

An aerial photograph of Durham City, showing the River Elvet flowing through a dense green forest. In the background, the city's historic buildings and the prominent Durham Cathedral are visible under a blue sky with scattered clouds. A stone bridge with multiple arches spans the river in the foreground.

Conservation Area Management Plan

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Durham City Elvet Conservation Area

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	2
1.1 What is a conservation area?.....	3
1.2 What is the purpose of this appraisal?	4
2. Overview	6
2.1 Location and description.....	7
2.2 The conservation area boundary	9
2.3 Summary of special interest.....	12
2.4 Topography and setting	14
2.5 Historic development.....	20
2.6 Heritage Assets	27
2.7 Townscape – positive contributors	30
2.8 Archaeology	31
2.9 Landscape, green and blue infrastructure assets	32
2.10 Landmarks, views and vistas	33
2.11 Movement, activity and atmosphere.....	36
2.12 Land use	40
2.13 Layout, pattern and grain.....	41
2.12 Character areas	45
3. Street characterisation.....	46
3.1 Character area 1 (Historic core – Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Street, Hallgarth Street and Quarryheads Lane)	46
3.2 Character area 2 (Whinney Hill).....	88
3.3 Character area 3 (Green Lane, The Racecourse and riverside).....	106
4. Condition of place and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats	127
4.1 Condition of place	128
4.2 S.W.O.T analysis.....	129
4.3 Opportunitis and options appraisal	131

I. Introduction



1.1 What is a conservation area?

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

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

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

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

evolved over the centuries, spreading out in all directions from the peninsula.

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 What is the purpose of this appraisal?

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

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

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

The purpose of the CAMP Strategic Context document is to:

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

Fig 1 below. Streetscene views along part of Hallgarth Street, a characterful street of 18th and 19th century. Buildings, and Church Street Head characterised by Victorian terraced properties.



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 area's special interest and character.
- Offer solutions to the issues and potential risks through the management aims and actions.
- Identify positive opportunities for change and improvements.
- Support the delivery of good design and assist in the preparation and implementation of enhancement and regeneration opportunities when they arise.

Fig 2 below. A drone view over Durham Castle across Elvet Conservation Area showing the dense mixed townscape and the local and wider landscape surroundings.



Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

2. Overview



2.1 Location and description

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

Durham City Elvet Conservation Area occupies the eastern part of the historic city centre. It is a large, distinctive, and complex part of the city comprising of a medieval core focused around Old Elvet, New Elvet, and Church Street, with late 19th and 20th century development and suburban housing extending westwards along Quarryheads Lane.

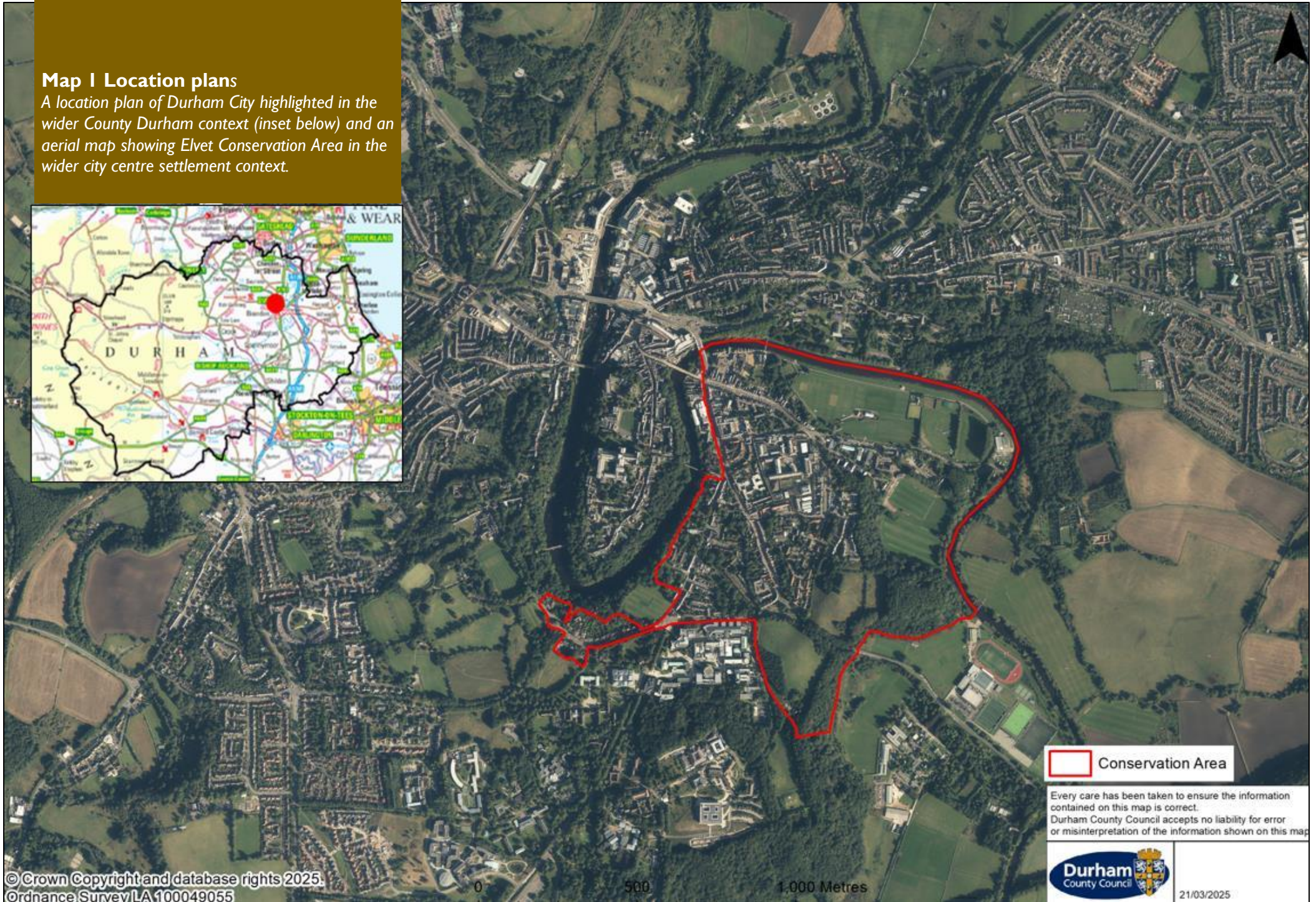
A defining characteristic is the juxtaposition of the built and natural environments with dense urban development on the edge of the River Wear corridor, the mostly flat riverside and flood plain land around The Racecourse, and the encompassing “hilly” landscape features of Maiden Castle, Whinney Hill, Mountjoy and part of Great High Wood.

Fig 3 below. A selection of images showing the main streets that form the historic core of the conservation area, Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Street and Hallgarth Street. All distinctive streets but with unifying characteristics.



Map I Location plans

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



21/03/2025

2.2 The conservation area boundary

Description

In the north the conservation area boundary follows the course of the River Wear between New Elvet Road Bridge in the west to Maiden Castle footbridge in the south east. From here the boundary follows the route of the footpath around the base of the hill of Maiden Castle up to the A177 Shincliffe Peth. From this point it crosses the road continuing south through Great High Wood and around Mountjoy up to Stockton Road. It then heads west following the road to the end of Quarryheads Lane. The west side of the boundary skirts around ridge of the river gorge up to Kingsgate Bridge. Here it turns east onto New Elvet following the street back to the modern road bridge.

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 conservation area boundary identification process:

- The area is focused on the medieval streets that are a fundamental part of the city’s wider medieval town plan.
- The area is informed by two historic borough boundaries of the city established by c.1250, although records of Elvet’s existence predate the earlier occupation of the Peninsula in 995.
- The north, east and west boundaries are naturally formed by the loop of the River Wear around the peninsula ending upstream at the boundary with Shincliffe Conservation Area.
- The boundary excludes Dunelm House and Durham University Riverside Developments 1 and 2. These developments were designed to face the river having a stronger presence within the river corridor that is part of the Durham City Peninsula and Riverbanks Conservation Area.
- The southern boundary is defined by the main east-west route of Stockton Road and Quarryheads Lane that separates the area from Durham University Science Park Site.
- The modern housing area between Church Street and Hallgarth Street is included as it is indivisible from the historic streets bounding this area.

- The boundary includes the historic landscape features at Maiden Castle Wood, Mountjoy and part of Great High Wood. These are of historic significance and play an important role in the area’s aesthetic and setting as part of the ring of hills around the city. These form a green skyline backdrop and provide a fine view of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

The conservation area represents an important piece of Durham City’s historic townscape and a significant part of its 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.

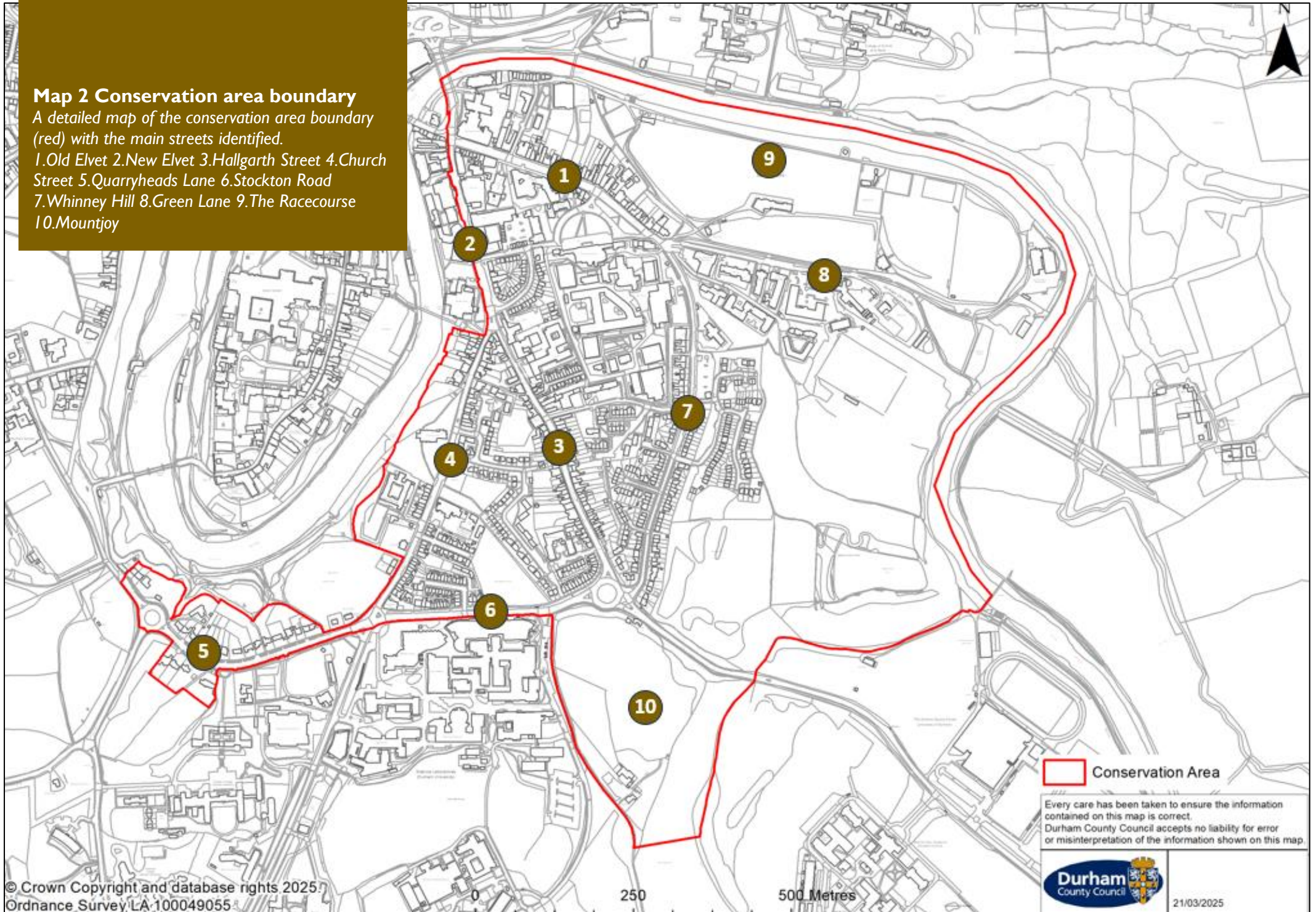
Fig 4 below. The entrance to distinctive green open space of The Racecourse form Old Elvet, that provides a very positive contrast with the dense and busy urban environment.




Map 2 Conservation area boundary

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

1. Old Elvet
2. New Elvet
3. Hallgarth Street
4. Church Street
5. Quarryheads Lane
6. Stockton Road
7. Whinney Hill
8. Green Lane
9. The Racecourse
10. Mountjoy



 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.

Map 3 Conservation area boundary (aerial map)

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



 Conservation Area

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

2.3 Summary of special interest

Architectural interest

- The area's high architectural quality and diversity ranging from Georgian townhouses and cottages to Victorian workers' terraces, and notable historic landmarks.
- The high number of listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets combining to generate high-quality historic streetscapes.
- The variation in character and distinctiveness moving from place to place.
- The prevailing use of traditional building materials, techniques, architectural features, and detailing.



Fig 5 above. Old Elvet is arguably the finest historic streetscape in the city, characterised by a rich collection of Georgian townhouses.

Historic interest

- The area's interest relating to its early occupation predating the arrival of the community of St Cuthbert on the peninsula, and as one of the city's medieval boroughs.
- The surviving and legible medieval layout and plan form, medieval buildings and burgage plot pattern, vennels and other historic routes.
- The high significance of the medieval Durham Cathedral Priory farm group a unique survival in the city centre.
- The legible 19th century residential expansion and the character this generates.



Fig 6 above. St Oswald's Church dating from the 12th century on the site of an earlier church.

Topography and setting

- The unique and varied topography ranging from the flat open floodplain to the hills surrounding the area that are intrinsic to the setting of the wider city.
- The value of the topography in terms of constraining and shaping the built environment of the area.
- The high historic, aesthetic, leisure/recreational and social value of The Racecourse used since 1773.
- The area's significant value as an intrinsic part of the setting to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage site.
- The importance of the topography in terms of the views it creates, and the role the landscape plays in views.



Fig 7 above. The view across the sports pitches at Green Lane.

Green and blue infrastructure assets

- The abundance and variation in the green spaces that have historic interest, community value, and high visual amenity value.
- The value of the green spaces in terms of enhancing the setting of the buildings and the important natural separation they provided.
- The area's intrinsic and inseparable relationship with the river, surrounding countryside, woodland and hills.



Fig 8, above. A typical riverside footpath enclosed on one side by greenery with an open aspect to the river beyond which is a woodland "wall."

Views

- The 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, castle, and cathedral.



Fig 9, above. The "classic" seemingly designed view of the Durham Cathedral from Durham Crown Court

Public realm

- The high quality public realm of the different streets and spaces of variable scales and character.
- The public artworks on the riverside encouraging social interactions.
- The changing visual experiences, ambiances, and sense 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 peninsula.



Fig 10, above. Public art pieces at the riverside.

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 which has shaped its plan and built form and is a defining characteristic of its special interest.

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

The 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 Durham 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.

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.

At Elvet this surrounding mature landscape provides physical and visual containment to the urban area and generates a scenic green backdrop. This can be best appreciated in the long-ranging views across gained from the higher ground in Claypath and Gilesgate which show Elvet nestled low in the surrounding landscape.

To the south the landscape character is more open and rural fragmented by pockets of denser areas of mature woodland which encroach into the built form around the edges of this part of the city. Despite the density of urban form, the combination of the woodlands at Pelaw Woods, Whinney Hill, Mountjoy, Great and Little High Wood, groups of trees, street trees and surrounding countryside gives the area a very high tree canopy cover.

Elvet's immediate setting is defined by the outer bank of the steep narrow River Wear gorge which forms the western edge of the conservation area. Here the juxtaposition of the rich densely wooded landscape with Durham Cathedral rising majestically above achieves a series of dramatic high quality views throughout Elvet, and lesser, yet still important glimpses of the cathedral between buildings and over rooftops.

As Elvet occupies land at a lower level to the peninsula this creates a strong visual relationship in particular from the flatter undeveloped floodplain. From here other parts of the city are visible providing a visual understanding of the area's historic urban setting.

On the opposite side of the river the parkland on the site of the College of St Hild and Bede merges into the dense woodland at Pelaw Woods. The woodland rises steeply up from river level to create enclosure reinforcing the landscape character. Further positive contributors to the area's setting are the green corridor approaches into Elvet for example along Potters Bank, and South Road.

The landscape and riverscape both contain, and constrain development, while green fingers of undeveloped open countryside and the floodplain have played a vital role in preventing urban growth and coalescence. This has shaped the built environment seen today and provides a visually rich contrast between buildings and landscape that achieves high aesthetic quality that is fundamental to the character of the place.

Fig 11 right. A digital terrain map showing the varied topography of the city and the main ridge and hill lines with Elvet Conservation Area boundary highlighted in red.

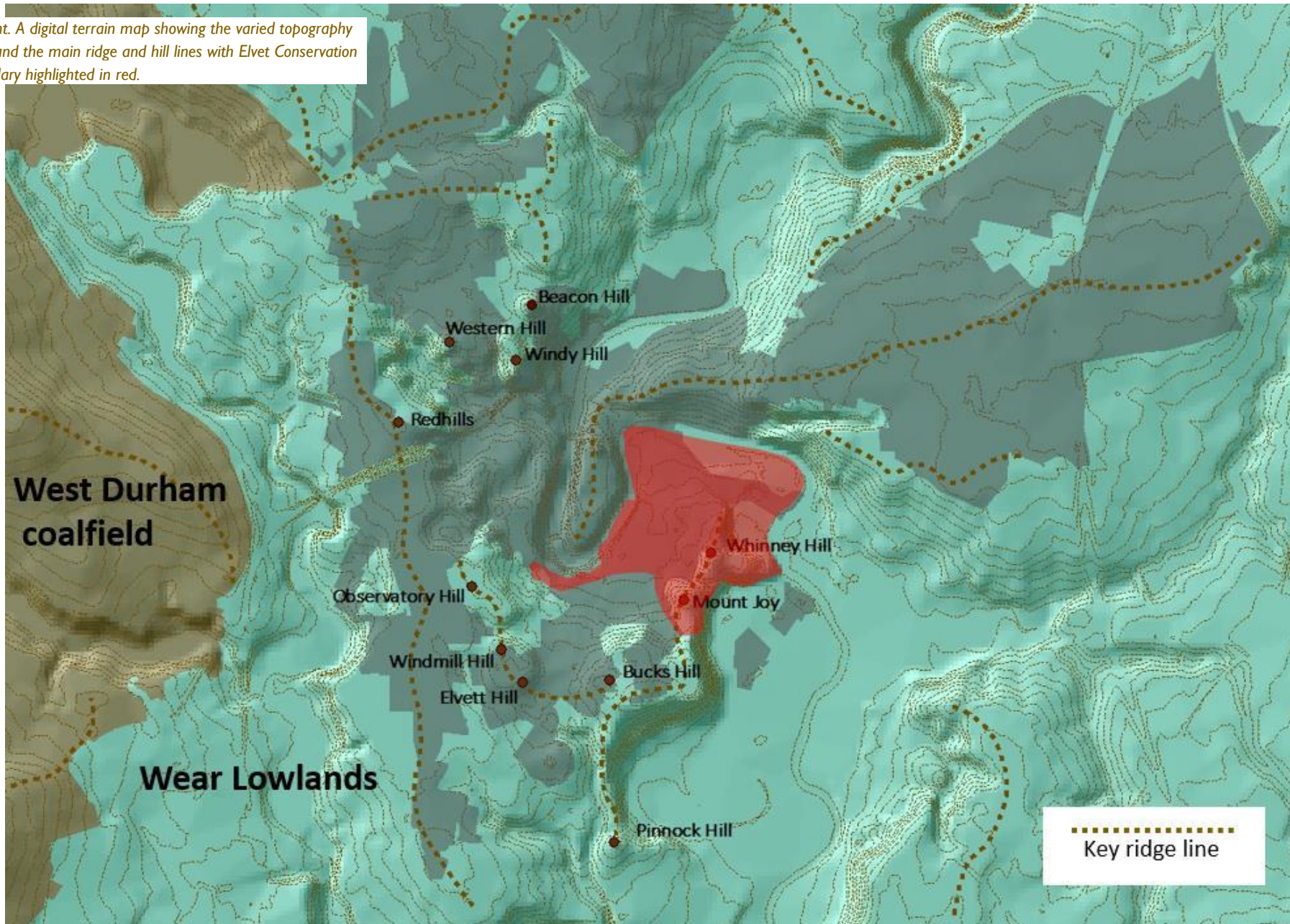
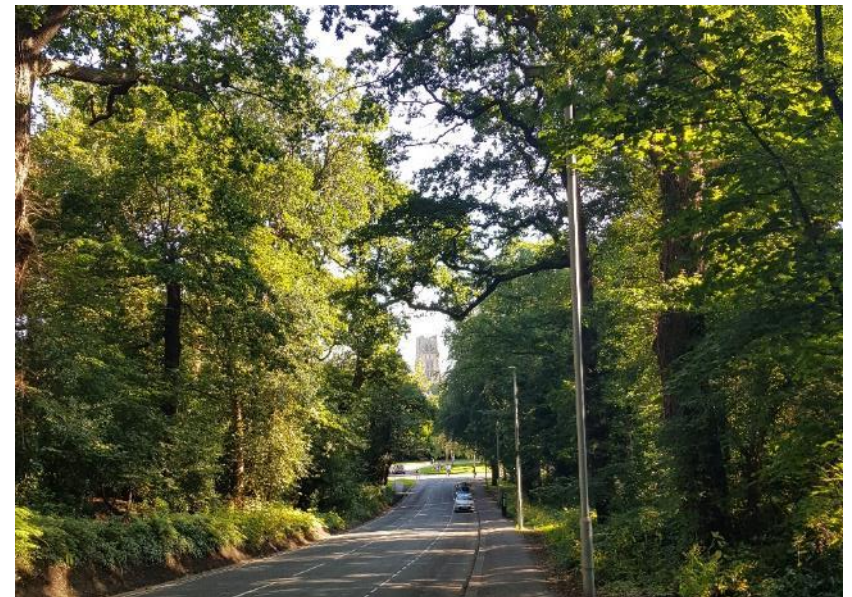


Fig 12 below. An image showing Maiden Castle Wood with the sports pitches in the foreground at lower river level.



Fig 13 Right. The view along the river corridor towards Baths Bridge showing the woodland in the grounds of the College of St Hild and St Bede forming natural containment to the conservation area, and the green leafy corridor approach into Elvet along Potters Bank.



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

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

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

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

Elvet 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 between places.

One example is the experience of walking through Pelaw Woods in Gilesgate Conservation Area where the dense mature woodland prevents views out. Then emerging at the open riverside, the buildings lining Green Lane and Old Elvet come into view with the castle and cathedral towering above them in dramatic fashion. This view, and others, also gives a sense of the city's separation by the river and of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site with its elevation, drama, and dominance over the townscape.

The higher vantage points from within the conservation area boundary provide fine "hidden" expansive views over the area. Further, there are many distinctive changes in character from urban to natural and vice versa along different approaches. An example is the exit from Old Elvet onto the racecourse and riverbanks followed by the steep climb up to Gilesgate, and the route along Quarryheads Lane of suburban character that changes to one of semi-rural dominated by Durham School.

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

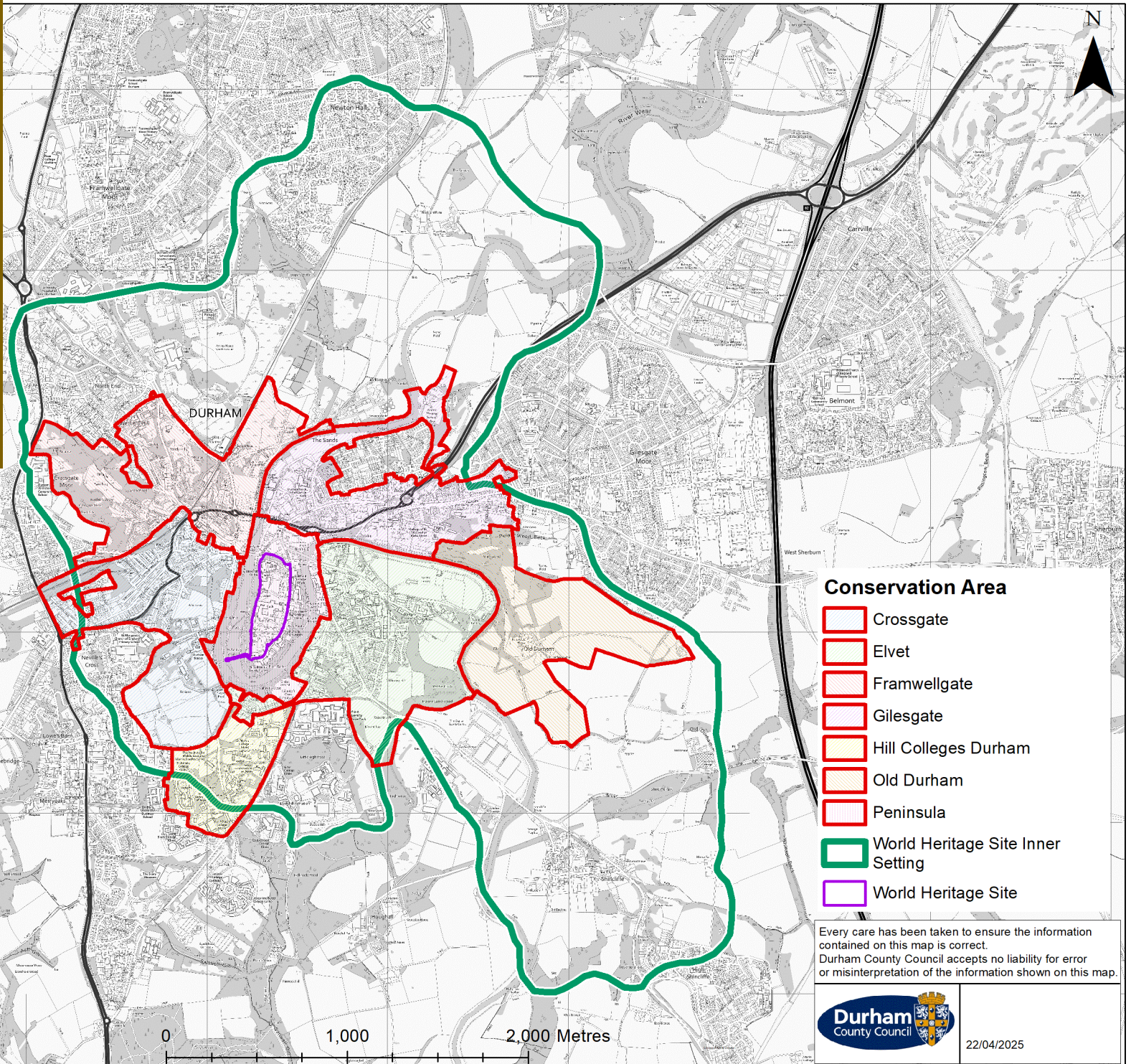
Beyond the historic city core the setting is dominated by modern areas of housing and infrastructure of little interest with limited visual connections with the historic built settlement. Beyond is a very open form with robust corridors of farmland and woodland. The physical separation from the historic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

The surrounding areas play 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 5 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.



The expansive view across Elvet from Durham Cathedral tower demonstrating the distinctive topography, setting and containment provided by the surrounding landscape.

Image, © Krystal Tara, used with permission.



2.5 Historic development

Durham City was like many medieval towns arranged so 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. Gilesgate in the east linking the city to Sunderland and Hartlepool, and Elvet on the road to Darlington and the South.

The city centre has not been heavily impacted by industrial development in the same way as other towns. Its medieval layout has been conserved with the separate ancient suburbs still legible. The medieval town comprised a group of independent "boroughs."

Each borough had its own parish church, court, mill and bakehouse and the houses bordering the streets were laid out within long narrow strips of land or burgage plots, end on to the street. As the houses built up across the street frontages narrow alleys, or vennels were established to serve rear yards and stables, usually one for each pair of burgage plots.

The earliest signs of history in the Elvet area are the evidence of Maiden Castle Iron Age Fort dating from c800BC–AD43. It was once moated by the River Wear on three sides, needing only a deep ditch on its western flank to complete its defences. Records of Elvet's urban existence pre-date the early settlement on the peninsula in 995AD, so it may have been a place of great importance. It was known as "Aelfet" meaning "swan island" and is recorded in the Anglo Saxon Chronical in 762AD.

During the medieval period, the Elvet Borough consisted of Old Elvet and New Elvet, but there was a further independent part, this being the Barony of Elvet around St Oswald's Church, Church Street, Hallgarth Street, Whinney Hill and part of Quarryheads Lane.

The first mention of Elvet in Norman times was when Bishop St Carileph gave the Barony of Elvet to the Cathedral Priory that included the site of Elvethall Manor or the "Hall Garth," where the street today gets its name. This was an important agricultural estate that supported the Priory. At this time, the land behind the main streets was largely undeveloped, being a diagonal arrangement of narrow fields used as allotments, private gardens, orchards, and plantations.

Elvet grew to become a suburb of considerable size, and its importance recognised when Bishop Pudsey linked it to the peninsula via Saddler Street with the construction of Old Elvet Bridge in 1153-95.

The Racecourse is historically significant dating from the medieval period when it belonged to the Durham Priory. It later became a horse racetrack in 1733 that continued to c1887.

Elvet changed during the 19th century with notable new developments. This included Durham Courts in 1811 and Durham Prison in 1850, replacing the Great North Gate in Saddler Street that was the city's "gaol" (jail), the prison expanded in 1865-89 when further accommodation blocks were built. Elvet Railway Station opened in 1893, the line running to the south of Green Lane, with important brick remains surviving along the riverside. In 1895 Old Shire Hall was constructed, with the residential terraces at Mavin Street and Mountjoy Crescent constructed in the later part of the century.

The urban expansion continued into the 20th century with the construction of Elvet Methodist Church in the 1920s, the public swimming baths in the 1930's replacing an early building used as a public wash house and fire engine station house.

During this period further terraced housing was built at Boyd Street, High Wood view and High Wood Terrace in the 1920s, followed by new housing in the 1930-50s at Whinney Hill, then at Court Lane, Elvet Crescent, and St Oswald's Close in the 1960s.

As Durham University expanded it occupied various buildings within Old Elvet resulting in Elvet becoming a second centre for the University. Consequently, the University commissioned Ove Arup and Partners to design a new footbridge to link Bow Lane on the peninsula with Elvet. Kingsgate Bridge was completed in 1962-3.

Durham University has had a significant influence on the form and character of New Elvet. It was originally very similar to Old Elvet, however by the 1950s it consisted of a mixture of traditional buildings at its north end (many of which survive today), a factory, a cleared site, a small housing estate and some derelict buildings. This area was redeveloped by the University in the 1960s known as Elvet Riverside 1, with Elvet Riverside 2 built in 1972.

The new "relief" road through this part of the city had a significant impact. It was built in 2 phases, the first in 1967-75, from North Road to Gilesgate, followed by the route across to Elvet via New Elvet Bridge. This coupled with adjacent land clearance resulted in the loss of many historic buildings, and large areas of land being released for development. Further road constructions occurred with the formalisation of the lane east off Hallgarth Street to the site of Elvethall Manor, a new road linking to Whinney Hill, and with the construction of the A177 and Stockton Road that sought to reduce traffic from within the medieval streets.

More recently the largest development in the area occurred at Whinney Hill School with the demolition of the redundant school building and construction of new dwellings in a mixture of contemporary house types introducing a new character within the area.



Fig 14 above. View of New Elvet c.1901 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR003487),



Fig 15 above. View of Old Elvet c.1914 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR003505),



Fig 16 above. View of Old Elvet c.1865 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR001018),



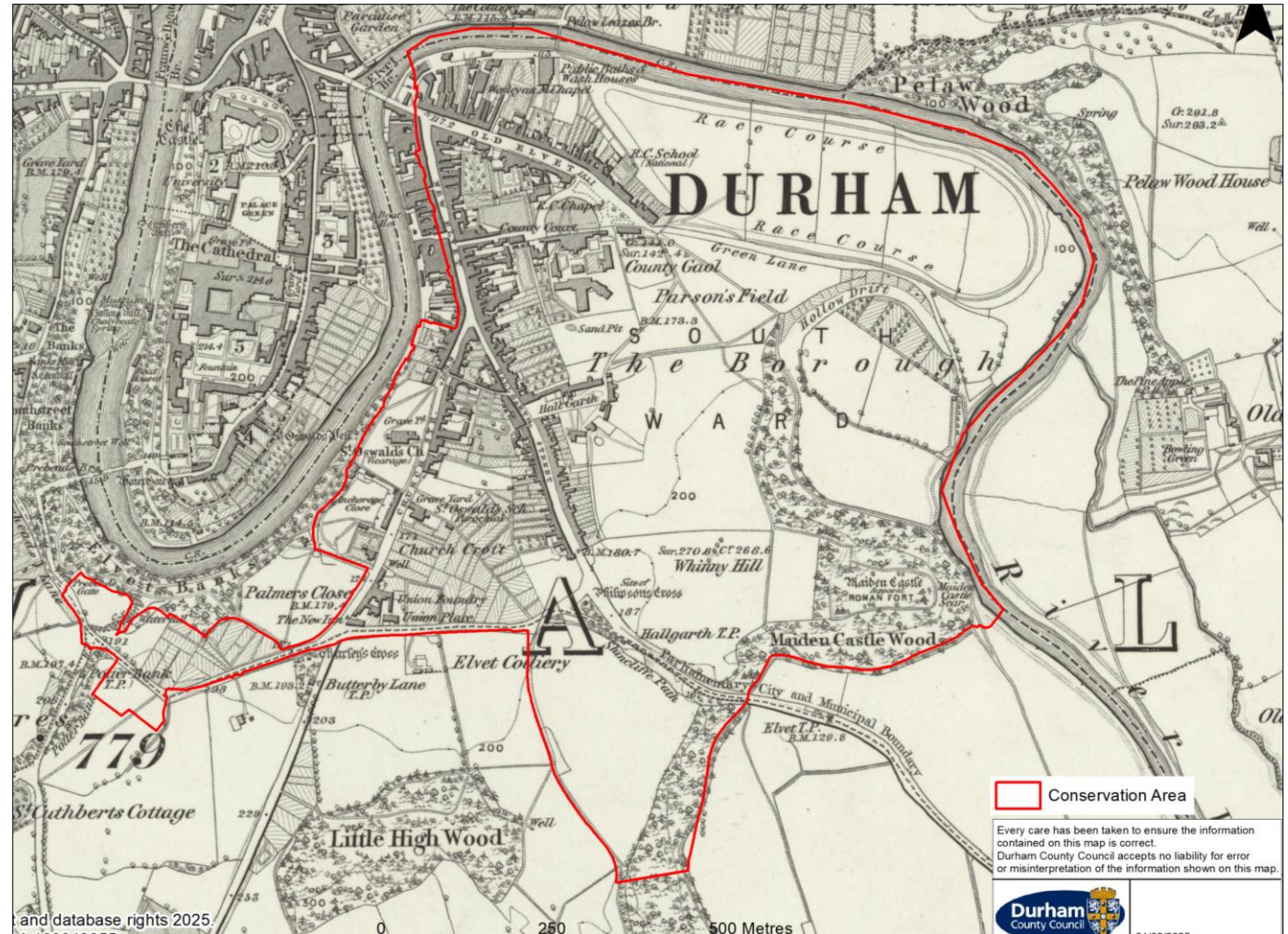
Fig 17 above. View of Elvet Bridge from original postcard c.1910 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00747),



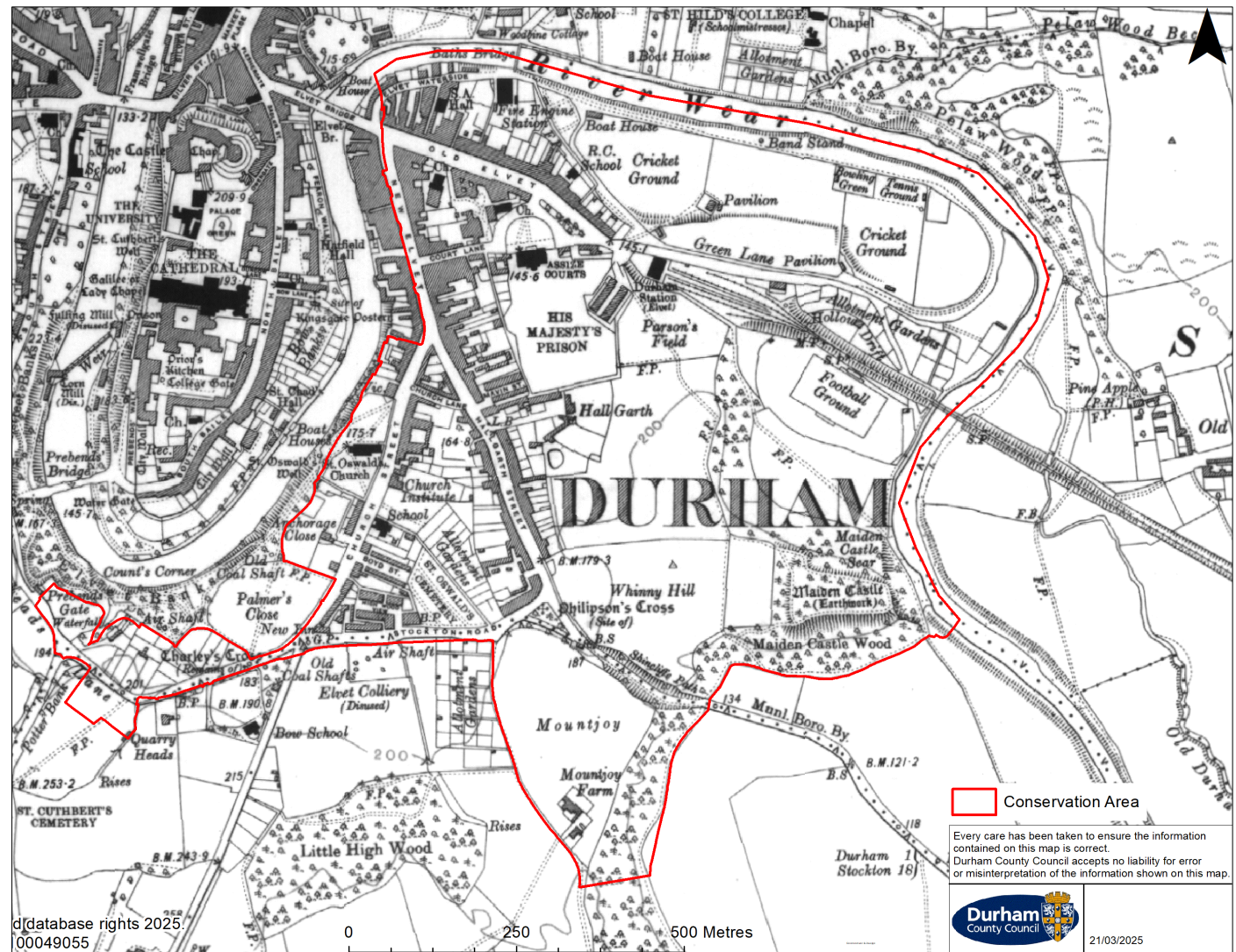
Fig 18 above. New Elvet postcard before c.1918 Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00986),

Fig 19 right and the following pages. A sequence of historic ordnance survey map extracts of the conservation area.

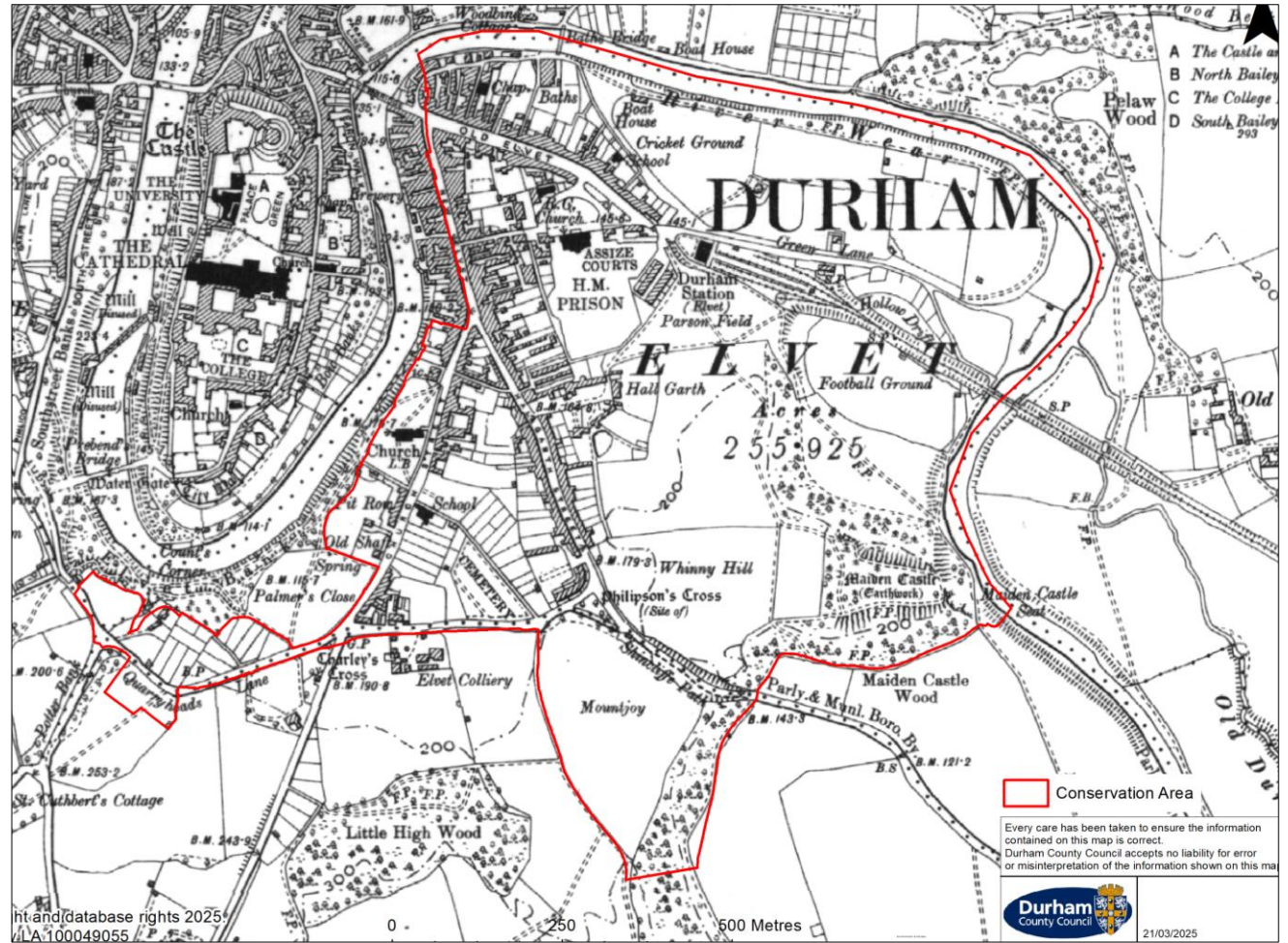
OS map c.1860, is one of best surviving guides to the plan form of the city, it shows the conservation area largely in its original medieval layout with residential properties concentrated along the main streets of Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Street and Hallgarth Street. The majority of the remained area is shown as undeveloped fields and woodland plus Race Course. It shows in detailed the burgage plot pattern, County Court, and prison buildings.



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 map shows that Elvet was not radically affected by the Victorian period of expansion that significantly changed the form and character of the city centre in the west. Elvet only notably changed with the small construction of terraced housing at the south end of Church Street, and at Mountjoy Crescent. The map shows Durham Station (Elvet) on Parsons field with the railway line travelling southeast crossing the river that led to Sherburn House Station.

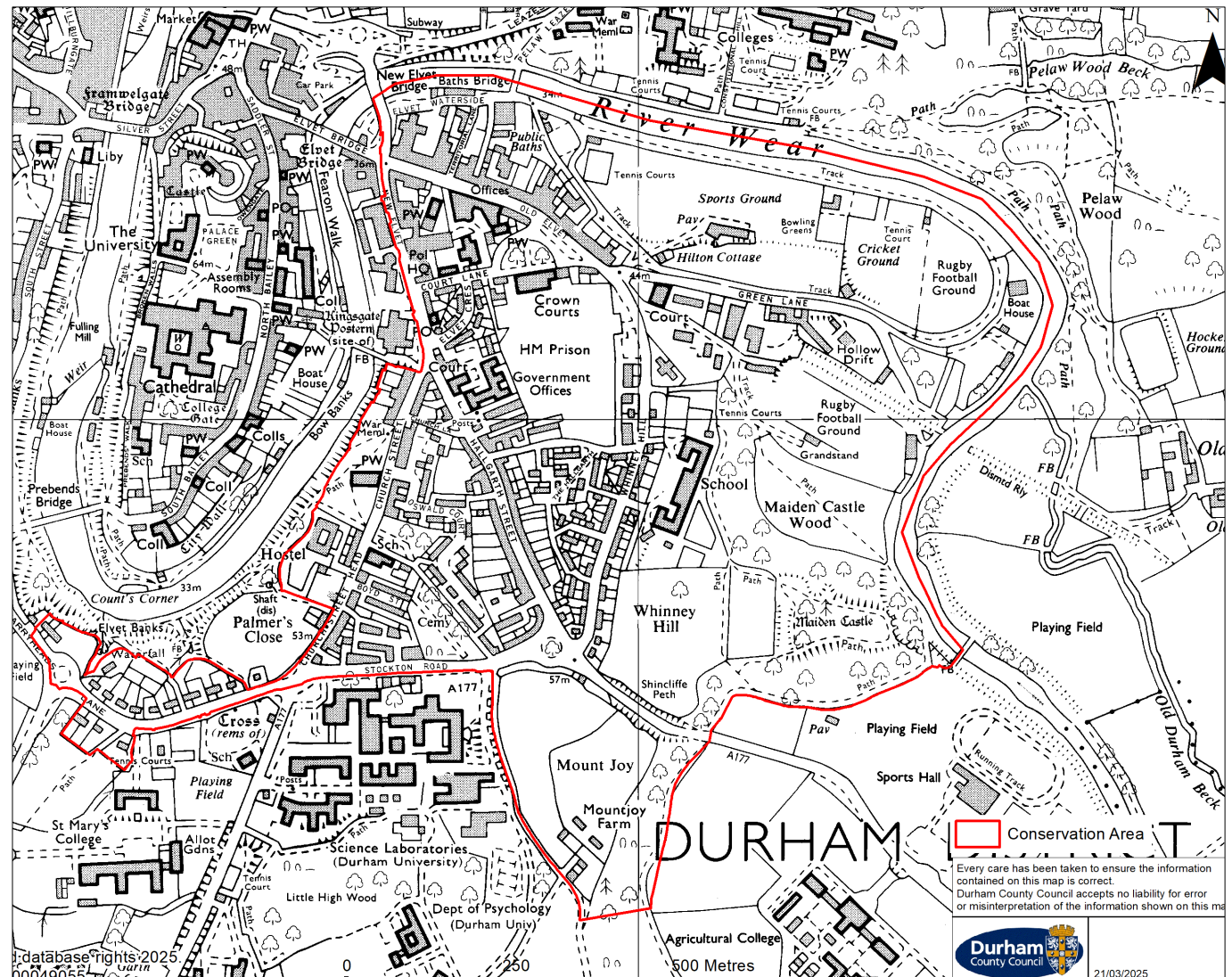


OS map c.1923, the early 20th century map shows limited change in the form of some new residential development with the construction of the terraces of Mavin Street, Boyd Steet and High Wood View.



ht and database rights 2025
LA 100049055

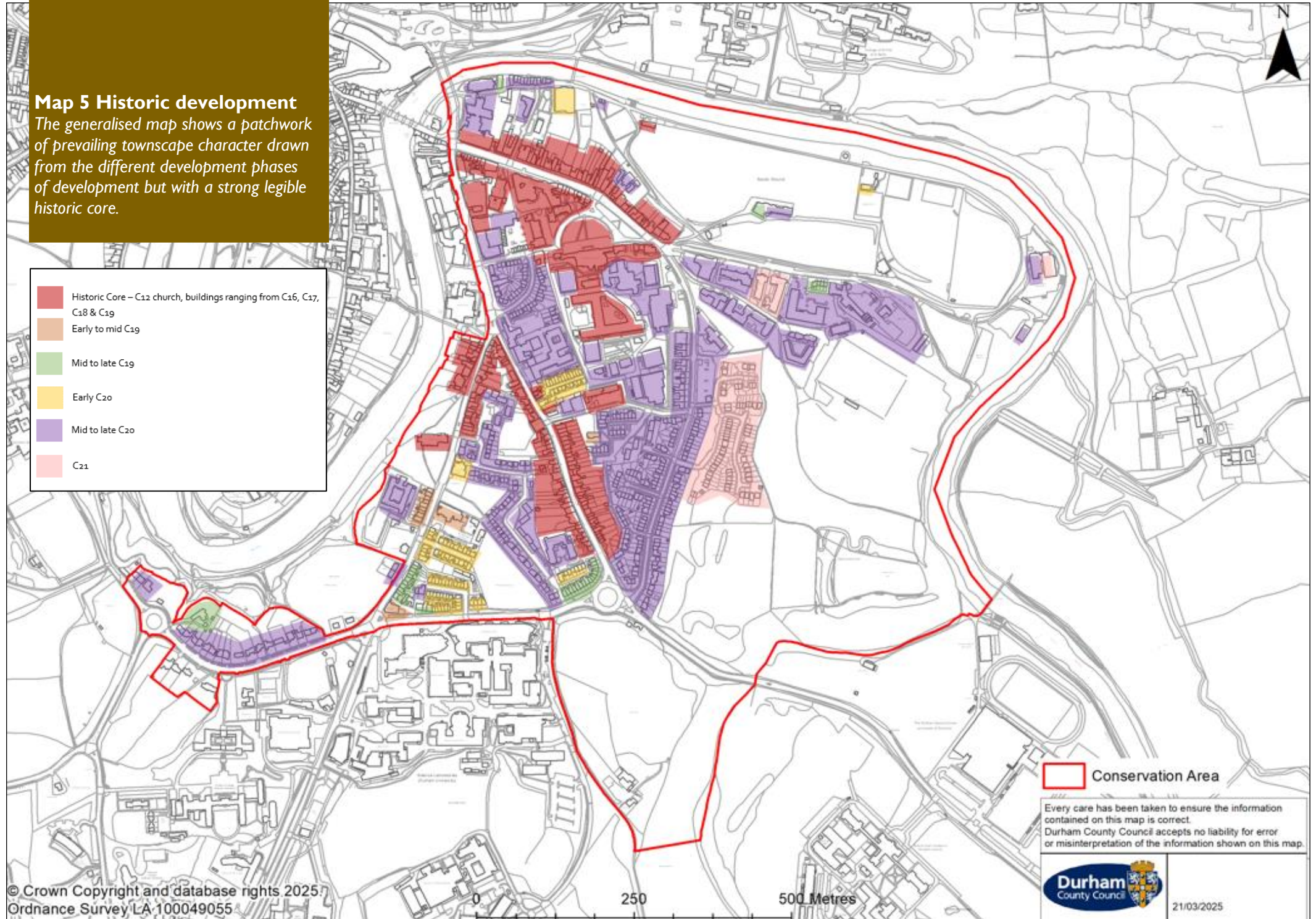
OS map c.1980-94, the late 20th century map shows the main change to the plan form of the city as part of the new “through road” that included the construction of New Elvet bridge, the clearance of buildings at the Old Elvet and New Elvet Junction, the introduction of social housing at Whinney Hill and road construction works along Stockton Road and the new A177 to Shincliffe. There were further housing developments of Oswald Court, Elvet Crescent, and along Quarryheads Lane, while the government offices are introduced at the north end of Hallgarth Street.



Map 5 Historic development

The generalised map shows a patchwork of prevailing townscape character drawn from the different development phases of development but with a strong legible historic core.

- Historic Core – C12 church, buildings ranging from C16, C17, C18 & C19
- Early to mid C19
- Mid to late C19
- Early C20
- Mid to late C20
- C21



 Conservation Area

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



21/03/2025

2.6 Heritage Assets

The conservation area contains a significant number of 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 20 above. The grade II listed historic landmark, Old Shire Hall in a distinctive Baroque architectural style.

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 (NDHA)

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

Fig 21 below. Images showing the variation of non-designated heritage asset within the conservation area, the Masonic Hall, Cricket Pavilion and Mountjoy Crescent.



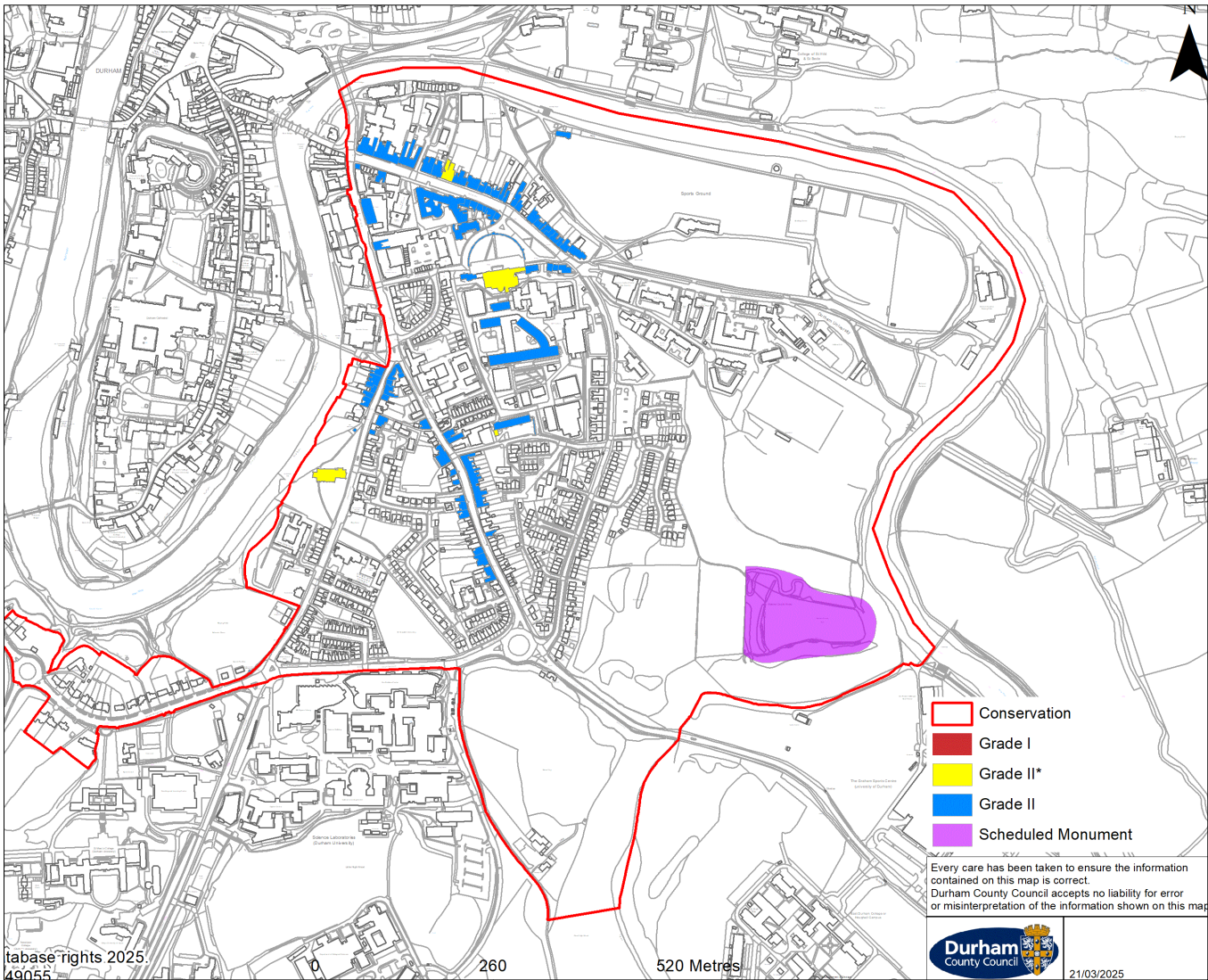
Map 6 Designated heritage assets – listed buildings and scheduled monuments

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: Royal County Hotel (GRII), Dun Cow Public House (GRII), Old Shire Hall (GRII), Old Elvet No's 1, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 19 1/2, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 51, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 55a, (all GRII) 46, 47, 48, 49 (GRII*), Governor's House to east of Crown Court (GRII), Durham Crown Court (GRII*), Staff Locker Rooms west of Crown Court (GRII), forecourt gates and walls to Crown Court (GRII), Church of St Cuthbert and Presbytery (GRII), Former Three Tunns Hotel, New Elvet (GRII), No 20 New Elvet (GRII), No's 1, 2, 3, 4a, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 28, 28a, 29b, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 (all GRII) Church Street, St Oswald's Church (GRI), War Memorial St Oswald's Church (GRII), Charley's Cross corner of Church Street (GRII), No's 21-23 Hallgarth Street (GRII), Victoria Public House, Hallgarth Street (GRII), Hallgarth House (GRII), No's 18, 37, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 75, Hallgarth Street (all GRII), Durham Prison Workshops (GRII), Tithe Barn (GRII*), two barns, Durham Prison Officer's Club (GRII), wall east of Durham Prison Officer's Club (GRII).



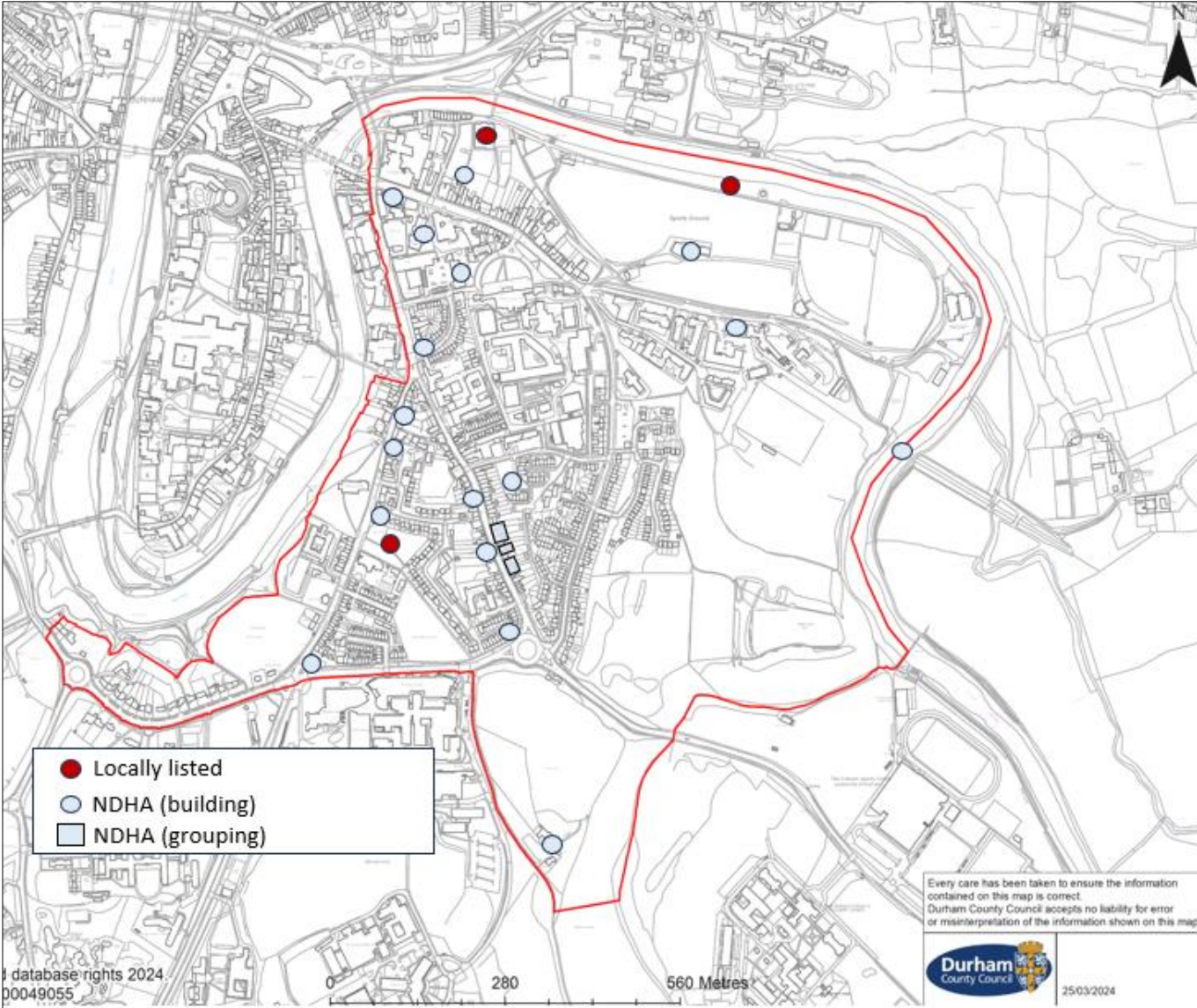
Map 7 NDHAs

The map identifies the NDHAs identified within the conservation area.

The CAMP Strategic Context document describes the process by which NDHAs are identified. It should be noted that they can be subject to change and that 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: Dunn Cow art piece the riverside, former Durham City Swimming Baths, Elvet Waterside, St Oswald’s Park, Church Street

NDHAs: Nos 13-14 Elvet Crescent, White Church, Church Street Head, No 11 Church Street, Mountjoy Crescent, Mountjoy Farmhouse and outbuildings, Nos 2-4 Old Elvet, Elvet Methodist Church, Masonic Hall, Old Elvet, Cathedrals, Court Lane, Nos 8-9 Church Street, St Oswald’s Church Institute, Church Street, Nos 34-36, 38-39, 42-45 Hallgarth Street, Hallgarth Farmhouse, No 72 Hallgarth Street, Nos 60-62 Hallgarth Street, Durham University Cricket Pavilion, Vennel and Vennel Cottage Old Elvet, Railway line, bridge archway and abutments, Green Lane/riverside, Railway Cottages, Green Lane, Bandstand, riverside.

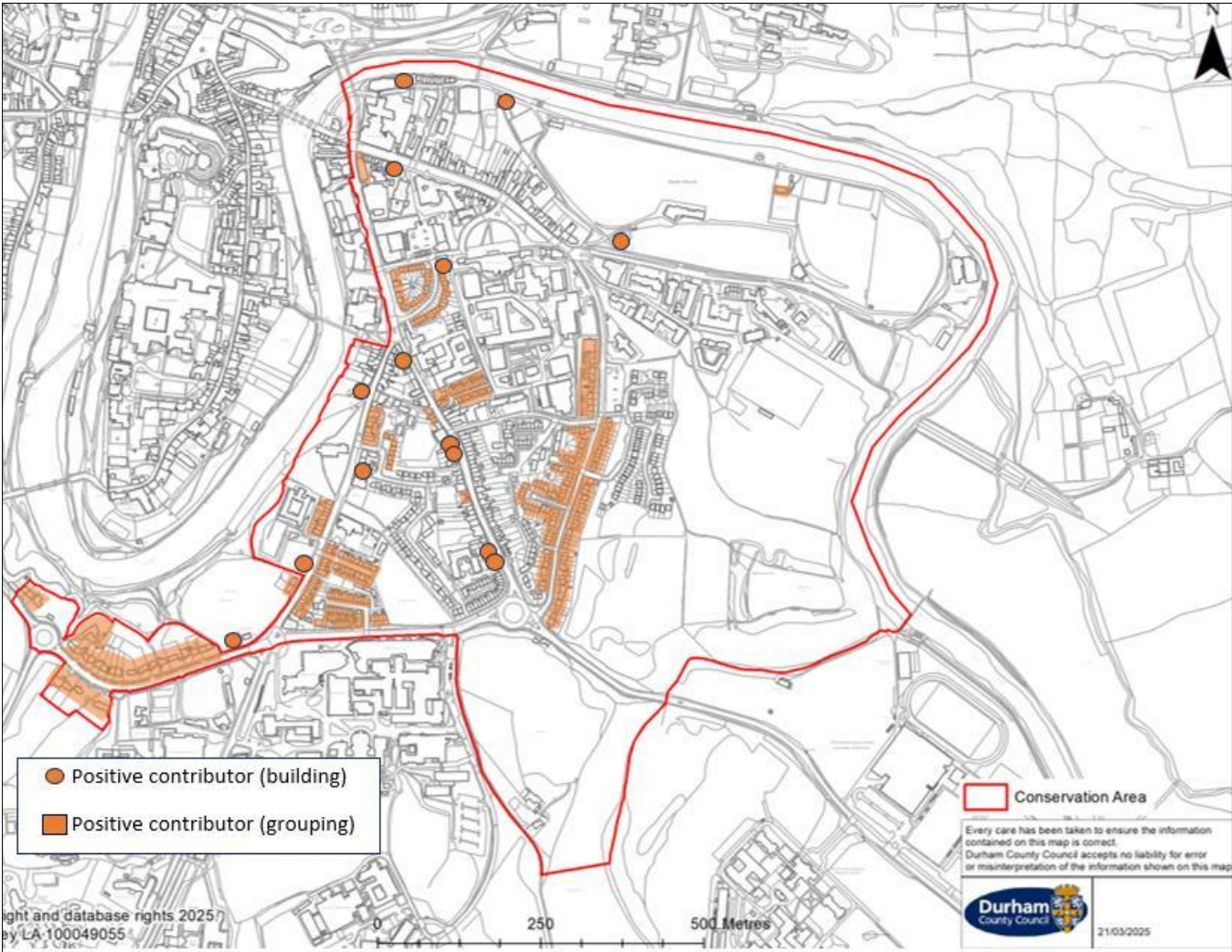


2.7 Townscape – positive contributors

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

Positive contributors: Nos 4-26 Quarryheads Lane, The Cottage, Quarryheads Lane, Nos 1-2 Palmers Close, Nos 1-3 Union Place, Nos 1-23 High Wood, Nos 1-4 Gladstone Villas, Nos 18-27 and 35-36 Church Street Head, Nos 1-18 Boyd Street, Nos 1-7 Church Street Villas, The Anchorage, Church Street Head, Nos 1-9 Anchorage Terrace, No 25 Church Street, Nos 13-18 Church Street, The Vicarage Church Street, Nos 1-8 Oswald Court, Kingsgate House, Hallgarth Street, Nos 82-84 Hallgarth Street, Nos 74 and 76 Hallgarth Street, Nos 64-66 Hallgarth Street, Nos 50-52 Hallgarth Street, Nos 16, 17 and Deansgate House, Hallgarth Street, Nos 1-21 Boyd Street, Nos 1-80 Whinney Hill, Wayside Cottage, High Trees, Fort William, Shincliffe House, Crossways, Wood View, Hillside, Whinfield, Glenwood, Ingleside, Elaton, The Cottage, Lavender House, Dunholme, Fown-Ditt, Pine Tree, Whinney Hill, Nos 81-100 Whinney Hill, Nos 1-40 Elvet Crescent, Nos 3-9 New Elvet, No 1 Old Elvet, Nos 7 Old Elvet, Hilton Cottage, Green Lane, detached building in west Elvet Waterside Apartments, former public convenience, riverside, bowling green buildings north side of The Racecourse.

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 continuity down the centuries of street patterns, land divisions, property plots, and how buildings have evolved.

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

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

Within Elvet Conservation Area, Durham University Archaeological Services have carried out an excavations revealing settlement evidence from medieval through post-medieval. These include 12-15th century tenement boundaries, cess pits, beer-making, evidence of fig trade with Europe, 16th and 17th century pottery and a saw pit, along with modern air raid shelters.

Further, there are documented medieval secular buildings some where the present day external facades conceal retained features and fabric within and potentially beneath them relating to much earlier structural fabric. For example, the listed barns at the Prison Officers Club are medieval and are significant within the city centre being the Cathedral Priory farm buildings. Nos, 3, 5, 7 and 12 Church Street are residential properties of the late 17th or early 18th centuries but possibly incorporating earlier fabric and features. While No 35 Hallgarth Street has pre-late 17th century fabric. At Nos 54-56 Hallgarth Street renovations in the 1970s revealed evidence of a possibly medieval single-storey house. At No 7 Old Elvet evidence of an early walled garden were discovered.

There has been limited recorded archaeological investigation but given the areas ancient origins archaeological remains from many periods could possibly be found. discovered.

Such archaeological evidence is of great interest and importance that adds to the conservation area's special historic interest and to that of the wider city centre.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, to be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

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



2.9 Landscape, green and blue infrastructure assets

Green infrastructure is the term used to describe the 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 the roadside verges and street trees found in places such as New Elvet and Old Elvet, the positive green amenity spaces as part of the housing layout design of Oswald Court and the Hallgarth, and private gardens in the streetscene, such as those along Quarryheads Lane.

The second category are the more significant local green spaces with added historic, aesthetic and community values. In Elvet such assets include St Oswald's Churchyard & Cemetery, Palmers Close, St Oswald's Park, the allotments at the east end of Green Lane, and the designed green space in front of the Crown Court.

This part of the city has an inseparable relationship with the River Wear corridor as it meanders around the peninsula and through the flood plain down to Shincliffe. The green spaces of The Racecourse and those lining both sides of the river as it bends southwards to Maiden Castle are of high importance informing a key part of the area's landscape character, providing a green setting to its buildings and iconic views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Woodland areas on surrounding ridges such as Whinney Hill, Maiden Castle and Mountjoy form part of the almost continuous woodland "wall" informing a significant natural backdrop to this part of the city. The value of this hilly landscape is recognised by its formal designation as part of the Area of Higher Landscape Value. It defined as an area which is considered to be of high landscape quality with strong distinctive characteristics that make them particularly sensitive to development.

The green spaces are identified and described in more detail in the individual street characterisation sections.

Fig 23 below. A selection of images of some of the green infrastructure assets within the conservation area, the former bowling green, riverside, the rugby pitch adjacent The Racecourse, St Oswald's churchyard, the green space at the Crown court, St Oswald's playground and Mountjoy Crescent



2.10 Landmarks, views and vistas

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

Given the conservation area's proximity and the surrounding hilly topography and the flat open floodplain land there are significant views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site from within and across the area. These include the sequential views from the riverside footpaths at The Racecourse; fine panoramic views from elevated vantage points looking across the eastern part of Elvet from places such as Claypath, Gilesgate, Pelaw Woods and from within the site of the College of St. Hild and St. Bede.

Added to the above, there are important river corridor views from Elvet Bridge, New Elvet Bridge, Baths Bridge, and Maiden Castle Bridge, some providing mixed townscape views of Elvet in relation to other parts of the city. Two of the most significant are the splendid panoramic views from Mountjoy and Whinney Hill.

There are intimate historic streetscape views along Old Elvet, Church Street and Hallgarth Street, where the historic built form is of high architectural quality and diversity. This includes close up views of historic landmarks such as Old Shire Hall, Elvet Methodist Church, the Church of St Cuthbert, the Crown Courts, and St Oswald's Church. There are other notable historic streetscape views that give a different experience of later 19th century terraces such as the along Stockton Road, Mountjoy Crescent, Highwood Terrace and Gladstone Villas. Within the 20th century residential streets there are often surprising views of Durham Cathedral between the individual blocks and above the rooftops that contribute positively.



The “classic” riverside view from the north side of the riverbank looking towards Elvet, Durham Castle and Cathedral seen dominating the skyline with a dramatic presence in their townscape and river setting.

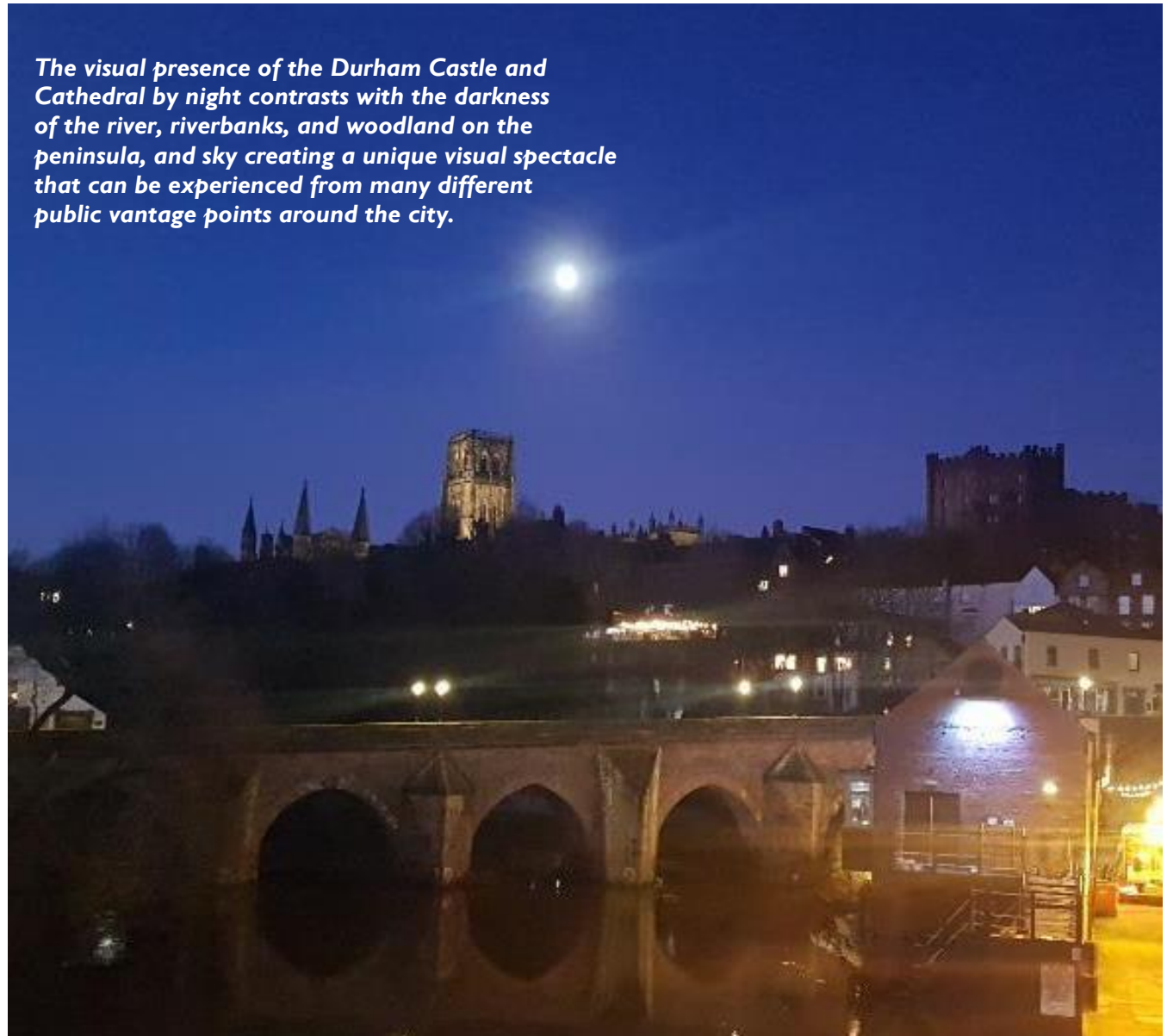
Night-time views

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

Within the conservation area there are a series of night-time views that are important in terms of contributing to its character and appearance. These align with some of the key daytime views but provide a different visual experience. Here these include views from Pelaw Woods, The Racecourse, Baths Bridge, and New Elvet Bridge.

The key views are identified and described in more detail in Part B Street Characterisations section. Exclusion should not be seen that other views do not contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The visual presence of the Durham Castle and Cathedral by night contrasts with the darkness of the river, riverbanks, and woodland on the peninsula, and sky creating a unique visual spectacle that can be experienced from many different public vantage points around the city.



Map 9 views/vantage point map

The map identifies a selection of important views/vantage points. Exclusion should not be seen that others do not contribute positively.

1. Panoramic view across Elvet from Pelaw Woods
2. Sequence of views of the WHS down Pelaw Leazes Lane emerging onto Baths Bridge
- 3 Views of the WHS from St Hild & Bede College grounds.
4. Sequence of views across Elvet to the WHS from the riverside
5. Panoramic view of WHS from higher elevation on Whinney Hill
6. Views of the WHS from within Whinney Hill housing area.
7. Channelled view of WHS and Court buildings along Court Lane
8. River corridor view of WHS and Old Elvet Bridge from New Elvet Bridge.
9. Glimpsed views of WHS from within New Elvet
10. View of WHS from east end of Kingsgate Bridge
11. View of WHS from Church Street Head.
12. View of WHS from South Road junction
13. Panoramic WHS and townscape view from Mounty Joy

Primary historic streetscape views Old Elvet, Church Steet, Hallgarth Street, Whinney Hill (Prison Officer Club)

Secondary historic streetscape views Church Street Head, Stockton Road, Mountjoy Crescent. **Landmarks** A-Durham Cathedral, B-Durham Castle, C-Old Elvet Bridge, D-former City Swimming Baths, E-Elvet Methodist Church, F-Old Shire Hall, G-St Oswald's RC Church H-Crown Court/HMP Durham, Durham Prison Officers Club, J-St Oswald's Church, K-Dunelm House.



2.11 Movement, activity and atmosphere

The conservation area is mixed in land use and character. It is dense urban in the north and west with a variety of residential, commercial, educational, and ecclesiastical uses, with the prison complex occupying a large area. This changes in the east and south to a landscape focus with a semi-rural character, leisure, and recreational uses. The different levels of activity and contrasting ambiances contributing very positively to the conservation area's distinctiveness and sense of place.

How these different component parts, and the City in general, is experienced derives from the urban framework within it. This relates to the network of roads, streets, lanes and vennels, that dictate pedestrian and vehicular movement into, through and out of the place, and the spaces that attract people and encourage interaction. Within the conservation area there is a wide range of such elements that merge into one another providing different experiences and shifting character.

The A177 travelling into the city from the southeast is a key gateway point and a green corridor approach up to the roundabout at Whinney Hill, Hallgarth Street and Stockton Road. This can be a busy and noisy route but is important bypassing the city centre and leading out to Shincliffe and the western side of the city.

It also provides valuable pedestrian connections to Houghall, Shincliffe Village and the riverside where its changes to a quieter tranquil atmosphere, sometimes disrupted by noise from sporting activities at the university sports complex. It is also a busy cycle route and there can be issues on the bank with pedestrians sometimes walking in the road.

Stockton Road travelling east-west tends to be a hive of activity and a noisy place owing to the presence of the Science Park Site on the south side, and as it provides access Durham University's man campus in the south part of the city. It can be a very busy pedestrian environment with high student footfall.

The second key gateway point is in the north at the Old Elvet / New Elvet Bridge junction. Here the area is very busy with a vibrant atmosphere. There are strong active frontages, and the area has heavy traffic, noise, and pollution. This level of activity generally continues along New Elvet, but in Old Elvet it becomes overtaken by a calmer residential feel, although it can still be quite busy due to the presence of the hotels, courts, and Durham University buildings.

Both Church Street and Hallgarth Street have a residential/domestic character, but both are impacted by traffic and parking congestion. Church Street tends to be the busier owing to the presence of the school, and being closer to the colleges, because of the narrowness of the

pavement on the west side it can be uncomfortable for pedestrians.

The residential area between Church Street and Hallgarth Street is much quieter, but it does provide valuable pedestrian short-cuts to the surrounding main streets. There is also a series of enclosed Victorian terraced side and back streets that generally have less activity and a quieter domestic character. Whinney Hill has its own sense of place, the street curving, dipping, and rising, with the abundance of greenery enhancing the public realm. It can be busy at times, with cars parked on the street, while also being a bus route, but nonetheless it still provides a pleasing pedestrian route down to Old Elvet and the riverside.

In the east the urban area transitions into the semi-rural riverside, a much more tranquil environment despite its proximity to the busy city streets nearby. Unlike the other areas, aside from Green Lane, this is mostly experienced on foot. The sports grounds at the Racecourse, Bowling Club, Cricket Club, Rowing Club and Rugby Club provide valuable leisure and recreational activities, supplemented by the riverside footpaths popular with walkers, joggers, cyclists, and rowers on the river itself.

The network of riverside footpaths continue south to Houghall and Shincliffe, and over the river to Old Durham that are very popular and pleasing walking routes, more rural in character and provide a positive contrast to the formal busy streets elsewhere in the conservation area.

Fig 24 below. A selection of images showing different streets found within the conservation area.



Church Street



Church Street Head



Elvet Crescent



New Elvet



Court Lane



Hallgarth Street



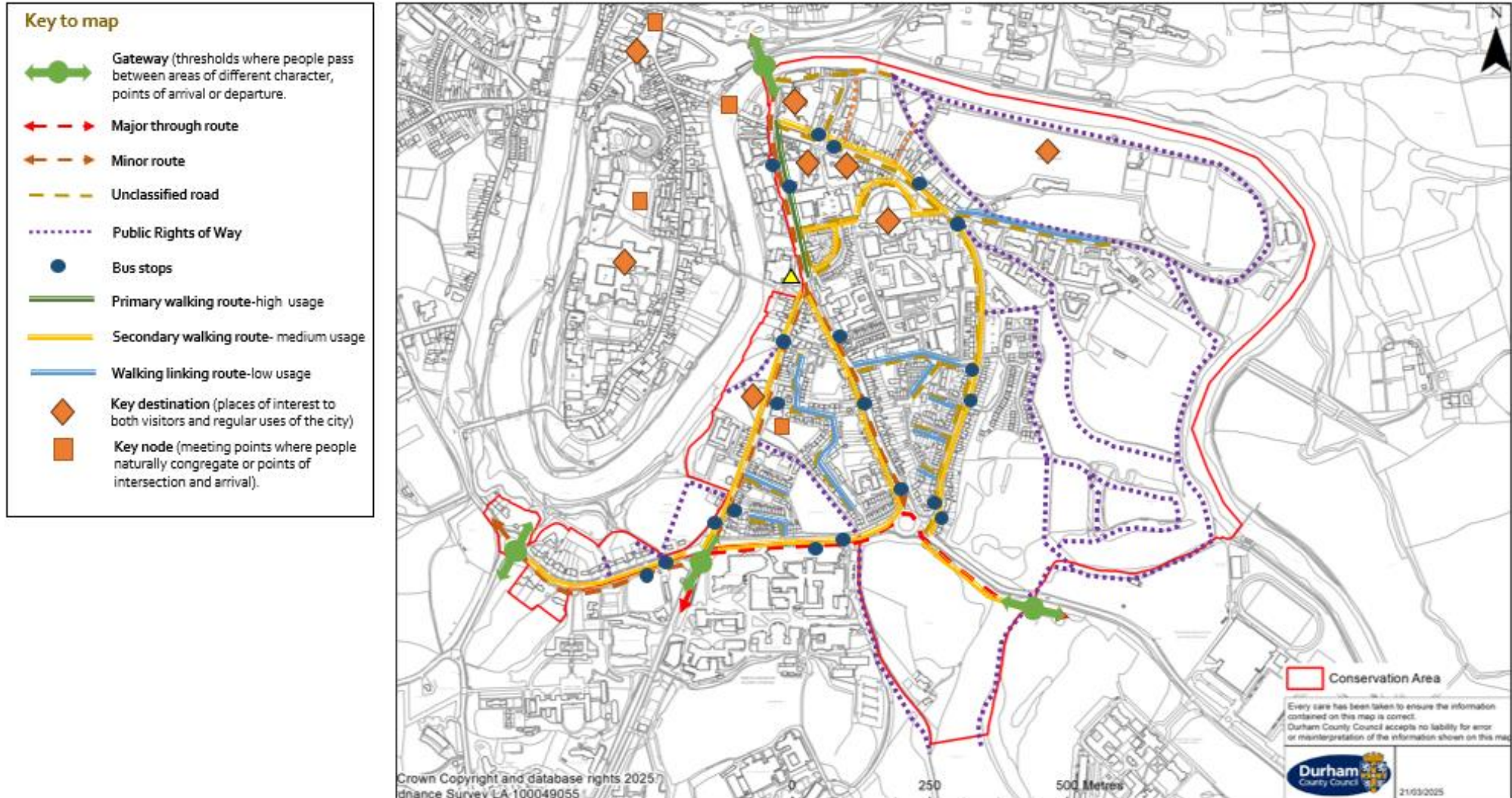
Old Elvet



Whinney Hill

Map 10 Movement map

The map identifies the main movement framework and key points within the conservation area and its surrounding environment. These are important in defining how the area is experienced.



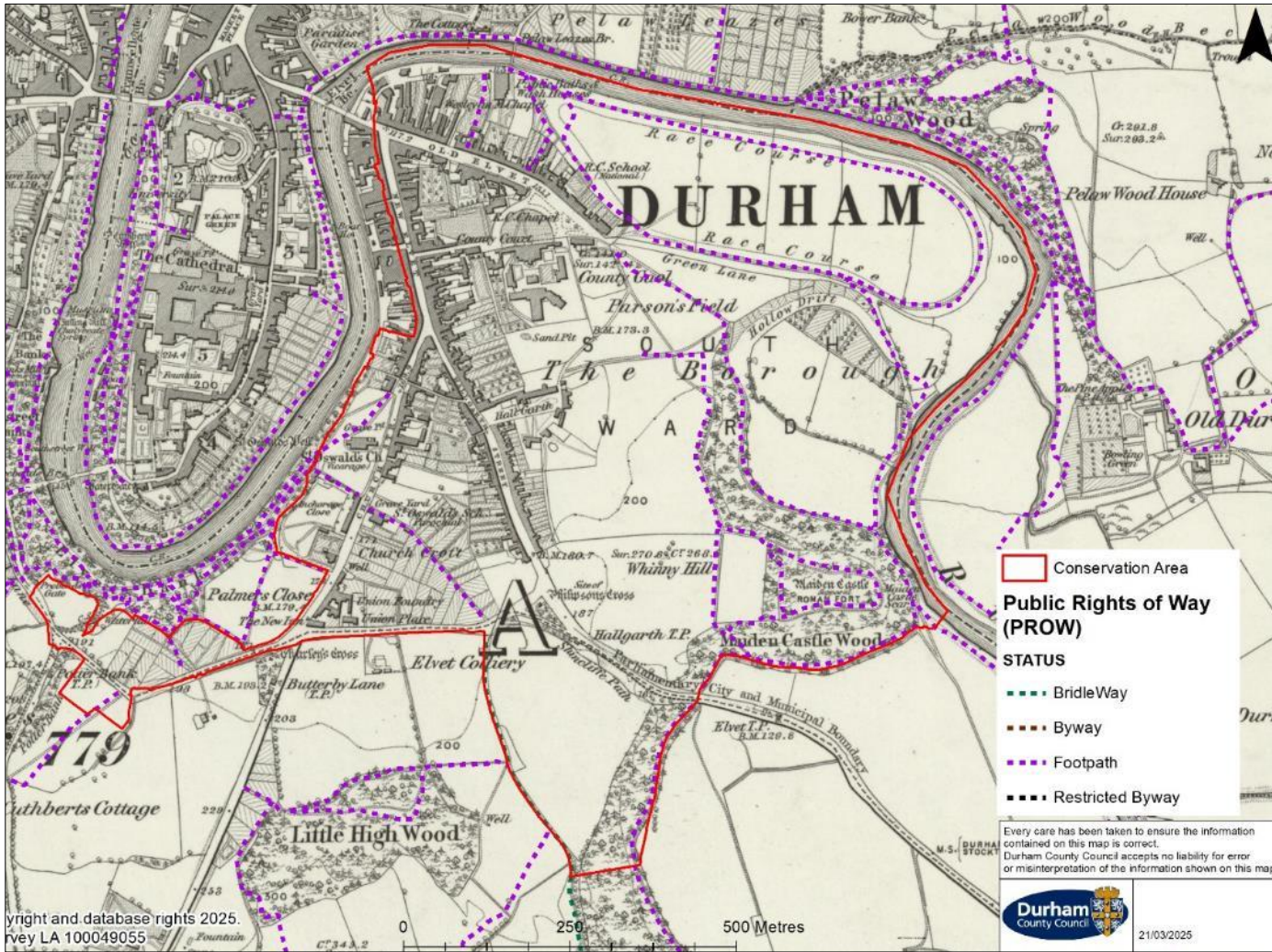
Map 11 Movement map (historic)

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 Durham Cathedral. Some of these are potentially historic pilgrim routes, adding to the better known linkages to Finchale, Beaufrepaire, and Keping, and the route of Cades Road.

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

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

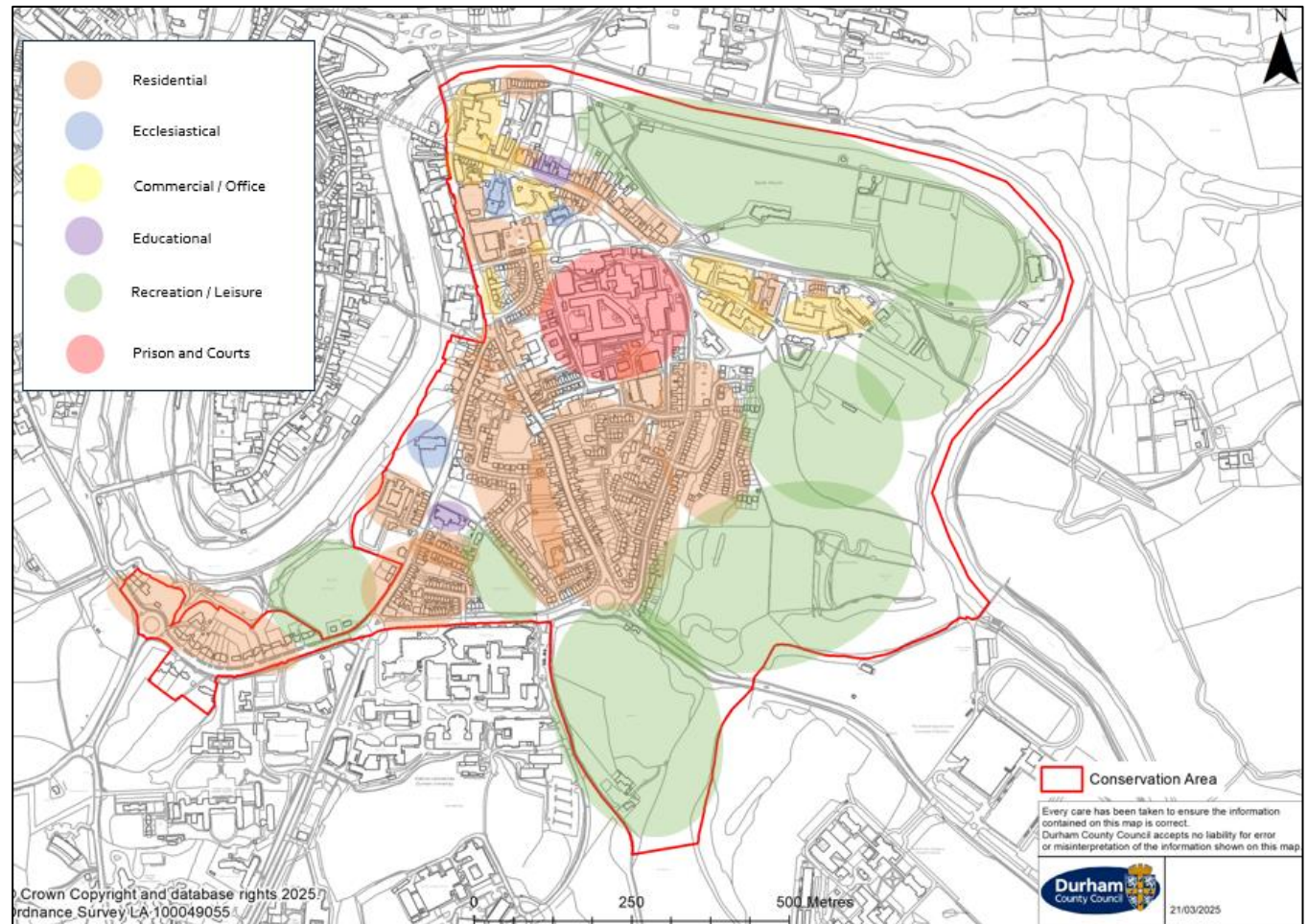


2.12 Land use

The map illustrates broadly the ways in which buildings and land are used across Elvet Conservation Area. The land use defines building types and character that changes from place to place. It shows uses with clear definition to the component parts, dominated by residential, recreation, and leisure, with small concentrations of commercial and a scattering of small elements of educational and ecclesiastical uses.

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 was established by c.1250 as part of the wider medieval town plan of the city. These are the main streets/routes of Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Street and Hallgarth Street. The medieval layout of the city has altered little over the centuries and within Elvet it remains legible today despite changes and expansion in the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

The medieval plan form is simple comprising of linear streets lined on both sides by tightly packed buildings, Old Elvet running west-east, connected to Sadder Street by Old Elvet Bridge, New Elvet running north-south then forking south-east/west at Hallgarth Street and Church Street. The introduction of Leazes Road in the 1970s however severed Old Elvet from its historic continuation along Elvet Bridge.

The main streets generally have unbroken building lines with buildings pressed up against the back edge of the pavement. There are some exceptions to this general rule such as the break at Territorial Lane leading to the former industrial riverside area, and a limited number of buildings being set back from the main street frontage.



Fig 25 above. *The enclosed space at Elvet Waterside the 19th century plan form and historic industrial character still preserved.*

Within the city’s medieval streets historic tenement/burgage plots were the chief determinant of house plans across the city. They comprise of long, narrow plots and these still exist within Old Elvet and Church Street.

An important part of the historic layout and physical fabric of the city are the narrow vennels and lanes some dating back to medieval times, a number of which can be found in the area. These are of historic significance and contribute to the area’s pedestrian permeability.

The street of Old Elvet is generously spacious lined with 17th- 19th century buildings plus the dramatic introduction of Old Shire Hall on its south side. Importantly a sightline remains between the street and Elvet Bridge sustaining the understanding of the historic connection

physically lost by the construction of the modern road. At the top of the street, the partially concealed forecourt of Durham Crown Court offers an important semi-circular green space with the Court buildings set back yet conforming to the street’s linear pattern. Beyond, the buildings of HMP Durham rise to the south and have a very significance presence within Elvet.



Fig 26 above. *The wide street of Old Elvet the space contained by a built form of varying ages and architectural styles, creating a streetscape of high significance and character.*

New Elvet has lost much of its former medieval cohesiveness except at its northern end. The modern apartment building at Orchard House has restored some of that feeling though the earlier university riverside development has ignored the street line and offers nothing distinguished to the street frontages. The east side the street is punctured by the curving street of Elvet Crescent leading through to Court Lane, the Crown Court and Old Elvet.



Fig 27 above. *New Elvet, a long wide street that drops down from its north junction with Church Street/Hallgarth Street to New Elvet Bridge.*

South of New Elvet, Hallgarth Street and Church Street re-establish the historic pattern and residential character until the University South Road development is reached.

Church Street is orientated southwest, with Hallgarth Street, southeast, both displaying the general layout and building patterns of the medieval city. Within Hallgarth Street this is interrupted by 20th century infill developments on the east side of which pays little regard to the historic plan form.

Church Street and Hallgarth Street are linked together in the south via Stockton Road which runs westwards to Quarryheads Lane. This street pattern generates a triangular segment of land which contains dense modern residential development, the layout and building pattern adopting an irregular pattern.



Fig 28 above. *The north end of Church Street, a tightly enclosed space with an intimate character the carriageway framed by tall buildings of different ages and architectural styles.*

Quarryheads follows a historic route but today is characterised by 20th century residential properties set back following the curve of the street up to Potters Bank roundabout. The street feels wide and spacious and has a positive suburban character.



Fig 29 above. *The curving spacious street at Quarryheads Lane suburban in character.*

At the east end of Old Elvet, Whinney Hill rises steeply to its junction with Stockton Road and the A177. This is a narrow, hilly street of separate residential blocks of the inter-war period either fronting the main street or in cul-de-sac form.

Where Old Elvet and Whinney Hill meet, Green Lane runs eastwards along the outer edge of the racecourse; the land here is flat and triangular shaped pinched to the west and opening out to the east. The buildings along this route developed from the 1960s onwards and adopt a scattered and un-cohesive arrangement. Beyond this area the conservation area is characterised by a riverside footpath enclosed by greenery then an open form along the river corridor upstream to Shincliffe Village.

Elsewhere, there are pockets of late 19th/early 20th century development such as Mavin Street, Boyd Street, and High Wood View. These are short linear uniformed terraced blocks either fronting or running parallel to the main streets or clustered around the road junctions. They have connecting back lanes that are important components of the area's plan form.



Fig 30 above. A typical cul-de-sac in Whinney Hill seemingly designed with the view of Durham Cathedral in mind.



Fig 31 above. Green Lane a spacious single street with an eclectic mixture of buildings on the south side in a linear arrangement and open space in the north.

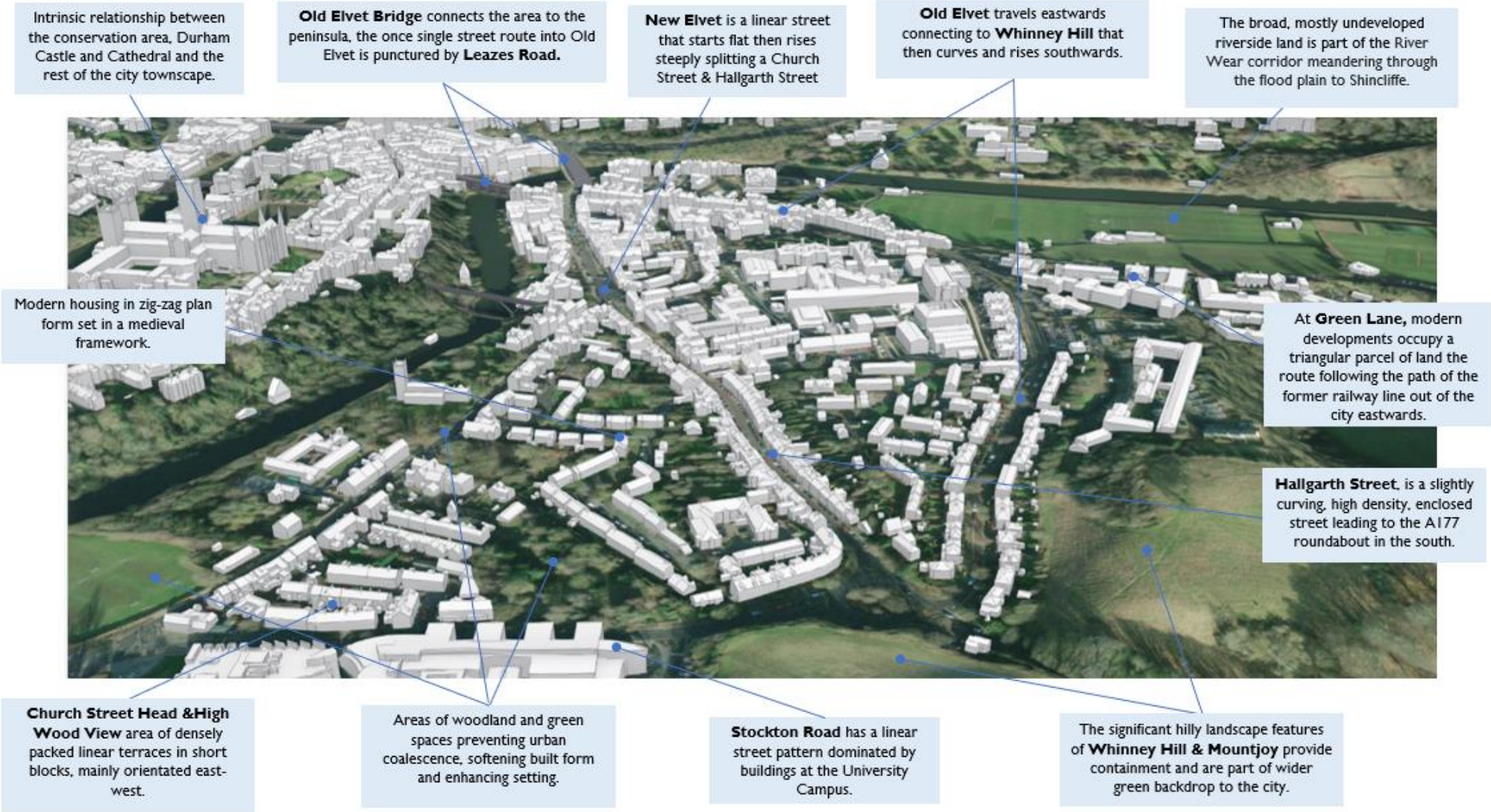


Fig 32 above. The enclosed Victorian terraced streets at High Wood View.



Fig 33 above. An example of one of the area's vennals that are important components of its historic plan form and layout.

Fig 34 below. A 3D model demonstrating the general development pattern and layout of the conservation area and the urban form's relationship to landscape.



2.12 Character areas

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

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

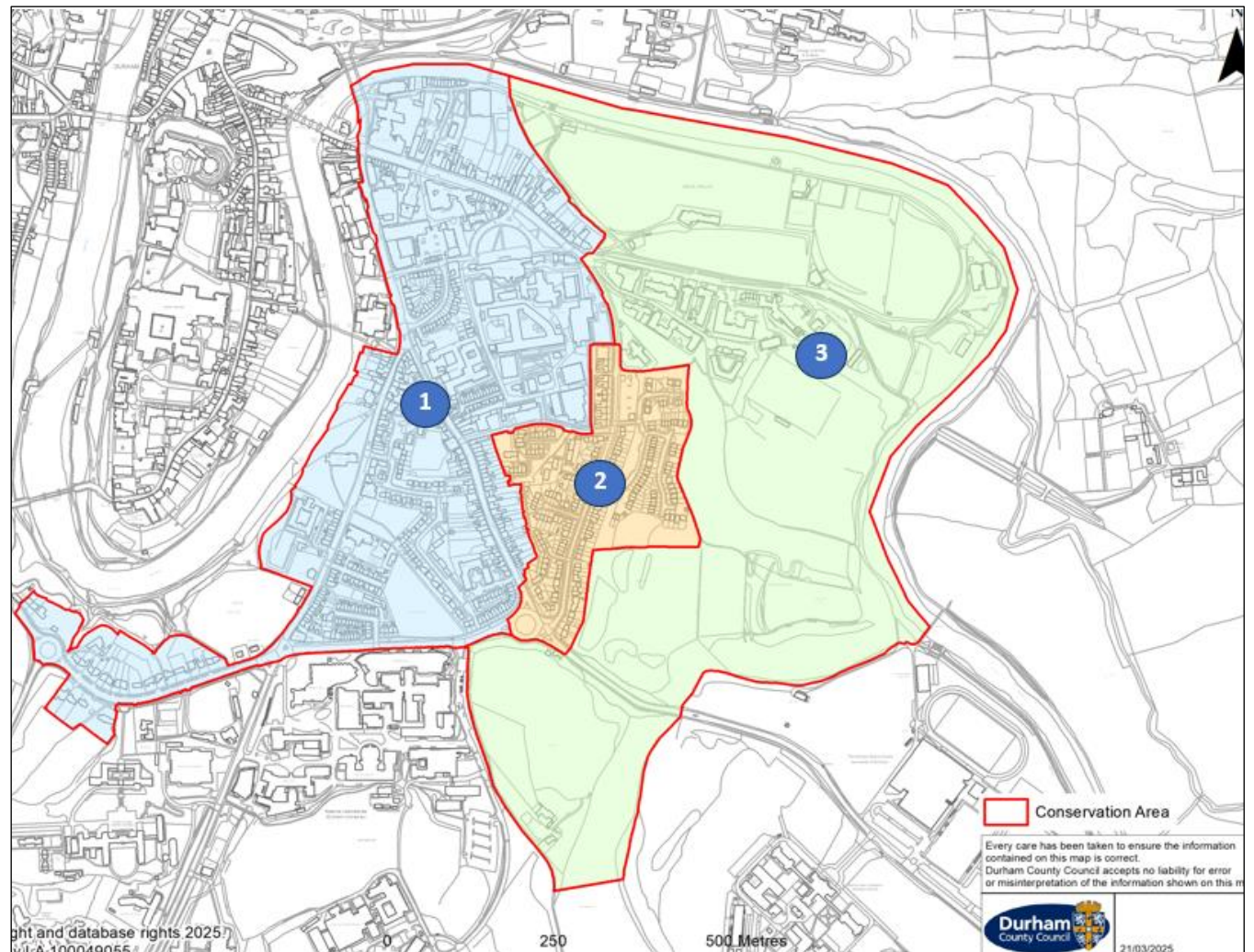
Character Area 1 - Historic core, (comprising Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Street, Hallgarth Street and Quarryheads Lane).

Character Area 2 – Whinney Hill.

Character Area 3 - Green Lane, The Racecourse, and riverside.

Map 13 Character areas

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

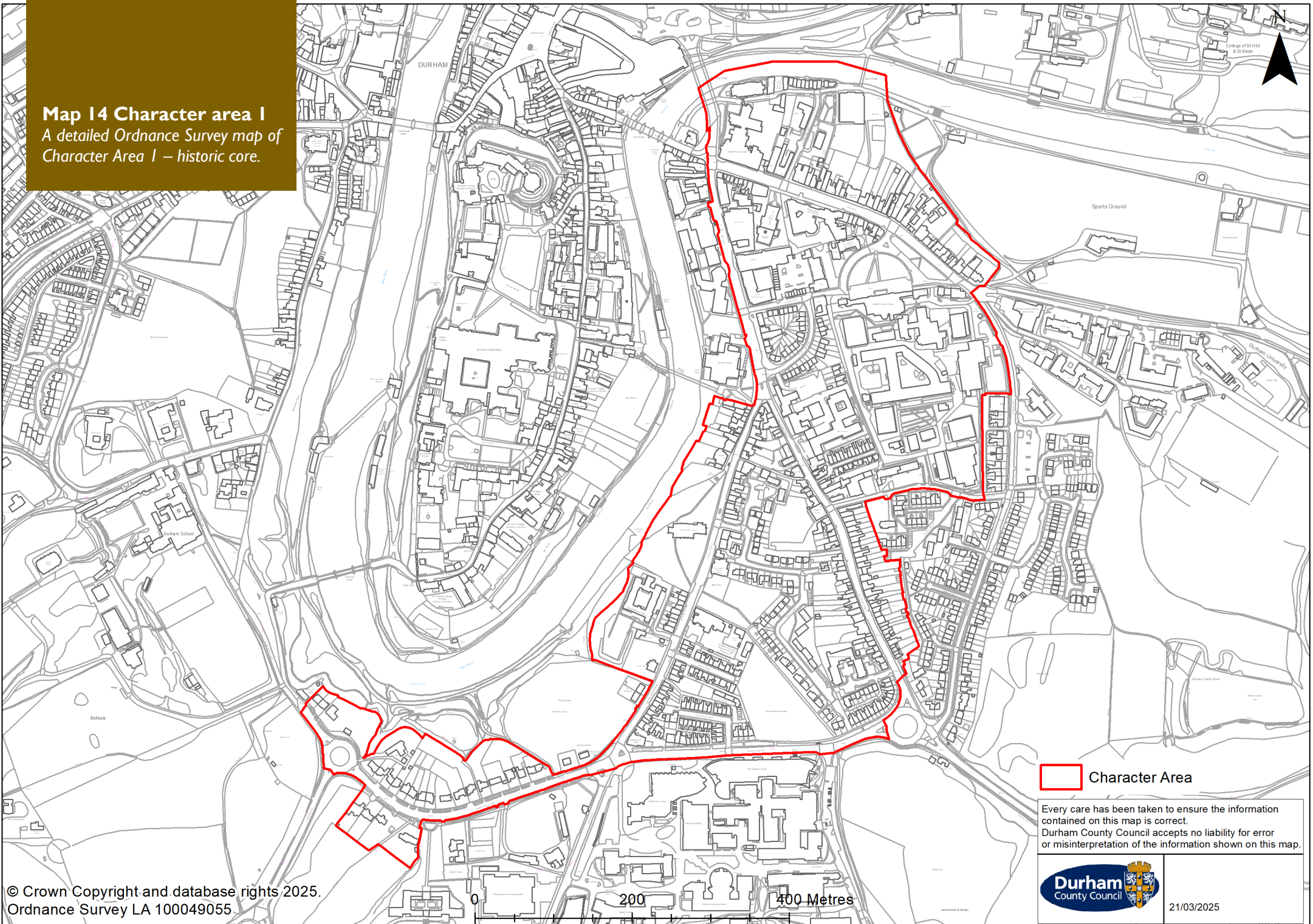



3. Street characterisation

3.1 Character area I (Historic core – Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Street, Hallgarth Street and Quarryheads Lane)



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 occupies the full extent of the western side of the conservation area. It follows the west side of New Elvet between New Elvet Bridge down to Dunelm House, where it turns to follow the rear plots of the buildings lining Church Street. From here the boundary follows the edge of the riverbanks woodland to the west end of Quarryheads Lane by Prebend's Bridge Cottage. The boundary follows Stockton Road then heads northwards around the rear of the east side of Hallgarth Street following the edge of HMP Durham up to the east end of Old Elvet. From this point it follows the public right of way behind Old Elvet to Bath's Bridge turning west ending at New Elvet Bridge.

The area comprises the key historic streets of Old Elvet, New Elvet, Church Steet, Hallgarth Street and Quarryheads Lane, accompanied by the built up part of Elvet Waterside.

The setting to the area is informed by the River Wear corridors eastern loop around the peninsula and the townscape beyond, the flat open floodplain land at the Racecourse, and the dense residential estate of Whinney Hill. The hilly landscape features of Mountjoy, Maiden Castle and the Whinney Hill, provide an important green backdrop to the area and the wider city.

The more immediate setting is informed by the close-knit dense urban form of the intertwined enclosed historic streets with the river and 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?

- Medieval plan form conserved and legible despite changes in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.
- Surviving vennels, lanes and tenement/burgage plots of high historic interest.
- Archaeological importance of the area predating the occupation on the peninsula.
- Enclosed streets and spaces fundamental to the areas character and sense of place.
- Strong sense of historic identity with predominance of historic buildings over modern redevelopments and interventions.
- Architecturally rich and diverse historic townscape ranging from Georgian townhouse to simpler modest Victorian terraces.

- Number of historic landmarks such as Old Shire Hall, St Oswald Church, the Crown Court, HMP Durham and the Tithe Barn.
- Includes some of the oldest buildings in the city outside of the peninsula such as the medieval barns at the Prison Officers' Club, and St Oswald's Church probably the oldest of the city's parish churches.
- High number of listed heritage assets, and others that are non-designated heritage assets.
- Prevalence of traditional materials, period features and detailing to the historic buildings.
- The historic importance and aesthetic value of the hilly natural landscape features, and flatter riverside land.
- The significance in views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, historic landmarks, and high quality distinctive historic streetscapes.
- The high communal and social value of the Racecourse and streets relatable to events such as the Miners Gala first held in 1872.

3.1.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

The area has a high density and legible historic street pattern. It comprises a simple linear plan form conserved by the restrictions imposed by the topography, flood plain, landscape features and land use. Where later phases of development are introduced, they are not so disruptive to the historic layout, and in the case of the 19th and early 20th interventions, contributes positively. The overall plan form and layout is still representative of its detailed recording on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map c.1856-65.

Old Elvet is a wide impressive street with a spacious yet enclosed character. It has a wealth of fine Georgian facades presented as a strong building line on both sides. Where interruption occurs, it impacts positively, such as with the dramatic presence of Old Shire Hall, and the graceful Durham Crown Court with its semi-circular open space in front.

The courts and associated buildings with linking walls still reflect the linear character of the street despite being set back from the main street frontage. Behind the courts is HMP Durham occupying a substantial site that has a significant presence within the area, the prison walls providing strong forceful boundaries in the area with the Victorian accommodation blocks seen peeking above.

Durham Prison is an obviously a self-contained site unlike any other in the city, the main Victorian buildings are long linear connected blocks enclosed large courtyard spaces, with the later buildings laid out haphazardly around them.

The medieval “burgage” plot pattern survives, mainly on the north side of Old Elvet, north part of Church Street and within Hallgarth Street. This is characterised by buildings set back of pavement, with long narrow garden plots to the rear. However, some plots have been lost due to amalgamation resulting in the construction of wider buildings and backland development.

On the north side of Old Elvet there are two surviving vennels that are important components of the medieval fabric and framework of the city. Quarryheads Lane is an important surviving representative of a medieval routeway, where the sandstone for the building of Durham Cathedral was quarried.

At the north end of Old Elvet the 20th century road layout had a significant impact sweeping away many historic buildings and altering the medieval street pattern, yet the open aspect of the new road bridge created one the best views the castle and cathedral from within the city.

Fig 35 right. A selection of image showing the general street pattern, top 1, the fine spacious street of Old Elvet, middle 2, the busy road junction where the surviving historic buildings reinforce the sense of its former character before the road construction works, bottom 3, a surviving narrow historic vennel connecting Old Elvet to the riverside.



Fig 36 below. Territorial Lane looking towards the access point onto Old Elvet, the route enclosed by a mixture of buildings.



On the north side of Old Elvet, Territorial Lane breaks through the otherwise continuous street frontage. This is a short narrow enclosed space leading to the riverside but is important retaining its historic industrial riverside character. It is however blighted by the car park to the side of the former swimming baths site, while historically it has always been undeveloped the space is detracted by its means of enclosure and low quality temporary buildings occupying the site, and moving east is visually marred by the large car park to the rear of the hotel.

There are examples of modern infill developments within Old Elvet and while the quality of the elevation treatments offer nothing positive, they generally respond well to the historic layout, building lines, and domestic scale of the street.

Fig 37 below. A view north along New Elvet dominated by the modern mundane Elvet Riverside Development.



There are examples of ad-hoc back land development that goes against the historic grain, but this does not detract from the layout nor the overall quality of the streets and spaces.

New Elvet has lost much of its former medieval cohesiveness except at its northern end. This is evidenced by the narrow buildings set in long rectangular plots, with a strong building line, of a high density, wrapping around the corner onto Old Elvet Bridge. The redevelopments at the former Three Tuns Hotel, and the apartment building at Orchard House has restored some of that feeling by respecting the historic building line.

Despite being within the Peninsular and Riverbanks Conservation Area boundary the modern university riverside development has a strong presence within New Elvet. It has ignored the historic grain and offers nothing distinguished, turning its back to the street. Despite the above, overall, the historic layout of the street is preserved and legible.

Fig 38 below. A view of the access point off New Elvet to Elvet Crescent, which is more suburban in character.



The east side of New Elvet is punctured by the mid-20th century Elvet Crescent leading through to Court Lane, the Crown Court and Old Elvet. This is a distinctive pocket of social housing with a curving layout where the modest residential properties are set back behind frontage gardens that gives a spacious feeling to the street.

Court Lane is a short narrow and enclosed street of mixed character, yet seemingly intentionally designed so that the Courts are looked down upon by the Cathedral. It is detracted by the horizontal block and the private car park on the north side of the street.

The south end New Elvet rises steadily then splits into Church Street and Hallgarth Street. Church Street rises sharply at its north end before levelling off whereas Hallgarth Street is level throughout. Both streets exhibit similar layout characteristics of Old Elvet.

On the east side of Hallgarth Street are the medieval Priory farm buildings, the east side barn turning its gable to the street with the others forming a linear group orientated east-west. Here the boundary walls create an enclosed site, very obviously distinctive from its predominant modern residential surroundings.

Moving south along Church Street the built form becomes more fragmented with a mixture of terraced blocks, detached and semi-detached buildings. Some are set back from the main building line, this, and the gaps in the street frontage, signifying different phases of development, which adds to the streets diverse historic character.

Quarryheads Lane curves southwest from its junction with Stockton Road/South Road then north up towards Prebends Bridge Cottage. It is a wide street characterised by semi-detached and detached mid to late 20th century housing. These tend to be larger in scale than the domestic dwellings seen elsewhere, set in more spacious plots following the curving line of the road. The plan form here is important with the gaps between the buildings affording framed views of Durham Cathedral.

Church Street, Hallgarth Street and Stockton Road frame a large triangular shaped parcel of land behind, historically a series of undeveloped garden plots. This area was subsequently developed as housing in the mid-to-late 20th century. The plan form comprises an irregular zigzag of semi-detached buildings, staggered blocks of flats, with some short cul-de-sacs. They do not respond to the predominant historic layout of the area, but it has its own sense of place; the buildings set behind open green frontages supplemented by corner green amenity spaces.

Fig 39 right. A selection of images of the short, enclosed street of Court Lane (top), the architectural diverse line street at Church Street (middle), and Hallgarth Street a characterful stylishly curving terraced street (bottom).



Fig 40 below. A selection of images of the general street plan within the Stockton Road area showing semi-detached properties and the series of Victorian terraces fronting the main road or in linear blocks of a distinguishable character.



Church Street Head and turning eastwards onto Stockton Road is an area characterised by typical compact Victorian terraced housing. These comprise relatively short, terraced blocks either fronting the main carriageway such as High Wood Terrace, as side streets such as Boyd Street or set behind the main street frontage like High Wood Terrace.

These streets all present familiar street scenes of linear blocks with some forming interlocking grid patterns. Unlike other such terraces in the city many have from small front yards enclosed by brick walls at the back of the pavement.

They have typical rectangular plot sizes and shapes with narrow enclosed back lanes that create distinctive rear environments, and overall, they contribute positively to the evolution of the historic layout and character of the area.

The character area has a strong urban focus but nonetheless includes numerous areas of green space, including many green infrastructure assets that contribute positively to its character, visual appearance, and to the setting of the historic buildings.

There are a series of broad green infrastructure assets such as the general carriageway and footway verges found along Stockton Road, Quarryheads Lane, at the south end of New Elvet and at the west end of Old Elvet, some hosting trees, hedgerows, and planting. Added to these are the private gardens, carriageway verges and street trees along Quarryheads Lane. These features contribute positively to the visual amenity and suburban character of the street, creating a green corridor route.

The space around the junction of Hallgarth Street/Whinney Hill features an abundance of greenery. The A177 is another important green corridor route into the city from Shincliffe Village, which opens up to the landscaped roundabout, mature trees around the base of Mountjoy, and to the gardens to the front of Mountjoy Crescent. This area is of high visual amenity value providing an important natural contrast before moving into the denser city streets.

The more significant green infrastructure assets in this area includes the semi-circular area in front of Durham Crown Court.

A historic green space bounded by mature trees of high visual amenity value designed as part of the court complex in the 19th century. At the east end of Old Elvet the street turns onto the racecourse providing an important transition space between the urban and natural riverside environments. Here, the private rear gardens of the buildings lining Old Elvet can be seen, including the burgage plot pattern.

In Church Street the historic green spaces are found at St Oswald’s Church yard and cemetery. These spaces have a semi-rural character in the context of the street frontage providing a positive contrast and natural break within the busy urban street. The trees within the front part of the churchyard are important features but are reducing views of the church. The rear of the churchyard has a woodland and wilderness like character blending into the riverbanks where there are important historic routes to the river and peninsula.

In positive contrast the cemetery attached to St Oswald Primary School is a more formal green space. It has been reorganised so that headstones have been moved to provide a play area for children.

Along the north side of Church Street and Quarryheads Lane there is a series of historic lanes that are informal and enclosed by greenery creating intimate pedestrian routes.

While not specifically contained within the character area there are significant green features that are important to the areas setting, these are the dense riverbanks woodland in the west, the open flat floodplain lane of racecourse in the east, Mountjoy and Whinney Hill in the south. As references in the overview documents the surrounding hilly and mature woodland creates a green “wall” backdrop to this part of the city, supplemented at close range by the woodland on eastern loop of the peninsula riverbanks.

Fig 41 below. An aerial map and selection of images showing examples of green assets that contribute positively to the character, appearance, and distinctiveness of the character area.

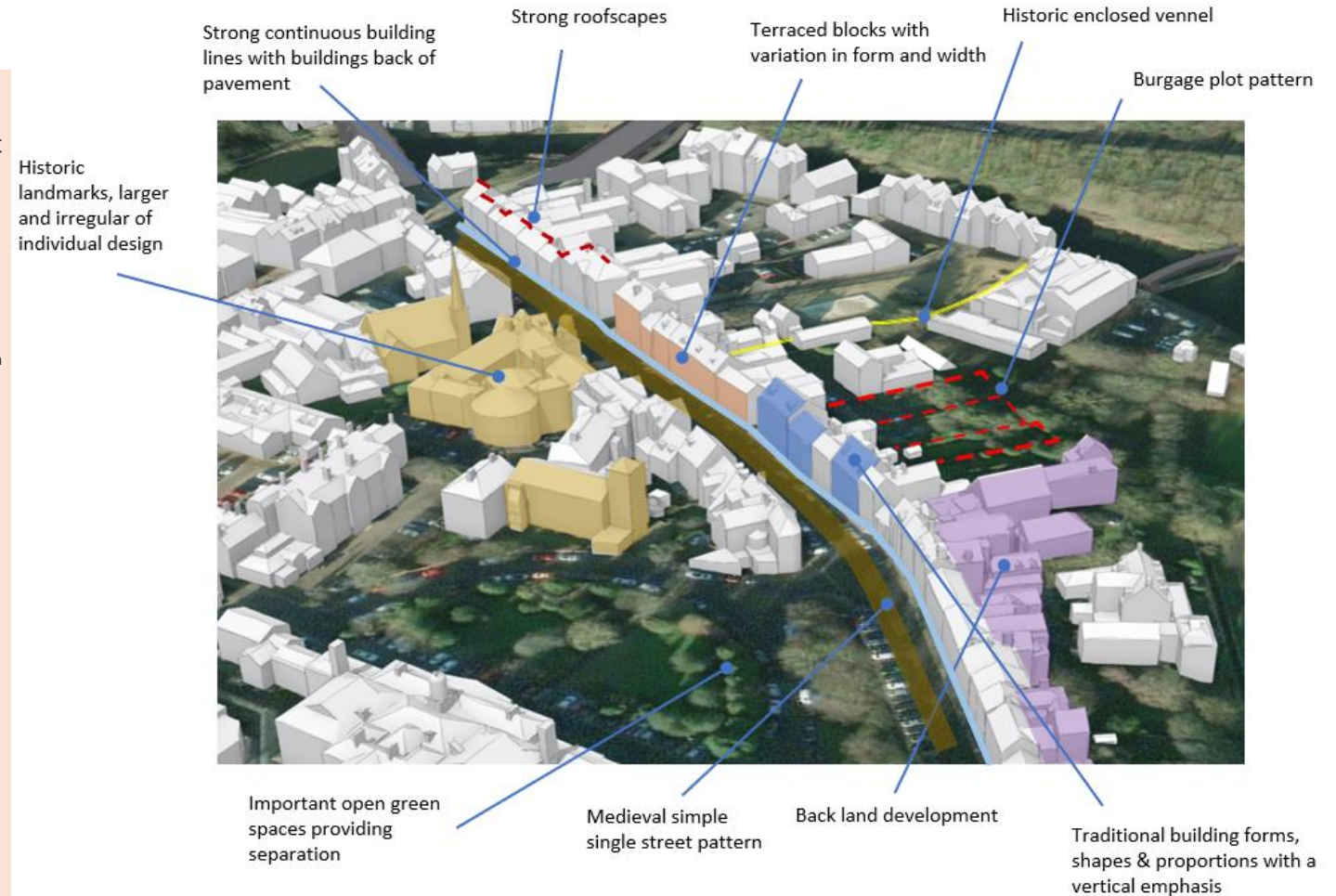


Layout, streets, and spaces - positive characteristics and identity that contribute to the area's special interest.

Key attributes (typology 1)

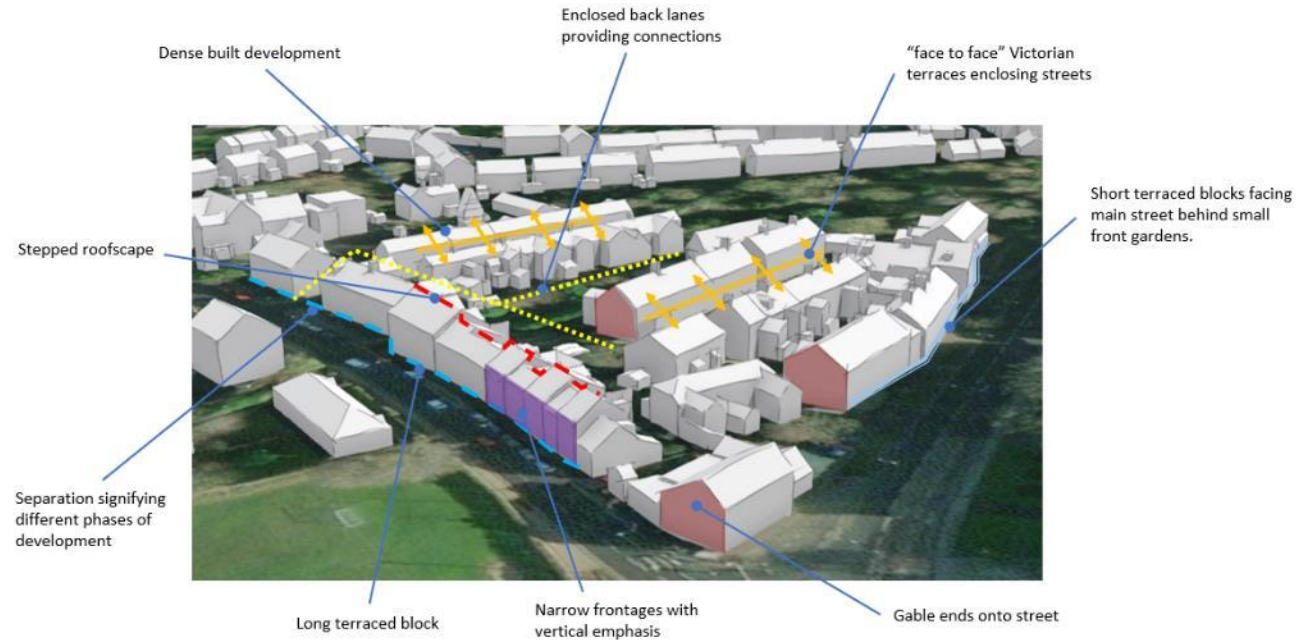
- High density with active street frontages.
- Simple medieval street pattern and layout that is preserved and legible.
- Surviving historic burgage plot pattern some amalgamated creating wider building frontages.
- Surviving historic vennels, routes, and 19th century back lanes.
- Buildings mostly pressed tight up against the back edge of the pavements creating enclosure and intimate character.
- Mostly, continuous unbroken terraced building lines.
- Where buildings do not conform to the prevalent building line this is by design creating landmarks.
- Different phases of development with legible consistency between blocks expressing the built environments evolution over the centuries.

Fig 42 below. A series of 3D modelling demonstrating the key positive attributes of the character area by typology.



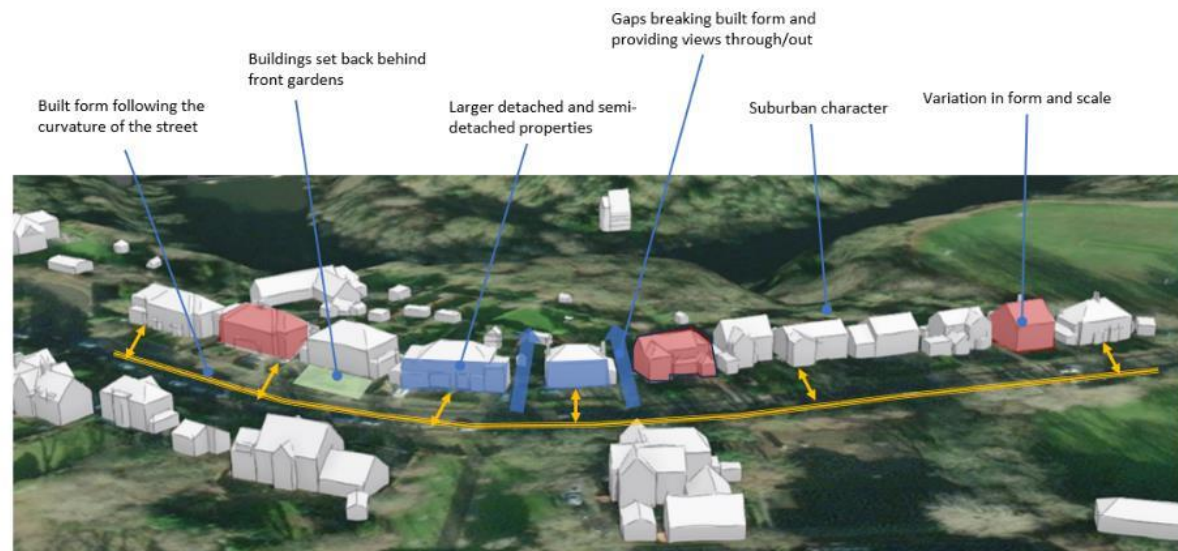
Key attributes (typology 2)

- High density compact terraced blocks.
- Linear street patterns, face-to-face and back to back with continuous frontages.
- Enclosed back lanes provided connections to neighbouring terraces and streets.
- Generally uniformed.
- Characterised by modest scales, simple shapes and forms, and vertical emphasis.
- Recognisable differences between some blocks signifying evolution of built form.



Key attributes (typology 3)

- High density compact terraced blocks.
- Linear street patterns, face to face and back to back with continuous frontages.
- Enclosed back lanes provided connections to neighbouring terraces and streets.
- Generally uniformed.
- Characterised by modest scales, simple shapes and forms, and vertical emphasis.
- Recognisable differences between some blocks signifying evolution of built form.



3.1.3 Architectural styles, form, and detailing.

The architectural character in this area is rich and varied, and of high quality recognised by the significant number of listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. The buildings range from the medieval barns to fine Georgian townhouses, and uniformed Victorian terraces. Further interest is created by the different uses; residential, a commercial concentration at the Old Elvet and New Elvet junction, places of worship, educational, public houses, and hotels, fundamental to the areas character and appearance.

A range of building scales and heights are present, from one to three storeys, and forms range from the simple to more complex. Aside from the church towers and Old Shire Hall, Old Elvet and the north end of Church Street are generally lined by three storey buildings with lower two storey buildings predominant elsewhere. The contrasts in building heights with stepped ridge and eaves levels and variations in the width of frontages along with the introduction of individually designed buildings, which break up the grain, contributes very positively to the areas character and sense of place.

Many buildings date from the 17th and 18th centuries, but some may incorporate even earlier fabric, including timber-framing. Some buildings were rebuilt or remodelled in the 19th century evidenced by irregularities in the elevations.

Many buildings in the area exhibit classic Georgian characteristics with square symmetrical shapes, carefully proportioned and well balanced facades. Common features include plinths, quoins, floor bands, and other dressings, timber sash windows with different glazing patterns predominantly multi-paned, tripartite sashes, and some limited examples of Yorkshire sliding sashes, timber panel doors in doorcases, ashlar wedge lintels, old brick lintels, windows with chamfered surrounds, canted and oriel bays. Walls are a mixture of render and exposed facing brick often handmade, with the roofs mainly of Welsh slate.

Added to the above are the later phases of Victorian expansion in the form of terraced housing dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that display typical characteristics of the period. They are generally of a modest 2 storeys and 2 bays with red brick frontages and pitched slate roofs. The roof lines punctured by chimneys, whilst windows would have historically been 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 timber sliding sashes, with door treatments of 4 and 6 panels. However, many such windows and door styles have been lost to unsympathetic modern alternatives along with some roof covering materials.

Common detailing included eaves corbels, flat arched brick lintels, painted stone sills, crown chimney pots, while along Church Street Head full height canted bay windows and oriel windows are commonplace.

The notable exceptions to the above are at High Wood View where some historic sashes are preserved in a more distinctive 4-over-1 style. The properties at Gladstone Villas meanwhile have unique decorative common porches, while Mountjoy Crescent is noteworthy for being of a different stone construction with a rhythm of dual pitched roofed dormers, narrow 1-over-1 mullioned sash windows, and elaborate shared stone door hoods with brackets.

Of significance is the elegant, curving terrace of properties on the east side of Hallgarth Street. These date from c.1840 built from brick with ashlar dressings, each two storey - two bays with steps up to panelled front doors in doorcases, multi-paned sash windows, and eaves corbels some with rare surviving wooden guttering and brackets.

In Church Street there are two stand out buildings of note Nos 8 and 9, a pair of matching houses of the 1860s distinctive from their plainer neighbours presenting a grand terrace with elaborate detailing.

Fig 43 below. A selection of images showing the different ages and architectural styles of buildings within the character area.



There are three buildings constructed for religious use: the Church of St Oswald's, Elvet Methodist Church and the Church of St Cuthbert and the attached Presbytery.

St Oswald's is a significant ancient landmark, an Anglo-Saxon sculpture suggests an earlier date and likely the site of St Cuthbert community and the first timber church from which the cathedral was established. It was extensively rebuilt in the early 19th century by renowned architect Ignatius Bonomi. It is constructed from coursed square sandstone with ashlar dressings, has a prominent 4-stage tower, strong buttresses, a battlemented parapet, and a mixture of Tudor arched, perpendicular, and larger stained glass windows. The Vicarage has a mid-Victorian appearance that belies the fact it is a complex building dating back to the 17th century. In contrast to St Oswald's, the church of St Cuthbert occupies a quiet corner in Old Elvet. It dates from 1826-27, again by Ignatius Bonomi, in a distinctive Perpendicular style.

Historically Durham City boasted a significant number of hotels, inns, and public houses along key routes and at stopping points for the stagecoaches that operated throughout the city. There are a number of such historic buildings in this area, The Court Inn, The Royal County Hotel, The Three Tuns, The Half Moon, The City, The Dun Cow, and The Victoria Inn. These are all distinctive buildings with their own individual style and character. Added to the above is Old Shire Hall, sensitively converted to a hotel in 2018.

Old Shire Hall was originally a public building (former County Council offices) built in 1896-8, of distinctive bright red engineering brick with terracotta dressings in a Baroque style, it has a dramatic presence in the street with its copper dome visible in the wider townscape.

Noteworthy to the rear of Old Shire Hall is The Cathedrals, a distinctive detached building of high architectural quality. It was originally a public house dating from the mid to late 19th century, converted to apartments with the character preserved. It comprises of two storeys of red brick with prominent Dutch gables and fine stone details, with a strong sense of balance and elegance to the façade.

The Dun Cow, on the outside is a simple but characterful smaller two storey rendered building unusual in preserving an entry from the passageway to its left-hand-side, it is said to be the city's oldest public house dating back to the 17th century.

The Royal County Hotel is a well know landmark comprises four separate residential properties of the 18th century. They provide a single parallel block to the street, but while the individual buildings are recognisable, part has been removed by the 20th century car park access. They are all rendered, and features include sash windows, oriel bays, timber doors in pedimented door case, ornamental cast iron balcony, eaves cornice, moulded window surrounds.

The building has a significant and dignified presence on the corner of the street. An important architectural feature with added interest is the balcony, a focal point in the street during the Miners Gala parade that developed out of the miner's trade unionism, the first union established in 1869.

A standout building further to the east along Old Elvet is the Masonic Hall of 1868, modest in scale but highly distinctive in the street owing to its elaborate and unique free Gothic detailing. It is of a stone constructed with patterned slate roof.

The Crown Court, staff locker rooms to the west side, the Governor's House to the east side, and HMP Durham form a distinctive group unlike any other in the city. The historic buildings behind the prison walls comprise of four linked prisoner accommodation wings and detached private chapel. The Crown Court dates from c.1811 by George Money Penny and Ignatius Bonomi, in a distinctive Italianate style.

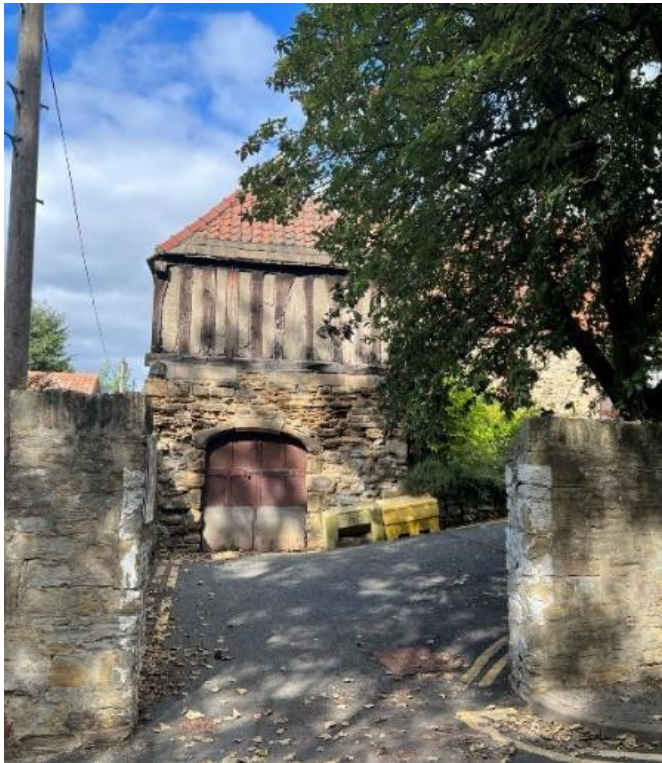
The prison is a unique and distinctive site within the city, the form and style of the older accommodation blocks dictated by their function. They date from 1850 by Bonomi and Cory, are four storeys in height and of 11 bays constructed from coursed squared sandstone with a rhythm of small, barred windows, the tall brick ventilation stacks notable features in the surrounding townscape.

Fig 44 below. A selection of images showing examples of the moder distinctive individually designed buildings that add to the architectural richness and townscape character of the area.



Southwest from the prison complex is the Tithe Barn and two other barns forming a distinctive and rare surviving farm group in the heart of the city centre. They were part of the Cathedral Priory Farm and are medieval in date of a sandstone rubble construction with ashlar dressings, stone slates, and pantile roofs. Notably, the Tithe Barn’s timber frame with brick noggins is exposed externally, adding to only a handful of such timber framed buildings that survive in the city centre.

Fig 45 below. An image of the medieval Tithe Barn.



In terms of the 20th century buildings, Orchard House is a substantial apartment building on the street frontage of New Elvet. While neutral in its contribution, it responds positively to the historic building line and scale of the neighbouring built form, and its elevation treatment respects the local vernacular with its vertical balance.

Elvet Crescent has a mixed style and character, commercial to the New Elvet street frontage, and residential behind. The frontage buildings comprise two storeys of red brick with hipped roofs and are distinctive with their mock timber framework to the first floors. The residential dwellings are again two storeys with red brick ground floors and rendered first floors including brick floor band and opening detailing, below hipped red pantile roofs.

The modern properties at Oswald Court and The Hallgarth are unremarkable and of their time. All of these buildings make a neutral contribution.

Of further note is the small group of properties at Church Lane; they are hidden behind Nos 10-18 Church Street. They are one storey with steeply pitched roofs, have rendered elevations with brick plinths, entrance columns, and face green open space. The back street area has its own charm and sense of place contributing positively.

At Elvet Waterside the character is very mixed dominated by the modern riverside apartment building of a staggered form with contrasting gabled, hipped, and asymmetrical roofs and

ordered fenestration. Despite being modern they generally reflect the historic industrial character that once dominated the riverside. Adjacent are two surviving Victorian industrial buildings where the original character has been preserved in the residential conversions.

In stark contrast the south side of the street is dominated by the lower quality modern rear blocks of the Royal County Hotel that bridge over the road to a riverside extension.

A short distance eastwards is the former City of Durham Public Swimming Baths. It is a large and distinctive inter-war building with a municipal facade and elements of detailing. Unfortunately, it is a long term disused, vandalised, and deteriorating building.

There has been some positive contemporary development in the area, at the Three Tuns Hotel there is a successful contemporary infill of the former open car park, with design cues drawn from the local vernacular supplemented by a metal clad set back linking element. To the side/rear of the 18th century No 33 Church Street the late 20th century extensions have been replaced with traditional render and brick extension stepping down to a contemporary flat roof stone and glazed corner element, which has positively regenerated a prominent space.

Fig 46 below. The contemporary infill development at the former Three Tunns Hotel successfully completing the streetscene and an extension at 31-33 Church Street.



The type of materials utilised within the historic buildings in the area make a valuable contribution to its distinctiveness and sense of place. The variation in material age, type, texture, colour, and tone, adds high aesthetic interest that contributes very positively. Materials are also important in creating a sense of history, and in reflecting changes in fashion and taste as well as reflecting building status.

The main historic streets are characterised by a traditional material palette. There is a mixture of light coloured render with incised, smooth, and roughcast finishes visible, exposed handmade facing brickwork mainly of dark red brown but with some examples of lighter toned brickwork, and the stronger red engineering brickwork to the Victorian terraced properties. Several original brick elevations have been painted over but in Old Elvet this is not detrimental given the facade material variation.

There are examples of sandstone seen at the Church's, Vicarage, Durham Prison Officers' Club, and Courts in varied coursing. Stone and brick are commonly used for detailing such as quoins, floor banding, eaves corncing, door and window heads and sills, and plinths. The modern developments tend to have blander brickwork in red, light, and dark brown colours.

uPVC characterises the residential properties at Oswald Court, The Hallgarth, and Elvet Crescent, in such places this material causes no harm these areas being modern and neutral contributors.

Welsh slate is the dominant roof covering material, although there are examples of traditional Lakeland slate, red and brown pantiles, these are variety and visual interest into the roofscape, but the lower quality replacement concrete tiles detract. Notably 54-56 Hallgarth Street retains several courses of stone slates.

Material Palette



Architectural Detailing Palette



Doors are highly varied but are consistent in terms of traditional timber painted doors being prevalent in Old Elvet, Church Street and Hallgarth Street. Some of the Victorian terraced properties such as Church Street Head, Gladstone Villas and Mountjoy Crescent retain a high proportion of timber doors. But uPVC and composite doors tend to be more commonplace within the other Victorian streets, and along Quarryheads Lane.

The traditional timber doors are generally solid with a variety of paint colour finishes adding visual interest. The most common styles are panelled doors of different configurations, but there are some notable bespoke designs, and some with intricate mouldings.

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

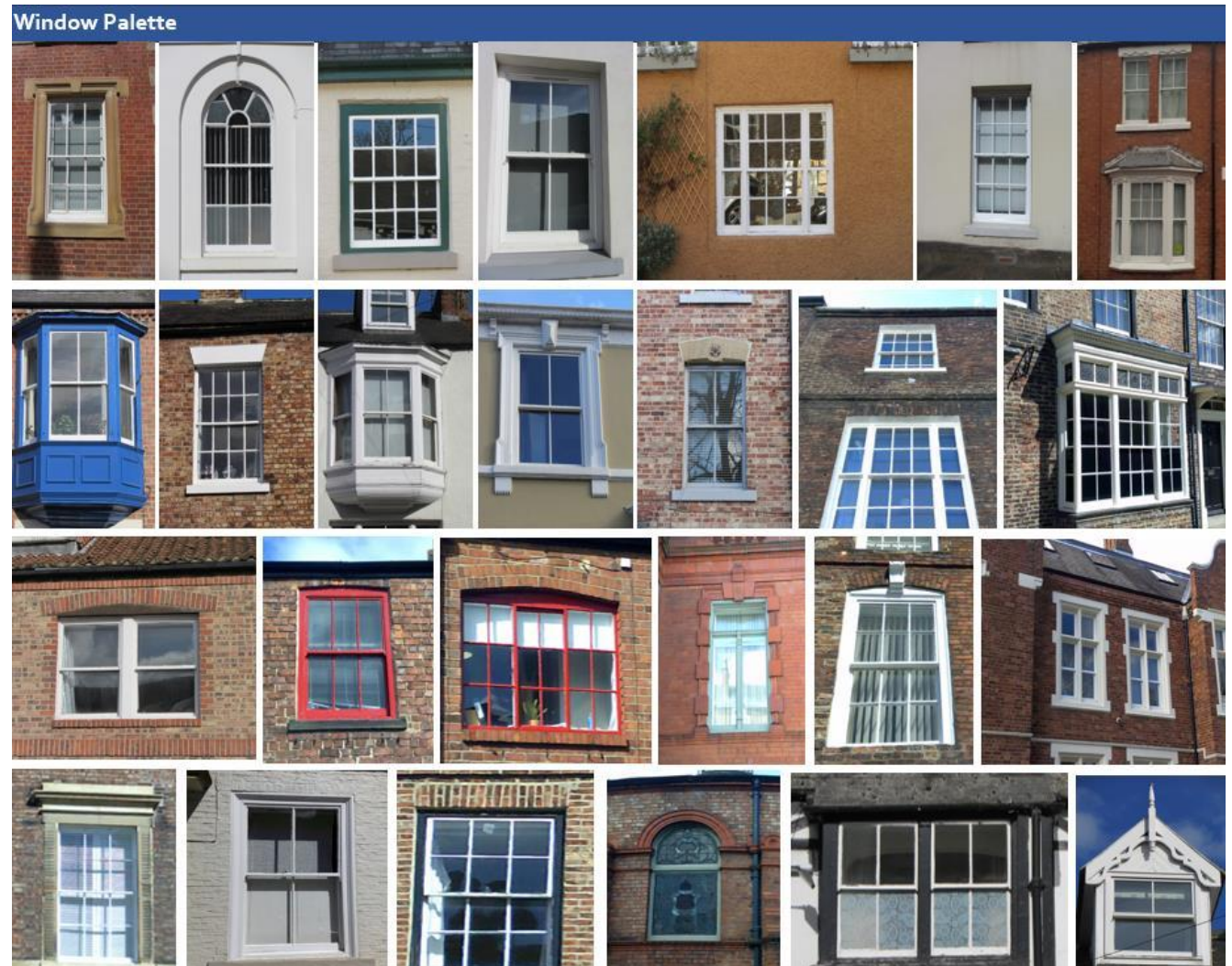
Door cases are commonplace with brackets and hoods, some more elaborate in style than others.



Traditional timber painted sliding sash windows are the predominant window style places such as Old Elvet, Church Street, Hallgarth Street, and Church Street Head, but uPVC windows tends to be more prevalent within the other Victorian properties.

Windows are mostly in typical Georgian and Victorian period configurations of 2-over-2, 3-over-3, 6-over-6, and 8-over-8 glazing patterns. There are some more distinctive windows including arched, tripartite, leaded, and industrial. Bay windows are fairly commonplace with oriels, and full height canted bays visible in certain streets.

Windows often have either stone painted lintels and sills, in flat and wedge shapes, or brick headers, and there are some examples of more elaborate opening surrounds.



Roofscape

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

The roofscape is almost exclusively of traditional dual pitches of different degrees, eaves, and ridge levels, with the rooflines punctured by chimneys. The chimneys vary in dimensions and are mostly built from brick and have brick band detailing and pots. In some places traditional dormers are an integral part of the buildings original architectural design that adds further variety and visual interest into the roofscape. There are a couple of examples of modern flat roofed style dormers that are more incongruous being out of keeping with the type and historic character of their host.

There are some positive skyline interruptions, the tall spire of Elvet Methodist Church, the tower of St Oswald's Church, and the bright red tower with its copper dome at Old Shire Hall; such features add to the architectural richness and visual interest of the rooflines. Consistency can be seen within the Victorian terraced blocks, where the typical roofscape is pitched roofs running the length of the terrace united by detailing and regularity of chimney stacks.

The contribution of the modern developments to the roofscape is mixed, the domestically scaled residential infill developments tend to respect the prevalent traditional roof forms, and the stepped pattern assimilate well into the roofscape. However, there are some examples of larger flat roofed blocks that are out of character. Unlike the earlier terraced housing the properties at Elvet Crescent have relatively shallow hipped roofs, stepped in pairs, with overhanging eaves that adds some interest. In the small modern residential estates such as Oswald Court and The Hallgarth, because of the deeper plan of the buildings they typically have larger roofs but positively again have overhanging eaves and short chimney stacks.

The roofscape is experienced on two levels: intimately within the individual streets and in broader terms in views from higher surrounding ground seen at a distance. This is mostly from specific locations in Gilesgate and Claypath, where there is a tumbling of roofs cascading down to riverside level set against the hilly woodland backdrop. These views are of high value with notable features including the clock tower to the Crown Court, and the tall brick ventilation stacks to the prison accommodation blocks, the dome to Old Shire Hall and the church spires.

Fig 47 below. A close up view of the roofscape along part of Old Elvet with positive interjections in the form of landmarks such as the church spires and copper dome of Hotel Indigo, formerly Old Shire Hall.





An image demonstrating how the different architectural styles, materials, and detailing combine to create one of the most architecturally impressive streetscapes within Durham City.

Shopfronts

The character area has an important concentration of commercial buildings around the road junction of Old Elvet, New Elvet and Elvet Bridge, with others intermingled on the main streets. The majority of these buildings have good quality historic or traditionally designed shopfronts that make a positive contribution to the streetscene. While they vary in appearance, they have unifying characteristics of traditional proportions, vertically emphasised shop window often with glazing bars, recessed entrance doorways, suitably scaled fascia's above, framing provided by pilasters often with decorative corbels, and grounding via stallrisers.

There is a notable short parade of historic shop fronts on the south side of Old Elvet. No 1 on the corner with New Elvet has a shop front of the early 20th century whereas Nos 2-3 form a long block of 4 bays each containing a late 19th century or early 20th century timber shop front of uniformed design.

No 17 Hallgarth Street has a historic shopfront dating back to the late 19th century, while No 14 Church Street has a 19th century shop front that is more distinctive on account of the brick infill and detailing. The Victoria public house on the west side of Hallgarth Street has a frontage of c.1889 comprising bright red brick rising from a contrasting buff sandstone plinth, and including sandstone dressings, and well as a carved panel of the door depicting the head of Queen Victoria.

On the east side of New Elvet there is a parade of four small timber shop fronts. While these are modern, they are positive contributors to the streetscene owing to their simple traditional design, but two are visually detracted by too much clutter within the shop windows.

In contrast, the further away on the corner of Stockton Road and Church Street Head, the White Church has a simple rendered frontage with traditional hand painted letter signs.

Hanging signs are commonplace, mostly traditionally designed, held in position by simple black metal brackets. Fascia's tend to comprise of either individually applied lettering or flat panels with applied lettering and generally sympathetic, but there are some examples of boxy modern aluminium fascia's that detract from the visual appearance of the streetscene. A number of the traditional signs are illuminated that is appropriate given the night use with subtle external illuminated sources appropriate.

Fig 48 below. Examples of traditional shopfronts that add visual interest to the streetscene.



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

- Distinctive high quality historic buildings of different periods and architectural styles.
- Rich townscape resulting from the architectural diversity of form, style, scale, massing, and materiality.
- Important groupings of Georgian townhouses and Victorian properties.
- High level of architectural detailing, decoration, and intactness.
- Legible variation from place to place with own historic identity informed by period architectural styles.
- Significant buildings of individual designs reflective of historic use and status, some notable landmarks.

Negative elements (sites/buildings)

Within the character area, three sites/buildings are identified as detracting from its historic character and appearance;

Palmers Garth, Hatfield College, Hallgarth Street – a mid to late 20th century large unrelieved single block form with flat roof, varied and fussy fenestration and low quality brown brick walling.



Elvet House, Hallgarth Street – mid to late 20th century long one storey block to the street frontage that is set well back from the main building line, flat roofed with no redeeming features.



Former public swimming baths car park - there is one detracting gap site identified, this being to the west side of the former City Swimming Baths. While historically it has always been undeveloped it adversely impacts upon the visual amenity of the area on account of the harsh timber boundary fencing and low quality temporary cabin style buildings that are visible from the public domain.



Fig 49 left and above. Negative buildings at Palmer's Garth, Elvet House and cabin style buildings at Elvet Waterside.

Negative elements (alterations)

The historic buildings within Old Elvet, the south part of Church Street, and at Hallgarth 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. However, there are some notable detractors.

At Nos 81-83 New Elvet, the front block dates back to the 18th century. However, the ground floors were entirely removed, and modern commercial frontages introduced in the later part of the 20th century that detracts from the historic character and overall quality of the elevation as a whole.

At Anchorage Terrace and in streets such as Boyd Street, Mavin Street, High Wood Terrace, High Wood View and Church Street Head, there is a visually obvious loss of traditional materials and features such as windows and doors, replaced with unsympathetic uPVC alternatives.

There are some examples of intrusive dormers, one original red brick terraced property has imitation stone cladding that impacts very negatively. There is one property that has solar panels on the front roofslope, that is visually jarring within the roofscape, and examples of original brick chimney stacks being lowered. Such issues detract from the character and visual appearance of the individual properties and the uniformity of the terraced street frontages.

Commercial frontages at Elvet Crescent are all modern, they are different in style and mostly made from aluminium with one or two neutral contributors, the others have an adverse impact on visual amenity owing to the visual clutter, lower quality fascia signage and garish colour schemes.

Fig 50 below. A selection of images showing examples of negative alterations, uPVC windows and doors, partly demolished chimney stacks, flat roofed dormers, a modern shop front in garish colours.



3.1.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

This character area has three key gateway points off New Elvet Bridge in the north, the A177 in the south, and South Road in the southwest. The main roads in the north and south are part of the 20th century road bypass development that has unfortunately led to busy traffic intruding through the area, the effect obviously increased during peak times. In places it can be a very busy and noisy environment with vehicles and pedestrians congregating at a number of stopping points. Added to this there are bus stops and some on-street parking provision that adds vehicle clutter into the narrower streets of Church Steet and Hallgarth Street. While Old Elvet is wider and more spacious, parked vehicles can still clutter and detract from the overall historic character and visual appearance of the place.

The junction of Stockton Road/South Road/Church Street Head tends to receive the highest amount of activity due to the converging of four main roads. Given the narrowness of the pavements in some parts of Church Street there can be conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

The junction of New Elvet, Old Elvet and Elvet Bridge is most often a busy environment affected by high vehicle usage, including buses, with noise and pollution that is intrusive but unavoidable. Old Elvet tends to be quieter and residential in character moving east-west but is still affected by through traffic and on-street parking, in some places it is more prominent and visually detracting such as in front of Old Shire Hall and the Crown Court. Due to the presence of the public houses, hotels, and commercial properties this junction point can be particularly busy on weekends and at nighttime with revellers, which adds to the vibrancy and vitality of the area.

At the west end of Old Elvet the footways turn onto the riverside providing a positive shift in character to the tranquillity of the riverside environment that is a pedestrian focused environment. Likewise, there are some narrow pedestrian only quieter informal lanes on the west side of Church Street, through St Oswald’s Church Churchyard and on the south side of Quarryheads Lane that connect to the peninsula riverbanks footpath network.

Fig 51 below. A selection of images showing the busy Elvet junction, and the impact of parked cars in Old Elvet and near Durham Crown Court cluttering the space.

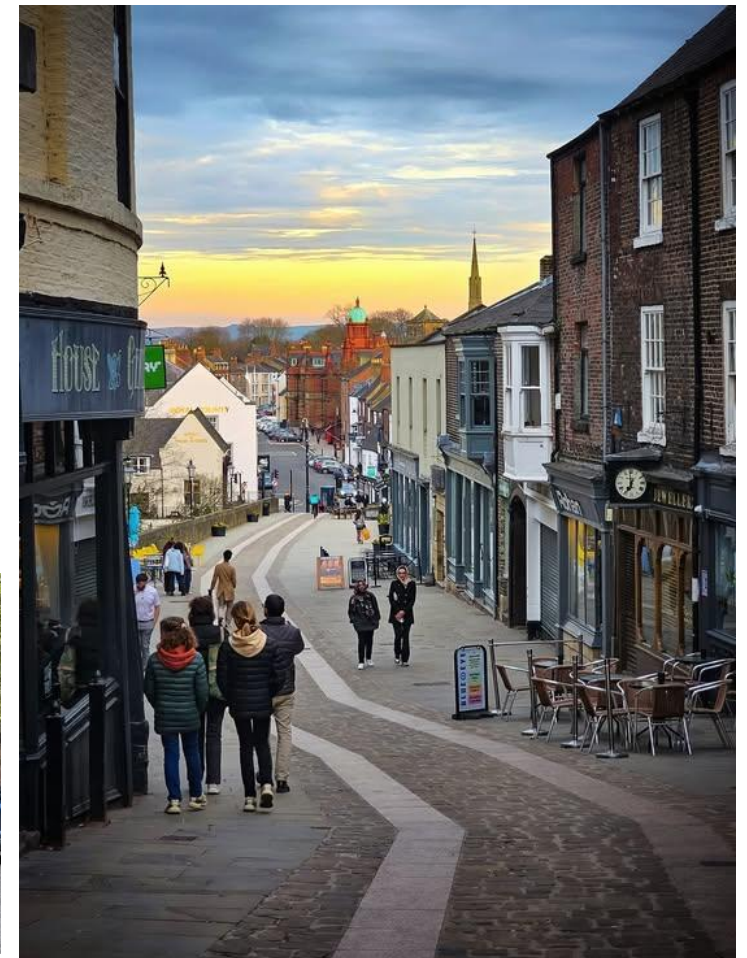


The route of Stockton Road provides a valuable connection between places such as the university campus, science park, Houghall College and Maiden Castle sports complex. It is also part of the 20th road improvement programme and as such can be very busy. Visually it is dominated by the Palatine Centre that overpowers the Victorian dwellings on the opposite side of the road, with the telecommunications mast and base equipment visually incongruous in the street scene.

Moving westwards Quarryheads Lane can be just as busy. But owing to spacious feel, abundance of greenery, lower density development, and its suburban character, provides a pleasant pedestrian experience, despite the noise intrusion from passing traffic.

Overall, and despite some weaknesses, the area provides a range of different positive pedestrian experiences, and contrasting ambiances, busy, vibrant, and often congested along the main streets and junction points, with quieter domestic side and back streets, and a more peaceful atmosphere moving into the riverside environment. There are many strong historic streetscapes and individual buildings that draw the eye in a positive way.

Fig 52 below. A selection of images showing the car dominated Hallgarth Street, the area in front of the Crown Court, and the pedestrian connection at Old Elvet Bridge between Elvet and the peninsula.



Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

Within Old Elvet and New Elvet most places are surfaced with standard materials of concrete

flagged footpaths in different sized modules, with concrete kerbs and tarmac carriageways. The positive exceptions being in front of Old Shire Hall and Territorial Lane where areas of light red paving flags can be found that enlivens the visual appearance. At the junction of New Elvet and Elvet Bridge there is the positive use of traditional Yorkstone paving and stone setts appropriate to the historic character. The area around the Courts has a traditional surface palette of small stone sets in a distinctive laying pattern with larger sets used as an interface material with the carriageway tarmac, although the condition is poor in places.

At the top end (south) of New Elvet at its junction with Hallgarth Street there is a very distinctive area of floorscape comprising of small granite sets in a radial fan-like laying pattern. In front of the commercial properties at Elvet Crescent the floorscape is modern but has been well designed as a positive piece of public realm.

The standard material palette continues into Church Street, the notable exception being the traditional cobbled surfacing found at Church Lane and the small areas of cobbles laid in front of the modern apartment block (Nos 19-21). The condition of the footways is variable with some noticeable areas that have a high amount of cracked paving flags.

The on street parking bays are particularly degraded, and at Church Street Head some paving flags have been replaced in black tarmac giving a poor patched appearance.

The footways at Hallgarth Street are mixed, in the north there is a standardised palette of a mix-matched appearance unbefitting of the historic character of the street. But in the south part stone paving and river cobbles can be found up against the building frontages that is positive. The carriageway is of red chipped tarmac that is aesthetically higher than the standard black, but it is detracted by some deterioration and long central channel repair.

The hidden side street of Mavin Street retains a traditional surface treatment of river cobbles, granite set and stone edging and small stone paving. However, the condition is poor that worsens moving towards the terraced properties where there is no formal carriageway, and the stone footways are seriously deteriorated.

There are some areas of positive traditional floorscape found in the alleyway next to the Victoria public house. This is of a distinctive granite material with a pink-hue laid in a fan shaped laying pattern. Mavin Street has a fine traditional floorscape of stone pavements, stone sets, and river cobbles, but the condition is very poor.

Standardised materials are used around Mountjoy Crescent, along Stockton Road through Quarryheads Lane, within the residential side and back streets. However, of note is High Wood View where red brick detailing has been introduced to break up the carriageway and as edging to the pavements. Of importance along Stockton Road and Quarryheads Lane are the green roadside verges that break up and soften the effect of the hard surfacing.

The overall quality and condition of the street surfacing palette is mixed. The use of traditional materials and distinctive laying patterns contributes positively. But the surfacing treatments are noticeably poor in some specific places resulting from insensitive material replacement and repairs giving a patchwork visual appearance, locations where the material is badly degraded, and where paving flags are broken, and uneven.

The busy junction at Old and New Elvet is visually detracted by the high level of street furniture in a concentrated area, including service boxes, bollards, litter bins, CCTV column, traffic lights, and pole signs. The visual impact is elevated as the medieval character here remains strong despite the through road.

Moving through Old Elvet there is only a limited amount of street furniture until reaching Old Shire Hall where the street becomes cluttered by highway and parking associated items.

Surfaces Palette

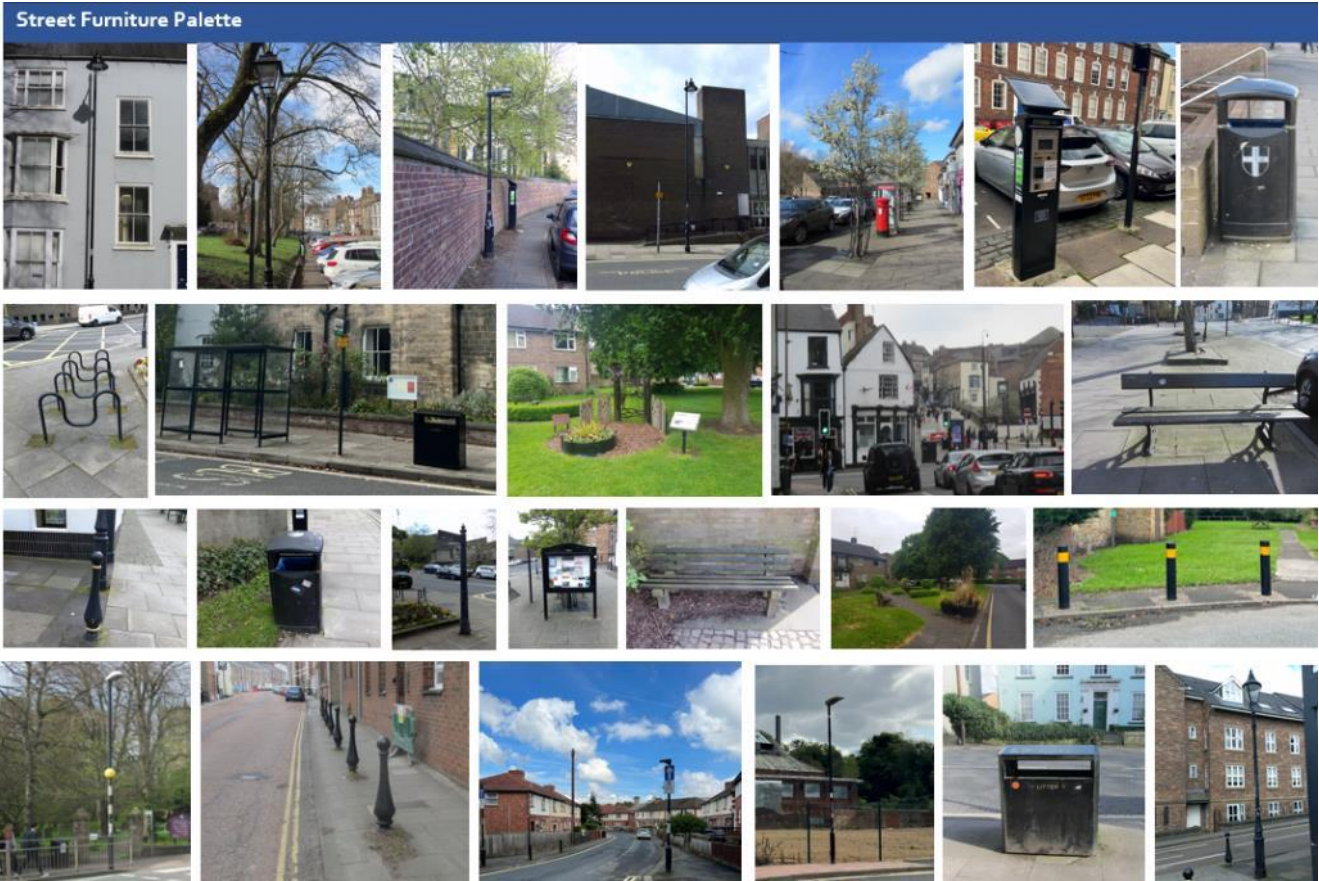


In New Elvet, bollards, railings, a bus stop, lighting columns, bins, and service boxes, pole mounted traffic and parking signs, line the street in an ad-hoc manner, and the street is adversely cluttered in front of Elvet Riverside 1 & 2. In contrast in front of Elvet Crescent there is a well-designed public realm scheme comprising of a wide paved area hosting seat, bins, bollards, cycle racks and street trees, which impacts positively.

Hallgarth Street is blighted by the frontage of Elvet House where there are visually intrusive railings, a barrier, an excessive number of bollards and proliferation of signs, the rest of the street is uncluttered which is positive. Church Street features the occasional bollard, bin, and bus stop, and is generally clutter free until reaching the school where the street is visually detracted by modern safety railings, additional road markings, traffic, and parking signs.

At the junction of Church Street Head, South Road, Stockton Road and Quarryheads Lane, there is a proliferation of street items, highway and directional signs, and lighting columns, which creates adverse visual clutter. The street furniture at Oswald Court includes public art, interpretation, seating, and planters, which enhances the public realm.

The streets feature standard modern street lighting columns of different designs and with different black and brown paint colour finishes most do not reflect the historic character, but there are limited examples of Victorian style lantern units that are more in keeping with the street scene.



Many of the buildings are pressed up against the back edge of the pavement and so have no front curtilages and therefore no boundary treatments. However the area still has an assortment of boundary treatments, historic and modern, that make a positive contribution.

Historic stone walls can be found around Elvet Methodist Church, St Cuthberts RC Church, St Oswald's Church, and Cemetery. There are distinctive bright red brick balustrades with ornate decoration at Old Shire Hall, and the vennels at Old Elvet are enclosed by historic stone and brick walls. There are some examples of fine ironmongery such as at the DLI Offices, the Methodist Church, and at the Crown Courts. Here there are low stone walls incorporating tall piers and a wrought iron lamp holder overthrow to the main gates.

In Old Elvet there are some surviving examples of traditional metal railings and in Church Street historic stone and brick walls can be seen all along the street. The rear plots at Old Elvet are enclosed by historic garden walls that are of significance.

The prison walls obviously have a very dramatic impact within the area, and there are important surviving historic stone walls enclosing the medieval barns.

Along Stockton Road the Victorian and Edwardian terraced properties are characterised by small front curtilages enclosed by red brick walls with piers. Of note are the stone walls, heavy stone piers and metal gates to the front of Mountjoy Crescent.

Boundaries in the form of red brick walls enclose the rear yards and back streets to the Victorian terraces in the area that are part of their original design. At Quarryheads Lane boundaries add to the streets suburban character comprising of a mixture of hedgerows, stone walls, timber fencing, and modern brick walls that enclose the front gardens and driveways.

The boundary treatments found in the area are important as many constitute historic fabric, they reinforce the historic linear plan form and help create the sense of enclosure. There are sections of stone walls with evidence of formerly hosting metal railings that would benefit from reinstatement, and in some limited places boundaries have been removed that impacts negatively. The timber fencing erected around the former car park at Elvet Waterside is visually detracting appearing very stark in its local context.



Fig 53 above. An image of the stark timber fencing along Territorial Lane, and the rear of Gladstone Villas where historic back yard walls have been removed impacting negatively.

Palette of Boundary Treatments



3.1.5 Visual experiences

The area has a unique position in the city centre on the east side of the River Wear from the peninsula and on the west from the lower undeveloped land of the floodplain. This combined with the medieval pattern and the hills that contain the urban form creates a number of impressive views.

The views evolve and change with movement through the character area. For example within Old Elvet the enclosure of the street creates an intimate inwards character dominated by the fine Georgian townhouses, with the dramatic introduction of Old Shire Hall an eye catcher in the streetscene. In contrast at the east end of the street it opens up to scenic riverside views, and glimpses of Durham Cathedral.

At Court Lane one of most impressive views of the Durham Cathedral in the city can be enjoyed. Moving along Church Street, St Oswald's Church is a landmark, within a street of high architectural quality and diversity. Then in contrast is the familiar sight of the modest Victorian terraced housing. The riverside environment provides "classic" sequential views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site in the context of the river corridor, Old Elvet and beyond.

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

View 1 – Sequence of views approach Elvet Riverside along Pelaw Leazes Lane and Baths Bridge

View 2 – View from New Elvet Road Bridge

View 3 – View eastwards from Old Elvet Bridge into Old Elvet

View 4 – Views in both directions along Old Elvet

View 5 – View westwards from in front of the Crown Court and Court Lane

View 6 – View west from New Elvet onto Kingsgate Bridge

View 7 – Views in both directions along Church Street

View 8 – Views in both directions along Hallgarth Street.

View 9 – Views east and west along entrance point to Whinney Hill.

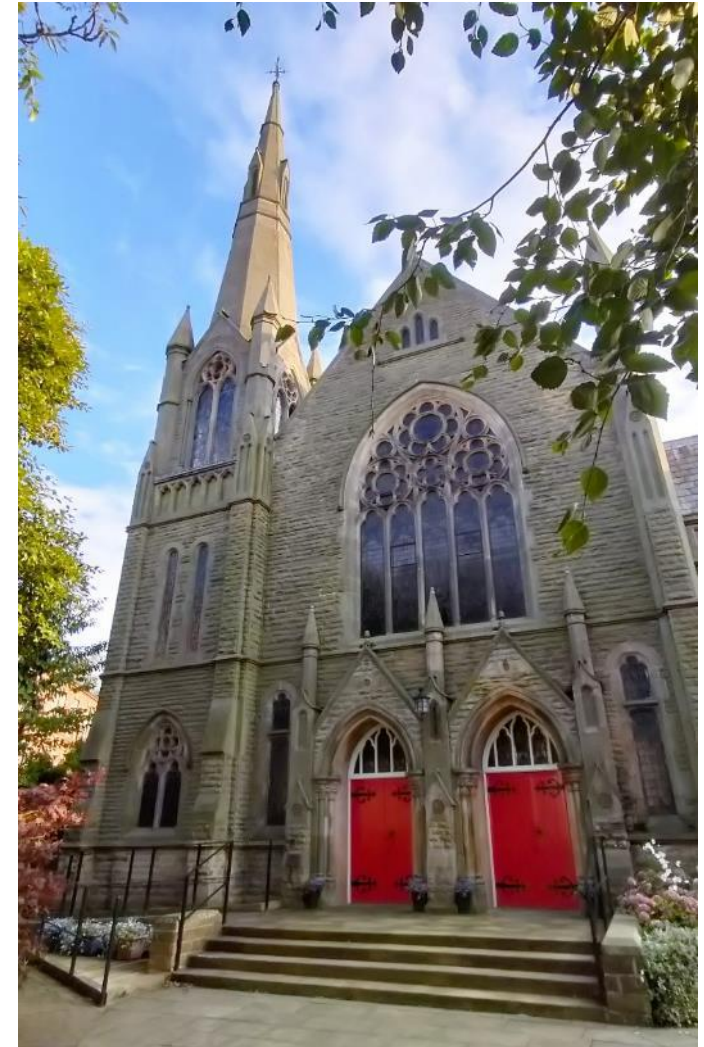


Fig 54 right. A close up view of the fine Elvet Methodist Church from within Old Elvet a landmark historic building within the streetscene.

Key Views
Location



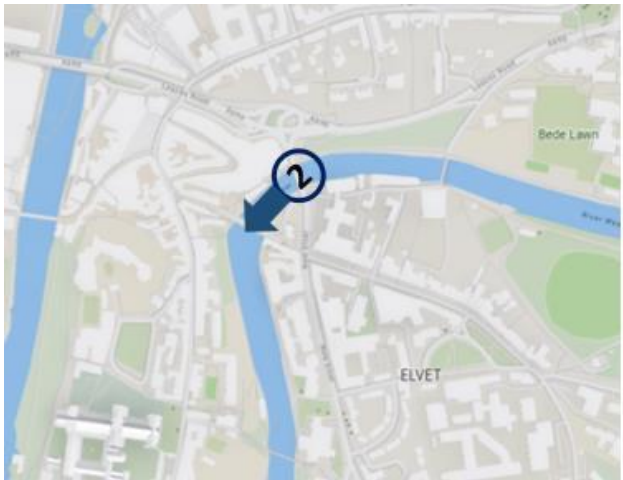
Image



Description

View southwest approaching Elvet Waterside via the route of Pelaw Leazes Lane and Baths Bridge.

A fine sequential view of Durham Cathedral experienced in both the river corridor and townscape setting. Moving down Pelaw Leazes Lane in Gilesgate approaching into Elvet the view is unfolding as the cathedral is heavily filtered by trees. The view opens dramatical at the riverside with Durham Cathedral perfectly framed by the building once on the footbridge. The view demonstrates the monument’s dominance and drama.



View southwest from New Elvet Road Bridge.

A well-known “classic” static view of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site in its river corridor setting with Old Elvet Bridge in the foreground. The view has inspired many painters and photographers. It is an important approach view into Elvet along the modern road bridge.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View southeast from the west end of Old Elvet Bridge.

A channelled kinetic historic streetscape view looking into Old Elvet that opens once on the bridge. The view is outside the conservation area but still significant as it gives a clear insight to the medieval connection between the peninsula and Elvet, physically separated by the late 20th century road construction works; an important historic approach view into Elvet.



Views northwest and southeast along Old Elvet.

Kinetic, intimate historic streetscape views within Old Elvet of the architecturally rich and diverse collection of historic buildings that coalesce to form one of the finest domestic streets in the city, enhanced by the dramatic introduction of historic landmark buildings. The view changes within movement as different buildings move in and out of view.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View west from the area in front of the Crown Court and along Court Lane.

A seemingly architectural designed view of its day so that Durham Cathedral dramatically overlooks the Crown Court. A similar view is attainable along Court Lane where the cathedral is framed by the buildings.

While the view is from static viewpoints the approach up Old Elvet gives no hint of the view that elevates the dramatic experience.



View westwards from New Elvet onto Kingsgate Bridge.

The open aspect of the entrance onto the foot bridge provides a fine static view of Durham Cathedral in its riverine settings.

The view also includes the distinctive Brutalist building of Dunelm House that reflects cutting edge architectural design of its day.

There is a strong group value between the building and bridge, and to a lesser, but still significant degree the World Heritage Site, captured from this vantage point.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

Views northeast and southwest along Church Street.

Kinetic, intimate historic streetscape views within Church Street. They provide an evolving experience, the north end dominated by grand Georgian and Victorian townhouses, the south by modest Victorian terraces. With the Church of St Oswald's, the historic focal point at approximately the middle of the street.

Views northeast and southwest along Hallgarth Street.

Kinetic intimate historic streetscape views within Hallgarth Street of the varied and characterful 18th and 19th century domestic properties.

Key Views
Location



Image

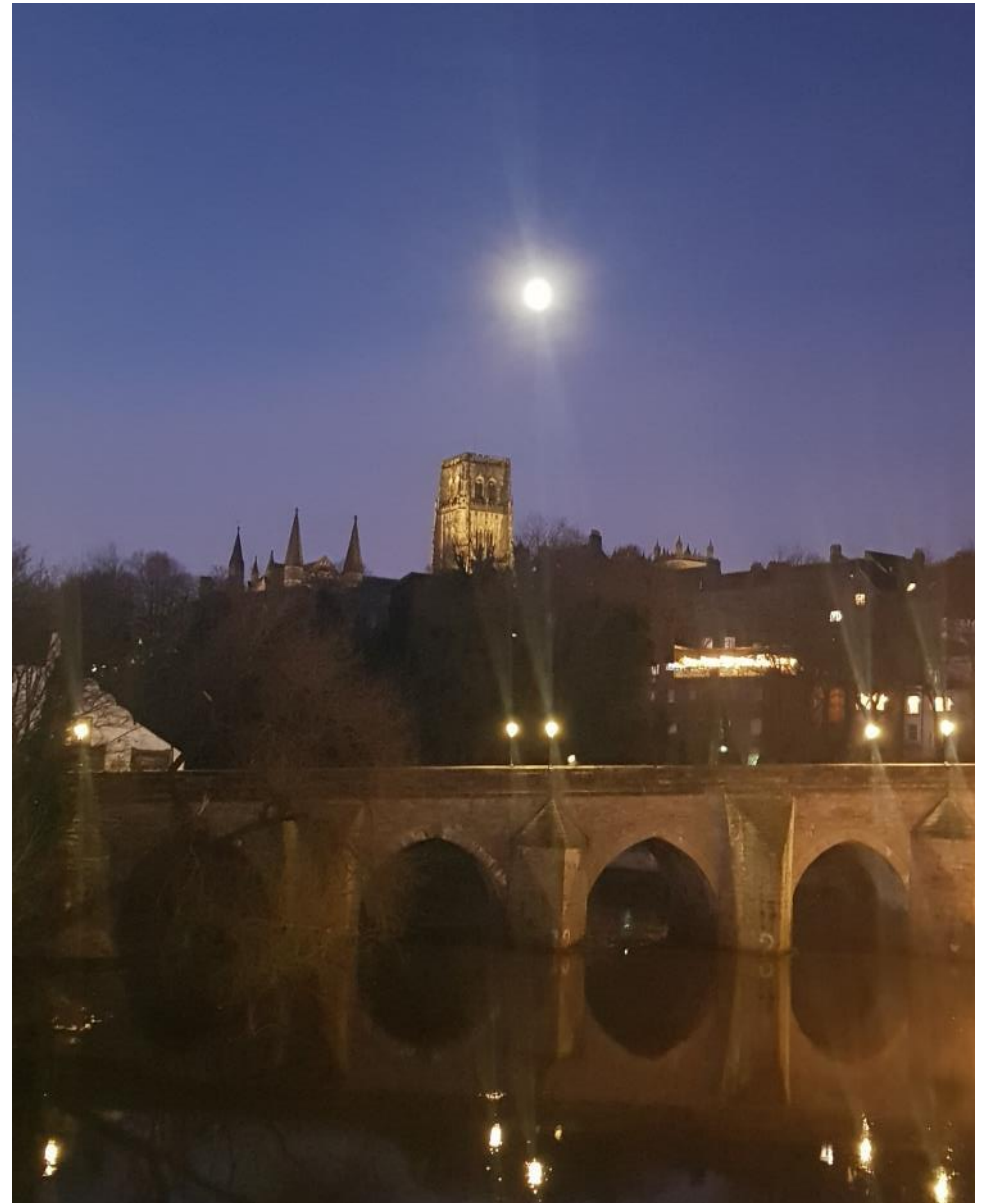


Description

Views east and west between Hallgarth Street and Whinney Hill

This area provides a sequence of views of the medieval barns. One vantage point moving into Whinney Hill view gives a rare experience into the ancient connection between the Cathedral Priory and the barns that were it home farm.

Key nighttime view Locations 1 and 2



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

- The contrasting ambience between the vibrant main streets, the calmer residential streets, and quiet vennels.
- The various approaches in Elvet that provide different experiences and views.
- Positive sense of separation and isolation within St Oswald's churchyard and Stockton Road cemetery and their different feel from the urban environment.
- The positive traditional floorscape and boundary treatments that distinguish and enhanced building plots, streets, and spaces.
- The different and high-quality framed, fixed, kinetic, and sequential views of changing historic streetscapes, urban and natural environments with historic focal points.
- The contrast between the day and night time ambiances, experiences, and views.
- The intrinsic visual relationship with Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

Negative elements (public realm)

The character area has a high quality historic townscape comprising development from the medieval to Victorian period. This is experienced overall in a positive public realm set within a medieval framework. However, the area is not without negative elements that detracts from the character and appearance of the place.

The area's biggest weakness is from the impact of traffic and parked vehicles, and associated paraphernalia, cluttering the historic streets and affecting visual amenity. This also generate noise, and pollution and can make crossing streets difficult. But it is recognised that such issue may be difficult to mitigate against.

A common problem within the Durham City Conservation Areas is caused by work carried out by utility companies who benefit from "permitted development" rights for various works that often have significance visual effects. This often results in loss of traditional floorscape materials reinstated with tarmac, or by patching of similar materials. There are issues with low quality deteriorated surfacing materials and loss of some boundary treatments.

The harsh timber boundary fencing and low quality temporary cabin style buildings on the former car park site at Territorial Lane detracts from the character and appearance of the place.

Fig 55 right. Images showing examples of car cluttered historic street scenes.



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

Built form

- There is a limited number of buildings that are noticeably suffering from an absence of general fabric maintenance works.
- Two historic buildings are identified as being “at risk,” the Durham Prisoner Officers Club, and the former City Swimming Baths.
- Within the Victorian terraced streets, the use of unsympathetic modern materials and features is prevalent. This detracts from the uniformity, historic character, and visual quality of the place.
- There are some examples of low-quality modern shop frontages and signs.
- There is one site hosting temporary buildings with visually stark boundary fencing that detracts from the character and visual appearance of the locale.

Urban spaces

- In some locations, street surfaces are deteriorating and mismatched, with fragmentary repairs creating a poor visual appearance.
- Traffic can be congested, and on-street parking is prevalent in places. This can make crossing difficult, create conflicts, and visual clutter.
- There are some examples of low quality, and loss of boundary treatments that impacts negatively.
- Some railings have been lost and sections of walls deteriorated.

Green spaces

- There are some areas of damage to roadside verges by vehicles.
- The unmanaged trees around St Oswald’s Church reduce views of the building.

Street furniture

- There are some “hot spots” where excessive street clutter detracts from the character and visual appearance of the place.

- There is a proliferation of items associated with car parking and traffic movement.
- Street furniture items overall are uncoordinated with some outdated.
- The communications mast and base equipment is very detracting in the streetscene along Stockton Road.

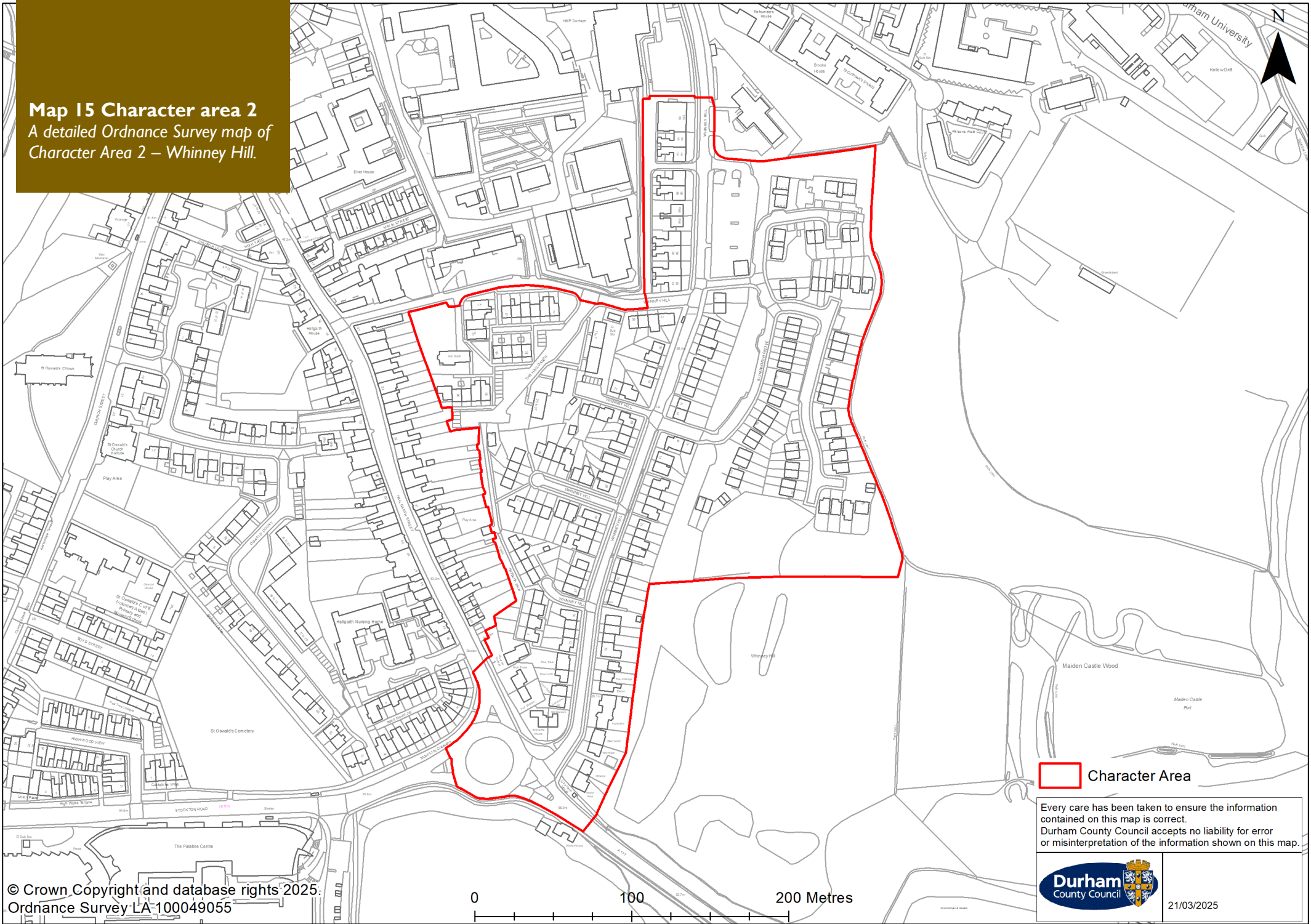
Threats


- Ongoing decline and continued lack of maintenance of those buildings which are deteriorated.
- Prolonging the unused status and rate of decay of the former city swimming baths building.
- The Prison Officers Club is in use, but the historic fabric continues to deteriorate.
- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials, continuation of mismatched replacement and patch repairs.
- Potential loss of surviving traditional street surfacing materials.
- Potential for unsympathetic alterations and loss of architectural features to unlisted historic buildings.

3.2 Character area 2 (Whinney Hill)



Map 15 Character area 2
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character Area 2 – Whinney Hill.



 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 to the residential area of Whinney Hill that occupies a site on the east side Hallgarth Street and HMP Durham. It is bounded by Green Lane in the north and the encompassing hilly landscape features Whinney Hill and Maiden Castle Wood in the east. This generates a mixed setting of historic urban and semi-rural environments and wider afield, it has a backdrop informed by the peninsula woodland, Pelaw Woods and the landscape grounds of St Hild and Bede College that rise steeply from the river up to Gilesgate.

The boundary of the area follows the rear plot arrangements of the original inter-war housing in the east and the contemporary residential development on the former Whinney Hill School site in the west, ending in the north at the prison and south at Stockton Road roundabout.

The late 19th and early 20th century expansion of the city occurred mainly on the west side close to the "Great North Road" and the Railway Station. In the period between the war estate of semi-detached dwellings sprang up at Whinney Hill and North End. Whinney Hill remains a good example of social housing from the era.

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

- Important representation of inter-war social housing from the time within the historic city centre.
- Original plan form, regular block pattern and cul-de-sac layout conserved and legible.
- Distinctive and varied topography rising steeply north to south.
- High aesthetic quality of the streetscape informed by its hilly nature, green space, street trees and private front gardens.
- Enclosed estate with its own sense of community and place.
- The designed gaps between the residential blocks to frame views of Durham Cathedral.
- The significant view from the landscape feature of Whinney Hill across the townscape to Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.
- The landscape significance of Whinney Hill as one of the series of hills that surround the city and provided its wider landscape backdrop.

Fig 56 below. Images of typical street scenes within Whinney Hill, semi-detached and larger blocks of social housing, with some short cul-de-sacs enhanced by an abundance of greenery in the public realm.



3.2.2 Local layout, streets, and spaces

The character area defines the eastern edge of both the conservation area and the urban part of the city centre. It is situated between the east end of Old Elvet and the roundabout at Stockton Road, Hallgarth Street and the A177 entrance into the city centre from Shincliffe.

The area has a simple layout and plan form as a single street orientated north south. It is enclosed by the buildings and boundaries lining both sides of the main carriageway but has a spacious feel. Its direction changes, curving from the northwest to the south, there is then a relatively straight section before curving again at the south end. It is of medium density and suburban in character unusually for a city centre location.

The layout comprises of short, regular terraced blocks in staggered formation, with three short cul-de-sacs leading off the main street on its western side. The properties fronting the main street are interwar semi-detached houses and houses in blocks of four with generous garden spaces. The plan form seemingly designed with gaps between the different blocks and utilising the lower levels at the heads of the cul-de-sacs to provide views of Durham Cathedral.

At the north and south ends there is a change in character. In the north there are longer terraced blocks of prison officer housing that respect the prevailing building line. On the opposite side of the street there is a large car park enclosed by red brick walls that adds nothing positive, behind which are the tall contemporary apartment blocks on the site of the former Whinney Hill School. The new development has primary and secondary frontages owing to the step in landform, with a robust street hierarchy and loose block arrangement.

At the south end of Whinney Hill there is a more spacious arrangement. Here the semi-detached and detached properties in different house styles are set slightly further back, some elevated, with the end of the street more open onto the main carriageway.

The approach to the summit of the landscape feature of Whinney Hill is by two routes. A winding and steeply rising narrow track behind the contemporary housing development that leads through the dense mature woodland, suddenly giving way to openness at the top. Alternatively, from a straight track behind No 14-22 Whinney Hill, where there is a steep climb up the hillside through a paddock. The hill is one of the encircling ridges of high ground that form the scenic green backdrop to the city's historic core.

Fig 57 right. Images demonstrating the general plan form and layout of the streets and spaces with the area.



Fig 58 below. The track behind the properties lining the east side of Whinney Hill.



hill

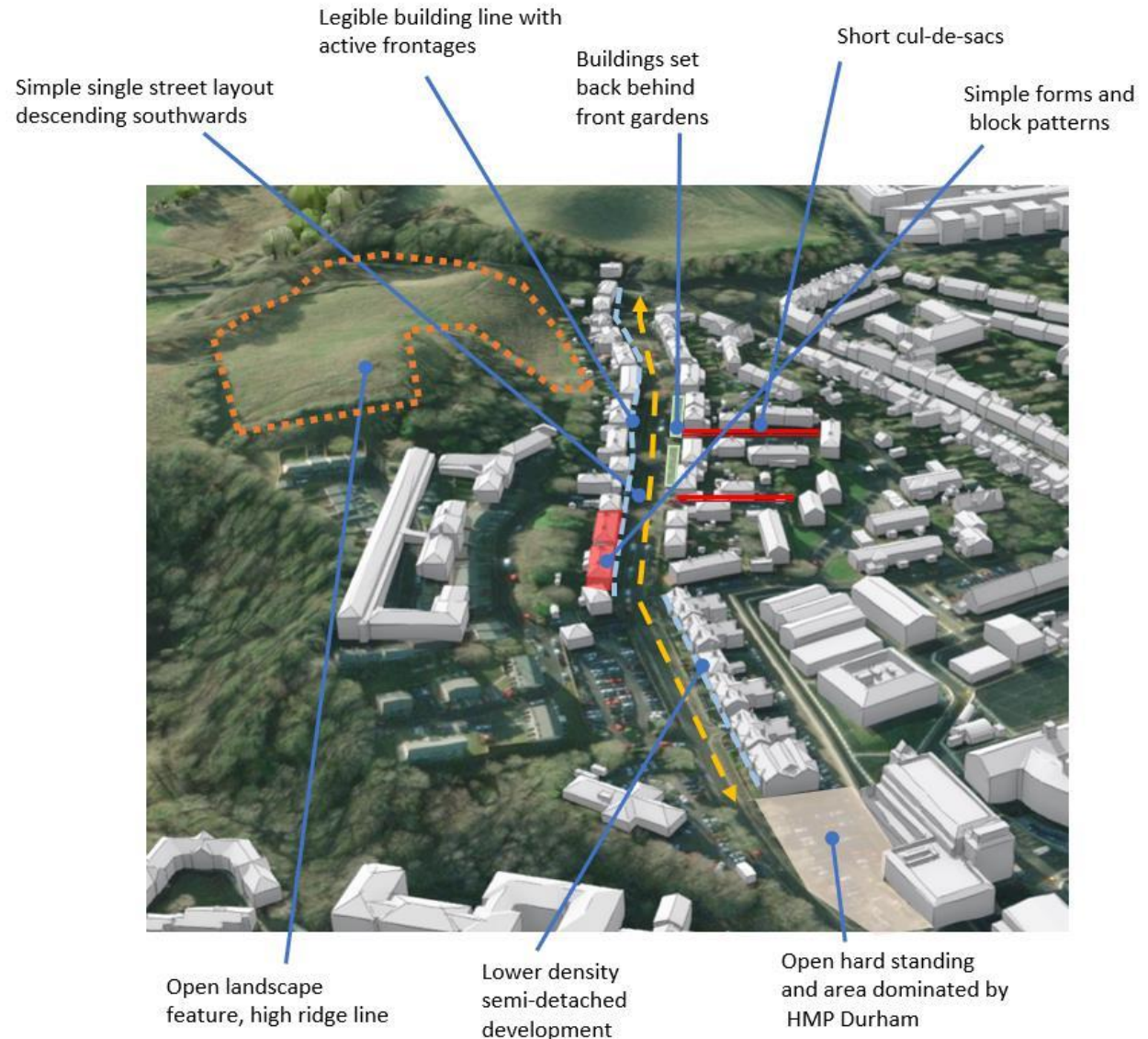


Fig 59 above. The open summit of Whinney Hill looking across to Maiden Castle Wood, left, the first notable view of Durham Cathedral approaching up the hill through the woodland in the north. This gives an important experience of the historic city centre's landscape containment and broader setting.

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

- Moderate density with strong active domestic frontages.
- Simple single street layout with short cul-de-sacs, important representation of social housing design of the period.
- Block form with designed gaps.
- Buildings set back from the main street behind generous garden space.
- Corners generally defined by green space.
- Carriageway and footway green verges supplemented by street trees.
- Different changes in levels that adds to character.
- Suburban in character that provides a pleasing contrast with surrounding medieval streets characterised by Georgian and Victorian buildings.
- Many buildings extended but not to the detriment of the street's original plan form and character
- High value landscape feature with dense woodland and open summit.

Fig 60 below. 3D modelling highlighting key attributes found within the area.



Whinney Hill has an abundance of greenery that is part of its distinctive suburban character and sense of place. The street frontage features a range of broad level green infrastructure assets in the form of general corner green amenity spaces, wide grass verges hosting mature street trees, on-street planter boxes, and private gardens with trees, planting, and hedgerows. This theme continues within the contemporary residential development with an open plan primary frontage where green space divides hardscape, and with a rising backdrop of mature tree coverage.

Added to the above, is the hilly green “wall” of the surrounding landscape that informs the backdrop to the contained housing estate, enhancing its character and setting. Whinney Hill climbs very steeply behind the houses at the south end of the street, it has a varied landform and is mostly open space with a rural character.

Moving north along the main street towards Old Elvet and Green Lane the street green character diminish with only single narrower roadside verge, but there are some greenery and trees to the perimeter of the prison car park.

Fig 61 right. A streetscape view showing the linearity of the areas plan form, and positive green suburban character, which is distinctive within the historic city centre.



Fig 62 below. An aerial map and selection of images showing positive green assets within the character area.



3.2.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing.

Whinney Hill is characterised by uniformed inter-war social housing of a simple yet recognisable period architectural style. The properties are two storeys, two bay, constructed from red-facing brick to ground floors with pebble dashed first floors. They have brick band detailing as an interface between the different materials, with brick detailing to the door and window openings and to the side wall junctions at first floor. The properties have hipped overhanging roofs of red and brown pantiles and central square chimney stacks. Original windows and doors have been lost over time meaning there is no cohesiveness in this regard, but otherwise the properties still read as uniform. The windows and doors are mostly uPVC in different standard modern styles disrupting the original uniformity of the elevations.

At the north end of the street the prison officer housing is of the same period but are of a different character. There are in longer terraced blocks of two storied with hipped roofs and have projecting feature bays, they are of red brick with a different tone below natural grey slate roofs and have tall red brick chimney stack with brick band detailing and pots.

Moving to the south end of the street, the properties are again from the inter-war period but of more individual designs but reflecting traits of the neighbouring social housing in terms of the material palette and elements of detailing.

Fig 63 below. Images of typical house types and styles within the character area.



The 21st century development on the former school site provides a contemporary house type with a modern material palette of light grey and red brick and roof tiles, with plain dark uPVC windows and doors. The development has a vertical emphasis and strong rhythm with elements of contemporary detailing, and it attempted to introduce a newer character.

The aspiration was for a unique and high quality design, but this has not emerged in reality. The larger apartment buildings are out of scale in the context of the two storey older counterparts, some units have very steep angled roofs, and the inclusion of tower-like projecting bays, balconies, dormers, and the materials pay little regard to the distinctiveness of the surrounding historic social housing. The majority of the development has limited visual interaction within the main streetscene through Whinney Hill and is neutral.

Fig 64 below. Images of the contemporary residential development on the former Whinney hill school site.



Material and Architectural Detailing Palette

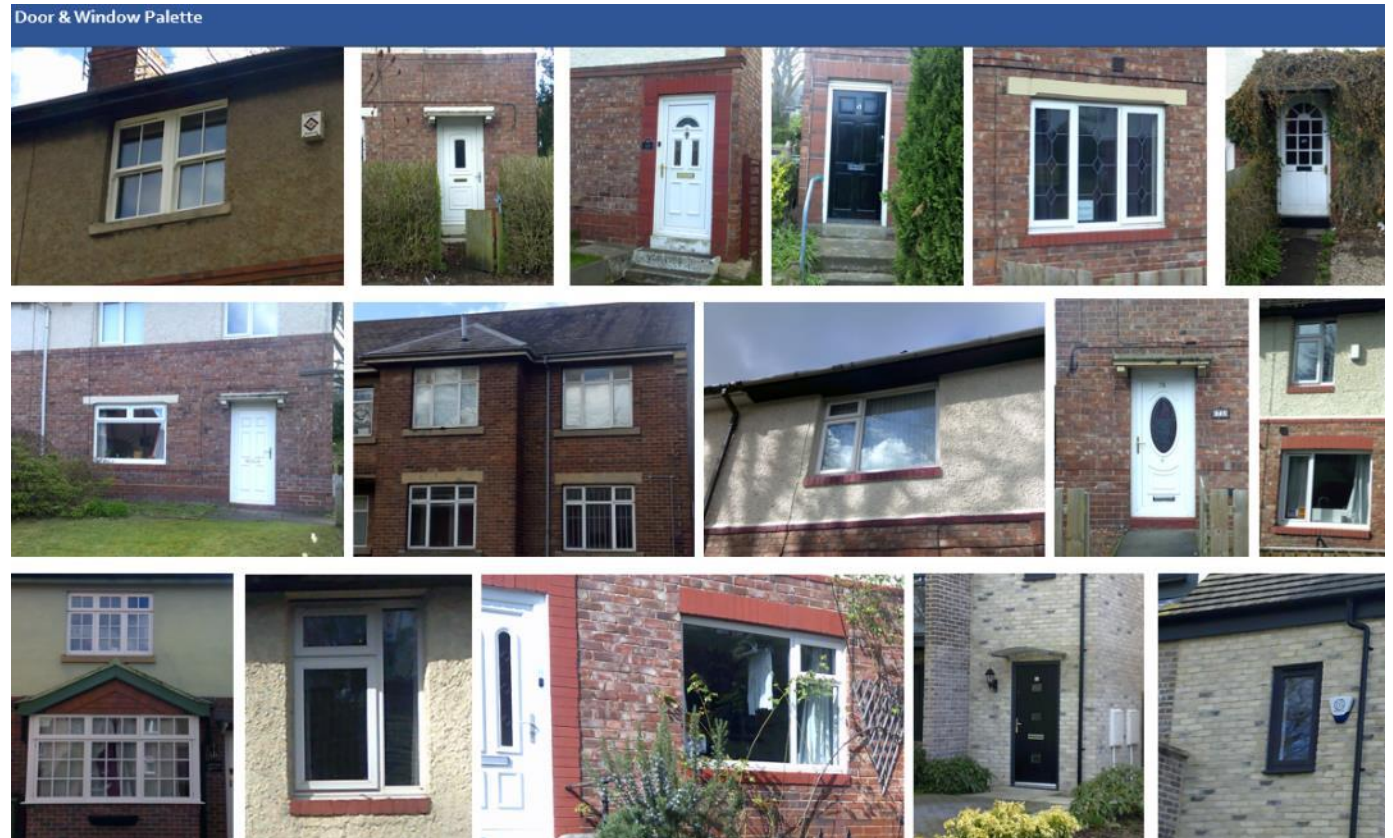


Architectural form, style, and detailing - positive contributors to the area's special interest and character.

- Good example of a distinctive inter-war/social housing estate within the historic city centre.
- Important as a clear progression from earlier Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing design.
- Distinctive architectural style of wider format houses with a horizontal emphasis in place of earlier vertical rhymes.

Negative elements (buildings)

The buildings are adversely affected by the loss of uniformity with regards the materials, windows, and doors. The majority of the windows are modern uPVC installations in different casement styles that are not in keeping with the character of the properties with no consistency in style. Further, many properties have been extended over the years, but the form and quality of the extension development varies and is not always sympathetic, this has also impacted upon the original design again in terms of the uniformity of the estate.



3.2.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Whinney Hill is a residential street with a high student population and because of its location providing a shorter route to Old Elvet and the riverside from the south it can have high pedestrian footfall. In contrast outside of term time it is much quieter.

The street is however used as a vehicle short cut and route out from Old Elvet and Green Lane, and due to the presence of the prison and its car parks, it can be a busy environment at certain times.

There is car parking provided on-street but due to the narrowness and hilly nature of the street this can create congestion. The combination of the steep inclines and cars parking on/overhanging the footpaths can make it difficult for pedestrians to navigate at times.

The prison area is dominated by park vehicles that is in conflict with the domestic character elsewhere, and parked vehicles can overspill onto the surrounding streets.

The overall impression, depending on the time of day, is of a relatively quiet and contained suburban area with a pleasant public environment that contrasts with the surrounding medieval streets. The experience within the public realm is enhanced by the hilly nature of the street, street trees and other roadside greenery, and well stocked private front gardens.

The carriageway comprises of red chipped tarmac that provides a pleasant contrast with the red material palette of the buildings. The footway is of standard concrete surfacing materials softened by the grassed verges in places edged by granite sets. The surfaces condition is mixed in places it has a poor appearance where patch work repairs have taken places, some of the roadside verges are degraded and patchy, turning into the cul-de-sacs standard black tarmac replaces red, and some grass verges have been lost to provide dropped kerbs to access in-plot front car parking spaces that impacts negatively.

The north end of the street is visually marred by the highway crash barrier on one side and run of modern bollards on the other and there is a proliferation of lighting columns, CCTV columns, signs, and bollards at the open frontage entrance to the prison, but these are unavoidable. Moving through the street it is not adversely affected by excessive numbers of street furniture items, there are highway and parking signs and meters, modern lighting columns, timber planter boxes (that are positive), bus stop, safety railings, bollards, bins, and a seat. These are however un-coordinated in style.

Boundary treatments are an important part of the character of the streetscene. At the south end there are estate style railings around the corner green spaces that enhance the entrance into the estate. The front gardens are enclosed by a mixture of red brick walls, timber and metal fencing and hedgerows. There is a uniformed frontage to the prison officers' accommodation in the form of red brick walls with in-set concrete piers and triangular concrete copings. These contribute positively to the streetscene.

There is an adverse effect in the streetscene resulting from some fencing that appears too stark in contrast, where railings have obviously replaced original red brick walls, and more significantly where front boundaries have been fully removed to create open in-plot car parking spaces and driveways.



Fig 65 above. An example of an open hard standing frontage that detracts from the character and visual appearance of the street.

Surfaces & Street Furniture Palette



Palette of Boundary Treatments



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

- Very green character that provides a pleasant public realm, this is enhanced by the hilly form of the street.
- Has a different positive feel to the Georgian and Victorian streets that predominant the conservation area.
- The public realm is of high scenic quality with a distinctively suburban character.

Negative elements (public realm)

The area is negatively affected by the impact of traffic and vehicles parked on-street, but this is difficult to avoid. There is an increasing dominance of student-let properties that leads to less activity outside of term time impacting on the character of the place. The overall aesthetic quality of the street is detracted by issues such as loss of front boundaries to hard standing, mismatched boundary and surface treatments, and fragmentary repairs to the carriageway and footways.

Fig 66 right. Images showing a car dominated street and below the visually harsh car park with the contemporary residential development behind.

Within Whinney Hill the car park sites at the north end of the street detract from the overall positive qualities of the street being out of keeping with the historic architectural form and character. While historically these sites have never been developed as housing and the car parks have existed for a significant period of time, they are visually intrusive being at odds with the prevailing domestic character of the street. However, it must be recognised that these are associated with HMP Durham so there is no real opportunity for improvement or sensitive redevelopment. Its open form also overstates the out of keeping presence of the contemporary development in the suburban streetscene.



3.2.5 Visual Experiences

The street occupies an important position on the edge of both the main urban area and the encompassing hilly landscape, because of this and its elevation from Old Elvet, it provides a range of important views. These vary including a long distance channelled view down the street where the buildings lining the ridge of Gilesgate Bank can be seen in the backdrop with the brightly rendered Chapel of Venerable Bede at the College of St Hild and St Bede an eyecatcher in the landscape. From the landscape feature of Whinney Hill there is a significant panoramic view across the townscape and wider landscape with Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site the focal point in the skyline. From different positions within the main street the cathedral can be seen either in the gaps between the buildings or over the rooftops, the estate seemingly intentionally designed to provide such views.

In summary the key views within this character zone are:

View 1 – View west from Whinney Hill (landscape feature)

View 2 – Example view west from within Whinney Hill housing area)

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

Fig 67 below. The view from the public footpath behind the contemporary residential development.



Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View westwards from Whinney Hill (landscape feature)

An unfolding panoramic experience of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site seen in its townscape and landscape setting. Approaching the crest of the hill the castle and cathedral are hidden from view due to the tree coverage, before a sudden and surprising reveal as the footpath opens up moving southwards. The view demonstrates their dominance in the skyline over the city and their visual drama.

View westwards from Whinney Hill (housing area)

From different vantage points along the main street of Whinney Hill fine views of Durham Cathedral are attainable, the cathedral seen in the skyline rising majestically above the rooftops of the houses. The views range from passing glimpses to sudden more revealing surprises framed by buildings.

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

Built form

- The prison car parking site detracts from the historic domestic character of the place.
- The buildings feature a wide variety of modern uPVC window and door styles that harm their original character with no uniformity.

Urban spaces

- There is a mismatch of surface materials that detracts from the overall character and appearance of the street.
- Street surfacing is deteriorated in some places and visually marred by fragmentary patch work repairs.
- The area can be traffic and car dominated that that along with its hilly nature affects accessibility.
- There is often a prominence of vehicles adding visual clutter.
- There is a mismatch of boundary treatments detracts from the area’s visual appearance.

- Loss of front boundary treatments creating open frontages impacts negatively.

Green spaces

- Some front gardens have been lost to create hard standing parking area’s in-plot that impacts negatively.
- Some roadside verges are in a poor condition.

Street furniture

- There are uncoordinated items and styles of street furniture, some items are outdated and items such as the safety railings and barriers are visually incongruous.
- Overall, the street is not excessively cluttered by items of street furniture that is positive.

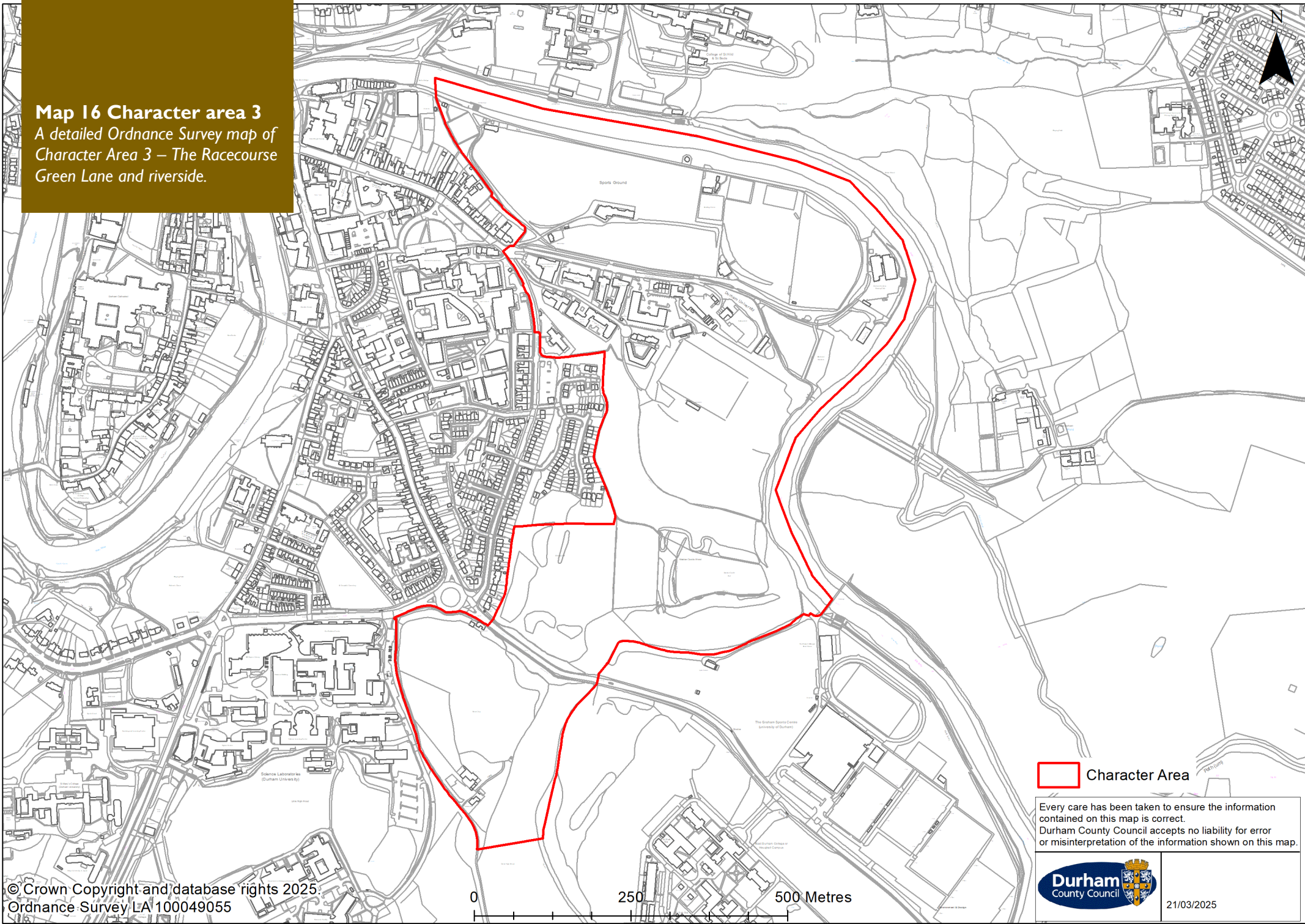
Threats


- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials, and continuation of fragmentary repairs.
- Potential for further loss of front boundaries and garden spaces.
- Continuation of incremental alterations to the inter-war houses degrading their character further.
- Continued negative effects of vehicles and car parking.

3.3 Character area 3
(Green Lane, The Racecourse and
riverside)



Map 16 Character area 3
A detailed Ordnance Survey map of
Character Area 3 – The Racecourse
Green Lane and riverside.



 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 eastern and southern outer limits of the conservation area focused upon Green Lane, The Racecourse, and the River Wear corridor downstream to Maiden Castle footbridge. It also include the landscape features of Maiden Castle Wood, Mountjoy and a small part of Great High Wood.

The eastern side of the character area is defined by the urban townscape following the backs of the residential curtilages of the properties lining the east side of Whinney Hill, south to the outer edge of HMP Durham and then the route of the public right of way to the rear of Old Elvet up to Baths Bridge.

The setting of this area is a mixture of historic dense urban, and semi-rural, with a green wooded backdrop. It is enhanced by the varied topography, the area predominantly on the flat open lower ground of the floodplain, but including broader hilly landscape features. This character zones is a intrinsic part of the special character of the wider Elvet conservation area, and the city centre, having a strong visual relationship with different parts of the town and providing dramatic views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.

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

- Historic interest of Green Lane being the route of the former railway line and site of Elvet Station with surviving railway cottages and railway line fragments in riverside landscape.
- The historic interest of Maiden Castle being the site of an Anglo-Saxon hill fort.
- The historic interest of The Racecourse belonging to the Priory in medieval timbers and first recorded for horse racing in c.1733.
- The community and social value of area being a popular recreation and leisure area, and site of the annual miner's gala first held here in 1872.
- The importance of the area in terms of providing a transitional natural space between the urban part of the city and the surrounding open countryside.
- The distinctive and varied topography, and the high quality landscape that also contributes positively to the wider city.
- The diversity and exceptional quality of views the area provides.

Fig 68 below. The river and racecourse area from the opposite riverbank.



3.3.2 Layout, streets, and spaces

Green Lane comprises a relatively flat linear route orientated eastwards from its junction point in the west with Old Elvet and Whinney Hill. The built form along Green Lane is of moderate density, developing from the mid-20th century onwards in an ad-hoc manner. The plots and building forms are of different orientations, sizes and shapes creating a mix-matched townscape character. The open frontage overlooking the racecourse down to the river is the area's redeeming feature, but this is marred by parked vehicles.

The buildings occupy a wide loosely triangular plot of land on lower ground to Whinney Hill, and slightly raised from The Racecourse. At the end of Green Lane, the area follows the loop of the River Wear back round to Baths Bridge, where there is a scattering of buildings along the river frontage. On the south side of Green Lane there are a number of narrow lanes, some historically associated with the former railway line layout.

The area mostly comprises of undeveloped landscape and as a result has an abundance of green space and green infrastructure assets that define its distinctiveness and are of high visual amenity value.

The racecourse area comprises of flat open green space with mature tree belts sub-dividing it in places where there are different sporting uses. The racecourse hosts a limited number of detached buildings, the Hilton Cottage, the Cricket Pavilion, and Boathouse, with the Cricket Club, Rowing Club, and Bowling Green on its periphery, with no set pattern to this built development.

Moving south the Rugby Club with its grandstand and club house occupy a large site on the west side of the riverbank's footpath, that has a steely rising backdrop of Maiden Castle Wood south of which is Maiden Castle itself a significant historic landscape feature classified as an Iron Age promontory fort, covering two acres and protected on all but the west side by steep natural slopes.

The south side of Green Lane is densely wooded that provides an important natural backdrop to the buildings and in some instances shields the bland unremarkable modern buildings from view. Beyond the area is characterised by the hills which surround this part of Durham, effectively screen the urban area, creating a natural wooded 'wall'.

One of the area's defining characteristics is the combination of different green spaces and features, and the juxtaposition of the built form with the landscape, the open aspect around the racecourse and Green Lane providing an important transition between the open countryside and the urban environment.



Fig 69 above. The flat open green space at the riverside and the racecourse, in contrast with the dense woodland at the south end of Green Lane approaching Maiden Castle.

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

- Concentrated area of high density built development, but natural openness is predominant.
- Buildings along Green Lane are neutral/negative, but the linear route is an important historic feature.
- Buildings aligned and designed to maximise riverside outlook.
- Buildings scattered across The Racecourse and riverside with no set arrangement, and of different leisure uses that is tied directly to their function and riverside setting.
- At Green Lane, there is a legible block form with gaps signifying different uses and phases of development.
- Important surviving linear block of Victorian Railway Cottages.
- Area is mostly undeveloped, and landscape dominated significant to the special interest and character of the wider city.

Fig 70 below. 3D modelling highlighting key attributes found within the area.

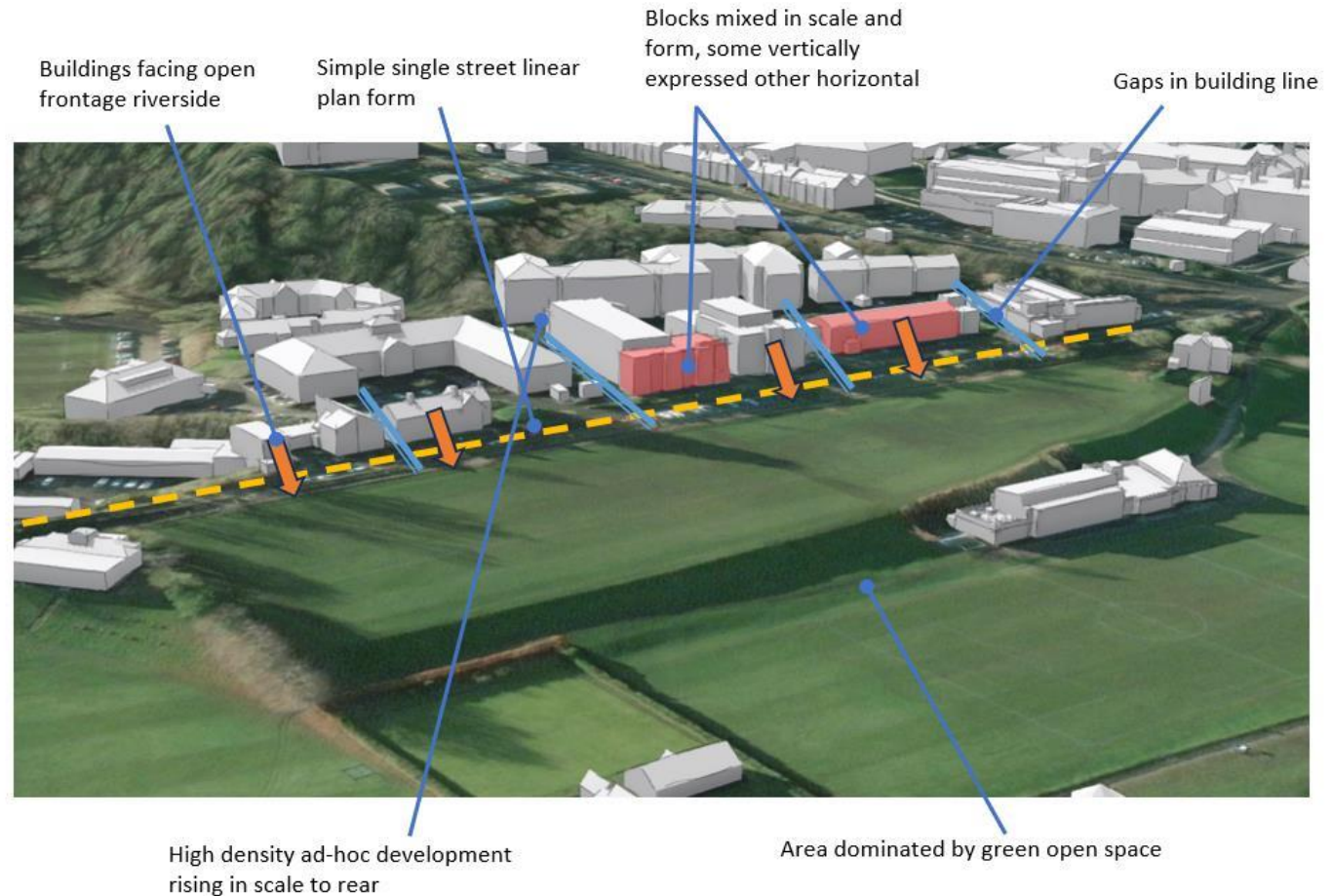


Fig 71 below. A plan and selection of images showing the local green assets within the character area.



The reduction and absence of built development in the main river corridor moving out from the city east and south given the area a very open form. The hilly landscape features make the city feel small and strongly defined, with the combination of Maiden Castle Wood, Great and Little High Woods, smaller pockets of woodland and trees gives the city a very high urban tree canopy cover which contributes significantly to the character and quality of views and often provides dramatic setting to its notable buildings.



3.3.3 Architectural style, form, and detailing

Within this character area there is no architectural cohesiveness given how it has evolved over time. The buildings fronting Green Lane developed from the 1960s onwards, and are considerably varied in terms of scale, massing, form, architectural style, materials, and aesthetic quality that creates a fragmented streetscene. They are broadly neutral in terms of their contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Magistrates' Court is a flat roofed brown brick building with stepped and staggered small flat roofed elements, and variation in fenestration that is municipal in appearance and adds nothing distinctive. The Health Centre building is an unrelieved double storey linear block, with some attempt at visual interest through the inclusion of windows grouped vertically through the use of rendered panels and slender raised surrounds and its distinctive copper roof.

The two adjacent apartment buildings step up in scale to three storeys that are visually overpowering yet architecturally they are more interesting with a wedge shaped roof, projecting and oversailing bays, deep recessed balconies and openings, variation in materials and fenestration. The other modern buildings are more mundane.

Fig 72 below. Examples of the modern developments along Green Lane.



Of a positive contribution is the terraced block at the east end of the lane comprising four former Victorian railway cottages that are important survivals and representations of the Railway activity in the area. They are of two storeys constructed from red brick with stone lintels and sills and have timber sliding sash windows in a 2-over-2 glazing pattern, red painted solid panel timber doors, shallow overhanging roof of Welsh slate and projection gable at the east end. They remain uniformed and well preserved.

There are three buildings of particular note at The Racecourse. At the west end stands St Cuthbert's Society Boathouse, a purpose-built boathouse of c.1894 comprising of a one storey and seven bay boat shed and a two storey club house cross wing. It is built from red brick and slate with a chamfered plinth, cut-brick eaves detailing, date stone plaque, and distinctive projecting wooden balcony.

Next is Durham Cricket Pavilion, built in c.1889 and insensitively extended in the 20th century, but this has not diminished its historic character. It is a rare example of an early pavilion building and is intact and provides a tangible link to sporting and social activities during the Victorian era. It features a steeply pitched red tiled roof with gabled clock dormer, large multipaned windows and projection metal external seating canopy with column supports.

Finally, a short distance to the southwest is Hilton Cottage that stands at the entrance to the pavilion building, it is slight later, c.1919-23, in a distinctive Arts & Crafts style.

Away from the riverside, in an isolated location on top of Mountjoy Hill is Mountjoy Farm. This is a rare and distinctive Edwardian farm group within the city. It comprises of a well preserved farmhouse, with a range of outbuildings adjacent that enclosed a courtyard space. The outbuildings however have been disused for a prolonged period of time and are significantly dilapidated with sections collapsed.

Fig 73 below. Examples of the historic buildings within the character area. The Victorian boathouse, Hilton Cottage, Victorian railway cottages and remains of the former railway line.



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

- Victorian and Edwardian buildings designed for specific uses associated with their respective locations.
- Distinctive architecture owing to individual designs but characteristic of the period in which they were built.
- Historic buildings architecturally and visually distinct from the modern development that dominates the area, elevating their positive contribution.

Negative elements (sites and buildings)

The modern buildings along Green Lane add nothing positive to the wider conservation area, being of no architectural or historic interest, excluding the Victorian railway station terrace. However, these developments are not so detracting given that Green Lane’s built character is informed by the sporadic modern development of different uses, phases, forms, styles, materials, and aesthetic quality.

The historic buildings show a high level of intactness with regards to the use of traditional materials, and period architectural features. The exception is the group of outbuildings at Mountjoy Farm. The main farmhouse is vacant, but only minor fabric repairs would be necessary to bring it back into sustainable active use. On the other hand, the outbuildings are “at risk” given the level of disrepair including sections that have collapsed, with reuse likely to be problematic.

The 20th century public toilets at the entrance to the riverside has a degree of character but is redundant and dilapidated that gives a poor impression at a key entrance point from Elvet and Baths Bridge.

Fig 74 below. Images of the long term vacant and deteriorated group of Edwardian farm buildings at Mountjoy and the public toilets at the riverside.



3.3.4 Ambiance and pedestrian experience

Green Lane has a wide variety of uses, residential, office, crown court, leisure, and health centre, yet has a generally moderate level of activity. Moving traffic is fairly infrequent, and it is a no-through vehicle route. It provides two pleasant pedestrian routes one via the footway in front of the buildings the other an informal track bounding the southern edge of The Racecourse leading out of the historic core down to Maiden Castle and beyond.

Due to the presence of on-street parking, and in-plot frontage parking courts Green Lane can be car dominated at peak times that impacts negatively on the character and appearance of the place, seen as intrusions into an area dominated by scenic natural landscape.

When car parking spaces are fully occupied, this combined with narrowness of the footway, the pedestrian experience is detracted, but the informal track provides relief and a better experience. The area has good linkages to the riverside footpath networks, the neighbouring streets and overall is accessible.

At the west end of Green Lane, the access down to the riverside is via steps or a steep incline that could be problematic for people with mobility issues. There is an extensive public right of way network along the riverside, through and around the woodland and up the hills, which offers a quiet tranquil walking route away from the bustling city centre, and is well used by walkers, joggers, and cyclists, although there can be background noise from different sporting activities.

Fig 75 below. The footway that follows the route of the carriageway along Green Lane which allows pedestrians to avoid the main street that can be dominated by parked cars.



Fig 76 above. The area has good accessibility, a peaceful ambiance, and is well used for a range of different recreational and leisure activities.

As well as the easily identifiable main routes there are a series of “hidden” lanes, that are quiet and informal. They tend to be enclosed by dense greenery that creates an intimate inwards semi-rural feel, offering a different positive experience.

The public artworks at the riverside are a popular feature to users of the area. The most recognisable is the life size like bronze sculpture, the “Dun Cow” referring to the legend of Durham’s founding on the peninsula with the arrival of St Cuthbert’s Community back to 995 AD. The sculpture was created by Andrew Burton in 1997. The bandstand dates to 1992 but there was a bandstand on the site in the 19th and early 20th centuries and is popular with visitors.

These features enhance the environment and the pedestrian experience of the riverside. They are part of a range of public artworks across the city centre, and others should be encouraged.

The carriageway and footway surfacing comprises standard modern materials, and at its east end there is an overly designed turning area with a sett surface material that is out of keeping in its semi-rural surroundings.



Fig 77 right. Examples of intimate “green lanes” and the positive public art works at the riverside.

While there are no traditional surface palettes the use of modern materials along the main street is not so harmful. The condition of the surfacing is fair overall, but there are some noticeable spots where repairs have taken place giving rise to a patchwork appearance that detracts. The driveway surfacing down to the cricket pavilion is in a deteriorated condition, as are some of the driveway entrances along Green Lane, and the turning areas.

The riverside footpaths are a mixture of standard tarmac and informal muddy lanes, which are generally in keeping. The unmaintained nature of some of the grassed verges adds to the informal semi-rural character of the area. Turning the corner at the east end of The Racecourse the area around the Rowing Club is a poor environment dominated by degraded hard standing and views of the car park, which detracts from the otherwise scenic quality of the surrounding natural environment.

There is a little street furniture items, concrete cast bollards, the occasional bin, parking meters, and lighting columns are found along Green Lane, the east end is however visually detracted by a high amount of signage that clutters the space.

At the riverside, there is well used play equipment, picnic tables and seats adjacent to the boat house, the occasional seat elsewhere and some public art pieces as well as the band stand.

The overall impression is that, minus the east end of the lane, the area does not suffer from an overabundance of such items, with the public art positive contributors, encouraging social interactions.

Surfaces Palette



Street Furniture Palette



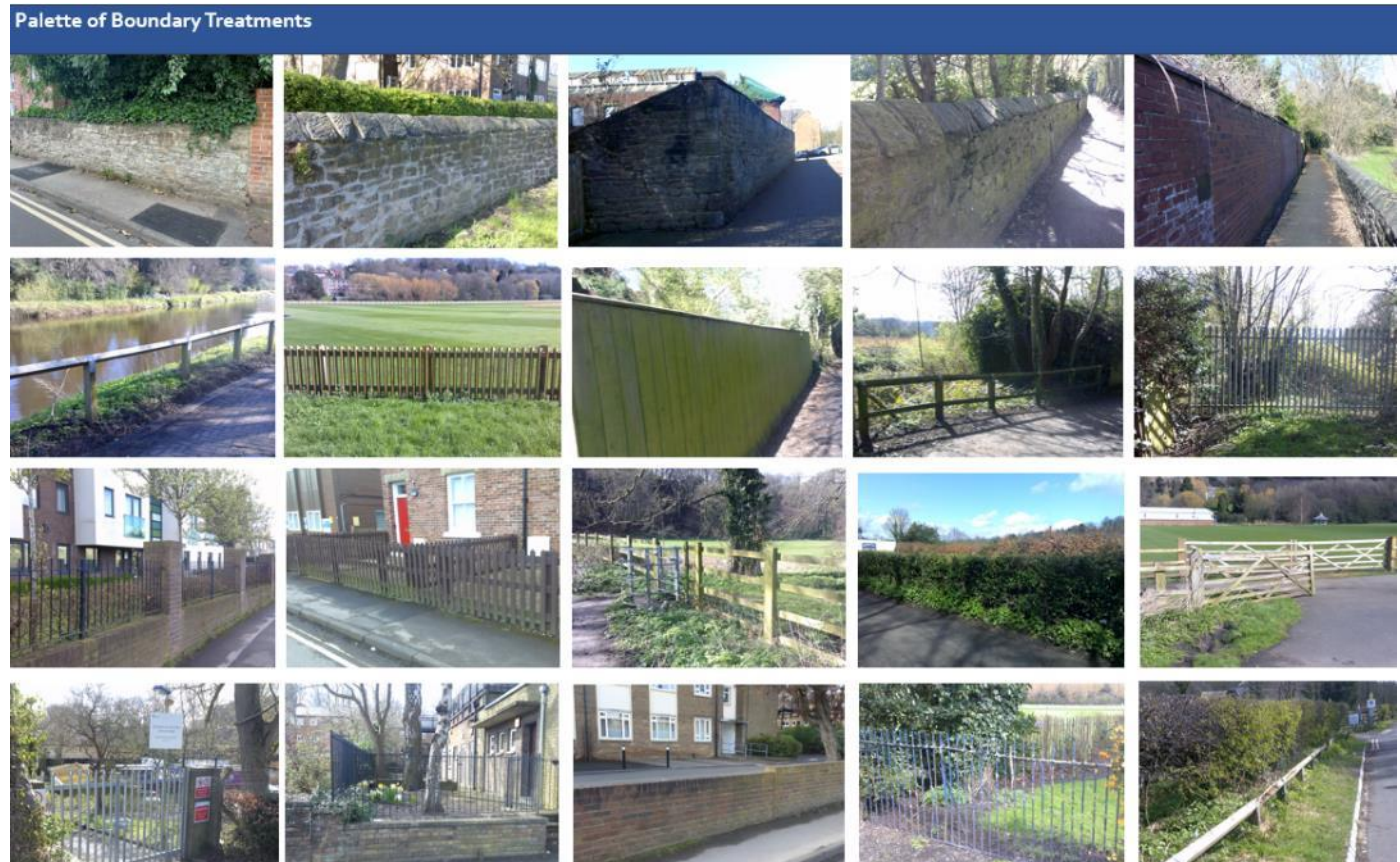
The frontages to the buildings along Green Lane have an array of different boundary treatments but are unified by following a consistent building line. This combined with the fencing, hedgerows and trees on the opposite site reinforces the lanes linear form, which is significant reflecting the route of the former Elvet railway line.

The boundaries comprise of modern low brick walls with black metal railings, taller brick walls with piers, some including railings on top, one section of stone walling, and timber fencing. This mix is not particularly positive, and the visible metal security fencing and gates impact negatively.

There are some positive sections of historic stone walls found around at the entrance to The Racecourse area from Elvet Waterside, enclosing the lane to the back of Old Elvet, with one section at Green Lane, which contribute positively. While not featuring in the main streetscene there is an important section of substantial stone wall to the rear relating to the former Victorian railway infrastructure in the area.

Within the riverside environment there is picket and rural style timber fencing in keeping with the character, while the boundaries to some of the lanes are informed by trees and vegetation that reinforce the enclosed nature and informal character.

Moving further into the riverside environment towards Maiden Castle the hard urban boundaries change to soft natural boundaries in the form of hedgerows and vegetation bounding the footways appropriate to the landscape and riverside character.



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

- The positive contrasting ambience between the area and the busier main streets nearby.
- The tranquil and calm environment of the riverside, and its high recreational and leisure value.
- Positive sense of separation and isolation from the rest of the historic city core moving into a scenic landscape dominated environment.
- The peaceful soundscape occasionally interrupted positively by noise from wildlife and leisure activities on the river.
- The sequential riverside views of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site that significantly enhance the experience of the place.
- The area's good connectivity to other parts of the city and beyond and the routes of different character it provides.
- The public art pieces that add interest to the riverside and encourage social interactions.

Negative elements (public realm)

The pedestrian experience is detracted by a number of elements, this includes that on-street parking and car dominance within Green Lane with vehicles cluttering the space and marring views out across The Racecourse. There is evidence of anti-social behaviour with vandalism in the form of graffiti a frequent occurrence. The general environment at the east end of Green Lane and around the Rowing Club is poor, detracted by degraded surfacing, security fencing, and low quality signage that is not befitting of the riverside character and gives a poor impression of the place.



Fig 78 below. Examples of the negative elements identified.



3.3.5 Visual experiences

This part of the city is unique in due to its low density development and situated on the lower open flood plain land surrounded by the hilly topography. As a result, it provides a sequence of views along the river corridor, and into the area from its wider surroundings where Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site provides the focal point.

The key views identified within this character zone are:

View 1 – View southwest from Pelaw Woods.

View 2 – Sequence of view eastwards along the riverside path.

View 3 - View north from Green Lane.

View 4 – View eastwards from Baths Bridge.

View 5 – View north west from Mountjoy.

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



Fig 79 above. The view from the public footpath looking across the racecourse towards Pelaw Woods.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View southwest from Pelaw Woods.

While the static viewpoint is outside of the character area boundary it is a significant view into/across the area. The panoramic view is dramatic showing the buildings of Elvet in the context of the flat open floodplain land, the hilly tree's backdrop to the city, and the relationship between the townscape, landscape and Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site



View westwards along the riverside at The Racecourse.

The riverside provides a sequence of "classic" well-known views along both the north and south riverbank of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. The views are emerging with tantalising glimpses before the openness of the land give rise to wide panoramic views that express the visual drama and dominance of the ancient monuments over the townscape, and in the local landscape context.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

View north from Green Lane.

A fine view north over The Racecourse from a static view point in Green Lane where the white rendered Chapel of The Venerable Bede is a notable historic landmark nestled into the college parkland. The buildings lining the south side of the ridge line along Gilesgate can also be seen.



View east from Baths Bridge.

A static panoramic view along the river corridor of high scenic value, the openness of The Racecourse contrasting with the dense woodland of Pelaw Woods that provides containment to the area, with activity on the river.

Key Views
Location



Image



Description

Views northwards from Mountjoy.

Walking up the footpath Durham Cathedral is unseen due to the lower land level and shielding by the large-scaled buildings on the University campus. As the footpath rises to the access point to the farm, turning around there is a sudden surprising view of the cathedral dominating the skyline.



Once on the hill in front of the farm buildings there is a wide panoramic view where the cathedral presence, dominance and drama is increased, and it is seen in its broader townscape setting.

Key Nighttime View

Location 1 Pelaw Woods



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

Built form

- The historic buildings at Mounty Joy Farm and vacant, dilapidated and “at risk.”
- The 20th century public toilets at the entrance to the riverside is redundant and dilapidated that gives a poor impression at a key entrance point.
- The quality of built form is characterised by 20th century development that does not contribute positively.

Urban spaces

- The carriageway surfacing is standardised and that makes a neutral contribution, but its visual appearance is detracted in places owing to deterioration and fragmented repairs.
- The riverside has informal footways that are in keeping with its character, and condition is not a noticeable issue.
- Parked vehicles visually clutter Green Lane, and the hard standing car parking areas are not positive in their landscape surrounds.

- The area around the entrance to Hollow Drift and the Rowing Club are poor quality environments

Green spaces

- The former bowling green at the entrance to the riverside is overgrown and an underused space.

Street furniture

- Street furniture is uncoordinated with some items outdated.
- There is some clutter mainly in the form of commercial and place name signage at the east end of the lane.
- Some items of street furniture and the public art pieces have been vandalised.

Threats

- Continues vacant status and deterioration of fabric to the redundant farmhouse and outbuildings.
- Continued deterioration of street surfacing materials, and insensitive patch repairs.
- Continued negative impact of parked vehicles on street.
- More signage clutter introduced at the east end of the lane.
- Continuation of vandalism through graffiti.

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



4.1 Condition of place

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

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

The summary shows the majority of the conservation areas scores as "Fair" – summarized as, **“the condition of the area is fair, 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
Anchorage Terrace	Fair
Boyd Street	Fair
Church Lane	Fair
Church Street	Fair
Church Street Head	Fair
Church Street Villas	Fair
Court Lane (including Elvet Crescent)	Fair
Durham Crown Court area	Fair
Elvet Waterside (including Territorial Lane)	Poor
Gladstone Villas	Fair
Green Lane	Fair
Hallgarth Street	Fair
High Wood View	Fair
Highwood Terrace	Fair
Mavin Street	Poor
Mountjoy Crescent	Optimal
New Elvet	Fair
Old Elvet	Fair
Quarryheads Lane	Optimal
Oswald Court	Optimal
School Lane (including cemetery)	Fair
Union Place	Fair
Whinney Hill	Fair

4.2 S.W.O.T analysis

Strengths

- The area is a fundamental part of the medieval town plan of the city, characterised by enclosed, intimate historic streets.
- Integral to the inner townscape setting to the World Heritage Site and setting of the other Durham City Conservation Areas.
- High historic interest, evidential value, architectural and aesthetic value, and archaeological potential.
- Defined by strong linear street building lines and active frontages.
- Surviving historic vennels, lanes and routes representing important historic fabric and features of the layout of area.
- Variation in land and building uses adding to character.
- Dominated by historic terraced forms interjected by landmarks of individual designs.
- Strong historic identity and sense of place of differing character providing visual and illustrative interest.
- Variation in age, form, size, scale, massing, typology, and architectural style, creating high quality diverse street scenes.
- Overall prevalence of traditional architectural features and traditional

materials in a number of streets giving high level of intactness.

- Significant views with historic focal points and landmarks including the World Heritage Site.
- Unique topography, including the contrast of the flat floodplain land with the surrounding hills.
- High landscape and scenic quality with a high number of green infrastructure assets.
- High community and social value of The Racecourse and riverside area.
- Overall good connectivity and accessibility with extensive public right of way network.

Weaknesses

- Some low quality modern and infill development a mixture of neutral and negative contributors.
- Examples of contemporary housing development that does not respect historic context.
- Some buildings that do not reflect the predominant historic plan form or grain of the area.
- Some buildings noticeable due to being unkempt and unmaintained.
- Identified vacant/gap sites that detract from the character of the place.
- Buildings/sites “at risk,” this includes the derelict former swimming baths building that attracts vandalism, Mountjoy Farm,

the public toilets, and disused bowling green.

- Some deteriorated sections of historic stone walling.
- Insensitive modern alterations to historic unlisted buildings, harming original uniformity, character, and visual appearance.
- Low quality street surfacing or variable condition, with fragmentary repairs common place.
- Some low quality modern shop fronts, modern signs, and clutter to shop windows.
- Some places congested, dominated, and cluttered by vehicles.
- Some “hot spots” detractive by street clutter.

Opportunities

- Redevelopment of modern infill that could be replaced with sensitive building forms that draws inspiration from the positive characteristics of the area.
- Secure retention, restoration, and appropriate sustainable re-use of the buildings “at risk.”
- Removal of temporary buildings and sensitive redevelopment of vacant/gap site appropriate to site and surroundings.
- Public realm improvement works including street surfacing and street furniture providing a co-ordinate approach appropriate to historic context, character, and appearance.
- Replacement of low quality shop fronts and signs with higher quality designs appropriate to context.
- Improvements to green infrastructure in some areas with potential air quality net gains.
- Expand the existing Article 4 to protect the unlisted heritage asset from harmful change.

Threats

- Continued long term status of disused buildings, structures, and green assets, which will deteriorate further and continue to attract vandalism.
- Further decay and deterioration of historic building fabric.
- Continued incremental changes and unsympathetic repairs and alterations to historic buildings.
- Continuation of deterioration and insensitive repairs to street surfacing.
- Loss of surviving traditional floorscape that will dilute historic character.
- Further loss of boundaries and gardens to hard standing further degrading character and marring visual appearance.
- Continuation of street clutter worsening the existing situation.

Summary

The conservation area is in fair material condition overall and despite its problems it 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 Opportunitis and options appraisal

The appraisal has identified two disused and deteriorated sites/buildings that offer potential for reuse and redevelopment that present opportunities for enhancement within the conservation area. The following provides an individual options appraisal for addressing these sites/buildings in the future.

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

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

Options appraisal

- Mixed use potential.
- Within floodplain placing significant restrictions.Requires awareness of flood prevention as an essential measure in any new building design.
- Retention and reuse of existing building to be explored.
- The physical and technical constraints of the building implies that its adaptation to an alternative use may be improbable.

- Retention of historic boundary walls.
- Particular emphasis would need to be given to the direct inter-visibility between the site and Durham World Heritage Site.
- Would need to respond positively to historic urban, riverscape, and landscape contexts.
- Consider contemporary design of exceptional quality.



Site location plan



Site highlighted in local context



Site images



Mounty Joy, Farm Buildings (NDHA)

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

Options appraisal

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



Site location plan



Site images

