

Heritage, Landscape and Design



Crook
Approved
December 2013

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Crook

December 2013

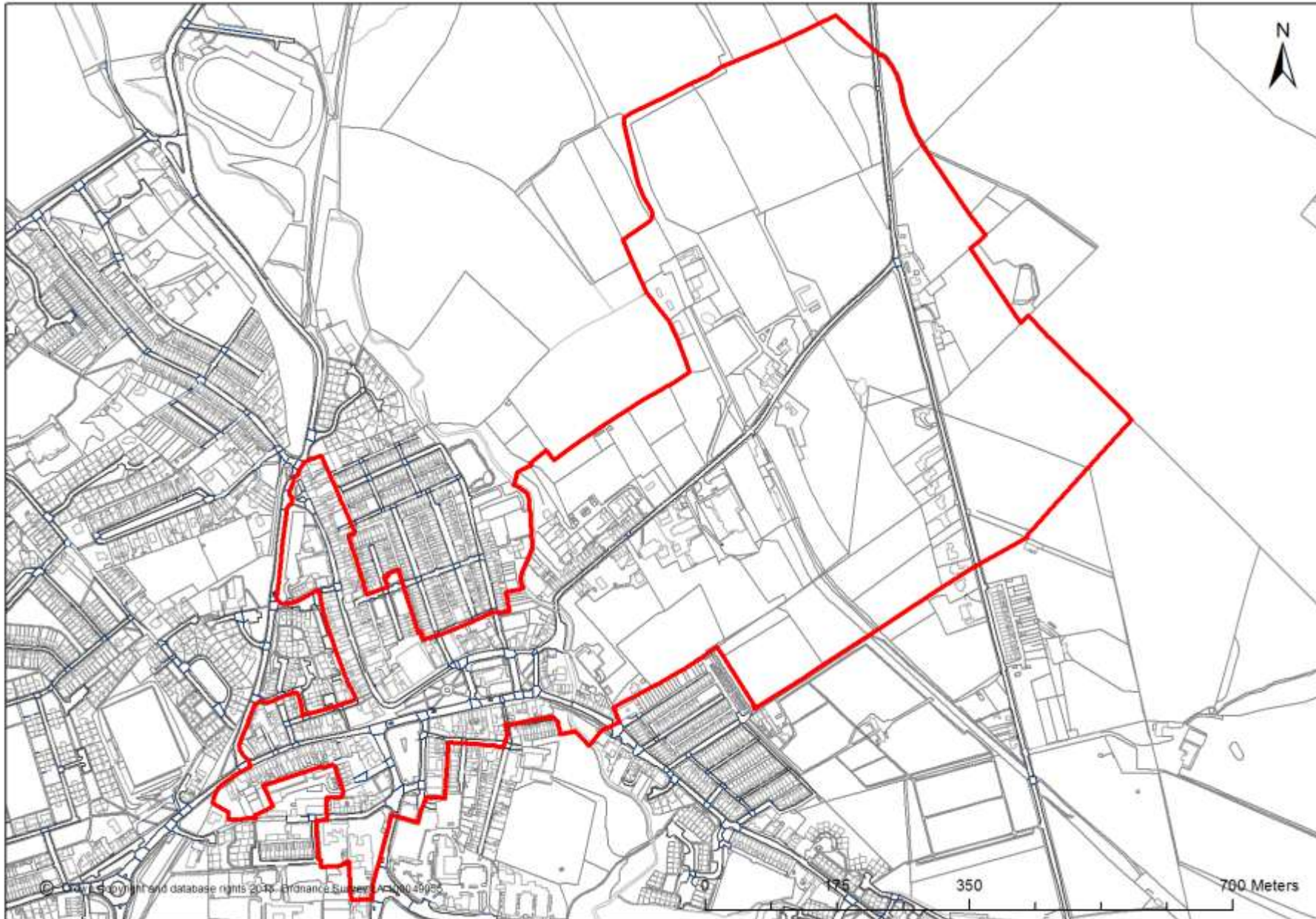


Heritage, Landscape and Design
Durham County Council

Designated August 1975
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Conservation Area Boundary



Summary of Special Interest

Crook is a small town at the eastern end of Weardale in the horse shoe valley formed by the Crook beck, and was little more than a hamlet around a village green until the early 19th century. The considerable expansion of coal mining increased the population of the area, including the surrounding villages, from 193 in 1801 to some 12000 by the early 1900s.

The opening of a branch of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and the development of various ancillary industries, including brick works and coke works, helped it to grow into an important local centre.

Despite the pressures of industrialisation followed by a long period of economic stagnation, the essentially urban centre of Crook retains the very attractive ingredients of the village which preceded it; the large village green with a small parish church on it sloping down to the Crook beck, with a group of houses around the more ambitious Roman Catholic Church of the lower slopes of Dowfold Hill as a back-cloth. The hillside behind these buildings is almost clear of development and forms an essential part of the best view of the town centre.



Old Police Station, bottom of Hope Street

Both the eastern end of the green and Church Hill retain a large number of small, informally grouped, private terraced houses, mainly dating from the mid 19th century, which convey something of what Crook must have been like when it was still a small village. Around the green itself most of the buildings have limited special qualities, but they are generally appropriate to their setting, and when combined provide a pleasing built environment.

The main shops are at the further, upper, end of the green and northwards along Hope Street, which is narrow and winding. Most of the buildings are two storeys but there are some three storey ones, Royal Corner and the Civic Centre being most notable. Although there are no buildings of

outstanding merit, they give this end of the green and the Market Place the sense of urban scale which is part of the town's individual character.



Traditional shop front detail, Hope Street

The south side of the Market Place is much more mixed with a poorer street scene enclosed by the rear elevation of the modern Co-op store.

The road into Crook from the west, via Commercial Street, whilst providing a sense of arrival in the town is also dilapidated in places, though there are a few individual groups of buildings which give it a character somewhat similar to that of Hope Street.

The boundary of the conservation area has been drawn to include the essential parts of the town centre which give it an attractive character, together with those on the fringes in which development must be carefully controlled if this is to be maintained. The area covered is therefore Hope Street, Commercial Street, the Market Place, the green, Church Hill and a portion of the open hillside beyond where there is a considerable need to exercise specially careful development control if the setting of the town is to retain its attractive appearance. The area west of the Market Place is only partly in character with the centre but unsympathetic new development here could be very damaging to the rest of Crook.



St Catherine's Church, The Green

Buildings in the town are predominantly stone, but there are many terrace buildings built of the yellow brick found in this part of the coalfield. Roofs are normally of slate.

Public Consultation

Public consultation is an integral part of the appraisal process. This final version document was the basis for consultation with local people and other interested parties, after which it was amended where necessary before being approved by the Head of Planning and Assets on 11th December 2013. The next stage will be the preparation of a Management Plan programme for all our Conservation Areas. Initial management proposals have been included in this document for consideration.

Planning Legislation

A conservation area is defined in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is not the purpose of a Conservation area to prevent development, but to manage change in a positive and proactive way that benefits current and future generations.

Conservation area status means that a special form of Planning Permission called Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building over 115m³ in size, the demolition of a boundary wall over 1m in height next to the highway or 2m. There is a general presumption against the loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Additional controls are also placed over trees within the area, meaning that an owner must submit a formal notification of works to the Council six weeks before starting work. Permitted development rights (works that can be done without Planning Permission) are also slightly different within designated conservation areas.

The primary legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This legislation includes certain statutory duties which the Council as Local Planning Authority must uphold. s69(1) of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas, and under s69(2) to review such designations from time to time. The Council has a further

duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas from time to time.

When assessing applications for development, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas under s72(1) of the Act. This does not mean that development will necessarily be opposed, only that this should not be detrimental to the special interest of the wider conservation area. Specific guidance relating to development within historic areas can be found within the National Planning Policy Framework produced by central government.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

The Conservation Area Appraisal represents the first phase of a dynamic process aimed at the conservation and enhancement of the conservation area. It is an assessment of those features and qualities that make an individual conservation area special. These can include individual buildings, groups of buildings, other structures, architectural details and materials, open spaces, landscaping, street furniture, and the relationships between all of these. This appraisal will help to raise awareness and appreciation of Crook's special character, while also providing a consistent and evidential basis on which to determine planning applications affecting the village.

The appraisal also seeks to identify any factors which detract from a conservation area's special qualities, and to present outline proposals for schemes which could lead to the safeguarding or enhancement of those qualities.

This appraisal discusses a wide range of structures and features within Crook, but no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Location and Setting

Location

Crook is a market town of less than 10,000 population at the eastern end of Weardale, in the horse shoe valley of the Crook Beck. It lies about 10 miles south west of Durham and stands at the junction of the A690 and A689, the principal road linking Bishop Auckland and Weardale.

The conservation area was originally designated in August 1975 and extended in December 2013. As far as possible the boundary of the area was drawn around distinct areas, including groups of buildings, since it is not only the buildings which are to be conserved but also the visual street scene.



Location of Crook

Setting

The conservation area includes much of the town centre including the principal shopping streets and the market place. It currently also includes a substantial area of open land to the east of the town centre around Church Hill and the slopes of Dowfold Hill and Low Jobs Hill. This rural area provides a background to the eastward views within the town and is important in promoting the 'market town' atmosphere of the settlement. The landscape setting is therefore an important asset and has been included within the boundaries of the conservation area since 1975.

The large village green which slopes down to Crook Beck remains intact and has a small parish church standing on it. The eastern end of the Green contains a number of small, largely stone built dwellings, mainly dating from the mid 19th century as does Church Hill. The dwellings of Church Hill are grouped around the architecturally more ambitious Roman Catholic Church on the lower slopes of Dowfold Hill and together act as a setting to the village green. The hillside behind these buildings is largely undeveloped and has an essential part to play in imparting and maintaining a distinctly rural quality to easterly views of the town centre and the green.



The Green looking eastwards

Historical Summary

Crook was little more than a hamlet with a village green until the early 19th century. Although coal had been mined near Crook since the 15th century it was not until considerable expansion of the coal mining and associated industries (e.g. Brickworks, coke works) in the second half of the 19th century that the character of the settlement changed from being a small agricultural village to that of a local industrial centre for the west Durham coal field. Yet despite this growth, particularly in the period 1841-51 when the population increased seven fold, the centre of the Crook still retains some features and qualities associated with its past as a small village.

In 1855 about 150 traders formed themselves into a Trader's Association. The North Terrace, South Street, Wheatbottom, Mill Street and the area at the bottom of Church Hill had a combination of shops and private dwellings. Crook was establishing itself as a town of some significance with an ever-increasing number of retail outlets. In 1900 a newspaper article read as follows:-

"It may prove interesting and it may perhaps be information of many people, when we state that Crook is one of the most competitive towns in County Durham. Tradesmen say that competition is keen and local shopkeepers assert that in no town of its size in the County is competition keener than in Crook"

Hope Street was possibly named after the Hope family who were, and their descendants still are, resident in Crook.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Hope Street was a path leading to farmsteads and the land on either side of the path it developed in to one of the main shopping streets and in the past it had the Doggarts Department store and the Police Station. Now there a wide variety of smaller shops ranging from clothes to saddlery and decorating shops.



Hope Street 1912

The market place (as we know it today) was a grazing area for sheep. At the beginning of the 1840s, the area around Crook market place did not take on the appearance of a normal town. It still resembled a rural village - houses were built near to where coal was being mined.

By 1850, the area adjoining the Market Place had become a distinct shopping centre with about 40 tradesmen providing a

range of services. (Many of the tradesmen were to become active in local government).

Around 1862, the Saturday markets, became a prominent feature of town life - the market being held on the part where the war memorial is now.



North Terrace and historic Market Place

South Street faces the present market place which has been refurbished recently and has a very busy market every Tuesday. The largest building was once the Electric Picture Palace. Generations of youngsters in Crook enjoyed the Saturday morning cinema in what became the Odeon

The new Electric Picture Palace at Crook was opened in 1910 and represented another significant step in the social development of the town



Co-op in historic market place

The building was a prominent architectural feature of the Market Place, and adjoined the well-known Temperance Hall, but was a much loftier building and had a much more imposing up-to-date appearance, being entirely new. The interior was modelled on the latest designs, both in regard to securing safety and easy viewing of the picture with tip-up chairs.

North Terrace faces the cenotaph, formerly part of the market place, and St. Mary's Church. The Civic Centre is the dominant building to-day and stands on the site of the old Co-operative Society building. Boots the Chemist is next to this, on the site of the old Woolworth store with the characteristic Woolworth frontage.



Market Place, Crook.
 North Terrace 1910



North Terrace late twentieth century

Church Street, as its name suggests, faces north onto St Catherine's Church. It is one of the most important shopping streets in Crook with a variety of retail and service outlets. The oldest building in Crook (Ye Olde Horse Shoe Inn) is located here together with some long-standing businesses. The street has long been characterised by its buildings of differing scale and architectural design, although some further uniformity now exists much of this character is retained.



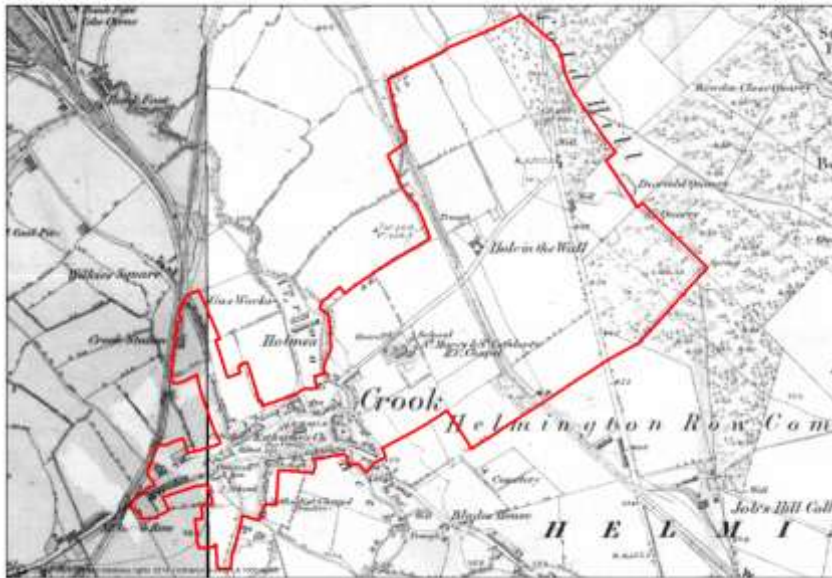
Church Street 1901



Church Street 1990's

Form and Layout

The form and layout of Crook which remains evident today was established well in advance of its detailed recording in the first edition Ordnance Survey map. The key elements of the settlement were established with St Catherine's Church and the early Market Place enclosed by some building to North Terrace and Church Street. St Mary and St Cuthbert's R.C Church and school had been established in Church Hill but the linking residential development was yet to be established, the land to the north of North terrace now occupied by dense residential development remained as grazing land. The Railways had already arrived which prompted the rapid expansion of the original village.



1860 OS extract

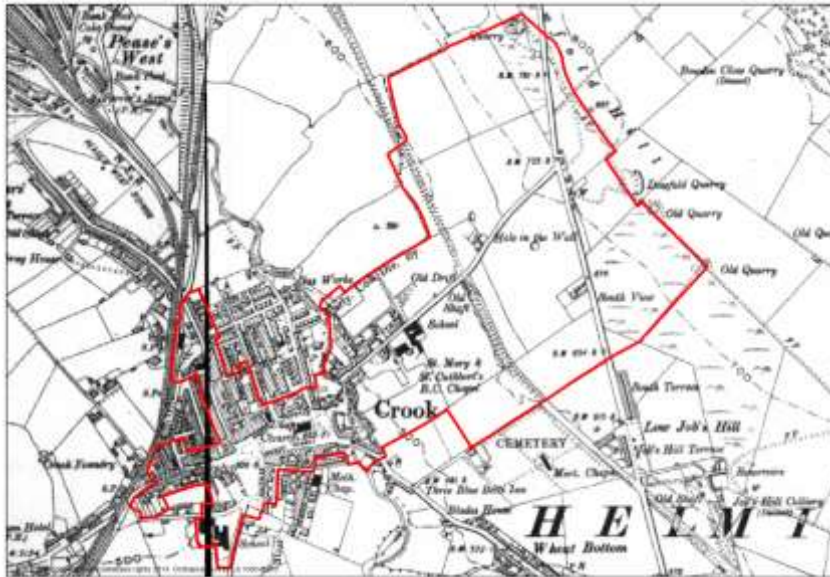
Work started on a temporary station in Crook in 1843, the original station was designed to be converted to railwaymen's cottages when a permanent station was built. The instruction was given by the Stockton and Darlington Railway company in 1856 to proceed with the permanent station.



Crook Station 1906

Opposite Crook Station were the sidings and main access to the huge Bank Foot site of coke ovens, fire clay works, chemical plant and Pease's West Colliery. This industrial development associated with the arrival of the railway led to the rapid expansion of the town. By 1898 land to the south of Church Street had been developed with the construction of the now Grade II* listed Dawson Street Methodist Chapel complete. Land to the north of North Terrace now took the form of tight rows of terraced properties providing

accommodation for the growing work force. Church Hill had also developed providing a continuous built up area linking to the Catholic Church, development west along Commercial Street had also been established.



1898 OS extract

By 1923 the plan form of the town which now forms the basis of the conservation area was established. Although slightly outside the now defined area, social and cultural facilities associated with a thriving town had also been established including the football ground and a cricket ground. Residential development had also begun to expand north of the station as more land was required.



1923 OS extract

The rapid expansion of the town in westerly direction is shown below. This is shortly before the station closure.



Crook 1960's

The image below shows how central the railway was to the development of Crook with Hope Street in the background which remains the core of the conservation area to this day.



Crook Station November 1960



Crook Station site 2005

Character Areas

The conservation area can be divided in townscape terms into a number of sub areas or components;

1. Hope Street
2. Commercial Street
3. The Green
4. Market Place
5. Church Hill & Environs
6. Bridge Street Area
7. Croft Street Area

Character Area 1: Hope Street



Top of Hope Street

This street contains many small shops and several pubs. Most of the smaller shops are well maintained and are in good decorative order, structurally sound and form continuous frontages along the street. There are however some vacant units and some buildings in need of repair. Generally the buildings are two storeys in height, constructed in stone with slate roofs. Others are rendered and several are of brick including the former Police Station. Many of the smaller buildings have oriel windows in the upper storey and original or sympathetic replaced timber shop fronts. The properties at the lower end of the street have colour washes on the upper storey walls, where as random or coursed rubble stonework remains visible on those properties at the upper end of the street.



Shop Front on Hope Street

The gentle curve of the street and the small openings through alleyways and arches to the east side of Hope Street provide visual interest and create a sequence of views along and out of the street. The street rises along its length from the green to the B6299. The narrow street provides enclosure and coupled with its function as a shopping street creates an atmosphere of bustle and movement.

Demolition of buildings in Hope Street has reduced the enclosed nature of the street. The opening up of this space has also contributed adversely to the microclimate of the street, which now has an open northerly aspect.



Car park at top of Hope Street, site of demolished station

Character Area 2: Commercial Street



Northern side of Commercial Street

Commercial Street forms the western most limb of the conservation area. The southern side of the street is occupied by shops, offices and public houses. The properties to the eastern end of this frontage are stepped back from the road. The northern side of the street has several shops, residential properties and a club set back from the road. It is part of the A689 and suffers heavy traffic which is exacerbated by the lack of rear access to shops and offices.

Generally the buildings are two storey, stone/rubble, terraced properties dating from the mid 19th century. No. 15 is a fine example of a dressed rubble wall construction with brick

quoins, stone lintels and plinth. Several covered alleyways on the south side of the street including one which has a panelled door at its entrance onto the pavement.

The street dips midway along its length and together with the curve in the street contributes to the visual interest. When moving westward along the street the stepped effect of buildings to the south side coupled with the change in level of the street create a funnelling effect along which vision is drawn. Nos. 3 and 5 West Road outside the conservation area act as important visual stop to such views. Views eastwards along the street provide glimpses of the green and hillside beyond.



Southern side of Commercial Street

The western junction of the street where it forms a junction with the B6299 is visually bleak. Due to sight lines and the design adopted, the area is very open with large grassed areas and little visual relief. The club courtyard is a poorly maintained space which would benefit from sympathetic treatment including the rationalisation of the car parking spaces. The floorscape of the street is poor; pavements are cracked and where access streets have been closed off the treatment is indifferent.

Character Area 3: The Green



View northwards of the Green

This area acts as a focus for the town centre. Essentially it consists of a large green with access roads and footpaths

crossing it, bounded by groups of buildings on three sides. The green at its widest where St Catherine's Parish Church, a small stone built church in the gothic style, stands. It slopes gently down towards the beck, though the change in gradient is more marked on the eastern edge where Mill Street and West Bridge Street leave it.

The green itself is edged with small trees and contains a number of flower beds and the town's listed war memorial.



St Catherine's Church

The green has a somewhat different character and atmosphere to the west of St Catherine's than that to the east. This is largely due to the concentration of shops at the western end while most of the properties to the eastern end

are residential. This transition is particularly evident in North Terrace. Church Street has a more continuous building frontage than North Terrace and is largely shops, offices and public houses. Mill Street is essentially a row of residential properties with No. 1 being a particularly fine building. Most of the frontages to the green are visually attractive in terms of scale, massing and continuity of form.

Most of the buildings surrounding the green are two storey, however, there are some three storey structures and the multi storey Council Office building which interrupts the building line. Many of the properties in Church Street have been rendered and colour washed, providing variety of colour and texture. Royal Corner, the location of the former Royal Hotel, on the corner of Hope Street and Commercial Street has a modern and prominent frontage which is an important yet poorly defined feature of Crooks townscape.

Shopfronts in this part of the conservation area are generally well proportioned. There is evidence that there has been some improvement to shop fronts and signage particularly Church Street. It is apparent that individual shop owners and residents around the green are conscious of the need to sustain and enhance the appearance of their properties and there is evidence of these individual efforts working to the benefit of the overall townscape.

Character Area 4: Market Place



View southwards of Market Place

The Market Place is a large tarmac/paved area used for the weekly market and car parking. Stalls cover half the car park during market day. Young trees have been planted around the perimeter of the market place.

The buildings which surround the market place are generally inappropriate to their setting and fail to enclose the market area. The variety of building type and materials used means that few buildings relate to one another.



St Catherine's Community Centre

There is a need to define the market place itself by the use of strong building frontages. Redevelopment could assist in improving the townscape and establishing character to the area, though care would be necessary in the design and massing of any development.

Bus stops and shelters are scattered around the market place. The market place is an area of continued activity and movement especially on market days. The car park, bus stops and pedestrian crossing all generate activity. People tend to wait for buses here or just watch other passers by and this space could be made more attractive through the further improvement of their surroundings.



View northwards of the Market Place

Extensive work has been undertaken within the Market Place to improve its layout, operation and appearance. The area has a very open feel which can be intimidating to pedestrians, care must be taken to ensure vehicular traffic does not dominate this important public space.

Character Area 5: Church Hill



View from bottom of Church Hill

This is a pleasant residential area within the conservation area. It consists of a narrow street which drops steeply down to the Crook Beck being separated from the rest of the settlement by this stream. The street has unity and continuity, fostered by the close juxtaposition of buildings, common building materials, the use of stone walls and groups of trees. These elements also promote a sense of enclosure throughout the length of the street.

The convent and school buildings marked the upper end of the street and the edge of the settlement itself, beyond on the hillside are open fields. From this point the views down the

hillside form a sequence with lateral divisions along alleyways and into the churchyard. The Roman Catholic Church is set back from the road and its juxtaposition with adjacent buildings provides a pleasant enclosed space. Good views of the centre of Crook are afforded from the top of Church Hill, with larger buildings, Dawson Methodist Church, the Co-op Building and St Catherine's clearly visible among the roofs of the town centre.



Our Lady Immaculate & St Cuthbert's Church, Church Hill



Convent and Community Centre, Church Hill

The convent and church are stone buildings which have been cleaned. The church has a tower with intricately designed pinnacles and is largely in the decorated style. Almost all the residential properties in Church Hill are two storey terraced cottages with stone rubble walls, slate roofs and small front gardens. Mature trees enhance the views along the street and engender the village character of this area. The sequence of views down the street needs to be carried on into the green. At present there is no continuity of views between Church Hill and the green being interrupted by the uninteresting landscape of Crook Beck, the rear of the premises in Mill Street (particularly the garage) and derelict land.

The appearance of Church Hill is marred by overhead wires, particularly around St Cuthbert's church yard. The demolition of properties at Beckside has left a blank gable end to the terrace in Church Hill.

A new primary school has been constructed to the southern side of Church Hill, this is beyond the church and associated buildings on the upper part of the hillside.

Character Area 6: Bridge Street Area

This area contains West Bridge Street and East Bridge Street. These street names are applied to two terraces along the A690, to the east of the green. They constitute the eastern entrance to the conservation area and probably were part of the original village along the beck.



West Bridge Street

West Bridge Street Terrace has a two storey stone frontage and a three storey rear elevation due to a change in the level of the site, adjacent to the Crook Beck. The basement windows in the front elevation have been backed up and several of the properties have had these fenestrations altered, resulting in a general downgrading of the appearance of the terrace. The terrace has considerable potential for improvement, particularly the curtilages. East Bridge Street is a neater row of properties containing a number of commercial premises, these are in varying condition and some would benefit from improvement.



View along West Bridge Street into town centre

The area is open to the west of the street and towards the fire station which, although outside the conservation area has a

detrimental impact upon the townscape. As an entrance to the town centre the area is of poor quality and would benefit from general landscaping and a coordinated approach to improvements of individual buildings. The area also suffers from overhead wires.

Character Area 7: Croft Street Area

This area is not a visual entity but includes several streets of differing townscape quality.



Croft Avenue

Croft Avenue is a cul-de-sac containing a terrace of red brick residential properties with front gardens. A line of bushes and trees at the head of the street provides a stop to views along

the street. Croft Street by contrast is lacking in character with the social club and garage outside the conservation that detracts from the appearance of the street. The school buildings which are set back from the road area and are mainly late 19th century with some brick built extensions. The large tarmac school yard at the northern edge of the school site would benefit from some landscape improvement.



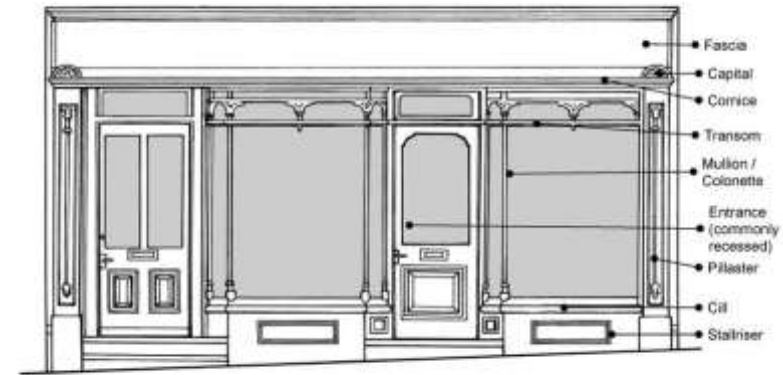
Queen Street

Queen Street contains a terrace of five stone built cottages, whose unity has been partially disrupted through modernisation of some of the properties. At present there is a large tarmac area to the front of the terrace which is bounded by bland walls of warehouses and out buildings and an access lane to the council depot beyond.

Architectural Character

There are, with the exception of the listed buildings no singularly outstanding buildings in the town but rather a characteristic range of commercially and residentially based groups throughout. While these uses are both still evident and remain the core of the architectural character here, they have been modified and adapted, largely within the last 30-40 years. Significant success has been achieved through public funding in the restoration of traditional shop fronts and building detailing which has added considerably to the character and appearance of the area.

The preservation and enhancement of traditional features associated with the commercial properties in the town is essential to protecting the character and appearance of the area. This must be balanced with the financial implications to small businesses and the desire for distinctive signage. The following images provide general advice on detailing to shops.



There are a considerable number of larger public buildings throughout the town including churches from various denominations, church halls, meeting rooms, public houses and public sector buildings.

Important Buildings

Five of the most important structures are listed for their architectural or historic interest (Appendix 1). In addition to the listed buildings, many other buildings combine to give the town its unique built heritage (Appendix 2). There is a presumption against the demolition of these structures in accordance with government guidance found in the National Planning Policy Framework



Central Methodist Church, Dawson Street



Ye Olde Horse Shoe Inn, Church Street

Name	Grade:
<i>CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH, DAWSON STREET</i>	<i>II*</i>
<i>CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND SAINT CUTHBERT, CHURCH HILL</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>PRESBYTERY ATTACHED TO CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND SAINT CUTHBERT, CHURCH HILL</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>WAR MEMORIAL, PIERS AND CHAIN, CHURCH STREET</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>PREMISES OCCUPIED BY JG FORSTER AND YE OLDE HORSE SHOE INN, 3 AND 4, CHURCH STREET</i>	<i>II</i>

Building Materials

The palette of building materials is primarily limited to stone, with Welsh slate, brick is more prominent in some later development and in distinctive residential terraces. Modern materials, mainly uPVC, are being introduced to the detriment of the historic character. Masonry includes the use of ashlar which is limited to grander buildings, but more commonly used are roughly coursed sandstone rubble or more neatly coursed sandstone blocks.

Timber, usually painted white is the traditional material for the manufacture of windows and doors. Many historic sash windows survive in older properties, but many others have been replaced in recent years with plastic alternatives. The use of uPVC is not considered appropriate because not only has it has an inferior aesthetic quality to timber but it is generally considered an unsustainable material. However, there may be exceptions to this where high quality UPVC windows of appropriate design may represent an improvement on the current fenestration.

Boundaries and Means of Enclosure

Use of boundary enclosures to the front of properties within the heart of the conservation area are generally limited. The majority of properties are terraced and face directly on to streets or to public spaces such as the Green and Market Place. The majority of properties have rear yards enclosed by brick walls.

There is some use of stone walls within the conservation area which form part of its character and are present in views around and in and out of the area. These are most common in the Church Hill area, in particular around Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert's Church and associated buildings.

Open Spaces and Trees

The Green forms a key area of open space at the centre of the conservation area. Adjacent to this the Market Place also provides an important open area, however given the differing surface treatment of these sites, i.e. grass and hard surfacing respectively, the character and uses of each space is very different.



View from the Green towards Church Hill

Open agricultural land is situated to the north and south of Church Hill and forms an important green buffer framing the central part of the conservation area. The area to the south of Our Lady Immaculate and St Cuthbert's Church and

associated presbytery forms an important part of the setting of these Grade II listed buildings.

Other open spaces around the conservation area are of a less formal nature and frame individual buildings and terraces.



Crook Beck

There are a number of mature and semi-mature trees within the Green which together with flower beds enhance the appearance of this area.

Extensive mature trees in the open spaces to either side of Church Hill form an important feature in long and short distance views in and out of the conservation area.

A small patch of trees lie adjacent to Crook Beck and the fire station, immediately within the eastern boundary of the conservation area. They provide an attractive entrance feature when entering the conservation area from the east and form part of the setting of the Grade II listed Horse Shoe Inn.

Views

Views form a significant part of the character of the conservation area, not least of these are the panoramic roof top views afforded from the top of Church Hill over the entire town allowing the conservation area to be appreciated in its widest context. These views extend to Weardale beyond.

Within the conservation area there are views across the wide open spaces within, these are terminated by focal buildings including the Council Offices, St Catherine's Church and various properties which terminate views within the gentle curve of Hope Street. Some are less positive given their design and detailing and specifically include Royal Corner.



View of Crook from north east

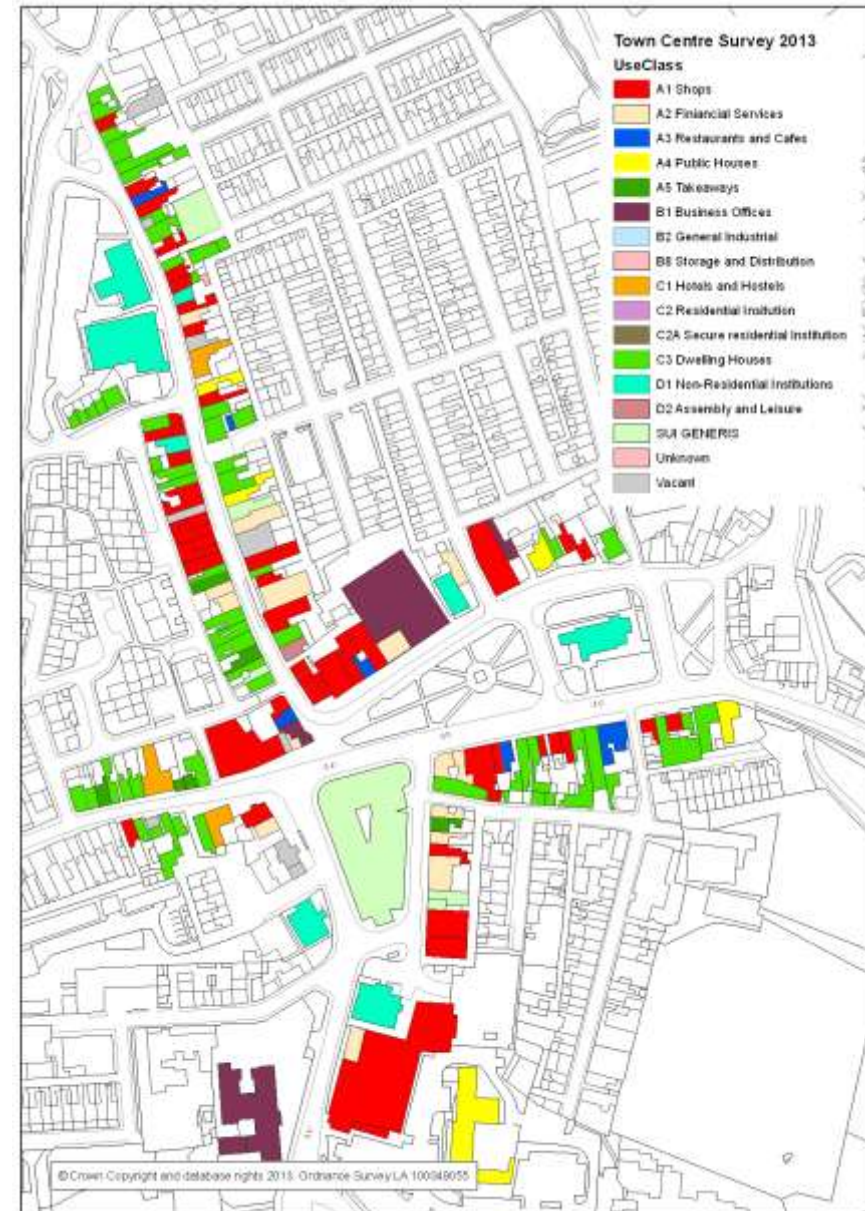
Important views out of the conservation area are afforded from all primary vehicular routes especially east, west and south.

Activity



The Market Place

There are some indications of changes in the viability of shopping premises within the conservation area. There are several vacant properties in Hope Street. This contraction in the number of shopping units within the town centre (not gross floorspace) suggests a decline in the popularity of Hope Street for shopping. The location of a car park on the old station site and the proposed development of Victoria Street for housing both to the west of Hope Street, should help to ensure the continued viability of existing shops in the Street.



Public Realm

Roads, pavements and other surfaces

Roads and pavements are generally of tarmac, with concrete kerbstones. There is no surviving evidence of historic road surfaces within the town.



Car park at top of Hope Street

The principal grassed area is the village green, although there is a less formal grassed area at the top of Hope Street adjacent to the car park and health centre and around the bottom of Church Hill. The majority of residential properties

are terraced and have rear concrete yards as opposed to gardens.

Signage



Traditional shop front on Hope Street

Whilst some original timber shop fronts have been retained and replicated throughout the conservation area, there are a number of inappropriate modern shop fronts and signage which detract from the character of the area.



Modern shop fronts on Hope Street

There is a significant quantity of directional road signage around the conservation area which can appear cluttered in places. Unauthorised signage around the conservation area can be problematic at times and adds to existing visual clutter.

Street furniture and overhead cables

There is a limited amount of street furniture around the town, the greatest concentration being a number of structures clustered on The Green and within the Market Place. These are generally seating benches, bollards and litter bins which are of standard co-ordinated design. Street lighting around the town varies in different areas but improvements have

been undertaken as part of wider achievements in the public realm.

The replacement and introduction of street furniture requires a degree of coordination and use of traditional designs which relate closely to the character of the conservation area.

A network of telegraph poles supports overhead electricity and telephone cables throughout the town. Collectively, these poles and cables detract from the character of the conservation area.

General Condition

The condition of the conservation area is generally sound with some isolated exceptions where a limited number of properties have been underused or poorly maintained. Action should be taken to promote their repair and re-use. Some poor and inappropriate repairs will accelerate the decline of historic fabric, particularly the use of inappropriate materials and repair techniques. Overall the conservation area is on a sound footing for enhancement and generally shows signs of care from the majority those concerned.



View down Church Hill

Other than the listed buildings within the town there are several buildings which are important in townscape terms, especially when considered in the context of groups or street frontages. Such buildings range from the visually prominent Roman Catholic Church to the individual properties in Mill Street and Church Hill. Many of the buildings in the town centre are stone walled with slate roofs. More recent additions to the townscape have introduced materials and built forms which are not sympathetic to the overall character, e.g. The Crook Branch Library.

The conservation area has several townscape areas of high quality including the narrow, busy Hope Street, the attractive setting of the green and the village like quality of Church Hill. Commercial Street part of the A689 has a certain amount of townscape potential and includes a few individual buildings which give it character somewhat similar to that of Hope

Street. These areas when considered in conjunction with the landscape setting provided by Dowfold Hill, provide Crook with an environmental quality that is not enjoyed by many other towns of similar size in County Durham.



The Board School

In order to conserve and enhance this character it is necessary to tackle the various problems and issues which detract from the appearance of the Crook Conservation Area. Generally the periphery and entrance to the conservation area require the most attention. However, there are also sites in the centre of the conservation area which require environmental improvement.

Future Challenges

Because the conservation area includes much of Crook Town Centre, by its nature it is an area that continues to adapt and evolve as the towns functions and activities change or are modified.

Dilapidated shop fronts and commercial properties

Whilst there has been investment within Crook Conservation Area in recent years, in the form of conservation led regeneration schemes, there is still much that could be done to continue to improve the character and appearance of the area. Many of the local traders and residents find it difficult to justify major capital improvements, partly because of the actual costs but also due to the lack of confidence in the future trading prospects. Hence there are still a number of premises which are in a run down condition, some with galvanised roller shutters and inappropriate signage. However the traditional shop fronts which have been reinstated and the traditional fenestration patterns which have been restored above these shopfronts have helped to enhance the character and appearance of the commercial centre of the conservation area and to improve its vitality and viability. It is important to continue to maintain and build upon the improvements to the built environment.

Loss of architectural and historic features

The centre of Crook still manages to retain a proportion of traditional fenestration patterns, original windows, doors and shopfronts. Some of the original timber sashes, doors, cornices and shopfronts remain, whilst others have been

restored and reinstated by means of the recent regeneration schemes. However, modern replacements such as UPVC doors and windows and modern aluminium shop fronts are a common feature in commercial and residential areas. Opportunities should be taken to reverse this loss of traditional features through the use of appropriate planning policies and the continued pursuit of appropriate grant funding.

Building condition

Some of the commercial buildings and spaces above them, particularly in the commercial centre still present a neglected image and need extensive repairs. Some shopfronts have rotten woodwork and some windows and doors are in poor decoration.

Again opportunities should be taken to make improvements whenever possible through the planning system and by engaging with any future investment opportunities.

Vacancy rates

Although the town centre has a good range of shops including banks, newsagents, green grocers, etc the vitality and viability of the town must be maintained, opportunities to reduce vacancy rates and retain and enhance existing retailers and services should be explored.

Public Realm

Whilst there have been some significant improvements to the public realm in the central commercial area in recent years, there is still more that could be done to improve poorly surfaced footpaths, streets, roads and car parks; to improve the quality of street furniture and lighting columns; to minimise street clutter and to lessen the visual intrusion of overhead wires.

Management Proposals

The following management proposals have been identified to ensure that future changes to the conservation area are directed in a proactive way. This is not an absolute list but outlines the main issues and possible tasks. It should be made clear that the Council cannot give a definite commitment to undertake these tasks, which will ultimately depend on future financial and staff resources:

- Protection of buildings and details of buildings that contribute to the character of the area.
- Protect important open spaces within the conservation area.
- Protect trees that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Protect spaces and features that contribute to the setting of the conservation area.
- Ensure that new development is only permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- Conserve historic boundary treatments.
- Work to preserve and enhance the quality of the public realm.
- Retain a mix of uses in the commercial centre of the town to ensure vitality and viability.
- Increase community understanding and involvement in the conservation area.
- Ensure that any future streetscape improvements continue to use an appropriate palette of materials which compliment public realm improvements which have taken place.
- Support opportunities to run overhead wires underground.
- Advertise availability of guidance and advice on appropriate repairs and alterations to historic and commercial buildings.

2013 Boundary Changes

On 11th December 2013 the boundary of the conservation area was amended to conform, where relevant, to current property boundaries and landscape features. Some additions and removals of properties from the boundary were also made. The confirmed changes are as follows:

1. The inclusion of an area of land to the north and rear of the health clinic and surgery on Hope Street. The area is historically significant having previously been the station for the town. This is why the area is relatively open; map regression concludes that it has not been developed since the closure of the station. The area forms an intrinsic part of the setting of the conservation area. Its inclusion within the boundary provides additional protection to landscape features and encourage the improvement of the hard landscaping.
2. The inclusion of two small terraces and car park on Albert Street and the car parking area to the rear of the current Civic Centre. This is a primary public space and falls within the immediate setting and important views into the conservation area. Its inclusion aims to encourage appropriate landscape improvements and will influence the quality of any future development on this part of Albert Street.
3. The removal of No's 8-13 Arthur Street. This is a historic anomaly which sees a small section of the terrace included which is not fundamental to the setting of the area and does not differ in character

from the remainder; it was determined that none of the terrace justified inclusion within the designated area.

4. The removal of Croft Avenue and adjacent open land previously associated with either the Board School or the later Crook Primary School. This terrace and the adjacent land display few if any features that contribute to the defined character of the Crook Conservation Area. Whilst an attractive traditional terrace, Croft Avenue displays few original features or uniformity worthy of preservation.
5. The inclusion of the community centre to the south of the Market Place, this is a key building within the conservation area.
6. The removal of Greenfield Cottages which have been much altered so that they no longer reflect the established character and appearance of the area, and are not fundamental to the setting of the area. The boundary was also rationalised around the Central Methodist Church which appears to have been included due to its high listed status, as the building is better protected in its own right.
7. The removal of a large area of land to Church Hill and Low Job's Hill from the boundary was considered as part of the appraisal process. However there was strong local feeling during the public consultation exercise that this area should be retained in order to prevent future development and retain the open, rural landscape to the north and east of the town centre and it has therefore been retained within the conservation area boundary.

Contacts and References

Bibliography

National Heritage List produced by English Heritage

The Durham Record, *Historic photographs*

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Ordnance Survey LA 100049055

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Contact

Heritage, Landscape and Design Team
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UQ

Telephone: 03000 267146
Email: design.conservation@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Listed Buildings

Five of the most important structures are statutorily listed for their architectural or historic interest. This means that a special type of Planning Permission called Listed Building Consent is needed for any internal or external alterations. The listed status includes any later extensions or additions, and any ancillary structures such as garden walls or outbuildings which were built before 1948. Further information on the National Heritage List which includes listed buildings and other statutory designations can be found online at :

<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/>

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Building</i>	<i>Grade</i>
1	<i>CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH, DAWSON STREET</i>	<i>II*</i>
2	<i>CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND SAINT CUTHBERT, CHURCH HILL</i>	<i>II</i>
3	<i>PRESBYTERY ATTACHED TO CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND SAINT CUTHBERT, CHURCH HILL</i>	<i>II</i>
4	<i>WAR MEMORIAL, PIERS AND CHAIN, CHURCH STREET</i>	<i>II</i>
5	<i>PREMISES OCCUPIED BY JG FORSTER AND YE OLDE HORSE SHOE INN, 3 AND 4, CHURCH STREET</i>	<i>II</i>

1

CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH, DAWSON STREET CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH, EMMERSON STREET

List Entry Number: 1229012

Grade: II*

Primitive Methodist Chapel, named and dated 1868 in pediment. Sandstone ashlar with pink granite columns flanking door; Welsh slate roof. Pedimented front of 2 storeys and 3 bays has moulded plinth; chamfered rusticated ground floor. 8 steps, the top one renewed, to central 4-leaf 8-panelled door and lunette in round-headed moulded keyed surround, recessed between attached columns with stone Corinthian capitals. Keyed, moulded round-headed surrounds to flanking aproned windows recessed in square panels. Double cyma recta ground-floor cornice, breaking forward over door, supports balustrades of first-floor windows, the central paired, which have low segmental heads and cord-moulded surrounds under bracketed drip-moulds with carved central finials. Deeply-moulded pediment on richly-carved cornice has sunken centre containing oval date-panel with cord-moulded frame and lily finial. Roof has 2 ogee-stopped ridge ventilators. Dwarf walls flanking steps have chamfered coping; wrought-iron handrails have down-curved ends. Interior: painted plaster above boarded dado; slender cast-iron columns with crocket capitals, support continuous gallery on 3 sides, with cast-iron bombe balustrade which has ivy-leaf decoration in 4 petals on circle motif; similar more slender posts in gallery. Large panelled pulpit with side steps in front of organ which is set in moulded arch on Corinthian pilasters. Flanking panelled wood screens to minister's and choir's vestries. Iron balustrades on rear gallery stairs in entrance foyer with tiled floor. Ceiling with moulded decoration is deeply coved along the long axis; 3 ceiling

roses contain pierced cones which formerly held light fittings suspended by ratchet control. Glass in simple floral patterns c.1925, as memorials to members of the congregation, and west window as First World War memorial.

2

CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND SAINT CUTHBERT, CHURCH HILL

List Entry Number: 1228976

Grade: II

Roman Catholic parish church. Foundation plaque dated 1853; by Edward Welby Pugin; tower completed 1897. Irregular courses of squared sandstone; upper stages of tower hammer-dressed; ashlar dressings. Roofs renewed in slate-coloured asbestos tiles. Aligned south-west/north-west. Aisled nave with ritual north porch and south-west tower; chancel with north Lady chapel and south vestry link to presbytery. Decorated style; tower Tudor Gothic. Steeply-gabled porch has double boarded door in moulded arch with elongated 2-centred head; steps up to 2-centred-arched west door, with foliage-decorated hinges, flanked by filleted shafts with vine-carved capitals under drip-mould with mitred head-stops; cusped niche above has statue of Our Lady. Decorated tracery in 2-light aisle windows, 4-light west and large 5-light east windows. Spherical-triangular clerestory windows have 3 cusped lights. Tall 3-stage tower has 2-light west window, cusped lancet at top of high first stage on east, steps up to boarded door on south; high plinth and clasping ashlar buttresses. Upper stages offset, with pinnaced clasping buttresses flanking clock under drip-mould, and tall traceried belfry openings; pinnaced parapet has corner blind-traceried battlements on flower-bracketed frieze with corner gargoyles. Steeply-pitched roofs of nave, chancel and Lady

chapel have stone cross finials. Interior; painted plaster above painted boarded dado; ashlar chancel and dressings. Painted scissor-truss roof and painted panelled keeled chancel roof. 5-bay arcades, the west bays filled with screens and the arches boxed in to form south porch and north children's room, have moulded 2-centred arches on quatrefoil columns with varied foliage capitals; high, shafted chancel arch with flower-stopped drip-mould. Other arches to chancel and doors either depressed 2-centred or elongated 2-centred. Chancel has angle-bracketed ashlar balcony on south. West screen and gallery have Gothic tracery with crested balustrade. High altar 1864 by J.F. Bentley now separated into 3 parts, the tabernacle in the Lady chapel, the altar under the chancel arch and the reredos in the original position, all of alabaster with enamel and gold inlay and painted panels, in Gothic style. East brass foundation plate dated 1853. Glass in east window by Hardman; other glass includes some by Atkinson Bros., Newcastle, commemorating 1862 arrival in the parish of the Sisters of Mercy.

3

PRESBYTERY ATTACHED TO CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND SAINT CUTHBERT, CHURCH HILL

List Entry Number: 1229009

Grade: II

R.C. Presbytery. Circa 1853 by E.W. Pugin. Coursed squared sandstone with ashlar quoins and dressings; roof renewed in slate-coloured asbestos tiles with flat stone gable copings. L-plan, attached to ritual south of chancel and south nave aisle. West elevation of 2 storeys and 3 bays, the third gabled and projecting, has Tudor-arched door at right of central bay, 3-light stone- mullioned and transomed window

higher to left of door. At right a similar window in square projection with hipped roof, under small 2-light window in steeply-pitched gable. Projecting one-storey left link with south aisle has small clasped lancets; 2-light window in dormer behind link. Steeply-pitched roof has tall ridge chimneys.

4

WAR MEMORIAL, PIERS AND CHAIN, CHURCH STREET

List Entry Number: 1229011

Grade: II

War memorial, with surrounding piers and chain. Circa 1919. Signed S. Webby, Liverpool. White granite; iron chain. 2 steps to tall tapered rectangular-section memorial on plinth; column has 2 offsets, cornice and diagonally-set square coping. Arms of Crook in wreath on main faces; shorter sides have pilasters with garlands; names of dead of wars of 1914-1918, 1939-1945, and 1950-1953 in Korea, in panels and on plinth. Diagonally-set low flat curb supports tapered square posts with pyramidal tops; link chain, with spikes through links, attached to posts.

5

PREMISES OCCUPIED BY JG FORSTER AND YE OLDE HORSE SHOE INN, 3 AND 4, CHURCH STREET

List Entry Number: 1279274

Grade: II

Shop and public house. Late C18 with mid-C19 shop and public house fronts; public house dated 1822 for C EI I over door. Shop sandstone rubble with ashlar quoins; public house painted render with painted ashlar dressings. Welsh slate roof with brick chimneys. 2 storeys, 3 wide bays and left extension of one storey, one bay. Shop at left has pilasters

and entablature framing hardboard-covered door with 2-pane overlight; shop window to left of door has 2 rows of 5 panes. Paired sashes on first floor have rendered jambs and painted projecting stone sill. Eaves gutter board. Public house at right has low 2-panelled door to right of centre in raised stone surround with stone-bracketed moulded hood EI over lintel incised C 1822 I. At left are top-hung casements in style of late C19 sashes; at right one wide and one narrow window, separated by a short pilaster and framed by pilasters and fascia with fruit-carved brackets. Cornice supports first-floor canted bay. Pierced 2-panel shutters to left ground-floor window. Roof over 2 left bays with left and central banded chimneys; roof of lower pitch over right bay has right end chimney. Left extension has pent roof; altered from 2-storey building. Public house included for group value.

Appendix 2: Notable Unlisted Buildings

The following buildings are not statutory listed but do make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There is a presumption against demolition of any of these structures. The omission of any particular building should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Ref	Building
1	St Josephs Lodge, 33 Church Hill
2	Convent House, Church Hill
3	St Catherine's Church, Church Street
4	Former school building, Elliott Street
5	St Catherine's Community Centre, Market Place
6	Defty's Hardware Shop, 6 North Terrace
7	Boots, 7 North Terrace
8	Former Board School, Croft Street
9	Crook Business Centre, New Road
10	16 Church Street
11	77-78 Hope Street
12	The Empire Building, 12 South Street
13	Redundant Church, North Terrace
14	1 Wesley Street
15	Bar 56 & Crook Hotel, 56-57 Hope Street
16	Hewitts Solicitor's, 1 Elliot Street
17	25 & 26 Commercial Street
18	Smith Roddam Solicitors & The Surtees Hotel, 1 & 2 South Street
19	Dowfold House, Low Jobs Hill



St Catherine's Community Centre, Market Place



Crook Business Centre

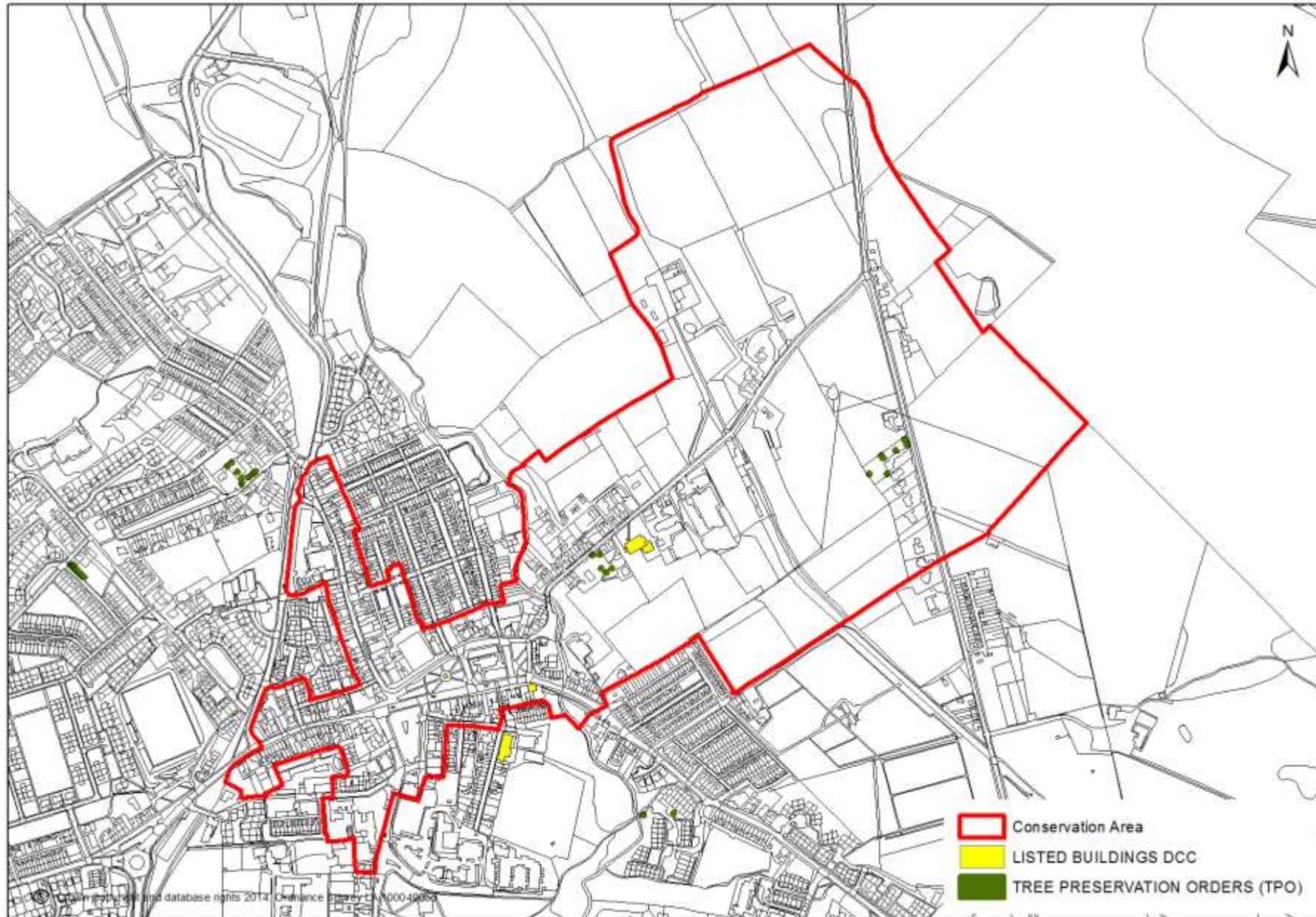


The Board School

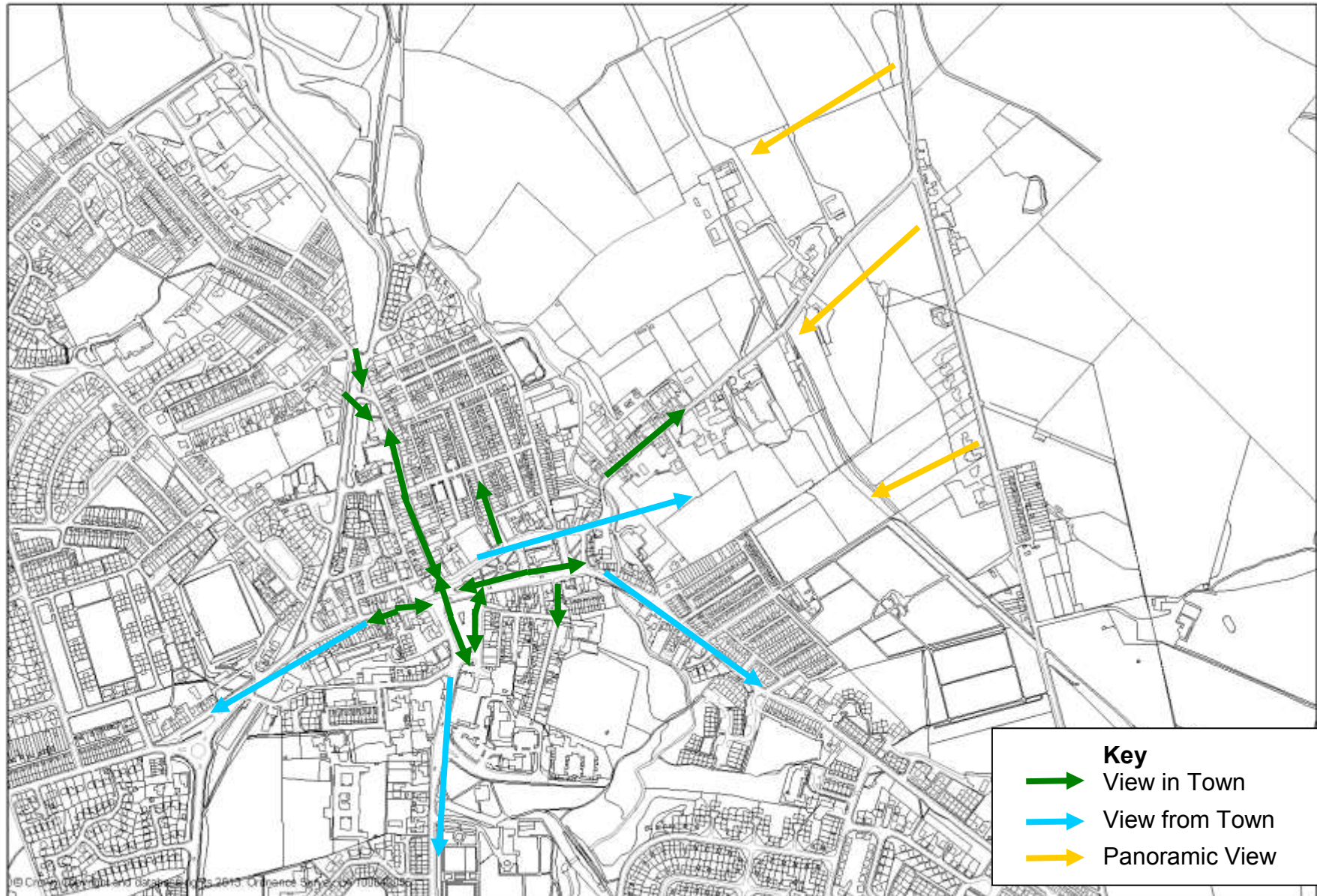


Former school building Elliott Street

Appendix 3: Current Designations



Appendix 4: Key Views



DRAFT

Heritage, Landscape and Design
Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
County Durham
DH1 5UQ

Tel: 03000 267146

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