



Conservation Area Management Plan

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area



All Maps © Crown copyright and database rights
2024 Ordnance Survey LA 100049055.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 What is a conservation area?.....	2
1.2 What is the purpose of this appraisal?.....	3
2. Overview	5
2.1 Location and description.....	6
2.2 Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area boundary	8
2.3 Summary of special interest.....	11
2.4 Topography and setting	13
2.5 Historic development.....	17
2.6 Heritage assets	25
2.7 Townscape – positive contributors	28
2.8 Archaeology	29
2.9 Landscape, green and blue infrastructure assets	30
2.10 Landmarks, views and vistas	31
2.11 Movement, activity and atmosphere.....	34
2.12 Land Use.....	38
2.13 Layout, pattern and grain.....	39
2.14 Character areas	41
3. Street characterisation	42
3.1 Character area 1 (historic core).....	42
3.2 Character area 2 (College of St Hild and St Bede)	83
3.3 Character area 3 (Kepier)	106
3.3 Character area 4 (Freemans Place, Millennium Place and The Sands).....	119
4. Condition of place and strenghts, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (S.W.O.T) analysis	136
4.1 Condition of place	137
4.2 S.W.O.T.....	138
4.3 Opportunities and options appraisal.....	140

I. Introduction



1.1 What is a conservation area?

The statutory definition of a conservation area, as defined in the primary legislation, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is:

"An area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

In determining the above there are no specific set criteria upon which an area is designated. But there are several key elements that are generally considered. These include the topography and landscape, building ages and architectural styles, the materials used and detailing, street patterns and grain, land uses, the public realm, green spaces, boundary treatments, and views.

The extent to which buildings and structures contribute generally derives from their frontages onto the street that is most experienced in the public domain. But in many places the sides and rears of buildings and streets can also be viewed, particularly in Durham City where many buildings and areas can be seen three dimensionally. This is due to how the buildings have developed in response to the landform and how the city has evolved over the centuries, spreading out in all directions from the peninsula.

Spaces can contribute very positively, connecting buildings and places, dictating movement, and creating interactions. These range from key open historic civic spaces such as Durham Market Place, to the contemporary Millennium Square, intimate medieval streets, narrow historic vennels and green lanes, and the riverside footpaths.

Green spaces are in abundance in Durham City, and they contribute significantly to its special character, distinctiveness, and sense of place. They vary greatly in type, use and extent, ranging from large areas of dense ancient woodland, local nature reserves, community allotment gardens, public parks, private front gardens in the streetscene, roadside verges, the riverbanks, and street trees.

Such green assets and the wider surrounding landscape have high scenic and aesthetic qualities that enhance the setting of buildings, streets, spaces, and the city as a whole. All of the above, and the varying topography, create and provide different visual experiences, and ambiances, with notable historic landmarks featuring in a range of different views.

The designation of a conservation area under the Town and County Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/69> gives the Local Planning Authority (LPA) certain statutory and general duties:

- **s69(1)** requires the LPA to designate from time to time any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas,
- **s69(2)** requires the LPA to review such designations from time to time.
- **s71(1)** requires the LPA to formulate, prepare and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas from time to time.
- **s72(1)** requires that when assessing applications for development in conservation areas, the LPA must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas.

1.2 What is the purpose of this appraisal?

The key objective of this character appraisal is to define, and provide an understanding, of the special interest of Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area. It identifies and evaluates the different elements and features and how they contribute to the area's distinctiveness, sense of place, character, and appearance, which justifies its designation. It then identifies the issues, problems, and potential threats the conservation area faces, and the opportunities, that assist to inform the management aims and action set out in the overarching management strategy document.

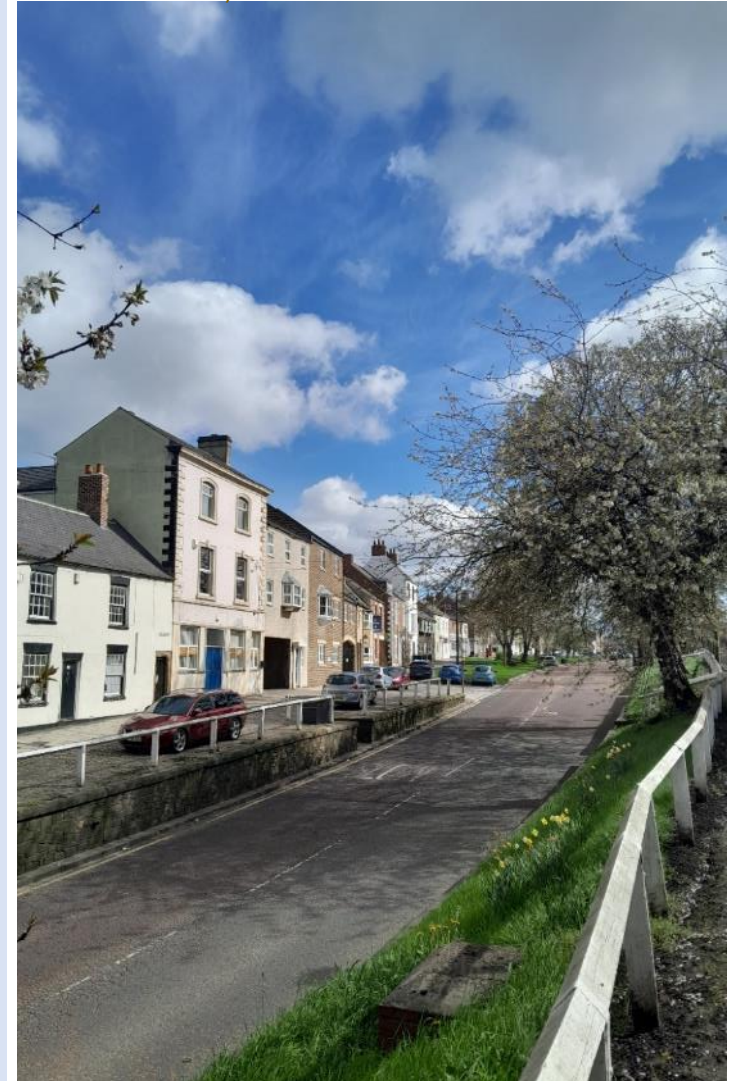
This appraisal will be an important tool and evidence base to inform the area's on-going management to ensure its special architectural and historic interest is conserved and where possible enhanced moving forwards. It has been prepared in accordance with Historic England's *Advice Note 1, Conservation Area, Appraisal, Designation and Management*, 2nd edition. (2019).

The appraisals form part 2 of the Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP). Part 1 is the Durham City Strategic Context document, and part 3 the Management Strategy.

The documents should be read in combination, the purpose of the Strategic Context document is to;

- Set out the approach to the protection of the city's special architectural and historic interest and how this can deliver other positive placemaking outcomes.
- Set out an overview of the city in terms of its special interest, historic timeline, topography & landscape context.
- Provide an understanding of the seven individual conservation areas, their inter-relationships and how in combination they inform the overall heritage significance of Durham City.
- Provide an understanding of the process and methodology that has been carried out.
- Set out how the Durham City Conservation Area has evolved from its original designation in 1968 through to its subdivision to seven conservation areas.
- Set out the justification for the designation of the seven new conservation areas.
- Set out how the CAMP documents work, and how they sit alongside other strategies and plans that are in place and emerging.

Fig 1 below. The view up Gilesgate Bank of the fine historic streetscape enhanced by green features and an important gateway route into the city centre.



Together the conservation area character appraisal and wider management strategy will:

- Help decision makers to be able to assess the impact of new development proposals and change upon the area's special interest, character, and appearance.
- Provide a detailed understanding of the area's special interest that can be used to inform future planning decisions.
- Identify positive features to be preserved, and negative features to be improved.
- Identify potential future risks to the area's special interest and character so that they can be avoided.
- Offer solutions to the issues and potential risks through the management aims and actions.
- Identify positive opportunities for change and improvements.
- Support the delivery of good design and assist in the preparation and implementation of enhancement and regeneration opportunities when they arise.

Fig 2 below. The splendid view from the elevated grass verge above Leazes Road looking over the College of St Hild and St Bede with Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site in the background.



2. Overview



2.1 Location and description

Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area occupies the northeastern part of the city centre. The boundary stretches from Leazes Road and Milburngate Road Bridge to the Sherburn Road and Sunderland Road junction and the site of Kepier Hospital at the riverside to the east.

Gilesgate is a distinctive, and complex environment with a medieval single street layout at its historic core. This route was once continuous down Claypath into the Market Place. The area grew up around St Giles' Church and the village green and is lined by buildings ranging from the 17th to the 20th century.

The conservation area includes the historically important medieval Kepier Hospital site, together with its orchard and farmland, and the late 19th century College of St Hild and St Bede. There is a series of characterful Victorian terraced streets such as Leazes Place, Ravensworth Terrace, and Magdalene Street, and the individually designed 21st century riverside development along Freemans Place.

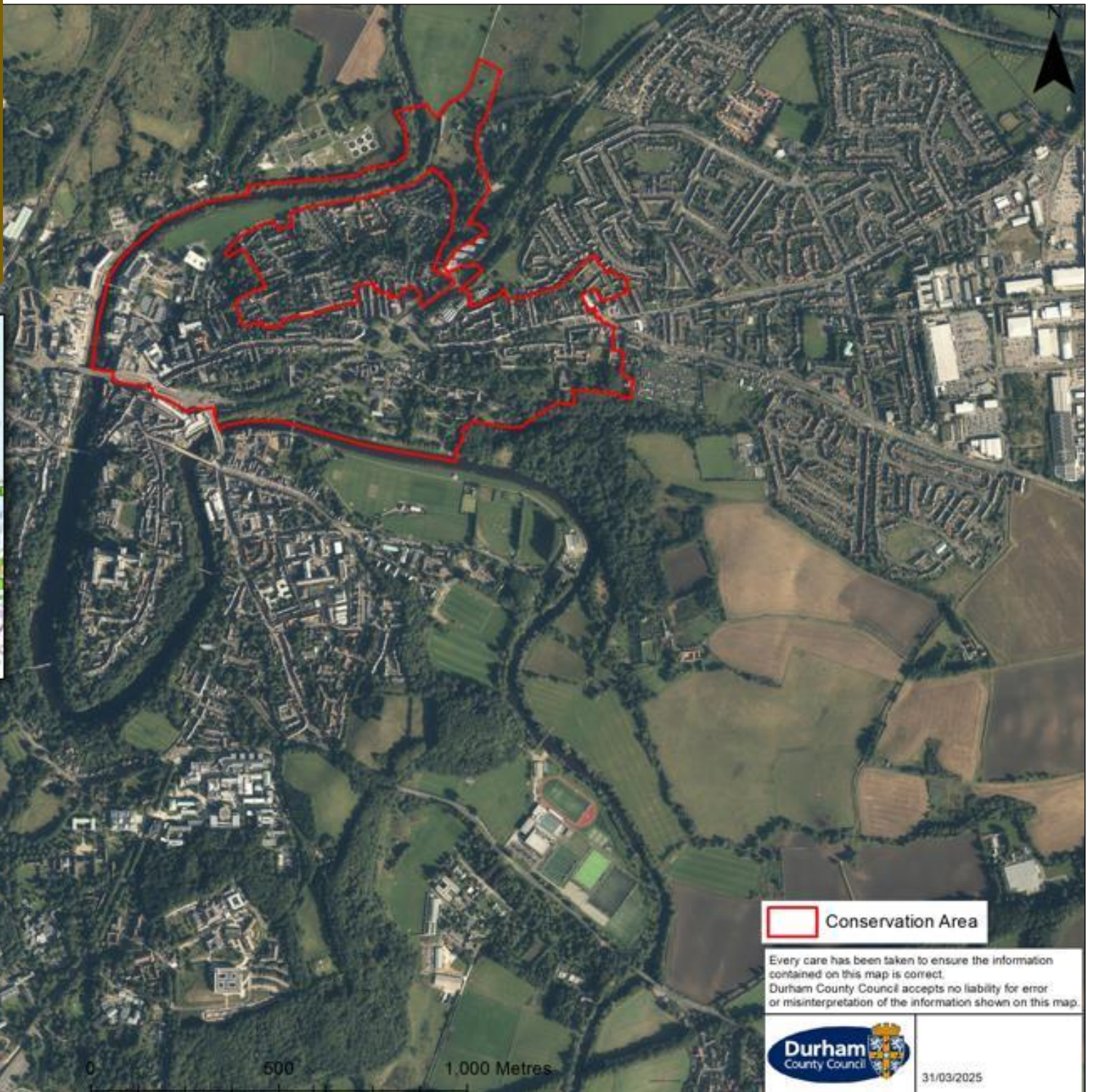
A defining characteristic of the area is the juxtaposition of the built and natural environments with dense residential, commercial, leisure and educational development on or bordering the flatter open floodplain land and on the steeply rising land of the River Wear valley terrace.




Fig 3 above and right. A selection of images showing different parts of the conservation area. Above, Gilesgate Bank demonstrating the broader landscape setting. Right top; the Victorian terrace of Ellis Leazes one of a series that characterise the north side of Gilesgate roundabout, middle; Claypath and bottom; the fine collection of dwellings on the south side of Gilesgate Village Green.

Map 1 Location plans

A location plan of Durham City highlighted in the wider County Durham context (inset below) and an aerial map showing Gilesgate Conservation Area in the wider city centre settlement context.



 Conservation Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.



31/03/2025

2.2 Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area boundary

Description

The west boundary follows the course of the River Wear north from Millburngate Road Bridge up to Kepier Hospital. It then turns south bypassing Kepier Training Centre up to the A690 capturing the ruins of St Mary Magdalene Chapel. From here it heads east around the outer edge of The Sidings and the buildings on the north side of Gilesgate up to and including McNally Place.

From this point it crosses over to the Sunderland Road and Sherburn Road junction continuing around Vane Tempest Hall and The Laurels. It then heads west around the grounds of the College of St Hild and Bede down to the river up to New Elvet Bridge where it follows Leazes Road back to the road bridge.

There is a large gap in the boundary between Gilesgate and the river as it excludes the area of modern residential housing and student accommodation at The Sands that includes Wearside Drive, Ferens Close, Ferens Park and Orchard Drive.

The following provides a list of the key points that have informed the Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area boundary identification process:

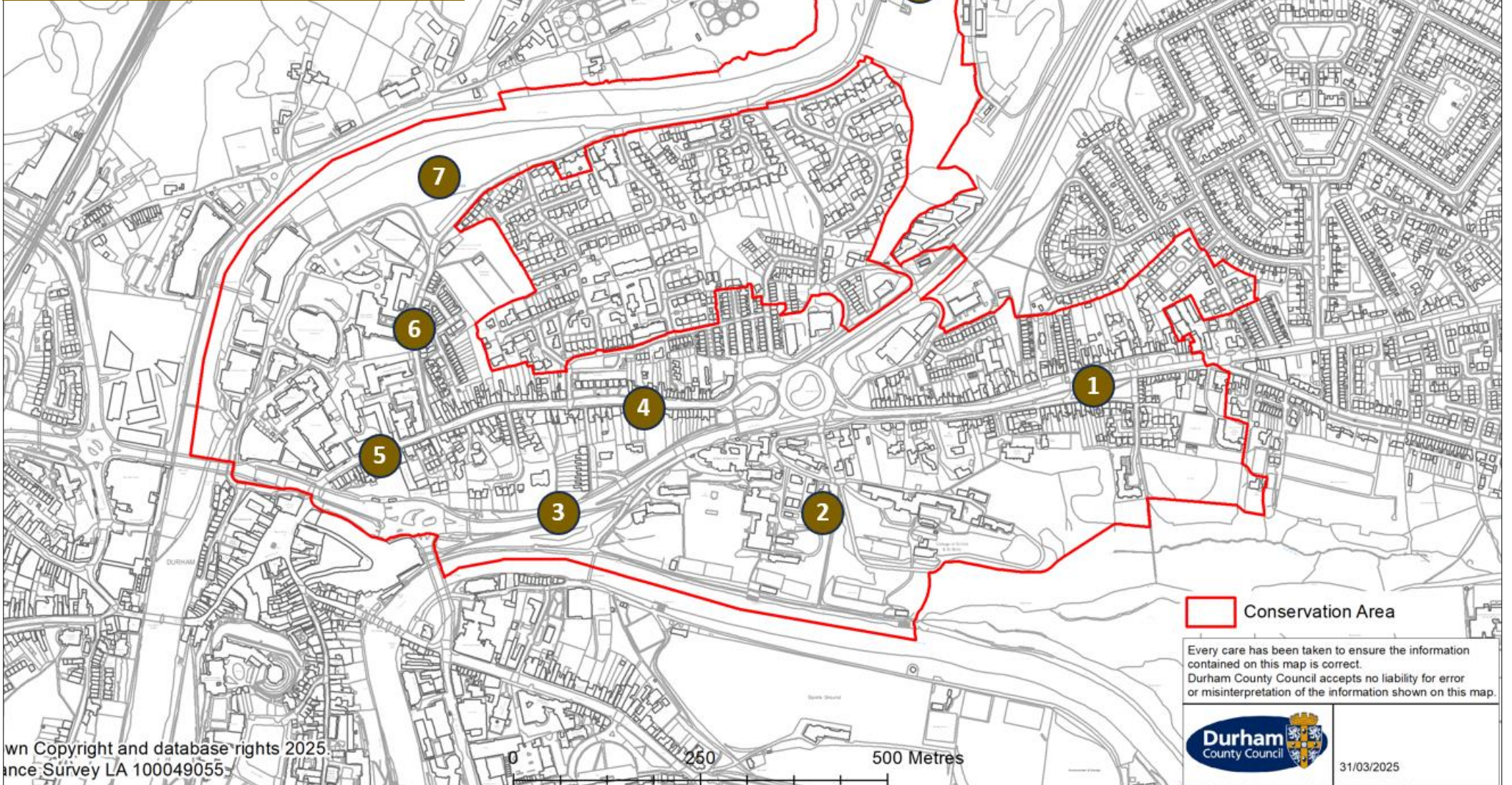
- The historic core is focussed on the medieval street pattern that is part of the city's wider medieval town plan.
- The area is loosely informed by the historic borough of the city "St Giles" established by c.1250.
- The boundary is drawn to include the medieval site of Kepier Hospital that has a direct historic connection with St Giles' Church.
- The north, west and south boundaries are naturally defined by the River Wear.
- The boundary excludes the student accommodation at St Giles' Studio, the modern filling station and local retail centre as they are modern developments of no special interest
- The early 20th century terraced housing at Wynyard Grove is excluded as it is segregated from the historic core by the 20th century filling station. It is a limited contributor to the street scene and is heavily altered lacking historic integrity.
- The boundary has been rationalised to terminate at the end of the village green that is the principle historic identity of Gilesgate.
- The Sands is included as a historic open green space with the river corridor route an important historic connection to Kepier.
- The purpose built student accommodation at Chapel Heights has been excluded as it is of no historic interest and is architecturally neutral.
- The Army Reserve Centre is included as a prominent site, of distinctive 1950's municipal architecture with high social and communal values.
- The boundary has been drawn to capture the small housing estate at McNally Place as a good local example of 1950's social housing.
- The Sidings is included as despite being a modern housing development, its location within the historic townscape has been a factor in the good quality pastiche design.

The conservation area represents an important piece of Durham City's townscape, topography and landscape that is intrinsic to its character and sense of place. It has significant historic, evidential, aesthetic, and communal/social values, to merit designation, that deserves careful management to preserve or enhance.

Map 2 Conservation area boundary

A detailed map of the conservation area boundary (red) with the main streets identified.

1. Upper Gilesgate (east)
2. College of St Hild and St Bede
3. Leazes Road
4. Lower Gilesgate (west)
5. Claypath
6. Providence Row
7. The Sands
8. Kepier



Map 3 Conservation area boundary (aerial map)

The aerial map shows the boundary in detail and the distinction between the urban and natural environments with the surrounding city faded out to give greater clarity.



 Conservation Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.



27/11/2024

2.3 Summary of special interest

Architectural interest

- The area's high architectural quality and diversity ranging from medieval barns, gatehouse and church to Georgian townhouses, Victorian terraces, 1950's social housing, and individually designed contemporary developments.
- The notable historic landmarks of individual design including St Giles' Church, United Reform Church, Durham 6th Form Centre, College of St Hild and St Bede, and Vane Tempest Hall.
- The high number of listed buildings, locally listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets combining to generate a high-quality townscape.
- The variation in architectural style, character and distinctiveness moving from place to place.
- The prevailing use of traditional building materials, techniques, architectural features, and detailing.

Historic interest

- The area's importance as an intrinsic part of the wider medieval town plan.
- The surviving and legible medieval layout and plan form, including the burgage plot pattern, vennels and village green.
- The high significance of the medieval Kepier Farm group and its historic connection to St Giles' Church.
- The high significance of the collection of buildings forming the College of St Hild and St Bede, and in being part of Durham University.
- The legible 19th century residential expansion and the character this generates.



Fig 4 above. An image of Vane Tempest Hall of 1863 the Durham Militia headquarters, now a community centre.

Topography and setting

- The unique and varied topography ranging from flat open floodplain land at The Sands, undulating farmland at Kepier and the steep sides of the river valley rising to the Gilesgate ridge line.
- The value of the topography constraining and shaping the built environment.
- The area's significant value as an intrinsic part of the setting to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, and the other Durham City Conservation Areas.
- The importance of the topography in terms of the views it creates, and the significant role the landscape plays in views.



Fig 5 above. The view from Green Lane of the parkland at the College of Hild and Bede and the buildings lining the Gilesgate ridgeline.

Green and blue infrastructure assets

- The abundance, variation and high aesthetic quality and value of the green spaces and features.
- The green assets of higher significance with social and communal values such as the historic village green, the college parkland, and The Sands.
- The value of the green spaces in terms of enhancing the setting of historic buildings and providing important natural separation.
- The area's intrinsic and inseparable relationship with the river, surrounding countryside, woodland, and hills.



Fig 6 above. A view of the flat green open space at The Sands

Views and vistas

- The wide variation of views and the changing visual experiences they provide including views of significant historic landmarks.
- The strong visual relationship between the area, the castle and cathedral, and other Durham City Conservation Areas.
- The outward views of the surrounding landscape giving a hint of the hills and ridges that contain the historic city core.
- The high value of the historic streetscape views and their architectural diversity.



Fig 7 above. The view of Durham Cathedral between the buildings and above the rooftops from Gilesgate Bank.

Public realm

- The high quality public realm such as the village green, spaciousness around Leazes Road, and the riverside walks.
- The visual experiences, ambiances, and senses of place, that change with movement along different routes, streets and spaces.
- The good connectivity and accessibility the area has with other parts of the city, including the river and peninsula.
- The mixture of traditional and high quality contemporary hard landscaping.

Community and intangibles

- There is high significance in the life of the student communities at the College of St Hild and St Bede.
- The importance in terms of the collective memories of college life for students and staff.
- The importance of the colleges as part of the historic and internationally known Durham University.

2.4 Topography and setting

The unique topography (*the physical form, features, and appearance of land surfaces for example rivers, valleys, hills*) of Durham City is one of its most significant and striking features, shaping its plan, and built form and is a defining characteristic of its special interest

The city lies within a wide belt of coal measure in a broad valley at the confluence of two rivers, the River Browney, and the River Wear. In the Ice Age, glacial deposits of sands and gravels were left and choked the river valley. To avoid the buried river valley, the river cut into solid rock and created a narrow steep-sided gorge, resulting in the dramatic meander around the peninsula.

The historic core of the city is focussed on this deeply incised gorge forming a tight bend in the river which provided a strong defensive site and an arresting setting for the Norman castle and cathedral. The medieval city lay on the peninsula behind its defensive walls, spreading out across the neck of the peninsula and onto the opposing riverbanks from Framwellgate and Elvet Bridges and up the ridge to the north-east at Claypath and Gilesgate.

The surrounding mature hilly landscape forms an almost complete circuit around the historic city core. It stretches from Maiden Castle to the southeast, via High Wood and Hollingside Lane above the University site at Stockton Road,

through Lowes Barn, Neville’s Cross, Crossgate Moor and Windy Hill and finishing at Aykley Heads above Crook Hall. The river forms two breaks at Maiden Castle and Crook Hall but the area in between completes the circuit of the bowl with the high ground at Gilesgate.

This topography and the scenic landscape background it provides contains and defines the historic city, with Gilesgate Conservation Area a significant physical component.

Fig 8 below. A digital terrain map showing the varied topography of the city with the main ridges (dashed) and hills identified and the conservation area highlighted in red.



Gilesgate is unique within the city in that the main historic streets are laid over a ridge line where two sides of the steep river valley terraces meet. This is an intrinsic part of the complex of ridge lines that encircle and divide the city and which feature in the backdrop of many views. There are gaps in the street frontages that provide important views out. These give a sense of the physical and visual containment by the surrounding landscape that also generates a scenic wooded backdrop to the historic core of the city.

More intimately, the leafy parkland of the College of St Hild and St Bede and Pelaw Woods, encloses views to the north-east from the Elvet area. In contrast the north is dominated by residential development stepping down to the open flat floodplain land at The Sands. This continues eastwards as part of the robust river corridor stretching to Kepier. Here there is a very open landform of undulating farmland rising up to the A690.

The topography creates a series of important vantage points notably Gilesgate Bank, the A690 approach into the city, and from the college grounds. From such places, the castle and cathedral can be seen majestically in the skyline and dominating over the fragmented townscape.

The setting of the area is very mixed. It comprises of the surrounding historic townscape, dense areas of modern housing developing from the mid-20th century onwards, and the ancient woodland at Pelaw Woods.

Beyond the woodland is the flat open land of The Racecourse, the historic buildings at Old Elvet and modern buildings at Green Lane. In the north is a distinct rural landscape surrounding Crook Hall. Beyond this is Frankland Park comprising of open farmland, and ancient woodland, rising steeply to a wooded horizon at the railway line.

A major positive attribute of the conservation area's significance is the role its townscape plays as an essential component of the largely unaltered medieval plan and layout of the wider city centre.

Fig 9 below. *The view from Kepier Lane near the A690 showing the topographical form and scenic rural landscape that provides part of the character and setting to the conservation area.*



The city has retained the medieval historic street pattern together with its largely 19th century expansion, with swathes of green space that in places creates a semi-rural character. Whilst some 20th and 21st century development has altered the townscape; it remains characterised by a wide variety of historic buildings of different periods giving it a strong identity and sense of place.

The topography allows the historic evolution and multi-layered built development to be experienced and appreciated, while generating a series of high value views with Durham Castle and Cathedral the focus of many.

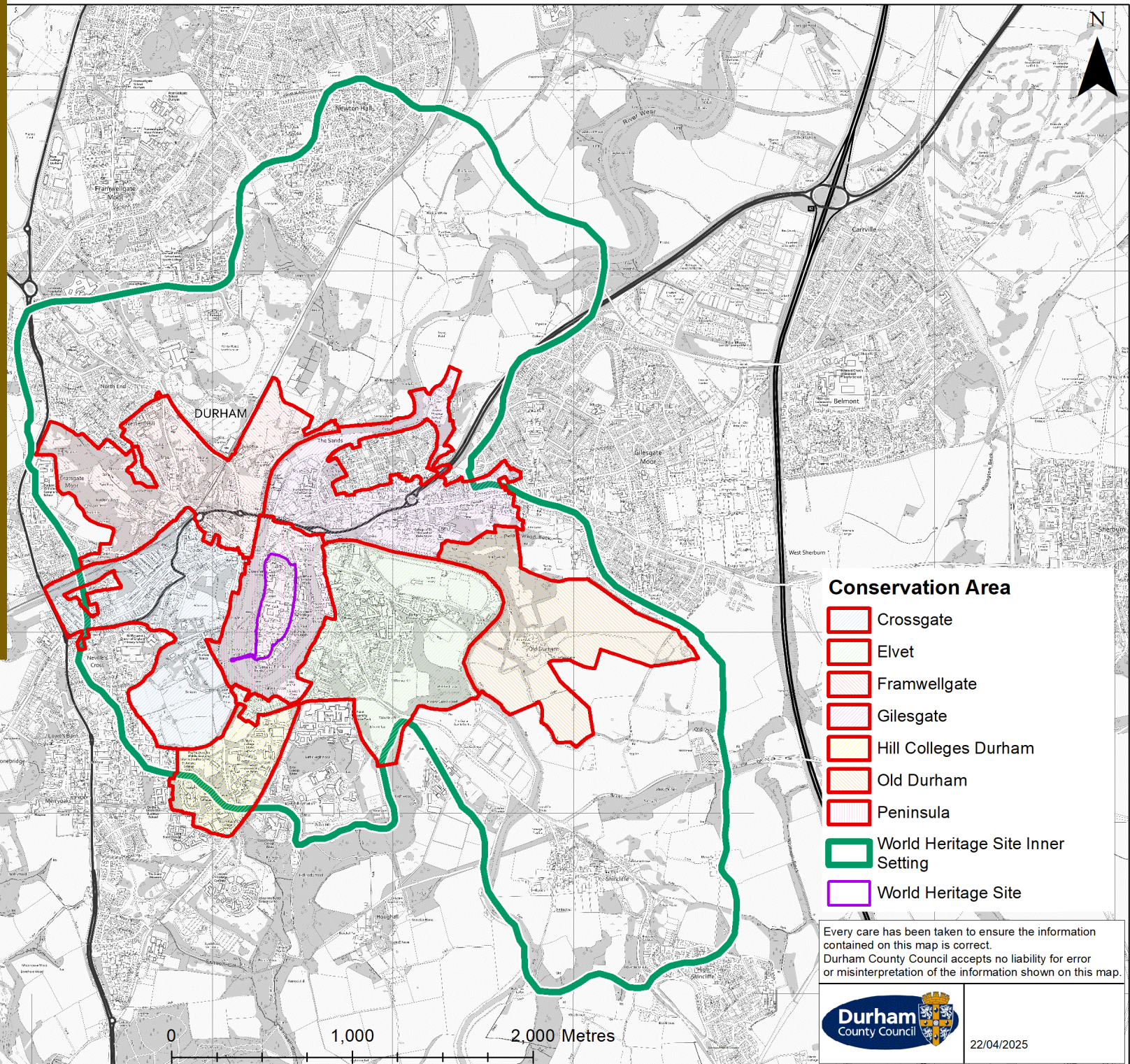
Gilesgate Conservation Area therefore has significant group value, an indivisible historic connection and physical relationship with the other Durham City Conservation Areas, that inform one another's setting.

Map 4 Setting

The map shows the 7 Durham City Conservation Areas in combination and the boundary of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, and its inner setting. This demonstrates the intrinsic relationship.

It should be noted that the World Heritage Site setting boundary is not tightly delineated but is more “zone” like where the topography, tree coverage, buildings heights, road, and street patterns determine cathedral visibility.

The inner setting is loosely defined as the ridges and hill tops surrounding the historic core of the city in which the World Heritage Site sits and contains the more significant views of the castle and cathedral.



Conservation Area

- Crossgate
- Elvet
- Framwellgate
- Gilesgate
- Hill Colleges Durham
- Old Durham
- Peninsula
- World Heritage Site Inner Setting
- World Heritage Site

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.

Fig 10 below. A sequence of views from within the conservation area showing the green “wall” that contains the City’s urban area giving hints at its distinctive topography and landscape setting. Views from Gilesgate Bank, Ravensworth Terrace, Claypath, the A690 slip road, and the terrace at Millennium Place.



2.5 Historic development

The historic plan form of Durham City has a typical medieval arrangement. It comprises a simple single street layout with the main roads and bridges directing movement into the main Market Place where goods could be sold, tolls collected, and pilgrims entertained before continuing on their journey to the cathedral. The city grew up around a number of key entrances and routes with Framwellgate and Crossgate leading north and west respectively. Gilesgate heading out in the east connecting Durham Cathedral Priory to its outer farm estate, and Elvet the main route out to Darlington and the south.

The city centre has not been heavily impacted by industrial development in the same way as other towns. Its medieval layout has been conserved with the separate ancient suburbs still legible. The medieval town comprised of a group of independent boroughs. Each borough had its own parish church, court, mill and bakehouse and the houses bordering the streets were laid out within long narrow strips of land or burgage plots, end on to the street. As the houses built up across the street frontages narrow alleys, or vennels were established to serve rear yards and stables, usually one for each pair of burgage plots.

One of the city boroughs was St Giles' which grew up around the hospital of St Giles,' founded in 1112, the first hospital to be built in County Durham.

St Giles' Church was built in the same year by Bishop Flambard and was constructed as a Chapel for the Hospital.

Gilesgate developed further to accommodate population displacement when the area north of the cathedral was cleared of housing in the 12th century. The early housing centred on the village green and St Giles' Church at the top of Gilesgate Bank. The buildings formed a linear pattern along the main route that was continuous up to the entrance into the Market Place. The village green still bears reference to its medieval form, although it has been dissected by a network of roadways and paths over time, while some of the houses still have surviving burgage plots.

The historically important site of Kepier Hospital stands in an isolated riverside location in the northeast part of the conservation area. The Hospital of St Giles' was founded by Bishop Flambard c.1112 and it stood on the hill near St Giles' Church which originally served as the hospital chapel. Bishop Pusey completely rebuilt the hospital circa 1180 on a new site at Kepier, and included an infirmary, dormitory and church dedicated to St Mary and All Saints.

Of the hospital only the 14th century gatehouse remains that leads to a courtyard on the opposite side of which is a 14th century building, now the farmhouse, partly on 12th century foundations. The site also includes the ruins of the 16th century Heath family mansion.

Hidden behind the main street frontage of Gilesgate near the Queen's Head Public House is Vane Tempest Hall, an important historic site built in 1865 as a military drill hall for the Second Durham Militia with the officers housing built around the edge of the village green. The Marquis of Londonderry established the unit hence its name.

Gilesgate was split at its western end by the introduction of the A690 in the 1960's resulting in the loss of many historic buildings. This breaks the medieval street pattern but has to some extent re-established Gilesgate as a separate area in the city, whilst Lower Gilesgate is now seen as extension to Claypath. However, the separation of the two historic streets of Gilesgate and Claypath is marked by the medieval vennel of Tinker's Lane.

The medieval single street layout survived largely unaltered up until the 19th century. During this time there were notable residential developments including streets such as Ravensworth Terrace, Renny Street, and Mayorswell Street. Also, of note to the south of Bakehouse Lane was the former County Penitentiary, established in 1853, that still stands today.

On the south side of Leazes Road is the College of St Hild and St Bede. Bede College was founded for men in 1839 with St Hild College founded for women founded later in 1858, the colleges amalgamated in 1976.

Fig 11 below. A map showing the old boroughs of the city,
© M Roberts used with permission.

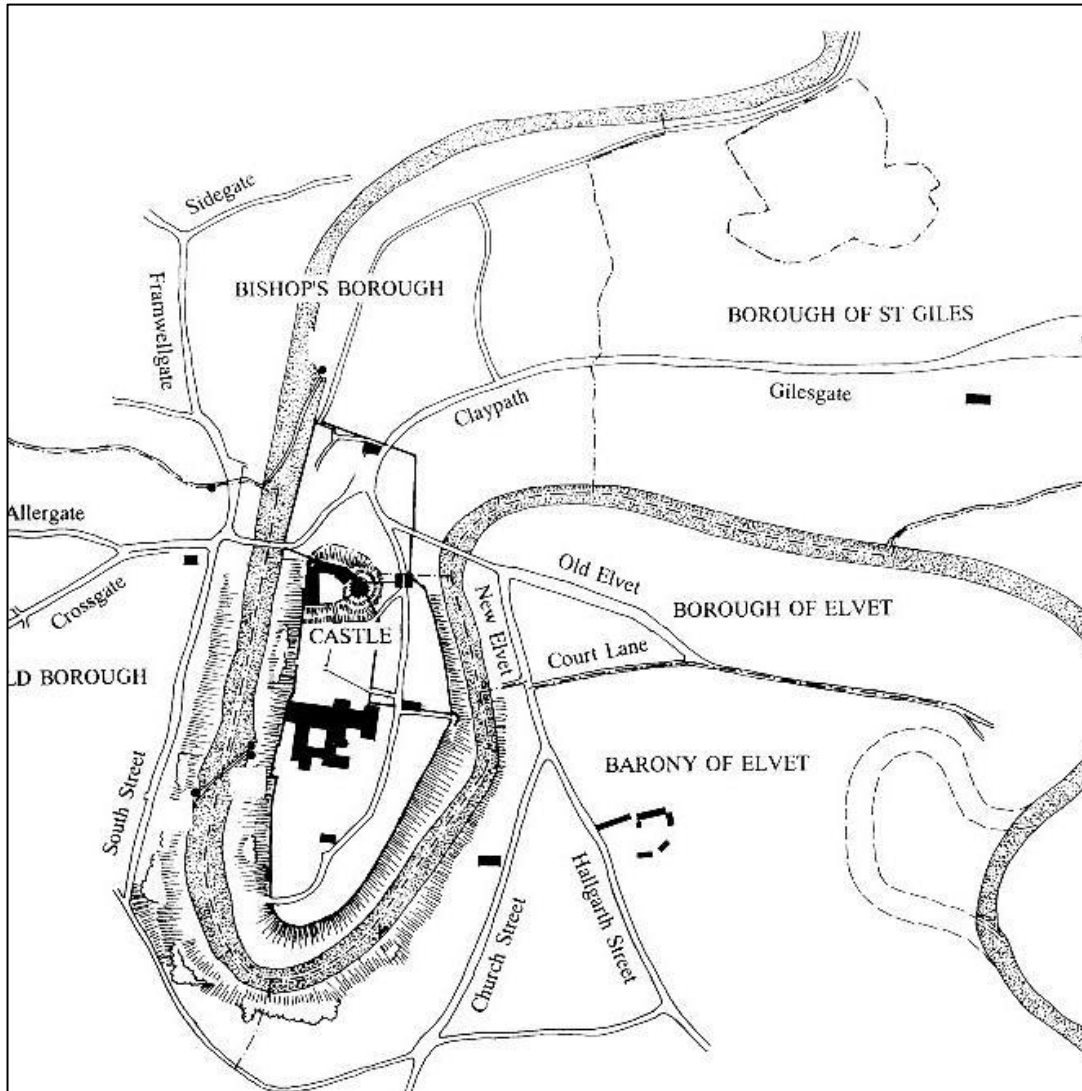
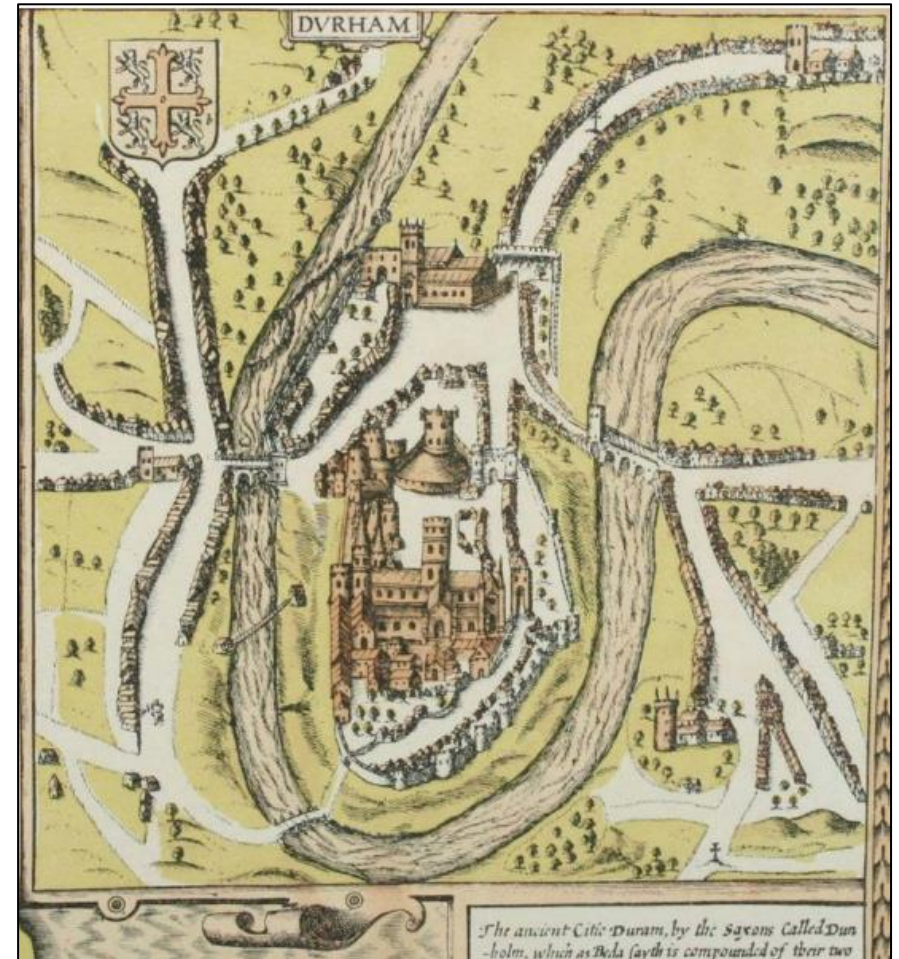


Fig 12 below. Speed's map of 1627 is one of the best early representations of the city. It shows the defensive gate at the Claypath entrance into the Market Place and a single curving street up to St Giles' Church.



Prior to the founding of the colleges the land had been used for agricultural purposes, divided into small square plots most likely for the growing of crops for the city. By the end of the 1800s this small field system had been replaced by parkland. By 1923 the St Hild's site had expanded to the south, taking over some of the allotment gardens to increase the number of buildings and provide some grounds.

The college site evolved to include a 'model school' and a principal's house, accessed from Pelaw Leazes Lane. By the 1960s all of the allotment gardens at the southern end of the site had disappeared and the land utilised for tennis courts, boat houses and parking facilities for the colleges.

Further developments at the college included The Chapel of the Venerable Bede (known as Bede Chapel) built in 1938-9, shortly followed by extensions to the main college buildings. In the early 1900's three large, detached dwellings were constructed on the southern side of St Hild's Lane, as was the Principal's House off Pelaw Leazes Lane. Further developments occurred in the 1960s and 1970s to provide further facilities, including a large hall of residence at the eastern end of the site.

The Army Reserve Centre occupies a dominant position just to the north of the A690. It was developed in the 1950s on land which was historically part of the St Mary Magdalene's Chapel site. To the north of which are modern infill housing developments such as Mayorswell Close, the northern extension of Douglas Villas (built on the site of the demolished Primary School), Magdalene Heights and Ashwood.

There has been significant change within the southwest part of the area between Millburngate Road Bridge, Providence Row and Freemans Place. Here, the former open car park on the south side of Claypath and former industrial buildings, mill buildings and ice rink that stood on the riverside, have been developed as part of the 21st century quarter including the Gala Theatre, Clayport Library, commercial and leisure units, hotel, office buildings, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre, and the University Business School.



Fig 13 above. The bottom of Gilesgate Bank the Durham Ox public house and DLI Drill Hall demolished to make way for the new through road c.1961-67 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00949),



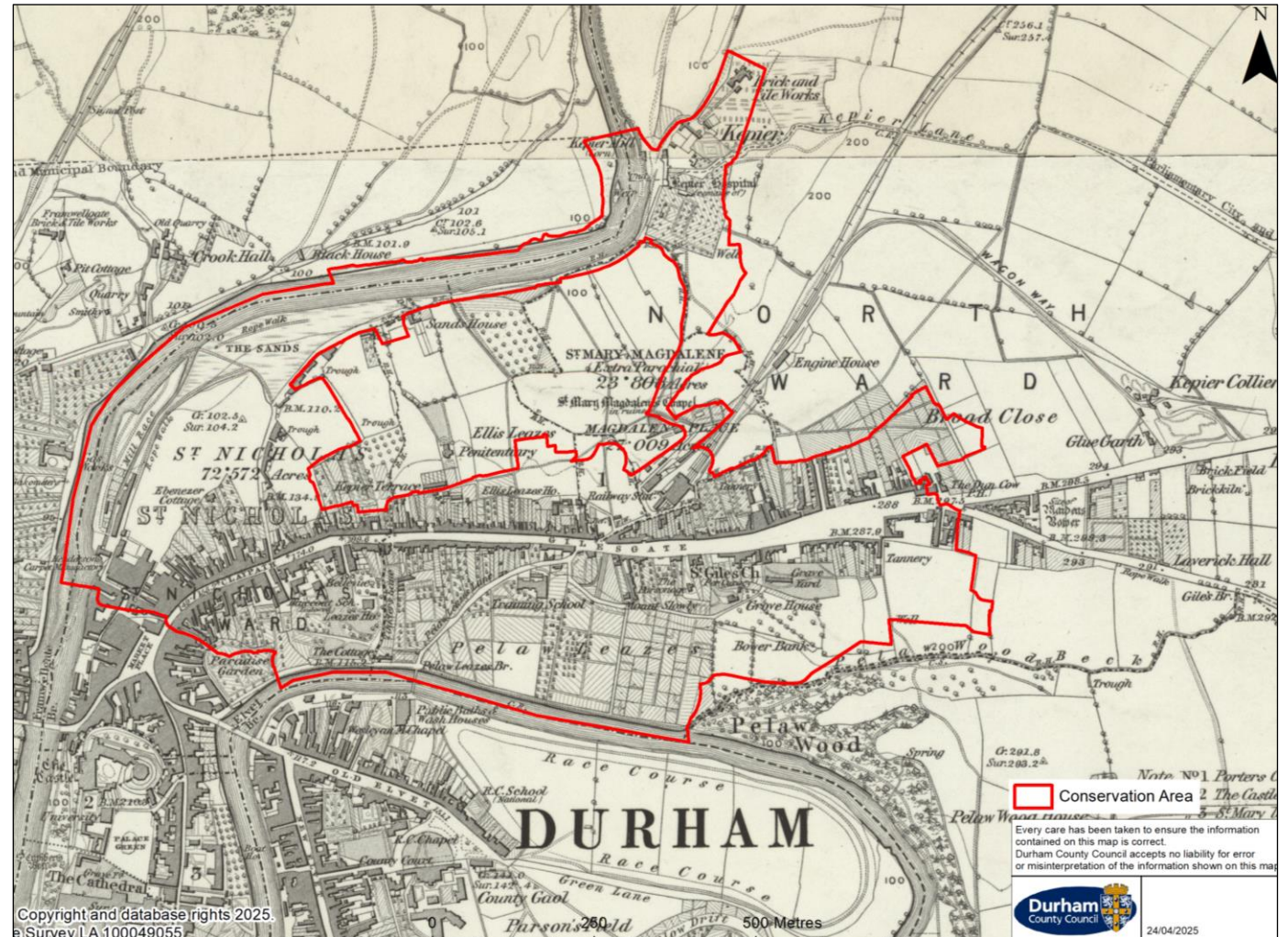
Fig 14 above. Durham City Horse Parade travelling down Gilesgate Bank c.1910 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR03494),

OS map c.1860, is one of the best surviving guides to the historic plan form of the city. It shows the Gilesgate area largely as its original medieval layout as a simple single street leading out from the Market Place to the east where it splits leading to Belmont and Sherburn. The railway line is seen travelling north with the station and sheds set behind the main street frontage of Gilesgate. The historic routes of Pelaw Leazes Lane, Tinklers Lane, and the route of Providence Row leading around The Sands to Kepier, are all identifiable. The south side is dominated by a patchwork of burgage plots and gardens down to the river, with the landscape in the north of large irregular fields and open spaces. It shows the industrial buildings of the “carpet manufacturers,” mill buildings, mill race and “rope walks” behind Claypath in the north.



Fig 16 above. St Giles' Church c.1900 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR02897),

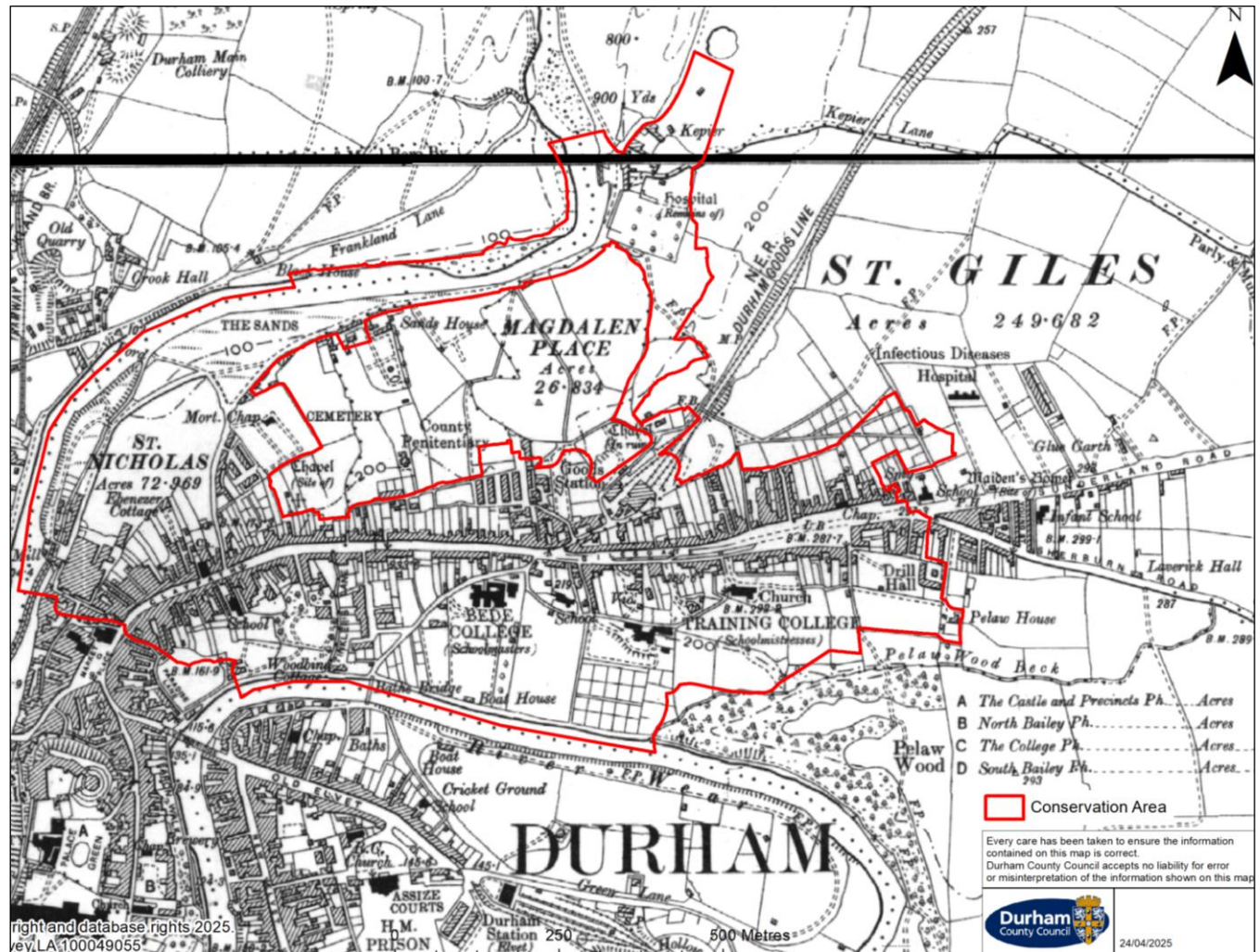
Fig 15 below. The following provides a sequence of historic ordnance survey map extracts from c.1860 to 1970-79.



OS map c.1898, the late 19th century map shows the main changes within the area as new buildings added at the College of St Hild and St Bede, residential terraces constructed adjacent to Gilesgate Goods Station, and Ravensworth Terrace. Also of note is the introduction of St Nicholas Mortuary Chapel and Cemetery.



Fig 17 above. Claypath c.1902-07 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00923),



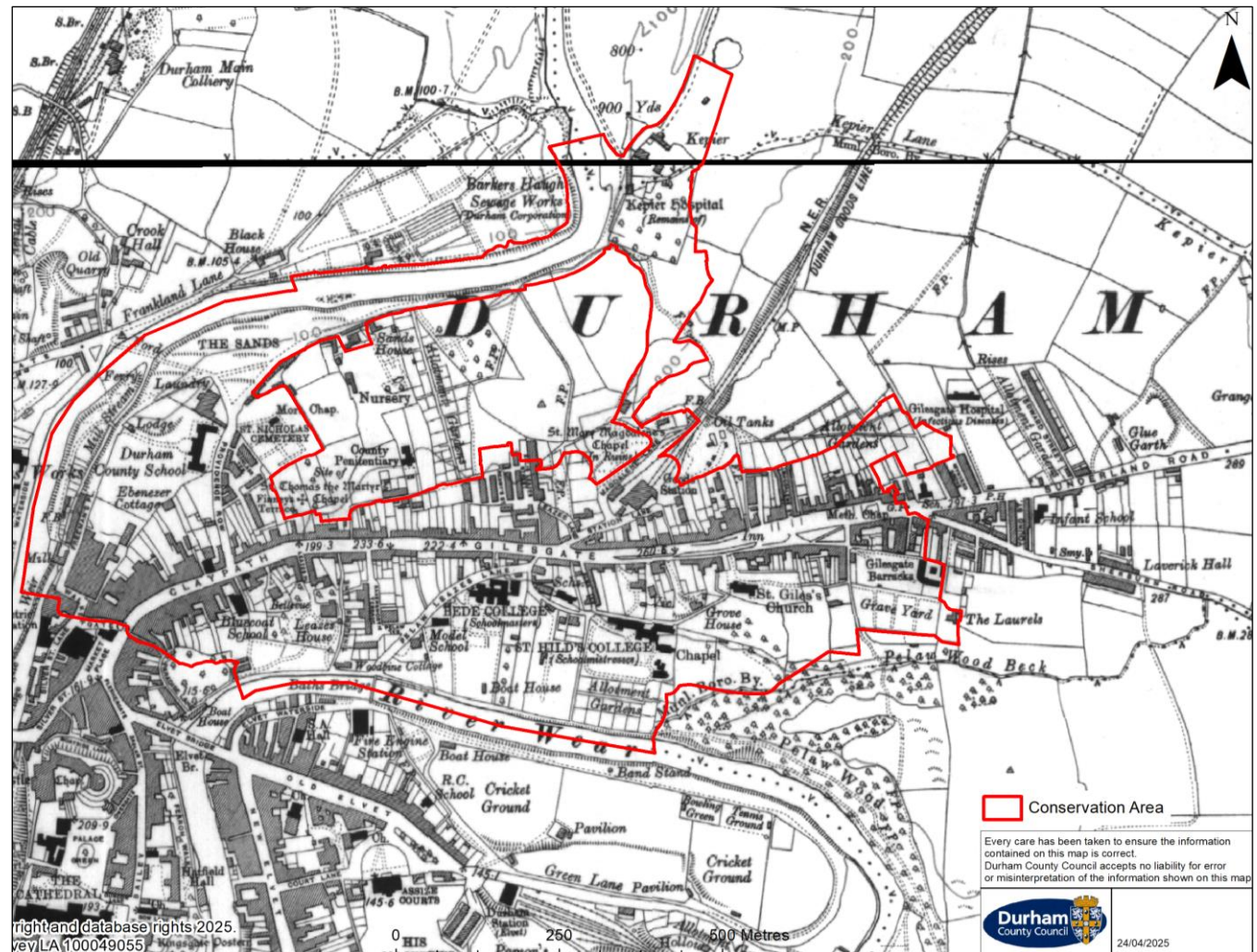
OS map c.1923, the early 20th century map shows limited physical change. Providence Row is named as such for the first time, Durham Sixth Form Centre, its lodge building, and laundry adjacent have been constructed, and new allotment gardens are shown next to Sands House.



Fig 18 above. Durham City view from Claypath 1922. Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00720),



Fig 19 above. Claypath c.1960, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00916)



OS map c.1970-79, by the 1970's the area has changed significantly mainly as a result of the new bypass road built in two stages from 1967 to 1975. This involved the demolition of housing in Gilesgate separating it from Claypath. The north part of the area is now dominated by housing development punctuated by Ferens Park football ground, the home of Durham City AFC. Further buildings have been added at the College of St Hild and St Bede, the gardens and fields have mostly been developed, and the former Ice Rink is recognisable.

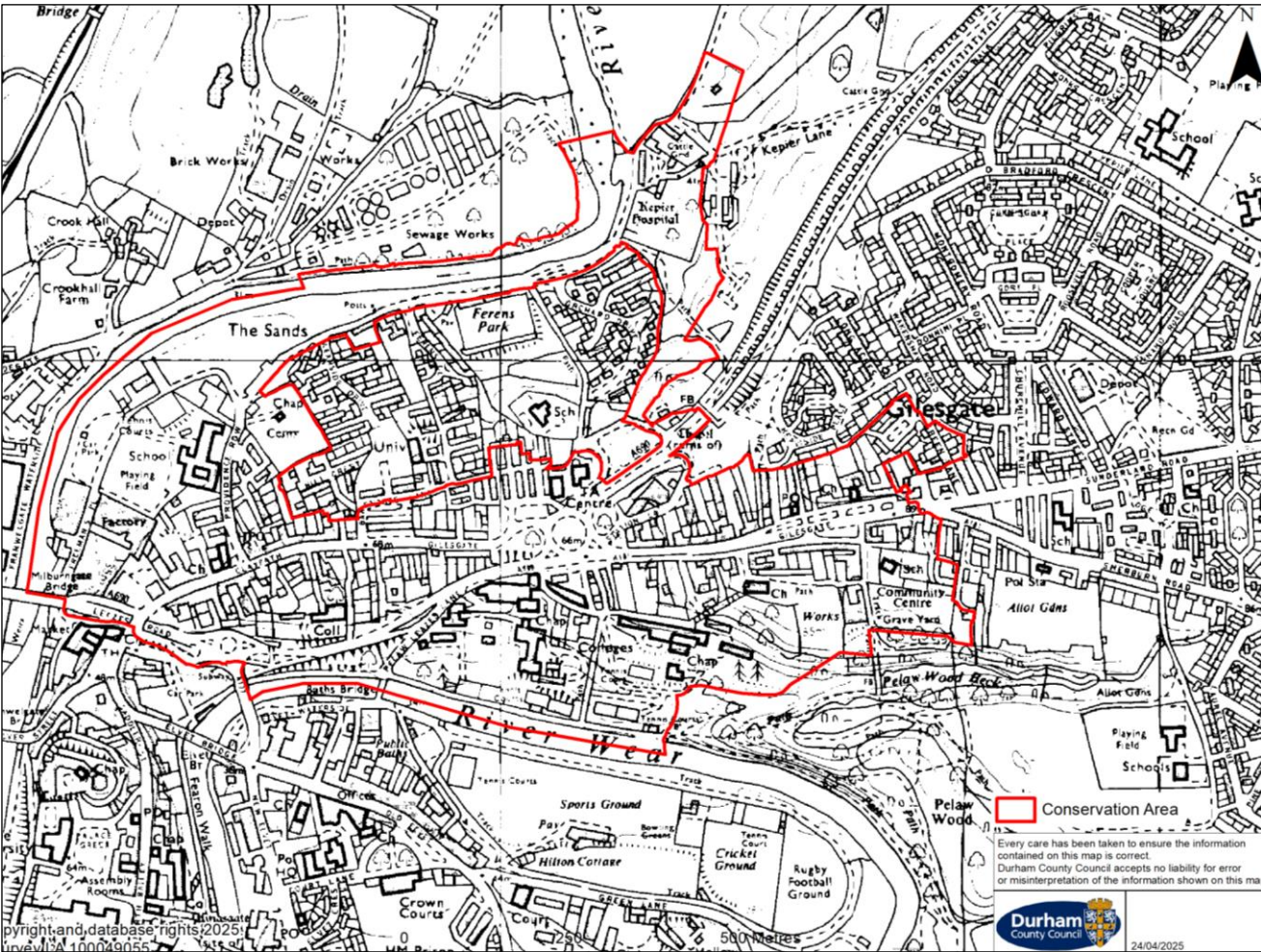
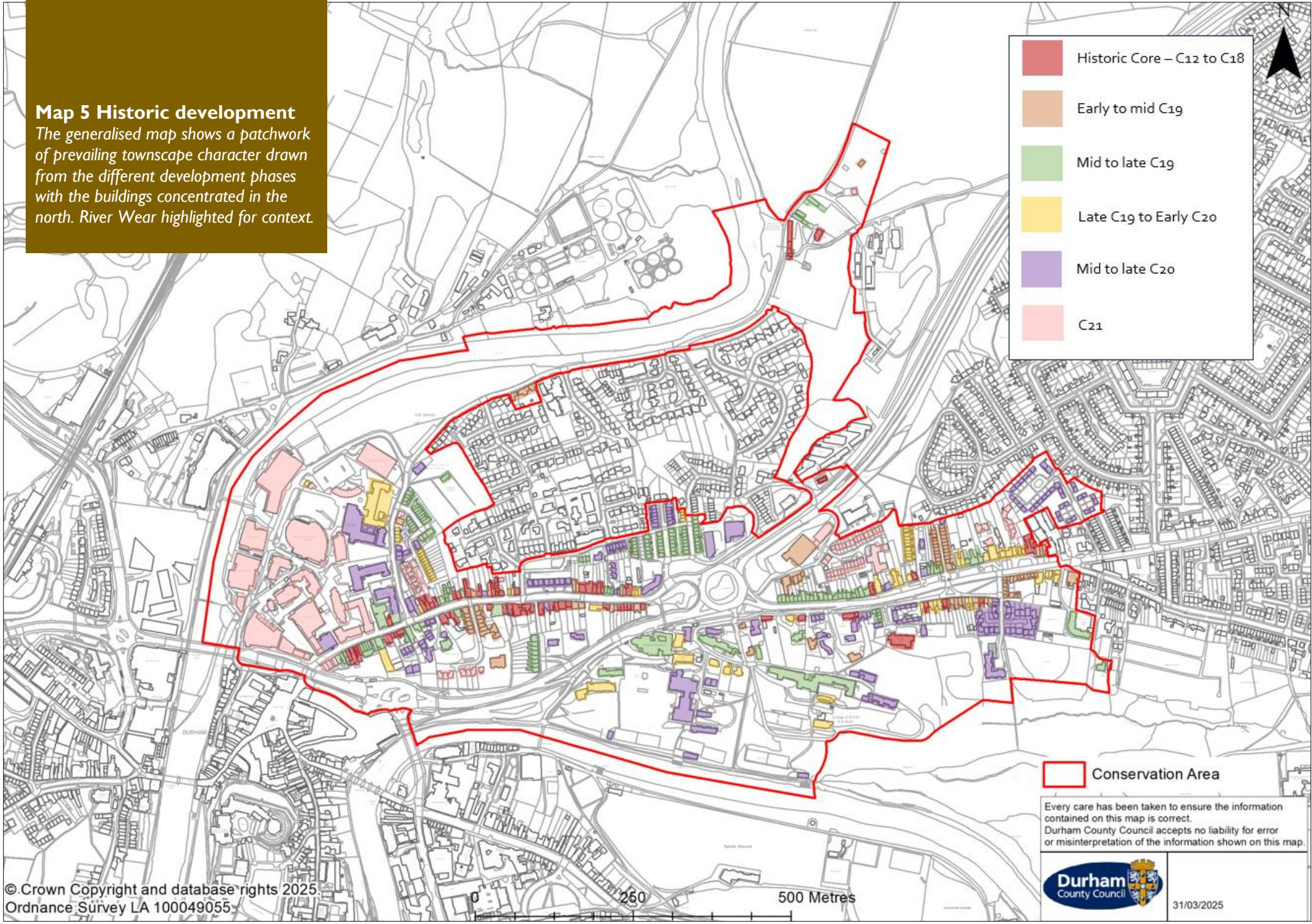


Fig 20 above. Lower Claypath 1978 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00921),

Map 5 Historic development

The generalised map shows a patchwork of prevailing townscape character drawn from the different development phases with the buildings concentrated in the north. River Wear highlighted for context.



- Historic Core – C12 to C18
- Early to mid C19
- Mid to late C19
- Late C19 to Early C20
- Mid to late C20
- C21

Conservation Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.

2.6 Heritage assets

Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset in its own right, contains numerous individual heritage assets. This includes both designated and non-designated buildings, structures and sites that create its historic identity and distinctiveness making a positive contribution to the conservation area.



Fig 20 above. The grade I listed Kepier Gatehouse.

The designated and non-designated heritage assets within the conservation area are identified on the following page.

Definition of heritage assets

Scheduled monuments

Archaeological sites and monuments which meet the test of national importance may be scheduled.

Listed buildings.

Listed Buildings are buildings and structures defined by the Secretary of State as being of "special architectural or historic interest." They include buildings and structures that are deemed to be of importance on a national scale.

Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, (only c.2.5% of listed buildings)

Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; (c.5.8% of listed buildings)

Grade II buildings are of special interest; (c.91.7% of all listed buildings)

Non-designated heritage assets and Locally Listed assets

These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, landscapes, or archaeology identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of their heritage interest but which do not meet the criteria for listing.

Fig 21 below. Images showing examples of NDHA at the College of St Hild and St Bede.



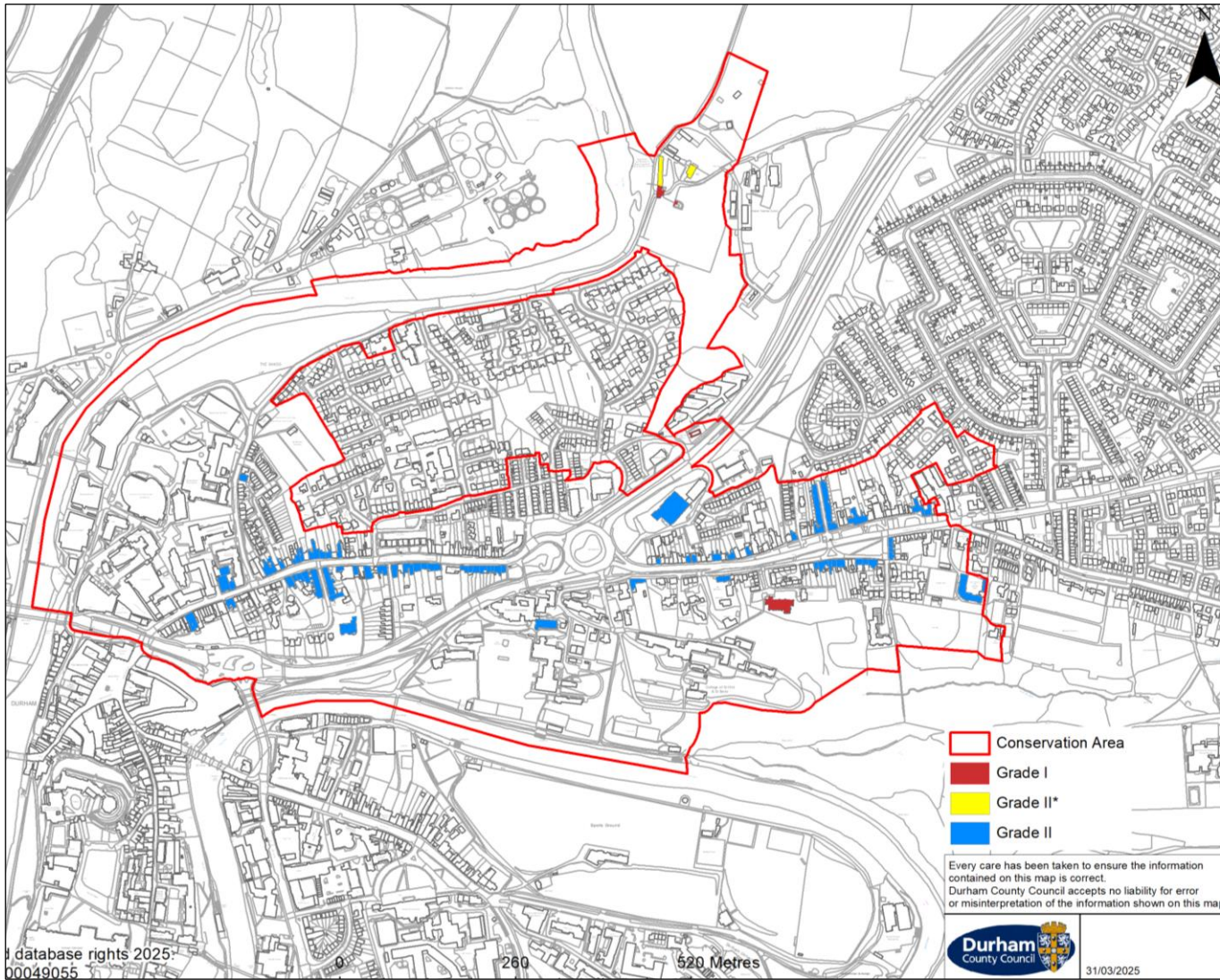
Map 6 Designated heritage assets

The map identifies the designated heritage assets within the conservation area.

Listed buildings can be searched, and other information found, on the National Heritage List which includes listed buildings and other statutory designations at:

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

Listed Buildings: Vane Tempest Hall, Gilesgate Nos 59,66,68,70A,71,74,75,78,90,94,94A,94C,94D,95,95A,103-105,106,107,126,127,128,129-130,133-134,135,136,140-141,142,143,144-145,146, 167 and Belvedere, 173 wall and outbuilding (all GRII), Gilesgate Nos 193 to 202 consecutively (GRII), Nos 209-201,211,212,213-214,216-217,218-219,220 (all GRII). Church of St Giles' (GRI), Nos 2-12 and 16-27 Magdalene Street (GRII), former Gilesgate Railway Station, Chapel of St Mary Magdalene (GRI and Scheduled Monument) Chapel of The Venerable Bede (GRII), College of the Venerable Bede War Memorial (GRII), Claypath United Reform Church, Nos 32,38,39,40,42,45,46,47,51,52,53,55,64,66,69,70,71,former Travellers Rest Public House No 72, The Big Jug No 83, 91 and 91A (all GRII). Leazes Place Nos 1-6 and Nos 7-12, Leazes Cottage, Leazes House (all GRII). No 11 Providence Row (GRII). Kepier Gateway and buildings attached (GRII*), Kepier Farmhouse (GRII), Kepier Scheduled Monument.



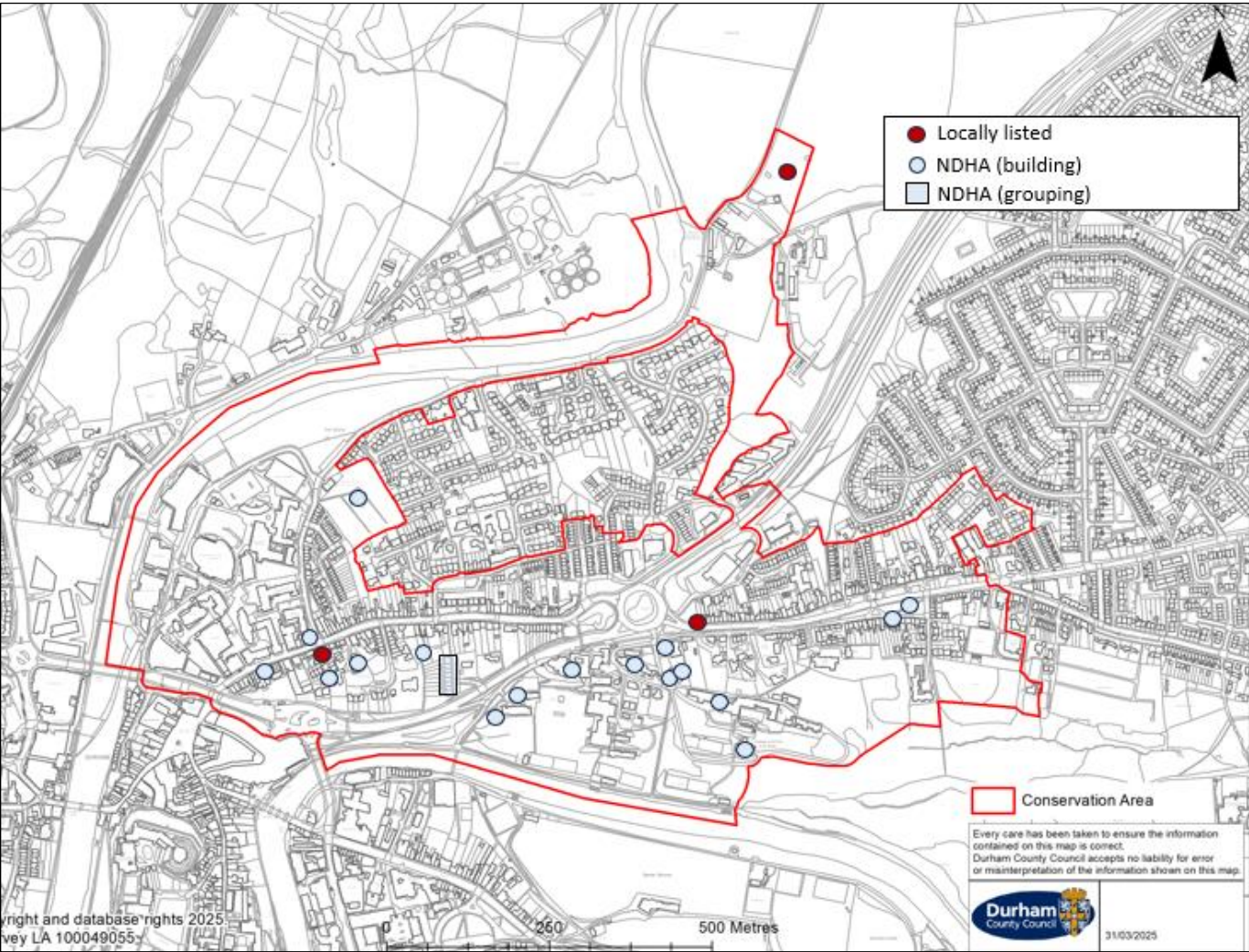
Map 7 NDHAs

The map identifies the NDHAs identified within the conservation area.

The CAMP Strategic Context document describes the process by which NDHAs are identified. It should be noted that the NDHAs identified can be subject to change with further identification. The omission of a particular building, structure, or feature, at this time should not be taken as an automatic assumption that it is not a NDHA.

Locally listed: No 80 Claypath, wall mural No 57 Gilesgate, Keping brick kiln.

NDHAs: St Nicholas Chapel, graveyard, headstones and boundary walls, Providence Row. Quaker burial ground including headstones, Claypath. St Anthony’s Vicarage and Priory, Claypath. No 33 Claypath. No’s 86-88 Claypath. No’s 137-139 Gilesgate. Gilesgate Village Green. Tinkler’s Lane. Ravensworth Terrace. York Cottage. Alma House. Pelaw View. College of St Bede. College of St Hild. Hawthorn House. Carter House. Gymnasium College of St Hild and Bede. The White House, College of St Hild and Bede.

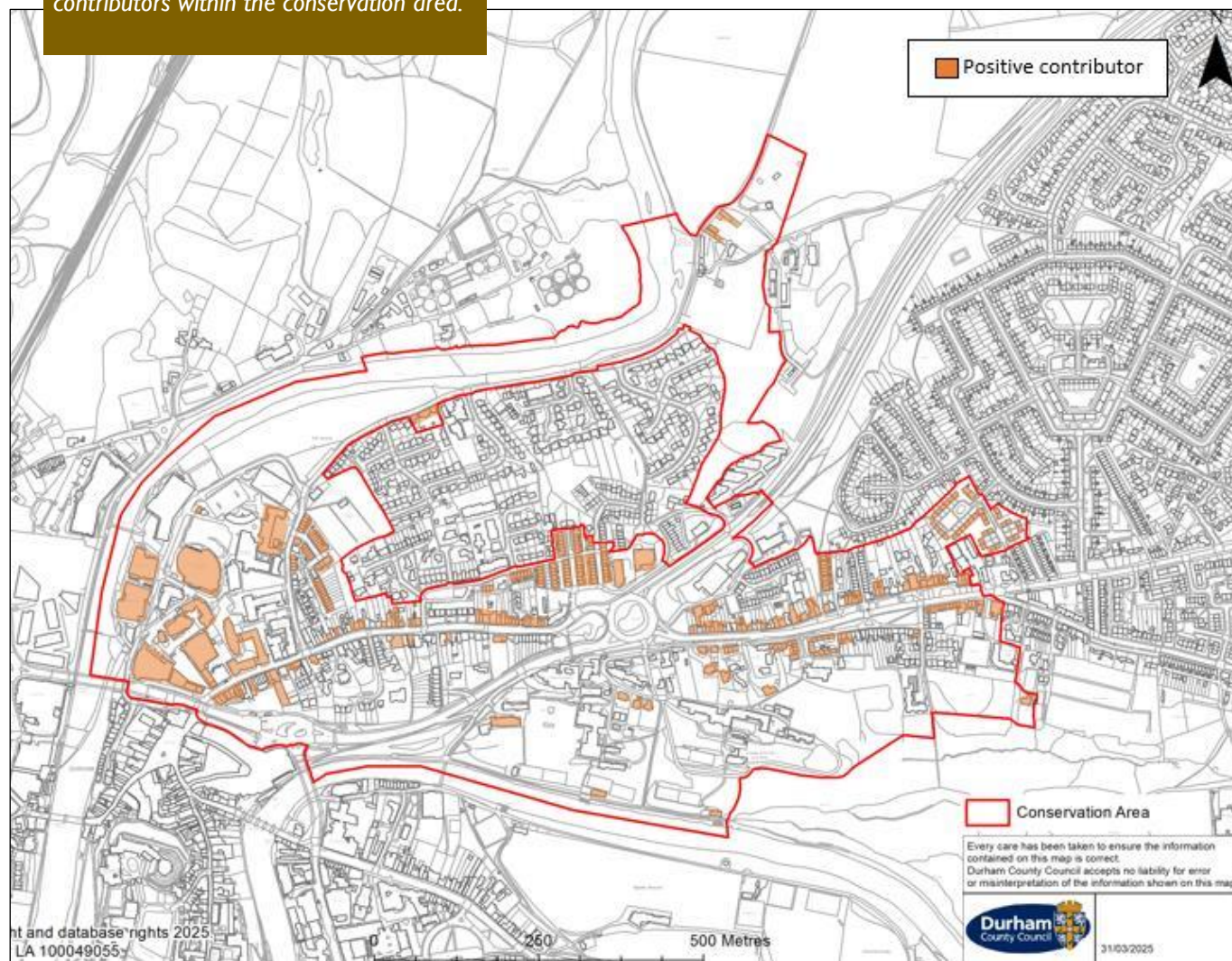


2.7 Townscape – positive contributors

There are many other buildings of low to moderate significance which still make a positive contribution to the area's character and appearance but do not meet enough selection criteria to be classified as non-designated heritage assets. It is important that such positive contributors are identified separately, as such buildings still help to shape the area's character, identity, and sense of place. It should be noted that this is not a definitive list, the omission of any particular building, structure, or feature, should not be automatically taken to imply that it is of no interest

Positive contributors: Nos 57, 58, 60-65, 68a, 69, 70, 72, 76, 77, 80-89, 93, 93a, Woodlands, Caselaw, 97-102a, 108, 109, Queens Head Public House, Nos 113-124, 132a, 147, 148, 149a, 149-151, 159-166, 169-172, Manor Lodge, Manor House, Charles Strank's House, Grove House, The Laurels, Army Reserve Centre, Gilesgate (east). Nos 10-25, 215, 221 and Southlands, Gilesgate (west). Nos 1-22 McNally Place, Nos 1-12 Green Lane, Nos 10-25 Ellis Leazes, Nos 1-2, and 12-15 Douglas Villas, Nos 1-14 Renny Street, Nos 1-12 Mayorswell Street, Nos 1-15 Mayorswell Field, Nos 1-6 Kepier Villas, Nos 8-10 Kepier Terrace. Nos 1-10 West View, Nos 1-9 Station Lane, No1, Easdale, Gables, St Hilds Lane, building to the rear of White House Pelaw Leazes Lane, two boathouse riverside. Student Castle, Nos 41, 43, 44, 48 (Close Garth), 54/55, 57/57a, 58-63, 65 (Claypath House), 78, 84, 85, William Robson House, 1-4 Blue Coat Buildings, 92-97 Claypath. Nos 7-10, 12, 14-18 Providence Row. Lodge and main building Durham Sixth Form Centre main building, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre, Wearside House, Freemans Reach, buildings at Millennium Place. Nos 1-17 Wanless Terrace, Nos 1-11 Finney Terrace, Sands House, Sands Cottage, farm buildings north side of Kepier Farm.

Map 8 Positive contributors
The map identifies the positive townscape contributors within the conservation area.



2.8 Archaeology

Although not an obvious component of the conservation area, archaeological remains contribute to understanding how the city and its environs have developed resulting in their current character and appearance.

The character of the city has been heavily influenced by buried archaeology through the continuity down the centuries of street patterns, land divisions, property plots, and how buildings have evolved.

Excavations have been undertaken in Durham from the post-war period onwards, with archaeological excavations in recent years discovering the existence of prehistoric settlements at various locations across the conservation areas. These include a Bronze Age settlement at Mountjoy, Maiden Castle Iron Age hillfort and an Iron Age roundhouse on the site of 18-29 Claypath. The remains of Iron Age structures have also been found to the rear of 17 South Bailey.

Given the spatial distribution of Late Iron Age sites in the central and eastern sectors of the county, as revealed by discoveries during the last two decades, the existence of unknown sites from this period within the Durham City Conservation Areas must be a strong possibility.

Within Gilesgate Conservation Area there has been relatively limited recorded archaeological investigation but given its ancient origins archaeological remains from many periods could possibly be found.

Of note, in 2012 archaeological features were uncovered in the rear plots of Nos 101 and 101a Gilesgate. These included cut features such as pits, post holes and gullies along with a yard surface and evidence that the tanning of leather had taken place, of medieval and post medieval dates. Investigations at Nos 18-29 Claypath between 2016-17 found remains of different activities. These included cremation remains and a possible round house from the iron age, pits, and post holes from around the 10th century and a hearth and features possibly an oven or kiln from the 12th to the 14th century. Other features found included stone walls, cobbled floor surfaces, and a stone well.

There are known medieval secular buildings within the conservation area where the present day external facades conceal retained features and fabric within and potentially beneath them relating to much earlier buildings. For example, Nos 48, 53, 72-73 Claypath contain physical evidence suggesting a 17th century date whereas the Big Jug Public House is possibly 15th or 16th century. While Gilesgate No 221 incorporates seemingly 17th century or earlier masonry, and no's 216-217 have vernacular roof trusses indicating a 17th century age.

The archaeological evidence, and potential, is of great interest and importance that adds to the conservation areas special historic interest and to that of the wider city centre. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, to be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

Fig 22 below. Images showing archaeological excavations in Durham City.



2.9 Landscape, green and blue infrastructure assets

Green infrastructure is the term used to describe the natural and semi-natural (including the water environment) features within urban and rural areas. It is not limited to green spaces in the traditional sense such as public parks, often the perception, but can be a variety of types that thread nature into the built environment. Green assets contribute significantly to the conservation areas character, aesthetic quality and to the setting of its streets, spaces, and buildings. Further, they enhance the area's biodiversity, improve the quality of the environment, and help with climate change mitigation.

Two categories of green infrastructure assets are identified. The first is the broad range that includes the roadside verges, street trees and general green amenity spaces found along Leazes Road/A690 and Freemans Place for example.

The second category are the more significant green spaces with added historic, aesthetic, social and community values. These include Gilesgate Village Green, the parkland at St Hild and St Bede College, St Nicholas Cemetery, The Sands, and riverbanks (identified as local green spaces in the neighbourhood plan), and Kepier Hospital that is on the local list of historic parks, gardens, and designed landscapes.

All of these, and other green features, contribute positively to the character and visual appearance of the conservation area. There is also a scattering of trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders at No 57 and No 169 Gilesgate, South Lands, Finney Terrace, Leazes Court and Sands House.

This part of the city has an inseparable relationship with the River Wear corridor as it meanders around the peninsula upstream to Kepier and downstream to Shincliffe, the entirety of the conservation area sandwiched between this course. The river corridor that defines the north and south sides of the conservation area with its treed and wooded earthy banks are a vital part of its character and have high aesthetic value in the context of the wider historic core of the city.

Fig 23 below. A selection of images of green infrastructure assets within the conservation area at the riverside, Leazes Road, Gilesgate Village Green, and the College of St Hild and Bede.



2.10 Landmarks, views and vistas

Durham is a city of views, where the topography, historic development, and layout combine to generate a high number of important views that contribute significantly to its special interest, character and how this is experienced. Views can be static, sequential, or dynamic, meaning the focal point is not always apparent and can move in and out of view enhancing the experience. They may be short or long range, glimpses between or above buildings, or panoramas from elevated locations.

There are significant views of Durham Castle and Cathedral from within the conservation area, including sequential views travelling west down Gilesgate Bank and Leazes Road, and riverside views south along the footpath approaching Elvet Bridge. There are fine cathedral views from within the elevated grounds of the College of St Hild and St Bede, and a further sequential view approaching into the city along the A690 from the east. Here, the cathedral appears in passing glimpses before a dramatic reveal approaching Gilesgate roundabout giving a strong sense of arrival.

Added to the above are important historic streetscape views along Gilesgate and Claypath and those of the later 19th century terraces such as at Ravensworth Terrace, Renny Street, Ellis Leazes, Mayorswell Street and Douglas Villas.

Of importance are the close quarter views of historic landmarks such as St Giles' Church, Vane Tempest Hall, the original main Victorian buildings at the College of St Hild and St Bede, and the distinctive group of medieval buildings at Kepier Hospital. All these views, and others, contribute significantly to the character, visual quality, and experience of the conservation area.

Key views are identified on the map on page 30, and shown in detail in Part B. The methodology for identifying key views is set out in the strategic context document.

Fig 24 below. A view of the fine historic streetscene along Claypath, the buildings framing St Godric's Church and the Viaduct in the background beyond which the wooded ridge line gives a sense of the historic core's containment by the topography.



Night-time views

By day, the city provides a spectacular picture whether arriving by train or by walking through its narrow streets and by the river. But it also possesses a unique night-time environment, with dark areas of natural landscape sitting close to the illuminated urban core that combine with a pattern of light generated by the activity of the city. This takes place amongst a rich and diverse collection of historic buildings, streets, urban and garden spaces, crowned by Durham Castle and Cathedral illuminated by an architectural lighting scheme. The city has not been dramatically over-lit improving the quality of the night-time visual experience, and there is a need to protect this dark character in key areas, and important night-time views.

Within the conservation area the most notable night-time views generally relate to those of the castle and cathedral from key approaches, routes, and elevated vantage points, but they provide a very different experience of high aesthetic value that contributes positively to the conservation area.

Fig 25 *right. A drone view across the city at night. The visual presence of the castle and cathedral by night contrasts with the darkness of the river, riverbanks and sky creating a unique visual spectacle that can be experienced from many public vantage points around the city.*



Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

Map 9 View/vantage point map

The map identifies a selection of important views/vantage points. Exclusion should not be seen that others do not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Map Key

1. Close quarter views of Vane Tempest Hall.
2. Close quarter views of St Giles' Church.
3. Sequential views along the A690 and static view from pedestrian footbridge of Durham Cathedral.
4. Sequential views of Durham Castle and Cathedral along Gilesgate (east).
5. Close quarter views of the main buildings at College St Hild and Bede.
6. Sequential views of Durham Castle and Cathedral along Pelaw Lane and riverside.
7. View of Claypath, St Godric's Church and Viaduct.
8. Views of Kepier Hospital along the riverside.
9. River corridor view from Pennyferry Bridge.
10. Sequential views of Durham Castle and Cathedral along Leazes Road.
11. Views of Durham Castle and Cathedral from the college grounds.
12. Kinetic riverside views.

Historic streetscape views

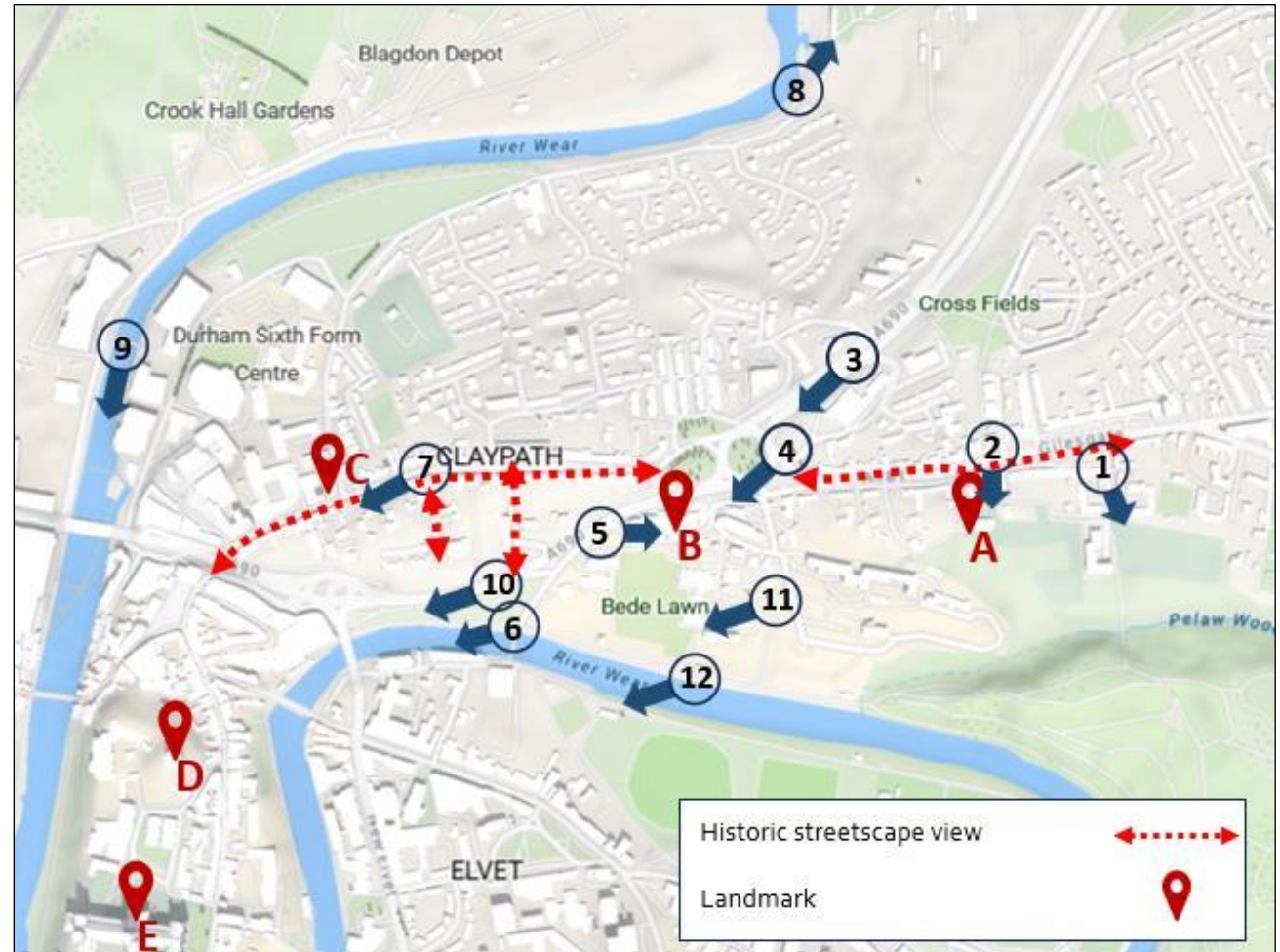
Upper (east) and Lower (west) Gilesgate, Claypath, Leazes Place, Ravensworth Terrace.

Key night-time views

- 1 Riverside and 2 A690.

Landmarks

A-St Giles' Church, B-College of St Hild and St Bede, C-United Reform Church, D-Durham Castle, E-Durham Cathedral.



2.11 Movement, activity and atmosphere

The conservation area is a dense urban environment predominantly residential but with concentrations of commercial, leisure, educational and ecclesiastical uses. Added to this are the natural environments of the riverside and the farmland surrounding Kepier. This produces different levels of activity, and changing, contrasting, ambiances that is an important part of the area's character and distinctiveness.

The A690 through the conservation area is one of the major routes in and out of the city connecting it to Sunderland. It has high volumes of traffic daily but includes traffic-light controlled pedestrian crossing points improving navigation. Despite the negative intrusion punching through the historic core, it is an important route constructed to move traffic out of the city's narrow medieval streets. The carriageway has some historic significance as it follows the route of the former railway line.

The area around Gilesgate roundabout and along Leazes Road skirting around Lower Gilesgate and Claypath can be equally as congested with traffic, and is a busy, noisy environment. It is walkable by a series of direct pedestrian routes and some crossing points.

Relief is provided by the short historic "green lane" route of Pelaw Leazes Lane leading to the calmness of the riverside.

The second main east-west route is the medieval street of Gilesgate, beginning at its junction with Sunderland Road and Sherburn Road, known locally as the "road-ends." It is a hive of activity, and a vibrant place dominated by cars and modern buildings that provides a poor entrance into the conservation area. The enclosed, Back Wynyard Grove side street is a quieter straight route from Green Lane to McNally Place, a small and peaceful residential area with its own sense of community.

Claypath and Gilesgate have a residential character but receive a moderate amount of footfall and traffic. In Upper Gilesgate, traffic tends to be heavier, combined with the normally high number of parked vehicles, making the space feel cluttered, and too dominated by vehicles that is its biggest weakness.

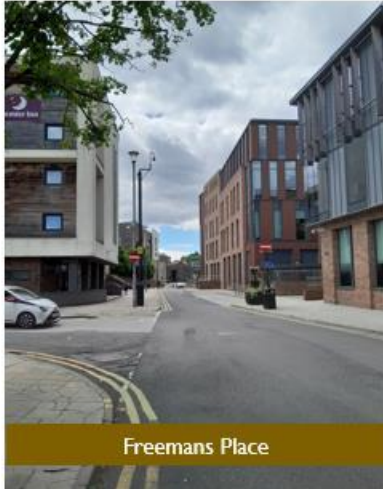
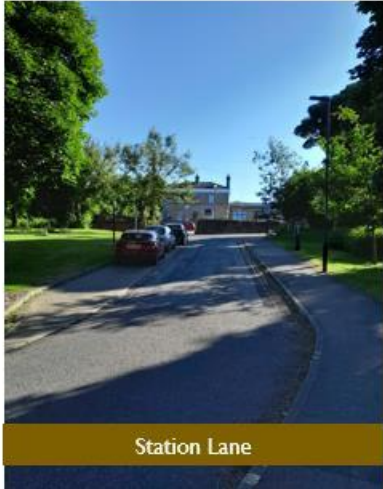
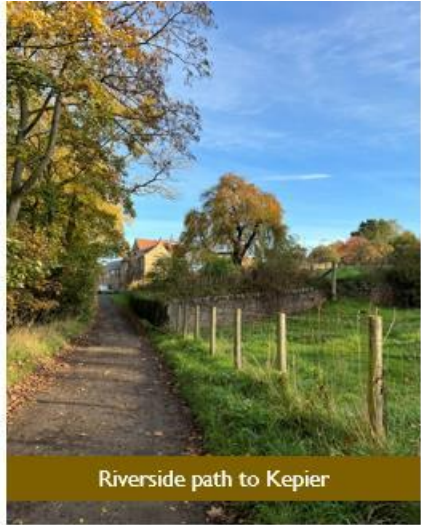
The residential area on the north side of Leazes Road/Gilesgate roundabout and behind Lower Gilesgate is a quieter environment. It is characterised by Victorian terraced streets, and later suburban housing, that generally generate less traffic and lower footfall. The straight, slightly hilly, Bakerhouse Lane, runs parallel behind Claypath, that provides a series of narrow steeply descending pedestrian routes, down to the riverside.

The southwest end of Claypath has a bustling atmosphere owing to the active commercial and retail frontages, purpose-built student accommodation, entrance to Millennium Square with the Market Place close by, and due to the presence of the road bridge. There are bus stops, and a taxi rank so the space is often affected by heavy traffic, noise, and feels too congested, while the quality of the general environment provides a poor gateway entrance into the Market Place.

Providence Row is the only vehicle exit route from The Sands and Freemans Place, and as such can be affected by a high volume of traffic at peak times. It has a steep descent to The Sands and the riverside. From here the historic route to Kepier is mostly experienced on foot with the riverside footpaths popular with walkers, joggers, and cyclists. The rural character and calmness provides a very positive contrast to the formal busy streets elsewhere.

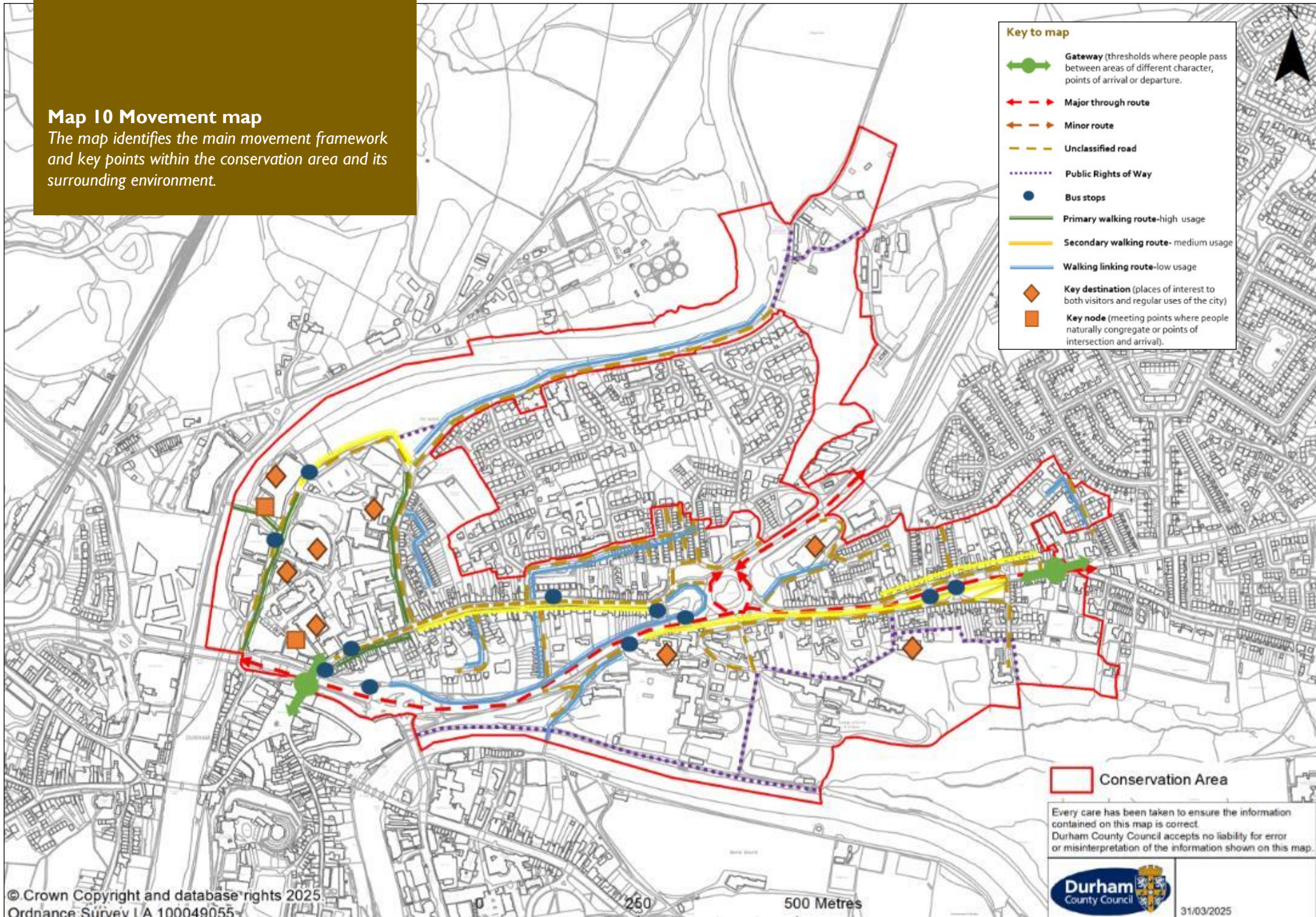
The College of St Hild and St Bede is a hilly site with two main access points via St Hild's Lane and Pelaw Leazes Lane. It features a series of footpaths on different levels through the college grounds some leading down to the riverside. Activity levels differ depending on the day and time, but the north part can be very active. Within the site it is active during term time, but overall has a quieter academic feel and its own sense of place that contributes positively.

Fig 26 below. A series of images showing the different routes, streets, and spaces found within the conservation area. They range from residential streets, quieter back lanes, historic lanes, and busy road junctions providing different character, visual experiences, and ambiances.



Map 10 Movement map

The map identifies the main movement framework and key points within the conservation area and its surrounding environment.



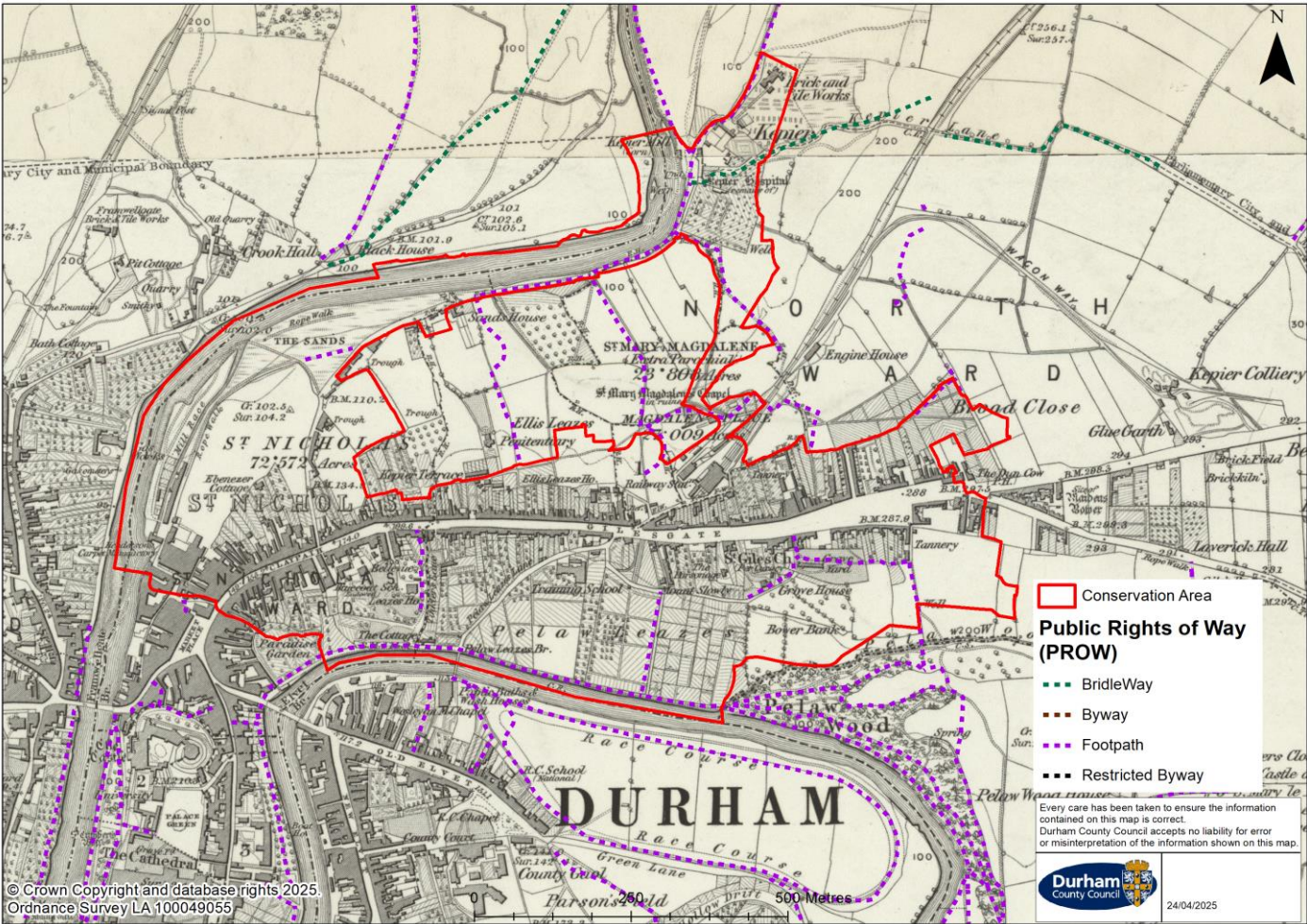
Map 11 Movement map (historic)

Movement map overlaid onto a 1st edition Ordnance Survey map c.1860 showing the pattern of historic routes many likely pre-dating the detailed recording.

The early layout of the road pattern combined with the historic lanes, paths and tracks have a formative impact on access and movement through the area and are characterful distinctive routes contributing positively to the significance of the conservation area. The historic routes are still legible and navigable, with obvious routes to the cathedral. Some of these are potentially historic pilgrim routes, adding to the better known linkages to Finchale, Beaufrepaire, Kepier and the route of Cade’s Road.

Cade’s Road is an undefined Roman route believed to have been constructed between 138 and 161AD, a decade or so after Hadrian’s Wall. It represented a north-south link between York and the Tyne, in County Durham passed Chester-le-Street, Kepier, Old Durham and Shincliffe. It is named after John Cade of Durham, an 18th century antiquarian who in 1785 proposed its existence and possible course.

These routes are key to understanding the historic development of Durham and thread together all the historic assets, offering a tangible link back to Durham’s past



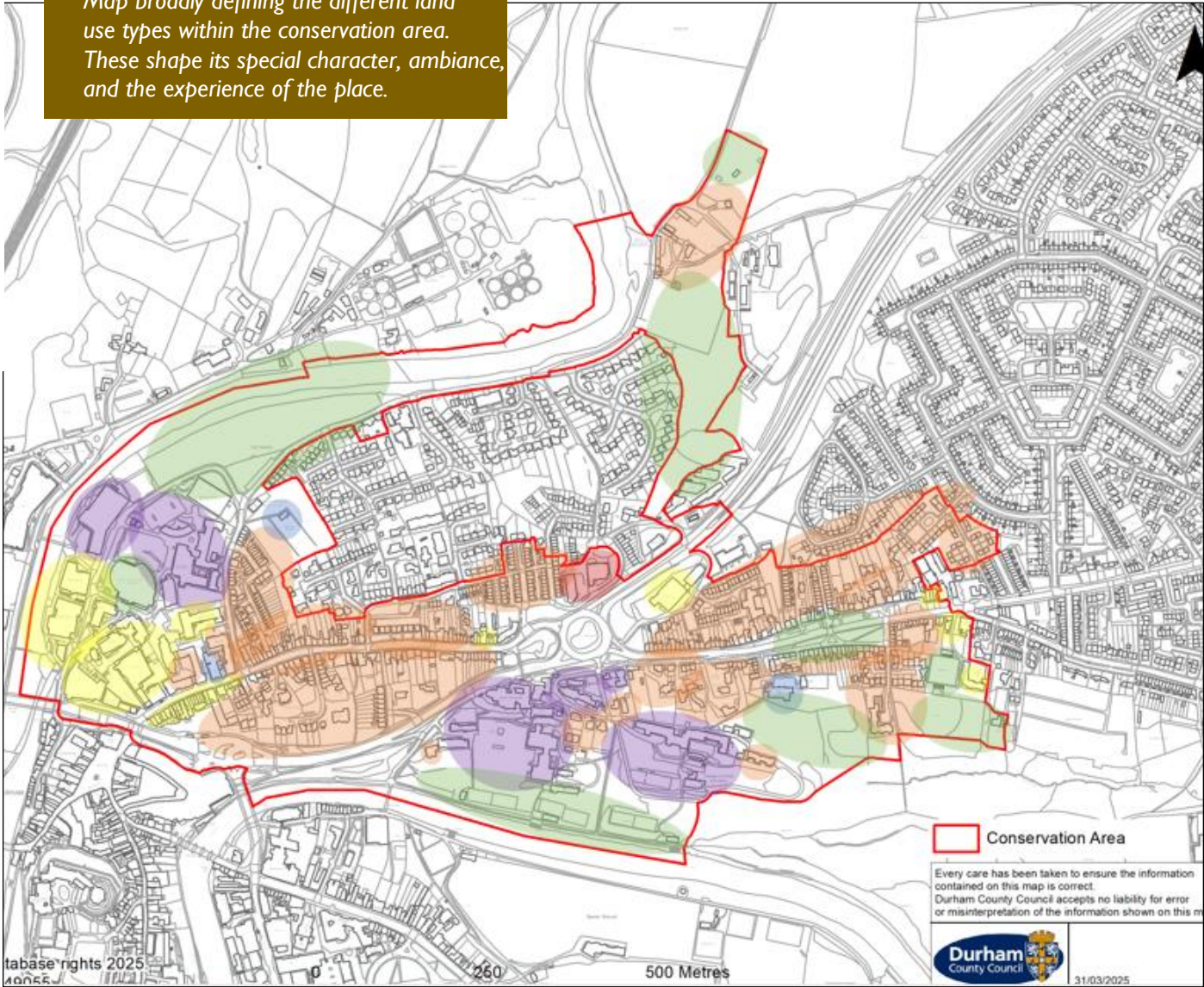
2.12 Land Use

The map illustrates broadly the ways in which buildings and land are used across Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area. The land use defines building types and character that changes from place to place. It shows the east and west dominated by residential use interspersed with limited commercial use that dominates the west end of Claypath. There are strong concentrations of educational use while the riverside and undeveloped river valley slopes are landscape dominated hence of recreation and leisure uses.

Map key

- Residential
- Ecclesiastical
- Commercial/retail/office
- Educational
- Recreation / Leisure
- Institutional

Map 12 Land use
Map broadly defining the different land use types within the conservation area. These shape its special character, ambience, and the experience of the place.



2.13 Layout, pattern and grain

As referenced earlier in this document the layout and plan form of the conservation area was established by c.1250. This relates to the main route of Claypath and Gilesgate along with The Sands and the riverside route to Keping Hospital. While Gilesgate has been significantly impacted by the introduction of the A690, and major contemporary developments, the medieval layout survives, and the finer historic grain is predominant.

The historic layout is very simple comprising of a single street travelling east out from the Market Place that connected Durham Priory on the peninsula with its estates at Sherburn and Pitlington. Houses were built along either side set back to allow for an area of open green space, Gilesgate village green. This layout is still evident today despite the A690/Leazes Road severing part of this ancient city approach.

The main streets are characterised by terraced blocks with consistent building lines where the properties are generally pressed up against the back edge of the pavement. This provides almost continuous street frontages broken occasionally by access roads to side streets.

There are some detached blocks that signify later phases of development, that are neutral in contribution but do tend to respond to the building line and domestic scale of the street.

Within the city's medieval streets tenement/burgage plots were the chief determinant of house plans. They comprise of long, narrow plots with buildings at the front onto the street, this important historic plot pattern still exists within Claypath and Gilesgate.

Another important part of the historic layout and physical fabric of the city are the narrow vennels historic lanes and routes, some dating back to medieval times, a few of which can be found in the conservation area.

Within the conservation area are a series of late 19th and early 20th century terraces radiating from the spine of Claypath and Gilesgate. These are generally short straight, and enclosed streets orientated north south with connecting back lanes.

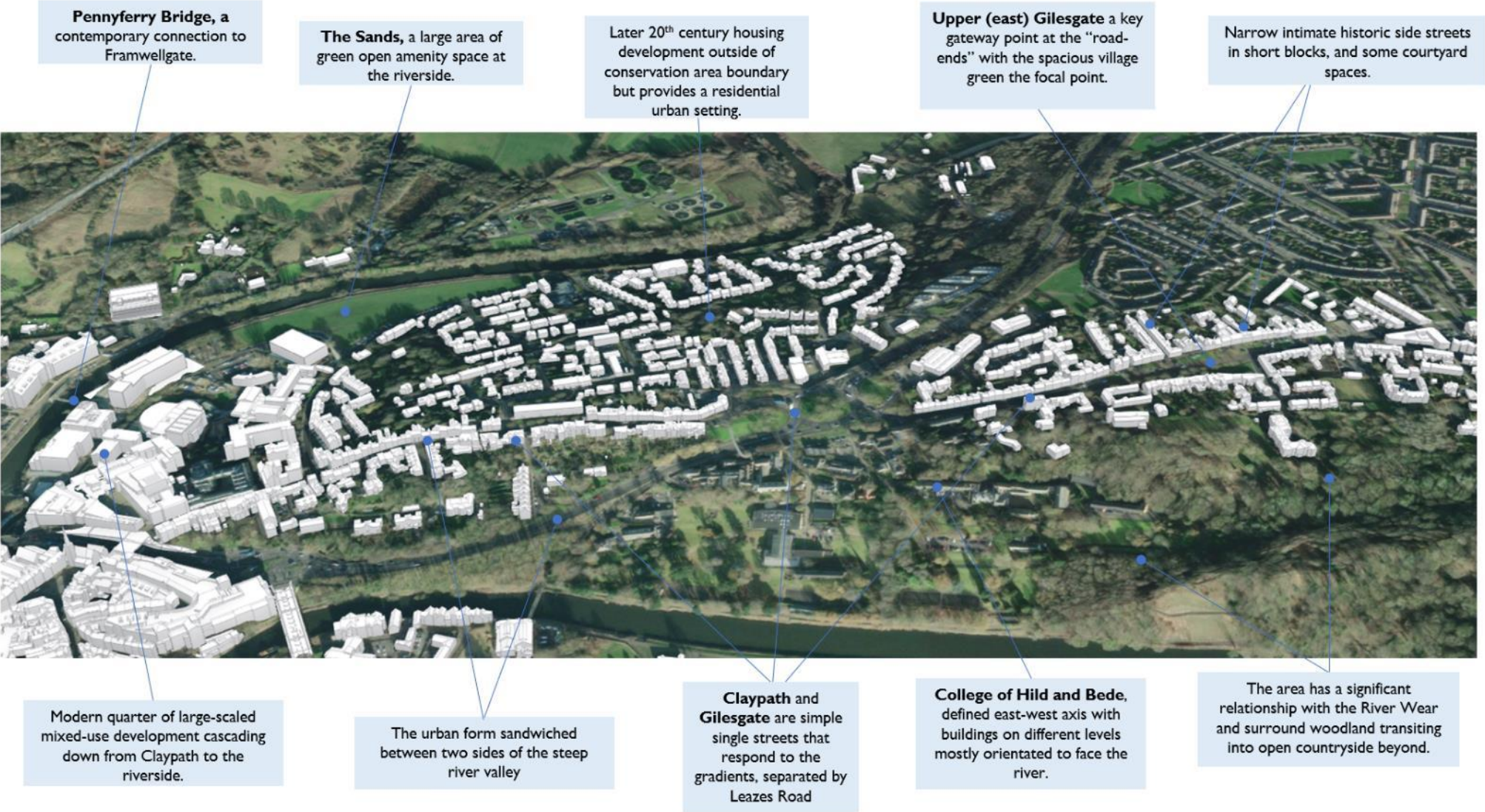
The College of St Hild and St Bede has developed in a non-cohesive manner, with a mixture of historic and modern buildings. The only unifying characteristic is that they turn their backs to the main road, making the most of their scenic parkland setting and exploiting river views.

Keping Hospital is an isolated, small compact site within the northeast part of the conservation area set within an extensive rural landscape setting. It exhibits a simple historic "agricultural" plan form, with the main barns and farmhouse set in a rectilinear form around a central courtyard accessed through the imposing medieval Gatehouse.

At the southwest end of Claypath the Durham City Millennium Project created a theatre, public square, multi-storey car park, hotel, and a series of commercial and leisure units. The buildings frame the open square responding to the topography as a series of tiers with narrow pedestrian routes connecting to wider open spaces culminating at the wide steps down to the riverside.

On the lower riverside Freemans Place is a single narrow route that curves from the Walkergate slip road in the south to the northeast This area is dominated by contemporary mixed use development that positively engages the riverside character. This is achieved by the buildings being set back creating a pedestrian walkway linking to Pennyferry bridge, with the uses of the buildings pulling pedestrians in to provide activity. There are notable open hard landscape spaces that provide relief and encourage the enjoyment of riverside views.

Fig 27 below. A model demonstrating the general development pattern and layout of the conservation area and the urban forms relationship to landscape



2.14 Character areas

The conservation area can be sub-divided into four “character areas” - smaller places which have their own identities. Identifying such areas is important in order to provide a detailed and practical analysis, identify the issues, problems and opportunities that vary from place to place, and to develop appropriate policies for future conservation and enhancement.

Four character areas are identified as broadly correlating in land use, historic development, and have unifying characteristics:

Character area 1 – Historic core focused upon the main spine route along Gilesgate and Claypath.

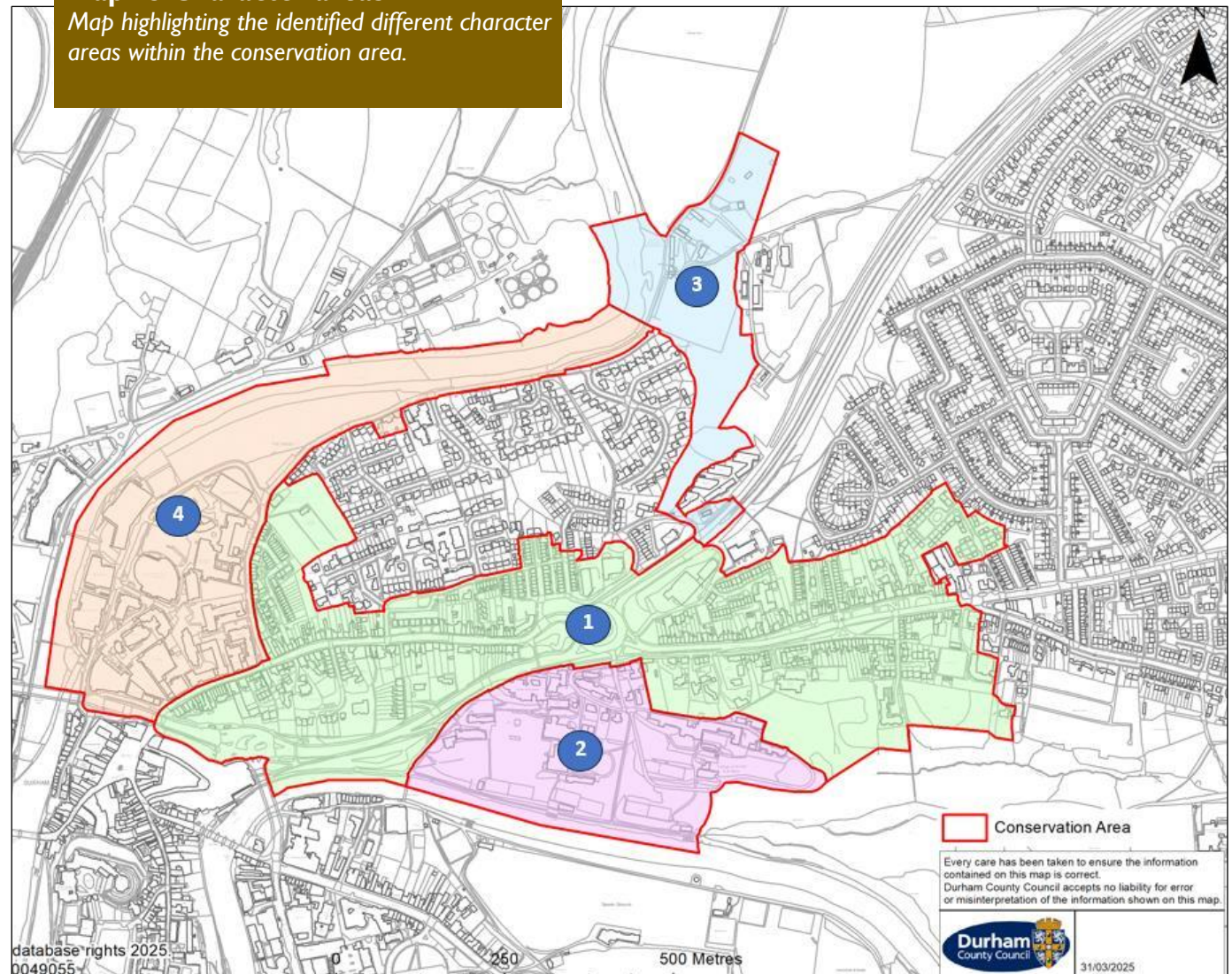
Character area 2- The College of St Hild and St Bede.

Character area 3- Kepier.

Character area 4- Freemans Place, Millennium Place and The Sands.

Map 13 Character areas

Map highlighting the identified different character areas within the conservation area.

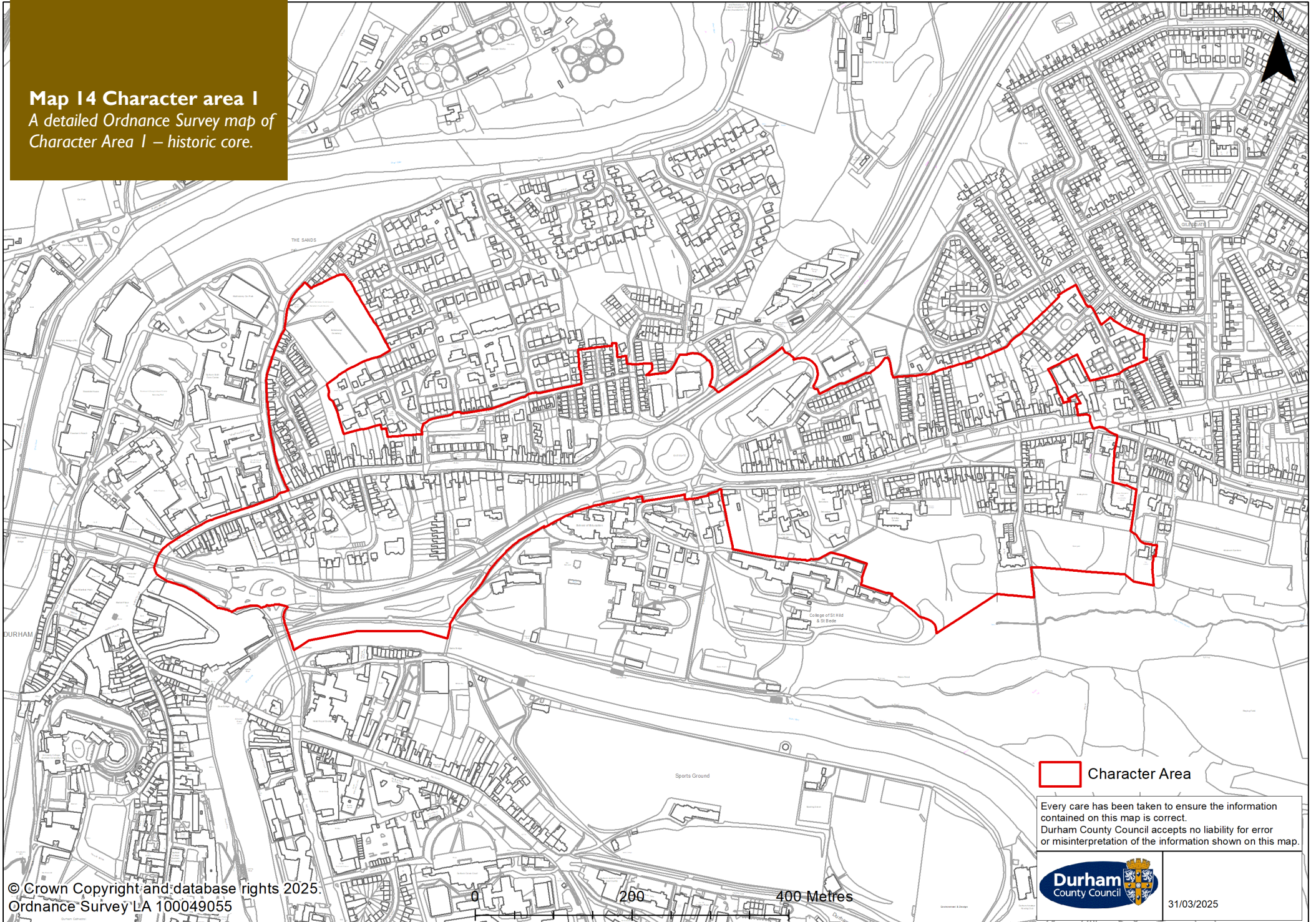



3. Street characterisation

3.1 Character area I (historic core)




Map I4 Character area I
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character Area I – historic core.



 Character Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.

 Durham County Council

31/03/2025

3.1.1 Location and summary of special interest

This character area forms the central spine of the conservation area comprising the main route out from the Market Place up Claypath and Lower Gilesgate, crossing the A690/Leazes Road and continuing up Upper Gilesgate to the road ends.

The northern boundary follows the edge of McNally Place, and the historic garden plots on the north side of the main street capturing the side streets of Magdalene Terrace and West View. It continues around The Sidings and the former Railway Goods Station on Station Bank, crosses the A690, from where it skirts around the Army Reserve Centre site, the nearby Victorian terraces and New Kepier Court. From this point it follows the rear burgage plots of the buildings lining the west end of Claypath down to St Nicholas Cemetery then turns south following the route of Providence Row.

In the south it bounds the A690 from the Market Place up to the west end of Gilesgate Bank, with a slight deviation to capture the riverside and Pelaw Leazes Lane. It then follows the north edge of the grounds of the College of St Hild and St Bede then Pelaw Woods from where the east end is defined by The Laurels and Vane Tempest Hall.

The setting to the area is informed by the dense modern housing estates of Wearside Drive, Ferens Close and Ferens Park in the north and Heaviside Place, Wakenshaw Road, and Church Hill Avenue. This is followed by the low-quality modern development of the filling station and local retail centre beyond which is mostly later 20th century residential development. A more befitting setting is provided in the west consisting of the neck of the peninsula occupied by the Market Place. In the south Pelaw Woods and the River Wear provide a natural contrast of high aesthetic quality. Importantly the broader surrounding landscape is never far from view.

What gives the area its special historic and architectural interest and character?

- Historic significance as the heart of one of the city’s medieval boroughs, its association with the hospital and church built by Bishop Ranulf Flambard in the 12th century. The church gives its name to the street.
- The conserved and legible medieval plan form despite significant change in the in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- The surviving burgage plots, historic lanes, and routes of historic and evidential importance.

- The area’s evolution during the 19th century with terraced sides streets of distinctive and strong period character.
- The architectural richness and diverse historic townscape ranging from Georgian townhouse and cottages to simpler modest Victorian terraces.
- The number of historic landmarks such as Vain Tempest Hall, St Giles’ Church, the United Reform Church, the former railway goods station building, and the remains of St Mary Magdalen Chapel.
- The high number of listed heritage assets, locally listed assets, and non-designated heritage assets.
- The prevalence of traditional materials, period features and detailing to the historic buildings.
- The significant views and different visual experienced including those of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

3.1.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The plan form and layout of this character area is still representative of its medieval arrangement and its detailed recording on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map c.1856-65.

Upper Gilesgate is a long linear, steep street that begins in the east where Sherburn Road and Sunderland Road merge. At first the street is straight and flat with an enclosed character, the buildings on either side of the “road-ends” providing a historic gateway entrance. This is an important point within Gilesgate as it marks the transition between the medieval area and the later 19th and 20th century expansion.

The built form is terraced, set back behind generous spaces, either as green open space or hard standing areas. This reduces in width moving down the bank where the street becomes narrower and more enclosed. The primary feature is the village green dissected and bounded by a number of access roads and footways.

Where interruption occurs to the otherwise continuously built up street frontage this is generally positive. For example, by the introduction of Magdalene Street a straight narrow and tightly enclosed side street consisting of early 19th century houses, and adjacent in the west by the early 20th century West View. This is a short linear and hidden terraced street orientated north fronting a characterful green lane.

St Giles’ Church is set back from the street on the south side which provides a more private and spacious setting to the building. On the north side of the church wall is a historic undeveloped garden plot that is an important survival. Other positive gaps take the form of historic vennels, lanes and archway/carrageway type openings leading to rear courtyard developments with their own positive character such as Chapel Mews and St Lukes Mews.

Gilesgate bank is lined with two and three storey predominantly Georgian and Victorian (with some modern infill) residential properties. To the rear the medieval burgage plot pattern survives, mainly in the north between Magdalene Street and St Giles’ Studios, and on the south from Nos 137 to 149. However, some plots have been lost due to amalgamation resulting in the construction of wider buildings and back land development.

Fig 28 right. A selection of images showing the main street of upper Gilesgate dominated by wide green spaces and village green area framed by buildings that is the principle historic identity of Gilesgate.





Fig 29 above. The short historic side street at Magdalene Street and the 19th century properties lining the north side of Gilesgate Bank.

At the east end of the street on the north side, Green Lane provides the access to McNally Place. This is a good example of mid-20th century social housing with its own sense of place. It has an open plan layout where the characterful red brick bungalows, grouped in twos and threes front open green amenity space with generous rear gardens.

Vane Tempest Hall stands at the southeast end of Maynard's Row behind the Queen's Head Public House. This is the historic access point to the building, but the present day short curving street was created in the mid-20th century following demolition of older buildings on either side. Vane Tempest Hall has a north and east range connected by a central corner entrance tower with an enclosed courtyard behind and fronts an open bowling green with allotment gardens on south side, this open space befitting its status.

Station Lane is a short, enclosed, and steeply climbing lane ascending from Gilesgate Roundabout. It is significant as the original street leading to the former Gilesgate Railway Station with the main building standing detached on elevated ground on the north side of the lane. The properties lining the north side of Gilesgate Bank have long narrow rear plots that have modest buildings that front onto the southern side of Station Lane. These buildings appear to have been associated with the railway.

At the end of Station Lane is The Sidings, the only major 21st century development within the character area. The residential dwellings are set in staggered and stepped terraced blocks facing the single rising carriageway, which terminates at a larger block of flats of a L-plan form. It has an inwards character and distinctiveness, obviously influenced by the local building style.



Fig 30 above. Vane Tempest Hall, the buildings grouped around the former parade square forming a distinctive historic site within the character area.



Fig 31 above. McNally Place a characterful small housing area of bungalows grouped in pairs around an open central space.

There are some historic buildings that go against the predominant grain. These are Grove House, Charles Stanks House, and the Manor House. They are notable for being individually designed grander villas that stand detached behind the Gilesgate street frontage, with larger footprints and of different orientations.

Moving westwards the street descends to Gilesgate Roundabout, gradually at first before dropping steeply. The carriageway is on lower ground bounded by stone walls and grassy embankments that gives the buildings above a stronger presence, which is positive.

Leazes Road is open in character and dominated by the modern carriageway, but the abundant greenery softens the effect of the roads intrusion and make for a more pleasant environment. Of significance is Pelaw Leazes Lane, a short route that runs off Leazes Road in the south bounding the College of St Hild and St Bede. It descends steeply to the riverside and has an enclosed intimate "green lane" character. It is the only surviving section of the much longer historic route that connected to Gilesgate which was destroyed by the construction of the bypass road.

On the north side of Gilesgate Roundabout is Leazes Lane that provides the access to the grid pattern of Victorian/Edwardian terraced streets. The development of these types of terraces is a distinctive feature of the city centre, more so in the western part. These streets and spaces are significant historically symbolising the late 19th

century and early 20th century residential growth of the city where there was limited opportunity for expansion in the medieval core. They are of a uniform, modest domestic scale, and basic design of "two up two down" configurations, and rectangular plots. They typically have small rear yards enclosed by shared brick boundary walls and small brick outhouses, beyond which are back lanes.

These terraces are dissected by Bakehouse Lane that travels east-west Here there is a mixture of house types, but it has an overall suburban character. In the main the built form comprises of short staggered terraced blocks, set back from the footway behind gardens. The street pattern is broken by access points to neighbouring streets such as Wear View and Mayorswell Close.



Fig 32 below. A selection of images showing Pelaw Leazes Lane leading down to the riverside, the southern route of Leazes Road, and junction at Leazes Lane and Lower Gilesgate.



Beyond Gilesgate Roundabout is Lower Gilesgate forming a continuation of Claypath. The street is more enclosed, and intimate compared to Upper Gilesgate. Similarly, it provides a continuous built-up street frontage with an almost complete absence of private front curtilage, and a surviving burgage plot pattern running north and south from the road. Claypath is characterised in the same way of strong built-up frontages enclosing the carriageway dropping steeply down towards the Market Place.

Fig 33 below. The view down the enclosed ancient street of Claypath, the carriageway framed by continuous terraced blocks.



There are positive 19th century introductions that puncture the tightly knit historic street frontage. These include Leazes Place a short, cobbled street tightly enclosed by two face-to-face terraces, while Ravensworth Terrace is open fronted at the south end of a steep descent from Lower Gilesgate. Also, of significance in terms of the area’s plan form and layout is Tinkler’s Lane separating Claypath and Gilesgate. This is a very narrow, enclosed vennel and important historic route enclosed by tall stone garden walls, which drops very steeply to Leazes Road.

Fig 34 below. Tinklers Lane, a characterful enclosed historic vennel.



Providence Row descends steeply from Claypath to The Sands. It is enclosed beginning with ad-hoc large scaled modern development with gaps signifying the different phases. Moving north there is a shift to a historic character comprising of Victorian terraced blocks fronting and behind the main street, Wanless Terrace and Finney Terrace that rise with the steep incline. Finney Terrace is notable owing to its odd orientation with its back to the street and the pattern of detached long narrow linear gardens.

Fig 35 below. Providence Row descending steeply to the riverside from Claypath



The area has a strong urban character but nonetheless includes numerous areas of positive green space. These include the general carriageway and footway verges along Leazes Road, the grassed embankments with trees and planting bounding Gilesgate Bank, the woodland along Pelaw Leazes Lane and the hillside and trees on the south side of lower Claypath. The landscaping around Leazes Road softens the formality of the buildings and the impact of the modern carriageway providing a pleasing buffer between the pedestrian environments. At Vane Tempest Hall the pristine bowling green is an important community and social facility.

Pelaw Leazes Lane is enclosed by a dense overhanging mature tree canopy with woodland adjacent and on the riverside. This creates a leafy character that contrasts positively with the main urban area a short distance away. This does however result in the almost complete loss of the cathedral view in the summer months.

From the south side of Leazes Road the rear gardens to the properties lining Lower Gilesgate are visible. These alongside the street trees, shrubs and hedgerows bounding the footway below, have high visual amenity value.

The residential properties along Bakerhouse Lane have front gardens with hedging, trees, and planting that creates a positive suburban character. At the end of the street to the rear of The Chains is a large green open space with substantial mature trees and hedgerows that also hosts play equipment providing a positive public amenity space.

The gardens at Finney Terrace date from its early 20th century construction providing a historic linear pattern, they are well stocked with trees and planting, injecting colour, and soft forms into the hard urban environment.

McNally Place is notable for the open plan layout where the bungalows huddle around, and are set back behind, generous green amenity spaces that are fundamental to small estate's character and sense of place.

Added to the above are the more significant green infrastructure assets of the village green, and the churchyards and cemetery at St Giles' Church and St Nicholas Mortuary Chapel. Gilesgate Green is of particular historical significance, originating from the medieval era and today provides an important amenity and social space. Mature trees and planting are dotted across the green and line Gilesgate itself.

Such green spaces and others are invaluable to the area's character, and visual appearance. However, the dense mature tree cover along Leazes Road and Pelaw Leazes Lane significantly reduces the extent, quality, and value of the views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

The condition the green spaces is variable, some areas on the north side of the village green are damaged by parked cars, edges are often tatty, and some are overgrown, whereas the primary green space on the south side is regularly maintained and planted. The carriageway embankments down Gilesgate Bank and the green spaces around Gilesgate roundabout are maintained, cut short and enhanced by planting.

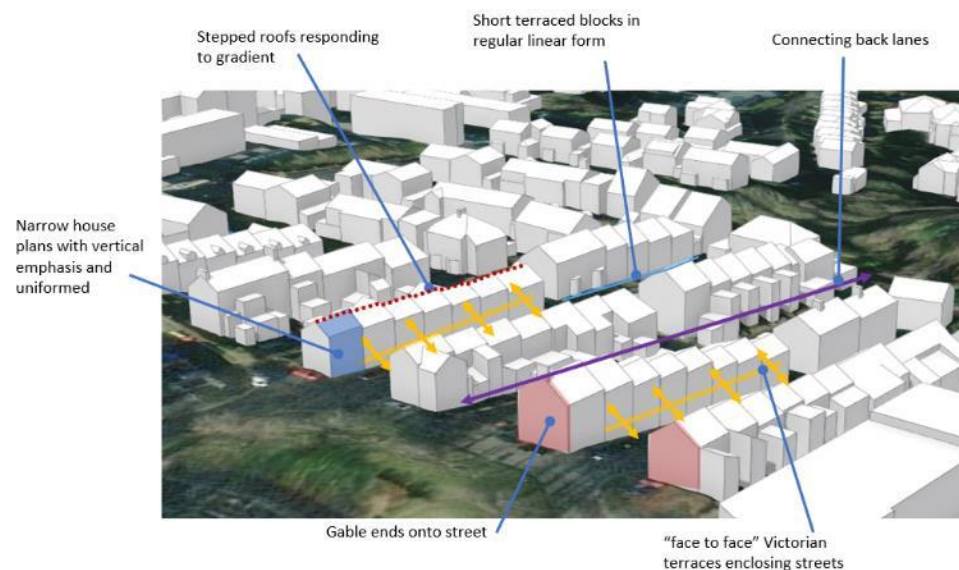
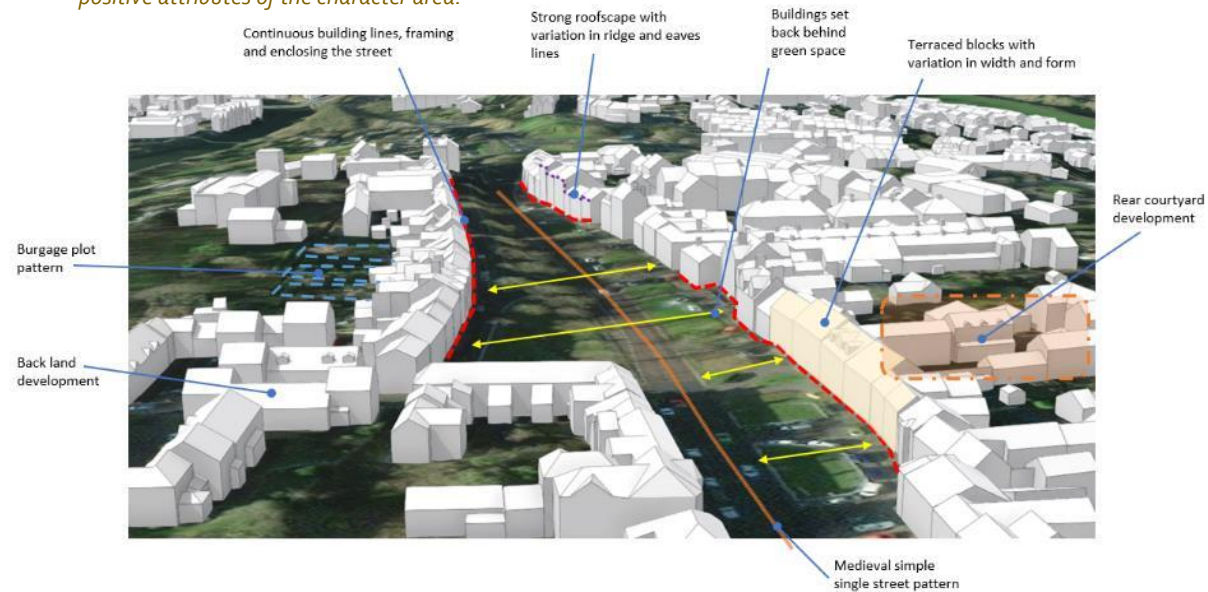
Fig 36 below. A plan identifying the key green spaces within this character area.



Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to the area's special interest.

- High density active street frontages with strong continuous building lines.
- Well preserved and legible medieval street pattern and layout.
- Surviving historic burgage plots, village green focal point, historic vennels, lanes and other routes.
- Predominantly terraced form with buildings set at the back of the pavements creating enclosure to the streets.
- Core area of Victorian terraced blocks in grid pattern, with connecting back lanes.
- Small rear courtyard spaces of different character.
- Gaps signifying different phases of development important in expressing the built environment's evolution.
- Historic buildings defined by traditional shapes, forms, and proportions, with frontages well ordered, and a uniform character.
- Variation of green spaces of different spatial scales, use, and character.

Fig 37 below. A plan and modelling demonstrating the key positive attributes of the character area.



3.1.3 Architectural styles, form, and detailing.

The architectural character in the area is varied, rich, and of high quality. Buildings are generally two and three storeys of traditional shapes and proportions. Variation in height and width along with the introduction of individually designed buildings, breaks up the fine urban grain, which contributes very positively to the area's character and distinctiveness.

There are many Georgian town houses in Gilesgate and Claypath that exhibit classic characteristics of square symmetrical shapes, with carefully proportioned forms, and well balanced facades. Common features include plinths, quoins, floor bands, and other dressings, timber sash windows with different glazing configurations, canted and oriel bays, timber panel doors in doorcases, flat and wedge lintels, old brick lintels, and boot scrapers. The properties at Lower Gilesgate are distinguishable because of the pastel coloured rendered facades that enliven the visual appearance of the streetscene.

Added to the above are the Victorian properties with typical characteristics being uniformed of two storeys, two bays of red brick with slate roofs, sash windows and panelled entrance doors.

Some buildings stand out by being more distinctive and elaborately detailed which enrich the streetscene. Examples are Woodlands and Caselaw on the north side of upper Gilesgate, a pair of early 20th century red brick houses with

ashlar and terracotta dressings, double storey canted bays and distinctively shaped gables. Their presence is enhanced by a small characterful mid-19th century colourful "Pink House" adjacent with its slightly projecting gabled bays.

Next to this, Melkridge has an imposing presence. It dates from c.1840 comprising of two storeys and three bay with porch, canted bays, large decorative gabled dormers, and neo-Tudor detailing. The late 19th / early 20th century terrace of three houses Nos 137-139 are very distinctive on the south side of the village green, owing to their mock timber framing and Free Gothic detailing. Each house has an oriel bay with hipped gablet (a smaller ornamental gable) and shields.

Fig 38 below and right. A selection of images showing different architectural styles and character that define the character area.



Numbers 193 to 202 Gilesgate present one of the finest, and most colourful, historic streetscapes in the city, comprising of a well preserved group of buildings dating from the 17th to the 19th century.



The north side of Gilesgate Roundabout is characterised by modest late 19th and early 20th century terraced housing. These are typically two storeys and two bays of red brick with pitched slate roofs. The roof lines are stepped and punctuated by chimneys, windows would have historically been 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 timber sliding sashes, with door treatments of 4 and 6 panels. However, many such windows and door styles have been lost to unsympathetic modern alternatives. They have a distinctive architectural rhythm with detailing including eaves corbels, brick lintels, painted stone sills, and recessed entrance doors with over-lights.

Nos 1 and 3 Douglas Villas stand out as they comprise a detached matching pair and are of a large scale and more elaborately detailed with ashlar quoins, painted plinths, buff brick eaves cornice in an unusual design, stone name sign, tall door cases with decorative brackets and hood and ground floor bays.

There are two notable examples of 19th century terraced streets of higher quality. Leazes Place is a very characterful intimate street with two short terraces of six properties facing each other across a cobbled road.

The properties date from c.1840 in the Regent style, each house mainly of two storeys and two bays of dark red/brown brick below Welsh slate roofs. Unifying features include six-panelled entrance doors with over-lights Tuscan doorcases, multi-paned sash windows, with some limited oriel bays. Hidden away further along Leazes Place is Leazes House, a 19th century house built in 1848 as a home for the influential Henderson's, who were carpet manufacturers in Durham.

Fig 39 below. *The listed Leazes Terrace and distinctive red brick Ravensworth Terrace.*



Ravensworth Terrace dates from the later part of the 19th century. The properties are of a distinctive, more ornate style than other terraces in the city from the same period. They are of two storeys plus basement and two bays, one narrower. They are accessed by stone steps leading to 6-panel timber doors with brick detailed surrounds, stone hood and over-lights. Windows are single pane sliding sashes with brick arched heads featuring stone keystones and projecting sills with brackets. They also have oriel bays and a rhythm of stepped pitched roofs some with hip roofed dormers.



There are four buildings constructed for religious use: St Giles' Church, the United Reform Church, St Nicholas' Chapel, and St Anthony's Priory. St Giles' Church dates back to the 12th century with the tower early 13th and 15th centuries. It has a later 19th century south aisle, vestry, and north porch, of a sandstone construction, its style typified by its age.

The grandeur of the United Reform Church (Christ Church) forms a key focal point within Claypath. It consists of two parts with a rear earlier church hall of c.1751 and the main church to the street dated 1885-6 with a Victorian Gothic frontage constructed from snecked sandstone with an ashlar plinth and dressings. Notable features include the imposing octagonal belfry and soaring spire, the steep pitched slate roof with decorative ridge tiles and the round headed windows. A modern component has been added beyond the north and west elevations. This adopted a contemporary design approach of an octagonal form which critically retained external views of the older hall by the clever juxtaposition of solid/mass and glazed void.

St Nicholas' Chapel, stands on a hill on the north side of Providence Row, dating from c.1859, it functioned as a mortuary chapel. It is a local landmark with its own distinct Gothic character, sympathetically restored recently which has breathed new life into the formerly abandoned historic building.

In contrast to the above is St Anthony's Priory. This comprises of a characterful stone house of 1850 in a neo-Tudor style. The most interesting part is the modern element of a unique architectural composition of angled forms with feature glazing and a solid robust character.

Fig 40 below. The 12th century St Giles' Church and 19th century St Nicholas' Chapel, in contrast to the architecturally distinct late 20th century development at St Anthony's Priory.

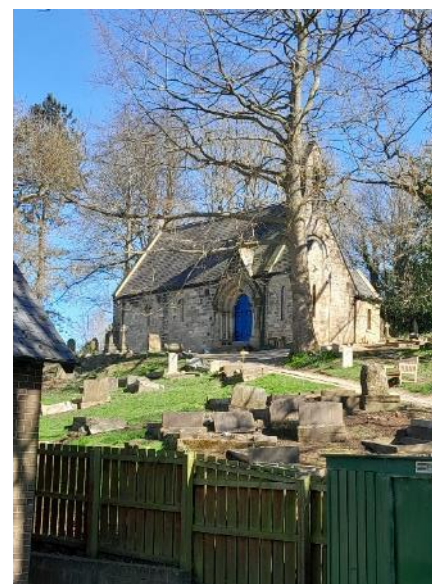
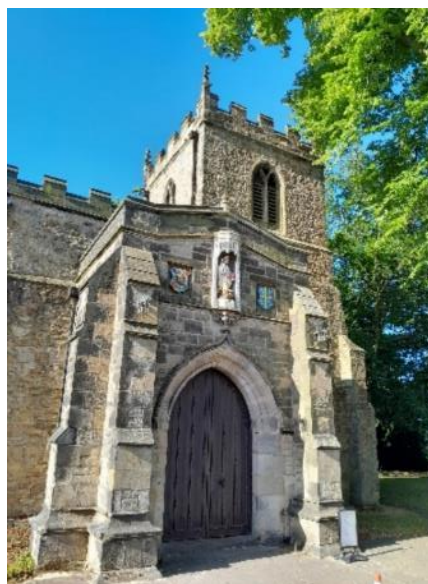


Fig 41 below. A selection of images showing the different architectural styles of the buildings found within the character area.



There are three modern developments in the conservation area which contribute positively towards its character and appearance.

The Army Reserve Centre, dating from the 1960s, is a distinctive building on account of its use, institutional and functional architectural style, and it has high community and social value. Such buildings required a specific provision of space as the role of the volunteer forces, and their technology, evolved over time, with garaging and hard-standing areas essential elements to post-war designs. The site comprises two separate buildings built from economical brick, of basic shapes, one long linear block the other mono-pitched with a lower component, and utilitarian elevations.

An important detailing on the building is the Durham Light Infantry crest that was saved from the demolition of the former drill hall, which was the headquarters of the 8th regiment of the DLI, built in 1902 and demolished in 1966.

No 33 Claypath, built in the second quarter of the 20th century, is a three storey building of a bright red brick with ashlar dressings. It was originally a Post Office, and has a very elaborate stone entrance doorway, large multi-pane windows in stone surrounds arched on the ground floor, floor bands, and a flat roof that slightly with a stone cornice.

McNally Place dates from the 1950/60s and is characterised by uniform red brick bungalows of a long horizontal form. The roofs are punctured by tall Dutch gables with brick arched openings that provide rear access. They are important representations of social housing at the time of peak construction, yet they were designed with a certain charm and are architecturally pleasing.

In terms of the 21st century the most significant component of the townscape in this area is Student Castle at Claypath. While this resulted in the demolition of a group of historic buildings the redevelopment adds positively to the townscape due to the design quality of the Claypath frontage. It gives the impression of a fragmented form with a vertical emphasis and strong rhythm with a range of heights and widths reflecting the historic grain and vernacular character but with an interesting contemporary aesthetic.

Fig 42 below. Positive modern developments within the character area the Army Reserve Centre, Student Castle, Claypath, and bungalows at McNally Place.



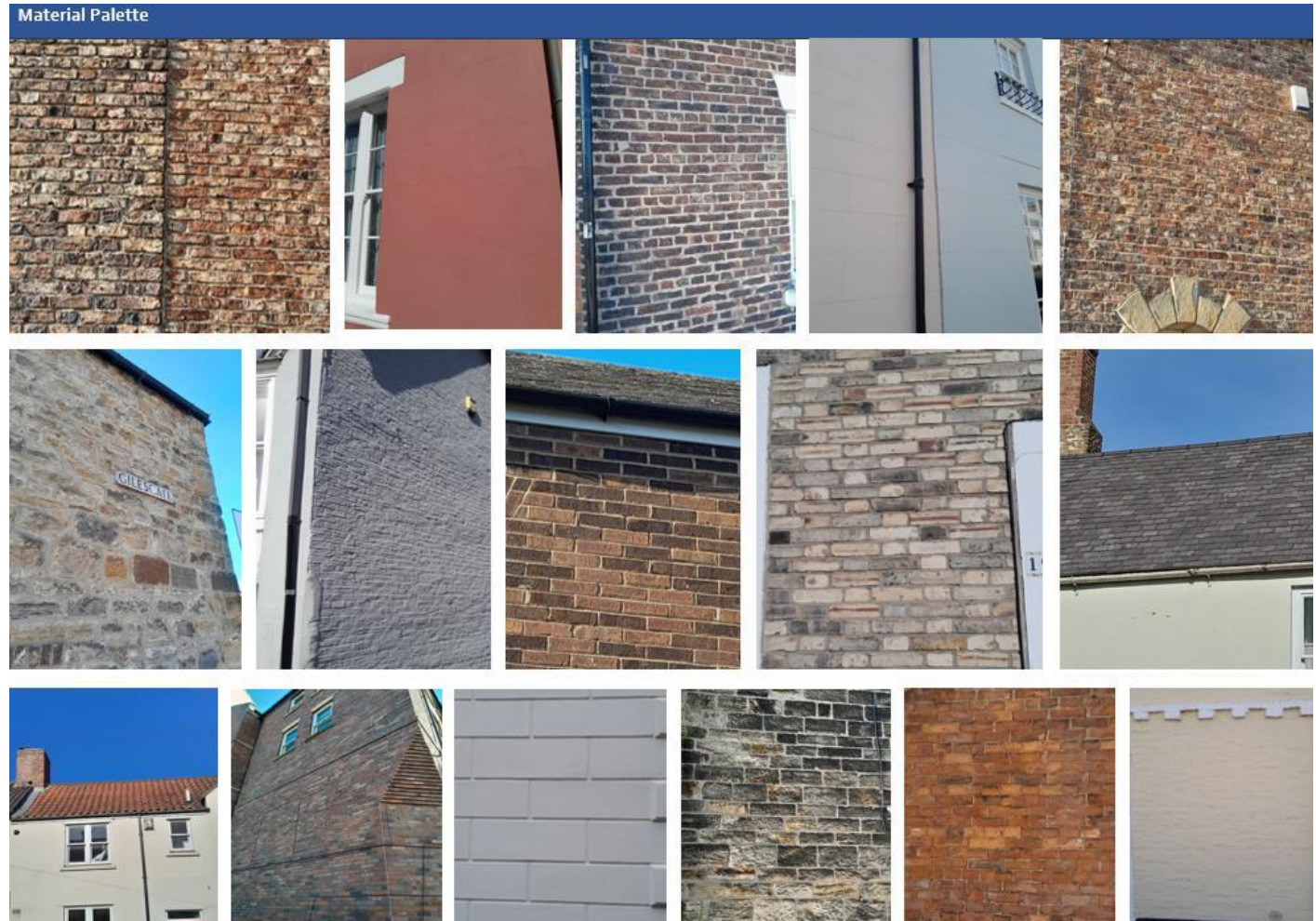
The palette of materials makes a valuable contribution to local distinctiveness and character of the area. There is great variation in the type, texture, colour, and tone, which adds aesthetic interest. Materials are also important in creating a sense of history, and in reflecting changes in fashion and taste as well as reflecting building status.

The area is characterised by a traditional and varied material palette of mostly red brickwork and render. This includes handmade brick mainly of darker red/brown colours with some examples of lighter toned grey and strong red engineering brickwork. There is a high use of render that is mostly smooth in different warm and heritage colour finishes, some incised, but some lines are faded. The use of sandstone is limited but there is some notable use such as at Vane Tempest Hall, the former officers' housing, and the church buildings. Stone and brick are commonly used for detailing such as quoins, floor banding, eaves corncicing, door and window heads and sills, and plinths.

The late 20th century developments tend to have blander brickwork in red, light, and dark brown colours. The exception is found at Student Castle where the external brickwork is of a higher quality with a warmer appearance and is also used successfully to emphasis the different blocks.

Natural Welsh slate is the dominant roof covering material within this area with the occasional use of traditional red pantiles.

There is some limited use of modern concrete tiles and synthetic fibre cement slate that detracts from the traditional material palette.





An image demonstrating how the diverse range of materials, their different colours, tones, and textures combine to create an aesthetically interesting and pleasing streetscape.

Architectural Detailing Palette

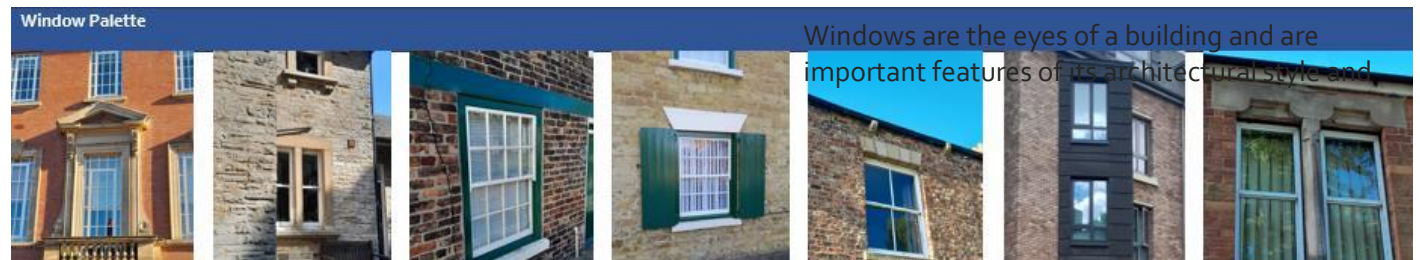


Doors play a key role in a building's character and those found within the area are highly varied but

with traditional timber doors prevalent. These contribute positively to the character and appearance of the building and streetscene.

They are generally solid with a variety of paint colour finishes adding visual interest. The most common styles are panelled doors, in fours and sixes, but there are some notable bespoke designs, and some with intricate mouldings and detailing. Many doors have over-lights in rectangular and half-round styles often with glazing bars and with some geometric and fan decorative styles.

Door cases are commonplace, with brackets, hoods, pilasters, and pediments with dentilled projections. There are some examples of more ornate surrounds including in stone and brick with added detailing. These elements enhance the main entrances into the properties and are generally styled to reflect the buildings' status.



character. Traditional timber painted vertical sliding sash windows are predominant in Claypath, Gilesgate, Leazes Place and Ravensworth Terrace. They are mostly in typical Georgian and Victorian period styles of 2-over-2, 3-over-3, 6-over-6, and 8-over-8 glazing patterns. There are some more distinctive windows including arched, tripartite sashes, and the occasional leaded styles.

There are some examples of traditional oriel and double height bay windows and traditional pitched roof dormers that are positive features. Bays tend to have decorative panelling. There are some limited but important examples of surviving traditional timber window shutters. At Student Castle the angled contemporary metal clad dormers, are distinctively different and contribute positively to the streetscene.

Window openings are most often defined by either stone painted lintels and sills, in flat and wedge shapes, or brick headers, and tend to be set in reveals.

The roofscape of the character area is a fundamental part of its distinctiveness. The different building ages, uses, forms, and architectural styles creates variation in roof form, and detailing. This generates a diverse historic roofscape of great character that contributes positively to that of the wider city.

The roofscape is almost exclusively of traditional dual pitches of different degrees, eaves, and ridge levels, with the rooflines punctuated by chimneys. The chimneys vary in dimensions and are mostly built from brick with brick band detailing and pots. The roofscape is further enriched by different styles of gables onto the street, traditional dormers, and the church spire and tower. However, there are a couple of examples of modern box style dormers that are incongruous and out of keeping with the character of the host building.

Consistency can be seen within the Victorian terraced blocks, where the typical roofscape is pitched roofs running the length of the terrace united by detailing and regularity of chimney stacks.

Fig 43 above. *Claypath is a prime example of a fine historic roofscape with interest created by the different eaves and ridge levels, variation in roof pitches, and chimneys. The wall gabled dormer at No 61 and church spire are focal points.*



Shopfronts

Retail is a key activity within Claypath, with a concentration of different uses at the southwest end of the street. The majority of these buildings have good quality historic or traditionally designed timber shopfronts that make a positive contribution to the street scene. While they vary in style and appearance, they have unifying characteristics of traditional proportions, vertically emphasised shop windows, recessed entrance doorways, framing provided by pilasters often with decorative corbels, and grounding via stallrisers.

There are some notable historic survivals such as the Blue Coat Buildings that have frontages with altered 19th century shop fronts. No 84 has a fine decorative late 19th shopfront. At Nos 86 to 88a there are four late 19th century shopfronts with similar design traits, while No 90 has an altered 19th century shop front with delicate detailing.

The modern shop fronts in this area are a mixture of timber and aluminium, simple in style, and generally neutral in contribution. The exception is found at Ruth First House with its large horizontal windows and heavy uPVC fascias.

are generally flat signs with raised borders, and individually applied lettering. There are however some negative examples of plastic signs and internally illuminated signs that are out of keeping. Some shop frontages are detracted by window clutter, vinyl graphics, and visually harsh colour schemes.

Fig 44 below. *The commercial street frontage at the lower west end of Claypath.*



interest to the streetscene. Where illuminated this is by a subtle external source.

In upper Gilesgate there are no surviving historic shop fronts, with the modern ones huddled around the road-ends generally neutral in their context. Nos 113-114 have a traditionally modelled timber shopfront but are visually marred by the garish colour and plastic signage.

The quality of the signage is variable. There are some good examples of sympathetic fascia signs to both the historic and modern shopfronts. These

Hanging signs are commonplace, most are traditionally designed, and held in position by simple black metal brackets that add visual



Architectural form, style, and detailing - positive contributors to the area's special interest and character.

- Distinctive high quality historic buildings of different periods and architectural styles.
- Rich townscape resulting from the architectural diversity of form, style, scale, and massing.
- Important groupings of Georgian townhouses and Victorian properties.
- High level of architectural detailing and decoration.
- Architectural uniformity with classically proportioned and symmetrical facades, with a vertical emphasis.
- Predominance of traditional vertical sliding sash windows and timber panelled doors.
- Traditional shop and public house frontages.
- Varied and colourful palette of high quality traditional materials.
- Distinctive roofscape and skyline including historic focal points.

Negative elements (sites and buildings)

Within the character area, one building and two sites have been identified as impacting negatively on its character and appearance.

Ruth First House

The building dates from the 1960s occupying a prominent corner position. It comprises four storeys of bland brown facing brickwork with uPVC windows and shopfront type treatment at ground floor. It has a low quality aesthetic and does not pay due regard to the finer historic grain and architectural quality of Claypath. The mural is however an important redeeming feature on the local list.

Gap site adjacent to No 80 Claypath

The site is located on the south side of Claypath and is a notable gap in the continuous historic steetscene between Nos 79 and 80. The site was previously occupied by built development from the 19th century up until the late 20th century. It comprises a refuse store enclosed by timber fencing with scrub land behind. The site is a notable detractor within the Claypath streetscene.

Garage site adjacent to No 66 Claypath

The site comprises an old outbuilding and garage but they have been heavily altered and are in a deteriorated condition. They bound the footway on the south side of Claypath and stand out as a detracting from the local character within the streetscene.

Fig 45 below. The buildings and sites identified as impacting negatively on the character and appearance of the area.



Negative elements (alterations)

The historic buildings in Claypath, Lower Gilesgate, much of the south side of Upper Gilesgate, Leazes Place and Ravensworth Terrace show a high level of authenticity. This is in terms of the preservation of the use of traditional materials, architectural features, and detailing. However, a different trend is seen in other parts of the area. The historic terrace on the north side Upper Gilesgate near the road-ends and others such as Ellis Leazes, Renny Street, Mayorswell Street, Providence Row and Wanless Terrace, are noticeably degraded by unsympathetic alterations over time. The main negative impacts tend to derive from:

- Installation of non-conservation style roof-lights, and roof-lights that are haphazardly positioned and square in shape etc.
- Some visible modifications to original openings.
- Painting and rendered over the originally exposed historic fabric.

Such issues detract from the overall quality and historic character of the building and when repeated across a terrace, spoils the overall historic character, uniformity, and visual appearance of the street to the detriment of the special interest of the conservation area.

Fig 46 below. A selection of images showing negative alterations to historic buildings found within the character area.

- Loss of traditional timber windows and doors, and installation of low-quality uPVC and composite alternatives in different modern styles.
- Loss of traditional Welsh slate for inferior modern concrete tiles and fibre cement slate.
- Addition of low quality insensitively designed modern box style dormer windows.
- Removal or lowering of original chimney stacks and loss of chimney pots.



3.1.4 *Ambiance, pedestrian experience, and public realm*

This character area is a key gateway point into the city centre from the east with the main thoroughfares of the A690, Gilesgate Bank and Leazes Road converging at Gilesgate Roundabout. Added to this are the key connections to the Market Place, The Sands via Providence Row, and with the presence of the filling station and local retail centre at the road ends. This layout creates an urban environment that has heavy traffic, is very busy, noisy, and effected by pollution, with vehicles congregating at a number of stopping points.

Relief is provided by the village green where there is a sense of space framed by the surrounding continuous built-up street frontage and roadside trees. This area provides a positive pedestrian experience with seating that encourages people to stop and enjoy the green.

On-street parking is provided in some places and there is hard standing parking on parts of the former village green on the north side of the street that serve the different uses. As a result, parked vehicles visually clutter and diminish the character and visual amenity of this important gateway space. Parking on and overhanging the footway, along with refuse bins on the street, can hinder pedestrian movement and detract from the experience along the historic street.



Fig 47 above. The east end of Gilesgate at the busy “road-ends” junction.



Fig 48 above. The pleasing pedestrian environment of the village green a historic focal point in Gilesgate.



Fig 49 above. The north side of the street cluttered and obstructed by parked vehicles.

Continuing down the bank the pedestrian experience on the south side is very satisfying with sightlines drawn to the historic buildings and wooded background, and elevation of the street above the main carriageway reducing traffic from view. There can however be conflicts between pedestrians walking in the road and vehicles using the private access road to jump the traffic queues.

This side of the street has valuable pedestrian only connections passing St Giles' Church down through the steep woodland to the riverbanks, Pelaw Woods and the College of St Hild and St Bede. Such routes provide a welcomed quiet retreat of a semi-rural character. They have a "green lane" feel but are very steep with steps so not accessibility friendly. The riverside experience is one of a much calmer relaxed atmosphere where the footways are well used and enjoyed by walkers, dog-walkers, joggers, and cyclists. The contrast between the busy main streets and quick transition to the quieter riverside environment is a very positive contributor.

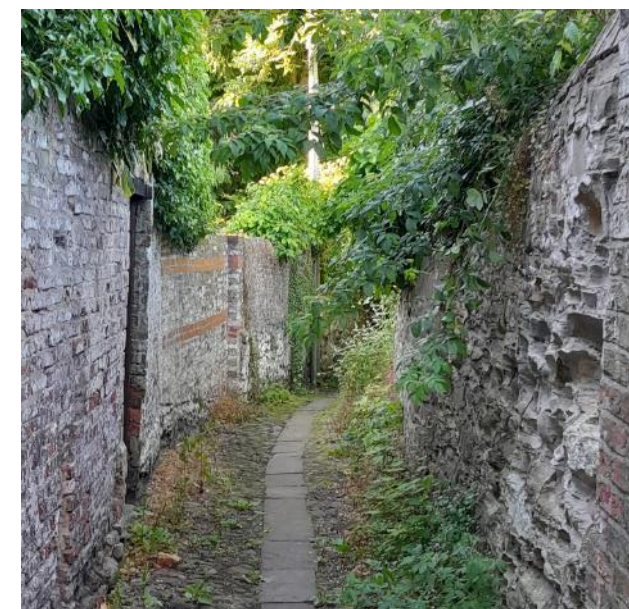
Moving westwards Gilesgate Bank terminates at the roundabout at Leazes Road / A690. This area is heavily trafficked and a very busy, noisy, area supplemented by a series of footways of medium and low use. Some of these are however less appealing due to the sheer impact of the road despite being softened by green amenity spaces.

Lower Gilesgate and Claypath have a quieter residential and more intimate feel. They provide a pleasant pedestrian experience of strong historic character despite the noise intrusion from passing traffic and the presence of parked cars on-street.

Fig 50 below. The south side of Gilesgate leading down to St Giles' Church, followed by a view along the riverside footpath.



Fig 51 below. The characterful route along Claypath descending to the entrance into the Market Place, a vennel giving an insight and experience of a typical ancient route through the city.



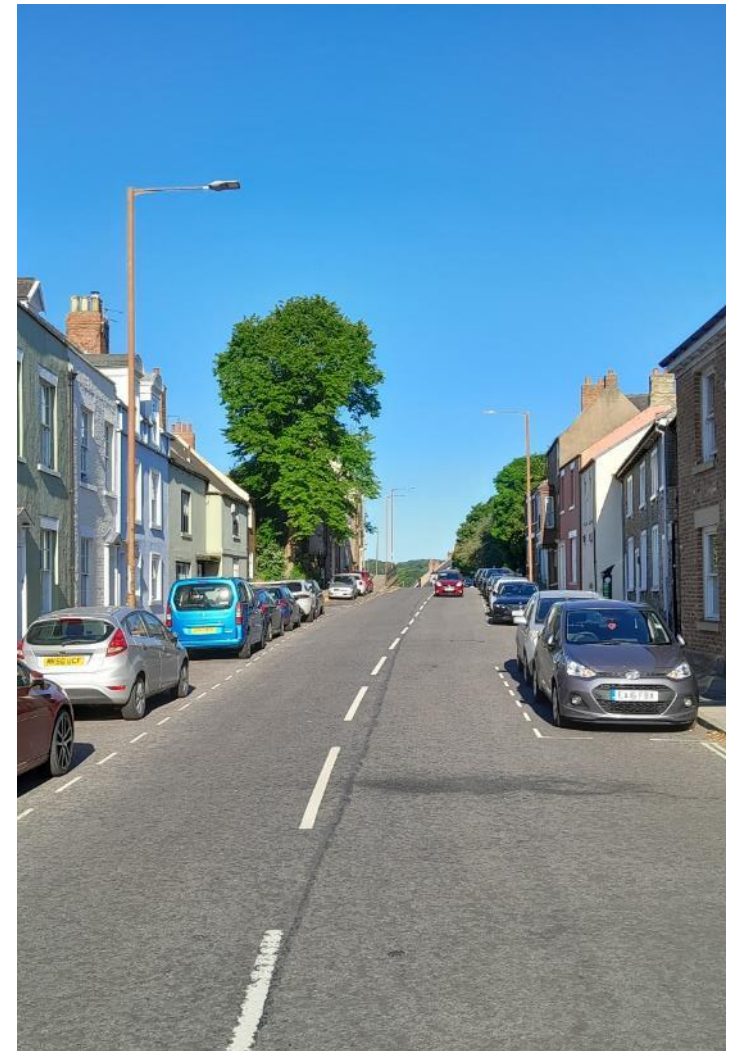
Due to the public houses, and retail premises, at the southwest end of the Claypath, with Millennium Place opposite with its mixed use leisure offer, this area can be particularly busy on weekends and at nighttime with revellers, which adds positively to its vibrancy and vitality. But equally, it can be very busy and chaotic at times and an unpleasant space for pedestrians. This area is also blighted by a high amount of street clutter and poor surfacing at the important entrance point into the Market Place and detracts from the overall experience.

Providence Row is often a busy place as the only exit point from Freemans Place that includes Durham Sixth Form Centre, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre, Freemans Reach, and the residential dwellings fronting The Sands. It is therefore often busy with traffic congested at its junction with Claypath. The footways are wide but the bank very steep and this may be problematic for some people. It is initially dominated by large scale modern developments of mixed use. But upon reaching the north end, there is a positive shift to a historic residential character before reaching the openness of the riverside where there is very pleasant pedestrian experience informed by a semi-rural character.

Across the character area there are a number of residential side streets with lower levels of traffic and pedestrian movement, which are generally quieter, more so outside of term time given the high number of student houses.

Despite the identified negative effects of traffic and parked vehicles, which are difficult to mitigate, the area still provides an attractive approach into the city centre. This is because of the character and high quality of the different street scenes informed by the historic buildings, village green, green spaces, and some cobbled margins.

Fig 52 below and right. *The busy main route along Leazes Road and Lower Gilesgate approaching Claypath with on-street parking.*



Street surfacing materials and their layout within conservation areas play an important role in their character and have a visual and physical impact on how they are used and valued.

At Gilesgate Bank, Upper Gilesgate and Claypath there is red chipped tarmac surfacing to the carriageways. This has a higher aesthetic quality compared to the standard black found elsewhere and contributes positively. These streets also exhibit important areas of traditional floorscape in the form of stone paving, stone setts, stone kerbs, and cobbles.

In Lower Gilesgate on the south side stone paving, with stone sets and wheelers can be found and this is appropriate to the historic character of the street. Leazes Place is very notable as one of the best preserved domestic streets in the city characterised by a fine traditional floorscape of stone paving and cobbles.

There are positive examples of traditional materials used for footways with stone paving and stone kerbs at both Upper and Lower Gilesgate, Claypath, Ellis Leazes, and at Douglas Villas. Magdalene Street has 45 degree herringbone paving that is very busy on the eye. But the streets entrance there is a traditional palette of large stone sets with granite set edging, cobbles either side with stone paving to the footways, and this contributes positively.

Elsewhere there is a mixture of standardised materials of tarmacadam, concrete paving of different modules and concrete kerbs that are not very becoming of the historic character of the place.

Maynard's Row, which provides the access to Vane Tempest Hall, stands out as being particularly poor with very deteriorated surfacing and large potholes, it is cluttered with parked vehicles, signs, and refuse bins.

Fig 53 below. *The positive quieter pedestrian routes along West View and St Giles Close leading into Pelaw Woods.*



The overall quality and condition of the street surfacing palette is variable. The use of traditional materials contributes very positively to the local character and its sense of place. But this is weakened by the deteriorated condition. For example, cobbled surfacing is poor and, in some places, overgrown with missing and displaced stones, places where cobbles have been repaired with insensitive materials, and damaged by parked vehicles. There are many fractured and uneven paving flags, and repairs carried out in different materials giving a poor mismatched visual appearance.

Surfaces Palette



Street furniture can add to the conservation area’s aesthetic, enhance its character, and contribute positively to its overall quality for residents and visitors.

There is one unique 19th century item of street furniture in the form of a cast iron horse trough, used as a planter, on the roadside at Gilesgate Bank, but its condition is deteriorated.

There are some positive items such as the timber seating, and timber planters on the village green, the use of “Durham” cast iron bollards across the area, the seating on the green space in front of The Chains and the play equipment to the rear.

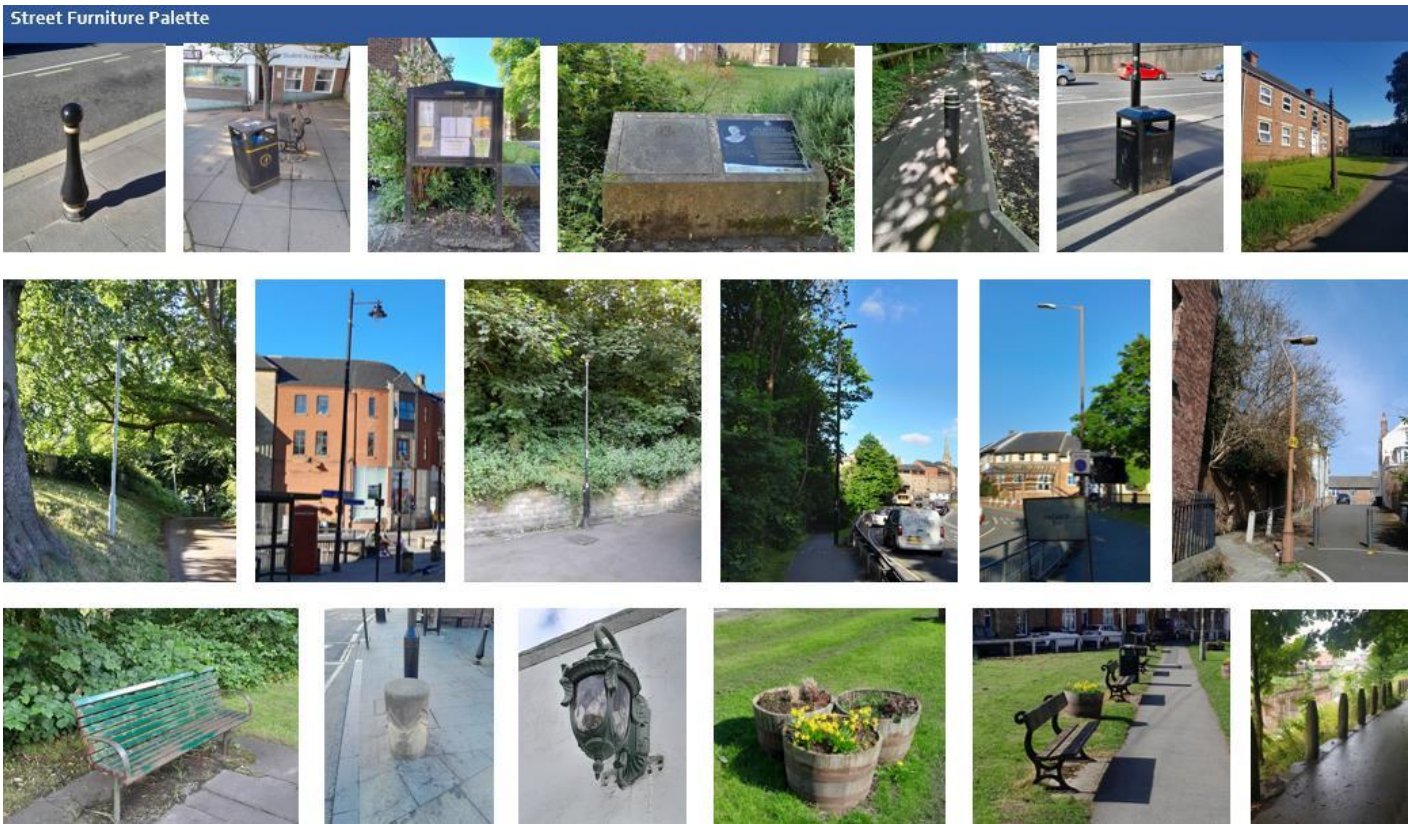
Along Gilesgate Bank, Lower Gilesgate and Claypath there are standard items such as bus stops, refuse bins, the occasional seat, and traffic signs, but these are well dispersed and limited in number causing no real adverse visual effect.

On the other hand, the west end of Gilesgate Bank, Gilesgate Roundabout and the Leazes Road area are visually detracted by the paraphernalia associated with the modern highway, such as the traffic lights, railings, and high number of road signs.

The junction of Claypath, Millennium Square and the Market Place is very cluttered and uncoordinated owing to the presence of a high number of street furniture items in a compact area.

These include rows of traditional and contemporary style bollards, a high number of lighting columns close together, litter bins, cycle rack, planters, and pole mounted traffic signs. The cumulative effect of these items with the very poor carriageway surfacing detracts from the quality of the townscape in this critical location.

Street lighting columns throughout the area are modern of different standard designs, contemporary at the entrance to Millennium Square, with green, black, and brown colour finishes. Within Gilesgate and Claypath they are not very becoming with the historic character and quality of the streetscapes.



Boundary treatments can be integral to an area's character and appearance and are important in delineating public and private space while reinforcing the linear street pattern.

Within this character area there is an assortment of boundary treatments, historic and modern, that make such a positive contribution. These include the historic low brick and stone front walls with piers and gates, and traditional spike-top metal found in Upper Gilesgate the historic ornamental metal railings and gates at Leazes Place.

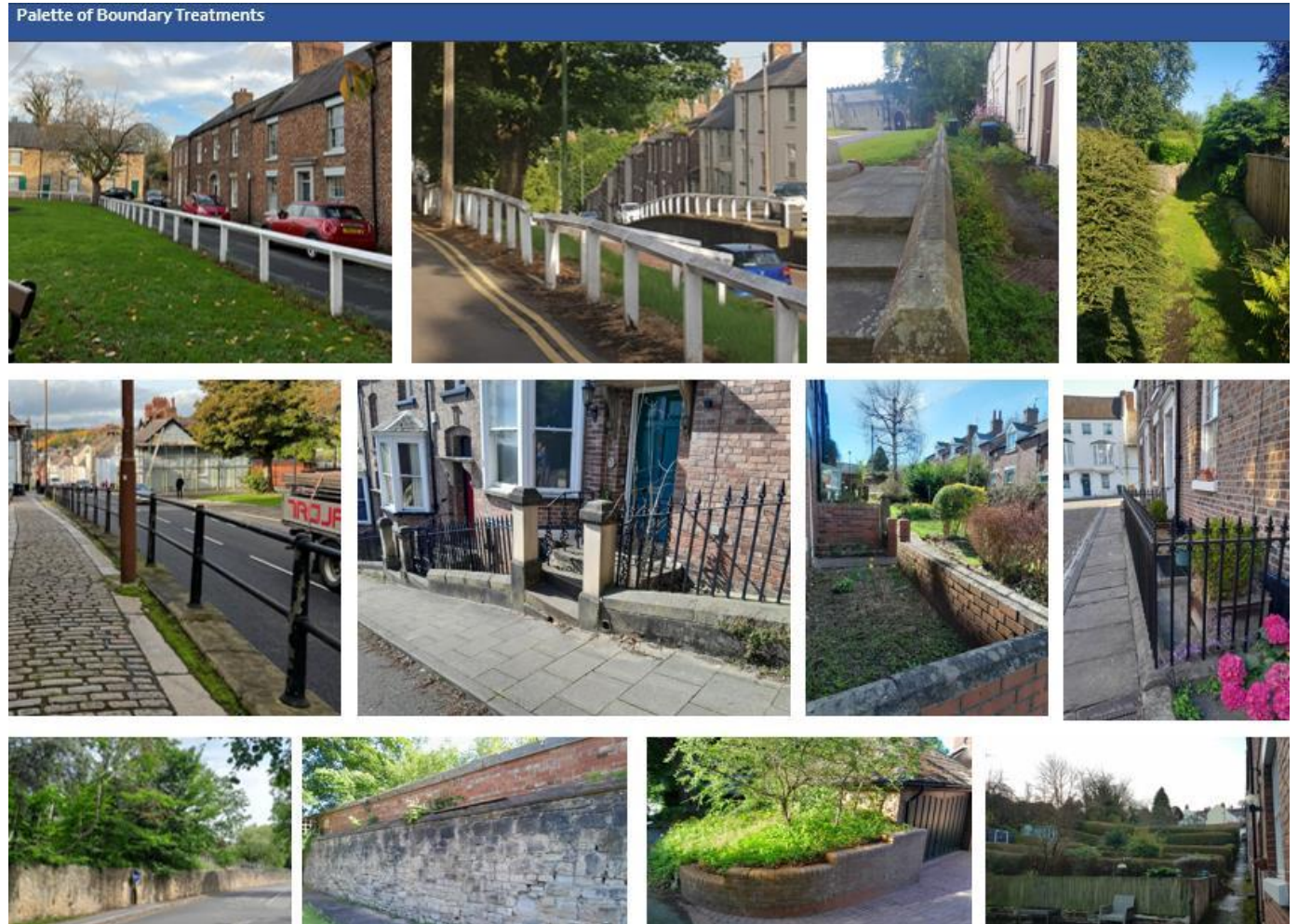
The village green areas and Gilesgate Bank have distinctive white painted "birds-mouth" fencing that is sympathetic to the character of the space.

There are important historic stone walls around St Giles' Churchyard, and as retaining walls along Gilesgate Bank and Lower Gilesgate. Further, the entrances to the Victorian Villas behind the street frontage have stone walls with tall stone piers, and there are historic stone walls around the former goods station building.

The properties at Ravensworth Terrace feature low stone walls with copings, stone entrance piers and spear topped metal railings that are an essential part of the street's high aesthetic quality and historic character.

Within Bakerhouse Lane there are examples of modern black metal railings, timber fencing, hedgerows and red brick walls that contribute positively to the suburban character.

Also, in this area the Victorian terraces have red brick walls enclosing the rear yards and back lanes these are important elements of the local character.



3.1.5 Visual experiences

The character area has a distinct position and topography which has dictated the street pattern and the evolution of its built development. This has created a series of notable views that express its special interest, distinctiveness, and character.

The views change with movement, for example within Upper Gilesgate the continuous street frontages provide visual containment and intimate historic streetscene views. But travelling down Gilesgate Bank there are at first glimpses of Durham Castle and Cathedral that open out around Gilesgate Roundabout where a greater extent of the buildings can be seen.

A similar scenario occurs along the A690 where Durham Cathedral is unseen approaching into the city before a sudden reveal giving a strong sense of arrival. In contrast moving down Pelaw Leazes Lane to the riverside there is a fine emerging view of Durham Castle and Cathedral behind Old Elvet Bridge in their river corridor and townscape context.

Travelling down Lower Gilesgate and into Claypath, the elevation and narrowness of the street creates a channelled historic streetscape view where the United Reform Church spire Durham Viaduct, the Railway Station and St Godrics Church form notable landmarks. These are in contrast to the close up views and the familiar sight of the more modest Victorian terraced housing experienced elsewhere.

All such views, and many others contribute to the visual experience of the area, and provide an understanding and appreciation of its special interest. In summary the key views identified within this character zone are:

View 1 – Sequence of views west along Gilesgate Bank

View 2 – Close quarter view from Gilesgate Bank of St Giles' Church

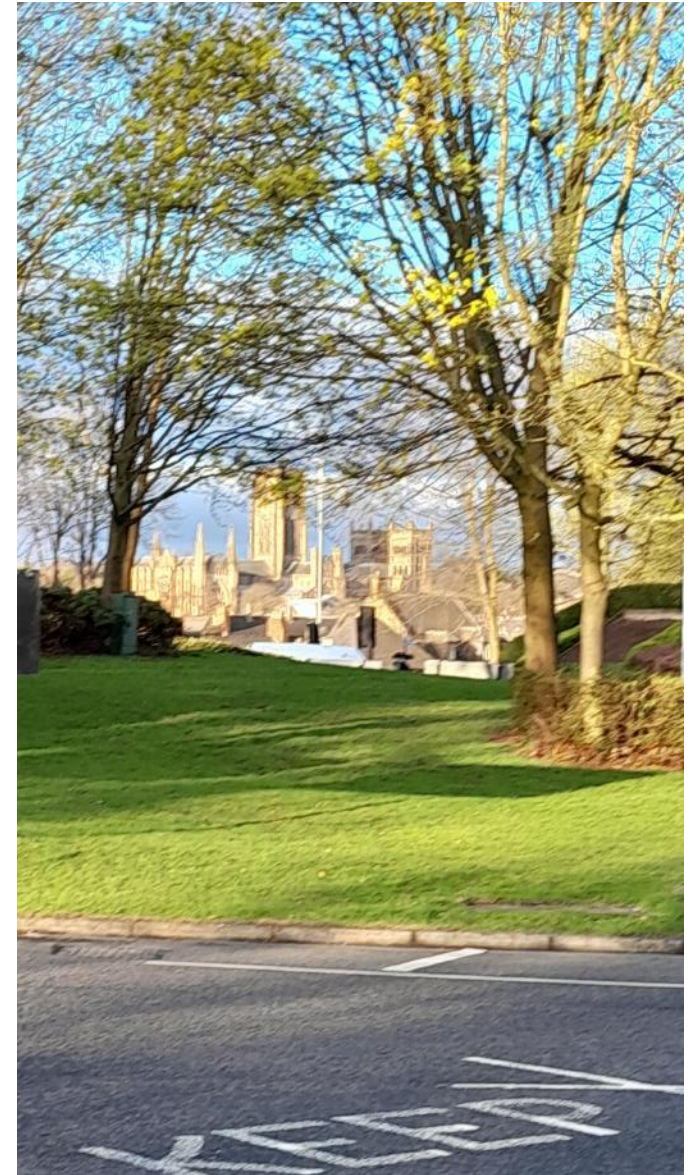
View 3 – Sequence of views southwest along Pelaw Leazes Lane and down to the Riverside

View 4 – Static view west from pedestrian footbridge over A690 .

View 5 – Streetscape view Lower Gilesgate and Claypath

View 6 – Views along Leazes Road.

Fig 54 right. The fine view of Durham Cathedral framed by the trees on Gilesgate Roundabout.



Key Views
Location



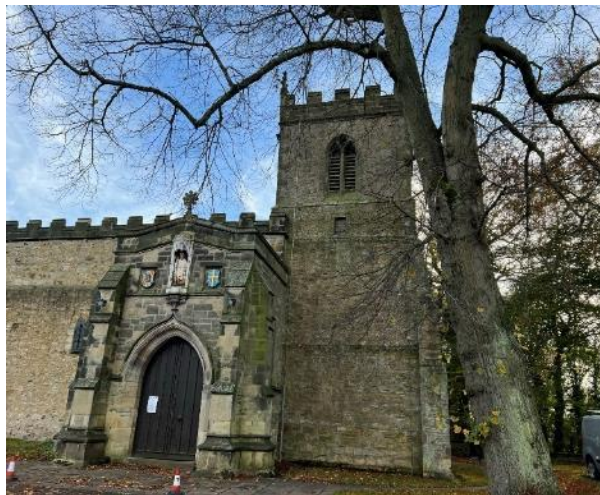
Image



Description

Views west from Upper Gilesgate.

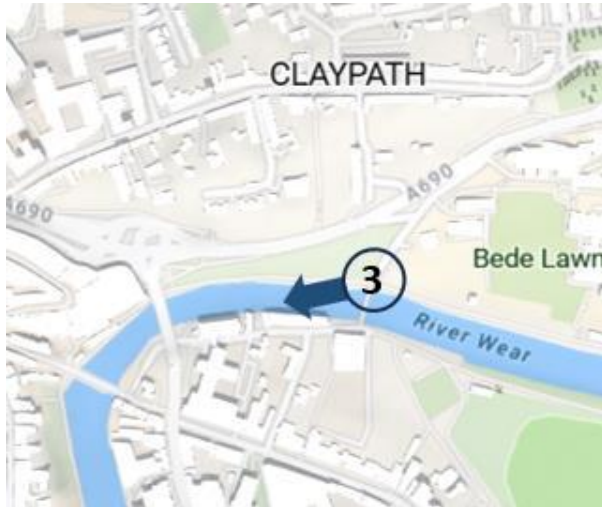
Sequential views west approaching Gilesgate Roundabout. The castle and cathedral are unseen but travelling down Gilesgate Bank there are tantalising glimpses between the buildings. The views then open up at the bottom of the street where more of monuments are revealed.



Views south from Gilesgate Bank

Close quarter kinetic views approaching the church from the open access point on the south side of Gilesgate Bank. The experience is elevated as approaching the church along the street it is hidden from view by the buildings.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

Views south west from Pelaw Leazes Lane to the riverside

Sequential views where Durham Castle and Cathedral vary in extent. At first the cathedral is framed but heavily filtered by the trees overhanging the lane. There is then no sight of the buildings turning west onto the riverside footway but travelling south some glimpses are attainable through the trees before castle and cathedral are dramatically revealed above the bridge and tree canopy.



Views south west from A690.

A static view from the pedestrian footbridge crossing the A690 behind the Travel Lodge. It provides a splendid view that demonstrates the scale, dominance, and drama of Durham Cathedral. The route along the road provides a sequential experience as the cathedral is dramatically revealed travelling into the city giving a sense of arrival.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View south west from Lower Gilesgate / Claypath

Enclosed channelled views of the historic streetscape characterised by elegant Georgian and Victorian architecture. The elevation of the streets provides a deep field of view as far as St Godric's Church and Durham Viaduct that are notable historic focal points. Further, it gives a sense of the surrounding landscape that contains the historic core.

Key Views

Location



Image



Description

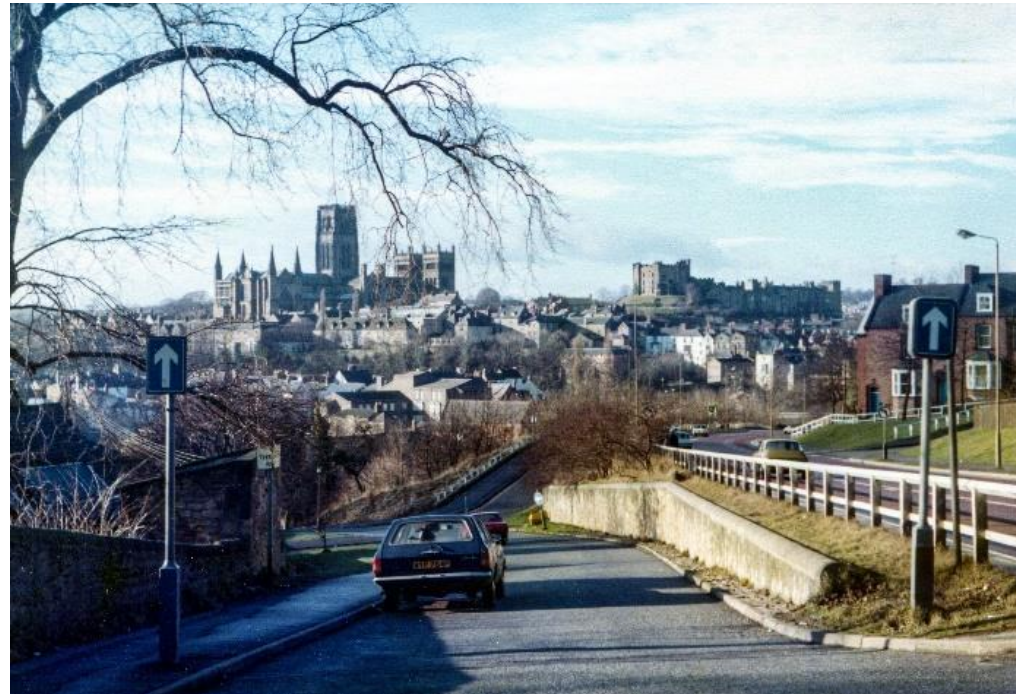
View west along Leazes Road

An important approach view along Leazes Road with Durham Castle and Cathedral visible above the tree canopy. Their presence, and the quality of the view is increased during the winter months.

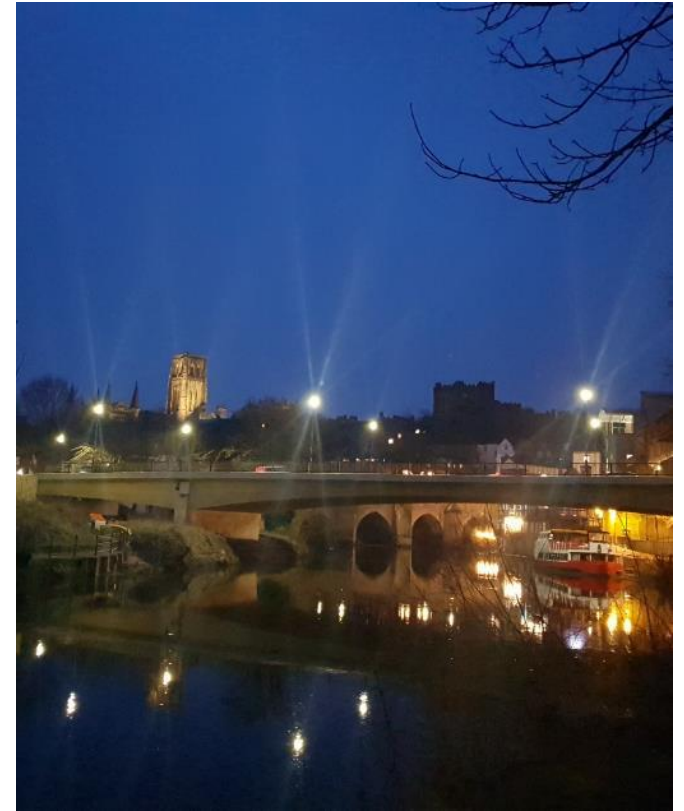
Fig 55, right. Comparative historic and present day view point.

Within the seven Durham City Conservation Areas there are examples of important views lost or reduced due to intervening development or unmanaged tree coverage. In this character area there is one notable example, the view along Leazes Road; this is a classic approach view that has been significantly reduced over time due to trees evidence by historic photographs. Taking opportunities and positive action to recover such would be very beneficial.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10229487057633102&set=gm.3001209870015451&idorvantiy=741812175955243>



Key nighttime views – sequential views down
Pelaw Leazes Lane emerging onto Baths Bridge and
approaching New Elvet Bridge along the riverside.



Ambiance, pedestrian experience, and public realm - positive contributors to the area's special interest and character.

- The contrasting ambience between the busy main streets, residential side streets, and the quieter semi-rural lanes and riverside area.
- The different routes and connections the area provides with changing character and ambiances leading into different parts of the city centre.
- The overall pleasant pedestrian environment and experience of strong historic character.
- The traditional floor and boundary treatments that enhance the aesthetic of the public realm.
- The different and high-quality framed, fixed, dynamic, and sequential views the area provides; including those focused on Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Negative elements (public realm)

The area's biggest weakness derives from the impact of traffic, congestion and parked vehicles cluttering the historic streets and spaces. This negatively affects visual amenity in particular around the village green area, and when combined with refuse bins on the footway hinders pedestrian movement.

The visual quality of the area is detracted from surface treatments being either traditional but in a deteriorated condition, or modern and mismatched. A common problem is caused by work carried out by utility companies who benefit from "permitted development" rights for various works that often create poor visual effects. This often results in loss of traditional floorscape materials reinstated with tarmac, or by patching of similar materials.

There are some notable "hot spots" of poor quality public realm. These are parts of the village green, the entrance into Maynard's Row, and at the west end of Claypath leading into the Market Place. This results from street clutter, condition, and material issues, which gives a poor impression of the place. The fencing around the village green is collapsed in places and to the rear of the Victorian terraces some original walls have been lost.

Fig 56 right. A selection of images showing the negative issues in the public realm visual clutter and poor surfacing at the entrance to the Market Place, car dominated village green area, the poor quality Maynard's Road, and damaged fencing.



3.1.6 Appraisal summary - negatives, issues, threats, and problems that affect the character and appearance of the area.

Built form

- There are two buildings of low quality and one gap site that detracts from the character and appearance of the area.
- There are some buildings that are noticeably suffering from fabric deterioration and an absence of regular maintenance works.
- There are many properties where unsympathetic alterations have been undertaken that detract from their uniformity, historic character, and aesthetic.
- Vacancy is not a noticeable problem within the area, but there are a limited number of buildings that do not appear to be in use.
- There are some examples of low quality modern shop frontages and signs.

Urban spaces

- There are positive areas of traditional floorscape, although condition varies with some noticeably degraded and damaged.

Green spaces

- Some green spaces are damaged by vehicles crossing and parking on them.

- In some locations, street surfaces are poor, deteriorated, and mismatched, with fragmentary repairs creating a poor visual appearance.
- There are places where parked vehicles are damaging surfacing.
- Traffic can be congested, and parking is a noticeable problem around the village green area that detracts from the historic character of the place. However, this may be difficult to resolve.
- Parked vehicle and refuse bins can impede pedestrian movement on some footways.
- Collections of refuse bins in certain locations blight visual amenity.
- There are some examples of loss of historic boundary treatments and insensitive replacement that impacts adversely.
- The condition and quality of the spaces at the Village Green, Maynard’s Road, and Lower Claypath are noticeably poor.

Street furniture

- Overgrowing trees block and reduce the extent and quality of views of Durham Castle and Cathedral.
- There is a proliferation of items associated with car parking and traffic, but it is recognised that this may be unavoidable.
- Street furniture items overall are uncoordinated, and some are outdated.
- Street lighting columns are all modern and mismatched.

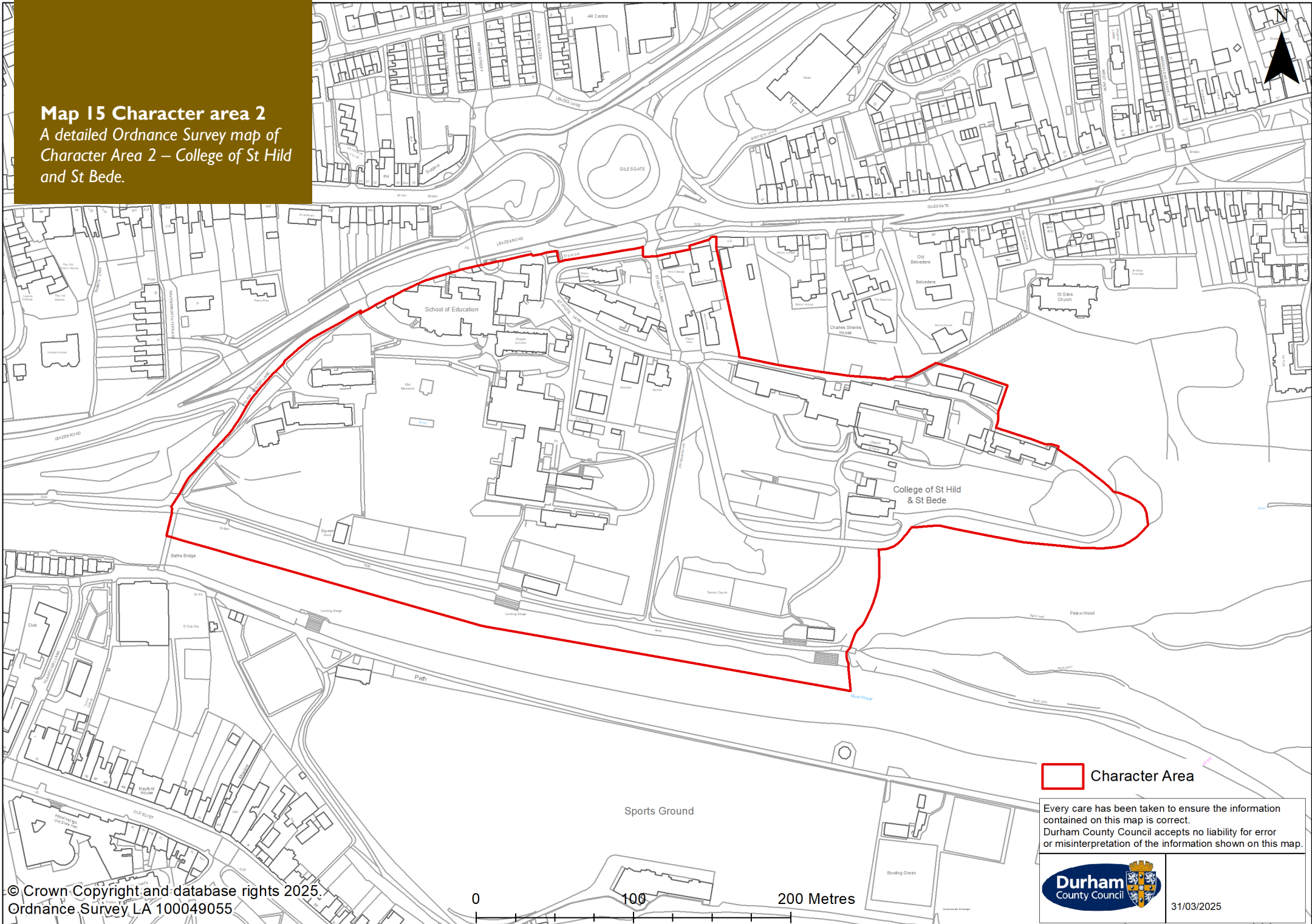
Threats


- Ongoing decline of those buildings which have fabric deterioration issues.
- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials, and mismatched replacement and patch repairs.
- Potential for further loss of traditional street surfacing materials and boundaries.
- Potential for unsympathetic alterations to unlisted historic buildings.
- Unmanaged trees further reducing the extent and quality of important views.

3.2 Character area 2
(College of St Hild and St Bede)



Map 15 Character area 2
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character Area 2 – College of St Hild
and St Bede.



 Character Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.



31/03/2025

3.2.1 Location and summary of special interest

The College of St Hild and St Bede is a constituent college of Durham University. It is the university's second largest college, formed in 1975 following the merger of two older 19th century colleges, the College of the Venerable Bede for men and St Hild's College for women. This college is unique being the only college in the city not located either on the Bailey or to the south of the city at the Hill Colleges campus.

The college occupies the southern part the conservation area between Leazes Road in the north and the riverside in the South. In east the boundary is provided by the edge of Pelaw Woods and the rear plots of the building lining the south side of Gilesgate Bank. In the west it follows the route of Pelaw Leazes Lane down to Baths Bridge.

The setting to the character area is mixed, informed by the busy urban environment of Gilesgate with the modern bypass road. This contrasts with the tranquil nature of the river corridor and the dense mature woodland of Pelaw Woods that provides a very fitting setting merging seamlessly into the college's leafy parkland.

At the time of writing the college is vacant and awaiting refurbishment / redevelopment by the University before reoccupation as residential accommodation.

What gives the area its special historic and architectural interest and character?

- The conserved 19th century east-west plan form, legible despite the intrusion of modern development.
- The distinctive and diverse architectural styles, and high aesthetic quality, of the historic college buildings.
- The varied topography situated on a steep sided valley as part of the River Wear corridor.
- The historic parkland character with a contrast of open green space and woodland that achieves high aesthetic quality.
- The enclosed inwards character with a collegiate air that makes it very distinct from the other character areas.
- The splendid views across the river and townscape to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.
- The high social significance in the life of the student communities at the college, and importance in terms of the collective memories of college and university life for previous students and staff.

Fig 57 below. A selection of image of the original main Victorian college buildings.



3.2.2 Local layout, streets, and spaces

The college occupies a substantial site that contains piecemeal built form that has developed from the Victorian period onwards creating a varied character, and quality, with different uses to the buildings and spaces.

The college site has two main access points one off St Hild’s Lane, the other via Pelaw Leazes Lane. But there are other preserved historic routes leading up from the riverside and down through the woodland to the rear of St Giles’ Church. These are steep, enclosed, and intimate routes of a “green lane” character.

The college has an informal layout with no street frontage as the buildings turn their back to Leazes Road orientated for face the river southwards. Given the different uses, phases, and individual designs there is no definable building line. Building positions are varied and staggered across the site that adds to its character.

The buildings are surrounded by a mixture of green open spaces, and hardscaped areas. The wide gaps between them notable in signifying the different phases of development and provide positive separation.

Fig 58 below. Images showing the buildings set on different levels accessed by narrow paths and steps. These routes are enclosed by trees that contrast positively with broader open green spaces.



Density and plots are highly varied, the north and central parts of the site are of higher density, whereas the south, east and west are of lower density with the buildings in more spacious surroundings. The historic college buildings and later 20th century blocks are wide, and of regular plan forms. There is a pair of semi-detached dwellings on a small square plot, detached dwellings on narrower plots, and smaller rectangular boathouses standing on the riverside.

The topography has dictated the plan form and adds to its strong character and sense of place. The site drops down from Leazes Road in the north to the riverside in the south with the buildings dispersed over different levels, the landform slopes steadily at first but then becomes steeper.

The intentional historic prominence of the main college buildings is obvious. They utilise the topography by being designed to stand prominently on a high ridge line overlooking the river and Elvet, displaying their grandeur and status. However, this legibility has been reduced by tree cover and the modern blocks introduced into the south part of the site.

The historic layout and character has been compromised further in the west and central parts of the site due to a high amount of later development that envelops the older buildings including the listed chapel. These modern developments and associated spaces such as the car parking compromise the historic buildings’ setting.

Fig 59 below. *The openness around the original buildings enhance their setting, followed by the enclosed linear route through the college along St Hilds Lane.*



The college has a leafy parkland character with dense areas of woodland in the east and north merging into Pelaw Woods and St Giles’ Churchyard.

The formality of the college buildings is softened by mature landscaping, resulting in an area of high aesthetic value. Formal landscaped terraced areas frame the historic buildings in the northern part of the site with less formal parkland, grassed and treed areas sloping down towards the riverside. The quality of the landscape is recognised by most of the site being included within the Area of Higher Landscape Value identified in the County Durham Plan.

The trees have intrinsic value. All contribute in some degree to the leafy parkland character. Some play a critical role in screening and assimilating the modern built form into the landscape and softening the visual impact.

Part of the college’s character is the contrasting image of the place, urban in the north and semi-rural in the south and east where building density decreases, and greenery increases. This contributes significantly to the visual amenity of the area and wider surroundings. This is most obvious in views of the “green wall” from the other side of the river, and the more intimate experience along the riverside path in front of the college grounds.

Fig 60 below. *The “green wall” of the college grounds viewed from Green Lane with the white rendered chapel a landmark in the parkland. Green spaces and trees within the centre of the college.*



Fig 61 below. A selection of images of the different positive green spaces within the character area that contribute to its character and appearance.



Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to the area's special interest.

- High density in the north reducing in the south and east with a predominance of open space.
- Original college buildings fixed on a legible east-west axis and taking advantage of the land form to reflect status.
- Informal layout and ad-hoc development pattern but cohesion provided by buildings facing south.
- Individual plots of differing sizes, shapes, orientation on different levels that adds to character.
- Gaps important in signifying different phases of the college's evolution.
- Series of green open spaces of differing scales, and enclosed green lane connections.
- Leafy historic parkland character enhancing the setting of the buildings.

Negative elements

The layout of the college campus provides no meaningful or positive street frontage in the north to Leazes Road and Gilesgate. Historically, there were buildings in this location that followed the general historic grain and street pattern. These were removed to make way for the new bypass road. This important frontage is dominated by a large hard standing car park and low quality modern development blocks that detract from the character and appearance of the streetscene.

A further negative is that the prominence of the main college buildings, designed to reflect their grandeur and status is all but lost. This results from the ad-hoc nature of the modern development and associated spaces around them, and due to the tree cover, on what was formerly open gardens sloping down to the riverside.

Fig 63 below. An image of the college from the 1920s demonstrating the original design intent to reflect the prominence and status of the buildings from the riverside overlooking formal gardens.

[hildbedealumni | Alumni of the College of St Hild & St Bede, Durham University | Page 2](#)



3.2.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing.

The original Victorian college buildings are of high architectural quality. St Bede’s College was built in 1839 followed by St Hild’s College in 1858. This results in some variation, but both have a strong formality and are grand buildings reflective of their use and status.

St Hild’s building is between three and four storeys with a H shaped plan and attached model school wing. It is built from coursed squared stone with steeply pitched Welsh slate roofs including decorative tall stone chimneys. It is in the Gothic revival style with a symmetrical front elevation and dominant stone projecting gables at either end with a series of smaller gables between. The west wing dates from 1907 by J Potts following the original theme but with variation in detailing.

St Bede’s is an imposing three storey building with a simple H-plan in the neo Tudor style. Again, it is of a stone construction with Welsh slate roofs, and features stone transomed and mullioned windows, some with inset curved headed stone detailing adding interest. Both buildings are impacted by piecemeal additions and extensions of the later 19th, early and mid-20th centuries. Of these additions the chapel of 1912-13 by Joseph Potts and Son is positive. It comprises of a rectangular plan with a steeply pitched slate roof designed to respect the main building with well executed detailing.

On the east side of Leazes Lane is the former Victorian school building. This comprises one storey and a long linear plan form built from squared stone with a steeply pitched Welsh slate roof in a distinctive fish scale pattern. It has notable gabled dormers with lancet headed windows, a decorative leaded spire, and tall ashlar chimneys with clay pots.



Fig 64 right. A selection of images of the original main college buildings and the splendid later private chapel addition.

Behind the school, southwest is the Chapel of the Venerable Bede (grade II listed), an Anglican Chapel constructed in 1939 in a distinctive Art Deco style with Gothic, Classical and Baroque detailing. It has a completely different architectural style and character to the more formal Victorian buildings. It is notable for the quality of design and execution, in particular the skilful amalgam of various architectural styles that is a trademark of architects Seeley & Paget, who were one of the leading national architectural practices of the time. The chapel has a reinforced concrete frame filled with solid brickwork, rendered, and painted white with a notable curving plain east end and flanking buttresses.

Fig 65 below. The Chapel of the Venerable Bede.



To the south of the chapel is the gymnasium of 1931 possibly to designs of local architect Joseph Potts and Son of Sunderland. This building is of a functional and utilitarian appearance of red brick and smooth render, with a central wide doorway that features Doric pillars to either side of a stone portico and tall linear windows above. A crude incongruous dormer extension has been added to create a third storey on both sides of the main roof. Its interest results more from representing the concerns for physical health in education from the period.

In the southwest part of the site is Carter House, the 'Model School' constructed in 1886. It has architectural interest owing to its H-plan design with a central linear range and end cross ranges illustrating its original function. It is in the Tudor Revival style of a stone and slate construction with stone mullioned windows, stone surrounds, and a wide Tudor arched door with stone mouldings. The roof has strong form with stone water tabling detailed with ball finials and terracotta ridge tiles. A large flat roofed dormer has been inserted at a later date, detracting from the style and simplicity of the prominent western frontage.

Other buildings include York Cottage possibly of an early 19th century date constructed as a private dwelling. It is a plain building of modest design with a symmetrical but undistinguishable main elevation.

The White House dates from the early 20th century as a detached private villa set in its own grounds. It is well-proportioned and well-preserved, and includes features such as stone mullioned windows, hoodmoulds and overhanging eaves with an Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

Fig 66 below. Images of Carter House and the White House.



Burdon House looks outwards onto Gilesgate/Leazes road, built in the 1970s-80s of a mundane brown brick and two storey block form. It has some interest because of the irregularly pitched roof form and slight projection of the windows with solid panels between and above with a vertical emphasis.

Further south in the college site is Caedmon Hall dating from the early 1960s. It comprises of two and three storeys addressing the sloping site, and features timber panels, large metal windows, and roofs with gently sloping pitches. It has some merit as a good example of 1960s design.

The other modern extensions and accommodation blocks are between four and five storeys of bland materials and have no or little detailing, or any redeeming architectural features.

At the riverside, the two boathouses are utilitarian buildings of modest architectural interest. Collingwood boathouse is a modern rebuild on an earlier footprint, whereas Hild Bede boathouse has more interest as it is well-preserved example of a standard hut type design.



Fig 67 above. A selection of images showing the different architectural styles of buildings that contribute positively to the character of the area, York Cottage, Pelaw View, gymnasium building and Alma House.

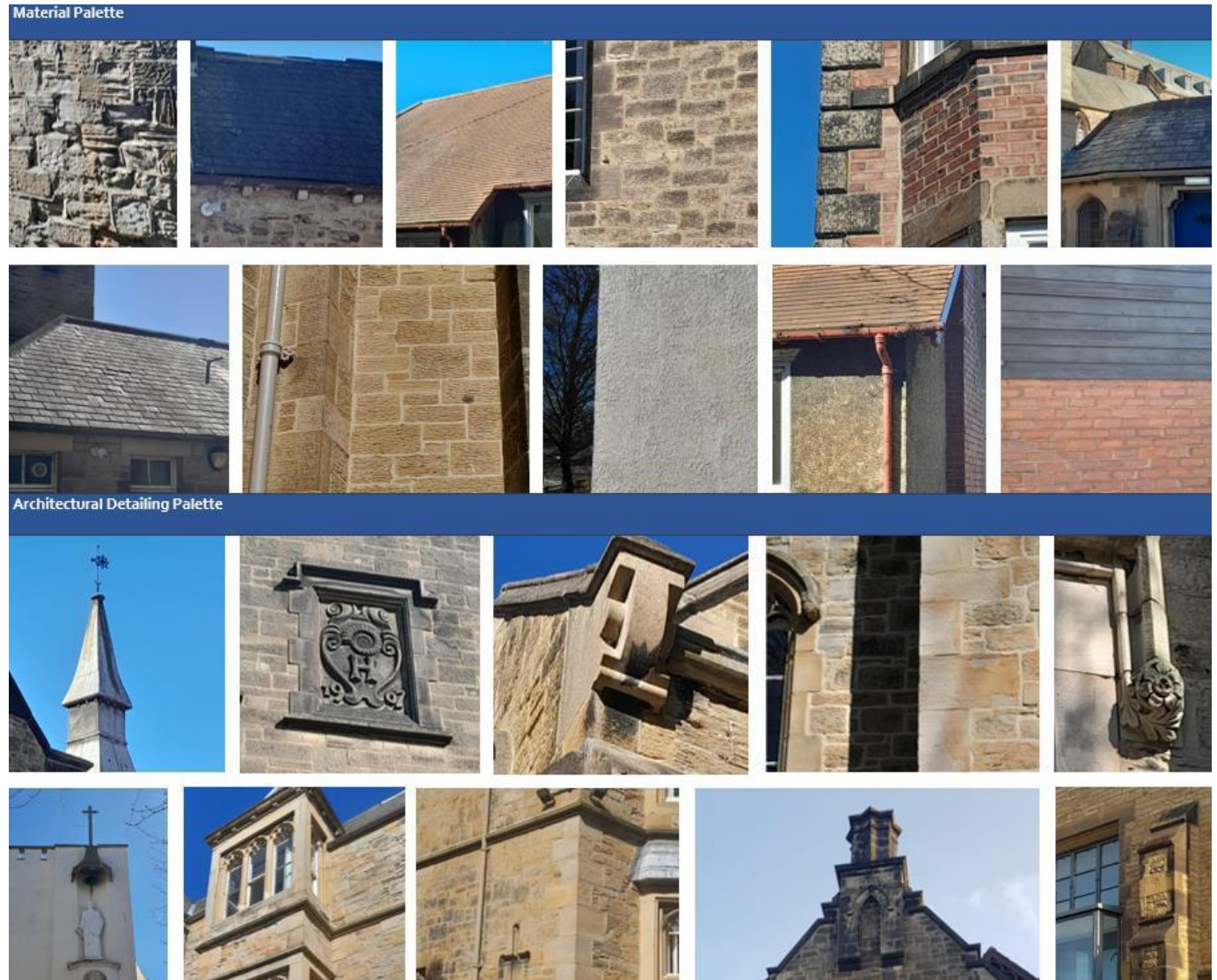
The 19th century college buildings and some later early 20th century additions are characterised by their stone construction. Stone is also commonly used for detailing such as quoins, floor bands, lintels, sills, window, and door surrounds and often including mouldings as added ornamentation.

There is some limited use of render with smooth and striking bright white render used at the Chapel of Venerable Bede, and rough-cast and cream used on the residential properties. Other buildings are of red facing brickwork in different tones and textures adding variety and interest. Less common materials are timber boarding, and pebble dashed render.

In terms of roof materials, traditional Welsh slate predominates across the historic buildings but there is some limited use of Lakeland slate and red tiles that adds positive variation.

The modern developments have a blander material palette of buff or brown brick with some pebbled dashed panels. Roof coverings are a mixture of single-ply and metal roof coverings with some limited use of natural grey slate.

Architectural detailing in the area includes stone corbelling, intricate finial's, stone buttress features, stone carved heads to windows, water tabling, kneelers, stone string courses, and carved arched drip moulds.

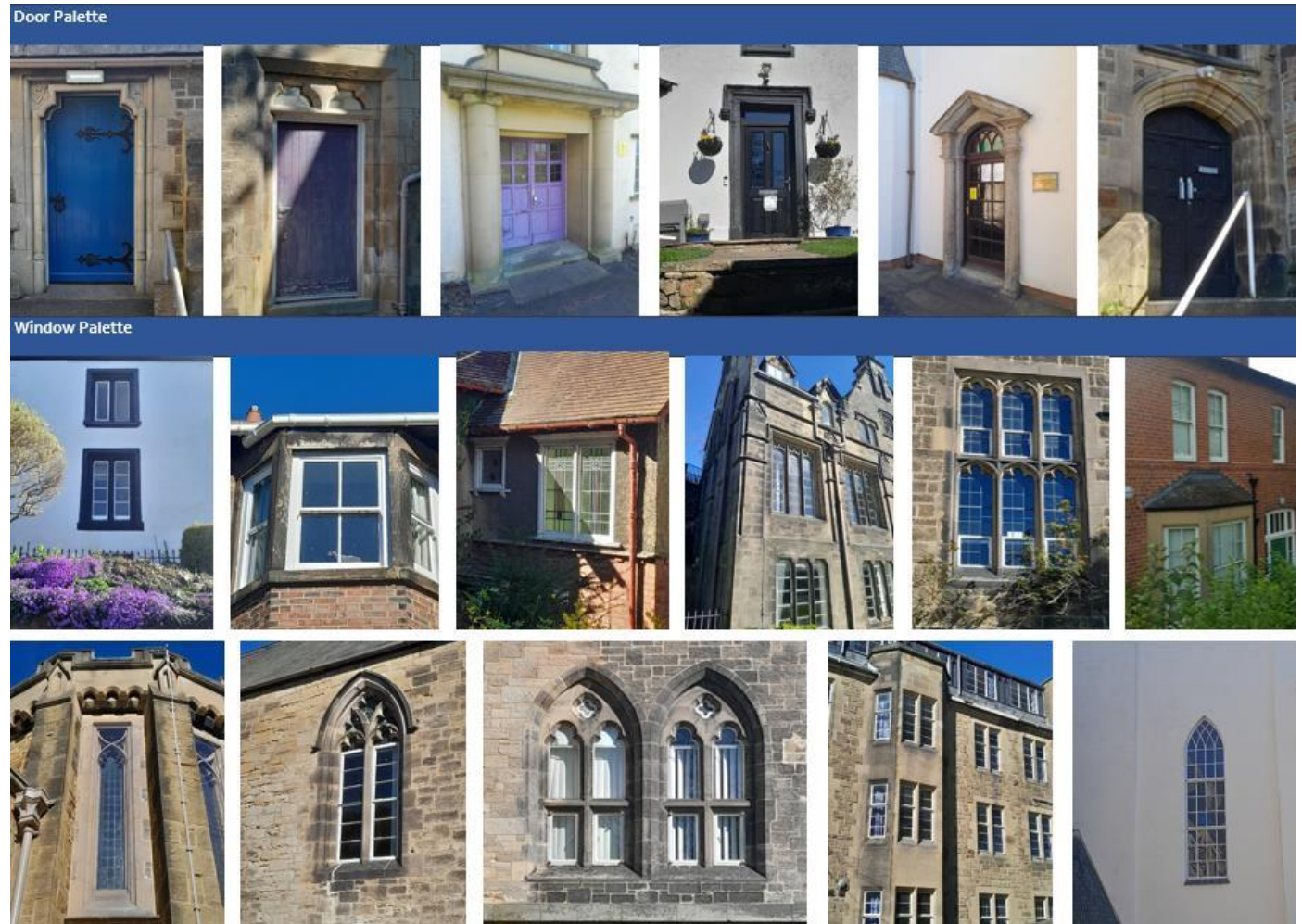


The historic buildings have traditional timber painted panelled doors in different styles that contribute positively. Some have decorative fanlights and stone door cases with either flat or Tudor arches.

There is a mixture of traditional timber painted sliding sash windows, casements (side-hung and top openers) in different glazing configurations, and fixed lights in timber and metal.

The main college buildings are notable for their strong stone mullion and transom windows, Gothic Revival styled windows and arched headed and lancet windows with different detailing. There are a number of examples of canted and squared bays, often double height, which add variety and character.

Doors and windows to the modern developments tend to be simple with windows in different casement styles in aluminium with some limited use of uPVC and are either squared or horizontal in proportion with shallow reveals.



Roofscape

The historic roofscape of the character area is highly distinctive. The historic buildings are characterised by traditional roof forms of different masses, and degrees of pitch, broken up by steps and projections in the building lines and different ridge and eaves levels. They have traditional coverings and strong detailing, punctuated by brick chimney stacks. The roofs are interjected by some original dormers adding interest.

There is an overall distinctive harmony of historic roofscape that is a vital part of the character of the wider townscape. First because of its unique institutional nature and quality, and secondly because it can be experienced from different public vantage points. The later individual Edwardian buildings have hipped roofs with swept overhanging eaves. They contribute positively although they are viewed more individually.

The roofs of the modern buildings are either flat, or shallow pitched, they are mostly neutral in contribution. Later flat roofed dormer insertions noticeably detract from the historic character and appearance of the original college buildings.

Fig 68 below. An image from Lower Gilesgate that captures the roofscape of the college characterised by traditional slate roofs with ridged punctured by chimneys.



Architectural form, style, and detailing - positive contributors to the area’s special interest and character.

- The ambitious design of the main college buildings and distinctive Gothic and neo-Tudor architectural styles.
- Buildings designed to make use of their site and landscape position, and that are notable for being ornate and well-detailed.
- The architectural interest of the different buildings tied into their original functionality such as the gymnasium and model school.
- The positive contrast between the different styles of the college buildings and private detached dwellings such as York Cottage of modest design, the private villa at White House that is more elaborate, and Rose and Bede Cottage of the inter-war period.
- Group value as part of the wider Durham University estate a product of expansion over time.

Negative elements

There have been piecemeal additions, including modern dormers, and extensions to the original main college buildings affecting their design integrity and compromising original character.

The buildings which detract are the mid to late 20th century blocks that are intrusive within the immediate setting of the Victorian college buildings, they are very out of place in the context of the historic parkland character. The buildings are of a low design and aesthetic quality that make no reference to the historic built form.



Fig 69 below. Examples of elements that detract from the buildings and the areas character, visually intrusive dormers and low quality modern buildings.

3.2.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

The college campus is currently vacant and therefore activity is limited.

It has a contrasting character and ambiance, busy and inherently urban in the north where it fronts Gilesgate and is affected by passing heavy traffic with high levels of pedestrian footfall. This changes into a calmer semi-rural character moving southwards through the site via the green lane routes. These provide tantalising glimpses of the cathedral in the gaps in the trees that draw you into the green open space where both the cathedral and castle are revealed to a great extent providing a fulfilling “hidden” visual experience.

There is a further important connection up to St Giles’ Church by a historic routes through the woodland. But this can be difficult to navigate owing to the steep inclines and steps so are not very pedestrian friendly in this regard.

Despite the amount of built development, the campus has a spacious parkland feel and provides a suitable and pleasing transition between the intimate college parkland and the open riverside environment.

The site is spread over different levels with a network of footpaths through the trees skirting around the edges of the Victorian buildings. Many routes converge at the steps leading down to the war memorial standing on a wide open grassy hill with seating, providing a place of quiet retreat and enjoyment of the cathedral view that is a further positive experience.

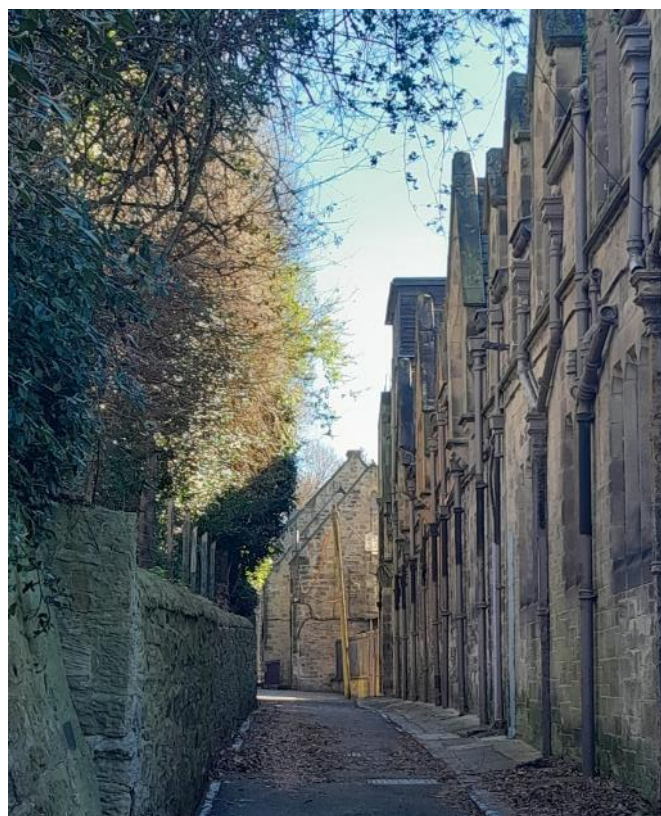


Fig 70 below. *Examples of routes of different character that add positively to the experience of the place.*

Pelaw Leazes Lane is another historic route that curves around the west side of the campus descending down to the riverside and Baths Bridge. This is a relatively wide space providing a pleasant walking experience, the abundance of greenery including overhanging trees creating a green corridor with heavily filtered views of the cathedral through the tree canopy.

On arrival at the riverside, it is common to see walkers, dog-walkers, cyclists, joggers, and rowing boats on the river. Here the footpath heads eastwards passing Pelaw Woods to Old Durham, and in the west towards New Elvet Road Bridge. The riverside walk is enhanced by the sequential views of the castle and cathedral it provides.

The impact of parking is variable, in-plot parking and dedicated parking areas are provided. In terms of the main historic college buildings the car parking is set away from the buildings so parked vehicles do not impact adversely in terms of cluttering views.

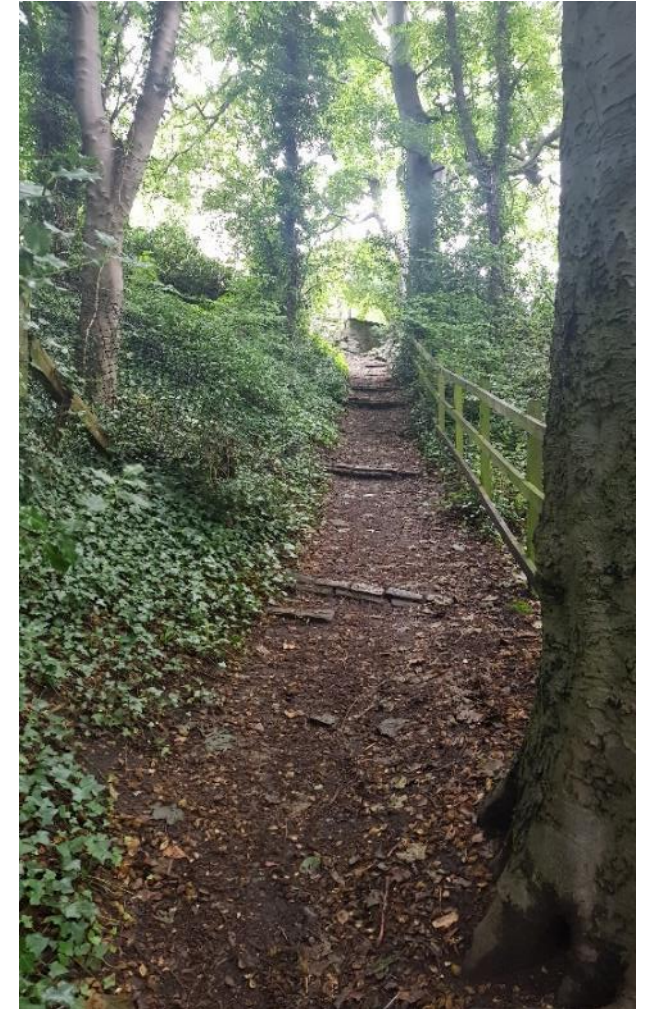
The character and appearance of the north part of the campus is however detracted by the car park adjacent Leazes Road. This space is cluttered by vehicles and car parking paraphernalia that does not provide a becoming entrance nor positive streetscene.

The large car park adjacent to the tennis courts is on lower ground surrounded by tree cover so is visually discreet until close range when it is viewed as a negative intrusion in the parkland.

The college campus has a distinctive character and its own sense of place within the wider conservation area. It is private land but with some public rights of way that provides a positive pedestrian experience.



Fig 71 below. Examples of positive "green lane" routes steeply descending to the riverside and up to St Giles Church.



The carriageway and footway surfacing materials are mostly of a standard modern palette of tarmacadam, concrete pavements, and kerbs, with some very limited use of stone paving around the edges of one or two buildings. The condition is variable, notably poor in places where the tarmacadam is deteriorated due to wear and tear over time, and where patched due to previous repairs and renewal works giving a mismatched appearance.

The proliferation of items associated with the car park in the north part of the college detracts from the visual appearance of the frontage. Elsewhere street furniture items are limited to the occasional litter bin, timber seat positioned to maximise views out and runs of bollards.

Street lighting columns are a mixture of older painted cast posts with modern head units, and standard modern units, with other means of illumination provided by modern units fixed to buildings and bollard lighting on the footway approach to the chapel.



Boundary treatments contribute positively to the character of the college where they reinforce the sense of enclosure, demarcate the historic routes and individual building plots.

There are many sections of important historic stone walling with the original entrance points to the main college buildings featuring substantial stone gate piers with pyramidal stone copings. The walls vary in terms of coursing and coping styles.

There are positive examples of traditional black painted metal railings and gates such as those at The White House, Pelaw View and Alma House.

Elsewhere there are examples of timber fencing and hedgerow boundaries that are generally in keeping with the parkland character.

Palette of Boundary Treatments



3.2.5 Visual experiences

The college site occupies a significant position on a steep slope of a river valley terrace overlooking the river and the Elvet area, with the landform dropping down to the lower floodplain. This location and topography creates a series of important views that enhance the experience of the place. Many are focused on Durham Castle and Cathedral seen in their river corridor and townscape setting that are significant, others are close quarter views of the splendid and imposing original Victorian college buildings.

In summary the key views within this character zone are:

- View 1** – view east from Pelaw Leazes Lane of main Victorian college building.
- View 2** – view from the lower terrace of the main Victorian college buildings.
- View 3** – view southwest from open space in south part of the college campus.
- View 4** – sequential views emerging from footpath down Constitutional Hill to the riverside.

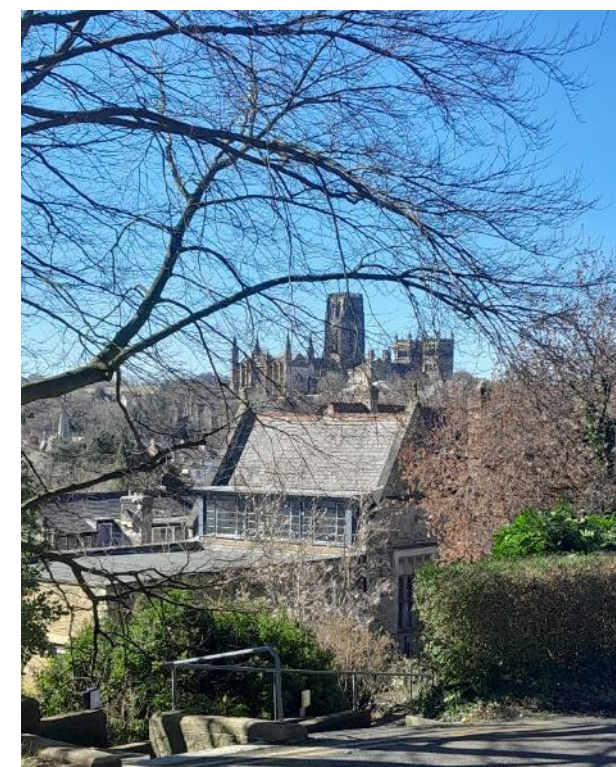
Locations and details of these views are provided on the following pages.

Also, of relevance and importance is the positive role the campus plays in terms of views looking towards the site from different vantage points across the city. It is visible in a range of near and middle distance views from the riverbanks around The Racecourse, Green Lane, Elvet Riverside, and from Whinney Hill. These views are of high value with the Victorian buildings discernible within the parkland with the brightly rendered Chapel shining as a notable historic landmark amongst the trees.

Fig 72 below and right. *The expansive view out over Elvet with the woodland at Mountjoy, High Wood and Maiden Castle in the background. The splendid view of the cathedral from St Bede College.*



Further, the site is visible in the backdrop of views of the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. For example, from Observatory Hill where it lies on rising ground to the right of the cathedral, from Briarville where it lies in the backdrop between the castle and cathedral, and from St Aidan’s College where the lower parts of the site are largely screened by woodland.



Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View east from Pelaw Leazes Lane

Close quarter views approaching the college from the open access point on the west side. Such views demonstrate the architectural quality of the main Victorian college buildings and their group value.



Views north from the lower terrace within the college grounds.

Sequential views through the college grounds of the main Victorian buildings down to the lower terrace. From the lower ground the views give an important hint of the original design intent to reflect the college's status set on high ground overlooking the river.

**Key Views
Location**



Image



Description

View south west from the open ground on the west side of the lane down to the riverside.

Sequential views where Durham Castle and Cathedral vary in extent. At first the cathedral is unseen approaching the lane, there are then glimpse between the trees drawing people into the open space where there is a dramatic reveal of the cathedral, and to a lesser extent the castle, dominating the skyline giving an appreciation of its great scale.



View south west from the riverside.

Emerging at the end of the lane there is a reveal of the castle and cathedral emphasising their dominance and viewed in the townscape and picturesque riverscape setting.

Ambiance, pedestrian experience, and public realm - positive contributors to the area's special interest and character.

- The positive experience in being very different to the surrounding residential areas.
- The quieter ambience and distinct collegiate air.
- The variation in the levels with different footpaths through the campus that encourages exploration many providing important close up views of the historic buildings.
- The experience created by moving from places of different character.
- The variation in views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, ranging from passing glimpses between trees, over buildings, and broader views from open space that evolve moving through the place.

Negatives

The pedestrian experience approaching and within the college campus is detracted by a number of elements. This includes the low quality modern developments that do not reflect the high architectural quality and character of the original college buildings. Further, some blocks are visually incongruous in the foreground of views of Durham Cathedral, and in some locations reduce the extent of the view.

The site has a poor presence on Leazes Road with no meaningful or positive street frontage that is dominated by modern developments, and the hard standing car park with its associated clutter.

There are some boundary features that have an adverse effect, these are associated with the modern developments and nursery and include stepped brown brick walls, and green metal security fencing.

The surfacing types and condition are not befitting the historic character of the place and detract from its aesthetic weakening the experience.

Fig 73 below. A selection of images showing some of the negative issues identified including frontage car park, poor surfacing, and low quality fencing.



3.2.6 Appraisal summary - negatives, issues, threats, and problems that affect the character and appearance of the area.

Built form

- The architectural integrity and quality of some of the original college buildings has been compromised by later additions and alterations.
- The modern development blocks lack the architectural distinction and quality in comparison to the original college buildings. Their contribution is either neutral or negative.
- The buildings are presently vacant.

Urban spaces

- The hard surfacing materials are modern, deteriorated in places and visually marred by fragmentary patch repairs.
- The type and quality of the surfacing is not befitting the historic character of the place.

The frontage of the nursery onto Leazes Road is dominated by the parking area, a proliferation of signage, with refuse bins visible that provides an unwelcoming entrance.

- Some sections of historic boundary walls are deteriorated with visible cracking, leans, open joints, and missing stones.

Green spaces

- In places the unmaintained tree canopy reduces/heavily filters views of Durham Cathedral, but the trees are part of the campus's parkland character.

Street furniture

- There is a mismatch of modern lighting columns.

Threats

- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials, and continuation of fragmentary repairs.
- Potential for loss of historic boundaries.
- Continued negative effects of the car parking areas.
- The college is an allocated site in the County Durham Plan for Durham University. Development coming forwards that does not recognise the site's opportunities and constraints and is not informed by an understanding of its significance and character could potentially be very harmful.

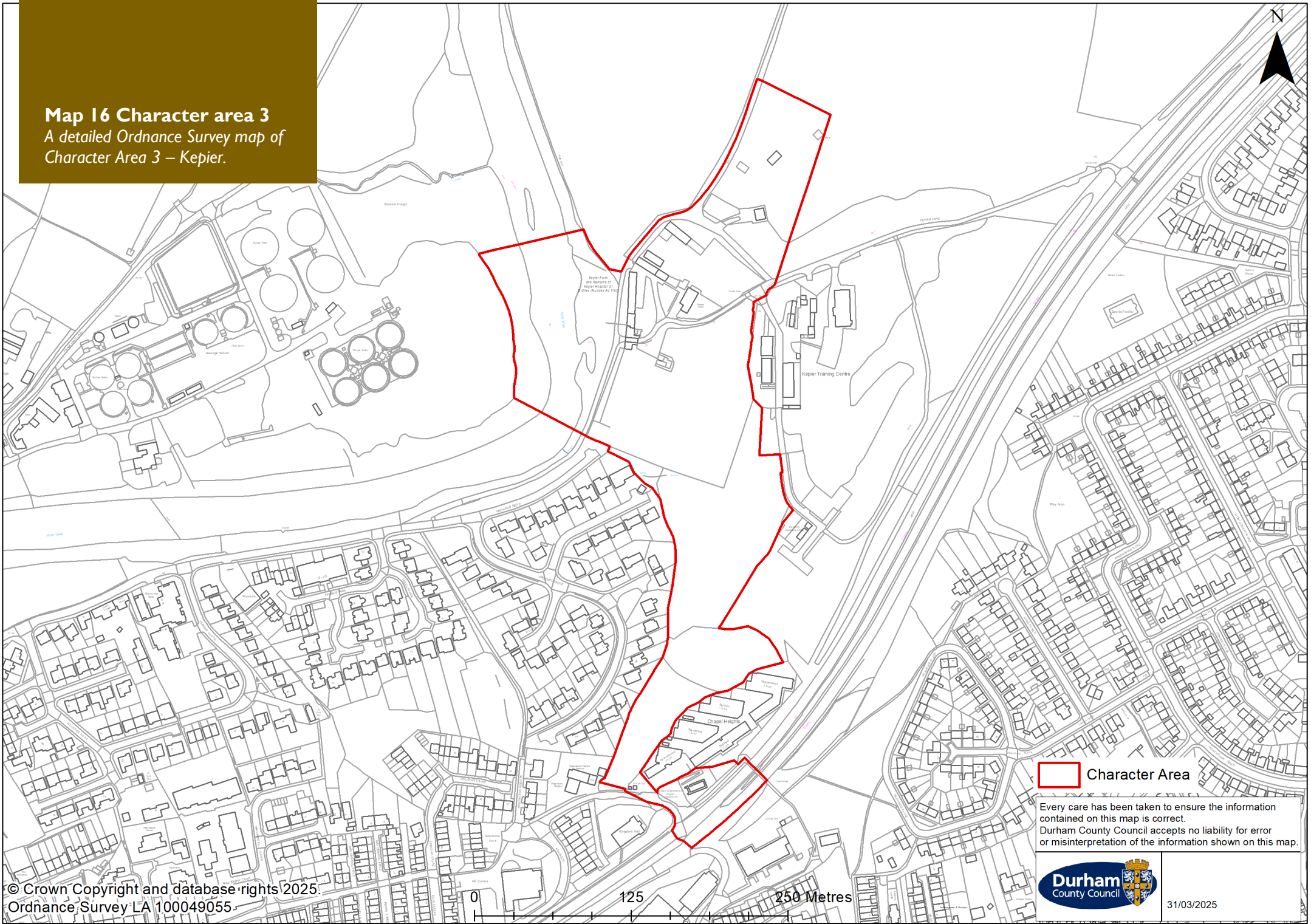
This could also detract from the setting of other Durham City Conservation Areas and the setting of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.


3.3 Character area 3 (Kepier)



Map 16 Character area 3

A detailed Ordnance Survey map of Character Area 3 – Kepier.



 Character Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.

3.3.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area relates to the medieval Kepier Hospital site and part of its historic estate, which was extensive stretching as far as Ramside Hall Hotel in the east.

The western boundary is defined by a combination of the banks of the River Wear and the edge of the modern housing estate at Orchard Drive terminating in the south at the A690. From here the boundary wraps around the ruins of St Mary Magdalene Chapel following the perimeter of the contemporary purpose built student accommodation development at Chapel Heights and Kepier Training Centre. In the north it tightly follows Kepier Farm with an outward extension capturing the surviving remains of the former 19th century brick and tile works.

Despite the presence of the dense area of modern housing in the west and the A690 in the south, the setting is rural, comprising hilly open farmland and the river corridor that achieves high visual quality.

The Kepier Farm House site and orchard are a scheduled monument while the gatehouse and barns attached are grade II* listed with the farmhouse listed at grade II. These designations testifying to the area archaeological, historical, and architectural significance.

What gives the area its special historic and architectural interest and character?

- High historic interest and intangible connection with St Giles’ Church, Kepier replacing the original hospital chapel on the site of the church and re-founded in the 12th century by Bishop Hugh le Puiset.
- The site’s intangible connection to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site as the hospital was built to relieve the poor and welcome pilgrims visiting Durham City.
- The historic connections with notable Durham gentry who have shaped the place; the Heath family in the 16th century, who also owned Old Durham, and the Cole family in the 17th century.
- The historic and evidential value of the historic garden including the remains of 17th century banqueting house and 19th century orchard.
- The archaeological interest and potential of the farm and chapel ruins.

- The varied topography and surrounding high quality agricultural landscape that also contributes positively to the setting of the building and wider historic city core.
- The strong feeling of isolation and separation from the main urban area of the city centre, and natural tranquil atmosphere.



Fig 74 above. A close up view of the imposing great gateway building at Kepier Hospital

3.3.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

Kepier Farm stands on a loop of the River Wear adjacent to the riverbank on its east side. The main access is from the city centre in the west by a single historic route from The Sands that follows the downstream course of the river to the gatehouse.

The farm is accessed through the great gateway where the main buildings are grouped around a courtyard space that is loosely triangular in shape. Beyond in the north are smaller agricultural buildings orientated southeast to northwest that are situated within a large, enclosed paddock. The south side of the courtyard is bounded by the large rectangular orchard, elevated on a terrace overlooking the river.

An informal track skirts around the western boundary of the farm group, which continues northwards through the farmland with playing fields on the west side. Through the gateway passing the farmhouse is a formalised route, Kepier Lane, which travels east up the steep incline to the A690.

This simple layout and plan form is recorded in detail on the 1st edition OS map c.1865 with no discernible changes after this survey. The creation of the nearby training centre in the later part of the 20th century is the most significant intervention into the surrounding farmland, which detracts from its setting and rural aesthetic qualities.

Also of note is that the riverside location of the hospital site is close to the point where the Roman road called Cade’s Road is thought to have crossed the River Wear.

St Mary Magdalene Chapel, consolidated as a ruin, stands detached in modern surroundings by the side of the A690 which has compromised its setting.

The area is part of the main river valley where there is a reduction, followed by an absence, of built development moving out from the historic core of the city, transitioning into open countryside.

Fig 75 below. *The main courtyard group of agricultural buildings and right the buildings set within an open paddock on the north side of the courtyard.*



Kepier has a very open form, comprising farmland on a mixture of a steep valley side and the lower flatter land of the floodplain. Beyond this, across the river in the west is Frankland Park that is part of the complex of ridges encircling the historic core of the city that provide a scenic outlook and backdrop to the character area.

The area is characterised by green space comprising of the tree lined riverbanks, carriageway and footway verges, woodland, old field enclosures and reclaimed colliery workings, and the historic orchard. All of these spaces contribute positively to the area’s high aesthetic quality, character, and its distinctiveness.



The view across the river from the west towards Kepier Hospital. It shows the small group of buildings huddled together within a scenic rural landscape of a varying land form that provides a very fitting setting.



Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to the area's special interest

- Close grouping of historic buildings, in the main with a traditional courtyard arrangement.
- Well-preserved medieval layout including important riverside route from the city centre.
- The high historic, evidential, and aesthetic value of the preserved orchard space.
- The open landform of the surrounding landscape that provides the setting to the historic buildings.
- The layout of the different public rights of way that connect to the wider network that stretch well beyond the conservation area.

Fig 76 below. An image of a painting by amateur artist John Coffy based closely on photographs from the 1880s. This gives an important insight into how the complex would have looked showing the gatehouse, barns, farmhouse, the White Bear Inn set in its orchard and Kepier Mill. Below a present day view of the orchard.



[Kepier Hospital In Durham - Fabulous North](#)



3.3.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing

The architecture in the character area is informed by a remarkable collection of historic buildings that have a deep richness and are of high quality.

The gatehouse dates back to the 14th century. It comprises of two storeys of a T-plan, constructed from sandstone with ashlar dressings, pantiled roof and with stone copings and brick chimneys. It has an air of ancientness, with its most striking feature the vaulted gateway entrance.

Attached to the north side of the gatehouse is a range of farmbuildings. These are medieval in date but with 19th century alterations and additions. They are a mixture of one and two storeys built from sandstone with roofs of Welsh slate and red pantiles. They have interesting brick patching and insertions that provide a record of the different phases of adaption, and a solid robust agricultural character.

Fig 77 right. A selection of images showing the east facing elevation of the gatehouse, the inside of the gateway with the impressive double chamber and vaulted arches and the farmhouse.



In the north east corner of the courtyard is the farmhouse which has fabric from the 14th to 20th centuries. It comprises of two storeys and three bays with a lower left extension. It is built from sandstone that has been render over with ashlar dressings and a Welsh slate roof. To the rear there is an interesting mixture of rubble stone, brick and a boulder plinth, and it has irregular fenestration including two distinct light windows with Perpendicular style tracery.

On the north side of the orchard are the remains of the Heath family's Elizabethan manor house. In the 1820s the manor house became an inn called the White Bear but only the arches of its basement remain. It dates from the late 16th century and comprises of four bays with three arches built from sandstone ashlar and brick in the Classical style.

The other buildings of the farm group are brick built barns with dual pitched Welsh slate roofs, solid timber doors with some doors and windows infilled with brickwork. They are of a simple, functional agricultural character, dating back to the 19th century.

A short distance in the north from the farm stands Keping brick kiln. It is important as the only surviving building of the former brick and tile works. It dates from the mid-19th century, of an oblong plan and domed. It was involved in making bricks for local use and is a rare example of an industrial lime kiln.

The final building in the character area is the chapel of St Mary Magdalene. It was founded in the 13th century but was mainly rebuilt in the 15th century. It has a simple rectangular footprint with the walls of course squared sandstone. It stands ruinous and roofless, but notable features include the massive west buttress, the east window, and south doorway.

Within this area the material palette is traditional and limited with a mixture of sandstone and red brick. Stone is also used for quoins, plinths, water tabling, drip moulds and Tudor style opening surrounds. Roof covering materials are a mixture of Welsh slate and red pantiles. Doors and windows are all made from timber, with doors of a solid timber boarded style. Windows are a mixture of casements, arched, and two-light types with some original openings infilled.

Fig 78 below. A selection of images showing the ruins of the Chapel of St Mary Magdalene, Keping Loggia, the brick kiln, and stone farm building.



Material Palette



Door and Window Palette



Architectural form, style, and detailing - positive contributors to the area's special interest and character.

- A unique group of buildings of high historic, evidential, architectural, and aesthetic quality.
- Rural vernacular buildings of medieval date but with 19th century alterations and additions that add to their character and the site's story.
- The legible architectural hierarchy reflective of the building's historic status and use.
- Buildings with a unified traditional materiality.
- The site is architecturally distinct within the conservation area and wider historic city centre.

Fig 79 below. The rear of the farmhouse is particularly notable being of a rubble construction with partial boulder plinth, and including an ogee-headed entrance door, windows with Perpendicular tracery and irregular windows including a blocked opening.



3.3.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

The character and ambiance within this character area is markedly different to the others and distinct within the wider historic core of the city. It is located on the urban edge fronting the riverside that is a much quieter and tranquil place. This is despite the presence of the A690 that provides disturbing background noise.

Approaching Kepier from the west there is a contrasting character. This is created by the green open space of The Sands and river with a wooded backdrop, which is overlooked by dense modern housing, providing a semi-rural feel. Continuing west along this historic river corridor, it changes to a distinctive enclosed green lane. This provides a pleasing experience transitioning from an urban to a quieter rural character with the river never far from view. The riverside and farmland provides an idyllic setting to the group of historic buildings, and a distinctive pedestrian experience of high character.

At first the Kepier buildings are unseen due to the bend in the footway and its intimate enclosure. The first hint of the site is the stone wall that bounds the orchard. Then the great gateway is revealed, it is an imposing sight, and a surprising “hidden” gem to those who do not know the area. This reveal, and the sense of quiet isolation is an important characteristic of the place, that provides a uniquely positive pedestrian experience.

The pedestrian routes connect to a wider public right of way network that travels through Kepier Wood, the disused quarries to Belmont Viaduct and beyond. They provide a pleasing walking experience and as a result walkers, dog-walkers, joggers, and cyclists can often be seen. Vehicle movement is minimal, that reinforces the rural character of the place.

The second main route travels through the gateway, passing the orchard and farmhouse taking a relatively straight and steep path up Kepier Lane to the A690 that disturbs the rural ambiance.

There is little in the way of public realm in this area, other than the footways that are a mixture of worn black tarmac, and informal dirt tracks. The farm courtyard is private but visible in the public domain that has a tarmac surface that is degraded in places and not befitting of the distinctive historic character.

Street furniture is uncommon. This along with the avoidance of road markings and lighting columns is positive in reflecting the rural character of the area.

The area features traditional boundary treatments including stone walls, brick walls, hedgerows and timber fencing that are in keeping and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

Fig 80 below. Images of the river along the western approach to Kepier and the informal path between the playing field, paddock, and river.



Palette of Boundary Treatments



3.3.5 Visual experiences

Owing to the separation from the main historic core of the city, containment by the topography, and general absence of built development positive outwards views are landscape dominant. Views within the character area are therefore limited.

Key Views

Location



Description

A sequential view approaching Keiper Hospital along the historic riverside route. At first the buildings are hidden from view with tantalising glimpses of the great gateway through the trees rounding the bend in the footpath, that then straightens to channel views. The buildings' dramatic presence increasing on approach.



Ambiance, pedestrian experience, and public realm - positive contributors to the area's special interest and character.

- Distinctive rural character and tranquil ambiance that is distinct from other parts of the city.
- Positive and strong sense of isolation and separation from the busy urban environment of the city within just a short walking distance.
- The positive experience in terms of the contrast between the close riverside setting and broad undulating open landscape.

Negatives

None identified.

3.3.6 Appraisal summary - negatives, issues, threats, and problems that affect the character and appearance of the area.

Built form

- The building fabric to some of the farm buildings and gatehouse is eroded and deteriorating at different rates.
- There are some visible condition issues to some of the historic stone and brick walls.
- The brick kiln is in a perilous condition and "at risk."

Urban spaces

- The carriageway surfacing approaching the farm and within the courtyard is deteriorated and modern not befitting the historic rural character of the place.

Green spaces

- The orchard space is overgrown and unmaintained in places that detracts from its aesthetic quality.
- Much of the green space is unmaintained and overgrown but this is in keeping with the natural riverside character.

Street furniture

- Street furniture is very limited and not a negative issue.
- The absence of street furniture and formalised spaces is in keeping with the area's character.

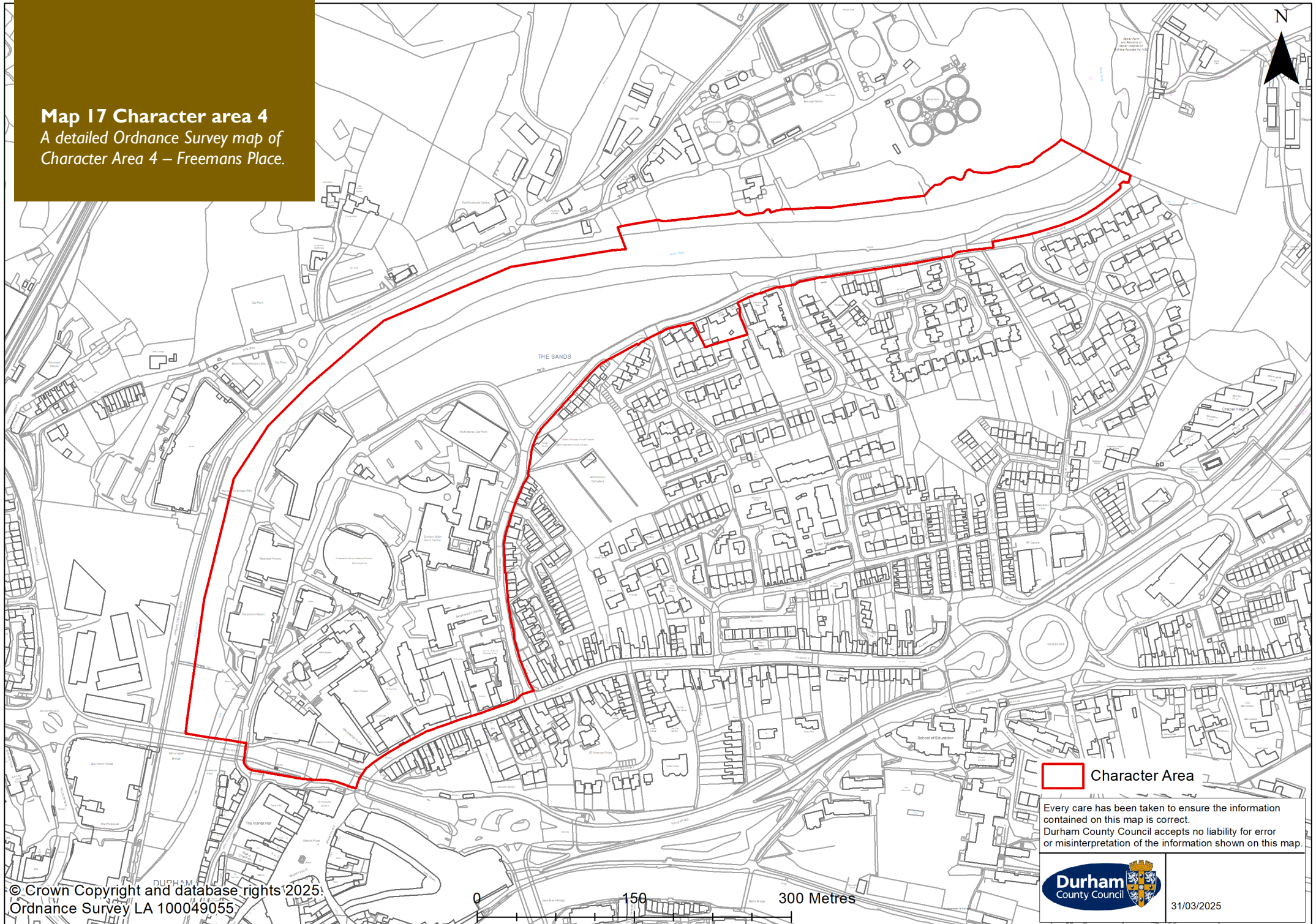
Threats


- Continued deterioration of historic building fabric.
- Ongoing dereliction and deterioration of the brick kiln.
- Continued deterioration of carriageway and courtyard surface materials.

3.3 Character area 4
(Freemans Place, Millennium Place and
The Sands)



Map 17 Character area 4
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character Area 4 – Freemans Place.



 Character Area

Every care has been taken to ensure the information contained on this map is correct. Durham County Council accepts no liability for error or misinterpretation of the information shown on this map.



3.1.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area forms the western side of the conservation area fronting the River Wear between Millburngate Road Bridge downstream to the end of the modern housing estate at Orchard Drive. It includes The Sands and part of the river corridor approach to Kepier. The eastern edge follows Providence Row with the southern boundary formed by the contemporary buildings lining the north side of Lower Claypath.

The majority of the character area comprises modern mixed-use development as part of the 20th and 21st century “new quarter” to the city. The area differs markedly from the historic core as the development is distinct in its scale and modern architectural styles. These lack historic depth but provide interesting juxtapositions between the wider historic and modern built form.

The historic interest of the area is provided by The Sands, an open green space on the floodplain that traditionally belongs to the Freeman of the City. The historic riverside route to Kepier that includes the 19th century Sands House, and the distinctive early 20th century Durham Sixth Form Centre building with the entrance still guarded by the gate lodge.

The character area has a mixed setting of the surrounding dense commercial and residential development presenting a varied townscape. The landscape of the steep sided river valley up to the East Coast railway line and the River Wear corridor. The varying topography has shaped the built form, situated on the lower reaches of the flood plain, and rising up with the modified steep valley sides.

Fig 81 below. *The riverside route towards The Sands, and the view across to Durham Sixth Form Centre.*



What gives the area its special historic and architectural interest and character?

- Historic interest in terms of buildings dictated by a historic framework of Freemans Place and the ancient river corridor route to Kepier.
- The Sands and riverside restricting built development preserving the natural open character.
- The historic, aesthetic, communal/social value of The Sands, and intangible connection to the Freeman of the city.
- The historic, evidential, and architectural interest of the historic buildings of the 18th and early 20th centuries.
- The sequence and variability of important townscape, river corridor and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site views the area provides.
- The variation of architectural styles of the contemporary riverside developments, and the juxtaposition with the historic core of the city.

3.1.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

Freemans Place curves sharply around the Walkergate slip road then travels northwards curving slightly towards The Sands where it joins Providence Row. The route also splits eastwards following the course of the river. The building plots lining the street vary considerably being of different footprints, irregularly shaped, and varying scales with cohesion only provided by orientation overlooking the river.

Freemans Reach, and Wearside House include stepped public open terraces towards the river followed by a long riverside walking route. This leads to Durham University Business School, which has a strong impact and urbanising influence on what was a greener site. This is an important point of transition where the character moves from the urban area of large scaled modern development to the open green space of The Sands, floodplain, and part of the river's green corridor.

The modern developments embrace the river setting providing positive public spaces and an accessible route to Framwellgate Waterside crossing over Penny Ferry Bridge.

On the south side the density of built form decreases, and it is positively interrupted by the green open space in front of the Sixth Form Centre, framed by modern buildings, that then gives way to the negative influence of the adjacent large visibly open car parking area.

The Sixth Form Centre site is mostly outside the public domain, but the buildings are seen set back from the main street frontage, other than the original gate lodge. The site is densely developed with buildings of different footprints and orientations that visually swamp the original college building and are grouped around the open sports pitch.

Millennium Place is located on the higher ground between the north side of Claypath and the riverside. The layout takes the form of a series of contemporary blocks that define and tightly enclose a formal urban square that is a hard unwelcoming space.

The blocks provide perimeter "wall like" elements to Leazes Road, Claypath and Freemans Place. There is a series of different interconnected terraced levels stepping down with the gradient to the riverside, with a narrow pedestrian route off the slip road mimicking a historic vennel.



Fig 82 right. *Freemans Place is a linear street framed by contemporary buildings of large scale and massing providing enclosure. Below right an examples of the different terraced levels of Millennium Place.*

Despite being a dense urban area there are positive green spaces. Most obvious is The Sands, a highly valued area of common land and significant historic urban green space. It is wide, flat, and open in character and has high aesthetic value as part of the river corridor.

Also of note is the corner green space and landscaping at the junction of Providence Row. The open playing field at Durham Sixth Form Centre. The grass embankment with an avenue of mature trees between the footway and carriageway along Freemans Place, and the green space, planting, and trees at the foot of the steps up to Millennium Square, and bounding Walkergate slip road. All of these broader green spaces contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.

The layout overall has a positive quality contrasting with the historic core, it is simple and brings together a series of routes and spaces that connect the townscape, riverside and landscape.

Fig 83 right. A selection of views across the open green space at The Sands, the sports pitch at Durham Sixth Form Centre, and the streetscape at the north end of Providence Row showing the contrast in space and character.



Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to the area's special interest

- The buildings set within a historic framework of important riverside routes and spaces.
- Contemporary developments with well-designed public spaces and walkways that embrace the riverside setting.
- The openness of The Sands and the positive role it plays in the transition from the dense urban to semi-rural environments.



3.1.3 Architectural styles, forms, and detailing

Adjacent to Freemans Reach is the Archimedes' Screw a small yet interesting structure, which replaced Bishops Mill. It is of note as a contemporary representation of the long tradition of waterpower utilisation of the river on the site.

Freemans Reach and Waterside House are of contemporary architecture. They comprise of brick block forms, which are vertically proportioned with punched openings and deep reveals, referencing the Durham vernacular. The northern block comprises two north-south running wings linked by a central glazed atrium, with oriels, bays, and projecting corners. The variation in pier and window widths creates an interesting rhythm to the elevations.

The southern block comprises two east-west wings again linked by a central glazed atrium and incorporates stepped terraces towards the river. In contrast to the northern block, the corners are recessed to reduce the massing.

The development contributes positively reading legibly as an organic group of buildings and spaces that face the river in a contemporary and open manner.

storeys with a regular block form. The footprint is cranked to follow alignment with the main street, that along with its sheer size and scale, creates a very strong frontage. The form steps down to address the riverside where there is an atrium between the blocks creating a legible entrance feature. The building's most distinctive feature is the use of fins to give a strong vertical rhythm. It has a simple material palette of reconstituted concrete with a smooth light texture and sandstone tone, a darker plinth, and different grey finishes to the glazing and panelling.

The building's relationship with The Sands and the termination of built form along the riverside is harsh given the scale of the hard urban intervention at the rural edge.

Adjacent is Pennyferry Bridge, constructed in 2002, taking its name from "Ferryman" who charged a penny for a boat ride to those wishing to cross the river. It is a cable-stayed bridge of a A-frame made from steel that has an elegant structural quality with a sweeping staircase at its west end.

curved and compact form, overhanging steel beams on concrete columns, angled window, and subtle wave to the roof.

At Durham Sixth Form Centre perhaps the most interesting of the modern developments is the multimedia centre set back behind the main green open space. It has a linear plan form and despite being a large intervention, the majority of its mass is hidden to the rear. The elevation facing the street is a mixture of solid and curtain walling acting as a lighter counterpoint, with contrasting materials and colours enlivening its aesthetic, with the full height red cladding an eye catcher.

Also of note is the contemporary copper clad extension to the red brick lodge, and the distinctive curved arts centre building with a central tower entrance element, overhanging roof, and deeply recessed black windows frames that contrast with the white render finish.

Durham University Business School has its own contemporary style. It is between three and five

On the east side of the street stands Freemans Quay which won a design award in 2009. It is a distinctive modern building notable for its dynamic



Fig 84 below. A selection of images showing the different architectural styles within the character area.

The Edwardian Durham Sixth Form Centre main building retains a strong historic character despite being detracted by insensitive mid-20th century

classroom additions. It comprises of a U-plan enclosing the original schoolyard that backs onto Providence Row. The building has an ornate red brick frontage with a Welsh slate roof, large classroom windows in a multi-pane style, rich detailing, and central round bell tower as a focal point.

Some 130 metres from the car park building in the east, facing the river is Sands House and Sands Cottage. The building originally dates from the late 18th century/early 19th century but was partially rebuilt in the 20th century. It comprises of a main three storey rectangular block and lower one storey long linear block of different heights, at right angles to the road. It is fully rendered with hip and pitched slate roofs, and has a late 19th century oriel bay, cogged eaves, and tall chimney stack. Despite insensitive modern alterations its historic form survives and its overall appearance hints at it being a former chapel.

Millennium Place was the first of the “new city” cultural quarter with two main focal points the Gala Theatre being the centrepiece, and the corner tower block occupying a critical position onto Claypath. All the buildings are flat roofed of different shapes and forms with a sculptural quality.

variety and interest to the bars and restaurants that feature a mixture of brick and timber, different glazing styles, oval and rectangular forms. They have a clean contemporary aesthetic, with the disposition of the buildings and architectural language influenced by the topography and acting as a bold counterpoint to the historic character of the city. The design of the Millennium Place development was chosen after a competition and was awarded the City of Durham Trust Architectural Commendation.

The material palette found within this area is highly varied and contemporary with smooth render, different red and terracotta facing brickwork, hit and miss brickwork, timber cladding, zinc, aluminium, and reconstituted stone. The roofs have grey finishes to blend with the historic roofscape of the city in wider views. There is a mixture of glazing panels, powder coated metal glazing, and curtain wall glazing. The palette, window and doors styles reinforces the contemporary aesthetic across the area.

Millennium Place has a fine glazed and curved facade, curtain wall glazing, strong projecting eaves lines, and supporting columns. There is more



Roofscape

Within this character area the roofscape is inherently modern comprising flat and very shallow

hipped roofs, that are stepped in form and of different massings. They are simply detailed with parapets commonplace. There is a general hierarchy visible with cascading roofs stepping away from the river, this creates a fragmented roofscape in surrounding views, where the juxtaposition of the contemporary roofscape with that of the historic core is one of its defining features.

Durham Sixth Form Centre has an interesting historic roofscape of a long linear form with a Welsh slate covering, that is punctuated by gables, chimneys and the bell tower, recognisable behind the incongruous modern classroom block.

Shopfronts

The shop fronts within the character area are concentrated within the Millennium Place development. They are all modern and uniform in terms of being full height vertically glazed frontages, made from aluminium with a dark grey colour finish and of simple configuration. They are generally sensitive to the contemporary aesthetic of the development.

There is an abundance of signage again all taking a modern design approach utilising the individual units dedicated signage zones.

Signs mostly comprise of individually applied lettering and logos, with the occasional fascia and wall mounted panel type sign, in different sizes, font types, and corporate colour schemes.

Elsewhere high-level signs are visible of larger scale and different designs that are aesthetically in keeping with the contemporary context.

Fig 85 below. Examples of different shop fronts and signs at Millennium Place.



- Distinctive and individual contemporary architectural designs coalescing to create a new quarter of the city.

- The positive juxtaposition between the contemporary developments and the historic core of the city.
- Contemporary buildings of interesting architectural and aesthetic quality.
- Important as part of the city's architectural evolution that is distinct from the predominant Georgian and Victorian character elsewhere.



3.1.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Freemans Place feels tightly enclosed with the public realm overshadowed by the large scaled contemporary developments bounding and looming over the footways. This creates a distinct inward contemporary character that is positive.

The area receives a high amount of pedestrian footfall and traffic owing to the different uses it provides such as the hotel, offices, public swimming baths, the sixth form centre, and coach drop-off points, with only one way out via Providence Row. It often has a busy atmosphere and can be noisy added to by traffic on Milburngate Road Bridge, and the rumble of the river.

At Freemans Place a new public realm has been created that provides a very positive pedestrian experience, designed to reflect the contemporary styles of the surrounding architecture.

At the north and south ends there are open terraced spaces through the developments with a riverside walk on the west side. This provides a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of the main street, with seating alcoves nestled amongst the trees to encourage people to stop and enjoy the riverside views. The outdoor terrace around the detached kiosk building is well used in the summer months and can be a vibrant space with revellers.

Fig 86 below. A selection of images of the contemporary public realm of different terraced levels, riverside walkway, and open urban square.



When busy with traffic the narrower south end of Freemans Place can feel congested, but it widens at the north end giving a sense of being less crowded. It can be considered as pedestrian friendly with a series of clear and legible routes that include the provision of ramps, level accesses and accessible drop off points, and a lift up to Millennium Square. As such it is suitable for all pedestrians, wheelchair users, and people with prams.

Approaching Freemans Place over Pennyferry Bridge there is a spacious contemporary urban square at the Business School. This provides an important sense of arrival and extends the riverside walk to The Sands. It has an open form, and much calmer feel where the urban area begins to transition into the semi-rural riverside.



Millennium Place provides a range of bars and restaurants and is busy on a weekend this can spill out into Claypath, and it can feel intimidating at times. The main square was designed to be a contemporary take on the medieval Market Place but has not delivered the original vision. It is an unwelcoming hard urban space and is used mainly as a through route. However, it is used as an outdoor performance space for street entertainment and events that enlivens the area.

The hard landscaping is a mixture of high quality textured concrete paving flags, kerbs, and block paving with some having natural stone trims. There is Yorkstone paving and some limited use of whinstone setts, and some selective use of contrasting materials in places to emphasis entrances. Despite this variation there is coherent hard landscaping between the different phases of riverside development.

There are various items of contemporary styled street furniture in the area that also enhances the usability of the spaces. These include benches, bollards, litterbins, finger post signs, cycle racks, balustrades/handrails, and planters. Added to the above are standardised highway and parking signs, and standard modern lighting columns with different head units and colour finishes in black and grey, but excessive clutter is avoided.

Interest is provided by the three public art pieces. "The Journey" by local artist Fenwick Lawson, a bronze sculpture depicting six monks transporting St Cuthbert's coffin. The "The Heron" by steel sculpture Jon Voss, which has a soft luminance first shown at Lumiere in 2017, and the super-sized desk lamp by French company TILT from Lumiere in 2023.

There is a wide mixture of boundary treatments within the area that contribute positively. These include the timber birds-mouth fencing at The Sands, traditional metal railings and brick piers at the Sixth From Centre, the art piece style metal boundary to the sports pitch and the low brick and rendered walls to the contemporary developments. However, the wire mesh and car park security fencing is visually poor.

Overall, the character area has a public realm that is in keeping with the contemporary nature of the area and that contributes positively providing a range of different ambiances and pedestrian experiences that adds to character and distinctiveness of the place.

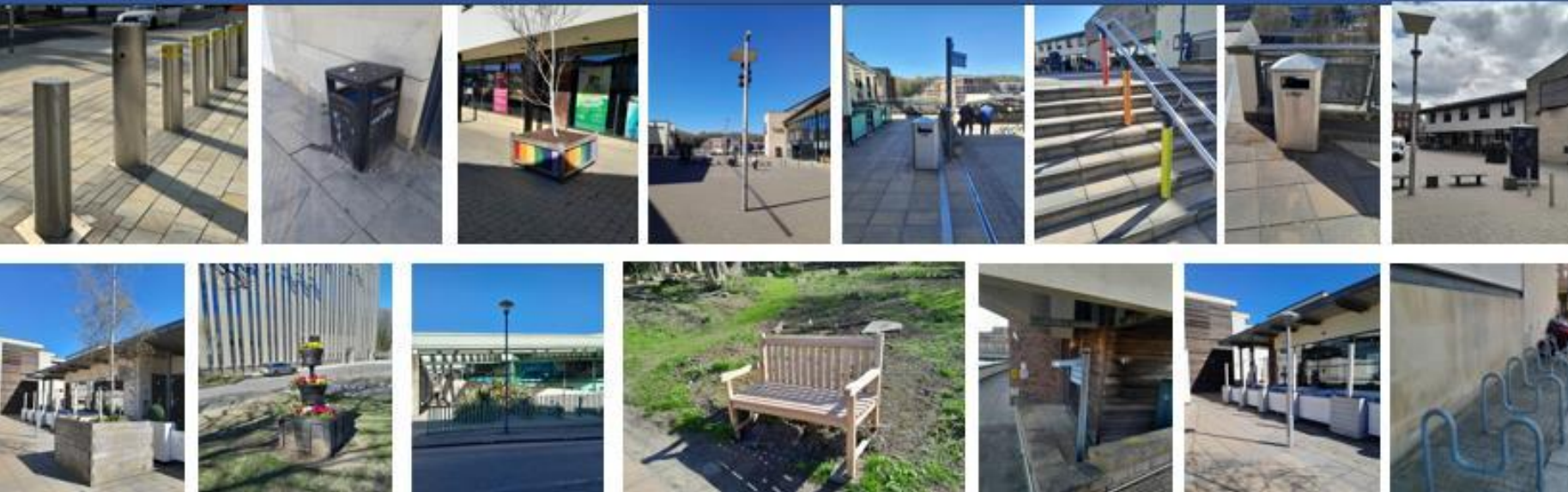
Fig 87 below. *Examples of public art works within the character area.*



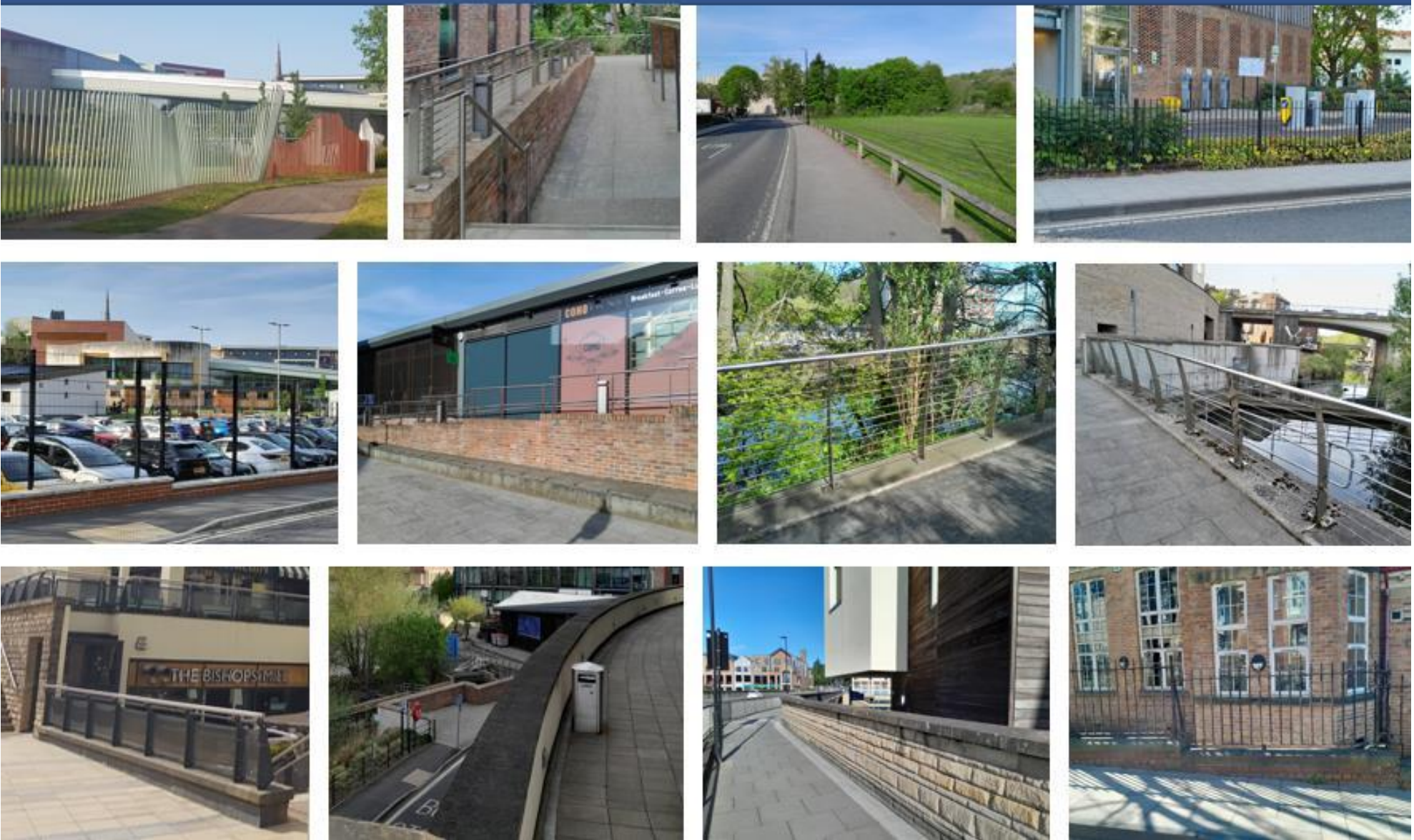
Surfaces Palette



Street Furniture Palette



Palette of Boundary Treatments



**Ambiance and pedestrian experience-
positive contributors to the area's special
interest and character.**

- Very distinct part of the city that contrasts with the strong Victorian and Georgian character that predominates, providing a very different positive experience.
- Good accessibility with routes of different urban, semi-rural and rural character.
- Positive transition from urban to countryside moving north east towards Keping and beyond.
- Vibrant atmosphere in places.
- Public art pieces adding interest and encouraging interaction.

Negatives

The new car park building next to the sixth form site on the corner with Providence Row impacts negatively. It presents a functional mass and a hard urban edge despite the attempt to add interest with timber fins and brick base to give some tone to the structure. The building is notably out of place against the edge of The Sands and the historic buildings on the junction of Providence Row.

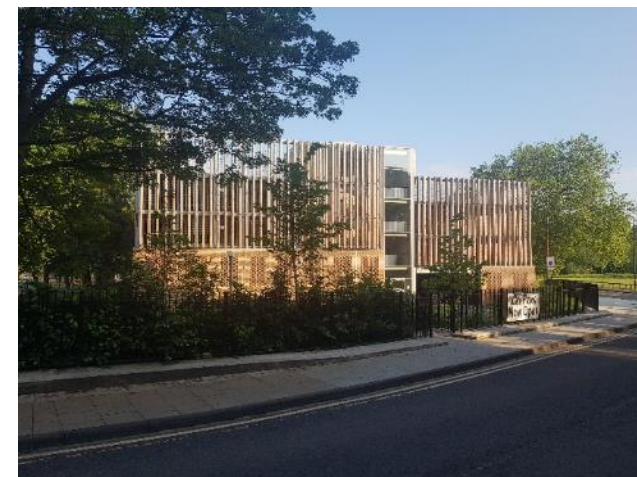
The one story flat roofed modular building at the Sixth Form Centre is of a low quality at the front of the site on the green open space. It is a temporary building, but is visually intrusive in its surroundings, and it would be important that it does not become a permanent one.

The large open car park on the north side of Durham Sixth Form Centre, surrounded by security fencing, and the undeveloped former carpark adjacent Durham University Business School have an adverse visual impact within the streetscene.

The visual appearance of some areas are detracted by poor quality street surfacing including patch repairs creating a very noticeable mismatch of materials and finish.



Fig 88 below. Examples of spaces and buildings identified as impacting negatively on the character and appearance of the area.



3.1.5 Visual experiences

Views within this character area views are limited by the size and scale of the enclosing built form. The openness of The Sands provides river corridor views in both directions where the buildings at Crook Hall can be seen nestled in the woodland. From the upper terrace at Millennium Place there are panoramic views over the river and townscape that is a mixture of contemporary and historic buildings, in contrast there are more intimate river views from the riverside walk. The most notable view in the area is from the centre of Pennyferry Bridge that provides a long sweeping view along the river corridor towards Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Key Views

Location



An emerging view as the castle and cathedral are unseen approaching the bridge from Freemans Place. The bridge provides a static viewing point of the castle's west range and the cathedral western towers showing their dominance over the wider townscape and their landscape and riverscape setting.



Description

3.1.6 Appraisal summary - negatives, issues, threats, and problems that affect the character and appearance of the area.

Built form

- There are some empty units within Millennium Place that impact negatively.
- The multi-storey carpark has a negative visual impact.
- Freemans Quay has a poor appearance due to fabric deterioration and staining.

Urban spaces

- Street surfacing is mismatched and deteriorated in places.
- Some spaces are in a poor condition with public areas cluttered by seating, tables etc associated with the commercial units.
- The surface car parks are incongruous spaces within the streetscene.

Green spaces

- The green space at Durham Sixth Form Centre is detracted by the temporary cabin style buildings.

Street furniture

- Street furniture items are uncoordinated due to being associated with different developments.
- The security fencing around the car park is visually poor.

Threats

- Continuation of vacancy and threat of vacancy rate increasing.
- Continued erosion of street surfacing materials.

4. Condition of place and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (S.W.O.T) analysis



4.1 Condition of place

The methodology for assessing the condition of place is set out in the strategic context document. Right, is a table showing the condition score for each street.

A summary of the findings of the condition of place surveys and resulting opportunities for deliverable actions are set out within the individual character zone sections. .

The tabulated summary show the majority of the conservation areas scores as “Fair” – summarized as, **“the condition of the area is good, but there have been the loss of some historic features of architectural detailing such as changes to windows and doors. Public realm may require improvement or repair, but the overall area is clearly forming a positive contribution to the conservation area.”**

Street Name	Condition Score
BAKEHOUSE LANE	Fair
DOUGLAS VILLAS	Fair
CLAYPATH	Fair
ELLIS LEAZES	Fair
GILESGATE (Upper-East)	Fair
GILESGATE (Lower-West)	Optimal
MAGDALENE STREET	Optimal
MAYNARD'S ROW	Poor
MAYORSWELL STREET	Fair
McNally PLACE	Optimal
RAVENSWORTH TERRACE	Optimal
RENNY STREET	Fair
STATION LANE	Fair
WEST VIEW	Fair
ST GILES' CLOSE	Optimal
ST HILD AND BEDE COLLEGE	Fair
KEPIER	Fair
FREEMANS PLACE	Optimal
MILLENNIUM SQUARE/WALKERGATE	Fair
LEAZES ROAD	Fair

4.2 S.W.O.T

Strengths

- The area is a fundamental part of the medieval town plan of the city but has its own historic identity and sense of place.
- Integral to the setting of the other Durham City Conservation Areas and the World Heritage Site.
- High historic interest, evidential value, architectural and aesthetic value, and archaeological potential. Places with high social and community value.
- High number of designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- Defined by strong linear street pattern and active frontages.
- Surviving historic routes representing important features of the layout of the area and wider city.
- Variation in land and building uses adding to character.
- Variation in age, form, size, scale, massing, typology, and architectural style, creating high quality diverse street scenes.
- Prevalence of traditional architectural features and traditional materials in a number of streets giving high level of intactness.
- Surviving areas of traditional surface and boundary treatments
- Examples of good quality traditional timber shop fronts.

- Variety of views of the World Heritage Site including surprising, glimpsed, and sequential views.
- Unique topography, including the contrast between the flat floodplain land, the Gilesgate ridge and surrounding hills providing containment.
- The high aesthetic value of the green spaces, woodland, and farmland, their positive contribution to views.
- High historic, community and social value of The Sands and Village Green.
- Overall good public realm, linkages, pedestrian connectivity, and permeability.
- The modern quarter of mixed-use contemporary development provides different architectural character, leisure uses and adds significantly to the city's economic vitality and viability.

Weaknesses

- Examples of lower quality modern and infill development, a mixture of neutral and negative contributors.
- The vacant status of the College of St Hild and St Bede.
- Some buildings visually stand out due to unkempt and unmaintained condition.
- Gap and car park sites that detract from character and appearance.
- One historic building identified as being "at risk, the brick kiln at Kepier.
- Insensitive modern alterations to historic unlisted buildings, harming original uniformity, character, and visual appearance.
- Some limited loss of traditional boundary treatments, metal railings and red brick walls.
- Street surfacing of variable condition, with fragmentary repairs, mismatched street surfacing materials, and degrading, giving a poor aesthetic.
- General poor environment of the village green area, Maynard's Row, and the entrance into the Market Place.
- Historic loss of green space for hard standing parking in Upper Gilesgate.
- Some "hot spots" visually detracted by street clutter.
- Some examples of lower quality modern shop fronts, and modern signs.
- Some places dominated and cluttered by parked vehicles.

- Parked Vehicles and refuse bins on street impeding pedestrian movement.
- Extent and quality of some views of Durham Castle and Cathedral reduced by unmanaged tree cover and blocked or interrupted by modern development.
- Some empty commercial units.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment or aesthetic improvements to modern infill that could be replaced with sensitive building forms that draw inspiration from the positive characteristics of the area.
- Secure restoration of the building “at risk,” and re use of empty historic buildings and retail units.
- Sympathetic redevelopment of the gap site appropriate to context.
- Fabric restoration works and reversal of past insensitive alterations to historic buildings.
- Sympathetic reinstatement of missing traditional railings, and boundary walls.
- Public realm improvement works to key areas.
- Replacement of lower quality shop fronts and signs with higher quality sympathetic designs.
- More cohesive items of street furniture and use of heritage style street lighting columns in the key historic streets.

- Tree works to recover views of Durham WHS and regular maintenance regime.
- Explore ways to reduce the negative impact of parked cars around the Village Green area, and car park at Freemans Place.
- Green infrastructure reinforcement works where possible, in succession potentially delivering air quality and biodiversity net gains.
- Better maintenance of the green amenity spaces.
- Reuse and sensitive redevelopment of the College of St Hild and St Bede site.

Threats

- Continued deterioration of the building at risk.
- Prolonged vacancy of historic buildings resulting in fabric deterioration.
- Further decay and deterioration of historic building fabric and prolonged general maintenance issues to some historic properties.
- Continuation of negative impact of gap site.
- Continued incremental changes and unsympathetic repairs and alterations to unlisted historic buildings.
- Continuation of deterioration and insensitive repairs to street surfacing.

- Potential for loss of surviving traditional floorscape and boundaries etc that will dilute historic character.
- On going issues with parked cars and traffic management, affecting air quality.
- Adding to the existing proliferation of street items, including furniture, highways and parking elements, and signs, creating more visual clutter.
- Potential for insensitive development at College of St Hild and St Bede site.

Summary

The conservation area is in fair material condition and despite its issues and weaknesses overall, the area has a high level of architectural and historic interest. Nevertheless, there are negative issues, challenges, and opportunities to address if the area is to play its fullest role in terms of preservation of its special interest for this and future generations, people’s impressions, and experiences of the area, and in the future economic and social prosperity of the city.

The above can be achieved by implementing the principles, policies and guidance set out in the CAMP overarching management strategy in the future when opportunities arise. Either through the planning process, regeneration schemes or other projects.

4.3 Opportunities and options appraisal

The appraisal has identified one gap site that offers potential for new built development. The following provide an individual options appraisal for addressing this site in the future.

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, commercial or leisure.
- Infill development responding to the stepped built form and roof lines.
- Scale, height and massing to respect neighbouring buildings and surroundings.
- Vertical expression and balance to the front elevation onto the street.
- Design and detailing drawn from the positive characteristics 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