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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Council Agenda

6.00 pm Thursday, 17 July 2025
Central Hall, Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket, Darlington, DL1 5RP

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.

2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Council held on 15 May 2025, 22 May 2025, and 19 June 2025. (Pages 5 - 24)

3. Declarations of Interest.

4. Sealing.

5. Announcements.

6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-

   (a) The Public;

   (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;

7. Council Reports.

   (a) Pavement Cafe Policy – Report of the Executive Director- Economy and Public Protection. (Pages 25 - 66)

8. Cabinet Reports.

   (a) Adoption of Finalised Appraisal for the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Including Changes to its Boundary and Name – Report of the Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection. (Pages 67 - 208)

(b) Climate Change Progress – Report of the Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection. (Pages 209 - 228)

(c) Designation of New Middleton St George Conservation Area and Adoption of Finalised Appraisal – Report of the Executive Director, Economy and Public Protection. (Pages 229 - 468)

(d) Updated Statement of Community Involvement - Part 1 (Local Plan) – Report of the Assistant Director – Economy and Public Protection. (Pages 469 - 482)

(e) Cabinet Urgent Decisions – Report of the Chief Executive. (Pages 483 - 486)

(f) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 487 - 490)

(g) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 491 - 494)

(h) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 495 - 498)

(i) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 499 - 508)

(j) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 509 - 514)

(k) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; (Pages 515 - 522)

(l) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio; and (Pages 523 - 526)

(m) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 527 - 532)

9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-

(a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 533 - 534)

(b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 535 - 536)

(c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 537 - 538)

(d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 539 - 540)

(e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 541 - 544)

10. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.

Amy Wennington
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 9 July 2025

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership
The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Lee, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Pease, Porter, Ray, Renton, Dr. Riley, Robinson, Roche, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin, Wallis and Walters

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact James McAllister, Democratic Officer, Resources and Governance Group, 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 Email: james.mcallister@darlington.gov.uk or Telephone 01325 403122

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COUNCIL

Thursday, 15 May 2025

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Dulston, Durham, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Kane, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Pease, Porter, Ray, Renton, Dr. Riley, Robinson, Roche, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin, Wallis and Walters

APOLOGIES – Councillors Keir, Lee and Mrs Scott

75 MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 27 MARCH 2025

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 27 March 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 27 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

77 SEALING.

Presented – The Register showing the documents which had been sealed since the last meeting of the council.

78 ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Death in Service of Alan McNeill – The Mayor announced the death of Council employee Alan McNeill, and made reference to Mr McNeill's years of service in the Housing Buildings Team in addition to Council efforts to ensure Mr McNeill's family receive appropriate advice and support.

Members stood and observed a short silence in respect of Mr McNeill.

79 QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM):-

(1) THE PUBLIC;

There were seven questions, received with notice, from Members of the Public. Three Members of the Public attended the meeting to ask their questions in person, and each received a response thereon.

The Mayor requested that a written response be provided to the 4 Members of the Public who did not attend to ask their question in person.

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

There were no questions to from Members, where notice had been given, for the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

80 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(3) CONSTITUTION UPDATE

The Executive Director, Resources and Governance, submitted a report (previously circulated) which invited members to approve of an update to the Council's Constitution.

This report was introduced by the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, and outlined an intention to amend the Constitution in order to better facilitate the work of the Council's committees.

It was proposed to amend the constitution to reflect changes to senior management roles and address the appointments to a number of Proper Officer and Statutory Officer roles.

It was also recommended to amend Paragraph 1 (f) of the Council Procedure Rules to enable the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs at the Annual Meeting of the council.

Councillor Harker moved this recommendation, as per Paragraph 4 of the report, before outlining the proposed procedure of Chairing to be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council. This was seconded.

There were two submitted amendments to the Constitution update. The first was submitted by Councillor Dulston, which was seconded:

"I MOVE that Paragraph 4 (a) be amended to read 'the updates and changes to the Constitution as detailed in this report, with the exception of the proposed amendment outlined in Paragraph 27 of the submitted report (to amend paragraph 1 (f) of the Council Procedure Rules to enable the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs at the Annual Meeting of the Council), be approved, and that paragraph 4 (b) remain as is. The Amendment would then read:

4 (a) The updates and changes to the Constitution as detailed in this report, with the exception of the proposed amendment outlined in Paragraph 27 of the submitted report (to amend Paragraph 1 (f) of the Council Procedure Rules to enable the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs at the Annual Meeting of the Council), be approved;

(b) The Monitoring Officer is delegated to update the Constitution to reflect the changes identified."

A vote was taken on this Amendment, and the Amendment was rejected.

The second amendment was submitted by Councillor Snedker, which was seconded:

"Replace Paragraph 27 of Item 7a with:

It is therefore proposed to amend Paragraph 2 of the Council Procedure Rules to enable the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs at the Annual Meeting of the Council.
2. At the Annual Meeting, the Council will :-
a. Appoint to those Committees established in accordance with the political balance rules; and
b. Members of each Committee to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Adults Scrutiny Committee, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, The Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee, the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee, the Planning Applications Committee, the Audit Committee, the Council Decision Making and Scrutiny process Working Group, and the Climate Change Committee
c. Appoint to those Committees and outside bodies (which are Council appointments)."

A vote was taken on this Amendment and the Amendment was rejected.

At the request of five Members, a Named Vote was taken of those Members present at the meeting on the Substantive Motion, and there appeared:

For the Motion: Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Riley, Robinson, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (28).

Against the Motion: The Mayor, Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs. Culley, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Pease, Snedker.

Abstentions: Councillors Renton and Toms.

RESOLVED - (a) The updates and changes to the Constitution as detailed in this report, unless otherwise stated, be approved.

(b) The Monitoring Officer is delegated to update the Constitution to reflect the changes identified.

REASONS - The recommendations are supported to ensure that the Constitution is clear, accurate, up-to-date and fit for purpose.

81 CABINET REPORTS.

The Cabinet Members each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken under their relevant portfolio during the previous cycle of meetings. Cabinet Members answered questions on their portfolios.

82 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY OVERVIEW REPORTS:-

The Scrutiny Committee Chairs each submitted a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last cycle of

Committee meetings, and responded to any questions thereon.

83 NOTICE OF MOTION

(4) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MCEWAN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR MAMMOLOTTI

The following Motion was moved by Councillor McEwan, and seconded by Councillor Mammolotti:

Nature Restoration Motion

That this Council notes:

i) The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Since the Industrial Revolution, we have already lost half of all animals, plants and birds because of intensive agriculture, habitat depletion and climate change.

ii) Pollination is one of the most important mechanisms in the maintenance and conservation of biodiversity, and in general, life on earth. Bees and other pollinating insects such as the hoverfly are vital in this process. Two thirds of the world's 3000 species of agricultural crops require agents for and are reliant on pollination.

iii) 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s, reducing an important food source for pollinating insects. Estimates suggest it would cost UK farmers £1.8 billion a year to manually pollinate their crops.

iv) The State of Nature 2023 report shows that since 1970, UK species populations have declined by about 19% on average, and nearly 1 in 6 species are now threatened with extinction.

v) A report published by UN agencies on Climate Change and Biodiversity, states that the destruction of forests and other ecosystems is undermining nature's ability to absorb and store greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which is the single biggest driver of global warming. The report concluded that climate change and biodiversity loss should be tackled together.

vi) Nature is vital for the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink. But nature is in free-fall.

vii) The covid 19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature. Faced with isolation during this time, being outdoors in nature offered many benefits and served, and continues to serve, as a reminder of the profound consequences to our wellbeing that can result from continued degradation of nature. There are many studies identifying clear links between robust mental health and access to green spaces and nature.

viii) However, reports provided by the world's governments, as well as other sources of evidence, reveal examples of progress, which, if greatly scaled up, could support the transformative changes necessary to achieve the 2050 vision of living in harmony with

nature.

ix) The government states that local authorities are perfectly placed to lead by example, working with local communities, landowners and other partners in the development of local plans and strategies which support biodiversity.

That this Council believes:

i) A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, happy, prosperous society, and it is our duty and responsibility to support a Nature Restoration Plan to work together with the Climate Change Emergency already adopted, since they are inextricably linked.

ii) Just like climate change, the loss of species and degradation of our natural environment is an existential threat, and the action needed is both urgent and transformative.

iii) As well as improvements in the innate value people place in biodiversity, tackling its decline can deliver wider benefits to the environment, economy and society.

That this Council resolves:

i) To declare a Nature Restoration Plan which, together with the Climate Change Emergency, will underpin all the Council's considerations, proposals and decisions.

ii) To develop a Nature Restoration Action Plan, informed by consultation with officers, councillors, experts (specifically our Ecologist and Climate Change Officer), community and environmental groups and residents. The Plan should be subject to annual review by the Climate Change and Nature Restoration groups within the council to maintain its efficacy.

iii) To lead by example by including targeted and site-appropriate measures on council owned land and communal areas and commit to ongoing monitoring to inform further action.

iv) To effect borough-wide measures which will include, but not be limited to:

(a) Ensuring the delivery of biodiversity enhancements through our planning policy and development, embedding nature recovery in all strategies, plans, including the Local Plan, and all policy areas.

(b) Establishing a Darlington Biodiversity and Nature Recovery Charter and Recognition Scheme, calling on all organisations, businesses, schools, groups and individuals to contribute towards net gain.

(c) Designing all new council housing with opportunities for net gain e.g. swift boxes, hedgehog highways (where viable) etc.

(d) Identifying how the town's open spaces can create net increases, with community engagement in habitat development, such as flowering meadows for pollinating insects, bee banks and ponds, and wherever possible make better links between areas as recommended in the Lawton Review.

(e) Providing a range of public engagement and awareness campaigns to give advice to residents, groups and businesses on how to protect and enhance habitats within their neighbourhood, and to work more closely with already established ecological and environmentally engaged groups.

(f) Providing training and resources for councillors and council employees about the ecological emergency.

(g) Integrating the targets, objectives and outcomes of this Motion, i.e. the Nature Restoration Action Plan, with those outlined in the Climate Change Plan, to ensure measures to tackle climate issues do not contravene the principles of enhancing biodiversity, and wherever possible the Council will invest in nature-based solutions to climate change, to confront the climate and nature emergencies together.

Advance notice of an amendment proposed to be moved to the Motion submitted by Councillor McEwan and seconded by Councillor Mammolotti:

Climate Change and Nature Restoration Motion

That this Council

a) **notes:**
i) The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Since the Industrial Revolution, we have already lost half of all animals, plants and birds because of intensive agriculture, habitat depletion and climate change.

ii) Pollination is one of the most important mechanisms in the maintenance and conservation of biodiversity, and in general, life on earth. Bees and other pollinating insects such as the hoverfly are vital in this process. Two thirds of the world's 3000 species of agricultural crops require agents for and are reliant on pollination.

iii) 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s, reducing an important food source for pollinating insects. Estimates suggest it would cost UK farmers £1.8 billion a year to manually pollinate their crops.

iv) The State of Nature 2023 report shows that since 1970, UK species populations have declined by about 19% on average, and nearly 1 in 6 species are now threatened with extinction.

v) A report published by UN agencies on Climate Change and Biodiversity, states that the destruction of forests and other ecosystems is undermining nature's ability to absorb and store greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which is the single biggest driver of global warming. The report concluded that climate change and biodiversity loss should be tackled together.

vi) Nature is vital for the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink. But nature is in free-fall.

vii) The covid 19 pandemic highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature. Faced with isolation during this time, being outdoors in nature offered many benefits and served, and continues to serve, as a reminder of the profound consequences to our wellbeing that can result from continued degradation of nature. There are many studies identifying clear links between robust mental health and access to green spaces and nature.

viii) However, reports provided by the world's governments, as well as other sources of evidence, reveal examples of progress, which, if greatly scaled up, could support the transformative changes necessary to achieve the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

ix) The government states that local authorities are perfectly placed to lead by example, working with local communities, landowners and other partners in the development of local plans and strategies which support biodiversity.

b) **believes:**

i) A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, happy, prosperous society, and it is our duty and responsibility to support a Nature Restoration Plan to work together with the Climate Change Emergency already adopted, since they are inextricably linked.

ii) Just like climate change, the loss of species and degradation of our natural environment is an existential threat, and the action needed is both urgent and transformative.

iii) As well as improvements in the innate value people place in biodiversity, tackling its decline can deliver wider benefits to the environment, economy, society and the wellbeing of future generations.

c) **resolves:**

i) To declare a Nature Restoration Emergency which together with the Climate Change Emergency, will be reflected in the Council's considerations, proposals and decisions.

ii) To set clear strategic goals for nature recovery by 2040, including the development of a Nature Restoration Action Plan, with an outline of resourcing implications within 12 months of this declaration, informed by consultation with relevant officers, councillors, businesses, community and environmental groups and residents. The Plan should be subject to annual review by the expanded Climate Change and Nature Restoration group (see viii) within the council to maintain its efficacy.

iii) Call on central government to develop the strategies and deliver the funding necessary to make this possible.

iv) Continue work to make Darlington Borough Council net zero by at least 2040, considering both production and consumption emissions, both directly and indirectly caused by the council (scope 1 and 2), as described by the Carbon Trust. For scope 3 emissions the Council will publish data (where available) to monitor emissions and inform procurement practice.

v) Continue to ensure that Darlington Borough Council is adapting to climate change so that it can sustain vital services.

vi) Continue to publish the emissions for the whole Borough and track this against a 2040 net-zero pathway.

vii) To lead by example by including targeted and site-appropriate measures on council owned land and communal areas and commit to ongoing monitoring to inform further action on nature restoration.

viii) Expand the remit of the Climate Change Working Group, integrating the targets, objectives and outcomes of this Motion, i.e. the Nature Restoration Action Plan, with those outlined in the Climate Change Plan, to confront the climate and nature emergencies together.

A vote was taken on the Amendment, which was carried.

The Amendment became the Substantive Motion, which was also carried after a further vote took place.

84 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND OTHER BODIES.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

ANNUAL COUNCIL

Thursday, 22 May 2025

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Kane, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Roche, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin and Wallis

APOLOGIES – Councillors Lee, Pease, Renton and Walters

ABSENT – Councillor Robinson

1 **ATTENDANCE AT MEETING.**

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

3 **TO ELECT A MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025/26**

Consideration was given to the election of a Mayor for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Sonia Kane be elected Mayor of the Borough of Darlington for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Following her election, the Mayor made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and :-

(i) Was invested with the Chain of Office;
(ii) Announced her decision to support the Family Help Charity and Darlington Community Theatre.

4 **RETIRING MAYOR - VOTE OF THANKS**

A vote of thanks was proposed to the Retiring Mayor and Mayoress.

RESOLVED – That the cordial thanks of the Council are due, and hereby tendered, to Councillor Robert Donoghue and Margaret Donoghue for the exemplary manner in which they have discharged the duties of the high office of Mayor and Mayoress of this Borough during the past Municipal Year.

5 **TO APPOINT A DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025/26.**

Consideration was given to the appointment of a Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Helen Crumbie be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Darlington for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

6 **THE MAYOR OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO MAKE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT MAY BE**

NECESSARY.

There were no further announcements reported at this meeting.

7 **APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES 2025/26**

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the membership of the various Committees for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

RESOLVED –
(a) That the appointment of Members to the various Committees, as detailed in the Appendix to the submitted report, be approved.
(b) That any consequential changes be made to the Council's Constitution.

REASON – To comply with the nominations received.

8 ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS 2025/26 (SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON THURSDAY, 15TH MAY 2025)

Following a constitutional change, the election of Chairs and Vice Chairs for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 took place at this meeting in order for Council business to immediately continue.

At the request of 5 Members, a named vote took place for the Chair/Vice Chair election of the following Committees:

Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Anderson – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (26)

Councillor Tostevin - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

-Councillor Dillon was not present at this time and therefore did not cast a vote.

Councillor Anderson was duly elected as Chair of the Adults Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 26 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Michael Nicholson – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (26)

Councillor Mammolotti - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

-Councillor Dillon was not present at this time and therefore did not cast a vote.

Councillor Michael Nicholson was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Adults Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 26 votes to 18.

Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Allen – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (26)

Councillor Toms - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

-Councillor Dillon was not present at this time and therefore did not cast a vote.

Councillor Allen was duly elected as Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 26 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Layton – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (26)

Councillor Toms - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

-Councillor Dillon was not present at this time and therefore did not cast a vote.

Councillor Layton was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 26 votes to 18.

Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor McGill – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor Mrs Culley - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor McGill was duly elected as Chair of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Coe – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom,

McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor Snedker - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Coe was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Chair of Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Baker – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor Durham - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Baker was duly elected as Chair of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Dillon – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor Henderson - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Dillon was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Chair of Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Johnson – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor Holroyd - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Johnson was duly elected as Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee:
Councillor Layton – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom,

McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor Holroyd- Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Layton was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Chair of General Licencing Committee:
Councillor Kane – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor K Nicholson - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Kane was duly elected as Chair of the General Licencing Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of General Licencing Committee:
Councillor Ali – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor K Nicholson - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Ali was duly elected as Vice Chair of the General Licencing Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Chair of Licencing Act 2003 Committee:
Councillor Kane – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor K Nicholson - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Kane was duly elected as Chair of the Licencing Act 2003 Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

Vice Chair of Licencing Act 2003 Committee:
Councillor Ali – Councillors Ali, Allen, Anderson, Baker, Beckett, Coe, Cossins, Crumbie, Curry, Dillon, Garner, Harker, Hazeldine, Johnson, Kane, Layton, Mahmud, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, M Nicholson, Porter, Ray, Dr Riley, Roche, Storr, Wallis. (27)

Councillor K Nicholson - Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Henderson, Holroyd, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Mammolotti, Marshall, K Nicholson, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Toms, Tostevin. (18)

Councillor Ali was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Licencing Act 2003 Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026 by 27 votes to 18.

The following Elections of Chairs and Vice Chairs took place without a named vote:

Audit Committee:
Chair: Councillor Henderson
Vice Chair: Councillor Beckett

Planning Applications Committee:
Chair: Councillor Haszeldine
Vice Chair: Councillor Cossins

Council Decision Making and Scrutiny Process Working Group:
Chair: Councillor McGill
Vice Chair: Councillor Cossins

Climate Change:
Chair: Councillor Snedker
Vice Chair: Councillor Mahmud

9 **REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES 2025/26**

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to representation on other bodies for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

RESOLVED – That the nominations to the other bodies, as detailed in paragraph 6 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASON – To comply with the nominations received from the Political Groups.

10 **TO APPROVE A PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Submitted – A programme of Ordinary Meetings of the Council for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – That the programme of Ordinary Meetings be approved.

COUNCIL

Thursday, 19 June 2025

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Allen, Anderson, Baker, Bartch, Beckett, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dillon, Dulston, Durham, Garner, Harker, Haszeldine, Henderson, Holroyd, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Lawley, Layton, Lee, Mahmud, Mammolotti, McCollom, McEwan, McGill, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Pease, Porter, Ray, Roche, Mrs Scott, Snedker, Storr, Toms, Tostevin and Wallis

APOLOGIES – Councillors Ali, Coe, Donoghue, Marshall and Dr. Riley

ABSENT – Councillors Renton, Robinson and Walters

11 INTRODUCTIONS / ATTENDANCE AT MEETING.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

13 QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM):-

14 THE PUBLIC;

There were two questions, received with notice, from Members of the Public. Both Members of the Public attended the meeting to ask their question in person, and received answers from the relevant Cabinet Members thereon.

15 MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

There were no questions from Members, where notice had been given, for the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

16 NOTICE OF MOTION

17 TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DURHAM AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR DULSTON

The following Motion was submitted by Councillor Durham and seconded by Councillor Dulston:

Supporting Sporting Clubs & Protecting Green Spaces for the Stars of Tomorrow

That this council notes:

a) Strong sports clubs are vital community assets, offering social connections, promoting physical and mental health, and fostering a sense of belonging. They provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to interact, build relationships, and contribute to their local areas. Furthermore, sports clubs can address social challenges like reducing crime and

improving educational

b) Where supported they can contribute to a vibrant economy, not only bringing in much needed investment into the town through improved facilities but support the small trader, the local cafe or pub.

c) Darlington has a strong history of producing sporting stars, each honing their fledgling skills or exercising on the various green spaces we have within the Borough.

d) For the small child, "Tommy Crooks Park" can become Wembley, "Bellburn Field" Anfield and "Fryers field" the crease at Lords.

e) It was important as a Council to refresh the Playing pitches & Built facility strategy in 2021 to understand the Towns current capacity, how we could help sports clubs such as Darlington FC finding its forever home. This strategy was guided by short, medium and long term actions, the latter maturing no later than 2026.

f) The Labour/Lib Dem administration has recently approved its Physical Activity Strategy for the next 10 years, it makes reference to the actions within the above report, however it puts a longer timeframe on delivery up to 2031.

That this Council Believes:

a) Any decisions approved by this council which effect Sporting Clubs and spaces where sports are played goes beyond politics and should be cross party and made by "Full Council"

b) Darlington Council has a chequered history when it comes to supporting the sporting clubs in Town or protecting the green spaces used to play sport on.

c) We can't reverse what has gone before but can do better in the future.

d) This Council will always be an anchor for Sporting Clubs in choppy waters, the best interests of the club at the heart of joint working arrangements.

e) Any review of the actions required within the Playing pitches and Built facility strategy cannot be pushed back, if anything we must do more and we must go faster.

That this Council resolves to:

a) Bring forward the review of the Playing pitches & Built facility strategy 2021 to identify which aims require renewed focus.

b) Officers provide clarity and full transparency on any plans which may impact on the Economic health or security of Tenure for any Sporting Club within the Borough.

c) Commit to bringing forward the required changes to the Local Plan either through policy or Land Designation which will ensure that all recreational spaces are protected from House Building.

d) Commits to an unwavering support to ensure Darlington FC finds its forever home.

e) Ensuring that any plans which effects a sporting club, either economically or its secure tenure, these decisions are scrutinised by a committee made up of all members from Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee, Community and Local Services Scrutiny Committee and Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

f) Following the above review, "Full Council" rather than "Cabinet" approves or rejects said plans.

g) This Council delegates to the Monitoring Officer the task of making any Constitutional changes necessary to facilitate the above.

h) If required ask the Mayor to convene an Extraordinary meeting of Council to approve changes set out in g), if the next meeting of Council is more than 45 days from date of this meeting.

Councillor Durham also thanked Members and Officers for their attendance at this Extraordinary Meeting of the Council.

The following Amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Harker and Seconded by Councillor Roche:

The Following amendment was submitted by Councillor Harker and seconded by Councillor Roche:

Supporting Sporting Clubs and Protecting Green Spaces for the Stars of Tomorrow

This council notes:
a) Strong sports clubs are vital community assets, offering social connections, promoting physical and mental health, and fostering a sense of belonging. They provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to interact, build relationships, and contribute to their local areas. Furthermore, sports clubs can address social challenges like reducing crime and improving educational attainment.

b) Where supported they can contribute to a vibrant economy, not only bringing in much needed investment into the town through improved facilities but support the small trader, the local café or pub.

c) Darlington has a strong history of producing sporting stars, each honing their fledgling skills or exercising on the various green spaces we have within the Borough.

d) For the small child, "Tommy Crooks Park" can become Wembley, "Bellburn Field" Anfield and "Fryers Field" the crease at Lords.

e) It was important as a Council to refresh the Playing Pitch & Built Facility Strategy in 2021 to understand the Borough's current capacity, how we could help all sports clubs find security of tenure. This strategy states that it "sets out the strategic direction and site-specific priorities for the future delivery of sports facilities across the Borough until 2031."

f) The Labour/Lib Dem administration has recently approved its Physical Activity Strategy for the next 10 years, it makes reference to the actions within the above report, keeping to the same timeframe that it stated.

g) Preparations are already underway to review and refresh the Playing Pitch & Built Facility Strategy.

This Council Believes:
a) Any decisions approved and scrutinised by this Council which affect Sporting Clubs and spaces where sports are played goes beyond politics and should be made according to the agreed constitution of the Council.

b) Darlington Council has a positive history when it comes to supporting the sporting clubs in the Borough, developing sports facilities and protecting the green spaces used to play sport on, as well as creating new ones (e.g. West Park).

c) We have an opportunity to build on what has gone before and do even better in the future.

d) This Council will always be an anchor for Sporting Clubs in choppy waters, with the best interests of the clubs at the heart of any joint working arrangements.

e) The planned review and refresh of the Playing Pitch & Built Facility Strategy this year represents a great opportunity to further the support of sporting clubs, as well as helping people to move more, enjoy sport and develop the wonderful facilities in the Borough further.

This Council resolves to:

a) Review and revise the Playing Pitch & Built Facility Strategy 2021 to identify which aims require renewed focus, as already planned for this year.

b) Continue to provide clarity and full transparency on any plans which may impact on the Economic health or security of tenure for any Sporting Club within the borough, whilst ensuring commercial sensitivities are respected and maintained.

c) Ensure house building continues to give due regard to access of local people to recreational spaces, including creating new such facilities.

d) Reaffirms the importance of security of tenure for all sporting clubs, as referenced in the Playing Pitch & Built Facility Strategy.

e) Ensuring that any plans involving the Council, which affects a sporting club, either economically or its secure tenure, are scrutinised by the relevant scrutiny committee and all decisions required are considered by relevant committees, according to the agreed Constitution of the Council.

f) That all members take responsibility for communicating about sports clubs and playing

fields in an accurate manner, avoiding rumour, speculation and “fake news”.

Members then entered into discussion on the amendment, with some Opposition Members noting that the contents of both the Motion and the amendment were not on the Forward Plan and thus not on the Council’s radar. This part of the discussion was concluded with Opposition members’ reference to the Motion’s support to Sporting Clubs facing financial difficulty and impacts on green spaces following the increase in housing developments.

Members responded to the discussion by referring to the seriousness of this attempt to inhibit change, noting that this was an area for discussion on 3 separate occasions in Scrutiny which was not addressed by the Conservatives, but was addressed by the Green and Ruling Group.

The Amendment was Carried.

The Amendment became the Substantive Motion and was put to the meeting, and was Agreed.

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

PAVEMENT CAFÉ POLICY

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Jim Garner, Stronger Communities Portfolio

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

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To invite Members to approve the final draft of the Council's revised Pavement Café Policy, which is at **Appendix 1.**

2. The schedule and attached appendices to this report give details of the request for consideration.

Summary

3. This report seeks Members' approval of a revised Pavement Café Policy, following public consultation and supported by the Licensing Committee, incorporating legislative changes, and to reflect the changing dynamics of the town.

Human Rights Act

4. When considering matters relating to the grant of a licence and the placing of conditions on licences, the Committee must consider whether the decision affects an individual, group, or Company's Human Rights as set out in the Convention and if it does, whether the interference with those rights is permissible by reason of the justifications set out in the Convention. In addition, consideration must be given to whether the interference is proportionate.

Legal Implications

5. There are no issues that the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 17

6. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty of the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of

those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Full Council approve this revised Pavement Café Policy, which will apply to all licences issued from the date of this agreement.

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reason; to ensure standards are maintained to protect the public, taking into account legislative changes and guidance issued to local authorities.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

(i) Business and Planning Act 2020
(ii) Highways Act 1980
(iii) Equality Act 2010
(iv) Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
(v) Pavements for People
(vi) The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill 2024-25
(vii) The Tobacco and Vapes Bill
(viii) ADPH North East Position Statement on Nicotine Vaping

Colin Dobson: Extension 5988

Council Plan	This policy will maintain the legal framework when dealing with pavement café applications
Addressing inequalities	The proposals will have no additional impact on equality of opportunity for the disabled public. Equality Act screening assessment has been carried out
Tackling Climate Change	This report has no impact on the Council's carbon impact.
Efficient and effective use of resources	This report has no impact on the Council's Efficiency Programme.
Health and Wellbeing	This policy will address health concerns caused by smoking raised at a local and national level
S17 Crime and Disorder	This policy will address issues specifically relating to the prevention of crime and disorder
Wards Affected	The proposals affect pavement café licences throughout the Borough
Groups affected	The policy does not have a direct impact on any particular group
Budget and Policy Framework	This report represents no major change to Policy
Key Decision	The proposals do not represent 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 the Council's impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Background

9. On 13 March 2000, Darlington's Community Protection Committee approved the introduction of a pavement café licensing scheme and a guidance document that contained standard conditions applied to such licences. The standard conditions within the Policy were reviewed by Full Council on 16 July 2009 when they were simplified, and on 20 March 2014, a further update of conditions was approved.

10. The Council's policy in respect of licensing pavement cafes in Darlington was designed to enhance the leisure provision for residents and visitors to Darlington and add to the vibrancy of both the day and evening economy of the town centre. Well-operated pavement cafes are attractive venues for families to enjoy refreshment and add to the ambiance of the town centre.

11. The licensing of pavement cafés was regulated by the Highways Act 1980, however, this has recently been superseded by the Business and Planning Act 2020, which was made permanent on 31 March 2024. This Act was introduced to assist the hospitality trade recover from Covid- 19 restrictions by using outside space to increase capacity when social distancing was essential. It achieved this by simplifying and speeding up the application process. A pavement café licence is bespoke to each premises but includes two mandatory conditions required under this Act. These are:

    (a) No obstruction

(b) Smoke-free seating

12. This Act has reduced the consultation and decision-making time for pavement café licence applications from 28 days of public consultation to 14 days, with a further 14-day determination period. It places a maximum fee that can be charged of £500 for a new licence and £350 for it to be renewed, and it also allows licensing authorities to issue licences for up to two years (previously required to renew annually). When this Act was originally introduced, Darlington's Licensing Committee decided that pavement café licences should initially be issued free of charge. A new fee structure was approved in 2023 to be implemented when the Business and Planning Act was made permanent.

13. Prior to the Business and Planning Act, Licensing issued nine pavement café licences, which was a fairly consistent number over the years prior to Covid. With the introduction of the Act, it grew to 32 premises, however, this has now reduced to an average of 20, as pavement cafes do not form part of the business model for some premises that initially took advantage of a free licence. Each licence is approved by the Highways Department, Police, and Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) following consultation.

The Consultation Process

14. Throughout the time of Covid restrictions being eased, Licensing was cognizant of the dynamics within Darlington and particularly the town centre licensed trade. It has been clear that pavement cafes have been a huge success and have contributed greatly to the economic recovery. It has also highlighted how our policy needs to adapt to take into account these changes and align it with future development plans.

15. Licensing has been liaising closely with key stakeholders and asking how our current policy can be improved whilst maintaining the vibrancy that pavement cafés have brought to the town. These proposed amendments, which also take into account legislative changes, have been made as a result of those discussions and highlighted in a summary below, along with the rationale for change.

Mandatory cycle lanes not to be used for outside space	Taking into account changes to the transport infrastructure
Advertisement of gambling services and vaping products to be prohibited	Representations from Public Health and Trading Standards due to the harms they can cause to vulnerable people
A-boards or advertising signs or any other unsightly or unapproved items are not to be placed on or adjacent to the pavement café area or in lieu of the café area not being utilised.	Representations from disability groups and this would not be in keeping with the vision for Darlington Town Centre. This is in line with Darlington's Pavements for People guidance document
High quality furniture made from a composite material may also be considered on a case-by-case basis.	Composite materials have developed in recent years and can provide a good alternative to metal or wood
Tables, chairs, parasols, barriers, etc. shall not be stored on the highway when the pavement café is not open or when the furniture is not in use unless, in exceptional circumstances, where permission has been	Prevent anti-social behaviour late into the night where people may congregate. Also prevent loose furniture being used as weapons. There may be circumstances in future development plans where this may be

granted following consultation with key stakeholders	accommodated on a case-by-case basis
In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for larger freestanding parasols or outdoor shade structure covering several tables at once to be used	Covid restrictions demonstrated that the use of gazebos were an effective and viable alternative to parasols in some locations
The use of electric heaters will be considered subject to a risk assessment taking into account the siting of the heaters, location of electrical points, cables and protection from the weather	There are occasions where these can be safely used and help reduce emissions
A minimum width of 1.5 meters could be regarded as the minimum acceptable distance between two obstacles or edge of carriageway in certain locations with approval of key stakeholders	Department for Transport guidance, Section 4.2 Inclusive Mobility and government pavement café licence guidance 2024. This will still provide space for wheelchair access and give key stakeholders the opportunity to assess on a case- by-case basis before approval
A collaborative approach may be considered where a number of small pavement cafes wish to combine their space into one pavement café area provided they all consent, and this will only be subject to approval if all key agencies agree. Where granted, should problems occur because of this agreement the Council reserves the right to require barriers to delineate each pavement café	As the town centre develops, smaller areas, i.e. the Yards will not be disadvantaged and remain compliant with policy
Soft drinks may be allowed in bottles on the provision that they are removed and safely disposed of immediately after the contents have been consumed.	This was proposed by trade representative as it supports families using pavement cafes where alcohol is not the main feature.
There will be a zero tolerance no smoking policy for all pavement cafes. A no smoking sign will be displayed at the entrance and a sign will be placed on each table. Allowing customers to vape will be at the discretion of the licence holder, however it is recommended that a vape free area is retained for those customers who do not wish to inhale the aerosol of those vaping around them	Representations from Public Health and is a proportionate response to help reduce smoking (pavement cafes are not 'beer gardens'). Having smoke-free outdoor dining areas enhances the appeal for customers with families and for non- smokers. It also supports those who have taken the steps to quit and want to maintain a smoke- free lifestyle. Allowing vaping supports the use of these products as an anti-smoking tool and there is no evidence that passive inhalation is harmful in outside settings
In an initial application for a pavement café licence, applicants will be asked to identify an area where they will direct smokers to if practicable	Whilst accepting that some people still wish to smoke, this area will be considered acceptable if it is away from those who may be affected by the smoke
Remove the requirement for food to be	Business and Planning Act make it clear that

served	pavement cafes are provided for food and/or drink. The provision of food can create an additional burden on premises who will ordinarily only serve drink
No requirement for litter bins however where provided they should have a lid to prevent the contents being blown by the wind and prevent flying insects being attracted to the location. Bins should be made of non-combustible materials to reduce the risk of accidental fires or arson	Tables are cleared by staff and rubbish is taken away to commercial bins.
Allow low level background music with sound amplification equipment, however anything beyond that will require approval from Environmental Health. Television sets are not allowed in the pavement café area	Allow a pleasant ambiance but prevents issues of excessive noise and nuisance, allowing customers to enjoy the outside space
Television screens inside the premises will not be positioned to make them visible from the pavement café unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council following consultation with key agencies. Where consent has been granted, the Council reserves the right to withdraw this at any time where there are concerns for public safety.	Live sports can present challenges for police and local authority, adversely affecting those wanting to enjoy the outside ambience. There remains a flexibility on a case-by-case basis for these to be permitted, provided all key agencies are in agreement
Terminal hour to be increased from 10.30pm until 11.00pm	This will allow premises to align their pavement café licence with their alcohol licensing hours and aid the removal of street furniture to inside the premises
Requirement for the licence holder to complete counter terrorism awareness training	Advice and guidance that is being introduced into the hospitality trade as a result of the proposed Martyn's Law

16. On 17 December 2024, the Licensing Committee approved a draft revision of the Pavement Café Policy, including the above proposals, to be released for public consultation, and this took place from 24 December 2024 until 28 February 2025. It was available on the Darlington Borough Council website and widely publicised through both local and social media. Notification was also sent to key stakeholders and Members with a link to the consultation. A list of those direct consultees is in **Appendix 2**.

Response to Consultation

17. Thirty-one formal responses were received, and these have been compiled in a table in **Appendix 3** for consideration.

Information and Analysis

18. Further responses were received from County Durham and Darlington Fire Service, highlighted below, and have been incorporated into the draft policy for consideration.

(a) Area of licence application should be assessed as to not restrict access to fire hydrants on pavements by use of furniture or barriers used for the purpose of the business.

(b) Bins should be made of non-combustible materials to reduce the risk of accidental fires or arson.

(c) The use of portable heaters should be addressed and incorporated into the fire risk assessment for the premise or business.

19. DBC Highway Department also responded by making recommendations on the following:

(a) That any barrier/planter, etc must be at least 500mm from the edge of a running carriageway.

(b) In areas where traffic is controlled by Traffic Regulation Orders and reinforced by raising/lowering bollards, in particular Skinnergate, but also to a lesser degree Blackwellgate, High Row, Bondgate and Northgate that if the bollard fails to rise to protect the area, the café licence would be suspended to protect pavement café users from potential unauthorised vehicle entry/vehicle strikes

20. Again, these have been incorporated into the policy for consideration.

21. During the consultation process, it became very clear that the main concerns were on the issues of smoking and vaping. The Regulation Manager from Fresh and Balance, which is a regional programme dedicated to reducing harm from tobacco and alcohol in the North East of England, provided a formal response to the consultation and is reproduced in full at **Appendix 4**. In summary, they called for a 100% smoking ban in pavement cafes, stating "smokefree pavement cafes can contribute to an environment in which smokers are helped to quit and people are protected from tobacco-related harm, as well as creating more family friendly spaces. It will be very welcome if Darlington's pavement cafes become smokefree."

22. They did, however, consider vaping as a proven aid to help people quit smoking, and there is no evidence so far that vaping is harmful to those around them. As such, they did not recommend a blanket ban on restricting vaping without stronger evidence of harm, and they would be concerned that such restrictions may imply equivalence in harms between smoking and vaping, which may deter smokers from switching from smoking to vaping.

23. This position is supported by Darlington's Director of Public Health and by the Association of Directors of Public Health North East.

24. On analysing the responses, 15 of the 31 respondents would support a ban on smoking and vaping, which is quantified as 48.3%.

25. In line with Public Health guidance, it was proposed to the Licensing Committee that this revised policy has a complete ban on smoking in pavement cafes, however, the decision on allowing vaping should be at the discretion of the licence holder.

26. Further analysis of the 31 responses in relation to other key proposals is shown in the table below and demonstrates general support for those changes to policy.

Proposal	No. respondents making comment	Support proposal	Against proposal
Allow background music	17	13	4
Extend time to 11pm	11	10	1
No requirement for food	7	6	1

Meeting with the Licensing Committee

27. On 29 April 2025, a draft proposal of changes was presented to the Licensing Committee. Members supported the introduction of a complete ban on smoking and extended this ban to vaping. Whilst a ban on vaping went beyond guidance from Public Health, it was felt that this practice would be unpleasant for those nearby trying to enjoy their food or drink.

28. Also, Members did not support soft drinks being served in bottles as they felt the risk to the public from broken glass was too great.

Equalities Impact Assessment

29. The full policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, and a recent screening process has been carried out to ensure this assessment is still appropriate. There is nothing contained within this report that would adversely impact that assessment.

Financial Implications

30. There are no financial implications arising in respect of this report.

Conclusion

31. The proposed policy will maintain safety standards and enhance the customer experience for those using these outside spaces.

Appendix 1

Pavement Cafe Policy

DRAFT

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1. GENERAL

Definition

Introduction

Alfresco dining is becoming a more widespread aspect of urban life, and the presence of tables and chairs on the pavement can make a positive contribution by adding vitality, colour, life and interest to an area. Darlington Borough Council (DBC) supports and encourages the provision of pavement cafes in the town as they can help maximise the use of public spaces and aid the local economy by adding to the facilities offered to people who live, visit and work in Darlington.

The idea of a pavement café is to offer the public the chance to eat and/or drink outside. It is not aimed at increasing the overall size of a public house. If the Council considers that the overall effect of an application will result in a significant increase in customers, additional facilities may be required at the premises to meet that need eg. Toilets.

A pavement licence is granted by the local authority, which allows the licence-holder to place **removable furniture** over certain highways adjacent to the premises where the application has been made.

General requirements

Whilst the provision of pavement cafes is encouraged, it is important that they are properly administered and managed to ensure that they meet the high standards expected in Darlington. They should not obstruct the highway or create a hazard for pedestrians, especially for those disabled people who have a visual or mobility impairment.

The area to be used must take into account other needs in the immediate vicinity e.g. kerbside parking, bus stops and pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian needs must be paramount. The expanse of the pavement café must not conflict with any access or dropped crossings that are required for free passage of road users. Barriers and tapping rails should be positioned and maintained to the satisfaction of Darlington Borough Council and should be totally removed outside the permitted hours of operation of the café, except where approval has been given following consultation with all interested parties/agencies.

The pavement café should occupy an area directly in front of and be visible from the existing premises. Emergency exit routes from this premises and adjacent buildings should not be obstructed by the pavement café and emergency service vehicles must have access along all streets at all times, even in pedestrianised areas.

In general, all parts of the highway may be used for pavement cafés, assuming all safety and non-obstruction requirements are met. The exceptions are:

- Any carriageway or 'shared use surface'
- Mandatory cycle lanes
- Any highway verge
- Where width of the pavement makes it impractical/unlawful

- Where authorised street furniture makes it impossible

Licences will not normally be granted where:

- A significant effect on road safety would arise either from the siting of tables and chairs, or from customers visiting or leaving the licensed area.
- Where access to the pavement café from the premises or use of facilities at the premises for customers involves crossing a live carriageway
- Where there are concerns over the recorded level of personal injury accidents in the locality where the tables and chairs will be sited
- There is a conflict with Traffic Orders such as waiting restrictions
- The site obstructs either pedestrian or vehicular access, or traffic flows, or places pedestrians in danger when in use
- There would be a significant loss of amenity caused by traffic; noise; rubbish; potential for the harbourage of vermin; odour or fumes
- The tables and chairs obstruct the safe passage of users of the footway or carriageway
- The area to be licensed interferes with sight lines for any road users such as at road junctions, or pedestrian crossing facilities
- The site does not allow the licence holder, staff and customers to park in a safe manner
- The trading activity is carried out after dusk and the site is not adequately lit to allow safe access and egress from the site for both customers and staff
- The existing toilet and washing facilities are not adequate to accommodate an increased number of customers using the pavement café
- The Council is not satisfied that applicants have made satisfactory arrangements for the storage and collection of all refuse associated with their business
- The Council is not satisfied that applicants have made satisfactory arrangements for the storage of all tables and chairs off the highway without impeding any access or egress from the premises.

In considering the above matters, the standard guidance will be that a licence will only be issued if an unimpeded pedestrian route can be maintained at all times. The route shall ensure that all pedestrians and particularly those with a disability can maintain their normal path where feasible. All applications will be considered on their own merits.

Pavement café licences will only be issued to cafes, restaurants, public houses or other establishments that serve food and/or drink within the premises and employ sufficient staff to service the outside area.

Pavement café licences will not be issued to self-service premises or takeaway food shops.

The Council will carry out periodic inspections to make sure that all the terms and conditions of the licence are being observed.

DBC needs to take into consideration safety of all Publicly Accessible Locations (PALS) and this will be assessed before any pavement café licence is granted. Counter-terrorism awareness and training is available free of charge at https://ct.protectuk.police.uk/

A pre-licensing visit will be made to each premises upon receipt of an application for the grant, renewal or variation of a pavement café licence, to discuss the application process, the proposed operation of the cafe etc. to provide advice and information to the applicant.

Once the pavement café licence has been issued, further visits will be made to the premises to review the practical day-to-day operation of the café. An additional assessment will be made at the end of the 'season' to evaluate the operation of the café over that period and to determine if any revision of the operating schedule is necessary.

Any other visits to the premises will be made on a risk rated rationale determined by the findings of the above visits and/or complaints received during the period of the licence.

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, the following phrases shall mean:

Pavement Café:	Pavement cafés are considered to be tables and chairs placed on the public highway (includes pavements) where food and/or drink is served.
Market Day:	As decided by the market management
Event Day:	Days when special events take place in the Borough
Normal Day:	Any day other than a Market Day and when no special event is taking place

2. LEGAL SITUATION

Prior to 2020 all pavement licences were issued under the Highways Act 1980. To assist businesses recover from the effects of Covid-19, the Business and Planning Act 2020 introduced temporary provisions to reduce barriers for restaurants and pubs using outside space when social distancing was required. The Business and Planning Act was subsequently made permanent (with amendments) by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, which came into effect in 2024. Ordinarily, all pavement licences will now be issued under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

If the furniture is not removable and appropriate planning permission is in place, in exceptional circumstances and with approval of key agencies, an application must be made for permission under the Highway Act 1980. If granted under the Highway Act, all relevant conditions in this policy will apply.

Tables and chairs placed on the highway without permission are an illegal obstruction and the Council will take enforcement action in such cases.

Granting a licence to operate a pavement café does not imply an exclusive right to the area. The operator of the café should be aware that the Council reserves the right to gain access to the café area for cleaning, repairing and maintaining the highway or street furniture. Other statutory organisations may also require access for maintenance and repair of their equipment. The Council therefore reserves the right to suspend the licence temporarily if, for any reason, it becomes necessary.

If it appears to the Council that a person granted a licence has committed a breach of conditions, they may serve a notice requiring steps be taken to remedy that breach within a specified time. If the licence-holder fails to do so, the local authority may amend the licence, with the consent of the licence-holder; revoke the licence or take steps to remedy the breach.

Where the Council has incurred expenses in the exercise of its powers, those expenses, together with interest at a reasonable rate (the Council may determine this from the date of service of a notice of demand for those expenses) may be recovered by the Council from the licence holder.

Under the terms of the Highways Act 1980, the Council will not grant permission unless it obtains the express consent of interested frontages who may be materially affected by the proposal.

Section 115A(7) of the 1980 Act states that 'frontages' means: *the owners and occupiers of any premises adjoining the part of the highway on, in or over which facilities for recreation or refreshment or both, have been, are being or would be provided.*

Where required, express consent must be provided in writing before an application will be accepted.

The pavement café must operate in accordance with the conditions of the licence. Any breach of the conditions may lead to action by the Council and for a licence to be refused in the future.

On expiry of the licence, where there has been an application to renew the licence prior to its expiry, these conditions shall be deemed to remain in force whilst the premises lawfully continue to operate as if a licence was in force.

The Licence holder shall make no claims or charge against the Council in the event of the street furniture being lost, stolen or damaged except where it is attributable to negligence on the part of the Council or any of its Officers.

If a public liability insurance policy is not in force, the Council shall withdraw the licence for the period in which the policy is not in force and the licence holder may be liable to prosecution for obstruction of the highway.

The licence holder shall not cause or undertake any alterations to the highway surface.

The licence holder shall not assign, sub-let or part with this interest or possession of a licence.

The Council may at any time vary the conditions of a licence.

The Council will not grant a licence to persons under the age of 18 years.

The Council may suspend or terminate a licence if any of the conditions of the licence are breached.

A licence holder may terminate a licence at 21 days' notice by informing the Council in writing.

The licence does not take precedence over police powers to preserve order.

There is no statutory appeal process for these decisions, however as an internal review, any decision may be referred to the Licensing Committee.

3. PRIVATE LAND

This policy relates only to pavement cafés on a public highway. (Cafes on private land are not covered.) Although a pavement cafe licence is not required on private land, planning permission may be required if the structures and fittings are not of a temporary nature.

Land that might be considered private may in fact have become highway if the public have enjoyed access over it for at least twenty years without challenge, or if the Council have formally adopted the land. Before proceeding, it would be wise to check with the Planning Department to establish if planning permission is necessary and with the Highways Authority to confirm land ownership.

4. RIGHTS OF ACCESS

Authorised Officers of the Council and Police Officers shall have access to a pavement café at all times whilst it is in operation.

5. ADVERTISING

Advertising of gambling services, vaping products or irresponsible alcohol promotions will not be permitted on the barriers or furniture within the pavement café area. Please note that tobacco advertising is already prohibited under the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002.

Advertising requires prior approval of Darlington Borough Council.

6. DESIGNING THE PAVEMENT CAFÉ

Size and Layout

The size and layout of the proposed pavement café will be dependent upon the characteristics outside the premises, particularly the space available, taking into account the needs of other users. It is not therefore appropriate for this Policy to set a standard size for the pavement café – see Layout Guide Dimension Criteria below:

Plans to be submitted with an application shall be drawn to scale, with dimensions, including areas required, the number of tables and chairs to be provided and pinch points detailing width and length. Space should be left between the tables and chairs to allow access for all, including wheelchair users.

The layout of furniture and means of enclosure will only be approved if adequate provision has been made for customers with disabilities.

The pavement café should:

- occupy an area directly in front of the Applicant's premises;
- be visible from these premises; and
- not extend beyond the width of its frontage (unless you have express consent from adjacent premises).

Emergency routes from adjacent buildings and the applicant's premises should not be obstructed by the Pavement Café. If the emergency services object to the proposal on safety grounds, it is very likely that the Council will refuse it.

Minimum Unobstructed Space Criteria

On a normal street, there must remain at least 2.0 metres (6.6 feet) of unobstructed space between the carriageway and the front of the pavement cafe to allow pedestrians to pass by safely.

On streets with high pedestrian usage, there must remain at least 2.75 metres (9 feet) of unobstructed space.

Each case will be judged on its merits and the unobstructed space will be set between 2.0 and 2.75 metres according to the frequency of pedestrian usage and other relevant parameters.

The requirement may however be waived by the Council in certain locations where it is considered safe to do so. A minimum width of 1.5 meters could be regarded as the minimum acceptable distance between two obstacles in certain locations with approval of key stakeholders.

A 1.5 metre wide access to the premises should be kept clear at all times.

Layout Guideline Dimension Criteria

A table and two chairs are deemed to occupy a minimum of 2.0 metres by 1.0 metre. (This does not include space for circulation.)

A table and four chairs are deemed to occupy a minimum of 2.0 metres by 2.0 metres. (This does not include space for circulation.)

An allowance must also be made for any other equipment and circulation requirements within the area applied for, particularly wheelchair access and movement within the pavement café area.

Lighting

The Applicant for a pavement café licence should, if intending to open beyond dusk, carefully consider the level of lighting in the proposed pavement café area. Whilst street lighting may be perfectly adequate for a public highway, it may need supplementing to allow the pavement café to operate safely.

Any additional lighting equipment and supply must be specified in the application to enable its impact upon the highway to be considered.

Tables and Chairs

All furniture shall be of high quality constructed of wood or metal and approved by the Council. High quality furniture made from a composite material may also be considered on a case by case basis. Parasols must not have any advertising on except for the name of the business. The advertising of gambling services, alcohol or vaping products is not allowed. All proposed furniture and parasols will be inspected by an Officer from the Council to ensure that they are of satisfactory quality, construction and colour prior to a licence being issued.

When choosing furniture, regard should be given to the highway surface, as uneven or sloping surfaces may require more sturdy styles of tables and chairs, whilst narrow legs may cause damage to certain paving. It is advisable to discuss this at an early stage and certainly before any furniture is purchased.

Full details, including dimensions, materials and colours of proposed furniture, ideally accompanied by photographs or illustrations, will be required as part of the application.

The Council reserves the right to reject applications where inappropriate furniture is proposed.

Tables, chairs, parasols, barriers, etc. shall not be stored on the highway when the pavement café is not operating unless, in exceptional circumstances where permission has been granted following consultation with key stakeholders. If furniture is stored within the premises, any fire exit or escape route must not be blocked by stored furniture.

The Council reserves the right to refuse a licence to any applicant who has not made suitable arrangements for the internal storage and collection of refuse, and to withdraw the licence if the approved arrangements are not adhered to.

The layout of the café's furniture and means of enclosure must provide adequate access and circulation space for all customers including wheelchair users and those with pushchairs, buggies, etc.

Tables and chairs should not be located where they will impede drivers' sight lines or obscure highway signs.

All necessary items shall be removed from the highway if requested by a police officer, an authorised Council Officer or representative of a public utility. These items shall remain off the highway for as long as is required.

Parasols

To protect customers from excessive sun light, parasols shall be available for use at each table if the pavement café area is in direct sunlight, and a customer requests that a parasol be provided.

Parasol's metric dimensions, materials and colour must be specified as part of the application and their proposed locations shown on the site layout plan.

The design and colour of parasols will not be restricted to a particular type but they should be made of high quality materials and fabric and be of a uniform design and colour. Bright, garish or reflective colours should be avoided.

Parasols, when opened must not overhang the boundary of the pavement café and must remain closed in periods of high winds. They should be safely secured and contained entirely within the boundaries of the pavement café to ensure they do not cause an obstruction or create a hazard.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for larger freestanding parasols or outdoor shade structure covering several tables at once to be used. Each case will be dealt with on its merits.

Garden style umbrellas are not acceptable.

Space Heaters

If space heaters are used their dimensions, materials and colour must be specified within the application and their proposed locations shown on the site layout plan.

A formal risk assessment is required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to support the application. This should be carried out by a competent person (someone who has knowledge of the law, British Standards, and Health and Safety Executive Codes of Practice and Guidance).

In considering an application, the Council will have regard to the inherent safety of the equipment, its location, storage of Liquid Petroleum Gas cylinders, maintenance, training arrangements and fire risk assessment.

The use of electric heaters will be considered subject to a risk assessment taking into account the siting of the heaters, location of electrical points, cables and protection from the weather.

The Council will consider the adequacy of the risk assessment, which must:

- identify the hazards e.g. fire, explosion, burns, impact from falling equipment / cylinders
- decide who may be harmed and how
- evaluate the risks and decide whether proposed precautions will be adequate or whether more could be done
- record findings
- review assessment and revise if necessary

Other Furniture

If planters are to be used within the pavement café, good quality composite materials may be permitted as a means of reducing their weight to maintain portability.

At least one child's high chair must be available for customers to use within the pavement café.

Barriers

Barriers or other means of enclosure are required in order to ease pedestrian movement, guide the visually impaired, protect users of the facility and contain the licenced area.

The entire pavement café (excluding entrances) **shall be enclosed in its entirety** using a suitable barrier with sufficient space for access, along with circulation inside the enclosed area. The area should be assessed prior to application to ensure that it does not restrict access to fire hydrants on pavements by use of furniture or barriers.

Barriers should consist of at least two solid horizontal elements; the lower element should not be more than 155 mm above the ground and the second element between 800 and 1000 mm above the ground. They must be sturdy enough to prevent collapse if accidentally walked or stumbled into.

Hoops or post and chain type barriers and low-level objects will not be acceptable

Barriers must not be permanently fixed to the ground where this is public highway.

The barriers should be supported by suitable 'feet' that do not cause a trip hazard to pedestrians, particularly those who are visually impaired.

Any barrier/planter etc must be at least 500mm from the edge of a running carriageway

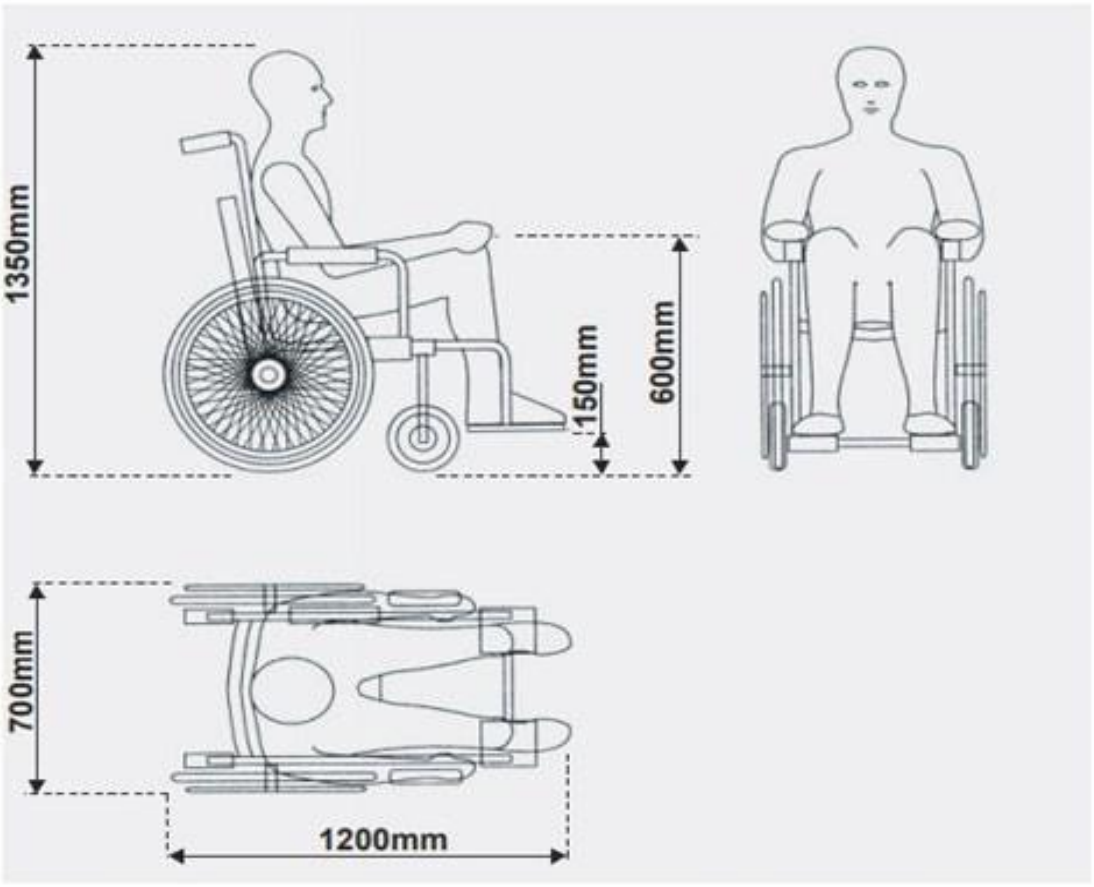
Each barrier can incorporate the café logo if desired.

A collaborative approach may be considered where a number of small pavement cafes wish to combine their space into one pavement café area provided they all consent, and this will only be subject to approval if all key agencies agree. Where granted, should problems occur because of this agreement the Council reserves the right to require barriers to delineate each pavement café.

Accessibility

All pavement cafes should be accessible for wheelchair users.

Where access to the pavement café is not level, a suitable and stable ramp, sufficient to allow access by a reference wheelchair must be available at all times. (A reference wheelchair has: (a) total length of 1200mm including extra-long footplates (b) total width of 700mm.)



7. ALCOHOL

In order to supply alcoholic drinks in the pavement café, a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 will be required. This is an entirely separate matter to granting a pavement café licence.

Drinks shall not be served to people standing outside the boundary of the pavement café, nor shall people purchasing drinks within the area be permitted to stand and drink or to take them outside of the area.

No alcohol shall be sold or consumed within the pavement café area unless in compliance with a premises licence.

A pavement café licence should not be a means of extending the overall capacity of a public house. It is expected that a pavement café will enhance facilitates by offering food and/or drink in a pleasant outdoor environment. If the service of alcohol leads to anti-social behaviour or disorder, the pavement café licence may be reviewed, revoked or not renewed.

Drinking alcoholic beverages directly from bottles is not permitted in the pavement café area. Wine however, may be served from the bottle at outside tables. Drinks should be served in glasses made of toughened or tempered safety glass, polycarbonate, plastic or paper cups.

The café area should supervised at all times with customers seated.

8. SMOKING

There will be a zero tolerance **no smoking** policy for all pavement cafes. A no smoking sign will be displayed at the entrance and a sign will be placed on each table.

Pavement cafes are not to be used as an outdoor smoking area and those wishing to smoke should be directed to a location away from the barriers where smoke will not drift across tables. **Where practicable, applicants will be asked to identify an area where they will direct smokers to.**

9. FOOD/DRINK

Food businesses are required by law to be registered with the local authority. This is an entirely separate consideration to granting a pavement café licence and can be done by contacting Environmental Health.

The pavement café area is to be used only for the service and consumption of food and/or drink.

Customers must be seated at a table when consuming food and/or drink

It is imperative that good food hygiene practices are followed at all times.

All the food and drink consumed within the pavement café area should be ordered and purchased there.

The crockery and cutlery used in pavement cafes should be good quality and uniform style.

Food should be served on plates, not in plastic or cardboard containers, paper bags or other wrappers.

Tables must be cleared of all uneaten food, used crockery, cutlery etc. and properly cleaned of any spillage immediately after they are vacated by customers.

Any food spilt on the highway must be removed immediately and the area washed at the earliest opportunity. This will minimise the likelihood of birds scavenging in the area.

If birds roost on buildings or in trees adjacent to the pavement café, applicants should consider providing parasols or some other form of cover in order to minimise the risk of food contamination.

Food should never be placed in an unprotected area where a passing assistance dog could be drawn to it.

The licence holder will be responsible for the cleanliness of the pavement café area at all times. Care should also be taken to ensure that litter does not stray or get blown further afield.

Menus should be readily available either at the tables or on request. A-boards must not be used to display menus or advertise the cafe as they can cause dangerous obstructions to pedestrians.

An area of approximately 5 metres around the site should be kept clear of any stray or windblown litter from the café.

The area should be swept when necessary to keep it clear of litter and refuse. Spillages and breakages, especially of glass and crockery, should be cleared up immediately. Care must be taken to avoid nuisance to customers and to ensure that hazards are not created during this work. The café area should be cleansed at the end of the trading day or as soon as practicable.

If a bin is provided in the pavement café area it should have a lid to prevent the contents being blown by the wind and also prevent flying insects being attracted to the location. Bins should be made of non-combustible materials to reduce the risk of accidental fires or arson. Commercial wheelie bins are not suitable for this purpose.

The use of barbecues, rotisseries, ice cream machines, drinks machines or any other equipment for the preparation and/or sale of food and drink for consumption on or off the premises will not be permitted within the pavement café area without prior approval from the Council following consultation with responsible authorities.

11. NOISE / NUISANCE

Background music played at a low level may be permitted after consultation with Environmental Health provided it does not cause a nuisance to nearby residents or adjacent premises.

Television screens inside the premises will not be positioned to make them visible from the pavement café unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council following consultation with key agencies. Where consent has been granted, the Council reserves the right to withdraw this at any time where there are concerns for public safety.

Advice on how to minimise noise disturbance can be obtained from the Council's Environmental Health team.

12. FEES

The current fees payable for the grant and renewal of pavement café licences are available from the Licensing Office and published on the Councils website.

Fees are determined by the Licensing Committee in accordance with statutory requirements and based on the size of the proposed pavement café area.

Fees are not refundable if the application is unsuccessful or where a licence is surrendered.

Variations to Fee Structure

The fee structure is reviewed annually as part of the budgetary process. Notice of the current fees will be supplied to applicants at the time of application.

13. INSURANCE

The Licence holder shall indemnify Darlington Borough Council against all liability made in consequence of the pavement cafe use, and for this purpose must take out a policy of insurance to

the sum of £5,000,000. The holder must also produce to the Council, on request, current receipts for premium payments and confirmation of annual renewals of the policy. (Applicants are advised to inform their insurance company of the intention to obtain a pavement café licence, as an existing policy for the premises may not automatically cover this function.)

14. MANAGEMENT

The licence holder is responsible for the satisfactory conduct of people within the pavement café. Rowdy or unruly behaviour may lead to the suspension or termination of the licence. Premises may also wish to adopt their own dress code as a condition of entry.

15. HOURS OF OPERATION

The **maximum** permitted hours of operation will be:

Monday to Sunday between the hours of 08.00 hours and 23.00 hours

Please note that these are maximum hours that may be applied for. If there are objections to the number of hours requested, shorter hours may be offered. If no compromise can be agreed, then the application will be referred to the Council Licensing Committee for consideration.

Hours may also be reduced where time limited traffic orders are in place.

Please also note that there is no drinking up period, therefore licence holders will be expected to manage the laying out and clearing of the pavement café within these hours. Posts, barriers, tables and chairs shall not be placed upon the highway before the commencement of operational hours and shall be removed entirely at the end of the operational hours.

The pavement café area shall be cleared of all waste and litter at the end of each and every licensed opening period.

16. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS

Each application for **grant and/or renewal** will be accompanied by:

i) A completed application form; and
ii) Risk assessments covering Health and Safety (including fire risk assessment for portable heaters) and
iii) Proof that the Action Counters Terrorism Awareness E-learning course has been completed; and
iv) The prescribed fee; and
v) A certificate of Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million that has specific cover for the outside pavement café area. This must indemnify the Highway Authority against all claims for injury, damage or loss to users of the public highway, arising from the use of the highway for the permitted purpose, and
vi) Details of brand, type and materials of proposed furniture; and
vii) Details of any external lighting and heating equipment; and
viii) Details of opening and closing times, and
ix) Contact details for the applicant and of the property owner (if different) and

x) A site plan to scale of 1:100 (or 1:200 if considered adequate by officers). This should show:

- The proposed boundaries of the café giving dimensions and distance from kerb line and street furniture such as bollards etc.
- Building line
- Kerb line
- Layout and dimensions of tables and seating
- Dimensions and points of access
- Location and dimensions of parasols and any freestanding lighting and/or heating equipment.

If the plan is not to scale and/or does not contain full details with accurate dimensions, then the application will be rejected and returned.

Applications shall be sent to

Licensing, Darlington Borough Council, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT.

Or e-mailed licensing@darlington.gov.uk

If a licence is transferred then the new licence holder shall produce their own certificate of Public Liability Insurance of at least £5 million.

17. CONSULTATION

Grant of Licence

Where the application is for the grant of a licence, the Council will undertake a full consultation, which will include the Police, and various sections within the Council (Planning, Environmental Health, Highways, Utilities, Darlington Association on Disability (DAD), and if the pavement café is to be located in the Market place, the Markets Officer will also be consulted).

The Council will publish applications and will consult with nearby frontages that may be affected.

On the day the application is made, applicants must fix a notice of the application to the premises so that the notice is readily visible to, and can be read easily by members of the public who are not on the premises. This notice shall remain in place until the end of the consultation period of 14 days (beginning the day after the application is made). The licensing authority then have a further 14 days in which to make a determination.

An example of a notice and guidance notes for completion can be found at the end of this policy

Renewal of Licence

Where the application is to renew the licence, the Council will consult with the Police and Environmental Health only, unless there is a variation to the hours of operation and/or the size or layout of the pavement café, in which case the Council will undertake a full consultation.

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Variation of Licence

Where the application is to vary the terms of the licence i.e. to increase the number of covers, or to amend the layout of the pavement café, the Council will undertake a full consultation.

Transfer of Licence

Where the application is to transfer the licence, the Council will consult with the Police and Environmental Health only.

All Applications

Applications for a pavement café licence may be submitted with an alternative layout plan that would provide a bigger café area, at certain times however, only one pavement café layout may be used at any one time. Pavement cafe licensed areas may not be divided by splitting the café into two discreet areas.

The applicant shall provide a written assessment of the risks their employees are exposed to whilst at work and must also assess whether there are risks to members of public that arise out of the business. This is especially in relation to the highway and also the remedies to any such risks.

NB Reviews of risk assessments shall always be carried out when there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid or on event days where activities may affect the premises. The result of the review must be documented.

18. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Licences will run from the date they are issued to an end date specified in the licence, which will be no more than two years after the date of issue.

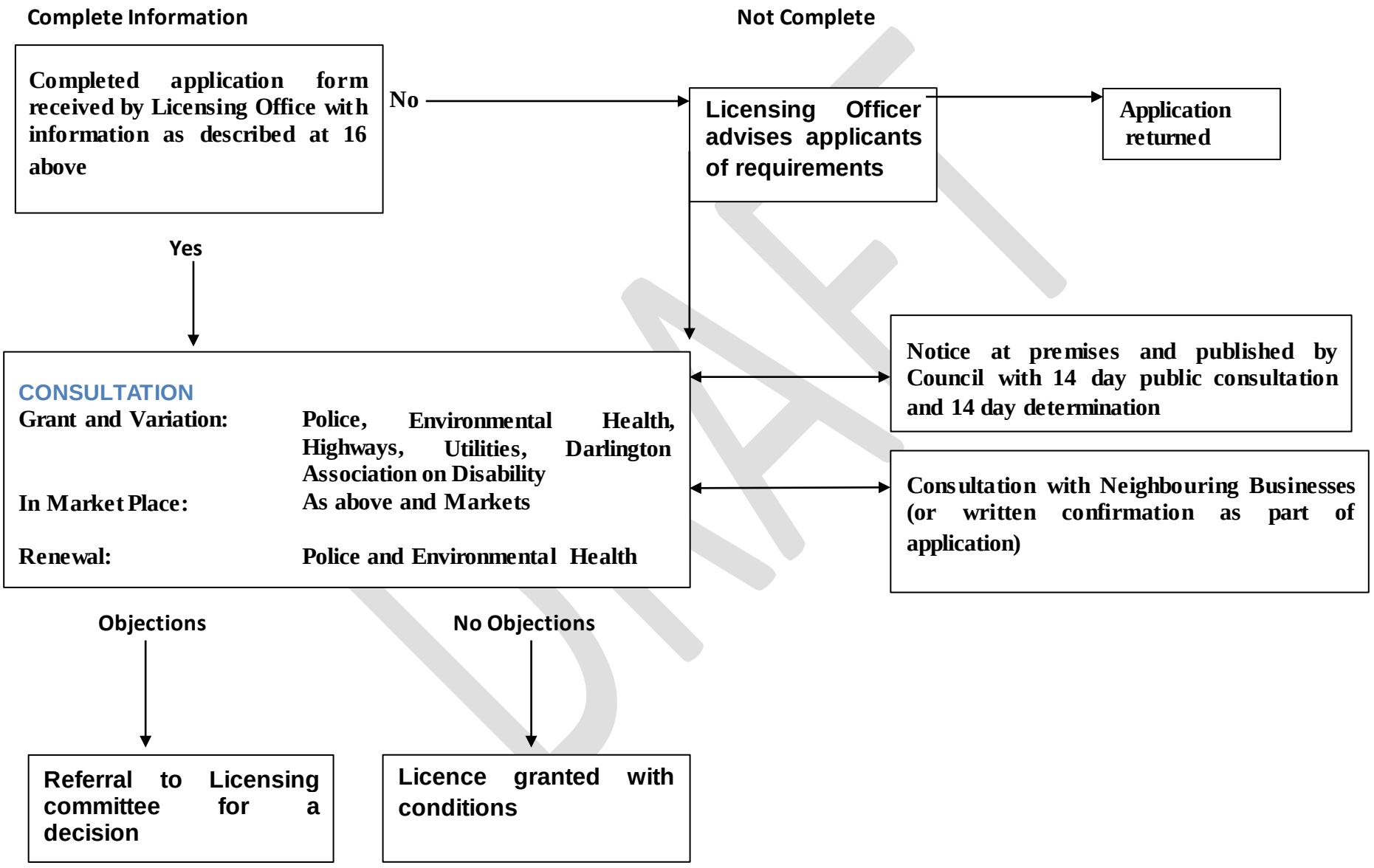
The pavement café licence must be displayed in a prominent position in an external window facing the frontage.

On certain event days, the pavement café may be required to close. Should this be required a notification will be sent from the Council advising of the times and reason for the closure.

19. CONTACTS

To be added prior publication

20. SUMMARY OF PROCEDURE FOR GRANT OF PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENCE



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21. STANDARD CONDITIONS FOR PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENCES

General

1. A copy of the licence and pavement café layout plan must be displayed at the premises at all times.

2. Smoking will not be permitted within the pavement café at any time.

3. **"No Smoking"** sign will be prominently placed at the entrance and on each table.

4. Posts, barriers tables and chairs shall not be placed upon the highway before the commencement of operational hours and shall be removed entirely at the end of the operational hours. The area shall be left clean and tidy and free of any rubbish.

5. The use of advertisement boards is prohibited

6. The advertising of gambling, irresponsible alcohol promotions or smoking products is prohibited

7. The café area must be supervised at all times whilst it is operational

8. The use of sound amplification equipment to play live or recorded music will not be allowed without approval from the Council following consultation with Environmental Health.

9. Use of television sets is prohibited

10. Television screens inside the premises will not be positioned to make them visible from the pavement café unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council following approval from Responsible Authorities

11. The licence holder shall not cause or permit any alterations to the highway surface and any damage to the highway will be restored to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority at the expense of the licensee.

12. The licence holder shall not assign, sub-let or part with his/her interest or possession of a licence.

13. A licence holder may terminate a licence at any time by informing the Council in writing.

14. Authorised Officers of the Council and Police Officers shall have access to a pavement café at all times whilst it is operating

15. If requested by a police officer or an authorised officer of the Council by notice, all items shall be removed from the highway. These items shall remain off the highway for as long as is required.

Management

16. The licence holder shall be responsible for the conduct of people, both patrons and employees, within the pavement café area.

17. The named licence holder is required to complete the Action Counters Terrorism Awareness E-learning course https://ct.protectuk.police.uk/ and provide proof of completion

18. Patrons shall not be permitted to remove food, drinks, crockery or any cutlery from the pavement café.

19. Only patrons seated at tables shall be served or permitted within the pavement café

Service

20. All tables must be cleared of uneaten food, used crockery, cutlery etc. and properly cleaned of any spillage immediately they are vacated by customers.

21. All the food and drink consumed within the pavement café area must be ordered and purchased there.

22. No alcohol shall be sold or consumed within the pavement café area unless it is in compliance with a premises licence.

Articles used in the Café

23. All furniture shall be of high quality, constructed of wood, metal or suitable composite and approved by the Council.

24. Parasols shall be available for use at each table if the pavement café area is in direct sunlight, and a customer requests that a parasol be provided.

25. Parasols, when opened must not overhang the boundary of the pavement café and must remain closed in periods of high winds.

26. All alcoholic drinks shall be decanted from the bottle except when a customer has ordered a particular bottle of wine, in which case, the opened bottle may remain on the table or be decanted into a polycarbonate wine container. Staff shall ensure that all empty bottles are removed from the pavement café immediately.

27. Permitted receptacles to be used within the pavement café are:-

- Glasses made of toughened or tempered safety glass
- Glasses made of polycarbonate or plastic
- Paper Cups
- Non-disposable tableware for service of food
- Metal or non-disposable cutlery

28. At least one child's high chair must be available for customers to use within the pavement café.

29. The use of barbecues, rotisseries, ice cream machines, drinks machines or any other equipment for the preparation and/or sale of food and drink will not be permitted within the pavement café area without prior approval from the Council following consultation with responsible authorities.

Boundary and Barriers

30. The entire pavement café (apart from entrances) shall be enclosed in its entirety with a suitable barrier, the design and dimensions of which must be agreed, in writing, by the Council. Space will be required for circulation and access within the enclosed area in addition to that for tables and equipment.

31. All activity associated with the pavement café shall be contained within the boundary including tables, chairs and other permitted equipment.

32. The agreed boundary and layout of the pavement café as defined by the plan attached to the Licence shall not be altered without the express permission of the Council.

33. Where express permission to use neighbouring frontages is withdrawn, pavement café furniture will be removed and new plan will be submitted for approval.

34. Barriers must not be permanently fixed to the ground on a public highway.

35. Where access to the pavement café is not level, a suitable and stable ramp shall be provided at all times.

36. Under normal circumstances a minimum distance of 2.0 metres between the edge of the pavement café and the edge of any adjacent carriageway or vehicle route shall be maintained. If the pavement café is on a street with a high pedestrian usage this minimum may be increased to 2.75 metres. A minimum width of 1.5 meters could be regarded as the minimum acceptable distance between two obstacles or edge of carriageway in certain locations with the approval of key

stakeholders. Free an unobstructed passage of pedestrians on the highway must be maintained at all times.

37. Customers using the pavement café area must not obstruct the pavement outside the pavement café area with items such as push chairs, scooters etc. Staff will request the removal of these items as a condition of entry.

38. In areas where traffic is controlled by Traffic Regulation Orders and reinforced by raising/lowering bollards, if the bollard fails to rise to protect the area, the cafe licence will be suspended to protect pavement cafe users from potential unauthorised vehicle entry/vehicle strikes.

Litter

39. The licence holder shall keep the area within the boundaries clean and litter free. Any litter that escapes from the inside of the licensed area to the outside of the area shall be collected by the licence holder

Insurance

40. If for whatever period or reason a public liability insurance policy is not in force, the Council shall be deemed to have withdrawn this Licence for the period during which the said policy is not in force and the licence holder may be held liable for obstruction of the highway and prosecution under Section 137 of the Act.

The licensing authority may impose additional conditions taking into account information disclosed by the applicant as well as any representations received during the public consultation.

DRAFT

EXAMPLE NOTICE FOR DISPLAY BY AN APPLICANT FOR A PAVEMENT LICENCE.

Section 2 Business and Planning Act 2020.

I/We *(1),*
give notice that on *(2)* [I/we] applied to *(3)* for a 'Pavement Licence' at: *(4)*

known as *(5)*

The application is for: *(6)*

Any person wishing to make representations regarding this application may do so by writing to: *(7)*

by: *(8)*

The application and information submitted is published …. (9).

Signed ……

Dated (10) ……

DRAFT

Guidance notes:
Substitute the numbers with the following information:

(1) name of applicant
(2) date the application is made (i.e. submitted)
(3) name of local authority
(4) postal address of premises
(5) name premises is known by
(6) brief description of application (e.g. outdoor seating to the front of the premises for serving of food and drink]).
(7) address to which where representations can be sent (for example council email address or via a council portal).
(8) last date for representations being the date 14 days after the date the application is submitted to the local authority (excluding public holidays)
(9) the place where the application and accompanying material can be viewed (for example council website)
(10) date the notice was first displayed (must be the same date as (2))

DRAFT

Appendix 2

Pavement Café Policy Consultees

- North East Strategic Licensing Group (NESLG)
- Tees Valley Licensing Group (TVLF)
- Councilors
- Ash
- Fresh
- Pubwatch
- Weatherspoons
- Stonegate Group
- Admiral Taverns
- Star Pubs
- Darlington pavement café licence holders
- Mincoffs Solicitors
- Woods and Whur Solicitors
- Poppleston Allen
- Night Time Industries Association (NTIA)
- Association of Town and City Management (ATCM)
- Purple Flag
- Public Health
- Police
- Fire Service
- Highways
- Environment
- Planning
- Darington Association on Disability (DAD)
- Town Centre Management
- TGI Media

DRAFT

Appendix 3

Responses to Pavement Café Policy Consultation

1	Hi, I am writing to express my support for the inclusion of zero tolerance to smoking/vaping in outside hospitality areas to this revised policy. The prevalence of cigarette smoking in the UK has decreased significantly in the last 70 years however vaping is on the increase particularly amongst young people. Reducing opportunities for smoking/vaping is a positive step in helping those who want to quit and will enhance the leisure provision in Darlington for all residents and visitors. According to a report from ASH in 2024 less than 12% of the UK population are now cigarette smokers. Provision of designated smoking areas, as stated in the policy, is a sufficient way to respect the rights of those who choose to smoke/vape (the minority of the population) whilst also recognising the preferences and safeguarding the health of non-smokers (the majority). I do however feel a minimum distance for such purposes should be stated within the policy. Drift of second-hand smoke from cigarettes/vapes will continue to be a nuisance/health hazard if the designated smoking area is in close proximity to seating/hospitality areas. I applaud the council for their forward thinking on this matter. The additional measures proposed in this policy directly support the proposed amendments to the recently introduced Smoking and Vaping Bill. Implementing a zero tolerance approach to smoking and vaping is the right thing to do if we as a nation are to ever achieve the goal of a smoke free generation.
2	**I wish to comment on your Pavement Policy in the light of the Coniscliffe Road development.** **Firstly, an insistence on food would make no sense and be totally at odds with the successful trial period that has been seen to work well for the bars involved.** **Smoking and Vaping; on balance I'd prefer neither but don't feel too strongly about it outside.** **Low level music is not needed in that area - conversation and laughter provides the best ambience.** **30 minute extension would give hard-pressed hospitality businesses the option to gain income without any real detrimental effect on the area.** **Finally, move the planters flush to the curb to give the bare more table space.** **Orb is particularly badly affected by the size of the adjacent planters.**
3	I think all of the proposals are excellent! As a smoker myself I personally would remove myself from the seating area anyway in consideration for others- as who wants to sit among a cloud of smoke Here's hoping we get the weather!!
4	**I absolutely agree with no smoking and vaping, and I agree with no need for**

	food and a later opening. Music is good too. And some heaters please. I think m the pavement cafe culture is a really good idea and will boost the town. We will definitely come in more if we know it's dog friendly and smoke free.
5	Just like to give my views on pavement cafe policy. Definitely ban smoking and vaping. Smoking and vaping would put me off visiting a pavement cafe, I can't bear to be around it. Ambient music would be nice.
6	**Hello, having read the proposal, I think it sounds like a good idea, but disagree with the ban on smoking and vaping. I do not smoke myself, but feel that people who do so should be able to do this outside a venue. As someone who works in hospitality, I worry that venues will close if people are banned from smoking outside them.**
7	The policy on smoking and vaping would be redundant as all people would do is just step away so you would still have the fumes from smoking/vaping. Much better to try and have separate areas. The rest of the policy I totally agree with. Thank you for your time in reading this.
8	**Here are my comments** **1) stop trying to ban everything- it should be up to the establishment who is serving the customers. There is no evidence smoking outdoors affects any bystanders health. Let people police themselves for goodness sake!** **2) music pumped from poor quality sound systems can be awful and sound travels. If different establishments compete it can become a cacophony- I'd recommend only allowing live music (preferably acoustic) that then limits it and boosts the local music economy**
9	I would like to put forward my views for this new policy . As a previous license holder in Scarborough for 10 years and also a non smoker myself I can see both sides. I feel it would be a positive benefit to businesses to have more flexibility on the pavement policy being updated. As a customer I feel it would be a positive for me to be able to relax outside with just a coffee on a peasant afternoon/evening without the need to buy food. I would also love to be able to have a slight background music to listen to too and as long as this is done with a respectful volume to other properties I think this adds to the ambience and ultimate experience. As a non smoker myself I can still also respect and understand that smoking/vaping is also a part of some people's relaxation. I would have no problem with someone on a close by table partaking in this and also as a foster carer with DBC would have no concerns sitting with my child in that same situation as it is in an outdoor space. Although he has been taught that smoking/vaping is ultimately bad for your health he also recognises that it would

	also be that persons choice. Please feel free to contact me to follow up on my views if you feel this would help.
10	**Regarding the proposed changes:** • **No smoking and no vaping** • **Remove the requirement for food to be served** • **Allow low level background music** • **Raise the terminal hour from 10.30pm to 11.00pm** **All of the proposed changes are good, except for the background music. It's completely unnecessary to impose music on customers.**
11	With regards to your consultation I would like to add my views o don't want to give my details but I have worked within the night time economy for many years. You already have ludicrous enforcements,like no beer or cider bottles yet others can bring wine, champagne and soft drinks bottles outside as well as glasses. This basically defeats the point and causes security issues when trying to enforce this. You also have the policy that people must be seated again have you tried to enforce this when you have someone who has just seen there friends and are trying to talk again causes problems for security. Now you want to stop smoking and vaping so customers can't do this inside venues now your wanting to say they can't do it outside another crazy plan and to think someone actually gets paid to think of these things. May be try coming around the town during the summer and see venues and staff trying to implement these rules of sorting down or no beer/cider bottles but yet wine bottles and glasses are ok . If you do come out try a bank holiday the town has a terrible CCTV system that is a waste of time with the operators in charge to start off with they are of little help to the night time economy always telling staff to phone the police or asking venues what they want them to do !!
12	**Dear Sirs,** **I have read the recent consultation document and wholeheartedly agree with the ban on smoking and vaping within the cafe area.** **I see the cafe area as an extension of the licensed premises and if you are unable to smoke/vape within the premises I agree that this should extend to the cafe.** **The minority of people now smoke (11%) of our population therefore the majority of those people using the cafe would prefer the ban. It is a good idea in the document to have signage identifying where those who wish to smoke/vape are signposted to the areas where this is legally allowed.** **I am very much looking forward to using these areas safely coming the summer months.**

13	Apart from banning smoking and vaping, the other proposals are a step too far.
14	**Great idea. Darlington Council are very forward thinking and proactive! Proud to live here.** **My thoughts.....** **Absolutely agree with the no smoking or vaping.** **Disagree with allowing low level background music, it's not necessary.** **Disagree with raising the termination timings. 10.30 is plenty.** **On the fence about food needing to be served.**
15	Is thus proposal for cafes and pubs? In my opinion, it is absolutely ridiculous to ban smoking and vaping outside. I am a non smokers, but believe people have a right to sit outside and enjoy their drink, with a relaxing smoke or vape. People work very hard to earn the right to sit down and relax. If smoking and vaping helps those people to relax, then so be it. I also think it may be a bad idea to stop the food policy, as if this policy is to include public houses, it's just an excuse to get drunk in the sun. Keep the food policy, as this will help "soak" up the alcohol intake. Low level volume music, could be good. What volume level is classed as low? How would the council police this? Or indeed, how would the council police a y of the proposed changes?
16	**I strongly object to the proposal to ban smoking and vaping at outside tables.** **I have never smoked or vaped but like everyone I have friends, relatives and colleagues who do.** **Encouraging people to consider giving up smoking and vaping is a legitimate public health objective.** **Trying to force adults into giving up smoking and vaping, through the imposition of coercive rules, is bullying behaviour which can not be justified in a liberal democracy.**
17	Dear sirs, In response to your request for views on the above policy. I would be in favour of your proposals as I believe they would be an asset to the town and the vibrant atmosphere which could be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. I particularly like your proposal to ban smoking and vaping in these areas although, as with the idea of 'low level' music, I think they would be quite difficult to enforce. I hope these comments are useful to you.
18	**Hello,as a smoker I strongly disagree with the council banning smoking in the outdoor area. There are very few areas in pubs where we are allowed to smoke,and all the ban will do is move smokers to the area away from the**

	seating area. It won't stop people smoking.
19	In relation to the proposed amendments to the Pavement Café Policy, I agree with all of the proposed amendments except for the ban on smoking and vaping. I think that a lot of the reason people choose to sit outside of a café is so that they can smoke or vape. I feel that banning smoking and vaping in the outdoor area will reduce trade. People will instead choose to sit or stand somewhere else in the town centre to smoke or vape, and not spend money doing it, therefore not supporting the local economy.
20	**Thanks for putting these proposals forward,** **It would be great if the no smoking and vaping where implemented, there is nothing more off putting than a load of people taking over the out door seating area blowing all there smelly, unhealthy smoke over everyone if you ask just about any of them to stop blowing smoke over you it al.ost always ends in a very unfriendly exchange from them and spoils what should be a relaxing night/ afternoon out in the town.** **Thanks again for the proposal hope it gets passed .**
21	Banning smoking and vaping is a stupid move. It's outdoors, people sit outside precisely so they can smoke / vape!
22	**I refer to the Smoking section of the document. Smoking and vaping should not be banned. You are outside and it is just another way to get more businesses shutdown. People are going to have to go the other side of the barriers and then light up and the smoke will still go into the roped off area.** **What is it achieving? So people cant smoke inside, now cant smoke outside, simply they will vote with their feet and go somewhere they can. And I am a ex smoker.** **At least have the possibility of a designated smoking area were ashtrays/bins can be supplied and maybe leave it to the discretion of the owners.**
23	Having read the proposed policy, I think it sounds like a good idea on all fronts, especially: • No smoking and no vaping (this is a number one priority as the amount of people vaping is the current scourge of the town centre) • Remove the requirement for food to be served • Allow low level background music • Raise the terminal hour from 10.30pm to 11.00pm. I think it would be helpful for a programme of jet washing to take place outside all of the pavement cafe areas in town after the winter in order to have a baseline of how well the areas are maintained by the individual businesses. The same should happen when they are packed away for autumn/winter.
24	**I would leave the smoking ban up to the owners giving them the opportunity to serve their clientele**

25	I am in total agreement with the following • No smoking and no vaping • Remove the requirement for food to be served • Allow low level background music • Raise the terminal hour from 10.30pm to 11.00pm
26	**All great ideas. Well done.** **We normally have to sit indoors in warm weather to avoid smoke and whatever chemicals are in vapes.**
27	I do not think that you should ban vaping and smoking outside or in outside seating, this has shown to have a negative affect on businesses in the past and has been shown to as part of the decline in trade for public houses. This also is a step towards removing rights and controlling by governments
28	**Sounds good to me**
29	I agree with the proposed pavement policy especially the no smoking or vaping. I hope however that the venues make sure that the customers adhere to the rules. I have been in public houses recently in Darlington where people have been openly vaping inside the pub and the staff have done nothing to stop them. The outside cafe culture is great for Darlington and I enjoy sitting outside either drinking or eating. As long as the council monitor the situation I am totally in favour.
30	**Firstly I very much support the pavement café concept – I think it is a fantastic idea.** **My only slight issue is the inclusion of vaping products in with smoking in terms of a ban. Vaping products are promoted by the NHS as a much healthier alternative to smoking, and my personal view is that they should be allowed in an outside venue. I appreciate that vaping is lumped in with smoking tobacco products in terms of legality of use indoors (wrongly in my view) and that smokers and vapers are found together outside pubs and restaurants across the land.** **However, Vaping products have no second hand smoke element attached to them in terms of public health – midwives regard people using vapes as non smokers – and I think that we are sending out the wrong message putting those who vape in the safe bracket as tobacco users. This forces people who vape to stand in an area surrounded by people smoking the very thing they are trying to avoid.** **In my view (and I acknowledge that I am likely to be in a small minority) people who vape should not be forced to share smoking areas with those using**

	tobacco products – and I think DBC should be sending out a positive public health message by accommodating those who vape. **Just a thought.**
31	I welcome the changes highlighted and feel they will enhance the attraction for visitors coming to Darlington.

DRAFT

Appendix 4

Response to consultation from Fresh/Balance

Dear Colin

Many thanks for bringing this consultation to our attention. We welcome the opportunity to comment and would be very happy to discuss any element of this further.

When new pavement café rules were initially introduced as part of Covid laws, we called for these to be 100% smokefree (in terms of tobacco) as a national mandatory condition, given the lethal nature of tobacco products and shifts in social norms to create more smokefree spaces. This didn't happen nationally unfortunately, but we were delighted with the response of many North East local authorities who introduced 100% smokefree pavement cafes as a local condition.

ASH have a useful briefing on smokefree pavement licences: Smokefree Pavement Licences - ASH which sets out the legal justification, the public health justification and also the levels of public support and the economic case. It explains how smokefree pavement cafes can contribute to an environment in which smokers are helped to quit and people are protected from tobacco-related harm, as well as creating more family friendly spaces. It will be very welcome if Darlington's pavement cafes become smokefree.

In terms of vaping, nicotine vapes are very different from tobacco products. They don't contain lethal tobacco, they are proven to help people to quit tobacco smoking and to reduce tobacco-related harm. From a secondhand exposure perspective, while secondhand smoke from cigarettes causes serious harm to others, there is no evidence so far that vaping is harmful to people around you, and any risks are likely to be very low – see the NHS Better Health website pages on vaping for more information on this: Vaping myths and the facts - Better Health - NHS. What evidence there is of harm comes from prolonged exposure indoors, not outdoors.

As such, we wouldn't recommend blanket restrictions on vaping in outdoor settings without stronger evidence of harm. We would be concerned that such restrictions would imply an equivalence in harms between vaping and smoking – which isn't the case – and this will deter smokers from switching to vaping. Including vaping in smokefree pavement café rules could also make it harder to enforce restrictions on smoking because you aren't giving customers an alternative to smoking: indeed, allowing vaping outdoors may support the implementation of smokefree outdoor rules and encourage smokers to switch.

We would be happy to give you any more information that might be useful to this discussion. We would recommend being aware of the regional position statement on nicotine vaping from Directors of Public Health in the North East (here) and would encourage you to link in closely with Darlington's Director of Public Health, Lorraine Hughes, and the local tobacco control lead, Abbie Kelly, who are copied in here,

particularly as the Tobacco and Vapes Bill makes its way through Parliament and the consultations that will follow in terms of extending smokefree and vape-free places.
With many thanks

Catherine

Catherine Taylor
Regulation Manager
Fresh and Balance

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

ADOPTION OF FINALISED APPRAISAL FOR THE STOCKTON & DARLINGTON RAILWAY: NORTHGATE CONSERVATION AREA INCLUDING CHANGES TO ITS BOUNDARY AND NAME

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

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

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks Councillors' approval to adopt the finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal, including changes to its boundary and name. The document that has been submitted is called *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. March 2025.*
See Appendix 1.

Summary

2. The report provides justification for adopting the finalised appraisal for the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area. The draft version of the appraisal (September 2024) had been subject to a six-week public consultation period. Amendments have been made in light of the comments received (see appendix of the finalised appraisal).

3. By adopting the finalised appraisal, a new, much larger Conservation Area boundary (see chapter 6.0 of the appraisal) would be designated by the Council.

4. By adopting the finalised appraisal, the conservation area name would officially be changed from *Northgate Conservation Area* to *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area*.

5. Following the adoption of the finalised appraisal, the text currently marked in yellow will be amended to reflect the adopted status of the appraisal. No other changes will be made. The adopted appraisal will be named: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. March 2025*

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that:

   (a) Council adopts the finalised appraisal for the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area.

   (b) Council adopts the finalised boundary for the Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area (see chapter 6.0 of the appraisal).

   (c) Council adopts the name change from *Northgate Conservation Area* to *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area.*

   (d) Council authorises the amendment of finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal with regards to the text marked in yellow, to reflect the adopted status of the document. The adopted appraisal will be named: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. March 2025.*

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

   (a) The Northgate Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset of international significance due to its structures and associations directly linked to the birth/early years of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825. Despite its high importance, it has been on the national Heritage at Risk Register since 2010.

   (b) The bicentennial of the S&DR is in September this year. The Council has been making significant investments in preparation for the celebrations inside the Conservation Area (e.g. Hopetown Darlington, Edward Pease house).

   (c) The current Northgate Conservation Area appraisal was adopted in January 2007 and is now deemed inadequate and out of date. The present Conservation Area boundary dates from 2003.

   (d) The new appraisal picks up some of the 'unfinished' work carried out by Durham County Council (2022) and Land Use Consultants (2021). It provides a detailed record and analysis of the existing Conservation Area, as well as proposals for boundary changes and name change, and suggestions for improvements so that the Conservation Area may eventually be removed from the Heritage at Risk register.

   (e) The responses on the draft document were generally very supportive of the appraisal and its proposals, including the feedback received from Historic England and the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway.

   (f) Once the new appraisal has been adopted it will provide an evidence base for managing change in the area and form a material consideration in the Planning process, replacing the 2007 document.

(g) It will also assist if funding is sought for larger regeneration schemes within the amended boundary. Historic England confirmed that they will not provide funding for improvement works within the Conservation Area until the new appraisal, including boundary changes and name change, has been adopted.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

(i) Darlington Borough Council (2007) *Northgate Conservation Area. Character Appraisal. January 2007*
(ii) Darlington Borough Council (2024) *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft. September 2024*
(iii) English Heritage (2010) *Heritage at Risk. North East 2010*
(iv) Historic England (2023) *Heritage at Risk. North East & Yorkshire Register 2023*

David Hand : Extension 6294

Council Plan	The appraisal: (a) Supports economic growth through sustainable and well-planned development (priorities). Underpins the Plan's priority of valuing our heritage and culture.
Addressing inequalities	Not Applicable
Tackling Climate Change	Possibly slightly positive impact. The appraisal raises some awareness against the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, which often have a high-carbon footprint and adverse effect on the insulating properties of traditional structures.
Efficient and effective use of resources	If the appraisal is adopted, there may be a slight increase in additional officer workload in planning applications and enforcement. (NB: The boundary of the existing article 4 direction WILL NOT change following the adoption of the new Conservation Area boundary)
Health and Wellbeing	Possibly slightly positive impact. The information provided in the appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the area.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Possibly slightly positive impact. The information provided in the appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the area.
Wards Affected	Northgate, Pierremont, North Road, Brinkburn & Faverdale, Stephenson
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	Ni Impact

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

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.

9. Much of the special interest of the existing Northgate Conservation Area (boundary adopted in 2003) comprises structures and associations linked to the birth/early days of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR). The S&DR opened in September 1825 and is of international significance, being the world's first public railway on which a locomotive hauled passengers.

10. Initially, a North Road Station Conservation Area was designated on 14 November 1974. On 4 December 1997, this was incorporated into the newly created Northgate Conservation Area. On 21 July 2003, the area was further extended to include additional properties to the east side of Northgate, High Northgate and the Skerne Bridge.

11. An appraisal for the Northgate Conservation Area was first adopted in January 2007. The 2003 boundary was not reviewed at the time.

12. In March 2021, a proposed new draft character appraisal was finalised by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of Darlington Borough Council, but this was not published or adopted. Again, that document did not include an examination of the 2003 conservation area boundary. LUC also produced a Northgate Urban Design Framework and Masterplan in February 2021 for a large part of the Conservation Area which now forms the strategic direction/vision for regeneration under the Towns Fund scheme.

13. In July 2022, Durham County Council (DCC) provided *Conservation Area Assessments – Route of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway. Darlington & Middleton St. George*. This concerned the northern half of the Northgate Conservation Area only, which, at the time, was proposed to be separated from its southern half, extended, and renamed as a new conservation area. However, no appraisal had been provided by DCC to justify their proposal.

14. The Northgate Conservation Area has been on the national Heritage at Risk Register since 2010. Despite its high significance, it is the conservation area that is in worst condition inside the borough.

15. Darlington Council has been making significant investments within the Conservation Area in preparation for the 2025 celebrations of the S&DR, including the redevelopment of the railway heritage quarter (Hopetown Darlington) and regeneration works under the Towns Fund scheme, with the Edward Pease house lined up for works soon.

Draft Appraisal: September 2024

16. Darlington's present Conservation Officer joined the Council at the end of February 2023. In April 2023, there was an email from Historic England, the government's statutory adviser on the historical environment, asking for any Heritage at Risk updates. In June, the Conservation Officer had a site meeting with Jules Brown (Historic Places Adviser for North East & Yorkshire, Historic England) in the Northgate Conservation Area to discuss issues with regards to its condition and possible boundary changes, as well as the ongoing redevelopment and planned events linked to the S&DR bicentennial in 2025. It was agreed that an updated appraisal of the Northgate Conservation Area should be a priority.

17. The new appraisal was drafted between September 2023 and February 2024 by the Conservation Officer. It included:

    (a) Information on the planning implications of conservation area designation, including the existing article 4 direction.

(b) A detailed assessment of the significance of the Northgate Conservation Area based on its historical development, spatial/character analysis and values attributed by the local community and other stakeholders.

(c) A description of its 'very bad' condition and its causes, traffic and public realm issues, damage to the historical environment and harmful modern development.

(d) An assessment of threats/potential future issues as well as opportunities for enhancement.

(e) Proposed changes to the conservation area boundary comprising the exclusion of a few minor areas that are not of special interest, as well as the proposed extension of larger areas, based on DCC's initial suggestions, but amended where deemed justified. There would also be a name change to *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area*, to reflect its place in a wider historic environment beyond the Council's boundaries.

18. The finished draft was informally circulated to the Councillors of the affected wards on 2 April 2024. During the cabinet meeting on 10 September 2024, Councillors approved the proposed public consultation on the document *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft. September 2024*.

19. The draft appraisal was available for public (and internal) consultation on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage from 20 September to 1 November 2024, along with a feedback form to be completed. Paper copies of the document (read only) and feedback form were also available at the Town Hall (by appointment only) and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries. The public consultation was advertised on the Darlington Borough Council website and Facebook page, and inside the *One Darlington Autumn 2024* magazine, which had been distributed to homes, community venues and businesses in Darlington; it is also available online. Site notices were displayed in various locations of the proposed new Conservation Area boundary (see section 5.3 of the appraisal). In addition, the Council directly notified individuals, groups and organisations that were likely to have a particular interest in the Northgate Conservation Area appraisal. At the request of the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, the Conservation Officer gave a presentation on the proposed boundary changes to the Friends at the Darlington Cricket Club on 3 October 2024.

20. During the consultation period, a total of 18 responses were received comprising representatives of (number of responses in brackets):

(a) (5) The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway

(b) (3) Darlington Borough Council (DBC) members of staff

(c) (2) Residents outside the existing and new conservation area

(d) (2) Westbrook Area Residents Association

(e) (1) Cinema Theatre Organisation

(f) (1) A1 Steam Locomotive Trust

(g) (1) DBC Councillor

(h) (1) Historic England

(i) (1) Durham County Council

(j) (1) Darlington Interest Group (part of the Friends of the S&DR)

21. Following the public consultation period, a summary of all the comments received was put on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage on 6 November 2024: https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/22198/2024-11-05_gir-consultation-re-website.pdf. The feedback received is generally supportive of the document and its proposals.

Finalised Appraisal: March 2025

22. Following the consultation period, the Council's Conservation Officer worked methodically through all the feedback received and made amendments throughout the document where deemed necessary. An overview of the comments and how they were processed is provided in the appendix of *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. March 2025.*

23. Following the feedback received during the consultation period, changes to the new conservation area boundary were made (see section 5.4 of the finalised appraisal).

24. The finalised appraisal includes text marked in yellow which will be updated once the document is approved for adoption. There will be no other changes. The adopted document will be named: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. March 2025.*

Financial Implications

25. Advertisement costs: Notice of the newly designated boundary will be published in the London Gazette and at least one local newspaper.

Legal Implications

26. Conservation area designation of the new extension areas and loss of designation for the areas to be excluded (see chapter 5.0 of the finalised appraisal).

27. NB: Following adoption of the new boundary (see chapter 6.0 of the finalised appraisal), there will be no change to the existing article 4 direction. The Northgate Conservation Area Direction (2006) will not apply to any of the extension areas, and it will remain in place for any areas that have been excluded from the 2003 boundary.

Estates & Property Advice

28. The proposed boundary changes will include land that is Council-owned.

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

29. The appraisal raises some awareness against the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, which often have a high-carbon footprint and adverse effect on the insulating properties of traditional structures.

Consultation

30. See above, paragraph 22.

Outcome of Consultation

31. See above, paragraphs 23 and 24.

Stockton & Darlington Railway:

Northgate

Conservation Area Appraisal

Finalised document

March 2025

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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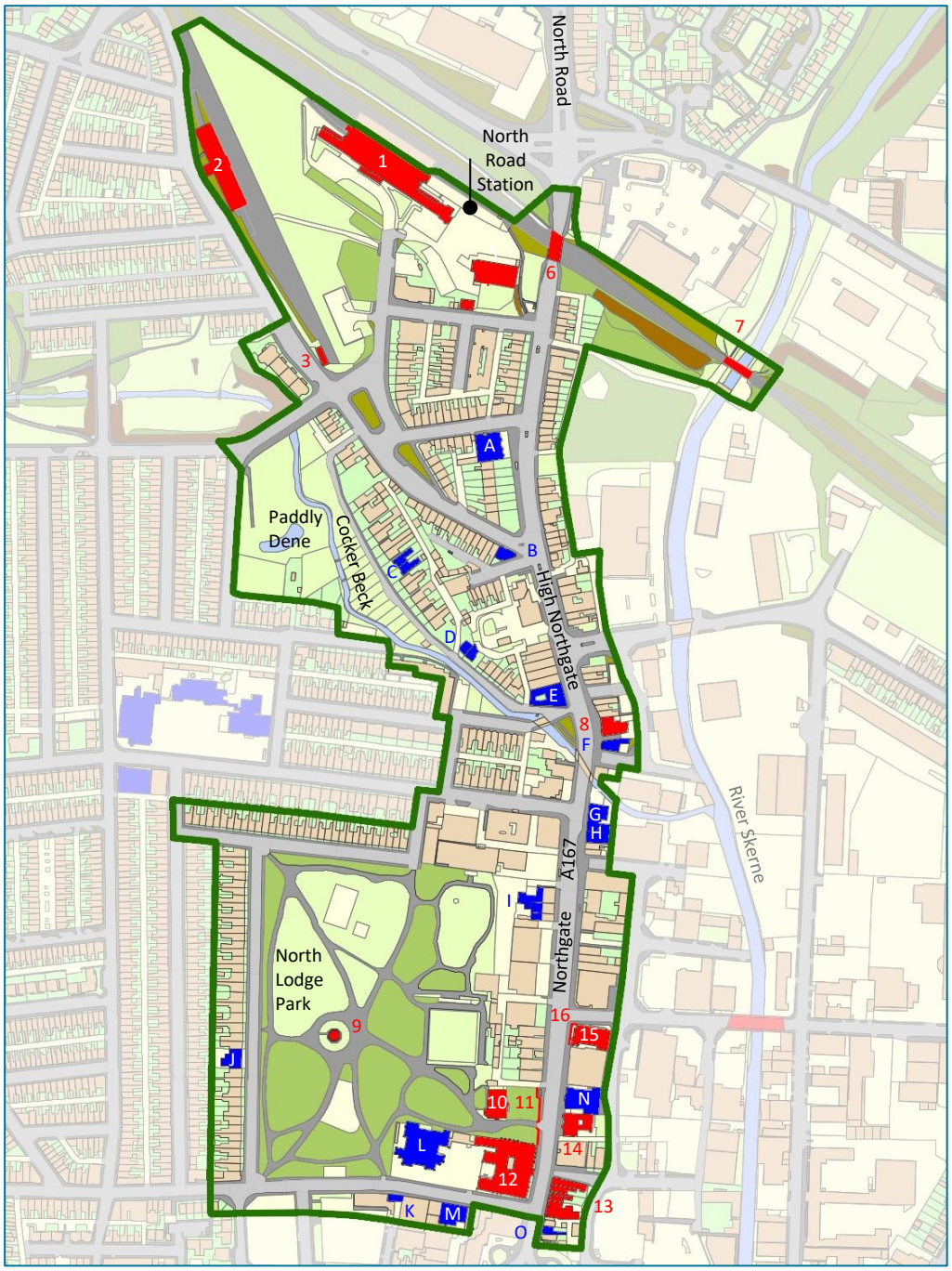
< *Cover image: Detail from the* Opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, 1825 *watercolour by John Dobbin (1815-1888) painted in 1875 (Darlington Borough Art Collection). Note that the curved wing walls of the bridge did not exist in 1825 but were added in 1829 to strengthen the embankments.*

Map of the Conservation Area under Review



Northgate Conservation Area, **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green) (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Listed buildings: 1. North Road Railway Station, 2. Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works, 3. Lime Cells, 4. 1 & 2 McNay Street, 5. Goods Shed South East of North Road Station, 6. Railway Viaduct, 7. Skerne Bridge, 8. Railway Tavern, 9. Bandstand to West of Bowling Green, 10. North Lodge, 11. Front Garden Wall to North Lodge, 12. Central School (East Block), 13. 138-148 Northgate, 14. Central School Annex, 15. Northgate United Reformed Church, 16. Forecourt Railings and Gate Piers to Northgate United Reformed Church

Other notable buildings: A. Darlington Working Men's Club, B. Melville House, C. 15 & 16 Westbrook Villas, D. 8 & 8a Westbrook Villas, E. Livingstone Building, F. 1 Leadenhall Street, G. Bridge Hotel, H. Odeon, I. Elmfield House, J. Pentecostal Church, K. Darlington Bottling Company, L. Central Secondary School, M. Temperance Institute, N. Salvation Army Citadel, O. The Half Moon

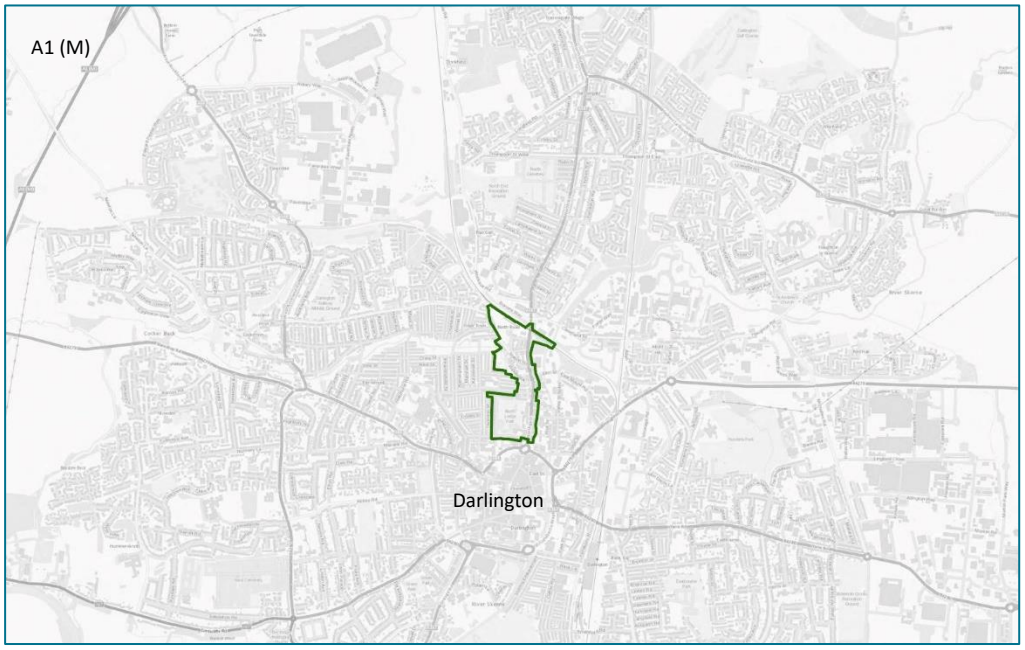
1.0 Introduction

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 Northgate Conservation Area was first adopted in January 2007. The document is now considered to be inadequate and out of date.

In March 2021, a proposed new draft character appraisal was finalised by Land Use Consultants (LUC) on behalf of Darlington Borough Council, but this was not published or adopted. LUC also produced a *Northgate Urban Design Framework and Masterplan* in February 2021 for a large part of the Conservation Area which now forms the strategic direction/vision for regeneration under the Towns Fund scheme (see section 3.6). In July 2022, Durham County Council provided *Conservation Area Assessments – Route of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway. Darlington & Middleton St. George* evaluating the northern half of the Northgate Conservation Area only, which, at the time, was proposed to be separated from its southern half, extended, and renamed as a new conservation area (see section 5.2).

1.1 The Conservation Area under Review



Location of the Northgate Conservation Area, **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green) (Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2023. Licence Number 100023728 2024)

Darlington is a large town in County Durham in the Northeast of England which lies immediately to the east of the A1(M). The Northgate Conservation Area is just to the north of the town centre and of an urban nature. At the time of review (see section 1.2), it comprised an area of 21.78 hectares between the northern roundabout of the

inner ring road and North Road Station, being mainly located within the Northgate ward, although two very small areas were in the Pierremont and North Road wards.

Initially, a North Road Station Conservation Area was designated on 14 November 1974. On 4 December 1997, this was incorporated into the newly created Northgate Conservation Area. On 21 July 2003, the area was further extended to include additional properties to the east side of Northgate, High Northgate and Skerne Bridge. **It is the boundary adopted in 2003 that is being appraised, see map at the beginning of this document.**

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

The Northgate Conservation Area is on the national Heritage at Risk Register due to its 'very bad' condition (see section 4.1).

1.2 The Appraisal

The new Northgate Conservation Area appraisal was drafted between September 2023 and February 2024 by the Darlington Borough Council Conservation Officer, Gaby Rose, providing a comprehensive reassessment of the area including proposed boundary changes. **10 September 2024 represents the 'time of review' of the appraisal**, coinciding with the Council's cabinet meeting when the draft document was first available to the public (see section 1.3).

The appraisal process offers an opportunity to reassess a conservation 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 Northgate 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)

Throughout most of the text, the area will be referred to as *Northgate Conservation Area,* as this was its name when writing the draft document. It has since been renamed [subject to adoption] (see section 1.4).

The author would like to thank Yvonne Richardson, Ross Chisholm, Peter Bainbridge and Caroline Hardie for their time and providing additional information during the draft stage of the appraisal.

1.3 Public Consultation on Draft Appraisal

At the cabinet meeting on 10 September 2024, Councillors approved the public consultation on the document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft. September 2024*.**

The draft appraisal was available for public consultation on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage (see section 7.3) from 20 September to 1 November 2024, along with a feedback form to be completed. Paper copies of the document (read only) and feedback form were also available at the Town Hall (by appointment only) and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries. The public consultation was advertised on the Darlington Borough Council website and Facebook page, and inside the *One Darlington. Autumn 2024* magazine, which had been distributed to homes, community venues and businesses in Darlington; it is also available online[1]. Site notices were hung in various locations of the proposed new Conservation Area boundary (see section 5.3). In addition, the Council directly notified individuals, groups and organisations that were likely to have a particular interest in the Northgate Conservation Area. At the request of the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, the Conservation Officer gave a presentation on the proposed boundary changes to the Friends at the Darlington Cricket Club on 3 October 2024.

The author would like to thank the Friends of the S&DR for advertising the public consultation on the draft appraisal on their website.

Following the public consultation period, a summary of all the comments received was available on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage from 6 November 2024 until DATE.

The draft appraisal was then reassessed and amended in light of the feedback received during the consultation (see appendix). Various other amendments were made throughout the document, such as providing more clarity in general.

1.4 Adoption of Appraisal

The revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. March 2025*** will be put to Councillors at the Cabinet meeting on 4 March 2025 and at the Council meeting on 27 March 2025, to seek formal adoption of the appraisal including the revised new Conservation Area boundary and name change. Please note that the area under review and the time of review (see sections 1.1 & 1.2) have remained unchanged.

Following the adoption of the appraisal on DATE, the new Conservation Area boundary and name change to *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area* (see chapter 6.0), the document will be edited one more time to reflect its adopted status [only the text highlighted in yellow will be amended], and its title changed to ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. March 2025.*** Notice of the amended boundary will be made to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Historic England, and be published in the London Gazette and at least one local newspaper[2].

[1] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/21946/winter-2024-one-darlington.pdf

[2] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sections 70 (5) & (8)

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] Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, 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[5] is compliant with the NPPF. At the time of review, the following policies applied to the whole or parts of the Northgate Conservation Area (see Policies Map) – please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording:

Policy TC 3 Additional Site for Town Centre Uses (car parks along Gladstone Street). Development proposals should take their cue from the historic grain of development within the site, with the design, scale and density reflecting the distinct character of the Northgate Conservation Area. *NB: This policy will become redundant for the adopted new Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area (see chapter 6.0).*

Policy TC 6 Darlington - Town Centre Fringe. 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

[3] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, page 5
[4] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, page 73
[5] 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 2 Stockton and Darlington Railway. Proposals that conserve and enhance elements which contribute to the significance of the S&DR and its setting will be supported. Proposals will be supported where they include measures that preserve any physical remains along the route, include site interpretation and where appropriate reinstate a legible route where those remains no longer exist.

Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character. The character and local distinctiveness of will be protected and improved by **(B)** retaining and enhancing the length, continuity, biodiversity, amenity and heritage value of **Historic Routes**, and **(C)** retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban parkland **(North Lodge Park)**.

Policy ENV 4 Green and Blue Infrastructure. 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. The Council is committed to 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, and, where appropriate, using developer contributions to manage the impact of development on the transport network.

Policy IN 7 Telecommunication Masts. Development should not have an unacceptable effect on conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historic interest.

For the adopted new Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area (see chapter 6.0), the following additional policies will apply (see Policies Map[6]):

Policy E 1 Safeguarding Existing Employment Opportunities. Planning permission will be granted on available land and for the change of use of existing buildings or developed land. Proposals for other employment uses not falling within the 'suggested uses' of specific sites will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that they will not have a detrimental effect on the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining or nearby properties or prejudice the development of adjacent sites.

Policy ENV 6 Local Green Space (North Park). Development will not be permitted unless it is consistent with the National Policy approach for Green Belts.

[6] Darlington Borough Council 2022

Policy ENV 7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development (Dii) Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites. Development likely to result in significant harm should be avoided by being relocated to an alternative site of less harmful impacts. Where this is not possible and it is demonstrated development is required in that location, it will only be permitted if the significant harm can be overcome by adequate mitigation or as a last resort appropriate compensation measures.

2.1 Conservation Area Designation

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**,** "the Act", defines conservation areas as ***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 H3) 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, green spaces 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's National Heritage List for England

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).

7 Darlington Borough Council 2022
8 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 204
9 Historic England 2017b, page 4
10 Historic England 2019, page 27

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] (see chapter 5.0). In addition, section 71 of the Act 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 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 environment and make this information publicly accessible[15]. The *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal* provides such assessment (see chapters 3.0 & 4.0). 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, the area 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, it is an offence to cause, carry out or permit demolition of buildings inside conservation areas without planning permission.

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
17 Available on Historic England's website

Permitted development rights. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, "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 within conservation areas. Further permitted development rights can be removed by the Council imposing directions under article 4(1) of the Order. This means that 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.

Please note that there is an article 4 direction for the Northgate Conservation Area under review (see section 3.6). The *Northgate Conservation Area Direction (2006)* will not be affected by any of the boundary changes.

Works to trees. Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that anyone intending to carry out works to a tree 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 regards 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 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 Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area

At the time of review, the Northgate Conservation Aera included 16 listed buildings, which are shown on the map at the beginning of this document. Following the adoption of the new Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary (see chapter 6.0) two further listed buildings will be added, providing a total of 18 listed buildings.

Under section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, listed buildings are ***buildings of special architectural or historic interest*** that are included on Historic England's **National Heritage List for England**. They are **designated heritage assets** and graded according to their special interest:

- Grade I – of exceptional interest; nationally only 2.5% of all listed buildings are in this category
- Grade II* – of more than special interest; 5.8% of all listed buildings

- Grade II – of special interest; 91.7% of all listed buildings

Please 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[18]:

- 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 the assessment[19]:

- 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 parts of the listed building are likely to require **Listed Building Consent**. This includes works to:

- the whole 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

Moreover, some works may also require planning permission or advertisement consent. For further information check our website or the Planning Portal (see section 7.3).

[18] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 1(5)
[19] Mynors 2006, page 115ff.

3.0 Assessing Significance

Conservation areas are designated for their special architectural and historic interest (see section 2.1). Most areas have both, although one may be considered more prominent than the other. Nevertheless, when appraising a conservation area, we also need to look at the wider interests of a place in order to better understand its dynamics. It is therefore 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 the assessment[20]:

- **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 a conservation 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[21].

3.1 Summary

At the time of review, the Northgate Conservation Area comprised the following elements of significance:

> The A167 (Northgate and High Northgate) forms the historic spine of the area, aligned along the former **Great North Road** between London and Edinburgh. This route linked the pre-industrial town with its pioneering railway and is still one of the principal gateways into Darlington.
>
> The oldest surviving feature is probably the **Bulmer Stone**, which was left here by the last Ice Age, named after Willy Bulmer who read the news standing on it. At one time it marked the northern boundary of the town. It was also known as the 'Battling Stone' as weavers used to beat flax on it. It was Darlington's flourishing **textile industry** which had attracted representatives of the **Pease and Backhouse families**[22], who would play such an important role in the nineteenth-century development of the town. Both families owned large areas of land inside

[20] English Heritage 2008, page 27ff
[21] English Heritage 2008, page 14
[22] Flynn 1992, page 8

the boundary under review, upon which they constructed **villas surrounded by parkland or extensive gardens** which partly survive in the form of a designed public park (North Lodge Park) and a more 'natural' green oasis (Westbrook). Many of the former villas are also associated with amateur and professional **botanists**.

The town's transformation to a major industrial centre was largely due to Darlington-born **Edward Pease** investing his time, energy and wealth in pursuing the establishment of the **Stockton & Darlington Railway** (S&DR)[23]. Following a meeting of Pease with engineer George Stephenson at the former's home at **138-148 Northgate**, the S&DR was born, using steam-powered locomotives on raised tracks. The original 26-mile line is now regarded as the prototype for all modern railways. On 27 September 1825, the **world's first public railway on which a locomotive hauled passengers**[24] made its maiden journey across **Skerne Bridge**, now the oldest railway bridge in the world that is still in use. The ride across the bridge has been immortalised in a painting by John Dobbin. Today the viewpoint of the painting along High Northgate is known as **Dobbin's View**. The bridge also used to grace the back of the **five-pound note**, next to a portrait of Stephenson.

The railway heritage site at the north end of the Conservation Area under review comprises a complex of structures associated with the **first (1825-1841)**, **second (1841-1850)** and **third (1850s-1870s) generation of railway architecture**[25] which have considerable individual and collective significance. They represent a period in which people were learning by trial and error how to operate the railway in an efficient manner[26], and incorporate **Italianate/classical styles** which were popular in the pioneering days of the railway[27]. Other important structures associated with this embryonic phase of railway development, although no longer extant, were also located here. Over 19 kilometres of surviving live track bed make this line the **longest continually operating modern railway in the world**[28]. The significance of the S&DR is promoted by a number of **local heritage groups**, such as the Friends of the S&DR.

Darlington's industrial expansion triggered by the arrival of the railway caused a rapid increase in the town's population and subsequent demand for housing and amenities – the latter also including education and a wide range of leisure facilities – resulting in some of the earliest **railway-led urbanisation** in the world. At the time of review, much of the **nineteenth-century planform** had survived throughout the Conservation Area, with several properties dating from the Georgian period and most of the **scoria-paved back lanes** still intact. **Neo-Gothic** buildings and architectural features can be attributed to notable local architects **George Gordon Hoskins** and **Robert Borrowdale.**

Details of the above are provided in the following sections.

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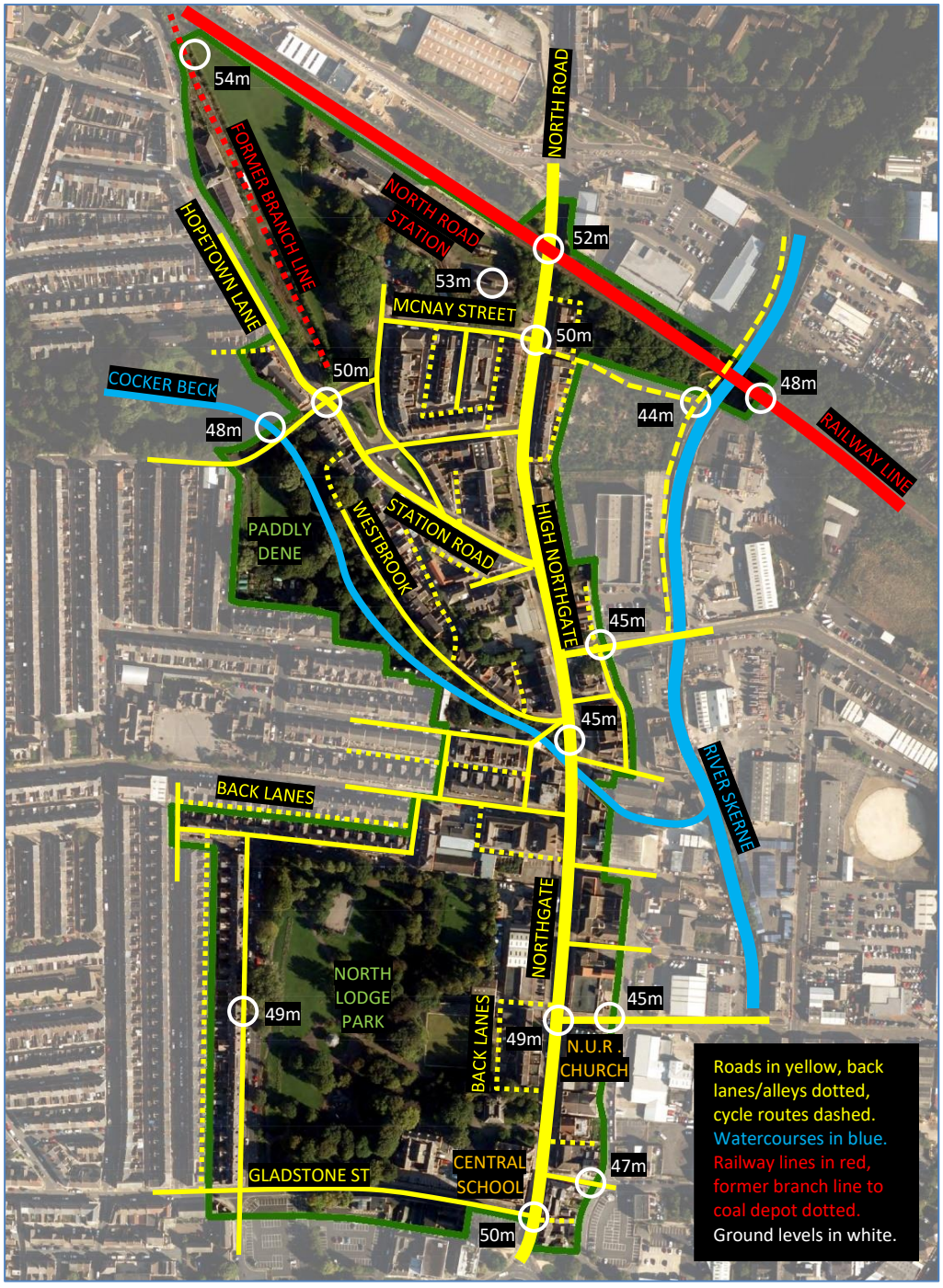
23 Flynn 1992, page 8
24 Flynn 1987, page 40
25 Historic England 2017a, pages 2-3
26 Clark 2006, page 3
27 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 25
28 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 31

3.2 Layout, Planform and Setting

This section provides some of the evidential value of the Northgate Conservation Area at the time of review (e.g. existing layout) as well as some of its historical value (e.g. former building locations).



Layout of the Northgate Conservation Area, **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green). (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The Northgate Conservation Area lies to the north of Darlington town centre and is separated from it by the dual-carriageway inner ring road. Its underlying bedrock is made of calcareous mudstones and dolomitic limestones[29].

[29] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-stones-england

The A167 forms the linear spine of the area under review, comprising Northgate to the south and High Northgate to the north. It is one of the principal gateways into the town and carries a high volume of vehicle traffic, splitting the Conservation Area under review into a narrow east and a much larger western part. The land gently rises from a ground level of 50m at the south end of the A167 to 52m at the north end of High Northgate[30]. There, the land slopes up noticeably the short distance to the station site. This drastic level change is the result of the lowering of the road to allow traffic to pass under the railway bridge where previously there had been a level crossing (see section 3.3). There is also a noticeable downwards slope from the A167 towards the river Skerne to the east, which runs almost parallel to the main street, just outside the boundary adopted in 2003.

Roughly at midpoint, the Conservation Area under review is further 'dissected' by Cocker Beck, which flows northwest to east into the Skerne, separating Northgate from High Northgate. Although the land drops gently towards the beck, this 'break' is not obvious from the A167 or the land to the east, but it is experienced in the western part where the beck is nestled within a lush green corridor that carries on far beyond the boundary adopted in 2003. A small park called Paddly Dene including a pond widens the green corridor to the west of the beck. Westbrook follows the curved line of the watercourse along the northeast side of the green corridor, distinctly breaking away from the general road pattern of the area. To the south of Cocker Beck, the roads run strictly in a north-south or east-west direction, perpendicular and parallel to Northgate. This changes slightly as the A167 curves gently after crossing the beck into the northern part of the Conservation Area under review, and again more significantly where Station Road branches off towards Hope Town in a north-west direction. Throughout the area under review, where there are rows of historical housing, back lanes run parallel to the roads.

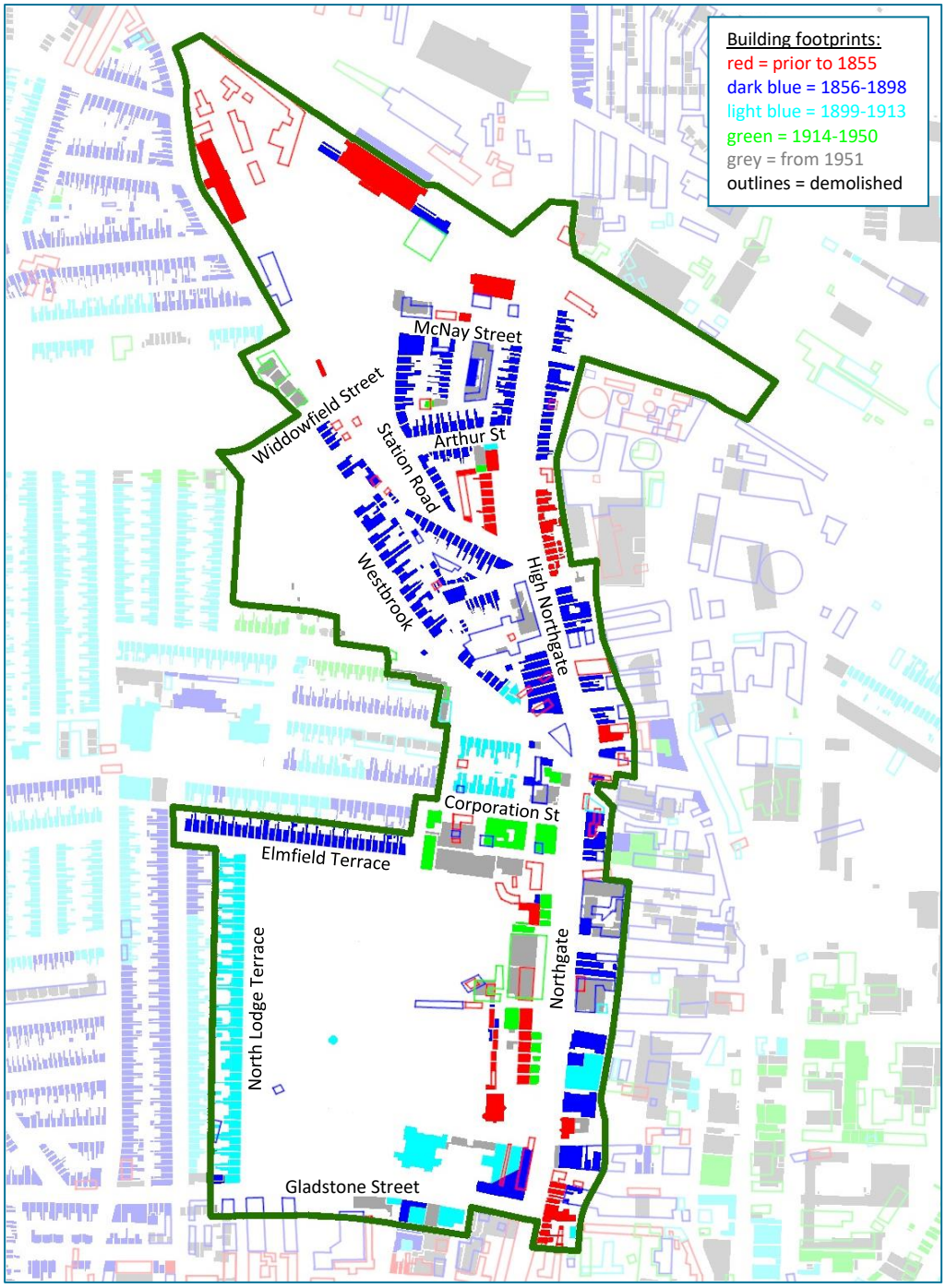
At the northern end of the boundary adopted in 2003 lies North Road Station which now serves the line between Bishop Auckland and Saltburn, its facilities located on a platform a short distance to the southeast of the historic station building. There are two railway bridges, one crossing High Northgate and the other the river Skerne. Two road bridges (including Northgate Bridge) and a pedestrian bridge cross Cocker Beck.

Besides the green corridor surrounding Cocker Beck, the Conservation Area under review also includes North Lodge Park which is a designed greenspace of roughly rectangular footprint. To the north, there is a large open square where Station Road and Hopetown Lane meet which includes grassed areas and three young trees. To the north of the square, the historic railway buildings are nestled behind a number of mature trees that link to the green corridor of the railway line, which carries on to the east outside the boundary adopted in 2003.

The map regression below shows that the surviving planform of the Northgate Conservation Area under review largely dates from the second half of the nineteenth century (dark blue). It has survived particularly well in the northern part. There are also a number of pre-1855 structures (red) dating back to a time when this part of Darlington was more sparsely settled. Later development around the turn into the twentieth century (light blue) completes the historical planform, largely comprising rows of buildings lining the roads. A notable exception to this layout is the railway buildings (including those that are no longer extant) which are more generously spaced and often follow(ed) the directions of the main and former branch lines.

[30] https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/map-kb57/England/

Construction between 1913 to 1950 (green) marks a phase of transition and mainly affects the southern part of the boundary adopted in 2003, including a number of roadside extensions to pre-1855 buildings along the west side of Northgate.



Planform – map regression of the Northgate Conservation Area, **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green). (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Although there has been demolition of old structures (shown as outlines on the map regression) as well as construction of post-1950 buildings (grey) throughout the Conservation Area under review, the essence of the historical planform has largely been retained. This is in great contrast to the areas immediately to the north, east and south adjoining the boundary adopted in 2003, which had their historical grain erased through large-scale demolition and new construction in different development patterns.

3.3 Historical Development

This section describes the historical value of the area under review using information retrieved from secondary sources (see chapter 7.0). The listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Other (surviving) notable buildings, which are of architectural or historic interest, are assigned their [LETTER].

The oldest surviving feature of the Conservation Area under review is the 'Bulmer Stone' along the west side of Northgate, opposite Garden Street, a boulder of Shap granite from Cumbria that was moved here by a melting glacier at the end of the last Ice Age, c.10,000BC. It was named after Willy Bulmer who, in the early nineteenth century, read out the London news standing on the stone. At one time it marked the northern boundary of the town. It also used to be known as the 'Battling Stone' as weavers beat flax on it, with some of them living a row of vernacular cottages behind the boulder. The Bulmer Stone used to be located on the edge of the pavement but was relocated behind the railings of [12] Central School (East Block) in 1923[31].

Excavations in the current location between Dodds Street and Selbourne Terrace, c.150 meters west of the boundary adopted in 2003, uncovered a burial site containing skeletons and grave goods from the later-sixth or early-seventh century. The Anglo-Saxon settlement may have been located to the south of the cemetery[32]. Darlington experienced medieval growth due to its position in the Durham bishopric. Its market (charter granted in 1183[33]) flourished to serve the agricultural hinterland and those passing through the town on the Great North Road, the main historical highway between London and Edinburgh, now Northgate and High Northgate (A167), which traverses the Conservation Area under review. The term 'gate' is a common suffix for road names around the centre of Darlington and derives from the Old Norse *('gat')* for 'street', implying Viking presence during the late-ninth century.

[14] Central School Annex (photo © Gaby Rose, March 2023): Built by the Robson family who were Quakers, local linen merchants and accomplished botanists, it formed the north end of the town until c.1825. Old photos show a shallow front garden with metal railings. An extensive rear garden originally extended down to the river Skerne. Later, the building had a variety of uses such as hospital, education facility and restaurant[34].

31 Lloyd 2001, pages 102-104
32 Cookson 2005, page 10
33 https://www.british-history.ac.uk/list-index-soc/markets-fairs-gazetteer-to-1516/durham
34 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2023, pages 2 & 13

The latter half of the eighteenth century saw the beginning of large-scale industry in the town, resulting in a population increase of approximately thirty percent between 1767 and 1801. The emphasis had shifted from leather processing to textile preparation[35], which attracted businesspeople into Darlington who were intending to make their wealth in the woollen or textile industry, such as the Robson family. They built a prestigious detached residence at 156 Northgate in around 1800, now designated under the name of [14] **Central School Annex** (grade II*)[36]. It is located just a little further north from the Bulmer Stone but on the opposite side of the street and was at the time the most northern building of the town. Beyond it lay agricultural open countryside in the ownership of leading local Quaker families.

In 1818, Edward Pease (1767-1858) and a group of businessmen formed the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company. Pease was a Quaker and retired wool merchant who also owned the weavers cottages behind the Bulmer Stone[37]. He had realised that there was a need for a railway to transport coal from the collieries of West Durham. Coal was a very important resource at the time both for domestic and industrial purposes. It had to be moved from remote locations on poor roads by horse-drawn cart, so a cheaper, more efficient solution needed to be found[38]. On 19 April 1821, the Stockton & Darlington Railway Act was passed to allow the company to build a horse-drawn tramway that would connect the Witton Park Colliery to the port on the river Tees at Stockton, via Darlington[39].

[13] 138-148 Northgate (photo © Gaby Rose, March 2023): Originally a pair of later eighteenth-century houses, evidence of which is clearly visible on the rear/east elevation along Weaver's Way (i.e. original window openings including a round-arched stair window – not shown in photo). Pease lived here from 1798 until his death in 1858[40]. In 1821 he met Stephenson in his kitchen along Northgate, now the location of 'Best Kebab'. In 1866 the building was remodelled by dividing the former Pease house into two shop units, constructing a north extension and reconfiguring the front/west elevation with stucco, pilasters and a central pediment. In 1909, the second bay was re-fronted again including a memorial to the 'first public railway' and Pease's former residence.

35 Clack, Pearson 1978, pages 16-17 & 19
36 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1242805
37 Flynn 1988, photo 56
38 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 8
39 https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/archives/sd-railway-act-1821/
40 Lloyd 2001, pages 106 & 111

George Stephenson (1781-1848), an engineer who had already built successful locomotives and recently designed railways for collieries[41], met Pease at the latter's home opposite the weavers cottages, now [13] **138-148 Northgate** (grade II)[42], on the day the 1821 Act was passed. Here, Stephenson persuaded Pease to use steam-powered locomotives instead of horses for the new railway. He also convinced him to lay rails raised above the ground rather than tram tracks set into the ground. These two factors (especially the first) separated the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) from the colliery railways and would change the history of Darlington, the North East, and the world. Pease was so impressed with Stephenson that he made him surveyor of the line in 1822, and later Chief Engineer of the company. Construction work on the S&DR started in the same year, supervised by Stephenson's deputies including Thomas Storey. The distance set out between the rails became the standard gauge for railways throughout the world[43]. Following intense lobbying, a second Act of Parliament was approved in 1823 to allow the use of locomotives, and, importantly, adding passengers to the long list of goods that the railway would transport[44].

On 27 September 1825, the S&DR was officially launched, with its initial focus on the general purpose of trade rather than the operation of a passenger rail service[45]. On the opening day, a holiday was declared in Darlington. People travelled from all over the region selecting different parts of the route to observe from or hitching a ride from the Masons Arms pub in Shildon[46]. Here, 34 chaldron waggons carrying coal, flour and approximately 500 passengers[47] and the first purpose-built passenger carriage, called *Experiment*, reserved for members of the S&DR Committee only[48], were coupled to steam-powered locomotive *Locomotion No. 1.* The train then set off with George Stephenson as the engine driver for the day. At Darlington, six wagons of coal were sent down the branch line to the depot – which would become the backbone of the extending town[49] – and be given to the poor.

After the engine had been refuelled and watered, the train continued its journey across [7] **Skerne Bridge** (grade I)[50], now also with a brass band on board[51], heading towards Stockton. The ride across the bridge has been immortalised in the 1875 painting by John Dobbin (see cover image of this document) who had witnessed the event at the age of four. Dobbin was born in Weaver's Yard (no longer extant), which ran along the south border of the Edward Pease House and its extensive rear garden. His father had done sketches standing at the bridge on the opening day, which John turned into the famous painting for the 50th anniversary of the railway[52]. The bridge also features in a lithograph of 1856 (depicting the opening day) and an undated but early oil painting (showing the line working after the construction of the Merchandise Station in 1827)[53]. Edward Pease did not attend the opening ceremony but stayed at his home in Northgate as his favourite son, Isaac, had died[54].

41 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 10
42 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322933
43 Flynn 1987, 39
44 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 11
45 Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021a, page 10
46 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, pages 12-13
47 Flynn 1987, 39
48 Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021a, page 10
49 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019a, page 41
50 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1475481
51 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, pages 13-14
52 Lloyd 2001, pages 111-112
53 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, pages 14 & 19
54 Lloyd 2001, page 111

[7] Skerne Bridge (photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024): Railway bridge designed in a classical style by Ignatius Bonomi for the S&DR, 1825; subsequently altered/strengthened. It is the only architect-designed bridge of the S&DR[55] and featured on the company's headed paper. It is now the world's oldest railway bridge still in use, as stated on the recently installed metal artwork in the foreground. Also note the vegetation growth on the bridge, which is a concern for its structural integrity (see section 4.2). Whilst the galvanised lighting column in front of the bridge detracts from the view, the recent works to the river-side railings by Northern Gas Networks have improved the setting of the bridge[56].

The original line was 26 miles long (rather than just a few miles) and provided the beginning of a national railway network. It ran from the coal mines near Witton Park – where waggons were hauled by horse and stationary engines to Shildon, and from there using steam-powered locomotives when available (there was a shortage in the beginning) or otherwise continued horse-drawn – to the port at Stockton via Darlington and Yarm, where there were branch lines. It was significant that the route did not take minerals straight from the point of extraction to the nearest harbour but diverted via Stockton and Darlington with their growing industries and future source of passenger traffic and local markets[57]. The S&DR was the first railway in the world proving that the new-fangled steam power could work on an industrial basis. It was designed to be a permanent line (many earlier railways only offered temporary forms of transport) available for anyone to use for a fee at a set rate (earlier railways were used by mine companies and private industrialists). Moreover, the S&DR was permitted to move a large variety of goods types as well as passengers (as opposed to having a single use), which became the successful business model for modern railways. It boosted local industries, changed the landscape, and by promoting the railway as a new form of transport, it helped to trigger a second wave of industrial revolution[58]. The S&DR made possible the rapid expansion of railways in the nineteenth century across the globe, together with the accompanying huge worldwide social and economic change[59].

The terraced houses of 69-81 High Northgate were the first railway properties to be built in Darlington, around 1825[60]. In 1826-27, the S&DR passenger traffic flourished beyond initial expectations carrying 30,000 passengers a year and resulting in a more than eightfold increase in local traffic[61]. It was at this time that the [8] **Railway**

55 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 77
56 Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October
57 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 27
58 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, pages 6-7, 12, 16-17, 22
59 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019a, page 1
60 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 78
61 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 17

Tavern (grade II)[62] was constructed for the S&DR, one of three public houses built by Heighington-born stonemason John Carter which adapted the concept of a coaching inn to form proto-railway stations. It was also Carter who added the curved wing walls to [7] Skerne Bridge in 1829 (see cover image), to strengthen the embankments; these are now concealed by the present wing walls made of rock-faced stone[63]. The primary purpose of the [8] Railway Tavern was to serve customers of the coal depot terminus of the branch line on the opposite side of the street. It never developed into a proper passenger station due to its distance to the main line. Tenders to operate the newly built inn were invited in May 1827, but the local magistrates refused to grant a licence. In response, the S&DR constructed a small retail brewery to the south, on the northern bank of Cocker Beck, which had also been designed by Carter. No licence was required to sell beer for consumption off the premises. The brewery was leased out in May 1828 and initially proved profitable. Following a change in the law, the S&DR to finally obtained a licence for the [8] Railway Tavern in autumn 1829. The brewery was converted into an iron warehouse in 1831 and demolished in 2014[64].

[8] Railway Tavern (photo © Gaby Rose, March 2023): Commissioned in 1826 and constructed in 1827, it was built to serve the workers and customers using the S&DR's depot across the road[65]. The ground-floor street frontage was redesigned by notable architect GG Hoskins in 1898, using a distinct 'lozenge' glazing pattern. The heritage-style bollards on the right were provided as part of the 2002-05 Northgate HERS, and the building itself benefitted from restoration works as part of the 2005-09 Northgate PSCA (see section 3.6).

Around 1830, town banker and alpine/herbal plant specialist William Backhouse (1779-1844) built [I] **Elmfield House** on large parkland that he owned between Northgate, Cocker Beck and (now) Gladstone Street. There were woodland walks and a large pond with boathouse to the rear of the mansion. His elder brother Jonathan, the family's head banker, bankrolled the building of the S&DR, whilst William made a subscription of £3,000 for its construction[66]. In 1832, John Beaumont Pease, nephew of Edward Pease, bought the southern end of the Elmfield estate from Backhouse. He

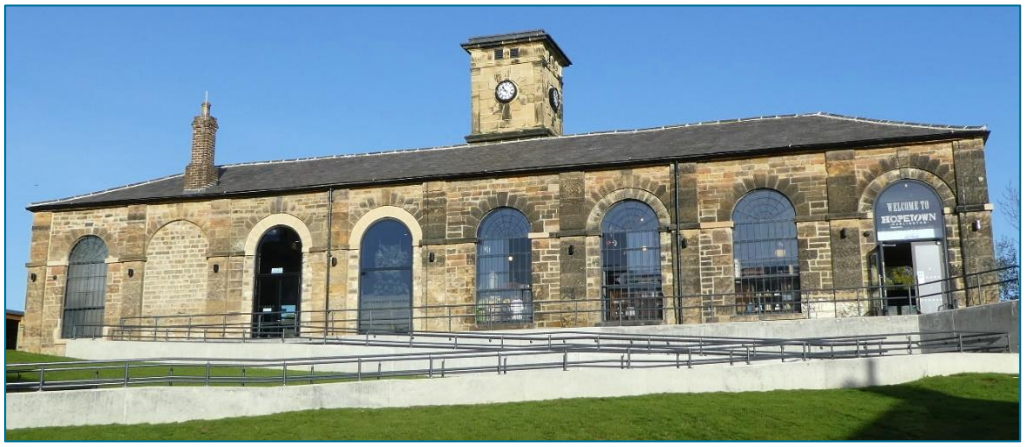
62 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1486008
63 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1475481
64 Boyle 2017, pages 13-16, 18 & 21
65 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 21
66 Banham 2023, 27

built [10] **North Lodge** (grade II)[67] including front garden wall (grade II)[68] on it in 1836, where he lived until his death in 1873[69]. He also took ownership of the neighbouring North Terrace (delisted in 2003) built in the 1820s[70].

Left: **[I] Elmfield House**: c.1830 for William Backhouse, now much concealed behind a modern extension in the place of a former front garden. *Right:* **[10] North Lodge**: Home of John Beaumont Pease. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

In 1829, the S&DR opened the Croft branch (see section 5.2/C5) which ran south through the future site of Bank Top Station[71], outside the area under review.

In 1831, Quaker businessman and S&DR committee member Alfred Kitching (1808-1882) and his brother William relocated their ironmongery and foundry business from the town centre to the northern tip of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003[72]. In 1832, the Kitching brothers opened the Hope Town Foundry in the same location. In the early days, a large part of the work of the firm was the manufacture of locomotives such as the famous engine *Derwent* in 1845[73], which is now on display at [1] North Road Station (now part of the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction).



[5] Goods Shed (photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024): By Thomas Storey, George Stephenson's nephew, in an Italianate classical style, 1833, subsequently altered and extended. It is the oldest single-storey, railway goods shed and now part of the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction.

67 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121285
68 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322934
69 Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, pages 3-4
70 Lloyd 2005, pages 142-143
71 Darsley, Lovett 2023, '5. North Road to Croft via Bank Top'
72 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 5
73 https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Whessoe_Foundry_Co

In 1833, the S&DR took passenger transport inhouse (this was initially carried out by private operators using horse-drawn coaches on the line) and now provided a fully steam-hauled service[74]. Also in that year, the [5] **Goods Shed** (grade II*)[75] was built by S&DR Chief Engineer Thomas Storey replacing the original Merchandise Station's purpose of handling non-bulk freight transported by rail. In turn, the upper level of the Merchandise Station (no longer extant), which had been built along the line to the east of High Northgate in 1827, was converted from a goods into a passenger station[76]. The prominent clock tower of the [5] Goods Shed, which was added by the succeeding S&DR Chief Engineer John Harris in 1839-40 (along with an extension to double the floor area), was an early attempt by the S&DR to establish a 'master clock' at Darlington due to different time zones throughout the country. Between 1840 and 1848, all train companies gradually moved towards using Greenwich time, although it was not compulsory until 1880[77].

In 1840 the Railway Goods Agents' Office was built, now known as [4] **1 and 2 McNay Street** (grade II)[78]. It was designed by John Harris and is contemporary with his works to the [5] Goods Shed. Old maps show that the Shed's rail tracks merged to the street frontage to the east of the office building, where there appears to have been a collection point for local merchants, once they had paid their bills at the office[79]. Around the same time, the [3] **Lime Cells** (grade II)[80] depot building was constructed along the branch line, replacing or adding to the earlier (1825) coal and (1828) lime facilities located at the terminus of the branch. The imported lime was delivered by bottom-opening chaldron wagons on the upper floor of the building, emptied into the four cells below, and then made available for purchase from Hopetown Lane[81]. It can be assumed that the many workers houses in the surrounding area are held together by lime (mortar) bought here[82].

Left: **[4] 1 and 2 McNay Street**: Former Railway Goods Agents' Office, built in 1840 for the S&DR incorporating Italianate elements. It was later converted into two flats. *Right:* **[3] Lime Cells**: Constructed shortly after 1839 to store lime. The listed building is currently 'at risk' due to its poor condition. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

Passenger services were again relocated in 1842, and this time to the purpose-built [1] **North Road Railway Station** (grade II*)[83] completed by John Harris. Intervisibility

74 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Whessoe Works' & 'Historical Background'
75 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121262
76 Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021b, pages 5 & 10
77 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 26
78 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121282
79 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, pages 18 & 72
80 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1391819
81 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 5, 14, 16 & 30
82 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 75
83 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1322962

between the goods and passenger stations would have been important for day-to-day management[84]. In the previous year, the Great North of England Railway, having purchased the Croft branch from the S&DR, had provided the first station at Bank Top, only a short distance to the town centre, to service its new line between York and Darlington[85]. The [1] North Road Railway Station building originally included a station master's house on the west side, with the surviving S&DR ceramic plaque E9 (of 1857) still showing that this end was used for domestic purposes[86].

[1] North Road Railway Station (photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024): By S&DR Chief Engineer John Harris in a utilitarian Italianate style, 1842; initially single storey, subsequently altered and extended; the first floor was added in 1876 to house new telegraph equipment. The Neo-Gothic chimney stacks do not fit in stylistically. It was at this station where the world's first luggage allowance was introduced in 1846[87]. From 1857 to 1892, the historic steam engine *Locomotion No. 1* was displayed on a plinth outside the station[88], and from 1974 to 2021 inside the building, after it had been converted into a museum (Darlington North Road Station Museum, later known as Head of Steam). The building is now part of the new Hopetown Darlington tourist attraction.

Between 1800 and 1850, Darlington's population had risen from 4,670 to 12,452, which is an increase of 175%. Immigration can be the only explanation for such a large increase. In that period, totally new industries (e.g. iron works) had come to the town as a result of the arrival of the S&DR and started to replace the traditional ones (e.g. textile manufacturing)[89].

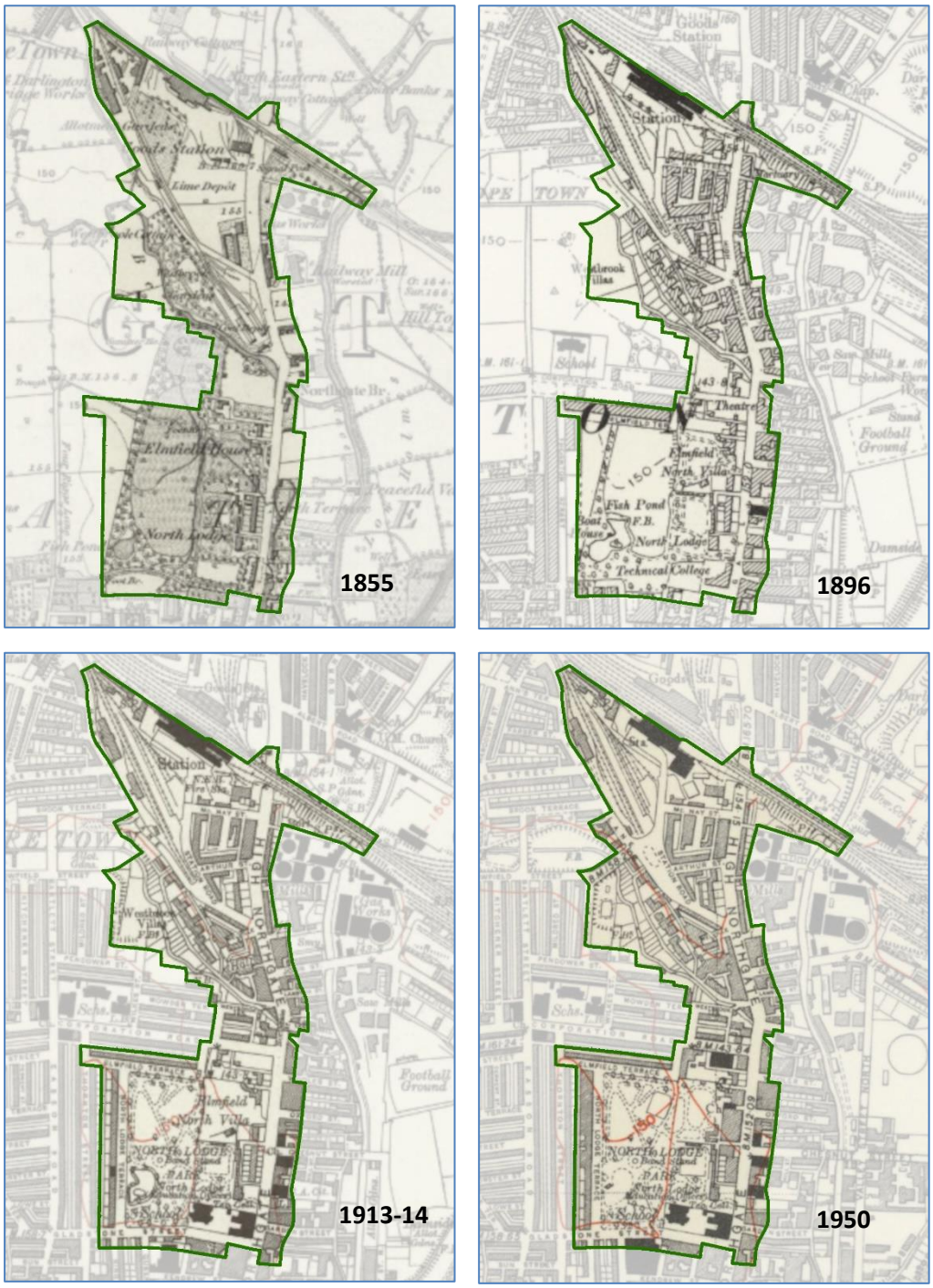
In 1853 the [2] **Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works** (grade II)[90] were built along the west side of the branch line. They also included a dwelling ('cottage') in the central part along Hopetown Lane. The building mainly served the repair and, later, construction of railway carriages, possibly replacing an original workshop (no longer extant) established by George Stephenson to the north of the former Merchandise Station in 1837, following the increase in passenger traffic. The carriage works are now the oldest known railway carriage manufactory in the UK. They used to be located opposite the Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry and surrounded by all manner of light industrial and railway buildings and structures, operating in a busy environment. Originally the carriages, which were compact and clearly had their design derived from horse-drawn stagecoaches, gained access into the building through the central part by the use of a turntable on a single-track spur off the branch[91].

84 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 35
85 Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXXII
86 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 3
87 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, pages 20 & 27
88 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 35
89 Clack, Pearson 1978, page 19
90 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121229
91 Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021a, pages 10-13, 15, 16, 62 & 64

[2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works (photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024): Workshops, 1853, for the S&DR by architect and Quaker Joseph Sparkes, who also extended the [1] North Road Railway Station in the same year[92]. The appearance along the road is more utilitarian, but the opposite elevation along the former depot branch line includes Italianate elements. It is the oldest remaining railway carriage manufactory in Britain[93] and now part of the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction.

The 1855 map (see below) shows the former Merchandise Station (demolished in 1864[94] although parts of its northern wall and probably its foundations still survive) which at the time operated as 'Weardale Lime Office'[95]. It is located opposite the later [5] Goods Shed on the east side of High Northgate. The Railway Goods Agents' Office (now [4] 1 and 2 McNay Street) is shown to the south of the Shed. The map also depicts the initial cast-iron railway bridge over the road, and [7] Skerne Bridge to the east of it. The 1840 North Eastern goods station (no longer extant) opposite the S&DR passenger station ([1] North Road Railway Station) can be seen across the rail tracks just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003; it was sold to the S&DR in 1857 and from then on their main point of goods handling[96]. The northwesternmost building complex, between the [2] S&DR Carriage Works and passenger station, is the Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry. From here, the branch line leads to the coal and lime depot at its terminus (no longer extant) at Northgate Bridge, with the [8] Railway Tavern just to the north of the bridge and opposite the depot. The [3] Lime Cells are shown halfway down the branch line. In the southern part of the area under review, the building line had modestly expanded north along Northgate since c1825. Edward Pease's house (now [13] 138-148 Northgate) and the former Robson residence (now [14] Central School Annex), with extensive gardens down to the river, are shown along the east side of Northgate, in the southeastern corner of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. The weavers cottages (behind the Bulmer Stone) are on the opposite side of the road. There are also larger greenspaces: allotment gardens between the branch line and passenger station, Westbrook Gardens between the branch line and Cocker Beck – these were set out by S&DR director Henry Pease (1807-1881), Edward's son, in 1837[97] including intersecting walks, a pond and temple[98] – and the extensive landscaped grounds behind [I] Elmfield House and [10] North Lodge.

92 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 30
93 Clark 2009, page 50
94 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, pages 19-20
95 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 22
96 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 17
97 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 51
98 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 19



Six-inch OS maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk) and overlaid with the Northgate Conservation Area **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green). The map dates provided are at the time of survey.

In 1856 the [6] **Railway Viaduct** (grade II)[99] was constructed when the line was widened to four tracks, replacing a former level crossing and subsequent cast-iron railway bridge over the street[100]. The extensive cuttings that took place altered ground levels and removed the original approach to the [5] Goods Shed from High Northgate[101]. In the same year, the Darlington & Barnard Castle Railway opened, which diverged at Hopetown Junction[102] (see section 5.2/A1), a short distance to the

[99] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121286
[100] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 76
[101] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 54
[102] Darsley, Lovett 2023, point 49

northwest outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. An act of parliament subsumed the company into the S&DR in 1858[103].

[6] Railway Viaduct (photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): Plans to build the bridge had begun in the 1840s. It was finally built in 1856, altered/rebuilt in 1876, and the road level further dropped after 1949 to allow for double-decker busses[104]. An early photograph shows a plaque with the date MDCCCLVI on the side. Altered prior to 1935.

Following his father's death, William Backhouse Jr. (1807 - 1869) sold Emfield to Alfred Kitching in 1856[105], with [I] Elmfield House becoming the latter's new home. Besides building locomotives, Kitching was, at the time, was one of the directors of the S&DR[106]. He added a small piece of land to the north adjoining Cocker Beck to plant trees, perhaps to screen the coal depot[107]. In 1857, Kitching built the S&DR's 118th engine and named it *Elm Field* after his new home. His son John (1854-c.1935) was a keen horticulturist and prettified the grounds further[108].

In 1860, the S&DR purchased the Hope Town Foundry site to extend its their [2] S&DR Carriage Works. The Kitching business along with much of the best machinery was relocated to the Whessoe Foundry Co a short distance to the north, just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003[109].

In 1861, the S&DR built an engine shed which could accommodate up to twelve locomotives a short distance to the north along the main line (see section 5.2/A4), just outside the boundary adopted in 2003.

In 1863, the S&DR opened a major new Locomotive Works to north of [1] North Road Railway Station in order to cope with the demand[110], which became to be known as the North Road Shops (only a few remnants are still extant (see section 5.2/A3 & A7)), also outside the Conservation Area under review, relocating its former manufacture at Shildon[111]. These works, along with the now-established rail link

[103] Allen 1964, page 120
[104] Flynn 1988, photo 135
[105] https://geneagraphie.com/pedigrees/Pennyghael/Janson.pdf
[106] https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/people/ap27762/kitching-alfred
[107] Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 4
[108] Lloyd 2005, pages 143-144
[109] https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Whessoe_Foundry_Co
[110] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Whessoe Road Engine Shed'
[111] Flynn 1989, page 107

between London and Scotland (via Bank Top), made Darlington the centre of a complex railway network and heavy engineering industry, leading to a huge rise in the number of workers in the town engaged in both the operating and maintaining the network. The local engineering works fed off the dramatic increase in work[112], with the North Road Shops employing 339 workers by 1866, rising to 1,400 by the 1890s[113]. Following the S&DR's merger with the North Eastern Railway (NER) later in 1863, which already had facilities at York, the North Road railway quarter became something of a backwater[114]. Nevertheless, the Darlington Committee of the NER still controlled the former S&DR routes for the next ten years[115] and held its meetings at [1] North Road Railway Station until 1876[116].

Top left: **[C] 15 & 16 Westbrook Villas** (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): By GG Hoskins in a polychromatic Neo-Gothic design, 1864. *Top right:* **[D] 8 & 8a Westbrook Villas**: By local architect and stonemason Robert Borrowdale in a Neo-Gothic design with ecclesiastical elements, and, unusually for him, in (Pease) brick. *Bottom:* **[B] Melville House**: Cocoa palace, a landmark built in sandstone by Borrowdale in 1879. (Photos © Gaby Rose, August 2023).

In the 1860s-70s, Westbrook Villas were built on Henry Pease's gardens to accommodate railway management staff[117]. They were the last middle-classes

[112] Clack, Pearson 1978, page 21
[113] Emett 2003, page 8
[114] Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021b, page 5
[115] Flynn 1987, page 40
[116] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 29
[117] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 51

houses to be built inside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. [C] **15 & 16 Westbrook Villas** were probably the first commission of architect George Gordon Hoskins (1837-1911) after he set up in Darlington in 1864[118]. [D] **8 & 8A Westbrook Villas** are said to have been designed by eccentric stonemason and architect Robert Borrowdale (1833-1908)[119]. In 1879, Darlington's first 'cocoa palace' opened in [B] **Melville House** along High Northgate, also built by Borrowdale (his final work in Darlington), providing a place where teetotallers could socialise; it soon went out of fashion and shut before the turn of the century[120].

In 1869, St George's Presbyterian Church was built on land along the east side of Northgate which had been purchased from John Pease. Since its reunion with the Congregational Church Union Street (recently demolished) in 1972[121] it has become the [15] **Northgate United Reformed Church** (grade II)[122]. In 1873, the [E] **Livingstone Building**s were completed along High Northgate, named after the explorer who died in that year[123]. Only the southern complex survives today.

Left: **[15] Northgate United Reformed Church** with forecourt railings and gate piers[124] (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): 1869; in a severe C13 style in coursed freestone. *Right:* The surviving **[E] Livingstone Building** (Photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): 1873. Nos. 19 & 29 were part of the 2002-05 Northgate HERS (see section 3.6).

Slightly further north and on the same side of Northgate, the Theatre Royal was erected in 1865, Darlington's first purpose-built theatre. It was closed three years later and demolished in 1873. The new Theatre Royal opened in the same location in 1881. After having burnt down due to a stage performance involving fireworks two years later, the derelict shell was bought in 1887 by the owner of [G] **Bridge Hotel** next door (which was rebuilt in 1898, still in the same ownership as the theatre[125]) who restored the Theatre Royal, including electric lights for the stage[126]. In the same

[118] https://web.archive.org/web/20080322011630/http://www.communigate.co.uk/ne/westbrook/page4.phtml
[119] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/9244082.westbrook-wander/
[120] Lloyd 2001, pages 148-149 & 159
[121] Flynn 189, page 100
[122] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1258167
[123] Lloyd 2001, page 145
[124] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1258171
[125] Flynn 1988, photo 67
[126] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/culture/film/features/20217334.15-old-pictures-odeon-darlington-luxe-cinema-northgate/

year, the [N] **Salvation Army Citadel** was constructed further south on the same side of the street. Its foundation stone was laid by the Citadel's founder General Booth[127].

Left: **[G] Bridge Hotel** (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): Rebuilt in 1898, with the former Theatre Royal to the right, now the [H] Odeon. Until fairly recently, the building used to extend further left/north along the street. The demolished building's footprint still survives as an (external) enclosed space with a fireplace along the beck-side wall. *Right:* **[N] Salvation Army Citadel** (Photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): 1887; to the right of it is [14] Central School Annex, the former home of the Robson family.

By 1880, Darlington's textile industry had largely been out of operation[128]. In 1885, the initial workforce of eleven at the [2] S&DR Carriage Works had reached its peak with 150 employees. However, the NER announced its closure as it was more economical to do the works in York and ceased all works on Darlington site the following year[129]. North Road's location on the edge of Darlington was less from ideal. Once the NER controlled all the lines in the area[130], the new station at Bank Top completed in 1887 (outside the area under review) took much of the passenger and freight traffic away from [1] North Road Railway Station[131].

During the late 1880s, after his father had died, John Kitching allowed more of the former Elmfield estate to be built on. Thornton Street soon sprung up, followed by Elmfield Terrace. Kitching lived at [I] Elmfield House until 1920[132].

Following the passing of the 1889 Technical Education Act[133], [12] **Central School (East Block)** (grade II)[134], now also known as Central House, was built by the Town Corporation as Darlington's first Technical College in 1896. The building was designed by GG Hoskins. It is partly located on land formerly owned by the North Lodge estate, which had begun to be broken up in 1894[135]. Additionally, the row of weavers cottages formerly owned by Edward Pease was demolished in 1895 to make way for its construction. Another school (which is listed by curtilage) was built in a similar Neo-Gothic style immediately to the west of [12] Central School (East Block), on the site of the former open-air school[136] (see below), opening in 1911. It had initially

127 Flynn 1988, photos 65 & 67
128 Clack, Pearson 1978, page 21
129 Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021a, page 39
130 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'North Road (Darlington)'
131 http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/d/darlington_north_road/
132 Lloyd 2005, pages 144 & 146
133 Flynn 1988, photos 56 & 60
134 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1160912
135 Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 4
136 Flynn 1987, page 84

been known as the Higher Grade School but was renamed to [H] **Central Secondary School** in 1916[137].

[12] Central School (East Block) (photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): 1896 by G.G Hoskins in an elaborate Perpendicular style, with the two female figures on the gable tops representing Art and Science[138]. **[H] Central Secondary School**, 1911, to the far left.

The six-inch 1896 map (see above) shows that much of the existing planform within the Conservation Area under review had been established by the late-nineteenth century, with a continuous building frontage along Northgate and High Northgate and new roads forking off to either side. [12] Central School (East Block), built in the same year, is already shown. The 25-inch edition (not reproduced here) clearly depicts [F] **1 Leadenhall Street** built by Robert Borrowdale and [O] **The Half Moon**, although it is likely that the pub is much older, judging from its external appearance and location. Since the issue of a map dating from 1870[139] (not reproduced here), there had been a significant increase in buildings, in particular workers housing, which was required for the expanding workforce of the railway and its associated industries. High Northgate had become a busy shopping centre serving the housing near the station site[140]. New railway lines had been put into place to join with the east coast mainline, with [1] North Road Railway Station becoming a major passenger facility. The former Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry had partly been demolished to make way for extra sidings for the Royal Agricultural Show in 1895; the remainder was demolished in 1975[141]. The branch line had also been shortened, its southern stretch and coal depot (the latter closed in 1871[142]) now replaced by urban architecture, such as the [E] Livingstone Buildings. By then, a much larger coal depot (no longer extant) had been provided along the main line to the southeast of [7] Skerne Bridge (see section 5.2/C4), outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. The branch also no longer served the [3] Lime Cells, maybe as waggons had become too large for the building[143]. The [5] Goods Shed had been converted into a NER fire station[144], with an extension added to the south elevation.

[137] Flynn 1988, photos 56 & 60
[138] Flynn 1988, photo 57
[139] Clark 2006, page 9
[140] Flynn 1994, photo 47
[141] Clark 2006, pages 11 & 17
[142] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 19
[143] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 16
[144] Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021b, pages 39

Left: **[F] 1 Leadenhall Street** (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): by Robert Borrowdale; the lion at the apex is the replacement of a previous lion. *Right:* **[O] The Half Moon** (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): probably the oldest surviving pub building inside the Conservation Area under review, although later altered.

In 1900, a new road named North Lodge Terrace was constructed on the west side of the North Lodge estate in response to the demand in housing. In the same year, the [K] **Darlington Bottling Company** opened along Gladstone Street. In 1901, Gladstone Street was extended east to meet Northgate[145]. Following a meeting of railwaymen in a cocoa house in the town centre that year, the newly formed [A] **Darlington Working Men's Club** established itself in a couple of terraced properties at the end of High Terrace along High Northgate, providing reading and leisure facilities for the working man, run by ordinary working men[146]. In 1903, the [M] **Temperance Institute** along Gladstone Street had opened, providing facilities (e.g. meeting rooms for trade unions and friendly societies, billiard room, bathroom) away from the temptations of the public houses. Fund raising and donations from wealthy families such as the Peases and Backhouses had provided the money for its construction[147]. It later also included the Picturedrome where movies were shown[148]. The Institute proved so popular that in 1909 an additional Temperance Hall (demolished in 1959) was opened next door[149].

Between 1851 and 1901, Darlington's population had risen by 366% from 12,452 to 45,958 due to the continuing growth in railway and heavy engineering[150].

145 Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 4
146 Lloyd 2001, pages 129 & 135
147 Flynn 1988, photo 61
148 Flynn 1987, page 101
149 Lloyd 2001, pages 101-102
150 Clack, Pearson 1978, page 21

Top: **[A] Darlington Working Men's Club** (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): 1901, re-fronted in the 1920s. The building and boundary walling benefitted from improvement works under the 2005-09 Northgate PSCA (see section 3.6). *Bottom left:* **[M] Temperance Institute**: 1903. Once a handsome building, the ground floor is now disfigured. *Bottom right:* **[K] Darlington Bottling Company**: 1900. The entrance and display windows are now blocked. (Photos © Gaby Rose, December 2023)

In 1901, the North Lodge estate was acquired by the Town Corporation from the Pease family so that the grounds could be turned into a public park. Backhouse's castellated boat house remained beside the enlarged pond[151]. [10] North Lodge facilitated municipal offices and the Education Department was based here from 1905 to 1970. In 1903, North Lodge Park officially opened[152], including an octagonal [9] **Bandstand** (grade II)[153]. In 1906, the Bowling Green and pavilion opened[154]. It was hoped that the new green would relieve the pressure on South Park[155]. In 1910, Darlington's first open-air school was constructed in North Lodge Park, an educational experiment aimed for sickly girls. The structure consisted of a wooden frame with two canvassed walls. The canvas could be moved depending on the wind direction to shield from. Some of the pupils had been prescribed rest by their doctors, so hammocks were slung between the trees so that they could take a nap. The school only operated in this location for two months and was then relocated[156].

[151] Lloyd 2005, page 144
[152] Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 4
[153] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121287
[154] Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 4
[155] Flynn 1988, photo 64
[156] Lloyd 2005, pages 145-146

[9] Bandstand to West of Bowling Green (photo © Gaby Rose, July 2023): Restored and re-opened in 2010 after long-term dereliction. North Lodge Terrace in the background.

The 1913-14 map (see above) shows the completed row of housing along North Lodge Terrace which incorporates the [J] **Pentecostal Church** (now a mosque) built in a Neo-Gothic style. Further terracing had been provided along the northern border of North Lodge Park (Elmfield Terrace) as well as to the west of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. To the north of Cocker Beck, the Assembly Hall (no longer extant), where movies used to be shown[157], is marked behind the northern complex of the Livingstone Buildings (also no longer extant). Further north, the [5] Goods Shed is now annotated as NER Fire Station; it is possible that the conversion had taken place by the end of the nineteenth century. The new use occupied the western side of the building servicing the increasing collection of railway buildings in the North Road area and presumably on the wider railway network[158].

[J] Pentecostal Church (photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): The building has unusually been incorporated within a row of terraced housing.

[157] Flynn 1987, page 101

[158] Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021b, pages 38 -39

In 1920, North Lodge Park was extended to its present size by inclusion of the remaining Elmfield grounds[159]. In 1932, the lake was filled in and re-landscaped. Three years later, the boathouse was converted into a shelter. It was finally demolished in 1954[160]. Also in 1932, the area between the [2] S&DR Carriage Works, [1] North Road Railway Station and the former Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry began to be used as a railway scrapyard (until the 1960s) for the disassembly of withdrawn locomotives[161]. It was later grassed over and used for events connected with the Darlington North Road Station Museum[162] (see below).

The Theatre Royal was operating as a cinema when it closed in 1936. By end of January 1938, it had been transformed by Associated British Cinemas (ABC) into the Regal cinema, which later became the [H] **Odeon**. The old theatre building had been demolished apart from its side walls; the façade and stage end were new[163]. At that time, Darlington had proportionally more cinema seats than any other town[164].

The **[H] Odeon**, closed at the time of review (photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): Art Deco style between Victorian buildings; formerly the site of the Theatre Royal.

The 1950 map (see above) shows North Lodge Park without the lake. A few new buildings as well as extensions to existing buildings, the latter notably along Northgate, had been built to the north and east of the park. In 1951, plans were drawn up to convert the former fire station, which the [5] Goods Shed had been turned into, as a depot for the maintenance of railway-owned road delivery vehicles[165]. The map shows that by that time, the southern extension had been removed and a complex of structures been erected between the building and [1] North Road Railway Station.

[159] Flynn 1988, photo 63
[160] Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 5
[161] Clark 2006, page 50
[162] http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/d/darlington_north_road/
[163] https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/20950#
[164] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/culture/film/features/20217334.15-old-pictures-odeon-darlington-luxe-cinema-northgate/
[165] Purcell Architecture Ltd 2021b, page 45

Train services had decreased after the war. Towards the end of the 1960s, employment in the railway and engineering industries declined, leading to a degree of local degeneration. With Bank Top having become the main station for Darlington, the [1] North Road Railway Station building was closed to passengers in 1964 and completely shut down the following year[166], although the platform and train services have remained operational to this day. Just outside the Conservation Area under review, the Darlington & Barnard Castle branch closed in 1965, with the rails removed soon after[167], and in 1966 the North Road Shops (Locomotive Works) shut down officially after years of uncertainty[168].

The construction of the dual-carriageway inner ring road between 1969 and 1973 cut a swathe through Northgate, demolishing a large number of buildings to the south of [12] Central School (East Block), just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. This dissected Northgate to such a degree that it has since led to the development of two separate streets, with the northern part (A167) inside the Conservation Area now being 'cut off' from Darlington's bustling town centre and consequently declining.

On 27 September 1975, exactly 150 years after the first steam-powered passenger train made its historic journey, the Darlington North Road Station Museum was opened by H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh inside the [1] North Road Railway Station building. In the same year, the remains of the former Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry were demolished[169].

In July 2024, the brand-new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction comprising the refurbished [1] North Road Railway Station, [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works and [5] Goods Shed opened to the public (see section 3.6).

3.4 Spatial Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the Northgate Conservation Area at the time of review. Note that planform, road and railway line layouts, watercourses, topography, and buildings are described in the previous sections (see sections 3.2 & 3.3). Listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document; 'other notable buildings' are assigned their [LETTER]

The Northgate Conservation Area under review includes a number of focal points which feature within the key views, see below. Whilst the [9] Bandstand, St George's Hall and the [6] Railway Viaduct can only be viewed from shorter distances, [12] Central School (East Block), [15] Northgate United Reform Church, the [5] Goods Shed, [7] Skerne Bridge, [G] Bridge Hotel and [B] Melville House are also visible over longer distances. The area's most prominent focal point, however, is just outside the boundary adopted in 2003. Northgate House, a 1960s office block of nine storeys height (plus two additional storeys for the stairs tower), overshadows the road junction of Northgate and Gladstone Street. Due to its size, it can even be seen from the northern part of the Conservation Area under review including the foot-and-cycle path at [7] Skerne Bridge.

[166] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 21
[167] Darsley, Lovett 2023, point 49
[168] Emett 2003, pages 13-23
[169] Clark 2006, page 56

Spatial analysis of the Northgate Conservation Area, **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green) (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

By the late-nineteenth century, much of the built environment of the area had achieved good urban enclosure and cohesion – as typical for an old town centre – with rows of two-to-three-storey buildings and prominent boundary walling fronting the roads and back lanes. Whilst much of this is still in place, the loss of old structures has had a negative impact on the spatial experience of the Northgate Conservation Area under review. In addition, the modern buildings are generally not in keeping with the overall development pattern of the area (see section 3.2), undermining the sense of enclosure and cohesion to various degrees. A particularly detrimental example would be the filling station replacing the northern Livingstone Building. Notably, a number of fine historical frontages are now concealed behind single-storey extensions, with those to the western side of Northgate also undermining the

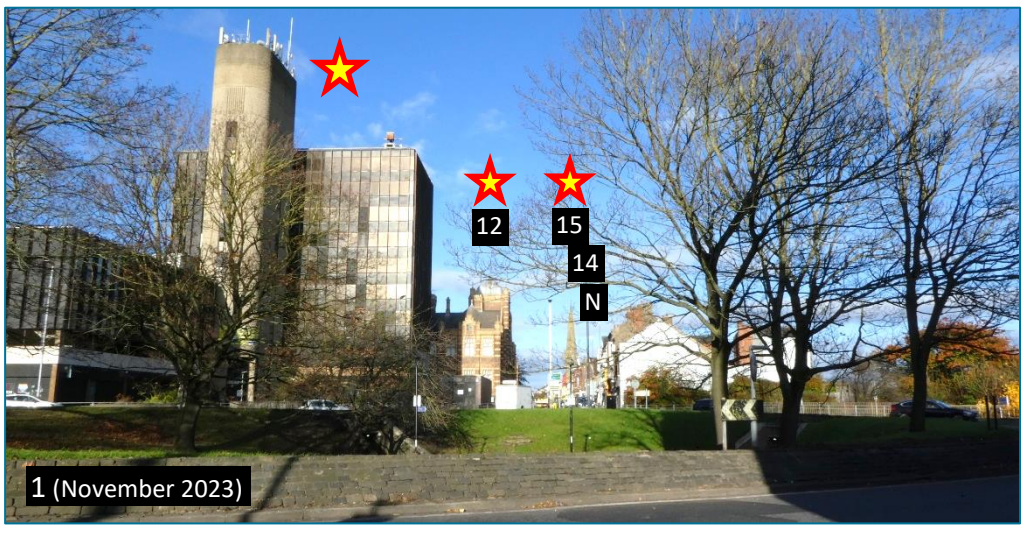
spatial experience in those locations. In contrast, whilst the new residential building types that have been introduced throughout the area under review are out of character (see section 3.5), they at least contribute to the enclosure of space. In various locations, mature trees and other vegetation also add a sense of enclosure, albeit more organically.

An area of notably lower building density is the railway heritage site at the northern end of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, which now comprises the recently completed Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction (see section 3.6). Here the buildings are very loosely spaced. The former industrial yard between [1] North Road Railway Station and the [2] S&DR Carriage Works has been grassed over, reminiscent of the mid-nineteenth-century allotment gardens that were in this location prior to the full industrialisation of the site (see section 3.3). Mature trees partially impede views from the roads onto the former passenger station building.

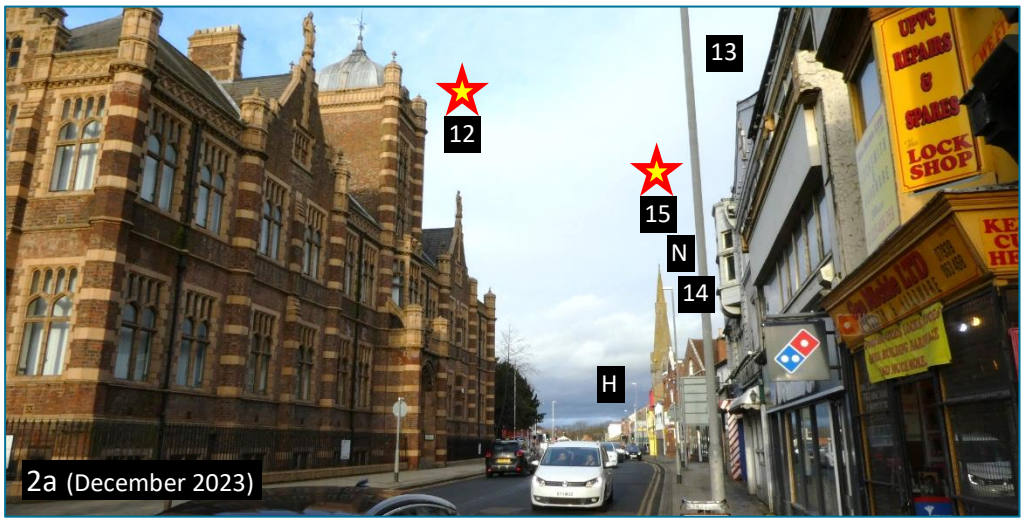
The Conservation Area under review has three good (open) public spaces, as shown on the map above, which feature in some of the key views. They all include some degree of vegetation. Whilst most of the area is accessible to the public, the private greenspace between Westbrook and Cocker Beck and the green corridor along the railway line are not, but they are visible from public viewpoints.

The key views of the Northgate Conservation Area under review are mostly internal, rather than looking from outside the area into the boundary adopted in 2003, with the exception of views 1 and 14 (see below).

View 1 has been taken from the roundabout of the dual-carriageway inner ring road outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, which divides Northgate into two independent sections. Mature trees on the sunken pedestrian island in the centre of the roundabout partially conceal the view onto the southern gateway of the area under review. Most notably, the modern glass-and-concrete office tower block of Northgate House just outside the designated boundary overshadows the surrounding buildings including [12] Central School (East Block), which can be seen projecting behind it. On the opposite/east side of the street a row of historical buildings survives including [13] 138-148 Northgate and [O] The Half Moon, although they cannot be identified from this angle. The spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church is a distant focal point, also on the east side of Northgate. The brick façade of the [N] Salvation Army Citadel can just be glimpsed in front of it, whilst the adjoining [14] Central School Annex is mostly concealed behind a streetlight.



Crossing the roundabout and entering the area under review, **View 2a** has been taken from the junction of Northgate with Gladstone Street (the latter just out of view to the far left/west), looking north. In this location, both sides of the street are well enclosed by building frontages, with the Neo-Gothic design of [12] Central School (East Block) dominating the view; the trees of North Lodge Park are just visible behind it. On the opposite/east side of Northgate, the prominent red brick facades of [14] Central School Annex and the [N] Salvation Army Citadel are much concealed by a streetlight and traffic sign. [13] 138-148 Northgate can be seen immediately to the right/east of the lamp post. The spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church remains a distant focal point. In the far background, the trees along the railway corridor can just be spotted to the left/west of the white façade of the [H] Odeon.



2a (December 2023)

Crossing over to the opposite/west side of the street, **View 2b** still focusses on the spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church, which now has become more clearly visible. In the foreground to the right/east, the prominent pediment of [13] 138-148 Northgate can be seen, with [14] Central School Annex and the [N] Salvation Army Citadel notably continuing the gable-fronting 'theme' further along Northgate. On the left/west side, a stone figure on top of the northern gable of [12] Central School (East Block) can be spotted overlooking the street where traffic is queuing up to enter the Northgate roundabout (see View 1).

2b (December 2023)

Walking down/west Gladstone Street, **View 3** has been taken from its junction with North Lodge Terrace, looking north. A long row of traditional brick houses behind shallow front gardens lines the road along the left/west side of North Lodge Park. Its two-storey bay windows, dormer windows and chimney stacks create a strong rhythm and conceal the former [J] Pentecostal Church further down the road. On the chamfered street corner in the foreground is one of the metal-gated park entrances, with the [9] Bandstand just visible behind mature vegetation. A line of intermittent, roadside trees inside the park helps channel the view down North Lodge Terrace.

View 4 has been taken from the opposite end of North Lodge Terrace looking south, with the row of traditional brick houses lining the street to the right/west and the line of intermittent trees inside North Lodge Park to the left/east. Old upright metal railings enclose the public greenspace, with a modern paved sidewalk next to it and a fair amount of cars parking alongside. From this location, there is a better view onto the [9] Bandstand inside the park, with Northgate House towering above it in the background, just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. There is also a slightly better view onto the former [J] Pentecostal Church within the terrace.

View 5 has been taken from the junction of North Lodge Terrace with Elmfield Terrace, looking east along the northern border of North Lodge Park. Again, the road is lined with mature trees inside the park behind the old metal railings to the right/south, and a brick terrace along the opposite/northern side. The houses here also have shallow front gardens but only single-storey bay windows; nevertheless, these create a rhythm along with the prominent chimney stacks. Some of the properties now have modern renders which undermine the originally intended uniformity of this historical row. At the south-eastern end of Elmfield Terrace, St George's Hall with its pyramidal roof provides a local focal point.

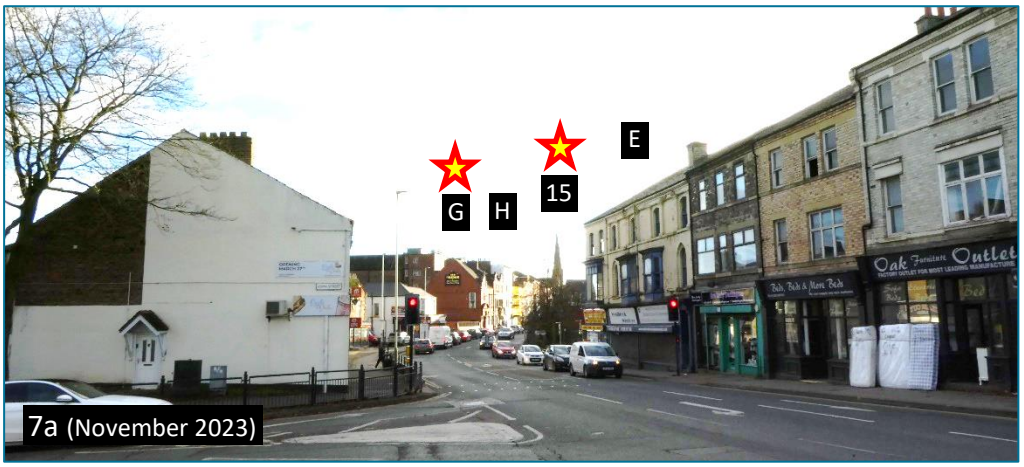
5 (December 2023)

Elmfield Terrace then turns north for a short distance until it meets Corporation Road. **View 6** has been taken from this junction looking east, with [G] Bridge Hotel being a distant focal point at the junction of Corporation Road with Northgate. To the left/north, a terrace including two-storey brick-built bay windows lines the road behind shallow front gardens. Here, too, some of the properties now have modern renders which undermine the intended uniformity of the historical row. Further along there is a modern timber-clad building of unusual shape which is very uncharacteristic for the area. On the other/south side of the road there are two large brick buildings that were constructed between 1913 and 1950. These were some of the last traditional structures to be built in the Conservation Area under review. The one closest to the foreground is in office use and has a scoria-paved back lane to its western elevation, which is just visible in the far right-hand bottom corner.

6 (December 2023)

Returning back onto the main street, **View 7a** starts off a sequence of views along the spinal axis of the Conservation Area under review, looking south. The first one has been taken from the busy junction of High Northgate with John Street, the latter visible in the foreground on the left/east. To the right/west, the surviving (southern) [E] Livingstone Building prominently faces this junction. However, it only stands out now as its neighbouring buildings have been demolished. Behind it is a small public greenspace with benches and trees, the former location of Robert Borrowdale's 'bizarre' Westbrook Buildings which had at least twenty-five gargoyles[170]. As High Northgate gently slopes downhill towards Cocker Beck and curves right/west, the red brick gable of [G] Bridge Hotel and adjoining white façade of the [H] Odeon can be seen on the other/eastern side of Northgate Bridge. In the distance, the spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church provides a distant focal point.

[170] Flynn 1994, photo 53



7a (November 2023)

Moving south, **View 7b** has been taken from the junction of High Northgate with Lambton Street. In front of the [8] Railway Tavern on the left/east side of the street, the pavement widens in the location of a former standage where carts and wagons could await the refreshed return of their drivers. Across the road is the small public greenspace with benches and trees, the former location of Borrowdale's Westbrook Buildings. The detached gable-fronted brick building on the opposite/east side of the street, to the right/south of the [8] Railway Tavern, is [F] No. 1 Leadenhall Street, which the only surviving house out of eight or nine that Robert Borrowdale had built in this street[171]. Across Northgate Bridge, the red brick gable of [G] Bridge Hotel (facing Cocker Beck) and the adjoining white façade of the [H] Odeon can be seen. In the distance, the spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church again provides a focal point, with the white-rendered corner of [13] 138-148 Northgate visible behind and [12] Central School (East Block) on the opposite/west side of the street.

7b (December 2023)

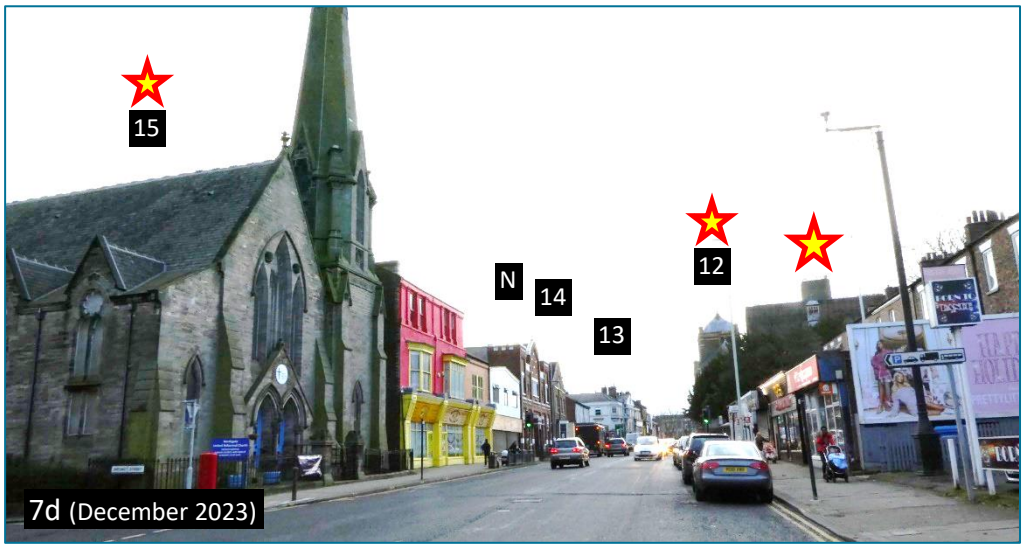
Moving on, **View 7c** has been taken from Northgate Bridge with the street now rising steadily away from Cocker Beck. To the left/east are [G] Bridge Hotel, with its demolished building part now being an external space to the far left/north, and the adjoining [H] Odeon to the right/south. Across the street is some traditional brick architecture built in the first half of the twentieth century (see View 6) which still has its original shopfront and windows. Whilst the left/eastern side of Northgate is well enclosed by buildings fronting the street, the sense of enclosure on the right/western side has been undermined by modern extensions and other buildings that are unsympathetic to the historical development pattern. In the distance, there are three

[171] Lloyd 2001, pages 141 & 154

landmarks: the spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church remains very prominent, and on the other/west side of the street are [12] Central School (East Block), with the treetops of North Lodge Park in front, and Northgate House just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. The trees at the far end of Northgate mark the location of the roundabout on the ring road (see View 1), with the white-rendered corner of [13] 138-148 Northgate just visible to the left/east.

7c (December 2023)

The final view of this sequence is **View 7d** which has been taken from the junction of Northgate with Chesnut Street. [15] Northgate United Reform Church now features prominently in the foreground to the left/east and forms a distinct group with the adjoining buildings including the [N] Salvation Army Citadel and [14] Central School Annex, held together by a gable-fronting 'theme'. Further up the road, the pedimented central section of [13] 138-148 Northgate continues this (see View 2b). On the opposite/west side of the street, the modern, single-storey extensions in front of North Terrace (143-163 Northgate) have weakened the sense of urban enclosure. Behind them, the trees at the entrance of North Lodge Park can be seen in front of [12] Central School (East Block) and Northgate House, the latter just outside the Conservation Area under review.



7d (December 2023)

Going back to High Northgate, **View 8** has been taken next to the filling station's digital price board so that it does not impede the view, looking north. The former cocoa palace of [B] Melville House is a quirky local landmark at the junction with Meville Street and Station Road. Galvanised streetlights detract from the building.

The A167 gently curves right steadily rising north. On the left/west side is a good-quality terrace with large front gardens; these were the first railway properties to be built in c.1825 following the arrival of the S&DR. The former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club, just visible behind the vegetation, forms the end property of this row and projects significantly. The next terrace, further north, has smaller front gardens so the houses are closer to the street, narrowing the view. On the right/east side, the street is lined by another early terrace of c.1825 without front gardens. Some of the properties have been altered quite significantly, although the chimneys have generally been retained and remain prominent. The trees in the far distance mark the entrance to the new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction (see View 13).

8 (December 2023)

Turning left/west onto Station Road/Hopetown Lane, **View 9** has been taken from the junction with Widdowfield Street looking southeast onto the triangular public square which used to be the location of the branch line to the coal depot. The open space is well bounded by stone walling to the left/north containing the railway heritage site, with mature trees softening the boundary (not shown). Further stone walling to the right/south (behind the brick wall) is believed to be remnants of the original enclosure of the former depot or branch line. Three young trees have been planted on a large, grassed traffic island in the centre of the square. In the background, rows of terraced housing front the open space on gently curved lines. This is generally an attractive public space, although the galvanised streetlights and a modern house do detract.

9 (December 2023)

Going down Widdowfield Street, **View 10** has been taken from the junction with Drury Street, looking south. The green space to the left/east is the small park of Paddly Dene along Cocker Beck, its entrance on the curved street corner. A row of traditional brick houses, just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, features a mural of the first black professional footballer Arthur Wharton on the northern gable wall. The terrace lines the road along the west side of this pleasant park, with mature vegetation inside along its east and south borders.

10 (December 2023)

Heading back to High Northgate, **View 11a** has been taken from the gap between numbers 84b and 94. It is also known as **Dobbin's View**, the viewpoint of John Dobbin's belated painting of the opening day of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, see cover image of this document. [7] Skerne Bridge is less noticeable from the east side of street due to a tall stone boundary wall blocking the view but is more easily visible from the slightly elevated western pavement. Two terraces frame this view. The far-end property of the left/northern terrace (not shown) is inscribed '1857 – FAITH HOUSE', a former reading room built by the Darlington Workmen's Mutual Improvement Society which was later turned into a mortuary caretaker's cottage[172].

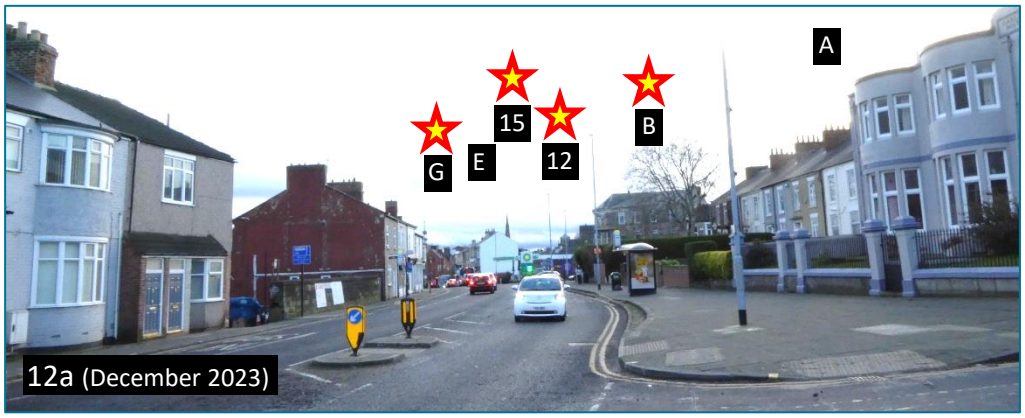
11a (December 2023)

Dobbin's View can also be experienced from the sandstone-paved lane along the gable wall of 94 High Northgate, as shown in **View 11b**. Graffiti, litter and tipping are a problem here. The land between High Northgate and the river includes the newly created carpark for the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction (see View 14) which is outside the Conservation Area under review. It occupies the location of the former gasworks (opened in 1830[173]) which most likely blocked the view from this location onto [7] Skerne Bridge.

11b (November 2024)

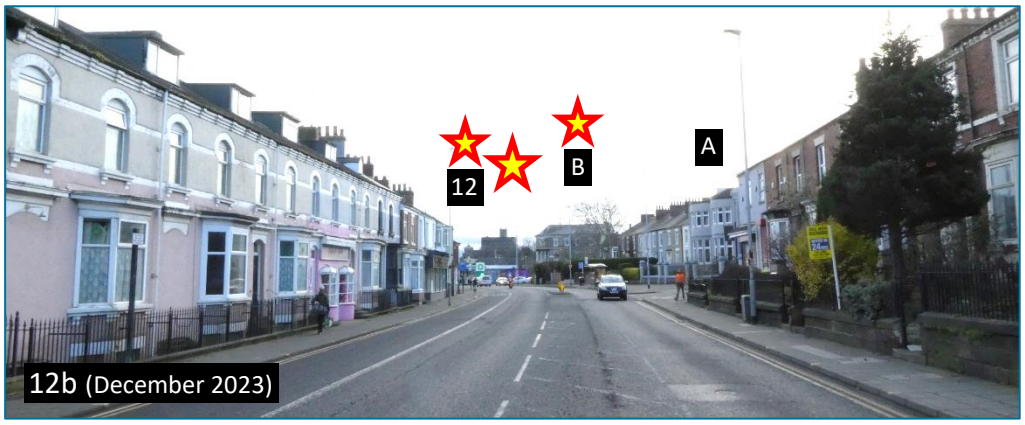
[172] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 12
[173] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 13

View 12a has been taken from the junction of High Northgate with Arthur Street, looking south. To the left/east is the gap between the two terraces which frame Dobbin's View (see View 11a) with the stone boundary wall in between. To the right/ west of the street is the former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club with its distinct curved bay windows and prominent piers to its front garden, the latter having belonged to the former original two houses. Behind it is an adjoining, recessed row of Georgian houses with generous front gardens (see View 8). Well-established vegetation softens the view, partially concealing [B] Melville House. Galvanised streetlights add a rigid element and detract. The street curves gently to the left with the white gable of the surviving [E] Livingstone Building being in the central background. As the street dips down to Cocker Beck, the gable of [G] Bridge Hotel becomes visible. Far in the distance, three landmarks at the southern end of the area under review can just be spotted: the spire of [15] Northgate United Reform Church, [12] Central School (East Block), and the tower block of Northgate House to the right/south of it, the latter being outside the boundary adopted in 2003.



12a (December 2023)

View 12b has been taken from further up/north High Northgate, from the pedestrian crossing at Skerne Bridge Entrance, still looking south. This view is clearly channelled along the street by some handsome terraced housing lining both sides. The properties to the right/west include high-quality architectural detailing, basements and front gardens bounded by metal fencing on dwarf sandstone walling. The terrace to the left/east is more basic but also includes basements with railings in front and some detailing which is of interest. The houses with the arched lintels were cohesively improved by the owner inspired by the achievements of the HERS and PSCA schemes in the 2000s (see section 3.6). Further south, the space opens up at the former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club revealing [B] Melville House in the background, although it is partially concealed by the mature vegetation of the Georgian terrace's end gardens. As the street curves left out of sight, there is a glimpse of [12] Central School (East Block) in the far distance with Northgate House towering above it to the right/south, the latter being just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003.



12b (December 2023)

Going back to the junction with Arthur Street (see View 12a), **View 12c** has been taken from the opposite direction, looking north along High Northgate. The focal point in the distance is the [6] Railway Viaduct which is flanked by trees to both sides. Again, the view is channelled by rows of houses lining the street. The trees behind the left/western terrace, which includes high-quality architectural detailing, mark the entrance to the railway heritage site which now comprises the new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction (see View 13). Behind the last, more basic terrace of former railway cottages on the right/eastern side of the street, (probably self-seeded) trees grow on top of the embanked railway corridor.

12c (November 2023)

View 13 has been taken from the north end of High Northgate, at the junction with Skerne Bridge Entrance, looking onto the former railway heritage site which now comprises the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction. The clock tower of the recently restored and converted [5] Goods Shed still provides the focal point, as was its original design intention. A new entrance to the site has been created on the corner with McNay Street. Whilst this reflects the original approach to the building from High Northgate, the size of the new staircase is overbearing. The open space around the building is an important factor as is its intervisibility with the former goods office, now [4] 1 & 2 McNay Street, due to their former functional interrelationship (see section 3.3). The view is framed by a terrace including high-quality architectural detailing to the left/south of McNay Street (see Views 12b&c) and the [6] Railway Viaduct to the right/north of the railway heritage site. The new, brightly lit Hopetown LED board on top of the raised ground next to the former [5] Goods Shed can look very intrusive, although it detracts less in the bright sunshine. The western traffic lights at the newly created pedestrian crossing partially conceal the view onto this important historic building.

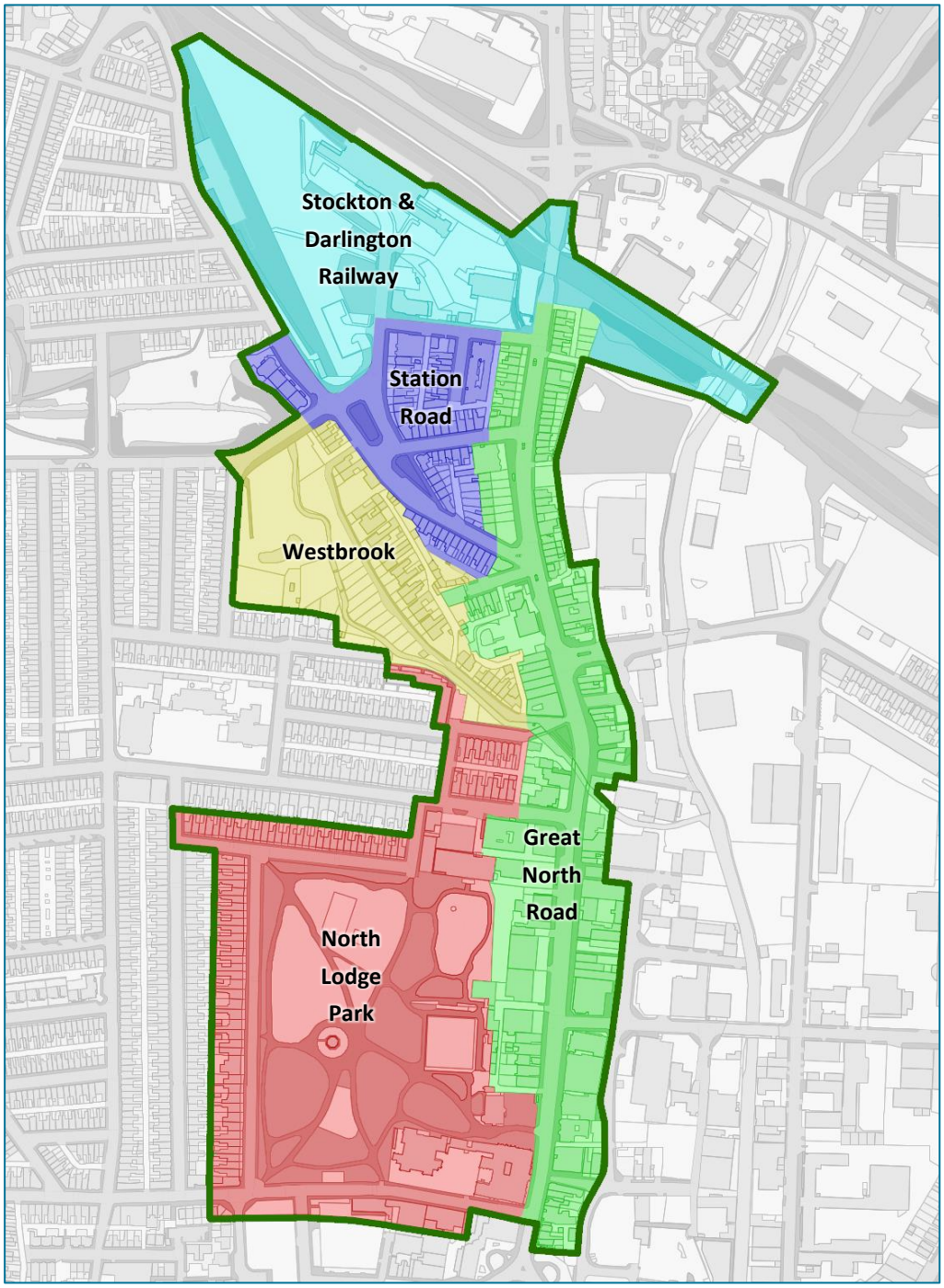
View 14 has been taken from the foot-and-cycle path along the river Skerne just outside the Conservation Area under review. Historically, the riverbank in this location was heavily industrialised, including the former gasworks, and would have not been accessible to the public. Today, the newly created surface carpark for the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction presents a bleak and open site, and it is regrettable that no trees or other landscaping have been included, with the vast tarmacked surface distracting from the picturesque [7] Skerne Bridge within the Northgate Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003. The two terraces in the background to the left/west, also within the designated area, line the eastern side of High Northgate with the clock tower of the [5] Goods Shed just visible behind. Mature trees soften the embanked railway corridor.

3.5 Character Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the Northgate Conservation Area at the time of review. It should be read in conjunction with the historical development (see section 3.3) and spatial analysis (see section 3.4). Listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document; 'other notable buildings' are assigned their [LETTER].

At the time of review, the Northgate Conservation Area comprised the following character zones (colour on the map below in brackets):

- Great North Road (green)
- Stockton & Darlington Railway (light blue)
- Station Road (dark blue)
- Westbrook (yellow)
- North Lodge Park (red)



Character zones of the Northgate Conservation Area, **boundary line at the time of review, as adopted in July 2003** (green) (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The Great North Road character zone is of linear shape and follows the north-south axis of the busy A167. Its main architectural and historic significance comprises:

- Part of the main historical highway between London and Edinburgh
- Pre-industrial country estates of wealthy Darlington residents
- Birthplace of the railways and Dobbin's View
- Early railway-related buildings
- Robert Borrowdale buildings and associations

This character zone is the most complex within the Northgate Conservation Area under review. It is of an urban, mixed-use (residential, retail/food & drink, commercial, community use and leisure[174]) nature, with two-and-three-storey buildings including a variety of architectural styles (e.g. Italianate and Art Deco) fronting the main street. Intermittent trees and other vegetation soften the channelled views along this enclosed urban space. A small public green space opens up the area to the northwest of Northgate Bridge (see View 7b). Much of the experience of the character zone is undermined by the high volume of vehicle traffic, which not only has a negative impact on pedestrian movement from one side of the street to the other but also creates an unpleasant atmosphere. Moreover, previous demolition of old buildings, loss of architectural cohesion, ongoing dilapidation, vacant units, visual clutter and insensitive modern development (sometimes resulting from a change of use) have caused significant harm to the character of the Georgian and Victorian streetscape (see section 4.1).

The Great North Road character zone includes the following listed buildings:

[8] Railway Tavern
[13] 138-148 Northgate
[14] Central School Annex
[15] Northgate United Reform Church *[landmark]*
[16] Forecourt Railings and Gate Piers to Northgate United Reformed Church

It also has the largest amount of 'other notable buildings':

[A] Darlington Working Men's Club
[B] Melville House *[landmark]*
[E] Livingstone Building
[F] 1 Leadenhall Street
[G] Bridge Hotel *[landmark]*
[H] Odeon
[I] Elmfield House
[N] Salvation Army Citadel
[O] The Half Moon

The historical buildings of this character zone comprise detached and terraced houses as well as commercial/leisure town buildings, with some of them including flats or businesses on the upper floors. A few industrial buildings survive in rear areas. Whilst [14] Central School Annex still portrays the wealth of its former inhabitants, [I] Elmfield House is now much concealed behind modern single-storey extensions of commercial nature. There are a large number of such extensions where there used to be generous front gardens, especially in the southern part of this character zone (see Views 7c&d). With the exception of North Terrace (143-163 Northgate), all other terraced housing is in the northern part (see Views 8 & 12a-c), close to the railway heritage site. The houses which are set back behind front gardens and/or include basements and have external stairs leading to the entrances were originally of higher social status than those without. Many terraces have been adversely affected by modern alterations, although those on the western side of High Northgate have generally retained their historical character. There is a wide range of old commercial and leisure buildings including [8] Railway Tavern, [13] 138-148 Northgate, [15] Northgate United Reform Church, the former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club, [B] Melville House, [E] Livingstone Building, [G] Bridge Hotel, [H] Odeon,

[174] Land Use Consultants 2021, page 10

[N] Salvation Army Citadel, and [O] The Half Moon. These buildings have generally fared better than many houses in retaining their historical appearance.

Left (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Former warehouse with hoisting door along Beck Road. *Right* (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): The (now blocked) tall, central doorway into the two-storey building at the entrance of Westbrook suggests a former carpet trade connected with this structure, which abuts the [E] Livingstone Building.

Although the linear building element prevails in this character zone, a few notable detached structures include gable-fronting elevations, namely [F] 1 Leadenhall Street, [14] Central School Annex, [N] Salvation Army Citadel and [13] 138-148 Northgate. Due to the enclosed nature of this zone, the roofs, which are generally pitched or hipped and slated, are less prominent. The brick chimney stacks of the houses or pubs contribute to the character where they have been retained. The different roof shapes of the [H] Odeon (although pitched behind a tall parapet wall, it has the external appearance of a flat roof), [N] Salvation Army Citadel (crenelated towers) and [15] Northgate United Reform Church (very steep pitch with multiple 'dormers') make these buildings stand out in the streetscape. Whilst the historical buildings are often built in red brick (the earlier ones at the north end of this character zone have Flemish bonds), a terrace along Melville Street and sections of the [E] Livingstone Building are faced in cream/buff 'Pease' brick. This type was manufactured by the company of Joseph Pease, son of S&DR founder Edward Pease[175], and had become popular for the use on public buildings by the 1860s[176]. The landmark buildings [15] Northgate United Reform Church and [B] Melville House are made of facing sandstone, the former incorporating high-quality ashlar. Stone has also been used for architectural features and window/door surrounds on red-brick buildings. Single-storey bay or oriel windows and decorative stone canopies above windows and door entrances can be found throughout this character zone. Structures with more elaborate detailing include the [E] Livingstone Building, [G] Bridge Hotel, [N] Salvation Army Citadel, [F] 1 Leadenhall Street and [13] 138-148 Northgate. The [8] Railway Tavern, former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club, [H] Odeon, re-fronted [13] 138-148 Northgate and [O] The Half Moon would have originally been designed with a lime render to make them stand out and attract people. However, a large quantity of the old brick buildings is now rendered or painted and would originally not have been. This can undermine the group value of building groups such as terraces (see Views 8 & 12a-c).

[175] http://www.solwaypast.co.uk/index.php/bricks/2-uncategorised/30-h-co-brick
[176] Cookson (ed) 2003, page 129

Left: Brick building with Italianate stone detailing to eaves and canopy above window. *Centre:* [E] Livingstone Building – All walling and detailing in brick, later painted; decorative bay window constructed in timber. *Right:* [F] 1 Leadenhall Street – Distinctive stone carvings by Robert Borrowdale (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

Where traditional sash windows with old glazing and panelled doors survive, they can add significantly to the quality of the historical buildings. The same applies to casements including coloured and clear glass set in leaded glazing bars. Unfortunately, old windows and doors have often been replaced with different designs and materials which make them stand out negatively. Likewise, modern shopfronts can be very intrusive on old buildings, although some historically inspired designs exist which are in keeping with the architecture. A few old shopfronts do survive (e.g. 14 & 32 High Northgate).

Left (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Traditional windows with slim frames and glazing bars and a traditional-style shop front were provided under the 2002-05 Northgate HERS. *Right* (Photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): Coloured glass with lead glazing bars were restored under the 2005-09 Northgate PSCA (see section 3.6).

The modern buildings in this character zone are of commercial, leisure and residential nature and located in the southern part of the character zone, with the exception of the filling station. None of these buildings contribute positively. Some of them have a very harmful impact on the Conservation Area under review, because of their orientation, shape, materials and/or detailing.

The roads are generally surfaced in modern asphalt and pavements in artificial stone flags. Distinct scoria-paved back lanes and alleys do survive and are an important element of the area's character. Scoria blocks were produced (possibly from 1899 on)

by the Tees Scoria Brick Co. Ltd of Bank Top, Darlington, and were the by-product of the steelmaking industry in Middlesbrough. Their high mineral content resulted in the distinct blue colouring. Designed to combat disease-ridden back alleys, these bricks were easily washable. A few of the back lanes to the east of the A167 also include rare survivors of sandstone block paving. Modern street furniture and traffic signage are to a standard utilitarian design. Old stone or brick boundary walling, piers and metal railings contribute positively to the public realm, including the [16] Forecourt Railings and Gate Piers to Northgate United Reformed Church. The rear yard walls to North Terrace (143-163 Northgate) have been removed, now presenting a poorly maintained open area used for car parking and dumping refuse. In addition, the large metal flues to the commercial units and raised seating area to the rear of the terrace have added further visual harm (see section 4.1).

Top left: Back lane with scoria and sandstone block surfacing. *Top right:* Ornate, cast-iron railings on top of ashlar stone/brick boundary walling between private front garden and public realm. *Bottom:* Rendered garden wall on street corner with stone copings and prominent gate piers. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

The Stockton & Darlington Railway character zone is of roughly triangular shape and lies at the north end of the Northgate Conservation Area under review. It can only be accessed from the west and south, as the railway line forms a physical (and visual) barrier to the northeast. Whilst in the nineteenth century this zone was predominantly in industrial, transport and related administrative uses, the former function has ceased to exist. The railway heritage site including its listed buildings have just been turned into the new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction which operates next to the North Road passenger station (platform only). The carpark for Hopetown Darlington has been provided at a walking distance outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, adjacent to the river Skerne (see View 14); it is not easy to locate, in particular for vehicle drivers from outside Darlington. With the exception of the short stretch along High Northgate, the S&DR character zone has comparatively little vehicle movement and therefore does not suffer from the implications of high traffic. Moreover, the detached buildings and bridges are

spaced generously and interspersed with plenty of mature vegetation, contributing to a more relaxed atmosphere than the previous character zone.

The main architectural and historic significance of this zone lies in the railway site originally developed by the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company between 1831 and 1853, including the rail track across [7] Skerne Bridge, which featured in the opening ceremony of the line in 1825, see cover image of this document. This zone was the catalyst for the rapid expansion of Darlington in the nineteenth century and contributed to the birth of a modern railway network across the world. The existing green space to the east of the former branch line is a reminder of the allotment gardens shown on the 1855 map.

The Stockton & Darlington Railway character zone includes the following listed buildings; there are no 'other notable buildings':

[1] North Road Railway Station
[2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works
[3] Lime Cells
[4] 1 & 2 McNay Street
[5] Goods Shed *[landmark]*
[6] Railway Viaduct *[landmark]*
[7] Skerne Bridge *[landmark]*

Apart from these structures, there is another, modern building on the junction of Station Road with McNay Street. It is constructed in sandstone employing a pastiche architectural style which confuses the interpretation of this historic site.

The historic buildings in this zone are detached and of various sizes, ranging from large ([1] North Road Railway Station and [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works) to quite small ([3] Lime Cells). Most roofs are hipped, and all are slated. Windows comprise sashes and casements incorporating multiple panes. All of the structures are of a utilitarian character with the exception of [4] 1 & 2 McNay Street, which was built as an office but could visually be mistaken for a dwelling. Whilst the S&DR structures are faced in stone or render and incorporate Italianate styles to various degrees, the [3] Lime Cells have the appearance of an outbuilding, with their upper roadside elevation currently clad in timber boarding; they are a rare survival of a once-common and distinctive regional building type. Using a classical design was a marketing move, with the [5] Goods Shed being the most formal and most expensively constructed. In the 1830s, the railway's key customers were prosperous merchants receiving and despatching goods, so the building needed to impress and reassure[177]. The Neo-Gothic elements added later to [1] North Road Railway Station are an anomality in this zone, although they do indicate the style direction Victorian railway architecture would take throughout the country.

The roads and cycle path to [7] Skerne Bridge are surfaced in modern asphalt. The railway heritage site has recently been paved in various surfacings, with some ground patterns indicating the locations of former rail tracks, thus enhancing the Hopetown Darlington visitor experience. There are no known surviving historical ground finishes in this character zone. Long stretches of coursed sandstone retaining walls bound the railway heritage site. These were probably part of a landscaping scheme between 1938 and 1950. A short, curved section of old sandstone wall abutting the north

[177] Clark 2006, pages 18 & 56

corner of the [3] Lime Cells may date from the mid-nineteenth century[178]. Modern gabion walls containing loose rubble stones in metal baskets line the embankment to the railway corridor and detract from the setting of [7] Skerne Bridge.

Coursed sandstone retaining wall along Hopetown Lane enclosing railway heritage site with mature vegetation behind. (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

The trees on the railway heritage site include mature sycamore, birch and beech. The railway embankment near [7] Skerne Bridge has (semi-) mature trees and saplings comprising ash, sycamore, buddleia and cypress. The bridge structure offers some potential to bats for roosting. Hart's tongue ferns grow around and on the base of the bridge, and there are willows along the Skerne. The river offers habitat for waterfowl, kingfishers, and even otters in this area.

The Station Road character zone is the smallest and lies in the northern part of the Conservation Area under review. It is of irregular shape. The buildings are mainly rows of houses fronting the streets. This residential area includes one (now) commercial building dated 1873 and a former factory (now extended and converted into flats). A few of the terraced houses at the south end of Station Road have retail or commercial uses on the ground floors. This zone is a tightly-knit built environment of urban character which has degraded over the years by insensitive alterations to many of the buildings. The generous public open space to the west bounded by rows of houses has a pleasant atmosphere (see View 9). Vegetation growth within this zone is limited to the square. There is little vehicle movement but a fair amount of roadside parking.

The main architectural and historic significance of this zone is the railway workers housing built in the second half of the nineteenth century, sparked by the growth of the railway industry and migration of workers into this area to find work[179]. Moreover, the public square used to be the location of the S&DR branch line to the coal depot. Evidence of the industrial past can still be found in the stone walling along the southern side of Hopetown Lane/Station Road which is believed to be associated with the former depot or branch line. The stretch of Station Road coming off High Northgate used to form the northern boundary of the coal depot.

This zone has no listed or 'other notable' structures.

Although the rows of historical houses include design variations they do work as an ensemble. They are generally built in red brick with the exception of the properties at the south end of Station Road, which are faced in (cream/buff) Pease brick. However, many of the brick facades are now concealed beneath a modern render which

[178] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 21 & 43
[179] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, page 78

undermines the group value of the buildings. They are generally two storeys high, although some are slightly raised with a basement below. Only the houses facing the public square have front gardens. Those at the northern end of Station Road used to be of highest status judging from their two-storey bay windows, dormers and elaborate eaves detailing. Some of the openings have curved stone lintels, and traditional timber sashes including old glazing survive. The red-brick houses not facing the square are more basic, although one row includes detailing in Pease brick and single-storey bay windows (Stephenson Street), whilst those along Arthur Street have moulded canopies above doors and ground-floor windows. In contrast to the houses facing the public open space, many of the more basic terraces have been altered more significantly by changing opening patterns, insertion of modern windows, doors, shop fronts and roofing materials, which has been to the detriment of the Conservation Area under review (see section 4.1). Within the more confined streetscapes, roofs are not as visible as across the public square where grey slating (or imitation of) has been retained.

Top: Stone wall associated with former coal depot or branch line which has been repurposed to residential boundary walling along Hopetown Lane[180], including coal holes and doorways. *Bottom left:* Higher-status terraced house at the northern end of Station Road with basement and front garden including replacement metal railings. *Bottom right:* These houses along Stephenson Street, with prominent chimney stacks, are made of red and cream/buff bricks although most now have a modern render. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

The (now) commercial building at the north end of Station Road is single storey and matches some of the elements of the adjoining houses. It has very elaborate eaves in Pease brick and decorative stone mullions. Its historical use is unknown to the author. The former industrial building along Stephenson Street is three storeys tall and has a large entrance. Its new windows detract significantly.

[180] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 21

The modern buildings are all built in red brick with slate (or look-a-like) roofs. Pullman House, an apartment block along Hopetown Lane has uncharacteristic, large entrance porches and Juliet balconies and is three storeys tall (see section 5.1). The modern house within the old building row across the square fails to work with the proportions of the neighbouring properties and has a brick front garden wall instead of metal fencing. The new apartment buildings along Stephenson Street harmonise more reasonably, probably also due to being in a more confined built environment. Nevertheless, they do detract from the former industrial building which they surround with their uncharacteristic 'mini gable' feature.

The roads are generally surfaced in asphalt and the pavements in artificial stone flags. Scoria-paved back lanes survive, although the section off Arthur Street and smaller patches elsewhere have been replaced with asphalt. Rear yard walls have often been altered although evidence of historical openings can still be found. All historical cast-iron railings to the front gardens have been lost, but some survive in front of the basements along the southern part of Station Road. Modern metal replacements help retain the character, but the introduction of timber fencing and brick walling has had a negative impact. The former, large front garden to the commercial building at the north end of Station Road has been lost completely to hardstanding. Modern galvanised streetlights detract from the public open space.

Left: Scoria-paved back lane off McNay Street lined with original rear-yard walling including openings, the coal holes now blocked. *Right:* Original metal railings set in stone in front of basement along Station Road. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

The Westbrook character zone is of slightly elongated shape and follows the green corridor along Cocker Beck in the western part of the Northgate Conservation Area under review. It is mainly in residential use, although some of the outbuildings are used for storage or as workshops. It is the only middle-class area in the north part of the town. This zone has a very natural character due to its lush (and in places overgrown) vegetation and could be described as a green oasis within the town. The houses all date from the second half of the nineteenth century and are arranged in a linear fashion along the northeast side of Westbrook, which resembles more a lane rather than an urban road. Most of the properties have generous front gardens. There is comparatively very little vehicle and pedestrian movement in this zone apart from on Widdowfield Street, where there is also the entrance into the small public park, Paddly Dene (see View 10). Whilst vehicle access is not practical, drivers try to access Station Road via Westbrook and become stuck, or park inconsiderably[181]. On balance, however, this character zone has a very pleasant and peaceful atmosphere, apart from the back lanes which appear run down, like many other back lanes in Darlington, including the remainder of the Conservation Area under review.

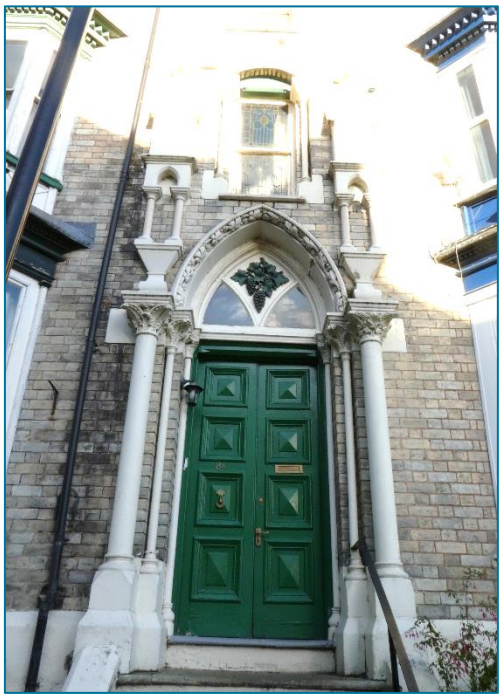
[181] Woolley, A. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 30 October

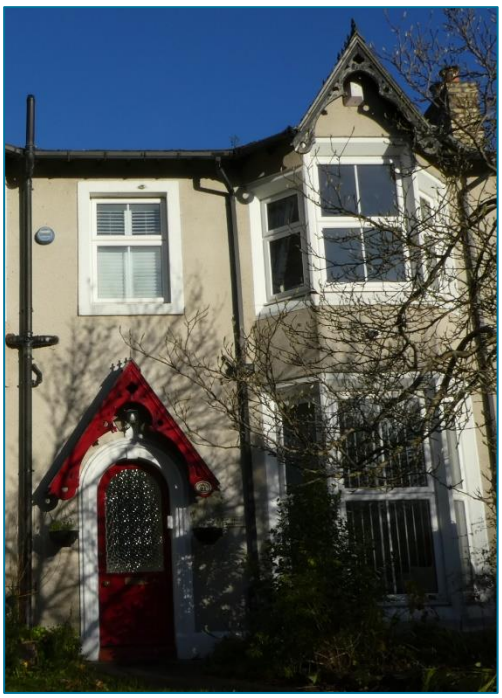
Typical character of Westbrook, looking southeast, with lush vegetation taking the centre stage. (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

The main architectural and historic significance of this zone is that it used to be the former pleasure gardens of Henry Pease, the character of which has been retained in the existing abundant vegetation, and was then turned into a high-status residential area for management staff of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in the 1860s-70s, with two of the semi-detached villas designed by notable local architects GG Hoskins and Robert Borrowdale. To the rear, sections of former boundary walling between the Pease gardens and the coal depot and branch line survive, including evidence of former garden structures abutting the wall, as well as Tallyman's Cabin.

There are no listed buildings in this zone but the following 'other notable' houses:

[C] 15 & 16 Westbrook Villas (Hoskins)
[D] 8 & 8a Westbrook Villas (Borrowdale)





Left: Elaborate Neo-Gothic door surround in ecclesiastical style at [D] 8 & 8a Westbrook Villas with original panelled doors and old glazing. *Right:* Decorative barge boards to full-height bay window and entrance door. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

The buildings are mostly semi-detached houses of two to three storeys' height. A few have a basement with the raised ground-floor entrance accessed by an external staircase. The walls are often built in red brick, although a number are faced in (cream/buff) Pease brick or rendered. A few of the houses have gable-facing elements, such as [C] 15 & 16 Westbrook Villas and [D] 8 & 8a Westbrook Villas, although generally the ridge lines are parallel with and linear to the lane. Due to the confinement of the space, roofs (mostly slated) and chimneys are less prominent. All buildings feature stone, rendered brick or timber bay windows. Many have ornate door and window surrounds of various designs, with some of them including canopies above. Other architectural elements include decorative ridge tiles and barge boards, which are probably less typical for the area, as well as dormers. Original doors and window frames including old/coloured glass survive, and those that have been replaced with uPVC products can stand out negatively. Generally, however, the historical character of the houses has been well retained.

Behind the houses are two back lanes which include a few outbuildings that are not of ancillary residential use (although those do exist behind the yard walls). These are privately owned by non-residents and used for storage and workshops, adding to the challenge of maintaining the back lanes[182]. An outbuilding at the end of the shorter lane has a hoisting door possibly suggesting an original commercial (storage) use. The outbuildings along the much longer, winding back lane are built against the stone wall which is thought to be the boundary of the former Henry Pease's gardens. It still retains scarring created by lean-to greenhouses associated with these gardens. Unusually, one of the existing outbuildings has an incised rendered finish and arched window with Neo-Gothic hood mould over. It is known as Tallyman's Cabin and may have had some purpose in monitoring the coal waggons as they entered the depot drops to the other side of the wall[183]. At the north end of the lane, the boundary wall includes a similarly shaped window opening which is now blocked. This is also thought to date back to Henry Pease's gardens, which had cottages and a bath abutting the boundary wall, all decorated in a Neo-Gothic style[184].

Left: Outbuilding with hoisting door. *Right:* Various brick and rendered outbuildings along the longer back lane. The central one is Tallyman's Cabin; it used to be crenelated and has a Neo-Gothic entrance behind the abutting brick garage. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2023)

[182] Woolley, A. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 30 October
[183] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 20
[184] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020 pages 21 & 43

Westbrook and Widdowfield Street are surfaced in asphalt and the pavements in artificial stone flags. The back lanes are covered in scoria blocks; the longer one also includes a section of rare stone surfacing and the small remnant of a brick floor. Rear yard walling to the houses has generally been retained, although much altered. The long back lane includes the railway-themed display boards of the 2013 Art Heritage Trail (see section 3.6) which are now in poor condition and add to the run-down atmosphere. At its southern end, a short stone wall which adjoins the former Pease boundary wall at a right angle incorporates a relocated head of the Green Man carved by stone mason Robert Borrowdale[185]. The front gardens are bounded by brick, stone or rendered dwarf walls with stone copings, with the original cast-iron railings now all removed. In some places metal railings have been reinstated or new timber fencing been introduced, the latter not being in keeping with the historical character of this zone. Some of the gate piers in the front walling feature prominently. Old iron railings survive between Westbrook (lane) and Cocker Beck, starting at Westbrook Terrace Bridge. Further north is a low brick wall which includes cream/buff bricks inscribed with 'PEASE' laid out in a pattern, behind which there are private gardens. This wall was constructed more recently[186], commemorating the original Henry Pease pleasure gardens. The heritage-style streetlamps along the lane contribute very positively.

Along Cocker Beck and Paddly Dene, mature and semi-mature trees include sycamore, elder, weeping willow, as well as veteran ash and willow. During a site visit on 9 January 2024, robin, blue tit, great tit, long tailed tit, blackbird, song thrush and redwing were observed. Cocker Beck offers opportunities for otter to commute through the landscape almost undetected. However, the trees and beck can also cause issues for the Westbrook residents (see section 4.1).

The North Lodge Park character zone is in the southwestern part of the Northgate Conservation Area under review. It is of urban character. A residential area, including a church converted into a mosque, surrounds the public park with mature trees. Along the eastern part of Gladstone Street there are retail/food and drink, commercial and community-use functions[187], including the Council offices at Central House, whilst to the southwest there are two surface carparks, with the western one being very exposed due to the lack of any vegetation. There is only a small amount of vehicle traffic, although some of the streets are quite affected by roadside parking (see View 4). Whilst the atmosphere around the park is pleasant and quiet (see View 3), the east end of Gladstone Street feels more confined and less attractive due to the presence of Northgate House (just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003) and other incongruous modern development.

The main architectural and historic significance of this zone is that it used to be the former country estate of William Backhouse, which was sold off bit by bit due to development pressures following the arrival of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. A large part was eventually turned into a public town park, also including the former grounds of the Elmfield Estate, which was the home of S&DR industrialist Alfred Kitching. Essentially, the creation of North Lodge Park in 1903 demonstrated the aspirations of Darlington to be seen as a modern and 'caring' town[188].

The North Lodge Park character zone includes the following listed buildings:

[185] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 20
[186] Woolley, A. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 30 October
[187] Land Use Consultants 2021, page 10
[188] Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 3

[9] Bandstand to West of Bowling Green *[landmark]*
[10] North Lodge
[11] Front Garden Wall to North Lodge
[12] Central School (East Block) *[landmark]*

It also has the following 'other notable buildings':

[J] Pentecostal Church
[K] Darlington Bottling Company
[L] Central Secondary School
[M] Temperance Institute

Left (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): Original panelled door with stone canopy over and old sashes along North Lodge Terrace. *Right* (Photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): Curved first-floor window with leaded glazing along Elmfield Terrace.

Most buildings in this zone are historical and comprise a range of styles. [10] North Lodge is a remnant of the former country estate era and enjoys a secluded location in the park; it is the only Georgian building. Victorian Neo-Gothic architecture features more boldly in this character zone at Central House ([12] Central School (East Block)) – which is the most prominent building within the Conservation Area under review – the former [L] Central Secondary School, the former [M] Temperance Institute, and the former [J] Pentecostal Church. Whilst the first-mentioned three buildings form a loose group displaying similar terracotta detailing and gabled designs, the latter is unusually part of a red brick terrace. All rows of housing in this zone have shallow front gardens except for those along Westbrook Terrace. Detailing around openings (in brick or stone) and eaves of these properties does exist but is quite basic. North Lodge Terrace includes a groceries store with a partially concealed traditional shop front on the corner with Gladstone Street. The houses in this row have two-storey bay windows and dormers, and some surviving original panelled doors and windows, including old glazing. Whilst these properties have retained their red brick appearance, many in the other streets now have modern renders and/or have undergone other intrusive alterations (see Views 5 & 6). A traditional building at the north end of Elmfield Terrace includes a fine curved window with leaded glazing. The [K] Darlington Bottling Company is a small but distinct brick building with nice detailing although it is currently covered in a modern paint and boarded up. Further east along Gladstone Street is a small building faced in Pease brick which – like the adjoining former [M] Temperance Institute – has been much altered on the ground floor to include retail, and is now completely overshadowed by the adjoining Northgate House (just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003).

The modern buildings all contribute negatively to the Conservation Area under review. Deanery Court, an apartment block at the north end of this zone does not fit in with the development pattern of the area (see section 5.1). The same applies to the supermarket to the southeast of it, which is clad in grey metal profiling. The restaurant along Gladstone Street is poorly designed comprising a mix of styles, whereas a building further to the east has a negative impact on the adjoining former [M] Temperance Institute by being of 'cubic' shape.

Concerning assets within the public realm, North Lodge Park features most strongly. It still retains its original iron railings, gates, piers and [9] Bandstand (see Views 3 & 4), as well as the [11] Front Garden Wall to North Lodge at the east entrance into the park. The roads and paths inside the park are surfaced in asphalt and the pavements in artificial stone flags. Scoria-paved back lanes survive behind the terraces. Much of the original dwarf walling to the front gardens of the building rows has been replaced with modern brick or blockwork. All original cast-iron railings to domestic boundary walling are lost, although some metal railings have been reinstated using sympathetic modern replacements.

Original iron railings, gate and piers at north entrance to North Lodge Park. (Photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023)

Within North Lodge Park, there is an assemblage of mature and veteran trees including yew, cherry, beech, broad-leaved lime, pedunculate oak, holly, sycamore, horse chestnut, birch, hornbeam, ash, pine, spruce, cypress, cockspur thorn, as well as lines of poplar along its southwestern and northern boundaries. Mature and veteran trees offer valuable roosting space for bats and nesting birds. During a site visit on 9 January 2024, goldfinch, long tailed tit, great tit, blue tit, robin, nuthatch and blackbird were observed inside the park.

3.6 Value Attributed by the Local Community and Other Stakeholders

Listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document; 'other notable buildings' are assigned their [LETTER].

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the Northgate Conservation Area under review responded that they most value the area's general tangible heritage including buildings, its railway architectural heritage, Westbrook's social history, community pride and environment, the setting and views of [7] Skerne Bridge, and greenspaces (see appendix).

In 2021, Forever Consulting created a socio-economic profile for the **local community** of the Northgate Conservation Area under review. At the time, around 900 people lived in the area comprising an ethnically diverse and transient population (i.e. people who had moved home within the previous twelve months, or oversea migrants) of working age (16 to 64 years old). Key characteristics of the Northgate community profile included:

- 'Constrained city dwellers' who are passive and uncommitted internet users, with a low sense of community belonging, but with good access to greenspace
- Vulnerable groups with high levels of worklessness, deprivation, disability, mental health and crime
- Homes are predominantly older buildings which are terraced or flats; they are affordable but come with issues around over-crowding, lack of central heating and a high number of vacant dwellings
- Low skills levels and low household income, with a high proportion of those in employment in elementary occupations. Businesses are predominantly in retail, hotel and catering, the arts/entertainments, recreation, and other services sectors
- Low levels of car ownership but residents largely live within walking distance of key services

In 2019, Northgate was in the top ten-percent most deprived areas in the country. It was also in the top ten-percent most deprived in five of the seven domains measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (income, employment, education, health and crime)[189].

The above profile is, however, not entirely representative of the population living at Westbrook, where house prices had an overall average of £287,500 over the last year[190], compared to an overall average of £164,112 for the whole of Darlington[191]. Moreover, there is a strong community value at Westbrook, with the residents being organised as a membership association, the **Westbrook Area Residents Association**. This is a voluntary community group acting under its current constitution since 2004, supporting:

- A safe, happy and supportive community
- Celebration and promotion of our local history and heritage
- Preservation of the cultural, environmental and historic assets of Westbrook

In 2013, an Art Heritage Trail was installed along the longer back lane to illustrate Westbrook's railway heritage and complement the original architecture that is in situ. The display works were created by students of the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College[192]. A new heritage art trail is currently being planned by the Westbrook Area Residents Association to celebrate the bicentennial of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (see section 4.3).

[189] Land Use Consultants 2021, appendix B pages 5-8
[190] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/dl3/westbrook.html
[191] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/darlington.html?country=england&locationIdentifier=REGION%5E406&searchLocation=Darlington
[192] Woolley, A. 2024. Email to Dave Coates, 13 May

The **Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)** is of considerable significance to the heritage community, and there is a growing interest in early railway infrastructure from specialist societies and the wider public[193]. Darlington Borough Council considers the S&DR pivotal in reinforcing the identity of the town. However, there are also certain local people who appear not to value it, or perhaps are even unaware of it. Those who appreciate or actively promote it are in effect an international community, including the following local groups which are based in and around the heart of the S&DR[194]:

- Darlington Model Railway Club
- Darlington Railway Museum Trust
- Darlington Railway Preservation Society
- Friends of Darlington Railway Centre
- Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway
- the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust
- the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Society
- the North Eastern Railway Association

The **Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway** have published a series of self-guided walks booklets for sections of the S&DR, which are available for sale and online. *The Route of the S&DR 1825: The Darlington Circular Stockton & Darlington Railway Walk No.5* covers the railway heritage site, High Northgate, Northgate and Westbrook within the Conservation Area under review. The subsequent booklet (no.6), *Darlington to Goosepool*, includes some of the sites proposed for extension of the boundary adopted in 2003, namely areas B, C3, C5, C6, and C7 (see section 5.2). Volunteers from the Darlington Group of the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway assist with litter picking, path clearance and general maintenance of the walks[195]. The Darlington group meets regularly at the [8] Railway Tavern.

Another stakeholder of the Northgate Conservation Area under review is the **Friends of North Lodge Park**, which were formed as a registered charity in 2001. They initially focussed on restoring, promoting and using the [9] Bandstand, which was re-opened after long-term dereliction in September 2010. Over the years, they have run many hundreds of events in North Lodge Park and got involved in local projects (see below). They also look after the park through litter picking and bulb planting.

Despite its significant problems (see section 4.1), **the A167**, which passes through the length of the Conservation Area under review connecting the north of Darlington (and beyond) with the inner-ring-road roundabout, has remained very important locally and regionally, with some of the heaviest traffic flows in town. It is also a major bus route including services to/from West Park, Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor, Durham and Middlesborough. There is a good amount of pedestrian movement along the A167 comprising people who visit local businesses or walk into the town centre or to the train station at the north end of the spine road within the boundary adopted in 2003. Some of the local businesses are located in the [8] Railway Tavern, [13] 138-148 Northgate, [E] Livingstone Building, and [O] The Half Moon, serving customers from the immediate surroundings. Whilst **North Road station** is only a secondary passenger station for Darlington, it does provide an alternative, more sustainable form of transport for the area.

[193] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2021, page 70
[194] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, pages 33-34
[195] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

The streets away from the A167 are much quieter, and pleasant where there are trees and greenspaces (see below). The **Harrowgate Hill Cycle Route** passes through a very short section of the Conservation Area under review, adjacent to the river at [7] Skerne Bridge. It forms part of the town-wide network of cycle routes.

The following road names commemorate important elements of heritage significance within the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003:

- **Weaver's Yard** (shown on the 1855 map) – also formerly known as Half Moon Yard, as [O] The Half Moon lies along its southern side – used to stretch down to Weir Street on the banks of the river Skerne. It was largely demolished in the late 1960s, although the scoria-paved alley off Northgate still survives. In the past, mostly carpet makers used to live here, hence the association with the weaving industry which pre-dates the arrival of the S&DR. It was also the birthplace of John Dobbin (born in 1821).
- **Garden Street** (first shown and named on the 1896 map) is associated with the extensive garden behind Edward Pease's house (now [13] 138-148 Northgate) which was located along the southern side of the current street. The garden was full of pagodas, vineries and orchards, stretching down to a boat house on the riverbank[196].
- **McNay Street** was developed in the 1870s and is associated with railway engineer and secretary Thomas McNay (1810-1869).
- **Stephenson Street** was created at the same time and is associated with George Stephenson (1807-1881) who was a senior manager with the S&DR and, later, the North Eastern Railway until 1873 (not to be confused with the famous George Stephenson).
- **Arthur Street** (first shown and named on the 1896 map) has been named after Joseph Pease's son[197].
- **Elmfield Terrace** (first shown and named on the 1896 map) lies behind Elmfield House on land which used to be part of its grounds. In the late 1880s, Alfred Kitching's son John allowed more land of the former Backhouse estate to be developed into roads and housing (see section 3.3).

Facilities of communal value within the Northgate Conservation Area under review include North Lodge Park (including bowling green, playground and sports court), the former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club (which now has both male and female members[198]), the former [J] Pentecostal Church, now a mosque, and [15] Northgate United Reform Church. These facilities are probably mainly used by local people.

The Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 includes good green pockets which provide wildlife habitats, which in turn can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the local community. The main residential character zones are North Lodge Park, Westbrook and Station Road (see section 3.5). Out of the three, the latter is probably less favoured to live in due to the lack of a more substantial greenspace as well as its proximity to the A167. In contrast, the North Lodge Park and Westbrook character zones feel more secluded from the unpleasant environment of the busy spine road and include plenty of mature vegetation, providing desirable places to live within walking distance of the town centre. The greenspace at **Westbrook** has a wilder feel,

[196] Lloyd 2001, pages 106 & 111-112
[197] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 55
[198] Lloyd 2001, pages 129-132

with mature trees bordering the site and Cocker Beck running through this character zone, although these are not without their problems (see section 4.1). Nevertheless, the beck offers an important corridor for rare and protected species such as otter to move through the landscape almost undetected. Westbrook is particularly good for bird watching, with resident birds such as nuthatch, song thrush, robin, and long tailed tit being frequently observed, and overwintering birds such as redwings and siskins using the area to forage in preparation of migrating to breed in the spring.

When in 1965 the [1] North Road Railway Station building was closed, decay rapidly set in, hastened by vandalism. Its significance had however been recognised by a number of local people, Darlington Borough Council, museum and tourist board staff who grouped together to rescue the building and create the **Darlington North Road Station Museum**, later known as Head of Steam. They also saved the associated [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works and [5] Goods Shed, all in the nick of time before the 150-year commemorations in 1975[199].

Between 1990 and 2002, the significance of the S&DR received national attention with the Bank of England including an illustration of Locomotion No.1's maiden journey across [7] Skerne Bridge in 1825 on the rear of the £5 note, next to a portrait of George Stephenson[200]. From then on, the bridge has been nicknamed the **Five-Pound-Note Bridge**.

Specimen of former five-pound note with Locomotion No. 1 over [7] Skerne Bridge in the background. The locomotive in the foreground is Stephenson's Rocket of 1829 which he built for the Liverpool and Manchester Railway.

In 1992 the collection of Ken Hoole (1916–1988), a renowned railway enthusiast, was transferred from Durham County Council to Darlington Borough Council's Head of Steam museum inside the [1] North Road Railway Station building so that the museum could open a research room called the **Ken Hoole Study Centre**. The collection is a unique resource devoted to the railways of North East England. The Study Centre also houses the John Mallon collection, part of the North Eastern Railway Association and the museum archive collections. Prior to the recent redevelopment of the railway heritage site (see below), the Study Centre was open to the public on set days via appointment, along with an online enquiry service. The Council is currently (September 2024) working on how the Ken Hoole Study Centre will operate on the redeveloped Hopetown Darlington site.

[199] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 21
[200] https://drps.synthasite.com/darlington-railway-historic-flashbacks/-3-the-olde-five-pound-note

In 2002, Darlington Borough Council received a total of £321,725 funding from One North East and English Heritage (now Historic England) for improvement works to an area which roughly matched the extent of the Great North Road character zone (see section 3.5), as part of the five-year **Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme** (HERS). This scheme had been set up by English Heritage to help property owners carry out repairs and reinstatements to their buildings, providing that these would sustain local employment, create new homes and encourage inward investment within conservation areas. Under the Northgate HERS twelve building projects were carried out, as well as environmental enhancement works.

Top (Photo © DBC, before July 2001): Nos. 105 (grey) and 109 (end property) High Northgate **prior to** works. No. 105 including its boundary wall was improved under the 2002-05 HERS, and No. 109 under the 2005-09 PSCA, both receiving new metal railings. *Bottom* (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023)*:* The properties still stand out positively today.

In 2004, Darlington Borough Council secured funding to regenerate Lodge Park under the **Transforming Your Space** scheme, which the Friends of North Lodge Park also engaged in. They were particularly key to the success of an art project which involved writer in residence Maureen Almond, who worked with a wide range of groups and individuals from the local community, and artist Andrew McKeown. They created a series of cast-iron leaves including text from the community which were placed onto the lawn inside the park. In addition, a book called *Our North Lodge Park: A Dedication by the Community Surrounding North Lodge Park, Darlington* was

published featuring local people's poems, as well as another book, *Tongues in Trees*, including personal poems by Almond about fourteen trees that had to be felled. The project also made safe the park's listed [9] Bandstand (prior to its restoration and re-opening in 2010) featuring words from the poems on each of its eight boarded-up sides. Furthermore, path lightning was provided and most of the paths in North Lodge Park were resurfaced. Finally, a quilt comprising patches embroidered by various members of the community was made and displayed at park events and, later, in Corporation Road primary school (see section 5.2/E).

In 2005, Darlington Borough Council secured match funding of £103,631 (total public funding: £207,262) from English Heritage as part of the four-year **Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas** (PSCA), again for improvement works to the same area as the previous HERS, to help restore business and residential premises. Under this scheme seven properties were enhanced by a similar range of building works as for the HERS. Moreover, inspired by the results of both the Northgate HERS and PSCA, other property owners invested in the area without any grant funding. Overall, the works carried out as a direct or indirect result of the two schemes significantly improved parts of the Northgate Conservation Area under review.

In 2006, Darlington Borough Council imposed an **article 4 direction** on the whole of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, which is still in place. The Northgate Conservation Area Direction (2006) restricts permitted development rights (see section 2.3) for **dwellinghouses (use class C3)** with regards to works affecting:

(a) their enlargement, improvement or other alteration
(b) alteration to their roof slopes
(c) erection or construction of a porch outside their external doors
(d) provision of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool within their curtilage
(e) provision of hard surfacing incidental to their enjoyment
(f) installation, alteration or replacement of an antenna on them or within their curtilage
(g) erection, alteration or removal of their chimneys
(h) erection, construction, maintenance improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within their curtilage
(i) painting of their exterior or any building/enclosure within their curtilage
(j) demolition of the whole or any part of any gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure within their curtilage

The direction had been a condition of obtaining the grant for the PSCA. Its purpose was to protect the investment made by English Heritage and the Council, so that the improvements made under the scheme by reinstating or restoring historical features were not subsequently undone without the requirement of planning permission.

The next funding opportunity came in 2017 when Historic England accepted the whole of the S&DR (i.e. including the (former) line beyond Darlington borough's and the Northgate Conservation Area's boundaries) as a **Heritage Action Zone** (HAZ), following an application by the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Board, which also included Darlington Borough Council. The HAZ initiative is working with local people and partners to breathe new life into places that are rich in heritage, to unlock their potential and make them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. Launched in May 2018 and running for five years, the S&DR HAZ aimed to better manage, preserve and utilise heritage assets with a view to

stimulating economic growth, especially in the build-up to the railway's bicentenary in 2025[201]. The HAZ works carried out on the railway heritage site within the Northgate Conservation Area under review had a project value of £35m and included the refurbishment of the listed [1] North Road Railway Station, [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works and [5] Goods Shed, turning them into the brand-new visitor attraction **Hopetown Darlington**, which first opened its doors on 16 July 2024[202]. The name takes inspiration from the former Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry on this site[203], which is associated with the construction of S&DR locomotives (see section 3.3). In November 2024, Hopetown Darlington won the highly prestigious North East Culture Award for Best Museum or Cultural Venue. Prior to that, it had been awarded the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme accolade and the Welcome accolade, both by VisitEngland[204].

Environmental works were carried out by **Discover Brightwater**, a National Lottery Heritage Fund supported partnership that enabled projects including river habitat improvements, wetland creation, heritage and archaeology involving local communities around the Skerne, which ran from 2018 to 2021[205]. Under this project access to [7] Skerne Bridge was improved and a pedestrian-and-cyclist route provided from Skerne Bridge Entrance (off High Northgate) to the river inside the Northgate Conservation Area under review, joining the Harrowgate Hill Cycle Route (largely outside the boundary adopted in 2003) along the Skerne.

In 2020/21, Darlington Borough Council secured £23.3m from the **Towns Fund**, 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 to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth. A large part of the Northgate Conservation Area under review was identified as one of three priority areas in Darlington where these funds would be focused to enhance, support and supplement existing schemes. The railway heritage site, which also was part of the S&DR HAZ, and [13] 138-148 Northgate had/have been assigned budgets. Further sites within or just outside the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 that have been allocated grants from the Towns Fund are currently (September 2024) being considered for improvement works.

[201] Knight 2019, page 4
[202] https://www.visitcountydurham.org/news/hopetown-darlington-opens-its-doors-on-tuesday-16-july/
[203] https://www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk/about-us/#OurHistory
[204] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/your-council/news/news-item/?id=2169
[205] https://www.durhamwt.com/discover-brightwater

4.0 Condition, Threats and Opportunities

This chapter is intended to inform future management plans for the Northgate Conservation Area, which would be subject to public consultation.

4.1 Condition and Current Issues

This section should be read in conjunction with the spatial analysis (see section 3.4), character analysis (see section 3.5) and value attributed by the community and other stakeholders (see section 3.6), which provide further information or examples on most of the issues raised below.

> During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the Conservation Area under review voiced concerns about modern development including front extensions to historical buildings; the poor condition and lack of maintenance of parts of the area or certain buildings; various issues at Westbrook; inappropriate uses of buildings; street clutter, signage and litter; and the lack of planning enforcement regarding unauthorised changes to buildings (see appendix).

Despite the Northgate Conservation Area under review being an important designated heritage asset, it is one of the most deprived areas in Darlington. When the inner ring road was built between 1969 and 1973, it 'cut off' the area from the bustling town centre, gradually leading it into social and economic decline.

At the time of review, the Northgate Conservation Area was in **'very bad' condition**, with deteriorating trajectory[206]; the Westbrook character zone when seen in isolation could considered to be in fair condition. Out of the seventeen conservation areas within Darlington Borough, Northgate was in worst condition. Despite the improvement works carried out between 2002 and 2009 and the article 4 direction imposed in 2006 (see section 3.6), the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 has been on the national Heritage at Risk Register since 2010.

The rear yards to North Terrace (143-163 Northgate) have been removed, although the scoria-paved back lane is still in place. This space is now used for ad-hoc parking and rubbish disposal. The tall metal flues against the rear façade belong to the ground-floor commercial units, with further flues along the main street, all of which detract. Modern replacement windows and a double garage (?) with a seating area over are not in keeping with the character of the historical environment. (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023)

[206] Historic England 2023, page 31

At the time of review, the main issues of the Northgate Conservation Area were as follows, with those in bold **detracting significantly**:

A) Social and economic decline:

- 'Constrained city dwellers' with a low sense of community belonging
- Vulnerable groups with high levels of worklessness, deprivation, disability, mental health and crime
- Low skills levels and low household income, with a high proportion of those in employment in elementary occupations
- Homes with issues around over-crowding, lacking central heating and a high number of vacant dwellings (see section 3.6)
- Other vacant buildings/business units
- Absent landlords
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- **Population financially stretched** in southern part of the Northgate Conservation Area under review, **urban adversity** in northern part (e.g. small, rented homes in deprived area; significant debt/credit issues; high rates of benefit claimants; low qualifications; semi-skilled/unskilled jobs; health problems)[207]
- **General lack of maintenance**
- **Lack of investment from private landlords**
- Anti-social behaviour: vandalism, graffiti, litter and fly-tipping

B) Traffic, environmental and public-realm issues:

- North Road being a secondary railway station only and inconveniently located outside the town centre
- **High volume of vehicle traffic along the A167 resulting in noise, pollution, congestion, and a potentially unsafe environment for pedestrians and cyclists** (see paragraph below)
- **Clutter of traffic-management measures (e.g. pedestrian barriers, speed bumps) and ill-chosen signage locations, in particular along the A167**
- Roadside car parking in residential streets
- **Galvanised streetlights and other utilitarian street furniture**
- Telegraph poles and overhead wires (back lanes)
- Wheelie bins cluttering back lanes
- Overgrown, self-seeded trees at Westbrook causing various problems (dark homes and gardens, falling branches/twigs/leaves, root damage to main sewer), lack of support from Council including refusals to carry out works to trees, and lack of collaboration across Council departments and with Environment Agency and utilities
- Flooding incidents of Cocker Beck[208]

The A167, which passes through the length of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, connecting the north of Darlington (and beyond) with the inner ring road, has some of the heaviest traffic flows in in town. From a vehicle-drivers point, the Great North Road character zone (see section 3.5) is mainly travelled through rather than being a major destination, with the exception of the adjoining new

[207] Darlington Borough Council 2021, pages 15, 17 & 92
[208] Woolley, A. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 30 October

Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction at the northwest end of High Northgate (A167); it has its own car park outside the Conservation Area under review, which is not straightforward to locate and visitors must cross the main street in order to get from there to the attraction (see section 3.4). Generally, driving along the A167 can be stressful due to frequent congestion and difficulties crossing the street on some of the junctions. Walking alongside it is also very unpleasant because of the high volume of traffic (and the resulting noise and pollution), the general run-down appearance of the streetscape and poor design of some modern development.

C) Damage to historical environment:

- Loss of historical buildings; some of them were of considerable significance (e.g. Merchandise Station (see section 3.3))
- Loss of original scoria paving
- **Loss of traditional doors and windows including old glazing**
- **Loss of traditional slate roofing**
- **Loss of traditional boundary walling/iron railings (front and rear)**
- Loss of original front gardens and rear yards
- **Replacement of all the above with unsympathetic products/designs and materials**
- **Use of incompatible materials for repair works (e.g. cement)**
- Lowering of historical chimney stacks
- **Changes to historical opening patterns to buildings and rear yard walling** (e.g. insertion of modern garage doors)
- **Modern (front) extensions to old buildings and loss of original ground-floor elevations (change of use)**
- **Application of modern renders and paints to traditional brick facades** (see section 4.2)
- Addition of satellite dishes, burglar alarms (to roadside walls) and TV aerials (to chimneys)
- Addition of modern dormers, roof lights and solar panels to terraces
- Addition of prominent extractor fans and flues to traditional buildings
- **Inadequate building maintenance, including structures of high significance such as the Edward Pease House and Skerne Bridge**

D) Harmful new/modern development:

- Modern buildings not in keeping with the development pattern of the area (building type, scale, planform and massing) (see section 3.2)
- **Modern development incorporating poor or uncharacteristic/ inappropriate designs (e.g. pastiche style), detailing (e.g. Juliet balconies) and materials (e.g. tall timber-boarded fencing)**
- **Modern shopfronts, metal roller shutters (also in back lanes) and signage/advertisement (including digital board at filling station)**
- **Modern development in the immediate setting of the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003, including new buildings (e.g. Northgate House), the demolition of historical planform and creation of surface-level car parks**

Top (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): The right-hand/northern house shows what the other two used to look like, with the exception of its modern windows. The re-fronting works to the left/south and middle units have resulted in an almost complete loss of the historical character and appearance of these properties. Also note the lowered chimney stacks. *Middle left* (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): A characterful historical arrangement has been spoiled by uPVC windows. *Middle right:* Prior to the application of a modern render, addition of a porch, changes to the windows openings and loss of corbelled canopies in 2023, the left/ western property used to be almost identical to the one next door. Its historical character and appearance as well as the group value with its neighbour have been lost completely. *Bottom:* The Machine Mart building is an eyesore because of its bold colouring, the use of vertical profile cladding and its 'cubic' shape (industrial character). Whilst the apartment block next door fits in better due to the use of brick, its overall elevation design (window proportions, etc.) including set-back upper floor undermine the surrounding historical environment. Also note the roller shutter to the shopfront. (Photos © Gaby Rose, August 2023)

In summary, the positive aspects of the Northgate Conservation Area under review (see chapter 3.0) are heavily undermined by the loss of architectural cohesion and historical character, dilapidation and a high volume of traffic, creating an unpleasant environment, which, naturally, does not inspire significant private investment. Factors which contribute to the above-listed issues have often been the direct or indirect result of past planning decisions:

- The construction of the inner ring road
- Other harmful or insensitive development in and around the Conservation Area under review (e.g. Northgate House)
- Lack of planning enforcement, in particular with regards to the Northgate Conservation Area Direction (2006)

Concerning the last point, the 2017 Conservation Areas at Risk returns spreadsheet sent to Historic England claims that **unauthorised works** had been carried out in the previous three years which harmed the special interest, significance and/or character of the Conservation Area and that the Council took no enforcement action against these. In addition, it mentions the *[w]idespread use of uPVC windows and doors and satellite dishes in Victorian terraces despite Article 4 Direction (some pre-direction and some as a result of lack of enforcement / unwillingness to implement Article 4)* and that *[m]ost applications as a result of the Article 4 Direction are retrospective and it is difficult to gain support to refuse these. There has been a problem with a lack of enforcement in previous years.*

An investigation into the enforcement inquiries raised within the last five years (since 2019) reveals fifty cases on file. Around 70% of these turned out not to be of a planning enforcement nature (e.g. advice requests, permitted development). Out of the remaining (i.e. unauthorised) cases five were not resolved in a satisfactory manner from a conservation point-of-view due to lack of enforcement action or approval of the harmful works in retrospective planning applications. Whilst this number seems low, the cumulative impact of such outcomes needs to be considered in the long term, as well as the setting of negative precedents.

A resident in the Northgate Conservation Area under review suggested that many people don't apply for planning permission for article-4-related development as they find the process difficult (the Council does not provide any free planning advice) and unaffordable, bearing in mind that this is generally a very poor area (see section 3.6). They argued that there is little risk involved in carrying out unauthorised works with regards to the removed permitted development rights as the Council is unlikely to follow them up, but if it does, one just applies for permission retrospectively[209].

4.2 Threats and Potential Future Issues

Listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

There is no doubt that the construction of the **inner ring road** between 1969 and 1973, in particular the **Northgate Roundabout**, was a key contributor to the decline of the Conservation Area under review. Moreover, it will remain a barrier for improvement and financial investment, despite the area being so close and well connected to facilities and transport links in the town centre. Traffic volumes and

[209] Atkinson 2025. Phone call with Gaby Rose, 12 February

congestion along the A167 are unlikely to ease in the foreseeable future and present another (east-west) barrier. It will remain challenging to regenerate the area as a separate, sustainable entity next to the thriving town centre.

Whilst the HERS and PSCA schemes carried out in the 2000s did valuable work in restoring some of the historical character that had been lost and inspired others to do similar works (see section 3.6), the initial local enthusiasm to make improvements within the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 was short lived. In the meantime, **public grant monies for homes and small businesses within conservation areas have become rare**. Although there have been recent funding opportunities for enhancement works (see section 4.3), their immediate impact and long-term effect are difficult to foresee. It is however possible that without future schemes setting further positive precedents, private investment in the area may stagnate.

Salespeople and building contractors often lead property owners/occupiers to believe that elements of their old buildings need a modern makeover in order to make them more energy efficient, such as by replacing traditional windows and doors with uPVC substitutes or applying modern renders to solid walling. However, there are more sympathetic opportunities for improving the thermal performance of windows by employing relatively simple methods (e.g. heavy curtains, blinds and shutters) as well as further improvement by installing secondary glazing[210]. Using timber products has the advantage of (re-)using more eco-friendly and sustainable resources. In the long-term, the costs of maintaining them 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. With regards to the introduction of impermeable materials such as modern renders, cement pointing and silicon paints, these are incompatible with traditional walls, which entirely 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. Moreover, the negative visual impact such interventions have can be significant, as evident throughout the Conservation Area under review. Removing or concealing traditional features from a historical property can reduce its market value.

Development pressures keep presenting a threat to the Conservation Area, in particular for sites to the south and east outside the boundary adopted in 2003. Northgate House, just outside the currently designated area under review, has already set a negative precedent for the future development of the site. Any new building on this plot would need to be scaled down significantly in order to harmonise with the Conservation Area, especially in this key/gateway location. Whilst scale may not be the biggest issue for the other potential development sites, planform, massing, materials, detailing as well as loss of historical fabric and features are likely to be, judging from more recent development within the boundary adopted in 2003. Moreover, old buildings and other structures (e.g. boundary walling) remain at risk of being lost or further disfigured, possibly to make plots more economically viable (e.g. change of use from residential to commercial). Haphazard enforcement of the existing article 4 direction has set a negative precedent and continues contributing to the architectural decline of the area (see section 4.1).

Likewise, the continued **lack of development or maintenance** of buildings also presents a threat to the Conservation Area. The condition of [7] Skerne Bridge is steadily declining, its fine masonry being deteriorated by vegetation growth. The

[210] Wood, Bordass, Baker 2009, page vii

Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway have been campaigning for the removal of buddleia and other plants from the structure. Whilst Network Rail took some measures earlier in 2024, they were insufficient, so vegetation growth continues. Urgent action is required to prevent further damage to this important grade-I-listed building, which could eventually be put on the national Heritage at Risk Register[211]. The [7] Lime Cells and [13] 138-148 Northgate, both of them grade II listed, are already 'at risk' due to their poor state. It is currently (September 2024) unclear when works will take place to restore these buildings.

All of the above threats have the potential to further deteriorate the Northgate Conservation Area and, in the long run, jeopardise its designation status.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

Listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

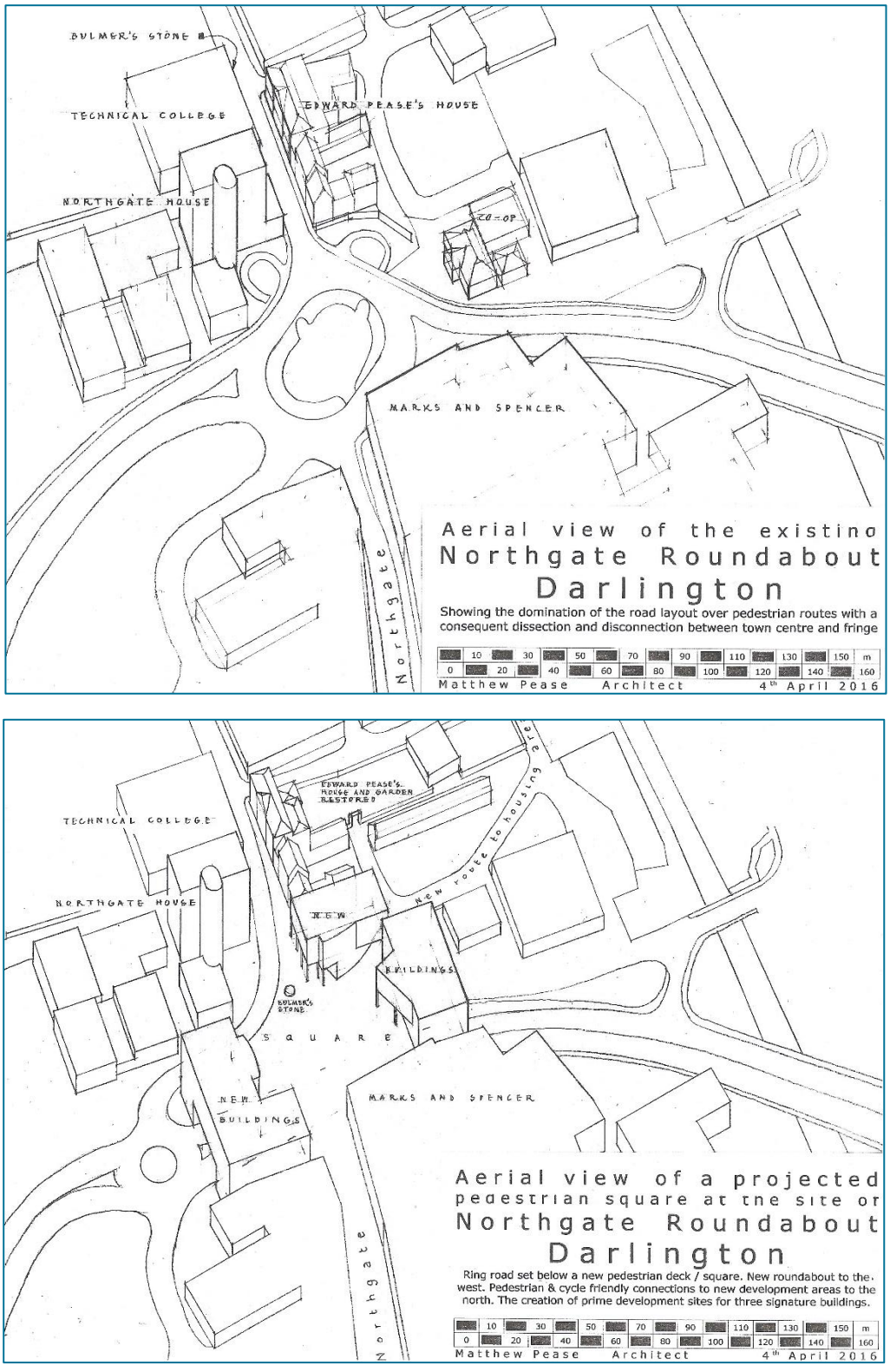
> During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the Northgate Conservation Area under review suggested that positive change could be implemented through planning enforcement (article 4 direction) and use of other statutory powers; guidance on design, funding and on Council's/other agencies' roles and responsibilities; financial aid for building owners and residents; restriction of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Local Plan); engagement with residents, schools/colleges and businesses; a clear cross-Council strategy for the implementation of a management plan for the area; the use of volunteers to keep the area tidy and report issues; more appropriate uses for buildings; and restoration of historical features (see appendix).

It is hoped that this document will help residents, local businesses, investors, planners and highways/utility authorities understand how heritage significance is embodied within the Northgate Conservation Area under review (see chapter 3.0) as well as the new adopted boundary (see chapter 6.0) and provide them with the knowledge to prevent future harm and enable positive change. In addition, a **Conservation-Area-specific design guide** could be produced, giving clear guidelines and details for sensitive development within the revised Conservation Area boundary and its setting, including works in the public realm. Such design guide could be adopted as a supplementary planning document. It would provide a helpful tool for applicants, agents and planners, as well as homeowners, businesses and highways/utility authorities who wish to carry out works under permitted development rights. Whilst not creating instant change, a design guide would enable smaller steps into the right direction and therefore be beneficial long-term tool.

Also in terms of day-to-day planning, it would be prudent to provide a **new article 4 direction** for the whole of the new adopted Conservation Area boundary. Moreover, such direction should restrict permitted development rights for other elements than dwelling houses (see section 3.6). Additional use classes like Houses in Multiple Occupation and mixed uses (residential/retail) should also be included, as well as the public highway, to protect the surviving scoria and stone paved surfaces. It is imperative, however, that any article 4 direction, including the existing one, is strictly enforced, which currently does not seem to be the case (see section 4.1). As the very

[211] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

poor condition of the Northgate Conservation Area under review is largely the result of detrimental development carried out over the years, any opportunity for undoing harm should be used. This will set positive precedents which can open the door for further positive change. In addition, it would be beneficial for the area if the Council could provide **free planning advice** with regards to article-4-related matters and engage with the residents.



Top: Sketch of Northgate Roundabout in 2016, looking north. *Bottom:* Sketch of idea to underground the traffic and create a pedestrian square surrounded by existing and new buildings, reinstating Northgate as a continuous road. (Images © Matthew Pease, April 2016)

As pointed out in the previous sections, the ring road presents a major barrier to improving the Conservation Area. This had been recognised by architect Matthew Pease who came up with an idea in 2016 to underground the traffic at **Northgate Roundabout**, instead of people as is currently the case. Such scheme would involve burying the ring road beneath a new pedestrian public square which would be surrounded by existing and new buildings, with the site value of the latter going some way to offset the costs of the highway works. Essentially, it would reinstate Northgate as one continuous road from the town centre. In addition, the Bulmer's Stone could be relocated from its current 'prison' behind the railings of [12] Central School (East Block) to the new public space where it could be a focal point.

In 2014, Matthew Pease came up with an option to restore the **Edward Pease House**, now [13] 138-148 Northgate, whilst retaining elements of all of its construction phases[212]. Darlington Borough Council too has looked more recently into various options for reinstating the whole building, but its multiple ownerships remain a hurdle to achieving this. Other potential candidates for improvements works to railway-related sites include **Dobbin's View** (see section 3.4). Planning permission has been granted to create a public viewing area with seating and hard surfacing on the land behind the sandstone wall between 94 and 84a High Northgate.

It is hoped that the new **Hopetown Darlington** visitor attraction at the northern end of the Conservation Area under review will not only increase public (including local) awareness and interest in the Stockton & Darlington Railway but also be a catalyst for further improvements in the wider area. In order to kick-start investment in the southern end, the Council intends to establish a railway-themed 'gateway' in one of the ground-floor units of [13] 138-148 Northgate by 2025, with money made available from the **Towns Fund**. It is anticipated that further (non-railway-related) properties and larger areas between the two sites can be improved or regenerated in line with the Northgate Masterplan drawn up by Land Use Consultants Ltd in 2021 (see below). Money to help achieve this may also be secured from the Towns Fund, potentially with additional (match) funding from Historic England's **Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas** (PSICA), and a contribution from grant recipients. There are currently (December 2024) talks between the Council and Historic England about making an application for a grant under the PSICA scheme, which may fund building repairs, reinstatement of architectural features and work within the public realm, similar to the previous HERS and PSCA schemes (see section 3.6).

Funding from the UK Government, National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Tees Valley Combined Authority has been secured for the installation of seventeen **interpretation boards** along the route of the S&DR, as well as a **digital discovery trail.** Two of the interpretation boards will be located in Darlington Borough: one at [7] Skerne Bridge and the other one near the former coal depot at Middleton St George. The digital discovery trail is being developed in partnership with Teeside University. It will be in the form of a mobile app and website which will incorporate augmented reality visualising what certain locations looked like in the past, a game which will encourage exploration of the route and allow users to build a cavalcade, wayfinding, a voice over narrative at key locations and a series of short podcasts. **Other themed heritage trails** (e.g. 'gardens and parklands') could be created in the Conservation Area using the Council's existing *Darlington Town Centre Trails* app. The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway are proposing to include a **guided walk**

[212] Pease, M. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 18 October

for visitors between the town centre and Hopetown Darlington in their programme for the S&DR celebrations in 2025[213].

In addition, the Westbrook Area Residents Association is planning to install a **new art heritage trail at Westbrook** as part of the 2025 railway bicentenary, as a community project. This would replace the existing display boards installed in 2013 (see section 3.6). They also want to change the locked access gate between Station Road and Westbrook with a better design which is more sympathetic to the surrounding Victorian architecture, to improve the streetscape of Station Road and the new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction. The renewed art heritage trail aims to[214]:

- Celebrate the unique social and architectural history of Westbrook, promoting, protecting and celebrating the heritage of the S&DR, in particular the coal drops wall and Tallyman's cabin (see section 3.5)
- Reference the history of artists on Westbrook including notable nineteenth-century artists Victor Hobson, Samuel Elton, Edgar Elton and Georgina Mary Green
- Comprise designs developed in partnership with the local community – fostering community participation and engagement – for up to six new metalwork sculptures and a new gate
- Be situated on the same site as the previous trail, being mounted on the back lane walls (property of residents) adjacent to the historic coal drops wall
- Create opportunities for volunteering among the community with street cleans and heritage events

There are opportunities to gain further understanding of the (built) heritage significance of the Northgate Conservation Area under review (see section 3.3) by **archaeological investigation**, possibly also with community involvement. Examples of locations that may yield further information include:

- The high ground to the rear and sides of the [3] Lime Cells and the grassed traffic island on the public square immediately to the south of it may contain buried remains of the former branch line or sidings. It is not clear how the landscaping of 1938 affected the original ground levels and to what extent below-ground remains might still survive here[215].
- The site of the former Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry, which is now located in the new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction between the former [1] North Road Railway Station and [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works, was grassed over again more recently. The foundry complex had been partially demolished in 1870-1895 to make room for more sidings, possibly for the Royal Agricultural Show of 1895. The remainder of the buildings was removed in 1975, although buried remains may still survive.
- It is possible that fabric (in situ or ex situ) of the former coal depot opposite the [8] Railway Tavern had been incorporated in any of the subsequent buildings constructed on its site.

[213] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October
[214] Woolley, A. 2024. Email to Dave Coates, 13 May
[215] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 55

- The site of the first Merchandise Station, which lies within the enclosed railway corridor, has had relatively little development following its demolition in 1864. The plot is therefore of extremely high archaeological potential. The wider area had been through a number of topographical changes including road lowering and possibly embankment heightening in order to accommodate the 1857 [6] Railway Viaduct. Consequently, evidence gained from the building footprint and railway embankment elevation may provide data on the functioning of the Merchandise Station and how it was altered.
- The former extensive gardens behind the Edward Pease House, now [13] 138-148 Northgate, are currently under a surface car park. Garden archaeology may well survive below.[216]

The are also opportunities to **improve the public realm**, for example by:

- Carrying out an audit of all street/park furniture and traffic signs with a view of removing those that are no longer needed (de-cluttering) and reconfiguring others in better locations or exchanging them for more sympathetic designs.
- Painting galvanised traffic sign posts and street furniture, such as the lighting column in front of [7] Skerne Bridge, in a dark matt colour to make them blend in better with their surroundings. Lighting columns along Northgate and High Northgate used to be painted in a distinctive colour to give it a sense of identity, whilst elsewhere they were painted a dual-tone green[217]. This could be reinstated.
- Identifying locations which could be turned into more engaging public spaces. For example, the traffic island in the Station Road character zone (see section 3.5) could include benches to invite people to linger as well as interpretation boards or artwork (sculpture) relating to the historic function of this space (i.e. former branch line to coal depot).

When implementing the above, highway safety must not be compromised.

Considering a wider re-development strategy, the **Northgate Urban Design Framework**, which provides the strategic vision for a large part of the Conservation Area under review and beyond, sets out to address the following key points[218]:

Location, access and form:

- Improve the setting of landmarks, such as the [8] Railway Tavern, [13] 138-148 Northgate and [7] Skerne Bridge
- Use gateway sites to orientate visitors to the area through landmark built form, quality public realm design, wayfinding and interpretation
- Enhance existing key nodes, particularly in relation to improving pedestrian movement and flow
- Create new key nodes at the intersection of Cocker Beck with Northgate and the junction of the beck with the Skerne, to open up

[216] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019a, pages 51 & 54-56
[217] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October
[218] Land Use Consultants 2021, pages 13-15

their natural character, which will add interest to the built character and create destination points along a journey
- Create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere along Northgate which reduces the prominence of the car
- Use opportunities for increasing pavement widths and crossing points, softening the urban environment and elevating quality generally throughout
- Improve connections from the town centre
- Create a riverside walk to improve footfall into the area, offer health and well-being benefits and bring a unique and vibrant natural aspect to the existing Northgate character; this route should work with the historical grain and development pattern to create a network of pedestrian-friendly spaces
- Create alternate green routes through the area, incorporating North Lodge Park
- Reinforce historical plot sizes to ensure development of human scale
- Enhance existing plot boundaries
- Restore the historical building line along High Northgate and mitigate harmful alterations
- Retain historical built form, evaluating opportunities for enhancement, re-purposing and better integration within the streetscape
- Reinforce historical character through new built form
- Retain historical surfaces to conserve character

Spaces and natural environment:

- Develop purpose and identity of the Westbrook greenspace, to add value to the existing character, increase amenity value and biodiversity value
- Preserve historical character of the river Skerne and Cocker Beck

Built structures and detailing:

- Identify opportunities for restoring historical details – windows, doors, boundary treatments, high-level features such as chimneys, masonry and shop frontages
- Reinforce character appropriately in the design of new builds (windows, doors and boundary treatments)
- Improve the appearance of buildings that detract from the historical character or replace them with new designs which respond appropriately to historical form

A **Concept Masterplan** for Northgate was drawn up in line with the Urban Design Framework, with collaboration from Darlington Borough Council, Historic England, the Environment Agency, the Brightwater Partnership and key community stakeholders. The masterplan includes a series of plans exploring development possibilities, access and circulation, green infrastructure and sustainability. Its vision is that Northgate will become a revitalised neighbourhood on the doorstep of the Darlington town centre, with high-quality development and public realm spaces.

Significant value has been placed on access to greenspace and nature, to promote walking and cycling as a primary mode of transport[219].

During the public consultation on the draft appraisal (see section 1.3), the **Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway** kindly offered to help Darlington Borough Council achieve enhancement and promotion of the Northgate Conservation Area by[220]:

- Assisting with the preparation of a Conservation Area management plan and its implementation
- Managing S&DR assets such as the Pease's House ([13] 138-148 Northgate) and Dobbin's View (see section 3.4)
- Providing specialist advice on railway heritage to the Council (as planning authority, highway authority and property owner), developers, statutory undertakers and Network Rail before proposals become too committed
- Providing guided walks, self-guided walk books, talks, research and displays at events
- Providing volunteers for litter picking and path clearance at trouble spots
- Working with local community groups, such as the Westbrook Area Residents Association
- Developing awareness of the town's railway heritage with residents, businesses and the public generally
- Accessing grants from funds not available to the Council

The author would like to thank the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway for their continuing support and assistance.

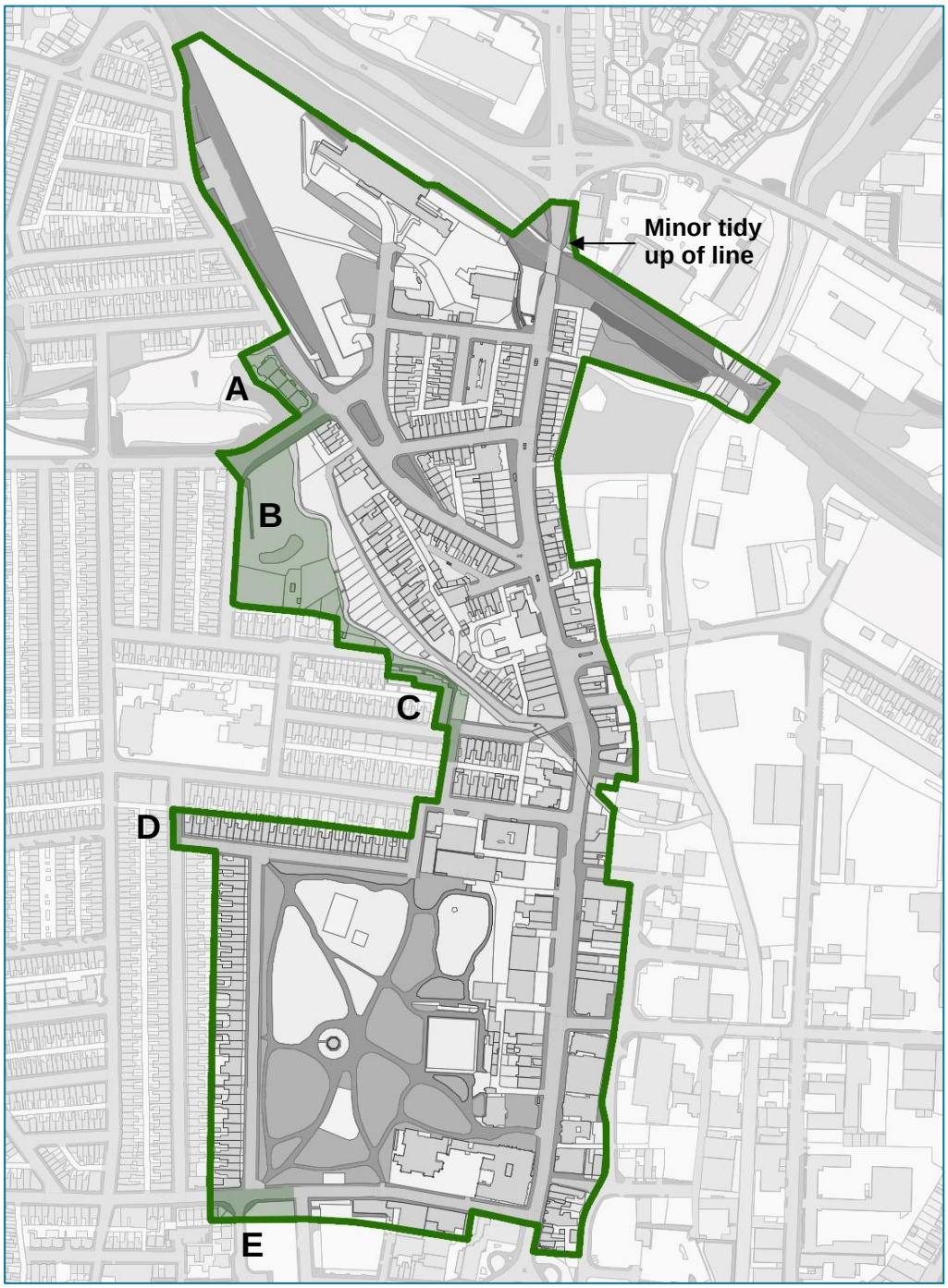
[219] Land Use Consultants 2021, pages 53-55

[220] Hammond, N. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 28 October

5.0 Boundary Changes

Members of the public and other stakeholders were invited to submit their comments on the proposed draft changes to the Northgate Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 (see sections 5.1 to 5.3). Following public consultation, the proposed new Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary was amended (see section 5.4), finalised and adopted (see chapter 6.0).

5.1 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed Exclusions



Proposed **(draft)** exclusions shaded in green **at the time of review**. Northgate Conservation Area boundary line adopted in July 2003 in green. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

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[221].

The map above shows the proposed exclusions from the Northgate Conservation Area at the time of review (September 2024), which were put out for public and internal consultation. **Following the feedback received, the proposal to exclude area E has since been omitted (see section 5.4).**

Proposed (draft) exclusions from the Northgate Conservation Area boundary at the time of review: *Top* (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): Pullman House, with listed Lime Cells to far right/east. *Bottom left:* Deanery Court. *Bottom right:* Street corner and modern houses at Kendrew Street West carpark. (Photos © Gaby Rose, August 2023)

Conservation areas are designated for their *special architectural and historic interest* (see section 2.1). The draft appraisal (September 2024) identified that the following parts within the boundary adopted in 2003 are not/no longer of special interest:

A. **Pullman House**: This apartment block along Hopetown Lane replaces former buildings first shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1939. It is not clear what these were or what their significance was. They do not appear to have been residential types. The existing apartment block is not in keeping with the development pattern in this location by being three storeys tall (as opposed to the two-storey old houses to either side of it) and includes architectural features (e.g. entrance porches, Juliet balconies) which detract from the historical buildings. Its location opposite the listed Lime Cells is unfortunate.
B. **Paddly Dene**: Whilst this small park provides a pleasant public space (see sections 3.4 & 3.5) it seems to be lacking any heritage significance which would tie it in with rest of the boundary adopted in 2003. Moreover, geographically, it is separated from the main part of the Conservation Area under review by Cocker Beck and belongs

[221] Historic England 2019, page 39

to 'The Denes', six interconnected green spaces that extend for some 1.5km largely outside the designated area.

C. **Deanery Court**: This apartment block at the north end of Mowden Street replaces former buildings first shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1939. It is not clear what these were or what their significance. They do not appear to have been residential types. The existing apartment block is not in keeping with the development pattern in this location by being three storeys tall (as opposed to the two-storey houses on this side of Cocker Beck) and includes architectural features (e.g. Juliet balconies, prominent gable-facing element) which detract from the historical buildings.
D. **Thornton Steet:** This very short stretch of road is not fronted by any of the buildings that are included in the boundary adopted in 2003.
E. **Undefined space at Kendrew Street carpark**: This seemingly random area on the map comprises the street corner of Gladstone Street/ North Lodge Terrace, a small area of the Kendrew Street West Car Park and fragments of modern houses.

5.2 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed Extension Areas

Listed buildings are referred to by their designation name and assigned their [NUMBER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

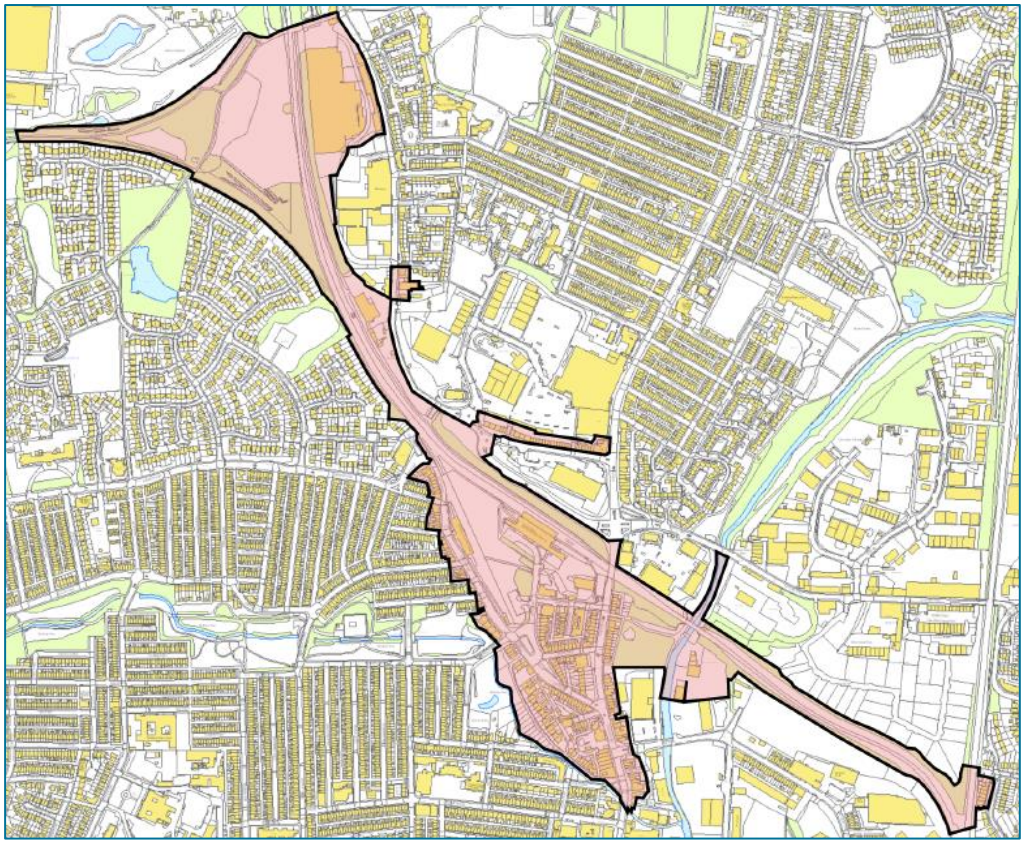
Historic England advises that an existing conservation area boundary may have been drawn too tightly, potentially omitting areas now considered to be of special interest, such as historical rear plots with archaeological interest, later phases of development, or parks, cemeteries and other old greenspaces. In such cases the boundary may need to be extended[222].

Looking at the Northgate Conservation Area under review, it seems that the railway line at North Road station has previously been regarded as a 'natural' northern cut-off point, which makes sense in so far as the tracks do present a significant physical break in the townscape. Moreover, the boundary adopted in 2003 has focused on the very early development of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), which is of highest importance. Nevertheless, there still remains a significant amount of character and interest to areas of later-nineteenth-century (and beyond) development associated with the railways and related industries to the north and east of North Road[223]. These are being identified and analysed in this section.

By July 2022, **Durham County Council (DCC)** had looked into potential areas to be designated beyond the former line of the S&DR. They had come up with a proposal to split the Northgate Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 in half (although without providing a supporting detailed assessment for justification): the northern part would become a new conservation area and extended, whilst the southern part would remain unchanged for the time being. **This is no longer proposed.** The detailed analysis provided in this appraisal (see chapter 3.0) should make it clear that subdivision of the Conservation Area under review is neither justifiable nor desirable. Nevertheless, DCC's suggested boundary extensions have been studied in detail and are discussed on the text below, and amended where deemed justified.

[222] Historic England 2019, page 39
[223] Betts, T. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 1 November

Moreover, DCC drafted a list of potentially 'locally listable' heritage assets along the full route of the S&DR as part of a pilot project in 2023. Those that fall into the proposed extension areas have also identified in the text below **(DCC List)**.



Durham County Council's proposal of 2022 – **this is no longer proposed**. Their suggested boundary extensions to the northern part of the Conservation Area under review have been re-examined in this section. (Map © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey LA 100049055. Landmark Information Group Copyright © 2022)

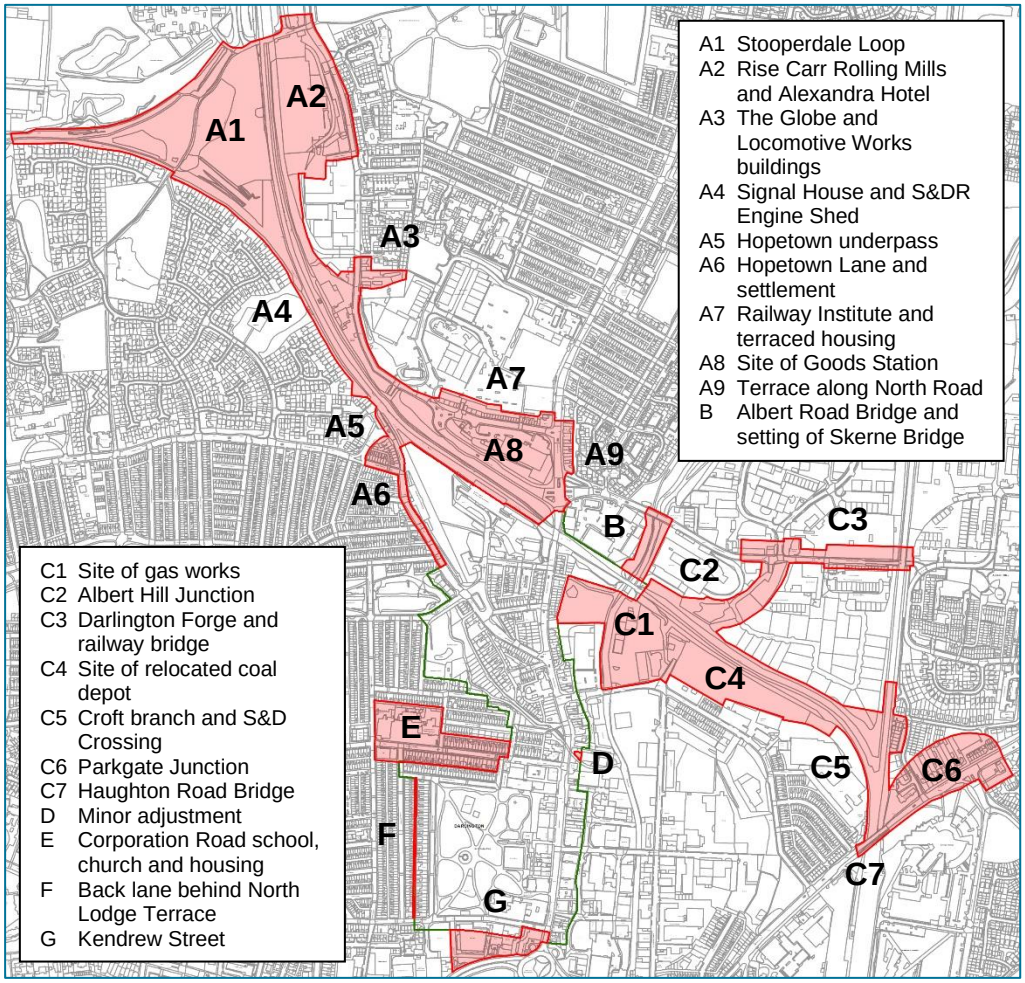
In order to qualify for inclusion in the existing designated boundary, any extension area must relate to elements defining the significance of the Northgate Conservation Area under review (see section 3.1). In addition, any extension area will have to meet the following tests[224]:

a) The extension area has sufficient architectural or historic interest for it to be considered 'special'.
b) That special interest is experienced through the extension 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 below shows the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area at the time of review (September 2024), which were put out for public and internal consultation. **Following the feedback received, the proposal to include area G has since been omitted (see section 5.4).**

[224] Historic England 2019, page 5

NB: Areas A1 – A8 and C1 – C5 also include the corresponding railway corridor of the former S&DR, which is still a live line. Its proposed inclusion will not be analysed unless there are important features within the corridor, which will then be identified and discussed.



Proposed **(draft)** extensions shaded in red **at the time of review**. Northgate Conservation Area boundary line adopted in July 2003 in green. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

A1 – Stooperdale Loop. This proposed extension area is identical with DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary follows the surviving live railway line as well as the directions of the former rail tracks to Barnard Castle which have been retained as public foot/cycle-paths and bridleways within the present nature reserve.

The Stooperdale Loop, named after what appears to have been a farmstead called 'Stooperdales' on the 1855 map, was the three-way junction of the S&DR with the Darlington & Barnard Castle Railway. The latter was established in 1856 and subsumed by the S&DR in 1858. The distinct triangular layout of the junction is first shown on the 1898 map. Today only the live line of the former S&DR route survives, bordering the area along its eastern side. The tracks of the branch line to Barnard Castle were removed shortly after its closure in 1965 (see section 3.3). Nevertheless, the triangular layout is still evident on aerial photographs as it has been retained in the present path arrangement which traverses the nature reserve in this location. In addition, the pre-railway route of Honeypot Lane cuts through the area. Various man-made features survive within the undergrowth, such as brickwork, cast-

concrete, former timbers railway sleepers, and metal rail tracks **(DCC List)**. The Friends of the S&DR recovered discarded early stone sleeper blocks from the undergrowth in this area and have used them in an installation on the former trackbed next to the path alongside Tornado Way[225], outside the proposed extension area. From the northeastern part of the nature reserve there are good views onto the Rise Carr Rolling Mills (see below: A2) across the live railway line.

A1 – *Top:* View from the centre of the former Stooperdale Loop junction onto the Rise Carr Rolling Mills (see below: A2) across the surviving live railway line. *Middle:* Location where the Barnard Castle line branched off left/north and right/southeast into Darlington. *Bottom left:* Abandoned metal rail tracks at the former southern junction of the branch line with the S&DR (not accessible to the public), with the S&DR Engine Shed (see below: A4) just visible in the background to the left/southeast. *Bottom right:* Remains of brick walling with iron brackets to the rear of the housing plots along Hensfield Grove. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

This area justifies inclusion as it clearly demonstrates early railway development that is directly linked to the S&DR (historic interest). Its special interest is experienced and enjoyed by the public (nature reserve). Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area.

[225] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

A2 – Rise Carr Rolling Mills and Alexandra Hotel. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as further pieces of land to the north, east and south which appear relevant to the historical site's context. The new proposed boundary comprises the railway corridor including the bridge, Elmtree Street, the former Alexandra Hotel, the Rise Carr Rolling Mills site, the surface carpark adjoining it to the south, Prospect Place and the corresponding stretch of Whessoe Road.

A2 – *Top left* (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024): Stone-and-metal railway bridge over Elmtree Street, west elevation. *Top right* (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Former Alexandra Hotel, now the St Georges Bridge Centre. *Middle:* Prominent buildings and retaining wall of the Rise Carr Rolling Mills site along Whessoe Road. *Bottom:* Surface carpark and Prospect Way (to the left/south), which used to be the access road to a former coat depot. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

The Rise Carr Rolling Mills **(DCC List)** opened in 1868[226] and, over the years, became a major employer in Darlington. In 1998, the complex (by then taken over by British Steel) closed[227]. In 1864, Theodore Fry (newly married into the Pease family) and Charles I'Anson (founder of the Whessoe Foundry Co (see section 3.3)) had bought five acres of land adjoining the east of the railway line and formed the Rise Carr

[226] Flynn 1987, page 49

[227] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/18590098.day-rolling-mills-labourer-mangled-horrible-manner-roof-blew-off-factory/

Rolling Mills. For their workers they built terraces on the opposite side of Whessoe Road, the first ones named after them, Fry Street and I'Anson Street. These no longer exist. The name 'Rise Carr' implies boggy land where brushwood grew. The 1855 map shows a farmstead of the same name some distance to the west of the S&DR. At that time, the later Rolling Mills plot was yet undeveloped, although Honeypot Lane bordering the north of the site (now called Elmtree Street in this location) already existed. Before Honeypot Lane turns southwest through the Stooperdale Loop (see above: A1) it used to cross the rail tracks on the same level[228]. By 1896 (OS map), the level crossing had been replaced with the existing railway bridge **(DCC List)**.

Working in a hot environment is' 'thirsty work' so the street outside the Rise Carr Rolling Mills was lined with public houses. The Alexandra Hotel on the corner of Whessoe Road and Elmtree Street bears the name of Princess Alexandra of Denmark who married the Prince of Wales in 1863 (Denmark Street and Wales Street nearby are also named after the couple). Whilst other former pubs along this stretch of Whessoe Road no longer exists, the Alexandra survives because the bridge club that had met in the factory offices took over the building when the Rolling Mills closed[229].

This area justifies inclusion as the Rise Carr Rolling Mills were established in this location because of the presence of the railway line (although by that point no longer the S&DR), with their own rail access (sidings) to the main line. They are one of the few survivors of Darlington's significant industrial expansion in the mid-nineteenth century. The 1896 map suggests that Prospect Place provided access to a coal depot connected to the railway to the south of the mills site. In the location of the present surface carpark there used to be workers housing and the land to the rear, now heavily vegetated, appears to have been part of the mills site. Elmtree Street (formerly part of Honeypot Lane) experienced development due to the railway such as the bridge and resulting lowered road levels. Whilst the former Alexandra Hotel has changed in appearance, the building is clearly connected to the Rolling Mills. Together with the prominent retaining wall **(DCC List)** and roadside buildings of the Rise Carr site, it has a strong visual presence alongside the road (landmark building). Much of the special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Whessoe Road. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

A3 – The Globe and Locomotive Works buildings. The proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as well as further land to the east which appears relevant to the historical site's context. The new proposed boundary comprises the former Globe pub, buildings believed to be associated with the former Locomotive Works and the corresponding stretch of Whessoe Road.

Like the Alexandra Hotel (see above: A2), the Globe was another public house which was established due to the presence of heavy industry in the area, and, likewise, located on a street corner. The building seems to be shown on the 25-inch OS maps of 1896 and 1913/14, but, unlike the Alexandra, it is not named or identified as a pub. It is first marked 'P.H.' on the 1939 map suggesting it may have had a different use previously. The Globe closed in c.2000 and was then converted into flats[230]. To the south of it are two brick buildings which feature recessed panelled walling, an

[228] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/9982703.getting-bottom-rise-carr/
[229] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/18514191.day-margaret-thatcher-visited-darlington-pub-renowned-whippet-racing/
[230] https://www.closedpubs.co.uk/durham/darlington_globe.html

architectural style that can be seen on other contemporary structures. The southern brick building is first shown on the 25-inch map of 1896 next to sidings leading from the main line into the Locomotive Works (also known as North Road Shops). The building may date from around the 1870s, judging from its detailing. On the 1913-14 map, it is marked as 'Tank' identifying it as a water tower. The other surviving brick building **(DCC List)** and two timber structures (one is attached to the former water tower and the other to the east of it) are first shown on the 25-inch map of 1939 and also appear to be part of the Locomotive Works. The Locomotive Works were opened by the S&DR in 1863 and passed on to the North Eastern Railway later that year (see section 3.3). They would play an important part in the economy of Darlington, in their heyday employing over 2,200 workers[231].

A3 – *Top:* Formerly the Globe, now flats; the attached building is modern. *Bottom:* The former water tower is the brick building to the right/south, its tank now removed and a new roof provided. Attached to it is one of the timber structures shown on the 1939 map. The brick building to the left marks the northwest corner of the former Locomotive Works and, like the water tower, has recessed panelled brick walling. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

This area justifies inclusion as it contains surviving structures of the former Locomotive Works, which were largely demolished following their closure in 1966. The southern side of this area is still defined by the curved line of the former sidings into the Locomotive Works. Whilst the former Globe pub has changed in appearance, the building is clearly connected to the former heavy industry in this area. As a building group, this area is an isolated survivor along the eastern side of Whessoe Road where most of the other historical structures and road layouts have succumbed to modern development. Much of the special architectural and historic interest of

[231] Flynn 1989, page 107

this area is experienced by the public from Whessoe Road. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

A4 – Signal House and S&DR Engine Shed. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as Signal House. The new proposed boundary comprises the railway corridor, the plots including the former Signal House and S&DR Engine Shed buildings, and the corresponding stretch of Whessoe Road.

Signal House is first shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1896, with its angled south elevation following the sidings from the main railway line into the Locomotive Works and its east elevation along Whessoe Road. Its location suggests that it controlled the railway crossing as well as the switches in the surrounding area. To the southwest is the former S&DR Engine Shed built in 1861, which could accommodate up to twelve locomotives. Sited in the angle between the main railway line and the sidings serving Locomotive Works, it was soon absorbed into the latter and served a variety of roles[232].

A4 – *Top:* The S&DR Engine Shed designed by William Peachey, which has just been restored for the 2025 S&DR bicentennial. The live railway line passes behind the building to the left/ west. *Bottom:* Signal House along Whessoe Road with the line of the former sidings into the Locomotive Works along the south gable wall. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

[232] http://www.railwayarchitecture.org.uk/Location/Darlington/Darlington.htm

This area justifies inclusion as it contains the 1861 Engine Shed **(DCC List)**, which was one of the last major structures built by the S&DR. Whilst Signal House post-dates the S&DR, it clearly has the appearance of a railway building. It also includes evidence of the former sidings into the Locomotive Works along its southern gable wall. Much of the special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Whessoe Road, with Signal House being a landmark structure when approaching from the south. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

A5 – Hopetown underpass. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as a stretch of Whessoe Road. The new proposed boundary comprises the railway corridor, Hopetown underpass including its short approach roads, a plot of land bordering the east of the railway line and the corresponding stretch of Whessoe Road.

A5 – *Top* (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024): Hopetown underpass when approaching from Otley Terrace (west). The low walling to the left/west is also built in traditional brickwork with stone copings. *Bottom* (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Boundary walling along Whessoe Road with distinct recessed panels.

The S&DR had originally provided a level crossing for road traffic over their tracks at Hopetown. However, as seen elsewhere along the main line, increasing use made this inconvenient so an underpass was dug out to connect the Hope Town settlement

(see below: A6) with Whessoe Road. A possibly late-Victorian photo shows a rubblestone retaining/parapet wall along the western side of the railway corridor, lined by a stone pavement, and a narrower underpass opening with an extremely acute corner which caused problems for traffic[233]. The improved/new underpass and accompanying road widening are first shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1913-14. These works had required the demolition of early terraced housing along Alliance Street and at the top end of Hopetown Lane (now Otley Terrace). The approaches to the existing underpass are lined by tall, traditional brick walling with recessed panels at parapet height **(DCC List)**. The date on the nearby rebuilt pub in the Hopetown Settlement implies that the underpass and road improvement works had been carried out by 1909. The plot of land to the east of the railway line, which is currently a salvage yard, belonged historically with an Engine House (1855 map) pre-dating the existing S&DR Engine Shed (see above: A4) and was later part of the railway sidings complex (1896 map).

Although the surviving fabric and features mainly date from the early-twentieth century, this area justifies inclusion as it is clearly connected to the use of the historic railway and has largely retained its nineteenth-century layout. Much of the special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Whessoe Road, Otley Terrace and South Street. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

A6 – Hopetown Lane and settlement. This proposed extension area differs from DCC's proposal of 2022; the proposed omission of buildings along the western side of Hopetown Lane is explained at the end of this section. The new proposed boundary comprises the triangular settlement plot at the top end of Hopetown Lane (now Otley Terrace) as well as the road stretch of Hopetown Lane/Otley Terrace up to where it meets the Conservation Area boundary under review.

The 1855 map shows the origins of the Hope Town settlement at the top end of Hopetown Lane and along what is now Alliance Street. The buildings depicted fell victim to road widening works in the early-twentieth century (see above: A5) and no longer exist. However, the triangular settlement layout now formed between Otley Terrace, Alliance Street and Anns Terrace still survives. It is reasonable to assume that this triangular plot had been built up before further development was carried out in the surrounding area, and if so, the former workers houses would be the earliest survivors of the Hope Town settlement. Besides the two surviving terraces, the triangular plot also includes the Railway Hotel of 1909 (i.e. the rebuilt earlier pub shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1896, which slightly projected towards the road) **(DCC List)**, an angled, scoria-paved back lane (pre-1896), brick boundary walling with recessed panelling along the northwestern side built between 1896 and 1913/14, and, unusually, a contemporary two-storey stone outbuilding **(DCC List)**.

Although the historical workers housing not of special architectural quality and has been subject to detrimental change, this area justifies inclusion as the origins of the Hope Town settlement survive (historic interest), which had established itself due to the arrival of the S&DR. Moreover, the panelled brick boundary walling and rebuilt pub on this plot are associated with the improvement works to the railway underpass in c.1909. The full length of Hopetown Lane justifies inclusion as it gave access from Darlington to the early Hope Town settlement, and as it provides views onto the [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works within the Conservation Area under

[233] Flynn 1988, photo 136

review. The special (architectural and) historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Hopetown Lane, Otley Terrace, Alliance Street, Anns Terrace, the east end of Brinkburn Road and the scoria-paved back lane. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to further harmful development.

A6 – *Top:* Looking north along Hopetown Lane with the [2] Stockton & Darlington Railway Carriage Works being a focal point to the centre right/north. *Bottom left:* Early workers housing along Anns Terrace (right/ southeast) and panelled brick boundary walling along Alliance Street. The stone outbuilding along the back lane is visible to the left/northeast. *Bottom right:* The Railway Hotel of 1909 at the corner of Alliance Street (far right/north) with Otley Terrace (foreground). (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

A7 – Railway Institute and terraced housing. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as additional land to the north and south. The new proposed boundary comprises the terraced properties of nos. 1-27 Whessoe Road **(DCC List)**, the corresponding stretch of road in front and the back lane behind the buildings, the adjoining sheds to the north (accessible from the retail park) and the Railway Institute **(DCC List)** on the junction Whessoe Road/North Road.

The Railway Institute was designed by local architect John Ross and built by the S&DR in 1861[234]. It provided education and training for railway workers, as well as social functions. A pair of very long wooden benches with iron/metal legs **(DCC List)**, which are potentially of notable age, are placed against the east elevation of the building. A drawing from 1863 shows that the terrace adjoining the Institute also existed by then, making it some of the earlier railway housing in Darlington. Today all the houses have been converted into small businesses. To the rear, a long back lane paved in scoria blocks **(DCC List)** links the terraces. The rear yards to the houses have all been demolished. To the north, the back lane is bounded by tall brick walling **(DCC List)** incorporating structures on the adjoining site. These are first shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1913/14 and belonged to the Locomotive Works established in 1863 (see above: A3). The map suggests that the sheds were mainly accessed from a rail track next to them.

[234] http://www.railwayarchitecture.org.uk/Location/Darlington/Darlington.htm

A7 – *Top* (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024): Sheds originally belonging to the Locomotive Works, west end. *Centre top* (Photos © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Scoria-paved back lane with sheds to the left/north and terraces to the right/south; note the loss of the rear yards. *Centre bottom:* The terraces have all been converted into small businesses, as evident by the insertion of roller shutters throughout the ground floors. *Bottom:* The Railway Institute of 1861 is a landmark building at the corner Whessoe Road/North Road; contemporary houses are attached to the left/west. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

This area justifies inclusion as it contains surviving structures of the former Locomotive Works, which were largely demolished following their closure in 1966. Despite harmful modern alterations, the terraces are important representing some of the pre-1870 housing provided for railway workers. The Railway Institute is both of architectural and historic significance, as well as a landmark on a busy road junction. The special interest of this area is experienced by the public from the retail park's carpark, Whessoe Road, North Road, the back lane behind the terraces and from inside the Institute, which has retained its social function. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development.

A8 – Site of goods station. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 (railway corridor only) as well as further land to the north. The new proposed boundary comprises the railway corridor adjoining the Conservation Area under review to north, the land between Bonomi Way and the railway line, Bonomi Way and the triangular plot bounded by North Road, Whessoe Road and Bonomi Way.

The 1896 OS map shows the former S&DR Goods Station (see section 3.3) to be in the location of the existing triangular plot and Bonomi Way – the latter being a modern road which has been named after the [7] Skerne Bridge's architect – with a multitude of tracks and sidings coming off the main line. The construction of the new Darlington Locomotive Works between Bonomi Way and the railway was recently completed. The building is accessible to the public, including a bridge link from the Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction within the Conservation Area under review. It also houses the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust.

A8 – Bonomi Way, looking west, with the new Darlington Locomotive Works to the left/ northwest. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

Despite Bonomi Way cutting through the historical site, this area justifies inclusion as the overall shape of the former Goods Station plot has been retained (historic interest). The triangular site, which currently includes a modern commercial building, may still contain archaeological interest with regards to its historical use. The new Darlington Locomotive Works building along the main line is directly linked to the Conservation Area under review. The special historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from as Bonomi Way, Whessoe Road and North Road as well as from inside the new building. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

A9 – Terrace along North Road. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises nos. 38-70 North Road and the corresponding stretch of road in front (to the west) and short lane to

the north gable wall, as well as the northern, curved section of the Ashlar stone retaining wall leading to and abutting the [6] Railway Viaduct on its eastern side.

Nos. 38-70 North Road are first shown on the 1896 map. There used to be further terraces to the east and south of it which no longer survive; only those to the north of it do. Whilst the back lane to the terrace no longer exists either, a short scoria-paved lane with stone kerbing remains along the north gable wall. The curved stone retaining wall leading to the [6] Railway Viaduct was rebuilt when the Bonomi Way/Albert Road/North Road junction was created. The inscribed capstone on the end pillar originates from Gloucester House which once stood nearby[235].

A9 – *Top:* Nos. 38-70 North Road looking northeast. *Centre:* The terrace viewed from the north, looking southeast. *Bottom:* Scoria-paved lane with worn stone kerbing; also note historical door surround to the right/east, at no. 70. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

Although the terrace is not of special architectural quality and has been subject to detrimental works, this area justifies inclusion due to the spatial relationship that it

[235] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

forms with the railway workers' terracing on Whessoe Road, the Railway Institute (see above: A7) and Goods Station site (see above: A8) (historic interest). Some original details do survive on the building and rear yard walling, as well as the scoria-paved side lane. The row is one of the few survivors in the station area, in a location where much of the historical grain has been erased by modern development. Whilst the retaining wall leading to the bridge is of little historical merit (mainly the capping stone), its southern section is already within the Conservation Area under review. Moreover, it matches the ashlar stonework of the [6] Railway Viaduct and channels the view onto the listed bridge. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from North Road, the side lane along no. 70 and the rear road in the location of the former back lane of the terrace. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to further harmful development.

B – Albert Road Bridge and setting of [7] Skerne Bridge. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as further land to the east and west and the road bridge to the north. The new proposed boundary comprises the river Skerne and its embankments up to Albert Road, including the ruin of an old brick building on the eastern riverbank and Albert Road Bridge **(DCC List)**.

B – *Top* (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Albert Road Bridge viewed from the footpath along the Skerne, looking north, with the original structure partially concealed behind the later one. The Council has agreed to paint the bridge railings, at the request of the Friends of the S&DR, to enhance its appearance for the 2025 S&DR bicentenary[236]. The ruined brick building is to the right/east. *Bottom* (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024): View from Albert Road Bridge (through mesh panelling) with the brick building to the left/east and [7] Skerne Bridge in the background. Note the traditional railings on the left-hand/eastern riverbank.

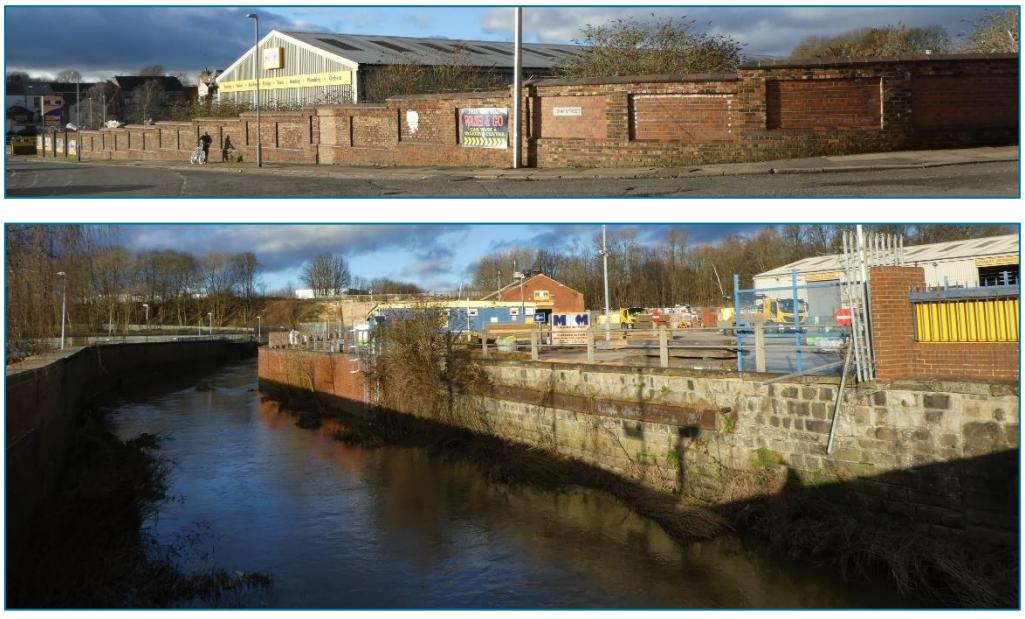
Albert Road Bridge is first shown on the 1896 OS map, providing an essential link between North Road to the west and the steel and iron works along Cleveland Street

[236] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

(see below: C3) to the east. The original bridge displays its skew-arch brickwork and Norman-style stone and brick details in the central and side arches. It was later widened to the south using stone piers, which were retained when the bridge was strengthened in the late-twentieth century[237]. Abutting the bridge to the southeast is a ruined, small brick building with stone lintels which is first shown on the 1913/14 OS map. It may have had some sort of weighing function, judging from the 'W.M.' (Weighing Machine) on the map. A photo of [7] Skerne Bridge taken in August 1948 shows Albert Road Bridge and the small building (intact) in the background.

This area justifies inclusion as it contains the immediate setting of [7] Skerne Bridge (which is within the Conservation Area under review) and the original road bridge that connected the town with its heavy industrial area, which had settled due to the arrival of the railway. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from the foot/cycle-path along the west side of the Skerne, and from Albert Road Bridge. Conservation area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area. The ruined brick building is under threat of further demolition by Northern Gas Networks in connection with works on their land[238].

C1 – Site of gas works. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as further land to the south. The new proposed boundary comprises the recently created carpark between Dobbin's View and the river Skerne (see section 3.4/ view 14) and other sites to the east, to the north of John Street: the Skerne, the foot/cycle-path along its western bank and the commercial plot across the river.



C1 – *Top:* Stepped brick walling with recessed panels along southern (John Street) and eastern boundaries of the commercial site. *Bottom:* View from John Street Bridge onto part of the proposed extension area including a traditional brick building in the background; [7] Skerne Bridge can just be glimpsed to the left/north of it. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

The 1855 OS map depicts Darlington's original gas works between Dobbin's View and the Skerne, whilst the land to the east of the river appears to have still been in agricultural use. The 1896 map shows the gas works extending to a site to the east of the river, which is currently in commercial use. Besides a large modern industrial

[237] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October
[238] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

shed and office cabin, it includes a traditionally constructed brick building with round-headed brick arches **(DCC List)**. In addition, it is bounded by stepped brick walling with recessed panels along John Street and the short cul-de-sac to the north. The existing path alongside the west of the Skerne is not shown on any historic maps. It was probably created after the demolition of the Railway Mills, gas works and a terraced building along John Street.

This area justifies inclusion as it contains the immediate setting of [7] Skerne Bridge (within the Conservation Area under review), including the site between Dobbin's View and the river, which used to accommodate Darlington's original gas works. It is now the surface carpark for the new Hopetown Darlington visitor attraction within the Conservation Area under review. The southern-most boundary line proposed by DCC in 2022 cutting through the former gas works site does not exist on the ground or on historic maps and has therefore been discarded; instead, the whole former gas works site should be included. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from John Street and the short cul-de-sac to the north, the foot/cycle-path along the river, the commercial business, and from Dobbin's View (see section 3.4/views 11 a & b) and Skerne Bridge Entrance (the latter partly) within the Conservation Area under review. Designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

C2 – Albert Hill Junction. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 (railway corridor only) as well as further land to the north. The new proposed boundary comprises the former site of the railway sidings to Cleveland Street, which is currently in commercial use, and the adjoining main line corridor.

The 1855 OS map shows curved sidings departing from the S&DR main line to the South Durham Iron Works; at the time, Cleveland Street (originally a farm track) was not yet connected to North Road. The 1896 map shows more extensive sidings in this location serving the Albert Hill Foundry to the south of Cleveland Street and Darlington Forge, which had taken over the South Durham Iron Works[239], to the north (see below: C3). The term 'Albert Hill Junction' is given on the 1913/14 map.

C2 – View from Cleveland Street onto the former site of Albert Hill Junction, looking southwest. Many of the sidings would have stopped short of the street, although others did cross it to serve Darlington Forge. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

This area justifies inclusion as it was directly (physically) linked to the S&DR and the industrial expansion that followed it. On aerial photographs, the curved outline of the former sidings is still evident. It is possible that the site has archaeological value. The special historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Cleveland Street and the commercial business. Conservation Area designation would help

[239] Flynn 1989, page 109

protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development.

C3 – Darlington Forge and railway bridge. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises the traditionally constructed buildings lining Cleveland Street to the north, the entrance to York Street, the former house/pub at the street corner (currently a takeaway) **(DCC List)**, its rear building line parallel to the main road (cutting through a modern building to the east that does not quite line up with the footprint of the former row), the railway bridge and associated walling, railings and steps **(DCC List)**, and the corresponding stretch of Cleveland Street.

The 25-inch OS map of 1896 indicates that the railway bridge and associated walling, metal railings and steps to the west and the former house at the corner of Cleveland Street/York Street are now the oldest surviving structures in this area. Prior to the construction of the railway bridge, there used to be a level crossing, as seen elsewhere in Darlington. As the area developed into a heavy iron and steel industrial site and Albert Hill (outside the proposed extension area to the east) became a residential area, a bridge was required. The 1896 map depicts a wider structure than today due to the larger number of track lines. It also had four similar approaches with railings and steps, but those on the east were removed as part of Albert Hill redevelopment in the 1970s. Today, the southwestern approach has become overgrown and is a litter trap, and the Friends of the S&DR assist the Council in keeping it tidy. The now detached former house is shown on the map to be part of a building row. It used to be, until recently, the Cleveland Arms pub, serving the thirsty foundry workers and residents of the surrounding terraced streets (one was appropriately called Vulcan Street)[240]. No physical evidence of the former terraced housing seems to survive.

The 1913/14 map shows what may have been an office building for the Darlington Forge **(DCC List)** to the north of Cleveland Street, adjacent to the east of the sidings just over the road from Albert Hill Junction (see above: C2). It is constructed in red Flemish-bond brickwork and includes fine sandstone detailing. It is not clear whether the smaller building shown on the map to the west of the sidings is the current one in this location. All surviving traditionally constructed buildings along the north side of Cleveland Street seem to be depicted on the 1939 map and were part of the Darlington Forge complex, which closed in 1963[241].

This area justifies inclusion as it is clearly a very important remnant of the industrial expansion that followed the arrival of the S&DR. It used to be ideally located near a major railway cross junction (see below: C5 & C6). The former office building and large industrial building have additional architectural interest, with the latter also having a significant roadside presence and landmark function. The former house to the south is the sole survivor of one of the building rows that used to be in this area and includes original features. The special historic interest of this area is experienced by the public mainly from Cleveland Street. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

[240] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October
[241] Flynn 1989, page 109

C3 – *Top:* Former Darlington Forge buildings along Cleveland Street, looking east. *Centre left:* Former house which was once part of a building row; later the Cleveland Arms pub. *Centre right:* Brick retaining wall with stone copings and original iron railings on the western approach to railway bridge. *Bottom:* Railway bridge looking west, with stone steps and Darlington Forge landmark building in the background. Note the reduced track width of the bridge. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

C4 – Site of relocated coal depot. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 (railway corridor only) as well as further land to the south. The new proposed boundary comprises a largely empty plot of land to the north of East Mount Road, the short cul-de-sac off John Street/East Mount Road and the adjoining railway corridor.

By the time the S&DR coal and lime depot at Northgate Bridge was closed in 1873 (see 3.3), a much larger coal depot had been provided to the north of Upper John Street (now East Mount Street). The 25-inch OS map of 1896 shows extensive sidings from/to Parkgate Junction to the east (see below: C6) as well as a weighing machine (W.M.) to the north of the short cul-de-sac off (Upper) John Street, which provided road access to the depot.

This area justifies inclusion as it is the direct successor to the original coal depot at Northgate Bridge, the location of which is already within the Conservation Area under review. On aerial photographs, the distinct outline of the historical site is still clearly readable. There is likely to be some archaeological interest, as the land seems to have been largely undeveloped following the removal of the depot's tracks and buildings in the second half of the twentieth century (only a small part is currently occupied by a car wash and valeting centre). The special historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from the short cul-de-sac off John Street/East Mount Road, the car wash on the former coal depot site and the back lane behind nos. 112-126 East Mount Road, the latter including a tall brick retaining wall to the site. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development.

C4 – *Top:* View from the short cul-de-sac off John Street/East Mount Road, looking east. *Bottom:* Retaining wall behind nos. 112-126 East Mount Road, with the former coal depot site behind the fence. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

C5 – Croft branch and S&D Crossing. This proposed extension area includes DCC's proposal of 2022 as well as further land to the north and south. The new proposed boundary comprises the location of the former track bed of the S&DR immediately to the west of the S&D Crossing (no longer extant), a stretch of live railway corridor going in a north-south direction including the grade-II-listed sign that marks the former crossing, the curved live railway line in the approximate location of the

former Croft branch (now the Bishop Auckland line), and the grade-II-listed GNER engine shed to the southeast of the former crossing.

The Great North of England Railway (GNER) operated the route between York and Darlington between 1841-46; the line included the former Croft branch of 1829 which they had purchased from the S&DR (see section 3.3). The opening of the Newcastle & Darlington Joint Railway in 1844 included a level, perpendicular crossing of the S&DR to the north-northeast of Darlington, known as S&D Crossing[242]. The GNER built an engine shed designed by George Townsend Andrews in this location in the same year[243]. The 1855 OS map depicts the building in the southeastern quarter of the crossing, with the curved track of the former Croft branch to the west. It also shows a curved, two-point junction between the York-to-Berwick line (from Bank Top) and the S&DR (heading towards Fighting Cocks), to the east of the engine shed (see below: C6). The 25-inch OS map of 1896 depicts a signal box between the engine shed and the crossing, which is no longer extant. By that time, the crossing had been expanded into a major junction. In 1937, the London North Eastern Railway installed a trackside sign in celebration of their connection to the S&DR to the northwest of the S&D Crossing, marking the progress for south-bound passengers along their journeys[244]. By 1988, the former S&DR line had been completely removed from the crossing[245]. Today, the converted engine shed is surrounded by a modern housing development which confuses the interpretation of the historical setting.

C5 – *Top:* Former GNER engine shed, now converted into flats and located within a modern residential area. *Bottom:* 'Route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway' trackside sign next to live tracks of the former Darlington-to-Newcastle line, looking southwest. Note the metal palisade fencing in the background. (Photos © Gaby Rose, August 2023)

[242] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'S&D Crossing'
[243] http://www.railwayarchitecture.org.uk/Location/Darlington/Darlington.htm
[244] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1476475
[245] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'S&D Crossing'

The site of the former S&DR trackbed immediately west of the crossing was enclosed with palisade railings as part of a larger area of unauthorised development. Planning permission was eventually granted but required the offending railings to be removed and the land appropriately landscaped to recreate the appearance of the former railway. This has not been done yet (September 2024)[246].

This area justifies inclusion as it marks – no longer by track lines but by a historical sign – the approximate location of the historic S&D Crossing. It is possible that the land immediately to the west, which seems largely undeveloped, has some archaeological value. The area also includes the approximate route of the former Croft branch where it departed from the main S&DR line, which is still a live track. Whilst the GNER engine shed does not form part of the history of the S&DR, it should be included due to its location at the former S&D Crossing. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from the Sidings and Haughton Road Bridge (see below: C7). Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to harmful future development, as seen elsewhere in its surroundings.

C6 – Parkgate Junction. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises a few modern properties in the angle between the Sidings and Haughton Road (B6279), nos. 123-165 Haughton Road, the former Vicarage on the opposite (south) side of Haughton Road and the corresponding road stretch along the B6279.

The existing curved line of the housing plot represents the former two-point junction between the York-to-Berwick line (from Bank Top) and the S&DR (heading towards Fighting Cocks) to the east of the former S&D Crossing (see above: C5), as depicted on the 1855 OS map. Haughton Road is shown too and pre-exists the railway. The 25-inch OS map of 1896 names the southern part of this junction as Parkgate Junction. It also shows the terraced properties, now nos. 145- 157 **(DCC List)**, built on the curved piece of land between the railway junction and Haughton Road as well as the Vicarage across the road. The latter was constructed around 1876 by eminent architect GG Hoskin, being contemporary with the nearby Church of St James which it originally served[247]. It is understood that all these buildings had been built prior to the lowering of the road levels to accommodate an underpass under the railway line to Fighting Cocks (no longer extant and outside the proposed extension area to the east). A substantial ashlar retaining wall **(DCC List)** was erected to the site of the Vicarage to allow the lowering of the road. The semi-detached houses, which have unusual front-facing gabled extensions, are first shown on the 1939 map. All other buildings are later and of no interest. The modern development along the Sidings has erased the curved line of the former railway junction in this location.

This area justifies inclusion as much of the line of the former two-point junction between the York-to-Berwick line (from Bank Top) and the S&DR (heading towards Fighting Cocks) still survives. Moreover, the railway terrace (nos. 145- 157 Haughton Road) and Vicarage are also of architectural interest. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from the Sidings and Haughton Road. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to further harmful development.

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[246] Chisholm, R. 2024. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 October

[247] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/24618226.plans-demolish-st-james-vicarage-darlington-submitted/

C6 – *Top:* Semi-detached houses along Haughton Road possibly dating from the 1930s, with unusual front extensions. *Centre:* The terrace of former railway housing appears little altered. The modern building to the right is of no interest. Note the former higher road level. *Bottom:* The Vicarage to St James church is currently derelict. The tall retaining wall originates from the later lowering of the road. Note the incongruous modern development in its immediate surroundings to the left/east. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

C7 – Haughton Road Bridge. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises Haughton Road Bridge.

Haughton Road would have originally crossed the Croft branch of the S&DR in 1829 (see section 3.3), probably with a level crossing. It is unknown to the author when a bridge was provided over the railway line. The road levels on the 1855 map suggest

that it was already in place by then, at that time crossing the York-to-Berwick line. The parapet wall is constructed in ashlar sandstone with (later?) triangular copings. The bridge structure was not inspected by the author. Although the parapet is high, views can be gleaned from the centre of the bridge looking north along the railway line going to Newcastle, with the listed GNER Engine Shed to the east, and the Bishop Auckland line curving to the west, roughly following the route of the old Croft branch (see above: C5). Moreover, the landmark Darlington Forge building (see above: C3) can be spotted in the far background. A later pedestrian-and-cyclist bridge has been added to the southeast of the historical bridge.

C7 – *Top* (Photo © Gaby Rose, August 2023): Haughton Road Bridge, looking southwest. The curved metal structure of the later bridge can be seen to the left/south. *Bottom* (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024): View from the bridge looking north, with the converted GNER engine shed in the background to the right/northeast and route of former Croft branch to the left/northwest. The landmark Darlington Forge building can be seen between the tracks in the far background.

This area justifies inclusion as it marks the crossing of Haughton Road over the former Croft branch. The bridge may be an early railway structure and includes features of interest. The view from it is important too, looking towards the location where the S&D Crossing (see above: C5) would have been, just behind the former GNER Engine Shed. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from the Haughton Road Bridge. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the character and appearance of this area.

D – Minor adjustment. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The proposed new boundary comprises a small piece of land to the east of 2 High Northgate within the Conservation Area under review which is part of the property, as shown on the 25-inch OS map of 1896. This area justifies inclusion as it completes the historical plot and tidies up the boundary line in this location. There are generally no public views of this area, as it is concealed behind tall gates and a building extension. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to further harmful development.

D – View from Leadenhall Street looking south. The proposed new area is concealed behind the tall timber gates and single-storey extension, and is part of the historical plot of 2 High Northgate, which is the building to the right/west. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

E – Corporation Road school, church and housing. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises the remainder of Corporation Road with the terraced housing to either side and their corresponding back lanes, the school including its outbuildings and back lane, and the Darlington Baptist Church including its side lane.

The 1896 map shows Corporation Road and some of its terraced properties (presumably under construction at the time) and the main/central school building as well as outbuildings to the rear. The foundation stone of the Baptist church was laid in November 1904. The 1913/14 map shows the planform of the area very similar to today, although there have been some new buildings/extensions to the church and school as well as the loss of some smaller buildings since then. When on site, it is apparent that the church and school are fine examples of architecture, with much of their original character and appearance retained, as well as their scoria-paved back/ side lanes. The school still has some of its historical brick boundary walling with stone copings and iron fencing to the front and outbuildings along the tall boundary wall to the rear. The two brick terraces have shallow front gardens (although much altered) and scoria-paved back lanes. Whilst many properties have been negatively impacted by harmful development (e.g. modern renders, uPVC windows and doors), much architectural interest survives, such as the use of polychromatic brickwork, prominent chimney stacks, original dormer windows with finials, elaborate eaves detailing, and moulded stone lintels including hood moulds to the doors.

E – *Top left:* Darlington Baptist Church of 1904 including polychromatic brickwork and fine architectural detailing, looking southeast. *Top right:* Scoria-paved side lane with the church to the right/north. *Centre top:* Main school building and east wing with distinct curved gable designs and landmark central 'tower', looking north. *Centre bottom:* The scoria-paved back lane to the school is bounded by brick outbuildings behind tall walling; east wing to the left/ south. *Bottom:* Terraced houses with shallow front gardens along Corporation Road, looking west. Note the rhythm created by the bay windows, original dormers and chimney stacks. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

This area justifies inclusion as it forms part of the nineteenth-century residential development around Lodge Park, which is within the Conservation Area under review. Moreover, the church and school buildings are clearly of architectural value. The terraces also retain features of interest and complete the remainder of Corporation Road, which is already partly within the Conservation Area under review. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Corporation Road, Thornton Street, Easson Road, Bartlett Street, Wilkes Street, the back/side lanes and from inside the Baptist church. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to further harmful development.

F – Back lane behind North Lodge Terrace. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The proposed new boundary comprises the western half of the scoria-paved back lane behind North Lodge Terrace. This area justifies inclusion as only the eastern part of the lane is included within the Conservation Area under review. However, this lane needs to be treated as 'a whole' in order to retain its character and appearance. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Gladstone Street, Elmfield Terrace and the back lane itself. Conservation Area designation would help protect (or even enhance) the historical character and appearance of this area, which is vulnerable to further harmful development.

F – Back lane to rear of North Lodge Terrace, looking north; note the original shuttered openings to both sides. The rendered wall further on to the right/east has a harmful impact on the historical character of this lane. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

G – Kendrew Street. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC's proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises the land between St Augustines Way (A68, inner ring road), Kendrew Street West carpark, Gladstone Street and Northgate (A167).

John Kendrew (1748-1800), after whom the street was named, was a weaver who lived around here as a child. He adapted the Spinning Jenny for the spinning of flax for linen. The open-air swimming baths were built along the north side of Kendrew Street in 1851, in the location of the current Kendrew Street East surface carpark. They were roofed over in 1889 and demolished in 1983[248]. The 1855 OS map shows a

[248] Flynn 1988, photo 54

corner building to the east of the baths which still survives (now Holly Street and nos. 8-9 Kendrew Street); it is the oldest surviving heritage asset in this area. The map depicts further buildings of similar scale to the east up to Northgate and gardens to the north. By 1896 (25-inch OS map), the gardens had been lost and the area further built up. The (now commercial) building range to the north of the corner building still survives and includes a carved stone plaque 'D.B.Q.C. 1879' of the Darlington Quoit Club, which is visible from the north end of Holly Street. The inscribed stone may have been relocated here from a 'Club' shown on the 1896 map in the current position of Northgate House. To the west of the public baths, Queen Street had been completed; this is now the location of the access lane into the carpark. The 1913/14 map shows the newly constructed Gladstone Street and further development of the area. The construction of the dual-carriageway inner ring road in the approximate location of Kendrew Street between 1969 and 1973 and Northgate House three years later, and the demolition of the swimming baths and other old buildings caused major harm to this historical area and its wider surroundings.

G – View across the inner ring road looking northeast. The corner building (Holly Street and nos. 8-9 Kendal Street) is the oldest surviving heritage asset in this area. In the background, the attached, slightly lower building to the left/north includes the 1879 Quoit Club inscription, in the approximate location of the yellow van. Behind it, [H] Central Secondary School within the Conservation Area under review can be glimpsed. Northgate House to the right/east is completely out of scale and not in keeping with the surrounding architectural language. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2024)

This area justifies inclusion because of its association with the pre-railway textile industry (John Kendrew). It also retains a pre-1855 building and another nineteenth-century complex. The historical road layout is still fairly readable, despite the damage caused by the construction of the inner ring road and carparks. The special architectural and historic interest of this area is experienced by the public from Commercial Street, St Augustines Way, Kendrew Street, Gladstone Street, Northgate, and the Commercial Street and Kendrew Street carparks. Conservation Area designation is required to help enhance the historical character and appearance of this area, which is very vulnerable to further harmful development.

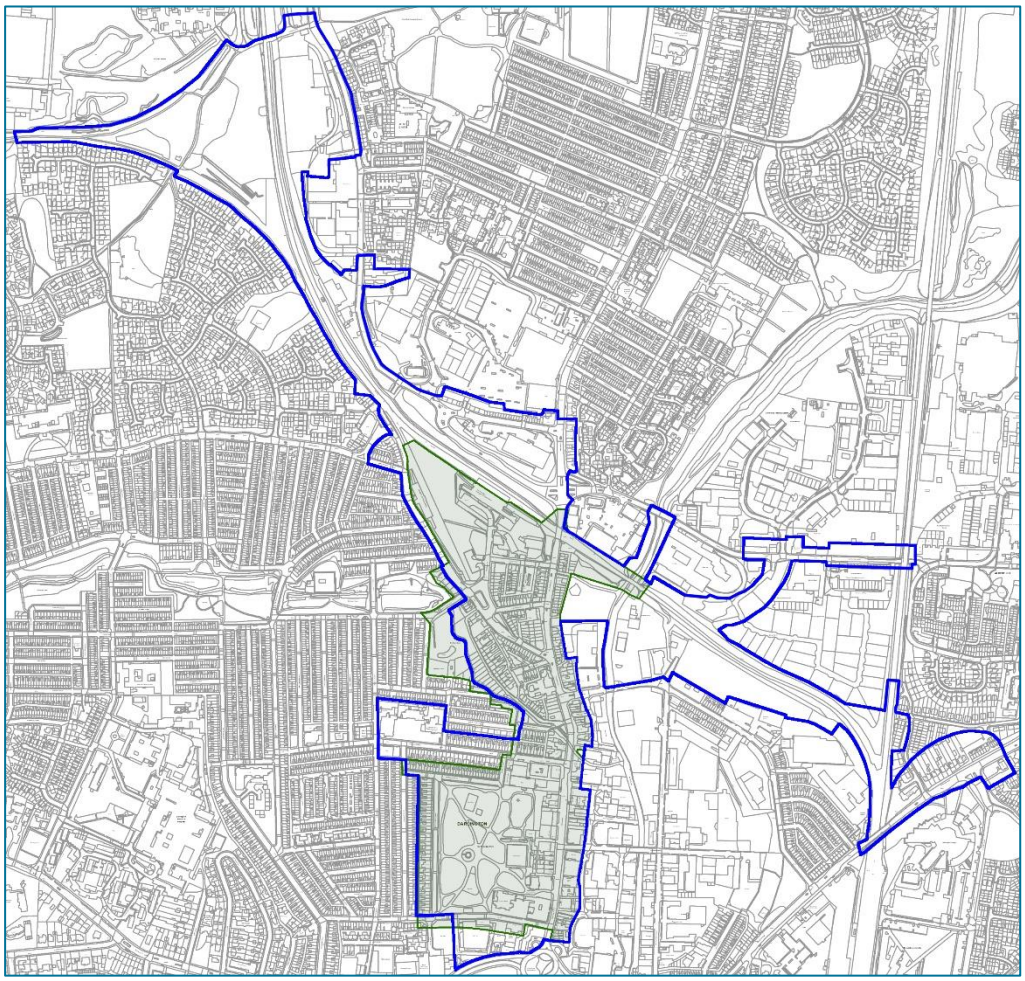
Further areas had been considered for inclusion when drafting the appraisal but were dismissed for the following reasons:

- **Buildings along Hopetown Lane**, as proposed by DCC: The development pattern along Hopetown Lane is not entirely linear but consists of large terraced blocks. Therefore, if any plots were to be included, it would need to be the whole blocks (historical grain). However, it has been considered that too much of the architectural

interest has been eroded in these parts, and that they are not as historically significant as the early triangular settlement site (block) to the north (see above: A6).

- **Weaver's Way and John Dobbin Road**: Whilst both road names are associated with the artist, the routes are entirely modern and not in keeping with the historical settlement grain in this area. The historical route of Weaver's Yard (see section 3.6), where John Dobbin was born, has largely been demolished.
- **Garden Street carpark**: Garden Street, first shown on the 1896 OS map, was named after the gardens of Edward Pease which had been located here, behind [13] 138-148 Northgate. They stretched all the way to the Skerne. On the opposite riverbank were the grounds of East Mount, home of Edward's eldest son John, with a rustic bridge leading to an orchard. This area was called Peaceful Valley (1855 map) but also nick-named Pease-full Valley[249]. Sadly, the historical grain in this area has largely been destroyed by modern development (see section 3.2).

5.3 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed New Boundary



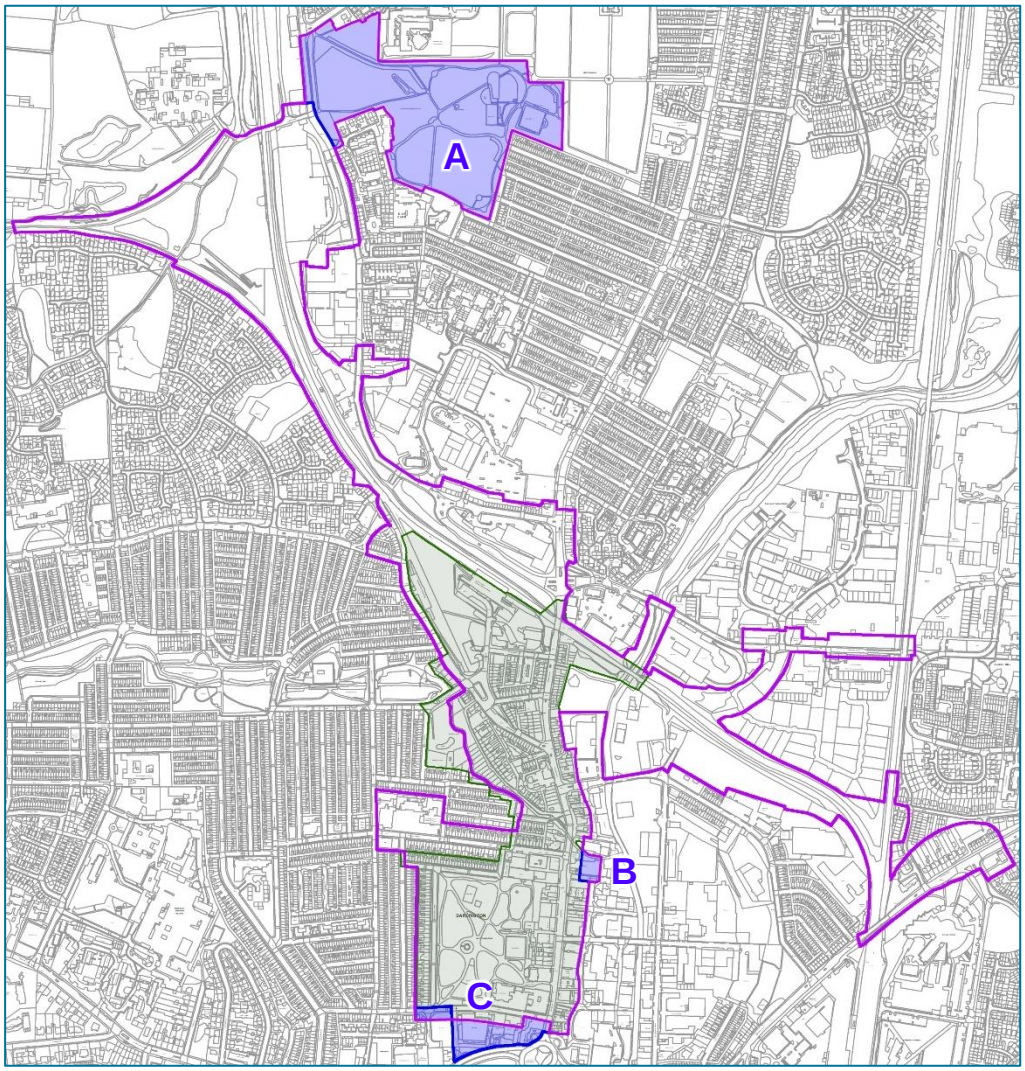
Proposed **(draft)** *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area* boundary in blue **at the time of review**. Northgate Conservation Area boundary line adopted in July 2003 in green. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

[249] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 16

The map above shows the proposed new boundary for the Conservation Area at the time of review (September 2024), which was put out for public consultation. It was also proposed that its new name would be *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area* to reflect its place in a wider historic environment beyond the Council's boundaries.

Please note that this boundary line will not be adopted (see chapter 6.0).

5.4 Changes to Boundary post Public Consultation



Post-consultation changes to the *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary* proposed in the draft appraisal (see section 5.3) shaded in blue, with the finalised new boundary line in pink (see chapter 6.0). Northgate Conservation Area boundary adopted in July 2003 in green. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Considering the feedback received during the consultation period, the following changes have been made to the boundary proposed in the draft appraisal (see section 5.3), see map above:

A. **The inclusion of North Park**, as suggested by one of the Councillors. This new extension area is justified for the following reasons:

- Like North Lodge Park, which is already within the Conservation Area under review, North Park was created by the town council on former estate grounds (Honeypot House).
- The opening of North Park (1896) precedes the opening of North Lodge Park (1903).
- This public park was built as the result of the industrial expansion of the area, to provide a 'green lung' for resident workers[250].
- The original North Park was smaller and expanded in the first half of the twentieth century. Much of the layout created by 1950 still survives (see old maps).
- There is a visual interrelationship between the park and the already proposed extension area including the Rise Carr Rolling Mills, Alexandra Hotel and railway bridge (see section 5.2/A2).
- The surviving old trees and non-listed bandstand would benefit from conservation area designation (see chapter 2.0).

Top: The former Alexandra Hotel and Rise Carr Rolling Mills viewed from inside North Park looking southwest. *Middle:* Old trees associated with the original park layout with slightly later bandstand in the background, looking northwest. *Bottom left:* Bandstand erected sometime between 1896 and 1913/14. *Bottom right:* Double line of mature trees associated with the pre-1950 extension of the park. (Photos © Gaby Rose, November 2024)

[250] Lloyd 2005, pages 138-139

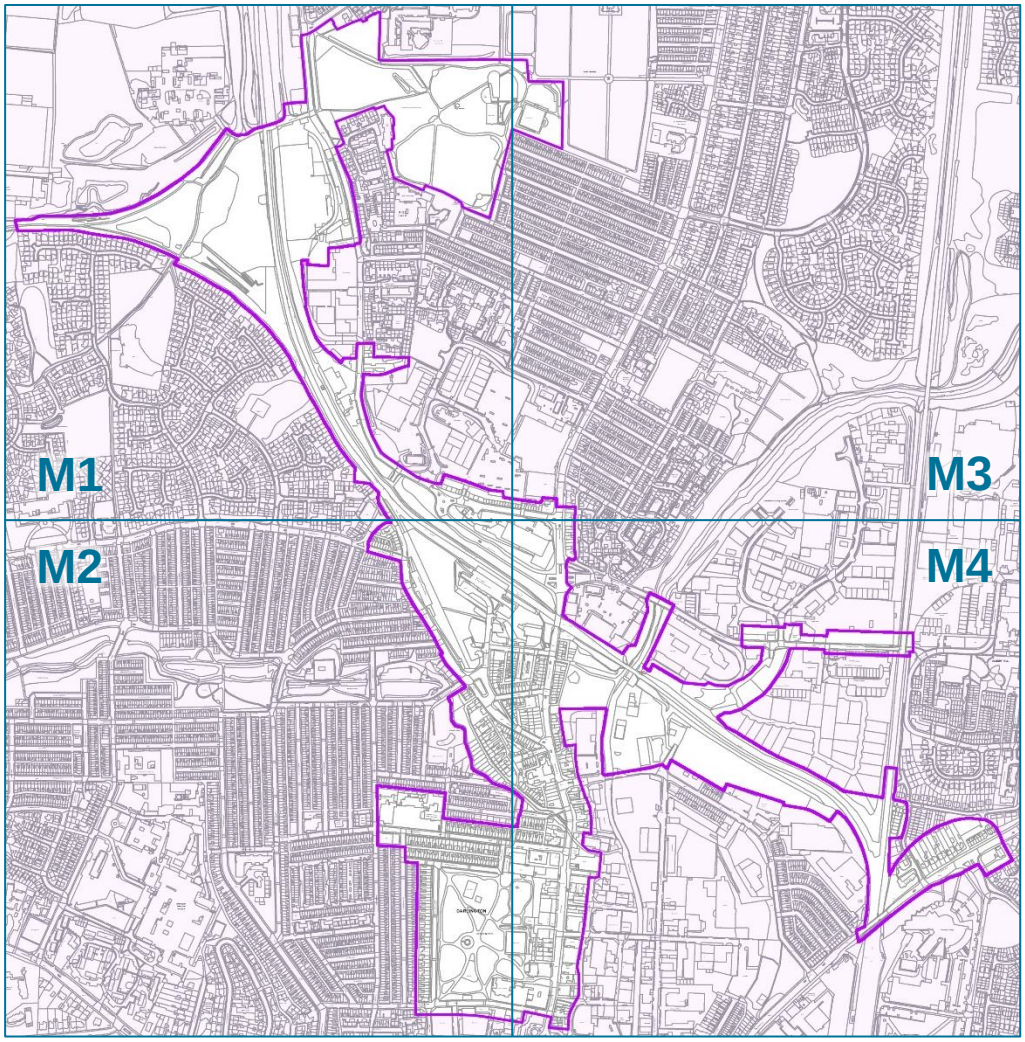
B. **The inclusion of remainder of the Odeon cinema/former Theatre Royal and its curtilage along Wooller Street**, as advised by Cinema Theatre Organisation. This minor amendment makes sense as the 2003 boundary cuts through this important building.

Rear of the (currently vacant) Odeon cinema, which still includes parts of the former Theatre Royal, with Wooler Street to the left/south. (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024)

C. **The retention of the existing (2003) southern boundary line.** During the public consultation period, land in this part of the Northgate Conservation Area was proposed both for exclusion (see section 5.1/E) and inclusion (see section 5.2/G). However, following the consultation period, the Council decided not to make any changes here.

Adoption of Finalised Boundary (DATE)

The map below shows the finalised boundary which is proposed for adoption, including the name change to **Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area**. More detailed maps are provided on the following pages.

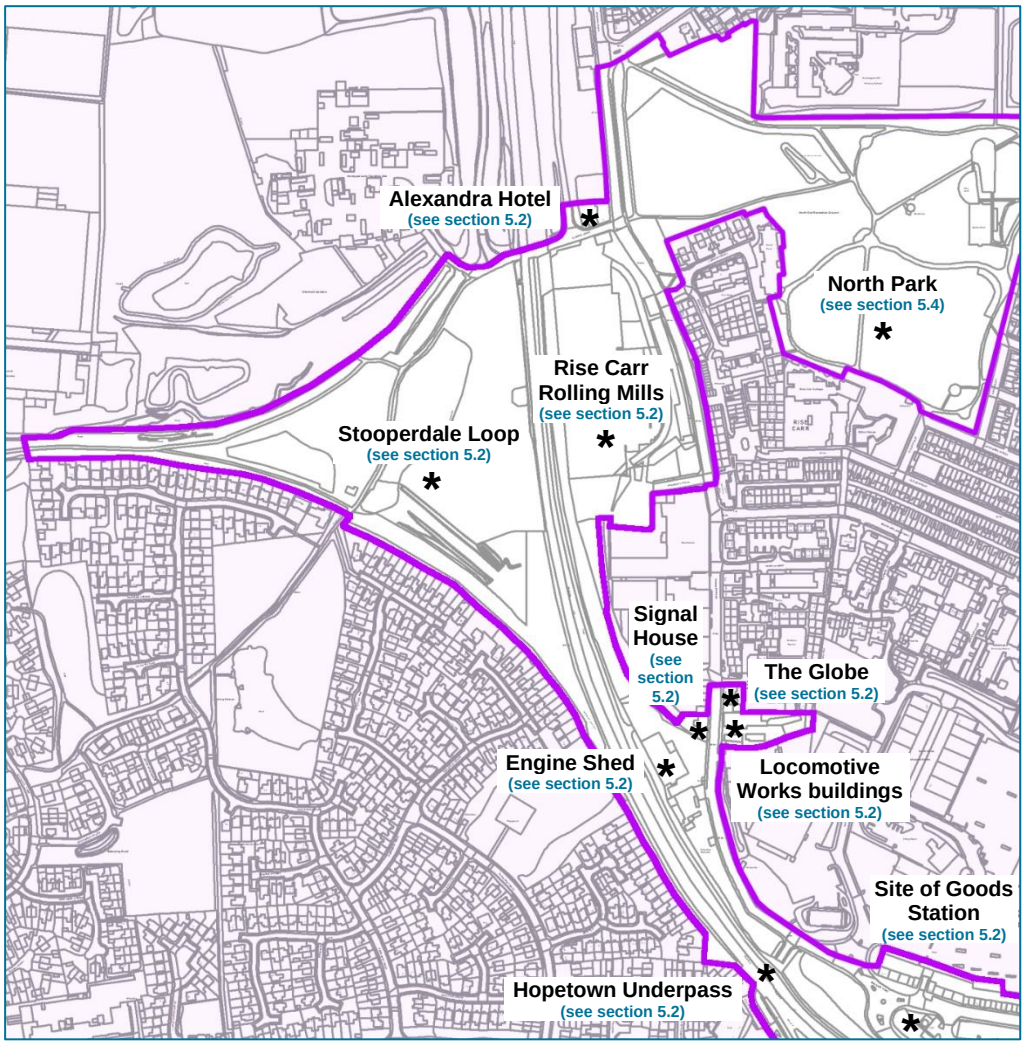


Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The finalised boundary comprises the following changes to the Northgate Conservation Area under review:

- The exclusion of certain areas within the boundary adopted in 2003 as proposed in the draft appraisal (see section 5.1) with the exception of area E (see section 5.4)
- The extension areas proposed in the draft appraisal (see section 5.2) with the exception of area G (see section 5.4)
- The inclusion of remainder of the Odeon cinema, including its curtilage, and North Park (see section 5.4)

Map Excerpt M1

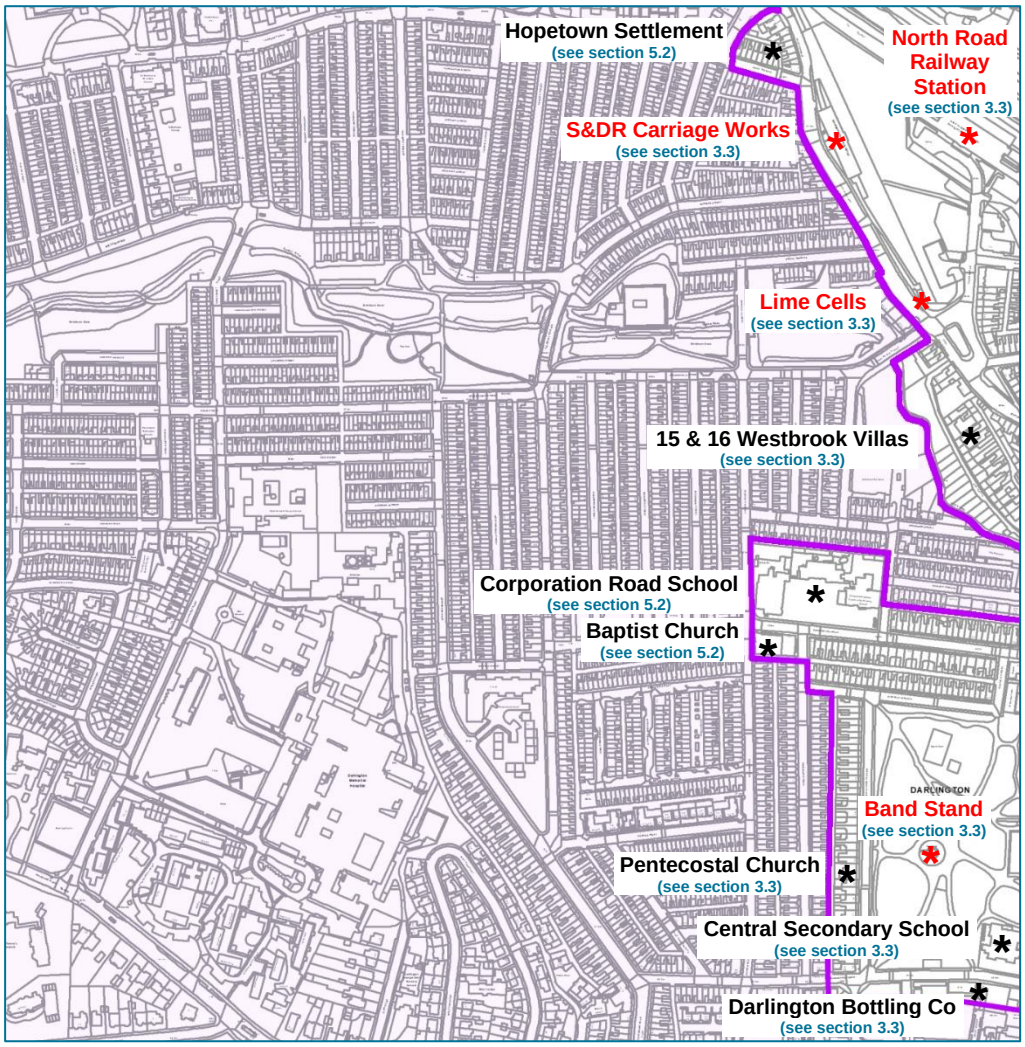


Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. **Place/building names refer to historical uses of sites.** (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The finalised new boundary does not result in an overall improvement of the condition of Conservation Area. It remains on the **Heritage at Risk Register**.

The Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area faces the same issues and challenges as the Conservation Area boundary adopted in 2003 (see section 4.1), including its new extension areas. These contain structures that are vacant and/or in poor condition, like the Rise Carr Rolling Mills (see section 5.2/A2). Historical buildings are at risk of being significantly modified, such as Signal House (see section 5.2/A4) where the roof is currently (November 2024) being raised. Moreover, the inclusion of the land to the north of the inner ring road, including Northgate House (see section 5.2/G), brings additional threats to the newly adopted Conservation Area. The successful design and scale of any potential new development will be a major challenge in such a sensitive gateway location.

Map Excerpt M2

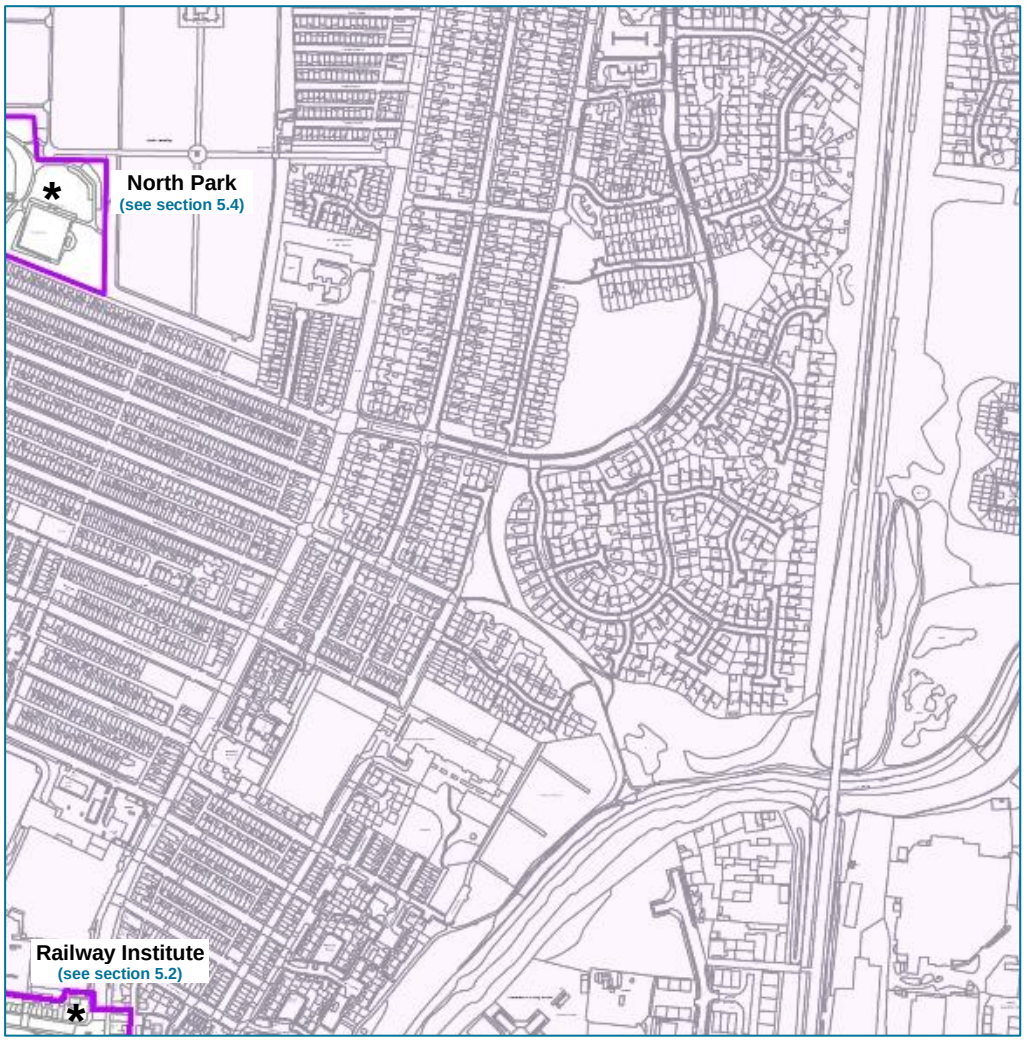


Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. **Place/building names refer to historical uses of sites, or listed building designations (red).** (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

In order to prevent cumulative piecemeal harm in the long term, it is strongly recommended that the existing article 4 direction is comprehensively reviewed and a new direction made for the finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area (see section 4.3). It is essential that any article 4 direction, including the existing one, is strictly enforced.

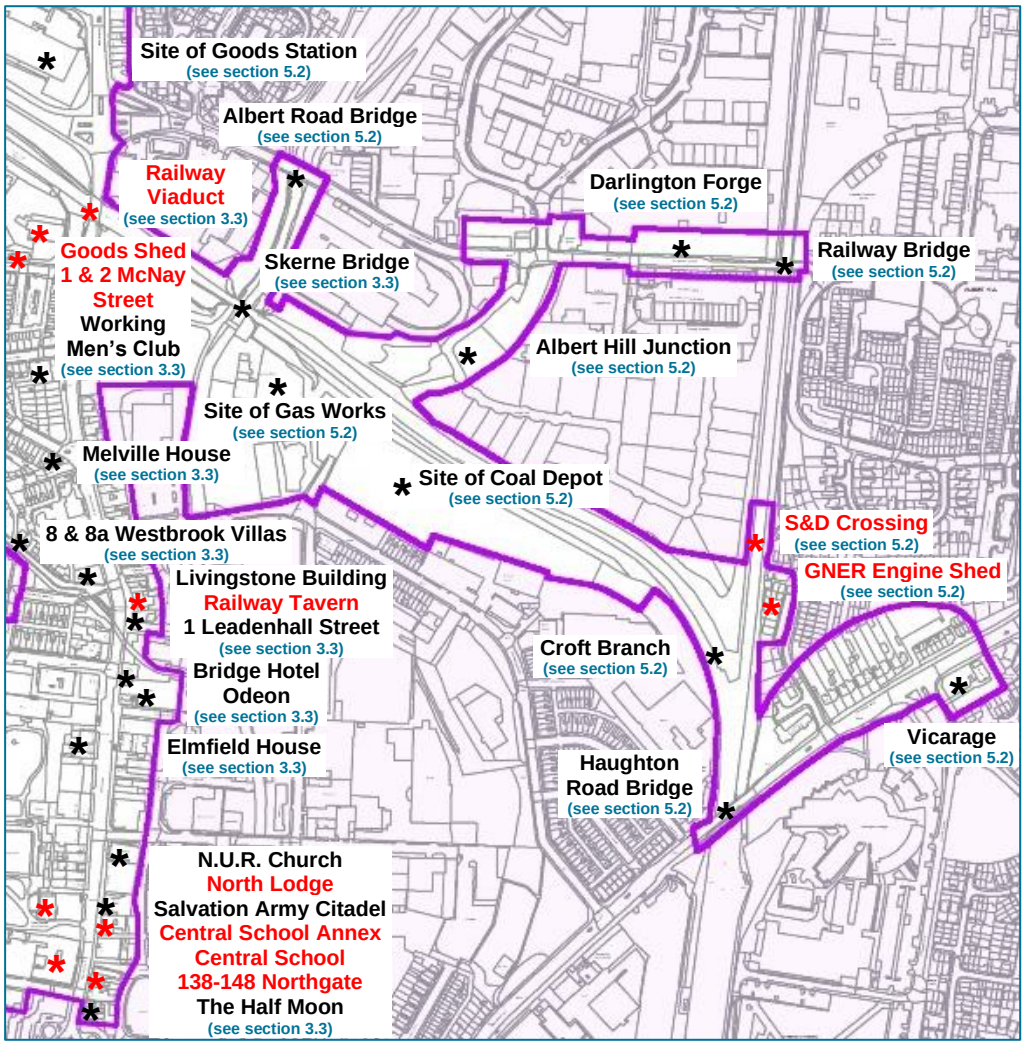
> ⚠ **At the time of adoption, the existing article 4 direction (see section 3.6) was not affected by any of the boundary changes. The Northgate Conservation Area Direction (2006) still applies to the boundary adopted in 2003.**

Map Excerpt M3



Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. **Place/building names refer to historical uses of sites.** (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

Map Excerpt M4



Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. **Place/building names refer to historical uses of sites, or listed building designations (red).** (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

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Please note that information retrieved from Darlington Borough Council 2007 has not been referenced in the text.

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North Eastern Railway Association: https://ner.org.uk/

Planning Portal: https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission

The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust: https://www.a1steam.com/

The North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Society: https://nelpg.org/

The Northern Echo: https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/

Whessoe Engineering Limited: https://whessoe.co.uk/

Appendix: Outcome of Public Consultation

The general parameters of the consultation process have been outlined at the start of the appraisal (see section 1.3). Altogether, the Council received a total of eighteen responses on the document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft. September 2024***, comprising representatives of (number of responses in brackets):

- (5) The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)
- (3) Darlington Borough Council (DBC) staff
- (2) Residents outside the existing or proposed conservation area
- (2) Westbrook Area Residents Association
- (1) Cinema Theatre Organisation
- (1) A1 Steam Locomotive Trust
- (1) DBC Councillor
- (1) Historic England
- (1) Durham County Council
- (1) Darlington Interest Group (part of the Friends of the S&DR)

Six of the above filled in the feedback form that had been provided by the Council. Below is a summary of the responses received (number of responses/comments in brackets). The text in blue explains how the feedback has been considered for the revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised Document. March 2025:***

Q1 *Before you took part in this consultation, were you aware that 'Northgate' is designated as a Conservation Area?*

(5) Yes (1) No

Q2 *Do you live or work in the present Northgate Conservation Area boundary, see map at the start of the appraisal document?*

(3) Yes (3) No

Q3 *Do you live or work in the proposed extension boundary of the Northgate Conservation Area, see map in section 5.2 of the appraisal document?*

(5) Yes (1) No

Q4 *What is your personal or professional interest in the Northgate Conservation Area?* Comments:

- (3) Interest in railway heritage assets & history
- (2) Member/volunteer at railway heritage charity
- (2) Resident at Westbrook
- (1) Interest in general Darlington heritage & history
- (1) Daily walks through Conservation Area

Q5 *Before you took part in this consultation, were you aware that there is an Article 4 direction on the Northgate Conservation Area, see section 2.3 of the document?*

(4) Yes (2) No

Q6 *Do you think Northgate benefits from being a Conservation Area?*

(5) Yes – comments:

- (4) Designation helps preserve/improve some of the heritage value
- (1) Residents are more inclined to take pride in the appearance of the area and be more informed about its important history

(1) No – comments:

- (1) It is not obvious that insensitive changes have been stopped or money been put into the area

Q7 *Do you think that the draft appraisal accurately describes the significance, character and appearance of the Northgate Conservation Area, see section 3.0?*

(4) Yes – comments:

- (2) Consistent with personal knowledge of the area
- (1) Well researched and use of significant supporting evidence
- (1) Detailed, descriptive and illustrated by photographs

(2) No – comments:

- (2) Westbrook is not correctly represented with regards to its vegetation growth, vehicle access, car parking and Cocker Beck
  - Additional information has been provided **(see sections 3.5 & 4.1)**
- (1) Westbrook is not correctly represented with regards to the artwork and outbuildings in the back lane, and the PEASE brick wall
  - Additional information has been provided **(see sections 3.5 & 3.6)**
- (1) Draft appears dismissive of community heritage celebrations
  - The draft appraisal only commented on the poor condition of the present Westbrook display boards; this has been retained **(see section 3.5)**

Q8 *What, in your opinion, are the most positive aspects about the Northgate Conservation Area; what should be protected?* Comments:

- (5) General tangible heritage including buildings
- (2) Railway architectural heritage
- (2) Westbrook's social history, community pride & environment
- (1) The setting and views of Skerne Bridge
- (1) Greenspaces
- (1) Everything that has been proposed in the draft appraisal

➢ These points are summarised at the beginning of **section 3.6**

Q9 *What, in your opinion, are the most negative aspects about the Northgate Conservation Area; what could be improved?* Comments:

- (2) Modern development incl. front extensions to historical buildings
- (2) The poor condition and lack of maintenance of parts of the area or certain buildings
- (2) Issues at Westbrook: Absent landlords, HMOs, self-seeded mature trees, lack of support from the Council, and lack of collaboration between Council and various agencies
- (1) Inappropriate uses of buildings (e.g. takeaways)
- (1) Street clutter, signage and litter
- (1) Lack of enforcement regarding unauthorised changes to buildings
- (1) No negative aspects

➢ These points are summarised at the beginning of **section 4.1**

Q10 *How, in your opinion, could positive change be implemented? How could negative change be avoided?* Comments:

- (4) Planning enforcement (in particular with regards to article 4 direction) and the use of other statutory powers
- (4) Guidance for local people, e.g. on design, funding and Council's/ other agencies' roles and responsibilities
- (3) Financial aid for building owners and residents
- (2) Restriction of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Local Plan)
- (2) Engagement with residents, schools/colleges & businesses
- (2) A clear cross-Council strategy for the implementation of a management plan for the area
- (1) Use of volunteers to keep area tidy and report issues
- (1) More appropriate uses for buildings
- (1) Restoration of historical features

➢ These points are summarised at the beginning of **section 4.3**

Q11 *Do you agree with the proposed boundary changes, see section 5.0 of appraisal document?*

(5) Yes – comments:

- (2) Extension areas are important to the heritage/management of the Northgate Conservation Area
- (1) Provides protection for railway heritage
- (1) The wider area the better – include as much as possible

(0) No

Q12 *Any other comments?*

- (1) Issues regarding the poor state of Skerne Bridge

- Additional information has been provided **(see section 4.2)**
- (1) Full support of the proposed extension of the Conservation Area boundary – heritage needs to be preserved
- (1) Engagement with Westbrook residents in the preparation of the draft appraisal was minimal and superficial
  - The six-week consultation period provided opportunities for feedback and engagement **(see section 1.3)**
- (1) The Council needs to recognise that residents and property owners are key partners in managing, maintaining, promoting and improving the Northgate Conservation Area

The remaining consultation responses were sent in by email. Below is an overview of what they contained. The text in blue explains how responses have been considered for the revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised Document. March 2025:***

- Strong support from Historic England and Friends of the S&DR of the descriptive/analytical information and proposals provided within the draft appraisal
- General comments about the Council and development & planning/ conservation issues in Darlington
  - These were not specific to the Northgate Conservation Area under review and have therefore not been included
- Requests to further reference or credit source materials
  - The use of the Dobbin painting has been credited **(page 2)**
  - Further information from the 2021 Urban Design Framework & Masterplan has been provided **(see sections 3.6, 4.1 & 4.3)**
  - Further information from *Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Second edition, Historic England Advice Note 1* has been provided **(see sections 5.1 & 5.2)**
  - Information on Durham County Council's *Local Heritage List. Stockton and Darlington Railway (Including Shildon)* has been provided **(see sections 5.2 & 7.1)**
- Suggestion to make changes to the layout and presentation of the appraisal
  - It has been decided not to combine the assessment of the proposed extension areas (section 5.2) with that of the Conservation Area under review (chapter 3.0), as this would be very time consuming and potentially confusing to the record of the appraisal process. However, assets within 5.2 have been cross-referenced into section 3.3 where mentioned.
  - It has been decided that the overall layout and presentation of the document is fit for purpose (mainly for digital use).
- Suggestion to provide additional analysis of certain aspects of the area
  - It has been decided that the information on the 'other notable buildings' is adequate **(see chapter 3.0)**. Further emphasis has been made that all heritage assets within a conservation area are designated **(see chapter 2.0)**.
  - Plans showing positive and negative contributors are provided **(see page 3 and sections 3.4 & 5.1)**. There are no clear-cut 'neutral' contributors as such.

- Query about the information on the North Road Station area being out of date
  - Photos that were notably out of date at the time of review (September 2024) have been replaced with new ones and the text amended **(see sections 3.3 & 3.4)**
- Suggestions by the Friends of the S&DR, Highways and others to provide various additional information and correct mistakes regarding factual aspects of the area
  - These have been incorporated into **sections 3.2 to 3.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4 & 5.2**
- Offer of assistance by the Friends of the S&DR to the Council on a variety of matters
  - This has been included in **section 4.3**
- Information about architect Matthew Pease's vision to underground the vehicular traffic at the Northgate roundabout and proposed restoration of the exterior of the Pease House
  - This has been included in **section 4.3**
- Advice from Historic England to retain the highway on Gladstone Street (at junction with North Lodge Terrace) within the amended Conservation Area boundary
  - This has been accepted **(see section 5.4)**
- Further suggested boundary extensions to include the whole of the Odeon cinema and its curtilage, two listed iron bridges[251] [252] over the Skerne, Honey Pot House[253], and North Park
  - It has been agreed to include the remainder of the Odeon cinema and its curtilage in the new boundary **(see section 5.4)**
  - It has been decided not to include the two listed iron bridges as they are
    a) at some distance to the Conservation Area boundary
    b) protected by listed building designation
  - It has been decided not to include Honeypot House (NB the surviving building is not the old estate house, which was demolished in the early 1960s[254]) as it
    a) is at some distance to the new Conservation Area boundary
    b) is protected by listed building designation
    c) does not fit in with the key elements of significance of the Northgate Conservation Area (see section 3.1)
  - It has been agreed to include North Park in the new boundary **(see section 5.4)**
- Advice from Historic England to clearly identify negative aspects in the revised new Conservation Area
  - This has been included in **chapter 6.0**

[251] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1242992
[252] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1329402
[253] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1121279
[254] Lloyd 2005, page 139

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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conservation@darlington.gov.uk

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

Trevor Watson, Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Council on progress towards the Council's net zero target.

Summary

2. Following Council elections in 2023, the Climate Emergency Declaration was re-affirmed, and the Council's carbon neutral target was brought forward to 2040.

3. The Climate Change Officer recruited in January 2024 left service in January 2025. Recruitment for a new Climate Change Officer has taken place with the new starter joining the team in May 2025.

4. The Council's emission reduction trajectory of 40% reduction every five years is still in place. Council emissions for 2024/25 were 6,642 tonnes CO2e. The emissions we report are made up of the energy use in council buildings; business mileage; fleet emissions, and streetlighting and signs. We do not currently measure emissions from our supply chain or from waste.

5. Our carbon emissions for 2024/25 have increased from 2023/24. Investigations are ongoing. However, the opening of the new Hopetown Museum will have impacted on our emissions.

6. We have requested data from the Met Office on numbers of days below expected temperatures during the winter period. If there were a significant number of days, this could have impacted on the amount of gas required for heating.

7. A carbon audit of the Council's land indicated that approximately 1000 tonnes of carbon are being stored each year.

8. Data on the wider Borough emissions are published by the Government in June, so this data is not yet available to us.

9. Of the 121 actions due to be reported at the end of 2024/25, 109 are on track and nine have been completed (see **Appendix 1**).

10. Following the recent motion declaring a nature restoration emergency, we will revise the climate change strategy and action plan.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Reasons

12. The recommendations are supported by the increasing public pressure to act on climate change, we run the risk of significant damage to our reputation if we do not deliver on our stated commitment to dealing with the Council's contribution to climate change.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

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

Margaret Enstone: Extension 6229

Council Plan	This report reflects the Council Plan Core Principle in Tackling Climate Change. In turn, 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
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
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.
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. This report is a progress report of our journey to becoming a carbon neutral 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. It will not affect any particular ward.
Groups Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular group.
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	No

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

13. Following Council elections in 2023, the Climate Emergency Declaration was re-affirmed, and the Council's carbon neutral target was brought forward to 2040. Further aims to increase engagement with residents and businesses were included with the intention of reducing wider borough emissions. A further commitment to monitor the Council's supply chain emissions was also added.

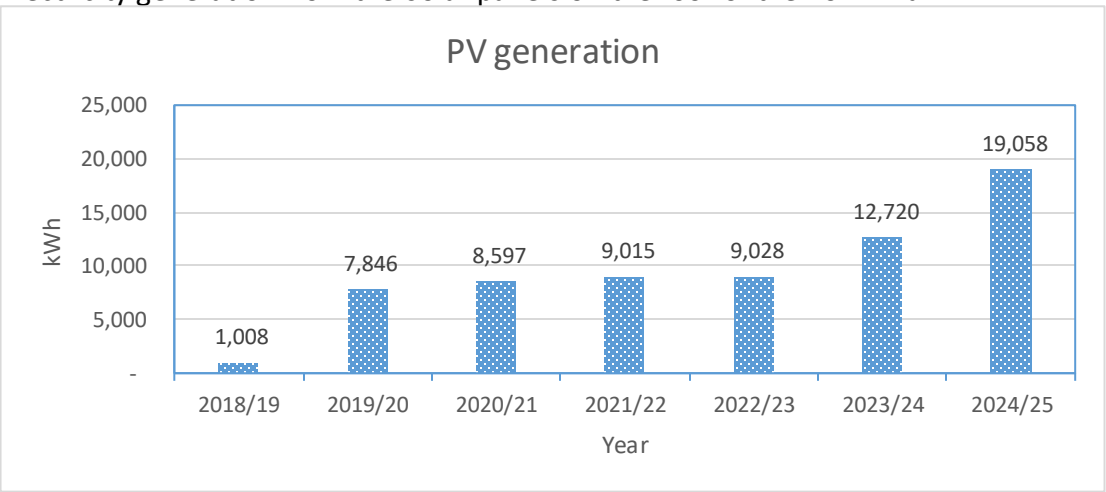
14. The Climate Change Officer recruited in January 2024 left service in January 2025. Recruitment for a new Climate Change Officer has taken place with the new starter joining the team in May 2025. For the interim period, the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer has carried out both roles, with some necessary delay in planned implementation of tasks.

15. The Council's emission reduction trajectory of 40% reduction every five years is still in place.

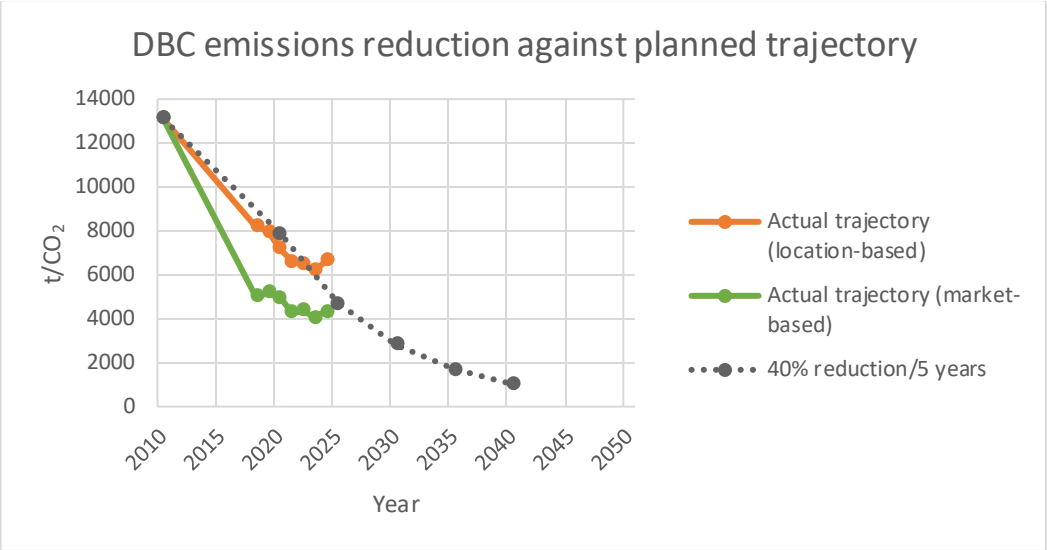
16. Emissions to date:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	tCO_2	tCO_2	tCO_2	tCO_2	tCO_2	tCO_2	tCO_2	tCO_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
Water	0	0		-	-	11.40	12.97	-
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

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



18. Trajectory



19. We report emissions as recommended by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and show both location-based emissions, which use the average grid emissions that reflect the energy that we are using and market-based emissions, which take into account the zero carbon tariff that we have chosen. The emissions we report are made up of the energy use in council buildings (not including Council homes as we do not control how residents use the energy); business mileage; fleet emissions, and streetlighting and signs.

20. Clearly, the past year has seen a rise in emissions. We still need to investigate this further, but there are a few additional sets of emissions that we are reporting in this period.

21. Hopetown opened in 2024 after a period of refurbishment with a greatly increased number of buildings open to the public. The resulting increase in gas and electricity use is showing in the 2024/5 period. The listed building status of most of the buildings means that solar panels are not permitted.

22. This year also, for the first time, we have data from fuel cards for fleet and equipment used by Street Scene. As a proportion of our overall emissions, the impact of this is minor, but it is an addition to our reporting.

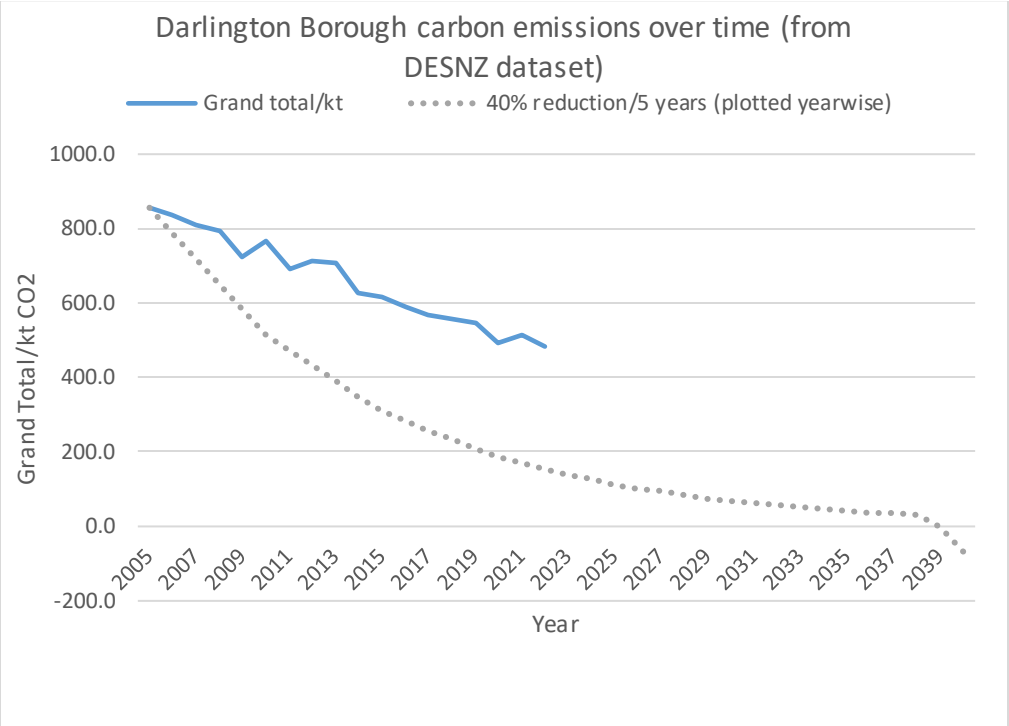
23. We have requested data from the Met Office on numbers of days below expected temperatures during the winter period. If there were a significant number of days, this could have impacted on the amount of gas required for heating.

24. Further investigation will take place and will be reported at the six-monthly report due in January 2026.

25. On the positive side, we carried out an audit of Council land to assess its ability to store carbon. The full report is on the website, but initial figures suggest Council land is currently storing approximately 1000 tonnes each year.

26. The 2023 motion bringing forward the date for carbon neutrality to 2040, also included a requirement to monitor Borough-wide emissions. These figures are drawn from the

government's published figures. These are published in summer, two years in arrears, so data for 2023 is not yet available to us. The figures below relate to 2022.

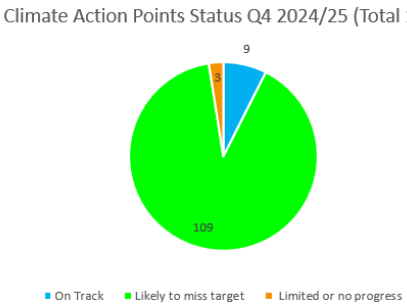


27. We have no target for Borough emissions, but we have mapped the Government data against a 40% reduction every five years trajectory, to align with our Council target.

28. The Council is directly responsible for 2-5% of Borough emissions. However, we do have the ability to influence up to 80% of them. The difference in the actual vs trajectory above, demonstrates that we must reflect on the wider implications of decisions we make.

Climate change action plan

29. At the end of March 2025, 109 actions were on track with nine completed (see Appendix 1). Three actions were likely to miss their target, mostly due to capacity issues.



30. Highlights include:

    (a) In 2023, the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer was invited to take part in a project to develop guidance for local authorities to report to Defra on adaptation progress. This work culminated in a trial in 2024, for local authorities to report to the Secretary of State under the Climate Change Act's Adaptation Reporting Power. Our report was submitted in December 2024 and was well received with feedback stating

that it was a "fair description of the climate issues facing the council and the steps to overcome these challenges using a wide range of data and statistics".

(b) Work on installing solar panels on the Dolphin Centre has begun and this and other actions within the Dolphin Centre are expected to be completed ahead of schedule.

(c) Against initial expectations, encouraging the taxi trade to switch to electric is proceeding well. At the beginning of the programme, we had 13 hybrid vehicles and no electric vehicles in the licensed fleet. We now have 76 hybrids and five fully electric, which equates to 31.7% of our fleet.

(d) The initial tree planting target was 20,000 trees by 2025. The team has worked with community groups, businesses and schools and the current total is approximately 47,700. The target has now been increased to 100,000 trees by 2030.

(e) In 2024, the Head of Environmental Services and the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer worked together to commission the first UK local authority audit of council land and its ability to absorb carbon. Following that audit, the Environment team is now running a trial on alternative seeding to increase the potential of council land to absorb carbon emissions.

(f) We have extended the HVO trial on our refuse trucks and have now added solar panels on five of the refuse trucks. These panels reduce the amount of fuel used on ancillary tasks such as the lifts, radios and lights.

31. Following the recent motion declaring a nature restoration emergency, we will revise the climate change strategy and action plan.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

HR Implications

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

Estates and Property Advice

35. 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

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

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

37. Climate change is a corporate priority. Public scrutiny in this area is growing and we should consider and set out the climate impacts of decisions. This report shows how we are progressing on our journey.

Equalities considerations

38. 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

39. 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.

APPENDIX A

The tables below show progress on actions to the end of 2025. Of the 121 actions reporting at the end of 2024/5, 109 are on track and 9 have been completed. The remainder are showing limited progress, for the most part due to capacity or resourcing issues. It should also be noted that the action plan is an organic document and actions may need to be amended or removed due to changes in government policy or factors beyond our control.

PRINCIPLE 1: REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E01	Continue to utilise sustainable road maintenance materials	Highway Asset Management	Ongoing	On track
E02	New build- Ensure that the prioritisation of carbon reduction is maintained throughout the design and build process.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
E03	New build - Ensure new corporate buildings reflect and deliver the processes within the climate change strategy.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
E04	New build - Reduce use of brick and blockwork in designs for our house building and increase the use of more sustainable processes and materials.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
E05	New build - Require and analyse whole life costing during the building design process.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	Likely to miss
E06	New build - Investigate the implementation of a set carbon intensity parameters for construction of new council buildings (e.g. KgCO2e/m2).	Capital Projects	Ongoing	Likely to miss
E07	Global initiatives - Review how building fabric air tightness could be improved through sealing, draught stripping and closing off unused ventilation openings.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E08	Global initiatives - Consider introducing and improving loft insulation.	Corporate Landlord	Dec-25	Not due to be reported
E09	Global initiatives - Review hot water wastage.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E10	Global initiatives- Insulate all pipework, valves and fittings throughout.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E11	Global initiatives- Review opportunities for solar panels.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E12	Global initiatives- Review combined heat and power opportunity.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E13	Global initiatives- Review solar water heating.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On Track
E14	Global initiatives- Introduce draught lobbies to reduce unwanted air infiltration.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track

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Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E15	Global initiatives- Review building lighting strategies with particular focus to luminaires, control systems and daylighting provision. Install occupancy sensor controls to lighting in all rooms, wc's and corridors. Setting time delays to minimum practical levels.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E16	Corporate Buildings - Undertake a rationalisation of the office portfolio to reflect the reduced occupancy levels following the COVID-19 pandemic and the numbers of staff working from home.	Corporate Landlord	Dec-25	Not due to be reported
E17	Town Hall - Consider introducing or improving wall insulation (internal lining) to solid single skin structures.	Corporate Landlord	Dec-25	Not due to be reported
E18	Town Hall- Consider replacing or improving glazing (single glazed integral windows).	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E19	Town Hall- Consider introducing or improving insulation of flat roofs.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E20	Dolphin Centre - Consider variable speed drives for fans, pumps, and compressors.	Corporate Landlord	Dec 26	Not due to be reported
E21	Dolphin Centre - Review BMS installation and submetering monitoring.	Corporate Landlord	Dec 26	Not due to be reported
E22	Dolphin Centre - Consider fitting secondary glazing and under glaze sky lights where appropriate.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E23	Dolphin Centre - Consider how the pool complex air tightness can be improved and sealed better.	Corporate Landlord	Dec 26	Not due to be reported
E24	Dolphin Centre - Review condition of fabric for measures to improve energy performance i.e. building pressure tests for air tightness and thermography tests for insulation continuity.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E25	Dolphin Centre - Consider replacing any legacy sodium-based lighting with LED.	Corporate Landlord	Dec 26	Not due to be reported
E27	Deliver on Housing Services Climate Change Strategy	Housing Services	Ongoing	On track
E28	Dolphin Centre- Review use of pool covers.	Leisure Services	Sept 25	Not due to be reported
E29	Dolphin centre - investigate solar panel options	Leisure Services	Sep-25	On track
E30	Dolphin centre - New Windows for front of house - plans to be in place Sept 2024	Leisure Services	Sept-25	Not due to be reported
E31	Dolphin Centre - triple glazed windows around pool hall	Leisure Services	Sept 25	Not due to be reported
E32	M&E phase 3 works	Leisure Services	Jul-25	Not due to be reported

APPENDIX A

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E33	Hippodrome - Introduce expandable entrance collars to connect the rear of the delivery vehicles to loading areas to reduce heat losses.	Corporate Landlord	Oct 25	Not due to be reported
E33	New CHP plant	Leisure Services	Jul-25	On track
E34	Variable speed fan for AHU1	Leisure Services	Jul-25	On track
E35	Enforce private rented and non-domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards regulations.	Private Sector Housing	ongoing	On track
E36	Develop pipeline of projects ready for future funding streams	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	On track
E37	Developing the net zero business sector.	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track
E38	Planning- Include a request in planning applications for expected carbon impact of developments.	Development Management	Sep-24	On track
E39	Council maintained school premises - ensure all maintenance, upgrades and refurbishment consider environmentally friendly options and adhere to the new guidance	Skills and Employability	Ongoing	On track
E40	Reduce paper across both site, digitalising historical information and promoting this with staff.	Library Service	Ongoing	On track
E41	To evaluate how efficient the heating system is at Cockerton and explore the option of more efficient fans.	Library Service	Sep-24	On track
E42	Food & beverage will be locally sourced where possible.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E43	No single use plastic will be used. Food and drink packaging will be from sustainable materials.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E44	Leftover packaged food will be offered to the local food bank	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E45	Left over fresh food will be offered to the Too Good to Go scheme	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E46	Waste packaging to landfill will be reduced through recycling & composting	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E47	Where possible retail stock will be locally sourced	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E48	Toys & other items sold will not be made from plastic unless it has been recycled first	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E49	Events will recycle and reuse material as much as possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E50	Hire equipment will be from local companies to reduce road mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E51	Event retail, food & beverage will be from sustainable sources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E52	Exhibitions will recycle and reuse material as much as possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E53	Hire equipment will be from local companies to reduce road mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E54	When hiring in exhibitions the mode of transport and distance travelled will be taken into consideration	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E55	Retail sold will be from sustainable sources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E56	Single use presentation materials such as foamboard will be avoided.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E57	For collections management, a clean hand policy will be introduced to reduce amount of single use gloves	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E58	Nitrile gloves and acid free paper will be recycled when they can no longer be used	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E59	Climate control methods such as dehumidifiers will only be used when essential	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E60	Digital marketing rather than paper will be used wherever possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E61	Local photographers, videographers and drone operators will be used for professional footage to reduce mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E62	All internal advertising screens, donation points etc will be switched off during closing hours	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E63	Colouring sheets or trails will not be printed unless for a specific purpose or need	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E64	Materials for workshops will be sourced locally where possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E65	The sustainability of materials used in formal and informal workshops/activities will be considered	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E66	Delivery of the Social Housing Decarbonisation (wave 2) project by March 2025	Housing Services	Sept-25	Not due to be reported
E67	All Council Homes to achieve EPC band C by 2030	Housing Services	Apr-25	Not due to be reported

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PRINCIPLE 2: REDUCE DEMAND FOR FOSSIL FUELS

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
F01	DBC to assist with TVCA's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which seeks to decarbonise the Tees Valley bus fleet. Reinforce Darlington voluntary agreement of switching off bus engines after 2 minutes in the town centre (if bus is not fitted with automatic cut off.	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F02	Staff travel- Include questions in staff survey to establish travel habits pre, during and post lockdown.	Transport Planning	Sept 25	Not due to be reported
F03	Staff travel- Include questions in staff survey regarding current and potential cycling incentives schemes.	Transport Planning	Sept 25	Not due to be reported
F04	Staff travel- Have a pool of low emission/hybrid/electric cars for staff to use for work related travel to try and encourage staff members to travel to and from work more sustainably.	Transport Planning	Sept 25	Not due to be reported
F05	Staff travel- Investigate setting up a car club for travel to, from and during work.	Transport Planning	Sept 25	Not due to be reported
F06	Staff travel - Following survey; support Active Travel Hub in Darlington, delivered by Sustrans through TVCA contract.	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F07	Active Travel - Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F08	Rollout of additional Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs)	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F09	Implementation of a package of safety measures around schools including - 20mph zones / safe routes to school / waiting restrictions / schools streets / school crossing patrol service / pedestrian and cycle training	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F10*	Council fleet- Identify infrastructure needs for fleet transition.	Waste & Transport Services	Ongoing	On Track
F11	Council fleet- Identify sources of funding for fleet transition.	Waste & Transport Services	Ongoing	On Track
F12	Continue to encourage taxi drivers to switch to electric by offering reduced licence fee as part of taxi policy	Licensing	ongoing	On Track
F14	New build- Incorporate low carbon heating system considerations into developments.	Development Management	Ongoing	On track
F15	Sustainable travel options will be promoted to visitors	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
F16	Sustainable travel options will be promoted to schools	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track

PRINCIPLE 3: CONTRIBUTE TO A GREENER GRID

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
G01	We adopt a presumption in favour of renewables and batteries across our whole estate, integrating these technologies as standard in all capital projects.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
G02	Our building design process takes a whole system approach to low carbon technologies, exploring all options for energy standards, such as Passivhaus standards.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
G03	Public Transport - CRSTS infrastructure schemes	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
G04	Revisit heat network feasibility	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Completed

PRINCIPLE 4: SEQUESTER CARBON

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
S01	Explore opportunities for enhancing roadside verges and open space.	Countryside Services	ongoing	On Track
S02	Plant 20,000 new trees.	Countryside Services	Mar-24	Completed
S03	Food waste collection - Implement food waste collection service	Waste & Transport Services	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
S04	Council in joint project to develop a carbon neutral waste to energy plant	Waste & Transport Services	Mar-28	Not due to be reported
S05	Develop plan for offsetting emissions, including how it would be funded.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track

GOVERNANCE

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
Go01	All cabinet reports, scrutiny reports, plans and policies will include a climate change impact assessment.	Democratic Services	Mar-24	Likely to miss target

PROCUREMENT

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
P01	Work with procurement to reduce our supply chain emissions and influence suppliers' climate change practices	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
P02	Review the current criteria and encourage school transport drivers to switch off engines when stationary and move to electric vehicles.	Procurement	Ongoing	On track

FINANCING

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
Fi01	Lobby government for funding to be available, for example, the long-awaited UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and allocated on a fair basis.	Finance	Ongoing	On track
Fi02	Investigate the practicality of issuing bonds.	Finance	Dec-25	On track
Fi03	Explore risk/scrutiny of using financing from specialist climate/carbon reduction schemes offering interest free loans (i.e. Salix Finance, etc.)	Finance	Ongoing	On track
Fi04	Investigate a system to ring-fence (all or proportion of) savings achieved as a direct result of council climate change policies which can be used to support further investment.	Finance	Mar-24	Completed
Fi05	Use of S106 to fund transport & infrastructure linked to climate change objectives.	Finance	Dec-24	On track
Fi07	Explore legal and practicality of building in environmental goals into relevant procurement and if not achieved supplier to pay a climate rebate which can be retained to fund future climate change actions.	Procurement	Mar-30	Not due to be reported
Fi07	Explore legal/statutory powers to add a climate levy to schemes/projects.	Legal	Mar-30	Not due to be reported

ADAPTATION

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A01	Monitor impact of climate change on rivers and potential water safety issues	Community Resilience	ongoing	On Track
A02	Maintain links with voluntary and community sectors to ensure continued service delivery with changing weather patterns	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track

APPENDIX A

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A03	Adjust rotas if changing climate affects staff ability to safely work	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A04	Consider flexible hours for staff during extreme weather periods	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A05	Ensure staff recognise and deal with signs of heat exhaustion/heat stroke	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A06	Review ability to deal with increased numbers of vulnerable people through risk management.	Adult Social Care	ongoing	Completed
A07	Review contingency plans to ensure they take account of climate change	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A08	Identify and understand critical and local infrastructure.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A09	Embed climate change in local flood risk management strategies.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A10	Work with local resilience forums to collect and share data on resource impacts of severe weather events.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A11	Include possible health impacts from weather events and future climate risks in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A12	Use local data on population and health to consider social vulnerability to climate change impacts.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A13	Include adaptation in health and wellbeing plans.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-24	Completed
A14	Assess the range of social care assets and key routes used by staff at risk of flooding.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Completed
A15	Support commissioners to embed consideration of future climate change into the commissioning processes of care providers.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A16	Assess flood risk of residents (particularly vulnerable adults and children) who have care provided at home.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-24	Completed
A17	Ensure biodiversity net-gain proposals in new development are screened to ensure they are suitable under future climate scenarios.	Ecologist	Ongoing	On track
A18	Use green infrastructure to providing shading and cooling for buildings or to protect walking and cycling routes.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer/Ecologist	Ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A19	Undertake a local climate change risk assessment for most vulnerable services (eg education and social care).	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	Completed
A20	Integrate adaptation measures in statutory plans, strategies and functions.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A21	Map longer-term decisions and investments across service areas to determine opportunities to build in resilience.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A22	Embed contractual requirements for climate resilience or adaptation into key contracts and services.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A23	Engage with infrastructure providers to understand impact on local authority infrastructure assets and develop plans to reduce risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A24	Work across infrastructure providers and agencies to understand interdependent risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A25	Investigate requirement of the BREEAM adaptation credit in new build and refurbishments.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A26	Implement local responses to the Heatwave Plan for England.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A27	Identify the most vulnerable groups to climate change risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Jun-24	On track
A28	Identify critical at-risk businesses and infrastructure.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A29	Review Adaptation Reporting Power reports of local organisations to understand key infrastructure issues.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Completed
A30	Engage key partners such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, neighbouring authorities and Tees Valley Nature Partnership to develop adaptation actions for natural capital.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A31	Use green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions to provide resilience.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	On track
A32	Strategy and action plan formally reviewed every three years, with an ongoing watching brief.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A34	Use the ADEPT guidance to determine next steps needed to reach 'maturing adaptation' level.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A35	Identify key contacts in other organisations and to understand shared priorities for climate resilience in key statutory areas.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A36	Collaborative working through local government networks and other key partners to increase efforts to embed adaptation.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A37	Promote sign up to the Environment Agency's flood warning service.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A38	Promote water, energy efficiency and flood resistance and resilience measures.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A39	Raise awareness of relevant climate risks with local businesses	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track
A40	Review local biodiversity action plans and species action plans to develop actions for particular species vulnerable to future climate	Ecologist	Ongoing	On track

INFLUENCING

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
I01	Form a climate change working group with young people	Youth Participation	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
I02	Use existing meetings with young people to look at climate change actions	Youth Participation	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
I03	Work with Climate Change team to develop appropriate tools for sharing with vulnerable customers	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
I04	Continue to support and encourage staff to consider reducing carbon footprint e.g electric cars take up, walking, cycling, personal and professional responsibilites (energy efficiency etc)	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
I05	Promote Good "carbon-neutral" practice to local businesses – supporting awareness raising, promoting smarter working and resource efficiency and encouraging better understanding of carbon footprints	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track
I06	Promoting sustainable inward investment	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
I07	To hold quarterly events about sustainability, recycling, climate change etc. at both Libraries	Library Service	Ongoing	On track
I08	To work with the sustainability and climate change lead officer to develop a school climate change conference.	Library Service	Dec-24	On track
I09	Customers will be encouraged to join in with actions both on and off site	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
I10	Visitors will be encouraged to take photographs of trails and activites or to download resources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
I11	Participants will be encouraged to recycle materials they do not wish to take home	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track

COMMUNICATIONS

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
C01	Internal communications plan delivered	Communications Team	Ongoing	On track
C02	External communications plan delivered	Communications Team	Ongoing	On track

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

DESIGNATION OF NEW MIDDLETON ST GEORGE CONSERVATION AREA AND ADOPTION OF FINALISED APPRAISAL

Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

Responsible Director -
Trevor Watson
Director of Economy and Public Protection

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The report seeks Councillors' approval to designate a new conservation area at Middleton St George and to adopt the corresponding appraisal. The document that has been submitted is called *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025*. See **Appendix 1.**

Summary

2. The report provides justification for the designating a new conservation area at Middleton St George and adopting the corresponding appraisal. The draft version of the appraisal (December 2024) had been subject to a six-week public consultation period. Amendments have been made in light of the comments received.

3. Following the adoption of the finalised appraisal, the text currently marked in yellow will be amended to reflect the adopted status of the appraisal. No other changes will be made. The adopted appraisal will be named: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. May 2025.*

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that :-

   (a) Council adopts the new conservation area boundary at Middleton St George (see chapter 6.0 of the finalised appraisal).

   (b) Council adopts the new conservation area's name: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area.*

   (c) Council adopts the finalised appraisal for the new Middleton St George Conservation Area.

(d) Council authorises the amendment of finalised appraisal with regards to the text marked in yellow, to reflect the adopted status of the document. The adopted appraisal will be named: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. May 2025.*

Reasons

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

(a) Fighting Cocks was an original stopping point (station) along the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825. The presence of the railway led to the establishment of the Middleton Iron Works in 1864, which sparked the development of the village of Middleton St George.

(b) The bicentennial of the S&DR is this year. There will be many events along the former route to celebrate the birth of the modern railway. Darlington Borough Council (DBC) has been making significant S&DR-related investments, and Middleton St George Parish Council is also preparing for its celebration within the village. Over the past few years, heritage assets at Fighting Cocks have been promoted through the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan, S&DR Heritage Action Zone and Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub.

(c) The appraisal demonstrates in detail that sufficient special interest survives at Middleton St George which is associated with the S&DR and the industrial development of the village justifying the designation of a conservation area. It picks up the 'unfinished' work by Durham County Council who proposed a (different) conservation area boundary for Middleton St George in 2022.

(d) The draft conservation area boundary proposed by DBC has generally been welcomed by residents who took part in the public consultation. It is also supported by the Friends of the S&DR and Middleton St George Parish Council. Amendments have been made following feedback received, including concerns raised by Historic England.

(e) Once the conservation area boundary has been adopted, the appraisal will provide an evidence base for managing change in the area and form a material consideration in the Planning process. Conservation area designation can also assist if funding is sought for larger regeneration or conservation schemes within the boundary.

(f) The appraisal also includes suggestions to improve the condition of the area. These are in line with the aims of the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan and the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub.

Trevor Watson
Director of Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

(i) Darlington Borough Council (2024) *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft. December 2024*
(ii) https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/17327/msg-np-made-version.pdf
(iii) https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/16184/fighting-cocks-heritage-hub-guide.pdf

David Hand: Extension 6294

Council Plan	The appraisal: (a) Supports economic growth through sustainable and well-planned development (priorities). (b) Underpins the Plan's priority of valuing our heritage and culture.
Addressing inequalities	No impact
Tackling Climate Change	Possibly slightly positive impact. The appraisal raises some awareness against the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, which often have a high-carbon footprint and adverse effect on the insulating properties of traditional structures.
Efficient and effective use of resources	If the appraisal is adopted, there may be a slight increase in additional officer workload in planning applications and enforcement.
Health and Wellbeing	Possibly slightly positive impact. The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the area.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Possibly slightly positive impact. The information provided in the draft appraisal may lead to wider improvements in the area.
Wards Affected	Sadberge & Middleton St George
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	No

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Background Information

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).

7. There is currently no conservation area at Middleton St George.

8. Fighting Cocks was an original stopping point (station) along the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) of 1825, which is of international significance being the world's first public railway on which a locomotive hauled passengers. The village of Middleton St George did not exist at the time. This stopping point in the middle of nowhere was likely chosen as it is the location of an ancient road junction where the old lane from Darlington met the route of the former Roman road. With the advent of the railway, industrial sites were established at Fighting Cocks. In 1864 the Middleton Iron Works occupied a large site further to south which sparked the development of Middleton St George including rows of workers houses and a village centre.

9. Much of the surviving special interest at Middleton St George comprises structures and other elements linked to the S&DR, the regionally important Fighting Cocks Reservoirs which predate the historical settlement, and buildings associated with the industrialisation and resulting creation of the village.

10. Up until the appraisal, the focus at Middleton St George was mainly on the S&DR.

11. General interest in the railway heritage increased as minds started to focus on the S&DR Bicentennial and the founding of the Friends of the S&DR in 2015. Darlington Borough Council (DBC) has been making significant S&DR-related investments, and Middleton St George Parish Council is also preparing for its 2025 celebration within the village.

12. A 2016 Historic Environment Audit identified Fighting Cocks as a location of significant heritage value with several S&DR-related assets and remains still to be found.

13. In 2017, Historic England accepted the whole 26-mile route of the former S&DR as a Heritage Action Zone, following an application by the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Board which included DBC. Launched in May 2018, the S&DR HAZ aimed to better manage, preserve and utilise heritage assets with a view to stimulate economic growth through various projects in the build-up to the railway's bicentenary in 2025. Programme outputs which directly affect Middleton St George include improvement works to the level crossing and the provision of information and interpretation.

14. In May 2019, Middleton St George Parish was formally designated as a neighbourhood area. In September 2022, the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan (2022-2036) was made which includes actions and policies protecting the former route of the S&DR.

15. In early 2020, the Parish Council and the Friends of the S&DR responded to local interest by establishing the Middleton St George S&DR Heritage Steering Group with the mission of delivering the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub, which comprises a number of projects to improve the heritage assets at Fighting Cocks.

16. In July 2022, Durham County Council (DCC) provided *Conservation Area Assessments – Route of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway. Darlington & Middleton St. George*, proposing a conservation area boundary for Middleton St George. It was not accompanied by an appraisal to justify their proposal (see chapter 5.0 of the appraisal).

17. In November 2023, DBC's Conservation Officer was shown around Fighting Cocks by the Friends of the S&DR. Projects to be delivered by the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub were also outlined. The Conservation Officer met the Friends on other occasions in 2024 when there was progress or completion of some of the projects (e.g. mural, waiting shed, vegetation clearance).

Draft Appraisal (December 2024)

18. An appraisal for Middleton St George was drafted between March and June 2024 by the Conservation Officer. It included:

    (a) Information on the planning implications of conservation area designation (chapter 2.0).

    (b) A detailed assessment of the significance of Middelton St George and its surroundings based on its historical development, spatial/character analysis and values attributed by the local community and other stakeholders (chapter 3.0).

    (c) A description of its condition and its causes and any issues which have led to the deterioration of the area (section 4.1).

    (d) An assessment of threats/potential future issues as well as opportunities for enhancement (sections 4.2 & 4.3).

    (e) Proposed conservation area boundaries based on the special interest of the area, including DCC's initial suggestion as well as additional areas (section 5.1).

19. At the cabinet meeting on 3 December 2024, Councillors approved the public consultation on the document *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024).*

Public Consultation

20. The draft appraisal was available for consultation on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage from 13 January to 24 February 2025, along with a feedback form to be completed. There was also a link to an online portal where the document could be viewed and commented on.

21. Paper copies of the appraisal (read only) and feedback form were available at the Town Hall (by appointment only) and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries.

22. The public consultation was advertised on the DBC website and Facebook page.

23. Site notices were hung in various locations of the proposed new conservation area boundary.

24. In addition, the Council directly notified individuals, groups and organisations that were likely to have a particular interest in the Middleton St George Conservation Area.

25. At the request of the Middleton St George Parish Council, the Conservation Officer gave a presentation on the proposed new conservation area at the Middleton St George Women's Institute on 20 January 2025 (see Appendix 1 of the finalised appraisal).

26. During the consultation period, a total of 15 responses were received comprising representatives of (number of responses in brackets):

    (a) (9) Residents (in or close to assessment area)

    (b) (1) The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway

    (c) (1) MSG Parish Council

    (d) (1) Darlington Borough Council

    (e) (1) Historic England

    (f) (1) Durham County Council

    (g) (1) Other

27. Following the public consultation period, a summary of all the comments received was put on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage on 26 February 2025: https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/22796/middleton-st-george-conservation-area-consultation-responses-jan-2025.pdf.

28. The feedback on the draft appraisal and proposed conservation area boundary was generally supportive, including from the Friends of the S&DR and Middleton St George Parish Council. However, there were two objections including from Historic England who argued that more work was needed to clearly identify the special architectural or historic interest that DBC sees as desirable to conserve or enhance, and to use this to reconsider the boundaries proposed.

Finalised Appraisal (May 2025)

29. Following the consultation period, the Council's Conservation Officer worked methodically through all the feedback received and made amendments throughout the document where deemed necessary. An overview of the comments and how they were processed is provided in appendix 2 of *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025.* See Appendix 1.

30. Extra care has been taken to provide considerable clarification on the identification of the special interest (see section 3.1 of the finalised appraisal) and justification for proposed boundary designation (see section 5.1 of the finalised appraisal) using Historic England guidelines. It is considered that the concerns of Historic England have now been adequately addressed.

31. Moreover, additional areas have been included in the finalised new conservation area boundary (see section 5.2 of the finalised appraisal).

32. The finalised appraisal includes text marked in yellow which will be updated once the document is approved for adoption. There will be no other changes. The adopted document will be named: *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. March 2025.*

Financial Implications

33. Advertisement costs: Notice of the newly designated boundary will be published in the London Gazette and at least one local newspaper.

Legal Implications

34. Conservation area designation under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Estates and Property Advice

35. The proposed boundary changes will affect the DBC-owned land, most notably the former railway corridor and the Whinnies nature reserve.

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

36. The appraisal raises some awareness against the use of modern materials that are incompatible with traditional buildings, which often have a high-carbon footprint and adverse effect on the insulating properties of traditional structures.

Consultation

37. See point 20 to 25 above

Outcome of Consultation

38. See points 26 to 31 above.

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Appendix 1

Stockton & Darlington Railway:

Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks)

Conservation Area Appraisal

Finalised document
May 2025

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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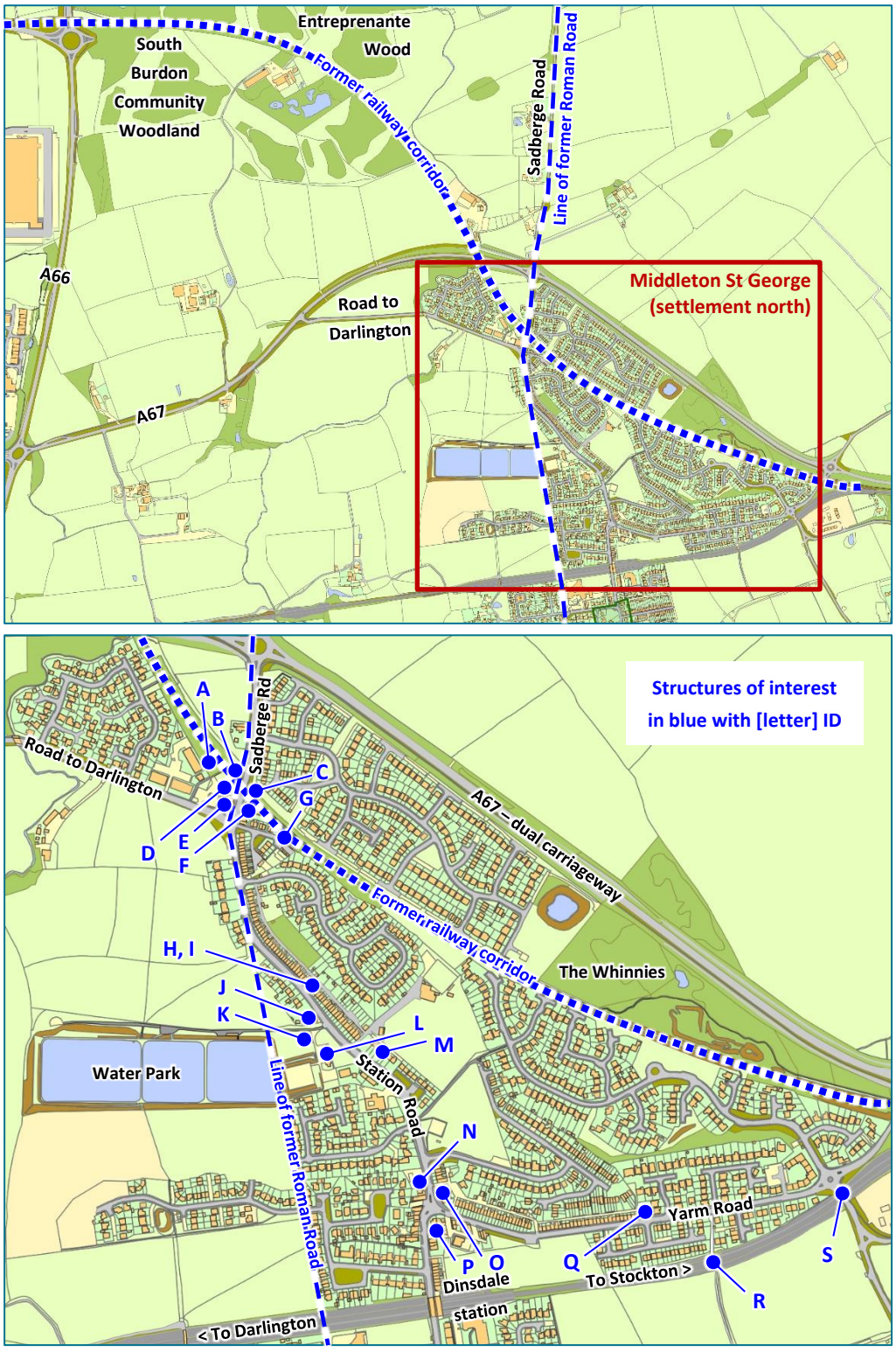
< Cover image: Former station building (painted white) and station master's house at Fighting Cocks. The modern garage is in the location of the former platform, with the wall facing the trackside displaying a mural of the historic station. (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2024)

Maps of the Assessment Area



Top: Full extent of assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

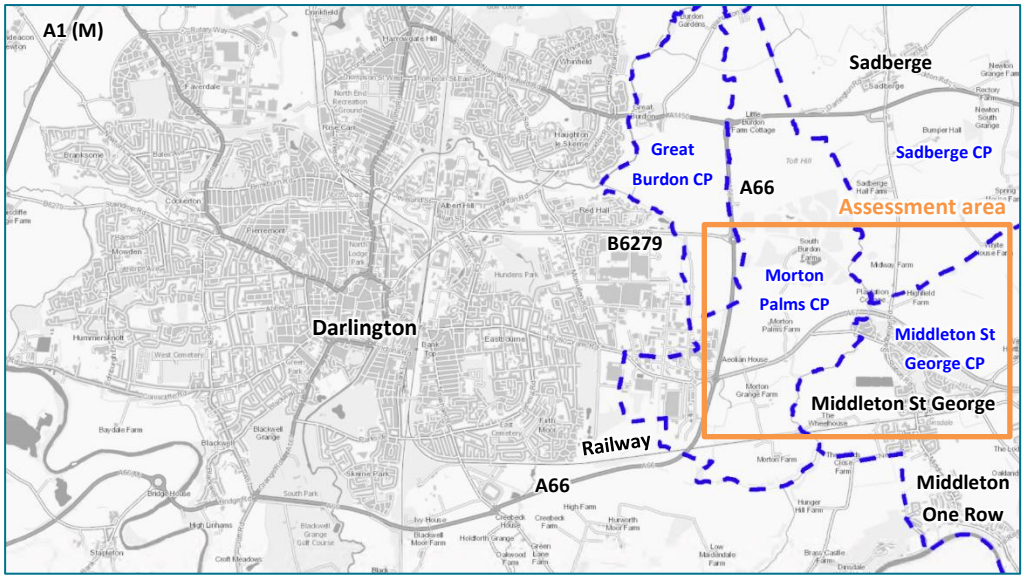
[A] Crane Base & Platform (remains). **[B]** DRDC Loading Dock. **[C]** Waiting Shed (remains). **[D]** Coal Depot (remains). **[E]** Fighting Cocks Inn. **[F]** Station Master's House & Station Building. **[G]** Enclosed Railway Corridor (remains). **[H]** The Lyric. **[I]** Undenominational Mission Hall. **[J]** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. **[K]** Board Room & Entrance Gate. **[L]** Pumping Station. **[M]** Cocks Memorial Homes. **[N]** Havelock Arms Hotel. **[O]** Killinghall Arms. **[P]** Co-op & Stable. **[Q]** Middleton Iron Works (remains). **[R]** Masonry Railway Bridge. **[S]** Metal Railway Bridge.

1.0 Introduction

A character appraisal assesses the **special interest** of an existing or proposed new conservation area that merits 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 heritage 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.

At the time of assessment (see section 1.2), there was no conservation area at Middleton St George to the north of the live railway line, although parts of the village to the south of the line were in the Middleton One Row Conservation Area[1]. Designation within the northern part of the settlement had previously been considered in July 2022, when Durham County Council suggested a conservation area boundary for the former railway corridor at Middleton St George (see chapter 5.0).

1.1 The Assessment Area



Location of assessment area (orange). Parish boundaries in dark blue, dashed (Map contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2024. Licence Number 100023728 2024.)

Middleton St George is a large village approximately five miles to the east of Darlington, County Durham, in the Northeast of England. The assessment area subject of this appraisal – detailed maps on previous page – was drawn up around the full extent of proposed designation suggested by Durham County Council in 2022 (see above), comprising the former route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), now a green corridor, as well as the wider setting. The assessment area is bordered by the A66 to the west up to the roundabout with the B6279 to the north, the live railway line to the south and its former junction with the S&DR to the east (see section 3.2). It also includes the northernmost tip of the existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary, as designated in 1972. Whilst its character is mainly rural, much of the village is of a suburban nature. The assessment area

[1] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf

currently lies in the Sadberge & Middleton St George ward, and in the Middleton St George, Morton Palms, Great Burdon and Sadberge parishes.

At the time of assessment (see section 1.2), there were seventeen conservation areas within Darlington Borough, with Middleton St George proposed to be the eighteenth such designation. Further information on our conservation areas can be found on the Council's website (see section 7.3).

1.2 The Appraisal

This document was drafted between March and June 2024 by the Darlington Borough Council Conservation Officer, Gaby Rose, providing a comprehensive assessment of Middleton St George and its setting as well as a proposed conservation area boundary line. **3 December 2024 represents the 'time of assessment' or 'time of review of the assessment area'**, coinciding with the Council's cabinet meeting when the draft document was first available to the public (see section 1.3).

The appraisal is an opportunity to assess 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 tries to cover the main aspects of Middleton St George and its setting, 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 assessment area at the time of review (see chapter 3.0)
- The condition of the assessment area, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change (see chapter 4.0)
- A proposed conservation area boundary at the time of assessment (see chapter 5.0)
- The finalised boundary line which will be adopted (see chapter 6.0)

The author would like to thank Ross Chisholm and Peter Bainbridge for their time and providing additional information during the draft stage of the conservation area appraisal, and Caroline Hardie for providing additional information when finalising the document.

1.3 Public Consultation on Draft Appraisal

At the cabinet meeting on 3 December 2024, Councillors approved the public consultation on the document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024)*.**

The draft appraisal was available for consultation on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage (see section 7.3) from 13 January to 24 February 2025, along with a feedback form to be completed. There was also a link to an online portal where the document could be viewed and commented on. Paper copies of the appraisal (read only) and feedback form were available at the Town Hall (by appointment only) and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries. The public consultation was advertised

on the Darlington Borough Council website[2] and Facebook page. Site notices were hung in various locations of the proposed new conservation area boundary. In addition, the Council directly notified individuals, groups and organisations that were likely to have a particular interest in the Middleton St George Conservation Area. At the request of the Middleton St George Parish Council, the Conservation Officer gave a presentation on the proposed new conservation area at the Middleton St George Women's Institute on 20 January 2025 (see appendix 1).

The author would like to thank Middleton St George Parish Council for advertising the public consultation of the draft appraisal on their website and Facebook page.

Following the consultation period, a summary of all the comments received was available on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage from 26 February until DATE.

The draft appraisal was then reassessed and amended in light of the feedback received (see appendix 2). Various other amendments were made throughout the document when finalising the appraisal, to provide more clarity, etc.

1.4 Adoption of Appraisal

The revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025*** will be put to Councillors at the Cabinet meeting on 6 May 2025 and at the Council meeting on 15 May 2025 to seek formal adoption of the appraisal and designation of the Conservation Area (see chapter 6.0). Please note that the assessment area and time of review (see sections 1.1 & 1.2) have remained unchanged.

Following the adoption of the appraisal and designation of the Conservation Area, the document will be edited one more time to reflect its adopted status [only the text highlighted in yellow will be amended], and its title changed to ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. May 2025.*** Notice of the newly designated boundary will be made to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Historic England, and be published in the London Gazette and at least one local newspaper[3].

[2] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/consultations/current-consultations/?id=68

[3] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sections 70 (5) & (8)

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[4]. 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*[5]. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance[6], 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*[7] is compliant with the NPPF. At the time of review, the following policies applied to the Middleton St George assessment area – please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording and the Policies Map identifying the relevant locations:

Policy SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy (2) Service Villages. Will be maintained as villages that offer a range of facilities and services, where a level of development will meet local needs and facilitate economic diversification of rural areas. Development should safeguard and reinforce the distinctive character of each settlement and not detract from their landscape setting.

Policy H 1 Housing Requirement – Middleton St George: 860 units. Housing will be delivered to meet a minimum requirement of dwellings per annum. It is anticipated that the sites will be delivered in accordance with the housing trajectory which indicates that a continuous five-year supply of housing will be maintained throughout the plan period.

Policy H 2 Housing Allocations. The land to the south and west of Station Road (plot 99, Maxgate Farm) is allocated for housing development to help meet the requirement set out in Policy H 1.

Policy H 3 Development Limits. Development within the limits identified on the Policies Map will be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant national and local policies.

Policy H 5 Affordable Housing – affordable requirement: 20% (of which 50% affordable rent and 50% affordable home ownership). In order to meet the needs of people who are not able to access the general housing market, the provision of affordable housing will be expected in residential development schemes of 10 or more dwellings.

4 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 7 & 8
5 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, page 73
6 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 202
7 Darlington Borough Council 2022

Policy ENV 2 Stockton and Darlington Railway. Proposals that conserve and enhance elements which contribute to the significance of the S&DR and its setting will be supported. Proposals will be supported where they include measures that preserve any physical remains along the route, include site interpretation and, where appropriate, reinstate a legible route where those remains no longer exist.

Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character. The character and local distinctiveness of […] villages and rural area will be protected and improved by (A.1) retaining the openness and green infrastructure functions of rural gaps, and (B.2) retaining and enhancing the length, continuity, biodiversity, amenity and heritage value of the **historic route of the Darlington/Middleton St George/A66/A67/Stockton Corridor**.

Policy ENV 4 Green and Blue Infrastructure. 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 ENV 6 Local Green Space. Development will not be permitted within a Local Green Space, designated either within the Darlington Borough Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan, unless it is consistent with the National Policy approach for Green Belts. Sites LGS16 (Middleton St George Playing Field) and LSG17 (Water Park, Middleton St George) are identified within the assessment area.

Policy ENV 7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development: (D.ii) Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites (the Whinnies). Development likely to result in significant harm should be avoided by being relocated to an alternative site of less harmful impacts. Where this is not possible, and it is demonstrated development is required in that location, it will only be permitted if the significant harm can be overcome by adequate mitigation or, as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures.

In addition, if the appraisal results in conservation area designation, the following policies will also apply – please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording:

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.

The *Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan (2022-2036)*[8] is compliant with the Darlington Local Plan and was 'made' (adopted) by Darlington Borough Council in line with the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The plan area comprises of the parish of Middleton St George except for land at Teesside International Airport, covering the central, southern and eastern parts of the assessment area. Decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Objective 1 (quality of life) sets out that new development should maintain and enhance local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the built, historic and natural environment. The following policies are relevant to the historical environment – please refer to the Neighbourhood Plan for the full wording:

Policy MSG1: Sustainable development (d) It will be necessary to demonstrate how development would protect or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

Policy MSG2: Design (c) Development will be supported where it conserves and, where possible, enhances the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

Policy MSG3: Embedding energy efficiency and renewable energy (f) Consideration should be given to how development reduces energy demands of historic buildings, subject to compliance with other relevant policies on historic assets.

Policy MSG4: Green Infrastructure. New development should seek to protect and, where practical, improve and extend green infrastructure of the historic route of the Stockton Darlington Railway.

Policy MSG8: Heritage assets. Where development may impact on a heritage asset, applicants should provide information that describes the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. In the determination of development proposals: (a) Great weight will be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any harm or loss to its significance will require clear and convincing justification in accordance with national policy. (b) A balanced judgment will be required to fully consider the effects of any development proposals affecting a non-designated heritage asset, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy MSG13: Tourism and leisure (a) Development will be supported where the siting, scale, materials and design respect the character of the surrounding area and conserve and, where possible, enhance heritage assets and their setting.

[8] Middleton St George Parish Council 2022

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[9] 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[10]. The courts have held it legitimate to include within a conservation area the setting of buildings that form the heart of that area[11]. Examples of types of special architectural and historic interest which justify designation include areas[12]:

- 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 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[13]. 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**

[9] Darlington Borough Council 2022
[10] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 204
[11] Historic England 2017b, page 4
[12] Historic England 2019, page 27
[13] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 69

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[14] as well as the character or appearance of our conservation areas[15]. 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[16]. 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 environment and make this information publicly available[17]. The *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George Conservation Area Appraisal* provides such assessment (see chapter 3.0) and 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[18]. If a conservation area is considered to be 'at risk', the Council will liaise with Historic England. If confirmed to be in poor condition, the area will be put on the national Heritage at Risk Register[19]. 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:

14 Darlington Borough Council 2022, paragraph 9.1.18
15 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72
16 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 219
17 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 205-206
18 Historic England 2019, page 29
19 Available on Historic England's website

- 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
- 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 amened) 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[20] – 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 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

At the time of review, the northernmost tip of the Middleton One Row Conservation Area[21], as designated in 1972, was included within the assessment area.

[20] The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, section 15
[21] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf

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[22]:

- **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[23].

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[24]:

- 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

22 English Heritage 2008, page 27ff
23 English Heritage 2008, page 14
24 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 the area as a whole has a particular special interest

3.1 Summary of Special Interest

At the time of assessment, the proposed Middleton St George Conservation Area (see section 5.1) comprised the following elements of special interest, in chronological order:

Roman route: Cade's Road was supposedly built by the Romans between 138 and 161 AD. It continued to be an important route northward until the fifteenth century and marked the parish boundary between Middleton St George and Dinsdale until January 2016. Today, the line of the former route is still retained in boundary lines, the northern stretch of Station Road, and the full length of Sadberge Road.

The Cocks family: In the nineteenth century, the Cocks were the last holders of the manor of Middleton St George, which had been passed down through various families from the mid-twelfth century on. Their name appears in 'Fighting Cocks' (see below) and 'Cocks Memorial Homes'. The latter are alms-houses that were constructed in an Arts and Crafts style from money that Henry Cocks, the final owner of the manor, had left behind on his death in 1894. Henry Cocks also built the Fighting Cocks Inn in 1832-4, which remained in his ownership until he died.

Fighting Cocks: It is plausible that 'Fighting Cocks' had first been applied to the area around the ancient road junction where the lane from Darlington joined the former Roman route sometime between 1801 – i.e. the year that the Cocks family inherited the manor – and 1822/3 – i.e. the survey of the proposed Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)[25]. The name also appears in Fighting Cocks Inn, Fighting Cocks Mill, Fighting Cocks Station, Fighting Cocks Branch, and had been applied as far south as the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs (see below). Today, the name is still used for the area at the northern road junction. Here the grouping of the former inn, station buildings, railway corridor, and the remains of the coal depot and later goods station presents an important ensemble associated with its origins in the pioneering days of the railway[26] (see below). Notable buildings at Fighting Cocks are faced in buff-coloured Pease brick, which was manufactured by the company of Darlington-

[25] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[26] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 2 & 30

born Joseph Pease, son of S&DR founder Edward Pease[27], and had become popular for the use on public buildings by the 1860s[28].

Stockton & Darlington Railway: The birth of the village of Middleton St George was triggered by the opening of the S&DR on 27 September 1825, the world's first public railway on which a locomotive hauled passengers. The original 26-mile line, which passed to the north of the Fighting Cocks road junction, is now regarded as the prototype for all modern railways[29]. In 1887, the stretch between Albert Hill Junction (Darlington) and Oak Tree Junction (Middleton St George) was bypassed by a new passenger line, turning the original route of the S&DR into the Fighting Cocks Branch. It mainly concentrated on transporting freight until 1988, when the branch line was shut down. Today, the former track bed and railway-associated earthworks survive as a lush green corridor which is of high public/communal value.

Part of original mineral network along S&DR: In order to deliver the region's natural produce from mines, quarries and lime kilns for local sale or export efficiently, the S&DR developed a system of depots along the mainline (as well as at the termini of the branch lines) where freight could be weighed, sorted, stored and sold[30]. The original coal depot at Middleton St George was the first structure the S&DR built at Fighting Cocks, shortly after the opening of the railway in 1825. Evidence of it survives in the form of the remains of possibly original boundary walling and later-phase coal cells. The surviving loading platform and crane base are linked to the later operation of the site as a goods station.

Early railway station: One of the many ways the S&DR influenced the development of the worldwide railway network was in the provision of station facilities[31]. Whilst only fragments of walling of the original Railway Lodge of 1830/1 survive in the rebuilt station building, it is significant that Fighting Cocks, being not much more than a road junction in a rural setting at the time, did have a station building that dealt with passengers, parcels, coal, etc.

Fighting Cocks Reservoirs: This site is directly linked to the nineteenth-century growth of the Teesside towns and industries, having supplied Stockton, Middlesbrough and Yarm with water. The first basin was constructed in 1852, extracting water from the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage (1850) on Coniscliffe Road, which is now a scheduled monument, before the historical village of Middleton St George had taken its shape yet. It was the second service reservoir constructed to serve the Tees Cottage Waterworks and is now the only one that still survives within Darlington Borough. Whilst many villages depended on pumped water until well into the twentieth century, Fighting Cocks was already connected to piped water in 1853. Today, the site includes the water park (comprising the three slightly later service reservoirs), Parish Council's meeting room (a small Victorian Board Room building),

27 http://www.solwaypast.co.uk/index.php/bricks/2-uncategorised/30-h-co-brick
28 Cookson (ed) 2003, page 129
29 Flynn 1987, pages 39-40
30 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 5
31 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 1

Community Centre (the former Pumping Station, built in a modernist style) with outdoor sports court (the original basin), and a nature trail along the bottom of the northwestern reservoir embankment. The site has a distinct character and is of high public/communal value.

Industrial village: Whilst Fighting Cocks was an original S&DR stopping point (1825) and had an early passenger station building (1830/1), it was not until the Middleton Iron Works had set up near the southern road junction in 1864 that the village began to take its shape. Middleton St George would not be the same today without the S&DR that enabled the establishment of the iron works (with direct rail access) which, in turn, triggered the development of the historical settlement. The result was a dispersed linear village with two centres, one at each road junction, setting it apart from the other settlements that had formed along the route of the (former) S&DR – New Shildon, Middlesbrough, Hopetown, Eaglescliffe and Busselton[32] – which were generally more compact and/or clustered in planform. The rows of workers houses and commercial properties around the Square (southern road junction) that were constructed to accommodate and serve the large workforce still line the main roads. Now that the industries have completely gone, these buildings are the most prominent survivors/reminders of the village's industrial past.

Details of the above are provided in the following sections.

3.2 Layout, Planform and Setting

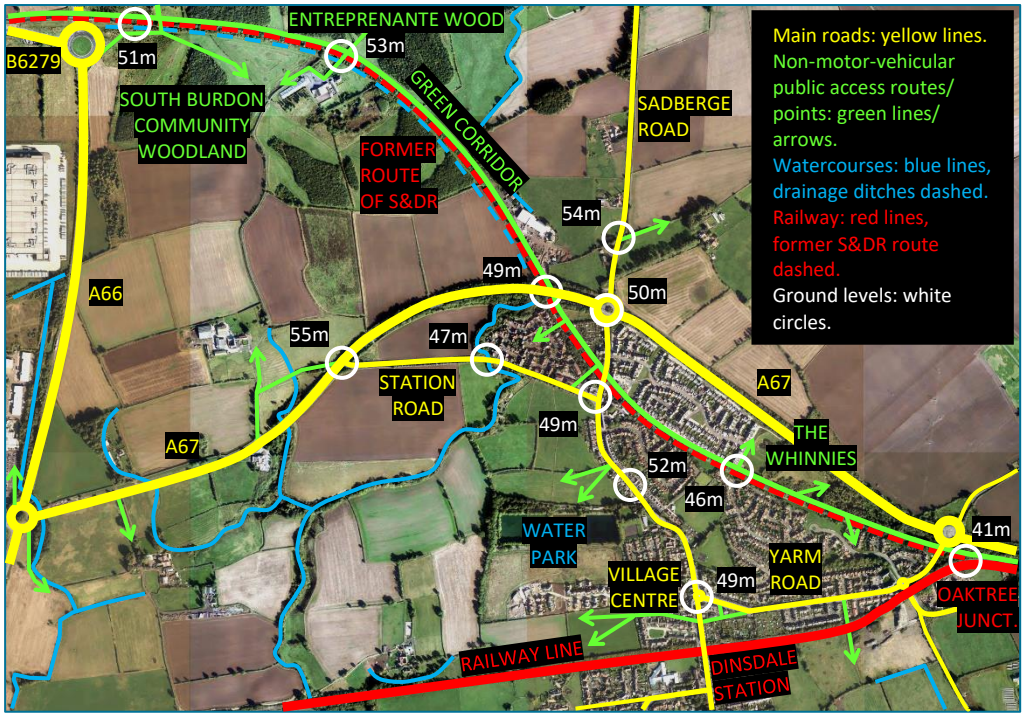
This section provides some of the evidential value (i.e. the existing layout, etc.) of the assessment area at the time of review, as well as some of its historical value (i.e. former building locations).

Middleton St George lies to the east of Darlington, just beyond the outer ring road (A66). The assessment area comprises a plateau-like area to the north above the steep banks of the river Tees, with a generally flat or very gently undulating topography[33]. The underlying bedrock is mainly made of the Sherwood sandstone group overlaid by glacial till, although there are also pockets containing clay and silt sediments. To the west of the village is an area of calcareous mudstone bedrock with superficial glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits[34].

Its setting of the village is largely agricultural land – both arable and pastoral – with isolated farmsteads. The fields are of medium size, irregularly shaped and often lined by hedges, shrubs and/or trees. It also includes three nature reserves – the Whinnies, Entreprenante Wood and South Burdon Community Woodland – as well as the Middleton St George Water Park comprising three former service reservoir basins. There is a good network of public rights of way in the countryside, with several of them originating in the village[35]. A series of minor streams crosses through fields or defines their boundaries, particularly in the western part of the assessment area. The remains of historical drainage ditches can be found along the southern side of the

[32] Hardie, C. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 20 February
[33] Land Use Consultants 2015, pages 45 & 47
[34] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-stones-england
[35] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/rights-of-way/where-are-rights-of-way/

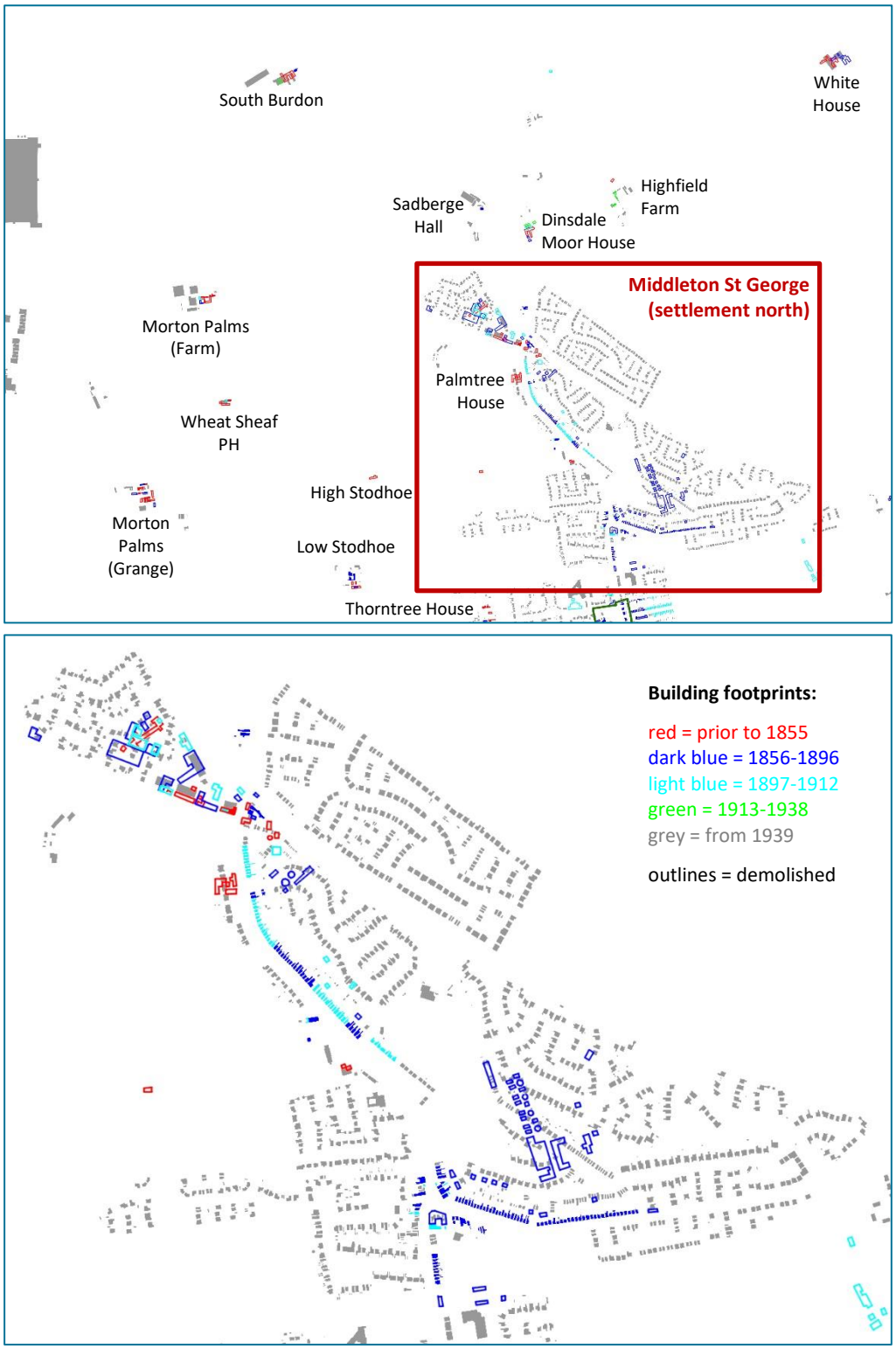
former route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) between the A66 and A67, which is now a bridleway and part of National Cycle Route 14 connecting Darlington with South Shields.



Layout of Middleton St George assessment area at time of review. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The A66 frames the western side of the assessment area, confining the outskirts of Darlington, with the B6279 (Tornado Way) roundabout being in the northwestern corner of the area. The A67 sweeps to the north of the village of Middleton St George linking Yarm and Darlington. Both are busy main roads emitting an almost constant noise level that can be heard from a distance. This is most noticeable in tranquil areas just outside the village, such as at the water park and the bridleway mentioned above, the latter passing under the A67 through a short concrete tunnel in an embankment that carries the road. A live railway line frames the southern side of the assessment area, connecting Bank Top (Darlington) and Saltburn via Middlesborough, with (the misleadingly named) Dinsdale Station located on the eastern side of the main road (Middleton Lane). The eastern-most point of the area is the former location of Oaktree Junction, where the railway line from Bank Top used to join the route of the S&DR, with the former track bed to the (north)west of the historic junction now being part of National Cycle Route 14.

A spine road meanders through the length of the village/assessment area in a roughly north-south direction. To the north of the railway station is the village centre around a three-road junction, historically known as the Square, with Yarm Road heading east and eventually exiting the settlement. At this junction, one part of the spine road (Middleton Lane) crosses the railway line into the southern part of Middleton St George which is mostly outside the assessment area. The other part (Station Road) heads to the north of the village where there is another three-road junction, known as Fighting Cocks. Whilst the main road turns west to Darlington, the spine road continues north (Sadberge Road), with both shortly exiting the village.



Planform – map regression. *Top:* Assessment area. (Former) farmsteads are annotated. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary line in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The line of the historic S&DR used to pass to the north of the village on a gentle curve, with a level crossing over Sadberge Road, but the rails are long gone. The former track bed has however been retained as a green corridor[36], including a stretch of National Cycle Route 14 and, to the west of Sadberge Road, there is also a bridleway. The disused railway corridor leads from what used to be Oaktree Junction

[36] Also see Darlington Policies Map 'Key Diagram' of *Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036*

at the eastern end of the village to the A66/B6279 roundabout, and beyond to Darlington North Road outside the assessment area. In Middleton St George, the land rises steadily from 41m at the former junction to around 49m at the northern and northwestern ends of the settlement. There are however variations around the former S&DR route which mostly lies in cutting but is embanked when approaching the location of Oaktree Junction. Yarm Road cuts through this embankment. As the green corridor exits the village in a northwestern direction, the ground levels remain fairly constant, with the highest point being 53m near the entrance to Entreprenante Wood. The levels then drop down to 51m[37] just before the bridleway slopes up on a modern embankment to cross the A66 over a green metal bridge to the north of the B6279 roundabout.

The live railway line is embanked at the former Oaktree Junction, and in cutting at Dinsdale Station and to the west. There are two original railway bridges between the station and former junction. The road bridge over the line carrying Middleton Lane is a modern replacement. To the west of the station there is another minor road bridge, as well as two level crossings with public footpaths crossing the live line.

The map regression (above) shows the northern part of the village of Middleton St George and its surrounding farmsteads. Most of the latter have pre-1855 origins (red building footprints). Historical rows of houses still line the main roads of the village (now Station Road, Middleton Lane and Yarm Road). There used to be more loosely configured industrial sites away from the main roads, but these have all been demolished. Since the mid-1990s, considerable amounts of housing development (grey footprints) have not only increased the size of the village significantly but also changed it from a dispersed linear layout into a suburban sprawl.

3.3 Historical Development

This section describes the historical value of the assessment area using information retrieved from secondary sources (see chapter 7.0). Surviving structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

Early human activity involved the construction and use of what is now known as Cade's Road from the Humber Estuary northwards to the River Tyne by the Romans, which is believed to have been built between 138 and 161 AD. The road crossed the river Tees emerging up the steep bank just west of what would become the village of Middleton One Row. It is conceivable that there would have been a Roman control point at such a commanding position. The route then headed north into the assessment area, following boundary lines and then the northern-most stretch of today's Station Road and the full length of Sadberge Road, and beyond to Sedgefield (outside the assessment area) where there was a Roman settlement[38] [39].

[37] https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/map-kb57/England/

[38] https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/places/cades-road/

[39] The Durham County Council Historic Environment Record entry for H3821 : Roman Road, Cade's Road, Margary RR80a, Tees crossing to Wear Crossing states that *[w]hile some have difficulty in accepting the Pountey's Bridge crossing as a Roman route through lack of evidence of Roman construction* – in 1996, the remains of an abutment and pier of a stone bridge construction including iron cramps of unknown origin were recorded by divers of the Northern Archaeological Group in the Tees at Middleton One Row, in alignment with Church Lane (Source S22267) – *it remains that Pountey's Bridge is the only evidence of a historic river crossing in this area. In addition, the clear alignment of the Roman road on the Yorkshire side is towards Pountey's Bridge.*

It is possible that the church of St George, which lies around two miles to the southeast outside the assessment area, marks an Anglo-Saxon site. A pre-Conquest sundial used to be incorporated in the former outer chancel wall until its Victorian rebuilding when it was relocated to the newly constructed church at Middleton One Row. Moreover, a historical record suggests an earlier dedication to Saint Gregory, which would coincide with time of the saint's popularity[40].

Being located to the north of the river Tees, Middleton St George was not subject to the Domesday survey of 1086, a record made at the behest of King William I of the value and extent of each settlement within his recently conquered realm. This remote area was considered a buffer zone against the inroads of the Scots, so viceregal powers had been conferred to the bishops of Durham, which gave them the authority to levy taxes, coin money, grant markets and fairs, and raise an army[41]. Nevertheless, the Wapentake of Sadberge, which Middleton St George lay in, was still under the jurisdiction of the king. This changed in 1189 when Richard I (the Lionheart) sold it to the bishop of Durham, Hugh Puiset, to help finance his crusades.

The first occurrence of the parish of Middleton St George, which was in two moieties (parts), is in the return of 1166. One moiety was the manor of **Over Middleton (Middleton One Row)** (partially within the assessment area), which lay to the east of the former Roman road, held by William son of Siward who was also lord of the neighbouring Dinsdale manor (partially within the assessment area) to the west of Cade's Road. The other was the manor of **Nether or Low Middleton (Middleton St George)** (also partially within the assessment area) to the east and southeast comprising two unequal moieties held by Roland and Godfrey Baard. In 1416, John Killinghall held the main, 'Roland Baard' portion of the manor of Low Middleton in socage, i.e. by payment of rent to the bishop. In 1569, it was sold by the Killinghall family to Ralph Tailbois who sold it to the Johnson family in 1573. After other changes in ownership, it passed back into the Killinghall family in c.1606, when the former two moieties of the manor of Low Middleton were united as one estate, albeit without the West Hartburn land (see below). At John Killinghall's death in 1762, he passed it on to his cousin William Pemberton whose son bequeathed it to his maternal aunts, Elizabeth and Sally Cocks of Plymouth Dock, on his death in 1801. The Cocks moved here to live on the estate and were succeeded by their brother Elisha. His son Henry inherited the estate in 1833 and held it until 1895. The tithe entries show that by 1837 the parish of Middleton St George had split into nine ownerships, with Henry Cocks owning a third of land[42] [43].

A medieval manor was a self-contained administrative unit granted by the sovereign to a nobleman (lord) in exchange for military and other forms of service. It typically consisted of a manor house, village, church, mill, as well as arable and common lands. Despite its potentially earlier origins mentioned above, the present building of the church of St George[44] originates from the thirteenth century, although the font basin is from c.1160, when the Baards were first recorded to hold the manor. The church lies in a very prominent location on raised ground overlooking a large dip in the landscape including the manor house and (now deserted) village of Low Middleton, which are around half a mile to the south of it, near the banks of the river

[40] Pallister 2007a, pages 22-24 & 42
[41] Flynn 1987, page 15
[42] https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/durham/vol3/pp293-299#fnn11 `
[43] Pallister 2007a, pages 25-26, 32-34, 40, 52-53, 70, 109 & 115
[44] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1299460

Tees. The manor house was Low Middleton Hall[45], the present building first constructed by Cuthbert Johnson in 1587, replacing a medieval manor house on or near the site. The house has a keystone over the former main entrance bearing the Killinghall coat of arms and the date of 1670 when the house was remodelled and re-fronted, and a rainwater head dated 1721 commemorating Robert and Jane Killinghall[46]. In 1963, earthworks of the medieval village were still visible and thought to represent two or three toft enclosures in a row[47]. Today only a longitudinal, indented area to the northeast of Low Middleton Hall can be seen on LiDAR imagery[48] suggesting the location of the former village.

A reconstructed map of the parish of Middleton St George at c.1200 (not reproduced here) shows the manor of Over Middleton stretching from the river Tees northwards along the eastern side of the former Roman road (apart from a minor deviation), the manor of Low Middleton to the southeast and West Hartburn to the east. The latter was a subordinate unit of the manor of Low Middleton and also split into the two moieties. The map indicates the village locations of Low Middleton, Over Middleton (now Middleton One Row) and West Hartburn, all outside the assessment area. Although the two manors were quite separate, their contiguous location in the parish led to a good deal of cross leasing of lands. Moreover, tenants of Over Middleton were entitled to use land at Stodhoe (within the assessment area) in the neighbouring parish of Dinsdale, which may have already been a separate, self-contained farmstead at the time[49].

Physical evidence of early habitation closest to the assessment area are the now deserted medieval village of West Hartburn[50] to the east of the present settlement of Middleton St George, and Middleton One Row to the south. Remains of West Hartburn are visible as earthworks, surrounded by remnants of a ridge-and-furrow field system. Middleton One Row still retains the mound of a Norman motte-and-bailey defensive castle[51], possibly built by William son of Siward who held the manors of Over Middleton and Dinsdale in the mid-twelfth century, overlooking the bridge across the river Tees, which was still part of a main route (Cade's Road) northwards and an important point of entry into the bishopric until the fifteenth century[52]. Judging from the partial survival of a ridge-and-furrow field system in the eastern part of Middleton One Row behind the old houses facing south to the river[53], the existing settlement appears to directly overlie the medieval village.

Whilst there is no clear evidence of early settlements in the assessment area, the 'Keys to the Past' website, a basic version of the historic environment records for County Durham and Northumberland, has entries of crop marks that may indicate buried remains of Roman, Iron Age and even Neolithic or Bronze Age structures within the area, most of them to the west of the former Roman road. In addition, LiDAR imagery[54] shows earthworks of ridge-and-furrow field systems indicating medieval farming activities. Prominent examples survive in fields that have not been overploughed, such near the A67/Sadberge Road roundabout.

45 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1185935
46 Ryder 2016, pages 1, 5-6 & 15-16
47 Durham County Council Historic Environment Record: DCC PRN H7818
48 https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=NZ3658810981
49 Pallister 2007a, pages 26, 29, 38, 40 & 56
50 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011257
51 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011072
52 Pallister 2007a, pages 39 & 47-48
53 https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=NZ3523012415
54 https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=NZ3420014392

Over the centuries, changes in agrarian practises contributed to the undermining of the feudal system and its manorial structure. By c.1630, all the formerly open arable fields of the parish had been enclosed and converted from growing corn to mainly cattle grazing; only in the second half of the eighteenth century would the balance between cattle and corn become more even, due to the need to feed the rapidly growing urban populations. **Enclosure** often contributed to depopulation and desertion of villages, such as those at Low Middleton and West Hartburn, which had been abandoned around 1550. At Middleton One Row, the substantial crofts (strips of land) behind each tenement must have contributed significantly to the livelihood of the tenants, making it less necessary from them to move out to the new self-contained farms that had been established with enclosure. This new pattern of dispersed farmsteads is still very prominent within the assessment area. White House Farm, in the northeast corner of the assessment area, is an early example of the move out of West Hartburn village into the new farms created with enclosure.

The hearth tax return of 1666 for the parish shows that William Killinghall, lord of the manor of Low Middleton, possessed the grandest house (Low Middleton Hall) with ten hearths, and that the lord of the manor of Over Middleton, James Askew, 'only' had five. Although the loss of the feudal element in their role as lords of the manor had an impact on the Killinghalls, they remained the major landowner in the parish and retained a position of authority as well as the patronage of the church including a share of the tithes. In contrast, the lords of the manor of Over Middleton, who never had a part in the control of the church, had lost far more power when the medieval manor was transformed into commercial farms and estates. Little more than the title remained, and that seems to have disappeared after 1720.

By 1700, Middleton One Row was the only substantial assemblage of buildings in Middleton St George parish, although a few cottages had sprung up at Oak Tree, to the east outside the assessment area; it would become a sizeable hamlet in the second half of the eighteenth century[55].

A map of John Rontree's Farm[56] (not reproduced here), which was surveyed as part of the Killinghall estate in 1757[57], depicts the northern road junction in the location of the present village of Middleton St George, with the routes going north, south and west, like today. Only four structures are shown on the map; none of them have survived. On the north side of the junction was a small single-storey structure next to an access point to a footpath through Mr Rontree's fields to the west of Sadberge Road, in Dinsdale parish. Some distance to the north, between the footpath and road, was what would become known as Dinsdale Moor House, presumably Mr Rontree's home, judging from its detailed depiction. To the south of the junction was Palmtree House, also along the western side of the road (now Station Road). Further to the south along the eastern side of the road was the Killinghall farm, in Middleton St George parish.

In 1789, a sulphurous spring was discovered about half a mile to the west of Middleton One Row, in Dinsdale parish outside the assessment area, marking the birth of the Dinsdale Spa. When in 1797 better facilities were provided, visitors started arriving from a wider area. This also had an increasing impact on Middleton St George parish. For example, the church of St George was partially rebuilt in 1805 to accommodate the growing numbers of residents and spa visitors. By 1828, three

55 Pallister 2007a, pages 56-58, 62-63, 70, 79, 83, 87, 127 & 140
56 https://archiveshop.northyorks.gov.uk/historic-maps/ZDG-A-IV1-9-2.html
57 Pallister 2007a, pages 7, 79 & 81

quarters of Middleton One Row had been rebuilt and new houses constructed so that the village could provide improved and increased visitor accommodation. A year later, a large hotel opened adjacent to the spa[58]; this had been designed by architect Ignatius Bonomi[59], who had conceived the iconic Skerne Bridge in Darlington for the **Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)** just a few years earlier.

In 1818, Edward Pease, a Quaker and retired wool merchant from Darlington who would later become known as the 'father of the railways', and a group of businessmen formed the S&DR company[60]. In May 1821, a new committee was formed with Reverend William Addison Fountaine, rector of Middleton St George since 1798, being one of the members. The reverend owned Forster Field Farm, which partially lay on the southeastern fringe of the assessment area. He would later profit significantly from his railway interests, enabling him to expand his estate so that he would become the second most extensive landowner in the parish, also owning White House Farm in the northeastern corner of the assessment area[61].

A survey map of 1822/3 for the proposed route of the railway line (not reproduced here) mainly shows dispersed 'buildings' within the assessment area, which are also identified on the map regression (see section 3.2): Ripon House (later South Burdon Farm), Morton Palms (farm), Wheat Sheaf (inn), Morton (Palms Grange – here three buildings are depicted, so this may have been a small hamlet by that time) and Stodda (High Stodhoe Farm, no longer extant). In the location of the present village of Middleton St George, Palmtree House (farm) and Dinsdale Moor House (farm) are the only buildings shown. Besides the northern road junction there is also a southern three-road junction in the location of the present village-centre roundabout, with the main route turning east. On the map, the northern road junction is marked as **'Fighting Cocks'**. Whilst the name may be associated with the now illegal sport of cock fighting, which was popular in the area from at least the eighteenth century[62], there is no evidence for this[63]. It is plausible that it rather refers to the major landowning Cocks family who inherited the manor in 1801 (see above).

The 1822/3 map also shows that the originally proposed route of the S&DR by Welsh engineer George Overton in 1821 would have bypassed Fighting Cocks some distance to the south, along the fringe of the assessment area. This proposal was however superseded by the new route put forward by English engineer George Stephenson in 1823 which was eventually built, passing just north of the Fighting Cocks road junction. The land that the new railway would go through in the eastern half of the assessment area belonged to Elisha Cocks (Dinsdale Moor House and Palmtree farms) and Revered W A Fountaine (Forster Field Farm)[64] [65].

The S&DR opened on 27 September 1825, with the 26-mile main line running from the coal mines near Witton Park to the river Tees at Stockton, via Darlington and Yarm where there were two branch lines[66]. Early stopping places of the S&DR were mostly where the line crossed existing roads, such as at Fighting Cocks, although

58 Pallister 2007a, pages 88-89, 112 & 120
59 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1185930
60 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 8
61 Pallister 2007a, pages 109-110, 112-113, 115 & 121
62 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, p. 3, 18-19
63 Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
64 Pallister 2007a, page 116 Fig.21
65 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, p. 3 & 42
66 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 5

there were initially no platform or station facilities[67]. In the first five years of railway use, the level crossing over Sadberge Road was a simple affair with the sleepers set into the ground to avoid obstructing road users. On approaching, the driver would sound a horn to warn traffic of the oncoming train[68].

After the railway had opened, the first development at Fighting Cocks provided by the S&DR was a [D] Coal Depot to the south of the line, as approved in the Committee's meeting of October 1825. Following another S&DR meeting in May 1827, a 'drop' was to be added. Thus, it seems that the original depot was developed in two stages: the first was a railway siding with an unloading area where coal would be shovelled from waggons into sacks for landsale (local sale), and the second was a raised rail track over cells where coal and other minerals could be dropped from bottom-opening waggons more efficiently. In the year 1829-30, over a thousand tons of coal and another thousand of lime and stones were delivered to the depot[69].

Remains of possibly original (1825) boundary walling of the **[D]** Coal Depot constructed in squared sandstone. *Left:* View looking north with Sadberge Road to the right. The end of the wall has been damaged, possibly by a wagon[70]. *Right:* View from the disused railway corridor looking south. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

The location of the [D] Coal Depot was significant, being at the long-standing junction of the former Roman Road and the lane to Darlington. Moreover, it was just over two miles from the expanding Dinsdale Spa. Passenger coaches brought visitors along the railway to Fighting Cocks for the spa and guest accommodation at Dinsdale and Middleton One Row. In 1828 two coaches travelled daily in each direction. However, the spa and depot not only attracted passengers, depot workers and coal merchants to Fighting Cocks, but also farmers, builders and other tradespeople. Thus, there was a demand for more facilities in this location.

Consequently, the minutes of a S&DR meeting in April 1830 ordered the construction of a *'Cottage for the accommodation of Passengers and Parcels and the sale of Coals Lime etc'*. By the end of 1830 or early 1831, the first station building at Fighting Cocks, known as Railway Lodge, was completed to the east of Sadberge Road and south of the railway track. At that time, the station was in the same management as the [D] Coal Depot across the road. In December 1831, it was occupied by John Clayton and Elizabeth Bedford. John had earlier (1829) held the tenancy of the S&DR Company brewery at Darlington. He asked the S&DR in late 1830 if he could take over the new station being built at Fighting Cocks after losing his job at the brewery.

67 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Historical Background' & map XXVIII
68 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 18
69 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 8
70 Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January

One of the tasks he would do at the station was selling coals from the depot. By 1832, John had given up his occupation as a coal dealer. At the end of 1839, the S&DR Company proposed to have the running of the depot being handed over to a third party, marking a departure of the combined depot/station functions[71].

In June 1832, Henry Cocks inherited the Low Middleton estate of his father Elisha (see above). This included Palmtree House Farm and the plot to the north of the road junction (which was part of Dinsdale Moor House Farm) upon which he had the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn constructed shortly. It seems probable that the inn opened at some point between 1832 (inheritance of the manor) and May 1834 when it was listed in the trade directory under the management of Mary Woodhouse, wife of William, a farmer, who lived at Palmtree House. It is conceivable that its construction was triggered by the new railway station congregating potential customers in this location. The change from horse-drawn coaches along the railway track (there was a lack of locomotives in the beginning) to steam-hauled passenger trains and the S&DR Company taking all traffic into their own hands (rather than contracting it out) from 1833 on[72] [73] may have also contributed to its construction. Prior to the opening of the inn, William Woodhouse had already provided refreshments to the public since 1828 from his home at Palmtree House. Such 'open kitchen' operations were the origin of many public houses, particularly in rural areas[74].

Former **[E]** Fighting Cocks Inn looking northwest, with remnant of the **[D]** Coal Depot's southern boundary wall just visible in the background to the far right/north along Sadberge Road. The original inn comprises the three bays on the right-hand return, facing the station. It is possible that it was only single storey, as suggested by the right/northern-most bay, which seems to be original. The additional bays and lower wing facing the road junction (the latter's historical stable, cart house and hayloft functions no longer readable) are later extensions (see below). The large double window on the ground floor with leaded coloured glazing (partially concealed behind the telegraph pole) and porch are early-twentieth century insertions. The window opening above and the two small windows on the right-hand return are later replacements of former sashes[75]. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

The [E] Fighting Cocks Inn was not just used by workers at the [D] Coal Depot. Passenger coaches, collecting and dropping off travellers, and coal trains stopped here in such numbers that a watchman was told to *'put an end to such loose practices'*. Consequently, Fighting Cocks became a regular stop[76]. In 1840, the S&DR

71 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 8-9 & 15
72 Pallister 2007a, page 125
73 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 5
74 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 13-17
75 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 21 & 27-29
76 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 21

made an agreement with Michael Walton the landlord of the inn which bound him to transport all first-class passengers between the railway and Dinsdale Spa[77].

The 1839 plan drawing of the Fighting Cocks Station area by T Dixon for the S&DR[78] (not reproduced here) shows the [D] Coal Depot consisting of six cells with a track over served by a siding branching off to the southeast. Across the main line is a small unknown building, approximately in the location of the later [B] DRDC Loading Dock (see below), and a milestone marking the eight-mile point on the opposite side of Sadberge Road; both are no longer extant. To the south of the depot is the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn fronting onto Sadberge Road, drawing its trade from the growing railway operation at the station (Railway Lodge). Further to the east is a mill with circular planform (a windmill) and a building of square footprint right next to it, both also served by a siding coming from the main railway line and no longer extant.

By 1839, between twenty and fifty coal trains were passing through Fighting Cocks on their way to Stockton each day[79]. In April 1840, the average number of tickets sold per day to departing travellers at the station was 32. In February-March 1841, when there were three passenger trains a day in each direction, the average was just fifteen. Similar numbers of passengers would arrive at the station. This would suggest that the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn depended quite significantly for its trade on users of and workers at the [D] Coal Depot and some nearby businesses, besides the modest number of travellers[80]. In November 1846, the station was recorded as Middleton and Dinsdale, named after the two nearest villages[81].

In the 1840s, a George Stephenson (not the famous S&DR engineer mentioned earlier) was the S&DR's Passenger Manager. He lived in Middleton St George and commuted to his office in Darlington from Fighting Cocks each day. A strong churchgoer, he went on to bring pressure on the S&DR to stop using public houses as substitute stations[82].

Following an act of parliament in 1851, the newly established Stockton, Middlesbrough and Yarm Water Company (SM&YWC) was authorised to raise money, lay water mains and buy water from the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage on Coniscliffe Road, first built by the Darlington Gas and Water Company (DG&WC) in 1850 and now a scheduled monument[83], in order to meet the increasing demand for water from the growing towns and industries of Teesside. An extensive part of the Act is devoted entirely to protection of the S&DR, should it be necessary to lay mains near, under or across railway land. By June 1852, the Tees Cottage Waterworks was supplying both the DG&WC and SM&YWC. In July 1852, the half-yearly meeting of the latter noted that their service reservoir at Fighting Cocks (now an outdoor sports court behind the Community Centre), with a capacity of one million gallons of water, was nearing completion. This was the second service reservoir constructed to serve the Tees Cottage Waterworks. It incorporated a filter to remove atmospheric debris before the water exited, an apparently unique feature[84]. From here, the water was fed by gravity through a single pipe to Yarm,

77 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019, page 40
78 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 9-10
79 Pallister 2007a, page 126
80 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 18
81 Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXVIII
82 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 24
83 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1002300
84 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, pages 38-41 & 134

Stockton and Middlesbrough. Whilst many villages depended on pumped water until well into the twentieth century[85], Fighting Cocks was already connected to piped water in 1853, following the installation of a second pipe[86].

Having experienced further increasing demand for water, the SY&MWC obtained another Stockton, Middlesbrough and Yarm Waterworks Act in 1854. The wording suggests that it also gave the company powers to construct a reservoir in the parish of Dinsdale, near the Middleton and Dinsdale Station of the S&DR, but without any specific indication of the location, type or size of this reservoir[87].

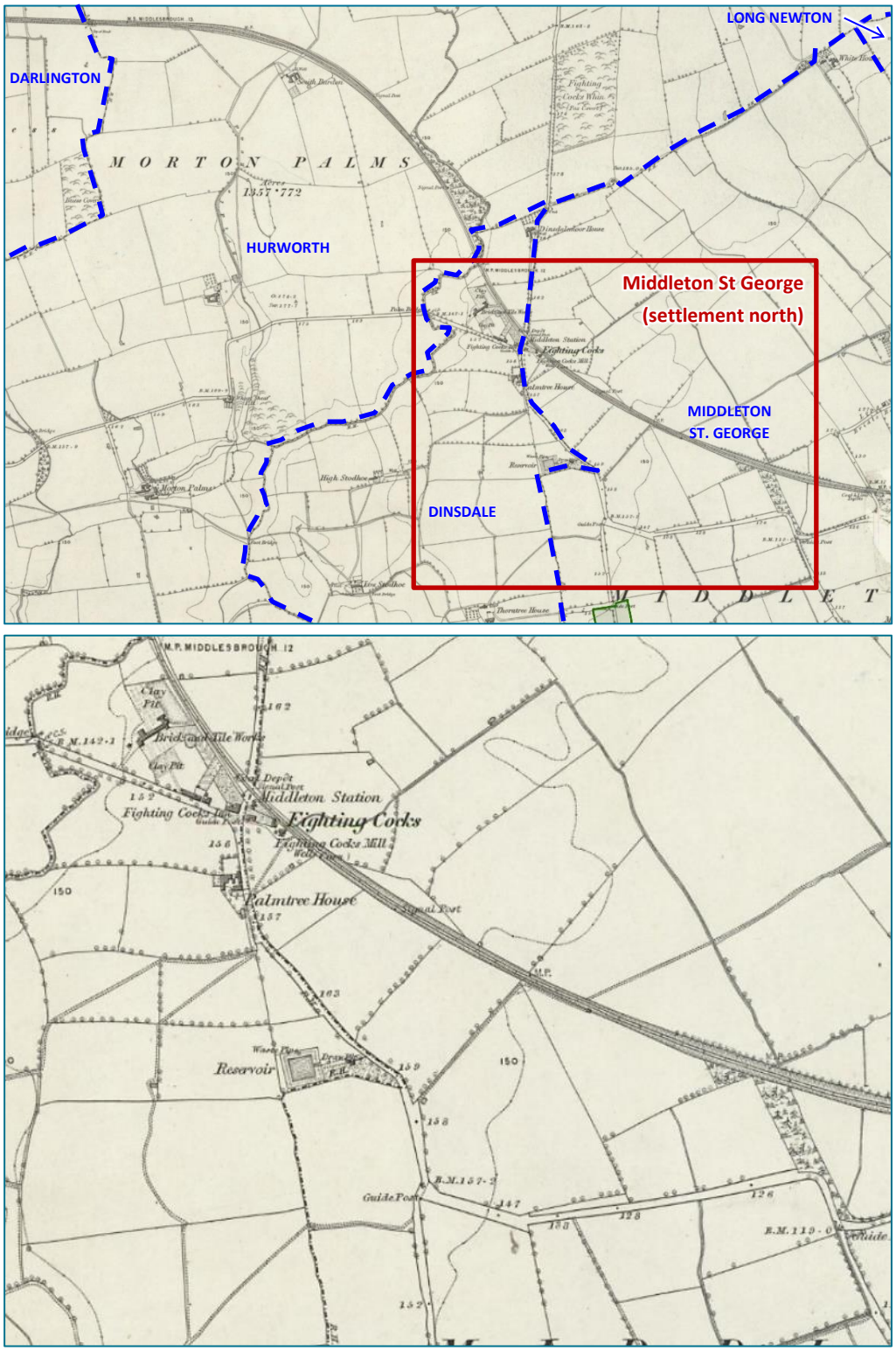
The 1855 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see below) shows that the line of the former Roman road (see map at the beginning of this document) has been fully retained as field boundaries to the south of Palmtree House. The original SM&YWC service reservoir is depicted between that line and what would become the spine road through the village, with the locations of a draw pipe and waste pipe shown. There also seems to be a building to the east of the reservoir, which is no longer extant. The assessment area appears predominantly rural with dispersed farmsteads, as well as the Wheat Sheaf public house near the Morton Palms hamlet. The reverse S-shape of the S&DR cuts across the countryside and over Sadberge Road to the north of the Fighting Cocks road junction. At the [D] Coal Depot, the end of the coal drop seems to include a building, possibly a weigh house. Immediately to the south, the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn has been substantially extended to the west by expanding the pub and providing an attached lower-height three-stalled stable block with coach house and loft over. A historical photo[88] shows that these extensions are faced in Pease brick. On the map, the Railway Lodge is now named Middleton Station and the Fighting Cocks Mill identified to process corn. Further buildings have been constructed since the 1839 plan drawing along the lane to Darlington and near the wind mill, as well as the Brick and Tile Works to the northwest of Fighting Cocks. The works presumably supplied building materials for the new houses to be (re)built in the immediate area[89] and generated more traffic for the railway and a requirement for coal to fuel the kilns[90]. In the southeastern corner of the assessment area, in the location of the later Oaktree Junction (see below), there is a coal and lime depot immediately to the south of the S&DR.

In 1858, the 'Stockton and Middlesbrough Waterworks Act' was passed. The preamble notes that the SM&YWC had been unable to complete all the works of the previous acts within the set limit. Because of this, and the increasing demand for water in the distribution area, the Act gave the company the power to construct additional pipelines from Tees Cottage to the supply area via the reservoir at Fighting Cocks. Schedule A of the Act gives a list of works and property already constructed or purchased by the company including[91]:

- Two reservoirs and other works at or near Fighting Cocks
- Two lines of main pipes from Tees Cottage to Fighting Cocks

85 Historic England 2017a, page 3
86 Pallister 2007a, page 139
87 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, page 44
88 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 11 & 18-19
89 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 20
90 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 10-11
91 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, page 45

- One line of main pipe from Fighting Cocks to Middlesbrough and thence to Stockton, and various other unspecified pipes, etc., clearly for distribution purposes



1855 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. Parish names and boundaries at the time are shown in dark blue (**NB: these are not the current parish names/boundaries**). In the area of the reservoir, the boundary between the Dinsdale and Middleton St George parishes did not follow the line of the former Roman road. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

In 1860, the [F] Station Master's House and Station Building were constructed in the location of the old station to provide improved passenger services, retaining some of the stonework of the earlier building in the rear walling[92]. A Neo-Gothic arched sash window facing onto the Darlington-bound platform could be opened to serve customers across a counter. It is possible that the [C] Waiting Shed on the Stockton-bound platform across the railway track was built around the same time. Like the station buildings, it is constructed in buff-coloured Pease brick, although the stretchers to the rear are red bricks. The shed was originally open fronted[93].

Top: **[F]** Station Master's House (right) and Station Building at former Sadberge Road level crossing with disused railway corridor to the left/east. Both are faced in Pease brick although the former Station Building is now painted white. The Neo-Gothic window is behind the modern garage, which is in the location of the former Darlington-bound platform. *Bottom:* Remains of the rear wall of the **[C]** Waiting Shed constructed in English Garden Wall bond. The wall has since been partially rebuilt by the Friends of the S&DR. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

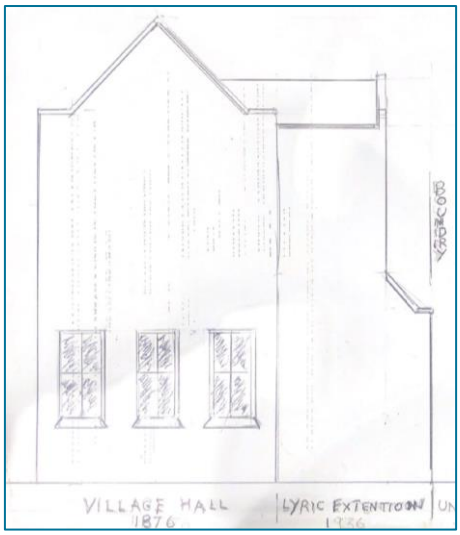
In the same year, the Dinsdale Moor Iron Works (no longer extant) opened to the west of the [D] Coal Depot. They were established by a group of businessmen including estate owner Henry Cocks, a Darlington colliery owner and representatives

92 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 19

93 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 24

of the Pease family. Iron ore first discovered in the Cleveland Hills in 1859 and coal from Shildon were brought here for the manufacture of iron and steel[94].

Also in 1860, Rakes Hall was built by Mr Rake as a village hall for non-Quaker workers. It now adjoins the southern end of Station Terrace. After becoming a boys school, it would later be turned into the [H] Lyric cinema[95] (see below).



Left: Former Rakes Hall which would later become **[H]** the Lyric, how a house (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Right:* Sketch by J Richardson (not to scale) of what the building used to look like, kindly provided by Ross Willis.

In 1863, the S&DR and North Eastern Railway (NER) company amalgamated. The station was renamed 'Fighting Cocks' on 1 September 1866[96].

In 1864, the [Q] Middleton Iron Works were constructed to the east of the southern road junction on land that belonged to Henry Cocks (once part of Palmtree House Farm), served by a siding off the railway line. They produced pig iron and operated initially two, and from 1875[97] on four, blast furnaces powered by a stationary steam engine. They also had an internal narrow-gauge railway system for moving slag. Whilst their location was well suited to the availability of raw materials, there was no substantial source of labour in the locality to meet the demands of the industry. Therefore, workers needed to be brought in from elsewhere. Many came from Yorkshire but many others also from much further away. The first houses to be built for them were a long terrace along the southern boundary of the iron works, along the road to Yarm. Henry Cocks called it Killinghall Row, after his forebearers who held the manor of Low Middleton. The same principle was applied for the naming of Pemberton Terrace (with generous front gardens) to the west of it, close to the southern road junction which became to be known as the Square[98] [99]. Other houses in the vicinity built around that time bear their builders' names: Harts Buildings, Browns Buildings and Hansons Buildings [sic][100].

94 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 20
95 Lombard-Earl, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 31 January
96 Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXVIII
97 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 20
98 Pallister 2007a, pages 116 & 133-135
99 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Historical Background' & point 75
100 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16302438.lawless-middleton-st-george-prison-deal-irish-drunks/

Top: Remains of southern boundary wall of the **[Q]** Middleton Iron Works, bordering the back lane to Killinghall Row, Yarm Road, the first houses to be built for the increasing workforce. It is mainly constructed from slag with a few red brick pinnings in between. Smelting is the process of applying heat and a chemical reducing agent to an ore to extract a desired base metal product. As most ores are impure, it was necessary to use limestone, which was brought in from Weardale, to remove the accompanying rock gangue as slag[101]. This wall is now the only survivor of the iron works site (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024). *Bottom:* Details of slag pieces. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

The construction of the new housing changed the centre of gravity within the parish in only one decade. The well-established nucleus of population at Middleton One Row was still there and remained the centre for visitors to the spa and some local services but was outweighed by the development around the [Q] Middleton Iron Works. The iron-works-centred housing was originally known as Killinghall, but with its continuing expansion that name was lost. Instead, the new village was taking on the name of the parish, Middleton St George[102].

Former **[J]** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel with gable end fronting the road, now converted into residential use. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

[101] Pallister 2007a, page 133

[102] Pallister 2007a, pages 134 & 137

In 1869, the [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built halfway between the northern and southern road junctions along the west side of (now) Station Road, adjoining the northeast corner of the reservoir site.

In 1871, the Gas Works were built to the southeast of the Fighting Cocks Mill, served by a railway siding. They were owned by the Middleton and Dinsdale Gas Company and supplied gas for the lighting installed in the later part of the nineteenth century. By 1893, there were 32 public lamps in the parish[103]. In addition, the local availability of gas allowed the NER to light railway signals, including those on the ground[104].

In spring 1871, the church of St Lawrence[105] was opened in Middleton One Row. By that time, the inconvenience and inadequacy of the small, remote church of St George had become too apparent, as it was unable to cater for the inhabitants of Middleton One Row, spa visitors and the growing, even more distant, industrial population at Middleton St George.

At the end of July 1871, following the Education Act of the previous year, a new National School (no longer extant) was provided on Chapel Street on the southern fringe of the assessment area, replacing the undersized school at Middleton One Row. The location was chosen due to its proximity to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works whilst minimising the distance to Middleton One Row. In addition, the management of the iron works had become alert to the educational and social needs of its workforce and provided a library and reading room on their site.

The 1871 census shows that the total population of the parish had suddenly exploded from roughly 220 people during the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries to 918. Out of this number, 470 people lived at Killinghall and Fighting Cocks. Further housing had been built on the eastern side of (now) Station Road and to the south of the Dinsdale Moor Iron Works, along the lane to Darlington. The population of Middleton One Row was 229, which also included workers employed in the industries (with the exemption of the Gas Works which were not included in that census). The railway also contributed to the expansion of the population and housing demand, requiring labourers, clerks, gate keepers, etc. The industrial community now made up over half of the population, with 133 men employed at the iron and brick works. As the housing demand could not keep up with the increasing workforce, families had to share houses with other families or boarders[106].

A print of 1875 (not reproduced here) shows Fighting Cocks Station from the level railway/road crossing looking southeast[107]. In the foreground on the left is the [C] Waiting Shed facing onto the northern platform with two lamps, one of them mounted to the building, the other freestanding. Across the two railway tracks are the [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, the latter facing onto the southern platform with passengers waiting and a signal post to the right, close to the crossing. In the background are the windmill and, further beyond, the smoking chimneys of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works.

Because of the large number of 'thirsty' iron workers, two pubs were built at the Square: the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and, opposite, the [O] Killinghall Arms. Soon the

[103] Pallister 2007a, page 157
[104] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 22
[105] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1185932
[106] Pallister 2007a, pages 84, 134 & 137-143
[107] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 27

village became noted for its lawlessness due to drunken behaviour. In 1877, a seven-foot-long petition was delivered to Darlington magistrates demanding that the village be equipped with its own prison, the reason being that *'[i]n order to convey a disorderly person to the lock-up in Darlington, the policeman is frequently compelled to leave the locality when his presence is most needed, and it is well known that, in his absence, deplorable scenes are but too common'*. Consequently, one or two houses of a terrace called Central Buildings (no longer extant) on the south side of the Square were converted into a police station with lock-up. It was ideally located, between the two pubs, where most of the drinking took place, and facing the Square, where most of the fighting took place[108]. The police also used to be stationed in 8 Middleton Lane, now a private house just outside the assessment area, which may have been built in the 1880s ore 1890s. It still contains evidence of cells[109].

Left: **[N]** Havelock Arms Hotel. *Right:* The former **[O]** Killinghall Arms; a historical photo shows the building without render and 2x2 sliding sashes[110]. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

By 1881, Pemberton Terrace had been extended to infill the space between it and Killinghall Row, which was also known as Old Row. Named New Row, it provided another nineteen houses for iron workers. More houses were built in Chapel Row and elsewhere in the Killinghall area, as well as in Middleton One Row and along Middleton Lane, to the south outside the assessment area. The larger houses along the latter were mainly the homes of prosperous families in commerce and industry, who were no longer constrained to live where they worked[111].

In 1882, the Dinsdale Wire and Steel Works opened[112] (no longer extant) between the Brick and Tile Works and Dinsdale Moor Iron Works along the lane to Darlington, using raw material from Sheffield and elsewhere.

In 1883, the [Q] Middleton Iron Works were closed down for the remainder of the century. Imports of better-quality ore from Spain and elsewhere were now used, so it was more economical to use blast furnaces closer to port facilities. The parish was hit hard by the loss of its main source of employment. By 1891, the population had fallen to 871 from its census peak of 1103 in 1881. Also, another side effect of the closure of the iron works was that the plans for a Roman Catholic chapel along Chapel Street, hence its name, came to a complete halt and was never built.

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108 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16302438.lawless-middleton-st-george-prison-deal-irish-drunks/

109 Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

110 Chapman 1990, page 106

111 Pallister 2007a, pages 147-148

112 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area'

At around 1886, a signal box was provided along the southern track at Fighting Cocks Station, immediately to the west of the level crossing. It was a 'Type C1b' building, with panelled brickwork on the ground floor. The frame had 19 levers and a separate wheel was provided to operate the crossing gates[113].

A photograph of 3 June 1887 shows the same view of Fighting Cocks Station as the 1875 print. By that time, however, the windmill no longer had sails, as they had apparently been destroyed in a storm, and was driven by an engine. Little else seems to have changed, with passengers still lining the platform[114].

Left: **[S]** Metal Railway Bridge over the historical route to Yarm. *Right:* **[R]** Masonry Railway Bridge over access track. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

On 1 July 1887, less than one month after the photo was taken, the NER opened a new passenger line between Darlington's enlarged Bank Top Station and the resulting railway junction with the existing line at the eastern fringe of the assessment area. The junction was named Oaktree Junction, after the nearby hamlet, and formed the western end of the Darlington & Saltburn branch. The new line bypassed the original S&DR route through Fighting Cocks Station, which became known as the **Fighting Cocks branch or loop line**, running between Albert Hill Junction near Darlington's North Road Station and Oaktree Junction[115]. It required various bridges, including a [R] Masonry Railway Bridge over an access track to a farmstead and a [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the road to Yarm at the southeast end of the assessment area. The new line also resulted in the provision of a new passenger station for Middleton St George, misleadingly named Dinsdale Station, half a mile to the south of Fighting Cocks and close to Killinghall, where most of the recent development had taken place. Consequently, the bypassed, old line and station concentrated on moving and handling freight, including the serving of the [D] Coal Depot[116], as well as excursion trains and diverted services. It is likely that the [C] Waiting Shed was enclosed with a timber front following the transfer of passenger traffic to Dinsdale Station. Its use changed to a paraffin lamp room, storage of pairs of metal ramps (required for pushing derailed waggons back on the track) and a toilet[117] [118]. Besides the new Dinsdale Station offering better passenger facilities, it was also much nearer to the centre of population and thus convenient for commuting to Darlington and Teesside. This opened up a much wider range of employment possibilities for the inhabitants in the parish. Moreover, the dwindling

[113] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 15
[114] Pallister 2007a, pages 103, 139 & 147-148
[115] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 16
[116] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 19
[117] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 28
[118] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Historical Background', 'Oak Tree Junction' & '6. Darlington South Junction to Oak Tree Junction via Dinsdale'

visitors to the spa had been replaced by day-trippers from the nearby towns, with Dinsdale Station being within easy walking distance to Middleton One Row.

Henry Cocks, the last lord of the manor of Middleton St George, died in November 1894. He was also the last person to be interred beneath the chancel of St George's church[119]. Much of his estate was auctioned off, including the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn in September 1895. Its sale represented the first change of ownership since it was built. The purchaser was the Victoria Brewery of Darlington, also known as Warwick's Brewery Co. They remained owners until 1926. The triangular field adjoining the inn to the west was developed to provide a red brick terrace comprising five houses (no longer extant) following the inn's sale in 1895[120].

The Local Government Act of 1894 introduced parish councils and brought the village level of government into the pattern we have today. Functions previously carried out by churchwardens and vestries were now taken over by elected councillors. On 4 December, the inaugural meeting of the Middleton St George Parish Council was held at the school on Chapel Street[121].

The 1894 act also introduced rural district councils, establishing Darlington Rural District Council (DRDC) for the area. These inherited the functions of the earlier sanitary districts, but also had wider authority over matters such as local planning, council housing, playgrounds and cemeteries. The council had loading docks served by the old railway line[122] of which the [B] DRDC Loading Dock at Fighting Cocks still survives. It would later be used to load slag tarmacadam for the use in road repair[123].

Remains of the **[B]** DRDC Loading Dock at Fighting Cocks Station, to northwest of the former level crossing. The Friends of the S&DR tidied up the area, cleared vegetation growth and added old railway sleeper blocks so that this feature can be better appreciated by the public. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

The 1896 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see below) identifies the line of the former Roman Road, although it is now disrupted by three further basins on the enlarged Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site which have been built to the west of the original, smaller basin. To the northeast of the oldest reservoir, the [K] Board Room building is shown, and the earlier building to the east (no longer extant) seems to have been enlarged or rebuilt. Bordering the reservoirs site to the northeast is the [J] (Wesleyan) Methodist Chapel. The terrace on the opposite side of the road includes a post office, with the building that would become [H] the Lyric cinema (originally Rakes Hall) immediately to the north of it.

[119] Pallister 2007a, pages 148 & 153
[120] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 19
[121] Pallister 2007a, page 153
[122] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area'
[123] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), pages 15, 18 & 21

[K] Board Room (top) and Entrance Gates (bottom) belonging to the former Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site. *Top:* The building, now the Parish Council Meeting Room, has now all its openings except for the main entrance boarded up. *Bottom:* The curved layout of the gateway seems to imply a former turning circle for carts or coaches and would have provided a more notable sense of arrival for visitors. Note the survival of the original iron railings (in contrast to the **[M]** Cocks Memorial Homes (see below) on the opposite side of the road). There is a glimpse of the **[J]** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel to the right/north of the gateway. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

On the 1896 map, further new buildings are shown along the lane to Darlington (these are no longer extant). Nearby, there is the semi-detached house along Sadberge Road a short distance north of the level railway crossing, and two houses opposite Palmtree House, now part of Station Terrace. The [F] Station Master's House and Station Building are no longer marked as a station. There has been some expansion of the industry at the northern road junction. However, the windmill is no longer annotated, either as it no longer performed a commercial function or was completely out of use by then. The name Fighting Cocks has been moved from the northern road junction to the south of Palmtree House. New development shown around the southern road junction comprises various buildings, including the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel, [O] Killinghall Arms and another post office. To the northeast is the large industrial site of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, connected via sidings to the original railway line, which has become the Fighting Cocks Loop Line and was reserved for industrial activities. Along the iron works' western boundary is a triangular field, now the village's playing field, with an access lane from (now) Station Road to the industrial site along its northwestern border. The iron works are also linked via a rail track to a site to the south(east), across the road to Yarm and new passenger railway line. The area between the southern road junction and station is annotated Killinghall. The surrounding area of the village is still agricultural with dispersed farmsteads, the Morton Palms hamlet, and the Wheatsheaf Inn along the lane to Darlington.

1896 six-inch OS maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

At Dinsdale station, the 1896 map shows an eastbound (north) and a westbound (south) waiting shed. The booking office was located adjacent to the road bridge, at street level above the railway tracks[124]. To the east, there are two more bridges along the Darlington & Saltburn line: the [R] Masonry Railway Bridge over an access track to a farmstead and the [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the road to Yarm. At Oaktree

[124] Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXXIV & points 88-90

Junction, the passenger line joins onto the track of the former S&DR. To the south of the station, along Chapel Street, is the school and more housing.

Top: Remains of **[G]** Enclosed Railway Corridor in Pease brick laid in the English Garden Wall bond to the north of the former Gas Works and windmill sites; note the 'zigzag' line of wall (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024). *Middle:* Remains of later, southern coal drop walling of the **[D]** Coal Depot built in stone; the brick walling on top was added when the depot was no longer in use. The wall now forms the boundary to the carpark of the former **[E]** Fighting Cocks Inn. *Bottom:* This feature, judging from its position near the **[A]** Crane Base and Platform just outside this view on the right/north (see below), seems to be related to the ramp carrying the siding track to the coal cells. (Photos © Gaby Rose, April 2024)

The 1896 25-inch OS map (not reproduced here) shows further detail which is of particular interest for the northern road junction. The [E] Fighting Cocks Inn is now referred to as a hotel, and one of the buildings to the west of it, along the Darlington lane, is marked as a smithy. There has been significant railway-related development with multiple tracks in the widened [G] Railway Corridor, which has been enclosed by tall brick walling to the north of the windmill and Gas Works sites. To the west of Sadberge Road opposite the [C] Waiting Shed (with a boundary stone to the west of

it), the [B] DRDC Loading Dock is served by a single siding which stops short of the road. Across the tracks, there is the signal box at which two sidings terminate. To the south of it, the [D] Coal Depot has been enlarged and 'shifted' slightly to the west, including former land to the rear of the inn. The number of coal cells has been increased to eleven and the working area widened to permit access on both sides of the cells. A new weighing machine and its office have also been added. This all suggests that the depot has been completely rebuilt and reorganised, perhaps by the NER after its amalgamation with the S&DR[125]. Further to the southeast, at Oaktree Junction, there is another signal box to the south of the tracks, which opened on 1 July 1887 along with the new passenger railway line.

In 1898, Fighting Cocks was still a busy goods station. Traffic in coal, coke, lime and limestone amounted to 8,548 tons. Goods forwarded totalled 10,495 tons and goods received 12,677 tons. Traffic was handled in three sets of sidings[126].

Around the turn of the century, the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works were reopened after a certain amount of reconstruction by their new owners, the Linthorpe Dinsdale Smelting Company. The furnaces were progressively brought back into production over a number of years. The intention was to allow the use of foreign ore and yield a product more suitable for the making of steel. In 1901, there were complaints about the danger to health and the environment caused by the discharge of smoke and dirt from these operations. In 1904, the company agreed to pay for the erection of a drinking trough combined with a gas lamp in the middle of the Square (the southern road junction), to enhance the centre of the iron works village.

[M] Cocks Memorial Homes. The clock tower over the central part is a later replacement and is at odds with the Arts and Crafts style of the building. The original clock tower over the central unit was constructed of more elaborately designed masonry and had a flat roof[127]. In the foreground, the metal boundary railings were likely cut off in the war effort in the 1940s. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

In 1903, seven alms-houses called the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes were built across the road from the reservoirs with some of the money left by the late Henry Cocks[128]. Although originally the central unit was for a matron, it now has the same status as the others houses. The additional room in this cottage was intended for the use of the trustees but has long been incorporated into the living accommodation[129].

[125] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 11
[126] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 18
[127] https://www.francisfrith.com/middleton-st-george/middleton-st-george-the-old-people-s-homes-c1960_m421009#
[128] Pallister 2007a, pages 106 & 159-160
[129] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

In 1906, the [P] Co-op and Stable were built at the north end of Middleton Lane, forming a group with Central Buildings (which included the police station and prison) to the south of the Square. The stable building is to the rear of the site and comprised three stalls and a hayloft over, accommodating the horses and cart that were used by the shop for home deliveries[130].

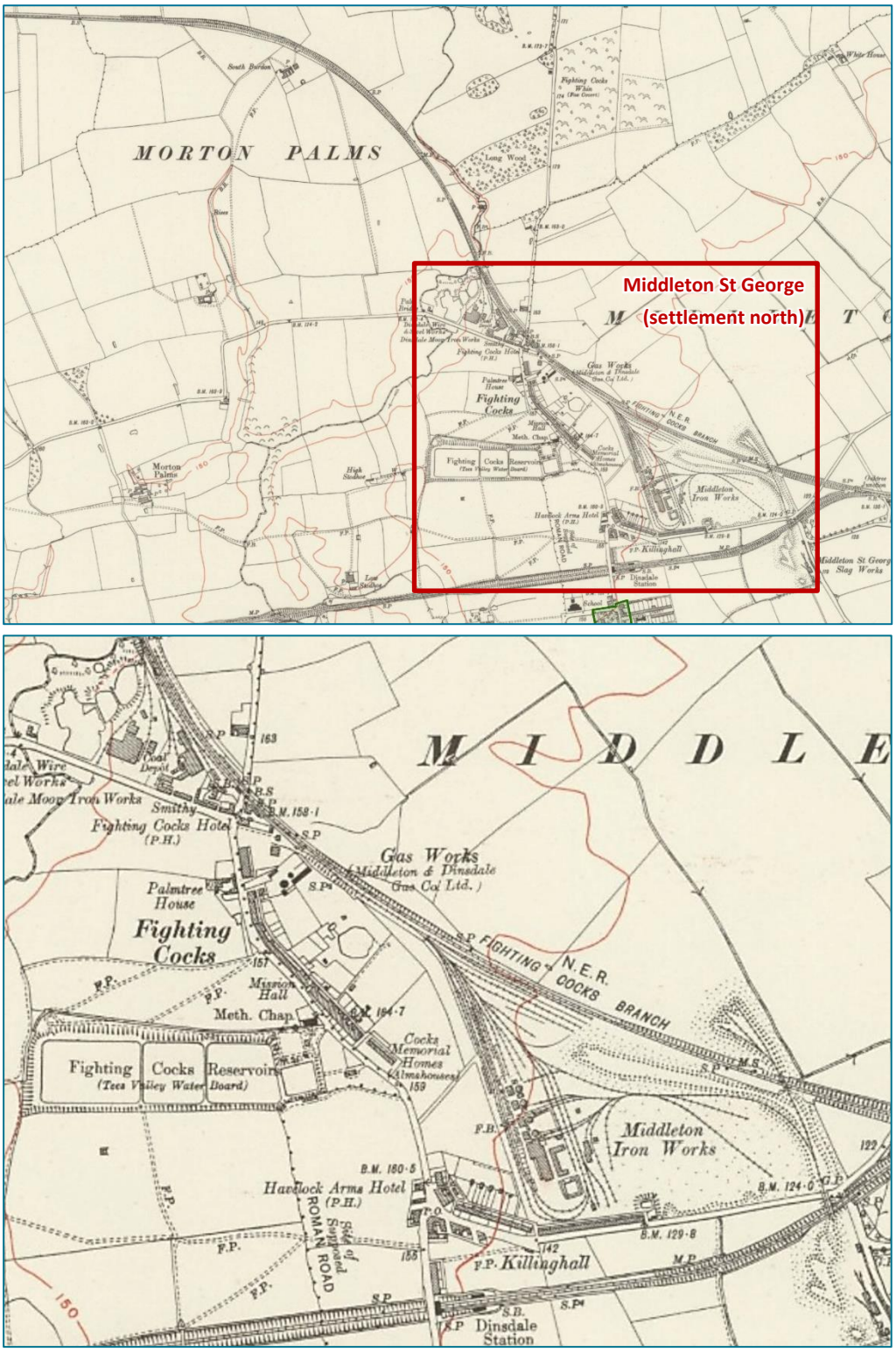
Left: Former **[P]** Co-op along Middleton Lane with detached Stable building in the background. *Right:* Stable viewed from Yarm Road. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

In 1907, the Tees Valley Water (Consolidation) Act included a list of all the completed and uncompleted Tees Valley works. According to it, the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs had their works completed and were in use[131].

Left: Former **[I]** Undenominational Mission Hall with 'Undenominational Mission Hall 1907' commemorated on the fence (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Right:* Sketch by J Richardson (not to scale) of what the building used to look like in 1930, kindly provided by Ross Willis.

Also in 1907, the [I] Undenominational Mission Hall was built by George and Edith Graham along with other subscribers on the site of the building that is marked as a post office on (now) Station Road on the 1896 map. Their names were put on separate bricks in a panel built into the right-hand side of the front elevation. The mission hall was mainly used to help children at the north end of the village learn about Christianity Methodist style[132]. Before World War I, undenominationalism peaked. Undenominationals were not attached to any denomination; they considered themselves 'just Christians'[133].

[130] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16388701.memories-middleton-st-george-co-op-ernie-hall-delivered-groceries-horse-cart/
[131] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, page 99
[132] Richardson, J. 2018. Notes on 'Undenomination Church Hall in M.S.G' dated August
[133] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16388701.memories-middleton-st-george-co-op-ernie-hall-delivered-groceries-horse-cart/



1912-14 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

In 1911, a new school (no longer extant) opened along Neasham Road to the northwest of the old school. It provided modern premises with much increased accommodation and improved facilities, serving pupils from the age of five to leaving at the age of fourteen[134].

[134] Pallister 2007a, page 161

The 1912-14 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see above) shows further expansion of the industrial areas at Fighting Cocks and the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works. The latter are no longer connected to the site to the south(east) across the road to Yarm and passenger railway line, which had become occupied by the Middleton St George Slag Works in the meantime. Instead, a new rail connection has been established from the iron works to a site across the Fighting Cocks branch line. Moreover, a new road to Long Newton has been constructed branching off the road to Yarm where it turns south towards the [S] Metal Railway Bridge, heading outside the settlement in a northeastern direction, cutting through the embankment of the Fighting Cocks branch to the west of Oaktree Junction. There has been further provision of terraced housing between the northern and southern road junctions, and along Chapel Street. The new school is shown to the south of the passenger railway line, bordering the line of the former Roman Road, which is still annotated. The map names a number of buildings in the settlement, including a smithy to the west of the northern road junction, the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn (still a hotel), [I] (Undenominational) Mission Hall, [M] Cocks Memorial Homes, the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and [J] (Wesleyan) Methodist Chapel. It seems that the former [O] Killinghall Arms was not used as a pub at the time, as it is not mentioned. The Fighting Cocks Reservoirs are now owned by the Tees Valley Water Board. The surrounding area is still agricultural with dispersed farmsteads and the Morton Palms hamlet; the former Wheatsheaf Inn along the lane to Darlington is also no longer named and may have been a farmhouse at the time, as implied by its present name (Old Farmhouse).

The corresponding 1913 25-inch OS map (not reproduced here) shows further detail for the Fighting Cocks industrial sites. At the [D] Coal Depot, the former eleven coal drop cells have been increased to twelve, possibly by subdivision of one cell. At their northeastern end, between the track over the cells and the siding stopping short of the signal box, the [A] Crane Base is shown with a small building right next to it (the latter is no longer extant) and a line that seems to symbolise an adjoining Platform, which partially survives today. The weighing machine has been relocated slightly to the north to allow freer access in and out of the depot, presumably by larger vehicles. A new weighing office seems to have been built adjoining the signal box to the southeast, with the previous building demolished. To the west, the sites of the Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works and Dinsdale Moor Iron Works have received their own coal depots which are served by sidings from the main line. To the east across Sadberge Road, the former windmill seems to have been demolished.

In 1914, the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building at Fighting Cocks were sold for residential use[135].

In 1915 and, again, in 1923 there were further complaints about alleged smoke pollution emitted from the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works[136].

From 1921 to 1945, the Gas Works sidings were taken over by Charles Ingram, railway wagon builder and repairer[137].

In 1925, the stretch of line between Goosepool and Faverdale (Darlington), which included the Fighting Cocks branch, was used as part of the locomotive parade in the

[135] Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXXIV
[136] Pallister 2007a, pages 163-164
[137] Darsley, Lovett 2023, point 75

100th birthday celebrations of the opening of the S&DR where locomotives and waggons went on static display[138].

[A] Crane Base (top) and Platform (bottom). *Top:* Looking northwest, the platform is behind the crane base within the undergrowth; its alignment shown on the 1913 map is indicated by the yellow line. The rail tracks coming from the main railway line would have been to the righthand/northeast side. *Bottom:* Remnants of former platform viewed from the bridlepath looking southwest, with the walling stones now largely dislodged. The crane base is to the left/south just outside the view. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

In the same year, the former school building along Chapel Street was taken over by the parochial church council and became known as Parochial Hall. Apart from providing for the Sunday School, it was also used for dances and other community activities[139].

Around 1930, the [L] Pumping Station was built on the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site, which, at the time, was owned and operated by the Tees Valley Water Board[140]. The building is set at a distance and angle to the main road.

[138] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019, page 43
[139] Pallister 2007a, page 165
[140] https://msgcommunitycentre.co.uk/about-us/our-history/

Former **[L]** Pumping Station, now Community Centre, built in a Modernist style. The original multi-pane windows have been replaced. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

In 1931, the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works were closed down for good due to a wider depression in the country, and unemployment was rife in the parish. Consequently, the huge mountain of slag left over from the smelting process was partly used for road making[141].

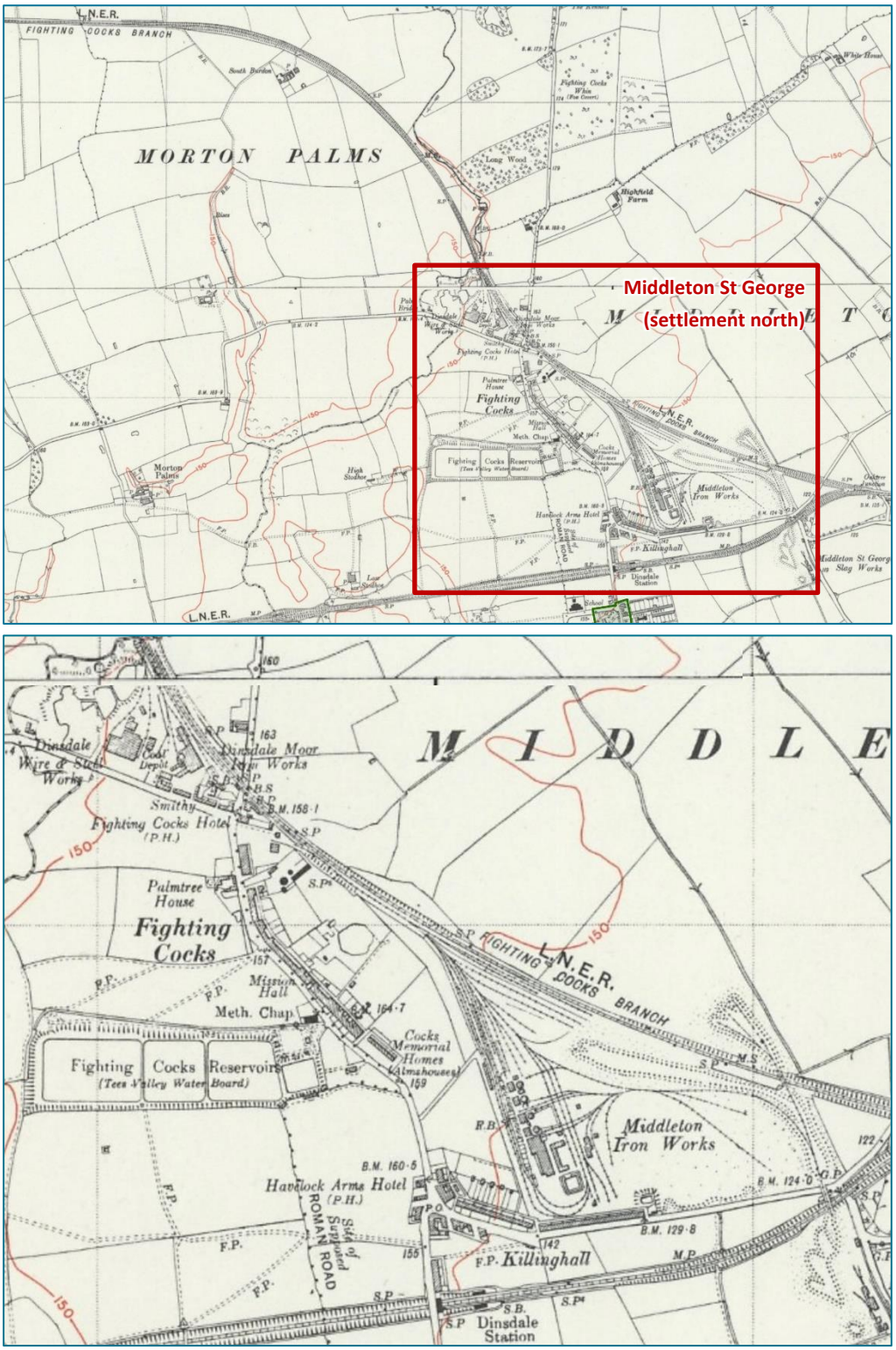
In the same year, the site of the former Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works along the road to Darlington was turned into a scrapyard with new rail sidings being provided. During the 1960s, many ex-British-Rail engines would be scrapped there[142], marking this stretch of the original 1825 railway line as one that not only witnessed the birth but also the final demise of the public steam locomotive[143]. First Arnott Young and then the Durham Tube Works undertook the scrapping of railway engines and carriages on this site before it was turned into the St George's Gate housing estate in the early 2000s[144].

A photo of the former Fighting Cocks Station of 1933[145] (not reproduced here), taken from a similar location as the 1875 print, shows the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building next to the live goods-traffic railway line, with the passenger platform now removed. A wooden barrier is on the level crossing to allow road traffic pass. The former [Q] Middleton Iron Works are in the far background.

In 1936, the former Rakes Hall was extended and converted into a 265-seater cinema called [H] the Lyric. It would later be used as a pigeon club and washing machine repair place, before being turned into a residential property in the 1980s[146].

In late 1938, with the prospect of war, construction of the Royal Air Force (RAF) aerodrome had begun in the southeast of the parish, extending right up to the church of St George. This transformed a large area of landscape outside the assessment area (and partly within the neighbouring Long Newton parish). It also brought about an interface and social intermingling with the local population. The slag heaps left from the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works contributed towards the base material for the runways. A large force of employment was required, which boosted the local economy[147].

141 Pallister 2007a, page 165
142 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area'
143 Pallister 2007a, page 170
144 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7102901.housing-estate-built-next-year/
145 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 19
146 Lombard-Earl, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 31 January
147 Pallister 2007a, page 165



1938 six-inch OS maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

The 1938 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see above) shows very little change to the previous map, although the Fighting Cocks branch line is now owned by the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER). The location names of Fighting Cocks and Killinghall are still provided. The Gas Works no longer exist. The [L] Pumping Station on the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site, although supposedly built around 1930, is not depicted.

The corresponding 25-inch OS map is one year later (not reproduced here), from 1939. It shows that within the last year the council houses which had already been planned for Middleton St George in the early 1920s have eventually been built to the west of the school along a new cul-de-sac called Thorntree Gardens, in the Dinsdale parish at the southern fringe of the assessment area. The delay in construction had been due to the alleged smoke nuisance associated with the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works, which had resulted in the originally planned site being rejected[148]. Between 1938 and 1939, semi-detached houses were provided to the north of the [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, and another mission hall (now the site of a surface carpark) was built to the north of the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel. Immediately to the north of it, a large building is shown set back from the road, possibly the depot that had been used by the Water Board or Environment Agency before the High Stell housing development was built here in the late 1990s[149]. The map also identifies the Parochial Hall, which used to be the old school building. At the top end of the village, the grounds of the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn (still a hotel) have been expanded to the rear (north), maybe to provide a car park. To the north of the railway line, the triangular agricultural field has been turned into allotment gardens, helping feed families through home food production during the depression, and again later during the rationing years of the Second World War. Further allotments are shown behind Station Terrace and to the north of Dinsdale Station.

After the Dunkirk evacuation (26 May – 4 June 1940), soldiers of the Suffolk Regiment were billeted at the [I] Undenominational Mission Hall, before they were transferred to Catterick Garrison a few months later[150].

The RAF Middleton St George officially opened on 15 January 1941. A wireless station was established in a field opposite the slag works in the southeastern corner of the assessment area, with a number of high, lattice-construction radio masts. From 1942 until the end of the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Air Force assumed duties providing most of the ground staff and aircrew flying bombers over Germany and occupied Europe. Bombs, armaments, and other equipment were delivered by rail to Fighting Cocks goods station, including the former [D] Coal Depot, and from there by road to the aerodrome. The [I] Undenominational Mission Hall received a new lease of life when evangelical services were organised by Canadian airmen, which were also well attended by people from the village and Darlington. In their spare time, staff often socialised outside the airfield, frequenting the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn, [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and [O] Killinghall Arms. Dances at the Parochial Hall were also well attended. Moreover, [H] the Lyric cinema proved hugely popular with airmen stationed at the airfield.

In 1947, demolition of the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works started. However, the blowing engine house remained and would later be adapted for other usage. Around the same time, the smithy at Fighting Cocks and the houses and cottages beyond it along the road to Darlington were also demolished[151].

A photo of the former Fighting Cocks station of 1949[152] (not reproduced here), taken from a similar location as the 1875 print, shows a residential hedge planted around the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, next to the live goods-

[148] Pallister 2007a, page 164
[149] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[150] Richardson, J. 2018. Notes on 'Undenomination Church Hall in M.S.G' dated August
[151] Pallister 2007a, pages 100 & 165-170
[152] Darsley, Lovett 2023, point 74

traffic railway line. A wooden barrier is on the level crossing to allow road traffic pass. The [C] Waiting Shed is still intact. The industrial buildings have disappeared from the background.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, the Parochial Hall was the home of the Middleton St George Operatic and Dramatic Society. Their productions always played to full houses. In the late 1950s, [H] the Lyric closed due to falling attendances brought about by television and changing lifestyles.

In 1954, the Dinsdale Moor Iron Works, which had flourished during the war years and continued to be a major employer in the village, closed resulting in further loss of railway traffic along the Fighting Cocks branch line. As a result, the adjacent scrap yard on the site of the former Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works was then able to expand and fill the void[153].

In 1958 the Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot opened on part of the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works site as a British Railways facility for the production of long-welded rails for track renewals[154]. In 1960, CN Hadley and Son, a firm of engineers and flange-makers from Darlington, started to occupy much of the remainder of the former iron works site including the blowing engine house, next to welding depot. They would stay here until 2003, when, faced by a severely declining manufacturing market, the company closed its business and sold the land to Wimpey housing[155].

A photo of the former Fighting Cocks passenger station of 1960[156] (not reproduced here), taken from the location of the former [D] Coal Depot shows the brick-built signal box, the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock, by then out of use and overgrown, as well as parts of the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building (still in facing Pease brick) and [C] Waiting Shed; the latter seems still intact.

After a public enquiry in 1962, most of the remaining gap between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row had been built over. The housing expansion and resulting population increase carried on regardless of the slow decline of the village's services[157].

In 1963, the Central Buildings terrace to the south of the Square, which included the old police station and lock-up, was replaced by a new pair of semi-detached police houses and a single-storey police hut (still extant but no longer in its original use)[158]. They accommodated the police sergeant and constable before they would become private houses[159].

By 1964, both George and Edith Graham had died, and their niece sold the [I] Undenominational Mission Hall. It was then rented to an antiques dealer until 1967. Afterwards, the pigeon club took possession, and in 1969 they allowed a youth club

153 Pallister 2007a, page 169
154 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 26
155 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7007010.losing-last-reminders-ironworks-industry/
156 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 26
157 Pallister 2007a, page 170
158 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16302438.lawless-middleton-st-george-prison-deal-irish-drunks/
159 Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

to use the building to accrue funds to buy their own building (i.e. old [P] Co-op[160], which had closed in the late 1960s[161]).

In March 1964, the former [D] Coal Depot, which had continued as the Fighting Cocks goods station, closed[162]. In the same year, following a change in defence requirements, the RAF aerodrome closed too. The airfield was then converted into a civil airport, with flights to Heathrow commencing at the end of the same year[163].

The Fighting Cocks branch line closed as a through route in May 1967. One track was lifted, but the other remained in place so that traffic could still be worked from Oaktree Junction to the Patons & Baldwins factory just outside Darlington and the Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot. The line to the west of the factory was severed, and the Fighting Cocks signal box was demolished in November that year.

In 1972, the Oaktree Junction signal box was abolished[164]. Around 1973, the historical Dinsdale station buildings were also demolished, although the station has remained in use until today.

When the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs were no longer needed to supply water to the iron works and the village, they were taken over by Northumbrian Water and de-commissioned. The former reservoirs were converted into a water park for leisure activities, and the [L] Pumping Station became a new village hall, filling a void which had existed since the demolition of the Parochial Hall for the building of houses along Chapel Street. In 1980, the freehold of the Pumping Station was sold to the Middleton St George Community Association by the Parish Council, for the sum of £15,000. The Parish Council and community members put £5,000 into a bank account to cover necessary improvements[165].

In 1983, metal manufacture on the former site of Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works ceased, resulting in another loss of employment within the village[166].

In 1988, the Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot closed, following the closure of Patons & Baldwins in the early 1970s. The Fighting Cocks branch line had now shut down completely. The part of the route to the west outside the assessment area was subsequently built on to form the B6279, whilst the part within the assessment area, to the east of the A66, became a public right of way[167].

In the mid-1990s, Middleton St George had a population of approximately 1,800. Due to the demise of the industry and the availability of brownfield sites for new housing, the population grew rapidly to the current level of approximately 4,600[168].

By the end of twentieth century, a by-pass (A67) had been provided around the northern end of the village, removing the disturbance of the ever-increasing through-

[160] Richardson, J. 2018. Notes on 'Undenomination Church Hall in M.S.G' dated August
[161] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16388701.memories-middleton-st-george-co-op-ernie-hall-delivered-groceries-horse-cart/
[162] Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXVIII
[163] Pallister 2007a, pages 170-171
[164] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 31
[165] https://msgcommunitycentre.co.uk/about-us/our-history/
[166] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area' & point 89
[167] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 31
[168] https://middleton-st-george.org.uk/about-the-village/village-profile/

traffic and affording much better access to the airport. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to provide a direct link from the main road to Long Newton, cutting out the previous route via West Hartburn, which became a dead-end farm access only.

In 2003, the school on Neasham Road survived a destructive fire, but was replaced by a modern school building in 2006. In 2004, the blowing engine house of the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works was demolished[169], making way for further new housing. The building was surveyed before demolition and written up in the Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist. At the time, it was, however, not possible to examine any below-ground remains and these have now completely been removed[170].

3.4 Spatial Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the assessment area at the time of review. Note that planform, road and railway line layouts, watercourses, topography, and all structures of interest are described in the previous sections (see sections 3.2 & 3.3). Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

The assessment area is experienced by members of the public from the A66 and A67, footpaths, main and side roads and communal spaces within the settlement, and from several public rights of way over private farmland, nature reserves and the former railway corridor.

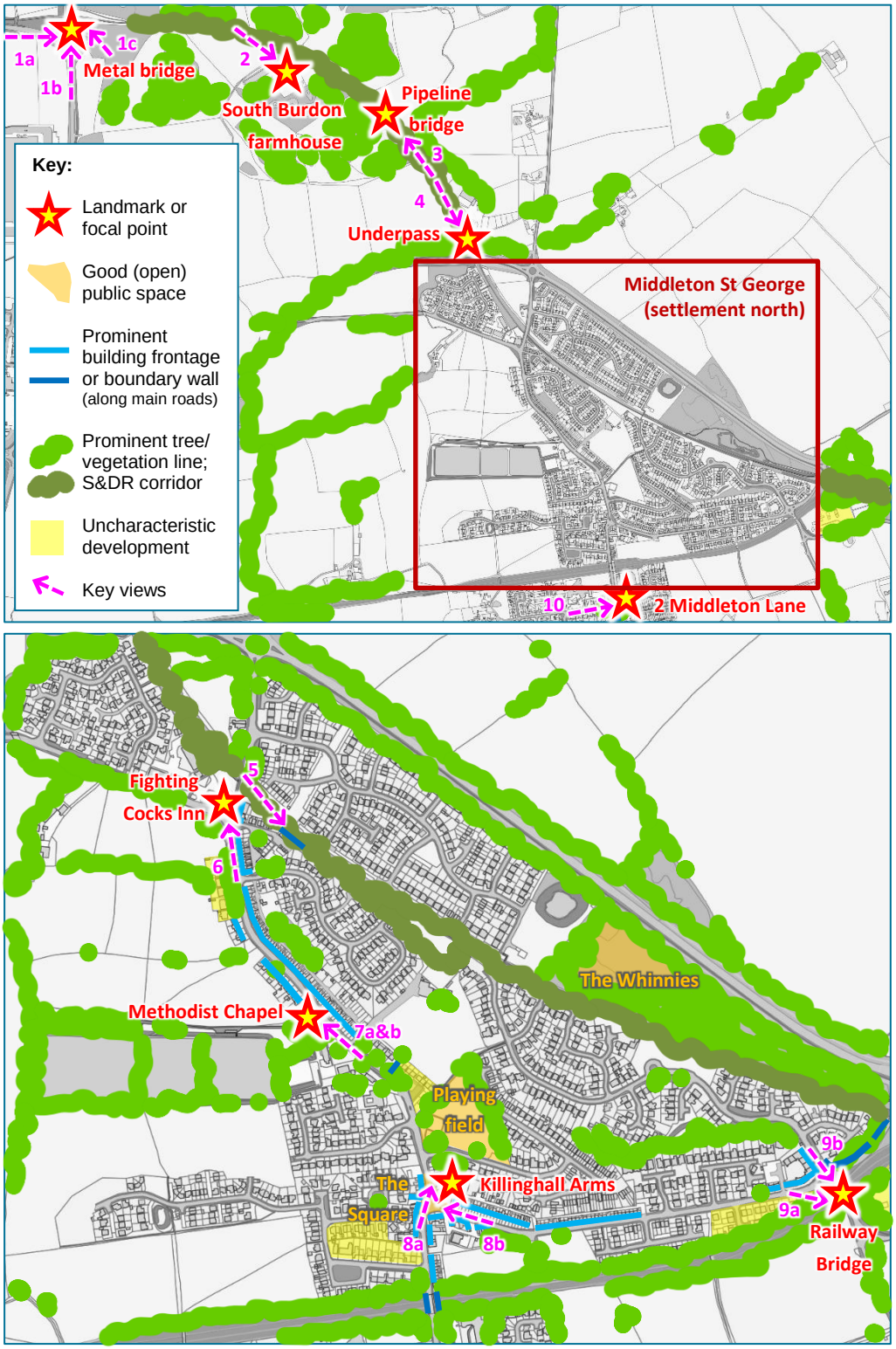
The area includes a number of focal points which feature within the key views, see below. Whilst South Burdon Farmhouse, the pipeline bridge, underpass below the A67, [O] Killinghall Arms and [S] Metal Railway Bridge can only be seen from shorter distances, the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn, [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and 2 Middleton Lane are also visible over longer distances. The area's most prominent landmark, in terms of its size and exposure, is the metal bridlepath bridge across the A66, linking the outskirts of Darlington via the green corridor with Middleton St George, along the route of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR).

The analysis of the character zones within the assessment area (see section 3.5) shows that the spatial experience between the zones differs notably, ranging from lush open countryside (Zone A) to a well-enclosed green corridor (zone B), loosely arranged modern housing estates (Zone C), high-density historical building rows lining the main roads (Zone D), an embanked water park of rectangular footprint (Zone E), allotments concealed behind dense vegetation (Zone F), open communal green spaces (Zone G), and a modern school compound (Zone H). The A66, A67 and live railway line create noticeable barriers within the assessment area and between/ within character zones, with the railway line dividing the village into two separate parts. The large amount of lush vegetation, often along boundary lines and adding to the definition of space, provides an element of cohesion throughout the area.

Buildings are generally of two-storey height, although there are also a number of bungalows and a new housing site including three-storey houses, which are marked in yellow on the maps below as they do not fit in with the remainder of the development pattern of the village. The 'urban' enclosure and cohesion established

[169] Pallister 2007a, pages 100, 161 & 171
[170] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

by the nineteenth-century layouts have been undermined by later housing where these do not line and face onto the main roads. Whilst modern residential development was initially provided on the brownfield sites of the former industry such as the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, the more recent and ongoing housing schemes are (being) built on greenfield sites in the village's immediate setting.



Spatial analysis. *Top:* Assessment area. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The settlement includes three good (open) public spaces, as shown in orange on the map above. The Square, i.e. the southern road junction which is confined by buildings, also features in two key views. In contrast, the Playing Field and the clearing inside the Whinnies are (partially) enclosed by mature trees and not within any of the key views.

The **key views** within the assessment area are as follows; all photos were taken in May 2024 unless mentioned otherwise:

View 1a has been taken from the B6279 (Tornado Way) approaching the roundabout junction with the A66 from the western, Darlington direction, in the northwestern-most corner of the assessment area. It is only experienced by vehicle users of the B6279. The focal point is the green metal bridge to the centre left/north. It carries a bridlepath into the green corridor along the former route of the S&DR which leads to the village of Middleton St George. In the background, beyond the grassed roundabout to the right/east, the trees of South Burdon Community Woodland can be seen. A number of galvanised streetlamps are very prominent in this view.

View 1b has been taken from the cycle path to the south of the roundabout looking north along the A66 towards the landmark of the green metal bridge which carries the bridlepath into the green corridor along the former route of the S&DR to the village of Middleton St George. This view is experienced by vehicle users of the A66 and cyclists. In the background to the right/northeast, the tree line in the location of the former railway corridor can be seen. A number of galvanised streetlamps are very prominent in this view.

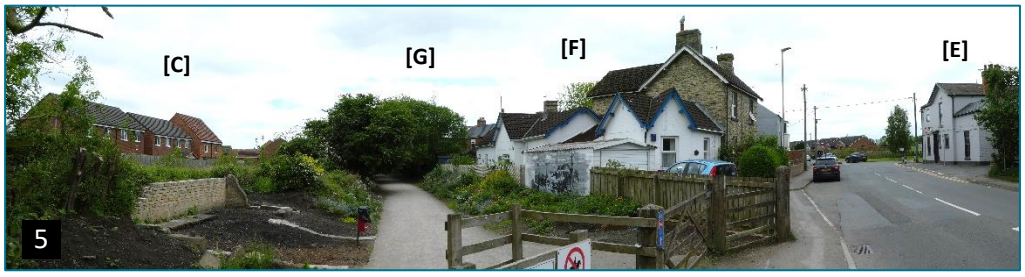
View 1c has been taken from the cycle path to the southeast of the roundabout looking northwest towards the landmark green metal bridge which carries the bridlepath into the green corridor along the former route of the S&DR to the village of Middleton St George. It is experienced by cyclists as well as pedestrians who park their vehicle in this location and then head off into the countryside to the far right/ northeast. The blue sign in the background to the right/north shows the average minutes required for cyclists to reach Darlington town centre (20), Middleton St George (13), Sadberge (13) and Great Burdon (9) from here. A number of galvanised streetlamps are very prominent in this view.

View 2 has been taken from the former track bed of the S&DR which is now a public bridleway, looking southeast down the green corridor. It is experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. South Burdon farmhouse is a focal point to the right/southeast, beyond the overgrown railway embankment. The two photos reveal the difference vegetation can make in only two months, with the top image taken in May and the bottom in March 2024, the latter showing the house far more prominently. Moreover, the farmhouse was also very prominent from the former level crossing just slightly further on in March, but completely concealed by leafy vegetation in May, which is why that viewpoint has not been included.

View 3 has been taken from the bridleway looking northwest with the focal point of a pipeline bridge overhead. It is experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Again, the pipes had been much more prominent due to less foliage two months earlier in March. At that time, they also had been very visible from the opposite direction but were much concealed by vegetation in May, which is why that viewpoint has not been included. This photo is a good example of how enclosed and dark the green corridor can be once the vegetation growing on the sloped sides of the railway embankments has taken over.

View 4 has been taken from the green corridor looking southeast towards the underpass carrying the A67, which cannot be seen but can be heard from here. It is experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Again, the underpass had been much more prominent two months earlier in March. It also had been very visible from the opposite direction then but much concealed by leafy vegetation in May, which is why that viewpoint has not been included. In front of the underpass, there is a metal barrier, followed by a large rock and a public litter bin.

View 5 has been taken from the former level crossing of the S&DR with Sadberge Road (route of the former Roman road) looking southeast. It is experienced by all users of the public highway. In the foreground to the left/southeast are the remains of the [C] Waiting Shed built in Pease brick, behind which a recently constructed housing estate can be glimpsed. Down the green corridor, which at this point is only available for pedestrians and cyclists, are the remains of [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling within the trees. In the centre right/southeast of the photo are the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, both also constructed in Pease brick and now in residential use. In the background to the far right/south is the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn which has recently been converted into a supermarket. In the far background beyond Sadberge Road is a row of modern bungalows facing Station Road. Wooden and metal telegraph poles (panted green) and a galvanised streetlamp are prominent in this view.



View 6 has been taken from Station Road looking north towards the historic Fighting Cocks road junction with the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn, now a supermarket, being a distant focal point. To the left/northwest is the row of modern bungalows mentioned above, faily concealed behind established front gardens. To the right/northeast, nineteenth-century terraces, now much modified, enclose the road on this side. The rhythm created by their chimney stacks is an important feature. Wooden (and metal) telegraph poles are prominent in this view.

View 7a has been taken from about midpoint of Station Road looking northwest with the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, now in residential use, being a focal point to the centre left/west, set at an angle to the road. In front of it is the lush vegetation belonging to the Middleton St George Community Centre and Parish Council premises. To the right/north, nineteenth-century terraces, now much modified, enclose the road on that side. The rhythm created by their chimney stacks is an important feature. Wooden (and metal) telegraph poles are prominent in this view. A large number of wall-mounted satellite dishes faces onto the road.

View 7b has been taken from slightly further south along Station Road looking northwest with the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel still being a focal point in the distance, set at an angle to the road. In the foreground is the lush vegetation belonging to a domestic garden and the Middleton St George Community Centre and Parish Council premises. On the right/north side of the road, set back behind a well-cared-for front garden, are the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes, designed in an Arts and Crafts style, which seems unique for the assessment area. The entrance piers within the low brick boundary wall can be seen to the left/northwest of a mature tree in the centre of the photo. The clock tower (no longer the original one) is not much of a landmark as the building is not prominent from the road. Due to the large trees, the wooden (and metal) telegraph poles are slightly less obvious in this view.

View 8a has been taken from Middleton Lane looking northeast at the roundabout of the southern road junction (the Square) with the former [O] Killinghall Arms, now an Indian restaurant, being the focal point. Hipped roofs are notable in this location. The route to the left/north is Station Road and to the right/east is Yarm Road. The latter is lined with a row of terraced housing along its north side, originally built for workers of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, which used to be located behind the houses. The

rhythm created by their chimney stacks is an important feature. A large number of satellite dishes on the terraces faces onto Yarm Road. At the right/southeast edge of the photo, the modern semi-detached houses which replaced Central Buildings (including former police station and lock-up) can be glimpsed. They accommodated the police sergeant and constable in the later-twentieth century but are now in private houses. A modern police hut is to the left/east of them, now presumably also in residential use. Metal (and wooden) telegraph poles are prominent in this view.

View 8b has been taken from Yarm Road looking northwest at the Square. Again, hipped roofs are notable in this location. Whilst the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and former [O] Killinghall Arms can be spotted to the right/north facing onto Station Road, there are no focal points in this view. At the left/south edge of the photo, part of the semi-detached houses which replaced Central Buildings can be glimpsed behind a well-established front garden. The corner building in the centre has a convenience store on the ground floor. Metal (and wooden) telegraph poles are less prominent. A large number of wall-mounted satellite dishes faces onto the Square.

View 9a has been taken from near the other (eastern) end of Yarm Road within the village, looking southeast at the roundabout with the [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the old road to Yarm being the focal point to the centre right/southeast. To the left/east of the bridge, dense vegetation encloses the live railway line, merging with the green corridor in the location of the former Oaktree Junction beyond. In the background underneath the bridge, a recently constructed housing estate can be glimpsed, comprising buildings of locally untypical designs. Galvanised streetlamps are prominent in this view.

View 9b has been taken from Woolsington Drive looking south at the roundabout with the [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the old road to Yarm being the focal point to the centre right/south. To the left/east of it, dense vegetation encloses the live railway line, merging with the green corridor in the location of the former Oaktree Junction beyond. At the right/southwestern edge of the photo, part of a row of bungalows can be glimpsed behind a vertically boarded timber fence. Galvanised streetlamps are prominent in this view.

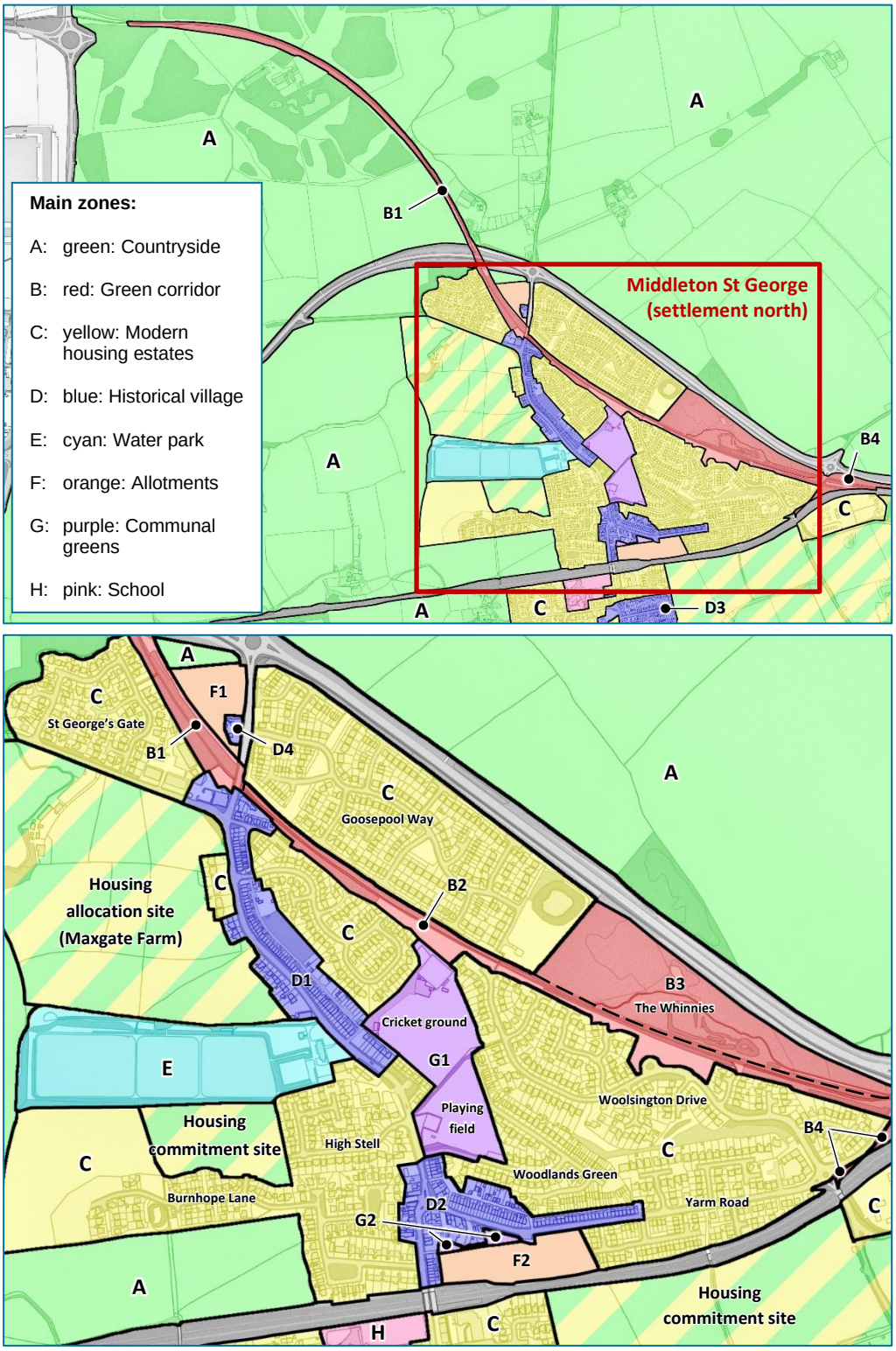
View 10 has been taken from Neasham Road looking east at the junction with Middleton Lane, on the southern fringe of the assessment area, which is largely within the existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area. 2 Middleton Lane with its prominent two gables fronting onto the junction is a focal point and can also be seen from further down the road. To the left/northeast is a modern housing block (outside the existing Conservation Area), its architectural design being out of character with the surrounding historical precedents. To the right/southeast are some of the detached villas built for prosperous families in commerce and industry in the late-nineteenth century. To the far right/south, the mature trees and gated boundary wall used to belong to the grounds of Thorntree House, which is contemporary with the comparatively more modest villas across the road. Whilst the mansion still survives, much of its former plot has been built over by modern houses. In this view metal telegraph poles with multiple lines of wire detract from the focal point.

3.5 Character Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the assessment area at the time of review. It should be read in conjunction with the descriptions of the area's layout, planform and setting (see section 3.2), its historical development including structures of interest (see section 3.3) and the spatial analysis including key views (see section 3.4). Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Key views are referred to as ***(View 1, 2, …)*** *in the text below.*

Despite the large size of the assessment area, only nine character zones were identified at the time of review, which are shown on the map above. These are

primarily based on development/use types and layouts which define their general appearance. Many zones (A, C, D, F, G) are made of a number of dispersed, separate areas, whilst others (B, E, H) are one continuous area. The A66, A67 and live railway line have not been allocated any zones, as these are transport corridors which create barriers within and between zones.



Character zones. *Top:* Assessment area. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The character zones have been used to inform the proposed conservation area boundary (see chapter 5.0), based on their special architectural or historic interest.

> ⚠ The significance ratings provided below are within the Darlington Borough context and only concern elements that are still extant.

Zone A – green: Countryside. At the time of review, this was the largest zone in the assessment area. It comprised five separate areas of varying size and is of **moderate heritage interest**. This zone mainly consists of arable and pastoral farmland, including a few horse paddocks, and two nature reserves in the northwestern part of the assessment area. The land is the result of enclosure since the sixteenth century, which has established a patchwork of medium-size fields and dispersed farmstead. It also contains archaeological evidence of preceding medieval open field systems (ridge and furrow) and possible earlier structures. There is good recreational access with a network of public footpaths and bridleways crisscrossing the countryside, contributing to its public enjoyment. Zone A is not only experienced from within it but can also be seen from other zones – although increasingly less so due to new housing construction on (former) Zone A land, see below – the A66 and A67, and the live railway line.

Zone A: South Burdon Community Woodland viewed from the green corridor near its western end (Subzone B1), looking south. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

Lush vegetation is a key characteristic of this zone with trees (e.g. ash and horse chestnut), shrubs and hedges (hawthorn and blackthorn) often defining boundary lines, following watercourses or forming small woodlands such as the South Burdon Community Woodland. The latter comprises a predominantly native broadleaved forest with areas of managed grassland and open-water habitats[171]. Zone A provides habitats for a range of farmland bird species such as yellowhammers and linnets that will nest and forage in the hedgerows; skylarks and grey partridge that will nest on the ground in the longer vegetation; and species such as barn owl, kestrel and bats that will hunt across the fields and field margins for prey. Barn owls and kestrels will nest in veteran trees and agricultural buildings in this zone. The trees and buildings also offer roosting potential for bat species such as common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat. Mammal species recorded include badger, fox, rabbit, and hedgehog.

Whilst the countryside had a key role in the setting of the historic village, in particular to the west of it, it has been and is significantly being encroached upon by modern housing schemes (Zone C). Areas that are currently under construction or have been earmarked for housing under policy H 2 of the Local Plan (see chapter 2.0) are hatched in green and yellow on the map above.

[171] Land Use Consultants 2015, pages 46 & 48

Zone A: Agricultural fields just north of live railway line with new houses along Burnhope Lane (Zone C) being constructed in the adjoining field behind. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone B – red: Green corridor. This is the longest character zone stretching from the northwestern to the southeastern corners of the assessment area. It is of **very high heritage interest**. Whilst Zone B is mainly linear in shape following the former track bed of the original route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) which later became the Fighting Cocks branch line, it also includes the Whinnies nature reserve as well as the location of the former Oaktree Junction at the meeting point with the live line, both in the eastern end of the assessment area. The main character of this zone is being one continuous woodland, apart from the roads which cut across and create small breaks. Thera are no buildings but a few remnant structures and other features relating to former industrial sites, which were key to the historical development of the village, including the following surviving structures of interest:

- [A] Crane Base and Platform
- [B] DRDC Loading Dock
- [C] Waiting Shed (remains)
- [D] Coal Depot (remains)
- [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor (remains)

Zone B also includes the spoil heaps and bridge abutments which are associated with the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works site, see Subzone B3.

Although this character zone is one continuous area, it can, from a pedestrian's perspective, be subdivided into four 'subzones':

B1. the green corridor to the northwest of Sadberge Road
B2. the green corridor between Sadberge Road and Yarm Road
B3. the Whinnies nature reserve
B4. the green corridor and 'woodland' to the east of Yarm Road

Subzone B1. This stretch of the green corridor is of recreational value being fully accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. It provides important connectivity not only for people but also wildlife, with direct links into Zones A, C and D. The track is enclosed by dense vegetation **(View 3)**, which changes with the seasons, growing on the slopes of the railway cutting embankments to both sides. The predominant habitat comprises hawthorn and brambles, offering suitable nesting habitats for species such as blackcap and whitethroat warblers.

Subzone B1: *Top:* Concrete post halfway up the railway cutting embankment viewed from the former level crossing at South Burdon farmhouse (the latter in Zone A). *Middle:* View from the green corridor onto farmland to the southwest (Zone A), with historical drainage channel in the foreground, and a low embankment behind. *Bottom:* View from the green corridor onto the modern housing estate along St George's Gate (Zone C) behind an overgrown cutting embankment, looking southwest. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

The overall sense of enclosure is very prominent in this subzone's western stretch, where the railway bed lies in cutting. There are the remains of a historical ditch along the southwestern side within the corridor, which was designed to keep the line drained. A number of early stone sleeper blocks had been found discarded here before the rapidly growing undergrowth started to conceal them[172]. There is also a ditch at the top of the cutting on both sides (in places) which collected run off from the adjoining fields. Rabbits have been digging out cinders (not seen by the author) from the old track surface on the northern cutting embankment. In this part of the subzone, views into the adjoining countryside (Zone A) can only be had in a few

[172] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January

locations near South Burdon farmhouse (Zone A) **(View 2),** where there used to be a level railway crossing for the farm. Whilst no particular evidence survives, there is a later concrete post and base at the location of the former crossing which must have carried some sort of signal. Along this stretch there are a number of concrete bases left from the later use as a branch line which presumably supported signals[173].

When approaching the underpass carrying the noisy A67 the sense of enclosure diminishes, with the vegetation becoming less dense and the embankments lower or even disappearing, enabling views onto farmland and farm buildings, although this can also depend on the amount of foliage at the time of the year. The underpass marks the northern entrance into (or exit from) the village of Middleton St George **(View 4)** along the green corridor from the Darlington direction. Immediately to the north of it, a modern access lane comes off to the east of the bridleway. To the south of the underpass, recently constructed houses along St George's Gate (Zone C) can be glimpsed from a few locations. Along the northern side of the green corridor, allotments (Zone F) and a historical semi-detached house beyond (Zone D) can be spotted when there is no or little foliage. When approaching Sadberge Road, the remains of a [A] Crane Base and Platform and other small-scale industrial fragments can be seen in the undergrowth to the right/south. In the area leading to the former level crossing, the green corridor widens where it used to include various sidings branching off the main railway tracks as well as a signal box to the south of the line, adjacent to Sadberge Road. In this location, only the two phases of [D] Coal Depot walling survive. On the opposite/north side of the corridor is the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock.

Subzone B2. This stretch of the green corridor is of recreational value being fully accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. It provides important connectivity not only for people but also wildlife, with direct links into Zones C and D. There are thin strips of woodland and scrub which comprise ash, willow, sycamore, oak, hawthorn and blackthorn, providing a habitat for nesting birds and roosting bats. The understory supports species such as common toads, hedgehogs, and small mammals.

To the east of the level crossing, the corridor is narrow again as it used to accommodate the two tracks of the main line only. On a shallow embankment to the north are the remains of the Stockton-bound [C] Waiting Shed, with some of the new houses off Goosepool Way (Zone C) visible behind. On the opposite side, the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building (Zone D) are not part of this character zone as, although functionally directly linked to the railway corridor, they have physically been separated by a timber fence and long, modern garage now forming a barrier on top of a shallow embankment where the Darlington-bound platform used to be **(View 5)**. In this location, the green corridor has benefited from improvement works carried out by residents, the Friends of the S&DR and a local artist (see section 3.6), re-establishing a sense of arrival at the former station. Carrying on eastwards, trees and shrubs line both sides, with the remains of [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling appearing on the southern railway cutting embankment. In the location where the sidings used to branch off into the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, the vegetation opens up exposing a grassed-over embankment with a greenspace behind, enabling glimpses onto the modern housing off Woolsington Drive (Zone C) where the iron works were located. Shortly further on, an access path branches off to the north giving a clear view onto the other end of the Goosepool Way housing estate. The Whinnies (Subzone B3) start after a greenspace including a pond to the east of the houses, providing a continuous dense woodland along the northern side

[173] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 17

of the corridor up to Yarm Road. Opposite the entrance into the nature reserve, to the southern side of the corridor, the vegetation begins to open up again, exposing a larger greenspace beyond the railway cutting embankment, which enables further views onto the modern housing off Woolsington Drive. Further east, the corridor becomes fully enclosed by vegetation again, with the former track bed of the railway now elevated on top of an embankment. Just before Yarm Road, it slopes down relatively steeply to meet the road, which had been cut into the historical railway embankment.

Subzone B2: *Top:* View along the green corridor looking east, with entrance into the Whinnies local nature reserve (subzone B3) to the left/north and the grassed-over railway cutting embankment to the right/south, with houses off Woolsington Drive (Zone C) in the far background (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Bottom:* View from Yarm Road looking southwest at the embankment of the raised former track bed (as opposed to when the railway lay in cutting as seen on the photo above) with another entrance into the nature reserve to the far right/northwest. In this location, there used to be a railway bridge over Yarm Road. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

Subzone B3. The Whinnies is a five-hectare Local Nature Reserve (LNR) currently managed by Durham Wildlife Trust. It is of recreational value being fully accessible to pedestrians. There is a secluded atmosphere throughout the nature reserve, crisscrossed by earthen paths. Whilst most of this subzone is a dense woodland, there is a large clearing at its western end including a medium-size pond and timber benches. The bumpy topography of the woodland area to the east implies the presence of slag spoil heaps created by the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works, as depicted on the 1912-14 six-inch OS map. In this area, there are also drainage ditches as well as the remains of bridge abutments made of stone (not seen by the author due to heavy vegetation growth) associated with the transport of slag from the former iron works, as shown on the 1912-14 map. The bridge was locally called the Red Bridge, presumably because it was covered in red iron ore dust[174]. Along the border with the former railway corridor (Subzone B2) is a chasm including some dead trees.

[174] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 30

Subzone B3: *Top:* View from the clearing looking east with pond and seating in the foreground and woodland behind. *Middle:* Woodland with bumpy topography created by the former iron works' slag spoil heaps. *Bottom:* Chasm with dead tree and green corridor (subzone B2) behind the fence line. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

The LNR comprises a series of species-rich grasslands with small ponds, deciduous woodland, and scrub habitats. The meadow to the west is a species-rich calcareous grassland containing species such as quaking-grass, yellow-wort, birds-foot trefoil, agrimony, zig-zag clover, marsh thistle, and meadowsweet. It supports an assemblage of invertebrates including ringlet butterfly, dingy skipper, common and large blue butterfly, and many other butterfly species, as well as a host of other species of invertebrates. The grasslands to the east are dominated by wetter-tolerant species such as ragged robin, yellow flag iris, and devil's bit scabious. The woodland and scrub contain tree species such as elm, wych elm, elder, field maple, oaks, willows, and ash; and shrub species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, and dogwood. The

ponds onsite provide habitat for a range of species including smooth newt, common toad, water scorpions, dragonflies, and fish such as roach, perch, and European eels. There are also historical water vole records for the ponds and ditches onsite.

Subzone B4. This subzone has some recreational value as the path parallel to the live railway line is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The woodland to the north is part of the Whinnies LNR. The woodland to the south of the path is largely within the live railway corridor, fenced off to the public by metal mesh panels; it can also be seen from Yarm Road (Zone C) **(Views 9a & b)** and the live railway line (outside this character zone). Within this enclosure is the location of the former Oaktree Junction, where the former line of the S&DR and the 1887 railway line from Bank Top station met. The overall woodland character of this subzone feels less tranquil than in subzones B1-B3 due to the proximity of Yarm Road, the A67 and the live railway line.

Subzone B4: View looking east along the path between the A67 (to the left/north, out of view) and embanked former route of the S&DR on the right/south which is still part of the live railway corridor, hence fenced off. The approximate location of the former Oaktree Junction is in line with the righthand tree. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

Zone C – yellow: Modern housing estates. This character zone comprises the largest number of separate areas, eight in total at the time of assessment, which come in various shapes and sizes. It is only of **very limited heritage interest**. Its character is residential, with the houses being of non-local and 'suburban' designs, generally arranged along winding cul-de-sacs. The buildings are often two storeys high, although there are also bungalows and a few houses comprising three storeys. Some of the housing estates were built onto the former industrial sites that had been set up following the advent of the railway, most notably the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, but no historical evidence seems to survive in these areas. Others were built onto greenfield sites, formerly belonging to Zone A. Due to the inward-looking nature of these areas, the surrounding character zones often contribute only little to their setting. One exception would be the modern houses that face onto Station Road and Yarm Road in the vicinity of roadside, traditional brick terracing (Zone D), although the new designs generally do not harmonise with the historical precedents.

This zone contains limited ecology interest. However, the urban setting does offer potential for species such as hedgehog, which will use gardens for foraging and commuting. The older buildings may offer roosting potential for bats such as common and soprano pipistrelle, as well as nesting opportunities for swift, starlings, house sparrows, house martins, and swallows. The vegetated gardens offer pollinating plants for bees, butterflies and moths, and hover flies.

Zone C: *Top:* Some of the more typical houses, with their design not being location specific but to a good standard. *Bottom:* A modern attempt of housing design which is visually less successful. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone D – blue: Historical village. This zone consists of four separate areas of various shapes and sizes and is of **medium-to-high heritage interest**. Its general character comprises traditional buildings, often in the form of terraced housing built in red brick, densely lining and facing onto the main roads. Subzones D1 and D2 form the historical cores of the village of Middleton St George and include the largest number of surviving structures of interest of any of the character zones:

- [E] Fighting Cocks Inn
- [F] Station Master's House and Station Building
- [H] The Lyric
- [I] Undenominational Mission Hall
- [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel
- [M] Cocks Memorial Homes
- [N] Havelock Arms Hotel
- [O] Killinghall Arms
- [P] Co-op and Stable
- [Q] Middleton Iron Works (remains)

Zone D can be subdivided into the following subzones:

D1. Fighting Cocks road junction and Station Road
D2. The Square and Yarm Road
D3. Middleton Lane and Chapel Street (this subzone is partly within the existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area)
D4. 1 & 2 Orient Villas, Sadberge Road

This character zone has a similar (limited) ecological interest as Zone C (modern housing estates). The main difference is that subzone D1 links the water park (Zone E) to the green corridor (Zone B). However, as it is poorly vegetated it does not provide an effective wildlife corridor.

Subzone D1. In this key location where the 1825 S&DR crossed the line of the Roman Road **(View 5)**, the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn is not only the oldest surviving building in the village but also a long-distance focal point at the historic Fighting Cocks road junction **(View 6)**, where the development of this settlement first started. It forms a group with the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building on the opposite side of the road, and together they contribute significantly to the setting of the former railway corridor (Zone B) in this location. Along Haxby Road, a cul-de-sac to the east of the junction, traditionally constructed semi-detached brick houses of possible 1930s date continue the historical layout by lining the road.

Subzone D1: *Top left:* Harpers Terrace faced in cast stone, with shallow front gardens. Later canopies spanning between bay windows cut into and obscure the decorative string courses at Nos. 1-4. Whilst the window frames have been changed to different designs, the opening pattern has been well preserved. The decorative lintel design to Nos. 1 and 2 (right) can also be found on window openings to the rear of Station Terrace (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025). *Top right:* Entrance pier with carved stone cockerel, which was brought here from Low Middleton Hall[175], and two commemoration plaques on the gable wall in the background, **[M]** Cocks Memorial Homes. *Middle:* The long Station Terrace with three well preserved houses, although window frames have been changed to different designs. The unit on the left, which would have looked the same, has been changed significantly, like many other houses in this row (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Bottom:* Back lane to rear of Station Terrace with overgrown former allotment gardens to the left/east. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

To the south of the junction, traditional terraces enclose the winding Station Road along its eastern side. The northern-most row, called Harpers Terrace, which is first

[175] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

shown on the 1913 OS map, appears, unusually, to be faced in cast/artificial stone which has been painted white, with the original roadside opening pattern seemingly intact. It features later canopies spanning between the ground-floor bay windows. Many of the red brick houses of the next, much longer Station Terrace had their original openings changed in size and/or are now rendered. Behind this terrace, adjoining the back lane, is a large, enclosed greenspace which used to be allotment gardens shown on the 1939 map. It is currently very overgrown but still full of fruit trees and wildlife[176]. Further south are various gable-fronted properties including the former [I] Undenominational Mission Hall and [H] the Lyric which face onto the spine road through the village. Next, there is another terrace, called Water View, with more generous front gardens than the preceding properties, and again with canopies spanning between the bay windows on some of the houses. Despite the many changes to the buildings, historic features can still be found, such as prominent chimney stacks, ornate eaves detailing, shaped lintels and traditional boundary treatments.

Water View, the southern terrace, of which parts have been rendered. There is a continuous ground-floor canopy and the original opening pattern has been preserved. The front garden in the middle has an unusual stone boundary wall with metal railings and distinct carved piers, which are in poor condition. Note the eaves detailing on the right-hand, earlier house. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

To the south of the terraced houses, set back from the road behind a generous front garden including mature trees, are the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes. They are designed in an Arts and Craft style, which seems unique for the assessment area. The houses have modern rear extensions and appear to be well preserved. On the opposite (west) side of Station Road, semi-detached houses of possible 1930s date behind front gardens have been included in this zone as they contribute to the enclosure of space. Gaps between the buildings still enable views into the countryside, although for not much longer, as construction on the Maxgate Farm housing site behind has started. To the south, the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, with round-arched openings, is set at an angle to the road, providing another long-distance focal point **(Views 7a & b)**.

Subzone D2. This area centres around the Square **(Views 8a & b)**, the southern road junction along the spine route through the village, which includes a roundabout. Development started here in the second half of the nineteenth century to provide workers of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works with housing and amenity facilities. Today a

[176] Lombard-Earl, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 31 January

short section of boundary walling to the east of Killinghall Row is all that survives of the former iron works, which were crucial to the historical development of the village. Killinghall Row faces directly onto the pavement along Yarm Road and has a stepped roofscape reflecting the sloping topography. Many of the houses have undergone significant changes with regards to their openings and/or received a modern render, although the rhythm created by the chimney stacks has largely survived. The next building row to the north (New Row and Pemberton Terrace) is quite similar but set back behind generous front gardens. Only one house stands out as positive with its original opening pattern intact and brick façade on display.

Subzone D2: *Top left:* Two well-preserved houses at Killinghall Row, the first terrace built for the iron workers, which face directly onto the pavement. *Top right:* Former stationmaster's house for Dinsdale Station at the south end of Belle Vue Terrace (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024). *Bottom:* Harts Buildings at the southern end of Station Road with polychromatic brickwork. Whilst Nos. 1-4 appear to be built around the same time, there is a clear change in construction between Nos. 2 and 3, including different eaves and window surround designs, and the use of a different type of red brick. The once continuous roof surface has now been broken up by using different materials. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Around the Square, individual buildings are grouped more organically. The former [O] Killinghall Arms has been extended with an additional unit to either side under one roof. The [N] Havelock Arms Hotel across the road still reads as a detached building. On the east side of Station Road is a short red brick terrace called Harts Buildings behind front gardens. Detailing in Pease brick is of interest and there are also canopies spanning from the ground-floor bay windows, as already seen further up the street. Whilst Nos. 1-4 were constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century, the northern-most property (No. 5) was built by Hadleys, the company that occupied the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works site from 1960 to 2003[177].

[177] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

Down Middleton Lane is the former [P] Co-op and Stable with some modern buildings to the opposite side of the road, which generally fit in well. Bellevue Court to the south of the former Co-op appears less successful. Following a gap, there is a traditional row called Belle Vue Terrace set back from the road behind a shallow front garden. A distinctly different house is attached to the southern end of this row, which was built as a stationmaster's house for Dinsdale Station[178]. Again, there have been the typical alterations to individual properties, although the continuous decorative eaves brick band and rhythm created by the chimneys remain.

Subzone D3. This fragment of an area to the south of Dinsdale Station was first developed in the second half of the nineteenth century with better-class housing for prosperous families in commerce and industry **(View 10)**, who were not constrained to live in close proximity to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works. At the time of assessment, the plots along Middleton Lane and Thorntree House were within the Middleton One Row Conservation Area.

Subzone D4. This small, isolated plot comprises a semi-detached house along Sadberge Road, which was built in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nellie Hawkins who worked in the signal box during the war lived in one of them[179]. The building makes a strong contribution along this stretch of the road.

Subzone D4: Semidetached house, surrounded by allotments (Zone F) and lush roadside vegetation. It is unusual that bay windows are on the gable end, although this seems to be the main elevation. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone E – cyan: Water park. This single area comprises the water park, including boating and fishing ponds, a nature trail and the premises of the Middleton St George Community Centre and Parish Council. The former reservoirs, in particular the outdoor sports court, are of **high heritage interest** being directly linked to the nineteenth-century growth of the Teesside towns and industries and the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage and providing the village with early piped water. Most of the site is accessible to the public and of high recreational/communal value. It also contributes to the setting of the adjoining character zones (A, A/C, C and D).

Zone E includes the following surviving structures of interest:

- [K] Board Room & Entrance Gate
- [L] Pumping Station

[178] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[179] Hugill, N. 2023. Email to Peter Bainbridge, 15 November

Both the former [L] Pumping Station and [K] Board Room are set back at an angle to Station Road and align with the orientation of the [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in the adjoining plot (Zone D). Whilst the former is an unusual modernist building for Middleton St George and visible from the main road, the latter is traditionally designed and largely concealed by lush vegetation, although its curved [K] Entrance Gate provides a notable roadside presence. The most dominant feature in this zone is the embanked three former reservoirs which now form the water park. They have trees growing on their embankments as well as a public footpath on top and are quite visible from the surroundings. The ongoing construction of the housing estates (Zone C) around Burnhope Lane (to the south) and Maxgate Farm (to the north) is starting to have a negative impact on the setting of this recreational landscape, with the new housing being visible from the elevated water park, spoiling what were until recently natural surroundings (Zone A) (see section 4.1).

The ponds are vegetated with flag iris and bulrush to the borders, and the angling ponds are stocked with species such as carp, perch, and roach. They support water birds such as mallard, moorhen, and coot, with herons using the ponds for hunting. Occasional otters use the reservoir within their commuting route through the area. The reservoirs also support foraging Daubenton's bats on an evening, which catch insects over the water. The areas around the basins comprise amenity grassland and woodland. The former is predominant to the south and adjacent to the car parking areas. Trees present within the latter include ash, rowan, field maple, elm, willow, crab apple, and cherry. The trees are mature and will support a wide range of nesting birds as well as roosting bats.

Zone E: *Top:* View along the southern embankment of the former reservoirs which form the water park, looking east. *Bottom:* Former original reservoir turned into a sports court, looking northeast, with Middleton St George Community Centre in the background and metal artwork in the foreground. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

To the northwest and west at the bottom of the embanked water park, there is a small woodland including a nature trail. From here, there are views and glimpses north as well as footpaths into what was until recently pasture and is now being

developed into a large housing estate (Maxgate Farm). The nature trail includes various metal artworks, way markers, interpretation boards, benches and old reservoir walling (see section 4.1), which add interest to Zone E.

The woodland contains ground cover which support an assemblage of invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians, and larger mammals such as roe deer. It also contains plant species which are indicative of ancient woodland, such as dogs' mercury, red campion, wood avens, herb-robert, guelder rose, wood sedge, and hairy brome. These indicators demonstrate that the woodland has been present for a long time and is in generally good condition. Bird species observed included chiffchaff, blackcap, bullfinch, chaffinch, goldfinch, robin, and wren.

Zone E: Small woodland with nature trail including a bench and view into the landscape prior to construction start of the Maxgate Farm housing estate (left) and an old brick wall boundary with stone copings to the bottom of the western reservoir embankment (right). (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone F – orange: Allotments. This zone is made of two separate areas and is of **medium heritage interest**. The allotment gardens were created to help feed families through home food production during the depression and during the rationing years of the Second World War. This zone is very private with public views much concealed by dense vegetation, which contributes to the setting of Zones B, C, D and G.

Zone F: Allotment gardens to the south of Yarm Road, looking south from the triangular greenspace in Zone G. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Allotments can offer some biodiversity interest, and often function as green corridors and habitats for wildlife. The northernmost allotments along Sadberge Road (F1) are bounded by mature hawthorn and elder hedgerows with trees such as ash within the hedgerows. The southernmost allotment along Killinghall Row (F2) contains hedgerows which are more heavily managed and shorter in height and width but would still offer some limited interest from birds and other wildlife. The boundary hedges and trees offer nest habitat for birds such as chaffinch, goldfinch, blackbird, and dunnock; as well as offering foraging and pollinating opportunities. The linear hedgerows also create green corridors for hedgehogs to shelter and commute, and for bats such as whiskered bat to commute and forage along.

Zone G – purple: Communal greens. This zone comprises various open greenspaces and is of **medium heritage interest**. It includes the cricket ground and playing field (G1) which adjoin and contain some mature trees to the borders. The latter is a roughly triangular shaped field. Its eastern side used to be the boundary to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works and the path along its northwestern side represents the line of a former access route from the spine road to the iron works. In addition, there are two much smaller triangular public spaces (G2) to the south and southeast of the Square, which are first shown on the 1912-14 OS map. They are connected by a narrow earthen footpath enclosed by tall hedges to either side. Most of this zone is accessible to the public and of high recreational/communal value.

Zone G: *Top:* Playing field to the left/southeast with a line of mature trees along the path next to the adjoining cricket ground on the right/northwest, behind a tall metal fence. *Middle:* Greenspace to the southeast of the Square, with footpath to the left/west leading to a smaller triangular greenspace, looking west. *Bottom:* Smaller greenspace to the south of the Square, also looking west. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

This zone predominantly consists of areas of amenity grassland, with trees and hedges to the borders. The grassland comprises typical managed grassland species such as perennial rye grass, red fescue, cockfoot, and Yorkshire fog. Other plant species within the grassland are daisy, creeping buttercup, self-heal, white clover, and dandelions. Trees present to the borders of the grassland include ash, poplar, copper beech, black locust, crab apple, elm, willow and black oak. The hedges to the borders are predominantly hawthorn. Due to the heavily managed nature of the grassland, it offers little interest to pollinators but may provide some foraging opportunities to hedgehogs. The trees and hedgerows offer more potential, with some fruiting and flowering trees providing foraging and pollination interest to a range of species.

Zone H – pink: School. This is one single area which adjoins the live railway line to the south. It comprises the premises of the St George's Church of England Primary School including a grassed playing field to the northeast, the Women's Institute and scouts' building. It is of **low heritage interest**. The dwarf boundary wall is possibly the sole surviving remnant of the 1911 school. Prior to that, this zone was part of a field along the line of the former Roman Road, a line which has been retained in the current school's western boundary. The three existing buildings are of very different architectural styles, with the large modern school complex including curved elements, the institute being a traditional timber-boarded 'hut', and the more recently constructed scouts' building having an unconventional, functional appearance. None of them harmonise together or with the surrounding buildings. Overall, this is not really a proper character zone but an assemblage of structures which do not belong into any of the adjoining zones (C and D). The ecological value of this area is similar to Zone G (communal greens).

Zone H: *Top:* St George's Church of England Primary School with historical dwarf boundary wall in the foreground, which would have been topped by vertical metal railings. *Bottom:* Women's Institute and new scouts' building (right). (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

3.6 Value Attributed by the Local Community and Other Stakeholders

Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area responded that they most value the area's (see appendix 2):

- Nature (reserves), trees, greenspaces and surrounding countryside
- Historical structures/features/assets
- Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)/Fighting Cocks Station and former railway corridor
- History including agricultural and industrial heritage, and its undeniable links to the S&DR
- Great community and Middleton St George being a lovely place to live
- Cricket Club, water park, the [M] Havelock Arms and village centre
- Excellent transport links

Middleton St George is a pleasant village and desirable place to live, hence its continuing significant growth in housing. It is well connected by automobile (A67), train (Dinsdale Station) and plane (Teesside Airport to the east outside the assessment area) and has good access links into the countryside and nature reserves via public foot-, bridle- and cycle paths (see section 3.2). The assessment area includes various amenities for residents and visitors such as a number of shops, a post office, a pub (the [M] Havelock Arms), a restaurant (the former [O] Killinghall Arms), cafes, takeaways, a pharmacy, a veterinary practice, a primary school and other services, as well as leisure facilities including a playing field, cricket club, history group, women's institute, water park including model boat and fishing clubs, and scouts. In the past, there were also two garages/petrol stations in the village[180]. At the water park, the Community Centre (former [L] Pumping Station) is a thriving hub, managed by trustees as a charitable body. The trustees, together with a growing membership, form the Middleton St George Community Association and are responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and the activities provided by multiple hirers for the benefit of all residents of the village and beyond[181].

At the time of consultation (see section 1.3), Middleton St George was a well-to-do place with houses prices being at an average of £250,047 over the last year (Darlington, by comparison, was £163,307). The majority of sales were detached properties selling for an average price of £323,700 (by comparison, the majority of sales in Darlington were semi-detached houses at an average price of £169,130[182]; in County Durham, the majority of sales during the last year were terraced properties at an average price of £109,762[183]). Moreover, sold prices in Middleton St. George over the last year were 5% up on the previous year and 12% down on the 2022 peak of £283,019[184].

[180] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[181] https://msgcommunitycentre.co.uk/about-us/our-history/
[182] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/darlington.html
[183] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices-in-County-Durham.html
[184] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/middleton-st-george.html

The communal value of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) as a whole, including the former section that goes through the assessment area, is of considerable significance to the heritage sector locally, nationally and internationally, and there is a growing interest in early railway infrastructure from the wider public. Those who appreciate or actively promote it are in effect an international community, including the following regional groups[185]:

- Darlington Model Railway Club
- Darlington Railway Museum Trust
- Darlington Railway Preservation Society
- Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway
- the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust
- the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Society
- the North Eastern Railway Association

In addition, the parish has two local groups, the **Middleton St George Local History Group** and **Middletons in Bloom**, who deserve recognition for their interest in and work on the former S&DR line and elsewhere[186]. The Local History Group former was at first informally set up in 2003 with the desire to bring people in the village together in a social setting and to use the former [L] Pumping Station, which at that time had very nearly been closed down. They also wanted to try to give residents more knowledge of the village and the surrounding area, hoping that they would contribute their memories or do some documentary research into the local history. Middletons in Bloom is a volunteer-led group that works with other organisations and businesses across the community entering the Northumbria in Bloom each year, which is a campaign that recognises, encourages and rewards community groups who work together to transform their village, town or city through gardening, environmental awareness and community support. They also create a month-by-month calendar annually with photos of nature imagery (e.g. wildlife, flowers, trees, scenery and gardens) taken by residents.

In 2017, Historic England accepted the whole 26-mile route of the former S&DR as a **Heritage Action Zone** (HAZ), following an application by the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Board, which included Darlington Borough Council. The overall HAZ initiative is working with local people and partners to breathe new life into places that are rich in heritage, to unlock their potential and make them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. Launched in May 2018 and running for five years, the S&DR HAZ aimed to better manage, preserve and utilise heritage assets with a view to stimulating economic growth through various projects in the build-up to the railway's bicentenary in 2025[187] (see below). HAZ programme outputs which directly affect Middleton St George include improvement works to the level crossing and the provision of information and interpretation (Projects 6 and 13 of the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub (see section 4.3)).

In early 2020, the Parish Council and Friends of the S&DR responded to local interest by establishing the **Middleton St George S&DR Heritage Steering Group** with the mission of delivering the **Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub**. This involves a number of projects to enhance the historic station site. The following tasks have commenced or already been completed[188]:

[185] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, pages 33-34
[186] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January
[187] Knight 2019, page 4
[188] Chisholm (2022)

New Fighting Cocks name board (project 2b) fixed to the left/southeast of the mural (project 4) on the recently installed fence (project 2a), which is of a railway station design. The mural has since been slightly amended with the addition of a carriage. Also note the colourful flower border on the embankment created by the owner of the former **[F]** Station Building. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

- Project 1 'Waiting Shed': Work on the consolidation of the remains of the [C] Waiting Shed started in July 2024. The Friends of the S&DR provided funding for stone copings and labour to carry out the works. One of the members did the brick laying and supplied lime mortar. Later, an information board and seating will be installed, and the area will be suitably landscaped and made wheelchair accessible.
- Project 2a 'Railway Fence': The current owner of the former [F] Station Building replaced some 25 metres of the previous domestic-style boundary fence with a traditional North Eastern Railway station type with diagonal palings facing the former track. The Friends of the S&DR contributed towards the cost of the new fence.
- Project 2b 'Station Name Board': Friends of the S&DR member Peter Bainbridge crafted a traditionally designed Fighting Cocks board in timber and fixed it onto the new fence in April 2024.
- Project 3 'Track Installation': Old concrete railway sleepers have been installed in front of the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock.
- Project 4 'Railway Mural': The current owner of the former [F] Station Building kindly permitted the painting of a mural on their garage facing the former track. Artist Lewis Hobson of Durham Spray Paints depicted the old station with a train. The costs of the spray paints (£1,500) received a 50% grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, whilst the other half was paid for by the Friends of the S&DR. At the end of April 2024, local school children attended the painting of the mural. They were also allowed to sow wildflowers on a prepared patch of soil between the garage and Sadberge Road. The official unveiling of the mural was on 4 May 2024, alongside activities for children.
- Project 7 'Coal Depot': Vegetation clearance by volunteers has exposed the (brick and) stone retaining boundary wall of the former [D] Coal Depot. Outstanding works include an archaeological investigation of the walling. Visible remains will be secured/made

good and the area properly landscaped, with interpretation. The proposed picnic table area could become a public garden.

- Project 8 'Loading Dock Wall': Vegetation and earth build up were removed by volunteers to bring the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock better into view and allow the wall to be inspected and repaired as necessary.
- Project 16 'Conservation Volunteers': A team of volunteers has been established by the Friends of the S&DR who clear vegetation and recover bricks and other re-useable materials. They meet on a Friday every two weeks to carry out maintenance works at Fighting Cocks.
- Project 17 'Conservation Area': An investigation to create a new conservation area has been carried out by conservation officers at Darlington Borough Council and, previously, Durham County Council.

In April 2020, the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn was listed as an Asset of Community Value with Darlington Borough Council, giving the local community an increased chance to buy the asset when it came up for sale, which in this case however did not happen. The former inn was removed from the list in November 2021 following relevant disposal (transfer of the freehold)[189].

In 2021, the **Beamish Museum**, an open-air museum to the south of Newcastle-upon-Tyne which brings the history of the Northeast of England to life, recreated Middleton St George's 1950s fish and chip shop which used to adjoin the [O] Killinghall Arms to the left/north. The building was constructed within the museum's 1950s Town as part of the Remaking Beamish project, grant aided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and forms the end property of a row with three other building replicas from elsewhere in the Northeast. The community of Middleton St George had been involved during the creation of the project[190]. Today, the premises of the original fish and chip shop are occupied by a takeaway.

For 2025, various activities are being planned for the **Bicentenary of the S&DR** by the local community. There will be a week full of events in Middleton St George from 14 to 22 June 2025, including an exhibition of railway-related photographs at the Women's Institute, a railway-related song organised by St. George's CE Academy, bunting and yarn bombing to decorate the village, and many other activities. The Summer Fair in August and Middletons in Bloom (see above) will also have railway-related themes in 2025. Moreover, there is a proposal for a permanent heritage trail identifying locations of historical interest (not just railway related)[191].

[189] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/communities/assets-of-community-value
[190] https://www.beamish.org.uk/news/chip-in-with-beamishs-1950s-town-at-middleton-st-george-event/
[191] https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/MSG-Stockton-and-Darlington-Railway-Bicentenary-Organisaing-Group-Report-to-Friends-03.10.2024.pdf

4.0 Condition, Threats and Opportunities

This chapter is intended to inform future management plans if a conservation area was to be designated. These would be subject to public consultation.

4.1 Condition and Current Issues

This section should be read in conjunction with the historical development of the assessment area (see section 3.3), its spatial analysis (see section 3.4), character analysis (see section 3.5) and the value attributed by the community and other stakeholders (see section 3.6), which provide further information or examples on most of the issues raised below.

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area voiced concerns about (see appendix 2):

- Too much and unsuitable new housing
- Lack of new infrastructure/amenities improvements following housing expansions, increase in traffic and parking issues
- Loss of village 'feel' and community spirit
- Loss of the village's heritage and greenspaces
- Insensitive 'upgrading' of old properties by landlords
- There being very limited resources for children of school age or late teens to do activities
- Vegetation removal and vandalism at the water park

At the time of review, the assessment area was overall in good condition in terms of its maintenance status. There were, however, a number of issues which have degraded the built/historical/natural environment:

Until quite recently, the western parish boundary coincided with the line of the former **Roman Road**, following field boundaries and what is now Sadberge Road. Due to the relentless expansion of the village, this ancient parish line was abandoned and a new line drawn further west in 2016. In addition, the new housing estate off Burnhope Lane, which is currently under construction, cuts across the line of Cade's Road, diluting its readability.

It is very obvious that **modern housing schemes** have been swallowing up the historical village. Initially, these were built on the old industrial sites, regrettably also leading to the demolition of the last surviving buildings of the Middleton Iron Works, including the blowing engine house[192]. With the old industrial sites now built over, new housing is being provided in the adjacent countryside to the west which used to form the setting of the village until very recently, also resulting in the loss of existing trees, hedgerows and wildlife habitat. Public footpaths which used to lead through agricultural fields now go through housing estates, taking away from their recreational value. Overall, Middleton St George is increasingly being developed into a suburban sprawl, which is not how the place set out to be (linear village). The designs and layouts of the new residences do not harmonise with the higher-density old houses (terraces) which face onto the main roads. The new buildings employ a

[192] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7007010.losing-last-reminders-ironworks-industry/

generic architectural language which is not location-specific to Middleton St George and are loosely arranged around long, winding cul-de-sacs with multiple short cul-de-sacs branching off. Such layouts can lead to problems like emergency accessibility and crime, the latter especially presenting opportunities where escape routes exist, such as footpaths leading from the estates[193]. In addition, residents have mentioned traffic and car parking problems arising from the increase in housing and lack of appropriate infrastructure improvements (see appendix 2). Finally, it needs to be mentioned that the naming of the streets for such new developments never acknowledges the industrial antecedents of Middleton St George[194].

When the railway line was operational, there were no or only a few trees besides it. Today, excessive vegetation growth within the **green corridor** is a maintenance issue. There is a need to keep the path clear for public access and enjoyment, including key views, balanced against the need to protect wildlife habitats and ecology value. The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway carry out regular trimming and weeding works in the corridor at the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub. Their volunteers often find it 'impossible' to keep on top of things due to the lack of sufficient manpower, larger-scale equipment and seasonal restrictions to carry out works. However, recent cooperation between the Friends and Darlington Borough Council officers has resulted in successful clearance along the path[195]. The Friends own a small patch of land to the north of the former inn (location of former coal depot), whilst the remainder of the corridor is owned by the Council.

View from northern embankment across the western-most basin of the water park, with new housing estate visible in the background. The buildings are more prominent when there is no direct blinding sunlight. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

In the beginning of 2021, there was upheaval amongst residents about the removal of vegetation from the southern embankment of the three former reservoirs which now form the **water park**[196], opening up the view onto a large new housing scheme under construction. The parish council had commissioned a Reservoir Engineer to inspect the structural stability of the embankments in 2019, due to the imminent construction of the houses in the adjoining field. The survey report contained a strong recommendation for the clearance of all vegetation from the top to the

[193] The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) pages 20 & 88
[194] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[195] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January
[196] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19087108.fury-hedges-removed-middleton-st-georges-water-park/

bottom of the southern bank and its replacement with grass, as this would enable easier visual monitoring of the bank with regard to any dam leakages which might occur[197]. The most recent engineer's report of 2023 reiterates that *there should be no trees, coarse vegetation (brambles/shrubs etc) and that the embankments have good grass cover to resist erosion by rainfall, animals, people etc and in the extreme to protect the embankment should the reservoirs overfill and then overflow*[198]. Although there were originally no trees on the reservoir embankments, the site has become a nature spot of communal value, which is now being surrounded by new housing estates along its northern and southern sides. Whilst dense vegetation would help conceal unsightly views and protect wildlife habitats and tranquillity, it will also need to balanced against potential risks to public health and safety.

Another issue at the water park concerns an old reservoirs boundary wall along the bottom of the western embankment, which is accessible from the nature trail. It is built in red brick and has sandstone capping (see section 3.5/E). Whilst there is some structural movement evident, probably due to pressures from the sloping embankment behind, the main concern is acts of vandalism that have resulted in the destruction of a long stretch of the walling[199]. A quantity of discarded brick and stone, along with rubbish, can be found near the destroyed section, which includes the wall's former southern terminal pillar. In contrast, a curved brick wall at the western corner of the northern embankment survives in good condition.

Top: End section and terminal pier (right) of former reservoir embankment walling that has been destroyed by vandals. *Bottom:* Discarded rubbish, bricks and stone cappings opposite the dismantled walling. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

[197] https://middleton-st-george.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Extraordinary-Parish-Council-Meeting-15.02.2021-Signed-Minutes.pdf

[198] Dams & Reservoirs Ltd (2023) page 10

[199] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

Inside the village, **traditional buildings** have suffered the following harmful interventions, with those in bold having had the most detrimental impact:

- Loss of historical features
- Lowering of original chimney stacks
- Introduction of new roofing materials (including on existing canopies), roof lights and solar PV panels on road-facing elevations
- Plastic rainwater goods, especially those in a light colour
- **Change of original opening patterns including changes to opening sizes/proportions** and introduction of Juliet balcony
- **Change of original window frame layouts**
- **Non-traditional window and door replacements**, often using off-the-shelf uPVC products
- **Use of paint/render, including poorly chosen colours, on facing brick or stonework**
- **Use of incompatible building materials on external solid walling**, such as cement pointing and modern renders and paints, which have a high risk of causing long-term damp problems resulting in cold, unhealthy interiors
- Modern canopy and porch designs
- Unsympathetic rear extensions including flat roofs

Extensions to rear of traditional terrace with flat roofs, modern renders and inappropriate window proportions, viewed from public footpath. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

The **public realm** within the village includes the following detractors which have a negative impact on the historical environment:

- Loss of historical front gardens
- Change of original boundary treatments with modern designs
- Large number of wall-mounted satellite dishes facing the main roads
- Prominent wooden and metal telegraph poles with overhead wires
- Unsympathetic galvanised streetlights and traffic/bus-stop sign posts
- Lack of coordination in the design of lighting columns and other street furniture
- Utilitarian bus shelter (although painted to blend in) squeezed onto a narrow stretch of pavement in front of the former methodist chapel
- Plastic bollards and advertisement on the forecourt of the former inn
- Blistered and tarmacked pavements, the latter sometimes poorly patched
- Untidy back lanes

Back lane behind one of the traditional terraces with dumped rubbish. Saplings and other vegetation taking hold on the last remnant of the former iron works site. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

4.2 Threats and Potential Future Issues

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area identified the following threats to Middleton St George (see appendix 2):

- New housing and its impact on historical assets, nature/trees/ greenspaces/habitats/farmland and tranquillity
- New housing designs
- New housing being unaffordable for first-time buyers, possibly forcing people born and raised in the village to leave
- Closure of shops and businesses
- Middleton St George losing its identity as a village and becoming a small town with few extra amenities
- Possible future loss of the water park

One of the main threats to the historical village is the **continued housing expansion**. Landowners may be enticed to sell their agricultural fields, especially if it yields a better profit than farming them. In particular, the countryside to the west of the settlement and the gap between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row should be (have been) retained as open fields due to their strong contribution as setting and readability of the villages' historical planforms. There are less sensitive areas which could be developed instead. Moreover, the continued supply of housing schemes incorporating generic building designs along cul-de-sacs does dilutes the local distinctiveness and heritage interest of Middleton St George. There needs to be a masterplan (see section 4.3) setting out how the village can be sustainably expanded so that it can fully support its residents whilst retaining or enhancing its sense of place. Further expansion will also necessitate the provision of an adequate road network (not dead ends) and appropriate services within the village.

During the public consultation, further concern about the **water park** was raised (in addition to the removed embankment vegetation and vandalised boundary walling, see section 4.1). Apparently, it would *not [be] impossible that at some time in the future there will be pressure to remove the water altogether and flatten the*

reservoirs[200]. Such development will require planning permission. Whilst the heritage significance and communal value of the site, particularly if included in a conservation area designation, would be in favour of the water park's retention, other material considerations will also need to be weighed in the decision-making process.

Old buildings and other structures (e.g. boundary walling) remain at risk of being lost or further disfigured, possibly to make existing plots more economically viable. Moreover, salespeople and building contractors often 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, as already evident throughout the historical village. Removing, damaging or concealing traditional fabric and features from an old property can also reduce its market value.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

This section should be revisited when formulating a conservation area management plan in the future. *Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.*

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area made the following suggestions for preventing further harm or implementing positive change in Middleton St George (see appendix 2):

- Stop or decrease building more houses
- Provide more wildlife, trees and flowers (grass verges), and preserve existing green areas
- Designate conservation area with Article 4 Direction to control/ monitor future development including alterations
- Provide a planning process whereby decisions for new buildings are both rigorously scrutinised and sanctioned by the parish council
- Preserve the village identity that is left
- Enhance and bring back the lost character of unsympathetically upgraded old properties
- Provide a list of products suitable for renovating old houses and other key information to residents within the conservation area
- Provide additional community resources and invest into community projects and local security (e.g. CCTV and static cameras)

It is hoped that this appraisal document will help residents, local businesses, investors, planners and highways/utility authorities understand how heritage significance is embodied within the assessment area and provide them with the knowledge to prevent future harm and enable positive change.

[200] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

The Middleton St George **Neighbourhood Plan** has identified a number of community actions to improve the parish, which could be delivered by the parish council in conjunction with other local organisations[201]:

1. Create wildflower areas, e.g. along Sadberge Road
2. Support the delivery of the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub (see below)
3. Install interpretation boards at water park and in the green corridor
4. Better control dog fouling
5. Remove overhead cables thought the village
6. Identify community wildlife projects
7. Seek a net-zero carbon future for the parish
8. Improve current play area
9. Improve the water park, e.g. lighting, trails
10. Provide more facilities for young people
11. Provide more facilities for older people
12. Improve multi-use games area
13. Create a community garden
14. Work with Darlington Borough Council to tackle anti-social behaviour more efficiently
15. Work with the Council to improve highway safety
16. Provide an integrated approach to bus service provision
17. Work with the Council to deliver paths improvements
18. Make improvements to unadopted road leading to the cricket club
19. Ensure that development provides appropriate path and cycleway links from estate roads to the existing footpath/cycleway network

With regards to community action 2 above, outstanding works of the **Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub** include[202]:

- Project 5 'Old Mill Wall': Repair and partially reinstate the remains of the [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling.
- Project 6 'Level Crossing': Replace existing gates with a more railway-crossing themed design. Possibly create traffic calming features at all former level crossings along the line, with setts replicating early sleeper blocks or with metal rails inserted into the carriageway.
- Project 9 'Crane Base': Some of the brickwork of the [A] Crane Base requires repointing. Its surroundings could be cleared of vegetation and a feature created with the other remains nearby.
- Project 10 'Highway Artwork': Install a railway-heritage-themed village sign on Sadberge Road.
- Project 11 'New Hedge': Housing developers are required to plant 30 metres hedge behind the [C] Waiting Shed following completion of project 1 (see section 3.6).
- Project 12 'Fighting Cocks Inn': The developer of the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn is required to affix an information panel to the building describing its origin and heritage importance.
- Project 13 'Information and Interpretation': Details TBC
- Project 14 'Car and Cycle Parking': Parking bays or a lay-by for visitors could be created on Sadberge Road. Cycle parking rails or stands should be provided in a secure location.

[201] Middleton St George Parish Council 2022, pages 32-34 (annex 2)
[202] Chisholm (2022)

- Project 15 'Publicity': Updates on the Heritage Hub will be circulated. Guided tours and explanations of the projects will again be given in order to encourage local people and business to become involved.

The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway have some funding reserved for the remaining projects of the Heritage Hub. External sources must however be found to complete the works. Having a conservation area designated would be of great help for the Friends[203].

Besides project 5 of the Heritage Hub, the author of this appraisal suggests that further structures of significance outside the project area would also benefit from **restoration or consolidation works**:

- The western wall at the bottom of the embankment of the water park (see section 4.1)
- The surviving boundary wall of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works behind Killinghall Row

With regards to project 13, the author suggests that the following locations may be suitable for **on-site interpretation**, including some outside the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub project area:

- Within green corridor: former crossing at South Burdon Farmhouse, [A] Crane Base & Platform, [B] DRDC Loading Dock, [C] Waiting Shed, [D] Coal Depot, [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling, [Q] Middleton Iron Works, and Oaktree Junction
- Within the Whinnies: spoil heaps and former bridge linking to [Q] Middleton Iron Works site
- In the water park: former service reservoirs (including embankment walling), [K] Board Room and [L] Pumping Station
- In the playfield: old boundary line of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works
- At the surviving boundary wall of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works

Besides interpretation boards, a **digital heritage trail** could be created on Darlington Borough Council's existing *Darlington Town Centre Trails* app.

> If Middleton St George is designated as a conservation area, it will be easier to obtain **grant money** from external sources for interpretation and restoration/consolidation works.

In addition to the existing Neighbourhood Plan, a **strategic masterplan including location-specific design guide** could be produced, providing clear guidelines for sensitive development within the assessment area. It could be adopted as a supplementary planning document and be a helpful tool for applicants, agents and planners, as well as homeowners, businesses and highways/utility authorities who wish to carry out works under permitted development rights. Whilst it would not create instant change the masterplan could enable smaller steps in the right direction at a time and therefore be a beneficial long-term tool. It should include:

- Existing/proposed road and other transport networks incl. carparks
- Existing/proposed building orientations, types, massings and designs

[203] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January

- Existing/proposed green and communal spaces
- Existing/proposed zones of different use types, how they interact (e.g. residential – commercial – leisure) and how they are served by the transport system
- General guidelines for sympathetic improvement and maintenance works to traditional buildings
- Opportunities for improvements within the public realm

With regards to the penultimate point, **traditional buildings** that have been disfigured or otherwise altered can, for example, be visually improved by reinstating their original opening pattern including appropriate fenestration and removing any modern renders, external paints and insulation. Besides their negative visual impact, the latter are likely to have also resulted in long-term damp problems (see section 4.2). It is *essential* that the *entire* wall 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-wall buildings 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. With regards to the latter, an external wall could, for example, be safely upgraded by applying an insulating lime plaster of a maximum thickness of five centimetres to its interior face. Any further insulation 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[204].

Left: The northern end house of Killinghall Row shows that, despite the insertion of larger openings, the original lintels have been retained (circled in yellow). This is likely to be the case with many of the other properties that have been altered. The reinstatement of the original openings here should therefore be fairly straightforward (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025). *Right:* Cross references can be made by looking at properties within the row that have been well preserved. Here, the replacement frames using a 2x2 sash type seems appropriate for the construction date of the row (c.1864). Note that these are uPVC windows which is not evident unless you look in detail! Their slim frames and glazing bars as well as them being set back in the masonry allow them to fit in almost perfectly (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024).

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

[204] See Building Conservation Directory website

are now high-end uPVC products on the market which mimic traditional windows very well, as seen in the photo above. 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[205], which is preferable to replacing them as they are becoming a rare resource.

With regards to potential **improvements within the public realm**, there are various opportunities such as by providing heritage-style streetlights and painting galvanised poles in matt black or another dark colour. Darlington Borough Council and utility companies should coordinate the designs and locations of highway signs, lighting columns and other street furniture, and highway maintenance to reduce clutter and unsympathetic materials/designs[206].

During the public consultation on the draft appraisal (see section 1.3), the **Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway** kindly offered to help Darlington Borough Council address a range of issues and opportunities in the future (see chapter 4.0)[207]:

- Assist with the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan and its implementation
- Assist the Council in the management and day-to-day upkeep of the track bed path and its green corridor
- Continue the delivery of the projects of the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub (see above) and managing its features
- Arrange guided walks for local residents and the general public
- Revise the self-guided walk book *Darlington to Goosepool* (see section 7.2)
- Work with the Parish Council, voluntary groups and individual volunteers in the local community
- Help the 2025 Bicentenary Group with their programme of events for this summer
- Develop awareness of the village's rail heritage with residents, businesses and the public generally
- Provide the Council and developers specialist advice on planning applications which may affect the fabric or setting of the S&DR
- Access grants from funds not available to the Council

The author would like to thank the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway for their continuing support and assistance.

Finally, if Middleton St George is designated as a conservation area, it will be beneficial to impose an **article 4 direction** on it, to restrict further permitted development rights (see section 2.3). It should be applied to dwellinghouses as well as other use classes. This would control the design and quality of development and therefore help prevent further harmful alterations and gradually introduce positive change. By doing so, Darlington Borough Council would also meet its legal obligation

[205] Wood, Bordass, Baker 2009, page vii
[206] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January
[207] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 7 February

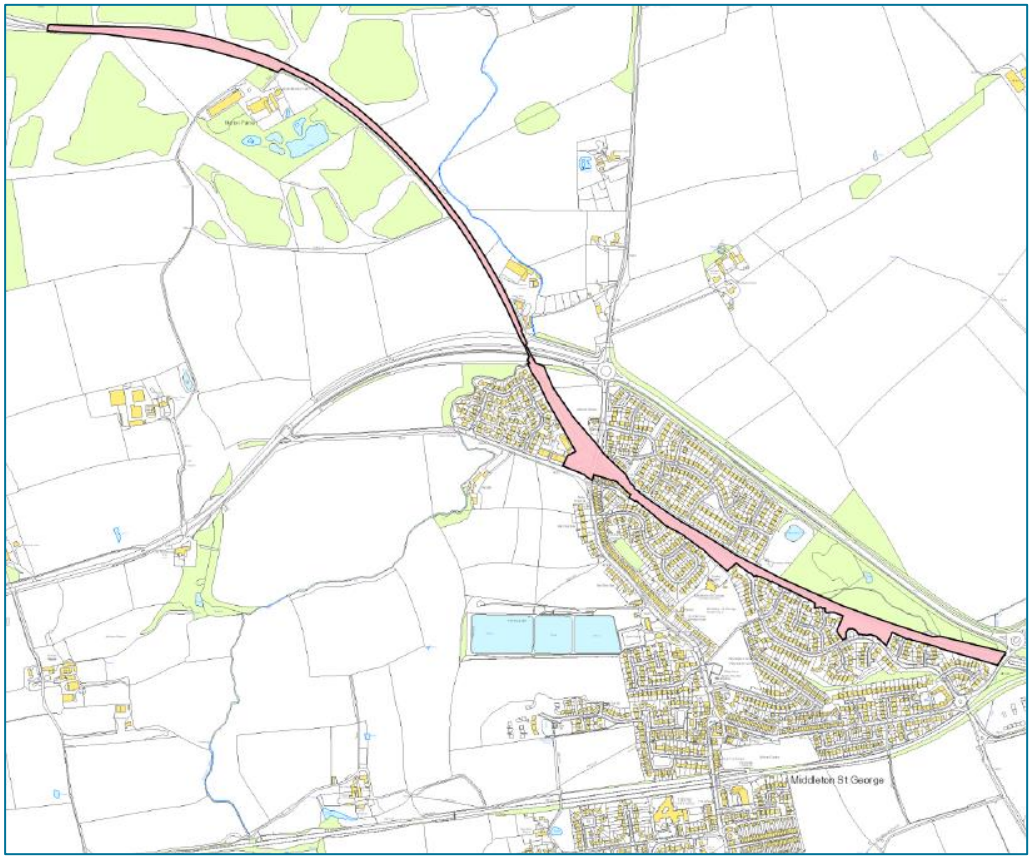
to *formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*[208] of Middelton St George (see section 2.2). Conservation-led change such as by introducing article 4 directions can add value to an area and consequently enable communities to regenerate.

[208] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 71

5.0 Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

At the time of assessment, there was no conservation area at Middleton St George to the north of the live railway line, although parts of the village to the south of the line were inside the Middleton One Row Conservation Area[209].

In July 2022, Durham County Council (DCC) came up with a proposed conservation area boundary for Middleton St George, but this proposal was taken no further. It had followed an assessment whether any areas in Darlington borough associated with the route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) had the potential to be newly designated. In fact, DCC had initially investigated whether the entire 26 miles of the former S&DR was worthy of designation. They concluded that the level of special interest varied along the route so that it would not be appropriate for a single continuous conservation area. Therefore, individual areas were identified.



Durham County Council's proposal of 2022 for creating a new conservation area at Middleton St George. **NB: This boundary line was not proposed at the time of assessment of the draft appraisal**. (Map © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey LA 100049055. Landmark Information Group Copyright © 2022)

The conservation area boundary that DCC proposed for Middleton St George would have covered the former railway corridor from near the A66/Tornado Way roundabout at the west end to Yarm Road at the east end, also including the former Fighting Cocks Inn, remnants of S&DR infrastructure, the station buildings and small areas of open space. It was a shortcoming that DCC proposed their boundary without providing a conservation area appraisal including a detailed description and analysis of the wider area which would ultimately justify the setting of a boundary.

[209] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf

In 2023, DCC drafted a list of potentially 'locally listable' heritage assets associated with the S&DR along its full former route as part of a pilot project. For Middleton St George, such heritage assets comprised the former Fighting Cocks Inn, waiting shed remains, station buildings and remains of the coal depot, which all would have been included in their previously proposed conservation area.

Whilst the boundary that DCC suggested was never contested and has been fully included in the proposed (see section 5.1), amended/finalised (see section 5.2) and adopted (see chapter 6.0) conservation area lines, further areas were identified that justify inclusion.

5.1 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed Boundary

This section offered suggestions at the time of assessment for how boundary lines for a Middleton St George Conservation Area could be drawn, based on the findings of significance within the assessment area (see chapter 3.0). Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

In order to qualify for conservation area designation, any proposed areas need to meet the following tests[210]:

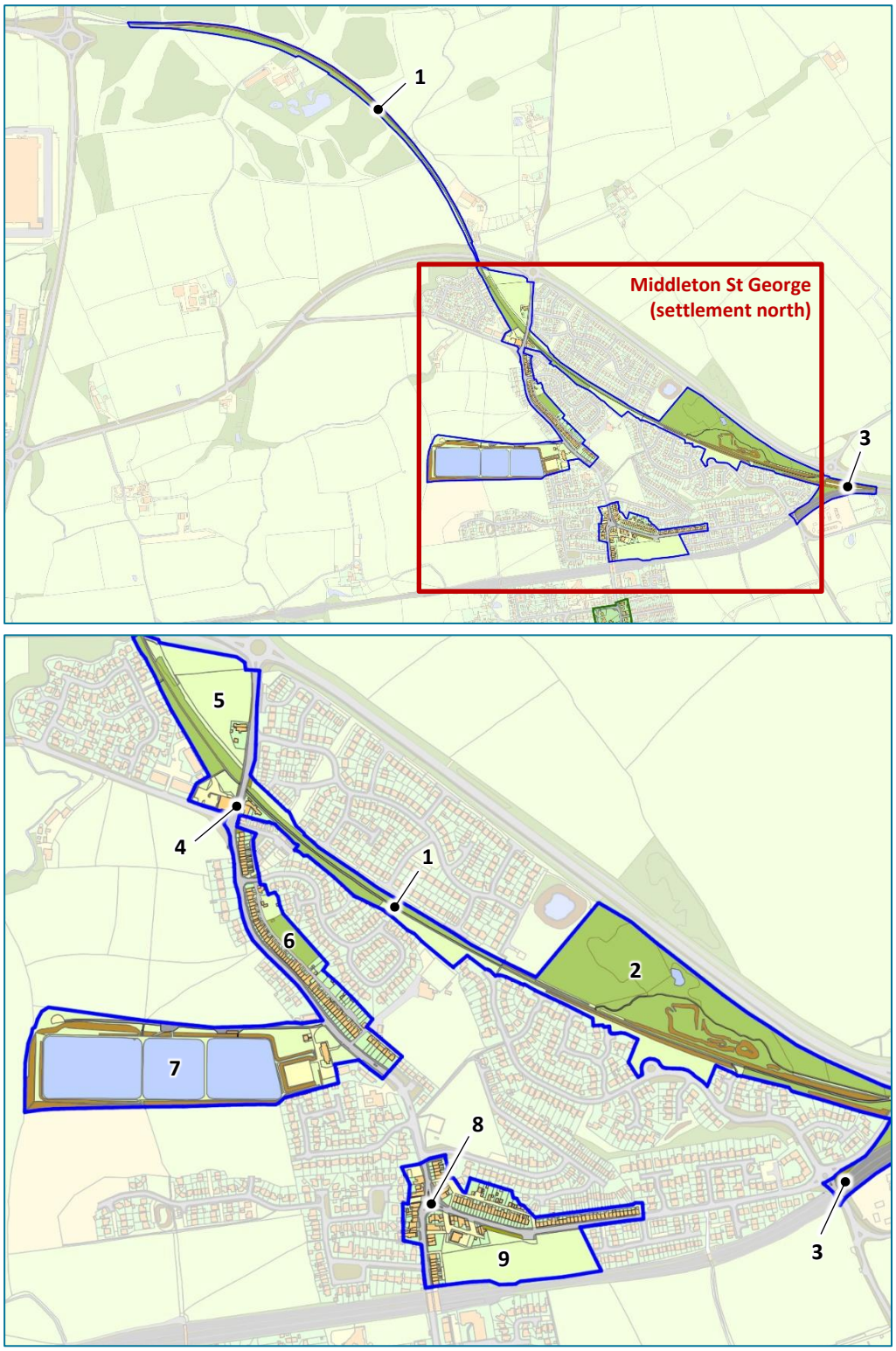
a) The proposed areas have sufficient architectural or historic interest to be considered 'special'.
b) That special interest is experienced through the areas' character or appearance.
c) It is desirable for that character or appearance to be preserved or enhanced, also considering any problems that designation may help solve.

The map below shows the proposed draft boundaries for a Middleton St George Conservation Area which had been drawn up for public consultation. Members of the public and other stakeholders were invited to submit their comments (see section 1.3). **Whilst eleven respondents supported the proposed designation of these boundaries, including the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and Middleton St George Parish Council, there were also two objections, including from Historic England (see appendix 2).**

The proposed draft Middleton St George Conservation Area comprised a number of smaller character areas which are numbered 1 to 9. These have basically been derived from character zones B (Green corridor), D (Historical village), E (Water park) and F (Allotments) (see section 3.5), although a few amendments have been made. In the following text (i.e. the justification for the proposed designation), the identification letter of the relevant character zone and any amendment to it, if applicable, is given in brackets. Following the consultation period, the justification for the proposed designation of these areas was expanded for further clarification.

Please note that these boundary lines will not be adopted (see chapter 6.0).

[210] Historic England 2019, page 5



Proposed draft Middleton St George Conservation Area in blue, which was available for public consultation – **these boundary lines will not be adopted**. *Top:* The assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

1 – Green corridor (B1 & B2). This matches the boundary line suggested by DCC (see chapter 5.0). The area is of high heritage interest and of high public/communal value. It comprises part of the former track bed of the original line of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) – later the Fighting Cocks branch – which is still clearly readable as such, including its original cuttings/embankments and drainage ditches.

Surviving structures of interest include the [A] Crane Base and Platform, [B] DRDC Loading Dock, [C] Waiting Shed (remains), [D] Coal Depot (remains), [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor (remains) and other small-scale industrial fragments.

a) Area 1 has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct links to the internationally significant S&DR and surviving structures/features of local interest.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through removal of the tracks and establishment of heavy vegetation, the route of the former S&DR is still discernible in planform and related structures/features do survive.
c) It is desirable for the former railway corridor and its related structures/features to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation and restoring the [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor remains (see section 4.3).

2 – The Whinnies (B3). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author of this document believes that its links to the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works, which used to be of such high importance to the historical development of the village, clearly justify designation. The topography created by the underlying spoil heaps, which originated from the iron works site, give such a distinct character to the woodland, and there is also surviving evidence of the bridge which spanned to the former iron works site. In addition, the local nature reserve is of high public/communal value.

a) Area 2 has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct links to the locally highly significant iron works.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through removal of the bridge (although remnants do survive) and establishment of heavy vegetation, the 'bumpy' topography created by the spoil heaps is clearly discernible.
c) It is desirable for the local nature reserve to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation (see section 4.3).

3 – Oaktree Junction (B4, amended). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that it is important to include the location where the former line of the 1825 S&DR and the 1887 NER passenger line to Bank Top Station met, due to the implications it had on the original route. As a result, the line from Oaktree Junction towards North Road Station became the Fighting Cocks branch, which was mainly reserved for goods traffic, with passenger services generally abandoned. Later, the branch was served from Oaktree Junction only, once its western connection had been severed. Ultimately, this stretch of the original S&DR was lost completely as a consequence of the 1887 passenger line. The area also includes the public footpath immediately to the north of the live railway corridor and the [R] Metal Railway Bridge over the old road to Yarm, which is a focal point from the public highway.

a) Area 3 has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct links to the creation of the Fighting Cocks branch line and the ultimate demise of that section of the original route of the S&DR.
b) Whilst some of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through removal of the tracks on the former S&DR route (only) and establishment of heavy vegetation, the former junction is still discernible in planform and located within the existing railway corridor.

c) It is desirable for the (former) railway corridor to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation (see section 4.3).

4 – Fighting Cocks (part of D1). This matches the boundary line suggested by DCC. The area has been identified as being of high heritage interest and is located at the ancient road junction where the lane from Darlington joined the former Roman route. Moreover, it is directly linked to the arrival of the S&DR where, consequently, the development of the village started. The area contains the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn which was built sometime between 1832-4 by the last owner of the manor, Henry Cocks, and is now the oldest surviving building in the village. It is a long-distance focal point from the public highway and forms a distinct group with the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, both of them built in Pease brick. The latter includes extant fabric of an early S&DR station building (1830/1).

a) Area 4 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to being at the location of an ancient road junction and the arrival of the S&DR which triggered the historical development of the village, the survival of the S&DR station buildings including remnants of an early station building, the former inn's locally important association with Henry Cocks, and the group value of these buildings.
b) Whilst the original inn has been modified considerably (including historically), the character/appearance of that special interest survives in the existing road junction, the historical layout and spatial contribution of the three old buildings, and design of the station buildings, which appear little altered.
c) It is desirable for the road junction and three buildings to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation (including the reinstatement of the inn's board) and removal of unsympathetic more recent alterations at the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn (paint finishes, window frames, etc.) (see section 4.3).

5 – Roman Road & northern allotments (F1 & D4, extended, & part of C). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author thinks that there is a case for including this stretch of Cade's Road with the more unusually designed nineteenth-century semi-detached building making a visual contribution along the public highway. The historical allotments are in the immediate setting of the former track bed of the S&DR, with its distinct triangular-shaped plot first shown on the first-edition six-inch OS map (1855). The small field to the north (which is currently grazed by ponies) seems to include remnants of a ridge-and-furrow field system and also forms part of the setting.

a) Whilst the architectural and historic interest of Area 5 is not sufficient to be considered 'special' enough on its own, it does form part of the immediate setting of a section of Area 1, and as such contributes to the special interest.
b) The character/appearance of the architectural and historic interest largely survives.
c) It is desirable for the greenspaces and landmark building to be preserved.

6 – Station Road (part of D1, amended). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that the early linear development along the main road, which had sprung up due to the establishment of industrial sites served by the main railway line,

most notably the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, justifies inclusion. Surviving structures of interest include the former [I] Undenominational Mission Hall, [H] the former Lyric, the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, a focal point along the main road, and the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes. The latter are of high local significance due to their Arts and Crafts style and connotation with Henry Cocks' (and, as such, the former manor's) final contribution to the area. The short artificial/cast-stone-faced terrace at the northern end seems unusual for Middleton St George.

a) Area 6 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to representing the early development of the village, its links to the locally highly significant iron works and its industrial past (most of which has disappeared) in general, the group value of the buildings and including locally important buildings.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through unsympathetic alterations to many of the terraced properties, the overall built form has been retained in the surviving historical platform and spatial contribution.
c) It is desirable for these buildings to be preserved and the terraced properties to be enhanced by removal of unsympathetic more recent alterations (see section 4.3).

7 – Fighting Cocks Reservoirs (E). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that it clearly justifies inclusion. The former service reservoirs are directly linked to the growth of the Teesside towns and industries and therefore of regional significance. The first basin was constructed before the historical village of Middleton St George had started to take its shape, extracting water from the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage, now a scheduled monument. It was the second reservoir to service the Tees Cottage Waterworks, out of a total of eleven, and is now the only surviving one within Darlington Borough. Whilst many villages depended on pumped water until well into the twentieth century, Fighting Cocks was connected to piped water in 1853. The reservoirs' former [K] Board Room & Entrance Gate are traditionally designed, with the latter making a roadside contribution. The former [L] Pumping Station is an unusual, modernist building for Middleton St George. Today, the site's water park, outdoor sports court community centre and nature trail are recreational assets of distinct character and high public/community value.

a) Area 7 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct link to a scheduled monument, the Teesside industrial growth in general, providing early piped water to Fighting Cocks and including locally important buildings.
b) Whilst some of character/appearance of that special interest has been 'diluted' through the establishment of vegetation on the reservoir embankments and loss of water within the original basin, the historical layout and topography of the site have been retained.
c) It is desirable for the site to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation, reinstating the original fenestration to the former [L] Pumping Station and rebuilding the western wall at the bottom of the water park's embankment (see section 4.3).

8 – The Square & Yarm Road (D2). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that the early development around the Square and the workers housing along the roads, which are the direct result of the establishment of the formerly nearby [Q] Middleton Iron Works, justify inclusion. A stretch of distinct boundary walling built from slag behind one of the terraces is the only industrial

evidence that survives on the former iron works site. Buildings of interest within the area include the former [O] Killinghall Arms, a focal point from the public highway, the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and the former [P] Co-op and Stable.

a) Area 8 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to representing the early development of the village, its links to the locally highly significant iron works and its industrial past in general, the group value of the buildings and including locally important buildings/structures.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through unsympathetic alterations to many of the buildings, the overall built form has been retained in the surviving historical platform and spatial contribution.
c) It is desirable for these buildings to be preserved and enhanced by removal of unsympathetic more recent alterations (modern renders, change of opening patterns, etc.) and the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works boundary wall to be consolidated, with interpretation provided alongside it (see section 4.3).

9 – Southern allotments & greenspaces (F2 & G2). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author thinks that there is a case for including the two triangular greenspaces, which are first shown on the 1912-14 OS map and accessible to the public, and the historical allotments. The latter and the larger triangular greenspace are in the immediate setting of the former workers houses along Yarm Road.

a) Whilst the architectural and historic interest of Area 9 is not sufficient to be considered 'special' enough on its own, it does form part of the setting of Area 8, and as such contributes to the special interest.
b) The character/appearance of the historic interest survives.
c) It is desirable for the greenspaces to be preserved.

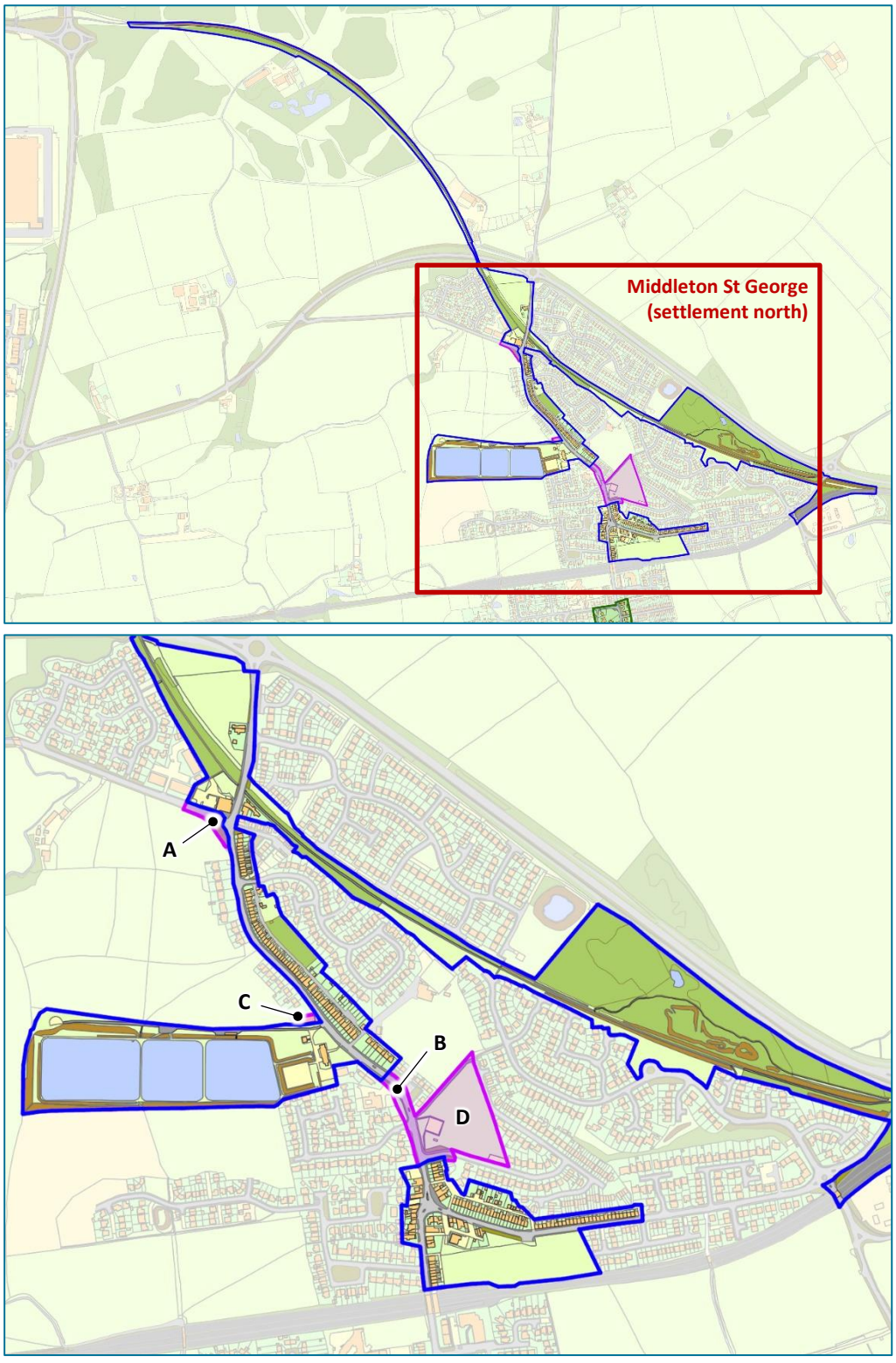
5.2 Boundary Changes post Public Consultation

Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

When giving the presentation at the Women's Institute during the consultation period (see section 1.3 & appendix 1), the author suggested further possible boundary additions:

A. The road to Darlington along the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn plot, to clearly represent the historic road junction. This stretch of road had been omitted by mistake from draft area 4 (see section 5.1)
B. The stretch of Station Road between draft areas 6 and 8, to create a continuous conservation area line (NB: a conservation area does not necessarily need to have one continuous boundary line)

Having considered the above, it has been decided to add areas A and B, including associated roadside greens, to the finalised Middleton St George Conservation Area boundary. In addition, following the public consultation period, the decision has been made to also include:



Boundary line changes (further additions) post public consultation in pink. Blue conservation area boundary line as proposed in draft appraisal, see section 5.1. *Top:* The assessment area, with existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

C. The former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. Whilst it was mentioned in the text to be included in draft area 6, it had been omitted from the boundary line on the map by mistake. This is now rectified.

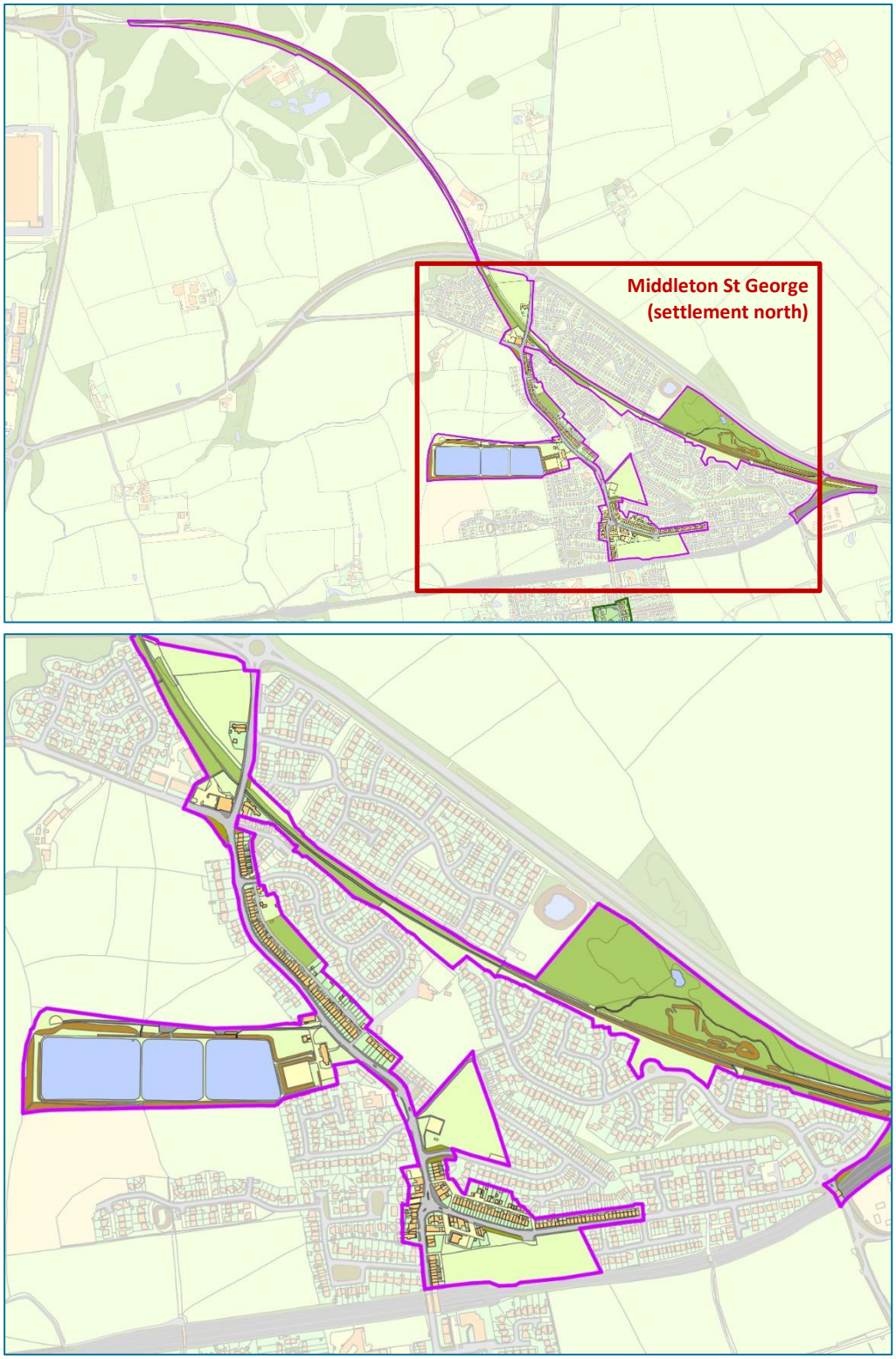
D. The playing field (see section 3.5/G1). This roughly triangular shaped field is first shown on the 1896 OS map with its eastern side forming the boundary to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works and the existing path along its northwestern side representing the line of a former access route from the main street to the works (see section 3.3).

a) Area E has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its link to the locally highly significant iron works site, of which only very little evidence survives.
b) Whilst the character/appearance of the field has changed from possibly agricultural to leisure and the immediate setting from industrial to residential, the historical planform does survive.
c) It is desirable for the (play) field to be preserved and enhanced by providing on-site interpretation alongside the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works boundary line and repairing/replacing the existing timber fence.

Extension area D – playing field: View from path along its northwestern side looking west onto the former boundary line of the **[Q]** Middleton Iron Works, which is now marked by a timber boarded fence and a line of trees. Further trees were being planted at the time of the visit. The modern houses behind are on the former site of the iron works. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

6.0 Adopted Boundary (DATE)

The map shows the finalised conservation area line for Middleton St George which is proposed for adoption. It comprises the boundaries proposed in the draft appraisal (see section 5.1) and further areas added post public consultation (see section 5.2).



Middleton St George Conservation Area boundary proposed for adoption in pink. *Top:* Assessment area, with existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

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Northumbria in Bloom: https://northumbriainbloom.com/

Appendix 1: Copy of Meeting Notes

Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024)
Meeting at the Women's Institute, Middleton St George (MSG)
Monday 20 January 2025, 18:30 – 19:50

An estimated 20-30 people attended including representatives of the MSG Parish Council (PC), the local history group, Friends of the S&DR, and residents .

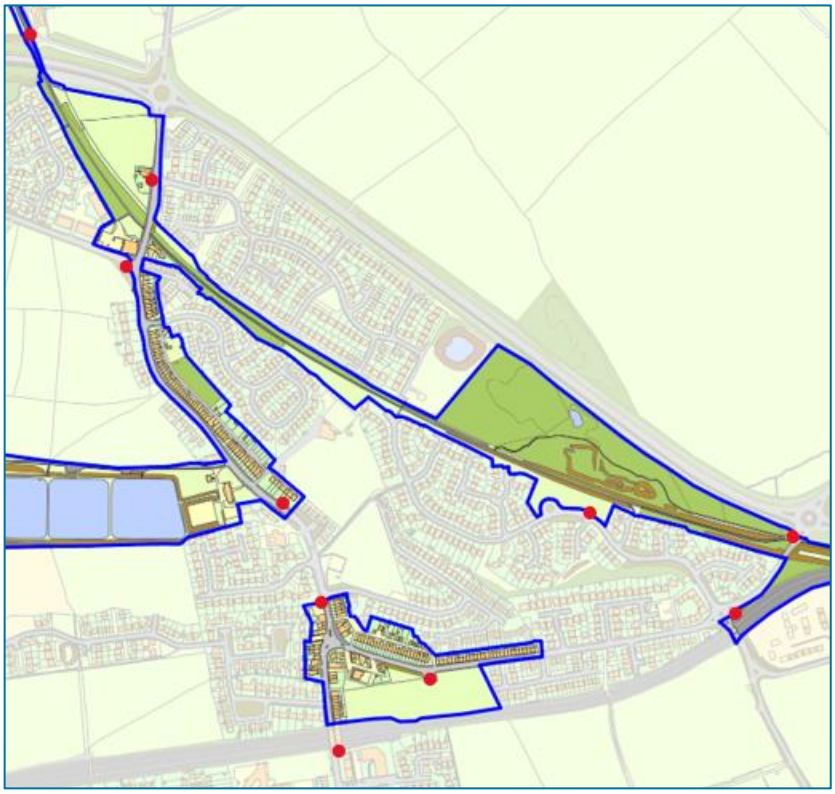
At the start, a presentation on the proposed new conservation area (CA) was given by Gaby Rose, the Darlington Borough Council (DBC) Conservation Officer.

During the Q & A afterwards, the following points were raised:

- Uncertainty about an existing CA at the north end of Middleton Lane. I confirm that the Middleton One Row Conservation extends as far north as 1 Middleton Lane: *https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf*
- Question whether loss of special architectural interest still merits CA designation. I confirmed that CAs are *areas of special architectural* ***or*** *historic interest*. Special historic interest (e.g. the former iron works) does merit designation if it is associated with physical evidence (e.g. workers terraces).
- Query about the proposed extent of designation. I explained that the currently proposed boundary is what I think is the maximum extent of justifiable CA designation for MSG. I wanted to 'put all the cards on the table' and discuss them, rather than too few.
- Different views about the inclusion of the workers terraces in the CA boundary, with one side being opposed due to the lack of architectural interest and the other side being in favour. I understand that the latter attendants live in such houses and are keen to restore them to a more sympathetic appearance. They also voiced strong support for raising awareness of the industrial heritage which is often much neglected.
- Discussion whether the terracing at MSG is common or average in the Northeast; there were different opinions. I mentioned that in my assessment I evaluate significance in the context of Darlington borough, and asked whether there are similar scenarios like at MSG elsewhere in the borough as I am not aware of any.
- Different views on whether CA designation for the terracing is now too late, as the fields on the opposite side of Station Road are already being developed. The planning report apparently stated that development was acceptable as there was no CA at the time.
- Query whether the Whinnies would benefit from CA designation as they are already protected by the Local Plan (policy ENV 7).

Additional designation will provide further protection, such as with regards to works to trees.

- Lack of clarity on the exact details of restrictions CA designation would put on property owners. Section 2.3 of the draft provides an overview of the implications for the public and the relevant legislation (see chapter 7.0 for how to access these sources).
- Request that if houses were designated, a design guide specific to MSG on how to sympathetically improve and modify these properties is provided.
- Concern that people living in the terraces may not be aware of the proposed CA designation. Below is a map showing all the locations where I have hung site notices, mainly attached to lamp posts (red dots). The consultation has also been advertised on the DBC's and the PC's websites, and the DBC Facebook page.



- Query about what happens after the consultation period, in particular what will get designated. After the consultation, I will process and evaluate the responses received. I will amend the appraisal with regards to factual/historical information where necessary. Different views on the proposed CA boundary will be considered, and a decision will be made on whether to amend the currently proposed boundary. The finalised CA boundary will then be recommended to Councillors for approval at the cabinet and council meetings.

Gaby Rose, 21 January 2025

Appendix 2: Outcome of Public Consultation

The general parameters of the consultation process have been outlined at the start of the appraisal (see section 1.3). Altogether, the Council received a total of fifteen responses on the document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024)***, comprising representatives of (number of responses in brackets):

- (9) Residents (in or close to assessment area)
- (1) The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway
- (1) MSG Parish Council
- (1) Darlington Borough Council
- (1) Historic England
- (1) Durham County Council
- (1) Other

Seven of the above filled in the feedback form that had been provided by the Council. Below is a summary of the responses received (number of responses/ comments in brackets). The text in added blue explains how the feedback was considered for or integrated in the revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025***:

Q1 *Do you live or work in the assessment area, see map at the start of the appraisal document?*

(6) Yes (1) No

Q2 *Do you live or work in the proposed conservation area boundary for Middleton St George, see map in chapter 5.0 of the appraisal document?*

(1) Yes (6) No [according to postcode provided]

Q3 *What is your personal or professional interest in the area?* Comments:

- (7) Resident
- (2) Family also lives/lived in the village
- (1) Active in local community
- (1) Supports protection and conservation of village and its historical features
- (1) Formerly employed at the old railway welding depot
- (1) Regularly socialises in village pubs
- (1) Has witnessed the demise of a very small community which has significantly grown through housing development over recent years

Q4 *Do you think Middleton St George would benefit from being a Conservation Area?*

(7) Yes – reasons:

- (3) To protect greenspaces/wildlife/natural habitats which are being destroyed for new housing estates
- (2) To protect and enhance historical assets
- (2) To prevent further damage and protect what is left
- (2) To impose planning controls with regards to alterations, new builds, and the general expansion of village ensuring that adequate infrastructure and local amenities will be provided
- (2) For the reasons set out in the CA Draft Appraisal

(0) No

Q5 *Do you think that the draft appraisal accurately describes the significance, character and appearance of Middleton St George, see chapter 3.0?*

(7) Yes – comments:

- (2) Showcases history/historical importance of the village
- (2) Very impressive, comprehensive, interesting and/or well written report
- (1) Photos taken prove character of the area
- (1) The key pertinent points are hit

(0) No

Q6 *What, in your opinion, are the most positive aspects about Middleton St George; what should be protected?* Comments:

- (4) Nature, trees, greenspaces, nature reserve and/or surrounding countryside
- (3) Historical structures/features/assets
- (3) S&RD station area and/or former railway corridor
- (2) History of the village incl. agricultural and industrial heritage, and its undeniable links to S&DR
- (2) Lovely place to live
- (1) Great community
- (1) Cricket Club, Water Park, the Havelock Arms
- (1) Village centre
- (1) Excellent transport links

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 3.6**

Q7 *What, in your opinion, are the most negative aspects about Middleton St George (also see section 4.1); what could be improved?* Comments:

- (4) Too much and/or unsuitable new housing
- (3) Lack of new infrastructure/amenities improvements following housing expansions, increase in traffic movement and/or parking issues
- (3) Loss of village feel and/or community spirit
- (1) Loss of village's heritage
- (1) Loss of greenspaces

- (1) Inappropriate 'upgrading' of old properties by landlords
- (1) Very limited resources for children of school age or late teens to do activities

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 4.1**

Q8 *What, in your opinion, are threats or potential future issues for Middleton St George (also see section 4.2)?* Comments:

- (5) New housing and their impact on historic assets, nature/trees/ greenspaces/habitats/farmland and tranquillity
- (2) New housing designs
- (1) New housing being unaffordable for first-time buyers, possibly forcing people born and raised in the village to leave
  - ➢ Policy H 5 of the *Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036. Adopted February 2022* specifies a 20% affordable housing requirement for residential development schemes of 10 or more dwellings in Middleton St George, of which 50% is affordable rent and 50% affordable homeownership.
- (1) Closure of shops and businesses
- (1) MSG losing its identity as a village and becoming a small town with few extra amenities

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 4.2**

Q9 *How, in your opinion, could positive change be implemented (also see section 4.3)? How could negative change be avoided?* Comments:

- (3) Stop or decrease building more houses
- (3) Provide more wildlife, trees and/or flowers (grass verges) and/or preserve existing green areas
- (1) Designate conservation area with Art 4 Direction to control/ monitor development including future alterations
- (1) Provide transparent planning process whereby decisions for new buildings are both rigorously scrutinised and sanctioned by the parish council
- (1) Preserve the village identity that is left
- (1) Enhance and bring back the lost character of unsympathetically upgraded old properties
- (1) Provide a list of products suitable for renovating old houses and other key information to residents within the CA
  - ➢ Further information is now provided in **section 4.3**, and links to the Building Conservation Directory are available in **section 7.3**
- (1) Provide additional community resources and/or invest into community projects and local security (e.g. CCTV and static cameras at the four entrances into the village)

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 4.3**

Q10 *Do you agree with the line of the proposed Conservation Area boundary, see section 5.0 of appraisal document?*

(4) Yes – comments:

- (1) No other greenspace to call a boundary
- (1) Protects the main routes through the original village

(1) No – comments:

- (1) Agrees with proposed CA inclusions but also wants the field at the top of Woodlands Green and cricket pitch to be designated
  - The cricket pitch is not shown on the historic maps, and the shape of the site has changed over time too; therefore, it will not be designated.
  - The playing field is now included in the finalised CA boundary, see **section 5.2** and **chapter 6.0**

Q11 *Any other comments?*

- (2) Supports the proposal and hopes that CA will be implemented
- (1) Fully supports additional boundary inclusions to those made by Durham County Council
- (1) Believes that the CA is overall a positive thing and should help to enhance the character of buildings
- (1) Advises to keep village as green as possible and encourage more wildlife to areas/gardens through initiatives
- (1) Believes the ridge-and-furrow sites on farmland should be protected, noting that new housing is ripping through one now
  - As noted, the fields to the north of the water park are currently being destroyed by new housing construction, so designation comes too late.
  - The small field to the south of the A67/Sadberge Road roundabout is part of the proposed Middleton St George CA boundary, and reference to the ridge-and-furrow is now made in the text for draft area 5, see **section 5.1**.
  - The two fields to the north of the A67/Sadberge Road roundabout are too cut off from the proposed designated area by the A67; they are no longer part of the setting of the village.
  - The ridge-and-furrow systems at West Hartburn and Middleton One Row are outside the assessment area. With regard to the former, it may be included in the scheduled monument, although the earthworks do not seem well preserved (judging from the LiDAR). The author strongly believes that the latter should be included in the Middleton One Row CA.
- (1) States that the whole village (not just the proposed CA) needs protecting from becoming a town and losing its character, its aesthetic look, community spirit and historical legacy
  - The criteria for conservation area designation eligibility are outlined in **sections 2.1, 3.0 & 5.1**. and the modern housing estates do not meet them
- (1) Queries whether the CA would be governed by preservation orders etc., to keep the natural tree lines and habitat
  - Trees in a CA are protected under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, see **section 2.3**.
- (1) Strongly objects to any development in this specific CA

The remaining consultation responses were sent in by email. Below is an overview of what they contained. The text added in blue explains how responses have been considered for or integrated in the revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025***:

Comments on **general information** with the appraisal:

- Historic England: Acknowledgement that draft document contains a great deal of valuable information to reveal the historical and architectural interest of the study area.
- Historic England: Advice to publish management proposals needed to secure enhancement at the same time as the decision to designate, to show that it is desirable, and to indicate how it would be delivered.
  - Some of this is included in **section 4.3**
- Historic England: Advice that if designation is pursued, a separate, new CA appraisal should be adopted and the current one of the wider study area placed separately in the local Historic Environment Record. Encouragement to make any new appraisal more visual.
  - A new appraisal is not considered to be necessary or appropriate, as all information is contained within this document. An additional document may confuse the record of the appraisal process.
  - It is considered that the presentation of the information contained in this appraisal is fit for purpose.
- Friends of the S&DR: Offer to help the Council in addressing a range of issues and opportunities.
  - These are now listed in **section 4.3**
- Resident: Acknowledgement that draft document is very wide ranging and done with commendable thoroughness.
- Resident: Suggestion not to reference areas well outside the proposed CA and not to stray into the pre-industrial history.
  - It has been decided to retain this information for the following reasons (see **section 3.3**):
    - Cade's Road is relevant as it went through the assessment area and is still readable in the current road/boundary layouts. While some have difficulty in accepting the Roman road in this location, the HER entry implies there is sufficient evidence pointing to the likelihood of its former existence.
    - The former manors of MSG, MOR and Dinsdale are relevant as they were within the assessment area. Moreover, the manorial family names of Killinghall, Pemberton and, notably, Cocks still survive in the village.
    - The church of St George outside the assessment area is relevant as it seems to incorporate the oldest surviving building in the parish. It also served the village until 1871, and Henry Cocks in buried in it.
    - References to the three villages (two of which are no longer extant) outside the assessment area are provided to reveal the settlement context (within the former manors) that MSG is located in. The hamlet of Oak Tree

provided the name of the railway junction in the assessment area.
    - The changes in agrarian management are relevant as they are visible in the assessment area (e.g. ridge and furrow, enclosed fields).
    - Dinsdale Spa is relevant as Fighting Cocks Station became the point of arrival for spa visitors and the landlord of the Fighting Cocks Inn provided transport to the spa for first-class train passengers.
- Resident: Concern that lack of regard for the history of MSG is still embedded in planning policies and actions of developers, with the result that village is turning into a characterless small town with a traffic problem.
    - ➢ It is anticipated that the formal adoption of this appraisal will raise awareness amongst planners, developers and property owners, and result in better-informed decision making.
- Resident: Identification of former Pumping Station and Board Room as some of the significant buildings in the village.
    - ➢ These are now mentioned and marked as 'structures of interest' (see map at the beginning of the document) throughout the finalised appraisal.
- Resident: Concern that the removal of trees from the banks of the water park has opened up views onto new housing estates and that in the future there could be pressure to remove the water and flatten the former reservoirs.
    - ➢ Conservation area designation would provide some protection for trees, see **section 2.3**
    - ➢ The 2021 vegetation removal is now included in **section 4.1**.
    - ➢ The flattening of the reservoirs/water park would require planning permission. CA designation would be a material consideration in the decision-making process of an application. This is now included in **section 4.2**
- Other: Suggestion that Council should coordinate the design and location of highway signs, lighting columns, other street furniture, and highway maintenance to reduce clutter and unsympathetic materials.
    - ➢ This is now included in **section 4.3**
- Darlington Borough Council: Request to mention Hopetown Darlington and the Centre for Local Studies in sources.
    - ➢ This is now included in **section 7.3**
- Various: Provision of further information and corrections on a range of factual/historical/other matters.
    - ➢ These are now included in **sections 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2 and 7.3** where applicable

Comments on **proposed new designation and conservation area boundary**:

(11) In support:

- Parish Council: Acceptance of the recommendations for the Fighting Cocks Conservation Area.
- Friends of the S&DR: Support of the proposed CA boundaries as the protection and enhancement of the former S&DR track bed is

important justification for the proposed designation; there would be no MSG as we know it today without the S&DR.

- Friends of the S&DR: Support of the inclusion of the former industries' workers housing as it will help raise awareness of the importance of the S&DR in the history of the village.
- Other: Confirmation that Friends of the S&DR have some funding reserved for the remaining projects of the Heritage Hub, but external sources must be found to complete the works. Having a CA designation would be of great help for the Friends.
  - This is now included in **section 4.3**
- Other: Support of proposed draft boundaries as draft areas 1 to 5 cover railway heritage and areas 6 to 9 show how a village community emerged following the coming of the S&DR railway and the businesses and industries it generated.
- Resident: Strong support that MSG's cultural and industrial heritage is saved as so much has already been lost, e.g. the big industrial building (the last of its kind in the whole of the area) that was demolished for Woodlands Green, 1500sqm of ancient hedgerow at the water park due to Homes by Carlton's desire for lakes views, and the oldest ticket office on the S&DR to a Sainsbury's store.
  - Further information is now provided about the (demolished) blowing engine house, see **section 3.3**.
  - According to the MSG Parish Council meeting notes of 15 February 2021 (available on their website) it appears that the Parish Council had instigated the vegetation removal from the south bank of the water park following the recommendations of a reservoirs engineer, and that Homes by Carlton in fact raised a complaint about the works. The 2021 vegetation removal is now included in **section 4.1**.
  - The author has not been able to find sources backing up that the Fighting Cocks Inn ever included a ticket office. This seems unlikely considering the first station building (Railway Lodge of 1830/1) predates the original inn (built at some point between 1832 and 1834). Moreover, whilst the station had been provided by the S&DR, the inn was owned by Henry Cocks, lord of the manor, see **section 3.3**. Finally, looking at the pre-conversion floor plan of the former inn (planning application ref. 21/00223/OUT), there is no indication of a ticket office in what is believed to be the original part of the building.
- Resident: Particular interest in saving the area behind Station Road which was allotments and food growing space, and is still full of fruit trees and wildlife.
  - This greenspace is now mentioned in **section 3.5**.

(2) **Not** in support:

- Historic England: Whilst in agreement that in broad terms the study area's interest turns on its historical links to the very high significance of the S&DR, there is concern that more work is needed to clearly identify the special architectural or historic interest, in particular with regard to the Square, the workers housing and former reservoirs, and to use this to reconsider the boundaries proposed for CA designation.

- Further information on the heritage significance of the former water park and village has been provided in **sections 3.1 & 3.3**.
- Clear justification for areas to be designated is now provided using the parameters set out in HE guidance, see **sections 5.1 & 5.2**.

- Historic England: Query why the ridge-and-furrow field systems described in the document are not appraised in chapter 5.0 and are left out of consideration for CA status.
  - This has been explained under feedback form responses to Q11, see above.
- Historic England: Concern that, if designation is pursued as proposed, this will have implications for the Council when meeting duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the areas.
  - These are the implications for, and the purpose of, any CA designation, see **section 2.2**.
- Historic England: Encouragement to consider other potential ways to protect the character and features as an alternative to CA status, such as the MSG Neighbourhood Plan, local listing, the DBC Local Plan, a supplementary planning document or non-planning activity, such as managing the natural environment, redesigning highways, or engaging with local history.
  - Considering DCC already proposed a conservation area in 2021 and the findings of this report also conclude with a proposal to designate, which has been supported by residents, the Friends of the S&DR and MSG Parish Council, the author sees no reason for not creating a CA.
  - The MSG Neighbourhood Plan covers a much larger area though excludes part of the former track bed of the S&DR (which is outside MSG parish). It is aimed to address a variety of issues. In contrast, a CA appraisal focuses in detail on heritage matters and is therefore likely to carry more weight in the planning process with regards to development proposals in the built historical environment.
  - The Council does not have a Local List. Local listing would only be suitable for structures that have not been much altered and would not protect larger groups of buildings (which is what CA designation is for).
  - The DBC Local Plan covers the whole borough and is aimed to address a variety of issues with a broader brush. In contrast, the CA appraisal is specific to the assessment area and provides a quantity of details that will be of interest to and consequence of in the planning process, supporting Local Plan policies.
  - The adopted appraisal would be a supplementary planning document.
  - Non-planning activities will rely on the good will of people. They are more likely to be carried out when specified in a CA appraisal/management plan, such as cosmetic improvement works by Highways, as they are otherwise not a priority to the Council.
- Resident: Support of 2022 DCC boundary as it restricts itself to the immediate subject (the S&DR), although the exact boundary could be

discussed, for example whether it should include the former station buildings or the Whinnies nature reserve.
  - Other areas have been identified to have special interest, see **sections 3.1, 5.1 & 5.2** – further information and justification has been provided since the draft appraisal.
- Resident: Opinion that workers terraces, the Square and boundary wall of former iron works are not of special architectural interest.
  - It is correct that the special historic interest significantly outweighs the architectural value here – NB: conservation areas are *areas of special architectural **or** historic interest*.
  - The boundary wall constructed from slag is an important – and the only – survivor directly related to the iron works site.
- Resident: Suggestion that history of the village is better obtained from documentary sources than coming to see it, and concern that MSG is being talked up as a place of interest when a visit is likely to lead to disappointment.
  - Every attempt has been made to accurately portray the history of the place and what survives. Recently taken photos give a true impression of the current state of the village.
- Resident: Opinion that conservation area designation will not result in improvement of properties, due to lack of resources or inclination.
  - A few residents at the presentation meeting stated that they want to sympathetically restore their old properties. They also voiced that raising awareness (through this document) may inspire others to do the same. In any case, designation is more likely to result in improvements (and funding opportunities) and stop further harm than having none.
- Resident: Opinion that conservation area designation will result in pointless restrictions on property owners.
  - The restrictions are likely to result in some protection of old buildings and trees, which is considered to the benefit of the area. The instances of removal of permitted development rights that concern conservation areas are now listed in **section 2.3**. following a resident's request.

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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Appendix 1

Stockton & Darlington Railway:

Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks)

Conservation Area Appraisal

Finalised document
May 2025

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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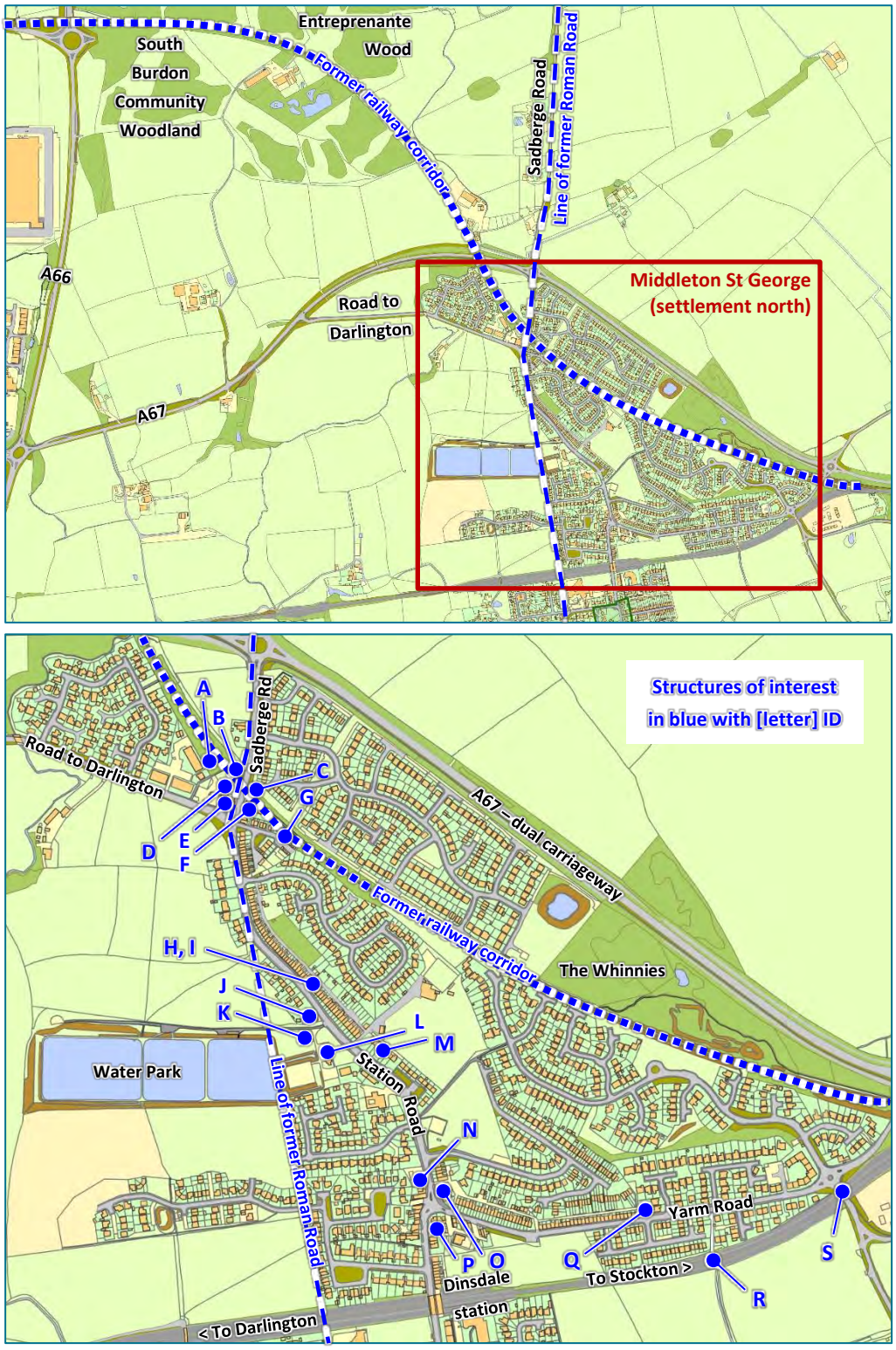
< Cover image: Former station building (painted white) and station master's house at Fighting Cocks. The modern garage is in the location of the former platform, with the wall facing the trackside displaying a mural of the historic station. (Photo © Gaby Rose, April 2024)

Maps of the Assessment Area



Top: Full extent of assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

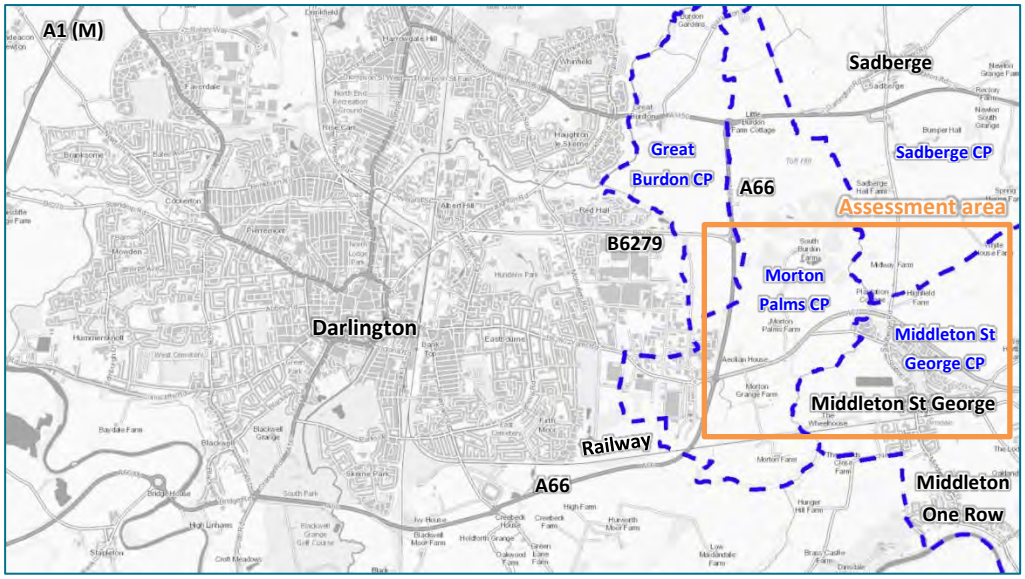
[A] Crane Base & Platform (remains). **[B]** DRDC Loading Dock. **[C]** Waiting Shed (remains). **[D]** Coal Depot (remains). **[E]** Fighting Cocks Inn. **[F]** Station Master's House & Station Building. **[G]** Enclosed Railway Corridor (remains). **[H]** The Lyric. **[I]** Undenominational Mission Hall. **[J]** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. **[K]** Board Room & Entrance Gate. **[L]** Pumping Station. **[M]** Cocks Memorial Homes. **[N]** Havelock Arms Hotel. **[O]** Killinghall Arms. **[P]** Co-op & Stable. **[Q]** Middleton Iron Works (remains). **[R]** Masonry Railway Bridge. **[S]** Metal Railway Bridge.

1.0 Introduction

A character appraisal assesses the **special interest** of an existing or proposed new conservation area that merits 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 heritage 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.

At the time of assessment (see section 1.2), there was no conservation area at Middleton St George to the north of the live railway line, although parts of the village to the south of the line were in the Middleton One Row Conservation Area[1]. Designation within the northern part of the settlement had previously been considered in July 2022, when Durham County Council suggested a conservation area boundary for the former railway corridor at Middleton St George (see chapter 5.0).

1.1 The Assessment Area



Location of assessment area (orange). Parish boundaries in dark blue, dashed (Map contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2024. Licence Number 100023728 2024.)

Middleton St George is a large village approximately five miles to the east of Darlington, County Durham, in the Northeast of England. The assessment area subject of this appraisal – detailed maps on previous page – was drawn up around the full extent of proposed designation suggested by Durham County Council in 2022 (see above), comprising the former route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), now a green corridor, as well as the wider setting. The assessment area is bordered by the A66 to the west up to the roundabout with the B6279 to the north, the live railway line to the south and its former junction with the S&DR to the east (see section 3.2). It also includes the northernmost tip of the existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary, as designated in 1972. Whilst its character is mainly rural, much of the village is of a suburban nature. The assessment area

[1] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf

currently lies in the Sadberge & Middleton St George ward, and in the Middleton St George, Morton Palms, Great Burdon and Sadberge parishes.

At the time of assessment (see section 1.2), there were seventeen conservation areas within Darlington Borough, with Middleton St George proposed to be the eighteenth such designation. Further information on our conservation areas can be found on the Council's website (see section 7.3).

1.2 The Appraisal

This document was drafted between March and June 2024 by the Darlington Borough Council Conservation Officer, Gaby Rose, providing a comprehensive assessment of Middleton St George and its setting as well as a proposed conservation area boundary line. **3 December 2024 represents the 'time of assessment' or 'time of review of the assessment area'**, coinciding with the Council's cabinet meeting when the draft document was first available to the public (see section 1.3).

The appraisal is an opportunity to assess 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 tries to cover the main aspects of Middleton St George and its setting, 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 assessment area at the time of review (see chapter 3.0)
- The condition of the assessment area, any problems or threats to it, and opportunities for beneficial change (see chapter 4.0)
- A proposed conservation area boundary at the time of assessment (see chapter 5.0)
- The finalised boundary line which will be adopted (see chapter 6.0)

The author would like to thank Ross Chisholm and Peter Bainbridge for their time and providing additional information during the draft stage of the conservation area appraisal, and Caroline Hardie for providing additional information when finalising the document.

1.3 Public Consultation on Draft Appraisal

At the cabinet meeting on 3 December 2024, Councillors approved the public consultation on the document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024).***

The draft appraisal was available for consultation on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage (see section 7.3) from 13 January to 24 February 2025, along with a feedback form to be completed. There was also a link to an online portal where the document could be viewed and commented on. Paper copies of the appraisal (read only) and feedback form were available at the Town Hall (by appointment only) and at the Crown Street and Cockerton libraries. The public consultation was advertised

on the Darlington Borough Council website[2] and Facebook page. Site notices were hung in various locations of the proposed new conservation area boundary. In addition, the Council directly notified individuals, groups and organisations that were likely to have a particular interest in the Middleton St George Conservation Area. At the request of the Middleton St George Parish Council, the Conservation Officer gave a presentation on the proposed new conservation area at the Middleton St George Women's Institute on 20 January 2025 (see appendix 1).

The author would like to thank Middleton St George Parish Council for advertising the public consultation of the draft appraisal on their website and Facebook page.

Following the consultation period, a summary of all the comments received was available on the Council's Conservation Areas webpage from 26 February until DATE.

The draft appraisal was then reassessed and amended in light of the feedback received (see appendix 2). Various other amendments were made throughout the document when finalising the appraisal, to provide more clarity, etc.

1.4 Adoption of Appraisal

The revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025*** will be put to Councillors at the Cabinet meeting on 6 May 2025 and at the Council meeting on 15 May 2025 to seek formal adoption of the appraisal and designation of the Conservation Area (see chapter 6.0). Please note that the assessment area and time of review (see sections 1.1 & 1.2) have remained unchanged.

Following the adoption of the appraisal and designation of the Conservation Area, the document will be edited one more time to reflect its adopted status [only the text highlighted in yellow will be amended], and its title changed to ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George Conservation Area Appraisal. Adopted document. May 2025.*** Notice of the newly designated boundary will be made to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Historic England, and be published in the London Gazette and at least one local newspaper[3].

[2] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/consultations/current-consultations/?id=68

[3] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sections 70 (5) & (8)

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[4]. 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*[5]. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance[6], 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*[7] is compliant with the NPPF. At the time of review, the following policies applied to the Middleton St George assessment area – please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording and the Policies Map identifying the relevant locations:

Policy SH 1 Settlement Hierarchy (2) Service Villages. Will be maintained as villages that offer a range of facilities and services, where a level of development will meet local needs and facilitate economic diversification of rural areas. Development should safeguard and reinforce the distinctive character of each settlement and not detract from their landscape setting.

Policy H 1 Housing Requirement – Middleton St George: 860 units. Housing will be delivered to meet a minimum requirement of dwellings per annum. It is anticipated that the sites will be delivered in accordance with the housing trajectory which indicates that a continuous five-year supply of housing will be maintained throughout the plan period.

Policy H 2 Housing Allocations. The land to the south and west of Station Road (plot 99, Maxgate Farm) is allocated for housing development to help meet the requirement set out in Policy H 1.

Policy H 3 Development Limits. Development within the limits identified on the Policies Map will be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant national and local policies.

Policy H 5 Affordable Housing – affordable requirement: 20% (of which 50% affordable rent and 50% affordable home ownership). In order to meet the needs of people who are not able to access the general housing market, the provision of affordable housing will be expected in residential development schemes of 10 or more dwellings.

4 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 7 & 8
5 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, page 73
6 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 202
7 Darlington Borough Council 2022

Policy ENV 2 Stockton and Darlington Railway. Proposals that conserve and enhance elements which contribute to the significance of the S&DR and its setting will be supported. Proposals will be supported where they include measures that preserve any physical remains along the route, include site interpretation and, where appropriate, reinstate a legible route where those remains no longer exist.

Policy ENV 3 Local Landscape Character. The character and local distinctiveness of […] villages and rural area will be protected and improved by (A.1) retaining the openness and green infrastructure functions of rural gaps, and (B.2) retaining and enhancing the length, continuity, biodiversity, amenity and heritage value of the **historic route of the Darlington/Middleton St George/A66/A67/Stockton Corridor**.

Policy ENV 4 Green and Blue Infrastructure. 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 ENV 6 Local Green Space. Development will not be permitted within a Local Green Space, designated either within the Darlington Borough Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan, unless it is consistent with the National Policy approach for Green Belts. Sites LGS16 (Middleton St George Playing Field) and LSG17 (Water Park, Middleton St George) are identified within the assessment area.

Policy ENV 7 Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development: (D.ii) Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites (the Whinnies). Development likely to result in significant harm should be avoided by being relocated to an alternative site of less harmful impacts. Where this is not possible, and it is demonstrated development is required in that location, it will only be permitted if the significant harm can be overcome by adequate mitigation or, as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures.

In addition, if the appraisal results in conservation area designation, the following policies will also apply – please refer to the Local Plan for the full wording:

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.

The *Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan (2022-2036)*[8] is compliant with the Darlington Local Plan and was 'made' (adopted) by Darlington Borough Council in line with the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The plan area comprises of the parish of Middleton St George except for land at Teesside International Airport, covering the central, southern and eastern parts of the assessment area. Decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Objective 1 (quality of life) sets out that new development should maintain and enhance local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the built, historic and natural environment. The following policies are relevant to the historical environment – please refer to the Neighbourhood Plan for the full wording:

Policy MSG1: Sustainable development (d) It will be necessary to demonstrate how development would protect or enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings.

Policy MSG2: Design (c) Development will be supported where it conserves and, where possible, enhances the significance of heritage assets and their setting.

Policy MSG3: Embedding energy efficiency and renewable energy (f) Consideration should be given to how development reduces energy demands of historic buildings, subject to compliance with other relevant policies on historic assets.

Policy MSG4: Green Infrastructure. New development should seek to protect and, where practical, improve and extend green infrastructure of the historic route of the Stockton Darlington Railway.

Policy MSG8: Heritage assets. Where development may impact on a heritage asset, applicants should provide information that describes the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. In the determination of development proposals: (a) Great weight will be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any harm or loss to its significance will require clear and convincing justification in accordance with national policy. (b) A balanced judgment will be required to fully consider the effects of any development proposals affecting a non-designated heritage asset, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy MSG13: Tourism and leisure (a) Development will be supported where the siting, scale, materials and design respect the character of the surrounding area and conserve and, where possible, enhance heritage assets and their setting.

[8] Middleton St George Parish Council 2022

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[9] 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[10]. The courts have held it legitimate to include within a conservation area the setting of buildings that form the heart of that area[11]. Examples of types of special architectural and historic interest which justify designation include areas[12]:

- 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 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[13]. 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**

[9] Darlington Borough Council 2022
[10] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 204
[11] Historic England 2017b, page 4
[12] Historic England 2019, page 27
[13] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 69

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[14] as well as the character or appearance of our conservation areas[15]. 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[16]. 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 environment and make this information publicly available[17]. The *Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George Conservation Area Appraisal* provides such assessment (see chapter 3.0) and 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[18]. If a conservation area is considered to be 'at risk', the Council will liaise with Historic England. If confirmed to be in poor condition, the area will be put on the national Heritage at Risk Register[19]. 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:

14 Darlington Borough Council 2022, paragraph 9.1.18
15 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72
16 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraph 219
17 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024, paragraphs 205-206
18 Historic England 2019, page 29
19 Available on Historic England's website

- 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
- 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 amened) 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[20] – 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 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

At the time of review, the northernmost tip of the Middleton One Row Conservation Area[21], as designated in 1972, was included within the assessment area.

[20] The Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012, section 15
[21] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf

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[22]:

- **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[23].

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[24]:

- 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

22 English Heritage 2008, page 27ff
23 English Heritage 2008, page 14
24 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 the area as a whole has a particular special interest

3.1 Summary of Special Interest

At the time of assessment, the proposed Middleton St George Conservation Area (see section 5.1) comprised the following elements of special interest, in chronological order:

Roman route: Cade's Road was supposedly built by the Romans between 138 and 161 AD. It continued to be an important route northward until the fifteenth century and marked the parish boundary between Middleton St George and Dinsdale until January 2016. Today, the line of the former route is still retained in boundary lines, the northern stretch of Station Road, and the full length of Sadberge Road.

The Cocks family: In the nineteenth century, the Cocks were the last holders of the manor of Middleton St George, which had been passed down through various families from the mid-twelfth century on. Their name appears in 'Fighting Cocks' (see below) and 'Cocks Memorial Homes'. The latter are alms-houses that were constructed in an Arts and Crafts style from money that Henry Cocks, the final owner of the manor, had left behind on his death in 1894. Henry Cocks also built the Fighting Cocks Inn in 1832-4, which remained in his ownership until he died.

Fighting Cocks: It is plausible that 'Fighting Cocks' had first been applied to the area around the ancient road junction where the lane from Darlington joined the former Roman route sometime between 1801 – i.e. the year that the Cocks family inherited the manor – and 1822/3 – i.e. the survey of the proposed Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)[25]. The name also appears in Fighting Cocks Inn, Fighting Cocks Mill, Fighting Cocks Station, Fighting Cocks Branch, and had been applied as far south as the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs (see below). Today, the name is still used for the area at the northern road junction. Here the grouping of the former inn, station buildings, railway corridor, and the remains of the coal depot and later goods station presents an important ensemble associated with its origins in the pioneering days of the railway[26] (see below). Notable buildings at Fighting Cocks are faced in buff-coloured Pease brick, which was manufactured by the company of Darlington-

[25] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[26] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 2 & 30

born Joseph Pease, son of S&DR founder Edward Pease[27], and had become popular for the use on public buildings by the 1860s[28].

Stockton & Darlington Railway: The birth of the village of Middleton St George was triggered by the opening of the S&DR on 27 September 1825, the world's first public railway on which a locomotive hauled passengers. The original 26-mile line, which passed to the north of the Fighting Cocks road junction, is now regarded as the prototype for all modern railways[29]. In 1887, the stretch between Albert Hill Junction (Darlington) and Oak Tree Junction (Middleton St George) was bypassed by a new passenger line, turning the original route of the S&DR into the Fighting Cocks Branch. It mainly concentrated on transporting freight until 1988, when the branch line was shut down. Today, the former track bed and railway-associated earthworks survive as a lush green corridor which is of high public/communal value.

Part of original mineral network along S&DR: In order to deliver the region's natural produce from mines, quarries and lime kilns for local sale or export efficiently, the S&DR developed a system of depots along the mainline (as well as at the termini of the branch lines) where freight could be weighed, sorted, stored and sold[30]. The original coal depot at Middleton St George was the first structure the S&DR built at Fighting Cocks, shortly after the opening of the railway in 1825. Evidence of it survives in the form of the remains of possibly original boundary walling and later-phase coal cells. The surviving loading platform and crane base are linked to the later operation of the site as a goods station.

Early railway station: One of the many ways the S&DR influenced the development of the worldwide railway network was in the provision of station facilities[31]. Whilst only fragments of walling of the original Railway Lodge of 1830/1 survive in the rebuilt station building, it is significant that Fighting Cocks, being not much more than a road junction in a rural setting at the time, did have a station building that dealt with passengers, parcels, coal, etc.

Fighting Cocks Reservoirs: This site is directly linked to the nineteenth-century growth of the Teesside towns and industries, having supplied Stockton, Middlesbrough and Yarm with water. The first basin was constructed in 1852, extracting water from the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage (1850) on Coniscliffe Road, which is now a scheduled monument, before the historical village of Middleton St George had taken its shape yet. It was the second service reservoir constructed to serve the Tees Cottage Waterworks and is now the only one that still survives within Darlington Borough. Whilst many villages depended on pumped water until well into the twentieth century, Fighting Cocks was already connected to piped water in 1853. Today, the site includes the water park (comprising the three slightly later service reservoirs), Parish Council's meeting room (a small Victorian Board Room building),

27 http://www.solwaypast.co.uk/index.php/bricks/2-uncategorised/30-h-co-brick
28 Cookson (ed) 2003, page 129
29 Flynn 1987, pages 39-40
30 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 5
31 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 1

Community Centre (the former Pumping Station, built in a modernist style) with outdoor sports court (the original basin), and a nature trail along the bottom of the northwestern reservoir embankment. The site has a distinct character and is of high public/communal value.

Industrial village: Whilst Fighting Cocks was an original S&DR stopping point (1825) and had an early passenger station building (1830/1), it was not until the Middleton Iron Works had set up near the southern road junction in 1864 that the village began to take its shape. Middleton St George would not be the same today without the S&DR that enabled the establishment of the iron works (with direct rail access) which, in turn, triggered the development of the historical settlement. The result was a dispersed linear village with two centres, one at each road junction, setting it apart from the other settlements that had formed along the route of the (former) S&DR – New Shildon, Middlesbrough, Hopetown, Eaglescliffe and Busselton[32] – which were generally more compact and/or clustered in planform. The rows of workers houses and commercial properties around the Square (southern road junction) that were constructed to accommodate and serve the large workforce still line the main roads. Now that the industries have completely gone, these buildings are the most prominent survivors/reminders of the village's industrial past.

Details of the above are provided in the following sections.

3.2 Layout, Planform and Setting

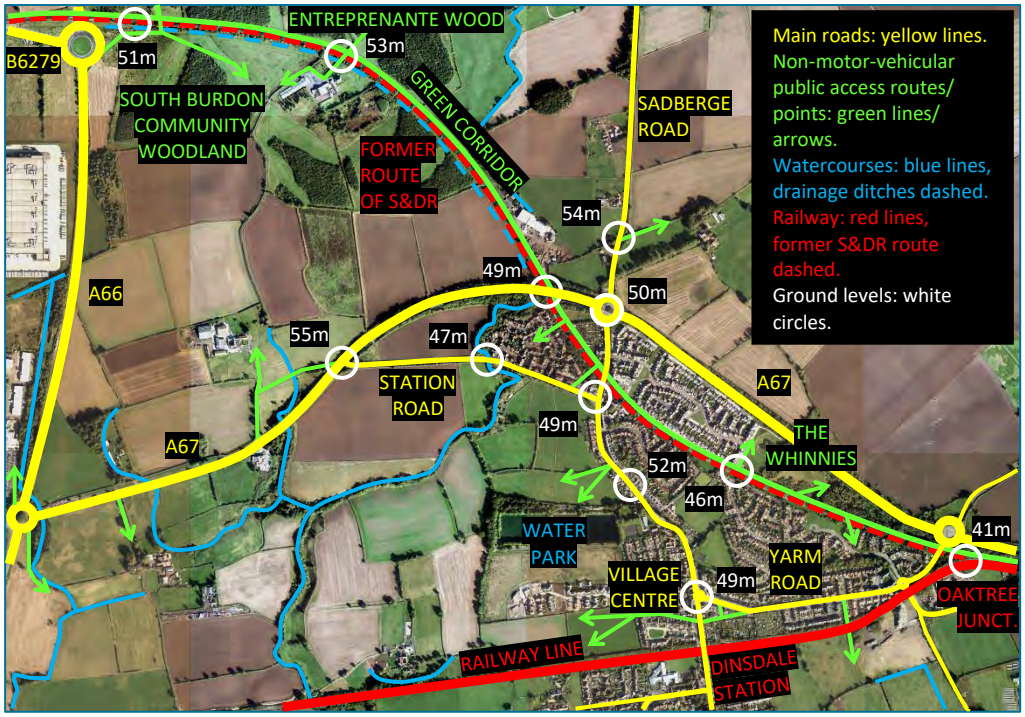
This section provides some of the evidential value (i.e. the existing layout, etc.) of the assessment area at the time of review, as well as some of its historical value (i.e. former building locations).

Middleton St George lies to the east of Darlington, just beyond the outer ring road (A66). The assessment area comprises a plateau-like area to the north above the steep banks of the river Tees, with a generally flat or very gently undulating topography[33]. The underlying bedrock is mainly made of the Sherwood sandstone group overlaid by glacial till, although there are also pockets containing clay and silt sediments. To the west of the village is an area of calcareous mudstone bedrock with superficial glaciofluvial sand and gravel deposits[34].

Its setting of the village is largely agricultural land – both arable and pastoral – with isolated farmsteads. The fields are of medium size, irregularly shaped and often lined by hedges, shrubs and/or trees. It also includes three nature reserves – the Whinnies, Entreprenante Wood and South Burdon Community Woodland – as well as the Middleton St George Water Park comprising three former service reservoir basins. There is a good network of public rights of way in the countryside, with several of them originating in the village[35]. A series of minor streams crosses through fields or defines their boundaries, particularly in the western part of the assessment area. The remains of historical drainage ditches can be found along the southern side of the

[32] Hardie, C. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 20 February
[33] Land Use Consultants 2015, pages 45 & 47
[34] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-stones-england
[35] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/rights-of-way/where-are-rights-of-way/

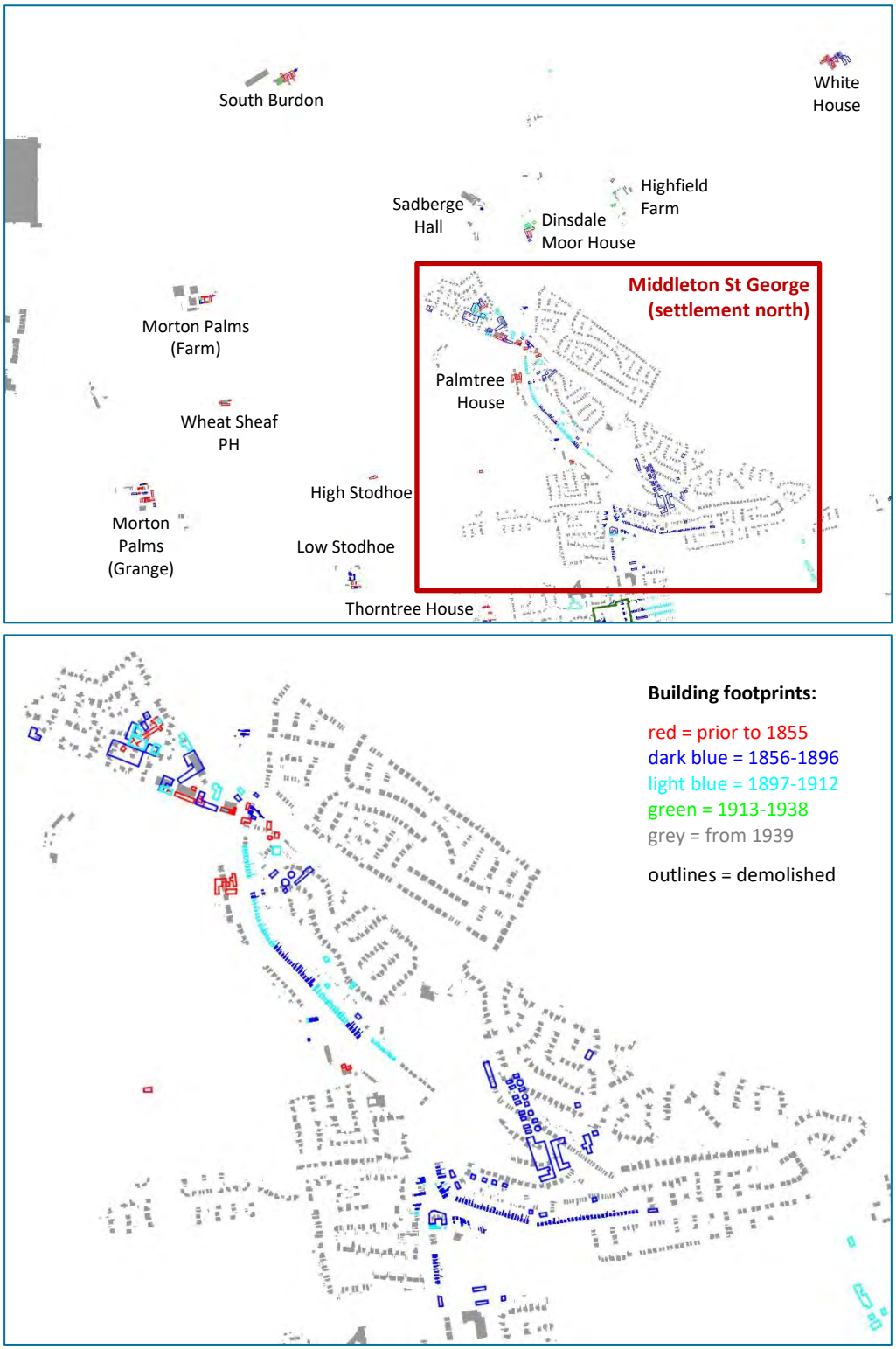
former route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) between the A66 and A67, which is now a bridleway and part of National Cycle Route 14 connecting Darlington with South Shields.



Layout of Middleton St George assessment area at time of review. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The A66 frames the western side of the assessment area, confining the outskirts of Darlington, with the B6279 (Tornado Way) roundabout being in the northwestern corner of the area. The A67 sweeps to the north of the village of Middleton St George linking Yarm and Darlington. Both are busy main roads emitting an almost constant noise level that can be heard from a distance. This is most noticeable in tranquil areas just outside the village, such as at the water park and the bridleway mentioned above, the latter passing under the A67 through a short concrete tunnel in an embankment that carries the road. A live railway line frames the southern side of the assessment area, connecting Bank Top (Darlington) and Saltburn via Middlesborough, with (the misleadingly named) Dinsdale Station located on the eastern side of the main road (Middleton Lane). The eastern-most point of the area is the former location of Oaktree Junction, where the railway line from Bank Top used to join the route of the S&DR, with the former track bed to the (north)west of the historic junction now being part of National Cycle Route 14.

A spine road meanders through the length of the village/assessment area in a roughly north-south direction. To the north of the railway station is the village centre around a three-road junction, historically known as the Square, with Yarm Road heading east and eventually exiting the settlement. At this junction, one part of the spine road (Middleton Lane) crosses the railway line into the southern part of Middleton St George which is mostly outside the assessment area. The other part (Station Road) heads to the north of the village where there is another three-road junction, known as Fighting Cocks. Whilst the main road turns west to Darlington, the spine road continues north (Sadberge Road), with both shortly exiting the village.



Planform – map regression. *Top:* Assessment area. (Former) farmsteads are annotated. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary line in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north. (Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The line of the historic S&DR used to pass to the north of the village on a gentle curve, with a level crossing over Sadberge Road, but the rails are long gone. The former track bed has however been retained as a green corridor[36], including a stretch of National Cycle Route 14 and, to the west of Sadberge Road, there is also a bridleway. The disused railway corridor leads from what used to be Oaktree Junction

[36] Also see Darlington Policies Map 'Key Diagram' of *Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036*

at the eastern end of the village to the A66/B6279 roundabout, and beyond to Darlington North Road outside the assessment area. In Middleton St George, the land rises steadily from 41m at the former junction to around 49m at the northern and northwestern ends of the settlement. There are however variations around the former S&DR route which mostly lies in cutting but is embanked when approaching the location of Oaktree Junction. Yarm Road cuts through this embankment. As the green corridor exits the village in a northwestern direction, the ground levels remain fairly constant, with the highest point being 53m near the entrance to Entreprenante Wood. The levels then drop down to 51m[37] just before the bridleway slopes up on a modern embankment to cross the A66 over a green metal bridge to the north of the B6279 roundabout.

The live railway line is embanked at the former Oaktree Junction, and in cutting at Dinsdale Station and to the west. There are two original railway bridges between the station and former junction. The road bridge over the line carrying Middleton Lane is a modern replacement. To the west of the station there is another minor road bridge, as well as two level crossings with public footpaths crossing the live line.

The map regression (above) shows the northern part of the village of Middleton St George and its surrounding farmsteads. Most of the latter have pre-1855 origins (red building footprints). Historical rows of houses still line the main roads of the village (now Station Road, Middleton Lane and Yarm Road). There used to be more loosely configured industrial sites away from the main roads, but these have all been demolished. Since the mid-1990s, considerable amounts of housing development (grey footprints) have not only increased the size of the village significantly but also changed it from a dispersed linear layout into a suburban sprawl.

3.3 Historical Development

This section describes the historical value of the assessment area using information retrieved from secondary sources (see chapter 7.0). Surviving structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

Early human activity involved the construction and use of what is now known as Cade's Road from the Humber Estuary northwards to the River Tyne by the Romans, which is believed to have been built between 138 and 161 AD. The road crossed the river Tees emerging up the steep bank just west of what would become the village of Middleton One Row. It is conceivable that there would have been a Roman control point at such a commanding position. The route then headed north into the assessment area, following boundary lines and then the northern-most stretch of today's Station Road and the full length of Sadberge Road, and beyond to Sedgefield (outside the assessment area) where there was a Roman settlement[38] [39].

[37] https://en-gb.topographic-map.com/map-kb57/England/

[38] https://www.roman-britain.co.uk/places/cades-road/

[39] The Durham County Council Historic Environment Record entry for H3821 : Roman Road, Cade's Road, Margary RR80a, Tees crossing to Wear Crossing states that *[w]hile some have difficulty in accepting the Pountey's Bridge crossing as a Roman route through lack of evidence of Roman construction* – in 1996, the remains of an abutment and pier of a stone bridge construction including iron cramps of unknown origin were recorded by divers of the Northern Archaeological Group in the Tees at Middleton One Row, in alignment with Church Lane (Source S22267) – *it remains that Pountey's Bridge is the only evidence of a historic river crossing in this area. In addition, the clear alignment of the Roman road on the Yorkshire side is towards Pountey's Bridge.*

It is possible that the church of St George, which lies around two miles to the southeast outside the assessment area, marks an Anglo-Saxon site. A pre-Conquest sundial used to be incorporated in the former outer chancel wall until its Victorian rebuilding when it was relocated to the newly constructed church at Middleton One Row. Moreover, a historical record suggests an earlier dedication to Saint Gregory, which would coincide with time of the saint's popularity[40].

Being located to the north of the river Tees, Middleton St George was not subject to the Domesday survey of 1086, a record made at the behest of King William I of the value and extent of each settlement within his recently conquered realm. This remote area was considered a buffer zone against the inroads of the Scots, so viceregal powers had been conferred to the bishops of Durham, which gave them the authority to levy taxes, coin money, grant markets and fairs, and raise an army[41]. Nevertheless, the Wapentake of Sadberge, which Middleton St George lay in, was still under the jurisdiction of the king. This changed in 1189 when Richard I (the Lionheart) sold it to the bishop of Durham, Hugh Puiset, to help finance his crusades.

The first occurrence of the parish of Middleton St George, which was in two moieties (parts), is in the return of 1166. One moiety was the manor of **Over Middleton (Middleton One Row)** (partially within the assessment area), which lay to the east of the former Roman road, held by William son of Siward who was also lord of the neighbouring Dinsdale manor (partially within the assessment area) to the west of Cade's Road. The other was the manor of **Nether or Low Middleton (Middleton St George)** (also partially within the assessment area) to the east and southeast comprising two unequal moieties held by Roland and Godfrey Baard. In 1416, John Killinghall held the main, 'Roland Baard' portion of the manor of Low Middleton in socage, i.e. by payment of rent to the bishop. In 1569, it was sold by the Killinghall family to Ralph Tailbois who sold it to the Johnson family in 1573. After other changes in ownership, it passed back into the Killinghall family in c.1606, when the former two moieties of the manor of Low Middleton were united as one estate, albeit without the West Hartburn land (see below). At John Killinghall's death in 1762, he passed it on to his cousin William Pemberton whose son bequeathed it to his maternal aunts, Elizabeth and Sally Cocks of Plymouth Dock, on his death in 1801. The Cocks moved here to live on the estate and were succeeded by their brother Elisha. His son Henry inherited the estate in 1833 and held it until 1895. The tithe entries show that by 1837 the parish of Middleton St George had split into nine ownerships, with Henry Cocks owning a third of land[42] [43].

A medieval manor was a self-contained administrative unit granted by the sovereign to a nobleman (lord) in exchange for military and other forms of service. It typically consisted of a manor house, village, church, mill, as well as arable and common lands. Despite its potentially earlier origins mentioned above, the present building of the church of St George[44] originates from the thirteenth century, although the font basin is from c.1160, when the Baards were first recorded to hold the manor. The church lies in a very prominent location on raised ground overlooking a large dip in the landscape including the manor house and (now deserted) village of Low Middleton, which are around half a mile to the south of it, near the banks of the river

[40] Pallister 2007a, pages 22-24 & 42
[41] Flynn 1987, page 15
[42] https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/durham/vol3/pp293-299#fnn11 `
[43] Pallister 2007a, pages 25-26, 32-34, 40, 52-53, 70, 109 & 115
[44] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1299460

Tees. The manor house was Low Middleton Hall[45], the present building first constructed by Cuthbert Johnson in 1587, replacing a medieval manor house on or near the site. The house has a keystone over the former main entrance bearing the Killinghall coat of arms and the date of 1670 when the house was remodelled and re-fronted, and a rainwater head dated 1721 commemorating Robert and Jane Killinghall[46]. In 1963, earthworks of the medieval village were still visible and thought to represent two or three toft enclosures in a row[47]. Today only a longitudinal, indented area to the northeast of Low Middleton Hall can be seen on LiDAR imagery[48] suggesting the location of the former village.

A reconstructed map of the parish of Middleton St George at c.1200 (not reproduced here) shows the manor of Over Middleton stretching from the river Tees northwards along the eastern side of the former Roman road (apart from a minor deviation), the manor of Low Middleton to the southeast and West Hartburn to the east. The latter was a subordinate unit of the manor of Low Middleton and also split into the two moieties. The map indicates the village locations of Low Middleton, Over Middleton (now Middleton One Row) and West Hartburn, all outside the assessment area. Although the two manors were quite separate, their contiguous location in the parish led to a good deal of cross leasing of lands. Moreover, tenants of Over Middleton were entitled to use land at Stodhoe (within the assessment area) in the neighbouring parish of Dinsdale, which may have already been a separate, self-contained farmstead at the time[49].

Physical evidence of early habitation closest to the assessment area are the now deserted medieval village of West Hartburn[50] to the east of the present settlement of Middleton St George, and Middleton One Row to the south. Remains of West Hartburn are visible as earthworks, surrounded by remnants of a ridge-and-furrow field system. Middleton One Row still retains the mound of a Norman motte-and-bailey defensive castle[51], possibly built by William son of Siward who held the manors of Over Middleton and Dinsdale in the mid-twelfth century, overlooking the bridge across the river Tees, which was still part of a main route (Cade's Road) northwards and an important point of entry into the bishopric until the fifteenth century[52]. Judging from the partial survival of a ridge-and-furrow field system in the eastern part of Middleton One Row behind the old houses facing south to the river[53], the existing settlement appears to directly overlie the medieval village.

Whilst there is no clear evidence of early settlements in the assessment area, the 'Keys to the Past' website, a basic version of the historic environment records for County Durham and Northumberland, has entries of crop marks that may indicate buried remains of Roman, Iron Age and even Neolithic or Bronze Age structures within the area, most of them to the west of the former Roman road. In addition, LiDAR imagery[54] shows earthworks of ridge-and-furrow field systems indicating medieval farming activities. Prominent examples survive in fields that have not been overploughed, such near the A67/Sadberge Road roundabout.

45 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1185935
46 Ryder 2016, pages 1, 5-6 & 15-16
47 Durham County Council Historic Environment Record: DCC PRN H7818
48 https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=NZ3658810981
49 Pallister 2007a, pages 26, 29, 38, 40 & 56
50 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011257
51 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011072
52 Pallister 2007a, pages 39 & 47-48
53 https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=NZ3523012415
54 https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map?ref=NZ3420014392

Over the centuries, changes in agrarian practises contributed to the undermining of the feudal system and its manorial structure. By c.1630, all the formerly open arable fields of the parish had been enclosed and converted from growing corn to mainly cattle grazing; only in the second half of the eighteenth century would the balance between cattle and corn become more even, due to the need to feed the rapidly growing urban populations. **Enclosure** often contributed to depopulation and desertion of villages, such as those at Low Middleton and West Hartburn, which had been abandoned around 1550. At Middleton One Row, the substantial crofts (strips of land) behind each tenement must have contributed significantly to the livelihood of the tenants, making it less necessary from them to move out to the new self-contained farms that had been established with enclosure. This new pattern of dispersed farmsteads is still very prominent within the assessment area. White House Farm, in the northeast corner of the assessment area, is an early example of the move out of West Hartburn village into the new farms created with enclosure.

The hearth tax return of 1666 for the parish shows that William Killinghall, lord of the manor of Low Middleton, possessed the grandest house (Low Middleton Hall) with ten hearths, and that the lord of the manor of Over Middleton, James Askew, 'only' had five. Although the loss of the feudal element in their role as lords of the manor had an impact on the Killinghalls, they remained the major landowner in the parish and retained a position of authority as well as the patronage of the church including a share of the tithes. In contrast, the lords of the manor of Over Middleton, who never had a part in the control of the church, had lost far more power when the medieval manor was transformed into commercial farms and estates. Little more than the title remained, and that seems to have disappeared after 1720.

By 1700, Middleton One Row was the only substantial assemblage of buildings in Middleton St George parish, although a few cottages had sprung up at Oak Tree, to the east outside the assessment area; it would become a sizeable hamlet in the second half of the eighteenth century[55].

A map of John Rontree's Farm[56] (not reproduced here), which was surveyed as part of the Killinghall estate in 1757[57], depicts the northern road junction in the location of the present village of Middleton St George, with the routes going north, south and west, like today. Only four structures are shown on the map; none of them have survived. On the north side of the junction was a small single-storey structure next to an access point to a footpath through Mr Rontree's fields to the west of Sadberge Road, in Dinsdale parish. Some distance to the north, between the footpath and road, was what would become known as Dinsdale Moor House, presumably Mr Rontree's home, judging from its detailed depiction. To the south of the junction was Palmtree House, also along the western side of the road (now Station Road). Further to the south along the eastern side of the road was the Killinghall farm, in Middleton St George parish.

In 1789, a sulphurous spring was discovered about half a mile to the west of Middleton One Row, in Dinsdale parish outside the assessment area, marking the birth of the Dinsdale Spa. When in 1797 better facilities were provided, visitors started arriving from a wider area. This also had an increasing impact on Middleton St George parish. For example, the church of St George was partially rebuilt in 1805 to accommodate the growing numbers of residents and spa visitors. By 1828, three

55 Pallister 2007a, pages 56-58, 62-63, 70, 79, 83, 87, 127 & 140
56 https://archiveshop.northyorks.gov.uk/historic-maps/ZDG-A-IV1-9-2.html
57 Pallister 2007a, pages 7, 79 & 81

quarters of Middleton One Row had been rebuilt and new houses constructed so that the village could provide improved and increased visitor accommodation. A year later, a large hotel opened adjacent to the spa[58]; this had been designed by architect Ignatius Bonomi[59], who had conceived the iconic Skerne Bridge in Darlington for the **Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)** just a few years earlier.

In 1818, Edward Pease, a Quaker and retired wool merchant from Darlington who would later become known as the 'father of the railways', and a group of businessmen formed the S&DR company[60]. In May 1821, a new committee was formed with Reverend William Addison Fountaine, rector of Middleton St George since 1798, being one of the members. The reverend owned Forster Field Farm, which partially lay on the southeastern fringe of the assessment area. He would later profit significantly from his railway interests, enabling him to expand his estate so that he would become the second most extensive landowner in the parish, also owning White House Farm in the northeastern corner of the assessment area[61].

A survey map of 1822/3 for the proposed route of the railway line (not reproduced here) mainly shows dispersed 'buildings' within the assessment area, which are also identified on the map regression (see section 3.2): Ripon House (later South Burdon Farm), Morton Palms (farm), Wheat Sheaf (inn), Morton (Palms Grange – here three buildings are depicted, so this may have been a small hamlet by that time) and Stodda (High Stodhoe Farm, no longer extant). In the location of the present village of Middleton St George, Palmtree House (farm) and Dinsdale Moor House (farm) are the only buildings shown. Besides the northern road junction there is also a southern three-road junction in the location of the present village-centre roundabout, with the main route turning east. On the map, the northern road junction is marked as **'Fighting Cocks'**. Whilst the name may be associated with the now illegal sport of cock fighting, which was popular in the area from at least the eighteenth century[62], there is no evidence for this[63]. It is plausible that it rather refers to the major landowning Cocks family who inherited the manor in 1801 (see above).

The 1822/3 map also shows that the originally proposed route of the S&DR by Welsh engineer George Overton in 1821 would have bypassed Fighting Cocks some distance to the south, along the fringe of the assessment area. This proposal was however superseded by the new route put forward by English engineer George Stephenson in 1823 which was eventually built, passing just north of the Fighting Cocks road junction. The land that the new railway would go through in the eastern half of the assessment area belonged to Elisha Cocks (Dinsdale Moor House and Palmtree farms) and Revered W A Fountaine (Forster Field Farm)[64] [65].

The S&DR opened on 27 September 1825, with the 26-mile main line running from the coal mines near Witton Park to the river Tees at Stockton, via Darlington and Yarm where there were two branch lines[66]. Early stopping places of the S&DR were mostly where the line crossed existing roads, such as at Fighting Cocks, although

58 Pallister 2007a, pages 88-89, 112 & 120
59 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1185930
60 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 8
61 Pallister 2007a, pages 109-110, 112-113, 115 & 121
62 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, p. 3, 18-19
63 Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
64 Pallister 2007a, page 116 Fig.21
65 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, p. 3 & 42
66 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, page 5

there were initially no platform or station facilities[67]. In the first five years of railway use, the level crossing over Sadberge Road was a simple affair with the sleepers set into the ground to avoid obstructing road users. On approaching, the driver would sound a horn to warn traffic of the oncoming train[68].

After the railway had opened, the first development at Fighting Cocks provided by the S&DR was a [D] Coal Depot to the south of the line, as approved in the Committee's meeting of October 1825. Following another S&DR meeting in May 1827, a 'drop' was to be added. Thus, it seems that the original depot was developed in two stages: the first was a railway siding with an unloading area where coal would be shovelled from waggons into sacks for landsale (local sale), and the second was a raised rail track over cells where coal and other minerals could be dropped from bottom-opening waggons more efficiently. In the year 1829-30, over a thousand tons of coal and another thousand of lime and stones were delivered to the depot[69].

Remains of possibly original (1825) boundary walling of the **[D]** Coal Depot constructed in squared sandstone. *Left:* View looking north with Sadberge Road to the right. The end of the wall has been damaged, possibly by a wagon[70]. *Right:* View from the disused railway corridor looking south. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

The location of the [D] Coal Depot was significant, being at the long-standing junction of the former Roman Road and the lane to Darlington. Moreover, it was just over two miles from the expanding Dinsdale Spa. Passenger coaches brought visitors along the railway to Fighting Cocks for the spa and guest accommodation at Dinsdale and Middleton One Row. In 1828 two coaches travelled daily in each direction. However, the spa and depot not only attracted passengers, depot workers and coal merchants to Fighting Cocks, but also farmers, builders and other tradespeople. Thus, there was a demand for more facilities in this location.

Consequently, the minutes of a S&DR meeting in April 1830 ordered the construction of a *'Cottage for the accommodation of Passengers and Parcels and the sale of Coals Lime etc'*. By the end of 1830 or early 1831, the first station building at Fighting Cocks, known as Railway Lodge, was completed to the east of Sadberge Road and south of the railway track. At that time, the station was in the same management as the [D] Coal Depot across the road. In December 1831, it was occupied by John Clayton and Elizabeth Bedford. John had earlier (1829) held the tenancy of the S&DR Company brewery at Darlington. He asked the S&DR in late 1830 if he could take over the new station being built at Fighting Cocks after losing his job at the brewery.

67 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Historical Background' & map XXVIII
68 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 18
69 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 8
70 Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January

One of the tasks he would do at the station was selling coals from the depot. By 1832, John had given up his occupation as a coal dealer. At the end of 1839, the S&DR Company proposed to have the running of the depot being handed over to a third party, marking a departure of the combined depot/station functions[71].

In June 1832, Henry Cocks inherited the Low Middleton estate of his father Elisha (see above). This included Palmtree House Farm and the plot to the north of the road junction (which was part of Dinsdale Moor House Farm) upon which he had the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn constructed shortly. It seems probable that the inn opened at some point between 1832 (inheritance of the manor) and May 1834 when it was listed in the trade directory under the management of Mary Woodhouse, wife of William, a farmer, who lived at Palmtree House. It is conceivable that its construction was triggered by the new railway station congregating potential customers in this location. The change from horse-drawn coaches along the railway track (there was a lack of locomotives in the beginning) to steam-hauled passenger trains and the S&DR Company taking all traffic into their own hands (rather than contracting it out) from 1833 on[72] [73] may have also contributed to its construction. Prior to the opening of the inn, William Woodhouse had already provided refreshments to the public since 1828 from his home at Palmtree House. Such 'open kitchen' operations were the origin of many public houses, particularly in rural areas[74].

Former **[E]** Fighting Cocks Inn looking northwest, with remnant of the **[D]** Coal Depot's southern boundary wall just visible in the background to the far right/north along Sadberge Road. The original inn comprises the three bays on the right-hand return, facing the station. It is possible that it was only single storey, as suggested by the right/northern-most bay, which seems to be original. The additional bays and lower wing facing the road junction (the latter's historical stable, cart house and hayloft functions no longer readable) are later extensions (see below). The large double window on the ground floor with leaded coloured glazing (partially concealed behind the telegraph pole) and porch are early-twentieth century insertions. The window opening above and the two small windows on the right-hand return are later replacements of former sashes[75]. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

The [E] Fighting Cocks Inn was not just used by workers at the [D] Coal Depot. Passenger coaches, collecting and dropping off travellers, and coal trains stopped here in such numbers that a watchman was told to *'put an end to such loose practices'*. Consequently, Fighting Cocks became a regular stop[76]. In 1840, the S&DR

71 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 8-9 & 15
72 Pallister 2007a, page 125
73 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 5
74 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 13-17
75 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 21 & 27-29
76 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 21

made an agreement with Michael Walton the landlord of the inn which bound him to transport all first-class passengers between the railway and Dinsdale Spa[77].

The 1839 plan drawing of the Fighting Cocks Station area by T Dixon for the S&DR[78] (not reproduced here) shows the [D] Coal Depot consisting of six cells with a track over served by a siding branching off to the southeast. Across the main line is a small unknown building, approximately in the location of the later [B] DRDC Loading Dock (see below), and a milestone marking the eight-mile point on the opposite side of Sadberge Road; both are no longer extant. To the south of the depot is the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn fronting onto Sadberge Road, drawing its trade from the growing railway operation at the station (Railway Lodge). Further to the east is a mill with circular planform (a windmill) and a building of square footprint right next to it, both also served by a siding coming from the main railway line and no longer extant.

By 1839, between twenty and fifty coal trains were passing through Fighting Cocks on their way to Stockton each day[79]. In April 1840, the average number of tickets sold per day to departing travellers at the station was 32. In February-March 1841, when there were three passenger trains a day in each direction, the average was just fifteen. Similar numbers of passengers would arrive at the station. This would suggest that the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn depended quite significantly for its trade on users of and workers at the [D] Coal Depot and some nearby businesses, besides the modest number of travellers[80]. In November 1846, the station was recorded as Middleton and Dinsdale, named after the two nearest villages[81].

In the 1840s, a George Stephenson (not the famous S&DR engineer mentioned earlier) was the S&DR's Passenger Manager. He lived in Middleton St George and commuted to his office in Darlington from Fighting Cocks each day. A strong churchgoer, he went on to bring pressure on the S&DR to stop using public houses as substitute stations[82].

Following an act of parliament in 1851, the newly established Stockton, Middlesbrough and Yarm Water Company (SM&YWC) was authorised to raise money, lay water mains and buy water from the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage on Coniscliffe Road, first built by the Darlington Gas and Water Company (DG&WC) in 1850 and now a scheduled monument[83], in order to meet the increasing demand for water from the growing towns and industries of Teesside. An extensive part of the Act is devoted entirely to protection of the S&DR, should it be necessary to lay mains near, under or across railway land. By June 1852, the Tees Cottage Waterworks was supplying both the DG&WC and SM&YWC. In July 1852, the half-yearly meeting of the latter noted that their service reservoir at Fighting Cocks (now an outdoor sports court behind the Community Centre), with a capacity of one million gallons of water, was nearing completion. This was the second service reservoir constructed to serve the Tees Cottage Waterworks. It incorporated a filter to remove atmospheric debris before the water exited, an apparently unique feature[84]. From here, the water was fed by gravity through a single pipe to Yarm,

77 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019, page 40
78 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 9-10
79 Pallister 2007a, page 126
80 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 18
81 Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXVIII
82 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 24
83 https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1002300
84 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, pages 38-41 & 134

Stockton and Middlesbrough. Whilst many villages depended on pumped water until well into the twentieth century[85], Fighting Cocks was already connected to piped water in 1853, following the installation of a second pipe[86].

Having experienced further increasing demand for water, the SY&MWC obtained another Stockton, Middlesbrough and Yarm Waterworks Act in 1854. The wording suggests that it also gave the company powers to construct a reservoir in the parish of Dinsdale, near the Middleton and Dinsdale Station of the S&DR, but without any specific indication of the location, type or size of this reservoir[87].

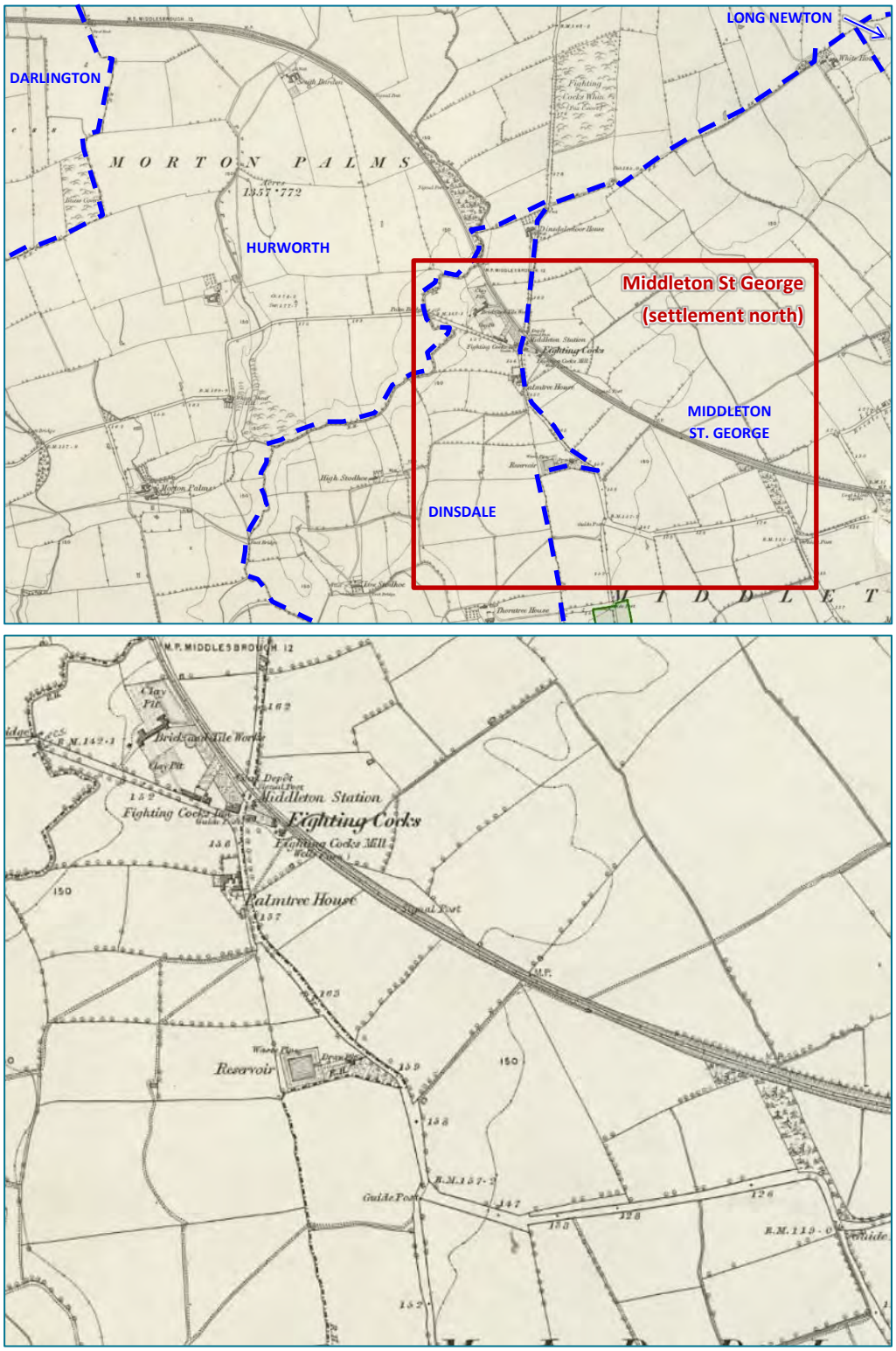
The 1855 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see below) shows that the line of the former Roman road (see map at the beginning of this document) has been fully retained as field boundaries to the south of Palmtree House. The original SM&YWC service reservoir is depicted between that line and what would become the spine road through the village, with the locations of a draw pipe and waste pipe shown. There also seems to be a building to the east of the reservoir, which is no longer extant. The assessment area appears predominantly rural with dispersed farmsteads, as well as the Wheat Sheaf public house near the Morton Palms hamlet. The reverse S-shape of the S&DR cuts across the countryside and over Sadberge Road to the north of the Fighting Cocks road junction. At the [D] Coal Depot, the end of the coal drop seems to include a building, possibly a weigh house. Immediately to the south, the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn has been substantially extended to the west by expanding the pub and providing an attached lower-height three-stalled stable block with coach house and loft over. A historical photo[88] shows that these extensions are faced in Pease brick. On the map, the Railway Lodge is now named Middleton Station and the Fighting Cocks Mill identified to process corn. Further buildings have been constructed since the 1839 plan drawing along the lane to Darlington and near the wind mill, as well as the Brick and Tile Works to the northwest of Fighting Cocks. The works presumably supplied building materials for the new houses to be (re)built in the immediate area[89] and generated more traffic for the railway and a requirement for coal to fuel the kilns[90]. In the southeastern corner of the assessment area, in the location of the later Oaktree Junction (see below), there is a coal and lime depot immediately to the south of the S&DR.

In 1858, the 'Stockton and Middlesbrough Waterworks Act' was passed. The preamble notes that the SM&YWC had been unable to complete all the works of the previous acts within the set limit. Because of this, and the increasing demand for water in the distribution area, the Act gave the company the power to construct additional pipelines from Tees Cottage to the supply area via the reservoir at Fighting Cocks. Schedule A of the Act gives a list of works and property already constructed or purchased by the company including[91]:

- Two reservoirs and other works at or near Fighting Cocks
- Two lines of main pipes from Tees Cottage to Fighting Cocks

85 Historic England 2017a, page 3
86 Pallister 2007a, page 139
87 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, page 44
88 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 11 & 18-19
89 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 20
90 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, pages 10-11
91 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, page 45

- One line of main pipe from Fighting Cocks to Middlesbrough and thence to Stockton, and various other unspecified pipes, etc., clearly for distribution purposes



1855 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. Parish names and boundaries at the time are shown in dark blue (**NB: these are not the current parish names/boundaries**). In the area of the reservoir, the boundary between the Dinsdale and Middleton St George parishes did not follow the line of the former Roman road. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

In 1860, the [F] Station Master's House and Station Building were constructed in the location of the old station to provide improved passenger services, retaining some of the stonework of the earlier building in the rear walling[92]. A Neo-Gothic arched sash window facing onto the Darlington-bound platform could be opened to serve customers across a counter. It is possible that the [C] Waiting Shed on the Stockton-bound platform across the railway track was built around the same time. Like the station buildings, it is constructed in buff-coloured Pease brick, although the stretchers to the rear are red bricks. The shed was originally open fronted[93].

Top: **[F]** Station Master's House (right) and Station Building at former Sadberge Road level crossing with disused railway corridor to the left/east. Both are faced in Pease brick although the former Station Building is now painted white. The Neo-Gothic window is behind the modern garage, which is in the location of the former Darlington-bound platform. *Bottom:* Remains of the rear wall of the **[C]** Waiting Shed constructed in English Garden Wall bond. The wall has since been partially rebuilt by the Friends of the S&DR. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

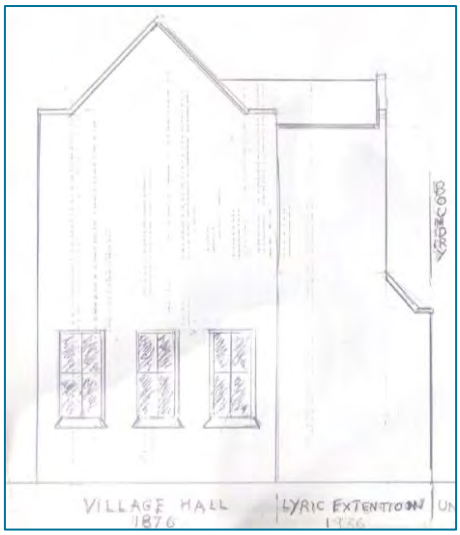
In the same year, the Dinsdale Moor Iron Works (no longer extant) opened to the west of the [D] Coal Depot. They were established by a group of businessmen including estate owner Henry Cocks, a Darlington colliery owner and representatives

92 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 19

93 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 24

of the Pease family. Iron ore first discovered in the Cleveland Hills in 1859 and coal from Shildon were brought here for the manufacture of iron and steel[94].

Also in 1860, Rakes Hall was built by Mr Rake as a village hall for non-Quaker workers. It now adjoins the southern end of Station Terrace. After becoming a boys school, it would later be turned into the [H] Lyric cinema[95] (see below).



Left: Former Rakes Hall which would later become **[H]** the Lyric, how a house (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Right:* Sketch by J Richardson (not to scale) of what the building used to look like, kindly provided by Ross Willis.

In 1863, the S&DR and North Eastern Railway (NER) company amalgamated. The station was renamed 'Fighting Cocks' on 1 September 1866[96].

In 1864, the [Q] Middleton Iron Works were constructed to the east of the southern road junction on land that belonged to Henry Cocks (once part of Palmtree House Farm), served by a siding off the railway line. They produced pig iron and operated initially two, and from 1875[97] on four, blast furnaces powered by a stationary steam engine. They also had an internal narrow-gauge railway system for moving slag. Whilst their location was well suited to the availability of raw materials, there was no substantial source of labour in the locality to meet the demands of the industry. Therefore, workers needed to be brought in from elsewhere. Many came from Yorkshire but many others also from much further away. The first houses to be built for them were a long terrace along the southern boundary of the iron works, along the road to Yarm. Henry Cocks called it Killinghall Row, after his forebearers who held the manor of Low Middleton. The same principle was applied for the naming of Pemberton Terrace (with generous front gardens) to the west of it, close to the southern road junction which became to be known as the Square[98] [99]. Other houses in the vicinity built around that time bear their builders' names: Harts Buildings, Browns Buildings and Hansons Buildings [sic][100].

94 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 20
95 Lombard-Earl, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 31 January
96 Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXVIII
97 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 20
98 Pallister 2007a, pages 116 & 133-135
99 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Historical Background' & point 75
100 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16302438.lawless-middleton-st-george-prison-deal-irish-drunks/

Top: Remains of southern boundary wall of the **[Q]** Middleton Iron Works, bordering the back lane to Killinghall Row, Yarm Road, the first houses to be built for the increasing workforce. It is mainly constructed from slag with a few red brick pinnings in between. Smelting is the process of applying heat and a chemical reducing agent to an ore to extract a desired base metal product. As most ores are impure, it was necessary to use limestone, which was brought in from Weardale, to remove the accompanying rock gangue as slag[101]. This wall is now the only survivor of the iron works site (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024). *Bottom:* Details of slag pieces. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

The construction of the new housing changed the centre of gravity within the parish in only one decade. The well-established nucleus of population at Middleton One Row was still there and remained the centre for visitors to the spa and some local services but was outweighed by the development around the [Q] Middleton Iron Works. The iron-works-centred housing was originally known as Killinghall, but with its continuing expansion that name was lost. Instead, the new village was taking on the name of the parish, Middleton St George[102].

Former **[J]** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel with gable end fronting the road, now converted into residential use. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

[101] Pallister 2007a, page 133

[102] Pallister 2007a, pages 134 & 137

In 1869, the [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built halfway between the northern and southern road junctions along the west side of (now) Station Road, adjoining the northeast corner of the reservoir site.

In 1871, the Gas Works were built to the southeast of the Fighting Cocks Mill, served by a railway siding. They were owned by the Middleton and Dinsdale Gas Company and supplied gas for the lighting installed in the later part of the nineteenth century. By 1893, there were 32 public lamps in the parish[103]. In addition, the local availability of gas allowed the NER to light railway signals, including those on the ground[104].

In spring 1871, the church of St Lawrence[105] was opened in Middleton One Row. By that time, the inconvenience and inadequacy of the small, remote church of St George had become too apparent, as it was unable to cater for the inhabitants of Middleton One Row, spa visitors and the growing, even more distant, industrial population at Middleton St George.

At the end of July 1871, following the Education Act of the previous year, a new National School (no longer extant) was provided on Chapel Street on the southern fringe of the assessment area, replacing the undersized school at Middleton One Row. The location was chosen due to its proximity to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works whilst minimising the distance to Middleton One Row. In addition, the management of the iron works had become alert to the educational and social needs of its workforce and provided a library and reading room on their site.

The 1871 census shows that the total population of the parish had suddenly exploded from roughly 220 people during the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries to 918. Out of this number, 470 people lived at Killinghall and Fighting Cocks. Further housing had been built on the eastern side of (now) Station Road and to the south of the Dinsdale Moor Iron Works, along the lane to Darlington. The population of Middleton One Row was 229, which also included workers employed in the industries (with the exemption of the Gas Works which were not included in that census). The railway also contributed to the expansion of the population and housing demand, requiring labourers, clerks, gate keepers, etc. The industrial community now made up over half of the population, with 133 men employed at the iron and brick works. As the housing demand could not keep up with the increasing workforce, families had to share houses with other families or boarders[106].

A print of 1875 (not reproduced here) shows Fighting Cocks Station from the level railway/road crossing looking southeast[107]. In the foreground on the left is the [C] Waiting Shed facing onto the northern platform with two lamps, one of them mounted to the building, the other freestanding. Across the two railway tracks are the [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, the latter facing onto the southern platform with passengers waiting and a signal post to the right, close to the crossing. In the background are the windmill and, further beyond, the smoking chimneys of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works.

Because of the large number of 'thirsty' iron workers, two pubs were built at the Square: the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and, opposite, the [O] Killinghall Arms. Soon the

[103] Pallister 2007a, page 157
[104] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 22
[105] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1185932
[106] Pallister 2007a, pages 84, 134 & 137-143
[107] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 27

village became noted for its lawlessness due to drunken behaviour. In 1877, a seven-foot-long petition was delivered to Darlington magistrates demanding that the village be equipped with its own prison, the reason being that *'[i]n order to convey a disorderly person to the lock-up in Darlington, the policeman is frequently compelled to leave the locality when his presence is most needed, and it is well known that, in his absence, deplorable scenes are but too common'*. Consequently, one or two houses of a terrace called Central Buildings (no longer extant) on the south side of the Square were converted into a police station with lock-up. It was ideally located, between the two pubs, where most of the drinking took place, and facing the Square, where most of the fighting took place[108]. The police also used to be stationed in 8 Middleton Lane, now a private house just outside the assessment area, which may have been built in the 1880s ore 1890s. It still contains evidence of cells[109].

Left: **[N]** Havelock Arms Hotel. *Right:* The former **[O]** Killinghall Arms; a historical photo shows the building without render and 2x2 sliding sashes[110]. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

By 1881, Pemberton Terrace had been extended to infill the space between it and Killinghall Row, which was also known as Old Row. Named New Row, it provided another nineteen houses for iron workers. More houses were built in Chapel Row and elsewhere in the Killinghall area, as well as in Middleton One Row and along Middleton Lane, to the south outside the assessment area. The larger houses along the latter were mainly the homes of prosperous families in commerce and industry, who were no longer constrained to live where they worked[111].

In 1882, the Dinsdale Wire and Steel Works opened[112] (no longer extant) between the Brick and Tile Works and Dinsdale Moor Iron Works along the lane to Darlington, using raw material from Sheffield and elsewhere.

In 1883, the [Q] Middleton Iron Works were closed down for the remainder of the century. Imports of better-quality ore from Spain and elsewhere were now used, so it was more economical to use blast furnaces closer to port facilities. The parish was hit hard by the loss of its main source of employment. By 1891, the population had fallen to 871 from its census peak of 1103 in 1881. Also, another side effect of the closure of the iron works was that the plans for a Roman Catholic chapel along Chapel Street, hence its name, came to a complete halt and was never built.

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108 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16302438.lawless-middleton-st-george-prison-deal-irish-drunks/

109 Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

110 Chapman 1990, page 106

111 Pallister 2007a, pages 147-148

112 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area'

At around 1886, a signal box was provided along the southern track at Fighting Cocks Station, immediately to the west of the level crossing. It was a 'Type C1b' building, with panelled brickwork on the ground floor. The frame had 19 levers and a separate wheel was provided to operate the crossing gates[113].

A photograph of 3 June 1887 shows the same view of Fighting Cocks Station as the 1875 print. By that time, however, the windmill no longer had sails, as they had apparently been destroyed in a storm, and was driven by an engine. Little else seems to have changed, with passengers still lining the platform[114].

Left: **[S]** Metal Railway Bridge over the historical route to Yarm. *Right:* **[R]** Masonry Railway Bridge over access track. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

On 1 July 1887, less than one month after the photo was taken, the NER opened a new passenger line between Darlington's enlarged Bank Top Station and the resulting railway junction with the existing line at the eastern fringe of the assessment area. The junction was named Oaktree Junction, after the nearby hamlet, and formed the western end of the Darlington & Saltburn branch. The new line bypassed the original S&DR route through Fighting Cocks Station, which became known as the **Fighting Cocks branch or loop line**, running between Albert Hill Junction near Darlington's North Road Station and Oaktree Junction[115]. It required various bridges, including a [R] Masonry Railway Bridge over an access track to a farmstead and a [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the road to Yarm at the southeast end of the assessment area. The new line also resulted in the provision of a new passenger station for Middleton St George, misleadingly named Dinsdale Station, half a mile to the south of Fighting Cocks and close to Killinghall, where most of the recent development had taken place. Consequently, the bypassed, old line and station concentrated on moving and handling freight, including the serving of the [D] Coal Depot[116], as well as excursion trains and diverted services. It is likely that the [C] Waiting Shed was enclosed with a timber front following the transfer of passenger traffic to Dinsdale Station. Its use changed to a paraffin lamp room, storage of pairs of metal ramps (required for pushing derailed waggons back on the track) and a toilet[117] [118]. Besides the new Dinsdale Station offering better passenger facilities, it was also much nearer to the centre of population and thus convenient for commuting to Darlington and Teesside. This opened up a much wider range of employment possibilities for the inhabitants in the parish. Moreover, the dwindling

[113] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 15
[114] Pallister 2007a, pages 103, 139 & 147-148
[115] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 16
[116] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 19
[117] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 28
[118] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Historical Background', 'Oak Tree Junction' & '6. Darlington South Junction to Oak Tree Junction via Dinsdale'

visitors to the spa had been replaced by day-trippers from the nearby towns, with Dinsdale Station being within easy walking distance to Middleton One Row.

Henry Cocks, the last lord of the manor of Middleton St George, died in November 1894. He was also the last person to be interred beneath the chancel of St George's church[119]. Much of his estate was auctioned off, including the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn in September 1895. Its sale represented the first change of ownership since it was built. The purchaser was the Victoria Brewery of Darlington, also known as Warwick's Brewery Co. They remained owners until 1926. The triangular field adjoining the inn to the west was developed to provide a red brick terrace comprising five houses (no longer extant) following the inn's sale in 1895[120].

The Local Government Act of 1894 introduced parish councils and brought the village level of government into the pattern we have today. Functions previously carried out by churchwardens and vestries were now taken over by elected councillors. On 4 December, the inaugural meeting of the Middleton St George Parish Council was held at the school on Chapel Street[121].

The 1894 act also introduced rural district councils, establishing Darlington Rural District Council (DRDC) for the area. These inherited the functions of the earlier sanitary districts, but also had wider authority over matters such as local planning, council housing, playgrounds and cemeteries. The council had loading docks served by the old railway line[122] of which the [B] DRDC Loading Dock at Fighting Cocks still survives. It would later be used to load slag tarmacadam for the use in road repair[123].

Remains of the **[B]** DRDC Loading Dock at Fighting Cocks Station, to northwest of the former level crossing. The Friends of the S&DR tidied up the area, cleared vegetation growth and added old railway sleeper blocks so that this feature can be better appreciated by the public. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

The 1896 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see below) identifies the line of the former Roman Road, although it is now disrupted by three further basins on the enlarged Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site which have been built to the west of the original, smaller basin. To the northeast of the oldest reservoir, the [K] Board Room building is shown, and the earlier building to the east (no longer extant) seems to have been enlarged or rebuilt. Bordering the reservoirs site to the northeast is the [J] (Wesleyan) Methodist Chapel. The terrace on the opposite side of the road includes a post office, with the building that would become [H] the Lyric cinema (originally Rakes Hall) immediately to the north of it.

[119] Pallister 2007a, pages 148 & 153
[120] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 19
[121] Pallister 2007a, page 153
[122] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area'
[123] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), pages 15, 18 & 21

[K] Board Room (top) and Entrance Gates (bottom) belonging to the former Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site. *Top:* The building, now the Parish Council Meeting Room, has now all its openings except for the main entrance boarded up. *Bottom:* The curved layout of the gateway seems to imply a former turning circle for carts or coaches and would have provided a more notable sense of arrival for visitors. Note the survival of the original iron railings (in contrast to the **[M]** Cocks Memorial Homes (see below) on the opposite side of the road). There is a glimpse of the **[J]** Wesleyan Methodist Chapel to the right/north of the gateway. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

On the 1896 map, further new buildings are shown along the lane to Darlington (these are no longer extant). Nearby, there is the semi-detached house along Sadberge Road a short distance north of the level railway crossing, and two houses opposite Palmtree House, now part of Station Terrace. The [F] Station Master's House and Station Building are no longer marked as a station. There has been some expansion of the industry at the northern road junction. However, the windmill is no longer annotated, either as it no longer performed a commercial function or was completely out of use by then. The name Fighting Cocks has been moved from the northern road junction to the south of Palmtree House. New development shown around the southern road junction comprises various buildings, including the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel, [O] Killinghall Arms and another post office. To the northeast is the large industrial site of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, connected via sidings to the original railway line, which has become the Fighting Cocks Loop Line and was reserved for industrial activities. Along the iron works' western boundary is a triangular field, now the village's playing field, with an access lane from (now) Station Road to the industrial site along its northwestern border. The iron works are also linked via a rail track to a site to the south(east), across the road to Yarm and new passenger railway line. The area between the southern road junction and station is annotated Killinghall. The surrounding area of the village is still agricultural with dispersed farmsteads, the Morton Palms hamlet, and the Wheatsheaf Inn along the lane to Darlington.

1896 six-inch OS maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

At Dinsdale station, the 1896 map shows an eastbound (north) and a westbound (south) waiting shed. The booking office was located adjacent to the road bridge, at street level above the railway tracks[124]. To the east, there are two more bridges along the Darlington & Saltburn line: the [R] Masonry Railway Bridge over an access track to a farmstead and the [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the road to Yarm. At Oaktree

[124] Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXXIV & points 88-90

Junction, the passenger line joins onto the track of the former S&DR. To the south of the station, along Chapel Street, is the school and more housing.

Top: Remains of **[G]** Enclosed Railway Corridor in Pease brick laid in the English Garden Wall bond to the north of the former Gas Works and windmill sites; note the 'zigzag' line of wall (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024). *Middle:* Remains of later, southern coal drop walling of the **[D]** Coal Depot built in stone; the brick walling on top was added when the depot was no longer in use. The wall now forms the boundary to the carpark of the former **[E]** Fighting Cocks Inn. *Bottom:* This feature, judging from its position near the **[A]** Crane Base and Platform just outside this view on the right/north (see below), seems to be related to the ramp carrying the siding track to the coal cells. (Photos © Gaby Rose, April 2024)

The 1896 25-inch OS map (not reproduced here) shows further detail which is of particular interest for the northern road junction. The [E] Fighting Cocks Inn is now referred to as a hotel, and one of the buildings to the west of it, along the Darlington lane, is marked as a smithy. There has been significant railway-related development with multiple tracks in the widened [G] Railway Corridor, which has been enclosed by tall brick walling to the north of the windmill and Gas Works sites. To the west of Sadberge Road opposite the [C] Waiting Shed (with a boundary stone to the west of

it), the [B] DRDC Loading Dock is served by a single siding which stops short of the road. Across the tracks, there is the signal box at which two sidings terminate. To the south of it, the [D] Coal Depot has been enlarged and 'shifted' slightly to the west, including former land to the rear of the inn. The number of coal cells has been increased to eleven and the working area widened to permit access on both sides of the cells. A new weighing machine and its office have also been added. This all suggests that the depot has been completely rebuilt and reorganised, perhaps by the NER after its amalgamation with the S&DR[125]. Further to the southeast, at Oaktree Junction, there is another signal box to the south of the tracks, which opened on 1 July 1887 along with the new passenger railway line.

In 1898, Fighting Cocks was still a busy goods station. Traffic in coal, coke, lime and limestone amounted to 8,548 tons. Goods forwarded totalled 10,495 tons and goods received 12,677 tons. Traffic was handled in three sets of sidings[126].

Around the turn of the century, the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works were reopened after a certain amount of reconstruction by their new owners, the Linthorpe Dinsdale Smelting Company. The furnaces were progressively brought back into production over a number of years. The intention was to allow the use of foreign ore and yield a product more suitable for the making of steel. In 1901, there were complaints about the danger to health and the environment caused by the discharge of smoke and dirt from these operations. In 1904, the company agreed to pay for the erection of a drinking trough combined with a gas lamp in the middle of the Square (the southern road junction), to enhance the centre of the iron works village.

[M] Cocks Memorial Homes. The clock tower over the central part is a later replacement and is at odds with the Arts and Crafts style of the building. The original clock tower over the central unit was constructed of more elaborately designed masonry and had a flat roof[127]. In the foreground, the metal boundary railings were likely cut off in the war effort in the 1940s. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

In 1903, seven alms-houses called the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes were built across the road from the reservoirs with some of the money left by the late Henry Cocks[128]. Although originally the central unit was for a matron, it now has the same status as the others houses. The additional room in this cottage was intended for the use of the trustees but has long been incorporated into the living accommodation[129].

[125] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 11
[126] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 18
[127] https://www.francisfrith.com/middleton-st-george/middleton-st-george-the-old-people-s-homes-c1960_m421009#
[128] Pallister 2007a, pages 106 & 159-160
[129] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

In 1906, the [P] Co-op and Stable were built at the north end of Middleton Lane, forming a group with Central Buildings (which included the police station and prison) to the south of the Square. The stable building is to the rear of the site and comprised three stalls and a hayloft over, accommodating the horses and cart that were used by the shop for home deliveries[130].

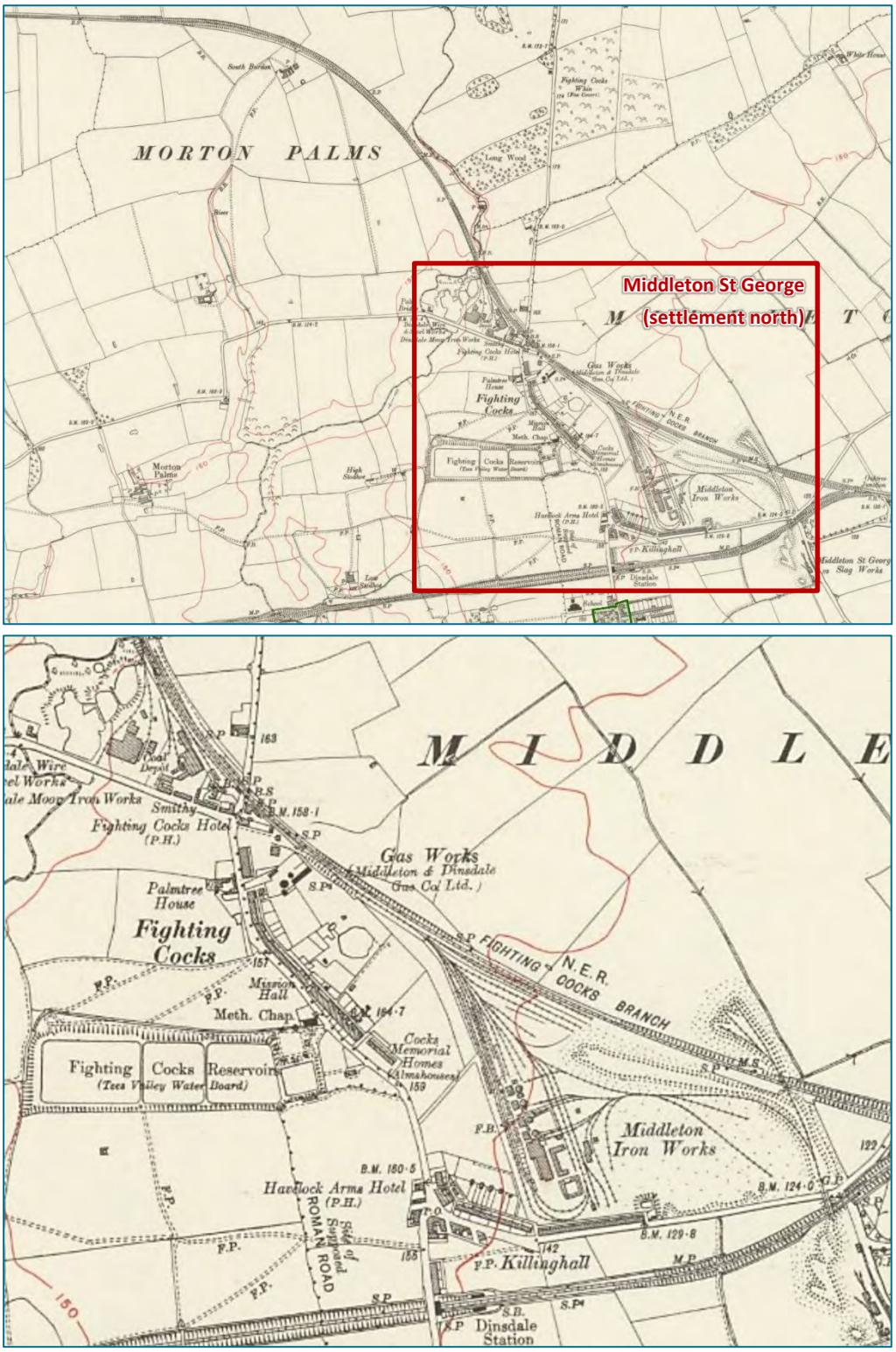
Left: Former **[P]** Co-op along Middleton Lane with detached Stable building in the background. *Right:* Stable viewed from Yarm Road. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

In 1907, the Tees Valley Water (Consolidation) Act included a list of all the completed and uncompleted Tees Valley works. According to it, the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs had their works completed and were in use[131].

Left: Former **[I]** Undenominational Mission Hall with 'Undenominational Mission Hall 1907' commemorated on the fence (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Right:* Sketch by J Richardson (not to scale) of what the building used to look like in 1930, kindly provided by Ross Willis.

Also in 1907, the [I] Undenominational Mission Hall was built by George and Edith Graham along with other subscribers on the site of the building that is marked as a post office on (now) Station Road on the 1896 map. Their names were put on separate bricks in a panel built into the right-hand side of the front elevation. The mission hall was mainly used to help children at the north end of the village learn about Christianity Methodist style[132]. Before World War I, undenominationalism peaked. Undenominationals were not attached to any denomination; they considered themselves 'just Christians'[133].

130 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16388701.memories-middleton-st-george-co-op-ernie-hall-delivered-groceries-horse-cart/
131 Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2018, page 99
132 Richardson, J. 2018. Notes on 'Undenomination Church Hall in M.S.G' dated August
133 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16388701.memories-middleton-st-george-co-op-ernie-hall-delivered-groceries-horse-cart/



1912-14 six-inch OS map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

In 1911, a new school (no longer extant) opened along Neasham Road to the northwest of the old school. It provided modern premises with much increased accommodation and improved facilities, serving pupils from the age of five to leaving at the age of fourteen[134].

[134] Pallister 2007a, page 161

The 1912-14 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see above) shows further expansion of the industrial areas at Fighting Cocks and the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works. The latter are no longer connected to the site to the south(east) across the road to Yarm and passenger railway line, which had become occupied by the Middleton St George Slag Works in the meantime. Instead, a new rail connection has been established from the iron works to a site across the Fighting Cocks branch line. Moreover, a new road to Long Newton has been constructed branching off the road to Yarm where it turns south towards the [S] Metal Railway Bridge, heading outside the settlement in a northeastern direction, cutting through the embankment of the Fighting Cocks branch to the west of Oaktree Junction. There has been further provision of terraced housing between the northern and southern road junctions, and along Chapel Street. The new school is shown to the south of the passenger railway line, bordering the line of the former Roman Road, which is still annotated. The map names a number of buildings in the settlement, including a smithy to the west of the northern road junction, the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn (still a hotel), [I] (Undenominational) Mission Hall, [M] Cocks Memorial Homes, the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and [J] (Wesleyan) Methodist Chapel. It seems that the former [O] Killinghall Arms was not used as a pub at the time, as it is not mentioned. The Fighting Cocks Reservoirs are now owned by the Tees Valley Water Board. The surrounding area is still agricultural with dispersed farmsteads and the Morton Palms hamlet; the former Wheatsheaf Inn along the lane to Darlington is also no longer named and may have been a farmhouse at the time, as implied by its present name (Old Farmhouse).

The corresponding 1913 25-inch OS map (not reproduced here) shows further detail for the Fighting Cocks industrial sites. At the [D] Coal Depot, the former eleven coal drop cells have been increased to twelve, possibly by subdivision of one cell. At their northeastern end, between the track over the cells and the siding stopping short of the signal box, the [A] Crane Base is shown with a small building right next to it (the latter is no longer extant) and a line that seems to symbolise an adjoining Platform, which partially survives today. The weighing machine has been relocated slightly to the north to allow freer access in and out of the depot, presumably by larger vehicles. A new weighing office seems to have been built adjoining the signal box to the southeast, with the previous building demolished. To the west, the sites of the Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works and Dinsdale Moor Iron Works have received their own coal depots which are served by sidings from the main line. To the east across Sadberge Road, the former windmill seems to have been demolished.

In 1914, the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building at Fighting Cocks were sold for residential use[135].

In 1915 and, again, in 1923 there were further complaints about alleged smoke pollution emitted from the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works[136].

From 1921 to 1945, the Gas Works sidings were taken over by Charles Ingram, railway wagon builder and repairer[137].

In 1925, the stretch of line between Goosepool and Faverdale (Darlington), which included the Fighting Cocks branch, was used as part of the locomotive parade in the

[135] Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXXIV
[136] Pallister 2007a, pages 163-164
[137] Darsley, Lovett 2023, point 75

100th birthday celebrations of the opening of the S&DR where locomotives and waggons went on static display[138].

[A] Crane Base (top) and Platform (bottom). *Top:* Looking northwest, the platform is behind the crane base within the undergrowth; its alignment shown on the 1913 map is indicated by the yellow line. The rail tracks coming from the main railway line would have been to the righthand/northeast side. *Bottom:* Remnants of former platform viewed from the bridlepath looking southwest, with the walling stones now largely dislodged. The crane base is to the left/south just outside the view. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

In the same year, the former school building along Chapel Street was taken over by the parochial church council and became known as Parochial Hall. Apart from providing for the Sunday School, it was also used for dances and other community activities[139].

Around 1930, the [L] Pumping Station was built on the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site, which, at the time, was owned and operated by the Tees Valley Water Board[140]. The building is set at a distance and angle to the main road.

[138] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2019, page 43
[139] Pallister 2007a, page 165
[140] https://msgcommunitycentre.co.uk/about-us/our-history/

Former **[L]** Pumping Station, now Community Centre, built in a Modernist style. The original multi-pane windows have been replaced. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

In 1931, the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works were closed down for good due to a wider depression in the country, and unemployment was rife in the parish. Consequently, the huge mountain of slag left over from the smelting process was partly used for road making[141].

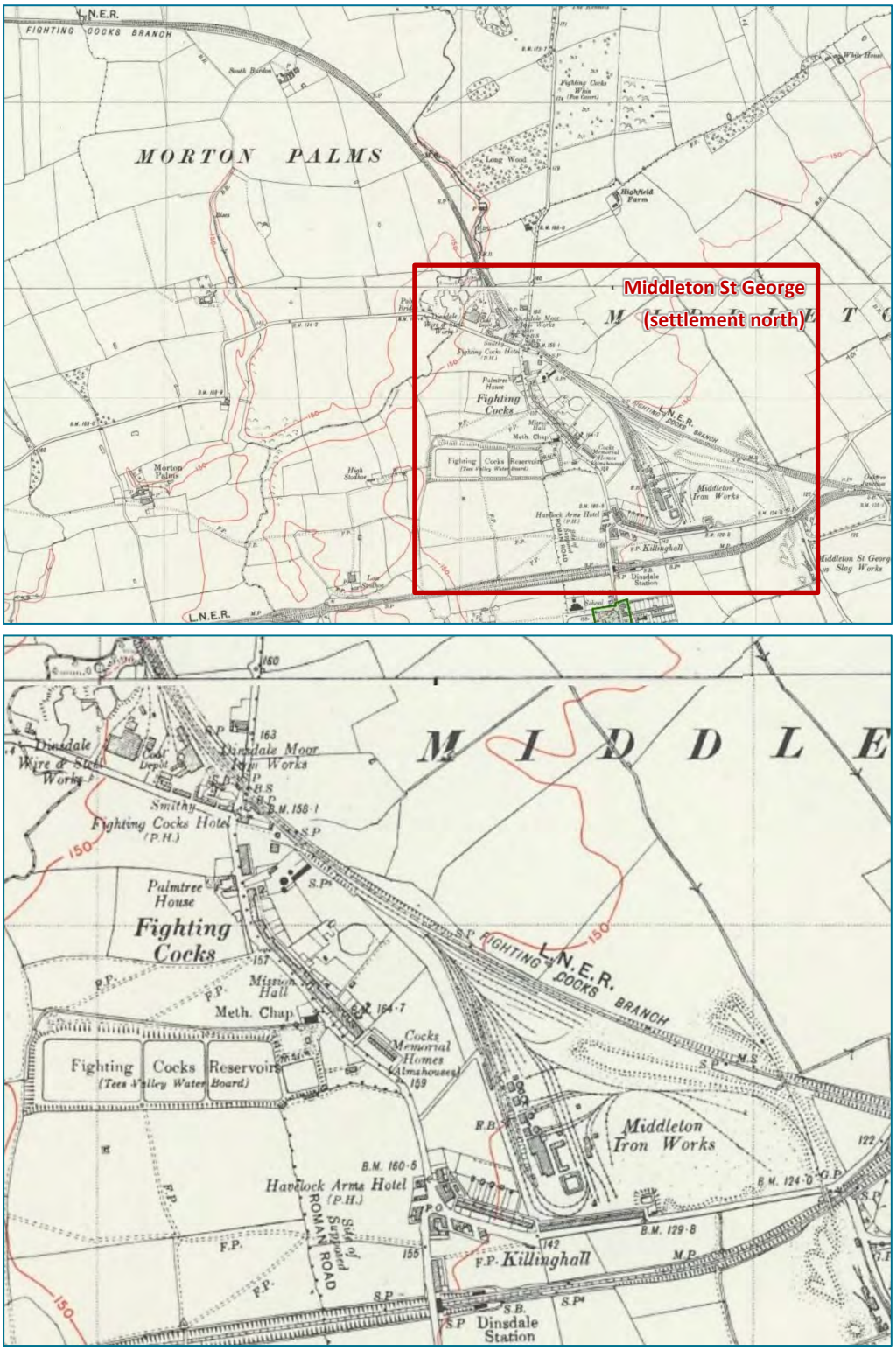
In the same year, the site of the former Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works along the road to Darlington was turned into a scrapyard with new rail sidings being provided. During the 1960s, many ex-British-Rail engines would be scrapped there[142], marking this stretch of the original 1825 railway line as one that not only witnessed the birth but also the final demise of the public steam locomotive[143]. First Arnott Young and then the Durham Tube Works undertook the scrapping of railway engines and carriages on this site before it was turned into the St George's Gate housing estate in the early 2000s[144].

A photo of the former Fighting Cocks Station of 1933[145] (not reproduced here), taken from a similar location as the 1875 print, shows the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building next to the live goods-traffic railway line, with the passenger platform now removed. A wooden barrier is on the level crossing to allow road traffic pass. The former [Q] Middleton Iron Works are in the far background.

In 1936, the former Rakes Hall was extended and converted into a 265-seater cinema called [H] the Lyric. It would later be used as a pigeon club and washing machine repair place, before being turned into a residential property in the 1980s[146].

In late 1938, with the prospect of war, construction of the Royal Air Force (RAF) aerodrome had begun in the southeast of the parish, extending right up to the church of St George. This transformed a large area of landscape outside the assessment area (and partly within the neighbouring Long Newton parish). It also brought about an interface and social intermingling with the local population. The slag heaps left from the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works contributed towards the base material for the runways. A large force of employment was required, which boosted the local economy[147].

141 Pallister 2007a, page 165
142 Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area'
143 Pallister 2007a, page 170
144 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7102901.housing-estate-built-next-year/
145 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 19
146 Lombard-Earl, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 31 January
147 Pallister 2007a, page 165



1938 six-inch OS maps reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk). *Top:* Assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north.

The 1938 six-inch OS map of the assessment area (see above) shows very little change to the previous map, although the Fighting Cocks branch line is now owned by the London and North Eastern Railway (LNER). The location names of Fighting Cocks and Killinghall are still provided. The Gas Works no longer exist. The [L] Pumping Station on the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs site, although supposedly built around 1930, is not depicted.

The corresponding 25-inch OS map is one year later (not reproduced here), from 1939. It shows that within the last year the council houses which had already been planned for Middleton St George in the early 1920s have eventually been built to the west of the school along a new cul-de-sac called Thorntree Gardens, in the Dinsdale parish at the southern fringe of the assessment area. The delay in construction had been due to the alleged smoke nuisance associated with the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works, which had resulted in the originally planned site being rejected[148]. Between 1938 and 1939, semi-detached houses were provided to the north of the [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, and another mission hall (now the site of a surface carpark) was built to the north of the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel. Immediately to the north of it, a large building is shown set back from the road, possibly the depot that had been used by the Water Board or Environment Agency before the High Stell housing development was built here in the late 1990s[149]. The map also identifies the Parochial Hall, which used to be the old school building. At the top end of the village, the grounds of the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn (still a hotel) have been expanded to the rear (north), maybe to provide a car park. To the north of the railway line, the triangular agricultural field has been turned into allotment gardens, helping feed families through home food production during the depression, and again later during the rationing years of the Second World War. Further allotments are shown behind Station Terrace and to the north of Dinsdale Station.

After the Dunkirk evacuation (26 May – 4 June 1940), soldiers of the Suffolk Regiment were billeted at the [I] Undenominational Mission Hall, before they were transferred to Catterick Garrison a few months later[150].

The RAF Middleton St George officially opened on 15 January 1941. A wireless station was established in a field opposite the slag works in the southeastern corner of the assessment area, with a number of high, lattice-construction radio masts. From 1942 until the end of the Second World War, the Royal Canadian Air Force assumed duties providing most of the ground staff and aircrew flying bombers over Germany and occupied Europe. Bombs, armaments, and other equipment were delivered by rail to Fighting Cocks goods station, including the former [D] Coal Depot, and from there by road to the aerodrome. The [I] Undenominational Mission Hall received a new lease of life when evangelical services were organised by Canadian airmen, which were also well attended by people from the village and Darlington. In their spare time, staff often socialised outside the airfield, frequenting the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn, [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and [O] Killinghall Arms. Dances at the Parochial Hall were also well attended. Moreover, [H] the Lyric cinema proved hugely popular with airmen stationed at the airfield.

In 1947, demolition of the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works started. However, the blowing engine house remained and would later be adapted for other usage. Around the same time, the smithy at Fighting Cocks and the houses and cottages beyond it along the road to Darlington were also demolished[151].

A photo of the former Fighting Cocks station of 1949[152] (not reproduced here), taken from a similar location as the 1875 print, shows a residential hedge planted around the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, next to the live goods-

[148] Pallister 2007a, page 164
[149] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[150] Richardson, J. 2018. Notes on 'Undenomination Church Hall in M.S.G' dated August
[151] Pallister 2007a, pages 100 & 165-170
[152] Darsley, Lovett 2023, point 74

traffic railway line. A wooden barrier is on the level crossing to allow road traffic pass. The [C] Waiting Shed is still intact. The industrial buildings have disappeared from the background.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, the Parochial Hall was the home of the Middleton St George Operatic and Dramatic Society. Their productions always played to full houses. In the late 1950s, [H] the Lyric closed due to falling attendances brought about by television and changing lifestyles.

In 1954, the Dinsdale Moor Iron Works, which had flourished during the war years and continued to be a major employer in the village, closed resulting in further loss of railway traffic along the Fighting Cocks branch line. As a result, the adjacent scrap yard on the site of the former Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works was then able to expand and fill the void[153].

In 1958 the Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot opened on part of the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works site as a British Railways facility for the production of long-welded rails for track renewals[154]. In 1960, CN Hadley and Son, a firm of engineers and flange-makers from Darlington, started to occupy much of the remainder of the former iron works site including the blowing engine house, next to welding depot. They would stay here until 2003, when, faced by a severely declining manufacturing market, the company closed its business and sold the land to Wimpey housing[155].

A photo of the former Fighting Cocks passenger station of 1960[156] (not reproduced here), taken from the location of the former [D] Coal Depot shows the brick-built signal box, the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock, by then out of use and overgrown, as well as parts of the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building (still in facing Pease brick) and [C] Waiting Shed; the latter seems still intact.

After a public enquiry in 1962, most of the remaining gap between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row had been built over. The housing expansion and resulting population increase carried on regardless of the slow decline of the village's services[157].

In 1963, the Central Buildings terrace to the south of the Square, which included the old police station and lock-up, was replaced by a new pair of semi-detached police houses and a single-storey police hut (still extant but no longer in its original use)[158]. They accommodated the police sergeant and constable before they would become private houses[159].

By 1964, both George and Edith Graham had died, and their niece sold the [I] Undenominational Mission Hall. It was then rented to an antiques dealer until 1967. Afterwards, the pigeon club took possession, and in 1969 they allowed a youth club

153 Pallister 2007a, page 169
154 Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 26
155 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7007010.losing-last-reminders-ironworks-industry/
156 Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 26
157 Pallister 2007a, page 170
158 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16302438.lawless-middleton-st-george-prison-deal-irish-drunks/
159 Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

to use the building to accrue funds to buy their own building (i.e. old [P] Co-op[160], which had closed in the late 1960s[161]).

In March 1964, the former [D] Coal Depot, which had continued as the Fighting Cocks goods station, closed[162]. In the same year, following a change in defence requirements, the RAF aerodrome closed too. The airfield was then converted into a civil airport, with flights to Heathrow commencing at the end of the same year[163].

The Fighting Cocks branch line closed as a through route in May 1967. One track was lifted, but the other remained in place so that traffic could still be worked from Oaktree Junction to the Patons & Baldwins factory just outside Darlington and the Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot. The line to the west of the factory was severed, and the Fighting Cocks signal box was demolished in November that year.

In 1972, the Oaktree Junction signal box was abolished[164]. Around 1973, the historical Dinsdale station buildings were also demolished, although the station has remained in use until today.

When the Fighting Cocks Reservoirs were no longer needed to supply water to the iron works and the village, they were taken over by Northumbrian Water and de-commissioned. The former reservoirs were converted into a water park for leisure activities, and the [L] Pumping Station became a new village hall, filling a void which had existed since the demolition of the Parochial Hall for the building of houses along Chapel Street. In 1980, the freehold of the Pumping Station was sold to the Middleton St George Community Association by the Parish Council, for the sum of £15,000. The Parish Council and community members put £5,000 into a bank account to cover necessary improvements[165].

In 1983, metal manufacture on the former site of Dinsdale Wire & Steel Works ceased, resulting in another loss of employment within the village[166].

In 1988, the Dinsdale Rail Welding Depot closed, following the closure of Patons & Baldwins in the early 1970s. The Fighting Cocks branch line had now shut down completely. The part of the route to the west outside the assessment area was subsequently built on to form the B6279, whilst the part within the assessment area, to the east of the A66, became a public right of way[167].

In the mid-1990s, Middleton St George had a population of approximately 1,800. Due to the demise of the industry and the availability of brownfield sites for new housing, the population grew rapidly to the current level of approximately 4,600[168].

By the end of twentieth century, a by-pass (A67) had been provided around the northern end of the village, removing the disturbance of the ever-increasing through-

[160] Richardson, J. 2018. Notes on 'Undenomination Church Hall in M.S.G' dated August
[161] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/history/16388701.memories-middleton-st-george-co-op-ernie-hall-delivered-groceries-horse-cart/
[162] Darsley, Lovett 2023, map XXVIII
[163] Pallister 2007a, pages 170-171
[164] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 31
[165] https://msgcommunitycentre.co.uk/about-us/our-history/
[166] Darsley, Lovett 2023, 'Haughton Road Industrial Area' & point 89
[167] Coulthard, Teasdale (ed.) (2018), page 31
[168] https://middleton-st-george.org.uk/about-the-village/village-profile/

traffic and affording much better access to the airport. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to provide a direct link from the main road to Long Newton, cutting out the previous route via West Hartburn, which became a dead-end farm access only.

In 2003, the school on Neasham Road survived a destructive fire, but was replaced by a modern school building in 2006. In 2004, the blowing engine house of the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works was demolished[169], making way for further new housing. The building was surveyed before demolition and written up in the Cleveland Industrial Archaeologist. At the time, it was, however, not possible to examine any below-ground remains and these have now completely been removed[170].

3.4 Spatial Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the assessment area at the time of review. Note that planform, road and railway line layouts, watercourses, topography, and all structures of interest are described in the previous sections (see sections 3.2 & 3.3). Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

The assessment area is experienced by members of the public from the A66 and A67, footpaths, main and side roads and communal spaces within the settlement, and from several public rights of way over private farmland, nature reserves and the former railway corridor.

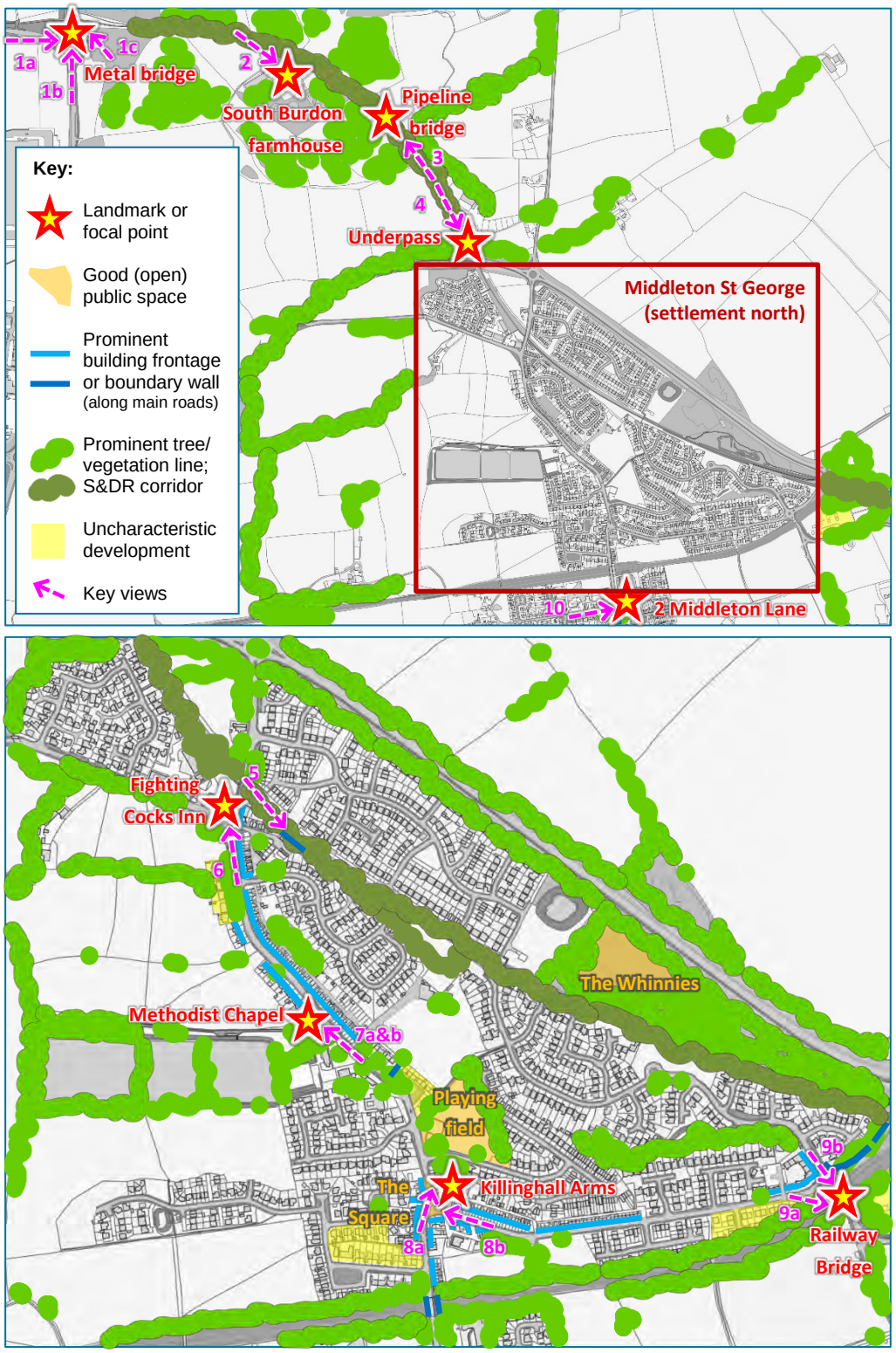
The area includes a number of focal points which feature within the key views, see below. Whilst South Burdon Farmhouse, the pipeline bridge, underpass below the A67, [O] Killinghall Arms and [S] Metal Railway Bridge can only be seen from shorter distances, the [E] Fighting Cocks Inn, [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and 2 Middleton Lane are also visible over longer distances. The area's most prominent landmark, in terms of its size and exposure, is the metal bridlepath bridge across the A66, linking the outskirts of Darlington via the green corridor with Middleton St George, along the route of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR).

The analysis of the character zones within the assessment area (see section 3.5) shows that the spatial experience between the zones differs notably, ranging from lush open countryside (Zone A) to a well-enclosed green corridor (zone B), loosely arranged modern housing estates (Zone C), high-density historical building rows lining the main roads (Zone D), an embanked water park of rectangular footprint (Zone E), allotments concealed behind dense vegetation (Zone F), open communal green spaces (Zone G), and a modern school compound (Zone H). The A66, A67 and live railway line create noticeable barriers within the assessment area and between/ within character zones, with the railway line dividing the village into two separate parts. The large amount of lush vegetation, often along boundary lines and adding to the definition of space, provides an element of cohesion throughout the area.

Buildings are generally of two-storey height, although there are also a number of bungalows and a new housing site including three-storey houses, which are marked in yellow on the maps below as they do not fit in with the remainder of the development pattern of the village. The 'urban' enclosure and cohesion established

[169] Pallister 2007a, pages 100, 161 & 171
[170] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

by the nineteenth-century layouts have been undermined by later housing where these do not line and face onto the main roads. Whilst modern residential development was initially provided on the brownfield sites of the former industry such as the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, the more recent and ongoing housing schemes are (being) built on greenfield sites in the village's immediate setting.



Spatial analysis. *Top:* Assessment area. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The settlement includes three good (open) public spaces, as shown in orange on the map above. The Square, i.e. the southern road junction which is confined by buildings, also features in two key views. In contrast, the Playing Field and the clearing inside the Whinnies are (partially) enclosed by mature trees and not within any of the key views.

The **key views** within the assessment area are as follows; all photos were taken in May 2024 unless mentioned otherwise:

View 1a has been taken from the B6279 (Tornado Way) approaching the roundabout junction with the A66 from the western, Darlington direction, in the northwestern-most corner of the assessment area. It is only experienced by vehicle users of the B6279. The focal point is the green metal bridge to the centre left/north. It carries a bridlepath into the green corridor along the former route of the S&DR which leads to the village of Middleton St George. In the background, beyond the grassed roundabout to the right/east, the trees of South Burdon Community Woodland can be seen. A number of galvanised streetlamps are very prominent in this view.

View 1b has been taken from the cycle path to the south of the roundabout looking north along the A66 towards the landmark of the green metal bridge which carries the bridlepath into the green corridor along the former route of the S&DR to the village of Middleton St George. This view is experienced by vehicle users of the A66 and cyclists. In the background to the right/northeast, the tree line in the location of the former railway corridor can be seen. A number of galvanised streetlamps are very prominent in this view.

View 1c has been taken from the cycle path to the southeast of the roundabout looking northwest towards the landmark green metal bridge which carries the bridlepath into the green corridor along the former route of the S&DR to the village of Middleton St George. It is experienced by cyclists as well as pedestrians who park their vehicle in this location and then head off into the countryside to the far right/ northeast. The blue sign in the background to the right/north shows the average minutes required for cyclists to reach Darlington town centre (20), Middleton St George (13), Sadberge (13) and Great Burdon (9) from here. A number of galvanised streetlamps are very prominent in this view.

View 2 has been taken from the former track bed of the S&DR which is now a public bridleway, looking southeast down the green corridor. It is experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. South Burdon farmhouse is a focal point to the right/southeast, beyond the overgrown railway embankment. The two photos reveal the difference vegetation can make in only two months, with the top image taken in May and the bottom in March 2024, the latter showing the house far more prominently. Moreover, the farmhouse was also very prominent from the former level crossing just slightly further on in March, but completely concealed by leafy vegetation in May, which is why that viewpoint has not been included.

View 3 has been taken from the bridleway looking northwest with the focal point of a pipeline bridge overhead. It is experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Again, the pipes had been much more prominent due to less foliage two months earlier in March. At that time, they also had been very visible from the opposite direction but were much concealed by vegetation in May, which is why that viewpoint has not been included. This photo is a good example of how enclosed and dark the green corridor can be once the vegetation growing on the sloped sides of the railway embankments has taken over.

View 4 has been taken from the green corridor looking southeast towards the underpass carrying the A67, which cannot be seen but can be heard from here. It is experienced by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Again, the underpass had been much more prominent two months earlier in March. It also had been very visible from the opposite direction then but much concealed by leafy vegetation in May, which is why that viewpoint has not been included. In front of the underpass, there is a metal barrier, followed by a large rock and a public litter bin.

View 5 has been taken from the former level crossing of the S&DR with Sadberge Road (route of the former Roman road) looking southeast. It is experienced by all users of the public highway. In the foreground to the left/southeast are the remains of the [C] Waiting Shed built in Pease brick, behind which a recently constructed housing estate can be glimpsed. Down the green corridor, which at this point is only available for pedestrians and cyclists, are the remains of [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling within the trees. In the centre right/southeast of the photo are the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, both also constructed in Pease brick and now in residential use. In the background to the far right/south is the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn which has recently been converted into a supermarket. In the far background beyond Sadberge Road is a row of modern bungalows facing Station Road. Wooden and metal telegraph poles (panted green) and a galvanised streetlamp are prominent in this view.

View 6 has been taken from Station Road looking north towards the historic Fighting Cocks road junction with the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn, now a supermarket, being a distant focal point. To the left/northwest is the row of modern bungalows mentioned above, faily concealed behind established front gardens. To the right/northeast, nineteenth-century terraces, now much modified, enclose the road on this side. The rhythm created by their chimney stacks is an important feature. Wooden (and metal) telegraph poles are prominent in this view.

View 7a has been taken from about midpoint of Station Road looking northwest with the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, now in residential use, being a focal point to the centre left/west, set at an angle to the road. In front of it is the lush vegetation belonging to the Middleton St George Community Centre and Parish Council premises. To the right/north, nineteenth-century terraces, now much modified, enclose the road on that side. The rhythm created by their chimney stacks is an important feature. Wooden (and metal) telegraph poles are prominent in this view. A large number of wall-mounted satellite dishes faces onto the road.

View 7b has been taken from slightly further south along Station Road looking northwest with the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel still being a focal point in the distance, set at an angle to the road. In the foreground is the lush vegetation belonging to a domestic garden and the Middleton St George Community Centre and Parish Council premises. On the right/north side of the road, set back behind a well-cared-for front garden, are the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes, designed in an Arts and Crafts style, which seems unique for the assessment area. The entrance piers within the low brick boundary wall can be seen to the left/northwest of a mature tree in the centre of the photo. The clock tower (no longer the original one) is not much of a landmark as the building is not prominent from the road. Due to the large trees, the wooden (and metal) telegraph poles are slightly less obvious in this view.

View 8a has been taken from Middleton Lane looking northeast at the roundabout of the southern road junction (the Square) with the former [O] Killinghall Arms, now an Indian restaurant, being the focal point. Hipped roofs are notable in this location. The route to the left/north is Station Road and to the right/east is Yarm Road. The latter is lined with a row of terraced housing along its north side, originally built for workers of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, which used to be located behind the houses. The

rhythm created by their chimney stacks is an important feature. A large number of satellite dishes on the terraces faces onto Yarm Road. At the right/southeast edge of the photo, the modern semi-detached houses which replaced Central Buildings (including former police station and lock-up) can be glimpsed. They accommodated the police sergeant and constable in the later-twentieth century but are now in private houses. A modern police hut is to the left/east of them, now presumably also in residential use. Metal (and wooden) telegraph poles are prominent in this view.

View 8b has been taken from Yarm Road looking northwest at the Square. Again, hipped roofs are notable in this location. Whilst the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and former [O] Killinghall Arms can be spotted to the right/north facing onto Station Road, there are no focal points in this view. At the left/south edge of the photo, part of the semi-detached houses which replaced Central Buildings can be glimpsed behind a well-established front garden. The corner building in the centre has a convenience store on the ground floor. Metal (and wooden) telegraph poles are less prominent. A large number of wall-mounted satellite dishes faces onto the Square.

View 9a has been taken from near the other (eastern) end of Yarm Road within the village, looking southeast at the roundabout with the [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the old road to Yarm being the focal point to the centre right/southeast. To the left/east of the bridge, dense vegetation encloses the live railway line, merging with the green corridor in the location of the former Oaktree Junction beyond. In the background underneath the bridge, a recently constructed housing estate can be glimpsed, comprising buildings of locally untypical designs. Galvanised streetlamps are prominent in this view.

View 9b has been taken from Woolsington Drive looking south at the roundabout with the [S] Metal Railway Bridge over the old road to Yarm being the focal point to the centre right/south. To the left/east of it, dense vegetation encloses the live railway line, merging with the green corridor in the location of the former Oaktree Junction beyond. At the right/southwestern edge of the photo, part of a row of bungalows can be glimpsed behind a vertically boarded timber fence. Galvanised streetlamps are prominent in this view.

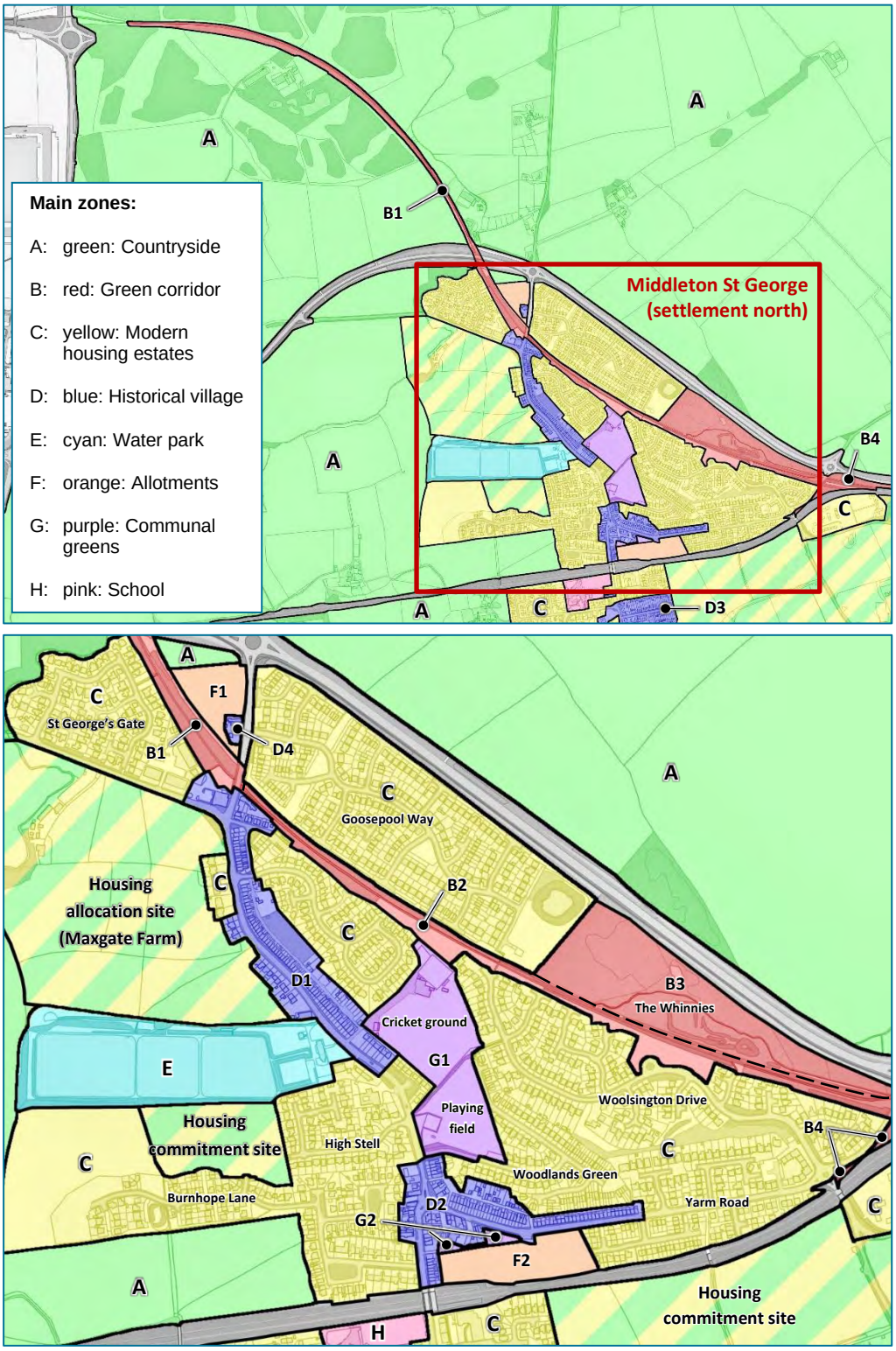
View 10 has been taken from Neasham Road looking east at the junction with Middleton Lane, on the southern fringe of the assessment area, which is largely within the existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area. 2 Middleton Lane with its prominent two gables fronting onto the junction is a focal point and can also be seen from further down the road. To the left/northeast is a modern housing block (outside the existing Conservation Area), its architectural design being out of character with the surrounding historical precedents. To the right/southeast are some of the detached villas built for prosperous families in commerce and industry in the late-nineteenth century. To the far right/south, the mature trees and gated boundary wall used to belong to the grounds of Thorntree House, which is contemporary with the comparatively more modest villas across the road. Whilst the mansion still survives, much of its former plot has been built over by modern houses. In this view metal telegraph poles with multiple lines of wire detract from the focal point.

3.5 Character Analysis

This section provides some of the evidential (and historical) value of the assessment area at the time of review. It should be read in conjunction with the descriptions of the area's layout, planform and setting (see section 3.2), its historical development including structures of interest (see section 3.3) and the spatial analysis including key views (see section 3.4). Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document. Key views are referred to as ***(View 1, 2, …)*** *in the text below.*

Despite the large size of the assessment area, only nine character zones were identified at the time of review, which are shown on the map above. These are

primarily based on development/use types and layouts which define their general appearance. Many zones (A, C, D, F, G) are made of a number of dispersed, separate areas, whilst others (B, E, H) are one continuous area. The A66, A67 and live railway line have not been allocated any zones, as these are transport corridors which create barriers within and between zones.



Character zones. *Top:* Assessment area. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

The character zones have been used to inform the proposed conservation area boundary (see chapter 5.0), based on their special architectural or historic interest.

> ⚠ The significance ratings provided below are within the Darlington Borough context and only concern elements that are still extant.

Zone A – green: Countryside. At the time of review, this was the largest zone in the assessment area. It comprised five separate areas of varying size and is of **moderate heritage interest**. This zone mainly consists of arable and pastoral farmland, including a few horse paddocks, and two nature reserves in the northwestern part of the assessment area. The land is the result of enclosure since the sixteenth century, which has established a patchwork of medium-size fields and dispersed farmstead. It also contains archaeological evidence of preceding medieval open field systems (ridge and furrow) and possible earlier structures. There is good recreational access with a network of public footpaths and bridleways crisscrossing the countryside, contributing to its public enjoyment. Zone A is not only experienced from within it but can also be seen from other zones – although increasingly less so due to new housing construction on (former) Zone A land, see below – the A66 and A67, and the live railway line.

Zone A: South Burdon Community Woodland viewed from the green corridor near its western end (Subzone B1), looking south. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

Lush vegetation is a key characteristic of this zone with trees (e.g. ash and horse chestnut), shrubs and hedges (hawthorn and blackthorn) often defining boundary lines, following watercourses or forming small woodlands such as the South Burdon Community Woodland. The latter comprises a predominantly native broadleaved forest with areas of managed grassland and open-water habitats[171]. Zone A provides habitats for a range of farmland bird species such as yellowhammers and linnets that will nest and forage in the hedgerows; skylarks and grey partridge that will nest on the ground in the longer vegetation; and species such as barn owl, kestrel and bats that will hunt across the fields and field margins for prey. Barn owls and kestrels will nest in veteran trees and agricultural buildings in this zone. The trees and buildings also offer roosting potential for bat species such as common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat. Mammal species recorded include badger, fox, rabbit, and hedgehog.

Whilst the countryside had a key role in the setting of the historic village, in particular to the west of it, it has been and is significantly being encroached upon by modern housing schemes (Zone C). Areas that are currently under construction or have been earmarked for housing under policy H 2 of the Local Plan (see chapter 2.0) are hatched in green and yellow on the map above.

[171] Land Use Consultants 2015, pages 46 & 48

Zone A: Agricultural fields just north of live railway line with new houses along Burnhope Lane (Zone C) being constructed in the adjoining field behind. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone B – red: Green corridor. This is the longest character zone stretching from the northwestern to the southeastern corners of the assessment area. It is of **very high heritage interest**. Whilst Zone B is mainly linear in shape following the former track bed of the original route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) which later became the Fighting Cocks branch line, it also includes the Whinnies nature reserve as well as the location of the former Oaktree Junction at the meeting point with the live line, both in the eastern end of the assessment area. The main character of this zone is being one continuous woodland, apart from the roads which cut across and create small breaks. Thera are no buildings but a few remnant structures and other features relating to former industrial sites, which were key to the historical development of the village, including the following surviving structures of interest:

- [A] Crane Base and Platform
- [B] DRDC Loading Dock
- [C] Waiting Shed (remains)
- [D] Coal Depot (remains)
- [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor (remains)

Zone B also includes the spoil heaps and bridge abutments which are associated with the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works site, see Subzone B3.

Although this character zone is one continuous area, it can, from a pedestrian's perspective, be subdivided into four 'subzones':

B1. the green corridor to the northwest of Sadberge Road
B2. the green corridor between Sadberge Road and Yarm Road
B3. the Whinnies nature reserve
B4. the green corridor and 'woodland' to the east of Yarm Road

Subzone B1. This stretch of the green corridor is of recreational value being fully accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. It provides important connectivity not only for people but also wildlife, with direct links into Zones A, C and D. The track is enclosed by dense vegetation **(View 3)**, which changes with the seasons, growing on the slopes of the railway cutting embankments to both sides. The predominant habitat comprises hawthorn and brambles, offering suitable nesting habitats for species such as blackcap and whitethroat warblers.

Subzone B1: *Top:* Concrete post halfway up the railway cutting embankment viewed from the former level crossing at South Burdon farmhouse (the latter in Zone A). *Middle:* View from the green corridor onto farmland to the southwest (Zone A), with historical drainage channel in the foreground, and a low embankment behind. *Bottom:* View from the green corridor onto the modern housing estate along St George's Gate (Zone C) behind an overgrown cutting embankment, looking southwest. (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

The overall sense of enclosure is very prominent in this subzone's western stretch, where the railway bed lies in cutting. There are the remains of a historical ditch along the southwestern side within the corridor, which was designed to keep the line drained. A number of early stone sleeper blocks had been found discarded here before the rapidly growing undergrowth started to conceal them[172]. There is also a ditch at the top of the cutting on both sides (in places) which collected run off from the adjoining fields. Rabbits have been digging out cinders (not seen by the author) from the old track surface on the northern cutting embankment. In this part of the subzone, views into the adjoining countryside (Zone A) can only be had in a few

[172] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January

locations near South Burdon farmhouse (Zone A) **(View 2),** where there used to be a level railway crossing for the farm. Whilst no particular evidence survives, there is a later concrete post and base at the location of the former crossing which must have carried some sort of signal. Along this stretch there are a number of concrete bases left from the later use as a branch line which presumably supported signals[173].

When approaching the underpass carrying the noisy A67 the sense of enclosure diminishes, with the vegetation becoming less dense and the embankments lower or even disappearing, enabling views onto farmland and farm buildings, although this can also depend on the amount of foliage at the time of the year. The underpass marks the northern entrance into (or exit from) the village of Middleton St George **(View 4)** along the green corridor from the Darlington direction. Immediately to the north of it, a modern access lane comes off to the east of the bridleway. To the south of the underpass, recently constructed houses along St George's Gate (Zone C) can be glimpsed from a few locations. Along the northern side of the green corridor, allotments (Zone F) and a historical semi-detached house beyond (Zone D) can be spotted when there is no or little foliage. When approaching Sadberge Road, the remains of a [A] Crane Base and Platform and other small-scale industrial fragments can be seen in the undergrowth to the right/south. In the area leading to the former level crossing, the green corridor widens where it used to include various sidings branching off the main railway tracks as well as a signal box to the south of the line, adjacent to Sadberge Road. In this location, only the two phases of [D] Coal Depot walling survive. On the opposite/north side of the corridor is the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock.

Subzone B2. This stretch of the green corridor is of recreational value being fully accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. It provides important connectivity not only for people but also wildlife, with direct links into Zones C and D. There are thin strips of woodland and scrub which comprise ash, willow, sycamore, oak, hawthorn and blackthorn, providing a habitat for nesting birds and roosting bats. The understory supports species such as common toads, hedgehogs, and small mammals.

To the east of the level crossing, the corridor is narrow again as it used to accommodate the two tracks of the main line only. On a shallow embankment to the north are the remains of the Stockton-bound [C] Waiting Shed, with some of the new houses off Goosepool Way (Zone C) visible behind. On the opposite side, the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building (Zone D) are not part of this character zone as, although functionally directly linked to the railway corridor, they have physically been separated by a timber fence and long, modern garage now forming a barrier on top of a shallow embankment where the Darlington-bound platform used to be **(View 5)**. In this location, the green corridor has benefited from improvement works carried out by residents, the Friends of the S&DR and a local artist (see section 3.6), re-establishing a sense of arrival at the former station. Carrying on eastwards, trees and shrubs line both sides, with the remains of [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling appearing on the southern railway cutting embankment. In the location where the sidings used to branch off into the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, the vegetation opens up exposing a grassed-over embankment with a greenspace behind, enabling glimpses onto the modern housing off Woolsington Drive (Zone C) where the iron works were located. Shortly further on, an access path branches off to the north giving a clear view onto the other end of the Goosepool Way housing estate. The Whinnies (Subzone B3) start after a greenspace including a pond to the east of the houses, providing a continuous dense woodland along the northern side

[173] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 17

of the corridor up to Yarm Road. Opposite the entrance into the nature reserve, to the southern side of the corridor, the vegetation begins to open up again, exposing a larger greenspace beyond the railway cutting embankment, which enables further views onto the modern housing off Woolsington Drive. Further east, the corridor becomes fully enclosed by vegetation again, with the former track bed of the railway now elevated on top of an embankment. Just before Yarm Road, it slopes down relatively steeply to meet the road, which had been cut into the historical railway embankment.

Subzone B2: *Top:* View along the green corridor looking east, with entrance into the Whinnies local nature reserve (subzone B3) to the left/north and the grassed-over railway cutting embankment to the right/south, with houses off Woolsington Drive (Zone C) in the far background (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Bottom:* View from Yarm Road looking southwest at the embankment of the raised former track bed (as opposed to when the railway lay in cutting as seen on the photo above) with another entrance into the nature reserve to the far right/northwest. In this location, there used to be a railway bridge over Yarm Road. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

Subzone B3. The Whinnies is a five-hectare Local Nature Reserve (LNR) currently managed by Durham Wildlife Trust. It is of recreational value being fully accessible to pedestrians. There is a secluded atmosphere throughout the nature reserve, crisscrossed by earthen paths. Whilst most of this subzone is a dense woodland, there is a large clearing at its western end including a medium-size pond and timber benches. The bumpy topography of the woodland area to the east implies the presence of slag spoil heaps created by the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works, as depicted on the 1912-14 six-inch OS map. In this area, there are also drainage ditches as well as the remains of bridge abutments made of stone (not seen by the author due to heavy vegetation growth) associated with the transport of slag from the former iron works, as shown on the 1912-14 map. The bridge was locally called the Red Bridge, presumably because it was covered in red iron ore dust[174]. Along the border with the former railway corridor (Subzone B2) is a chasm including some dead trees.

[174] Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016, page 30

Subzone B3: *Top:* View from the clearing looking east with pond and seating in the foreground and woodland behind. *Middle:* Woodland with bumpy topography created by the former iron works' slag spoil heaps. *Bottom:* Chasm with dead tree and green corridor (subzone B2) behind the fence line. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

The LNR comprises a series of species-rich grasslands with small ponds, deciduous woodland, and scrub habitats. The meadow to the west is a species-rich calcareous grassland containing species such as quaking-grass, yellow-wort, birds-foot trefoil, agrimony, zig-zag clover, marsh thistle, and meadowsweet. It supports an assemblage of invertebrates including ringlet butterfly, dingy skipper, common and large blue butterfly, and many other butterfly species, as well as a host of other species of invertebrates. The grasslands to the east are dominated by wetter-tolerant species such as ragged robin, yellow flag iris, and devil's bit scabious. The woodland and scrub contain tree species such as elm, wych elm, elder, field maple, oaks, willows, and ash; and shrub species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, and dogwood. The

ponds onsite provide habitat for a range of species including smooth newt, common toad, water scorpions, dragonflies, and fish such as roach, perch, and European eels. There are also historical water vole records for the ponds and ditches onsite.

Subzone B4. This subzone has some recreational value as the path parallel to the live railway line is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The woodland to the north is part of the Whinnies LNR. The woodland to the south of the path is largely within the live railway corridor, fenced off to the public by metal mesh panels; it can also be seen from Yarm Road (Zone C) **(Views 9a & b)** and the live railway line (outside this character zone). Within this enclosure is the location of the former Oaktree Junction, where the former line of the S&DR and the 1887 railway line from Bank Top station met. The overall woodland character of this subzone feels less tranquil than in subzones B1-B3 due to the proximity of Yarm Road, the A67 and the live railway line.

Subzone B4: View looking east along the path between the A67 (to the left/north, out of view) and embanked former route of the S&DR on the right/south which is still part of the live railway corridor, hence fenced off. The approximate location of the former Oaktree Junction is in line with the righthand tree. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

Zone C – yellow: Modern housing estates. This character zone comprises the largest number of separate areas, eight in total at the time of assessment, which come in various shapes and sizes. It is only of **very limited heritage interest**. Its character is residential, with the houses being of non-local and 'suburban' designs, generally arranged along winding cul-de-sacs. The buildings are often two storeys high, although there are also bungalows and a few houses comprising three storeys. Some of the housing estates were built onto the former industrial sites that had been set up following the advent of the railway, most notably the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, but no historical evidence seems to survive in these areas. Others were built onto greenfield sites, formerly belonging to Zone A. Due to the inward-looking nature of these areas, the surrounding character zones often contribute only little to their setting. One exception would be the modern houses that face onto Station Road and Yarm Road in the vicinity of roadside, traditional brick terracing (Zone D), although the new designs generally do not harmonise with the historical precedents.

This zone contains limited ecology interest. However, the urban setting does offer potential for species such as hedgehog, which will use gardens for foraging and commuting. The older buildings may offer roosting potential for bats such as common and soprano pipistrelle, as well as nesting opportunities for swift, starlings, house sparrows, house martins, and swallows. The vegetated gardens offer pollinating plants for bees, butterflies and moths, and hover flies.

Zone C: *Top:* Some of the more typical houses, with their design not being location specific but to a good standard. *Bottom:* A modern attempt of housing design which is visually less successful. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone D – blue: Historical village. This zone consists of four separate areas of various shapes and sizes and is of **medium-to-high heritage interest**. Its general character comprises traditional buildings, often in the form of terraced housing built in red brick, densely lining and facing onto the main roads. Subzones D1 and D2 form the historical cores of the village of Middleton St George and include the largest number of surviving structures of interest of any of the character zones:

- [E] Fighting Cocks Inn
- [F] Station Master's House and Station Building
- [H] The Lyric
- [I] Undenominational Mission Hall
- [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel
- [M] Cocks Memorial Homes
- [N] Havelock Arms Hotel
- [O] Killinghall Arms
- [P] Co-op and Stable
- [Q] Middleton Iron Works (remains)

Zone D can be subdivided into the following subzones:

D1. Fighting Cocks road junction and Station Road
D2. The Square and Yarm Road
D3. Middleton Lane and Chapel Street (this subzone is partly within the existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area)
D4. 1 & 2 Orient Villas, Sadberge Road

This character zone has a similar (limited) ecological interest as Zone C (modern housing estates). The main difference is that subzone D1 links the water park (Zone E) to the green corridor (Zone B). However, as it is poorly vegetated it does not provide an effective wildlife corridor.

Subzone D1. In this key location where the 1825 S&DR crossed the line of the Roman Road **(View 5)**, the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn is not only the oldest surviving building in the village but also a long-distance focal point at the historic Fighting Cocks road junction **(View 6)**, where the development of this settlement first started. It forms a group with the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building on the opposite side of the road, and together they contribute significantly to the setting of the former railway corridor (Zone B) in this location. Along Haxby Road, a cul-de-sac to the east of the junction, traditionally constructed semi-detached brick houses of possible 1930s date continue the historical layout by lining the road.

Subzone D1: *Top left:* Harpers Terrace faced in cast stone, with shallow front gardens. Later canopies spanning between bay windows cut into and obscure the decorative string courses at Nos. 1-4. Whilst the window frames have been changed to different designs, the opening pattern has been well preserved. The decorative lintel design to Nos. 1 and 2 (right) can also be found on window openings to the rear of Station Terrace (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025). *Top right:* Entrance pier with carved stone cockerel, which was brought here from Low Middleton Hall[175], and two commemoration plaques on the gable wall in the background, **[M]** Cocks Memorial Homes. *Middle:* The long Station Terrace with three well preserved houses, although window frames have been changed to different designs. The unit on the left, which would have looked the same, has been changed significantly, like many other houses in this row (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024). *Bottom:* Back lane to rear of Station Terrace with overgrown former allotment gardens to the left/east. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

To the south of the junction, traditional terraces enclose the winding Station Road along its eastern side. The northern-most row, called Harpers Terrace, which is first

[175] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

shown on the 1913 OS map, appears, unusually, to be faced in cast/artificial stone which has been painted white, with the original roadside opening pattern seemingly intact. It features later canopies spanning between the ground-floor bay windows. Many of the red brick houses of the next, much longer Station Terrace had their original openings changed in size and/or are now rendered. Behind this terrace, adjoining the back lane, is a large, enclosed greenspace which used to be allotment gardens shown on the 1939 map. It is currently very overgrown but still full of fruit trees and wildlife[176]. Further south are various gable-fronted properties including the former [I] Undenominational Mission Hall and [H] the Lyric which face onto the spine road through the village. Next, there is another terrace, called Water View, with more generous front gardens than the preceding properties, and again with canopies spanning between the bay windows on some of the houses. Despite the many changes to the buildings, historic features can still be found, such as prominent chimney stacks, ornate eaves detailing, shaped lintels and traditional boundary treatments.

Water View, the southern terrace, of which parts have been rendered. There is a continuous ground-floor canopy and the original opening pattern has been preserved. The front garden in the middle has an unusual stone boundary wall with metal railings and distinct carved piers, which are in poor condition. Note the eaves detailing on the right-hand, earlier house. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

To the south of the terraced houses, set back from the road behind a generous front garden including mature trees, are the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes. They are designed in an Arts and Craft style, which seems unique for the assessment area. The houses have modern rear extensions and appear to be well preserved. On the opposite (west) side of Station Road, semi-detached houses of possible 1930s date behind front gardens have been included in this zone as they contribute to the enclosure of space. Gaps between the buildings still enable views into the countryside, although for not much longer, as construction on the Maxgate Farm housing site behind has started. To the south, the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, with round-arched openings, is set at an angle to the road, providing another long-distance focal point **(Views 7a & b)**.

Subzone D2. This area centres around the Square **(Views 8a & b)**, the southern road junction along the spine route through the village, which includes a roundabout. Development started here in the second half of the nineteenth century to provide workers of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works with housing and amenity facilities. Today a

[176] Lombard-Earl, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 31 January

short section of boundary walling to the east of Killinghall Row is all that survives of the former iron works, which were crucial to the historical development of the village. Killinghall Row faces directly onto the pavement along Yarm Road and has a stepped roofscape reflecting the sloping topography. Many of the houses have undergone significant changes with regards to their openings and/or received a modern render, although the rhythm created by the chimney stacks has largely survived. The next building row to the north (New Row and Pemberton Terrace) is quite similar but set back behind generous front gardens. Only one house stands out as positive with its original opening pattern intact and brick façade on display.

Subzone D2: *Top left:* Two well-preserved houses at Killinghall Row, the first terrace built for the iron workers, which face directly onto the pavement. *Top right:* Former stationmaster's house for Dinsdale Station at the south end of Belle Vue Terrace (Photos © Gaby Rose, March 2024). *Bottom:* Harts Buildings at the southern end of Station Road with polychromatic brickwork. Whilst Nos. 1-4 appear to be built around the same time, there is a clear change in construction between Nos. 2 and 3, including different eaves and window surround designs, and the use of a different type of red brick. The once continuous roof surface has now been broken up by using different materials. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Around the Square, individual buildings are grouped more organically. The former [O] Killinghall Arms has been extended with an additional unit to either side under one roof. The [N] Havelock Arms Hotel across the road still reads as a detached building. On the east side of Station Road is a short red brick terrace called Harts Buildings behind front gardens. Detailing in Pease brick is of interest and there are also canopies spanning from the ground-floor bay windows, as already seen further up the street. Whilst Nos. 1-4 were constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century, the northern-most property (No. 5) was built by Hadleys, the company that occupied the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works site from 1960 to 2003[177].

[177] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

Down Middleton Lane is the former [P] Co-op and Stable with some modern buildings to the opposite side of the road, which generally fit in well. Bellevue Court to the south of the former Co-op appears less successful. Following a gap, there is a traditional row called Belle Vue Terrace set back from the road behind a shallow front garden. A distinctly different house is attached to the southern end of this row, which was built as a stationmaster's house for Dinsdale Station[178]. Again, there have been the typical alterations to individual properties, although the continuous decorative eaves brick band and rhythm created by the chimneys remain.

Subzone D3. This fragment of an area to the south of Dinsdale Station was first developed in the second half of the nineteenth century with better-class housing for prosperous families in commerce and industry **(View 10)**, who were not constrained to live in close proximity to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works. At the time of assessment, the plots along Middleton Lane and Thorntree House were within the Middleton One Row Conservation Area.

Subzone D4. This small, isolated plot comprises a semi-detached house along Sadberge Road, which was built in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nellie Hawkins who worked in the signal box during the war lived in one of them[179]. The building makes a strong contribution along this stretch of the road.

Subzone D4: Semidetached house, surrounded by allotments (Zone F) and lush roadside vegetation. It is unusual that bay windows are on the gable end, although this seems to be the main elevation. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone E – cyan: Water park. This single area comprises the water park, including boating and fishing ponds, a nature trail and the premises of the Middleton St George Community Centre and Parish Council. The former reservoirs, in particular the outdoor sports court, are of **high heritage interest** being directly linked to the nineteenth-century growth of the Teesside towns and industries and the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage and providing the village with early piped water. Most of the site is accessible to the public and of high recreational/communal value. It also contributes to the setting of the adjoining character zones (A, A/C, C and D).

Zone E includes the following surviving structures of interest:

- [K] Board Room & Entrance Gate
- [L] Pumping Station

[178] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[179] Hugill, N. 2023. Email to Peter Bainbridge, 15 November

Both the former [L] Pumping Station and [K] Board Room are set back at an angle to Station Road and align with the orientation of the [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in the adjoining plot (Zone D). Whilst the former is an unusual modernist building for Middleton St George and visible from the main road, the latter is traditionally designed and largely concealed by lush vegetation, although its curved [K] Entrance Gate provides a notable roadside presence. The most dominant feature in this zone is the embanked three former reservoirs which now form the water park. They have trees growing on their embankments as well as a public footpath on top and are quite visible from the surroundings. The ongoing construction of the housing estates (Zone C) around Burnhope Lane (to the south) and Maxgate Farm (to the north) is starting to have a negative impact on the setting of this recreational landscape, with the new housing being visible from the elevated water park, spoiling what were until recently natural surroundings (Zone A) (see section 4.1).

The ponds are vegetated with flag iris and bulrush to the borders, and the angling ponds are stocked with species such as carp, perch, and roach. They support water birds such as mallard, moorhen, and coot, with herons using the ponds for hunting. Occasional otters use the reservoir within their commuting route through the area. The reservoirs also support foraging Daubenton's bats on an evening, which catch insects over the water. The areas around the basins comprise amenity grassland and woodland. The former is predominant to the south and adjacent to the car parking areas. Trees present within the latter include ash, rowan, field maple, elm, willow, crab apple, and cherry. The trees are mature and will support a wide range of nesting birds as well as roosting bats.

Zone E: *Top:* View along the southern embankment of the former reservoirs which form the water park, looking east. *Bottom:* Former original reservoir turned into a sports court, looking northeast, with Middleton St George Community Centre in the background and metal artwork in the foreground. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

To the northwest and west at the bottom of the embanked water park, there is a small woodland including a nature trail. From here, there are views and glimpses north as well as footpaths into what was until recently pasture and is now being

developed into a large housing estate (Maxgate Farm). The nature trail includes various metal artworks, way markers, interpretation boards, benches and old reservoir walling (see section 4.1), which add interest to Zone E.

The woodland contains ground cover which support an assemblage of invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians, and larger mammals such as roe deer. It also contains plant species which are indicative of ancient woodland, such as dogs' mercury, red campion, wood avens, herb-robert, guelder rose, wood sedge, and hairy brome. These indicators demonstrate that the woodland has been present for a long time and is in generally good condition. Bird species observed included chiffchaff, blackcap, bullfinch, chaffinch, goldfinch, robin, and wren.

Zone E: Small woodland with nature trail including a bench and view into the landscape prior to construction start of the Maxgate Farm housing estate (left) and an old brick wall boundary with stone copings to the bottom of the western reservoir embankment (right). (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Zone F – orange: Allotments. This zone is made of two separate areas and is of **medium heritage interest**. The allotment gardens were created to help feed families through home food production during the depression and during the rationing years of the Second World War. This zone is very private with public views much concealed by dense vegetation, which contributes to the setting of Zones B, C, D and G.

Zone F: Allotment gardens to the south of Yarm Road, looking south from the triangular greenspace in Zone G. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

Allotments can offer some biodiversity interest, and often function as green corridors and habitats for wildlife. The northernmost allotments along Sadberge Road (F1) are bounded by mature hawthorn and elder hedgerows with trees such as ash within the hedgerows. The southernmost allotment along Killinghall Row (F2) contains hedgerows which are more heavily managed and shorter in height and width but would still offer some limited interest from birds and other wildlife. The boundary hedges and trees offer nest habitat for birds such as chaffinch, goldfinch, blackbird, and dunnock; as well as offering foraging and pollinating opportunities. The linear hedgerows also create green corridors for hedgehogs to shelter and commute, and for bats such as whiskered bat to commute and forage along.

Zone G – purple: Communal greens. This zone comprises various open greenspaces and is of **medium heritage interest**. It includes the cricket ground and playing field (G1) which adjoin and contain some mature trees to the borders. The latter is a roughly triangular shaped field. Its eastern side used to be the boundary to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works and the path along its northwestern side represents the line of a former access route from the spine road to the iron works. In addition, there are two much smaller triangular public spaces (G2) to the south and southeast of the Square, which are first shown on the 1912-14 OS map. They are connected by a narrow earthen footpath enclosed by tall hedges to either side. Most of this zone is accessible to the public and of high recreational/communal value.

Zone G: *Top:* Playing field to the left/southeast with a line of mature trees along the path next to the adjoining cricket ground on the right/northwest, behind a tall metal fence. *Middle:* Greenspace to the southeast of the Square, with footpath to the left/west leading to a smaller triangular greenspace, looking west. *Bottom:* Smaller greenspace to the south of the Square, also looking west. (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

This zone predominantly consists of areas of amenity grassland, with trees and hedges to the borders. The grassland comprises typical managed grassland species such as perennial rye grass, red fescue, cockfoot, and Yorkshire fog. Other plant species within the grassland are daisy, creeping buttercup, self-heal, white clover, and dandelions. Trees present to the borders of the grassland include ash, poplar, copper beech, black locust, crab apple, elm, willow and black oak. The hedges to the borders are predominantly hawthorn. Due to the heavily managed nature of the grassland, it offers little interest to pollinators but may provide some foraging opportunities to hedgehogs. The trees and hedgerows offer more potential, with some fruiting and flowering trees providing foraging and pollination interest to a range of species.

Zone H – pink: School. This is one single area which adjoins the live railway line to the south. It comprises the premises of the St George's Church of England Primary School including a grassed playing field to the northeast, the Women's Institute and scouts' building. It is of **low heritage interest**. The dwarf boundary wall is possibly the sole surviving remnant of the 1911 school. Prior to that, this zone was part of a field along the line of the former Roman Road, a line which has been retained in the current school's western boundary. The three existing buildings are of very different architectural styles, with the large modern school complex including curved elements, the institute being a traditional timber-boarded 'hut', and the more recently constructed scouts' building having an unconventional, functional appearance. None of them harmonise together or with the surrounding buildings. Overall, this is not really a proper character zone but an assemblage of structures which do not belong into any of the adjoining zones (C and D). The ecological value of this area is similar to Zone G (communal greens).

Zone H: *Top:* St George's Church of England Primary School with historical dwarf boundary wall in the foreground, which would have been topped by vertical metal railings. *Bottom:* Women's Institute and new scouts' building (right). (Photos © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

3.6 Value Attributed by the Local Community and Other Stakeholders

Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area responded that they most value the area's (see appendix 2):

- Nature (reserves), trees, greenspaces and surrounding countryside
- Historical structures/features/assets
- Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR)/Fighting Cocks Station and former railway corridor
- History including agricultural and industrial heritage, and its undeniable links to the S&DR
- Great community and Middleton St George being a lovely place to live
- Cricket Club, water park, the [M] Havelock Arms and village centre
- Excellent transport links

Middleton St George is a pleasant village and desirable place to live, hence its continuing significant growth in housing. It is well connected by automobile (A67), train (Dinsdale Station) and plane (Teesside Airport to the east outside the assessment area) and has good access links into the countryside and nature reserves via public foot-, bridle- and cycle paths (see section 3.2). The assessment area includes various amenities for residents and visitors such as a number of shops, a post office, a pub (the [M] Havelock Arms), a restaurant (the former [O] Killinghall Arms), cafes, takeaways, a pharmacy, a veterinary practice, a primary school and other services, as well as leisure facilities including a playing field, cricket club, history group, women's institute, water park including model boat and fishing clubs, and scouts. In the past, there were also two garages/petrol stations in the village[180]. At the water park, the Community Centre (former [L] Pumping Station) is a thriving hub, managed by trustees as a charitable body. The trustees, together with a growing membership, form the Middleton St George Community Association and are responsible for the maintenance of the buildings and the activities provided by multiple hirers for the benefit of all residents of the village and beyond[181].

At the time of consultation (see section 1.3), Middleton St George was a well-to-do place with houses prices being at an average of £250,047 over the last year (Darlington, by comparison, was £163,307). The majority of sales were detached properties selling for an average price of £323,700 (by comparison, the majority of sales in Darlington were semi-detached houses at an average price of £169,130[182]; in County Durham, the majority of sales during the last year were terraced properties at an average price of £109,762[183]). Moreover, sold prices in Middleton St. George over the last year were 5% up on the previous year and 12% down on the 2022 peak of £283,019[184].

[180] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[181] https://msgcommunitycentre.co.uk/about-us/our-history/
[182] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/darlington.html
[183] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices-in-County-Durham.html
[184] https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/middleton-st-george.html

The communal value of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) as a whole, including the former section that goes through the assessment area, is of considerable significance to the heritage sector locally, nationally and internationally, and there is a growing interest in early railway infrastructure from the wider public. Those who appreciate or actively promote it are in effect an international community, including the following regional groups[185]:

- Darlington Model Railway Club
- Darlington Railway Museum Trust
- Darlington Railway Preservation Society
- Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway
- the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust
- the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Society
- the North Eastern Railway Association

In addition, the parish has two local groups, the **Middleton St George Local History Group** and **Middletons in Bloom**, who deserve recognition for their interest in and work on the former S&DR line and elsewhere[186]. The Local History Group former was at first informally set up in 2003 with the desire to bring people in the village together in a social setting and to use the former [L] Pumping Station, which at that time had very nearly been closed down. They also wanted to try to give residents more knowledge of the village and the surrounding area, hoping that they would contribute their memories or do some documentary research into the local history. Middletons in Bloom is a volunteer-led group that works with other organisations and businesses across the community entering the Northumbria in Bloom each year, which is a campaign that recognises, encourages and rewards community groups who work together to transform their village, town or city through gardening, environmental awareness and community support. They also create a month-by-month calendar annually with photos of nature imagery (e.g. wildlife, flowers, trees, scenery and gardens) taken by residents.

In 2017, Historic England accepted the whole 26-mile route of the former S&DR as a **Heritage Action Zone** (HAZ), following an application by the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Board, which included Darlington Borough Council. The overall HAZ initiative is working with local people and partners to breathe new life into places that are rich in heritage, to unlock their potential and make them more attractive to residents, businesses, tourists and investors. Launched in May 2018 and running for five years, the S&DR HAZ aimed to better manage, preserve and utilise heritage assets with a view to stimulating economic growth through various projects in the build-up to the railway's bicentenary in 2025[187] (see below). HAZ programme outputs which directly affect Middleton St George include improvement works to the level crossing and the provision of information and interpretation (Projects 6 and 13 of the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub (see section 4.3)).

In early 2020, the Parish Council and Friends of the S&DR responded to local interest by establishing the **Middleton St George S&DR Heritage Steering Group** with the mission of delivering the **Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub**. This involves a number of projects to enhance the historic station site. The following tasks have commenced or already been completed[188]:

[185] Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2013, pages 33-34
[186] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January
[187] Knight 2019, page 4
[188] Chisholm (2022)

New Fighting Cocks name board (project 2b) fixed to the left/southeast of the mural (project 4) on the recently installed fence (project 2a), which is of a railway station design. The mural has since been slightly amended with the addition of a carriage. Also note the colourful flower border on the embankment created by the owner of the former **[F]** Station Building. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

- Project 1 'Waiting Shed': Work on the consolidation of the remains of the [C] Waiting Shed started in July 2024. The Friends of the S&DR provided funding for stone copings and labour to carry out the works. One of the members did the brick laying and supplied lime mortar. Later, an information board and seating will be installed, and the area will be suitably landscaped and made wheelchair accessible.
- Project 2a 'Railway Fence': The current owner of the former [F] Station Building replaced some 25 metres of the previous domestic-style boundary fence with a traditional North Eastern Railway station type with diagonal palings facing the former track. The Friends of the S&DR contributed towards the cost of the new fence.
- Project 2b 'Station Name Board': Friends of the S&DR member Peter Bainbridge crafted a traditionally designed Fighting Cocks board in timber and fixed it onto the new fence in April 2024.
- Project 3 'Track Installation': Old concrete railway sleepers have been installed in front of the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock.
- Project 4 'Railway Mural': The current owner of the former [F] Station Building kindly permitted the painting of a mural on their garage facing the former track. Artist Lewis Hobson of Durham Spray Paints depicted the old station with a train. The costs of the spray paints (£1,500) received a 50% grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, whilst the other half was paid for by the Friends of the S&DR. At the end of April 2024, local school children attended the painting of the mural. They were also allowed to sow wildflowers on a prepared patch of soil between the garage and Sadberge Road. The official unveiling of the mural was on 4 May 2024, alongside activities for children.
- Project 7 'Coal Depot': Vegetation clearance by volunteers has exposed the (brick and) stone retaining boundary wall of the former [D] Coal Depot. Outstanding works include an archaeological investigation of the walling. Visible remains will be secured/made

good and the area properly landscaped, with interpretation. The proposed picnic table area could become a public garden.

- Project 8 'Loading Dock Wall': Vegetation and earth build up were removed by volunteers to bring the former [B] DRDC Loading Dock better into view and allow the wall to be inspected and repaired as necessary.
- Project 16 'Conservation Volunteers': A team of volunteers has been established by the Friends of the S&DR who clear vegetation and recover bricks and other re-useable materials. They meet on a Friday every two weeks to carry out maintenance works at Fighting Cocks.
- Project 17 'Conservation Area': An investigation to create a new conservation area has been carried out by conservation officers at Darlington Borough Council and, previously, Durham County Council.

In April 2020, the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn was listed as an Asset of Community Value with Darlington Borough Council, giving the local community an increased chance to buy the asset when it came up for sale, which in this case however did not happen. The former inn was removed from the list in November 2021 following relevant disposal (transfer of the freehold)[189].

In 2021, the **Beamish Museum**, an open-air museum to the south of Newcastle-upon-Tyne which brings the history of the Northeast of England to life, recreated Middleton St George's 1950s fish and chip shop which used to adjoin the [O] Killinghall Arms to the left/north. The building was constructed within the museum's 1950s Town as part of the Remaking Beamish project, grant aided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and forms the end property of a row with three other building replicas from elsewhere in the Northeast. The community of Middleton St George had been involved during the creation of the project[190]. Today, the premises of the original fish and chip shop are occupied by a takeaway.

For 2025, various activities are being planned for the **Bicentenary of the S&DR** by the local community. There will be a week full of events in Middleton St George from 14 to 22 June 2025, including an exhibition of railway-related photographs at the Women's Institute, a railway-related song organised by St. George's CE Academy, bunting and yarn bombing to decorate the village, and many other activities. The Summer Fair in August and Middletons in Bloom (see above) will also have railway-related themes in 2025. Moreover, there is a proposal for a permanent heritage trail identifying locations of historical interest (not just railway related)[191].

[189] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/communities/assets-of-community-value
[190] https://www.beamish.org.uk/news/chip-in-with-beamishs-1950s-town-at-middleton-st-george-event/
[191] https://www.sdr1825.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/MSG-Stockton-and-Darlington-Railway-Bicentenary-Organisaing-Group-Report-to-Friends-03.10.2024.pdf

4.0 Condition, Threats and Opportunities

This chapter is intended to inform future management plans if a conservation area was to be designated. These would be subject to public consultation.

4.1 Condition and Current Issues

This section should be read in conjunction with the historical development of the assessment area (see section 3.3), its spatial analysis (see section 3.4), character analysis (see section 3.5) and the value attributed by the community and other stakeholders (see section 3.6), which provide further information or examples on most of the issues raised below.

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area voiced concerns about (see appendix 2):

- Too much and unsuitable new housing
- Lack of new infrastructure/amenities improvements following housing expansions, increase in traffic and parking issues
- Loss of village 'feel' and community spirit
- Loss of the village's heritage and greenspaces
- Insensitive 'upgrading' of old properties by landlords
- There being very limited resources for children of school age or late teens to do activities
- Vegetation removal and vandalism at the water park

At the time of review, the assessment area was overall in good condition in terms of its maintenance status. There were, however, a number of issues which have degraded the built/historical/natural environment:

Until quite recently, the western parish boundary coincided with the line of the former **Roman Road**, following field boundaries and what is now Sadberge Road. Due to the relentless expansion of the village, this ancient parish line was abandoned and a new line drawn further west in 2016. In addition, the new housing estate off Burnhope Lane, which is currently under construction, cuts across the line of Cade's Road, diluting its readability.

It is very obvious that **modern housing schemes** have been swallowing up the historical village. Initially, these were built on the old industrial sites, regrettably also leading to the demolition of the last surviving buildings of the Middleton Iron Works, including the blowing engine house[192]. With the old industrial sites now built over, new housing is being provided in the adjacent countryside to the west which used to form the setting of the village until very recently, also resulting in the loss of existing trees, hedgerows and wildlife habitat. Public footpaths which used to lead through agricultural fields now go through housing estates, taking away from their recreational value. Overall, Middleton St George is increasingly being developed into a suburban sprawl, which is not how the place set out to be (linear village). The designs and layouts of the new residences do not harmonise with the higher-density old houses (terraces) which face onto the main roads. The new buildings employ a

[192] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/7007010.losing-last-reminders-ironworks-industry/

generic architectural language which is not location-specific to Middleton St George and are loosely arranged around long, winding cul-de-sacs with multiple short cul-de-sacs branching off. Such layouts can lead to problems like emergency accessibility and crime, the latter especially presenting opportunities where escape routes exist, such as footpaths leading from the estates[193]. In addition, residents have mentioned traffic and car parking problems arising from the increase in housing and lack of appropriate infrastructure improvements (see appendix 2). Finally, it needs to be mentioned that the naming of the streets for such new developments never acknowledges the industrial antecedents of Middleton St George[194].

When the railway line was operational, there were no or only a few trees besides it. Today, excessive vegetation growth within the **green corridor** is a maintenance issue. There is a need to keep the path clear for public access and enjoyment, including key views, balanced against the need to protect wildlife habitats and ecology value. The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway carry out regular trimming and weeding works in the corridor at the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub. Their volunteers often find it 'impossible' to keep on top of things due to the lack of sufficient manpower, larger-scale equipment and seasonal restrictions to carry out works. However, recent cooperation between the Friends and Darlington Borough Council officers has resulted in successful clearance along the path[195]. The Friends own a small patch of land to the north of the former inn (location of former coal depot), whilst the remainder of the corridor is owned by the Council.

View from northern embankment across the western-most basin of the water park, with new housing estate visible in the background. The buildings are more prominent when there is no direct blinding sunlight. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

In the beginning of 2021, there was upheaval amongst residents about the removal of vegetation from the southern embankment of the three former reservoirs which now form the **water park**[196], opening up the view onto a large new housing scheme under construction. The parish council had commissioned a Reservoir Engineer to inspect the structural stability of the embankments in 2019, due to the imminent construction of the houses in the adjoining field. The survey report contained a strong recommendation for the clearance of all vegetation from the top to the

[193] The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) pages 20 & 88
[194] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January
[195] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January
[196] https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19087108.fury-hedges-removed-middleton-st-georges-water-park/

bottom of the southern bank and its replacement with grass, as this would enable easier visual monitoring of the bank with regard to any dam leakages which might occur[197]. The most recent engineer's report of 2023 reiterates that *there should be no trees, coarse vegetation (brambles/shrubs etc) and that the embankments have good grass cover to resist erosion by rainfall, animals, people etc and in the extreme to protect the embankment should the reservoirs overfill and then overflow*[198]. Although there were originally no trees on the reservoir embankments, the site has become a nature spot of communal value, which is now being surrounded by new housing estates along its northern and southern sides. Whilst dense vegetation would help conceal unsightly views and protect wildlife habitats and tranquillity, it will also need to balanced against potential risks to public health and safety.

Another issue at the water park concerns an old reservoirs boundary wall along the bottom of the western embankment, which is accessible from the nature trail. It is built in red brick and has sandstone capping (see section 3.5/E). Whilst there is some structural movement evident, probably due to pressures from the sloping embankment behind, the main concern is acts of vandalism that have resulted in the destruction of a long stretch of the walling[199]. A quantity of discarded brick and stone, along with rubbish, can be found near the destroyed section, which includes the wall's former southern terminal pillar. In contrast, a curved brick wall at the western corner of the northern embankment survives in good condition.

Top: End section and terminal pier (right) of former reservoir embankment walling that has been destroyed by vandals. *Bottom:* Discarded rubbish, bricks and stone cappings opposite the dismantled walling. (Photos © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

[197] https://middleton-st-george.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Extraordinary-Parish-Council-Meeting-15.02.2021-Signed-Minutes.pdf

[198] Dams & Reservoirs Ltd (2023) page 10

[199] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

Inside the village, **traditional buildings** have suffered the following harmful interventions, with those in bold having had the most detrimental impact:

- Loss of historical features
- Lowering of original chimney stacks
- Introduction of new roofing materials (including on existing canopies), roof lights and solar PV panels on road-facing elevations
- Plastic rainwater goods, especially those in a light colour
- **Change of original opening patterns including changes to opening sizes/proportions** and introduction of Juliet balcony
- **Change of original window frame layouts**
- **Non-traditional window and door replacements**, often using off-the-shelf uPVC products
- **Use of paint/render, including poorly chosen colours, on facing brick or stonework**
- **Use of incompatible building materials on external solid walling**, such as cement pointing and modern renders and paints, which have a high risk of causing long-term damp problems resulting in cold, unhealthy interiors
- Modern canopy and porch designs
- Unsympathetic rear extensions including flat roofs

Extensions to rear of traditional terrace with flat roofs, modern renders and inappropriate window proportions, viewed from public footpath. (Photo © Gaby Rose, May 2024)

The **public realm** within the village includes the following detractors which have a negative impact on the historical environment:

- Loss of historical front gardens
- Change of original boundary treatments with modern designs
- Large number of wall-mounted satellite dishes facing the main roads
- Prominent wooden and metal telegraph poles with overhead wires
- Unsympathetic galvanised streetlights and traffic/bus-stop sign posts
- Lack of coordination in the design of lighting columns and other street furniture
- Utilitarian bus shelter (although painted to blend in) squeezed onto a narrow stretch of pavement in front of the former methodist chapel
- Plastic bollards and advertisement on the forecourt of the former inn
- Blistered and tarmacked pavements, the latter sometimes poorly patched
- Untidy back lanes

Back lane behind one of the traditional terraces with dumped rubbish. Saplings and other vegetation taking hold on the last remnant of the former iron works site. (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024)

4.2 Threats and Potential Future Issues

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area identified the following threats to Middleton St George (see appendix 2):

- New housing and its impact on historical assets, nature/trees/ greenspaces/habitats/farmland and tranquillity
- New housing designs
- New housing being unaffordable for first-time buyers, possibly forcing people born and raised in the village to leave
- Closure of shops and businesses
- Middleton St George losing its identity as a village and becoming a small town with few extra amenities
- Possible future loss of the water park

One of the main threats to the historical village is the **continued housing expansion**. Landowners may be enticed to sell their agricultural fields, especially if it yields a better profit than farming them. In particular, the countryside to the west of the settlement and the gap between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row should be (have been) retained as open fields due to their strong contribution as setting and readability of the villages' historical planforms. There are less sensitive areas which could be developed instead. Moreover, the continued supply of housing schemes incorporating generic building designs along cul-de-sacs does dilutes the local distinctiveness and heritage interest of Middleton St George. There needs to be a masterplan (see section 4.3) setting out how the village can be sustainably expanded so that it can fully support its residents whilst retaining or enhancing its sense of place. Further expansion will also necessitate the provision of an adequate road network (not dead ends) and appropriate services within the village.

During the public consultation, further concern about the **water park** was raised (in addition to the removed embankment vegetation and vandalised boundary walling, see section 4.1). Apparently, it would *not [be] impossible that at some time in the future there will be pressure to remove the water altogether and flatten the*

reservoirs[200]. Such development will require planning permission. Whilst the heritage significance and communal value of the site, particularly if included in a conservation area designation, would be in favour of the water park's retention, other material considerations will also need to be weighed in the decision-making process.

Old buildings and other structures (e.g. boundary walling) remain at risk of being lost or further disfigured, possibly to make existing plots more economically viable. Moreover, salespeople and building contractors often 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, as already evident throughout the historical village. Removing, damaging or concealing traditional fabric and features from an old property can also reduce its market value.

4.3 Opportunities for Enhancement

This section should be revisited when formulating a conservation area management plan in the future. *Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.*

During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the assessment area made the following suggestions for preventing further harm or implementing positive change in Middleton St George (see appendix 2):

- Stop or decrease building more houses
- Provide more wildlife, trees and flowers (grass verges), and preserve existing green areas
- Designate conservation area with Article 4 Direction to control/ monitor future development including alterations
- Provide a planning process whereby decisions for new buildings are both rigorously scrutinised and sanctioned by the parish council
- Preserve the village identity that is left
- Enhance and bring back the lost character of unsympathetically upgraded old properties
- Provide a list of products suitable for renovating old houses and other key information to residents within the conservation area
- Provide additional community resources and invest into community projects and local security (e.g. CCTV and static cameras)

It is hoped that this appraisal document will help residents, local businesses, investors, planners and highways/utility authorities understand how heritage significance is embodied within the assessment area and provide them with the knowledge to prevent future harm and enable positive change.

[200] Wheeler, J.S. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 21 January

The Middleton St George **Neighbourhood Plan** has identified a number of community actions to improve the parish, which could be delivered by the parish council in conjunction with other local organisations[201]:

1. Create wildflower areas, e.g. along Sadberge Road
2. Support the delivery of the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub (see below)
3. Install interpretation boards at water park and in the green corridor
4. Better control dog fouling
5. Remove overhead cables thought the village
6. Identify community wildlife projects
7. Seek a net-zero carbon future for the parish
8. Improve current play area
9. Improve the water park, e.g. lighting, trails
10. Provide more facilities for young people
11. Provide more facilities for older people
12. Improve multi-use games area
13. Create a community garden
14. Work with Darlington Borough Council to tackle anti-social behaviour more efficiently
15. Work with the Council to improve highway safety
16. Provide an integrated approach to bus service provision
17. Work with the Council to deliver paths improvements
18. Make improvements to unadopted road leading to the cricket club
19. Ensure that development provides appropriate path and cycleway links from estate roads to the existing footpath/cycleway network

With regards to community action 2 above, outstanding works of the **Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub** include[202]:

- Project 5 'Old Mill Wall': Repair and partially reinstate the remains of the [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling.
- Project 6 'Level Crossing': Replace existing gates with a more railway-crossing themed design. Possibly create traffic calming features at all former level crossings along the line, with setts replicating early sleeper blocks or with metal rails inserted into the carriageway.
- Project 9 'Crane Base': Some of the brickwork of the [A] Crane Base requires repointing. Its surroundings could be cleared of vegetation and a feature created with the other remains nearby.
- Project 10 'Highway Artwork': Install a railway-heritage-themed village sign on Sadberge Road.
- Project 11 'New Hedge': Housing developers are required to plant 30 metres hedge behind the [C] Waiting Shed following completion of project 1 (see section 3.6).
- Project 12 'Fighting Cocks Inn': The developer of the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn is required to affix an information panel to the building describing its origin and heritage importance.
- Project 13 'Information and Interpretation': Details TBC
- Project 14 'Car and Cycle Parking': Parking bays or a lay-by for visitors could be created on Sadberge Road. Cycle parking rails or stands should be provided in a secure location.

[201] Middleton St George Parish Council 2022, pages 32-34 (annex 2)
[202] Chisholm (2022)

- Project 15 'Publicity': Updates on the Heritage Hub will be circulated. Guided tours and explanations of the projects will again be given in order to encourage local people and business to become involved.

The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway have some funding reserved for the remaining projects of the Heritage Hub. External sources must however be found to complete the works. Having a conservation area designated would be of great help for the Friends[203].

Besides project 5 of the Heritage Hub, the author of this appraisal suggests that further structures of significance outside the project area would also benefit from **restoration or consolidation works**:

- The western wall at the bottom of the embankment of the water park (see section 4.1)
- The surviving boundary wall of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works behind Killinghall Row

With regards to project 13, the author suggests that the following locations may be suitable for **on-site interpretation**, including some outside the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub project area:

- Within green corridor: former crossing at South Burdon Farmhouse, [A] Crane Base & Platform, [B] DRDC Loading Dock, [C] Waiting Shed, [D] Coal Depot, [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor walling, [Q] Middleton Iron Works, and Oaktree Junction
- Within the Whinnies: spoil heaps and former bridge linking to [Q] Middleton Iron Works site
- In the water park: former service reservoirs (including embankment walling), [K] Board Room and [L] Pumping Station
- In the playfield: old boundary line of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works
- At the surviving boundary wall of the [Q] Middleton Iron Works

Besides interpretation boards, a **digital heritage trail** could be created on Darlington Borough Council's existing *Darlington Town Centre Trails* app.

> If Middleton St George is designated as a conservation area, it will be easier to obtain **grant money** from external sources for interpretation and restoration/consolidation works.

In addition to the existing Neighbourhood Plan, a **strategic masterplan including location-specific design guide** could be produced, providing clear guidelines for sensitive development within the assessment area. It could be adopted as a supplementary planning document and be a helpful tool for applicants, agents and planners, as well as homeowners, businesses and highways/utility authorities who wish to carry out works under permitted development rights. Whilst it would not create instant change the masterplan could enable smaller steps in the right direction at a time and therefore be a beneficial long-term tool. It should include:

- Existing/proposed road and other transport networks incl. carparks
- Existing/proposed building orientations, types, massings and designs

[203] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January

- Existing/proposed green and communal spaces
- Existing/proposed zones of different use types, how they interact (e.g. residential – commercial – leisure) and how they are served by the transport system
- General guidelines for sympathetic improvement and maintenance works to traditional buildings
- Opportunities for improvements within the public realm

With regards to the penultimate point, **traditional buildings** that have been disfigured or otherwise altered can, for example, be visually improved by reinstating their original opening pattern including appropriate fenestration and removing any modern renders, external paints and insulation. Besides their negative visual impact, the latter are likely to have also resulted in long-term damp problems (see section 4.2). It is *essential* that the *entire* wall 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-wall buildings 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. With regards to the latter, an external wall could, for example, be safely upgraded by applying an insulating lime plaster of a maximum thickness of five centimetres to its interior face. Any further insulation 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[204].

Left: The northern end house of Killinghall Row shows that, despite the insertion of larger openings, the original lintels have been retained (circled in yellow). This is likely to be the case with many of the other properties that have been altered. The reinstatement of the original openings here should therefore be fairly straightforward (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025). *Right:* Cross references can be made by looking at properties within the row that have been well preserved. Here, the replacement frames using a 2x2 sash type seems appropriate for the construction date of the row (c.1864). Note that these are uPVC windows which is not evident unless you look in detail! Their slim frames and glazing bars as well as them being set back in the masonry allow them to fit in almost perfectly (Photo © Gaby Rose, March 2024).

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

[204] See Building Conservation Directory website

are now high-end uPVC products on the market which mimic traditional windows very well, as seen in the photo above. 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[205], which is preferable to replacing them as they are becoming a rare resource.

With regards to potential **improvements within the public realm**, there are various opportunities such as by providing heritage-style streetlights and painting galvanised poles in matt black or another dark colour. Darlington Borough Council and utility companies should coordinate the designs and locations of highway signs, lighting columns and other street furniture, and highway maintenance to reduce clutter and unsympathetic materials/designs[206].

During the public consultation on the draft appraisal (see section 1.3), the **Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway** kindly offered to help Darlington Borough Council address a range of issues and opportunities in the future (see chapter 4.0)[207]:

- Assist with the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan and its implementation
- Assist the Council in the management and day-to-day upkeep of the track bed path and its green corridor
- Continue the delivery of the projects of the Fighting Cocks Heritage Hub (see above) and managing its features
- Arrange guided walks for local residents and the general public
- Revise the self-guided walk book *Darlington to Goosepool* (see section 7.2)
- Work with the Parish Council, voluntary groups and individual volunteers in the local community
- Help the 2025 Bicentenary Group with their programme of events for this summer
- Develop awareness of the village's rail heritage with residents, businesses and the public generally
- Provide the Council and developers specialist advice on planning applications which may affect the fabric or setting of the S&DR
- Access grants from funds not available to the Council

The author would like to thank the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway for their continuing support and assistance.

Finally, if Middleton St George is designated as a conservation area, it will be beneficial to impose an **article 4 direction** on it, to restrict further permitted development rights (see section 2.3). It should be applied to dwellinghouses as well as other use classes. This would control the design and quality of development and therefore help prevent further harmful alterations and gradually introduce positive change. By doing so, Darlington Borough Council would also meet its legal obligation

[205] Wood, Bordass, Baker 2009, page vii
[206] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 23 January
[207] Chisholm, R. 2025. Email to Gaby Rose, 7 February

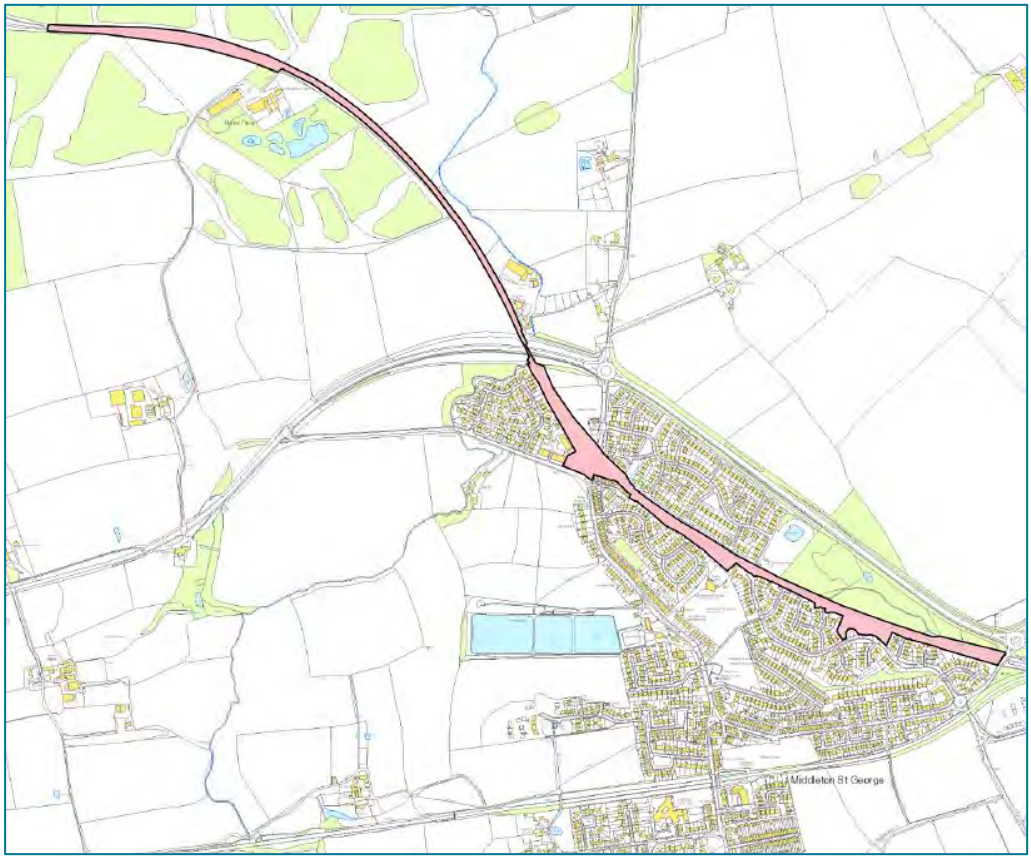
to *formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement*[208] of Middelton St George (see section 2.2). Conservation-led change such as by introducing article 4 directions can add value to an area and consequently enable communities to regenerate.

[208] Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 71

5.0 Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

At the time of assessment, there was no conservation area at Middleton St George to the north of the live railway line, although parts of the village to the south of the line were inside the Middleton One Row Conservation Area[209].

In July 2022, Durham County Council (DCC) came up with a proposed conservation area boundary for Middleton St George, but this proposal was taken no further. It had followed an assessment whether any areas in Darlington borough associated with the route of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) had the potential to be newly designated. In fact, DCC had initially investigated whether the entire 26 miles of the former S&DR was worthy of designation. They concluded that the level of special interest varied along the route so that it would not be appropriate for a single continuous conservation area. Therefore, individual areas were identified.



Durham County Council's proposal of 2022 for creating a new conservation area at Middleton St George. **NB: This boundary line was not proposed at the time of assessment of the draft appraisal**. (Map © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey LA 100049055. Landmark Information Group Copyright © 2022)

The conservation area boundary that DCC proposed for Middleton St George would have covered the former railway corridor from near the A66/Tornado Way roundabout at the west end to Yarm Road at the east end, also including the former Fighting Cocks Inn, remnants of S&DR infrastructure, the station buildings and small areas of open space. It was a shortcoming that DCC proposed their boundary without providing a conservation area appraisal including a detailed description and analysis of the wider area which would ultimately justify the setting of a boundary.

[209] https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf

In 2023, DCC drafted a list of potentially 'locally listable' heritage assets associated with the S&DR along its full former route as part of a pilot project. For Middleton St George, such heritage assets comprised the former Fighting Cocks Inn, waiting shed remains, station buildings and remains of the coal depot, which all would have been included in their previously proposed conservation area.

Whilst the boundary that DCC suggested was never contested and has been fully included in the proposed (see section 5.1), amended/finalised (see section 5.2) and adopted (see chapter 6.0) conservation area lines, further areas were identified that justify inclusion.

5.1 Public Consultation Draft: Proposed Boundary

This section offered suggestions at the time of assessment for how boundary lines for a Middleton St George Conservation Area could be drawn, based on the findings of significance within the assessment area (see chapter 3.0). Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

In order to qualify for conservation area designation, any proposed areas need to meet the following tests[210]:

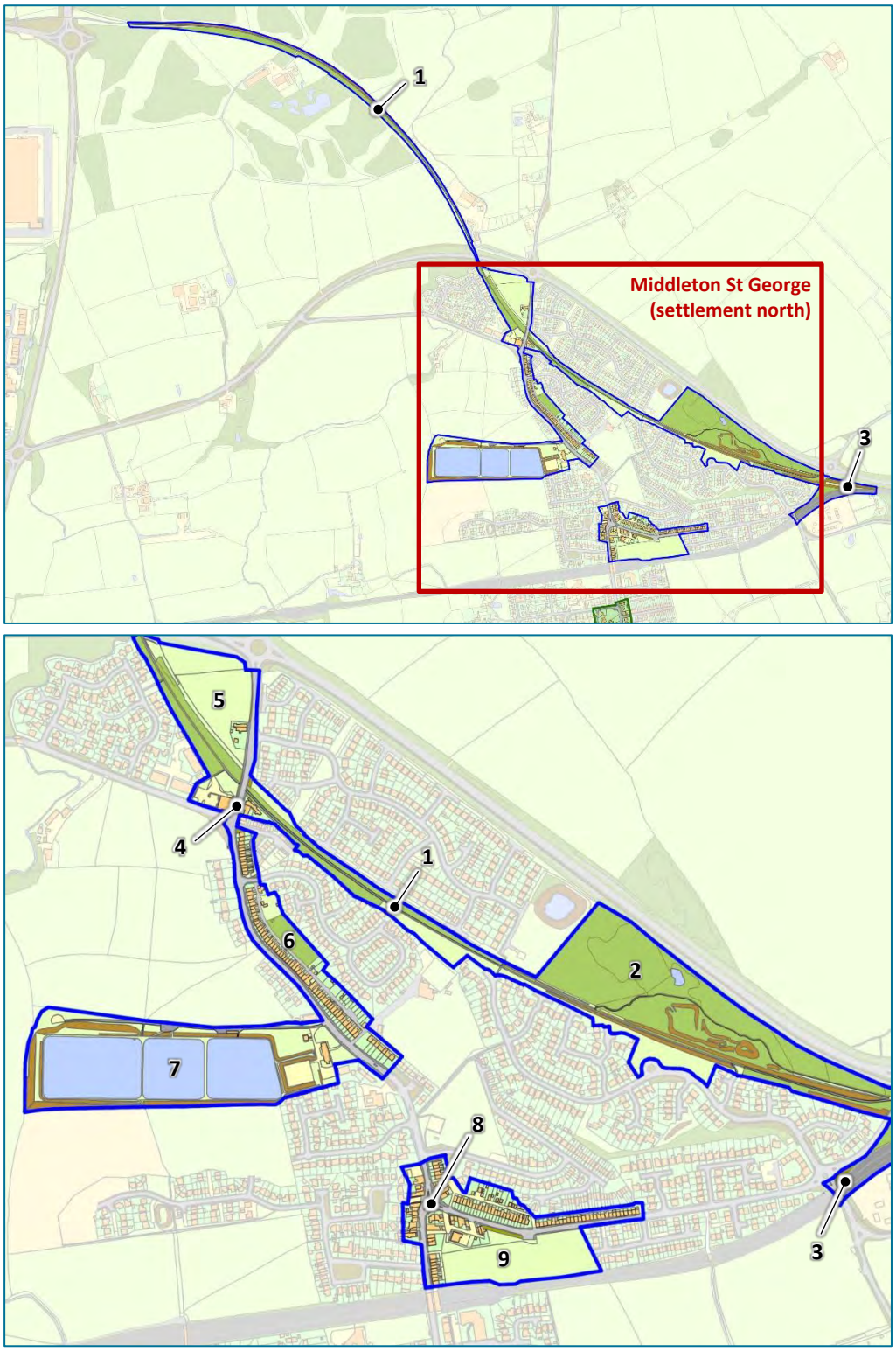
a) The proposed areas have sufficient architectural or historic interest to be considered 'special'.
b) That special interest is experienced through the areas' character or appearance.
c) It is desirable for that character or appearance to be preserved or enhanced, also considering any problems that designation may help solve.

The map below shows the proposed draft boundaries for a Middleton St George Conservation Area which had been drawn up for public consultation. Members of the public and other stakeholders were invited to submit their comments (see section 1.3). **Whilst eleven respondents supported the proposed designation of these boundaries, including the Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and Middleton St George Parish Council, there were also two objections, including from Historic England (see appendix 2).**

The proposed draft Middleton St George Conservation Area comprised a number of smaller character areas which are numbered 1 to 9. These have basically been derived from character zones B (Green corridor), D (Historical village), E (Water park) and F (Allotments) (see section 3.5), although a few amendments have been made. In the following text (i.e. the justification for the proposed designation), the identification letter of the relevant character zone and any amendment to it, if applicable, is given in brackets. Following the consultation period, the justification for the proposed designation of these areas was expanded for further clarification.

Please note that these boundary lines will not be adopted (see chapter 6.0).

[210] Historic England 2019, page 5



Proposed draft Middleton St George Conservation Area in blue, which was available for public consultation – **these boundary lines will not be adopted**. *Top:* The assessment area. Existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Middleton St George settlement north. (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

1 – Green corridor (B1 & B2). This matches the boundary line suggested by DCC (see chapter 5.0). The area is of high heritage interest and of high public/communal value. It comprises part of the former track bed of the original line of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) – later the Fighting Cocks branch – which is still clearly readable as such, including its original cuttings/embankments and drainage ditches.

Surviving structures of interest include the [A] Crane Base and Platform, [B] DRDC Loading Dock, [C] Waiting Shed (remains), [D] Coal Depot (remains), [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor (remains) and other small-scale industrial fragments.

a) Area 1 has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct links to the internationally significant S&DR and surviving structures/features of local interest.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through removal of the tracks and establishment of heavy vegetation, the route of the former S&DR is still discernible in planform and related structures/features do survive.
c) It is desirable for the former railway corridor and its related structures/features to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation and restoring the [G] Enclosed Railway Corridor remains (see section 4.3).

2 – The Whinnies (B3). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author of this document believes that its links to the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works, which used to be of such high importance to the historical development of the village, clearly justify designation. The topography created by the underlying spoil heaps, which originated from the iron works site, give such a distinct character to the woodland, and there is also surviving evidence of the bridge which spanned to the former iron works site. In addition, the local nature reserve is of high public/communal value.

a) Area 2 has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct links to the locally highly significant iron works.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through removal of the bridge (although remnants do survive) and establishment of heavy vegetation, the 'bumpy' topography created by the spoil heaps is clearly discernible.
c) It is desirable for the local nature reserve to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation (see section 4.3).

3 – Oaktree Junction (B4, amended). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that it is important to include the location where the former line of the 1825 S&DR and the 1887 NER passenger line to Bank Top Station met, due to the implications it had on the original route. As a result, the line from Oaktree Junction towards North Road Station became the Fighting Cocks branch, which was mainly reserved for goods traffic, with passenger services generally abandoned. Later, the branch was served from Oaktree Junction only, once its western connection had been severed. Ultimately, this stretch of the original S&DR was lost completely as a consequence of the 1887 passenger line. The area also includes the public footpath immediately to the north of the live railway corridor and the [R] Metal Railway Bridge over the old road to Yarm, which is a focal point from the public highway.

a) Area 3 has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct links to the creation of the Fighting Cocks branch line and the ultimate demise of that section of the original route of the S&DR.
b) Whilst some of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through removal of the tracks on the former S&DR route (only) and establishment of heavy vegetation, the former junction is still discernible in planform and located within the existing railway corridor.

c) It is desirable for the (former) railway corridor to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation (see section 4.3).

4 – Fighting Cocks (part of D1). This matches the boundary line suggested by DCC. The area has been identified as being of high heritage interest and is located at the ancient road junction where the lane from Darlington joined the former Roman route. Moreover, it is directly linked to the arrival of the S&DR where, consequently, the development of the village started. The area contains the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn which was built sometime between 1832-4 by the last owner of the manor, Henry Cocks, and is now the oldest surviving building in the village. It is a long-distance focal point from the public highway and forms a distinct group with the former [F] Station Master's House and Station Building, both of them built in Pease brick. The latter includes extant fabric of an early S&DR station building (1830/1).

a) Area 4 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to being at the location of an ancient road junction and the arrival of the S&DR which triggered the historical development of the village, the survival of the S&DR station buildings including remnants of an early station building, the former inn's locally important association with Henry Cocks, and the group value of these buildings.
b) Whilst the original inn has been modified considerably (including historically), the character/appearance of that special interest survives in the existing road junction, the historical layout and spatial contribution of the three old buildings, and design of the station buildings, which appear little altered.
c) It is desirable for the road junction and three buildings to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation (including the reinstatement of the inn's board) and removal of unsympathetic more recent alterations at the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn (paint finishes, window frames, etc.) (see section 4.3).

5 – Roman Road & northern allotments (F1 & D4, extended, & part of C). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author thinks that there is a case for including this stretch of Cade's Road with the more unusually designed nineteenth-century semi-detached building making a visual contribution along the public highway. The historical allotments are in the immediate setting of the former track bed of the S&DR, with its distinct triangular-shaped plot first shown on the first-edition six-inch OS map (1855). The small field to the north (which is currently grazed by ponies) seems to include remnants of a ridge-and-furrow field system and also forms part of the setting.

a) Whilst the architectural and historic interest of Area 5 is not sufficient to be considered 'special' enough on its own, it does form part of the immediate setting of a section of Area 1, and as such contributes to the special interest.
b) The character/appearance of the architectural and historic interest largely survives.
c) It is desirable for the greenspaces and landmark building to be preserved.

6 – Station Road (part of D1, amended). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that the early linear development along the main road, which had sprung up due to the establishment of industrial sites served by the main railway line,

most notably the [Q] Middleton Iron Works, justifies inclusion. Surviving structures of interest include the former [I] Undenominational Mission Hall, [H] the former Lyric, the former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, a focal point along the main road, and the [M] Cocks Memorial Homes. The latter are of high local significance due to their Arts and Crafts style and connotation with Henry Cocks' (and, as such, the former manor's) final contribution to the area. The short artificial/cast-stone-faced terrace at the northern end seems unusual for Middleton St George.

a) Area 6 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to representing the early development of the village, its links to the locally highly significant iron works and its industrial past (most of which has disappeared) in general, the group value of the buildings and including locally important buildings.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through unsympathetic alterations to many of the terraced properties, the overall built form has been retained in the surviving historical platform and spatial contribution.
c) It is desirable for these buildings to be preserved and the terraced properties to be enhanced by removal of unsympathetic more recent alterations (see section 4.3).

7 – Fighting Cocks Reservoirs (E). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that it clearly justifies inclusion. The former service reservoirs are directly linked to the growth of the Teesside towns and industries and therefore of regional significance. The first basin was constructed before the historical village of Middleton St George had started to take its shape, extracting water from the Darlington Waterworks at Tees Cottage, now a scheduled monument. It was the second reservoir to service the Tees Cottage Waterworks, out of a total of eleven, and is now the only surviving one within Darlington Borough. Whilst many villages depended on pumped water until well into the twentieth century, Fighting Cocks was connected to piped water in 1853. The reservoirs' former [K] Board Room & Entrance Gate are traditionally designed, with the latter making a roadside contribution. The former [L] Pumping Station is an unusual, modernist building for Middleton St George. Today, the site's water park, outdoor sports court community centre and nature trail are recreational assets of distinct character and high public/community value.

a) Area 7 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its direct link to a scheduled monument, the Teesside industrial growth in general, providing early piped water to Fighting Cocks and including locally important buildings.
b) Whilst some of character/appearance of that special interest has been 'diluted' through the establishment of vegetation on the reservoir embankments and loss of water within the original basin, the historical layout and topography of the site have been retained.
c) It is desirable for the site to be preserved or enhanced, e.g. by providing on-site interpretation, reinstating the original fenestration to the former [L] Pumping Station and rebuilding the western wall at the bottom of the water park's embankment (see section 4.3).

8 – The Square & Yarm Road (D2). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author believes that the early development around the Square and the workers housing along the roads, which are the direct result of the establishment of the formerly nearby [Q] Middleton Iron Works, justify inclusion. A stretch of distinct boundary walling built from slag behind one of the terraces is the only industrial

evidence that survives on the former iron works site. Buildings of interest within the area include the former [O] Killinghall Arms, a focal point from the public highway, the [N] Havelock Arms Hotel and the former [P] Co-op and Stable.

a) Area 8 has sufficient architectural and historic interest to be considered 'special' due to representing the early development of the village, its links to the locally highly significant iron works and its industrial past in general, the group value of the buildings and including locally important buildings/structures.
b) Whilst much of the character/appearance of that special interest has been lost or diluted through unsympathetic alterations to many of the buildings, the overall built form has been retained in the surviving historical platform and spatial contribution.
c) It is desirable for these buildings to be preserved and enhanced by removal of unsympathetic more recent alterations (modern renders, change of opening patterns, etc.) and the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works boundary wall to be consolidated, with interpretation provided alongside it (see section 4.3).

9 – Southern allotments & greenspaces (F2 & G2). This area was not proposed by DCC, but the author thinks that there is a case for including the two triangular greenspaces, which are first shown on the 1912-14 OS map and accessible to the public, and the historical allotments. The latter and the larger triangular greenspace are in the immediate setting of the former workers houses along Yarm Road.

a) Whilst the architectural and historic interest of Area 9 is not sufficient to be considered 'special' enough on its own, it does form part of the setting of Area 8, and as such contributes to the special interest.
b) The character/appearance of the historic interest survives.
c) It is desirable for the greenspaces to be preserved.

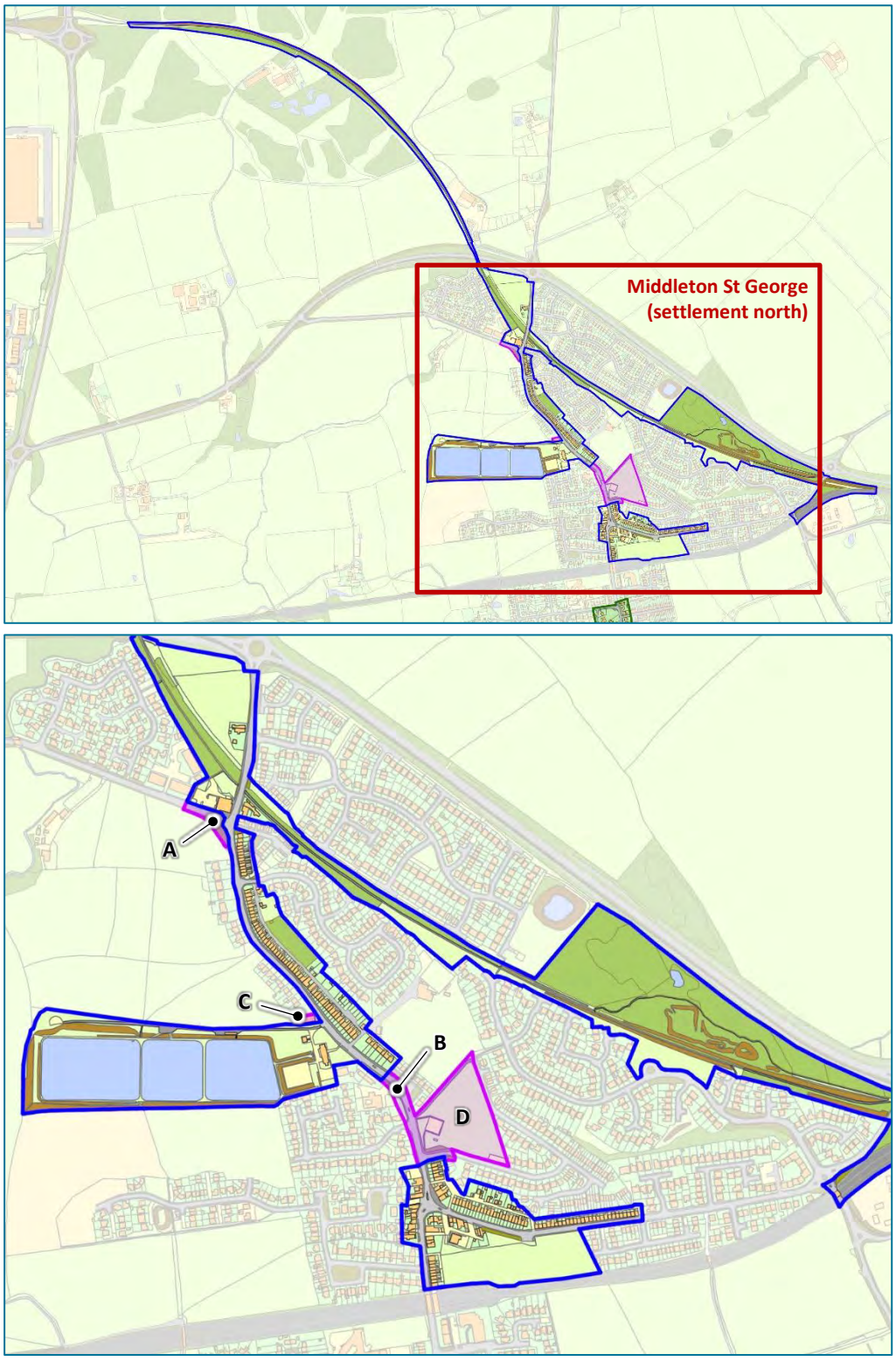
5.2 Boundary Changes post Public Consultation

Structures of interest are assigned their [LETTER] given on the map at the beginning of this document.

When giving the presentation at the Women's Institute during the consultation period (see section 1.3 & appendix 1), the author suggested further possible boundary additions:

A. The road to Darlington along the former [E] Fighting Cocks Inn plot, to clearly represent the historic road junction. This stretch of road had been omitted by mistake from draft area 4 (see section 5.1)
B. The stretch of Station Road between draft areas 6 and 8, to create a continuous conservation area line (NB: a conservation area does not necessarily need to have one continuous boundary line)

Having considered the above, it has been decided to add areas A and B, including associated roadside greens, to the finalised Middleton St George Conservation Area boundary. In addition, following the public consultation period, the decision has been made to also include:



Boundary line changes (further additions) post public consultation in pink. Blue conservation area boundary line as proposed in draft appraisal, see section 5.1. *Top:* The assessment area, with existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

C. The former [J] Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. Whilst it was mentioned in the text to be included in draft area 6, it had been omitted from the boundary line on the map by mistake. This is now rectified.

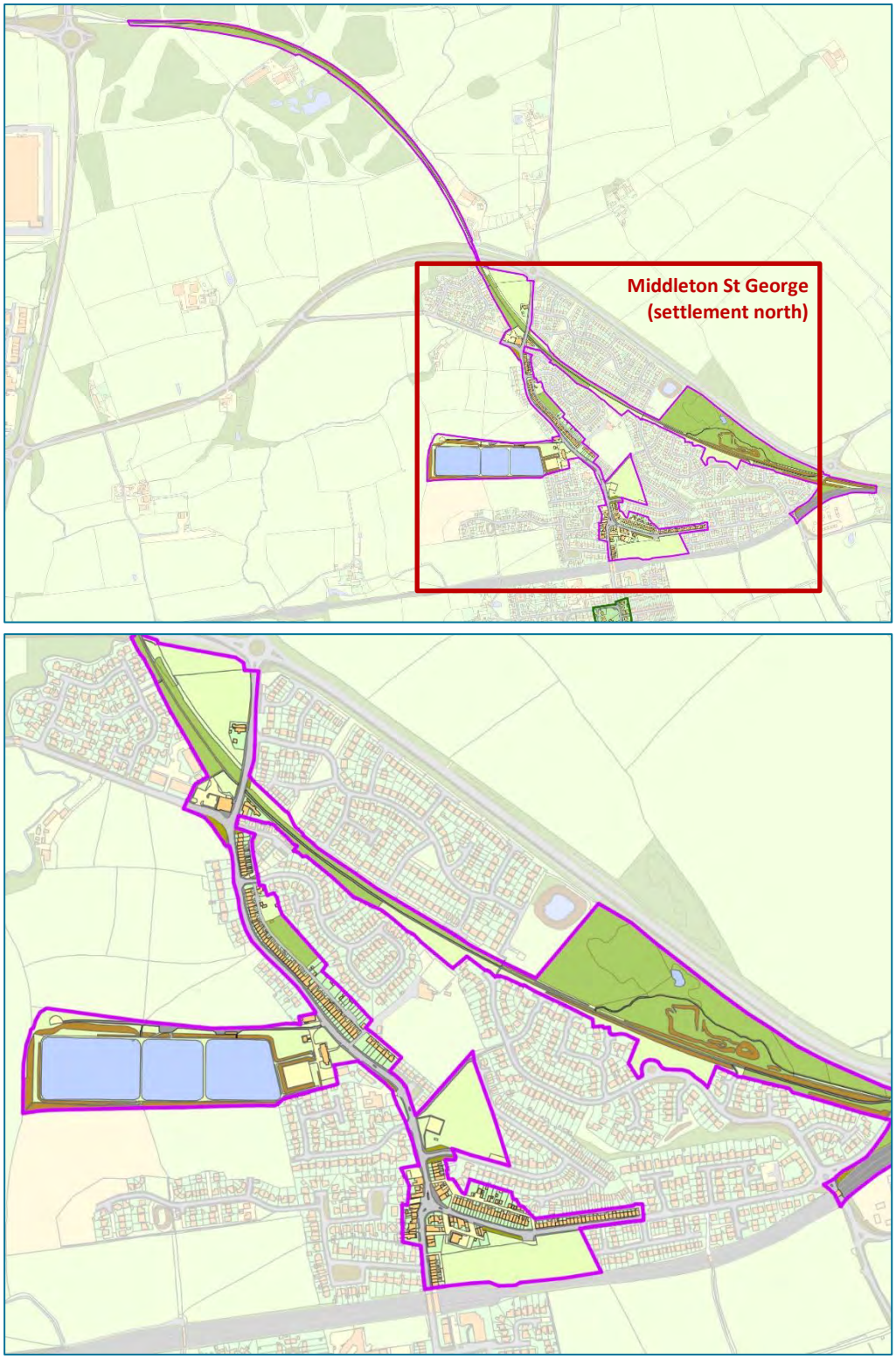
D. The playing field (see section 3.5/G1). This roughly triangular shaped field is first shown on the 1896 OS map with its eastern side forming the boundary to the [Q] Middleton Iron Works and the existing path along its northwestern side representing the line of a former access route from the main street to the works (see section 3.3).

   a) Area E has sufficient historic interest to be considered 'special' due to its link to the locally highly significant iron works site, of which only very little evidence survives.
   b) Whilst the character/appearance of the field has changed from possibly agricultural to leisure and the immediate setting from industrial to residential, the historical planform does survive.
   c) It is desirable for the (play) field to be preserved and enhanced by providing on-site interpretation alongside the former [Q] Middleton Iron Works boundary line and repairing/replacing the existing timber fence.

Extension area D – playing field: View from path along its northwestern side looking west onto the former boundary line of the **[Q]** Middleton Iron Works, which is now marked by a timber boarded fence and a line of trees. Further trees were being planted at the time of the visit. The modern houses behind are on the former site of the iron works. (Photo © Gaby Rose, February 2025)

6.0 Adopted Boundary (DATE)

The map shows the finalised conservation area line for Middleton St George which is proposed for adoption. It comprises the boundaries proposed in the draft appraisal (see section 5.1) and further areas added post public consultation (see section 5.2).



Middleton St George Conservation Area boundary proposed for adoption in pink. *Top:* Assessment area, with existing Middleton One Row Conservation Area boundary in dark green. *Bottom:* Settlement north (Map © Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

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North Eastern Railway Association: https://ner.org.uk/

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Northumbria in Bloom: https://northumbriainbloom.com/

Appendix 1: Copy of Meeting Notes

Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024)
Meeting at the Women's Institute, Middleton St George (MSG)
Monday 20 January 2025, 18:30 – 19:50

An estimated 20-30 people attended including representatives of the MSG Parish Council (PC), the local history group, Friends of the S&DR, and residents .

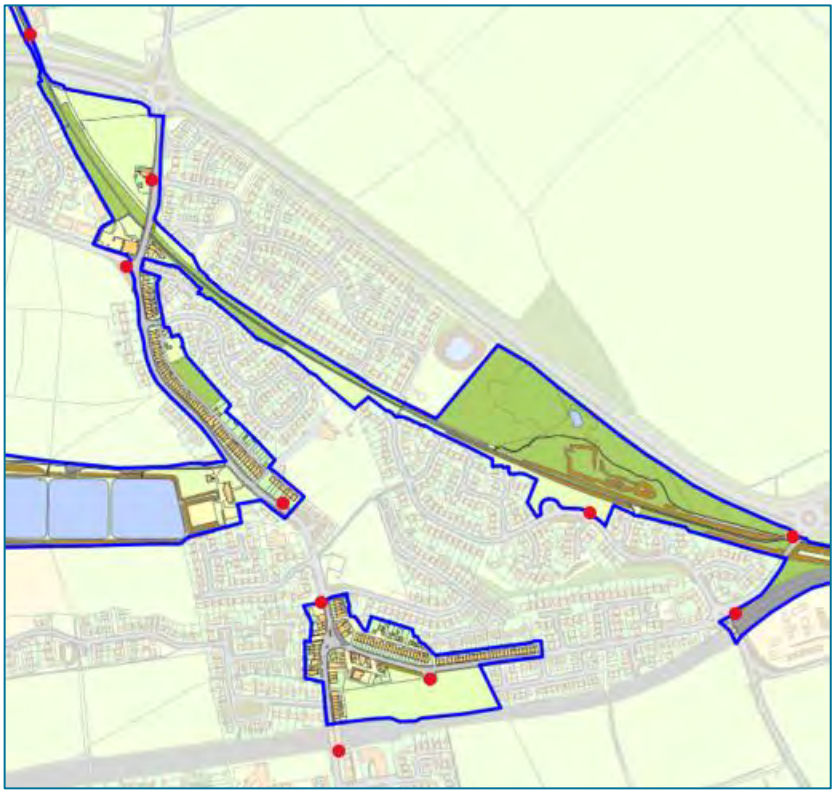
At the start, a presentation on the proposed new conservation area (CA) was given by Gaby Rose, the Darlington Borough Council (DBC) Conservation Officer.

During the Q & A afterwards, the following points were raised:

- Uncertainty about an existing CA at the north end of Middleton Lane. I confirm that the Middleton One Row Conservation extends as far north as 1 Middleton Lane: *https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/1959/middleton-web-map.pdf*
- Question whether loss of special architectural interest still merits CA designation. I confirmed that CAs are *areas of special architectural* ***or*** *historic interest*. Special historic interest (e.g. the former iron works) does merit designation if it is associated with physical evidence (e.g. workers terraces).
- Query about the proposed extent of designation. I explained that the currently proposed boundary is what I think is the maximum extent of justifiable CA designation for MSG. I wanted to 'put all the cards on the table' and discuss them, rather than too few.
- Different views about the inclusion of the workers terraces in the CA boundary, with one side being opposed due to the lack of architectural interest and the other side being in favour. I understand that the latter attendants live in such houses and are keen to restore them to a more sympathetic appearance. They also voiced strong support for raising awareness of the industrial heritage which is often much neglected.
- Discussion whether the terracing at MSG is common or average in the Northeast; there were different opinions. I mentioned that in my assessment I evaluate significance in the context of Darlington borough, and asked whether there are similar scenarios like at MSG elsewhere in the borough as I am not aware of any.
- Different views on whether CA designation for the terracing is now too late, as the fields on the opposite side of Station Road are already being developed. The planning report apparently stated that development was acceptable as there was no CA at the time.
- Query whether the Whinnies would benefit from CA designation as they are already protected by the Local Plan (policy ENV 7).

Additional designation will provide further protection, such as with regards to works to trees.

- Lack of clarity on the exact details of restrictions CA designation would put on property owners. Section 2.3 of the draft provides an overview of the implications for the public and the relevant legislation (see chapter 7.0 for how to access these sources).
- Request that if houses were designated, a design guide specific to MSG on how to sympathetically improve and modify these properties is provided.
- Concern that people living in the terraces may not be aware of the proposed CA designation. Below is a map showing all the locations where I have hung site notices, mainly attached to lamp posts (red dots). The consultation has also been advertised on the DBC's and the PC's websites, and the DBC Facebook page.



- Query about what happens after the consultation period, in particular what will get designated. After the consultation, I will process and evaluate the responses received. I will amend the appraisal with regards to factual/historical information where necessary. Different views on the proposed CA boundary will be considered, and a decision will be made on whether to amend the currently proposed boundary. The finalised CA boundary will then be recommended to Councillors for approval at the cabinet and council meetings.

Gaby Rose, 21 January 2025

Appendix 2: Outcome of Public Consultation

The general parameters of the consultation process have been outlined at the start of the appraisal (see section 1.3). Altogether, the Council received a total of fifteen responses on the document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Public Consultation Draft (December 2024)***, comprising representatives of (number of responses in brackets):

- (9) Residents (in or close to assessment area)
- (1) The Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway
- (1) MSG Parish Council
- (1) Darlington Borough Council
- (1) Historic England
- (1) Durham County Council
- (1) Other

Seven of the above filled in the feedback form that had been provided by the Council. Below is a summary of the responses received (number of responses/ comments in brackets). The text in added blue explains how the feedback was considered for or integrated in the revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025***:

Q1 *Do you live or work in the assessment area, see map at the start of the appraisal document?*

(6) Yes (1) No

Q2 *Do you live or work in the proposed conservation area boundary for Middleton St George, see map in chapter 5.0 of the appraisal document?*

(1) Yes (6) No [according to postcode provided]

Q3 *What is your personal or professional interest in the area?* Comments:

- (7) Resident
- (2) Family also lives/lived in the village
- (1) Active in local community
- (1) Supports protection and conservation of village and its historical features
- (1) Formerly employed at the old railway welding depot
- (1) Regularly socialises in village pubs
- (1) Has witnessed the demise of a very small community which has significantly grown through housing development over recent years

Q4 *Do you think Middleton St George would benefit from being a Conservation Area?*

(7) Yes – reasons:

- (3) To protect greenspaces/wildlife/natural habitats which are being destroyed for new housing estates
- (2) To protect and enhance historical assets
- (2) To prevent further damage and protect what is left
- (2) To impose planning controls with regards to alterations, new builds, and the general expansion of village ensuring that adequate infrastructure and local amenities will be provided
- (2) For the reasons set out in the CA Draft Appraisal

(0) No

Q5 *Do you think that the draft appraisal accurately describes the significance, character and appearance of Middleton St George, see chapter 3.0?*

(7) Yes – comments:

- (2) Showcases history/historical importance of the village
- (2) Very impressive, comprehensive, interesting and/or well written report
- (1) Photos taken prove character of the area
- (1) The key pertinent points are hit

(0) No

Q6 *What, in your opinion, are the most positive aspects about Middleton St George; what should be protected?* Comments:

- (4) Nature, trees, greenspaces, nature reserve and/or surrounding countryside
- (3) Historical structures/features/assets
- (3) S&RD station area and/or former railway corridor
- (2) History of the village incl. agricultural and industrial heritage, and its undeniable links to S&DR
- (2) Lovely place to live
- (1) Great community
- (1) Cricket Club, Water Park, the Havelock Arms
- (1) Village centre
- (1) Excellent transport links

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 3.6**

Q7 *What, in your opinion, are the most negative aspects about Middleton St George (also see section 4.1); what could be improved?* Comments:

- (4) Too much and/or unsuitable new housing
- (3) Lack of new infrastructure/amenities improvements following housing expansions, increase in traffic movement and/or parking issues
- (3) Loss of village feel and/or community spirit
- (1) Loss of village's heritage
- (1) Loss of greenspaces

- (1) Inappropriate 'upgrading' of old properties by landlords
- (1) Very limited resources for children of school age or late teens to do activities

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 4.1**

Q8 *What, in your opinion, are threats or potential future issues for Middleton St George (also see section 4.2)?* Comments:

- (5) New housing and their impact on historic assets, nature/trees/ greenspaces/habitats/farmland and tranquillity
- (2) New housing designs
- (1) New housing being unaffordable for first-time buyers, possibly forcing people born and raised in the village to leave
  - ➢ Policy H 5 of the *Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036. Adopted February 2022* specifies a 20% affordable housing requirement for residential development schemes of 10 or more dwellings in Middleton St George, of which 50% is affordable rent and 50% affordable homeownership.
- (1) Closure of shops and businesses
- (1) MSG losing its identity as a village and becoming a small town with few extra amenities

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 4.2**

Q9 *How, in your opinion, could positive change be implemented (also see section 4.3)? How could negative change be avoided?* Comments:

- (3) Stop or decrease building more houses
- (3) Provide more wildlife, trees and/or flowers (grass verges) and/or preserve existing green areas
- (1) Designate conservation area with Art 4 Direction to control/ monitor development including future alterations
- (1) Provide transparent planning process whereby decisions for new buildings are both rigorously scrutinised and sanctioned by the parish council
- (1) Preserve the village identity that is left
- (1) Enhance and bring back the lost character of unsympathetically upgraded old properties
- (1) Provide a list of products suitable for renovating old houses and other key information to residents within the CA
  - ➢ Further information is now provided in **section 4.3**, and links to the Building Conservation Directory are available in **section 7.3**
- (1) Provide additional community resources and/or invest into community projects and local security (e.g. CCTV and static cameras at the four entrances into the village)

➢ These points are now summarised at the beginning of **section 4.3**

Q10 *Do you agree with the line of the proposed Conservation Area boundary, see section 5.0 of appraisal document?*

(4) Yes – comments:

- (1) No other greenspace to call a boundary
- (1) Protects the main routes through the original village

(1) No – comments:

- (1) Agrees with proposed CA inclusions but also wants the field at the top of Woodlands Green and cricket pitch to be designated
  - The cricket pitch is not shown on the historic maps, and the shape of the site has changed over time too; therefore, it will not be designated.
  - The playing field is now included in the finalised CA boundary, see **section 5.2** and **chapter 6.0**

Q11 *Any other comments?*

- (2) Supports the proposal and hopes that CA will be implemented
- (1) Fully supports additional boundary inclusions to those made by Durham County Council
- (1) Believes that the CA is overall a positive thing and should help to enhance the character of buildings
- (1) Advises to keep village as green as possible and encourage more wildlife to areas/gardens through initiatives
- (1) Believes the ridge-and-furrow sites on farmland should be protected, noting that new housing is ripping through one now
  - As noted, the fields to the north of the water park are currently being destroyed by new housing construction, so designation comes too late.
  - The small field to the south of the A67/Sadberge Road roundabout is part of the proposed Middleton St George CA boundary, and reference to the ridge-and-furrow is now made in the text for draft area 5, see **section 5.1**.
  - The two fields to the north of the A67/Sadberge Road roundabout are too cut off from the proposed designated area by the A67; they are no longer part of the setting of the village.
  - The ridge-and-furrow systems at West Hartburn and Middleton One Row are outside the assessment area. With regard to the former, it may be included in the scheduled monument, although the earthworks do not seem well preserved (judging from the LiDAR). The author strongly believes that the latter should be included in the Middleton One Row CA.
- (1) States that the whole village (not just the proposed CA) needs protecting from becoming a town and losing its character, its aesthetic look, community spirit and historical legacy
  - The criteria for conservation area designation eligibility are outlined in **sections 2.1, 3.0 & 5.1**. and the modern housing estates do not meet them
- (1) Queries whether the CA would be governed by preservation orders etc., to keep the natural tree lines and habitat
  - Trees in a CA are protected under section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, see **section 2.3**.
- (1) Strongly objects to any development in this specific CA

The remaining consultation responses were sent in by email. Below is an overview of what they contained. The text added in blue explains how responses have been considered for or integrated in the revised document ***Stockton & Darlington Railway: Middleton St George (Fighting Cocks) Conservation Area Appraisal. Finalised document. May 2025***:

Comments on **general information** with the appraisal:

- Historic England: Acknowledgement that draft document contains a great deal of valuable information to reveal the historical and architectural interest of the study area.
- Historic England: Advice to publish management proposals needed to secure enhancement at the same time as the decision to designate, to show that it is desirable, and to indicate how it would be delivered.
  - Some of this is included in **section 4.3**
- Historic England: Advice that if designation is pursued, a separate, new CA appraisal should be adopted and the current one of the wider study area placed separately in the local Historic Environment Record. Encouragement to make any new appraisal more visual.
  - A new appraisal is not considered to be necessary or appropriate, as all information is contained within this document. An additional document may confuse the record of the appraisal process.
  - It is considered that the presentation of the information contained in this appraisal is fit for purpose.
- Friends of the S&DR: Offer to help the Council in addressing a range of issues and opportunities.
  - These are now listed in **section 4.3**
- Resident: Acknowledgement that draft document is very wide ranging and done with commendable thoroughness.
- Resident: Suggestion not to reference areas well outside the proposed CA and not to stray into the pre-industrial history.
  - It has been decided to retain this information for the following reasons (see **section 3.3**):
    - Cade's Road is relevant as it went through the assessment area and is still readable in the current road/boundary layouts. While some have difficulty in accepting the Roman road in this location, the HER entry implies there is sufficient evidence pointing to the likelihood of its former existence.
    - The former manors of MSG, MOR and Dinsdale are relevant as they were within the assessment area. Moreover, the manorial family names of Killinghall, Pemberton and, notably, Cocks still survive in the village.
    - The church of St George outside the assessment area is relevant as it seems to incorporate the oldest surviving building in the parish. It also served the village until 1871, and Henry Cocks in buried in it.
    - References to the three villages (two of which are no longer extant) outside the assessment area are provided to reveal the settlement context (within the former manors) that MSG is located in. The hamlet of Oak Tree

provided the name of the railway junction in the assessment area.
    - The changes in agrarian management are relevant as they are visible in the assessment area (e.g. ridge and furrow, enclosed fields).
    - Dinsdale Spa is relevant as Fighting Cocks Station became the point of arrival for spa visitors and the landlord of the Fighting Cocks Inn provided transport to the spa for first-class train passengers.
- Resident: Concern that lack of regard for the history of MSG is still embedded in planning policies and actions of developers, with the result that village is turning into a characterless small town with a traffic problem.
    - ➢ It is anticipated that the formal adoption of this appraisal will raise awareness amongst planners, developers and property owners, and result in better-informed decision making.
- Resident: Identification of former Pumping Station and Board Room as some of the significant buildings in the village.
    - ➢ These are now mentioned and marked as 'structures of interest' (see map at the beginning of the document) throughout the finalised appraisal.
- Resident: Concern that the removal of trees from the banks of the water park has opened up views onto new housing estates and that in the future there could be pressure to remove the water and flatten the former reservoirs.
    - ➢ Conservation area designation would provide some protection for trees, see **section 2.3**
    - ➢ The 2021 vegetation removal is now included in **section 4.1**.
    - ➢ The flattening of the reservoirs/water park would require planning permission. CA designation would be a material consideration in the decision-making process of an application. This is now included in **section 4.2**
- Other: Suggestion that Council should coordinate the design and location of highway signs, lighting columns, other street furniture, and highway maintenance to reduce clutter and unsympathetic materials.
    - ➢ This is now included in **section 4.3**
- Darlington Borough Council: Request to mention Hopetown Darlington and the Centre for Local Studies in sources.
    - ➢ This is now included in **section 7.3**
- Various: Provision of further information and corrections on a range of factual/historical/other matters.
    - ➢ These are now included in **sections 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2 and 7.3** where applicable

Comments on **proposed new designation and conservation area boundary**:

(11) In support:

- Parish Council: Acceptance of the recommendations for the Fighting Cocks Conservation Area.
- Friends of the S&DR: Support of the proposed CA boundaries as the protection and enhancement of the former S&DR track bed is

important justification for the proposed designation; there would be no MSG as we know it today without the S&DR.

- Friends of the S&DR: Support of the inclusion of the former industries' workers housing as it will help raise awareness of the importance of the S&DR in the history of the village.
- Other: Confirmation that Friends of the S&DR have some funding reserved for the remaining projects of the Heritage Hub, but external sources must be found to complete the works. Having a CA designation would be of great help for the Friends.
  - This is now included in **section 4.3**
- Other: Support of proposed draft boundaries as draft areas 1 to 5 cover railway heritage and areas 6 to 9 show how a village community emerged following the coming of the S&DR railway and the businesses and industries it generated.
- Resident: Strong support that MSG's cultural and industrial heritage is saved as so much has already been lost, e.g. the big industrial building (the last of its kind in the whole of the area) that was demolished for Woodlands Green, 1500sqm of ancient hedgerow at the water park due to Homes by Carlton's desire for lakes views, and the oldest ticket office on the S&DR to a Sainsbury's store.
  - Further information is now provided about the (demolished) blowing engine house, see **section 3.3**.
  - According to the MSG Parish Council meeting notes of 15 February 2021 (available on their website) it appears that the Parish Council had instigated the vegetation removal from the south bank of the water park following the recommendations of a reservoirs engineer, and that Homes by Carlton in fact raised a complaint about the works. The 2021 vegetation removal is now included in **section 4.1**.
  - The author has not been able to find sources backing up that the Fighting Cocks Inn ever included a ticket office. This seems unlikely considering the first station building (Railway Lodge of 1830/1) predates the original inn (built at some point between 1832 and 1834). Moreover, whilst the station had been provided by the S&DR, the inn was owned by Henry Cocks, lord of the manor, see **section 3.3**. Finally, looking at the pre-conversion floor plan of the former inn (planning application ref. 21/00223/OUT), there is no indication of a ticket office in what is believed to be the original part of the building.
- Resident: Particular interest in saving the area behind Station Road which was allotments and food growing space, and is still full of fruit trees and wildlife.
  - This greenspace is now mentioned in **section 3.5**.

(2) **Not** in support:

- Historic England: Whilst in agreement that in broad terms the study area's interest turns on its historical links to the very high significance of the S&DR, there is concern that more work is needed to clearly identify the special architectural or historic interest, in particular with regard to the Square, the workers housing and former reservoirs, and to use this to reconsider the boundaries proposed for CA designation.

- Further information on the heritage significance of the former water park and village has been provided in **sections 3.1 & 3.3**.
- Clear justification for areas to be designated is now provided using the parameters set out in HE guidance, see **sections 5.1 & 5.2**.

- Historic England: Query why the ridge-and-furrow field systems described in the document are not appraised in chapter 5.0 and are left out of consideration for CA status.
  - This has been explained under feedback form responses to Q11, see above.
- Historic England: Concern that, if designation is pursued as proposed, this will have implications for the Council when meeting duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the areas.
  - These are the implications for, and the purpose of, any CA designation, see **section 2.2**.
- Historic England: Encouragement to consider other potential ways to protect the character and features as an alternative to CA status, such as the MSG Neighbourhood Plan, local listing, the DBC Local Plan, a supplementary planning document or non-planning activity, such as managing the natural environment, redesigning highways, or engaging with local history.
  - Considering DCC already proposed a conservation area in 2021 and the findings of this report also conclude with a proposal to designate, which has been supported by residents, the Friends of the S&DR and MSG Parish Council, the author sees no reason for not creating a CA.
  - The MSG Neighbourhood Plan covers a much larger area though excludes part of the former track bed of the S&DR (which is outside MSG parish). It is aimed to address a variety of issues. In contrast, a CA appraisal focuses in detail on heritage matters and is therefore likely to carry more weight in the planning process with regards to development proposals in the built historical environment.
  - The Council does not have a Local List. Local listing would only be suitable for structures that have not been much altered and would not protect larger groups of buildings (which is what CA designation is for).
  - The DBC Local Plan covers the whole borough and is aimed to address a variety of issues with a broader brush. In contrast, the CA appraisal is specific to the assessment area and provides a quantity of details that will be of interest to and consequence of in the planning process, supporting Local Plan policies.
  - The adopted appraisal would be a supplementary planning document.
  - Non-planning activities will rely on the good will of people. They are more likely to be carried out when specified in a CA appraisal/management plan, such as cosmetic improvement works by Highways, as they are otherwise not a priority to the Council.
- Resident: Support of 2022 DCC boundary as it restricts itself to the immediate subject (the S&DR), although the exact boundary could be

discussed, for example whether it should include the former station buildings or the Whinnies nature reserve.
  - Other areas have been identified to have special interest, see **sections 3.1, 5.1 & 5.2** – further information and justification has been provided since the draft appraisal.
- Resident: Opinion that workers terraces, the Square and boundary wall of former iron works are not of special architectural interest.
  - It is correct that the special historic interest significantly outweighs the architectural value here – NB: conservation areas are *areas of special architectural **or** historic interest*.
  - The boundary wall constructed from slag is an important – and the only – survivor directly related to the iron works site.
- Resident: Suggestion that history of the village is better obtained from documentary sources than coming to see it, and concern that MSG is being talked up as a place of interest when a visit is likely to lead to disappointment.
  - Every attempt has been made to accurately portray the history of the place and what survives. Recently taken photos give a true impression of the current state of the village.
- Resident: Opinion that conservation area designation will not result in improvement of properties, due to lack of resources or inclination.
  - A few residents at the presentation meeting stated that they want to sympathetically restore their old properties. They also voiced that raising awareness (through this document) may inspire others to do the same. In any case, designation is more likely to result in improvements (and funding opportunities) and stop further harm than having none.
- Resident: Opinion that conservation area designation will result in pointless restrictions on property owners.
  - The restrictions are likely to result in some protection of old buildings and trees, which is considered to the benefit of the area. The instances of removal of permitted development rights that concern conservation areas are now listed in **section 2.3**. following a resident's request.

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

UPDATED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - PART 1 (LOCAL PLAN)

Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio

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

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SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' approval to adopt an updated version of its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Part 1 (Local Plan).

Summary

2. A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Local Planning Authorities will involve local communities, businesses and key stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Plan and any future Development Plan Documents (DPD's) or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

3. Authorities are required to review their SCI's at least every five years. The Darlington SCI – Part 1 was last reviewed in August 2020 with temporary updates made to reflect national COVID 19 pandemic restrictions.

4. The update will remove these restrictions and allow some other minor updates to be consulted on prior to the statutory consultation periods on the Local Plan Review. An updated Design of New Development Supplementary (SPD) will also be prepared and consulted upon alongside the review of the Local Plan in line with the content of the updated SCI.

5. Cabinet approved an updated draft of the SCI Part 1 for consultation on 8 April 2025. This consultation was held between 29th April 2025 and 30 May 2025. Six responses were received none of which raised significant concerns in relation to the content of the Updated SCI Part 1.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that Council adopt the Updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Part 1 (Local Plan).

Reasons

7. The recommendation is supported as the Council is required to have an up-to-date SCI as part of the plan review process.

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

(i) National Planning Policy Framework, December 2025
(ii) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
(iii) Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
(iv) Localism Act 2011

David Nelson: Extension 6291

Council Plan	The Local Plan and supporting documents are integral to the delivery of the Council Plan and its priorities (adopted by Council in July 2024). The priorities are: ECONOMY - building a strong sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all. The Local Plan allocates land for employment sufficient to meet the future needs of the borough. HOMES – affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents. The Local Plan allocates sufficient land to meet the boroughs needs, sets affordable housing requirements and ensures new developments are well planned, safe and attractive. LIVING WELL – a healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most. The existing Local Plan encourages development to consider health and wellbeing with a requirement for larger developments to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Allowance is also made for older people's accommodation and sets a requirement for adaptable homes. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.

	The Local Plan contains a mechanism to secure contributions to education provision and secure sites for new provision in key locations. COMMUNITIES – working together for safer, healthier and more engaged communities. The Local Plan throughout has a focus on delivering cohesive communities rather than individual developments. LOCAL ENVIRONMENT – a well-connected, clean and sustainable borough. The Local Plan contains numerous policies to protect both the natural and built environment.
Addressing inequalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be part of the plan and SPD review and process.
Tackling Climate Change	Achieving sustainable development is a fundamental objective of the Local Plan. The early review of the existing Local Plan will enable the council to develop additional policy to tackle climate change matters, reflect updated national policy and improve existing policies where necessary. The reviewed plan will need to be supported by an updated Sustainability Appraisal which will consider climate change in greater detail.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The council has to have an up to date plan this necessitates a review at least every five years. This includes review of the SCI.
Health and Wellbeing	A key objective of Local Plan and supporting documents is to improve people's health and wellbeing by protecting and improving the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The Local Plan has a role in reducing crime through the promotion of good design and location of development.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no proposed changes to the Council's budget or policy framework in this report.
Key Decision	Yes
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

8. The Updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – Part 1 (Local Plans), attached at **Appendix 1**, is a statutory requirement. SCI's set out how Local planning authorities will involve local communities, businesses and key stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Plan and any future Development Plan Documents (DPD's) or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

9. Government guidance stipulates that:

   Local planning authorities must review their SCI's every 5 years from their adoption date. It is important that SCI's are kept up-to-date to ensure effective community involvement at all stages of the planning process. Therefore, a local planning authority should regularly review and update their Statement of Community Involvement to reflect any changes to engagement.

   A local planning authority may review and update their Statement of Community Involvement at the same time as reviewing and updating a plan to reflect what action is taken to involve the community in any change to the plan.

10. The Darlington SCI – Part 1 (Local Plans) was last updated in August 2020 with some temporary updates made to reflect national COVID 19 pandemic restrictions. This update will remove restrictions and allow some other minor updates to be consulted on prior to the statutory consultation periods on the Local Plan Review.

11. The SCI sets out the General principles to our planning consultations/engagement. These are:

    (a) We will communicate clearly;
    (b) We will make it easy for you to be involved;
    (c) We will make sure your involvement is effective;
    (d) We will share information and provide feedback;
    (e) We will keep the process simple;
    (f) We will learn from our mistakes.

12. The SCI also sets out in more detail:

    (a) When we will consult;
    (b) Who we will consult;
    (c) How we will consult;
    (d) Details of how we will communicate with respondents;
    (e) How decisions will be made;
    (f) Where documents will be made available; and
    (g) How we can be contacted.

13. There are also some details around Duty to Cooperate with other Local Planning Authorities and public bodies with an interest in land use and development in the

Borough. Along with a reiteration of the council's support role in the preparation of any Neighbourhood Plans.

14. The changes to the SCI are minor and primarily relate to:

    (a) Removal of temporary COVID related restrictions;

    (b) Updates to reflect the Equality Act;

    (c) Updates to 'Specific Consultation Bodies' (e.g. Highways England is now National Highways);

    (d) Information will be hosed on the main corporate website rather than a separate 'Local Plan Microsite'.

15. It should be noted that the Council's SCI – Part 2 (Planning Applications) is not part of this review.

Financial Implications

16. The SCI has been reviewed by the Planning Policy team with no direct additional costs other than officer time.

Legal Implications

17. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Consultation

18. Cabinet approved an updated draft of the SCI Part 1 for consultation on 8 April 2025. This consultation was held between 29 April 2025 and 30 May 2025. Everyone on our existing Local Plan Consultation Database were informed directly and information provided online.

19. In total six responses were received. Two from statutory consultees Historic England and Natural England confirming they had no comments to make on the document. The remaining four were from residents.

20. Of these responses from residents, most indicated broad support for the consultation methods, although some did express concern with an overreliance on using the council website to communicate information. This is however in line with the Governments ongoing to commitment to make information freely available in digital formats. As part of this we will look to make our documents available in different formats upon request to ensure that our local plan consultations are accessible to all.

21. A number of points raised related to Part 2 of the SCI regarding consultation on planning applications. This part of the SCI is not currently under review.

22. As a result of the consultation no changes are deemed necessary to the SCI but a number of the points raised have been noted and will be considered when individual engagement plans are produced for specific pieces of work. We have also been looking into specific

ways to deliver alternative formats of consultation documents, this included fulfilling a request for an audio document for this consultation.

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
(Part 1) THE LOCAL PLAN

Draft for Adoption
July 2025

1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (Part 1) sets out how Darlington Borough Council will involve local communities, businesses and key stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Plan and any future Development Plan Documents' (DPD's) or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

1.2 It has been updated to help shape the review of the Local Plan. It replaces the previous SCI (Part 1) issued in August 2020.

2. General principles

2.1 We will always apply some general principles to our planning consultations / engagement. These are set out below:

a) We will communicate clearly;
b) We will make it easy for you to be involved;
c) We will make sure your involvement is effective;
d) We will share information and provide feedback;
e) We will keep the process simple;
f) We will learn from our mistakes.

2.2 Involvement in consultations will be open to all, including all protected characteristics listed within The Equality Act 2010.

2.3 If you have difficulty in communicating with us, we will make information available in other formats such as braille, large print audio, audio description or another language on request.

2.4 Wherever possible, consultation will be carried out alongside other community engagement initiatives.

3. When will we consult?

3.1 The Local Planning Regulations state that there must be a minimum of two consultation periods for Local Development Documents (including Local Plans). The first consultation relates to the issues and options that the Local Development Document should address (Regulation 18), and the second consultation should take place prior to the submission of the Local Development Document to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public (Regulation 19).

3.2 In addition to the statutory consultees, the Council will ensure that local communities, businesses and key stakeholders can be involved throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. The means of doing this will be set out in separate Engagement Plans.

3.3 Supplementary Planning Documents will normally undergo a minimum of four weeks consultation prior to adoption by the Council.

4. Who will we consult?

4.1 The Council must conform to certain rules and regulations set by Government on how it consults. The *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012* list 'specific consultation bodies' that we must consult with (as applicable). For Darlington Borough these are:

a) The Coal Authority;
b) The Environment Agency;
c) Homes England;
d) Tees Valley Combined Authority;
e) The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England);
f) Natural England;
g) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited;
h) National Highways;
i) Parish Councils (including Parish Councils adjoining the borough);
j) Adjoining authorities;
k) Relevant telecommunications companies;
l) Clinical Commissioning Body or relevant successor;
m) Durham Constabulary;
n) Relevant electricity and gas companies;
o) Sewerage and water undertakers.

(Or any equivalent successor bodies to any of the above).

4.2 We are also required to consult with any 'general consultation bodies' which may be affected by the contents of the document being produced. These will include:

a) Voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the Council's area;
b) Bodies in the Council's area which represent the interest of different needs groups.

4.3 The Council will also consult 'other consultation bodies' which they consider to be appropriate and who have not fallen into the above categories, which may include:

a) Residents Associations;
b) Developers and agents;
c) Special interest groups;
d) Environmental groups;
e) Businesses or business networks;
f) Educational establishments;
g) The general public.

4.4 We also hold and maintain a database of names and postal/email addresses of residents and stakeholders who have asked to be kept informed of any consultations that may come forward. An individual or an organisation may ask to be added or removed from this database at any time. In the interests of efficiency, we will assume that all those who provide an email address are happy to be contacted via this means. If you would like to be added to this database, please email us at planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk or write to us using the postal address in section 13 of this document.

5. How will we consult?

5.1 Before we begin key stages of a Local Development Document, we will produce an Engagement Plan (where officers consider one to be necessary), setting out when and how we will consult/engage throughout the process. This will ensure consideration is given to the most effective way of communicating the particular issue, and that the methods engaged are proportionate.

5.2 The type of engagement plan will be determined depending on the nature of the issues, and those likely to be affected. For example, they could be area based if the particular issue concerns a specific site, or they could target a particular sector. Engagement plans will ensure that consultations always meet statutory requirements.

5.3 We will use a range of communication methods to inform individuals and organisations that a consultation is taking place, what the issues are and how they can be involved in the process. We will use the most appropriate consultation methods to ensure maximum opportunities for community involvement.

5.4 The Council will use different levels of community involvement as follows:

a) Information – Providing information through a variety of methods;
b) Consultation – Asking the community to provide their views about particular planning proposals at the appropriate stages;
c) Participation – Enabling communities and stakeholders to get involved (i.e. workshops to identify specific issues).

5.5 The methods that we employ to notify and involve stakeholders in the consultation process include those listed below. A bespoke combination of consultation methods will be used depending on the specific issue being considered:-

a) Contact appropriate organisations and individuals directly;
b) Publicise consultations along with relevant documents by methods such as website updates, social media, press releases, displays, etc.
c) Formal notices in the local media;
d) Consultation documents to be made available at the customer contact centre at the Town Hall (by appointment only);
e) Consultation documents will be made available at Crown Street and Cockerton Libraries;
f) Work with existing community groups or other interest groups, attend community events and joint consultations;
g) Consider organising events such as stakeholder meetings or workshops, including place-shaping workshops.

6. What you can do

6.1 If you tell us that you are interested in Local Plan documents and would like to be kept informed of future consultations, we will add your details to our Consultation database. You will receive an email or letter when there is an opportunity for you to be involved, and to let you know that new documents have

been produced. If you would like your contact details to be added to our database, please contact us using the details at the end of this document. It is important that you let us know of any changes to your contact details, so that the database remains up to date.

6.2 To ensure that the process is transparent and so that everyone can see how our policies have developed, we need to receive all comments in writing, by email, online or by letter. If we undertake consultation events or workshops, we will make written records of views expressed at the time, so that they can also be taken into account. In order to make your comments as effective as possible, you should:-

a) Make comments clear and concise so that we know what your main points are;
b) Make comments within published time periods;
c) Use the form provided, where possible. For most of our consultations we provide a comments form for you to fill in. This is not compulsory, but it can make your comments clearer and ensures we have all of the information we need;
d) Be aware that your comments will be made publicly available on our website, and at our offices;
e) If you are a member of a group or organisation let us know whether you are responding on your own behalf or as a member of that body.

6.3 The Council cannot accept anonymous comments. The Council reserves the right to not consider any representation that contains any inappropriate comments such as abusive content, offensive language or discriminatory comments. The Council will only consider comments that are relevant to the subject or theme of the consultation.

7. Responses to consultations – What the Council will do

7.1 In response to any consultation responses the Council will:-

a) Formally acknowledge receipt of all emails and letters;
b) Request additional information from you where comments are not clear.

7.2 Consultation responses will be made publicly available on the website as soon as practicable. At the end of the consultation period, we will publish all comments received on our website. A Consultation Statement, in accordance with statutory requirements, will outline the full extent of the consultation, who was consulted, how they were consulted, and a summary of the main issues raised as a result of those consultations. This will be reported to Place Scrutiny Committee. It will then be available when the Local Plan (or other DPD) is submitted to the Secretary of State, via the website, the Town Hall (by appointment) and Crown Street or Cockerton Libraries. Comments received on Supplementary Planning Documents will be reported to the relevant committee.

7.3 In responding to enquiries, consultees will be referred to the Council's Planning Policy website. If the council considers an individual response is appropriate or further clarification is required then we will contact you via your preferred method of communication.

7.4 We will evaluate and learn from consultations and will improve our feedback

arrangements where this is required. All lessons learnt will be taken into account in the formulation of Engagement Plans for future consultations.

8. How will decisions be made

8.1 Local Plans and other planning documents should represent a collective vision, in the context of national priorities, local circumstances and community views. To this extent, there are likely to be conflicting views about the best use of land and broader policy context. To help reduce these tensions, the Council will ensure that early and effective community engagement with stakeholders, prescribed bodies and the local community is undertaken and that everyone has an opportunity to express their views. Methods will be dependent on the planning document being prepared and the stage that the document is at, and this will always be considered carefully in the formulation of Engagement Plans.

8.2 Despite this, there may still be occasions when differences of opinion cannot easily be resolved. The Council will analyse comments made in response to consultations and balance different needs and opinions, including the need to conform to national policy and guidance. Based on all of the information available, officers will make a recommendation, in the form of a report to:

a) Cabinet; and
b) Full Council

8.3 Once the recommendations have been approved by Full Council, the Local Plan and any future Development Plan Documents will progress to Examination in Public, whilst Supplementary Planning Documents will be adopted by the Council.

9. Duty to Co-operate

9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) states that local planning authorities continue to be under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

9.2 The NPPF requires strategic policy-making authorities to collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which need to be addressed within their plans. They should also engage with relevant bodies including Local Nature Partnerships, local communities, infrastructure providers, elected mayors and combined authorities (in cases where Mayors or combined authorities do not have plan making powers).

9.3 The Council is committed to working with other Local Planning Authorities and public bodies with an interest in land use and development in the Borough. To demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, the NPPF advises that strategic policy-making authorities should prepare statements of common ground which document the cross-boundary matters being addressed and make progress in cooperating to address these.

10. Neighbourhood Planning

10.1 Neighbourhood planning, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, gives communities the power to agree a neighbourhood development plan, make a Neighbourhood Development Order and make a Community Right to Build Order. The framework for producing these plans and orders is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

10.2 Where local people express an interest in neighbourhood planning, the Council will support them. This will include initial advice about the process, providing details about emerging and existing Local Plan policies, and sharing other information available to the Council.

10.3 Further information about current Neighbourhood Areas, and support and funding for neighbourhood planning is available at: www.darlington.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning .

11. Availability of documents

11.1 Local Development Documents and related information, including reports prepared to underpin policy preparation, will be made available on the Council's website. They will also be made available at the customer contact centre in the Town Hall (by appointment only) and at Crown Street and Cockerton libraries during specific consultation periods. At other times, these documents can be made available to view at these locations on request.

11.2 Paper copies, including large print and electronic versions, and any formats required as reasonable adjustments, such as braille or audio will be made available. Languages other than English can be provided on request wherever practicable and reasonable. However, a charge may be made for these.

12. Contacting the Council

12.1 If you wish to know more about the SCI, or any aspect of planning policy, please contact us using the post or email addresses below. Information on the Local Plan, other planning policy documents and the development plan process is also available on the website.

Website: www.darlington.gov.uk/planningpolicy

Email: planning.policy@darlington.gov.uk

Tel: 01325 406724

Planning Policy Team,
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Feethams
Darlington
DL1 5QT

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

CABINET URGENT DECISIONS

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker, Leader of the Council

Responsible Director – Rose Rouse, Chief Executive

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the urgent decisions made by Cabinet to which the procedure for calling-in could not be applied, as contained in this Council's Constitution.

   NOTE – The topics of the reports outlined below are not to be the subject of debate by Council. However, Councillors may ask technical or factual questions to the relevant Executive Director as to the reason(s) for urgency.

Recommendation

2. That the urgent decisions taken be noted.

Reasons

3. To comply with this Council's Constitution.

Rose Rouse
Chief Executive

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet entitled 'Release of High Needs Capital – Beaumont Hill Academy' submitted on 6 May 2025.

Paul Dalton : Extension 5805

Council Plan	Any links to the Council Plan are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Addressing Inequalities	Any impact in relation to Addressing Inequalities are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Tackling Climate Change	Any impact in relation to Tackling Climate Change are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Efficient and Effective Use of Resources	Any impact in relation to Efficient and Effective Use of Resources are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Health and Well Being	Any impact in relation to Health and Well Being are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Any impact in relation to S17 Crime and Disorder are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Wards Affected	Any impact in relation to Wards Affected are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Groups Affected	Any impact in relation to Groups Affected are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a non-Executive decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Any impact in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers are referred to in the individual reports submitted to Cabinet.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

4. Contained within this Council's Constitution is a procedure for Scrutiny Committees to call-in decisions of Cabinet. This call-in procedure does not apply where the decision being taken by Cabinet or an Officer is urgent.

5. A decision will be urgent if any delay, which is likely to be caused by the call-in process, would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public interest.

6. The Constitution states that decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency and, given below, are details of such decisions taken since the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 27 March 2025:

C150/May/2025	Release of High Needs Capital – Beaumont Hill Academy	In order to complete this project for September 2025, contractors have to be appointed by the first week of June. Without certainty around funding the Education Village Academy Trust will not be able to proceed, and the Council will need to make alternative arrangement for a number of children with special educational needs.

Outcome of Consultation

7. No formal consultation was undertaken in the preparation of this report.

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform and update Members on the Leader's Portfolio since the last meeting of Council. The following are some of the areas of work under the Leader's Portfolio.

TVCA Transport Portfolio Update

2. As the TVCA Cabinet member with responsibility for transport the following sections provide a general update on elements of the portfolio relevant to Darlington.

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Funding 2022/23 to 2026/27

3. Significant progress is being made on the development and delivery of the CRSTS programme. Of particular interest in Darlington, is the anticipated approval of the Woodland Road Phase 2 Active Travel scheme, to extend the scheme which starts on Duke Street towards Cockerton. Work is also at an advanced stage on accessibility improvements to North Road station to complement the investment made to Hopetown and the improved station entrance. This will enable work to commence later this year, following the S&DR200 bi-centenary events.

Transport in City Regions Funding 2026/27 to 2031/32

4. On 4 June 2025, in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the government confirmed an allocation of a £15.6bn settlement for nine eligible mayoral strategic authorities as devolved funding to invest in transport infrastructure. Rather than being called CRSTS2, this programme is now called Transport in City Regions (TCR) funding and TVCA is to receive £978m for the period 2026/27 to 2031/32 comprising £916m of capital funding and £72m of revenue funding. Whilst formal guidance has not yet been issued it is understood that the revenue is being provided to support the development and delivery of the infrastructure programme and cannot be used to deliver revenue projects so, for example, it cannot be used for the provision of additional bus services.

5. In January 2024, TVCA Cabinet unanimously approved a £1bn investment programme to allocate the CRTCR2 funding and to allow project development work to take place to ensure that a project pipeline was in place in advance of April 2027. Further details of the investment programme can be found on the TVCA website: https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/about/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/7-Transport-Programme-Cabinet-Report-Jan-2024-1-1.pdf

6. The published objectives of TCR are:

(a) Continuing to drive growth and productivity through investment in integrated transport networks

(b) Transforming infrastructure to support the delivery of new homes and improve access to opportunity for all

(c) Decarbonising transport and enabling healthy living, including promoting modal shift from cars to public transport, walking and cycling

Tees Valley Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Active Travel Programme

7. TVCA successfully secured £17.8m of LUF funding to deliver a package of Active Travel improvements across the region. Development work has been continuing over several months on the nine identified schemes, which includes improvements to connectivity between Darlington Town Centre and Northgate. All these schemes are at an advanced stage of project development, with business cases being prepared for assessment. Approval is expected in Q2 of 2025/26 (July – September) to enable all the schemes to move into the delivery phase before the end of the year.

Darlington Station

8. Delivery of the Darlington Station project continues ahead of scheduled completion at the end of this year. In May, a major project milestone was achieved with the final link of the new footbridge installed, connecting the new and existing station. Network Rail have now commenced work to facilitate the bridge fit out and are continuing to progress fit out of the station shell.

9. The TVCA-led work to the multi storey car park and external landscaping is progressing well, with the new entrance from Neasham Road to the short stay interchange area now created the Highways Authority for the associated highways works is being developed and engagement has started with utilities companies in preparation for the associated works.

10. A site compound, hoarding and scaffolding has been erected around properties at the Victoria Road entrance of the Station in preparation for the remaining demolition work for the Western Gateway scheme. Initial demolition work has commenced with roof tiles starting to be removed, and it is anticipated that the demolition will be complete by the end of August. Conversations are ongoing with LNER to understand programme interfaces with their planned works to the Porte Cochere, but it is anticipated that the highway and public realm improvements work will commence later this year.

Climate Change

11. The Cross Party Working Group met on 18 June and heard from the Assistant Director for Resources on what progress is being made in his departments.

12. The Group terms of reference will be amended to take account of the recent Nature Restoration Emergency motion.

External Meetings and Engagement

13. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are some of the meetings and events I have attended:

    (a) Various Cabinet and Transport meetings at the TVCA
    (b) Rail North and Transport for the North meetings
    (c) Briefings with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
    (d) Federation of Nursery Schools & Reid Street Primary School governing body meetings
    (e) Bi-monthly catch up with Ciaron Irvine, Deputy Chief Constable
    (f) Informal catch up with David Garthland, Darlington College
    (g) Memorial Service in remembrance of the Royal Canadian Air Force who served out of RAF Middleton St George during the Second World War
    (h) Visited Hopetown to see the voluntary work being undertaken by A1 Trust, DRPS and NELPG
    (i) The Junction Foundation
    (j) Citizenship Ceremony
    (k) Briefings with Jim McMahon MP, Minister of State at the MHCLG
    (l) Climate Change Working Group
    (m) Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board
    (n) Darlington Neighbourhood Board
    (o) ANEC – Association of North East Councils
    (p) Darlington Community Carnival
    (q) The LGA Conference
    (r) Gavin Foster, Northern Echo editor

Councillor Steve Harker
Leader of the Council

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Economy Portfolio.

Environmental Health

2. Following the media reports of a serious injury to an underage user of a sunbed shop in Middlesbrough and the subsequent jailing of the business owner, Environmental Health have carried out a programme of visits to similar shops in Darlington. Self-assessment letters were sent to 13 sunbed businesses in Darlington requiring information on how they control underage use of sunbeds in their premises. Eight follow-up visits were carried out to determine compliance with health and safety and age restricted legislation. Five out of the eight visits found that improvements were needed in terms of health and safety and one shop had illegal tanning nasal sprays seized. As a response to the non-compliance, enforcement letters were sent to the businesses requiring them to comply and checks will be made in due course to check on the progress of these shops.

3. The Air Quality Annual Status Report has been submitted to Defra which concludes that air quality across the Borough is generally good and complying with the air quality objectives. The report provides information on progress made with actions to improve air quality and links in with the aims of the Darlington Borough Council Air Quality Strategy launched in 2024.

Climate Change

4. I am delighted to report that the new Climate Change Officer has been recruited and joined the team in May.

5. The annual report is tabled at this meeting. As you can see, the emissions for 2024/5 have risen against our trajectory. We are exploring the reasons for this, but initial investigations suggest that the opening of Hopetown and the increased activity in former empty buildings plays a part. Also, during the current works at The Dolphin Centre, the combined heat and power unit has been offline. This means that electricity has been consumed through the meter that would not normally be used. The new CHP unit id due to be online in July 2025. The Climate Change Officer will be working with the Corporate Landlord to identify improvements in these and other areas.

Building Control

6. Building Regulations applications and works progressing as normal, no issues to be reported.

7. KPI returns for the first reporting quarter have been submitted to The Building Safety Regulator. Monitoring is ongoing and further returns will be submitted throughout 2025.

The Building Control team continue to work hard towards preparing all relevant reports to be submitted to the BSR.

8. Confirmation has been received that the Building Safety Regulator will be undertaking an imminent audit of the DBC Building Control service. Preparations within the team have been underway over recent months and we are in a good position. This may impose strain on the resources available. Support and advice have been offered from neighbouring authorities and LABC can also provide an insight into what to expect and provide guidance and assistance.

9. The government's Building Safety Levy implementation has been postponed until autumn 2026 of which Building Control will be the collectors and administrators. The Building Control team are taking every opportunity to learn more about the expectations from MHCLG. Further work will be required to ascertain exact requirements for resourcing and implementation of systems and processes to support Levy collection as we approach the implementation date.

10. Dangerous structures reporting has somewhat alleviated after a surge at the beginning of the year. We continue to follow up reports of dangerous structures and ensure any dangers are removed. We have continued to monitor some of the more contentious problem buildings around the borough, as follows:

    (a) Working with building managers and the owner, improvements have been made to Rise Carr Club after concerns were raised about loose materials to the roof.

Development Management

11. The application for the New Treasury Building has now been granted planning permission by the Council following a formal announcement from the Government. Further discussions have been had with the applicant's agent to further improve the design of the scheme. These discussions have been productive and are now complete. A further meeting with residents to explain the details of the scheme has taken place in conjunction with the Deputy Leader and local ward Members. Whilst there is a commitment to the scheme, it is likely that some further amendments to the scheme will be negotiated at the applicant's request. Following further discussions with the applicant it has been agreed that they will now progress with the 106 legal agreement. The agreement has now been signed by all parties, which now gives assurances that the much-awaited development will now proceed.

12. There has been an occupation incident by travellers adjacent to an existing traveller site in the Borough. The matter has been reported to the Planning Applications Committee and the appropriate mechanism to deal with the matter has been instigated through the Court.

Business Investment

13. Business start-up and business growth enquiries continue, with the main areas of interest from the hospitality and health and beauty sectors.

14. The Business Team have been working closely with TVCA to develop the refreshed business support package to help local businesses develop and grow. This support will be funded via TVCA's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.

15. Between 20 and 22 May 2025, officers attend the UK Real Estate, Investment & Infrastructure Forum as part of a Tees Valley delegation. The event brings together investors, developers, local authorities, and industry leaders to discuss sustainable, inclusive, and innovative investment, economic development and regeneration. The event presents an opportunity to network and connect with a wide variety of industry leaders, potential clients, and collaborators. As part of the TVCA package, space was provided to promote Darlington and the investment opportunities available.

16. In early June, the Business Investment Team hosted a "Skills Booster" event. This new event aimed to raise awareness of the wide range of skills and training opportunities available locally to support career growth, personal development, and lifelong learning. It brought together around 40 exhibitors including local education and training providers, support organisations, and a selection of employers. Bringing together a wide range of support organisations helps raise aspirations and supports people to realise their potential.

17. Other events the Business Investment Team have attended include:

    (a) Amazon Fulfilment Centre Visit with Make UK – 3 April 2025
    (b) Tees Valley Launchpad Showcase – 3 April 2025
    (c) Bionow Pharma Manufacturing Conference – 7 May 2025
    (d) Business & Professional Services employer engagement event – 13 May 2025
    (e) Tees Valley Business Club meeting @ Darlington – 19 June 2025
    (f) Impact: The Evolution of AI for Business Innovation - 20 June 2025
    (g) Darlington Professionals Network – 27 June 2025

Estates

18. The Blackwell parkland continues to be enjoyed by regular users and newcomers alike with positive feedback; the maintenance company for the parkland, Brambledown are carrying out regular inspections and can be contacted directly should any issues arise. The new footpath from the parkland to the bus stop on Grange Road near the hotel entrance has now been completed with safety barrier installed. A similar barrier is to be installed outside the other footpath access on Grange Road. The 'Heritage Park' residential development by Homes by Esh is now well underway and the show home is now open and generating a lot of interest.

19. The Burtree Garden Village development which includes the Council's land at High Faverdale Farm has now started and the infrastructure works are well underway. The Phase 1 reserved matters planning applications are now being progressed, and the farmhouse and buildings are being demolished following a recent arson attack.

20. The selection process for the town centre regeneration development partner is progressing and was considered at Cabinet on 8 July.

Towns Fund

21. The Towns Fund Programme continues to deliver on its objectives with the public realm enhancements in Coniscliffe Road fully completed in June 2025. Shopfront works continue at pace on both Skinnergate and the Yards, and Victoria Road, with both schemes due to complete by the end of 2025.

22. Works to the former Northern Echo building are making good progress, with the ground floor Adult Skills facility likely to be operational in early 2026 and completion of the upper floors by the end of 2026.

23. Work has commenced on 156 Northgate to transform a historic building into quality office space; this is scheduled to complete by December 2025.

24. Contracts for works to Edward Pease House are out for tender and expected back mid-July with a proposed start of August 2025 and a completion target of December 2025.

25. Development of an urban green space on the disused site on Garden Street within the Linear Park project has commenced with an artist being appointed in March 2025 to begin research.

26. Initial demolition work has commenced on the properties next to Bank Top Station. The detailed design for the public realm scheme is due to be complete by end July 2025. TVCA anticipate the works will be complete by early 2026.

Planning Policy

27. A new draft Homes Strategy is currently out for consultation and a further report will be presented to Cabinet once the consultation period has ended and responses considered.

28. Proposals to introduce an Article 4 Direction relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation have now been publicised following a decision at the last Cabinet meeting.

29. Work is on-going on a review of the West End and Victoria Embankment Conservation Area Appraisals.

Councillor Chris McEwan
Economy Portfolio

COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Adults Portfolio.

Operational Services

Outcome of the Inspection of the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

2. The Local Authority (LA) received GOOD overall with a rating of 73%.

3. The report summary identified:

   (a) That Darlington provided a good level of Adult Social Care (ASC) service and support. There was a consistent strength-based assessment programme with flexible approaches from staff as well as supportive management around support planning.

   (b) Risk prioritisation was evident across all assessments, and CQC did not see evidence of a negative impact of waiting. There were no delays to hospital discharge and the data around reablement and outcomes following discharge were better than average.

   (c) Identified carers stated they received a good level of support and national data was positive.

   (d) We had a 'Making Every Contact Count' approach, with effective community support and we had clear plans to further embed public health approaches to address health inequalities. There was good partnership working in the discharge of the better care fund and work had been done to address gaps in the care market. There was also a good quality assurance support and additional funding had been provided to support the home care market.

   (e) Collaborative working with partners was evident, particularly in relation to hospital discharge and the interface they had with social work teams. Section 75 agreements worked well with co-location and multidisciplinary team working embedded. Academic work undertaken with the university was brought back by social workers into practise. We commissioned the voluntary community and social enterprise sector to provide services to support people in the community and there were market engagement sessions which fostered a positive relationship with providers. There was mostly positive feedback about transitions to adult services.

   (f) Safeguarding arrangements were effective and proportionate to the size of the LA and involved shared arrangements with the children's safeguarding board. There

was a good performance on deprivation of liberties assessments and good oversight of decision making.

(g) Open and transparent relationships with senior leaders and staff felt they had the ability to challenge and influence policies and practice. Leaders had an impact on staff retention, and there is a positive workplace culture. A key feature of the work of leaders in recent years, had been to embed practice and validation forums. These effectively supported staff learning. The LA demonstrated a commitment to continuous learning related to cultural needs and commissioned external training.

4. This is a significant achievement for the LA and testament to the hard work, commitment and dedication of the adult service teams and wider colleagues who have worked tirelessly to achieve this outcome.

5. The score of 73% has placed the LA as one of the highest rated adult services in the country and the second highest in the North East. This is an amazing success for a small LA.

Adult Social Care Teams

Bed Lever and rails Risk Assessment

6. ASC have now completed the risk assessments for the historic (420) equipment prescriptions, being the first LA in the region to conclude this work.

Blue Badges

7. We currently have 104 people waiting for a blue badge Occupational Therapy assessment and plans are in place to further reduce these waits. There is a newly embedded operational model to support more efficient applications.

Safeguarding (SG)

8. The numbers of safeguarding concerns received have increased alongside complexity. In 2023/2025 2,832 SG referrals were received, an additional 566 to the previous year equating to 24.98% increase.

9. Self-neglect and acts of omission remain the highest proportion of safeguarding referrals.

10. One care home remains in our Executive Strategy procedures. ASC continue to work closely with our internal and system partners to support the providers make required improvements against the action plan. Lifted suspension is in place for the care home whilst monitoring improvements and actions.

11. **Hospital Discharges** - Referrals remain high, and complexity has increased resulting in a higher use of intermediate care beds and short break stays following discharge.

People remaining at home 91 days post discharge

12. At the end of March 2025, 87.1% of people discharged from hospital are still living at home 91 days post hospital discharge this is consistent to previous years, and we remain in a strong position regionally with low numbers experiencing re admission to hospital.

People awaiting allocation for further assessment

13. People awaiting allocation for further assessment continue to be closely risk assessed and reviewed. All people waiting for allocation have had a detailed contact assessment and have been signposted and provided with appropriate advice and information. All are assessed as low risk.

Commissioning and Contracts

14. Carers Week took place from 9 June 2025 – 15 June 2025, with partners hosting a range of events across the Borough, including in the Town Hall, GP surgeries, schools, Darlington Memorial Hospital and West Park. The purpose of the events was to recognise and celebrate the incredible contribution of unpaid carers in our communities and to enable more people to identify themselves as carers. In addition, the events aimed to ensure carers were aware of what support they could access which would enable them to carry out their caring role while minimising the impact on their health, wellbeing, work and other personal commitments.

15. The new Home Care and Support Framework which became operational on 3 February 2025 included an innovative element called "Shared Lives". This is a community-based adults support services which is akin to children's fostering arrangements. People with eligible care and support needs (typically people with learning disabilities) will live in a family environment and share all aspects of family life with the aim of supporting them to live as independently as possible. Commissioning officers are working with adult's operational colleagues and the new "Shared Lives" provider to develop a programme of work including establishing a matching process for carer families and eligible individuals.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

16. The new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements became effective on 1 April 2025 with James Stroyan, Executive Director of People, stepping in as Partnership Chair for the coming year. In light of these new arrangements, the partnership will be reviewing its terms of reference and governance to ensure all groups are explicit about their roles and responsibilities. The partnership is currently in the process of appointing an Independent Scrutineer who will focus on quality assurance and organisational scrutiny and help to strengthen the multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements.

17. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group met on 2 April 2025, the agenda covered the new multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements, the findings of the Child J Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review and a focus on the strategic approach to Suicide Prevention in Darlington, considering its current position and consider how partner agencies may contribute to this collaborative work. The Partnership bid a fond farewell to Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer who has provided an invaluable contribution to the Partnership over a significant period of time.

Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults

COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are all relevant to the main areas of work undertaken under the Children and Young People Portfolio.

The Government's June Spending Review

2. In the recent Government spending review £555M of additional national funding between 2025 and 2028 was announced. The Treasury said that the additional resource would enable investment in preventive provision that "avoids a family's needs escalating, reducing costs and demand" while also expanding support for care leavers and fixing "the broken care market" through measures in the Children's Well Being and Schools Bill. There was also a commitment announced to continue the £523M in national annual funding allocated this year for Children's Social Care reform. The comprises of £270M in Social Care prevention grant and £253M previously allocated in the now disbanded Supporting Families Programme.

3. This is hugely welcome, and will begin to reverse some of the previous Government's destructive policies, including the cuts to Sure Start. Here in Darlington, work will be undertaken to understand the implications and impact of these announcements locally and in line with the service development working already taking place to ensure that the new statutory responsibilities as part of the Children's Well Being and Schools Bill are complied with and met. This is also in line with this work this Council has undertaken since 2023 to develop greater sufficiency in children's placements, and improving services for our care leavers.

4. The national core schools budget will increase from £64.8 billion this year to £69.5 billion in 2028, a cash-terms increase of £4.7 billion by the end of the spending review period. Spending on school maintenance and repairs nationally will also rise by around £400 million to around £2.3 billion a year by 2029-30.

5. The Government has announced an extension of free school meals eligibility. From September 2026, all pupils who have at least one parent or carer receiving universal credit will be eligible, regardless of their total household income. This is a key milestone in the Government's agenda to tackle Child Poverty and ensure all children have the Best Start in Life.

6. It is estimated that there will be 150,000 fewer people in relative poverty after housing costs in FYE 2030 as a result of expanding Free School Meals in England to all children on Universal Credit, compared to baseline projections. This includes 100,000 fewer children in relative poverty after housing costs compared to the baseline.

Child Poverty

7. Last month I attended a meeting of the North East Child Poverty Commission, where we received an important presentation from the lead member of the Cabinet Office on the Government's forthcoming new national child poverty strategy, due to be published in Autumn 2025. Along with the expansion of free school meals for all Universal Credit households mentioned above, the Government has also announced a new Crisis and Resilience Fund to replace the Household Support Fund, supporting families in immediate hardship.

8. This is in the context of child poverty in the UK significantly increasing since 2010, with 700,000 more children living in poverty, reaching 4.3 million in 2022/23. This means that 3 in 10 children in the UK are now in poverty. The poverty gap, or the difference between the average income of poor families and the poverty line, has widened, indicating that poor families have fallen further into poverty, and the number of children in deep poverty has also increased.

9. Darlington's review of data published by DWP in March of this year on children in low-income families shows that in 2023/24, 28% (5564) of 0–15-year-olds in Darlington were in relative poverty before housing costs compared with 28.4% in the North East. On this measure the Borough ranks 8th out of 12 in the North East, and 4th out of 5 in the Tees Valley. This data shows rising numbers of children in poverty across North East England and Darlington is no exception.

10. No single organisation can tackle poverty alone. Alongside the North East Child Poverty Commission, we are continuing with our review to understand the work currently undertaken across services that has a positive impact on those living in poverty. We will devise a broader approach to look at wider family and community poverty, which will be informed by the cross council commission of services we're undertaking over the summer. Once the national strategy in the autumn has been published, we will consider where we can best focus. We will consider the challenges around poverty and low income in the development of Darlington's Plan for Neighbourhoods and Inclusive Growth Strategy, and the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan.

Early Intervention and Front Door

11. The Children's Initial Advice Team continues to be a stable and effective team. The focus of the team remains central to relationships and ensuring the right service support children and their families at the right time to gain the best possible outcomes at the earliest opportunity. The performance data, audit work, feedback and outcomes show that CIAT are ensuring the right service to our families, without delay. The conversion rate of contacts to referrals to social care has decreased over the past 12 months and this is testament to the work that has been carried out to make sure decision making is proportionate, families do not experience unnecessary social care assessment and that first and foremost children are safe and that the service provided meets the needs of children and families.

12. The Family Time Service remains a stable and effective service for our children and their families as they continue to focus on maintaining relationships between children and their families when children are cared for by the Local Authority. The team work closely with

social care teams and offer a wide range of support alongside facilitating and supervising family time sessions. More recently the team have supported with completing aspects of life story work, providing transport for young people and they are assisting with visits to families where there can be a focus on parenting work to inform assessment, and supporting family placement team with school transports. The team also continue to link closely with partners, for example, the Housing team and there have been instances when there are white goods, furniture and household items that might have ordinarily been disposed of now being recycled for use by our families in need.

Building Stronger Families Service

13. Work continues to ensure that early help assessments are led by external partners, and there are a higher number of schools now leading which is very positive. The new early help assessment is proving positive, with relational family plans being more sustainable and achievable overall.

14. The service offer is town wide, and we are currently building up the offer based from The Rydal Academy following a move over from Skerne Park. The aim is to work closely with the schools in the area to ensure that the offer reflects the needs of the families. New universal groups offer more in-depth support for speech and language in early years and this will port around the town to ensure that everyone has access to this resource. Targeted groups continue to support parenting and behaviour management, as well as reducing parental conflict, and we are currently looking to develop a new group to support those experiencing domestic abuse.

Young People's Engagement and Justice Service (YPEJS)

15. Summer Activities are due to be scheduled in coming weeks, the service will aim to have a day centred around mountain bike maintenance and riding skills, a fishing day, a mixed day for the continuation of the victim support Duke of Edinburgh group which will rotate between in-house delivered activities and a couple of paid and finally a generic activity day that will also follow a similar pattern, all referrals taken from current caseloads.

16. Out of Court Diversion Cases slightly on the higher side, but increase in workload more impacted by court work, bail, community orders and remand management programmes.

17. Prevention case levels remaining consistent with closures being replaced with new cases.

18. The team attended Adolescent Stalking training delivered by Forensic-CAMHS, contained a mixture of research reviews as well as lived experience input which was extremely well received by staff. Adolescent Stalking refers to stalking where the perpetrator is an adolescent, as opposed to an adult. Whilst we are not currently supporting any young people where this is an issue, it is an emerging trend nationally and so the training leaves the service well prepared as and when these issues emerge.

Safeguarding Assessment and Care Planning including Children with Disabilities

19. The strategic and operational responsibilities for exploitation have now moved to the Care Planning part of the service following a review. Work is underway to review current procedures and processes to better support children, families and practitioners. There is

to be a focused practice session in July linked to Exploitation for Care Planning staff to improve confidence in this area of the service. Improved links have been made with Durham as our neighbouring authority but also Cleveland with a Teesside operational group to be set up to share information around cross-boundary exploitation. The service is focused on tackling issues of exploitation and practice in this area will be enhanced by being co-located alongside care planning services.

20. Average workloads within the Assessment and Safeguarding teams are 17 with the highest being 30. Some challenges in relation to sickness have impacted on workloads and support is being offered to reduce workloads where possible and support practitioners to progress closures where appropriate. Average workloads within the Children with Disabilities team are 15. A new role to improve the social care advice within EHCPs is progressing well and is based within the team. We are currently exploring the opportunity to commission some of another LA's time to support our assessments of children who have potential children's continuing health care needs.

21. Ongoing focused work is taking place on re-referrals to children's social care with a weekly meeting taking place. Current data for April 2025 shows re-referrals at 18.1% down from 23.1% in 2024/2025.

Looked After and Care Leaver information

Children in our Care and Care Leavers

22. Of the 13 taster flats currently available, five are occupied by young people over the age of 18. Those eligible to bid for housing are doing so with support from their Staying Close Personal Advisors. One 17-year-old has recently moved from Thompson Street into a taster flat and is thriving in independent living. Another 17-year-old young man is scheduled to move into a flat on 16th June. Two Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are sharing a two-bedroom flat. One of them has recently moved on, and another young person has taken their place. Additionally, a 17-year-old young woman has chosen to return to Darlington from Wolverhampton to further develop her independent living skills. She moved on 5 June with support from her peer mentor. The remaining four flats are currently vacant and awaiting refurbishment and redecoration. These are expected to be ready for new occupants by mid-July.

23. Of the 13 taster flats currently available, five are occupied by young people over the age of 18. Those eligible to bid for housing are doing so with support from their Staying Close Personal Advisors. One 17-year-old has recently moved into a taster flat and is thriving in independent living. Another 17-year-old young man is scheduled to move into a flat on 16th June. Two Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are sharing a two-bedroom flat. One of them has recently moved on, and another young person has taken their place. Additionally, a 17-year-old young woman has chosen to return to Darlington from Wolverhampton to further develop her independent living skills. She moved on 5 June with support from her peer mentor. The remaining four flats are currently vacant and awaiting refurbishment and redecoration. These are expected to be ready for new occupants by mid-July.

24. Data from 30 April evidenced we had 269 children in our care, with 22 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children. The reduction in children subject to a Care Order is a result of

focused work across all services to ensure the threshold for the Care Order is consistently reviewed. In April 2025, 10 children ceased to be looked after, seven children returned home, one child was adopted, one turned 18 and receives leaving care support and one UASC turned 18, they are also receiving leaving care support.

25. We have 140 care leavers supported by the team aged 18-25. This is a reduction of three compared to last month. We also support 57 care experienced young people aged 16 and 17 years. We keep in touch with our care leavers and there are regular opportunities for them to come together for activities and support. Recent activities have involved Monthly Care Experienced Forums to get young people's input into service development, shows at the Hippodrome, monthly well-being walks, celebrating Easter by ensuring every care experienced young person and their children received an Easter Egg and mounting our plaque at the Positivitree.

26. The mentoring programme provides care-experienced adults with the opportunity to mentor younger children in care, as well as other care-experienced young people. To date, we have successfully recruited and trained 11 care-experienced young people as mentors.

27. Currently, 101 young people are engaged with the programme - an increase of 17 since March 2025. Of these, six are waiting to be matched with a mentor, and 14 have had planned endings to their mentoring relationships. This service is available to all teams supporting children and young people. The matching process has been overwhelmingly positive and emotionally rewarding for everyone involved. Many of our mentors are balancing employment and family life while still making time to support younger children in care. We are actively recruiting more mentors and have shortlisted 11 candidates. Interviews are scheduled for 11 June 2025.

28. We are utilising the YMCA three nights per week Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 5.30-7.30 for children in care youth provisions. Our Monday session supports children aged 5-11 and we have a minimum of 12 children attending each week. Our Tuesday/Thursday Secondary school aged children group receives a minimum of 15 young people attending each week.

29. Once per month we enjoy a Care leaver walks with groups of 10+ people attending each session.

30. Safe space was a youth provision operated by the team for children in our care. It is a mix of social and focused activities aimed at reducing loneliness, anti-social behaviour and supporting children's emotional health. We received 12 months funding for this project, which ended October 2024. We have submitted a funding application to the Rotary Club to support with some of the costs to continue this valuable support to children in our care. We continue to wait for invite to attend a full Rotary meeting to present the project.

31. Staying Close continues to enhance the support provided to our young people who are preparing to leave care; we are currently supporting 24 young people. This number remains consistent as young people come to the end of their support journey and have achieved their goals. The project has supported 40 young people since April 2023 and 18 young people have successfully moved onto their own accommodation. The project offers a six-days-per-week service for young people most in need. Some feedback from the young people and their workers "she makes sure I'm getting the help I need", "she always

listens to me, gives amazing advice, she never lets me down", "the targeted support offered to this young person by the staying close PA has been crucial to their success", "The support I have got is the best".

32. We received confirmation of government grant funding for Staying Close Project for a further year which is great news! This will allow us to continue with the development the service and support more young people to successfully progress to independence.

Fostering and Supported Lodgings

33. As at the end of April 2025, we had 61 approved foster carer households, 32 of which are supporting 79 children, 28.4% of which are long term matched. We have 49 approved connected carers, with 32 households supporting 42 children, accounting for 29.6 % of the children that are in foster care.

34. Fostering Recruitment has seen an upturn in the months of April/May 2025. We received five expressions of Interest in April and May 2025. Of these five expressions of interest, three have progressed to assessment, one is in application stage and one applicant withdrew.

35. In May 2025 we had one foster carer approved at panel, this is in addition to three foster carer approvals in April 2025 totalling four new Foster Carers for this new financial year.

36. Fostering Fortnight in May 2025 included a social media campaign with videos from foster carers, staff and care experienced peer mentors, as well as a foster carer walk and foster carer recruitment tent for two days in the market.

37. Fostering with Northeast ran a campaign in conjunction with SMOOTH radio and had events across the Northeast at Teesside Park and Dalton Park locally.

38. The addition of a second panel monthly has supported with capacity to ensure that carers are not being unnecessarily delayed and waiting for approval. This has helped with connected foster carers. The additional panel has also allowed the team to catch up with first annual reviews. We had a backlog of reviews due to prioritising Form K and Fostering Assessments.

Foster Carer Recruitment

39. Our 2025 recruitment strategy alongside Fostering with North East's recruitment is to target certain key dates this year, these include:

    (a) Fostering Fortnight – May 2025
    (b) World Refugee Day – June 2025
    (c) Supported Lodgings Week – July 2025
    (d) Kinship Carers Week – October 2025

40. We will adopt a co-ordinated approach within the council using our social media, PR, and marketing to really sell and support our fostering offer. Events such as bowling, attending Hope Town etc and events at local amenities during the above weeks can create some good content and awareness.

41. We continue to promote recruitment through the DBC Facebook page. We have established monthly meetings between the team and colleagues in Communications. This will ensure that Fostering is covered regularly in the One Darlington Magazine, and we will twin-track this by pushing live news and information through social media.

Homes for our Children

42. CEDARS manager has submitted their Ofsted paperwork, wea re awaiting Ofsted to contact us and progress the registration.

43. Butterfield received their first Ofsted inspection and received a grading of Good with only one recommendation.

44. Gilling children's home repurposing is progressing with the home to be called Blossom. We have a project plan in place, and we are aiming for Ofsted registration paperwork to be submitted at the beginning of August. Job adverts for staff will be advertised imminently with a projected recruitment timescale of approximate three months from interview.

45. Re-purpose of Dunrobin - the new home in Sherbourne Close will be ready in September 2025. We are working on a plan to register the home with Ofsted and then move staff and children.

46. All three mainstream children's homes are running at full capacity with three children in each home.

Education

47. From September 2025, the introduction of 30 hours of funded childcare for eligible working parents of babies from 9 months up to 3 years old (where eligibility will match the existing 3 and 4-year-old 30 hours offer).

48. Evidence suggests that the childcare market in Darlington has been able to accommodate an increase in demand following the first two phases of childcare entitlement expansion. There is an overall sufficiency of places to meet the current demand from parents in Darlington. The DfE share ECS code validation rates with LAs showing the number of childcare codes validated and verified by Darlington residents. For summer and autumn 2024, Darlington's validation rate has been above the national rate.

49. 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.

50. A higher proportion of Darlington primary schools have nurseries than nationally (68% in Darlington v. 20% nationally).

51. Four Darlington schools applied for capital funding and all four were successful in securing the funding to enable them to open or expand their nursery in September 2025.

Youth Unemployment

52. The Darlington 18-24 claimant count has risen from 6.6% (495 young people) in January 2025 to 6.9% (520 young people) in April 2025, a rise of 0.3%. This is probably the result of seasonal jobs from the Christmas period ending.

53. Darlington at 6.9% is still higher than North-East average (6.0%) and National average (5.6%). In the same period the North-East average only rose by 0.1%, however the England average rose by 0.3%, in the same period.

54. April 2025 figures for the Tees Valley show a 0.3% increase for all the Tees Valley local authorities except Redcar which only increased by 0.1% (January 2025 figures in brackets):

    (a) 8.8% (8.5%) Hartlepool
    (b) 8.5% (8.2%) Stockton
    (c) 8.1% (7.8%) Middlesbrough
    (d) 7.4% (7.3%) Redcar & Cleveland
    (e) 6.9% (6.6%) Darlington

Darlington Employment Initiative (DEI)

55. The DEI programme is funded through UKSPF and the target group is economically inactive people of working age. The priority groups are; over 50 early retirees, those looking after the family or home and those who are short term sick (less than 12 months).

56. The two staff started the programme mid-February 2024. The current programme was due to run until 31 March 2025, but has been extended for a further year. The target original was for 104 starts with 24 participants in employment by programme end, we are just waiting on revised targets.

57. By the end of April 2025, the team had engaged 174 participants (against an overall contract target of 104) with 85 moved into employment (against an overall contract target of 24). Of those above 82 of the 174 participants were aged 16-24 (47%) with 40 of those moving into work (49%).

Youth Guarantee Trailblazer

58. The government set aside £45m to establish eight Youth Guarantee Trailblazer areas to test new ways of supporting young people (18-21 year olds) into employment or training, by bringing together and enhancing existing programmes in partnership with local areas. The Trailblazer was due to start on 1 April 2025 for a year. TVCA was able to submit a bid for up to £5m with the target group being those 18-21 year olds on benefits. TVCA bid has been approved, and they are currently holding discussions with individual local authorities. The proposed workstreams are as follows (potential leads):

    (a) Convene key service providers and organisations (TVCA)
    (b) Deliver a programme of paid work placements and non-paid work tasters (LAs)
    (c) Test different methodologies for building engagement with young people (LAs)
    (d) Engage and support those leaving Year 13 without a positive destination (LAs)

(e) Mapping an analysis of current landscape and provision (TVCA)

Children's Commissioning and Contracts

59. Further work has been successfully undertaken to embed the Darlington Young Carers Memorandum of Understanding through a second launch event at the end of April. The voice of Darlington Young Carers has been particularly prominent through the launch. Several bespoke videos have been developed by Darlington Young Carers for different target audiences including; top tips for young carers and professionals. Additional analytical work is being undertaken by children's commissioning to review the school census data in relation to Young Carers to enable targeted work with Family Action and Schools to ensure that there are no Wrong Doors for Young Carers in Darlington.

60. The provision of Ofsted Registered Supported Accommodation for young people aged 16-17 years old has been expanded through the newly developed Butlers Grange provision operated by ROC Group. The provision is already providing positive opportunities for a range of Darlington young people including young people stepping down from residential care and those ready to begin their next chapter of preparation for adulthood.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

61. The new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements became effective on 1 April 2025 with James Stroyan, Executive Director of People stepping in as Partnership Chair for the coming year. In light of these new arrangements, the Partnership will be reviewing its terms of reference and governance to ensure all groups are explicit about their roles and responsibilities. The partnership is currently in the process of appointing an Independent Scrutineer who will focus on quality assurance and organisational scrutiny and help to strengthen the multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements.

62. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group met on 2 April, the agenda covered the new multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership arrangements, the findings of the Child J Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review published in February this year and a focus on the strategic approach to Suicide Prevention in Darlington, considering its current position and how partner agencies may contribute to this collaborative work. The Partnership bid a fond farewell to Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer who has provided an invaluable contribution to the Partnership over a significant period.

HAF - Holiday Activity and Food Programme

63. The Move More Team engaged 970 participants at Easter. Funded by the DfE the HAF programme offers free activities and nutritious meals for all eligible young people aged 5 - 16 years in Darlington. The activities, which are all delivered by professional staff, will include a nutritious meal for every participant at each event, taking place at various locations across the town, which included sports, arts and crafts, cooking and much more. A range of activity sessions were also made available for children and families with additional needs (SEND)

Councillor Nick Wallis
Children and Young People Portfolio

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Health and Housing Portfolio were as follows:

Public Health

2. The recent swap to stop events in the town centre have proved to be extremely popular with a total of 244 people spoken to and 241 reuseable vapes given out to our residents to aid their quit attempt. With the ban on single-use vapes coming into force on 1 June 2025, reusable UK regulated vapes have been more popular and the Service has not experienced an increase in people returning to smoking.

3. On 2 June an application was submitted for a Sport England place-based development funding allocation. Place based work is about whole system change, bringing partners together to normalise physical activity as part of everyday life. The focus of the funding is not specifically about sport or sports facilities, but 'inactivity, activity, accessibility, health, and lifestyle'. The application has been submitted by Tees Valley Sport, in partnership with the Public Health and Move More teams. There are strong relationships established with our VCS organisations to strengthen the system and optimise the opportunity. The application is for funding to deliver a programme of development work over a 15-month time period. This will include gathering insights across three defined geographical areas, those being Red Hall and Albert Hill, Park East and Central Darlington and Pierremont. The geographical areas have been chosen based on a combination of levels of deprivation, child poverty data, proportion of children who are overweight (at reception and year 6) and the availability of community assets. Insight will also be collected for the following themed workstreams; learning disabilities, active environments and young people (aged 13- 18 years). If the application is successful work will commence from September 2025.

4. There has been fantastic progress with the ongoing work we are carrying out in relation to our oral health promotion campaign. Currently 13 schools and 9 nurseries are delivering the Supervised Toothbrushing Scheme. An additional 5 primary schools have agreed to deliver from September, meaning it will be offered across 64 per cent of primary schools. Furthermore, 8 of the primary schools have agreed to extend the programme across all of their early years and KS1 classes. The programme will also be piloted with 5 childminder provisions.

5. Efforts will continue to encourage more schools to participate in the Supervised Toothbrushing Scheme, including meeting with schools, sharing local data and highlighting how the offer aligns with the Early Years Foundation Framework.

6. Oral health promotional events have been delivered, including Tractor Tuesday and Eco Fayre pop up stalls. We distributed 232 Toothbrush and toothpaste packs, 253 toothbrush timers and over 200 reward charts to parents and carers. There will be a presence at

future events, including Darlington by the Sea. The 0-19 team are issuing free flow cups as part of routine visits for toddlers and toothbrush and toothpaste packs to families who need them.

7. As mentioned previously Darlington has received some national funding to support the delivery and expansion of Supervised Toothbrushing Schemes, with a specific ask to focus on early years settings in the 20 per cent most deprived areas of Darlington. The lead for oral health promotion has attended the Nursery Network and Primary Heads meetings to encourage increased uptake of the Supervised Toothbrushing Scheme. The funding is also being used to support the development of 2 educational videos to promote key oral health messages and tips.

8. A task and finish group has been established to understand issues and barriers in relation to oral health promotion to support the implementation and extension of toothbrushing to all Key Stage 1 pupils and identify other oral health promotion opportunities to consider. Eleven schools have been invited to this group.

9. The Oral Health Promotion Alliance launched on 5 June with 14 partners invited to attend including the 0-19 service, Education Team, Social Care, Oral Health Team and a local dentist. The Alliance will support the development and monitoring of a new Oral Health Promotion Strategy. The initial meeting was very successful, and the draft strategy will be developed by the end of July. Consultation has taken place with groups across the town on oral health and a survey carried out to inform the strategy development, the results are currently being analysed.

Housing Services

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

10. Following the results of the first Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, which was completed in November 2023, our Tenants Panel asked us to focus on three specific areas to improve tenant satisfaction, these were:

    (a) Complaints handling;
    (b) Listening to tenants' views;
    (c) Dealing with anti-social behaviour.

11. Within these areas, the Tenants Panel also suggested some actions, which they felt would improve satisfaction for all tenants. These included:

    (a) Setting up a dedicated housing complaints webpage;

    (b) Increasing the visibility of the Tenants Panel;

    (c) Setting up transactional feedback surveys for complaint and anti-social behaviour investigations.

12. All these actions were completed in 2024-25, and whilst there have been overall improvements in the 2024 Tenant Satisfaction survey, there are still improvements that

can be made. Our plan for action in 2025-26 will include:

(a) **Repairs**: Our repairs service shows the highest level of satisfaction but also included some the highest areas of dissatisfaction. Therefore, our Tenants Panel will be carrying out a review of the repairs service this summer, starting with the void property repair process. Those aged 65+ were more satisfied than younger tenants, so we will be looking at how to engage more with younger tenants and those with families.

(b) **Complaints handling**: The Tenants Panel suggested that we; use the Tenants Panel as a tool to review our complaints and provide independent feedback, invite a member of the housing complaints team to the Tenants Panel every quarter to go through complaints and focus on the improvements made on the back of this, and continue to improve feedback with transactional surveys, which tenants can complete at the end of an investigation. From this, we will check if we adhered to the policy and whether our internal processes are robust and fit for purpose. The Tenants Panel have been attending scrutiny training, so they can scrutinise our performance better.

(c) **Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour**: The Tenants Panel suggested that we; include an article in Housing Connect about what actions we have taken, how tenants can report issues to us and ensure this is a regular feature, produce a new leaflet detailing how to report anti-social behaviour to help explain the process better, and review the current webpages to ensure they provide all the information that our tenants need.

(d) **Listening to tenant's views**: The Tenants Panel suggested that we; recruit a Tenants Panel member from each area of Darlington to ensure no area is being overlooked, aim to recruit a community champion for each area of Darlington to take part in estate walkabouts and train tenants as fire marshals for the area that they live in, and create a new Tenants Panel recruitment leaflet that outlines the roles and responsibilities of being a Tenants Panel and Digital Tenants Panel Member.

New Build

13. Members will be aware of the criminal damage inflicted on a number of our much-needed new build properties at the Neasham Road site, and I am devastated by this act of vandalism. Six of these homes will need to be demolished and rebuilt. There will be significant costs, which we are talking to our insurers about. The destruction also means there will be a delay in completing this phase of the building work, resulting in potential tenants having to wait longer for their new homes.

14. However, despite this set-back, the Neasham Road site is still on course to be mostly completed by March 2026, as planned, with the damaged properties being completed by mid-2026. I must commend and thank our fantastic Building Services team for responding so quickly and professionally to this incident. Now that the investigation has come to a close, we will be undertaking an internal review.

Thrive Darlington Service

15. Members will recall from my report in May 2024 that 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, five of which are occupied and seven are undergoing refurbishment.

16. 11 young people have been accepted into the project with mental health, lack of independent living skills and homelessness being the predominant reason for referral. Support is being provided by WayThrough, including income maximisation, debt advice, access to training and education, access to leisure and faith activities, physical and mental health management, and securing and maintaining move-on accommodation from the project.

17. Examples of the work undertaken so far with the young people accepted onto the project include:

    (a) One young person volunteered at the library, which enabled them to gain new skills around organisation and having a structured approach.

    (b) One young person volunteered at a foodbank which gave the young people a good understanding of community challenges and being a part of improving the lives of those struggling with the financial crisis. This also helped improve their own financial understanding.

    (c) Two young people volunteered at the King's Church. This involved the young person supporting the team in the kitchen with meeting and greeting customers, washing-up and serving customers. This empowered the young people to manage their own time, organise their daily routines and, as an incentive, meals were provided.

    (d) One young person volunteered at Eastbourne Community Centre at a table-top sale event.

    (e) Gym sessions and gardening groups were set up and led by the project, which focused on improving young people's physical and mental health. The sessions also support young people to socialise and integrate with others in the community and improve their confidence.

    (f) Participation in youth networks. The team attended regular Youth Network meetings, where they obtained relevant contacts from local agencies working with young people. This was focused on volunteering, training and education. It also provided useful resources for young people such as mental health services.

Dolphin Centre

18. Work continues to install 399 photovoltaic (PV) panels on the flat roofs of the Dolphin Centre and is expected to complete late summer/early autumn.

19. A new seating area has been installed outside the changing village in reception to encourage customers to go bare foot when entering the pool complex to reduce the use of overshoes and support the environment. Biodegradable overshoes have also been purchased for those not wishing to go barefoot.

20. May half term holidays were extremely busy with an increase in footfall and income in most business areas. Swimming in particular experienced a large increase on the same period last year. A new pool party was introduced and attracted families and young people in the town taking the pool to full capacity.

21. A water safety roadshow is being delivered in primary schools across the town. The talk is being delivered by a member of the swim teaching team who was involved in a near drowning incident as a child and therefore can share real life experience and dangers associated with water.

Eastbourne Sports Complex

SEND Basketball

22. Darlington Move More Team has supported Darlington Storm Basketball club with a successful Sport England Movement Fund application for £14,500 to provide a specific SEND basketball session alongside the club that will be fully inclusive and sustainable for SEND participants. The application also offers young aspiring coaches the chance to become qualified and support the club in developing a SEND Basketball team.

Inclusion Programme

23. Darlington Move More Team have been working with Sport for Confidence and Teesside University on developing a new Boccia session at the Dolphin Centre following a successful application of £12,000 to the Sport England movement fund. The bid includes new inclusive boccia equipment, line marking of the main sports hall, funding for the session and leaders to be trained up from internal and external inclusive services and occupational therapists. The session has grown significantly with 26 attendances on average from various partner organisations since the start of April.

Councillor Matthew Roche
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing

COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Local Services Portfolio.

Climate Change

2. To highlight and engage with visitors around Climate Change the Eco Fair attracted thousands of visitors with information stands, exhibitors and local producers. There were drop-in activities themed around nature with over 350 people making recycled flowers for a project that will be displayed during the summer.

Highway Maintenance Programme

3. Highway Maintenance Schemes completed:

   (a) Patching Contract: Carriageway Patching (six sites)
   (b) A67 Sadberge Road Roundabout: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.223km)
   (c) Unc Allington Way: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.832km)

4. Highway Maintenance Schemes on site:

   (a) Unc. Barnes Road: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.268km)

5. Highway Maintenance schemes due to start:

   (a) Surface Dressing Contract: two sites (2.330km)

   (b) Micro-Asphalt Contract: four sites (1.298km)

   (c) B6290 Carmel Road North (Phase 3): Carriageway Resurfacing (0.620km)

   (d) A1150 Stockton Road/Whinfield Road Roundabout: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.240km)

   (e) A68 West Auckland Road (Phase 2): Carriageway Resurfacing (0.475km)

Bus Services

6. From the beginning of May, the service 6 and 6a has seen an enhanced service with a daily evening service and an hourly daytime Sunday service introduced using S106 funding. These enhancements will operate for a minimum three-year period. Tees Flex is continuing until August 2025, a decision beyond this period is awaited from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

7. The under 22 fares promotion will continue for the financial year 2025/26. There is also a scheme to provide bus passes for care leavers agreed and this is in the process of being finalised.

Safer Routes to School

8. **Table 1** below shows progress on all our Safer Routes to School (SRTS) schemes that are currently being developed. The construction dates are anticipated and will be dependent upon the outcome of consultation and the availability of construction resource at that time.

Scheme	Scheme Consultation	Ward Member Briefing	Portfolio Holder sign-off	Traffic Regulation Order consultation	Potential Cabinet (if we receive objections)	Construction (currently programmed)
Hurworth Academy School 20mph Zone	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete
Abbey Infants and Junior School 20mph scheme	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Cleveland Terrace and Abbey Road - some early enabling works undertaken during Easter 2025 holidays with remaining work to be carried out during the summer holiday period.
Stanhope Road North Puffin crossing	Public consultation July 2025	Complete	Awaiting outcome of consultation	November 2025	February 2026	A scheme has been drawn up and consultation with local residents and businesses to commence shortly.
St. Augustine's School 20mph scheme	Complete	Complete	Engagement report being collated	September 2025	December 2025	School Summer holidays 2026

Scheme	Scheme Consultation	Ward Member Briefing	Portfolio Holder sign-off	Traffic Regulation Order consultation	Potential Cabinet (if we receive objections)	Construction (currently programmed)
St Bede's School 20mph scheme	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Complete	Currently programmed for Easter 2026 will coincide with maintenance scheme.
Longfield School Puffin crossing	March 2025	Complete	Awaiting outcome of consultation	July 2025	October 2025	Looking to coordinate construction with highway maintenance scheme on Longfield Road. Date to be agreed.
Mowden Infant and Junior School 20mph scheme	Resident consultation to be determined, engagement with the school to be undertaken	Ward member briefing late January	Awaiting outcome of consultation and decision on funding	TBD	TBD	TBD

Table 1: Progress of the current programme of SRTS Schemes

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)

9. CRSTS project work continues to be developed with a number of bus improvement and active travel schemes being developed. These projects are at various stages of development, either concept, preliminary or detailed design and some have statutory support from Active Travel England. It is likely that Woodland Road (phase 2) Active Travel Infrastructure Scheme will be delivered on site this year.

10. The government has announced that the Tees Valley will receive £978million of transport funding for the period 2027 to 2032. This was originally earmarked to come as the second round of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS2). The Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet agreed a programme of works for the funding in January 2024.

Hopetown Darlington

11. 'Railway Pioneers - Celebrating the Railway Rockstars of the Past' closed on 22 June 2025. The first of two Stockton & Darlington Railway 200 (S&DR200) bicentennial anniversary festival exhibitions at Hopetown, we welcomed over 21,000 visitors to the exhibition which showcased the advancements of rail technology in the early 19th century as well as the engineering innovation which led to the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

12. 'STEAM to the Future', the second S&DR200 bicentennial anniversary festival exhibition at Hopetown, opened on 11 July 2025. This family friendly exhibition takes a playful look at the near and BlueSky thinking using commissioned art pieces showcasing the design and science behind the rail industry. S&DR200 has commissioned an immersive installation by A.A.Murakami (AKA Studio Swine) inspired by steam as a source of power, and visitors will have the chance to create a 22nd century inspired locomotive using virtual reality software. The free-to-enter exhibition will take place in the Exhibition Hall in historic Grade II listed Carriage Works until 5 October 2025.

13. 'Experiment!', our railway-themed time travel immersive experience ride, was shortlisted for the prestigious Museums + Heritage Awards in the 'Best Use of Digital, UK' category. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful on this occasion, but we were honoured to be named among this year's finalists at the awards, which celebrates excellence across the global cultural sector.

Libraries

14. Libraries succeeded in gaining funding to encourage reading for enjoyment and celebrating our railway history. Targeted at youngsters who were at a crucial stage of development when they were heavily disadvantaged during the pandemic, *On Track for Storytime* re-engaged young readers, provided a shared experience from school to school, and showcased peer-to-peer role modelling of storytelling.

15. Libraries gifted an entire year group (Year 3) a special edition copy of the book *Little Loco's Big Day,* by local author, Caroline Hardie, in hopes it would inspire children to become the bold, enterprising innovators of the future. The book tells the story of Locomotion No 1 on her first journey 200 years ago.

16. A film was made of five school classes reading *Little Loco's Big Day* and acting out scenes. This film was used to gift the remaining school classes their book and was made available on YouTube and social media for families to learn about our railway heritage and inspire involvement in the wider celebrations and activity.

17. A leaflet detailing recommended reads and related events celebrating the S&DR200 festival were given to all families alongside information on joining and using the library. 1,300 children were gifted the book, including a group of home-schooled pupils.

18. Darlington Library successfully bid for funding to restore and frame an important item from the town's history collection. The large original testimonial document presented to Edward Pease, Father of the Railways, in 1857, is notable for the number of influential people to have signed it as well as the rare autography of the time. This item is on display as part of the bicentennial celebrations within Darlington Library.

19. A touring exhibition showcasing Stockton and Darlington Railway's momentous history is taking place in the Art Gallery within Darlington Library.

20. The documents have been brought together from archives across the UK and include engineer drawings and rarely seen maps, as well as a few amusing Victorian cartoons depicting the adventurous and strange inventions of the age.

21. The exhibition is complemented by other works from Darlington's historic collection, as well as completed peg dolls decorated to symbolise a memorable journey, produced by members of the public and community groups as part of the Memory of a Journey Project.

22. The Crossing the Tees Book Festival is delivered by Darlington, Stockton, Hartlepool, Middlesborough and Redcar and Cleveland Libraries. The line-up kicked off in Darlington with a Stand-Up History Show from TV personality and Antique expert, David Harper, and concluded with an evening of live music and spoken word inspired by the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the people who ride it with Hark! The Sound of Stories 'Passengers and Pioneers'. Back for its 11th year, the festival also showcases a range of author talks, and poetry, writing and publishing workshops.

Hippodrome

23. Newcastle's Ballet Lorent performed at the Hippodrome on 16 - 17 May, with children from Heathfield Primary School performing alongside the professional dancers.

24. As part of our ongoing partnership with Orchestras Live, Royal Northern Sinfonia performed at the Hippodrome on Thursday 5 June. As a curtain-raiser to the concert, students from Sedgefield Community College performed a bespoke piece created in workshops with the orchestra; they then had the opportunity to watch the concert. 350 people attended the concert, with tickets priced at just £5 for the under-30s and for friends and family of the workshop participants.

25. Community hires included Melanie Edmenson and Tees Dance, giving hundreds of young people the opportunity to perform on the Hippodrome stage. English Youth Ballet also performed at the Hippodrome on 13 - 14 June, with 60 young dancers from the local area performing alongside professional dancers in *Giselle*.

26. The Hippodrome's Youth Theatre will perform in The Hullabaloo on 21 June, while Youth Dance participants will present a showcase in the Hippodrome on 2 July.

27. The Hippodrome has formed a new partnership with Blackbird Creative Arts to offer Key Stage Door, a performing arts alternative education provision for 11–16-year-olds in Darlington. The programme is aimed at students who struggle with Emotionally Based School Avoidance; it's run by Blackbird Creative Arts who are hiring the space at a reduced rate. The provision will begin from September 2025.

28. The Hippodrome has formed a partnership with Live Theatre, Newcastle, and the NHS Integrated Care Board. On behalf of the NHS Universal Family Programme, at the Hippodrome, Live Theatre will deliver a six-week workshop programme for care experienced young people who are based in the Darlington area. These workshops using creative learning are designed to enhance employability skills, including communication, building confidence and encourage teamwork, equipping young people with skills and knowledge in preparation for entering the world of work.

29. Heavily-sold performances during this period include Sir Tim Rice (Monday 26 May), Dianne and Vito – Red Hot and Ready (Sunday 13 July, 855 tickets sold thus far), Jools Holland (15 July, 734 tickets sold thus far) and Rumours of Fleetwood Mac (Friday 18 July, 813 tickets sold thus far).

30. Thus far during this period, the Hippodrome's sector-leading access scheme has enabled 76 Essential Companions to attend shows free of charge to support audience members with disabilities, with 21 Universal Credit recipients and two Pension Credit recipients attending at a 50% discount.

Creative Darlington

31. Heritage and Culture fund budget has been committed to the Orchestras Live Darlo Creates programme in 2025/26 involving Darlington Hippodrome, Durham Music Service, Royal Northern Sinfonia who will deliver projects in summer 2025 and spring 2026 and Opera North who will begin a *From Rail to Stage* project which will involve Haughton Academy and Hopetown Darlington.

32. In May 2024 we were advised by another party that an application has secured an Arts Council England Project funding grant offer with budget support from the Heritage and Culture fund budget support in kind from Darlington Hippodrome to undertake a research and development project, expected to take place at Darlington Hippodrome between 22 and 30 September 2025, investigating the viability of adapting 'Second Hand Rose', a radio play by Philip Meeks shared on BBC Radio 4, for performance on stage.

33. *Where in the North?* by Darlington Photography Association ran Saturday 12 April 2025 - Thursday 8 May 2025, presenting unlabelled photographs and asking visitors to guess where in the North (from Ripon/York to Northumberland, Cockermouth to Redcar) they were taken. Several photographs in Darlington Borough Art Collection were shown alongside this exhibition. Visitor comments on this exhibition included 'First time visit – not living in Darlington so wouldn't use Library but enjoyed the exhibition + reading the history of the building' and 'what I have seen here cannot get any better'.

34. An exhibition featuring 3 quilts created by Speak Their Name North East ran from Saturday 10 May 2025 to Thursday 12 June 2025. The three quilt panels contained 120 squares created by some of those who have lost loved ones to suicide in our region. Alongside the quilts, 20 works from Darlington Borough Art Collection were displayed on the Art Gallery exhibition boards. Information on Speak Their Name and signposting to suicide prevention services was shared within the space. Their exhibition drew a selection of comments including "what a wonderful tribute and a reminder to all of us how suicide affects many, many people", "great to see such a display designed to challenge the stigma".

Town Centre Partnership and Events

35. Darlington Community Carnival brought together schools, organisations and residents to enjoy this year's carnival celebrations 'All Aboard the Carnival Express' including a procession through the town centre followed by entertainment and stalls in Stanhope Park throughout the day. The carnival worked alongside a number of schools and groups with artist Yvonne Preston to create costumes and props for the occasion.

36. South Park hosted Proms in the Park on 6 July, with a fantastic programme of tunes performed by the Royal Signals Northern Band in support of the Army Benevolent Fund. Local cadets volunteered at the event, adding to the strong community spirit. Thousands of attendees gathered with their picnics to enjoy an evening of music in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

37. The GOLD Tea Dance welcomed hundreds of attendees who enjoyed tea and freshly baked scones while listening to vintage music, dancing in the square, and exploring a variety of information stalls and local service providers present at the event.

38. The Darlington Vintage Car Rally showcased nearly 200 classic vehicles throughout the town centre. This annual event attracts thousands of visitors, encouraging them to explore the town and enjoy extended visits - providing a valuable boost to local retail and hospitality businesses. The rally featured a wide range of impressive vehicles, organised into categories, with awards presented to the top entries. Many motoring clubs also attend regularly, as the event is a well-established highlight on the vintage car calendar.

39. Throughout the summer, the town centre offers a packed programme of events, including much-loved staples like *Darlington by the Sea* and the *10K*. In addition, a range of events are delivered in partnership with local organisations such as Darlington Healthwatch. The programme features various animation days designed to encourage visitors to explore the entire town centre and support high street businesses. All events are listed on www.enjoydarlington.co.uk and the communications and marketing teamwork in the social media platforms to help promote Darlington.

40. The Events Team is working closely with the S&DR200 Festival team to plan and deliver two major events—*Ghost Train* and *Anniversary Journey*—this September. These large-scale celebrations are expected to attract thousands of visitors from across the UK and internationally.

Environmental Services

41. As part of the national Simpler Recycling reforms, plans are progressing for the commencement of weekly food waste collections from April 2026. Various procurement exercises are underway across the Tees Valley for containers, vehicles and treatment facilities. The introduction of food waste collections will also see a move to the weekly collection of recyclable materials. To support this, a dedicated communications and engagement programme will be developed.

Councillor Libby McCollom
Local Services Portfolio

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Resources Portfolio.

Revenues and Benefits

2. Our Revenues and Benefits team continues to perform well in recovering long-standing and large debts to the Council, as follows.

   (a) One commercial debtor owed over £15,000 in unpaid Business Rates and following the commencement of bankruptcy action by the Council, the full amount was recovered.

   (b) One debtor, who was a local landlord, owed over £4,500 in unpaid Council Tax on two properties in Darlington. Charging orders were secured on the properties in 2020 but when the landlord passed away in 2022, the full amount of the Council Tax debt was then recovered, following the sale of the properties.

3. During 2024-25, a total of 13,372 Council Tax and Business Rates bills were sent electronically, representing an approximate saving of £8,500 on postage and stationery. Whilst this is an increase on the numbers in 2023-24, this total still only represents 11% of all the bills sent. Signs of improvement are encouraging in 2025-26, with over 13% of bills produced electronically so far but more work needs to be done.

4. Our Revenues and Benefits team are currently exploring an alternative to the way e-bills can be produced, by giving customers the option of receiving an e-bill when a change of circumstances or application for a discount is received. This should increase the number of e-bills significantly and I will update Members later in the year.

Climate Change

5. As noted above every move to a paperless electronic bill reduces paper consumption and energy required for the processing and delivery and the team are working to increase take up rates in this area.

6. Work on providing electric vehicle chargers at the Allington Way depot is progressing well and will allow progression to more electric vehicles in the council fleet. We have been working closely with Northern Power Grid, and they have provided an indicative date of September to install the cabling required for the work. A tender is currently underway through NEPO to appoint a contractor to deliver the charging units and substation.

7. As an update from my last report, 112 photovoltaics (PV) have now been installed on the lower level Dolphin Centre roof, work will now begin on the remaining 287 PV's on the higher roof.

8. Our ICT infrastructure is continually being refreshed and as the new equipment comes online the carbon footprint is reduced along with the electricity required to power it.

Customer Services

9. Our Customer Service and Civic Enforcement teams joined forces to take part in a National Blue Badge Action Day, which took place on 30 May 2025. Data from this day is being collated and will be shared nationally with all Councils taking part.

10. Taking part in this important event shows that we take Blue Badge fraud and misuse very seriously. Although officers already make regular checks on Blue Badges, the day of action allowed more resource to be added and recording statistics to be shared nationally.

11. Councils taking part will also be recognised by the transport minister, who takes a great interest in what Councils do take part in this day. We have been working hard to prepare for this day of action for a couple of months, which is the first time for Darlington.

12. We have used this opportunity to raise public awareness through local media and social media channels, informing the public about what we are doing to deter misuse and educating badge holders and the general public about the rules and importance of compliance.

Capital Projects and Design Services Management

13. The Council's capital programme has a wide range of exciting projects being developed and delivered.

    (a) On the Darlington Station scheme, which is being managed by the Tees Valley Combined Authority, Network Rail's contractors are continuing the fit out works and the external areas are nearing completion.

    (b) Neasham Road and Sherborne housing schemes continue to progress well. However, on the Neasham Road site there has been an incident of vandalism which has severely damaged several properties. Efforts are being made to minimise delays to the completion of the scheme.

    (c) The refurbishment works to provide office space at No.156 Northgate are progressing well and the tender for refurbishment works to No.142 Northgate has been issued.

    (d) The refurbishment works at the former Northern Echo building are also progressing well both internally and externally.

    (e) The remaining phase of demolition at the Skinnergate Housing site is due to commence shortly and aims to be complete by the end of August.

14. Business cases continue to be developed to secure additional projects from funding opportunities.

15. There remains a risk of further inflation related effects on construction related costs.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

16. During May and following the establishment of a robust data processing agreement, 25 staff from a range of services commenced a pilot of an AI tool called MINUTE. The tool has been developed by a team in central government, and Darlington is one of 25 local authorities testing it. It transcribes in-person and online meetings through both live capture and audio uploads. The transcriptions are then summarised using one of the several template options available. All of this is achieved within a matter of minutes after the meetings.

17. Early tests have generated positive results, and the pilot runs until mid-July. If proven to be successful, the tool has the potential to save a significant amount of officer time when documenting meetings, and it enables minute takers to be more actively engaged in meetings.

18. We are also testing the capabilities of other similar commercial products, with a view to establishing an approach to the wider use of this technology across the Council later in the year.

Councillor Mandy Porter
Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main updates under the Stronger Communities Portfolio are as follows: -

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

2. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour trends for Darlington:

Darlington	YTD April/May 2024	YTD April/May 2025
Crime	1870	1874
ASB	440	645

Crime

3. The year-to-date crime figure has seen a small increase than the same period last year, by 0.2%. All reported incidents of violence with injury have seen a 10.9% reduction, burglary offences have reduced by 37.8% and vehicle offences has reduced by 46.3%. Specific areas of crime with comparative increasing trends are robbery, arson, racially aggravated crime, sexual offences, rape, and possession of weapons.

ASB

4. The ASB year-to-date figure is higher than the same period last year, by 46.6%. During the reporting period there was an increase in anti-social behaviour associated with off-road bikes, noise related incidents, driving in an anti-social manner at car parks, and youth related ASB (the weather has had an impact in this area). Additional measures were introduced to address the ASB, including multi-agency partnership working, additional uniformed staff on patrol, increased youth intervention work, increased staffing within CCTV room and increased civic enforcement.

5. During the reporting period the Young People's Engagement and Justice Service have received five referrals into the Early Intervention and Prevention Pathway from the Civic Enforcement Team.

6. Between 1 April 2025 and 31 May 2025:

   (a) 8 young people received first warnings for ASB

   (b) 5 young people received acceptable behaviour agreements (ABA)

   (c) 2 young people committed ABA breaches

(d) 5 young people were referred to Darlington Borough Council Young People's Engagement and Justice Service for positive intervention

(e) 2 young people are pending interview

(f) 1 young person has a Civil Injunction pending.

Parking and Environmental Enforcement Activity

7. Since the last reporting period officers have continued to enforce parking contraventions and tackle problems associated with fly-tipping and waste in back lanes, the figures below provide an overview of activity:

(a) 70 environment crime cases (of which 48 closed) 1 Live Case and 21 Outstanding Cases

(b) 2 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for (1) Fly Tipping £1000 and (2) Duty of Care £600

(c) 2 Community Protection Warnings (CPW) were issued by the Police for noise and neighbour related issues.

(d) 3 individuals were prosecuted for obstructing investigations, with one individual ordered to pay £1080 for 3 offences related to fly tipping. A second individual was fined a total of £458 for obstruction under section 110 and the third fined £206 for obstruction under Section 110.

(e) 3 further Cases are pending Court dates in July 2025; one of which was adjourned in April 2025 for three offences (related to fly tipping).

(f) Trail cameras to improve CCTV deployment options are being considered.

(g) 2047 Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) in relation to parking contraventions have been issued during the period of 01/04/25 – 25/05/25.

Begging Incidents

8. Begging incidents over the last two months have reduced significantly compared to the same period the previous year. Increased dedicated patrols and joined-up partnership working has driven improvements.

9. There are currently six people begging and they are engaging with the outreach worker to provide all available support mechanisms. Intelligence is gathered amongst partners and reviewed at multi-agency meetings to determine the most appropriate solutions and actions. Support is offered through a dedicated outreach worker who engages and signposts individuals to the appropriate services.

10. Media campaigns focussed on begging continue to educate members of the public on ways to report incidents of begging.

PREVENT

11. Prevent is the government strategy to combat terrorism and radicalisation in the UK. The annual Prevent assurance process for 2024/2025 has been completed for Darlington and the result of the benchmark assessment conducted by the Home Office is as below:

    (a) Multi Agency partnership Group – Exceeded
    (b) Local Risk Assessment – Met
    (c) Partnership Plan – Met
    (d) Referral Pathway – Met
    (e) Training Programme – Exceeded
    (f) Reducing Permissive Environments – Met
    (g) Communication & Engagement - Met

Household Support Fund

12. The Benefit Enquiry Action Team (BEAT) continues to provide essential support to residents across the Borough. Darlington Borough Council commissions Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland to provide the service, which in turn helps local people to identify and apply for unclaimed benefits they might be entitled to. Between October 2024 and March 2025 additional funding was made available via the Household Support Fund (HSF) to provide a temporary boost in service provision. Consequently, for the six months between October 2025 and March 2025 the service helped over 600 people within the Borough to identify and apply for over £1.1m in unclaimed benefits. The annual target is £1m+, so to achieve more than £1m within a six-month period is a fantastic result. Support was provided for over 20 types of benefits, with the highest values being attributed to Personal Independence Payments (£411k), Attendance Allowance (£150k), Carers Allowance (£97k), migration to Universal Credit (£97k), and Limited Capability to Work – Universal Credit (£94k). A dedicated campaign to raise awareness of BEAT is proving to be effective, with the One Darlington magazine being a notably successful means of communications for some benefits, and online channels for others.

13. Arrangements are in place for the Household Support Fund to be delivered in line with the Cabinet report of 8 April 2025. As in previous years, vouchers to the value of £12 per week will be issued to parents of children in receipt of free school meals over the summer holidays.

Plan for Neighbourhoods

14. Arrangements are in place for the Council to support the independent Board that has been approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to lead Darlington's Plan for Neighbourhoods. It has agreed two priority areas: Driving Growth and Thriving Neighbourhoods. In line with the guidance provided, it is focusing on neighbourhoods seen as 'left behind'. Discussions are underway with the voluntary and community sector to carry out community engagement which will inform the Regeneration Plan that is required to be submitted by 28 November.

Trading Standards

15. Darlington businesses have been visited and advised on the upcoming disposable vapes ban which came into force on 1 June 2025. Compliance check visits will be undertaken. Several inspection visits have been completed by the trading standards team including public houses, large retailers, and tanning shops. Visits to Darlington Farmers Auction Mart have been conducted to check on animal welfare.

16. A safety concern with regard to an unsafe mobile phone charger was notified to the trading standards team who have issued a press release to advise the public on how to stay safe and a radio interview given on this topic and the disposable vape ban.

Private Sector Housing

Warm Homes: Local Grant

17. In 2024 a consortium of Tees Valley Councils (Middlesbrough, Darlington, Stockton, Redcar & Cleveland) was created to seek funding for the improvement of energy performance in private dwellings – both owner-occupier and in the private rental market. In March 2025 the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, which awards the grants to local authorities, awarded the Tees Valley consortium £13.9M to deliver home energy improvements.

18. The scheme will be delivered in partnership with a national energy supply company and will offer households on lower incomes, living in properties with energy performance rating (EPC) between D and G, the opportunity to improve their property's energy efficiency and energy performance rating through a variety of single and combined improvements and adaptations. This will include the installation of modern energy efficient low carbon heating systems and improved insulation of dwellings. There will be no contribution from occupiers for any works carried out.

19. The scheme will be delivered over three years with funding split over the three years as follows:

Total across whole Funding Period	*£13,953,865.00*
FY 25/26	*£2,322,957.00*
FY 26/27	*£5,874,899.00*
FY 27/28	*£5,756,009.00*

20. Residents and landlords will be able to apply for works to be carried out to their properties and then work with the main supplier to identify and implement the most effective solutions to improve the energy efficiency of the property. Some properties may only need small improvements, such as improved insulation, to enable a measurable improvement in energy efficiency, whereas other properties might require considerable works to be carried out. A measure of energy performance before and after improvements will be made to demonstrate the effectiveness of the scheme and the improvement in energy performance achieved.

21. Consortium members are currently working on the procurement and delivery arrangements for the scheme.

Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2)

22. Following a successful bid in January 2023, a scheme to improve energy inefficient properties, funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, provided measures to 81 properties across the Tess Valley.

23. The project is being led by Darlington Borough Council, under a partnership name of Home Energy Efficiency Tees Valley (HEET) aimed to improve up to 300 properties.

Licensing

24. Following full public consultation, a revised Pavement Café Policy has been discussed at the Licensing Committee, with recommendations for Full Council to consider. Included in these recommendations are for there to be a complete ban on smoking and vaping in pavement cafes.

25. The government has announced that there will be a public consultation on proposals to address issues of cross-border taxi licensing, which, although lawful, has reduced the ability of licensing authorities to deal with local problems. Regional taxi licensing is being considered, which could see a Tees Valley wide taxi licensing regime and alignment of policies.

26. Early consultation is taking place with street traders and stakeholders with a view to amending DBC's current Street Trading Policy. This will take into consideration changes to Darlington's town centre in recent years and the competing demands of businesses.

Councillor Jim Garner
Stronger Communities Portfolio

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COUNCIL
17 July 2025

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Safeguarding Responsibilities and the Executive Strategy Process

2. The Head of Adults introduced a report outlining the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and the executive strategy process. A presentation was prepared in advance for the meeting which touched upon both areas, focusing upon the protection of vulnerable adults.

3. The Head of Adults reinforced that Council operates under the statutory framework of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership and that the Council has a responsibility to ensure that all commissioned agencies work in line with such framework and in line with the Care Act 2014.

4. The Executive Strategy Process was described as a multi-agency framework designed to address serious safeguarding concerns, it ensures that safeguarding responses are coordinated, person-centred, and legally compliant.

5. The presentation detailed how the service area carries out a self-audit, identifying both areas of strength and areas of development. Expectations and an improvement plan are outlined after speaking to staff, residents and family members to garner a more holistic perspective on needs.

6. The Head of Adults made reference to the Safeguarding Adults Boards which are required to be established by every Local Authority. The role of a SAB is to develop safeguarding strategies, conduct Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs henceforth), and promote inter-agency cooperation.

7. Further reference was made to the service area's prevention duty, notably undertaking a risk notification pilot which has prevented 330 safeguarding incidents per annum thus far. Additionally, officers touched upon the CPD delivered to staff, which they ensured was evidence-based training.

8. Brief reference was made to the recent CQC inspection carried out within the service area which returned a positive result, and Members shared very positive sentiments towards this and the staff within the service area.

9. During the officer's presentation, there was mentioning of medicine being administered incorrectly. Members questioned whether the multiple cases of this had similar causes, which the officers responded to saying that high levels of staff turnover and thus subsequent lack of training had resulted in an 'as and when' protocol being adopted in

some cases which proved to be an issue. The officers addressed the efforts being made to combat this issue going forward – largely regarding the adoption of more stable management.

10. Members commended officers regarding the service area's constant engagement and dialogue with providers and patients, the connections built with staff, residents and families, all of which having been recognised by the CQC inspection.

11. Members referred to the positive feedback on the Risk Notification Pilot, questioning the level of inquiry's received, the conversion rate, and how the Council compares to neighbouring authorities. Officers responded with positive figures.

12. Finally, I questioned the practice of monitoring closed cases - whether this was over-management and perhaps not the best use of resources. Officers responded by reassuring the committee that this is a very successful practice as it allows the team to identify areas of success and ensure that this is continued going forward.

Work Programme 2024/25

13. We made reference to the Annual Briefing of this Scrutiny Committee which aided in compiling a draft Work Programme.

14. Members opened discussion into any additional items that needed to be incorporated into the Work Programme going forward, specifically the adoption of an item regarding Adults with Learning Disabilities and Adult Day Services. The Democratic Officer and Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, are currently arranging this.

15. The Committee agreed upon the provisional items on the Work Programme as outlined in the draft, in addition to the timeframes for such items to be brought to the Committee and agreed upon the full list of dates for this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026.

Councillor Andrew Anderson
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee

COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Work Programme

2. We gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2025/26, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included for this municipal year.

3. We suggested that the following reports be added:
   (a) A report on the number, locations and condition of children's play-areas across Darlington.
   (b) A report on the support available to families affected by youth offenses
   (c) A report on childhood poverty, specifically following the completion of the current in-progress review which aims understand the work currently undertaken across services that has an impact on those living in poverty.

4. In relation to the above suggestions, members agreed for officers to make enquiries as to whether reports may share interest with the remit of other committees and to organise reasonable dates for presentation.

5. A number of questions were also raised for officer responses relating to the service area and Council events. Discussion ensued around Key Performance Indicators, and it was agreed that members would be provided with the full suite of performance indicators for both Children's Services and Education for member's consideration and suggestion for inclusion in future performance reports.

Councillor Hilary Allen
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

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COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Darlington Cultural Strategy Action Plan 2024-2025

2. Members received a comprehensive update from the Creative Darlington Manager on the progress of the Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022–2026 and the 2024/25 Action Plan. We also discussed early proposals for the 2025/26 plan.

3. The Strategy aims to focus the Council's cultural vision while supporting advocacy and funding efforts for local events. Highlights of this year included the opening of Hopetown, the S&DR200 festival launch and the strong performance of Darlington Library.

4. Members raised constructive concerns around sustaining visitor numbers post-S&DR200, diversity of attractions at Hopetown as well as Darlington's visibility n the context of film and television filming. Officers reassured us of ongoing efforts to address these challenges, including future event programming and joining the UK Films Council to attract further filming opportunities.

5. We also discussed potential future bids to the Arts Council. While no applications have yet been successful, optimism remains due to increased small grant availability.

6. As a committee, we noted the update on progress on the 2024/2025 Action Plan and considered the Action Plan for 2025/2026.

Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021-2031

7. Members received a detailed report from the Head of Environmental Services on the implementation of the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021–2031. The strategy has ambitious aims to expand and managing Darlington's tree population, with over 47,700 trees planted since 2021 - surpassing annual targets.

8. The Committee welcomed the introduction of a more robust, risk-based inspection regime, developed in consultation with the Council's insurers, Zurich. This now includes scheduled inspections by qualified arboriculturists and use of the Treewise system to monitor and maintain Council-owned trees.

9. KPIs, which were updated after this report came before the Committee last year, were reviewed. They covered tree inspections, planting versus felling, ash dieback management, and public enquiries. While most indicators showed positive performance, members noted the need for improved data on repeat visits.

10. Members raised issues around community safety, tree planning and land ownership. Officers committed to improving coordination with the Planning department and producing a resident-friendly summary of the strategy to clarify Council responsibilities in residential areas. This was with the intention of providing this condensed document to residents to clarify what the Council can and can't do with regards to trees in residential areas.

Work Programme 2025/2026

11. We discussed the utility of the Annual Briefing of this scrutiny committee which had taken place the week after the week After Annual Council in May. This Annual Briefing allowed Members to suggest items that they would like to be incorporated into the work programme with relevant officers and establish time frames that officers could bring such items to Committee.

12. A productive number of items were suggested and therefore a substantial work programme has been agreed.

13. My thanks go to the Democratic Officers, Officers and Members for embracing this new improvement to the work programme process.

Councillor James McGill
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee

COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Rent 2024-25

2. The Assistant Director of Housing and Revenues submitted a report which provided us with an update on the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents during 2024-25 and consider the write-off debts over £1,000 that are irrecoverable before approval by Cabinet on the 8 July 2025.

3. The report explained that the Collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents during 2024-25 had continued to be a significant challenge in the current economic climate. However, the report explained that despite the challenges a total of £143.45m had been collected for 2024-25, £79.19m of Council Tax, £33.78m of Business Rates and £30.48m of Council rents.

4. The report stated that approval is to be sought to write-off a total of £1,226,320 of debts in respect to individual cases exceeding £1,000 for the financial year 2024-25. The report explained that it had become apparent that no further steps can be taken to recover the following sums, £386,385 of Council Tax, £331,368 of Business Rates, £174,791 of former Council tenant arrears, £86,253 of Housing Benefit overpayments, £247,523 of sundry debts.

5. We asked what the percentages would be for what we did and did not collect and how the statistics for Darlington Borough Council compare to other authorities.

6. We discussed how the Council differentiates individuals who can pay but will not and individuals who cannot afford to pay. We asked if the Council had a good working relationship with Citizens Advice.

7. We asked if it would be possible to look into the sundry debts further when the report next attends the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Project Position Statement and Capital Monitoring Outturn 2024-25

8. The Executive Director of Resources and Governance and the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services submitted a report to update us on the current position in relation to the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme, the financial outturn positions as 31 March 2025 and the proposed financing of the 2024/25 capital expenditure, together with an update on the current status of all construction projects being undertaken by the Council.

9. It was reported that there had been significant enhancements made to the Councils assets in three major programme areas of schools, housing and transport which used mainly external funding as well as several other largescale schemes in the Borough. The investments delivered a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and most importantly to Council services. This included refurbishment of Council homes, improved learning environments in schools, better traffic flows and opportunities for sustainable travel.

10. The report detailed the total capital expenditure for 2024/25 was £51.712m. The report also included that the Council currently had 22 live projects with an overall project outturn value of £132.748m. Most projects have been running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues.

11. We discussed the Skinnergate project, we wanted to know the current status of the project and if there had been any impacts to businesses on Skinnergate.

12. We then moved onto Hopetown project, and we asked for further information on the legal advice that had been sought around the areas of dispute. We also asked for clarification around the overspend budget position.

13. We questioned the increase of unsupported borrowing from last year to this year and the reason behind this. Other queries we raised were in relation to the Home Upgrade Grants and the Revenue contribution into the Capital Expenditure.

Revenue Budget Monitoring Outturn 2024-25

14. The Executive Director of Resources and Governance submitted a report which was being considered by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 8 July 2025, requesting us to consider the 2024/25 revenue outturn.

15. It was reported that the Councils General Fund reserves position at the 31 March 2025 is £12.607m, which is an increase of £0.264m on the planned balances in the 2024-28 MTFP. This improvement related to the £1.321m underspend in the Council's 2023/24 financial results, £0.777m projected departmental overspends in the 2024/25 financial year and a £0.280m decrease in corporate resources. The report included a number of carry forward requests which will assist with projected slippage and pressures in the coming year.

16. We discussed the savings in relation to staffing in social care; we asked for further information behind this. We asked for the overall running costs for the Hopetown Project and whether Hopetown has its own accounts.

Councillor Rebecca Baker
Chair Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

COUNCIL
17 JULY 2025

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Waiting Lists for NHS Services

2. We received a presentation from the Deputy Director of Planning and Performance, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, updating Members on the waiting lists for NHS Services for County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) in relation to planned care and cancer.

3. Members were pleased to note that the overall waiting list have progressively reduced over the last 12 months and are below planned levels and that the proportion of patients on the waiting list who have been waiting for less than 18 weeks has been relatively stable over the last 12 months, with signs of improvement from July 2024.

4. The presentation provided details of long waiting patients, with Members noting that CDDFT had zero reported 78+ week wait and 104+ week wait patients. It was also reported that the number of 52+ week wait has progressively reduced from August 2024 through to December 2024, however has increased slightly towards March 2025 and that a low number of 65+ week wait remained until December 2024 which was now showing as zero for March 2025.

5. The presentation provided a breakdown for each speciality, with Members noting that Trauma and Orthopaedic, General Surgery, Gynaecology and Other – Paediatric makes up 50 per cent of the overall waiting list and details were provided for the composition of outpatient attendances.

6. We were informed that diagnostic performance has been progressively improving over the last 12 months and is well below the North East and North Cumbria average position and in relation to Cancer services, CDDFT has consistently performed better than the North East and North Cumbria average position. Members noted that planned developments and improvements for cancer services in 2025/26 are being supported by the Northern Cancer Alliance.

7. Members sought an update on Breast Services and were informed that a managed clinical network across the North East and North Cumbria, facilitated by the Northern Cancer Alliance has been working on an improved clinical modelling for breast services, and an emerging clinical model has been identified which required agreement with providers. Members were advised that stakeholder engagement will be undertaken and that a further update can be provided to Members.

8. We also discussed right place first time and whether delays to treatment can be linked to accessibility issues. Members were reminded that not all hospitals provide the same service so there may be an expectation for patients to have to travel however patient choice exists in relation to accessing services.

9. Members requested further details of waiting times for speciality services within diagnostics and further discussion ensued regarding the fluctuations within diagnostic activity over the last 12 months and the potential impact of cuts to the Integrated Care Board on meeting targets.

Housing Services Fire Safety Policy for purpose-built blocks of flats, Sheltered and Extra Care Accommodation 2025-2030

10. We received a report on the draft Housing Services Fire Safety Policy for purpose-built blocks of flats, Sheltered and Extra Care Accommodation 2025-2030 prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 8 July 2025.

11. The policy sets out how the Council will provide staff, residents, visitors and partner organisations with clear guidelines as to how to prevent fires and actions to take in the event of a fire to protect themselves and others.

12. We noted the consultation undertaken with the Tenants Panel and that the Panel are in support of the proposed policy.

13. We sought clarification regarding the Council's responsibility for the storage of flammable materials and equipment by residents and advised that the tenancy agreements detailed what could and could not be stored, outlined tenants' responsibility in relation to allowing access to their property and that enforcement action can be taken by the Council.

14. Members were informed that any hoarding issues could be identified through a range of Council activities including day to day repairs, tenancy audit visits and gas safety checks; and in relation to hoarding, all housing staff received basic awareness training and staff worked closely with tenants and other services for any breaches in contract.

15. We discussed smoke detectors, noting that all new tenants receive fire safety checks and all properties have hard wired smoke detectors; and following a question regarding the move towards a 'stay put' evacuation policy Members were informed of the work being undertaken to introduce this for purpose built blocks of flats; this policy is already in place for sheltered and extra care accommodation.

16. This Scrutiny Committee supports the onward submission of the draft Housing Services Fire Safety Policy for purpose-built blocks of flats, Sheltered and Extra Care Accommodation 2025-2030 to Cabinet for approval.

Quality Accounts

17. Scrutiny considered the draft Quality Accounts 2024/25 of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and have provided commentary for inclusion in the final Quality Accounts.

Work Programme

18. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

19. We have agreed that items be included on Integrated Care Board and expected changes, Physical Activity Strategy, Healthcare associated infections and the Homes Strategy. The work programme will be updated accordingly.

Councillor Neil Johnson
Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee

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