

An aerial photograph of Durham City, showing the River Ure flowing through a lush green forest. In the background, the city's historic architecture is visible, including the prominent spire of Durham Cathedral. A semi-transparent white box with a light blue border is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

Conservation Area Management Plan

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Durham City Framwellgate 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. These include the topography and landscape, building ages and architectural styles, the materials used and detailing, street patterns and grain, land uses, the public realm, green spaces, boundary treatments, and views.

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

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

Green spaces are in abundance in Durham City, and they contribute significantly to its special character, distinctiveness, and sense of place. They vary greatly in type, use and extent, ranging from large areas of dense ancient woodland, local nature reserves, community allotment gardens, public parks, private front gardens in the street scene, 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 Framwellgate 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 and 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 street scene view along North Road the buildings framing Durham Castle dominating the skyline in the background.

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. The east side of the conservation area along the riverside is dominated by mixed use contemporary development providing a distinctive modern urban quarter to the city. This transitions into a rural environment north eastwards along Frankland Lane.



2. Overview



2.1 Location and description

Durham City is centrally located within County Durham, with the Cathedral and Castle at its heart set on a dramatic peninsula overlooking the River Wear. The city is well connected to many strategic road and rail routes, including the A1(M), and the east coast mainline.

The Framwellgate Conservation Area occupies the north western part of the city centre and is a complex mixture of historic and contemporary urban environments, and major landscape assets of different use and character. Its western boundary is defined by the River Wear corridor stretching from Framwellgate Bridge downstream to the east end of Frankland Lane. In the north it follows the railway line, the route of Framwellgate Peth and the outer edge of Flass Vale. The southern boundary is dictated by the railway embankments at Redhills, the line of Sutton Street and rear plots on the south side of North Road.

The area comprises of a medieval core of Framwellgate Peth, Millburngate, and Sidegate, along with the medieval manor at Crook Hall. It includes a major part of the city's 19th century expansion in the form of the commercial street of North Road, the distinctive site of Redhills Miners' Hall, and the residential streets around the viaduct. Finally, there is the large scaled mixed-use 20th and 21st century riverside developments along Framwellgate Waterside including the Raddison Blu

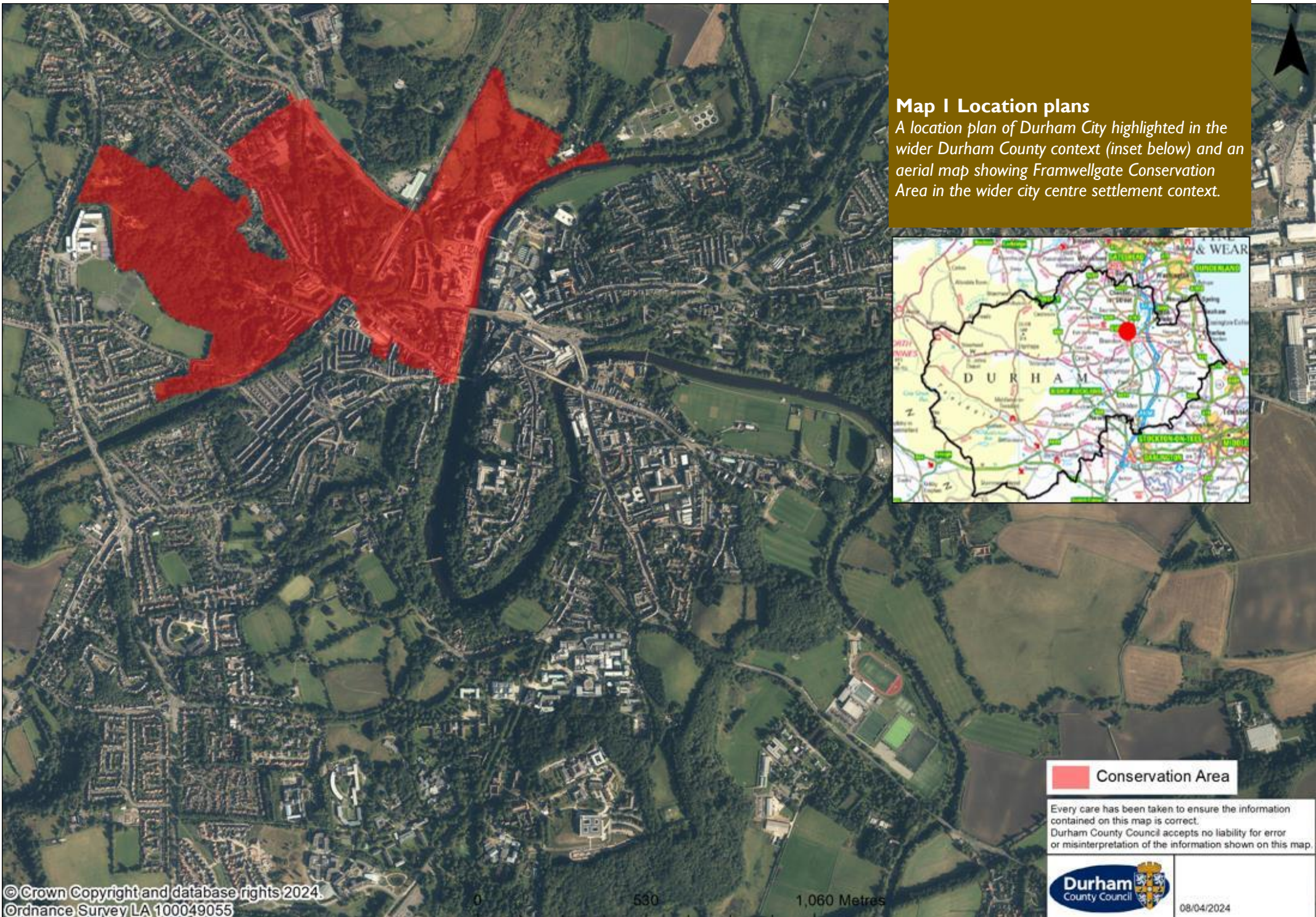
Hotel, Riverwalk, and Millburngate House redevelopment.

Landscape features include the reclaimed industrial and agricultural landscape surrounding Crook Hall on the steep river valley side that rises up to the railway line in the north and the wider open countryside on the urban limits of the city in the east. Also included are the local green assets of the Victorian public park at Wharton Park, and Flass Vale a historic area of woodland containing grassland and marshland habitats and allotment gardens.



Fig 3 below. A selection of images showing the main streets and routes of Framwellgate Peth, North Road, Sidegate, and Redhills Lane






Map 1 Location plans

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



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2.2 The conservation area boundary

An important part of the appraisal process is to provide an understanding as to how the boundary to the conservation area has been drawn, what is included and what has been excluded, and why certain physical features have been used to define it. The following provides a list of the key points that have informed the Durham City Framwellgate Conservation Area boundary identification process:

- Focused on the surviving medieval street pattern that is a fundamental part of the city's wider medieval town plan.
- Area loosely informed by part of the historic sub-borough established by c.1250, the "Bishops Borough."
- The north and east boundaries are logically defined by the River Wear and Railway line, respectively.
- The boundary excludes the former DLI Museum site as this is segregated from the main urban area by the railway line and is situated in more modern surroundings.
- The landscape around Crook Hall is included as it strongly relates to the built settlement and largely retains a historic context.

- The boundary is tightly drawn around Flass Vale as an important historic landscape feature that plays an important role in the areas aesthetic and setting as part of the ring of hills that contain the urban form.
- Valeside is excluded as it comprises of detached modern houses of no architectural or historic interest.
- The western boundary includes Redhills Cemetery and Gray's Terrace as the last historic elements before the dense area of modern housing.
- The boundary is drawn around St Leonard's School and no 4 North End that are included for their group value and historic interest relating to the Victorian Springwell Hall estate.

The conservation area represents an important piece of Durham City's historic townscape and a significant part of the landscape intrinsic to its character and sense of place. It has significant historic, evidential, aesthetic, and communal values, comprising of legible different characterful parts but with cohesive areas to merit designation which deserves careful management to preserve or enhance its special interest.

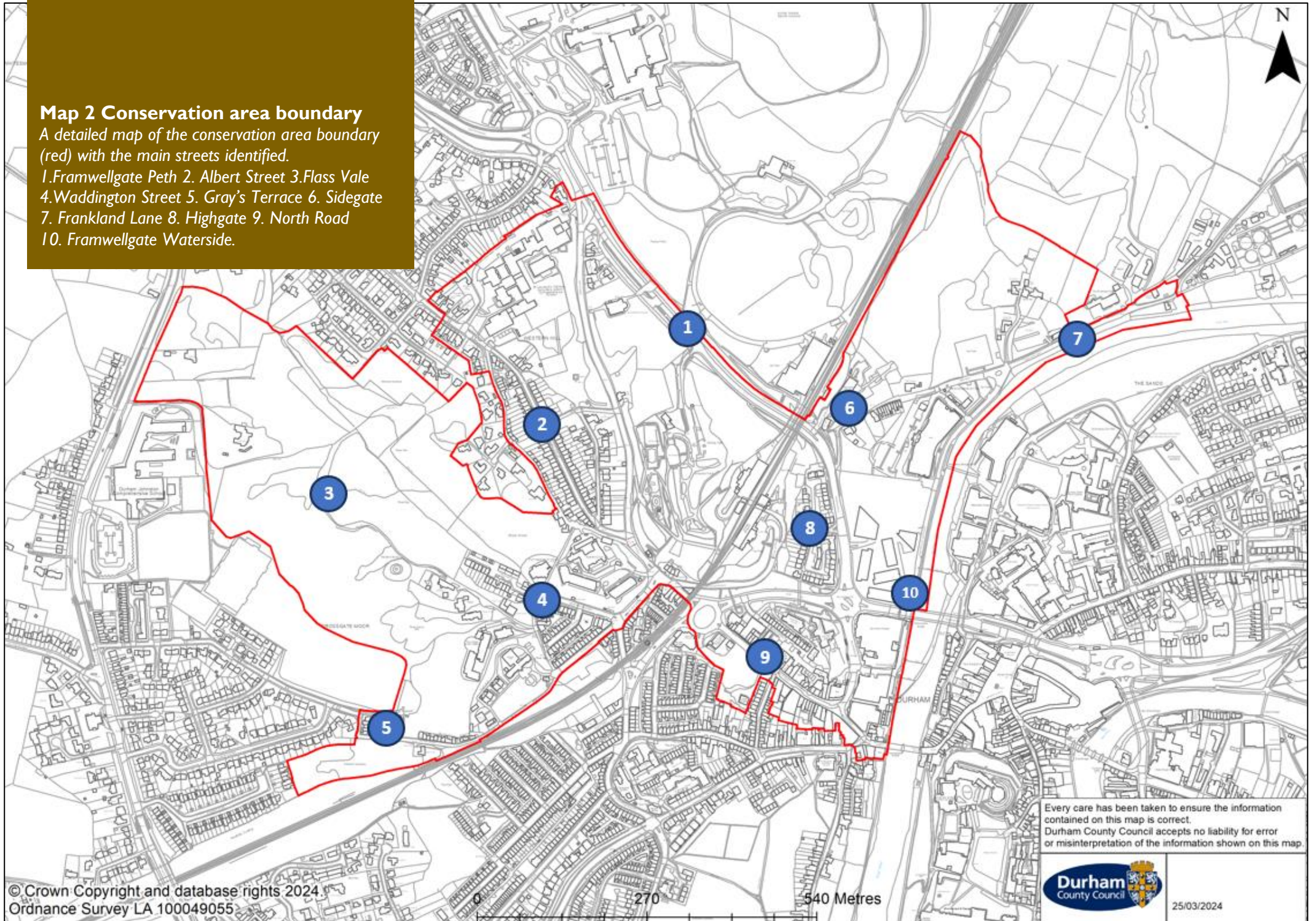
Fig 4 right. An image of the characterful Edwardian street at Fieldhouse Terrace.



Map 2 Conservation area boundary

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

1. Framwellgate Peth
2. Albert Street
3. Flax Vale
4. Waddington Street
5. Gray's Terrace
6. Sidegate
7. Frankland Lane
8. Highgate
9. North Road
10. Framwellgate Waterside



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.



25/03/2024

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’s high architectural quality and diversity ranging from the medieval Crook Hall to modest Victorian terraced housing.
- The historic landmarks including the Viaduct, former County Hospital, Redhills Miners’ Hall, and North Road Miners’ Hall.
- The high number of listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets.
- The juxtaposition of historic buildings and contemporary riverside developments as part of the evolution of the townscape.
- The variety in building uses and the architectural interest this creates.



Fig 5 above. An image of the fine terrace of Albert Street.

Historic interest

- The areas medieval origins as one of the city's old boroughs with the plan form from this period still legible.
- The areas importance as a fundamental part of the wider medieval town plan.
- The high historic interest of the group of buildings at Crook Hall, arguably the most significance outside the peninsula.
- The areas high interest forming a major part of the city’s 19th century development as an important part of the Victorian expansion of the city associated with wider industrialisation.
- The different historic streets, routes, paths, and lanes including the known pilgrim route from Frankland Farm through Frankland Park.



Fig 6 above. An historic cobbled street at Sidegate.

Topography and setting

- The unique and varied topography ranging from the flat floodplain to the steep river valley.
- The landform influencing character for example by creating staggered and stepped roofscapes and streetscapes.
- The intrinsic physical, spatial, historic, and visual relationship and setting contribution of Framwellgate Conservation Area to the other city conservation areas.
- The area’s value as an intrinsic part of the inner setting to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.
- The importance of the topography in terms of the different experiences and views it creates.



Fig 7 above. The wooded ridgeline behind Riverwalk.

Green and blue infrastructure assets

- The abundance and variation in the local green assets, some of which have historic interest, community and social value, and high visual amenity value.
- The smaller broader green spaces with visual amenity value that enhances the visual experiences of the place and softens the hard urban form.
- The value of the green spaces in terms of enhancing the setting of the buildings and the important natural separation they provide.



Fig 8 above. An image of the playground at Wharton Park.

Views

- The wide variation of views and the changing visual experiences they provide including views of significant historic landmarks and changing intimate historic streetscapes.
- The strong visual relationship between the area and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.
- The importance of designed views such as from The Battery at Wharton Park, and the sequential experience from Frankland Farm along Frankland Lane and Framwellgate Waterside.



Fig 9 above. A view of Durham Cathedral from Wharton Park.

Public realm

- The areas of good quality historic and contemporary public realm enhancing the setting of buildings and adding to the aesthetic of the place.
- The historic boundary treatments that reinforce the linear nature and sense of enclosure within the streets as well as defining building plots.
- The changing visual experiences, ambiances, and senses of place, with movement through different routes, streets, and spaces.
- The good connectivity and accessibility the area has with other parts of the city, including the riverbanks and peninsula.



Fig 10 above. The public realm at Framwellgate Peth.

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 features that has shaped its plan and built form and is a defining characteristic of its special interest. This is clearly evident in Framwellgate which features a varying hilly topography and range of distinctive landscape features that are important to its character.

The city lies within a wide belt of coal measure sandstone in a broad valley at the confluence of two rivers, the River Wear, and the River Browney in the west. After the Ice Age the area found itself underwater in a large lake of glacial meltwaters dammed by the receding ice flow to the north. The glacial deposits choked the old river valleys at the junction of the Browney and Wear, where the Wear was forced to rework its channels. This created wide flood plains but where the river cut through the solid rock to avoid the buried valley narrow steep-sided gorges were formed such as that seen in the meander around the peninsula at Durham City.

The intimate geography of the peninsula river gorge created a naturally and easily defendable site which was recognised by the community of St Cuthbert seeking a permanent and safe resting place for the remains of their saint.

The peninsula's high level also helped to create an atmosphere of complete dominance, high status and wealth for Durham Cathedral, and strength for the Norman Castle, with the Cathedral an "eye catcher" in the wider landscape.

The geographical form gave the city its name with 'Durham' derived from the Old English word meaning 'hill-island.' It also created many distinctive views where Durham Cathedral and Castle are spectacularly seen overlooking the fragmented townscape. This unique combination of geographical location, topography and iconic buildings have created a visually dramatic and internationally recognisable skyline.

Framwellgate sits within the side of one of the steep valley terraces that dip and then rise steeply towards the outer edges of the city centre. This is most obvious between Crook Hall and Framwellgate Peth, where the landscape is legible as a steep valley terrace falling down to the narrow floodplain below.

This landscape is a very distinctive part of the city that has been heavily influenced by 19th century industrial activity most notably former quarry workings. Traces of this former industry have now mostly been lost, having been reclaimed by nature. Beyond, the landscape comprises open farmland, and woodland, which rises steeply to a wooded horizon. Further east the topography becomes more undulating, moving out and away from the city.

In the west the modern highway and the 19th and 20th century development rise steeply northwards continuing on the elevated terraces above the main river valley. The landscape character has been positively influenced by 19th century modifications through features such as Wharton Park, St Cuthbert's Church, and the historic part of St Leonard's School (Springwell Hall).

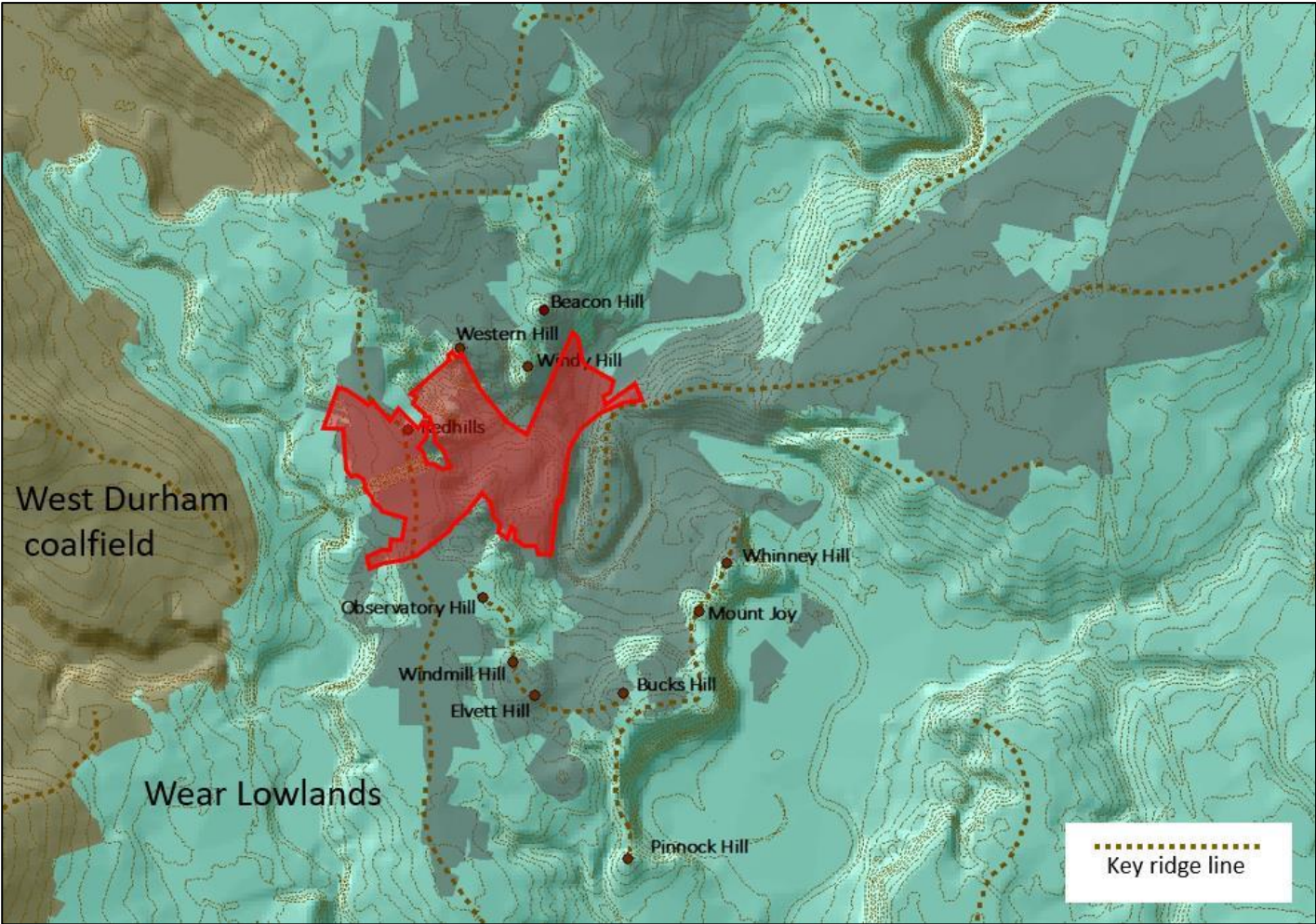
The area has a distinctive setting informed by a mixture of urban, river, and a landscape with a variation of uses and character. The street pattern and built form laid out over the varying topography creates a series of views across to the peninsula where Durham Castle and Cathedral are notable landmarks. The combination of the topographical, landscape and river has constrained development preventing urban growth and coalescence, which has shaped the built environment seen today and provides a visually rich contrast between buildings and landscape that achieves high visual quality.

Fig 11 Right. 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 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 Framwellgate 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.



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.

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

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

Framwellgate 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 provided moving from place to place.

For example, there is a significance experience along the riverside from Frankland Lane where the area is dominated by a largely undeveloped rural landscape approaching into the conservation area. This changes to one of 21st century urban riverside with the castle and cathedral at first hidden from view. This is followed by glimpses of the ancient monuments in the background with their visual presence and dominance growing when moving along the riverside footpath.

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, and how the townscape has evolved.

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. For example, moving down the busy commercial Victorian street of North Road, down to the quiet retreat of the riverbanks.

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

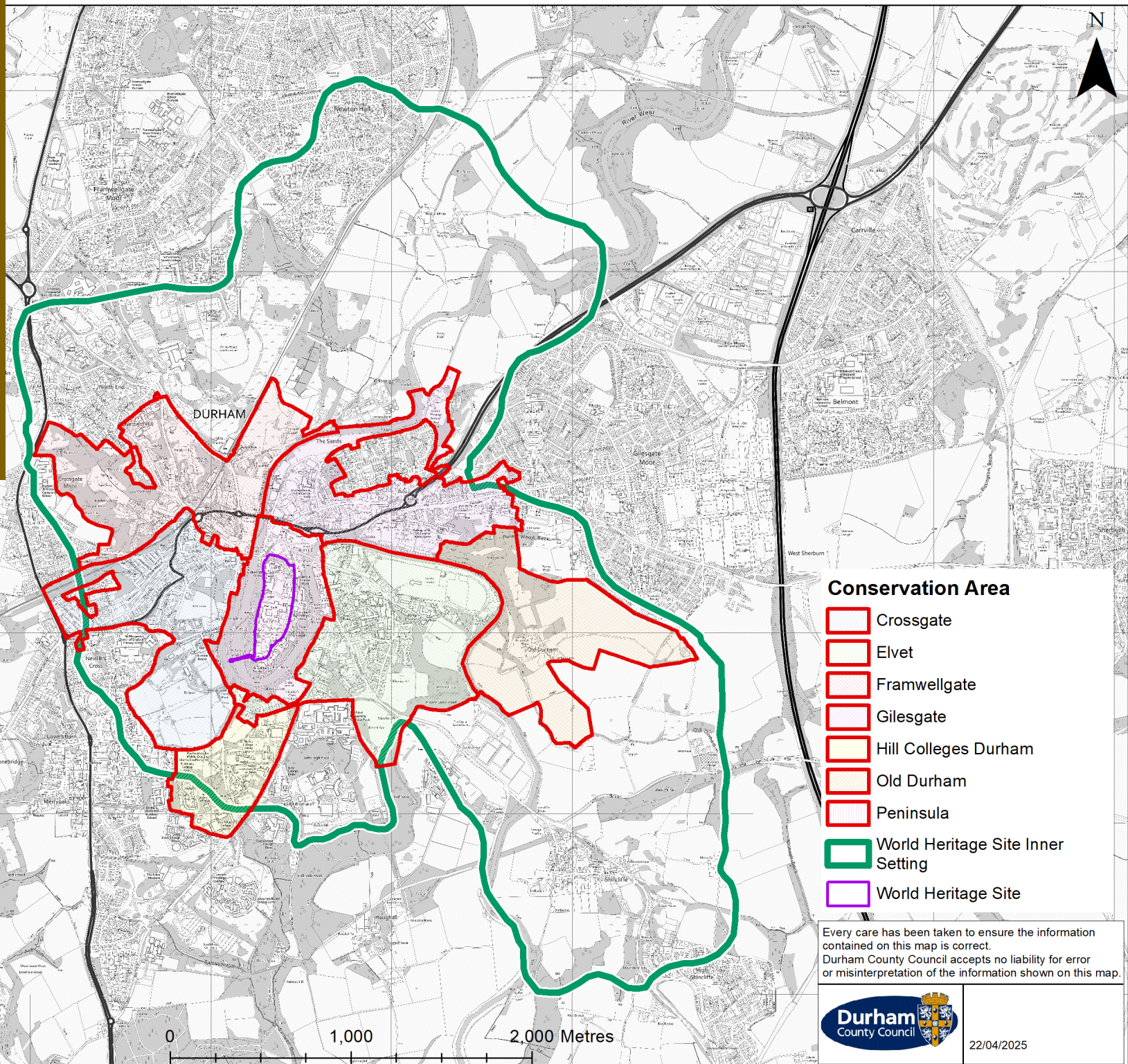
Outside the surrounding conservation area boundaries, the setting is mostly dominated by modern areas of housing and infrastructure of little interest with limited visual connections with the historic built settlement. Beyond is a very open form with robust corridors of farmland and woodland. The physical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

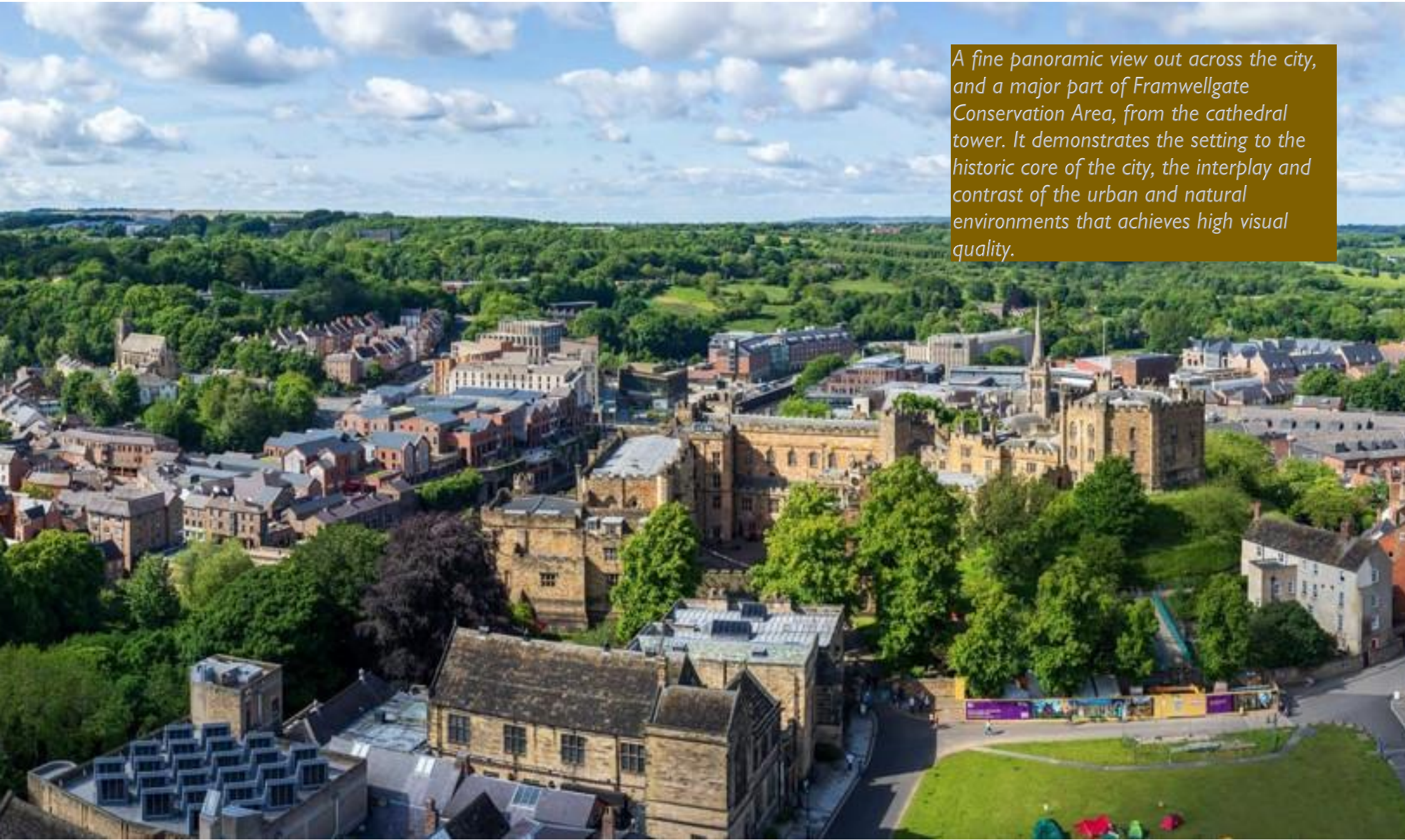
Map 4 Setting

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

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



Image, © CBA, used with permission



A fine panoramic view out across the city, and a major part of Framwellgate Conservation Area, from the cathedral tower. It demonstrates the setting to the historic core of the city, the interplay and contrast of the urban and natural environments that achieves high visual quality.

2.5 Historic development

The historic plan form of Durham City was like many medieval towns arranged in a way that the main roads and bridges directed movement into and through the main Market Place to collect tolls, trade merchandise and provide entertainment to travellers and pilgrims to Durham Cathedral. The city's suburbs grew up around three main entrances, Framwellgate and Crossgate between Framwellgate Bridge and the main roads from Newcastle and Lanchester in the north and north-west.

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

Framwellgate Conservation Area was located within the Bishop's Borough, with the area starting to grow in importance in the early 12th century, evidenced by Bishop Flambard

constructing the Old Bridge, now Framwellgate Bridge to link Framwellgate to the peninsula via Silver Street.

Framwellgate was an important route that headed northeast towards an ancient spring "Fram Well". Milburngate joined Framwellgate close by the river. This was historically a slum area, which linked into Kings Street (today North Road).

In contrast to the tightly knit medieval streets of the city centre, the countryside just beyond the urban edge supported a number of small estates, each centred on a manor house, the sole survivor of which is the 14th century Crook Hall, In the 17th and 18th century a further wing and a fine Georgian town house was added to the original medieval building remnants, and in 18th century two barns, a coach house, granary, and farmhouse were built.

Durham's population growth during the late 17th and 18th centuries was accommodated largely within its medieval boundaries. The eventual opening up of the city was brought about firstly by the decline in its military role, then later encouraged by the influence of the 18th century Paving Commissioners and their 19th century successors, the Local Board of Health, to seek improvements first in highways, then public health and sanitation. This was particularly relevant for the slum area of Milburngate which continued to deteriorate and was eventually cleared.

The area significantly changed in the 19th century, when in 1830 North Road was built to replace Kings Street and Framwellgate Peth as the main entrances into the city from the North. This provided direct access to Framwellgate Bridge and was designed to improve the overall traffic network of the city. As part of this many houses to the west of Framwellgate Bridge were demolished.

In 1857 Durham Railway Station was built by the London and North Eastern Railway Company. The station was built on high ground near Wharton Park on land partly owned by William Lloyd Wharton. In the same year, the company constructed the Viaduct over North Road.

The development of the railways had a dramatic impact on the city. Victorian terraces were built adjacent to the viaduct, spreading north and west, during mid to late 19th century.

In 1858 Wharton extended the grounds of his country house "Mount Beulah" (now St Leonard's School), to create a summer garden and terrace exploiting the spectacular views of Durham Castle and Cathedral, and to overlook the railway lines and station. Wharton bequeathed the use of Windy Hill to the City in July 1858 with Wharton Park becoming one of the first Public Parks in the region and was used to host the first Durham Miners' Gala in 1871. Other notable developments within the area during Victorian times are St Godric's Church built in 1864 by E.W Pugin, and the former County Hospital building.

During the 20th century there were significant changes in the area driven by inner city slum clearance programmes, the suburban development of private housing estates, new road building and large new commercial developments. This resulted in the medieval street pattern of Framwellgate being destroyed and major changes to the built form of North Road to make way for the new road building programme and associated works.

In the 1930s many the historic buildings and burgage plots on Framwellgate and Milburngate were cleared. The new through road was built in two stages from 1967 to 1975. This involved the demolition of housing around Framwellgate waterside, Castle Chare, beneath the Viaduct, Claypath, North Road and Gilesgate. This resulted in large areas of cleared land released for redevelopment.

It was during this period that commercial development appeared with The Gates Shopping Centre, Millburngate House and the National Savings Office being built. These sites have since been developed as part of the 21st century quarter of the city centre.



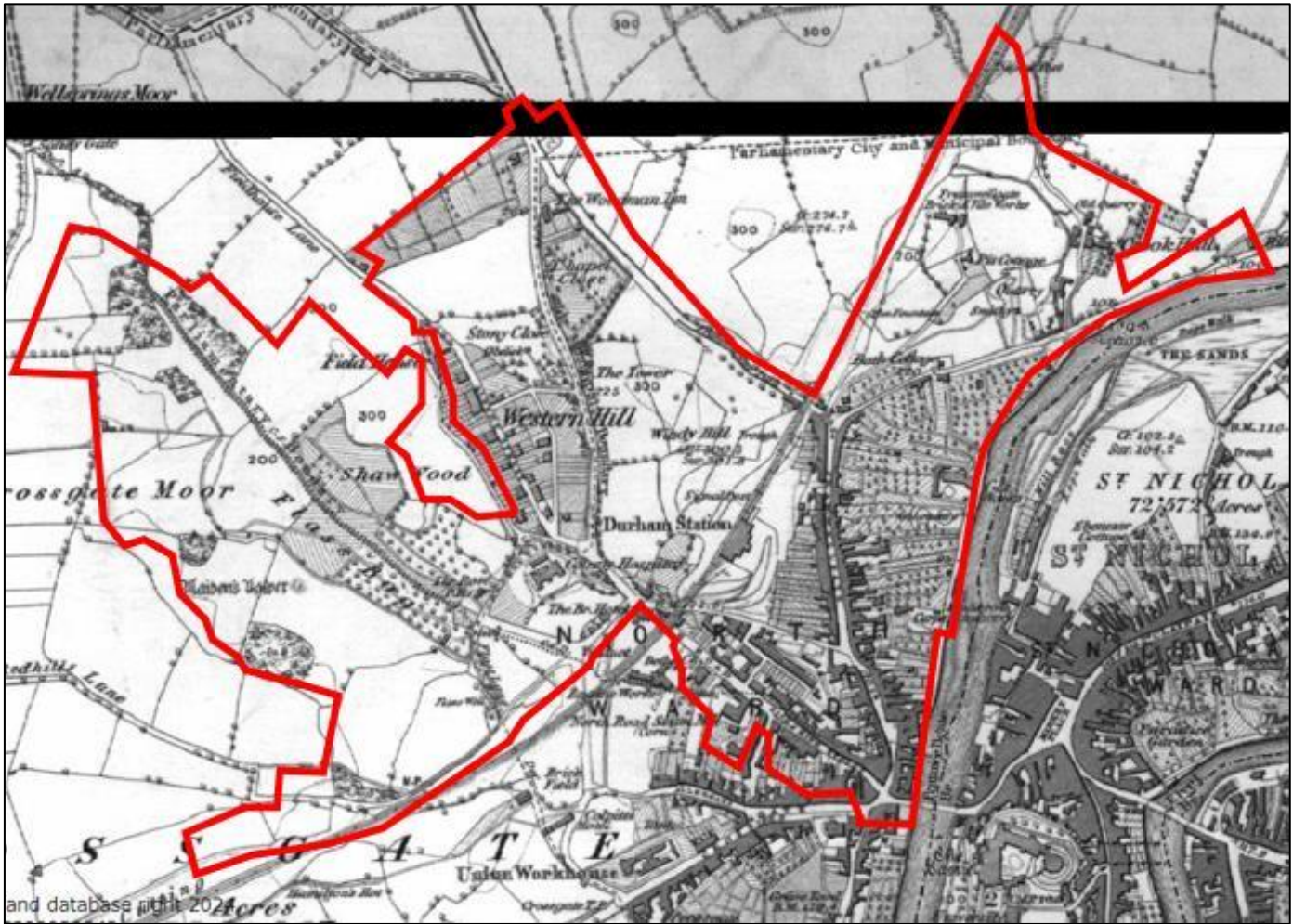
Fig 12 above. Speed's map of c1610 is one of the earliest representations of the city showing the general layout as seen today with street radiating out from the peninsula in all directions. In Framwellgate it shows the routes of Framwellgate Peth and Milburngate.



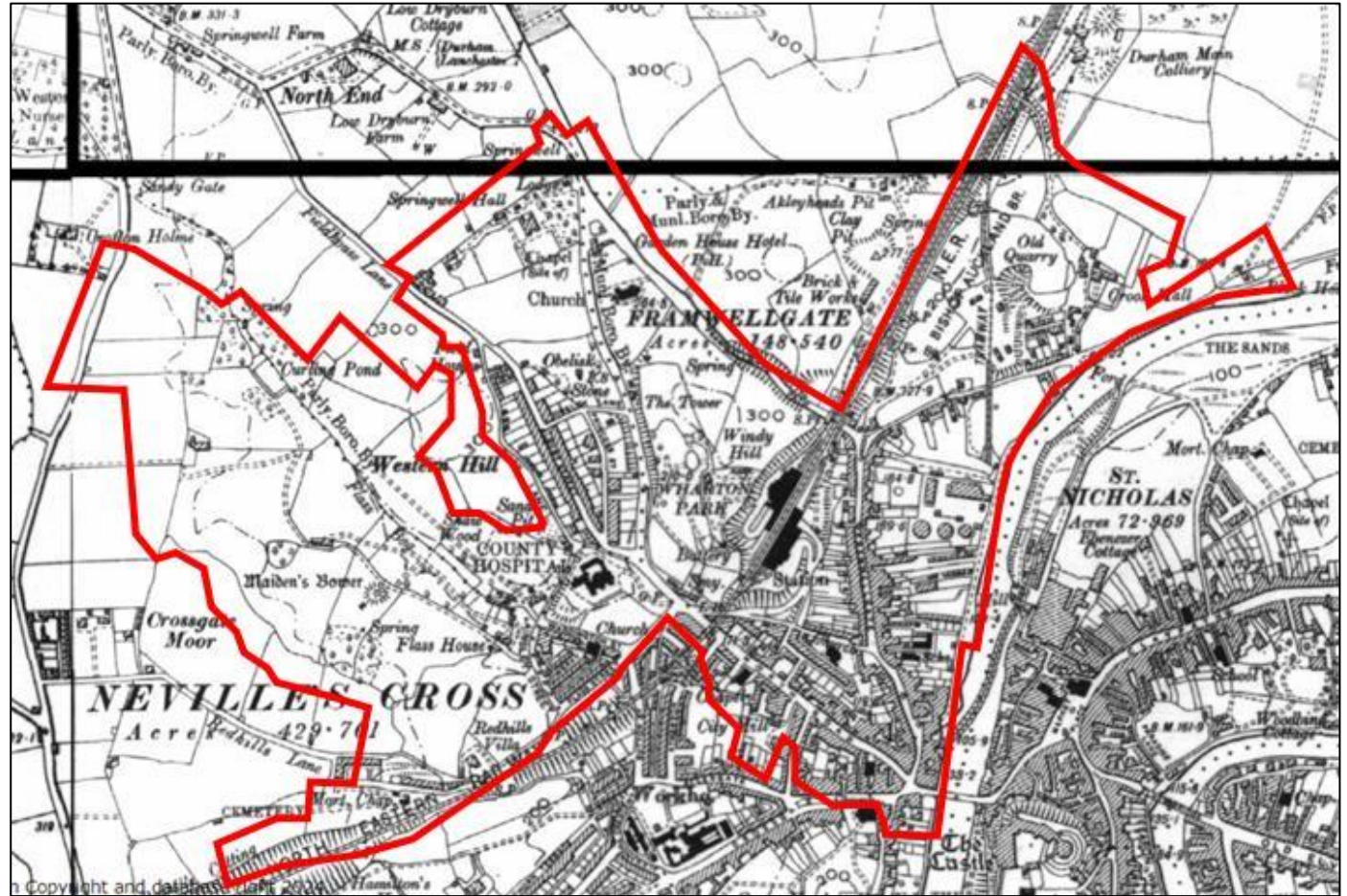
Fig 13 above. "Durham" by G Cole and J Roper map of c.1804-1810 shows north route named as "Milburn Gate and "Framwell Gate" surrounding by gardens and the "Mill Bourne" stream off the River Wear.

Fig 14. Right and continuing on the following pages is a sequence of historic ordnance survey maps.

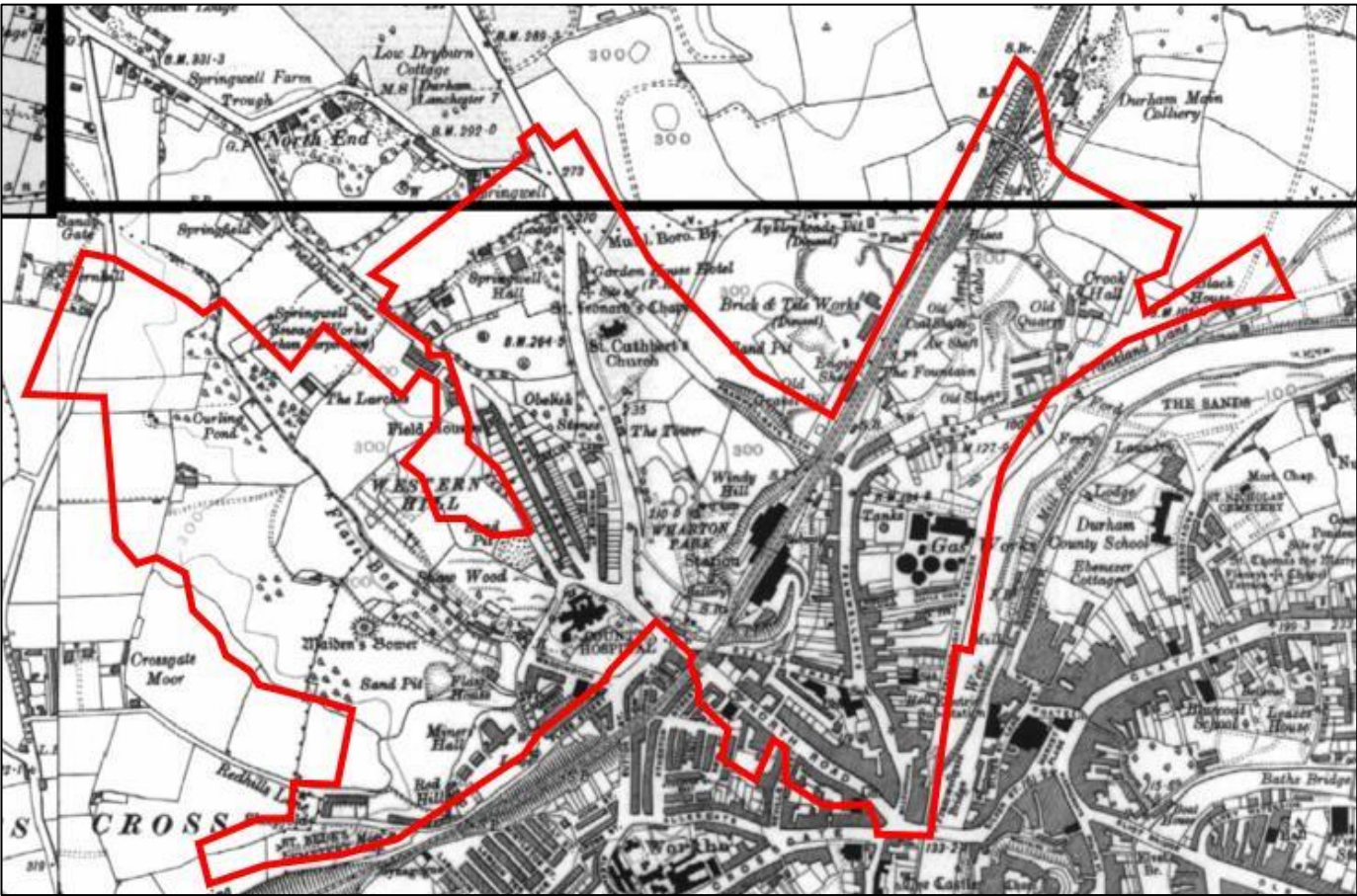
OS map c.1860, is one of best surviving guides to the plan form of the city, it shows the Crossgate area largely as its original medieval layout with residential properties concentrated along Crossgate, Allergate and South Street with much of the area outside of these streets undeveloped agricultural land. It includes several 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.



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.

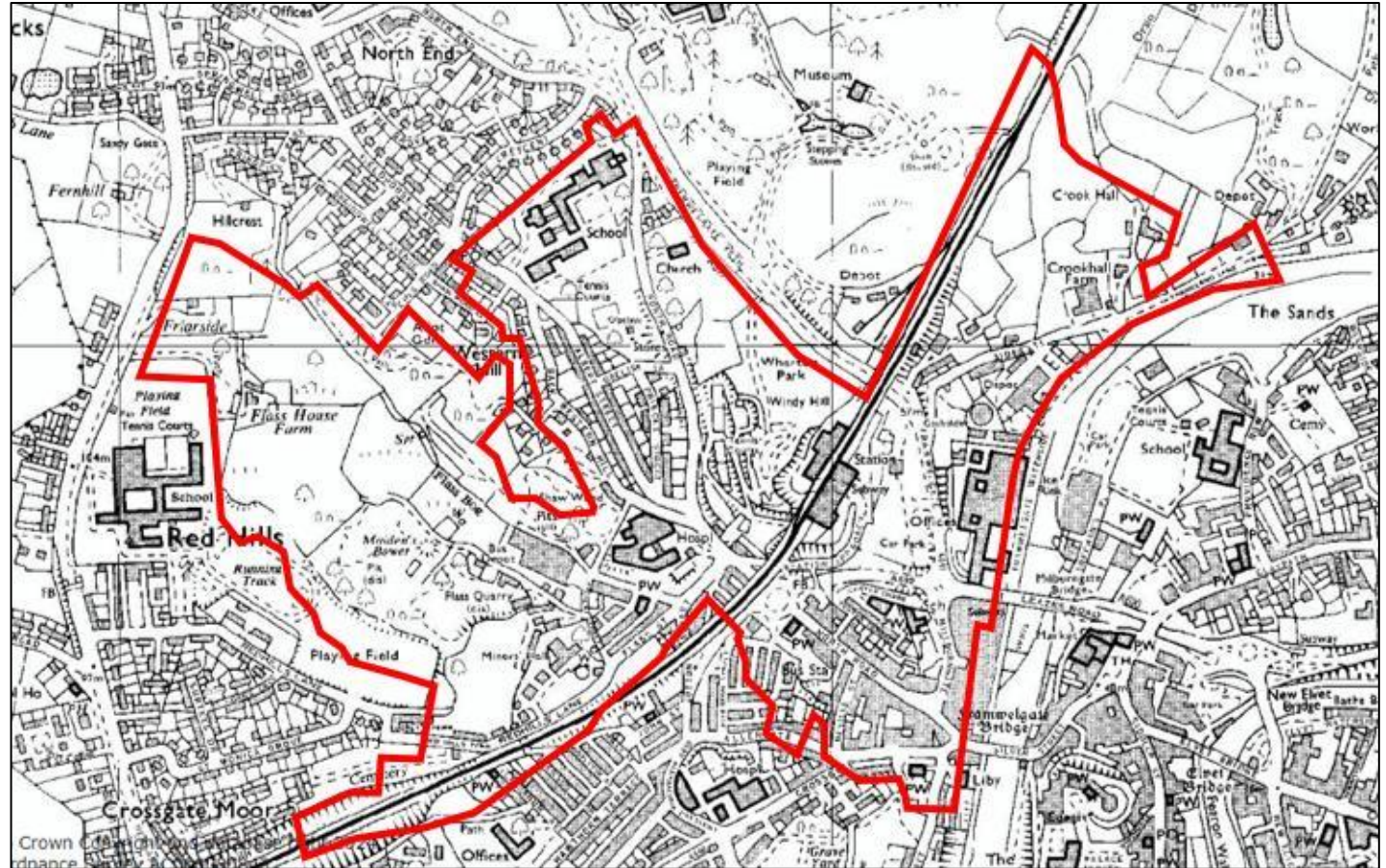




Fig 15 above. An original postcard along Framwellgate Peth c.1913, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00944),



Fig 16 above. View from the Battery Wharton Park c.1910-11, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00818),



Fig 17 above. Framwellgate Peth and Castle Chare c.1974, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00945),



Fig 18 above. North Road c.1930, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00990),



Fig 19 above. North Road c.1901 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR001842),

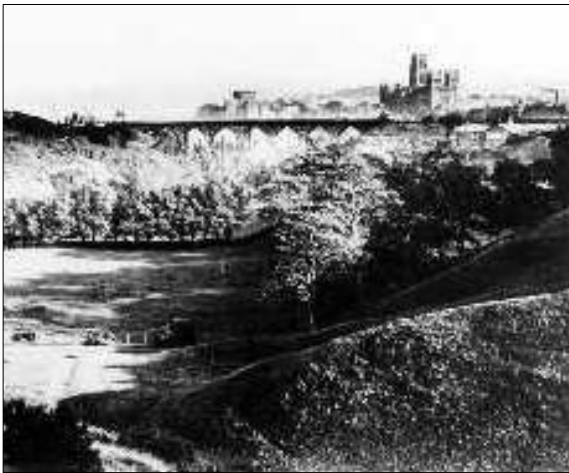
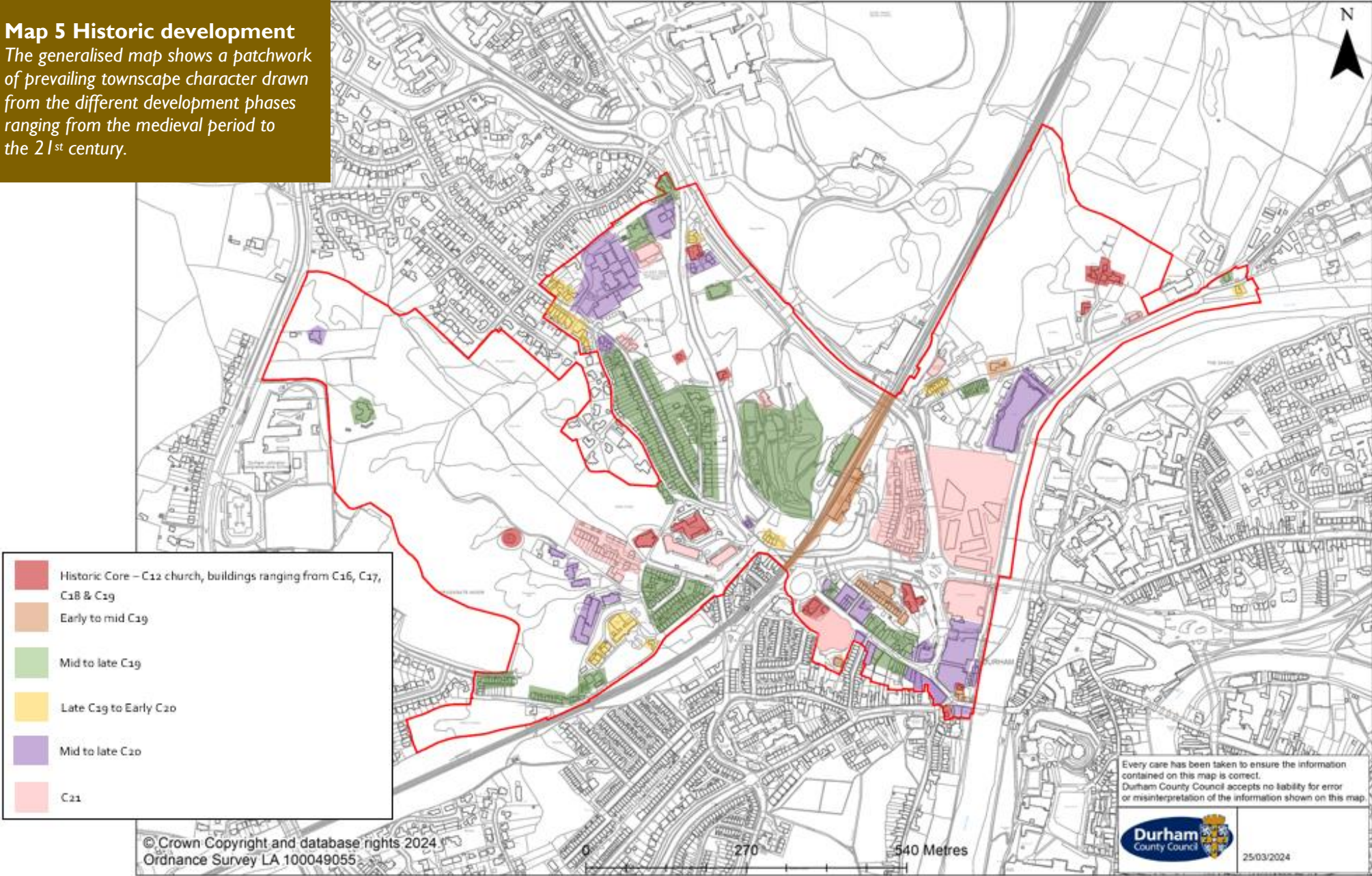


Fig 20 above. Durham City from Flass Vale, date unknown, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR001341),

Map 5 Historic development

The generalised map shows a patchwork of prevailing townscape character drawn from the different development phases ranging from the medieval period to the 21st century.



2.6 Heritage assets

Framwellgate Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset in its own right, contains numerous individual heritage assets including both designated and non-designated buildings, structures and sites that create its historic identity and distinctiveness making an invaluable positive contribution to the conservation area.



Fig 21 above. The impressive grade II listed Redhills Miners' Hall.

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

Definition of heritage assets

Scheduled monuments

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

Listed buildings.

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

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

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

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

Non-designated heritage assets and Locally Listed assets

There 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 22 below. The grade II* listed Durham Viaduct and grade II Church of St Cuthbert.



Map 6 Designated heritage assets

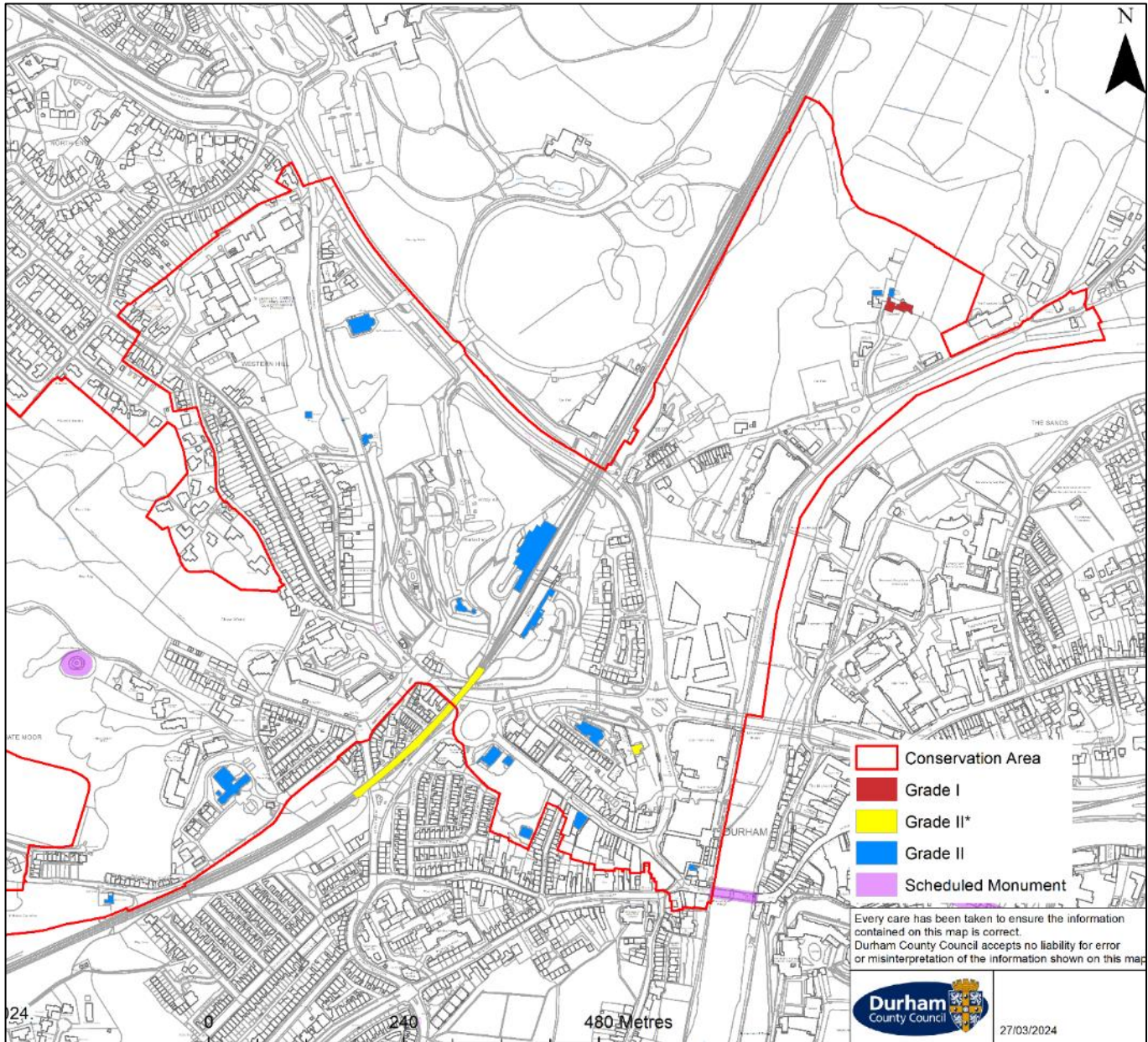
The map identifies the designated heritage assets within the conservation area.

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: Church of St Cuthbert, Lych Gate west of Church of St Cuthbert, Obelisk, boundary stone 10 metres north of Obelisk Lane junction, the Grey Tower, Railway Viaduct and Drinking Fountain, Methodist Church, No 27, Former Miners' Hall, Nos 15,16,17, (former) United Bus Company Canteen, Premises (formerly) occupied by Zak's Menswear and Jewellery Centre North Road. The Battery, Wharton Park. Durham Railway Station north Range, West Range and Canopy. Fram Well Head, Framwellgate Peth. Crook Hall, Barn north of Crook Hall, Barn west of Crook Hall, Frankland Lane. Redhills Miners' Hall, Statues east of Durham Miners' Hall, Bede Lodge, Redhills Lane. Premises occupied (formerly) by Messrs J and M Luke junction of Sutton Street. Church of St Godric, War Memorial in churchyard, St Anne's Court, Castle Chare.

Scheduled Monument: Maiden's Bower round cairn, Flax Vale.



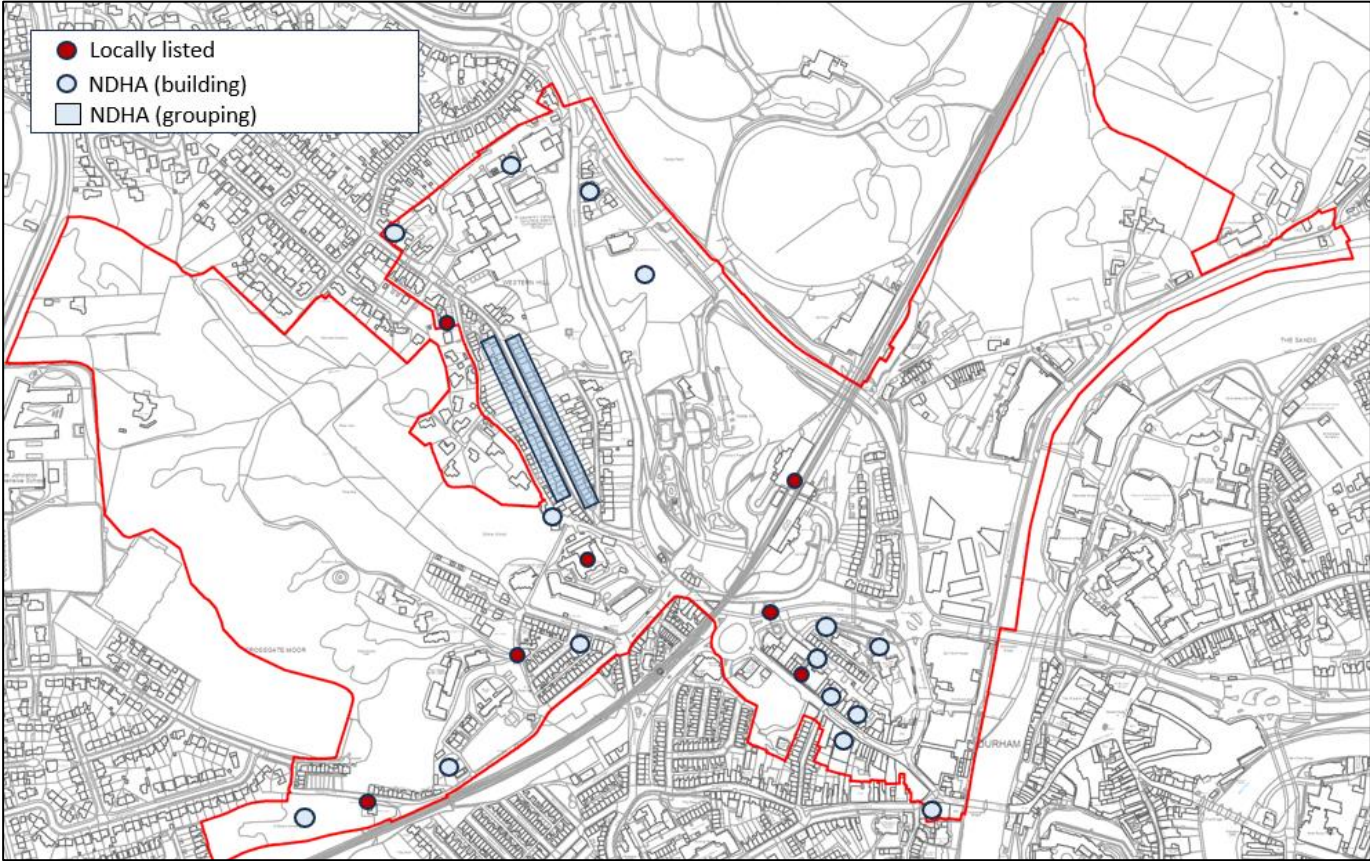
Map 7 NDHAs

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: Former County Hospital, North Road. DLI Cottages, Western Hill. Lych Gate, Redhill's Lane. Flass Lane. Stone gate pillar, Station Approach. Telephone Box, North Platform, Durham Railway Station. Station Bank.

NDHAs: The Cartologist (formerly Garden House) public house, North Road. St Cuthbert's graveyard, headstones and boundary walls, North Road. St Godric's Court, Castle Chare. War Memorial, St Godric's Castle Chare. The Shakespeare Hall, North Road. No 65 North Road. Former Cinema North Road. St Leonards main school building Springwell Hall, lodge, walls and cottage, North Road. The White House Redhills Lane. United Reform Church, Waddington Street. St Bede's Cemetery, headstones, and boundary walls, Redhills Lane. Former industrial buildings, Back Western Hill, Albert Street (excluding Nos 34 and 35), Nos 1 and 2 Springwell Villas. No 25 Tenter Terrace/Station Bank.



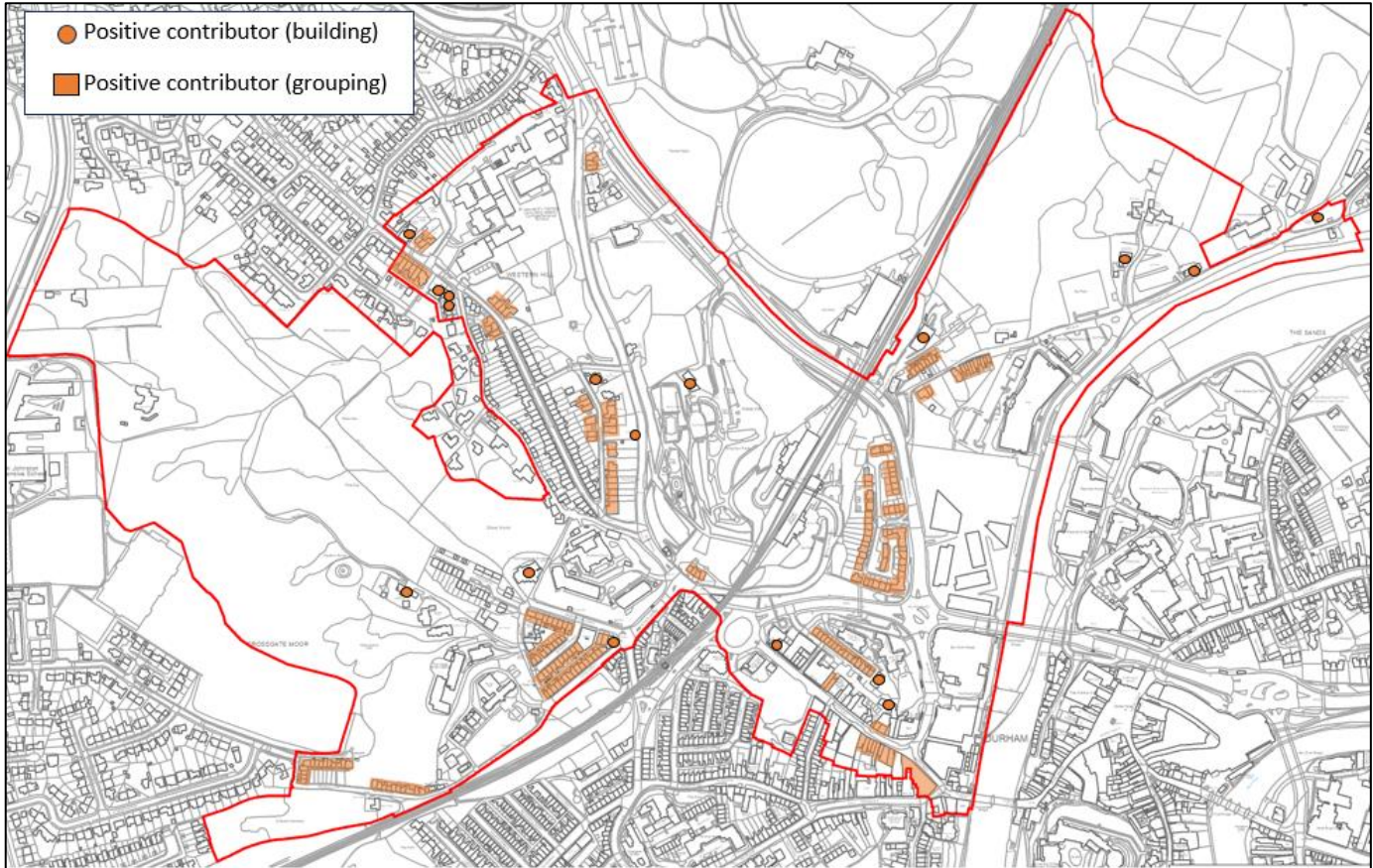
2.7 Townscape – positive contributors

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 areas character, identity, and sense of place. It should be noted that this is not a definitive list, the omission of any particular building, structure, or feature, should not be automatically taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Positive contributors: Nos 1-14 Gray’s Terrace, Nos 1-10 Redhill’s Terrace, No 3 Prior’s Path, Flass Bungalow, Nos 2-15a Flass Street, Durham CIU Headquarters Flass Corner, Nos 2-12 Waddington Street, Nos 1-18 Mowbray Street, Nos 1-4 Parkside, Nos 1-7 West Terrace, Nos 1-7, 9-11 Victoria Terrace, Nos 1-4 and 6-8 Princes’ Street, The Grey House Princes’ Street, Eastwood, Beechwood, Marville Princes’ Street, Coach House North Road, Normanlea, Field House and Millbank, Albert Street, Nos 1-4 Western Hill, Bye Cottage, Holmside, West View, Fieldhouse Lane, Nos 1-6 Fieldhouse Terrace, Springwell Cottage, Sunnyside, Finchale, Fieldhouse Lane, Nos 1-3 St Cuthberts Place, Frankland Cottage, Frankland Lane, Crook Hall Visitors Centre, Crook Hall Farmhouse, Nos 1-17 Sidegate, Nos 1-7 Diamond Terrace, Fram House, Wharton Park Visitors Centre, Nos 1-61 Highgate, Nos 2-16 Tenter Terrace, No 17 (Presbytery) Tenter Terrace, Head of Steam Public House Reform Place, Nos 1-4, 6-12, 53,63,64,74,75,76,and 77 North Road.

Map 8 Positive contributors

The map identifies the designated heritage assets 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 persistence 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 Framwellgate Conservation Area there has been relatively limited recorded archaeological investigation. There are however a number of recorded buildings, structures and finds of archaeological interest.

The Fighting Cocks Public House has well-disguised indications of pre-19th century fabric and most interesting is the side wall containing timber framing of a former adjacent building. Nos 136 and 137 Millburngate (or No 1 Framwellgate Bridge) appears to be early 19th century from the outside but possibly incorporated medieval elements that may have been associated with a tower or gatehouse linked to the bridge. Around the site of the former Garden House, hanged criminals from Dryburn were buried here and human remains have been found. Dryburn was an execution site dating back to medieval times, up until the establishment of Durham Jail in 1816.

The listed Fram Well Head is an important above ground feature built in 1450 and rebuilt in 1847 gifted to the city by Thomas Billingham. At Millburngate remains relating to Durham City’s gas works were uncovered during development in 2018, the gas company formed in 1856 and ceased in 1941. The most significant site of archaeological interest is Crook Hall a medieval manor house of the 14th century remodelled in the 15th and 17th centuries, it contains possible remains of a chapel and dry moat.

The archaeological evidence, and potential, is of great interest and importance and adds to the conservation areas special historic interest and to that of the wider city centre. This could include underwater archaeological remains related to form river crossings, weirs, and mills.

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 23 below. A series of images showing archaeological excavations in Durham City.



2.9 Landscape, green and blue infrastructure assets

Green infrastructure is the term used to describe the network of natural and semi-natural (including the water environment) features within urban and rural areas. They are not limited to green spaces in the traditional sense such as public parks that is often the perception but can be a variety of types that thread nature into the built and urban environment. Such assets contribute significantly to the area’s special character, visual quality and to the setting of its streets, spaces, and buildings. It enhances the area’s biodiversity, improves the quality of the environment, and helps with climate change mitigation.

There are two categories of green infrastructure assets, the first is the broad range that includes verges, roundabouts with soft landscaping, general green amenity spaces, street trees, play spaces and private gardens visible in the street scene. The second category are the more significant local green spaces with added historic and comment interest.

The green spaces and trees lining the riverside, the trees, woodland, agricultural land, and open countryside on the river valley slopes are of high importance to the character, appearance and setting of the area and the wider city.

At Crook Hall, the small gardens are of high historic, evidential, and aesthetic interest, comprising a traditional walled garden and contemporary garden. Representing a good example of a minor gentry garden that has evolved into a cottage garden.



Fig 24 above. The historic gardens at Crook Hall and private front gardens at Fieldhouse Lane that contribute positively to the suburban character and aesthetic of the street scene.

Likewise, Wharton Park has similar values, comprising of a series of paths, terraces, the Battery viewing platform, allotments, and play spaces, with dense mature tree cover and open green amenity spaces.

Flass Vale has a different character; a large informal area comprising woodland, a disused quarry, grassland, bogs/marshland, allotments, and Maiden’s Bower. This is a small round flat-topped mound standing on a natural sand hill, which is probably a Bronze Age (2300BC to 800BC) burial mound. The earliest records of the site are from 1346, when the relics of St Cuthbert were placed there during the Battle of Neville’s Cross.

Added to the above are smaller green infrastructure assets such as St Cuthbert’s Churchyard, Redhills cemetery, the landscape ground to Redhills Miners’ Hall, the railway embankments, trees, and vegetation enclosing routes such as the Back Western Hill, Flass Lane, the school grounds, and private front gardens visible in the public domain most notably Princess Street and Albert Street that add to the green corridor effect down North Road from North End.

The River Wear Corridor is a special and unique part of the region’s natural environment and a significant natural component of the wider city that crosses multiple conservation areas. The importance of the river and the riverbanks cannot be overstated, providing a unique natural space of

high aesthetic and recreational value, which forms a scenic natural foreground to Framwellgate.

Fig 25 below. A selection of image of different green assets found within the conservation area that contribute positively.



Diamond Terrace gardens



Wharton Park



Frankland Lane



Flass Vale



Railway embankment



Framwellgate Peth

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 and evolving views¹ that contribute significantly to its special character and how this is experienced. Views can be static, or dynamic ¹, they may be short or long range, glimpses between or above buildings, or panoramas.

Part of the special interest of the area results from its unique position and topography, providing a series of significant views of Durham Castle and Cathedral WHS. Such views are attainable from elevated public vantage points including Flass Vale, Durham Railway Station, and Wharton Park. Of equal importance is the sequence of views into the area from the railway line, A690, and the Frankland Farm/Frankland Lane approaches into the city centre, part of the historic pilgrimage route to the Cathedral. Added to the above there are historic channelled streetscape views moving southwards down Albert Street and North Road from North End that unveil Durham Castle and Cathedral. The closer view of these monuments when rounding the corner onto Framwellgate Bridge is one of surprise and high value.

The contemporary riverside development at Riverwalk provides a significant view of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage seen in both its townscape and landscape setting.



Fig 26 above. A glimpsed view of Durham Castle from Diamond Terrace.

There are many public views of other significant historic landmarks such as the Viaduct, Redhills Miners’ Hall, St Cuthbert’s Church, the former County Hospital, St Godric’s Church & St Anne’s Convent, the United Reform Church, North Road Methodist Church, North Road Miners’ Hall.

There are notable historic streetscape views that give a different experience of the historic 19th century terraces such as the view down the cobbled lane of Sidegate.



Fig 27 above. An image showing the dominance of St Godric’s Church and convent over the modern carriageway.

¹ a view where the focal point draws in with movement and is not at first always apparent

Nigh-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 also not been dramatically over-lit improving the quality of the night-time visual experience.

Within the conservation area the most notable night-time views generally align with the important day time views of Durham WHS from Framwellgate Waterside and Riverwalk

The key views are identified and described in more detail in Part B Street Characterisations section of this appraisal document. The methodology for identifying and analysing the key views within the conservation area is set out in the strategic context document. A selection of representative views is shown on the map on the following page. These are a selection only and there are likely to be others, but this does not mean that they do not contribute positively to the conservation area. In addition the map includes key buildings identified as landmarks that often feature in views.

Fig 28 below. A night-time view taken from Framwellgate Waterside. The visual presence of Durham Castle and Cathedral by night contrasts with the darkness of the river, riverbanks and sky creating a unique visual spectacle that can be experienced from many public vantage points around the city.



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.

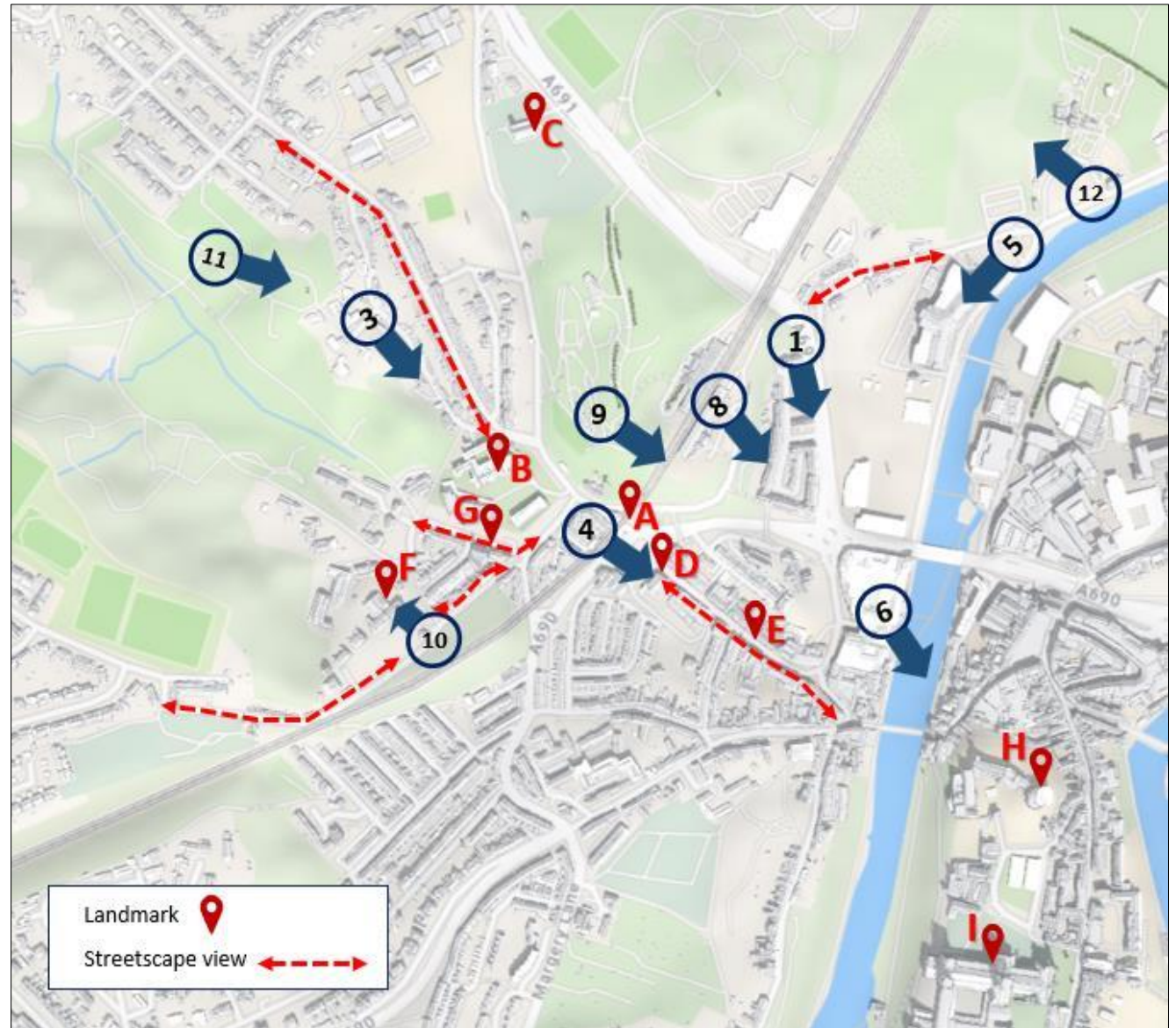
1. View south along Framwellgate Peth
2. Streetscape views along Albert Street (revealing cathedral view at south end of the street)
3. Channelled view down Back Western Hill (including sequential cathedral view over rooftops)
4. Sequential views along North Road (former County Hospital, Viaduct, Durham WHS)
5. Sequential views along Frankland Land and Framwellgate Waterside
6. View from Riverwalk public promenade.
7. View from roundabout of Castle Chare and St Godric's Church.
8. Views from the Railway Station including Station Approach
9. Views from Wharton Park
10. View of Redhills Miners' Hall from Redhills Terrace
11. View from Flass Vale (Hangman's Hill)
12. Glimpsed views of Crook Hall

Historic streetscape views

Albert Street, North Road, Waddington Street, Redhills Terrace, Redhills Lane, Sidegate.

Landmark

A-Viaduct B-Rushford Court, C-St Cuthbert's Church D-North Road Methodist Church E-North Road Miners' Hall F-Redhills Miners' Hall G-United Reform Church, H-Durham Castle, I- Durham Castle



2.11 Movement, activity and atmosphere

The conservation area is mixed in land use and character, dominated by the rural landscape in the northeast, at its centre is a mixture of historic residential, commercial, and ecclesiastical uses, with the riverside dominated by contemporary leisure, and commercial uses. It has various levels of activity and contrasting ambiances that contribute positively to its distinctiveness and sense of place. This is experienced by the network of different roads, streets, lanes, and vennels, that dictate pedestrian and vehicular movement into, through and out of the place, with buildings and spaces that attract people and encourage interactions.

Framwellgate Peth is a gateway point and key north-south route travelling down from the roundabout at North End to Leazes Road. This route is busy with traffic, particularly at peak times. Despite this, and the noise from passing traffic and trains, the impact is reduced by the wide footpaths, green spaces, and street trees, with good accessibility to the train station, riverside via Sidegate, Wharton Park and beyond. Adjacent, the busy main road Framwellgate Peth is a busy cycle path and separate pedestrian pathway that links up with an effective network of routes to the riverbanks.

The second north-south route is North Road that has a distinctive character being an enclosed green corridor entrance into the city centre. Traffic is less intense, but the presence of the school can create congestion at drop-off/pick-up times. The pedestrian experience here is of an enclosed informal historic character.



Fig 29 above. The green corridor route of Framwellgate Peth.



Fig 30 above. The green leafy route along North Road.

Moving further into the city, activity levels increase, especially at Milburngate roundabout. Here there is a more vibrant and noisier atmosphere, which continues into the commercial street of North Road, an important space being the main pedestrian route from the public transport hubs of the train station and bus station to the peninsula via Framwellgate Bridge. North Road is characterised by its vibrancy with high pedestrian footfall, buses, and taxis, and is terribly busy on weekends and with revellers at nighttime.



Fig 31 above. The busy commercial and key gateway street of North Road.

Wharton Park and Flass Vale provide a welcome and more tranquil relief to the busy city centre environment. Wharton Park is a municipal park offering different attractions such as play equipment, outdoor gym, public art, community garden, and a multi-games area.

It is generally quiet, other than on weekends, despite being a pedestrian environment with a series of interconnected pathways, due to the different terraced levels, steps, and inclines, it could be difficult to navigate for some people.

Flass Vale is an extensive valley of mixed woodland and meadows and is a very tranquil space. It features an extensive network of informal paths that snake across the undulating landform, linking to the A167 and Newcastle Road in the north and west. The vale has a strong feeling of natural isolation, which is very positive.

The main residential street is Albert Street which drops steeply down north to south and is a tightly enclosed terraced street providing a linear route of significant character opening out onto North Road. In contrast Back Western Hill is a narrow quieter lane. Despite the residential nature of this area, the streets can be busy with traffic and pedestrians at peak times. There are several quite enclosed residential side and back streets off the primary routes.

The riverside environment is highly active, used for recreational activities such as dog walkers, joggers, cyclists, and anglers. It is also a popular route into town for residents, workers, and shoppers to cross the river via Pennyferry Bridge. Crook Hall is also a popular visitor attraction.

The area is a key part of the Green Corridor initiative with Durham County Council and the National Trust. This is to improve the connection to Newton Hall and Finchale via Frankland Lane and the Camino Ingles pilgrim route. This recognises that Durham is a unique place where nature culture and heritage are inextricably linked, seeking to enhance this important connection.














Fig 32 below. Images showing the contrast between the open riverside area at Framwellgate Waterside, and the quiet intimate historic route at Back Western Hill.

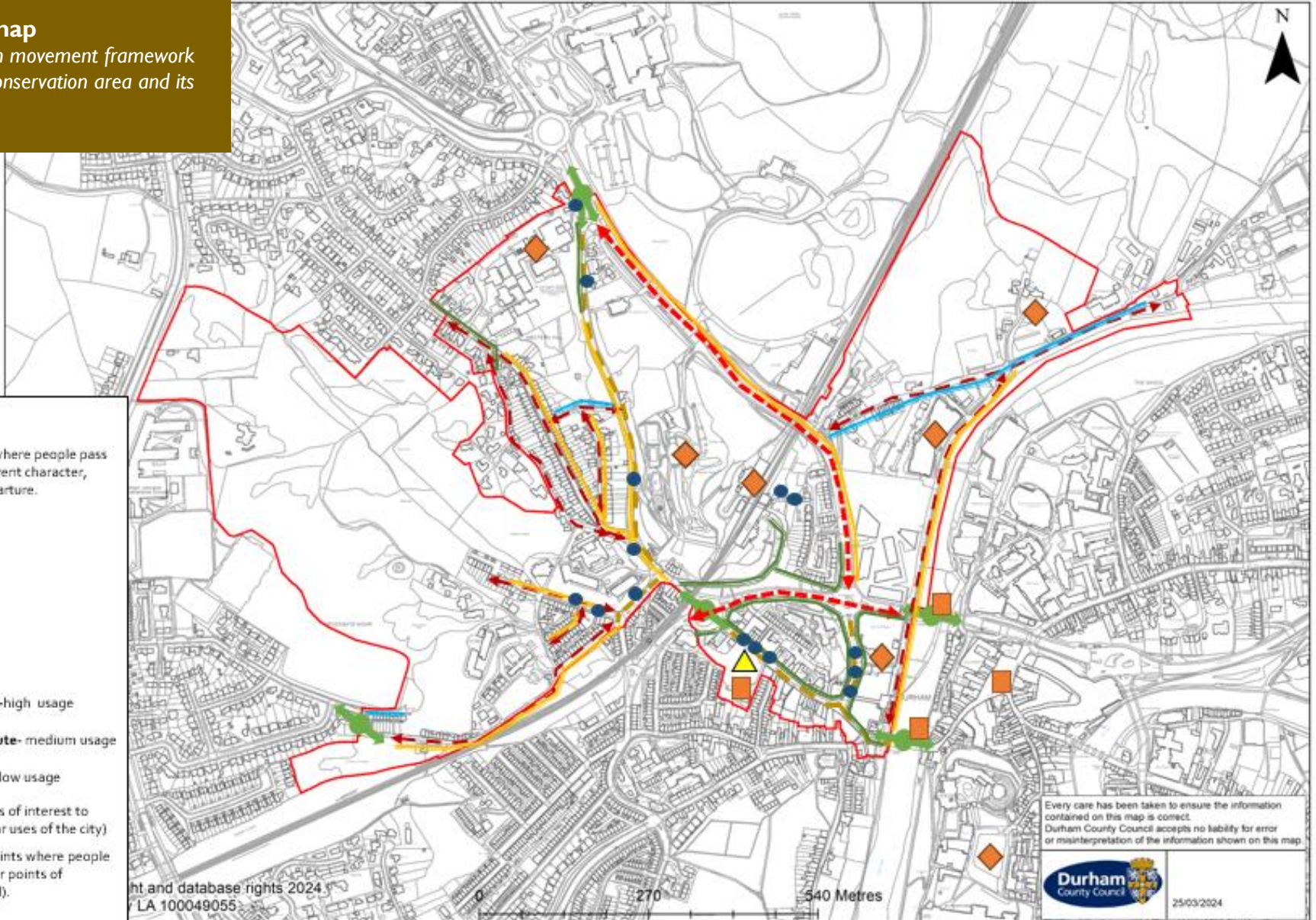


Map 10 Movement map

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

Key to map

-  Gateway (thresholds where people pass between areas of different character, points of arrival or departure).
-  Major through route
-  Minor route
-  Unclassified road
-  Public Rights of Way
-  Bus stops
-  Primary walking route-high usage
-  Secondary walking route-medium usage
-  Walking linking route-low usage
-  Key destination (places of interest to both visitors and regular uses of the city)
-  Key node (meeting points where people naturally congregate or points of intersection and arrival).



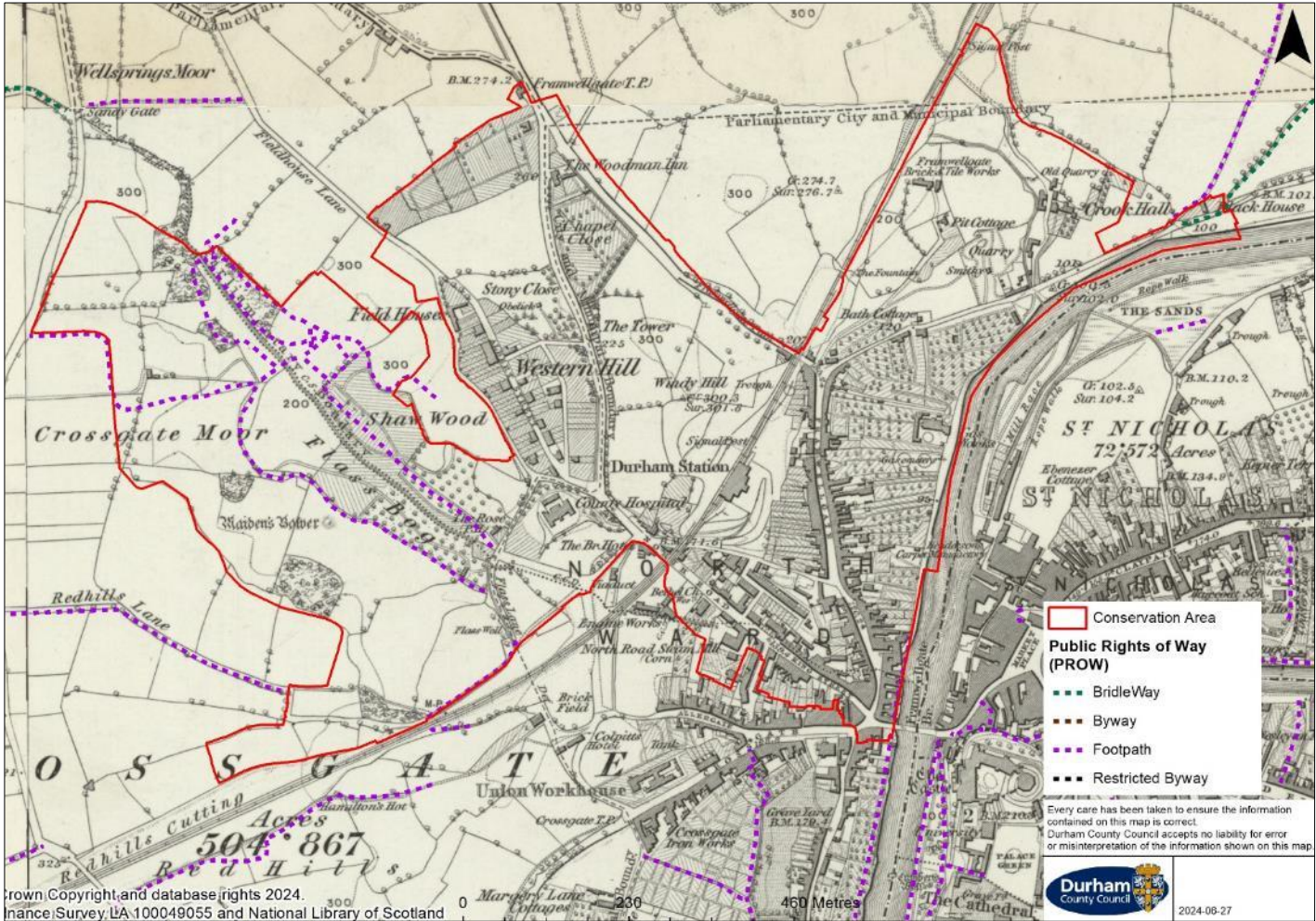
Map 11 Movement map (historic)

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 part of the pilgrim trail, although this is conjectural, adding to the better known linkages to Finchale, Beaufort, and Keping, and the route of Cade's Road.

Cade's Road is an undefined Roman route believed to have been constructed between 138 and 161AD, a decade or so after Hadrian's Wall. It represented a north-south link between York and the Tyne, in County Durham passed Chester-le-Street, 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 features are key to city's plan form and to understanding the historic development of Durham, threading together all the historic assets, and offering a tangible link back to Durham's past.

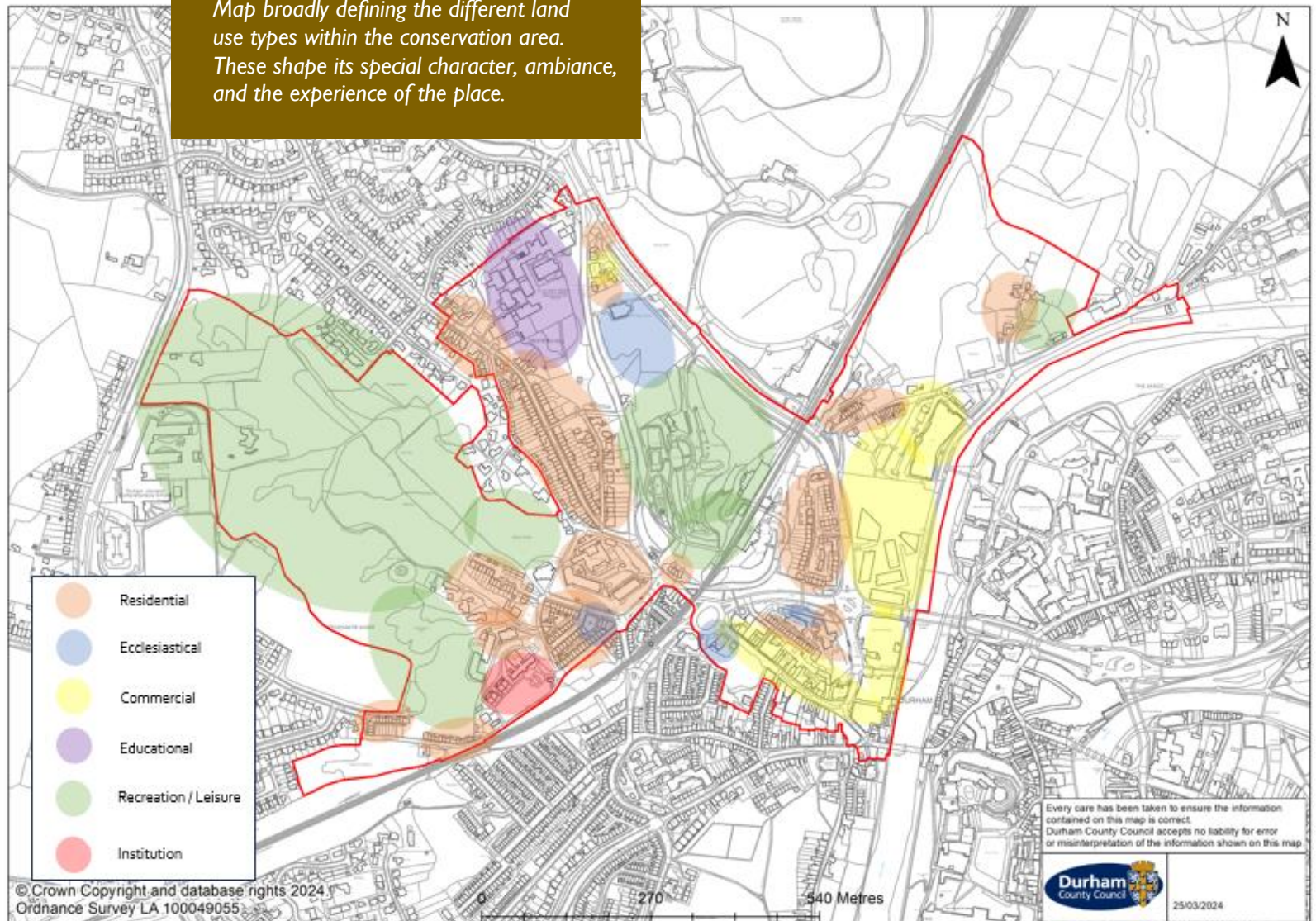


2.12 Land use

Land use defines building types and character that changes from place to place, the plan illustrates broadly the ways in which buildings and land are used across Framwellgate Conservation Area. It shows different uses with clear definition to the component parts, with strong residential uses flanked by green space and the riverside dominated by commercial use.

Map 12 Land use

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



2.13 Layout, pattern and grain

The historic core and layout of the conservation area, like others, relates to the key elements established by c.1250 as part of the medieval town plan of the city. Within Framwellgate they are less legible than in other parts of the city, and components have been lost due to significant historic clearance works. Nonetheless some medieval routes survive, including Framwellgate Peth, Sidegate, and at Milburngate.

Buildings are sparse along Framwellgate Peth with a small cluster on the triangular tip of land where it adjoins North Road, followed by St Cuthbert's Church set back from both streets in its spacious churchyard.

Sidegate is located on the west side of the Peth, a narrow distinctive cobbled street with a more informal lane type character, which drops steeply down to Framwellgate Waterside, with Diamond Terrace standing on elevated ground above. These two terraces have narrow rectangular building plots, strong building lines, and provide continuous frontages.

At the south end of Framwellgate Peth stands Highgate, a high-quality modern development that provides a positive townscape enhancement on the site of a former open car park. It comprises a series of traditional terraced blocks with rectangular plots, the building lines staggered, and heights stepped in response to the

topography creating a hierarchy of streets within enclosed courtyard spaces within the development.

North Road is a wide street with buildings pressed up against the back edge of the pavement providing a mostly continuous street frontage. The built form is highly varied in terms of plot sizes and building scales. The terraced format is interrupted positively by the dramatic presence of former miners' hall, and united reform church. Notably, the surviving historic buildings on the north side at the west end of Framwellgate Bridge, restore some to the former medieval feeling. There are some incongruous modern developments, but they generally respond positively to the historic building line and frame the street.

Behind North Road is Tenter Terrace, a short linear terrace occupying an elevated position over-shadowed by St Godric's Church.

The late 19th/early 20th century residential streets are typical examples of the era characterised by narrow plots with small back yards, in a linear terraced block form and compact pattern, most often stepped with the gradient of the land. The exception to such general rules is Albert Street, this is a long, steeply climbing terraced street, but with more generous plots featuring small front amenity spaces and long rear gardens, the linear street pattern reinforced by front boundary treatments.

Durham Railway station sits on high ground overlooking the city centre. The station is accessed via Station Approach a winding road climbing up from its junction in the west with North Road.

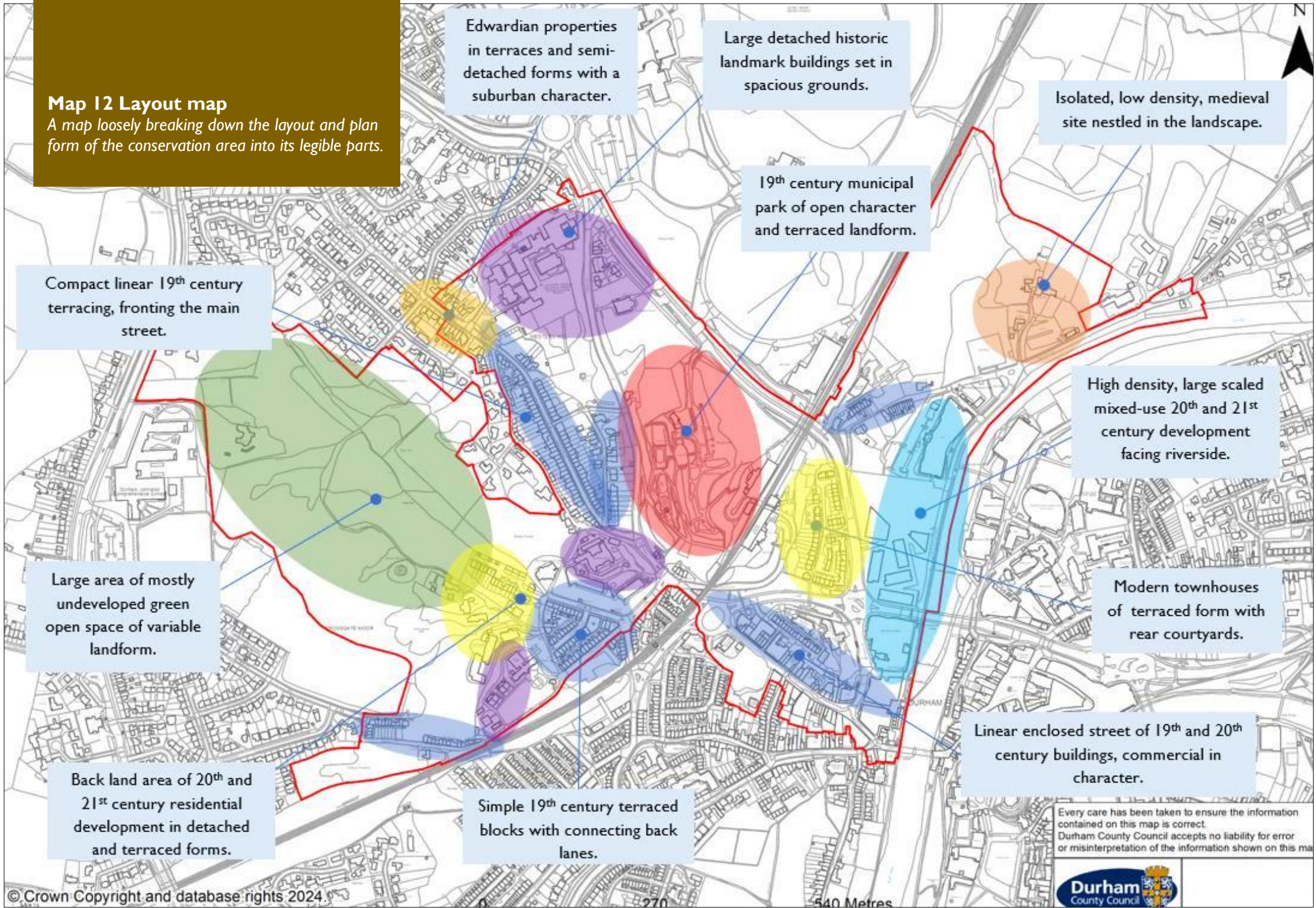
Crook Hall occupies an isolated site in the northeast away from the main urban core of the city. The buildings are set back on high ground from Frankland Lane, a linear route bounding the riverbank. The buildings are clustered around small courtyard spaces with the historic gardens on the south sides, and Crook Hall farmhouse standing detached in the south.

Framwellgate waterside runs southwards from its junction with Sidegate and Frankland Lane for terminating at Leazes Road Bridge. This is part of the contemporary riverside quarter to the city that has repurposed the riverside becoming a leisure destination.

Riverwalk has broken the block pattern of the former Gates Shopping Centre opening up the internal streets and introducing a series of new spaces with a wide promenade to the river. The plan is designed to be a modern interpretation of the historic city and its general grain. Similarly, the Milburngate development references the historic built format and grain of the city in a distinctive contemporary manner, but with a cascading effect down to the riverside.

Map 12 Layout map

A map loosely breaking down the layout and plan form of the conservation area into its legible parts.



Edwardian properties in terraces and semi-detached forms with a suburban character.

Large detached historic landmark buildings set in spacious grounds.

Isolated, low density, medieval site nestled in the landscape.

19th century municipal park of open character and terraced landform.

Compact linear 19th century terracing, fronting the main street.

High density, large scaled mixed-use 20th and 21st century development facing riverside.

Large area of mostly undeveloped green open space of variable landform.

Modern townhouses of terraced form with rear courtyards.

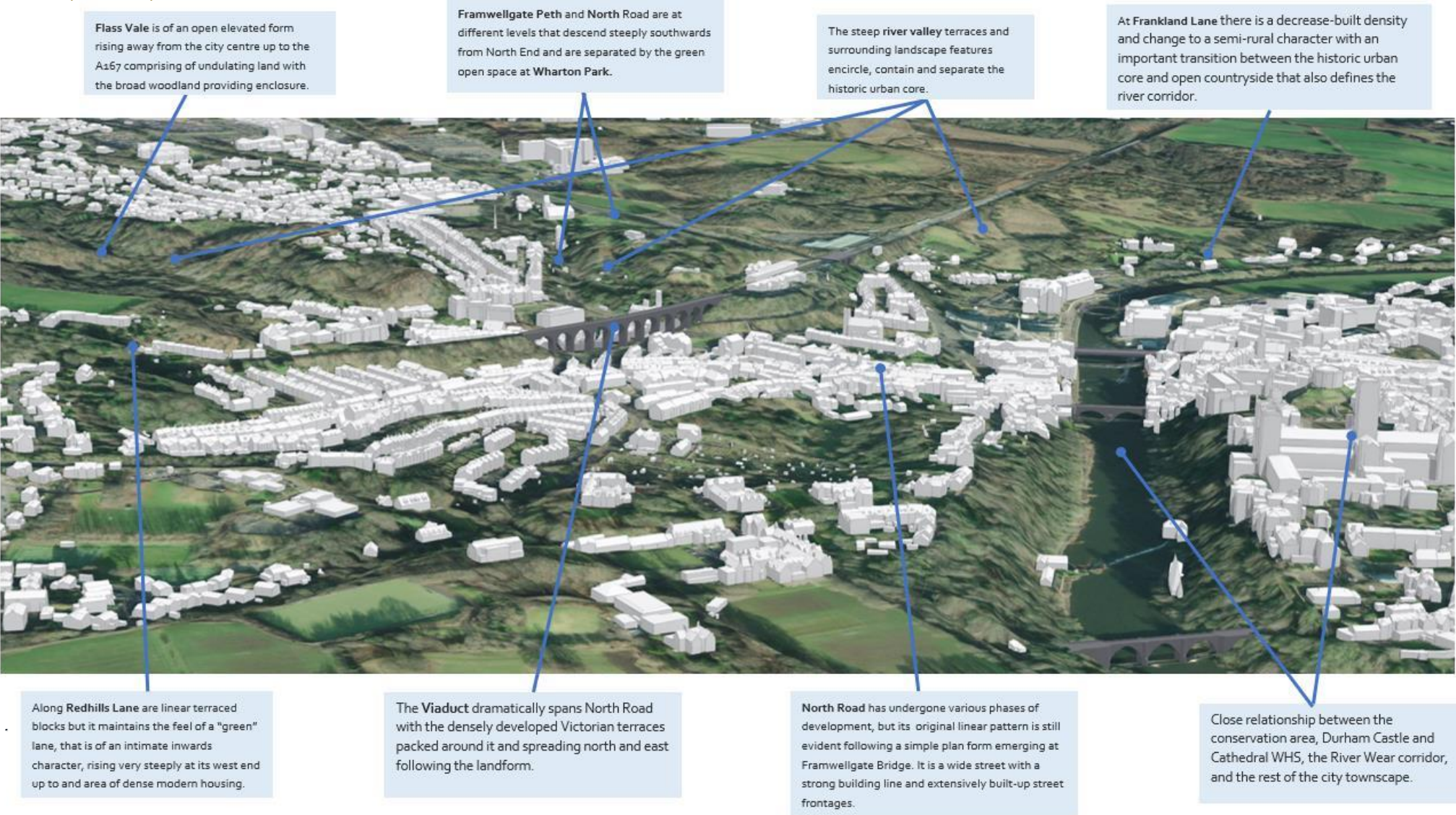
Back land area of 20th and 21st century residential development in detached and terraced forms.

Simple 19th century terraced blocks with connecting back lanes.

Linear enclosed street of 19th and 20th century buildings, commercial in character.

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

Fig 33 below. A model demonstrating the general development pattern and layout of the conservation area and the urban forms relationship to landscape



2.14 Character areas

The conservation area can be sub-divided into “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. Five character areas are identified as broadly correlating in land use, historic development, and in character terms. They can still be variable in but have unifying characteristics.

Character area 1 – Historic Core, including Framwellgate Peth, Albert Street, Redhills and Wharton Park.

Character area 2- Flass Vale, local nature reserve.

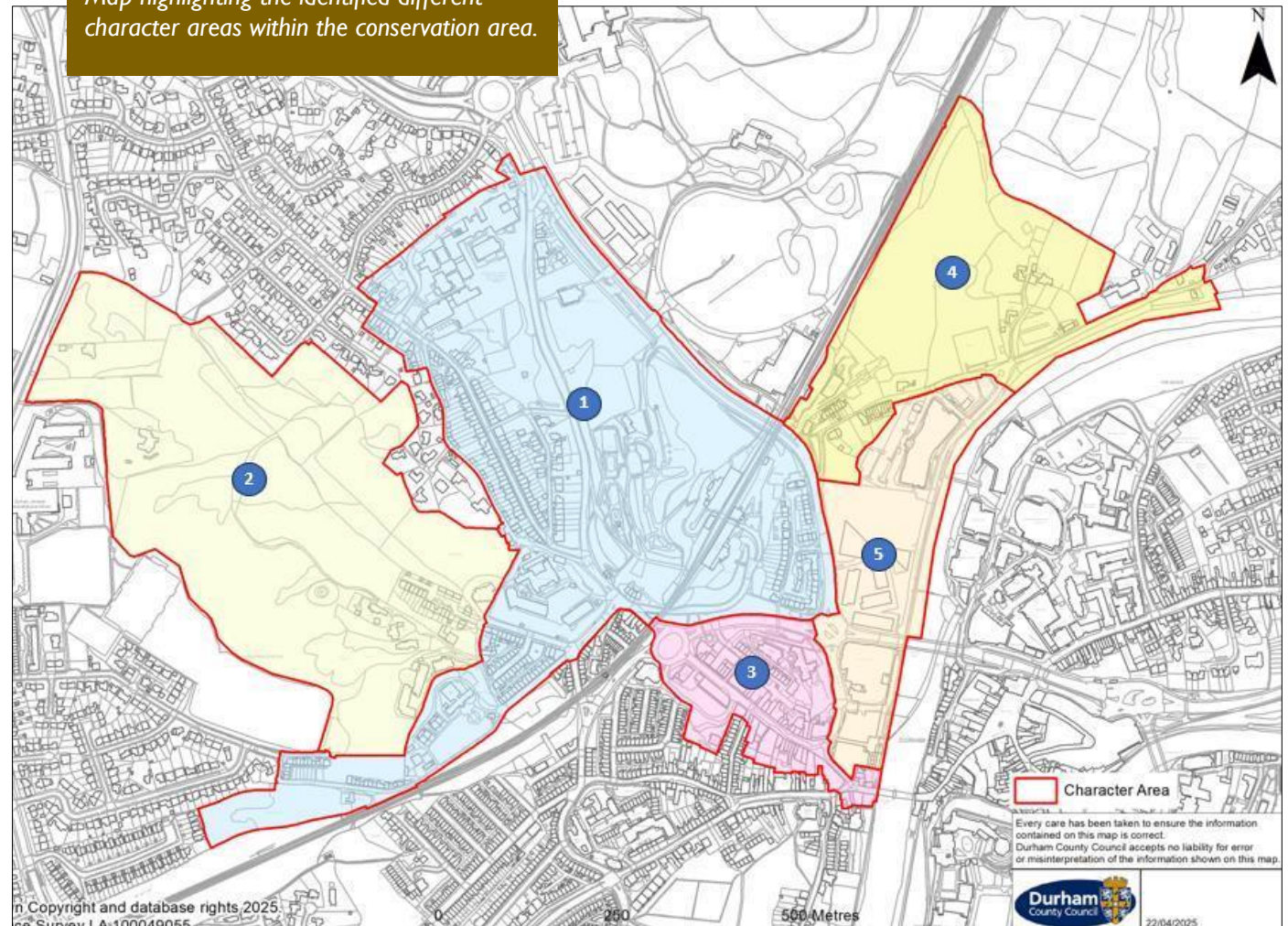
Character area 3- North Road, Victorian street of commercial character.

Character area 4- Sidegate and Crook Hall, historic manor house and garden on the city’s urban edge.

Character area 5- Millburngate and Framwellgate Waterside, modern riverfront urban development.

Map 13 Character areas

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

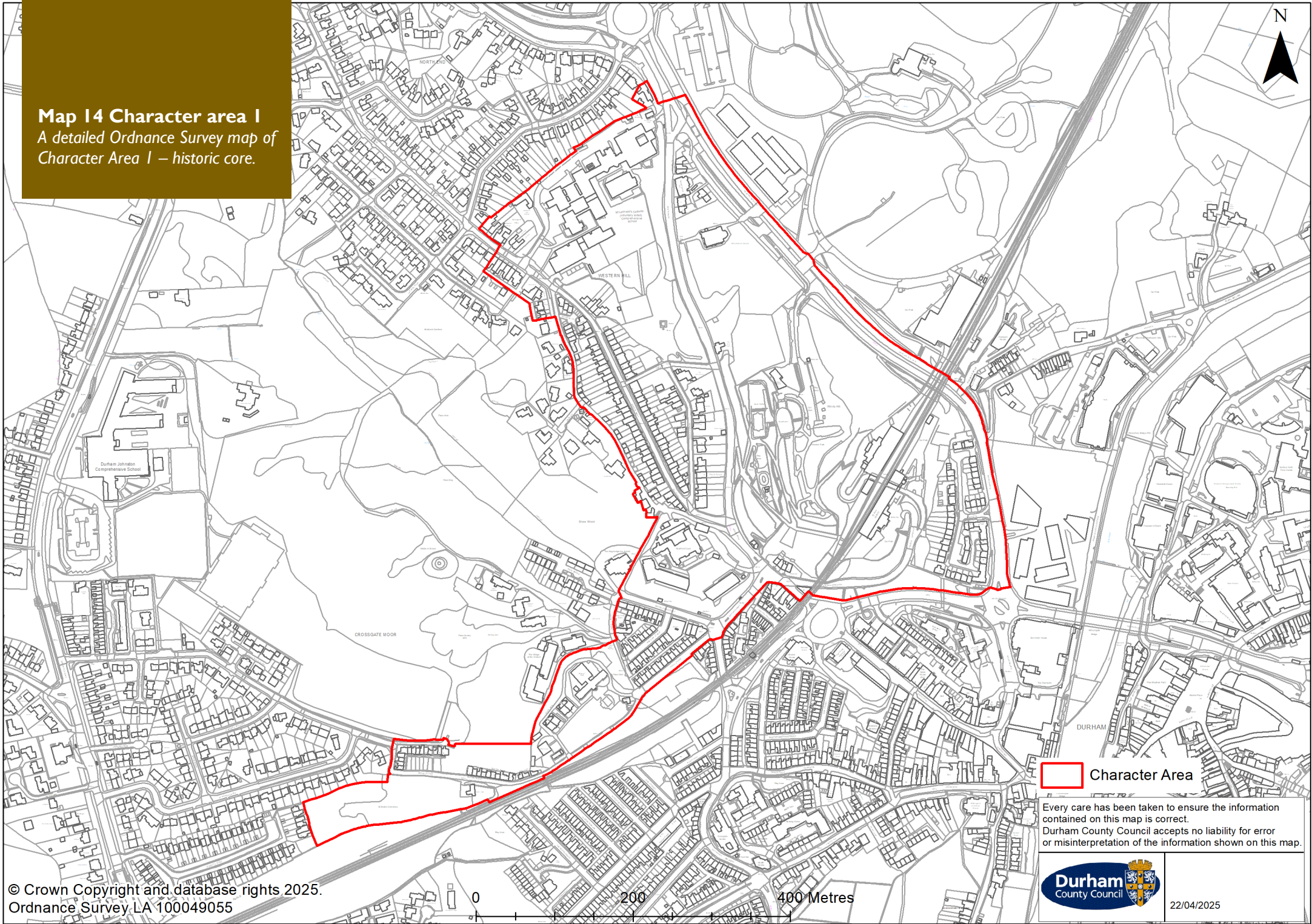



3. Street characterisation

3.1 Character area I (Historic core – Framwellgate Peth and Albert Street)



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.

3.1.1 Location and summary of special interest

This character area forms the historic core comprising of Framwellgate Peth, Millburngate, North Road (upper between the Viaduct and North End), and the residential streets in the north and west. The built form is accompanied by the green spaces of Wharton Park, the grounds of St Leonard’s School and Redhills Miners’ Hall, St Cuthbert’s graveyard, and Redhills cemetery.

The east boundary east follows the route of Framwellgate Peth and in the north the perimeter of St Leonard’s School site crossing the street to Fieldhouse Terrace. It then runs south behind Back Western Hill, turning west around the edge of the former County Hospital site. In continues around Redhills Miners’ Hall up to the west end of Redhills cemetery. The south bounday is provided by the railway embankment up to Sutton Street where it turn, east following the A690 to Millburngate roundabout.

The setting to the area is a mixture of urban and landscape of different uses and character with dense 20th century residential development in the north, parkland, and the rural landscape on steep sided river valley gorge in the east with Flass Vale in the west and modern housing beyond. In the south is the city centre, on the west side of the river a mixture of residential, commercial and leisure uses, in a framework of medieval, 19th century and contemporary built development.

The more immediate setting is informed by the close-knit dense urban form of the intertwined enclosed historic streets with the surrounding landscape never far from view that is important to the distinctiveness of the area and its sense of place.

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

- Significant as a fundamental component of the city’s medieval town plan with a conserved street pattern from this period.
- Dominated by 19th century development providing a recognisable character.
- Architectural cohesiveness of the residential terraced streets.
- A strong sense of historic identity and distinctiveness
- Number of historic landmarks such as Redhills Miners’ Hall, Durham Viaduct, St Cuthbert’s Church, United Reform Church, former County Hospital building.
- The high number buildings and structure identified as heritage assets.
- The area representing a significant phase in the expansion of the city.

- The significant views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, historic landmarks, and high quality distinctive historic streetscapes.
- The high value of the green infrastructure assets, providing a contrast with the dense urban form.

Fig 34 below. The characterful early 20th century properties at Parkside.



3.1.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The medieval plan form in this historic core is no longer obvious, the buildings and burgage plot pattern having been swept away. However, the ancient routes of Framwellgate Peth, Milburngate and Sidegate remain conserved. The historic layout of the area is mainly 19th century and representative of its detailed recording on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map c.1856-65.

The development pattern overall appears sporadic dictated by land use and geographical constraints, and it signifies different building uses, status, and periods of development. There is a scattering of buildings in the north part with no development pattern. Here density is low owing to being characterised by the large natural open spaces of Wharton Park, St Cuthbert’s Church, and the grounds of St Leonard’s School.

Elsewhere the urban form is of higher density mainly comprising of compact linear residential terraces laid out over the steeply rising topography. In the south part the area is divided and spanned by the dramatic introduction of the railway, viaduct, and railway station. This contrast of density, layout, urban and natural form is a fundamental part of the area’s identity and sense of place.

Framwellgate Peth is wide, spacious, and open with the domestic buildings concentrated at the north end set back in small rectangular plots. In contrast North Road in the west is narrower and tightly enclosed where the school and church grounds, and the steep terraces and embankments of Wharton Park, create a green corridor route that contributes very positively.



Fig 35 above. Images showing the contrast between the north and south parts of Framwellgate Peth, an open layout enhanced by greenery that becomes an enclosed route dominant by large scaled modern developments.

Albert Street has an almost continuous street frontage of higher status and character compared to the other Victorian terraces in the area. The street feels wide and is enclosed by the buildings set at the back of the pavements behind small front yards but benefiting from long rear gardens. Buildings are wider than the more modest Victorian terraced houses elsewhere, and there are some double frontage properties of more grandeur. To the rear, on the west side of the street, many properties have one storey garages and former workshops at the backs of the garden that press tightly onto Back Western Hill. This is a tightly enclosed, winding, historic lane of a different character to the other streets and spaces with the area.



Fig 36 above. The fine enclosed Albert Street descending southwards that provides a framing view of the wider landscape surrounding the city in the background.

The building line at Albert Street is punctured by Obelisk Lane, a narrow steep lane that drops down to North Road, which is of a distinctive informal semi-rural character.

At the south end of Albert Street, the street corner rounds onto Princess Street of mixed built development. The south comprises of larger residential properties in generous rectangular plots standing high above North Road where their front gardens are angled down towards the street. The north end comprises of buildings of limited cohesiveness, in short terraced, semi-detached, and detached forms of different plot sizes and shapes providing a varied streetscape.

In contrast the north end of Albert Street moving into Fieldhouse Terrace becomes more suburban in character with a mixture of terraced, semi-detached, and detached properties with front gardens providing a pleasing street scene.

The other streets within the character area comprise short blocks concentrated in the west. The house plans are typical of the period, when large numbers of terraces were built to accommodate householders at the lower end of the social-economic scale, who required accommodation close to their places of work. They are of a modest domestic scale and basic “two-up-two-down” design.

They typically have small rear yards enclosed by shared brick boundary walls and small brick outhouses. Although many original outbuildings have been lost and yard spaces reduced over time.

A significant “hidden” back lane space is Flass Lane, a historic pedestrian only route that travels north-south from the end of Waddington Street to Flass Street. The lane is narrow and very tightly enclosed by buildings, trees, and vegetation, and includes Flass Well, a medieval or later well, part of the Durham water supply until the 19th century, but very heavily overgrown. Likewise, the steeply descending enclosed route along Sidegate down to the riverside is a further characterful green lane.

The former County Hospital site is a focal point of the character area occupying a prominent elevated position on a highly visible corner, with a significant slope toward the southeast. The site comprises large scaled contemporary student accommodation perimeter blocks overlooking the historic streets with landscaped grounds and courtyard spaces. The original Victorian building stands proudly in the north part of the site, its siting seemingly designed to create a domestic villa character on the edge of the expanding town.

St Leonard’s School in the north of the character area is dominated by ad-hoc modern flat roofed blocks of low quality that shield most of the original building from view. The importance of the site in layout terms stems from its original design as a country house estate in the Durham tradition of a garden focused estate of the local gentry. The main hall “Springwell Hall” stands in the north part of the grounds that were modelled to utilise the rising land to allow views of the cathedral to intrude. The hall has an axial alignment with the Obelisk a focal point in the broad landscape and townscape.

Redhills comprises Durham Miners’ Hall, agents’ houses, gate lodge, villas and four statues. The site occupies a relatively hidden location in the city at the end of the steep narrow Flass Lane in the east and Redhills Lane in the west. The small L-plan lodge stands guard at the gated entrance with the rest of the buildings set back within open landscape grounds. The main hall is accessed via a formal driveway that combined with the presence of the statues provides a grand entrance. The villas stand adjacent to the main hall on its west side, comprising a pair of semi-detached buildings following the building line of the hall overlooking the main open green space. A key aspect of the site’s character is that for such a large formal building, the location and nature of the surrounding spaces provide a contained and intimate setting.

Fig 37 below. A series of images of the general street pattern and character of different routes within the character are. Below left: Redhills Lane and Obelisk Lane. Middle: Station Approach. Right Fieldhouse Terrace and Princess Street.



The character includes a number of significant areas of green space that contribute positively to its distinctiveness, character, and visual appearance, while enhancing the setting of the historic buildings. It is also somewhat unique in the wider city; in that it includes a number of historic sites where there is an inseparable designed connection between built form and landscape as well as the city's only public municipal park.

Some are of high significance on account of their historic, evidential, design community/social, and higher aesthetic values. The first such site is St Leonard's School, although dominated by modern block development, enveloping the original hall, the sense of the designed county house estate has not been completely lost. The main hall stands in the north part of the site, with its entrance and gatehouse adjacent in the east. The loose triangular plan form of the estate, the openness to the south part of the site dominated by green spaces and dense tree cover to the boundaries, and the directional alignment between the hall, obelisk, and cathedral, is preserved, and of high significance.

Wharton Park is the product of a 19th century garden landscape design, restored in the 21st century. The municipal park is set on a series of steep terraces, providing a range of spaces of different use and character. It includes dense woodland, groups of trees, terraced planting, open grassed areas, and allotments.

Added to this are the play areas, amphitheatre, multi-use games areas, community garden and putting green with further recreational and social values. The topography was utilised to create a series of winding paths combined with the steepness of the terrain and absence of outwards views, gives a feeling of confinement throughout most of the space. Both the park and school grounds have wider value as part of the landscape that encircles the north side of the city being broken only by the ribbons of development at Western Hill and Gilesgate. The churchyard at St Cuthbert's and Redhills Cemetery are further historic green open spaces, which are important as a quiet place of retreat or high aesthetic value.

The above are key spaces, supplemented by front gardens visible in the street scene, carriageway green embankments, the green lanes, and roadside verges that are further positive features contributing to the areas character and appearance.

While not specifically contained within the character area Redhills Cutting, Flass Vale and Shaw Wood are very important to the area's setting, the woodland penetrates into the urban area and provides part of the wider landscape backdrop of high scenic quality.

Fig 38 right. *The roadside verges of generous widths, hedgerows to the footway and trees enhancing the aesthetic and providing a pleasing pedestrian experience which contributes positively.*

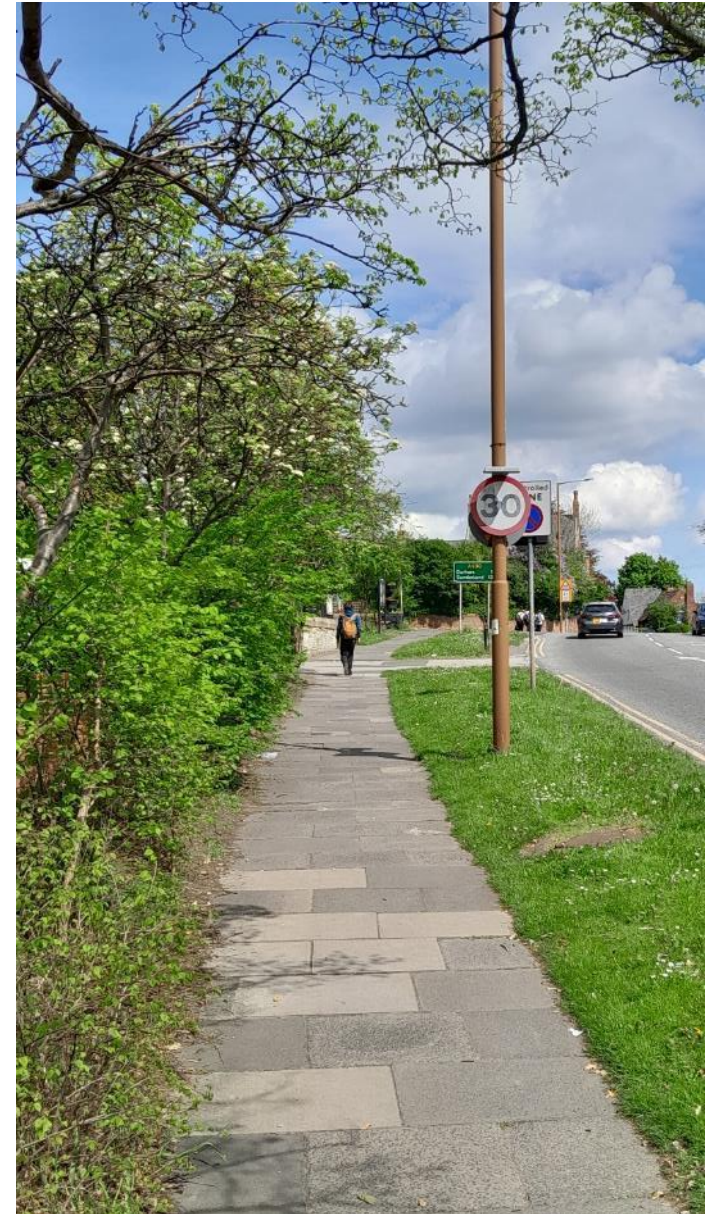
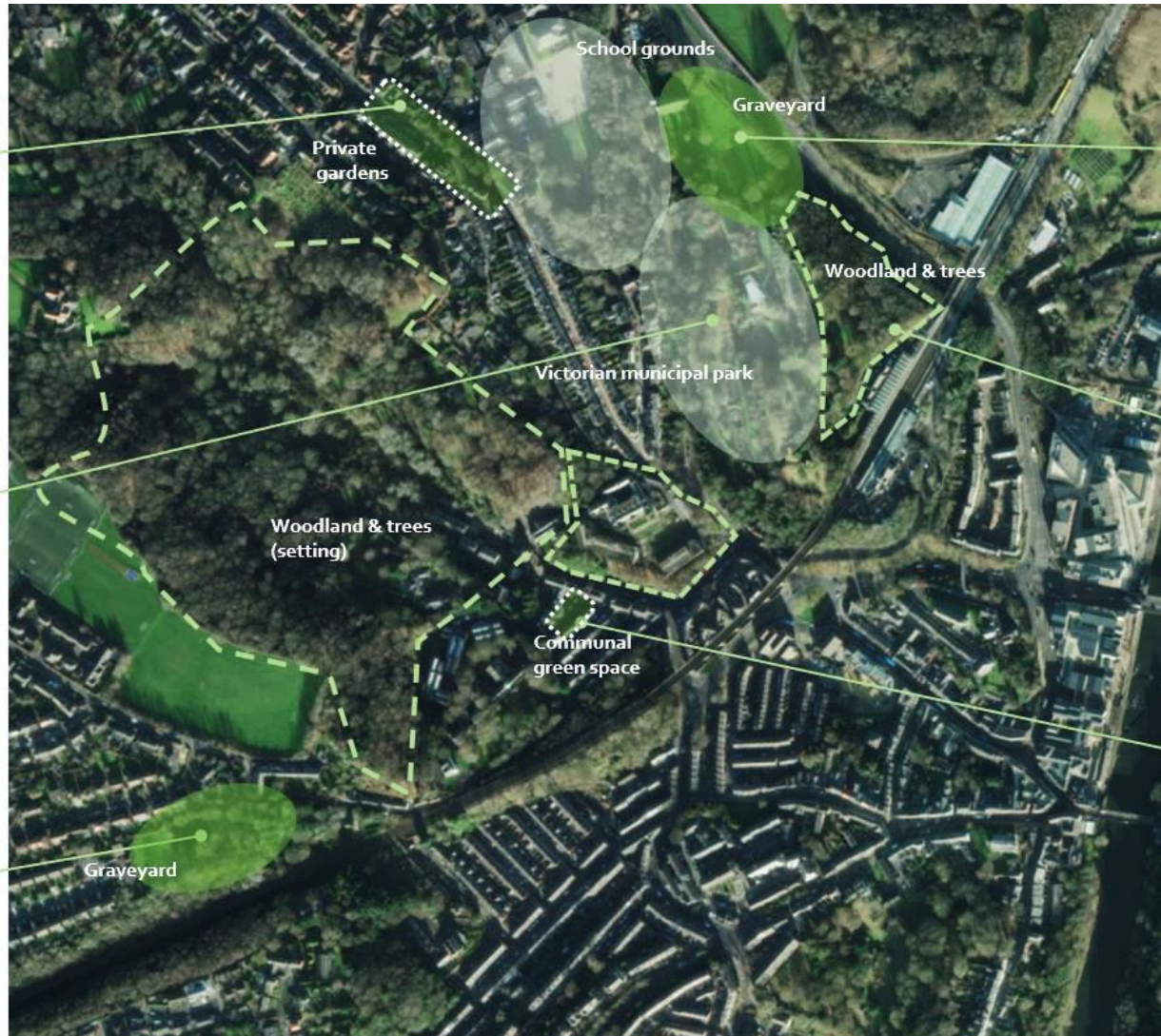


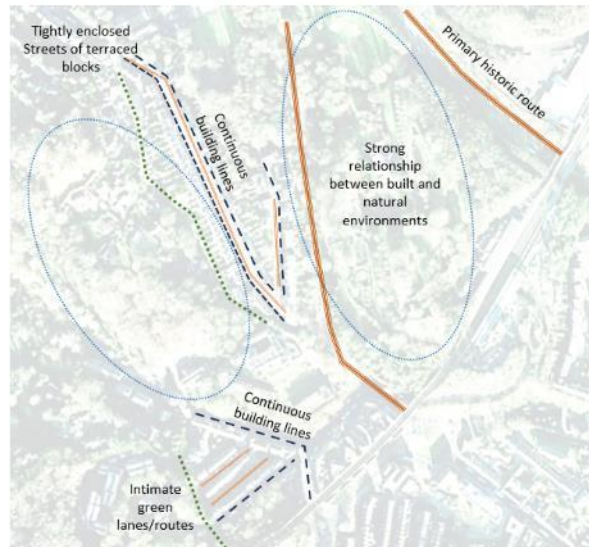
Fig 39 below. An aerial plan and images identifying the key green spaces that contribute positive to the character and appearance of the area, and its setting.



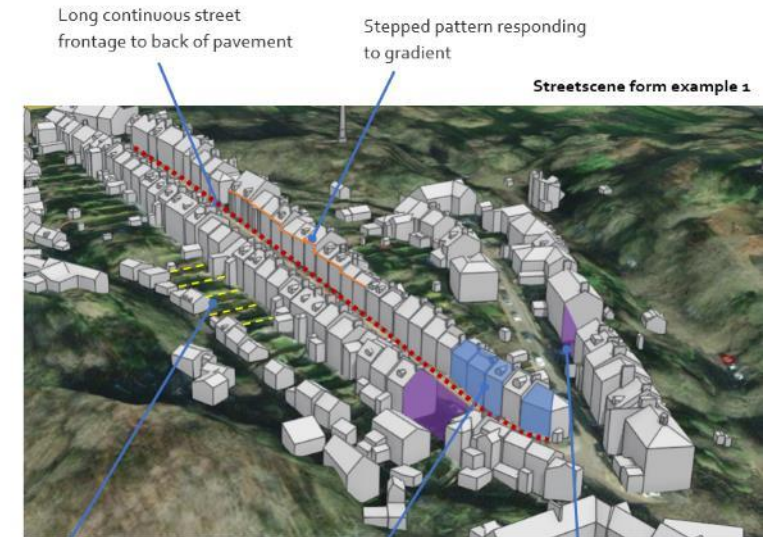
Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to the area's special interest.

- Surviving and legible medieval street pattern in parts, but mostly of a 19th century plan form.
- Variable layout in terms of street widths, curvilinear forms responding to terrain, and higher density contrasting with open areas, which adds to character.
- Gaps important to layout by reflecting different phases of development, land use and building status.
- Dwellings of terraced blocked form, often stepped with the gradients and with connecting back lanes.
- Where buildings do not conform to the prevalent plan form and grain this is by design creating distinctive landmarks.
- Buildings addressing the pavement to frame the carriageway and provide active frontages.
- Historic lanes, paths and routes some providing sub-environments with their own character, distinct from the main streets.

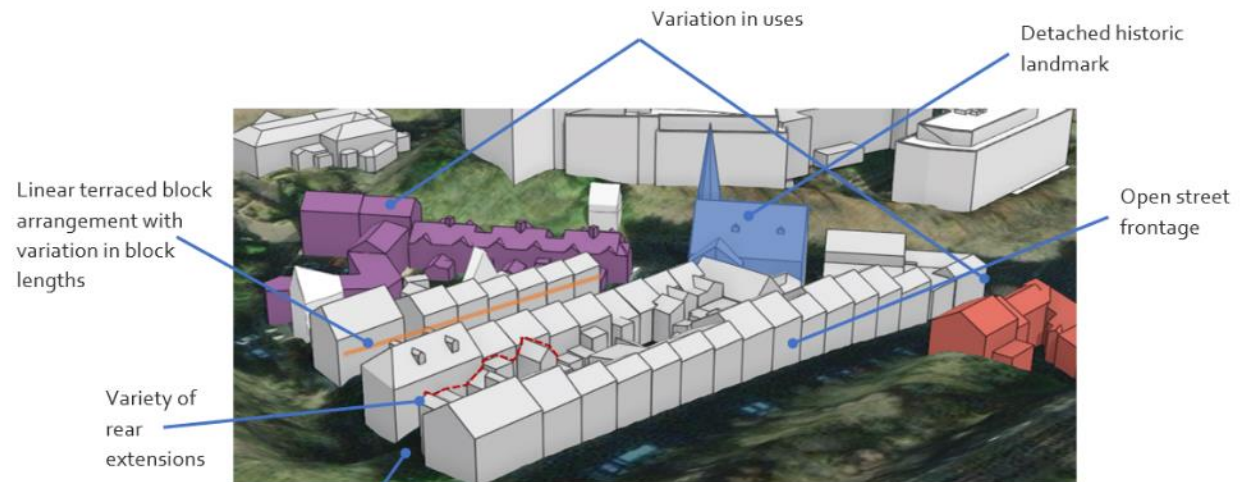
Fig 40 below. A plan, and modelling demonstrating key positive plan and layout characteristic of the character area.



Plan form



- Regular historic back garden layout
- Traditional building shapes and proportions but with height and width variations
- Gaps signifying development phases



Back-to-back layout separated by lane

Streetscene form example 2

3.1.3 Architectural styles, form, and detailing.

The character area has a strong identity informed by the Victorian domestic terraces that provide the predominant building typology. Architectural variety and interest is added by the positive introduction of buildings of different age, use and distinctive high quality individual designs.

The concentration of Victorian terraced housing dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries display typical characteristics of the period. They are generally of a modest 2 storeys and 2 bays with red brick frontages and pitched slated roofs, the roof lines punctuated by chimneys. Windows would have historically been 1-over-1, 2-over-2 timber sashes, with door treatments of 4 and 6 panels. However, many such windows and doors have been lost to unsympathetic modern alternatives. Common detailing included eaves corbels, flat arched brick lintels, painted stone sills, and crown chimney pots.

The notable exceptions are found at Albert Street and Princes Street, while these streets date from the same period, they are of an obvious higher status architecturally being more embellished, contributing very positively.

Albert Street is regarded as one of Durham's finest streets in terms of planned domestic architecture, the buildings are of tall 2 storeys with basements, and 2 bayed, but there are some wider 3 bay buildings.

They are of a stone and brick construction with steeply pitched slate roofs and have a rhythm of oriel bay windows with some double height bays seen. Windows are almost exclusively traditional timber painted vertical sliding sashes with different glazing patterns, 1-over-1, 2-over-2, and 6-over-6 with exposed and painted lintels and sills and some stone window surrounds. Front doors are all traditional timber painted doors in different styles but 4 and 6 panelled are the most popular, they have a mixture of rectangular and half round over-lights and there are many stone with key stone heads, timber and stone door cases, other features include floor banding, eaves corbels, brick chimneys with pots, and traditional dormer windows. While there are key unifying characteristic of scale, traditional forms and proportions, the variation in architecture style and detailing creates greater character and aesthetic quality.

The exception to the above is the modern infill development at Nos 34 and 35, these following the building and roof line to the street but are bland of brown brick that contribute nothing positive to the street scene.

The buildings at the south end of Princes Street are its finest that can be viewed from North Road. They comprise a fine terrace of Edwardian townhouses of 3 storeys with wide frontages of red brick with stone detailing such as string courses, dentils, plinths, and chimneys, many retain traditional timber painted sash window heads and sills, and

doors are timber panelled deeply recessed in surrounds.

Fieldhouse Terrace is a notable street on account of its distinctive Edwardian architectural style, which is markedly different from the other terraces in the area. These are again of 2 storeys and 2 bays of a brighter red brick and slate roofs, the terraces are ended by hipped roofs. They have imposing double height bays, a rhythm of small hipped roofed dormers, 1-over-1 traditional timber sashes, stone detailing and door surrounds with pilasters and hoods supported by oversized corbels. Overall, despite some modern alterations they present a fine and characterful uniformed group.

Adjacent to the terrace in the north are Nos 1 and 2 Springwell Villas a distinctive semi-detached pair of Edwardian properties with their projecting front bays rising up to substantial gabled dormers, brick on edge lintels to timber painted windows in a unique 10-over-1 style, double leaf 6-pane front doors, and with a high amount of exposed mock-timber framework for added decoration.

The other noteworthy buildings in this area are the semi-detached Edwardian style DLI cottages dating from 1903 and bearing plaques dedicating the buildings to the memory of soldiers from the Durham Light Infantry who fought in the South African War of 1899-1902. They are brick built with red tiled roofs and share a projecting pebble dashed gable and retain many original features.

Fig

Fig 41 right. A series of images showing the different architectural styles of buildings within the character area. This diversity adds to the character of the place, ranging from Victorian and Edwardian terraces, Arts and Crafts, and individual distinct styles.



There are two buildings constructed for religious use the St Cuthbert's Church and the United Reform Church at Waddington Street both landmarks in their respective areas. St Cuthbert's Church dates from the mid-19th century in the Early English style but with French influence. It is constructed from sandstone with plinth and dressings and has a steeply pitched part conical roof with dark slate roof and tall three stage tower. The United Reform Church dates from 1878 built in the Victorian Gothic revival style. It is constructed of sandstone and features a tall tower, large extended steep slate roof, a prominent gabled frontage, and arched mullion window openings

The former County Hospital building is a historic landmark constructed between 1850 and 1919 in a distinguishable Elizabethan style designed to create a domestic Victorian villa character. Part of its contemporary conversion involved removal of an early 20th century wing and other later additions that have better revealed its significance.

The new student accommodation blocks are designed as broken and articulated perimeter blocks in a contemporary style. The elevation treatments are simple, with a vertical expression with materials and contemporary detailing used to provide variation and interest. The blocks are large scale, their presence increased by being raised above Sutton Street and Waddington Street and are visually prominent and feel overbearing in the domestically scaled street scenes.

Close to the hospital is the distinctive Waddington Street, a short terrace of six characterful properties with prominent decorative wall gables, eaves corbels, brick banding, pointed arched windows and bays. Some are marred by insensitive modern alterations, but the overall historic character and aesthetic uniformity remains strong.

Architecturally, Redhills Miners' Hall is one of the most impressive buildings in the city centre owing to its distinctive Classical neo-Baroque design, grandeur, and status it exhibits. It is of 2-storeys and 17-bays with projecting second and third bays, and projecting centre bay with domed Ionic porch. It has large sash windows in a multi pane style set in architraves with bracket sills and cornices, string courses, and it is constructed from bright red Durham coal field brick with sandstone ashlar plinth, quoins, and dressings. The roof is notable for the corner pilasters, balustrade, and high central dome.

The building is the work of regionally important architect H.T Gradon. The agent's house, lodge and villas are also of high architectural value complementing the architectural style and materials of the main hall.

Within North Road between the A690 roundabout and North End, the notable historic building is the Grey Tower standing in isolation at the roadside. It is possibly a former lodge of the late 18th/early 19th century and is a very distinctive house within the city owing to its 3 storey tower form with battlemented parapet roof, ashlar dressings, and slit style windows.

In terms of modern development, the most notable and positive, is Highgate a dense housing area comprising of terraced blocks, facing eastwardly, with plots that are generally rectangular with some larger corner turners. The blocks are layered with the topography providing a hierarchy of streets and set in intimate courtyards and mews with terraced landscaped gardens. The architectural style is pastiche that creates a distinguished residential quarter. The scheme eschews any attempt at modern interpretation or experiment. Instead, its motif is the unashamed replication of the Durham Georgian townhouse.

Fig 42 below. The United Reform Church dominating as a historic landmark in the townscape, and St Cuthbert's Church in the Early English style but with French influence.



Fig 43 below. The architectural contrast between the Victorian Elizabethan style former county hospital and the adjacent contemporary accommodation blocks.



Fig 44 below. The distinctive and impressive Edwardian Baroque styled Redhills Miners Hall.



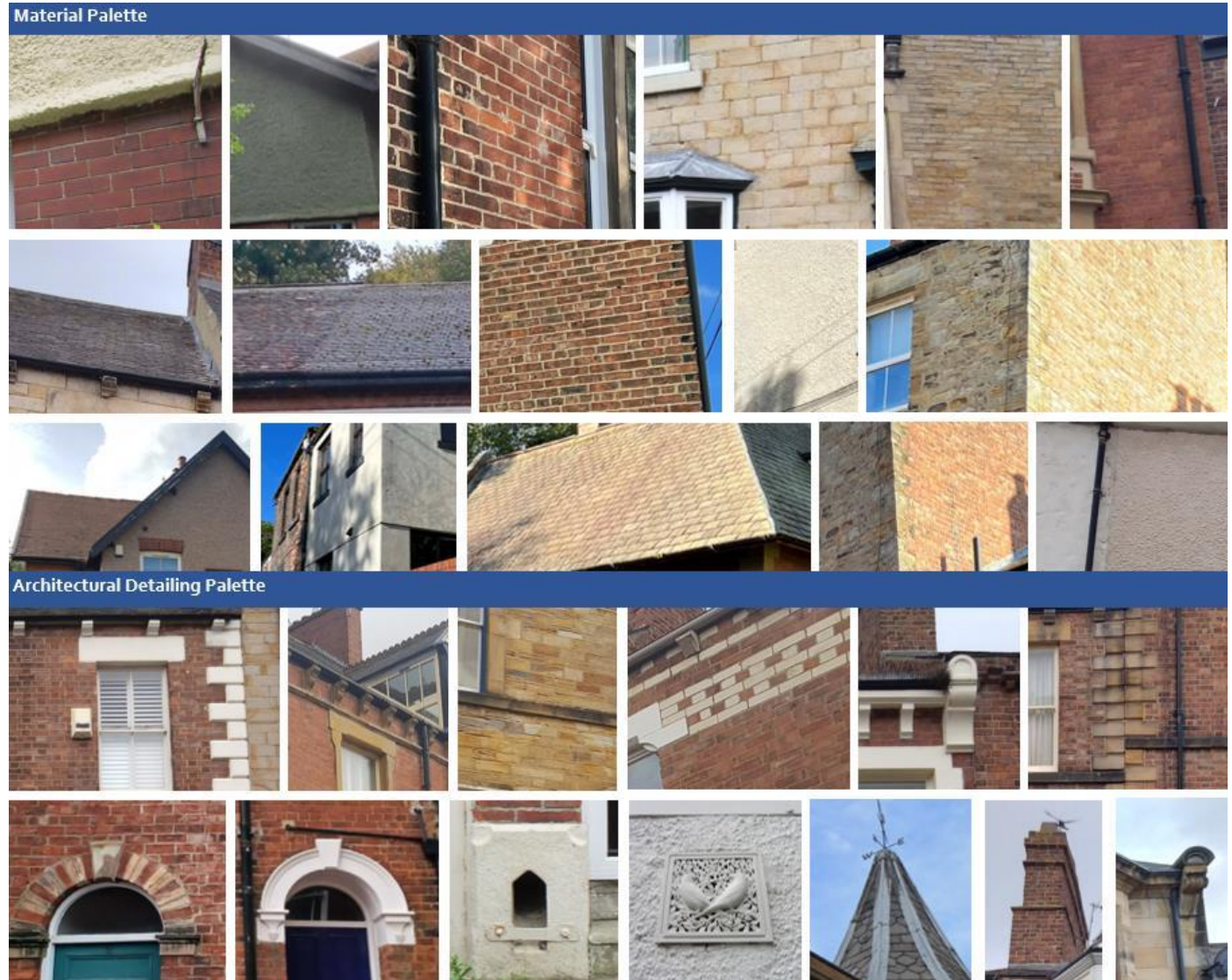
Fig 45 below. Highgate a high quality pastiche modern development designed to reflect the Georgian vernacular character of Durham City.



The area is characterised by a historic and traditional material palette with some limited contemporary interjection. Given how the area developed and evolved there is a predominance of red engineering facing brick. There are notable exceptions such as the distinctive bright red brick seen at Redhills Miners' Hall site, and the sandstone properties in Albert Street. There are examples of sandstone used for the landmark buildings such as the former County Hospital, the Grey Tower, the Railway Station, and the churches. Stone and brick are commonly used for detailing and decoration such as quoins, floor banding, door and window surrounds, heads and sills, chimney banding, eaves corbels and corncicing, enriching building facades.

There is some use of render seen within Princes Street, at the north end of North Road, and within Waddington Street, but elsewhere the use of this material is negative. In Mowbray Street for example two gable ends have been rendered over with bright red paint finish that detracts from the visual appearance of the red brick Victorian terraced street. While in Redhills Lane some of the original red brick frontages have been rendered over and this impacts negatively.

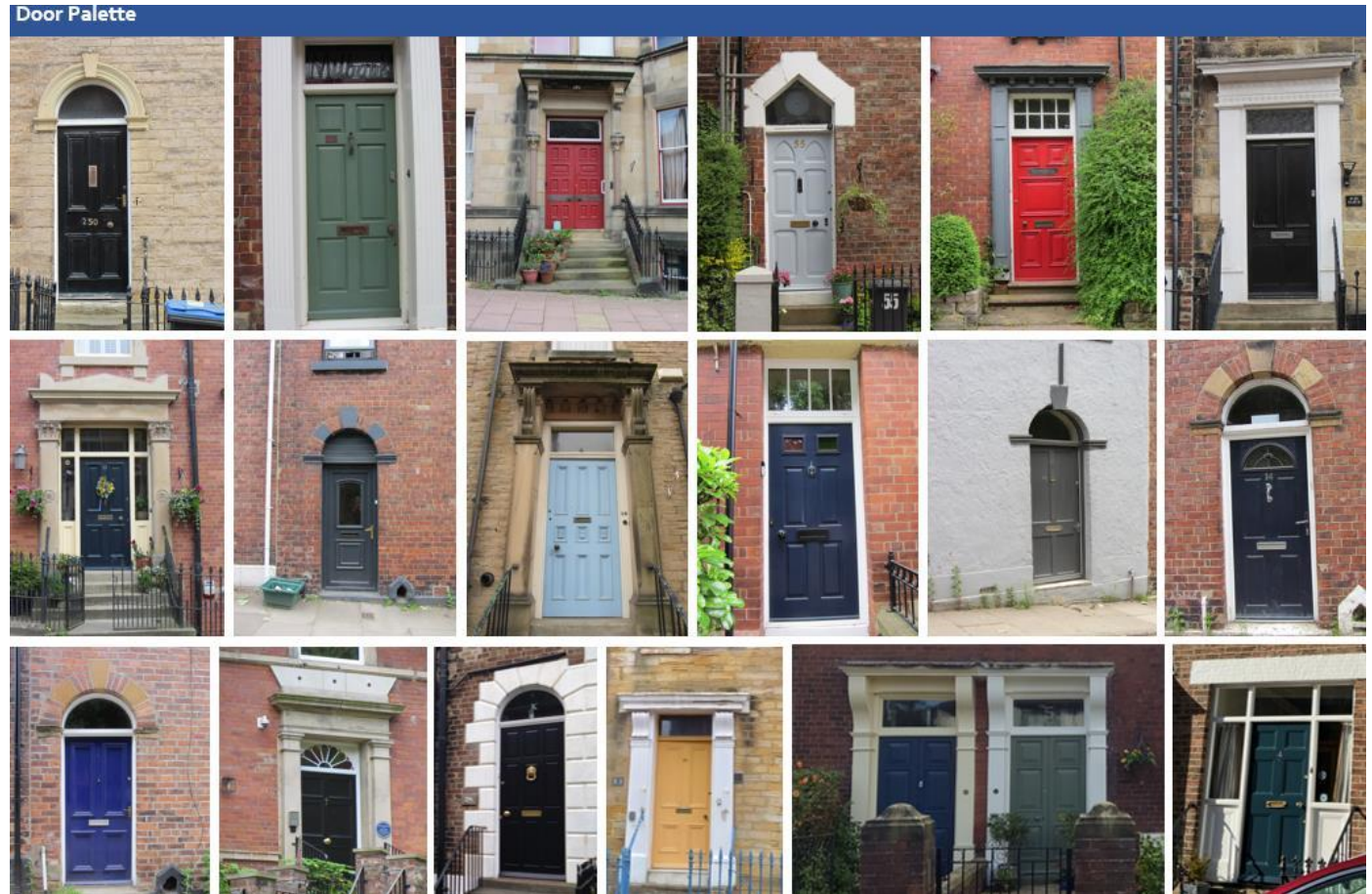
Welsh slate is the dominant roof covering material within this character area, but there is some obvious replacement for inferior fibre cement slate that is very out of character.



Doors are varied in terms of materials and styles but there are many examples of traditional timber painted doors, particularly in Albert Street, which contribute positively to the character and visual appearance of the individual buildings and collectively to the street scene. Others found are lower quality uPVC and composites in different styles that are generally not in keeping with the character of the building.

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

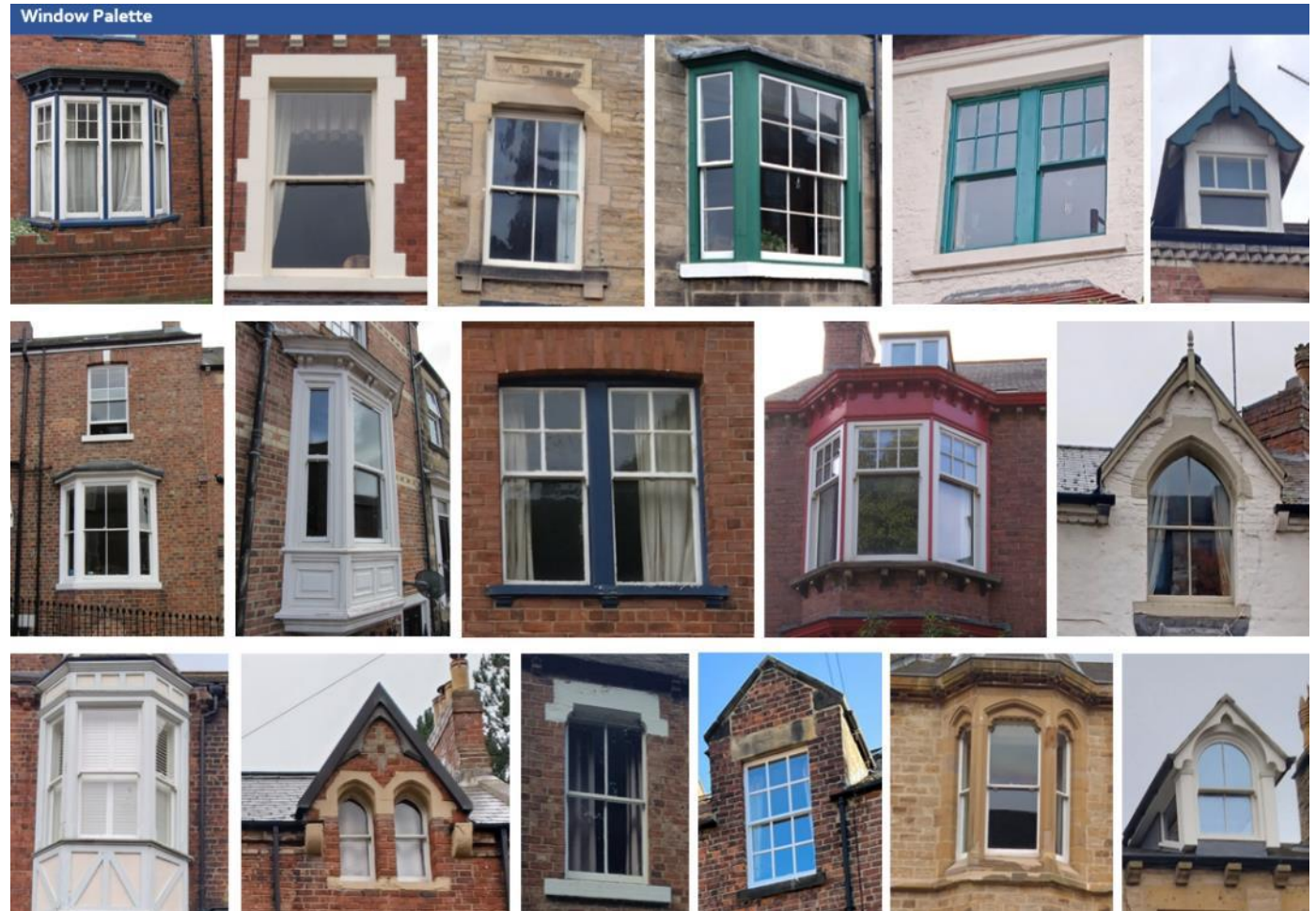
Door cases are commonplace, with brackets and hoods, with examples of more ornate surrounds, whilst pilasters, hoods, pediments with dentilled projections can be seen in the area. These add considerably to the architectural quality and character of the street.



Windows are the eyes of a building that are important features of its architectural style and character. Excluding one property all of the windows withing Albert Street are traditional timber painted sliding sash windows. There are some found elsewhere but many have been lost to unsympathetic modern uPVC alternatives that are damaging to the character and appearance of the building and streetscape.

Windows are in a mixture of Georgian and Victorian styles including 1-over-1, 2-over-2, 3-over-3, and 6-over-6 glazing patterns. There are some more distinctive windows including Edwardian 6-over-1 styles, bay windows, oriels, and full height canted bays in timber and stone enhanced by detailing and decoration. Traditional gabled and hip roof dormers can be commonly found in Albert Street that are positive features. There are some limited examples of wall dormers that add visual interest.

Windows often have stone painted lintels and sills, brick on edge headers, stone surrounds with sill bracket and stone shoulder lintels.



Roofscape

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

Consistency can be seen within the Victorian terraced blocks, where the typical roofscape is front to back pitched roofs running the length of the terrace that can be seen in the street frontages and from back lanes united by simple detailing and regularity of chimney stacks.

The roofscape across the area is almost exclusively of traditional dual pitches of different degrees, eaves, and ridge levels, so stepping at different lengths, with the rooflines punctuated by chimneys. Some chimneys have been lowered with a limited number lost that adversely affects the original uniformity. In Albert Street there is often added decoration at eaves level with dormer windows being integral features. But the quality of the roofscape is marred by the modern flat roofed dormers that appear at odds with the traditional character. There are some visible roof-lights within the area, and while they have no design consistency, they are not so detrimental to the character and visual appearance of the roofscape overall.

There are some positive interruptions to the terraced roofscape such as the tall spire of the United Reform Church a significant and dominant historic feature in Waddington Street, the central copper dome at Redhills Miners’ Hall, the prominent gables seen at the former County Hospital building, and the distinctive castellations at the Grey Tower. Such buildings add to the richness and depth of the roofscape.

Fig 46 below and right. A selection of images showing the differences in roofscape character at Albert Street, Waddington Street and Redhills Terrace.



The contribution of the modern developments to the roofscape is mixed. The infill development at the northeast end of Flass Street has a flat roof at much lower level compared to its terraced neighbours, and as a result appear at odds.

At Highgate, the roofscape is traditional and prominent approaching into the city from the north along Framwellgate Peth and is overlooked from the railway station. The roofscape is of high quality design and detailed to reflect the historic streets of the city and it remains unaltered.

In contrast is the roofscape informed by the accommodation blocks around the perimeter of the former county hospital site. This comprises of a sequence of large contemporary flat roofed blocks, with the rooflines stepped and top floors inset providing subordinate enclosing blocks to the original building with a stronger more open focused foreground setting. The roofscape is designed to be distinct from the surrounding domestic streets by the stepped form responds to the site’s topography.

The roofscape within this character area is experienced on two levels: intimately within the individual streets and in broader terms in views from surrounding higher ground such as from the approach into the city centre by train, and from Wharton Park. In such views there is a significant broad roofscape dominated by terraces seen in different orientations stepping both up and down with the landform. Such views are important to understanding the roofscape and its positive value to that of the wider historic townscape.



Fig 47 above. The high quality traditionally designed roofscape at Highgate with variation in pitch, height, and eaves levels with brick chimneys vertical features.

Shopfronts and signs

The character area is dominated by residential uses but has some limited commercial uses at Waddington Street, and Station Approach. Kingslodge occupies a hidden position at the northwest end of Waddington Street, its frontage features a distinctive metal overarch displaying the name in metal letters with subtle wall mounted signage flanking the entrance driveway.

Station House on the corner of Station Approach features a traditional timber shop front with a timber fascia sign and wall painted logo sign to the gable end brickwork. The building contributes positively to the character of the street, but its condition is deteriorated and impacts negatively on its aesthetic.

At Durham Railway Station, part of the west range that consists of the passenger building has been successfully converted to a micro-pub, “The Signal Man,” the external signage has been carefully considered, being minimalist, simple, and traditional, with an elaborate interior fit-out that has positively re-purposed the building.

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

- Distinctive historic buildings of different periods and architectural styles but with some unified groupings.
- Rich townscape resulting from the rich traditional architectural character
- Diversity of form, style, scale, massing, materiality, and detailing adding interest.
- Buildings of traditional form and proportions displaying characteristics of their era.
- The architectural contrast between the simple mine workers' terraces and the terraces more aspiring to the middle classes.
- Varied and colourful palette of high quality traditional materials.
- Distinctive roofscape and typical of the era including prominence and rhythm of chimneys.
- Notable historic landmarks of high architectural quality.

Negative elements (buildings)

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

Former industrial buildings, Back Western Hill –

A group of stone and brick built former industrial buildings of the 19th century, they have been disused for a long period of time and are very deteriorated with an uncertain future. The buildings are of moderate significance but are at risk.

Fig 48 below. *The redundant and dilapidated historic industrial buildings.*



No 1 Flass Street / Flass Corner – the main corner building appears to be an original part of the 19th century terraced streets, but to the rear is a modern infill that appears incongruous in the street scene owing to its lower scale, flat roof, square and horizontal windows and rendered right-hand-side.

Fig 49 below. *The low quality modern flat roofed infill development at Flass Street.*



Former WC North Road – a prominent building on account of its roadside frontage position along a key route, but it is of low quality comprising a flat roofed brick and concrete building of the mid to late 20th century. Planning permission has been granted for positive transformation to a contemporary café, but this has not commenced, and the buildings have been over boarded for a long period of time.

Fig 50 below. *The boarded over former public convenience at North Road.*



Negative elements (alterations)

The historic buildings within Albert Street show a very high level of intactness overall in terms of the preservation of the use of historic/traditional materials, period architectural features and detailing. Elsewhere, the level of intactness of the historic buildings is variable, many have been noticeably degraded by unsympathetic alterations. The main impacts tend to derive from:

- insertion of roof-lights when haphazardly positioned, excessive in number, size, and not of a conservation style,
- some examples of incongruous flat roofed box type dormers,
- rendering of original exposed facing brickwork, and brightly coloured paint finishes,
- replacement of original windows and doors and installation of low-quality uPVC and composite doors and uPVC windows of inappropriate designs and proportions,
- satellite dishes attached to front elevations,
- complete loss or lowering of original chimney stacks.

These issues detract from the overall quality of the building and when repeated across a terrace, degrades the overall historic character and visual appearance of the street.

Fig 51 below. A selection of images showing some of the negative alterations to historic buildings within the character area including imitation sash uPVC windows, painting historic brickwork, and large flat roofed dormers.



3.1.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Framwellgate Peth is a key entry/exit route, with ancient origins, but today is characterised by modern road development that is most often heavily trafficked, busy, and noisy. That said, up to the railway bridge it still manages to provide a pleasant pedestrian experience, due to its spaciousness, abundance of greenery, and sparseness of buildings. It has good direct and accessible linkages to Wharton Park, the railway station, and beyond, and is a cycle route. Car parking is provided in front of the church that is well used at school-run times, this can add visual clutter, but the impact is reduced by the width of the street and softened by greenery.

Approaching and passing under the bridge the route narrows marginally and feels more enclosed, with the impact of passing traffic increasing as the footway moves closer to the carriageway. Continuing south the route arrives at the A690, a very busy urban environment, affected by high vehicle usage, noise and pollution, with traffic often queued at the traffic lights. The traffic light system, pedestrian footbridge, crossing points and different footpath routes do make pedestrian navigation easier. The overall high volume of traffic has a negative impact on the surrounding historic environment, but this is unavoidable.

The North Road entrance experiences some through traffic, but this is mainly during peak times and is less impactful, hence the route is often calmer. It is very enclosed due to the presence of the stone walls bounding the back of the pavements, the hedgerows, and dense tree cover, along its entire length. It offers a very different, positive experience compared to Framwellgate, as a green corridor route into the city. However, the pavements are very narrow in some places that can cause pedestrians to step into the road to pass by.



Fig 52 above. The north end of Framwellgate Peth travelling into the city with a positive green character.



Fig 53 above. The south part of Framwellgate Peth beyond the railway bridge approaching the busy Milburngate junction.



Fig 54 above. North Road approaching in the city centre, a pleasing green corridor route terminated by the viaduct dominating the end of the street.

The west side is punctured at approximately mid-point by Obelisk Lane, a short quiet route of a semi-rural character. It has only a single narrow footpath on one side and is very steep, when combined with parked cars on the carriageway, it can be difficult to navigate for pedestrians but provides a valuable short cut to Albert Street. The lane is unique in the area in that it is not framed by buildings with enclosure created by the boundary walls, dense trees, and vegetation coverage.

Moving southwards North Road opens out at its junction with the A690 roundabout, this area provides a range of uses including residential, purpose built student accommodation, limited retail and two public houses. It connects through a viaduct archway to the commercial part of North Road that includes the bus station, and up to the railway station via Station Approach.

As such, it has high movement and activity levels and can be busy and noisy, increased by the rumble of trains above. The street provides a significant visual experience in terms of the emerging view of Durham Cathedral, first unseen then nearly framed within the viaduct arch.

Station Approach is a winding steeply rising street northward up to the railway station enclosed by stone walls and treed embankments. The tree cover shields the fine townscape views that include the castle, cathedral, and St Godric’s Church, detracting from the overall experience, especially the sense of arrival leaving the station.

The railway station is a hive of pedestrian and vehicle activity and is currently the most used station in County Durham. The forecourt can be very busy where there is purposeful movement into the station complex and out to the city centre. There are frequent private cars, taxis, and buses, and it provides a series of routes to different parts of the city centre.



Fig 55 above. Images of Station Approach looking towards the viaduct and the well-used steps leading down the side of Highgate, bot pleasing pedestrian routes providing valuable connections.

To the north is Wharton Park, the city’s only municipal park of high importance. It provides a range of activities and spaces of different recreational, and leisure uses, and it is used to host leisure and cultural events promoting enjoyment of the outdoors.

The park offers a quiet retreat from the busy city centre but can be busier and noisier during the summer months. The entrance space is dominated and visually detracted by the car park, but this does not harm the overall positive experience. The park was created on a hill and accessibility is problematic for some people due to the steep inclines and steps.



Fig 56 above. A family musical event held at the amphitheatre at Wharton Park.

Albert Street links North End to Sutton Street. It is residential in character with a quieter ambiance experiencing infrequent traffic, and less pedestrian footfall compared to the surrounding streets. It is an enclosed space and offers a visually pleasing experience given the high quality and diversity of the historic properties. The street is however visually marred by the clutter of on-street parking, and when combined with moving traffic can make crossing difficult.

In contrast, Back Western Hill is a hidden historic route of distinctive character. It is a steep and winding narrow wooded lane travelling north south where sudden glimpses of the cathedral appear over the rooftops. It is used by pedestrians but has no footways, and when there is traffic and parked vehicles in the tightly confined space, navigation can be impeded. It offers a surprising kinetic experience, which contributes positively to the character of the area. It is however detracted by the condition of the outbuildings, surfacing, refuse bins, and graffiti.

The western part of the character area is predominantly of residential terraced streets, which have a quieter atmosphere, particularly Redhills Lane. This is a very narrow tightly enclosed lane changing to a semi-rural character moving westwards. It is a very steep route used as a short-cut into/out from the city centre linking to Newcastle Road, but traffic is infrequent.

The cemetery provides a place of quiet retreat and reflection that is important to the social history and character of the place.

Cars parked on street can be visually detracting from the historic street scene but overall, it provides a pleasant walking experience. Similarly, at Flass Street and Mowbray Street parking is on street, which clutter and detract from the visual appearance of the street scene.

Connecting Ainsley Street and Flass Street is Flass Lane. This is one of the city’s hidden ancient lanes found behind buildings, which are a key part of the City’s character, the well offering a clue to the important role it played in city life. It is a very narrow intriguing lane, informal and quiet, of a semi-rural character.

Fig 57 below. Images showing the distinct character at Back Western Hill with the cathedral peeking above the rooftops in the background, and Redhills Lane with the castle above the treeline in the background.

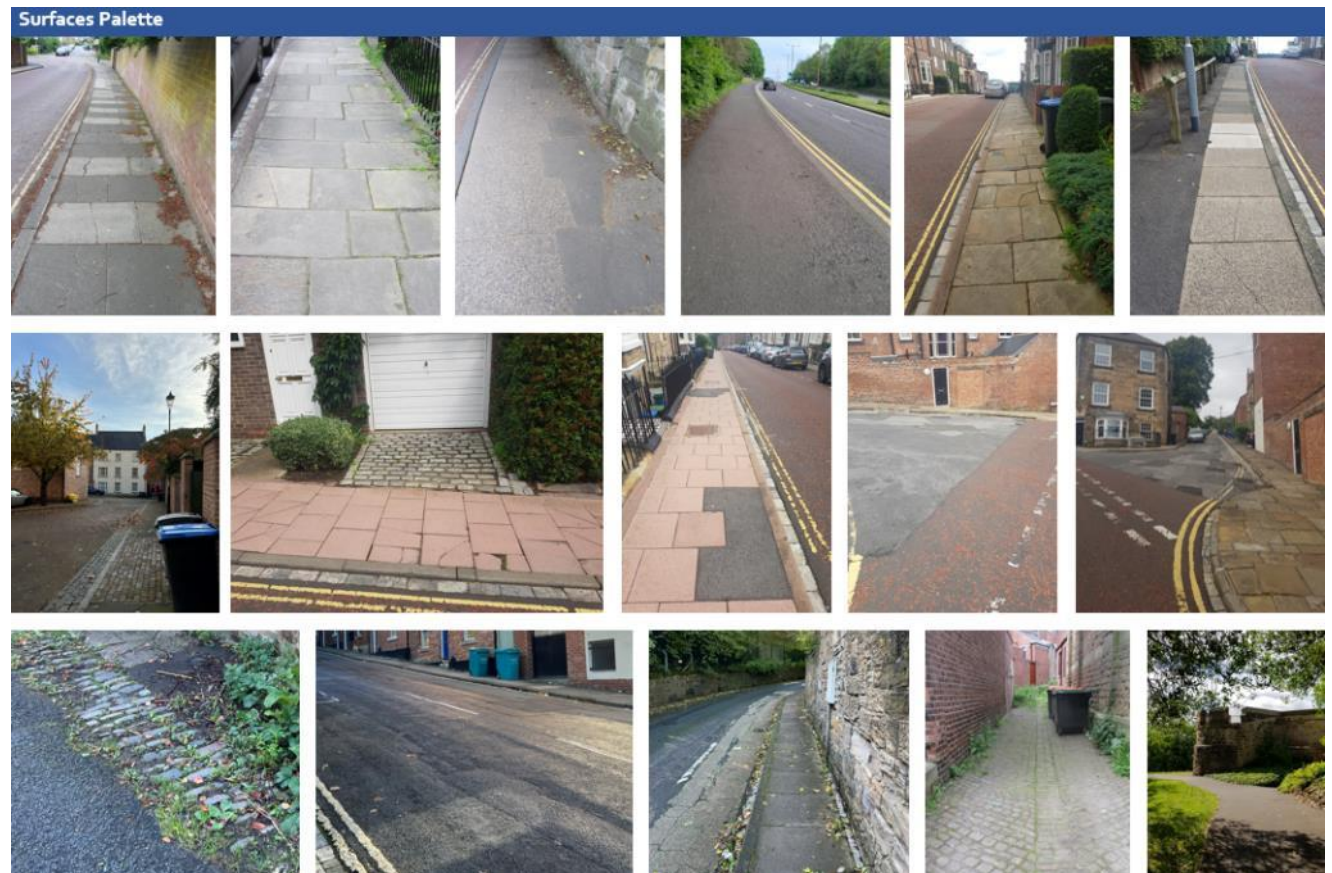


The overall quality and condition of the street surfacing palette is mixed. Within the character area modern surface materials are prevalent consisting of standard tarmacadam, concrete flagged footways in different modules and concrete kerbs.

Highgate is a notable positive exception with a traditional palette of stone paving, setts, areas of cobbles and buff carriageway surfacing that enhances the aesthetic quality of the development and setting of the buildings. Some carriageway areas have a red-chip tarmac finish which is aesthetically more pleasing and in character with the street compared to the standard black finishes.

The paving within Albert Street is a mismatch of traditional stone and distinctive light red/pinkish concrete that complements the carriageway surfacing. However, some paving flags have been replaced with black tarmac giving a very poor patched appearance that impacts negatively. On the south side of Back Western Hill there are some positive channels of traditional cobbles and setts, but restoration is needed. The back lane on the south side of Mowbray Steet has a distinctive pattern of stone setts that is positive.

There are instances where insensitive patch repairs and reinstatement works have been undertaken in different materials that impact negatively on the quality and aesthetic of the floorscape. Further detraction results from fractured flagstones and their unevenness, and from different materials merging with no interface material.



The busy road junctions are cluttered by the high number of street items in concentrated areas including service boxes, bollards, CCTV columns, traffic lights, traffic signs, wayfinding signs, and roadside safety railings. However, such items are a functional necessity and difficult to avoid, removal of redundant elements and rationalisation would still be beneficial to the visual appearance of the area.

Elsewhere, bollards, bus stops, lighting columns, litter bins and service boxes, can be found lining the different streets, but they are not excessive in number and generally do not adversely affect the character and visual appearance of the place.

All of the streets feature standard modern street lighting columns of different designs neutral in impact. Given the quality of Albert Street this would benefit from a change to a heritage style lighting scheme.

Dispersed around Wharton Park there are different items of play equipment, outdoor gym equipment, timber seats, picnic benches, bins, signage, railings, car park signs and pay meters, lighting columns and public art pieces. The entrance and area around the heritage centre is the only place that is visually detracted by clutter, as within the rest of the park there is an appropriate balance.

The park includes positive public art pieces and sculptures. "The Way" an abstract representation of St Cuthbert's journey leading to the cathedral, and the abstract "Ps in a Pod" a collection of sculptures designed to be similar but different like people. These enhance the public enjoyment and encourage interaction.

Boundary treatments are an important characteristics of the area, reinforcing the linear and enclosed nature of streets and spaces, defining the public and private realm, and having aesthetic value.

The properties in Albert Street have small front yard spaces enclosed by traditional black metal railings with different spike and fleur-de-lis tops that contribute positive to the character and aesthetic quality of the street scene. At Fieldhouse Lane, hedges and red brick walls are found with those in front of Fieldhouse Terrace being noteworthy consisting of low red brick walls with chamfered stone copings and tall heavy stone piers.

There are red brick walls and piers to the fronts of the properties at Waddington Steet, but one section has been replaced with lower quality red brick that stands out negatively, while at the northwest end of the street one property has contemporary style timber fencing that is visually jarring in the street scene.

North Road is characterised by historic stone walls where the condition of some sections is concerning, displaying masonry deterioration, fractures, and leans. The walls to the properties at Princes Street and Victoria Terrace have stone piers that are important features along North Road. Boundaries are an integral part of the design at Highgate, comprising of brick walls, gates, and railings.

The County Hospital site is surrounded by tall stone walls with flat copings and tall piers that provide a fine setting to building. The Miners' Hall has an impressive frontage of high stone walls that continue up Redhills Lane, reinforcing its linear street pattern, and mirrored by the walls and railway embankments on the opposite side that create a funnelled impression.

St Bede's Cemetery is bounded by stone walls adding to the character of the street scene and complemented by the stone walls at the south end of the gardens fronting Gray's Terrace.

Boundaries are also important and positive features of Wharton Park, they take the form of estate style metal fencing, stone terraced and battlemented walls, hedgerows, and timber fencing, all appropriate to the character of the park. They interconnect over different levels supporting the terraces and separate spaces of different character.

Street Furniture Palette



Palette of Boundary Treatments



3.1.5 Visual experiences

As a result of the character area's unique position forming the northwestern part of the city centre, and its steeply rising topography there are a number of important views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. These include the experience arriving into the city by train leaving the railway station where the dominance and dramatic presence of the cathedral provides an important sense of arrival. Further there is a sequential experience walking from the station down to the city centre where the castle and cathedral move in and out of view, with a panoramic view provided by the designed viewpoint over Highgate although this is significantly reduced due to unmanaged tree cover.

Added to the above is the fine panoramic view across the townscape from The Battery at Wharton Park, with the cathedral rising majestically into the skyline, there is the dramatic introduction of Durham Viaduct with a significant skyline and streetscape presence, the splendour of the historic landmarks of Redhills Miners' Hall, the former County Hospital building, the United Reform Church, and views of different domestic historic streetscapes.

All of these views, and others, provide an appreciation and understanding of the area's special interest and contribute to its character.

In summary the key views identified within this character area are as follows.

View 1 – Streetscape views north and south along Albert Street.

View 2 – View of the cathedral along Framwellgate Peth.

View 3 - Panoramic townscape view from The Battery Wharton Park.

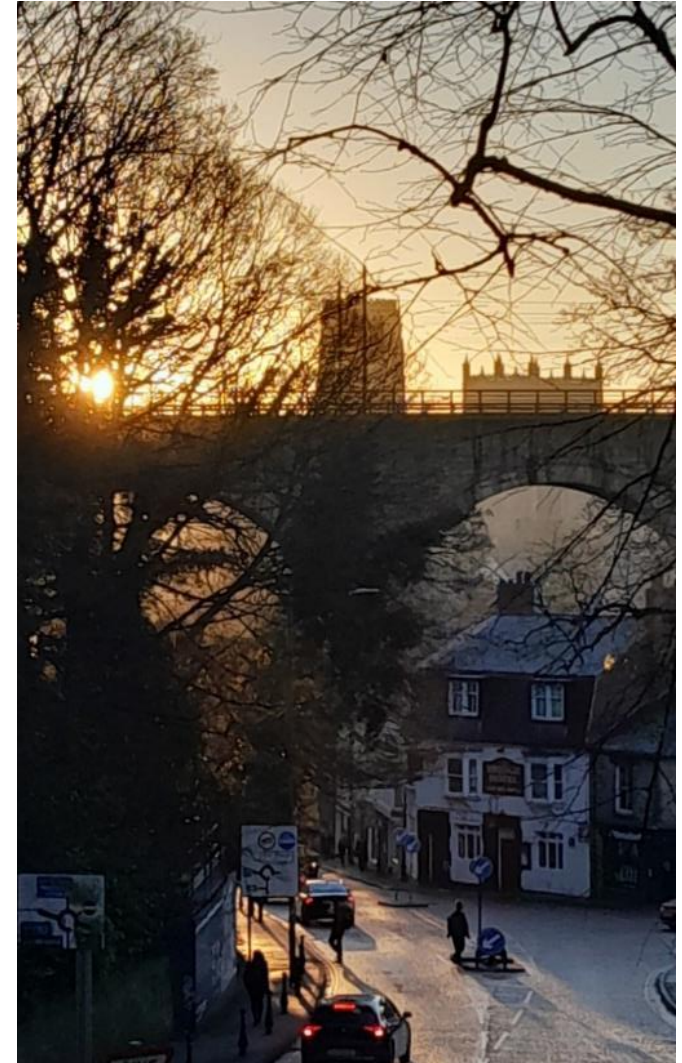
View 4 – View from North Road of the viaduct and cathedral.

View 5 – View from west end of Flass Street of Redhills Miners' Hall.

View 6 – from the train station / station approach of the castle and cathedral



Fig 58 below. Images of Durham Cathedral from the railway station and North Road.



Key Views
Location



Image



Description

Views in both north and south directions along Albert Street

Enclosed channelled and intimate views of the fine historic streetscape comprising of 19th century dwellings of higher status compared to others of the period.



View south approaching the city centre along Framwellgate Peth

Sequential view of Durham Cathedral as it is first unseen passing under the railway bridge as the road descends to Millburngate roundabout. The cathedral becomes increasingly evident and prominent travelling southwards. The view is one of the cathedrals dominance in the skyline over the contemporary urban development.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View south east from The Battery, Wharton Park

An elevated view from a designed historic static viewpoint. The cathedral and castle are seen in their wider historic townscape and landscape context, highlighting their dominance over the historic city core.



View south east at the junction of North Road and Sutton Street

Kinetic and sequential view approaching the viaduct that is at first unseen descending the street before a sudden reveal. Moving towards the viaduct the archway frames the cathedral dominating the skyline above the historic urban townscape.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View north from the south west end of Flass Street.

A short range close quarter view from a static view point of Redhills Miners' Hall set in its landscape designed grounds and wooded backdrop from the entrance gates.



Views south east from the railway station and Station Approach

The site provides static viewpoints, kinetic and sequential views, where the cathedral is visible from Station Approach providing a sense of arrival. It then disappears from view descending the street, with glimpses appearing between the trees. This is followed by an open panoramic view from the designed viewing point on Station Approach where the castle and cathedral are seen against the broader townscape.

The views are however significantly reduced in the Summer due to the unmanaged tree cover.

Key night-time views

Sequential views from the Train Station/Station Approach and Framwellgate Peth. These provide a different visual dimension and experience to the same day-time views.



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

- Positive contrasting ambiance between the busy main gateway routes and urban spaces, with the quieter green lane routes and cemetery spaces.
- Positive sense of intimacy and enclosure within certain streets and lanes.
- The green corridor routes leading into the city provide a different character and experience.
- The high value and positive sense of place, social and recreational value of the municipal park.
- The traditional boundary treatments give clear definition to the public and private space and have positive aesthetic value in the street scene.
- The different routes available and connections between places of different character.
- The evolving views of changing historic streetscapes, urban and natural environments with historic landmarks.

Fig 59 below. Wharton Park was restored in 2015 funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Durham County Council that included improvements such as a new heritage centre, café, play area and restoration works to the amphitheatre, and it continues to be a popular attractions as a public park in the heart of the city.



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

Built form

- There are two historic buildings identified as being at risk the Lychgate at Redhills Lane, and the industrial building Back Western Hill.
- There are a number of properties where traditional timber doors and windows have been lost for uPVC and composite alternatives.
- Examples of low quality modern dormers that are out of keeping and detracting.
- There are some examples of low quality modern development that do not respect the historic layout, character, and appearance.

Urban spaces

- In some locations, street surfaces are mismatched with material degraded, giving a poor appearance.
- There are examples of fragmentary repairs using different materials giving rise to a poor patched appearance.

- Some carriageway materials are degraded, and on some footways, paving flags are fractured and uneven.
- Streets can be dominated by moving and stationary traffic and parked cars. In the narrower historic streets this results in visual clutter.
- There is some noticeable loss of traditional boundary treatments. The condition of the historic boundary treatments is variable and is noticeably deteriorated along North Road and Back Western Hill.

Green spaces

- The broader green spaces are in a fair condition, but some roadside verges are deteriorated.
- There are places where unmanaged tree cover reduces the extent and quality of viaduct, castle, and cathedral views.

Street furniture

- There are "hot spots" where street clutter is more prevalent, but these are at the busy road junctions and stopping points so difficult to mitigate.

- Lighting columns are mixed, and some places would benefit from a heritage style lighting scheme to enhance the character.

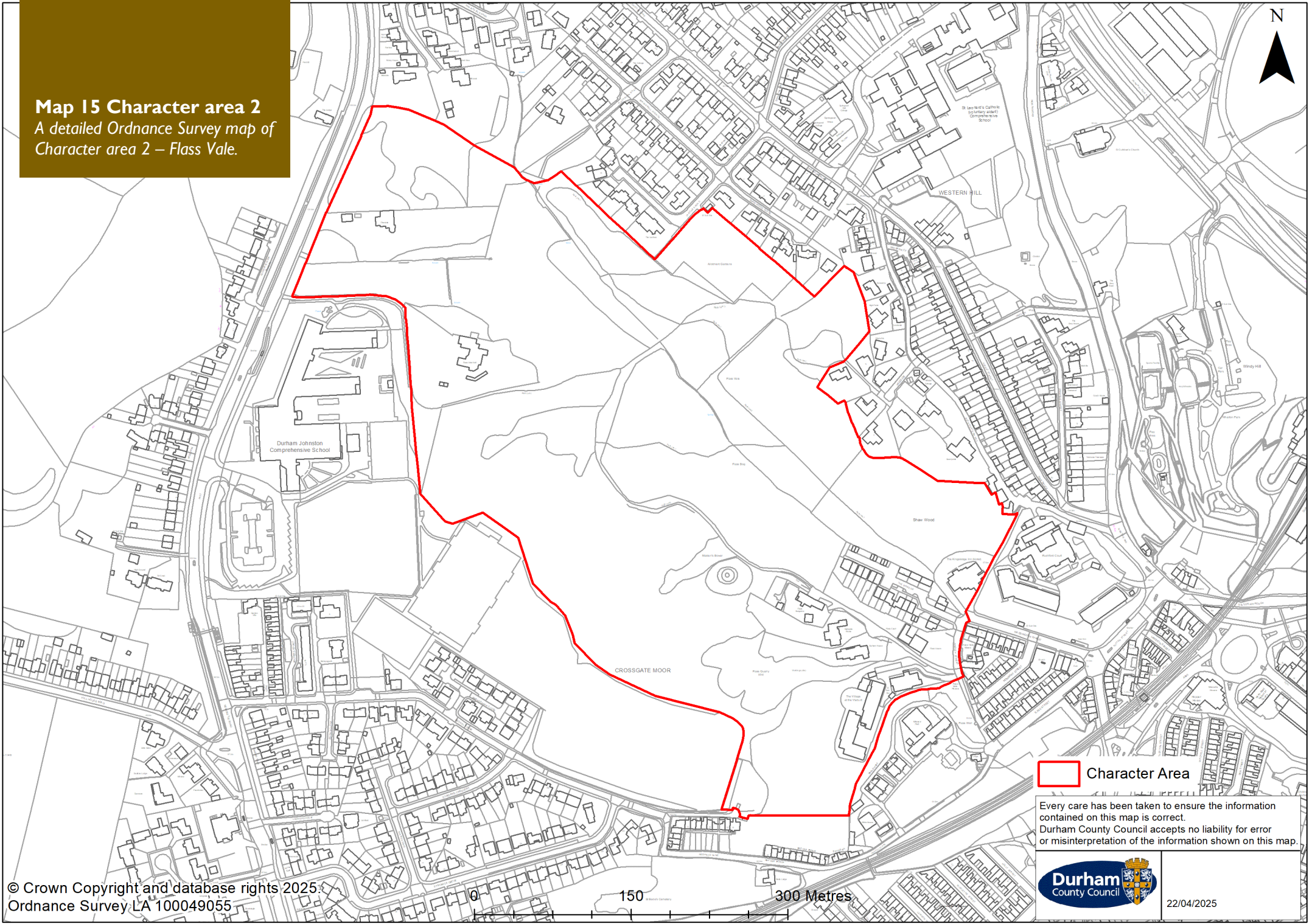
Threats


- Ongoing deterioration of vacant and underused buildings and boundary walls.
- Ongoing vacancy of former public WC building.
- Continuing deterioration of street surfacing materials, and ongoing insensitive material replacement and patch repairs.
- Continuing negative visual impact of parked vehicles and traffic, along with the associated street items, but in places this is likely difficult to avoid or mitigate.
- Potential for unsympathetic alterations and loss of architectural features to non-designated heritage assets due to permitted development rights, or as a result of unauthorised alterations.
- Lack of tree management screening and/or reducing important views further.

3.2 Character area 2 (Flass Vale)



Map 15 Character area 2
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character area 2 – Flass Vale.



 Character Area

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

3.2.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area relates exclusively to Flass Vale, a local nature reserve, and green asset, which occupies the majority of the western part of Framwellgate Conservation Area.

In the north it is bounded by Newcastle Road and the modern housing area at North End. Its eastern edge follows the backs of the dwellings at Valeside, Shaw Wood Close, and Springwell Avenue, and Durham Johnston School.

In the south it runs around the rears of the properties of Gray’s Terrace continuing around the back of Redhills Miners’ Hall site, and Ainsley Steet up to the south end of Back Western Hill.

The area has a mixed historic and modern urban setting, and in a wider context forms part of the encircling landscape on the north side of the city centre. The vale is one of several green fingers of countryside that run into the historic heart of the city contributing greatly to the character, aesthetic and visual appeal of the area and wider city centre

While the character area is a natural environment it includes some residential development at the south east end in the form of The Bowers, Flass Bungalow, Highgate House, Durham House, Flass House and The Village at the Viaduct.

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

- Ancient topographical landscape features.
- An integral part of the wider landscape intrinsic to the character and appearance of the city centre.
- Significant green space that penetrates into the urban built form of the city.
- Distinctive and varied topography rising steeply northwards which developed as part of the glacial movement that created the river valley.
- High ecological, wildlife, and natural aesthetic qualities.
- Provides a range of land uses woodland, meadow, bog, and community allotments.
- Provides a significant view of Durham Cathedral from the landscape feature known as “hangman’s hill.”
- High value as a local community recreational, leisure and social place.
- Includes the important Bronze Age Maiden’s Bower round cairn, a scheduled

monument.

Fig 60 below. Image of a typical woodland path at the entrance to Flass Vale from Waddington Street, and the views in the centre of the vale looking north.



3.2.2 Local layout, streets, and spaces

The vale is a significant and substantial natural space forming part of the hilly green “wall” of the surrounding landscape that informs the backdrop to the urban area. It comprises different elements such as Shaw Wood, the disused Flass Quarry, Maiden’s Bower, Flass Bog, allotment gardens and springs, with mature trees, hedges, vegetation and undulating open green areas. Overall, it has a wilderness quality of high scenic value and character that is distinctive within the city centre. This is laid out across an undulating landform rising steeply northwards.

Part of the significance and spatial arrangement of the value is how it was created and developed. The broad shape of Flass Vale was laid down 10,000 years ago when the ice cap retreated, leaving sand, clay, and gravel behind as water flooded towards the valley of what is now the River Wear. These deposits formed the hills surrounding Flass Vale. The hill which formed Redhills and the A167 blocked meltwater from flowing through Flass Vale and diverted it into what is now the Browney Valley.

The first evidence of human settlement in Flass Vale dates from the Bronze age in the form of the Maiden’s Bower, a Bronze Age burial mound. There is also a route thought to be part of the route taken by monks between Durham Cathedral and Beaufrepaire in medieval times.

During the 19th century it was a mixture of pasture, had several gardens, two plantations and patches of woodland, then a public pleasure garden and an extensive orchard, with the bottom of the valley a bog. Profound changes were made in the 20th century with the extraction of sand in several quarries on both sides of the Vale. There was a sewage works at the top of the Vale, which was abandoned and later used as an allotment.

This combination of natural, human-caused modifications to the landform, and reclamation of former industry, shaped the topography and character of the vale. It comprises of an interesting combination of open green spaces merged into dense woodland, with allotment gardens on the periphery, laid over the varying landform to provide a distinctive and interesting walkable layout, steep and hilly in places.



Fig 61 below. A series of images showing the range of natural habitats of different character within the vale including dense woodland open pastures, and allotment gardens.



Fig 62 below. An image of the Maiden's Bower.



At the vale's south end is The Bowers, a modern residential development within a naturally self-contained area, and relatively hidden in the wider townscape. The building line at the entrance respects the existing line of Flass Vale, and the adjacent Kingslodge Inn, where two pairs of houses flank the entrance providing gateway features. The layout has clear reference to the surrounding historic townscape, the buildings providing a series of frontages that structure the layout defining and enclosing the public realm. This creates an area with its own character and sense of place.

The detached buildings on the vale's west side are individually designed with no set development pattern, they are of different orientations set in plots of different shapes and sizes. They developed from the mid-20th century onwards and are neutral contributors.

In the south is "the village at the viaduct" a large, purpose-built student accommodation development. It goes largely unnoticed on account of its location in an irregular carved depression to the southeast bottom corner of the vale, enclosed by buildings and dense tree cover. It does not reflect the historic grain but is nestled inoffensively into its landscape and wider townscape surroundings.

3.2.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing.

This character area is landscape focused incorporating limited built development that is situated at south end of the vale comprising of 20th and 21st century residential developments.

At The Bowers, the dwellings are of 3-4 storeys adopting a traditional/pastiche type design approach mimicking the Victorian terracing in the local context. They have an ordered and vertical emphasis to the elevation treatments and include traditional architectural elements and detailing such as bay windows, art stone heads and sills, gabled parapets, and sash style windows, with chimneys to break up the graduated roofscape.

There is slight variation in the brick work colour to add definition and interest, and the roofs are of traditional Welsh slate. The development is a positive contributor and a sensitive piece of townscape regeneration replacing the former bus depot.

The Village at the Viaduct is designed in a contemporary style. The blocks are linked to create courtyard spaces to provide a community environment. While of a large scale at 3 and 4 storeys there is a graduated massing, stepped roofscape and vertical emphasis. They have contemporary detailing of deep reveals, glazed links, vertically proportioned windows, coloured glass panels and variation across the pitched roofs. Visually they are simple, but the above elements combine to bring variety and visual interest.

Durham House and Highgate House are detached, individually designed modern dwellings. They comprise a large irregular footprint, with hipped roofs, tall external chimney stacks, vertically proportioned windows in a multi-pane style, balcony over entrance with art stone balustrading, and dormer windows. They do not reflect the local vernacular but as the plots are engulfed by the vale's dense mature tree cover their contribution is neutral. The 1950's Flass Vale Bungalow is a simple traditional building with a good degree of character that provides a positive building at the vale's entrance.

Fig 63,below. A selection of images of the different buildings within the character area showing the diversification in age, and architectural style.



3.2.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Flass Vale offers a hidden escape from the noise, hustle, and bustle of the busy city centre environment just a short walk away. The main entry from the south is by a narrow, enclosed pedestrian route alongside Kingslodge. Walking north the track opens up to meadows that creates a sense of arrival. Immediately the noise from traffic and pedestrians disappears, giving way to a tranquil natural ambiance. As an area of wilderness, it contains much wildlife that enhances the pedestrian experience moving through the vale.

The area can be described as pedestrian friendly owing to the high number of public rights of way, with designated footpaths snaking through the vale . However, the steep and hilly parts may be difficult to navigate for people with mobility issues. Activity levels are low giving a strong feeling of isolation. It is a popular space used for dog-walkers, joggers, cyclists, and nature walks.

There is a mixture of open exposed areas, sheltered spots, and areas of dense woodland providing changing natural experiences. Part of the interest of the vale is the sense of community ownership. The Friends of Flass Vale was publicly launched in October 2002 and consists of over 256 members of the local community who all share a passion for the protection and enhancement of the vale.

The paths throughout the vale are a mixture of tarmac, and informal rough dirt tracks. There is no lighting beyond the entrance points, and very limited street furniture, with only the occasional seat, and one interpretation board. This is appropriate to the character of the area.

Boundary treatments are infrequent with only rural style timber fencing found. Enclosure within the vale is created by the dense mature tree cover, vegetation, and hedging that is appropriate to its land use, type, and character.



Fig 64 above. An examples of one of many designated footpaths running through the vale.

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

- Positive sense of seclusion and separation from the busy urban core of the city centre.
- Provides a valuable experience as a peaceful quiet retreat.
- Intimate inwards natural character of high aesthetic value and quality.
- Area of higher landscape, wildlife and biodiversity value that is experienced walking through the vale.
- Hilly nature of the vale and the various routes leading off in different directions encourage exploration.
- Positive recreational, leisure, social and community value bringing people together.

3.2.5 Visual experiences

Flass Vale is a naturally self-contained area, comprising of a deep valley and due to the dense mature woodland and vegetation cover, outwards views are heavily restricted, while inwards views have limited depth of field.

As a result, there is only a single key viewpoint identified from the elevated exposed location at "Hangman's Hill." This is one of the hills that encircle the historic city core and provides a fine static view of Durham Cathedral in the skyline above the dense tree canopy, residential dwellings in the foreground and wider landscape backdrop.

Viewpoint location map



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

Built form

- The buildings are all modern, in use, and in a good physical condition with no issues identified.

Urban spaces

- The informal surfacing of the footways/tracks within the vale are appropriate to the area's character, so no issues are identified.

Green spaces

- The wilderness like quality and unmanaged nature of the greenery is in keeping with the vales character, so no issues.

Street furniture

- Very limited items of street furniture and limited lighting appropriate to the location, so no issues identified.

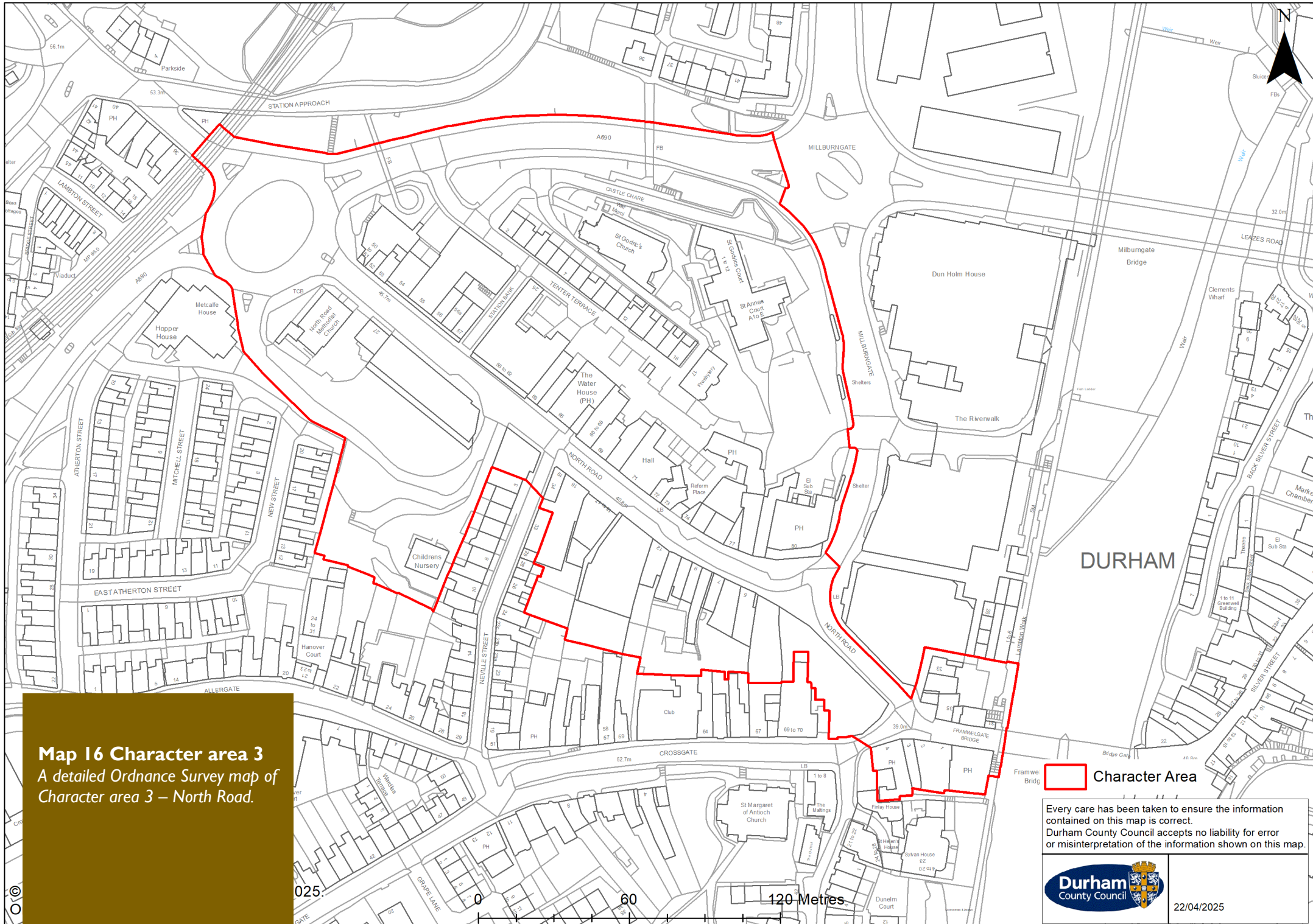
Threats

- None identified.




3.3 Character area 3
(North Road)





Map 16 Character area 3

A detailed Ordnance Survey map of Character area 3 – North Road.

 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.



22/04/2025



3.3.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area occupies the southern part of the conservation area between the A690 in the north and the west end of Framwellgate Bridge in the south. The east boundary follows the carriageway behind Castle Chare, and the west boundary is tightly drawn around the rear plots of the buildings lining the south side of the street.

Most of the historic streets within the city have medieval origins with a strong Georgian character. But this part of the city became the focus of Victorian development and the main entrance into the city centre from the new railway station. As a result it appears very distinct from the strong medieval and Georgian character that dominates the historic core of the city centre elsewhere.

The area is mostly commercial in use, and is the key route between the public transport hubs of the railway station and bus station to the peninsula and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site via Framwellgate Bridge.

It is part of the bustling city centre urban environment with a mixed setting of historic residential townscape, contemporary mixed use commercial and leisure development, with the south corner opening up to the river corridor. This provides the dramatic surprise of Durham Castle and Cathedral appreciated in its "romantic" setting.

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

- Historic interest as part of the city's 19th century expansion heavily influenced by wider industrialisation.
- The preserved simple linear historic street pattern.
- The street's value as a key gateway and axial route to the historic city core.
- The sense of place informed by its historic and ongoing commercial use, and the activity and vibrancy this generates.
- Variety of architectural styles with distinctive historic landmarks of individual designs reflective of use and status.
- Victorian commercial character with a strong positive contrast to the medieval and Georgian townscape of the city.
- The static, kinetic and sequential visual experiences of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site

Fig 64 below. Views within North Road with the former cinema and miner's hall focal points, and the distinct contrast between the 19th century Methodist Minister's House and contemporary bus station redevelopment.



3.3.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

North Road is a Victorian street which links to the city’s central core on the peninsula. The iconic cathedral and the castle are in prominent view looking down the street to the south east. This is as a result of the road being aligned along the axis of the castle and the natural topography of the peninsula that ‘lifts’ the castle clear of its surrounding buildings.

The character area has undergone a number of stages of development, but its historic plan form is preserved and legible. North Road is a short Victorian street that follows a simple linear path emerging from the west end of Framwellgate Bridge, travelling diagonally northwest up to the A690. From this point it curves and drops steeply eastwards down to Milburngate. The street is wide and enclosed by an almost continuous built frontage with buildings pressed up against the back of the pavement.

Where there are breaks in the building line this is positive in terms of providing entrances into the historic side streets of Neville Steet, Station Bank, and at Reform Place. Building plots and footprints vary giving rise to a mixture of narrow and wider frontages, but there are some cohesive terraced groups.

The terraced format is interjected positively by larger scale landmark buildings of the former cinema building, North Road Miners’ Hall, and Methodist Church, and negatively by the modern building at No 19. There is an important historic back street space, Reform Place, a fully enclosed former industrial courtyard area.

The southeast end of the street on the north side is significant as the surviving historic buildings give a hint of the medieval pattern and built form of development that existed at Milburngate.

Tenter Terrace is an elevated short linear terrace of fifteen residential properties. They have a uniform rhythm of rectangular plots with small back yards, bounding a rare and distinctive fully cobbled back lane. At the southeast end stands the detached presbytery, a building of a larger footprint facing east within a generous irregular plot.

In the north is St Godric’s Court and St Anne’s Court are of an L-plan form facing an enclosed courtyard. The buildings are of a large scale, which combined with their elevated position, gives rise to a strong presence within Milburngate. On the north side the no-through route of Castle Chare drops diagonally down to Milburngate Roundabout, with the A690 curving sharply around the periphery.

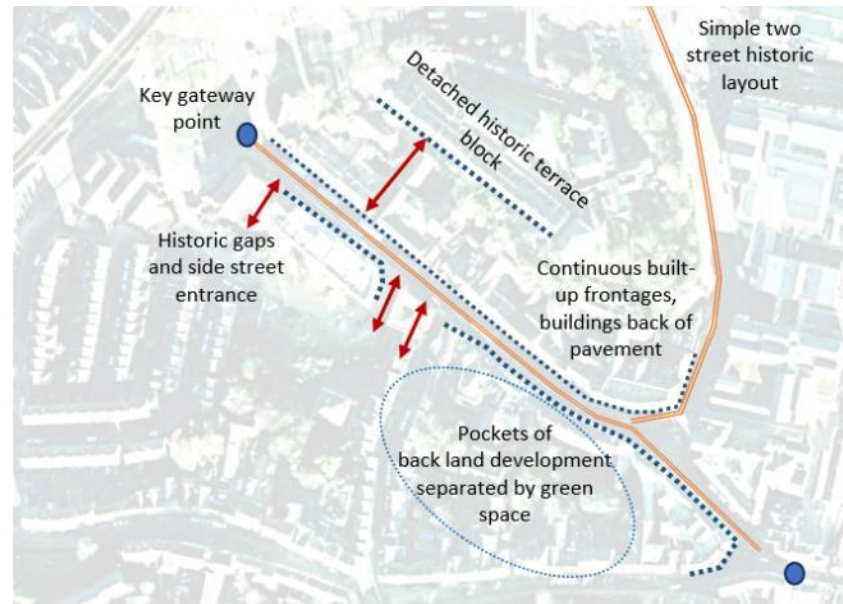
Fig 65 below. Left; the main enclosed street of North Road showing the simple linear plan form. Centre: the open access points and steep bank up Nevilles Street. Below: the curving declining route at Milburngate.



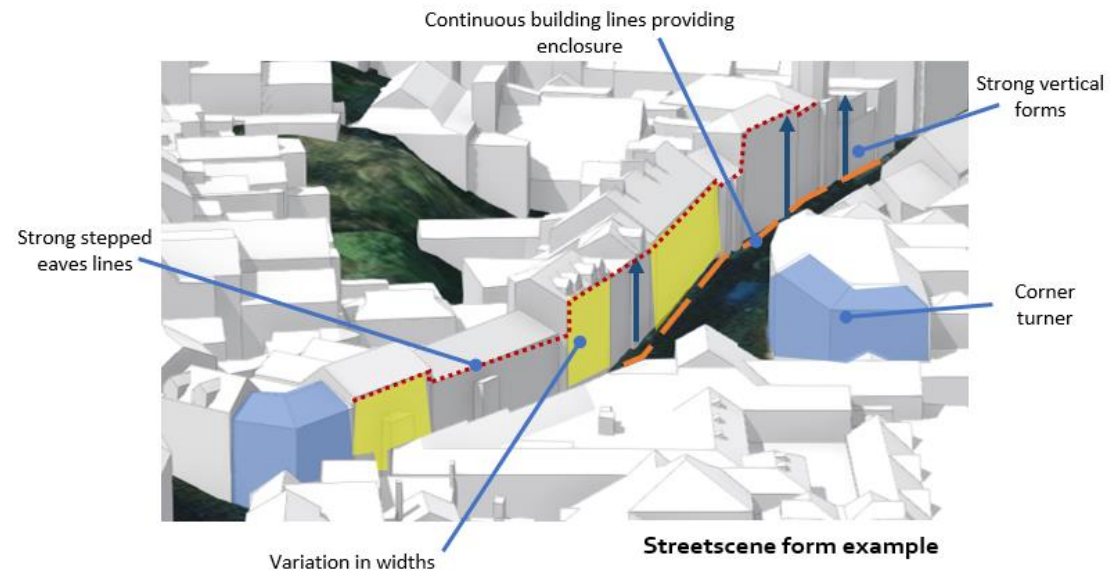
Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to special interest.

- Simple linear 19th century street pattern and key gateways.
- High density development with strong active commercial frontages, which is the street's historic identity.
- Terraced plan form with buildings pressed at back edge of pavement punched by historic side streets that add positively to character.
- Distinctive historic landmarks with wider frontages.
- Small historic industrial courtyard space with its own sub-character.
- Collection of individually designed buildings of the church and former convent, which do not conform to the general grain but contribute very strongly and positively.
- Layout and buildings positively frame and channel views to the castle in the south and viaduct northwards.

Fig 66 below. A plan and modelling demonstrating the layout attributes of the character area.



Plan form



Streetscene form example

3.3.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing

At eye level North Road presents as down-at-heel, but ignoring the modern shop fronts and development blocks, and looking up there are a number of handsome facades testifying to its Victorian origins.

The buildings are a mixture of ages, scales, forms, detailing and visual appearance but with unifying characteristics. They are between 2 and 3 storeys, traditionally shaped and proportioned, with ordered and vertical emphasis to the front elevations. Common features include sash windows, some examples of bay windows, string, and eaves dentil coursing. The modern redevelopment at the south east end of the street conforms to the historic characteristic's contributing positively to the streetscape.



Fig 67 above. The modern development block that complements the historic townscape owing to its well-considered design and quality.



Several buildings stand out owing to being architecturally distinctive and more embellished. The former Miners' Hall has a significant presence in the street with a wide ashlar frontage, large multi-pane sash windows, balustraded parapet to the roof, and two stage tower with high octagonal dome.

The neighbouring building is the former cinema also comprising a wide ashlar frontage but in a distinctive Art-Deco style. A short distance to the north is The Water House, a public house which is a fine brick building with stone detailing and a grand columned stepped entrance.

At the north end of the street stands the Methodist Chapel, and Minister's House of 1835 and 1860, respectively. The chapel is built in classical style of squared sandstone with ashlar dressings and features round heads and tripartite sash windows, a fine entrance of eight steps leading up to an Ionic porch, with giant Tuscan pillars defining each bay, and the top entablature and pediment with name and date stone. The Minister's House is a simple dignified building again of squared sandstone with large sash windows, string course, and double door set within a Tuscan doorcase.

Fig 68 left. Top: the Victorian buildings with preserve upper floor facades. Centre: the Art-Deco former cinema and the former Miners' Hall. Bottom: the Methodist Chapel.

The Fighting Cocks Public House is of a 1920s/30s classical design with tripartite sashes in the rendered floor above. It disguises pre-19th century fabric with important exposed timber framing in the side wall belonging to the former adjoining building.

St Godric's Church is a historic landmark of a distinctive Gothic style. Its most striking feature in the surrounding townscape is the dramatic west tower with its large corner pinnacles. In fine contrast is the 18th century former convent standing in front of the church, which is a three storey building Georgian in character. Attached on its north side is the more substantial and imposing former school building of red brick with large traditional timber sash windows, half gabled dormers, stone string courses, heads, and sills.

Tenter Terrace adjacent the church dates from the early 19th century and is a simple stone terrace of 2 storey, 2 bay dwellings, with a simple ordered street elevation. The character and appearance of the street has been harmed by modern alterations including render applied to the existing stonework and uPVC windows and doors.

The street has a strong and positive historic character with its own sense of place deriving from the different built types and uses that are representative of its development. But this is detracted by interspersed low quality late 20th century developments. This includes the two flat roofed blocks flanking the entrance to Neville Street.

At the north end of the street there are long horizontal blocks separated by Station Bank, of dull brown brick, oversized canopy, large horizontal and narrow vertical slit style windows, which offer nothing positive to the street scene. At the south end of the street is the 4-storey Bridge House, dating from the 1960's constructed from brown brickwork. It is unremarkable architecturally but important in terms of its arresting riverside location.

The new bus station is three storeys in height and of a singular flat roofed block form aligned with the back of pavement. The style and aesthetic is unapologetically contemporary with the scale and massing articulated by use of different materials and heavily recessed joints. It has a vertical expression created by the windows forming vertical strips, which combined with larger areas of glazing give a visual clue of the full height concourse space within the building. The redevelopment of the bus station site has resulted in a visual improvement compared to the former building. Although it has a dominant street scene presence and appears somewhat stark in its surroundings, its contribution overall is neutral.

Fig 69 right. *The Fighting Cocks Public house of a classic early 20th century design, and below the Georgian former convent, that contrast with the strong red brick and detailing of the former school building.*



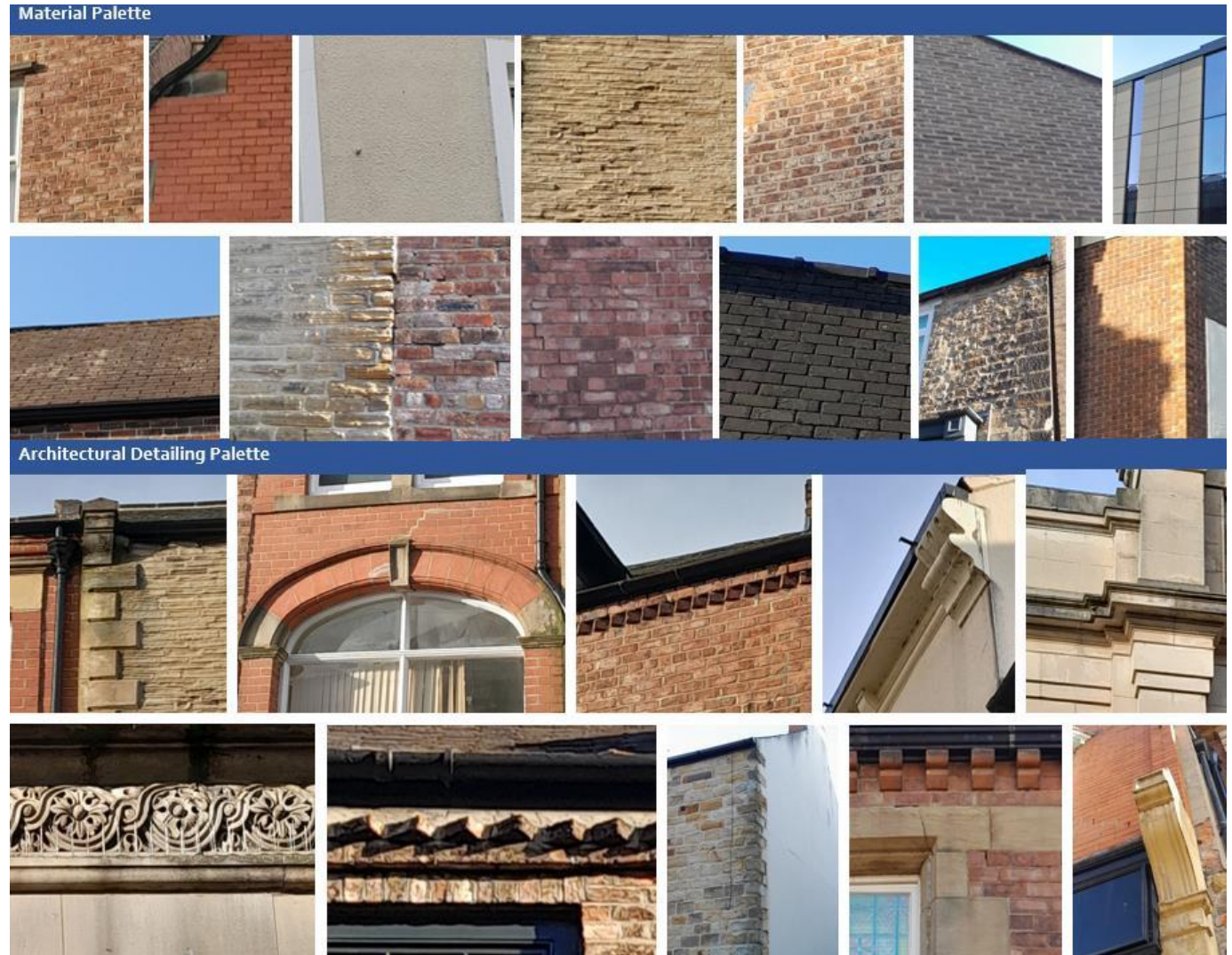
The type of materials used within the buildings makes a key contribution to the local distinctiveness of the character area. They vary considerably generating a rich traditional palette giving a high level of aesthetic interest and sense of its history.

Brick in multi-red, and some limited dark red/brown handmade brickwork, modern development blocks in lifeless brown brick. There are some examples of buff stone, and ashlar.

Tenter Terrace is one of the few terraces in the city constructed from local sandstone, but some properties have covered the original material with render. Render is also a finish found with the main street in light colour finishes. The newest building is the bus station that has a limited contemporary palette of buff stone and metal framed glazing.

Stone and brick are used for elements of detailing including eaves courses and corbels, floor bands, quoins, window heads and sills, and some more elaborate opening surrounds that enrich the elevations. There are a number of brick chimneys visible some with brick banding and stone detailing.

The roofs that are visible have traditional Welsh slate coverings appropriate to their character and giving a high level of intactness and authenticity.

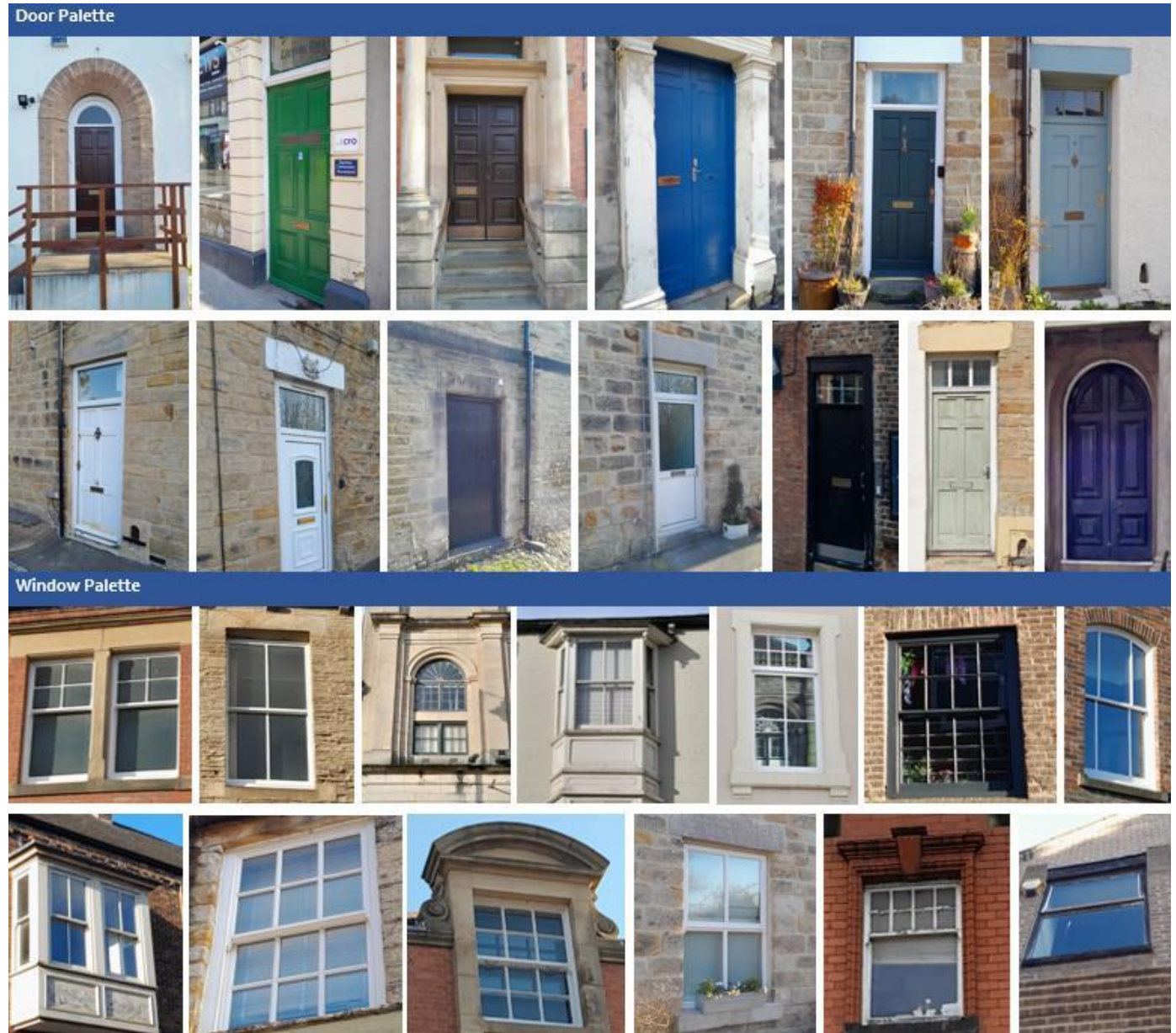


The most notable doors are found at the Minister's House of the Methodist Chapel that has a panelled central double door in a stone Tuscan doorcase, while the church has a large panelled double door in round arch. The residential Tenter Terrace has a mixture of traditional timber painted 6-panelled doors that are in keeping, and some unsympathetic uPVC replacements. The loss of the window and door uniformity has harmed the terraces character and appearance.

Within North Road there is a wide variety of window styles, some buildings have traditional timber painted sliding sash windows in different 1-over-1, 2-over-2, and 6-over-6 glazing configurations that contribute positively. There are examples of modern timber casements windows that are neutral, and some noticeable loss of traditional windows for insensitive modern uPVC replacements that is damaging to the character of the building and street.

The late 20th century developments have a mixture of timber, metal, and uPVC, which are generally suitable to the age and style of the building but are not positive within the wider street scene.

At Tenter Terrace there are some surviving traditional timber sashes with one property having timber shutters. But most have been replaced unsympathetically with timber windows in a different casement style, and uPVC units that harms the historic character of the terrace.



Roofscape

Like all of Durham City's historic streets the roofscape of North Road is a significant positive contributor to the wider townscape. The eclectic collection of buildings of different, ages, uses, and styles creates a highly varied roofscape character seen from numerous public vantage points approaching the street and from surrounding elevated vantage points notably from the railway line in the west.

The roofscape predominantly comprises traditional dual pitches with the occasional hipped roof set at different degrees, with variation in the eaves and ridge levels creating stepped rooflines often broken by chimneys and the occasional dormer window. There are some unusual features adding interest including the distinctive Dutch gable at No 64, the highly detailed stone parapet to the Art Deco former cinema, and the tall domed tower of the former Miners' Hall. Added to these are the viaduct in the north, the central tower of Durham Cathedral and castellations of Durham Castle's west range in the background of the roofscape in views to the south.

The roofscape overall is traditional and of strong character but is detracted by modern interjections. The north end of the street is dominated by long unrelieved horizontal blocks, with further flat roofed buildings flanking the access point to Neville Street. These appear at odds and out of place in the context of their traditional neighbours.

At the south end of the street Riverwalk plays an inseparable role in the area's roofscape. It is designed with saw-tooth vertical blocks to reflect the form and mass found in the historic Durham townscape, successful at the development entrance but ignored rounding the corner towards Framwellgate Bridge where the mid-20th century block provides a long unbroken roof that adds nothing positive.

Fig 70 below. A view across the North Road roofscape from Tenter Terrace showing the eclectic mixture of traditional roof forms and right the variation in roofscape on the north side of the street with the castellations of the castle dominant.



Shopfronts and signage

Durham has a vibrant city centre, with North Road developed as a Victorian “high street” which remains in commercial use to this day. Nearly all of the ground floors of the buildings contain shop frontages. These include one important rare survival from the 19th century, whilst other replacements vary in design, and aesthetic quality, and there is a proliferation of signage.

The historic and traditional timber shopfronts make a positive contribution to the street scene. While they vary in appearance, they have unifying design characteristics of traditional proportions, vertically proportioned shop windows with glazing bars, recessed entrance doorways, appropriately sized fascia’s above, framing provided by cornicing and pilasters, often with decorative corbels, and stallrisers, some with panelling, providing detail and grounding.

The modern style of shop fronts tend to be made from aluminium, have large areas of glazing and flush modern glazed doors, and are devoid of decoration and visual interest. The impact of these shop fronts is negative when low quality and hosted by a historic/traditional building, as they appear at odds with the character above. But others are neutral in contribution when featuring within the modern development blocks as they appear more relatable to the age and design of the host building.

In terms of signage, there are examples of individually applied lettering, three dimensional and simple flat fascia panels, along with two examples of hand painted signage. There are many traditional hanging signs that contribute positively and enliven the street scene.

Equally there are detractors taking the form of heavy internally illuminated box signs, flat oversized fascia’s and heavy internally illuminated projecting signs which are visually jarring.

Fig 71 below. *The commercial street scene on the south side of the street showing the wide range of different shop fronts and signs on display.*



Added to this, there are examples of shop windows being visually cluttered by advertisements, while further street clutter is formed by pavement signs that can obstruct pedestrian movement.

The empty retail units, unsympathetic shopfronts and associated paraphernalia have a negative impact on the character and aesthetic appeal of the conservation area and are a key issue here.

Shopfront and Signage Palette



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

- Victorian and commercial character distinct from the medieval city streets.
- Strong familiar historic identity with some building and upper floor facades of high quality that reflect the street's origins.
- Period properties unified by vertical emphasis, architectural rhythm, and uniformity of design.
- The varied and rich palette of traditional materials.
- Buildings of individual designs, higher status and different uses that are historic landmarks enriching the townscape.
- Some good quality traditional shop frontages that add interest to the street scene.

Negative elements (sites)

There are four sites within the street identified as impact negatively upon its character and visual appearance.

Nos 18 and 19 North Road

A late 20th century redevelopment block occupying a prominent corner position at the junction with Neville Street. While its building line and height respect the street, the horizontal form with no articulation, bland elevation and materials stands out as being unsympathetic in its historic context. The effect is increased owing to it adjoining the former miners' hall.

No 20 North Road

A substantial detached three storey mid-to-late 20th century development block with a flat roof. The ground floor has a long modern shop frontage, and while the upper floors have some merit in terms of the glazing pattern, the design is of low quality and fails to achieve sympathetic assimilation into the historic streetscape.

Nos 54-57 North Road and Nos 58-62

Two late 20th century redevelopments of similar designs. They are of a long horizontal form of bland brown brick, lack design quality and interest, with oversized canopies that create poorly enclosed footways.

Negative elements (alterations)

The main negative impacts in terms of alterations to buildings found within the character area tend to derive from:

- the loss of traditional timber windows and timber panelled front doors at Tenter Terrace,
- the installation of low-quality uPVC windows and doors which are out of keeping.
- rendering and painting over the original exposed stone and brick work,
- the enlargement of original openings,
- the introduction of low quality modern box dormers,
- loss of traditional timber shopfronts,
- low quality modern shop fronts and signage,
- clutter to elevations and within shop windows.

3.3.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

North Road is a commercial street generally full of noise and activity, with a bustling vibrant atmosphere. It has a highly active night life owing to the number of public houses and takeaways and being a pedestrian connection from the bus/railway stations to other places of night-time activity such as Riverwalk and up to the Market Place. It is a single straight route that is easy to navigate. By being the key gateway route to the Market Place and cathedral from the main public transport hubs of bus station and train station it can be extremely busy and feel congested with buses, taxis, shoppers, revellers, and people standing queuing at bus stops. Yet this high level of activity is a key part of its character.

As North Road forms the central pedestrian spine route to the peninsula, encompassing the bus station, with key links to the rail station and with retail frontage either side of the road, it is a key arrival point. It is often people’s first experience of the city that gives a poor impression because of the quality and condition of some of its buildings, the retail uses, and the general degradation of the urban environment.

Survey figures show that vacancy rates within the city have decreased over recent years but there are still a noticeable number of empty units within the street that impacts negatively on the impression, character, and visual appearance of the place.

North Road can also be affected by anti-social behaviour more so than in other parts of the city centre, which can harm people’s experience and perception of the city. These issues need to be addressed if the area is to achieve its true potential.

The back streets to North Road tend to be quieter with a lower level of pedestrians and traffic. The area can however be dominated by parked vehicles cluttering the narrow spaces. The very busy Milburngate Roundabout creates a poor setting to the former convent, school, and church. At the back of Tenter Terrace there is a short yet important route, an enclosed and sheltered historic cobbled lane one of the best preserved in the city centre. The ambiance of the pedestrian environment around Millburngate it dominated by traffic, producing noise and pollution.

There is a positive change at the south end the street turning east at the key gateway point onto Framwellgate Bridge. While pedestrian movement is still high, there is vibrancy created by the outdoor seating associated with the cafes, and public houses.

A significant experience here is that moving south down North Road the castle and cathedral disappear from view, then suddenly and surprisingly reappear at close distance turning the corner on to the bridge, at first framed by the buildings then opening out to the river corridor.

There are two well used pedestrian bridges within the area crossing over the A690. These both provide important visual experiences of the viaduct and Victorian terracing, and the castle and cathedral in the townscape context.

Fig 72 below. Activity in North Road with shoppers and bus travellers.



The carriageway surfacing along North Road and turning the corner to the lower end of Crossgate Bank has recently been renewed. While this comprises a standard modern black tarmacadam material it provides a refreshed and uniformed surface treatment. This work along with sections of footway material replacement works have impacted positively on the visual appearance of the street.

There are some positive surface treatments with traditional setts to the carriageways at Castle Chare and Station Bank. York stone is also used around the chapel, whilst the back lane at Tenter Terrace is fully cobbled but in need of restoration. In front of the terrace there are self-made parking bays that have a mixture of concrete, gravel, and sett surface treatments, some areas in a poor condition and overgrown.

There is a higher quality consistent surface material palette in the south part of North Road consisting of York stone paving and conservation kerbs that contributes positively.

There are however still some weaknesses for example the access to the children’s nursery and carriageway surface material around Milburngate and Tenter Terrace is degraded and poor in places. Within North Road there is still a mismatch of different paving modules that could be improved to provide visual uniformity.

North Road is impacted by a proliferation of street furniture items that in places visually clutter the space. The north end near the roundabout is affected by standard traffic related items, moving through the street there are bus stop signs, litter bins, a high number of bollards, seats, lighting columns, railings, service boxes, a post box, cycle racks, wayfinding, taxi, and parking signs. Removal of any redundant items and rationalisation with a co-ordinated design approach would be highly beneficial.

The entrance to Tenter Terrace, and the church, is visually detracted by clutter in the form of bollards, road signage, and refuse bins. On the North Road side, the access up to Tenter Terrace is significantly detracted by a large bus stop information sign that detracts in the foreground of the view of St Godric’s Church.

The buildings within North Road have no front boundary treatments, but there are traditional black metal railings on the north side of the chapel and in front of the Minister’s House. Elsewhere there are metal railings, historic brick and stone walls around the former convent, school, and church, timber birds-mouth fencing on top of the A690 embankments, brick, stone and rendered walls to the back of Tenter Terrace. Of note is the green living wall to the back of the bus station that injects an element of nature into the harsh urban environment.

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

- Positive sense of identity informed by the commercial character, and associated buzz of activity.
- Provides a central pedestrian spine route to the castle and cathedral acting as an important gateway route.
- Variety of notable views, the street layout purposely promotes axial views along the main street.
- Pedestrian friendly and focused.

Negative elements

The street has a poor reputation and does not give a positive impression of the city to visitors arriving by train or bus. This is generally due to the combination of a number of factors including anti-social behaviour issues, empty retail units, outdated and deteriorated elements of the public realm, the low quality modern development blocks, and the unmaintained condition of some buildings giving an overall shabby appearance. All such issues detract from the character and appearance of this important gateway street.

Surfaces Palette



Street Furniture Palette



3.3.5 Visual experiences

North Road is an enclosed linear street that rises slightly from its southwest junction with Framwellgate Bridge up to the A690. As a result, it provides limited opportunities for any significant outwards views, however the street funnels views south towards Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, and in reverse of the viaduct. Turning the corner onto Framwellgate bridge provides a sudden and dramatic view at closer quarters of the peninsula, castle, cathedral, and river corridor, which is significant. St Godric's church is seen at close quarters from the A690 while Milburngate provides a significant view of the church, former convent, and school where they have a dramatic and looming presence above street level. This view is noticeably reduced in the summer months. The key views identified within this character zone are:

View 1 – View south along North Road

View 2 – View north along North Road

View 3 – View from junction point onto Framwellgate Bridge

View 4 – View of St Godric's from Tenter Terrace

View 5 – "Hidden" cathedral view from Tenter Terrace

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

Fig 73 below. The view of Durham Cathedral in the North Road streetscen from the roundabout.



Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View south along North Road.

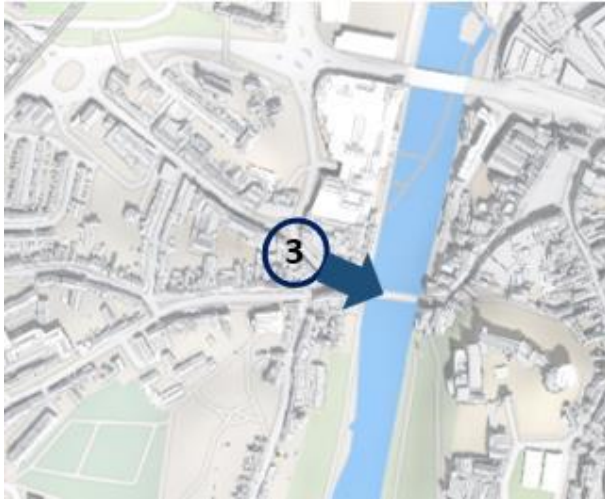
A sequential view approaching into North Road and when emerging from the Bus Station. The street layout and buildings frame the west range of Durham Castle where its sheer mass dominates the skyline creating visual drama.



View north along North Road.

A kinetic view north up the street where the Viaduct dominates the skyline spanning the street, its becomes more dominant and impressive as you move towards it.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View east at the south end of North Road turning onto Framwellgate Bridge.

A sequential view of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site travelling along North Road the castle and cathedral disappear from view, before a dramatic reveal when emerging onto Framwellgate Bridge. The ancient buildings dominate the townscape and are seen at close quarters in their river and landscape setting.

View west from Castle Chare

A close range static view point demonstrating the architectural quality of the church, its dominance and its historic landmark status in the townscape.

The experience of the view is elevated as approaching from the south up the steps from Millburngate the church is unseen, that heightens its dramatic impact once in view.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View south east from the end of Tenter Terrace.

A static “hidden” view point from where the elevated perspective intensifies the prominence of the cathedral and its dominance over the townscape.

The extent and quality of the view is however reduced in the Summer months due to tree cover.

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

Built form

- Examples of insensitive alterations to some historic buildings, including loss of traditional features and fabric.
- Examples of low quality late 20th century development that does not respect the historic character of the street.
- Some of the shop frontages suffer from fabric condition issues.
- There are a number of modern shopfronts and advertisements of a low aesthetic quality.
- The overall condition of the buildings and street feels unmaintained and shabby.
- Despite some recent improvement there are still empty shop units that impact negatively.
- There are some metal roller shutters that impact negatively deadening the visual appearance of the unit and street scene.

Urban spaces

- The floorscape is mismatched and variable in quality and condition.
- The cobbled back lane at Tenter Terrace is a positive traditional floorscape but is in need of restoration.
- The space in front of and around Tenter Terrace and the church is detracted by refuse bins, clutter, and parked vehicles.
- The open service yards are visually poor overlooked spaces.
- The entrance to Reform Place is negatively impacted by collections of commercial refuse bins and low quality deteriorated surfacing.

Green spaces

- The embankments around the area are important to its setting, but the unmanaged trees reduce views of historic landmarks in the Summer months.

Street furniture

- Street furniture within North Road is uncoordinated, pieces are outdated and in places there is excessive visual clutter.

- The abundance of traffic and parking related items detract from the street scene but may be difficult to resolve.

Threats

- Continued deterioration and unsympathetic alterations to historic buildings.
- Worsening of the area's shabby appearance.
- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials, and continuation of insensitive replacement and patch repairs.
- More items of street furniture and parking related paraphernalia being introduced adding more negative clutter.
- An increase in vacancy rates.
- Continuation of anti-social behaviour issues.
- Ongoing poor impression of the place putting off visitors and potentially new businesses.

3.4 Character area 4 (Sidegate and Crook Hall)



3.3.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area forms the northeast extremity of the wider conservation area focusing on the medieval manor site at Crook Hall, the ancient route of Sidegate and the surrounding landscape.

The western and eastern boundaries come to a point in the north informed by the railway line and the edge of the woodland. In the south the boundary follows the path of a short section of the carriageway at Framwellgate Peth, turning east around the rear plots of the dwellings at Sidegate and continuing down to the riverside. From here it follows the riverbank along Frankland Lane up to, and including, Frankland Cottage. The area is landscape dominated; part of the steep sided river valley encircling the north side of the city centre only interrupted by the urban presence of Western Hill and Gilesgate.

The area’s setting is mixed comprising of contemporary riverside development, “Barkers Haugh,” a stretch of alluvial (soils consisting of earth and soft sand left behind on land flooded or where a river once flowed) land forming part of a river valley and wider open countryside. The railway line provides an abrupt stop in the north with Aykley Heads, and areas of dense modern housing at Newton Hall beyond.

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

- Sidegate is significant as a surviving and legible remnant of the medieval plan form of the city in this area.
- It is said to be first mentioned in 1217 when it belonged to Gilbert De Aikes of Aykley Heads.
- The high historic, evidential, and archaeological potential of Crook Hall as the most important domestic medieval building in the city outside the peninsula.
- Distinctive and varied topography rising steeply northwards from the river to the railway line developed as part of the glacial movement that created the river valley.
- The high ecological, wildlife, and natural aesthetic qualities of the historic landscape, with parts shaped and reclaimed by former industrial development.
- The architectural interest of the area provided by the evolution of Crook, a 14th century manor house, and the Victorian terraces.

The 19th century gardens at Crook Hall are of high interest.

- The important views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site from the riverside and elevated vantage points giving different visual experiences.
- The route along Frankland Lane which is part of the pilgrim route between Finchale Priory and the cathedral.

Fig 74 below. The view across the gardens in front of Diamond Terrace.



3.3.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The ancient route of Sidegate is located between the main carriageway of Framwellgate Peth in the southwest and Frankland Lane in the northeast. It is a very distinctive steep "green lane" of an intimate historic character. The lane is narrow tightly enclosed and steeply descending.

There is a terrace of nine dwellings, with a larger dwelling standing detached as its west end. The terrace comprises of narrow rectangular plots, with two storey houses set at the back of the pavement to define the space, with small, enclosed back yards.

On higher ground above is Diamond Terrace with a notable different characteristic of having garden plots separated from the dwelling frontages by a narrow footpath.

The other buildings within this area conflict with the above regular layout being detached with different orientations and larger irregular plots set in a sporadic arrangement.

Frankland Lane runs parallel to the River Wear. It begins at the south end of Sidegate where it is open in character but detracted by the electricity sub-station and car park site. Beyond this point it provides a scenic linear route of a semi-rural character enclosed by trees and vegetation but opening up at the modern riverside centre.

The group of buildings at Crook Hall, with the exception of the contemporary visitor centre, are set back from the main frontage along Frankland Lane. They are accessed by a steeply climbing long private driveway

The historic gardens exist within the framework of garden walls and the hall buildings. There is a mixture of garden compartments of different spatial scales, including 'Secret Walled Garden', 'Shakespeare Garden', 'Cathedral Garden', 'Silver and White Garden', lawns, moat, and a maze. The gardens are of high significance, characterful and aesthetic value, but are outside of the general public domain.

Fig 75 below. *The along Sidegate a simple steeply climbing cobbled street, and right the view along the river corridor at Frankland Lane.*



The surrounding broad landscape of the character area is a significant space on the valley terrace overlooking the River Wear where the steep slopes fall down to the floodplain below. The character is open and predominantly rural with a mixture of dense woodland and farmland. Its form has been shaped by historic industrial activity with the landscape reclaimed by nature.

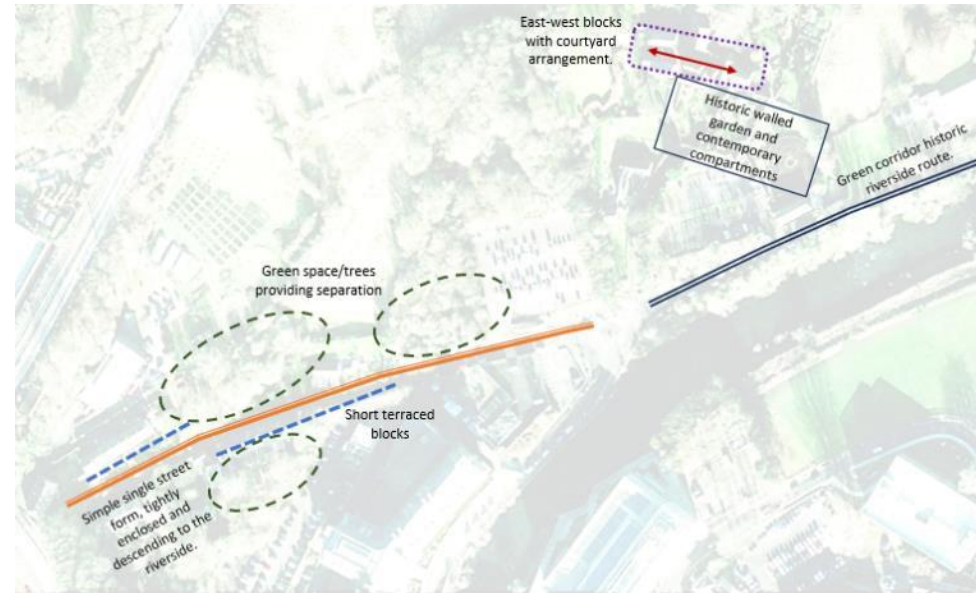
An important part of the landscape is the recognisable field pattern with hedgerow dominated boundaries that most probably date from the enclosure of medieval town fields in the 17th century. It has an urban fringe quality and is crossed by the east coast main railway providing an engineered upper edge.



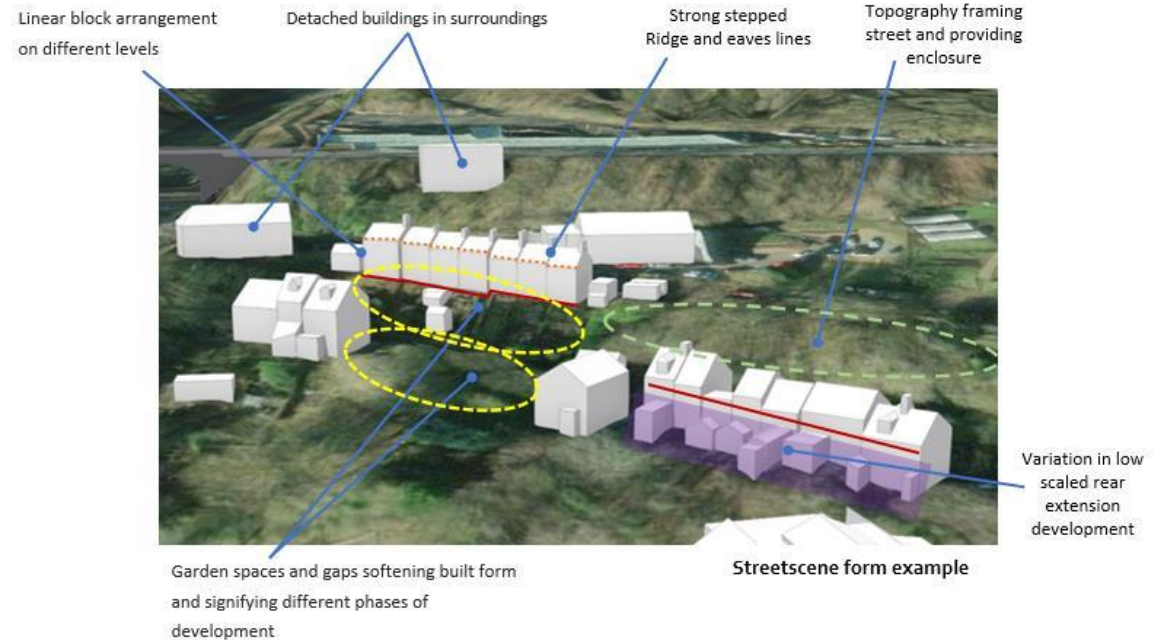
Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to special interest.

- Simple single street layout comprising of medieval side street and riverside pilgrimage route.
- Steeply descending, enclosed and intimate, "green lane" route.
- Low density development separated by green space and surrounded by landscape.
- Representative period terraced plan form of two blocks one elevated above the other.
- Courtyard plan form at Crook Hall with compartmentalised gardens of different sizes and character.
- Positive contrast between the enclosed lane and open riverside area.

Fig 76 below. A plan and modelling demonstrating the layout attributes of the character area.



Plan form



3.3.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing

Sidegate and Diamond Terrace reflect the Victorian terrace typology that is recognisable and accounts for a large portion of the western side of the city centre. They are modestly scaled dwellings of two storeys and two bays with front to back pitched roofs running the length of the terrace with brick chimney stacks. Front elevations are simple and would have originally featured timber sliding sash windows and timber panelled front doors. However, at Sidegate the uniformity, historic character and appearance has been harmed by the use of insensitive modern uPVC doors and windows. Diamond Terrace fares slightly better with some surviving traditional timber sashes.



Fig 77 above. The Georgian house at Crook Hall.

Crook Hall is a multi-phased building from the medieval period with 15th to 18th century adaptations. The medieval hall is constructed from stone with a notable garderobe tower and chamber, in a Tudor architectural style. In contrast the main house to the left side is Georgian of a taller three storeys and wider three bays with features including stone lintel bands and brick floor bands, moulder kneelers, massive brick chimney stack, large sash windows, and significantly floor bands at different levels and altered quoins indicating the re-fronting of an earlier house. Within the public domain only the upper levels of the Georgian house are visible.



Fig 78 above. The buildings along Sidegate.

The buildings to the west side of the site are only accessible by a private driveway. But they comprise of two 18th century barns which have been sensitively converted to residential use conserving their original agricultural character. The Old Coach House is a two storey three bay brick structure with a roof of pantiles, with important surviving timber framing exposed that is possibly older and features a wider loading door, tall segmental-headed central doorway and brick upper floor level band. The Old Granary is again of two storeys and three bays built from brick but with a slate roof.



Fig 79 above. Diamond Terrace, the terraces displaying typical period characteristics despite unsympathetic modern alterations.

There are three modern developments within the character area that are markedly different architecturally.

The riverside centre, at the east end of Frankland Lane, dates from the 1970s. It is a long shallow pitched roofed rendered building of a light industrial type of style and appearance that adds nothing distinctive to the area and is neutral in contribution.

Fram Well House is a contemporary two and three storey office building. It is box-like with a distinctive aesthetic that references the area's light industrial past. It has a solid robust lower level that contrasts with the lighter weight upper floors where the rhythm and verticality of the glazing expresses the local vernacular.

Crook Hall Visitor Centre is another distinctive building and positive introduction at the riverside. It adopts a clean contemporary aesthetic with an exaggerated traditional form, exclusively of timber cladding to give a softer natural aesthetic resulting in an almost "waterfront" style. The building assimilated well in its riverside setting and contributes positively to the conservation area.



Fig 80 above and right. Fram Well House and Crook Hall Visitor Centre of very different individual contemporary architectural styles; representing the area's industrial history and waterfront location, respectively.

The material palette is predominantly of red brick and sandstone, with the occasional use of render and contemporary materials such as metal and timber cladding. There is some limited use of brick for features such as eaves corbels with painted stone lintels and sills commonplace. Roof covering materials are traditional grey slate with red pantiles found on some of the Crook Hall buildings.

Doors and windows are highly varied and while there are surviving traditional timber painted sash windows and panelled doors, the majority are insensitive modern uPVC and composite replacements in different styles.



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

- Strong familiar historic identity informed by Victorian terraced streets.
- Period properties unified by vertical emphasis and rhythm with stepped roofs.
- Front elevations of a character synonymous with Victorian and Edwardian housing.
- Properties constructed from a limited yet rich palette of traditional materials.
- Buildings at Crook Hall of high architectural quality, their aesthetic informed by different historic uses.
- Contemporary developments that are of individual designs and architecturally distinct, contrasting positively with the historic character.

Negative elements (alterations)

The main negative impacts in terms of alterations to buildings found within the character area tend to derive from:

- the loss of traditional timber windows and timber panelled front doors to the Victorian terraced properties, and installation of uPVC alternatives,
- the loss of natural slate roof covering materials for inferior fibre cement slate alternatives,
- rendering and painting over the original walling material,
- the addition of solar panels to visible front roof slopes,
- graffiti to the disused chapel building.

Fig 81 below. Solar panels at Diamond Terrace and examples of unsympathetic modern windows.



3.3.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Sidegate is a quiet lane that provides a valuable pedestrian connection between Framwellgate Peth and the riverside. It is not adversely affected by moving traffic. At the north end the quiet ambiance is reduced by traffic noise from the road and occasional trains. Nonetheless it offers a unique pedestrian experience, as a medieval side route, within the city with this character legible.

The steepness of the street and rectangular sett surfacing can make accessibly difficult for some people. Given the narrowness of the lane and intimate enclosure when cars are parked on-street they clutter and detract from its character and can impede the footway.



Fig 82 above. The quiet green lane of Sidegate providing an intimate historic pedestrian experience.

Sidegate opens up at its southeast end to the riverside and is a highly active environment. It is used by walkers, joggers, cyclists, and anglers, and is a popular route linking to the city centre and the opposite side of the river via Penny Ferry Bridge. It can be adversely dominated by vehicles owing to the presence of the two car parks, and on street parking around the Radisson Hotel. The end of the lane is detracted by the large service yard to the hotel, the substation, and car parks that are visually intrusive detracting from the otherwise pleasant pedestrian experience. Turning onto Frankland Lane there is a positive shift to a semi-rural riverside character. The route is enclosed by greenery with gaps providing river views and sometimes across to The Sands that enhance the experienced.



Fig 83 above. The character changes at the south end of the lane emerging at the riverside that is a busier place and visually marred by modern functional spaces.

The lane receives less pedestrian and vehicular activity adding to its character, and transition to the open countryside beyond the city limits. It is a popular walking route that has high historic significance as part of the Camino Ingles to Finchale. This offers significant unfolding and surprise views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

The Camino Ingles is a route that starts in north-western Spain and was historically used by pilgrims from Northern Europe. A significance section being the route from Finchale Abbey to Durham Cathedral forging a connection between Durham City and Europe.



Fig 84 above. Moving west, the route positively reverts to an intimate green character along the riverside leading out from the historic city core to the surrounding countryside.

Adjacent to the main carriageway of Framwellgate Peth the surfacing comprises of rough tarmac and open car park, cluttered with signs that are visually unappealing. In contrast at Sidegate there is a well-preserved traditional surface material of granite setts, detracted by the use of concrete steps, tarmac footways, and galvanised railings.

At the south end of the street surfacing materials are of standardised black tarmac, concrete paviours, and kerbs. This area is visually cluttered by the proliferation of car parking associated items, street lighting columns, railings, and bollards that detracts from the visual appearance of the place. Within Sidegate there are some traditional Victorian street lamp columns that are appropriate to the lanes character.

Continuing along the riverside there are standard tarmac footways, but limited street furniture items, appropriate to the semi-rural character of the area, although the condition of the carriageway surfacing is poor in places.

There are a mixture of boundary treatments found throughout this area including different styles of timber fencing at the back of Diamond Terrace, where the rear yards are enclosed by historic red brick walls. There are stone walls at the base of the railway embankment and one side of Sidegate, while on the opposite side the metal security fencing to the back of the Raddison Hotel is out of keeping and visually detracts.

At the riverside there is timber birds-mouth fencing, metal railings, and hedgerow boundaries, which are important features reinforcing the linear nature of the route.



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

- Strong semi-rural character.
- Quieter atmosphere and sense of separation from the main historic core of the city.
- Intimate inwards character within the green lane with a positive contrast with openness at the riverside.
- Pleasant walking route along Frankland Lane that is pedestrian friendly and focused leading to Newton Hall.

Negative elements

The experience is detracted at the riverside by the unattractive substation site and the undeveloped car parks. The junction can also be busy and noisy with waterfront traffic and parked vehicles cluttering the space. The north west entrance into Sidegate from Framwellgate Peth is a poorer environment with a shabby appearance resulting from the degraded surfacing, outdated and damaged railings, and overgrown vegetation. It is unfortunate that the Crook Hall buildings are not very visible from Frankland Lane, due to shielding by the walls and more so the unmanaged tree and vegetation cover. The sewage works on the edge of the area provides a poor start to the route of the Camino Ingles.

3.3.5 Visual experiences

Sidegate is a narrow tightly enclosed lane with no outward views, the most important view being the experience travelling down the lane to the riverside and the contrast between the enclosure and openness. From the footpath in front of Diamond Terrace and from the back street environment in the east the elevated nature of the land form provides panoramic views across the landscape and townscape with the castle and cathedral visible to different degrees. These views are however reduced in the summer months.

The key views identified within this character area are:

View 1 – Views in both directions along Sidegate.

View 2 – Views from Diamond Terrace.

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

Fig 85 below. *The view from Diamond Terrace looking east across the gardens to the wider countryside.*



Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View in both directions along Sidegate.

A kinetic channeled view along the medieval side street with a semi-rural character, important in giving a strong sense as to how such ancient routes would have been experienced.



Views south from Diamond Terrace.

Diamond Terrace and the land behind provide a series of static view points out across the townscape. The castle, cathedral and church spires are historic landmarks in the skyline demonstrating their status and prominence.

The extent and quality of these views depending on the time of year.

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

Built form

- The buildings are in a variable condition, some suffering from a lack of general maintenance.
- While the former chapel building has been demolished and planning consent for redevelopment this has not yet materialised leaving a poor site.
- Many of the historic terraced properties are detracted by insensitive modern alterations such as the installation of uPVC windows and doors that harms their character and uniformity.
- There is some obvious loss of traditional materials for inferior modern alternatives.
- The roofscape is spoilt by solar panels to front roof slopes.

Urban spaces

- The floorscape within Sidegate is positive comprising of traditional setts but the use of standard materials to the footway could be improved.

- Elsewhere the floorscape is standardised and the condition is variable, with some areas notably degraded.
- The car park and presence of the hotel service yards detracts from the character and visual appearance of the area.
- The car parking area to Crook Hall is a low quality space with metal security railings that is not befitting the local historic context.

Green spaces

- In elevated views from around Diamond Terrace the unmanaged tree cover reduces the wide townscape views that includes the castle and cathedral.

Street furniture

- The area is visually detracted by parking and traffic paraphernalia at the junction to Sidegate and Frankland Lane.
- The concrete post and metal railings at the top of Sidegate are outdated and damaged.

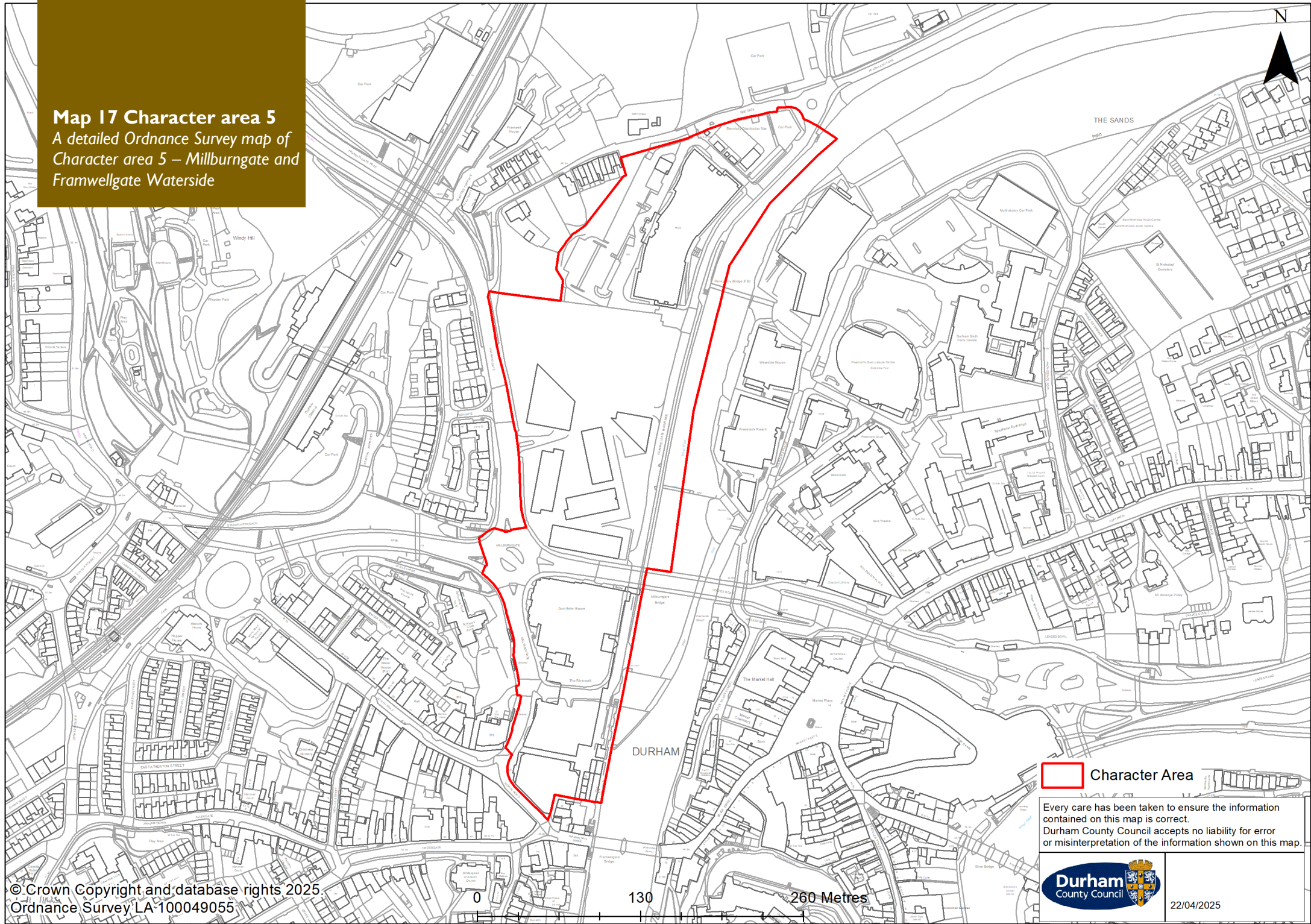
Threats

- Potential unsympathetic alterations to the high quality traditional floorscape at Sidegate.
- Continued deterioration of building fabric and ongoing lack of a regular maintenance regime.
- Continued deterioration of standard carriageway and footway surfacing materials.
- Continued growth of unmanaged trees reducing and screening views further.
- Further insensitive modern alterations to the historic terraced properties.
- Poor quality cleared site with the approved redevelopment scheme not coming forwards.

3.5 Character area 5
(Millburngate and Framwellgate
Waterside)



Map 17 Character area 5
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character area 5 – Millburngate and
Framwellgate Waterside



 Character Area

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

3.3.1 Location and summary of special interest

The character area forms the western side of the conservation area fronting the river between Framwellgate Bridge in the south up to the car park at the north end of the Raddison Hotel site. The east side follows the path of Milburngate heading north over Leazes Road roundabout up Framwellgate then turning to follow the backs of the terraced properties at Sidegate down to the junction with Frankland Lane.

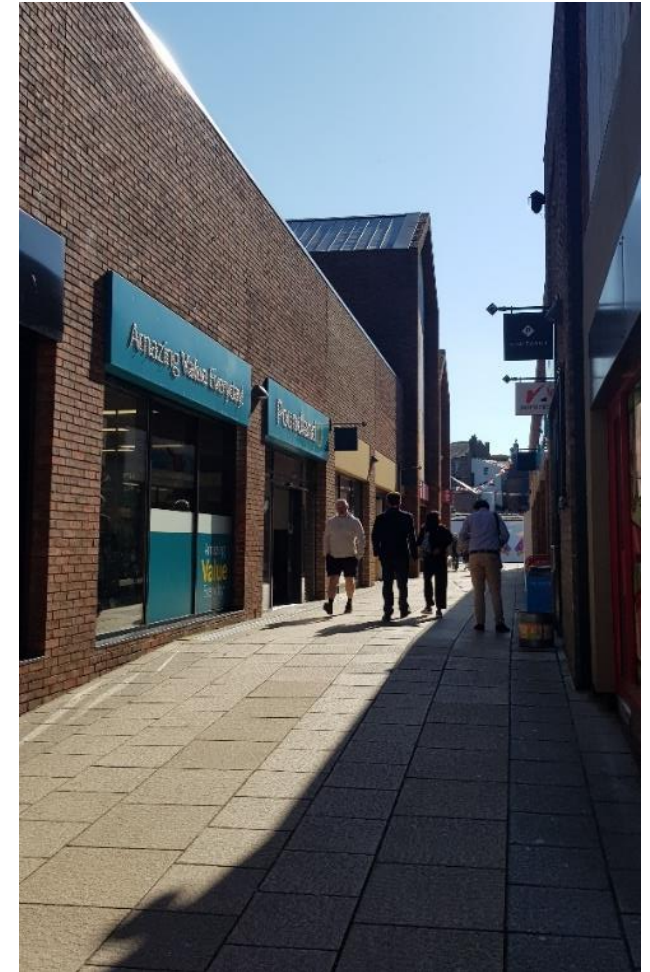
The character area comprises modern mixed-use development as part of the recognisable 20th and 21st century “new quarter” to the city. The area differs markedly from the historic character of the city as the development is distinct in its scale and modern designs. It therefore lacks historic depth but provides interesting juxtapositions between wider historic and modern built form.

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

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

- Historic interest in terms of layout; Milburngate and Framwellgate Waterside are important ancient routes.
- Some surviving historic buildings from the 17th to the 19th centuries.
- The kinetic, sequential, and static views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site
- The significance of Framwellgate Waterside as a pilgrim route from Finchale Priory via Frankland Lane.
- The high significance of the surviving timber framed building within Milburngate giving an important insight to the houses that originally existed in the area.
- The variation and architectural styles of the contemporary riverside developments.
- The varying topography, river corridor position and outlook.

Fig 86 below. An image of a typical modern commercial “street” through Riverwalk.



3.3.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The character area has been shaped in modern times within the historic framework of Milburngate and Framwellgate Waterside. Milburngate is a short curving route from the west end of Framwellgate Bridge up to Leazes Road roundabout, whereas Framwellgate Waterside is at lower river level curving southwest from its junction in the north with Sidegate. The route feels open and spacious owing to its riverside setting.

The Raddison Hotel of 2008 is of a substantial size and presence. It is set back from the footway and slightly elevated with a curved plan form following the course of the River Wear. Adjacent in the south is the Milburngate development designed to embrace the riverside providing new pedestrian links from Milburngate roundabout and Framwellgate Peth down to the riverside.

The newly formed public realm is of high quality comprising a series of connected small courtyard spaces, and avenues stepping down to river level, ended by a public riverside square.

The development blocks have a cascading effect in response to the topography, with the internal spaces well integrated. Overall, it provides a distinctive contemporary piece of new urban townscape where the layout, spaces and permeability and connectivity will, once completed, be one of its main positives.



Fig 87 above. The high quality contemporary public realm at Milburngate.

Riverwalk has reconfigured and removed parts of the former 1970s/80s shopping centre that has resulted in a positive piece of townscape enhancement in terms of its layout and the spaces it provides. The development removed previous covered walkways to create narrow open “streets” and spaces reflecting the historic layout of the city as opposed to the former inwards looking cul-de-sac layout.

The riverside terrace has been widened to form a lively promenade with active frontages that embrace the riverside rather than turning their backs to it like the former shopping centre. The lower riverside terrace car park entrance below the development remains a dark and uninviting space.

The place is a hard urban environment but both Milburngate and Riverwalk developments have some limited designed greenery around the perimeters to soften the sites. At Milburngate there is added landscaping and tree planting to the public realm that is positive. At Riverwalk, the lower-level frontage includes the use of a modular panel system of green screens to generate a softer natural aesthetic and to reflect its riverside location.

Fig 88 below. The spacious riverside terrace at Riverwalk that provides a fine view of the castle and cathedral.



3.3.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing

The area is characterised by large scale modern development individually designed thus of different architectural styles with a small, yet highly important, quantity of historic built form.

At the north end of Elvet Waterside stands the Radisson Blu Hotel. The four-storey hotel features contemporary detailing of a curved form. It is of a brick construction with stone dressings to the ground floor and a steeply pitched slate roof incorporating a rhythm of dormers. A dramatic glazed central atrium provides a central feature and forms the main entrance from the riverside. The buildings design recognises the urban sensitivity of its context.

The ongoing Milburngate House redevelopment attempts to reflect the historic character and grain of the city. It presents a series of building types and angled block forms with a cascading effect united by verticality of form and broken varied rooflines, representative of the city's historic streets. The aesthetic is clean and contemporary with different tones of materials and simple detailing add visual interest.

Riverwalk is designed to reflect the form and mass that characterises the city townscape. The development presents a simple connected block massing with a vertical emphasis and includes different heights and roof forms designed to reflect the finer grain of the townscape. The cinema entrance acts as a "arrow" marker to the wider façade adding visual interest.

This creates its own distinctive architectural style that attempts to integrate into the wider townscape with parts more successful than others. The roadside (east) and rear elevations lack active frontages and are more dominant and less successful than the river frontage. The rear has a blockier nature, with less articulation and at close quarters the large scale becomes more apparent.

While this character area lacks historic depth compared to other parts of the city and is markedly different being dominated by large developments distinct in their scales and different modern architectural designs, the regenerated riverside frontages have made a positive mark on the character and appearance of the city.

The remaining historic buildings stand adjacent to Framwellgate Bridge. These are three storey brick built 19th century buildings with multi pane sash windows, wedge shaped heads and sills. There is exposed lower-level masonry at the east end that is significant as it is possibly medieval in part that could well have been some sort of tower or gatehouse connected with the bridge. The historic architectural character of the upper floors is conserved but the buildings have been heavily altered at ground floor which jars visually with the original architecture. Here the entrance of Riverwalk forms a negative cut and clumsy alteration mismatched with the building above.

No 29/30 Milburngate is contained within the Riverwalks development and is a highly significant building. It comprises of two storeys and three bays of stone rubble and exposed timber framing, that points to being within the Durham post medieval tradition, probably of the early 17th century.

Fig 89 below. A compilation of images showing the different architectural styles of the modern developments that characterise the character area.

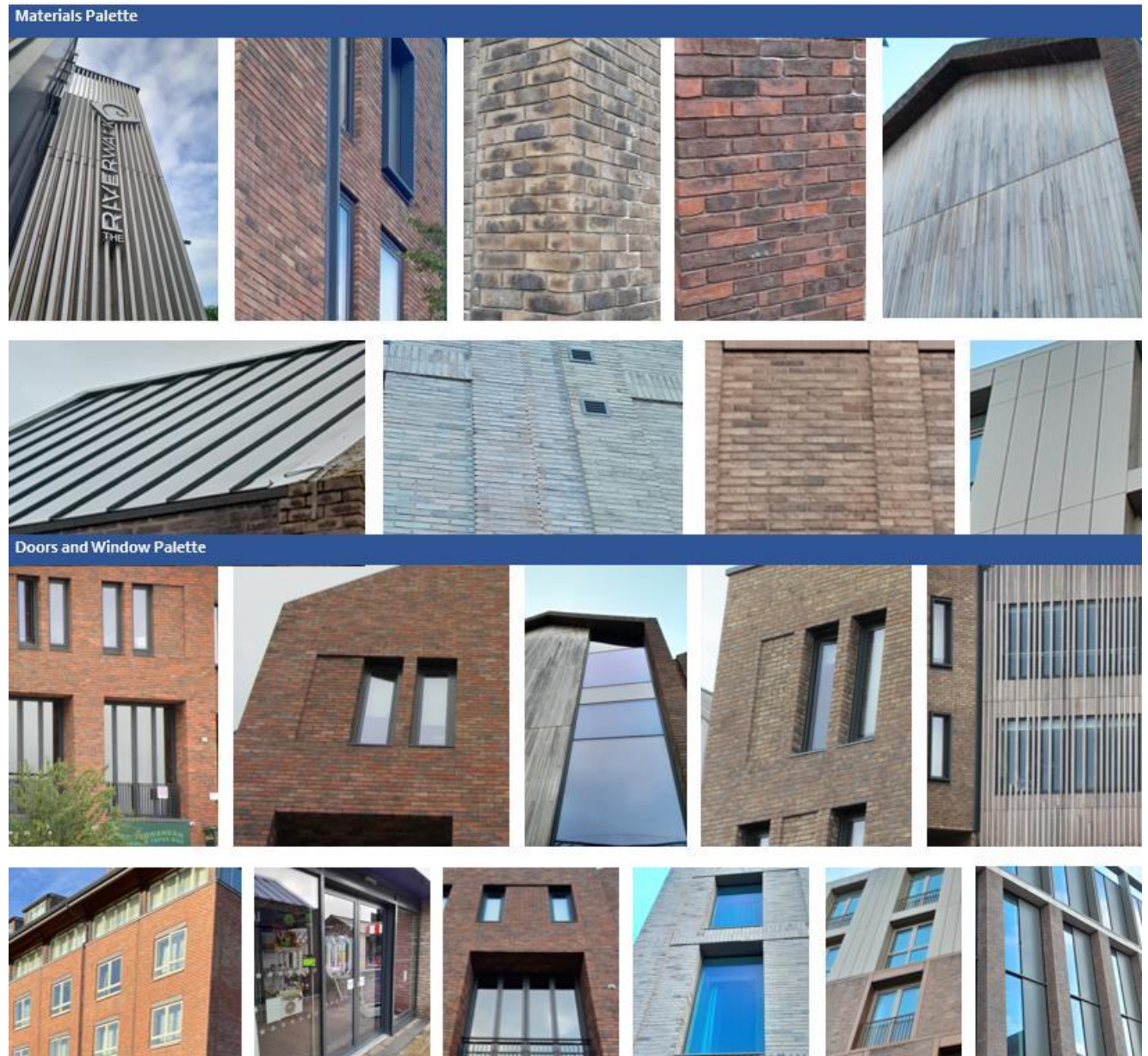


The area is dominated by a contemporary material palette. Riverwalk is characterised by its distinctive textured form, with a simple palette of materials with a mixture of different red, brown, and grey bricks, flush timber cladding and timber battens, and aluminium rainscreen and standing seam with dark muted colour finishes with subtle contemporary detailing. While the use of metal for the roof covering reflects the contemporary theme it does not harmonise with the surrounding natural slate roofscape.

The Millburngate development continues the simple contemporary theme with a tonality of materials moving from warm grey to darker grey followed by red hues. The use of metal adds a crisp clean contemporary expression. The materials have been effectively used for vertical detailing and to add visual interest to the facades.

The limited number of historic buildings are a mixture of handmade red/brown brickwork, render and exposed timber framework with roofs of traditional Welsh slate.

Glazing is simple in style made from aluminium set in deep reveals, vertically proportioned with variation in sizing, with predominantly dark grey colour finishes. Some have raised metal box surrounds that add interest to the elevations.



Shop fronts and signage

The shop fronts within this character area are modern in style and mostly uniform as a series of full height vertically glazed frontages. They are made from aluminium with a dark grey colour finish and a simple configuration that fits in with the contemporary aesthetic of the development.

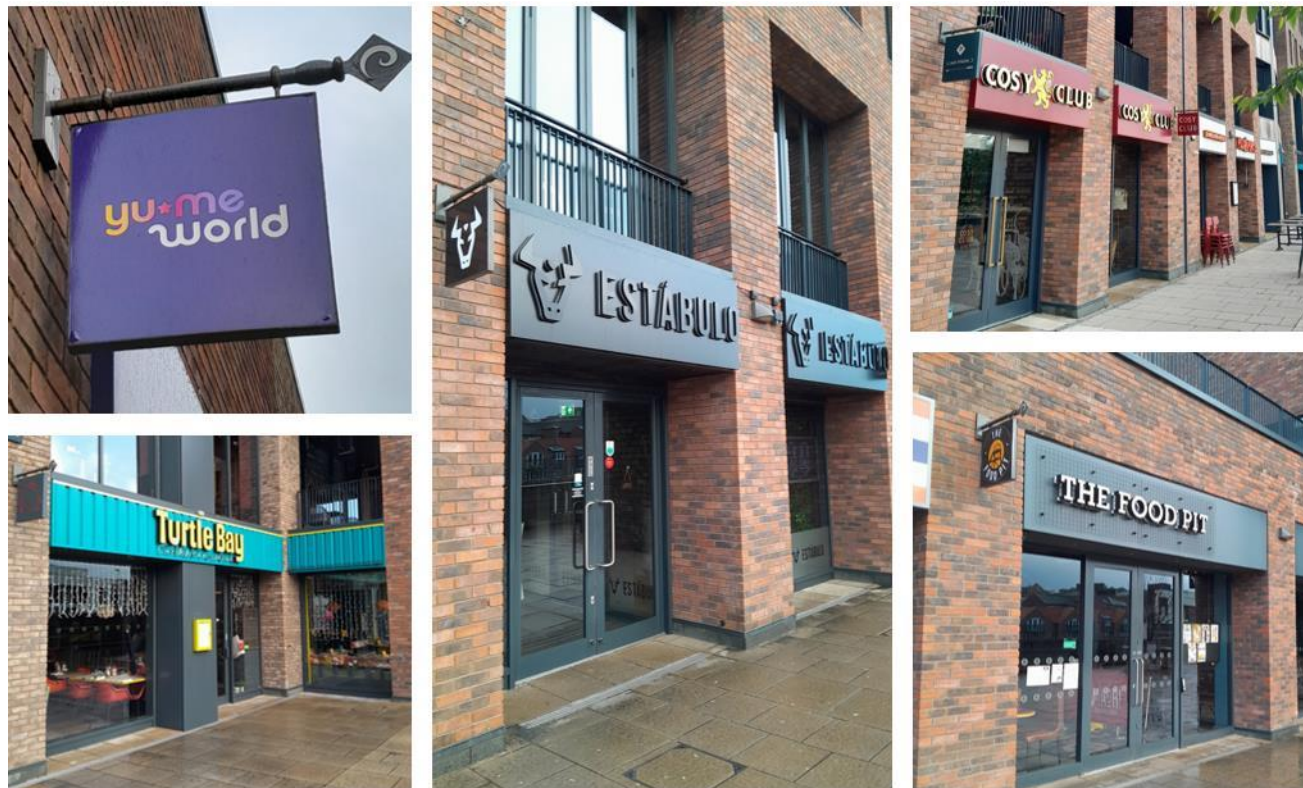
At Riverwalk there is an abundance of signage, the fascia signs utilise the individual units dedicated signage zones and the hanging signs the bespoke "Riverwalk" fixing bracket. The use of modern materials and modern styles are appropriate to the modern mixed-use environment, with individually applied lettering most common. Aesthetically some are more pleasing than others.

The weakness results from the development going against the design principles and parameters for new signs set out in the original signage strategy. This was to ensure a consistent approach across the development, however there is an excessive amount of corporate branding that detracts from the overall architectural quality. This should be addressed in the future.

Negative elements

The area's biggest weakness is that the Milburngate development remains incomplete and inactive, this will be a blight on the character area and wider townscape until it is resolved.

Fig 90 below. Images showing examples of different contemporary shop fronts and signs at Riverwalk.



3.3.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Framwellgate Riverside is a highly active place. It provides a valuable pedestrian connection to other parts of the city and the outlying surrounding countryside via Frankland Lane, with Pennyferry Bridge linking the east and west sides of the river. It is part of the wider riverside route popular with dog walkers, joggers, and cyclists.

The north end is car dominated which detracts from the riverside character, but the route is spacious where the openness of the riverside exaggerates this effect. Despite the presence of moving traffic along the route, around the car park entrances, and noise disturbance from traffic on Leazes Road, the overall pedestrian experience is a positive one.

Part of this is the contribution the route makes to the experience of the visual drama of the WHS, that is obscured at first by the scale of foreground development, having increased visual presence with movement along the riverside passing under Leazes road bridge and ending at the dramatic and highly significant view near Framwellgate Bridge. Such dynamic views are part of the overall experience of moving around the city. The area is however detracted by the unfinished and inactive Millburngate development.

Riverwalk is a hive of activity, and a very busy pedestrian environment offering a range of different retail, commercial and leisure uses. Achieving and maintaining full occupancy is key to the success of the development.

As referenced previously the redevelopment of the former shopping centre has resulted in the creation of open streets and spaces, and outwards views of the city, that enhance the experience of this part of the conservation area. The open streets give off the same enclosed intimate feeling as their medieval counterparts and receive a high amount of pedestrian footfall.



Fig 91 above. The route along Framwellgate Waterside, and the outdoor seating and drinking space at Riverwalk.

The place comes alive at night and is a hive of activity with revellers visiting the many bars, eateries, and the cinema. During the summer months the riverside promenade is busy with people congregating for outside eating and drinking. The development has created an enhanced riverside experience with a high quality pedestrian environment.

Around the development there is a very different experience, as it is part of the inner ring road with Leazes Road Bridge on its north site and Millburngate in the west. These are two busy routes with high volumes of cars and buses and have high numbers of pedestrians that use the routes linking to the railway station, the area can be congested with traffic stopping at the traffic lights and queues as the bust stops.



At Framwellgate Waterside and Milburngate the carriageway surfacing comprises red chipped tarmac, but this is very faded and poorly patched in places, with footways of standard black tarmac, concrete paving, and kerbs. At the riverside there is some limited positive greenery with grass verges that softens the hard materials. In these locations street furniture is not excessive comprising of railings, seats, litter bins, bus stops and post mounted signage, which is not so visually detracting.

Milburngate development has a mixture of stone and concrete kerbs and edging, natural stone paving slabs with concrete flags, concrete setts, with regularity of module, which provides a subtle and warm surface treatment. Boundaries are of ashlar walling, stainless steel railings and balustrading appropriate to the contemporary aesthetic of the development.

The promenade at Riverwalk comprises a high quality public realm with a surface material palette of concrete paving flags with subtle differences in texture and warm colours with some elements of soft landscape.

Street furniture is contemporary in style with steel framed timber bench seating, circular tree planters, steel litter bins, and cycle racks, these items are well dispersed so as not to detract visually nor interrupt the flow of the space.



3.3.5 Visual experiences

The character area occupies a significant position sitting alongside the River Wear. The south part is close to the historic centre of the city, with the north separated by Leazes Road. As a result, the area provides significant views approaching the castle and cathedral along the riverside, and from elevated positions above. These views have added importance as they are bound up within the quality of the other Durham City Conservation Areas and demonstrate the outstanding universal value of the world heritage site. They draw in other historic landmarks such as Framwellgate Bridge, St Nicholas' Church, and the Market Hall. Interestingly, Milburngate Bridge is cleverly hidden when seen from Prebends Bridge. It is built in alignment with Framwellgate Bridge, so it appears that traffic drives over the historic crossing point.

The key views identified within this character zone are:

View 1 – Views south along Framwellgate Waterside.

View 2 – View south east from the riverfront terrace at Riverwalk.

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

Fig 92 below. Public art within Riverwalks with the castle and cathedral viewed in the background.



Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View south along Framwellgate Waterside

Sequential views approaching the peninsula from the south, the experience is at first one of 21st century urban riverside development that changes to the historic townscape with the castle and cathedral standing out in the skyline background. The presence and dominance of the monuments increases moving south where there is a greater appreciation of their river and landscape setting.



View south east from Riverwalk

A similar view to the above but from a static vantage point where the elevation emphasises the dominance and drama of the castle and cathedral standing out against the fragmented built development and wooded riverbanks.

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

Built form

- There are some empty units within Riverwalk that impact negatively.
- The Milburngate development remains incomplete, unresolved, and inactive that is the area’s biggest weakness.
- Some materials out of keeping with historic city context.
- Elevations cluttered by excessive corporate branding.

Urban spaces

- The riverside is an important space but is detracted by low quality, degraded, and patched street surfacing in places, along with deteriorated carriageway grassed verges.
- The surface treatment around Milburngate is faded, a poor mismatch of red and black tarmac, and is deteriorated.
- The entrance down to the riverside from Millburngate is an uninviting dark space that does not provide a fitting entrance.

Green spaces

- No issue identified.

Street furniture

- No issues identified.

Threats

- Continued deterioration and patch repairs to the surfacing at the riverside and around Milburngate.
- Milburngate development remains incomplete and unopened.
- Continuation of empty retail units and potential for an increase in vacancy rates.
- More clutter added to elevations.



Fig 93 below. A selection of images showing the negative issues and problems identified, gap side at the riverside, poor degraded surfacing, and empty retail units.

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



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 area sections.

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

Street Name	Condition Score
CASTLE CHARE	Fair
DIAMOND TERRACE	Fair
FRAMWELLGATE PETH	Fair
FRAMWELLGATE WATERSIDE	Fair
FRANKLAND LANE	Fair
MILLBURNGATE	Fair
NORTH ROAD (VIADUCT TO NORTH END)	Fair
NORTH ROAD (COMMERCIAL STREET TO FRAM BRIDGE)	Poor
SIDEGATE	Fair
RIVERWALK	Optimal
STATION BANK	Fair
TENTER TERRACE	Poor
WHARTON PARK	Optimal



4.2 S.W.O.T Analysis

Strengths

- Integral to the setting to the World Heritage Site and other Durham City Conservation Areas.
- High historic interest, evidential value, architectural and aesthetic value, and archaeological potential.
- Conserved historic plan form, part medieval, but mainly from the 19th century expansion of the city associated with wider industrial heritage of the county
- Strong historic identity and sense of place with streets of differing character providing visual interest.
- Good connectivity throughout and to other parts of the city, and key gateway route to the peninsula.
- Many significant and important views with historic focal points and landmarks.
- Hilly topography, local green assets, and high quality landscape setting.
- Distinct 21st century new quarter to the city of contrasting contemporary architecture.

Weaknesses

- Some buildings and sections of historic boundary treatments suffering from fabric condition issues.
- Some prominent low quality modern development that is visually jarring in its historic context.
- Empty commercial units.
- Insensitive changes to historic unlisted buildings, mainly the Victorian terraces harming original uniformity and character.
- Areas of low-quality mismatched street surfacing in a deteriorated condition in places.
- Examples of low-quality modern shopfronts and signage.
- Some shop front windows cluttered by advertisements.
- Excessive items of street furniture in places.
- Low quality public realm and shabby appearance in certain places.
- North Road known to suffer from anti-social behaviour issues.

- Negative impacts of traffic, and parked vehicles but often unavoidable.
- Unmanaged tree growth reducing the extent, quality, and value of key views.
- Problems with litter in the river and collection on the weirs.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment of modern infill sites replaced with sensitive building forms, style, materials, and detailing, which draws inspiration from the positive characteristics of the area.
- Secure appropriate reuse of empty commercial units.
- Seek to reverse insensitive and harmful alterations to the historic buildings.
- Seek improvements to low quality shop fronts and signage.
- Public realm improvement works including street surfacing and street furniture rationalisation.
- Improvements to green infrastructure in some areas with potential air quality net gains.
- Expand the existing Article 4 to protect unlisted heritage assets from harmful change.

Threats

- Continued incremental changes and unsympathetic repairs and alterations to historic buildings.
- Continuation of deterioration and insensitive patched repairs to street surfacing.
- Continued long term status of vacant sites and deterioration of fabric.
- Continued alterations to, and loss of, traditional shopfronts.
- Ongoing lack of tree management further impacting the quality of important views.
- Vacancy rate increasing.

Summary

The conservation area is in fair material condition and despite issues and some weaknesses overall, the area has a high level of architectural and historic interest that warrants designation. Nevertheless, there are issues and problems identified that need to be resolved 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 centre.

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

4.3 Opportunities and options appraisal

The appraisal has identified a number of sites that offer potential for reuse and redevelopment that present opportunities for enhancement within the conservation area. The following pages provide an individual options appraisal for addressing these buildings and sites in the future.

Nos 18-19, 22, 54-57 and 58-62 North Road

A group of mid-20th century redevelopment blocks occupying prominent street frontage positions. They have out of keeping forms, bland elevations, and materials, are devoid of detailing and interest that stands out as being unsympathetic within the streetscape.

Key design paramaters

- Mixed use option with active ground floors to respond to commercial character of the street.
- Respond to existing building lines, scale, heights and linear nature of the street.
- Must appropriately address the domestic scale of adjacent residential terraces.
- Roofscape would require great consideration given key viewpoints of the world heritage site and landmark listed buildings in the street.
- Solid ground floors with glazed openings to reflect character of the street.
- Upper levels solid with vertical detailing and fenestration to express vertical rhythm.
- High quality materials drawn from the local vernacular.
- High quality sustainable desing reflecting local vernacular but could be expressed in a contemporary way.



Site location plan



Site images

Former industrial buildings, Back Western Hill

The site comprises of five linked former Victorian industrial buildings located on the west side of Back Western Hill. They are of different phases of construction, originally dating from the late 19th century, fully established by the early 20th century. They have been substantially altered and re-built and are of a general functional design. The buildings were previously in use as a garage but have been disused for many years and are in a deteriorated physical condition.

Options appraisal

- Residential use potential.
- Retain and convert principal historic blocks, but full condition survey would be required to determine feasibility.
- Redevelopment between 1 and 3 storeys.
- Must respond to the topography, existing built form and back street character.
- Any increase in density must be broken down by inclusion of building line and height variants.
- Elevation treatments to be simple that could draw from historic industrial character, including contemporary approach.
- Materials to be high quality reflecting the traditional material palette of the area.
- Very limited scope for private amenity space and parking provision given physical constraints.



Site location



Site images

Former public WC North Road

The building is a former public toilet block of c.1960s comprising of a one storey brown brick structure with a flat roof. It is of a low quality functional aesthetic of its time, that is visually prominent at the roadside. It has been disused for many years and is detracting within the streetscene. Planning permission was granted in 2021 to convert the structure to a café with a glazed rooftop terrace that was renewed in 2023.

Options appraisal

- Demolition and redevelopment precedent set by previous planning permissions.
- Redevelopment should utilise the existing footprint, some scope for limited upper level extension if critical to securing reuse.
- Must respond positively to the buildings retreat into the surrounding landscape and trees.
- Opportunity to greatly improve the structures bland outdated aesthetic with a contemporary and imaginative make-over.
- Should use high quality contemporary materials



Site location plan



Site image



Fig 93 right. Render image from planning approval [DMI/23/00792/FPA | Conversion to Cafe with associated alterations and new first floor over | Former Public Toilets North Road Durham DHI 4RE](#)