

An aerial photograph of the Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area. The River Ure flows through the center, flanked by dense green trees. In the background, the Durham Cathedral is visible, along with other historic buildings. A stone bridge with multiple arches spans the river in the foreground. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Conservation Area Management Plan

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area



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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. This includes 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 the special interest of Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area. It identifies and evaluates the contribution of the different elements and features that form the area's distinctiveness, sense of place, character and appearance that justify its designation. It then identifies any issues, problems, and potential threats the conservation area faces, and the opportunities, that help to inform the overarching realistic and deliverable management aims and actions set out in the management strategy.

The appraisal will provide 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 ed. (2019).

The individual character appraisals form **part 2** of the Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) process. **Part 1** is the Durham City Strategic Context document, and **part 3** the overarching Management Strategy. These documents should be read in combination.

The purpose of the CAMP 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 outcomes.
- Set out an overview of the city in terms of its special interest, history timeline, topography & landscape context.
- Provide an understanding of the seven individual conservation areas, their interrelationships 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 documents work
- Sit alongside other strategies and plans that are in place and emerging.



Fig 1 above. The streetscene view along part of The Avenue, a characterful suburban street dating from the late 19th century.

Together the conservation area character appraisal and CAMP overarching 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 appearance and significance.
- 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, negative features to be improved and identify potential future risks to the areas special interest and character.
- 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. A drone view across the Crossgate Conservation Area showing the layout and compact terraced street patterns, the viaduct spanning North Road, and the areas local and wider landscape setting with green "fingers" penetrating into the urban form.



Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

2. Overview



2.1 Location and description

Durham City is one of the most historic cities in the UK founded in the 10th century with its core on the peninsula, crowned by the castle and cathedral, and bounded by the River Wear. It has always been, and continues to be, a place of change and growth. It is centrally located within County Durham and is well connected to many strategic road and rail routes, including the A1(M), and the east coast mainline. Within the city, radiating out from the peninsula is a network of streets, roads, and different routes spreading wider afield to connect the city with the surrounding villages.

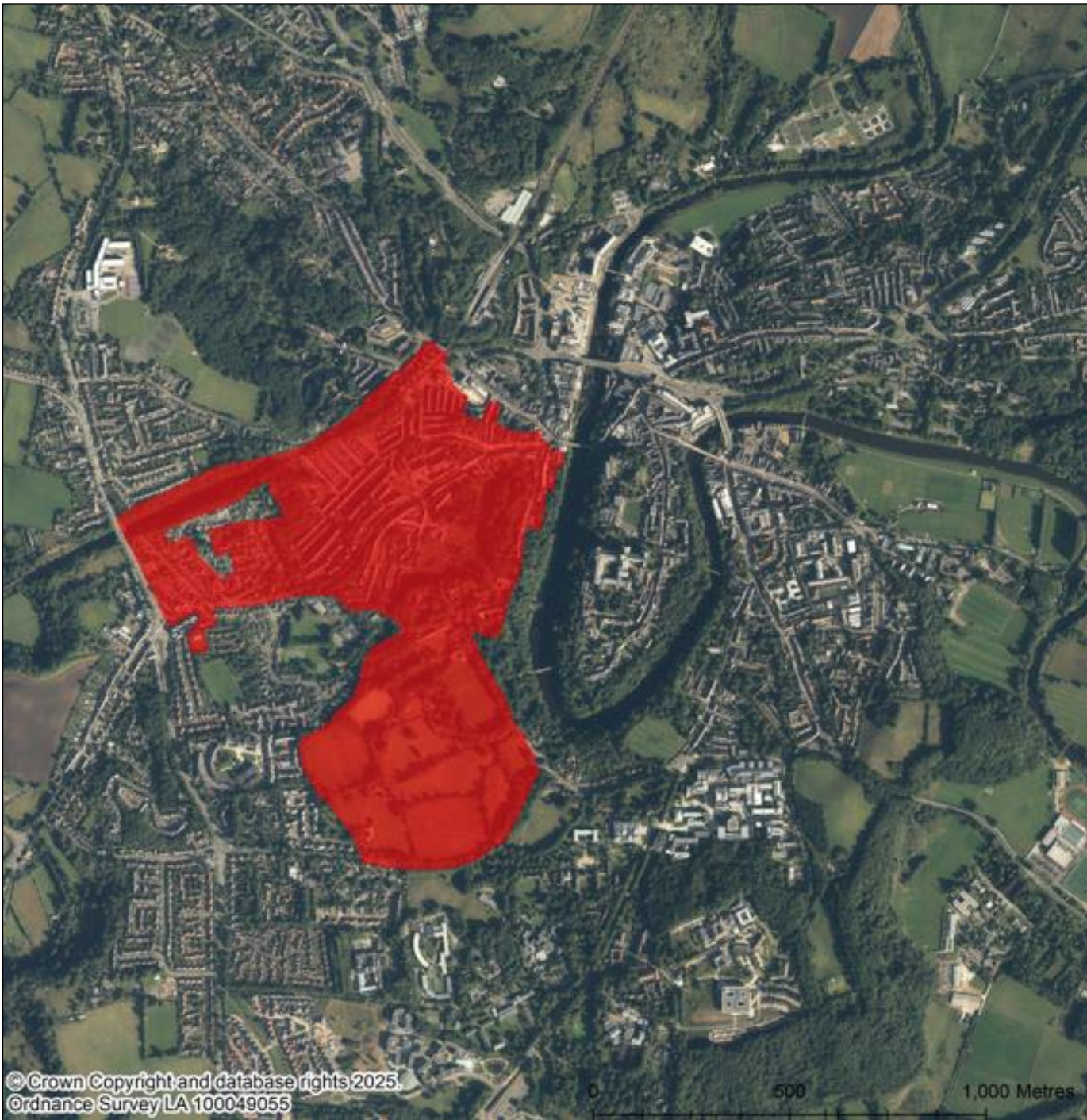
Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area occupies the majority of the southwestern part of the city centre between the west side of the River Wear gorge and Newcastle Road at Nevilles Cross.

The conservation area comprises of three distinct and legible parts; first the medieval core of Crossgate, Allergate and South Street; secondly the post c.1900 urban expansion focused on Crossgate Peth and the surrounding residential streets of 19th century and early 20th century housing; and thirdly the semi-rural, landscape dominant area in the south that includes Durham School and merges into the riverbanks.

Location plans and a plan of the Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area boundary can be found on the following pages.




Fig 3 above. A selection of images showing the main streets that form the historic core of the conservation area, Allergate, Crossgate and South Street. They provide different streetscapes of high historic interest, architectural quality, and diversity.



Map 1 Location plans

A location plan of Durham City highlighted in the wider county context (inset below) and an aerial map showing Crossgate 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.



06/01/2025

2.2 Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area boundary

Description

In the north the conservation area boundary follows the railway line, then the south side of Flass Street and Sutton Street. It turns southeast around Nos 36-41 North Road passing under the Viaduct and around the west side of North Road roundabout. It continues past Hopper House and Metcalf House, around the rear of Durham Bus Station and Neville Street. From here it follows the rear plot lines of the buildings lining the north side of Crossgate bank.

The east boundary is formed by the upper edge of South Street Banks down to Pimlico, from where it turns west to Quarryheads Lane. It then heads south following the street up to the roundabout at Potters Bank. From here the boundary curves to the south west up the bank before turning northwards between West House Avenue and Observatory House following Clay Lane up to Margery Lane.

The boundary continues along the route of Blind Lane and Crossgate Peth westwards up to Neville's Cross, where it wraps around the grounds of St John's Church on the south side of the street. The west boundary follows Newcastle Road northwards up to the railway line at Redhills cutting.

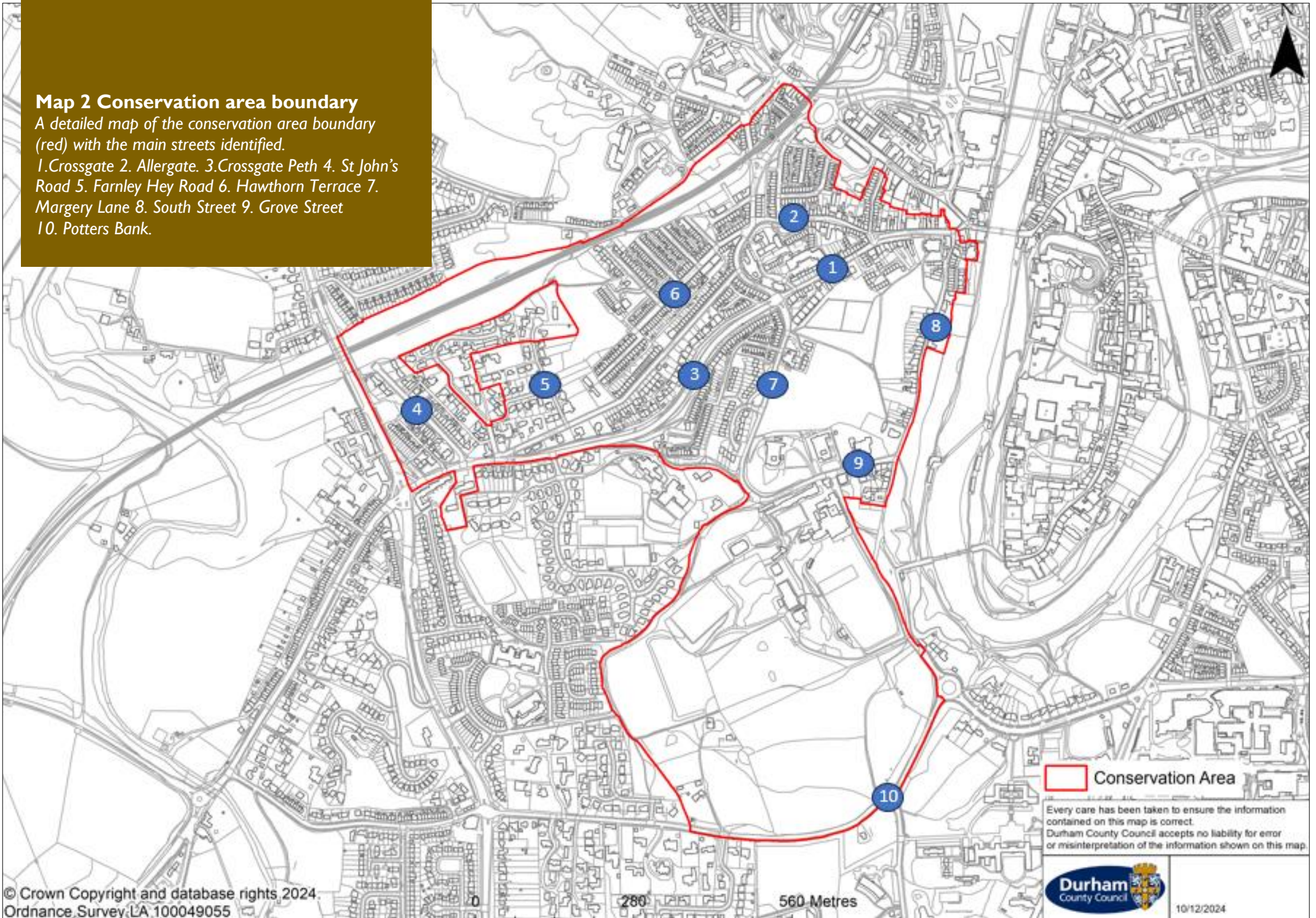
The following provides a list of the key points that have informed the Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area boundary identification process:

- Area loosely informed by the "old borough" boundary established by c.1250.
- Focused on the historic framework that is part of the wider medieval town plan and the subsequent areas of later Victorian and Edwardian development. This is clearly defined with areas of cohesive historic character.
- The western boundary logically provided by Newcastle Road that demarcates the urban edge of the city centre.
- At Farnley Ridge, Farnley Hey Road and Percy Terrace the boundary is drawn to correlate with the c.1919-59 Ordnance Survey maps representing an important phase in the city's urban evolution.
- St John's Church, war memorial and churchyard are included as a notable historic landmark site at this entry point into the city with community/social significance tied directly to the local area.
- St Margaret's Church of England Primary School and the adjacent housing are excluded; they date from the mid-20th century and are of no special interest.
- The railway line and viaduct provide an obvious historic landmark boundary to the area in the north and demarcate a change in character.
- Redhills cutting is included due to the high value unfolding and sequential views from the train entering/leaving the city centre.
- The northeast boundary is aligned with the rear curtilages of the properties on the north side of Crossgate and Allergate. This separates the residential area from the commercial street of North Road.
- The western boundary is naturally formed by the outer wooded banks of the River Wear gorge.
- Potters Bank forms a natural boundary in the south separating Crossgate from the Hill Colleges (a group of colleges to the south of Durham including St Mary's, Collingwood, Grey, St. Aidan's, Trevelyan, and Van Mildert).

Map 2 Conservation area boundary

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

1. Crossgate 2. Allergate 3. Crossgate Peth 4. St John's Road 5. Farnley Hey Road 6. Hawthorn Terrace 7. Margery Lane 8. South Street 9. Grove Street 10. Potters Bank.



**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.

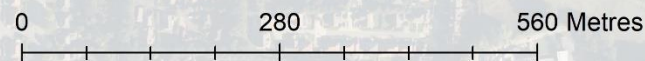


 Conservation Area

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2.3 Summary of special interest.

Architectural interest

- The area has high architectural quality and diversity ranging from vernacular houses, Georgian townhouses to Victorian workers’ terraces.
- There are many distinctive buildings of individual design and notable historic landmarks.
- The high number of listed buildings, locally listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets that combine to generate high-quality historic streetscapes.
- The architectural styles, character and distinctiveness varying from street to street.



Fig 4 above. A street scene view of Allergate showing the diversity and quality of the historic buildings.

Historic interest

- The area has medieval origins and is one of the city's old boroughs.
- The area is fundamental to the wider medieval town plan.
- The medieval layout and plan form, medieval buildings and burgage plots survive and are legible.
- The 19th century and early 20th century development evidence important phases of the city's residential expansion.



Fig 5 above. The view from Crossgate Bank of St Margaret's of Antioch Church with Durham Cathedral in the background.

Topography and setting

- The area’s value and contribution to the city’s distinct topography that provides wide ranging views.
- The river gorge providing a natural boundary to the area and picturesque landscape setting.
- The landform influencing built development and creating character for example stepped street and roofscapes.
- The intrinsic physical, spatial, historic, visual relationship and setting contribution of Crossgate to the other Durham City conservation areas.
- The area has significant value as an intrinsic part of the setting to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site of international significance.



Fig 6 above. The topography and landscape creating views and part of the setting to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Green and blue infrastructure assets

- The many different green spaces bring historic interest, community value, and high visual amenity value.
- The contrasting open elevated areas such as Observatory Hill are part of the Durham Bowl and contribute significantly to the local character.
- The smaller broader green spaces with visual amenity value enhance the visual experiences of the place.
- The green spaces enhancing the setting of the buildings and provide important natural separation.
- The high mature urban treen canopy cover enhancing setting and the quality of view.



Fig 7 above. The green lane at the end of South Street bounding the riverbanks.

Views and vistas

- The wide variety of views and changing visual experiences including views of significant historic landmarks.
- Intimate inwards views highlighting changing historic streetscapes.
- The area has a strong visual relationship between the area and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, and the important castle and cathedral views that appear in the context of different residential streets and approaches.



Fig 8 above. The view of the cathedral towers above the buildings on South Street taken from St Margaret's graveyard.

Public realm

- The area's traditional floorscape enhances the setting of the historic buildings and the character and appearance of the historic streets and spaces.
- The historic boundary treatments reinforce the linear nature and sense of enclosure with the streets as well as defining building plots.
- The visual experience, ambiance, and sense of place, changes along different routes, streets, and spaces.
- The area's connections and links to other parts of the city, including the riverbanks and peninsula.



Fig 9 above. The entrance to Trinity Hall with historic stone walls, gate piers, and cobbles.

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 glacial deposits left in the Crossgate area gave rise to a gentler and steeper rolling terrain. Nearly all of the area is constructed on land rising away from the river westwards up to a ridge at the outer extent of the river valley forming part of the feature known locally as the 'Durham Bowl.' This topographical feature is a key component of the city and the conservation areas, where it rises to the first skyline forming the inner setting to the historic city core.

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,

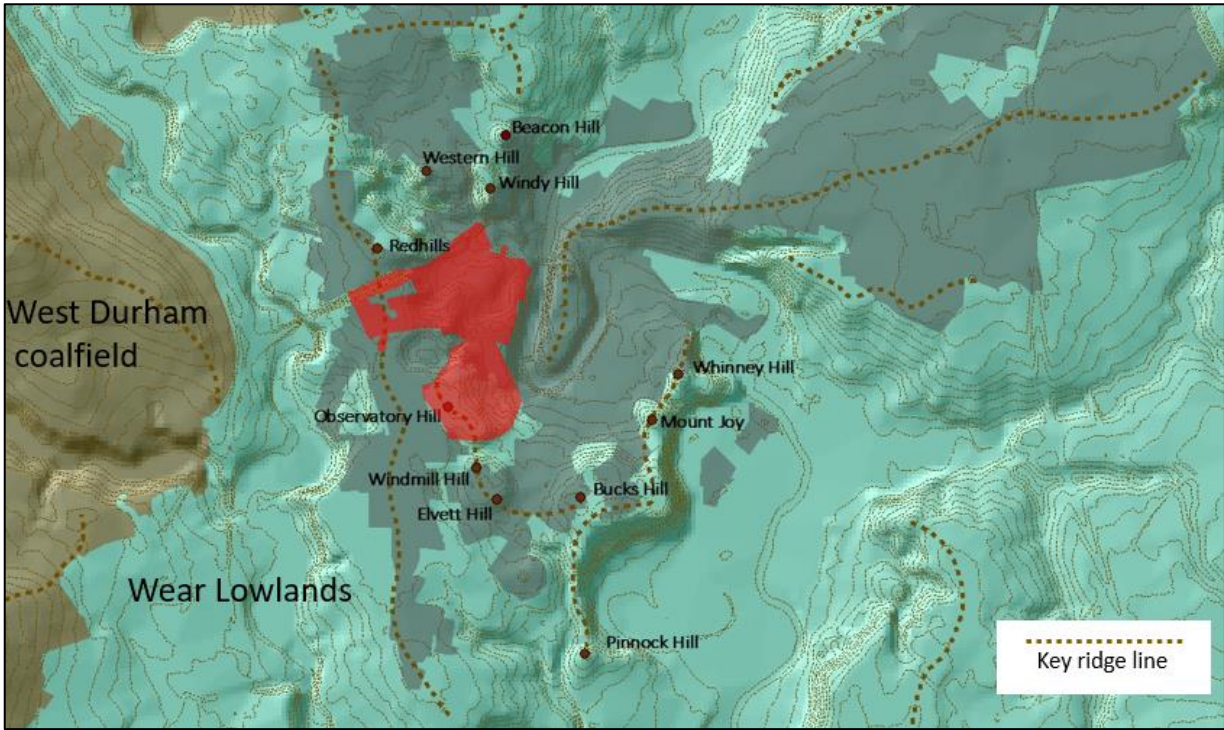
through Lowes Barn, Neville's Cross, Crossgate Moor and Windy Hill and finishing at Aykley Heads above Crook Hall. The river forms two breaks at Maiden Castle and Crook Hall but the area in between completes the circuit of the bowl with the high ground at Gilesgate.

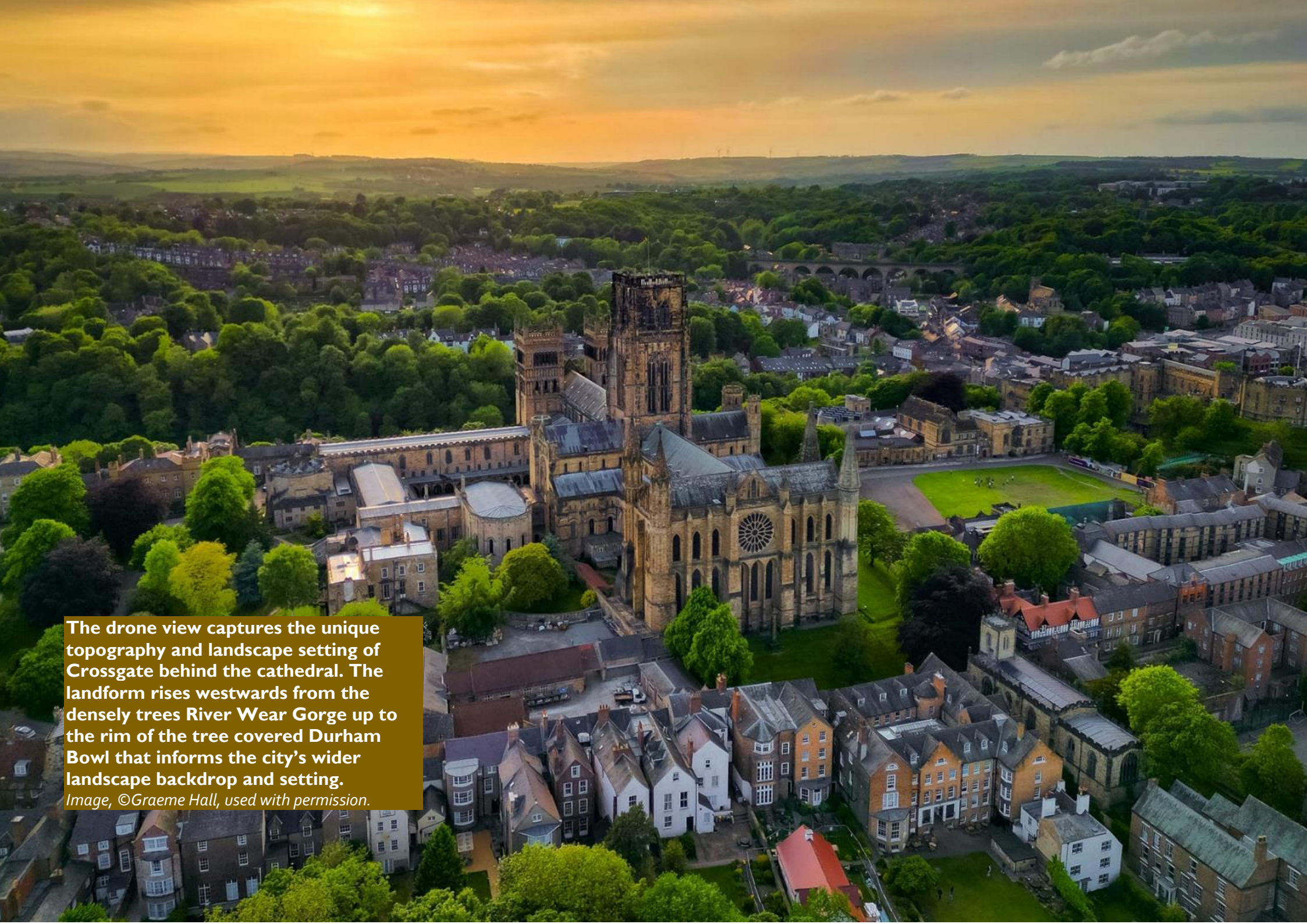
This topography and the scenic landscape background it provides contains and defines the historic city, with the Crossgate Conservation Area forming a significant physical component.

The topography provides a series of long ranging views from higher ground at different points around the city where the built environment is seen nestled into the landscape with the higher ridge behind. At closer quarters it provides a more immediate and intimate green background that contributes to character and views.

South Street is notable due to its uniqueness as it follows an ancient route occupying a distinctive position perched high on the upper edge of the river gorge. The other residential streets within the area are hilly, rising and falling at different gradients intermingled with flatter areas of land.

Fig 10 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.





The drone view captures the unique topography and landscape setting of Crossgate behind the cathedral. The landform rises westwards from the densely trees River Wear Gorge up to the rim of the tree covered Durham Bowl that informs the city's wider landscape backdrop and setting.
Image, ©Graeme Hall, used with permission.

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

A settlement is known to have existed at Durham by the 10th century, with recent archaeological evidence of even earlier occupation of the peninsula. It was chosen as the final resting place for the community of monks carrying St Cuthbert's coffin in 995 owing to being a naturally defensible site. The castle and the cathedral were constructed, and the city grew up beyond the defensive castle walls between, along, and at the edges of key routes.

The city has retained the medieval historic street pattern together with its largely c.1900 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.

Crossgate Conservation Area therefore has significant group value and an indivisible historic connection and physical relationship with the other Durham City Conservation Areas.

This is evidenced and can be understood by the city's history, evolution of the built environment, the framework of the different approaches along the principle historic streets and other historic routes, and the different visual connections and experiences.

One example is the intimate experience on Crossgate Bank of the historic residential properties with the castle and cathedral being at first hidden then moving in and then out of view. This is followed by a dramatic reveal at the junction with Framwellgate Bridge that presents the sheer dominance and strength of the castle and the cathedral in its river and landscape setting.

This view, and others, gives a sense of the city's separation by the river and of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site with its elevation and dominance over the surrounding city. The upstream views demonstrate the juxtaposition of the old and modern city.

From Wharton Park in Framwellgate Conservation Area there are fine expansive views over the Crossgate area. Further, there are many distinctive changes in character from urban to natural and vice versa along different approaches. An example is the exit from South Bailey onto the riverbanks crossing Prebends Bridge and walking along South Street into Crossgate.

The experience of such changes in character is particularly notable to the north and south east

where a densely wooded then open agricultural landscape is dominant beyond the River Wear.

Further significance is drawn from the fact that the Durham City Conservation Areas in combination provide a substantial part of the setting of Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site. They play different roles in attributes of the site's significance and its outstanding universal value and how this is experienced, appreciated and understood.

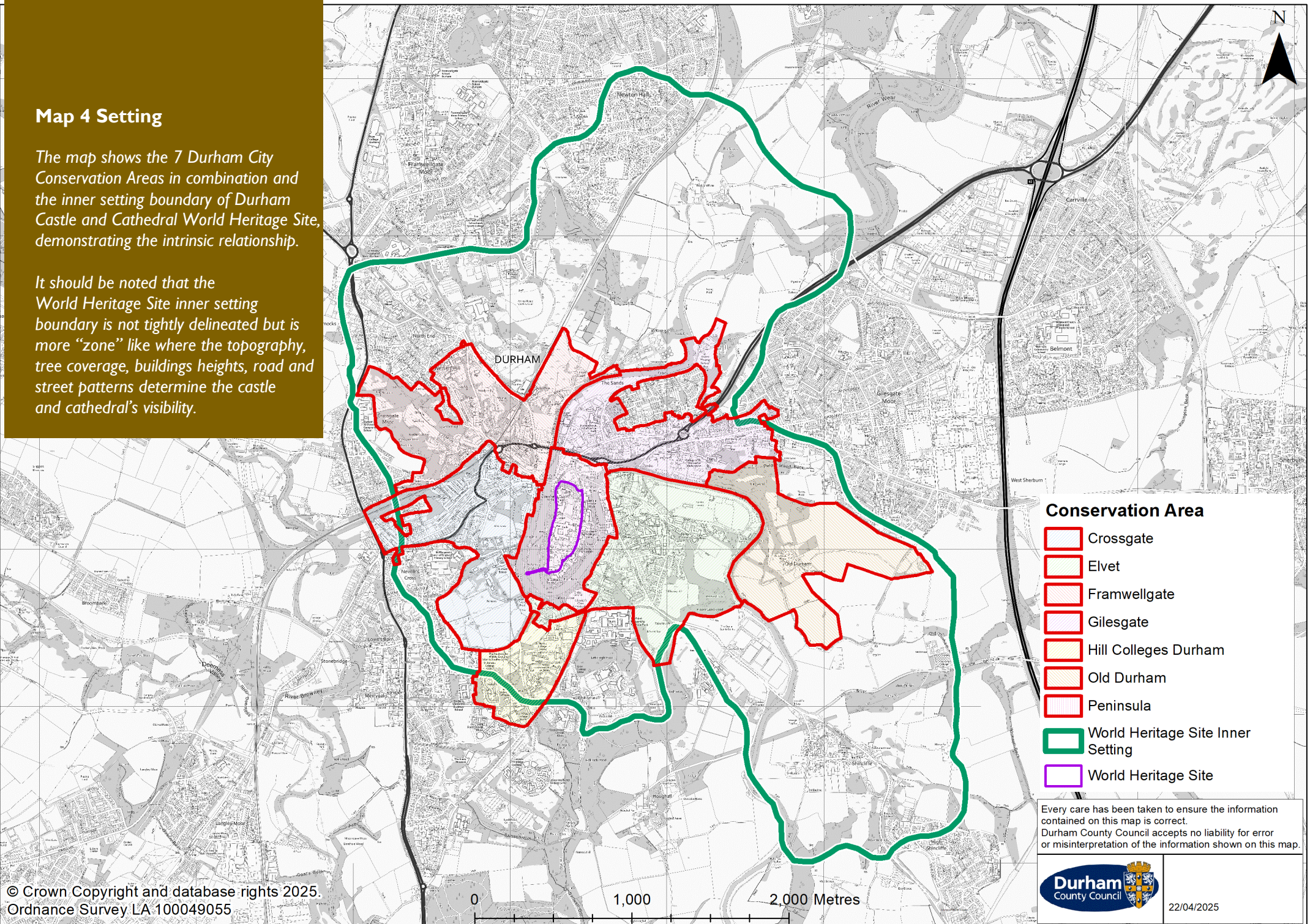
Outside the surrounding conservation area boundaries, the setting is dominated by modern areas of housing and infrastructure of little interest with limited visual connections with the historic built settlement. Beyond is a very open form with robust corridors of farmland and woodland. The physical separation from the historic core and its lack of prominence in general views makes the city feel small and strongly defined. This adds positively to its setting.

The surrounding area plays a further positive role. This is in terms of the different approaches that provide an obvious transition from a modern to historic character which emphasises the appreciation and positive experience of the special interest of the historic environment once within the conservation area. On the western edge of the conservation area glimpses of the wider landscape from the urban streets contribute to character. In addition, the views of the Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing lining the roadside indicate the urban edge of the historic city core.

Map 4 Setting

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

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



2.5 Historic development

The historic plan form of Durham City has a typical medieval arrangement, comprising of a simple single street layout with the main roads and bridges directing movement into the main commercial, community, and social hub of the Market Place. The city grew up around several key ancient entrances and routes with Framwellgate and Crossgate leading north and west respectively. Gilesgate leads out in the east connecting the Cathedral Priory to its outer farm estate, and to wider medieval ports, with Elvet the main route out to Darlington and the south.

The city has not been heavily impacted by industrial development in the same way as other towns and as a result its core medieval layout remains intact. The medieval town was organised as a group of seemingly independent boroughs under the control of the Bishop and the Priory. 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. 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.

The western approach to the peninsula was one of the most important in the “old borough” of Crossgate. Crossgate is one of the oldest streets in the city taking its name from the medieval Neville’s Cross that still stands at the west end of Crossgate Peth or “path.”

The origins of South Street are uncertain but is it obviously a significant historic route and one of the oldest streets in the city, which was part owned by the Priory. It was an important route providing access to the west and southwest of the county and to the peninsula being where the merchants chose to live, the houses designed to enjoy the finest of views.

The church of St Margaret’s of Antioch was first established in the mid-12th century to serve the borough that was essentially an independent urban settlement with its own court. The area of Crossgate and Allergate was a residential area that did not have its own shops, or market hence was connected to the Market Place when Bishop Flambard built Framwellgate Bridge c.1128. It is said that it is very likely that from earlier times there were dwellings in the Crossgate area possibly before the arrival of the community of monks on the peninsula in 995.

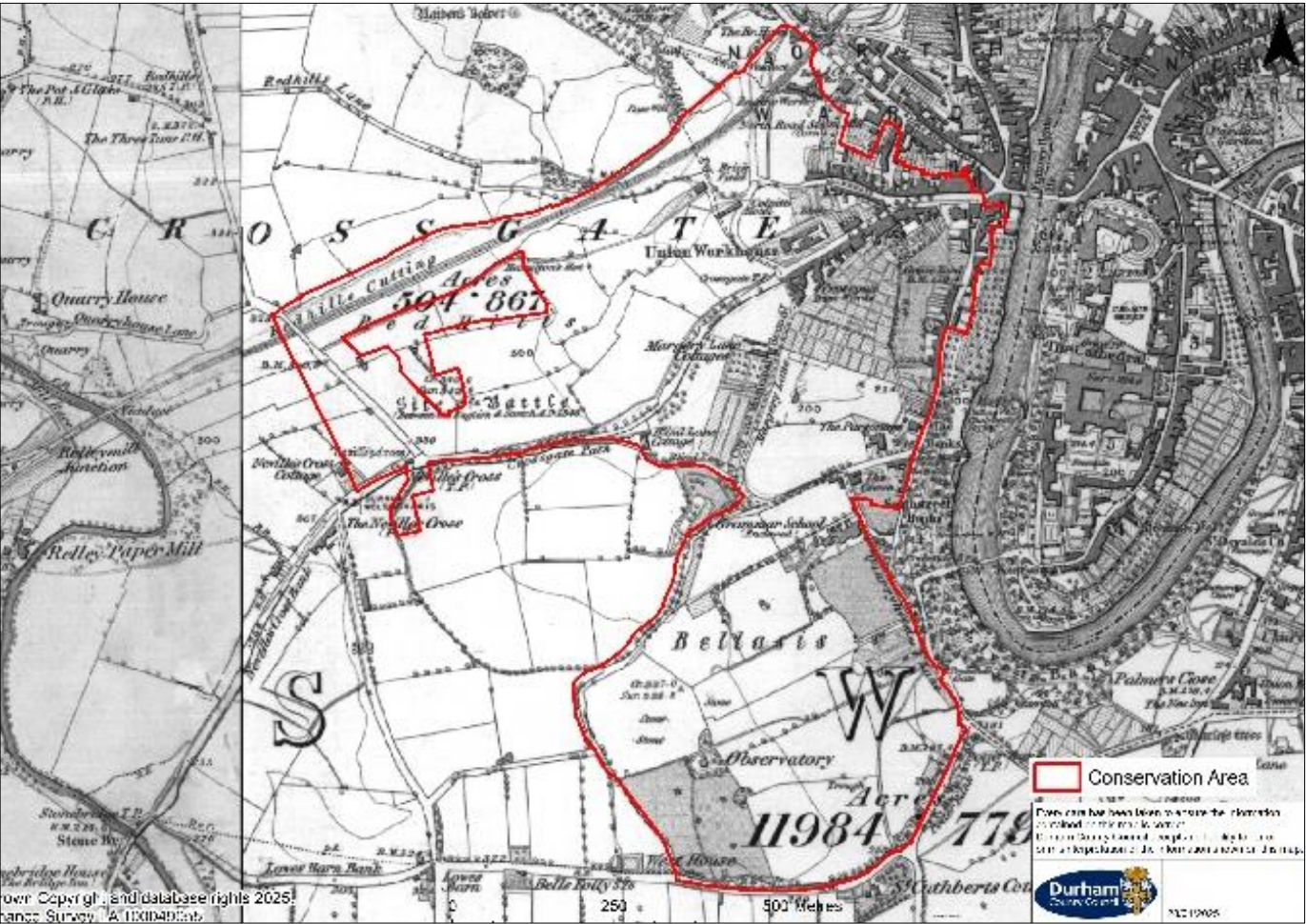
St Margaret’s allotments on Margery Lane, have historic significance being the site of a quarry supplying stone for the cathedral and other monastic buildings of the priory. This quarrying activity created the sunken level and the cathedral view as seen today.

The greatest change in the area resulted from the major industrial development in the 18th and 19th century that took place in the broader region when Durham lay at the centre of its important coalfield. By the mid-19th century Durham had scarcely developed beyond its medieval plan, but there was notable early 19th century development with the construction of North Road in 1830s, Union Workhouses in 1837, then slightly later Neville Street in the 1840s, followed in 1850 by Colpitts Terrace.

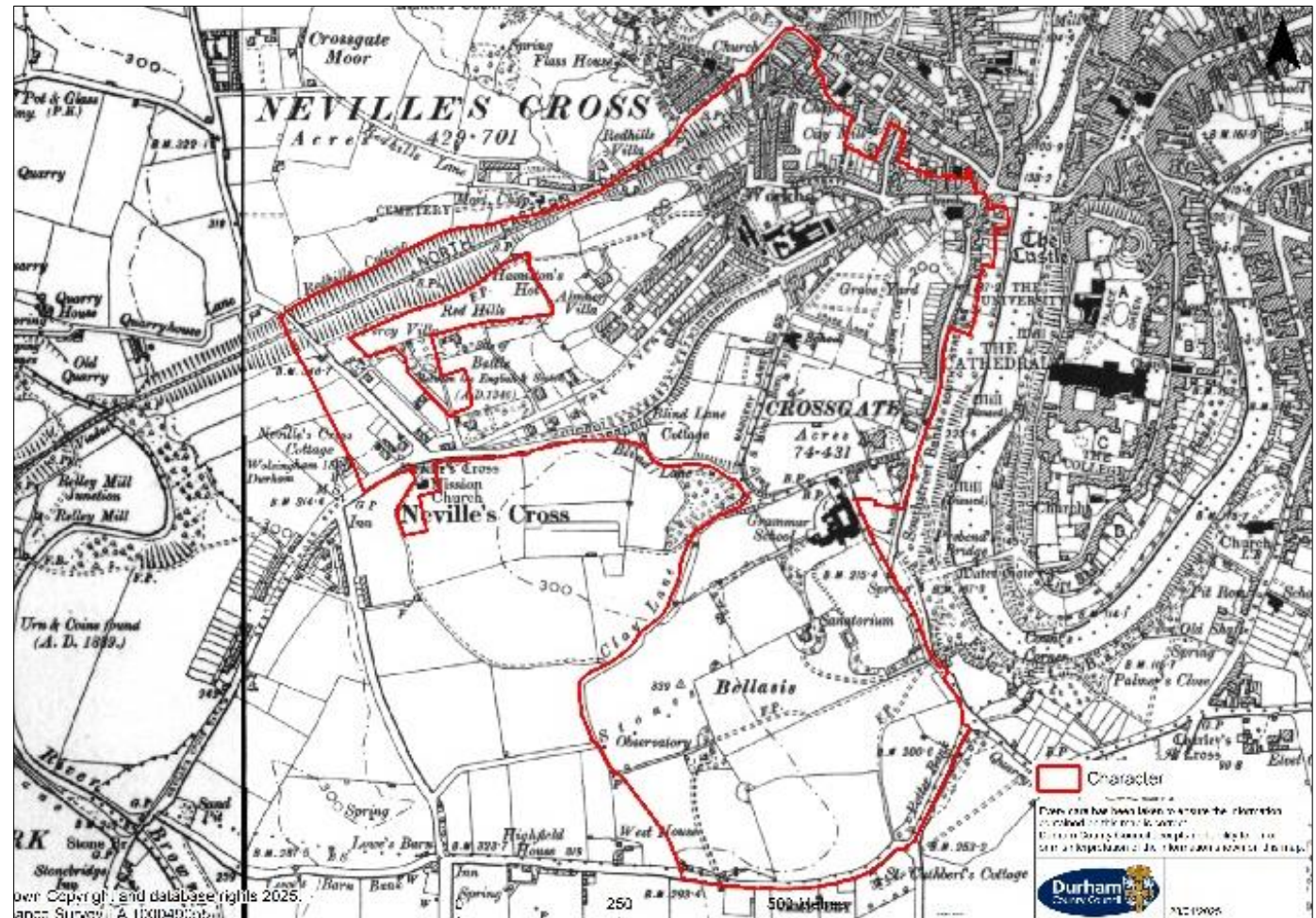
The improved north-south road communication being developed west of the city, coupled with the arrival of the railways led to dense residential development along the road network on the western side of the city, within Crossgate. During the later part of the 19th century and moving into the early 20th century residential terraces were built to house the mining workers and their families. This markedly changed the character of the area.

Fig 11 right. A sequence of historic ordnance survey map extracts.

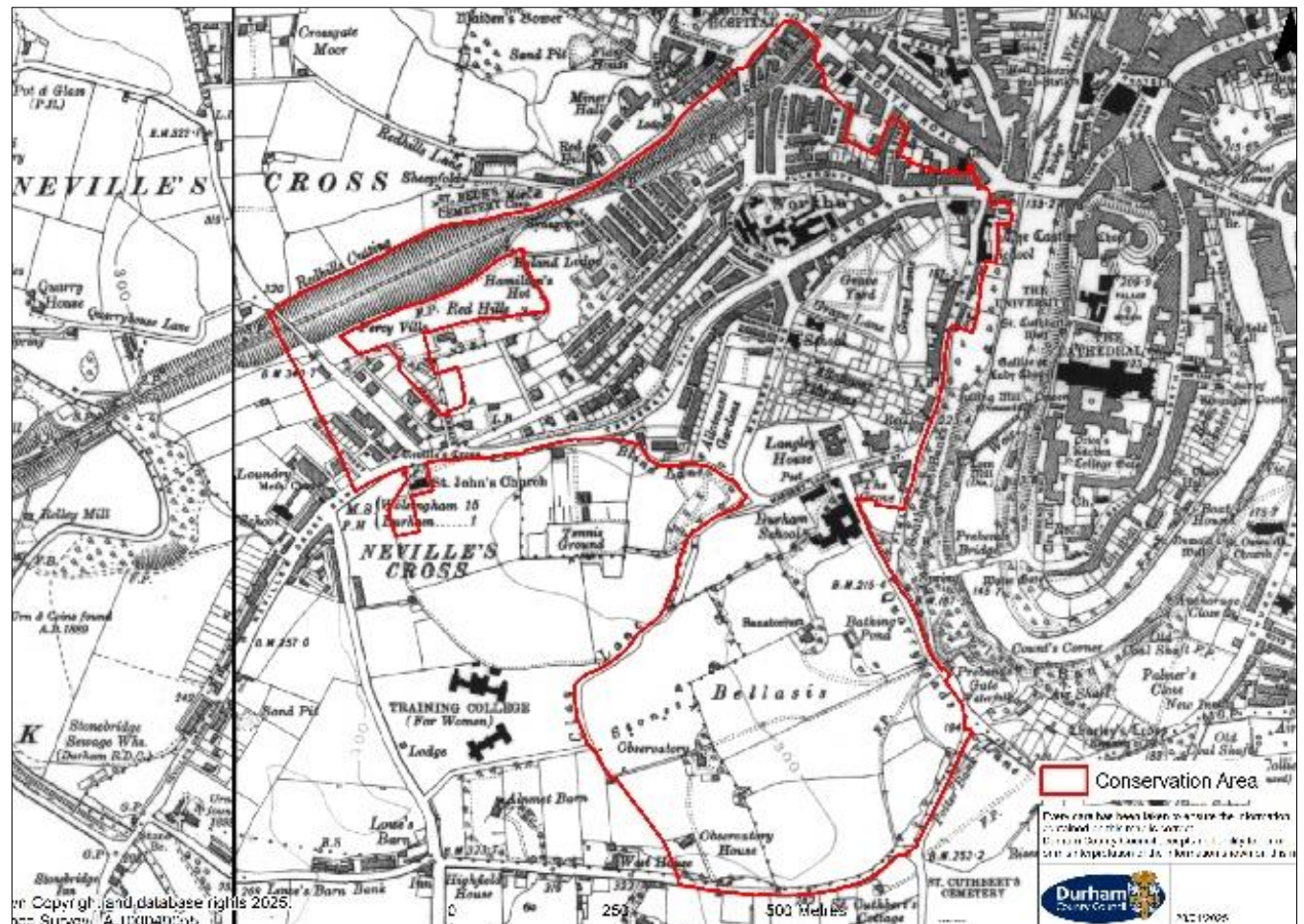
OS map c.1860, is one of best surviving guides to the plan form of the city, it shows the Crossgate area largely in its original medieval layout with residential properties concentrated along Crossgate, Allergate and South Street. The majority of the area outside of these streets is shown as undeveloped agricultural land. It includes a number of historic routes such as "Crossgate Path," Blind Lane, and Clay Lane, and buildings such as a steam mill, engine works, the Observatory, St Margaret's Workhouse, Colpitts Hotel, and Durham School.



OS map c.1898, by the middle of the 19th century the foundations of the “modern” city were in place. The peninsula had been opened up by the removal of its gates and fortifications, roads bypassed it to the west and the railways arrived from three different directions. The late 19th century maps show the Victorian period of expansion with the railway line travelling into the city centre from the west and dense built development within its surroundings. North Road and Neville Street are shown along with dwellings at Hawthorn Terrace, Crossgate Peth, Alexandria Crescent, John Steet, Sutton Street, and Atherton Street amongst others. Within the Farnley Hey Road and Percy Terrace area there was only a small number of buildings scattered along the old route that crossed Redhills Cutting to the old quarry at the riverside.



OS map c.1923, the early 20th century map shows further residential expansion in the western part of the city with a series of short, terraced blocks developed behind Hawthorn Terrace and North Road, and around the Neville's Cross area. While today, George Street fronts onto Newcastle Road, it was originally a side street off Neville's Cross Bank. Further housing development occurred on the garden land and allotments between the east side of Crossgate Peth and the west side of Margery Lane, in the form of Beech Crest, Briarville, Nevilledale Terrace, and Summerville.



OS map c.1980-94, the late 20th century map shows the main change to the plan form of the city being the introduction of the new “through road” that included the construction of new bridges, embankments and slip roads. This included the release of large areas of land for development. It also shows Farnley Hey Road, Farnley Hey Mount and Percy Terrace illustrating a changing suburban form and the post-war evolution of this part of the conservation area.

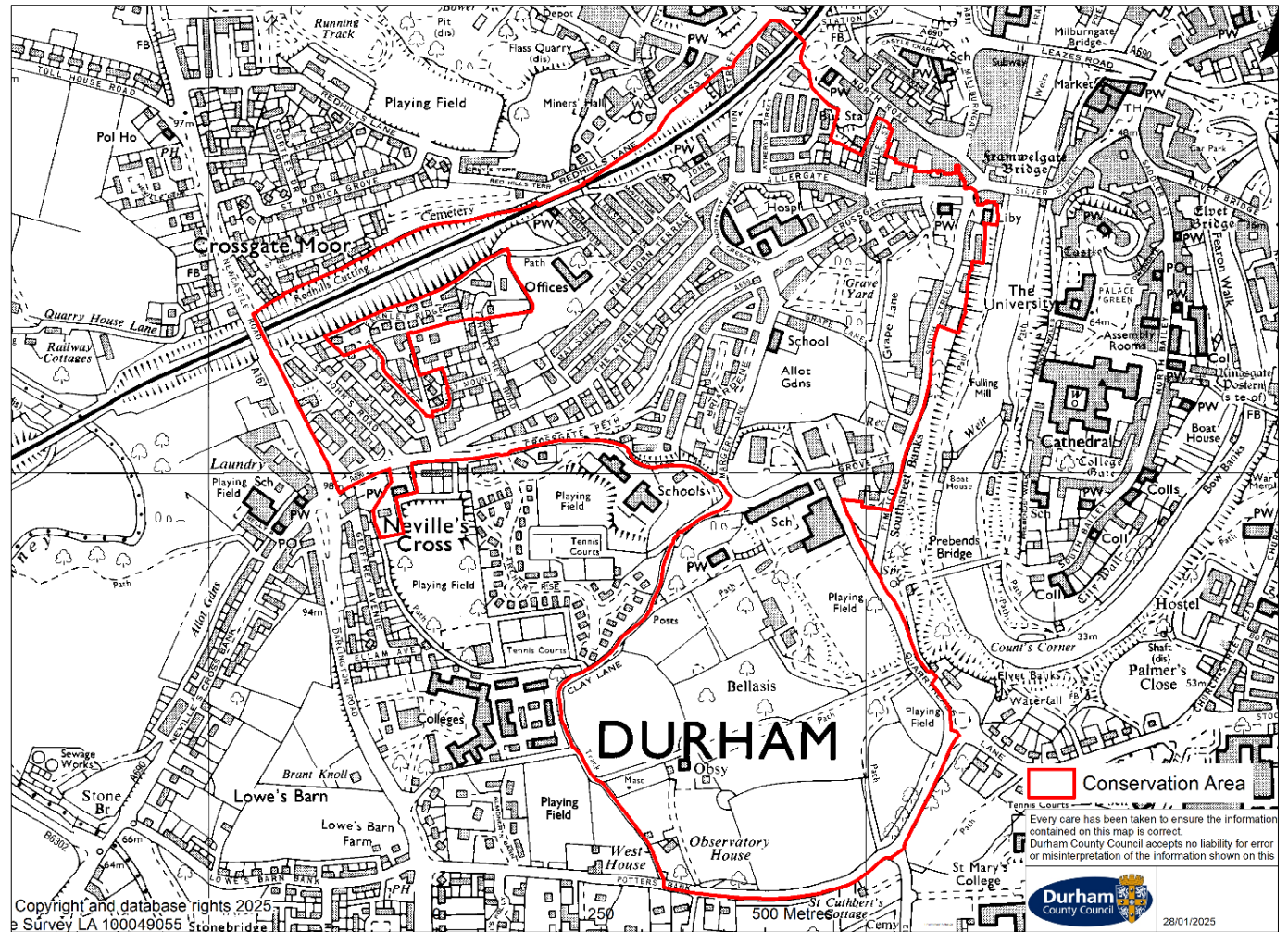




Fig 12 above. A view from original postcard along Crossgate c.1901-25 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR019881),



Fig 14 above. Old houses in South Street against the east end of the church South Street 1901-1925 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR01017).

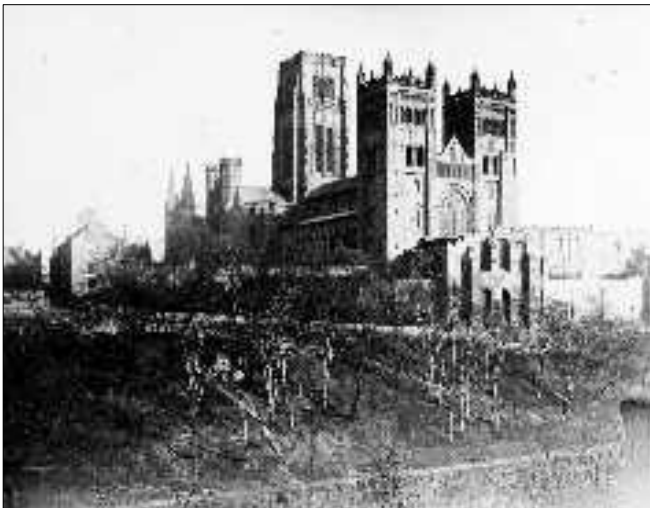


Fig 13 above. A "lost" view of Durham Cathedral taken from South Street in the 1930s Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00493),

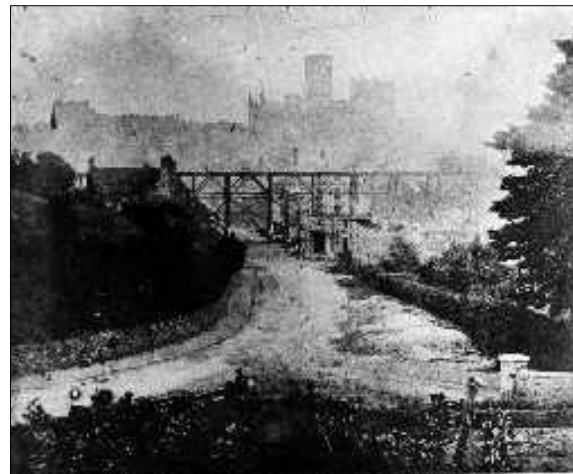


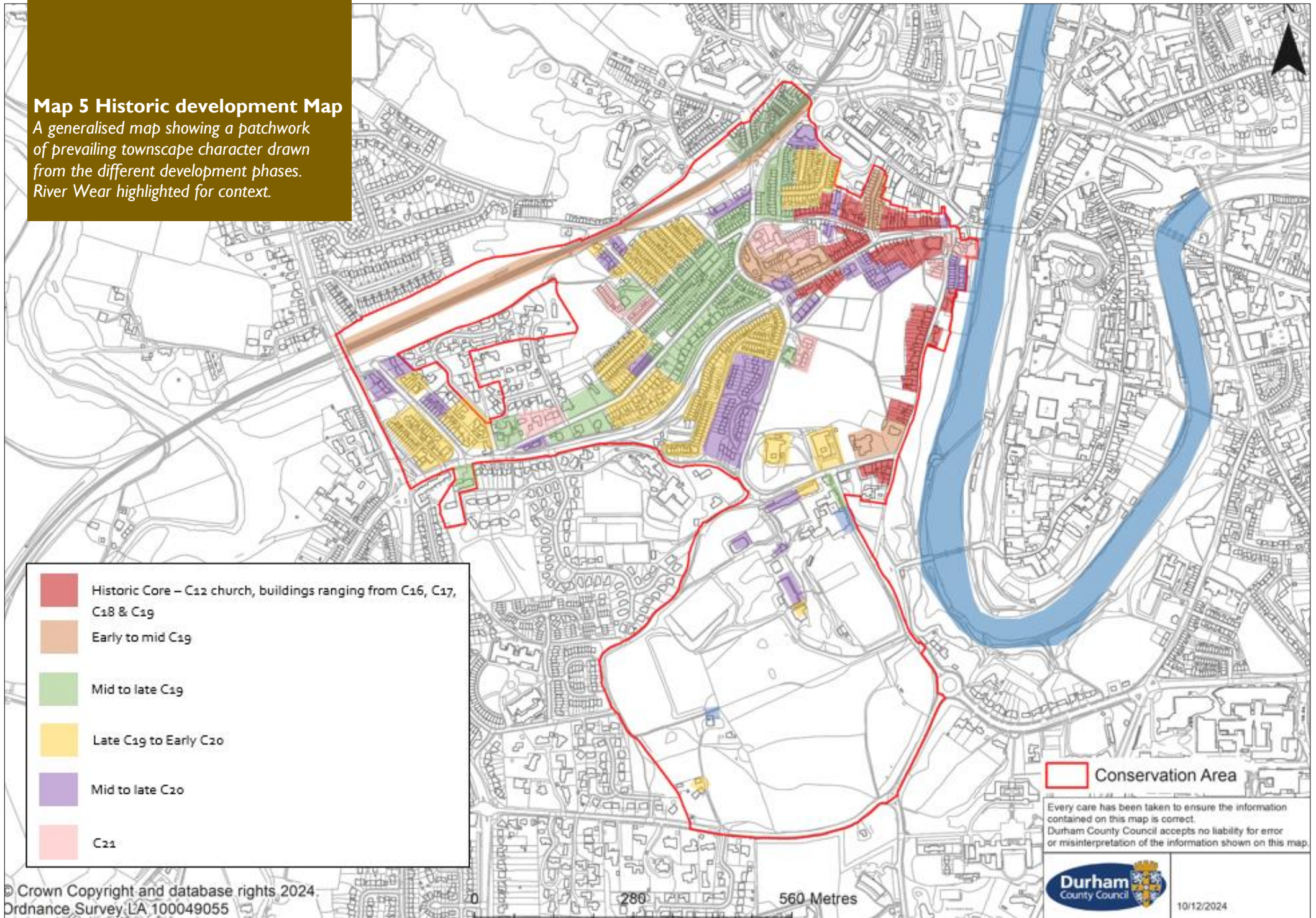
Fig 15 above. The construction of the railway viaduct c.1857 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR02226),



Fig 16 above. Allergate c.1960, the building was a hospital before the opening of the County Hospital in 1853 and was replaced by Hanover Court Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00910),

Map 5 Historic development Map

A generalised map showing a patchwork of prevailing townscape character drawn from the different development phases. River Wear highlighted for context.



 Conservation Area

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2.6 Heritage assets

Durham City Crossgate 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 17 above. *Neville's Cross, a medieval monument erected to commemorate the battle of Neville's Cross on October 17th, 1346.*

The designated and non-designated heritage (NDHA) assets within the conservation area are identified on the maps 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, archaeology, or landscapes 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 18 right. *A selection of image showing the variation of heritage assets within the conservation area, St Margaret's Centre (top), Pimlico (middle), walls and headstones at St Margaret's Graveyard (bottom)*



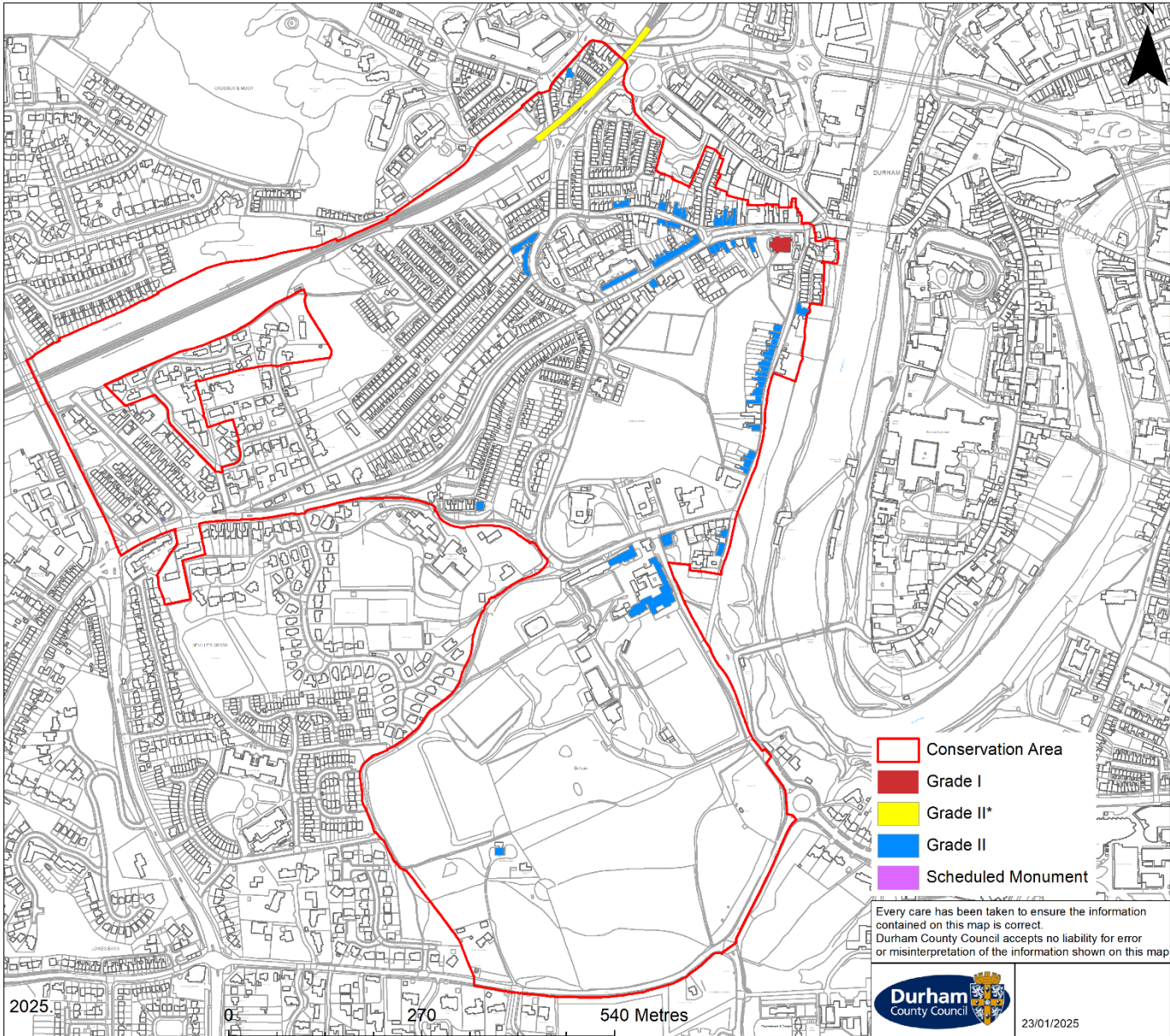
Map 6 Designated heritage assets

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: Premises occupied by Messrs J and M Luke at junction of Sutton Street (GRII), Railway Viaduct and drinking fountain (GRII*), Nos 58-61 Hawthorn Terrace (GRII), Colpitts Hotel (GRII), Colpitts Terrace (GRII), shop corner of Colpitts Terrace (GRII), Bede Rest (GRII), Nos 4,5,6 Allergate (GRII), No 7 Allergate (GRII), Nos 14,15,16 Allergate (GRII), No 22 Allergate (GRII), No 24 Allergate (GRII), No 26 Allergate (GRII), No 4 Crossgate (GRII), No 7 Crossgate (GRII), No 9 Crossgate (GRII), No 10 Crossgate (GRII), No 11 Crossgate (GRII), No 25 Crossgate (GRII) Nos 38-50 Crossgate (GRII), Church of St Margaret of Antioch (GRI), Nos 20-20a South Street (GRII), Nos 32,33,34,35,36,37,42, 45,46,47,48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55,56,57 South Steet (GRII), Nos 5 and 7 Pimlico (GRII), The Grove (Durham School Bursar's Office and Common Room) (GRII), Durham School south building, frontage building and gateway (GRII), Durham School Luce Music Centre and Porters' Lodge (GRII).



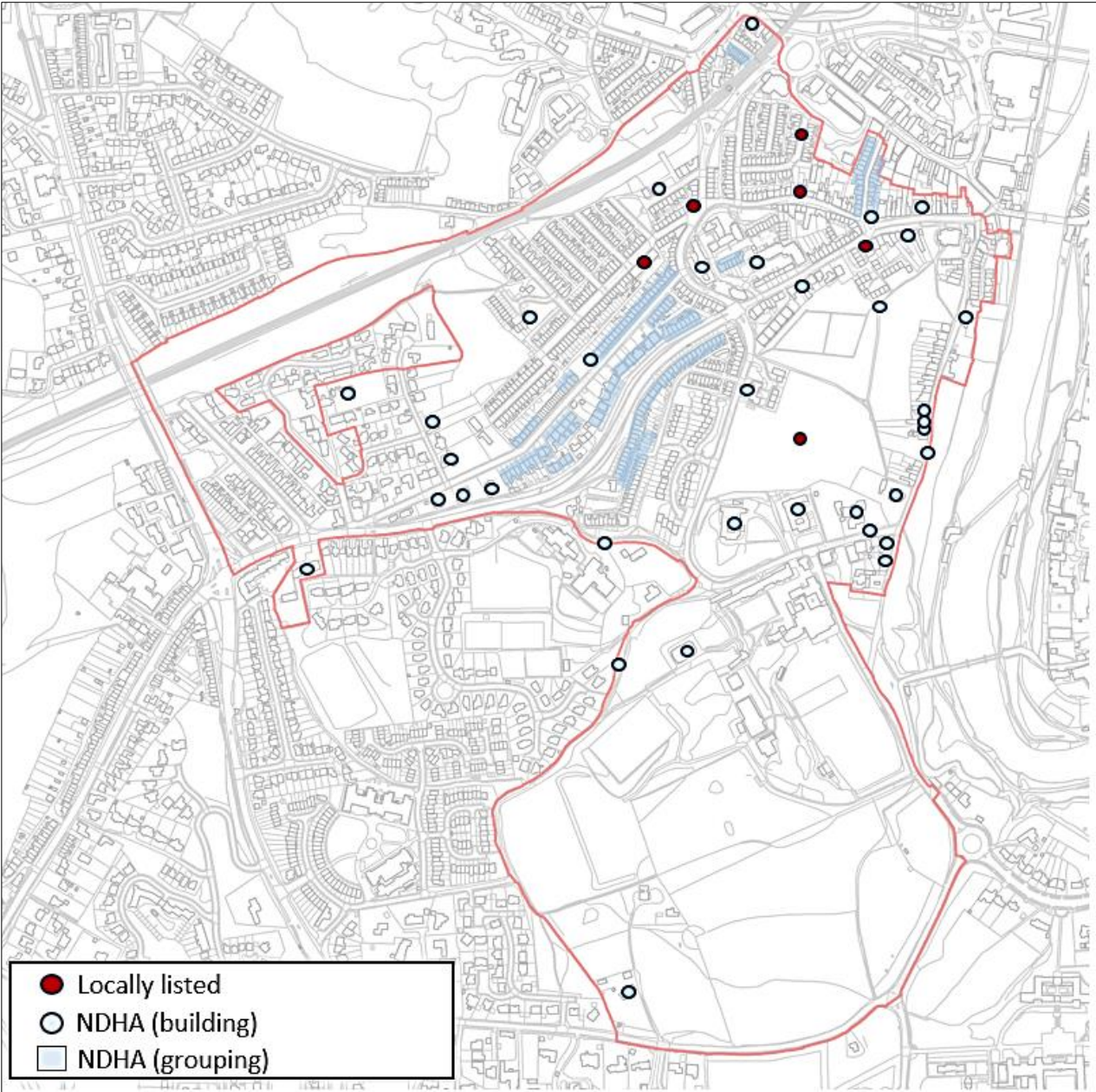
Map 7 NDHAs

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: Ye Old Elm Tree Crossgate, No 20 Allergate, Harrison House Hawthorn Terrace, street name sign on No 57 Hawthorn Terrace, St Margaret’s Allotments, New Street.

NDHAs: The Bridge Public House, Nos 5 and 6 Crossgate, No 51 Crossgate, Crossgate Working Men’s Club, Nos 28 Crossgate, No 21 South Street, No 38 South Street, No 39 South Street, No 40 South Street, St Margaret’s Rectory and boundary walls South Street, riverbanks walls and railings South Street, boundary walls gate piers and gravestones St Margaret’s Graveyard, St Margaret’s Centre Margery Lane, Crossgate Workhouses and Chapel, St Margaret’s Garth, former Rington’s Tea workshop John Street, Byland Lodge, Farnley Tower, No 24 The Avenue, Oak Lea The Avenue, Dunster House The Avenue, Avenue House The Avenue, Hillcrest Farnley Hey Road, Percy House Percy Lane, Poole House, The Caffinites and Trinity Hall Grove Street, walls gate piers and cobbles at Trinity Hall, Nos 1, 4 and 6 Pimlico, Durham School Chapel, St John’s Chapel and war memorial, Crossgate Peth (excluding Aspen Lodge, Maple Lodge and No 21), Lambton Street, Neville Street, Nevilledale Terrace, The Avenue (excluding Nos 29 -35a), Observatory House, Clay Lane and Blind Lane.

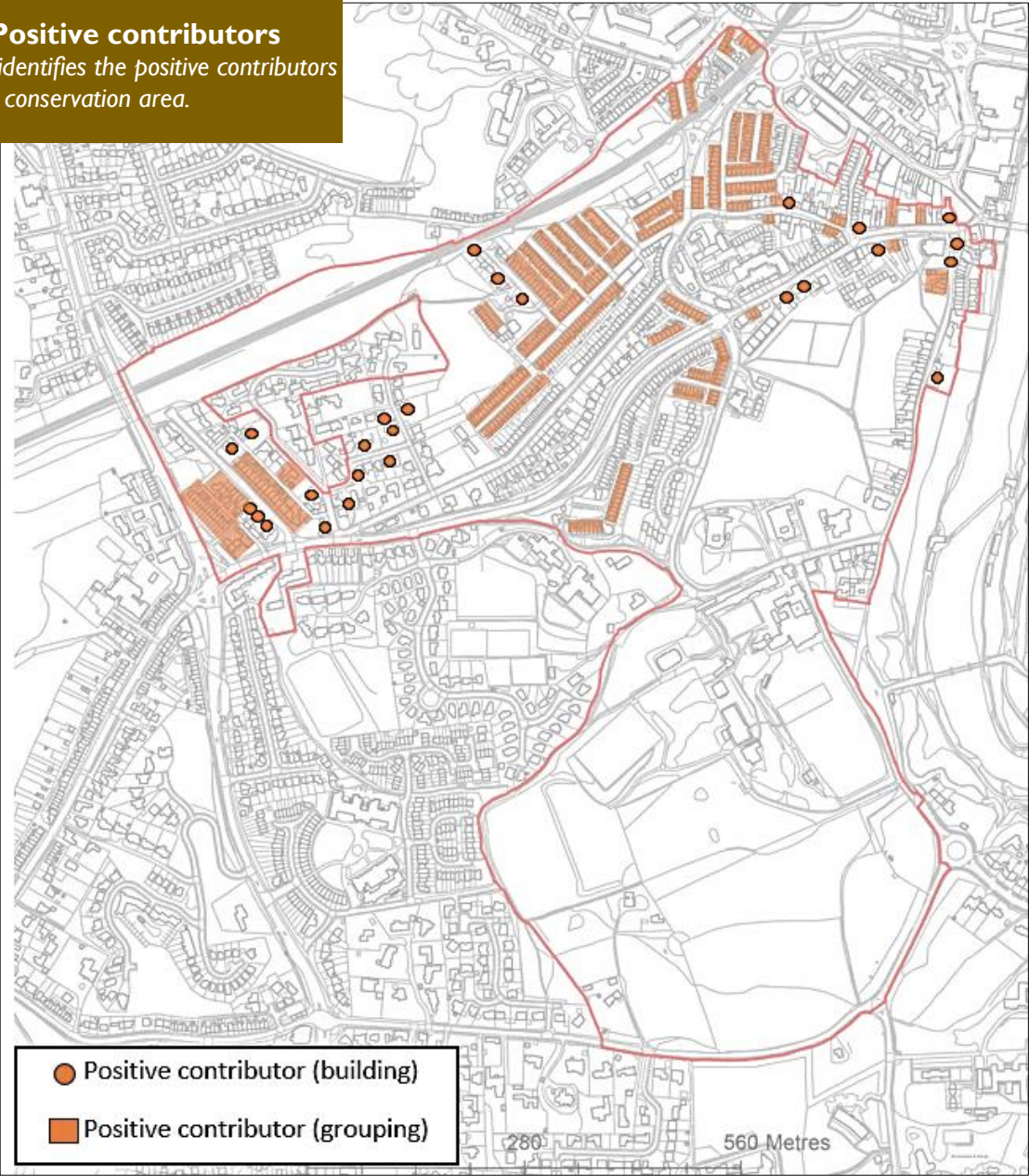


2.7 Townscape – positive contributors

There are many other buildings of low to moderate significance which 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: George Street, Ward Court, St John’s Road – Nos 2-28, Cross House, No 30, Cross View House, Hilda House. Percy Terrace- Rokerby House/Villa, The Hermitage, Viewlands, Craigmore, Sunny Brae. Farnley Hey Road- Woodside, Hill Crest. Farnley Mount-Oatlands, Springgate, Heather Lea, Latrigg. Neville Court. May Street. Laburnum Avenue-Nos 1-12 and 18, Presbyterian Chapel, The Lodge. Juniper Way. Byland Close. Hawthorn Terrace. Lawson Terrace. Mistletoe Street. Holly Street. John Street Nos 3-10. Sutton Street Nos 1-6, Nos 18-27, Nos 28-32, Nos 33-36. Atherton Street. East Atherton Street. Mitchell Street. Lambton Street Nos 10-11. North Road Head Nos 36-39, Nos 41-45. Allergate Terrace Nos 1-5. Allergate Nos 1,2,3,12,13,17,18,18a,19,27,28,29. Crossgate Nos 5,6,23,26,30-32, 52, 57, 58, 59,64-66, 69-70. The Maltings. South Street-The Old Church Hall, No 22, Nos 58-62. Alexandria Crescent. Palatine View. Summerville. Brierville.

Map 8 Positive contributors
The map identifies the positive 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 enclosed settlement at Mountjoy on the south side of the River Wear, 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. The existence of other sites is suggested by chance finds.

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 other, unknown, sites of this period within the boundaries of the Durham City Conservation Areas must be a strong possibility.

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

In 2000 three trenches were excavated at the corner of South Street and Crossgate and the remains of two cellars were found and medieval pottery recovered. An archaeological evaluation was conducted in 2005 on land west of South Street to the south of St Margaret’s Church with deposits from the 12th and 14th centuries identified.

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 structural fabric. For example, No 7 Allergate is 17th century or earlier with timber framing and numbered studs. No 22 Allergate has a front block of the 16th century with small window openings framed with oak studs and curved bracing exposed internally. No 7 Crossgate is possibly 17th century claimed to have a timber framed upper storey, and within South Street no 22 has thick and irregular stone walls implying 17th century or earlier while No 57 is said to be 17th century with earlier timber framing incorporated.

The known archaeological evidence, and unknown potential, is of great interest and importance; this adds to the conservation area’s 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 19 below. Images of 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, visual 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 as part of the CAMP process. The first is the broad range that includes roadside verges, roundabouts with soft landscaping, general green amenity spaces, street trees, play spaces and private gardens visible in the streetscene. The second category are the more significant local green spaces of historic, higher aesthetic, communal, or social interest, and those which are designated.

Despite the urban focus of much of the conservation area there are many green infrastructure assets of value that contribute positively to the character, appearance, and distinctiveness of the place.

Such assets include St Margaret's allotments on Margery Lane, St Margaret of Antioch churchyard and graveyard, the unique landscape feature of Observatory Hill, the riverbanks woodland on the areas eastern side (*the above are designated as local green spaces in the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan*) and the grounds at Durham School. Added to such spaces are private front gardens such as those found at The Avenue, Crossgate Peth and Farnley Mount that add to the depth of urban greenery and enhance the visual quality of the respective street scene. There are spaces with recreational value such as the playground at Allergate, and sports pitches, green corridor routes and lanes, roadside verges along Sutton Street and at Briardene, that soften the carriageway and urban form. Further, is the woodland between Farnley Hey Mount and Laburnum Avenue and on Redhills Cutting that provides a green backdrop in many urban views. These are all positive features with high visual amenity value. While the gardens at South Street are not openly visible from the public domain the area important to the areas setting and merge into the riverbank's woodland.

In the south the quality of the semi-urban landscape has been recognized through its designation as an area of high landscape value. This is defined as an area considered to be of high landscape quality with strong distinctive natural characteristics.

Fig 20 below. A selection of images of green infrastructure assets within the conservation area.

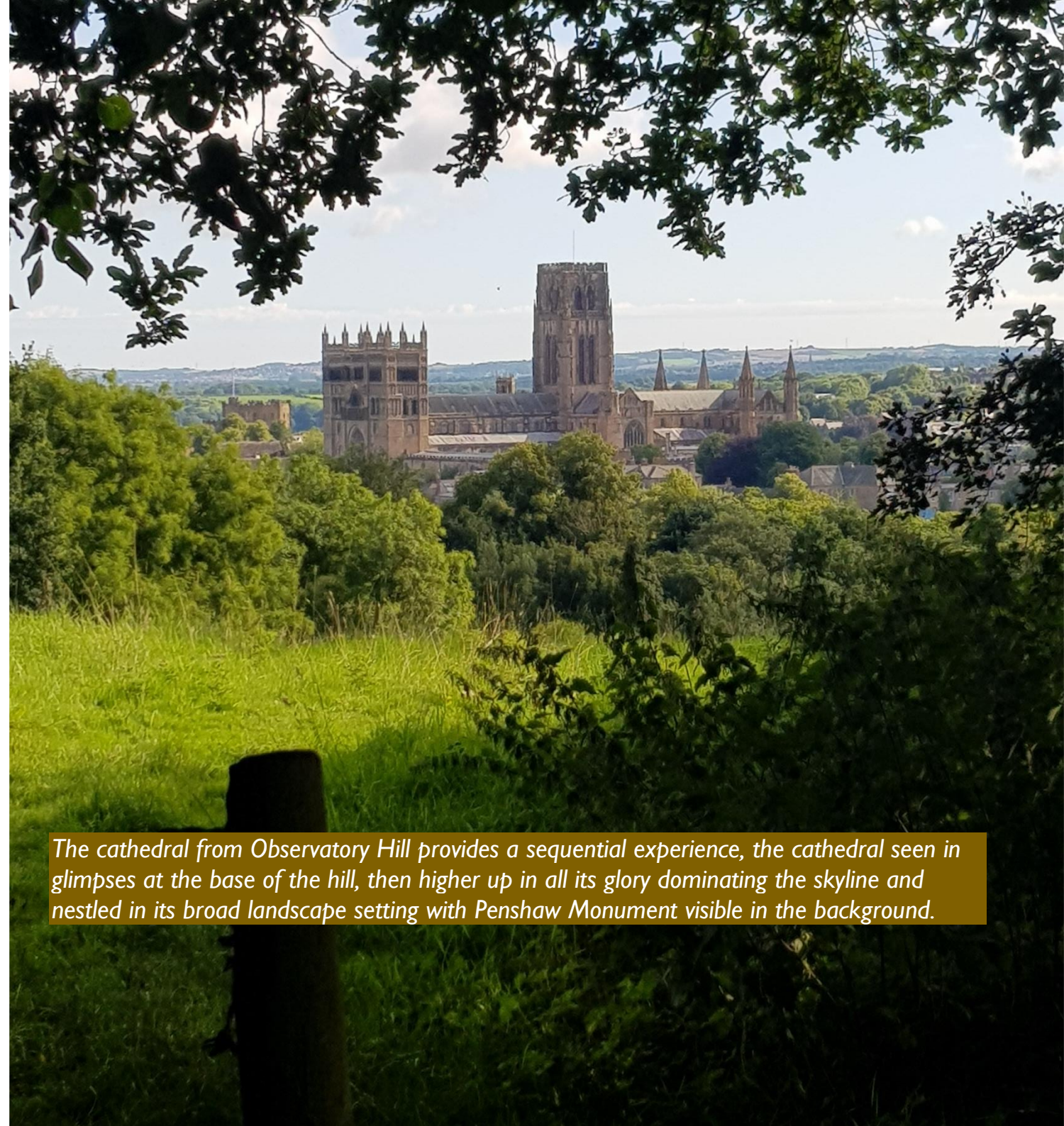


2.10 Landmarks, views and vistas

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.

Given the conservation area's proximity and the hilly topography there are significant views Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site from within the area. For example, looking across the river gorge from South Street, the approach to Framwellgate Bridge down Crossgate Bank, and the surprising revealing cathedral view from Farnley Hey Mount. Added to the above are views of other historic landmarks such as the viaduct and intimate views of fine historic streetscapes along South Street, Crossgate, and Allergate, with views along Crossgate Peth, Hawthorn Terrace, and The Avenue presenting a contrasting period residential character.

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.



The cathedral from Observatory Hill provides a sequential experience, the cathedral seen in glimpses at the base of the hill, then higher up in all its glory dominating the skyline and nestled in its broad landscape setting with Penshaw Monument visible in the background.

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 the Cathedral and Castle 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 align with the important day time views of Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site from within Crossgate, South Street and from Observatory Hill, but they provide a very different experience of high aesthetic value that contributes positively to the conservation area.

Fig 21 right. *A drone view across the city at night. The visual presence of the Cathedral and Castle 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. Streetscape view west towards St Johns Church.
2. Panoramic view east towards Durham Cathedral from Observatory Hill.
3. Channelled view northeast along Potters Bank of Durham Cathedral.
4. Streetscape view west to Durham School.
5. Open views east from South Street to both Durham Castle and Durham Cathedral.
6. View east from Margery Lane towards Durham Cathedral.
7. Streetscape view east to St Margarets Church, Durham Castle, and Durham Cathedral.
- 8 & 9. General streetscape views towards Durham Viaduct.
10. Panoramic view over townscape arriving by train.
11. View into Crossgate from Framwellgate Bridge.
12. View east from Brierville towards Durham Cathedral.
13. View east of Durham Cathedral from Farnley Mount.

Primary historic streetscape views

Crossgate, Allergate, South Street, Colpitts Terrace.

Secondary historic streetscape views

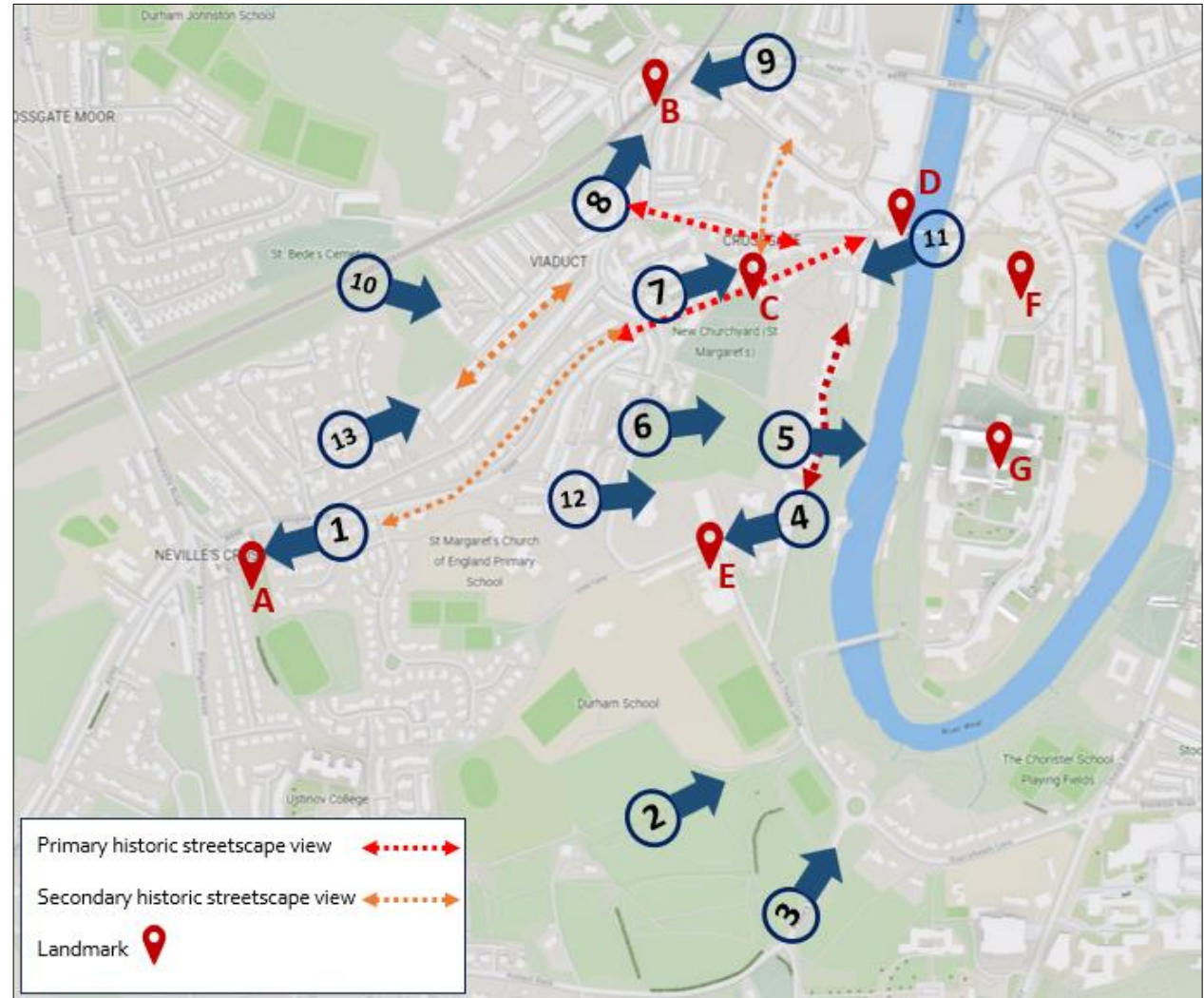
The Avenue, Hawthorn Terrace, Neville Street.

Key night-time views

2 Observatory Hill, 7 South Street, 8 Crossgate.

Townscape landmark

A-St John's Church, B-Viaduct, C-St Margaret of Antioch Church, D-Framwellgate Bridge, E-Durham School, F-Durham Castle, G-Durham Cathedral



2.11 Movement, activity and atmosphere

How the area is experienced derives from the urban framework within it that dictates pedestrian and vehicular movement into, through and out of the place, and the spaces that encourage interaction. These provide different experiences, changing views and shifting character that adds to the local identity and special interest.

Crossgate Peth is a key gateway and primary entry/exit route of the conservation area in the west. It is generally a busy route connecting to Newcastle Road and Darlington Road travelling north-south providing a defined boundary to the inner-city area of Durham. The origins and age of this route are uncertain, but it appears on old maps and is likely an important remnant of an early path/road pattern of historic importance.

The road along the peth is incised, enclosed by high retaining walls, embankments, and dense tree coverage on either side, with only glimpses of the properties overlooking the road attainable. This creates an enclosed green corridor approach into the city that contributes positively.

The pedestrian experiences on the north and south sides of Crossgate Peth are chiefly of characterful Victorian terraced streets and detached villas with the main road not readily seen.

These streets tend to have a quieter residential character despite their proximity to the busy highway. This can, however, change at peak times with noise from passing traffic and from the higher pedestrian footfall with people congregating at the crossing points.

Moving further into the city, activity levels naturally increase, especially when turning onto Alexandria Crescent down to the A690 and the roundabout at North Road. Here there is a busier more vibrant city centre atmosphere.

There are several enclosed residential streets off the main approach with a series of shorter streets running parallel and an extensive public right of way network. This gives rise to high pedestrian footfall and movement at certain times given the high student population in this part of the city centre.

Where the road splits moving into Crossgate and Allergate, there is a quieter intimate inwards residential character and traffic movement is infrequent. The street becomes busier moving down Crossgate Bank to the commercial junction at North Road Milburngate and at the west end of Framwellgate Bridge.

Important connections are provided by the series of formal back streets and less formal, often hidden historic "green" lanes that receive less footfall. These include Margery Lane, Clay Lane and Blind Lane that are much quieter with a more rural character.

These routes are part of the historic plan form of the city and provide valuable pedestrian linkages, they also connect to the riverbanks footpaths networks are well used by walkers, joggers, and cyclists.

Potters Banks provides the second primary route travelling eastwards from the A691 and Lowes Barn to the roundabout at Quarryheads Lane. Outside the conservation area the route is dominated by modern housing either side of the highway, entering the conservation area it transforms into an enclosed green corridor. The route is winding and hilly, dropping down to Quarryheads Lane, the trees on either side framing Durham Cathedral's Central Tower.

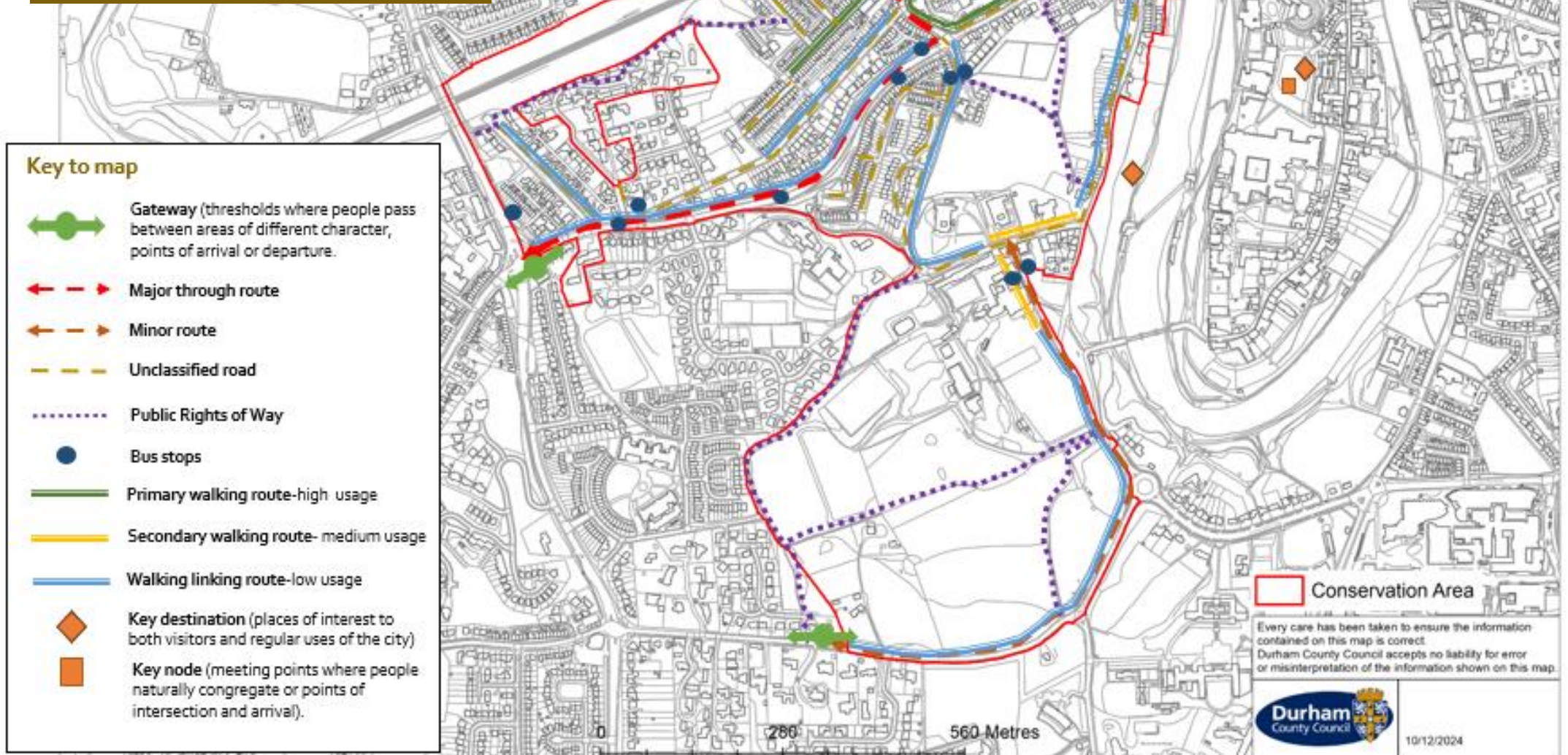
Overall, the area is positively characterised by active frontages along both the primary and secondary routes. They are predominantly residential in character, dense and vibrant in the north part leading into the city centre, but with some quieter side streets, and less dense in the south where there is a shift to educational use, and a quieter semi-rural character.

Fig 22 below. A selection 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. This is important as movement dictates how the area is experienced and its character understood.



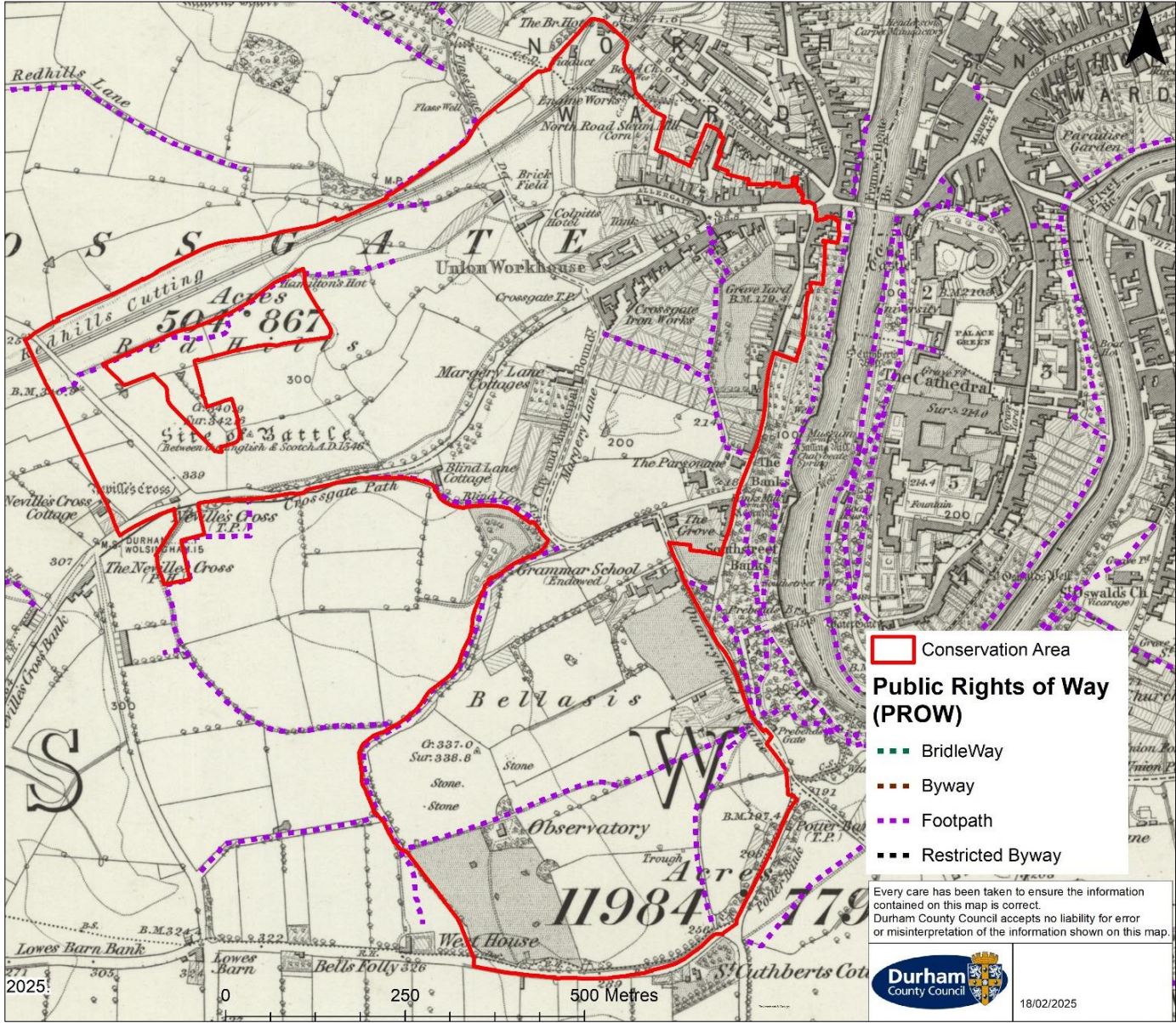
Map 11 Movement map (historic)

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, and Keping, and the route of Cades Road.

Cades 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, Keping, 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.

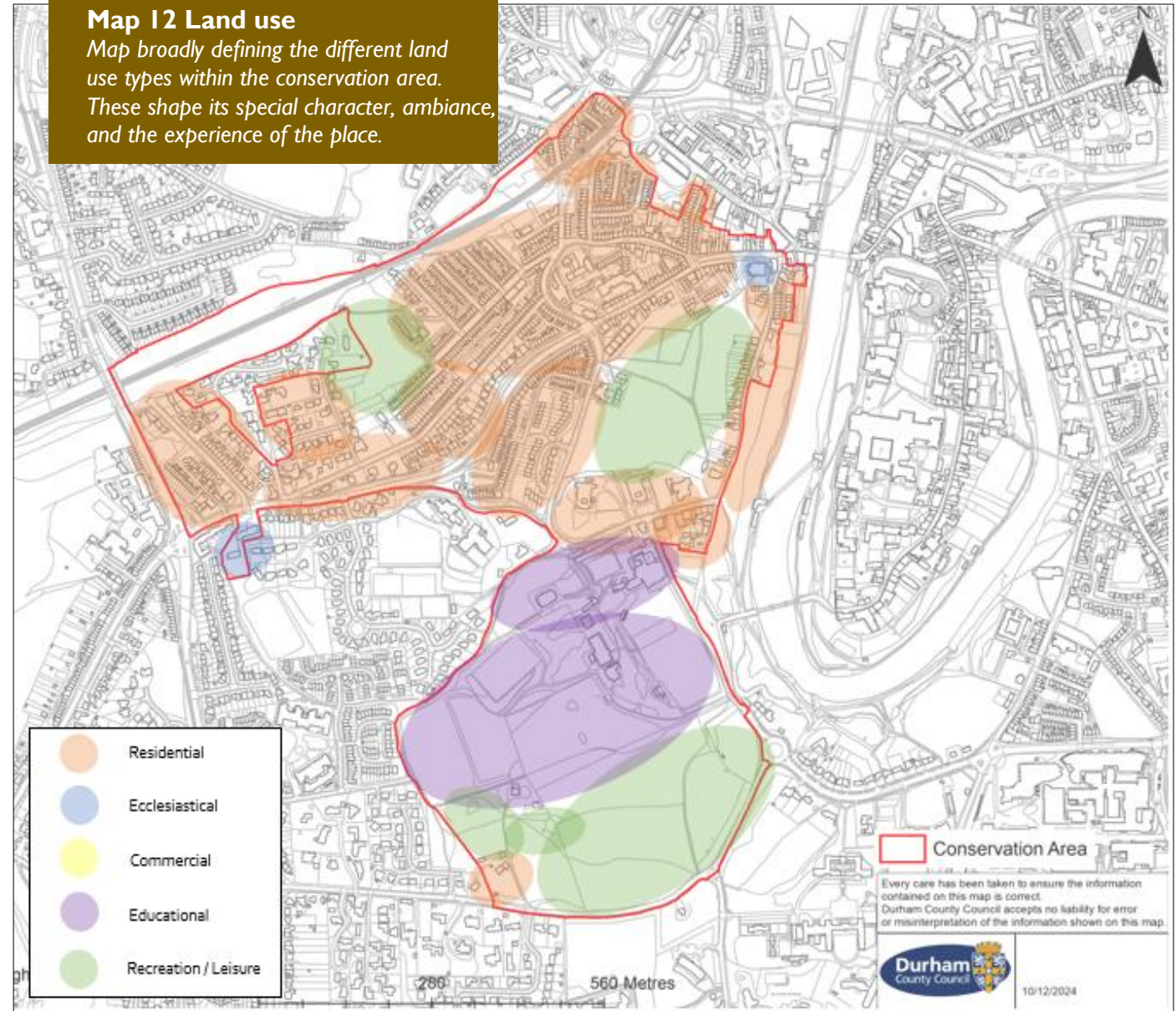
These routes are key to understanding the historic development of Durham and thread together all the historic assets, offering a tangible link back to Durham's past.



2.12 Land Use

The map illustrates broadly the ways in which buildings and land are used across the Crossgate Conservation Area. The land use is important as it defines building type and area character that changes from place to place. It shows limited uses with clear definition to the component parts, the north dominated by residential use and activity, the south educational/recreation/leisure, this correlates with the historic development pattern of the area.

At a more local level there is some limited retail and commercial use comprising of public houses, shops, and eateries found interspersed between the residential properties.



2.13 Layout, pattern and grain

The historic core of the conservation area was established well in advance of its detailed recording on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map c.1860. The key elements established by c.1250 as part of the medieval town plan of the wider city are the main streets/routes: Crossgate Peth, South Street, Crossgate, and Allergate. The medieval layout altered little over the succeeding centuries. It only significantly changed in the 19th and early 20th century with major urban expansion in the north and west. This was followed in the 20th century when the A690 road bypass punched through the area.

The plan form of the medieval streets is defined by the historic tenement/burgage plots which largely determined house plans across the city. They comprise long, narrow, plots with buildings on street. There is some variation in size through the city and in the outer borough streets such as Crossgate, Allergate and South Street they were more regularly spaced and more generously sized as pressure on land diminished. This contrasts with the peninsula for example where due to a range of land use constraints and development pressures, buildings are more tightly packed and expressed through greater height.

Victorian industry has left a strong mark within the conservation area, as the growth of the urban area was a direct consequence of the new rail network.

Many residential terraces were constructed in the 19th century in response to the growing population. This created a series of new roads, streets, and lanes changing the area's character.

As a result, much of the conservation area comprises Victorian and later Edwardian terraced streets. They follow a linear block form in compact grip patterns typical of the residential development of the industrial revolution. Housing is high density; backs face each other across an alleyway/back lane integral to the original design and layout.

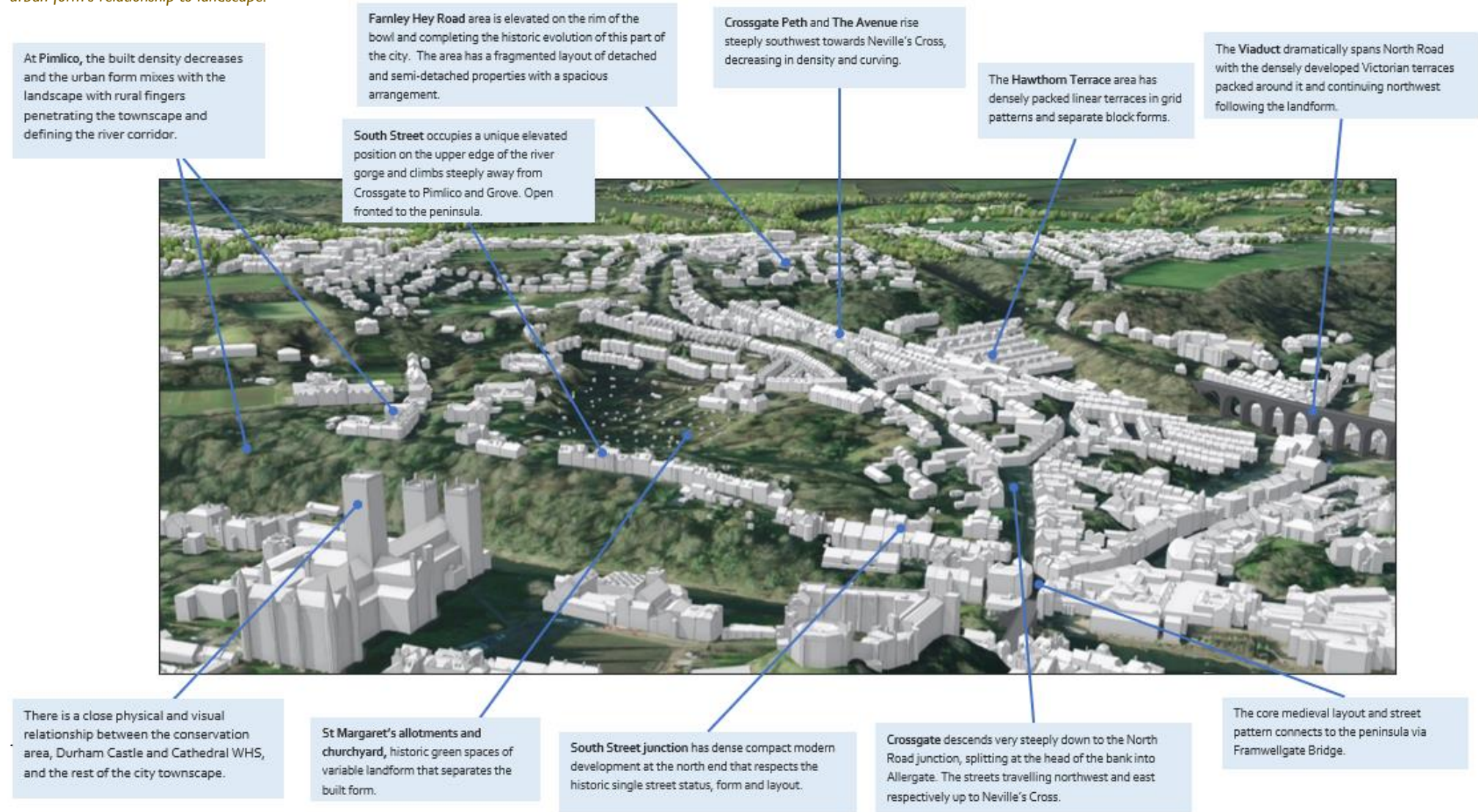
These back lanes connect neighbouring and wider surrounding streets often providing shorter routes. These were constructed for the working class with scant regard for space, comfort, or quality of life. Such housing provides a form and quality of development that is very distinguishable despite loss of architectural consistency.

There are some streets more tailored to the middle classes where the terraced building plots are more generous and in places there are larger scale detached properties in spacious enclosed private plots. In such instances the terraced properties face directly onto a front garden, the green space providing an important transition between public and private realm while also adding to the visual amenity of the wider streetscene.

To the west there is later 19th century and early 20th century residential development, most notably at The Avenue. This is a long linear street rising steeply to the west. Here there is greater variation that adds to the street's character beginning by following the general grain and pattern, but changing as the street rises where it is characterised by detached buildings set in individual spacious plots and recognisable with their own architectural language.

Within the conservation area there are two large sites that go against the predominant, two phase, historic layout. The first is Durham Union Workhouse site at the west end of Crossgate and the second is Durham School. This deviation from the historic development pattern does however have a positive impact creating two areas of very distinctive historic character, interest, and quality.

Fig 23 below. A 3D model demonstrating the general development pattern and layout of the conservation area and the urban form's relationship to landscape.



2.14 Character areas

The conservation area can be sub-divided into two “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.

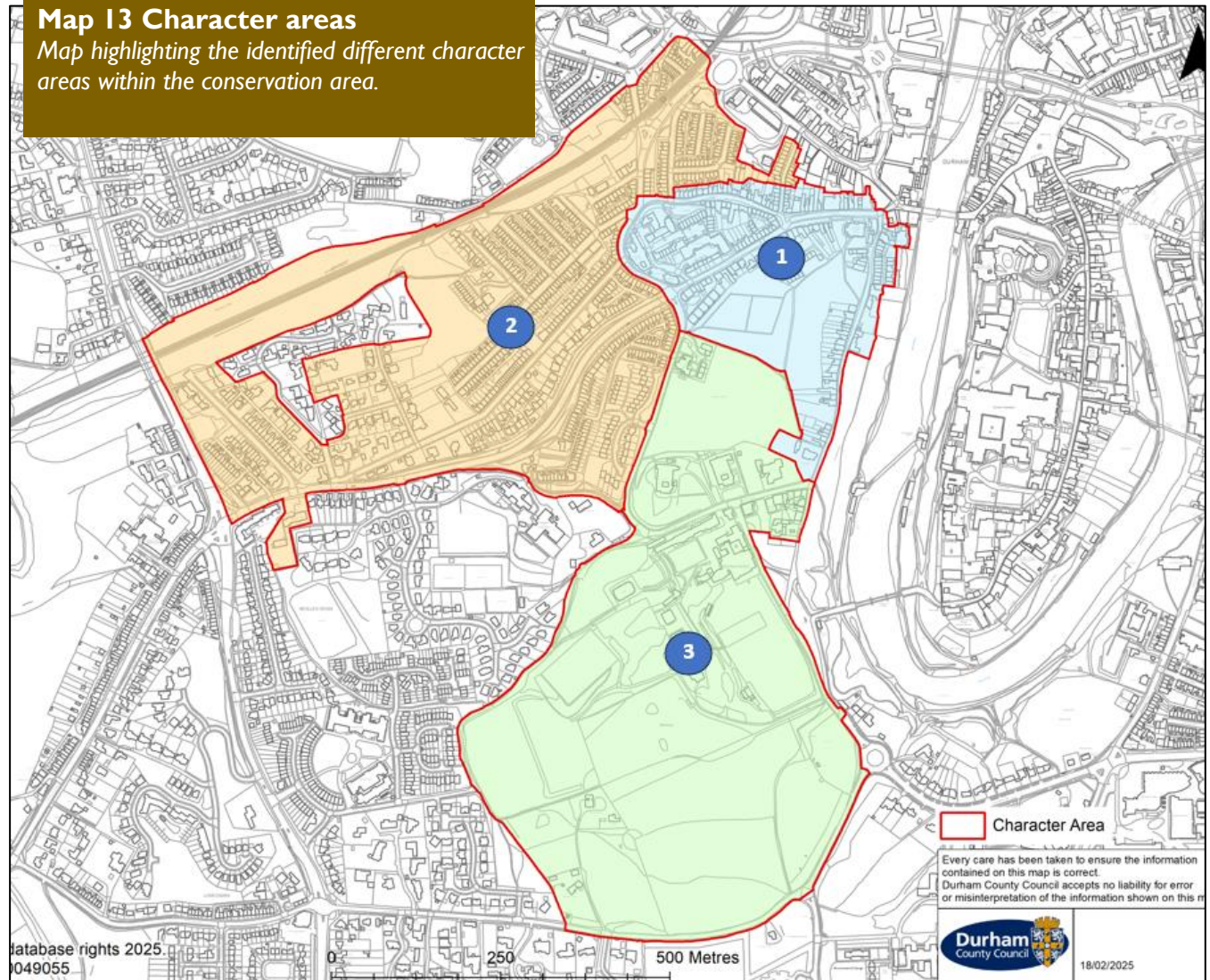
Three character areas are identified as broadly correlating in land use, historic development, and have unifying characteristics:

Character area 1 – Historic Core, building of mixed age and architectural style unified by forming the still legible medieval core with some medieval secular houses surviving.

Character area 2- Crossgate Peth, Victorian, Edwardian and some Arts and Crafts properties compact terraced streets with grid pattern, and pockets of suburban character.

Character area 3- Potters Bank & Pimlico, mixed use predominantly educational, low density of built development, dominated by landscape.

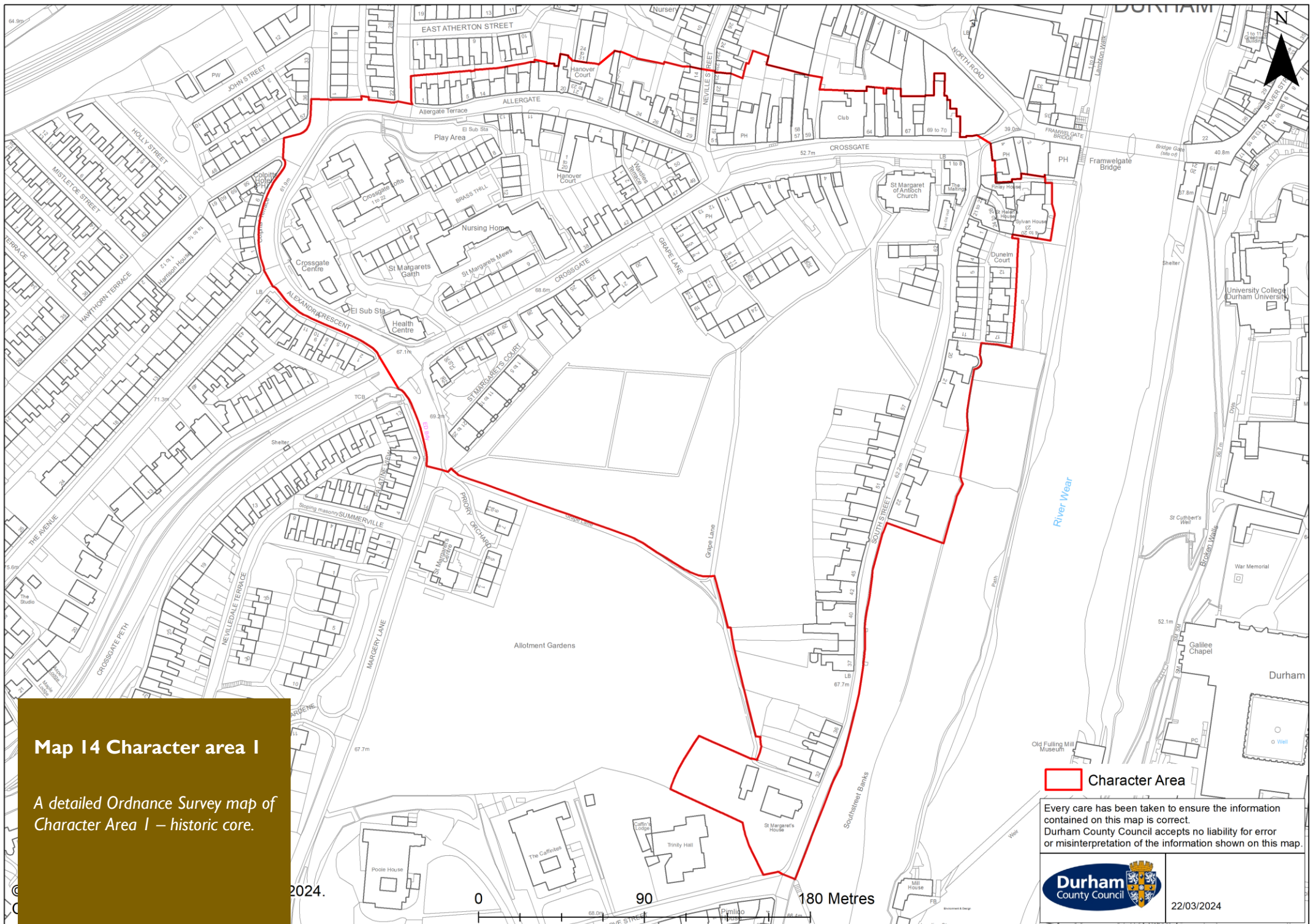
Map 13 Character areas
Map highlighting the identified different character areas within the conservation area.



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.



22/03/2024

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0 90 180 Metres

3.1.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area occupies the northeast part of the conservation area and is informed by the three medieval streets of Crossgate, Allergate and South Street, accompanied by the large graveyard of St Margaret's of Antioch Church. The setting to the area is mixed comprising the dense urban townscape in the north and west that is a mixture of residential and commercial uses, the River Wear with its densely wooded banks in the east, and the rural landscape on the urban fringe in the south.

The boundary is formed by Allergate in the north following the outline of the rear curtilages. In the east it follows the edge of the riverbanks woodland down to Pimlico. The southern boundary line follows the footpath between St Margaret's graveyard and the community allotments. In the west it follows Sutton Street round to the west end of Allergate.

Fig 24 below. The south end of South Street with an enclosed semi-rural character created by the riverbanks woodland.



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

- Strong historic identity, own sense of place and high level of authenticity.
- Surviving and legible medieval plan form, including lanes and burgage plots.
- Enclosed streets with intimate inwards character.
- Dense built development, with continuous historic building lines and active street frontages, supplemented and softened by historic green spaces.
- High architectural quality and diversity, with a mixture of Georgian townhouses and cottages, and Victorian infills.
- Prevalence of vernacular materials period features and elements of detailing.
- Many listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets.
- Significant historic streetscape views, and outwards views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.
- The topography and setting informed by the natural boundary of the River Wear gorge.



Fig 25 above. South Street is one of Durhams finest streets in terms of period houses and domestic architecture, and it as historically where wealthy merchants lived.

3.1.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The area has a tight knit, and fine, urban grain ordered by the topography, where the layout of the streets and spaces is linear and simplistic. This testifies to the area's medieval origins, with the street plan from this period conserved and legible.

The medieval "burgage" plot pattern survives in places with buildings set directly on street, with long narrow garden plots to the rear. There are instances where redevelopment has resulted in such plots being amalgamated producing buildings with wider frontages, which adds variation, which is not always positive.

The area is characterised positively by terraced blocks stepping down from west to east. The built form is of high density and tightly packed with buildings mostly pressed directly up against the back edge of pavements, typical of the historic city core. The streets have strong, mostly continuous, building lines, and active street frontages.

In Crossgate and Allergate there is an intimate inwards historic character, with Crossgate a wider street than its immediate neighbour. In Crossgate, some grand Georgian townhouses occupy elevated positions above the footway positively emphasising their status and prominence.

Domestic plots are generally orientated north south and are rectangular in shape but vary in width and depth. They tend to be larger than in other parts of the city where there is more development pressure.

The lower end of Crossgate Bank at its junction with North Road should be a place of vitality and urban vigour, but much has been lost due to development over time.

South Street is distinctive within the area and wider city as it has a splendid position on the crest of the upper river gorge opposite the peninsula. It is very different from Crossgate and Allergate being open fronted maximising the splendid views of the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. There is enclosure at the lower (north) end of the street comprising of a mixture of tall modern apartment blocks, historic buildings, and ancillary garage development. These respect the historic building lines and complement the old street pattern. The street is straight and steep, rising steeply to a peak towards Pimlico.

Fig 26 right. A selection of images showing the general street pattern, Top 1, Crossgate rising steeply from North Road with the presence of the fine Georgian townhouses overstated by their elevation position middle 2. Bottom, the street levels off temporarily at its junction with Allergate that rises gradually northwards, with Neville Street dropping steeply down to North Road 3.



Fig 27 below. Images of the general street pattern. South Street is characterised by the continuous historic street frontage, with the east aspect open fronted to the river gorge and peninsula. The street then becomes less dense, but its linear form continues, and it gives way to a semi-rural more informal character with dense mature tree cover.



The west side of South Street consists of large two and three storey villas and townhouses, with brick and stone walls at the lower end on the east side providing enclosure, a strong boundary frontage, and reinforcing the linear layout. The buildings are grouped together in eras and styles to some extent and have grand, reasonably wide frontages.

St Margaret’s Workhouses is a notable distinctive historic site that differs significantly from the surrounding street and development pattern. It is loosely oval with an irregular plan form and open plan layout containing a mixture of large single blocks and set back stone terraces of strong character. The buildings have a somewhat haphazard arrangement but are reflective of their original use and status.

A few buildings run against the historic grain and ignore the street line. These are detached and set back within larger plots. There is some limited back land development of neutral contribution such as St Margaret’s Court at the west end of Crossgate which replaced a much earlier 19th century building.

The small group of residential dwellings at Grape Lane is set back from the main street on lower ground, in a courtyard arrangement, with a parallel block gabled-ended onto the street. To the rear there are linear staggered blocks of bungalows overlooking the churchyard.

Although this goes against the historic plan form, the layout creates its own sense of place and community that contributes positively to the area.

There are a few historic vennels, lanes and routes that are more intimate and informal than the principal streets. They are part of the area’s history, and special interest that provide a very different pedestrian experience from the main streets. Vennels are commonplace within the city and are part of the urban fabric and medieval street pattern. Many have been lost over time giving those that survive added importance.

Fig 28 below. Images below showing a “hidden” vennel in Allergate, the informal lane at South Street leading to St Margaret’s allotments and graveyard, and the short historic route to the rear of the church, part of Grape Lane.



The area incorporates several green spaces that contribute positively to its character and appearance, complementing the urban form. The main historic green space is found at St Margaret's Church with a compact churchyard encircling the building. The churchyard's large extension in the south varies in landform and character. In part it has an unmanaged wilderness-like quality, then a more formal open area of grassland with dense mature trees sweeping across to the allotments.

The public playground at the west end of Crossgate, has both functional recreation and visual amenity value in the street scene. It comprises grassland enclosed by mature trees and hedging, providing an important and positive natural break and softening feature to the built form.

There are private gardens and mature trees to the rear of South Street visible from within the graveyard and informal lanes, and some private rear gardens in Allergate and Crossgate visible from the vennels. These are also important in providing soft separation between Crossgate and North Road. Despite being generally unseen, these are also important contributors to the areas character.

The entrance to Grape Lane on the south side of Crossgate provides positive green space with visual amenity value within a hard urban streetscape.

At the south end of South Street, there is a lot of overhanging greenery. This creates a green corridor route and semi-rural character that contributes very positively. To the rear of South Street, the allotment gardens at Margery Lane provide an important green setting to this area, and an important natural break to the dense urban form.

Fig 29 below. *St Margaret's Graveyard the primary historic green space and green asset within Crossgate.*



Fig 30 below. An aerial plan with images showing the key green spaces within the character area.



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

- High density development predominantly residential in use/character with tight-knit and fine historic urban grain.
- Retention of integrity and legibility of medieval layout.
- Continuous almost unbroken terraced blocks creating strong and active street frontages.
- Buildings directly addressing the pavement to frame the carriageway.
- Layout creates a positive sense of intimacy and enclosure through strong and distinctive building lines.
- Buildings stepped in response to the gradient.
- Variation in block form and height adds character.
- Strong relationship between buildings and green landscape spaces.
- Historic lanes, paths and routes some having their own character distinct from the main streets.

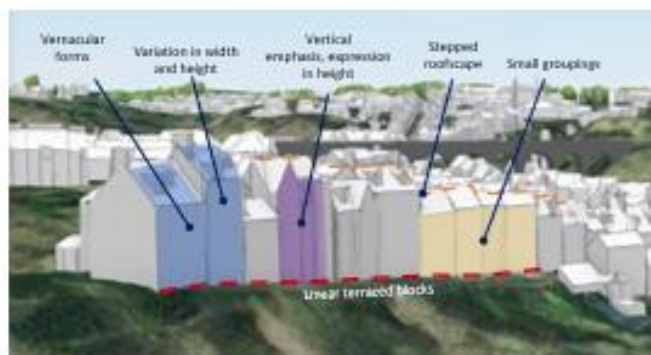
Fig 31 below. Plans, modelling, and images demonstrating the key positive attributes of the character area.



Plan form



Isometric plan



3.1.3 Architectural styles, form, and detailing.

The architectural character in the area is rich and varied, ranging from fine Georgian townhouses and cottages to more modest uniformed Victorian terraced properties, notable historic landmarks, and modern infill development. The diversity of architectural styles, features, detailing, and material palette creates the distinctiveness and special character of the place. The architectural quality of residential housing within this part of the conservation area is particularly high.

Building heights range from two to four storeys predominantly traditional in form and proportions with well-balanced often symmetrical facades. Despite the great variation there are some cohesive terraced blocks and unifying architectural features. The variation in scale, form, massing, and style provides a pleasing contrast with wide grand buildings often seen against their narrower smaller neighbours.

Significantly, some of the buildings have developed over the centuries and were part of the late medieval layout, but they were re-fronted to outwardly reflect the later form and character, with the medieval fabric hidden within.

The buildings in South Street tend to be higher and wider and are architecturally distinctive, many being individually designed. They range from three and four storeys, in villa and townhouse styles, some with grand frontages and elaborate detailing and decoration.

The different building styles are unified by vertical balance to the elevation treatments. South Street is often regarded as Durham’s finest street in terms of planned domestic architecture that adds significantly to the townscape quality of the conservation area. In contrast the north end of South Street is dominated by modern infill development, however this generally respects the street pattern and distinctive terraced character. The elevations are expressed through height, simplicity, verticality, and balance.

Crossgate and Allergate are characterised by Georgian and Victorian terraced properties. The Georgian properties tend to be higher and wider than their Victorian counterparts that have narrower frontages. The broad mixture of architectural styles in these streets is united by their domestic scale. They tend to be mostly rendered, and frequently have stone dressings, and classical detailing. There are some later 19th century buildings that are typically brick built but there are some stone terraces from this period. They have balanced elevations with timber sash windows with different glazing configuration, and timber panelled doors.

There are a few historic landmark buildings such as St Margaret’s of Antioch Church built in the 12th century and altered over an extended period in the 14th, 15th, and 19th centuries. The Elm Tree Public House is a notable building in the street and has a well-balanced frontage distinctive in its residential surroundings.

An important historic site is the Victorian St Margaret’s Workhouse and Hospital. They are key landmark buildings of considerable architectural interest. The modern conversion schemes conserve the building’s historic character and legibility of their different historic uses.

Fig 32 below. A selection of images showing the variation in building ages, forms, and styles within the area.



Fig 33 below. A selection of images showing the different architectural styles of building within the character area.

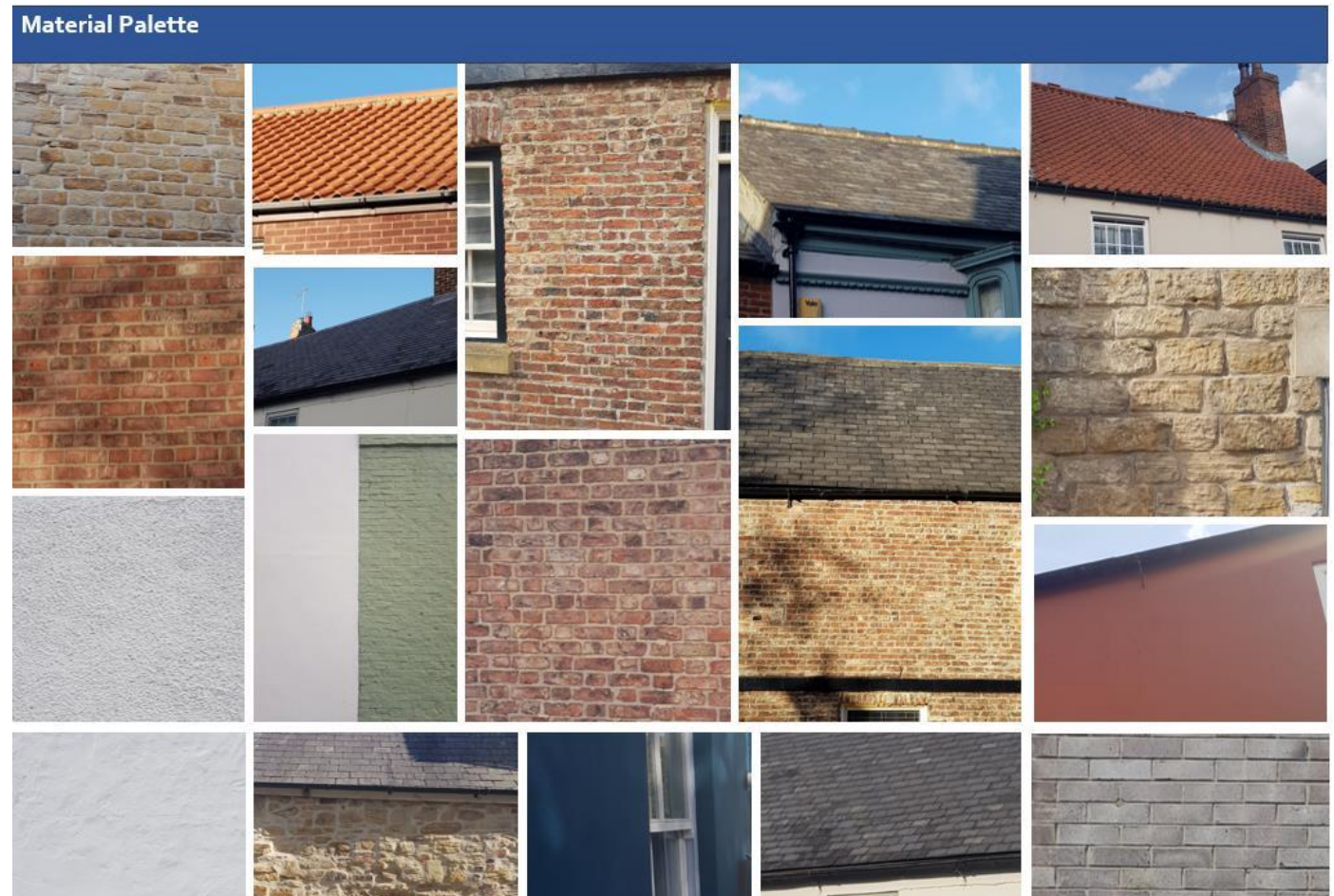


The palette of materials makes a valuable contribution to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The variation in type, texture, colour, and tone, along with the mixture of locally sourced and imported materials add aesthetic interest that contributes positively. Materials are also important in creating a sense of history, and in reflecting changes in fashion and taste as well as reflecting building status.

The area is characterised by a prevalence of historic and traditional materials, with a mixture of render, sandstone, and brickwork in reds and browns with examples of old handmade brick that enriches the streetscene. Stone and brick are commonly used for detailing such as quoins, floor banding, door and window heads and cills.

Welsh slate is the dominant roof covering material, although there are some examples of traditional red pantiles. Modern concrete tiles and buff brick go against the traditional material palette but are infrequent.

Historically, like other parts of the city, the area would have featured timber-framed and jettied buildings. Although medieval buildings are known to still exist, many were re-fronted in the 18th and 19th centuries concealing earlier timber-framed cores that are highly significant.



Architectural Detailing Palette

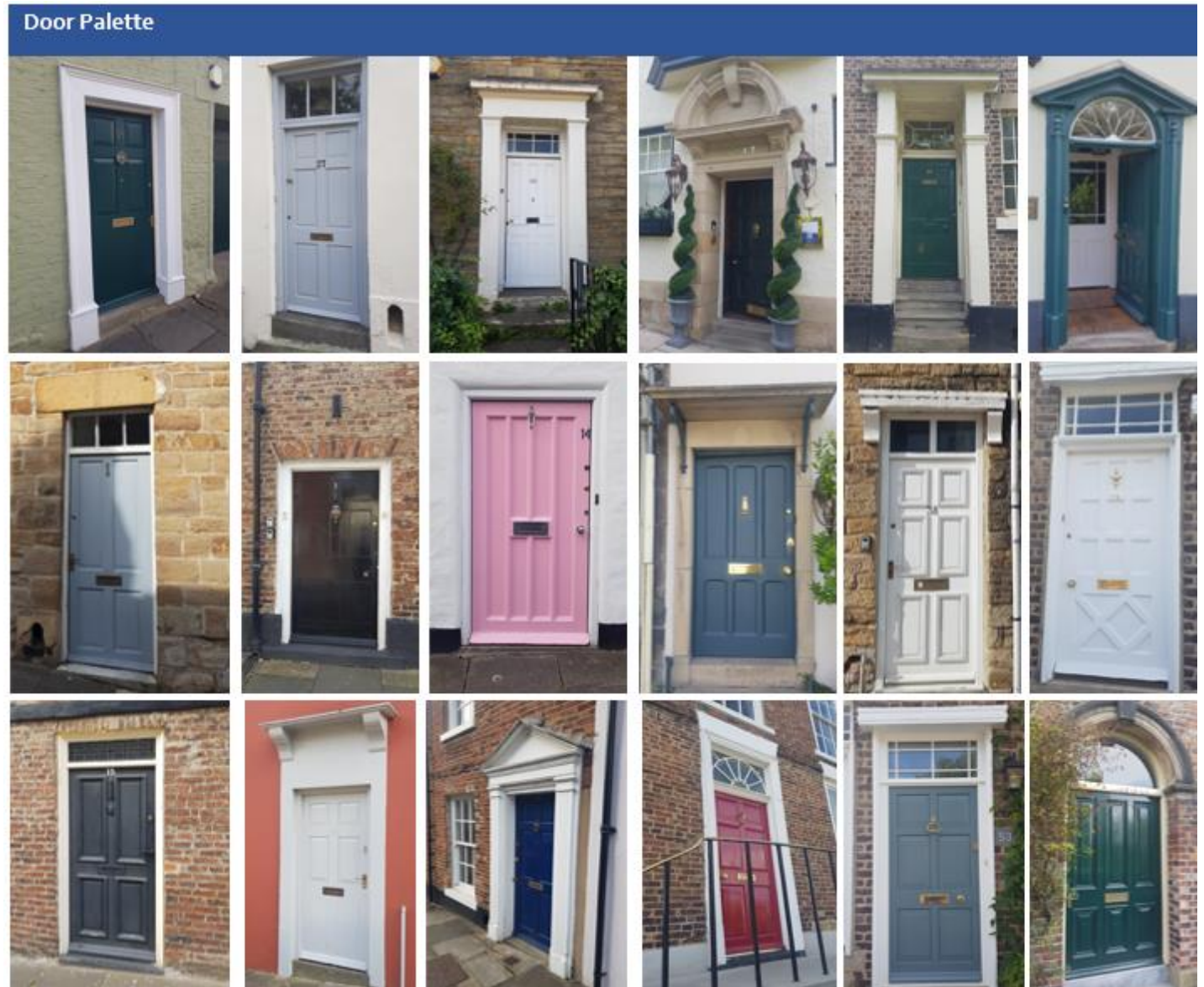


Doors are highly varied but are consistent in terms of traditional timber painted doors that contribute positively to the character and visual appearance of the individual buildings and collectively to the streetscene.

They are generally solid with a variety of paint colour finishes adding visual interest. The most common styles are panelled doors, in four and sixes, but there are some notable bespoke designs, and some with intricate mouldings.

Many doors have over-lights in rectangular and half-round styles often with glazing bars and with some geometric and fan decorative styles.

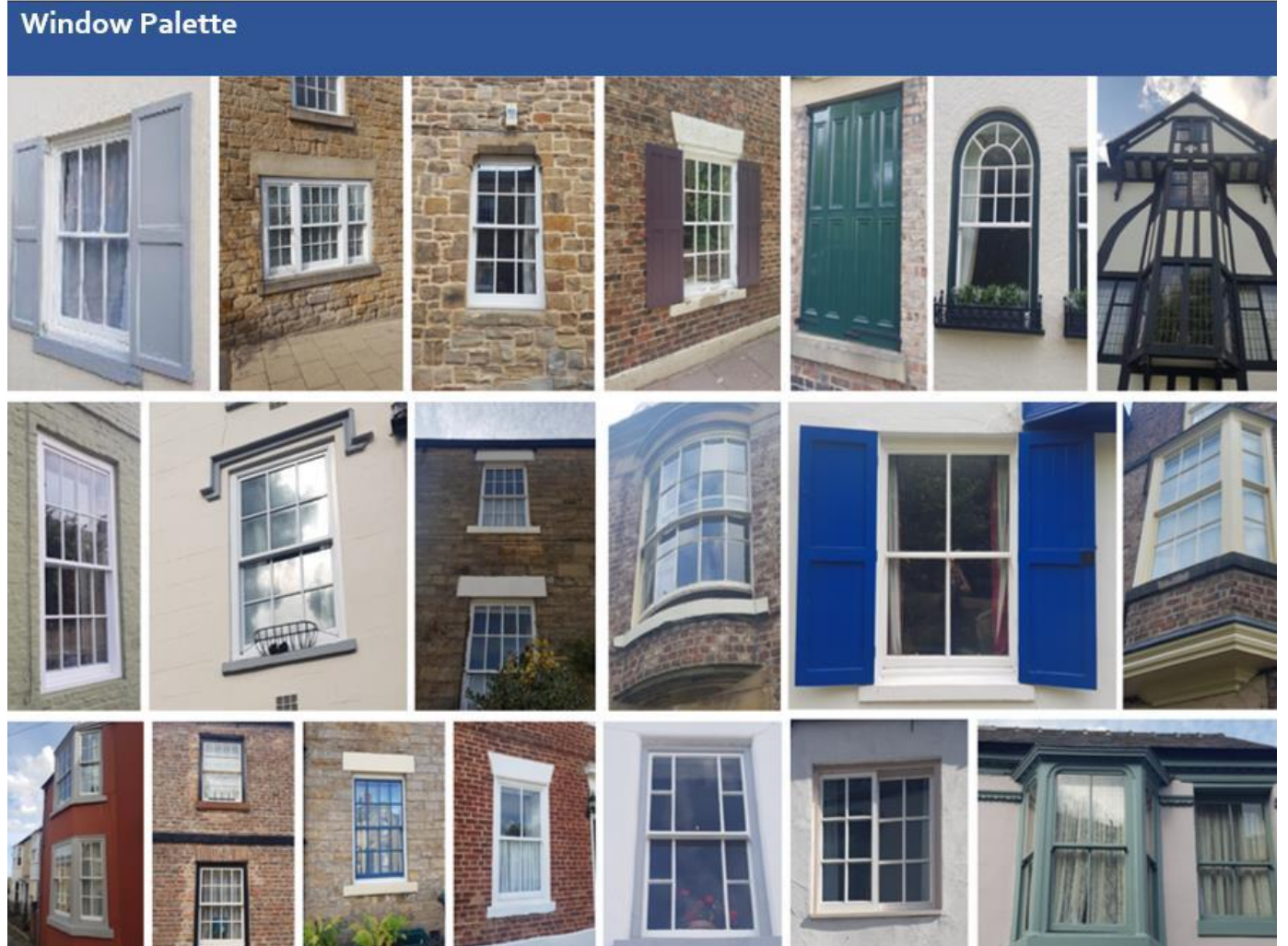
Door cases are commonplace, with brackets and hoods, with examples of more ornate surrounds, whilst pilasters, hoods, and pediments with dentilled projections occur in the area.



Windows are the eyes of a building and are important features of its architectural style and character. Traditional timber painted sliding sash windows are the predominant window style within the area. These are many vertical sliding sashes but also some positive examples of horizontal "Yorkshire" sliding sashes.

Windows 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, and leaded styles. Bay windows are fairly commonplace with oriels, and full height canted bays. Traditional pitched roof dormers can be commonly found and are positive features.

There are some examples of traditional timber window shutters which are further positive features. Windows often have either stone painted lintels and cills, in flat and wedge shapes, or brick headers, and tend to be set in reveals.



Roofscape

The roofscape of the character area is traditional and highly varied, with buildings designed in response to the topography, status, and architectural styles. The roofscape is appreciable from different vantage points within the area but most notably from the west end of Crossgate and looking eastwards within Allergate. Pitched roofs dominate with variation in the building heights, eaves, and ridge levels along with dormers and the rhythm of brick chimneys generating a roofscape of high quality that is a fundamental part of the area’s character and an important component of the wider townscape. In Crossgate, the distinctive roofscape visually merges into the wider roofscape of the Market Place and Claypath forming the background where the church spires are notable historic features in the skyline.

Roofs are almost exclusively Welsh slate with eaves highlighted by cornices or corbels. Chimneys are a significance positive feature most often of brick with band detailing and round, square and crown clay pots.

Shopfronts

The area is predominantly residential in use but there is a small commercial element concentrated within Crossgate between its junction points with North Road and Allergate.

The area displays traditional, good quality, retail frontages that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the street. These include the Elm Tree and The Angel which retain traditional-style public house frontages, and the Georgian Townhouse with a fine traditional timber painted shop frontage with hand painted signage.

Fig 34 below. Images from Allergate and Crossgate showing the historic roofscape with variation in form, pitch, height, and rhythm of chimneys.



Fig 35 below. Images of a shop and pub front within the character area.



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 vertical emphasis.
- Predominance of traditional vertical sliding sash windows and timber moulded panelled doors.
- Traditional shop and public house frontages.
- Varied and colourful palette of high quality traditional materials.
- Distinctive roofscape and skyline with roofs traditional and typical of the era including prominent chimneys.

Negative elements (buildings)

Within the character area, four buildings have been identified as impacting negatively on its character and appearance.

1. Health Centre – a detached building of a modern design that addresses its corner position but has little regard architecturally to its historic surroundings. Its negative impact elevated due to its important gateway position into Crossgate and high visibility at a busy main road junction.

2. Hanover Court 1-20 – a 4-storey block that is oversized in its domestic context that is characterised by 2-storey dwellings. It projects forwards from the historic building line and, fenestration is horizontal in form. The development was intended to reflect the former large, scaled 19th century hospital building that occupied the same site, but the design is of low quality that fails to achieve sympathetic assimilation into the historic streetscape.

3. Hanover Court 21-23 – a horizontal infill block with no articulation or modulation. It has bland elevations and materials with inappropriate fenestration that is unsympathetic in its historic context.

4. No 67 Crossgate – The building line and scales are in keeping but it has a very poor ground floor with garage openings and roller shutters, a large service entrance, low quality fenestration and materials.

Negative elements (alterations)

The historic buildings within this character area overall show a very high level of intactness and authenticity in terms of the preservation of the use of historic/traditional materials, period architectural features and detailing.

However, a limited number of the historic buildings are negatively impacted by unsympathetic alterations that detract from the character and quality of the streetscape. This results through the loss of traditional materials and period features, replaced with inappropriate modern alternatives such as uPVC windows and doors, and concrete roof covering.

Fig 36 below. Images of the buildings identified as negative and negative changes to historic buildings.



Loss of Welsh slate for modern tiles



Large modern box dormer with uPVC



Replacement uPVC imitation sash windows



Replacement uPVC door



3.1.4 Ambiance, pedestrian experience, and public realm

The area is surrounded by the wider busy urban environment with its commercial core, key roads, and public transport hubs nearby, and at its entrance/exit points in the north and west it can be busy and noisy at peak times.

Inwardly, Crossgate, Allergate and South Street provide a pedestrian experience of high value. It is one of domestic feel to the layout and buildings but where the vernacular architecture gives it a distinctive identity and high aesthetic quality.



Fig 37 above. The steep descent at Crossgate dominated by a fine Georgian streetscape with St Nicholas' Church spire a historic skyline feature.

These streets are secondary vehicular routes and as such they are not relentlessly impacted by the effects of traffic.

Crossgate however is busier as it is used as a "rat-run" from North Road to Crossgate Peth and Neville's Cross. As a result, there can be traffic build up at the junction onto Crossgate Peth. This combined with a high number of parked vehicles impacts negatively on the historic character of the place. Nevertheless, the historic character persists.

South Street has a quieter domestic character and ambiance compared to Crossgate and Allergate. At Crossgate's junction with North Road the level of activity and noise increases dramatically at peak time, and at night time, particularly on weekends.

Pedestrian movement is generally aligned in the same manner; South Street has less footfall than Allergate and Crossgate. These streets provide important and well used pedestrian connections between the denser surrounding residential streets and other parts of the city centre. They are also well used as short cuts by students. They provide similar experiences in terms of historic character and their hilly nature.

There are a few quieter pedestrian-only routes; winding informal lanes that provide a contrasting pedestrian experience to the main streets. There is very little in the way of signage and lighting along these routes, appropriate to their character.

In South Street there are important access points on the east side that connect to the footpath network through the woodland down to the riverbanks. These are positive features well used for walking and leisure activities and provide important routes linking to the peninsula and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Fig 38 below. The informal green lane leading to St Margarets graveyard.



Fig 39 below. Allergate cluttered with on street parking,

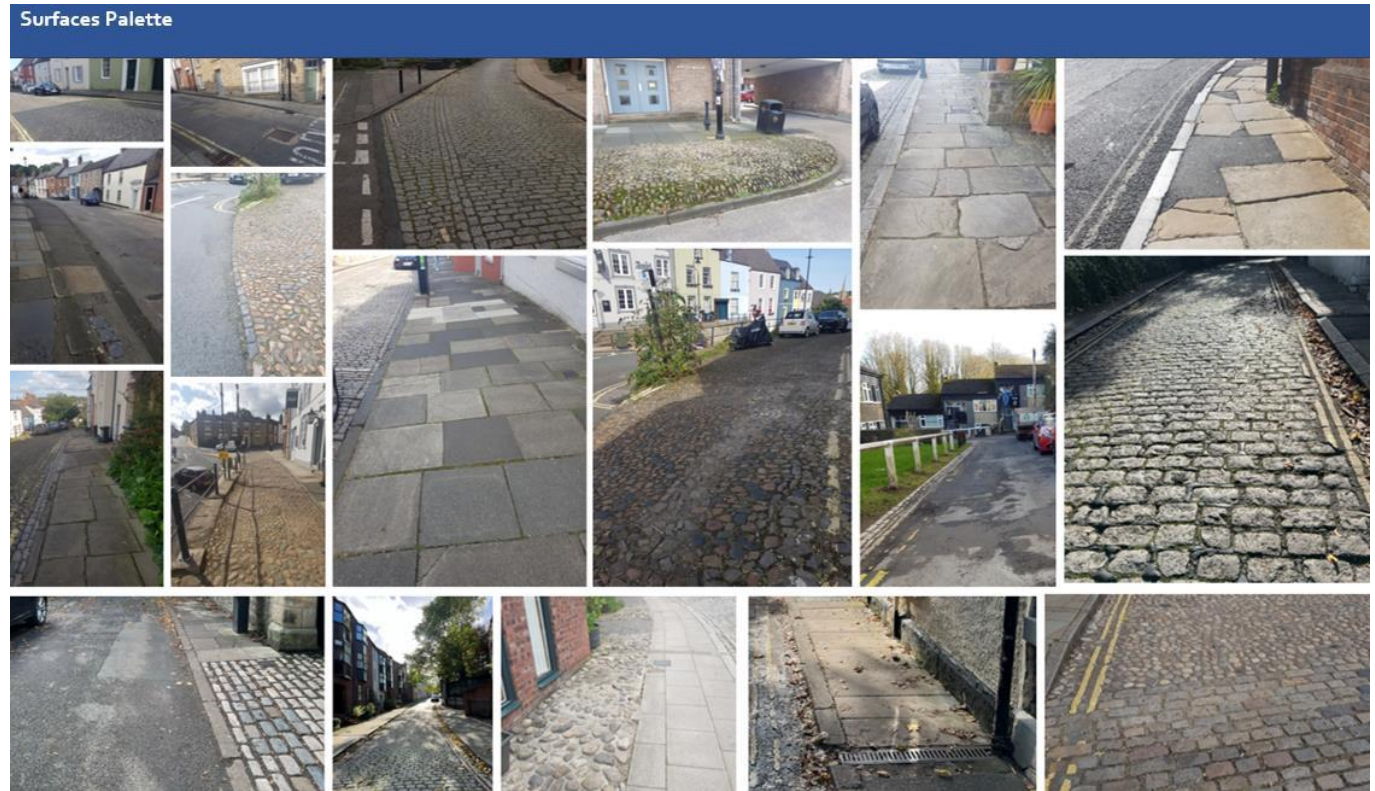


In Crossgate and Allergate, at busy times, there can be conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, with movement frustrated by the narrowness of the pavements, parked vehicles, and limited opportunities for crossing. Parked cars can often clutter all three of these historic streets detracting from the visual experience of the historic buildings and the general street scene.

Within Allergate and the north part of Crossgate concrete flagged footpaths with concrete kerbs and tarmacadam carriageways are commonplace.

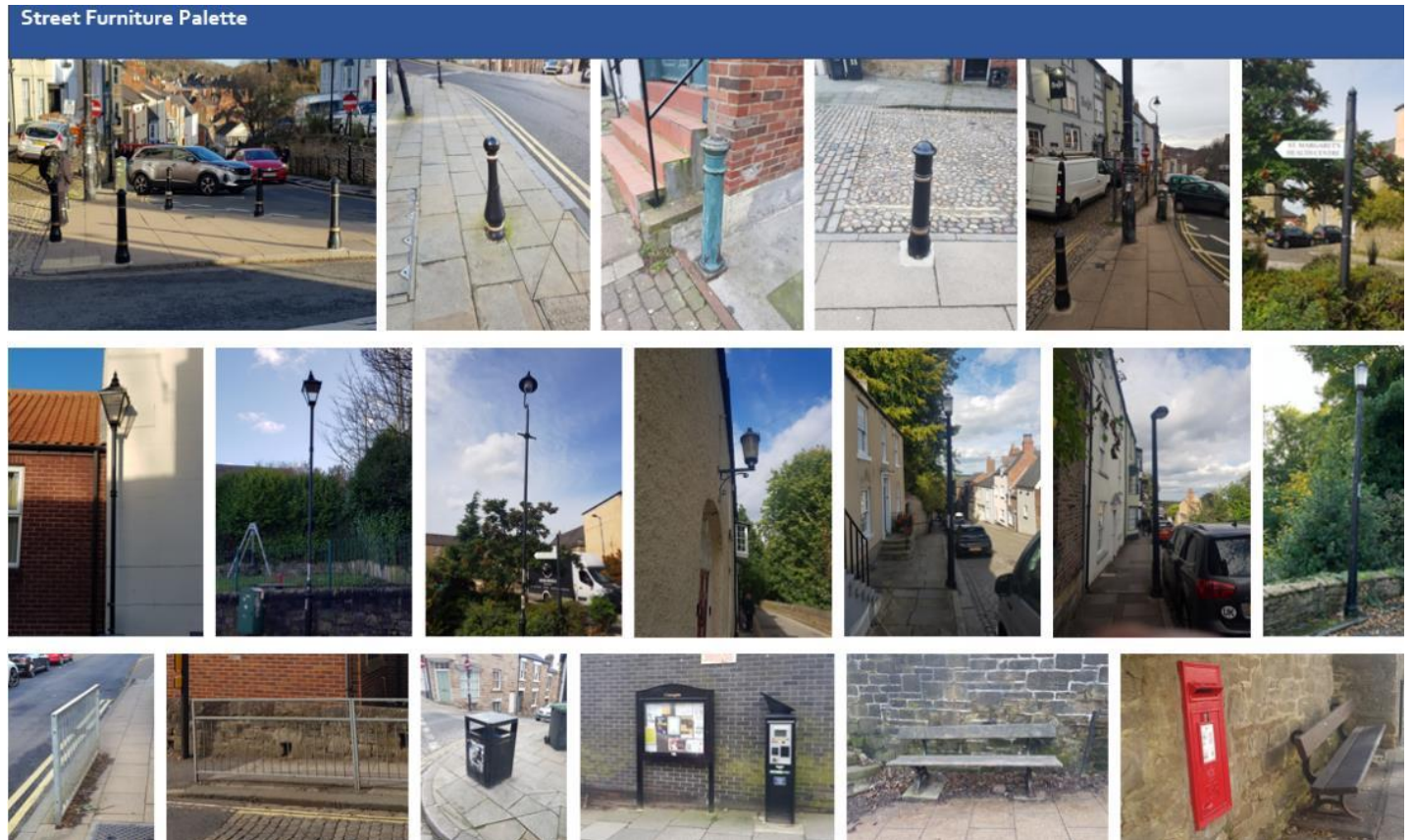
South Street and the north end of Crossgate are of higher quality with traditional setts to the carriageway and Yorkstone paving to the footway. There are other examples of traditional floorscape, granite sets and some areas of river cobbled surfaces. These areas of floorscape enrich the environment and are appropriate to the character and setting of the historic buildings. There are however many instances found where insensitive material replacement has taken place overtime giving a poor patchwork appearance, and an insensitive mismatch of surfacing materials.

Many paving flags are fractured, uneven, and some have been replaced with tarmacadam that impacts negatively. Added to the above there are often refuse bins collected on the footway and visible within side alleyways that add detrimental visual clutter. In combination such issues impact poorly on the visual appearance and overall impression of the place.



Street furniture is prevalent within the busier streets of Crossgate and Allergate. There is a mixture of lighting units within the area. In Allergate these are heritage lantern style columns appropriate to the character of the street, but elsewhere standard modern columns and head units are used. Within South Street there is a mixture of modern columns that are out of place given the quality of the historic streetscene, but there are some appropriate Victorian style wall mounted street light fittings.

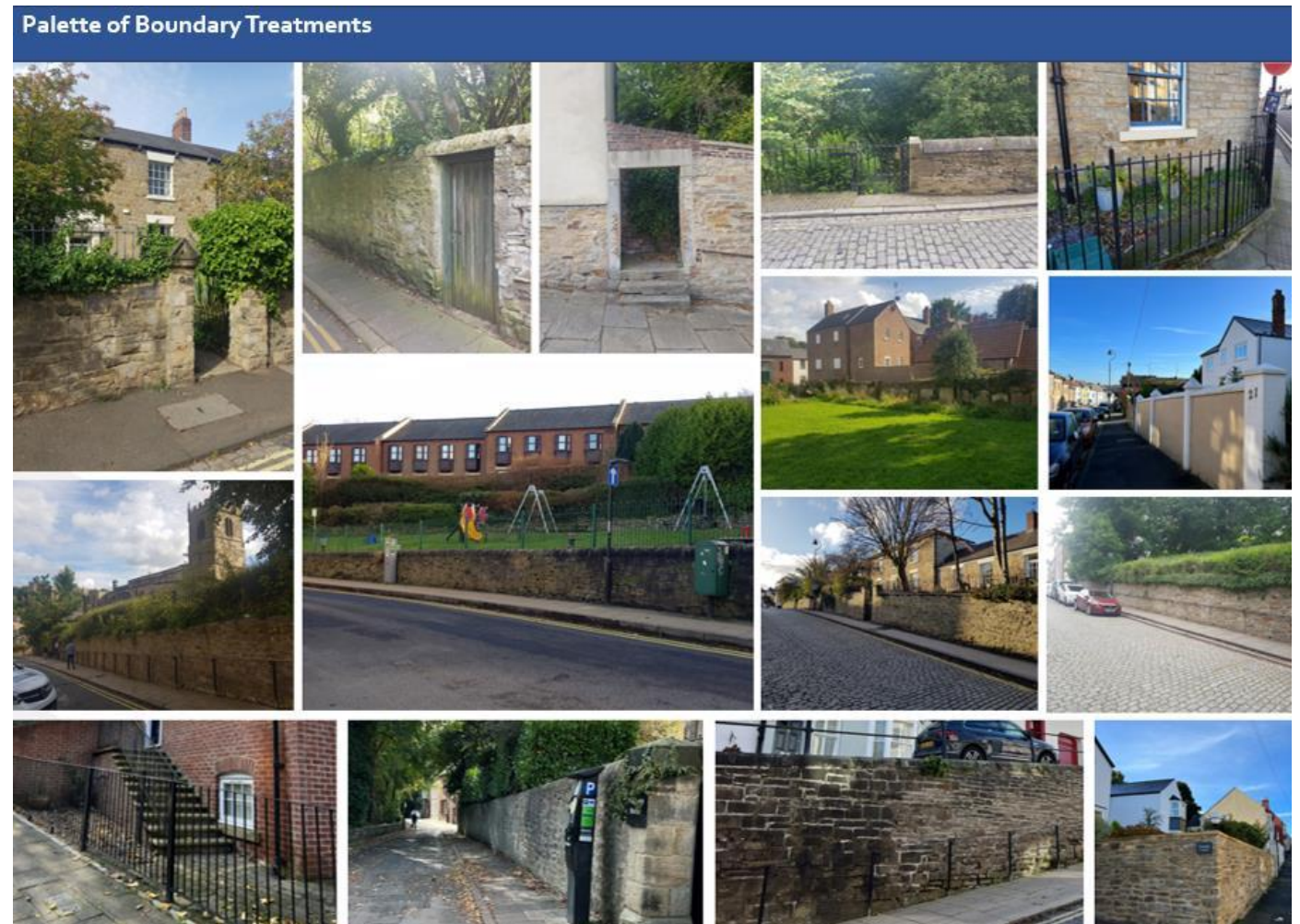
The main items of street furniture are bollards, parking and highway signs, parking meters, seating, and refuse bins. The overall impression is that the streets are not excessively cluttered by items of street furniture most of the time, the exception being at the junction of Crossgate, Allergate and Neville Street where the number of items is excessive in a relatively confined area of public realm.



Most of the buildings within the area are up against the back of the pavement. However, some of the rear gardens and yard spaces are enclosed by historic stone and brick walls. Despite being unseen, they represent important historic fabric and features in delineating the surviving medieval burgage plot pattern of the area.

There are some notable boundary treatments within the street scenes that contribute positively. For example, St Margaret of Antioch Church has black metal railings and impressive stone walls onto the street. St Margaret's Centre is enclosed by substantial stone walls with terraced courtyard walls within the site. The front gardens of St Margaret's Mews facing onto Crossgate are enclosed by historic stone walls with gates and piers. There are historic stone walls around the churchyard and allotments, and stone walls with sections of traditional black metal railings onto South Street.

There are some examples that do not fit with the prevalent historic boundary treatments including rendered walls, timber birds-mouth fencing at Grape Lane, sections of highway safety fencing, and the safety fencing around the playground in Allergate.



3.1.5 Visual experiences

As a result of the area's unique position and topography rising in elevation westwards, there are several impressive views with heritage focal points including, Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, and fine views of the historic streetscapes that merge into one another.

These views evolve and change with movement through the character zone. For example within Allergate, the narrowness of the street and heights of the buildings creates an intimate inwards character. However, the street is characterised by Georgian townhouses, and later Victorian properties that provide a streetscape of high quality and diversity.

Moving along the street eastwards views open up at the junction with Crossgate revealing a glimpsed view of the church of St Margaret of Antioch and Durham Cathedral. The view of the cathedral from South Street is an important historic view, not only because it expresses in detail the architectural quality of the building but also because the street is possibly a historic pilgrim route.



In summary the key views identified within this character zone are:

View 1 - Views east and west along Allergate.

View 2 - Views east and west along Crossgate.

View 3 - Views southeast from the mid-point in Crossgate of St Margaret of Antioch Church, Durham Castle & Cathedral.

View 4 - View north from Allergate/Crossgate looking down Neville Street.

View 5 - View east from within St Margaret's graveyard

View 6 - Views east from within South Street.

View 7 - Views north and south along South Street



Fig 40. Left, a "hidden" view of the castle from St Margaret's Graveyard. Middle, a View of Georgian townhouses that characterise Crossgate. Above, the channelled view from the elevated southwest part of Crossgate with Durham Castle Keep and western range prominent in the skyline backdrop.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

Views in both east and west directions along Allergate.

Kinetic enclosed, channelled, and intimate views of the fine historic streetscape comprising of 17th, 18th, and 19th century residential properties. The view changes with movement through the street.



View northeast from Crossgate.

Kinetic enclosed, channelled streetscape views focused on the historic buildings along Crossgate Bank, and the townscape backdrop.

Views evolve, in the south the historic roofscape is appreciable with the spires of St Nicholas Church and Claypath Church skyline features, behind these the tree-covered wider ridge can be seen. Descending the street the view changes to close up views of the fine Georgian and Victorian buildings.

Key Views
Location



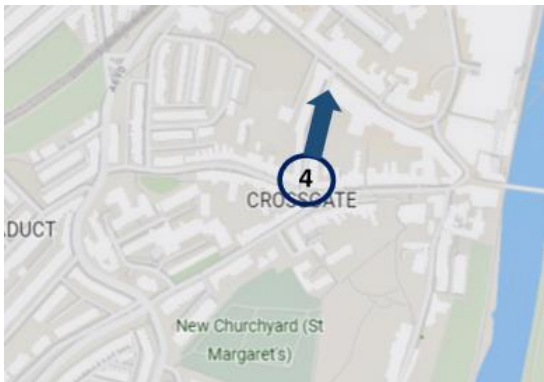
Image



Description

View southeast from Crossgate.

Crossgate Bank provides sequential views of the medieval church and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. This ends with a close-up view of the Church of St Margaret of Antioch that has a dramatic presence due to its elevated position above the footway. The west range of Durham Castle and Durham Cathedral can be seen in the background where they have a dominating skyline presence.



View north from the Allergate and Crossgate Junction down through Neville Street.

A fine view of St Godric's Church in the skyline channelled by the distinctive 19th century stone terraced building forming a distinctive and somewhat rare, cobbled street.

Key Views
Location



Image

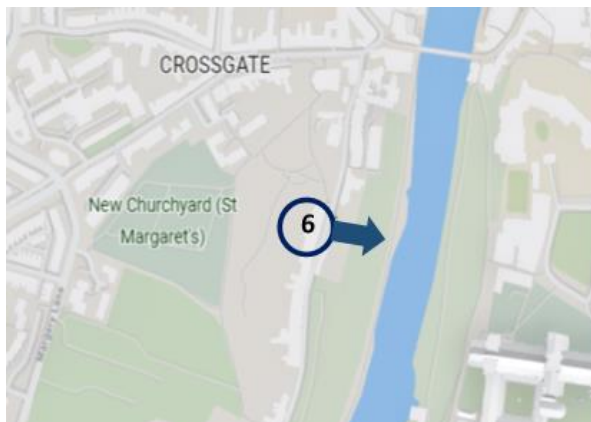


Description

A “hidden” view eastwards from within St Margaret’s graveyard

The elevated nature of the land provides a fine view of Durham Cathedral in the skyline above the roof tops of the historic buildings within South Street.

From the same vantage point there is a fine view of the west range and upper part of the keep of Durham Castle.



The view east from South Street.

South Street provides a sequence of fine views overlooking the River Wear gorge towards Durham Castle Cathedral World Heritage Site, the monuments dominating and dramatic in their riverbank woodland setting.

The views of the cathedral generally from within South Street are impeded by the unmanaged tree cover.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

The views north and south along South Street

Evolving close quarter views of the historic buildings of different architectural styles present a high-quality diverse historic streetscene. The views provide an important understanding of the status of Durhams wealthy merchants, and they used to live.

Key night-time views of the cathedral from
Crossgate, and South Street.



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

- Contrasting ambience between the residential streets, bustling wider environment, and quieter semi-rural character.
- Positive sense of intimacy and enclosure within the streets and quieter lanes.
- Positive sense of separation and isolation within the churchyard and its different feel from the urban environment.
- Some traditional floorscape adds to the area’s aesthetic quality.
- Stone, brick, and hedgerow boundary treatments to plots gives clear definition to the public and private space.
- The different and high-quality framed, fixed, dynamic, and sequential views of changing historic streetscapes, urban and natural environments with historic focal points.
- The contrast between the day and night time ambiances, experiences, and views.
- Middle distant views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Negative elements (public realm)

The character area has a high quality historic townscape comprising development from the medieval to Victorian period experience by an overall positive public realm with a medieval framework. However, the area is not without negative elements that detract from the character and appearance of the place.

Negative elements include the impact of traffic and parked vehicles cluttering the historic streets and affecting visual amenity, refuse bins obstructing the footway hindering movement, “hot spots” detracted by clutter from items of street furniture, and surface treatments being either traditional but in deteriorated condition, or modern and miss-matched.

A common problem within the Durham City Conservation Areas is caused by work carried out by utility companies who benefit from “permitted development” rights for various works that often have significance visual effects. This often results in loss of traditional floorscape materials reinstated with tarmac, or by patching of similar materials.

Fig 41 below. *The key streetscape within Crossgate provides a positive pedestrian experience that strongly conveys the area’s history, identity, and character but impacted by parking and street clutter.*



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

Built form

- Traditional materials are prevalent but there is some notable limited use of insensitive modern materials.
- Some limited replacement of traditional windows and doors with unsympathetic alternatives.
- There is a small number of buildings that show a decline in condition and general lack of regular maintenance works.
- Vacancy is not a noticeable problem within the area.
- There are examples of low quality modern development that do not respect the historic layout, character, and appearance.
- Examples of insensitive large modern box dormers.

Urban spaces

- Some street surfaces are mixed often with no interface material between traditional and modern surfacing treatments.

- Fragmentary repairs have been undertaken at different times using different materials giving rise to a poor patched appearance.
- Tarmacadam carriageway surfacing has or is deteriorating in places at different rates.
- Fractured footway paving that is poor aesthetically and potential tripping hazards.
- Areas of cobbles in a deteriorated condition.
- Footways can be blocked by parked vehicles and refuse bins also blight the visual appearance of the street.
- Streets are often car dominated.
- Movement can be impeded by parked vehicles and refuse bins on the footway.

Green spaces

- The woodland on the river gorge is unmanaged blocking and reducing important views of the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site from South Street.

Street furniture

- There are uncoordinated items and styles that do not fit in with the historic character of the place.
- There is a proliferation of items associated with car parking and traffic movement.
- Modern street lighting columns and head units, less sensitive than heritage style units. Styles uncoordinated.
- Visual clutter caused by excessive street furniture items, some outdated and in a poor condition.

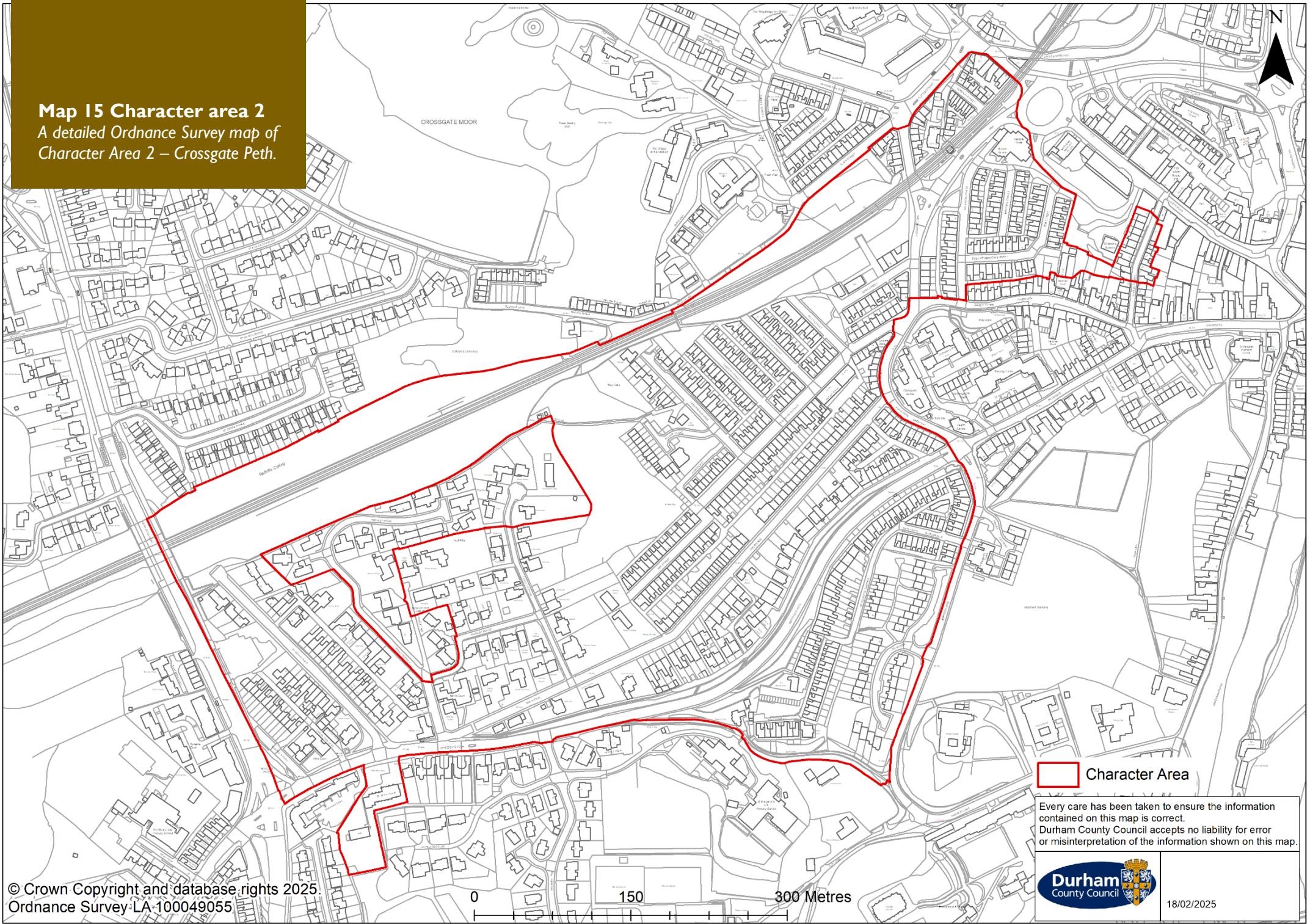
Threats

- Potential loss of surviving traditional street surfacing materials.
- Continuation of unmanaged tree cover resulting in additional obscuring or heavily filtering important views.
- Ongoing negative impact of parked vehicles and traffic.
- Potential for unsympathetic alterations and loss of architectural features to non-designated heritage assets.

3.2 Character area 2 (Crossgate Peth)



Map 15 Character area 2
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character Area 2 – Crossgate Peth.



3.2.1 Location and summary of special interest

This character area is densely developed and residential in character dominated by Victorian terraced housing. In the north the boundary is formed by the railway line and Sutton Street up to Bridge Street, continuing round the rear of the Bus Station on North Road taking in Neville Street. In the east it follows the curve of Sutton Street round to Margery Lane turning west onto Clay Lane. The southern boundary follows the route of Crossgate Peth up to St John's Church where it heads north along the A167 up to Redhill's Railway Cutting.

The setting of the area is formed by the surrounding dense urban townscape, commercial area around North Road, and by the topography of relatively steep terrain rising steeply westwards from the city centre. Along this ridge and the lower reaches of the Durham Bowl (the area of steep slopes and hilltop that surround the built environment of the city) are wooded railway embankments and slopes of dense woodland to the rear of Byland Lodge. The dense mature tree cover provides a natural green backdrop that contrasts with compact Victorian streets.

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

- Historic interest and identity as a distinctive part of the city directly associated with its C19 and early C20 expansion.
- Crossgate Peth is one of the oldest routes in the city.
- Distinctive historic development pattern of grid terraces, with connecting back lanes.
- Consistency and uniformity in traditional form, proportions, and scale, balance of openings and vertical emphases.
- Variation in architectural style ranging from simple terraces and Edwardian townhouses to grander detached villas.
- The built form stepped with the gradient add to character and generate high quality traditional roofscapes.
- The sustained use of traditional building materials and surviving period features.
- The visible garden spaces provide a suburban character in some streets.



Fig 42 above. Image of a typical Victorian terraced street found within the area, and the distinctive well-preserved terrace of Lambton Street.

3.2.2 Local layout, streets, and spaces

The plan form of the area has been dictated by two main factors: the topography and the arrival of the railway. The area is dominated by terraced housing that evolved on previously undeveloped land over two main phases. These both display similar characteristics in terms of high density, linear plan form and narrow plots, with some variation in street widths.

The development of these terraces is a distinctive feature of the city centre. These streets and spaces are significant historically. They symbolise part of the 19th century growth of the city when there was limited opportunity for expansion on the peninsula.

Hawthorn Terrace is a wide street, compared to its neighbours, with a series of shorter terraced streets behind running at right angles, together forming a tight grid pattern, also seen to the rear of North Road. These streets have strong building lines and active domestic frontages characterised by repetition of design. The streets respond to the landform by stepping evident in The Avenue, Atherton Street, Nevilledale Terrace and Summerville. Where the land is generally flatter the terraces tend to be either longer and continuous or in separate blocks.

Both types are seen at Hawthorn Terrace where the gaps provide access to the streets behind. Contrasting with the prevailing linear block pattern are the streets of Colpitts Terraces, Palatine View and Alexandria Crescent that are elegantly curving streets.

House plans are typical of the period. Large numbers of terraces were built speculatively to accommodate householders at the lower end of the socio-economic scale, who required accommodation close to their places of work. These were of a uniform, modest domestic scale, and simple “two up two down” design with rectangular plots and frontages pressed tight up against the back edge of the pavement. They typically have small rear yards enclosed by shared brick boundary walls and small brick outhouses. Unfortunately, many original outbuildings have been lost and yard spaces reduced over time by modern extension developments.

The main streets align with the primary thoroughfare from the west along Crossgate Peth and the A690 winding down to the Viaduct where it connects to North Road.

Fig 43 right. A selection of images demonstrating the layout and common house type with the area. Top, uniformed terraces stepped in response to gradient. Middle, compacted modest Victorian terraces in separate blocks. Bottom, a typical back lane.



The construction of the A690 in the mid-C20 resulted in the demolition of most of the east side of Sutton Street that visually shields Atherton Street. As a result, the back of this terrace now faces the main street with left over space turned into roadside greenery.

Within parts of The Avenue, Crossgate Peth and around the entrance point into St John's Road, there is a distinctive shift to lower density semi-detached and detached properties stepping up the hill. These are notably larger in size and set in generously sized plots.

These houses tend to be set back from the prevailing building line behind front gardens. They have more imposing boundary walls onto the street and mature vegetation that emphasises the strong linear form of the street. They are typical of a suburban layout towards the outskirts of the city.

On the north side of The Avenue the Farnley Hey Road area does not feature a typical Victorian street pattern. But importantly what it does reflect is the 20th century response to the need for houses in the growing city. It retains much of its original layout with Farnley Mount feeding off Farnley Hey Road, the straight enclosed street curving on the western tip where it reaches Percy Terrace. This area is modern suburbia, characterised by wide open cul-de-sacs with generous splays and turning heads, a fragmented street pattern and front gardens.

Fig 44 below. A selection of images of the wide street of The Avenue informed by grander terraced properties those at the west end of the street with private front gardens. Large, more ornate dwellings at Crossgate Peth. Example of a large, detached villa in generous grounds at the entrance to St John's Road. The terraced block at the northeast end of Crossgate Peth overlooking the main carriageway, and the open fronted curving terrace of Palatine View. The rising streets of May Street one of the uniformed Victorian terraces that characterises the character area.



Neville Street is separate from the main urban area described above, being located at the junction between Crossgate and Allergate where it drops steeply down to North Road. It is a fine street of stepped stone built terraced houses tightly enclosing a rare surviving cobbled street. It was a side street off North Road with no connection to Crossgate until the late 19th century.

The building pattern is one of narrow properties on either side of the street in rectangular plots, until reaching the north end where larger irregularly shaped commercial buildings emerge. The properties at the south end are pressed tight up against the back edge of the pavement. Moving downhill they become set back with front gardens and enclosed forecourt spaces.

Also noteworthy is Lambton Street, a 19th century terrace set back behind Sutton Street on lower ground below the viaduct. It is a single straight street running north-south with a rounded corner-end and it is one of the city's best preserved from this period.

Fig 44 below. Neville Street is a fine characterful late Victorian cobbled street, linear in form with stone buildings enclosing the space. It widens at the north end where the buildings are pushed back behind front curtilages.



Despite being a dense urban area there is an abundance of greenery that adds positively to its character and visual appearance. Places such as The Avenue, Crossgate Peth, St John's Road, and at Laburnum Avenue, benefit from private front gardens that have high visual amenity in the street scenes. Likewise, the larger private garden spaces surrounding the detached villas, tend to be filled by mature trees and hedgerows that add further positive greenery.

The back gardens to the properties lining the north side of Crossgate Peth cascade down to the street frontage at The Avenue where they contribute positively to the character of the street complementing the houses and creating an enclosed feel. There are some notable properties where gardens have been lost to provide hard standing driveways and parking areas to the detriment of the streetscene. In some back lanes, boundary walls have been lost creating open parking areas that detract from the historic character of the back-street environment.

The modern residential development at Byland Lodge included remodelling of the landscape as part of an overall landscape strategy. This has added to the setting of the Victorian lodge and enhanced the visual quality of the wider streetscene.

In the public realm there are other positive green features such as the embankments bounding Crossgate Peth creating a green corridor entrance into the area from the west.

The green roadside verges along the A690 in the north approaching the Viaduct and North Road roundabout help soften and provide green breathable space. At St John's Church, the open lawned area to the front provides a fitting setting to both the church and war memorial. On the west side of Laburnum Avenue there is a public play area, however it is an underused space. Adjacent to the play area is an important area of woodland that stretches south to the back of May Street and west to meet the rear boundaries of the garden plots of the properties on the east side of Farnley Hey Road. This has visual amenity value as part of the green woodland background to the residential streets.

The northern boundary to the area is informed by the railway embankments that are densely covered by trees and vegetation forming part of the green backcloth of high visual quality to this part of the city.



Fig 45 above. The woodland to the rear (east) side of Farnley Hey Road that provides an important green back drop to Byland Close and Laburnum Avenue, and right the roadside greenery in the context of the viaduct.

Fig 46 below. An aerial map and images identifying the key green assets within the character area.



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

- Variable density from compact uniformed terraced streets to semi-detached and detached properties create an area of suburban character.
- Typical period grid patterns, face-to-face and back-to-back streets providing strong building lines and continuous frontages.
- Interesting blend of colliding and interlocking blocks and street patterns.
- Buildings are pressed tight up against the back edge of the pavement framing the carriageway creating enclosed streets of different widths.
- Distinctive back lane environments provide connections to neighbouring streets.
- Buildings are stepped in response to the varying gradient.
- Positive mixture of no on-street curtilage and front gardens of variable depth.
- The clear distinction between the urban character of Victorian terraced development and the later suburban development.
- Gaps between buildings are important in signifying different phases of development.

Fig 47 below. 3D modelling highlighting key attributes found within the area.



3.2.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing.

The area is characterised by compact Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing with some semi-detached and detached properties of different ages. The buildings and streets are important in providing physical evidence of the city’s evolution and expansion as a result of 19th and early 20th century industry. They generally have a simple, yet distinctive architectural style, with typically modest floorplans, repetition of architectural design, with a vertical balance and simple detailing. The Victorian terraces are an instantly recognisable component of the city that enrich the historic character of the townscape.

Some of the terraces are grander than others with added detailing and decoration, and there are notable detached period buildings of individual designs often with wider frontages that add to the overall quality, depth, and character.

Common features include eaves corning and corbels, painted stone heads and cills, brick lintels, stone mullions, oriel and double height bays, over-lights, hoods and surrounds to doors, painted plinths, and boot scrapers. The individually designed buildings have bargeboards, finials, painted brickwork to emphasise elements, gutter brackets, and opening surrounds.

Roof lines tend to be of a stepped repeated pattern, regularly interspersed by chimneys giving rhythm to the roofs.

In some streets, dormers are commonplace and traditional that sit well with the historic character of the individual building and add positively to the streetscene. Some terraced properties are however harmed by oversized, poorly placed, and designed modern dormers.

The Farnley Ridge area is notable owing to its range of buildings that developed from the early 20th century onwards distinct from the Victorian streets that predominate the character area. However, it includes a number of older late Victorian/Edwardian buildings stand out because of their historic and architectural quality while others are important in terms of representing the pre-war period. Individually each house makes a positive contribution to the suburban character of the wider streetscape. Many retain key details and features which define the inter-war period of house building, taking on aspects of the 1930’s Art Deco form and moderating it as a response to the restrictions of the immediate post war period. Other properties retain distinct early 1950’s characteristics.

There are some noteworthy individual buildings that stand out because of their distinctive architectural style. They include Harrison House at Hawthorn Terrace, which retains its historic industrial character. The Gothic stone built Byland Lodge at Hawthorn Terrace, Farnley Tower, at The Avenue with its crow-stepped gables, the Art Deco Rington’s Tea building at John Street, and the rendered Gothic Percy House with distinctive

tower feature. The listed Colpitts Terrace is significant in representing the change from stone construction to red brick. Buildings like these add to the architectural variety and quality of the character area.

Fig 48 below. Colpitts Terrace, former Rington’s Tea workshop and Percy House.

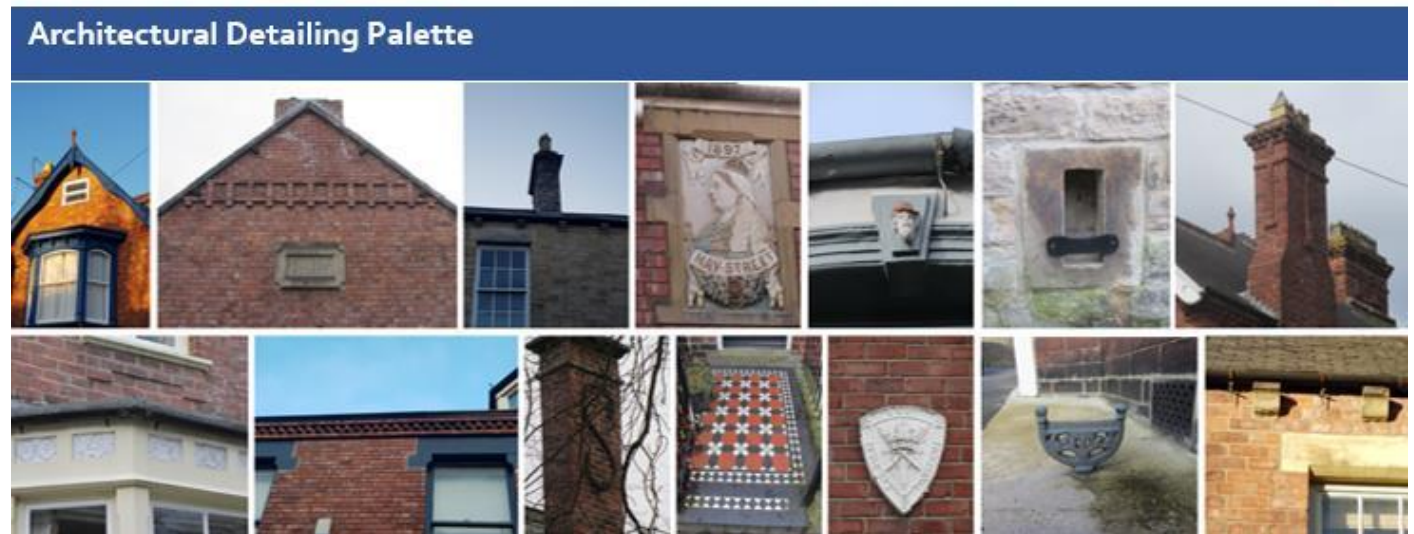


Fig 49 below. A selection of images showing the different styles of buildings within the character area.



The area is characterised by a simple and relatively limited palette of materials. Red facing brick is the prevailing walling material. The infill developments tend to use a multi-red brick that appears in keeping with the street scene. The notable exceptions to this general rule are the sandstone Colpitts Terrace and Nos 58-61 Hawthorn Terrace, and Lambton Street of buff brick. Some properties feature either render to the upper floors, with a few fully rendered that enliven the streetscene.

Both brick and stone are regularly seen throughout the area used for detailing to enliven the building frontages. Welsh slate remains the dominant roof covering material despite some loss for inferior artificial slate that impacts negatively. There is some limited use of red tile and red pantiles adding positively to the overall material palette.



The traditional doors found in the area are largely consistent in style being mostly solid in 4 and 6 panel designs, with over-lights. In some streets surrounds and canopies are commonplace enhancing the appearance of the front entrances. Other doors feature half-round heads with keystones or simpler painted lintels.

Surviving traditional timber windows are mainly vertical sliding sashes with 1-over-1, and 2-over-2 glazing patterns being the most common. There are also examples with more distinctive multi-paned styles.

Windows tend to feature either brick on edge flat arched headers, painted stone heads and cills, with some examples of painted stone and brick mullions. Oriel and double height bays characterise several streets.



Roofscape

The roofscape is a defining characteristic of this character area. The combination and differences of building height, architectural composition, and uniformity of design along with the local topography is most evident in this area. The historic terraced streets are viewed cascading down the various hills, generating striking silhouettes and skylines.

The steeply pitched roofs have ridge lines commonly punctured by a regular rhythm of brick chimneys with banding and clay pots commonplace. Some roof slopes incorporate traditional dormer windows, half-dormers, and eaves broken by gabled bays adding further variety and interest.

The Victorian terraces are at the modest end of the spectrum but the well-planned streets with an interesting blend of colliding and interlocking grid patterns, uniformity of design and roofscape create a very strong positive character to these residential parts of the city. This can be experienced in views from many vantage points in and around the city where the undulating distinctive roofscape is of considerable significance and features in the backdrop of many wider townscape views.

In Hawthorn Terrace, the modern infill development responds positively and blends harmoniously with the surrounding historic terraced form in terms of building line, scale, massing, design and detailing that includes a well-considered roofscape.

Fig 50 below. Images showing different roofscape across the Victorian terraces at Hawthorn Terrace, Palatine View, Crossgate Peth and Lawson Terrace.



Shopfronts and signage

Limited commercial activity is located within this character area found on Colpitts Terrace, Sutton Street and Hawthorn Terrace. The style and quality of the shop frontages and associated signage varies.

The street frontage of Colpitts Terrace is dominated by the early 19th century Colpitts Hotel, which has subtle traditional signage in keeping with its historic character. At the south end of the curving terrace the former shop (now office) has traditional hand painted signage on the round left corner with a simple timber shop front with prominent cornice.

In contrast to the above, the adjoining property on the corner of Hawthorn Terrace has a heavy modern timber shop front in a deteriorated condition with painted brick work.

At the lower end of Sutton Street, some of the commercial properties are devoid of shop fronts only featuring fascia panels and projecting signs fixed to the domestic frontages that appear out of place.

The commercial units dominate the north end of Neville Street. The quality of the signage is generally low, with oversized and modern plastic advertisements on display detracting from the visual appearance of the building elevations.

Fig 51 below. Images of different shop fronts and signs within the character area.



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

- Distinctive townscape resulting from period and architectural consistency but with some positive variety.
- Strong familiar historic identity informed by Victorian and Edwardian terraced streets.
- Period properties unified by vertical emphasis and architectural rhythm.
- Front elevations typically embellished or decorated and have features synonymous with Victorian and Edwardian housing.
- Properties constructed from a limited yet rich palette of traditional materials.
- Some properties are noticeably bolder enriching the historic character.
- Examples of inter-war and post-war housing make a positive departure from the earlier development and architecture.
- Some good examples of traditional public house frontages, shop frontages and signs.

Negative elements (sites)

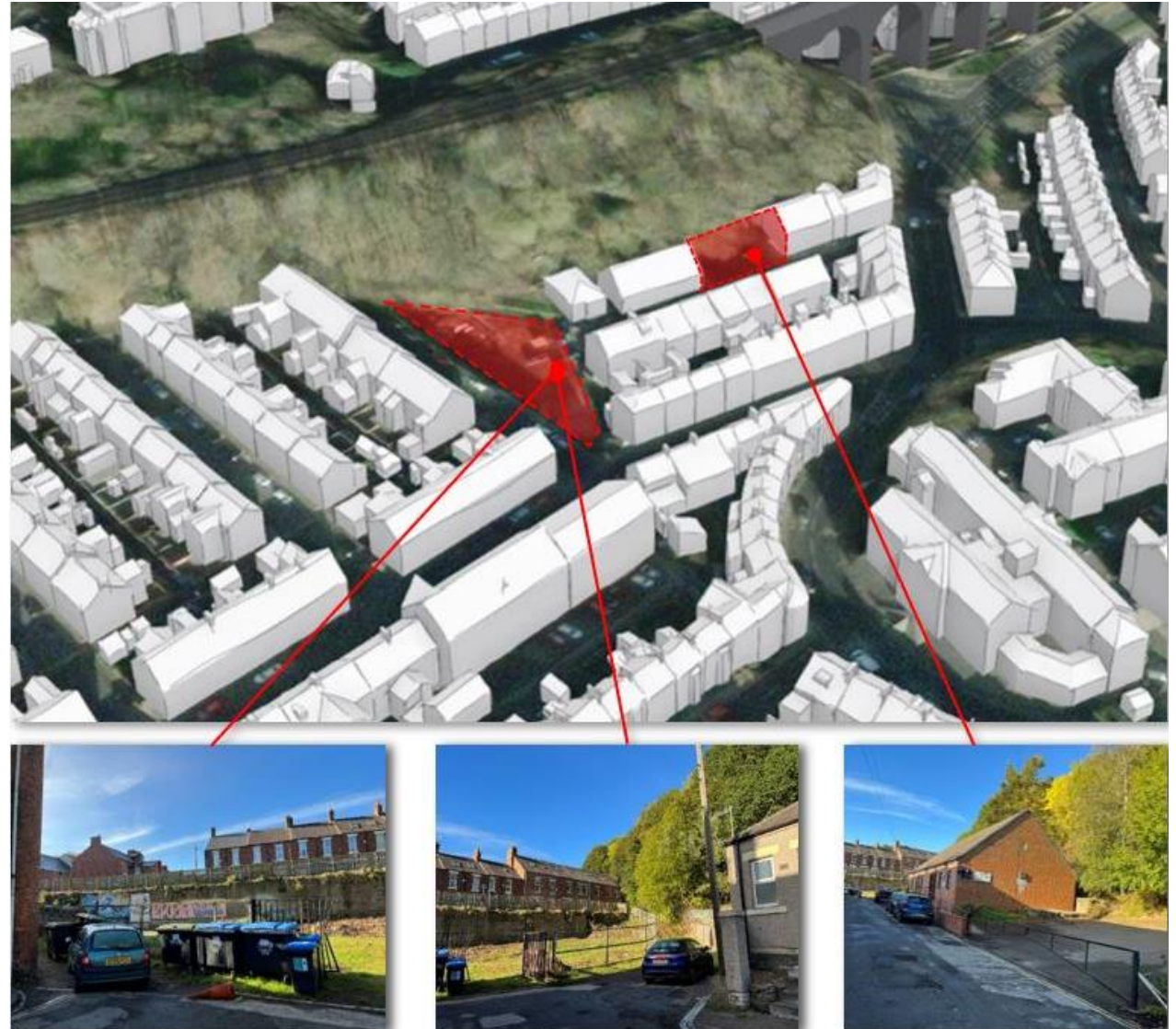
Four vacant gap sites are identified as impacting negatively from the area's special character and visual appearance.

Sites 1 and 2, John Street, Durham City

John Street was built in 1867 and currently features a cleared site at its west end. This contributes nothing aesthetically to the surrounding area, while being overlooked from Holly Street from which it appears more notable as an insensitive gap site in its surroundings.

The second site on the north side is a notable gap between later buildings comprising part hard standing and part overgrown grassland. This area was historically gardens for the terraced housing on the south side of the street, but now forms a notable empty gap in the built form of low aesthetic quality.

Fig 52 below. A sequence of 3D modelling and images showing the sites and buildings identified as impacting negatively.



Site 3, The Avenue, Durham City

The third site is a large gap on The Avenue between Nos 24 and 25. While historically the site has continuously been undeveloped, it is a notable unmaintained and overgrown site with visually harsh fencing prominent in the main street, breaking up the otherwise continuous terraced form.



Site 4, St John's Road, Durham City

This is a large gap site on the west of St John's Road at the north end of the street. It has been vacant for a long period of time following demolition of the petrol filling station on the site between 2006-2008. There is little significance to the site itself, and in its current vacant and deteriorated state it detracts from the overall quality and visual appearance of the street.

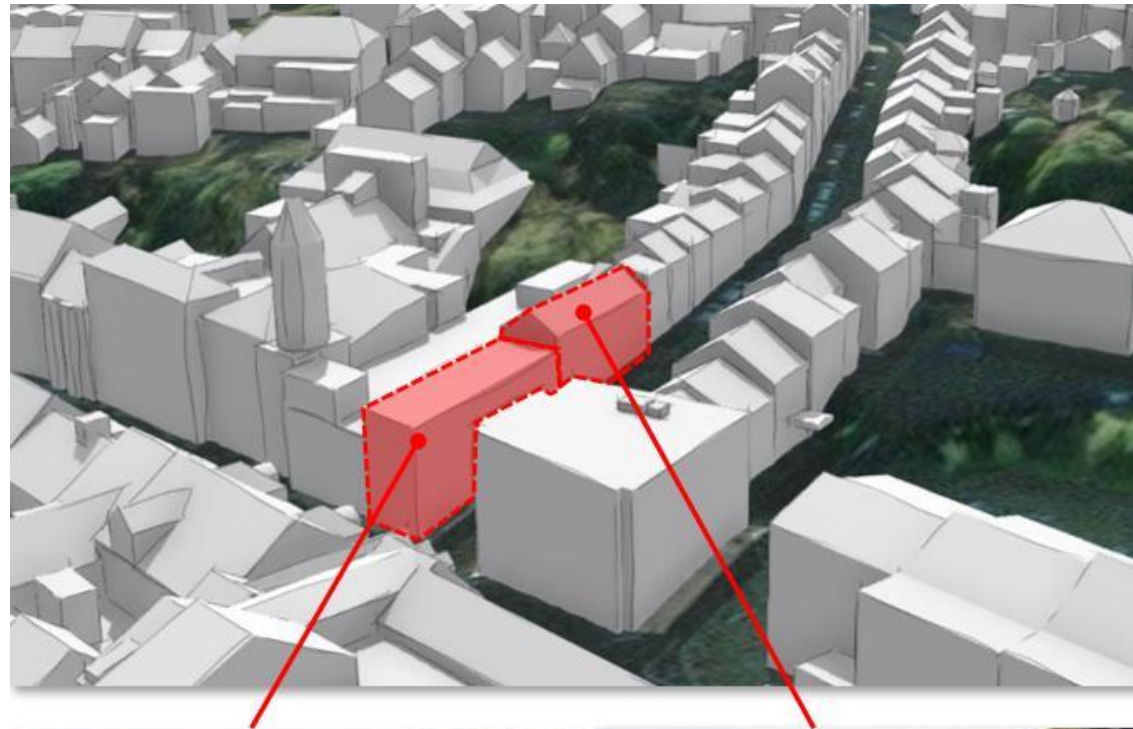


Negative elements (buildings)

Within the character area two buildings are identified as negative because they are at obvious odds with the historic context, detracting from the overall aesthetic quality and character of the streetscene.

Neville Street No33 – a two-storey building scale with a pitched roof that follows the building line in keeping with the local surroundings. However, it has a singular horizontal block form with no relief or interest, is of low quality materials and has fenestration that does not reflect the adjoining historic terracing.

Neville Street No 34 – the height and building line respects the historic street pattern but is has a singular horizontal block form with a flat roof, low quality materials, and poor fenestration that is out of keeping within its surroundings.



Negative elements (alterations)

Several of the historic terraced streets have been noticeably degraded, more so than in other parts of the city, by unsympathetic alterations, mostly undertaken prior to the serving of the Article 4 (2) Direction. The main negative impacts found tend to derive from:

- the loss of traditional timber sash windows and timber panelled front doors,
- the installation of low-quality uPVC windows, uPVC, and composite doors, of inappropriate designs,
- the loss of traditional Welsh slate for inferior modern fibre cement slate.
- the introduction of poorly designed oversized dormer windows,
- the insertion of roof-lights when randomly positioned, excessive in number, and not of a conservation style,
- complete loss or lowering of original chimney stacks,
- addition of solar panels to front roof slopes,
- proliferation of satellite dishes attached to front elevations,
- the enlargement of original openings.

Fig 53 below. A selection of images showing examples of unsympathetic alterations to historic buildings within the character area.



Such issues detract from the overall quality of the building and when repeated across a terrace. This degrades the overall historic character and visual appearance of the street to the detriment of the conservation area.

3.2.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

The area has a domestic character informed by the high number of residential streets on the north and south sides of Crossgate Peth. It generally provides a positive experience with streets of historic character feeding into the city centre. Crossgate Peth is a key entry/exit route from the west and is heavily impacted by both moving and stationary traffic, especially at peak times. The traffic junctions, stopping points, and queues can lead to general street congestion, noise, and pollution, but this seems unavoidable.

In contrast, The Avenue, running parallel to Crossgate Peth, provides a notable alternative pedestrian route offering a visually more appealing and quieter pedestrian experience full of character. The Avenue and the other similar no-through residential streets have infrequent moving traffic movement and less pedestrian footfall.

Parking in the character areas is generally on street, and in some places such as Hawthorn Terrace is not overly intrusive where the street is wider with generous footways. Within the narrower streets parked cars can make it feel more cluttered, detracting from the street’s visual amenity value.

The hilly nature of the streets enhances the experience with streets merging into one another and surviving original back lane connections that make a positive contribution.

However, the steepness in places may be problematic for people with mobility problems. Sometimes where the footways are narrow, parked vehicles can block and overhang, impeding pedestrian movement. In some streets in-plot parking and garaging is provided which lessens the effects of parked vehicles in the streetscene.

Fig 54 below. Examples of on-street parking cluttering historic residential streets.



The historic pedestrian only route along Blind Lane offers a contrasting quieter informal walk with a rural character connecting Crossgate Peth to Margery Lane, Grove Street and beyond, that is very positive.

Fig 55 below. Blind Lane, an informal historic pedestrian route with an intimate rural “green lane” character.



Despite the congestion, traffic and parking issues, the area can be considered pedestrian friendly with many different routes, streets, footways, back lanes, and public rights of ways available, and the occasional formalised crossing point.

The streets in this area have a high student population, with the area having good pedestrian connections to the colleges and the peninsula, and high footfall.

Despite these side streets manage to maintain a relatively quiet atmosphere, but some are deserted out of term time.

Approaching further into the city by both vehicle and on foot activity and noise levels rise. The residential terraced streets closer to the A690, viaduct, and North Road, such as at Atherton Street, and Mitchell Street experience more noise than their counterparts in the Hawthorn Terrace area.

There are places within the area where collections of refuse bins can often block the footways and back lanes imposing on pedestrian movement, they also detract from the visual amenity of the streetscene.

As the area developed as a result of the railway line, the rumbling noise of passing and overhead trains, depending on the location, can be regarded as positive - a sound heard dating back to 1844.

Fig 56 below. The Avenue that provided a characterful suburban route into the city centre, and the more intimate pedestrian route in front of Nevilledale Terrace.



Fig 57 below. Collections of refuse bins visible in the street detracting from its visual appearance. Examples of historic back lanes marred by refuse bins, litter, deteriorated surfacing, and overgrowth.



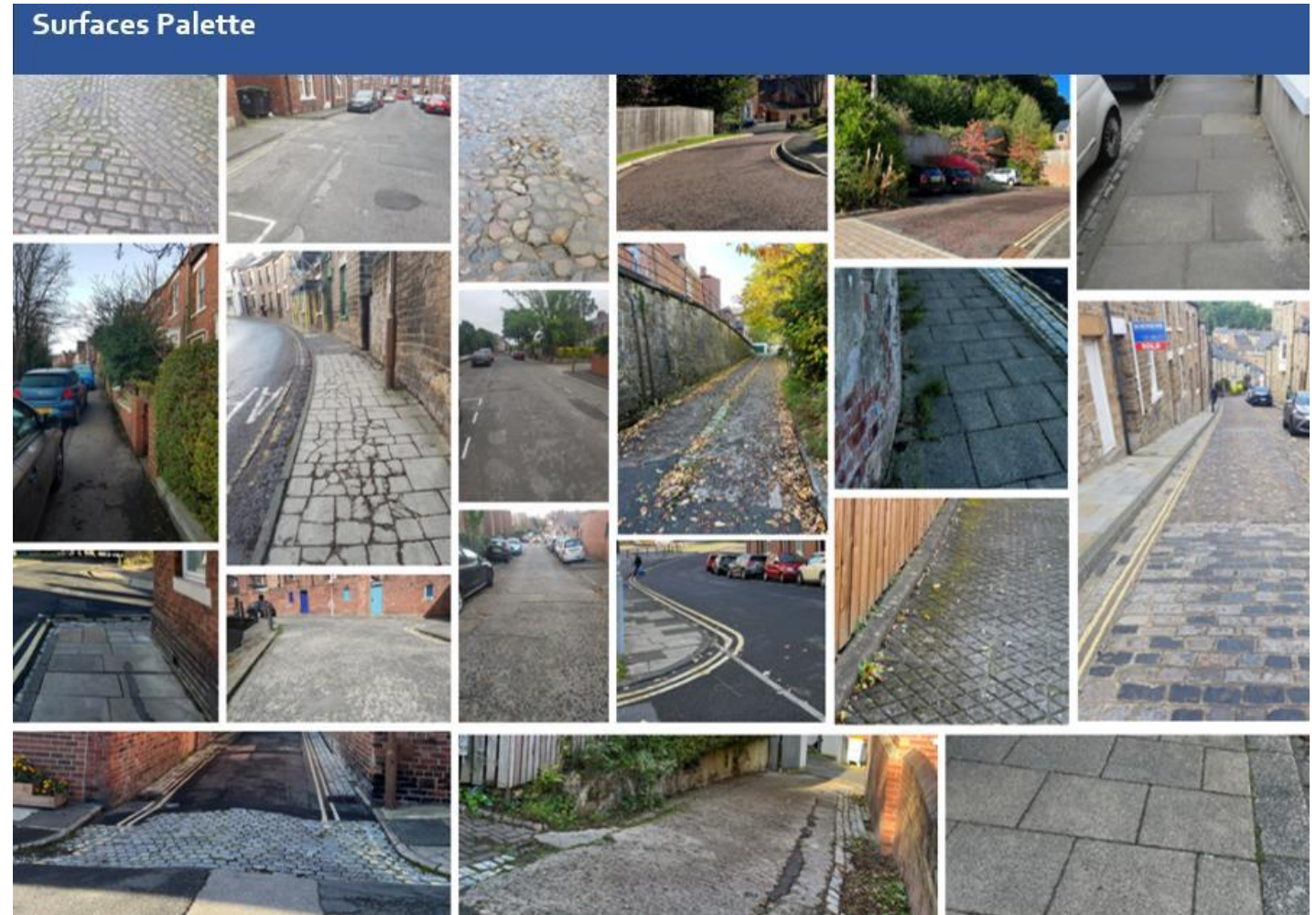
There is a wide variety of carriageway and footway surfacing in the area, but it is generally of standard modern materials such as concrete flags, in regular modules, concrete kerbs and tarmacadam.

In places some detailing is provided in the form of scoria blocks used as an interface material between the pavement and road, or as edging.

There is some limited use of traditional river cobbles and stone setts which are positive features, along with some spaces where red tarmac surfacing has been used.

Notably Neville Street is characterised by being almost fully cobbled, a rarity outside the peninsula.

The condition of surfacing materials varies from place to place but there are some notably poor areas, for example in front of the grade II listed stone terrace at Colpitts Terrace where many paving flags are fractured. There are places where replacement materials have been installed giving a poor patchwork visual appearance. Such issues detract from the visual quality of the respective historic streetscene.



Boundary treatments are very important and positive features of this character area, and they come in a wide range of forms and styles. The terraced streets have rear yards enclosed by red brick walls with gates and some surviving coal chutes. Some sections have been rebuilt in unsympathetic brick work that visually mars the back lane character.

There are places where traditional stone and brick walls, with gates, simple gate piers, and different styles of metal railings, are prevalent enclosing private curtilages that contribute positively. The front of the larger, detached villas along The Avenue and Crossgate Peth tend to have more substantial boundaries with walls having large piers. Hedgerow boundaries are commonplace within certain streets, which contribute positively to the suburban character.

In some places boundaries have been lost to create driveways, and insensitive boundaries have been created for example timber fencing replacing traditional railings. Some historic sections of boundary walls have been replaced with modern alternatives that are not in keeping. Such issues serve to be detrimental to the character of the historic streets.



3.2.5 Visual experiences

The street pattern and variation in the historic domestic terraces and detached houses laid over the changing topography creates a diverse range of evolving views. One of the most significant is the view arriving into the city by train from the south. This is a wide open panoramic view in which the Cathedral and Castle dominate the skyline above the fragmented townscape.

Approaching the city centre via Crossgate Peth Neville's Cross scheduled monument, and St John's Church and its war memorial are notable historic focal points. Travelling into the city center an important view of Colpitts Terrace emerges, with the public house a focal point on the corner travelling in the opposite direction. This is followed by dramatic views of the viaduct, with the surrounding streets Atherton Street, Mitchell Street and New Street, providing viaduct views from different angles.

Summerville provides a fine long distance view of Durham Cathedral, while the main streets such as The Avenue, Crossgate Peth, Nevilledale Terrace, and the Hawthorn Terrace area, provide visually distinctive historic street scenes.

In summary the key views within this character zone are:

- View 1** – View eastwards from the train.
- View 2** – Views in both directions at the southwest end of Crossgate Peth.
- View 3** - northwest along Alexandria Crescent.
- View 4** - View northeast along Sutton Street.
- View 5** - View north and east from Briarville
- View 6** - View east from Summerville
- View 7** - View west from Laburnum Avenue
- View 8** – View east from Farnley Hey Mount

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



Fig 58 right. The familiar architectural rhythm that typifies the character area demonstrated at Atherton Street.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View eastwards arriving in the City from the west by train.

A dynamic open panoramic view of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site in its townscape context, with the roofscape of the Crossgate area forming the foreground. This demonstrates the scale, dominance and drama of the castle and cathedral.

The railway provides sequential views with the city unseen before a dramatic reveal heading into the station, providing a sense of arrival.



View west along the west end of Crossgate Peth

A close up view of fine St John's Church, war memorial and grounds, built by St Margaret's Church in the 1890s built in response to the 19th century residential expansion in this part of the city.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View north along Alexandria Crescent

A view that emerges turning the corner from Crossgate Peth onto Alexandria Crescent, channelled towards the fine stone Colpitts Terrace. The terrace is significant in testifying to the change from the vernacular building tradition as a result of the railway coming to Durham and predominance of red brick terraced housing.



View north along Sutton Street / A690
approaching North Road

The character area provides a sequence of kinetic and emerging views of Durham Viaduct that has a very dramatic presence spanning North Road.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View east from Briarville

A significant panoramic view of Durham Cathedral seen in its broad landscape context. The view is enhanced by the private gardens in the foreground.



View east from Summerville

A fine channelled view of the western and central towers of Durham Cathedral towering above the riverbanks tree canopy.

Key Views
Location



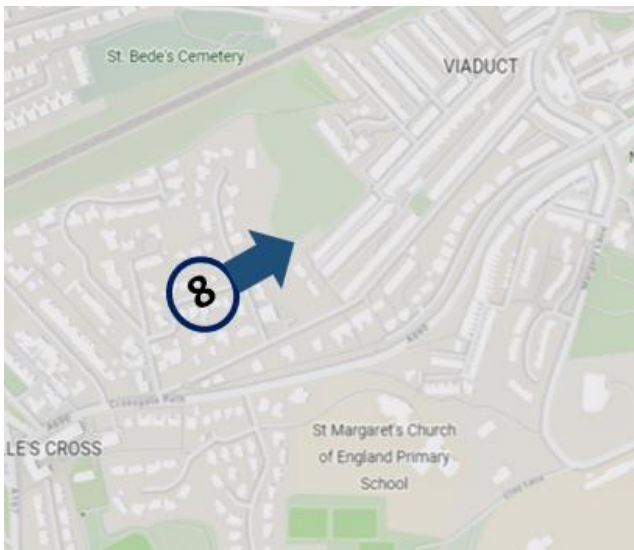
Image



Description

View west from the Laburnum Avenue adjacent to its junction with Hawthorn Terrace

A close quarter view of the fine Victorian lodge in its landscape grounds.



View east from Farnley Hey Mount.

The crest of the hill provides a fast and dramatic reveal of Durham Cathedral towering above the houses and appreciated in its broader landscape setting.

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

- round Positive experiences informed by familiar and locally cherished Victorian development providing a range of important routes with variation in character.
- The experience of the area's historic relationship with the viaduct providing an understanding of how it developed.
- The different kinds of ambiance moving through the place with quiet residential streets contrasting with the busy main road and "green" lane providing a rural feel.
- The variation in street widths and changing character from dense urban to suburban in places.
- The contrast between the intimate streets and the busy roads creating ever-changing character.
- The different traditional boundary and floor treatments that enhance the streetscene.

- The various evolving views of different residential architecture and historic focal points.
- The many fine views of Durham Cathedral ranging fixed, panorama, and framed views that are often surprising.

Fig 59 below. *The characterful suburban street along Percy Terrace forming.*



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

Built form

- The buildings overall are generally in a sound condition and appear to be well maintained. There are some visible signs of a lack of general maintenance in some streets.
- There is some low quality modern development that is out of keeping.
- There are many terraces adversely impacted by the loss of traditional materials and features, and use of insensitive modern replacements.
- In some streets the visual appearance of properties is marred by the high number of satellite dishes fixed to front elevations.
- The streets of Nevilledale Terrace, Crossgate Peth and The Avenue have a higher level of intactness with traditional materials and features prevailing.
- Positively the majority of buildings appear to have a use and therefore vacancy is not a noticeable problem within the area.

- There are many examples of low quality modern extensions alterations within the terraced back streets that detract from the local character.
- There are examples of poor quality large box type dormers visible to front and rear elevations that impact negatively.
- There are examples of low quality modern garaging which are negative features.

Urban spaces

- Gap sites detracting from the character and appearance of the area.
- The quality of the public realm is mixed and is mainly of standard modern materials.
- Street surfaces are varied in terms of condition. There are places where the tarmacadam to the carriageway is very deteriorated, and many footway paving flags are fractured.
- There are places where fragmentary repairs in different materials have been undertaken at different times giving rise to a poor patched appearance.

- The public realm below the viaduct arch at Sutton Street is dominated by refuse bins which impact negatively upon the streetscene.
- Some of the back streets are poor quality environments, with deteriorated floorscape, overgrown with vegetation, and used to house collections of refuse bins.
- Inappropriate replacement boundary treatments built in low quality materials and not in keeping with the building line.
- Loss of boundaries to create open parking areas impacts very negatively in the streetscene.
- There are four notable gap sites that detract from the character and appearance of the respective street.
- Some narrower streets can be dominated and cluttered by parked vehicles.
- Streets dominated by student housings can be inactive outside of term time, negatively impacting on the character and ambiance of the place.

Green spaces

- There are places where front gardens have been lost to hard standing that impacts negatively on the streetscene.
- There are places where the railway cutting, the lanes, and road embankments are very overgrown and overhanging, giving an untidy appearance.

Street furniture

- There are some “hot spots” negatively affected by too much street clutter.
- There is a proliferation of items associated with car parking and traffic movement.
- Items of street furniture are un-co-ordinated and outdated.

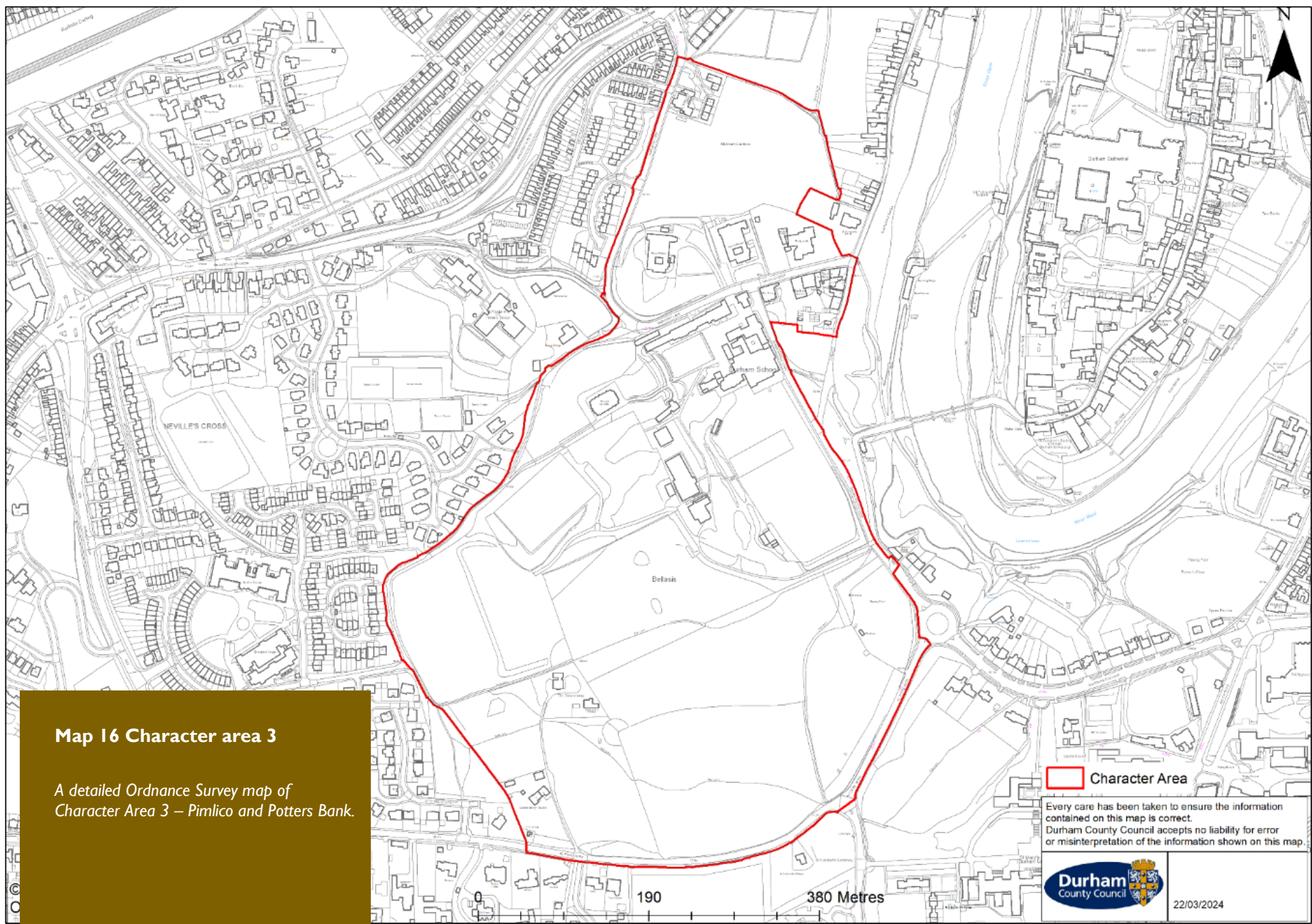
Threats

- Ongoing decline of those buildings which lack regular general maintenance works.
- Continued erosion of character through further loss of traditional materials and features such as windows, doors, and chimneys.

- Further loss of boundary walls and creations of open parking areas in-plot.
- Further visual harm caused by adding features such as box dormers, satellite dishes to front elevation and solar panels to roofs where visible.
- Potential for unsympathetic alterations and loss of architectural features to non-designated heritage assets due to permitted development rights.


3.3 Character area 3 (Pimlico and Potters Bank)





Map 16 Character area 3

A detailed Ordnance Survey map of Character Area 3 – Pimlico and Potters Bank.

 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.



22/03/2024

190 380 Metres

3.3.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area forms the south part of the conservation area comprising of Durham School, Pimlico, Potters Bank, Margery Lane, and Clay Lane. It is dominated by landscape intermingled with separate groups of historic buildings dispersed along these streets. The area is on the upper edge of the river gorge with flatter land at Pimlico and to the lower grounds of Durham School. The terrain rises steeply westwards up to Darlington Road and Lows Barn Bank and to the south is the very steep Observatory Hill.

St Margaret's allotment gardens at Margery Lane occupy the northwest corner of the character area situated on much lower ground to the main street, due to being a historic quarry site. In this area there were many sandstone quarries providing the stone for the castle, cathedral, and surrounding buildings.

The setting to the area is highly varied informed by the riverbank's woodland in the east, and Durham University colleges in the south, chiefly St Mary's College, and St Aidan's College. In the west is a dense area of modern housing that developed from the mid-20th century onwards. The area is significant forming part of the inner river valley ridge that provides spectacular sequential views and experiences of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

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

- The high scenic quality of the landscape and reduction in density of built form compared to the other character zones.
- The surviving medieval street layout of Pimlico and Margery Lane and the historic route of Clay Lane.
- The built form comprising almost exclusively of historic buildings, many listed, and others of local importance.
- The variety in age, architectural style, and high quality of the historic buildings.
- The sense of grandeur informed by the collection of academic buildings at Durham School
- The abundance of historic stone walls, gate piers, and areas of traditional floorscape,
- The community landscape asset of the allotment gardens of high visual quality and historic interest.
- The high landscape, aesthetic, and local recreational value of Observatory Hill.
- The significant views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.



Fig 60 above. The Victorian Gothic Durham School frontage and gateway building and the later stone swimming pool block.

3.3.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The plan form of the area in-part can be traced back to the medieval period with Pimlico forming a continuation of the route of South Street and occupying a triangular area of land with Grove Street in the north and Quarryheads Lane travelling southwards. This medieval layout is preserved and legible.

Moving south from Pimlico the area becomes dominated by the undeveloped scenic landscape, the most notable natural feature being Observatory Hill. This forms part of the ridge running along the western edge of the Durham Bowl. Beyond in the south is the historic route of Potters Bank, a steep curving road travelling east-west. The dense tree coverage and vegetation along this route creates an important green corridor entrance into the city.

Clay Lane skirts around the west side of Observatory Hill and the grounds of Durham School, dropping steeply down to Margery Lane. It is a very informal, tightly enclosed historic route, rural in character.

The area is characterised by low density built development where the separation by an abundance of tree cover, vegetation, and green spaces generates intimate enclosed streets of distinctive individual semi-rural character.

Buildings generally face the main street some tight up against the back edge of the pavement, but some are set back.

The first main street is Pimlico, a fine linear historic terrace running west and south following the fork in the road with No 4 prominent by being designed to address the corner. The street has strong building lines and active domestic frontages to both roadsides, the linear enclosed nature of this street, and the others, reinforced by the overhanging trees and historic boundary walls.

On the corner of Margery Lane and Grove Street is Durham School, where the historic and later modern buildings, are predominantly grouped around a main courtyard space. The other buildings are dispersed between the east sports pitch, on lower ground bounding Quarryheads Lane, and the west sports pitches, on higher ground extending towards the modern housing estate.

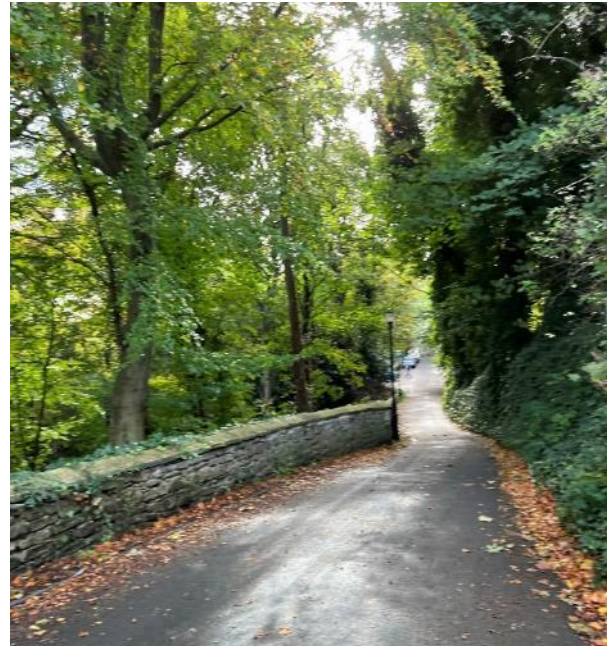
Opposite is Durham School’s Halls of Residence, comprising three substantial detached, low density, buildings set well back from the main street in spacious grounds, and in a staggered arrangement.



Fig 61 above. Images above show the main street pattern of the character zone. South Street levels off at the south end remaining tightly enclosed by buildings, walls and trees approaching Pimlico (top). The street continues south, and forks west marked by the corner building of No 4 Pimlico (bottom).



Fig 62 above. The street continues south, dipping and rising up to its junction point with Quarryheads Lane (above left). The buildings disappear from view and the street becomes a narrow and winding green corridor (above middle). The route of Margery Lane southwards leaving the city from the street's junction with Crossgate and Crossgate Peth, the former school at Priory Orchard stands on the left hand side (above, right).



Building plots in these areas are mixed with Pimlico having small loosely square and rectangular plots tightly packed. In contrast at Durham School the legible building plots are wide and less regular. In contrast to both, the halls of residences are much larger, with long driveways, and the buildings vary in orientation.

The final area is Priory Orchard located within the northwest corner of the allotment gardens. It sits within a dip in the landscape with a cul-de-sac layout of two separate blocks and the former Victorian school detached, bounding the main street on slightly lower ground to the footway.



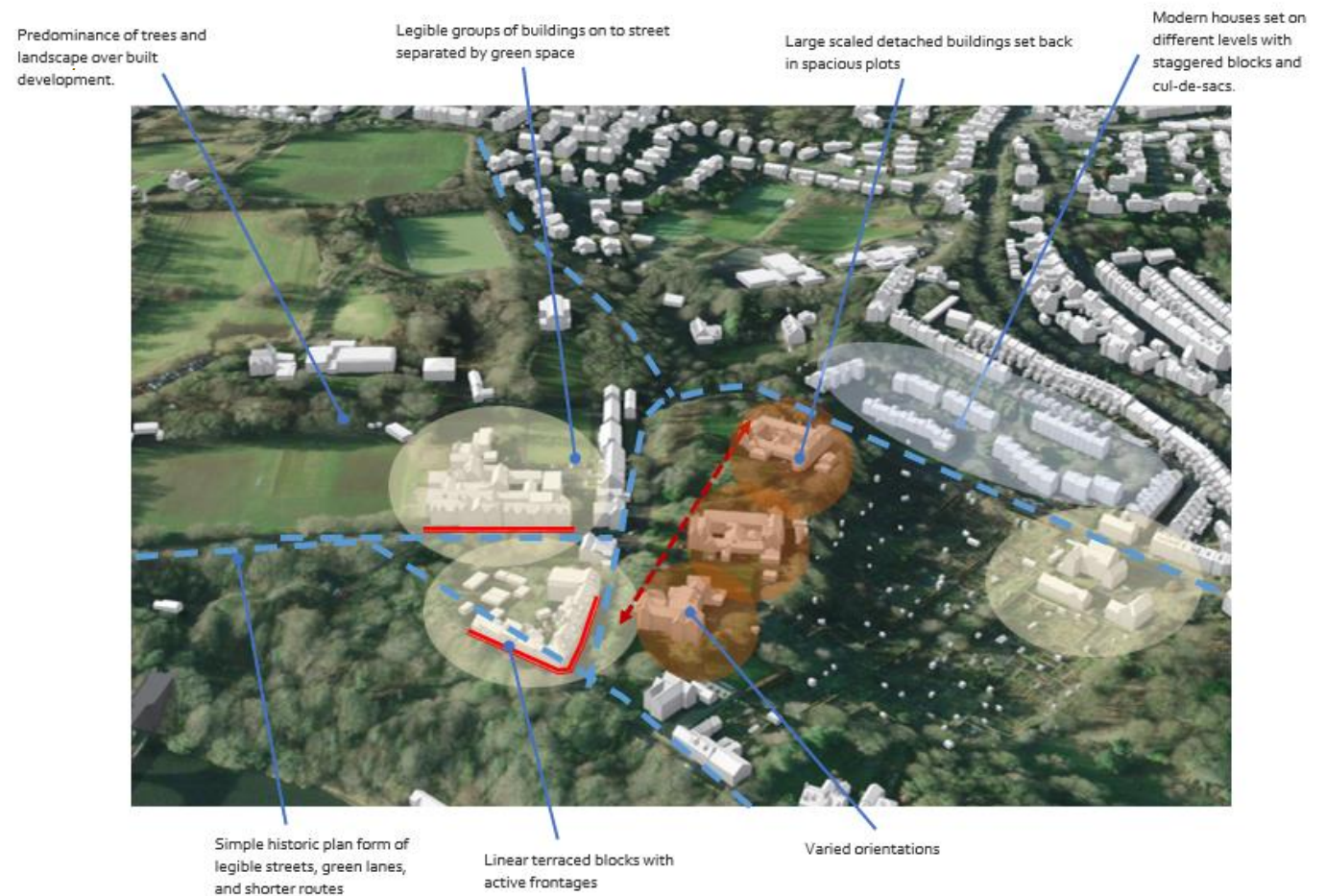
Here Margery Lane curves gently to the south, with the east side undeveloped. This contrasts with the west side where there is a good quality late 20th century infill residential development with an open plan layout.

The overall layout of the streets and spaces is less formal and regulated compared to other parts of the conservation area, and with a quieter rural and academic sense of place.

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

- Low density dispersed layout with historic buildings in groups separated by greenery with a positive semi-rural character.
- A legible medieval plan form including the main routes, informal green lanes, and connections to the riverbanks.
- Positive mixture of terraced buildings with a strong building line framing the carriageway, and large detached buildings set back in private grounds.
- Enclosed intimate streets created by the buildings and dense greenery.
- Varied and distinctive local topography positively shaping the streets and spaces.
- Predominance of landscape on urban edge enhancing character and setting of buildings.
- Positive contrast between the enclosed streets and broad green open spaces.
- Historic enclosed green lanes creating sub environments with a distinctive character.
- Tiered modern housing development with its own inwards character.

Fig 63 below. 3D modelling highlighting key attributes found within the area



Throughout the area there are many public footpath linkages that are important elements of its plan form. These include Clay Lane that links Neville's Cross and Observatory Hill areas with Margery Lane. Footpaths also cross the hill and pastures below leading to Quarryheads Lane and continue down through the woodland down to the riverbanks. These lanes contribute very positively having their own distinctive character, enclosed by dense greenery with Clay Lane incised in the landscape in parts.

This character area has an abundance of greenery that informs a major part of its special character and distinctiveness. Although falling outside the character zone boundary, the outer bank of the River Wear gorge plays a significant role in its setting. The riverbanks woodland at South Street Banks encloses the entire eastern edge of the area from the end of South Street down to Quarryheads Lane roundabout where it merges into Elvet Banks. The woodland is broad leaved, it developed in the last three centuries.

An important part of the land form are the slopes and ridges around the city that provide a range of views expressing the relationship between the buildings of the town, Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site and the landscape, the most important within this area being Observatory Hill.

The very steep hill is surrounded by open pasture with the summit consisting of rough open enclosed from the road by hedgerows and dense shrubs. It is a well-used recreational area criss-crossed by informal tracks. It is one of the important green wedges in the city.

Part of the character of Observatory Hill and its biodiversity value have been adversely affected in recent years due to ploughing of the largest field and there have been changes to the unmade path access points at the foot of the hills.



Fig 64 above. The view from Prebends Bridge northwards along the River Wear corridor. It shows the dense riverbanks woodland on the edge of the character area and wider conservation area (left side) that provide containment and an intimate setting.

At Durham School, the green spaces are private, but some areas are visible from the public domain. Notably, the land rises steeply within the rear part of the site to the west; where the private chapel is located with the woodland behind providing a scenic backdrop.

The mature trees around the accommodation blocks and the school sites boundary is dense and dominates the surrounding streets and lanes.

The streets and spaces are enhanced by the dense overhanging tree cover and in limited places, green roadside verges, and hedgerows where the road widens, and character becomes more urban leading back into the city centre.

Clay Lane has been an important pedestrian route into Durham since the medieval period and continues to serve as a major pedestrian artery into the City Centre. It forms one of the green corridors linking the riverbanks with countryside outside the City and provides an important dark corridor pedestrian-only connection.

The allotment gardens on the east side of Margery Lane are nestled between South Street, St Margaret's Church, and Durham School. They provide an important large green space, a community asset, and wildlife haven.

The gardens have historic significance. The site has been cultivated since the middle ages and was once the Cathedral's vegetable garden and fishponds; it is thought that the old quarry in the allotments was the source of the stone used to build the Cathedral. Clay Lane, St Margaret's Allotment and Cemetery are also identified as important local green spaces in the City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan.

Fig 65 below. *The roadside verges and street trees at Briardene, hedgerow and treed boundary to the halls of residence at Grove Street, Observatory Hill, and Clay Lane.*



Fig 66 below. An aerial map and images identifying the key green assets within the character area.



3.3.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing

There is no cohesive character or predominant architectural style in this area, but this serves to demonstrate individual development of the area and creates its own positive sense of place.

At Pimlico, the terrace facing onto the corner and north onto Grove Street dates from c.1899 constructed from brick with orange terracotta dressings and some intricate detailing. In contrast, the properties facing east are likely 18th century comprising of much simpler cottages, with symmetrical façades (below).



Fig 67 above The varied brick and rendered historic buildings fronting Pimlico.

Many of the buildings at Durham School do not feature prominently in the public domain, the exception being the imposing south frontage and gateway buildings that face Quarryheads Lane (below). This forms an important landmark at the road junction, built c.1843 by Salvin & Pickering, with the gateway added later c.1972. It is an imposing large two storey Victorian Gothic building its presence increased by the narrowness and enclosure of the street.



Fig 68 above. The splendid Victorian Gothic Durham School.

The north side of the school site is informed by the Music Centre and adjoining Porter’s Lodge building bounding Margery Lane. It dates from c.1889-1904, comprising a long liner plan of two storeys and eleven bays in total, it is of a hammer-dressed sandstone construction in the Free Jacobean style.

The school’s private chapel is mostly hidden from view but is seen from the main archway of the gateway building and it is a significant historic landmark within the site because of its elevated position. It dates from c.1924 and is one of the school’s war memorials with its stone walls engraved.

The three large, detached buildings forming the Schools halls of residences, are individually designed and distinctive buildings. Trinity Hall is the oldest dating from the mid-19th century, in the Gothic Revival style. To the west is Caffinites c.1913, a wide building with three storey treble gabled frontage and notable stone detailing. The final building in this group is Poole House, c.1824 that is a large Arts & Crafts style villa.



Fig 69 above. The impressive Trinity Hall.



Fig 70 above. *The Observatory.*



Fig 71 above. *Observatory House.*

Durham University's Observatory building (top left) stands in isolation on top of Observatory Hill and goes unnoticed in the context of the main streets, yet it is a very significant building. Dating from c.1839 by Anthony Salvin, it is of a Greek cross-plan form with a two storey three bay central range and one storey front and rear ranges. Its most notable feature, the central copper dome flanked by four pediments. A building type and style unique within Durham City.

To the south is Observatory House dating from the early 20th century, formerly two dwellings. It was successfully converted into a single contemporary family home. The building is aesthetically distinctive within this character area, yet its historic form and character remains legible.

The most notable of the last group of buildings at the north end of Margery Lane is St Margaret's Centre (top right) The former school dates from the late Victorian period. Constructed from traditional stone and slate with prominent gables and stone chimneys, a historic focal point at the roadside. Its historic character has been eroded by the installation of unsympathetic modern upvc window units.

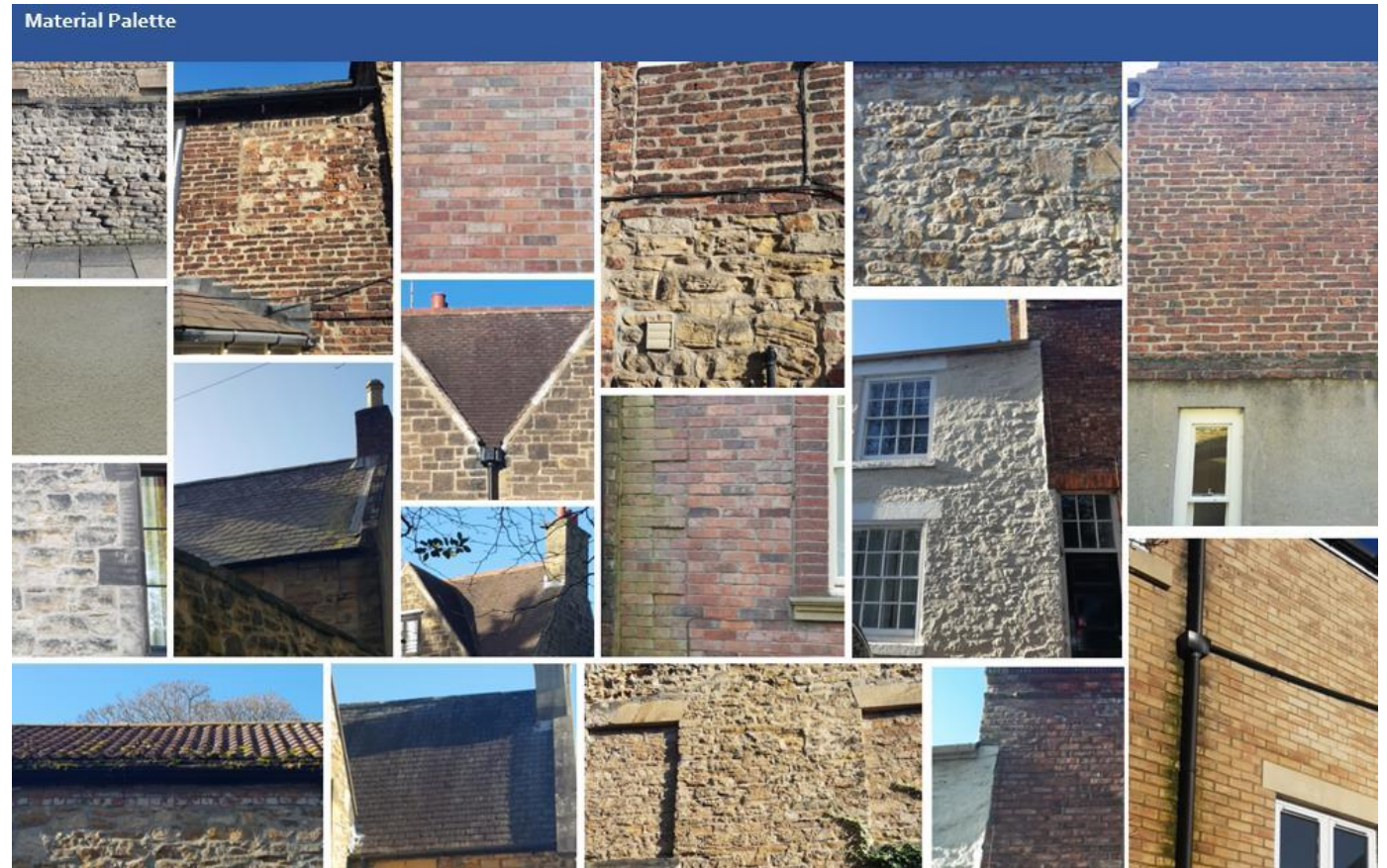


Fig 72 above. *St Margaret's Centre a former school of the 19th century.*

Resulting from the different building ages and architectural styles, their status and essential characteristics, the character area is of high architectural interest and aesthetic quality.

The area has a rich palette of traditional materials with reddish-brown handmade brick, polite smooth red brick with varied colour tones, warm sandy-coloured sandstone, and roughcast render. Roof covering materials are a mixture of Welsh slate, red tiles, and terracotta pantiles, with the occasional use of tiles. The Durham School buildings are of darker roughly coursed squared sandstone with ashlar dressings. The buildings at Pimlico are notable for their deep red terracotta brickwork. There are some limited examples of modern smooth render and buff brick that are in keeping with the respective buildings.

Brick and stone are also used for banding, window dressings, quoins, carvings, and eaves corbels that add patterning and detailing enhancing the quality of the building facades. They are also important in indicating the buildings different ages, function, and status.



Architectural Detailing Palette



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

- Distinctive architectural designs enhanced by variety signifying different building ages, uses, and status.
- High quality architecture creating a strong identity and character of high aesthetic quality.
- Historic buildings varied but with unifying characteristics and key groupings.
- Positive mixture and contrast between simple historic cottages, standing alongside buildings embellished and decorated, and grander large-scaled buildings, adding interest and character.
- Architectural uniformity with proportioned, vertically emphasises facades.
- The rich palette of historic/traditional construction materials, the mixture creating different tonal and texture contrasts.
- The well-preserved historic street frontages.

Negative elements (buildings)

Within the character area no buildings are identified as impacting negatively.

Fig 73 above. *The streetscene along Pimlico demonstrating the high quality and diversity of the historic buildings.*



Negative elements (alterations)

The historic buildings in this area are intact in terms of retention of traditional materials and period features. The exception is found at St Margaret's Centre where the late 19th century school has insensitive bottom opening uPVC casement windows.

3.3.4 *Ambiance and pedestrian experience*

The character and ambience within this character area is markedly different to the others that are situated within the busier urban and commercial environment of the city centre. In contrast this area is located on the urban edge that is a much quieter and tranquil place. This is despite the presence of the main route into the city via Potters Bank and the surrounding dense areas of modern housing in the west. However, the roundabout can be noisy and congested at peak times, while the route of Margery Lane is a short cut into/out of the city and again is busier at certain times of the day.

The character is semi-rural and more academic focused rather than residential, as it is dominated by Durham School and its halls of residences. As a result, footfall can be high with school pupils, and students using the area to access the peninsula, science park site and nearby colleges. This also generates more noise which is increased when the sports pitches are in use. Nevertheless, the ambience away from Potters Bank remains subdued. It can be disturbed by the buzz of activity at the school including children playing that is part of the historic soundscape.

Due to the high amount of tree coverage, overgrown and overhanging vegetation, boundary walling, and built development lining the streets, it is very enclosed, shady, and sheltered.

This is a fundamental part of its character, but the area is unwelcoming at night with limited lighting provision.



Fig 74 above. *The informal path up through the woodland from Pimlico to Durham School on Quarryheads Lane.*

Most of the time along Pimlico and Margery Lane vehicle traffic is generally limited. When there are parked cars in Pimlico due to the enclosed nature of the street and narrowness of the footway, provided along one side only, it can feel congested, and this detracts from the historic, intimate feel to the space.

Along Grove Street the impact of traffic decreases as it widens with some dedicated and in-plot parking provided at the school.

Aside from this, the street is accessible with a series of important pedestrian links down to the riverbanks and Prebends Bridge. It is therefore a popular route for walkers, joggers, and cyclists.

The main street at the north end of Margery Lane is affected by a high amount of traffic, pedestrian activity and thus noise, due to the proximity of the busy road junction at Crossgate Peth, Crossgate, Sutton Street and Margery Lane. However, the allotment gardens provide an invaluable quiet retreat and community recreational facility. Along Margery Lane, the footway is very narrow and movement in the north part is sometimes impeded by refuse bins on-street.

Clay Lane has been an important pedestrian only route since the medieval period and remains as such today connecting the area to Crossgate Peth, Darlington Road, and Neville’s Cross through the housing estates. Like Blind Lane in Crossgate, it is a very quiet, informal, and winding route, fundamental to the city-wide route network.

There are other important informal lanes connecting the area to the riverbank’s footpaths. These are significant by representing the way in which historic approaches to the cathedral may have once looked and been experienced.

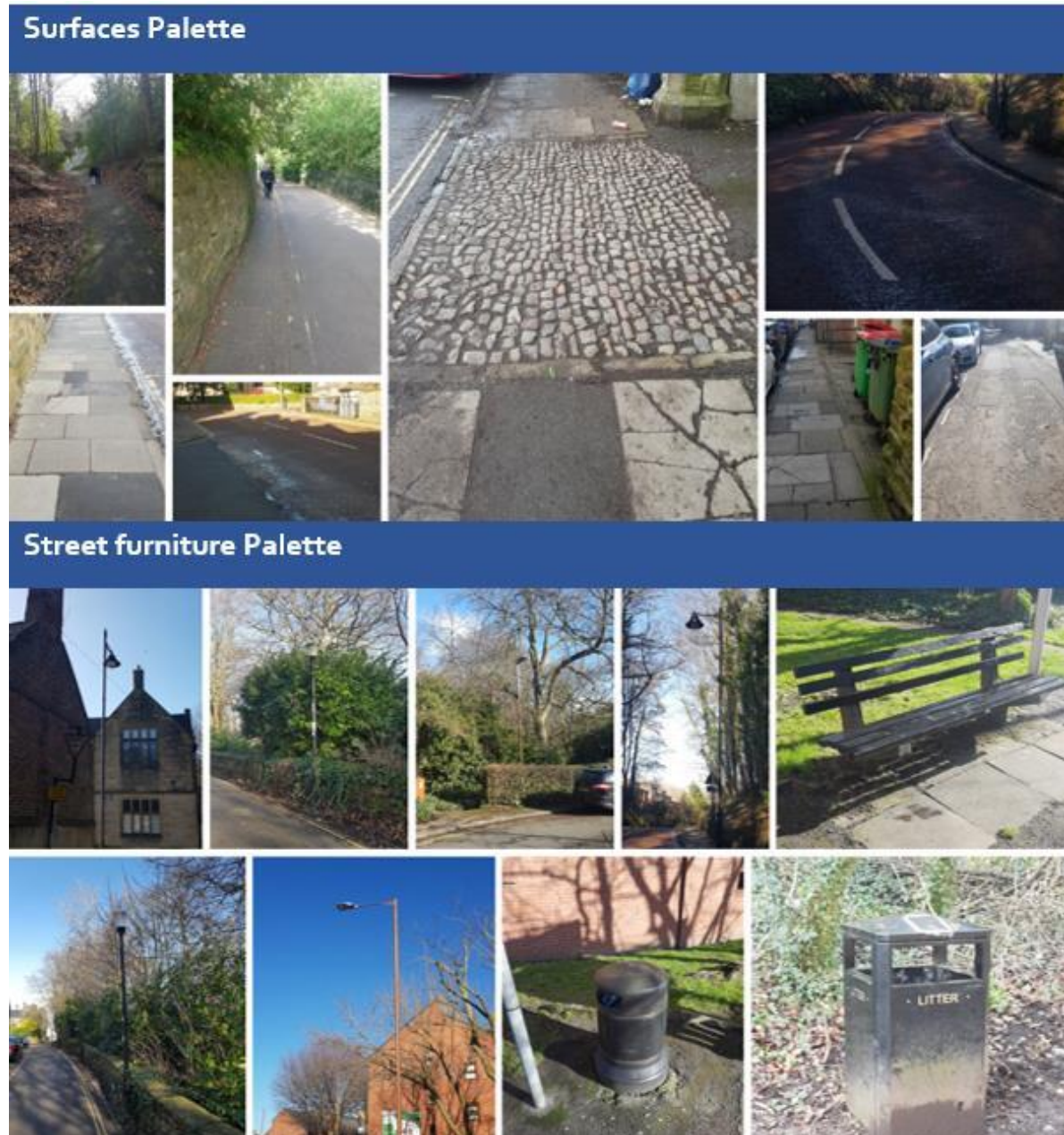
The surfacing is mostly standardised across the area, comprising of tarmacadam, concrete kerbs, and paving flags. The tarmacadam is mixed with a black surface finish along Pimlico and red-chipped along Margery Lane and Grove Street which is more visually appealing.

Road surfacing is deteriorated to different degrees and places that suffer from a higher amount of cracked and broken paving flags. Some flags have been insensitively replaced with tarmac that is visually detracting.

There are areas of positive traditional floorscape for example along the north side of Durham School onto Margery Lane where there is a long section of granite setts, which continues up to the entrance of Clay Lane. The driveway entrance to Trinity Hall is important comprising of stone sets and stone edging, which complements the stone gate piers and walling.

Clay Lane and the public rights of way over and around Observatory Hill and those linking Durham School and Pimlico to the riverbanks are a mixture of tarmac and informal dirt tracks.

Only a limited number of street furniture items are found, reinforcing the area's semi-rural character. There is an occasional seat and litter bin and some signage that is not very positive. Lighting columns are all of different modern styles that appear mismatched.



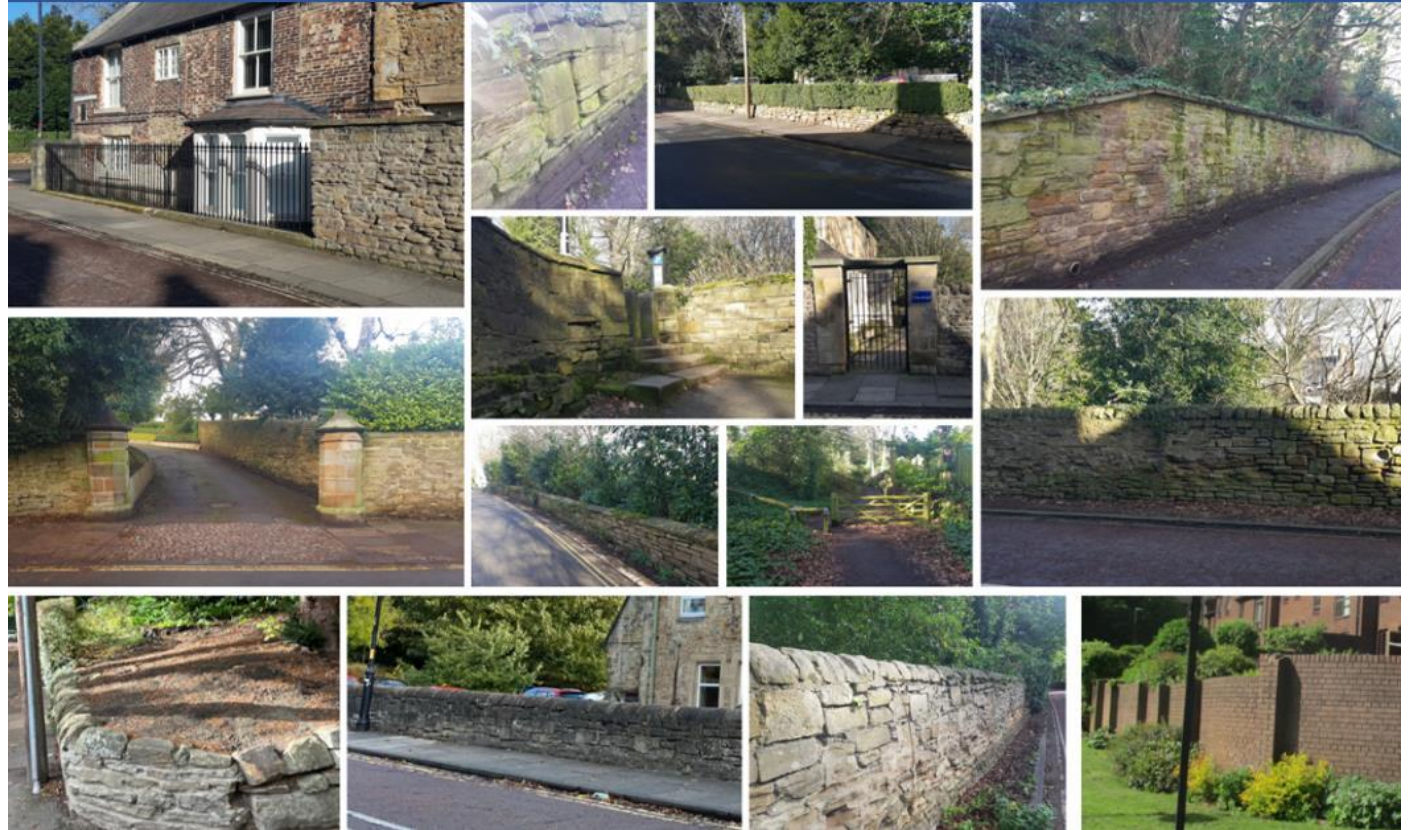
Boundary treatments are both common and important positive characteristics of the area. They demarcate the individual building plots, provide clarity to the private and public realm, and reinforce the linear, enclosed, character of the streets and lanes.

Historic stone walls are prevalent, randomly coursed, with different flat, and half-round stone copings. Stone walls, varying in height and construction, bound sections of the carriageway along Grove Street and Margery Lane. Examples of traditional black metal railings can be found around Durham School and The Grove. There are notable heavy stone gate piers such as at Trinity House and St Margaret's Centre. Some sections of historic stone walling have collapsed, and others are in a deteriorated condition. Timber fencing is infrequent but there are sections at the entrance to Blind Lane.

At Briardene the modern housing estate is enclosed on its east side facing Margery Lane by tall brown brick walls with projecting columns, but the visual harshness in the streetscene is reduced by its deep set back from the roadside and softening by planting.

At Potters Bank, around the Observatory and Observatory House, boundaries comprise of a mixture of hedging and shrubbery, timber post and wire fencing, and timber fencing.

Palette of Boundary Treatments



3.3.5 Visual experiences

The area predominantly has a quiet inwards character where the strong enclosure generally prevents views out. It opens up moving north along Margery Lane back towards the city centre, and at Observatory Hill. As such, views are generally restricted but there are some significant views that contribute positively to the character and experience of the area.

The key views identified within this character area are:

View 1 – View west along Grove Street/Margery Lane

View 2 – View east along Grove Street

View 3 – View east from Margery Lane

View 4 – View north along Potters Bank

View 5 - View east from Observatory Hill

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



The spectacular panoramic view of Durham Cathedral from the summit of Observatory Hill, demonstrating its dominance over the city and dramatic skyline presence.

Image, © Krystal Tara, used with permission.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View west from Grove Street / Margery Lane.

Sequential view approaching Durham School from Grove Street and Margery Lane. The school buildings are hidden from view followed by there fine chanelled view towards Durham School where the impressive Gothic stone frontage provides a notable historic landmark.



View east along Grove Street.

An unfolding kinetic view of Durham Cathedral. The view is seasonal but impressive, approaching along the street the cathedral is hidden from view, but it then reveals itself firstly in glimpses before the view opens at the street's junction with South Street.

The view is seasonal with the cathedral mostly blocked by tree cover in the summer months.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View west from Margery Lane overlooking St Margaret's allotments.

A fine static viewpoint of Durham Cathedral's central and western towers in the sky line above the tree canopy with similar views provided from within the allotment gardens and adjacent at St Margaret's Centre. These views demonstrates the cathedrals dominance and drama within the townscape and landscape.



View north along Potters Bank.

Travelling into the city centre along Potters Bank there are no notable views, the route being enclosed by dense tree cover, but as the road turns and dips there is a chaneled view of the Cathedral's central tower framed by the trees.

The extent and quality of view is reduced due to the unmanged tree cover.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View northeast from Observatory Hill

One of the most impressive visual experiences in the city is from Observatory Hill, walking up the steep incline provides a sequence of views of the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site seen in its broad townscape and landscape setting.

On a clear day Penshaw Monument can be seen in the backdrop to the Cathedral.

Key Night-time View

Location 5, Observatory Hill



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

- Distinctive ambiance and experience compared to the other character areas owing to its quieter semi-rural feel.
- Strong verdant character provided by the riverbanks, school, and halls of residence grounds, along the lengths of the different streets.
- The intimate inwards character and sense of separation from the wider city centre.
- The green lanes providing sub-environments of different character and pedestrian experiences.
- The gradual meandering street line, rising and falling landform, that enhances the character.
- The historic boundary treatments that add to character and reinforce the feel of enclosure.
- The fixed, dynamic, and sequential views of historic focal points.
- The steep walk up Observatory Hill and the spectacular revealing view of Durham cathedral the summit provides.



Fig 75 above. *The historic “green lane” route of Clay Lane.*

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

Built form

- There is some visible historic masonry and render decay to one or two buildings.
- The Observatory and two buildings adjacent, that are vacant and fenced off.
- The visual appearance of some historic buildings is slightly marred by modern fixtures to front facades.
- One historic building has been identified having unsympathetic uPVC windows.

Urban spaces

- There is lower quality surface materials in some areas that detracts from the visual appearance of the streetscene.
- Inconsistent and deteriorated surfacing in places, and some poor patch repairs.
- Some sections of stone walling have collapsed with others in a deteriorated condition.
- Spaces can be cluttered and detracted by parked vehicles as peak times.

Green spaces

- Unmanaged trees in places is reducing the quality of views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.
- Change in character and biodiversity impacts to a large part of Observatory Hill.

Street furniture

- There is a limited amount of street furniture, so streets and lanes are uncluttered which is positive.
- Street lighting columns are a mixture of modern in different styles and different paint colour finish that are out of keeping with the area's character.

Threats

- Ongoing vacant status of the Observatory buildings and fabric decay.
- On going decline of those buildings and boundary walls where the historic fabric is deteriorated.
- Some sections of boundary walls may be at threat from collapse due to cracking and instability.

- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials.
- Continuation of insensitive surfacing material replacement and patch repairs.
- The potential threat from unsympathetic alterations to the unlisted buildings.

4. Condition of place and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats



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 shows most of the conservation areas scores as “Fair” – summarized as, **“the condition of the area is good, but there has 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	Overall Street Score
ALEXANDRIA CRESCENT	Fair
ALLERGATE	Fair
ALLERGATE TERRACE	Fair
ATHERTON STREET	Fair
BEECH CREST	Fair
BLIND LANE	Fair
BRIARDEAN	Optimal
BRIARVILLE	Optimal
BRIDGE STREET	Fair
COLPITTS TERRACE	Fair
CROSSGATE	Fair
CROSSGATE CENTRE	Fair
CROSSGATE PETH	Fair
EAST ATHERTON STREET	Fair
FARNLEY HEY ROAD	Fair
FARNLEY MOUNT	Fair
GEORGE STREET	Fair
GRAY'S TERRACE	Fair
GROVE STREET	Optimal
HAWTHORN TERRACE	Fair
HOLLY STREET	Fair
JOHN STREET	Poor
LABURNHAM AVENUE	Fair
LAMBTON STREET	Fair
LAWSON TERRACE	Fair
MARGARY LANE	Fair
MAY STREET	Fair

MISTLETOE STREET	Fair
NEVILLE STREET	Fair
NEVILLEDALÉ TERRACE	Fair
NEW STREET	Fair
POTTERS BANK	Fair
PALATINE VIEW	Fair
PERCY TERRACE	Optimal
PIMLICO	Optimal
PRIORY ORCHARD	Optimal
SOUTH STREET	Optimal
ST JOHN'S ROAD	Fair
SUMMERVILLE	Fair
SUTTON STREET	Fair
THE AVENUE	Fair

4.2 S.W.O.T analysis

Strengths

- Is a fundamental part of the medieval town plan of the city, that is preserved and legible.
- Integral to the setting of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site and setting of the surrounding Durham City Conservation Areas
- High historic, evidential, architectural, and aesthetic value.
- Historic terraced grid patterns and block forms with strong active street frontages.
- Narrow, enclosed, intimate historic streets of high character.
- Series of significant historic routes, vennels and lanes.
- Strong historic identity and sense of place of differing character providing changing experiences, visual and illustrative interest.
- Variation of architectural style, creating high quality diverse street scenes.
- Prevalence of traditional architectural features and traditional materials in several streets.
- Important views with historic focal points and landmarks including Durham Castle and Cathedral.
- Unique topography, high landscape quality in the south.
- High number of green assets.

Weaknesses

- Low quality modern infill developments.
- Some buildings that do not reflect the predominant historic terraced form or historic grain of the area.
- Some buildings that stand out as being unkempt and unmaintained.
- Disuse of the Observatory buildings.
- Elevations detracted by modern fittings such as satellite dishes.
- Identified vacant/gap sites that detract from the streetscene.
- Trees being self-seeded and unmanaged that block, filter and reduce the value of important views.
- Insensitive changes to historic unlisted buildings, harming original uniformity and character.
- Low quality street surfacing in a poor condition in places.
- Material and visual amenity impacts resulting from utility company works.
- Collections of refuse bins visible in streetscene.
- Some car dominated streets.
- Some areas detracted by cumulation of street furniture including elements associated with traffic and parking.
- Some loss of boundary treatments and gardens to create parking areas.
- Some historic back streets are poor environment and detached from insensitive modern extensions.

Opportunities

- Replace negative buildings with sensitive building forms that draws inspiration from the positive characteristics of the area.
- Sensitive development of vacant/gap site appropriate to site and surroundings.
- Cycle of active tree management to improve reduced views and recover others.
- Public realm improvement works to street surfacing and street furniture providing a co-ordinated approach appropriate to historic context, character, and appearance.
- Improvements to green infrastructure in some areas with potential air quality net gains.
- Expand the existing Article 4 to protect the unlisted heritage asset from harmful change.
- Promote the reinstatement of lost traditional materials and period features.
- Promote and encourage fabric repair works to buildings, structures, and features.
- Encourage reinstatement of removed boundary treatments.
- Consideration given to parking and traffic arrangements to minimis impacts.
- Promote replacement of modern lighting columns in more appropriate styles.
- Encourage improvements to shop frontages and signage.

Threats

- Further decay and deterioration of historic building fabric.
- Continued incremental changes and unsympathetic repairs and alterations to historic building.
- Continuation of deterioration and insensitive repairs to street surfacing.
- Continuation of insensitive reinstatement resulting from works by utility companies.
- Further cumulative impacts from satellite dishes fixed to front elevations.
- Loss of surviving traditional floorscape that will dilute historic character.
- Continued long term status of vacant/gap sites that will deteriorate further and continue to attract vandalism.

Summary

The Conservation Area is in fair material condition and despite some weaknesses overall, the area has a high level of architectural and historic interest. Nevertheless, there are several 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 the 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.

