

Darlington West End Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

March 2010



DARLINGTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Introduction

West End Conservation Area (formerly known as Stanhope / Grange Road Conservation Area) was designated in 1975 and enlarged in 1990 and 1999. Featuring the best of Darlington's early suburban development from the 18th to 20th Century, this Conservation Area has a varied character that provides instructive forms for future suburban development as well as its own intrinsic value.

Primarily located to the west of the Town Centre Conservation Area and extending as far as the Cockerton Conservation Area and Carmel Road, this extensive part of Darlington has extensive tree cover and significant open spaces.

The purpose of this character appraisal is to update the record the Council has of the area and to capture the essential qualities that make this area special both from a historic and spatial perspective, informing planning decisions.

Conservation Areas are places where buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of special quality and interest.

2. Planning Policy

Darlington Borough Council's Development Plan is currently its Local Plan, adopted in 1997 (incorporating Adopted Alterations in 2001). In 2004 the Government introduced changes to the planning system with the aim of speeding up development plan preparation, making it more flexible and improving community involvement. Therefore, Darlington's Local Plan will need to be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF) for which work is underway. Conservation policies within the Local Plan were deleted on 27 September 2007 because they replicated national policy. Since then, and until Darlington's Local Development Framework is in place, conservation planning decisions are made based on national guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic environment, and will eventually be made by its replacement, the forthcoming Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning for the Historic Environment.

The Local Development Framework is a suite of documents intended to replace Local Plans. Conservation policies are likely to be found within the Core Strategy, and potentially Supplementary Planning Documents, providing detailed policy (as found in the Design Supplementary Planning Document) for Development Management and possibly Conservation itself.

Impacts of Conservation Area Designation

Its main practical use is to aid decision-making on planning applications received for works and development within the Conservation Area.

The designation of a Conservation Area by the Council introduces additional planning controls that are intended to ensure that any alterations do not detract from an area's "character or appearance"; they also aim to conserve or improve the "special interest" of an area.

In normal circumstances, householders have certain Permitted Development rights to carry out certain minor works to their properties, such as the erection of garden buildings, front porches or satellite dishes. However in a Conservation Area these rights are much reduced. For example:

The consent of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings, whereas in normal circumstances, only notification is required.

- The removal of boundary wall, fences and gates would require permission.
- The pruning or felling of trees requires six weeks prior notification.
- Any alterations to front elevations may require permission.
- Applications for proposals that affect the character or appearance of the area are advertised in local newspapers.
- Any new development (including extensions) would be expected to in keeping with, or improve the character of the area.

In addition to the above, works to non-residential properties, such as commercial properties and flats, will require planning permission if the work involves change. An example of this is replacing timber windows with uPVC on a block of flats, office or shop. Permission is unlikely to be granted where the works are to the detriment of the Conservation Area.

It is an offence not to comply with these requirements.

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3. Summary of Special Interest

Location and Setting

Location and context

West End Conservation Area is a part of Darlington's inner residential suburbs and is a generally prosperous and attractive part of town. Ranging from high-density town houses near to the centre of town to large detached villas in substantial grounds, this area makes a significant contribution to Darlington's housing offer.

Many of the green spaces and areas of mature tree cover remain in their historic location, although their use may have changed, adding to the spatial and amenity value of this part of town.

Being either side of two major routes into town this Conservation Area makes a significant contribution to the wider character of the town and reinforces Darlington's high quality built and natural heritage.

General character and plan form

The West End Conservation Area is an extensive area to the west of Darlington Town Centre. Including within its area a number of radial routes into the town, the plan form extends outwards along Coniscliffe Road and Woodland Road, both historic routes to Barnard Castle and Teesdale.

The boundary extends to the edge of first major expansions to the west of the town and includes most of South Park and to the north as far as the Memorial Hospital.

Within the diversity of built forms and layouts there is an underlying consistency in terms of materials and spatial quality.

Landscape setting

The area is predominantly flat with little in terms of topography affecting either the design or layout of the buildings, except in a very few cases. The buildings within the area represent the first phase of development upon originally greenfield land. Some scant evidence remains from historic map analysis of field boundaries that define specific phases of development.

Prior to the mid to late nineteenth century the River Skerne, which is to the south of the conservation area, meandered through the area that is now South Park prior to being canalised and managed for leisure and ornamental purposes.

Many of the larger, historic villas and halls within the area had extensive grounds, gardens and horticultural activities around them, some of which are still in evidence.

The area benefits from extensive mature tree cover in many areas.

The West End Conservation Area has a number of historic and valuable parks, squares and greenspaces and important green corridors within it's boundary, namely; South Park, Southend, Green Park, Stanhope Green and a gateway to the Denes. (see key map)

Opportunities for views out of the Conservation Area to the landscape beyond are limited. The primary views into the Conservation Area are from the intervening roads on the journey into the town centre where the open spaces, gardens and tree cover provide much value.



Woodland Road circa 1911.

Note the boundary walls and gates, Holy Trinity Church and the tree cover.

image courtesy of www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/90893939

There are few landmarks on the skyline above the tree cover and building heights tend to be in the range of substantial two to three storey buildings.

Historic development and archaeology

The origins and historic development of the area

West End Conservation Area is on the edge of Darlington Town Centre. Predating the industrial and railway influenced expansion of the 19th Century this part of the Borough was predominantly agricultural in character with interspersed large residences set in substantial grounds. The map of 1829 (by Reed – Bishop Middleham) clearly shows those features that have survived subsequent development notably;

- Woodlands
- Larchfield
- Southend (Borrowses)
- Polam Hall

To a greater or lesser extent.

Evidence of development prior to this date is scant.

The development of Darlington prior to the eighteenth century was predominantly limited to its medieval form creating overcrowding within the town and little development without.

To the west of Skinnergate, in the town centre, 200ha of glebeland forms part of the area covered by the Conservation Area, later developed as west end housing. The glebe can be seen on Reed's map of 1829.

Subsequent phases of development are identified through the inserted maps with a number of key notable features that contribute to the character of the area today; Much of the land to the west of the town centre was in the ownership of the Cleveland Estate and the steady opening up of roads and subsequent disposal of the estate has influenced the morphology and patterns of development in the area.

Demand was increasing for middle class housing in Darlington from the 1860's onwards. From the 1870s to the early 20th Century, in fits and starts, large and small packets of land were developed spreading west to meet the once isolated Rectory and the Cleveland Dairy (now demolished).

Much of the middle class housing, either built speculatively or for private clients, was heavily regulated by the Cleveland Estate as landowner. The estate was concerned about long-term residual value and demanded high quality building as such, detailing a legacy apparent today in the attractive streets of the inner conservation area.

Alongside the laying out and opening of new streets, roads and crescents various plans were made, adapted, abandoned and ultimately market forces were a key driver in terms of phasing and delivery.



Pierremont, date unknown.

Prior to the development of the grounds. Note the tower, now on Tower Road.

image courtesy of www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/92685655

The Quaker Estates in Darlington

A number of wealthy and prominent families, most famously the Peases and the Backhouses were active in the industrial and commercial development of Darlington throughout the 19th Century. As members of the Society of Friends these wealthy patrons built large but simple and unostentatious houses with substantial grounds. These grounds often had glasshouses, vineries and had extensive gardens. The Peases owned Southend throughout the 19th Century, the Backhouses built Polam Hall and Larchfield. Woodlands was built in the 1820's for Robert Botcherby and was subsequently extended by the Peases.

To the north of the conservation area the grounds of Pierremont Villa extended to Woodland Road, with the gatehouse remaining within the boundary.

By the beginning of the twentieth century these large estates had been sold and developed as family members died. In the main these new streets and houses were of a high quality, making a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Evidence on the ground still exists of the boundaries to these properties in the form of substantial stone walls and gate piers, either still in use for larger infill properties or now defunct and stopped up. In the case of Southend, part of the grounds now form a linear park alongside Grange Road.



Lodge on Woodland Road, formerly the gatehouse for Pierremont.

Elsewhere in the wider conservation area, the large villas of the Peases and Backhouses were beginning to be encroached upon by housing development as the estates of deceased family members were disposed of. After some late nineteenth century plans to divide the Southend estate

was finally laid out for housing, designed by Hoskins in 1897. The house later became a school and subsequently a hotel.

This pattern of development continued into the twentieth century with the landscape around Woodlands finally being lost to housing as late as 1997.

Archaeology

There are no archaeological records or finds within the boundary of the West End Conservation Area. Any settlement in this area was isolated and sporadic until the 19th Century.

(Taken from Victoria History, map evidence etc.)

Spatial Analysis

The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

A variety of public, private and semi-private spaces make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

Public Space

From north to south;

At the end of Woodland Road near Cockerton an entrance to the Denes touches the Conservation Area. Forming a small part of a much wider network of open space, parks and habitats this gateway to the Denes provides a connection and visible link to the road network. Further along Woodland Road to the east gate piers remain from the former Brinkburn Mansion, now demolished, that remained until the early 20th century. The conservation area boundary reflects the former grounds of this residence.



A gateway to the Denes to the north of the West End Conservation Area. The former grounds of Brinkburn Mansion now form part of this network of parks.

The former Woodlands estate, now executive housing, benefits from a wild flower meadow that provides a local habitat complementary to the woodland edge character of the edge of the site. This area is public space and is of great amenity and biodiversity value, though direct access is limited. This space benefits from its close proximity to the road network and a degree of natural surveillance, although in the long term the existing trees may suffer from the development of these grounds.

Holy Trinity Church yard is a public 'sacred' space with a variety of habitats and high amenity value and provides an excellent setting for the church. The roadside flanks have a substantial boundary and gates that demarcate the space, although the space does adjoin the rear of some properties.

Further south, Stanhope Green, adjoining the Queen Elizabeth VI Form College, is a popular and well-used green square close to the town centre. Bounded by buildings on all

sides it benefits from a degree of natural surveillance. With large areas of grass interspersed with mature trees this area makes a strong contribution to the environmental quality of the area, although more seating and waste disposal provision would be a welcome addition. Improvements to the boundaries, entrances and path surfaces would update this space, potentially adding historic and amenity value. Southend linear park, alongside Grange Road, provides an alternative pedestrian and cycle route that runs through mature trees and grassed areas (with crocuses in spring). To the west there is no boundary and the green space meets the street, to the east a low stone boundary wall separates the park from the pavement, with regular access points.

To the west of Southend, Green Park has an undulating feel with a variety of grassed areas, some equipped play, due to be

updated, and mature trees. The space adjoins the rear of the surrounding properties, benefits from little natural surveillance and has indistinct entrances. This park would benefit from improvement in terms of entrances and visibility, however the mature trees and space, notwithstanding, provide a high level of amenity and biodiversity value to the area.

To the south, the newly refurbished South Park provides pleasure gardens, recreation, play and habitats alongside the River Skerne as well as being the town's most important

wildlife corridor. To the south the more formal part of the park benefits from railings and formal entrances, serving to provide access and orientation. To the north and east these become less clear with 30 acres of amenity grassland this less formal open space adjoins the rear of the surrounding properties. Access is occasionally limited from surrounding streets by formal decorative fences. A lake provides ornamental value, habitats and a superb collection of specimen trees can also be found.

South Park

Laid out in 1853, South Park was built on the site of Poor Howdens farm. The land had been previously gifted to the town and through the agency and benevolence of Joseph Pease it was developed into a park featuring a large collection of botanic specimens, reflecting its Quaker heritage.

The park developed over time through extensions to its current extent and was previously known as Bellasis Park (after the Bellasis charity, the former owners of the farm), People's Park, New Park and Victoria Park.

Within the park various buildings were provided including the clock tower (1901) and the tea pavilion (1908). The Listed bandstand was built in 1893 (at a cost of £250 from skater's fees) and the fountain from Pierremont was relocated from its original home in the grounds of the villa.

The Fothergill Fountain is next to the Parkside entrance after being moved from its former home in Bondgate. John Fothergill was a key member of the temperance movement.

South Park was recently restored via Heritage Lottery funding and is on Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. More information can be found via the following link www.pastscape.org.uk



South Park Clock Tower built in 1901.

Semi-private Space

The forecourt to the Arts Centre (formerly a Ladies Teacher Training College) provides a contemporary hard landscape and setting for the building. It benefits from natural surveillance from the Arts Centre and complements the character of the adjoining Stanhope Green.

The car park for Sainsbury's supermarket is landscaped to its outer edges but makes little or no positive contribution to the character of the area.

Polam Hall School grounds are visible from South Park and partially from Grange Road, contributing positively to the character of the area. The grounds contain a pond which is a habitat to the Great Crested Newt.

E.D. Walker Homes has a substantial green in the middle of the housing that is partially visible from Coniscliffe Road and has limited public access, mainly for visitors.

Private Space

Many of the houses in the area benefit from front gardens and in many cases substantial rear gardens. These private gardens make a significant contribution to the character of the area through a number of means:-

- Many gardens have mature trees, that are visible from a distance and above roof height
- Larger substantial plots are interspersed with smaller plots giving variety in house form, setback and spatial quality
- Front gardens often have significant planting further emphasising the spacious nature of the streets
- At the edges of the Conservation area there has been significantly less infill development resulting in lower density development maintaining choice and variety in the town's housing offer
- Almost all houses have a degree of defensible space to the front

Key views and vistas

The primary characteristic vistas within the conservation area are the treelined approaches to the town centre. Mature trees set in the front gardens or vestiges of older estates are often set behind substantial boundary walls.

Other key vistas are;



Vista A

Along Woodland Road. The substantial boundary wall to the left relates to the now developed grounds of Woodlands. The mature tree cover makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Lower boundary walls to the right are interspersed with gatepiers. Large scale highway signage makes a negative contribution.



Vista B

The substantial and elevated terraces of Coniscliffe Road lie opposite the former grounds of Larchfield. Mature trees frame the view. Note the brick boundary walls and railings in this area.



Vista C

Substantial terraced townhouses opposite the former grounds of Southend, now a linear park. One of the fountains that is a feature of the area can be seen to the right and again, mature tree cover both behind the boundary walls and in the distance makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area



Vista D

At the gateway between the Town Centre and West End Conservation Areas. Abbey Road extends into the distance, dominated by mature tree cover. Boundary walls and hedges demarcate private space to the front of the houses and the landmark of the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form frames the view.



Vista E

Holy Trinity Church, the substantial elevated terraced townhouses of Woodland Road and mature tree cover dominate. Note also the stone boundary walls.



Vista F

Riverside tranquillity. The substantial grounds of Polam Hall alongside the River Skerne contribute to long distance views complementary to South Park which has recently benefited from substantial refurbishment.



Vista G

Riverside footpath in South Park. A beautiful collection of specimen trees, open spaces and the riparian environment provides accessible greenspace, opportunities for movement and recreation and biodiversity value in the heart of the town.



Vista H

Mature tree cover makes a key positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

Character Analysis

Definition of character areas

The West End Conservation Area can be split into three distinct character areas.

- (1) the more urban development of the former Cleveland Estate and the gradually subsumed villas of this area and Woodland Road
- (2) the suburban development of Coniscliffe Road and around
- (3) South Park

Activity and prevailing or former uses and their influence on the plan form and buildings

The gradual development of the area, after the subsequent opening up of roads enabling development has driven the form of the Conservation Area. Two distinct patterns of development have occurred:-

- Along the main roads into town, typically Grange Road and Woodland Road, ribbon development of villas and houses of varying sizes took place as plots became available. These were sometimes on the remnants of larger estates or as parts were sold off. This pattern continued throughout the development of the area.
- Between these main historic routes, new roads were opened up and infill development, either on previous gardens or speculatively on larger estates. This pattern created developments of larger and smaller rows and individual houses created over time, often complementary in form, height and layout, notwithstanding.

Via the agency of the Cleveland Estate the scale and form of the buildings, as well as their details were tightly controlled, giving rise to the current high quality streets in the area of this historic landholding.

Occasional detached villas and large houses were built throughout the development of the area, either as pioneer development or in subsequent infill plots. Where smaller units were built these remained substantial in scale in the most part and as part of planned streets of row houses.

Detached properties (other than the earliest examples) are predominantly found in the outer edges of the conservation area.

Other than educational or cultural uses the main use is residential. A small amount of local shopping and businesses can be found on Cleveland Terrace and West Street. Many of the buildings within the inner part of the Conservation Area are resilient forms that could be adapted to a variety of uses contributing to sustainable development.

The qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area

The West End Conservation Area benefits from buildings that have a strong street frontage, distinct boundaries and in the main attractive front gardens. Exposed rears of buildings are rarely found and where they are mature planting often obscures them. Due to the layout of the area, with rear lanes for service access there are the occasional exposed sides to terraces with blank walls.

In the main, buildings are modest in their construction and detailing and substantial in scale giving a prevailing feel of restrained elegance, unusual for the period in which the bulk of development took place.

The core buildings of the original Quaker villas are simple and classically proportioned congruous with their period and patronage. Predominantly late Georgian, they have been extended in subsequent years with extensions often reflecting the style of the time and occasionally in harmony with the host building.

Later Victorian development reflects a number of styles of building of a consistently high quality. Ranging from simply constructed and detailed terraces to more detailed and decorated townhouses there are many unifying features that give the area a distinctive identity;

- Buildings are typically within the range of two and a half to three storeys, with the occasional exceptions.
- Almost all houses have a defensible space to the front, either bounded by a wall, railings or both.

- Towards the town centre terraced forms predominate, with this pattern breaking down to the edges of the Conservation Area, in line with the character zones in the adopted Distinctively Darlington Design SPD.
- Ceiling heights are typically high, creating buildings of a substantial scale notwithstanding their number of storeys.
- Windows are predominantly rectangular, and taller than they are wide.
- Entrances to buildings are prominent and often a focal point for decoration, detail or architectural expression.
- Houses face the street, usually with a direct route to the front door.
- Where infill development has taken place, this has been historically restricted to planned development alongside streets.

Early Twentieth Century buildings follow either Victorian patterns, with a larger variety of window forms and details or individual detached houses on remaining plots. Some of these buildings reflect the Arts and Crafts style of the time and have roughcast render and on rare occasions distinctive details, reflective of the style.

Later Twentieth Century buildings are predominantly lower quality, small-scale infill often with poor street frontages and little or no boundaries.

Unlisted buildings

There are proportionally only a small number of listed buildings within the West End Conservation Area. Those that are listed are, in the main, older pre-Victorian examples.

Overall the Conservation Area benefits from a high proportion of high quality buildings that make a positive contribution to the area due to their group value and relative intact features, boundaries and windows.

Those buildings and structures of particular note, not Listed but of particular historic or architectural merit include:

- Queen Elizabeth VI Form College - G.G. Hoskins - 1875-6 - Waterhouse influenced Gothic (Pevsner)
- Darlington Arts Centre (former Schoolmistresses College) - J.P. Pritchett - 1876 - H Plan Gothic (Pevsner)
- 55 Cleveland Avenue - Arts and Crafts style, large roughcast house with decorative brick chimneystacks
- Sir E. D. Walker Homes - large group of elderly person's homes around a spacious central green. Neo-Georgian.
- A number of drinking fountains can be found within the Conservation Area.
- The former boathouse of Southend, now known as Oakdene Lodge to the rear of Southend Avenue
- Houses by Clark and Moscrop on Ashcroft Road



Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, by Hoskins, is a significant local building making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



Houses by Clark and Moscrop.

Drinking Fountains in the West End

Within the West End Conservation Area, often set into boundary walls there are four historic drinking fountains. These can be found on the corner of Milbank Road and Woodland Road, Grange Road, Coniscliffe Road and within South Park.

On Coniscliffe Road a brick built fountain was donated by Joseph Pease in 1866 on the roadside boundary of his house, Southend. A Bird motif on the keystone and a granite bowl. In good condition although not connected to water supply.

Milbank Road and Woodland Road Junction is host to another drinking fountain donated by Joseph Pease. Restored by Dr Freshwater. Cast iron with bird motifs and

trident and fish devices to either side within stone surround. The stone surround is suffering from extensive erosion. Grade II Listed (see Historic Assets audit below).

Also in 1866, Joseph Pease donated this fountain on Grange Road. Of carved stone with Granite bowl, bird motif and shields to either side. In good condition, not connected to the water supply.

Finally, in South Park (see above) the Fothergill monument stands at the entrance in good condition but is not connected. It was originally sited in Bondgate.

These fountains were gifted by Quaker patrons with the aim of promoting temperance whilst providing refreshment to the passing traveller.



Fountain on Grange Road set within the boundary wall around the former grounds of Southend. To the rear of the photograph the houses of Southend Avenue can be seen overlooking the park.

Additionally, whole streets of terraces, designed with a high degree of uniformity and of a high value due to their relatively intact windows, doors, boundaries and rooflines. Most notable of these are;

- Southend Avenue
- Oakdene Avenue
- Beechfield Road
- Parts of Langholme Crescent
- Stanhope Road

And the following rows,

- 73-79 Coniscliffe Road
- 85A-95A Coniscliffe Road
- 34-42 Cleveland Avenue

Overall, much of the West End Conservation Area has intact boundaries and architectural detail, adding to the value. These features overall are worthy of further protection and care.



73-79 Coniscliffe Road, a distinctive row of Arts and Crafts style houses adds interest, variety and quality to the character and appearance of the area.

Local Details

Throughout the Conservation Area as a whole there are a number of consistent details that appear in the majority of buildings. Not exhaustive and subject to exceptions these details are as follows;

Boundaries

The main type of boundary is a low wall, in either brick or stone that would have had railings atop. These railings, in the main now lost through their removal during WW2, would have been of wrought iron.

Elsewhere, brick or stone walls are employed either as low or high boundary walls, although to the street these are generally limited to no more than 1200mm in height.

Gates, where they are in place are typically wrought iron.

All walls are topped with copingstones or a suitable brick detail, often a special.

Gate piers are an important feature within walls. Where the gate has been stopped up they remain as signifiers of the historic opening and should be retained as such. Elsewhere, where they are used for their intended purpose they are substantial in their construction, often with brick specials to the corners.

Where railings have been lost hedges are sometimes employed as boundary treatments.

Paths

Paths lead directly in the main from street to gate to front door. In larger villas this pattern may be replaced with a sweeping drive to a forecourt outside the front of the dwelling, often with planting to the centre.

Doors

Many properties benefit from original timber doors in traditional frames. These make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The inherent variety of colour choice between owners often creates visual interest within the street. Also, where a row has been designed as such, the uniformity of the entrance adds to the visual coherence.

Dependant upon the age of the property a wide variety of door surrounds and details can be found, with the following common themes;

- Where they exist, canopies are small.

- Doorways are often simple in form, in earlier examples (late c18 – early c19) with classical entablature, rarely with pediment. Where porticos exist these are often simple and unadorned, projecting only a little. Transom lights are a common feature.
- Later development features doors with simpler treatments.
- Doors may be recessed, creating a degree of shelter.

In areas closer to the town centre doors are often above street level accessed by steps as there is often a half basement, creating a piano nobile.



Doorway featuring pilasters and entablature with fanlight above. Note the raised ground floor and steps up to the entrance, at the end of a direct path to the street.

Windows

Some form of stone lintel usually tops windows in the West End Conservation Area. Brick soldier courses are found only rarely and almost never to the front elevation.

There are a large amount of original timber windows within the area making a significant positive contribution to the character of the area.

Proportionally windows are taller than they are wide.

Bay windows are a common feature. These are usually of masonry construction and may extend over two storeys. They almost always have a flat top, with the roof material obscured by detailing.



Original timber doors and windows make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the West End Conservation Area. Architectural glass, complementary to these features also adds to the quality.

Roofline

Where the roofline is penetrated there are three main means this is achieved by:

- **Parapet Gables** - The wall material continues upwards creating a gable. This gable may be decorative and provide a rhythmic element within a row of houses.
- **Masonry Dormers** - Usually on stone buildings, occasionally with a small set back these dormers continue the wall material without the use of a gable.
- **Dormers** - Various types of dormer window, with a pitched roof if to the front can be found within the area. Some were designed in at the outset and are often more successful than those retrofitted. Flat roofed dormers are found to the rear of buildings. In the main the scale of dormers is quite modest.

Almost all buildings of the later C19 and early C20 have a decorative feature at the eaves. This can take the form of dentil courses or banding.

Chimney stacks, either plain or decorative make a positive contribution to the character of the area, both for their rhythmic role in the roofline and their occasional decorative treatment.

Prevalent and traditional building materials and the public realm

The main building material throughout the Conservation Area is brick. Brick is predominantly red in colour with a few notable exceptions;

- **Pease Brick**, the light coloured buff brick unique to the area, produced as a by-product of mining activities. This might also be found in varying colours due to the addition of other materials in the manufacturing process. Currently no bricks of modern manufacture provide a good match.
- **Black bricks**, used as a decorative feature in some instances can be found in limited quantities within the Conservation Area

Sandstone is commonly used for details around windows and doors as well as to provide banding.

In most cases roofs are constructed of slate. Older walls, particularly boundaries, are stone. Only a few buildings within the Conservation Area are of stone construction.

A historic material for the back streets is scoria blocks. Pale blue in colour they were manufactured from by-products of foundries. They were often scored to have two, four or eight divisions and very occasionally have a manufacturers stamp visible. For most purposes they are an unsuitable material for the public realm in new development as they are slippery when wet.

Scoria Blocks

The word scoria is derived from the Greek meaning 'excrement or dung'. The later usage of the term was used to describe the slag from blast furnaces; scoria was a euphemism for the same substance.

It was discovered that this hot material could be used to make hard blocks for street surfaces, solving the problem of disposal of this waste product. A complex process of manufacture involving rotating moulds and subsequent annealing in a kiln, created blocks that could be used for a variety of purposes due to their strength and hardness.

Today, although not suitable for motor vehicles, these blocks with their distinctive blue colouring are a distinctive feature of the back lanes in this area. They were originally installed as they were easy to clean and were an alternative to unsurfaced muddy lanes.

(From Chris Lloyd – Echo Memories)

The occasional stone curb can be found in some areas, particularly Harewood Hill. Where found they add distinctive character to otherwise anonymous streetscapes.

An audit of heritage assets



Drinking Fountain, Woodland Road, Darlington

Grade II

Condition ■

Drinking Fountain dated 1866, donated to the town by Joseph Pease



Forecourt Wall 3, Harewood Hill, Darlington

Grade II

Condition ■

Low ashlar wall of mid C19, with a rounded coping, ramped up at sides and centre to tall piers with coved cornices and low pyramidal tops.



Forecourt Walls, 67-69 Stanhope Road, North Darlington

Grade II

Condition ■

Mid C19. Low front walls of ashlar with panelled end and gate piers. Railings missing.



Steps Ramp Rail & Lampholder N Side, Holy Trinity Church, Woodland Road, Darlington

Grade II

Condition ■

Circa 1836. Flight of steps and ramp up to north tower porch has stout handrail with twist wrought iron balusters; and column lampholder on stone plinth.




Boundary Walls Gates & Piers N & W Sides, Holy Trinity Church, Woodland Road, Darlington


Grade II Condition ■


Circa 1836. Roughly coursed rubble with curved stone coping. Central pair of gate piers whose rebated angles hold nookshafts and whose tall caps recall the church spire. Heavy pair of wrought iron gates with double row of sunflower-headed standards, the lower heads above a rail at one-third height. Similar smaller piers hold single gate on west return.

	<p>Garden Wall 5, Harewood Hill, Darlington</p> <p>Grade II</p> <p>Condition <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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	<p>Forecourt Walls & Piers, Neasham House, 205 Grange Road, Darlington</p> <p>Grade II Condition <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C19 stone coped red brick wall with 4 stone piers, at ends and gateway. Plinths, very deep, large vermiculations, cornices and low, stepped pyramidal caps.</p>
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	<p>49-55 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7EH</p> <p>Grade II</p> <p>Condition <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Row of terraced houses circa 1800</p>
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	<p>41-47 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7EH</p> <p>Grade II</p> <p>Condition <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Row of terraced houses circa 1800</p>
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	<p>57-61 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7EH</p> <p>Grade II</p> <p>Condition <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Row of terraced houses circa 1800</p>
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Grange Hotel, Southend Avenue, Darlington, DL3 7HZ

Grade II

Condition ■

This building was formerly part of Southend Roman Catholic School. Early-mid C19 large foursquare villa of 3 storeys, 3 bays. Pinkish brick. This was the house of Joseph Pease until his death in 1872.



46 Cleveland Avenue, Darlington, DL3 7HG

Grade II

Condition ■

House. 1902-4 by Parker & Unwin. Brick and roughcast, with a plain tile hipped roof and 3 brick stacks. 2 storey plus attic. L-plan. All windows are square leaded casements.



21 Cleveland Terrace, Darlington, DL3 7HD

Grade II

Condition ■

Mid C19 two-storey, 3-bay villa. Pinkish brick.



4 Cleveland Avenue, Darlington, DL3 7HE

Grade II

Condition ■

The last survivor of an early-mid C19 terrace. Two storeys, 2 windows. Pinkish brick.



140 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7RW

Grade II

Condition ■

Large early C19 villa now in use as offices. Three storeys, 5 windows. Pinkish brick, low, pitched hipped slate roof almost the entire ridge of which is covered by a long chimney stack with 12 pots.



126 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7RW

Grade II

Condition ■

Small early C19 villa. Two storeys, 3 windows and one-storey side bays. Pinkish brick with stone-coped parapet largely concealing low pitched hipped slate roof with end chimneys.



122-124 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7RW

Grade II

Condition ■

Early-mid C19, each 2 storeys and basement, 2 windows, originally part of a terrace design, each door being at left. Pinkish brick. Fairly low pitched slated roof with centre and end chimneys.



94 - 96 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7RW

Grade II Condition ■

Early-mid C19, each 3 storeys, 2 windows, No. 94 having an additional rounded right section going right round the street corner into Cleveland Terrace. Fairly low pitched slated roofs with round hips over corner, ridge stacks. Pinkish brick.



104 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7RW

Grade II

Condition ■

Two-storey, 3 window early-mid C19 house. Pinkish brick



102 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7RW

Grade II

Condition ■

Two-storey, 3 window early-mid C19 house of pinkish brick. End chimneys to slated roof of moderate pitch.



98-100 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington DL3 7RW

Grade II Condition ■

Early-mid C19 pair, each 2 storeys, 2 windows. Pinkish brick; slated roof of moderately low pitch with centre and left end chimneys. Stone cills and lintels to recessed sash windows with glazing bars. Three stone steps to 4-panel doors, with cornice head and patterned oblong fanlight, in pilaster-and-entablature doorcases.



111, 113, 115, 117 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, DL3 7ET

Grade II

Condition ■

Early C19 terrace, each 2 storeys and basement. Nos. 111 and 113 have 3 windows, the others 2. Pinkish brick. Low pitched slated roof with lip at left end and ridge stacks.



27-33 Cleveland Terrace Darlington DL3 7HD

Grade II

Condition ■

Early-mid C19 terrace, each house 2 storeys and basement, 2 windows. Pinkish brick. Fairly low pitched slated roof with ridge stacks.



Harewood Hill Lodge, 14 Harewood Hill, Darlington, DL3 7HY

Grade II Condition ■

Early C19 villa with alterations. Two storeys, 3 windows, wide proportions. Low pitched hipped slate roof has deep eaves soffit on paired brackets.



7, 8 Harewood Hill Darlington DL3 7HY

Grade II

Condition ■

Late C18 or early C19. Originally one house; now divided. Two storeys, 3 windows in all. Pinkish brick; slated roof with end chimney.



5, 6 Harewood Hill Darlington DL3 7HY

Grade II Condition ■

Two large early C19 houses, each 3 storeys, 3 windows. Somewhat altered. Pinkish brick with stone 2nd floor cill band. Fairly low pitched hipped slate roofs. No. 6 also has a 1st floor stone cill band. Gauged flat brick arches to sash windows, some replaced.



1, 2 Harewood Hill Darlington DL3 7HY

Grade II

Condition ■

Early C19. Each 2 storeys, 3 windows. Pinkish brick with low pitched slated roofs; end chimneys



3, 4 Harewood Hill Darlington DL3 7HY

Grade II

Condition ■

Early C19. Each 2 storeys, 3 windows. Pinkish brick; low pitched slated roofs with end chimneys. Stone 1st floor cill band. Gauged flat brick arches to 1st floor sash windows with glazing bars in flush wood architraves.



1-8 Harewood Grove, Darlington, DL3 7HU

Grade II* Condition ■

Imposing early-mid C19 terrace of Newcastle type. Each house 3 storeys and basement, 2 windows and door on ground floor. Fairly low pitched slated roof hipped at ends, having deep eaves soffit on paired brackets over stone frieze. Row of transverse chimney stacks.



Polam Hall School, Grange Road, Darlington, DL1 5PA

Grade II Condition ■

Second quarter of C19 villa, formerly the residence of Jonathan Backhouse the banker, now a girls school. Pinkish brick with stone eaves cornice and blocking course, 1st floor band and plinth. Low pitched hipped slate roof with end and ridge stacks. Flat gauged brick arches and stone cills to recessed sash windows with glazing bars.



Neasham House, 205 Grange Road, Darlington, DL1 5NT

Grade II Condition ■

Early C19 villa of 2 storeys, 3 windows. pinkish brick. Low pitched hipped slated roof with eaves soffit; 2 brick stacks almost fill short ridge. Gauged flat brick arches to 1st floor sash windows with glazing bars in stucco-lined reveals.



Bandstand, South Park, Parkside, Darlington

Grade II

Condition ■

Late C19 octagonal bandstand with ogee shaped ribbed leaded roof of moderately low pitch. Central pierced octagonal drum supports ribbed leaded dome with wrought iron crow and spray finial.



Fountain, South Park, Parkside, Darlington

Grade II Condition ■

Mid C19. Tall terra-cotta structure. Small quatrefoil upper basin, with leafy finial, rests on 4 short columns of polished granite. These rise from a larger octafoil basin resting on a short, thick granite column upon a round terra-cotta base. All parts are richly moulded. Fountain rests on later cement plinth where a plaque records its origin at Pierremont House and its presentation to the borough in 1925.



67-69 Stanhope Road North Darlington DL3 7AP

Grade II

Condition ■

Substantial ashlar fronted terraced houses of mid C19, classical but with gothic touches. Each 2 storeys and attic, 3 windows. Slated mansards with 3 pedimented stone dormers.



Pierremont Lodge, 1A Tower Road, Darlington, DL3 6RU

Grade II Condition ■

1854 by Richardson and Ross. T-shaped lodge of one storey and attic. Coursed tooled freestone. Very high pitched slated roof with carved and pierced bargeboards to gable ends. Stone ridge stack has octagonal shafts and terra-cotta octagonal pots.



The Woodlands, 91 Woodland Road, Darlington, DL3 7UA

Grade II

Condition ■

Early-mid C19 villa. Entrance front of 2 storeys, 3 windows, large proportions, with slightly later 2-storey, 4-window north extension in similar style. Pinkish brick with stone 1st floor band and plinth



Holy Trinity Church, Woodland Road, Darlington

Grade II

Condition ■

1836 by Anthony Salvin. Cruciform church with aisles but no clerestory. Coursed freestone with ashlar dressings and fairly high pitched slated roof. Tower, placed midway on north aisle, of one tall stage, bell stage and parapet and a small, stumpy off-centre spire. Early English style properly carried out, well in advance of its period. Grouped but not stepped lancets, some with framing blanks.

Key

■ = Good condition

■ = Threatened

■ = At risk

Descriptions are not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the listings available on the Darlington Borough Council website.

The contribution made to the character of the area by green spaces; and its biodiversity value

Much of the West End Conservation Area benefits from mature trees and a network of interconnected habitats. To the north the entrance to the Denes, a valuable green infrastructure asset, connects with Woodland Road with its trees and mature gardens. To the south the area includes South Park and the riparian habitats that pass through and connect with the countryside.

Key green spaces and habitats within the area are identified below;

- The Denes
- Woodlands, including a wildflower meadow LNR
- Stanhope Green
- Southend Avenue
- Green Park
- South Park
- Polam Hall School

In addition domestic gardens and the grounds of institutional and education buildings make a significant contribution to the area's habitats and green infrastructure.

A patchwork of semi-natural habitats exist in areas that have remained undeveloped or have been allowed to succeed naturally between buildings, along lanes or on the edge of stands of trees. These make a significant contribution to the area's green infrastructure and biodiversity through their native species and provide links to other assets.

Also, these informal areas make a positive contribution to the character of the area, complementary to the order of buildings and gardens.

The predominantly older buildings and structures in the area provide much greater opportunities for wildlife habitats than their modern counterparts. Outbuildings and roof structures make a particularly valuable contribution.

The extent of intrusion or damage

The West End Conservation area suffers from a number of intrusive features:

- The replacement of original timber windows with UPVC has damaged the character of the area in some cases. This is limited at present on the whole, but it also shows a trend that causes concern.
- The surface car park of Sainsbury's Supermarket and the lack of enclosure or boundary makes a poor contribution to the character of the area.
- A number of poor quality house extensions.
- Infill development of gap sites with buildings of an inappropriate scale and form or displaying poor detailing.
- Modern developments behind walls or with an uncharacteristic relationship to the street.
- Development pressure on the extensive gardens that are found in some parts of the area.
- Extensions to the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College
- The loss of railings and walls

The existence of any neutral areas

Key neutral areas within the West End Conservation Area are as follows:

- Later twentieth century housing developments, although some of these make a negative contribution.
- Other than South Park, many of the greenspaces in the area have poor facilities and would benefit from investment in these and their ongoing maintenance.
- The public realm is of adequate quality but would benefit from more locally distinctive surfaces and detail.

General condition

The condition of the area is generally good. The intrusions outlined above are a concern but overall the high quality and resilient forms of the buildings in the area have stood the test of time.

Some of the buildings are now quite aged and their sympathetic maintenance and repair should be a priority. In areas such as windows and doors, as well as roofline and detailing, care needs to be taken not to erode the high quality built environment. Management proposals are outlined later in this document.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change and suggested improvements

The West End Conservation area is predominantly residential and this is unlikely to change.

The subdivision of larger properties can cause problems with lack of ownership of garden spaces and the use of forecourts for parking, both of which has a negative impact on the area.

Pressure on both front and rear gardens for development and for car parking is beginning to be problematic and if this continues there will be further erosion to the character of the area and its rich biodiversity value.

Mature trees are in some cases reaching the end of their natural life and their loss will have a severe impact on the character of the area.

The area is the product of layers of development. The gradual infilling of plots and larger estates has reached an optimal level with little capacity for future infill development

4. Community Involvement

Two public drop-in sessions were held in the area and the appraisal was publicised in local newsletters and by direct mailing to all existing and proposed residents. The appraisal was updated to reflect these comments.

5. Suggested Boundary Changes

A number of boundary changes are proposed through this character appraisal.

Based on historical evidence and the overall development of the area it is clear that some areas were not originally included in the West End Conservation Area. The Historic Development map shows some of these areas and the proposed extensions.

To the north the house and grounds of Pierremont and the Manor Road area represent early development within the area and it is proposed to include this. This will provide additional protection and control for

this valuable, historic and high quality area.

To the immediate south west of this area, the early development of Pierremont Crescent is proposed to be included. This would incorporate later 19th Century rows of distinctive, high quality houses, not included previously.

There is a proposed extension to the west, along Abbey Road, to include an area that makes a significant contribution to the approach to the town centre, as well as being of architectural and historic importance.

A new area extending from Coniscliffe Road to Cleveland Avenue has been identified for its historic importance and architectural quality.



The tower of Pierremont, now on Tower Road. Included within the West End Conservation Area due to its historic significance and role in the development of the area.



Pierremont Crescent, date unknown.

image courtesy of www.pbase.com/csdesign/image/54923813

6. Local Generic Guidance

Distinctly Darlington Design for new development SPD was adopted in 2009 and provides design guidance for new development throughout the Borough. Based on a thorough characterisation of the Borough it seeks to ensure that new development is of the highest quality and achieves high standards of sustainability and liveability.

In addition the Council publishes leaflets on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

7. Summary of Issues

There is significant development pressure on the large gardens that are found within the area. This pressure could lead to an erosion of the character of the area due to a number of factors;

- Many gardens have mature trees that would be compromised by development damaging an important part of the character of the area. This would have a particularly damaging effect on the skyline.
- Many of the larger properties have extensive grounds which form their setting and add to their value as large family housing.
- The West End Conservation Area has significant biodiversity value which would be compromised by the loss of gardens.

The subdivision of larger housing units has a negative impact upon the area creating pressure for car parking and the consequent loss of boundaries and defensible space.

Areas of informal greenspace and habitats outside the public spaces and private gardens make a significant contribution to the qualities and character of the area. These are potentially under pressure for development in the medium term.

Due to the age of the buildings some features like timber windows and doors are reaching the end of their life and may require repair or replacement. This requires extra management as the use of UPVC, for example, has had a negative effect on some parts of the Conservation Area.

Where new development has taken place it has often been of a diminutive scale and any subsequent redevelopment should more closely adhere to the scale and massing of the area.

On Woodland Road and Grange Road in particular the traffic noise and occasional congestion has a negative effect on the character and enjoyment of these roads for pedestrians and cyclists. This could be improved.

Some of the parks and greenspaces particularly Green Park and Stanhope Green are under-performing in comparison to the excellent South Park and could benefit from investment. Opportunities to enhance and reinforce the green infrastructure of the area should be taken through the enhancement or creation of wildlife corridors, movement networks and habitats.

The drinking fountains are currently not used and are under threat from decay and neglect in some cases.

Street furniture and the public realm could be more distinctive.

As mature street trees reach the end of their life their replacement should be considered.

Whilst high quality contemporary development, including extensions or the replacement of detractive or neutral elements within the area is encouraged, new traditionally built interventions should have similar levels and quality of detail and delight to those found in the area.

8. Further Information

Please note: If you are unsure whether your property is in a Conservation Area, or if you would like guidance on appropriate alterations and what requires planning permission, the quickest way to find out is to call the Council's Conservation Officer on: 01325 388604.

Further reading

Council-produced leaflet Living in a Conservation Area: A Guide for Residents (also available as a paper copy on request)

http://www.darlington.gov.uk/dar_public/Documents/Development%20and%20Environment/Development%20and%20Regeneration/Planning%20Services/Conservation/CAGuide.pdf

English Heritage guidance on Your Home in a Conservation Area www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.20516

PPG15 is the government's guidance on the care of the heritage environment that will ultimately be superseded by PPS15

The Planning Portal provides a comprehensive overview of the law and applications relating to the heritage environment.

9. Management Proposals

Management proposals include an Article 4(2) Direction to give additional planning control over development within the West End Conservation Area. Views are sought on this, as this would give specific control over;

- Alterations to elevations of any building (including painting)
- Alterations to roofs including materials and heights
- Truncating, raising or adding chimney stacks
- Adding aerials, satellite dishes or antenna to roofs, walls or in curtilage fronting the street
- New attic dormer windows
- Replacing doors or windows
- Removing, inserting or altering boundary treatments, such as walls and railings
- Creating hard standings or surfaces
- Adding, altering or removing porches
- Development in a garden fronting a highway, water course or public open space.

It is proposed to consult on this separately following the adoption of this document.

In addition a management plan for the retention of trees and their replacement over time is proposed, as well as an up to date tree condition survey and revised Tree Protection Orders where necessary.

The development of gardens and backland development will be resisted through the planning process. This seeks to protect these valuable spaces recognising their amenity and biodiversity value and spatial contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

DARLINGTON WEST END
CONSERVATION AREA

Character Appraisal
March 2010

