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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Cabinet Agenda

5.00 pm Tuesday, 6 January 2026
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

Members and Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest.

3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.

4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Cabinet held on 2 December 2025 (Pages 5 - 10)

5. Matters Referred to Cabinet – There are no matters referred back for reconsideration to this meeting

6. Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committee – There are no issues referred back from the Scrutiny Committees to this Meeting, other than where they have been specifically consulted on an issue and their comments are included in the contents of the relevant report on this agenda.

7. Key Decisions:-

   (a) Maintained Summer Schools Capital Programme Summer 2026 Report – Report of the Executive Director of People (Pages 11 - 14)

8. Climate Change and Nature Recovery Progress – Report of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection (Pages 15 - 24)

9. Council Tax Calculation of Tax Base 2026/27 – Report of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance (Pages 25 - 32)

10. Council Plan Performance Report - Quarter 4 – Report of the Chief Executive and all Executive Directors (Pages 33 - 108)

11. Consultation On Victoria Embankment Conservation Area Appraisal – Report of the Executive Director and Public Protection (Pages 109 - 172)

12. Consultation on West End Conservation Area Appraisal – Report of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection (Pages 173 - 344)

13. Museum Accreditation Policies 2025 – Report of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services (Pages 345 - 448)

14. Release of S106 Education Capital Funds – Report of Executive Director of People (Pages 449 - 452)

15. Objection to Traffic Order - Lowson Street – Report of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services (Pages 453 - 462)

16. Land at Morton Palms Business Park - Proposed Disposal of Plot – Report of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection (Pages 463 - 472)

17. Schedule of Transactions – Report of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection (Pages 473 - 476)

18. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to which Cabinet appoints.

19. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.

20. Questions.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

21. To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press :-

    RESOLVED - That, pursuant to Sections 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the ensuing items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

PART III NOT FOR PUBLICATION

22. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.

23. Questions.



Amy Wennington
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 24 December 2025

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership
Councillors Curry, Garner, Harker, McCollom, McEwan, Porter, Roche and Wallis.

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Olivia Hugill, Democratic Officer, Resources and Governance, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays (e-mail olivia.hugill@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405363).

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DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE MONDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2025

CABINET

Tuesday, 4 November 2025

PRESENT – Councillors Harker (Chair), Curry, Garner, McCollom, McEwan, Porter, Roche and Wallis

INVITEES – Councillor Snedker

APOLOGIES – Councillor Dulston

C32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C33 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.

No representations were made by Members or members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

C34 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2025

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 7 October 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C35 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters referred back for re-consideration to this meeting.

C36 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Scrutiny considered at this meeting.

C37 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026-2027

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director - Resources and Governance requesting that consideration be given to the draft Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme (also previously circulated) for 2026/27 prior to approval by Council on 27 November 2025.

The submitted report stated that the previous scheme had become operational on 1 April

2024; Councils were required to set a CTS scheme each year and as part of that exercise were required to consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme, and where changes were made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should be applied to anyone affected by those changes; and that no significant changes were proposed to the existing scheme.

It was reported that the scheme had been considered by the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 31 October 2025, who agreed its onward submission to Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet consider and approve the draft CTS scheme for 2026-27 at Appendix 1 and for it to be submitted to Council for decision.

REASON – The recommendation is supported for the following reasons:

(a) The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme for 2026-27 by 11 March 2026.

(b) The CTS schemes since 2013 have all been implemented successfully without any major challenges.

(c) The continued application of a reduced entitlement for working aged people is still appropriate, given the current financial position of the Council.

C38 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 2

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director - Resources and Governance providing a forecast of the 2025/26 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management process.

The submitted report stated that it was the second revenue budget management report to Cabinet for 2025/26 and that the latest projections showed an overall decline of £1.872m on the 2025/29 Medium Term Financial Plan, which was due to £2.880m of departmental pressures and a decline in corporate reserves of £0.481m, offset by £1.489m of additional balances following the 2024/25 outturn.

RESOLVED – It is recommended that:

(a) That the forecast revenue outturn for 2054/26, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That further regular reports be made to monitor progress and take prompt action if necessary.

REASONS – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

(a) To continue effective management of resources.

(b) To continue to deliver services to agreed levels.

C39 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 2

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director – Environment, Highways and Community Services and the Executive Director – Resources and Governance providing the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme; an update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council; and requesting that consideration be given to a number of changes to that programme.

The submitted report stated that the projected outturn of the current capital programme was £339.385m against an approved programme of £339.992m; the investment was delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and services; the programme, including commitments, remained affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2028/29; the Council was managing 19 live projects, with an overall projected outturn value of £131.241m, the majority of which were running to time, cost and quality expectations, but were being monitored given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally; and that the projects were managed either by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

RESOLVED – It is recommended that Cabinet:

(a) That the status position on construction projects, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the projected capital expenditure and resources, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(c) That the adjustments to resources, as detailed in paragraph 21 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

(a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.

(b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.

(c) To maintain effective management of resources

C40 TO CONSIDER THE USE OF LAND AT FAVERDALE INCLUDING FORMER ST MODWEN LAND FOR BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN AND NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY CREDITS

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection to seek approval for the use of land at Faverdale East Business Park (partly former known as St Modwen Land) specifically including use of the site to generate Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality credits but also to investigate the possibility of disposal of part of the land for employment purposes.

The submitted report stated that the site is approximately 35 hectares (shown at appendix 1) and that is it wholly owned by Darlington Borough Council (DBC), comprising land previously in DBC ownership and land purchases from St Modwen in 2020. The land was identified as an existing employment site in the Local Plan and it was always intended it would be used for employment purposes.

The report explained that during discussions with a prospective developer it came to light that nearly 25% of the site is listed as Open Mosaic Habitat which is defined by Natural England as priority habitat. This part of the site is expensive to replace if developed but highly valuable in biodiversity terms.

The report clarified that there has been interest in part of the site for employment purposes and this needs to be investigated to ensure the best value for the Council. Consideration needs to be given as to whether part or all of the site could be used for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Nutrient Neutrality (NN) Credits.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet agrees:

(a) To approve the use of part of the land to generate Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality Credits. Primarily for sale on the open market but also for use in Council developments.

(b) That Officers are authorised to initially register the land labelled Area one (Shown on the plan at APPENDIX 2) with Natural England for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain credits and to market the credits.

(c) That officers investigate the sale of Areas two and three on the plan at Appendix 2 for employment purposes. If the conclusions are that the land will generate a greater income for Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality credits within two years of this decision that officers are authorised to register with Natural England either Area two or three or both sites

(d) That the necessary funds are approved from existing budgets and the capital Investment Fund to allow fencing off parcels of land and for the registration of the land with Natural England so that the credits can be marketed.

(e) That the Council enters into a Conservation Covenant with a registered 'Responsible

Body' to ensure that the land is maintained in accordance with the Habitat, Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).

REASON – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

(a) That the statutory requirement for developments to provide at least 10% in biodiversity net gain has put into question the viability of the site for employment purposes, either due to the lack of developable land or the costs associated with developing the whole of the site.

(b) There is a financial benefit to the Council if the conclusions are that the site would be better used for environmental credits, with the land registered with Natural England for the sale of credits.

(c) By registering Area one we can seek the financial benefits at an early stage and by further considering Areas two and three we ensure we get the best value for the Council.

(d) If the land is registered in phases, the land needs to be physically separated to manage the land.

(e) To register the land with Natural England there needs to be a Habitat Monitoring and Management Plan in place and a legal agreement to ensure the HMMP is delivered.

C41 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

C42 TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS :-

C43 QUESTIONS.

DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2025

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CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

MAINTAINED SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMER 2026

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Children and Young People Portfolio

Responsible Director -
James Stroyan, Executive Director of People

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to:

   (a) Release the 2025/26 school condition allocation for the schools' summer works programme 2026.

   (b) Release the 2025/26 devolved formula capital to the maintained schools.

Summary

2. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the release of the 2025/26 School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding of £154,388 to undertake a programme of works across the maintained schools in Darlington during summer 2026. Works will include condition, electrical and mechanical surveys, works identified as a priority and any urgent works arising.

3. The report also seeks the release of the 2025/26 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £32,668. This funding is a formula-based grant provided to all maintained schools to help support their ongoing capital needs.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Members:-

   (a) Agree to formally release the 2025/26 School Condition Allocation of £154,388 to support the 2026 maintained schools' summer works programme.

   (b) Agree to formally release the 2025/26 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £32,668.

Reason

5. The recommendations are supported in order to release the School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital will enable capital investment to be undertaken in the areas identified with the greatest need, in terms of asset management priorities.

James Stroyan,
Executive Director of People

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Paul Richardson: 0794 724 7224

Council Plan	These capital works will ensure children are learning in a safe high-quality environment to make sure they have the best start in life.
Addressing inequalities	This programme has no specific impact on protected groups.
Tackling Climate Change	All work undertaken will be designed and constructed with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Defective materials and plant will be replaced with more efficient products e.g. increasing 'u' value on windows, insulation and modern highly efficiency boilers.
Health and Wellbeing	The capital strategy outlined in this report will continue the Council's drive to provide buildings that enhance children's life chances and opportunities to thrive.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Capital investment to improve facilities and provide better building maintenance will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Wards Affected	Schools located in: North Road (Harrowgate Hill Primary and Rise Carr College), Park East (Borough Road Nursery), Pierremont (George Dent Nursery), Red Hall and Lingfield (Red Hall Primary).
Groups Affected	Children and young people (Aged 2-16) in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed projects have no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

6. The Authority funds the capital maintenance and improvement of maintained schools from a variety of sources including capital allocations received from the Department for Education (DfE), bid-based submissions for Central Government funding programmes (compiled and submitted by Officers or individual schools) and Section 106 agreements.

School Condition Allocation (SCA)

7. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated the local authority £154,388 of School Condition funding for 2025/26 to address capital maintenance needs across the borough's remaining maintained schools. The Education and Inclusion Service within the People Group is responsible for ensuring all funding is targeted to meet strategic priorities and the highest priority needs across maintained schools and nurseries.

8. Once a school has converted to an Academy it is no longer eligible to be considered for capital maintenance funding allocated to the LA but can apply direct to the Department for Education (DfE) for funding as required.

9. The annual summer works programme is compiled using the information from local authority commissioned surveys covering building condition and electrical and mechanical services. A list of the highest priority works that fits within the available funding envelope is developed in conjunction with Building Design and Building Services. That list is then agreed between the local authority and the maintained schools in the spring prior to the works.

Asset Management Costs

10. An amount equivalent to 13.0% of the SCA is set aside to cover survey and design fees as part of the asset management process. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes.

Contingency / Urgent Works

11. The summer works programme retains a 17.0% contingency within the estimated value of the works. This is used to cover any unexpected costs or emergency works. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

12. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated £32,668 to Darlington-maintained schools for 2025/26 on a formula-led basis. Local authorities are required to distribute DFC to their schools in accordance with the DfE-published allocations. Schools will be encouraged to manage spend in line with agreed priorities.

Financial Implications

13. The School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital are all grants from the Department for Education (DfE). There is no impact on Council funds.

14. All funds must be spent in accordance with the DfE's 'condition methodology and spend guidance', the latest edition being from March 2025.

15. The local authority is receiving less and less as schools academise. This means less flexibility to undertake any serious condition issues at the remaining settings and a higher likelihood that Council funds would be required to supplement the DfE grant.

Consultation

16. Any capital works will be undertaken in consultation with the schools concerned and in line with the priorities identified as part of the school's surveys.

CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE RECOVERY PROGRESS

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

Responsible Director -
Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy & Public Protection

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Cabinet on progress towards both the Council's net zero target and its nature recovery ambition.

Summary

2. As agreed in the Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration, this report is the 6-month interim report.

3. The emissions data we gather is available annually, so there is no update on current emissions.

4. The increase in emissions reported for 2024/25 is partially due to the opening of Hopetown and works on the Dolphin Centre. Unfortunately, we do not yet have a definitive answer for the rise in emissions at Allington Way. Investigations are ongoing here.

5. The Climate Change Officer has been working with officers across the Council to revise the climate change action plan.

6. A new tool has been developed to identify potential projects that will require funding. We are also working with the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub for areas where they can support us with finding funding.

7. Following the nature recovery emergency motion in May 2025, a combined climate change and nature strategy was approved by Cabinet in September.

8. The Ecologist is developing a nature recovery action plan, which will align with the regional nature recovery strategy currently in development for the Tees Valley.

9. The Ecologist is also gathering data for our statutory biodiversity duty report, which is due to be submitted at the end of March.

10. She is also reporting to Natural England, on the management status of all Council managed local wildlife sites.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that Cabinet acknowledges the report.

Reasons

12. The recommendations support our declaration to act on climate change and nature depletion. We run the risk of significant damage to our reputation if we do not deliver on our stated commitments to dealing with the Council's contribution to climate change and ambition for nature recovery.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director

Background Papers
No background papers were used in producing this report.

Margaret Enstone : Extension 6229

Council Plan	This report reflects the Council Plan Core Principle in Tackling Climate Change. Actions that we take for climate change impact on our Council priorities. For example, as we improve our council stock, we improve the quality of life for our residents, leading to better health outcomes, which in turns means fewer days of school (or work), improved educational attainment and better work opportunities. Consultation responses on the Council Plan demonstrate that residents value nature and biodiversity. A healthy and vibrant natural environment will benefit people's health and the economy; people want to live and work in nice places. Alongside this, the links between nature and climate change are clear: climate change impacts on the natural environment, and a healthy natural environment can help manage climate change impacts.
Addressing inequalities	Climate change affects everyone, but it has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. This report demonstrates how we are addressing our own carbon emissions and resilience, giving us the ability to demonstrate through good practice what other people can do themselves. Studies show that people living in more deprived areas, minority ethnic groups and younger people are more likely to live in areas with less access to green space. Darlington is a relatively green town, but we must make sure that all members of our community have equitable access to good quality green spaces.
Tackling Climate Change	The Council has recognised the need to consider the carbon impact of the decisions it makes. This report is a progress report

	of our journey to reducing our carbon emissions and adapting our services to the unavoidable effects of climate change. The motion that was passed in May 2025 and the joint climate change and nature strategy demonstrate the interlinkages between climate change and nature.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Our approach to reducing emissions will mean that resources are used more efficiently.
Health and Wellbeing	According to the WHO, climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. Alongside this, nature plays a crucial role in human health and well-being – with both physical and mental health benefits, including reduced stress, improved mood, enhanced cognitive function and lower risk of chronic diseases. This report is a progress report of our journey to becoming a net zero council.
S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no expected impact on Crime and Disorder in Darlington.
Wards Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience and how we are delivering on our nature recovery ambition. The nature recovery action plan will benefit all wards in Darlington.
Groups Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience and how we are delivering on our nature recovery ambition. It will not affect any particular group, but the nature recovery action plan will benefit the whole Borough.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

13. As agreed in the Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration, this report is the 6-month interim report. The emissions data we gather is available annually, so there is no update on current emissions.

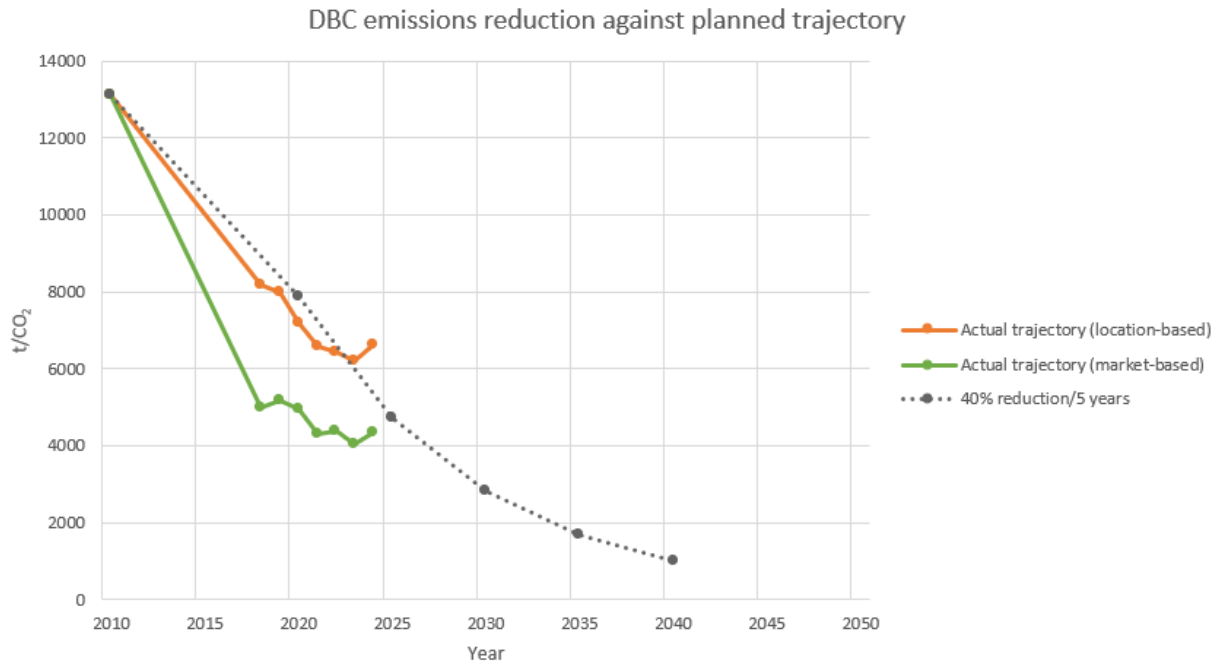
14. At the end of March 2024, our emissions were as follows:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	t/CO_2	t/CO_2	t/CO_2	t/CO_2	t/CO_2	t/CO_2	t/CO_2	t/CO_2
Streetlighting	3,487	759	596	515	458	412	418	418
Corporate Estate	7,564	5,928	5,907	5,014	4,864	4,709	4,579	4,968
Business Travel	2,050	1,509	1,482	1,426	1,270	1,328	1,192	1,256
Total estimated working from home emissions/tCO_2e during lockdown				125				
Total	13,101	8,196	7,985	7,080	6,592	6,449	6,190	6,642

15. Electricity generation from the solar panels on the roof of the Town Hall:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation
	kWh	kWh*	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh
Total		1,008	7,846	8,597	9,015	9,028	12,720	19,058

16. Trajectory:



17. The increase in emissions has been investigated and to some extent can be attributed to the opening of Hopetown. It is a reminder that all decisions the Council makes has an impact on our emissions target. We are working with the Corporate Landlord to see how future emissions can be reduced.

18. The works on The Dolphin Centre have also increased emissions while the combined heat and power (CHP) unit is out of action. This should be temporary but will be monitored. Once the solar panels are showing generation and the CHP is back online, savings should become evident here.

19. The third anomaly relates to Allington Road, where the increase is related to the installation of a new meter. Our supplier EDF and their subcontractor are looking at the meter to check that the set-up of the new meter is correct, and whether the old meter was set up incorrectly. The Corporate Landlord team will run their own tests to verify the information we are getting.

20. During the year, the Climate Change Officer has been working with officers across the authority to revise the climate change action plan to ensure continued relevance and boost progress across teams.

21. Highlights from activity to date include:

(a) Highway Asset Management

(i) Sustainable Materials: Ongoing use of sustainable road maintenance materials to reduce CO_2 emissions, with continuous exploration of new options.

(b) Capital Projects

(i) Carbon Reduction in New Builds: Carbon reduction measures actively considered and implemented in housing and commercial projects.

(ii) Modern Methods of Construction (MMC): Standard wall designs under review; Sparrow Hall Drive identified as a test site for MMC.

(iii) Renewables & Batteries: Presumption in favour of renewables and battery integration across the estate.

(iv) Low Carbon Technologies: Whole-system approach adopted for building design; supporting electric vehicle infrastructure at Arriva depot for delivery of electric buses.

(c) Corporate Landlord

(i) Air Tightness & Renewables: Air Source Heat Pumps included in Skinnergate Housing Scheme; renewables considered for future schemes.

(ii) Loft Insulation: Additional insulation installed at several sites; ongoing review.

(iii) Pipework Insulation: Mostly complete; proactive jackets added to valves when discovered.

(iv) Office Rationalisation: Central House Annexe vacated

(v) Low Carbon Heat & Power: New CHP unit installed at Dolphin Centre (awaiting commissioning).

(d) Transport Planning

(i) Bus Service Improvement: Active collaboration with TVCA on service reviews and infrastructure improvements. Awaiting funding announcement from DfT to understand and finalise plans for improving bus services in 2025/26.

(ii) Car Club Feasibility: Completed and decision documented; future consideration linked to TVCA mobility hubs.

(iii) Active Travel Engagement: Delivered events during Modeshift Month; launched Active Travel Ambassadors Programme in schools.

(iv) EV Charging Points: DBC are working with TVCA on the LEVI Capability Fund, which will see the introduction of charge points on street, where there is a need to do so.

(v) Cycling Infrastructure: LCWIP route finalised; safe routes to school implemented.

(e) Housing Services

(i) Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (Wave 2): Project completed in Q2.

(ii) Warm Homes Programme: Secured £3.549m government funding for upgrades (insulation, windows, solar panels) to 650 social homes; overall programme (including non-grant funded work) aims to upgrade 1,000+ social homes.

(f) Economy & Public Protection

(i) Taxi Policy: Continued incentives for electric and hybrid taxis with plans to retain the licence fee reduction for emission-free and hybrid vehicles; Euro 6 standards adopted.

(g) Adult Social Care

(i) Seasonal Weather Guidance: Comprehensive advice developed for vulnerable groups to stay safe during extreme weather.

(ii) Equipment Recycling: Discussions underway to enable Medequip recycling at council sites.

(iii) Carbon Footprint Awareness: Ongoing team discussions promoting sustainable travel and energy efficiency.

(h) Countryside Services

(i) Tree Planting: Target of 100,000 new trees by 2031 achieved (including partnership with Tees Forest).

(ii) Wildflower Planting: Continuous review for drought-resistant and wildflower planting.

(i) Waste & Transport Services

(i) Fleet Transition: Infrastructure installation scheduled; funding identified.

(ii) Food Waste Collection: Progressing contracts for new service.

(j) Leisure Services (Dolphin Centre)

(i) Solar Panels: Lower roof installation completed; upper roof nearing completion.

(ii) Energy Efficiency: New CHP plant installed; variable speed fans completed; major glazing and M\&E upgrades funded and scheduled.

(k) Hopetown Darlington

(i) Local Sourcing: Food, retail stock, and event supplies sourced locally.

(ii) Plastic Reduction: No single-use plastics; sustainable packaging adopted.

(iii) Food Waste Reduction: Leftover food offered via discount schemes.

(iv) Recycling & Reuse: Exhibition walls reused; nitrile gloves and acid-free paper recycled.

(v) Digital Marketing: Preference for digital over paper communications.

(vi) Energy Saving: Internal screens switched off during closing hours.

(vii) Community Engagement: Visitors encouraged to adopt sustainable practices.

(l) Library Service

(i) Sustainability Events: Plans for quarterly events on recycling and climate change.

(ii) Sustainable products across sites: continuous review of the products and materials used on both sites to improve environmental sustainability where possible.

22. The Climate Change Officer has developed a simple form for teams to let us know what projects they have in mind. This will enable the climate change team to help look for funding. Often, funding opportunities arrive with very short notice, and we cannot wait until they are announced before we start to develop projects.

23. The North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub is also looking for a pipeline of projects that they can then help support with finding funding. The recent Mayoral Renewables Fund arrived with no notice at all, so those authorities with ready projects were at an advantage.

24. In May 2025, Council passed a motion declaring a nature recovery emergency to sit alongside the climate change emergency. This recognises the links between the two areas of work.

25. A combined climate change and nature strategy was accepted by Cabinet in September 2025.

26. The Council's Ecologist is developing a nature recovery action plan, and we will produce combined reports to Cabinet and Council on the same timetable as the existing climate

change reports. We hope that a draft of the nature recovery action plan will be ready for the annual report in July.

27. Initially, the nature recovery action plan is focusing on internal actions. This will require engagement across the Council.

28. We will need to ensure that the nature recovery action plan aligns with the upcoming local nature recovery strategy for the Tees Valley. Publication is due June 2026.

29. Once a draft has been produced, the plan will be taken out for public consultation. Unlike the climate change plan's council only target, the nature recovery plan will affect the whole borough.

30. We will also ensure that the climate change and nature recovery action plans will indicate clearly where actions impact (both positively and negatively) on each other.

31. The Environment Act 2021 requires us to produce a biodiversity duty report every five years. The initial report is due on 26 March 2026. The Ecologist is gathering data for this report, which will go to Cabinet on 3 February.

32. The Ecologist is also reporting to Natural England, on the management status of all council managed local wildlife sites.

33. Other work includes significant time spent on responding to planning applications and the biodiversity net gain implications.

34. This links to the identification of a site to be used as a habitat bank for biodiversity net gain allocation within the borough. This site has the potential to generate income from sales of habitat units.

Communications

35. We have been working with the Communication team on a revised communications plan.

36. We continue to include a dedicated page in each issue of One Darlington and sharing appropriate social media posts.

Financial Implications

37. A reserve fund allowing agreed savings from projects to be set aside for investment in future climate projects has been set up. .

Legal Implications

38. There are no legal implications, but with public pressure to act on the threat of nature loss and impacts of climate change, we must demonstrate how we will deliver on the motion commitments and protect the Council from future legal challenge.

HR Implications

39. The report does not affect the terms and conditions of any staff or change their duties.

Estates & Property Advice

40. The report does not affect the Council's land holdings or involve a lease, or license or any transfer or purchase of land.

Procurement Advice

41. The report does not involve any purchase over £100k.

Equalities Considerations

42. Climate change affects everyone, but it has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. By ensuring that the Council is resilient to the effects of climate change, we ensure that we will be able to continue providing services to all residents.

Consultation

43. This report is a progress report for the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions and increasing its resilience to the impacts of climate change. No public consultation has been carried out.

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CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

ITEM NO.

COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION OF TAX BASE 2026/27

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Mandy Porter, Resources Portfolio

Responsible Director – Elizabeth Davison, Executive Director - Resources and Governance

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To determine the Council's tax base for 2026/27.

Summary

2. In accordance with Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the Council has to decide its tax base by 31 January in the year preceding that for which the tax base applies. This has then to be notified to any precepting authorities and is used in the calculation and setting of the Council Tax. The relevant tax base calculations are shown in **Appendices 1** and **2**.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that: -

   (a) The report for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2026/27 be noted and any comments forwarded to Council for final approval.

   (b) The tax base for the Council of 36,141.55 and the individual tax base for the parishes as set out at Appendix 2 be approved.

Reasons

4. The recommendations are supported to comply with statutory requirements, enabling the Council Tax for 2026/27 to be set by Council in February 2026.

Elizabeth Davison
Executive Director of Resources and Governance

Background Papers
Council Tax regulations
Council Tax database

Judith Murray - Extension 5401

Council Plan	This report has no implications for the Council Plan.
Addressing inequalities	There are no issues relating to inequalities
Tackling Climate Change	There are no climate change implications
Efficient and effective use of resources	The reports does not have any efficiency implications
Health and Well Being	There are no health and well being issues
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Wards Affected	The proposals affect all wards
Groups Affected	The proposals affect everyone liable for Council Tax
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not represent a change to the Budget or Policy framework
Key Decision	This is not an Executive decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The tax base is the total number of domestic properties in the Borough, calculated as a weighted average 'Band D equivalents. The amount of Council Tax payable for properties in each of the 8 valuation bands A to H is statutorily determined as proportions of Band D. The tax base is adjusted for discounts, exemptions and estimated changes over the coming year. An estimate of the collection rate is also applied. The tax base represents the amount of revenue that it is estimated will be raised by each £1 of band D Council Tax. It is, therefore, an important part of setting the Council Tax.

6. The council tax base is, for the purpose of calculating a billing authority's and a major precepting authority's council tax, the taxable capacity of an area or part of an area. The amounts are calculated for each financial year and represent the estimated number of chargeable dwellings after allowing for reductions and discounts and adjusted to take account of the authority's collection rate.

7. The regulations changed the formula for calculating the council tax base so as to take account of any reductions which will be made under the local council tax reduction scheme or increases for local premiums for empty or long-term empty dwellings.

8. Under the previous council tax benefit system, billing authorities received payment to cover 100% of the cost of council tax benefit paid. The council tax base was therefore unaffected by changes in council tax benefit granted because the billing authority did not forgo any council tax income from dwellings in receipt of council tax benefit.

9. However, under the local council tax support scheme, the council tax base is affected by whether a dwelling is in receipt of a council tax reduction awarded under the scheme, as the authority is foregoing council tax income from these dwellings.

10. Local council tax support reductions need to be reflected in the calculation of the council tax base, in order to calculate the correct amount of Band D council tax for the billing or major precepting authority area. If the council tax base did not reduce, authorities would set their council tax bills based on an incorrect level of taxable capacity. The outcome being that dwellings where an occupier was eligible to receive a reduction under the local authority's council tax reduction scheme would not be required to pay the full amount of council tax and the authority would not therefore be able to collect the correct amount of council tax to meet its council tax requirement, with a deficit being created on the collection fund.

11. Similarly, the tax base is increased by the premium generated through the empty and long-term empty homes scheme whereby the consequent increase in the council tax base is used to lower council tax bills.

12. The actual calculation of the tax base is prescribed in the above regulations and has several components.

Calculations must be made of the 'relevant amount' for the year, for each of the 8 valuation bands as shown in the Council's Valuation List submitted by the Listing Officer (HM Revenue and Customs) on 30 November 2025 and the Band A(-) category introduced with effect from 1 April 2000 to provide relief to disabled persons residing in Band A properties. The relevant amount for each band represents the number of chargeable dwellings, as adjusted for exemptions, disabled reductions, discounts and also estimated changes up to 31 March 2027. The final total for each band has to be converted to the equivalent number of Band D dwellings.

13. The relevant amounts for the individual bands are then totalled and the estimated collection rate for the year is applied. The collection rate is based on the proportion of the amount payable into the Collection Fund for the year, including appropriate adjustments for benefits and any transitional relief, which the Council believes will ultimately be collected. The resulting figure, plus any contributions in lieu from the Ministry of Defence in respect of forces accommodation, is the Council's tax base for its area for the year concerned.

14. The estimates and calculations outlined above in respect of the tax base for 2026/27 are shown in **Appendix 1**. Members will see that the calculations produce a total Band D equivalent of 36,489.4 (line 19) which, when combined with an estimated collection rate of 99.0% and contributions in lieu, results in an overall tax base figure of 36,141.55 which is a 0.66% increase on 2025/26.

15. Similar calculations also need to be made in respect of the parishes and in particular the same estimated collection rate must be applied as that used for the whole of the Council's area. The tax base calculations for each parish are as shown in **Appendix 2**.

Outcome of Consultation

16. This is a technical report, which follows a prescribed format. There has been no consultation in compiling this report.

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL - ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2026/27 **APPENDIX 1**

	Band	A (-)	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
1	Dwellings per Valuation List	0	23,175	11,238	7,878	6,009	3,652	1,426	694	54	54,126
2	Disabled Band Relief	0	(67)	(49)	(43)	(58)	(39)	(19)	(7)	(13)	(295)
3	Disabled Band Relief (Chargeable)	67	49	43	58	39	19	7	13	0	295
4	Disabled Band Relief (Adjusted)	67	(18)	(6)	15	(19)	(20)	(12)	6	(13)	0
5	Exemptions	0	(676)	(193)	(121)	(68)	(40)	(17)	(12)	0	(1,127)
6	Single discount (25%)	(28)	(10,936)	(4,263)	(2,619)	(1,459)	(675)	(262)	(94)	(2)	(20,338)
7	Double discount (50%)	(1)	(24)	(7)	(16)	(17)	(14)	(4)	(19)	(8)	(110)
8	Equated discounts	(7.50)	(2,746.00)	(1,069.25)	(662.75)	(373.25)	(175.75)	(67.50)	(33.00)	(4.50)	(5,139.50)
9	Empty Homes Premium 1 Yr (100%)	0	110	16	13	5	3	0	0	0	147
10	Empty Homes Premium (100%)	0	37	6	4	0	1	1	0	0	49
11	Empty Homes Premium (200%)	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
12	Empty Homes Premium (300%)	0	7	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	10
13	Second Homes Premium (100%)	0	30	24	22	12	1	2	1	1	93
14	**Chargeable Dwellings**	**59.50**	**19,945.00**	**10,018.75**	**7,148.25**	**5,568.75**	**3,424.25**	**1,332.50**	**656.00**	**39.50**	**48,192.50**
15	Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)	(18.10)	(4,396.84)	(988.76)	(316.36)	(107.22)	(28.40)	(9.97)	(4.07)	(0)	(5,869.72)
16	**Chargeable Dwellings after CTRS**	**41.40**	**15,548.16**	**9,029.99**	**6,831.89**	**5,461.53**	**3,395.85**	**1,322.53**	**651.93**	**39.50**	**42,322.78**
17	Estimated Changes					317					317
18	Band D Multiplier	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
19	Band D Equivalent (Relevant Amount)	23.0	10,365.4	7,023.3	6,072.8	5,778.5	4,150.5	1,910.3	1,086.6	79.0	36,489.4
20	Estimated Collection Rate										99.0%
21	Contributions in Lieu					17.0					17.0
22	**Council Tax Base**										**36,141.55**

APPENDIX 1

ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2026/27 – EXPLANATION OF TERMS

	Each column shows the totals for each Council Tax band A to H. The TOTAL column is the total for the whole Council. The Band A(-) column is the total in Band A where a disabled band relief applies.
Lines	
Line 1	The number of dwellings in each Council Tax band as per the Valuation List, as at 30/11/2025
Line 2	The number of dwellings in each band where a disabled band relief applies
Line 3	The number of dwellings in each band after the disabled band relief has been applied
Line 4	The net number of dwellings in each band after the disabled band relief has been applied (Line 3 - Line 2)
Line 5	The number of dwellings in each band that are exempt from Council Tax (where an exemption applies), to be deducted from the total number of dwellings
Line 6	The number of dwellings in each band where a single (25%) discount applies
Line 7	The number of dwellings in each band where a double (50%) discount applies
Line 8	The adjustment for each band where a discount applies (Line 6 x 25%) + (Line 7 x 50%)
Line 9	The number of properties that have been unoccupied or unfurnished for a period between one and two years which attract a 100% Premium
Line 10	The number of properties that have been unoccupied or unfurnished for a period between two and five years and which attract a 100% Premium
Line 11	The number of properties that have been unoccupied or unfurnished for a period between five and ten years and which attract a 200% Premium
Line 12	The number of properties that have been unoccupied or unfurnished for a period in excess of ten years and which attract a 300% Premium
Line 13	The number of properties classified as no-one's sole or main residence and is substantially furnished and which attracts a 100% Premium
Line 14	The equivalent number of chargeable dwellings before the application of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Line 15	The equivalent number of properties in receipt of council tax benefit in each band
Line 16	The equivalent number of properties after the application of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Line 17	The estimated number of additional band D equivalent dwellings that will be included in the tax base during 2026/27
Line 18	The band D multiplier that is applied to the number of chargeable dwellings in each band (this multiplier is prescribed in law)
Line 19	The adjusted number of chargeable dwellings in each band after applying the multiplier (Line 15 + Line 16) x Line 17
Line 20	The estimated percentage collection rate
Line 21	The estimated number of band D equivalent dwellings for contributions in lieu. (Armed Forces Accommodation)
Line 22	The Council Tax Base for 2026/27 (Line 18 x Line 19) + Line 20

APPENDIX 2

PARISH COUNCILS – ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2026/27

Parish	Current Parish Tax Base (1)	Adjusted Band D Equivalent 26/27 (2)	Collection Rate	Parish Tax Base
Bishopton	180.5	182.3	99.0%	180.5
Heighington	1,121.6	1,145.6	99.0%	1,134.2
High Coniscliffe	112.4	109.3	99.0%	108.2
Hurworth	1,601.7	1,661.8	99.0%	1,645.2
Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent	348.7	355.8	99.0%	352.2
Middleton St. George	2,114.1	2,163.2	99.0%	2,141.6
Neasham	249.3	256.4	99.0%	253.9
Piercebridge	61.9	61.2	99.0%	60.6
Sadberge	308.9	315.3	99.0%	312.2
Whessoe	662.0	766.9	99.0%	764.1

PARISH COUNCILS ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2026/27 – EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Columns	
Current Parish Tax Base (1)	The current Council Tax base for each Parish, using the methodology set out in Appendix 1, for 2025/26
Adjusted Band D Equivalent 26/27 (2)	The calculated Council Tax base for each Parish, using the same methodology set out in Appendix 1, and after the estimated changes for 2026/27 have been applied
Collection Rate	The estimated percentage collection rate
Parish Tax Base	The Council Tax Base for 2026/27 for each Parish

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CABINET
06 JANUARY 2026

QUARTER 2 - COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Stephen Harker, Leader and all Cabinet Members

Responsible Director -
Rose Rouse, Chief Executive and all Executive Directors

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The is the performance report of the new Council Plan 2024-27. It summarises progress against the key commitments and deliverables in the plan.

Summary

2. The Council Plan was approved by Council on 18 July 2024. The plan outlines Darlington Borough Council's long-term ambitions for Darlington and priorities for action over the next three years. It gives strategic direction to the Council and Council services, defining priorities, identifying key actions and shaping delivery.

3. The plan recognises the fundamental link between health, wellbeing and the economy. There are six priorities: economy, homes, living well, children and young people, communities and local environment. Three core principles shape the delivery of the plan: addressing inequalities, tackling climate change and efficient and effective use of resources.

4. This report provides a summary of the key actions taken by the council to deliver the priorities in the Council Plan. The appendix contains narrative from lead service areas on key actions, demonstrating delivery of the priorities and core principles.

5. The full plan can be found on the council website.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that Cabinet note the progress made in the delivery of the Council Plan.

Reasons

7. To monitor progress against key actions and priorities in the Council Plan.

Strategic Leadership Team

Background Papers

(i) Darlington Council Plan 2024 - 2027

Lynne Davies: Extension 5070

Council Plan	This report is about the delivery of the council plan
Addressing inequalities	Update on key actions are highlighted in the plan
Tackling Climate Change	Update on key actions are highlighted in the plan
Efficient and effective use of resources	Update on key actions are highlighted in the plan
Health and Wellbeing	Update on key actions are highlighted in the plan
S17 Crime and Disorder	Update on key actions are highlighted in the plan
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not require a decision affecting the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Update and key actions are highlighted in the plan

MAIN REPORT

INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

8. The Council Plan was agreed at Council on 18 July 2024. The plan is shaped by three core principles: addressing inequalities; tackling climate change; and efficient and effective resources. They are a long-term commitment to enhancing the wellbeing of all residents and ensuring the council can deliver the greatest impact within available resources.

9. There are six priorities for delivery:

   (a) Economy
   (b) Homes
   (c) Living well
   (d) Children and young people
   (e) Communities
   (f) Local environment

10. The Council Plan is monitored through 161 indicators collected via the report management system, of which 60 are qualitative measures. The council is currently at the midpoint of the 2025/26 financial year. The following section highlights a selection of the most notable achievements from the first half of the year.

11. A new **STEM Learning Centre** at Darlington's science park at Central Park will receive significant investment through the Government's Growth Mission Fund and Darlington's Pride in Place programme. The Chancellor announced £16 million towards the capital build in the Budget on 26 November 2025, underlining Darlington's growing national role as a hub for economic development, innovation, and skills. £5m additional funding from the Pride in Place programme will ensure the centre's mission to create pathways into high-quality employment for local people supports communities with the greatest barriers to participation, including those who are experiencing deprivation and are under-represented in this sector.

12. This cutting-edge facility will provide local young people with access to bespoke, specialist training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), ensuring Darlington and the region develops the skills and expertise needed for future growth. The centre will also deliver community outreach programmes to inspire and enable more residents to pursue careers in STEM sectors.

13. The council remains committed to improving the **energy efficiency of council housing stock** to reduce tenants' fuel bills and tackle climate change. This commitment is set out in the Housing Services Climate Change Strategy, approved by Cabinet in January 2024. The strategy recognises the significant investment required to meet Government targets: achieving a minimum EPC rating of C by 2030 and a net zero carbon rating by 2050. In the current financial year, the council has allocated over £4 million in capital expenditure to support energy efficiency initiatives.

14. This investment has been enhanced by successful bids to the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WHSHF), enabling improvements to the following homes:

    (a) SHDF Wave 1: Upgrades to 23 homes
    (b) SHDF Wave 2: Improvements to 130 homes
    (c) WHSHF Wave 3: Planned investment in a further 680 homes

15. These measures demonstrate our proactive approach to sustainability and our commitment to delivering warmer, more energy-efficient homes for residents.

16. The **S&DR200 Festival** marked the 200th anniversary of the world's first passenger rail journey on the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Delivered through a regional partnership, the festival featured a year-long programme of events, including the Ghost Train, exhibitions, and fringe activities. The headline event, the Anniversary Journey, took place on 27 September 2025. This historic recreation saw a replica of Locomotion No.1 travel from Shildon to Stockton, with a commemorative stop at Skerne Bridge in Darlington.

17. Investment in Hopetown Darlington has established a high-quality visitor attraction, earning multiple prestigious awards. Visitor numbers are projected to exceed 200,000 this year—a significant milestone. Building on the legacy of the anniversary year is a key priority, this will include the launch of passenger steam railway rides from Spring 2026 on what will be the UK's newest Heritage railway line. A comprehensive events and engagement programme will be delivered to further grow attendance and enhance the visitor experience in 2026.

18. Information on all the council plan indicators is provided in the appendix to this report.

Darlington Borough Council

Council Plan Performance Management Report 2025/26 Quarter 2

Report Section	Pages
Addressing inequalities	2 - 3
Tackling climate change	4 - 7
Efficient and effective use of resources	8 - 12
Economy	13 - 22
Homes	23 - 29
Living well	30 - 45
Children and young people	46 - 57
Communities	58 - 63
Local Environment	64 - 70

Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Darlington is a wonderful place to live and work and we want opportunities to be accessible to everyone.

We will have a long-term focus on understanding and addressing the causes of inequality ensuring our communities are safe and can thrive.

Develop a cross-council approach based on an in-depth understanding of inequalities and their causes, with a focus on local communities experiencing disadvantage

The council's policy team is undertaking analysis of data on child poverty in Darlington and the actions the Council is currently undertaking to address poverty in the Borough. This work will be considered by the Strategic Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team.

The analysis of this work is intended to inform the approach the council takes to addressing this challenge, how collaborating with voluntary, public and business partners could be focused to address inequality, and how discretionary funding, such as the Plan for Neighbourhoods, may be deployed. The team has also taken an active role as a member of the NE Child Poverty Commission to support their work and lobbying on the key issues for the national child poverty strategy.

Ensure all new strategies and plans consider inequalities, starting with the development of an inclusive growth strategy and a review of the health and wellbeing strategy

The Senior Leadership Team represented by the Chief Executive and Group Directors is responsible for ensuring all new strategies and plans consider inequalities. Information regarding progress with the inclusive growth strategy and the health and wellbeing strategy can be found elsewhere within this performance report. The internal policy and strategy network continues to provide a valuable forum for those with a responsibility for policy development to come together to share learning and briefings on the latest insights.

Data from a wide range of sources is regularly gathered and analysed to ensure the council has a good understanding of inequalities across the borough and wider region. The Darlington Profile 2025 report on the state of the borough has been developed and presented to senior leadership teams. The report provides a clear accessible overview of key data and trends affecting Darlington and presents headline findings to inform strategic decision-making.

The Indices of Deprivation 2025 were published by government on the 30th October. Analysis on deprivation and inequalities within the borough will be shared with senior leadership teams and used to inform key priorities including the development of the inclusive growth strategy and Pride In Place regeneration plan.

Lead Officer: Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Strengthen partnership working with key stakeholders and the voluntary and community sector with a long-term focus on opportunity and addressing the causes of inequality and short-term focus on reducing the burden of the cost of living. We will work with communities to understand first-hand the challenges they face

Household Support Fund (HSF) Round 7 is being delivered through voluntary and community organisations including:

- Vouchers during holiday period for children currently in receipt of Free School Meals
- Support for Care Leavers
- 1523 Vulnerable households requiring additional support including lone parents and low income pensioners.
- Elderly residents will be offered support in energy proofing their homes via Age UK
- Darlington-based foodbanks will be supported with food provision
- Support through citizens advice for 1500 households experiencing financial hardship

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Addressing inequalities

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

The changing climate impacts all our lives now and we know this is particularly important to our younger residents.

One of the first things we did when we came to office was bring forward by 10 years, to 2040, the Council's commitment to being carbon neutral.

Deliver the climate change action plan to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by 2040

Darlington Borough Council continues to make steady progress toward its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2040 through the delivery of its Climate Change Action Plan. Over the past quarter, significant steps have been taken across departments, including the completion of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Wave 2 project, installation of a new Combined Heat and Power (CHP) unit at the Dolphin Centre, and the integration of low-carbon technologies in new housing schemes. The Council has also secured £3.5m in government funding for the Warm Homes project, aiming to upgrade over 1,000 homes.

To ensure continued momentum, the Action Plan has been revised to reflect progress made and to align with updated departmental goals. This includes the removal of actions no longer viable, the addition of new initiatives such as the Nature Restoration Emergency Action Plan, and the refinement of targets based on feasibility and resource availability. Cross-departmental collaboration remains central, with ongoing work in areas such as sustainable transport, energy efficiency, and climate adaptation. The Council remains committed to transparent reporting and adaptive planning to meet its 2040 target.

Involve all parts of the council in a cross-council approach to sustainability and climate change

Darlington Borough Council continues to embed sustainability and climate action across all departments through a coordinated, cross-council approach. The Climate Change Action Plan is being actively delivered by teams spanning Housing, Transport, Planning, Leisure, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Waste, and more. Each service area has identified and implemented tailored actions, from integrating low-carbon technologies in capital projects to promoting sustainable travel, improving energy efficiency in council buildings, and enhancing biodiversity.

This quarter, departments have updated their actions to reflect progress and evolving priorities. For example, Housing Services completed Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and is preparing for Wave 3, while Countryside Services has set a new 100,000-tree planting target. Meanwhile, Adult Social Care and Public Health are addressing climate resilience through seasonal health communications and vulnerability mapping.

The revised action plan ensures that all services remain aligned with the Council's 2040 net zero target, with regular reporting and collaboration supporting a whole-council culture of sustainability.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

Work alongside our business community collaborating with groups such as the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership to transition to net zero

Darlington Borough Council continues to work closely with the local business community to support the transition to net zero. Through the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership (DEEP), we are promoting best practice and encouraging collaboration on sustainability. Recent actions include the addition of sustainability content in the Darlington Business Newsletter, signposting businesses to relevant guidance and support. We are also highlighting local businesses offering climate-related services and support.

To further strengthen engagement, we have appointed Decerna to provide expert advice on energy efficiency and net zero strategies for local businesses. This is complemented by our participation in regional and local climate events to build networks and share knowledge. A pipeline of potential projects is being developed to ensure readiness for future funding opportunities, and we are exploring new communication formats such as podcasts to raise awareness of climate risks and opportunities.

These actions have been revised to reflect progress made and updated goals across departments, ensuring our approach remains responsive and impactful.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

Work with partners, government, public and private sectors and residents for a resilient Darlington so we are able to respond and adapt to change.

Darlington Employers Environment Partnership (DEEP) was set up in 2023. It brings together like-minded local businesses to generate more sustainable outcomes from products, services and approaches.

There are three primary benefits for businesses who join: to network and learn from each other, to make direct contact with businesses that can help them reduce their carbon footprint and to promote their businesses achievements towards Net Zero. DEEP has just welcomed it's 50th member Teesside Airport

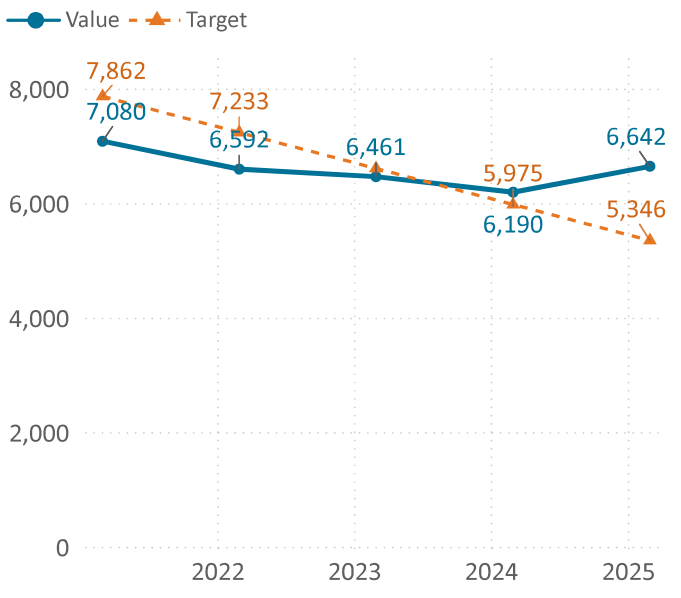
Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

Darlington Borough Council emissions (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)

We are still investigating the increase in emissions for 2024, but this will be related to the opening of Hopetown, a new meter at our Allington Road depot, and the works being carried out at the Dolphin Centre. The works here will lead to savings once the work is complete. We are taking forward work to establish and reduce emissions from our supply chain.

Following the declaration of a nature recovery emergency, to sit alongside the existing climate change emergency, we have revised the strategy and this is now available on the Council's website. The climate change action plan is being revised and a new, nature recovery action plan will be developed.



Lead Officer: David Hand: Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy & Enviroment

Core Principle: Tackling climate change

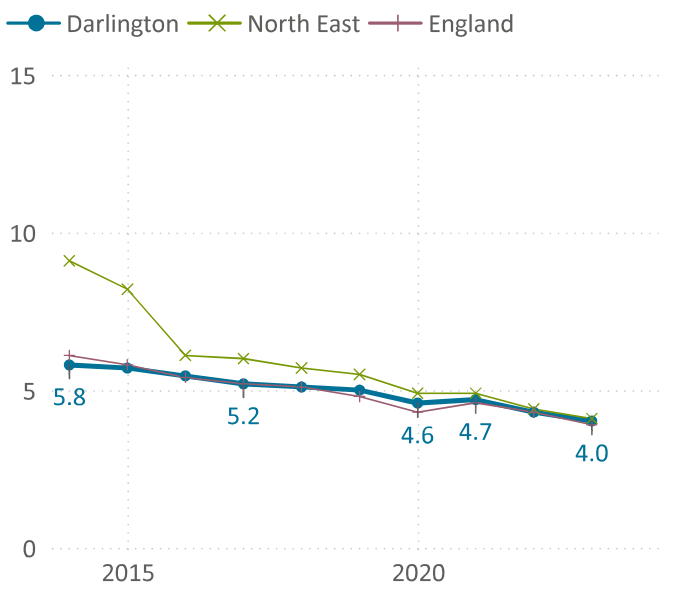
Key Deliverable: Deliver the climate change action plan to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by 2040

CO2 emissions per capita (tonnes of CO2 equivalent)

Data for this indicator is published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in summer. Data is two years in arrears, so relates to 2023.

Per capita emissions for Darlington are 4.02 tonnes CO2. This is just under the North East per capita figure (4.1 tonnes) and just above the per capita figure for England (3.9 tonnes).

The annual Eco Fair in June 2025 was again successful and we are planning the next event for June 2026. We continue to encourage action from residents, businesses and schools through direct messaging, through One Darlington and via social media.



Lead Officer:	David Hand: Head of Planning Policy, Economic Strategy & Enviroment
Core Principle:	Tackling climate change
Key Deliverable:	Work alongside our business community collaborating with groups such as the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership to transition to net zero

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

We will remain focussed on the financial sustainability of the council, ensuring good governance.

We will deliver the best services possible, with the resources we have, for our residents, communities, and businesses.

Deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan and positive Value For Money outcome

Council approved the 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) at their February 2025 meeting. The quarter 2 revenue budget management projection reported to Cabinet on 4th November, shows a decline of £1.872m on the agreed MTFP. Further details can be found within the report.

All services continue to scrutinise their budgets, challenging expenditure or increasing income, to assist with the current and future years budgets and to ensure value for money.

The Council has commenced budget setting for the next MTFP 2026/27 to 2029/30, which will be presented to Full Council in February 2026.

The Council's auditors Forvis Mazars review of value for money in the Council's 2024/25 accounts did not identify any significant weakness in the arrangements to secure value for money in the use of the Council resources.

Deliver high quality governance and decision making

Statutory officers met to review the Local Code of Corporate Governance and work progress on 9 June 2025 and 8 September 2025.

The Member Working Group to review Council Decision Making and the role of Scrutiny Committees met on 6 May 2025, 1 July 2025 and 16 September 2025.

Since April, training has been delivered on the Members' Code of Conduct and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.

Council, Cabinet and Committee papers have been reviewed throughout the year for compliance and delegated decisions review meetings have also been held.

The Register of gifts and hospitality has been updated throughout the year.

Staff and member comms have been circulated where required, such as with regard to the pre election period.

Lead Officer: Amy Wennington: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Review and refresh the Asset Management Plan

The production of a draft Strategic Asset Plan (to replace the existing, now dated, Asset Management Plan) is in progress.

The draft now needs updating to accord with the Council Plan and the Council's priorities and following consultation with the Resources Portfolio Holder it is intended to refer the report to Cabinet in Spring 2026, subject to input from the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, if considered necessary.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Review and refresh the Procurement Strategy

The Council spends millions of pounds every year and we want to use money effectively and achieve value by purchasing and procuring what we need at the right price and quality. The Council Plan prioritises growing the local economy and procurement activity can help in delivering this goal.

The Procurement Strategy 2025 – 2027 was developed to ensure the Council procures goods, services and works in line with the Procurement Act 2023 (which came into force on 24 February 2025), the Council Plan and our key objectives. The plan will direct and inform our procurement activity and was approved by Cabinet on 8 April 2025 following consultation. The council's procurement activity will be driven by the following key objectives and be kept under review;

1) Working together
2) Delivering quality and value for money
3) Social Value
4) Climate change
5) Governance and compliance
6) Local economy
7) Innovation, improvement and forward planning.

Lead Officer: Amy Wennington: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Build on the Capital Project Management process by introducing an enhanced ICT system to improve efficiency and effectiveness

In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Capital Project delivery, the Capital Projects team have worked alongside the Xentrall team to develop a bespoke project management system within Microsoft Teams.

This system, which is known as ProBox allows a more efficient flow and recording of information and feeds into the Project Position Statement which is reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The system is being used by the Capital Projects team on new capital projects.

Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Review and deliver the workforce strategy

Following a period of design and engagement with key stakeholders we have completed our new Workforce Strategy for 2025 to 2030 which has been endorsed by the Joint Consultative Committee.

The Workforce Strategy is under pinned by five frameworks (Include, Engage and Retain, Attract and Recruit, Develop and Lead, Health and Wellbeing and Smarter Working).

We have now launched initial communication activity as part of the roll out to staff.

Lead Officer: Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Maximise income through new joint venture companies, increase levels of business rates by growing the local economy; and maximise grant opportunities

The Council's ongoing and successful Joint Venture relationship with ESH Homes Ltd continues to deliver on a number of housing sites in the Borough.

The development of 44 units at Heritage Park, Blackwell is well underway with over 14 already completed. The Elderbrook Park and Hurworth Meadows developments at Neasham Road are also progressing well and will deliver circa 200 units.

Infrastructure works at Burtree Garden Village are now underway and the Esh JV are expected to be on site in Spring 2026 to bring forward circa 350 units. Pre -application consultation and initial feasibility has also progressed at the Coniscliffe Road site to bring it forward for the development of circa 80 units.

The Council is continuing to work with Esh Homes Ltd to identify other potential residential development opportunities for the Joint Venture'.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Explore opportunities to exploit digital assets to create efficiencies and increase productivity, including online delivery

To support the implementation of the Digital Darlington Strategy 2025-30, the Council has formed an Artificial Intelligence Strategy & Ethics Group, comprising experts from various fields including HR, communications, climate change, equality & diversity, and finance, as well as staff completing AI apprenticeships. This group objectively evaluates AI tools for Council adoption and recently recommended rolling out Microsoft CoPilot to staff, a plan approved by the Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG) and set for implementation before Christmas.

The Council has completed a pilot of the AI meeting transcription tool, Minute, developed by i.AI within Government Digital Services (GDS). This involvement has advanced the Council's understanding of AI governance and training, and the tool has helped to identify opportunities for efficiency benefits, with permission granted for wider use among staff at no cost until the end of March 2026, while GDS considers the future delivery model for Minute.

Additionally, the People directorate has been trialling Magic Notes, a commercial AI tool tailored for specific statutory meetings in social services. Staff feedback has been highly positive, leading to an extended trial to better assess its benefits prior to a decision on long-term adoption.

Lead Officer: Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Continue to build strong relationships with partners, residents and communities.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Group continues to be an effective way for the Council to engage with the sector. It is working with the Council to deliver Household Support Fund and is supporting the Plan for Neighbourhoods Board.

The Public Sector Executive Group continues to provide a means for the Chief Executive to meet with her counterparts in the other public sector agencies.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Core Principle: Efficient and effective use of resources

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Building a strong sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all.

Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents

Initial engagement workshops and meetings completed, and a draft delivery framework and plan have been produced. Work is now underway on:

- Building the evidence base/local economic assessment/current challenges
- Defining Strategic Vision & Objectives
- Identifying Key Economic Opportunities

The delivery framework sets out the approach to developing a new five-year Inclusive Growth Strategy and short-term Action Plan for Darlington. It highlights that:

- The new strategy will establish an economic baseline and a clear vision including overarching economic goals and objectives.
- The Action Plan will outline immediate actions necessary to implement the strategic vision.

Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes

The council is collaborating with a diverse range of local stakeholders to refresh the Town Centre Strategy and update the accompanying Action Plan.

This work is bringing together key town centre stakeholders from a cross-sector of interests. The refreshed strategy and action plan will reaffirm key priorities and objectives, and outline practical steps to enhance economic vitality, improve public spaces, and strengthen the town centre's role as a hub for business, leisure, and community life. As part of Town Centre Strategy refresh process, the stakeholder group will be reconvened in early 2026.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Ensure that the borough is safe, clean and maintained to levels that support the economy and encourage inward investment

Street Scene continues to sustain levels of cleanliness to high standards within the constraints of available resources. Overall cleanliness of the area following independent auditing confirms an average score of 85% which falls within the 'excellent' category.

Prevention and education measures are used to intervene in problems, with enforcement being a tool that can be used as and when appropriate to help protect the appearance of the town, damage to the environment and public health issues. The Council works closely with partners to try to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address crime and anti-social behaviour. The Council participated in the Home Office Safer Streets Summer Initiative which was targeted at town and city centres across the country with increased Police and civic enforcement patrols.

The Council updated the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for the town centre and this came into operation in July 2025. A Boroughwide PSPO was also introduced to deal with issues associated with side waste, begging and stray dogs.

In October 2025, the Council received a 'gold award' in the town centre category of the 2025 Britain in Bloom Awards, reflecting the appearance of the town centre and the community efforts that go into ensuring we have a clean and well maintained town centre for residents, businesses and visitors to enjoy.

Lead Officer: Ben Grabham: Assistant Director - Environmental Services & Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

The Council continues to work with employers in the local area to develop good job and career opportunities. Working with individual or clusters of local businesses, they are encouraged to develop their skills pipeline and invest in recruiting and sustaining talent by helping identify the support and training they need.

The Skills Booster event took place in the summer, bringing together a range of employment and workforce support organisations to help those individuals looking to move on from existing employment.

In October, the Destination STEM Hopetown event attracted 2,000 children and almost 50 employers to explore a range of STEM activities.

In the new year, Darlington Jobs Fair will once again be happening.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Provide more education and skills opportunities for residents by delivering the Adult Skills Centre and collaborating with providers and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)

The Council's Learning & Skills Service and Darlington College are jointly developing an adult skills centre in the old Northern Echo building to provide additional town centre learning opportunities. The planned date for completion of the centre is now May 2026.

As part of the government's Getting Britain Working initiative, council staff are working with TVCA, DWP and the DfE, to develop the Youth Guarantee Trailblazer programme, to encourage 18-21 year olds into employment, and the Connect to Work programme which supports those with disabilities, long term health issues, or multiple and complex barriers into work.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Work with Market Asset Management to deliver improvements to the historic indoor market

The market hall continues to welcome a mix of exciting new businesses, nurturing fresh life into the space. The market hall has also become a thriving events destination. It played host to a major Festival of Lights event as part of the Diwali celebrations.

Darlington market hall recently took part in the northern launch of High Street Positives; a collective initiative aimed at revitalising and reimagining British high streets. Attendees included local business owners, community leaders, and policymakers, all coming together to share ideas and celebrate local successes.

The Council, Market Asset Management, Darlington College and DEC have been working together on a pilot project as part of the Government's new Community Mission initiative. The focus of the Darlington pilot is "Supporting Young People into Work, Improving Skills and Seeing Enterprise as a Viable and Aspirational Career Pathway". This programme is now being delivered by Darlington College, MAM and the North-East Business Innovation Centre, aiming to enthuse and develop entrepreneurial skills in young people with a pop-up shop in the market hall.

Terms of reference for the Advisory Board have been produced, and an initial inception meeting is now scheduled with the aim of implementing the full Advisory Group in early 2026.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Accelerate the delivery of key sites to the market to attract private sector investment, including Darlington Science Park, Ingenium Parc and Symmetry Park

The Council continues to work with key stakeholders, investors and individual businesses to attract new investment to Darlington.

Working with Greenbox Darlington, Tritax Big Box and Lingfield Point, we continue to promote opportunities for the logistics sector. Greenbox Darlington recently secured its first letting with heating, cooling and infrastructure trade specialist Wolseley on a 107,775 sq ft site.

Working with TVCA, the Council attended UKREiiF 2025, a major real estate, property and infrastructure conference in Leeds that brings together over 16,000 sector professionals to discuss, drive investment and regeneration. The event provided an opportunity to showcase Darlington and everything it has to offer to potential investors and developers.

Meanwhile, the Council also featured in Commercial Property magazine, with a major advertorial highlighting investment opportunities in the town.

Working with partners from CPI and Teesside University a new marketing and promotion campaign for the remaining sites at Darlington Science Park is under development and will complement the wider branding/promotion of opportunities at Darlington Science Park.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Deliver the Towns Fund projects, including the refurbishment of the Northern Echo building to secure new business occupiers

The Towns Fund Programme remains in the latter stages of delivery. The refurbishment of the former Northern Echo building is making good progress with the ground and first floors due for completion in early 2026, and the upper floors due to be delivered on target by the end of 2026.

Improvements to shopfronts along Skinnergate and the Yards will finish by the end of 2025, inclusive of the public realm works to Coniscliffe Road which completed to budget in Summer 2025.

Remaining shopfront works on Victoria Road are also due to complete by the end of 2025.

On Northgate the redevelopment of no.156 into office accommodation is underway and due to complete in Spring 2026, and the refurbishment of Edward Pease House is awaiting revised costings from the contractor to commence works.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Work effectively with Darlington Economic Campus to fully realise the opportunities this investment presents to the town and its communities

The Council continues to work closely with officers from the Darlington Economic Campus (DEC) on a range of activities.

The Council has worked with Government Property Agency to complete the necessary planning requirements to enable construction of the new DEC building on Brunswick Street to commence, with Kier Construction breaking ground in September 2025.

Darlington has recently been selected as a testbed for the Government's new Community Mission initiative with a pilot project centred on the Government's “Growth Mission” i.e. economic development, regeneration, and opportunity creation. Working with DEC, a short term project using collective resources has been implemented focussed on “Supporting Young People into Work, Improving Skills and Seeing Enterprise as a Viable and Aspirational Career Pathway”.

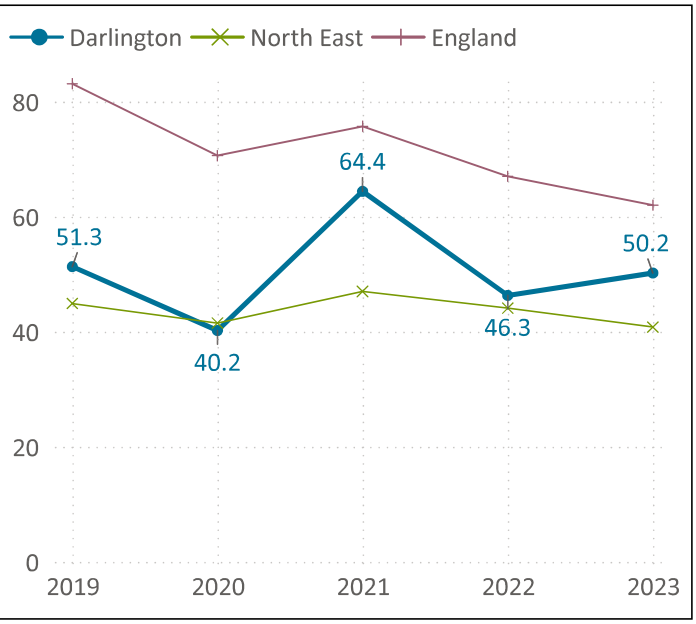
At a wider engagement level, DEC have played a major role in supporting the Council with the delivery of a number of skills and workforce development events, such as the Darlington Jobs Fair, Skills Booster and Destination STEM Hopetown, promoting the various career opportunities and skills requirements that are available within the civil service in Darlington.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

New business registration rate per 10,000 residents

New business formation rates tend to fluctuate in Darlington year on year. Between 2022 and 2023, the rate increased from 46.3 to 50.2 new business registrations per 10,000 residents. However, the longer term trend is that the rate has fallen since 2018, an overall trend mirrored by both the rates for the North East and England. In 2023, the number of new business registrations per 10,000 residents in Darlington was 50.2, higher than the North East (40.8), but still lower than the England rate of 62.0.



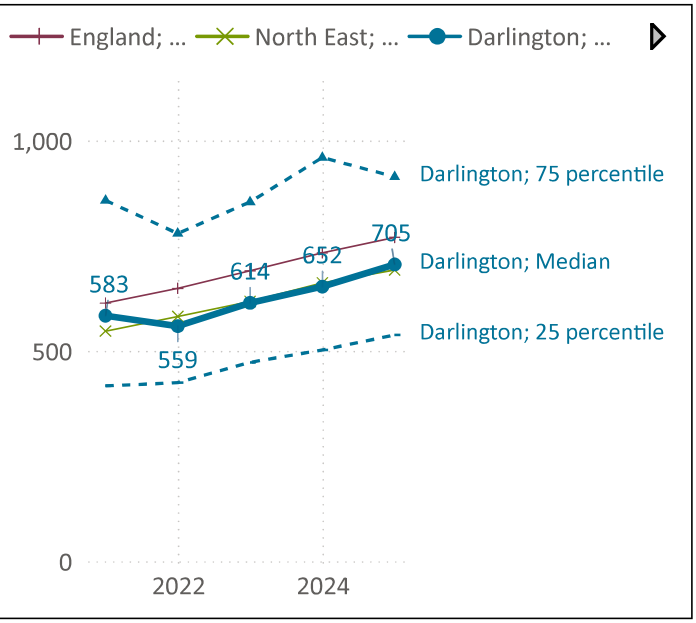
Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents

Weekly gross pay for full time workers (Residents)

Darlington's resident median weekly income for full time workers was £705.20 in 2025, slightly higher than the north east figure of £692.10, but below the England value of £769.50. The median figure for Darlington (£705.20) is closer to the lower quartile (£537.60) than the upper quartile (£913.50), indicating that half of the population earns within a relatively narrow range. The scale of this range has reduced since 2024, with a range of £375.90, compared to £457.30 in 2024. The upper quartile (£913.50) is much higher, suggesting a significant income disparity for higher earners.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents

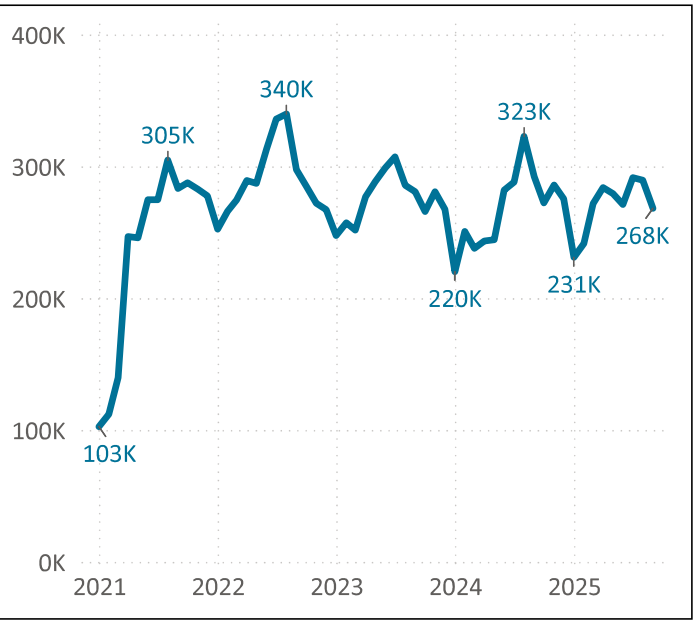
Town centre footfall weekly average for the month

Ongoing town centre animation and a vibrant events calendar aims to encourage town centre visits and encourage visitors to stay longer, explore more, and enjoy an enhanced experience across Darlington.

Interactive trails and events are designed to draw new customers into stores. The events team works closely with town centre businesses to support retail and hospitality.

Occupancy remains steady at around 85%, boosted by new openings that add to the town's vibrancy. More businesses are expected soon, likely reducing vacancy rates further.

UK retail footfall declined for the sixth consecutive month in October. Source: Retail Gazette



Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

Council Plan Priority: Economy

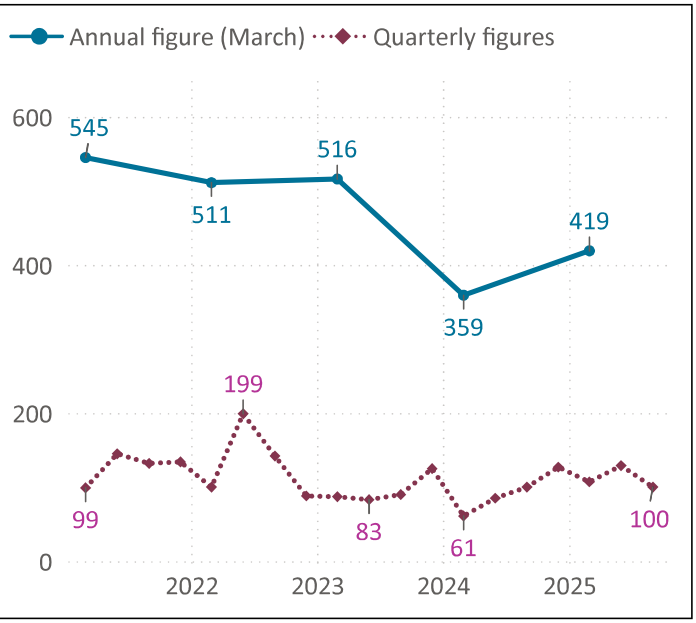
Key Deliverable: Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes

New homes delivered, annually

Housing delivery has seen a significant recovery since the 2023/24 financial year. The previous fall in delivery can be directly attributed to the Nutrient Neutrality (NN) designation affecting the whole Tees Catchment.

Applications are now progressing and gaining consent largely due to the Natural England NN credit scheme. The Borough has fared well in the proportion of credits allocated to developments in Darlington.

Latest monitoring indicates this recovery trend will continue. Our completions for this quarter were 100, which is down from the 129 completions in Q1. It gives a cumulative figure for the year so far of 229, which is 44 completions higher than at this point last year.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

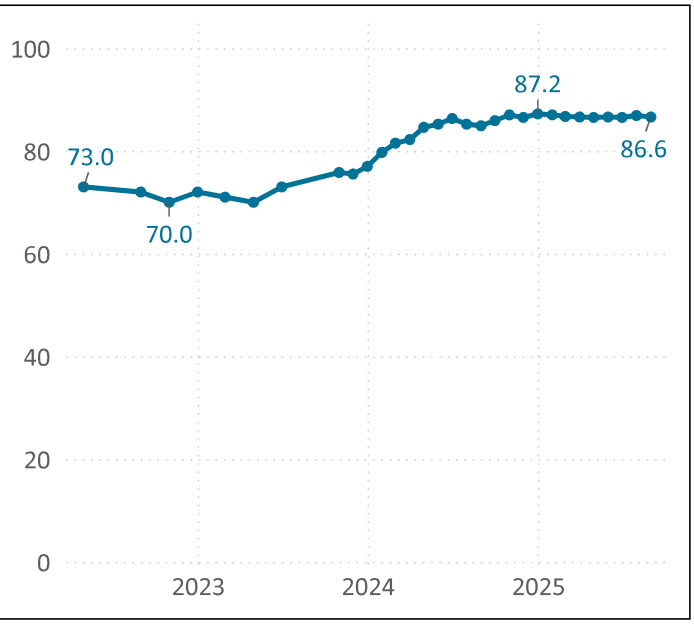
Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes

Land Audit Management System - Litter Score (Environmental Quality Survey)

The Litter Score is a 12-month rolling average percentage score of the 40 transects inspected for litter every month. Two wards are covered each month, in which twenty areas of the ward are inspected. Each ward is covered once within a 12-month period.
An inspection scores cleanliness of an area based on the grading system of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). Sites are graded from grade A to D. A score over 70% represents 'good' performance.

The latest 12-month average pass rate for litter is 86.6%. This is a rise from the 84.9% when compared to September 2024. As well as litter, the inspections include detritus, weeds, dog fouling, grass, shrubs and hedges, flowerbeds and overflowing public bins. The overall 12-month average pass rate is 85.0% which is an increase from 82.2% reported in September 2024.



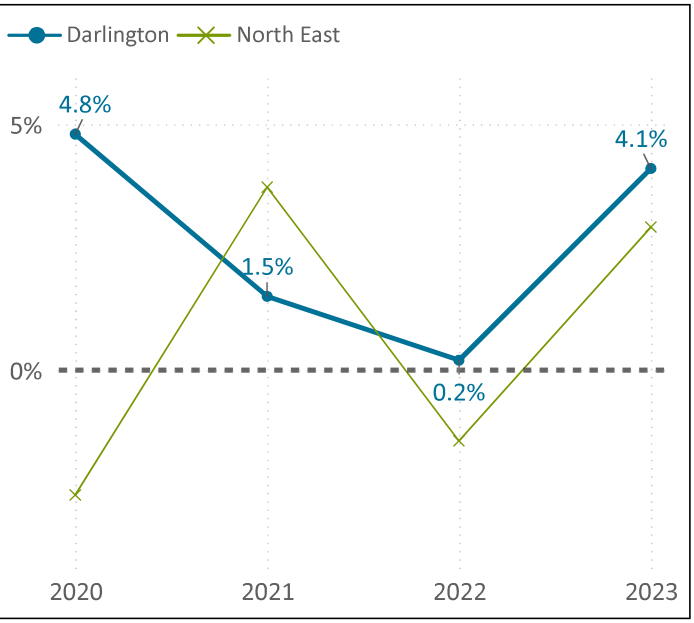
Lead Officer: Ben Grabham: Assistant Director - Environmental Services & Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Ensure that the borough is safe, clean and maintained to levels that support the economy and encourage inward investment

Change in total employment since previous year

This measure shows the difference in total employment (both Public and Private) compared to the same point 12 months previously, in order to show the number of jobs created in Darlington within the last year. The number of new employment opportunities shows an increase in 2023 to 4.1%, slightly better than the North East regional rate of 2.9%. This measure currently shows that the growth in total employment has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels of 2020 and 2019.



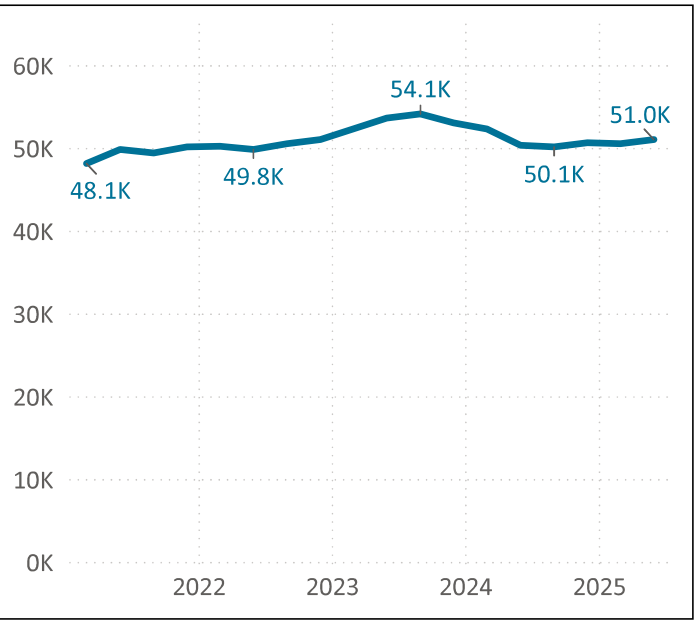
Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Number of people employed including self-employed

As of June 2025, the total number of people employed (including both employees and self-employed individuals) now stands at 51,000. This is an increase of 700 on the same time 12 months previously. The number peaked at 54,100 in September 2023. There's no stand out reason for this overall decline, and it could be due to a variety of factors such as national economic challenges, shifts in local industries, or broader regional trends. Nevertheless, the long-term trendline (since 2020) demonstrates a gradual increase.



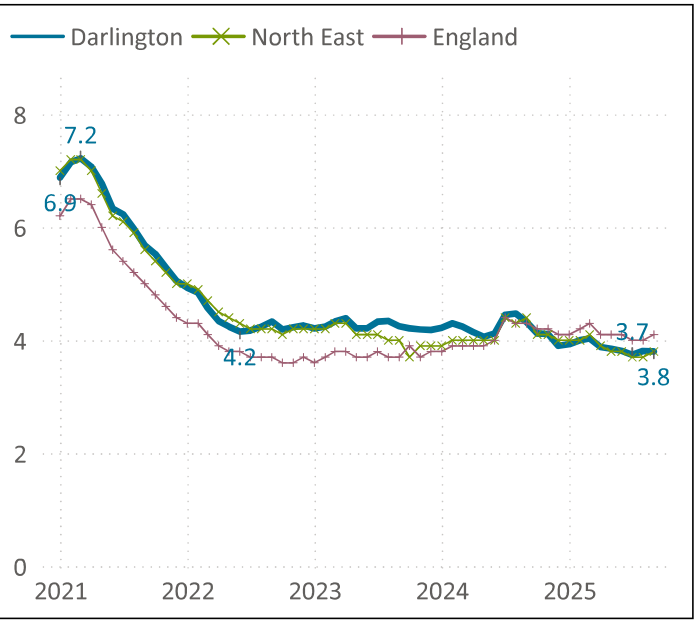
Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)

Since mid-2022 to date, the monthly unemployed claimant count in Darlington has remained relatively static - a trend which is mirrored in national and regional statistics. The claimant count in September 2025 stands at 3.8% - a reduction of 0.5% in the last 12 months. The rate in Darlington is below the England rate (4.1%) and equal to the North East rate (3.8%). The static nature of this measure since 2022 can be attributed to several factors, including economic inactivity, post-pandemic labour market mismatches and economic uncertainty.



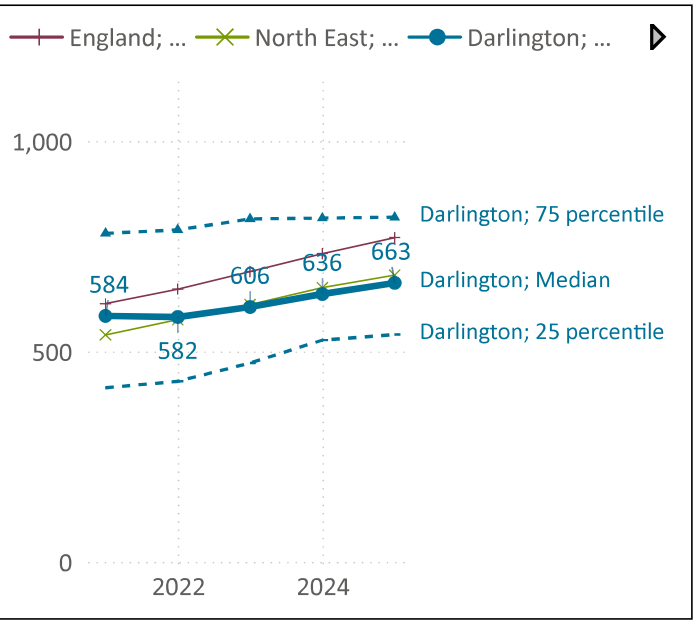
Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Weekly gross pay for full time workers (Employees)

Darlington's employee median weekly income for full time workers was £662.90 in 2025, slightly lower than the north east figure of £681.20, but below the England value of £770.70. The median figure for Darlington (£662.90) is closer to the lower quartile (£540.00) than the upper quartile (£819.00), indicating that half of the population earns within a relatively narrow range. The scale of this range has remained consistent since 2024, with a range of £279.00, compared to £289.90 in 2024.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Economy

Key Deliverable: Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents.

Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are

Our new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-30 was approved by Cabinet in March 2025. The key priorities in the strategy are:
- Working with charities and voluntary organisations, other social housing providers, Public Health and other statutory agencies to prevent homelessness
- Tackling rough sleeping by implementing our Rough Sleeper Plan
- Increasing the amount and improving the quality of temporary accommodation
- Addressing homelessness faced by particular groups of people, including those presenting with multiple or complex needs
- Improving move on accommodation provision, including specialist housing and support provision
- Securing funding to increase accommodation and resources

Our first multi-agency homelessness forum was held in June 2025 and was well attended. Task and finish groups were set-up to look at accommodation, specialist accommodation, prevention and support. Feedback from the task and finish groups took place at the second forum in November 2025. Progress against the strategy will be formally reviewed by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee in March 2026. In addition, we are also increasing the supply of good quality temporary accommodation by purchasing and refurbishing former Council homes, previously bought through the Right to Buy scheme. Options to lease properties in the private sector are also being explored as an alternative to placing people in expensive and inappropriate B&B accommodation. The Council, in partnership with WayThrough Charity, was successful in bidding for £770,000 from the Government's Single Homeless Accommodation Programme. The project, called Thrive Darlington, has used part of the funding to purchase 12 units of accommodation for supporting single homeless people. The 700 Club is currently pioneering a small-scale scheme of 12 properties, in partnership with Homes England, called 'Forever Homes', which seeks to move families affected by homelessness out of temporary accommodation.

Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Review our approach to empty homes across the borough so more quality homes are available

According to Government data (October 2024) there were 1,921 empty properties on the database. This equates to approximately 3% of all properties registered.

At this time there were 666 long-term empty homes, those dwellings which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months.

The Council does not have a dedicated resource to deal with empty homes, service requests are currently received from several sections of the council using various pieces of legislation. While planning and environment legislation have been used on several occasions, the complexity of housing legislation has been less employed.

The use of legislation may address a particular problem in time, it does not necessarily address the fundamental issue of the property being vacant. However the number of problematic long-term empty properties has been found to be very low.

A review of empty homes and the legislation used by each section of the Council has been carried out and a pilot project has been proposed to deal with the most problematic properties where ownership of the property is unknown.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Support the delivery of more social houses and supported accommodation by building more council homes and working with other social landlords and charities

Our Council housing new build site at Neasham Road will deliver 150 new homes, including 130 affordable rented properties, 19 rent to buy properties and one property for Children's Services. The first 54 homes have already been completed with remaining phases due to be completed from November 2025 to April 2026. The scheme has been partly funded by Homes England, with a grant of £7.35 million.

Our Council housing new build site at Sherborne Close (phase 2) commenced in July 2024 and will deliver 14 new homes, including 11 affordable rented properties, 2 rent to buy properties and one property for Children's Services. Completion of the site is due in March 2026. The scheme has been partly funded by Homes England, with a grant of £0.91 million.

Construction of our Council housing site at Skinnergate is due to commence in early 2026, following demolition of the existing commercial buildings. The site will deliver new shops and 16 new homes, all of which will be social rented properties, and is due to be completed in 2026-27. A bid for Homes England funding is currently being made and we are expecting a grant of around £2 million to help fund the project.

Further Council housing new build schemes are currently being worked up to increase the availability of social housing in Darlington to help meet additional demand, with over 2,000 households currently registered on our waiting list.

We are also increasing the supply of social housing by purchasing former Council homes, previously bought through the Right to Buy scheme. 10 ex-Council homes have already been bought and are in the process of being refurbished for use as general needs housing and temporary accommodation.

Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Develop and deliver a new homes strategy, to address housing need, including ensuring social and affordable homes across the borough, in accordance with the Local Plan

The draft Homes Strategy went out for consultation in July 2025 which ended September 2025. The responses are being collated and assessed and amendments will be suggested where required.

An Action Plan will also be prepared, which will sit alongside the Housing Strategy to enable delivery of its priorities. It is hoped the Housing Strategy and the Action Plan will be brought forward in the New Year for adoption.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Continue to improve the quality of housing through healthy home design principles and ensuring developers create greater energy efficiency in new homes

The Council is still awaiting the Government's consideration on Future Homes Standards and changes to Building Regulations as it is still not clear how Planning Authorities can exceed Building Regulation requirements. The Council will continue to monitor Government announcements and advise members when the situation is clear.

The Council may be able to alter planning policy in the review of the Local Plan depending on Government advice. The review of the Local Plan is currently underway and we continue to monitor the direction of Government policy in this regard.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Homes

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Continue investment in Council housing to ensure quality and greater energy efficiency

Improving the energy efficiency of our Council homes is a key priority for the Council and work is ongoing to achieve the Government targets of all properties rated as Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C or above by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050, as set out in our approved Housing Services Climate Change Strategy.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) wave 1 scheme has already delivered external and cavity wall insulation, Air Source Heat Pumps, loft insulation and solar panels to 23 Council homes using £0.24 million of Government funding and £0.28 million of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital expenditure.

SHDF wave 2 commenced in September 2024 and was completed in June 2025. The scheme delivered external and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, loft insulation, double glazing, and low energy lighting to 130 Council homes using £1.27 million of Government funding and £1.27 million of HRA capital expenditure.

In March 2025 we were successful in bidding for £3.5m Government funding as part of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WHSHF) wave 3. This scheme will deliver external and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, loft insulation, double glazing, and low energy lighting to approx. 680 Council homes using matched funding from the HRA. Delivery of WHSHF wave 3 is expected to significantly increase the percentage of Council homes rated as EPC C or above, which is currently 54%.

Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Ensure effective use of the Disabled Facilities Grant to enable people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible.

The Disabled Facilities Grant process continues to include a risk prioritisation tool to ensure those in most urgent need of the grant due to risk are prioritised within the application process and timescales. This is monitored through bi-monthly meetings. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed with no adverse impacts as individuals waiting for grant applications will be provided with appropriate advice or support. All individuals have regular communication from Adult Services to update on their position.

The Council are maintaining a balanced approach of monthly requests and approvals. The budget is well managed and the process has been acknowledged as coherent and equitable.

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Introduce additional licensing for homes of multiple occupation, a voluntary landlords charter and work towards the introduction of selective licencing in areas with a high number of private rented sector homes

Office of National Statistics data indicates that Darlington's private rented stock is at 20.77%, higher than the national average and the highest in the Tees Valley region. The regulation of rented properties and property management is carried out by several organisations in addition to Darlington Borough Council. Following a review of existing and proposed legislation the following schemes will be investigated:

- A voluntary landlords charter
- The introduction of additional licensing for homes of multiple occupation
- Introduction of selective licensing in areas with a high number of private rented sector homes

A report has been produced highlighting the development of the Council's approach to its responsibilities for enforcement of the private rented sector, in line with the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act. The Renters' Rights Act 2025 was enacted in October 2025 which will have a significant impact on these proposed schemes:

- The Act includes greater Investigatory Powers. These powers will be introduced from 27 December 2025.
- A Landlords' Portal is currently being piloted across England this will require the mandatory registration of each rented property. This is expected to be introduced in 2026.

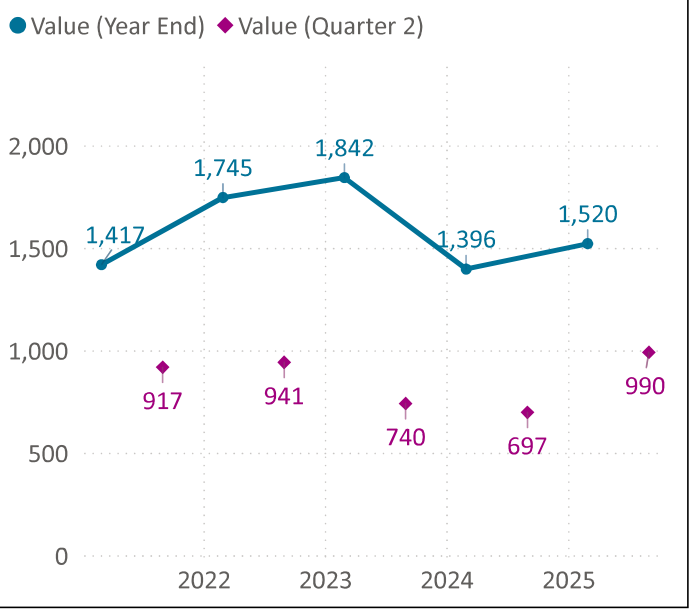
Article 4 will also have an impact on the development of Houses in Multiple Occupation once this is introduced across Darlington in 2026.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Number of people presented to Darlington Council's Homeless service

The number of homeless presentations to September 2025 has been 990, a 42% increase from September 2024 which was 697. This reflects local and national pictures which is seeing an increase in people at risk of homelessness and actually homeless. Darlington is still seeing a high proportion of presentations from the private rented sector where landlords are serving a section 21 notice. New legislation is coming into effect this year through the Renters Rights Act 2025 which has now been given Royal Assent. Work around this act and prevention and access to the private rented sector are part of the actions within the Preventing Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy and have been identified for the partnership Task and Finish Groups to feed into the Homeless Forum.



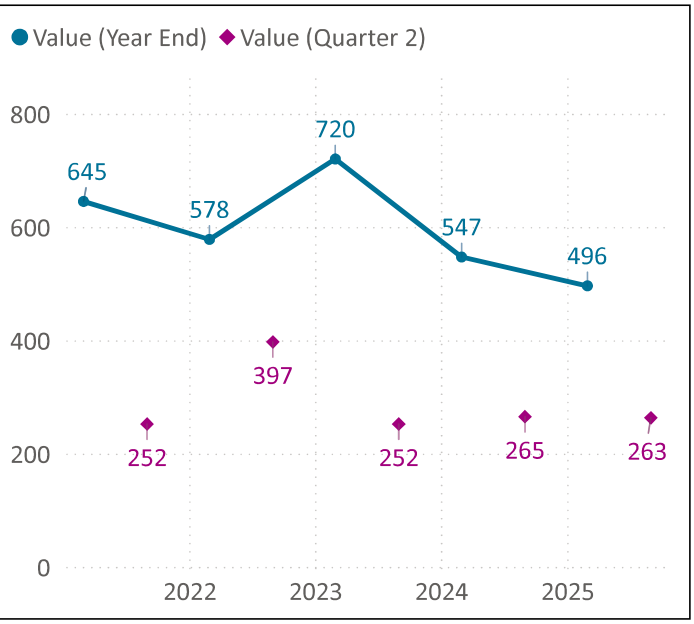
Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are

Number of positive outcomes where homelessness has been prevented

Positive outcomes for homeless cases remain consistent to this time last financial year which is good to see with the continuing pressures of lack of move on accommodation. September 2024 there were 265 positive outcomes and September 2025 we have seen 263 positive outcomes. This shows the Housing Options team are working well to achieve long term housing solutions for clients.



Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

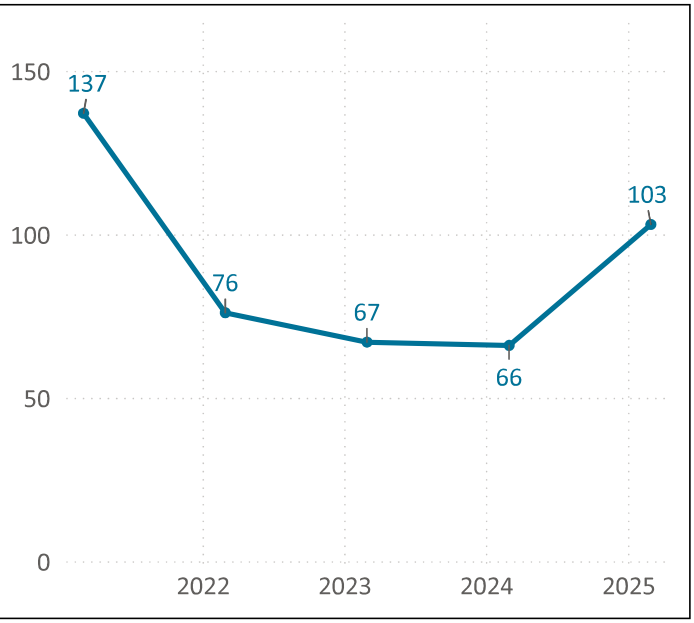
Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are

Additional Affordable Housing Supply - Completions

This annual figure has been obtained from the Government "Live Tables on Affordable Housing Supply". The number of affordable homes completed in 2024/25 has increased after three consecutive years of falls by 37 homes taking the total to 103.

Affordable homes continue to be delivered on Council sites (40) and by private developers (63). Of the total 77 were rented and the other 26 were affordable products.



Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

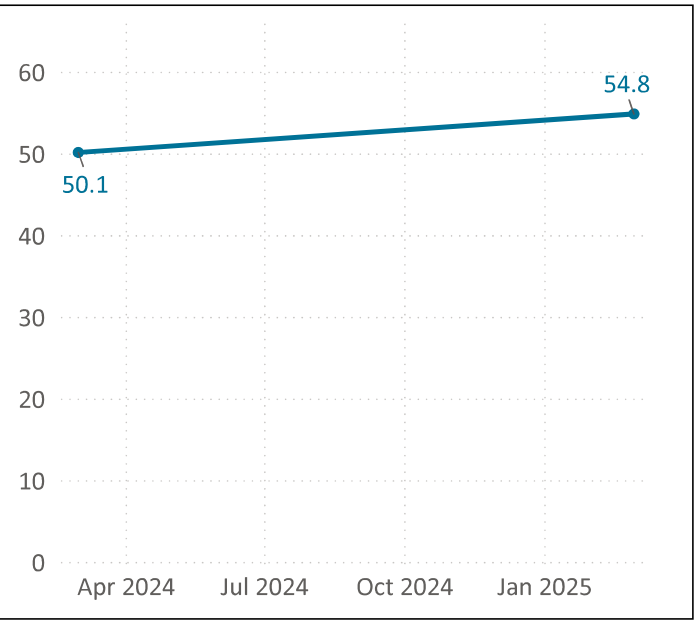
Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Develop and deliver a new homes strategy, to address housing need, including ensuring social and affordable homes across the borough, in accordance with the Local Plan

Percentage of Council properties at EPC C and above

We currently have 54.8% of council dwellings with an EPC graded C or above which is an increase of 4.7 percentage points from the same period last year (50.1%).

This increase is primarily due to successful grant funded works being completed in council homes. Additional funding has also been awarded under the Warm Homes: Social housing fund, which is a three year scheme to 2027/28, which will further improve the EPC rating of our properties.



Lead Officer: Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing & Revenues

Council Plan Priority: Homes

Key Deliverable: Continue investment in Council housing to ensure quality and greater energy efficiency

Council Plan Priority: Living well

A healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most.

Continue to develop joint working with the NHS and key partners to support people to lead healthier lives, stay in their homes for longer and reduce hospital stays

The Adults Services and the Commissioning, Contracts and Brokerage Teams continue to work with the Integrated Care Board and NHS Foundation Trusts to develop, maintain and deliver joint approaches to health and social care for people with care and support needs in Darlington. We have established a task and finish group to review the intermediate care offer and this continues to meet. It is currently reviewing best practice across the region and is developing option appraisals to share with partners.

We continue to have a quarterly collaboration meeting with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) and are working with the Trust and the four other Tees valley local authorities on exploring discharge hub models. A Trusted Assessment approach has been applied across the discharge pathway with County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) with positive feedback and experiences for people.

In addition the Council has developed a "winter initiative" project lasting until end of March 2026. This involves developing a smoother transition from discharge to intermediate care at home or in a care facility. This will be monitored through a multi-disciplinary approach for effectiveness and experience with the purpose of supporting people to return home, with support if required, quicker and will increase independence.

Health and Wellbeing Board to agree and deliver a new strategy to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities, and lead the creation of a health and wellbeing network

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which has a clear focus on improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities, was published in December 2024. Implementation of the strategy is being monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Board though an annual review and scheduled multi-agency 'deep dives' examining two of the four themes of the strategy each year. A deep dive on pregnancy and early years was undertaken in quarter 1 and the annual review was presented in quarter 2, providing an update on progress of key actions and identifying any areas of risk.

An approach has been agreed for the development of the health and wellbeing network, implementation will be led by the Public Health Team.

Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

The development of public health strategies are informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which provides a summary of the local health needs in Darlington, including an understanding of health inequalities. The Physical Activity Strategy has been approved. The Healthy Weight Plan, Oral Health Promotion Strategy and local suicide prevention plan are also being developed with local stakeholders.

Strategic priorities and actions on domestic abuse and sexual violence continue to be driven through the County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG), which is a partnership board. The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy is currently being refreshed in partnership with Durham County Council. The Darlington Domestic Abuse Local Working Group continues to meet to drive forward work locally.

The local delivery plan for drugs and alcohol is monitored through the governance arrangements of the County Durham and Darlington Combating Drugs and Alcohol Partnership, which is chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The additional funding for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services, inpatient detox and employment services have been continued for a further year until end of March 2026, with a separate monitoring and assurance framework managed by OHID.

Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities including the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex

The Dolphin Centre has experienced the highest visitor numbers on record for quarters 1 and 2. The pool facilities have continued to be very popular following the recent investment and water education has followed a consistent positive trend. Strong partnership with local colleges has resulted in excellent student engagement through targeted student membership and student discount schemes to encourage participation in positive activity during off peak times at a reduced rate.

Memberships are at an all time high, with popular classes such as Pilates and aqua aerobics hitting capacity weekly. The school holiday programming included a new addition, the weekly pool party which has proven to be very popular. New promotions have been introduced including Active Afternoons and Kids Eat Half Price which has helped generate footfall to bowling and the Bistro in off peak times. Soft Play has continued to maintain positive attendance figures with birthday parties proving a popular choice for local families.

The team is looking forward to work starting on the next phase of mechanical and electrical upgrades. Approval was also given for the installation of indoor golf to compliment DC Bowl plus a modern spinning studio adjacent to our existing fitness studio which will be refurbished and modernised. These investments are expected to retain and grow visitor numbers.

Attendances at Eastbourne Sports Complex have remained very positive as users continue to utilise the new facilities from the previous capital project investment. Darlington Academy is now using the site throughout the year which has increased daytime usage. The site has also had an increase in school games events and a full diverse range of activities has been delivered on site in the multi activity room delivered by the Move More team.

Lead Officer: Lisa Soderman: Head of Leisure

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

The Adult Services Transformation Plan is a strategic initiative designed to modernise service delivery, improve outcomes for residents, and ensure sustainability within available resources. It aims to drive efficiencies through streamlined processes through the “right team first time” approach, reducing duplication and delays, an enhanced Front Door model to manage demand early, promoting independence and reducing reliance on costly long-term care and targeted reviews and improved financial oversight to ensure care packages deliver value for money.
The Services utilise a Strength-Based Practice Framework, focusing on individual and community assets rather than defaulting to formal care and are investing in digital solutions (self-assessment tools, assistive technology, virtual training) to reduce administrative overhead and improve accessibility.

The plan supports the Council Plan 2024–2027 principles of addressing inequalities by promoting inclusive access to services, tackling climate change through digital delivery and reduced travel and efficient and effective use of resources by embedding prevention and independence. It contributes to the “Living Well” priority by enabling residents to maintain health and independence, and strengthens “Communities” through improvements outlined in the Care Quality Commission inspection report by developing co-production, shared experiences and reaching out to people/groups who do not always traditionally access Adult Services.

Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Shape a sustainable and accountable care market which delivers support focussed on promoting, regaining and maintaining people's independence and wellbeing

The Commissioning, Contract and Brokerage team are responsible for shaping and sustaining the local care market. They have worked with operational colleagues and partners across health, housing and the VCSE sector to develop a Market Position Statement and Commissioning Strategy with an associated Accommodation with Care and Support Needs Strategy (Adults) and a Sufficiency Statement (Children). These documents provide information about the care market in Darlington which will enable providers to understand the local context, how this is likely to change over the next couple of years and where development opportunities might arise in the future particularly those which support us to prevent, reduce, and delay care and support needs. The documents are for both existing and prospective providers and will support the delivery of both the Council Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Outcome based contracts have been relet or retendered across key areas of service provision including homecare, residential care and supported living. A review of Day Opportunities provision has been completed and a review of Extra Care services will start in early 2026. A new service based on the Shared Lives model is currently being mobilised. This model offers adults who need support the opportunity to live in the home of a trained carer and share family and community life. This approach promotes community-based solutions delivering cost-effective care that improves quality of life.

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Develop an Adult Social Care engagement strategy to ensure people requiring care and support, and their carers, are involved in service development and commissioning activity

The engagement and co-production strategy "Stronger Together" is completed. The Care Quality Commission undertook an inspection in January 2025 and acknowledged the work Adult Services is undertaking to ensure improved engagement, inclusion and communication with people who use the services. The work is continuing with recent work with Partners in Health and Care on Diversity by Design project to self assess people's current level of involvement and support the development of an engagement and co-production action plan to support the strategy.

One of the actions to undertake the development of an all age Autism Strategy has been initiated by the the formation of a steering group with partners and co-produced with the voluntary sector and people with lived experience. The draft strategy will align and be underpinned with other Council strategies such as the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Strategy. It will be shared for wider consultation in early 2026.

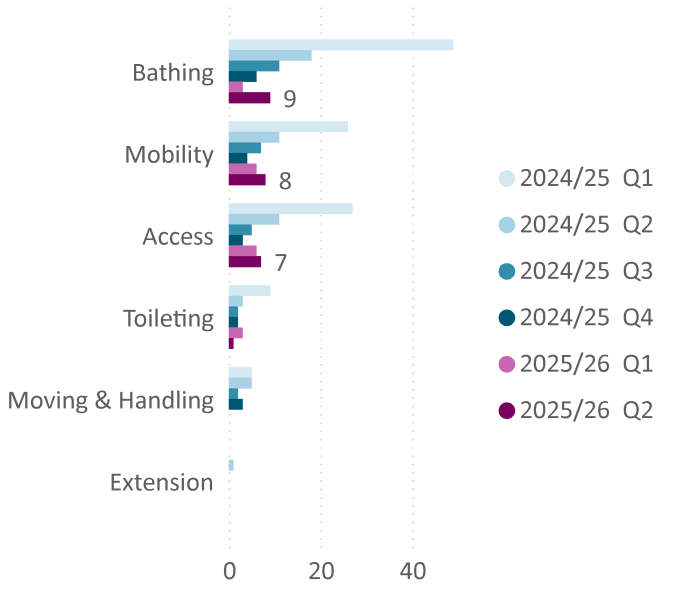
Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Major adaptations by type (quarterly)

There have been a total of 43 major works which have been approved during the first 2 quarters of the year. This is a significant reduction compared to the first half of the previous year when 165 major works had been approved.

A new procedure for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) requests is now in place. The new system ensures that DFG monies are utilised in the most appropriate way. A risk prioritisation approach has been introduced to assess the urgency of need of each referral.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

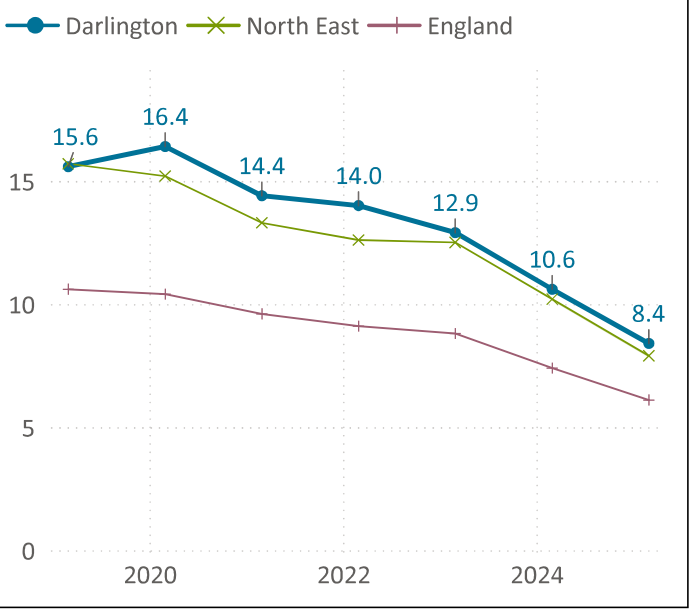
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Continue to develop joint working with the NHS and key partners to support people to lead healthier lives, stay in their homes for longer and reduce hospital stays

Percentage of women who smoke at time of delivery

The latest data from 2024/25 shows that 8.4% of mothers are known to be smokers at the time of delivery. This has reduced steadily since 2020. Darlington is statistically similar to the North East and statistically worse than England. The gap between Darlington and England has continued to narrow.

There is new investment in stop smoking services to provide additional support for pregnant women to quit smoking at every opportunity. Existing support is delivered by the NHS through local maternity services and by the Council, which commissions a specialist stop smoking service to help women quit before and after pregnancy.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

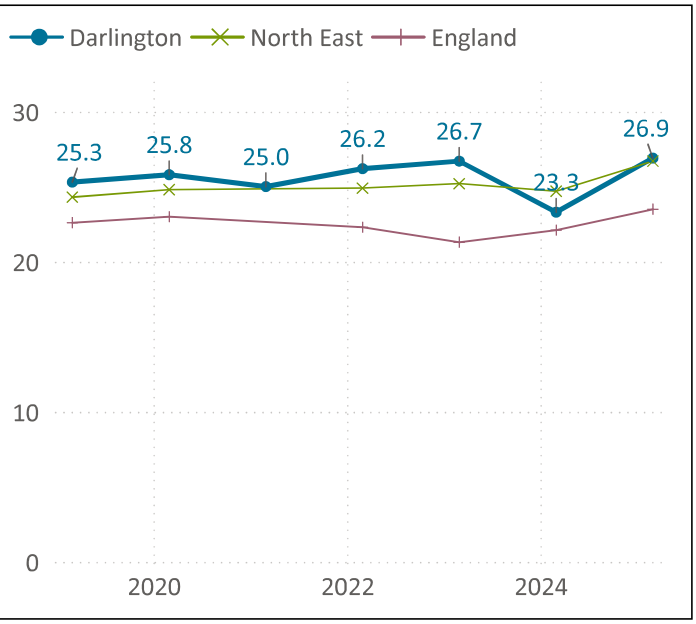
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Excess weight among Reception pupils (%)

The latest data from 2024/25 shows an increase in the proportion of reception children aged 4-5 years who were found to be overweight or obese when measured which is now at 26.9%. Darlington is now statistically similar to the North East but higher than the England average.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan identified evidence-based interventions delivered with partners to address underlying causes of obesity in children and young people. Work includes activity with schools and local commercial food premises to develop a healthy catering standard for a healthy food offer.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

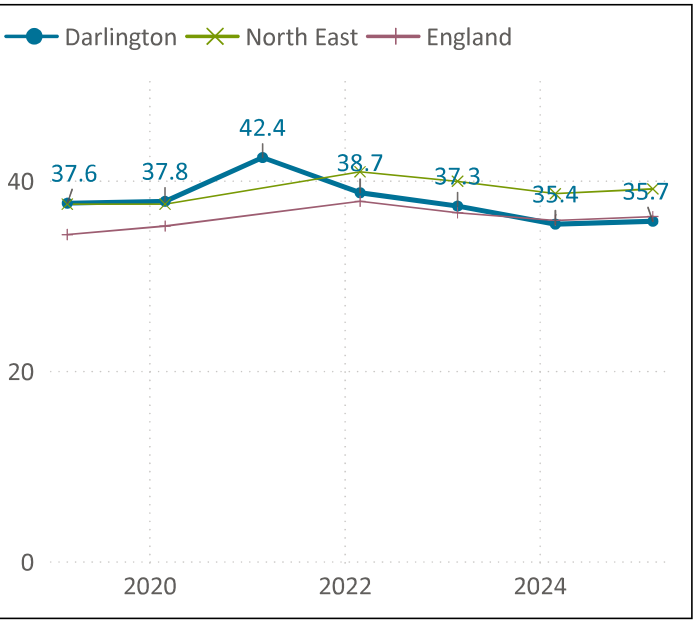
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Excess weight among Year 6 pupils (%)

The latest data from 2024/25 shows that 35.7% of Year 6 children aged 10-11 years who were measured were found to be overweight or obese. There has been a reduction each year since 2021, with Darlington being statistically lower than the North East and statistically similar to England.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan identified evidence-based interventions delivered with partners to address underlying causes of obesity in children and young people. Work includes activity with schools and local commercial food premises to develop a healthy catering standard for a healthy food offer.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

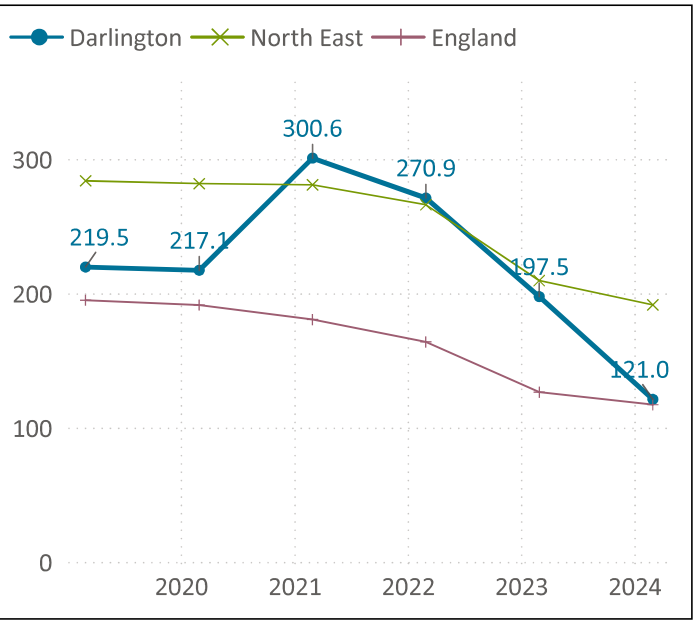
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Emergency Hospital Admissions for Intentional Self-Harm (per 100,000 population)

The latest data for 2024 shows a rate of 121 per 100,000 population, which is statistically similar to England and is statistically better than the North East. This data also shows a decreasing trend for Darlington from 2021.

Self-harm is a complex and poorly understood act with varied reasons for a person to harm themselves, irrespective of the purpose of the act. There is a significant and persistent risk of future suicide following an episode of self-harm. This indicator is a measure of intentional self-harm events that warranted a hospital admission and not a measure of the actual prevalence of self-harm.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

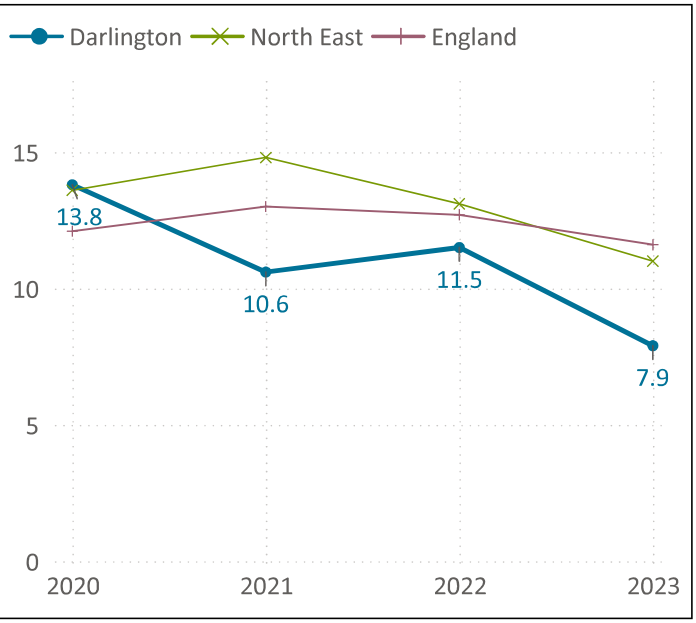
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Prevalence of smoking among persons aged 18+ years

This latest data from the 2023 Annual Population Survey (APS) shows that 7.9% of those who responded aged 18+ self-reported themselves as smokers in Darlington. This is the 3rd year with a reduction from a peak of 13.8% in 2020. Darlington is statistically better than the North East and England.

There is now an established downward trend with fewer people in Darlington identifying themselves as smokers. It is expected that this reduction will be sustained due to the impact of new and existing measures to reduce smoking in the community, including new legislation and extra funding to increase access to stop smoking interventions.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

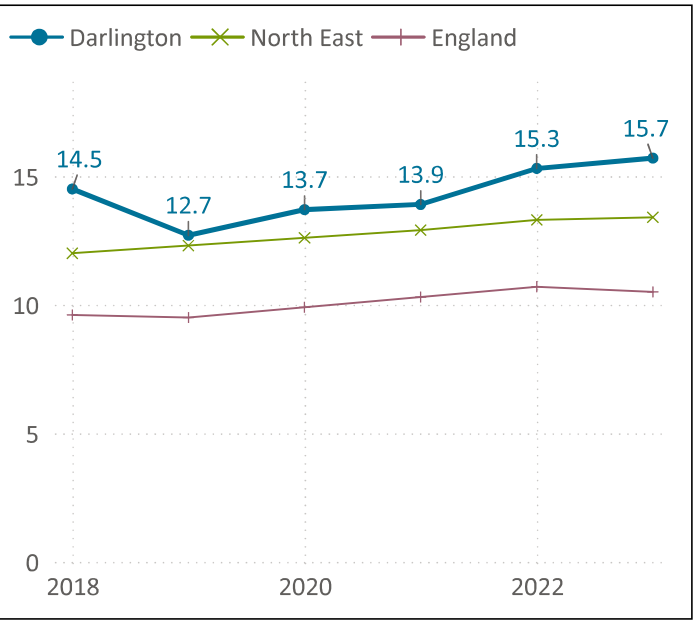
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Inequality in life expectancy at birth (male)

Inequality in life expectancy at birth for males in Darlington has widened in 2023, from 15.3 (2022) to 15.7 years, and is statistically worse than England and the North East.

The Public Health team is working with partners, including the NHS, to put into place evidence-based interventions to tackle the wider determinants of health that contribute to health inequalities. Examples include the commissioning of NHS Health Checks, developing a Food Partnership and working to develop a suicide prevention plan for Darlington.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

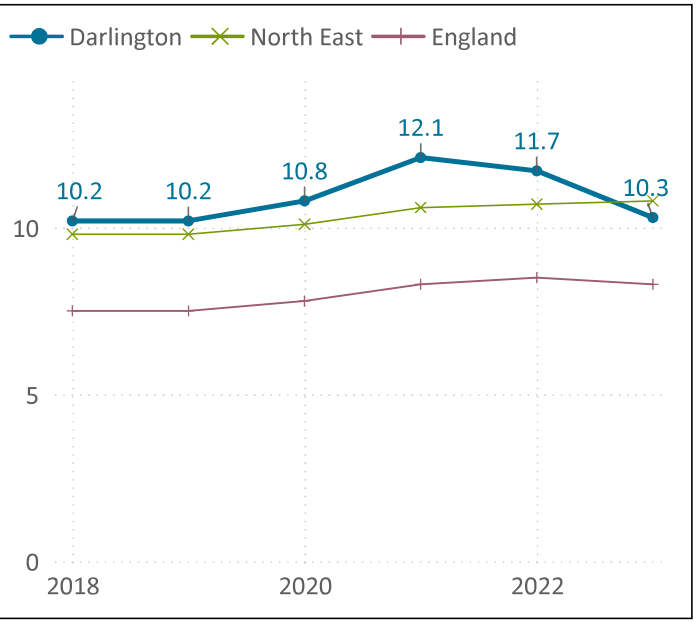
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Inequality in life expectancy at birth (female)

Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females in Darlington has narrowed in 2023, from 11.7 years in 2022 to 10.3 years, and is statistically similar to England and the North East.

The Public Health team is working with partners, including the NHS, to put into place evidence-based interventions to tackle the wider determinants of health that contribute to health inequalities. Examples include the commissioning of NHS Health Checks, targeted work to increase the uptake of screening and reduce smoking in women.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

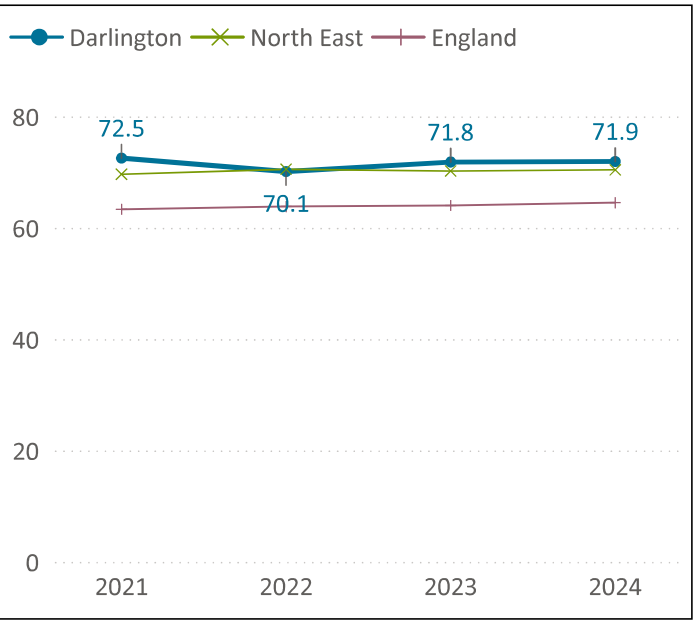
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Overweight (including obesity) prevalence in adults (18+ yrs)

This data from the responses to the 2023/24 sample of the Active Lifestyles Survey estimates very small increase in the rate of prevalence of overweight (including obesity) in adults in Darlington to 71.9%. Darlington is statistically similar to the North East, but worse than England.

The causes of obesity are complex, it is associated with reduced life expectancy and is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases. There are significant health inequalities in relation to the prevalence of obesity in Darlington, with some communities more affected than others. The Public Health team is working together with key partners to develop a system-wide approach to addressing these inequalities.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

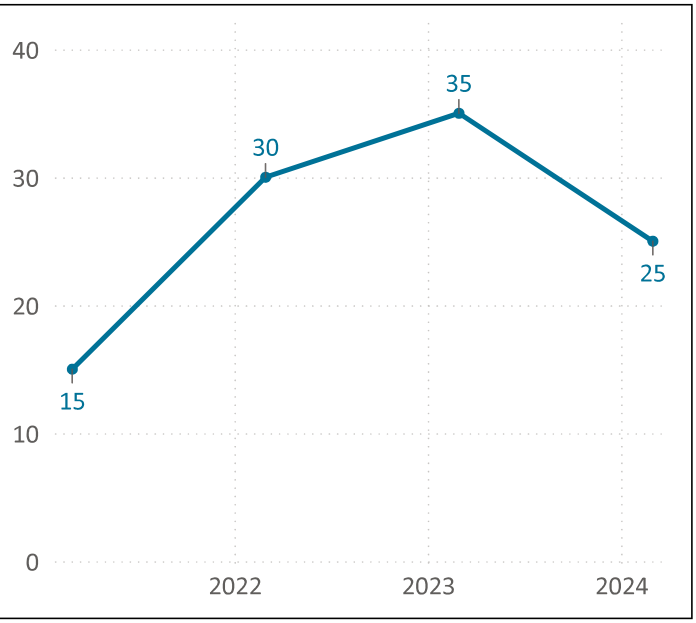
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Young people (under 18) in treatment for substance use alcohol

Recent data for 2023/24 shows a decline in the number of young individuals under 18 receiving treatment for alcohol-related substance use, compared to 2022/23.

The Public Health team commissions treatment and recovery services for Darlington, and there is a specialist service for young people. There has been work with partners, including education, youth offending, and probation, to increase the number of referrals into the system and targeted work with the provider to reduce barriers for young people to access and engage with services. The Public Health team works with partners, including schools and parents, through PHSE in promoting safer drinking messages for young people.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

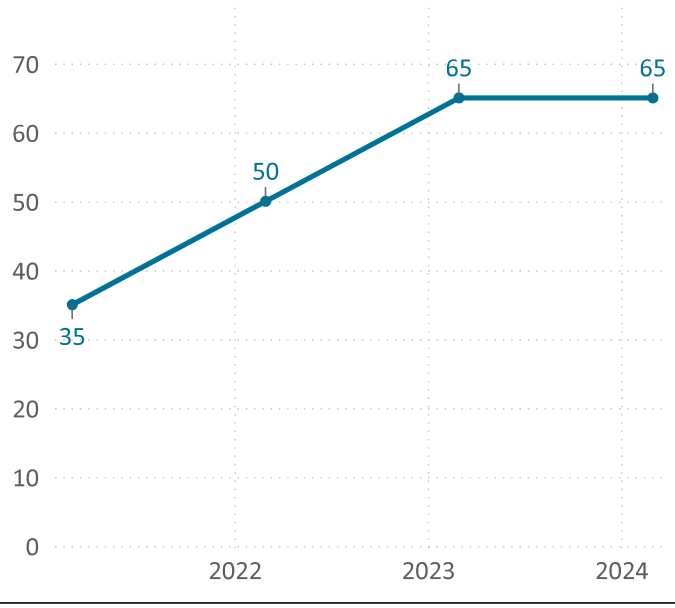
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Young people (under 18) in treatment for substance use drugs

Recent data for 2023/24 indicates the same number of young individuals under 18 who are in treatment for drug-related substance use.

The Public Health team commissions treatment and recovery services for Darlington, and there is a specialist service for young people. There has been work with partners, including education, youth offending, and probation, to increase the number of referrals into the system as well as targeted work with the provider to reduce barriers for young people to access and engage with treatment services. The Public Health team works with partners, including schools, police, and parents, to deliver prevention messages and programmes for young people.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

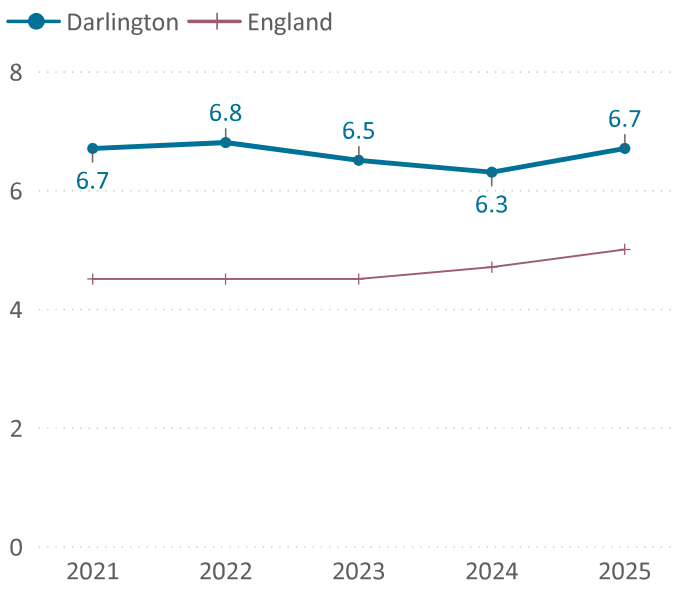
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Adults in treatment at specialist drug misuse service (per 1,000 population)

Recent data for 2024/25 indicates an improvement in the number of adults in treatment at specialist drug misuse services, with 6.7 per 1,000 population currently in treatment. This is higher than the rate for England at 5 per 1,000 and similar to the NE average.

The Public Health team is working with partners and local providers to continue work to make high-quality and effective services available and accessible to people in Darlington. This has included recent work with local GPs to provide a specialist in-reach offer for their patients so that they can access services more quickly. Other work includes quicker access to triage and assessment, reducing waiting times for treatment.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

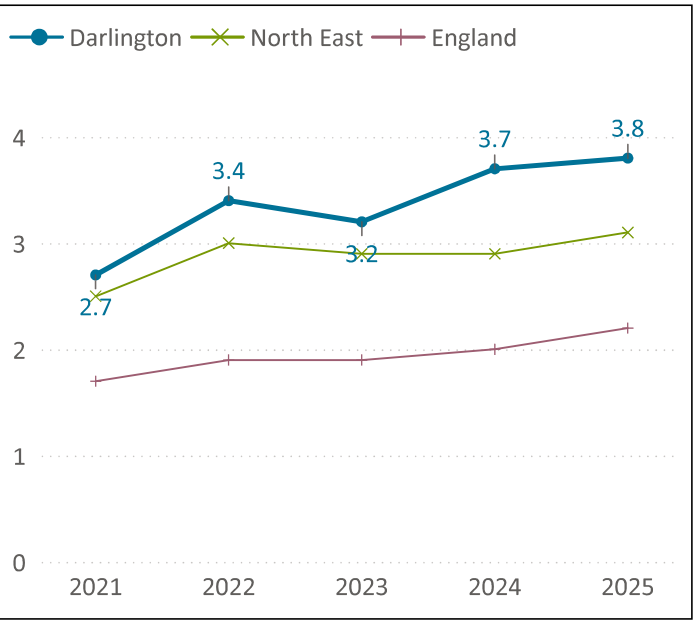
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Adults in treatment at specialist alcohol misuse service (per 1,000 population)

Recent data for 2024/25 indicates an improvement in adults in treatment at specialist alcohol misuse services, with 3.8 per 1,000 currently in treatment. This is better than the England average but more similar to the NE average.

The Public Health team is working with partners and providers to continue to provide quality and effective treatment and recovery services for people in Darlington. This has included reducing barriers to accessing services, with the provider improving the assessment and triage processes to ensure more timely access to treatment for those seeking help. Work continues with a broad range of prevention activities including supporting national and regional campaigns.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

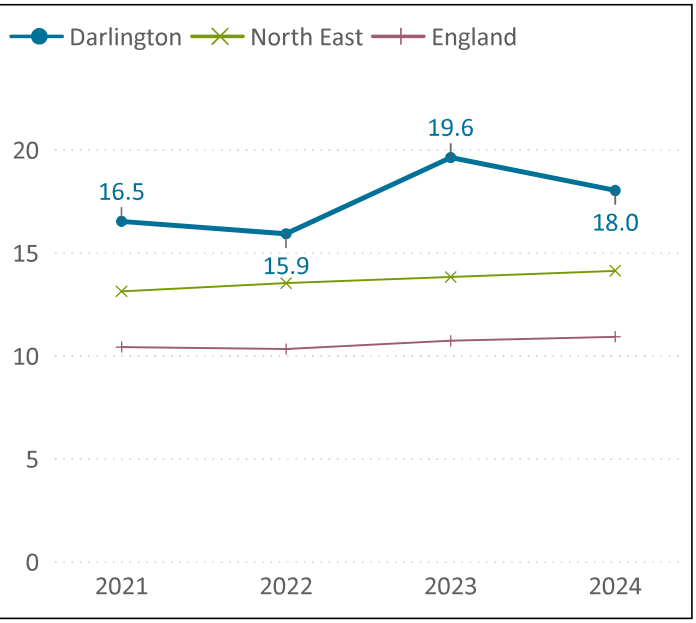
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Suicide rate (per 100,000 population, 10+ yrs)

Recent statistics from 2024 indicate that the suicide rate for Darlington has decreased to 18 per 100,000 individuals, This figure is the higher than England but statistically similar to the North East region.

Work is underway with partners to develop a suicide prevention plan for Darlington, coordinating actions across the borough. The public health team, Integrated Care Board (ICB), mental health trust TEWV, and others are building a local intelligence system to identify trends and risk factors. The ICB has also commissioned a regional support programme for families bereaved by suicide.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

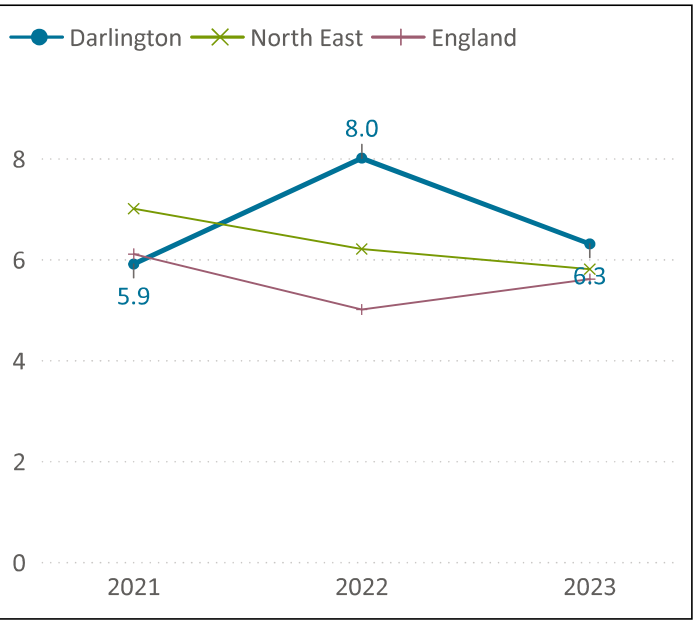
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Self-reported wellbeing: people with a low satisfaction score (percentage of respondents)

This indicator reflects the percentage of respondents to the national Integrated Household Survey who rated their overall life satisfaction as low. The most recent data from 2022/23 indicates that there has been a reduction in those reporting a low score with 6.3% of respondents now reporting a low satisfaction score regarding their wellbeing. This is statistically similar to England and the North East.

The authority is working with a broad range of stakeholders to address the wider determinants of health, and some specific targeted actions and plans address improving mental and physical health, as well as wider economic and social determinants of health including access to work.



Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

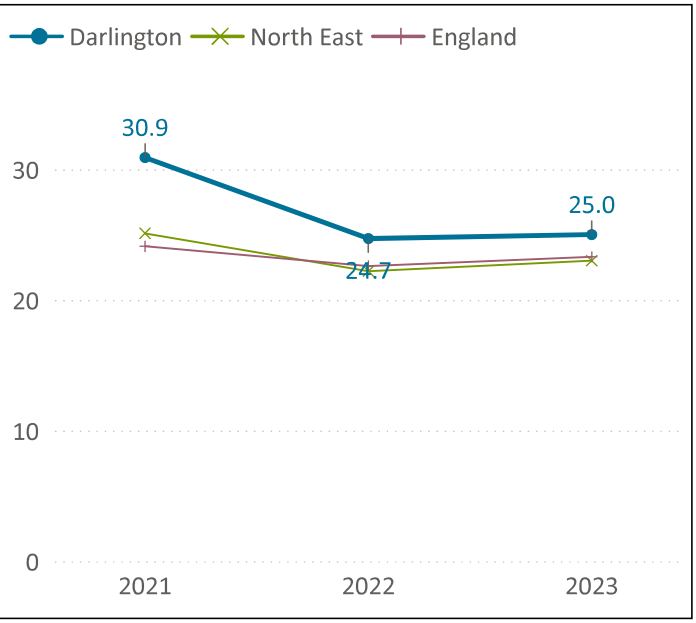
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Self reported wellbeing: people with a high anxiety score (percentage of respondents)

The most recent data from the National Household Survey shows that 25% of respondents in Darlington reported a high anxiety score which has reduced from a peak in July 2021. This is statistically similar to the England and North East averages.

The authority continues to work with a range of stakeholders to put into place plans and programmes to reduce community stresses and anxiety. This includes actions to improve public mental health and community safety. Other targeted programmes to reduce isolation and community cohesion and connectiveness are also being delivered with partners, including the Police, Police and Crime Commissioner and NHS.



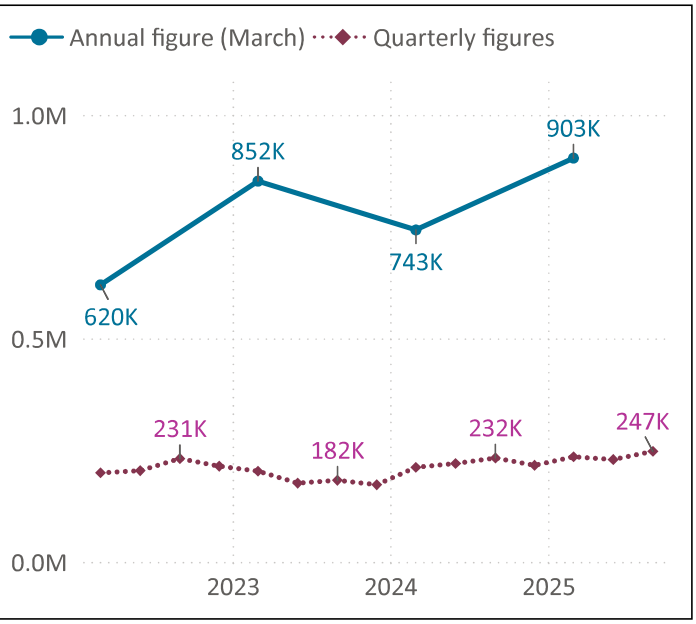
Lead Officer: Lorraine Hughes: Director of Public Health

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities, including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity

Total number of visits to the Dolphin Centre (all areas)

The first six months of this year have shown positive growth in visits compared to the same period in 2024/2025. The successful introduction of a weekly pool party in the school holidays has contributed to a very popular May and Summer holiday programme. New promotions across business areas including 'Active Afternoons' has increased footfall in bowling and soft play during term time. Membership numbers continue to rise to an all-time high, with popular fitness classes including Pilates and aqua aerobics continually hitting full capacity. This quarter has had the highest visitors on record for The Dolphin Centre, with many repeat customers contributing to growth in overall visitor numbers.



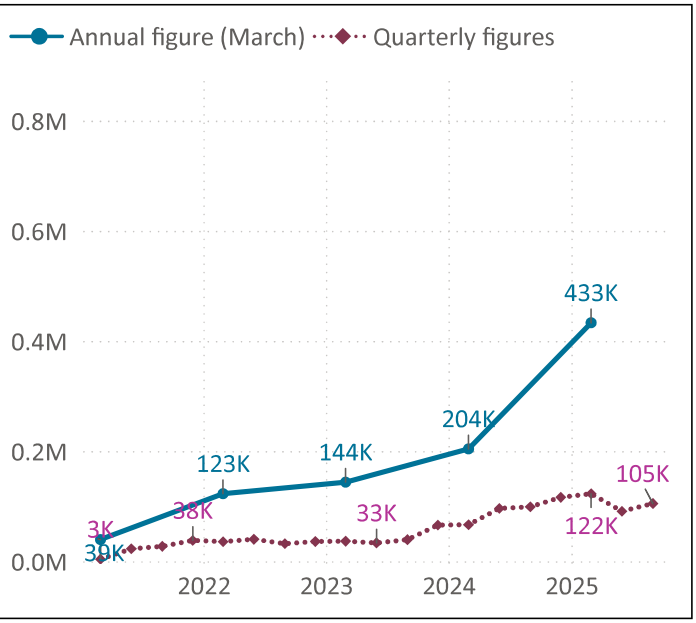
Lead Officer: Lisa Soderman: Head of Leisure

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities including the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex

Total attendances at Eastbourne Sports Complex

Attendances at Eastbourne Sports Complex have remained consistent from last year as users continue to utilise the new facilities from the previous capital project investment. Darlington Academy is now using the site throughout the year which has increased the day time usage. The site has also had an increase in school games events and a full diverse range of activities on site in the multi activity room delivered by the Move More team.



Lead Officer: Lisa Soderman: Head of Leisure

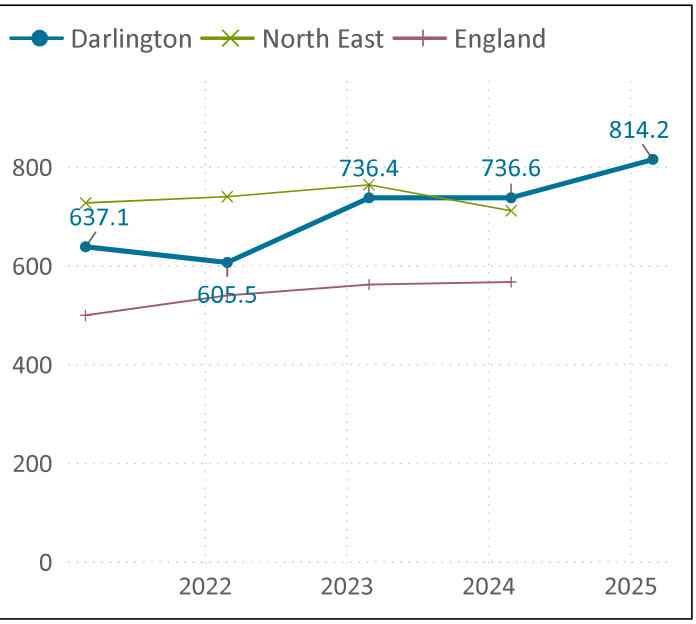
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities including the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex

Older people admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care, per 100,000 of the 65+ population

The Council acknowledges that there is has been an increase in residential care by older people since 2022. Demand, complexity and need are the contributing factors for this increase. The Council is actively working to reduce reliance on residential care through our strength based practice approach and where possible ensuring a home first approach for people being discharged from hospital. The Council will continue to monitor this trend.

Currently at the end of Quarter 2 2025-26 the total number of individuals who moved into permanent residential or nursing care is 63. This is lower than the same period last year when the figure was 93 and 96 in 2023-24.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

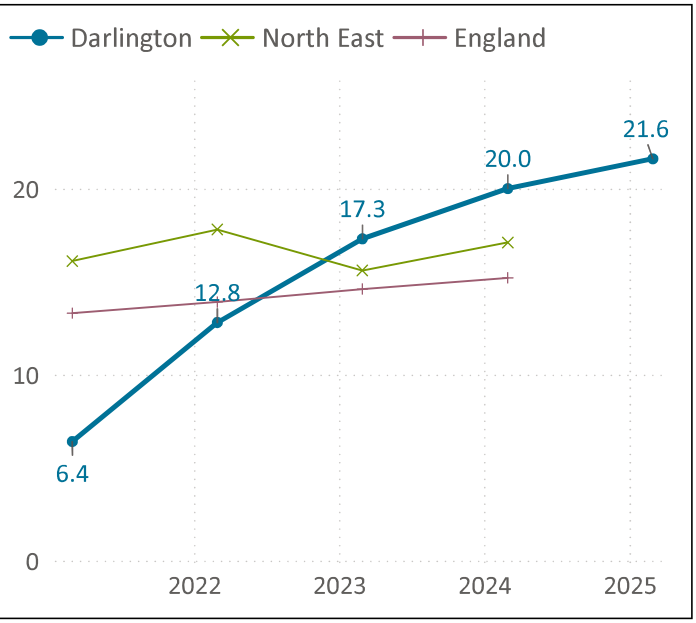
Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Adults aged 18 - 64 admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care homes, per 100,000 population

Where a community placement would have been appropriate all options were explored, however due to market capacity it was not possible to find suitable placements. Market development has been a key issue and has been identified as a key objective for development with commissioning colleagues.

There have been 7 18–64-year-olds who has entered permanent care since April 2025.

There are currently 60 individuals aged between 18 and 64 living in permanent care. The average age of these people is 49, and the average length of time they have been in permanent care is 4 years.



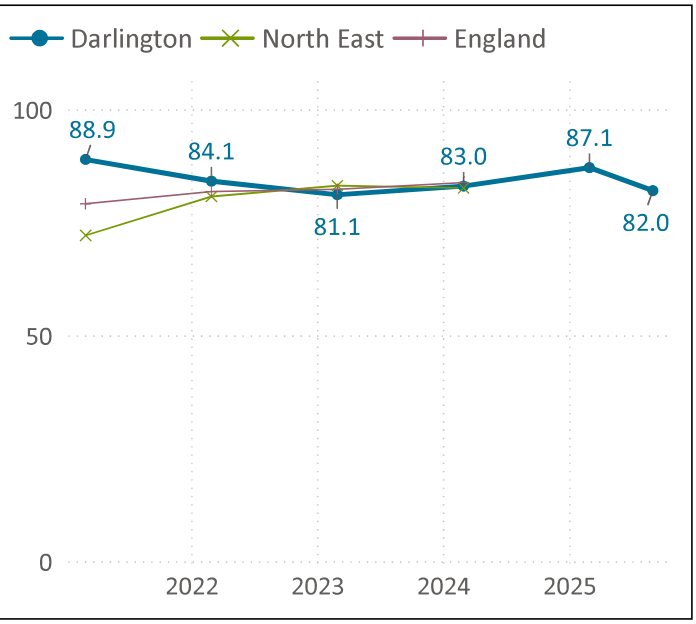
Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement or rehabilitation services

This data indicated the service provides to support people to return home following discharge from hospital, through assessment, support planning and short term reablement offer. This graph illustrates that at the end of September 2025, the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services was 82%. Performance in this indicator remains high despite an increase in the complexity of hospital discharges.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

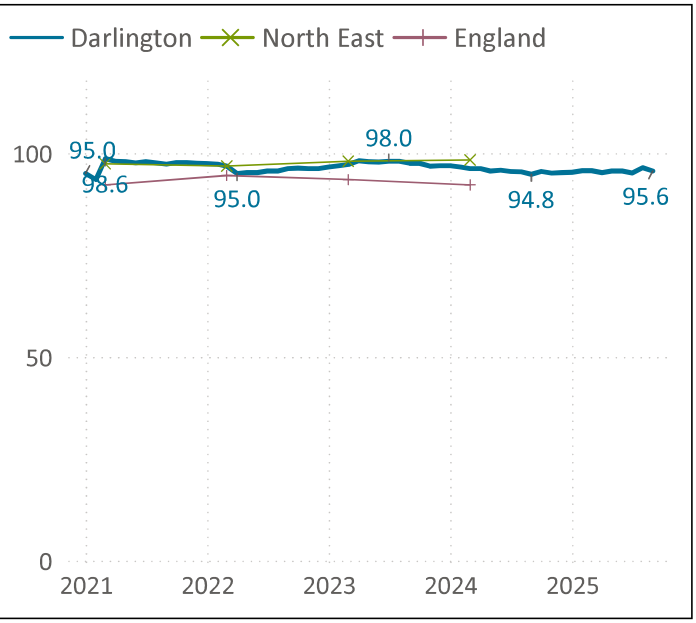
Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Percentage of people using social care who receive self-directed support

As at the end of September 2025, 95.6% of people using social care were receiving self directed support. This remains a relatively static level.

Darlington typically exceeds both the national and regional averages for this measure, reflecting our strong ethos of taking a strengths-based approach to support residents in need. The Council maximises service users' choice and control over the services they receive, to ensure these best suit peoples' particular needs and preferences. The Council continues to commission Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) to provide the direct payments support service which promotes people to manage their own personal support budgets.



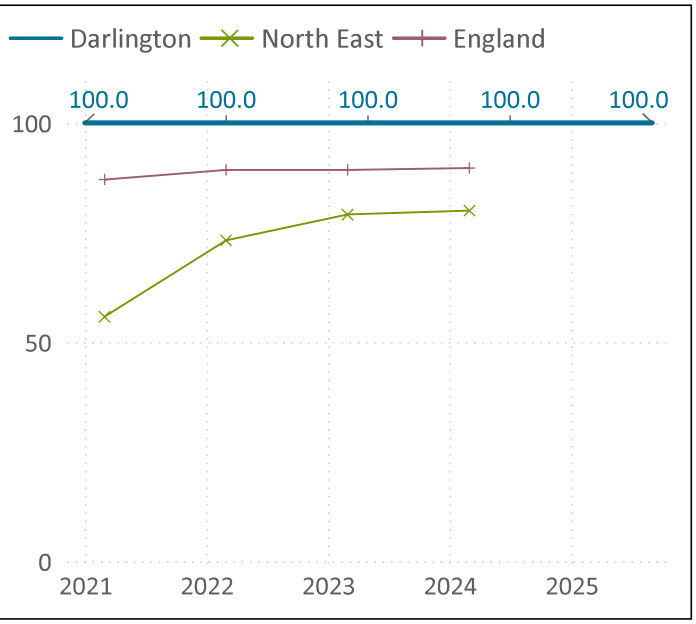
Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Percentage of carers using social care who receive self-directed support

100% of carers using social care received self-directed support. This data, which shows Darlington exceeds both the national and regional average for this metric, reflects how all carers, who are in receipt of a commissioned service, now have a personal budget. This enables them to maximise their independence and choice, to support their wellbeing and ensure they can access the support that best suits their needs. The Council continues working with carers and carers support groups to listen to the needs of carers. The Council has established Carers Champions within the service, and report on the Carers Action quarterly to the Commitment to Carers Strategy group.



Lead Officer: Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Council Plan Priority: Living well

Key Deliverable: Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.

Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

There are currently 59 approved Foster Carer Households, which is an increase from 57 Foster Carer households at the previous quarter. We have 65 Children placed with in house foster carers, which is an increase compared with 57 at quarter 2 last year.

11 Foster Carers were approved at Panel during 2024/25 compared with 5 the previous year. We have approved 4 new carers this year so far, with a further 8 prospective carers going through the assessment process.

Our Childrens Homes continue to be at full capacity with 5 out of our 6 homes being graded as Good by Ofsted.

Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

The Education Strategy Group (ESG) consisting of Trust and council senior leaders developed an Inclusion Charter for Darlington schools which was launched at an all-schools event on 21st June 2024. In response to data and anecdotal evidence suggesting that the challenges of providing inclusive education were increasing, the Darlington Education Strategy Group initiated work with the Educational Psychology Service to explore the latest evidence base for inclusion.

It was proposed that a Charter be developed as a vehicle for collective activity to support inclusion in Darlington. The Charter was co-produced with senior leaders from schools and colleges, using the evidence base and relating this to the context in which they found themselves. The Education Psychology Service facilitated the discussions, ensuring that research evidence underpinned the discussions and outputs. The Charter defines 4 essential pillars of inclusive education, presence, engagement, achievement and belonging.

An Inclusion Charter reflective tool and self-evaluation tool were developed for use in taking the Charter forward. The Charter and tools are designed to be flexible to meet the diverse range of individual circumstances, needs and aspirations of institutions and multi-academy trusts. All schools and colleges are signed up to the Charter. As at October 2025 79% of schools/trusts had attended a development session.

Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Work with the Department for Education and the successful academy trust sponsor to ensure the free school for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is developed on schedule, providing vital additional specialist capacity in Darlington

Darlington was awarded a special free school following our successful bid as part of Wave 3 of the programme. A sponsor multi academy trust has been assigned to operate the school.

We have been informed by the Department for Education that the Darlington school is now subject to value for money consideration, in line with the government's vision for the special educational needs system. We have been informed by the Department for Education that they are not yet able to update beyond that but will do so as soon as possible.

Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Develop more meaningful services by ensuring children and young people are involved in service development and commissioning activity

There are a number of avenues for the voice of children and young people to be involved in service review, development, design and commissioning activity. These include but are not limited to the Youth Parliament, DAD youth group, YMCA youth focused Darlo Care Crew, Youth Watch, focused Participation Officer engagement and Peer Mentor engagement.

Engagement with Darlington young carers has progressed during 2025/6 through the development of a number of YouTube videos designed and delivered by Darlington young carers to support other young carers and raise with professionals what is important for young carers in their interactions. Using the voice of children and young people Tees Valley YMCA have continued to develop a comprehensive youth work offer with a comprehensive universal and targeted weekly engagement programme.

Peer Mentors have led on a review of Corporate Parenting Panel arrangements to improve the experience and input from Care Experienced Young People. A focused piece of work is scheduled for the early part of 2026 with the Looked After Children Peer Mentors obtaining the voice of the child in relation to placement stability.

A key workstream of the Children's Reforms will involve engagement with Children and Young People to contribute to co-design of new services.

Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Widen access of eligible children to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme which focusses on health, wellbeing and raising aspirations

HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) programme provides free holiday club places to primary and secondary aged children on benefits-related free school meals, as well as other vulnerable children, giving them a chance to enjoy extracurricular activities and healthy meals during the school holidays.

The Move More Team deliver activity weeks at numerous community venues with a wide geographical spread across the town, so children are given the greatest opportunity to participate in the programme in their relative local ward and community. In the Summer holidays, over 7,000 places were booked for children aged 5-16 years of age, 1,108 free school meal children attended with 27% SEND children. Future funding will see further development to engage more eligible children into the programme.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Work in partnership with the early years sector and health services to promote school readiness and the delivery of the expansion of funded childcare entitlement

Evidence suggests that the childcare market in Darlington has been able to accommodate an increase in demand following the introduction of the third and final phase of childcare entitlement expansion from September 2025. Sufficiency of places will continue to be monitored through the remainder of the academic year as more children become eligible for entitlement places.

In early 2023, funding was made available by the Department for Education for local authorities to fund capital projects in schools and settings to deliver expansion of entitlement and/or wraparound places. Six projects are being funded in Darlington schools and settings. These projects will deliver up to an additional 65 wraparound places, 36 entitlements places for 2-year-olds and 60 entitlement places for mixed ages. Towards the end of 2024 DfE invited eligible state-funded primary-phase schools to apply for the School-Based Nursery Capital Grant. Four Darlington schools applied for capital funding and all four were successful. Three opened or expanded their nursery in September 2025 and one will open in September 2026.

Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Refresh and deliver the Children and Young People's Plan working with services across the council, key stakeholders, and children and young people in Darlington

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is the key delivery plan for children within the Council Plan. It identifies what key actions will be taken to deliver the agreed priority for children – the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations. It is a partnership plan which shows how organisations and agencies in Darlington will work together to improve outcomes for children. The plan for 2024 – 2027 takes the form of a video and poster which have been designed and produced by local children. Extensive data analysis and engagement activity with children, young people and key stakeholders identified five priorities which will form the basis of the plan: Health; Education; Family and Carers; Employment, and Community.

The CYPP was launched in November 2024 with regular updates on progress being posted on the Council website. Work is now being initiated to refresh and update the CYPP with a final report on the 2024 - 2027 plan to be completed by September 2026 and a fully revised plan to be in place by September 2027

Lead Officer: Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Continue the successful management of the Safety Valve plan for the education budget to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, eliminate the historic deficit on funding and deliver a financially sustainable system

The Department for Education (DfE), as part of its wider Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms, initiated the 'Safety Valve' intervention programme. The DfE recognises that over recent years, pressures on high needs budgets have contributed to many local authorities accruing deficits on their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Darlington, in common with many areas, built up a deficit on the high needs block element of the DSG. If a local authority can demonstrate sufficiently that their DSG management plan creates lasting sustainability, including reaching an in-year balance as quickly as possible, then the department will enter into an agreement with the authority (subject to Ministerial approval). Darlington entered into an agreement in March 2023.

The plan has been progressing well with Darlington achieving an in-year balance on the high needs block in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. The combined deficit reduction work along with the contributions through the Safety Valve Agreement has reduced our current projected deficit to circa £0.481 million and the council is currently on track to have eliminated the deficit within the terms of the agreement which is due to end in 2026/27. This will enable the council and partners to proceed with driving improvements in a financially sustainable way.

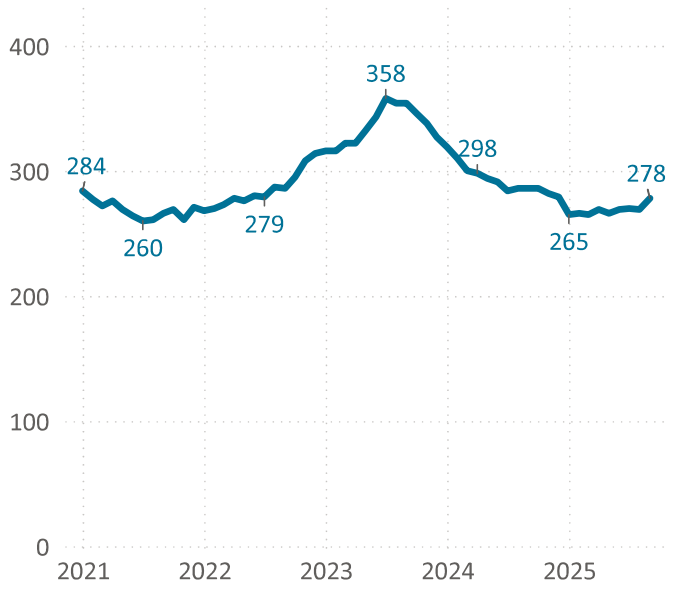
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Total number of looked after children (LAC)

278 children are being supported in the Council's care at the end of September 2025, 8.6% of which have come into the Council's care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

This equates to a -4.5% reduction in the number of children (excluding those needing care as UASC) that were in the Council's care when compared to the end of September last year.



Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

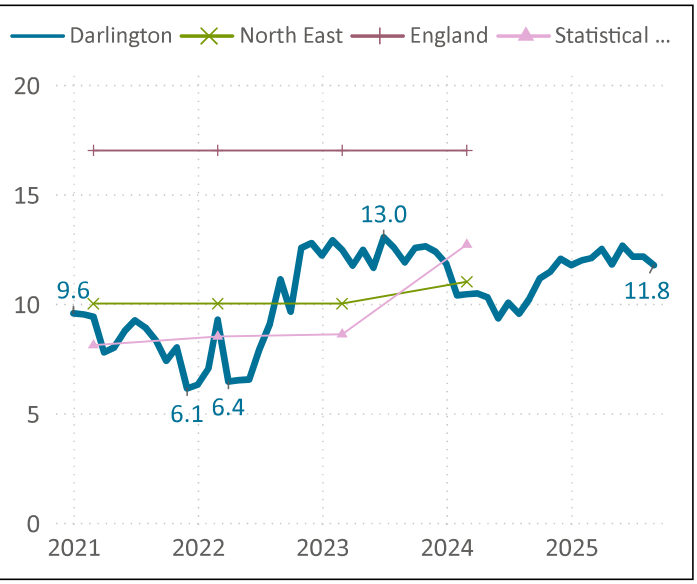
Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

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Percentage of total looked after children (LAC) placed more than 20 miles away from home, inside or outside the boundary, as at the end of each reporting period (excludes children placed for adoption or where home address is "of no fixed abode")

As of September 2025, 11.8% of our Children in Care were placed 20 or more miles away from their primary home. This is positively below the national average of 17%, reflecting our commitment to keeping children as close to familiar surroundings as possible.

Every placement is carefully reviewed to ensure it is the most suitable option for the child. Whether it's staying connected to family or accessing specialised care, we focus on what will best support each child's wellbeing and development.



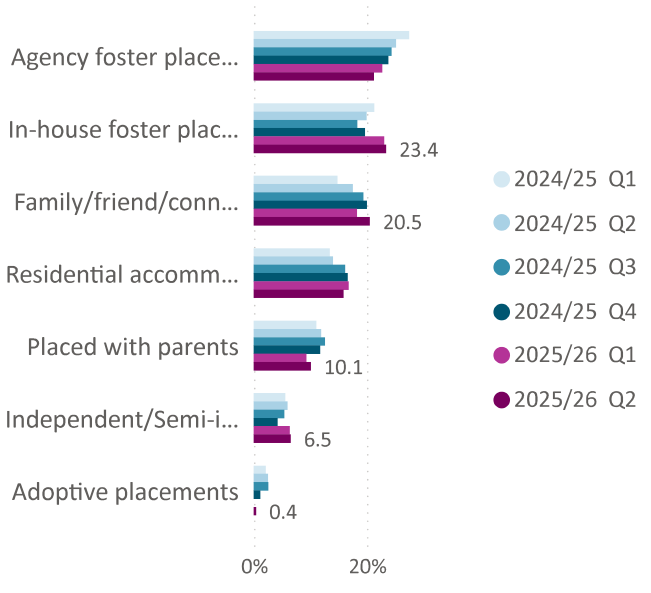
Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

Percentage of looked after children by placement type

At the end of September 2025, a large proportion of Darlington's children in care were living in foster placements (45%), with 20% placed in kinship care - that is, with relatives, 10% were living with a parent, while 23% were in supported residential accommodation, and 2% were placed for adoption or in other types of placements.
Every placement is carefully reviewed to ensure it's the most appropriate for the child, offering the right support with the aim to provide stable, nurturing environments that meet each child's individual needs.
We're also seeing positive change in the steady reduction in the use of agency foster placements.



Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

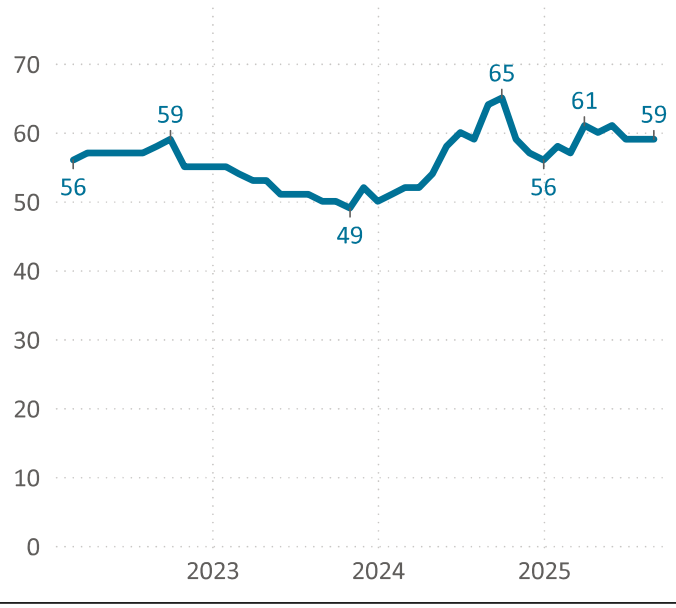
Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

Total number of approved foster carers

As of September 2025, Darlington Council has 59 approved foster care families and 53 approved kinship carers—relatives who care for children within their family network.

We're also seeing continued interest in fostering: 12 families are currently going through the assessment process to become approved foster carers, helping to support children in care across our community.
To raise awareness and encourage more people to consider fostering, the Council continues to promote foster care through its website and social media channels. This outreach has led to 14 new fostering enquiries and the approval of 4 new foster care families.



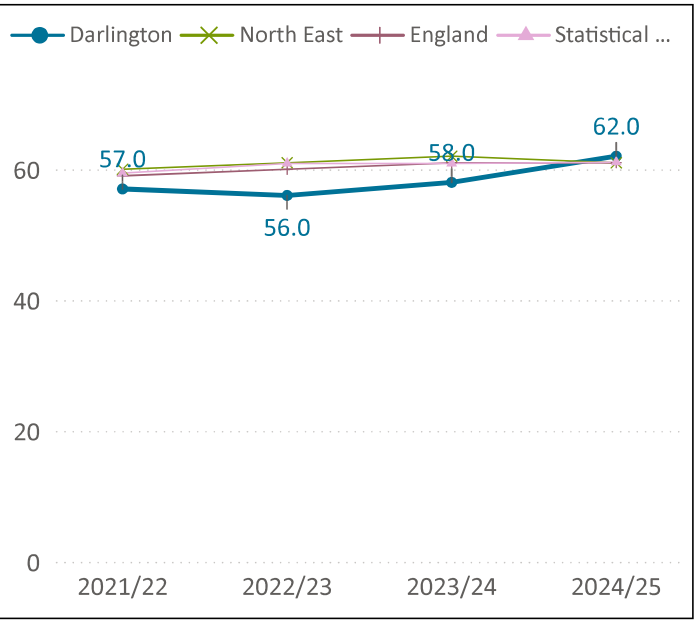
Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Provide a safe and supportive living environment for children cared for by the council by increasing the number of children placed in council foster care and, when appropriate, council-run residential homes.

Pupils reaching expected standard in Key Stage 2 for Reading, Writing & Maths (Percentage of all pupils)

The percentage of Darlington pupils achieving the expected standard in Key Stage 2 for Reading, Writing & Maths (RWM) has increased again between academic year 2023/24 and 2024/25, now sitting above national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators which have stayed the same or decreased slightly. Of the three categories (reading, writing and maths) Darlington students were strongest in maths followed by writing whereas comparators are all strongest in reading followed by maths.



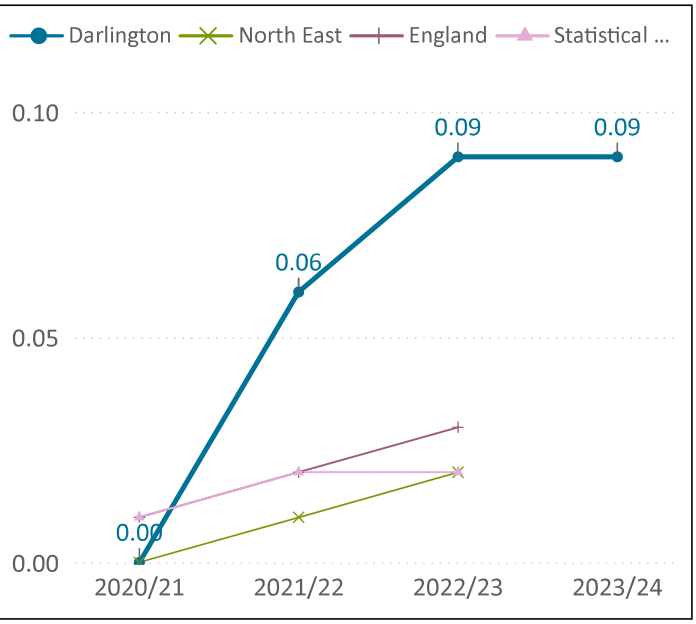
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

Permanent exclusions in Primary schools (Percentage of total pupils)

The permanent exclusion rate for Darlington's primary school children has remained steady from 2022/23 to 2023/24 after rising sharply for the previous two years, although it still remains very high. Note that this is due to a small number of primary schools excluding a large number of pupils rather than an authority-wide trend. Published comparison data for this measure are not yet available.



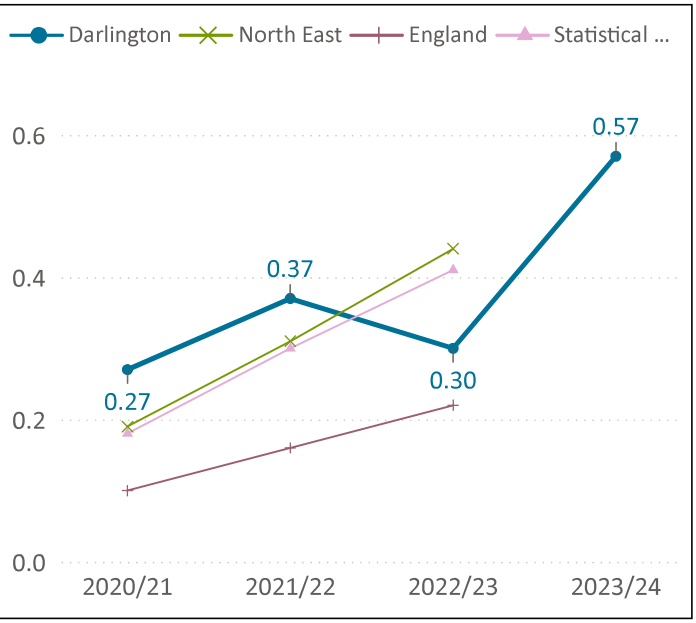
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

Permanent exclusions in Secondary schools (Percentage of total pupils)

The permanent exclusion rate of Darlington's secondary school pupils has increased sharply between academic year 2022/23 and 2023/24 after a decrease the previous year. Note that this high value is due to a small number of secondary schools excluding a large number of pupils rather than an authority-wide trend, which is a trend seen across the region. Published comparison data for this measure are not yet available.



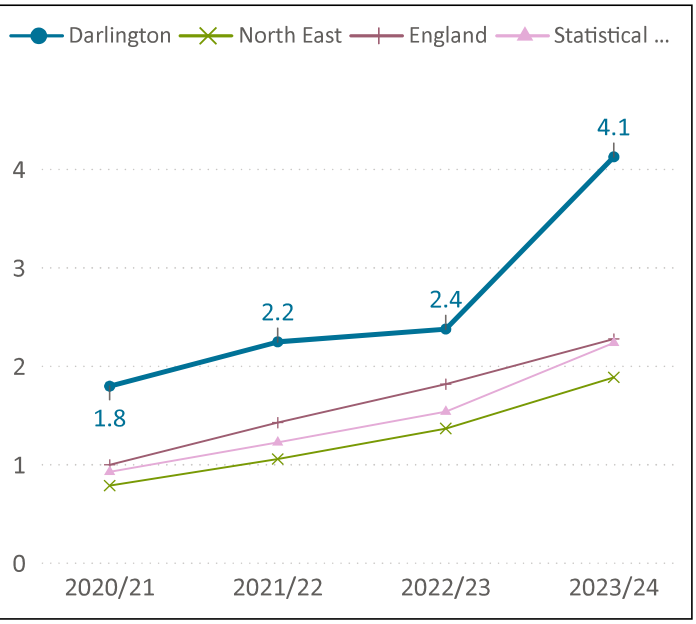
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

Suspensions in Primary schools (Percentage of total pupils)

The suspension rate of Darlington's primary school pupils has increased sharply between 2022/23 and 2023/24 after slowing somewhat the previous year. It remains well above the national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators and the gap is increasing. Note that this high value is due to a small number of primary schools suspending a large number of pupils rather than an authority-wide trend.



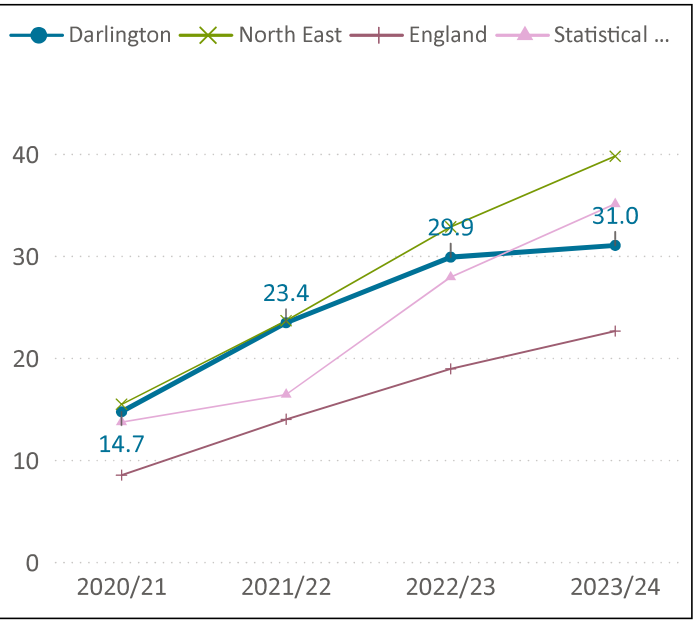
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

Suspensions in Secondary schools (Percentage of total pupils)

The suspension rate of Darlington's secondary school pupils has increased again between academic year 2022/23 and 2023/24, but this increase is much smaller than the previous years, bringing it below the regional and statistical neighbour comparators. However it should be noted that in the same period the exclusion rate increased sharply suggesting that this decrease is due to more pupils being excluded rather than suspended. Note also that this high value is due to a small number of secondary schools suspending a large number of pupils rather than an authority-wide trend. This trend is reflected across the region.



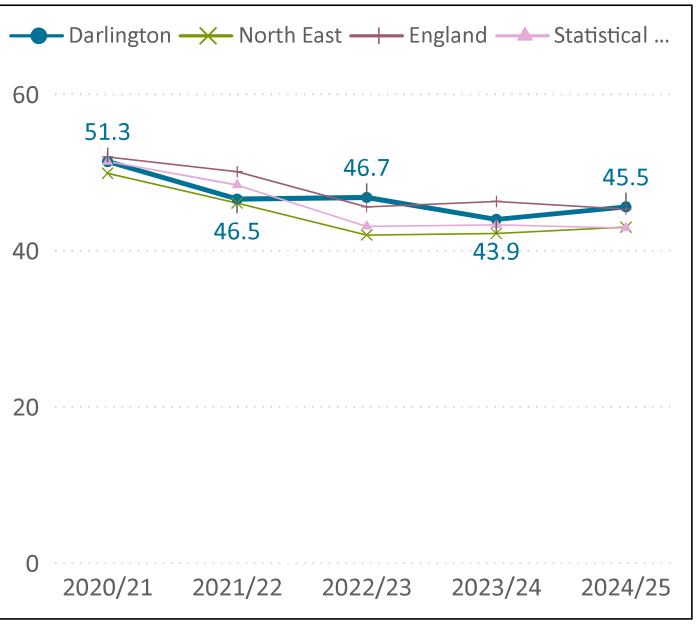
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

Pupils achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths (Percentage of pupils)

The percentage of Darlington's KS4 pupils achieving a grade 9-5 pass in English and Maths has increased slightly between academic year 2023/24 and 2024/25 after a small decrease last year. This increase contrasts with the overall trend of the national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators over the same time period where they all stayed fairly stable over the past year.



Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

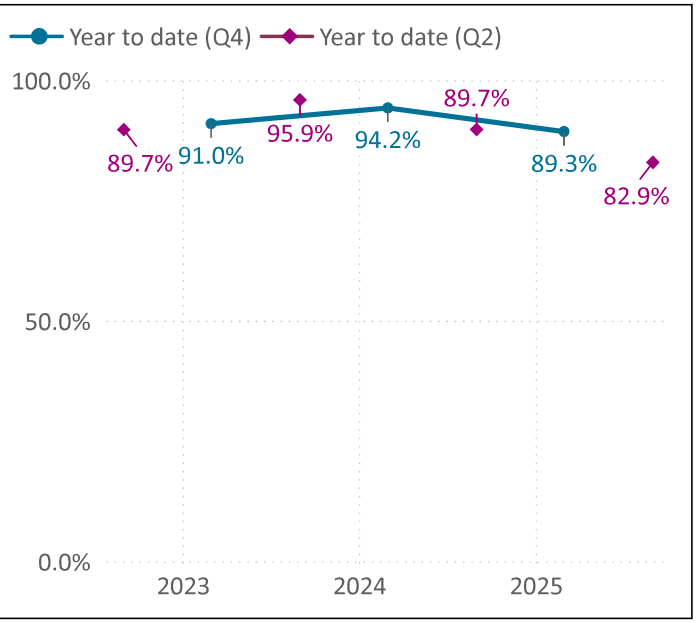
Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington

Percentage of looked after children (LAC) reviews where the child participated (excludes children under the age of 4yrs)

In the first half of the 2025/26 year, 82.4% of child in care reviews held, for those children aged over four, saw the child actively involved in their review meetings. This means they either attended the meeting themselves or shared their views beforehand so they could be included.

An additional 2.0% attended their review but did not contribute directly, while 11.1% of all reviews involved children under the age of four. For these younger children, participation looks different, but their needs and experiences are still carefully considered throughout the process.



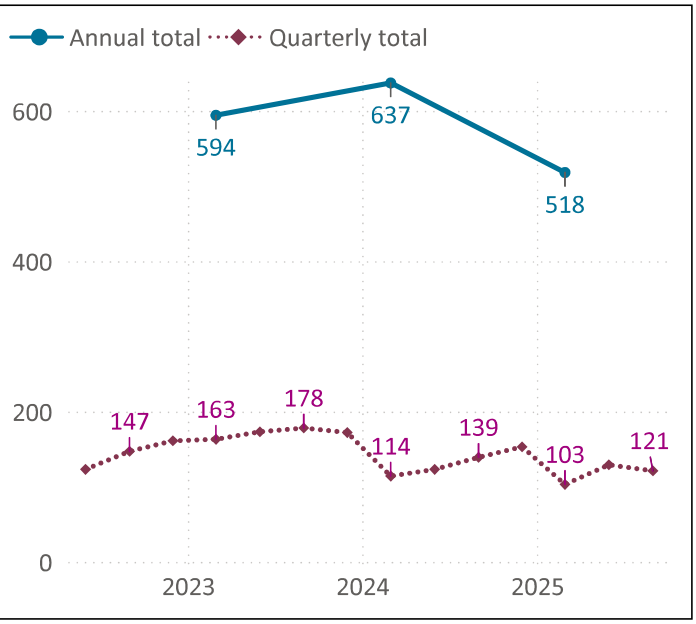
Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Develop more meaningful services by ensuring children and young people are involved in service development and commissioning activity

Number of looked after children (LAC) reviews where the child participated (excludes children under the age of 4yrs)

In the first half of the 2025/26 year, a total of 332 children had a Child in Care (CiC) reviews held. Of these, 295 were for children aged over four.
243 of those children took part in their review meetings—either by attending in person or by sharing their views ahead of time so they could be included in the discussion.
It's so important that children are involved in their reviews, as it helps ensure they have a say in decisions that affect their lives and care.
We continue to encourage participation and make sure every child feels heard and supported throughout the process.



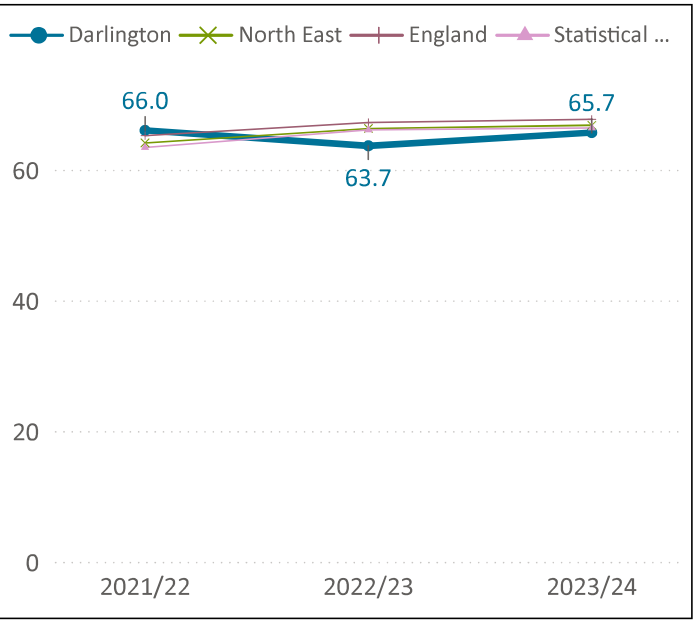
Lead Officer: Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Develop more meaningful services by ensuring children and young people are involved in service development and commissioning activity

School Readiness: all children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception (Percentage of all eligible children)

After a large decrease between academic year 2021/22 and 2022/23, the percentage of Darlington children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has increased sightly to fall roughly in line with the national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators in academic year 2023/24. However, it still sits below its 2021/22 value of 66% which was higher than all comparators.



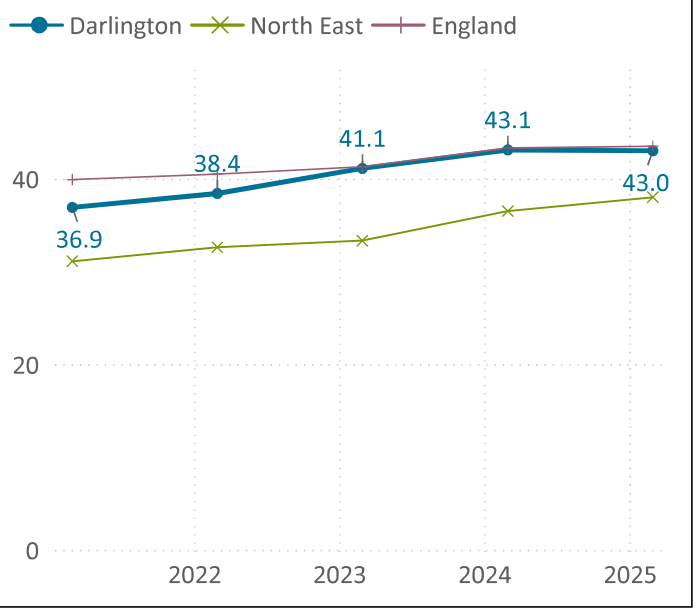
Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Work in partnership with the early years sector and health services to promote school readiness and the delivery of the expansion of funded childcare entitlement

Pupils with an EHCP educated in mainstream schools (Percentage of pupils with an EHCP)

With the support of mainstream schools and continued partnership working Darlington's percentage of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans educated in mainstream settings has risen from 34.2% in 2020 to 43.0% in 2025, higher than the North East average of 38.0%. The Darlington performance is now in line with the England average of 43.5%. There has been a year on year increase in pupils supported in mainstream settings since 2020 with a slight decrease between 2024 and 2025.



Lead Officer: Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

Council Plan Priority: Children and young people

Key Deliverable: Continue the successful management of the Safety Valve plan for the education budget to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, eliminate the historic deficit on funding and deliver a financially sustainable system

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Working together for safer, healthier and more engaged communities.

Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the community

During the reporting period, officers have continued to tackle problems associated with anti-social behaviour (ASB), fly tipping and waste in back lanes. The below figures provide an overview of activity:
(a) From 1st April 2025 to date 198 cases reported (of which 176 closed)
(b) 1 x Duty of Care Fail to pay Fixed Penalty Ticket (Fined £458)
(c) 7 x Section 110 Prosecutions (Total Fines £5,110)
(d) Fixed penalty Tickets issued:
2 x Fly Tipping @£1,000, total £2,000
3 x Duty of Care @ £600, total £1,800
4 x Breach of Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) @£100, total £400
2 x Littering @ £500, total £1,000
Number Forty is currently closed due to flooding of the premisses, however we are delivering a Street Friends medical support service which patrols the town centre during a Friday and Saturday night.

To address ASB, the Shopwatch scheme continues to grow, with the Yarm Road and North Road retail parks starting schemes shortly. The Council continues to contributes to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's 'Safer Businesses Group'.

The begging figures for this period compared to the previous year show a reduction in begging of 83.7%. There is currently around six people begging, partners are engaging with, offering all available support. Those individuals known to begging are reviewed at multi-agency meetings. Support is offered through an outreach worker who engages and signposts individuals to the service best suited to their needs.

Lead Officer: Chris Knox: Head of Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Work with partners to reduce the burden of the cost of living, with a focus on food and fuel insecurity

In addition to the Household Support Fund, the Council has been in discussion with the network of Food Banks that operate across Darlington. A meeting was called which was attended by eight of the 10 foodbanks that are known of in Darlington. It provided an opportunity for them to talk with one another which revealed that there would be great benefit in them collaborating.

The Council has agreed to collate a survey of them which will form the basis of a discussion at a further meeting.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Support and strengthen partnership working with voluntary and community groups with a focus on addressing the causes of inequality, financial inclusion, social exclusion, and vulnerable families with children and young people

Largely as a result of the strong relationships with the voluntary sector that have emerged through the work of the Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Group (VCSE), the Household Support Fund programme is being delivered through the sector as third party providers.

The group has established three working groups looking at social exclusion, financial exclusion and children and families.

Last year, the group selected four of its members to join the Long Term Plan for Towns Board which has subsequently become the Neighbourhood Board. The group has now been invited to be the primary link for the voluntary and community sector. Voluntary and Community Sector agencies worked together to deliver an engagement exercise across town. They achieved 2,400 respondents which is an unprecedented response rate. The information gathered will be used to inform the Pride in Place programme.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Support a strong Community Safety Partnership to ensure the issues affecting the safety and security of our communities are addressed collectively, including addressing hate crime

The Community Safety Partnership thematic group 'Building Stronger and Cohesive Communities' meets regularly to support our hard to reach communities and address community concerns. In support of this process Darlington has a strong Unity Group which meets on a regular basis and has members in the group from all sections of our community.

North Road and Northgate Community Cohesion Panel has been set up focusing upon geographical areas and behaviours in the area. Uptake by partners and in particular, residents, is encouraging with initial grant funding to support locally driven community based initiatives, which will address issues negatively affecting those communities. Problem Solving techniques and co-ordinated partner approaches to those initiatives will be evaluated with lessons learned and best practice helping future work Borough wide. Recent projects funded through this group are: improved lighting on areas of concern in North Road, the installation of six defibrillators and bleed kits along the North Road Corridor and funding of two youth provision initiatives in the North Road area.

Across the whole of Darlington we now have 18 defibrillators and bleed kits which are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, along with 50 trauma kits deployed across the town centre.

Lead Officer: Chris Knox: Head of Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Ensuring business activity is regulated, licensed and enforced effectively to protect the health and wellbeing of residents, visitors and businesses.

Trading Standards will conduct 90 programmed inspections by the end of March 2026 which will include checking compliance with current legislation and offering advice on any issues discovered and any upcoming issues. Visits will be targeted against high-risk business activities including firework storage and suppliers of regulated safety products.

Environmental Health will inspect 400 food premises before the end of March 2026. Inspections are programmed on a national risk basis set by the Food Standards Agency and check on compliance with food safety and labelling requirements. Environmental Health will carry out 50 annual surveillance visits in relation to health and safety in the beauty sector including looking at infection control and consumer safety. Environmental Health will carry out 50 annual food sampling visits to ensure food and drink sold in the Borough is safe for consumers.

Licensing will check compliance with taxi/private hire legislation and policy requirements by conducting 60 random roadside checks per quarter. Licensing will hold weekly multi-agency meetings to share intelligence and risk assess licensed premises to prioritise inspection.

Private Sector Housing will conduct 30 inspections for Houses in Multiple occupation based on a risk-based system over 12 months.

Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategy for informal volunteering which empowers people to volunteer and directs volunteering to areas of greatest need, including working with Darlington Cares to deliver an enhanced volunteering programme

A draft strategy framework has been produced for internal consultation in advance of a discussion at the Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Group. It proposes a focus on:

- structured volunteering
- employer supported volunteering
- community volunteering.

After describing the positive messages to be promoted to encourage volunteering, it then outlines a series of actions that the Council could take to positively support the growth of each type of volunteering.

Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

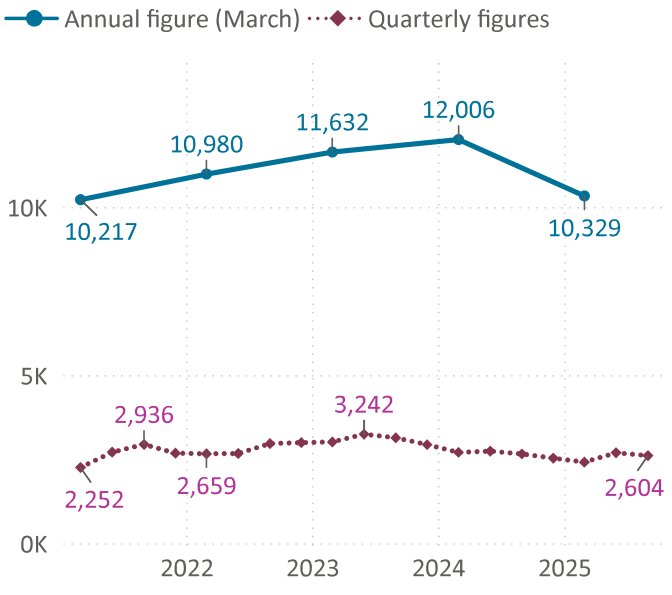
Council Plan Priority: Communities

Number of crimes (total)

The number of crimes reported year to date for this year is 5,292 compared to the same period last year at 5,389. This shows a decrease of 1.8% year to date and 97 fewer crimes across Darlington.

The town centre shows a reduction in crime, 626 crimes to date for this year compared to 782 for the same period last year, which is a decrease of 19.9% and 156 fewer crimes in Darlington town centre.

Community Safety continue to work with the Police to target criminality. Shoplifting has shown reductions across Darlington and the town centre during this reporting period with reductions of 12.8% and 18.9% respectively.



Lead Officer: Chris Knox: Head of Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the community

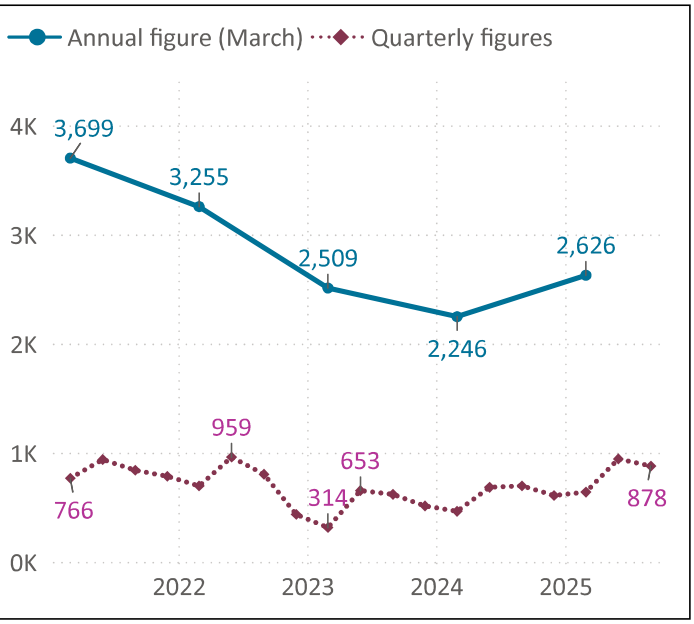
Number of ASB incidents, excluding duplicates (total)

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) has been on a downward trajectory. However, there has been a recent increase, with 1821 reports made across Darlington for the 2025-26 year to date, compared to 1379 for the same period last year. This equates to a 32.1% increase.

The increase has been seen across all areas of Darlington with the town centre having an increase of 23.4%, this equates to 33 more reports compared to the previous year. Regular meetings take place between partners and retailers to share intelligence and update retailers.

Targeted action has been taken by the Council, Police and partners to address the increase with extra resources being deployed by the Police, Council and partners.

Increases in ASB are being recorded across all of the Force area.



Lead Officer: Chris Knox: Head of Community Safety

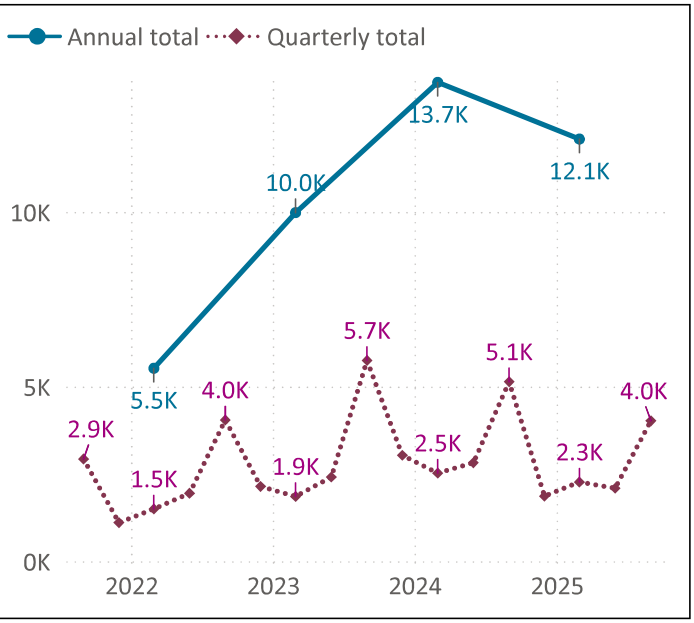
Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti-social behaviour and crime issues in the community

Number of items of school uniform distributed

The Uniform Shop continues to grow from strength to strength with levels of both donations and collections remaining high, with each academic year.

The project is a collaboration between the Council and Darlington Cares. Providing support to parents in relation to the rising cost of uniforms. The project also makes a positive contribution to the environment in reducing the volume of uniform being discarded, particularly into landfill.



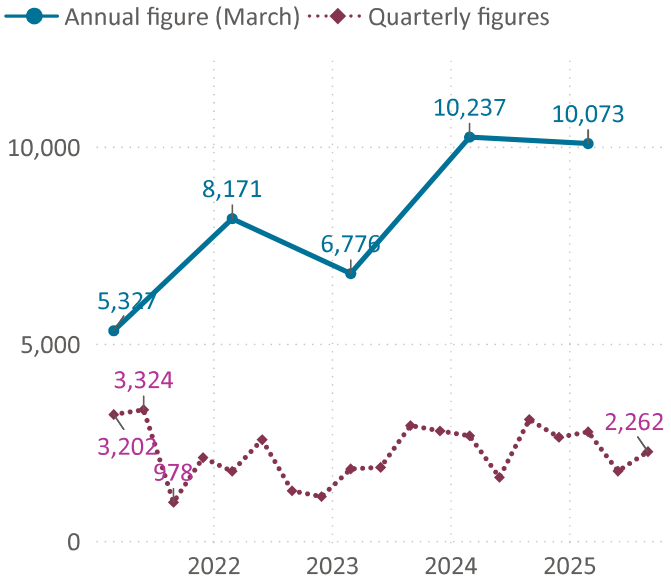
Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Work with partners to reduce the burden of the cost of living, with a focus on food and fuel insecurity

Number of Darlington Cares volunteer hours

Darlington Cares volunteering continues to grow as does its membership. The programme of activities delivered under the three areas of focus; environment, education and social justice, attract growing numbers of company volunteers. The Board continues to focus on the needs of foodbanks and in addition to providing volunteers is exploring what other support it can give them. The volume of volunteering remains similar to last year.



Lead Officer: Seth Pearson: Darlington Partnerships Director

Council Plan Priority: Communities

Key Deliverable: Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategy for informal volunteering which empowers people to volunteer and directs volunteering to areas of greatest need, including working with Darlington Cares to deliver an enhanced volunteering programme

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

A well-connected, clean and sustainable borough.

Enable improvements in transport systems by working in partnership with TVCA and public transport operators to deliver the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, including the improvement of bus facilities and the reliability of services

Work continues on the delivery of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme across the Tees Valley. In Darlington this means investment in the Darlington station project, development of walking and cycling schemes and improvements to key bus corridors.

The detailed design of Phase 2 of the Woodland Road Active Travel scheme is complete and construction work will start on site once the TVCA has completed its business case.

We are also working closely with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to develop projects for the Transforming City Regions (TCR) programme which runs from 2027/28 to 2031/32.

Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

The Town Centre Partnership team works closely with high street businesses to deliver a vibrant events programme aimed at encouraging visits to the town centre and encouraging longer visits in Darlington. These annual events are carefully curated to attract people into the town centre, inspiring them to explore, enjoy, and return.

Darlington proudly hosted the inaugural High Street Positives event in 2025, welcoming a national network of agents, towns, and businesses. The event aimed to strengthen positive perceptions of Darlington and showcase its vibrant town centre as a model for high street regeneration.

The events programme includes a wide mix, from unique experiences like the Misfits Market, hosted by a local independent, to family-friendly days such as Dinosaur Day, large-scale music events like Rhythm and Tunes Weekend, and smaller interactive trails.

Darlington's Purple Flag status highlights its safe and lively evening economy, adding to its appeal. The town's commitment to excellence was further recognised with a Gold award at Britain in Bloom 2025.

This diverse programme offers free, inclusive activities with broad regional appeal. The events team continues to engage with the community and local businesses to evolve the programme, ensuring it delivers value for both visitors and the town centre economy.

Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

The introduction of weekly food waste collections will commence from April 2026 in line with national changes as part of the Government's wider Simpler Recycling reforms. All English local authorities will be collecting food waste from April 2026 onwards (unless they already do so). There will be a move to weekly collections of recycling materials when the food waste collections launch. This should increase the amount of waste that is recycled and provide enhanced opportunities for residents to recycle as much of their waste as possible.

Detailed plans have been developed for the introduction of these changes with the procurement of new waste collection vehicles, caddies and food waste bins and disposal arrangements; all of which are required to treat food waste. The Council are utilising resources and expertise provided by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to inform the development of a communications programme to inform residents of the changes and maximise opportunities to recycle. An article was included in One Darlington (Autumn edition) with further communication planned for the New Year and in advance of the containers being delivered to all households. A member briefing session is planned for November 2025. Further updates will be provided in the coming months.

Lead Officer: Ben Grabham: Assistant Director - Environmental Services & Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Celebrate the opening of Hopetown and deliver a successful 2025 festival programme that helps to promote Darlington as a destination for visitors and investment

Hopetown Darlington was the centre of the S&DR200 celebrations on 27th Sept. 4,000+ visitors enjoyed the site as well as watching Locomotion No1 cross the Skerne Bridge to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first passenger rail journey. The Titans of Steam festival took place at Hopetown with 22,500 visitors over two weeks coming to see Flying Scotsman and Sir Nigel Gresley.

Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Work with statutory bodies to progress studies of flood risk in Darlington and enable funding to be sought to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Two studies are being progressed in partnership with key agencies that will inform and assist future planning, investment and bidding opportunities. The two studies that are taking place are:

* The Darlington Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP) study. The initial study is complete and a priority scheme has been identified which covers the West Beck and Cocker Beck watercourses, including Cockerton area. The current programme is for the stage 1/2 report to be complete by the end of 2026, business case for Government Grant in Aid (GiA) funding to take place in 2027, with construction from 2028 onwards (subject to successful business case and support from Northumbrian Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC)).

* Flood Asset Risk Study. This is looking at the risks and impact associated with the possible failure or blockage of key assets such as bridges and culverts to determine investment and maintenance strategies to minimise the risk of flooding. A high level study identified locations where further investigation was warranted due to the impact a blockage or partial blockage of the channel or culvert would cause to properties. The main scheme identified was on West Beck, which was incorporated into the NIDP scheme. Another scheme has been identified at Killerby and costed options have been drawn up. The Council is continuing to assess the business case for this scheme.

A number of smaller schemes are being developed to address local issues.

Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that guide better design in new developments and contribute to a sense of pride in place

The Council recently approved a revised Local Development Scheme, which in effect is a timetable for the production of planning policy documents. One of the documents within the timetable is a Supplementary Planning Document on design. This will replace the existing document which was adopted in 2011.

The intention is to consult on this document in the Spring of next year and to hopefully adopt a final version early in the Summer. The document when adopted will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

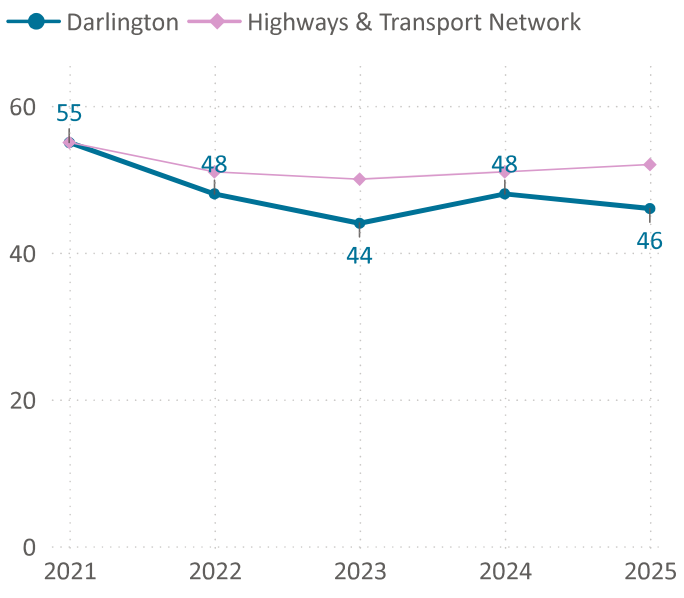
Lead Officer: Trevor Watson: Executive Director - Economy & Public Protection

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Overall Public Satisfaction with Public Transport Theme (National Highways and Transport Survey)

The satisfaction survey results are taken from a survey conducted by the National Highways and Transport Network, an organisation which provides a range of benchmarking services to Local Authorities. The overall public satisfaction with public transport has fallen from 48% in 2024 to 46% in 2025. This is below the Highways and Transport Network average of all the authorities taking part of 52%.

Tees Valley Combined Authority is the Local Transport Authority responsible for public transport and the Council will continue to work in partnership to steer investment into public transport in Darlington to improve satisfaction levels utilising Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding.



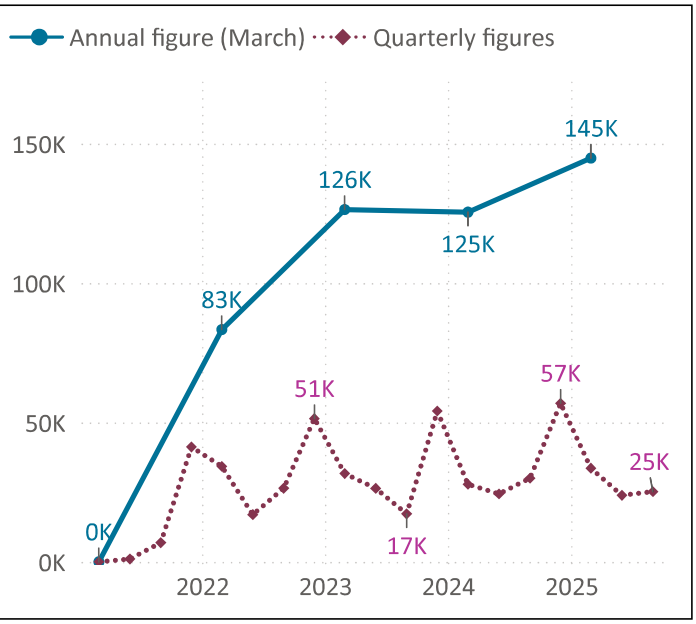
Lead Officer: Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Enable improvements in transport systems by working in partnership with TVCA and public transport operators to deliver the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, including the improvement of bus facilities and the reliability of services

Number of individual attendances at theatre shows

Audience attendances at Darlington Hippodrome shows for Q1 & Q2 2025/2026 were 49,026 (23,844 Apr - Jun / 25,182 Jul - Sep), compared to 54,340 for the same period last financial year. This reduced attendance can be attributed to the loss of the weeklong play, Kim's Convenience in June at short notice as well as a higher number of dramas across the period which attracts smaller audiences. Highest attendances were for The Rocky Horror Show (5,392 attendances over 7 performances), and week ending 20th July (4,730 attendances) that featured a successful run of one-night shows including James Bond Concert Spectacular, Rumours of Fleetwood Mac and Jools Holland.



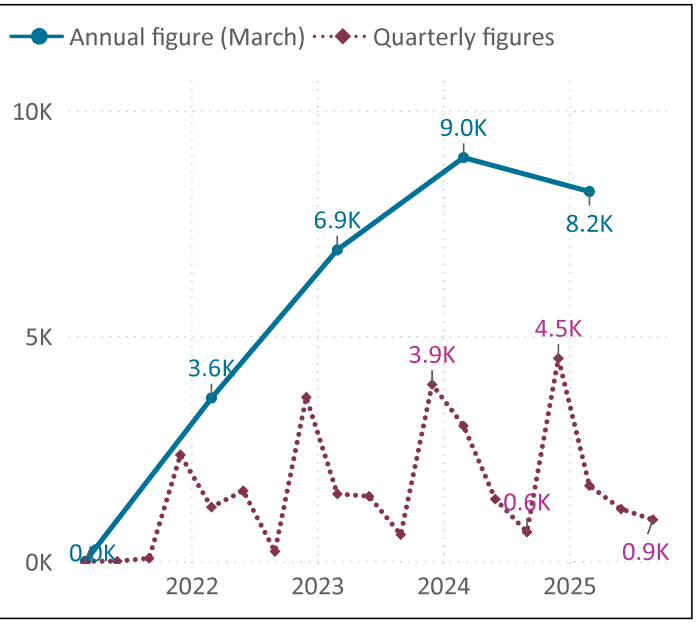
Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

Number of individual attendances at Hullabaloo shows

A total of 2,078 people attended performances at The Hullabaloo Theatre across Q1 & Q2 of 2025/2026 (up 53 attendances on the same period last year). 1,076 of the attendances were for Hipp@The Hullabaloo shows and 1,002 of the attendances were for Hullabaloo family shows. The Hippodrome has seen good attendance levels after a strategic focus on the programming of comedy which appeals to a larger audience, rather than drama.



Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

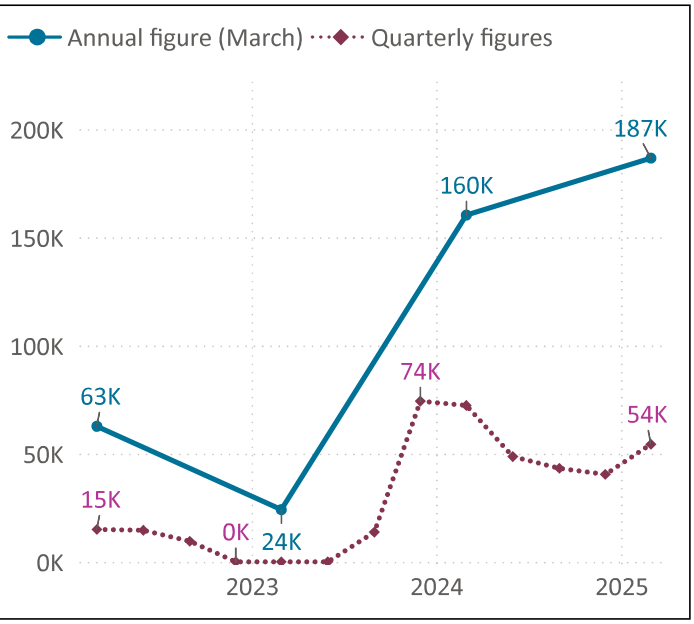
Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

Number of physical visits to Darlington Library (door count)

We have observed an issue with our main door counter. Whilst this is being investigated our monthly figures will be absent.

The library remains thriving, with people visiting for activities, workshops and events, as well as borrowing. The Study sees a diverse range of people working, and the Art Gallery, Centre for Local Studies and The Hive has attracted many people, particularly interested in our programming celebrating Darlington's railway history. Celebrations for our 140th birthday saw 72 babies and toddlers enjoying Rhymetime, and around 120 joined us for our Afternoon Tea Party.



Lead Officer: Mike Crawshaw: Head of Culture & Heritage

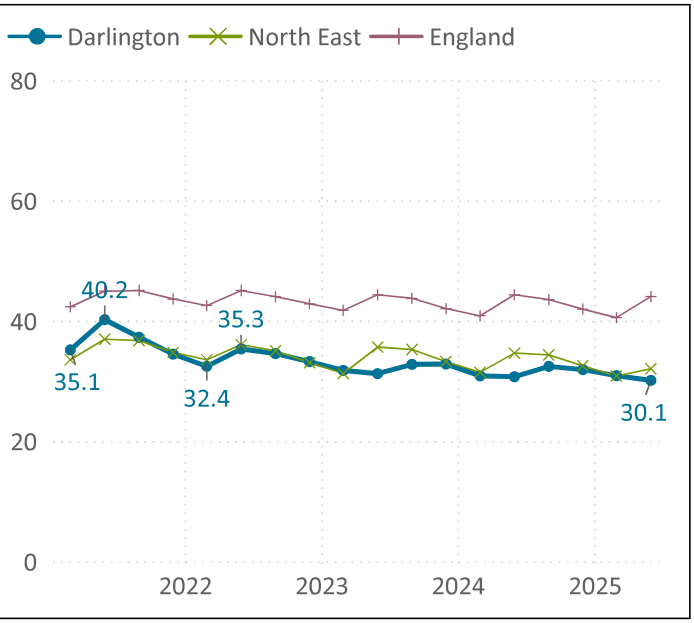
Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy

Percentage of household waste that is collected that is either reused, recycled or composted

The amount of waste that is recycled, composted or reused has fallen in recent years. The Council's performance has dropped to 30.1%. Work continues to be undertaken by Street Scene and communication teams to try to increase recycling and reduce contamination.

As part of the Government's Simpler Recycling Reforms, food waste collections will start in April 2026 and at this time we will transition to a weekly collection of dry recycling too. The service has also been looking into expanding the range of materials that can be recycled at the kerbside with cartons and Tetra Paks able to be presented from April 2026 onwards. This should help to increase overall recycling rates.



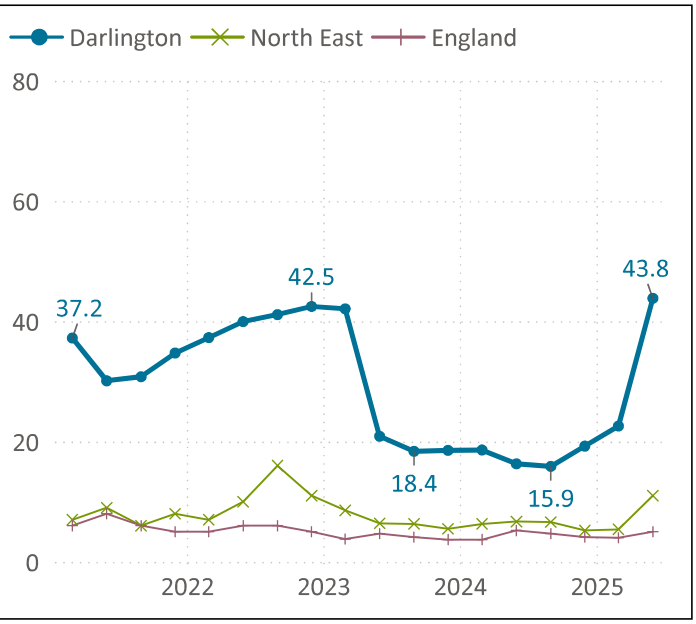
Lead Officer: Ben Grabham: Assistant Director - Environmental Services & Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is landfilled

The percentage of household waste sent to landfill has risen in the first quarter of the year. More of the Council's waste has been sent to landfill due to the availability of merchant capacity for energy recovery in the North East. The Council is above the North East average for landfill, as the majority of other North East Council's have primary contracts with energy recovery facilities.



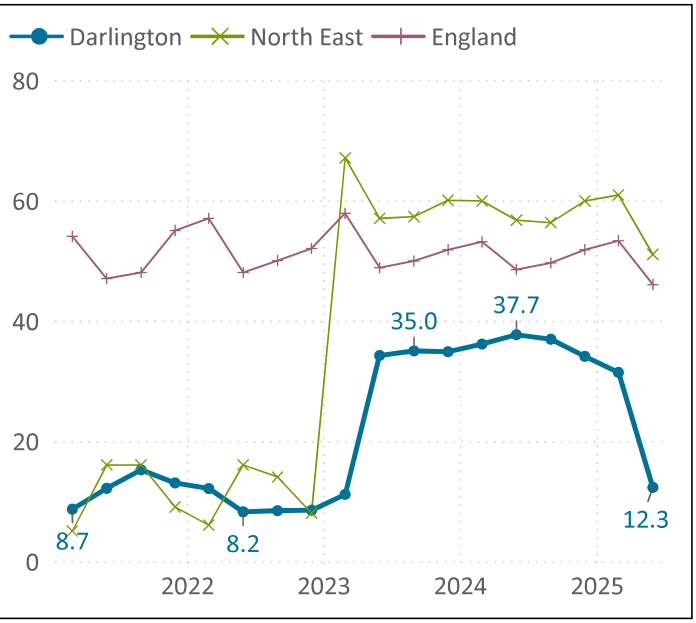
Lead Officer: Ben Grabham: Assistant Director - Environmental Services & Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is used for energy recovery

Performance is generally a result of available markets to accept the material from the Mechanical Biological Treatment process at affordable cost. Ultimately, the more waste, after recycling, that is sent to energy recovery reduces the amount of waste landfilled. Darlington Borough Council is below the North East average, as in most cases other North East authorities have a primary contract through energy recovery facilities.



Lead Officer: Ben Grabham: Assistant Director - Environmental Services & Community Safety

Council Plan Priority: Local Environment

Key Deliverable: Introduce food waste collections and support residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average

CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT APPRAISAL FOR THE VICTORIA EMBANKMENT CONSERVATION AREA INCLUDING PROPOSED BOUNDARY EXTENSIONS

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

Responsible Director -
Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to go out for public consultation with the new draft appraisal for the VICTORIA EMBANKMENT Conservation Area (NB: there is similar report for the new West End Conservation Area draft appraisal). The document also includes proposals to extend the existing conservation area boundary.

Summary

2. This report provides justification for writing a new appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area. It also briefly outlines the contents of the document and the proposed consultation process.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:-

   (a) Cabinet authorises public consultation on the new draft appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

   (b) The draft document is publicised for a period of at least six weeks, to allow members of the public and other stakeholders sufficient time to submit comments.

   (c) The draft document is amended and finalised in light of the comments received during the public consultation period.

   (d) The finalised conservation area appraisal including new boundary is submitted to Councillors for adoption; this will be subject to another Cabinet report.

Reasons

4. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-

   (a) According to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), the Council must review Darlington's conservation area boundaries from time to time and make amendments where necessary. The duty to prepare and review appraisals is also reflected in the Darlington Local Plan, forming part of the Council's proactive approach towards protecting the borough's heritage assets.

   (b) The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was designated on 10 May 1990. An appraisal was first adopted in March 2007. It did not include a reassessment of the original boundary line. The 2007 document is now considered out of date and inadequate.

   (c) The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area used to be on the national Heritage at Risk registers from 2009 until 2023, due to its poor condition.

   (d) The new appraisal offers a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that would be of greater influence in the planning process. It also includes an assessment of the 1990 boundary line and the area's condition, as well as proposals for enhancement to prevent it from becoming 'at risk' again.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

Darlington Borough Council (2007) *Victoria Embankment Conservation Area. Character Appraisal. March 2007:* https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/j21bsuxp/veca_appraisal.pdf
English Heritage (2010) Heritage at Risk. North East 2009
Historic England (2023) Heritage at Risk. North East & Yorkshire Register 2023
https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/annual-heritage-at-risk-registers-and-maps/

David Hand : 6294

Council Plan	Our ambitions – *An inclusive and sustainable economy will have a growing economy that supports our environment and heritage.* Our ambitions – *Thriving places and connected communities will have cultural, heritage and community assets.* Our priorities – *Local environment: Investing in our heritage and culture is important in preserving the identity of our communities, delivering regeneration and economic impact.* Our priorities – Local environment – Key deliverables: *6. Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that […] contribute to a sense of pride in place.*
Addressing inequalities	No impact
Tackling Climate Change	The draft appraisal points out that the achievement of sustainable development also encompasses an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness *against* the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings. Modern materials are likely to decrease the insulating properties of traditional structures by trapping water in the walling, potentially leading to long-term damp problems. In addition, they often have a high-carbon footprint and short lifespan.
Efficient and effective use of resources	In the long term, the new appraisal is meant to assist planning officers, applicants and other stakeholders in making informed decisions on development proposals within the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, which should be more time effective (and deliver desirable outcomes). In addition, if external funding is sought for works within the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, this up-to-date appraisal will be an essential requirement.
Health and Wellbeing	The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness *against* the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, potentially leading to long-term damp problems which can impact negatively on the occupants' health.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area.
Wards Affected	Park East and Park West
Groups Affected	No impact

Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was designated on 10 May 1990.

6. A conservation area is *'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'* (Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The special interest of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review comprises:

   (a) being one of the first roads to be laid out for the residential development of the area to the west of Bank Top Station

   (b) physical and historical links with the grade-II-registered South Park (outside the Conservation area under review)

   (c) associations with renowned local architect George Gordon Hoskins and the former cattle market on High Row (outside the Conservation Area under review)

   (d) a unique character and appearance in Darlington because of the juxtaposition of the straightened river Skerne and the two fine rows of housing facing it

   (e) the general survival of the of the late-Victorian character

7. An appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was first adopted in March 2007. It does not include a reassessment of the original boundary line. The 2007 document is now considered out of date and inadequate.

8. The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area used to be on the national Heritage at Risk registers from 2009 until 2023, due to its poor condition. It was Darlington's first conservation area to ever be on the register. In November 2023, it was removed following an assessment by the Council's Conservation Officer and the North East & Yorkshire Historic Places Adviser of Historic England, concluding that the area was generally in a good (improved) state of maintenance.

9. At the time, it was also considered that a new appraisal of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area would be advisable, in order to prevent it from becoming 'at risk' again.

RECENT ASSESSMENT

10. The new appraisal was drafted between June 2024 and August 2025 by the Council's Conservation Officer.

11. The draft appraisal reassesses the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that can be of greater influence in the planning process. It focuses on the following aspects:

    (a) The special architectural and historic interest of the area

    (b) The condition of the area, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change

    (c) The relevance of the existing boundary line and any proposed changes to it

PROPOSED PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

12. The draft appraisal will be available for consultation for a minimum of six weeks.

13. It will be available:

    (a) In digital format on the Council's website, along with a feedback form that can be completed. Additionally, members of the public can also email a response to the Conservation Officer

    (b) As paper copies (read only) of the document and feedback form at the Town Hall (by appointment only), and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries

14. At the commencement of the public consultation period, the Conservation Officer will directly approach individuals, groups and organisations that are likely to have a particular interest in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, including Councillors of the affected wards.

15. Site notices will be displayed within the proposed boundary extension areas.

Financial Implications

16. The public consultation on the draft appraisal will only require minor expenses for the printing of a few hard copies of the document and feedback forms, and the time of the Conservation Officer for evaluating comments received and amending draft.

17. If, in the future, the document including boundary changes is adopted, one-time advertisement costs for publicising the amended conservation area will occur.

Legal Implications

18. At the time of public consultation there will be none.

19. New conservation area designation (or loss of it) would take effect following the adoption of a new boundary, which would be subject to another Cabinet and a Council meeting.

Estates and Property Advice

20. The proposed boundary changes affect Council land (South Park).

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

21. The draft appraisal points out that the achievement of sustainable development also encompasses an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

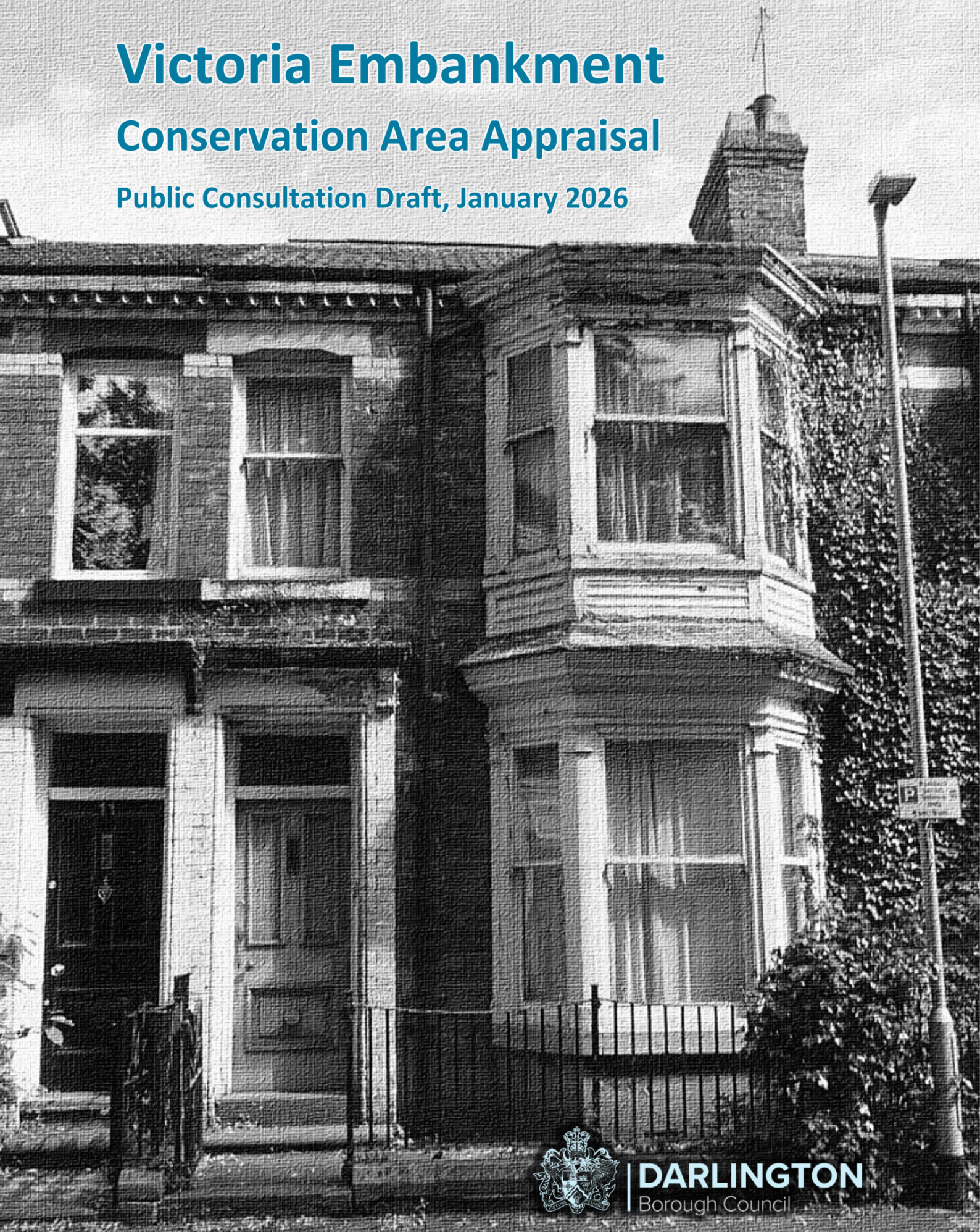
22. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness *against* the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings. Modern materials are likely to decrease the insulating properties of traditional structures by trapping water in the walling, potentially leading to long-term damp problems. In addition, they often have a high-carbon footprint and short lifespan.

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Victoria Embankment

Conservation Area Appraisal

Public Consultation Draft, January 2026



DARLINGTON Borough Council

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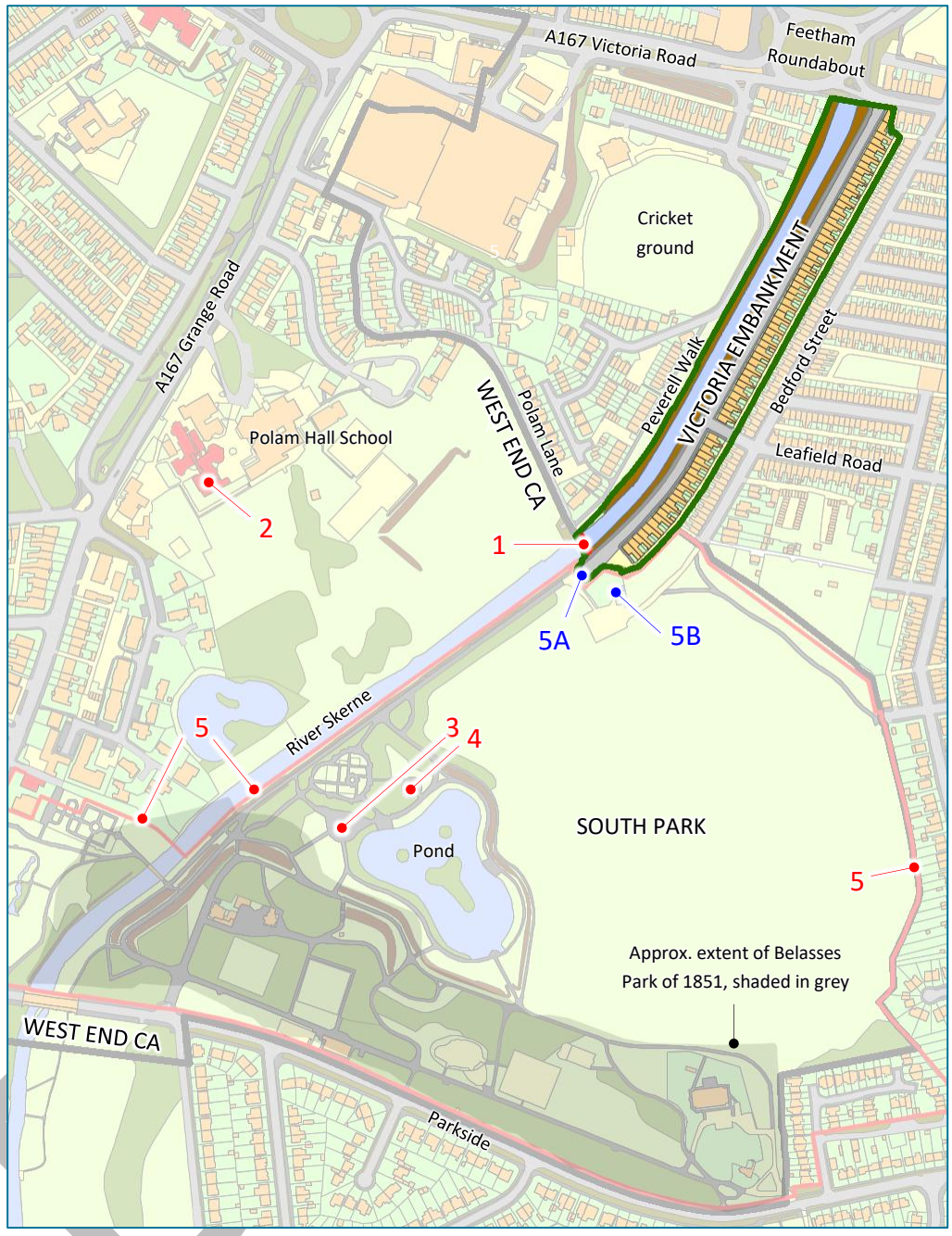
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< Cover image: One of the houses in the northern terrace (no. 12) which retains much of its traditional fabric and features, such as windows, door and projecting bay.

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Map of the Assessment Area



Assessment area including the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area (as designated in May 1990, dark green line) and its relevant surroundings including part of the West End Conservation Area (as amended in April 1999, dark grey line) **at the time of review**. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Designated heritage assets: **[1]** *Polam Lane Bridge* (LB II). **[2]** *Polam Hall* (LB II). **[3]** *Bandstand in South Park* (LB II). **[4]** *Fountain to north east of Bandstand in South Park* (LB II). **[5]** *South Park* (RP II).

LB = Listed Building; RP = Registered Park; II = grade II

Other structures of interest: **[5A]** *Victoria Embankment Entrance*. **[5B]** *Embankment Lodge*.

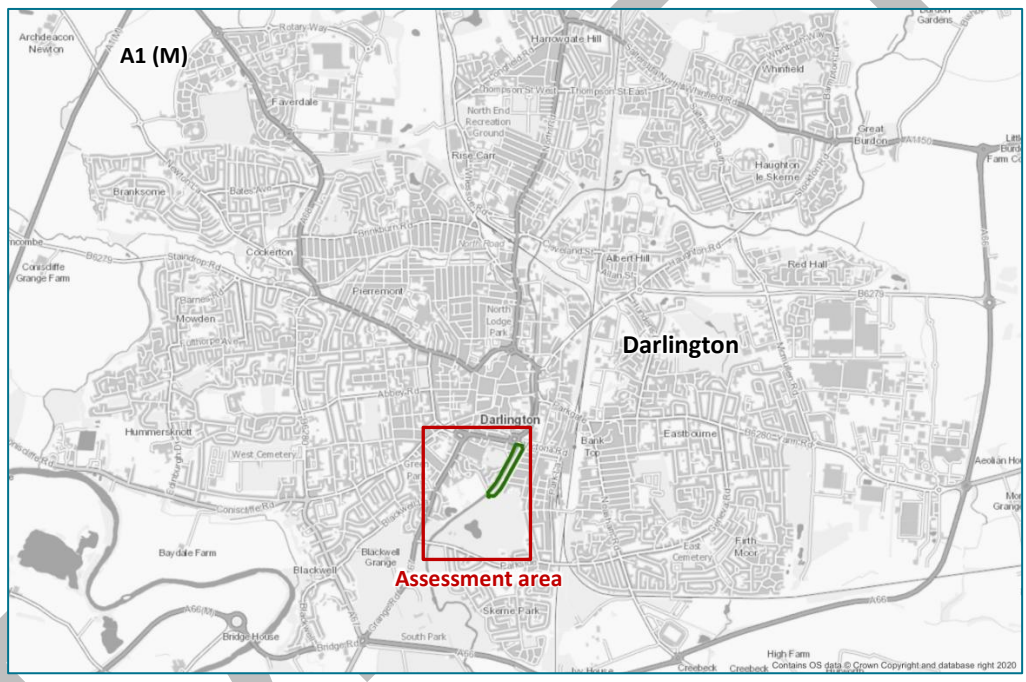
NB: These heritage assets are also designated (as part of the RP).

1.0 Introduction

A character appraisal assesses the **special interest** of a conservation area that merits its designation. It describes and evaluates the contribution made by the tangible (visible) aspects of its special interest which define the area's **character and appearance**. An appraisal aims to be informative and educational about our cultural inheritance and raise public awareness and support. Adopted documents provide an evidence base for managing change and will be a material consideration in the planning process. They can also identify opportunities for enhancement and assist if funding is sought for larger regeneration schemes, such as heritage action zones.

An appraisal for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was first adopted in March 2007. It is now considered out of date and inadequate.

1.1 The Assessment Area



Location of the assessment area including the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area boundary (as designated in May 1990, dark green line) **at the time of review**. (Map contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2024. Licence Number 100023728 2024.)

Darlington is a large town in County Durham in the North East of England which lies adjacent to the A1(M). The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area is located to the south of the town centre and is of a semi-urban nature. At the time of review (see section 1.2), it was the smallest conservation area within Darlington Borough, comprising a long narrow stretch of 2.58 hectares between Victoria Road and South Park. As part of the appraisal, some of its wider surroundings – much of which are in the West End Conservation Area boundary at the time of review[1] – have also been assessed because of their historical and spatial connections with Victoria Embankment (see sections 3.3 & 3.4). Altogether, the Conservation Area and the surroundings make up the assessment area (see map on the previous page for more details). Whilst Victoria Embankment lies in the Park East ward at the time of review, the part of the assessment area to the west of the Skerne is in the Park West ward.

[1] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/sk0c5w0i/west-end-web-map.pdf

The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was designated on 10 May 1990. The appraisal carried out in 2007 did not reassess or redefine the existing boundary line. Consequently, it is **the original designation boundary of 1990 that is being appraised in this document.**

At the time of review, the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area was one of eighteen such designations within Darlington Borough. Further information on our conservation areas can be found on the Council's website (see section 7.3).

The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area used to be on the national Heritage at Risk registers from 2009 until 2023. It was removed from the register following a reassessment of its condition (see section 4.1).

1.2 The Appraisal

This new Victoria Embankment Conservation Area appraisal was drafted between June 2024 and August 2025 by the Darlington Conservation Officer, Gaby Rose. It provides a comprehensive re-evaluation of the Conservation Area and its wider surroundings (the assessment area) including proposed boundary changes. **Throughout the appraisal, the 'time of review' refers to 6 January 2026**, which is the date of the Council's cabinet meeting when the draft document was first made available to the public (see section 1.3).

The appraisal process offers an opportunity to reassess the area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that can be of greater influence in the planning process (see chapter 2.0). Whilst it covers many aspects of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area and its surroundings, it cannot be completely comprehensive. **Omission of particular buildings, features or spaces does not imply that they are of no interest.**

The appraisal focusses on the following aspects:

- The special architectural and historic interest of the area at the time of review (see chapter 3.0)
- The condition of the area under review, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change (see chapter 4.0)
- The relevance of the boundary line at the time of review and any proposed changes to it (see chapter 5.0)
- The finalised boundary line which will be adopted (see chapter 6.0)

1.3 Public Consultation on Draft Appraisal

At the cabinet meeting on 6 January 2026, Councillors approved the public consultation on the document ***Victoria Embankment Conservation Area Appraisal – Public Consultation Draft, January 2026*.**

The draft is available for consultation on the Council's website from DATE to 17:00 on DATE 2026, along with a feedback form which we would like you to complete. Paper copies of the document (read only) and feedback form are available at the Town Hall (by appointment only – email conservation@darlington.gov.uk), and at the libraries on Crown Street and Cockerton Green/Woodland Road during normal

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opening hours[2]. Site notices have been displayed within the proposed boundary extension areas (see section 5.1). We have directly approached individuals, groups and organisations that are likely to have a particular interest in Victoria Embankment and the appraisal. Following the consultation period, the draft will be reviewed in light of the comments received and finalised before being formally adopted by the Council.

1.4 Adoption of Appraisal

This section will be provided at a later stage of the appraisal process.

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[2] https://www2.darlington.gov.uk/our-libraries

2.0 Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This includes an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment[3]. Some of the policies under *16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* specifically refer to conservation areas or designated heritage assets, which include conservation areas. A **heritage asset** is a *building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*[4]. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance[5], which forms the basis for all plan-making and decision-making.



All heritage assets within a conservation area are classified as designated heritage assets (see section 2.1).

The *Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036 – Adopted February 2022*[6] is compliant with the NPPF. At the time of review, the following policies applied to the whole of the assessment area (see Policies Map). The text typed in grey does not affect the Conservation Area under review. Please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording:

> **Policy TC 1 Darlington Town Centre**. Proposals for main Town Centre uses should be located within the Town Centre Boundary identified on the Policies Map. Where main Town Centre uses are proposed outside of the boundary a sequential test should be applied in accordance with national policy.
>
> **Policy TC 6 Darlington - Town Centre Fringe** (only applies to the area shown on the Policies Map). Development and regeneration will be promoted to deliver a range of mixed-use development and environmental improvements. The uses likely to be acceptable include economic, commercial and residential. The development should conserve historic buildings and where appropriate enhance the historic environment in the area, with an emphasis on creating opportunities for the celebration of Darlington's heritage.
>
> **Policy ENV 1 Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment (A) Designated Heritage Assets**. Proposals should conserve those elements which contribute to such asset's significance, including any contribution made by their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.
>
> **Policy ENV 1 Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment (B) Conservation Areas**. Proposals affecting a conservation area should preserve and enhance those elements identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the significance of that area. Development will not be permitted that would

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3 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 7 & 8
4 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, page 73
5 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 202
6 Darlington Borough Council 2022

lead to the loss of public or private open spaces within or adjacent to conservation areas where the existing openness makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area or its setting unless the public benefit demonstrably outweighs the harm.

Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character (C – South Park). The character and local distinctiveness of the urban area will be protected and improved by retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban and rural parklands.

Policy ENV 4 Green and Blue Infrastructure (existing Blue/Green Corridor along the **river Skerne**; proposed Green Corridor: **Victoria Road** – see Policies Map). Will be protected, and where appropriate, improved and extended to provide a quality, safe and accessible network of well connected, multi-functional open spaces for recreation and play and to enhance visual amenity, biodiversity, landscape and productivity.

2.1 Conservation Area Designation

Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), "the Act", conservation areas are ***areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance***. They are designated heritage assets. Their boundaries are not the same as any development limits boundaries (policy H 3) shown on the Darlington Local Plan Policies Maps[7] and have a different function, although in places they may coincide.

Section 69 of the Act requires the Council to determine which parts of the borough are areas of special interest and designate them as conservation areas. When considering designation, the Council should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack interest[8]. The courts have held it legitimate to include within a conservation area the setting of buildings that form the heart of that area[9]. Examples of types of special architectural and historic interest which justify designation include areas[10]:

- with a high number of nationally or locally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations
- which are linked to a particular individual, industry, custom or pastime with a particular local interest
- where an earlier, historically significant layout is visible in the modern street pattern
- where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate
- with a quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, greenspaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those on the

7 Darlington Borough Council 2022
8 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 204
9 Historic England 2017, page 4
10 Historic England 2019, page 27

Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest

Conservation area designation (as well as the reassessment of an existing area) is generally carried out by providing a draft appraisal which will go out to public consultation, although there is no legal requirement to do so. In light of any comments received, the document will then be amended, finalised and formally adopted by the Council (see sections 1.3 & 1.4). All adopted appraisals can be found on our website (see section 7.3).

2.2 Implications for the Council

Following designation, the Council has a **duty to review** Darlington's conservation area boundaries from time to time and make amendments where necessary[11]. In addition, section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires us from time to time to **formulate proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas and consult the public on them**. The duty to prepare and review appraisals and management plans, which may set out a variety of measures to help safeguard and improve a conservation area, is also reflected in the Darlington Local Plan (see chapter 2.0), forming part of our proactive approach towards protecting the borough's heritage assets.

In the exercise of planning functions, the Council shall pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the significance[12] as well as the character or appearance of our conservation areas[13]. Planning functions include both the formulation of robust conservation policies (Local Plan) and the determination of applications for planning permission or advertisement consent, helping us manage change within an area and its setting. The Council should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and their setting to enhance or better reveal their significance[14]. Although character appraisals will inform planning decisions, they alone do not determine whether development would be acceptable or not. The impact of proposed development upon a conservation area, or its setting, will also be weighed against other material considerations when reaching a decision.

National planning policy requires us to have up-to-date evidence about our historical environment and assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their surroundings, and make this information publicly available[15]. The *Victoria Embankment Conservation Area Appraisal* provides such assessment (see chapter 3.0). It is published on our website (see section 7.3).

Finally, the Council is also required to regularly assess Darlington's conservation areas with regards to their condition (see section 4.1). Character appraisals or shorter surveys identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into management plans specific to an area's needs[16]. If a conservation area is considered to be 'at risk', the Council will liaise with Historic England. If confirmed to be in poor condition, it

[11] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 69
[12] Darlington Borough Council 2022, paragraph 9.1.18
[13] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72
[14] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 219
[15] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 205-206
[16] Historic England 2019, page 29

will be put on the national Heritage at Risk Register[17]. We will then work with Historic England to find solutions to remove the conservation area from the register.

2.3 Implications for the Public

Conservation area status results in additional planning controls:

Demolition. Under section 196D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), it is an offence to carry out, cause or permit demolition of unlisted etc. buildings inside conservation areas without planning permission.

Permitted development rights. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), "the Order", defines conservation areas as **article 2(3) land**. Schedule 2 of the Order outlines which permitted development rights have been removed from article 2(3) land. This means that planning permission will be required to carry out those types of development, affecting:

- Part 1, Class A – enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class AA - enlargement of a dwellinghouse by construction of additional storeys
- Part 1, Class B – additions etc. to the roof of a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class E – buildings etc. incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class G – chimneys, flues etc. on a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class H – microwave antenna on a dwellinghouse
- Part 3, Class M – certain uses to dwellinghouses
- Part 3, Class Q — buildings on agricultural units and former agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses
- Part 7, Class A – extensions etc. of commercial, business or service premises
- Part 7, Class C – click and collect facilities
- Part 7, Class D – modification of shop loading bays
- Part 7, Class H – extensions etc. of industrial and warehouse
- Part 7, Class L – development at waste management facilities
- Part 7, Class M – extensions etc. for schools, colleges, universities and hospitals
- Part 9, Class D – toll road facilities
- Part 14, Class A – installation or alteration etc. of solar equipment on domestic premises
- Part 14, Class J – installation or alteration etc. of solar equipment on non-domestic premises
- Part 14, Class K – installation or alteration etc. of stand-alone solar equipment on non-domestic premises
- Part 14, Class N – installation etc. of flue for biomass heating system on non-domestic premises

[17] Available on Historic England's website

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- Part 14, Class O – installation etc. of flue for combined heat and power on non-domestic premises
- Part 15, Class B – electricity undertakings
- Part 16, Class A – electronic communications code operators
- Part 16, Class B – other electronic communications development
- Part 15, Class C – other electronic communications development: microwave antenna
- Part 19, Class B – extension or alteration of an operational Crown building
- Part 19, Class T – electronic communication apparatus etc for national security purposes
- Part 19, Class TA – development by the Crown on a closed defence site
- Part 20, Class ZA - demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place
- Part 20, Class A – new dwellinghouses on detached blocks of flats
- Part 20, Class AA – new dwellinghouses on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use
- Part 20, Class AB – new dwellinghouses on terrace buildings in commercial or mixed use
- Part 20, Class AC – new dwellinghouses on terrace buildings in use as dwellinghouses
- Part 20, Class AD - new dwellinghouses on detached buildings in use as dwellinghouses

Further permitted development rights can be removed by the Council imposing **directions under article 4(1)** of the Order. Consequently, planning permission will be required for the types of development specified in that direction. Article 4 directions can be useful tools, as they can prevent further decline of an area or even revert harm that has already been caused.

Works to trees. Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that anyone intending to carry out works to a tree – with a stem diameter greater than 75mm (3 inches) when measured at 1.5 metres (5 feet) above ground level[18] – in a conservation area must give at least six weeks notice to the Council. This gives us the opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order. The work may go ahead before the end of the six-week period if the Council gives consent. With regard to works to a dead or dangerous tree, unless there is an immediate risk of serious harm, a notice of five days must be given before carrying out the works.

The additional planning controls as well as improvement measures set out in a management plan (see section 2.2) help to ensure that existing and future generations can enjoy the benefits a conservation area can offer. Conservation areas that are well preserved can enhance economic well-being and quality of life, as well as offer a certain amount of continuity and stability. Likewise, conservation-led

[18] The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, section 15

change based on informed decisions can make a positive contribution enabling communities to regenerate. The value of a conservation area can be beneficial to both property owners/occupiers and developers, and estate agents may put increasing emphasis on such a location when advertising properties.

2.4 Other Designated Heritage Assets within the Area

Besides its conservation area designation, the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review also includes one listed building. Within the assessment area, there are three further listed buildings, a registered park and the southern and eastern parts of the West End Conservation Area, as shown on the map at the beginning of this document, all of which are designated heritage assets.

Under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), listed buildings are ***buildings of special architectural or historic interest***. Under section 8C of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (as amended), Historic England compiles a register of ***gardens and other land situated in England and appearing to them to be of special historic interest***.

Listed buildings and registered parks & gardens are included on the **National Heritage List for England** (Historic England website). They are graded according to their special interest as follows:

- Grade I – of exceptional interest; nationally only 2.5% of all listed buildings and 9% of all registered parks & gardens are in this category
- Grade II* – of more than special interest; 5.8% of all listed buildings and 27% of all registered parks & gardens are in this category
- Grade II – of special interest; 91.7% of all listed buildings and 62% of all registered parks & gardens are in this category

Note that not only 'buildings' can be listed but also other structures and objects, such as bridges, bandstands and railings.

With regards to the extent of listing, the following applies[19]:

- The list entry on the National Heritage List of England only *identifies* the 'principal listed building'.
- **The whole of the exterior and interior** of the principal listed building, including any later alterations, are listed.
- **Any object or structure fixed** to the principal listed building at the date of listing are also included.
- **Any freestanding object** (e.g. birdbath or statue) **or structure** (e.g. outbuilding or wall) within the **curtilage** of the principal listed building which has formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948 is also treated as part of the listed building.

The identification of curtilage is 'quintessentially a matter of fact'. Legal precedent has established three main criteria for its assessment[20]:

[19] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 1(5)
[20] Mynors 2006, page 115ff.

- the **physical layout** of the principal listed building and any other objects/structures
- the **ownership**(s) of the principal listed building and any other objects/structures, historically and at the time of listing (or 1 January 1969 if listed earlier)
- the **functional relationship**(s) between the principal listed building and any other objects/structures, historically and at the time of listing (or 1 January 1969 if listed earlier)

The Council determines whether an object or structure is curtilage listed. For any queries about the extent of listing, please contact conservation@darlington.gov.uk.

Works that affect any part of the listed building are likely to require **Listed Building Consent**. This includes works to:

- the exterior and interior of the principal listed building, including any later alterations
- any object or structure fixed to the principal listed building at the date of listing
- any freestanding object or structure within the curtilage of the principal listed building

Some works may also require **planning permission** or **advertisement consent**. For further information check our website or the Planning Portal (see section 7.3).

A registered park or garden is not protected by a separate consent regime. Nevertheless, in planning applications made to the Council great weight will be given to their conservation[21]. Any substantial harm to or loss of grade-II-registered parks or gardens should be exceptional[22]. The Council is required to consult the Gardens Trust on all applications concerning a registered park or garden.

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[21] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 212
[22] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 213

3.0 Assessing Significance

When appraising an existing or proposed new conservation area, we need to look at the detailed as well as wider interests (or values) of a place in order to better understand its dynamics. It is helpful to use the cultural and natural heritage values provided in *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* for such assessment[23]:

- **Evidential value:** the physical remains of past human activity (e.g. surviving structures and features) (see sections 3.2 to 3.5)
- **Historical value**: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected to a place; this tends to be illustrative or associative (see sections 3.2 & 3.3)
- **Aesthetic value:** the sensory and intellectual stimulation people draw from a place; it can be the result of the design of a place or its development over time (see sections 3.4 & 3.5)
- **Communal value:** the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it (e.g. residents and other stakeholders) (see section 3.6)

Note that elements can possess more than one heritage value.

The sum of all heritage values/interests defines the significance of a place. Only by defining the significance of an area is it possible to assess how its character and appearance is vulnerable to harm or loss. This also helps reduce potential uncertainty for owners and others when investment or development in the area is considered. Moreover, the understanding of significance provides the basis for developing and implementing local policies (see chapter 2.0) and management strategies that will sustain the heritage values of a place in its setting[24].

Conservation areas are designated for their **special architectural and historic interest** (see section 2.1). Most such areas have both, although one may be considered more prominent than the other. Key elements in defining the special interest are[25]:

- the still-visible effects/impact of the area's historic development on its planform, townscape, character and architectural style and social/ historic associations and the importance of that history
- architectural quality and built form, including any particular architectural interest resulting from a past use, planning or design, important phases of development, the integrity or group value of buildings or provision of a record of development over time through the architectural record
- the contribution to the special interest made by the setting on the area, that is what the setting can contribute to the significance of a heritage asset, and how it can allow that significance to be appreciated
- local distinctiveness and a sense of place which make the area unique, including the influence of sources of building materials and historic industries that have come to contribute significantly to the area's present identity

[23] English Heritage 2008, page 27ff
[24] English Heritage 2008, page 14
[25] Historic England 2019, 15

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- how the places within it are experienced by the people who live and work there and visitors to the area (including both daily and seasonal variations if possible)
- the design, planting or past use of open spaces, green areas, parks and gardens, and trees, including the representation of particular species or varieties that reflect key periods of horticultural interest, collecting or design
- designated and other heritage assets, their intrinsic importance and the contribution they make to the townscape – this will normally provide an indication of past recognition of special interest, whilst a focus of assets of a similar type may suggest the area as a whole has a particular special interest

3.1 Summary of Special Interest

At the time of review, the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area comprises the following elements of special interest:

Victoria Embankment was **one of the first roads to be laid out** for the residential development of the area to the west of Bank Top Station[26].

Victoria Embankment has **physical and historical links with the grade-II-registered South Park**, which is outside the conservation area under review:

- **The soil excavated to create the pond** in the park's extension area of 1880-82 was used to provide the embankment upon which the terraced houses were built.
- **The avenue of trees along the river** (and historically also on the eastern side of the road) continues from Victoria Embankment into the park, with the mature broad-leaved lime trees being of approximately the same age.
- **The northern park entrance of 1882**, which is contemporary with the terraced houses and precedes the current main (south) entrance, connects Victoria Embankment and South Park.
- The grade-II-listed **Polam Lane Bridge** inside the Conservation Area under review *forms an essential element* of South Park[27].
- There are **key views** between South Park and Victoria Embankment.

Victoria Embankment also has **associations with:**

- renowned local **architect George Gordon Hoskins** who provided the name 'Victoria Embankment'
- the former **cattle market on High Row** within the town centre (outside the Conservation Area under review), where the cast-iron posts and wrought-iron chains along the riverbank/pavement originated from

[26] North of England Civic Trust 2017, page 25

[27] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1391730

Victoria Embankment has a **unique character and appearance** in Darlington because of the juxtaposition of the straightened river Skerne and the two fine rows of middle-class housing facing it. There is a marked contrast between the hard frontage of the linear red brick architecture and the rhythm created by the two-storey bay windows and prominent chimney stacks, and the 'natural' riverscape with an impressive avenue of mature lime trees paired on the banks which almost resembles a Dutch-style canal.

Despite some harmful alterations, **the late-Victorian character has generally been retained.** Surviving features of interest on the terraces include bay windows, chimney stacks, decorative brick banding/eaves, vent grilles, panelled doors, traditional sash windows with old/coloured glazing, a Victorian roof light, tiled entrance paths, stone copings/ thresholds of dwarf boundary walling, metal railing remains, and original openings in the tall rear boundary walling (many now blocked). Features of interest in the public realm comprise the distinct scoria paving in the back lanes, the cast-iron posts and wrought-iron chains placed on a sandstone kerb between the eastern riverbank and pavement, Polam Lane Bridge, the northern entrance into South Park and the boundary walling/fencing to Embankment Lodge.

Details of the above are provided in the following sections.

3.2 Layout, Planform and Setting

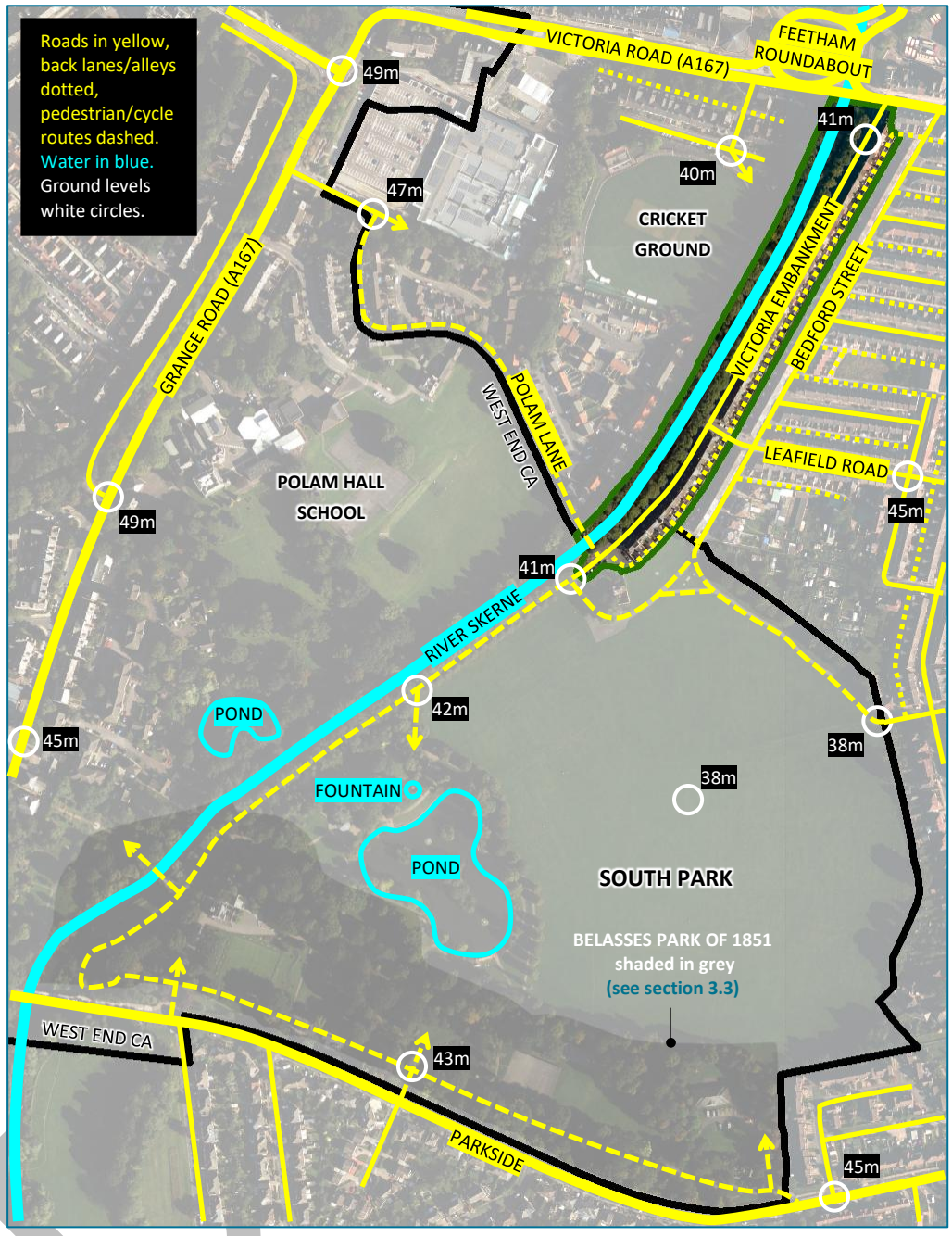
This section provides some of the evidential value (e.g. the existing layout, features, etc.) of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review and its relevant surroundings as well as some of its historical value (e.g. links, associations).

The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area lies just a few hundred meters to the south of Darlington town centre and is separated from it by the dual-carriageway inner ring road built in 1967-1973. Its underlying bedrock is made of calcareous mudstones as well as alluvium[28] (i.e. loose, unconsolidated sediments like clay, silt, sand or gravel deposited by flowing water). At its north end, to the southeast of Feethams Roundabout along the inner ring road, the Conservation Area borders Victoria Road which is on an east/west alignment leading from the roundabout to Bank Top Station (outside the assessment area). At the time of review, the south end of Victoria Embankment is adjoined by the West End Conservation Area.

The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review is orientated in a northeast/southwest direction with a very gentle curve at its southern end. The linear element makes a strong contribution throughout, with the canalised river Skerne to the west, lined by mature trees and other vegetation on both banks; the road of Victoria Embankment to the east; and then two rows of terraced housing with corresponding back lanes. The latter are separated by Leafield Road which branches off Victoria Embankment in its lower third in a perpendicular manner, heading east. At the south end of the Conservation Area under review is an entrance into the adjoining South Park, where the tree lines along the riverbanks continue. Just north of the entrance is a pedestrian/cyclist bridge across the river leading northwest onto Polam Lane outside the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area.

[28] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-stones-england

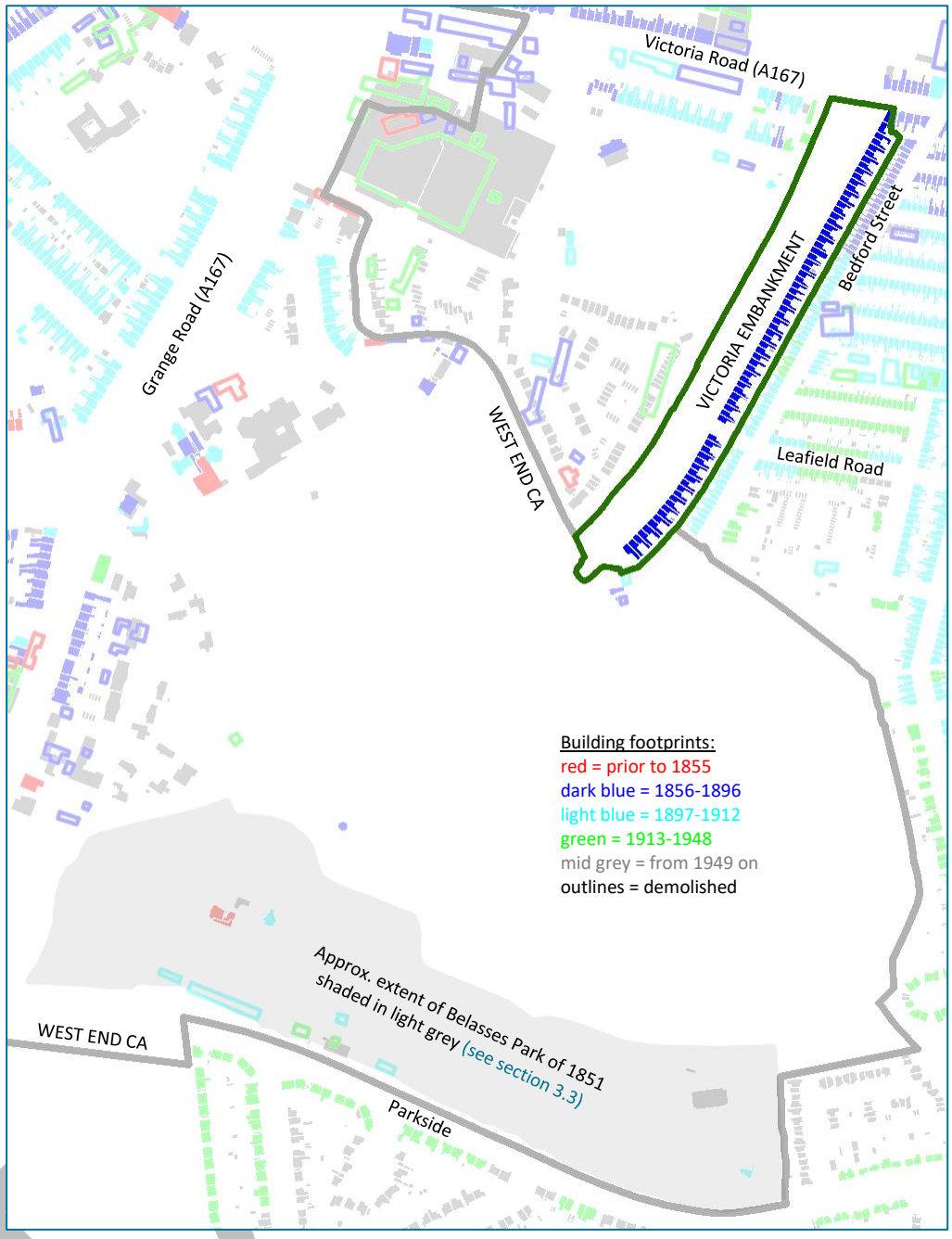
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Layout of assessment area including the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area (as designated in May 1990, dark green line) and its relevant surroundings including part of the West End Conservation Area (as amended in April 1999, black line) **at the time of review**. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The immediate setting outside the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review comprises Victoria Road lined with shops, etc. to the north; extensive nineteenth-century workers' class terracing to the east; South Park to the south; and a cricket ground and mainly modern housing to the west across the river, although there are also rows of traditional terraces at the northern end, all of which are well concealed behind the mature vegetation along the western bank of the Skerne. The road levels within the Conservation Area under review are roughly constant at around 41m, with the riverbank dropping down a couple of meters. Outside the boundary, the land rises to the east towards Bank Top Station and to the west beyond the river Skerne. The large greenspace in South Park has a dip at 38m[29].

[29] https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/map-kb57/England/

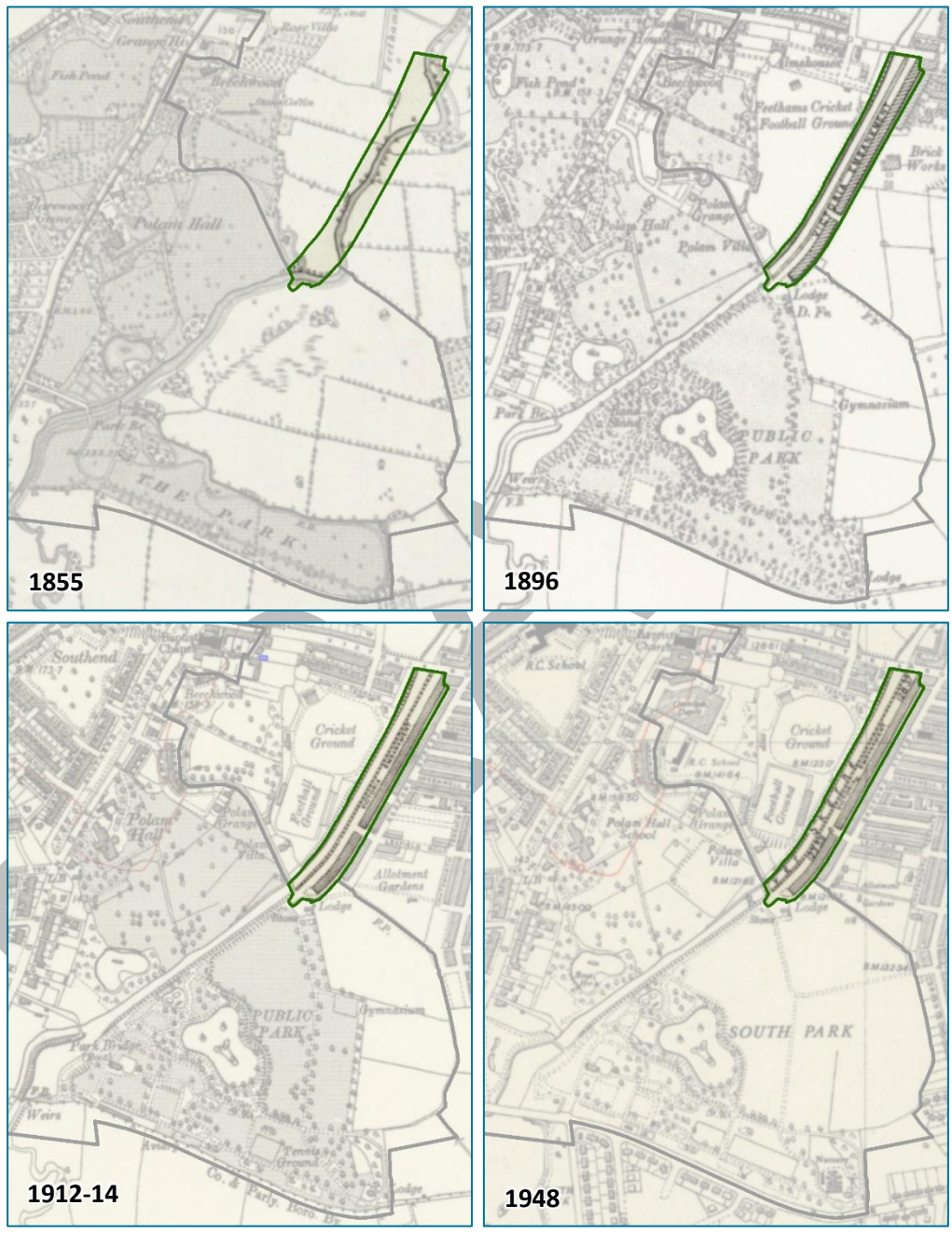


Planform – map regression of assessment area including the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area (as designated in May 1990, dark green line) and its relevant surroundings including part of the West End Conservation Area (as amended in April 1999, dark grey line) **at the time of review**. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The map regression (above) shows that the planform of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review dates from the second half of the nineteenth century (dark blue building footprints). Later alterations had no significant impact on the original layout. Outside the Conservation Area boundary, the planform of the historical development has largely been retained to the east of the assessment area, with later/modern housing to the southeast. In contrast, more considerable changes occurred on land to the west of the Skerne, with some of the modern development having erased historical patterns.

3.3 Historical Development

This section describes the historical value of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review and its relevant surroundings using information retrieved from secondary sources (see chapter 7.0). The listed buildings and registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other (surviving) structures of interest are assigned their [5/LETTER].



Six-inch OS maps of assessment area reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) and overlaid with the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area boundary (as designated in May 1990, dark green line) and part of the West End Conservation Area boundary (as amended in April 1999, dark grey line) **at the time of review**. The map dates provided are from the time of survey (i.e. not publication).

The six-inch 1855 OS map (see above) shows that in the location of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review there used to be farmland through

which the river Skerne took its natural, meandering course. Some distance to the south was 'the Park' (outside the Conservation Area under review), bordering the river to the east. This was also known as Bellasses Park which had opened to the public in November 1851, the first municipal park in the Northeast of England. Upon his death in 1640, James Bellasses of Owton, Hartlepool, had bequeathed a plot of nearly twenty acres to trustees who would rent it out to farmers. This had worked well for the following two hundred years. However, by the time of the Public Health Act of 1848, Darlington had become an overcrowded, heavy-industrial town with poor living conditions. Consequently, the newly elected board of health leased Bellasses' former fields from the trustees and turned them into a park for recreational purposes of the public.

One of the five committee members of the board of health responsible for the creation of the Park was Robert Thompson (died in 1884). He and his older brother William (1810-1879) were directors and auditors of the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company and the Middlesbrough, Stockton and Yarm Water Company. They also owned the Darlington & Stockton Times. In 1850, the self-made Thompson brothers had acquired the Polam Hall Estate which comprised land both to the west, where [2] *Polam Hall*[30] is located, and east of the river (all outside the Conservation Area under review). Having been on a financial downward spiral since Black Friday 1866, the Thompsons sold the mansion and its grounds to Quaker MP Arthur Pease, one of their largest creditors, in 1872. They kept the Little Polam Estate, a 24-acre plot to the east of the river comprising low-lying fields upon which the Park's extension would soon be built on[31].



[2] *Polam Hall,* outside the Conservation Area under review, grade II listed, looking northeast, with the original villa of 1794 being the central three bays and the bay to the right/south being the late-1820s extension designed by architect Ignatius Bonomi. From 1854 on, the Thompson brothers let the site to the Procter sisters, who had founded a Quaker school in Darlington; the school moved to the Polam Hall premises in the mid-1850s[32]. The building is now used as a part of a years-1-to-11 school complex. (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2023)

In 1877, Darlington council, who had replaced the board of health as the local ruling body in 1867, acquired Bellasses Park from the trustees. It became then known as the People's Park. When in early 1878 the Thompsons slipped into liquidation, the council also bought the Little Polam Estate from them for £3,800.

30 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121294
31 Lloyd 2005, pages 9-15, 18-23 & 100
32 AB Heritage Limited 2023, pages 24-25

The council's first project was the river Skerne. In 1880, it was canalised (straightened) along the boundary of Little Polam Estate and immediately to the north of it where Victoria Embankment was built, in order to alleviate flooding in the town centre. At the same time, the water level was raised by about three feet by building a weir at Victoria Embankment and a dam at what is now Parkside, creating a small boating lagoon at the southwestern corner of the People's Park[33]. Boats were available for hire for use on the stretch between the Victoria Embankment and the lagoon[34]. The 2007 conservation area appraisal suggests that a landing stage was built close to Victoria Road bridge to enable boat users to alight onto the park, although there seems to be no clear evidence for this.

Also in 1880, the borough surveyor, Thomas Smith, designed the layout for the new Public Park, extending the existing park to the north. Excavating a large ornamental pond with islands inside the extension area, the soil was moved to provide a bank for the two middle-class terraces to be constructed at Victoria Embankment[35], as it would have been impossible to build houses onto the marshy land[36]. At first, the new housing was intended to be called Park Avenue. Then Skerne Embankment was suggested, because the river had just been straightened. And finally, in December 1882, renowned local architect George Gordon Hoskins proposed Victoria Embankment which was settled upon. At the southern end of the road, the new [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* into the Public Park had opened in September of the same year[37]. Prior to that, the park could only be approached from the southwest coming off Grange Road and then across the Skerne. However, with its northward extension, an additional entrance closer to the town centre was provided[38].



[5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* of 1882 looking southwest into the contemporary **[5]** *South Park* extension bordering the southern end of the Conservation Area under review. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

In March 1891, designs and estimates for building [1] *Polam Lane Bridge*[39] across the Skerne at the south end of Victoria Embankment were put out to tender[40]. The iron-and-steel bridge was constructed shortly afterwards, connecting Victoria Embankment and the Public Park with the west side of the river.

33 Lloyd 2005, pages 21-23 & 29
34 Flynn 1994, photo 10
35 Lloyd 2005, pages 23 & 92
36 Flynn 1988, photo 105
37 Lloyd 2005, page 92
38 Flynn 1994, photo 10
39 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1391730
40 Lloyd 2005, pages 92-93



[1] *Polam Lane Bridge,* grade II listed, at the south end of the Conservation Area under review. Coursed rusticated sandstone abutments with impost blocks (not shown) each surmounted by two pillars extending above the deck, topped with moulded capstones. The abutments support a steel girder bearing the bridge deck, supplemented by a pair of cast-iron Corinthian columns placed in the centre of the riverbed. Wrought-iron ornamental balustrading with independent wooden handrails supported by curvilinear iron brackets. Also note the cast-iron posts with chains lining the pavement; the modern galvanised chains to the bottom stand out negatively. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

In the 1890s, the cast-iron post and wrought-iron chains that on market days had kept cattle off the pavement on High Row in the town centre (outside the Conservation Area under review) were relocated to Victoria Embankment[41], and were placed between the pavement and the riverbank.

In 1893, the wooden, canvas-topped bandstand of 1882 to the northwest of the pond inside the People's Park was replaced with a cast-iron octagonal [3] *Bandstand*[42] in the same location. It was built by Glasgow firm Walter Macfarlane and Co, who were a leader in ornamental ironwork at the time. The model chosen from the pattern book was number 279, which used to be a very popular type[43].



[3] *Bandstand in South Park,* grade II listed, outside the Conservation Area under review, looking southeast. At the time of review this triple-designated heritage asset is located within the West End Conservation Area. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

41 Flynn 1988, photo 105
42 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121246
43 Lloyd 2005, page 119

The six-inch 1896 OS map (see above) shows the two newly constructed terraces along Victoria Embankment as well as the slightly later [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* at the southern end of the road. Near the bridge is also the [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* into the recently enlarged Public Park, with the tree-lined riverside walk carrying on from the roadside into the park. The extension area features [5B] Embankment Lodge, a former gardener's cottage[44] with a drinking fountain dated 1858, at its northern end and the new [3] *Bandstand* near the recently excavated pond. To the east of Victoria Embankment, brickworks and more terraced housing (outside the Conservation Area under review) are beginning to spring up, the latter seemingly connected to the industrial site. It is quite possible that the bricks produced here were also used for the construction of the Victoria Embankment houses. There are further building rows along Victoria Road (outside the Conservation Area under review). Bordering the west of the Skerne are [2] Polam Hall within its large grounds and the Feetham Cricket and Football Ground, the latter two adjoining the Conservation Area under review.



[5B] *Embankment Lodge* within **[5]** *South Park* outside the Conservation Area under review. ***Left:*** View from Victoria Embankment looking southeast. Note that the boundary wall pier matches those of the **[5A]** *Victoria Embankment Entrance*. The dwarf walling and iron fencing to the right (the latter also matching the entrance gates' design) abut the Park's northern entrance (outside this view to the right). ***Right:*** Drinking fountain on the Lodge's southern boundary wall, viewed from inside the park. At the time of review, the Lodge and fountain are within the West End Conservation Area. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

Postcards of c1900[45] [46] show a uniformity and cohesion in design of the brick terraces with the chimney stacks and two-storey bay windows forming a strong rhythm along Victoria Embankment. It is notable that window frames and doors are not painted white but a very dark colour. The shallow front gardens have spear-headed railings. The eastern pavement is flagged, whilst the western one and the road have rolled surfaces, possibly macadam. The road is lined with scoria-paved gutters next to the wide stone kerbs of the pavements upon which the odd gas streetlight has been placed (two can be identified). The eastern gutter is lined with young trees; these were later removed as residents complained that they obstructed the light. The Skerne and grassed eastern riverbank with lime trees and post-and-chain 'fence' feature more prominently than today due to the vegetation being less mature and overgrown. On the eastern bank near [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* there are no trees,

[44] Lloyd 2005, page 92
[45] Flynn 1988, photo 105
[46] Flynn 1994, photo 10

enabling a much clearer view onto it. In the distance, the brick boundary walling of [5B] *Embankment Lodge* and the [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* can be seen at the southern end, and the double-arched Victoria Road bridge at the northern end.

The six-inch 1912-14 OS map (see above) shows no change to Victoria Embankment, although the associated 25-inch map of 1913 (not reproduced here) depicts a line of trees to either side of the road, as an extension of the double line of trees inside the Public Park. To the east of Victoria Embankment, new terracing is depicted as well as allotment gardens (outside the Conservation Area under review). The brickworks are now gone, with the area clearly developing into a residential quarter. To the west beyond the Skerne, the cricket ground has taken on its present 'round' shape, and there has been significant construction of housing around Grange Road (outside the Conservation Area under review).

In 1919, the park, now known as [5] *South Park*[47], acquired a few boggy, much lower lying fields bordering the east of the 1880-82 extension area (outside the Conservation Area under review). During the 1920s and 1930s, as part of a job creation scheme, unemployed men raised their level by several feet and completed the large greenspace which was used as a show field. In 1921, 500 such men also dug out the Cocker Beck sewer and constructed a road from Grange Road along the eastern boundary of the park, which later became known as Parkside, with a new bridge over the Skerne built in 1922 (all outside the Conservation Area under review). In 1927, the grand, southwestern entrance gates into Park were opened, becoming its new main entrance.

In 1925, the ornate terracotta [28] *Fountain*[48], also known as the Pierremont Vase, was relocated – although leaving behind its terracotta base – from its original location in Pierremont Park along Woodland Road (no longer extant; outside the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review) to the north side of the ornamental pond in [5] *South Park*. At the time, the Pierremont estate was being sold and divided up for housing development following the death of Henry Pease's widow in 1909. The fountain had been built in the 1870s when Pease had turned his attention to Pierremont Park. There, it had been the centre piece, standing beside another ornamental lake[49].



[4] *Fountain to north east of Bandstand in South Park,* grade II listed, outside the Conservation Area under review, looking north. At the time of review this triple-designated heritage asset is within the West End Conservation Area. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

47 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001278
48 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322956
49 Lloyd 2005, pages 114-116

In 1933, there was the final, two-acre extension of [5] South Park encompassing land to the west of the river which had been bought from Blackwell Grange. Again, the landscaping works was carried out by unemployed men[50].

The cast-iron railings and pedestrian gates to the front gardens of the Victoria Embankment houses were likely removed in the early 1940s as part of the country-wide 'war effort' to recycle architectural ironwork into materials that could be used in World War II. The Defence (General) Regulations of 1939 allowed for approved contractors to remove iron railings under section 50 and 53. This was followed by the production of a receipt showing the weight removed on which the owner could claim compensation[51].

The six-inch 1948 OS map (see above) shows the completed size of [5] *South Park* including its new main (southwest) entrance as well as minor changes within the park. To the east of Victoria Embankment further terraces have sprung up, and there is now also an omnibus depot to the west of the Skerne, off Grange Road (all outside the Conservation Area under review).

In the early 1970s, the nineteenth-century stone Victoria Road bridge over the Skerne was replaced with a modern concrete bridge, which was part of the works to provide a central inner ring road for Darlington (all outside the Conservation Area under review). Ultimately, the new carriageway and large-scale civic developments alongside it created a barrier for pedestrians between the town centre and the east of Darlington, which has been particularly damaging for Victoria Road and the western approach to Bank Top Station. Consequently, Victoria Road declined as a retail and commercial street[52], and the surrounding area, including the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review, deteriorated with it (see section 3.6).

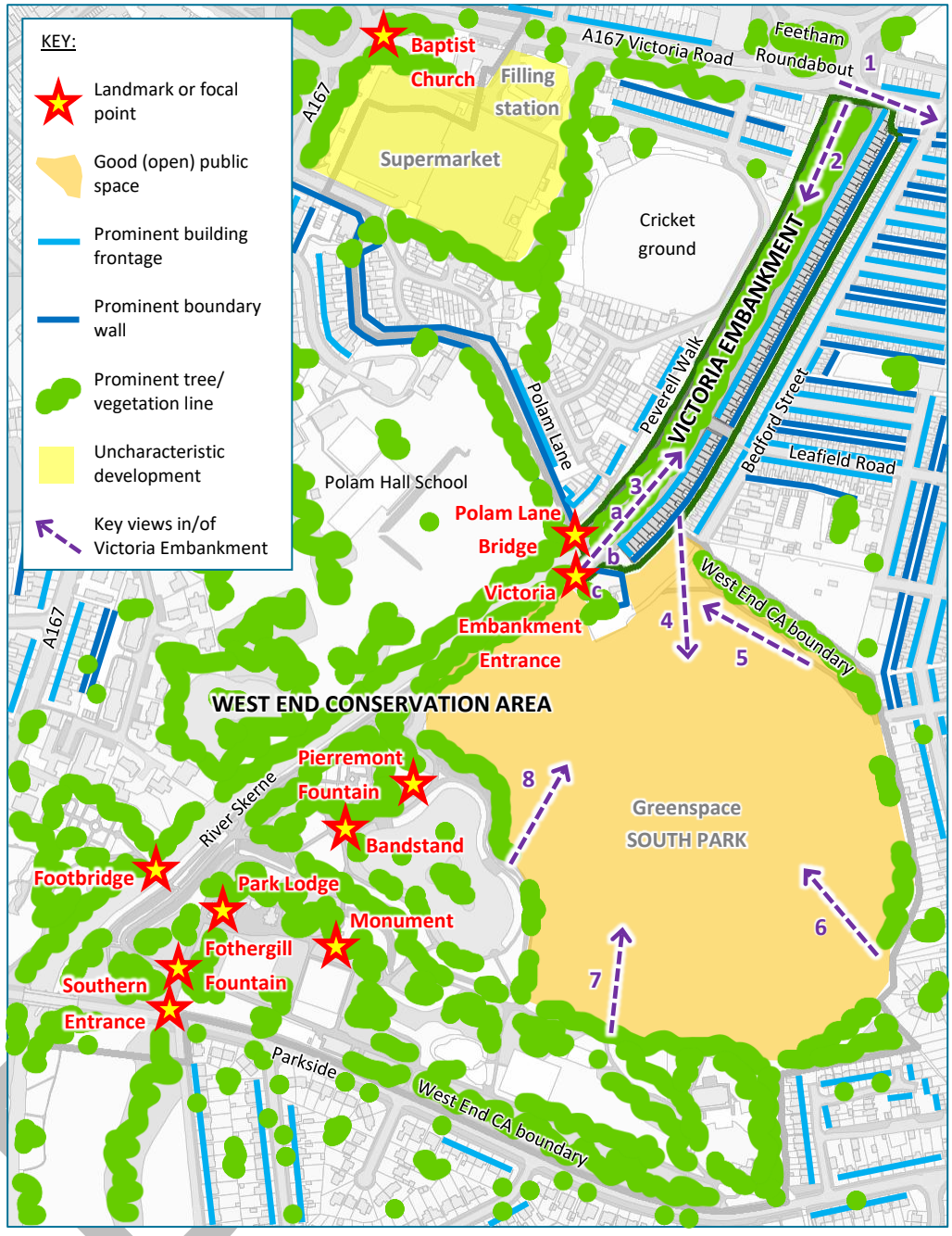
3.4 Spatial Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review and its relevant surroundings. Note that planform, road layouts, watercourses, topography, and buildings are described in the previous sections (see sections 3.2 & 3.3). The listed buildings and registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [5/LETTER].

The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review is of linear shape and secluded nature, facing away from the surrounding built environment onto the river Skerne to the west. Whilst the two long terraces provide a prominent urban frontage along its eastern side, the contrasting tree-lined riverbanks naturally soften the western border. The latter also conceal what lies behind to the west of the Skerne outside the Conservation Area under review, including the modern housing along Peverell Walk. This duality is also reflected outside the Conservation Area under review, with further high-density terraced housing to the north and east and lush vegetation to the south and west. Besides along the riverbanks (both inside and outside the Conservation Area under review), mature tree cover is most abundant

50 Lloyd 2005, page 126
51 https://www.theironbloke.com/about-1
52 North of England Civic Trust 2017, page 28

inside [5] *South Park* and on the [2] *Polam Hall* grounds, both of which are inside the West End Conservation Area boundary at the time of review.



Spatial analysis of assessment area including the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area (as designated in May 1990, dark green line) and its relevant surroundings including part of the West End Conservation Area (as amended in April 1999, dark grey line) **at the time of review**. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Most of the focal points in the assessment area are within or close to [5] *South Park* (see map above). However, of these only [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* and the [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* are directly relevant to the Conservation Area under review. Due to the confined nature of Victoria Embankment, the number of views within the Conservation Area under review is limited. Any internal views are channelled, not only along the road but also the back lanes (see section 3.5). Inside the park (outside the Conservation Area under review), the large greenspace enables views to the rear of the southern terrace from all locations except the northwestern part of the green.

The key views of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review are as follows – the photos were taken in June and July 2024:

View 1 has been taken from the traffic island to the southeast of Feethams Roundabout along the inner ring road dual carriageway (A167) looking east along Victoria Road, outside the Conservation Area under review. The view is channelled by buildings lining both sides of the ascending road towards the clock tower of the 1887 remodelled Bank Top Station at the end, with a former methodist church tower just visible to the left/west of it. In the foreground, Victoria Embankment branches off to the right/south. Along it, numbers 1, 1A and 2 provide a distinct frontage to the built environment in this part of the town. To the far right/south, the utilitarian balustrade of the modern concrete bridge across the Skerne can be seen along the boundary line of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review.



View 2 has been taken from the north end of Victoria Embankment inside the Conservation Area under review looking down/southwest along the northern terrace, with property number 1 to the left/east, and the dense line of lime trees on the eastern bank of the river Skerne to the right/west. The old iron posts and chains, originally located on High Row, are more concealed by the lush vegetation at this time of the year. On the opposite side of the road, the two-storey bay windows of the houses form a strong rhythm and dominate the elevation from this viewpoint. The view is channelled a long distance down the street between the hard frontage of the linear architecture on the one side and the soft, mature trees on the other. Galvanised signage posts and streetlights and traffic signs have some negative impact, as does the modern brick boundary wall on the far left/west.



View 3a has been taken from the opposite direction near the south end of the Conservation Area under review looking up/northeast Victoria Embankment, along the southern terrace. The end elevation of number 73 makes a strong visual

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contribution with its four original window openings, decorative eaves band and two prominent end chimneys stacks. Again, the view is channelled along the street between the hard frontage of the linear architecture on the one side and the soft, mature lime trees on the other. However, due to the bend in the road further on, the visible distance is shorter than in the view before. Moreover, the rhythm of the chimney stacks is prominent from this direction due to the curved nature of the terrace. Galvanised signage posts and streetlights have a lesser negative impact. Along the tree-lined riverside, the old iron posts and chains are more concealed by the lush vegetation at this time of the year.



View 3b (panorama) has been taken from the south end of Victoria Embankment within the Conservation Area under review looking up/northeast the road like in the previous view. Again, it shows the marked contrast between the hard frontage of the terraced housing and the soft landscaping of the lime trees on the riverbanks. The latter were planted uniformly, in symmetrical pairs almost giving the impression of a Dutch-style canal (although currently too overgrown). To the left/north is [1] *Polam Lane Bridge,* marking the route across the Skerne with its sandstone piers. The large litter bin placed in front of it has a negative impact on the immediate setting the listed bridge. The iron posts and chains start to the right/northeast of the bridge and carry on until the road junction with Victoria Road. On the far right/east, the tall brick boundary walling around the yard of [5B] *Embankment Lodge* can just be glimpsed behind the parked blue car. In this location, the road widens between the end property of the southern terrace (number 73) and the [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* into [5] *South Park* (where the photo has been taken from), maybe originally a coach turning point and now available for car parking.



View 3c has been taken a few meters further southwest from inside [5] *South Park,* which is within the West End Conservation Area at the time of review. In the foreground are the ornate piers and gates of the [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* of 1882, located on the shared boundary line of the two conservation areas. Beyond the gateway, the housing along Victoria Embankment inside the Conservation Area under review can be seen, with a gentle curve further up the road. Opposite the terraced housing, the mature lime trees line the river Skerne and the road. Through the closed double iron gates, one of the sandstone piers of [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* and the large black litter bin to the right/east of it can just be made out.

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View 4 (panorama) has been taken from the junction of the Victoria Embankment back lane and the southern side lane coming off Bedford Street (the latter outside the Conservation Area under review), both of them paved in distinct scoria blockwork, a by-product of the iron industry. To the right/southwest are the rear yards and extensions of Victoria Embankment houses bounded by tall walling. To the left/southeast is the gable wall of 146 Beford Street, now concealed behind a modern render. In between and fenced in by metal railings, the view opens up onto the large greenspace (show field) in the adjoining [5] *South Park,* which is within the West End Conservation Area at the time of review. The trees in the far background mark the location of the original Bellasses Park of 1851.



View 5 has been taken from the footpath bordering the large greenspace (show field) inside [5] *South Park* to the north, which was inside the West End Conservation Area at the time of review, looking northwest. The distant focal point, channelled along the path, is the rear elevation of the end of the southern terrace of Victoria Embankment inside the Conservation Area under review. At a short distance to the left/southwest, [5B] *Embankment Lodge* within the park can be seen behind its tall yard walling. Mature riverside trees form a cohesive background for both conservation areas at the time of review. This view will change once the newly planted saplings along the footpath have grown.



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Continuing clockwise around the large greenspace inside [5] *South Park* (within the West End Conservation Area at the time of review), **View 6** has been taken from the southeast edge of the green, near Berkeley Road off Clifton Road which features 1920s/30s housing, as can be glimpsed to the right/east. Looking north(west) across the greenspace, the rear elevation of the end terrace of Victoria Embankment within the Conservation Area under review can be seen in the distance. There is a glimpse of [5B] *Embankment Lodge* inside the park to the left/southwest of it. To the right/ southeast of the terrace are mature trees along the northern park border near the footpath shown in the previous view. In the distance, mature riverside trees form a cohesive background for both conservation areas at the time of review.



Carrying on clockwise around the large greenspace inside [5] *South Park* (within the West End Conservation Area at the time of review), **View 7** has been taken from the southern edge of the green, near the skate park. Looking north across the greenspace, the rear elevation of the end terrace of Victoria Embankment within the Conservation Area under review can be seen in the distance to the left/west, with mature riverside trees behind. There is a glimpse of [5B] *Embankment Lodge* inside the park further to the left/southwest. To the right/southeast of the terrace are the mature trees along the northern park border near the footpath shown in View 5. In the far distance behind them are the focal points of the spire of St Cuthbert's (centre/north) and the clock tower of Bank Top Station (right/northeast), both outside the Conservation Area under review.



Still continuing clockwise around the large greenspace inside [5] *South Park* (within the West End Conservation Area at the time of review), **View 8** has been taken from the southwestern edge of the green, near the pond. Looking north(east) across the greenspace, the rear elevation of the end terrace of Victoria Embankment within the Conservation Area under review can be seen in the distance to the left/west as well as the mature riverside trees behind. Further left/southwest, [5B] *Embankment Lodge* inside the park is now largely concealed behind mature trees. To the right/southeast of the terrace, glimpses of further terracing outside the Conservation Area under review can be seen behind the mature trees along the northern park border near the footpath shown in View 5. In the far distance to the right/northeast is the focal point of the clock tower of Bank Top Station, also outside the Conservation Area under review.

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3.5 Character Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review. It should be read in conjunction with the historical development (see section 3.3) and spatial analysis (see section 3.4). Listed buildings and the registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [5/LETTER]. Key views are referred to as in (View 1, 2, …) the text below.

At the time of review, the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area comprises three character zones, which are all of linear nature and parallel to each other:

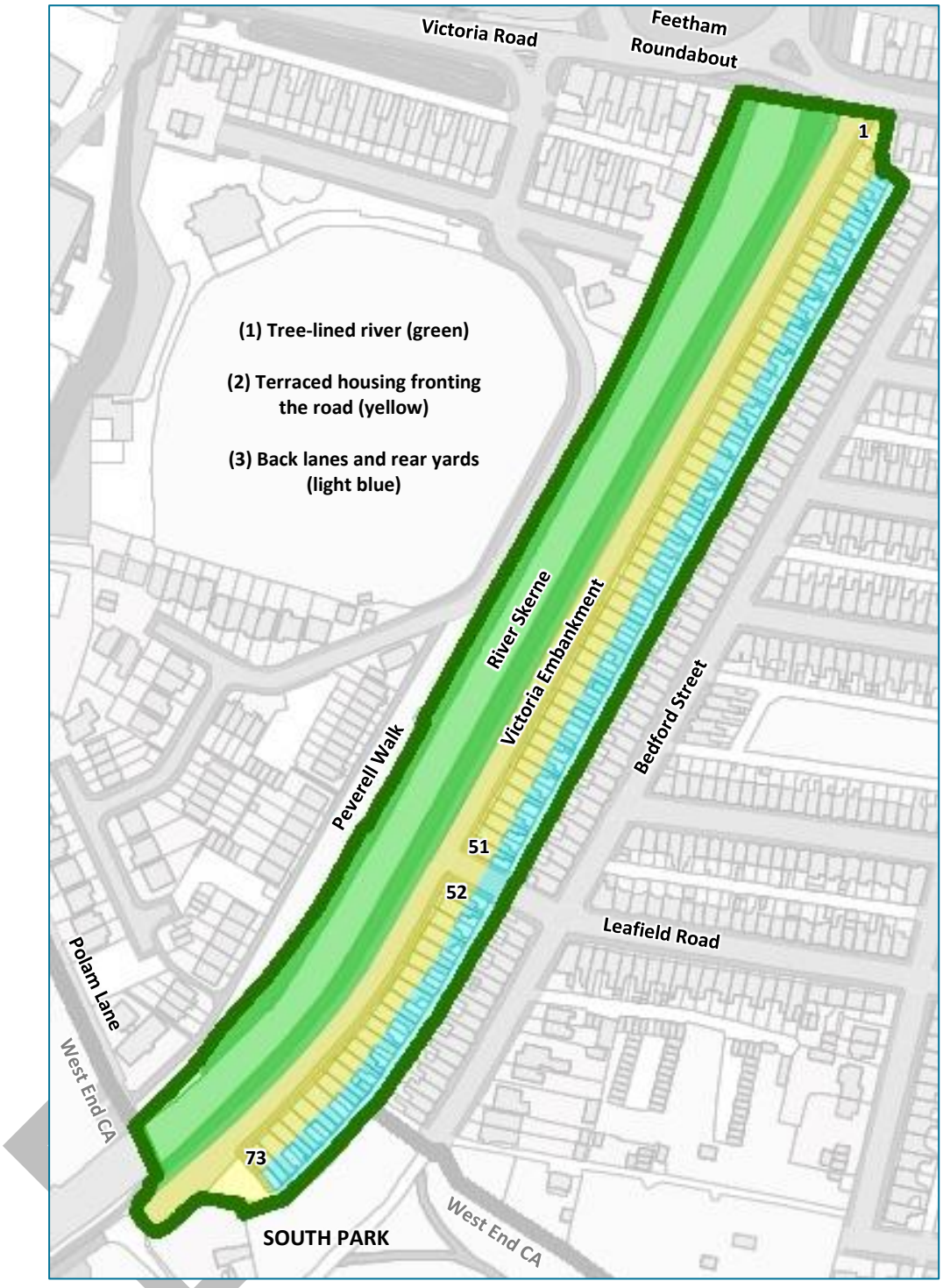
(1) Tree-lined river (shaded green on the map on the next page)
(2) Terraced housing fronting the road (yellow)
(3) Back lanes and rear yards (light blue)

(1) Tree-lined river (green). This character zone includes:

- the canalised Skerne (straightened in c.1880)
- both riverbanks including an impressive avenue of mature lime trees, planted in the early-twentieth century as a continuation of the tree lines inside [5] *South Park* (the park is outside the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review)
- the grade-II-listed, iron-and-steel [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* (of c.1891) near the south end of the Victoria Embankment
- a tarmacked pavement along the western side of the road, bounded by modern kerbstones; it includes a red EIIR pillar letter box, a parking ticket automat, signage, two galvanised streetlights along the riverside – one at [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* and the other opposite the junction with Leafield Road – bins and a dark green utility cupboard
- cast-iron posts with (mainly) wrought-iron chains between the eastern riverbank and pavement originating from the cattle market on High Row, outside the Conservation Area under review; these were relocated to Victoria Embankment in the 1890s

The Skerne runs through this character zone functioning as a green and blue corridor for wildlife. The vegetation provides the overarching character of this zone, which almost resembles a Dutch-style canal, but is currently too overgrown for such association. During the seasons of abundant vegetation growth, man-made objects, like the historical posts with chains and [1] *Polam Lane Bridge,* appear less prominent and the low-lying watercourse recedes into the background. Only the free-standing letter box on the outer edge of the pavement always remains quite visible.

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Character zones of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area (as designated in May 1990, dark green line); West End Conservation Area boundary as amended in April 1999 (dark grey line) **at the time of review**. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by G Rose)

The trees along the riverbanks are mature, predominantly broad-leafed lime, with the west side being less formal, also including scrub and trees including oaks, willows, sycamore, holly and privet. Besides the trees, the east bank comprises currently unmanaged grassland and wild plants. The habitats are utilised by a wide range of birds and mammals. Species recorded and observed recently on this stretch of the Skerne and through [5] *South Park* (outside the Conservation Area under review) include kingfisher, otter, moorhen, heron, Daubenton's and soprano pipistrelle bats.



(1) Tree-lined river. ***Top left:*** View from the junction of Victoria Embankment with Victoria Road (the latter not shown) looking southwest. The avenue of mature lime trees was planted uniformly, in symmetrical pairs formerly, almost giving the impression of a Dutch-style canal, although it is currently too overgrown. ***Top right:*** Cast-iron post with different types of wrought-iron chains, the bottom one being more ornate. The posts are placed on top of a (formerly) continuous sandstone kerb which is level with the pavement. In the locations of the posts, the kerb is interrupted by wider stone blocks to accommodate their large round base plate, which is bolted to the stone. ***Bottom:*** View of the western riverbank where the vegetation is less formal and even more overgrown than on the eastern bank. Mature trees conceal the modern housing development along Peverell Walk, outside the Conservation Area under review. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

(2) Terraced housing fronting the road (yellow). This character zone includes:

- the entire tarmacked road which is lined with scoria-paved gutters along the pavements to both sides
- a very short (western) stretch of Leafield Road
- the pavements to the east side of Victoria Embankment, all paved in concrete slabs and hemmed in by a modern kerb
- galvanised streetlights set at regular intervals along the private-property boundaries
- the main elevations of the early-1880s terraced housing including their shallow front gardens
- the [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* of 1882 into [5] *South Park* (the park is outside the Conservation Area under review)
- the boundary walling/fencing to [5B] *Embankment Lodge* (the lodge is outside the Conservation Area under review) at the southern end of the road (see View 3b)

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It is evident from their architectural design and location at the park's entrance and opposite the tree-lined river that the terraced houses were constructed for the middle class. The most notable elements are the hard frontage of the linear, red-brick architecture – in stark contrast to the adjacent 'green' character zone – and the rhythm created by the prominent, two-storey bay windows and chimney stacks (see Views 2 & 3a). Adjoining properties are mostly two-bay mirrored images in terms of their general layout, although there are also houses that are laid out differently, such as the three-bay numbers 1 and 1A near the junction with Victoria Road (see View 1). Notwithstanding such variations, there is an overarching element of cohesion and repetition in the overall design of the two terraces. Notably, despite the negative alterations that have been carried out over the years (see section 4.1), the late-Victorian character of the buildings has largely been retained and survives in a much better state than on the former workers houses in the neighbouring roads (e.g. Bedford Street), which were built at the same time or slightly later.



(2) Terraced housing fronting the road. Typical impression of northern terrace (numbers 9 to 15, left to right), when viewed from the riverside pavement looking south: hard frontage of the linear, red-brick architecture and rhythm created by the prominent, two-storey bay windows and chimney stacks. Note that the adjoining houses in this view are all mirrored images in terms of their general layout. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

In this zone, surviving features of architectural interest include:

- prominent, late-Victorian red-brick chimney stacks which step out towards the top
- red-brick walling in Flemish or Common bonds; some plain banding in cream-coloured Pease brick
- various decorative eaves designs in red or cream (Pease) brick
- bay windows which are often two storeys tall, but there are also single-storey examples; they are built upon a brick 'plinth' (most of which are now painted or rendered) with timber construction above including decorative mouldings, panelling and pilasters; their flat roofs finish just below the main buildings' eaves
- stone window lintels and projecting sills (now mostly painted) which are generally plain, although some mouldings or decorative details do exist

- traditional sash windows made of slim timber frames and old glazing
- entrance door surrounds with red or Pease brick pilasters (now sometimes painted) and stone lintel with various moulded stone canopy designs above
- original panelled timber doors of various designs with over-light
- old, metal under-floor ventilation grilles of various designs
- encaustic tiled entrance paths (NB: interior photos show that similar floor tiling carries on inside in entrance hallways)
- stone thresholds and copings of original dwarf boundary walling which retain the (now largely blocked) holes that used to hold the upright iron railings
- in-situ (remnants of) spear-headed railings and gate post
- ornate red-brick-and-stone piers to [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* and [5B] *Embankment Lodge* brick boundary wall, with metal entrance gates to the former and metal fencing to the latter



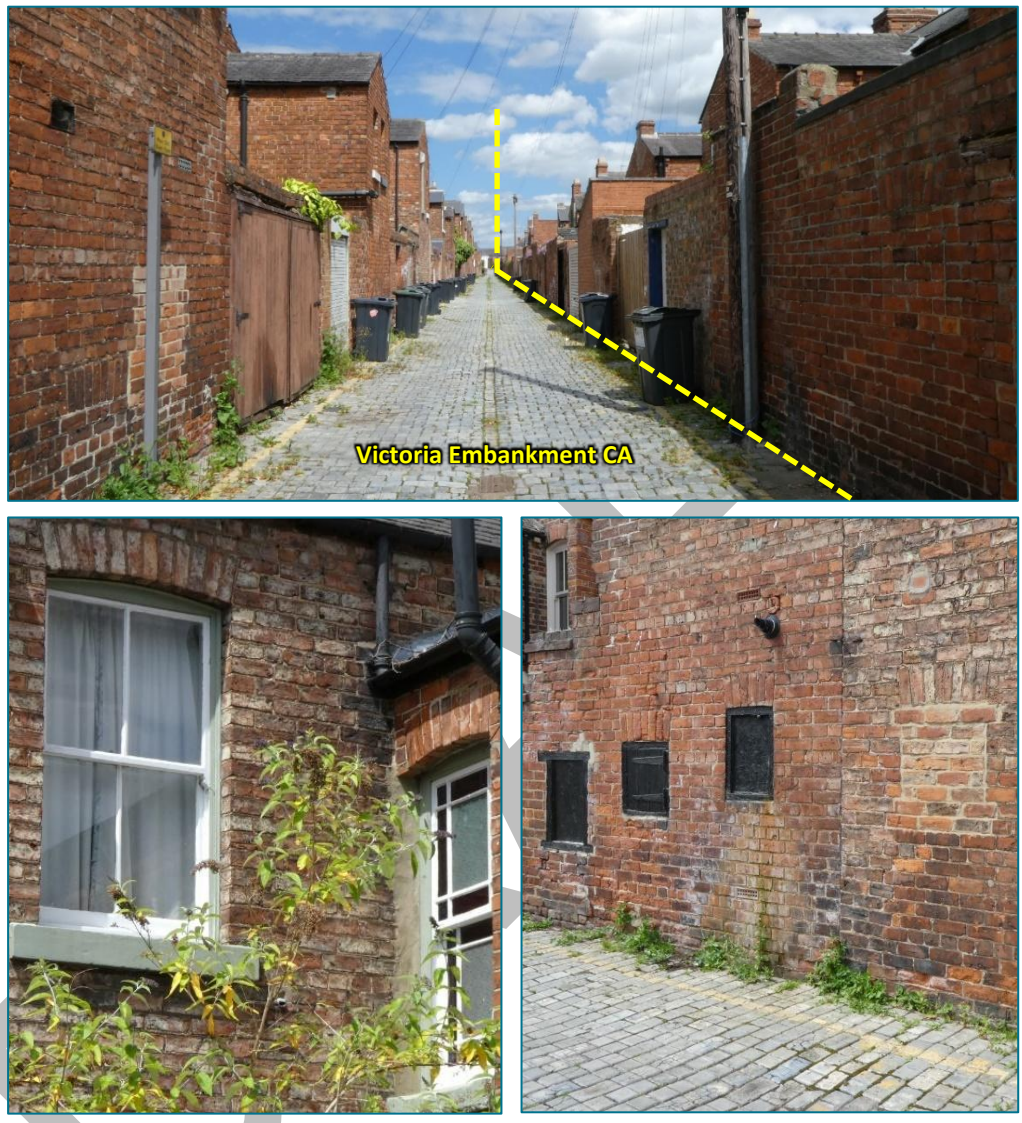
Top: The front elevations of numbers 65-67 are generally well preserved. Note the curved window lintels and top frames, both within the main walling and bay-window constructions. The windows of number 67 (right) are made from good-quality, slim uPVC frames which do harmonise with the timber windows to the left when viewed from a distance but are recognisable as plastic when standing closer to them. The brick masonry is more of a brown tone here with the window/door reveals and eaves band in a brighter red tone. The slated roof surface has retained some of its intended uniformity. ***Bottom left:*** Old metal grilles for under-floor ventilation. ***Bottom right:*** The only 'complete' survival of the original spear-headed railings at number 52, set into the sandstone base. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)



Top left: Number 9 – Brickwork in common bond, substantial chimney stack, two-storey bay window including decorative timber mouldings, panelling and pilasters, traditional sashes with slim timber frames and old glazing, entrance surround with moulded stone canopy, over-light and original door (top panels now replaced with glazing), decorative eaves with Pease bricks laid at an angle, and plain banding in Pease brick. Red rectangle: raised stone kerb with inset iron railings (spear heads are broken off); the neighbouring property, number 10, seems to include a remnant of an old metal gate post – ***also see bottom left. Top right:*** Number 29 – Similar architectural interest although different designs for brickwork (Flemish bond), decorative eaves, no Pease brick or plain banding, a window opening including a central mullion (this is the only property to have such), projecting window sills on corbels, a single-storey bay window and an original six-fielded panelled door. Also note the slimmer right-hand chimney as this is not a mirrored property (i.e. it doesn't share its stack with a neighbouring house). The 2x2 sashes are historically incorrect as they are a mid-C19 type, but they are traditionally designed/constructed and harmonise with the property. ***Bottom right:*** Number 38 – Encaustic tiled entrance path; sandstone threshold and copings of dwarf walling including blocked holes which held a gate post (larger hole in the threshold to the left) and upright metal railings (smaller holes in the copings to the right). Also note the metal grille for under-floor ventilation to the top entrance step, although this seems to be a later type. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

(3) Back lanes and rear yards (light blue). This character zone includes:

- the full width of the two back lanes parallel to Victoria Embankment
- a very short stretch of Leafield Road
- the rear elevations, rear extensions and rear yards of the Victoria Embankment houses



(3) Back lanes and rear yards. ***Top:*** View of the northern back lane from near its intersection with Leafield Road (not shown), looking north. Long, linear space defined by the distinct 'blue' scoria paving and tall red-brick walling to either side which channel the view (NB: the yard walling to the right/east is on the boundary line of the Conservation Area under review). Rhythm created by rear extensions. ***Bottom left:*** Traditional timber sashes with old glazing including original etched glass and coloured margins in the extension to the right. ***Bottom right:*** Original coal holes along the back lane with the one on the far right blocked. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

The appearance of this character zone is that of long, linear space defined by the distinct 'blue' scoria paving – a by-product of the iron industry – and tall red brick walling to either side, and the rhythm created by the rear extensions. Despite later alterations, the late-Victorian character has been retained and has probably changed only little since the 1880s. Generally, the survival of historical ground surfacing such as scoria paving contributes enormously to the retention of the original character and appearance of an area. On the boundary wall elevations, evidence of old

openings can be seen, such as coal holes, many of them now blocked. Due to the tall height of the walling lining the lanes, the private yards behind are not visible to the public, but there are glimpses onto first-floor elevations and roofs of the main houses and their extensions. Features of interest that are visible to the public include plain, slightly projecting brick coursing to the eaves, shallow-arched window openings – unlike at the front of the houses those to the rear are generally in brick, although there are also a few plain stone lintels – stone window sills, and traditional sash windows including some with original etched and coloured glazing. This zone is still clearly identifiable as a service area, in contrast to the representative side of the front of the houses facing the river, thus retaining the important historical front/back differentiation.

3.6 Value Attributed by the Local Community and Other Stakeholders

The Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review is a residential area. The terraced properties were built as family homes and are still in the same or a similar use. Floor plans on estate agent websites suggest that a standard two-bay unit originally had two main bedrooms and a servant's or child's bedroom in the rear extension, all on the first floor. Today, a few of the houses have been turned into apartments, including specialist accommodation for men with neuropsychiatric or neurodegenerative conditions[53].

Whilst the houses were originally aimed to cater for the middle class, the demography has changed since. A map shows that in 2019, the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review counted amongst the deprived areas within Darlington. Another map depicts that much of the area has been put into the **'urban adversity'** category, although its southern end, i.e. close to South Park, has been categorised as **'comfortable communities'**. The former is the lowest out of five categories and comprises households that find life the hardest and have the most difficult conditions including rented small homes in deprived areas, significant debt/ credit issues, high rates of benefit claimants, low qualifications, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, many single-adult households and health problems. The latter, which is the middle category, includes owner-occupiers of average priced houses who have average incomes, a mix of professional, managerial, clerical and skilled occupations, and who are not very wealthy but have few major financial worries[54].

Nevertheless, the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area is better off than its neighbouring residential roads, and seemingly with an improving tendency. This is confirmed by recent (March 2025) house prices. Victoria Embankment had an average price of £180,000 over the last year, which is above the average price of a terraced property in Darlington (£165,750[55]); sold prices were 12% up on the previous year and 15% up on the 2005 peak of £156,975[56]. By comparison, the terraced properties in the parallel road of Bedford Street had an average price of £91,317 over the last year, which is half of Victoria Embankment's; sold prices were only 6% up on the previous year and 2% down on the 2007 peak of £93,166[57]. Properties in Victoria Road bordering the north end of the Conservation Area under

[53] https://www.cygnetgroup.com/locations/river-view/
[54] Darlington Borough Council 2021, pages 15, 17 & 66
[55] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/darlington.html
[56] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl1/victoria-embankment.html
[57] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl1/bedford-street.html

review had an average price of £85,000 over the last year; sold prices were 8% down on the previous year and, notably, 44% down on the 2008 peak of £152,313 when they were similarly priced to those at Victoria Embankment in 2005[58].

Overall, it appears that the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review is a fairly desirable place to live, facing away from the more deprived, urban surroundings onto the 'green oasis' of the tree-lined river. The latter offers an important wildlife corridor for rare and protected species such as otter as well as good opportunities for bird watching, which in turn has a positive impact on the wellbeing of the residents. Moreover, the direct access into South Park (within the West End Conservation Area at the time of review) at the end of the road is a major bonus, as is the proximity of the town centre – despite the inner ring road acting as a barrier. It is however not only the homes along Victoria Embankment that benefit from the amenity of the tree-lined river and easy access into the park, but also the modern housing built along the opposite, western side across the Skerne, bordering the Conservation Area under review.



Modern housing along Peverell Walk facing the dense tree cover of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review, looking northeast. (Photo © Gaby Rose, July 2024)

In 2020/21, Darlington Borough Council secured £23.3m from the Towns Fund, which had been made available by central government for levelling up the UK economy following the impacts of COVID-19. The overarching aim was to drive sustainable regeneration in order to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth. Only the very northern tip of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review was located within the one of the Towns Fund key intervention areas (Station & Victoria Road).

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[58] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl1/victoria-road.html

4.0 Condition, Threats and Opportunities

This chapter is intended to inform any future management plans for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, which would be subject to public consultation.

4.1 Condition and Current Issues

This section should be read in conjunction with the summary of special interest (see section 3.1), spatial analysis (see section 3.4), character analysis (see section 3.5) and value attributed by the community (see section 3.6), which provide further information or examples on some of the issues raised below. Key views are referred to as (View 1, 2, …) the text below.

Victoria Embankment is considered to be in **fair** condition at the time of review. The Conservation Area used to be on the national Heritage at Risk registers from 2009 until 2023. In November 2023, it was removed from the register following a reassessment carried out by the Darlington Borough Council Conservation Officer and the North East & Yorkshire Historic Places Adviser of Historic England, concluding that the area was generally in a good (improved) state of maintenance, with the exception of property number 12.

However, the condition of a conservation area is not only determined by its state of maintenance but also by the amount of retention/loss of its special interest, character and appearance, which has been a major issue for Victoria Embankment over the years. The 2007 character appraisal first mentions that the recent introduction of alien features and intrusion of individual house modernisations had resulted in **unsympathetic and uncharacteristic changes** and in a **loss of cohesion between properties**. In 2017, the Conservation Areas at Risk returns data provided by Darlington Borough Council to Historic England points out that at Victoria Embankment the *loss of historic detail or inappropriate change to any of the following [categories was a] noticeable problem:* doors and windows; front elevations (e.g. painting, rendering); decorative features/materials (e.g. stonework, rainwater goods); roof coverings and chimneys (including rooflights); boundary walls/fences; hardstandings; and satellite dishes and TV aerials.

In June 2023, the Council's new conservation officer carried out a property-by-property external visual inspection of Victoria Embankment with regards to the concerns raised in the 2017 returns table. The following was found, with those issues marked in **bold** being considered major:

- Six properties no longer have a facing-brick appearance due to the application of **modern render, cladding or paint finishes**. This not only has a negative visual impact but also presents a high risk for creating long-term damp problems in the affected properties (see section 4.2). These interventions were probably carried out some time ago. No loss of decorative masonry has been noted.
- Changes to the masonry including new opening patterns and extensions have been harmful in places but are mainly confined to the rear elevations, where they cause less harm.
- There are no added front porches (which is positive).
- Only two satellite dishes have been noted along the roadside elevations (again, there are more to the back where they cause less

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harm), which have some negative visual impact. There are many TV aerials attached to the chimney stacks, but these are not considered to be too detrimental (and probably will vanish over time).

- There is generally a good survival of original panelled entrance doors; a few of the modern replacement doors stand out negatively.
- **Traditional windows** survive in much smaller numbers but where they do, they include old, etched and coloured glass, which is becoming a rare resource. Most notably, there has been a significant loss between 2015 (Google Streetview) and June 2023, with eleven properties (out of 74) having had their old windows removed, including 1930s sashes with ornate leaded glazing (at number 4) that were identified in the 2007 character appraisal. Just after the survey of June 2023, number 45, which had a traditional 'scumbled' paint finish to its timberwork, was comprehensively modernised, also resulting in the replacement of all of its possibly original windows. Consequently, **any surviving traditional windows at Victoria Embankment are at high risk of being removed**. Overall, replacement windows vary significantly in quality/design with many of them being quite insensitive (e.g. wide frames, different designs, layouts or opening patterns), but there are also a few properties with slim uPVC frames which harmonise with the Victorian terraces.
- Some **bay-window constructions** have lost their decorative timber window surrounds (including pilasters) following the introduction of modern window frames. Sometimes the original panelling between the ground and first floor windows has been replaced with different materials (e.g. slate) or designs (e.g. vertical timber cladding).
- A few of the chimney stacks have been lowered, but overall they are still a prominent, consistent feature.
- The **roof coverings**, originally in Welsh slate, are no longer cohesive surfaces. There has been the introduction of various new tiling types, and the products currently used comprise different types, some with a reflective appearance. Finish levels can vary too.
- Whilst there is a large number of modern roof lights, they are generally not too obtrusive when viewed from the road. One Victorian roof light survives (number 73).
- The solar panels provided to the rear roofs of number 16 were not considered to be a visual problem.
- Rainwater goods have been replaced with modern products, but they generally do not draw negative attention.
- Modern metal railings and pedestrian gates to the front prevail, but the designs are not uniform. There are four instances where incongruous masonry **boundary walls** have been introduced. Some properties retain their original dwarf walls but without railings. Changes to the tall rear yard walls have been significant in a few places, by applying paint/render or rebuilding in modern materials.
- Only a few encaustic tiled **entrance paths** remain, although some may survive under later surfacing. In a few places there are modern tiled entrance paths.

The new residential development at Peverell Walk, which had been considered a potential threat to the setting of the Conservation Area, does not negatively impact upon Victoria Embankment due to screening by mature trees and the separation provided by the river.

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Top: Number 56 (left) generally serves as a positive, well-preserved example, although the dark roof tiles (disruption the continuous roof surface) and large roof light (being more prominent) have some negative impact. Number 57 (middle) stands out negatively due to its black painted façade and later window frames. The latter not only have a different layout and opening types but also no longer follow the arched shape of the lintels. However, the reinstatement of spear-headed railings to the front of this property is very positive. Following the insertion of incongruous uPVC frames at number 58 (right), the timber bay-window structure has lost its original window surrounds including pilasters and arched lintels; these still survive at the other two properties. The original panelling between the ground- and first-floor windows has been retained. ***Bottom left:*** Number 48 (right) has a modern pebbledash render which disrupts the continuous brick façade of the terrace. Its replacement window frames are not in keeping with historical layouts and opening types and the arched top line has not been reinstated (compare with the property to the left, where traditional windows have been retained). Nevertheless, the timber surrounds of the bay-window structure do survive, including pilasters and curved lintels. The modern brick boundary wall is out of keeping and very disruptive. The property to the left (number 47) has retained its dwarf boundary wall but no metal railings have been reinstated. The continuous roof surface between the two properties is very positive. ***Bottom right:*** Number 31 (left) has a modern door which is not in keeping with next door's historical precedent, as is the uPVC window above. Whilst number 32 (right) is generally a positive, well-preserved example (including encaustic tiled entrance path), the reflective modern roof surface and light pink paint to the door stand out negatively. (Photos © Gaby Rose, July 2024)





Top: Boundary walling along southern, scoria-paved back lane with one section rebuilt in modern brickwork (left) and another rendered and painted red, disrupting the continuous traditional brick walling. ***Bottom:*** The rear elevations of the main house and (right-hand) extension of number 67 have been altered so drastically that the interpretation of its historical fabric and features has been significantly impeded. An additional storey exceeds beyond the terrace's continuous eaves line, and historical window openings been altered and a number of new ones been inserted. Note that this property is visible from inside South Park (**Views 5–8**). The rear is in great contrast to the house's front, which has earlier been identified as being very sensitively preserved. (Photos © Gaby Rose, July 2024)

It is unfortunate that the publicly most prominent properties, i.e. those closest to the junction with Victoria Road (Views 1 & 2), have been so considerably altered. Here, the loss of their original facing brick appearance has been particularly harmful, as has the introduction of brick boundary walling instead of metal railings. Elsewhere, the properties with a negative contribution are more dispersed amongst the positive and neutral ones, which lessens their impact.

Car parking and driving along Victoria Embankment can be a significant issue. Not only do parked cars along both sides of the road create a negative visual impact, but they also impede traffic coming from both directions from passing**.** From the author's personal experience, the current speed limit of 30 mph is not safe under these circumstances. **Galvanised signage posts and streetlights** detract where they are more exposed on the eastern pavements along the houses.

At the time of review, the **scoria surfacing** to both back lanes is almost complete and generally in good condition, although weeds grow within the joints, especially along the rear yard boundary walling. There are only few instances where incongruous tarmac patching has been carried out or the surface level notably dropped due to heavy vehicle use, most likely bin lorries. In general, however, the scoria surfacing throughout Darlington is at risk of being gradually lost (see section 4.2).

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The road surface of Victoria Embankment appears to be in good condition at the time of review. Road markings (e.g. residents' parking) are a minor detraction. **Resurfacing works** have led to tarmac being dragged over the scoria side gutters so that these no longer are a notable feature. The pavements to both sides seem slightly uneven in places, and there are patch repairs to the western one. Works to the latter have also led to tarmac being dragged over the (formerly) continuous **sandstone kerb** upon which the cast-iron posts with chains are placed. The condition of the stone kerb is poor – no doubt contributed by the re-surfacing works – with many stones dislodged or missing. There has also been replacement using modern concrete kerb stones which look out of place. The **cast-iron posts** are in fair condition. Most have some erosion to the bottom of the chain holes, and many of them lean. Some have signage attached to them, which is inappropriate. The wrought-iron **chains** are in good condition but in some places, such as at the southern end, have been replaced with galvanised chains which detract.



Left: Cast-iron posts leaning towards the riverside. Modern concrete kerb in the foreground. ***Right:*** The modern, shiny galvanised chain to the top is in great contrast to the wrought-iron chain at the bottom. Missing kerb stone in the foreground. Tarmac has been smeared across historical sandstone block and cast-iron post base. (Photos © Gaby Rose, July 2024)

The 2007 Victoria Embankment Conservation Area character appraisal likened the tree-lined river to a **Dutch-style canal**, which is evident in the document's cover photo. This is however not always the case, depending on the time of the year and the level of maintenance, with tall wild plants such as nettles and brambles taking over the grassed riverbanks and the trees growing unmanaged during summertime.

4.2 Threats and Potential Future Issues

At the time of review, the main threats to the special interest of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area are:

- **Continued removal or loss** (e.g. due to neglect or lack of maintenance) **of historical fabric and features** both on private properties (such as old windows and doors, tiled entrance paths, etc.)

and in the public realm (i.e. the scoria paving, sandstone kerb, cast-iron posts and wrought-iron chains)

- **Further incongruous modern replacements and other interventions** both on private properties (such as new extensions, changes to original opening patterns, application of render, etc.) and in the public realm (such as Highways-related works like re-surfacing, etc.)

With regard to threats to private properties, salespeople and building contractors may lead property owners to believe that elements of their old building need a modern makeover, for example, to make them more energy efficient by replacing traditional windows and doors with uPVC substitutes or applying modern renders to solid walling. Property owners are often unaware that impermeable materials such as cement renders, insulation, gypsum plasters, cement pointing, and certain exterior and interior paints are incompatible with traditional construction which relies on moisture movement. Consequently, such applications are likely to trap water in solid walling and create long-term damp problems, resulting in cold and mouldy indoor environments. In addition, the negative visual impact of such interventions can be significant, as already evident throughout Victoria Embankment. Removing, damaging or concealing traditional fabric and features from an old property can also reduce its market value.

In the public realm, the main threat is the full or partial removal of scoria surfacing from the back lanes by Highway 'improvement' works, as seen elsewhere throughout the town. It is significant that original ground surfaces, most notably the scoria, survive in Darlington. They contribute significantly to the character and appearance of historical areas and their removal can have a highly detrimental effect, as can be witnessed just a short distance away from the Conservation Area under review (see photos below). Due to the abundance of scoria that still exists in the town, it seems to be taken for granted. The Council's Highway department removes the blocks from back lanes for health-and-safety reasons. However, from the author's personal experience and communication with Darlington residents, it appears that the scoria may not be as much of a slipping and tripping hazard as people have been made to believe. Moreover, the back lanes are not main access routes. It needs to be kept in mind that once the scoria is gone its loss will be permanent, as it is no longer in production due to it being a by-product of the historical iron industry. Its removal from any conservation area should be wholly exceptional.



Back lane to Clifton Road at junction with George Street (around 80 meters to the east of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area) looking south as shown in Google Streetview of May 2023 ***(left)*** compared with recent Highway resurfacing works using tarmac ***(right)*** (photo © Gaby Rose, October 2023). There has been a significant loss in the historical character and appearance of the back lane following the removal of the original scoria surfacing.

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4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

It is obvious that the conservation area designation by itself has not protected Victoria Embankment adequately due to the lack of meaningful planning restrictions. The entry on the 2017 Conservation Areas at Risk spreadsheet (see section 4.1) concluded that an **Article 4 direction**, i.e. the removal of further permitted development rights (see section 2.3), should be a priority. It is frequently falsely assumed that such direction aims to prevent development when in fact its purpose is to enable positive change. It is not too late to impose such a direction now in order to retain and, in the long term, enhance through planning control the special interest of the Conservation Area under review, and help prevent it from going back on the Heritage at Risk register. Such direction should be applied to dwellinghouses as well as other use classes, including development relating to roads. By doing so, Darlington Borough Council would also meet its legal obligation to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Victoria Embankment (see section 2.2). Conservation-led change such as by introducing Article 4 directions can add value to an area and consequently enable communities to regenerate.

It would be beneficial for residents, local businesses, investors, planners and the highways/utility authorities to have a **design guide specific to the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area**. Such document should include guidelines and details of acceptable (and unacceptable) development to private property as well as within the public realm that is in keeping with the character, appearance and special interest of the Conservation Area, including specifications, methodologies, photos and drawings. For example, it may include the details of replacement roadside boundary railings modelled on the surviving original section, works to brick masonry and replacement window/door details. The design guide would be adopted as a supplementary planning document and be a material consideration for planning decisions. Whilst it is unlikely to create instant change it would enable smaller steps in the right direction and therefore be a beneficial long-term tool for helping undo the harm that has been caused as well as prevent further detrimental change.

Terraced houses that have been unsympathetically altered could be improved, for example, by removing any modern renders or external paints. Besides their negative visual impact, these are likely to have also resulted in long-term damp problems (see section 4.2). It is *essential* that the *entire* wall of a traditional building allows the movement of water (in liquid form, not vapour) so that it can dry out, thus restoring its maximum insulating properties. **Materials that are compatible with solid walling** are often referred to as 'breathable' (i.e. water permeable). Traditional lime mortars and (internal) plasters were originally used to build these properties and are still best suited to maintain and improve them. As an example, an external wall could be safely upgraded by applying an insulating lime plaster to its interior face. Any further insulation however carries a risk of cooling the wall down which means that it will not be able to dry out. Works with building limes should always be carried out by an experienced heritage contractor who has the specialist skills and knowledge in working with them[59].

Using **traditional timber windows and doors** has – besides being a significant visual enhancement – the advantage of (re-)using a more eco-friendly and sustainable material. However, sourcing good-quality timber frames can be an issue, and there are now high-end uPVC products on the market which mimic traditional windows

[59] See Building Conservation Directory website

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very well, as seen earlier (see section 3.5). In the long-term, the costs of maintaining timber window frames will often be cheaper because they can be repaired – contrary to uPVC products which normally need replacing as a whole – thus reducing the amount of building materials, energy and waste. The thermal performance of old windows, where these survive, can be improved by employing relatively simple methods (e.g. heavy curtains, blinds and shutters) or by installing secondary glazing[60], which is preferable to replacing them as they are becoming a rare resource.

The public realm of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area can be significantly improved, drawing inspiration from Historic England's *Street for All* publication[61]. The existing modern streetlights should be replaced with **Victorian-style heritage lamps**, to match those shown in the historical photographs. The remaining galvanised **signposts, back sides of signage and Victoria Road bridge railings** ought to be painted in a matt dark colour so that they draw less attention. All signposts that are redundant or a potential public hazard, i.e. those that are in the middle of the pavement such as near the junction with Victoria Road, should be removed or relocated.

The **pavement** concrete kerbs could be replaced in sandstone, as shown on old photos. Moreover, **benches** could be provided along the riverside, in particular at the southern end of Victoria Embankment near the entrance into South Park. The **litter bin at Polam Lane Bridge** should then be relocated alongside one of the benches. An **interpretation panel** could be provided to the right/northeast of the bridge providing information about Victoria Embankment, what was here before, and how it is linked to South Park (see section 3.3).

The continuous **sandstone kerb** along the riverside ought to be repaired and fully reinstated, also including the removal of the modern kerb stones. The tarmac smeared across the stone, column bases and scoria-paved roadside **drainage gutters** needs to be carefully removed. The **cast-iron posts** should be re-erected in a vertical manner where they have tilted, and the galvanised **chains** exchanged with wrought-iron ones. Any modern signage attached to the old posts ought to be transferred to less sensitive locations or, if possible, completely removed.

A **20-mph speed limit** could be served on Victoria Embankment. This is already in place along Victoria Road. Considering the confined space due to parked cars to both sides of Victoria Embankment, it is, in the author's opinion, not safe to drive faster. The existing 30-mph signage (including the posts it is attached to) could then be removed, which would also help declutter the public realm near the junction with Victoria Road.

The **trees and ground vegetation on the eastern riverbank** should be regularly maintained to reinstate the 'Dutch canal' atmosphere and better reveal the continuous stone kerb, cast-iron posts with chains and the Skerne. The riverbank should be seeded with grass and unwanted wild plants removed. The western riverbank can be left more unmanaged to attract diverse wildlife.

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[60] Wood, Bordass, Baker 2009, page vii

[61] Page 13 of this publication includes a photo showing a scoria-paved back lane in close vicinity to the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area, between Leafield Road and Roslyn Street, looking east.

5.0 Suggested Boundary Changes

This chapter offers suggestions on how the boundary of the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review could be amended. **Members of the public and other stakeholders are invited to submit their comments on the proposed boundary changes during the public consultation period (see section 1.2)**. Information on other elements of potential significance/relevance that have not been mentioned yet are also welcome. Following public consultation, the proposed draft Victoria Embankment Conservation Area boundary (see section 5.2) will be amended (see section 5.3), finalised and adopted (see chapter 6.0).

At the time of review, no part of the Conservation Area is proposed for exclusion.

5.1 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed Inclusion Areas

This section should be read in conjunction with the summary of special interest (see section 3.1), the historical development (see section 3.3) and spatial analysis (see section 3.4). The listed buildings and registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [5/LETTER]. Key views are referred to as in (View 1, 2, …) the text below.

Historic England advises that an existing conservation area boundary may have been drawn too tightly, potentially omitting areas now considered to be of special interest, such as historical rear plots with archaeological interest, later phases of development, or parks, cemeteries and other old greenspaces. In such cases the boundary may need to be extended[62].

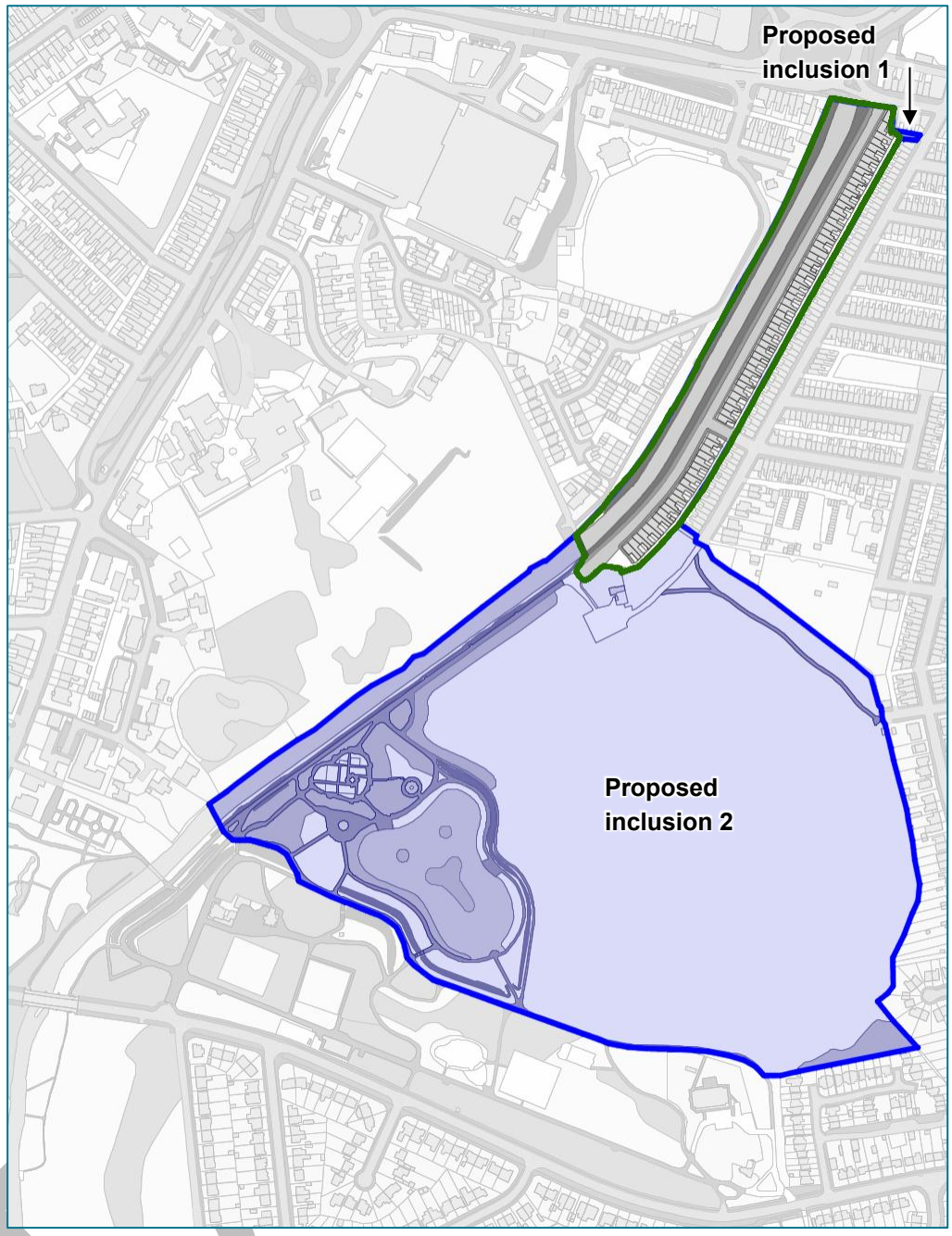
In order to qualify for inclusion, any proposed new areas must relate to the elements of significance which define the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review. In addition, they will have to meet the following tests[63]:

a) The proposed new area has sufficient architectural or historic interest for it to be considered 'special'.
b) That special interest is experienced through the proposed new area's character or appearance.
c) It is desirable for that character or appearance to be preserved or enhanced, also considering any problems that designation may help solve.

The map on the next page shows the proposed inclusion areas for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review (January 2026), which are being put out for public and internal consultation. The justifications are as follows:

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62 Historic England 2019, page 39
63 Historic England 2019, page 5



Proposed inclusion areas for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area under review in blue **at the time of review**. Conservation Area boundary line, as designated in May 1990, in dark green. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Proposed inclusion 1. Minor amendment: This area comprises the remainder (eastern stretch) of the northern, scoria-paved back lane.

a) Whilst the architectural and historic interest of proposed inclusion area 1 is not sufficient to be considered 'special' enough to be designated on its own, it forms part of an element which is already included within the designated area.
b) The character and appearance of the architectural and historic interest has been retained.
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved.



Proposed inclusion area 1 (blue), looking west: Scoria paving which adjoins the designated part of the back lane to the rear of Victoria Embankment. (Photo © Gaby Rose, July 2024)

Proposed inclusion 2. This area comprises the 1880-82 (and later) northern extension to [5] *South Park* which is directly linked to the development of Victoria Embankment:

- The avenue of trees along the river (and historically also on the eastern side of the road) continues from Victoria Embankment into the park, with the mature broad-leaved lime trees being of approximately the same age.
- [1] *Polam Lane Bridge* inside the present Conservation Area forms an essential element of South Park.
- The [5A] *Victoria Embankment Entrance* of 1882, which is contemporary with the terraced housing and precedes the current main (south) entrance, connects Victoria Embankment and South Park.
- The soil excavated to create the pond in the park's extension area of 1880-82 was used to provide the embankment upon which the Victoria Embankment houses were built.
- Whilst the grassland of the large space in the northern part of South Park is of poor ecological quality, it enables key views between the park and Victoria Embankment (Views 5-8). The surrounding trees are predominantly mature and as such offer cracks, holes, and gaps within them which offer nesting habitat to birds as well as roosting opportunities to bats.

NB: The original Bellasses Park or the extension area across the river are not proposed for inclusion as there is no direct link with Victoria Embankment.

a) Proposed inclusion area 2 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to being part of [5] South Park, which is a grade-II-listed registered park, also including the two listed structures (bandstand and fountain) within.
b) The character/appearance of that special interest has been retained.
c) It is desirable for that character/appearance to be preserved.

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Proposed inclusion area 2: Pond within **[5]** *South Park* looking north. The excavated nature of this feature is very evident in the embankment to the right. The arrow points to the location of the **[5A]** Victoria Embankment Entrance. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

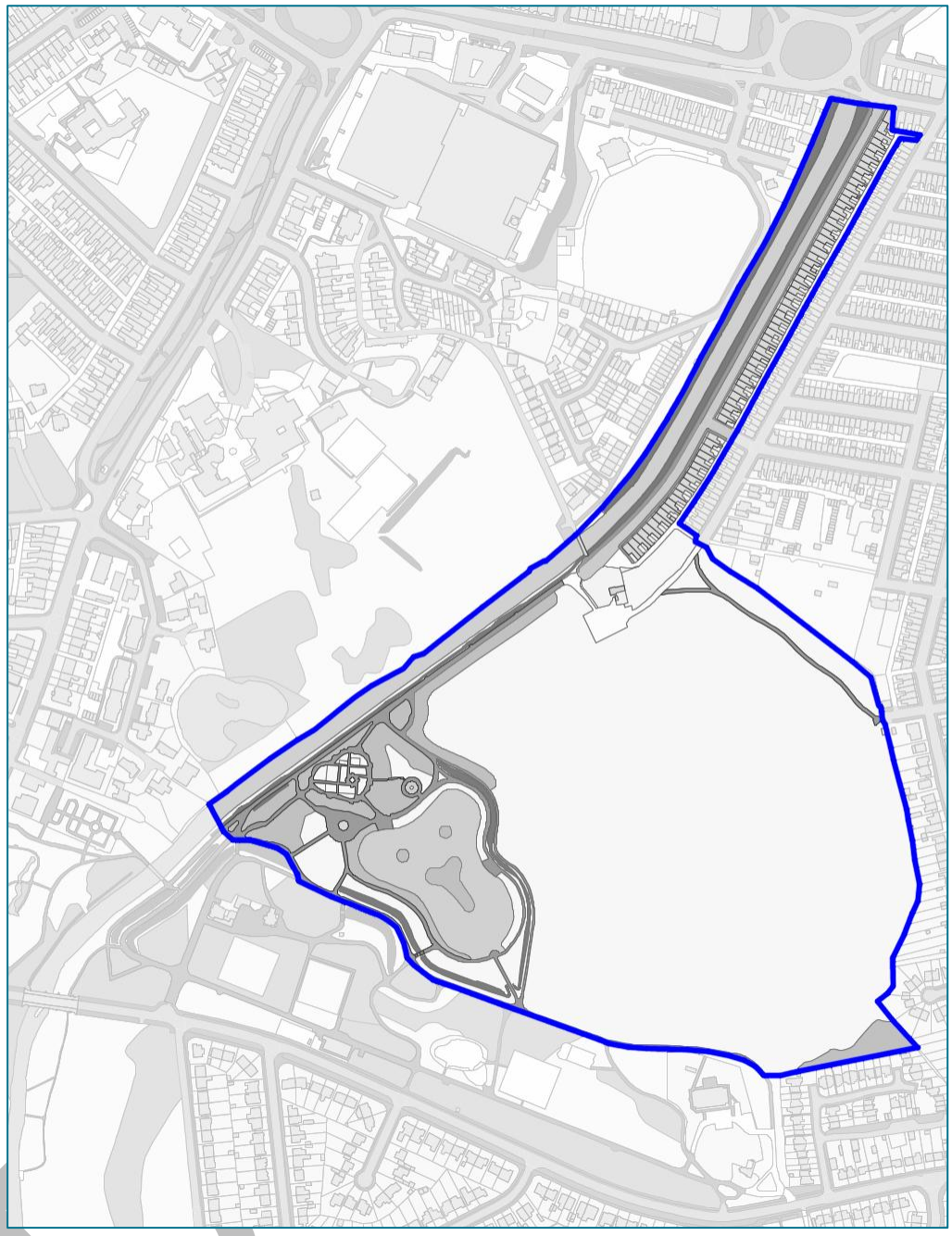
> At the time of review, proposed inclusion area 2 is within the **West End Conservation Area** boundary[64]. In order to deal with the 'area swap', the West End Conservation Area boundary is currently also under review, see Council's website.

5.2 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed New Boundary

The map shows the proposed draft boundary for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area which is available for public consultation.

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[64] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/sk0c5w0i/west-end-web-map.pdf



Proposed draft boundary line for the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area in blue **at the time of review**. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

5.3 Changes to Boundary post Public Consultation

This section will be provided following the public consultation period.

6.0 Adoption of Finalised Boundary (DATE)

This chapter will be provided following the public consultation period.

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7.0 Sources

Please note that any information retrieved from Darlington Borough Council 2007 has not been referenced in the text.

7.1 Guidance, Policies and Legislation

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The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/605/contents

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Lloyd, Chris (2005) *A Walk in the Park. Memories of Darlington 4.* The Northern Echo

North of England Civic Trust (2017) *Bank Top Station Darlington. Statement of Significance. Final Report – Amended.* Unpublished.

7.3 Websites

Building Conservation Directory – Products & Services: https://www.buildingconservation.com/directory/prodserv.php

Building Conservation Directory – Subjects: https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/articles.htm

Darlington Borough Council – Conservation Areas: https://www.darlington.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regs/planning/conservation-historical-environment/conservation-areas/

Darlington Borough Council – Listed Buildings: https://www.darlington.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regs/planning/conservation-historical-environment/listed-buildings/

Darlington Borough Council – Non-designated heritage assets: https://www.darlington.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regs/planning/conservation-historical-environment/non-designated-heritage-assets/

Darlington Borough Council – Planning: https://www.darlington.gov.uk/planning-and-building-regs/planning/planning-application-and-permission/

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Darlington South Park Foundation: https://southparkfoundation.org.uk/

Historic England – National Heritage List for England: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list

Historic England – Heritage at Risk Registers: https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/

National Library of Scotland – Maps: https://maps.nls.uk/

Planning Portal: https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission

The Friends of South Park: https://southparkdarlington.co.uk/

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Appendix: Outcome of Public Consultation

This will be provided following the public consultation period.

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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT
conservation@darlington.gov.uk

CABINET
6 January 2026

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT APPRAISAL FOR THE WEST END CONSERVATION AREA INCLUDING PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

Responsible Director -
Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to go out for public consultation with the new draft appraisal for the WEST END Conservation Area (NB: there is similar report for the new Victoria Embankment Conservation Area draft appraisal). The document also includes proposals to significantly change the existing conservation area boundary.

Summary

2. This report provides justification for writing a new appraisal for the West End Conservation Area. It also briefly outlines the contents of the document and the proposed consultation process.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that :-

   (a) Cabinet authorises public consultation on the new draft appraisal for the West End Conservation Area attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

   (b) The draft document is publicised for a period of at least six weeks, to allow members of the public and other stakeholders sufficient time to submit comments.

   (c) The draft document is amended and finalised in light of the comments received during the public consultation period.

   (d) The finalised conservation area appraisal including new boundary is submitted to Councillors for adoption; this will be subject to another Cabinet report.

Reasons

4. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-

   (a) According to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), the Council must review Darlington's conservation area boundaries from time to time and make amendments where necessary. The duty to prepare and review appraisals is also reflected in the Darlington Local Plan, forming part of the Council's proactive approach towards protecting the borough's heritage assets.

   (b) The current boundary line of the West End Conservation Area (NB: this is not the original boundary line, see Main Report) was designated on 30 March 2010. An appraisal was first adopted at the same time. The 2010 document is now considered out of date and inadequate.

   (c) The West End Conservation Area has been on the national Heritage at Risk registers since 2011.

   (d) The new appraisal offers a comprehensive re-evaluation of the West End Conservation Area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that would be of greater influence in the planning process. It also includes an assessment of the 2010 boundary line and the area's condition, as well as proposals for enhancement in order to take it off the risk register.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

Darlington Borough Council (2010) *West End Conservation Area. Character Appraisal. March 2010:* https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/2vghwdzk/weca_appraisal.pdf
English Heritage (2011) Heritage at Risk. North East 2009
Historic England (2024) Heritage at Risk
https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/search-register/annual-heritage-at-risk-registers-and-maps/

David Hand : 6294

Council Plan	Our ambitions – *An inclusive and sustainable economy will have a growing economy that supports our environment and heritage.* Our ambitions – *Thriving places and connected communities will have cultural, heritage and community assets.* Our priorities – *Local environment: Investing in our heritage and culture is important in preserving the identity of our communities, delivering regeneration and economic impact.* Our priorities – Local environment – Key deliverables: *6. Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that […] contribute to a sense of pride in place.*
Addressing inequalities	No impact
Tackling Climate Change	The draft appraisal points out that the achievement of sustainable development also encompasses an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness *against* the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings. Modern materials are likely to decrease the insulating properties of traditional structures by trapping water in the walling, potentially leading to long-term damp problems. In addition, they often have a high-carbon footprint and short lifespan.
Efficient and effective use of resources	In the long term, the new appraisal is meant to assist planning officers, applicants and other stakeholders in making informed decisions on development proposals within the West End Conservation Area, which should be more time effective (and deliver desirable outcomes). In addition, if external funding is sought for works within the West End Conservation Area, this up-to-date appraisal will be an essential requirement.
Health and Wellbeing	The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the West End Conservation Area. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness *against* the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, potentially leading to long-term damp problems which can impact negatively on the occupants' health.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the West End Conservation Area.
Wards Affected	Park East, Park West, College, Pierremont and Mowden
Groups Affected	No impact

Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. The origin of the West End Conservation Area goes back to 1968, when two small, very tightly drawn conservation areas were designated for Stanhope Green and Harewood Hill.

6. On 6 October 1975, a Stanhope Road/Grange Road Conservation Area was designated, extending out from and linking the former separate areas. On 10 May 1990 and 29 April 1999, it was further extended.

7. On 30 March 2010, the first character appraisal was adopted for the renamed West End Conservation Area, including additional boundary extensions. The 2010 document is now considered out of date and inadequate.

8. A conservation area is *'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'* (Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The special interest of the West End Conservation Area under review comprises:

   (a) three main roads that were turnpiked in the eighteenth century

   (b) mansions, villas and substantial terraced houses of high architectural quality interspersed with lush vegetation including many mature trees as well as various public parks, creating a large, prosperous and attractive inner suburb

   (c) associations with philanthropic causes of the wealthy Quaker causes and others

   (d) the development of the glebe land owned by the Duke of Cleveland for middle-class residences exclusively, comprising the first wave of town planning in the area, which has resulted in a diversity of built forms and layouts with an underlying consistency in terms of materials and spatial quality

   (e) the best of Darlington's early suburban development which has been altered relatively little, including the survival of a significant amount of traditional features

   (f) school buildings including the bespoke constructions designed by notable Darlington architects GG Hoskins and JP Pritchett

9. The West End Conservation Area has been on the national Heritage at Risk registers since 2011. In order to help remove the area from the register it had therefore been considered that a new appraisal would be advisable.

RECENT ASSESSMENT

10. The new appraisal was drafted between October 2024 and August 2025 by the Council's Conservation Officer.

11. The draft appraisal reassesses the West End Conservation Area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that can be of greater influence in the planning process. It focuses on the following aspects:

    (a) The special architectural and historic interest of the area

    (b) The condition of the area, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change

    (c) The relevance of the existing boundary line and any proposed changes to it

PROPOSED PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

12. The draft appraisal will be available for consultation for a minimum of six weeks.

13. It will be available:

    (a) In digital format on the Council's website, along with a feedback form that can be completed. Additionally, members of the public can also email a response to the Conservation Officer

    (b) As paper copies (read only) of the document and feedback form at the Town Hall (by appointment only), and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries

14. At the commencement of the public consultation period, the Conservation Officer will directly approach individuals, groups and organisations that are likely to have a particular interest in the West End Conservation Area, including Councillors of the affected wards.

15. Site notices will be displayed within the proposed boundary extension areas.

Financial Implications

16. The public consultation on the draft appraisal will only require minor expenses for the printing of a few hard copies of the document and feedback forms, and the time of the Conservation Officer for evaluating comments received and amending draft.

17. If, in the future, the document including boundary changes is adopted, one-time advertisement costs for publicising the amended conservation area will occur.

Legal Implications

18. At the time of public consultation there will be none.

19. Conservation area designation (or loss of it) would take effect following the adoption of a new boundary, which would be subject to another Cabinet and a Council meeting.

Estates and Property Advice

20. The proposed boundary changes affect Council land (for example South Park, Skerne Park, the Grange Road Roundabout, etc.).

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

21. The draft appraisal points out that the achievement of sustainable development also encompasses an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment.

22. The draft appraisal also raises some awareness against the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings. Modern materials are likely to decrease the insulating properties of traditional structures by trapping water in the walling, potentially leading to long-term damp problems. In addition, they often have a high-carbon footprint and short lifespan.

DRAFT

WEST END

Conservation Area Appraisal

Public Consultation Draft

January 2026



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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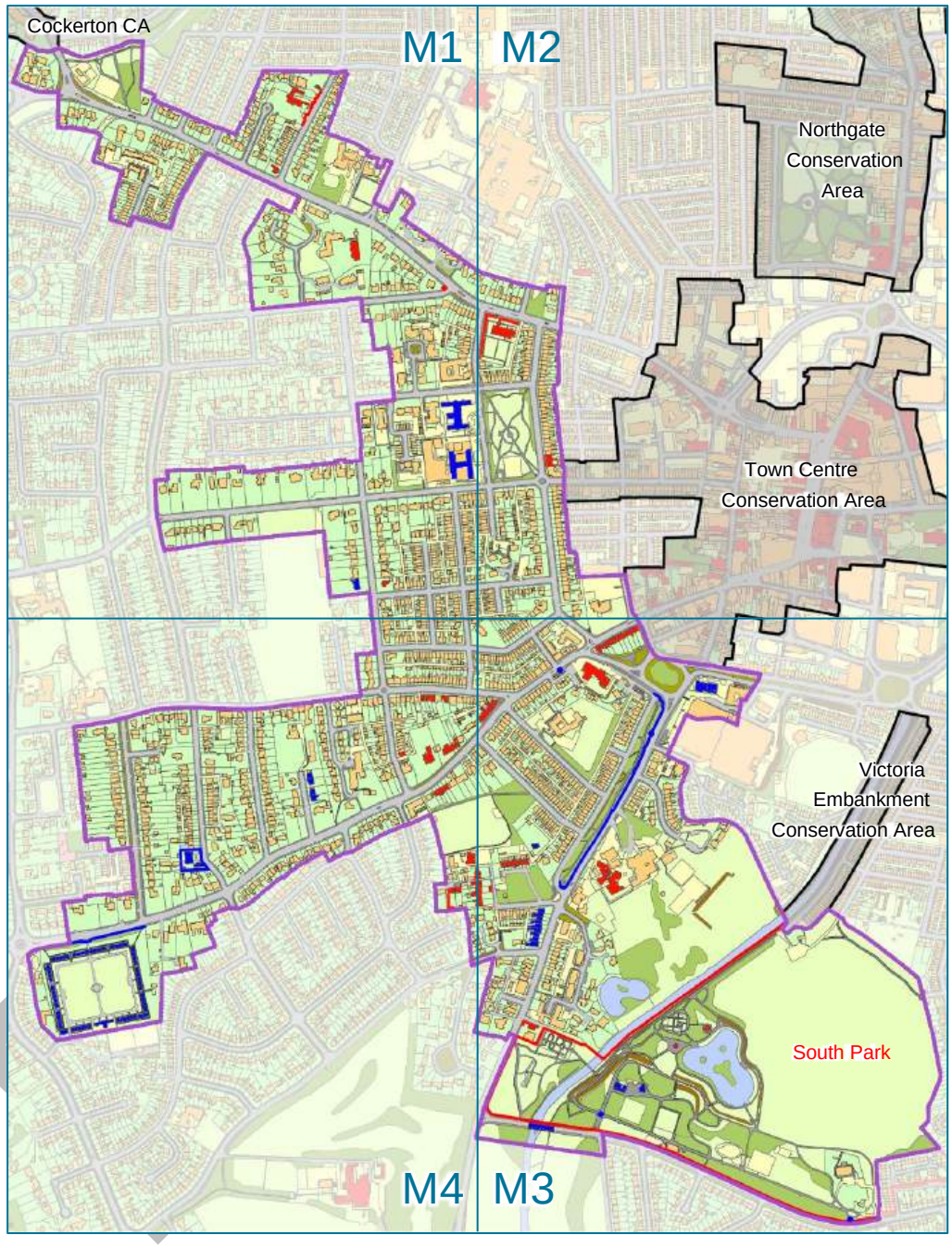
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< Cover image: A well-preserved terrace along Southend Avenue.

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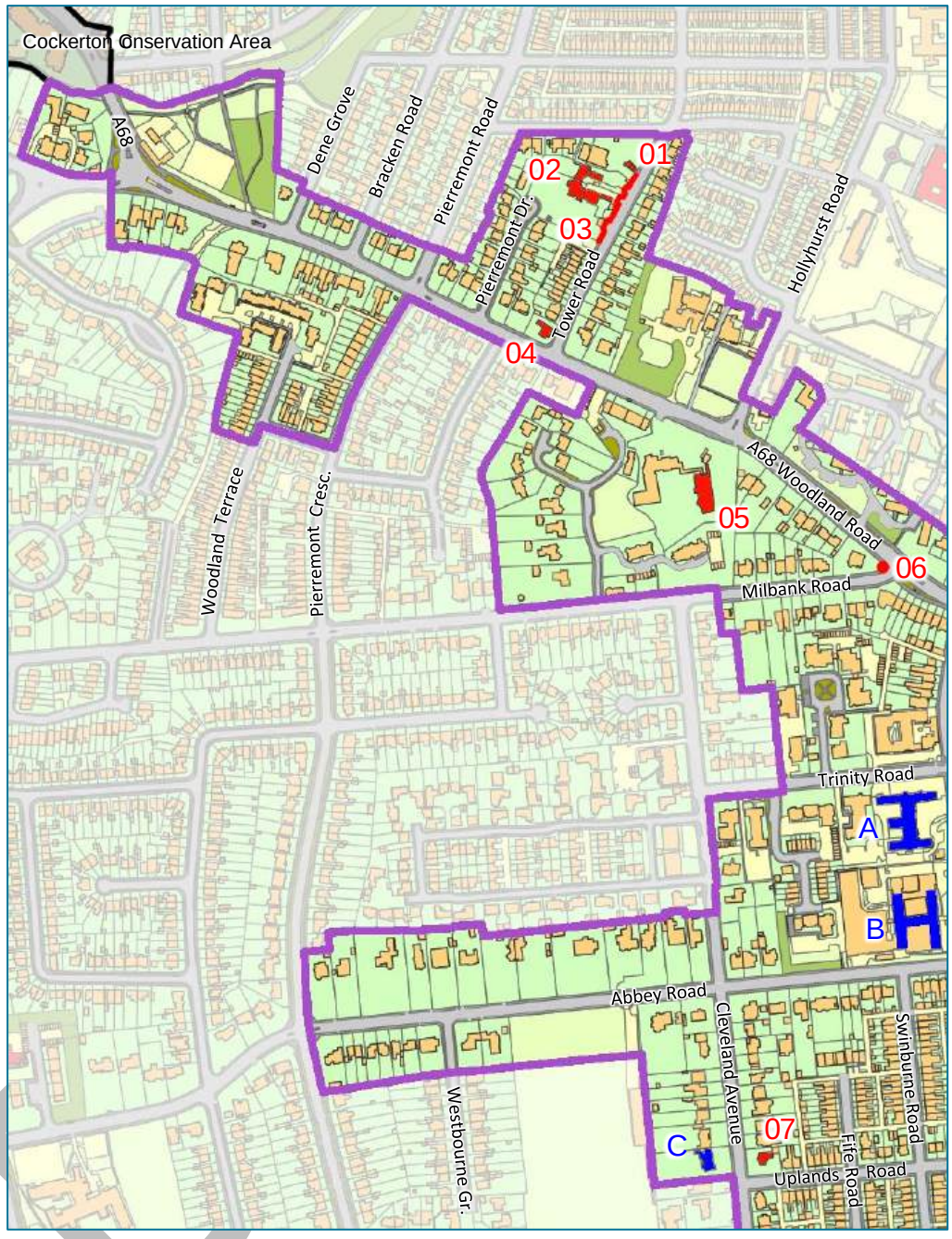
Maps of Conservation Area under Review

Overview



West End Conservation Area boundary (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines) at the time of review. Listed and registered heritage assets are marked in red, other notable structures in blue (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2012 Ordnance Survey 0100023728 Licence Number 100023728 2024 Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Map Excerpt M1

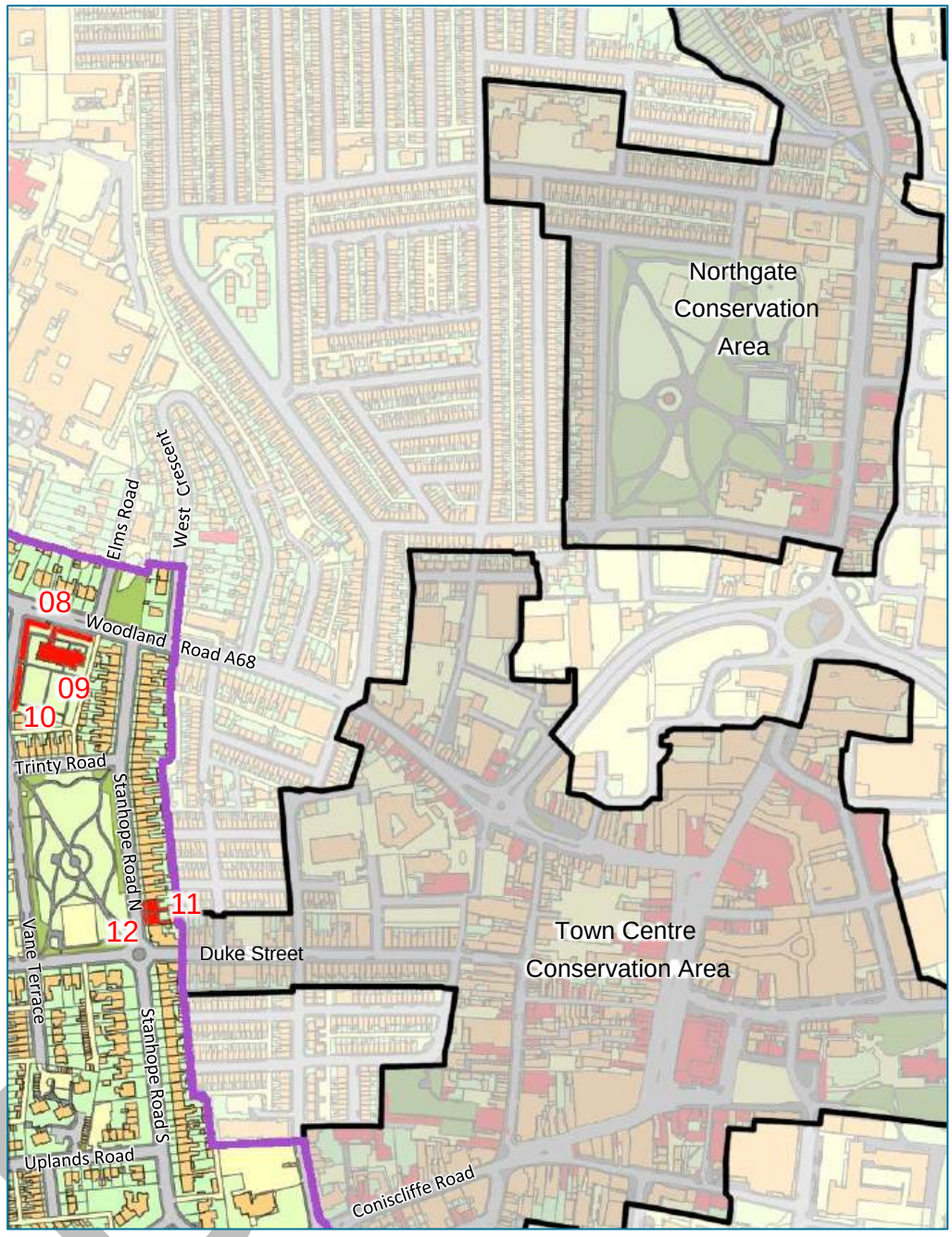


West End Conservation Area boundary (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundary line) at the time of review. Listed heritage assets are marked in red, other notable structures in blue (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024 Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Listed heritage assets: [01] *The Clock Tower* (LB II) [02] *Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall* (LB II) [03] *Gates, piers and forecourt wall to Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall* (LB II). [04] *Pierremont Lodge* (LB II) [05] *The Woodlands* (LB II) [06] *Drinking fountain on west corner of Milbank Road* (LB II) [07] *Inglenook* (LB II).

Other notable structures: [A] *Training College*, [B] *Grammar School walling & gate piers*, [C] *55, Cleveland Avenue*

Map Excerpt M2



West End Conservation Area boundary (purple boundaryline), as amended in March 2010 and surrounding conservation areas (black boundarylines) at the time of review. Listed heritage assets are marked in red. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Listed heritage assets: [08] *Steps, ramp, rail and lampholder to north of Holy Trinity Church* (LB II) [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* (LB II*). [10] *Walls, gates and piers to north and west of Church of Holy Trinity* (LB II) [11] *67 and 69, Stanhope Road* (LB II) [12] *Forecourt walls to numbers 67 and 69* (LB II).

Map Excerpt M3

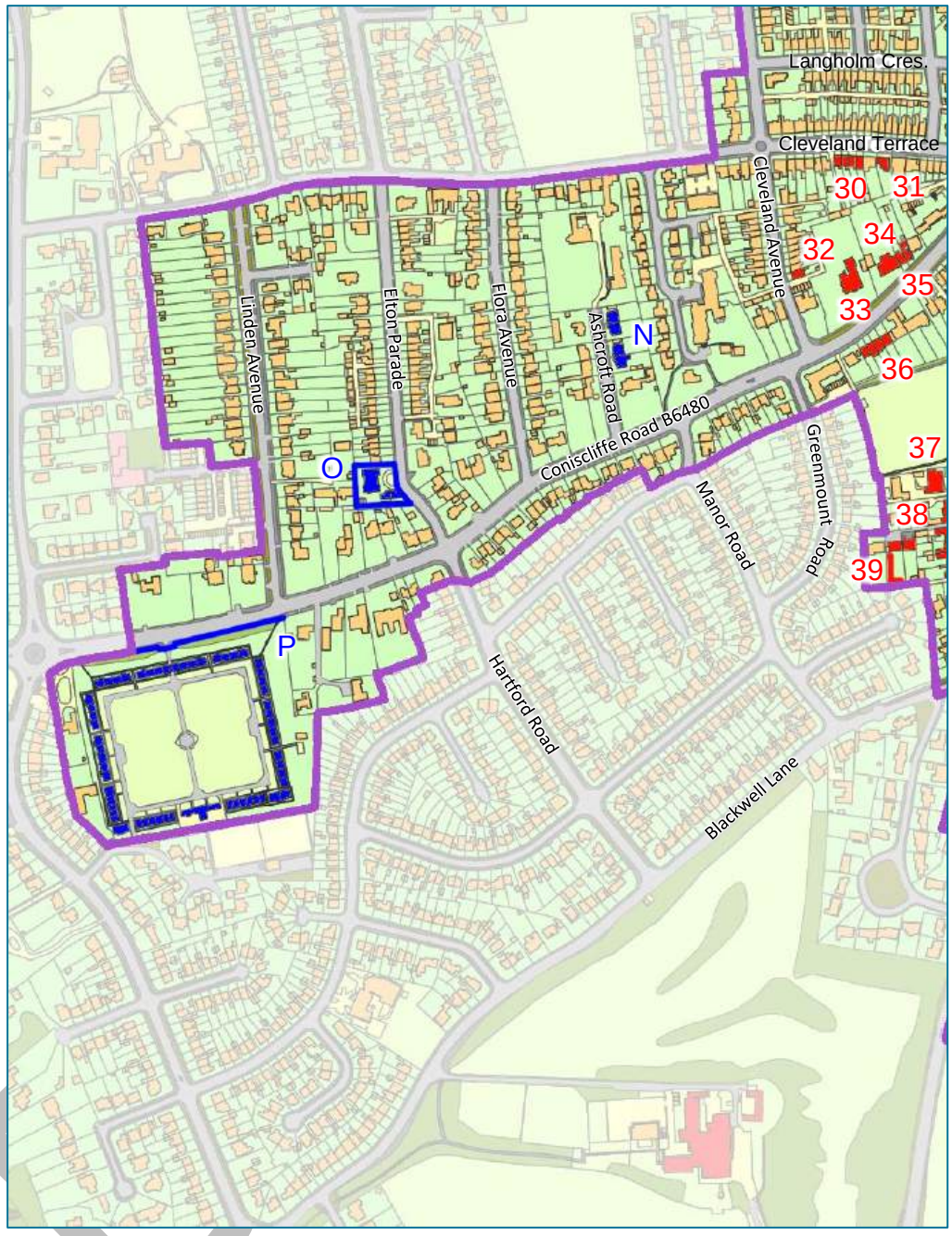


West End Conservation Area boundary (purple boundaryline), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundarylines) at the time of review. Listed and registered heritage assets are marked in red, other notable structures in blue (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024 Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Listed and registered heritage assets: [13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [14] *The Grange Hotel* (LB II) [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II). [17] *102, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [18] *104, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [19] *1-8, Harewood Grove* (LB II*). [20] *7 and 8, Harewood Hill* (LB II) [21] *3 and 4, Harewood Hill* (LB II) [22] *1 and 2, Harewood Hill* (LB II) [23] *Forecourt wall to number 3* [24] *Polam Hall* (LB II) [25] *Forecourt wall and piers to no 20* (LB II) [26] *Neasham House* (LB II) [27] *Bandstand in South Park* (LB II). [28] *Fountain to northeast of bandstand in South Park* (LB II) [29] *South Park* (RP II).

Other notable structures [D] *Coniscliffe Road fountain*. [E] *Baptist Church & gate piers* [F] *Grange Road fountain, walling & gate piers* [G] *Avenue Lodge* [H] *Woodside Terrace* [I] *Park Lodge* [J] *Tea Pavilion*. [K] *Fothergill Fountain* [L] *Parkside Bridge* [M] *East Entrance Piers*

Map Excerpt M4



West End Conservation Area boundary (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, at the time of review. Listed heritage assets are marked in red, other notable structures in blue (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose).

Listed heritage assets: [30] *27-33, Cleveland Terrace* (LB II) [31] *21, Cleveland Terrace* (LB II). [32] *4, Cleveland Avenue* (LB II) [33] *140, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II). [34] *126, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [35] *122 and 124, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [36] *111-117, Coniscliffe Road* (LB II) [37] *14, Harewood Hill* (LB II) [38] *5 and 6, Harewood Hill* (LB II) [39] *Garden walls to west and south of number 6* (LB II).

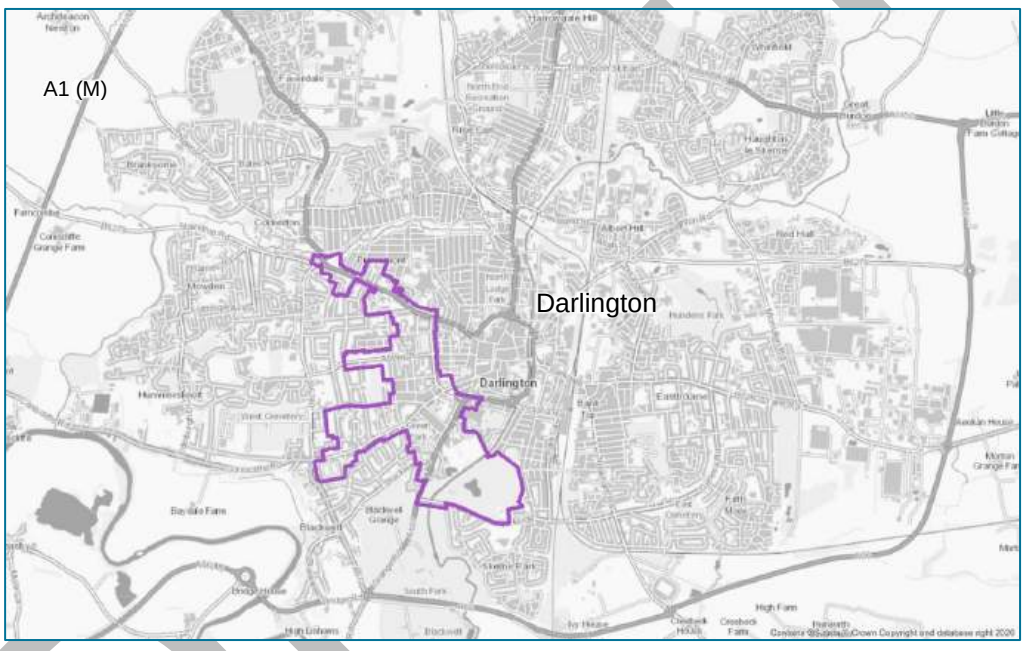
Other notable structures: [N] *Clark & Moscrop Houses* [O] *Welbeck House, gate piers & boundary walling* [P] *Sir ED Walker Homes, gate piers, gates, boundary walling & railings*.

1.0 Introduction

A character appraisal assesses the special interest of a conservation area that merits its designation. It describes and evaluates the contribution made by the tangible (visible) aspects of its special interest which define ú K Ŝ l n a r ŝ c t e r and appearance. An appraisal aims to be informative and educational about our cultural inheritance and raise public awareness and support. Adopted documents provide an evidence base for managing change and will be a material consideration in the planning process. They can also identify opportunities for enhancement and assist if funding is sought for larger generation schemes, such as heritage action zones.

An appraisal for the West End Conservation Area was first adopted in March 2010. It is now considered out of date and inadequate.

1.1 The Conservation Area under Review



Location of the West End Conservation Area boundary (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, at the time of review. (Map contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2024. Licence Number 100023728 2024.)

Darlington is a large town in County Durham in the North East of England which lies adjacent to the A1(M). The West End Conservation Area is located to the northwest, west and south (west) of the town centre and is predominantly of a semi-urban and suburban nature. At the time of review (see section 1.2), it is the largest conservation area within Darlington Borough, comprising an area of 135.84 hectares, and lies in the Park East, Park West, College, Pierremont and Mowden wards, the latter only comprising a very small area at its northeastern tip. The West End Conservation Area under review is adjoined by the Cockerton Conservation Area to the northwest, the Town Centre Conservation Area to the east and the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area to the southeast (see maps at the beginning of this document).

The origin of the West End Conservation Area goes back to 1968, when two small, very tightly drawn conservation areas were designated for Stanhope Green and Harewood Hill. On 6 October 1975, a Stanhope Road/Grange Road Conservation Area was designated, extending out from and linking the former separate areas. On 10

May 1990, the Conservation Area was enlarged to incorporate frontages along Woodland Road and Coniscliffe Road and the Uplands/Swinburne/Fife Roads area. On 29 April 1999, it was further extended to include South Park, to a greater depth to either side of Coniscliffe Road (including Linden Avenue, Elton Parade and the Sir ED Walker Homes) and a small area on Cleveland Avenue.[1] On 30 March 2010, a character appraisal was adopted for the now renamed West End Conservation Area, including further boundary extensions around Tower Road, Pierremont Crescent/ Woodland Road, Abbey Road/Cleveland Avenue and Flora Avenue/Ashcroft Road/ Greencroft Close. Consequently, it is the 2010 boundary that is being appraised in this document.

At the time of review, the West End Conservation Area was one of eighteen such designations within Darlington Borough. Further information on our conservation areas can be found on ú K Ŝ / 2 dz y Ŏ ŝ f Ω ă (see section 7.3).

The West End Conservation Area under review is on the national Heritage at Risk Register (see section 4.1)

1.2 The Appraisal

This new West End Conservation Area appraisal was drafted between October 2024 and August 2025 by the Darlington Conservation Officer, Gaby Rose, providing a comprehensive reassessment of the area including proposed boundary changes. Throughout the appraisal, the 'time of review' is NJ Ŝ ŧ Ŝ January 2026, which is the date of ú K Ŝ / 2 dz y Ŏ ŝ f Ω ă Ŏ l ō ŝ y Ŝ ú Y Ŝ Ŝ ú ŝ m ă Ŏ ø K Ŝ y ú K Ŝ available to the public (see section 1.3)

The appraisal process offers an opportunity to reassess the area in accordance with current planning policy and guidance, providing a robust document that can be of greater influence in the planning process (see chapter 2.0). Whilst the appraisal covers many aspects of the West End Conservation Area, it cannot be completely comprehensive. Omission of particular buildings, features or spaces does not imply that they are of no interest.

The appraisal focusses on the following aspects:

- The special architectural and historic interest of the area at the time of review (see chapter 3.0)
- The condition of the area under review, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change (see chapter 4.0)
- The relevance of the boundary line at the time of review and any proposed changes to it (see chapter 5.0)
- The finalised boundary line which will be adopted (see chapter 6.0)

1.3 Public Consultation on Draft Appraisal

At the cabinet meeting on 6 January 2026, Councillors approved the public consultation on the document *West End Conservation Area Appraisal (Public Consultation Draft) January 2026*

[1] Boyle, B 2009 'Track changes to *Grange Road Stanhope Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal*' (unpublished), 13 November

¢ K Ŝ ŘNJ l· Ŧ ű ƛ ă l· Ø l· ƛ f l· ō f Ŝ Ŧ ƨ NJ from DATE to DATE. Ő m ƨ ƴ Ť ɖ ƨ 17:00 l· ű ƛ ƨ y ˜ ƨ on DATE 2026, along with a feedback form which we would like you to complete. Paper copies of the document (read only) and feedback form are available at the Town Hall (by appointment only, email conservation@darlington.gov.uk), and at the libraries on Crown Street and Cockerton Green/Woodland Road during normal opening hours[2]. Site notices have been displayed within the proposed boundary exclusion and extension areas (see sections 5.1 & 5.2). We have directly approached individuals, groups and organisations that are likely to have a particular interest in the West End Conservation Area. Following the consultation period, the draft will be reviewed in the light of the comments received and finalised before being formally adopted by the Council.

1.4 Adoption of Appraisal

This section will be provided at a later stage of the appraisal process.

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[2] https://www2.darlington.gov.uk/our-libraries

2.0 Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. This includes an environmental objective to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment[3]. Some of the policies under *16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* specifically refer to conservation areas or designated heritage assets, which include conservation areas. A heritage asset is a *building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*[4]. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance[5], which forms the basis for all plan-making and decision-making.

> All heritage assets within a conservation area are classified as designated heritage assets (see section 2.1)

The *Darlington Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Adopted February 2022)*[6] is compliant with the NPPF. At the time of review, the following policies applied to the West End Conservation Area (see Policies Map), please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording:

> Policy H 2 Housing Allocations: Plot 25 (Former Arts Centre, Vane Terrace – also see Policies Map) is identified as a housing commitment to help meet the housing requirement set out in Policy H 1.
>
> Policy ENV 1 Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment (A) Designated Heritage Assets: Proposals should conserve those elements which contribute to such asset's significance, including any contribution made by their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.
>
> Policy ENV 1 Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment (B) Conservation Areas: Proposals affecting a conservation area should preserve and enhance those elements identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the significance of that area. Development will not be permitted that would lead to the loss of public or private open spaces within or adjacent to conservation areas where the existing openness makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area or its setting unless the public benefit demonstrably outweighs the harm.
>
> Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character: The character and local distinctiveness of the urban area will be protected and improved by (A.2 – Skerne Park) retaining the openness and green infrastructure, (B.2 – Historic Routes Milbank Road and Cleveland Terrace, see Policies Map) retaining and enhancing the length, continuity, biodiversity, amenity and heritage value of historic routes, and by (C – South Park)

[3] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 7 & 8
[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, page 73
[5] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 202
[6] Darlington Borough Council 2022

retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban and rural parklands

Policy ENV 4 Green and Blue Infrastructure (existing Blue/Green Corridor along the river Skerne, proposed Green Corridors: Milbank Road and Cleveland Terrace, see Policies Map) Will be protected, and where appropriate, improved and extended to provide a quality, safe and accessible network of well connected, multi-functional open spaces for recreation and play and to enhance visual amenity, biodiversity, landscape and productivity.

Policy IN 1 Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network (Key Sustainable Transport Corridors: Woodland Road and Cleveland Terrace, see Policies Map) In Delivering an efficient transport system with a focus on the provision of infrastructure improvements, to encourage greater use of sustainable modes, leading to less reliance on single occupancy vehicle journeys. The Council will work with partners and developers to make the best use of and improve existing transport infrastructure, where appropriate, using developer contributions to manage the impact of development on the transport network.

2.1 Conservation Area Designation

Under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) ó ú K Ŝ conservation areas are *areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. They are designated heritage assets.[7] Their boundaries are not the same as any development limits boundaries (policy H3) shown on the Darlington Local Plan Policies Map[8] and have a different function, although in places they may coincide.

Section 69 of the Act requires the Council to determine which parts of the borough are areas of special interest and designate them as conservation areas. When considering designation, the Council should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack interest.[9] The courts have held it legitimate to include within a conservation area the setting of buildings that form the heart of that area[9]. Examples of types of special architectural and historic interest which justify designation include areas[10]:

- with a high number of nationally or locally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations
- which are linked to a particular individual, industry, custom or pastime with a particular local interest
- where an earlier, historically significant layout is visible in the modern street pattern
- where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate

7 Darlington Borough Council 2022
8 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 204
9 Historic England 2017, page 4
10 Historic England 2019, page 27

- with a quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, greenspaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest

Conservation area designation (as well as the reassessment of an existing area) is generally carried out by a providing a draft appraisal which will go out to public consultation, although there is no legal requirement to do so. In light of any comments received, the document will then be amended, finalised and formally adopted by the Council (see sections 1.3 & 1.4). All adopted appraisals can be found on our website (see section 7.3).

2.2 Implications for the Council

Following designation, the Council has a duty to review 5 l· NJ f ƛ ƴ Ǝ ű ƨ ƴ Ω ă Ŏ ƨ ƴ ă Ŝ N area boundaries from time to time and make amendments where necessary.[11] In addition, section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) requires us from time to time to formulate proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas and consult the public on them. The duty to prepare and review appraisals and management plans, which may set out a variety of measures to help safeguard and improve a conservation area, is also reflected in the Darlington Local Plan (see chapter 2.0), forming part of our proactive approach towards protecting the borough's ă K Ŝ NJ ƛ ű l· Ǝ Ŝ l· ă ă Ŝ ű ă Φ

In the exercise of planning functions, the Council shall pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the significance as well as the character or appearance of our conservation areas.[12] Planning functions include both the formulation of robust conservation policies (Local Plan) and the determination of applications for planning permission or advertisement consent, helping us manage change within an area and its setting. The Council should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and their setting to enhance or better reveal their significance.[13] Although character appraisals will inform planning decisions, they alone do not determine whether development would be acceptable or not. The impact of proposed development upon a conservation area, or its setting, will be weighed against other material considerations when reaching a decision.

National planning policy requires us to have up-to-date evidence about our historic environment and assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their surroundings, and make this information publicly available.[14] The *West End Conservation Area Appraisal* provides such assessment (see chapter 3.0). It is published on our website (see section 7.3).

C ƛ ƴ l· f f è Σ ű K Ŝ / ƨ dz ƴ Ŏ ƛ f ƛ ă l· f ă ƨ NJ Ŝ lj dz ƛ NJ Ŝ Ř ű ƨ areas with regards to their condition (see section 4.1). Character appraisals or shorter surveys identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into management

[11] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 69
[12] Darlington Borough Council 2022, paragraph 9.1.18
[13] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72
[14] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 219
[15] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 205-206

LJ f l· y˘ ă ă LJ Ŝ Ŏ ƛ Ŧ ƛ Ŏ Φ ű L2 Ŧ l· l y˘ Ŏ· 2 NJ y Ŝ ă l· Ŝ Ω NJ Ó l y ű Ŝ Ŝ 2 Ř y ă l· NJ Ŝ l· ƛ ă
the Council will liaise with Historic England. If confirmed to be in poor condition,
will be put on the national Heritage at Risk Register, as is the case with the West
End Conservation Area under review. We are currently working with Historic England
to find solutions to remove the West End from the register.

2.3 Implications for the Public

Conservation area status results in additional planning controls:

Demolition. Under section 196D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), it is an offence to carry out, cause or permit demolition of unlisted etc. buildings inside conservation areas without planning permission.

Permitted development rights. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), ά ű K Ŝ h NJ Ř Ŝ NJ é Σ Ř Ŝ Ŧ ƛ y ŝ ă 2 (3) 2 y ˘ Ŝ NJ Ó l· 2 ű ƛ 2 y˘ l· NJ Ŝ l· ă
of the Order outlines which permitted development rights have been removed from article 2(3) land. This means that planning permission will be required to carry out those types of development, affecting:

- Part 1, Class A – enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class AA – enlargement of a dwellinghouse by construction of additional storeys
- Part 1, Class B – additions etc to the roof of a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class E – buildings etc incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class G – chimneys, flues etc on a dwellinghouse
- Part 1, Class H – microwave antenna on a dwellinghouse
- Part 3, Class M – certain uses to dwellinghouses
- Part 3, Class Q – buildings on agricultural units and former agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses
- Part 7, Class A – extensions etc of commercial, business or service premises
- Part 7, Class C – click and collect facilities
- Part 7, Class D – modification of shop loading bays
- Part 7, Class H – extensions etc of industrial and warehouse
- Part 7, Class L – development at waste management facilities
- Part 7, Class M – extensions etc for schools, colleges, universities and hospitals
- Part 9, Class D – toll road facilities
- Part 14, Class A – installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on domestic premises
- Part 14, Class J – installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises

[16] Historic England 2019, page 29
[17] ! Ø l· ƛ f l· ō f Ŝ 2 y˘ l ƛ ă ű 2 NJ ƛ Ŏ 9 y˘ ∃ f l· y˘ Ř Ω ă ø Ŝ ō ă ƛ ű Ŝ

- Part 14, Class K – installation or alteration etc of stand-alone solar equipment on non-domestic premises
- Part 14, Class N – installation etc of flue for biomass heating system on non-domestic premises
- Part 14, Class O – installation etc of flue for combined heat and power on non-domestic premises
- Part 15, Class B – electricity undertakings
- Part 16, Class A – electronic communications code operators
- Part 16, Class B – other electronic communications development
- Part 15, Class C – other electronic communications development: microwave antenna
- Part 19, Class B – extension or alteration of an operational Crown building
- Part 19, Class T – electronic communication apparatus etc for national security purposes
- Part 19, Class TA – development by the Crown on a closed defence site
- Part 20, Class ZA – demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place
- Part 20, Class A – new dwellinghouses on detached blocks of flats
- Part 20, Class AA – new dwellinghouses on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use
- Part 20, Class AB – new dwellinghouses on terrace buildings in commercial or mixed use
- Part 20, Class AC – new dwellinghouses on terrace buildings in use as dwellinghouses
- Part 20, Class AD – new dwellinghouses on detached buildings in use as dwellinghouses

Further permitted development rights can be removed by the Council imposing directions under article 4(1) of the Order. Consequently, planning permission will be required for the types of development specified in that direction. Article 4 directions can be useful tools, as they can prevent further decline of an area or even revert harm that has already been caused.

Works to trees. Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that anyone intending to carry out works to a tree [18], with a stem diameter greater than 75mm (3 inches) when measured at 1.5 metres (5 feet) above ground level, in a conservation area must give at least six weeks notice to the Council. This gives us the opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order. The work may go ahead before the end of the six-week period if the Council gives consent. With regard to works to a dead or dangerous tree, unless there is an immediate risk of serious harm, notice of five days must be given before carrying out the work.

[18] The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012, section 15

The additional planning controls as well as improvement measures set out in a management plan (see section 2.2) help to ensure that existing and future generations can enjoy the benefits a conservation area can offer. Conservation areas that are well preserved can enhance economic well-being and quality of life, as well as offer a certain amount of continuity and stability. Likewise, conservation and change based on informed decisions can make a positive contribution enabling communities to regenerate. The value of a conservation area can be beneficial to both property owners/occupiers and developers, and estate agents may put increasing emphasis on such a location when advertising properties.

2.4 Other Designated Heritage Assets within the Area

Besides its conservation area designation, the West End Conservation Area under review also includes thirty-nine listed buildings and one registered park, as shown on the maps at the beginning of this document, all of which are designated heritage assets.

Under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), listed buildings are *buildings of special architectural or historic interest*. Under section 8C of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (as amended), Historic England compiles a register of *gardens and other land situated in England and appearing to them to be of special historic interest*.

Listed buildings and registered parks & gardens are designated heritage assets that are included on the National Heritage List for England (Historic England website). They are graded according to their special interest as follows:

- Grade I: of exceptional interest; nationally only 2.5% of all listed buildings and 9% of all registered parks & gardens are in this category
- Grade II*: of more than special interest; 5.8% of all listed buildings and 27% of all registered parks & gardens are in this category
- Grade II: of special interest; 91.7% of all listed buildings and 62% of all registered parks & gardens are in this category

[illegible] as bridges, bandstands and railings.

With regards to the extent of listing, the following applies[19]:

- The list entry on the National Heritage List of England only *identifies* [illegible]
- The whole of the exterior and interior of the principal listed building, including any later alterations, are listed
- Any object or structure fixed to the principal listed building at the date of listing are also included
- Any freestanding object (e.g. birdbath or statue) or structure (e.g. outbuilding or wall) within the curtilage of the principal listed building which has formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948 is also treated as part of the listed building

[19] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s1(5)

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- the physical layout of the principal listed building and any other objects/structures
- the ownership(s) of the principal listed building and any other objects/structures, historically and at the time of listing (or 1 January 1969 if listed earlier)
- the functional relationship(s) between the principal listed building and any other objects/structures, historically and at the time of listing (or 1 January 1969 if listed earlier)

The Council determines whether an object or structure is curtilage listed. For any queries about the extent of listing, please contact conservation@darlington.gov.uk

Works that affect any part of the listed building are likely to require Listed Building Consent. This includes works to:

- the exterior and interior of the principal listed building, including any later alterations
- any object or structure fixed to the principal listed building at the date of listing
- any freestanding object or structure within the curtilage of the principal listed building

Some works may also require planning permission or advertisement consent. For further information check our website or the Planning Portal (see section 7.3).

A registered park or garden is not protected by a separate consent regime. Nevertheless, in planning applications made to the Council great weight will be given to their conservation.[21] Any substantial harm to or loss of grade II registered parks or gardens should be exceptional.[22] The Council is required to consult the Gardens Trust on all applications concerning a registered park or garden.

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[20] Mynors 2006, page 115ff.
[21] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 212
[22] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 213

3.0 Assessing Significance

When appraising an existing or proposed new conservation area, we need to look at the detailed as well as wider interests (or values) of a place in order to better understand its dynamics. It is helpful to use the cultural and natural heritage values provided in *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* for such assessment[23]:

- Evidential value: the physical remains of past human activity (e.g. surviving structures and features) (see sections 3.2 to 3.5)
- Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected to a place; this tends to be illustrative or associative (see sections 3.2 & 3.3)
- Aesthetic value: the sensory and intellectual stimulation people draw from a place; it can be the result of the design of a place or its development over time (see sections 3.4 & 3.5)
- Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it (e.g. residents and other stakeholders) (see section 3.6)

Note that elements can possess more than one heritage value.

The sum of all heritage values and interests defines the significance of a place. Only by defining the significance of an area is it possible to assess how its character and appearance is vulnerable to harm or loss. This also helps reduce potential uncertainty for owners and others when investment or development in the area is considered. Moreover, the understanding of significance provides the basis for developing and implementing local policies (see chapter 2.0) and management strategies that will sustain the heritage values of a place in its setting[24].

Conservation areas are designated for their special architectural and historic interest (see section 2.1). Most such areas have both, although one may be considered more prominent than the other. Key elements in defining the special interest are[25]:

- the still-Ø ă ă ō f Ŝ Ŝ Ŧ Ŧ Ŝ Ŏ ű ă κ ă Y LJ l· Ŏ ű 2 Ŧ ű K Ŝ l· NJ Ŝ l· its planform, townscape, character and architectural style and social/ historic associations and the importance of that history
- architectural quality and built form, including any particular architectural interest resulting from a past use, planning or design, important phases of development, the integrity or group value of buildings or provision of a record of development over time through the architectural record
- the contribution to the special interest made by the setting on the area, that is what the setting can contribute to the significance of a heritage asset, and how it can allow that significance to be appreciated
- local distinctiveness and a sense of place which make the area unique, including the influence of sources of building materials and historic industries that have come to contribute significantly to the l· NJ Ŝ l· Ω ă LJ NJ Ŝ ă Ŝ y ű ă Ř Ŝ y ű ă ű è

[23] English Heritage 2008, page 27ff
[24] English Heritage 2008, page 14
[25] Historic England 2019, 15

- how the places within it are experienced by the people who live and work there and visitors to the area (including both daily and seasonal variations if possible)
- the design, planting or past use of open spaces, green areas, parks and gardens, and trees, including the representation of particular species or varieties that reflect key periods of horticultural interest, collecting or design
- designated and other heritage assets, their intrinsic importance and the contribution they make to the townscape; this will normally provide an indication of past recognition of special interest, whilst a focus of assets of a similar type may suggest that the area as a whole has a particular special interest

3.1 Summary of Special Interest

At the time of review, the West End Conservation Area comprises the following elements of special interest:

Darlington used to be a communications centre due to its position in the Durham bishopric. The area to the west of the town is traversed by three main roads that were turnpiked in the eighteenth century, including the former Coal Road and Great North Road (Post Road), which had been in existence since at least the sixteenth century. These are still important radial routes into the town centre today and are now the oldest surviving features inside the Conservation Area under review.

During 5 l· NJ t λ ÿ of Ëusi2al ÿ ad Ö throughout the nineteenth century, mansions, villas and substantial terraced houses of high architectural quality were constructed on the fringes of the town, particularly in what would become the West End Conservation Area under review. The buildings were deliberately interspersed with lush vegetation including many mature trees as well as various public parks, so that the wealthier citizens could escape the overcrowded, polluted and disease-ridden town, creating a large, prosperous and attractive inner suburb.

Whilst the wealthy Quaker families of Pease and Backhouse were sometimes criticised for their mansions within substantial grounds, they did contribute freely to a multitude of philanthropic causes, particularly connected with health and education for the poor[26] (e.g. drinking fountains, schools). The almshouses, although not provided by a Quaker, were another act of charity within the area.

Prior to its development, the land to the west of the compact town used to include glebe land owned by the Duke of Cleveland. When, from 1863, it was gradually sold off and made available for housing, some of the new street names were given to commemorate the former landowners. Within what would become the Conservation Area under review, the Cleveland estate land was allocated for the construction of middle-class residences exclusively. The designs and layouts were heavily regulated by the estate, comprising the first wave of town planning in the area. This resulted in a diversity of built forms and

[26] Flynn 1992, page 9

layouts with an underlying consistency in terms of materials and spatial quality. Darlington architect John Ross, formerly of the partnership Richardson and Ross, which was responsible for works on some of the mansions, handled many applications on the Ð dz ⌊ Ŝ Ω ă . ō Ŝ K l· f Ŧ

Featuring ű K Ŝ ō Ŝ ă ű ƨ Ŧ 5 l· NJ f ƛ y˝ Ǝ ű ƨ y˝ Ω ă Ŝ l· NJ f è ă dz ō d former greenfield land, much of the building stock within the West End Conservation Area under review has been altered relatively little when compared to other residential areas and continues to make a significant contribution to ű K Ŝ ú ă ý ɣ Ω ƒ . A significant amount of traditional building features survive, notably prominent chimney stacks, an array of different roof shapes/sizes, decorative brickwork, entrance canopies and open/enclosed porches, classical doorcases, panelled timber doors with over-lights, bay windows, and slim, traditional window frames with clear, coloured or other decorative glazing, the latter often being leaded. The historical plots are enclosed by brick or stone boundary walling often featuring fine gate piers. Moreover, various outbuildings associated with original houses can still be found in rear areas. In the public realm, there are still plenty of scoria-paved surfaces, as well as some including cobbles or sandstone blocks.

The area also has a number of historical school buildings, both repurposed former houses and the bespoke constructions designed by notable Darlington architects GG Hoskins and JP Pritchett.

Details of the above are provided in the following sections.

3.2 Layout, Platform and Setting

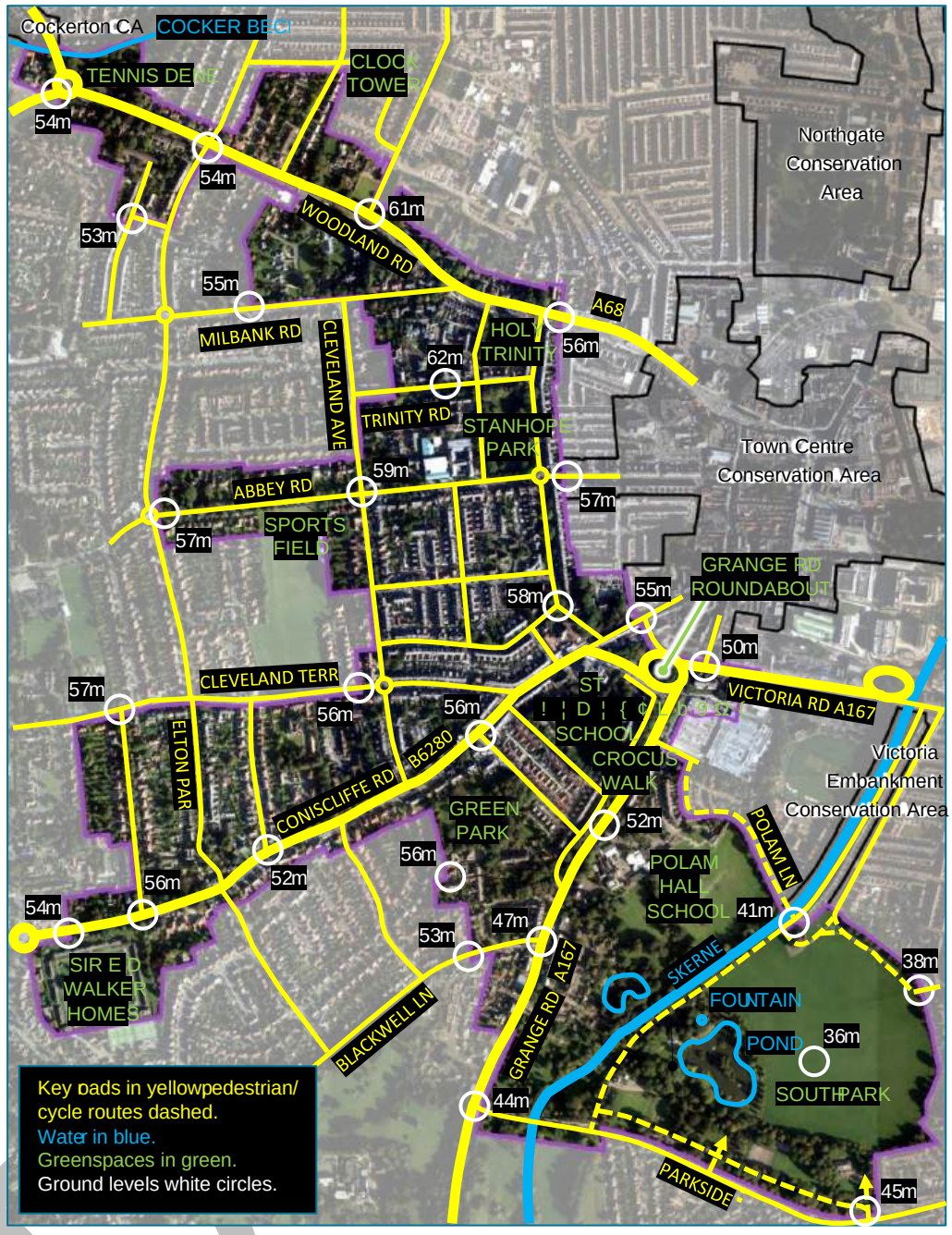
This section provides some of the evidential value (e.g. the existing layout, features, etc.) of the West End Conservation Area under review as well as some of its historical value (e.g. links, associations).

The West End Conservation Area, lies as the name implies, immediately to the west of Darlington town centre. It stretches extensively to the northwest, west and south.

The Conservation Area under review includes two watercourses. The River Skerne separates the oldest main parts of South Park from the remainder of the area. There are two ponds to either side of the river, one of them inside the public park. At the other end of the Conservation Area, Cocker Beck forms the northernmost border and is much more secluded.

The underlying bedrock of the West End Conservation Area under review is made of calcareous mudstones, with the exception of its northwestern part where there is also some dolomitic limestone. Around the Skerne and Cocker Beck Alluvium (i.e. loose, unconsolidated sediments like clay, silt, sand or gravel deposited by flowing water) can be found. In the southwestern part of the Conservation Area, sand and gravel were deposited by glacial meltwater. In its northwestern part as well as in the southern part of South Park there are unsorted sedimentary deposits which were created by the moving ice of a glacier (also known as glacial till) and are now suspended, with gravel, in a matrix of fine mud[27].

[27] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-stones-england



Layout of the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, at the time of review. Surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines). (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

There are two major roads, with the A68 (Woodland Road) from/to Edinburgh traversing the Conservation Area under review in the proximity of its northern border and the A167 (Grange Road) from/to Northallerton cutting through its southern part. Both are radial routes until they reach the town centre where they form the inner ring road The latter is largely outside the West End Conservation Area, with the exception of the western-most stretch of Victoria Road (A167). There is also the A road from Barnard Castle via Piercebridge which becomes the B6280 (Coniscliffe w 2 l Ř ú l ű 5 l NJ f ǎ y ∃ ű 2 y Ω ă 2 dz ű Ŝ NJ NJ ǎ y ∃ NJ 2 l Ř ø K Ŝ Conservation Area from a southwestern direction towards the town centre, again in a radial fashion. Along with the river Skerne, these wide, busy roads form physical and visual barriers within the West End Conservation Area.

Networks of minor road layouts have been formed between the A68 and B6280, and between the B6280 and A167. An angle of around 30 degrees is between Milbank Road and Woodland Road (A68), and an angle of around 45 degrees between Cleveland Terrace and Coniscliffe Road (B6280). Otherwise, the road layouts are generally perpendicular arrangements, with those between Milbank Road and Coniscliffe Road being roughly in a north-south and east-west orientation. The graphic above only shows the key roads, which are mainly through-roads. There are, however, also a quantity of back lanes behind the historical terraces as well as cul-de-sacs associated with 20th and 21st century housing estates, which are not depicted.

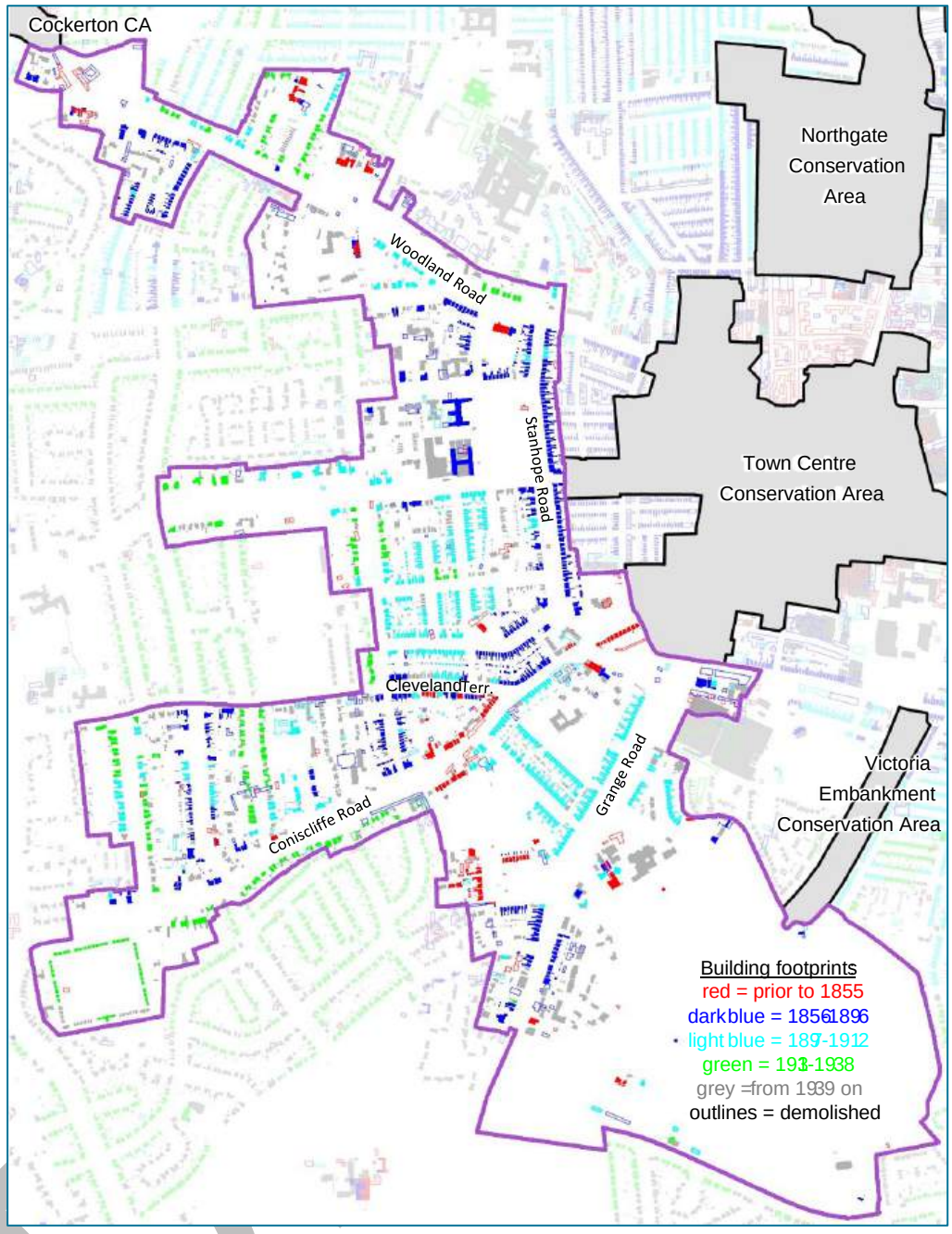
The West End Conservation Area under review boasts lush tree cover along several roads, the river Skerne and on the Grange Road Roundabout. In addition, there are a variety of public greenspaces, with South Park being the largest of them. The others are Crocus Walk along South End Avenue, Queen Park, Stanhope Park, the small park at the Clock Tower on Tower Road, the graveyard at Holy Trinity and Tennis Dene. The latter forms part of the much wider network of parkland called the Denes, which is largely outside the Conservation Area under review. Private greenspaces include those belonging to Polam School, [illegible] the [illegible] Walkergate Homes and the Abbey Road Sports Field, and the gardens of larger residences.

Whilst changes in the topography are often not very noticeable within the West End Conservation Area under review, an exception would be the areas to the west, northwest and northeast of the junction of Grange Road and Blackwell Lane, where ground levels range from 36 meters in the south to 62 meters in the north. The lowest point is within the large, grassed space inside South Park, where there is a notable dip, and the highest point along Trinity Road to the southwest of the churchyard.[28]

The immediate setting of the West End Conservation Area under review includes the Darlington town centre and residential street of Victoria Embankment to the east, which are both designated as separate conservation areas. To the north, west and south, the Conservation Area is largely surrounded by residential areas as well as the Darlington Memorial Hospital (north) and the large grounds of Blackwell Grange and further greenspaces on the opposite side of the A167 (south).

The map regression (see below) shows that the oldest surviving buildings (red footprints) within the Conservation Area under review are mostly located along or within the vicinity of the main routes into the town centre: Grange Road, Coniscliffe Road/Cleveland Terrace and Woodland Road. Many of the 1855 buildings in other locations have been demolished. The late nineteenth-century (dark blue) developments continued the principle of lining the roads, although often in a high-density and regimented manner by providing terraced houses. The long terraces lining the east side of Stanhope Road and the large plots of the school complex stand out. In the early twentieth century (light blue), the construction of terraced properties continued but also started to introduce more generous residential development comprising semi-detached and detached houses. The construction of the latter carried on into the first half of the twentieth century (green), and beyond. The more recent buildings (grey) come in various sizes and orientations, including dispersed arrangements, and often disrupt or displace the historical planform. In the immediate setting outside the Conservation Area, nineteenth-century terracing can be found to the east (town centre) and northwest of the boundary, whereas twentieth-century housing continues to the north, south and west.

[28] https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/maps-kb57/England/



Planform map regression of the West Conservation Area (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010 and surroundings at the time of review. The other conservation areas (black boundary lines and shaded grey) are omitted from this analysis – please refer to their appraisals for further information. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

3.3 Historical Development

This section describes the historical value of the West End Conservation Area under review using information retrieved from secondary sources (see 7.0). The listed buildings and registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER].

Darlington experienced medieval growth due to its position in the Durham bishopric building on a market which served a prosperous agricultural hinterland and traffic which passed through on the Great North Road between London and Edinburgh.

Much of this expansion was however limited to the confines of the historical settlement which now forms the town centre (outside the Conservation Area under review), in the yards and garths behind the marketplace frontages.[29]

The area that would become West End Conservation Area under review used to be enclosed agricultural land on the outskirts to the west of the compact town. Like today, it was traversed by the three main roads. The Coal Road from West Auckland to Darlington, including what is now Woodland Road (A68), was already in use by 1457. As a result of the Scottish war in the 1540s, communications with the south of the country, via the Great North Road, were improved and Darlington became a flourishing post town. The road from Barnard Castle to Stockton, including the stretch of Coniscliffe Road (B6280) that is now in the Conservation Area under review, seems to have existed since at least the sixteenth century.[30]

Upon his death in 1640, James Bellasses of Owton, Hartlepool, bequeathed four fields on Bracken Moor, a boggy stretch of land immediately to the east of the meandering river Skerne, to the town of Darlington. The plot, which was almost twenty acres in size, became to be known as Poor Howdens and administered by trustees who rented the fields out to farmers, with the income going to support poverty-stricken linen and woollen workers.[31]

In the latter half of the seventeenth century, the deanery (which had, since the mid ă ƛ È ú Ŝ Ŝ ƴ ú Ƙ Ŏ Ŝ ƴ ú dzNJ è Σ ō Ŝ Ŝ ƴ dz ƴ Ř ŜNJ ƨ dzNJ ƛ ă Ř ƛ Ŏ ú ƛ ƨ payment of one-tenth of their goods or income to the church each year) of Darlington were acquired by Christopher Vane (1653-1723), first Baron Barnard. He settled them with his second surviving son, William (1682-1734), second Viscount Vane, whose surviving son, also William (1714-1789), second Viscount Vane, would die without issue. As lay rectors, the Vanes held the parochial glebe (i.e. land either owned by the church or put aside to support a priest), which comprised a large wedge of 200 acres of agricultural land running out of town from Skinnergate to Carmel Road, bounded to the north by Woodland Road and a lane which would later become Milbank Road, and to the south Coniscliffe Lane (now Road) and a lane which would later become Cleveland Terrace (much of this land is within the West End Conservation Area under review). In the mid-eighteenth century, the glebe was ţ Ŝ ú ú ƨ Ŧ ƛ Ŧ ú Ŝ Ŝ ƴ ú Ŝ ƴ ł ƴ ú ă Σ ł ƴ Ř ú Ƙ Ŝ ± ł ƴ Ŝ ă NJ Ŝ Ŏ Ƙ Ŝ ƴ ă Σ LJ ƛ Ǝ ă Σ Ŏ ƨ NJ ƴ ł ƴ Ř[32]. Ƙ ł è ƛ ă ă dz ƛ ƴ Ǝ Ŧ NJ ƨ Y 5 ł NJ

In 1745, when the English army moved north to Culloden in the Scottish Highlands during the Jacobean Rising, the road between Northallerton and Darlington, which was part of the Great North Road, had to be repaired before the artillery could pass. On his return, the victorious Duke of Cumberland condemned the stretch between Darlington and Croft, which included the part of Grange Road (A167) that is now within the West End Conservation Area under review, as the worst he had travelled on. Generally, the poor state of the roads hindered trade and communications and increased the burden placed upon the ratepayers responsible for their repair. Whilst the parishes were called upon for more expense and effort, traffic became less and the roads more cut up.[33]

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29 Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 8
30 Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 111-123
31 Lloyd 2005, page 9-11
32 Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 5, 446, 195-196 & 201
33 Sunderland 1967, page 54-55

Consequently, the major routes were turnpiked by being placed in the control of trustees who were permitted by acts of Parliament to enclose such roads, erect toll gates and levy tolls on merchandise and travellers in return for maintaining them. First of all, the long-distance routes were tackled. In 1745, the part of the Post Road or Great North Road that went from Boroughbridge to Durham was turnpiked, including the stretch of Grange Road that is now within the West End Conservation Area under review (NB: this was a new stretch of the route; it had previously gone through Bank Top[34], outside the Conservation Area under review). In 1747, the road between Stockton and Barnard Castle was turnpiked. Next, the roads carrying coal from southwest Durham to Teeside and North Yorkshire were tackled. Coal was of great importance and, to help the trade, preferential tolls were fixed. In 1751, the Coal Road between Darlington and West Auckland was turnpiked. It enters the Conservation Area under review over the bridge across Cockerton Beck, which used to be the ancient boundary between the townships of Cockerton and Bondgate[35], and was the main artery coming from the pits of West Auckland, with around 200 carts passing over Cockerton Bridge each day. It had also been used by drovers bringing their cattle from farms to markets[36]. In 1795, the coal road between Cockerton Bridge and Staindrop was turnpiked, comprising what is now the B6279 only its eastern-most end is within the West End Conservation Area under review[37,38].

Bricks were made on a considerable scale in Darlington by the 1760s. In 1763, Francis Holmes bought Thornbeck Hills and Glover Pastures, a large triangular block of land partly within the West End Conservation Area under review between the northern border of the glebe, Cockerton Lane (now Woodland Road) and what is now Carmel Road (outside the Conservation Area under review)[39]. Part of this land may have been occupied by one of the brick-making sites of Robert Richardson, who produced bricks on contract to Holmes, selling them to various individuals for their own use[40].

In 1789, the deanery and tithes were purchased by Henry Vane (1726-1792) of Raby Castle, second Earl of Darlington and head of the main Vane family line. They would be passed down to his heirs, the Dukes of Cleveland and Barons Barnard[41].

The end of the eighteenth century saw the exodus of Darlington's [illegible] such as the principal Quaker families of Pease and Backhouse, into the surrounding countryside just outside the town, in particular what would become the West End Conservation Area under review, to avoid the pollution and overcrowding resulting from increasing industrialisation[42]. Their mansions with substantial grounds, which were supposed to be comfortable yet not ostentatious, adhering with the Quaker code of relative modesty in worldly goods, were generally established on land leased by the bishop. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the freeholds of these properties were sold to their occupiers[42]. The middle classes were quick to follow suit and began to acquire small villas or substantial terraced houses within the area[43].

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34 Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 123
35 Flynn 1994, photo 79
36 Flynn 1994, photo 79
37 Temple 1971, pages 1-2
38 Sunderland 1967, page 55-56
39 Flynn 1994, photo 68
40 Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 24 (map) & 188
41 Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 5 & 201
42 Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 5 & 43
43 Flynn 1994, Introduction

The earliest surviving building in the Conservation Area under review is [24] *Polam Hall*[44]. ¢ K Ŝ ø 2 NJ Ř K U J ž f ł ž y ˇ ∃ ō Ŝ Ŝ-lying land to the south of the Skerne along ú K Ŝ f the banks of the river Skerne and may have been derived from the Anglo-Saxon *polum*, meaning pools. In 1794, a two-storey, three-by-three-bay villa was constructed for Harrington Lee (died in 1824), a Darlington linen draper. It was the Ŧ ł NJ ă ú ú ł Y Ŝ ł y ˇ 5 l · NJ f ł y ∃ ú ž y Ω ă ă ž Ŏ ł l · f K ł ă ú ž NJ è just outside the town centre in the countryside.[45] In 1818, the site was let to Edward Backhouse (1781–1860), and then sold in about 1825 to his brother, Jonathan (1777–1842), a third-generation banker and the original treasurer of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR). In the late 1820s, Jonathan Backhouse employed architect Ignatius Bonomi to enlarge the villa into a mansion. He also bought up surrounding farmland and significantly extended the grounds. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, he landscaped these into a substantial pleasure garden and parkland, including a fishpond, overlooking the river Skerne with a broad sweep of pasture beyond[46][47].



[24] *Polam Hall*, grade II listed, looking northeast, with the original house of 1794 being the central three bays and the bay to the right/south being part of the late-1820s extension by architect Ignatius Bonomi. The building is now used as a part of a 1- to 11 school complex. (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2023)

According to the National Heritage List of England, a number of grade-II listed buildings inside the West End Conservation Area under review were built in the early nineteenth century. These were all high-status residences and include [22] *1 and 2, Harewood Hill*[48], [21] *3 and 4, Harewood Hill*[49], [38] *5 and 6, Harewood Hill*[50] including the [39] *Garden walls to west and south of number 5*[51], [20] *7 and 8, Harewood Hill*[52], [37] *14, Harewood Hill*[53], [34] *126, Coniscliffe Road*[54], [33] *140, Coniscliffe Road* ó l · y ˇ ž ú l · ú Ŝ Ř l · ă Ψ O Ŝ map, see Ó l · Ŝ and [26] *Neasham House*[56] p

[44] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121294
[45] Lloyd 1991, page 84
[46] Lloyd 2017, pages 30–32
[47] AB Heritage Limited 2023, pages 23–24
[48] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322942
[49] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1160202
[50] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121298
[51] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1160217
[52] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121299
[53] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121300
[54] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322919
[55] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121332
[56] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322940

The latter was the home of Thomas Pease[57] and its[25] *Forecourt wall and piers*[58] were added later in the nineteenth century.



Houses constructed on Harewood Hill in the early nineteenth century: *Top left:* [22] *1 and 2, Harewood Hill* Around 1850, no. 1 was the home of solicitor Addison Thomas Stephenson[59] *Top right:* [21] *3 and 4, Harewood Hill* which form a continuous row with numbers 1 and 2 behind generous front gardens. *Centre:* [38] *5 and 6, Harewood Hill* here the rear elevation featuring tall staircase windows faces onto the public highway. *Bottom left:* [20] *7 and 8, Harewood Hill* originally one house and now divided, with a modern wood doorcase and reproduction Regency segmental bow windows. *Bottom right:* [37] *14, Harewood Hill* its former front garden turned into a surface carpark. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

[57] Lloyd 1995, page 84

[58] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121295

[59] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 84



Further houses constructed in the early nineteenth century: *Top left:* [34] *126, Coniscliffe Road Top right:* [33] *140, Coniscliffe Road*, now in office use. In around 1850, when the house was known as Bellevue, it was the home of civil engineer John Dixon[60]. By 1885, it had become the retirement home of John Hardcastle Bowman, a Quaker and prominent member of the Board of Health during the 1850s, who had worked in the leather processing and tanning industry in town as well as been involved in other businesses[61]. *Bottom:* [26] *Neasham House* with its [25] *Forecourt wall and piers* added later in the nineteenth century (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

Around 1810, Larchfield [illegible] subsequently renamed Paradise, was built on Coniscliffe Lane (now Road), just outside the town centre for John Backhouse, a member of Darlington Quaker banking family[62].

In the mid-1820s, Robert (died in 1838, aged 47) and John Botcherby inherited their [illegible] said they set themselves as the [illegible] alternatives to the Quaker Peases. They swore that their mansions would be bigger than anything constructed by the Pease brothers[63], presumably meaning Joseph (1799-1872) and Henry (1807-1881). At the time, Joseph Pease was one of the supporters of the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company which had been set up by his father Edward in 1818[64], and Henry Pease was also a director of the S&DR.

[60] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 84
[61] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 149
[62] Flynn 1994, photo 91
[63] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/8831918.home-sweet-home/
[64] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 8

In 1826, Joseph Pease bought the Southend mansion, originally called Burrowses, from Edward Backhouse, who had built it as his residence in around 1810[65]. A map of the town centre dated 1826[66] shows a potential predecessor building orientated along a north-south axis, suggesting that the current house, now listed as [14] *The Grange Hotel*[67], was constructed shortly after the change of ownership. However, this could be a mapping error, as it has been stated that Pease enlarged the existing building that he had bought by adding a third storey, nursery wing, large bay window, entrance portico and conservatory in which he kept canaries (the latter is no longer extant). Pease also started buying up the surrounding fields, including South Winter Close which would later become Green Park[68], and turned them into a beautiful, wooded garden. The large grounds, wedged between Grange Road and Coniscliffe Lane (now Road), included five summerhouses, two fountains, several ponds and a variety of temples, louvres and alcoves[69], violating the Quaker code of relative modesty[70]. To the south of one the ponds was timbered building that Pease would have known as [G] Avenue Lodge. In around 1845 he would sell [illegible][71]





Top: The former Southend mansion, now grade II listed as [14] *The Grange Hotel*, was the home of the first Quaker MP Joseph Pease until his death in 1872. It is currently known as the Bannatyne Hotel (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025). *Bottom:* [G] Avenue Lodge used to be within the Southend garden and is now a private residence (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2025)

65 Flynn 1994, photo 94
66 Henry Pease and Company Limited 1952
67 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121289
68 Lloyd 1995, page 73
69 Lloyd 2017, pages 37-38
70 Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 42-43
71 Lloyd 2005, page 154

Around the (late?) 1820s, the buildings at Mount Pleasant, which appear to be the earliest building group along Coniscliffe Lane (now Road), were built. These include [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road*[72], [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road*[73], [17] *102, Coniscliffe Road*[74], [18] *104, Coniscliffe Road*[75], and [35] *122 and 124, Coniscliffe Road*[76]. Samuel Tuke Richardson (1846-1904), Quaker artist and confidential clerk at the Backhouses Bank on High Row (outside the West End Conservation Area under review), lived in the corner house, number 94, for at least a decade during his most productive period. His most famous work depicts Jonathan Backhouse balancing his three-wheeled post-chaise with cash as the carriage had lost a wheel on a mad dash back from London as the Earl of Darlington was attempting to make the Backhouse bank insolvent[77].

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[72] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121330
[73] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322918
[74] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1310827
[75] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121331
[76] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1159915
[77] Lloyd 1995, page 71



Houses constructed along Coniscliffe Road around the 1820s, all of them now listed grade II *Top:* [35] *122 and 124, Coniscliffe Road*, with [34] *126, Coniscliffe Road* to the far left. *Centre:* [17] *102, Coniscliffe Road* (right) and [18] *104, Coniscliffe Road* (left). *Bottom:* [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road*, a landmark building, and [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road* (right to left). (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1829, [05] *The Woodlands*[78] was built by Robert Botcherby[79] and, in the early 1830s, [02] *Pierremont*[80] was built by John Botcherby, both attempting to outdo the mansions of the Pease brothers. Pierremont with its ornate Gothic style, windows

[78] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121228

[79] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/23115223.darlington-hospice-benefits-redecoration-project/

[80] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121263

stained with the initial of Botcherby and other decorations, was exceptionally large and splendid, and there would have been few who could afford such a property[81]. Ironically, both *The Woodlands* and the Pierremont estate would later become the homes of members of the Pease family[82].





Top: [05] *The Woodlands*, grade II, later the home of Joseph Whitwell Pease, who extended the property significantly. [illegible] note that the grounds are not accessible to the public. The use of this photo has been kindly permitted. [illegible] *Bottom:* the [02] Pierremont buildings, grade II, later the home of Henry Pease, now subdivided into separate residential units: *Elm Court* with the 1873 Waterhouse colonnade to the left, *Pierremont* behind (not visible), *Dentdale West* to the right and *Dentdale East* out of view to the far right. The use of stone remained the preserve of high status homes, with the majority of buildings being constructed in brick[83]. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025).

According to the National Heritage List of England, [20] *27-33, Cleveland Terrace*[84] and [19] *1-8, Harewood Grove*[85] were built between the early and mid-nineteenth century.

[81] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 36
[82] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/8831918.home-sweet-home/
[83] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 188
[84] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121322
[85] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121296



Houses constructed in the early to mid-nineteenth century: *Top:* [30] *27-33, Cleveland Terrace*, grade II. The formerly continuous roof surface has been broken up by the use of modern tiles at numbers 31 and 33. *Bottom:* [19] *1-8, Harewood Grove*, which is grade II*-listed. In 1851, no. 8 accommodated a boarding school, no. 5 solicitor Thomas Bowes and no. 2 architect Thomas Dixon[86] (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

[13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road*,[87] also known as West Terrace, is not shown on the 1826 map and appears to have been constructed in the 1830s. It was built by Bright Wass, a former apprentice of the Botcherby [illegible] and may have been the two adjoining buildings depicted on the map, which [illegible][88]. Somewhat contradicting the 1830s construction date is the record of a British School within the building which had been formed in 1823; it was one of the earliest Voluntary Schools in Darlington, providing free education for children of the poor. British Schools had been established by Quaker Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) from London in 1808. They provided non-denominational instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and needlework taught by slightly older boys who had been instructed by a schoolmaster (known as the Monitorial System) and competed with the National

[86] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, pages 50 & 84
[87] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322936
[88] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 190-191

Schools set up in 1811, which were very similar in their approach but based on the teachings of the Anglican Church. In Darlington, members of the Pease and Backhouse families were prominent subscribers of the British and Foreign Schools { ƨ Ŏ ƛ Ŝ ű è Σ ø K ƛ Ŏ K Ŧ ƛ y ˙ l · y ˙ Ŏ Ŝ Ř ű K Ŝ . NJ ƛ ű ƛ ă K { Ŏ K ƨ ƨ major importance in attracting colonies of working-class families into the town, often from agricultural backgrounds, with their children requiring education.[89]



[13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road*, grade II listed, looking southwest. These would have been desirable houses close to the town centre, including basements and south-facing rear gardens. Apparently, the building accommodated an early British School which provided free and non-denominational education to children of the poor. Historical iron railings to the front survive. The units are now in commercial use. Note how the modern, reflective roof surface ƨ Ŧ y ˙ dz Y ˙ ō Ŝ NJ π p ō NJ Ŝ l · ļ ă dz LJ ă P ƨ Y ˙ Ŝ © Ga b Ty Ro ś ű Ŝ 2023 dz ƛ f Ř ƛ y ˙ Ǝ Ω ă

In January 1833, the dukedom of Cleveland was created (for the second time in history) for William Henry Vane (1766-1842) of Raby Castle, former third Earl of Darlington. He then became the first Duke of Cleveland, also retaining his fifth Baron Barnard title.

Between 1836 and 1838, the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity*[90] including its [08] *Steps, ramp, rail and lampholder to north*[91] and [10] *Walls, gates and piers to north and west*[92] were built to serve a mainly rural area on land (i.e. part of the glebe) that had been provided by the Duke of Cleveland. Originally, the building was located in the ancient parish of St Cuthbert and constructed as a chapel of ease[93] (Trinity Chapel) to St Cuthbert's church in the town centre (outside the West End Conservation Area under review) to meet the needs of Darlington's rapid expansion following the arrival of the railway (S&DR) in 1825. It was designed in the Early English style by Anthony Salvin (1799-1881) who was a notable architect during the late-Georgian and early-Victorian Gothic Revival. Although Salvin was based in London, he had family connections in Durham, which had brought him commissions for five churches in the Northeast, which he all designed in the Early English style. At Holy Trinity he demonstrates a faithfulness to the medieval Gothic that was unusual for its time. When in April 1843 a separate parish was created for Holy Trinity, the former chapel

89 Stockdale 1972, pages 6, 8, 13 & 26
90 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121226
91 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121227
92 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322946
93 Flynn 1987, page 25

became the parish church[94]. In 1846, its burial ground was consecrated; it would be full by 1862[95].



Top: [09] *Church of Holy Trinity*, grade II*, and associated grade II-listed structures, looking southeast. The utilitarian bus shelter in the immediate setting of the three listed buildings detracts. *Bottom:* Details of [08] *Steps, ramp, rail and lamphold* (yellow arrow) *to north* and [10] *Walls, gates and piers to north and west*. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1842, Woodside (no longer extant; just outside the West End Conservation Area under review) was built off Blackwell Lane, its grounds (partly within Conservation Area under review) stretching between Grange Road and Coniscliffe Lane (now Road). In 1848, it was bought by Quaker railway engineer John Harris (1812-1869), who had become a cousin of John Pease by marriage[96]. He employed Darlington architects and builders William Richardson and John Ross (1836-1895) to add a vast conservatory, a tower and a wing prior to his death. Richardson and Ross were also Quakers and quite in demand for extending and improving mansions of the Society of Friends at the time. ¢ K Ŝ è ø ŜNJŜ ⌊ y˝ 2 ø y˝ Ŝ 2 NJ Ŝ ă λ ∃ y˝ λ y˝ ∃ of the Crystal Palace Σ new-fangled conservatories for mansion owners[97], which had become a fashion after the Great Exhibition in London in 1851[98].

[94] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 2
[95] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 53, 206 & 208
[96] Lloyd 1995, page 84
[97] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/8831918.home-sweet-home/
[98] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 43-44

In 1846, Alexander James Howell became vicar at the Church of St Cuthbert. Being the domestic chaplain to the Duke of Cleveland, he built for his protégé the Parsonage ó f l· ű Ŝ NJ] y ƴ 2 ó y ƴ l· ă { ű / dz ű K ŏ ffŜ Ch ú Cliffe ± ƛ Ŏ l· NJ l· Ǝ Lane[99] (later on Uplands Road) in the 1850s. It was constructed on agricultural land that had been part of the glebe and replaced three old premises on Tubwell Row[100] (outside the West End Conservation Area under review).

Sometime between 1856[101] and 1855 (see OS map below), the terrace [36] *111-117, Coniscliffe Road*[102] was built. It appears to be a late example of such design.



[36] *111-117, Coniscliffe Road*, grade II listed, looking southwest. From the 1870s, Dr Waldy owned the terrace and three acres of the former Southend mansion gardens behind. The latter would become Green Park following his death. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In September 1850, Darlington elected its first Board of Health, to address the problems that the industrialisation had brought about. William Ranger, a government inspector who reported on the sanitary conditions of the town (outside the Conservation Area under review), pointed out that there were no places for exercise or recreation for the inhabitants. He stressed the importance of making available designated places ű K l· ű LJNJ 2 Ø ƛ Ř Ŝ Ψ NJ l· ű ƛ 2 ƴ l· f the dz ă Ŝ Y Ŝ ƴ ú Ω manufacturing industries. Consequently, public meetings were held and the town agreed that the Board of Health should lease the Poor Howdens fields to the east of the Skerne from the trustees. In 1851, the Board set up a committee to oversee the creation of a public park on this land[103].

> *The approaches to the town of Darlington give the idea of opulence, cleanliness and comfort, so many handsome residences and tastefully laid out grounds occupying the immediate environs whilst the streets for ű K Ŝ Y 2 ă ú LJ l· NJ ú l· NJ Ŝ f Ŝ ƴ Ǝ ű K è l· ƴ Ř ó ƛ Ř Ŝ X*
>
> Dr SE Piper, 1851[104]

Dr Stephen Edward Piper (1813 ς 1894) had arrived in Darlington in 1841 to practise medicine and was appointed as the first Medical Officer ű 2 ű K Ŝ ú 2 ó ƴ Ω ă . 2 l· NJ l· Health seven years later. In 1867, he would become the Medical Officer of Health to

[99] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 204
[100] Dean 1984, photo 32
[101] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 97 (map)
[102] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121290
[103] Lloyd 2005, pages 11-13
[104] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 27

the newly created Borough of Darlington, a position he would hold until 1882. It was due to his campaigning and forthright reports describing the appalling living and sanitary conditions within the town that Darlington acquired a supply of pure drinking water and an adequate sewage system[105]. His reports also highlighted the contrast between the poor and richer quarters. For example, in the West End, the death rate was under 10 in 1,000, whilst in the [illegible] it reached 44 to 56[106].

In 1851, the Darlington Gas and Water Company, which included subscribers from the Pease and Backhouse families, provided public streetlights on Woodland Road from the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* going eastwards and on Grange Road from [10] *1-8, Harewood Grove* going north[107]. Note that there were only very few buildings lining those road stretches at the time (see 1855 map below).

The Great Summer Show of 1851 was held in the grounds of [24] *Polam Hall* which at the time was inhabited by [illegible] (1824-1900). The show had a band playing near the fishpond and included displays of plants, cut flowers, fruit and vegetables. The eclipse of the sun that day was clearly visible to observers. All visitors from outside the area were offered cheap rail travel and the entry fee was reduced during the evening. A party of thirty workhouse children visited and had tea. Later in 1851 with both of his parents now deceased[108], Edmund Backhouse moved his family out and sold the hall to local entrepreneurs William (1810-1879) & Robert (died in 1884) Thompson[109 110].

In November 1851, [illegible] park, also known as Bellasses Park, opened to the public. It was the first municipal park in the Northeast of England. The original entrance was via a pathway off Grange Road along the north side of [26] *Neasham House*, and then over a bridge across the Skerne [illegible], which was in a similar location as the current footbridge in [29] *South Park*. Borough surveyor George Mason, who had been instructed to design the park, and superintendent John Morrison, a skilled arboriculturist, received little financial support for transforming the four Poor Howden fields. Money was found for draining the land and to build [I] *Park Lodge*, which provided accommodation for the park keeper (superintendent)[111]. Joseph Pease, perhaps mindful of the criticism that the vigorous mansion-building of his family in the immediate vicinity of the town had robbed its inhabitants of their accustomed facility to walk through fields, made a large [illegible] and donated [illegible] of slag from one of his blast furnaces to surface the footpath that wound around the edge of the park. Private gardeners were encouraged to donate spare plants. The stone-carved [M] *East Entrance Piers* were built sometime after 1852 and are now amongst the oldest surviving elements of the original park[112]. It is not clear what access point they marked originally. In July 1854, the park was considered to be [illegible] there, which may be interpreted as the park official opening ceremony[113 114].

[105] Flynn 1989, page 121
[106] Sunderland 1967, page 90
[107] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 35
[108] Lloyd 2005, page 100
[109] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, pages 31 & 57
[110] AB Heritage Limited 2023, page 25
[111] Flynn 1992, page 125
[112] Flynn 1987, page 101
[113] Lloyd 2005, pages 12, 15-16 & 89
[114] Lloyd 2005, page 17





Top: [l] *Park Lodge*, looking northeast, built in the early 1850s. The tower was later raised to accommodate the William Potts Memorial Clock of 1901, the dial made of Skelton cast iron and glazed with white opal glass.[115] The veranda was also added later, along with the original tearoom. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025) *Bottom:* [M] *East Entrance Piers* to [29] *South Park*, looking south, presumably relocated here along Park Side which was constructed in 1921. The metal gates are later replacements. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

Although [04] *Pierremont Lodge*[116] has a dated plaque of 1854 on its north gable wall, the building is not shown on the six-inch 1855 OS map (see below). The lodge, designed by Richardson and Ross,[117] was located at the entrance of the Pierremont grounds. In 1854, the estate was purchased [illegible] plausible that the date plaque commemorates the change in ownership rather than its construction year, although this is likely to have been built shortly after. [02] *Pierremont* used to be known as the 'Buckingham Palace of Darlington'. Like his brother Joseph, Henry Pease broke the Quaker code of relative modesty. By purchasing the property, he also offended his father (Edward, farther of the railways) who abided to the code and deferred to Pierremont [illegible][118]

[115] Lloyd 2005, page 64
[116] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1310113
[117] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 43
[118] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 44



[04] *Pierremont Lodge*, looking west. Like [02] *Pierremont*, which it served, it is built in sandstone and in a Neo-Gothic style. The building, dated 1854, marks the change in ownership, when Henry Pease bought the estate. The tall timber fence detracts from this grade-II-listed building. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

> *The leading families of the Friends have made their fortunes with their own right hands, and have settled down in all the best and snuggest mansions near the town. They love ample gardens and green plantations, plain houses and high walls, and there is an air of quintessence of comfort in their grounds.*
>
> Darlington historian William Longstaffe, 1854[119]

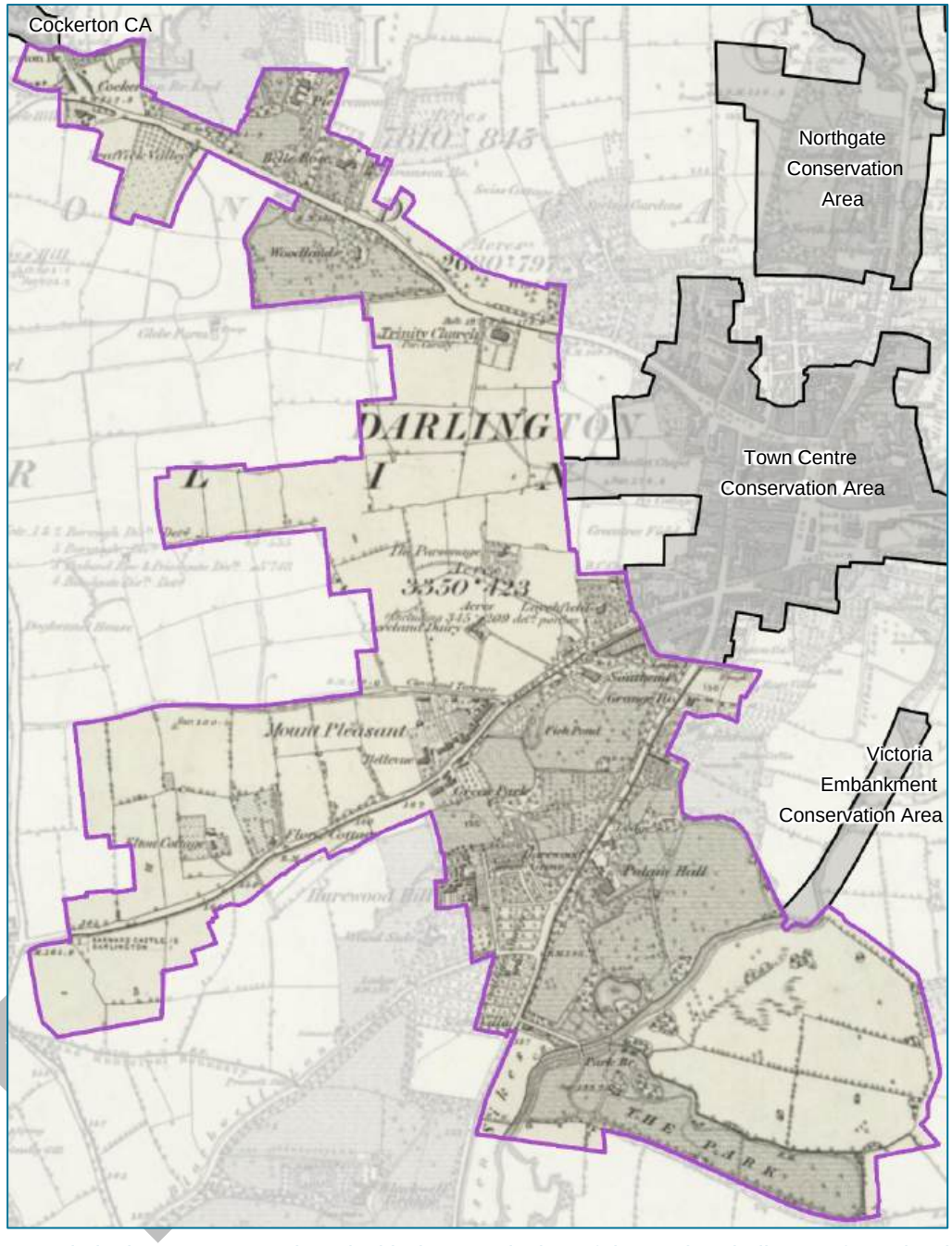
From 1854 on, the Thompson brothers let [24] *Polam Hall* to Jane Procter (1810-1882), who had founded a school for the education of daughters of Quaker families in Selby House on Houndgate (outside the West End Conservation Area under review) in 1848, with the help of her sisters Elizabeth and Barabara. The school relocated to the Polam Hall premises in the same year, whilst the sisters moved there in 1858[120 121].

The six-inch 1855 OS map (see below) shows that the area which would become the West End Conservation Area under review largely comprised enclosed agricultural fields and the estate grounds of wealthy citizens. At its southern end to the east of the meandering Skerne was Bell [illegible] the origin of [29] *South Park*. Like today, the area was traversed by Cockerton Lane, now Woodland Road (part of the 1751 turnpike), Coniscliffe Lane (now Road) (1747 turnpike), and Grange Road (1745 turnpike). The latter also provided access to the track into the Park, which now partly survives as Penny Lane. The origins of Milbank Road and Cleveland Terrace also existed, being the northern and southern boundaries of the glebe, but they were only minor tracks through farmland at the time. Whilst the map is annotated with "Green Park", it was then part of the private Southend gardens which belonged to Joseph Pease[122].

In 1855, the area included relatively few buildings, with many of them dispersed, although groups can be seen to the west of the Coniscliffe/Cleveland Terrace junction which is annotated as Mount Pleasant, at Harewood Hill, and around the Cockerton Lane/Staindrop Road junction. Unless mentioned otherwise, the buildings

[119] Lloyd 1995, page 80
[120] AB Heritage Limited 2023, page 25
[121] Flynn 1987, pages 80 & 89
[122] Lloyd 2005, page 154

mentioned in the text above are all depicted on the map. Those annotated on the map which have been demolished in the meantime include Belle Rose, Branson House, Flora Cottage, the Parsonage, Cleveland Dairy and Larchfield House.



1855 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) and overlaid with the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines and shaded grey) at the time of review. Map year given is time of survey (not publication).

According to the National Heritage List of England, a few of the listed buildings inside the West End Conservation Area under review were built in the mid-nineteenth century. These include the [23] *Forecourt wall to number 3*[123] (NB: the house number

[123] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121297

is incorrect, it is the wall to [21] *4, Harewood Hill*. [31] *21, Cleveland Terrace*[124] and [32] *4, Cleveland Avenue*[125].



Grade II-listed structures built in the mid-nineteenth century: *Top:* [23] *Forecourt wall to number 3* in ashlar sandstone, the railings now missing. This is actually the boundary wall to [21] 4, Harewood Hill. *Bottom left:* [31] *21, Cleveland Terrace* with oriels to side elevation. *Bottom right:* [32] *4, Cleveland Avenue* forms the end property to a terrace built in cream coloured (Pease) brick. Despite its different appearance, the red-brick house seems to be contemporary with the then newly constructed Cleveland Parade (now Avenue). All brick houses of the terrace are built in the Flemish bond. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1860, [05] *The Woodlands*, which had been owned by industrialist and banker John Whitwell Pease (1828-1903), son of Joseph Pease, since 1854[126], was nearly doubled in size ú ² l· ŎŎ ² Y Y ² Ř l· ú Ŝ t Ŝ a l s ă Ŝ D ă its distinctive tower. The l· Y ƛ f è architects were Richardson and Ross. In 1861, Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905), who would become a nationally highly important architect with offices in Manchester and London, provided a new chimneypiece and made other alterations to the mansion[127] ² l· ú Ŝ NJ K ² dz ă Ŝ Ω ă NJ Ŝ LJ dz ú l· ú ƛ ² y ó l· ă Ŧ ƛ NJ ă ú Ŝ ă ú l· ō f ƛ connections with the influential Quaker families, including the Peases and Backhouses[128]. Despite its enlargement, W ² K y ² K ă ú y ó Ŝ f W ă house and moved out by the late 1860s[129].

[124] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121321
[125] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1310853
[126] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 32
[127] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/4689170.alfred-waterhouse-full-catalogue-works/
[128] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 55
[129] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/8831918.home-sweet-home/

Also in 1860, notable Darlington architect James Pigott Pritchett (1830-1911) made alterations to the Tudor Gothic mansion of [02] *Pierremont*[130].

In the 1860s, a cottage tearoom including veranda was added to [I] *Park Lodge* in Bellasses Park[131].

From the 1860s, there was a much more sustained demand for houses for the middle classes in the growing managerial and professional sector. In 1863, freehold building land divided into 37 lots in the wedge between Coniscliffe Road and Cleveland Terrace was offered, although only half was sold. The following year, land around Pierremont Crescent and Woodland Terrace (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) was divided for auction following the death of private owner. Of the 45 plots, several were taken before the sale date[132].

Also in 1863, two giant sequoias (redwoods) the largest tree species on earth, were planted to the west of [I] *Park Lodge* in Bellasses Park to commemorate the marriage of HRH Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. They had been given to the town by Alfred Backhouse (1822-1888), son of Edward and head of the Quaker family banking firm[133].

In 1864, Henry Pease bought a quagmire to the south of [02] *Pierremont* across Woodland Road and transformed it into Pierremont Park (no longer extant) just outside the West End Conservation Area under review, to improve the view from his home[134]. The park opened to the public in 1870. It included a serpentine lake crossed by an ornamental bridge with an island topped by a Swiss chalet and alpine garden, the [28] *Fountain* that would later be moved to the northeast of the bandstand in South Park, a boathouse concealed by a rocky grotto, a heated garden party room and a waterfall with a secret passage underneath[135].

Henry placed the first one, the [F] *Grange Road fountain*, on a wall near the entrance of his Southend estate. In March 1866, he donated eight more to the town and the Local Government Board agreed to provide free water. Out of the nine fountains, only three survive now[136], comprising the one already mentioned on Grange Road, the [06] *Drinking fountain on west corner of Milbank Road* and the [D] *Coniscliffe Road fountain*. Looking at the 25-inch OS map of 1913, the [D] fountain appears to have been on the corner of Coniscliffe Road and Scarth Street. It is first shown in its current location on the 25-inch OS map of 1939 (not reproduced here), although the outbuilding it had been attached to has since been replaced with a modern brick structure.

[130] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 55
[131] Flynn 1989, page 155
[132] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 46
[133] Lloyd 2005, pages 48-49
[134] Flynn 1989, page 144
[135] Lloyd 2017, pages 41-43
[136] Lloyd 1995, page 13
[137] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322947

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All three drinking fountains include a bird motif. *Top:* [06] *Drinking fountain on west corner of Milbank Road* grade II listed and dated 1866. Romanesque arch on short columns, cast-iron arch with bird motif on keystone, and cast-iron panel with later basin and faucet hood. *Bottom left:* [D] Coniscliffe Road fountain, also dated 1866, now attached to a modern wall semi-circular brick arch with bird motif on sandstone keystone, hood mould and a granite bowl. *Bottom right:* [F] Grange Road fountain in a Gothic design with bird motif on central crenelation and a granite bowl (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1867, the Minton Chancel with a transeptal organ chamber and vestry was added to the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* by Darlington architect John Ross, formerly of the partnership Richardson and Ross. It was so called in memory of Reverend Thomas Webb Minton who had resigned in 1865 because of ill health[138] and provided much of the funding required for the construction of the chancel. The reverend was a member of the famous pottery family firm of Stoke, who donated a fine floor of encaustic tiles for the chancel[139]. The Minton Chancel would be further extended around 1898.

Also in 1867, Orwell House (no longer extant), perhaps when it was newly built at the corner of Grange Road and Victoria Road, became the home of Dr Stephen Edward Piper. He was born in Ipswich through which the river Orwell runs[140].

[138] Flynn 1988, photo 76
[139] Lloyd 2017, page 44
[140] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19028580.headline/

For the glebe to be developed, a private Act of Parliament was obtained in 1867, authorizing sales and leases. The first plan to build on the Cleveland estate was submitted to the council by architect John Ross in 1868, whose firm Ross and Lamb handled most such applications on the D dz ļ Ŝ Ω ă ō Ŝ K l· f Ŧ dz y˝ ú [141] ǩ f ű K Ŝ Ŝ y

In 1869, the owners of the new-built villas along the north side of (now) Woodland Road, on the stretch between the Pierremont estate and the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity,* approached the Darlington Town Council Streets Committee and said they were not happy with their road being named Cockerton Lane. Instead, they suggested Woodland Road. All of these villas, with the exception of Hollyhurst (built in the middle of the nineteenth century by Quaker lawyer George Allison) and Upper Thorpe (probably constructed in 1868 by Quaker William Cudworth), would be demolished around 1963, although the old stone boundary walls of the former house plots including blocked-up gateways still remain[142].

On the death of John Harris in 1869, Woodside became another Pease residence. Part of the grounds was sold off for housing[143]. [H] *Woodside Terrace* was built along Grange Road on part of the former Woodside Nursery grounds (see 1855 OS map)



[H] *Woodside Terrace*, faced in Pease brick and with elaborately gabled bays, was built in c.1869. At the time, the buff-coloured brick, a by-product of the t Ŝ l· ă Ŝ ō a l· ŷ ǩ ŋ è Ω ă activities elsewhere in the county, became popular for public buildings and in villas Darlington[144]. The terrace was later used by two schools. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2025)

From 1870 on, construction 2 y˝ ű K Ŝ 5 dz ļ Ŝ 2 Ŧ / f Ŝ Ø Ŝ f l· y˝ Ř Ω ă Ŝ ă ű 5 l· NJ f ǩ y W E Ú 2 d y Ω K ă Ŝ y˝ Ŝ ó NJ 2 l· Ř ă ó Ŝ NJ Ŝ f l· ǩ Ř 2 dz ú l· y˝ Ř and plots or whole streets then sold for building[145]. Some of the road names commemorate the former landowner: Cleveland Terrace, Vane Terrace and Duke Street. Stanhope Road, commemorating the marriage of the fourth (and last) Duke of Cleveland to the daughter of Earl Stanhope, was developed in the early 1870s[146]. It seems likely that [11] *67 and 69, Stanhope Road* and the [12] *Forecourt walls to*

[141] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 46
[142] Lloyd 1995, pages 64-5
[143] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 44
[144] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 189
[145] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 46-47
[146] Flynn 1994, photo 69
[147] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121261

numbers 67 and 69[148] were built around the time. They could be the earliest buildings in that row.



[11] *67 and 69, Stanhope Road* and its [12] *Forecourt walls*. These fine, almost identical, ashlar houses incorporating classical elements do not seem to be intended to sit within the brick terrace. John George Smith lived at no. 67 (ft); he was the Mayor of Darlington who officially opened the new southern entrance gates in [20] South Park in 1927[149]. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1870 or shortly afterwards, the roads which are now the A68, A167, B6279 and B6280 ceased to operate as turnpikes. The decline of the toll roads had been contributed to by the railways as well as the inherent defects of the turnpike system. Trains carried goods and passengers from 1825 and offered serious competition to the Coal Road right from the start[150]. Essentially, the Stockton & Darlington Railway had been built to transport coal more cheaply and efficiently from the mines near West Auckland[151].

In June 1871, the opening service for the [E] *Baptist Church* (then as a chapel) along the northern part of Grange Road was held. The new building had been required to accommodate increasing congregations and was constructed on land acquired from the Duke of Northumberland[152]. It was designed by local railway architect William Peachey (1826-1912), who worshipped at the chapel, in a Grecian/Romanesque-inspired style in Forcett stone[153]. In 1874, the Baptist Sunday School originally founded on Archer Street (outside the West End Conservation Area under review) also moved into the Grange Road property[154].

[148] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1310105
[149] Lloyd 2005, page 40
[150] Temple 1971, pages 27-28
[151] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 8
[152] Flynn 1989, page 128
[153] Lloyd 2017, page 61
[154] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 222



[E] *Baptist Church & gate piers* of 1871 by William Peache, now on the Grange Road Roundabout, looking east. There are also surviving raised stone kerbs to both sides of the entrance gateway which were originally surmounted by metal railings that have since been removed. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

Having been on a financial downward spiral since Black Friday 1866, the Thompson brothers sold [24] *Polam Hall*, the most saleable part of their portfolio, to Quaker MP Arthur Pease (1837-1898), one of their largest creditors, in 1872. They kept the Little Polam Estate, a 24-acre plot to the east of the river (for now), which comprised a few low-lying fields adjoining Bellasses Park along its northern border[155].

In February 1872, the British and Foreign Schools Society opened its North of England College for Training Mistresses for Elementary Schools in Darlington. It was run by a local committee on which Quakers were strongly represented, and which included a significant number of women[156]. Initially, the Society leased and converted four [illegible] [8] *Woodside Terrace* [illegible] adjacent Southend [14] *The Grange Hotel* were put at the [illegible] recreation and exercise. Within three years student numbers increased, so it became necessary to lease another adjoining house[157].

In 1873, Polam Lane [ed. more likely Polam Road] was laid out to open up part of the extensive grounds of [24] *Polam Hall* for building middle-class houses. Another group of executors offered plots in the Eden Avenue area between Coniscliffe Road and Carmel Road (partly within the Conservation Area under review), but the land remained undeveloped for more than twenty years[158].

Also in 1873, a range of colonnades was added to [02] *Pierremont* (this part of the mansion is now known as *Elm Court*), designed by Sir Alfred Waterhouse. It includes polished granite columns (some paired) and elliptical arches, stretching-south eastwards and ending in an open grotto or artificial ruin with artfully disposed rough

[155] Lloyd 2005, pages 20-21 & 23
[156] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 229
[157] Flynn 1987, page 78-80
[158] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 46

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rocks holding foliage and having mirrors set in the walls[159]. [01] *The Clock Tower*[160] was built on the estate grounds probably around the same time. After Henry Pease had died in 1881, his widow would continue to live at Pierremont until her death in 1909[161].



[01] *The Clock Tower*, formerly located on the estate grounds of [02] *Pierremont*, is now along Tower Road (behind the shrubs on the left). The large entrance porch to the right/west is in a small public park which had apparently been presented to the town following the death of [illegible][162]. The park is, however, not depicted as such on the historical maps (Photo © Gaby Rose, July 2023)

[illegible] plans for development to the West End as far as Cleveland Avenue, which had been submitted to the local authority in 1874, proved to be over optimistic, as it was still incomplete twenty years later. However, the estate did not approach the development of the area to the west of Stanhope Road with the same urgency it had applied to the working class streets close to the town (see below). The Duke held a long view of the development of his land. This is evident by the tight control exercised over the size, style and quality of the new housing, which would [illegible][163]

In 1875, the [K] *Fothergill Fountain* was moved for the Railway Jubilee from its original location on Bondgate (outside the West End Conservation Area under

[159] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121263
[160] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322963
[161] Flynn 1988, photo 84
[162] Lloyd 2017, page 43
[163] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 46-47

review), where it had been opened in June 1862, to Bellasses Park. Architect John Ross paid for the alterations. The intricately carved stone fountain (surprisingly not listed in its own right) had been the winner in a fountain-designing competition organised by the Darlington Total Abstinence Society and commemorates Dr John Fothergill (1785-1858), who was the first president of the Society until his death. The winning design had been conceived by seventeen-year-old Septimus Hird, an apprentice architect with Richardson and Ross, who died before its completion[164].



[K] *Fothergill Fountain* of 1861, looking southeast. With the gas disconnected, the light on top of the canopy was replaced by a stone bowl in 1880[165]. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

Also in 1875, the British & Foreign Schools Society bought a two-acre site on Vane Terrace from the Duke of Cleveland, to relocate the North of England College for the Training of Mistresses for Elementary Schools from [H] *Woodside Terrace*. The new building, annotated as [A] *Training College* on the 1896 map (see below), was designed by JP Pritchett in a Venetian-Gothic style inspired by John Ruskin and opened in 1876[166]. This ó l· ă t NJ ƛ ű Ŏ Ƙ Ŝ ű ű Ω ă Y ƨ ă ű ƛ Y LJ ƨ NJ ű l· y ˝ ű Č Ƙ l· Ø Ŝ ∃ l· ƛ y ˝ Ŝ Ř ō Ŝ Ŏ l· dz ă Ŝ non-conformist[167]. Ť Ƙ ƛ ŝ t NJ ƛ ű ý Ŝ Ŏ ă ż ű Y l· ƛ ű ă ű ƛ ƛ y ű (NB: unlike the National Schools, the British Schools did not teach in accordance with the Church of England). Much of the finance for its construction came from the ű ƨ ó y ˝ Ω ă ó Ŝ l· f ű l· Ƙ s[168], including the Peases and Backhouses. The residential places of the college were sought after as they offered bright working class teenage women a lucrative career[169].

The free Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth for the instruction and training of boys in grammar, (re-)founded by Queen Elizabeth in 1563, can be traced back at least to м р о л к м ó Ƙ Ŝ y ˝ ű Ƙ Ŝ Ŏ Ƙ l· y ˝ ű NJ è ƨ Ŧ ! f f { l· ƛ y ˝ ű ă ƛ y ˝ possible that the chantry school in turn had been a continuation of a grammar school first mentioned in 1291[170] [171]. ¢ Ƙ Ŝ ă Ŏ Ƙ ƨ ƨ f Σ f ƨ Ŏ l· ű Ŝ Ř y ˝ Ŝ l· NJ { ű /

[164] Lloyd 2005, pages 44-47
[165] Lloyd 1995, pages 9-10
[166] Flynn 1987, page 80
[167] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 54
[168] Flynn 1989, page 145
[169] Lloyd 2017, page 61
[170] Singlehurst, Portass, Flynn, Flynn & Atkinson 1999, page 47
[171] Lloyd 2017, page 18

the West End Conservation Area under review), had a chequered career, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century it had declined into little more than an elementary school, admitting girls as pupils. Its position close to the river and near the growing working-class area of Parkgate did not appeal to the middle classes[172]. In 1875-76, a new [B] *Grammar School* building was constructed to the south of the [A] *Training College* in a far more desirable area. The school moved here in 1878[173], providing teaching for boys only. The building had been designed by significant Darlington architect George Gordon Hoskins (1837-1911) in a Waterhouse-inspired Gothic style. Like Waterhouse, the staunch Anglican Hoskins had made useful contacts with the local Quaker families, and it appears that he was more to their taste than the non-conformist Pritchett because of his association with Waterhouse[174]. Edward Pease (1832-72), son of Joseph, had been instrumental in setting up both the training college and grammar school. He lived at Green Croft (demolished in the 1970s), built by his father on Coniscliffe Road in the 1860s[175].



Top: Former [A] *Training College* of 1875, designed by JP Pritchett. The building has been turned into 38 flats following planning permission granted in 2015. *Bottom:* Former [B] *Grammar School*, walling & gate piers of 1875-76, designed by GG Hoskins, now the Queen Elizabeth VI Form College. Old photos show that it used to be a landmark building[176], but it is now much concealed behind mature trees. Above the main entrance is a stone sculpture of Queen Elizabeth I (inset). The three end bays are later additions (see changes in brickwork). Originally the ground floor included an open, covered play area which has since been blocked in and turned into a laboratory[177]. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

[172] Flynn 1987, page 77
[173] Flynn 1988, photo 80
[174] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 56 & 225
[175] Lloyd 1995, page 75
[176] Flynn 1988, photos 80 & 81
[177] Flynn 1987, page 82

In 1876, [O] *Welbeck House,* [illegible] house. It had been the philanthropic concern of Mary A Hodgkin, granddaughter [illegible] they would be suitable for domestic service. As the century turned, the demand for maids and servants began to decline, so the school was converted into a laundry which operated under the name of Hygienic Hand Laundry[178].



[O] *Welbeck House, gate piers & boundary walling* built by Hoskins in 1876. Also note the carriage wheel stops to the gate piers and the scoria paving which has been partly tarmacked over (inset). (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

The new houses constructed [illegible] 5 dated 1877 [illegible] activity in the 1870s, and about half of them were approved in the boom year of 1876. However, of these approved houses 157 were in working class streets, and only 48 in the middle class areas. The former were on that part of the glebe nearest to the town (just outside the West End Conservation Area under review). It had been envisaged at the outset that Duke Street, breaking out of Skinnergate as a new route into the West End, would have streets of small terraces on either side and, beyond Stanhope Road, the houses would be larger and exclusively constructed for the middle classes and almost entirely owner-occupied, either built speculatively for sale or designed specifically for their owners. The area around the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity,* the north side of Cleveland Terrace and Langholm Crescent would also be developed with middle class housing, the latter eventually obliterating the Cleveland Dairy, which had kept poultry, pigeons and cattle, [illegible] century. To the far west, along Carmel Road (outside the Conservation Area under review), plots were offered for eight very substantial villas[179].

In February 1877, Darlington council, which had replaced the local Board of Health as the local ruling body in 1867, acquired Bellasses Park from the trustees on the condition that it would always be used as a public park. [illegible] The purchase money was given to the [B] *Grammar School* to provide scholarships[180]. When in early 1878 the Thompson brothers slipped into liquidation, the council also bought the adjoining Little Polam Estate from them, which became [illegible][181].

[178] Lloyd 1995, page 76
[179] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 46 & 115
[180] Flynn 1987, page 101
[181] Lloyd 2005, pages 21-23

In 1878, Darlington council bought the plot which would become Stanhope Green (now Park) from the Duke of Cleveland. Arthur Pease, who had done much to endow the [B] *Grammar School*, provided much of the purchase money.[182] In the following year, 5 l· NJ f ƛ y˜ Ǝ ű ƨ y˜ Ω ă park Ŝ Ğ ƨ ay Ř out by the borough Ll· f surveyor to provide an open area for children in which to enjoy fresh air. This was a significant change from the original ŝl ă ű l plán Ŝ Ğ build houses on the site, but, following the construction of the Grammar School and [A] *Training College*, the projected development of the field on the other side of Vane Terrace had been abandoned. On Stanhope Green, games were strictly forbidden. An attractive park shelter survived until the late 1980s, when it was demolished after being vandalised[183] [184].

In 1880, the Stockton & Darlington Steam Tramways Company built three lines from the Market Place (outside the West End Conservation Area under review), with one of them going to a terminus at the west end of Woodland Road[185]. Despite its name, the company operated its service with a fleet of twelve horse trams[186].

Also in 1880, the borough surveyor, Thomas Smith, designed the layout for the new P Ŝ ƨ LJ l P a Ŝ k, extending the existing park to the north. Starting work on the extension area, the Skerne was straightened along the boundary of the former Little Polam Estate, to alleviate flooding in the town centre. At the same time, the water level was raised by about three feet by building a weir at Victoria Embankment (outside the West End Conservation Area under review) and a dam at what is now Parkside, creating a small boating lake at the southwestern corner of the park. Boats were available for hire for use on the stretch between Victoria Embankment and the lagoon[187]. Visitors coming from Grange Road had to walk across Park Bridge onto a narrow tongue of land between the river and the lagoon and then across another footbridge at the south end of the lagoon[188] before they entered the park. Excavating a large ornamental pond with islands inside the extension area, the soil was moved to provide a bank for the middle terrace to be constructed at Victoria Embankment. In September 1882, the new northern entrance into the park opened at the south end of Victoria Embankment[189]. Prior to that, the park could only be approached from Grange Road. However, with its northward extension, an additional entrance closer to the town centre was provided[190].

. Ŝ ű ø Ŝ Ŝ y˜ м у у м l· y˜ Ř м у ф c Σ ű K Ŝ / f Ŝ Ø Ŝ f He y˜ Ř Ŝ ă ű l· received a small commission on each sale negotiated and retained a right to specify a minimum value and approve the design of each house. In practice this meant that he was often employed as architect, leading to possible conflicts of interest when he was not. Overall, he was involved in the design of some hundred houses as well as the road layouts[191].

[182] Lloyd 2005, page 134
[183] Flynn 1994, photo 70
[184] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 47 & 49
[185] 25-inch OS map of 1896
[186] Flynn 1987, page 66
[187] Flynn 1994, photo 10
[188] Flynn 1994, photo 11
[189] Lloyd 2005, pages 20, 23, 29 & 92
[190] Flynn 1994, photo 10
[191] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 55

In 1882, John Ross retired and sold his architectural practice to Frederick Clark (1854-1944) and Jobson Moscrop (1859-1929). They would have a large number of small commissions, submitting over 150 plans to the local authority for approval between 1882 and 1910, and therefore never be able to put their mark on the town the way that Hoskins or Pritchett had done[192].

[24] *Polam Hall* faced uncertain [illegible] school from Kendal relocated with eleven pupils to the Polam premises[193].

In 1885, the Darlington High School for Girls was established at Claremont (now Claremont Villas) on Trinity Road[194], to match the provision for boys at the [B] *Grammar School*. The house had [illegible] Financed by voluntary subscriptions, donations from the leading Quaker families and fees, the school grew slowly[195]. It was controlled by a committee of prominent local residents until 1906 when Durham County Council took over[196].

From 1886 into the 1890s, the [A] *Training College* was extended in a matching architectural style, creating a rather complex building[197]. In 1889, a large Practicing School was built to the rear of the building, where trainee teachers got their first classroom experiences[198].

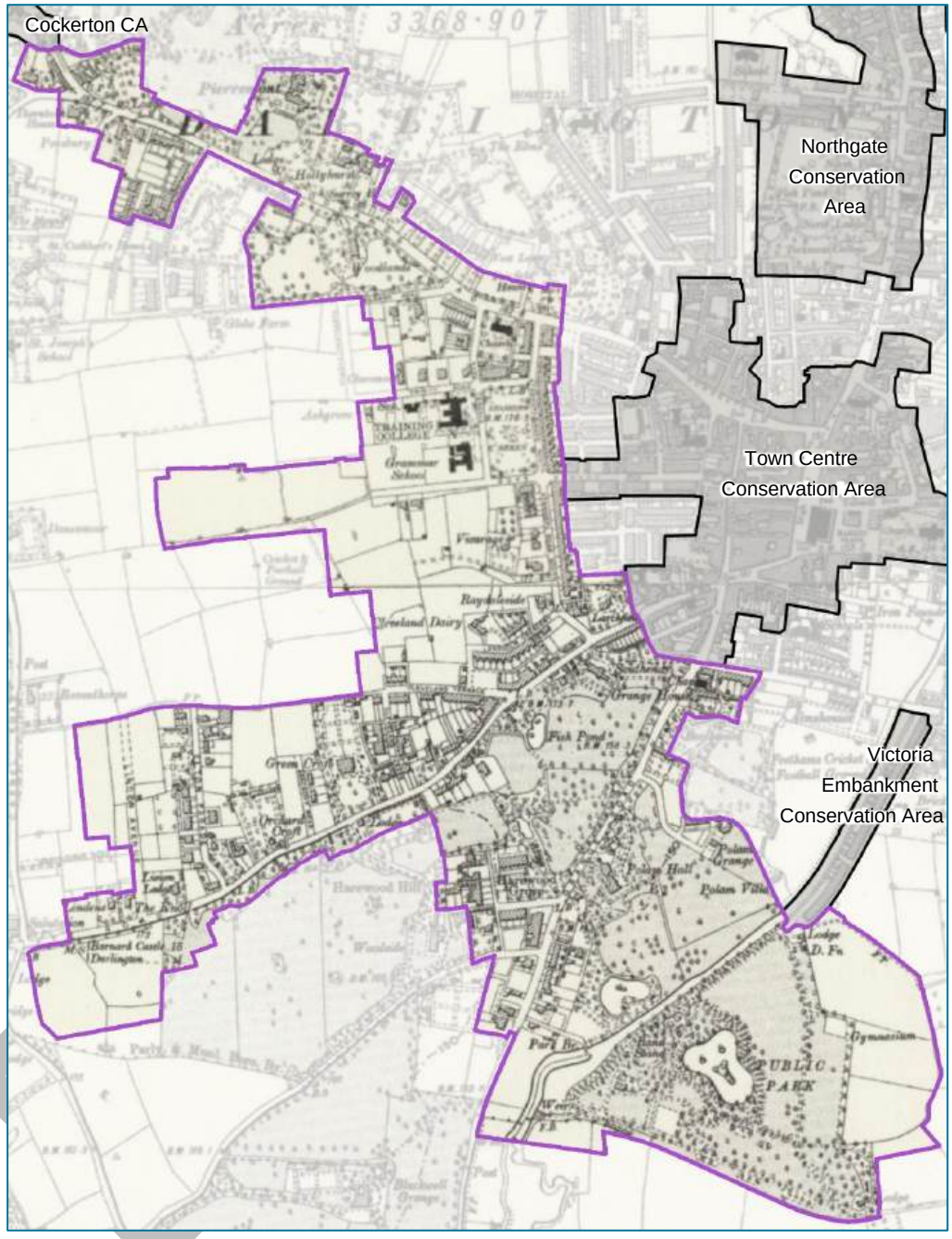
In 1893, the wooden, canvas topped bandstand of 1882 to the northwest of the [illegible] was replaced by an octagonal [27] *Bandstand*[199] in the same location. It was built by Glasgow firm Walter Macfarlane and Co, who were a leader in ornamental ironwork at the time. The model chosen from the pattern book was number 279, which used to be a very popular type[200].



[27] *Bandstand in South Park*, grade II listed, within the park [illegible] in the background to the right/southeast. The ceiling is of pitch pine and acts as a sounding board. In 2005, the bandstand was dismantled and returned for a complete overhaul (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

192 Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 57-58
193 Flynn 1987, page 80
194 Flynn 1987, page 78
195 Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 225
196 Flynn 1989, page 146
197 Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 54
198 Lloyd 2017, page 61
199 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121246
200 Lloyd 2005, page 119

In 1894,[24] *Polam Hall* was again revitalised when the school was organised into six forms. Pupil numbers rose, including day pupils and boarders[201]



1896 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) and overlaid with the West End Conservation Area (purple boundaryline), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundarylines and shaded grey) at the time of review. Map year given is time of survey (not publication).

The six-inch 1896 OS map (see above) shows ś K Ŝ Ŝ È ű Ŝ y˝ Ř Ŝ Ř t Ŝ ž LJ ť Ŝ Ω ă t t l· NJ ł ˛ The new pond/boating lagoon including islands, modified entrance route coming off Grange Road, and northern entrance at the south end of Victoria Embankment. It also confirms that there has been significant construction of new houses and roads in what would become the West End Conservation Area under review since 1855, such as in the Coniscliffe Road area, with the recently provided Linden Avenue, Elton Parade, Cleveland Parade (now Avenue) and Ashcroft Road

[201] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 226

heading north. The latter has two [N] *Clark & Moscrop Houses* built alongside it. Notably, there has been the construction of Stanhope Road, connecting Coniscliffe Road with Woodlands (sic) Road (ú K Ŝ may be a mapping error) and defining the border with the working class area to the east (outside the Conservation Area under review). It is lined with rows of buildings as well as Stanhope Green (now Park), the latter creating a buffer zone to the large, new school buildings along Vane Terrace. Other residential roads that have been built include Langholm Crescent, Scarth Street, Trinity Road, the western extension of Duke Street (now Abbey Road), Pierremont Crescent and Woodlands Terrace. Polam Road is shown but not named.



The two matching [N] *Clark & Moscrop Houses* are in an untypical style for the late Victorian era. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1897 Σ l· Ŧ ú Ŝ NJ ú K Ŝ Ř Ŝ l· ú K ă 2 Ŧ the former Southend estate was split up and sold for redevelopment. Whilst the mansion ([14] *The Grange Hotel*) would become the School of the Immaculate Conception (see below), the wider grounds were bought by the Southend Estate Company in 1899[202], the company sold the hundred-foot eastern belt of trees, also known as Crocus Walk, to the town to use as a public park. ú K ú K Ŝ Ŏ 2 Ø Ŝ ý l· ý ú ú K l· ú Ψ ă NJ Ŝ Y l· ă ý dz ý The land was officially opened as the park on 1 January 1901[203] [204]. Around the same time, the company built substantial terraced housing on the former estate grounds[205] to the designs of GG Hoskins[206].

By 1900 Arthur Pease had sold [24] *Polam Hall* to the school[207].

Between 1900 and 1905 as [H] *Woodside Terrace* fell vacant[208], [24] *Polam Hall* school became the tenant of nine of the ten houses, using one, called Polam House, as a residence for its headmistress Miss Bayes and the rest as overflow boarding accommodation for the school. After her marriage, Miss Bayes would live in Polam House until her retirement in 1933. Gradually, over the years, the school would vacate the houses and sell Polam House in the 1960s[209].

[202] Flynn 1989, page 129
[203] Flynn 1988, photos 93 & 94
[204] Flynn 1994, photo 92
[205] Flynn 1987, page 89
[206] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 45
[207] Lloyd 2005, page 101
[208] Flynn 1992, page 45
[209] Flynn 1989, page 130

In 1901, the observation tower of [I] *Park Lodge* was heightened by ten feet to enable the installation of the William Potts Memorial Clock as a focal point. The clock was officially started by Joseph Whitwell Pease on 4 September at 3 pm. Potts, who had died in 1887, had been an apprentice in Darlington but moved to Leeds where he and, later, his sons ran a thriving clock making business[210].

Considerable street [illegible] the first decade of the twentieth century. Langholm Crescent was completed in 1901, Vane Terrace extended, and the area around Swinburn and Uplands Roads developed, along with numerous back lanes. There were also high rates of development along Linden Avenue and Elton Parade[211].

By 1901-02, the Practicing School, later to be renamed as the Arthur Pease Practice School, operated under the auspices of [A] *The Training College* in the villa of Oak Lea (no longer extant, partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) on Woodland Road[212].



Two large Arts and Crafts houses along Cleveland Avenue. *Top:* [07] *Inglenook* of 1902-04, grade II listed, looking east (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025). *Bottom:* [C] *55, Cleveland Avenue*, which is just across the road, looking west (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2025)

In 1902-04 [07] *Inglenook*[213] was built, which had been designed by Derbyshire architects Richard Barry Parker (1867-1947) and his cousin and brother-in-law Raymond Unwin (1863-1940). Early work by the practice included large houses in the prevailing Arts and Crafts style, such as this building. It is likely that the house over

[210] Lloyd 2005, pages 62-65
[211] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 48
[212] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 229 & 232
[213] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1140082
[214] https://architecture.arthistoryresearch.net/firms/parker-unwin

the road, [C] *55, Cleveland Avenue*, was constructed around the same time. It is also built in an Arts and Craft style using brick and a roughcast finish and is shown on the 1912-14 OS map (see below).

In January 1902, the existing tramway system was acquired by Darlington Corporation which was planning to replace it with an electric tram network. The last horse tram ran in August 1903. In 1904, the old stone bridge over Cockerton Beck (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) was replaced with a girder bridge to enable the new electric tram service along Woodland Road to continue into Cockerton village (outside the Conservation Area under review). The Darlington Corporation Light Railway was opened on 1 June that year[215,216].

Provision for Catholic secondary education in the town did not take place until 1904, when the former Southend mansion [14] *The Grange Hotel* became the School of the Immaculate Conception. It was a Roman Catholic grammar school for girls staffed by Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, who had been attached to St [217] ! dz∃dz ă ű ƛ ƴ Ŝ Ω ă ó Ƨdz ă ű ƨdz ű ă ƛ Ř Ŝ ű Ƙ Ŝ ² Ŝ ă ű. 9 ƴ Ř / ƨ Given its wide catchment, dormitories were added to the building in 1905, followed by further extensions[218].

! f ă ƨ ƛ ƴ м ф л п Σ W t t NJ ƛ ű Ŏ Ƙ Ŝ ú ű Σ ű Ƙ Ŝ / f Ŝ Ø Ŝ f ŀ ƴ Ř in road building on Abbey Road and Uplands Street[219].

In 1908, [05] *The Woodlands* grounds to the east of the mansion were sold off for housing (see 1912-14 OS map below)[220].

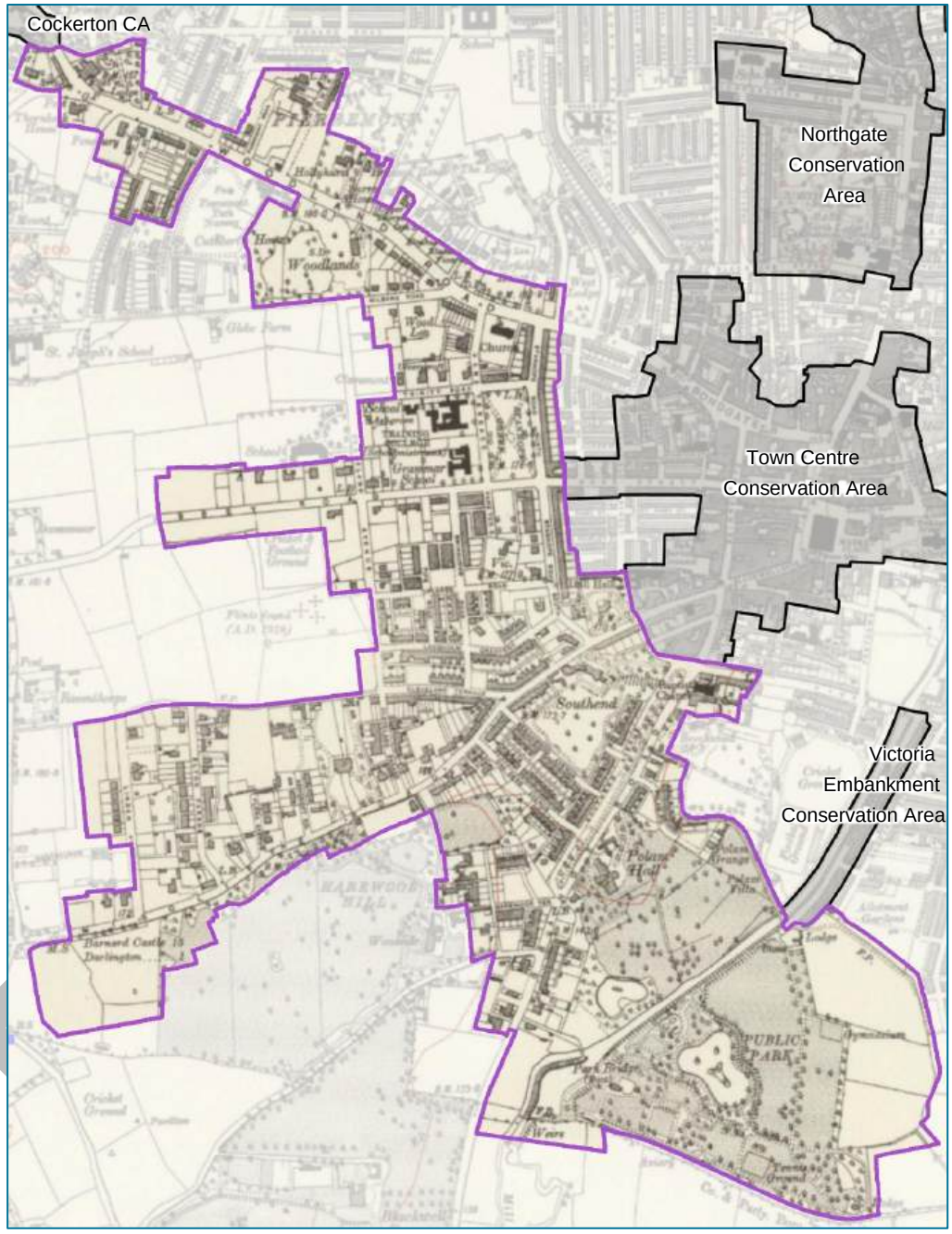


[J] *Tea Pavilion* of 1908. Note the decorative ridge tiles. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In June 1908, the [J] *Tea Pavilion* opened ƛ ƴ ă ƛ Ř Ŝ ű Ƙ Ŝ. The Ŝ ƨ Ŝ Ω ă t ŀ NJ ł Ψ NJ dz ă ű ƛ Ŏ Ω ű ƛ Y ō Ŝ NJ ă ű NJ dz Ŏ ű dz NJ Ŝ Ƙ ŀ Ř ō Ŝ Ŝ ƴ Ř Ŝ ă ƛ ∃ ƴ the right-hand side near the rear, the logs form the Darlington coat of arms[221].

[215] Flynn 1994, photo 79
[216] Flynn 1987, pages 66-67
[217] Flynn 1987, page 78
[218] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 211 & 229
[219] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 48
[220] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/8831918.home-sweet-home/
[221] Lloyd 2005, page 73

In 1911, the High School for Girls school moved to a new purpose-built building along Cleveland Avenue (just outside the West End Conservation Area under review)[222] l· y˝Ř / f l·NJŜY˝2 y˝ú ō ŜŎl·YŜ l· [223]ő.2 è ă Ω LJNJŜLJ l·NJ l· ú 2NJè



1912-14 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) and overlaid with the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines and shaded grey) at the time of review. Map year given is time of survey (not publication).

The six-inch 1912-14 OS map (see above) shows that new buildings have filled the former Ψ Ǝ between Coniscliffe Road and Woodland Road, with Cleveland Terrace now extended to link the former with Milbank Road. At the north end of what would become the West End Conservation Area under review, Tower Road cuts through the former Pierremont estate. It is likely that the [93] *Gates, piers and forecourt wall to*

[222] Flynn 1989, page 146
[223] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 32

Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall[224] were built at the same time as the road. Other roads that have been constructed since 1896 include Pierremont Drive, Swinburn Road, Fife Road, Uplands Road and Flora Avenue, although the latter was only a very short road back then. The former Southend estate has also been torn up by developers with terraced housing built along the newly constructed Beechwood Avenue, Oak Dene Avenue and Southend Avenue, although Crocus Walk along Grange Road has been saved as a public park for the town. Inside the PŜ 2 LJ P ŜÔ 2 ă there have been a few modifications, such as new tree planting and the provision of a tennis ground.



Part of the grade-II-listed [03] *Gates, piers and forecourt wall to Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall*, looking west, with the former mansion just visible in the background (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1913, [02] t λ Ŝ NJNJ Ŝ ÍV 2 ý ú into three dwellings was completed, and the former grounds laid out with roads of good quality housing[225].

Also in 1913, the [E] *Baptist Church* was extended by Clark and Moscrop[226].

By 1914 [24] *Polam Hall* had become, by regional standards, a relatively large private school[227].

Shortly before the First World War (1914-1918), building construction on the Cleveland estate started to extend to the west of Cleveland Avenue, with several villas built along Abbey Road[228], set back behind generous gardens. The relentless march of suburbia was then halted briefly by the War. By that time, younger generations of the Pease and Backhouse families had sought refuge in more rural retreats as their former estates were broken up and their mansions either demolished or put to other uses[229].

Town planning in Darlington became more deliberate and purposeful around the time the borough was extended in 1915. In 1916, the new borough council produced plans and projections allocating land for various uses, including parks and

[224] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1161440
[225] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 45
[226] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 214
[227] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 226
[228] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 48
[229] Flynn 1994, Introduction & photo 69

recreational grounds. Prospective residential sites were denoted Ψ ø 2 NJ ļ ǎ y˝ Ǝ Y Ŝ y˝ Ω ă 2 NJ Ψ ō t Ŝ l·úăúăŜ Ω NJ.[230] K 2 dz ă Ŝ ă

In 1916-17, boarding ended at the [B] *Grammar School* and the dormitories were rapidly converted into additional classrooms.[231]

In 1918, the [A] *Training College* moved its nursery school into Field House on Woodland Road (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review), which then became known as the George Dent Nursery School. It was only the third nursery in the country catering for pre-school children and had been set up in 1916 as a place where pupil-teachers from the North of England College for the Training of Mistresses for Elementary Schools could try out their new skills. Children were brought from across town to attend, and from 1925 on using subsidised public transport. The school, recognised nationally as a pioneer, benefited from Queen a l·NJ è Ω ă ǎ y˝ ú Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ú l· y˝ Ř l· ú ú NJ l· Ŏ ú.[232] Ŝ Ř NJ Ŝ Ǝ dz f l·NJ Ø ǎ ă

[24] *Polam Hall* was little affected by the First World War due to self-help easing shortages: potatoes were grown in the grounds by 1917, and initially thrived during the interwar years. Many pupils stayed on for longer, with two-thirds boarders. Elm Grove, a detached house just to the south-west of the hall on Grange Road, was purchased in 1922, and overspill was largely catered for by renting more adjacent houses in [H] Woodside Terrace and Southend Avenue. The hall became almost exclusively classrooms.[233]

In 1919, the t Ŝ 2 LJ a r k Ŝ f r o m ă then known as [29] *South Park*[234] in order to distinguish it from North Park, 1896, and North Lodge Park, 1903,[235] (both outside the West End Conservation Area under review) acquired a few boggy, much lower lying fields to the east, extending the park to its current size to the east of the Skerne. Funded by the Ministry of Labour in London, the council set up job creation schemes to occupy some of the 2,835 unemployed people following the end of the war. During the 1920s and 1930s workless men raised the level of the LJ l· Na ł e x t e n s i o n area by several feet and completed the show field. In 1921, 500 of them dug out the Cocker Beck sewer and built a road from Grange Road going east along the southern boundary of the park, Geneva Road, which later became known as Parkside (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) with a new road bridge over the river Skerne built in 1922. The new road was required to provide access to the new council housing that was to be constructed on the former Polam Hall farmland[236] immediately to the south of the park (just outside the Conservation Area under review). From late 1921 to early 1924, 250 unemployed men dug out a ten-acre boating lake (just outside the Conservation Area under review) to the south of [L] *Parkside Bridge*, replacing the smaller boating lagoon within the park.[237][238]

[230] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 60 & 101
[231] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 232
[232] Lloyd 1995, page 66
[233] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 231
[234] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 232-233
[235] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001278
[236] Flynn 1994, photo 17
[237] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 66
[238] Flynn 1994, photo 12
[239] Lloyd 2005, pages 31-32, 39-40 & 90-91



[L] *Parkside Bridge* of 1922, viewed from within [29] *South Park* in the location of the former boating lagoon, looking southwest. The lamps on top of the stone piers are later additions.[240] The later boating lake would have been to the other side of the bridge (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

Between 1922 and 1975, Larchfield House (no longer extant) was used as a Catholic secondary school for girls.[241] Σ ú NJ l· y˘ ă Ŧ Ŝ NJ NJ ƛ y˘ Ǝ ƨ f Ř Ŝ NJ LJ dz LJ ƛ f ă Ŧ NJ ² ƛ f f[242] ƛ (both outside the West End Conservation Area under review)

In 1924, Orwell House (no longer extant) was converted into the Grange Hotel.[243] (NB this is not the listed building mentioned throughout the text)

In 1925, the ornate terracotta [28] *Fountain*[244] also known as the Pierremont Vase was relocated, although leaving behind its terracotta base, from its original location in Pierremont Park (just outside the West End Conservation Area under review) across the road from [02] *Pierremont* to the north side of the ornamental pond in [29] *South Park*. At the time, the Pierremont estate was being sold and divided up for housing development. Ŧ ƨ f f ƨ ø ƛ y˘ Ǝ ú K Ŝ Ř Ŝ l· ú ik K ƨ Ŧ l Ŝ y˘ N 1909. The fountain had been built in the 1870s when Pease had turned his attention to Pierremont Park. There, it had been the centre piece, standing beside another ornamental lake[245].

[240] Dean 1984, photo 10
[241] Flynn 1994, photo 91
[242] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 231
[243] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19028580.headline/
[244] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322956
[245] Lloyd 2005, pages 114-116



The relocated [28] *Fountain to northeast of bandstand in South Park*, grade II listed, looking north. Its 21 jets of water are no longer in use, and some of the vases on the perimeter are now missing (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In the middle of the 1920s, a town planning scheme had been drafted which designated areas for industry, housing at various densities and open spaces, as well as laying out new roads on the outskirts of the town. There was opposition from landowners to what were seen as radical proposals, resulting in a public enquiry in 1926. Objectors included nineteen smaller owners of land adjoining the Black Path [246] which would later become the western extension to Cleveland Terrace (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review). They objected to the prospect of further road traffic including people travelling to funerals at West Cemetery (outside the Conservation Area under review). Yet this was a minor issue on the scale of proposals covering 6,526 acres, more than half of which lay in the rural areas. Limits were placed on housing density, restricting houses to an average of sixteen per acre in the West End. To counter the more intensive housing allocations elsewhere in Darlington, open land would be maintained including the designation of public spaces such as along Woodland Road and a new extension to [29] South Park (see below). The town clerk [illegible] Development had been almost entirely to the north while there had been a ring of private landed estates around the south and west sides of the town. These estates had been, or were in the process of being broken up so a town plan was needed in order that development could be controlled. [247]

The commitment to public open spaces made explicit in the 1920s town plan was followed seriously by the borough council. Besides the creation of additional parks and recreational grounds, some of the older parks were equipped with new facilities. Stanhope Green (now Park) acquired tennis courts and a putting green (the latter no longer extant). [29] *South Park*, already well-provided with facilities, underwent further improvements in the 1920s and 30s, including putting and bowling greens, and a grotto (the latter no longer extant) [248].

In 1926, Gevena Road West, later to be known as Parkside (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review), had streetlighting installed [249]

[246] Dean 1984, photo 23
[247] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 60
[248] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 63-64
[249] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 66

In April 1926, the last official tram ran in Darlington. The decision had been made to replace the existing tramway system with trolley buses, one of the first such systems in the country. The public transport system was now also extended to Geneva Road West (later Parkside)[250].

In June 1927, the new south entrance gates into [29] *South Park* were opened, ō Ŝ Ŏ ƨ Y ƛ y Ǝ ű K Ŝ LJ ł The present gates are replicas made in 2004, as the original ones were vandalised in the early 1970s[251].

In June 1928, the [P] *Sir E D Walker Homes*, designed by local architect Joshua Clayton, opened comprising 38 single-storey apartments, plus houses for a superintendent and a nurse, and a communal hall. Edward Daniel Walker (1844-1919), born in Brighton, was a railwayman, ƴ Ŝ ø ă ł Ǝ Ŝ y ű ă Ω, this ŝ y ń ŷ ŝ LJ NJ Ŝ y Ŝ dz N of Darlington and one-time owner of the Northern Echo. When he died, he left his estate to his wife along with instructions that on her death it should be used to provide comfortable homes for the working-class poor. His trustees cheaply bought land near the former Salutation Corner (the latter just outside the West End Conservation Area under review) from the Pease family. However, the Peases had sold the neighbouring land to the middle classes who did not want the poor moving in next door. The Darlington Chamber of Trade presented a petition to the council demanding the halting of the incongruous development, which was unsuccessful. The opening ceremony of the homes on 4 June was performed by the Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, a philanthropist, who delivered a charming unconventional speech to the 800 guests, and even the king sent a congratulatory telegram[252].



[P] *Sir E D Walker Homes, gate piers, gates, boundary walling & railings*, looking south. Whilst the building and iron gates have been designed in a Neo Georgian ł ŏ Ksty ƙ e, the ă Ω iron railings, boundary walling and gate piers are Art Deco. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

In 1929, there were substantial plans for new housing on the Cleveland estate further west and to develop the land to the south of [29] *South Park*[253] (just outside the West End Conservation Area under review).

[250] Flynn 1987, page 67
[251] Lloyd 2005, page 40
[252] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/10403306.oldies-nimbys/
[253] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 61

In 1930, Woodside stood empty, its estate in the process of being broken up for building since the mid 1920s. The mansion was demolished shortly afterward, although the kitchen garden and vinery survived as a market garden until 1984[254].

After 1930, the borough council bought land for a sports ground on Abbey Road (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) for the [B] *Grammar School*. In addition, a new laboratory, library, art studio, gymnasium and further classrooms were added to the building complex on Vane Terrace, and the former K Ŝ l· Ř Y l· ă ű Ŝ NJ Ω ă K 2 dz ă Ŝ ø l· ă[255]. l· f ű Ŝ NJ Ŝ Ř ƛ y ű 2 ű Ŝ l· Ŏ K

In 1932, land adjacent to the Black Path east of Elton Parade was made into a ō dz ƛ f Ř Ŝ NJ ă Ω NJ 2 l· Ř Σ ű K Ŝ y ă dz NJ Ŧ l· Ŏ Ŝ Ř l· y Ř Ř Ŝ Ř ƛ Ŏ l· ű Terrace after construction was completed[256].

In 1933, the final, two-acre extension to [29] *South Park* was made, encompassing land to the west of the river that had been bought from Blackwell Grange. Again, the landscaping works, which included considerable filling in with soil, construction of rockeries and planting of flower beds, was executed by unemployed men[257].

As from 1934, the former High School for Girls in Claremont was used by the [A] *Training College* for overspill[258].

In 1936, the existing aviary in [29] *South Park* was opened, replacing the original one built in 1902, which had been on the site of the [31] *Tea Pavilion*[259].

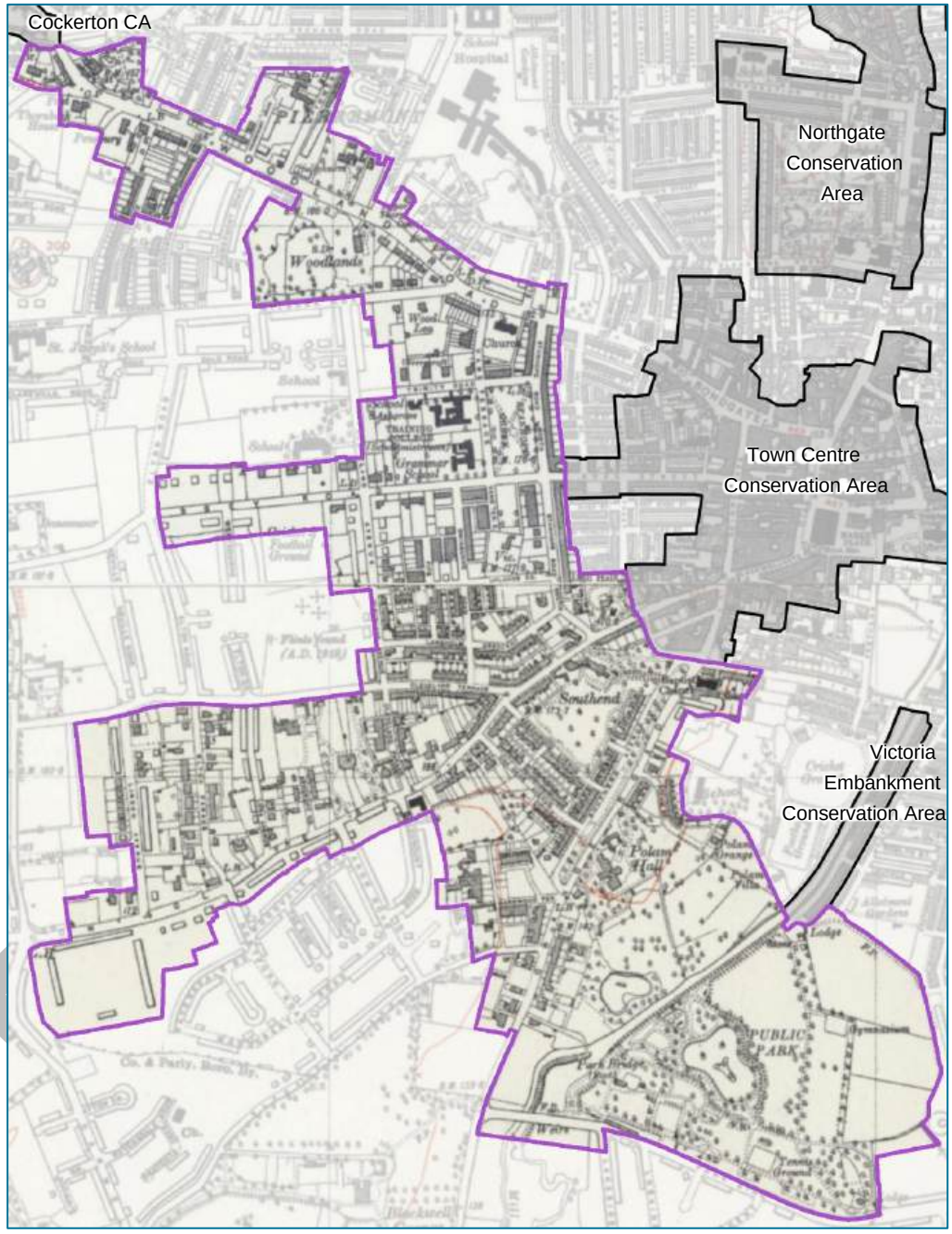
In 1937, Dr John Waldy, a consultant surgeon, died. Since the 1870s the family had owned [36] *111-117, Coniscliffe Road* and three acres of the former Southend mansion gardens behind. Dr Waldy had allowed church services and theatre performances to be held on his private parkland. His will stated that at his death the park, now known as Green Park, would go to the town corporation[260].

In 1938, [24] *Polam Hall* bought Polam Grange, a detached house with outbuildings to the northeast of the hall, at the end of Polam Road[261].

The six-inch 1938 OS map (see below) shows that the area which would become the West End Conservation under review was quite densely built up by then, also including buildings under construction (outlines). Further housing estates were being built to the west and south outside the boundary. Cleveland Terrace had been extended to Carmel Road to reach the previously secluded estates of the former glebe (outside the Conservation Area under review). Prior to this, the stretch from / f Ŝ Ø Ŝ f l· y Ř ! Ø Ŝ y dz Ŝ Ǝ 2 ƛ y Ǝ ø Ŝ ă ű K l· Ř ō Ŝ Ŝ y l· Y ƛ (partly within the Conservation Area under review). The lane which had marked the northern boundary of the glebe has been developed at its east and west ends into Milbank Road (partly within the Conservation Area under review). In 1938 after the survey of the map, the remainder of the old lane would be developed and the full

[254] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 69
[255] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 232
[256] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 68
[257] Lloyd 2005, pages 126-127
[258] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 232
[259] Lloyd 2005, page 81
[260] Lloyd 2005, page 154
[261] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 233

length of Milbank Road completed, made up by Christopher William Vane (1888 – 1964), tenth Baron Barnard, and adopted as a highway.[262] There have been minor changes within [29] *South Park*, although the new main entrance and final extension areas are not yet depicted on the map



1938 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) and overlaid with the West End Conservation Area (purple boundaryline), as amended in March 2010, and surrounding conservation areas (black boundarylines and shaded grey) at the time of review. Map year given is time of survey (not publication).

In 1939, a new, NJdz ă ú ƛ Ŏ footbridge was built over the Skerne, designed to complement the [J] *Tea Pavilion*[263], linking both sides of [29] *South Park*

[262] Cookson (ed.) 2005, pages 68-69
[263] Flynn 1994, photo 12

The development of new housing following the break up of the big estates was halted by the Second World War (1939-1945). It went on at tremendous speed after 1945, by now largely outside the West End Conservation Area under review, with low mortgage rates boosting the urge for homeownership amongst young people[264].

In 1946, the [A] *Training College* bought Claremont to augment the Arthur Pease Practice School[265].

In 1954, the boating lake to the south of [D] *Parkside Bridge* was filled in having turned into a sludgy bog due to lack of maintenance since the Second World War[266].

By 1956, the Hygienic Hand Laundry at [C] *Welbeck House* had been closed and was being converted into flats[267].

From 1957, the last children from the Practice School moved to new facilities on Abbey Road. Its old premises at Oak Lea continued to be used by the [A] *Training College*[268].

In 1958, [24] *Polam Hall* school expanded again into houses on Grange Road and started work on a new building on its premises which opened in 1961[269].

In 1960, Green Park opened to the public [illegible] private parkland[270].

In 1962, the bamboo footbridge over the Skerne inside [28] *South Park* was replaced by the present metal bridge[271].

In 1964, a new road system was trialled in Darlington ahead of the construction of the inner ring road (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review, and also affecting the area which would become the Grange Road Roundabout (see below). Photos from that year are now completely unrecognisable, depicting parts of the former Southend estate and buildings that would soon be demolished[272] [273] [274].

In 1965, a new student residence for the [A] *Training College*, Stanton Hall, opened on Trinity Road whilst the upgrading of the original buildings continued[275].

In 1975, the School of the Immaculate Conception, which had been resident at the former Southend mansion ([14] *The Grange Hotel*), [illegible]

[264] Dean 1984, Introduction
[265] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 235
[266] Lloyd 2005, page 38
[267] Lloyd 1995, page 77
[268] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 235
[269] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 234
[270] Lloyd 2005, page 156
[271] Flynn 1994, photo 12
[272] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/17737600.pictures-construction-darlingtons-inner-ring-road/#gallery2
[273] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/17737600.pictures-construction-darlingtons-inner-ring-road/#gallery3
[274] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/17737600.pictures-construction-darlingtons-inner-ring-road/#gallery4
[275] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 235

Hummersknott to become the Carmel Comprehensive School (both sites outside the West End Conservation Area under review)[276].

In August 1976, the junction between Victoria Road and Grange Road was radically reshaped and turned into a larger roundabout, although some mature trees from the former Southend grounds were retained on the new grassed traffic island. Despite the covenant and public indignation, over twenty yards of the northern stretch of Crocus Walk had been sacrificed for the new layout[277]. A photo taken at the time of road construction[278] shows the newly built northern end of the [F] *Grange Road walling & gate piers* and that none of the former boundary wall has been retained in the location of the roundabout. Moreover, the notable Grange Hotel (formerly Orwell House) fell victim to the road widening. When demolition came along, the business was transferred to [illegible] became [14] *The Grange Hotel*[279] in 1978[280]. Ultimately, the new inner ring road and large-scale modern developments alongside it created a barrier for pedestrians between the town centre and the areas on the other side of the dual carriageway. Consequently, Victoria Road (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) declined as a retail and commercial street[281] and the surrounding area deteriorated with it.

In 1978, Larchfield House was demolished to make way for the new building of St [illegible][282].

In July 1978, the [A] *Training College* which had had its name changed to the Darlington College of Education and its number of places increased to include mature male students in the 1960s, closed. It had not been able to compete with the larger, more modern educational institutions[283], and there was also a reduced demand for teachers[284]. In September 1979, the building started to be used as an Arts Centre[285], which would close in July 2012[286]. It has since been converted into flats.

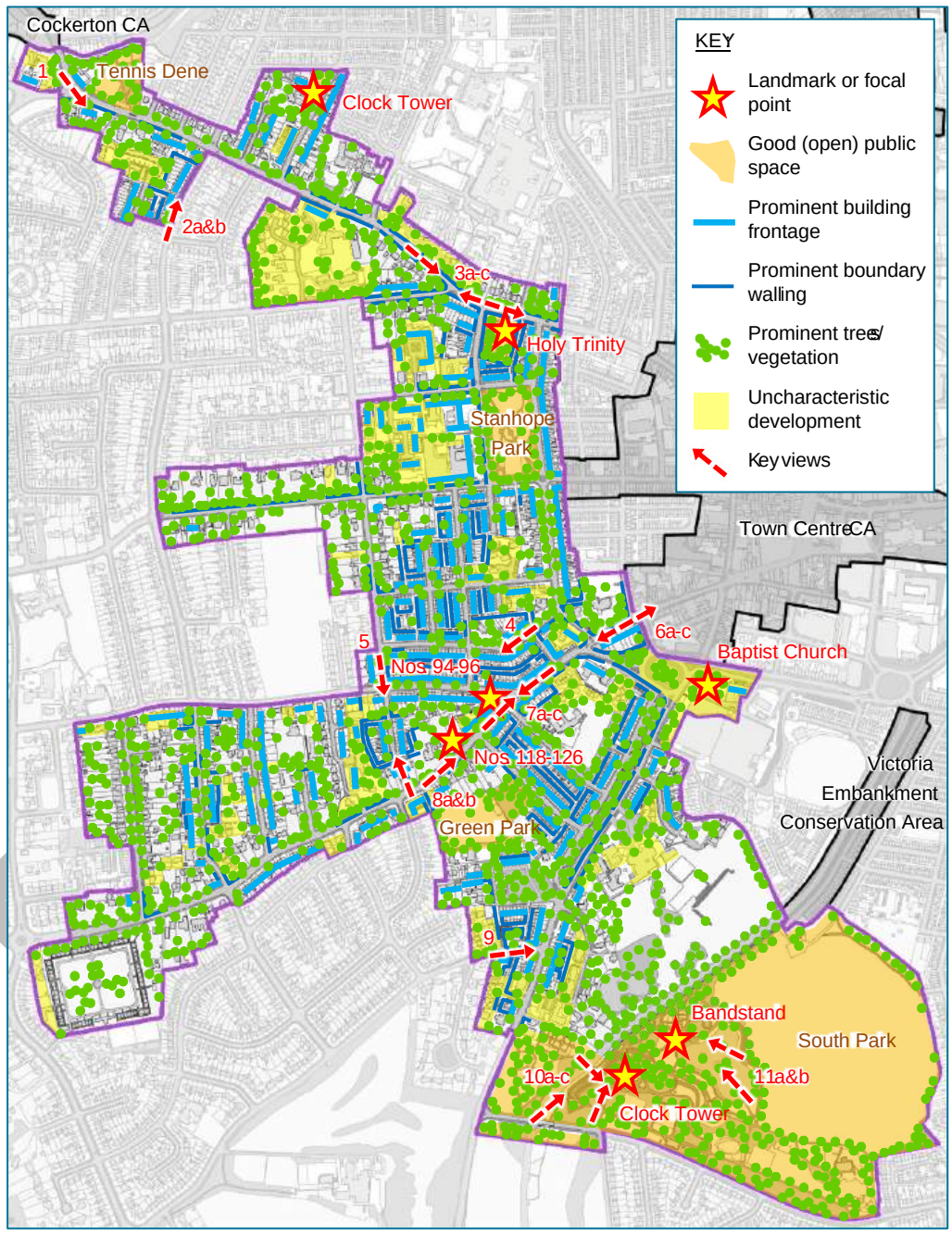
[illegible] been replaced by four blocks of flats[287].

In the late 1990s, new dwelling houses, blocks of flats, garages and associated highway were built onto the former estate grounds of [05] *The Woodlands* to the south and west of the listed building[288]. All former estate lands associated with the larger mansions of the West End Conservation Area under review have now been lost to housing with the exception of [24] *Polam Hall* which has still retained a large portion of its historical grounds (although not all of it).

[276] Flynn 1994, photos 94 & 96
[277] Flynn 1989, page 127 & 129
[278] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/17978825.pictures-darlington-radically-reshaped-1960s-1970s-inner-ring-road/#gallery-3
[279] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19028580.headline/
[280] Lloyd 2017, page 38
[281] North of England Civic Trust 2017, page 28
[282] Flynn 1988, photo 91
[283] Flynn 1987, page 80
[284] Flynn 1988, photo 77
[285] Flynn 1988, photo 77
[286] Lloyd 2017, page 63
[287] Dean 1984, photo 32
[288] See Planning files

3.4 Spatial Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the West End Conservation Area under review. Note that planform, road layouts, watercourses, topography, and buildings are described in the previous sections (see sections 3.2 & 3.3). The listed buildings and registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER].



Spatial analysis of the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, at the time of review. Surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines and shaded grey). (Map © Crown copyright and database right 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The West End Conservation Area under review is a large, irregular shape. Whilst much is of a fairly secluded nature, the main roads, Woodland Road (A68),

Coniscliffe Road (B6280) and Grange Road (A167) are busy with vehicular traffic and create barriers within the area. The river Skerne, separating the main part of [29] *South Park* from the remainder of the Conservation Area under review, presents the most significant barrier, as it can only be crossed at two points, over [L] *Parkside Bridge* and the footbridge inside the park. Overall, there is a good balance of buildings and greenspaces including individual trees within the area, although this is not the case to the east of the Skerne, which is predominated by vegetation and only has very few built structures. In contrast, the other greenspaces are on a much smaller scale, and, generally, it is the character of built form that defines the West End Conservation Area under review. Having been a middle-class residential area from the outset, the traditional buildings are of high architectural quality. Whilst the brick terraces line the roads more closely, the former villas and mansions are set back behind lush gardens, often bounded by prominent boundary stone or brick walls. However, it is the scoria paved back lanes behind the terraced houses that are most noticeably enclosed by tall, red-brick walling and often devoid of vegetation, creating a marked contrast to the [illegible] character along the main roads. More recent development has often had a negative impact on the area by not adhering to the historical design and layout principles in this part of the town. There are not many focal points within the area, which is also contributed by the abundance of vegetation concealing structures. Landmarks that do exist are often buildings that are raised in height, such as taller elements like towers and/or by being located on elevated ground.

Vegetation also has an impact on views. Those that are most prominent are along roads, channelled by buildings, boundary walls and/or vegetation (see Views 1 to 9), and inside the park where individual trees frame views or dense tree cover is in the background (see Views 10 to 11). The key views of the West End Conservation Area under review are as follows; the photos were taken in April 2025 unless mentioned otherwise.

View 1 (photo: June 2025) was taken to the south of Cocker Beck Bridge at the northwestern tip of the West End Conservation Area under review looking southeast towards Woodland Road forking off to the left of the roundabout. A linear modern building to the left/east channels the view, replacing a historical building of matching shape in this location[289]. The focal points are the substantial old houses that have been constructed on elevated grounds to the south of the junction, including Thornbeck House, which was built in the early 1860s and became a Collegiate School for Young Ladies in 1870[290]. The buildings are partly concealed by lush vegetation with further mature trees behind them and to both sides of Woodland Road.



[289] Lloyd 1991, page 10

[290] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/5022082.darlington-thorny-subject/

View 2a was taken from Pierremont Crescent just outside the West End Conservation Area under review, looking north. A three-storey, brick villa with dormers is prominent to the left/northwest, opposite the junction with Pierremont Gardens (concealed behind the parked cars on the right), which were once part of Henry t Ŝ l· ă Ŝ Ω ă t ƛ Ŝ T In the right/north of the view are two modern single storey houses which do not harmonise with their surroundings. Beyond them, the West End Conservation Area under review starts, marked by another red-brick villa behind a large tree. Further on is a terrace faced in Pease brick, which is quite prominent due to the gentle curve of the road, displaying a regular rhythm of dormers and ground-floor bay windows. Any buildings on the opposite (eastern) side of the road (though largely out of view) are not within the Conservation Area under review. Whilst galvanised streetlights are only minor detractors in this view, timber telegraph poles and roadside parked cars have a more harmful visual impact.



View 2b was taken from Pierremont Crescent inside the West End Conservation Area under review, looking northwest. The left/western side of the road is lined with red brick houses and the aforemented Pease brick terrace. The south side of the plot (just outside view) of the house on the far left marks the southern end of the Conservation Area under review in this location. Although the boundary walling to the front gardens is more prominent and the amount of vegetation comparatively less here, this view has a very similar character and appearance to the southern part of Pierremont Crescent (see View 2a), so it is unclear why the latter has not been included within the Conservation Area under review (see section 5.2). Whilst galvanised streetlights and overhead wires are only minor detractors, roadside parked cars have a more harmful visual impact.



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View 3a was taken from Woodland Road near the Hawkesbury Mews bus stop looking southeast, with the tower of the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* being the focal point in the background. The cherry trees in front were in full bloom at the time. Both sides of the road are lined by tall sandstone walls behind which are lush trees. Whilst galvanised streetlights and traffic sign posts are only minor detractors in this view, the busy vehicular road traffic has a more harmful impact for pedestrians and cyclists. The black bollards and traffic-light posts blend in well



View 3b was taken from the junction of Woodland Road with Milbank Road, looking east, and is very similar to the photo of an old postcard[291]. Just before the road ŏdzNJØŜă ƨdzűƨŦ ØλŜóΣ űKŜ ΨiónKxiatesŸ2 borderdzλfŘλy∃ the West End Conservation Area under review. In the foreground to the right/southeast is the prominent red brick terrace of numbers 57-71, set at an angle to the road, with the last property (no. 71) being a much larger house. Substantial chimney stacks, dormers and ground-floor bay windows form a regular rhythm, and the generous front gardens are enclosed by sandstone walling, including a tiled entranceway on the northern side. Behind the terrace, the tower of the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* provides a focal point. The mature trees to the left/north used to be ƨyűKŜ ∃NJƨdzyŘăƨŦl· ΨNJƨóΩƨŦyλyŜØλffl·ă demolished and replaced with a large number of modern flat buildings (partly within the Conservation Area under review). Besides the busy vehicular road traffic, other detractors in this view are galvanised streetlights and pedestrian railings (at the crossing) in a utilitarian design, and the yellow blister tiles at the dropped kerb to Milbank Road. The black bollards and traffic-light posts blend in well.



[291] Flynn 1988, photo 75

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View 3c was taken from the junction of Woodland Road with Elms Road, looking west, with the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* being a focal point in the foreground to the left/southwest. The associated [08] *Steps, ramp, rail and lampholder to north* and [10] *Walls, gates and piers to north and west* can also be seen, with the latter complementing the sandstone boundary walling on the opposite/northwest side of the road. Further behind, the red brick terrace of numbers 57-71 remains prominent. Lush vegetation softens both sides of the road. Whilst the street furniture in this view generally merges in well with its surroundings, the bus shelter at the entrance to the church has some harmful impact on the immediate setting of the three listed buildings. Also, the vehicular traffic is often very busy here.



View 4 was taken from Langholm Crecent just before its junction with Ilkley Street, looking west. A long row of red brick terraced houses curves along the left/southern side of the road, its chimney stacks forming a strong rhythm. The straighter, shorter terrace on the northern side is set back behind more generous front gardens and much concealed behind tall hedges and other vegetation. In the foreground to the right/northwest is the scoria paved entrance leading to the back lane behind the shorter terrace. Whilst galvanised streetlights are only minor detractors in this view, roadside parked cars have a more harmful visual impact.



View 5 was taken from Cleveland Avenue just before the roundabout with Cleveland ¢ Ŝ NJNJ l· Ŏ Ŝ Σ f ƨ ƨ ţ ƛ y Ǝ ă ƨ dz ű K Φ b dz Y ō Ŝ NJ ă п p l· y Ř п т with prominent bay windows and hipped roofs (although the former is part of a short terrace), form a gateway into the southernmost part of the Avenue. Beyond them lie the buildings to the west side of the road which can also be seen in View 8b. The road going to the right/west at the roundabout used to be a minor track known as ű K Ŝ Ω . f before it became part of Cleveland Terrace in the 1930s. Interspersed

vegetation softens the street scene, with prominent hedges in the foreground. Galvanised streetlights and traffic signposts detract, and a number of parked cars can be seen down the road. The black and (one) white bollards blend in reasonably well.



View 6a was taken from Coniscliffe Road within the Town Centre Conservation Area looking (south)west into the West End Conservation Area under review. This location forms a gateway into both conservation areas. Whilst the brick terrace of [13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road* dz ă Ŝ Ř ú ž Ŏ ž y˝ ú ǎ ý dz Ŝ town ǎ Ŝ tre Y, [292] f è Ω Ŧ NJ ž Y˝ highway and building development have severed it. The building boldly encloses the southern side of Coniscliffe Road, its chimney stacks and external staircases with metal railings forming a notable rhythm. It faces the tall, red-brick boundary of the former Larchfield House plot with mature vegetation surviving in the garden and forming a notable contrast to the linear architecture on the opposite side of the road. Further vegetation can be glimpsed to the rear of the terrace. In the far distance, landmark building [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road* (see Views 7a & b) can just about be made out. Galvanised streetlights and traffic signposts detract in this view. Any posts that have been painted black blend in well, although the bollards stand out due to their number.



View 6b was taken from the opposite direction, slighter further (south)west along Coniscliffe Road within the West End Conservation Area under review, again looking at the gateway between the two conservation areas. In the foreground to the left/north is the tall, red-brick boundary of the former Larchfield House garden, faced by [13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road* on the opposite side of the road (see View 6a). Larchfield Street, behind the boundary wall, and West Street, behind the terrace, compromise the shared conservation area boundary line. The view into the Town Centre Conservation Area shows old buildings to the left/northern side of Coniscliffe

[292] Flynn 1992, page 36

Road and a prominent modern corner building to the right/south. Here, the road has recently been narrowed for one-way vehicular traffic and the northern pavement widened to include public seating, corten-steel planters and lawn. Galvanised streetlights and traffic signposts detract in this view. Any posts that have been painted black blend in well, although the bollards stand out due to their number.



View 6c was taken from further southwest along Coniscliffe Road at its junction with the B6280 leading to the Grange Road Roundabout (outside this view to the right/east), looking northwest. L ú λ ă l · f Y 2 ă ú View 6a with [13] 1 2 6 1, λ Y l · ∃ Ŝ Ω 2 *Coniscliffe Road* boldly enclosing the right/southeastern side of Coniscliffe Road and the tall, red-brick boundary of the former Larchfield House set with mature vegetation forming a notable contrast to the linear architecture on the opposite side of the road. In the foreground, the boundary wall curves to the left/northwest outside view, following Stanhope Road South, which starts at this junction. In the far distance, the buildings of the Town Centre Conservation Area can be seen, with the spire of the listed Market Hall just visible behind the trees (red arrow). Whilst galvanised streetlights and traffic signposts detract, the two utility cupboards and bench/litter bin along the curved boundary wall section have been painted a natural green and black respectively, harmonising with their surroundings.

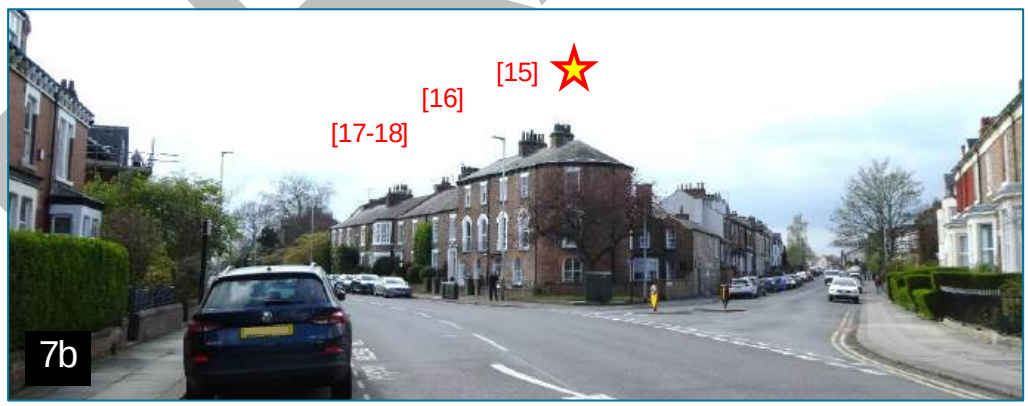


View 7a was taken from further southwest along Coniscliffe Road, looking southwest. The view is channelled by rows of houses lining both sides of the road to the landmark building of [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road* at the junction with Cleveland Terrace, although it is partially behind a large tree which was not in leaf at the time of visit. In the foreground, the terrace to the right/north has single-storey bay

windows whilst the row to the left has prominent two-storey bay windows which are partially concealed behind the hedges of the enclosed, shallow front gardens. In the background [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road*, [17] *102, Coniscliffe Road* and [18] *104, Coniscliffe Road* adjoin the listed corner building to the left/southwest, with the chimney stacks and flues making a strong visual contribution. Some large trees can be seen further in the distance. Galvanised streetlights are detractors, and there are also a few roadside parked cars.



View 7b was taken from slightly further southwest along Coniscliffe Road, looking west. The landmark building of [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road* is now more clearly visible behind the large tree, with Cleveland Terrace branching off to the right/west of it. The view is less channelled here as the roadside terracing appears less prominent at this generous road junction, with vegetation further softening the surroundings. [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road*, [17] 102, Coniscliffe Road and [18] *104, Coniscliffe Road* adjoin the listed corner building to the left/southwest, the chimney stacks and flues making a strong visual contribution. Further buildings can be seen to the right/west of the corner building on Cleveland Terrace. Galvanised streetlights and roadside parked cars are detractors on both streets.



View 7c (photo: June 2025) was taken from further southwest along Coniscliffe Road, near the junction with Oakdene Avenue (just outside this view to the right/south), looking into the opposite direction, i.e. northeast. [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road* is now less of a landmark. Instead, it channels the view alongside [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road* and [17] *102, Coniscliffe Road* to the curved red-brick terrace at the road junction with Cleveland Avenue. On the opposite, southeast side of the public highway is a terrace which features prominent gabled bays with two-storey, projecting bay windows. They are partly concealed behind the vegetation growing in the comparatively more generous front gardens enclosed by red-brick walling and gate piers. Galvanised streetlights and roadside parked cars are detractors.



View 8a was taken from further southwest along Coniscliffe Road, with the ground levels dropping near the junction with Cleveland Avenue (just outside this view to the left/west) (see View 8b), again looking northeast. The road junction with Cleveland Terrace is marked by the curved brick terrace in the far distance. The focal point of this view is a prominent building group including the listed buildings of [34] *126, Coniscliffe Road* and [35] *122 and 124, Coniscliffe Road* to the left/north, which have been built onto higher ground, at a slight angle to the road. The former is partly hidden behind a tall boundary hedge and there is also topiary in the front garden enclosed by stone walling and gate piers. Mature vegetation softens the surroundings further up the road. Chimney stacks are very noticeable in this view. The prominent gables that have been noted before (see View 7c) can just be seen in the distance to the far right/northeast. Again, galvanised streetlights and roadside parked cars are notable detractors.



View 8b was taken from slightly further southwest along Coniscliffe Road, looking north up Cleveland Avenue. Brick and stone boundary walling enclosing lush vegetation is prominent in the foreground. Although the buildings of 150, Coniscliffe Road and 1, Cleveland Avenue are set back from the road behind generous front gardens, they are very noticeable as they have been built onto rising ground. Moreover, the former features [illegible] as well as polychromatic roof slates which are laid out in patterns, whilst the latter has a facing gable with two-storey bay window underneath. The building directly on the opposite side of the road, also constructed in red brick, is much concealed by the mature vegetation within its large front garden. The central unit of Brooklyn Terrace, dated 1869, has a pediment further up Cleveland Avenue, which very gently curves to the north in this location and therefore better exposes the building. The terraced houses to either side of the pedimented section all have dormer windows which create a rhythm. The first-floor windows of this building, single and paired, are also prominent. A few mature trees

can be seen in the far background. Galvanised streetlights and roadside parked cars are detractors on both sides of Cleveland Avenue.



View 9 was taken from the eastern end of Blackwell Lane, looking east at the central pediment of 169-179, Grange Road, which is part of a prominent red brick terrace facing the road junction in the distance. In the foreground are tall, brick boundary walls to both sides of the road, with vegetation spilling over and a modern garage opening to the right/southeast. Mature trees can be seen further on. To the far right/south, the entrance to the scoria-paved back lane now called Kendal Close can be glimpsed. Behind it is a traditional outbuilding with hipped roof which belongs to 58, Grange Road, its projecting end chimney stack flanked by tall windows being prominent behind the outbuilding and rebuilt boundary walling. On the opposite (left/north) side of the road is the Pease brick faced end return property of [H] *Woodside Terrace* which used to accommodate staff of two different schools (although it is not clear whether this particular house was used by the schools). A galvanized streetlight detracts in the foreground to the left/north.



Next are key views taken of/from within [29] South Park. These are very different in character and appearance to those described above, having a semi-urban or suburban environment. Moreover, there are no detractors in any of these views.

View 10a was taken from within the most recent [29] *South Park* extension of 1933, to the west of the Skerne, looking east into the oldest part of the park (Pasture Park). The metal footbridge across the river in the foreground, which is a replacement constructed in 1962, channels the view towards the focal point of [I] *Park Lodge* with its prominent white clock tower. The building is on higher ground, framed by mature trees, including the giant sequoias planted in 1863 to the right/southeast. Halfway between the lodge and the bridge is a grassed, man-made

embankment also known as Park Terrace. In the past, it was used for flower displays often showing patriotic themes. This is a very picturesque view that has been photographed since the opening day of the predecessor, rustic Ψ ō l· Y fo 2b2idge of 1939[293].



View 10b was taken to the north of the main (southern) entrance into the original part of [29] *South Park*, looking north with [I] *Park Lodge* again being the focal point. This is another iconic view, which is channeled by the wide tarmacked footpath with bright flower displays to either side. These have been arranged in wavy lines, framed by low hedging behind. The surrounding mature trees create a lush environment. The huge trees to the left/northwest are the giant sequoias planted in 1863 to commemorate the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess of Denmark. In the background to the right/northeast, the [J] *Tea Pavilion* can just be glimpsed behind trees.



View 10c was taken from [L] *Parkside Bridge* looking north across the river Skerne into the original part of [29] *South Park*. The sturdy metal balustrade of the bridge which is interrupted by sandstone piers with lamps on top, invites the viewer to linger and look over what appears to be a meandering river in this location although its course has also been changed here, according to the six inch OS map of 1855. The grassy land to the right/northeast used to be the location of a boating lagoon until the 1920s and is now a community orchard. Surrounding the fruit trees are larger, mature trees which create a lush environment within the park.

[293] Flynn 1994, photos 12 & 13



View 11a was taken from the timber deck at the southern end of the ornamental pond within the 1882 [29] *South Park* extension, looking northwest. Out of the many views across the pond, this is probably the most impressive one, with a water fountain to the right/north in the foreground and the [27] *Bandstand* in the background on the opposite side of the pond, partly concealed by trees. The landmark qualities of the bandstand are not so apparent from here but are when approaching it from its western side. The mature trees and other vegetation surrounding the pond and on its islands create a lush environment.



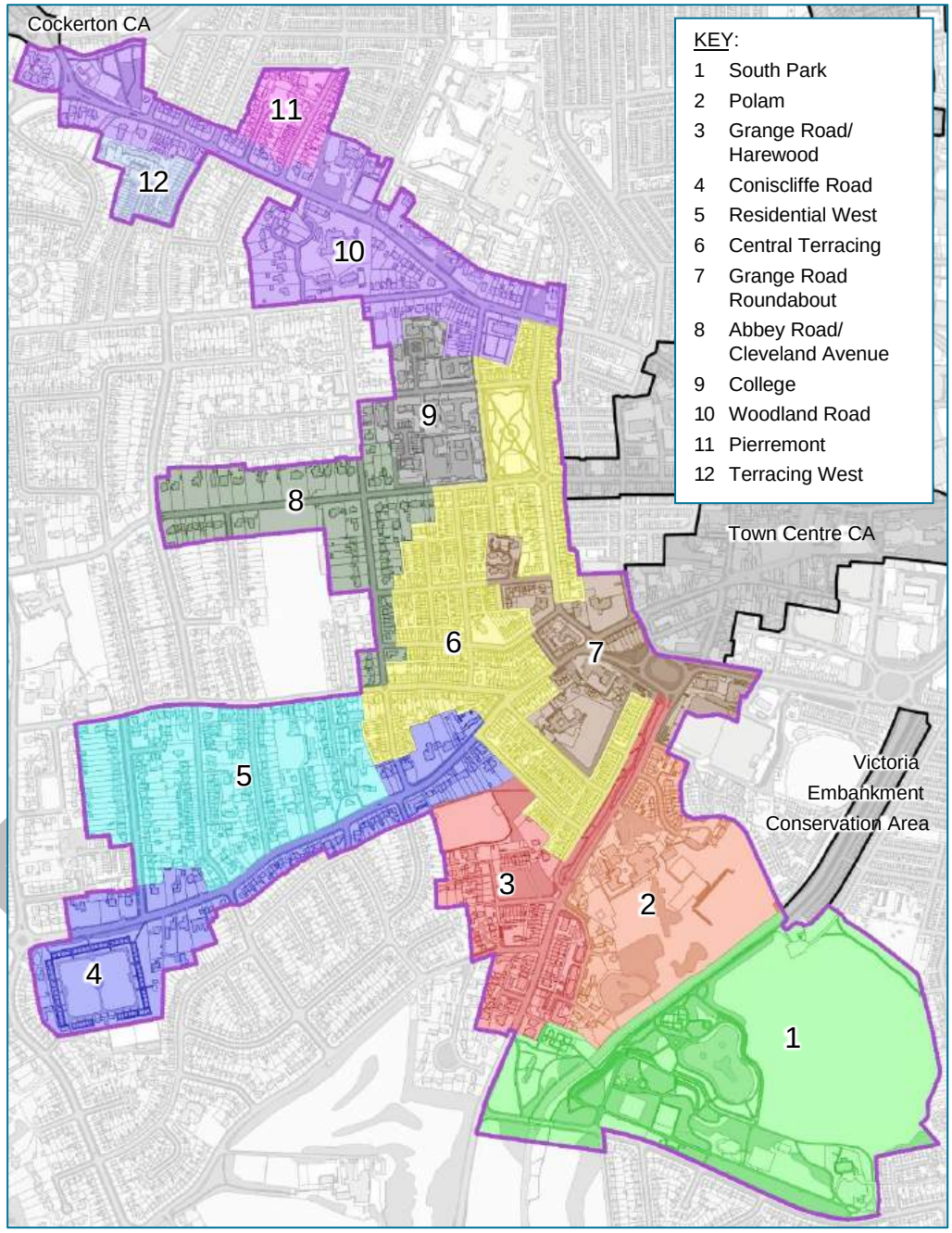
View 11b was taken from the east side of the pond within the 1882 [29] *South Park* extension, looking northwest. There is another fountain in the water, in the background to the left/west. Behind it is the [27] *Bandstand*, partly concealed by trees. The landmark qualities of the bandstand are not so apparent from here but are when approaching it from its western side. In the background to the right/north-west on dry land is the [28] *Fountain* also known as the Pierremont Vase, which was relocated here from the former Pierremont Park in 1925. The mature trees and other vegetation surrounding the pond and on its islands create a lush environment.



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3.5 Character Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the West End Conservation Area under review. It should be read in conjunction with the historical development (see section 3.3) and spatial analysis (see section 3.4). Listed buildings and the registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER]. Key views are referred to as in ó ± ƛ Ŝ ǿ . м Σ н Σ X ú



Character zones of the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line), as amended in March 2010, at the time of review. Surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines and shaded grey). (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by RCE)

At the time of review, the West End Conservation Area comprises twelve character zones of various shapes and sizes:

1. South Park
2. Polam
3. Grange Road/Harewood
4. Coniscliffe Road
5. Residential West
6. Central Terracing
7. Grange Road Roundabout
8. Abbey Road/Cleveland Avenue
9. College
10. Woodland Road
11. Pierremont
12. Terracing West

Character zone 1: South Park is located at the southern end of the West End Conservation Area under review. It is traversed by the river Skerne in a northeast/southwest direction and comprises the designated public park, the western-most road stretch of Parkside and the northern verge of Skerne Park. There are only very few buildings in this zone, and the overall character is that of a landscaped parkland.

The heritage interest of the South Park character zone is as follows:

¶ The original Bellasses Park of 1851, created by the Board of Health to address the problems that the industrialisation of Darlington had brought about, was the first municipal park in the Northeast of England. It includes the following notable structures:

[I] *Park Lodge*, also a landmark (see Views 10a & b)
[J] *Tea Pavilion*
[K] *Fothergill Fountain*
[M] *East Entrance Piers*

¶ The northern extension of 1882, linked to the development at Victoria Embankment (outside the West End Conservation Area under review), significantly enlarged the park which was then renamed as the t Ŝ 2 LJ a r k Ŝ D i ă c l u d e s the original ornamental pond as well as the following grade-II-listed structures:

[27] *Bandstand in South Park*, also a landmark (see Views 11a & b)
[28] *Fountain to northeast of bandstand in South Park*, also a landmark (see View 11b)

¶ The final park extensions of 1919 (east, completing the show field) and 1933 (west, including a rockery and rose garden)[294], landscaped by unemployed men as part of national job-creation schemes, created the full extent of the now grade-II-registered

[29] *South Park*

[294] Lloyd 2005, pages 126-128

Besides the above-mentioned structures, the park has two further lodges, two memorials (the Fowler Monument, which used to be on the grounds of [02] *Pierremont*, and the Manson Boulder) and various historical bric-a-brac (e.g. the Sebastopol Canon, Stockton & Darlington Railway tracks and Indigo Jones dial[295]). External views from the public highway into the park can be gained from:

[L] *Parkside Bridge* (see View 10c)

The bridge also bears evidence relating to the former boating lake of 1921-54 (i.e. its three arches; the Skerne now only flows under the two western ones, with the eastern one being on dry land), which commenced in this location and carried on into what is now Skerne Park (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review).

[29] *South Park* is enclosed by upright metal railings (mostly of a heritage style) as well as timber boarding and hedges along the shared boundaries with the adjoining residential properties. Entrances are off Grange Road, Parkside, Henderson Street and Victoria Embankment. The main part of the park, which is the much larger area to the east of the Skerne, is ø Ŝ t Ŏ ƻ Y ǎ y Ǝ Σ ø Ŝ t t and includes ƻ dz ú l· y Ř Ψ various leisure facilities (e.g. cafe, playground, skate park, green gym and bowling green) as well as places where there are things to do (e.g. cycling, ball games, etc. on the former show field) or look at (e.g. pond, aviary). By contrast, the part to the west of the river (i.e. the 1933 extension area), linked by a footbridge across the Skerne, feels more secluded because of its much smaller size and is heavily shaded by trees around the roadside entrance areas.

The Skerne traversing and bordering the park as a green and blue wildlife corridor supports otter, kingfisher, brown trout and many other species. It is lined predominantly by mature broad-leaved lime trees, with other species such as willow along its western riverbank. At the northeast end, a double row of trees continues into Victoria Embankment (outside the West End Conservation Area under review). There are some notable man-made topographical changes along the northern and western perimeter of the original Bellasses part of the park, to the northeast of the ornamental pond and to the northeast of the rockery. The pond includes yellow flag iris and pendulous sedge to the borders and the central island contains trees such as willows. It provides habitat to a range of water birds such as mallard, coot, moorhen, geese and occasional swan, and offers foraging habitat for species that feed on insects flying over land on the water, ă dz Ŏ K l· ă 5 l· dz Ŏ ƻ ú Ω ă LJ ǎ y Ŝ Σ è Ŝ ø Σ K ƻ and the area to the northwest of the pond and the 1933 extension across the river include locations with various floral displays and other plant arrangements. These areas also have dense tree cover with intermittent clearings, creating an interplay of dark and light spaces. Native and ornamental species include [Ŏ ƻ ú Ω ă LJ ǎ y Ŝ Σ è Ŝ ø Σ K ƻ and cedar of Lebanon. The most impressive trees are the two-stemmed giant redwoods (see View 10a), which offer foraging habitat for birds such as coal tits and goldcrest. Many of the trees throughout the park are mature and provide cracks, holes and gaps within them offering nesting habitat to birds such as blue tit, nuthatch and tree creeper, and roosting opportunities to noctule and brown long eared bats. The remainder of the park comprises a large open greenspace to the north and east (show field), which has trees and shrubs along its perimeter. The amenity grassland within the park is poor, with low plant species diversity due to intense management.

[295] Lloyd 2005, pages 75ff, 82, 83ff, 94ff & 129ff



[29] *South Park Top:* The Fowler Monument in the Bellasses part with steps leading up the man-made embankment, looking south *(left)*, and the Mason Boulder in the 1882 extension area with the show field in the background and a double row of trees along the riverside path, looking southwest *(right)*. *Centre top:* Timber carved squirrel sculpture in the Bellasses part with replacement footbridge leading across the Skerne into the 1933 park extension, looking northeast *Centre bottom* Inigo Jones sundial in the 1933 park extension to the west of the Skerne with rose garden and timber sculpture behind, looking northwest *Bottom:* Rockery within the 1933 park extension, looking north. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

Building materials inside the park comprise painted brick ([J] *Park Lodge*), red/brown brick (northern lodge, entrance gate piers, boundary walls, aviary, utility cupboards), Pease brick (southeastern lodge), buff brick and cladding (modern buildings), stone ([K] *Fothergill Fountain*, [M] *East Entrance Piers*, boundary walls), terracotta ([28] *Fountain*), cast/wrought iron ([27] *Bandstand*), modern metals (footbridge, fencing) and painted timber ([J] *Tea Pavilion*). Roofing materials include grey slates and red roof tiles. There is various park furniture such as information boards and other signage, litter and dog poo bins, playground and gym equipment, benches and picnic tables, bicycle stands, and a very few external lights.

Outside [29] *South Park*, this character zone includes a short section of Parkside, which can be busy at times. The attractive balustraded [L] *Parkside Bridge* invites pedestrians to look north into the registered park (see View 10c) or south into Skerne Park, although the former view is slightly more picturesque. To the east, the main entrance into South Park curves away from the public highway, providing a generous welcome point for visitors. Building materials in this part of the zone are limited to brick, stone and metal. The heritage-style bollards on the southern pavement and lanterns on the bridge piers contribute positively to the public realm.





Entrance gates and railings in [29] *South Park* (*left*) and, on the opposite side of the road, into Skerne Park (*right*); the galvanised streetlight to the right detracts (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2024)

Finally, the [29] South Park Extension, which is a large expanse of managed amenity grassland bisected by the river, with stands of scrub and trees. On the western side is South Park Family Wood, a small semi-mature woodland with a natural understory. Species present include birch, small and large leaved lime, rowan, English oak, field maple, alder and elder, with wood avens and cow parsley as ground flora. Along the riverbanks are trees such as alder, wych elm, elder, ossier willow and crack willow, with other plant species such as yellow flag iris and rush. There are stands of invasive Himalayan balsam and giant hogweed further west, which are managed to be kept under control and removed where possible.

Character zone 2: Polam is located in the southern part of the West End Conservation Area under review, between Grange Road and the river Skerne. It comprises the large site of Polam Hall School complex as well as various further buildings to the north and more recent housing in the southwestern part of the former grounds of the old hall. A large part of this zone includes landscaped greenspace that is not accessible to the public. The overall character varies within this zone (see below).

The heritage interest of the Polam character zone is as follows

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¶ The original villa built at Polam in 1794 was the first time a (very wealthy) person moved into what would become the West End Conservation Area under review, to escape the pollution and overcrowding that the industrialisation of Darlington had brought about. In the nineteenth-century, the building was turned into a Quaker mansion by notable architect Ignatius Bonomi, which is now a grade II listed:

[24] *Polam Hall*

Today, the site is the only one within the West End Conservation Area under review that has retained large grounds associated with its former mansion. Moreover, it has been in continued use as a school for a remarkably long time, since 1854.

¶ The former northern part of the K l· grounds used to be a kitchen garden (now longer extant). It is shown on the OS map of 1855, along with a single storey outbuilding at its north corner which still survives. In addition, the 25-inch OS map of 1896 implies that the present tall brick wall that had enclosed the former kitchen garden along Polam Lane, with a distinct curved corner to the northeast, had existed by then.





Remains of kitchen garden associated with [29] *Polam Hall* along Polam Lane *Top:* Former outbuilding on ú K Ŝ Ǝ NJ ƨ dz y˝ Ř ă Ω Ŧ ƨ NJ Y˝ Ŝ NJ y˝ ƨ NJ ú K Ŝ NJ y now rendered in grey and used as a Pilates studio; remnant of the old (pre-1855) brick garden wall, including a pilaster on the corner, faces Geran Road. *Bottom:* The distinct curved, northeastern corner of the former kitchen garden wall is first shown on the 1896 map, with a modern apartment building behind. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2025)

¶ In 1873, Polam Road was laid out to develop the former northern part of the K l· grounds. The high-quality middle-class terraces are first shown on the 1913-14 OS map.

The [24] *Polam Hall* site comprises a haphazardly grown school complex set within large grounds. There is a variety of building materials (including render, concrete and cladding) although red brick and grey roof slates prevail. Whilst the more recent structures were all designed for educational use, the now converted former houses,

i.e. the original mansion, Elm Grove and Polam Grange have largely retained their residential appearance. On balance, the modern development of the school site has had a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area under review. (see section 4.1)

Along Polam Lane (partly within the West End Conservation Area under review) with the ground sloping down towards the river, the ă Ŏ Ǩ ƶ ƶ ĩ ƶ Ơ ă are not visible to the public due to being enclosed by tall brick and concrete panel walling and the traditional (out)buildings near Polam Grange. Vegetation growth is prominent along this stretch, including harts tongue fern, yellow fumitory and ivy-leaved toadflax. Further towards the Skerne, the walling is covered in ivy, which is an important food plant for holly blue butterflies. Its flowers provide nectar for pollinating insects such as bees and hoverflies and its berries are an important food source for birds over winter such as song thrushes and blackbirds. Towards Ŝ Ŝ ŷ Ř Ŝ Ω ă l · Ψ ø λ f Ř Ω section which is unmanaged and has a range of plant species including bramble, ivy and willow. The bramble offers habitat to nesting birds such as whitethroat and and provides refugia for species such as hedgehogs.



Top left: View up Polam Lane, looking west. Whilst there are hoisting doors and hatches to this side of the large building to the left, the main elevation fronting the school site does not have the appearance of an outbuilding, so it is unclear what it was originally used for. Also note the graffiti on the boundary wall, which is made of old and modern red brick. *Top right:* View from *character zone 1* across the Skerne, looking north, onto Polam Grange (centre), the (out)building along Polam Lane (left), a modern building and another traditional outbuilding complex (both on the right). *Bottom:* View from the school entrance along Grange Road, looking south, ž y ú ž ú ú ă Ŝ ă ŷ ŷ ŷ

alongside a wide range of other aquatic invertebrates, and there are likely to be fish such as roach, rudd and perch. It is possible that otter will use the pond due to its proximity to the River Skerne and likelihood of containing fish.

Further glimpses of the school buildings can be gained from the south end of Polam Road, notably of Polam Grange, and the north end of Marlborough Drive. The latter provides views of Elm Grove and a small former stable building behind a tall brick boundary wall. Along Grange Road, Elm Grove is very prominent, mainly because of its large, pastiche extension. The original building still retains its traditional sliding sashes. Moving up the road, which steadily rises to the northeast, only glimpses can be gained [illegible] timber fencing, a historical pedestrian gateway made of brick piers, a shipping container, etc. At the north end, the wide site entrance allows views onto the [illegible] much concealing the buildings in the background. Whilst the mature trees on site offer bird nesting and bat roosting opportunities, the amenity grassland is fairly low value ecologically but will offer foraging opportunities for hedgehogs around the boundaries where more mature shrub planting occurs.







Top: View along Grange Road looking southeast, with Polam Road to the left/east. The end property of the terrace along Grange Road includes mock timber framing to its gables, making the house stand out. *Bottom:* The terrace along Polam Road is of a consistent, high quality design incorporating polychromatic brickwork and terracotta detailing. Old leaded, coloured glazing survives at its northern end (right). (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2025)

The character of the northern-most part of this zone, which is no longer part of the Polam Hall grounds, is generally semi-urban, with many of the buildings and rear boundary walls having a strong street frontage. The vegetation is mainly shrub size with only a few large trees. There are three traditional terraces set back behind

enclosed front gardens along the busy Grange Road and the quiet, winding Polam Road. Those along the former retain their scoria paved back lanes. The tall boundary along Polam Lane comprises parts of [24] *Polam Hall*'s former kitchen garden wall, including an associated outbuilding, and the rear yard brick walling of the Polam Road terrace. Red brick is the predominant walling material, followed by sandstone (e.g. for lintels and copings) and mock timber framing, and roofs are surfaced in grey slates. Notable traditional features include prominent chimney stacks, dormers with finials, gabled elements, decorative brickwork and terracotta, timber panelled entrance doors, bay windows, slim, traditional window frames with plain and coloured leaded glazing, tiled entrance paths, and metal railings and pedestrian gates to the front gardens. There are also a few modern buildings (two semi-detached houses, a three-storey apartment complex and a somewhat poorly-scaled infill house within the northern terrace along Grange Road), which, on balance, have a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1).

The character of the south-western part of this zone, to the east side of Marlborough Drive, is suburban, comprising a number of loosely arranged modern detached houses with garages (see section 5.1/Z2), intermixed with shrubs and mature trees, including a horse chestnut at the drive to property number 1, which used to be part of the [24] *Polam Hall* grounds. There is a tranquil atmosphere. The building materials are red, brown and yellow brick, cream render, white and brown tile-hung cladding and grey roof tiles, and the road surfacing also includes some red paving blocks. The mature front gardens are not enclosed and provide opportunities for birds such as robin, dunnock, chaffinch and blue tit to forage and nest. Due to the proximity to wooded areas, the nearby pond and the river, more woodland species may be present such as nuthatch, great spotted woodpecker and sparrowhawk. Mammals such as fox and hedgehog are likely to be in the area. The south-eastern-most residences can be glimpsed from across the Skerne in *character zone 1.*

Character zone 3: Grange Road/Harewood is located in the southern part of the West End Conservation Area under review and is traversed by Grange Road (A167) which is a major road into the town. Blackwell Lane coming off it is less busy, and further north, the L-shaped cul-de-sac road of Harewood Terrace/Hill is very quiet. This zone includes notable amounts of woodland that are accessible to the public and add to the tranquillity. The surrounding historical houses are of high quality, mainly comprising terraces and villas set back within enclosed front gardens. There are also a number of more recently constructed residential and commercial buildings of various designs which do not adhere to the historical development pattern and stand out negatively. The overall character varies within this zone (see below).

The heritage interest of the Grange Road/Harewood character zone is as follows:

- Grange Road has been an important route into town. From 1745 on, it used to be part of the Post Road or Great North Road between London on Edinburgh. It was turnpiked in the same year.

- The following listed buildings are grade II listed and were built prior to 1855 (OS map) unless mentioned otherwise:

  [19] *1-8, Harewood Grove* (grade II*)
  [20] *7 and 8, Harewood Hill*
  [21] *3 and 4, Harewood Hill*
  [22] *1 and 2, Harewood Hill*

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[23] *Forecourt wall to number 3*
[25] *Forecourt wall and piers to no 2* (late C19)
[26] *Neasham House*
[37] *14, Harewood Hill*
[38] *5 and 6, Harewood Hill*
[39] *Garden walls to west and south of number 6*

¶ Other buildings in this zone were constructed on parts of the former Woodside and [24] Polam Hall (*character zone 2*) estate grounds prior to 1894 (OS map). The following notable building was built onto a part of the former Woodside grounds following the death of the Ŝ ă ű l· ű Ŝ Ω ă ž ø y˝ ŜNJΣ W ž K y˝ I l· NJNJ ƛ ă Σ ƛ y˝ м y c ф

[I] *Woodside Terrace*

¶ Crocus Walk and Green Park are surviving remnants of the former Southend [14] *The Grange Hotel* (*character zone 7*) grounds which were turned into public parks. The following notable structures are associated with the Southend estate before it was broken up and developed at the turn of the century

[F] *Grange Road fountain, walling & gate piers*
[G] *Avenue Lodge*

The wooded areas are in the northern part of this zone and interlinked. They comprise the public parks of Crocus Walk and Green Park and what seems to be a semi-private space at [19] *1-8, Harewood Grove*, its entrance marked by scoria paving and modern garages to its western side. The substantial, brick building has a central pediment with a porch supported by Ionic columns, traditional sliding sashes, and unusually, balconies with iron railings to the entire first floor of the main façade as well as rear extensions incorporating buff/Pease brick along the scoria-paved back lane. To the northeast of the listed building [G] *Avenue Lodge* it is made of mock timber framing and has a prominent sandstone chimney stack comprising four rotated flues. The plot is bounded by scoria-paved back lanes, with a concrete block wall along its eastern border. Like Green Park it is accessed from Oakdene Avenue (*character zone 4*). The only other building in this part of the character zone is Southlands, a villa which still retains its original-size garden. The red brick house also has a porch supported by columns and includes wood shingle cladding on its double storey bay windows, as well as leaded clear and coloured glazing.

Harewood Grove and Green Park are partly enclosed by upright metal railings, and the latter has stone gate piers at its northwest entrance. Crocus Walk is bounded by, except for its western side, the stone-built [F] *Grange Road fountain, walling & gate piers* with heritage-style bollards in between. A bus stop has been squeezed onto the narrow pavement to the south of the fountain. Along Grange Road, there is a strong visual link with the adjoining *character zone 2: Polam*. Both public parks have benches, litter bins and cycle/footpaths, with Green Park also featuring a playground and metal sculptures. From the elevated clearing in Green Park, which is part of Harewood Hill, there are views onto the rear elevations of the houses along Coniscliffe Road (*character zone 4*). The space between Crocus Walk and the Harewood Grove wooded area is occupied by a curved traffic island which includes a GR letter pillar box, an arrangement of rocks on gravel and some roadside vegetation. Various highways surfaces and signage contribute to the visual clutter.



Top: View from within Crocus Walk, looking southeast, with glimpse into *character zone 2* in the backdrop. *Centre left* One of the two identical plaques on the two northern [F] *gate piers* at Crocus Walk. Shortly after Darlington becoming incorporated as a borough, the Corporation got this coat of arms, although it was never officially registered. They ŠNJ ă NJŠLJNJŠ ă Š y ú ă ú K Š ¢ 2 ø y Ω ă Ö ; 2 h y ú r Š b ă ł Ł 2 y ź r ź ă ú K Š Ö 2 ł the woollen industry and the bdz f h e a d ă represents agriculture. The motto attached was Ψ C f 2 NJ Š ł ú L y Ř dz ă ú NJ ƛ ł · Ω *Centre right* S c o r l a y a r d ă c k J a n e [2 9] f 1 2 B dz NJ ƛ ă K ú *Harewood Grove*, looking southwest, with the side elevations of the rear extensions being, unusually, faced in Pease brick. *Bottom:* View from within Green Park, looking east, with playground in the far background. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Tree cover in the wooded areas is very dense resulting in dark areas, although Green Park also contains a large area of amenity grassland to the centre, which is on an incline, with mature trees such as English oak. The eastern border of the park comprises a woodland with mature sycamore, holly, horse chestnut, beech, broadleaved lime, Scot pine, red oak, hawthorn and cherry. The bordering hedging includes Portuguese laurel, cherry laurel and elder. The western and southern borders appear unmanaged, with foxgloves, broadleaved dock, common nettle,

[296] https://www.flickr.com/photos/darlingtonboroughcouncil/7787745116

Ŝ f ŘŜNJΣ ƛ ƴØ l· ă ƛØŜ ă ƴ2 ø ō ŜNJNJè Σ ō ƛNJŘΩ ă Ŧ2 2 ú úNJ poppies, feverfew, purple loosestrife, ornamental hypericum, privet, herb Robert, blackthorn, pyracantha and climbing nightshade. Fallen dead wood is retained on site. Bird species within the park include great spotted woodpecker, goldcrest, jackdaw, dunnock and wood pigeon. The trees in Crocus Walk are mainly yew, with self-seeded silver poplars, holly, sycamore, standing deadwood, horse chestnut, American chestnut, beech, and wood sp. English Oak, young 25+ meters whitebeam, notable 40+ metres beech, a copper beech and hornbeam. Ornamental species such as laburnum and oriental beech are also present. Bird species include wren, robin, blue tit, blackbird and amber-listed stock dove. The wooded area at Harewood Grove comprises of mature and semi-mature horse chestnut, beech, yew and sycamore, with shrubs and ground cover under the trees. There is an area of well managed amenity grassland for residential usage. The trees would support species such as great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and treecreeper and provide roosting areas for bats such as noctule bats. Hedgehogs are likely to be present in the less managed areas and underneath shrubs.



Harewood Hill. *Top:* View from Harewood Terrace looking west, with characterful building (original use unknown to author) along tall garden wall, behind which one of the modern Hadrian Court houses can be glimpsed. To the right/north is a private green lane, and further to the right [22] *1 and 2, Harewood Hill*, partly concealed by vegetation within the Harewood Grove wooded area. *Bottom:* View down the narrow lane from near the hilltop, looking east, with [20] *7 and 8, Harewood Hill* being at the left/north end, and [21] *4, Harewood Hill* at the right/south end. Note the prominent chimney stacks and victoria channel next to the sandstone curb of the pavement. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Harewood Hill is a secluded area and, as the name implies, located on an incline. There is an almost rural character to this part of the zone, although this is undermined by the large, tarmacked carpark [37] *14, Harewood Hill* in place of its former front garden. The house is no longer in residential use. Overall, the

abundance of listed buildings, also including [22] *1 and 2, Harewood Hill*, [21] *3 and 4, Harewood Hill* and [20] *7 and 8, Harewood Hill*, lining the hillside set back within generous front gardens enclosed by boundary walling, such as the [23] *Forecourt wall to number 3*, contributes significantly to the architectural quality of the character zone. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include classical doorcases, over-lights, entrance porches supported on columns, curved bay windows and slim, traditional window frames with single glazing. Between numbers 4 and 7, a narrow lane, including a pavement lined with a sandstone curb along the south side, carries on to the hilltop. After being channelled by buildings and associated garden walls, the lane widens to the south to expose the rear elevation of [38] *5 and 6, Harewood Hill* (note that the [39] *Garden walls to west and south of number 6* are not visible from public views). The modern building right next to it blends in almost seamlessly, having been designed in a harmonious pastiche style. There is also a bungalow to the north of the lane, but it is well concealed behind an ž f Ř ō NJ ǻ Ŏ ļ ø l· f f Φ L ű ǻ ă y˝ ž ű ǻ Ŏ Ŝ l· ō t Ŝ ű K l· ű Y l· y˝ this lane have been painted white or cream, which adds to the character.

The remainder of this zone is centred around the busy Grange Road and is densely built up, with a semi-urban character. Whilst rear boundary walling, incorporating two traditional outbuildings, has a strong frontage along the back lanes and side streets (see View 9), the buildings along Grange Road are considerably softened by mature vegetation. These include high-quality historical terraces, many of them including basements, such as [I] *Woodside Terrace*, and a few villas which are slightly further set back within their front gardens, such as [26] *Neasham House*. Exceptionally, ű K ǻ ă f ǻ ă [25] *Forecourt wall* Ř ǻ Y ž ă elsewhere dwarf walling with metal railings has been employed to the fronts. In this part of the character zone the main traditional building materials are red and buff Pease brick, sandstone and grey roof slates. Notable features include prominent chimney stacks, projecting roofs, decorative eaves, dormers, gabled elements, staircases to raised main entrances, tiled entrance paths, classical doorcases including some with side panelling, timber panelled doors with over-lights, porches, bay windows, moulded window surrounds, and slim window frames with clear and coloured glazing.

Along the main road, the filling station and veterinary practice stand out negatively due to their incongruous modern designs and use of non-traditional materials. There is also a distinct, white modernist building in commercial use, but this makes a positive contribution. To either side of Grange Road, behind the buildings, are scoria-paved back lanes, beyond which are various modern residential buildings. To the east, along Marlborough Drive, are large four-storey blocks of flats (see section 5.1/EX2), some of which are visible from Grange Road, with a line of mature broad leafed lime trees between the two northernmost buildings. To the west is the small housing estate of Hadrian Court (see section 5.1/EX3) which is much concealed by mature vegetation and tall, old boundary walling. t ž y˝ Ǝ ű K Ŝ ă ǻ ű Ŝ Ω ă ă ž dz ű Blackwell Lane is a raised footpath bounded by a tall brick wall to the north and dense vegetation to the south. On the opposite side of the road is an old house which is now in commercial use. It has been poorly extended with what looks like a make shift construction made of metal cladding. Behind it is Kendal Close, a back lane which is still scoria paved. The strip of land to the west, presumably formerly associated with the roadside historical buildings and adjoining the enclosed walled kitchen garden of Woodside (see section 5.2/N1), has been developed with bungalows which can only be accessed from the back lane. Whilst this has also resulted in harmful alterations to the old boundaries, some of the traditional walling still survives. On balance, the modern buildings in this part of the character zone

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have a moderate to considerable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. (see section 4.1)







Views along Grange Road: *Top:* Ashburn House, now in commercial use, looking north. Victorian villa with decorative barge boards to canopies. Also note the projecting roof. A new building has been constructed in the former rear part of its garden. *Centre* 187-189, Grange Road, looking east. Both houses have an overlight above their entrance door. The latter is the only stone-built house along this road. Note the prominent porch supported by polished granite columns and the moulded window surrounds. *Bottom:* View of 169-171, Grange Road, which is part of a prominent terrace with central pediment (not shown), looking northeast. Note the projecting roof, the fine, carved entrance canopies and staircases to the raised ground-floor doors, with basements below. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Character zone 4: Coniscliffe Road is located in the western part of the West End Conservation Area under review. It comprises buildings facing the south side of this busy road, as well as some along the northern side which are often fully or partly concealed by vegetation. Along the road, there are mature trees and private gardens.

The latter provide habitat for birds, bats and hedgehogs but due to private management there is no information regarding whether pesticides are used which would reduce the biodiversity value for invertebrates. There are regular bus stops along Coniscliffe Road, with shelters on the northern side. The overall character of this zone is suburban. On balance, the modern houses in this character zone have a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. (see section 4.1)

The heritage interest of the Coniscliffe Road character zone is as follows:

- Coniscliffe Road, which lies on the historical route from Barnard Castle to Stockton, has been an important road into town since at least the sixteenth century. It was turnpiked in 1747.

- The eastern end of this zone includes some of the earliest properties constructed in what would become the West End Conservation Area under review (see 1855 OS map), such as the following grade II-listed buildings:

  [33] *140, Coniscliffe Road*
  [34] *126, Coniscliffe Road*, also a landmark
  [35] *122 and 124, Coniscliffe Road*, also a landmark
  [36] *111-117, Coniscliffe Road*, this used to be the home of Dr Waldy who donated the adjoining Green Park *(character zone 3)* to the public.

- At its western end, there are nineteenth-century villas, including The Knoll which was designed by GG Hoskins[297] (although probably one of the less refined examples in his portfolio), and other larger houses built from the second half of the nineteenth century on, as well as the following notable alms-houses:

  [P] *Sir E D Walker Homes, gate piers, gates, boundary walling & railings*

At the eastern end of this zone, there is an interplay between the buildings on both sides of Coniscliffe Road which face each other over some distance, being set back within enclosed gardens. There are grass verges between the road and pavements to either side. The buildings on the northern side are high-quality villas built on rising ground, overlooking the road. Notably, [34] *126,* [35] *122 and 124*, and the white-painted 118 and 120, Coniscliffe Road form a distinct, attractive group at an angle to the road, although the former is partly obscured by a tall hedge and topiary (see View 8a). To the west, [33] *140, Coniscliffe Road* is also largely concealed behind tall hedging and large trees. To the rear of 150, Coniscliffe Road and 1, Cleveland Avenue (see View 8b) is a linear outbuilding range which shares decorative features with the latter house. At the eastern-most end of this zone, behind some large trees, is a n uncharacteristic, long 1960s flat complex overlooking the road junction with Oakdene Avenue. At the junction, which includes a VR letter pillar box on the corner, are also substantial nineteenth-century residences constructed in polychromatic brickwork with a scoria paved lane between them. Alongside Oakdene Avenue, enclosing a generous south-facing garden of one of the residences, there is a stepped, tall red

[297] Lloyd 1995, page 77

brick wall with terracotta wave-profile copings and ornate piers. Between 103 and 107, Coniscliffe Road are street trees comprising a beech and a copper beech. They have reached mature size but are constrained by the pavement and adjacent housing which may impact on their growing larger. The trees provide feeding and roosting opportunities for birds but are in good structural condition which limits their use as bat roosts. The buildings to the south-west are less prominent and in a linear arrangement at an angle to the road, including [36] *111-117, Coniscliffe Road*. The plot occupied by a bungalow borders a cycle/footpath into Green Park (*character zone 3*), which is lined by tooled sandstone walling to both sides. In this part of the character zone traditional features include prominent chimney stacks, finials, ornate barge boards and ridge tiles, polychromatic roof slates laid out in patterns, an array of different roof shapes/sizes, gabled elements, mock timber framing, decorative brickwork and terracotta including egg-and-dart motif, staircases leading to raised ground floor levels, classical door cases, timber panelled entrance doors with over lights, bay and oriel windows, ornate window surrounds and traditional slim frames with clear and leaded, coloured glazing. On the side elevation of 140, Coniscliffe Road is a bow window including curved sliding sashes.



Top: View from Oakdene Avenue looking northwest. Prominent, stepped brick boundary wall with terracotta copings and gate piers with egg-and-dart detailing behind which are substantial nineteenth-century residences constructed in polychromatic brickwork with terracotta detailing. Note the array of different roof shapes/sizes, barge boards and mock timber framing to the gables. *Bottom:* Linear outbuilding range on Cleveland Terrace. Note the decorative terracotta bands including floral and egg-and-dart designs on the gable wall which continue from the house. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

At the western end of this zone, the pavements have mostly a red surface. There are large houses with gardens to both sides of the road, as well as the courtyard complex of the [P] *Sir E D Walker Homes*. The latter has amenity grassland and vegetated

gardens which offer some biodiversity value depending on how heavily managed they are. The boundary vegetation is made up of mature shrubs and trees including copper beech, birch, limes, cherry laurel, ivy and many other species. To the north side of Coniscliffe Road are three villas, two late-1930s and a modern house, which are all much concealed by the dense vegetation growing within their generous gardens. Lindens (Stone House) is built in sandstone, and the Knoll and Leven Lodge in red brick. The grounds of Lindens are enclosed by a coursed sandstone wall with ornate copings. The Knoll has an unusual battered rubblestone boundary wall along Coniscliffe Road and a panelled brick wall along Linden Avenue where there is also a good view onto the [illegible] decorative brickwork, ornate stone/brick lintels and prominent, arched porch. [illegible] modern brick. There are also various gate piers along this side of Coniscliffe Road.

The buildings facing the other/south side were built in the late 1930s. There is a prominent group comprising a red K6 telephone box and three large houses (one now in commercial use) that have a cream render, red roof tiles and open entrance porches. The front gardens are mostly hard surfaced. Two further 1930s houses include original timber panelled doors, moulded terracotta lintels and decorative leaded glazing. At the western-most end, the almshouses are mainly visible from their entrance area due to being enclosed by mature vegetation, with the coach-house-style building making a prominent contribution. There are also four modern houses to this side of the road, built onto former gardens, which are much concealed from public views.







Top: Prominent 1930s building group including three large houses that have a cream render and red roof tiles. *Bottom left:* 1930s moulded terracotta lintel and decorative leaded glazing with an original rainwater hopper to the left. *Bottom right:* [illegible] with decorative brickwork, ornate stone/brick lintels and a prominent, arched porch with stone detailing. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

The area between the eastern and western parts of this zone comprises mostly late-1930s houses, a few bungalows and one modern building (see section 5.1/E4), which are set back within shallow, enclosed front gardens with shrub vegetation, although there are also some trees. Building materials include brick, pebble-dash render, wood-shingle cladding and predominantly red/brown roof tiles. Typical features are two-storey, bay windows, some gabled elements, entrance canopies or open porches, and hipped roofs. In this part of the character zone, the main road appears wider. A GR letter pillar box can be found on the junction with Hartford Road.

Character zone 5: Residential West is located in the western part of the West End Conservation Area under review. It comprises the housing developments along Linden Avenue, Elton Parade, Flora Avenue, Ashcroft Road and Greencroft Close, which are roughly aligned along north-south axes, as well as some properties which face onto Coniscliffe Road and Cleveland Avenue. The overall character of this zone is suburban.

The heritage interest of the Residential West character zone is as follows:

- Ashcroft Road and Elton Parade, all the existing buildings along the former are depicted on the 1912-24 OS map, were the first roads laid to be out in this zone (see 1896 OS map) and include high-quality houses, such as the following notable structures:

  [N] *Clark & Moscrop Houses*, these were the first houses to be built along Ashcroft Road

  [O] *Welbeck House, gate piers & boundary walling*, designed by GG Hoskins

- Linden Avenue, laid out in the 1890s over the gardens of Lindens[298] *(character zone 4)*, is unique because of its prominent double line of lime trees planted along the full length of the road. There are examples of early semi-detached housing.

- The southern stretch of Flora Avenue is first shown on the 1912-24 OS map. It had been drawn across the former walled garden of Flora Cottage (1855 OS map, no longer extant) and its successor Orchard Croft (1896 OS map), with the latter Ω ă K ŝ ŝ ŝ

the exception of the northeastern 1.5-storey house, which has a linear old outbuilding to the rear of its plot. Traditional features on this road include prominent chimney stacks, a leaded roof lantern, an array of different roof shapes/sizes, projecting roofs, barge boards, gabled elements, decorative brickwork or terracotta, straight and curved entrance canopies, timber panelled entrance doors with fan over lights, bay windows, and slim window frames with coloured and clear leaded glazing. At the north end of Ashcroft Road, ornate entrance gate piers lead to the Danby Lodge, a historical mansion which now sits alongside two other, modern retirement homes on this plot. These buildings are well concealed behind mature vegetation when viewed from Ashcroft Road, including sycamore, yew, cypress, silver birch and beech, which provide nesting habitat for a range of bird species such as crows and magpies, great spotted woodpeckers and collard doves. The amenity grassland to ă ƚ ŭ ĉ ĉ Ĝ ĉ ĉ and well-managed gardens have limited biodiversity value. One of the modern retirement homes prominently abuts the south side of Cleveland Terrace. To the west of it facing the road are a 1930s semi-detached building which has been extended with garages to either side, and three modern red-brick bungalows. The latter are behind old boundary walling that is associated with the former gardens of the Danby Lodge and, due to their low heights, enable views onto the mansion.







Ashcroft Road. *Top:* 1.5-storey house with linear outbuilding including a roof lantern behind. Roadside brick boundary walls and gate piers with stone copings. *Bottom left:* Semi-detached building. The house behind to the far left/southwest is set towards Coniscliffe Road. The timber telegraph pole and galvanised streetlight detract. *Bottom right:* A fine entrance into one of the [N] *Clark & Moscrop Houses*. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Elton Parade comprises various houses, small villas and terraces facing onto the road behind enclosed front gardens, such as [O] *Welbeck House*, which is located

prominently along one of the southern, shallow road bends. The old buildings offer opportunities for bat roosting. They are generally two or 2.5 storeys tall and their gardens well vegetated including mature beech, yew and lime. There are no street trees. At the south end of the road is a linear house which faces prominently onto Coniscliffe Road. At the north end is a former villa, which is now a nursery school, with linear traditional outbuildings on its plot. The Victorian buildings in this part of the zone are made of red brick with grey slate roofs, whereas the four Edwardian semi-detached houses are rendered with red roof tiles. The terraces, including those facing onto Cleveland Avenue (one of them is now a convenience store), have scoria paved back lanes coming off the main road, bounded by tall brick walling to the rear of the properties. Notable traditional features in this part of the zone include prominent chimney stacks, an array of different roof shapes/sizes, dormers, projecting roofs, decorative barge boards, finials, gabled elements, ornate/polychromatic brickwork and stone lintels, entrance canopies and porches, classical door surrounds, panelled doors with overlights, bay windows, decorative leaded glass, and slim sliding sashes with clear and coloured glazing. There are also modern houses that have been constructed onto infill sites in former gardens. Whilst some of them harmonise with their surroundings, others have employed designs, materials and layouts that are not in keeping. On balance, the modern buildings in this part of the character zone have a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. (see section 4.1)



Elton Parade. *Top:* Victorian houses with prominent gables including decorative barge boards. *Bottom left:* Edwardian semi-detached houses with conical roofs to bay windows. *Bottom right:* Sliding sash including coloured glass in the margins. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Linden Avenue is very overshaded by the double row of mature street trees on grass strips between the pavements and the road, which also partially conceal the buildings behind. These include limes, horse chestnut, London plane, beech and

rowan. The houses, which are set back in well-managed gardens behind brick boundary walling, are detached and semi-detached and of good quality and design. Whilst most are rendered in pebble-dash and painted cream and have red roof tiles, there are also some that were faced in brick or include mock timber framing. Notable traditional features include prominent chimney stacks, an array of different roof shapes/sizes (including conical), projecting roofs, barge boards, gabled elements, decorative brickwork, a balcony, entrance canopies/porches, archways and other curved shapes, panelled doors with side- and over-lights, bay/bow windows, tripartite windows, an oval window, and leaded clear and coloured glazing. There are also a few modern houses at the south end of the road that are constructed in brown brick and dark-painted timber walling with shallow roof pitches which do not harmonise with their surroundings. Behind the properties to the west of Linden Avenue is a green lane (footpath) which runs parallel to the road.







Linden Avenue. *Top:* Large detached house with balcony over arched entrance. Also note the boundary wall to the far left/north which has recessed panels with the bricks set at an angle. *Bottom left*: Edwardian semi-detached house with leaded tripartite bow window including a projecting conical roof. *Bottom right:* Another Edwardian semi-detached building with fine detailing to the projecting roof and canopies. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Flora Avenue largely comprises late-1930s semi-detached houses set back behind enclosed front gardens with modern infill housing in between. The latter have, on balance, a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). The vegetation in the gardens is generally shrub sized. Building materials include red brick, pebble-dash render, wood-shingle cladding and predominantly red/brown roof tiles. Typical features are two-storey bay windows, some gabled elements, entrance canopies or open porches, door surrounds and hipped roofs (see section 5.1/Z6). Towards the south end of the road are two Edwardian semi-detached buildings which feature curved oriels, oval windows, panelled timber/glazed doors with side- and over-lights and curved

entrance canopies. Two Victorian villas, one of them now a day nursery school, the other accessed by a new metallised side lane off Flora Avenue, and two modern houses face onto Coniscliffe Road, set back behind gardens. The former are built in red brick with stone detailing and grey slate roofs and contribute significantly to the streetscene. There are some old metal railings immediately to the southwest of the road junction.



Top: Two Edwardian semi-detached buildings at the south end of Flora Avenue, looking northeast. *Bottom:* Two Victorian villas at entrance into Flora Avenue facing towards Coniscliffe Road, the one to the *right* being Orchard Croft. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Greencroft Close is a modern development comprising detached houses, a near apartment block and a large, irregularly shaped retirement home amongst mature vegetation associated with the former Green Croft grounds. The front gardens are unenclosed and there is a quiet atmosphere. Mature vegetated rear gardens have ornamental planting with pendulus sedge present. Bird species include jay, blackbird, robin and goldcrest. The retirement home has two mature silver birches on the green in front of it. Adjacent to the road is a mature cedar of Lebanon, which due to its size and structure is a significant tree, with a mature cypress next to it. To the rear is a mature giant sequoia, again a significant tree. Other trees include oak. Two further, parallel apartment complexes are accessed from Cleveland Terrace. Building materials in this part of the zone include red, orange and brown brick, render and grey roof tiles (see section 5.1/E7). The designs are not in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding historical precedents and have, on balance, a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1).

Character zone 6: Central Terracing forms the Ψ K Ŝ of the West End Conservation Area under review and is adjoined by many of the other zones. It mainly comprises Victorian and Edwardian terraces, although it also contains other, earlier and later

buildings that have been constructed in a linear arrangement parallel to the roads. There is a strong grid-like layout particularly in the northern part of this zone which also includes Stanhope Park. The overall character is semi-urban. On balance, the modern buildings in this zone have a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. (see section 4.1)

The heritage interest of the Central Terracing character zone is as follows:

- Some of the rows of housing are amongst the earliest buildings constructed in the West End Conservation Area under review, including the following grade-II-listed buildings at Mount Pleasant, which may have been built in the late 1820s:

  [15] *94 and 96, Coniscliffe Road* (also a landmark) (see Views 7a-c)
  [16] *98 and 100, Coniscliffe Road*
  [17] *102, Coniscliffe Road*
  [18] *104, Coniscliffe Road*

- Whilst the following grade-II-listed buildings at Mount Pleasant were built a bit later, they are also amongst the early housing provided in the area:

  [30] *27-33, Cleveland Terrace*
  [31] *21, Cleveland Terrace*

- Whilst the structures comprising the Cleveland Dairy (1855 OS map) no longer survive, the plot shape has been retained as well as the (replacement) building orientation.

- The main housing boom began in 1863 when the glebe owned by the Duke of Cleveland was gradually sold off and made available for constructing middle-class residences exclusively. From 1870 on, the developments started to transform [illegible] what the [illegible] designs and layouts heavily regulated by the Cleveland estate, comprising the first wave of town planning in the area. Some of the road names still commemorate the former landowner. The following grade-II-listed buildings may be amongst the earliest housing constructed onto the former glebe:

  [11] *67 and 69, Stanhope Road*
  [12] *Forecourt walls to numbers 67 and 69*

- In 1897, the former Southend ([14] *The Grange Hotel*, character zone 7) grounds were split up and sold for the development for housing, resulting in the construction of substantial terraces designed by notable architect GG Hoskins.

This character zone has a more regimented appearance due to the linear and perpendicular arrangement of the terraces. Areas where this is less apparent include Stanhope Road South which is much softened by mature street trees, the detached houses on the more generous plots of the former Cleveland Dairy and Cleveland [illegible] detached houses along Sunnybank Road and Uplands Road. The row of 4-18, Fife Road deserves special mentioning as its roadside elevation has been exceptionally well preserved. Building materials in this zone

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include predominantly red and some Peasley brick, sandstone, mock timber framing, render and wooden shingle cladding, and largely grey roof slates, with the exception at Oakdene and Beechwood Avenues which mainly have red. A major positive yet often overlooked contributor is the scoria paved back lanes which are enclosed by the tall brick walling of the ú Ŝ NJNJ Ĵ ĕ Ŷ ā Ω and outbuildings. Besides the surviving privies and coal houses, the latter also include some larger structures that may have been used for various non-residential purposes. There are many notable traditional features in this zone including prominent chimney stacks, finials, an array of different roof shapes/sizes Ā ỳ Ŏ f dz Ř λ ỳ Ǝ l, projecting Ř Ŝ Ř, barge Ẅ ĕ 2 Ỳ Ŝ Ω boards, dormers, gabled elements, pediment, dentilled eaves, kneelers, crenelations, decorative (including polychromatic) brickwork including moulded copings, terracotta detailing, stone string courses, datestones, balconies, turrets, gate piers with house name incised, original iron railings, tiled entrance paths, stone stairs to raised ground floors, entrance canopies/porches, verandas, classical and other entrance surrounds including panelled reveals, moulded stone lintels, key stones, panelled doors with side- and over-lights, two-leafed doors, reels, bay windows, oval and tripartite windows, round-arched stair windows, slim vertical sliding sashes, curved glazing, coloured glass and decorative leaded glazing.





Terraces along Coniscliffe Road *(top)* and Fife Road *(bottom)*, with the latter Ω ă ĕ Ŵ 12 ỳ ú best-preserved terrace in the West End Conservation Area at the time of review. Whilst the latter has a very regimented, simple appearance with all the houses being identical, the Ŧ 2 NJ Ỳ Ŝ NJ K l· ăt λ Ó ş Ŝ Ř Ω Ỳ ă NJ Ŝ Ẅ elements that project beyond the building as well as its roof line. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)



Top left: Panelled door with side- and over-lights and decorative leaded glazing, canopy over, tiled path and brick boundary wall with gate pier. *Top right:* A rare survivor of Victorian iron railings. *Centre left:* End turret with prominent chimney stack, coloured glazing and datestone. Dr Richard Taylor Manson, who is commemorated with a boulder [29] in South Park, moved into this house when it was newly built (see section 3.6). *Centre middle* Entrance with over-light and decorative leaded glazing, canopy over and a small oriel with leaded glazing. *Centre right* Ψ ± Ŝ ý Ŝ ú ƛ ł · ý Dvanáctiměsíční *Bottom left:* Entrance porch comprising decorative leaded glazing. *Bottom right:* Timber panelled entrance door with over-light and canopy. Matching barge board to bay window with additional sashes. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)



Top: View down a scoria paved back lane lined by tall boundary walling of rear yards and outbuildings. *Bottom left:* Large outbuilding with hoisting door on upper floor. *Bottom right:* Single storey outbuilding with two shuttered openings and a large gable chimney stack. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)

Stanhope Park is a public park enclosed by low red-brick walling with stone copings. It includes pathways, benches, bins and tennis courts. To the centre is an open space with flower beds containing ornamental plants as well as wildflowers which attract pollinators such as honey bees and hover flies. The open areas are dominated by well-managed amenity grassland for public recreation. Whilst it does not offer much biodiversity value it will assist with urban cooling and flood alleviation (drainage). Along the central pathways are newly planted trees which are being managed. The mature trees inside the park include native species such as English oak and beech, as well as ornamental species like oriental beech, copper beech, Portuguese laurel, cherry laurel, leylandii and horse chestnut. Most trees are in good health, with some having fungus growing on them which may create rot holes that provide opportunities for roosting bats and nesting birds such as nuthatch, great tits, and tree creeper. The park is also likely to support hedgehogs and other smaller mammals.

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Stanhope Park looking southeast with terraced houses along Stanhope Road North in the background behind the mature trees. (Photo © Gaby Rose, July 2025)

Character zone 7: Grange Road Roundabout is located in the eastern part of the West End Conservation Area under review and adjoins the Town Centre Conservation Area. It comprises a variety of sites that do not fit into any of the surrounding zones, including large-scale modern development such as the ring road, hence there is little cohesiveness. Consequently, the overall character varies within this zone (see below).

The heritage interest of the Grange Road Roundabout character zone is as follows:

- The oldest surviving buildings are the following grade II listed structures:

  [13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road* (see Views 6a-c)
  [14] *The Grange Hotel*, formerly known as Southend, the residence of Joseph Pease

- Other early surviving structures include the boundary walling of the former Parsonage/Vicarage (no longer extant) built for the Duke of Cleveland in 1846 and the enclosed former garden of Larchfield (no longer extant) built around 1810.

- This zone also includes the following notable structures:

  [D] *Coniscliffe Road fountain*, donated to the town by Joseph Pease
  [E] *Baptist Church*, also a landmark, *& gate piers*

- The remaining historical buildings/structures in this zone also contribute positively to the architectural interest of the West End Conservation Area under review.

Besides the public highway, the area at the roundabout and ring road also includes two modern buildings (see section 5.1/Z8) as well as the [E] *Baptist Church & gate piers*, which are the only surviving historical structures in this part of the zone. The latter are built from stone and include fine detailing. The church has a prominent façade with pediment and stands out as being isolated on the highway. There is a range of mature trees on the roundabout and on the road verge along the A167 including horse chestnut, sycamore, fir and lime, but no understory. This has limited value to most species but provides nesting bird habitat for magpie and wood pigeon.



The now isolated [E] *Baptist Church* on the Grange Road roundabout looking southeast. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

The site of the former Southend estate within this character zone includes its former mansion, now listed as [14] *The Grange Hotel*, which prominently faces onto the B6280, set back behind boundary wall. It has 6x6 sashes in moulded stone window surrounds, two tripartite windows with pilaster- and entablature treatment at the sides and a stuccoed central porch in antis. The plot also contains ornamental planting which is of limited value to wildlife, although there are likely to be nesting birds such as robin and dunnock in the shrubs. To the rear, the modern housing development of Westcliffe Court, comprising five compact apartment blocks and a primary school have been built onto parts of the historical Southend grounds. The school is accessed from Beechwood Avenue (*character zone 6*). Its large plot contains mainly mature sycamore with Portugese laurel hedging underneath, providing nesting opportunities for birds and also foraging opportunities for a wide range of birds, bats and small mammals. The site of Westcliffe Court includes a large number of semi-mature trees such as horse chestnut, oak, sycamore and hornbeam that conceal the modern buildings effectively from the roundabout side. There is a group of further trees across the B6280 to the opposite side of the mansion and five semi-mature hornbeams near the corner to Southend Avenue (*character zone 6*), all of which also used to belong to the Y l y ă grounds. Despite being partly concealed behind a tall modern wall, which incorporates the [D] *Coniscliffe Road fountain*, some of the Westcliffe Court flats are visible from Coniscliffe Road in the setting of the listed hotel. All buildings in this part of the character zone are built in red or brown brick, with grey slates or roof tiles, and are three storeys tall with the exception of the school, which is single storey. The character of this part of the zone is suburban.



View from Coniscliffe Road looking northeast: Modern block of flats behind tall brick wall which includes the [D] *Coniscliffe Road fountain* (behind the yellow traffic sign), with [14] *The Grange Hotel* just visible in the background. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

The remainder of Coniscliffe Road in this part of the character zone comprises a variety of old building types including [13] *41-61, Coniscliffe Road*, an industrial building and a linear, single-storey shop range. These directly line the pavements (i.e.

no boundary walling or front garden, although the terrace is set back a short distance behind upright metal railings. Notable traditional features include prominent chimney stacks, timber shop fonts, stone staircases leading to raised entrances, classical doorcases, timber panelled doors with fanlights, a scoria paved coach/cart entrance, slim timber sashes and fixed window frames, multi-pane bow/shop windows and decorative leaded and coloured glazing. There are also two three-storey modern apartment blocks, with one of them being very prominent on the road junction, which have a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). The replacement building for Larchfield, which serves as a Catholic parish centre, is well concealed behind the old red-brick walling and mature trees of the former villa's garden, the latter including copper beech, ash, holly, sycamore and ornamental species. The grounds provide nesting opportunities for birds and also foraging opportunities for a wide range of birds, bats and small mammals. The new building occupies a similar footprint as the former Larchfield building and the site still retains some traditional outbuildings to the rear, which is now a private carpark. The character of this part of the zone is semi-urban.





Top: Rare survival of an industrial building and a linear, single storey shop range along Coniscliffe Road, looking northeast, with two three-storey modern apartment blocks to either side. *Bottom:* Outbuildings associated with Larchfield (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

The remainder of this character zone comprises three old villas surrounded by dense tree cover at the east end of Langholme Crescent and modern houses along or off the east end of Uplands Road. Stanhope House, now in commercial use, is a white painted building that sits at an angle to Stanhope Road. It is bounded by a red brick walling and still retains its carved stone gate piers. The villa to the opposite side of the road, on the junction with Langholm Crescent, is built in red brick with some wood-shingle cladding and red roof tiles and is much concealed by vegetation. It is also bounded by a red brick wall with gate piers. The other old house, also constructed in brick and shingles, is on the south side of Langholm Crescent and, unusual for a residence, directly lines the pavement. It is abutted by a tall courtyard wall which has two arched coach/cart entrances. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, an array of different

roof shapes/sizes, projecting roofs with barge boards, dormer, gabled elements, entrance porches, an oriel, oval windows, slim sashes with shorter top frame and leaded decorative glazing. Along the south side of Uplands Road there are typical 1940s semi-detached houses in red brick and red roof tiles. On the opposite side of the road, the former plot of the Parsonage/Vicarage is set at an angle to the road and still bounded by its old brick wall. It now encloses four, three-storey blocks of flats which are set at a different angle. On balance, the modern buildings in this part of the character zone have a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). The character of this part of the zone is suburban.







Top: Large house directly lining Langholm Crest. Note the strong gable element, various roofs and the courtyard wall with arched coach/cart entrance. *Bottom left:* Wooden shingle clad gable element with barge boarding and intricate leaded glazing. *Bottom right:* Former boundary wall of the Parsonage/Vicarage with 1940s semi-detached houses beyond *(character zone 6)* (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Character zone 8: Abbey Road/Cleveland Avenue is located to the west of the West End Conservation Area under review. It comprises detached and semi-detached houses, often fully or partly concealed by lush vegetation, as well as a terrace which is aligned parallel to the road. It also includes the northern-most part of the Abbey Road Sports Field, which belongs to the college *(character zone 9)*. There is scoria paving in front of some of the driveways. The character of this zone is suburban. On balance, the modern buildings in this character zone have a minor harmful impact on

the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1), as they are generally well concealed behind mature vegetation.

The heritage interest of the Abbey Road/Cleveland Avenue character zone is as follows:

- This area used to be part of the glebe which was owned by the Duke of Cleveland. It formed part of a later phase of development into middle-class housing which started around 1900, and includes the following grade II-listed building:

  [07] *Inglenook*

  as well as the following notable structure:

  [C] *55, Cleveland Avenue*

- Along Abbey Road and to the east of Cleveland Avenue, there are other high-quality houses that were built around the same time.

Cleveland Avenue has houses to either side of the road set back within mature, enclosed gardens. Lush, intermittent vegetation comprises shrubs and a few trees which provide nesting bird habitats such as robin, blackbird and dunnock. The buildings vary in style which adds to the interest, with materials including red and buff/Pease brick, render, sandstone, wood shingle cladding and mock timber framing. Some of those built around the turn of the century are still reminiscent of the previous (Victorian) period, such as the stone-built terrace and the house at the junction with Langholm Crescent which has a crenelated garden wall to the rear whilst those in the Arts and Crafts style have embraced a more contemporary design notably [07] *Inglenook* and [C] *55, Cleveland Avenue*. Number 48 has a traditional outbuilding along the tall rear garden wall, which is accessed from the back lane *(character zone 6)*. Most of the properties to the west of the road were built in the late 1930s and include some more substantial houses at the north and south end of this stretch of road, with the latter having panelled brick boundary walling. There are also a few examples of brick boundary walls with piers and metal railings in between. Beyond the crossroads, a modern flat complex is well concealed by tall old brick boundary walling associated with Ashgrove *(character zone 9)*. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, dormers, barge boards, dentilled eaves, gabled elements, decorative brickwork and terracotta, crenelations, a balcony with iron railings, enclosed and open entrance porches, moulded door surrounds, keystones, panelled timber doors with side- and over-lights, decorative mouldings above windows, oriels, bay windows, circular windows, slim vertical sliding sashes and decorative leaded glazing including coloured and curved glass.

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Cleveland Avenue. *Top:* Late-1930s houses with moulded terracotta entrance surrounds and panelled doors and boundary walling *(left)* and an unusual curved, leaded oriel *(right)*. *Bottom:* House built around 1900 with curved entrance porch, coloured, leaded glazing, dentilled eaves and Pease brick chimneys as part of the stone-built terrace *(left)* and a contemporary villa including a dormer, mock timber framing, decorative moulding above the windows and a balcony *(right)*. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

To the west of the crossroads, the houses are well concealed behind mature vegetation, in particular to the north side of Abbey Road, where the building line, which started to get established around 1900, is significantly set back in very large gardens. Alongside the boundary walling are gate piers, of which some include ú K Ŝ LJNJ 2 LJ Ŝ NJ ú è Ω ă the old stone. Only the easternmost property, which has a two-storey, detached traditional outbuilding in its rear yard, is more clearly visible from Cleveland Avenue behind its tall brick boundary wall. Along the south side of Abbey Road, the main building of interest is a large, medieval-style house built around 1900 with mock-timber-framed upper storey. The adjoining sports field provides a distinct break despite being enclosed along the road by a tall ornamental hedge with sweet chestnut, silver birch, horse chestnut, rowan and sycamore in between, which have some value to breeding birds. The field consists of well-managed amenity grassland that may offer foraging habitat to birds and smaller animals such as hedgehogs. The buildings to the west, built in the late 1930s, are of lesser interest (see section 5.1/KE9).

The dense, roadside vegetation also carries to the east of the crossroads, with the exception of a Victorian brick villa, which is prominent despite being well set back from the roads. On the opposite side of the Abbey Road is a red VR pillar letter box. The houses in this vicinity were mainly built around 1900, although two buildings are

modern. Along the brick boundary wall are gate piers, and some of the walling also incorporates metal railings. Notable traditional features along Abbey Road in this character zone include prominent chimney stacks, gabled elements, decorative brickwork and terracotta, open entrance porches, panelled doors with overlights, bay windows, slim vertical sliding sashes, and leaded, clear and coloured glazing.



Houses built around 1900 along Abbey Road. *Top:* Mock timber-framed, medieval-style building with lateral, decorative chimney stack and floral leaded glazing (inset). *Bottom left:* The house with decorative brickwork at the crossroad includes an outbuilding behind the tall rear yard walling, its gable facing the road (right). *Bottom right:* Distinct entrance porch and original window with coloured glazing behind. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Character zone 9: College is located in the central part of the West End Conservation Area under review. It comprises the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and other former school buildings as well as a fair amount of modern development. On balance, the more recently constructed buildings in this zone have a considerable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). An overall character for this zone is difficult to define due to the mix of different elements in this small area.

The heritage interest of the College character zone is as follows:

- The mid-1870s school complex which includes the following notable structures:

  [A] *Training College*, designed by JR Pritchett

[B] *Grammar School*, designed by GG Hoskins

¶ Three Victorian houses, of which two are the survivors of a line of formerly four small villas along the north side of Trinity Road. Claremont and Ashgrove, the latter to the south of Trinity Road, are also associated with the use as schools.

Mature trees, such as lime, holly, copper beech, sycamore, beech (significant), horse chestnut (significant) and cherry, semi-mature sycamore and young beeches can be found along Abbey Road, Trinity Road and Vane Terrace, partly concealing the buildings which are significantly set back from the roads and enclosed by boundary walling. The mature trees support an array of bird species such as blue tit, robin and blackbird, and may provide roost sites for bats like pipistrelle and myotis bats. The historical structures in this zone, which are all made of brick (and some sandstone) and grey slate, are most prominent along Vane Terrace, comprising the imposing [A] *Training College* and [B] *Grammar School* walling & gate piers, as well as a small former villa across Trinity Road, which is now part of a largely modern care home complex. The Grammar School was more recently extended to the north with a grey and pink panel-clad structure which, like the Post-War extension along Abbey Road, has made no attempt of harmonising with the important Victorian schools to either side. Contrarily, the brick extensions dated 1995 and 2001 blend in well. On the college grounds are a significant sycamore and significant mature copper beech on the front, lime, cherry, bordering privet, lawns and planted beds. In the forecourt of the Training College is a stainless steel artwork which detracts from the historical surroundings, like the glass and stainless steel balustrading of the access ramp in front of it. Its grounds also include hornbeam, copper beech, ornamental planting on raised beds such as bordering privet and (invasive) snowberry.



Villas associated with former school use. *Left:* Ashgrove with Dutch gables and modern side extension. *Right:* Claremont; note the substantial carved stone canopy over the side entrance and the hood moulds above the windows. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

There are three further old villas along Trinity Road, intermixed with modern buildings of which some are set back behind old brick boundary walling. The tall wall in front of Swinden Court includes panelled fields and an arched doorway. To the east of Ashgrove, which has been over-extended with an additional bay and a whole new rear building connected by a link, is a late-1930s building with an L-plan that is historically associated with the [A] *Training College*. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, an array of different roof shapes, decorative ridge tiles, projecting roofs with barge boards, dormers, finials, dentilled eaves, gabled elements, turrets, decorative (including polychromatic) brickwork, string courses, sculptured Ψ D ₂ ű K ƛ Ŏ Ω ₸ Ŝ I· ű dzNJ Ŝ ă Σ

enclosed entrance porches and canopies, stone door surrounds with hoods, bay windows, hood moulds and drip courses, circular windows, slim vertical sliding sashes, and coloured leaded glazing.

Overall, this zone is much undermined by the mishmash of modern development such as the residential cul-de-sacs of Scholars Park and Trinity Mews, which is not in keeping with the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. Modern building materials include red brick, mock timber framing and modular panelling (see section 5.1/ X10 & EX11). Scholars Park has mature horse chestnut, ash and private gardens.

Character zone 10: Woodland Road is located in the northern part of the West End Conservation Area under review and adjoins the Cockerton Conservation Area at its northwestern tip. This wide road can be very busy and as such detracts from the historical surroundings. There are predominantly residential properties to both sides of the road. At its western end is Tennis Dene. It forms part of the much wider network of open space, parkland and habitats of the Denes, which is largely outside the West End Conservation Area under review. This zone also includes the west stretch of Milbank Road, again with houses to both sides. On balance, the more recently constructed buildings in this zone have a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). The overall character of this zone is predominantly suburban, although the area around the church with the surrounding terraced housing is semi-urban.

The heritage interest of the Woodland Road character zone is as follows:

- Woodland Road, which used to be part of the Coal Road from West Auckland to Darlington, has been an important route into town since at least 1457. It was turnpiked in 1751.

- Between 1836 and 1838, the following, now listed structures were built on land that had been provided by the Duke of Cleveland, and which used to be part of the glebe:

  [09] *Church of Holy Trinity* (grade II*), also a landmark (see Views 3a-c)
  [08] *Steps, ramp, rail and lampholder to north of Holy Trinity Church* (grade II)
  [10] *Walls, gates and piers to north and west of Church of Holy Trinity* (grade II)

  Originally, the building was constructed as a chapel of ease to St Cuthbert's church (outside the West End Conservation Area under review) to serve a mainly rural area and meet the needs of Darlington's rapid expansion following the arrival of the railway in 1825. At Holy Trinity, architect Anthony Salvin demonstrates a faithfulness to the medieval Gothic that was unusual for its time.

- To the north of Woodland Road lay the immediate grounds of the ostentatious [02] *Pierremont*, built by John Botcherby in the 1830s. In 1854, the estate was purchased by Henry Pease, with the following grade-II-listed buildings still commemorating the change in ownership:

  [04] *Pierremont Lodge*, designed by Richardson and Ross

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- To the south of the road is the following grade II listed mansion, built in 1829, which is also associated with members of the Botcherby and Pease families:

  [05] *The Woodlands*

- Tennis Dene is a remnant of the landscaped approach to Brinkburn mansion built in 1862 (no longer extant and outside the Conservation Area under review), the former residence of Henry Fell Pease, son of Henry Pease of the adjoining Pierremont estate. Its entrance gate piers and bridge over Cocker Beck still survive, which, like the former mansion, were built in buff/Pease brick[299].

- At the corner with Milbank Road is the following grade II listed feature which was donated by Joseph Pease to the town in 1866:

  [06] *Drinking fountain on west corner of Milbank Road*

- This character zone also includes terraces and other residences built in the second half of the nineteenth century as well as Edwardian houses constructed onto the former grounds of the Pierremont and Woodlands estates.

The western end of this character zone is marked by the busy Woodland Road Roundabout, which is overlooked by two distinct old houses amidst lush tree cover on raised ground to the south and linear, modern red brick buildings to the east (see View 1). Whilst the former comprise a variety of materials including stone, wood shingle cladding and mock timber framing, the remainder of the historical buildings in this part of the zone are mainly built in red brick. Immediately to the west of the old houses overlooking the roundabout is a modern dwelling which is much set back from the historical building line. To the east are further old houses, all set back from the south side of the road within enclosed (by brick boundary walling), well-vegetated gardens. To the west of the Woodland Road Roundabout, with strips of amenity grassland and mature trees in between, a prominent, Victorian semi-detached building overlooks another roundabout (outside the West End Conservation Area under review). There are modern bungalows in its former gardens (see section 5.1/E16), as well as a rendered, late-1930s house close to the road between the two roundabouts. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, hipped roofs, dormers, decorative brickwork, stone string courses, stone stairs to raised entrances, classical doorways with panelled reveals, panelled timber doors with side- and over-lights, bay windows, curved and decorative window lintels, corbelled sills, slim vertical sliding sash, clear and coloured leaded glazing, and gate piers with house names chiselled in.

[299] Cookson (ed.) 2005, page 44



Top left: Prominent, Victorian semi-detached houses at the northwestern end of the Conservation Area under review. Note the chimney stacks, decorative eaves, dormers and stone bay windows. *Top right:* This house along Woodland Road which is much concealed by a tall hedge, has distinct timber bay windows, with the one on the left having pilasters and the one on the right including a Venetian Gothic motif. *Bottom:* Tennis Dene looking southeast (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

To the east of the Woodland Road Roundabout is Tennis Dene, which is a managed area of habitats containing trees and shrubs as well as a playground. On the curb side to Woodland Road adjacent to the tennis courts within the park is a strip of amenity grassland with three large mature street trees comprising a broad-leaved lime, horse chestnut and English oak. There are three roadside entrance points into the park. Those to the north and south are marked by gate piers and a bridge with gate piers over Cocker Beck respectively, all built in buff/Pease brick. To the west is a modern pointed metal archway set within a low sandstone boundary wall. Inside the park the trees are largely mature and include species such as yew, horse chestnut, sycamore, beech, copper beech, wych elm, weeping willow, holly, ash, pedunculate oak and English oak. Some rarer trees such as hornbeam are also present. There is a more managed, fenced-off area along the Cocker Beck which includes newly planted fruit trees such as crab apples and cherry as well as other plants such as primula, mock orange, fatsia, ceanothus and other ornamentals. The area also contains bird feeders and bird baths which help support the wide variety of species present. While understorey may support species such as hedgehogs, small mammals and amphibians. However, in this area Cocker Beck is polluted and full of litter and therefore unlikely to support many species.

To the east of Tennis Dene, the long stretch to the north of Woodland Road includes predominantly detached and semi-detached houses set back from the road in enclosed (by stone boundary walling) well-vegetated gardens including large mature trees and shrubs, which partly or fully conceal the buildings. The houses are made of various material including red brick, render, wood shingle cladding and mock timber

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framing. The properties are on raised ground except for those at the western end of this part of the character zone. [04] *Pierremont Lodge*, built in sandstone, is set closer to the road and at a slight angle to it. Between Tower Road and Hollyhurst Road are two neighbouring former villas within large grounds, one of them now a specialist care home and the other accommodating the Darlington Woodland Bowling Club, which are set back much further from Woodland Road. To the east of them is a site containing a large number of modern apartment blocks scattered amongst mature trees (see section 5.1/KEY13), which is only partly inside the West End Conservation Area under review. Amongst them is the last surviving Victorian villa in this location, now a nursery, built in buff/Pease brick with the detailing in sandstone. There is a red GR pillar letterbox in front of this site along the pavement, and another one at the junction with Tower Road. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, hipped roofs, gabled elements with barge boards, pediments, decorative brickwork, a datestone, ornate gate piers (many of them redundant), entrance canopies, moulded stone door surrounds, panelled timber door with over-light, oriels, bay and bow windows, circular windows, slim vertical sliding sashes, and decorative leaded glazing.



Top: Edwardian houses on raised ground with mature front gardens behind sandstone boundary walling and a gate pier. The solar panels have a negative visual impact on the eastern ō dz ƛ t Ř ƛ y ∃ Ω. *Bottom:* Upper Thurlow, constructed in Pease brick with stone surrounds, is the last surviving Victorian villa in this location *(left)*, with its inscribed gate pier to the roadside *(right)*. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

To the south of Milbank Road and between Milbank Road and Woodland Road are further detached and semi-detached houses built predominantly in red brick, although there are also rendered and wood-shingle clad elevations. To the south of

Milbank Road are also two Victorian villas and a modern semi-detached buildings set back within enclosed, well vegetated gardens. The houses north of Milbank Road were built in around 1900 onto the eastern grounds of [05] *The Woodlands*. The sandstone boundary walling of the mansion has been retained where possible, in particular at the junction with Woodland Road, which includes [06] *Drinking fountain on west corner of Milbank Road*. There is scoria paving in front of some of the driveways off Milbank Road. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, gabled elements including Dutch gables, broken pediment, barge boarded, dentilled eaves, turrets, decorative (including polychromatic) brickwork, ornate gate piers (some with house name chiselled in), entrance canopies, timber panelled doors with over-lights, a stone balcony, bay windows, circular and oval windows, slim vertical sliding sashes and other casements, and decorative leaded glazing.





Left: Fine Edwardian house built onto the former grounds of [05] The Woodlands with dentilled eaves, including to the two-storey bay windows, and curved entrance canopy. Note the scoria paving in front of the driveway. *Right*: Rectangular, brick bay window with floral freeze to top. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

[05] *The Woodlands*, ý 2 ó dz ă Ŝ Ř ō è { ú ¢ ŜNJŜ ă I· Ω ă aI 2 ă LJ ƛ Ŏ Ŝ Σ large, detached modern wing which is linked to the listed building. The remainder of its former grounds was turned into further housing accessed by a forked cul-de-sac more recently (see section 5.1/ŽŽ12). The large private gardens are bordered by beech hedges and contain mature trees including beech, English oak, sycamore and also ornamental species. To the curtilage is mown amenity grassland and which are very diverse considering the heavy management and ƛ ý Ŏ f dz Ř Ŝ ă LJ Ŝ Ŏ ƛ Ŝ ă ă dz Ŏ K l trefoil, self-heal, yarrow, white clover, annual meadow grass, red fescue, perennial rye grass, common daisy, broad-leaved plantain, chickweed and wood avens. A large area of unmanaged grassland to the east of the road includes a wide range of species such as broad-leaved dock, cow parsley, common nettles, common knapweed, garlic mustard, perennial rye grass, buttercups, meadow foxtail grass and cocksfoot. To easterly border are large mature English oaks. The habitat in this area supports birds such as goldcrest, dunnock, chiffchaff, blackbird, swifts, robins and dunnock, as well as mammals such as fox, hedgehogs, noctule bats and amphibians.

There is a more urban character around the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity*, with two rows of terraced housing to the west, one of them facing onto Woodland Road (see Views 3b-c). To the rear of the churchyard and terraces are secondary (a short

section of stone-block-paved back lanes which are bounded by brick (terraces) and stone (church) walling, with some outbuildings along the former. Notable traditional features in this part of the character zone include prominent chimney stacks, decorative brickwork and terracotta, Gothic-style stone detailing, a dovecote, stone staircases to raised entrances with metal railings, gate piers with house names chiselled in, entrance canopies, timber panelled doors with fanlights, decorative lintels, bay windows, slim vertical sliding sashes, and decorative leaded and other coloured glazing. There is a tranquil atmosphere to the graveyard, which is in great contrast to the bordering busy main road. It includes mature trees, such as a notable English oak off Woodland Road, which support an array of bird species such as blue tit, robin, and blackbird, and may provide roost sites for bats such as whiskered bats. The churchyard also offers habitat for hedgehogs and other small mammals. Sadly, many of the gravestones are broken. Along the [10] *Walls, gates and piers to north and west of Church of Holy Trinity*, to the northwest of the [08] *Steps, ramp, rail and lampholder*, is a utilitarian bus shelter. Further along the road to the west, in front of the longer terrace, the public realm widens and includes an amenity grass strip at a prominent pedestrian road crossing (see section 4.1).



Top left: Churchyard looking northwest, with the church behind the trees in the background. *Top right:* A fine sliding sash with coloured leaded glazing to the rear of the terrace along Woodland Road. *Bottom left:* Doorway and bay window with fine brick detailing to the tops. Also note prominently panelled timber door. *Bottom right:* Outbuilding along back lane which incorporates a dovecote in the gable. There is historical stone block paving in the background (arrow), with scoria in front. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Character zone 11: Pierremont is located at the north end of the West End Conservation Area under review, comprising semi-detached and other houses on

Pierremont Drive, Tower Road as well as some along Bloomfield Road. On balance, the more recently constructed buildings have a moderate harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). The zone also includes a small public park to the north of the listed [02] *Pierremont* buildings. The overall character is suburban.

The heritage interest of the Pierremont character zone is as follows

- This area used to be part of the Pierremont estate. The original, exceptionally large and splendid hall was built by John Botcherby in the early 1830s in an attempt to outdo the Pease mansions. Ironically, the estate was purchased by Henry Pease in 1854 who over time added to the property, such as by providing a range of colonnades designed by Sir Alfred Waterhouse and a clock tower. Today, the surviving remains of the former Pierremont estate comprise the following grade-II-listed buildings:

  [01] *The Clock Tower*, also a landmark, which is now part of a small public park
  [02] *Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall*

- ! Ŧ ű Ŝ NJ ű Ќ Ŝ Ř Ŝ I· ű Ќ 2 Ŧ I Ŝ y NJ è t Ŝ I· ă Ŝ Ω ă ø ƛ Ř 2 built onto the former estate which also resulted in the construction of the following grade-II-listed structure:

  [03] *Gates, piers and forecourt wall to Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall*

- The four Edwardian buildings along the east side of Tower Road and the one along the west side of Pierremont Drive are examples of early semi-detached housing.

The land of this zone rises from the direction of Woodland Road (*character zone 10)* towards the north (east). The fine [02] *Pierremont* buildings, built in stone in a Gothic style, are well concealed from public views within their vegetated gardens. There is another large Victorian stone building immediately to the north which currently used by the Darlington Reform Hebrew Congregation. The twentieth-century houses that have been built onto the former Pierremont estate, set back from the roads within their managed gardens, are made of red and brown brick, render and mock timber framing (see section 5.1/ 5.14). They may support species such as swallow and house martin, and those with cracks and gaps in the roofs may support swifts and bats like common pipistrelle. At the northern end of Pierremont Drive is a turning circle with a mature copper beech. Due to its significant size, it is a notable tree in the area. Tower Road also has a notable beech tree by the garages that are part of the listed [03] *Gates, piers and forecourt wall*, within an area that has self-seeded saplings and appears unmanaged. The small park at [01] *The Clock Tower*, which is entered through an inconspicuous gate on the road corner, includes benches and a litter bin, and has a tranquil atmosphere being well enclosed by dense vegetation. The proximity of this zone to the Denes has potential for foxes and hedgehogs, as well as garden birds such as blue tit, blackbird, robin and dunnock.

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Small public park at [01] The Clock Tower looking northwest, which is stone flagged with a central, circular plant bed. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Character zone 12: Terracing West is located in the northwest of the West End Conservation Area under review. It comprises Victorian terraces and a villa along Piermont Crescent, Woodland Terrace and Barlow Street. The scoria-paved back lanes are (partly) enclosed by tall brick boundary walling and old and new outbuildings. The modern apartment blocks on Heatherwood Drive have, on balance, a minor harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). The overall character of this zone is semi-urban.

The heritage interest of the South Park character zone is as follows:

> ¶ These building rows are part of the western most terraced houses constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century in Darlington. The Victorian buildings, including the villa, are generally of high quality.

The buildings along the west side of Piermont Crescent comprise a quirky Ψ D 2 ű K ƛ Ŏ Ω villa and a building row, both built in red brick, as well as a substantial terrace dated 1870 and constructed in buff/Pease brick behind a prominent boundary of the same material (see Views 2a & b). Whilst the front gardens of the red-brick buildings contain vegetation, those of the Pease terrace are largely devoid of it, with their grounds now covered in hard surfacing. The short terraces along Barlow Street and the east side of Woodland Terrace, set back within enclosed gardens, are more basic and some of the properties have been adversely affected by the application of modern renders and other changes (see section 4.1). The longer terrace on the west side of Woodland Terrace includes some formerly higher-status properties judging from the presence of basements. The west side of its scoria-paved back lane is lined by a few courses of stone walling. This residential area offers limited wildlife potential, with managed gardens but no street trees. Notable traditional features in this character zone include prominent chimney stacks, decorative slating on an array of different roof shapes, dormers with finials, gabled elements, barge boards, paired stone rain gutter brackets, decorative polychromatic brickwork (including boundary walling), gate piers, a datestone, stone stairs leading to raised ground floors, classical door surrounds including panelled reveals, timber panelled doors with overlight, an oriel, bay windows, tall stair windows to rear, carved stone window surrounds, slim vertical sliding sashes, and coloured glazing.



Top left: Quirky villa on road corner with various roof shapes that are covered in decorative slating. Carved stone lintels and Pease brick bands including decorative eaves to turret. Brick boundary wall with prominent gate piers. *Top right:* Tall staircase window with carved stone surround and a very small window next to it. Paired rainwater gutter brackets over. *Bottom left:* Characterful outbuilding and rear yard wall along back lane. *Bottom right:* Low stone walling along scoria paved back lane. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

The modern housing at Heatherwood Grove is constructed in red brick. It includes mature and semi-mature trees and many potted plants which offer bird boxes for species such as blue tit.

3.6 Value Attributed by the Local Community and Other Stakeholders

This section should be read in conjunction with [illegible] (see section 2.2), historical development (see section 3), and character analysis (see section 3.5) Character zones are in brackets. Listed buildings and the registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER].

Like historically, the West End Conservation Area under review is a balanced, desirable, well-to-do area to live in, which is evident from the type, sizes of properties, its overall condition of maintenance (see section 4.1), and the current house prices. Regarding the latter, the table below shows that property prices are

often significantly above the Darlington average. It is however, notable that there have been considerable fluctuations to the previous and peak years, contrary to the Darlington average, and many of them with a downward trend. The terraced properties along Fife Road seem to be the safest location for investment, which will reflect on the desirability of residing in this street.

Data retrieved in July 2025	Average sold house price over last year	Change to previous year	Change to peak (year)
Marlborough Dr.[300]	£90,390	6% up	57% down (2015)
Woodland Road[301]	£120,000	46% down	73% down (2018)
Stanhope Road S[302]	£140,500	54% down	47% down (2022)
Darlington[303]	£172,062	2% down	6% down (2022)
The Woodlands[304]	£185,000	62% down	73% down (2011)
Grange Road[305]	£250,000	72% up	21% down (2021)
Fife Road[306]	£321,500	20% up	6% up (2021)
Burleigh Place[307]	£335,000	N/A	18% up (2020)
Swinburn Road[308]	£350,000	31% up	19% down (2019)
Abbey Road[309]	£393,750	6% down	47% down (2008)
Linden Avenue[310]	£430,000	13% down	12% down (2006)
Cleveland Ave[311]	£537,000	40% up	10% down (2020)

Note that those of Marlborough Dr were apartments only

When looking at household profiles these reflect the house prices above. A map shows that the West End Conservation Area under review largely consists of [illegible] representing healthy, wealthy and confident consumers who are financially successful, well educated with managerial/professional jobs, confident with new technology and finances, and own expensive homes in wealthy, high areas The area between Stanhope Road and Cleveland Avenue as well as the area the south(west) of the junction of Coniscliffe Road/Cleveland Terrace up to the river Skerne have been categorised as [illegible] represents young, well educated and mostly prosperous consumers including singles or couples, professionals moving up the career ladder, a mix of renters and owner occupiers, the internet generation, and those having a cosmopolitan outlook and urban lifestyle. The area to the south of Woodland Road between Pierremont Cres and the Cockerton Roundabout has been categorised as [illegible] these households just get by with modest lifestyles and feel financial pressures including single parents as well as single, separated and divorced people with incomes well below average, who have lower-paid administrative, clerical, semi skilled and manual jobs, are less likely to engage with financial services and use the internet socially. Notably, the area to the east of Stanhope Road has been categorised as [illegible] meaning that these households find life the hardest

[300] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl1/marlborough-drive.html
[301] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/woodland-road.html
[302] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/stanhope-road-south.html
[303] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/darlington.html
[304] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/the-woodlands.html
[305] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl1/grange-road.html
[306] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/fife-road.html
[307] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/burleigh-place.html
[308] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/swinburn-road.html
[309] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/abbey-road.html
[310] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/linden-avenue.html
[311] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/cleveland-avenue.html

and have the most difficult conditions including rented small homes in deprived areas, significant debt/credit issues, high rates of benefit claimants, lots qualifications, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, many single adult households and health problems[312].

Another map shows that in 2019, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranking was very high (i.e. good) for the area between Woodland Road, Stanhope Road and Cleveland Terrace, counting amongst the *least* deprived neighbourhoods in England. The area to the south of Cleveland Terrace ranked somewhere in the middle. In great contrast, the area to the east of Stanhope Road counted amongst the 10% *most* deprived neighbourhoods in England. The area to the south (west) of the junction of Coniscliffe Road / Cleveland Terrace and to the north of Woodland Road were only marginally better. However, when moving west along the north side of Woodland Road a neutral ranking would gradually be reached well before the Cockerton Roundabout[313].

A different map shows that a large part of the West End Conservation Area under review had a participation rate of 68% of state-funded mainstream students who had completed their GCSEs between 2012 and 2016 and entered higher education by the age of 19. To the north of Woodland Road this rate went down from 59% to 27% going west to east. To the east of Stanhope Road it was 58%, and to the southeast of the junction of Coniscliffe Road / Cleveland Terrace 44%. Notably, to the south of the junction of Grange Road / Blackwell Lane it dropped down to only 27%[314].

Part of the desirability of living in the West End Conservation Area under review is that it contains a number of public parks which provide opportunities for rest and recreation. Wdz Ř ∃ ǎ ƴ ∃ Ŧ NJ ƨ Y ú K [29] *South Park*, North Park, Stanhope Park and Tennis Dene are well visited. The small park at [01] *The Clock Tower* seemed to be useless, maybe because of its size and seclusion *(character zone 11)*. In terms of public value, South Park has the most to offer terms of leisure facilities as well as places where there are things to do or look at *(character zone 1)*, being a centre for activities for people of all ages. Every Saturday, it also hosts the Darlington South Park Run, which is a free community event. For those wishing to be less active, the [J] Tea Pavilion has been the central focus of the park for generations of Darlingtonians[315].

From 2004 to 2006, [29] *South Park* was transformed by a £3.9 million Heritage Lottery Funded project, which restored it to its Victorian splendour, while at the same time adding new attractions for visitors. The [27] *Bandstand in South Park*, [28] *Fountain to northeast of bandstand in South Park* and [K] *Fothergill Fountain* were fully restored, and the pond drained and redesigned in planes. New garden areas including a sensory garden were added, as well as a new café, public toilets and changing facilities. In addition, new play equipment was installed alongside 5 l NJ f ǎ ƴ ∃ ú ƨ ƴ Ω ă Ŧ ǎ NJ ă ú ă ļ l ú Ŝ ō ƨ l NJ Ř ple LVh NJ ļ Σ Ř Ŝ ă ǎ ∃ would use it. A new education centre was provided to the side of [I] *Park Lodge* so that schools and community groups can learn more about the park and its past. The 1933 extension area to the west of the Skerne did not receive any Heritage Lottery Funding as it is not part of the Victorian park[316].

[312] Darlington Borough Council 2021, pages 15 & 17
[313] Darlington Borough Council 2021, page 66
[314] Darlington Borough Council 2021, page 60
[315] Lloyd 2005, page 73
[316] Lloyd 2005, pages 57 & 126

The Friends of South Park was formed in 2004 to help run the park and ensure it is a safe and welcoming place for all visitors. They work alongside dedicated council staff[317]. In 2018, Darlington South Park Foundation was established as a community organisation. Working with the Friends of South Park, it aims to build on previous successful community work, utilising skills and resources of local people and businesses to enhance and sustain the park for the benefit of the community.

The river Skerne, which passes through and alongside *South Park*[29], was once the seventh most polluted river in England. It has more recently been improved in condition through projects such as Discover Brightwater, a £3.3 million Landscape Partnership Programme supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and partners such as the Environment Agency and Tees Rivers Trust. The Skerne now supports otter, kingfisher and brown trout, as well as many other species that rely on the river as a water source.

At the northern entrance of *South Park*[29], a large boulder commemorates Dr Richard Taylor Manson (1832-1900) who moved into the newly built Derneholme (*character zone 6*) along Stanhope Road South. From there, he operated as [illegible] wrote columns for the Northern Echo, the Darlington & Stockton Times, the North Star, the Lancet and the British Medical Journal. He is best remembered as a nature lover and his book *Zig Zag Ramblings of a Naturalist* was a distillation of his Darlington & Stockton Times columns. After he had died at Derneholme, twelve-ton boulder of Shap granite was decided to be a fitting memorial to him. In 1901, it took eight men with a cart and horses four days working from dawn to dusk to move it from above Winston Bridge in Teesdale into South Park[318].

The former home of Clara Curtis Lucas [illegible] councillor first elected in 1894, who lived at Fieldhead, Abbey Road, is also of community interest. There is a blue commemoration plaque on one of the gate posts. Early in life, Lucas was renowned for her strong personality with forthright and advanced independent views on political and social matters. In her advocacy on [illegible] she had been met with a considerable amount of opposition, which only served to strengthen her determination for equal rights with those of men. In her later years she had the satisfaction of seeing the fruits of her labours in conferring the vote on women in Parliamentary elections and access to areas that were once barred to females. Although having an interest in many activities, it was in Education that held her strongest tendency. Even before the introduction of Technical Education classes, Lucas and her sister conducted evening sessions for men and women, and also other educational work that was of great benefit[319].

Another part of the desirability of living in the West End Conservation Area under review is that it is within walking distance of the town centre. For people with less mobility or those wishing to travel further, there is also the option of various bus routes with stops along Woodland Road, Milbank Road, Yarm Road, Cleveland Avenue, Coniscliffe Road and Grange Road. Just outside the Conservation Area boundary further stops can be found on Parkside, Clifton Road and Hollyhurst Road[320]. The West End Conservation Area under review also has a number of cycle paths including motor-traffic-free cycle paths in *South Park*[29] and Crocus Walk and

[317] Lloyd 2005, page 7
[318] Lloyd 2005, pages 94-96
[319] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/cxilgu4i/claracurtislucas.pdf
[320] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/afhjbpic/darlington-bus-map-2025.pdf

to the west of the Grange Road Roundabout. Other cycle paths are along Pierremont Crescent, Cleveland Avenue, Abbey Road, Swinburn Road, Langholme Crecsent, Cleveland Terrace, Coniscliffe Road, Elton Parade, Beechwood Avenue, Harewood Terrace, Blackwell Lane, Kendal Close and Parkside[321]

Along Coach House Lane, a tarmac paved back lane off Elton Parade, are garages which include beautiful line drawings on their roller shutters. A retired architect with local and overseas experience, who is noted for his drawings of northeastern landmark buildings, started the murals as a coronavirus lockdown (2020/21) activity on his own property. His work proved so popular that his neighbours commissioned him to draw on their garage doors. The residents all agree that it has enhanced the character of this part of Coach House Lane[322]





Left: Drawing of the Timothy Hackworth House in Shildon with the Royal George and Locomotion engines in the foreground. *Right*: Drawing of local houses. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

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[321] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/ylwomtcu/darlington-cycle-routes.pdf
[322] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 17 July

4.0 Condition, Threats and Opportunities

This chapter is intended to inform any future management plans for the West End Conservation Area, which would be subject to public consultation.

4.1 Condition and Current Issues

This section should be read in conjunction with the summary of special interest (see section 3.1), spatial analysis (see section 3.4) and character analysis (see section 3.5) which provide further information or examples on some of the issues raised below. Listed buildings and the registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER].

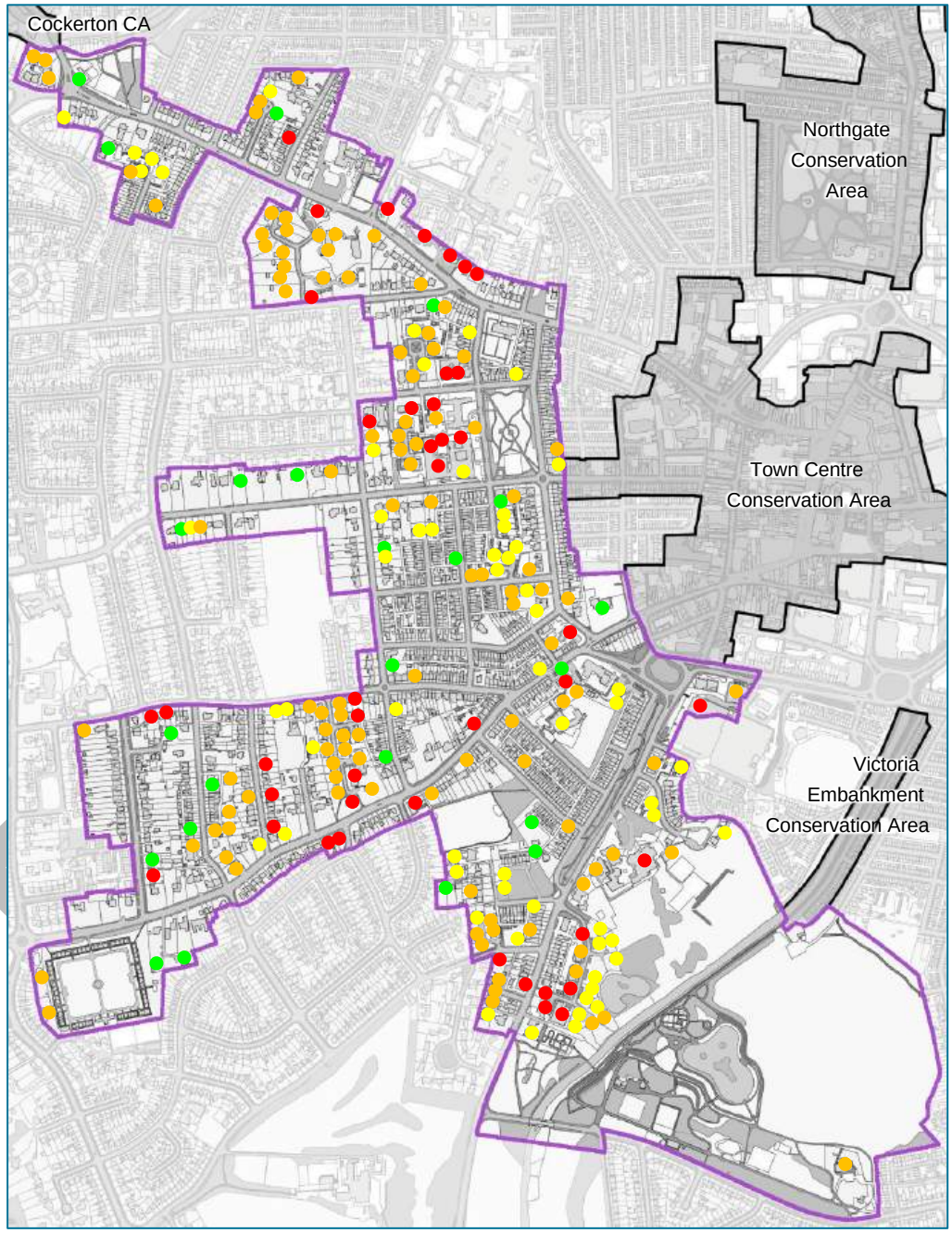
The West End Conservation Area under review has been on the Heritage at Risk Register since 2011, when ǎ ú ø l· ă ŘŜ ă ŎNJ ǎ ō Ŝ Ř ú ż a ō Ŝ ǎ y ˝ l· Ψ Ŧ Ψ Ř Ŝ ú Ŝ NJ ǎ ż NJ F ú ǎ y ż Ω ǎ ŘŜ ă ŎNJ ǎ Ř its condition has been described ł· ă Ω L A ł ż n o t e d o f September 2015 points out the following reasons: *Backland development in rear gardens encroaching on greenspace. A noticeable increase in the number of prominent solar panel installations, which often do not need planning permission. Loss of original, windows, doors and roofs, which often do not need planning permission.* The Conservation Areas at Risk return table of 2017 provides more detail. Loss of historical detail or inappropriate change was stated to be a noticeable problem to any of the following: front elevations (e.g. painting, porches, rendering); decorative features/materials (e.g. stonework, rainwater goods); roof coverings and chimneys (including rooflights); boundary walls/fences; hardstandings; satellite dishes (including CCTV and antennae); renewable energy devices; new extensions/alterations; and development/redevelopment (e.g. subdivision/infill). The table entry concludes with the following note: *This Conservation Area sees the most change of all of our Conservation Areas after the Town Centre. It is a sought after area and is in a generally good condition but is at risk from inappropriate garden development due to the high number of large gardens. The area has many original windows and doors with leaded glass, but many appear to be nearing the end of their life so are at risk from replacement with uPVC.*

The above findings do however, not quite represent a recent (July 2025) situation. Having just assessed the West End Conservation Area under review with great detail, it is considered that on balance it is not at risk. The following comments can now be made about the issues raised in 2015 and 2017, with only those in bold being significant:

- The construction of modern buildings including some extensions has been most harmful in terms of their design, scale and locations (see below).
- Old chimney stacks continue to make a positive contribution.
- Whilst there have been harmful changes to the choice of roof surfacing materials, the impact of these still appears low.
- Roof lights and antennae only detract little due to the often confined nature of the public views.
- The number of solar panels in public views is also low; examples can be found on Polam Road, Cleveland Terrace, Elton Parade (modern house), Linden Avenue, Abbey Road and Woodland Road.

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- Only a few satellite dishes were noticed as being prominent.
- There are just a few examples where harmful painting/rendering or porches have been introduced to front elevations
- The survival of traditional doors and windows is exceptional
- It is not clear what loss of decorative features/materials was being referred to in 2017
- Boundary walling has been considerably modified (see below).
- Historical ground surfaces still survive but are at risk of being lost (see section 4.2).



Locations of neutral modern buildings (green) and minor (yellow), moderate (orange) and considerable (red) harmful modern buildings including some prominent extensions and outbuildings with regards to the impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line as amended in March 2010) at the time of review. Modern = post 1938. Surrounding conservation areas (black boundary lines and shaded grey). (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by GC Rose)

The map above shows the locations of modern (post-1918) buildings and their impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. Those that are most harmful (red dots) are publicly visible from the roads and include unsympathetic non-traditional materials and designs (including size, form and layout) which do not harmonise with their historical surroundings. Those that are slightly less harmful (orange dots) are either less visible from public views or better designed. Many of these buildings are being proposed for exclusion from the conservation area boundary (see section 5.1).



Examples of modern buildings that are of considerable harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area under review (red dots). *Top:* Apartment blocks and veterinary practice between Grange Road (where this photo is taken from) and Marlborough Drive. Also note the use of black-purple brick for the boundary/retaining walling in the foreground, which is an unusual choice in colour for this setting. The filling station (not shown) is just across the road. *Bottom left:* Although the new extension to the [EB] Grammar School is of good quality when seen in isolation, it causes significant visual harm to the splendid historical building. *Bottom right:* A prominent, unsympathetic and poorly designed extension to a traditional red-brick building (far left) along Blackwell Lane. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Whilst the use of pastiche architectural language is often frowned upon as it can be confused with actual old buildings and undermine heritage significance, it is generally *easier* to get it to successfully blend in with historical surroundings, although there are also examples within the West End Conservation Area under review where this has failed to some degree. Modern architecture *can* be used very successfully within the historical environment; however, it is extremely difficult to get it right, not only in terms of harmonious architectural design and precise detailing (including specification of materials) but also the quality of construction.

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Whilst a successful attempt has been made to work with the architectural language and some of the alignments of the two historical buildings along Grange Road, the modern infill house lacks a matching use of wall-to-glazing ratio. In addition, the shallow pitch of the main roof and reduced bay windows detract noticeably. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2025)

Further architectural harm has been caused following unsympathetic or uncharacteristic alterations to traditional building fabric, also leading to loss of cohesion. Prominent examples are the two convenience stores with modern shop fronts on Cleveland Terrace and another one on Duke Street, which have been inserted retrospectively. In addition, there is a short terrace on Barlow Street with modern renders and a window opening that has been changed in size and proportions. Whilst such harmful interventions are now ubiquitous throughout much of Darlington, they are rare within the West End Conservation Area under review.



Top: The modern shopfront has ruined much of the appeal of this fine building along Cleveland Terrace. *Bottom:* Terrace on Barlow Street with modern renders, landscape ground-floor window, reflective roof slates and uPVC window frames, also resulting in a lack of cohesion between the properties. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Many original boundary treatments have been altered. The oldest walls enclosing the grounds of the mansions and villas were made of tall stone and brick masonry, and parts of these still survive. With the construction of attached houses, dwarf masonry walls with iron railings on top were provided to enclose the front gardens. Most of the Victorian upright railings were likely removed in the early 1940s as part of the country-ø ƛ Ř Ŝ Ψ ø ł· NJ Ŝ Ŧ Ŧ 2 NJ ú Ω ú 2 NJ Ŝ Ŏ è Ŏ ť Ŝ ł· NJ Ŏ K ƛ ú Ŝ Ŏ ú be used in World War II. The Defence (General) Regulations of 1939 allowed for approved contractors to remove iron railings under section 50 and 53. This was followed by the production of a receipt showing the weight removed on which the owner could claim compensation.[323] Consequently, whilst many dwarf walls survive, the railings do less so, although there are also sensitive modern replacements. In addition, some of the distinctive masonry detailing like the wave-profile copings along Oakdene Avenue has been lost. However, the introduction of modern timber-boarded fencing has had the most harmful impact on boundary treatments within the West End Conservation Area under review, such as Southland Avenue, Cleveland Avenue, Langholm Crescent/Swinburn Road, Burleigh Place, Upland Road, Pierremont Crescent and, notably, the listed [04] *Pierremont Lodge*.





Top: Timber-boarded fence along Southland Avenue adjoining a traditional brick walling with pier and metal railings, creating a significant lack of cohesion in the boundary treatment. *Bottom:* A particular prominent example of timber boarding at the crossroads of Langholm Crescent and Swinburn Road. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)

The rear yards to the houses were originally enclosed by tall brick walling and outbuildings like privies and coal houses that abutted it. Whilst the principle of tall enclosures to the rear has largely been retained, there have been numerous changes such as the introduction of modern brick walling or timber fencing, the loss of stretches of any enclosure and the construction of modern outbuildings like garages. Many of the rear yard walls also have had large roller shutters inserted to enable car parking on the NJ Ŝ ă ƛ Ř Ŝ y ú Ω ă L NJ Ŝ Y ƛ ă Ŝ ă Φ

[323] https://www.theironbloke.com/about-1





Top: The former continuous boundary walling to the left/west of Kendall Close has largely been replaced by new buildings and timber fencing which no longer ... *Bottom:* The back yard walling to the east of Elton Parade also had its former cohesive appearance undermined in this location by the introduction of various materials and wall heights. Note the white garage roller shutter. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)

Other insensitive modern boundary materials that have been introduced are the concrete wall panels and MDF boards enclosing the grounds of [24] *Polam Hall* along Polam Lane, which are overgrown, in poor repair and vandalised with graffiti, and the concrete wall panels at the Darlington Bowling Club along Hollyhurst Lane.



Concrete wall panels and MDF boards enclosing the grounds of [24] Polam Hall along Polam Lane (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2025)

Despite the West End Conservation Area being mostly in a very good state of maintenance and well cared for at the time of review ... a fair number of houses were in the process of being repaired or upgraded ...

following properties had obvious repair issues; all except for the last one seemed to be unoccupied

- 10, Polam Road: missing bay window with the openings boarded up
- Building on the grounds of [24] *Polam Hall* along Polam Lane: structural issues
- 78, Woodland Road: generally run down and tillage used as a dumping ground
- [11] *67, Stanhope Road*: lower-level stonework disintegrating behind what seems to be a cement render



Top left: 10, Polam Road with missing two-storey bay window. *Top right*: 78, Woodland Road viewed from West Crescent. *Bottom:* Disintegrating sandstone to bottom of bay window at [11] 67, Stanhope Road, with remnants of a cement render which is likely to have caused/accelerated the decay. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)

Other elements in deteriorating conditions within the West End Conservation Area under review are some of road (tarmac), pavement (concrete slabs, a number of them broken) and back lane (scoria) surfaces which have been poorly patched with tarmac. There are also instances where scoria blocks have been tarmacked over (e.g. Polam Road), although, on the positive side, this may have preserved them for the future. In the graveyard of the [09] *Church of Holy Trinity*, many gravestones are toppled over, broken into pieces or have their inscriptions eroded. Various boundary walls have their stone/brick disintegrating due to the use of cement pointing, such as along Woodland Road and Grange Road at [24] *Polam Hall*. Discarded rubbish and rats have been reported around [10] *Welbeck House*. Vandals have sprayed graffiti on

the underside of [L] *Parkside Bridge*, the boundary walling along Polam Lane, utility cupboards/building to north of the Grange Road Roundabout and litter bin at Abbey Road Sports Field. Like throughout Darlington, the back lanes have a slightly neglected appearance with weeds growing between some of the scoria blocks or along the boundary walling, but they are generally free from rubbish and other obstacles.

Visual clutter was noticed at the school site entrances at [24] *Polam Hall* and St ! dz Ǝ dz ă, ú with the Grammer including various signage, road markings, banners, traffic cones, yellow railings and vehicle barriers.

With regards to Highway-related detractors, the ring road and Grange Road Roundabout are the most obvious ones and therefore proposed for exclusion from the conservation area boundary (see section 5.1). Then there are various standard features that can be found throughout Darlington (and elsewhere) which are not appropriate for the use within conservation areas, such as:

- Galvanised streetlights, pedestrian barriers and traffic sign posts
- Yellow blister and other similar tiles at pedestrian crossings
- Inconsistency in the use of surfacing materials
- Mishmash of surfacing materials and road markings including cycle paths; these are not only unsightly but can be confusing
- Loss of continuous kerb line along the highway, which is not in line Historic England guidance[324]
- Utilitarian bus shelters, most notably the one in the immediate setting of the three listed buildings at Holy Trinity
- Timber telegraph poles and overhead wires (British Telecom)
- High volume of traffic, not only on the major roads. For example, Stanhope Road is not wide enough for the amount of traffic that comes through, also because of parked cars.



Prominent pedestrian crossing on Woodland Road with different surfaces materials, galvanised railings and streetlight, and duplicate signage for cycle path. It is however positive that the traffic light poles are not galvanised but black. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

Between Crocus Walk and Harewood Grove is a curved traffic island which includes a GR letter pillar box, an arrangement of rocks on gravel and some roadside vegetation, the different highways surfaces and signage contribute to the clutter.

[324] Historic England 2018, pages 12, 15 & 44

Residents have mentioned that roadside car parking can be a problem. Even with the issue of residents permits, some families have three cars, so the allocated parking areas are not always sufficient. Moreover, roadside car parking not only has a negative visual impact but also narrows the available width for moving traffic, which can be problematic where both sides of a narrow road are parked up.

To conclude, it needs to be kept in mind that this is a very large area and each case on its own will only have a minor negative impact. What has to be considered though is the cumulative impact of issues. This is most evident in the grouping of harmful modern buildings (see map above), alterations to traditional boundary walling modern highway surfacing and the amount of traffic including roadside parking

4.2 Threats and Potential Future Issues

At the time of review, the main threats to the special interest of the West End Conservation Area are:

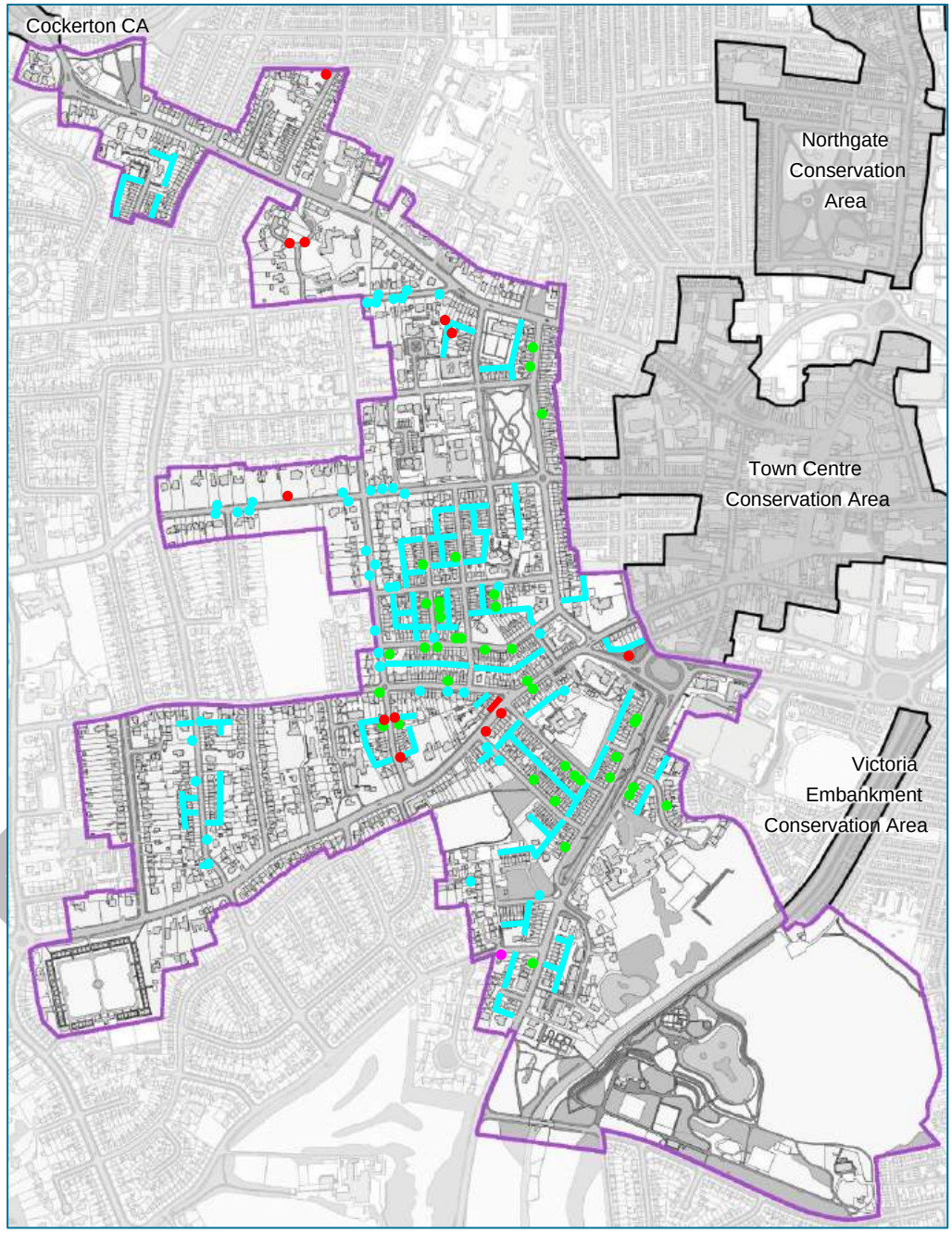
- The removal of historical fabric and features both on private properties (e.g. old windows) and in the public realm (e.g. scoria)
- Incongruous modern replacements and other interventions both on private properties (e.g. changes to original opening patterns, application of render) and in the public realm (e.g. resurfacing)
- The construction of new buildings, extensions and boundary treatments that do not harmonise with their historical surroundings

With regard to threats to private properties, salespeople and building contractors may lead property owners to believe that elements of their old buildings need a modern makeover, for example, to make them more energy efficient by replacing traditional windows and doors with uPVC substitutes or applying modern renders to solid walling. Property owners are often unaware that impermeable materials such as cement renders, insulation, gypsum plasters, cement pointing, and certain exterior and interior paints are incompatible with traditional construction which relies on moisture movement. Consequently, such applications are likely to trap water in solid walling and create long-term damp problems, resulting in cold and mouldy indoor environments. In addition, the negative visual impact of such interventions can be significant. Removing, damaging or concealing traditional fabric and features from an old property can also reduce its market value.

In the public realm, the main threat to the West End Conservation Area under review is the removal of old ground surfaces. The amount of survival of scoria-paved surfacing is remarkable in Darlington, although often probably taken for granted, and contributes significantly to the character and appearance of historical areas. The story of these blocks starts in the mid-nineteenth century, when Teesside industrialists had a problem with removing molten waste (slag) from a blast furnace during the production of pig iron. In 1869, Joseph Woodward from Darlington took out a patent on a device to turn the slag into silvery-blue surfacing blocks. His Tees Scoria Brick Company opened at Clay Lane Blast Furnace, Middlesbrough in 1872. The blocks are very durable, completely waterproof, frost-proof and chemical-proof. In the 1930s, the motor car destroyed the business, as people wanted a smoother ride on tarmac. By 1966 the company went bankrupt and wound up in 1972[325].

[325] https://www.clementshallhistorygroup.org.uk/blog/the-story-of-the-scoria-brick-a-recycling-success/

¢ K Ŝ / ƨ dz y˝ Ŏ ƛ f Ω ă I ƛ Ǝ K ø I· è Ř Ŝ LJ I· NJ ű Y˝ Ŝ y˝ ű ŃJ Ŝ Y˝ ƨ Ø Ŝ ă
and safety reasons, in particular in the location of pedestrian crossings. However,
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it appears that the scoria may not be as much of a slipping and tripping hazard as people have been made to believe. It needs to be kept in mind that once this is lost or gone its loss will be permanent, as it is no longer in production. The removal from any conservation area should therefore be wholly exceptional, and, where clearly justified, a sympathetic, high quality replacement should be specified in consultation with the conservation officer.



Locations of scoria (blue), natural stone block (red), cobbled (pink) and tiled (green) surfacing in the West End Conservation Area (purple boundary line as amended in March 2010) at the time of review. Note that these also include modern installations. Surrounding conservation areas in black boundary lines and shaded grey. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by 6 by Rose)





Scoria paving to Coach House Lane. *Top:* Example of a good survival. *Bottom:* This side lane is only a few meters further north. Whilst some scoria paving has been retained, large sections were recently replaced by tarmac, not only causing the loss of old surfacing but also creating an unsightly result which has a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2025)

Regarding the construction of further development, it would seem that there are not many, if any, locations left where new buildings would not have a negative impact on the special interest of the West End Conservation Area under review. However, the threat remains that further houses or large extensions will be squeezed into gardens, as has been the case.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

Considering the large amount of surviving old doors, windows and other features including scoria it is highly recommended to protect them by imposing an Article 4 direction on the entire conservation area, to restrict permitted development rights (see section 2.3). This should be applied to dwellinghouses as well as other use classes, including development to roads (e.g. resurfacing). Such direction would also help enable positive change where replacement or other development is clearly justified. Consequently, by imposing an Article 4 direction, Darlington Borough Council also would meet its legal obligation to *formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement* of the West End (see section 2.2). Conservation-led change can add value to an area and enable communities to regenerate.

It would also be beneficial for residents, local businesses, investors, planners and highways/utility authorities to provide them with a design guide specific to the West End Conservation Area. Such documents should include guidelines and details of

acceptable (and unacceptable) development to private property as well as within the public realm that is in keeping with the character, appearance and special interest of the Conservation Area, including specifications, methodologies, photos and drawings. Examples to be included would be the details of appropriate highway resurfacing (in line with I ă ă ú ž NJ ă Š*Streetscape Manual*), heritage-style streetlamps and other street furniture, replacement of roadside boundary walling and railings, repair works to traditional masonry, and replacement windows/doors. The design guide would be adopted as a supplementary planning document and be a material consideration for planning decisions. It would be beneficial long-term tool for helping prevent further detrimental change and undo harm that has been caused.

When working on traditional walling, which was designed to be fully water permeable, the use of modern materials (e.g. cement, gypsum, silicone) must be omitted, as, besides their negative visual impact, these are likely to result in long-term damp problems. It is *essential* that the *entire* wall allows the movement of water (in liquid form, not vapour) so that it can dry out, thus retaining its maximum insulating properties. Materials that are compatible with solid walling are often NJ Š Ŧ Š NJ NJ Š Ř ú ž ľ ă Ψ ō NJ Š ľ ű K ľ ō ť Š Ω ó ă Φ Š Φ ø ľ ú Š NJ LJ (internal) plasters were originally used to build these structures and are still best suited to maintain and improve them. As an example, an external wall could be safely upgraded by applying an insulating lime plaster to its interior face. Any further insulation however carries a risk of cooling the wall down which means that it may not be able to dry out. Works with building limes should always be carried out by an experienced heritage contractor who has the specialist skills and knowledge in working with them[326].

Where new windows and doors are justified, using traditional timber products has ç besides being a significant visual enhancement, the advantage of (re-)using a more eco-friendly and sustainable material. However, sourcing good quality timber can be an issue, and there are now high-end uPVC windows with slim frames and glazing barson the market which mimic traditional windows well. In the long-term, the costs of maintaining timber frames will often be cheaper because they can be repaired, contrary to uPVC products which normally need replacing as a whole, thus reducing the amount of building materials, energy and waste. The thermal performance of old windows, where these survive, can be improved by employing relatively simple methods (e.g. heavy curtains, blinds and shutters) or by installing secondary glazing[327]. This is preferable to replacing them as they are becoming a rare resource.





A suggestion to enhance the shops along Coniscliffe Road: The timber shop front could be restored to a similar detail like the unit to the right. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

[326] See Building Conservation Directory website
[327] Wood, Bordass, Baker 2009, page vii

5.0 Suggested Boundary Changes

This chapter offers suggestions how the boundary of the West End Conservation Area under review could be amended. Members of the public and other stakeholders are now being invited to submit their comments on the proposed boundary changes during the public consultation period (see section 1.2). Following the consultation, the proposed draft West End Conservation Area boundary (see section 5.3) may be amended (see section 5.4), finalised and adopted (see chapter 6.0)

5.1 Proposed Exclusions

This section should be read in conjunction with the summary of special interest (see section 3.1), the layout, planform and setting (see section 3.2), the historical development (see section 3.3), spatial analysis (see section 3.4), character analysis (see section 3.5), and condition and current issues (see section 4.1) of the Conservation Area under review. Listed buildings and the registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER]. Tree Preservation Orders are explained in section 2.3

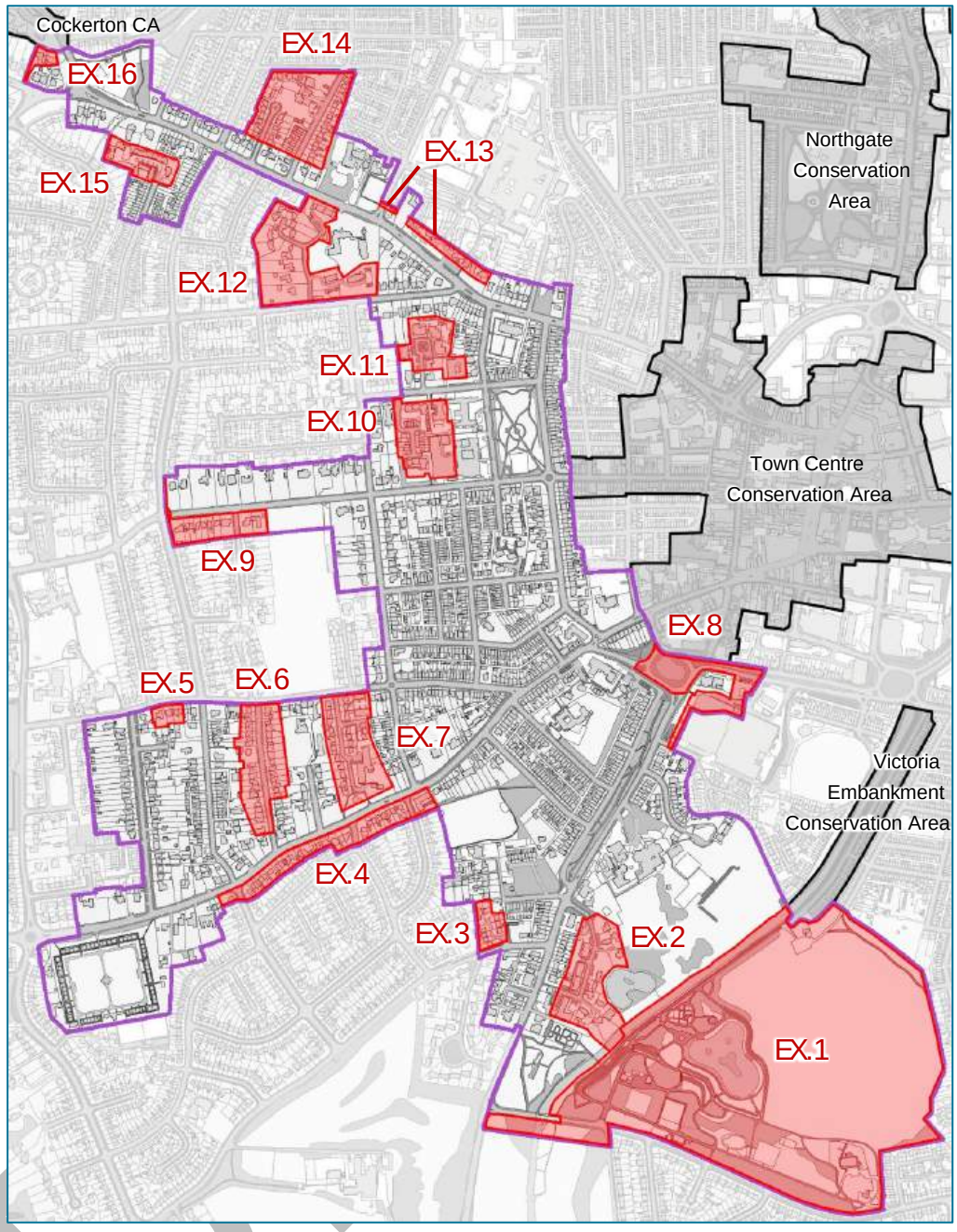
Historic England advises that there can be justification for removing parts from an existing conservation area. For example, special interest may have become so eroded by piecemeal change or poorly designed new development. In such cases, boundary revision will be needed to exclude them or, in exceptional circumstances, reconsideration of the overall conservation area designation[328].

The map below shows the proposed exclusions from the West End Conservation Area at the time of review (January 2026), which are being put out for public and internal consultation. These mostly comprise areas of late 1930s and more recent housing. Whilst the former are generally of good quality and design, they are not of special interest and as such dilute what is important about the Conservation Area under review. Moreover, similar such development is ubiquitous beyond the designated boundary.

The justifications for proposed exclusions are as follows:

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[328] Historic England 2019, page 39



Proposed (draft) boundary exclusions in red at the time of review. West End Conservation Area as amended in March 2010 in purple and surrounding conservation areas boundary lines in black and shaded grey. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by RCE)

EX.1 ç South Park, Parkside and Skerne Park [29] *South Park* does have sufficient l· NJ Ŏ K ƛ ú Ŝ Ŏ ú dz NJ l· f 2 NJ K ƛ ă ú 2 NJ ƛ Ŏ , which is why it is Ŝ ă ŝ Ŧ 2 NJ ƛ ú grade II-registered. However, it does not fit in with the character and appearance of the remainder of the West End Conservation Area under review, which is of semi-urban and suburban nature. The use of the park is purely recreational, whereas, on balance, the Conservation Area under review is primarily residential. Although the built environment of the West End is interspersed with lush vegetation and greenspaces, the registered park is much larger and, and for the most part, geographically separated from the main bulk of the area by the Skerne, with dense riverside vegetation amplifying the sense of separation. Technically, South Park is, as the name implies, not in the West End. *NB: The western part of South Park (i.e. the 1933 extension area) would be retained within the West End Conservation as it is on*

ű K Ŝ Ψ Ŏ 2 NJNJ Ŝ Ŏ ú ă ƛ Ř Ŝ Ω 2 Ŧ ű K Ŝ NJ ƛ Ó V Ba s a nd o f a ƛ ű K ƛ y ˝ ű size that harmonises with the other greenspaces in the designated area. As already shown in 2004-2006, this part of the park is also less likely to receive grants for improvements (see section 3.6), so conservation area designation can help open up other funding streams.

> Please note that the part of [29] *South Park* proposed for exclusion from the West End Conservation Area under review is currently proposed to be included in the Victoria Embankment Conservation Area. Ţ ă Ŝ Ŝ / 2 dz y ˝ Ŏ ƛ f Ω ă ø Ŝ ō ă ƛ ú Ŝ Φ

The stretch of Parkside that is proposed for exclusion is of limited historical interest, with the road being constructed in 1921 to provide access to a new housing scheme. *NB: [I] Parkside Bridge would be retained within the West End Conservation Area so that its architectural and historical merits remain protected by the designation.*

Skerne Park is of some historical relevance being the location of the boating lake, but the lake is long gone. Presumably, the slim strip of land within the West End Conservation Area under review was originally included to further protect the immediate setting of [29] *South Park*. However, development within Skerne Park is unlikely to happen in the near future, with the site being protected by Policy ENV 3 of the Local Plan (see section 2.0). Even if it was (reasonably) developed with housing like elsewhere in the surroundings, this would unlikely cause harm to the West End Conservation Area, due to the 1933 South Park extension being a buffer zone. Geographically, it makes more sense to have Parkside including [I] *Parkside Bridge* as the southern-most border of the Conservation Area, rather than an arbitrary line through Skerne Park.

EX.2 ç Marlborough Drive. This road is a modern cul-de-sac. The area to the east of it used to be part of the [24] *Polam Hall* grounds until more recently. Whilst the new housing development on this side has been laid loosely amongst the existing mature trees, it has severed the site from the context of the hall. To the west of Marlborough Drive are three-to-four-storey flat complexes which were built onto the former rear plots of the adjacent Grange Road properties. These large buildings are out of scale and have a considerable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End under review. The mature trees in this area, which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, would remain protected following the loss of conservation area designation.

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Top: Single-storey and two-storey detached houses along the east side of Marlborough Drive, with trees on the [24] Polam Hall grounds in the background (Photo © Gaby Rose, 2025). *Bottom:* One of the three-to-four-storey flat complexes along the west side of Marlborough Drive. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.3 ç Hadrian Court: This site used to be part of the Woodside gardens (see 1855 OS map), to the east of the mansion (outside the West End Conservation under review). The 25-inch OS map of 1939 implies that it continued to be in some sort of garden use (greenhouses) following the demolition of the mansion. The construction of the modern Hadrian Court housing development, which does not fit in with the historical development pattern of the Conservation Area under review, has wiped out any heritage significance of this site with the exception of some old boundary walling, which will be retained in the amended Conservation Area boundary.



The Hadrian Court housing development includes some untypical features for the area such as first-floor verandas and integrated garages. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

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EX.4 – Coniscliffe Road south. Most of the detached and semi-detached houses were under construction in 1938 (see building outlines on the OS map) onto what seems to have been a largely wooded strip of land associated with the former Woodside estate, of which no physical evidence in this location survives. The buildings are typical of their era and resemble the other surrounding houses that were built onto the former Woodside estate around the same time, outside the West End Conservation Area under review. The houses are of limited heritage value and do not comply with the special interest of the Conservation Area under review. Whilst original, clear and coloured leaded glazing and curved entrance canopies do survive (like elsewhere in the surroundings), this is not enough to justify designation. At the junction with Manor Road, there are three plots with heavily modified bungalows which have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area under review. At the eastern end, there is an L-shaped modern building (its use unknown to the author) which has replaced a former church in this location. It includes a domed corner that draws attention away from the historical domed villa over the road, and as such also has some negative impact. The mature trees in this area which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders would remain protected following the loss of conservation area designation.





Top: Late-1930s houses along Coniscliffe Road and modern, domed building to the far left/ northeast. *Bottom:* Bungalows when viewed from junction with Manor Road. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.5 – Cleveland Terrace south. This area includes two prominent modern houses of incongruous design, one of them behind a pastiche brick boundary wall with recessed panels. The boundary wall seems to be a different version of the one it replaces, as the surviving adjoining old wall which used to be part of the same historical plot has no panelling (to be retained within the conservation area). Further to the east, there is a mid-twentieth-century semi-detached building which has been extended by one bay to the west. It sits at odds with the fine Victorian terrace next to it (to be retained within the conservation area). There is no special interest in this area and the two modern houses have a considerable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review.



View from Cleveland Terrace, looking southeast. The two modern houses do not harmonise with the character and appearance of the surrounding buildings that positively contribute to the West End Conservation Area under review. The brick boundary wall seems to be a different version of what has been there before. To the left/east, the mid-twentieth-century semi-detached building is of no special interest and sits at odds with the fine Victorian Terrace next to it (the latter to be retained within the boundary). (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.6 – Flora Avenue. Many of the houses along Flora Avenue were built in the late 1930s. Whilst they are of good construction and retain a few original features such as decorative leaded glazing and timber panelled doors, like elsewhere in Darlington, they are not of special interest. Some of them have been extended unfavourably, by full-height side or roof space extensions. This area also includes some modern houses that were built more recently onto infill sites. These generally do not fit in with the 1930s housing precedent and stand out negatively.



Various late 1930s semi-detached houses along Flora Avenue, with those in the *top* photo being less altered examples. Those at the *bottom* had their roof spaces extended, resulting in ú Ķ Ŝ f ƨ ă ă ƨ Ŧ ú Ķ Ŝ Ψ Ķ ƛ LJ Ω Σ ø Ķ ƛ Ŏ Ķ (Photos © Gaby Rose, ō Ŝ Ŝ y ˜ NJ Ŝ ú June 2025)

EX.7 – Greencroft Close – Onto the former grounds of the Pease residence Green Croft (no longer extant), a modern housing estate has been built incorporating designs that have a considerable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. The two blocks of flats accessible from Cleveland Terrace, the retirement home complex of Greencroft Court and the house overlooking Coniscliffe Road stand out most negatively due to their incongruous designs. The site is protected by Tree Preservation Orders which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation. The surviving historical stone, red and buff/Pease brick boundary walling associated with Green Croft to the east and south of the historical site would be retained in the amended boundary.



Top left: Flat complexes off Cleveland Terrace. *Top right:* Modern house overlooking Coniscliffe Road. The old stone wall is associated with Green Croft and would be retained in the amended boundary. *Centre:* Modern houses at the north end of Greencroft Close. *Bottom:* Greencroft Court retirement home complex (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.8 – Grange Road Roundabout – The creation of the Grange Road Roundabout and associated stretch of dual carriageway ring road in August 1976 caused significant harm to the historical town. This has not only resulted in the loss of important structures such as Orwell House and the northern end of the [F] *Grange Road walling & gate piers* at Crocus Walk but also changed how Darlington is accessed and experienced. For pedestrians, these wide and often busy roads form a significant and

unpleasant barrier. It is believed that some of the mature trees on the grassed traffic island (these) are protected by a Tree Preservation Order which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation. (It) may originate from the former Southend [(14] *The Grange Hotel*) grounds, but otherwise no links to the past survive. Notably, old photos[329] [330] show that the character and appearance around the [E] *Baptist Church* & *gate piers* (which would be retained within the amended Conservation Area boundary) has changed unrecognisably, having isolated the building completely from its original context. Besides the public highway, this proposed exclusion area also includes parts of the large superstore car park and a modern brick apartment block facing onto Victoria Road (A167), all of which has a considerable harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review.



View along Victoria Road (A167) looking west towards the Grange Road roundabout, with Ÿ ƨ Ř Ŝ NJ ƴ l· LJ l· NJ ú Ÿ Ŝ ƴ ú ō f ƨ Ŏ ļ LJNJ ƨ Ÿ ƛ ƴ Ŝ ƴ ú f è Ŧ l· Ŏ ƛ ƴ Ǝ ú Ƙ Ŝ in light-grey cladding to the far left/south. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.9 (Abbey Road (south)) These houses were built in the late 1930s and later. Whilst they are of good construction and retain a few original features such as decorative leaded glazing and moulded door surrounds, like elsewhere in Darlington, they are not of special interest. The front gardens are enclosed by low brick walls and piers with timber-boarded fencing in between, the latter not being in keeping with the historical precedents in the West End Conservation Area under review. The lush roadside vegetation conceals much of the buildings. Many of the trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation. The scoria paving in front of driveways would be retained within the amened boundary. To the north side of Abbey Road, the pavement along Elton Road would be excluded.



One of the late-1930s houses, arguably a more interesting one (*left*), and a later house (*right*). (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

[329] Flynn 1989, page 127
[330] Lloyd 1995, page 81

EX.10 – College/Scholars Park – Historically, this area was part of the school/college grounds. The buildings proposed for exclusion are all modern and comprise the large Post-War extension to the college as well as more recently built apartment blocks and other houses. Of these, Swinden Court is most harmoniously designed in terms of fitting with its architectural language into its historical surroundings; however, it is four storeys tall, projects from the building line of the [A] *Training College* and has very dominant gabled elements and as such detracts from the important historical building along Trinity Road as well as the two-storey old houses across the road. Likewise, the incongruous, modular extension to the college clashes with the historical [B] *Grammar School* along Abbey Road. The residential buildings around the cul-de-sac of Scholar Park include mock timber framing to its upper floors. Whilst such elements have been employed historically elsewhere in the West End Conservation Area under review, it is completely out of character in this location. Moreover, the three-to-four-storey building along Trinity Road detracts from the two-storey historical houses on the opposite side of the road. Paradoxically, lower buildings can be found in the centre of the modern housing site – these would have been better located along Trinity Road. The mature trees in this area, which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, would remain protected following the loss of conservation area designation.



Top: Post-war extension in modular style to the Waterhouse-inspired Gothic [B] Grammar School (not depicted). *Bottom:* Whilst the houses at Scholars Park show an attempt to integrate with the historical surroundings, this has not been successful. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.11 – Trinity Road/Trinity Mews – The historical maps show that this area used to be villas and their gardens. Today it comprises a large care home complex along Trinity Road and a modern housing development comprising five prominent blocks of flats around the cul-de-sac of Trinity Mews. Whilst the latter employ similar architectural elements to the new housing on the opposite side of Trinity Road

(EX.10), such as smock timber framing to the upper floors, it has been carried out to a higher-quality design. Nevertheless, the whole complex is reminiscent of a fairytale castle, including turrets and arched gateways, and as such does not fit in with the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review. The red brick building of the care home is less prominent, but it does provide a continuous front in place of the generously spaced villas that had been there before. Its east wing has a flat roof which does not harmonise with the remainder of the complex, or the surrounding old buildings.





Top: Trinty Mews apartments. *Bottom:* Care home to the north of Trinity Road, with flat-roofed wing to the right/east. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.12 ç Woodlands housing. Prior to its development, this site used to be part of the grounds of [05] *The Woodlands* mansion. Apart from the old boundary walling, there are no surviving heritage features. The sandstone walling along Milbank Road, which is probably not to its original height (considering how low it is), would be excluded whilst all other roadside boundary walling would remain within the amended West End Conservation Area. The modern buildings, which predominantly comprise detached houses, are arranged in a loose fashion along a sweeping forked cul-de-sac, none of which is in keeping with the historical layouts in the Conservation Area under review. A building with a turret at the site entrance along Milbank Road gives the impression of a lodge when there was historically none in this location. There are also three apartment blocks. The one along Woodland Road is prominent behind the tall, old boundary wall and detracts from the historical significance of the nearby listed building. The whole site is protected by a Tree Preservation Order which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation.



Top left: Building with turret at housing site entrance along Milbank Road. *Top right:* One of the detached dwellings with garage building behind. *Bottom:* Block of flats along Woodland Road behind a tall, old boundary wall (which would be retained within the amended Conservation Area boundary) associated with the former grounds of 35 The Woodlands. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.13 – Woodland Road (north). These two areas used to be the large front gardens of a line of Victorian villas which have since been demolished. The old boundary walls along the road still survive and would be retained in the amended Conservation Area boundary. The loosely arranged modern block of flats, which may be partly included, do not follow the historical building line, orientation or arrangement and as such have had a detrimental impact on the heritage significance of this part of the West End Conservation Area under review. The mature trees in this area are covered by Tree Preservation Orders which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation.



Modern blocks of flats on former villa grounds. The old stone wall associated with one of the former villas would be retained in the amended boundary. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

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EX.14 – Pierremont. This comprises the entirety of character zone 11. The main heritage interest are the structures associated with the former Pieremont estate, which are all protected by being listed: [01] *The Clock Tower*, [02] *Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall*, and the [03] *Gates, piers and forecourt wall to Elm Court, Pierremont, Dentdale East, Dentdale West, Tower House and Pierremont Hall*. This zone also includes five Edwardian semi-detached houses, but they are not of special architectural interest. These and the 1930s houses retain a few original features such as panelled doors, canopies and decorative leaded glazing, like elsewhere in Darlington. However, they also contain a number of uPVC/composite windows and doors which detract from the historical surroundings. In addition, this zone includes some modern buildings that have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area under review, as they are not in keeping with the historical precedents of their immediate surroundings. The mature trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation.



Top: A modern row of housing along Tower Road. There is no historical precedent of terracing in this zone. *Bottom:* Examples of Edwardian semi-detached houses along Tower Road *(left)* and Pierremont Drive *(right)*. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.15 – Heatherwood Grove. Historically, this area seems to have been part of rear gardens. The modern apartment blocks are built in red brick and carry on the linear/ perpendicular layout set out by the surrounding Victorian terraces. They are however of no special interest and use an architectural language that is not quite in keeping with historical precedents inside the West End Conservation Area under review. The mature trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, which would remain in place following the loss of conservation area designation.



Heatherwood Drive housing, looking northwest. The apartment block to the far left, next to the scoria paved lane, appears quite squeezed in. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

EX.16 – Stainwood Court: This area used to be part of the large gardens of 2 and 4, Staindrop Road into which four modern houses have been crammed. The two closest to Cocker Beck are proposed for exclusion. Their architectural style is not in keeping with historical precedents inside the West End Conservation Area under review.



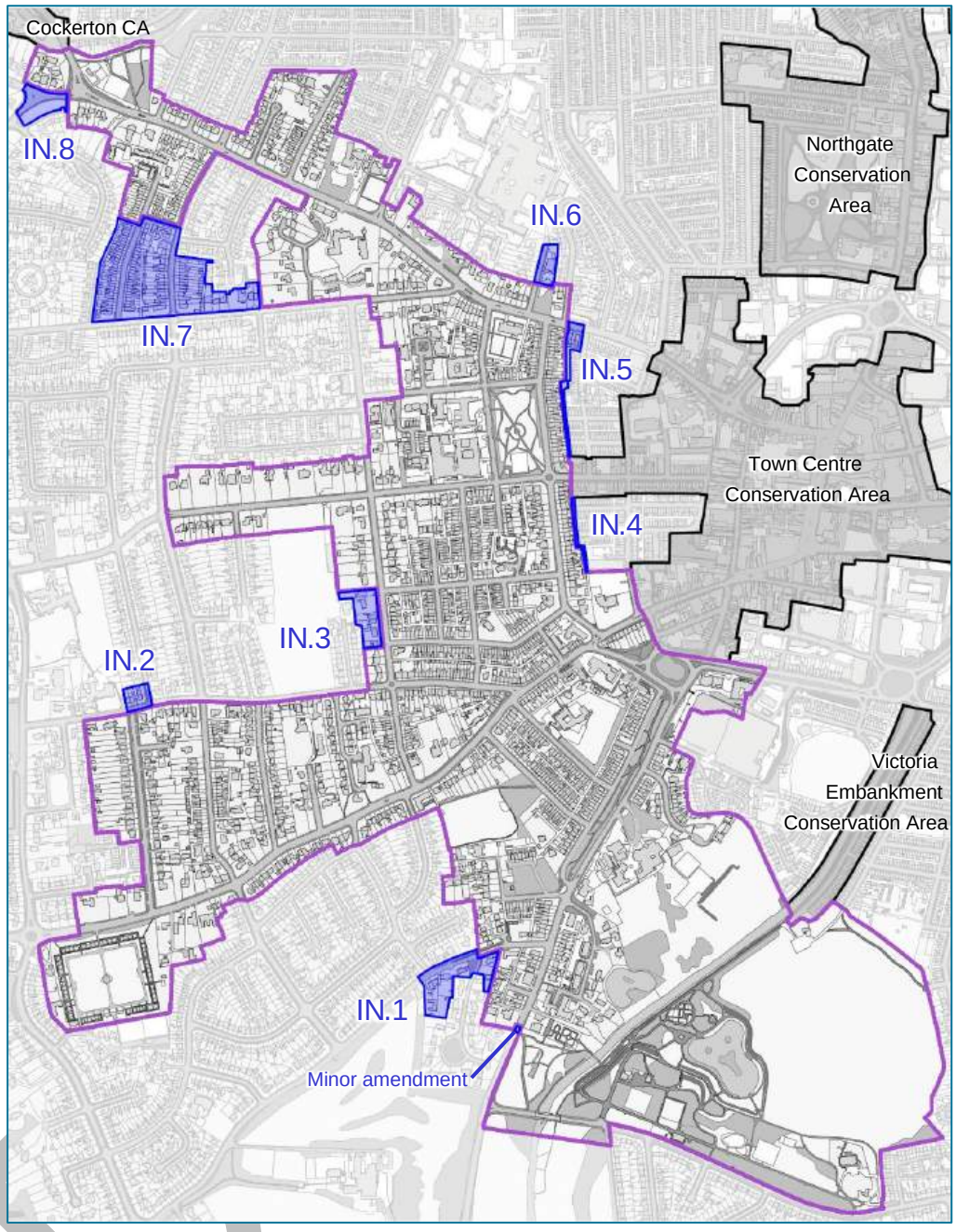
Glimpse of modern house in the former garden of 4, Staindrop Road, with the latter in the foreground to the right/northeast. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

5.2 Proposed Inclusions

This section should be read in conjunction with summary of special interest (see section 3.1), the historical development (see section 3.3), spatial analysis (see section 3.4) and character analysis (see section 3.5). Listed buildings and the registered park are referred to by their designation name (in italics) and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER].

Historic England advises that an existing conservation area boundary may have been drawn too tightly, potentially omitting areas now considered to be of special interest, such as historic rear plots with archaeological interest, later phases of development, or parks, cemeteries and other old greenspaces. In such cases the boundary may need to be extended.[331]

[331] Historic England 2019, page 39



Proposed (draft) boundary inclusions in blue at the time of review. West End Conservation Area as amended in March 2010 in purple and surrounding conservation areas boundary lines in black and shaded grey. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by RCE)

In order to qualify for inclusion, any proposed new areas must relate to the elements of significance which define the West End Conservation Area under review. In addition, they will have to meet the following tests[332]:

a) The proposed new area has sufficient architectural or historic interest
b) ¢ K l· ú ă LJ Ŝ Ŏ ƛ l· f ƛ y ú Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ú ƛ ă Ŝ È LJ Ŝ NJ ƛ Ŝ y Ŏ Ŝ Ř character or appearance.

[332] Historic England 2019, page 5

c) It is desirable for that character or appearance to be preserved or enhanced, also considering any problems that designation may help solve.

The map above shows the proposed inclusions for the West End Conservation Area at the time of review (January 2026), which are being put out for public and internal consultation. The justifications are as follows:

IN.1 – Woodside estate. This area used to be part of Woodside Nursery (1855 map) just across Blackwell Lane from Woodside (no longer extant), once an important mansion in the West End. The 25-inch OS map of 1896 depicts the existing two roadside buildings – one detached, the other semi-detached – behind which is a large walled kitchen garden. Despite being later extended, the buildings still retain plenty of architectural interest today. The map also shows that to the south of the semi-detached houses is an outbuilding complex around a small courtyard and another one to the east of the detached house. Both of them still survive alongside some of the former kitchen garden walling. There are hints that this area once operated as part of the Woodside estate. Notably, the detached house has a curved, gated, roadside entrance area which used to be directly opposite and mirroring the former entrance onto the Woodside mansion grounds on the north side of Blackwell Lane, as shown on the map. Moreover, the eastern semi-detached house was built by the Pease family in 1873 (see datestone) to serve as a home for the resident gardener at Woodside. It now has a modern side Ŝ È ú Ŝ y ă ƛ 2 y ˝ ø ƛ ú K ú K Ĝ Ŝ e s t ƛ y ˝ ƛ ú ƛ l · f commemorating Katherine Pease[333]. Today, much of the former kitchen garden has been lost to the housing development along Upsdale Drive (not proposed for inclusion), although parts of the northern, eastern and western walls survive. In addition, the western area still retains a lot of garden space. A modern house has been built against the northern wall line in the location of a greenhouse shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1896. It is not very visible from the road due to clever design and presents a positive example for sensitive development within the historical environment. Finally, the proposed extension area also includes the west stretch of the raised footpath along Blackwell Lane, which is first shown on the 1855 map. So far, only its eastern part is within the West End Conservation Area under review.

a) Proposed inclusio y ˝ l · N J Ŝ Ma 2 sufficient architectural and historic ƛ y ˝ ú Ŝ N J Ŝ ă ú T 2 N J ƛ ú (see above). Ŏ 2 y ˝ ă ƛ Ř Ŝ N J Ŝ Ř Ψ ă L J Ŝ
b) This special interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion l · N J Ŝ l · Ω ă a Ŏ K h e a r a Ŏ é Ŝ V i ded by the three old buildings and remains of the kitchen garden walling, surviving parts of the historical layout (including the modern house along the old garden wall), and the raised footpath.
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced

[333] https://media.onthemarket.com/properties/1286801/doc_0_1.pdf



Top: Semi-detached houses of 1878 along Blackwell Land ø ƛ ű K Ψ the garage door in the later extension. Modern house along the former kitchen garden wall line to the left/east. *Centre left* The detached house is a considerable landmark when viewed from Upsall Drive, with a remnant of the tall, red-brick kitchen garden wall in front. *Centre right* Raised footpath along Blackwell Land (to the left/south just outside view) looking west. *Bottom:* Former outbuilding along kitchen garden wall to the east of the detached house, across Upsall Drive. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

IN.2 ç Cleveland Terrace / Neville Road According to the historical maps, these two semi-detached buildings were constructed onto the Cleveland estate (former glebe) in the late 1930s. Although they are late examples, they are of high quality designs and have been little altered. Moreover, the Neville Road properties are in a more Modernist style, which seems uncommon for Darlington. All of the houses except for 3, Neville Road have retained their original windows, including coloured and leaded clear glazing as well as their original boundary walling. Notably, 110 and 112 Cleveland Terrace also make a strong visual contribution to Linden Avenue, being the focal point at the north end of the road which already is within the West End Conservation Area under review.

a) Proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· has sufficient architectural and historic ƛ y ű Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ű Ŧ 2 NJ ƛ ű (see above). Ŏ 2 y ă ƛ Ř Ŝ NJ Ŝ Ř Ψ ă LJ Ŝ

b) This special interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· Ω ă a Ǒ K ł N ł Ǒ ý Ŝ V ded by the semi-detached houses and their boundary walling.
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced





Top: View from the north end of Linden Avenue, looking north, with 110 and 112 Cleveland Avenue being the focal point. These semi-detached buildings have arched entrance porches and ΨLJ ł ƴ ű Ŝ Ř Ω Σ LJNJ ł Ŝ Ǒ ű ƴ Ǝ *Bottom:* View from a junction with Neville Road looking northwest, with Cleveland Avenue just out of sight to the left. Original corner windows and recessed entrance. Note the curved brick boundary wall which includes rendered panels, matching the materials of the house. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

IN.3 ç Cleveland Avenue (west). According to the historical maps, the two oldest buildings in this area were constructed on the Cleveland estate (former glebe) in the late 1930s. The brick boundary walls of the detached house also include rendered panels, matching the materials of the dwelling. Although the properties are later examples, they contribute strongly to the street scene that already is within the West End Conservation Area under review. The proposed inclusion area also includes three modern detached houses. Whilst they are of no interest, they are well set back from the road and/or concealed behind mature vegetation. There are no Tree Preservation Orders here, so conservation area designation would be beneficial in that regard too.

a) Whilst proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· has insufficient architectural and K ł ă ű ł NJ ł Ǒ ł ƴ ű Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ű Ŧ ł NJ its own it ű ł ō Ŝ Ǒ ł ƴ ă ł

contributes significantly to this part of the West End Conservation Area under review (see above).

b) Its architectural interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· Ω ă and appearance, provided by the late-1930s houses and their boundary walling, as well as mature trees.

c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced.



Late-1930s houses. The one in the foreground is a single dwelling, the other semi-detached. The former includes a moulded entrance surround with panelled reveals, circular windows and decorative, leaded glazing. The brick boundary wall incorporates rendered panels, matching the materials of the house. The later properties further along the road to the right/north are more heavily vegetated, just outside view. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

IN.4 ç Back lane to Stanhope Road South. The back lane to the rear of the terrace along Stanhope Road South is only partly included within the West End Conservation Area under review; the entire building row is already within the boundary. It is proposed to include the remainder of the back lane, which has retained its scoria surfacing.

a) Whilst proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· has insufficient architectural l· y˝ Ř K ǎ ă ú ƨ NJ ƛ Ŏ ƛ y˝ ú Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ú Ŧ ƨ NJ , it is directly associated with a high-quality terrace that is already within the Conservation Area under review.

b) Its interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· Ω ă character and appearance, provided by the scoria paving as well as views onto the rear of the properties.

c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced.



Back lane to the rear of Stanhope Road South, looking south *(left)* and looking north *(right)*, enclosed by tall walling and various buildings. (Photos © Gaby Rose, July 2025)

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IN.5 çBack lane to Stanhope Road North and 35-41, Woodland Road. Whilst the terrace along the full length of the east side of Stanhope Road North is already included in the West End Conservation Area under review, its corresponding back lane, which largely retains its scoria paving, is not. It is therefore proposed to include this lane as well as an adjoining short terrace on Woodland Road, which dates from around 1900, including its scoria paved back lane. The quality, character and appearance of this building is in keeping with the Conservation Area under review.

a) Proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· has sufficient architectural and historic ƛ ƴ ű Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ú Ŧ 2 NJ ƛ ú due to 35-41, Woodland Road's matching similar terraces in the Conservation Area under review, as well as its group value with the (already designated) buildings to the west of it. In addition, the long back lane proposed for inclusion is associated with a high-quality terrace, which includes the grade-II-listed [11] *67 and 69, Stanhope Road*, that already is within the West End Conservation Area under review.
b) This special interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· Ω ă and appearance, provided by the short terrace, its boundary walling and the scoria paving
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced



Top: Back lane to Stanhope Road North looking south. There are small areas within the scoria which have been patched with tarmac. *Bottom:* 35-41, Woodland Road looking southwest, with the buildings inside the West End Conservation Area under review to the right/west, including the tower of [09] Church of Holy Trinity in the background. The short terrace retains its original front boundary walling as well as some timber panelled doors and traditional windows including decorative leaded glazing. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June/July 2025)

IN.6 çFairfield House. This villa on Elm Road is first shown on the 1896 OS map. A large part of its garden is already within the West End Conservation Area under

review. In 1918, the [A] *Training College* moved its nursery school into the building, which then became known as the George Dent Nursery School. It was only the third in the country catering for pre-school children and had been set up as a place where pupil-teachers could try out their new skills. The school, recognised nationally as a LJ ƛ ƨ ƴ Ŝ Ŝ NJ Σ ō Ŝ ƴ Ŝ Ŧ ƛ ű Ŝ Ř Ŧ NJ ƨ Y v dz Ŝ Ŝ ƴ a l· NJ è Ω ă ƛ ƴ ű Ŝ l educationalists. Today, the George Dent Nursery School still occupies the building and the size of its original grounds has been retained

a) Proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· has sufficient architectural and historic ƛ ƴ ű Ŝ NJ Ŝ ă ú Ŧ ƨ NJ ƛ ú due to being a Victorian villa Ř Ŝ NJ Ŝ Ř Ψ ă LJ Ŝ with a large garden and its association with the Training College. Moreover, it was a nationally important nursery school in its own right and has continued this use for more than one hundred years.
b) This special interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion l· NJ Ŝ l· Ω ă and appearance provided by the building.
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced.



The George Dent Nursery School on Elm Road looking east. Whilst it has been somewhat insensitively extended to the left/north, the original building is still clearly readable. It retains most of its architectural features, although the window frames all appear to be more recent replacements. (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

IN.7 ç / ƨ ƴ ű ƛ ƴ dz l· ű ƛ ƨ ƴ ƨ This area comprises the remainder of Ω Pierremont Crescent and Woodland Terrace as well as some properties along the north side of Milbank Road. The Victorian and Edwardian houses in the southern part of Pierremont Crescent, built in red and buff/Pease brick, match those in the northern part, which already are in the West End Conservation Area under review, both in style and quality. The two Edwardian red-brick terraces along Woodland Terrace are slightly later than those to the north. The long terrace along the west side is of good quality and set back within front gardens. The shorter terrace on the opposite side of the road is of slightly lower quality (no stone window lintels and smaller front gardens) but shares details with the houses over the road (e.g. panelling of bay windows, decorative brickwork and eaves), so there is a clear group value between them. At the north end of the east terrace, a small, traditionally designed è Ŝ ű Y ƨ Ř Ŝ NJ ƴ ă K ƨ LJ K l· ă ō Ŝ Ŝ ƴ ō dz ƛ f ű ƨ h ƴ ű ƨ ű K Ŝ Ŝ latter now being tarmacked. Around Barlow Street, there are some modern houses which are not in keeping with the historical architectural surroundings. On Milbank Road, the proposed inclusion area comprises two large Victorian buildings and two modern pairs of detached houses well set back behind boundary walling. The

latter include a pair of high-quality houses that have used typical architectural elements of the Conservation Area under review effectively and sensitively. All back lanes save the one already mentioned retain their scoria paving.



Top: View up the southern part of Pierremont Crescent looking north, with red and Pease brick houses to both sides. In 1893, the brick villa in the background became the St Cuthbert's Home for Waifs and Strays, a church home for young girls who had usually been disowned for falling pregnant,[334] prior to that it had been used as a school. (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2025). *Centre* Terraces along Woodland Terrace with those along the west side *(left)* sharing similarities along the east *(right)*. *Bottom left:* Prominent, mirrored, semi-detached houses along Milbank Road built in Pease brick and first shown on the 1896 map. *Bottom right:* Further houses along Milbank Road looking northwest, with the one to the left/west also shown on the 1896 map. The one to the right is one of a pair of modern houses that uses typical architectural elements of the Conservation Area under review effectively and sensitively. The gate piers and boundary walling to the left seems to have belonged to a previous property in this location. (Photos © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

[334] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/5022082.darlington-thorny-subject/

a) Proposed Inclusion [illegible] has sufficient architectural and historic [illegible] due to the buildings making [illegible] similar houses in the West End Conservation Area under review, as well as their group value with those along Pierremont Crescent and Woodland Terrace that are already in the boundary.
b) This special interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion [illegible] and appearance provided by the houses, their boundary walling and gate piers, and some paved back lanes.
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced

IN.8 Green at Staindrop Road Roundabout. The area comprises a raised greenspace to the south of the roundabout which forms part of the wider setting of the prominent 2 and 4, Staindrop Road and other buildings that are within the West End Conservation Area under review. It also includes some trees (and shrubs) which would benefit from protection by conservation area designation.

a) Whilst proposed Inclusion [illegible] has sufficient interest for it to [illegible] it forms part of the wider setting of buildings that are already within the West End Conservation Area under review.
b) Its interest is experienced through the proposed inclusion [illegible] character and appearance, provided by the raised greenspace, trees and shrubs
c) It is desirable for that character and appearance to be preserved or enhanced

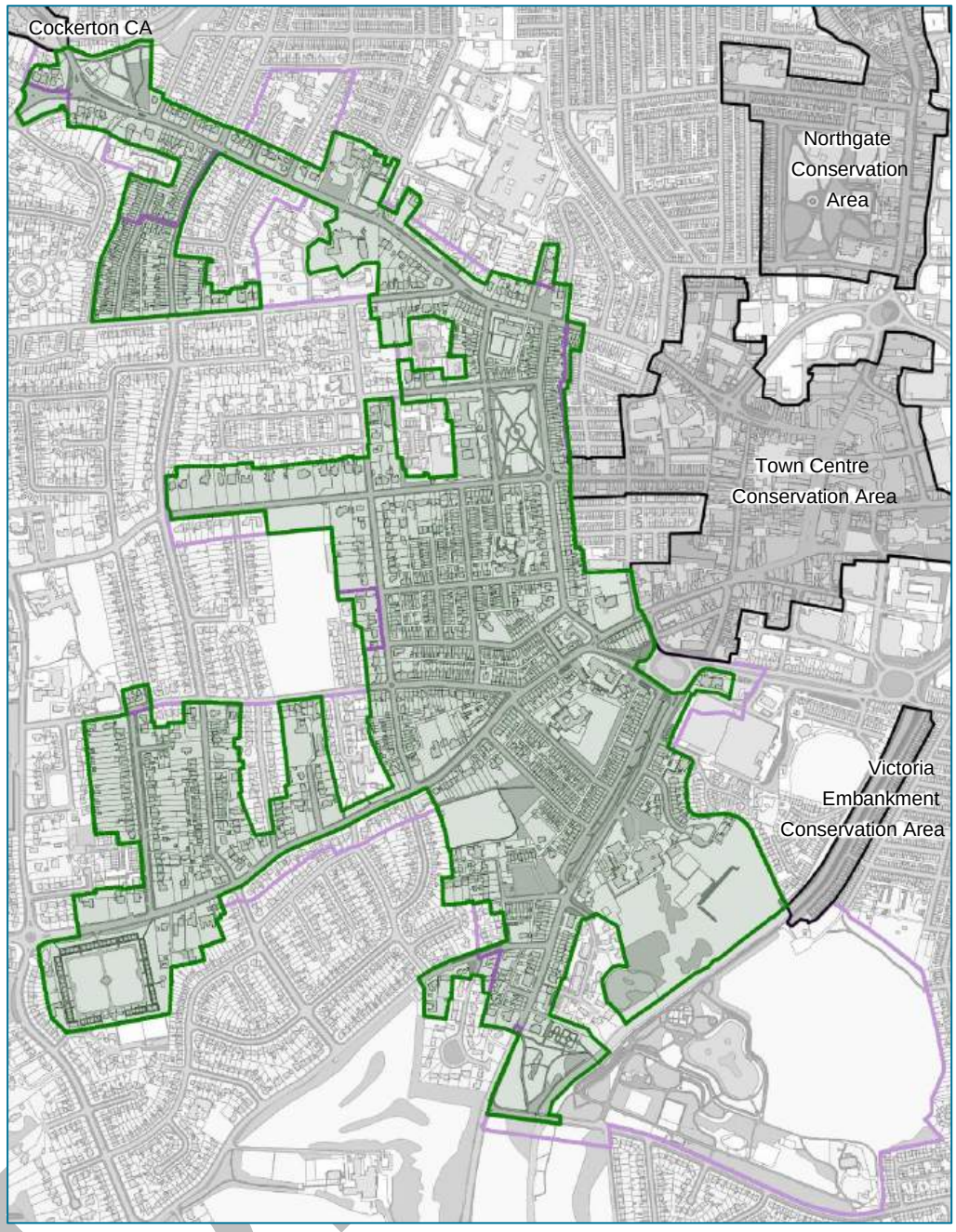


Greenspace at Staindrop Road Roundabout looking north with 2 & 4, Staindrop Road in the background (Photo © Gaby Rose, June 2025)

5.3 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed New Boundary

The map below shows the proposed draft boundary for the West End Conservation Area that is available for public consultation.

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Proposed draft boundary lines in green at the time of review. West End Conservation Area as amended in March 2010 in purple and surrounding conservation areas boundary lines in black and shaded grey. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by RCAS)

5.4 Changes to Boundary post Public Consultation

This section will be provided following the public consultation period.

6.0 Adopted New Boundary

This section will be provided following the public consultation period.

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Please note that any information retrieved from Darlington Borough Council 2020 has not been referenced in the text.

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Darlington South Park Run: https://www.parkrun.org.uk/darlingtonsouthpark/

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{ ű ¢ ŜNJŜ ă: https://darlingtonhospice.org.uk/

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Appendix: Outcome of Public Consultation

This will be provided following the public consultation period.

DRAFT



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT
conservation@darlington.gov.uk

CABINET
6 January 2026

MUSEUM ACCREDITATION POLICIES 2025

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Libby McCollom, Local Services Portfolio

Responsible Director -
Dave Winstanley, Executive Director – Environment, Highways & Community Services

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval of a series of museum policies that will enable a submission to Arts Council England for ongoing museum accreditation.

Summary

2. Museum accreditation assists with ensuring good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. The scheme also encourages all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards on how they are run, how they manage their collections and the experiences of their users.

3. An accreditation return is due by 2 March 2026 and the submission must include a current Museum Governance Plan, Collections Management Framework and Access Policy and Plan approved by the museum's governing body. Remaining an accredited museum will ensure the museum remains eligible for external funding and loans from other museums.

4. This report seeks approval of the above documents to form part of the submission for accreditation renewal.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that Cabinet approve:-

   (a) Hopetown Darlington Museum Governance Plan 2025-2030,
   (b) Hopetown Darlington Collections Management Framework 2025-2030
   (c) Hopetown Darlington Access Policy and Plan 2025-2030

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

   (a) To provide evidence of effective and professional management of Darlington's Museum Service, so that the museum remains an accredited museum and entitled to future support from the Arts Council England (Central Government Body).

   (b) To be eligible for future funding from external bodies, e.g. Arts Council England, Museums Association and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

   (c) To be eligible for future loans from other museums, e.g. Science Museums Group.

   (d) To ensure that the museum remains registered and complies with the standards and ethics as set out by the Museums Association.

Dave Winstanley
Executive Director - Environment, Highways & Community Services

Background Papers

i. Accreditation Standard (November 2018)
ii. How to meet the Standard (November 2024)
iii. Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024
iv. Head of Steam Collections Management Framework 2022-2027
v. Head of Steam Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024

Council Plan	History and heritage of Darlington is an important aspect of Darlington as a place, Hopetown Darlington being one of the key locations where Darlington's story is told.
Addressing inequalities	The content of this report has no impact on addressing inequalities.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no climate change impact implications in this report.
Efficient and effective use of resources	There is no impact on efficiency as a result of this report.
Health and Wellbeing	The content of this report does not impact on Health and Wellbeing.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report has no impact on Crime and Disorder
Wards Affected	Hopetown Darlington location is in Northgate Ward.
Groups Affected	No particular or individual groups are affected as a result of this report.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no Budget and Policy Framework implications in this report.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The museum is due for renewal of its Museum Association accreditation, and a submission is required by 2 March 2026

8. Accreditation is the UK standard for museums and galleries. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It is a baseline quality standard that helps guide museums to be the best they can be, for current and future users.

9. One of the aims of the Accreditation Scheme is to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards on how they are run, how they manage their collections and the experiences of their users.

10. To be Accredited, museums must (amongst other things) be committed to forward planning to improve the service for users and hold a long-term collection of artefacts.

11. To satisfy accreditation requirements there are three key documents:

    a) The **Museum Governance Plan 2025-2030.** This outlines the strategic objectives of Hopetown Darlington for the period December 2025 to December 2030. **(Appendix 1)**

    b) The **Collections Management Framework 2025-2030.** This includes the museum's policy for developing its collections, its documentation policy and its care and conservation policy. Accredited museums must manage collections effectively and make them and the information they hold about them available to everyone. **(Appendix 2)**

    c) The **Access Policy and Plan 2025-2030**. This outlines the museum's commitment is to accessibility for all visitors. **(Appendix 3)**

Financial Implications

12. If the museum does not achieve Accreditation they will no longer be eligible for future funding from external bodies, e.g. Arts Council England, Museums Association and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

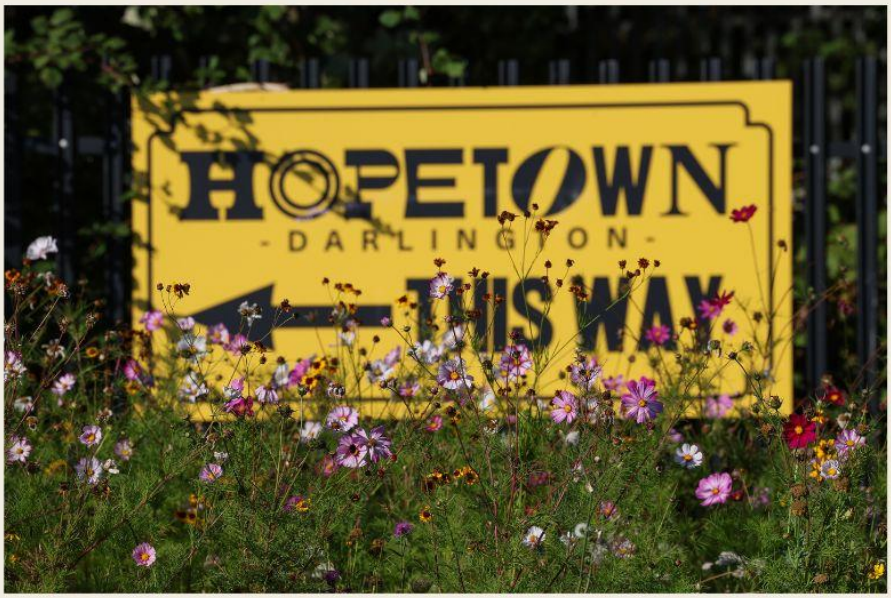
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HOPETOWN

- DARLINGTON -

MUSEUM GOVERNANCE PLAN

2025-2030



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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Hopetown Darlington

Museum Governance Plan

2025-2030

1. Introduction

1.1. The museum governance plan outlines the strategic objectives of Hopetown Darlington for the period December 2025 to December 2030 specifically for Arts Council England (ACE) Museum Accreditation.

1.2. The plan will be reviewed annually, with the first review being in December 2026. The plan will be reviewed by the site's senior management team (SMT).

1.3. Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: XXX

2. Mission Statement & Shared Values

Darlington changed the world as a pioneer of the modern railway. Hopetown Darlington will engage and inspire the innovators of the future by connecting them with our pioneering railway heritage.

Intelligent Play

- Imagination - the cornerstone of engineering
- Experimentation and innovation - that got us where we are today, and will take us into the future
- Interchange - this whole site is about interchange and exchange - of ideas, knowledge, experience

People Powered

- A place where staff and community are empowered to shape future developments
- A place that actively works to promote social inclusion and maximise accessibility
- Proud to tell Darlington's origin story

Progression

- Being a place that has a genuine commitment to co-design and co-curation - your story is part of this too.
- Reimagining what a heritage visitor attraction could be; how it interacts with people, the stories it tells, the impact it strives for.
- Balancing heritage stories with current developments and futuristic concepts.

3. Background to Site

3.1. Hopetown Darlington is located on the route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the world's first steam hauled railway to carry fare-paying passengers. The site consists

of the Stockton and Darlington Railway's buildings of the 1830-50s, including the Goods Shed (retail and café), the Carriage Works (exhibition hall and open stores) and North Road Station Museum. The site also includes Darlington Locomotive Works and 1861 Shed which house railway heritage groups.

3.2. The museum was founded in 1975, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Darlington and Stockton Railway, when the campaigning of enthusiasts and community activists resulted in the preservation of the passenger station. One side of the platform was partitioned off for ongoing main line usage and the remainder opened as 'Darlington Railway Museum'. The museum was originally administered by a charitable trust, but responsibility passed to Darlington Borough Council in 1984.

3.3. The museum changed its name again in the early 1980's and became the 'Darlington Railway Centre and Museum'. This name change was adopted to highlight the other historical buildings on the site, i.e. Hopetown Carriage Works, Goods Agents Office and Goods Shed. As a whole, the site represents the world's most important surviving group of early railway buildings.

3.4. Over the past 30 years the site has become home to several independent heritage railway organizations, working in partnership with the Council. Partnerships include A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, Darlington Railway Preservation Society, Darlington Model Railway Club, North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group, North Eastern Railway Association and the Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum.

3.5. In 2007/2008 a £1.7m refurbishment project was undertaken with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Northern Rock Foundation, the Railway Heritage Trust, English Heritage, European Regional Development Fund and other sources - Darlington Borough Council and the museum was re-branded the Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum.

3.6. In 2023/2024 after securing £37 million of funding from TVCA, NLHF, ACE, Historic England, Railway Heritage Trust and Art Fund, the museum, and surrounding heritage buildings, were transformed into a brand-new visitor attraction, Hopetown Darlington. The name takes inspiration from the old Hopetown foundry works associated with the railways. The classic features from the museum are joined by ground-breaking new attractions spread over a 7.5 acre site and incorporating other heritage railway buildings showcasing Darlington's innovative history.

4. Review of the Previous Forward Plan (2022-2024)

4.1. The previous Forward Plan was created in 2022 and was designed to be cover the period when the museum site was open to the public in 2022 and outlined the work plan for the period of redevelopment 2023-24 when the museum site would be closed

to the public (but museum engagement with the local communities would continue). A new Forward Plan/Business Plan would be developed for the newly redeveloped site.

4.2. As a result of the £37m redevelopment of the site it is not appropriate to compare and review the previous forward plan from 2022, as the scale of Hopetown Darlington far exceeds the former offer.

5. Current Position

5.1. Hopetown Darlington sits within Heritage and Culture in the Community Services section of the Environment, Highways and Community Services department of Darlington Borough Council.

5.2. The site currently employs 33 FTE staff.

5.3. During 2024/25 the site was used by 129,831 people (from opening on 16th July 2024 to 31st March 2025). This is a 222% increase on the last year of operation in 2022 (40,379). We are forecasted to reach 205,000 in the second year of operation (2025-2026).

5.4. The **Council Plan 2024 2027** highlights the importance of Darlington's railway heritage to the future development of the town. The plan includes a case study on Hopetown Darlington showing how investing in Darlington's heritage and culture plays an important in preserving the identity of Darlington's communities, delivering regeneration and economic impact.

5.5. S&DR200 legacy

- S&DR200 presented a festival celebrating the birth of the modern railway between March to October 2025. The festival took place across Darlington, County Durham and the Tees Valley to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first journey on the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR).

- The S&DR200 festival presented a series of free large-scale outdoor spectacles, events, exhibitions and new art commissions in the public spaces, libraries and world-class museums, including us! The festival team worked with internationally and nationally renowned artists, makers, filmmakers, curators, historians, and local creatives, and communities to create a rich and varied festival programme.

- Visitors of all ages enjoyed immersive art installations and augmented-reality digital games, saw treasured artworks in the region for the first time, joined thousands of others for awe-inspiring outdoor events and saw some of the world's favourite locomotives.

- Visitors to Hopetown Darlington during the festival period enjoyed two blockbuster exhibitions 'Railway Pioneers' and 'STEAM to the Future'. Thousands of people flocked to the site to enjoy 'Titans of Steam' a gathering of iconic locomotives including Flying Scotsman, Sir Nigel Gresley and Tornado in partnership with on-site railway heritage organisations.

- Visitor figures for the Hopetown S&DR200 Festival programme are outlined below:

  Railway Pioneers: **22194**
  STEAM to the Future: **31030**
  Night at the Museum (Ghost Train at Hopetown only): **2527**
  Titans of Steam: **11254**
  Titans of Steam Footplate Tours: **1367**
  Anniversary Journey: **6000**
  Total: **74,372**

- Hopetown's social media view in this period were 4.4 million views (1.2 million viewers), 83.2k interactions, and an extra 3.5k followers.

- Hopetown Darlington will work with railway heritage partners on-site to continue to offer a live steam and engineering programme and build on the legacy of the S&DR200 festival.

5.6. Environmental Sustainability

In July 2019, Members acknowledged the threat of climate change and passed a motion committing the Council to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. On 20th July 2023, a new motion reaffirming the climate emergency declaration and bringing the date forward to 2040, was passed.

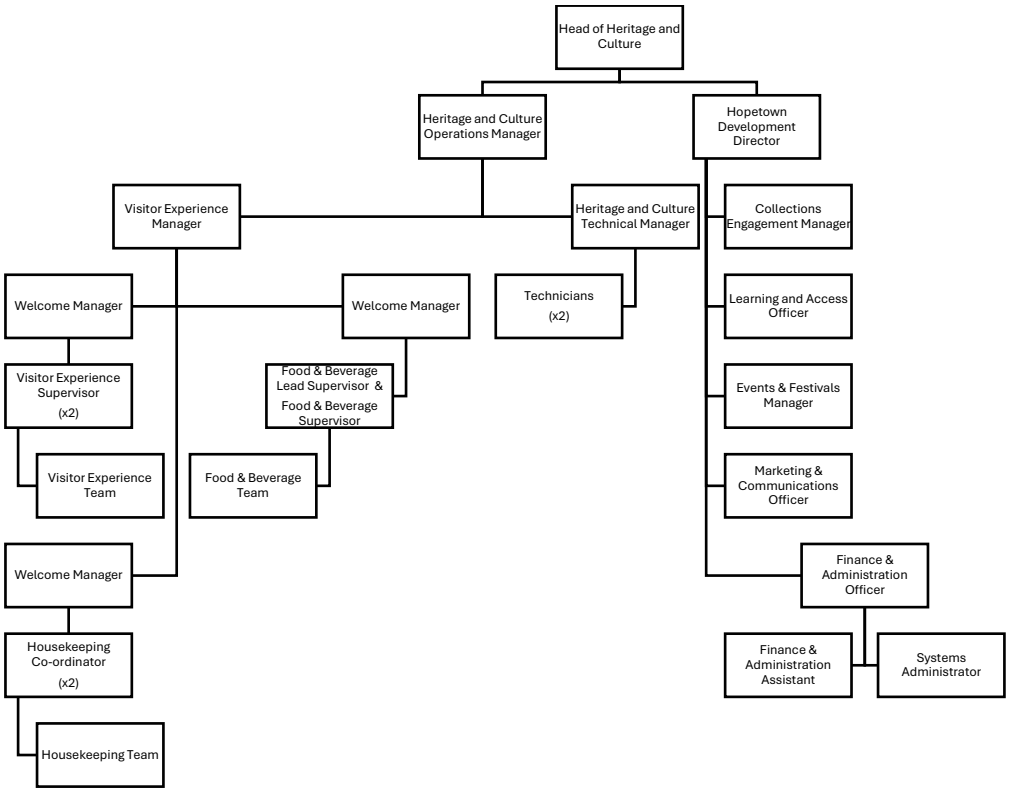
Our **Council Plan 2024 2027** has been published, which sets out our long-term vision, ambitions and priorities for Darlington. The three core principles are:

- addressing inequalities
- efficient and effective use of resources
- tackling climate change

We are also members of the Tees Valley Combined Authority, has its own region-wide **net zero strategy**.

Hopetown Darlington will put sustainability at the centre of its decision making across all aspects of the site. ***Hopetown - Sustainability***

5.7. Organisational Structure



5.8. Succession Planning

Hopetown Darlington has the following procedures in place for effective continuity and resilience to ensure the continuous running of the service. This will enable staff to 'multi-task' and cover other posts' work if required.

HRMI001	Catering Activities
HRMI002	Event Management
HRMI003	Educational Activities
HRMI004	Exhibition Management
HRMI005	Playground Compliance
HRMI006	Technical Management
HRMI007	Building Maintenance
HRMI008	Emergency Action Plan & Fire Evacuation
HRMI009	Marketing Management
HRMI010	Ticketing & Box Office Management
HRMI011	Service Standards
HRMI012	Building Operations Management
HRMI013	Building Cleaning - Hopetown
HRMI014	Externally Funded Projects
HRMI015	Collections Management
HRMI016	Retail Management

HRMI017	Sponsorship
HRMI018	Virtual Reality Experience
HRMI019	Financial Management

5.9. Access

- We have worked with AccessAble so visitors can find out about our facilities before they visit. AccessAble's surveyors assessed our venue to create a Detailed Access Guide. Check out the Detailed Access Guide here.
- Digital Maps: virtual 3D tour around Hopetown Darlington are available prior to visits, where visitors will find general facts and accessibility information for each building.
- Level access: Where there are stairs there is also a level access ramp or a lift for wheelchair users or those who use mobility scooters. The main entrance to Hopetown Darlington sits upon a bank. There is a ramp leading up to the entrance from the street below.
- Car Parking: Accessible parking is located in Skerne Bridge Car Park and on McNay Street. From here you can take the level access ramp up to the Goods Shed entrance.
- Places to Sit: There are benches inside North Road Station Museum. There are seated picnic areas located outside of Wagon Woods. There are accessible picnic benches in the Goods Yard. The café in the Goods Shed has plenty of seating.
- Toilets: Accessible toilets are located within the Goods Shed, North Road Station Museum, the Carriage Works and near to The Kiosk.
- Changing Places Toilet: There is a Changing Places toilet located within North Road Station Museum.
- Assistance Animals: Guide and assistance dogs – including assistance dogs in training – are welcome everywhere at Hopetown Darlington. Water bowls for dogs are available in the café and on Foundry Green.
- Blind or visually impaired: Large print text can be made available on request in advance.
- D/deaf or have hearing loss/hearing impairment: Hearing loops are fitted at the Goods Shed entrance and the reception desk in the Carriage Works.
- Information in other formats: Hopetown Darlington can provide information in other formats on request.
- Essential Companions/carers: If visitors require an essential companion or carer, they can visit the paid-for elements at Hopetown Darlington free of charge.
- Sunflower Lanyard Scheme: We are part of the Sunflower Lanyard Scheme.
- Baby Feeding and Breastfeeding: Hopetown Darlington is part of the BfN Breastfeeding Friendly scheme. Visitors are welcome to breastfeed anywhere on site. There is a baby feeding room located within North Road Station Museum if visitors wish to breastfeed in private. Baby bottles can be heated in the Clocktower Café.

- Quiet Times: Visitors may prefer to visit when we are less busy. Our quietest times are weekday afternoons during term time.
- Communicate in Print: Communicate in print and widget symbols can be found across all of our displays.

- Package for Sandy: Emergency supplies of sanitary products are available at the Welcome Desk in the Goods Shed and by asking for a 'Package for Sandy'. Visitors will receive a discreet envelope with emergency sanitary products, no questions asked.

5.10 Tees Valley Museums Group (TVMG)

- Tees Valley Museum Group is a consortium of five Local Authority Museum services: Stockton (the lead authority), Darlington BC, Redcar and Cleveland BC, Middlesbrough BC and Hartlepool BC.
- Mission statement: TVMG will ensure we remain ambitious and relevant for all of our communities; sharing and preserving their heritage and stories, giving real meaning to the work we do together.
- The site will continue to work with the Tees Valley Museums Group (funded by the Arts Council) during the period of this Forward Plan and beyond.

6. Consultation and Analysis of Views

6.1. Extensive audience development work was undertaken during the redevelopment of the site, as part of the branding work for the new site and the development of the interpretation plan for the site.

6.2. The key target groups included in the focus group programme were:

- Key personnel from Darlington Borough Council and the museum
- Stakeholder group of organisations sharing the site
- Friends and Volunteers
- Schools and Community Groups who use the site
- Family groups (existing visitors)
- Non-users

6.3. Audience data is collected via our post-visit e-mail questionnaire, travel survey, sign-ups for the website and data gathered through booking systems.

6.4. Reviews are collected via TripAdvisor, Facebook, Google, e-mails, visitor comments books across the site and verbally.

7. Aims

7.1. Sustain and increase visitor volume to the site through a 5-year plan of exciting exhibitions.

7.2. To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

7.3. To develop the site to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.

7.4. To care for the site's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.

7.5. For Darlington to be known for Hopetown Darlington, its railway heritage and as the birthplace of the modern railway.

7.6. To ensure Hopetown Darlington is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.

7.7. Sustain and increase visitor volume to the site through a 5-year programme of exciting events.

8. Objectives

8.1. Develop partnerships with major national funders to deliver two blockbuster exhibitions each year that encourage new audiences and repeat visitors.

8.2. Make Hopetown Darlington the place to volunteer by creating an inclusive and vibrant programme that enhances the visitor experience.

8.3. Create new and exciting partnerships with schools and communities to inspire the future generations and pioneers through engaging and unique activities and workshops.

8.4. Make Hopetown Darlington a leader in the museum sector by continuing to ensure the highest possible standards for collections management and increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.

8.5. Establish Hopetown as a world class visitor attraction through destination marketing campaign to increase awareness of the site and increase visitor numbers.

8.6. Hopetown Darlington to become a destination café, retail and meeting space for the northeast region through private hires and on-line retail presence.

8.7. Develop and implement the UK's newest heritage railway line and event programme that encourages new audiences and repeat visitors.

9. Action Plan 2025-2030

9.1. Aim: Sustain and increase visitor volume to the site through a 5-year plan of exciting exhibitions.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Develop partnerships with major national funders to deliver two blockbuster exhibitions each year that encourage new audiences and repeat visitors.	Develop Escape Room activity proposal for 2028/29	Investigate possible funding streams	January 2027	Collections Engagement Manager/ Technical Manager
		Work with technical manager on possible design	September 2027	
		Produce P&L for proposal	December 2027	
	Investigate Light Show Exhibition for 2027	Investigate exhibition providers	June 2026	Collections Engagement Manager/ Technical Manager
		Feasibility of creating light show in house	September 2026	
		Work on P&L and design with Technical Manager	December 2026	
	Develop Railways on Film exhibition proposal for 2029	Feasibility of licensing costs	June 2027	Collections Engagement Manager/ Technical Manager
		Audience research to test theme	June 2027	
		Investigate possible funding streams	December 2027	
		Initial research into subject matter	December 2027	

9.2. Aim: To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Make Hopetown Darlington the place to volunteer by creating an inclusive and vibrant programme that enhances the visitor experience.	Finalise volunteer strategy based on previous consultation report.	Investigate possible funding streams	January 2027	Collections Engagement Manager/ Learning & Access Officer
		Work with technical manager on possible design	September 2027	
		Produce P&L for proposal	December 2027	
	Define new volunteer roles in consultation with Hopetown Management team.	Set meeting to discuss possible roles	April 2026	Collections Engagement Manager/ Learning & Access Officer
		Create role descriptions	June 2026	
		Work with H&S to create relevant paperwork	August 2026	
	Promote programme with community partners	Advertise through Darlington Cares	September 2026	Collections Engagement Manager/ Learning & Access Officer
		Liaise with Darlington Culture Volunteers	September 2026	
		Contact former corporate volunteers to promote new roles	October 2026	

9.3 Aim: To develop the site to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Create new and exciting partnerships with schools and communities to inspire the future generations and pioneers through engaging and unique activities and workshops.	Formal learning - Work in partnership with teachers to continue to develop and extend our offer to schools, and those educating otherwise.	Establish a teachers' forum that will be in place to enable us to reapply for the Sandford Award for Heritage Education	2026	Learning & Access Officer
		Develop a new STEM workshop	2026	
		Develop self-led activities to be hosted on our website	2026	
		Develop ideas for a creativity offer for schools	2027	
		Building on work with Haughton and St Aidan's – develop new Secondary resources and or workshop.	2027	
		Extend our EYFS offer.	2028	
		Develop new SEND activities	2028	
	Informal learning – work with families to gain national recognition for	Establish a family forum that will be in place to enable us to apply for the Kids in	2026	Learning & Access Officer

	being Family Friendly.	Museums 'Family Friendly Museum' award.		
		Activity box for cafe	2026	
		Family learning activities as part of family learning festival	2027	
	Play – develop our play offer beyond physical resources	Play prompts cards for staff	2026	Learning & Access Officer
		Play ambassadors on staff team	2026-27	
		Develop consultation and feedback methods for children and young people	2027	
	Access – become a leader in the sector for access and inclusion	Regular accessible activities for families and adult groups – including the use of BSL, audio description and relaxed sessions	2026-30	Learning & Access Officer
		Identify new audiences and develop relationships	2026-30	
		Establish a Staff forum – ideas, groups to work with, wellbeing,	2026	

		perspectives and advice.		
		Establish an Access forum – (with NPO but independent of them)	2027	
		Establish a community forum – consultation, co-curation, ambassadors / advocates	2027	

9.4 Aim: To care for the site's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
Make Hopetown Darlington a leader in the museum sector by continuing to ensure the highest possible standards for collections management and increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.	Complete Documentation Backlog	Complete Documentation Stage Two	December 2026	Collections Engagement Manager
		Complete Documentation Stage Three	December 2027	
		Complete Documentation Stage Four	December 2028	
	Promotion of Collections and Archive	Develop collections area of website	July 2026	Collections Engagement Manager/ Marketing Officer
		Develop two new talks using archive material	December 2026	
		Publish one research article per year in heritage publication	December 2030	

	Partnership working within Darlington	Establish links with two new community partners	June 2028	Collections Engagement Manager
		Develop closer links with Centre for Local Studies e.g. exhibition sharing/ collections access	June 2027	
		Host six community groups in The Space each year.	Ongoing	

9.5 Aim: For Darlington to be known for Hopetown Darlington, its railway heritage and as the birthplace of the modern railway.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Establish Hopetown as a world class visitor attraction through destination marketing campaign to increase awareness of the site and increase visitor numbers.	Grow destination marketing to increase awareness of Hopetown Darlington.	Focus on Shildon (Locomotion) and York (NRM) with a simple call to action to visit our website to see what we are about.	2026	Marketing & Communications Officer
		Local TV advert using already produced content.	2027	
		Key campaigns in Edinburgh, London, York, Durham, Newcastle, Leeds and Northallerton	2028	

		railway stations.		
		Explore the possibility of conducing a Guinness World Record to bring Hopetown to a national audience.	2029	
	Relationship building with partners and local venues to increase awareness of site.	Build on Royal Navy Museum relationship to increase the awareness of Hopetown.	2026	Marketing & Communications Officer
		Work with LNER on the makeover of Darlington Railway Station.	2027	
		Work more closely with Locomotion – and Northern Rail – on joint marketing campaign.	2028	
		Build on marketing with Secondary Schools and the A1 Trust to attract more secondary visits focussed on the engineering side of the site.	2029	
	Monetise Hopetown Darlington's	Continue to grow our Facebook and	2026	Marketing & Communications Officer /

	digital presence.	Instagram channels to appeal to a wider audience, using family and heritage content. Also look to utilise TikTok as a marketing tool.		Collections Engagement Manager
		Investigate funding stream to employ additional Marketing Officer.	2027	
		Network with other attractions and partners to explore how to utilise YouTube and build a fit-for-purpose YouTube channel.	2028	
		Create live streams to monetise the YouTube channel.	2029	

9.6 Aim: To ensure Hopetown Darlington is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Hopetown Darlington to become a destination	Develop existing on-line retail offer.	Investigate other venues with strong on-line retail offer.	2026	Finance and Administration Officer / Visitor

café, retail and meeting space for the northeast region through private hires and on-line retail presence.		Investigate on-line retail platforms e.g. Shopify, All-Wag	2026	Experience Manager
		Relaunch on-line retail offer.	2027	
	Develop existing Private Hire offer.	Analyse data relating to site private hire bookings to see if any trends.	2026	Finance and Administration Officer / Development Director
		Investigate other venues with strong private hire offer.	2026	
		Develop and implement Private Hire Strategy for site.	2026	
	Investigate implementation of Membership Scheme.	Investigate other venues with membership schemes e.g. Tank Museum.	2026	Finance and Administration Officer / Development Director
		Analyse data and decide whether membership scheme is feasible for site.	2026	
		Develop Membership Scheme Strategy.	2027	
		Implement Membership Scheme.	2028	

9.7 Aim: Sustain and increase visitor volume to the site through a 5-year programme of exciting events.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Develop and implement the UK's newest heritage railway line and event programme that encourages new audiences and repeat visitors.	Review and Rewrite Events Strategy	Full data analysis of activities and events programme since opening.	2026	Events and Festivals Manager / Development Director / Marketing Officer
		Investigate events and activities programme at similar venues.	2026	
		Using data and research write a revised Events Strategy and 5-year plan that encourages new audiences and repeat visitors.	2026	
	Develop Legacy offer with on-site partners	Develop Legacy heritage offer branding.	2026	Events and Festivals Manager / Development Director / Marketing Officer
		Work with on-site partners on rail heritage offer on Legacy Line.	2026	
		Incorporate Legacy offer into existing events e.g. Ho-Ho-Hopetown.	2026	
	Review and develop the use of Private Hire events to supplement	Full data analysis of previous private hire events on-site.	2026	Events and Festivals Manager /

	events programme	Contact local clubs and organisations to promote site for hire for events.	2026	Development Director / Finance & Administration Officer
		Incorporate private hire events into the 5-year events programme.	2026	

10. Resources

10.1 Hopetown Darlington ensures an effective delivery of the service by splitting the workforce into two sections: development and operational. The Development Director oversees the strategic development of the site, and the Operations Manager oversees the day-to-day running of the site. The Development Director is the strategic lead for collections management, exhibitions and events, learning and access, finance and administration, marketing, audience development and fundraising. The Operations Manager oversees the visitor experience team, technical support and health and safety on the site.

10.2 Hopetown Darlington has a small but dedicated team of volunteers who help the site in a number of roles. Most of the volunteers have been recruited for exhibition stewarding and they help our audiences engage with the subject matter and enjoy their time in the exhibitions hall. We have five volunteers who attend regularly, and we work regularly with Darlington Culture Volunteers and the Stockton & Darlington 26 Miles team to supplement our existing volunteers during large events. We have two volunteers who work with the Collections Engagement Manager in all aspects of collections management. These volunteers are looking to progress in the sector, and their work is often based on skills building.

10.3 The budget for utilities lies with Corporate Landlord.

10.4 The site generates income through food and beverage, retail, private hires, monetary donations, events and exhibitions programme, sponsorship and external funding. The site relies on a detailed and comprehensive business plan to run the venue. Darlington Borough Council subsidises the site by a small amount (the same amount as the previous museum Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum). The remaining funding to run the site comes from income generated through the venue.

10.5 The food and beverage and retail offer are constantly under review to ensure that we offer the best possible quality for the best possible price to the customer and the organisation. These actions include reviewing the supplier chain, sandwich offer and increasing the product range in the café to increase the Gross Profit. With regards to retail actions include identifying bestselling items and removing slow selling items over time, introducing non-branded items into the shop and changing the focus of retail in Carriage Works retail to heritage/ railway books.

10.6 The site has been open for 1.5 years and is in the process of reviewing the budget, business plan and projected targets for the next financial year (2026-2027).

11. Review Date

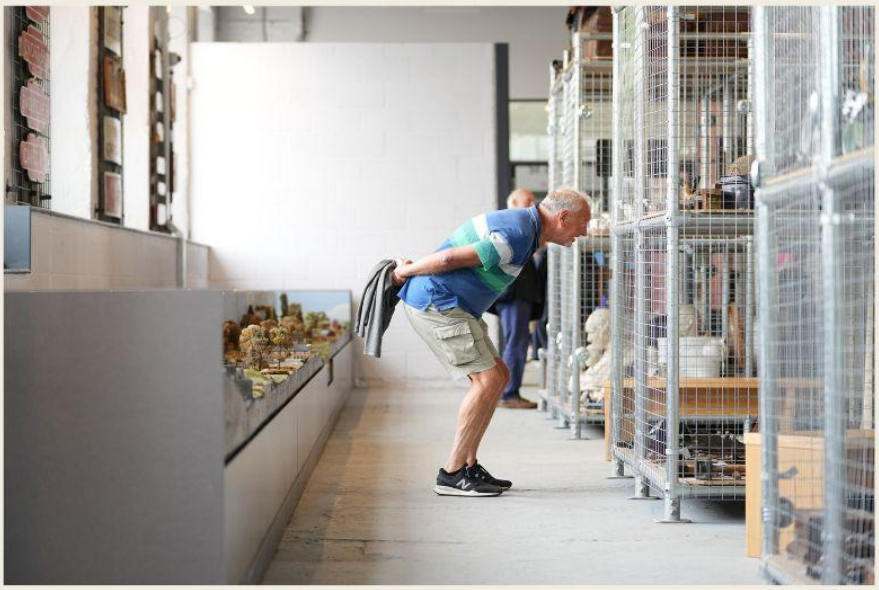
The Hopetown Darlington Forward Plan will be reviewed annually with the first review taking place in **December 2026**.

HOPETOWN

- DARLINGTON -

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

2025-2030



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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Collections Development Policy
2025-2030

Name of museum: Hopetown Darlington

Name of governing body: Darlington Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: *date to inserted upon approval at Cabinet*

Policy review procedure: The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Date at which this policy is due for review: December 2030

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Darlington changed the world as a pioneer of the modern railway. Hopetown Darlington will engage and inspire the innovators of the future by connecting them with our pioneering railway heritage.

Hopetown shared values are:

Play – Creating a space for energy, enthusiasm and shared experience.
Progress – Presenting and inspiring solutions for the future.
People – A place that actively works to promote social inclusion and accessibility.

1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

2. History of the collections

2.1. The museum was opened in 1975 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, when the campaigning of enthusiasts and community activists resulted in the preservation of the passenger station. The museum opened as 'Darlington Railway Museum' and was originally administered by a charitable trust.

2.2. The Trust Collection consisted of a combination of donations, loans from private donors (short-term and indefinite) and loans from local and national museums. In 1985 responsibility for the running of the museum, and the management of the collections, passed to Darlington Borough Council.

2.3. The collection consisted of railway items relating to the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) and the railways and railway industry of the north-east region. They also collected generic railway items not specifically associated with north-east England.

2.4. Any items donated after this date belong to the museum and the council. Any items donated prior to this date remain the property of the Trust (which has yet to be wound up despite numerous attempts by the council). These items (along with the loans taken in by the Trust) are regarded as Trust Loans.

2.5. Under the management of the council the museum continued to accept donations and loans of railway related artefacts not associated with north-east England, in particular generic railway ephemera, magazines and published material as well as the more relevant S&DR and north-eastern artefacts.

2.6. The museum has a number of artefacts on loan from the National Railway Museum including locomotives Derwent, Tennant 1463, a third class carriage and artefacts relating to the S&DR.

2.7. In the 1990's the town's local history museum, Tubwell Row Museum, closed its doors. All artefacts relating to the railways and/or Darlington were transferred to the museum.

2.8. In 1992 the collection of Ken Hoole, a renowned railway enthusiast, was transferred to the museum from Durham County Council so that the museum could open a research room called the Ken Hoole Study Centre. The collection made up the bulk of the research material along with archival material from the museums own collection.

2.9. From approximately 2000 the museum's *Collections Development Policy* was updated to only accept material relating to the S&DR and the development and operation of railways in north-east England.

2.10. In 2004 the museum received a bequest from local railway enthusiast John Mallon. The John Mallon Collection included a unique collection of railway photographs mapping different railway lines in the region, plus a large collection of railway ephemera collected by Mr Mallon during his time working on the railways. The collection is jointly owned by the museum and the North Eastern Railway Association (NERA).

2.11. In 2023 the museum received a bequest from local railway collector, Alan Bowman. The Bowman Collection consists of track plans and drawings as well as OS maps from the North Eastern Railway network.

3. An overview of current collections

3.1. The museum collection consists of **33,316** accessioned artefacts or groups of artefacts.

3.2. The museum's existing collections are almost wholly limited to material illustrating the development and operation of railways in north-east England. Although regional in scope, in some areas they are of national importance because of their association with the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), as the world's first modern railway.

3.3. The existing collections cover:

- the S&DR and its associated lines
- the North Eastern Railway (NER)
- the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER)
- British Railways (BR)
- the railway manufacturing industry in Darlington
- industrial railways in Darlington

3.4. The material held includes:

- archives, maps, photographs and printed ephemera
- one locomotive and two wagons
- items used in railway operating
- 'branded' items associated with the railway infrastructure
- models and toys

3.5. The museum also holds the largest existing collection of Darlington ceramic commemorative ware, and a small group of local history curiosities and bygones in the form of the remaining collections of the former Tubwell Row Museum.

3.6. The museum holds a large archive of railway related ephemera, maps and photographs from two donors in particular: Ken Hoole and John Mallon.

3.7. Although not strictly 'collections' in the traditional sense, in that they are fixed structures in their original locations, there is an argument that the most important items the museum holds are the buildings from the occupation of the site known by the S&DR as 'North Road'. These at present comprise North Road Goods Station, built in 1833 and extended in 1839-40; the Goods Agent's

Offices, built in 1840; Darlington (North Road) Station, built in 1841-42 and extended in 1853, 1856, 1860, 1864, 1872 and 1876; and Hopetown Carriage Works, built in 1853. The museum also holds the site of the demolished Kitching's Foundry, developed between 1831 and 1855 and effectively the S&DR's locomotive works until 1863.

3.8. The museum also maintains a reference library of published texts relevant to the history and development of railways, with particular reference, although not restricted to, north-east England.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1. The museum recognises its responsibility, when collecting new items, to ensure that collections care, documentation and use will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements (see Documentation Policy and Care and Conservation Policy). Where the acquisition of an item would have significant financial implications, either in terms of purchase price or future preservation, the matter will be referred to the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services for approval.

4.2. The primary objective in collections development will be to acquire material, by donation or purchase, which can document and interpret the following themes:

- The evolution and significance of the North Road site and its buildings.
- The origins, development and historical significance of the S&DR.
- The history and significance of S&DR 0-4-0 No 1 Locomotion, particularly the story of its iconisation by railway company publicity and the contribution this made to the birth of railway preservation.
- The history of Darlington as a railway manufacturing town, with particular reference to North Road Locomotive Works, 'Stivvies' (Robert Stephenson & Co), Faverdale Wagon Works, and dictheir products.
- The impact of railway transport and haulage on the economic and social development of Darlington and its surrounding area, including the town's industrial railways.
- The role of railways in popular culture and leisure, through such things as toys and model engineering.

4.3. The museum will continue to add to its collection of Darlington ceramic commemorative ware, as appropriate items are donated. It will also, as a home of last resort, be open to the acquisition of particularly significant individual items relating to the town's local history.

4.4. In relation to archives, maps, photographs and printed ephemera, the museum will continue to collect material generally relevant to the development and history of railways in north-east England. It will also continue to purchase, or to accept gifts of, relevant books and other publications for addition to its reference library.

4.5. The museum will collect relevant items from any historical period. In practice, and with the possible exception of significant local history items, few potential acquisitions are likely to be older than 1800. Where appropriate, particularly in the field of locally relevant 'branded' railway ephemera, the museum will selectively collect contemporary material.

4.6. In terms of geographical area, the museum's primary interest will be the Borough of Darlington and its dependent and surrounding area in terms of railway operating and use. This will be deemed to include the routes of the S&DR and its associated companies in their entirety, and the route over Stainmore.

4.7. The museum will also selectively collect items associated with the NER, the LNER and BR, provenanced to the area covered by the pre-1974 counties of Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire, where these illustrate aspects of railway history that are not covered by more locally provenanced material.

4.8. The museum will only collect large structural items or historic buildings (such as stations or signal boxes) where these can specifically contribute towards the delivery of the Museum Forward Plan or are functionally required for railway operating purposes. No large structural items or buildings will be acquired unless, on an item by item basis, it has been ascertained in advance that their erection and use on the site would be acceptable under planning legislation and to English Heritage.

4.9. Since its establishment in 1975, the museum has traditionally depended upon loans, from other museums or heritage railway organisations and from private individuals, for the great majority of the locomotives, carriages and wagons that have made up the core of its displays. As permitted by available opportunities and resources, the museum would like to significantly reduce the extent of its dependence on loans by acquiring its own collection of railway vehicles relevant to its mission and stated interpretive objectives.

4.10. The museum recognises that the collection only represents a small portion of society and includes limited histories of women, people living with disabilities and those from a minority background. These stories exist and the museum will seek to actively collect them through traditional collecting and contemporary collecting in order to rebalance the histories within the collection.

4.11. The museum will seek to collect a representative selection of locomotives built in Darlington, both to show how railway motive power has developed chronologically and the part the town once played in the manufacture of such locomotives.

4.12. A number of locomotives built elsewhere but used at Darlington industrial sites do survive in heritage railway ownership. Should opportunities arise, the museum would wish to acquire single examples of steam, diesel and electric locomotives used in Darlington industry.

4.13. The movement of goods by rail had a significant impact on the urban and economic development of Darlington, and on life in the area. Therefore the museum will seek to acquire a small selection of appropriate vehicles, to illustrate how railway travel in the area has changed over time.

4.14. The museum will seek to collect a small, representative, selection of wagons of different types, to illustrate the range and nature of railway goods traffic in the past.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.

5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

5.3 The museum will undertake rationalisation of the collection where:

- The artefact does not match the current *Collections Development Policy*.
- It is a duplicate of another artefact in the collection.
- The artefact is unprovenanced (i.e. does not have sufficient background information to provide context).
- It is too badly damaged or decayed to be worthy of retention, or was not in the first instance actually of museum quality.
- Its ongoing retention would represent a threat to the health or safety of museum staff or members of the public.
- Would be more appropriate to another museum or organisation's collection.

6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7 Collecting policies of other museums

7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

- National Railway Museum (York & Shildon)
- Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum
- Tyne & Wear Museums Service
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Borough Council
- Durham County Council

Specific reference is made to the following Heritage Railways:

- Tanfield Railway
- Bowes Railway
- North Yorkshire Moors Railway
- Weardale Railway
- Wensleydale Railway

The museum also acknowledges the collecting activities of Darlington Library in the field of local history, and will work with the Library to ensure that significant material is preserved in the most appropriate place.

8 Archival holdings

8.1 The museum holds a large collection of archival material including photographs, ephemera, maps and plans, and locomotive diagrams. The majority of the acquisitions that the museum receives are archival in nature and we will continue to collect relevant material for our collection. Archival material is available to the public for research purposes and is a much used resource.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

All acquisitions must be approved by a member of the Collections Team (either the Development Director or Collection Engagement Manager). No other member of staff may approve an acquisition in their absence. All acquisitions must comply with the museum's current *Collections Development Policy*. Where the acquisition of an item would have significant financial implications, either in terms of purchase price or future preservation, the matter will be referred to the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services for approval.

9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10 Human remains

10.1 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11 Biological and geological material

11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

12 Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13 Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14 Spoliation

14.1 The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

15.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005) , objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

16 Disposal procedures

16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.

16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.

16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).

16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for

the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.

16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

16.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.

16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

Documentation Policy
2025-2030

Name of museum: Hopetown Darlington

Name of governing body: Darlington Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: *date to inserted upon approval at Cabinet*

Policy review procedure: The documentation policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the documentation policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Date at which this policy is due for review: December 2030

1 Introduction

1.1 The museum's collections consist of archival material, held within The Stores, display objects within the North Road Station Museum exhibition rooms and platforms, and artefacts and archive material held within the reserve collection housed on public display in The Stores.

1.2 The museum's collection department currently consists of one full-time Development Director, one full-time Collections Engagement Manager and a small team of volunteers.

1.3 The maintenance of information about all artefacts deposited in the museum, to the SPECTRUM Standard, is a minimum requirement.

1.4 The acquisition and disposal of objects from the collections is covered by the current version of the Collections Development Policy.

1.5 Detailed operational guidelines for documentation procedures, in order to meet the SPECTRUM standard, can be found in the museum's Documentation Procedures manual.

2 Aims of the Documentation Policy

The aims of the Hopetown Darlington Documentation Policy are that for every artefact in its collection:

2.1 The museum has documentary proof of legal title, which also meets ethical standards.

2.2 There is an accurate entry in the Accessions Register.

2.3 A unique accession number is allocated and the artefact is marked or labelled with this number.

2.4 There is an up to date location (recorded on MODES).

2.5 There is a strong link between all associated documentation.

2.6 All documentation meets SPECTRUM standards.

3 Documentation Policy

3.1 The museum will ensure that these aims are met for all new acquisitions and will aim to achieve them for all artefacts already in the museum collection.

3.2 This policy applies to all collections within the museum, including artefacts transferred from Tubwell Row Museum.

3.3 This policy also refers to every artefact on loan to the museum, with the exception of accessioning and marking (although temporary labelling is permitted).

3.4 The museum will on the advice of the senior museum professional, and where funds allow, ensure that the electronic system used to catalogue the collection is suitable for the job and will still be accessible in the future.

3.5 The museum will save all electronic records on the Council's networked system and will be backed up on a remote server offsite.

3.6 The museum will store museum accession registers in a fire-proof safe.

3.7 The museum will ensure that security copies are made of all museum accession registers.

3.8 Only suitably trained museum staff or volunteers will be responsible for carrying out documentation procedures.

3.9 The museum will aim to make information about the collection accessible to the public through on-line catalogues.

3.10 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the museum's Collections Development Policy and the Care and Conservation Policy.

3.11 The Documentation Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is **December 2030.**

3.12 A Documentation Plan for the next five years will accompany this policy.

Care and Conservation Policy
2025-2030

Name of museum: Hopetown Darlington

Name of governing body: Darlington Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: *date to inserted upon approval at Cabinet*

Policy review procedure: The care and conservation policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the care and conservation policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Date at which this policy is due for review: December 2030

1 Introduction

1.1 Hopetown Darlington's statement of purpose highlights the museum's responsibility to preserve the collections for future generations:

*The museum's **responsibility** is to **preserve** for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.*

1.2 The Museums Association Code of Ethics states that museums have a duty to:

'***maintain*** and develop collections for current and future generations'

1.3 Hopetown Darlington does not employ a conservator. However, the Collections Engagement Manager has access to advice from a conservator/collections care adviser.

1.4 The museum is housed in a Grade II listed building, which was previously a railway station. The collections consist of industrial collections, social history collections and archive collections.

1.5 The Care and Conservation Policy is based on a combination of preventative conservation (measures to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum artefacts) and remedial conservation (measure which involve treatments to stabilise or improve the condition of an artefact).

1.6 The Care and Conservation Policy is to be read in conjunction with the museum's Forward Plan, Collections Development Policy, Documentation Policy and Emergency Manual.

1.7 The Care and Conservation Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is **December 2030.**

1.8 A Care and Conservation Plan for the next five years will accompany this policy.

2 Aims of the Care and Conservation Policy

The aims of the Hopetown Darlington Care and Conservation Policy are that for every artefact in its collection (in store, on display or on loan to/from) the museum will:

2.1 Take steps to slow down deterioration and prevent damage to artefacts.

2.2 Provide systems and equipment that monitor the environment, the artefacts and the buildings they are stored in.

2.3 Control and improve the environment, the artefacts and the buildings they are stored in.

2.4 Regularly seek professional advice from a conservator or collection care advisor.

2.5 Ensure that any conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services is included on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

2.6 Ensure that all members of staff working with the museum collection are aware of and follow all policies and procedures.

3 Collections Conditions Overview

3.1 Hopetown Darlington will survey and visually inspect the conditions of the collections in order to identify areas for improvement in line with best practice as defined by 'Benchmarks in Collections Care'. Hopetown Darlington will aim to meet, as a minimum, the 'basic level' requirement of Benchmarks. This Policy will be supported by a Care and Conservation Plan.

4 Preventative Conservation

4.1 Hopetown Darlington consists of four buildings, three of which are listed. Two of these house the collection. North Road Station Museum is situated in a Grade II listed building owned by Network Rail and leased by Darlington Borough Council until 2174. The Goods Shed, Carriage Works and Live Engineering Shed are owned by Darlington Borough Council. The buildings are maintained by Darlington Borough Council. Museum staff are responsible for regularly inspecting the buildings and ensuring that they are suitably maintained, undertaking repairs as required. The following systems are implemented to safeguard the collection:

- Building Maintenance
- Electrical Maintenance
- Intruder Alarms
- Fire and Evacuation Systems
- Building Maintenance Systems
- CCTV Systems
- Overnight Security Firm

4.2 Environmental Monitoring

- Hopetown Darlington will monitor and record the environment (temperature, relative humidity and light levels) of the exhibition and storage areas using continuous recording systems and hand held devices.
- The museum will analyse the results of the environmental monitoring and take action to control and improve the environment where necessary (subject to funding availability).
- The museum will monitor, manage and eliminate pests.

4.3 Environmental Control

Hopetown Darlington will store and display collections in a managed environment that minimises their rate of deterioration, using the following control factors and methods:

- Temperature: 18- 25 degrees centigrade
- Relative Humidity: 40-60% RH with less than a 10% fluctuation in any 24 hour period (mixed collections)
- Visible Light: 50 – 250 lux, depending on the light sensitivity of the object
- Storage: where practicable stored collections will be protected from dust using inert boxes, crates, covered racking or covered pallets
- Display: where appropriate, objects on display will be cased and the internal case environments tailored to suit the objects within.

4.4 Housekeeping

- Housekeeping programmes will be established and followed in line with benchmarking action plans.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained to clean display areas in a way that will not damage the collections. Dry cleaning methods will be favoured.
- New acquisitions and loans will be quarantined pending full inspection.
- Storage and display areas vulnerable to pest attack will be monitored on a monthly basis. Trap contents will be recorded and infestations located and eradicated.

4.5 Handling, movement and transportation of artefacts

- All collections and technical staff will be trained in object handling procedures.
- The movement of large or awkward items will be planned in advance with advice from the Collections Engagement Manager.
- All artefacts that are to be transported will be suitably wrapped and protected to avoid damage during movement.
- Items that are to be transported abroad will be accompanied by a courier, who will be either a member of museum staff or a suitably trained individual from another organisation.

4.6 Emergency Planning

- The Emergency Manual will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

5 Remedial Conservation

5.1 The museum will allow the basic cleaning of artefacts to be undertaken by suitably trained museum staff only.

5.2 If an artefact requires more advanced treatment the museum will contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor.

5.3 All treatments will be photographed and documented on MODES and records will be maintained in accordance with SPECTRUM standards.

Loans Policy
2025-2030

Name of museum: Hopetown Darlington

Name of governing body: Darlington Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: *date to inserted upon approval at Cabinet*

Policy review procedure: The loans policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the loans policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

Date at which this policy is due for review: December 2030

1 Introduction

1.1 From time to time it is appropriate for Hopetown Darlington to borrow items of historical significance from museums, other organisations or private individuals. Comparably, it is also sometimes appropriate for the museum to lend items from its collections.

1.2 The purpose of this policy is to regulate the approval and management of both outgoing and incoming loans. In doing so, it seeks to meet two objectives. Firstly, to minimise any risk the Council may face of a claim from a lender alleging that items of their property in the museum's care have been stolen, lost, destroyed or damaged. Secondly, to safeguard items from the museum's own collections loaned to others by ensuring that such items are appropriately cared for by their borrowers.

1.3 This Policy follows the procedures for loans outlined in SPECTRUM: the UK Museum Documentation Standard.

2 Authority and Responsibility

2.1 The Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services, as advised by the Museum Collections Team, will have delegated authority for approving and terminating both incoming and outgoing loans for items of major financial or historical significance, consistent with this Policy.

2.2 The Museum Collections Team will be responsible for all other loans as consistent with this Policy.

2.3 The following general exceptions to this position are noted:

- Where, in the view of the Council's museum collections team, an incoming loan might involve significant financial implications in terms of its movement or ongoing care; or

- Where, in the view of the Council's museum collections team, the nature of an incoming or outgoing loan might attract an adverse public reaction.

In such circumstances, the prior approval of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services will be required.

2.4 Responsibility for the security and physical care of incoming loans will be delegated to the Council's museum collections team. Equally, the museum collections team will be regarded as responsible for ensuring that outgoing loans are monitored, and that borrowers are taking all reasonable steps with regard to the security and physical care of items in their possession.

3 Outgoing Loans

3.1 Any item from the museum's collections may, at the discretion of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team, be loaned to an accredited museum, other organisation or private individual provided that:

- The item is not currently required by the museum for public display;
- Appropriate, arrangements will be put in place by the borrower for the item's physical care, to safeguard its security, and to insure it against all risks for an agreed value;
- The borrower can provide sound and sufficient justification for wishing to borrow the item; and
- The terms of the loan are recorded in writing over the signatures of authorised representatives of both the museum and the borrower.

3.2 It is accepted that in certain circumstances it may be proper for the museum to actively seek to place an item on loan with another accredited museum, other organisation or private individual.

3.3 By agreement between the parties, the duration of an outgoing loan may be for any stated period up to ten years. Where circumstances have not materially changed on either side, an outgoing loan that has naturally reached the end of its term may be renewed as many times as is felt desirable by both parties, although never for a period exceeding ten years at any one time.

3.4 Where an outgoing loan is to another accredited museum, no financial recompense will be sought, other than that the museum will have the discretion to recharge any costs that it would not otherwise have incurred.

3.5 Where a request for the loan of an item comes from another accredited museum, subject to the provisions of 3.1 above there will be a strong presumption in favour of the request being granted.

3.6 Relevant third parties must ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements covering outgoing loans are in place from the moment the item(s) pass from the museum's custody until the point when responsibility is formally returned to the museum.

3.7 When on display or otherwise in the public eye, it will be a condition of all outgoing loans that the borrower should appropriately acknowledge the museum's ownership of the item in question.

3.8 There will be a general, although not universal, expectation that borrowers will cover the cost of transport in both directions and any costs associated with the item's care whilst it is in their possession.

3.9 There is a general expectation that any concerns about the condition of an item on loan to a third party will be referred immediately back to the museum.

3.10 All borrowers will be required to fully indemnify the Council in respect of any claim or health and safety liability that may arise, other than where information that should reasonably have been known to the Council was not effectively communicated to the borrower.

3.11 An outgoing loan may be terminated by the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team, at any time for breach or with a period of notice to be set out in the loan agreement. However, other than when terminated for breach, where an outgoing loan is terminated early the borrower will be entitled to ask to be indemnified by the Council in respect to part of any costs the borrower incurred in the expectation that the loan would subsist for its duration as originally agreed.

4 Incoming Loans

4.1 Subject to 2.2 above, at the discretion of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team the museum may borrow any item deemed relevant to its purposes as set out below, from an accredited museum, other organisation or private individual.

4.2 The museum may borrow any item, without restriction, where it is identified as being relevant for inclusion within a temporary exhibition. Other than in making reasonable time allowances for exhibition preparation and disassembly, the duration of such loans will not normally extend beyond the period of the exhibition in question.

4.3 The museum may borrow any item covered by its *Collections Development Policy*, or specifically required for comparative purposes, for inclusion in its long-term displays or for research purposes. When such an item is no longer wanted for display or once active research involving it has come to an end, it will normally be returned to its owners as soon as is practicably possible. Any such loan will be for a maximum of ten years at any one time, subject to renewal as necessary by mutual agreement between the parties.

4.4 From time to time, the museum may identify items of great individual significance and covered by its *Collections Development Policy*, which are owned by non-museum organisations or private individuals, which the museum would actively seek to acquire on a permanent basis given the opportunity to do so, but of which the owners wish to retain ownership. In such circumstances the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team, may authorise the item to be held on loan in storage as well as when required for display. Any such loan will be for a maximum of ten years at any one time, subject to renewal as necessary by mutual agreement between the parties. However, subject to this specific exclusion, as a general rule the museum will not hold items on loan for long periods unless required for display or active research.

5 Operational Items

5.1 This Policy is not intended to apply to circumstances where the museum wishes to borrow or hire an item, including locomotives and other railway vehicles, for operational use rather than because of the item's historical significance. In such circumstances, terms of contract will be agreed between the parties.

5.2 However, for the avoidance of doubt, where the museum wishes to borrow an item because of its historical significance and it is also intended that the item should work, this Policy will apply. Other than as set out below, no item may be operated on the museum site unless it is formally on loan to the museum or covered by contractual arrangements as an item of working plant.

5.3 An exception to this general rule is noted in relation to locomotives and other railway vehicles being moved around by one of the Council's partner organisations with right of access to the site's internal railway system, solely to meet that organisation's own operational needs and not for public demonstration or display purposes. Items being moved under such circumstances need not be placed on loan with, or hired to, the museum, provided that the organisation in question operates in accordance with the museum's Safety Management System and has insurance cover to the satisfaction of the Council's Insurance Unit.

5.4 In all circumstances where an operational locomotive or other vehicle belonging to a third party is present on the site, it will remain the responsibility of the owners, rather than the museum, to arrange steam boiler or pressure vessel inspections and insurances as necessary.

5.5 Where the museum hires or, under this Policy borrows, an operational locomotive, the arrangement may (but need not) be made subject to the terms of a Private Owner Agreement in a form recognised by the Heritage Railway Association.

6 Insurance

6.1 All incoming loans will be fully covered at an Agreed Value by All Risks insurance cover put in place by the Council, from the moment the item passes into the museum's custody until the point when responsibility is formally returned to the owner or an agreed third party such as a road haulage contractor.

7 Maintenance of Records

7.1 The museum will maintain full, detailed records of the current location, condition and agreed value of all incoming and outgoing loans, to the satisfaction of the Council's Insurance Unit. From time to time the Audit Section will make spot checks or undertake a full review of these records.

7.2 No less than once every twelve months, an inventory and condition check will be completed for all incoming loans. On an equivalent cycle the museum will check the status of all outgoing loans, making a site visit and visual inspection where appropriate.

8 Revision of Policy

8.1 The Loans Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is **June 2030**.

HOPETOWN
- DARLINGTON -

Documentation Plan
2025-2030

1 Target Position

Hopetown Darlington will meet the Accreditation standard for Documentation as outlined in Section 2.

We will use the minimum standards for the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures for the following procedures;

- Object Entry
- Loans in
- Acquisition
- Location and movement control
- Cataloguing
- Object exit
- Loans out

We have documentation backlogs in our collections, in particular in our archive collection. We will use SPECTRUM minimum standards to bring our records up to the required standard.

2 Review of Current Procedures

2.1 Object Entry

- An *Object Entry* form must accompany all items entering the Museum (see appendices for an example of an *Object Entry* form).

- A *Donating Objects to the Museum* leaflet (see appendices) should be given to all persons wishing to donate items to the Museum (also available on the museum website).

- The *Object Entry* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Entry* form register.

- All relevant sections of the form must be completed, signed and dated. The *Object Entry* form should always include full details of ownership, including rights of information if known.

- A summary description of the objects (numbering them where possible) with any known historical background, including any associated rights (e.g. copyright).

- The reason the objects are entering the museum.

- On completion of the *Object Entry* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Entry* file as the master copy. The second pink copy is given to the donor as a receipt. The third blue copy remains with the artefact(s). If the material is accessioned the blue copy is filed in the Object History file. If the material is returned the blue copy is filed in the Loans In Returned file, a note is made in the *Entry Form* register and the white copy of the *Object Entry* form is signed and dated to record that the objects have left the museum.

- All objects on entering the museum will be stored in the collections store.

2.2 Acquisition

- Staff must never accept donations to the museum. Only the Development Director or Collections Engagement Manager may accept items and this is by prior appointment only.

- Each item being offered for donation must comply with the museum's current *Collections Development Policy*. If after consideration the material is considered not appropriate to the Museum Collection, the item will be returned to the owner.

- If the material is being donated to the museum a *Transfer of Title* form must be completed (see appendices for an example of a *Transfer of Title* form).

- The *Transfer of Title* form number and details must be recorded in the *Transfer of Title Form* register. The *Object Entry* number must be recorded on the *Transfer of Title* form and in the *Transfer of Title* register and vice-versa.

- All relevant sections of the form must be completed, signed and dated. The *Transfer of Title* form should always include:
  - Full details of ownership, including rights of information if known.
  - A summary description of the objects (numbering them where possible) with any known historical background, including any associated rights (e.g. copyright).
  - The reason the objects are entering the museum.

- On completion of the *Transfer of Title* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Transfer of Title* file as the master copy. The second yellow copy is given to the donor as a receipt. The third blue copy remains with the artefact(s). When the material is accessioned the blue copy is filed in the *Object History* file.

- It is the aim of the museum to accession artefacts within a month of donation.

- The artefact will be given its unique accession number; photographed and using MODES entered onto the Museum Catalogue and assigned a permanent location.

- Artefacts should be numbered using the following rules:

  - The number will be prefixed with DARRM (to identify the item belonging to Hopetown Darlington followed by the year, then followed by the number of the object e.g.DARRM:2003.102 (103 will be used to accession the next item).
  - At the start of each year the number of the item will return to 1

e.g.DARRM:2004.1
- Suffixes can be added to identify individual items within a group
  e.g.DARRM:2003.102.1
  e.g.DARRM:2003.102.2
- If an item has several parts to it, for example a teapot, this can be accessioned using the following sequence
  e.g. Teapot (body) DARRM:2003.103a
  e.g. Teapot (lid) DARRM:2003.103b

- The artefact will then be recorded in the museum *Accession Register* using archival quality ink.

- All items must be marked with their accession number either directly onto the artefact or using a label (see appendices for *Object Marking Procedures*).

- A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the donor.

- The item will then be appropriately wrapped and placed in its new permanent location.

- A security copy of the *Accession Register* will be made as and when required (on completion of a register).

- The MODES database and artefact photographs are stored on the council server and therefore are automatically backed up. However, regular back-ups will be made of both resources on a monthly basis.

2.3 Location and Movement Control

- A *Location Movement* ticket must be completed for any object moved from its present location (see appendices for an example of a *Location Movement* ticket).

- Only the Development Director or Collections Engagement Manager are authorised to move or remove items from their location.

- For temporary moves one copy of the ticket must be left in the objects usual location and the second copy should be used to update the catalogue. This can then be filed in the *Temporary Locations* file.

- If the items are re-housed for any length of time, for example exhibition use, the new location should be documented in the object file under the TEMPORARY_LOCATION field on the MODES catalogue.

- For permanent moves record the move as permanent on the *Location Movement* ticket. One copy of the ticket should be used to update the catalogue and filed in the *Object History* file (or disposed of). The second copy can be disposed of.

- If the object is given a new permanent location, the information must be documented in the object file under PERMANENT_LOCATION field on the MODES catalogue.

2.4 Cataloguing

- Items should be catalogued as soon as possible after accessioning. The museum aims to catalogue items at the same time as they are accessioned, within a month of donation.

- Cataloguing should only be carried out by a trained museum professional or volunteer under supervision of the Collections Engagement Manager.

- Catalogue information is held on the MODES computer database and should be accompanied by a photograph of the object.

- The minimum amount of information that should be catalogued is:
    - Accession number
    - Simple name
    - Number of items/parts
    - Brief physical description
    - Acquisition method, date and source material
    - Location information
    - Reference to available images
    - Recorder

- Where possible the following information should also be catalogued:
    - Title
    - Full name
    - Classification information
    - Field collection information
    - Production information
    - Association information
    - Valuation
    - Entry number

- The MODES database and artefact photographs are stored on the council server and therefore are automatically backed up.

2.5 Object Exit

- For details of who can authorise the exit of objects please consult the *Loans Policy* and the *Collections Development Policy*.

- An *Object Exit* form must be completed for all items leaving the museum (see appendices for an example of an *Object Exit* form). The *Object Exit* form must include:

    - Removers and/or Recipients name and address
    - Contact telephone number
    - Reason for exit
    - Return date (if appropriate)
    - DARRM number of the object
    - Description of the object(s)

- Condition of object(s)
- Insurance Valuation
- If the object(s) are to be returned

- On completion of the *Object Exit* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Exit* file as the master copy. The second yellow copy is given to the recipient as a receipt. If the items are on loan the third blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Active* file. If the material is to be permanently removed from the collection the blue copy is filed in the *Object History* file.

- The *Object Exit* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Exit Form* register, along with the return date (if appropriate).

- If the material is returned the white and yellow copy of the *Object Exit* form should be signed and dated by the Development Director or Collections Engagement Manager in recognition of having received the item(s) back in satisfactory condition (subject to later detailed examination). Both the recipient (yellow) and the museum (white) will keep their respected parts of the form for receipt. If the items were on loan the third blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Returned* file.

2.6 Loans In

- Loans will only be accepted within the Museum if they comply with the *Loans Policy*. Only in exceptional circumstances will items be accepted as a loan and will usually only be accepted for exhibition displays.

- An *Object Entry* form must be completed, signed and dated by one of the museum collections team and the person who has loaned the artefact (see appendices for an example of an *Object Entry* form). The form must include:

  - The owner's name and address
  - Length of the loan (usually from one to ten years)
  - The term PERMANENT LOAN must not be used.
  - Any particular terms of the loan
  - Description of object(s)
  - Condition of object(s)
  - Insurance Valuation

- On completion of the *Object Entry* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Entry* file as the master copy. The second pink copy is given to the donor as a receipt. The third blue copy is filed in the *Loans In Active* file.

- The *Object Entry* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Entry Form* register along with the end date of the loan.

- At the end of the loan period when the material is returned the white copy is signed and dated by both parties. The blue copy is filed in the *Loans In Returned* file and a note is made in the *Entry Form* register.

- The previous loan procedure within the Museum was to add the item to the catalogue, giving the item a DARRM number followed by /L. The item was then added to the accessions register. Loan objects must now **not** be added to the accession register.

- For loans taken into the museum using the old procedures: When the loan object exits the Museum, all records must be altered. An *Object Exit* form must be completed and a copy attached to the loan agreement (if there is one). The date of exit must be added to the MODES catalogue and the record moved to the *Returned* file.

2.7 Loans Out

- The Executive Director for Environment, Highways and Community Services as advised by the Museum Collections Team, will have delegated authority for approving and terminating both incoming and outgoing loans for items of major financial or historical significance, consistent with this Policy.

- The museum collections team will be responsible for all other loans as consistent with the *Loans Policy*.

- An *Object Exit* form must be completed for all items leaving the Museum on loan and must be accompanied by the *Loan Agreement* which includes the *Conditions of Loan* (see appendices for an example of an *Object Exit* form, *Loan Agreement* and *Conditions of Loan*). The *Object Exit* form must include:

    - Removers and/or Recipients name and address
    - Contact telephone number
    - Location of the Loan
    - Period of Loan (start and end date)
    - DARRM number of the object
    - Description of the object(s)
    - Condition of object(s)
    - Insurance Valuation
    - Any particular terms of the loan

- On completion of the *Object Exit* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Exit* file as the master copy. The second yellow copy is given to the recipient as a receipt. The third blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Active* file.

- The *Object Exit* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Exit Form* register along with the end date of the loan.

- Details of the outgoing loan must be added to the relevant file on the MODES catalogue database under the LOAN_OUT field.

- At the end of the loan period when the material is returned the white and yellow copy of the *Object Exit* form should be signed and dated by the Development Director or Collections Engagement Manager in recognition of having received the item(s) back in satisfactory

condition (subject to later detailed examination). Both the RECIPIENT and MUSEUM will keep their respected parts of the form for receipt.

- The blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Returned* file and a note is made in the *Object Exit Form* register. The date of return must be added to the MODES catalogue.

3 Retrospective Documentation

3.1 Background

- The museum opened in 1975 and was originally administered by a charitable trust. The Trust Collection consisted of a combination of donations, loans from private donors (short-term and indefinite) and loans from local and national museums. In 1985 responsibility for the running of the museum, and the management of the collections, passed to Darlington Borough Council. Any items donated after this date belong to the museum and the council. Any items donated prior to this date remain the property of the Trust (which has yet to be wound up despite numerous attempts by the council). These items (along with the loans taken in by the Trust) are regarded as Trust Loans.

- From 1990 all artefacts donated to the museum were given an accession number. At the same time a retrospective documentation project commenced to accession artefacts donated to the museum prior to 1990 and to identify any Trust Loans.

- In 2012 the museum has underwent a change in staffing. The Curator's post was merged with that of the Manager in 2013 (becoming the Manager Curator). This meant that the Curator's time was taken away from the collections department to focus on the management of the museum. In 2015 a Collections and Learning Assistant was appointed and since this time a considerable amount of progress has been achieved with regards to the documentation backlog.

- Since the last return in 2016, progress continued until March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of the museum for two periods, March to June 2020 and November to May 2021. With no access to collections during this time, the planned milestones in the 2016-2021 plan were not reached.

- From January 2022 until July 2024 the entire museum collection was stored at offsite premises during a period of redevelopment. Only essential access was provided to the collection during this time, for environmental monitoring purposes. No progress was made on the documentation plan during this time.

- Unfortunately not all artefacts donated to the museum from 1975 to 2009 (when the current Curator was appointed) have been formally accessioned and catalogued as part of the museum collection, in line with SPECTRUM and Accreditation Standard procedures.

- As the collection has been assembled on an ad hoc basis, with little consideration of a Collections Development Policy, an assessment will need to be made of the suitability of items for the collection ahead of accessioning.

- This procedure has been written using the guidance in the Collections Trust SPECTRUM Advice Sheet *Retrospective Documentation and Making an Inventory* http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/images/documents/c1/a210/f6/Retrospective_documentation.pdf

3.2 Aim

- To complete a basic inventory of all museum collection items in order to:
    - Make decisions about retention of items for the collection, in line with the museum's *Collections Development Policy*.
    - Gain a better understanding of the scope of the collection.
    - Match any existing documentation (e.g. entry forms, correspondence) against the inventoried items.
    - Identify Trust Loans and other loans that require termination so that artefacts can be returned to their owners.

3.3 Procedure

- Work systematically through the museum where collections are held to record each item or group of items directly on to the collections management database, MODES Complete.

- Where an object (or group of objects) does not have an existing number, assign a temporary number using the number system INV+ running number- i.e. INV1, INV2, INV3- attach a temporary paper label and create a new record on MODES.

- Record the following information on the database record about the item(s)
    - Temporary INV number
    - Simple name
    - Brief description (e.g. no of items)
    - Dimensions
    - Location
    - Date
    - Name of recorder

- On completing the inventory, review the items against existing documentation/ correspondence etc. to ensure that any other information about objects is brought into the system.

- At this point an assessment of what to be retained and disposed of can be made. This must follow the procedures laid out in the *Collections Development Policy*.

- For objects to be retained they should then be accessioned, marked and catalogued, in line with the museum's procedures. (N.B. entry forms are never filled out retrospectively).

3.4 Retrospective Documentation Action Plan

	Action	Timescale	Resources
1	**Documentation Stage 1** All procedures are in place.	Complete	
2	**Documentation Stage 2** Inventory work is currently ongoing as described above for the following locations: • Cage One • Cage Two • Cage Three • Cage Four • Framed Collection Storage • Framed Display Collection • Roller Racking	June 2026 June 2026 June 2026 June 2026 June 2026 June 2026 December 2026	Collections Team Volunteers
3	**Documentation Stage 3** Discrepancy checking of the stage 2 inventory against existing paperwork for the following locations: • Cage One • Cage Two • Cage Three • Cage Four • Framed Collection Storage • Framed Display Collection • Roller Racking	December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 December 2027	Collections Team Volunteers
4	**Documentation Stage 4** Complete acquisition and cataloguing procedures for inventoried items in the identified backlog for the following locations: • Cage One • Cage Two • Cage Three • Cage Four • Framed Collection Storage • Framed Display Collection • Roller Racking	December 2028 December 2028 December 2028 December 2028 December 2028 December 2028 December 2028	Collections Team Volunteers

A *Documentation Policy* for the next five years will accompany this plan.

HOPETOWN
- DARLINGTON -

Care and Conservation Plan 2025-2030

1 Collections Condition Overview

1.1 The museum collection consists of railway related industrial collections, social history and costume items plus an extensive archive collection including ephemera and photographs. Although not strictly 'collections' in the traditional sense, in that they are fixed structures in their original locations, there is an argument that the most important items the museum holds are the buildings from the occupation of the site known by the S&DR as 'North Road'.

1.2 The museum currently undertakes a programme of collections care and conservation on a regular basis. The museum uses Benchmarks in Collection Care (version 2.0) to review its collection which enables us to improve the collections care we provide.

1.3 The museum staff undertake visual inspections of all artefacts on display and in storage on a regular basis.

2 Environmental Monitoring

2.1 The museum ensures that the collection is environmentally monitored for temperature and humidity on a weekly basis using data loggers. The information retrieved is downloaded, analysed and recorded. The museum undertakes light monitoring (for UV and lux) on a monthly basis. The results are analysed and recorded. The museum undertakes pest management on a monthly basis. The results are analysed and recorded.

3 Environmental Control

3.1 Due to the nature of the building (Grade II* listed railway station) and the lack of resources it is difficult to implement hi-tech modes of environmental control. The museum endeavours to keep temperature, humidity and light levels within the recommended perimeters. A dehumidifier is available to treat fluctuations in humidity. Light sensitive items are displayed away from damaging light sources and only for short periods. Where practicable artefacts in storage are protected from dust using inert boxes, crates, covered racking or covered pallets. Where appropriate objects on display are cased and the internal case environments are tailored to suit the objects within.

4 Provision of a Suitable Building

4.1 The museum building is a Grade II* listed railway station, which is owned by Network Rail and maintained by Darlington Borough Council.

4.2 Darlington Borough Council's Corporate Landlord team undertake the day to day maintenance of the museum building with specialist contractors employed when necessary.

5 Housekeeping

5.1 The Housekeepers and Visitor Experience Team Members undertake general housekeeping on a weekly basis (with advice and guidance from the Collections Engagement Manager).

5.2 The Visitor Experience Team Members monitor the artefacts on display during the daily duties and notify the Collections Engagement Manager if they notice any issues relating to the artefact on display.

5.3 The buildings on-site are checked on a weekly basis and any maintenance issues are reported to the Operations Manager so that they can be rectified.

5.4 Housekeeping is of the highest importance. All staff are aware of the importance of reporting any pest sightings to the Collections Engagement Manager. All vulnerable areas are monitored with pest traps.

6 Remedial Conservation

6.1 Priorities for remedial conservation will be identified during the inventory stage of the Documentation Plan (Documentation Stage 2) and /or if artefacts will be required for exhibition.

6.2 If an artefact requires remedial conservation the museum will contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor (e.g. Conservation Advisory Network).

7 Care and Conservation Action Plan 2025-2027

Subject	Aim	Solution	Deadline
Collections Condition Overview	To ensure that all artefacts are condition checked and conservation undertaken where necessary.	Condition check all artefacts on display. Condition check all artefacts in storage during collections inventory (see *Documentation Plan*). Contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor for advice and guidance.	Yearly December 2030 (Every five years) Ongoing (as and when required)

Environmental Monitoring	To ensure that all artefacts are accurately environmentally monitored and action taken where required.	Monitor and record temperature and humidity levels. Monitor and record light levels. Contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor for advice and guidance. Calibrate environmental monitoring equipment.	Weekly Monthly Ongoing (as and when required) Every two years
Building Maintenance	To ensure that the museum building is suitably maintained.	Report any building maintenance issues as soon as they arise.	Ongoing (as and when required)
Housekeeping	To ensure that all of the exhibition and storage areas are clean and pest free.	Undertake cleaning of museum exhibition areas. Undertake cleaning of museum storage areas. Monitor and record pest activity. Contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor for advice and guidance.	Weekly Monthly Monthly Ongoing (as and when required)
Remedial Conservation	To ensure that all artefacts that require remedial conservation receive it.	Identify artefacts that require conservation. Investigate funding opportunities to enable conservation of artefacts.	December 2026 Ongoing (as and when required)

A *Care and Conservation Policy* for the next five years will accompany this plan.

HOPETOWN
- DARLINGTON -

Appendices

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HOPETOWN
- DARLINGTON -

Conditions of Loan

1. The artefact shall at all times remain the property of Hopetown Darlington and may require the artefact to be returned immediately at the expense of the Borrower in any of the following circumstances:
    a. If the Borrower fails to carry out any of the terms of this agreement to the satisfaction of Hopetown Darlington.
    b. If the artefact becomes surplus to the requirements of the Borrower.
    c. If the Borrower dies, becomes bankrupt, enters into liquidation or otherwise ceases to exist.

2. The Borrower must nominate a primary individual to whom all correspondence relating to the loan will be addressed. The Borrower must notify Hopetown Darlington immediately of any change in the identity or address of this contact.

3. Reasonable access to the artefact must be allowed by the Borrower to officers of Hopetown Darlington, or such persons as it may nominate, to inspect the artefact and premises where it is housed to ensure that the provisions of this Agreement and the requirements of Hopetown Darlington are being complied with. This shall be at the Borrower's expense.

4. The Borrower may not lend the artefact to any third party nor may the artefact be removed from the specified display premises without the prior written permission of Hopetown Darlington.

5. The Borrower will ensure that the artefact is maintained in a suitable condition for display. Dusting and other light cleaning may be carried out by trained staff but no repairs, restoration, conservation or extensive cleaning may be undertaken.

6. The artefact will not be released until Hopetown Darlington is satisfied with the standard of packing and of the security of the artefact on any vehicle. For the return to Hopetown Darlington the Borrower will provide packing and transport equivalent to that used on the outward journey. The cost of all packing and transport may be borne by the Borrower.

7. The artefact must be exhibited in a secure building in areas adequately protected against extremes of temperature, humidity, light and vibration. We may require proof of environmental conditions and how the artefact is displayed during the loan.

8. The artefact must be on regular surveillance by the Borrower's staff whilst open to the public.

9. The artefact must be in an area monitored by an alarm system whilst closed to the public.

10. An acknowledgement to Hopetown Darlington must be given in all press releases, leaflets, exhibition labels, catalogues and programmes. The wording of these must be agreed in advance with Hopetown Darlington.

11. Photographs or other reproductions of the artefact must not be made for commercial purposes by the Borrower or other bodies or persons without the prior written permission of Hopetown Darlington.

12. The Borrower may not produce any new products relating to the loaned artefact without the prior written permission of Hopetown Darlington.

13. No Press Releases may be issued until the Loan Agreement (Exit Form) has been signed by both parties and returned to the Hopetown Development Director or Collections Engagement Manager.

14. On finalisation of the Loan Agreement Press activity must be co-ordinated by and agreed by Hopetown Darlington.

15. No agreement between the Borrower and any third party shall be entered into without the prior written permission of Hopetown Darlington.

16. The Borrower will be responsible for the safe custody of the artefact throughout the loan period and will make good any loss or damage at his own expense to the satisfaction of Hopetown Darlington.

17. The Borrower accepts full responsibility for any loss or damage incurred while in transit from or to Hopetown Darlington.

18. The Borrower will insure the artefact for All Risks. Evidence of the insurance or written acceptance of liability for any loss or damage to the artefact will be required before the artefact is released from Hopetown Darlington. Any excess due to be paid on any claim shall be paid by the Borrower.

19. Hopetown Darlington must be informed immediately of any loss or damage to the artefact.

Revised April 2025 by Alison Grange (Collections Engagement Manager)

Hopetown Darlington

Donating objects to the museum

We hope this information will explain what objects the museum collects and how you can donate objects to the museum.

The museum collects objects relating to the railways of North East England, with particular emphasis on the Darlington area. This can include archive material, photographs, costume, tools and items used on the railways.

How do we decide what to collect?

- Does it relate to the railways of North East England or Darlington?
- Is it in good condition?
- Do we already have one in the collection?
- Does the item have a history or a provenance?
- Does the object fit in with our Collecting Policy?

The Collecting Policy allows us to manage how many objects enter the collection and ensures that we do not collect objects that we cannot store properly or that would be of more benefit in another museum.

How do you donate objects to the museum?

- If you would like to donate items to the museum you **must** first contact the Curator either by telephone, e-mail or letter.
- The museum is unable to accept objects if you do not make a prior appointment with the Curator.
- If the item meets all the requirements above the Curator will ask you to complete two forms (an entry form and a transfer of title form). This means that you have donated the object to the museum and it is now part of the museum collection.
- If the object does not meet all the requirements and we are unable to accession the item into the museum collection we may ask if we can use the object with school groups as part of an education handling box. Otherwise the item will be returned.

Contact the Collections Engagement Officer:

Telephone: (01325) 405542
E-mail: thestores@darlington.gov.uk
Address: Hopetown Darlington, McNay Street, Darlington, DL3 6SW

MUSEUM OBJECT ENTRY FORM

MUSEUM NAME:	DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL	Form No:	00405

Received from:	Owner (if different):
Address:	Address:
Tel No:	Tel No:

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT/COLLECTION (note obvious damage, & any related information eg. when, where, or how was it found or used; names, dates & details of the people who made or previously owned it, etc. **Continue on a new sheet if necessary)**

Total no. of items:

REASON FOR ENTRY (tick as applicable, and sign)

- ☐ **Donation** - I offer to donate the object(s) listed above to the museum's governing body.
- ☐ **Sale** - I offer to sell the object(s) listed above to the museum's governing body (price sought £.....).
- ☐ **Loan** - I offer to loan the object(s) listed above for the use of the museum's governing body for a period of ..... months.
- ☐ **Identification** - I leave the object(s) listed above for identification & undertake to collect these no later than 4 weeks from today.

I confirm that the information given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, & that I accept the terms and conditions described overleaf.

Signed: Date:

ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT (DONATIONS/SALES ONLY) (tick as applicable, and sign)

- ☐ I, the **owner**, confirm that I have undisputed title to the object(s) listed above, with full power to dispose of the items and transfer such title to the museum's governing body. OR
- ☐ I, the **depositor** acting on behalf of the owner(s), confirm that the owner(s) have undisputed title to the object(s) listed above, with full power to dispose of the items and transfer such title to the museum's governing body, & that I am authorised by the owner(s) to act on their behalf to that effect.

The title in the objects listed above, & subject to the conditions overleaf, is hereby transferred to the governing body of the museum.

Signed: Date:

MUSEUM SIGNATORY

Receipt of the object(s) described above is hereby acknowledged.

Signed: Date:
on behalf of the museum's governing body

RETURN OF OBJECT TO OWNER (tick as applicable, and sign)

I, the depositor/owner, acknowledge the return of the object(s) described above in a satisfactory condition following:

- ☐ identification ☐ the end of the period of loan
- ☐ the museum's governing body declining to accept the donation, loan or purchase of the object(s)

Signed: **Countersigned** (for museum): Date:

© MDA/East Midlands Museums Service

HOSR004 - 001

WHITE - MUSEUM (FILE)
PINK - DEPOSITOR/OWNER (RECEIPT)
BLUE - MUSEUM (TO ACCOMPANY OBJECT/S)

TRANSFER OF TITLE FORM

Sheet of

DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM
DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Institution: transfer of title number 0017

ACQUISITION

The museum gratefully acknowledges the acquisition into the collection of the items described below, from:

Acquisition method: _____ **date:** _____

DESCRIPTION OF ACQUIRED MATERIAL

entry form number	accession number
identity number	brief description

TRANSFER

In order to complete the transfer of title from you to the museum, we would be grateful if you could read the relevent notes overleaf and then sign this form to confirm that the details above are correct and that you accept the conditions overleaf. Please retain the second (yellow) part of the form for your files and return the first (white) part to the museum.

Museum officer: _____ **date:** _____

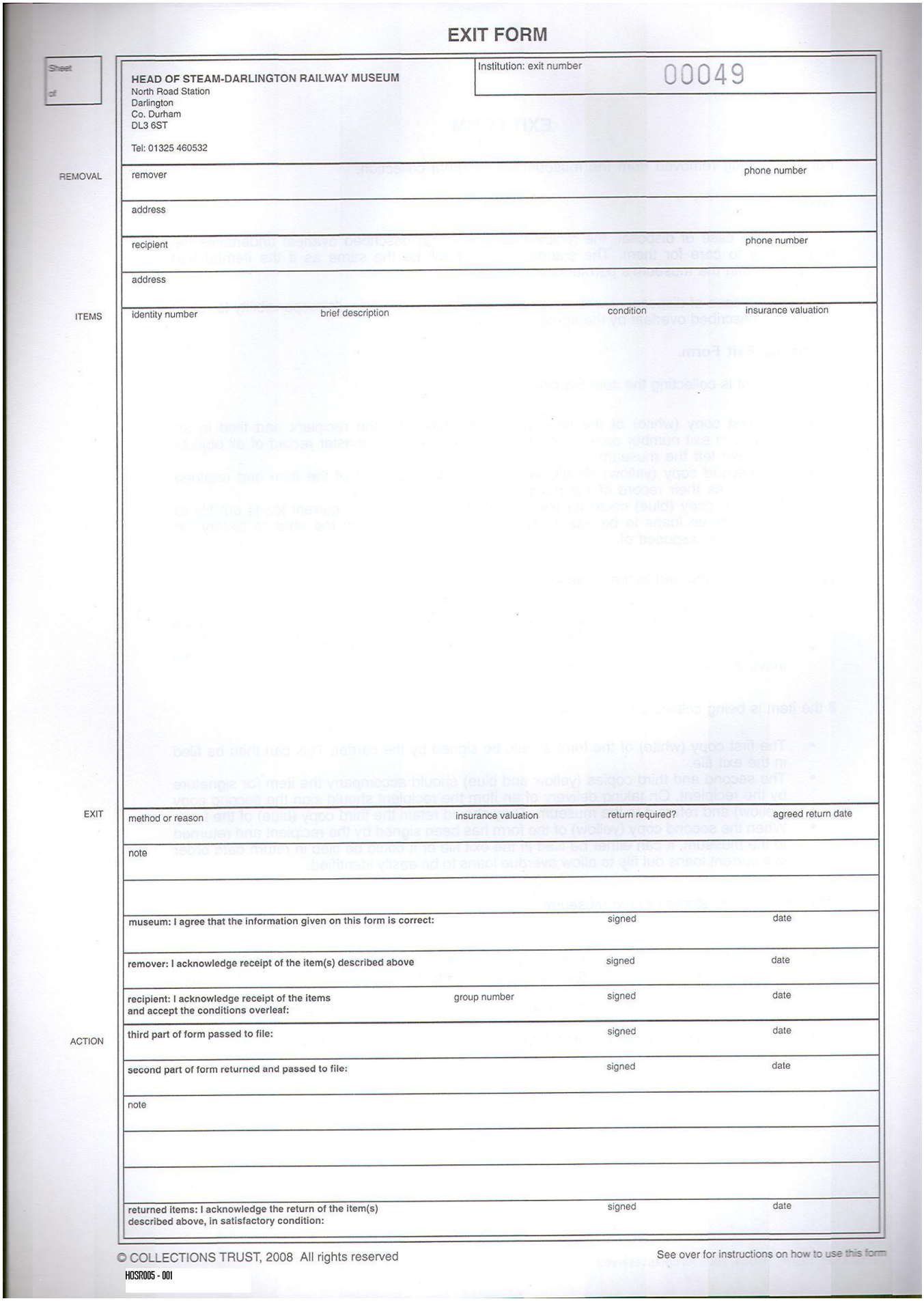
Depositor: _____ **date:** _____

HOSR003 - 001

We recommend that you keep the second part of this form in a secure place. It would help the museum if it could be produced in the event of any query concerning the acquisition or the items.

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WHITE - MUSEUM TRANSFER OF TITLE FILE
YELLOW - DONOR
BLUE - MUSEUM OBJECT HISTORY FILE



EXIT FORM

Sheet of

HEAD OF STEAM-DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM
North Road Station
Darlington
Co. Durham
DL3 6ST

Tel: 01325 460532

Institution: exit number 00049

REMOVAL

remover — phone number

address

recipient — phone number

address

ITEMS

identity number	brief description	condition	insurance valuation

EXIT

method or reason — insurance valuation — return required? — agreed return date

note

museum: I agree that the information given on this form is correct: — signed — date

remover: I acknowledge receipt of the item(s) described above — signed — date

recipient: I acknowledge receipt of the items and accept the conditions overleaf: — group number — signed — date

ACTION

third part of form passed to file: — signed — date

second part of form returned and passed to file: — signed — date

note

returned items: I acknowledge the return of the item(s) described above, in satisfactory condition: — signed — date

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See over for instructions on how to use this form

HOSR005 - 001

HOPETOWN
- DARLINGTON -

Loan Agreement
Hopetown Darlington

Hopetown's main contact	Alison Grange Collections Engagement Manager alison.grange@darlington.gov.uk 01325 405542
Borrower	
Borrower's main contact	
Loan object	
Valuation	
Loan start date	
Loan end date	
Reason for loan	
Evidence of insurance attached	Yes/No

Signed on behalf of the BORROWER to accept the object(s) listed above and to agree to meet the Terms and Conditions of Loan outlined overleaf:
Signature:
Name:
Position:
Date:
Hopetown Darlington agrees to loan the object(s) listed above to the Borrower on acceptance that the Terms and Conditions of Loan overleaf are adhered to:
Signature:
Name:
Position:
Date:

HOPETOWN DARLINGTON- MOVEMENT FORM

Object Number	
Description	
Permanent Location	
Reason for Movement	
Temporary Location	
Date of Movement	
Moved By	

HOPETOWN DARLINGTON- MOVEMENT FORM

Object Number	
Description	
Permanent Location	
Reason for Movement	
Temporary Location	
Date of Movement	
Moved By	

Collections Trust

Labelling and Marking Museum Objects Booklet

Collections Trust

The Collections Trust is the UK's independent organisation for collections. It sets professional Collections Management standards, and provides advice, support and training to help people meet them. Its aim is to connect people and collections, making collections accessible to everyone, now and in the future.

The Collections Trust manages the award-winning Collections Link advisory service and publishes *SPECTRUM*, the UK and international standard for Collections Management.

www.collectionstrust.org.uk

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Labelling and Marking Museum Objects

SPECTRUM Procedure Acquisition

These labelling and marking guidelines have been developed by the Collections Trust with the help of Vivien Chapman at the National Conservation Centre, National Museums Liverpool (NML).

Why do it?

Labelling and marking is part of the *SPECTRUM* procedure *Acquisition*, a *SPECTRUM Primary Procedure*, required to be in place for *Museum Accreditation* (see below). The *Accreditation Standard* says that:

'*Marking and Labelling: Each accessioned item, or group of items, must be marked and/or labelled with its/their unique identity number in a way that is as permanent as possible without damaging the item.*'

Every item in a museum collection must carry its identity number at all times, so that it can be linked to the information a museum holds about the object. If this bond between the object and its documentation is broken, the consequences may be serious. At best, time will be wasted because of the need to track down documentation and re-establish the link. At worst, the object will lose its provenance and other associated information for all time.

Note that the marking an object is not intended to act as a security device in the case of theft of the object.

The *Minimum Standard* for labelling and marking under *Acquisition*, states that museums should:

- Ensure that a unique number is assigned to, and physically associated with all objects.

When is it done and who does it?

Marking and/or labelling an object should be done as part of the accessioning process. Items on loan or not yet accepted into the collection should not be marked. Items which do not belong the museum, such as loans or potential donations should be labelled.

The preference should normally be to physically mark objects: however in some cases this may not be possible. These guidelines will help you label and mark the items in your collections in ways which are:

- **Secure** - The chances of accidental removal of the label or mark from the object must be extremely low;
- **Reversible** - It should be possible for a label or mark to be removed intentionally from an object, even after 50-100 years with as little trace as possible;
- **Safe for the object** - Neither the materials applied to the object nor the method by which they are applied should risk significant damage to the object;
- **Discreet but visible** - The recommended methods should not spoil the appearance of the object, nor obscure important detail. However, the number should be visible enough to reduce the need to handle the object;
- **Convenient and safe for staff and volunteers** - Materials should be easily available in small quantities at a reasonable price, and should not pose significant risks to health if used in accordance with the guidelines recommended by a local CoSHH risk assessment.

1

Health and Safety

Before using any technique, assess the health and safety risks associated with it. Under the CoSHH legislation (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health), it is the responsibility of each museum to carry out such an assessment, and to develop internal guidelines to ensure safe working practices. Guidance is available from the Health & Safety Executive, from introductory leaflets on CoSHH published by HMSO and from product information sheets available from suppliers.

As with any work involving the use of potentially hazardous substances consider, for example, the need for:

- Washing of hands before and after a labelling and marking session;
- Adequate ventilation;
- Disposal of waste;
- Cleaning and care of equipment;
- Hand and eye protection;
- Safe storage of materials and safe methods of decanting them;
- A ban on food, drink and smoking from the work area.

Particular care is needed when working with acetone - a highly flammable solvent.

For more Health and Safety advice and help with Health and Safety assessments go to www.coshh-essentials.org.uk

The following are Health and Safety assessments produced by National Museums Liverpool from the CoSHH essentials website:

- Paraloid B67 20% in white spirit
- Paraloid B72 20% in acetone

The following are relevant COSHH Essentials guidelines:

- General advice
- General ventilation
- Selection of personal protective equipment

Materials to avoid

It is tempting, for the sake of cheapness and convenience, to substitute non archive alternatives such as Tippex™ or clear nail varnish for white ink and Paraloid B72. These materials are unsuitable, and should never be used on museum objects for the following reasons:

- Tippex™ dries to form an inflexible surface layer subject to cracking and detachment. It is not designed for long-term stability, and may discolour and deteriorate with age. If it comes into direct contact with the surface of an object, it can be extremely difficult to remove and leaves an unsightly white residue; Tippex™ has a tendency to dry out and thicken in its container, making it difficult to apply smoothly, and resulting in an obtrusive and unsightly mark;
- Different manufacturers produce clear nail varnishes to a variety of formulations. They are not designed for long-term stability, and their ageing properties are unknown. However, in common with many other polymers, they are likely to cross-link with age, resulting in embrittlement and discolouration, and possible loss of primary information;
- Nail varnish remover is not a substitute for laboratory-grade acetone. It is a different solvent called amyl acetate.

2

Remember that any chemical substance, unless it has been developed or tested within the museum profession so that its properties are known, may have adverse effects on museum objects. Always check with a conservator before proceeding.

Also remember that even commonplace materials like Tippex™ can contain harmful chemicals, and bear hazard warning symbols. Treat them with the same care you would any other chemical, and observe CoSHH and H&S regulations for their use, storage and disposal.

Security marking

Ordinary UV security marker pens or Smartwater™ (an aqueous suspension of marker chemicals that fluoresce under UV light) can be applied to a Paraloid B72 base coat, as described in *Basic Technique 1: Writing on the Object*. This makes them easier to remove, ensuring reversibility, although it correspondingly lessens the degree of security protection.

Alternatively, an object could be marked on its pedestal, frame or mount (see *Basic Technique 11: Marking packaging or support*, bearing in mind that these can become separated from the object itself).

Positioning of labels and marks

- Avoid physically unstable surfaces. Also avoid placing labels or marks across a line of weakness or fracture;
- Choose a position so that the number is unlikely to be visible when the object is on display but is accessible in store;
- Avoid decoration and painted/varnished/pigmented/waxed areas;
- Avoid surfaces where the mark is likely to be at risk from abrasion, such as surfaces on which it normally rests, or where touched during handling;
- Mark all detachable parts of an object (using suffixes to the Object number);
- Locate the number so that the handling necessary to read it is minimised (consider marking the packaging or adding an extra tie-on label as well);
- With composite objects, mark the part on which the most secure method can be used;
- Where duplicate marks are made these should be in different positions on the object (bearing in mind, of course, the other principles listed above).

For suggestions on choosing a technique and where to mark different types of object see the NML's guidelines on Marking and Labelling Methods and Positions.

Basic Techniques

This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML

1. Writing on the object

Barrier coat

- Paraloid (acrylic polymers)
- B72 poly (ethyl methacrylate/methylacrylate)

B72 20% in acetone is used as a barrier coat on the object. B72 has the best ageing characteristics of any barrier coating, it doesn't change colour and stays soluble in solvents. It doesn't dissolve in white spirit. Acetone is quick drying. It may damage some types of objects

Top coat

- Paraloid (acrylic polymers)
- B67 poly isobutyl methacrylate

B67 20% in white spirit is used as a top coat. B67 also has good ageing characteristics but yellows a little in time. It is used dissolved in white spirit to reduce the risk of the barrier coat of B72 being dissolved.

Materials

- Paraloid B72 20% solution in acetone
- Paraloid B67 20% solution in white spirit
- Permanent black markers or Rotring pens and permanent black ink
- Permanent white markers
- Acetone
- Artists brushes or brush in cap containers
- Paper towels
- Cotton wool swabs

Tools

Tool	Pros	Cons
Metal pen eg Mapping pen or Rotring pen or Rotring and Indian ink	Traditional and excellent in experienced hands	May scratch and blob
Brush	Kindest to most surfaces	Hardest to control
Felt tip or roller ball pen with pigment ink	Easiest to control	Ink may not be acid free or permanent

5

Method

1. Read the Health and Safety data sheets and check that you are working in a well ventilated area.
2. Select a clean area on the object's surface.
3. Support the object if necessary so that you will be able to leave it to dry after marking.
4. Fill the cap brush or an artist's brush with the Paraloid B72 solution but do not overload it to avoid drips.
5. For non-porous surfaces: with one steady movement first move the brush in one direction to make a mark only slightly larger than the size of the number to be applied. Then stroke again in the opposite direction to use the solution on the other side of the brush. Then leave it to dry. Some people find it easier to apply single brush strokes.
6. For porous surfaces it is important to build up enough lacquer to prevent the ink penetrating the surface. Apply at least three coats of B72, allowing it to dry before applying the next coat. Enough lacquer has been applied when it dries to a fairly consistent smooth dull sheen. Hint: try this out on a similar trial surface or even paper first then see if you can remove the number or if the ink has penetrated the surface.
7. The ink should be applied in quite thick strokes with a pen appropriate to the size of the number you want to write. Leave it to set for a minute before applying a top layer of the Paraloid B67. If the ink is applied too thinly it may be damaged by the top layer of B67.
8. Only one layer of B67 should be necessary, spread lightly over the surface to avoid smudging of the ink below. You can add additional layers after the first is dry to give added protection against the number being worn away.
9. If you make a mistake wipe it off with a swab soaked in acetone.

2. Sticking a label on the object

This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML

This method can be used on many types of object but do not use on surfaces that are crumbly, flaky or hairy.

Materials

- Use Paraloid B72, starch paste or SCMC (sodium carboxy methyl cellulose). Do not use self adhesive labels or tapes as they always deteriorate. For example, they drop off, refuse to come off and / or stain the object
- Consider printing the number using a laser printer or photocopier (both pigment based) onto acid free paper
- For varnished surfaces use starch paste
- For plastics use dry starch paste or SCMC

Method

1) Write or print the number on a small strip of acid free paper.
2) Apply the adhesive to the label.
3) Press the label onto the object, sufficiently firmly that it moulds itself to the object's contours.

3. Sewn on label

This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML

Materials

- Tyvek (spun bonded polyolefin)
- Permanent markers or Rotring pens and permanent black ink
- Washed or unbleached cotton tape in various widths (to wash cotton tape soak it very hot water)
- Tie on tags
- Fine cotton or polyester thread

Tyvek

Pros:

- Water resistant;
- Cheap to buy as a sheet and cut to size;
- Available in a range of weights. Soft weights are more sympathetic to soft, fragile objects;
- Smoother to write on than cotton tape for textiles and do not need hemming.

Cons:

- Not all pens write on it. Some inks float off on immersion in water, so test;
- Risk of static charge which could attract particles from the object surface eg pigment.

Method

1) Assess the object and decide whether to sew on a label, attach a tie on label, or make a special tag. If you are going to sew on a label it must be possible to stitch into the textile without causing damage. Tie on labels should be attached through a buttonhole, or similar, so that the fabric is not damaged.
2) Choose a location. Bear in mind whether the label needs to be visible when the textile is in storage. If the textile is going to be rolled it may be worth marking a long cotton tape with the same number and tying it round the rolled textile.
3) Choose a tape width or label size appropriate to the object size.
4) Write the label neatly. This is easier with a marker.
5) For a standard flat cotton tape sewn-in label cut the tape approximately 5mm longer at each end than the finished length of the label. Turn under the raw ends and stitch in place with several long stitches at each end in a fine thread, preferable one that matches the textile not the label. The procedure for a sewn-in Tyvek label is the same, except no turnings are needed.
6) Tape and Tyvek can also be used to make looped labels sewn to the textile at one end only. This is particularly suitable for flat textiles with a hemmed edge. The loop can be arranged so that the number can be seen with the textile flat in store, but tucked beneath for display. The stitching can be concealed in the hem so that it cannot be seen from the right side.
7) Special Tyvek tags are used for fragile textiles, where a stitched label or a tie-on tag would cause damage. The number is written on a small piece of Tyvek and a fine needle is used with a length of fine polyester thread which is passed through the Tyvek and through an existing hole in the textile or between the threads from which it is woven. The ends of the thread are then knotted. This lightweight label puts little strain on the textile.

4. Immersible label (for specimen preserved in fluid)

This method is used for specimens preserved in fluid:

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the number on an Aquascribe label or strip of Tyvek, using a pencil or a drawing ink and drawing pen.
3. If using ink, allow it to dry for 24 hours. Also, check the ink for survival in fluid to be used.
4. Place label in fluid with specimen and seal.
5. Mark the packaging/container as well (see *Basic Technique 11: Marking packaging or support*).

5. Water immersible label (for object stored in water)

This method is used for objects stored in water, typically waterlogged glass or organic materials from terrestrial archaeological sites, and most categories of finds from maritime sites.

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator;
2. Write the number on a Tyvek label, using a black waterproof ink marker. Avoid pencil as it becomes illegible over time.
3. Allow ink to dry for 24 hours. Also, check the ink for survival in water.
4. Place label in container with object, and seal. Labels may be tied to larger objects using synthetic materials such as terylene or polypropylene twine, or plastic garden ties (which can be easily re-used).
5. When labelling any type of archaeological artefact, always refer to the UKIC publications, First Aid for Finds and First Aid for Marine Finds. If in doubt, consult a specialist archaeological conservator or finds officer.

6. Label on pin (for pinned biological specimen)

This method is used for pinned biological specimens:

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the object number on a small strip of acid-free paper or Tyvek using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen.
3. Stick the pin on which the specimen is mounted through this label, making sure that the hole is not too close to the edge and that the number can be read without disturbing the specimen.

7. Loose label (for small objects such as coins)

Some objects, such as coins, are too small and detailed to be marked, nor is it easy to tie a label onto them. The only option is to use a loose label:

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the object number on an acid-free paper or Tyvek label using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen. Put it underneath the object in its storage tray.
3. Take a photograph of the object, and mark the object number on the rear border of the print using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen (record the weight of the object as an additional means of identification).

Always keep the label with the object. When the object (and hence label) is moved, a proxy card should be put in its place.

8. Tie-on label

This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML

Pros:

- Easy to get from conservation suppliers;
- Easy to write on;
- Noticeable and easy to find;
- Can be written on in pencil or pen.

Cons:

- PH (acidity) should be tested if you don't know the origin;
- Tyvek is slightly more difficult;
- Easy to remove and lose;
- Paper labels may fall apart in a flood;
- Fibres from cotton may stick to artefacts;
- String may be nylon not cotton and deteriorate and harm the object;
- Cotton string may wick oil from the object, oil may cause ink to run;
- Paper and cotton labels are an insect food source.

Materials

- Use white acid free paper or card labels or Tyvek tags with tape or string.

Method

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the object number on an acid-free paper or Tyvek using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen.
3. Pass tape, string or thread (as appropriate to the object) through hole in label.
4. Tie tape loosely round the 'hole', 'handle' or 'neck' of the object using a reef knot or by looping it round and through itself.

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9. Duplicated pencil mark

Paper is easily marked with a good-quality 2B pencil, which can be removed with a very soft, clean eraser or Draftclean granules (available from conservation suppliers).

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Number the object in two separate locations in pencil on the reverse, using gentle pressure.
3. If newly sharpened, scribble with pencil until it writes smoothly.

10. Number applied with paint

Larger objects, particularly in agricultural, transport or industrial collections, could have their number painted on using a suitable paint. If the object is kept outdoors, it may be necessary to monitor the effects of weathering on the number.

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Paint on the number with a suitably sized brush.
3. Allow 24 hours to dry.
4. Acrylics should be used on objects with medium porosity. Oils may be used on objects with low porosity.

11. Marking packaging or support

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Label and mark the packaging of the object rather than the object itself, or place a label in the packaging.
3. The packaging should, where possible, be transparent (unless the items are light sensitive) to reduce the need for handling.
4. Where the marking methods that can be applied to the exterior are unreliable, labels should be placed within the transparent packaging - in addition to the outside of the packaging being marked - or a separate compartment may be provided for the label.

Plastic bags are difficult to mark effectively as few substances adhere well to their shiny surface (try the Shachihata Artline 70 pen). Marking on a whitened section is not recommended as the whitening wears off over time. Bags with a separate compartment for the label are a good solution if they are available in the required size. Custom-made bags can easily be made up using heat-sealing equipment. Otherwise internal Tyvek labels may be used to duplicate external marks.

Since an object may be removed from its packaging, it might be safest also to:

- Photograph the object OR
- Record the total number of objects in the packaging OR
- Weigh the object, if appropriate (not suitable for hygroscopic or volatile objects).

12. Mixing the varnish

This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML

Paraloid B72 20% in acetone

Method

1) Mix up a solution of Paraloid B72 granules in acetone at 20% weight to volume (for example, 20g of Paraloid in 100ml acetone) in a container that can be made airtight. (N.B. Paraloid B72 is also supplied as an adhesive in tubes, but granules are more convenient for making this varnish.
2) Seal the container and wait for the granules to dissolve (shaking the container periodically aids dissolution).
3) Small quantities can be decanted into a more convenient container, such as a 35mm film canister with a hole in the lid for the brush.
4) Paraloid B72 in acetone should be stored in a sealed container.

Paraloid B67 in white spirit or Stoddard Solvent

It is recommended that you allow plenty of time for mixing this resin solution as it can take up to two days to dissolve large quantities thoroughly eg 250ml upwards. If available a stirrer hot plate would be a very useful piece of equipment, speeding up the process and taking less time while mixing.

Method using a stirrer hotplate:

1) Add the full amount of solvent to a sealable, heat proof container.
2) If mixing large quantities only add half of the required resin to begin with. If only mixing small amounts add all of the resin at this stage.
3) Add a large bar magnet to the mixture and stir with the lid on for one to two hours on heat setting 2. Gentle heating of the mixture will help speed up the process. Do not increase the temperature as this will cause the adhesive to bake to the bottom of the container, rendering it useless, and will evaporate the solvent.
4) After approximately two hours switch off the stirrer and stir the mixture manually. As the adhesive begins to mix it becomes too tacky for the bar magnet to have any effect, regular manual stirring after this point allows the adhesive to mix thoroughly, although bar magnet can be used in between.
5) Once the first half of the consolidant is mixed in add any remaining resin and repeat the process.

Method without a stirrer hotplate:

1) Suspend the Paraloid B67 in a muslin bag in a jar of white spirit or Stoddard solvent. The muslin bag can be fixed to a jam jar by screwing on the lid.
2) Leave for about 24 hours for the Paraloid B67 to dissolve.

Assembling a labelling and marking kit

For the sake of safety and convenience, it is helpful to assemble all the equipment and materials required for labelling objects into a single general kit, or a series of specialist kits for use with different types of collections. For instance, natural history kits would need entomological pins and materials for spirit-based collections, whilst textile kits would require cotton tape, sewing materials etc.

Metal toolboxes with internal compartments make suitable holders for labelling and marking kits. Any chemicals and solvents in the kit should be stored upright in sealed and labelled containers. The box itself should be clearly marked with its contents, and stored in a secure, cool, well-ventilated area.

A general labelling kit might contain the following items:

Equipment

- Copies of the Collections Trust labelling and marking guidelines, in-house standardised labelling procedures, H&S/CoSHH information on chemicals used
- Graduated vessel/measuring jug, stirring rod, glass pipettes
- Safety glasses
- Gloves for object handling (vinyl or cotton)
- Drawing/marker pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, black and white drawing inks
- Cotton buds
- Labels (various types), Tyvek tags, string, thread and tape
- Cotton tape, sewing needles, cotton or polyester thread, stainless steel dressmaker's pins, scissors
- Polythene artefact bags (various sizes)
- Muslin bag
- Hotplate stirrer (if using)

Chemicals

- 100ml each of acetone, white spirit or Stoddard solvent and distilled water in sealed and labelled containers
- 100ml of ready mixed 20% Paraloid B72 in acetone in sealed and labelled container
- 100ml of ready mixed 20% Paraloid B67 in white spirit or Stoddard solvent in a sealed and labelled container

Suppliers

- Atlantis European Ltd
- Conservation Resources (UK) Ltd
- Cornelisson & Son: (retail unit) 0207 636 1045
- Conservation by Design
- Preservation Equipment Ltd
- Lion Picture Framing Supplies
- Watkins & Doncaster
- Whaleys (Bradford) Ltd
- Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd
- Cash's UK Ltd
- Aquascribe
- Oakes Eddon Scientific Services Ltd: 0151 207 3062

For suppliers of chemicals see your local Yellow Pages.

For more suppliers see the Museums Association website www.museumsassociation.org

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Materials

Acetone
Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sticking a label on the object

Local suppliers.

Acid-free paper
Used for:

- Label on pin
- loose label
- Sticking a label on the object

100% rag paper, no mineral coating or loading. Available from conservation suppliers.

Aquascribe waterproof label
Used for:

- Immersible label

Aquascribe.

Brush
Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Number applied directly with paint

High quality brush with secure hairs eg squirrel or sable (Finish on handle may be soluble in acetone). Local suppliers.

Cotton bud
Used for:

- Writing on the object

Natural cotton wool buds eg Johnson and Johnson. Local suppliers.

Distiller or de-ionised water
Used for:

- Sewn-on label - final rinsing of tape

Local suppliers.

Drawing ink
Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sewn-on label
- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Tie on label
- Sticking a label on the object

Rotring 591 017 black ink
Rotring 591 018 white ink
Rotring 591 003 red ink

Winsor & Newton ink is an alternative. Local suppliers.

Drawing pen
Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sewn-on label
- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Sticking a label on the object

Steel/ceramic nibbed pen eg Rotring Isograph 0.1 - 0.5 (0.2 - 0.3 are good for general use);
Faber-Castell TG 1.0 - 0.5. Local suppliers.

Eraser
Used for:

- Duplicated pencil marks

Local suppliers.

Felt tip pen
Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sewn-on label
- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Tie-on label
- Sticking a label on the object

For example, Pigma pens or any felt tip pen described as waterproof and permanent. These can be purchased from conservation and craft suppliers.

Muslin
Used for:

- Writing on the object

Local suppliers.

Needle
Used for:

- Sewn-on label

Size 10, 11 or 12 needles. Local suppliers.

Paint
Used for:

- Number applied directly with paint

Winsor & Newton Alkyd Oil Paints: Light (iron oxide), Red, Lamp (carbon), Black, Titanium White. Use an odorless-type thinner eg Winsor & Newton Sansidor. Local suppliers.

Paraloid B72 adhesive
Used for:

- Sticking a label on the object

Available from conservation suppliers.

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Paraloid B72 granules
Used for:

- Writing on the object

Available from conservation suppliers.

Paraloid B67
Used for:

- Writing on the object

Available from Conservation suppliers.

Pencil
Used for:

- Immersible label
- Duplicated pencil marks

Artist's quality 2B pencil. Local suppliers.

Pin
Used for:

- Label on pin

Stainless steel entomological pins available from Watkins and Doncaster.

Starch Paste
Used for:

- Sticking a label on the object

Readymade wheat starch is available from Preservation Equipment Ltd and Lion Picture Framing Supplies.

Stoddard solvent
Used for:

- Writing on the object

Local chemical suppliers.

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Tape
Used for:

- Tie-on label

Fine plain-woven inert tape 3-12mm. Standard polyester tape is available from large department stores.

Thread
Used for

- Sewn-on label

If possible use a fine thread similar to the textile from which the object is made. Otherwise, a fine spun thread eg Coates Drima. Local suppliers.

Tyvek
Used for:

- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Tie-on label

Available from conservation suppliers.

Unbleached cotton tape
Used for:

- Sewn-on label
- Tie-on label

Fine plain weave, 6-10mm. Conservation Resources, Whaleys (Bradford) Ltd, Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd, Cash's UK Ltd.

White spirit
Used for:

- Writing on the object

Local chemical suppliers.

HOPETOWN

- DARLINGTON -

ACCESS POLICY & PLAN

2025 - 2030



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Hopetown Darlington Access Policy & Plan

2025-2030

1. Hopetown Mission Statement & Shared Values

Darlington changed the world as a pioneer of the modern railway. Hopetown Darlington will engage and inspire the innovators of the future by connecting them with our pioneering railway heritage.

Intelligent Play

- Play means being imaginative about interactions - whether that's with objects, interpretation, buildings or people.
- This is a place where play comes with context - and it's that combination that creates an environment for passive learning.
- Interchange - this whole site is about interchange and exchange - of ideas, knowledge, experience.

People Powered

- A place where staff and community are empowered to shape future developments.
- A place that actively works to promote social inclusion and maximise accessibility.
- A place where the goals are bigger than just the site itself.

Progression

- Reimagining what a heritage visitor attraction could be; how it interacts with people, the stories it tells, the impact it strives for.
- Balancing heritage stories with current developments and futuristic concepts.
- Presenting progressive and positive solutions for the future.

2. Darlington Borough Council

Hopetown Darlington is run and managed by Darlington Borough Council (DBC) and is an Accredited Museum.

This strategy links directly with the DBC Equality Policy.

3. The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 established the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Duty requires local authorities and other authorities carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:

a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and those who do not.
c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and those who do not.

https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/pink-book/disabled-customers

4. A Social Model

Hopetown Darlington and Darlington Borough Council follow the social model of disability. The key principle is that inequality and social exclusion are caused by social and organisational barriers rather than the medical, economic, cultural or other circumstances of the individual. This principle is well established but it can be applied more widely. It is the position that underpins Equality Impact Assessment and is appropriate across all the legally Protected Characteristics.

5. Background

After an access audit by the Tees Valley Museum Group National Portfolio Organisation (TVMG NPO) in 2018, a number of changes were implemented to improve access to the previous museum. This included installing automatic doors with push pads, staff training, producing large print guides, having sensory equipment to borrow, producing a sensory map, a visual guide, an easy read guide and starting relaxed openings. We intend to produce these for Hopetown Darlington and continue to develop through consultation.

This strategy is linked to the Forward Plan, Learning Strategy, Events Strategy, Exhibitions Strategy, Play Strategy and Safeguarding Policy.

Hopetown Darlington works within the relevant legal framework. Darlington Borough Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. The Act brought together existing equality laws and made them stronger. It also strengthened existing duties and places new duties on public bodies. The protected characteristics listed in the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

6. Strategic Aims

a. We aim to maintain buildings and facilities that are as physically accessible as possible.
b. We aim to provide information in a range of formats appropriate to the needs of a wide range of visitors.
c. We aim to provide an excellent standard of customer care to ensure that all visitors feel welcome and comfortable in our venues.
d. We aim to keep charges as competitive as possible to ensure that as many people as possible can access our services.

7. Sustainability and Climate Change Action

Hopetown Darlington will put sustainability at the centre of its decision making across all aspects of the site. This links to plans from Darlington Borough Council and TVMG NPO.

Key points for Access:

a. We will encourage visitors to take images on their devices of trails and activities to do around the site, or have resources they can download. This will also aid translation or access requirements.
b. We will encourage our participants to recycle materials they don't wish to take home.
c. We will consider the sustainability of the materials we use, using sustainable materials where possible and practical to do so.
d. We will promote sustainable travel options, which are often lower cost, where practical for our visitors.
e. We will recycle and reuse materials and resources as much as possible.

8. Access and Inclusion

a. Physical

Hopetown Darlington recognises the need to ensure that the site and as many activities and learning opportunities as possible are accessible under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act and is working hard to achieve this. Through market research and consultation with users and non - users we will seek to update our information on the learning and physical needs of our target audiences. We are committed to ensuring that our buildings and displays are as accessible to as many users as possible, and we would like them to be able to see and hear our exhibits and information, to find their way round easily, to have places to rest, and to be able to access toilets and refreshments.

b. Communication

Recent consultation has highlighted the need of people with different access needs to be able to telephone and speak to someone about their visit beforehand.

An access survey by users of Euan's Guide has shown that clear accurate information about access on a site's website is essential for the 91% of respondents, with 76% of these saying that they had been disappointed by inaccurate or confusing information. 59% of respondents said that if there was no information or it was confusing, they just wouldn't visit as they assumed the site would be inaccessible.

c. Intellectual

Hopetown Darlington wants to engage with all our users and takes into account the different educational experiences, learning styles and ways of understanding of users of all ages. To help to achieve this, we present information and interpretation in a variety of text and graphic panels, as well as with museum objects, sound clips, audio visual displays, hands-on interactives and with staff.

d. Cultural

Hopetown Darlington is committed to equality and diversity and adheres to Darlington Borough Council's Equalities Policy. We recognise that users have differing cultural, ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds and have different religions or beliefs, nationalities, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, and physical and mental abilities.

e. Social Inclusion

Hopetown Darlington aims to engage with all sections of the community, particularly non-users who may be from the following backgrounds: young people; isolated older people; people from ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; people from C2DE communities. We aim to develop creative learning and activity programmes in partnership with organisations which already work with the above groups of people, and can bring their knowledge, expertise and existing relationships to bear.

f. Poverty Proofing

Hopetown Darlington is committed to the work we have recently carried out with Children North East and the Tees Valley Museums Group NPO on Poverty Proofing. The resulting report based on consultation with visiting and non-visiting audiences is informing our approach to providing affordable options for our visitors in the following areas:

- Digital poverty

  Some of our audiences are in digital poverty, especially in our hyper local area. This may be through economic necessity or through personal choice to not engage digitally. We will be mindful of this to ensure all audiences get equal access to our services, site and engagement opportunities. We will consider this in our marketing and communications.
- Transport

  We aim to promote the use of sustainable transport options to visit the museum, which as well as fitting our green commitments, also work as low-cost options. Hopetown Darlington is at North Road Railway Station in Darlington and also on the main bus route through the town. A bus stop is situated close to the entrance to the site. There will be accessible parking close to the site, and cycle parking onsite.
- Ticketing

  Online and in person for booking and purchasing tickets for paid for elements of the site. We aim to be as affordable as possible, with pricing reflecting similar offers locally.
- Retail

  Our shop will have different ranges of goods at a range of prices to suit all our visitors, from pocket money items for children, souvenirs and gifts. This will include toys, books, stationary, food and alcohol.
- Food and Drink Offer

  Our café and catering offer will have a range of food, drinks and snacks. We have consulted with family users about what children are likely to want and also about pricing. We want to serve quality food and drink at affordable prices. We will take into account allergies and intolerances in the choice and preparation of our menu. We will also have spaces where people can sit to eat their own food and drinks, as we recognise this may be the most affordable option for some families.

9. Potential Barriers

There are a number of key barriers to inclusive access:

a. Financial: people who may not be able to afford to access the paid for elements at Hopetown Darlington.
b. Cultural and social: people who may feel that Hopetown Darlington is not relevant to them and does not reflect, or engage with, their cultural or social heritage, language, cultural issues and differences, or identity.
c. Physical and sensory: people with physical disabilities, limited mobility, sensory impairments, hearing or visual impairments may not be able to access Hopetown Darlington.
d. Geographic: people who live too far away to access Hopetown Darlington.
e. Intellectual: some people may find the site too elitist or specialist; some may have special educational needs or learning disabilities; people may not feel that Hopetown Darlington uses multiple learning styles.
f. Attitudinal: people may not feel welcomed and valued.

We aim to reduce to barriers through audits, consultations with groups with lived experience and specialist expertise. We aim to ensure that our communications inform our audience of the measures we have put in place to welcome everyone and to promote equitable and independent access to our site.

10. Audiences

a. Target Audiences

Hopetown Darlington target audiences were determined in 2019 to inform the audience research that took place as part of the development of the Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter and the wider Heritage Action Zone project. The list was also informed by market analysis and data for Darlington and its hinterlands, and through benchmarking Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum's existing audiences.

- Local residents along the line
- Low-income adults and families
- Families with children under 11
- Adults
    - unemployed and in-work poverty
    - Adults in ill health
    - Isolated adults
- Young people, including those not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs)
- Day visitors (local, regional, national)
- Tourists (regional, national and international)
- Rail enthusiasts (local, national and international)
- Formal learners (Pre-school, Primary and Secondary)
- (Cross-cutting:) People of Black, Asian and minority ethnic heritage
- (Cross-cutting:) Disabled people

b. Most notably, Hopetown Darlington aims to reach local communities who live in the Darlington North area. Many of these residents are not regular consumers of heritage, and a proportion represent the top two percent of low-income adults in the UK.

11. Community Engagement

Our approach is 'nothing about us without us' and we aim to consult widely with local communities and specialist groups about our site and offer.
We aim to consult with the following partners and organisations with expertise during preparation to open the site and as an ongoing process.

- Tees Valley Museums Group NPO- Access Forum.
- Age UK
- Alzheimers' Society
- Dementia Voice Darlington
- Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)
- Daisy Chain (Autism)
- Hart Gables – Teesside and East Durham (LGBTQ+)
- Arcus LGBT CIC

- Darlington Assistance for Refugees (DAR)
- DBC Youth services – Darlo Care Crew
- Wellbeing group at St Teresa's Hospice
- Young people in Elective Home Education, and from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) Community
- Darlington Parent Carers Forum

12. Safeguarding

a. Our safeguarding policy and procedures cover children and young people up to the age of 18 and vulnerable adults. We work with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership.

b. Unaccompanied children
   - Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.

13. Access Statement and Guide – will be available on our website**:**
https://www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/plan-your-visit/access

14. Carers/ Essential Companions

Carers and essential companions who are required for visitors to be able to access Hopetown Darlington will be admitted free to the paid elements of the site. We recognise that someone may need more than one carer to be able to access our site, and we do not have a limit.

15. Access at Hopetown Darlington

- Our Access statement is available on our website.
- Our Accessibility Guide is available via our website.
- Hopetown Darlington is Dementia Friendly.
- Hopetown Darlington is Autism Friendly.
- An access kit is available at reception. It includes magnifying sheets, easy to hold pens, signature guides etc.
- All labels and interpretation panels are in an accessible font, and with a reading age of 10-13.
- The buildings are accessible via ramped or level access. Some buildings have lifts. Our site has accessible parking and toilet facilities.
- We have a Changing Places Toilet.
- We have produced a Visitor Visual Guide online, and 'walk through' film.
- Sensory and fidget toys are available to borrow.
- The site is breast feeding friendly, and the staff will have had awareness training.
- Seating is placed around the buildings and in our grounds.
- We are part of the Sunflower Lanyard scheme.
- Easy read guide.
- Sensory map.

16. Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome everywhere on our site.

17. Dogs

Well behaved dogs on leads are welcome in the Goods Shed, North Road Station Museum, The Stores and in our outdoor areas apart from the Wagon Woods play area. Dogs are not allowed in The Exhibition Hall. We reserve the right to ask dogs and their owners to leave if their behaviour causes a nuisance to other visitors or our staff.

18. Regular activities:

- Under 5's group – every Friday morning – ticketed
- Relaxed / Quiet Opening – Sunday mornings - TBC
- Dementia Café – 3rd Wednesday of the month – drop in
- Railway coffee morning – last Thursday of the month – drop in
- Homework Club – weekly drop in TBC
- Saturday STEM Club
- Saturday Art Club

19. Access to Collections

Link to Collections Management Framework

- **The Stores:**

The Stores (in the Carriage Works) are where our varied collection of railway objects and archive material is cared for and on display. We have an 'open store' to allow more of our collection to be on display, and we also have space for researchers to access our collections. Open during site opening hours.

- **The Space:**

The Space is a community curated exhibition space (in the Carriage Works), where local groups can showcase their work and provides Hopetown with an opportunity to showcase our work with communities.

20. Interpretation

a. We follow guidance from the RNIB, Tees Valley Museums Group NPO and other bodies regarding our interpretation. This includes the physical appearance of the material in terms of size, colour and type of font, as well as considerations such as word count and reading age. The reading age of our interpretation is 10-13. As well as printed materials we have audio visual materials, films and sound effects. Our interpretation will include the use of Widgit symbols to aid communication for those who find text difficult.

b. Access to special knowledge and expertise: When creating interpretation for in-house temporary exhibitions we seek to work with those with relevant lived experiences, specialist knowledge and expertise, and where possible to co-curate.

21. Staff training and Awareness

Staff receive mandatory training from Darlington Borough Council (who runs the site) including First Aid and Equalities. Other training in more specialist areas is provided by the relevant organisation as and when required. Staff are able to self identify a training need.

22. Volunteers

This links to our Volunteer Strategy.

Volunteering and work placement at Hopetown Darlington will be in partnership with the NLHF S&DR Heritage project, who will recruit and help to manage volunteers on our behalf. Volunteer tasks will be project based to give a clear role and outcomes for those taking part. We will produce project outlines to aid choice of role. The majority of projects will have a specified time period, for example two hours per week for six weeks.

We have established a digital volunteering programme. This allows volunteers to assist with collections tasks without having to come into the building and allow more flexibility about when they volunteer.

23. Review Date

The Hopetown Darlington *Access Policy and Plan 2025-2030* will be reviewed annually with the first review taking place in **January 2027.**

Action Plan

Activity	Year	Short/Medium/Long Term	Resources	Intended Outcomes
Staff training - Induction for future staff	As required	**Short term/ongoing**	Visitor Experience Manager, Learning and Access Officer, DBC, external organisations as necessary.	Ensure all staff are aware of the approach and knowledge needed to welcome and engage with all our visitors. They will understand the barriers visitors may face and how we can enable people to visit independently.
Consultation - Build on consultation and continue to understand preferences and needs of different audiences. Regularly 'check in' with groups consulted for strategy, 1-3 times per year as appropriate.	2025 onwards	**Medium term**	Learning and Access Officer	Ensure we are up to date and continuing to listen to our audiences and critical friends. Helps to develop relationships and advocacy.
- Identify other groups to consult with about future activities/ events and projects	2025 onwards	**Medium term**	Learning and Access Officer, Collections Engagement Manager, Events and Festivals Manager	Ensure we try to engage with harder to reach groups. Work in partnership with NLHF S&DR project, TVMG NPO and other groups.
Communications - Use various appropriate methods to communicate with different audiences according to their preferences. Continue to update via consultation.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Marketing and Communications Officer, with all colleagues.	Ensure we use methods to engage with as wide an audience as possible.

- Consider those in digital poverty, and those who may not use social media when planning communications and marketing. Work with organisations to cross promote.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Marketing and Communications Officer, with all colleagues. Partner organisations.	Ensure we use non digital methods and the communications methods of partners to engage with as wide an audience as possible. (For example: Age UK have identified leaflets as being useful for many of their users, and schools have newsletters for parents).
Physical Access - Keep up to date with best practice and continue to consult with audiences.	2025 onwards	**Medium term**	Work with TVMG NPO Access Officer and partners.	Maintaining relationships and advocacy.
- Consider physical access for each exhibition and event, as well as for school workshops - working with relevant groups with lived experience where necessary.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	DAD, Dementia Voice, TVMG NPO Access Forum, site staff, Learning and Access Officer, TVMG NPO Access Officer and partners.	Expert advice, maintaining relationships and advocacy.
Cultural Access - Ensure equalities training is regularly refreshed.	As required	**Long term**	DBC training, Learning and Access Officer, specialist organisations where necessary.	Staff are up to date with needs, preferences and appropriate language for our audiences.
- Consider the needs of different audiences for project working (eg to	2025 onwards	**Long term**	Groups, advocacy organisations, people with lived experience,	Ensuring different audiences want to work with us, maintaining relationships and meaningful long term engagement.

work with Bengali ladies in our local area, groups would need to be all female with female staff/ volunteers)			partners, NLHF S&DR colleagues, TVMG NPO.	
Intellectual Access - When planning exhibitions, take into account different learning styles, educational experiences, and ways of understanding of users of all ages.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Collections Engagement Manager, Learning and Access Officer. Consult with groups with lived experience.	Ensure as wide an audience as possible can engage with adaptions or access tools if required.
- Ensure all school and family workshops are suitable for or can be easily adapted for SEND audiences.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Learning and Access Officer. Consult with groups with lived experience.	Ensure needs are met to allow independent and inclusive engagement.
- Information for retail and café offer to be accessible, according to style of interpretation in museum.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Visitor Experience Manager, Learning and Access Officer, Marketing and Communications Officer. Consult with groups with lived experience.	A range of methods to suit as wide a range of need as possible.
Social Inclusion Poverty Proofing - Develop pricing for activities, events, catering	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Hopetown SMT.	Ensure all our audiences can afford to engage with our site and develop repeat visits.

and retail that works for the business plan whilst also being comparable to similar regional offers and affordable.				
Digital poverty - Access to ticketing in person, and digitally with the same offer available whatever way tickets are purchased	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Hopetown SMT	Ensure there is equal access to all our ticketing and offers. No one should encounter barriers when purchasing tickets.
- Access to communications and marketing – see communications above.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Marketing and Communications Officer, with all colleagues. Partner organisations.	Ensure we use non digital methods and the communications methods of partners to engage with as wide an audience as possible. (For example: Age UK have identified leaflets as being useful for many of their users, and schools have newsletters for parents).
Transport - Promotion of transport choices – see sustainability below.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Marketing and Communications Officer.	Audiences understand there are choices to get here, according to budget, need and geographical location.
Non-users - We aim to develop creative learning and activity programmes in partnership with organisations which work	2025 onwards	**Medium term**	Learning and Access Officer, Learning Assistant, NLHF S&DR project partners and TVMG NPO partners.	Ensure we work with targeted non-user audiences to consult, to help overcome barriers to visiting (whether real or perceived) and to meaningfully engage.

with the listed groups of people below, and can bring their knowledge, expertise and existing relationships to bear. - young people; - isolated older people; - people from ethnic minorities; - people with disabilities; - people from C2DE communities. We aim to programme in work with at least one new community group per year – linking to our Learning Strategy and our work with TVMG NPO and NLHF S&DR project partners.				
Projects/ Community Engagement - We will work on a number of planned projects with our Tees Valley Museums Group National Portfolio Partners to engage audiences with our collections and sites. Audiences include schools, young people and hard to reach groups. We will continue to	2025 -2030	**Long term**	Learning and Access Officer, Learning Assistant, Collections Engagement Manager, TVMG NPO partners.	Ensure we continue to work with our TVMG NPO partners. Working both independently and collaboratively, as well as taking advantage of funding and staff support opportunities to achieve shared outcomes.

consider our access commitments in this work.				
- We will work closely with the NLHF S&DR project team on the development and delivery of projects engaging audiences with the 26 miles of the original route of the S&DR. We will continue to consider our access commitments in this work.	2025-2030	**Long term**	Learning and Access Officer, Learning Assistant, Collections Engagement Manager, NLHF S&DR project team, volunteers.	Provide an outstanding engagement programme across the 26 mile route of the S&DR, as a well as at Hopetown Darlington. Expand reach to target audiences. Develop and maintain relationships with different communities.
- We will seek external funding for future engagement projects with our identified target audiences that are not covered by work with the TVMG NPO or NLHF S&DR. We will consider our access commitments in this work.	2025 onwards	**Medium term**	Learning and Access Officer, Learning Assistant, Hopetown SMT.	Continue our commitment to an accessible site and engagement programme. External funding will enable us to increase capacity, reach and resources to work with identified target audiences on high quality programmes.
Sustainability - Promotion of sustainable and accessible methods of travel. Including nearest facilities to site,	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Marketing and Communications Officer, Bishopline team,	Audiences understand there are choices to get here, according to budget, need and geographical location.

including for group visitors. - Develop and use accessible, downloadable, digital materials. Certain materials will be printed off for access purposes e.g. large print information.	Ongoing	**Short term/ongoing**	Marketing and Communications Officer, Learning and Access Officer, Visitor Experience Manager	Audiences will be able to print off if required, use the access software of their choice, or run through a translation tool.
Volunteering - Develop a variety of volunteering opportunities with colleagues in NLHF S&DR project. - Ensure volunteering opportunities open to all and promoted widely through partner organisations as well as usual channels.	Ongoing 2025 onwards	**Short term/ongoing** **Medium term**	Staff team, NLHF S&DR team Staff team, NLHF S&DR team, Marketing and Communications Officer.	Partnership working with NLHF S&DR project colleagues, increased capacity to recruit and manage volunteers and work placements. Specific tasks and projects will lead to increased sense of achievement for the volunteers. Ensure we reach as wide a pool of people as possible, including those from our target audience, and hard to reach groups.

CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

RELEASE OF S106 EDUCATION CAPITAL FUNDS

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Nick Wallis, Children and Young People Portfolio

Responsible Director -
James Stroyan, Executive Director of People

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to release £898,090.64 of Section 106 funding to enhance the educational provision at St George's Primary School, Middleton St George.

Summary

2. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the release of £898,090.64 of Section 106 funding.

3. All projects will be managed in line with the Corporate Capital Process procedures.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members agree to:

   (a) Release £898,090.64 of Section 106 funding for projects at St George's Primary School

Reasons

5. The recommendations are supported by the following reason: release of the funding will allow the educational settings to enhance their educational facilities, targeting capital investment in the areas identified as greatest need.

James Stroyan,
Executive Director of People

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Paul Richardson 0794 724 7224

Council Plan	The proposal is consistent with the Council Plan providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Addressing inequalities	This proposed project has no specific impact on protected groups.
Tackling Climate Change	All work undertaken will be designed and constructed with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Defective materials and plant will be replaced with more efficient products, e.g. increasing 'u' value on windows, insulation etc.
Health and Wellbeing	This proposal will provide a more conducive learning environment for the pupils at the school, supporting their wellbeing.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Improved facilities create a better environment for learning and encourage young people to take care of their surroundings, which in turn reduces vandalism.
Wards Affected	Sadberge and Middleton St George
Groups Affected	Children aged 3 to 10 at St George's Primary
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Section 106 Funding

6. The Council holds the following Section 106 education contributions:

   - £581,183.20 for the 'provision of additional primary educational places within the MSG area' (15/00976/OUT Land off Station Road)
   - £93,171.39 a 'contribution towards the provision of additional primary education places within the Middleton St George area' (16/00972/FUL Middleton Lane)
   - £54,450.86 'to provide additional Primary Education places' (17/00847/FUL Yarm Road)
   - £169,285.19 'towards the expansion of St George's Church Primary School' (16/00396/OUT Lancaster House)

7. The 2025 school place planning projections forecast that the school will fall below 5% surplus capacity by 2029/30 with only 17 surplus places to meet growing demand. Due to the school's village location, there should be no impact on other schools.

8. Subject to Cabinet approval it is proposed that St George's CE Academy use the Section 106 funding to expand and improve provision at their growing primary school, where pupil numbers have increased significantly as a result of recent housing developments. The investment will focus on extending their EYFS provision to ensure sufficient, high-quality Reception spaces for new families, upgrading and securing the KS1 playground to increase capacity, enhance safety, and support purposeful play and outdoor learning. In addition, the project will create a dedicated SEND room within the school to provide targeted support and interventions for children with additional needs, alongside the development of a bespoke outdoor SEND area designed to offer a safe, structured environment for sensory and therapeutic activities. Together, these improvements will ensure the school can continue to meet the needs of its expanding community and provide an inclusive, nurturing environment for all pupils.

9. These funds are due to expire May 2035, July 2032, May 2026 and February 2027 respectively, and if unused will have to be returned to their respective developers.

10. Any capital works undertaken using the Section 106 funding will be delivered by, and in consultation with, the academy trust.

Financial Implications

11. All funding with be paid through DBC grant agreements to the setting concerned.

Consultation

12. Any capital works will be undertaken in consultation with the settings concerned.

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CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER – LOWSON STREET

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Libby McCollom, Local Services Portfolio

Responsible Director - Dave Winstanley, Executive Director Environment, Highways & Community Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of an objection received to a proposed traffic regulation order and seek a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal.

Summary

2. Concerns were received from a resident, a business and a Councillor regarding parking and loading at the junction of North Road and Lowson Street.

3. Officers investigated the concerns and proposed changes to the existing loading bay and to introduce some waiting restrictions to deter vehicles from parking too close to the junction causing visibility issues.

4. As part of the statutory consultation, an objection was received from one of the businesses. The objector does not consider the proposals have been adequately investigated. The details of the objection along with the officer's response and assessment are considered in the main report and **Appendix B**.

5. Officers recommend setting the objection aside and proceed to introduce the No Waiting at any time and a change to the loading bay operation times.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that Members:

   (a) consider the points raised in the objection and the officer response.

(b) set the objection aside and authorise officers to proceed with the introduction of the No Waiting at any time restrictions as advertised; and change the operation times of the current loading bay to 7.00am – 4.00pm all days as shown in **Appendix C**.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

(a) Vehicles are parking on the junction causing sightline problems for vehicles exiting these roads. This inconsiderate parking has raised road safety concerns that have been reported by a resident and to the local councillor.

(b) The Highway Code states "DO NOT stop or park opposite or within ten metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space". This is to allow sightlines to be kept clear.

(c) The extended Loading Bay operation times will allow large vehicles an area to load/unload safely.

Dave Winstanley
Executive Director Environment, Highways & Community Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Chris Easby : Extension 6707

Council Plan	The implementation of waiting restrictions will support the local environment via maintaining traffic flow and facilitating servicing for local businesses.
Addressing inequalities	The overall policy framework for Transport is set out in the Darlington Transport Plan which has been developed with the aid of an Equality Impact Assessment.
Tackling Climate Change	The proposed loading bay and associated waiting restrictions will maintain traffic flow and avoid congestion caused by vehicles parked or loading within the carriageway.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The Council has a statutory duty as part of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no direct implications
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Wards Affected	Harrowgate Hill
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision

Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There are no direct implications

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Concerns were received from a resident, a business and a Councillor regarding parking and loading throughout the day at the junction of North Road and Lowson Street. The parking and loading is associated with a number of businesses at the location.

9. At present there is a loading bay that operates between Monday to Saturday between the hours 8.00am to 12.00pm on Lowson Street adjacent to the businesses. This no longer coincides with one of the businesses needs and a proposal was progressed to change this to operate everyday between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm.

10. There are currently no waiting restrictions at the junction, and road safety concerns have been raised regarding vehicles parking too close to the junction causing visibility issues. According to the Highway Code, you must not park within ten meters of a junction to ensure safety and visibility for all road users. Where concerns are raised, officers will investigate and determine what restrictions should be considered to try and alleviated the road safety issue.

11. Observations and investigations concluded that vehicles are parking too close to the junction causing visibility issues. To resolve the issue, the introduction of some double yellow lines at the junction were proposed.

12. The proposed waiting restrictions and changes to the loading bay operation times as outlined above were advertised as part of the statutory process. See **Appendix A**

13. An objection to the proposal was received from a business owner who does not consider the proposals have been adequately investigated. The objector accepts that there are certain times of the week when the junction is extremely busy, but this is suggested to be minimal. The objector's comments, with responses, have been tabulated **at Appendix B**.

14. As part of reviewing the comments from the objector further discussions were undertaken with a business and the proposed operation times of the loading bay are proposed to be reduced to 7.00am – 4.00pm, all days.

15. The proposed waiting restrictions are considered necessary to improve road safety and visibility exiting the junction. Officers recommend setting the objection aside and to proceed to introduce the No Waiting at any time and the change to the loading bay operation times as shown at **Appendix C**.

16. Subject to Cabinet approval, the restrictions will be introduced in accordance with the Councils powers as set out in Part 1 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

Financial Implications

17. The proposal will be funded from the traffic management budget.

Legal Implications

18. The Traffic Orders have been statutorily advertised for the required period.

Consultation

19. Officers have consulted with businesses on the proposals, and it has also been statutorily advertised in the press and council website, following delegated authority to progress a traffic order.

Outcome of Consultation

20. One objection was received, and the views are below:

21. *Whilst there are occasional issues with parking on this junction, it is rather limited and there is no evidence that the introduction of yellow line is necessary or indeed will prevent this parking, as it is already illegal so those choosing to park that illegally will continue to do so. This is mainly customers to the Morrisons Daily store and unlikely to be resolved by this poor scheme.*

22. *The times this junction is busy coincides with rush hour and the traffic movement on North Road is slow or stationary. The locally traffic approach this junction with caution. Lowson Street is often used as a short cut to avoid North Road and also by parents using the local school. Changes to is corner could potentially lead to the increasing of abuse and at a faster speed.*

23. [the Officer and Councillor] *suggest this junction is a major issue but yet it is not important enough for them to call Enforcement. This is an enforcement issue and yet none of the involved officials have seen reason to even consult or involve them.*

24. *The issues on this junction are no different to the ones that have existed for decades, they are minor and ad hoc, and 24/7 blanket restriction are not the solution for local business and residents.*

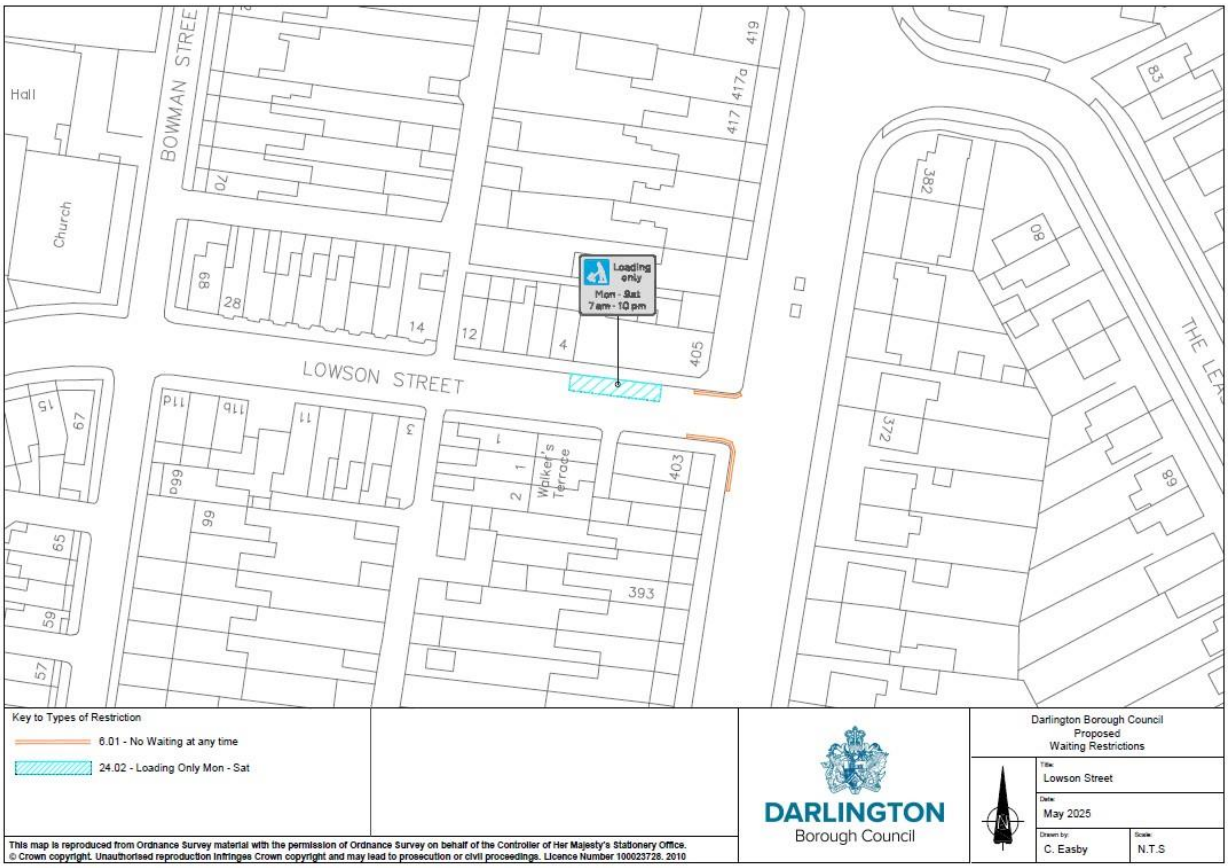
25. *It is suggested there are many complains, which is a lie. It is also claimed it is an unsafe corner, again with zero evidence.*

26. *The discussion held with Morrison and the confirmation to them that this scheme will go ahead is extremely concerning.*

Original Proposal to address Concerns **Appendix A**

Double yellow lines proposed to be introduced at the junction to improve road safety and visibility.

Change the operating hours of the loading bay from Monday to Saturday between the hours 8.00am to 12.00pm to operate everyday between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm.



The Objection and Officer's assessment and response **Appendix B**

Objection	**Officer comments**
I do not consider these proposals have been adequately investigated. I have had email correspondence with both [the Officer and Councillor]	Officers have visited the junction and witnessed vehicles parking on the junction. Morrisons Daily requested the extended operation times of the current loading bay on Lowson Street.
Whilst I accept that there are certain times of the week when this junction is extremely busy, this is minimal. I have evidenced this to [the Officer*] to be told that he has seen the junction at a busy time and has extrapolated this to be all the time and disagree with my view. I have* [the Officer] *to provide more information on his visit but he refused to do so stating he was unable to so because he did not record anything.*	Officer witnessed vehicles parking on the junction and across the tactile crossing. This was not recorded by the officer.
[the Officer*] stated that this will improve road safety but was unable to substantiate this. This was made as a statement of fact when it clearly is not. It is clear his opinion only and no supported in any way.*	The Officer has over 20 years' experience in Traffic and Road Safety. This case has also been discussed with the Traffic Manager who is in total agreement with the proposal its effect on road safety/visibility.
I asked [the Officer*] what other options had been considered and he informed me that he has no considered any other options, I don't understand why not*.	A 'Do Nothing' approach was considered but not recommended due to the Council's obligations under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage the safety and access across the network.
I also asked [the Officer*] if the double yellow line had been requested by Morrisons and he told me they had not. This is clearly untrue*	Morrisons Daily had not requested double yellow lines. Their request for the extension of the loading bay operation times was made through the Ward Councillor.
[the Officer*] also informed me that he had received only one resident's complain and this was over a year ago. So hardly an issue.*	One complaint was received that highlighted the issues of the junction. The Highway Authority have a statutory duty to maintain highways to ensure they are safe, and have a duty under the Road Traffic Act to introduce appropriate measures to prevent accidents.
[the Officer*] told me that he observed cars parked over the dropped curb and these*	Vehicles parking over tactile crossings can only be issued a PCN by the police and Civic

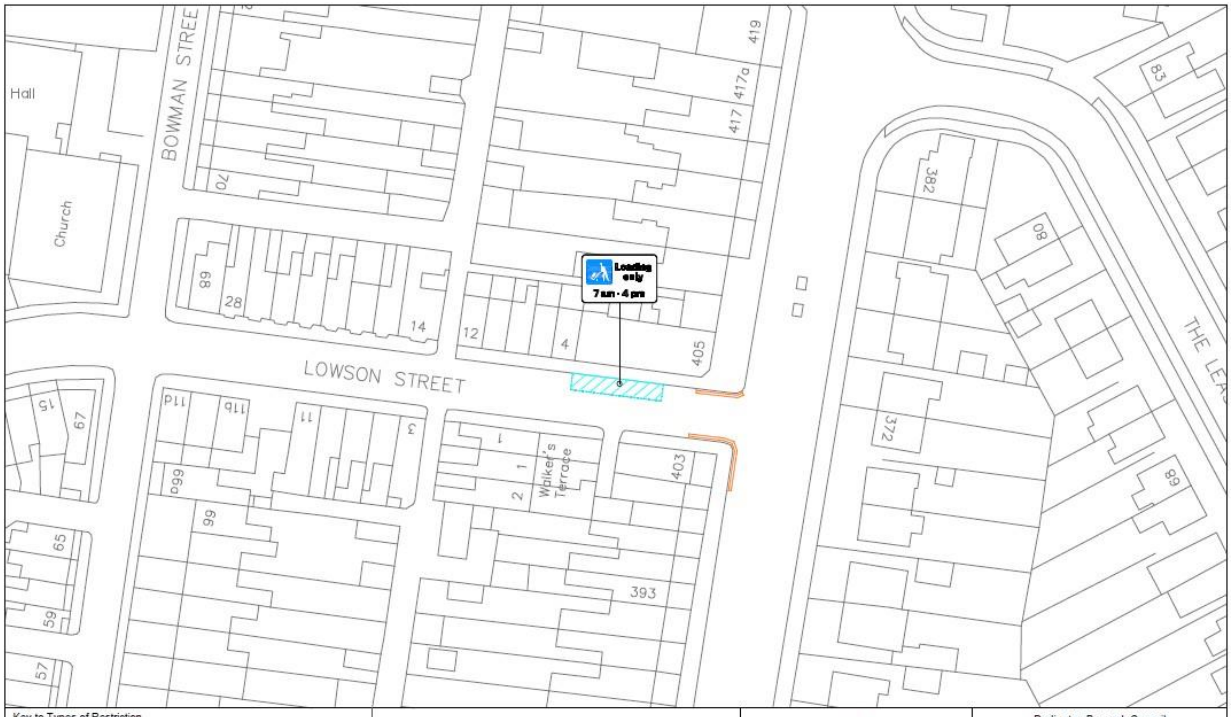
were inconsiderately parked so he needed to introduce double yellow lines. He later confirmed that these cars were actually illegal parked, hence the introduction of yellow lines would make no difference and was actually nothing to do with his department, but he has put forward a plan anyway.	Enforcement. The proposed double yellow lines protect and highlight the tactile crossing and also extend beyond this to aid visibility for pedestrians crossing.
[the Councillor] *advised that the requests for double yellow lines had come from residents, but on 18 June I spoke to a Morrisons employee who stated they had been told by management that they were getting double yellow lines and they were waiting on the date. I advised the employee that it was only a proposal and not definite. They stated they has been told it was definite. [the Officer] had stated there was no request from Morrisons and* [the Councillor] *had not mention this until my email asking her directly. At which point she advised Morrisons had made a request. I am sure there is a good explanation of why this was lied about and kept quiet and also how Morrisons have been led to be of the opinion this scheme had approval. Maybe this could be clarified.*	Morrisons Daily were consulted at the same time as the objector. At no point had [the officer] advised Morrisons this was a definite and at that point only a proposal, same as the proposed extension of the loading bay operation times.
These restrictions are going to make it virtually totally impossible for the elderly and disabled to access the businesses in this area by vehicle.	The proposal will reduce the parking by one vehicle outside 403 North Road and by 4 metres either side on Lowson Street. Blue Badge Holders may park on double yellow lines
I am unsure why this is required. [the Officer*] advised a request from Morrisons has been received, there was no evaluation as this was not required, they just accept what Morrisons requested and are implementing it.*	[The Councillor] had spoken with the manager of Morrisons Daily, who requested the extension of the Loading bay operation times.
I do not think this is required, other business in the area have not been approached, I have put forward my concerns just to be told no numerous occasions that this will benefit my business. I am applaud that a large multinational company has the power to enforce a change on a locally area	Other businesses were informed of the proposal by an informal consultation letter and plan.

without any need to approach and take no board the requirement of locally business. There is no evidence this is required but it is going to be implemented anyway.	
Morrison, who require the change to the loading bay, I believe are based in New York and not Darlington, make 3 deliveries to the store per week. Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. So why do they need a loading bay for 90 hours per week (in essence 24/7/365) and 1/3 their deliveries are outside the time any.	An Officer has been to discuss the operation times of the loading bay with Morrisons Daily who informed them that they receive deliveries Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, 7.00am – 4.00pm. As deliveries can change it was decided to make the loading bay operational for 7 days.
It has been insisted upon, numerous times, by [the Officer and Councillor*] that this is good for me. As they are aware, Morrison deliver using a large refrigerated truck that is parked 1 or 2 hours on the occasions it delivers. Due to the refrigeration its diesel engine is left running the whole duration. This is quite noisy. I certainly cannot have the windows open in the summer and now they suggest that been woken at 7am by this or trying to relax on an evening with this noise constantly going on is something that is beneficial. The thought process here is quite uncomprehensible from competent officials.*	Any business in the area can use the loading bay for their operational needs.

Proposals recommended to be progressed **Appendix C**

Double yellow lines proposed to be introduced at the junction to improve road safety and visibility.

Change the operating hours of the loading bay from Monday to Saturday between the hours 8.00am to 12.00pm to operate everyday between the hours of 7.00am and 4.00pm.



CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

LAND AT MORTON PALMS BUSINESS PARK – PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF PLOT

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Mandy Porter, Resources Portfolio

Responsible Director -
Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to dispose of the plot of land at Morton Palms Business Park as shown on the attached plan (**Appendix 1**), subject to planning permission being obtained by the proposed purchaser.

Summary

2. The plot of land extends to 0.56Ha (1.376 Acres) or thereabouts and it is intended that the land be used to provide surface car parking in connection with the proposed extension of Stephenson House which is the office building located directly opposite.

3. The proposed purchaser of the Council's plot is intending to acquire Stephenson House with a view to enlarging the office building to accommodate an office relocation of a major employer within Darlington.

4. Enlarging Stephenson House will mean building on what is currently the office car park and as such the Council is being asked if they can relocate the car parking onto the vacant plot of land opposite off Alderman Best Way.

5. In principle discussions about terms have taken place with the proposed purchaser and these are set out in the Part III report attached (**Appendix 2**).

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that:-

   (a) Approval be granted to dispose of the plot of land at Morton Palms Business Park as indicated on plan Appendix 1 and the Director of Economy & Public Protection be authorised in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Resources Portfolio to agree terms in line with those set out in Part III, Appendix 2.

(b) The AD Law & Governance Monitoring Officer be authorised to document the disposal accordingly.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-

(a) To assist business relocation and retention of jobs in Darlington, and
(b) To achieve a Capital Receipt for the Council.

Trevor Watson, Executive Director – Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Guy Metcalfe : 6725

Council Plan	This proposed sale is in accord with the objectives and deliverables in the Council Plan
Addressing inequalities	There are no diversity or inequality issues affected
Tackling Climate Change	There are no sustainability issues
Efficient and effective use of resources	A capital receipt will help the Council's budget
Health and Wellbeing	Ther are no Health and Well Being issues
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Wards Affected	Sadberge & Middleton St George
Groups Affected	There are no Groups adversely affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not present a change to the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The plot of land at the Morton Palms Business Park extends to 0.56Ha (1.376 Acres) or thereabouts and it is intended that the land be used to provide surface car parking in connection with the proposed extension of Stephenson House, which is the office building located directly opposite, see Appendix 1.

9. The proposed purchaser of the Council's plot is intending to acquire Stephenson House with a view to enlarging and almost double the size of the office building to accommodate an office relocation of a major employer within Darlington.

10. Enlarging Stephenson House will require building on what is currently the existing car park and as such the Council is being asked if they can relocate the car parking onto the vacant plot of land opposite, off Alderman Best Way.

11. In principle discussions about the proposed terms have taken place with the purchaser and these are set out in the Part III report attached Appendix 2.

12. Although the plot is to be used for car parking this will facilitate the expansion of Stephenson House which will enable a large employer to relocate and retain jobs within the town.

13. The increase in Business Rates generated from the expansion of Stephenson House will also be a financial benefit to the Council as indicated in the Part III report Appendix 2.

14. Even with the disposal of the plot there is sufficient land retained by the Council to be of interest to other potential developers.

Financial Implications

15. The proposed disposal of the plot will achieve a capital receipt for the Council as shown in the Part III report Appendix 2.

Legal Implications

16. The Council has the authority to dispose of land pursuant to S123 Local Government Act 1972 and the proposed disposal complies with the requirements of that act.

17. The Assistant Director Law and Governance Monitoring Officer will be required to document the disposal and deal with any issues arising from the legal process.

Estates and Property Advice

18. The plot of land at the Morton Palms Business Park which extends to 0.56Ha (1.376 Acres) or thereabouts is available for development and although it is to be used for car parking this will facilitate the expansion of Stephenson House which will enable a large employer to relocate and retain jobs within the town.

19. The land disposal will also generate a capital receipt for the Council.

Procurement Advice

20. This is a straightforward disposal of Council land and Procurement Advice will be sought as considered necessary.

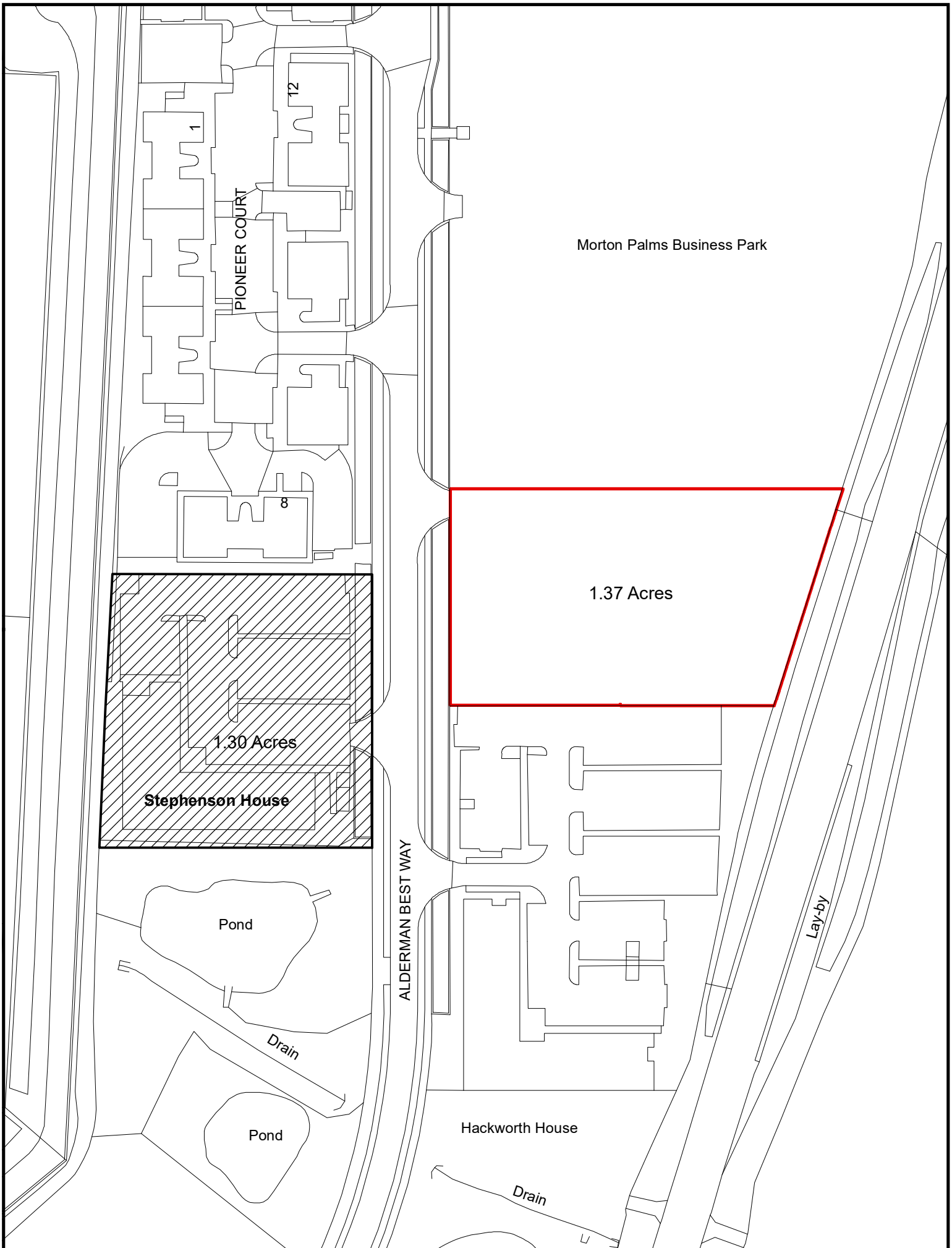
Carbon Impact and Climate Change

21. It is expected that the proposed expansion of Stephenson House will be built to BREEAM Excellent standard.

Consultation

22. External consultation will take place as part of the normal planning process.

23. Internal consultation has raised no objections to the proposed disposal.



DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ECONOMIC GROWTH GROUP ESTATES & PROPERTY, TOWN HALL, FEETHAMS, DARLINGTON, Co. DURHAM, DL1 5QT	Project Title: DBC OWNED LAND - ALDERMAN BEST WAY	Scale: 1 :1250	Ref: AT A4
	Drawing Title: LONG LEASE HOLD - DL1 4WB - APPENDIX 1	Date: 04/12/25	Area: 1.37 Acres
		Drawn: RMH	

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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CABINET
6 JANUARY 2026

SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Mandy Porter
Resources Portfolio

Responsible Director – Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy & Public Protection

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider and to seek approval of the terms negotiated in respect of the Schedule of Transactions as set out below.

TRANSACTION	PURPOSE OF TRANSACTION	MINUTE REF
Surrender of Farm Business Tenancy relating to land at Tees Grange and re-grant of Farm Business Tenancy relating to land at Grange Road and at Staindrop Road.	Land at Grange Road - 5.51 ha (13.62 acres) or thereabouts Land at Staindrop Road - 6.56 ha (15.71 acres) or thereabouts	

Summary

2. It is necessary for Cabinet to approve terms negotiated by the officers within the Economy and Public Protection Group on behalf of the Council to enable contractually binding contracts to be completed. The Part III **Appendix 1** details the terms negotiated for consideration and approval.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the schedule (Appendix 1) be approved, and the transactions completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

Reasons

4. Terms negotiated require approval by Cabinet before binding itself contractually to a transaction.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy & Public Protection

Background Papers
No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Guy Metcalfe : Extension 6725

Council Plan	Growing the local economy, encouraging new investment in the Borough and maximising employment opportunities.
Addressing inequalities	There are no issues relating to inequalities which this report needs to address.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no impacts on climate change.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Any additional costs will be met from within existing budgets.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues relating to Health & Wellbeing which this report needs to address.
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime & Disorder.
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There are no issues in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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