

Stockton & Darlington Railway:

Northgate

Conservation Area Appraisal

Finalised document

March 2025



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

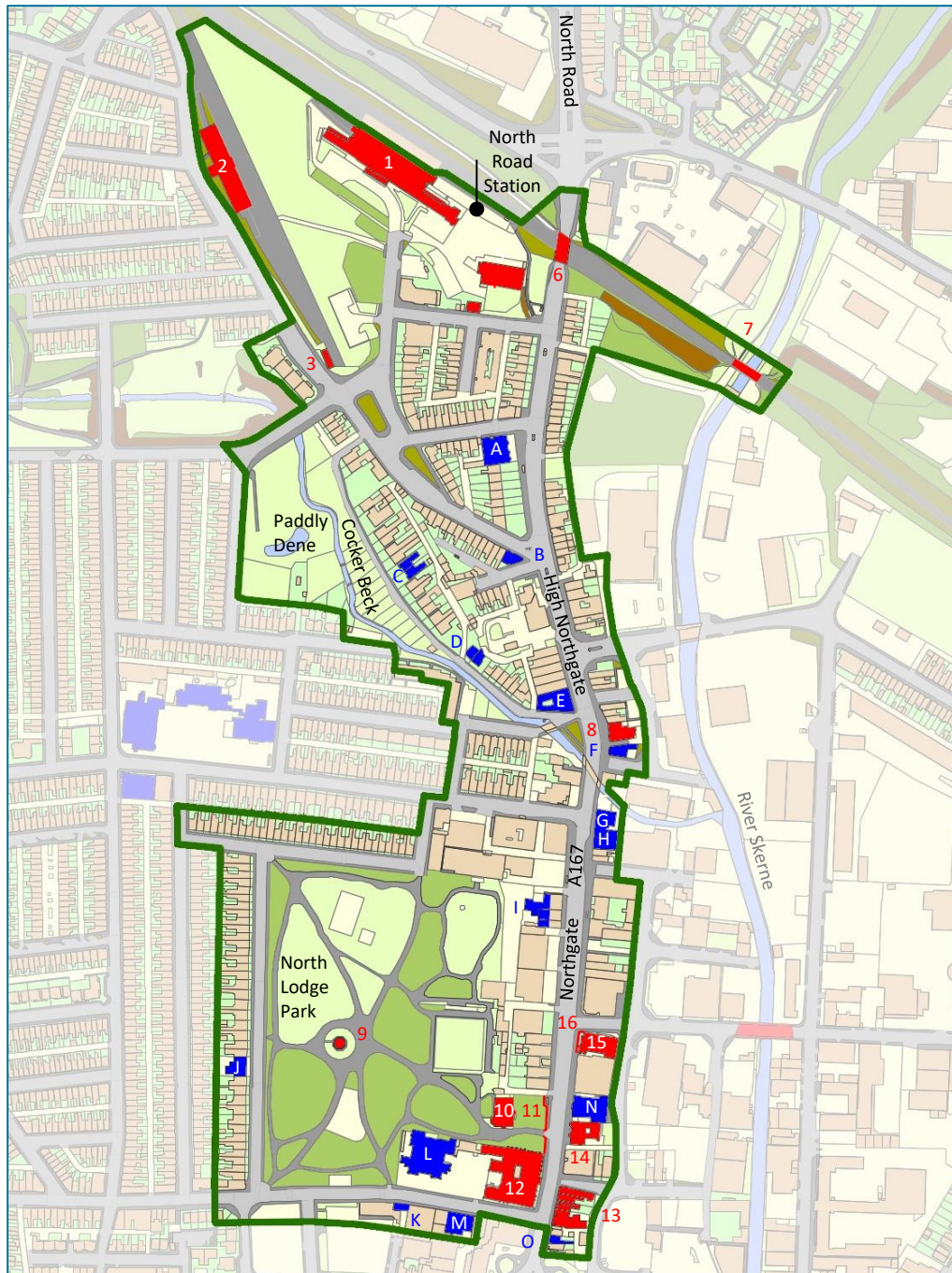


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< Cover image: Detail from the Opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, 1825 watercolour by John Dobbin (1815-1888) painted in 1875 (Darlington Borough Art Collection). Note that the curved wing walls of the bridge did not exist in 1825 but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

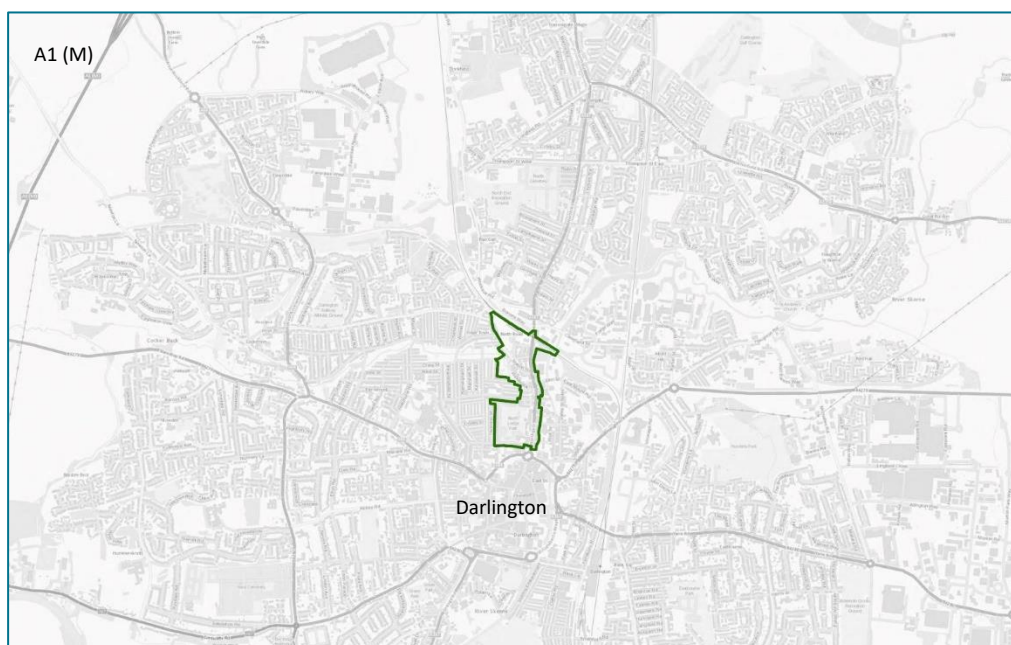
1.0 Introduction

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 online¹. 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 newspaper².

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 environment³. 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 Plan⁵ 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 Map⁶):

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 Maps⁷ 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 interest⁸. The courts have held it legitimate to include within a conservation area the setting of buildings that form the heart of that area⁹. Examples of types of special architectural and historic interest which justify designation include areas¹⁰:

- 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 necessary¹¹ (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 significance¹² as well as the character or appearance of our conservation areas¹³. 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 significance¹⁴. 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 accessible¹⁵. 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 needs¹⁶. 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 Register¹⁷. 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 Area 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 applies¹⁸:

- 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 assessment¹⁹:

- 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 assessment²⁰:

- **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 setting²¹.

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 manner²⁶, and incorporate **Italianate/classical styles** which were popular in the pioneering days of the railway²⁷. 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.

²³ Flynn 1992, page 8

²⁴ Flynn 1987, page 40

²⁵ Historic England 2017a, pages 2-3

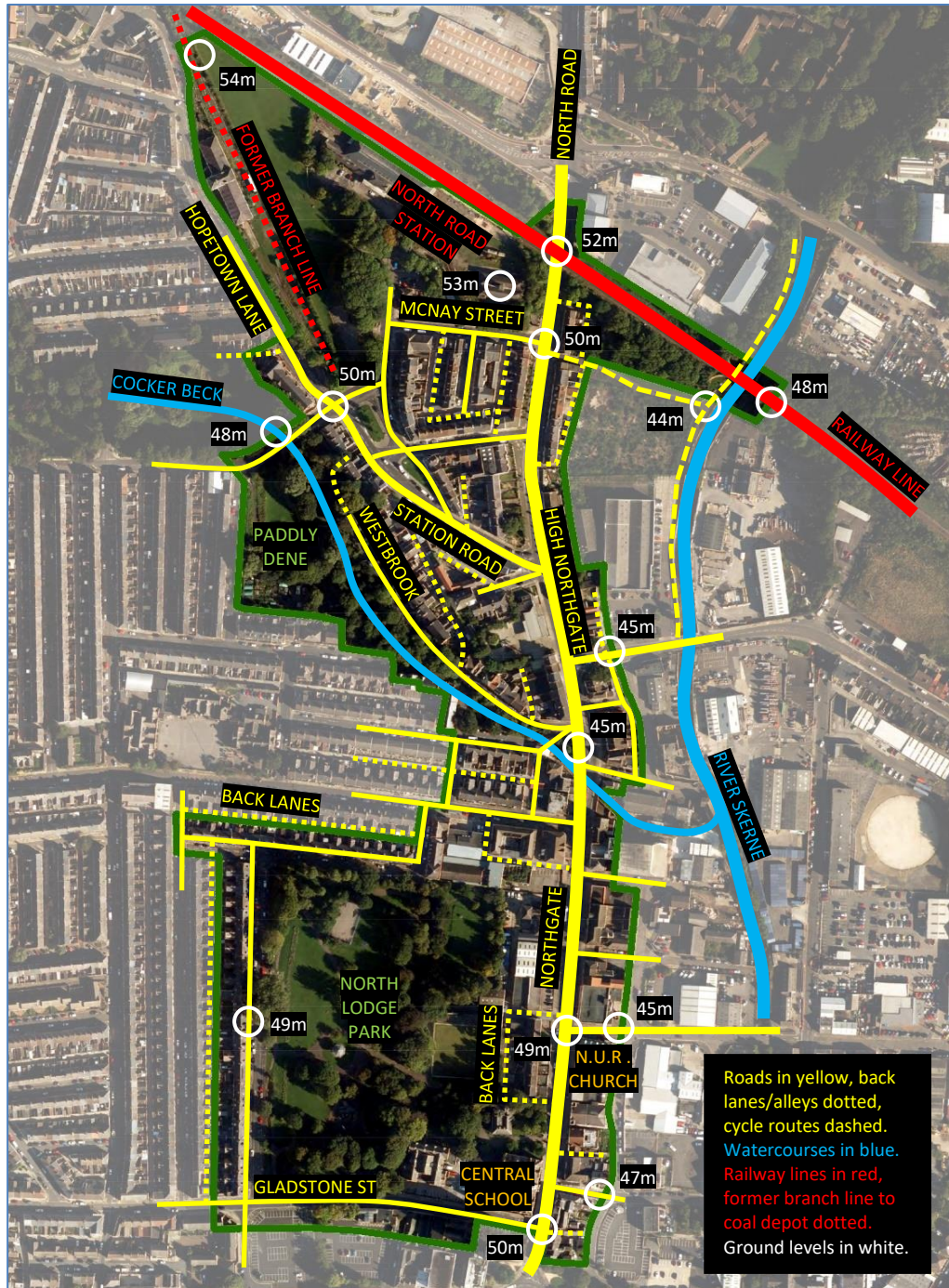
²⁶ Clark 2006, page 3

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 limestones²⁹.

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 Northgate³⁰. 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 Paddy 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.

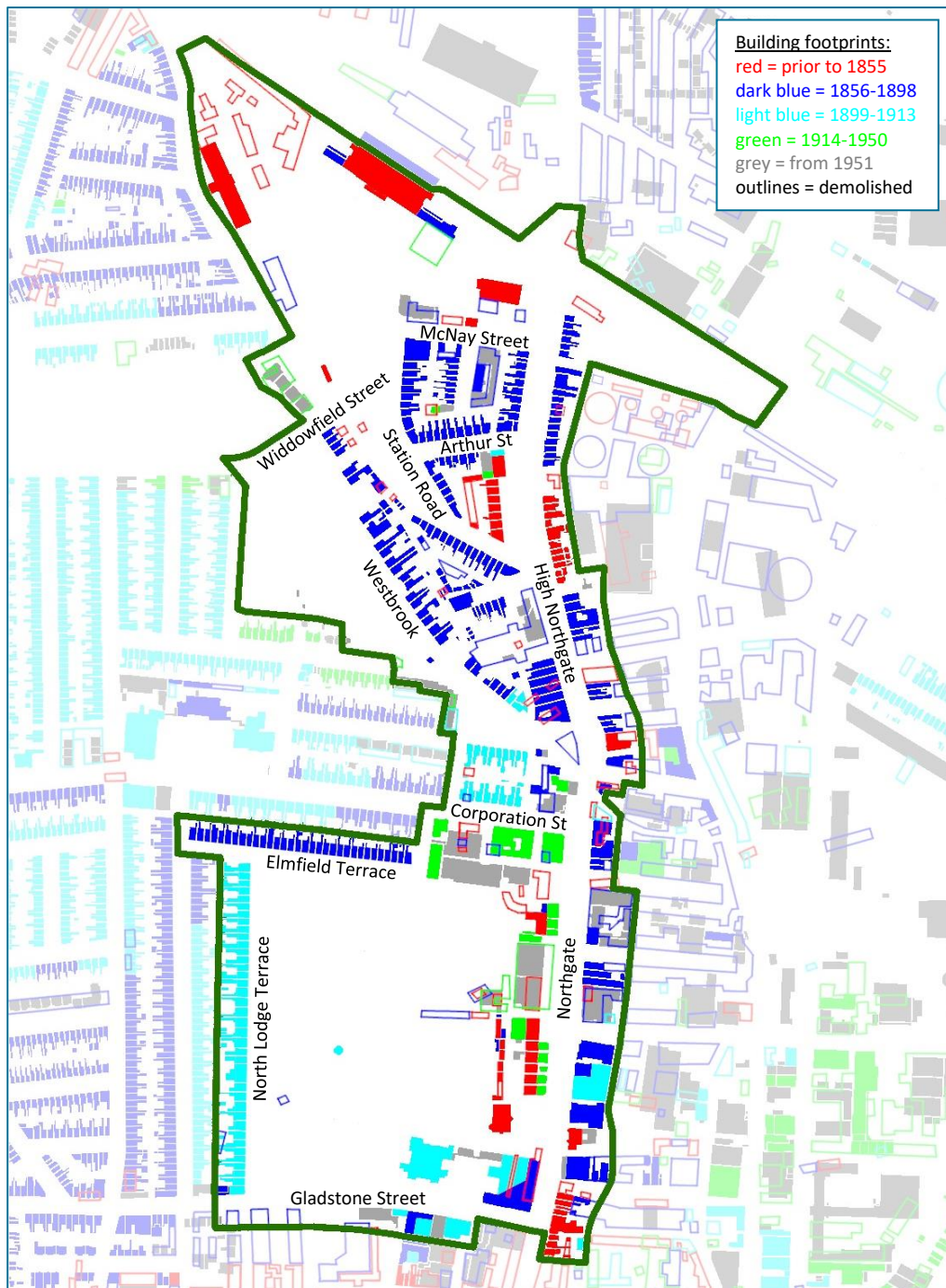
At the northern end of the boundary adopted in 2003 lies North Road Station which now serves the line between Bishop Auckland and Saltburn, its facilities located on a platform a short distance to the southeast of the historic station building. There are two railway bridges, one crossing High Northgate 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 1923³¹.

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 cemetery³². Darlington experienced medieval growth due to its position in the Durham bishopric. Its market (charter granted in 1183³³) 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 restaurant³⁴.

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 preparation³⁵, 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 Stone³⁷. 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 found³⁸. 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 Darlington³⁹.



[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 1858⁴⁰. 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 collieries⁴¹, 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 world⁴³. 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 transport⁴⁴.

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 service⁴⁵. 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 Shildon⁴⁶. Here, 34 chaldron waggons carrying coal, flour and approximately 500 passengers⁴⁷ and the first purpose-built passenger carriage, called *Experiment*, reserved for members of the S&DR Committee only⁴⁸, 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 town⁴⁹ – 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 board⁵¹, 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 railway⁵². 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 died⁵⁴.

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

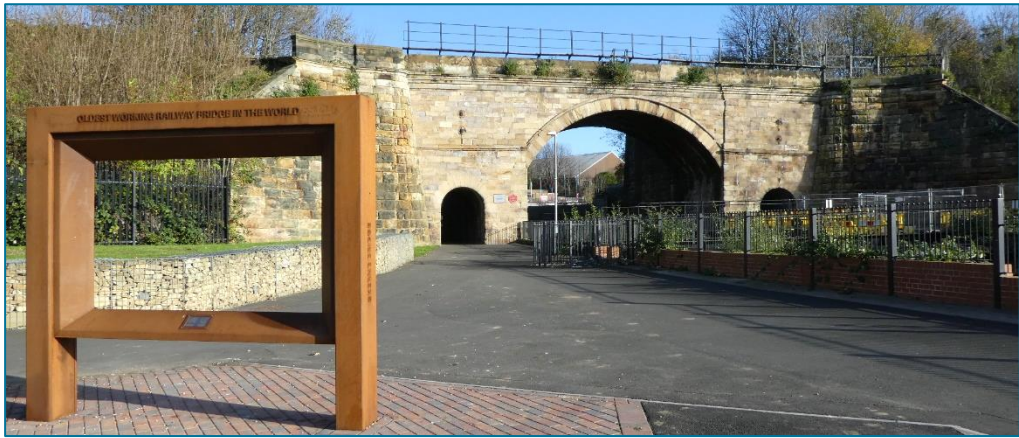
⁵⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1475481>

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&DR⁵⁵ 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 bridge⁵⁶.

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 markets⁵⁷. 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 revolution⁵⁸. 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 change⁵⁹.

The terraced houses of 69-81 High Northgate were the first railway properties to be built in Darlington, around 1825⁶⁰. 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 traffic⁶¹. 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 stone⁶³. 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 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 2014⁶⁴.



[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 road⁶⁵. 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 [1] **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 construction⁶⁶. 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 1873⁶⁹. He also took ownership of the neighbouring North Terrace (delisted in 2003) built in the 1820s⁷⁰.



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 Station⁷¹, 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 2003⁷². 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 1845⁷³, 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 service⁷⁴. 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 station⁷⁶. 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 1880⁷⁷.

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 office⁷⁹. 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 Lane⁸¹. It can be assumed that the many workers houses in the surrounding area are held together by lime (mortar) bought here⁸².



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 management⁸⁴. 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 Darlington⁸⁵. 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 purposes⁸⁶.



[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 1846⁸⁷. From 1857 to 1892, the historic steam engine *Locomotion No. 1* was displayed on a plinth outside the station⁸⁸, 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 branch⁹¹.

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 year⁹². 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 Britain⁹³ and now part of the Hoptown Darlington visitor attraction.

The 1855 map (see below) shows the former Merchandise Station (demolished in 1864⁹⁴ 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 handling⁹⁶. 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 1837⁹⁷ including intersecting walks, a pond and temple⁹⁸ – and the extensive landscaped grounds behind [1] Elmfield House and [10] North Lodge.

⁹² Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2014, page 30

⁹³ Clark 2009, page 50

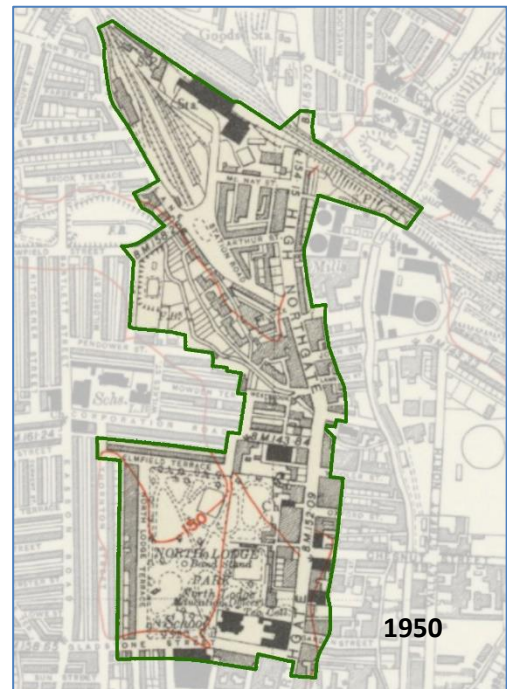
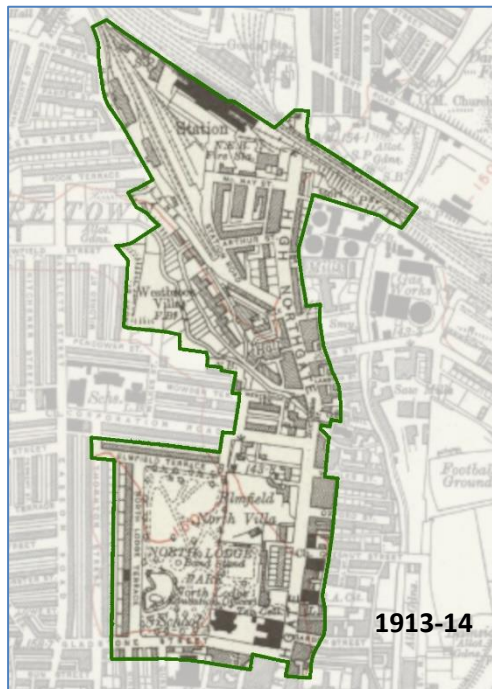
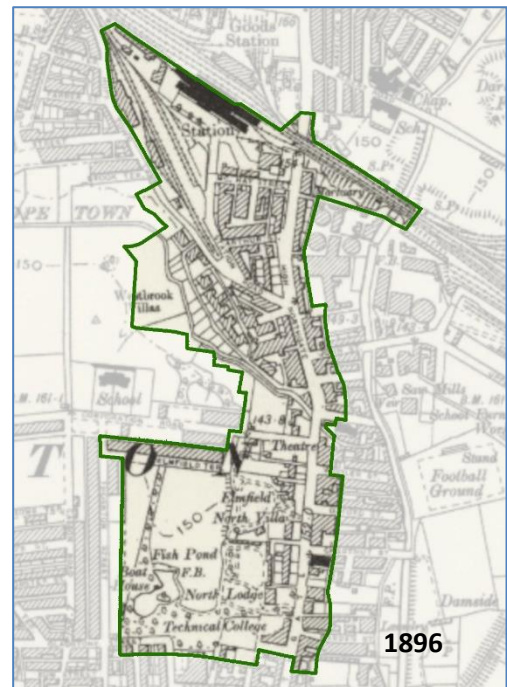
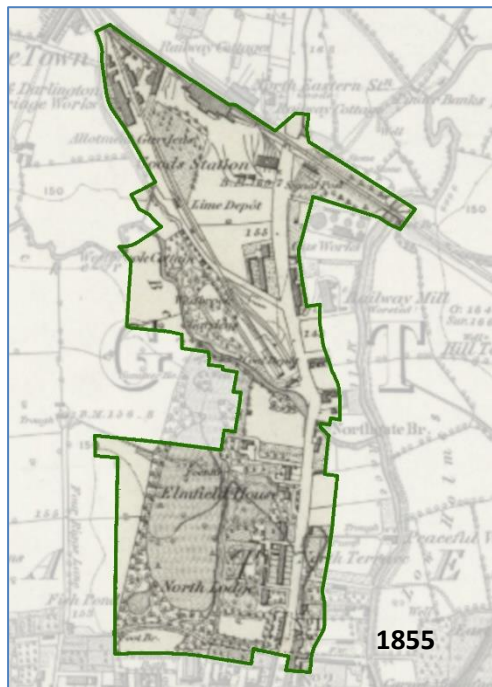
⁹⁴ Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway 2021, pages 19-20

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 street¹⁰⁰. The extensive cuttings that took place altered ground levels and removed the original approach to the [5] Goods Shed from High Northgate¹⁰¹. In the same year, the Darlington & Barnard Castle Railway opened, which diverged at Hopetown Junction¹⁰² (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 1858¹⁰³.



[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 busses¹⁰⁴. 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 1856¹⁰⁵, with **[1]** Elmfield House becoming the latter's new home. Besides building locomotives, Kitching was, at the time, was one of the directors of the S&DR¹⁰⁶. He added a small piece of land to the north adjoining Cocker Beck to plant trees, perhaps to screen the coal depot¹⁰⁷. 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 further¹⁰⁸.

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 2003¹⁰⁹.

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 demand¹¹⁰, 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 Shildon¹¹¹. 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 work¹¹², with the North Road Shops employing 339 workers by 1866, rising to 1,400 by the 1890s¹¹³. 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 backwater¹¹⁴. Nevertheless, the Darlington Committee of the NER still controlled the former S&DR routes for the next ten years¹¹⁵ and held its meetings at [1] North Road Railway Station until 1876¹¹⁶.



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 staff¹¹⁷. They were the last middle-classes

¹¹² Clack, Pearson 1978, page 21

¹¹³ Emmett 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 1864¹¹⁸. [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 teetotalers could socialise; it soon went out of fashion and shut before the turn of the century¹²⁰.

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 1972¹²¹ it has become the [15] **Northgate United Reformed Church** (grade II)¹²². In 1873, the [E] **Livingstone Buildings** were completed along High Northgate, named after the explorer who died in that year¹²³. Only the southern complex survives today.



Left: [15] **Northgate United Reformed Church** with forecourt railings and gate piers¹²⁴ (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 theatre¹²⁵) who restored the Theatre Royal, including electric lights for the stage¹²⁶. In the same

¹¹⁸ <https://web.archive.org/web/20080322011630/http://www.communicate.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 Booth¹²⁷.



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 operation¹²⁸. 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 year¹²⁹. North Road's location on the edge of Darlington was less from ideal. Once the NER controlled all the lines in the area¹³⁰, 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 Station¹³¹.

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 1920¹³².

Following the passing of the 1889 Technical Education Act¹³³, [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 1894¹³⁵. 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 school¹³⁶ (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, Gouldsbrough 2010, page 4

¹³⁶ Flynn 1987, page 84

been known as the Higher Grade School but was renamed to **[H] Central Secondary School** in 1916¹³⁷.



[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 Science¹³⁸. **[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 1870¹³⁹ (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 site¹⁴⁰. 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 1975¹⁴¹. The branch line had also been shortened, its southern stretch and coal depot (the latter closed in 1871¹⁴²) 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 building¹⁴³. The **[5] Goods Shed** had been converted into a NER fire station¹⁴⁴, 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 Northgate¹⁴⁵. 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 men¹⁴⁶. 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 construction¹⁴⁷. It later also included the Picturedrome where movies were shown¹⁴⁸. The Institute proved so popular that in 1909 an additional Temperance Hall (demolished in 1959) was opened next door¹⁴⁹.

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 engineering¹⁵⁰.

¹⁴⁵ Lawson, Gouldsborough 2010, page 4

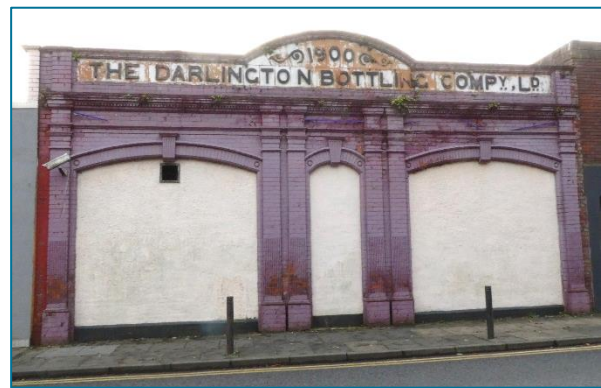
¹⁴⁶ Lloyd 2001, pages 129 & 135

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 pond¹⁵¹. [10] North Lodge facilitated municipal offices and the Education Department was based here from 1905 to 1970. In 1903, North Lodge Park officially opened¹⁵², including an octagonal [9] **Bandstand** (grade II)¹⁵³. In 1906, the Bowling Green and pavilion opened¹⁵⁴. It was hoped that the new green would relieve the pressure on South Park¹⁵⁵. 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 relocated¹⁵⁶.

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 shown¹⁵⁷, 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 network¹⁵⁸.



[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 grounds¹⁵⁹. 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 1954¹⁶⁰. 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 locomotives¹⁶¹. It was later grassed over and used for events connected with the Darlington North Road Station Museum¹⁶² (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 new¹⁶³. At that time, Darlington had proportionally more cinema seats than any other town¹⁶⁴.



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 vehicles¹⁶⁵. 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 year¹⁶⁶, 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 after¹⁶⁷, and in 1966 the North Road Shops (Locomotive Works) shut down officially after years of uncertainty¹⁶⁸.

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 demolished¹⁶⁹.

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 Emmett 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

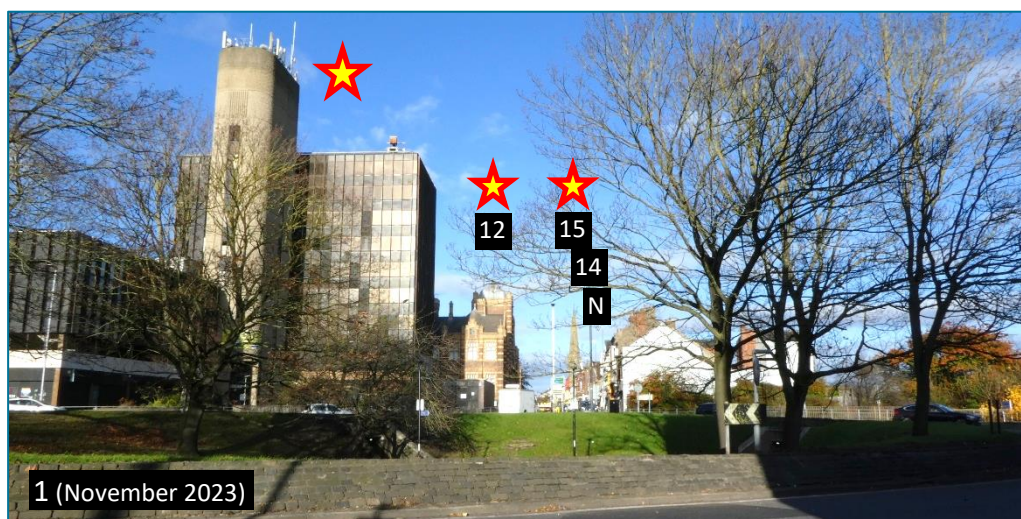
spatial experience in those locations. In contrast, whilst the new residential building types that have been introduced throughout the area under review are out of character (see section 3.5), they at least contribute to the enclosure of space. In various locations, mature trees and other vegetation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

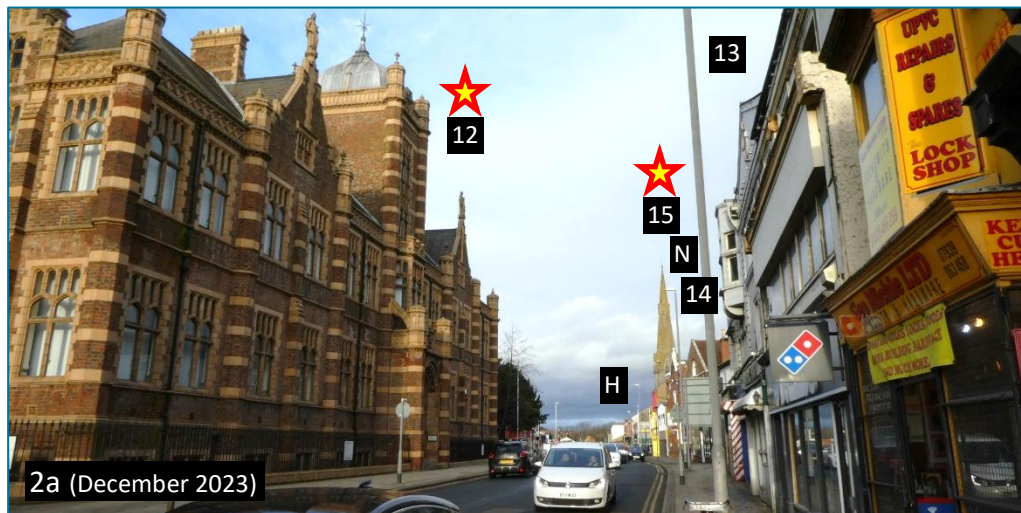
The Conservation Area under review has three good (open) public spaces, as shown on the map above, which feature in some of the key views. They all include some degree of vegetation. Whilst most of the area is accessible to the public, the private greenspace between Westbrook and Cocker Beck and the 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.



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).



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.

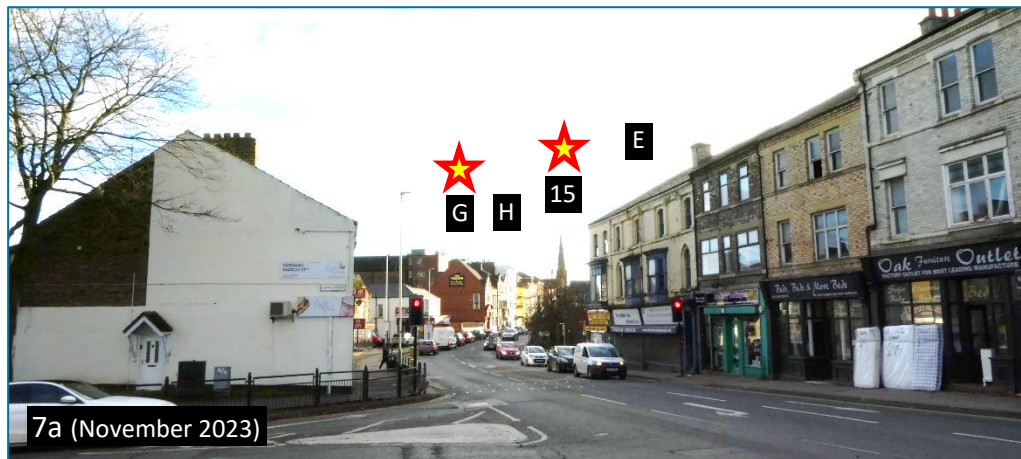


Elmfield Terrace then turns north for a short distance until it meets Corporation Road. **View 6** has been taken from this junction looking east, with [G] Bridge Hotel being a distant focal point at the junction of Corporation Road with Northgate. To the left/north, a terrace including two-storey brick-built 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.



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 gargoyles¹⁷⁰. 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



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 street¹⁷¹. 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.



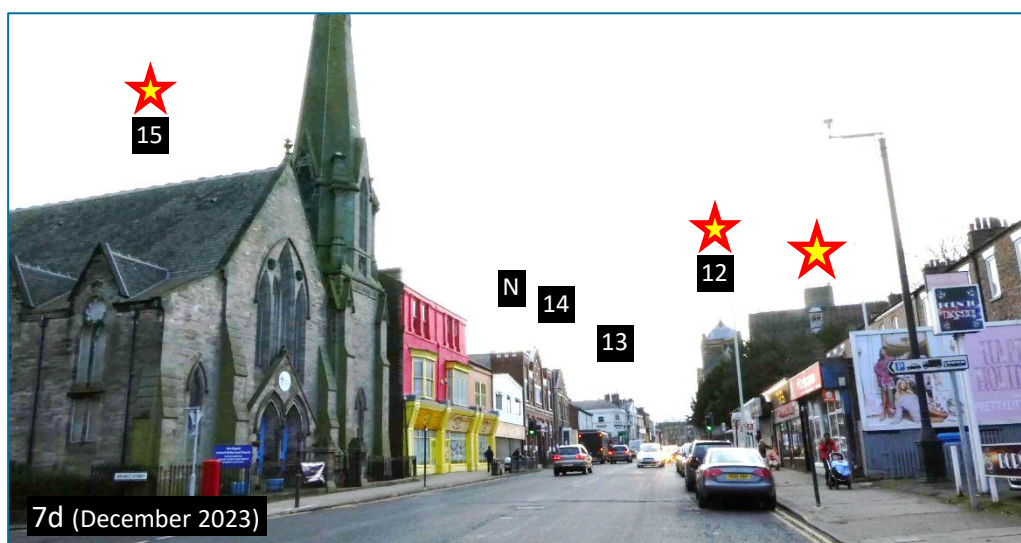
Moving on, **View 7c** has been taken from Northgate Bridge with the street now rising steadily away from Cocker Beck. To the left/east are [G] Bridge Hotel, with its demolished building part now being an external space to the far left/north, and the adjoining [H] Odeon to the right/south. Across the 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.



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.



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.

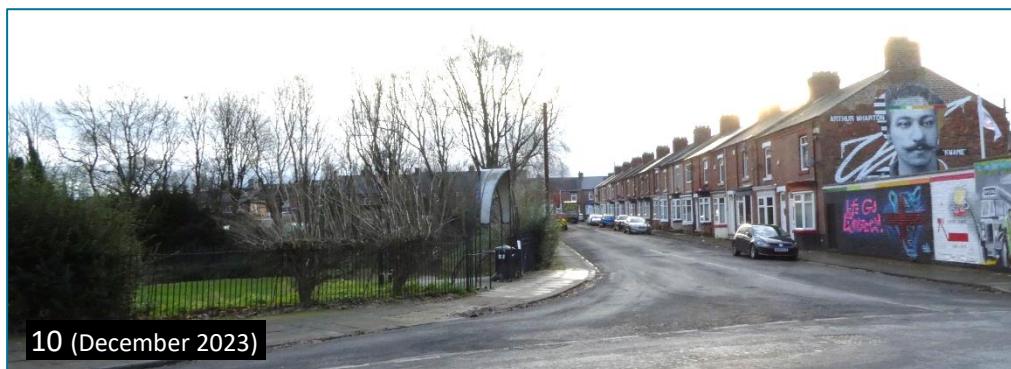
The A167 gently curves right steadily rising north. On the left/west side is a good-quality terrace with large front gardens; these were the first railway properties to be built in c.1825 following the arrival of the S&DR. The former [A] Darlington Working Men's Club, just visible behind the vegetation, 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).



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.



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 Paddy 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.



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 cottage¹⁷².



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 1830¹⁷³) which most likely blocked the view from this location onto [7] Skerne Bridge.



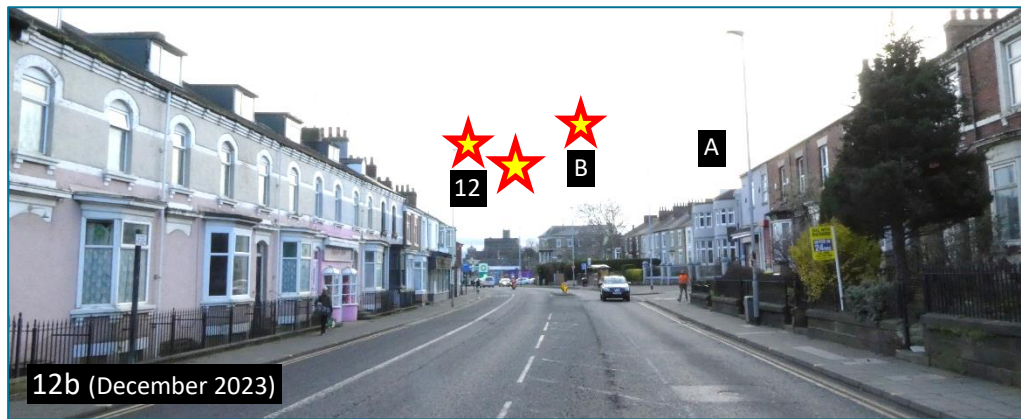
¹⁷² Friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway & Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2016a, page 12

¹⁷³ Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2020, page 13

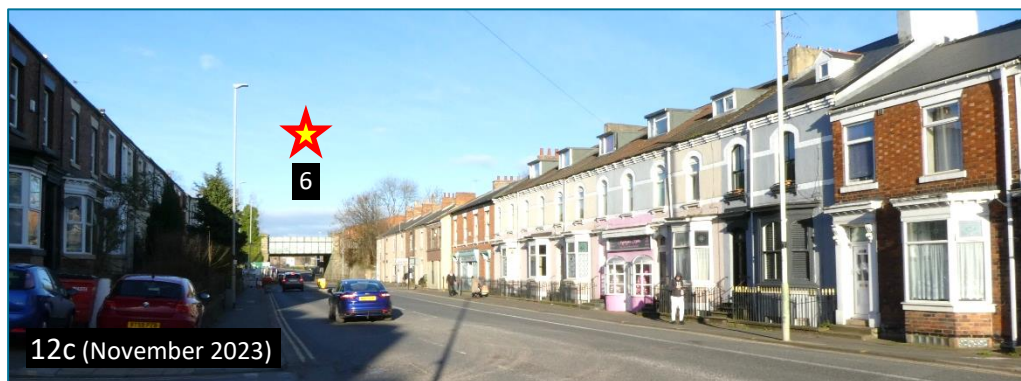
View 12a has been taken from the junction of High Northgate with Arthur Street, looking south. To the left/east is the gap between the two terraces which frame Dobbin’s View (see View 11a) with the stone boundary wall in between. To the right/west of the street is the former [A] Darlington Working Men’s 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.



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.



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 Hoptown 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.



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 Hoptown 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 Hoptown 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.

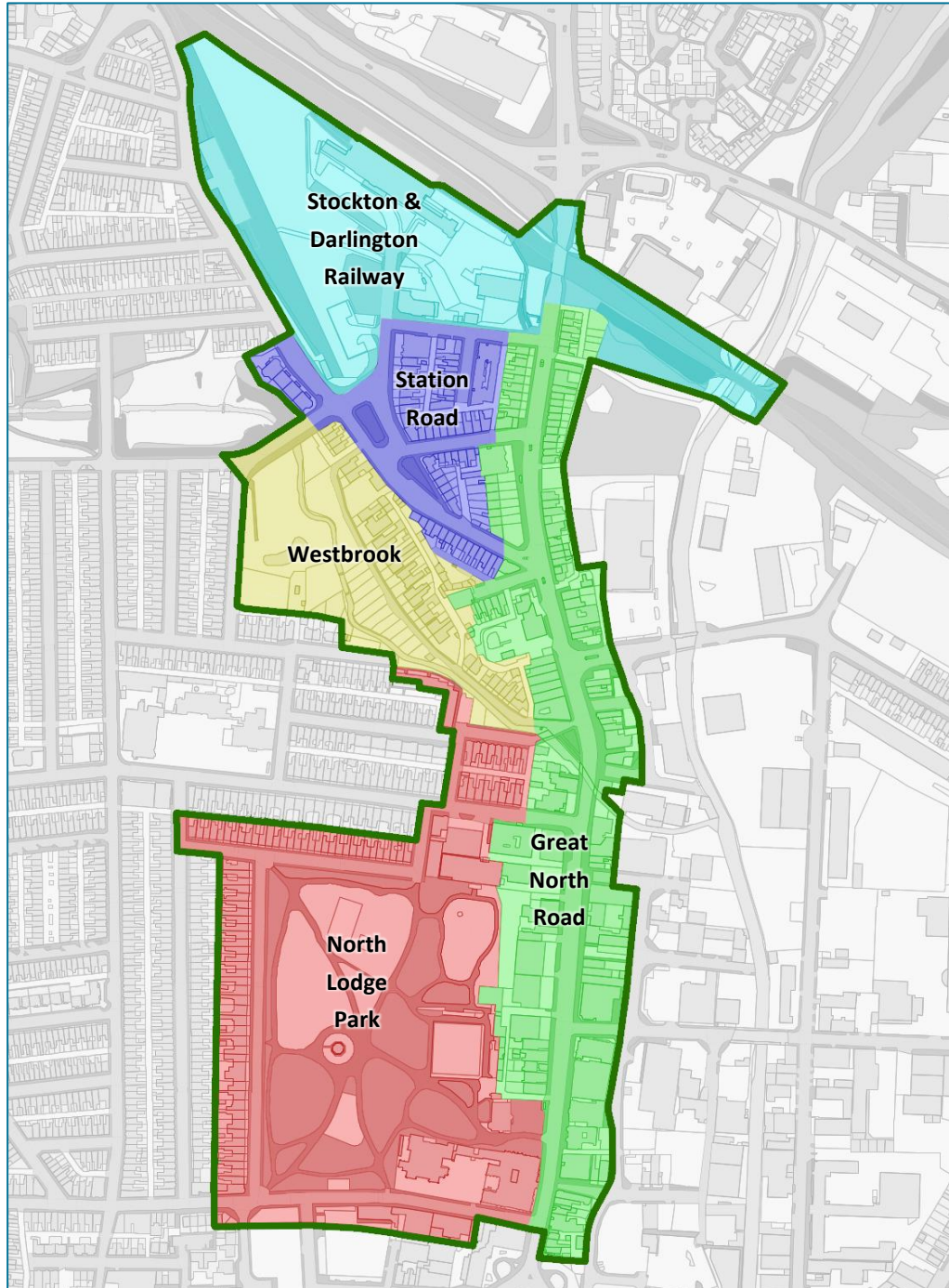


3.5 Character Analysis

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 leisure¹⁷⁴) 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 Pease¹⁷⁵, and had become popular for the use on public buildings by the 1860s¹⁷⁶. 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 reassure¹⁷⁷. The Neo-Gothic elements added later to [1] North Road Railway Station are an anomaly 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 century¹⁷⁸. 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 work¹⁷⁹. 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 Lane¹⁸⁰, 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, Paddy Dene (see View 10). Whilst vehicle access is not practical, drivers try to access Station Road via Westbrook and become stuck, or park inconsiderably¹⁸¹. 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 lanes¹⁸². 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 wall¹⁸³. 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 style¹⁸⁴.



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 Borrowdale¹⁸⁵. 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 recently¹⁸⁶, commemorating the original Henry Pease pleasure gardens. The heritage-style streetlamps along the lane contribute very positively.

Along Cocker Beck and Paddy 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 functions¹⁸⁷, 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' town¹⁸⁸.

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

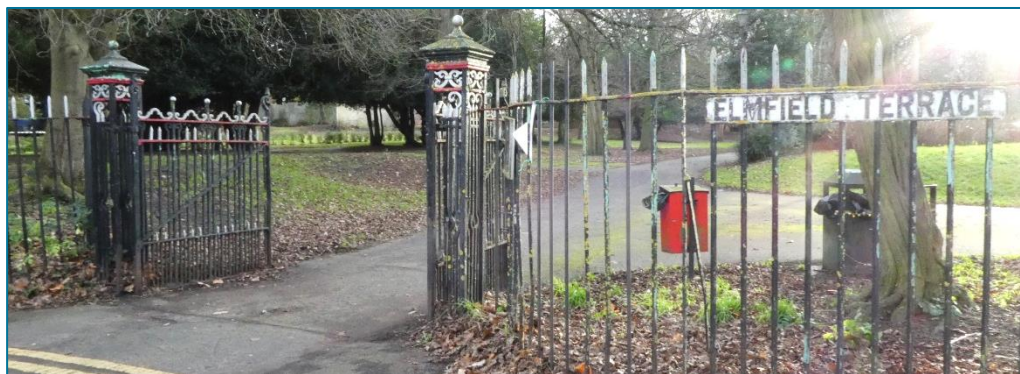


Left (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2023): Original panelled door with stone canopy over and old sashes along North Lodge Terrace. *Right* (Photo © Gaby Rose, December 2023): Curved first-floor window with leaded glazing along Elmfield Terrace.

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 overseas 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 year¹⁹⁰, compared to an overall average of £164,112 for the whole of Darlington¹⁹¹. 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 College¹⁹². 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 public¹⁹³. 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&DR¹⁹⁴:

- 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 walks¹⁹⁵. 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 riverbank¹⁹⁶.
- **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 son¹⁹⁷.
- **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 members¹⁹⁸), 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 1975¹⁹⁹.

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 Stephenson²⁰⁰. 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 2025²⁰¹. 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 2024²⁰². The name takes inspiration from the former Kitching (Hope Town) Foundry on this site²⁰³, 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 VisitEngland²⁰⁴.

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 2021²⁰⁵. 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 trajectory²⁰⁶; the Westbrook character zone when seen in isolation could be 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 Beck²⁰⁸

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 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 retrospectively²⁰⁹.

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 glazing²¹⁰. 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 Register²¹¹. 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.

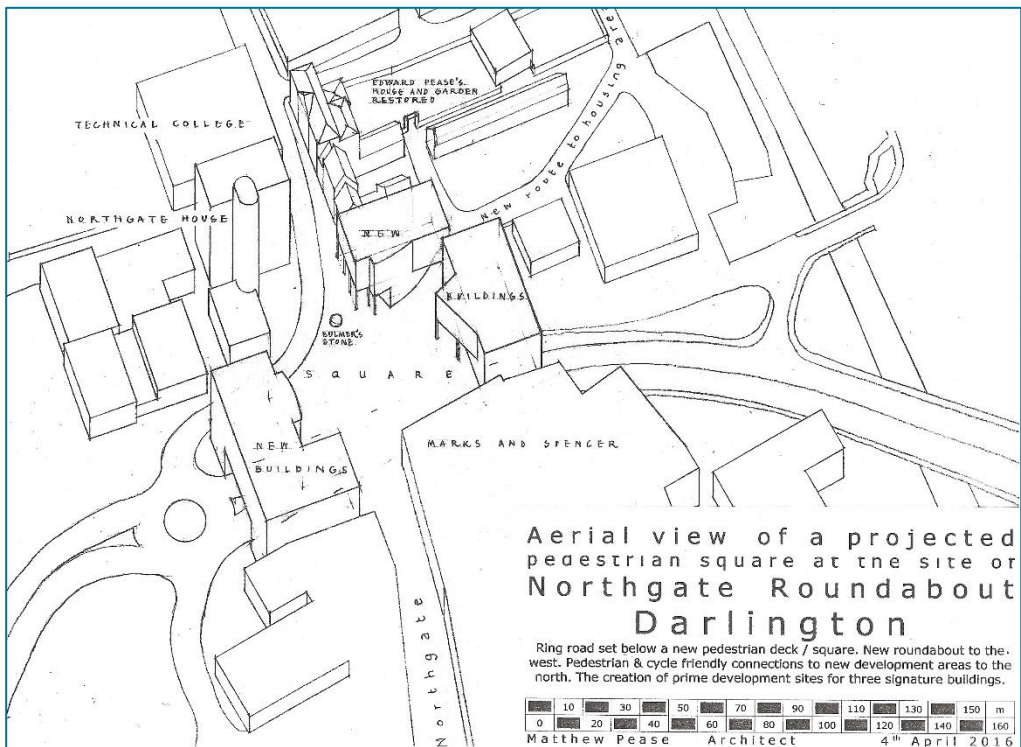
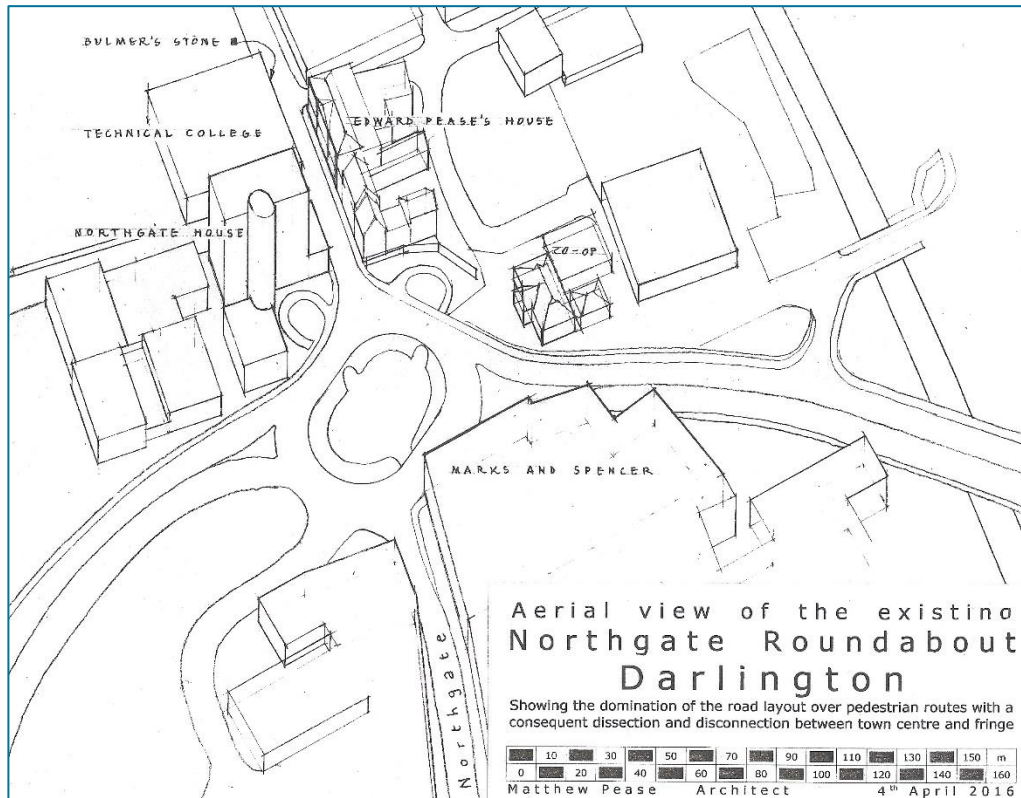
During the public consultation period, people from inside and outside the Northgate Conservation Area under review suggested that positive change could be implemented through planning enforcement (article 4 direction) and use of other statutory powers; guidance on design, funding and on Council's/other 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 phases²¹². 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 2025²¹³.

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 to²¹⁴:

- 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 here²¹⁵.
- 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

There 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 green²¹⁷. 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 points²¹⁸:

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 transport²¹⁹.

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 by²²⁰:

- 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.

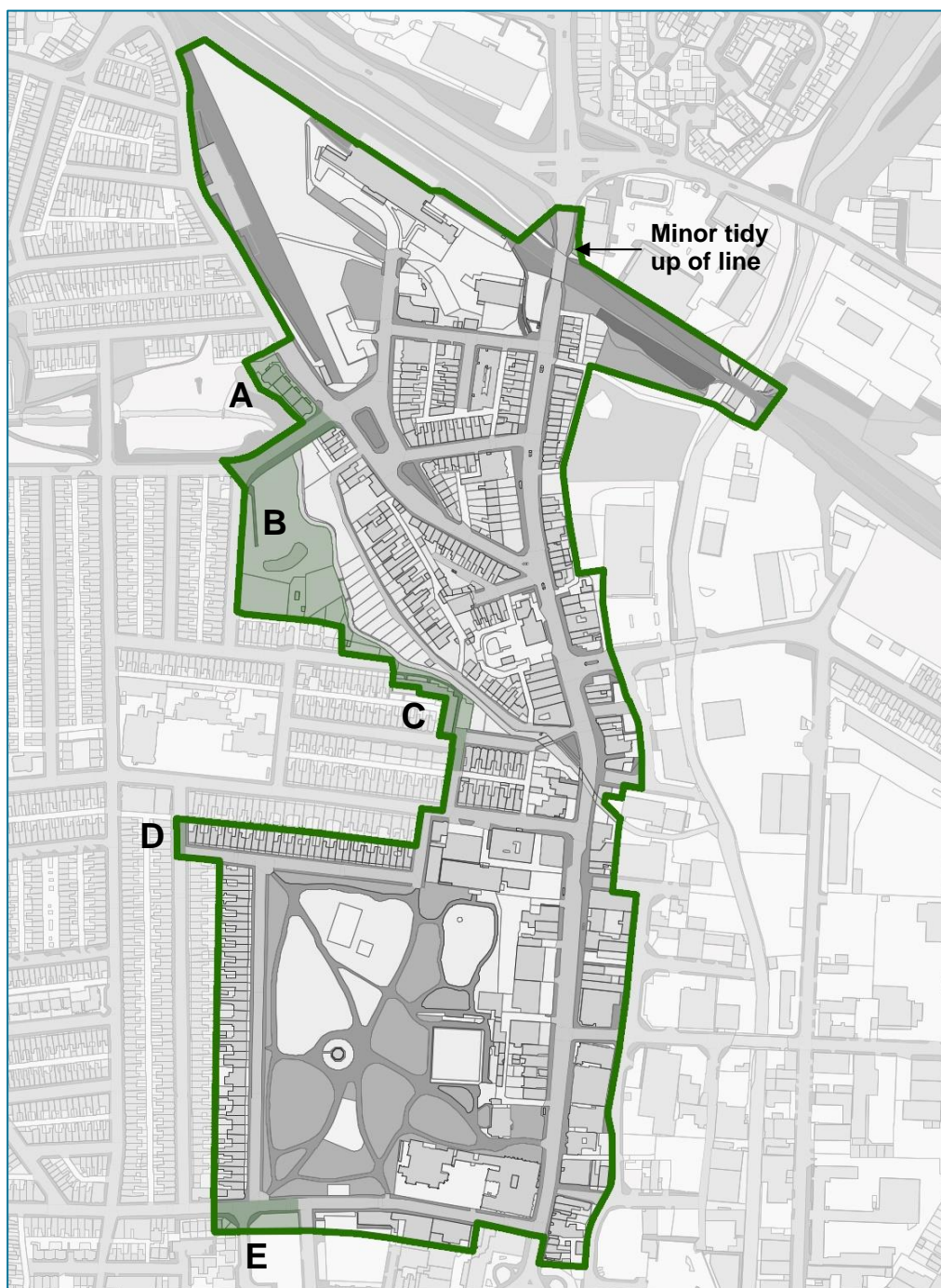
²¹⁹ Land Use Consultants 2021, pages 53-55

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 designation²²¹.

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. **Paddy 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 extended²²².

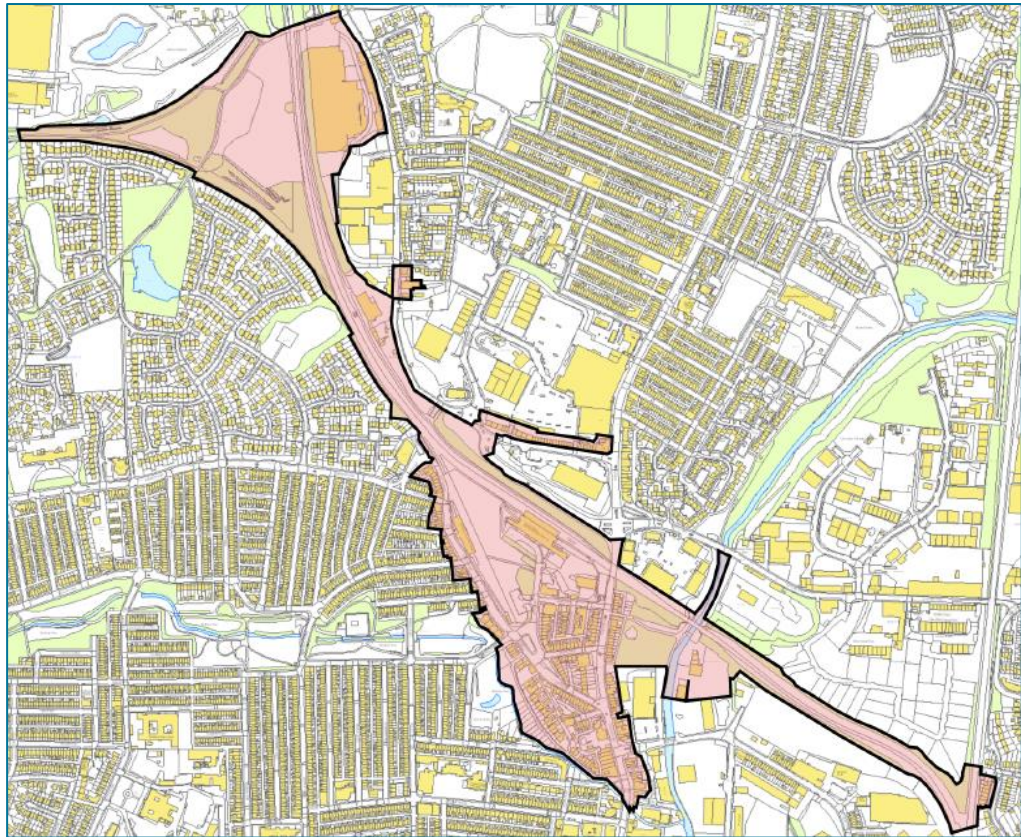
Looking at the Northgate Conservation Area under review, it seems that the railway line at North Road station has previously been regarded as a 'natural' northern cut-off point, which makes sense in so far as the tracks do present a significant physical break in the townscape. Moreover, the boundary 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 Road²²³. 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)

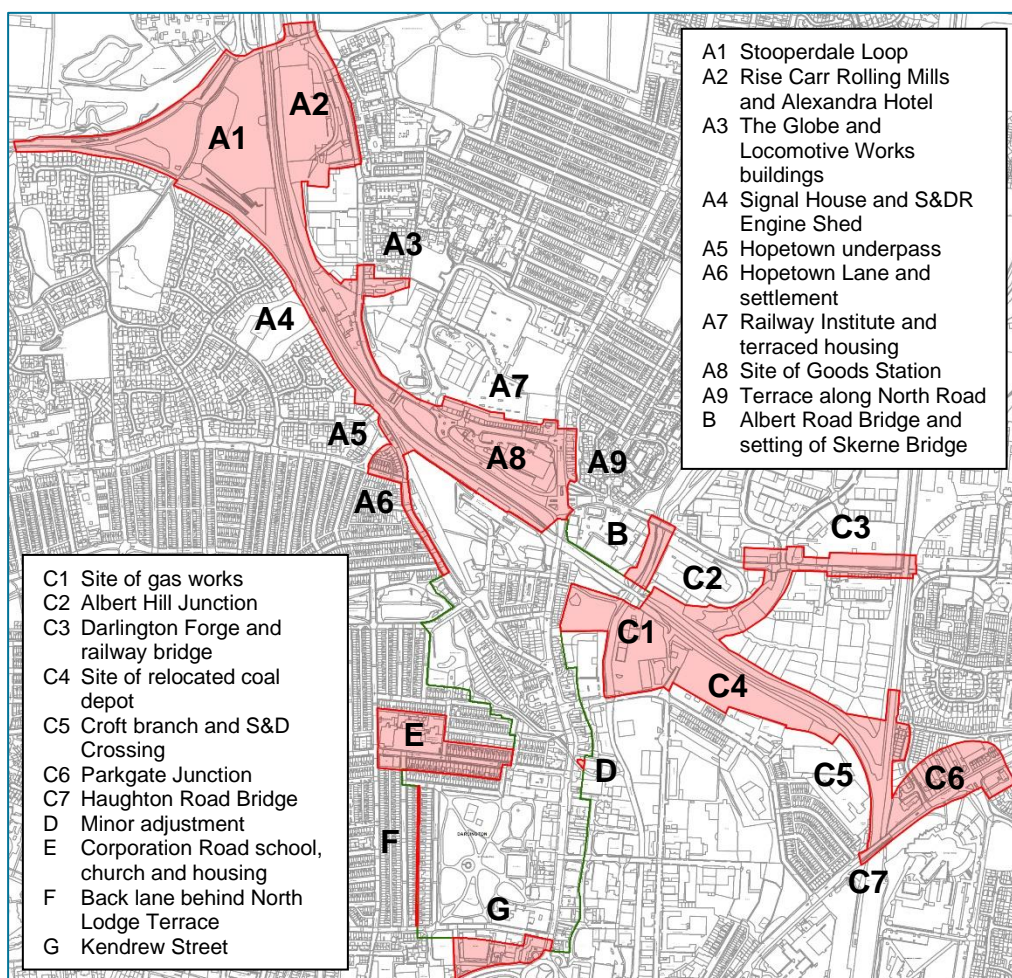
In order to qualify for inclusion in the existing designated boundary, any extension area must relate to elements defining the significance of the Northgate Conservation Area under review (see section 3.1). In addition, any extension area will have to meet the following tests²²⁴:

- 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 Way²²⁵, 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.

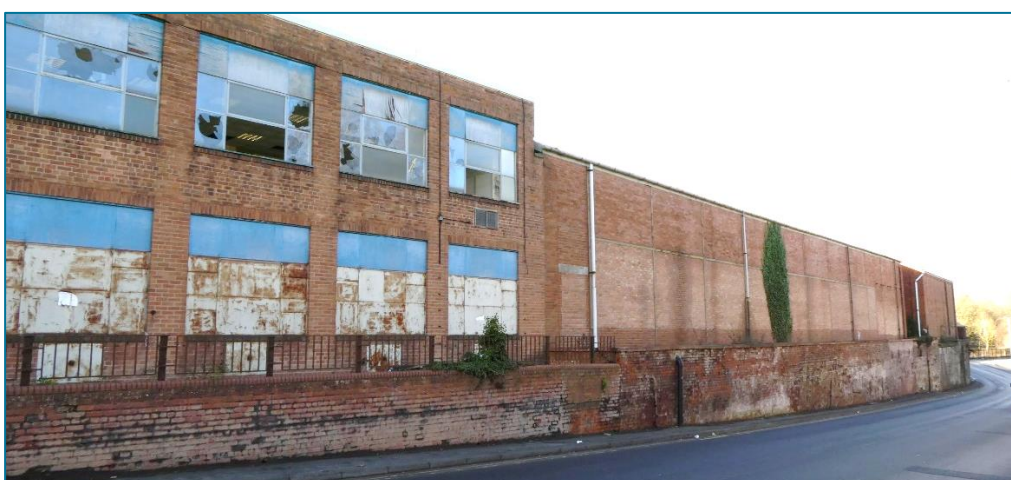


A1 – Top: View from the centre of the former Stooperdale Loop junction onto the Rise Carr Rolling Mills (see below: A2) across the surviving live railway line. **Middle:** Location where the Barnard Castle line branched off left/north and right/southeast into Darlington. **Bottom left:** Abandoned metal 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 1868²²⁶ and, over the years, became a major employer in Darlington. In 1998, the complex (by then taken over by British Steel) closed²²⁷. In 1864, Theodore Fry (newly married into the Pease family) and Charles l’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 l'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 level²²⁸. 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 exist, the Alexandra survives because the bridge club that had met in the factory offices took over the building when the Rolling Mills closed²²⁹.

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 flats²³⁰. 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 workers²³¹.



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 Whesoe 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 roles²³².



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 traffic²³³. 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 1861²³⁴. 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 nearby²³⁵.



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 bicentenary²³⁶. 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.

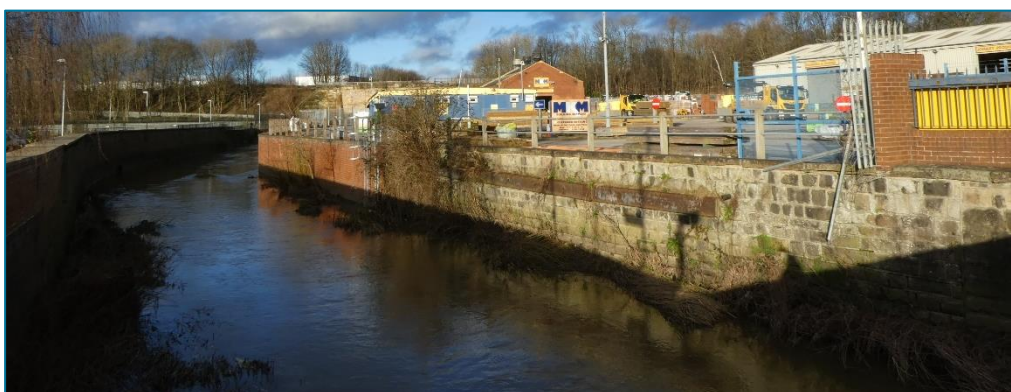
Albert Road Bridge is first shown on the 1896 OS map, providing an essential link between North Road to the west and the steel and iron works along Cleveland Street

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 century²³⁷. 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 land²³⁸.

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 Works²³⁹, 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 1963²⁴¹.

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 Crossing²⁴². The GNER built an engine shed designed by George Townsend Andrews in this location in the same year²⁴³. 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 journeys²⁴⁴. By 1988, the former S&DR line had been completely removed from the crossing²⁴⁵. 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 served²⁴⁷. 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.

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 Houghton 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 – Houghton Road Bridge. This proposed extension area is not included in DCC’s proposal of 2022. The new proposed boundary comprises Houghton Road Bridge.

Houghton 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 1983²⁴⁸. 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.

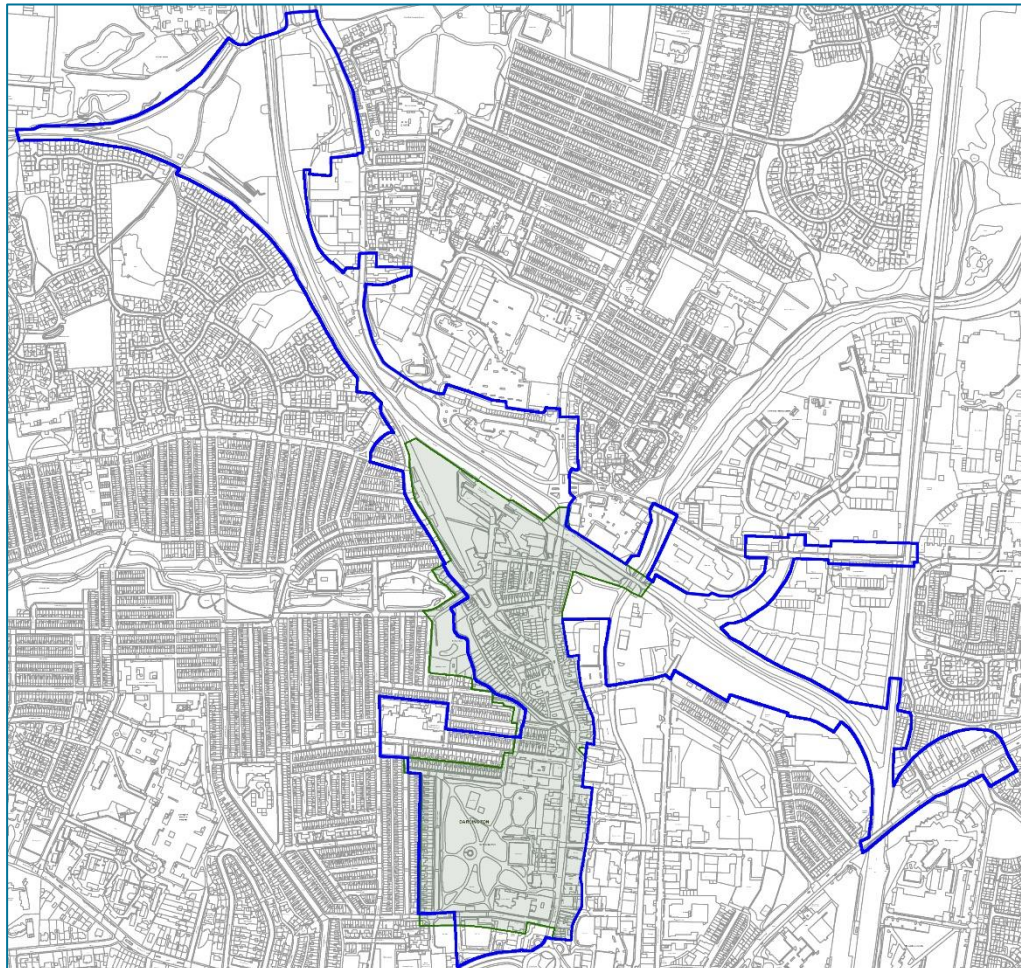
Further areas had been considered for inclusion when drafting the appraisal but were dismissed for the following reasons:

- **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 Valley²⁴⁹. 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



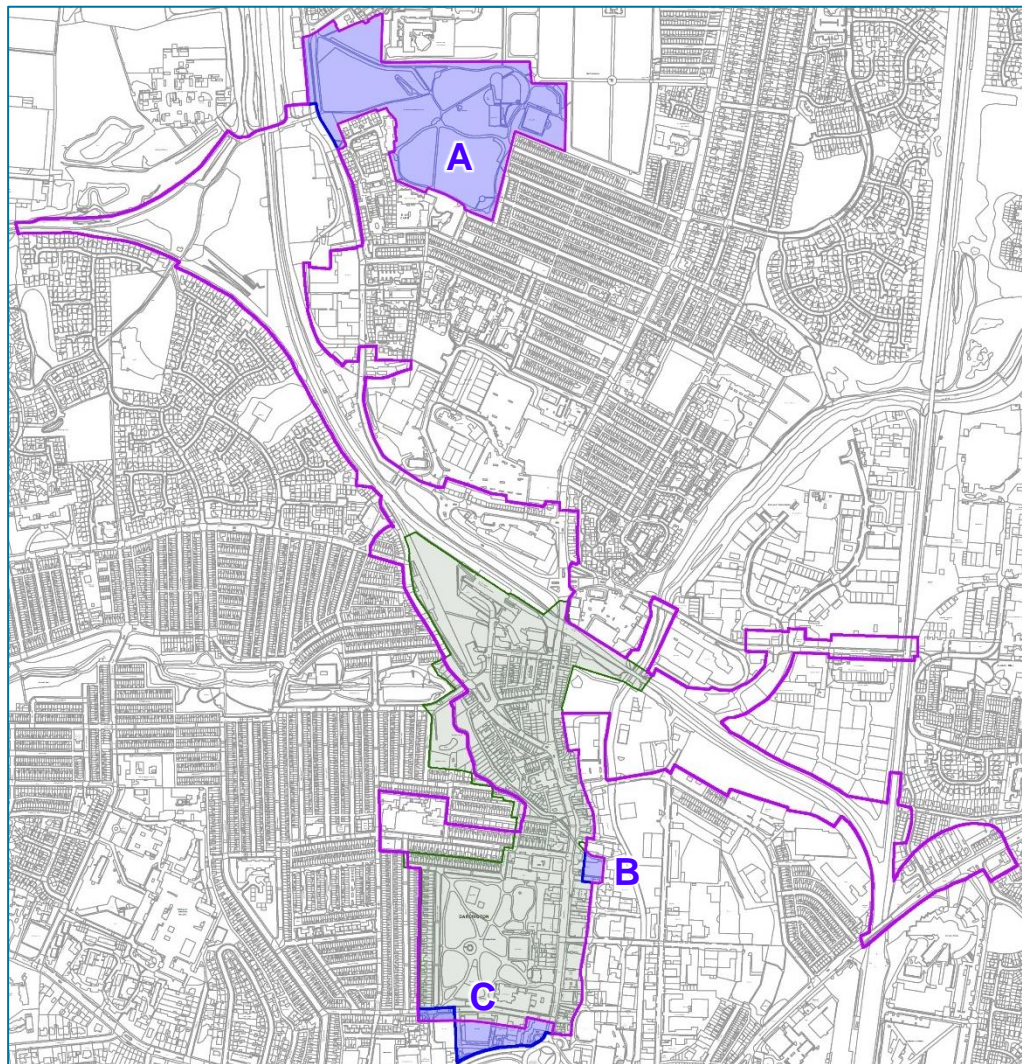
Proposed (draft) Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in blue at the time of review. Northgate Conservation Area boundary line adopted in July 2003 in green. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics 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 workers²⁵⁰.
- 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.

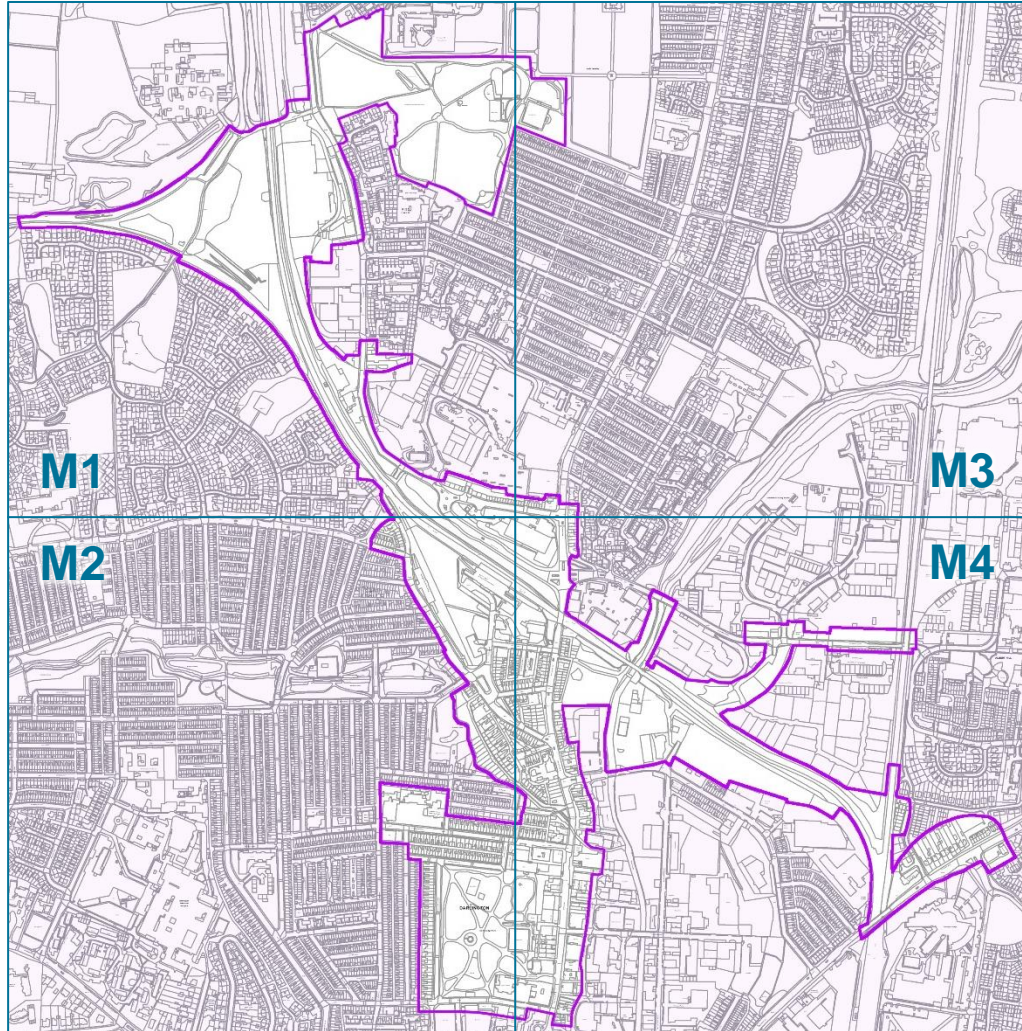


Rear of the (currently vacant) Odeon cinema, which still includes parts of the former Theatre Royal, with Wooller Street to the left/south. (Photo © Gaby Rose, November 2024)

- 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.

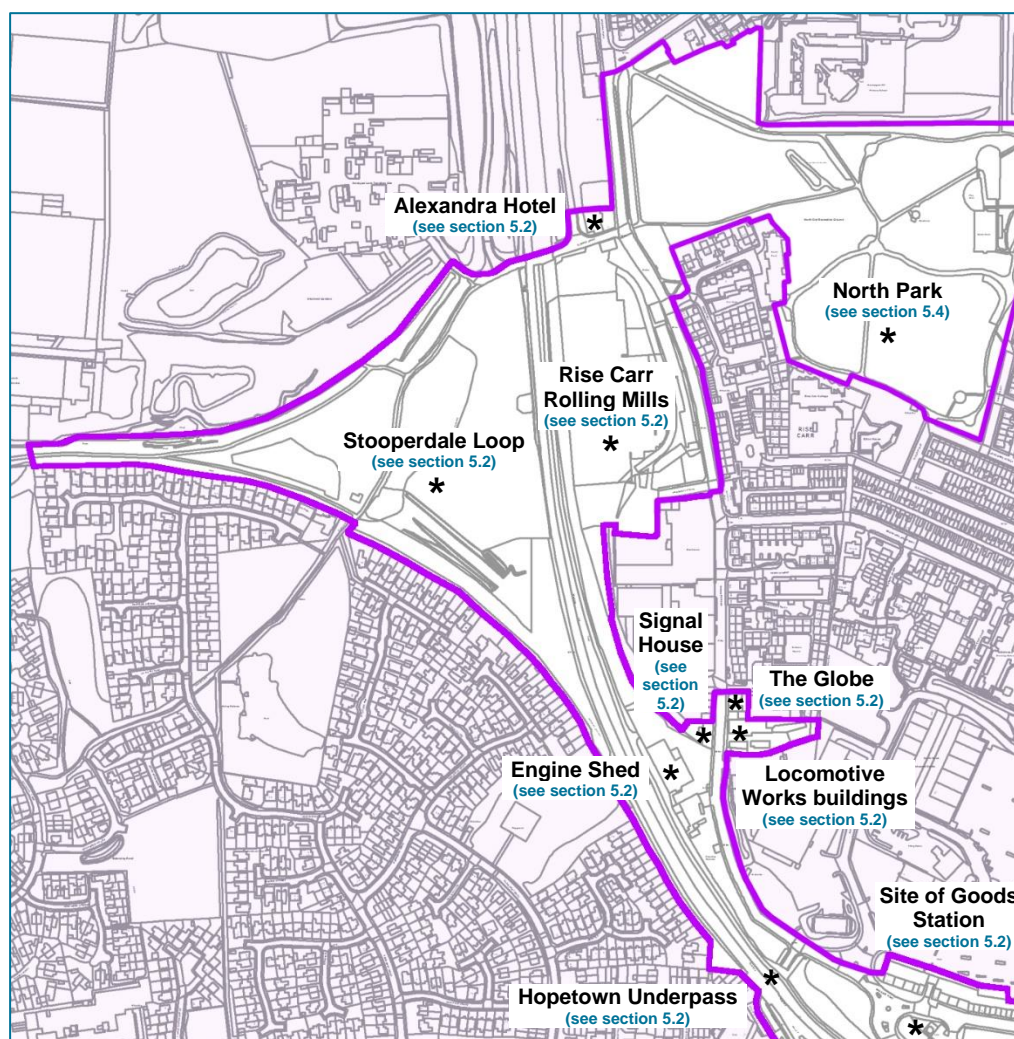


Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. Graphics by Gaby Rose)

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

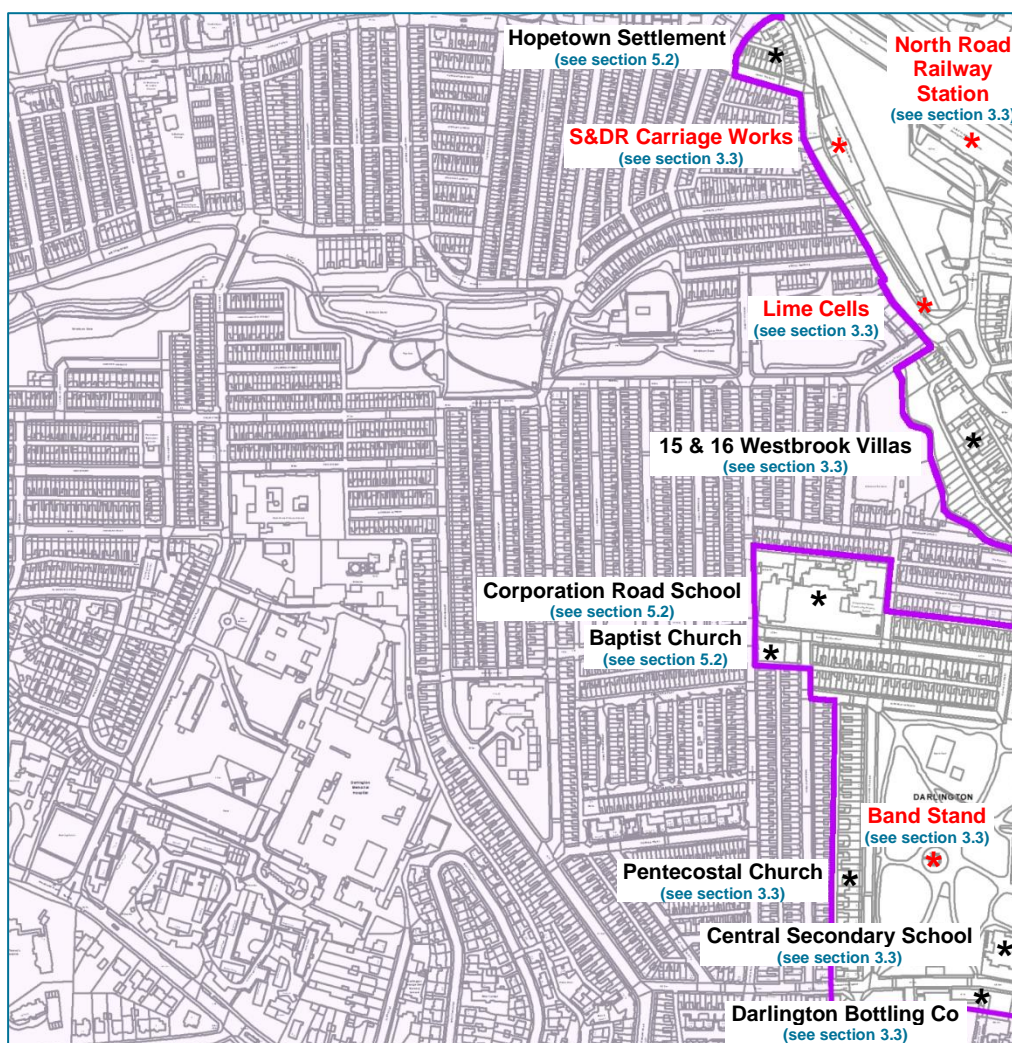


Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the proposed designation. Place/building names refer to historical uses of sites. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance Survey 0100023728. Licence Number 100023728 2024. 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



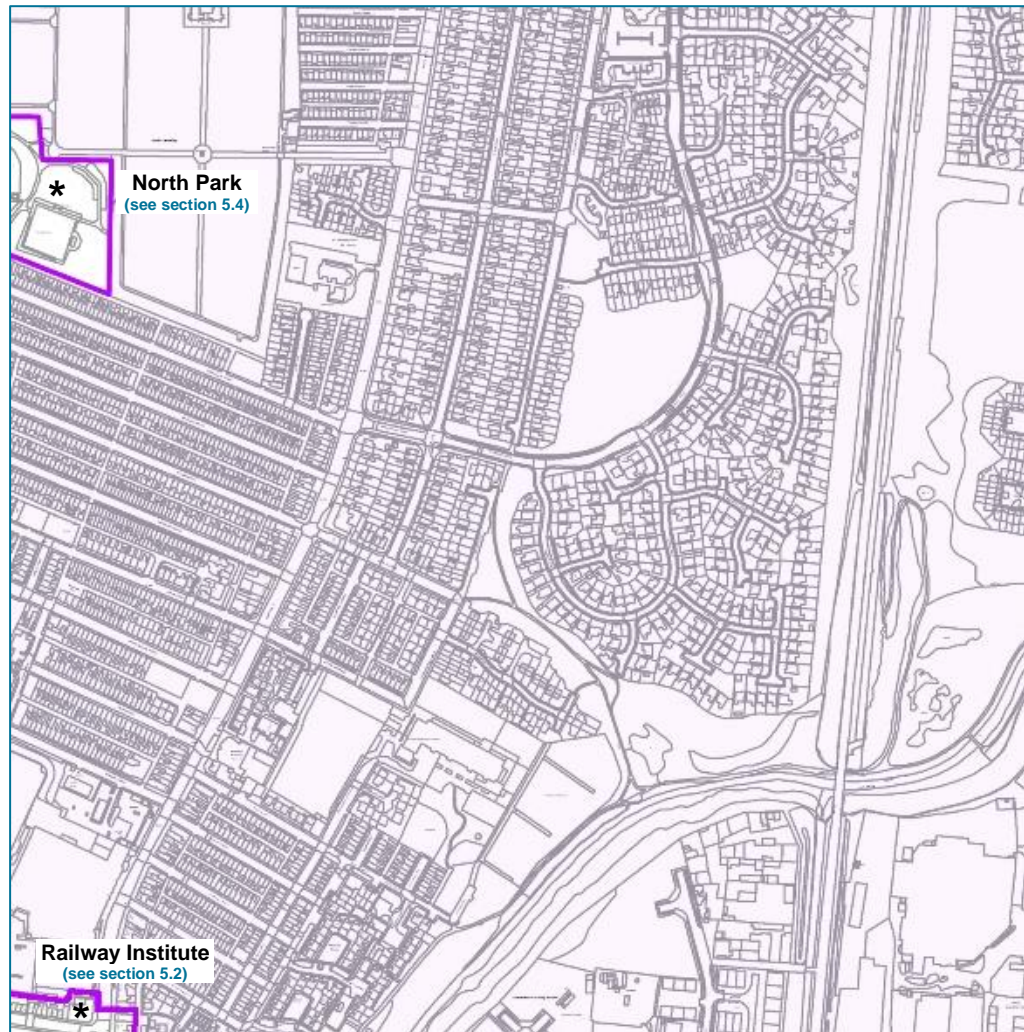
Finalised Stockton & Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area boundary in pink; the shaded areas are outside the **proposed designation**. **Place/building names refer to historical uses of sites, or listed building designations (red)**. (Map© Crown copyright and database rights 2023 Ordnance 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.



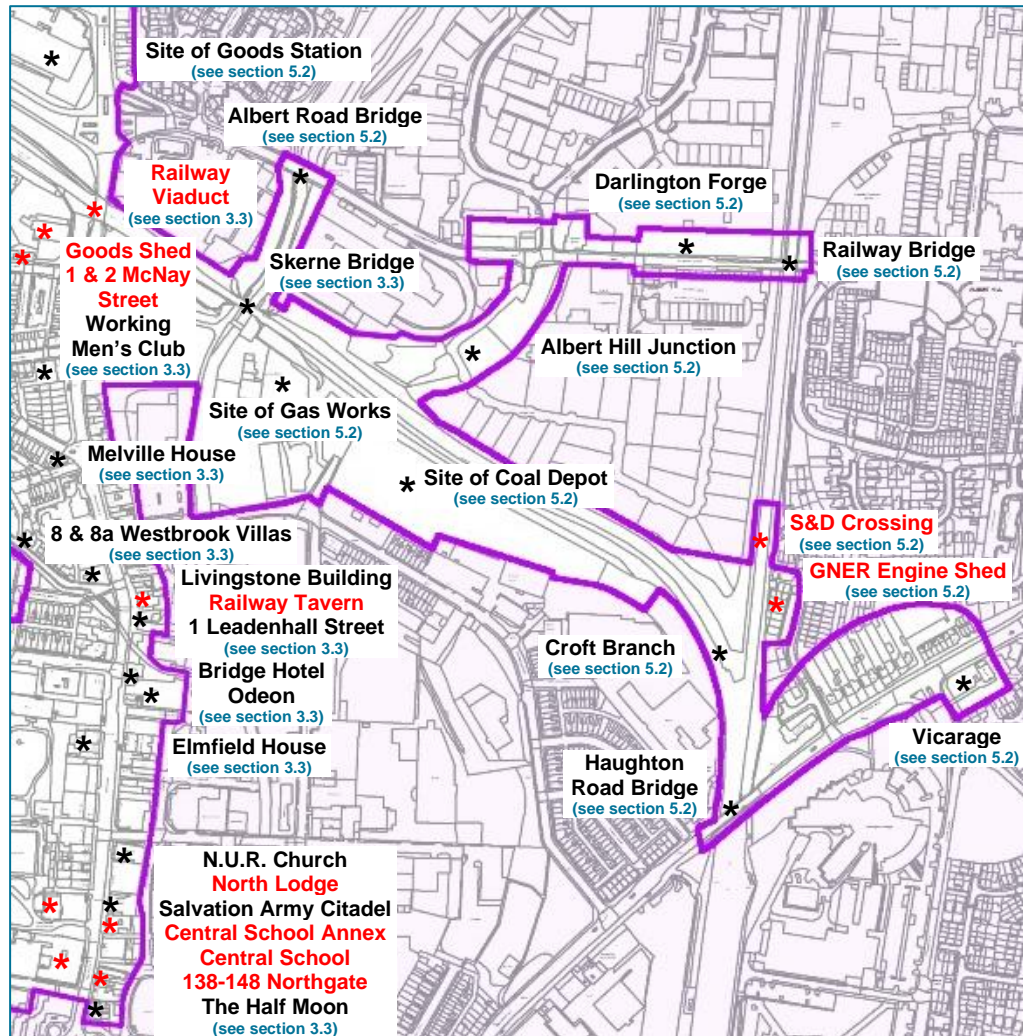
At the time of adoption, the existing article 4 direction (see section 3.6) was not affected by any of the boundary changes. The Northgate Conservation Area Direction (2006) still applies to the boundary adopted in 2003.

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 House²⁵³, 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 Honey Pot House (NB the surviving building is not the old estate house, which was demolished in the early 1960s²⁵⁴) 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



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