Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan

Part 3: Management Strategy

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Durham County Council

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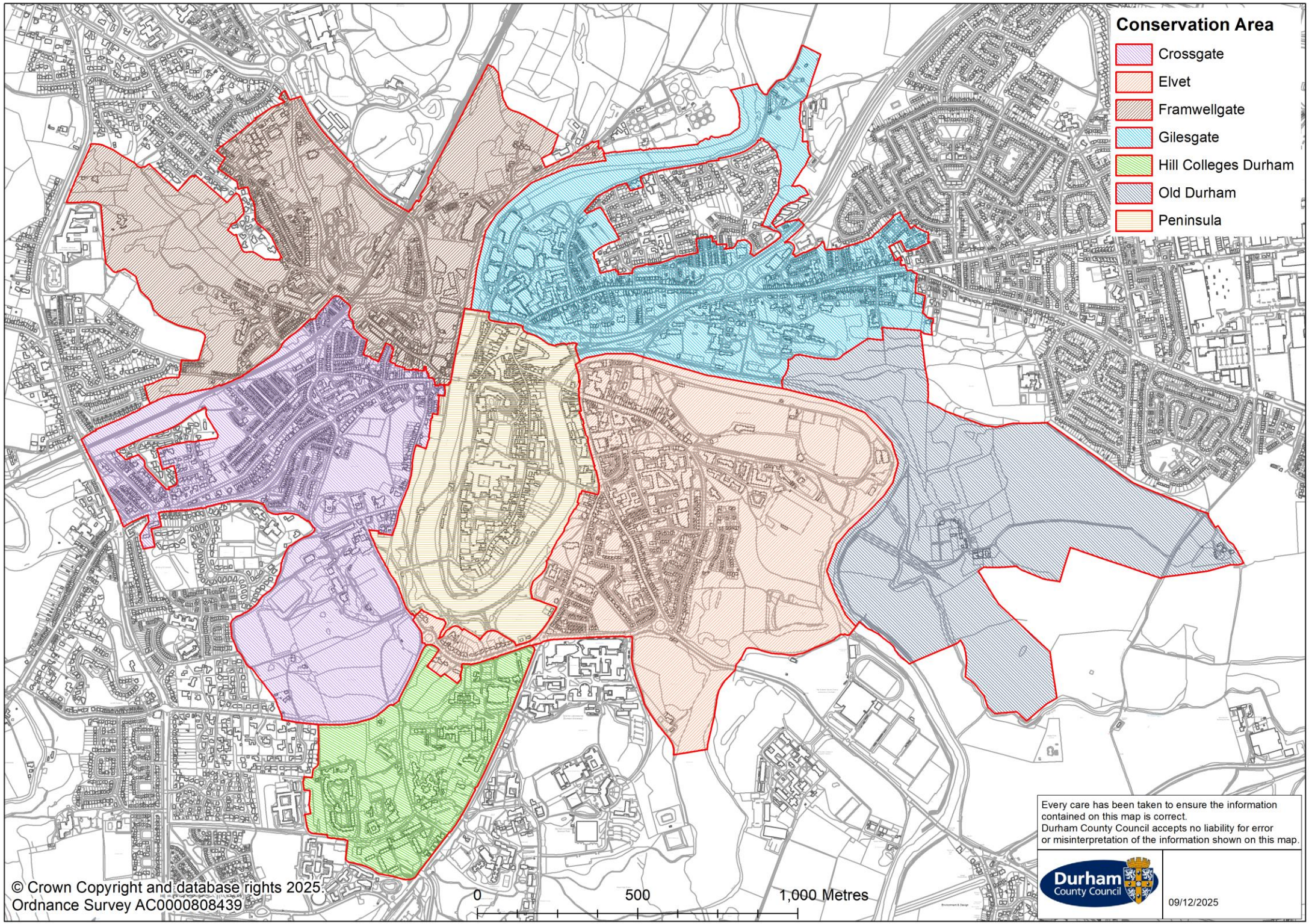
1. Introduction


Conservation Area
Crossgate
Elvet
Framwellgate
Gilesgate
Hill Colleges Durham
Old Durham
Peninsula
0
500
1,000 Metres
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1.1 What is the purpose of this management strategy?

Durham County Council (DCC) has a framework of local planning policies in place to ensure that new development and change in the historic environment preserves, and where possible enhances, its special interest, character, and appearance.

The adopted County Durham Plan (2020) and City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan (2021) contain specific heritage policies to achieve this.

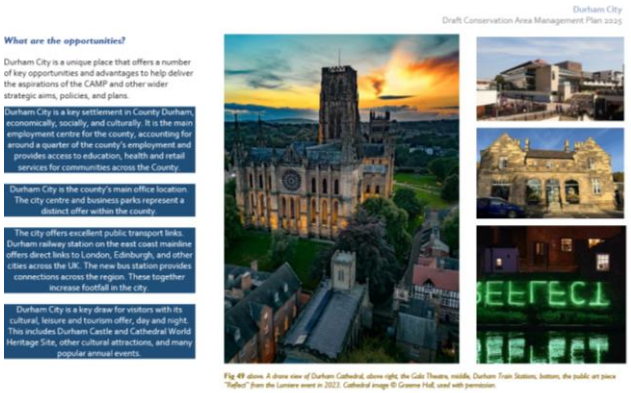
These underpin the principles and requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework Section 16, Conservation and Enhancement of the Historic Environment. Furthermore, the Council has a duty under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas 1990 Act to ***"pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of its conservation areas"***.

The Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) supports the above. It will be used by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) when assessing plans for change in the conservation areas, when considering future improvement works, and in supporting funding applications for specific projects. The CAMP's overall aim is to help deliver positive future management of the city's historic environment.

The CAMP will help to ensure that proposals for change are based upon an accurate understanding of the special interest, character and appearance of the place and its wider context, to inform appropriate and positive design decisions.

The CAMP for Durham City comprises three parts.

Part 1 is the strategic context document. This sets the scene to the city as a whole, explaining its special interest, the scope of the CAMP, and the process and methodologies that have been undertaken.


Durham City
Draft Conservation Area Management Plan 2025

What are the opportunities?

Durham City is a unique place that offers a number of key opportunities and advantages to help deliver the aspirations of the CAMP and other wider strategic aims, policies, and plans.

Durham City is a key settlement in County Durham, economically, socially, and culturally. It is the main employment centre for the county, accounting for around a quarter of the county's employment and provides access to education, health and retail services for communities across the County.

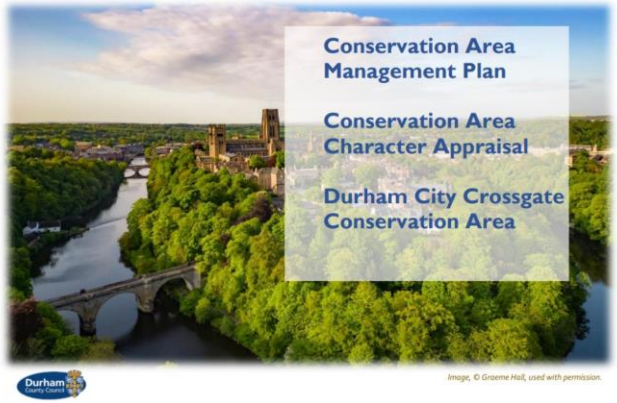
Durham City is the county's main office location. The city centre and business parks represent a distinct offer within the county.

The city offers excellent public transport links. Durham railway station on the east coast mainline offers direct links to London, Edinburgh, and other cities across the UK. The new bus station provides connections across the region. These together increase footfall in the city.

Durham City is a key draw for visitors with its cultural, leisure and tourism offer, day and night. This includes Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, other cultural attractions, and many popular annual events.

Fig 49 above. A drone view of Durham Cathedral, above right, the Gala Theatre, middle, Durham Train Station, bottom, the public art piece "Reflect" from the Lumiere event in 2023. Cathedral image © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

Part 2 are the seven individual conservation area character appraisals that identify the areas special architectural and historic interest that warrants their designated status. The appraisals also identify the issues, problems, and threats the conservation areas face.



Part 3 is this management strategy that presents a series of management recommendations, aims and actions focused upon the overarching themes identified in the strategic context document.

The management strategy has been drawn up in response to the findings from the review of the former Durham City Conservation Area and in the production of the seven individual conservation area character appraisals. Through review of cross-corporate and wider stakeholder strategies and plans, both in place and emerging, to ensure appropriate tie-in.

On the following page is a brief S.W.O.T (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis drawn from the above plus on-site survey work, and local knowledge.

Strengths

- Excellent regional links and public transport accessibility.
- Large catchment area.
- Significant employment/administrative centre.
- Prestigious higher education destination (Durham University).
- Established heritage tourism destination, with the World Heritage Site at its heart and internationally recognised.
- Wide range of retail, bars, restaurants, leisure, and recreation offer.
- High historic, evidential architectural, aesthetic, and archaeological value.
- Strong heritage identity and image.
- High quality visual experiences with historic landmarks.
- Unique topography, geography, and landscape of high aesthetic value and locally cherished.
- "New quarter" of mixed-use contemporary development.

Weaknesses

- Limitations and challenges of new development.
- Dominance of highways, parking issues, congestion, and conflicts with pedestrians.
- Hilly topography, presenting accessibility issues.
- Changing trend from traditional retail to leisure.
- Student dominance of housing.
- Conflicting agendas of major institution and major landowners.
- Tourism offer not sufficiently broad with strong competition and short stay rates.
- Low quality developments.
- Condition issues with some buildings and general unkempt appearance.
- Vacancy, disused buildings, and detracting gap sites.
- Low quality shop fronts and advertisements.
- Areas of poor quality public realm.
- Unmanaged tree cover reducing important views.

Opportunities

- Establish a clear identity and vision for the city.
- Improve overall city offer.
- Scope for some new development.
- Repurposing, reuse, and restoration of buildings.
- Growth as a tourism destination.
- Growth and promotion of cultural heritage.
- Fabric and aesthetic improvements to buildings.
- Removal of buildings from the at rick category.
- Reversal of previous insensitive alterations to historic buildings.
- Cycle of active tree management in specific places.
- Public realm improvement works such as street surfacing and street furniture providing a co-ordinated approach.
- Expand the existing Article 4 to protect unlisted heritage assets and historic streetscape from harmful change.

Threats

- National and local funding constraints, and wider economic weaknesses.
- Economic pressures and lack of investment.
- Development pressure to specific sites.
- New development detracting from significance and setting.
- Cumulative effects of new development.
- Increased vacancy rates.
- Continued long term status of vacant and gap sites.
- Continued dereliction and decay of vacant historic building.
- Continuation of anti-social behaviour.
- Continued harmful incremental changes to buildings.
- Continuation of deterioration and insensitive changes to public realm.
- Loss of surviving traditional floorscape.
- Continuing and increasing impacts of intensive traffic and parking.

1.2 What are the overarching conservation principles for Durham City?

Based upon the SWOT analysis and the appraisal process the following key principles and objectives emerged to form the foundation of the management strategy for Durham City.

1. To preserve, and where possible enhance, the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of the Durham City Conservation Areas, the heritage assets within them, and the contribution to significance made by setting.

2. To use the city's cultural heritage as the catalyst for it to thrive based on a clear identity. Encouraging a diverse range of uses, improving its economic vitality, viability, and attraction for all.

3. To ensure that future change and new development within the conservation areas is appropriate, sympathetic, and undertaken in a positive manner based on an understanding of the site's significance, character, and context.

4. To ensure positive contributors to the areas special interest, character and appearance are conserved and enhanced where possible.

5. To address elements that detract from the areas special interest, character, and appearance such as negative buildings, gap sites, vacant, derelict heritage assets, traffic, and parking impacts.

6. To ensure that the sustainability proposals within the historic environment do not compromise the special interest, character, and appearance of the individual site or its context.

7. To help ensure the good maintenance and upkeep of the historic environment, including seeking to prevent traditional fabric loss, reinstatement of lost materials and features and reversal of previous harmful alterations.

8. To protect areas of public realm that contribute positively and secure improvements where detracting from the areas special interest, character, and appearance, seeking the best quality possible and maximising opportunities for enhancement, including uses.

9. To ensure that the local green assets that contribute positively to the areas special interest and character are retained, managed, and enhanced.

10. To maximise opportunities to better reveal the significance, enhance peoples experience, understanding and appreciation of the city's heritage assets.

Fig 1 *below. The commercial street of North Road which has a poor impression, and a busy market day in Durham Market Place.*

1.3 Structure

Drawing from the appraisal process, and the overarching conservation principles, there are nine recuring themes that provide the foundation of the management strategy.

The nine themes are broken down into a series of key management aims to tackle the primary issues that have been identified. These are then supported by a series of individual actions needed to successfully deliver the key aim. Then follows an overall management action plan, which identifies the delivery methods, responsibilities, and resources required.

The starting point should be seeking to deliver all the management recommendations. However, it must be acknowledged this will not always be possible due to the site specific circumstances, what the proposal relates too and the planning policies that would apply. Typically, a range of matters would need to be considered within the planning balance as part of the decision making process.

2. Management recommendations

2.1 Theme 1 Protecting the built environment

The built environment comprises different structures and features experienced collectively as the physical environment in which people live and work. It represents the area's history and evolution while defining its identity, character, and local distinctiveness.

The protection of the built environment by conserving buildings and structures that contribute positively, addressing those which are negative, rectifying issues of condition, vacancy, and dereliction, enhances how the place is experienced and appreciated.

The above is critical to the long term preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas special architectural and historic interest, character, and appearance.

2.1.1 Protecting positive contributors

The city's architecture reflects its origins, history, development, and status, with a mixture of civic, educational, ecclesiastical, residential, commercial and leisure uses defining its character. The buildings are dispersed along a historic layout responding to the topography that combines intimate narrow medieval streets, Victorian streets in grid patterns, open urban spaces framed by buildings and riverside frontages. In contrast it has a clearly definable 21st century riverside quarter of large scale contemporary mixed-use development.

As a result, the city's townscape is rich, architecturally diverse and of high quality, with the majority of buildings contributing positively to the townscape. The built environment will inevitably continue to grow, and it is of the utmost importance that change is managed carefully to protect positive contributors within the conservation areas.

The conclusion of the conservation area review is that the condition of the built environment overall is "fair to good." There are however some notable exceptions in the form of historic buildings that are underused, vacant and deteriorated, with others identified as being "at risk." These must be addressed in the future by working with owners, securing funding for repairs, and promoting sustainable new uses as appropriate, to ensure their long term preservation.

Fig 2 *below. A selection of images should historic buildings within the Market Place, the contemporary riverside development at Riverbanks, and the Georgian streetscape at Gilesgate (west)*

Management Aim 1

Pay special attention to ensure that existing buildings that contribute positively to the special interest of the conservation areas are retained, conserved, and enhanced where possible, while addressing those which detract from the character and appearance of the place.

Action 1.1

Seek to ensure collaborative working between DCC departments to preserve the special interest, character, and appearance of all heritage assets within, and the buildings that contribute positively, to the townscape and special interest of the conservation areas.

Action 1.2

To consider buildings and structures identified as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs) for potential inclusion on the local list for Durham City or for potential national designation. All these heritage assets are to be added to the Historic Environment Record.

The conservation areas boast a high number of NDHAs. These are identified in the individual conservation area character appraisals with the selection process set out in the **CAMP Strategic Overview** document. The local list for Durham City has the ability for ongoing nominations to be considered for inclusion, giving such buildings, structures, and sites more protection. This includes identification of NDHAs through the formal planning process to ensure they are preserved and protected from negative changes. In succession this will sustain the high quality townscape and character of the city's historic environment.

Action 1.3

Demolition/loss of existing buildings, structures and features that contribute positively to the townscape will be resisted unless justified on wider planning policy grounds. Loss must deliver a benefit to the conservation area, and redevelopment be of equal or better design quality.

Historic buildings should be conserved as important relics of earlier times. They provide important physical connections to the past, add character to the place, and can have deep associations for local people. Where such buildings are vacant in the long term and deteriorated, they can significantly detract from the special interest and character of the place and can attract vandalism, worsening the adverse effect. Repurposing and restoring redundant historic buildings preserves the areas cultural heritage and enhances character. It can also contribute to the local economy and be a catalyst for improvements in the wider area. New uses and sympathetic adaptions are to be encouraged based on an understanding of significance.

Fig 3 *below. Image of diverse types of heritage assets within the conservation areas that contribute positively to the areas special interest, character, and appearance.*

2.1.2 Alterations to historic buildings

Action 1.4

Ensure that alterations to the physical fabric of buildings that contribute positively are appropriate and sympathetic. Seek to maximise opportunities to enhance, including reversing any previous harmful alterations. This can be via proactive engagement with owners and/or through the planning process.

Many historic buildings within the city have been insensitively altered by replacement of windows and doors, rendering or painting of original brickwork, enlarging original openings and works such as removal of chimney stacks. All these types of changes can erode the character and appearance of the individual building, the uniformity of the streetscene and in succession harm the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

Preservation of historic and traditional materials/fabric, period architectural features and elements of detailing is critical to avoid incremental diminishment of historic character. Further, maximising opportunities to reverse previous harmful changes is to be encouraged, this being incredibly positive.

One of the most noticeable issues is the installation of low quality standard uPVC windows in historic terraced properties. There must be an emphasis on retention of traditional timber windows, and where this is not possible as they are beyond repair, sympathetic traditional timber replacements must be the first consideration.

It is however important to recognise that technology has advanced with high quality uPVC heritage vertical sliding sash window products available. These can result in a positive change, for example when proposed to replace existing modern top opening timber casements that are already out of keeping, or when replacing an existing uPVC window of much lesser quality.

However, such windows will not always be suitable for use in historic buildings whose significance and character would be negatively impacted by them, and each case must be judged on its own individual merits.

Fig 4 *below. Example of good quality uPVC sash, and low quality uPVC casement units*

Fig 5 *below. A streetscene highlighting sympathetic and unsympathetic alterations to historic terraced properties that are commonly seen across the city.*

Action 1.5

The Article 4 Directions will be regularly monitored, and planning enforcement powers used where expedient to reverse any harmful effects resulting from unauthorised alterations.

Action 1.6

Seek to raise public awareness of the Article 4 Directions so that unauthorised alterations are avoided.

The Article 4 Directions served in 2007 and 2016 have been reviewed as part of the CAMP process, and while Durham City Conservation Area will no longer exist, it is considered that the properties covered are still worthy of such protection.

The Article 4 Direction has successfully resulted in enhancement works, for example where existing windows are insensitive modern uPVC or timber casements, replaced with better quality period style windows secured through the formal planning application process.

There have also been cases in the conservation area where enforcement powers have been used effectively to secure reversal of harmful alterations. For example, securing replacement of unauthorised manmade fibre cement tiles with traditional Welsh slate, and uPVC casement windows changed back to traditional timber sliding sash windows.

Several additional terraced streets and some individual been properties are proposed to be included as part of this management plan.

Fig 6 *Properties covered by the Article 4 Directions.*

Action 1.7

The Article 4 Direction will be expanded where appropriate to include more residential dwellings that contribute positively within the conservation areas.

Specific classes and parts of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) permits the erection, extension, or alteration of buildings. This means that such works can potentially be undertaken without needing planning permission. This could potentially result in works that detract from the character and appearance of the individual property and wider streetscene, particularly when repeated, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the conservation area. For example, repainting a front elevation in a stark colour that does not reflect the existing colour palette, altering window openings that affects the original pattern, and changing windows, doors, and roof coverings.

Expanding the Article 4 Direction to include more buildings would impose additional planning controls upon them to ensure they are preserved and help reverse previous adverse changes should the opportunity arise in the future.

Full details of the Article 4 Directions can be found at **section 4**.

2.1.3 Addressing negative buildings

Action 1.8

The removal and sympathetic replacement of buildings identified as negative and detracting from the special interest and character of the conservation area will be encouraged. Alternatively, opportunities will be taken to improve their visual appearance in the short to medium term.

Durham City lives with a legacy of mid and late 20th century development that sometimes detracts from the special character and appearance of the conservation area. They are generally of low architectural and urban design quality, inappropriate in terms of form, style, scale, massing, and materials and are devoid of detailing, or a combination of such factors. This distinguishes them within their respective historic surroundings as being out of character and lacking local distinctiveness.

Such buildings offer enormous opportunity for refurbishment, upgrading, or repurposing. Alternatively, demolition and redevelopment, complying with other relevant management policies within this document, could result in a very positive transformation of the site.

In succession, this can result in a noticeable townscape enhancement whilst strengthening the areas identity. It is therefore important that such buildings are addressed in the future where opportunities arise.

Fig 7 *below. Images showing examples of 20th century developments that detract from the historic character and distinctiveness of the place.*

2.1.4 Condition and vacancy

Action 1.9

Seek to raise awareness and work with owners and landlords of historic buildings to explore available resources and opportunities to address vacancy, disrepair, and condition issues sympathetically. This especially applies to buildings identified as "at risk". Where dialogue fails, and/or where the extent of deterioration or dereliction is sufficient, take appropriate enforcement action to rectify the issues.

There are some historic buildings within the city that are vacant and deteriorating, and others that are in-use but still visibly suffering from condition related issues. This is often due to the lack of a regular maintenance regime and general fabric decay because of age and natural weathering.

There are also instances where historic buildings have been inappropriately altered. For example, through replacement of traditional fabric and features with inferior harmful modern alternatives, and where front elevations are marred by modern fixtures and fittings.

It is of the utmost importance that buildings affected by such issues are addressed whenever possible, harmful alterations are reversed, and future ones avoided.

A significant decline in condition could result in an asset becoming classed as at risk. Enforcement action may become necessary. Sound, regular maintenance and appropriate repair not only safeguards physical fabric but also contributes towards aesthetic quality and can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a conservation area.

Regular inspection of building fabric and services is the starting point to identify any issues and specific maintenance tasks. This can include cleaning of gutters, drain grills or debris, cleaning blocked downpipes, removing vegetation growth, re-pointing, cleaning, and/or re-painting render and painting joinery.

Fig 8 *below. A selection of images showing deteriorated fabric and poor ribbon pointing to historic stonework.*

The approach to repair should generally be to uphold the use of traditional materials and techniques, so that the physical characteristics, performance, and visual appearance of the historic building is conserved. There may be instances where inappropriate modern fabric has decayed and requires replacement, providing a positive opportunity for better replacement in different materials traditional to the building.

Vacancy and disuse are a real threat to the physical fabric and significance of historic buildings. As maintenance issues go unaddressed, they can become structurally unsound, important historic fabric can be lost that is irreversible and they can be susceptible to damage from vandalism, or worse, arson.

The identification of vacant and derelict historic buildings at risk is important in focusing attention on the issue. This then acts as a monitoring mechanism and helps to inform proactive conservation strategies with the aim to see them removed from the "at risk" category.

This requires close collaboration with building owners and detailed consideration as to how resources can be used to target where they are most needed. Continued surveys should be conducted to assess the status and condition of identified buildings at risk, and potentially others that have fallen into disuse, dereliction, or disrepair.

This will provide a useful means of monitoring issues to indicate where actions may be required to halt or reverse deterioration. Such a process is important to safeguard the special interest and character of the city's historic environment for this and future generations. In worst case scenarios dereliction can threaten a heritage assets significance.

Vacant and deteriorated buildings, prominent in the public realm adversely affect the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas. But can also cause a negative feedback loop, discourage investment, and dissuade visitors due to a general sense of decline and neglect.

Further guidance

Buildings at Risk | SAVE Britain's Heritage

Search the Heritage at Risk Register | Historic England

At **Appendix 6** there are option appraisals for the key historic buildings which negatively impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area due to being vacant and/or in a declining physical condition.

- North Road Miners Hall
- South Street Mill
- The Fulling Mill
- The Counts House
- The former City of Durham public swimming baths
- Industrial buildings, Back Western Hill
- Mount Joy Farm

There are other listed structures where finding a new use is not relevant such as Prebends Bridge, sections of the Castle Walls and St Cuthbert's Well. These require investigation to identify appropriate remedial works as part of a comprehensive and sympathetic repair strategy.

Fig 9 *below. Prebends Bridge and the Counts House.*

2.1.5 Setting

Setting is an important part of the historic environment comprising of the surroundings in which heritage assets are understood, experienced, and appreciated. This includes past and present relationships between the urban townscape, river, and landscape. It is primarily visual but can include other elements such as ambiance, historic connections and intrinsic relationships between buildings, places, and spaces.

Preservation of the special interest, character and appearance of the individual conservation areas will ensure that their interrelated settings are protected.

Further, all seven conservation areas in combination have a setting that is important, beyond their interaction with one another and the Castle and Cathedral. This can also contribute positively to their significance.

Action 1.10

Pay special regard to ensure the setting of the conservation areas is conserved and where possible enhanced via the planning process.

It is important that elements and attributes of setting that contribute positively are preserved. To ensure this, new development and change must consider the locations immediate and wider context and the interrelationships (physical and visual) between different places. Further, cumulative change is an important factor. Where the setting has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development, consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from or can enhance the significance of the heritage asset.

A thorough understanding and assessment of the impact on setting needs to be considered when proposing new development within the conservation areas setting. This must be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected.

The assessment process should consider the following:

- The physical surroundings, group value and relationship with the heritage asset.
- Any intentional and formal designed views between the site and the heritage asset
- Any historic, intangible associations and patterns of use.
- The degree of change over time.
- The contribution made by ambiance, movement, and activity.
- Views from, towards, within, and across and including heritage asset.
- The potential impact of seasonal and day/night changes on setting.
- Any potential cumulative impacts alongside other developments.
- Any potential damage to the heritage assets economic viability threatening its on-going conservation.

Fig 10 *below. Examples of different settings.*

Action 1.11

New development proposals within the setting of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site (WHS) should be formulated and assessed in accordance with the CAMP Appendix, Durham WHS Setting – Guidance on understanding and assessing development impacts.

The surrounding built and landscape environments must be carefully managed to ensure an appropriate balance between protecting the setting and its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS while still allowing them to change and evolve. In particular the immediate surrounding townscape of Durham City Centre that will inevitably continue to develop, with a major part of the WHS inner setting provided by the seven Durham City conservation areas. It is also important to recognise that setting and OUV are complex subjects, which go beyond purely visual receptors, include intangible connections, and that experiences can change at different times of the year.

The importance of effective management and protection of the WHS and its setting must be based upon:

- a clear understanding of the sites location and sensitivity,
- its contribution to the WHS setting and OUV,
- the magnitude of change caused by the development proposal,
- the overall resultant level of impact.

As such, those proposing development within, or affecting, the setting of the WHS should use the CAMP Appendix, Durham WHS setting – Guidance on understanding and assessing development impacts. This sets of a clear logical process and consistent approach by which to assess the likely effect of development on the setting of the WHS and its OUV.

The guidance document should also be used as part of the plan making process and where other changes are proposed within the setting with potential effects on the WHS. The assessment could form part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where this is required; it could form part of other assessments or could be prepared as a stand-alone assessment supporting planning applications.

Further details can be found at **Section 1.9**, page of the CAMP Strategic Overview Document. The full appendix guidance document will be a key planning tool supporting the CAMP.

2.1.6 Views and Vistas

Intrinsically linked to setting are views and vistas. Durham is a city of views created by its distinctive topography and the way in which the built environment has developed. Views range from incidental glimpses between buildings, intimate channelled historic streetscape views, sequential and kinetic views that change with movement and wide-open panoramas from hills and ridges.

The city has an extremely dramatic skyline of tumbling domestic roofs, with the dramatic introduction of historic landmarks such as the Viaduct, the many church towers and spires, and the copper dome of Old Shire Hall, all subordinate to the dominance and drama of Durham Castle and Cathedral.

Views, into, out, from, across and through the city are all fundamental to its distinctive character, with views of the Castle and Cathedral defining its image that is internationally recognised. General views of the townscape, landscape, and river corridor that overlap is also of immense importance in conveying the city's special interest and evolution.

These make an exceptional contribution to the distinctive character of the place and how it is experienced.

Management Aim 2

Pay special attention to ensure that key and important views within, through, and across the conservation areas are sustained, conserved, and enhanced where possible. This includes day and nighttime views.

Action 2.1

Key and other important views will be protected from negative impacts, with sensitivity to change being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Action 2.2

Opportunities will be sought to recover lost views, better reveal, or improve views that are reduced and adversely affected by elements such as, intrusive modern developments and unmanaged tree cover, consistent with other relevant management recommendations.

Action 2.3

When arising, and appropriate, seek opportunities for new development to create new views to better reveal the significance of the conservation areas, the World Heritage Site, and the heritage assets therein.

The key views identified in the CAMP have been selected because they define the image and sense of place of the area. Obviously, many of the views are focused on the Castle and Cathedral but careful consideration was given to including the most significant and well-known public views, while at the same time identifying any detrimental elements within the views where there is an opportunity for enhancement.

They must not be considered a definitive list as the city is far too rich and important to discount other views when considering development proposals.

Proposals may also have unforeseen impacts on views and thus the setting of other heritage assets. This includes for example where tree management in one location to improve a reduced view of the Castle and Cathedral results in opening up visually harmful elements or incongruous features in the foreground or background.

A major consideration of new development in the context of townscape views, is building height, form and materials which can have skyline impacts. Given the high value of the city's roofscape, and the fact that in some places the topography is such that it blends roofscape and elevations, poorly considered development proposal has the capacity to be very detrimental to the distinctive character of the city in this regard.

Views can change with the seasons, with the value of views and extent of visual appreciation of the heritage assets forming the focal point potentially elevating during the winter months. The preservation of nighttime views must also be well considered, refer to **Theme 6**.

To protect important views, this may require the applicant to produce visualisations or modelling to accurately demonstrate the potential impacts of the development proposal. This process should not be seen as a negative, as it is recognised that development can also have a positive impact within key views. They can be enhanced for example by providing built development of a higher architectural quality or by removing visually detrimental elements.

The consideration of views in new development, and alterations to existing buildings, is critical to conserve the special interest, character, appearance and experiences of the Durham City Conservation Areas and their setting.

Development both within and outside the conservation area boundaries has the potential to affect views that can be positive and negative and in respect of the World Heritage Site, has the capacity to impact upon its outstanding universal value. Development also has the potential to affect the setting of other designated heritage assets within the immediate and wider townscape context of the site.

Understanding the importance of views potentially impacted by new development or change to existing buildings, and the resulting impact(s) is critical to their preservation and enjoyment.

Fig 11 *below. Examples of views from around the conservation areas of historic streetscapes, landscapes, and landmarks.*

2.1.8 Archaeology

Although not an obvious component of the conservation area's built environment, archaeological remains contribute to understanding how the city and its environs have developed, resulting in their current character and appearance. The character of the modern city has been heavily influenced by buried archaeology through the persistence down the centuries of street patterns, land divisions and property plots.

Development related archaeological excavations in the city have added to the understanding of its past and it is of high archaeological importance, potential and interest. It is of the upmost importance that archaeological assets are protected and not inadvertently damaged or destroyed, while taking opportunities to expand upon existing knowledge of the city and peoples past lives living within it.

Management Aim 3

Seek to ensure that the archaeological importance, interest, and potential of the city is preserved, while increasing the knowledge and understanding of the past, for this and future generations.

Action 3.1

Through the planning process ensure that the archaeological interest and potential of the site, and impact of the development proposal, is understood, through appropriate assessment. The level required being relevant to the significance of the site.

Action 3.2

Seek to ensure through the planning process that in cases where development may adversely affect archaeological remains, loss must be minimised or mitigated as far as practically possible.

Action 3.3

Ensure that the Historic Environment Record (HER) is kept up to date and accessible as an essential public information resource.

Where a site has the potential to have archaeological interest developers should undertake desk based assessments. This provides a mechanism for assessing the sites archaeological potential as well as the impacts of the proposal given that archaeological assets can be highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction.

Added to the above, in some cases it may be necessary to conduct further archaeologic work such as field evaluation, watching briefs or building recording.

The HER provides detailed public information about the known historic environment and is a valuable tool of the planning system. It brings information together about archaeology, historic buildings, historic structures and finds. It is therefore important that it is kept up to date to help public understanding.

The HER records are accessible to the public via Keys to the Past. This is however an abridged verion and should not be used soley to inform heritage statements in support of listed building consent or planning applications, a full search is required for this purpose..

Theme 1 Potential outcomes

Conserving the authenticity and integrity of historic buildings, improving the quality of existing modern development, and ensuring buildings have a sustainable active use and are in sound condition, all contribute positively towards the resilience and aesthetic qualities of the place. This has a significant impact in ensuring that the character and appearance of the conservation areas is preserved and enhanced. Further conservation of the historic built environment is positive for the lives of residents, workers, and visitors, improves people's impression of the place, and encourages economic success through increased footfall, investment, and tourism.

2.2 Theme 2 Delivering new development

New development shapes the built environment and local character while providing infrastructure and facilities that people rely on.

Design quality and heritage are intrinsically linked and important as they contribute towards an area's distinctiveness and sense of place. The introduction of new buildings and spaces, repurposing existing buildings and sites, while addressing elements that detract, with the right approach, will ensure the quality and character of the townscape is preserved and enhanced. This is achieved by the delivery of carefully considered design that is appropriate to the existing character and appearance of the conservation area.

Durham City has a rich variety and interplay of built, historic and natural environments. The different buildings, streetscapes, and urban areas are dynamic places that are constantly adapting to the needs of their inhabitants, with each generation contributing uniquely to the city's evolution.

New developments shape the place, its aesthetic, and people's perceptions and experiences. It is therefore important to put into place overarching design aims and actions to support the planning policy framework, and to ensure that the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas is conserved and where possible enhanced as they evolve.

The above is relevant to all types of new development from small scale householder and commercial works such as house extensions and new shop fronts, to larger scale new residential, commercial and leisure developments with the potential to impact greatly in the wider townscape context.

New development in the city can be challenging, with different sites and places having different constraints and opportunities. The approach must be to inspire high quality sustainable design through the creation of buildings and spaces that celebrate and reinforce the special interest and character of the city responding positively to the sites local and wider context.

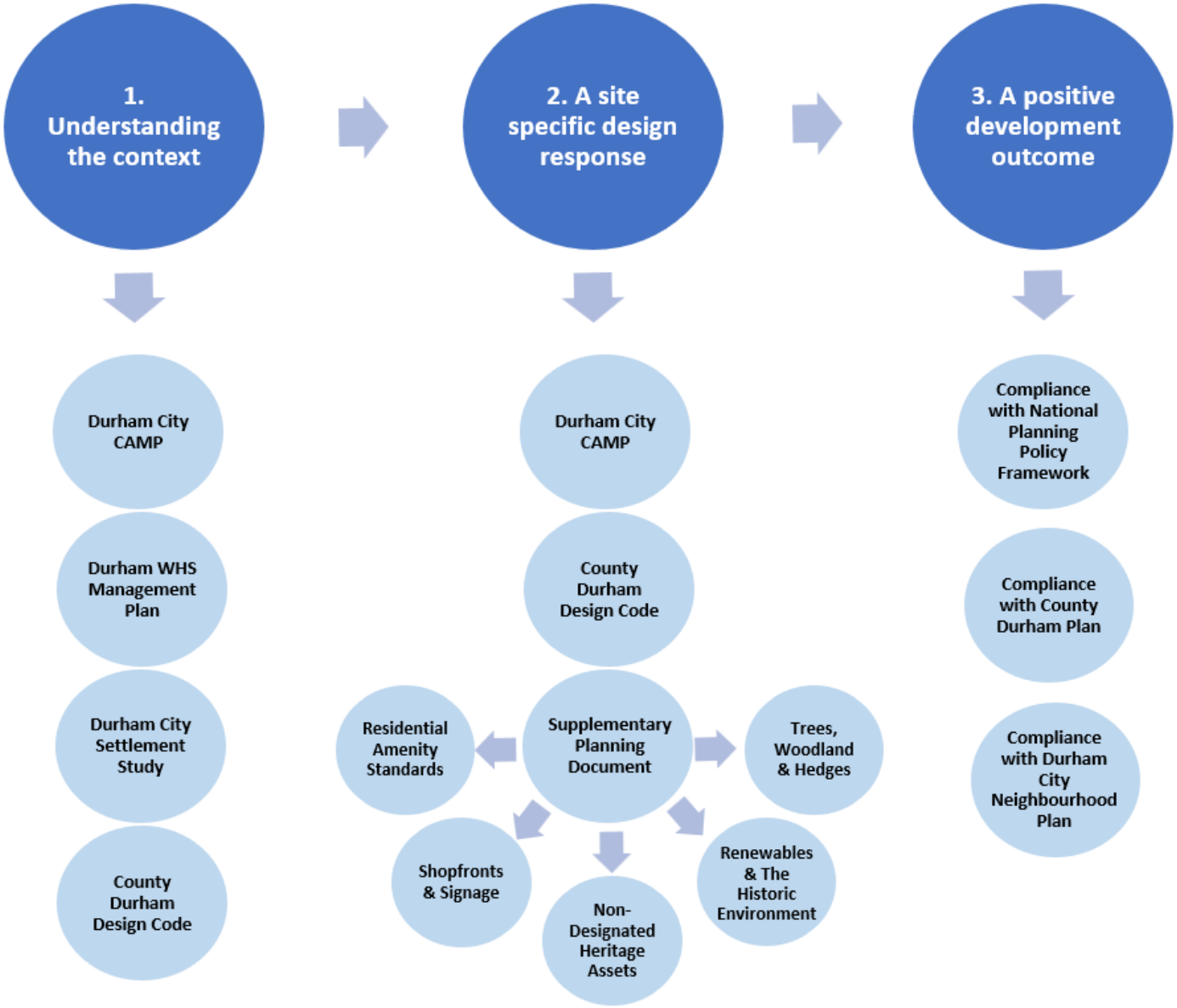
Fig 12 *below. An example of successful redevelopment in Claypath. Purpose built student accommodation of a high quality design based on an understanding of the historical context and character. Despite the demolition of the historic buildings and increased scale, the new development assimilates positively in terms of building line, stepped roofscape, detailing, and verticality to the elevation treatment with a contemporary aesthetic.*

The bottom of Claypath © Roger Smith cc-by-sa/2.0 :: Geograph Britain and Ireland

2.2.1 Design objectives

- Encourage and promote a higher standard of design, creating positive places that respond to the local sense of place and character.
- To ensure that new development preserves or enhances the significance and setting of any heritage assets affected.
- To maximise enhancement opportunities where possible, to improve the built form, green infrastructure assets, the public realm, connectivity, and views.
- To ensure sympathetic assimilation with the local plan form, street scene, immediate surroundings and the wider townscape and landscape context of the city.
- To encourage high quality contemporary development, subject to location, drawing inspiration from the local vernacular.
- New development should have a continuity and clarity of form with public and private spaces distinguishable.
- New development should provide good connectivity reinforcing historic routes and introducing new ones where possible.
- Is of a scale, massing, form, architectural style, materiality, and aesthetic that is sympathetic to the site its location and surroundings.

2.2.2 How can positive design be delivered?



Management Aim 4

To ensure that new development has a positive impact by delivering a high standard of design that is sensitive to the special interest, character and appearance of the place and its context.

Action 4.1

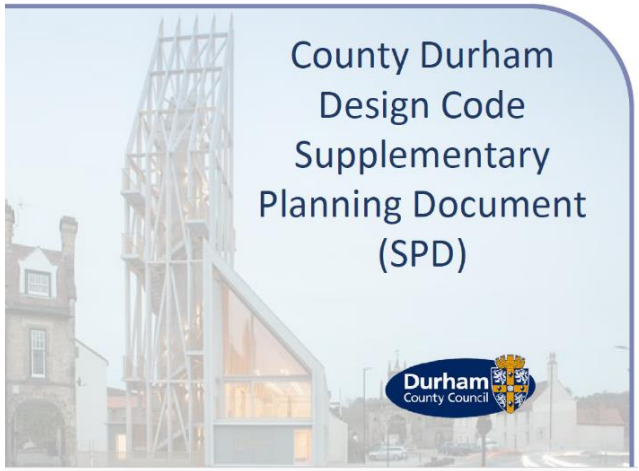
New development proposals within the conservation areas should conform to the principles set out in the County Durham Design Code SPD and supporting settlement character study for Durham City.

The County Durham Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets down an approach for ensuring well designed buildings and places that are suited to County Durham, with a specific section in the code relating to historic cities, such as Durham City.

The document is broken up into sections covering context, significance and setting to provide an understanding to help formulate the design process, then a model design code and checklist providing design guidance in different locations and contexts.

The code supports the planning framework for ensuring high quality design and is intended to support all types of development although the document is housing focused. The document can be used by applicants and their design teams, local communities and their representatives, Councillors who make planning decisions and local authority planning officers in assessing the quality and appropriateness of planning applications.

It is a key and valuable tool to ensure that new development is well designed and high quality that responds positively to the site and its local and wider context.



Further reading

County Durham Desing Code

PROMOTING A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH TO NEW HOUSING IN HISTORIC PLACES (historicengland.org.uk)

Good Practice for Design in the Historic Environment: Principles and Case Studies | Historic England

The Design Code aims to inspire design excellence through the creation of locally inspired buildings and places which celebrate and reinforce the unique character, identity, heritage, and culture of County Durham. By providing clarity about what is meant by high quality locally distinctive design - in the context of County Durham Plan Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) and requirements set down in other policy guidance - it can aid the planning and implementation of all types and scale of new development. Design Code, Settlement Study and CAMP combined will provide an invaluable toolkit for developers to help them create better quality development and uplift design standards in the city.

Action 4.2

The planning process and relevant design guidance will be used to ensure that the desired design quality of new development proposals will be achieved, with a traditional/local vernacular response or sensitive high-quality, or innovative, contemporary approach.

New development can have a positive impact on a place, so long as the design response is appropriate. It should be informed by positive existing development, harmonising in terms of placement, layout, orientation, scale/size, massing, architectural style, materials, and detailing. New development must also consider and be sensitive to the sites setting. This includes the local streetscene and wider townscape.

Contemporary design with its own language is to be encouraged when high-quality and appropriate to the use, site, its surroundings, and wider context.

Contemporary buildings appear radically different from their historic counterparts, but contemporary architecture can enrich the townscape. There are some consistent principles such as simplicity of form with clean lines and avoiding unnecessary decoration, providing a restrained material palette, and drawing inspiration from existing buildings but with a different expression.

Fig 13 *below. Examples of successful new residential development within Crossgate Conservation Area, the terraced form, scale, design, uniformity, materials, and detailing reflecting the surrounding Victorian terraced housing.*

Action 4.3

When the opportunity arises, high quality appropriately designed redevelopment of notable gap sites that offer an opportunity for a positive outcome enhancing the special interest of the conservation area will be encouraged.

There are a number of gap sites identified within the conservation area character appraisals that generally detract from the character and visual appearance of the place and often give a poor impression.

Some sites offer excellent potential for new built development. These were formerly occupied by buildings and structures demolished at some point in the past, others form notable gaps at the end of, or between the terraced blocks that developed around them.

Infill development of such gap sites, in an appropriate use and manner that is sensitive to its immediate surroundings and wider built context, would have the potential to enhance the existing built up street frontages and have a positive effect on the townscape.

2.2.4 Detailed design principles

The design of new development should generally:

- Relate well to the geography, topography, landscape, and history of the place.
- Respect the positive characteristics that define the city's urban form relevant to the site specific location, for example plan form, building lines, historic street pattern and layout, building scale, massing and proportions, plot and block shapes and dimensions.
- It should follow historic plot widths and avoid merging or sub-division of historic plots, avoiding harm to burgage plots.
- Provide strong active frontages to the street
- Respect the surrounding built form with regards to height, scale, massing, form, material, styles, and detailing.
- Respond positively to the local vernacular, paying due regard to street frontages in terms of symmetry/ordering, verticality, repetition, fenestration and detailing as relevant to the location.
- Respect important views.
- Use high quality materials that reflect or respond to the dominant material palette of the street.
- Create new views and juxtapositions that add variety and interest to the area.
- Provide positive connections and pedestrian permeability, embracing existing routes and good quality public realm where relevant.

Fig 14 *below and right. Good examples of new modern design successfully assimilated into the townscape.*

Action 4.4

Ensure that proposed alterations and new extensions are sympathetic in design to the building and its surroundings. Opportunities should be taken to replace existing low quality extensions that are visible with ones of a higher design and aesthetic quality enhancing the special interest and character of the conservation area.

Extensions to residential properties are the most generic form of new development within the conservation areas. Many existing extensions are sympathetic, with both traditional and contemporary design approaches. Many others however do not respond positively to the characteristics of the host building.

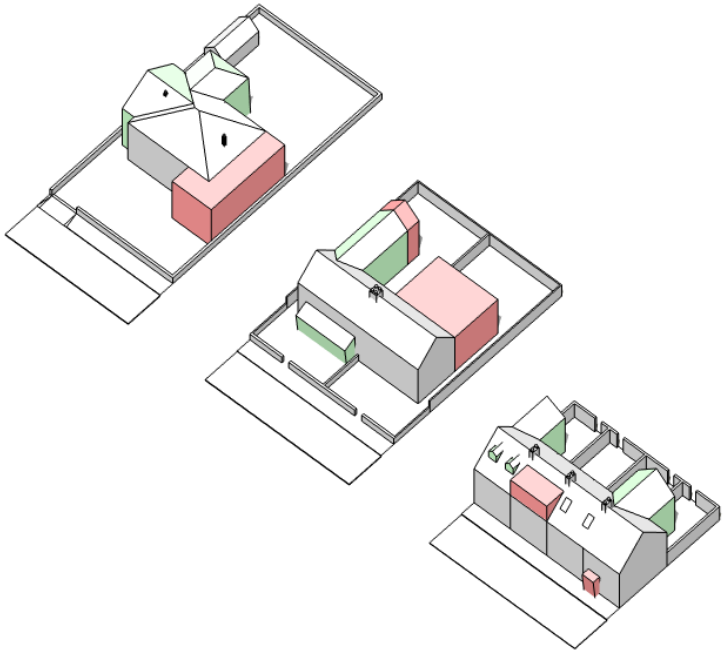
When low quality extensions are visible in the public domain, they can have a negative effect on the character and visual appearance of the area. They can create a harmful terracing effect within street scenes, have poor wrap-around forms, be too dominant and overpowering, be of insensitive materials and have fenestration that is not reflective of the existing, that must be avoided.

What the key extension design principles?

- Adopt a form that is in keeping with the form and style of the host building.
- Be of an appropriate size, scale, and massing and not too dominant or overpowering.
- Use either matching materials or contrasting materials if a contemporary intervention.
- Emulate elements of existing detailing.
- Respect the pattern, size, shape, and style of the existing openings.
- Have a roof shape, pitch and form that complements the existing roofscape.
- Appear subordinate, usually achieved by lower ridge and eaves levels and stepped-in building lines.
- Not imbalance the streetscene or create a terracing effect.
- In some cases, exceptional and good quality, interesting contemporary designs may be achievable, and it is important not to stifle creativity or imaginative contemporary design approaches.

Fig 15 *below. General examples of typical extension designs*

The models are for illustrative purposes only. They identify good (green) and bad (red) examples of typical householder developments within the conservation areas. However, they should not be taken as implying that permission for such additions will be automatically granted as there may be exceptions and designs are dependent on the site specific circumstances and context.



2.2.6 Roofs and dormers

Action 4.5

The introduction of new roofs through new development or alterations to existing roofs must be sympathetic in design to the roofscape of the locale and wider townscape. Opportunities should be maximised to reverse existing harmful impacts.

The roofscape of the city is an important characteristic of its special interest and is widely visible. The overall impression is of a universal use of natural slate, traditional roof forms, more often stepped with the gradient, and punctured by chimneys. This creates a high quality traditional roofscape with a distinctive rhythm that must be conserved.

New development proposals must respect the city roofscape in both the local and wider context. The use of flat and angled roofs in contemporary extension designs can potentially be complementary, setting an honest contrast between traditional and new. Such forms may be appropriate and sympathetic in certain locations for example many of the large modern buildings along the riverside incorporate flat roofs, mostly successfully.

Fig 16 *below. Examples of large scaled contemporary riverside development characterised by varied roof forms with interest created by different heights and angles. Botton, a view of a traditional roofscape.*

When undertaking attic conversions, it is important that alterations to the roof form are very carefully considered. It may be possible to adjust the existing roof height and pitch, but this can be very harmful if it disproportionately alters the overall scale and form and impacts negatively on the roofscape of the street. Further, if the roof is part of a continuous uniform terrace such alterations would be particularly harmful, and the roof structure may be of significant age where modifications would result in the harmful loss of important historic fabric.

Across the conservation areas there are many examples of traditionally styled dormer windows that assimilate successfully into the historic character of the roofscape and streetscene. There are instances where they are integral components of the buildings original architectural design, contributing positively to the streetscene.

Historic dormers should be retained and repaired whenever possible, changes to bring them up to modern standards may be possible provided they do not compromise their character and quality. If full replacement is needed owing to poor condition, then this should be on a true like for like basis.

The introduction of new dormers to buildings that were not originally designed with such features can be harmful, particularly if a property is part of a uniform historic terrace. In such cases dormers should normally be avoided or potentially located to the rear if there is a precedent for such interventions in the roofscape and its surroundings. Furter, they could potentially be added when not generally visible from the surrounding public domain.

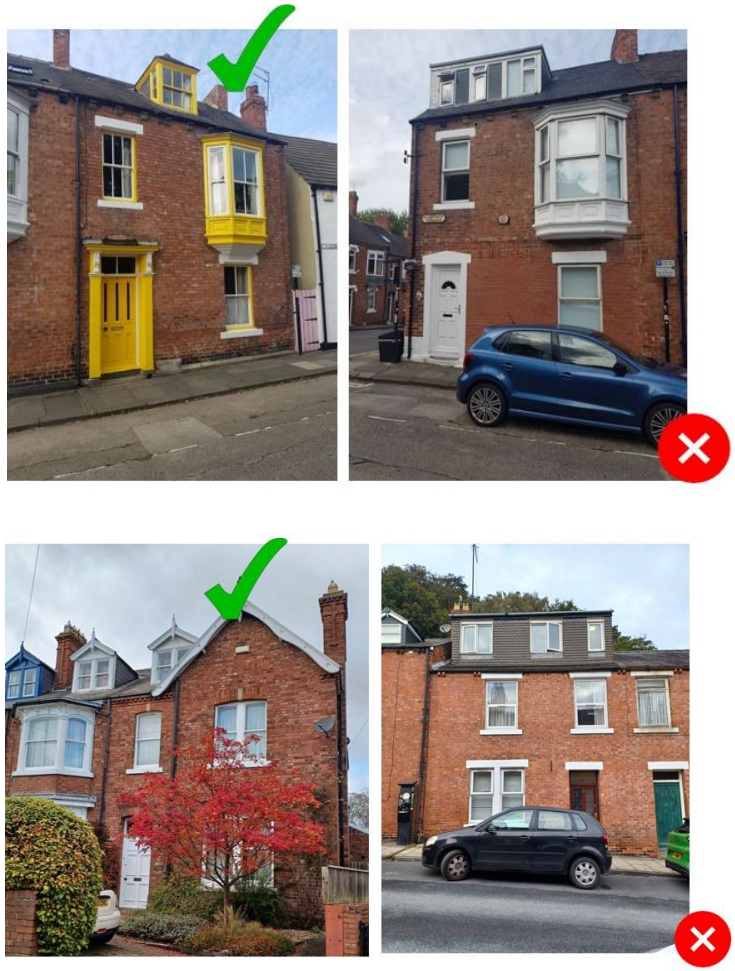
Opportunities should be taken to improve the design of existing dormers if they detract from the character and appearance of the building and street, while new dormers must be sympathetic in design.

Major harm can result from inappropriately designed modern dormers in prominent locations. There are examples of large box style dormers in the city that are markedly out of place because they are excessive in size, horizontal in form, and devoid of design cohesiveness with the elevation below. Such dormers not only harm the character and special qualities of the individual building, but also to the wider character and appearance of the conservation area.

What are the key design principles?

- The principle of adding dormers must be based upon initial compatibility with the period and character of the host building and its context.
- The size and scale must be proportionate and subordinate, it must not dominate the roofscape and should reflect the positive dormers in the locale, if any exist.
- It should be set below the ridge, back from and above the eaves level and centrally aligned with the window openings to provide vertical balance and symmetry to the elevation where appropriate.
- If more than one is proposed, they should be regularly spaced.
- It should normally adopt a traditional form and style, with windows and materials reflecting the existing.
- It must not conflict with the original roof form or detract from the character and visual appearance of the elevation.
- New dormers may be better placed to the rear where they are less visible and less prominent.

Fig 17 *below. Examples of well-designed traditional dormer and poor quality box dormer in a Victorian terrace.*



2.2.7 Rooflights

Rooflights are a common sight within certain parts of the conservation areas which are not always positive. They are generally neutral in impact when appropriately designed. But they can result in adverse clutter in the roofscape when, for example a high number are installed haphazardly or when they are oversized and project up from the roof plane. New rooflights should also ideally be avoided in roofs where none exist or limited to the rear of the roof if generally unseen from the public domain. This is to ensure the traditional roofscape is conserved with visual impacts minimised.

Conservation rooflights designed with a traditional aesthetic and flush fitting to give a clean aesthetic.

What are the general design principles for roof-lights?

- Understand the buildings significance, character, and context as rooflights may not be appropriate at all on some elevations.
- Consider installation within the rear roof slope in the first instance so that they are unseen.
- They should be limited in number and small. Large roof-lights can be visually intrusive, and a high number create unwanted clutter, detracting from the visual appearance of the roof.
- They should be of a conservation style, metal material and flush fitted.
- Typically, vertically proportioned.
- They should be appropriately aligned with the window openings, if possible, to give vertical balance.
- If more than one is needed, they should be horizontally aligned, and haphazard positioning avoided.

Fig 18 *below. Example of conservation style roof lights that appear sympathetic (top), below standard roof-lights haphazardly arranged.*

2.2.8 Shopfronts and signage

Durham is a vibrant mixed use city with a number of commercial streets that expand across different conservation areas. Within these there are a multitude of shop fronts and advertisements. Some are historic, others modern, in both traditional and contemporary forms and styles.

Well-designed shopfronts and signs help create a sense of place and contribute very positively to the character and visual appearance of the area, that alongside outdoor seating and eating areas, add to the vitality and vibrancy of the place. In the city there are many positive examples of surviving historic and traditional timber shop fronts and it is of the utmost importance that these are retained and any alterations to them conducted sympathetically. There is a risk when a new owner takes possession, in terms of re-branding and the potential to undertake insensitive alterations that can be damaging.

There are a number of modern shopfronts and signs of lesser quality design that detract from the character and visual appearance of the host building and in succession the visual amenity of the streetscene. It is important that these are not repeated in the future and that opportunities to reverse insensitive shopfront design and signs are taken whenever possible.

Management Aim 5

Pay special attention to ensure that existing historic and traditionally designed shopfronts are retained. Works to them must be undertaken in a sympathetic manner, while proposals for new shopfronts are of to be of a high standard of design appropriate to the character of the host building and the streetscene.

Action 5.1

Surviving historic and good quality traditional shopfronts and architectural features are to be retained and preserved. Where in a poor condition repair is to be encouraged, loss must be justified, and replacement conducted sympathetically.

Action 5.2

Any proposed new shopfronts must be sympathetically designed and of good quality, and where relevant with the new design based on visual documentary evidence of the original, or alternatively from positive shop frontages in the site's context. This is to enhance the special interest of the conservation area.

Action 5.3

All shop front alterations and replacement works are to be in accordance with the Shopfront Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

There are many examples within the city where modern replacement shopfronts have been introduced that stand out due to being aesthetically inferior to their historic and traditional counterparts. These changes have often been at the expense of the original shopfronts basic rules with traditional materials, scale, proportion, and detailing ignored for cheaper alternatives that dilute the historic character of the place. Opportunities must be taken in the future to reverse the shopfronts that impact negatively with an uplifted positive design response.

Where documentary and/or physical evidence is lacking, new shopfront designs should be based upon positive examples within the street or surrounding area, that are appropriate to the period of the building. This is of particular importance where there is uniformity of design. New designs should take the aesthetic of the whole building into consideration, and the proposal should harmonise with the shopfronts and buildings in the surrounding area.

The promotion and delivery of good shopfront design is essential to the preservation and enhancement of the character of the city, in succession enhancing the retail and leisure experience for customers and visual amenity for the general public. This not only relates to shopfronts within historic buildings, but good design is also important to new leisure and commercial frontages to modern development. In such cases there can be more freedom to provide visually interesting designs appropriate to the buildings architectural style, context, and setting

What is good shopfront design?

- Good proportions and balance that unify with the rest of the host building.
- Designed to "frame" the view and opening into the shop itself.
- Designed to complement and take cues from neighbouring shop fronts that are of good quality.
- Include features such as pilasters to frame the entrance and windows, stall riser to provide grounding and protection. Corbels or capitals to finish off the top of the pilaster, cornice, and fascia to frame the upper part and provide a signage zone, appropriate window layout, and recessed entrance doors.
- Colour finishes to be considered in the context of the street and overall character of the area, avoid being excessively bold and garish, and consider the use of heritage paints.
- Contemporary shopfronts should follow the same basic principle in terms of balanced composition, vertical glazing, lateral framing elements, and simple configurations with a "clean" aesthetic.

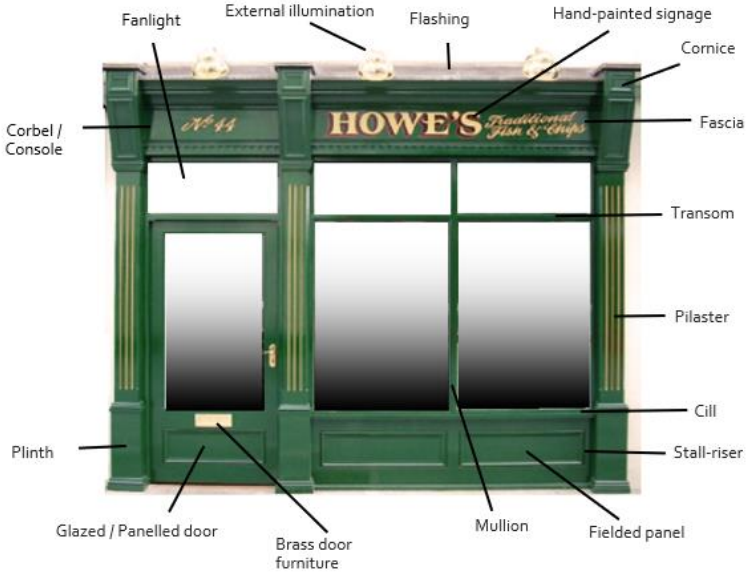


Fig 19 *below. Example of a good quality traditionally designed shopfront, and low quality shop fronts below.*

What are the benefits of good shopfront design?

- Creating a positive shopping experience.
- Attract more customers.
- Enhanced brand identity and positive image.
- Increased property value.
- Conserves and enhances the character and visual appearance of the conservation area.
- Higher pedestrian footfall and increased sales turnover.
- The creation of a shopping community that includes those that wish to buy and sell locally.
- Encourage new investment and long-term sustainability.

Action 5.4

Where the opportunity arises existing unsympathetic additions, clutter, and fixtures to existing shop frontages will be reversed, and where in a deteriorated condition repair and restoration encouraged.

The visual appearance of shopfronts can be harmed by elements such as security shutters, window clutter and too much signage, over boarding when vacant, modern fixings, condition issues and a lack of regular general maintenance. The overall adverse visual impact is often elevated when such issues affect heritage assets. They are generally easy to resolve and should be encouraged as this would greatly benefit the visual amenity of the streetscene and conservation area.

Management Aim 6

To ensure existing historic, traditional, and good quality modern signage is preserved and that existing insensitive modern signs are replaced to a higher standard of design where the opportunity arises.

Action 6.1

Future signage proposals to be of a sympathetic design and of appropriate quality relevant to the host building, location, and context, in terms of size, style, design, materials, colouring and content.

Action 6.2

Use available planning enforcement powers where expedient to preserve or enhance visual amenity resulting from advertisements that are unauthorised.

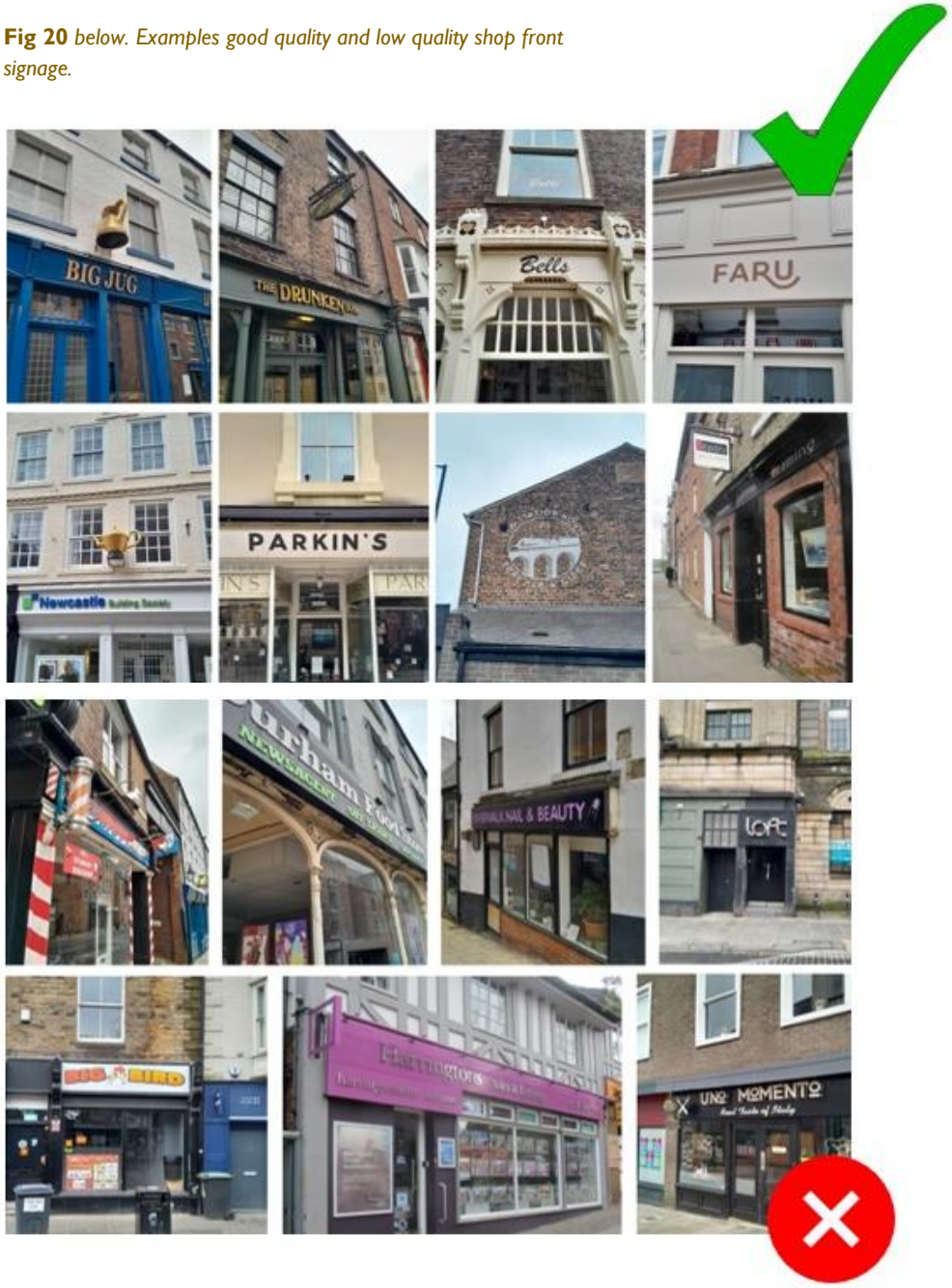
Signs and advertisements can have a significant impact on the streetscene, both positively and negatively. Their purpose is to attract attention, and they are important for commercial activity. They come in many different forms including fascia signs, hanging, and projecting signs, wall mounted signs, menu boards, pavement signs, and window graphics.

It is of the utmost importance that the design of such items is well considered and appropriate to the host building and wider streetscene. This to ensure they contribute positively within the surrounding environment while at the same time delivering the desired effect in terms of attracting customers. They should not be oversized, proportionate with the shop front as a whole, the type and size of the lettering must be suitable so that it is clear, legible, and visually appealing, and colour palettes subtle and not too garish.

Painted timber is a traditional material which is encouraged, but depending on the host building and its context other options could be considered, but uPVC, acrylic and metal boxes would generally not be appropriate as this gives a poor quality appearance and does not weather well. There are some limited examples of traditional painted wall signs, a form of signage that is to be encouraged within the conservation areas.

The visual quality of signs can often be dictated by corporate branding and there can be pressure to deliver such house style signage. However, house styles may sometimes be inappropriate, depending on the site specific context. They may need to be adapted to respect the age, style and character of the host building and its surroundings. Illumination of signs is considered under **Theme 6**.

Fig 20 *below. Examples good quality and low quality shop front signage.*



Action 6.3

In collaboration with Highways, explore ways of reducing and controlling the number, type, and positions of freestanding pavement signs within the city's primary commercial streets.

All advertisements affect the visual appearance of the place in which they are displayed both positively and negatively, and there is a need to balance requirements of attracting the attention of potential customers to the business, with conserving the character and visual amenity of the city.

During normal business hours there is a general proliferation of free standing signs within the city, some businesses having more than one. In places there is a cumulative effect where they add clutter and are both disruptive to visual amenity and cause obstructions in the footway. The impact is elevated when they are viewed against many other advertisements on the building.

The opportunity should be taken to rationalise the number of these types of signs and remove those that are excessive. This will improve visual amenity and remove potential hazards for pedestrians.

This can be achieved but putting a strategy in place of effective and proper enforcement of laws relating to highways where appropriate and when A-boards and other free standing signs are placed upon footpaths, paved areas, and pavements.

It is recognised that businesses need to attract customers and freestanding pavement signs would not be so harmful if numbers are restricted, are placed in a suitable visible location of public highway, are of a good quality and consistent in size to secure some uniformity.

Fig 21 *below. Examples of A-frame pavement signs in the footway.*

Management Aim 7

Any proposals for new and/or replacement security measures to the retail, business and leisure uses within the city must be carefully considered and justified by the use.

Action 7.1

All new security measures must be justified and designed on a site specific basis, with the visual impacts mitigated as far as practically possible and should only be considered when relevant to the specific business use with justification.

It is recognised that criminal activity and anti-social behaviour is a concern for some business operators and owners, more so for certain uses. However, the introduction of external security shutters, can often result in a poor "deadened" frontage. They prevent window shopping and contribute to a sense of hostility because of their appearance that negatively affects the building and streetscene when down.

The more this is repeated in one particular place the worse the effect. Added to the above, they can have visually poor bulky external housing units and can harm architectural features of the shopfront.

Therefore, justification must be provided, different options explored, and the aim should be to strike an appropriate balance between improving security and preserving the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area.

Fig 22 *below. Examples of A-frame pavement signs and the different types of security shutters found within the conservation areas.*

Theme 2 Potential outcomes

Positive new development within the conservation areas can play a major role in enhancing the character and visual appearance of the conservation area, how the area is used, and the experiences of the public. It can help create a diverse mix of uses enhancing the city's offer, bring in new businesses, and encourage more footfall. This adds positively to its vibrancy, vitality, and economic viability. Further, heritage-led regeneration through new development and heritage-inspired design can create interesting buildings, spaces, and places, create jobs and boost communities' well-being.

2.3 Theme 3 Sustainability

Addressing environmental issues is an important part of sustainable development and is a theme that runs through the planning policy framework.

Conservation of the historic built environment is an inherently sustainable activity. It is important to preserve and re-use existing historic buildings with an emphasis on sympathetic maintenance and repair, with a whole building approach, as a fundamental consideration in improving energy efficiency.

Further, many people now want to adapt their homes to improve energy efficiency. But this must be balanced against the need to protect the buildings architectural and historic interest, its character and appearance and that of its surroundings.

It is widely recognised that the historic environment plays an important role in the delivery of wider strategic sustainability objectives. However, the historic environment provides an invaluable resource handed down from the past. It is therefore vital that physical change either through new energy efficiency related development or alterations to existing historic buildings is very carefully considered with an appropriate balance reached.

Management Aim 8

Pay special regard to ensure that alterations proposed to historic buildings and sites associated with sustainability are undertaken sympathetically to the special architectural and historic interest of the site and its surroundings.

Action 8.1

Proposals for improving energy efficiency within the historic environment will be encouraged. But they must be sympathetic and consistent with relevant detailed guidance such as DCC's adopted Energy Efficiency, Renewables and The Historic Environment SPD.

Action 8.2

Ensure that physical adaptations to historic buildings and sites in response to climate change mitigation do not cause harm to their fabric, character, or visual appearance, and preserve the special interest of the conservation area, where the works can be controlled.

Maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable, however, there are growing pressures to further improve their energy efficiency in order to reduce carbon emissions.

Great care needs to be taken when changes are proposed to ensure they are sensitive. For example, the addition of solar panels is to be encouraged but they must not detract from the historic character of the building, street or wider roofscape. They may be able to be accommodated sensitively in places where they are not readily visible from the public realm. The visual impact may be further mitigated by the product chosen, its specification and design.

It may be possible to upgrade the thermal efficiency of windows by adding secondary glazing, or when windows require replacement by including slim profile heritage double glazing.

Design decisions should be based upon an understanding of the building's fabric, construction, performance, significance, and its heritage context using a holistic "whole building" approach. This will help to ensure a balanced solution to energy saving is found. Further, there must be an understanding of effectiveness of the measures proposed and an evaluation of risk.

The starting point should be low risk minimal intervention for maximum benefit. This means using methods that minimise historic fabric change and alteration such as refurbishment and draft proofing windows and doors, or installing heavy curtains, before considering more impactful methods.

Where solar panels are being considered, discrete locations should be chosen, such as rear roof slopes, or the roofs of extensions or outbuildings. Solar slates are also a more discrete alternative.

Fig 23 *below. An image showing that the installation of renewable energy methods can detract from the historic character and visual appearance of a historic building and terrace streetscene.*

Harm should be avoided or minimised, long term physical risk reduced, and measures designed to be reversible without detriment.

Overall, there must be an appropriate balance between delivering energy efficiency improvements with preservation of the conservation areas special interest, character, and appearance. Further information can be found in the [Energy Efficiency, Renewables and the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation - Durham County Council]

What are the key principles to follow?

- Understand the significance of the building, its fabric and how it performs.
- Prioritise appropriate maintenance, repair, and refurbishment.
- Explore low impact interventions in the first instance.
- Ensure that interventions and new fabric are compatible with the old.
- Consider the lifespan of the intervention.
- Avoid or minimise harmful impacts.
- Seek advice on changes through the pre-application system.

Theme 3 Potential outcomes

Sustainable development within the conservation areas can contribute positively to the areas character, identity, and heritage significance. It can help support growth creating buildings, spaces and places that contribute to climate change mitigation, good health and wellbeing, sustainable communities, and higher social values. This will protect and enhance the historic, built, and natural environments for present and future generations.

Fig 24 *below. While still visible, solar panels integrated into the roof plane on buildings of lower character can be less impactful in the streetscene.*

2.4 Theme 4 Landscape, green and blue infrastructure assets

Green and blue infrastructure is a combination of the natural landscape and designed landscape elements that thread nature into the urban environment. These are important local features such as the parks, open green spaces, trees, road verges, sports pitches, woodland, churchyards, allotments, and private gardens.

It is especially important that they are protected as they add to the attractiveness and distinctiveness of the conservation areas, contributing positively to their special interest and character. They also provide leisure, health, tourism, economic and environmental benefits.

Durham City boasts a city-wide network of green infrastructure assets. These vary in terms of type, use, scale, visual amenity attributes and character. The value of the conservation areas network of greenery is recognised in the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan | Developing a neighbourhood plan for Durham City

In terms of blue infrastructure, this includes the River Wear, its streams and smaller water courses. The river and its corridor meandering through, and sub-dividing the city is the most significant landscape feature and its value to the significance of the conservation areas cannot be overstated.

There are also important points in the city where there is a transition between the urban environment and countryside beyond where green spaces and features are particularly significance to the character and appearance of the place.

Management Aim 9

To ensure that the local green assets are protected, managed, and enhanced where possible in a manner appropriate to their contribution, significance, character, functionality, and context. Including seeking to ensure that development proposals maximise green infrastructure benefits and biodiversity net gain (BNG) within the conservation areas where relevant.

Action 9.1

Ensure collaborative working between DCC departments to set out a holistic strategic direction, to positively manage and optimise the city's local green assets.

Action 9.2

Seek to ensure that works within the conservation areas are in accordance with the principles set out in the Tree, Woodland, and Hedges SPD, and the objectives of Theme 2b of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan the vision being to protect and enhance the city's green space for leisure, health, economic and environmental benefits.

Action 9.3

Ensure through the planning process that the value of the framework of the city's green infrastructure to the conservation areas is understood and that it is protected and enhanced through the planning process.

Given the numerous and wide reaching benefits, the protection, conservation, enhancement, and appropriate management of the city's green asset network must be a high priority. When considering new development proposals such assets must not be lost or harmed unless the wider benefits to the city clearly outweigh that harm. This will ensure that the positive contribution they make to the conservation areas and people's lives is protected.

The City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has a similar vision to protect the city's natural green spaces and networks and states that they will be enhanced for the leisure, health, economic and environmental benefits they provide for all. The CAMP supports this vision, and it is important that future change within the conservation areas complies with the detailed policies and principles in the County Durham Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

Action 9.4

Seek to maintain a litter free environment by exploring different options through collaborative working between DCC departments and relevant external bodies to reduce the effects of litter/plastic pollution within and around the River Wear and its environs.

The presence of unsightly accumulated litter within the river, on the weirs and around the riverbanks degrades public amenity and perceptions of the city.

Dealing with these issues is important so that the riverbanks and river can be enjoyed by visitors, students, people working in the city, and users of the river. This can include raising awareness of the impact of litter, undertaking an audit of litter bin units, and considering additional units at key sites.

There may be the potential of installing modern technology solutions to mitigate the issue (along with measures to interrupt litter supply at source) demonstrating positive action to address the problem, and in so doing presents education opportunities to raise the profile of litter pollution and to influence behaviour.

The river environment is incredibly challenging particularly in the context of the World Heritage Site, with the visual impact of any proposed intervention requiring careful consideration.

Fig 25 *below. The river flows through the heart of the city as an invaluable recreational, leisure, biodiversity and visual amenity resource that must be protected.*

2.4.1 Trees and hedgerows

Trees and hedgerows bring colour and character into the urban area, soften hard building lines and spaces, and enhance the aesthetic qualities of streetscapes. The reasons for the occurrence of trees, location, distribution, and density is often as a result of intentional design giving added importance.

Trees are a vital resource within the city and people have long valued trees for the vital role they play as part of its natural infrastructure. Likewise, hedgerows are of high aesthetic and environmental value, and in the city are a defining characteristic of both suburban street scenes and the rural environment.

Despite the density of urban form, in places the combination of woodlands on the steep river valley slopes gives the historic core of the city a very high level of tree canopy cover.

This contributes significantly to the character and quality of views providing a green backdrop of high scenic quality.

Action 9.5

Ensure collaborative working between DCC departments and external bodies to protect, maintain and appropriately manage the city's existing tree stock and hedgerows where they contribute positively and can be controlled via the planning process.

Action 9.6

Maximise opportunities to enhance the city's trees and hedges where possible and relevant to the specific site and its context, supporting replacement where loss is unavoidable.

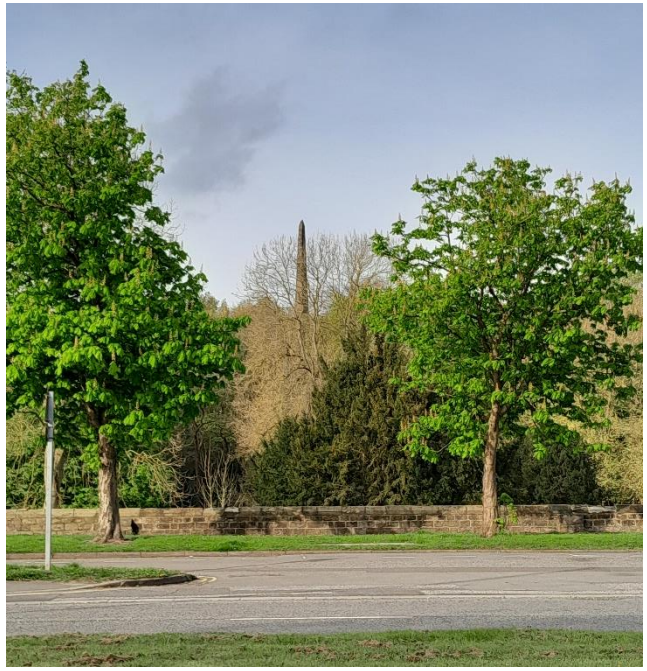


Fig 26 *below. Images of trees and green space, trees along Framwellgate Peth, allotment gardens at Margery Lane, playing fields, trees, and woodland at Elvet Riverside, and Gilesgate village green.*

The care, conservation and effective management of trees is vital to conserving the benefits they provide. It is also important to identify ways to enhance the city tree stock. This can be part of future development proposals and wider strategies. It is recognised that tree management within the city can be difficult given available resources and land ownership. However, it is still important to have a methodology in place to provide a positive mechanism ensuring that decisions undertaken in relation to trees are made in an appropriately considered way.

Trees are often at risk from development pressure, and it is vital that their importance to the site and its wider surroundings is understood, and that their value is a key consideration from the early stages of the design process.

Despite the many benefits, trees can cause damage to historic structures most commonly to boundary walls, and it is important to balance problems against benefits based on an understanding of significance.

While ecology and biodiversity is indivisible from green and blue infrastructure assets the topic is tackled by other policies, guidance, and objectives. It is not necessarily a direct or key element of special interest that needs effective management to preserve or enhance the special interest of the conservation areas.

Biodiversity net gain is still to be encouraged but it must be mindful of the sites landscape significance so that this is protected. It is also important that changes are not viewed in isolation but in the wider green context.

Furthermore, in certain conservation areas there are long standing problems of dealing with invasive non-native plants, on the riverbanks, Old Durham Beck and at Pelaw Woods for instance. As part of the overall approach opportunities should be taken tackle such species in future work to improve the natural environment in the city.

Theme 4 Potential outcomes

Preservation of green infrastructure will ensure that they continue to contribute positively to the character, visual appearance, and special interest of the conservation areas. They will also continue to provide other major benefits, being the cornerstone of biodiversity, helping with climate change mitigation can contribute to flood management and are integral to people's health, sense of wellbeing, and quality of life, benefiting the city and the public at large.

Fig 27 *below. Van Mildert College, the 20th century purpose built college designed to embrace the landscape, creating a leafy park land setting, with the lake as its natural focal point, and the greenery along the riverside approach to Old Durham.*

2.5 Theme 5 Public realm

The public realm comprises of the external public urban spaces to the built environment. It is fundamental to the city's plan form and character, created by the way the different routes, streets and spaces interweave between places, and how they dictate movement as well as creating social interactions.

The public realm is made of up of different elements and features such as items of street furniture, boundary features, wayfinding signage and public art. Further, it includes traffic, parking, and accessibility. The public realm is an integral part of the conservation area's identity and impacts on how people experience the place.

Managing and enhancing the public realm of the conservation areas is critical to preserve their special architectural and historic interest. It must integrate well with the historic buildings and create a cohesive and pleasant environment. Further, the public realm should be accessible and inclusive, high quality, materially appropriate, functional, and safe for residents, workers, students, and visitors alike.

If the above is successful then it will improve people's perceptions and experiences of the city's historic environment. Such positive place making can be achieved through thoughtful planning of new works, routine maintenance, and one-off improvement schemes, addressing negative areas and features, especially in areas rich in traditional character.

Management Aim 10

Pay special attention to the protection, and enhancement of the quality and distinctiveness of the public realm of the conservation areas creating more enjoyable, safe, and accessible places for all.

Action 10.1

Ensure collaborative working between DCC departments and external bodies as necessary to secure a sympathetic approach to new public realm works within the city.

Action 10.2

Seek opportunities to improve the public realm and create more imaginative use of spaces based on an understanding of significance. This can either be through enhancement of existing, or creation of new in a manner that conserves or enhances the special interest of the conservation area.

Fig 28 *below. Key public spaces at The Market Place, Palace Green, Millennium Square and the Crown Court.*

Action 10.3

Future works should seek to maximise opportunities for reversing previous unsympathetic alteration, decluttering, or providing more coordination to the public realm.

If the public realm is poorly considered, inappropriately altered or uncared for, it can diminish the overall quality of the historic environment undermining its character, and appearance. This can detract from its usability as social spaces. It is therefore of the utmost importance that future changes to the public realm are well considered relevant to the local character and sense of place.

Exploring more imaginative uses of spaces should be encouraged this must be site and area specific in terms of design and material palette. There are public spaces within the city that are used as outdoor eating and drinking areas. These can contribute positively to the vibrant character of the place. However, they need to be carefully controlled and actively managed as they can impact negatively through a reduction or blocking of the space from increased outdoor seating, litter and poor temporary signage detracting from visual amenity.

Action 10.4

Seek to ensure enforcement of highway licence applications by a collaborative and proactive approach.

Strategic Highways operates a licence application to put tables and chairs on the pavement or road. This must be enforced to ensure public safety, accessibility, footpath maintenance and potential anti-social behaviour issues in the surrounding area. Each application should be checked for available footpath space, impact on other businesses or the ability to clean and maintain the area and any risks in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Collaborative working and the formal application process should function as a means to control such interventions within the public realm, with the impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area a material consideration.

Fig 29 *below. The public realm around Gilesgate village green detracted by a combination of excessive parking, damage to the green spaces, deteriorated timber fencing and surfacing in a poor condition. Cars cluttering The College and damaging the cobbles. Back Silver Street the quality of the place of strong historic industrial character detracted by the poor quality of the public realm in places.*

Action 10.5

New development proposals within the city should maximise opportunities for the creation of new public realm, and linkages to existing. Such works must be high quality, designed relevant to context, and secured through the formal planning process.

New development proposals should provide positive spaces of distinctive quality and should not feel disconnected from the existing public realm. Spaces should feel welcoming and be accessible, with physical barriers avoided, routes carefully considered, entrances clearly visible and sightlines maintained. The amount, extent and style of street furniture should be carefully planned so as not to cause obstruction and to be aesthetically pleasing, using high-quality materials drawing from the local context. Trees and planting can play a positive role in enhancing visual amenity and softening urban hardscape and buildings. It could maximise river outlook and heritage views enhancing the overall experience of the place.

This, and other good practice design principles help to ensure new public realm is given real value as part of the collective public realm resource that enhances the aesthetic, and people's perception and experience of the city.

2.5.1 Street Surfacing

Street surfacing is an important part of the public realm that can be visually appealing and help to deliver the areas distinctive local character. The diversity of materials, shapes, styles, finishes and different textures can enhance the setting of buildings and improve the pedestrian experience.

The street surfacing (carriageways and footways) within the conservation areas varies significantly in terms of materials, detailing, quality, and condition. There are places where the use of traditional good quality surface treatments such as river cobbles, granite sets, Yorkstone paving and stone kerbs can be found that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the built environment and public realm.

The overall quality found throughout the city is variable and predominantly at the medium or lower end because of the prevalence of standard modern materials and their degraded condition. In some specific locations the public realm is adversely affected by vehicles being prioritised, causing damage to both traditional surface materials and green spaces.

Action 10.6

Pay special attention to ensure that surviving traditional floorscape will be preserved through retention, sympathetic repair, and restoration. If significantly deteriorated and replacement is required, this is to be like for like or of equivalent quality.

Action 10.7

Traditional street surfacing treatments will be enhanced through reversal of past insensitive works when opportunities arise.

Action 10.8

Seek to reinstate lost traditional street surfacing and expand use where appropriate, taking into account accessibility requirements.

Fig 30 *below Examples of good quality traditional surface treatments within different parts of the city centre*

Action 10.9

Secure collaborative working between DCC departments to establish early dialogue when street surfacing works are proposed to ensure they are appropriate in design and materials, relevant to the location.

Action 10.10

Seek a method for positive engagement to agree a commitment to sympathetic reinstatement of materials in sensitive locations where essential service works are undertaken. DCC to employ a monitoring framework to ensure compliance.

Action 10.11

Seek to ensure that proposed works within the highway and public realm adhere to the guidance and principles of Historic England Guidance "Streets for All."

The quality of the public realm is vital to the character and appearance of the conservation areas, and a strong public realm influences the local distinctiveness with the look and feel of the streets and spaces reinforcing the sense of place.

The design of new work to street surfacing treatments must pay due regard to the existing, understanding its importance and the specific character of the location. This needs to be balanced with technical design requirements, available resources, and accessibility needs.

Nevertheless, preservation of historic and traditional surface treatments should be the starting point, the highest percentage of which can be generally found in the older streets of the city such as Hallgarth Street, Crossgate, South Street, Silver Street, North and South Bailey, The College, Dun Cow Lane, Bow Lane, some parts of Gilesgate, with smaller areas found in Church Steet and Allergate and along the historic bridges.

In other areas where more standardised modern surface treatments are found, the main detrimental impacts generally result from a mismatch of materials, having no interface material between different finishes, previous insensitive repairs in different materials, and deterioration of condition.

In both scenarios there are places where footway surfacing materials are so badly fractured and uneven that they potentially harm accessibility and cause potential tripping hazards. This can often be caused by driving and parking on the pavements (**see section 2.5.2**).

There are examples in the conservation area where footways have been poorly designed with inappropriate kerb lines affected the width of the footways and character of street. This can impact on pedestrian movement and safety. In such circumstances there may be opportunities for improvement including changing existing kerb lines. At the same time this could provide accessibility benefits.

A common occurrence within the city is work undertaken by utility companies that benefit from "permitted development rights" for works such as laying underground pipes. This has a significant adverse effect on the character of the place for example where cobbles have been replaced with tarmacadam, or where red chip tarmac has been replaced with black leaving an unsightly street long channel.

Opportunities to address such issues would create incredibly positive outcomes. Where there are standard modern materials, like for like replacement, giving a condition improvement, would at least make the roads and pavements provide a neutral rather than a negative visual impact.

It must be noted that some traditional surface treatments, especially river cobbles, can be a challenge for some individuals with accessibility needs, and new designs must ensure that diverse needs are taken into account.

Fig 31 *below. Examples of deteriorated and poorly repaired street surfacing treatments that are commonly found across the conservation areas. Reversal of such impacts and future prevention would be highly beneficial to the character and appearance of the place.*

2.5.2 Traffic and parking

The city is a very busy, ever growing, urban environment with a number of key gateways, destinations, and thoroughfares alongside dense areas of residential streets. Therefore, it must be able to accommodate and manage a high amount of vehicle movement and cope with increased parking pressures. As a result, traffic dominates the character of many areas and poses a challenge to conservation area management.

Traffic and pedestrian movement is vital to the success of the city, supporting its economic vitality, businesses, and the increasing population. The city is also a through route for people travelling to and from work outside the city centre, has a strong leisure offer, a series of key destinations and resultingly, an increasing number of journeys.

Action 10.12

Seek to investigate different ways, through cross departmental working, to mitigate negative effects of traffic and parking within the city.

Action 10.13

Seek to rationalise the number of traffic and parking related street items to declutter identified hot spots to improve the visual amenity of the area.

Action 10.14

Support other corporate plans, strategies and initiatives that seek to reduce road traffic, encourage other means of transport, and parking management within the city.

Action 10.15

Explore the use of more stringent enforcement of regulations, if possible, with regards to driving, inconsiderate parking on the footways, and parking contraventions to improve the local environment .

Different places are affected by traffic and parked vehicles to different degrees. Generally, the A690, constructed in the mid to late 20th century, provides a very busy urban environment, which is to be expected. However other parts of the city are adversely affected by congestion, high numbers of parked vehicles cluttering historic street scenes, and from the effects of noise and pollution.

In some areas conflicts arise between motorists and pedestrians for instance where footpaths are very narrow and parked vehicles overhang the footway, or where illegally parked on pavements obstructing movement. There is greater conflict evident in the medieval street network that was never intended to accommodate cars, buses, and delivery vehicles.

Both moving and parked vehicles have implications for visual amenity, added to where there is a proliferation of traffic and parking related items such as signs, poles, safety railings and from vehicles causing physical damage to important surface treatments.

Traffic may seem par for the course in a very busy city centre and ever growing urban environment. The constant stopping and starting of vehicles during traffic congestion reduces air quality and causes noise pollution that detracts from the historic sense of place.

It is of vital importance that ways to reduce the negative impacts of traffic and parking are explored. This will help to emphasise the special character and appearance of the individual streets and areas over the effects of traffic and parking, improving the historic and public environment.

Fig 32 below. *A selection of images showing the effects of traffic and parking across the conservation areas.*

2.5.3 Boundary treatments

Action 10.16

Existing historic boundary treatments must be retained, harmful alterations avoided to ensure they are conserved appropriate to their significance and setting, with opportunities taken to reinstate lost boundaries.

Within the conservation areas there are many important surviving historic boundary features that vary from sandstone walls to decorative wrought iron railings, and red brick walls enclosing back yards and gardens. These are part of the historic physical fabric of the city, have aesthetic value and reinforce the sense of enclosure to many streets and spaces. Some are designated heritage assets of high significance, for example as part of the Castle's defensive complex on the peninsula. Others are important by delineating historic burgage plots, being components of the grid pattern of Victorian terraced streets, enclosing historic lanes and vennels creating an intimate character and add character to front gardens in the streetscene.

However, there are many examples where they have been lost or unsympathetically altered and re-built. For example, using modern engineering bricks and where timber fencing has replaced traditional railings that appear too stark and harsh in the streetscene.

It is of the utmost importance that such historic features are retained and conserved, or where replacement is justified based on condition, they should be re-built based on the original details and materials.

Existing harmful changes should be reversed, and where historic boundaries have been lost, they should be reinstated based on historic evidence or where none exist, taking design cues from the period of the building or from positive examples in the streetscene. They should also be kept in a good state of repair. This will ensure that they continue to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation areas.

Fig 33 *below. Examples of positive historic boundary treatments that contribute to the distinctiveness of the place that must be preserved and protected. Ranging from historic stone and brick walls, decorative metal railings and gates.*

2.5.4 Street furniture

Action 10.17

Seek to improve areas adversely affected by street clutter or outdated items of street furniture, secure the installation of higher quality co-ordinated items designed to respect the sites character and context and that future works make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the city.

There is a wide mix of items of street furniture throughout the city, in some places where more abundant this results in excessive visual clutter. There are items that are in a deteriorated condition and others that are out of date. For example, cast "Durham" bollards, concrete bollards and steel tube type bollards can be found in the same place, there is a mixture of different litter bin styles, in places a proliferation of traffic signs and different styles of seating.

The combination of such factors and creation of excessive, unnecessary clutter, can be detrimental to the visual appearance of the place, with some notable "hot spots." Such items should be rationalised, with redundant items removed and a minimalistic co-ordinated approach required to achieve a positive enhancement.

What are the opportunities?

- Street furniture must be provided but should be audited on a regular basis.
- Street furniture should be rationalised and reduced where possible and beneficial.
- There should be a co-ordinated approach to street furniture.
- Street furniture to be kept in good condition.
- Street furniture to be high quality of design and materials with appropriate colour finishes relevant to location.
- Consideration should be given to providing a heritage range when replacement is proposed, and appropriate to location.
- E-charging points are likely to become common place in street scenes in the coming years, units must be carefully considered so as not to add to existing visual clutter.
- Street furniture to be sited and laid out appropriately to context, avoiding causing obstruction, with seats for example located in places of interest and activity creating a "seat with a view" where possible.

Fig 34 *below. Example of street clutter in Crossgate and the lower end of Claypath that detracts from the visual appearance and quality of the historic streetscene.*

2.5.5 Historic vennels and back lanes

Action 10.18

Seek opportunities through collaborative working with relevant landowners and bodies to improve the general environment within the historic vennels, back streets and lanes within the conservation areas.

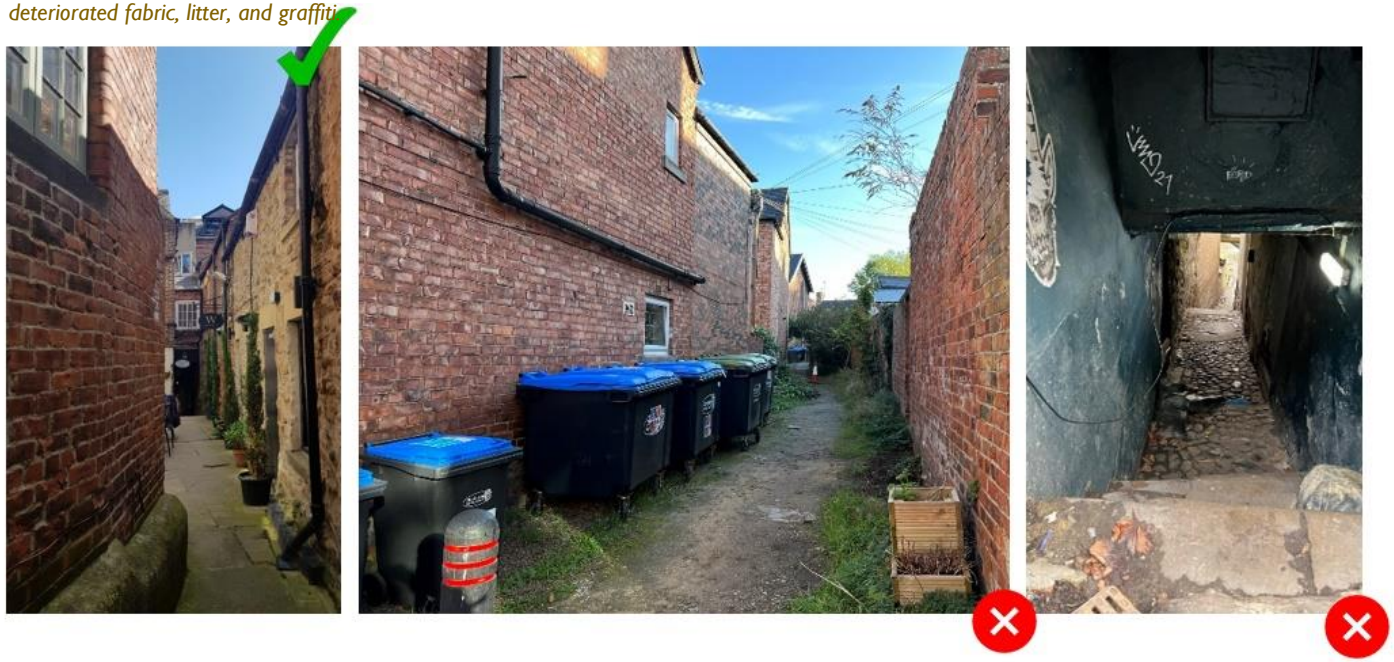
There are a series of vennels (or alleyways), back lanes and leafy green lanes, within the city that are significant physical components of its historic layout, some dating back to the medieval period. They also provide pedestrian links between neighbouring areas forming part of the movement framework within the city.

These important routes are however generally forgotten about when considering improvement works and as such, they can be in a poor physical condition suffering from deterioration of fabric, and often from the effects of anti-social behaviour.

They are not inviting to the public meaning they miss out on the different historic experiences they provide compared to the main streets and spaces.

There are many places within the conservation areas characterised by Victorian and Edwardian terraced street. These are laid out back to back or in grid patterns with connecting back lanes that are part of their original design and contribute positively to the conservation area.

Fig 35 *below. Example of a well preserved historic vennal on the west side of Sadder Street, an inviting space of strong historic character. In contrast a low quality back street and right the historic vennal of Drury Lane on the east side of Saddler Street a very poor environment leading down to the riverside with deteriorated fabric, litter, and graffiti*



Many are often neglected, overgrown, with poor surfacing and marred by collections of refuse bins. Improvements to these important historic spaces would be beneficial to their character and the visual amenity of the place.

2.5.6 Wayfinding and interpretation

Action 10.19

Seek to improve cross service and partner working to maximise opportunities to improve wayfinding signage throughout the city based on a clear strategy, brand focus, and access for all.

Wayfinding information is critical to the experiences within the conservation areas. At present there are multiple layers of signage that can be confusing, with a proliferation and mixture of monoliths, welcome boards, wall mounted and finger post signs, which provide no cohesive branding, with some signs old and out of date. Added to the above, some signs are poorly located, obstructed from view, and vandalised meaning they are ineffective at communicating directions to users. Such issues give a poor impression of the place.

To address such issues and make the city easier to navigate a clear strategy is required that provides a consistent approach, information that is clear, accessible, integrated, and co-ordinated. It must remove clutter, damaged, and redundant existing signs, and be mindful of the needs of all users. It would also be important to maintain a good visual appearance of any new signage, and that it is kept relevant, that will require continued monitoring. This will help to ensure that new wayfinding interventions in the townscape are usable and sensitive to its character and appearance.

The Durham pointers provide a valuable service to visitors to the city and enhance the experience. The group of volunteers know the city and its history well providing information and helping people to find their way around. The group was established in 2012 following the closure of the Tourist Information Centre and comprise of over sixty volunteers and it is important that the service they provide continues.

Fig 36 *above. Examples of the different layers of wayfinding signage found within the city, mismatched in style, some outdated, difficult to see, and of a poor visual appearance.*

Action 10.20

Work in partnership to explore ways to introduce new and update existing interpretation where relevant, that must be sympathetically designed, to better reveal the significance of the site and area, with the information based upon site specific research.

Heritage interpretation is a key part of the historic environment, providing information to the public explaining the nature, origins, history, and purpose, of the resource. The goal being to improve and enrich the visitor experience by helping them understand the significance of the place they are visiting and connecting people and places.

There is some limited interpretation provision within the city, but there is a missed opportunity to greatly improve the visitor experience given the high significance of the historic environment. There would need to be a delicate balance between over-intensive interpretation and the need to avoid excessive clutter to conserve the special character and appearance of the area.

The design of new interpretation would need to be carefully considered and could exploit the use of modern non-intrusive technologies. It must be relevant to the place, understanding why it is important, what is the meaning that wishes to be communicated and the key message and story, and what is the best way to present it.

Action 10.21

Seek cross service collaboration to ensure that proposals for replacement and new lighting units within the city are appropriate to the site and its historic context, exploiting opportunities to improve existing lighting units where possible.

Existing street lighting is very mixed in terms of the type and style of units, size, and appearance, ranging from traditional Victorian lantern style columns and wall mounted units painted black, to different types of standard modern columns. Such tall modern columns can appear out of place and be visually detrimental in the higher quality historic streets. Lighting can be affective without being obtrusive, the temptation must be avoided to over-provide, that can lead to clutter and unnecessary light pollution.

Consideration should be given to extending the use of the existing heritage style street lighting where appropriate, based upon the streets character. Adding new lighting into historic streets must be carefully considered. In other areas care should be taken to select lighting units of a style that are in keeping with the prevailing character, providing mismatched units must be avoided with positions carefully considered.

Fig 37 *above. Heritage interpretation at Prebends Bridge that better reveals the significance of the place enhancing the visitor experience.*

2.5.7 Public art

Action 10.22

Seek opportunities to enhance the public art offer within the conservation areas and ensure any pieces are appropriate in terms of location, position, and design.

Public art can contribute positively to the character, appearance, and experience of a conservation area. Pieces can be aesthetically valuable, encourage social interactions, and can encourage people to be attracted to and form an attachment with a location through historical and cultural understanding.

There are many public art pieces scattered across the city centre for example at The Racecourse, Wharton Park, the Hill Colleges, and Freemans Place, some of which are Lumiere legacy pieces. These enliven the space and place and are important features of the public environment.

There should be continued support of the retention of existing and the development of new public art pieces where relevant in the city. Any new public art piece should be commissioned for the specific site, drawing inspiration from its historic interest and/or natural qualities to tell its story.

Fig 38 *below. Examples of public art from around the city, at Freemans Place, Millennium Square, The Racecourse and St Oswald's playground.*

2.5.8 Community safety: anti-terror and crowded places

Action 10.23

Seek to ensure that the implementation of any new anti-terror and crowded place measures strike an appropriate balance between safeguarding and minimising the visual and physical impacts within the historic environment

Action 10.24

Seek to ensure that new developments and alterations to buildings and within the public realm adhere to the basic principles of Secured by Design at the outset of the design process, where relevant.

Durham City attracts a high number of visitors each year as an international tourist destination, there are many businesses with a wide range of pubs, bars, restaurants, and leisure uses on offer, it has a high residential and student population, key transport hubs and different public spaces. As such certain buildings and the public realm can be very busy, congested, and crowded, with densities varying depending on location, the day of the week and time of the day.

There are also popular annual events such as Durham Miners Gala, with more than 200,000 people packing The Racecourse and city streets,

There is a continued threat from terrorism within the UK's crowded places and it must be a priority to ensure and maintain a safe and secure environment for the people visiting, studying, residing, and working in the city.

Achieving a safe and secure public environment can include the implementation of physical measures that impact upon the character, visual appearance, and impression of the place, as well as active management, to provide the necessary protection for a particular building or public space. Each site is different and can present different challenges with a no one size fits all solution.

Measures can include street design improvements to create clearer lines of sight and reduced vehicle access and speed, improvements to buildings, CCTV, well-managed access points and specifically designed items of street furniture.

Such measure must consider the needs of people and the potential impacts on the historic environment.

There are generally two main affects from the introduction of permanent and temporary anti-terror and crowded places management measures, visual and physical. Given the sensitivity of the city's historic environment, impacts should be minimised and mitigated as far as practically possible but without compromising the effectiveness of the measure. It is also important to consider design when incorporating security measures into new developments where relevant.

Fig 39 *above. An example of a sympathetically designed security measures as part of the new public realm at Durham University Business School.*

Durham Police encourages applicants to build/refurbish developments incorporating the guidelines of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

While Conservation Areas and listed buildings often impose restrictions on alterations and enhancements, there are security solutions available that can provide protection without compromising the architectural integrity or heritage value of the property. "Secured by Design" is a scheme which promotes the inclusion of architectural crime prevention measures into new projects and refurbishments. It is important that proposals follow such specialist guidance and principles where relevant.

Further reading

Secured by design

2.5.9 Community safety: anti-social behaviour

Action 10.25

Seek to support wider corporate initiatives and explore ways, including expediting enforcement powers, if relevant and justified, to tackle ongoing anti-social behaviour issues within the city centre.

Anti-social behaviour covers a broad range of activities. In the wider public domain, it can include rowdiness and general nuisance behaviour, discarding litter or drugs paraphernalia, begging, graffiti, and vehicle nuisance. Such activities can significantly affect not only people's enjoyment of a place, but the wider public's impression, the sense of local community, as well as disrupting local businesses.

There can be harm caused to heritage assets by both crime and anti-social behaviour such as physical damage and loss of fabric through theft or vandalism, and there are buildings and structures within the city that attract vandalism.

Within the city there are some known "hot spots" where anti-social behaviour frequently occurs, with evidence that people are travelling from further afield to participate, as the city is seen as a lucrative area for begging given the high number of students and visitors to the city that are harassed in the street. Such incidents are likely to escalate on busier market days for example.

Fig 40 *below. Examples of graffiti within the conservation areas.*

Anti-social behaviour can have both a direct and indirect impact through social or economic loss to the amenity of an area. Such effects detract from the experience of the historic environment, and it is vitally important they are resolved and prevented from reoccurring as far as practically possible.

Action 10.26

Collaborative working between DCC departments services, owners, and occupiers of heritage assets to address issues of heritage crime when opportunities arise, or a threat is identified.

There is an identified threat of heritage crime. Harm caused by crime and anti-social behaviour can have direct impacts for example loss of fabric through theft particularly metal and stone, criminal damage including graffiti and especially arson, and through unauthorised works by owners.

It is important that such impacts are avoided as far as practically possible and that tactics to prevent or deter crime threats are effective, informed by an understanding of the site's significance and the identified threat or risk, proportionate to the risk, and suitable for the protection of the specific heritage asset. This is to ensure that the historic and cultural environment passed onto the next generation is in a good condition.

However, within the conservation areas the impacts can arrise from the implementaion of external physical measures and new fixings or fixtures to buildings. Elements such as new CCTV, security fencing, metal covers to doors and openings to vacant buildings and barrier interventions such as bollards, can add unwanted clutter and negative elements into the streetscene. It is therefore important to strike an appropriate balance between risk and impacts within the conservation areas, based on an understanding of significance.

Further reading HEAG319 Heritage Crime Prevention

2.5.10 Refuse

Action 10.27

Collaborative working between DCC departments, partners and interested bodies to explore ways of improving domestic and commercial waste management in the city centre to improve the historic environment for all.

Action 10.28

Seek to ensure through the planning process and existing policy guidance that new development proposals within the city provide adequate waste management measures, where relevant, based on use, level of occupancy, and predicted volumes.

Issues with domestic and commercial refuse and litter, which can include fly tipping, trade waste problems with overflowing bins and accumulations of rubbish bags can be very detrimental from a general environmental and visual amenity perspective. Within the city centre there are places more affected by such issues than others with collections of a high number of refuse bins visible and rubbish bags in the main street scenes, some back lanes, and vennels, and areas impacted by several larger commercial refuse bins and overspill.

There are also many streets within the city where there are collections of refuse bins on the footway that impede pedestrian movement. Some places would benefit from shared bin storage facilities in appropriate locations to help mitigate the effects of such adverse features in the historic environment. However, the position and design of such introductions into the street scene must be carefully considered to avoid causing visual harm.

High number of refuse bins within the narrow historic streets and confined spaces can have an increased effect and there is a challenge where buildings have a dual function with commercial use a ground floor and residential accommodation above. Ways to address such issues and impacts should be explored to enhance the character and visual appearance of the areas worst affected. Properties changing use, and new developments should seek to incorporate on-site refuse storage facilities.

Fig 41 *above. Examples of refuse bins that are visually detriments to the historic streetscapes and obstructing pedestrian movement on the footway.*

2.5.11 Riverside Safety

Action 10.29

Seek to support the wider corporate agenda, the city safety group and landowners when considering works to improve safety around the riverside so that all can enjoy it, and to ensure that the implementation of any new physical measures are sympathetic in design.

There have been a number of infrastructure works conducted along the river to improve safety over the past few years funded by DCC, Durham University and Durham Cathedral. Improvements were made to the riverside paths in locations prone to erosion and the installation of new sections of fencing carefully designed in the context of the location.

The lighting along Windy Gap is effective in terms of publicising the lit nighttime walking route. But it has a visual impact in a sensitive dark location, demonstrating how such introductions to improve safety need to be carefully considered and designed.

Other opportunities to improve riverside safety, including education and awareness campaigns are to be encouraged, but any future physical control measures following risk assessment must be carefully considered and designed to protect the unique historic landscape and high aesthetic value of the riverbanks.

2.5.12 Accessibility, visitor welcome and connectivity

Action 10.30

Collaborative working between DCC departments, partners, and relevant bodies when opportunities arise to explore and implement ways of improving accessibility and inclusivity within the city.

Action 10.31

Seek to ensure that the existing public rights of way, lanes, paths, and tracks within the historic environment are not lost because of new development, and that they are improved where possible.

Action 10.32

Explore opportunities to improve the visitor experience and dwell time including providing new services.

Visitors to the city arrive by car, bus or by train, and at present the experience from the railway station and bus station is less than satisfactory. The redevelopment of the bus station has improved visitor welcome here but there are empty buildings, buildings in a poor condition, and low-quality developments along North Road impacting on the visitor experience. This can be improved by responding to other recommendations presented in this document such as reducing vacancy, diversifying uses, improving the visual appearance of buildings and the public realm.

Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all alongside, efforts and promotion of more active ways of travel, is a key part of enhancing the character, appearance and people's impression and experience of the city centre. In succession better streets and spaces can encourage more people to engage with the historic environment, better revealing significance to a wider audience whether by visually appreciating its wealth of historic buildings, visiting those open to the public and the WHS, or enjoying a quiet walk around the riverbanks.

Making the city more navigable, making places easier to find, and removing hinderances help to make movement easier so that everyone can enjoy what the city has to offer.

Theme 5 Potential outcomes

A calmer, visually attractive, and well-maintained public realm would help encourage people to visit the city more often and spend more time within it adding to its vibrancy, and economic viability. In succession it would enhance the character, appearance, and experience of the conservation areas.

2.6 Theme 6 Lighting

Lighting can contribute positively to the historic environment giving an added dimension to streets and spaces. It can give greater presence to historic buildings enhancing key architectural features. However, it is important to achieve the right balance by appreciating the value of darkness and how this relates to the local and wider character of the place.

Lighting is intrinsically linked to the way people experience and use the city. This relates to the effects of street lighting, the lighting of existing and proposed new buildings, and illumination from signage. If badly lit the visual environment can feel unsafe and be underwhelming and illegible.

Durham City is particularly sensitive to new lighting proposal owing to the sensitivity of change in the nighttime surroundings of the Castle and Cathedral.

Management Aim 11

When and where opportunities arise explore options to enhance the nighttime environment of the conservation areas in a manner that preserves and better reveals significance where relevant.

Action 11.1

Pay special regard to preserving the nighttime character of the conservation areas where it contributes to their special interest.

Action 11.2

Collaborative working between DCC departments and external specialist bodies to seek to improve the nighttime environment where opportunities arise.

Action 11.3

New lighting within new development proposals or changes to existing buildings, streets, and spaces, must give consideration to conserving the distinctive nighttime character and appearance of the city.

With Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site at its centre and the historic urban core contained by hills and ridges, the city is a unique environment, both with respect to its topography, architecture, landscape and riverscape setting. By day it provides a spectacular picture, whether arriving at the railway station or walking by the river. By night it has not been dramatically over-lit and is effectively a twenty-four hour city with its mixed population of students, tourists, shoppers, workers, and residents providing an ever changing pattern of activity at all times.

As a result, a large number of people spend as much time experiencing Durham's built environment during the hours of darkness as they do by day, particularly in the winter months. Lighting therefore plays an important role not only in providing the basic means by which to see but also in creating an appropriate atmosphere, making people feel safe and secure and helping them to find their way around such that their experience of the public realm is both positive and enjoyable.

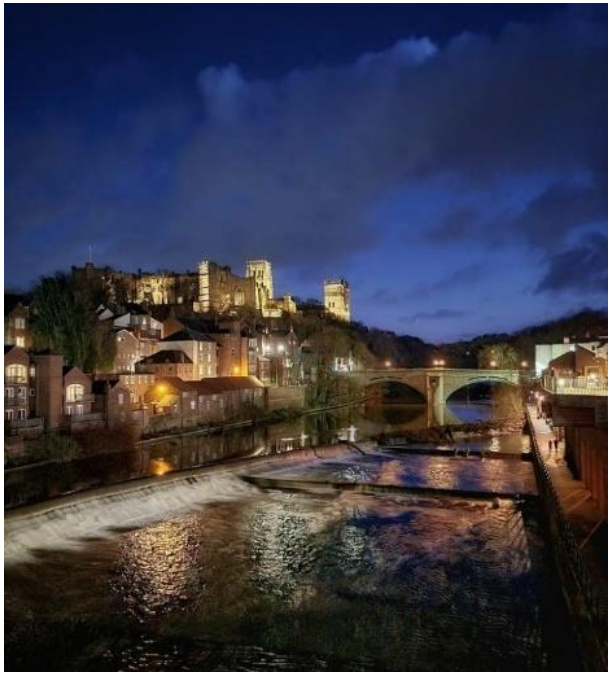
The visual presence of the Cathedral and Castle by night contrasts with the darkness of the woodland cloak, river, riverbanks, and sky. This combined with the low levels of illumination in the townscape below, and in the loop of the river around the peninsula provides a dark cloak that emphasis the Cathedral and Castle at night while giving a distinctive visual experience.

The nighttime presence of the World Heritage Site and other historic landmarks could be harmed by the introduction of high levels of new illumination into the sensitive context.

Likewise excessive light spillage could harm the nighttime character of the city's historic streets and spaces.

Very careful and detailed consideration must be given to the visual impact of lighting. Either when informing the detailed design of new development proposals of sufficient size/scale and massing, or when considering changes to existing buildings, streets, and spaces. This is to ensure the nighttime character of the city is protected. Critical will be the positioning, form, type, and level of illumination.

Fig 42 *below. Night time views within the conservation areas along Old Elvet, Owengate and Framwellgate Waterside. Elvet and riverside images, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.*



The city does not fulfil its potential after dark. Its streets and public spaces can sometimes feel slightly disorientating, particularly to the visitor. The quality of light could be better, and fine buildings are often disfigured either by inappropriate lighting solutions or unnecessary spill from street lighting, advertising, and security lighting. Improving the existing situation is to be encouraged. The intrusion of artificial light extensively illuminating areas that are not supposed to be lit or intruding visually in wider townscape and river corridor views is to be resisted.

2.6.1 Street lighting units

Action 11.4

The introduction of new and replacement street lighting units within the conservation areas are to be in keeping with the character of the place and maximising opportunities to improve the existing situation as relevant.

Urban street lighting plays an important role in shaping the character and identity of the area, impacting on safety, aesthetics, and functionality. Within the conservation areas the predominant form is street lighting columns, these are found in a wide variety of styles, lamp type, heights, and different colours. There is overall an inconsistent approach with many streets hosting columns that are not befitting the historic character and appearance of the locale. Providing a consistent approach to new and replacement lighting units within the conservation areas offers an opportunity for improvements in the future.

What are the opportunities?

- Select new lighting unit types which are in keeping with the character and appearance of the place.
- Take opportunities to replace lighting units that are outdated and unsympathetic within the historic place.
- Heritage style lighting is recommended for streets and spaces of higher significance whereas high quality contemporary styles may be suitable elsewhere.
- Avoid an excessive number of lighting units to avoid light pollution, spillage and over-lighting buildings, streets, and spaces.
- New installations must consider the value of the floorscape for example avoiding causing harm to traditional cobbled and stone surfaces.
- The number, height, and placement should be appropriate to the significance of the space, the surrounding buildings, and category of the highway.

2.6.2 Illuminated signage

Action 11.5

Future proposals for illuminated signage are to be considered on an individual basis, illumination should relate to an established nighttime use and where illumination will not adversely affect visual amenity. The level, form, and type of illumination is to be appropriate to the site's context.

The lighting of commercial units, streets and spaces must be carefully considered. An over illumination could potentially be visually harmful not only to the building and street but the setting of other heritage assets. In some cases, sufficient illumination can be provided by ambient street lighting and interior lighting, illumination should generally only be permitted to nighttime business uses and where appropriate to the context. If illumination is justified then the form, style, level, and colour should be sympathetic and subtle to prevent adverse nighttime visual impacts.

Particular care should be taken to illumination of signs to traditional shop fronts, for example internally illuminated signs can be harmful owing to the chunky/boxy design of the fascia to house the illumination. A sympathetic external source such as a swan-light or small spot light should be the first consideration.

Theme 6 Potential outcomes

Enhancing the nighttime environment would improve the legibility of the public realm, making it more aesthetically pleasing and contributing positively to the sense of place. It can bring about safety and security benefits, support the city's identity, attract more people into the city enhancing the nighttime economy. It can enhance peoples experience of the conservation areas and provide a positive direction for art, festivals and events adding to the cultural life of Durham.

2.7 Theme 7 Regeneration and inward investment

Regeneration can positively shape places, and heritage is fundamental to its success in Durham City. The special interest, character, and quality of the historic environment and its management should be used as the foundation for the city's future growth and development.

This can include repurposing buildings and sites, finding new uses for redundant buildings and empty units, with new uses meeting the demand, or by introducing positive new development. Heritage-led regeneration and heritage-inspired design would bring significant benefits to the city and the local community, combined with protecting its invaluable cultural heritage for this and the future generations.

Durham City lies at the heart of the county and is a bustling city centre with a University that is internationally renowned. It is a significant administrative and cultural centre and a public transport hub reflecting its role as the focus for the locality and wider area. It continues to attract major events, with Durham Cathedral as its major cultural attraction. All the above bring huge benefits for the local economy, and for residents, businesses, and visitors.

It is important that the city continues to move forward but this can be challenging. Town centres are facing the challenges of changing and evolving retail patterns. There is a challenge in terms of the future development of the University to support their vision of world leading research, education, and a wider student experience. This is alongside growth in student numbers, improving public transport, cycling, and walking routes, achieving balanced communities, developing the leisure and tourism offer and addressing environmental impacts.

The priority must be to ensure that as the city meets those challenges and evolves, it does so in a positive manner that preserves the special architectural and historic interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas.

Management Aim 12

To support the continued development of Durham City as a key visitor and tourist destination, educational, commercial and leisure destination, vital to its future economic success, through preservation, enhancement, and promotion of its historic environment.

Action 12.1

DCC will continue to explore opportunities for regeneration and inward investment within the city centre with its funding partners, stakeholders, and developers. This will consider the historic and natural environments, leisure, cultural and retail offer, and delivery of enhancement to the special interest of the conservation areas.

Action 12.2

The CAMP will be used as a key tool to drive heritage-led regeneration and inward investment in the city centre and to monitor progress while providing a platform that ensures all parties with a vested interest are informed.

The CAMP should be used as part of the primary regeneration framework for the city. This is due to identifying numerous buildings, sites, spaces, and places where there are opportunities for improvement and enhancement. This forms part of the proactive approach to change management within the conservation areas.

A mapping exercise has been undertaken of the potential opportunities and different types of improvements (set out in the Strategic Context document) that can also help identify delivery partners. They must be guided by the other management aims and actions set out in this document to ensure there is great emphasis placed on the preservation and enhancement of the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas and their setting.

Fig 43 *below. Examples of regeneration schemes within the conservation areas repurposing existing sites.*

Action 12.4

Opportunities should be maximised through the planning process to repurpose and redevelop existing buildings and sites with higher quality designs where this will deliver positive regeneration and enhancement of the conservation areas special interest.

Fundamental to the city's positive regeneration is making places better for people. This includes the way they work, and how they look, while providing and improving connections between places and people's movement, the urban form, nature and built fabric.

This can help create lively places with their own distinctive character and such important benefits can be gained by repurposing and redeveloping existing buildings and sites that do not contribute positively to the character, appearance, and distinctiveness of the conservation areas. This can include contemporary design solutions that respond positively to the heritage led design principles set out in theme 2 of this document.

Fig 44 *below. Examples of positive repurposing and redevelopment*

Above, The Gates was a late 20th century shopping centre within the city centre beside the river. It was an insensitively designed development which faced inwards, built from a mundane material palette. This was replaced with the more engaging Riverwalk development which responds more positively to its site context. However, it is not without flaws with less activity and interest to the rear elevation, and the height in parts counter to the former building.

Elevation comparison image from planning application reference DM/15/01626/FPA, DM_15_01626_FPA-DESIGN_AND_STATEMENT_PART_1-1602566.pdf (durham.gov.uk)

Action 12.5

Seek to protect existing commercial and leisure uses within the conservation areas retail environment where it has a positive impact and encourage new where appropriate to context.

The retail and leisure uses within the city can be traced back to the medieval period through to the present day. They remain a defining and important characteristic of specific parts of the conservation areas that are important to protect.

As such there should be a presumption against the loss of commercial and leisure uses, with the local provision enhanced by new appropriate uses as relevant to the location. This can be supported by the potential commercial Article 4 Direction as set out in Action point 1.6.

Shops, services, and leisure facilities are essential features of the city centre that contribute to its vitality, vibrancy, character, and sense of place, which should not be eroded but rather built upon and expanded so that the city continues to grow.

Action 12.6

Proactively engage with owners, encourage new occupants, and explore new uses aligned with planning policy, to improve vacancy rates within the conservation areas and seek funding streams to aid take-up.

There has been a positive uplift in the city's commercial streets in terms of a reducing vacancy rate since 2020. However, there are still a number of vacant units. Vacancy is detrimental to the visual amenity of the locale and gives rise to a neglected atmosphere within the streetscene detracting from people's impression of the place.

Empty buildings can cause a negative feedback loop which means they discourage investment, decrease the offer of the high street, dissuade customers from visiting and contribute to a general sense of decline and neglect; this obviously increases where there are more empty buildings in a single street.

It is important to maximise opportunities and encourage appropriate reuse of empty retail units and upper floors, to enliven and diversify the mix of uses within the city, to encourage more footfall and ultimately improve the city's economic health.

While the above is to be encouraged, it is of the utmost importance that new uses are compatible with existing and are not detrimental to the historic environment.

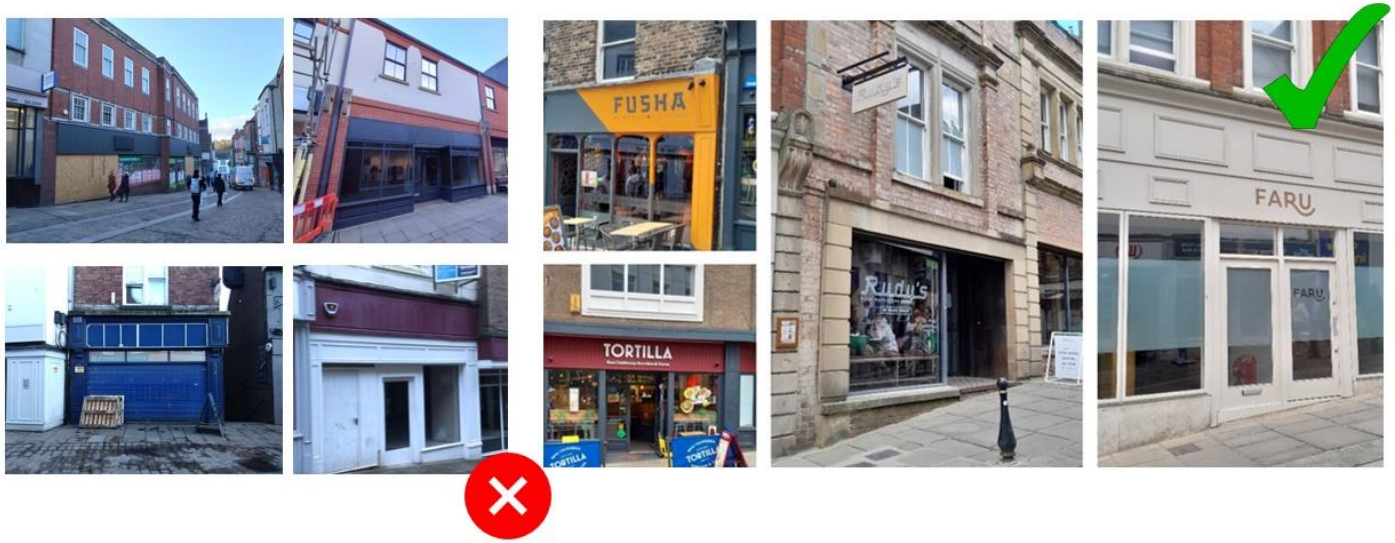
Durham City has a high proportion of restaurants, cafes, and drinking establishments; whilst the city's economy is also significantly influenced by the large student population and its part-time presence.

There is a clear shift in the city from retail uses to one of more leisure with a strong "café-culture." There needs to be a clear direction in terms of embracing this change to meet the demand. This can involve allowing more varied uses, or a refocus on the retail offer, with the ultimate outcome to reduce vacancy rates, create a place that attracts visitors and encourages them to spend more time in the city.

However, this needs to be carefully balanced against the difficulties and issues around such leisure uses and protecting the conservation areas heritage and character.

DCC is operating a retail start up grant scheme, targeted business improvement grant scheme, and property reuse and conversion loan scheme which seek to encourage new business across the county and for external improvements to existing business premises. **Further information can be found** Business grants and loans - Durham County Council

Fig 45 *below. Examples of empty retail units and new business uses within the conservation areas.*



Where a long term use is not on the table, there are different options available that can have a positive and instantly noticeable impact. Soft touch interventions that do not require regular use or access to the property such as window displays and installations, or changing exhibitions, which can create visual interest could be considered. Such options require careful design consideration. Temporary uses such as pop-up spaces can include both retail and community workshops or leisure spaces, which can inject life, creativity, and economic activity.

There are many vacant upper floors within the city centre even when the ground floor shop unit is occupied, they are sometimes used for storage that gives a bleak visual appearance. Upper floor use is to be encouraged to revitalise the high street, that in theory ensures appropriate maintenance, and can add increased footfall into the area from new residents or visitors.

Theme 7 Potential outcomes

Successful heritage led regeneration has the potential to provide significant benefits. It can bolster local businesses and the local economy, bring back underutilized heritage assets to life, increase the city's prosperity while improving the quality of the place and adding value to people's lives. Overall, leading to positive growth in a way that preserve and enhances the special interest and character of the conservation areas.

Fig 46 *below. The city as a number of historic streets and spaces that are popular for events, outdoor eating and drinking areas, adding to the retail offer, which creates a positive vibrant character.*

2.8 Theme 8 Key estates

Major land owners in the city centre include the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral and Durham University. The Cathedral and its associated buildings have a commanding presence on the peninsula but also own several parcels of land within the city. The university has many colleges and departments located on the peninsula, Old Elvet and at Hill Colleges.

The Cathedral and university are major assets to the city but also act as the custodians of large key estates. These include the World Heritage Site, many listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets that contribute to the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas.

Management Aim 13

Ensure through formal close partnership working with Durham University and Durham Cathedral that special attention is paid to change within their respective estates, so they are managed sympathetically to preserve the special interest and character of the conservation areas.

Action 13.1

Encourage positive proactive engagement and a heritage-led philosophy with Durham University and Durham Cathedral regarding the general upkeep, repair, restoration works and alterations within their estates that inform the special interest of the conservation areas.

Action 13.2

Engage with Durham University and Durham Cathedral to ensure that future development proposals within their estates respond to the site's special interest, positive characteristics, and its local and wider conservation area context.

The university's masterplan presents a strategy for its growth, building upon its strengths including research, education, and the wider student experience. It provides an overall guide as to how the university could develop its estate in the long term. This offers a challenge in balancing the estates expansion along with preserving the conservation areas.

It must be recognised that the university continues to invest in the repair, restoration, and upkeep of its historic building stock. It has also funded several projects that will provide new uses, enhance, and better reveal significance that is to be applauded, it is important that this good work continues.

The Cathedral stands at the heart of Durham World Heritage Site, the highest level of heritage recognition and protection. Part of the site's significance is the contribution made by setting and while change needs to be embraced, at the same time there is a challenge in balancing development and economic opportunities with preserving the site and its setting.

The university and Cathedral estates must be managed in a way the preserves the special interest of the historic environment and against relevant supporting documents such as the World Heritage Site Management Plan, and Castle walls management plan all within the overarching national and local planning policy framework.

There is a close and successful partnership working agreement between the University and Durham County Council and it is important that this continues and is strengthened. This positive approach helps to manage the historic environment effectively and efficiently.

Management Aim 14

Seek to support the wider strategic approach to shared student housing within the conservation areas to preserve the special interest and character of the place through the planning policy framework.

Action 14.1

Ensure through the planning process that proposals for enlarging, and the creation of new HMOs, and purpose built student accommodation is appropriate to the site location, character and context and can be facilitated without harm to the special interest of the conservation area.

There are many historic streets within the conservation areas that are in mixed use in terms of residential dwellings and student houses in multiple occupation. Some areas have a greater mixture and higher student population than others, and there is a long-standing objective seeking to achieve an appropriate balanced community, supported by local planning policies.

The student population of the city may continue to grow with the university's expansion aspirations. This will add further pressures and has the potential to adversely affect the character of a place in terms of both amenity and physical effects of associated development and alterations to existing historic buildings.

This intensification of use can result for example in a lack of building maintenance leading to unkempt facades, loss and damage of fabric by developers and landlords maximizing the number of occupiers, empty properties creating dead streets void of activity at certain times of the year and a lack of a permanent local community within the city.

Therefore, if not carefully controlled and managed such uses can be detrimental to the character and appearance of the historic environment in specific parts of the conservation areas.

Fig 47 *above. Many of the Victorian terraced streets in the conservation areas have a high student population that can have negative effects on the character of the place.*

Theme 8 Potential outcomes

Balancing the aspirations of the major land and key estate owners in a proactive manner, with the needs of the local communities, will ensure appropriate management going forward. This is in turn ensures the preservation of the estates and the assets therein, thus preserving the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas.

2.9 Theme 9 Tourism

County Durham is a developing tourism destination with more than £1.3 billion annually flowing into the county from its visitor economy which employs over 14,000 people. High quality attractions, accommodation, cultural events, things to see and do and places to eat and drink are essential to the visitor experience and also in making the County and Durham City a great place to live, work, and study.

The tourism economy brings significant benefits to the city, and it is important to build upon the existing offer to enhance the visitor experience, prolong dwell times and encourage repeat visits. This better reveals the cultural heritage of the place to a wider audience through specific heritage attractions, engagement in heritage based activities and general exploration of the city's distinctive historic environment.

Tourism ties directly into the historic environment with Durham City home to one of the most recognisable historic landmarks in the UK, the internationally renowned Durham Castle, and Cathedral World Heritage Site. Destinations with a World Heritage Site have been known to attract higher visitor numbers and increased spending through uniqueness and authenticity.

As well as the World Heritage Site, other historic sites include Cook Hall and Gardens, Durham Town Hall, and the riverbanks as well as other attractions within the city and wider county.

Management Aim 15

Seek to support the wider strategic aims and objectives of the Durham Tourism Management Plan to enhance the quality of the visitor experience and the viability of the visitor economy, building on the already strong partnership approach.

Action 15.1

Collaborative working between DCC departments external bodies to explore opportunities to promote and enhance cultural visitor attractions. Supporting their growth and viability where appropriate and facilitated in a manner that preserves the special interest of the conservation areas.

Action 15.2

Seek to explore opportunities to create new tourism developments where appropriate. Ensure it can be provided without negatively affecting the areas special interest, character and appearance while maximising opportunities to better reveal the city's cultural heritage.

The visitor economy continues to be a growth sector that is recognised in a range of frameworks and strategies concerned with the County's economic development and growth. The Durham Tourism Management Plan sets out the County's visitor economy performance, the value of tourism, including the contribution made by Durham City, and sets out the strategic vision for growth.

This must draw from the fact that Durham is fundamentally a heritage and countryside destination with an emerging arts and cultural offer to attract new and repeat visits, with heritage the product that visitors most closely associate with it. Evidence demonstrates that local heritage plays an important role in attracting people to place.

Further reading The Contribution of the Heritage Sector to the Visitor Economy | Heritage Counts | Historic England

Visit County Durham and its many partners in the public and private sector recognise the importance of appropriate and sustainable development to retain and protect the authenticity and distinctiveness of tourist destinations. It is vital to the preservation of the conservation areas special interest, character, and appearance that this approach continues into the future.

Visitors and residents, rightly have high expectations in terms of the facilities, interpretation, and the experience of the place. Providing developments that respect the essence of the city, and which enhance and improve the city's storytelling and animation, are to be encouraged. It is also important that the experience they provide is comparable, if not better than similar destinations and places.

The visitor economy is central to the overall economic, social, and cultural health and vibrancy of Durham City. With research showing that visitors spend, and dwell times are lower than other destinations. This is largely due to the lack of a critical mass of visitor attractions and a not unrelated limited retail offer, one sustaining the other.

This is compounded by a high proportion (90%) of lower spending day visitors as opposed to a low (10%) of visitors who stay overnight but contribute almost half of the overall spend. In association, the city has a series of annual events that are very positive in terms of economic, community and social impacts, with "signature events" such as Lumiere, Durham Regatta, Fire and Ice, Durham Pride, Brass Festival, and the Miners Gala.

These events, and others, attract a large number of visitors to the city and are very important economically to local businesses, while appealing across ages, genders, and social profiles. They have strong cultural heritage links with a significant need to sustain the strong branding of such events and to build upon them in the years to come.

Since its beginning in 2009 Lumiere has become the Uks pre-eminent light-art biennial event and part of Durham's story. Despite its demise due to viability, options for future light shows, events and installations could be explored as part of the city's wider tourism or public art offer.

Theme 9 Potential outcomes

Building upon a successful tourism economy through cultural-led regeneration and positive sustainable developments would boost economic activity and the vibrancy and viability of the city centre while enhancing in a unique way visitor's connections with the historic environment. Increased tourism can attract inwards investment, support the event programme , and promote protection of heritage assets, while providing regeneration, economic and social benefits.

Further information Welcome - Durham-UK

Fig 48 *below. Different events and attractions within the city.*

3. Delivery and monitoring

3.1 Delivery

The CAMP sets out a framework and strategy for the future management of the city's seven conservation areas. Delivery of this will require DCC departments to work in collaboration and take accountability for some of the actions. It will require prioritisation and focus and a clear resourcing strategy, along with continued community, stakeholder and partnership working.

The CAMP is aspirational, but it will be a key ongoing tool to ensure cross departmental working within DCC and with external partners and stakeholders to help make positive change within the city for residents, students, workers, business owners and visitors alike.

3.2 Monitoring and review

Monitoring the success of the CAMP is an important part of the process to ensure it is being delivered and that it is effective. It will also indicate what needs to change in response to circumstances as the city centre is constantly evolving.

This management strategy will therefore be reviewed within five years of adoption and amended as necessary in line with the statutory requirements set out in section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Added to this the following specific monitoring criteria can be considered

- Number of heritage assets included on the national heritage at risk register.
- Number of assets included on the local heritage at risk register.
- Number of enforcement investigations or prosecutions taken against unauthorised works to properties in the conservation area.
- Number of applications approved where at least "less than substantial" harm was identified.
- Number of vacant buildings and gap sites resolved securing reuse and appropriate development through planning approval.
- Annual percentages of vacancy, different retail uses, and new uses created identified through annual town centre survey.

3.3 Action Plan

The Local Planning Authority is primarily responsible for the management and maintenance of the conservation areas through the development management process and maintenance and improvement of public spaces. It is important that there is a clear action plan in place to deliver the aims of the CAMP that will ensure that the special interest, character, and appearance of the conservation areas is preserved and enhanced going forward and in the long-term.

On the following pages is an action plan that sets out how the main management aims can be delivered, who is responsible and what resources are required.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
1.Ensure that existing buildings that contribute positively to the special interest of the conservation areas are retained, conserved, and enhanced where possible, while addressing those which detract from the character and appearance of the place.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.DCC specialist officers will provide advice and guidance to property owners and developers to guide appropriate alterations, repairs, maintenance, and secure high-design quality. 3.Continued identification of NDHAs, buildings for local listing, and potential national listing. 4.Continued monitoring of the Article 4 Direction and amendment where necessary. 5.Seek potential funding streams to support repair and restoration works. 6.Pursue appropriate enforcement action to address breaches of planning control when expedient to do so. 7.Appropriate maintenance and management regimes based on an understanding of place.	DCC Development Management (planning and enforcement), Design and Conservation, Regeneration, Corporate Property and Land, Highways, Clean and Green, individual land, and property owners.	1.Within existing resources and annual budgets. 2.Sourcing, promoting, and delivery of any relevant grant schemes.
2.Pay special attention to ensure that key and important views within, through, and across the conservation areas are sustained, conserved, and enhanced where possible and appropriate.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.DCC specialist officers will provide advice and guidance to developers to guide appropriate change to protect important views. 3.Preservation or enhancement of views through development opportunities, and regular tree maintenance regimes.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, Regeneration, Landscape, Clean and Green, developers, and land owners.	1.Within existing resources.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
3.Seek to ensure that the archaeological importance, interest, and potential of the city is preserved, while increasing the knowledge and understanding of the past, for this and future generations.	1.Specalist archaeology advice through the formal planning process with applications determined in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies and guidance. 2.Maintaining and continued updating of DCC's Historic Environment Record. 3. Building recording as necessary secured through the planning process. 4.Delivery of appropriate and proportionate archaeological evaluation and monitoring through the planning process.	DCC Development Management Planning), Design and Conservation, Archaeology.	1.Within existing resources. 2.Developer funded, as required through the planning process.
4.To ensure that new development has a positive impact by delivering a high standard of design that is sensitive to the special interest, character and appearance of the place and its context.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Promotion of high-quality, sustainable, and sympathetic design via the planning process. 3.Production of site-specific development briefs and design guidance where necessary and appropriate. 4.Specific heritage-led regeneration and redevelopment schemes to secure enhancement works. 5. Utilising the design review process and enhanced design review for appropriate schemes.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, Regeneration, developers, and land owners.	1.Within existing resources.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
5.Pay special attention to ensure that existing historic and traditionally designed shopfronts are retained where appropriate. Works to them must be undertaken in a sympathetic manner, while proposals for new shopfronts are of to be of a high standard of design appropriate to the character of the host building and the streetscene.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy documents, including the Durham City CAMP, and the adopted Shopfront Guide 2.Promotion of relevant DCC grant schemes to fund new shopfronts, with projects using suitably qualified architects and contractors to implement high quality design. 3.Pursue appropriate enforcement action to address breaches of planning control where expedient.	DCC Development Management (planning and enforcement), Design and Conservation, Regeneration, individual business, and property owners.	1.Promotion of DCC business improvement grant scheme or future equivalents. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.
6.To ensure existing historic, traditional, and good quality modern signage is preserved and that existing insensitive modern signs are replaced to a higher standard of design where the opportunity arises.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy documents, including the Durham City CAMP, and the adopted Shop Front Design Guide. 2.Promotion of relevant DCC grant schemes to fund new signage, with projects using suitably qualified architects and contractors to implement high quality design. 3.Pursue appropriate enforcement action to address breaches of planning control where expedient.	DCC Development Management (planning, Design and Conservation, Regeneration, individual business owners.	1.Promotion of DCC business improvement grant scheme or future equivalents. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.
7.Any proposals for new and/or replacement security measures to the retail, food and beverage, business and leisure uses within the city must be carefully considered and justified by the use or design quality.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy documents, including the Durham City CAMP and relevant guidance. 2.Pursue appropriate enforcement action to address breaches of planning control where expedient.	DCC Development Management (planning and enforcement), Design and Conservation, Regeneration, individual business owners.	1.Promotion of DCC business improvement grant scheme or future equivalents. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
8.Pay special attention to ensure that alterations proposed to historic buildings and sites associated with sustainability are undertaken sympathetically in relation to the special architectural and historic interest of the site and its surroundings.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP, and the adopted Energy-Efficiency-Renewables-and-the-Historic-Environment-Supplementary-Planning Document- 2.Pursue appropriate enforcement action to address breaches of planning control where expedient.	DCC Development Management (planning and enforcement), Design and Conservation, land, and individual property owners.	1.Within existing resources. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.
9.To ensure that the identified local green assets are protected, managed, and enhanced where possible in a manner appropriate to their contribution, significance, character, functionality, and context. Including seeking to ensure that development proposals maximise green infrastructure and biodiversity net gain within the conservation areas where relevant.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Explore opportunities for sites to be improved as part of any future projects. 3.Delivery of specific regeneration schemes, or smaller public realm enhancement works working in collaboration with specialist DCC officers. 4.Green infastructure proposals to be carried out in accordance with the principles of the adopted DCC Strategic Green Infastructure Framework Durhams-green-infrastructure-framework/ and relevant management/maintenance plans.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, Ecology Landscape, Clean and Green, land owners.	1.Within existing resources. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
10.Pay special attention to the protection, and enhancement of the quality and distinctiveness of the public realm of the conservation areas creating more enjoyable, safe, and accessible places for all.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Investigate any potential funding streams that become available that could contribute to or deliver public realm enhancement. 3.Explore specific project opportunities to improve the public realm in particular addressing the negatives identified in the CAMP. 4.Strengthen existing relationships, formalise processes including the design review process and liaise with other DCC services and third parties looking to undertaken public realm works. 5.Continued monitoring of the public realm and implementation of regular maintenance regimes.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, Landscape, Highways, Regeneration, and land owners. Utility companies.	1.Within existing resources. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.
11.When and where opportunities arise explore options to enhance the nighttime environment of the conservation areas in a manner that preserves and better reveals significance where relevant.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Liaise with DCC street lighting design engineers to assist with the detailed design of street lighting improvement schemes.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, Neighbourhoods and Environment (street lighting).	1.Within existing resources. 2.Exploration and securing of any relevant external funding sources.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
12.To support developing Durham City as a key visitor and tourist destination, educational, commercial and leisure destination, vital to its future economic success, through preservation, enhancement, and promotion of its historic environment.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Investigate potential funding streams that could become available which could contribute to the enhancement of the conservation area while meeting wider DCC key regeneration aims. 3.Liaise with third parties looking to invest in development sites or properties to secure appropriate and sensitive outcomes.	DCC, Visit County Durham, Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation individual site and property owners.	1.Within existing resources and annual budgets. 2.Exploration and securing of external funding streams.
13.Ensure through formal close partnership working with Durham University and Durham Cathedral that special attention is paid to change within their respective estates, so they are managed sympathetically to preserve the special interest and character of the conservation areas.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Strengthen and formalise existing partnership working to manage the historic estates and deliver appropriate and positive change within the conservation areas.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, Landscape, Durham University, Durham Cathedral Dean and Chapter.	1.Within existing resources and annual budgets from all parties. 2.Exploration and securing of external funding streams.
14.Seek to support the wider strategic approach to shared student housing within the conservation areas to preserve the special interest and character of the place through the formal planning policy framework.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP, and HMO regulations.	DCC Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, landlords.	1.Within existing resources.

Management Aim	Delivery method	Responsibility	Resources
15. Seek to support the wider strategic aims and objectives of the Durham Tourism Management Plan to enhance the quality of the visitor experience and the viability of the visitor economy, building on the already strong partnership approach.	1.Pre application enquiries and planning applications will be determined in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance documents, including the Durham City CAMP. 2.Explore investment opportunities and funding streams to help drive growth. 3.Strengthen existing partnerships and working groups with a regenerative approach to ensure growth is sustainable.	DCC, Visit County Durham, Development Management (planning), Design and Conservation, land, and property owners.	1 Within existing resources and annual budgets of all partners. 2.Exploration and securing of external funding streams.
General. To monitor the condition of the conservation areas and to ensure that the CAMP documentation for their appraisal and management is relevant.	1.Review of the CAMP in line with up to date policies, standards, and guidance. 2.Updating of street by street condition, shop front, and views surveys. 3.Historic England At Risk Returns undertaken yearly. https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/heritage-at-risk/	Design and Conservation.	1.Within existing resources.

4. Article 4 Direction

4.1 Introduction and background

In conservation areas minor forms of development to residential properties such as domestic alterations and some extensions can often be undertaken without planning permission under the provision of the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (GPDO) (as amended). The Article 4 of the GPDO gives the LPA the power to limit/remove these permitted development rights to properties, when it is considered necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area.

This means that what are considered minor alterations, which can sometimes be harmful (e.g. replacement of traditional timber sliding sash windows with uPVC alternatives) are brought back under planning controls and assessed through the planning process.

Within Durham City there were two Article 4 Directions in operation. One covering properties within Crossgate and the Crossgate Peth area served in 2007, and the other within The Avenue, Hawthorn Terrace and adjacent streets, Albert Steet, Waddington Street, Mowbray Street, parts of Sutton Street, Claypath, Gilesgate, Church Street and Hallgarth Street, served in 2016.

As part of the CAMP there is a requirement to review and assess the Article 4 Directions. This is to bring forward potential changes for further protection and enhancement based upon a robust evidence base. Furthermore, since the serving of the existing Article 4 Directions there have been changes in planning policy, as well as physical changes within the conservation area.

Fig 49 *below. A selection of images showing examples properties included within the 2016 Article 4 Direction.*

4.2 Revisions

As Durham City Conservation Area no longer exists, the Article 4 Directions should be re-served in respect of the individual new conservation areas in which the properties fall. The CAMP review process also offered an opportunity to reassess the Article 4 Directions with the potential to extending their provisions. This primarily relates to residential properties but in the future commercial properties in the historic core could be considered.

The Article 4 review involved a two-stage approach. Firstly, a full review of all of the properties covered by the 2007 and 2016 Article 4 Directions. This was to establish if the properties were still worthy of inclusion and to capture their character and visual appearance at a point in time.

Secondly, a robust review of the properties excluded from the original Article 4 Directions was undertaken. Properties were identified with a strong public presence owing to their street frontage locations contributing positively to the townscape because of their historic interest, character, aesthetic appeal, group value and level of intactness. The level of contribution considered such that it is desirable to impose additional planning controls to ensure they are preserved and protected from harmful changes.

Article 4 properties – As served 2007 and 2016

Nos 5,6,8,20,21,23,26,27,28,30,31,32,52,59,64 Crossgate;1-25, Maple Lodge, Aspen Lodge Crossgate Peth;1-37 Nevilledale Terrace;1-14 Summerville; 1-13 Brierville;1-7 Beech Crest; 1-7 St Margarets Garth; 1-13 Alexandra Crescent; 1-15 Palatine View

Nos 1-63, Field House, Milbank and Normalea, Albert Street; 1-9 Anchorage Terrace; 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 27a and St Oswald's Vicarage, Church Street; 18-28, The Anchorage, 35 and 36 Church Street Head; 1-7 Church Street Villas; 41, 43, 48, 54, 55, 55a, 58, 59, 61, 62 and 63 Claypath; 10-12, 14-19, 20-22, 24, 24a, 57, 58, 60-65, 68a-70, 72, 76, 77, 80-83, 86, 89, 93, 93a, 97, 99, 102a, 132a, 137-139, 147-149a, 159-161, 166, 172, 215, 221, Caselaw, Woodlands and Southlands, Gilesgate; 1-4 Gladstone Villas; 16, 16a, 34, 35, 36, 38-49, 50-53, 60-66, 72, 74, 76, 80, 82 and 84 Hallgarth Street; 2-57 Hawthorn Terrace; 1-6 Highwood Terrace; 1-23 High Wood View; 1-12a and 19-21 Laburnum Avenue;

Nos 1-8 and 10-14 Lambton Street; 1-34 Lawson Terrace, 1-32 May Street; 1-28 Mistletoe Street; 1-16 Mount Joy Crescent; 1-18 Mowbray Street; 44 and 45 North Road; 1 and 2 Palmers Close; 1,2,3,4a,4b and 4c Parkside; 3-10 Ravensworth Terrace; 18-27 and 30-32 Sutton Street; 1-28 and 36-64 The Avenue; 1a, 1b, 2 and 3 Union Place; 4-9 Waddington Street; 1-7 West Terrace.

Potential inclusions (residential)

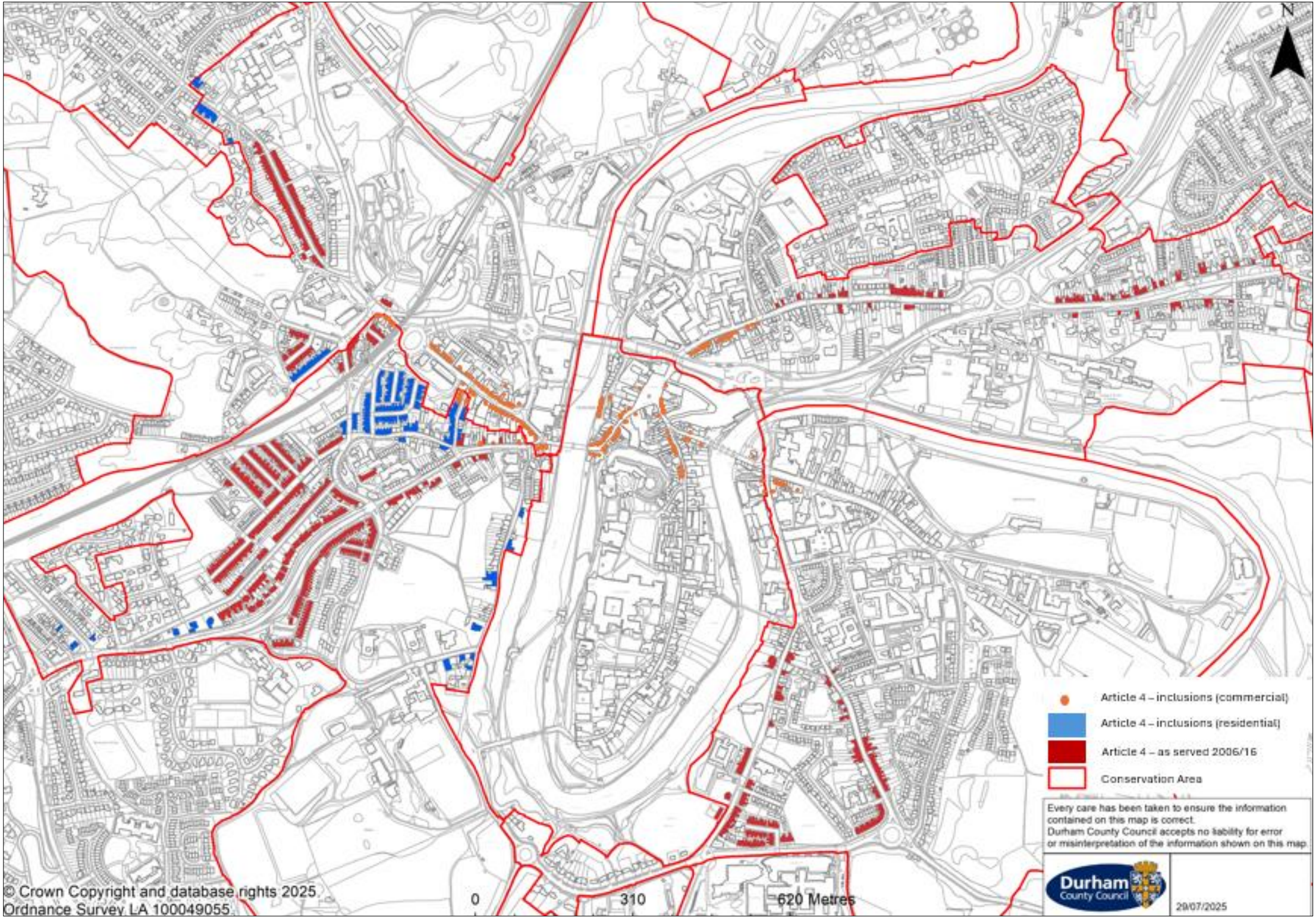
Nos 21,22,38,39,40 South Street; Avenue House, Dunstar House, Oak Lea The Avenue;1-5 Allergate Terrace;1-3,12,13,17-20,27-29 Allergate;1-21,22-34 Atherton Street; 1-10,11-19 East Atherton Street;1-6 Fieldhouse Terrace; 1-2 DLI Cottages; 1-2 Springwell Villas;2-15a Flass Street;1-5,Cedar House, Ash Tree House, Holly Tree House, Willow Tree House, Holly Street; 1-12, 13-24 Mitchell Street; 7-18, 20-28 Neville Street;2-11,12-20 New Street;

Potential future inclusions (commercial)

Blue Coat Buildings (1-4) Claypath. Nos 80, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 88A, 89, 90, 92, 92A, 93, 94, 96, 97 Claypath. Nos 2-5, 8, 9, 10, 17-18, 26 Market Place. No 1 Back Silver Street, Nos 1-7 Fowlers Yard. Nos 2-6, 7-8, 9, 9A, 10 and 11,13-15, 17, 18, 19,20 and 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28,29, 30 and 31,35, 37 and 38, 39 Silver Street. No 1, 2, 3, 32, 33, 52, 55-57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64,65, 67, 69, 77-78 Saddler Street. No 2, 2A, 3, 3A, 4, 7 Old Elvet. Nos 3-9, 26-27, 28, 29, 20, 31-33, 81, 82, 83, 83 New Elvet. Swan and three cygnets PH, No 14, 15, 19-20, 22,23 Elvet Bridge. No 57-58, 69-70 Crossgate, Crossgate WMC. No 3, 4, 5, 6, 30-33, Neville Street. Unit 1, 2a, 2b, 2d, 2c, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 50-51, 54-57, 58-62, 63, 64, 66-68, 69, 70, 71a, 71b, 71c, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80 North Road. Bridge House, North Road. Nos 34, 35, Framwellgate Bridge. No 4 South Street.

The properties listed to the left are shown on the map on the following page.

Fig 50 *below. A selection of images showing examples of the new inclusions to the Article 4 Direction.*



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5. Appendix 1: Managing change, planning legislation and guidance

5.1 Introduction

Planning legislation, policy, and guidance, at the national and local levels, enables the effective management of change within the conservation areas and secures the preservation and enhancement of the character, appearance, and significance of the place.

The national legislative framework for the conservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act defines what a conservation area is and is the primary legal mechanism for ensuring its preservation and enhancement.

The primary legislation is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework - 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - Guidance - GOV.UK

This sets out the overarching requirement of the local planning authority to identify and protect designated and non-designated heritage assets, and their settings.

At a local level, planning policy is set out in the County Durham Plan - Durham County Council This provides the local authority with its own policies on the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Specifically, Policy 44, Historic Environment, and 45 Durham World Heritage Site, with policy 29 relating to sustainable design also relevant.

The plan also has several other policies relevant to the conservation areas, Policy 33 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, Policies 35 and 36, Water Management and Water Infrastructure, Policy 39 Landscape, Policy 40 Trees, woodlands and hedges, and Policy 41 Biodiversity.

The above is underpinned by the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan | Developing a neighbourhood plan for Durham City This was adopted in June 2021 and the specific policies H1 the conservation areas, H2 Durham WHS, and S1 sustainable development.

The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies a number of Local Green Spaces under Policy G2, creation of the 'Emerald Network' under G3 and a general requirement to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure in accordance with Policy G1.

Generally being within a conservation area can bring about additional controls to proposed works and what may and may not require planning permission.

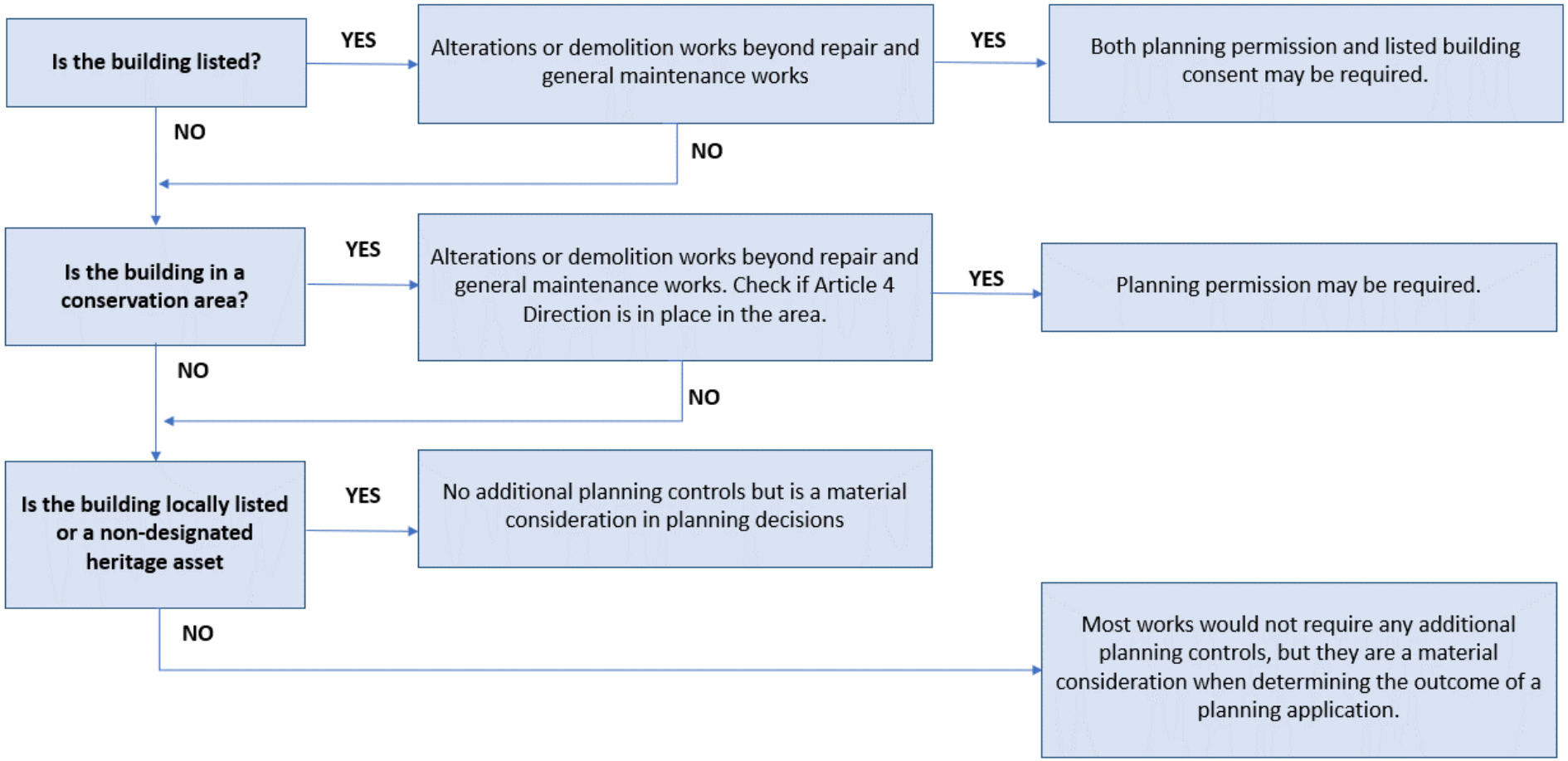
Further, Permitted Development Rights are works that can be undertaken without planning permission to householder properties only. But sometimes they can be removed either as part of a planning condition of an approved development or by the serving of an Article 4 Direction.

It is always advised to check with the local planning authority before conducting works to find out if any permissions are required. Details about the pre application service can be found Planning advice and enquiries - Durham County Council

Additional information can be found at the Planning Portal Website Conservation Areas - Other permissions you may require - Planning Portal

5.2 Process to determine if permission is required or not

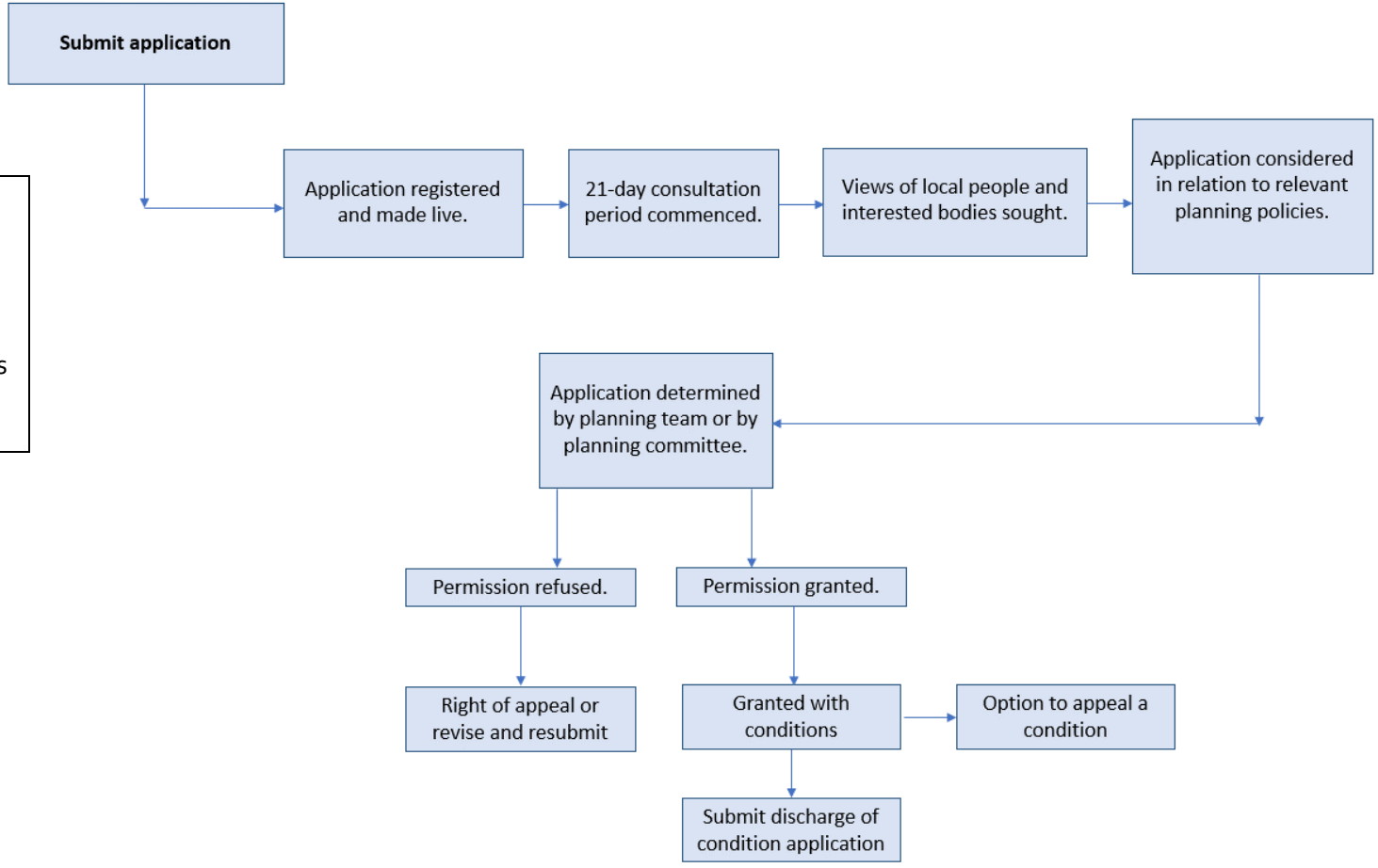
The infographic below shows the basic process in determining if permission is required or not, this is followed by a second infographic that sets out how the planning process works, and its timescales in principle.



5.3 General process if planning permission is required

The infographic to the right shows the general planning process from initial submission of the application to its determination.

To assess a listed building consent or planning application an appropriate level of supporting information is required, some of which are national requirements and mandatory. This information is required for an application to be made valid. Details of the validation requirements can be found Planning Validation Requirements (durham.gov.uk)



5.4 Major Development

Major development is often far more complex than other forms of planning applications and requires more extensive levels of information, consultation, and consideration.

Within Durham City it is essential that such proposals have a thorough understanding of and pay due regard to heritage matters, both direct and indirect, at the start of the process This is in order to identify constraints and opportunities, to influence positive design decisions and to conclude and mitigate impacts.

Such impacts can relate to the significance of the site itself, the setting of surrounding listed buildings and conservation areas in both the immediate and wider context, and most importantly, the significance and setting of Durham World Heritage Site. As such, a robust understanding of its values and attributes set out in the "Statement of Outstanding Universal Value" is required.

The role the site plays in the setting of the WHS, its location, the form, scale, massing, design, and materiality of the development proposal and visual connections are important to evaluate from the outset with the impact on OUV assessed to a standard recognised by UNESCO.

What is a major development?

Major development is defined by the Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as;

a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits.

b) waste development.

c) the provision of dwellinghouses where—(i) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph.

d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more: or

e) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

What are the key principles?

a) Informed by a clear understanding of the site, its immediate surroundings and wider townscape, landscape and riverscape context as relevant.

b) Identification of key constraints that can include flood zones, green belt, area of high landscape value, trees, topography, and specific design parameters such as scale and massing.

c) Based on a full understanding of heritage significance and setting contribution to ensure preservation.

d) Understanding the sites contribution to views at near, middle, and long distance.

e) Identification of key opportunities including creating new views to better reveal significance, removal of negative elements, or providing a higher quality design response that what exists.

What is the general process?

The starting point should be an extensive pre application submission with DCC providing a bespoke service for major and strategic development proposals. This will help to

- Determine details of any legal designations and limitations that affect the site.
- Set out the key national and local planning policy context and any relevant supplementary guidance.
- Bring in key internal consultees and external parties at the early stage.
- Identify if the proposal will have a significant impact on the environment by virtue of its nature, size, or location, that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) will be required.
- Identify any other material considerations.
- Identify any elements of the proposed development that may be deemed harmful and need addressing or amending to rectify issues.
- Set out the information requirements for full application stage.
- Conclude as to the likelihood of the scheme being accepted.

If the proposals are considered EIA development it should include the necessary information to meet the criteria outlined in Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999. This includes (but is not limited to):

- a description of the proposed development, its characteristics, land-use, emissions.
- an outline of the main alternatives studied – including the main reasons for the choice, taking into account the environmental effects.
- a statement identifying the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.
- for example, the population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, and climatic factors, as well as the architectural and archaeological heritage.
- a description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment – including the direct effects and any indirect effects.
- a statement outlining the measures that will be taken to prevent, reduce and (where possible) offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.
- an indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.

The Environment Statement (ES) would need to include a cultural heritage chapter that identifies the heritage assets potentially affected by the development proposals and provides a comprehensive assessment of the potential effects on their significance and setting. World Heritage Sites are classed as "sensitive areas" for the purposes of EIA assessment regulations.

What are the requirements on assessing the impact on Durham World Heritage Site?

Any major development proposal that impacts on or is within the setting of the World Heritage Site must be assessed based on the UNESCO Guidance Toolkit 2022 World Heritage Centre - Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (unesco.org) . The toolkit provides an overview of impact assessment and how it can be used, with Section 5 detailing how it can be carried out as part of a wider EIA process. Section 6 explains how to carry out a standalone HIA. The guidance is clear that the assessment should be drawn up in consultation with local communities and key stakeholders.

DCC's planning validation requirements sets out that all applications whose scale or nature could impact on heritage assets should be accompanied by a heritage statement and with specific reference to Durham World Heritage Site, sets out that a Design and Access Statement and Townscape or Landscape Visual Assessment will be required.

As previously, when considering the potential impacts of major development within the setting of the World Heritage Site this must be assessed in terms of the relevant attributes of significance contributing to its OUV, generally relating to;

Significance 2 The visual drama of the Cathedral and Castle on the peninsula and the associations of the site with notions of romantic beauty.

Significance 3: the physical expression of the spiritual and secular powers of the medieval Bishops Palatine and the defended complex.

Significance 6: the sites role as a political statement of Norman power imposed on a subjugate nation, as one of the country's most powerful symbols of the Norman conquest of Britain.

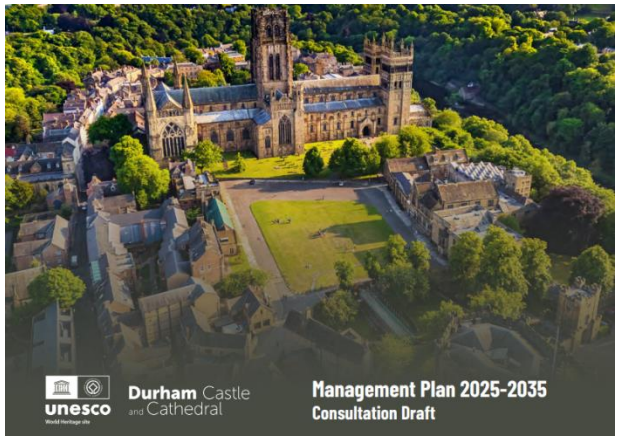
The sites significance and OUV is set out in Management Plan: 2. Significance of Site – Durham World Heritage Site

The management plan is currently being updated, consultation draft World Heritage Site Management Plan 2025-2035 with the prospectus for 2023-35 headlining the themes and projects of the next period 2024-2035MgtPlanprospectusfinal-compressed.pdf (durhamworldheritagesite.com)

The emerging World Heritage Site Setting Study if adopted will provide part of the evidence base and an important toolkit to inform an understanding of its setting that include experiential, visual and intangible values.

Historic England provides expert advice Guidance for World Heritage Management | Historic England on management and changes that relate to world heritage that should be utilised at an early stage.

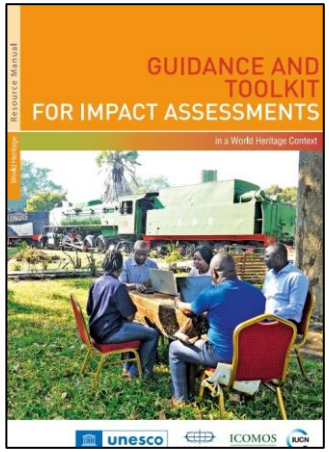
In combination the above should be used to inform major new development proposals within the city to ensure its OUV is protected. In direct association, as the proposed Durham City Conservation Areas provide a significant part of the setting to the World Heritage Site, this process will ensure that change is effectively managed to preserve and where possible enhance the conservation areas special interest, character, and visual appearance.



What is meant by public benefits?

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which could be anything that delivers economic, social, or environmental objectives. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset or securing its optimum viable use in support of its long-term conservation. The balancing exercise is a matter of planning judgement. For more information Historic environment - GOV.UK



5.5 General guidance and sources of information

Building maintenance

Maintenance Matters | spab.org.uk Maintenance Matters | spab.org.uk

Maintenance and Repair of Older Buildings | Historic England

Looking After Historic Buildings | Historic England

Principles of Repair for Historic Buildings | Historic England

Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading | Historic England

Repair or Change Windows in an Older Home | Historic England

Repair or Renew the Roof in an Older Home | Historic England

Top Tips for Maintaining Your Listed Building – The Historic England Blog (heritagecalling.com)

Works to Roofs, Walls, and Building Services | Historic England

Setting

The Setting of Heritage Assets

Development Affecting the Setting of Heritage Assets

Empty shops and new uses

Dealing with empty shops – a good practice guide for councils | Local Government Association

Creative Uses for Old Buildings | Historic England

Energy efficiency

Energy Efficiency, Renewables and the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation - Durham County Council
Energy Efficiency and Retrofit in Historic Buildings | Historic England

Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency | Historic England

Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy Saving Measures | Historic England

Installing Solar Panels | Historic England

Shopfronts and signage

Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation - Durham County Council

Public realm

Streets for All | Historic England

Urban and Public Realm Heritage | Historic England

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6. Appendix 2: options appraisals – vacant historic buildings and gap sites

6.1 Vacant/Disused historic buildings

Miners Hall, 15-17 North Road (grade II listed)

The building is located on the south side of North Road near to its junction with Nevilledale Terrace. It is the former Miners Hall, listed at grade II, dating from 1875, a very distinctive building of high status in its surroundings and it is a historic landmark in the townscape. The building has been vacant for a long period of time and visually is suffering from deterioration, its full condition would need to be understood to inform development options.

Options appraisal

- Commercial / Leisure use potential.
- Large floorplates may be offputting.
- Full surveys required to establish true structural and fabric condition.
- Surveys to inform full scope of remedial works to rectify the issues.
- Limited historic fabric and features internaly, therefore greater scope for changes to secure re-use.
- External alteration opportunities limited given restrictions imposed by architectural style and fascade quality expressing original use.
- Any new signage would need to be carefully considered.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site image

Riverbanks, South Street Mill (grade II listed)

The building is located on the west bank of the River Wear at the head of the weir. It dates from the late 18th century built following a flood that destroyed its 15th century predecessor. The earlier medieval building was a fulling mill converted to a corn mill, believed to be one of six mills in the city owned by the priory. It was previously in commercial use including a boat building work shop then operating as a informal club house and boat store since the 1950s. The Mill House was previously in residential use but has been vacant for a long time. The building fabric has continued to deteriorate and it is prone to vandalism.

Options appraisal

- Commercial / Leisure use potential, Mill House residential/office/tourist accommodation potential.
- Isolated location outside the main commercial streets of the city may be offputting.
- Accessibility and flooding issues given riverside location.
- Full surveys required to establish true condition and to inform appropriate repair/restoration scheme.
- Very limited opportunities for external changes given historic use and conserved character.
- Feasability study beneficial to explore options.
- Ecologically sensitive area.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

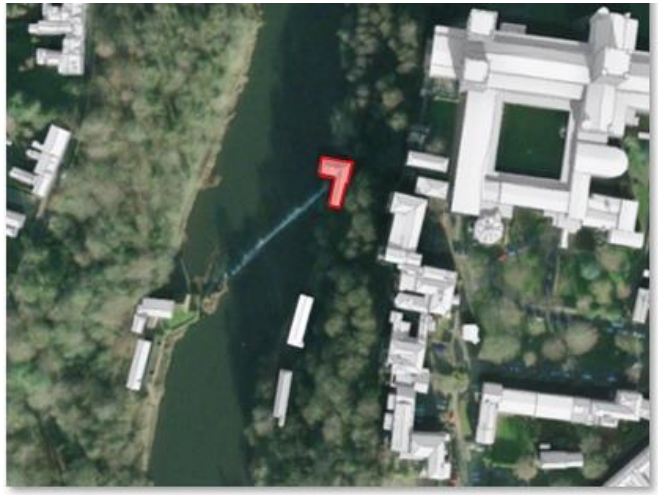
Site images

Riverbanks, Fulling Mill (grade II listed)

The building is located on the inner east bank of the River Wear at the north head of the weir opposite South Street Mill. Again it dates from the medieval period and is the other surviving priory mill. However the building that stands today is mostly 17th and 18th century, incorporating early fragments. The building became the first Durham University museum of archaeology opening in 1833. From 1956 it housed the university's archaeology department becoming a museum again in the 1970s up until 2014 when it became vacant and it remains disused. The building fabric has continued to deteriorate over a prolonged period and it is prone to vandalism.

Options appraisal

- Different use options and potential.
- Isolated location may be problomatic
- Accessibility and flooding issues given riverside location.
- Full surveys required to establish true condition and to inform appropraite repair/restoration scheme.
- Very limited opportunities for external changes given historic use and conserved character.
- Feasability study beneficial to explore options.
- Ecologically sensitive area.



Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site image

Riverbanks, Counts House (grade II listed)

The building is located on the riverbanks at the south end of the peninsula. It was built c.1810 as a summer house for No.12 South Bailey, when the Bailey gardens stretched down to the riverside.The building has been considered "at risk" for a long period of time due to being disused, its deteriorated condition and vandalism. Various options for its re-use have been appraised in the past but none have materialised these inlude a café, visitor centre, catering and education centre.

Options appraisal

- Mixed use potential, possible visitor or interpretation centre, café.
- Isolated location may be offputting.
- Difficult accessibility due to location.
- Works to make usable such as providing new heating ventilation, power supply and distribution would need to be carefully considered.
- Full survey required to establish true condition and to inform appropriate repair/restoration scheme.
- Building is within the flooplain.
- Ecological sensitive area.

Site location plan

Site images

Former City of Durham Swimming Baths, Elvet Waterside (NDHA)

The building is located at the east end of Elvet Waterside, facing the River Wear, and near to The Racecourse with Old Elvet behind to the south. It was built in the 1920s on the site of the original baths and wash house c.1856, and is in an inter-war style with a strong presence on the riverside. The swimming baths stayed open until 2008, the building has been disused since this time. It is in a derelict and severely deteriorated physical condition, worsend as it is prone to vandalism.

Options appraisal

- Mixed use potential.
- Within floodplain placing significant restrictions.Requires awareness of flood prevention as an essential measure in any design work.
- Retention and reuse of existing building to be explored as may be the only option.
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- Retentation of historic boundary walls.
- Particular emphasis would need to be given to the direct inter-visibility between the site and Durham WHS.
- Would need to respond positively to historic urban, riverscape, and landscape contexts.
- Consider contemporary design interventions of exceptional quality.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site images

Former industrial buildings, Back Western Hill (NDHA)

The site formerlly hosted a series of Victorian industrial buildings of different phases of construction, originally dating from the late 19th century. They have been been demolised due to structural failure that has left a derelict eyesore site in the context of the back lane that offers a redevelopmnet opportunity.

Options appraisal

- Residential use potential.
- Redevelopment between 1 and 3 storeys.
- Must respond to the topography and general back street character.
- Density must be broken down by inclusion of building line and height varients responding to the gradient.
- Elevation treatments to be simple and could draw from the former historic industrial character, including contemporary approach.
- Materials to be high quality reflecting the traditional material palette of the area.
- Very limited scope for private amenity space and parking provision given physical constraints.
- Impacts on surrounding trees would need to be considered.

Site location

Site images

Mounty Joy, Farm Buildings (NDHA)

The site comprises of a group of Victorian farm buildings located in the south west corner on the top of the hill at Mount Joy. They comprise of a farm house and a collection of outbuildings, adjacent to the north. The buildings have been disused for a prolonged period of time. The farmhouse is in a reasonable condition but the outbuildings are very dillapidated, have missing roofs, sections have collapsed with others unstable.

Options appraisal

- Farm house previously in use as office accommodation.
- Farm house in sound condition and easily adaptable to appropriate new use with minimal intervention conserving historic character.
- Farm house requires some fabric restoration work.
- Outbuildings require feasiability study and condition survey.
- Desirability to retain, restore and re use but the physical fabric is very dilapidated, and repurposing may be unviable.
- Outbuildings have limited new use potential.
- Constrained site on edge of Science Park with limited private access.

Site location plan

Site images

6.2 Opportunities (gap sites)

Site 1 Back Silver Street

The site is located at lower river level, Back Silver Street. It previously hosted a series of buildings of residential and small commercial uses, that were cleared in the 1970s/80s. It is a split level site that retains extensive buttressed retaining walls and numerous small parcels of land, overgrown with scrub and self seeded trees, a disused garage block, and dilapidated refuse store. The derelict site detracts from the local historic industrial character and the areas visual appearence.

Key design paramaters

- Up to 5 storyes in height.
- Layout and arrangement to respond positively to the historic urban grain.
- Provide a strong active frontage to Fowlers Yard.
- Composition influenced by simple traditional shapes and forms.
- Present a positive response to the local vernacular that could be a high quality contemporary interepretation.
- Roofscape a significant aspect in surrounding views that must respect the "tumbling" roofscape from the back of the Market Place down to the riverside.
- Limited high quality palette of materials.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site image

Site 2 John Street

The site is located at the end of John Street within a dense residential area, characterised by Victorian terraces. Historically it hosted two dwellings which were demolished in the 20th century with two garages remaining on the site until c.2000. It was later cleared and used as a yard, and has been vacant and disused for many years. It comprises of overgrown hardstanding, scrub with a larger overgrown retaining wall enclosed by security fencing, that detracts from the character and visual appearence of the area.

Key design paramaters

- Orientated to face Holly Street with a two storey domestic frontage.
- Linear terraced form to respect surrounding grid pattern of streets.
- Stepped blocks to break down scale and massing.
- Traditional pitched roof form including stepped eaves and ridge lines.
- Simple elevations with rhythm, vertical balance and symetrical fenestration to reflect surrounding treatements.
- Rear elevation to follow themes of verticality and uniformity.
- Good quality red brick facade with natural slate roof coverings.
- Should present a positive response to the local vernacular that could be a high quality contemporary interpretation.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site images

Site 3 The Avenue

The site is located between Nos 24 and 25 the Avenue. It has been continuously undeveloped since the construction of the surrounding housing in the late 19th century. Despite this it stands out in the terraced streetscene as being at odds with the prevailing character. It is disused and overgrown with harsh close boarded fencing that contributes nothing positive to the character and visual appearence of The Avenue. Sensitively designed infill development would enhance the streetscene.

Key design paramaters

- Terraced infill development responding to the terraces flanking either side.
- 2 storey street frontage with attic accomodation with 3 storeys to the rear,
- Front and rear alignments responding to existing building lines.
- Limiting depth to provide occupier amenity space.
- Traditional form, proportions, good quality traditional materials.
- Simple elevations with rhythm, and vertical balance.
- Simple traditional form to the rear.
- Reflect dominance of solid masonry to windows, as seen in surroundings
- Detailing drawn from historic precedent.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site images

Site 4 Claypath

The site is located on the south side of Claypath and is a notable gap in the continuous historic streetscene between Nos 79 and 80. It was previously occupied by a building from the 19th century up until the late 20th century. It comprises of a refuse store enclosed by timber fencing with scrub land behind. The site detracts from the character and visual amenity of Claypath. Sympathetic infill would positively regenerate the site and improve the historic streetscene.

Key design paramaters

- Different use options residential, commerical or leisure.
- Infill development responding to the stepped nature of the building and roof lines that characterise the street.
- Maximum of 3 storeys.
- Scale, height and massing to respect surroundings.
- Vertical expression and balance to the front elevation onto the street.
- Design and detailing drawn from the positive characteristis of the historic buildings in the vicinity, but could be a contemporary interpretation.
- Detailing must not be overly fussy.
- Materials to be traditional, high quality, and drawn from existing material palette.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site images

Site 5 St Johns Road

The site is located at the north end of St John's Road. It was previously occupied by a filling station fronting the A167 NewCastle Road up until 2006. The site was cleared and remains a vacant prominent site in the street frontage where it is enclosed by close-boarded timber fencing with its poor hard surfaces visible. In its current form it detracts from the local characer and visual amenity, and sensitive redevelopment has the potential to improve matters.

Key design paramaters

- Suitable for residential development given predominance of residential uses in the surrounding area.
- Must respond positively to local plan form and modest terracing that characterises the sites surroundings.
- Must provide active frontages to both NewCastle Road and St Johns Road.
- Should of be a locally inspired character with design inspiration taken from historic buildings within the area.
- Vertical expression, ordered and well balanced elevation treatement.
- Simple detailing drawn from the locality.
- Materials to be traditional, high quality, and drawn from existing material palette.
- Should present a positive response to the local vernacular that could be a high quality contemporary interepretation.

Site location plan

Site highlighted in local context

Site images

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