

Conservation Area Appraisal



**Ireshopeburn
Newhouse
West Blackdene**

December 2011

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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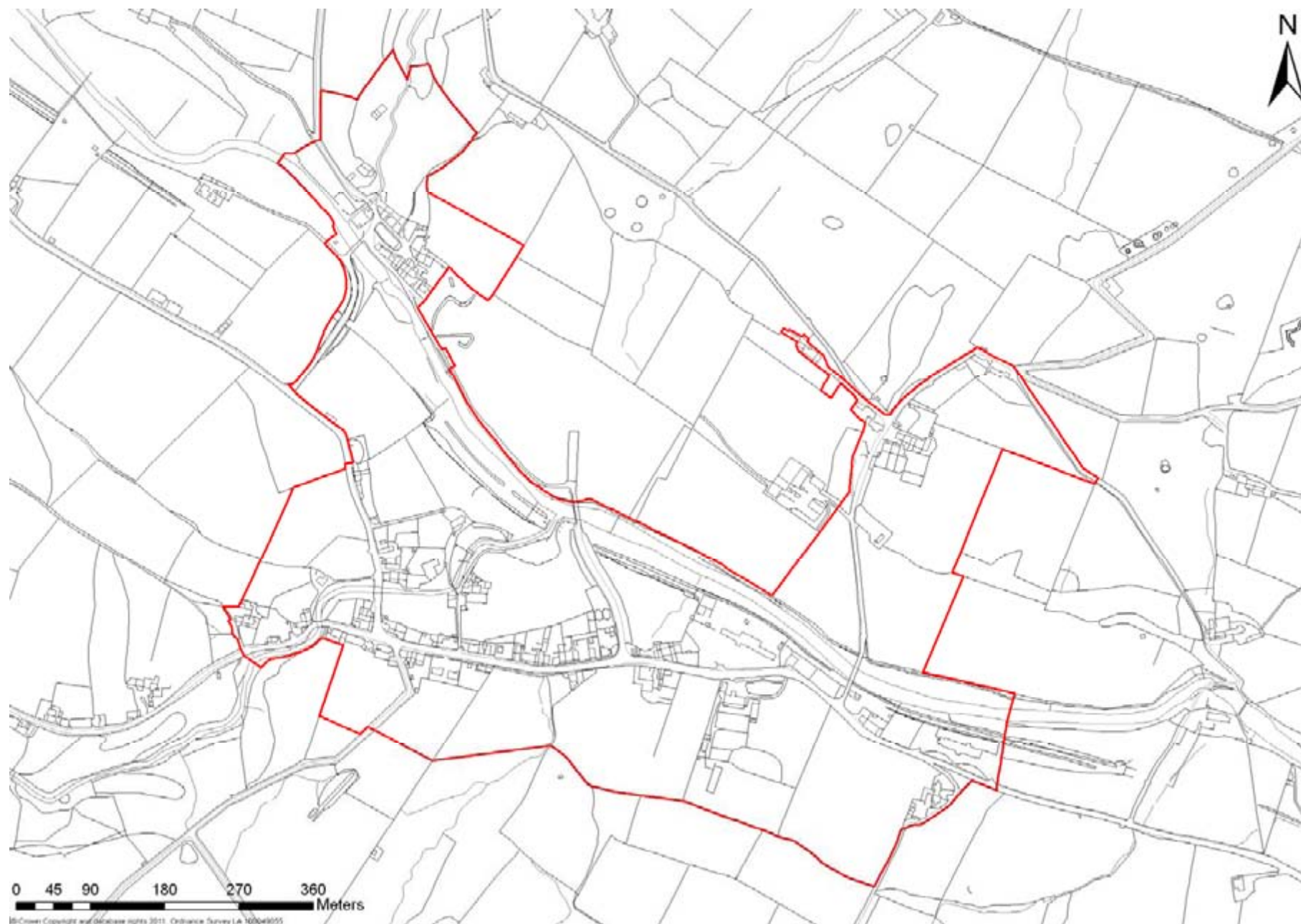


***Heritage, Landscape and Design Team
Durham County Council***

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Conservation Area Boundary



Summary of Special Significance

The appraisal covers the three adjacent but historically distinct settlements of Ireshopeburn, Newhouse and the hamlet of West Blackdene. They were previously covered by two separate conservation area designations but given their shared landscape context and historical links they are being brought together in a unified conservation area in 2011.

It is considered that the special character of the conservation areas is derived from:

- The development of Ireshopeburn and West Blackdene along the floodplain of the River Wear and stretching up the slope of the valley to Newhouse.
- Bridges of varying size and design which cross the river and Ireshopeburn.
- Mature tree cover and rich meadows.
- Stunning moorland backdrops.
- Twisting roads which channel and foreshorten views within the settlements.
- Contrasting linear development along road edges and groups of buildings clustered around former farmsteads which bring a rural settlement pattern into the village.
- The compact shape of West Blackdene focused on the pound.
- Stone field and garden boundary walls which link buildings to the settlements rural hinterlands.
- Robust two storey stone built houses, many with sandstone flag or slate roofs.
- Survival of high attic windows set into the apex of stone gables.

- Extensive survival of original architectural details including timber windows and cast iron rainwater goods.
- Strong silhouettes created by chimney stacks and pots.
- Both operational and converted agricultural buildings in Ireshopeburn.
- The survival of built remnants of the lead mining industry.



View over Ireshopeburn from Stoney Path



Newhouse



West Blackdene

Public Consultation

Public consultation is an integral part of the appraisal process. The Character Appraisal was subject to a public consultation phase, after which it was discussed by Durham County Council's Cabinet in December 2011. 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 elsewhere. 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 conservation areas can be found within PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment and its accompanying practice guide which are published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, at national government level.

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 Ireshopeburn, Newhouse and West Blackdene'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 Ireshopeburn, Newhouse and West Blackdene, but no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should certainly not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Location and Setting

Location

Ireshopeburn is located on the south side of the River Wear over the valley floor where the Ireshope Burn drops and moves across the valley basin. The settlement has stretched to the east where it straggles along both sides of the A689. Newhouse clusters around the former mine agent's house on Well Bank on the north side of the river overlooking the village. West Blackdene, some 200 metres to the west of Ireshopeburn, sits beside the Wear on its northern bank. The settlements are located c12km west of Stanhope.



Location plan.

Setting

The conservation area is located in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is characterised by a distinctive landscape of high moorland and broad upland dales. This pattern can clearly be seen from the village. In terms of landscape quality, the AONB and its neighbouring fringes are recognised to be of high value in terms of appearance with significant geological and ecological interest.

The solid geology of the Ireshopeburn area consists of alternating layers of carboniferous limestone, sandstone and shale with the harder layers standing out as terraces on the valley's sides to create interesting profiles. These sedimentary rocks are cut by NE-SW veins containing minerals such as galena, fluorspar and iron ore. Unusually, the bed of the Wear at the point where it is joined by the Ireshopeburn is smooth limestone bedrock, over which the river is often very shallow.

Overlying the solid geology is a mantle of glacial till, noticeably thicker to the south of the Wear than to its north. The valley floor is infilled with alluvium and river terrace deposits.

Local geological resources have been quarried and mined throughout Ireshopeburn's history, playing a key role in the local economy over the centuries. The limestone itself was quarried to produce lime for mortar and for the liming of fields to improve acid grassland; it was also used as road stone and as a flux in the iron industry. Ironstone has also been mined locally. However, by far the most important mineral resource exploited throughout Ireshopeburn's history has been lead (the history of the local lead industry is outlined in Appendix 3). Following the decline of the lead industry, fluorspar mining was important, notably at West

Blackdene Mine which continued to operate throughout most of the 20th century.

The steep slopes to north and south of Ireshopeburn are covered by a patchwork of stone-walled green fields, containing extensive evidence of former lead mines and quarries. They rise steeply to the open moorland of Noon Hill to the south and Black Hill and Carr Brow Moor to the north. West Blackdene stands on a small, level terrace immediately east of the confluence of the Elmford Burn and the Wear, and like Ireshopeburn, is enclosed by rising ground to all sides. Newhouse is different, standing high above the north bank of the Wear on Well Bank where it enjoys splendid views to the south over the river and beyond. Dense and attractive areas of woodland and pastures decorate the sheltered valley bottom to enhance the attractive rural character of the main settlements.



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Ireshopeburn in its landscape setting (2006)

Historical Summary

This section presents a brief summary of Ireshopeburn's history; a more detailed overview is provided in Appendix 3.

Pre-Medieval

Although occasional stray finds of flint tools and other artefacts demonstrate that people have been active in Upper Weardale since Mesolithic times (c10,000 years ago), there is no clear evidence for human settlement in the immediate environs of Ireshopeburn throughout the entire prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon eras. Recent survey work has recorded settlements and field systems from Iron Age (c750BC-AD80) and Roman (cAD80-410) times within 5km of Ireshopeburn around Westgate, but it is not currently known whether the distribution extends as far up the dale as Ireshopeburn. The only reference to pre-medieval times might lie in the name of the village which could be of Anglo-Saxon origin as it contains the 'Old English' words of burn and hope – the latter meaning a valley opening onto a main river valley.

Medieval

Currently, the earliest evidence for settlement at Ireshopeburn dates from the medieval period. From the 12th century, Ireshopeburn lay within the Bishop of Durham's Forest of Weardale, used primarily for hunting. In the mid 13th century the Bishop set up a number of new farms throughout the Forest, four of which are in the Ireshopeburn and West Blackdene Conservation Areas. These were developed over subsequent centuries as cattle ranches which became the agricultural focus around which the settlements developed.

As well as exploiting the agricultural potential of Weardale, the Bishops also sought to profit from ore extraction. Together, farming and mining underpinned the development of settlements at Ireshopeburn and West Blackdene. There is documentary evidence for lead mining at the latter from 1401.

From the 17th century, lead mining and processing in Weardale expanded under the Blackett-Wentworth-Beaumont family, and Newhouse was developed as the Weardale headquarters for this industry. Most local buildings date from the 18th and 19th century and were related to lead mining. Many houses were built for lead workers and High House Chapel (1760) and the adjacent school (1854) were intimately linked with the industry.

In 1883, control of the local lead industry passed to the newly formed Weardale Lead Company, who also located their headquarters at Ireshopeburn. Weardale House was developed as the Managing Director's home, with offices at Coronation Cottage and workshops to the east.

The lead industry went into decline at the end of the 19th century and the Weardale Lead Company transferred its operations to Rookhope in 1947. Mining for Fluorspar continued at West Blackdene into the late 20th century, but all mining operations in the area have now ceased.

The Grade II listed High House Chapel is still in regular use, as it has been since its foundation in 1760. It now also houses the Weardale Museum. The old school is now a pub, the Weardale Inn and is also Grade II listed. Working farms still exist on the sites of the original 13th century farmsteads.

Form and Layout

The Ireshopeburn/Newhouse and West Blackdene Conservation Area has been divided for the purposes of this appraisal into three character areas:

1. Ireshopeburn village
2. Newhouse
3. West Blackdene

Character Area 1: Ireshopeburn Village

This character area covers the whole of the village of Ireshopeburn together with its immediate rural hinterland. The settlement has developed alongside the A689, to be contained by the River Wear and the embankment of the old Weardale railway to the north.

Key features:

- The Ireshope Burn, the Wear and the wooded pastures.
- Bridges.
- Generally a loose collection of buildings with gaps offering views across the valley.
- Twisting views in the village.
- The robust stone built houses with surviving architectural details and original materials.
- Stone boundary walls.
- The working farms.
- Remnants of the lead mining industry.

Most buildings are constructed in local stone and front onto the road, with the main residential area concentrated to the west where the A689 turns a right-angle just south of Ireshope Burn

Bridge some 200m west of its confluence with the Wear. Here, the buildings are generally of 18th and 19th century date. Character Area 1 also includes the lower stretches of Stony Path and the Lanehill road as they descend from the surrounding moorland to enter the west end of the village. Although most buildings are domestic, the character area includes the historic farmsteads of Gate House, Lowburn and Earnwell which bring an agricultural presence to the heart of the village. The south side of Front Street is largely undeveloped with open fields and woodland coming to the roadside. The surrounding hills provide the backdrop to all views from within the village. A cul-de-sac road passes north from the A689 over a modern bridge over the Wear to the site of Blackdene mine, now a hay field, where a riverside path leads to West Blackdene.

The west end of the village consists of a few scattered buildings including the 18th century High House Chapel which now incorporates the Weardale Museum, and the old school, now the Weardale Inn, both of which are Grade II listed buildings. The substantial brick-built early 20th century Weardale House (now an outdoor education centre) is located on the south side of the road.

Recent additions to the village include the new small housing estate at Anitas Way, two small caravan sites adjacent to the Ireshope Burn, and the children's' play area opposite North View.



High House Chapel from the track above the Hotts, with Newhouse in the background



Front Street.



Looking towards Brierhill.

Character Area 2: Newhouse

This character area is approached from Ireshopeburn village by Coronation Bridge and the steeply rising Well Bank.

Key features:

- The prominence of the buildings cut into the rising slope of the valley.
- Views across the valley.
- The high quality architecture of New House.
- The extensive use of natural materials in repair and conversion works.
- The remnants of the lead mining industry.
- Good quality conversion of agricultural buildings.

The area is dominated by the grand 18th century dwelling, Newhouse which is Grade II* listed. The refined architecture of the property is in marked contrast to the vernacular character of most buildings of Ireshopeburn village and West Blackdene. A cluster of stone buildings surrounds Newhouse, all set within large, open pasture fields with scattered trees that give an impression of a parkland setting. The Barn, now converted into a house but retaining its historic character, is important to the setting of Newhouse. At the northern edge of the conservation area, high above the Wear with commanding views to the south, are Hill View and High Barns. The modern farm buildings south-west of Newhouse and to the west of Well Bank are excluded from the conservation area.



Newhouse from the south



The Wear from Coronation Bridge



The former Reading Room



Newhouse from the north

Character Area 3: West Blackdene

Although the villages are only separated by a 100m stretch of the Wear, the hamlet of West Blackdene has always been a separate settlement from Ireshopeburn.

Key features

- Layout of the settlement around the former pound.
- Amrita Cottage, possible bastle house.
- Buildings moving-up the rising slope of Carway Bank.
- Tightly defined space.
- Stone buildings with regular building lines.
- Wooded banks of the River Wear.
- Bridges.

West Blackdene has a distinctive character which is markedly different from other Weardale settlements. The village clusters on a low gently rising plateau above the north bank of the Wear, from which the land rises steeply to the north. It consists largely of two terraces, both of which face south towards the Wear. The southernmost terrace includes Amrita Cottage which appears to incorporate parts of a 17th century bastle house which illustrates the hamlet's probable late medieval presence. Between the two terraces is the old pound, probably originally a stock enclosure of late 18th or early 19th century date, now largely divided into private gardens. To the east of the pound is the historic Dean House, with its exceptionally fine stone-flagged roof, which together with the two terraces produces an enclosed space that gives the impression of a large, defensible stock enclosure. The conservation area includes a c400m stretch of the Wear. Its wooded banks contrast with the generally open surrounding green fields, landscape features which make a substantial contribution to establishing the character of West Blackdene. The 18th century

Blackdene Bridge over the Wear together with the nearby late 19th century railway bridge are important historic features.



The riverside terrace



The 18th century bridge



The pound



West Blackdene from the north

Architectural Character

Ireshopeburn contains a range of buildings dating from the 17th through to the 21st century - although the village might be medieval in origin and buildings may incorporate earlier historic fabric. Other than a handful of special-purpose buildings including the chapel, school, village hall, old workshops, the Candlehouse at Newhouse and the bridges, buildings within the settlements are primarily domestic or agricultural and reflect their historic use through their appearance.

Some buildings have been altered. Most of the changes are relatively minor and do not substantially diminish their historic quality or attraction. The most frequent alterations relate to changes to the material content of window and doors which, weakens architectural composition, but are reversible.

The key features of the historic buildings are:

- Stone built with slate or stone flagged roofs.
- Dual pitched roofs with chimney stacks and pots with limited use of water tabling.
- Corrugated metal roofs on some farm buildings.
- Two storey buildings with some two and a half storey buildings with second storey windows tucked beneath eaves.
- Attic windows set high in gables.
- Vertically proportioned window openings with conspicuous reveals.
- Exposed masonry, although some farm buildings are whitewashed.
- Traditional geometric arrangement of windows and doors.
- Cast iron rain water goods spiked to elevations.

- Recent buildings tend to echo the local vernacular although incorporating modern building techniques and non-local materials.

Agricultural buildings are prominent within the conservation areas, including those associated with Gate House, Lowburn and Earnwell farms in Ireshopeburn Village; the barns by Newhouse; and the farm north-west of West Blackdene.



Agricultural buildings play a key role in defining the character of the conservation areas.

Bridges play a significant role in the appearance of the area, ranging from the modern replacement over the River Wear at the west end of Ireshopeburn to the 18th century survivor in West Blackdene.

Important Buildings

There are 15 statutorily listed buildings in the conservation area which are recognised as being of national importance for their special architectural or historic interest. (see Appendix 1 for more details)

Building	Grade
Ireshopeburn	
<i>Memorial to John Wesley</i>	II
<i>High House Chapel and former Minister's House</i>	II
<i>Rancho del Rio and inscription stone</i>	II
<i>Ivy Cottage and barn</i>	II
<i>Guidepost at junction of A689 and Causeway Road</i>	II
<i>Weavers workshop, Causeway Road/A689</i>	II
<i>Coronation Bridge over the River Wear</i>	II
<i>Newhouse and attached walls</i>	II*
<i>Field Barn south of Newhouse</i>	II
<i>Reading room and cottage</i>	II
<i>Sundorne and Milburn</i>	II
<i>Candle House</i>	II
West Blackdene	
<i>Pound at the west end of the village</i>	II
<i>Amrita Cottage</i>	II
<i>Bridge over the River Wear</i>	II

In addition to the listed buildings, many other buildings combine to give the village its unique built heritage (see Appendix 2 for more details). There is a presumption against the demolition of these structures in accordance with government guidance found in PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment.

<i>Briar Hill</i>
<i>Gate House Farm</i>

<i>Brierhill</i>
<i>Lowburn</i>
<i>Derelict house, Poperd Hill</i>
<i>Midlothian House</i>
<i>No 40 Front Street</i>
<i>Ireshopeburn Institute/Village Hall</i>
<i>North View</i>
<i>Ivy Cottage</i>
<i>No's 3 and 4 Lanehill</i>
<i>Ullsfield</i>
<i>31-37 Front Street</i>
<i>23-25 Front Street</i>
<i>Earnwell Cottage (No. 7 Front Street)</i>
<i>30 & 32 Front Street</i>
<i>28 Front Street</i>
<i>No's 24-26 Front Street</i>
<i>No's 20-22 Front Street</i>
<i>No's 12-18 Front Terrace</i>
<i>No's 6-10 Front Street</i>
<i>No. 2 and 4 Front Street</i>
<i>Earnwell</i>
<i>Weardale House</i>
<i>Old Weardale Lead Co. workshops</i>
<i>Wesley Garth</i>
<i>Coronation Cottage</i>
<i>Wayside House and the Hotts</i>
<i>Old barn and outbuildings south-west of Newhouse</i>
<i>No 8 New House</i>
<i>Hill View and High Barns</i>
<i>West Blackdene</i>
<i>The North Terrace, nos. 3-6 West Blackdene</i>
<i>Farmstead north-west of the village</i>
<i>Dean House</i>
<i>Realm Cottage</i>

Building Materials

There is a limited palette of materials in the area which binds the buildings together and creates a distinctive sense of place.

Masonry is generally of local sandstone which would have been taken from the many neighbouring quarries. It is occasionally laid in neatly coursed blocks but more frequently roughly coursed rubble with corners defined by stone quoins. Some buildings in Ireshopeburn are rendered, the most prominent being the unfortunately pebble-dashed terrace at Earnwell on the north side of Front Street. Some agricultural buildings were limewashed to provide an antiseptic skin to the buildings. The only substantial brick structure in the conservation area is Weardale House. The history of some buildings and areas of settlement can be traced through masonry changes and ghosted openings.

Roofs tend to be either split sandstone flags or Welsh slate which came to the north-east in the late 18th/early 19th century as collier ballast.

Window and door openings are generally formed by plain stone surrounds or by plain lintels and cills. Traditional windows are timber framed sliding sash, either multi or single paned depending upon age. Plastic alternatives are becoming increasingly common. There are many fine examples of traditional timber planked and panelled doors.

Rainwater goods are traditionally cast iron spiked onto walls, but some are being replaced by plastic alternatives mounted onto fascias.



Examples of different styles of masonry.



Contrasting roofs: modern artificial slates (left), traditional stone flags (centre) and Welsh slate (right on Front Street).



Examples of traditional doors and windows

Boundaries and Means of Enclosure

Stone walls, both within the village and throughout the surrounding landscape, are crucial elements of Ireshopeburn's character, doing more than any other built element to bind Ireshopeburn village, Newhouse and West Blackdene together and merge them with the surrounding landscape. Stone walls exist in a variety of forms. They include the pound at West Blackdene, roadside walls, walls around private gardens, bridge parapets and field walls. Most are of drystone construction but some are mortared. Some, such as the bulging retaining walls on the roadside up to Newhouse, are in very poor condition and in need of urgent attention.

Stone walls are by far the most common form of boundary within the conservation area, but there are some other means of enclosure including iron railings, timber and post and wire fences, brick walls and hedges.

Open Spaces and Trees

The interaction between buildings and spaces help to define the distinctive character of a settlement. This is certainly the case at Ireshopeburn, where open spaces and woodland within and surrounding the conservation area play a key role in defining local character. It is only towards the west end of Front Street, and within the core of West Blackdene (itself a key open space at the heart of the settlement) that a feeling of enclosed space is encountered. Even here, however, views of green fields are always present between and beyond the buildings.

Large open expanses of agricultural land comprising pasture fields and hay meadows bounded by drystone walls, many including earthworks associated with old mines and quarries, surround Ireshopeburn village, Newhouse and West Blackdene. These are crucial to the character of the conservation area, providing an essentially rural context for the settlements and framing views from within it. This rural character is extended into the heart of the village, with most properties along Front Street backing directly onto green fields. Open fields border directly onto the south of Front Street along much of its length.



Left: The River Wear from Coronation Bridge

Right: Views of distant moors are constantly visible from within the conservation areas.



Left: Agricultural land on the south side of Front Street

Right: Play area at west end of Ireshopeburn

The former site of the Blackdene mine has been landscaped and transformed into a large hayfield substantially surrounded by deciduous trees.

The children's play area opposite North View is an important open space for the village community. Its location, tucked away behind houses and largely hidden from the Ireshope Burn by trees and scrub, means that the modern, brightly coloured apparatus does not adversely impact on the historic character of the village.

The River Wear and the Ireshope Burn are crucial to the character of the conservation area. The channel of the Wear, flowing from the north-west through West Blackdene and on to pass along the north side of Ireshopeburn village, is in places very shallow with sheet rock exposed in its bed. Mature deciduous trees clothe its banks throughout much of its passage through the conservation areas. The banks of the Ireshope Burn, which flows into the Wear from the south-west, are also clothed with deciduous woodland at the south-west corner of the conservation area to provide dramatic and attractive green bulk. The woodlands, in addition to being of important ecological value,

provide seasonal variety to the views enjoyed from within and around the village.

In addition to the riverside woodland, mature trees stand at many other places throughout the conservation area, notably around Newhouse, on Poperd Hill, in the gardens of Weardale House and the Weardale Inn, and along field boundaries. Private gardens also play an important role in defining the character of Ireshopeburn. The gardens of Weardale House, the Weardale Inn, Newhouse and the pond within West Blackdene are particularly significant.

There are four Tree Preservation Orders in Ireshopeburn - two sycamores at Poperd Hill, a Hawthorn near the Coronation Bridge and a group of sycamores and other species at Well Bank.

Views

The villages are set in wide landscapes with open views along and over the flanks of the Wear Valley. The views, frequently dramatic and of their own intrinsic value, provide the moorland backdrop which contains the settlements. Views to the north from Ireshopeburn are extensive and take in the base and rising slopes of the valley, whereas the views to the south tend to be contained and foreshortened by the lower shoulders of the valley flanks. Newtown and more isolated farmsteads and field buildings decorate the landscape to articulate the mining and agricultural history of the area. The way in which the sweeping views flow into the settlements is of great significance and must be protected.

Views within Ireshopeburn are mainly channelled along Front Street, with buildings and stone boundary walls along both sides of the road. The building pattern is loose and the boundary walls

low to allow these views to occasionally spread out across the valley sides. Groups of trees and buildings provide partial end stops to views where the road twists through the village.

In contrast to the linear prospects which flow through Ireshopeburn, the views within West Blackdene tend to be tightly focused on the pound and along the river bank.



Left: View across Ireshopeburn to the south

Right: View along the base of the valley



Left: Foreshortened views in Ireshopeburn

Right: Views in West Blackdene focus on the pound

Activity

The villages are now primarily residential. The once thriving mining industry which led to the expansion of Ireshopeburn ceased in the early 20th century with few surviving reminders other than marks on the ground. There is still agricultural activity at the heart of the village at Earnwell Farm and also in the surrounding countryside. The now substantially abandoned early 20th century engineering works to the west of Wesley Garth is a reminder of intensive earlier industrial activity. Economic activity has been generated through tourism and leisure and the pub/restaurant, Weardale Museum and the Outdoor Education Centre. The Weardale Way also runs along the north bank of the River Wear bringing ramblers into the village.

Public Realm

Roads, pavements and other surfaces

Roads throughout the conservation area are generally tarmac. Pavements on Front Street are partly tarmac and partly finished in concrete flags, the latter provided through a Wear Valley-wide refurbishment initiative. The road from Front Street to the old Blackdene mine has a pavement, but elsewhere most roads have grass verges rather than pavements.

A number of unmetalled public footpaths lead from the settlements into the surrounding countryside. Stone steps address gradients and a timber footbridge carries the public footpath over the Ireshope Burn at Lowburn.



Concrete flags and stone steps

Signage

Road signs (direction signposts and warning signs) throughout the conservation area are generally of a standard, modern type, although one early 20th century cast iron guidepost (Grade II listed) does survive in front of the village hall. Public footpath signs are provided where footpaths intersect with roads. These are of a variety of forms, mostly modern, with the sign adjacent to High Barns, above Newhouse, being of an unusual form and perhaps several decades old.

Signage in Ireshopeburn provides an insight into the village's past. A large inscribed stone plaque dated 1854 records the construction of Newhouse School '*by and on land belonging to WB Beaumont, M.P. aided by subscriptions from his agents, miners and others for the education of all religious denominations*' (Grade II listed). This now lies partly obscured by shrubs opposite the entrance to the Weardale Inn. A memorial to John Wesley stands in a garden immediately north-west of the junction of Front Street and Well Bank, close to where Wesley is believed to have preached before High House Chapel was built. This monument's pedestal is probably 18th century and thought to be part of a sundial. A small brass plaque commemorating the opening of Ireshopeburn Bridge in 2000 is set into the bridge parapet. An interpretive panel entitled 'Miners and Methodists', outlining aspects of Ireshopeburn's heritage, has been erected adjacent to Coronation Bridge on the line of the Weardale Way.

Other than road signs, signage within West Blackdene and Newhouse is non-existent. Within Ireshopeburn village it is restricted to a few advert signs. These are generally discrete and do not detract from the historic character of the village.



Commemorative signage

Street furniture and overhead cables

A variety of benches are provided around the conservation area. For example two are located by the pound at West Blackdene and two others are positioned in front of the village hall. This area in front of the hall is unfortunately cluttered with road signs, a litter bin, notice boards, a telegraph pole and a modern telephone kiosk. A traditional bright red post box is built into a stone wall on the opposite side of the A689. An overgrown old bench is located in the hedgerow on the east side of Well Bank, below Newhouse.

A network of unsightly timber and green metal telegraph poles supports overhead electricity and telephone cables throughout Ireshopeburn, Newhouse and West Blackdene. Many double as lamp posts with suburban style lamps. Collectively, these poles and cables detract from the historic character and appearance of the conservation area.



Overhead power infrastructure, poles and lines

General Condition

The condition of the conservation area is generally sound. However, there are a number of old properties which have been completely abandoned and in a state of extreme disrepair. They are at risk and require holding repairs, securing and reuse. Other buildings are dilapidated and require attention in order to protect their future wellbeing. Some field and boundary walls are also in need of repair.

Management Proposals

Ireshopeburn, Newhouse and West Blackdene are well preserved rural villages. There is a need to preserve and enhance their special character and appearance and ensure that any future developments are sympathetic and sustainable.

The following management proposals have been identified to ensure that any future changes to the conservation area is 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:

Management proposals:

- Protect the historic layout pattern and appearance of the settlements.
- Protect views of, into and across the conservation areas.
- Protect and properly repair field and boundary walls and hedges.

- Encourage the future containment and definition of space through the construction of stone boundary walls and/or hedge planting.
- Identify buildings and structures at risk and devise and implement proposals to ensure their survival.
- To resist infill development along the A689 in order to keep the open character of Ireshopeburn and retain views over the rural hinterland
- Monitor erosion of traditional details, and consider whether an article 4(2) direction removing householder permitted development rights is needed to preserve the character and appearance of the area
- Any future developments within the conservation areas should be subject to an archaeological assessment as part of the planning process.
- Underground overhead wires and, where necessary, introduce appropriately styled street lighting columns and lantern heads.
- The careful introduction of additional interpretation to complement the Weardale Way signage by Coronation Bridge.
- To promote the North Pennines AONB Buildings Design Guide to encourage good design and introduce any additional design guidance that is particularly pertinent to the conservation areas.
- Undertake a landscape survey of the conservation areas and prepare management plans which protect the wellbeing of the landscape, particularly tree cover along the valley floor, and introduce, where appropriate, measures to restore historic landscape settings.

Boundary Changes

The boundary of the conservation areas was amended in 2011 to accommodate changes to property boundaries and to bring together the two areas. This rationalised the boundaries and will enable a more co-ordinated approach to the management of the historic settlements and their immediate settings. The amendments comprised of:

1. To include the area of land contained by the northern edge of the approach road to West Blackdene from the A689 to the edge of the West Blackdene Conservation Area (including the northern embankment); the northern edge of the A689 from its junction of the approach road to West Blackdene; the northern edge of Ireshopeburn Conservation Area; the northern edge of the Weardale Way from its interface with the boundaries of Ireshopeburn Conservation Area and West Blackdene Conservation Area; and the western edge and southern edge of West Blackdene Conservation Area as far as the approach road from the A689 and West Blackdene. This joined the two former areas together.
2. To include land to the rear (south) of 3 Causeway Road. This rationalised the boundary to conform to property boundaries.
3. To include a small triangular area of land incorporating part of the frontage of the Weardale Inn and part of the A689. This rationalised the boundary to conform to property and land use boundaries.
4. To include a small area of land to the west of 8 Well Bank. This rationalised the boundary to conform to property boundaries.
5. To include Short Thorns farm and its adjacent byre located to the west of Newhouse. It forms part of the historic settlement of Newhouse and thought to have been the mines' headquarters and agent's house. It is an important component of Newhouse and clearly visible in long distance views.
6. To include land between the bankside of the River Wear and the northern edge of the Weardale Way between the western edge of the former Ireshopeburn Conservation Area and the access road leading into the site of the former Blackdene mine. This rationalised the boundary to conform to land use boundaries.
7. To exclude land to the north of the field boundary to the north of 7 and 8b West Blackdene. This rationalised the boundary to conform to land use boundaries.
8. To include the northern half of the field to the north of 3 to 6 West Blackdene. This rationalised the boundary to conform to field boundaries.
9. To include the northern parts of the fields to the north and west of 2 West Blackdene. This rationalised the boundary to conform to field boundaries.
10. To exclude the area of land between the southern bank of the River Wear and the northern edge of the track leading to Waterside Farm. This rationalised the boundary to conform to field boundaries.

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National Heritage List produced by English Heritage

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Appendix 1 Listed Buildings

15 of the most important structures within the conservation area are statutorily listed for their architectural or historic interest – one Grade II* and the others are Grade II. 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:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/

Building	Grade
Ireshopeburn	
<i>Memorial to John Wesley</i>	II
<i>High House Chapel and former Minister's House</i>	II
<i>Rancho del Rio and inscription stone</i>	II
<i>Ivy Cottage and barn</i>	II
<i>Guidepost at junction of A689 and Causeway Road</i>	II
<i>Weavers workshop, Causeway Road/A689</i>	II
Newhouse	
<i>Coronation Bridge over the River Wear</i>	II
<i>Newhouse and attached walls</i>	II*
<i>Field Barn south of Newhouse</i>	II
<i>Reading room and cottage</i>	II
<i>Sundorne and Milburn</i>	II
<i>Candle House</i>	II

West Blackdene	
<i>Pound at the west end of the village</i>	II
<i>Amrita Cottage</i>	II
<i>Bridge over the River Wear</i>	II

MEMORIAL TO JOHN WESLEY

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8722838582



Memorial to John Wesley and his preaching near this site. Probably C18 pedestal, perhaps former sundial, bearing C20 commemorative plaque. Millstone grit pedestal, with abacus, on square base and with stepped square coping. John Wesley used to preach near here beside a thorn bush; the 1894 railway was said to be aligned to avoid the site. Included for historical interest.

HIGH HOUSE CHAPEL AND FORMER MINISTER'S HOUSE

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8726438544



Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and minister's house, now chapel and museum. 1760; extended and raised 1871. Sandstone rubble with quoins, plinth and ashlar dressings; Welsh slate roof with stone gable copings. Chapel: 2 storeys, 3 windows; house set back at left: 2 lower storeys and 2 bays, the left curved, and one-storey, one-bay pent left porch. West front of chapel has 4-panelled double door and shaped fanlight under wide 2-centred arch on pilasters; similar surrounds to flanking narrower windows all under drip moulds. Continuous drip mould to 3 first-floor windows in similar style with sill string. Round-headed louvered opening in gable peak has 2-centred-arched drip mould. North and south fronts have chamfered flat stone lintels and projecting stone sills to 3 windows on each floor. All windows late C19 sashes. House has boarded door in centre, in plain stone surround; 20-pane sashes; truncated left chimney. Interior: painted plaster above boarded and panelled dado; coved stippled-plaster ceiling. Slender, tapered cast iron columns, with abaci, painted in marbling with stencilled decoration, support 3 sides of continuous gallery with panelled balustrade on brackets; west gallery on wall behind high pulpit, which has pierced stylised flower patterns in Gothic panels; organ in west gallery. Communion rail on slender turned balusters; smaller balusters to west of side aisles. 12-sided ceiling ventilators with fret panels. House has C19 kitchen range in front room, plain stone chimney-piece in rear room which has window shutters. L-plan stair has pierced cast iron panels supporting moulded handrail with Gothic newels. Source: Clack and Pattinson *Weardale Chapels* Durham 1978.

RANCHO DEL RIO

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8737338517



School, now restaurant and public house. 1854, for W. Beaumont, M.P., *'aided by subscriptions from his agents, miners and others for the education of all religious denominations'* according to resited inscription stone. Later porch. Coursed squared sandstone with chamfered plinth, pecked quoins and ashlar dressings; Welsh slate roof with stone gable copings. Symmetrical. Main block one storey, 11 bays, the central projecting, quoined and gabled with lower gabled porch. Slightly set-back one-storey, one-bay wings. Diagonally-boarded central door with elaborate hinges under 2-centred arch with voussoirs; trefoil-pierced bargeboards on porch gable. Flanking 5-bay sections have large 16-pane sashes, with ventilators replacing some panes, with flat stone lintels and projecting stone sills. Altered windows in wings. Roof gable copings on main block are chamfered and rest on moulded kneelers (one lost); flat copings on wings. 4 corniced ashlar ridge chimneys, with tall red pots except for right which is truncated.

INSCRIPTION STONE SET IN GARDEN SOUTH OF RANCHO DEL RIO

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8736238498



Inscribed stone commemorating building of school in 1854; rectangular slab about 1 x 1 metres, with recessed centre inscribed W. BEAUMONT ESQ. M.P./AIDED BY SUBSCRIPTIONS FROM HIS/AGENTS MINERS AND OTHERS/FOR THE EDUCATION OF

CHILDREN/OF ALL RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS/1854.
Included for historical interest.

IVY COTTAGE AND BARN ADJOINING

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8657238667



House and barn. C17 and C18 with alterations. Roughly-coursed sandstone rubble of uneven size. Stone-flagged roof. 2 storeys. House at right 2 wide bays; one-bay barn to left. Boarded door and overhead under flush lintel. Early C19 sash windows, lost bars. Left bay of house now

incorporated into barn, which has inserted Dutch door at left and loading door above. End chimneys, the left truncated, the right rebuilt in brick. Rear elevation shows door lintel inscribed OCY2 1687 I I B with pincers, hammers and shears carved at-right. Inscription said to refer to early Presbyterian Meeting held in this house. Source: Clack and Pattinson *Weardale Chapels Durham* 1978 p. 93. Empty and derelict at time of survey.

GUIDEPOST AT JUNCTION OF A689 AND CAUSEWAY ROAD

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8666238645

Guidepost. Early C20. Tapered cast-iron post with cast-iron indicators. Post has moulded plinth, moulding supporting indicators and top moulding with spear finial. Indicators of simplified pointing-hand shape, and low-relief lettering; one ST.

JOHN'S CHAPEL 1 1/4/ STANHOPE 8 3/4/, the other ALSTON 11 3/4/ ALLENDALE 12 1/2.

WEAVERS WORKSHOP AT JUNCTION OF A689 AND CAUSEWAY ROAD

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8667538638



Smithy, now shop and workshop. Mid C18. Coursed sandstone rubble with quoins and ashlar dressings; roof of stone flags, renewed in synthetic stone over

additions. 2 storeys, 3 bays, and one-storey, one-bay left garage and right pent extension. Central boarded door in plain stone surround;

wide 6-pane window at left with thin stone lintel and sill; similar treatment to plain sash in wider third bay. Wider lintels and sills to first-floor sashes. 2 end chimneys. Double boarded vehicle door in left and plain sash in right additions.

CORONATION BRIDGE OVER RIVER WEAR

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8724438609



Bridge. 1840. Coursed squared sandstone with ashlar dressings. 2 wide recessed segmental arches, with, band

voussoirs and drip bands under road-bed level; central cutwaters. Flanking wide ashlar pilasters continuing to form rectangular-plan piers with hipped coping, which terminate round-coped parapets.

The bridge apparently collapsed a year after construction and had to be rebuilt.

NEWHOUSE, AND WALLS ATTACHED

Grade: II*

Date Listed: 31/01/1967

NGR: NY8729038878



House, now 3 houses. C17 with C18 and C19 alterations. Thinly-rendered sandstone rubble with ashlar quoins and dressings; graduated stone-flagged roof with stone gable copings.

Main house: 2½ storeys, 7 bays; right extension 2 storeys, one wide bay, with wall attached to right. Garden wall in front at right. Sixth bay has partly-glazed 6-panel door in moulded square-headed surround under cyma-moulded label dripmould. Similar label mould over 6-panel door, with 2-pane overlight, in third bay. Second door and all windows have rebated stone surrounds; windows have similar label moulds, and flat mullions, with blocked holes for 2 vertical bars in each light except for 3 right ground-floor windows which have been lowered, probably in early C19. Slight rebating in window reveals and mullions to receive frames for glass, except in 3 left first-floor windows where glass is set forward of rebate, and in inserted stones in 3 lowered windows. Some vertical stones suggest there were formerly wider label moulds. 5 third-floor 2-light stone-mullioned windows. Cottage at right has 4-panel door and 2-pane

overlight under flat stone lintel, and flat stone surrounds to 16-pane sashes. Wall at right has boarded door in alternate-block surround.



Roof has flat gable copings on cyma reversa-moulded kneelers; 2 end chimneys, with plinths and cyma reversa-moulded cornices; renewed rear chimney in similar style. Rear stair wings have flat-stone-mullioned windows with slight splays; and single lights with

vertical iron bars in gable peaks.

Garden wall, running forward from left end, has doorway in chamfered alternate-block jambs, and shaped coping with ball finial.

Interior: left part has full-height close-string open-well stair with square panelled newels with long pendants and fat acorn finials, grip handrail, skittle balusters and pulvinated string; moulded risers. In right part of main house another close-string dog-leg stair with narrow roll-moulded handrail on splat balusters, lyre-shaped except on first flight, with pulvinated string. Many 2-panelled doors, the upper panel smaller, with E hinges; shell-canopied cupboard with shaped shelves and pull-out ledge in ground-floor left room; first-floor pine chimney-piece with architrave and dentilled cornice; some stucco ceiling cornices; original tied-on glass in window in right gable, blocked by addition of wing.

Historical note: the home of successive agents of the Beaumont lead-mine-owning family. Source: W. Fordyce History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham 1857 I p673.

FIELD BARN ABOUT 100 METRES SOUTH OF NEWHOUSE

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8727338770



Field barn and dovecote. Late C18. Thin sandstone rubble with ashlar quoins; stone-flagged roof with stone ridge. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Thin wood lintels over boarded door to left of centre and flanking windows with some glazing bars. Blank above. Left return gable has long flight of side stone steps to first-floor boarded door under thin stone lintel; 5 graduated rows of pigeon holes in gable peak.

READING ROOM AND COTTAGE ADJOINING TO RIGHT

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8730338890



Reading Room and cottage attached. 1850, but cottage includes one bay of a bastle-type building of circa 1600. Reading Room and left part of cottage coursed squared stone with tooled dressings; right bay rubble with larger boulder plinth. Stone-flagged roof. Reading Room 1 tall storey, 2 bays.

Central ledged and boarded door; flanking 16-pane sashes. Left bay of cottage has similar door and C20 windows in original openings, all with tooled lintels and sills. Right bay has modern windows in new openings. Cottage has end chimneys, the left probably also serving Reading Room. In left-return of Reading

Room a segment-arched wagon entrance, with alternating-block jambs, partly filled and C20 boarded doors inserted. Historical note: built by Thomas Sopwith, agent of The Blackett lead mines, for the use of the miners. Source: Fordyce History of Durham 1857 II p.674.

SUNDORNE AND MILBURN, ADJOINING TO RIGHT

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8732638882



2 cottages, early C19. Sundorne coursed rubble, Milburn coursed squared sandstone; stone-flagged roofs. Sundorne 2 storeys, 1 bay. C20 windows, glazed door and sun porch. Right end chimney. Milburn. 2 storeys, 4 windows. 6-panel door, with plain overlight, in tooled surround in C19 cast iron trellis porch. 12- and 16-pane sashes with flush lintels and sills. Right end chimney. Sundorne is included for group value as part of terrace with Reading Room.

CANDLE HOUSE AT NEWHOUSE

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8731238930



Candle storage house for Beaumont lead mines. Late 98/early 99. Coursed sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings and quoins; roof pantiled. 2 storeys one bay. Wide flat stone lintels and slightly-projecting stone sills to

windows, with some glazing bows. Low-pitched hipped roof. Empty and derelict at time of survey.

POUND AT WEST END OF VILLAGE

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8667639138



Pound, probably early C19. Dry stone, with quoins and boulder coping. Rectangular enclosure about 50 metres x 12metres. Partly-filled stile entrance at south-west corner. Inserted gate near south-east corner.

AMRITA COTTAGE

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8667339118



House, probably originally a defensible house. C16, possibly incorporating earlier fabric, with alterations. Rubble with irregular plinth; quoins, some massive; ashlar dressings. Roof of C20 tiles with brick chimneys. 2 low storeys, 4 bays. 2 steps up to boarded door under flat stone lintel in third bay; C20 sashes with glazing bars under flat stone lintels, some renewed, and with thin projecting stone sills. Blocked door at left; blocked narrow window at-centre of first floor. Rear elevation has blocked Tudor-arched doorway, with large irregular jambs supporting lintel with eroded inscription; one- storey, 2-bay

pent outshoot has large quoin. Interior: left, north part has round-headed arch in south wall, chamfered on southern face. Ceiling was originally very low; floor since lowered; inserted central stair.

BRIDGE OVER RIVER WEAR

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NY8663839124



Bridge. Probably C18. Sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings. 2 wide segmental recessed arches, with narrow drip strings, flank cut water with low rounded coping. Parapets have round coping.

Appendix 2 Notable Unlisted Buildings

The following buildings are not statutorily listed but they 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.

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Building</i>
1	<i>Briar Hill</i>
2	<i>Gate House Farm</i>
3	<i>Brierhill</i>
4	<i>Lowburn</i>
5	<i>Derelict house, Poperd Hill</i>
6	<i>Midlothian House</i>
7	<i>No.40 Front Street</i>
8	<i>Ireshopeburn Institute/Village Hall</i>
9	<i>North View</i>
10	<i>Ivy Cottage</i>
11	<i>No's 3 and 4 Lanehill</i>
12	<i>Ullsfield</i>
13	<i>No's 31-37 Front Street</i>
14	<i>No's 23-25 Front Street</i>
15	<i>Earnwell Cottage (No. 7 Front Street)</i>
16	<i>No.30 & 32 Front Street</i>
17	<i>No.28 Front Street</i>
18	<i>No's 24-26 Front Street</i>
19	<i>No's 20-22 Front Street</i>
20	<i>No's 12-18 Front Terrace</i>
21	<i>No's 6-10 Front Street</i>
22	<i>No's 2 and 4 Front Street</i>
23	<i>Earnwell</i>

24	<i>Weardale House</i>
25	<i>Old Weardale Lead Co. workshops</i>
26	<i>Wesley Garth</i>
27	<i>Coronation Cottage</i>
28	<i>Wayside House and the Hotts</i>
29	<i>Old barn and outbuildings south-west of Newhouse</i>
30	<i>No.8 New House</i>
31	<i>Hill View and High Barns</i>
32	<i>West Blackdene</i>
33	<i>The North Terrace, No's 3-6 West Blackdene</i>
34	<i>Farmstead north-west of the village</i>
35	<i>Dean House</i>
36	<i>Realm Cottage</i>

1 **Briar Hill**



The terrace of Briar Hill stands to the left of the A689 as it approaches Ireshopeburn Bridge from the north-west. The terrace consists of stone-built houses, probably early 19th century, with a modern house added to the north end. The modern house is of neatly coursed sandstone blocks without

quoins, with a Welsh slate roof, mock sash windows and a front door set within a lean-to porch. All but one of the older houses is rendered, so the historic stone is not visible, but the northernmost house is of coursed sandstone similar to the adjacent new house; it also has a front porch of similar form to that on the new house. All the properties have Welsh slate roofs, and modern windows. This appraisal proposes that the roadside agricultural building to the north of the terrace is included in the conservation area.

2 **Gate House Farm**



Gate House Farm consists of two joined double-fronted houses facing south towards the Ireshope Burn. The houses are of similar character, both of coursed sandstone blocks, but a clear break in the masonry between them demonstrates that they were not built at the same time. The left-hand house has

evidence of blocked openings and its asymmetrical window arrangement suggests that it has undergone changes over the years. Windows to both properties are set within roughly shaped sills and lintels; the door to the left-hand house is set beneath a thin stone lintel, while that to the right-hand house is concealed within a recent porch/conservatory. The roof is Welsh slate, with

four stone built chimneys on the ridgeline, and a catslide roof to the rear. Several stone-built agricultural buildings stand to the rear (north) of the farmhouses.

3 **Brierhill**

Brierhill is a large stone building, originally a house with byre and hayloft attached. It stands in a fine landscape setting on the north bank of the Ireshope Burn, surrounded by old stone fieldwalls and outbuildings. Its front elevation is painted white. It has a fine roof of graduated stone flags, extending as a catslide to the rear, with stone ridge tiles and four stone chimneys. Windows have plain lintels and sills, with the front door having a plain lintel. The first floor windows to the left (west) are very small, whereas those to the right are more conventional in size. All windows and doors are modern.

4 **Lowburn**



Lowburn is a substantial stone building, now two houses, with stone outbuildings to the rear. It is of roughly coursed sandstone throughout, though differences in the character of the masonry suggest several phases of building. The two houses share the same ridge line and roof of artificial

slates, but they are of different character. The right-hand house has a symmetrical façade of central door flanked by windows with two windows above, with plain sills and lintels painted green. The left-hand house is larger and has a tie rod at ground floor level towards its west gable, and a substantial external stone chimney to the rear. It has a front door set within a stone porch with stone-flagged roof. It has 2 ½ storeys, with small 2nd floor windows set

tight beneath the eaves, with large stones functioning both as lintels for the 1st floor windows and sills for those on the 2nd floor.

5 Derelict house, Poperd Hill



A track leads west from just north of Ireshopeburn Bridge to a derelict house below the east flank of Poperd Hill. This is of roughly coursed sandstone rubble with quoins, with a gabled extension to the north and a catslide roof to the rear. It retains a stone-flagged roof, though is deteriorating. The remnants of stone

chimneys stand on each gable. The wide central door in the front elevation, presumably evidence that the building was once used as a garage and/or for storage, has been partly blocked up.

6 Midlothian House



Midlothian House (43-47 Front Street) is of neatly coursed sandstone blocks, without quoins. The roof is Welsh slate, hipped at its south end, Four brick chimneys stand above the ridge line. Most windows have wide stone lintels and narrow sills painted white; the northernmost house had a shop

window. It now has painted areas over its ground floor window and door to imitate appropriately sized lintels. No's 45 and 47 have matching window openings at first and second floor levels, suggesting that they were once a single property. No 47 has single-pane sashes, apparently recently installed, while the other properties have modern windows. No's 43 and 45 have plain stone door surrounds on plinths; No 47's door has been inserted and does not have a stone surround.

7 No.40 Front Street



This is a substantial stone property to the south-east of Ireshopeburn Bridge. It is L-shaped in plan. The main block is of coursed sandstone blocks with ashlar quoins. It has a symmetrical east-facing façade with central door between two windows and three windows above; old photographs show this as a shop – the

current windows being inserted when the property reverted to residential use. The door has a plain lintel and quoins. Windows are single-pane sashes set between plain sills and lintels with angular ends. The south gable, facing Front Street, displays an asymmetric profile with a catslide roof extending to the rear; the north gable is symmetric with no rear extension.



The south gable incorporates two substantial mullioned windows with drip moulds similar to those on Newhouse; the masonry between these two windows is different in character from the rest of the gable and presumably dates from the time when these windows were inserted. Small

attic-level windows survive in both gables; the north gable also has two further single-pane sashes. The roof is of Welsh slate, with gable chimneys and a central chimney in the ridge line. The extension to the rear (west) is of similar masonry but retains a fine stone-flagged roof, with two stone chimneys. It is an independent structure, retaining quoins to its original angles, joined to the rear of the main block via a link that has been added following the construction of both buildings. The extension has single-pane sashes matching those of the main block, and also retains a small attic level window in its west gable.

8 Ireshopeburn Institute/Village Hall



The Village Hall has a stone over its door inscribed 'Diamond Jubilee Institute 1897'. It is a single storey single bay structure with symmetrical façade of central door within a stone porch flanked by a single window to each side. Masonry is of neatly coursed sandstone blocks with ashlar quoins to

the angles of both the main building and the porch. The porch has an ornate frieze to its eaves. The door is set beneath an ornate pointed arch with an overlight incorporating 'arts and crafts' style stained glass. Windows are four-pane sashes set between chamfered sills and lintels. The roof is of Welsh slate, with ornate ridges tile to both the main roof and the porch. Stone chimneys top both gables

9 North View



North View is a terrace of three houses of neatly coursed sandstone blocks with Welsh slate roof. The west gable clearly demonstrates the profile of an earlier, narrower house. Windows are set between plain stone lintels and projecting sills; the easternmost house retains attractive multi-pane sashes to

the front elevation and east gable (the gable also has a small window at attic level), whereas the other properties have modern 'mock multi-pane effect' windows. Doors, including the garage door at the west end of the terrace, are set beneath wide stone lintels.

10 Ivy Cottage



Ivy Cottage is located to the west of North Cottage. It is a small late 18th/early 19th century house of coursed sandstone blocks with stone flagged roof. Linked to this via a low, single-storey extension is an older range dating from the late 17th century.

It is derelict. It is of roughly coursed

sandstone with a roof of graduated stone slates with chimneys to both gables, one truncated and the other rebuilt in brick. The gables show evidence for an older steeply-pitched, presumably heather-thatched, roof. The original structure seems to have been single-storey. The present two-storey building has two first-floor doorways, and a surviving 19th-century sash window in very poor condition survives at first-floor level in the east gable. A chamfered doorway in the rear elevation has a lintel inscribed with 'OCY2 /1687 / IIB' along with a pair of pliers, a hammer and a pair of shears. Ryder (2003) speculates that these may have been occupational emblems of a blacksmith, but the listed building description suggests they refer to the building's use as a Presbyterian Meeting House. The occupied cottage adjacent to Ivy Cottage is of less historic interest but nonetheless an attractive stone cottage with stone flagged roof; windows and doors are modern but set in original openings.

11 No's 3 and 4 Lanehill

These two attractive semi-detached cottages, located to the west of Ivy Cottage, are of roughly coursed sandstone with a fine stone-flagged roof. No. 3 has a recent porch to the front and No. 4 an older outbuilding at its south-west angle; both of these also have stone-flagged roofs. All windows

are modern, set within historic openings. First-floor windows in No. 3 are set tight beneath the eaves.

12 Ullsfield

Set high above the north side of Lanehill within its own gardens, is of coursed sandstone with roof of graded stone flags with stone chimneys to each gable. Windows are mock sashes, set between plain sills and lintels, those to first floor set tight beneath the eaves. A modern conservatory has been added

to the centre of the front elevation. A smaller house, currently unoccupied with roof of corrugated metal sheeting and two unusual multi-pane windows, adjoins the west gable, with a further lean-to structure against the west gable of this.

13 No's 31-37 Front Street

A terrace of four houses to the south side of the street, the two end properties being three-bay double-fronted and the two central ones having two bays. All are of coursed sandstone with quoins to

both ends. The two central properties retain traditional doors, with no. 33 having traditional sash windows and no. 35 mock sashes.

14 No's 23-25 Front Street

A distinctive building on the south side of the road, of neatly coursed sandstone with Welsh slate roof and stone chimneys. Its distinctiveness arises largely from its white door and window surrounds and matching blue doors. Windows are all modern with the exception of the small four-pane attic

window in the west gable. No 25 appears to have originally had two front doors and to have been two houses; one of the doorways is now occupied by a window. A wall, part brick and part stone, gives access to a yard within which is a green timber shed that appears to be in imminent danger of collapse. A stone garage with corrugated metal roof and blue door stands a little to the west.

15 Earnwell Cottage (No. 7 Front Street)

The easternmost house facing onto Front Street, surrounded to east and west by open fields. Its front elevation is of neatly coursed sandstone blocks, the asymmetric gables of roughly coursed rubble. The gables clearly show an earlier roofline to the rear; the rear of the property has been raised at some

point. The house has a roof of graded stone flags, and a single chimney to its east gable. A stone garage with roof of corrugated metal sheeting stands against the west gable.

16 No's 30 & 32 Front Street



The north side of Front Street is lined with a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached houses, mostly of 18th/19th century date. No's 30 and 32 Front Street is a semi-detached pair set back from the road behind a low stone wall, each having an extension to the side. The houses are of coursed sandstone blocks with quoins, and roofs of artificial slates with brick chimneys. Windows are set between plain stone sills and lintels, and doors have plain stone surrounds. Windows and doors are all modern.

17 No.28 Front Street



28 Front Street is a two-bay detached house with wings set back to either side, the east of which appears to be a relatively recent extension. It is of neatly coursed sandstone blocks with a front door set within a doorway of alternating long and short jambs. Windows are a variety of sashes of traditional form set within original openings; a small attic level window survives in the west gable of the central block. The house has a particularly fine stone-flagged roof, best appreciated from the rear.

18 No's 24-26 Front Street



A semi-detached pair, the most immediately distinctive feature of which is their double-pile roof; this roof is continuous over the front pile but discontinuous over the rear, with a gap

between the rear sections of the two houses. The roof over no.24 is of stone flags, that over no.26 has been replaced with artificial (concrete) slates. The chimneys over the front portion of no.26 have been replaced in brick. The houses are of coursed sandstone blocks, with substantial lintels. The two doorways to no. 24 have alternating long and short stone jambs. No 26's front door is set within a small porch, but has jambs that mirror those of no. 24. No. 24 retains historic gutters and downpipes, while no.26 has plastic. Both properties have sash windows of traditional form and both have small attic level windows within their gables. No. 24 has a recent conservatory to its rear elevation. Substantial detached stone garage blocks stand to each side of the houses, that to the west having a stone-flagged roof.

19 No's 20-22 Front Street



No's 20-22 Front Street, uniquely for Ireshopeburn, are set at right angles to Front Street. These houses have a number of unusual features for Ireshopeburn, including a hipped roof to its south gable, windows and doors within plain stone sills, lintels and jambs, and chimneys and gateposts of red brick. The south gable is pebble-dashed. Windows and doors are all modern.

20 No's 12-18 Front Terrace



No's 12-18 Front Terrace form a single terrace. No's 12 and 14 are a similar pair at the east end of the terrace, with a fine stone-flagged roof, incorporating two rooflights to the front. The east gable retains a single kneeler. The

houses are of coursed sandstone with substantial quoins at the east end; the west end seems to have been built out from the pre-existing east gable of no. 16. Windows to the front are set within thick sills and lintels, painted white. No. 14 has traditional sashes while no.12 has windows of modern design. The east gable retains a small attic level window. No 16 is a two bay house similar in outward form to Nos. 12 and 14, but with a slate roof and two chimneys one of which is of yellow brick. No. 18 is a double-fronted house with a further substantial bay to the west incorporating a stone-arched garage door. The front elevation has distinctive stained glass windows set within brown frames, between plain stone sills and lintels. The roof, unusually for Ireshopeburn, is pantiled, with two rooflights over the west bay. The masonry is of neatly coursed sandstone blocks, with raised lime pointing. The raised pointing extends to no. 16, but not to the west bay of no.18.

21 No's 6-10 Front Street



A separate terrace to the east of no. 12, set back behind a low stone wall and accessed via individual gates. No's 6 and 8 are similar in character, though no. 8 has a bay window. Both have matching recessed front doors with panelling; no 6 has a pediment over its door. Windows are of a matching modern design, between plain stone sills and lintels. The roof is slate; no. 8 has red ridge tiles. Chimneys are brick. No. 10 is double fronted, with door and window frames formed from large stones that could be described as ashlar; the rest of the masonry is coursed sandstone, with raised lime pointing. Windows and door are modern.

22 No. 2 and 4 Front Street



No. 2 and 4 Front Street are small, detached houses of coursed sandstone with Welsh slate roofs. Number 4 has quite a grand doorway with white architrave, and modern windows between plain stone sills and lintels, painted white.

23 Earnwell



Just east of the junction with the road north to the old Blackdene Quarry is the ancient settlement focus of Earnwell, with a terrace of 5 houses to the north of the road and agricultural buildings to the south. The houses are of more than one phase; they are not aligned with the north side of the road so they may predate the present line of the road. They could be of late 18th or early 19th century date, but are currently pebble-dashed so all historic fabric is hidden. Windows and doors are modern; an old attic-level window in the west gable is now boarded. Roofs are a combination of stone flags and Welsh slate, extending to catslides at the rear. Chimneys are stone, two of which appear to have been renewed relatively recently. Stone outbuildings survive to the rear of the terrace. South of the road are two substantial stone barns set at right-angles to each other, still retaining original features including first floor doors and small windows. The barn closest to the road currently has a roof of corrugated metal sheeting. In the angle formed by the two barns are several smaller agricultural buildings including a small single-storey structure that retains a roof of graduated stone flags and several more recent structures now used for agricultural storage.

24 **Weardale House**



Weardale House stands to the south of the A689. Unusually for Ireshopeburn, it is of brick. It has a roof of small red tiles (check), with dormer windows to south (front) and north elevations. Windows are of various styles, including multi-pane and single-pane mock sashes and dormers. The building was initially

constructed in the early 20th century as offices for the Weardale Lead Mining Company, later becoming the private residence of the company manager. It was redeveloped as a field study centre in the 1950s, and is now the headquarters of the Weardale House Outdoor Education Centre.

25 **Old Weardale Lead Co. Workshops**



North of the A689 opposite Weardale House are the old workshops of the Weardale Lead Company, originally aligned alongside the railway and housing blacksmiths, joiners and millwrights, these are now used for the repair of vehicles and agricultural machinery; through its gates the

property has the appearance of a scrapyard, but the grounds are generally hidden behind stone walls and do not detract visually from the rest of the village. The surviving buildings, of roughly coursed sandstone rubble with quoins and Welsh-slate roof, are much overgrown and, although they were not closely examined at the time of this appraisal, appear to be in rapidly declining condition.

26 **Wesley Garth**



Immediately east of the old works is the house known as Wesley Garth, named on the 1st edition OS map (c1860) as Hotts Lane House and on the 2nd edition map (c1896) as Coronation Cottage. This is a fine house, set down below the level of the road facing over private gardens to the east. It is of

neatly coursed sandstone, with a symmetrical façade of central door between two windows with three windows above. The doorway has a stone surround with chamfered lintel; windows are four-pane sashes set between plain sills and lintels (the first floor lintels are windows are recent insertions). The double-pile roof is of graded stone flags, with stone ridge tiles. Stone extensions to the south provide access from street level and a garage.

27 **Coronation Cottage**



The house to the south-east of Coronation Bridge is shown on modern OS maps as Coronation Cottage, although on earlier OS maps this label appears to have been applied to the building discussed above. The cottage was also known as Crossing Keepers Cottage. The present-day Coronation

Cottage is rendered and painted cream, so its historic fabric is hidden. It appears, however, to have a number of relatively recent extensions to the late 19th century core. Windows are all modern. The roof is of Welsh slate.

28 Wayside House and the Hotts



Occupying an elevated position on the south side of the A689, accessible via a steep track from opposite the Weardale Inn, are Wayside House and The Hotts. Wayside House is of coursed sandstone rubble with quoins. The front elevation has four large windows which appear to be recent insertions beneath concrete

lintels, along with two more conventional sized windows door set within a recent porch. It has a fine roof of graded stone flags, with stone chimneys to each gable.



The Hotts appears to be a stone house but is currently pebble-dashed with its front elevation largely hidden behind vegetation. It has a flat-roofed two-storey extension to the rear; a timber garage links it with the south gable of Wayside House. All windows are modern. The main roof is of graded

stone flags, with brick chimneys to each gable. To the rear (west) of these houses are some agricultural outbuildings including a stone range with tin roof and a large barn composed of a mixture of stone walls, corrugated metal sheeting and timber. A traditional range of outbuildings with mono-pitched roof of stone flags stands just to the south of The Hotts.

29 Old barn and outbuildings south-west of Newhouse



A substantial byre/barn of neatly coursed sandstone rubble with quoins and ashlar dressings stands immediately south-west of Newhouse.

This is built into the slope so that its north gable is single storied, and it's imposing south gable of three storeys. The south gable has a ground level door with an adjacent four-pane sash window and a small attic-level window opening, now boarded. The west face of this building has many openings, and displays evidence that it has developed through several phases. A ground floor door has an ashlar surround, and a multi-paned window to either side. All woodwork is painted green. In the angle formed by the north gable of the barn and the south-east angle of Newhouse are two small stone outbuildings, one with a stone-flagged roof and the other with a roof of corrugated metal sheeting and modern windows.

30 No.8 New House



On the opposite side of the road to Newhouse, is of coursed sandstone with quoins of varied form. The property is of probable early 19th century origin but has recently undergone a considerable degree of redevelopment, including the addition of a substantial extension to the west that incorporates

two timber garage doors; the masonry of the extension's front elevation matches that of the original property, but the at the time of writing its rear elevation is of exposed breeze block. The property has matching recent single-pane sash windows throughout, set between plain stone sills and lintels. An apparently original attic-level window survives in the east gable. It has a roof of stone flags to the front and artificial slates to the rear, with stone ridge copings and brick chimneys. The property has an extensive garden extending down slope from the front elevation which at the time of writing is in the process of being landscaped.

31 **Hill View and High Barns**



Hill View and High Barns are built into the hillslope at the northern edge of the conservation area, facing south over Weardale with their rear elevations to the road. Hill View is of roughly coursed sandstone rubble with a fine roof of graded stone flags. It has three ridge chimneys and a more substantial stack

set into the north wall. It retains multi-pane sash windows set between plain stone lintels and sills, to the rear these are set tight beneath the eaves. High Barns stands to the east of Hill View on the same axis, and is of broadly similar form, also with a fine stone slate roof. It has a substantial outbuilding adjacent to its north-east angle. Set at right angles to Hill View with its rear elevation to the road is what appears to be a recent house of very traditional form.



The masonry is of coursed sandstone, without quoins, and includes a platform of irregular courses at the south-east angle which enables the courses above to be set horizontally throughout. The west elevation incorporates two four-pane sash windows, set between roughly shaped stone sills and lintels.

The property has a fine roof of what appear to be quite ancient stone flags, presumably recycled from an old building elsewhere.

32 **West Blackdene**



Most houses in West Blackdene lie within two terraces, running along either side of the pound and both facing south towards the Wear. The south terrace, No's 10-18 West Blackdene, overlooking the river, includes houses of various dates extending back at least to the early 17th century (Amrita Cottage

is thought to have been a bastle house). Old photographs show that most of these houses were standing in similar form to today by c1900, but the recent insertion of modern doors and windows in several has adversely affected the overall historic character of the terrace, giving it something of a muddled appearance. The houses are generally of coursed sandstone blocks, but the nature of the masonry varies from house to house. Two houses have raised lime pointing. The westernmost house retains a stone-flagged roof, but all other roofs are of Welsh slate or modern artificial slates. All the chimneys are brick.

33 **The North Terrace, No's 3-6 West Blackdene**



Standing to the north side of the pound. Old photographs show a pair of semi-detached double-fronted houses to the west, a separate pair of houses in line with these to the east, and a further double fronted house joined to these but offset to the front. These houses are instantly recognisable today, but the

gap between the two blocks has been infilled through the construction of a very narrow single-bay link. A further new house, now rendered, has been added to the west end of the block, extending both in front and behind the original lines. The historic

photographs show that historic sash windows have in all cases been replaced with modern windows of non-traditional form, although they lie within original openings. The houses are all of neatly coursed sandstone blocks, with roofs of Welsh slate. Gables seem originally to have had stone copings and kneelers, some of which survive. The rear elevation is remarkably featureless, and largely covered with thin grey render. At the time of writing planning permission has been granted for a new dwelling on the open land immediately east of this terrace. A detached house stands adjacent to the bridge and appears to be similar in character to the above houses; perhaps it was built at the same time. Today this house is rendered, and has modern windows.

34 Farmstead north-west of the village



On the opposite side of the Elmford Burn, is a small farmstead consisting of farmhouse and detached byre/barn. Both are of coursed sandstone, with substantial quoins. The house has a roof of modern artificial slates and multi-paned windows of apparently recent date. The barn has a roof of black metal

sheeting, and also an extension in similar sheeting to the south.

35 Dean House



Dean House stands at the east end of West Black Dene, facing eastwards. The north end of the building is a separate property, Little Dykes. The building's front elevation was illustrated by Featherstone in the 1850s. The house is of neatly coursed sandstone

and retains a particularly fine stone-flagged roof, extending as a catslide to the rear with a dormer window. The rear elevation has mullioned windows, within which are set recent windows with mock leading. Much of the masonry is hidden behind vegetation. West of Dean House is a recently renovated detached stone house with stone-flagged roof and sash windows of traditional form. South of Dean House are two further detached properties. These all seem to be renovations of historic structures which appear to be present on mid- 19th century OS maps.

36 Realm Cottage



Realm Cottage stands in isolation on the north bank of the Wear, It has been converted from an old mine building, and includes significant new material. It has a stone-flagged roof, and windows are traditional sashes, finished in brown.

Appendix 3 Origins and History of Ireshopeburn

Before Ireshopeburn

There is little known about human activity around Ireshopeburn throughout prehistoric, Roman and early Medieval times. It is known from occasional finds of their flint tools, that people were present here in Mesolithic and Neolithic times, between about 8,000 and 2,000 BC, but they probably occupied small campsites on a seasonal basis rather than living here permanently. A possible Neolithic long barrow (burial mound) is recorded on the County Durham Historic Environment Record just south of Weardale House, close to the southern boundary of the conservation area; it is perhaps more likely that this feature relates to lead mining, but it could easily be tested by limited archaeological investigation.

Palaeoenvironmental evidence from elsewhere in the North Pennines suggests that the upland economy was essentially pastoral through until the early Bronze Age (c2000-1500BC), when people practising mixed agriculture set up permanently occupied farmsteads of timber round-houses in the hills. Whether or not any such settlements stood in the vicinity of Ireshopeburn is not known, but the discovery of a bronze sword of later Bronze Age date from Burnhope Reservoir (c 2km west of Ireshopeburn) demonstrates that people were active in this area at the time.

Recent survey work has recorded settlements and field systems from Iron Age (c750BC-AD80) and Roman (cAD80-410) times within 5km of Ireshopeburn around Westgate, but it is not currently known whether the distribution extends as far up the dale as Ireshopeburn. The Durham Historic Environment Record (HER) mentions the finding of a fragment of a red sandstone

quern during the digging of foundations for a pumping station in 1952, just north of what is now Realm Cottage in 1952. According to the HER this is undated, but many quernstones are of Iron Age/Roman date; this example should be located and dated, as it may be the only evidence for late prehistoric/Roman period settlement this far into the dale.

The Roman army arrived in northern England in AD79, rapidly establishing control over the area through a system of roads and forts. The Romans exploited parts of the North Pennines for lead, silver and other minerals, and for hunting, and although the Roman takeover must have had some bearing on life here, there is no evidence in any great change in settlement pattern or agricultural practice in the vicinity of Ireshopeburn.

Following the end of Roman rule in the early 5th century AD, and after much political upheaval during the so-called 'Dark Ages', Weardale found itself incorporated within the great Anglian kingdom of Northumbria, eventually coming under the ownership of the Community of St Cuthbert, based at Durham. Nothing is known of human activity in the vicinity of Ireshopeburn throughout this period.

In summary, virtually nothing is known of developments around Ireshopeburn prior the Norman Conquest, although it is most unlikely that there was no settlement here throughout all this time. It is possible that Anglo-Saxon settlements existed in Upper Weardale and were abandoned following William the Conqueror's 'Harrying of the North' in 1069/70, but no archaeological evidence of such pre-Conquest settlement has yet been discovered. Many place names in the area are of Anglo-Saxon origin, but these relate primarily to natural places (most notably burns and 'hopes' – the latter meaning a valley opening onto a main river valley),

rather than to settlements which tend to have medieval or later names.

Medieval Ireshopeburn

In 1109, a royal charter granted the Bishop of Durham the forests between the Tees and the Tyne. Ireshopeburn lay within Weardale Forest, exploited by the Bishops of Durham and their aristocratic guests for grand hunting expeditions in search largely of roe deer but presumably also other beasts such as wild boar.

Ireshopeburn has no confirmed features of medieval date. The County Durham HER does record a possible motte (an earthwork mound for a timber castle) within the grounds of Weardale House, but the presence of such a structure here would come as a huge surprise; it should perhaps be archaeologically examined to ascertain its true nature.

The latter half of the 13th century saw a radical reorganisation of the upper Weardale landscape. In about 1250, a deer park, Stanhope Park, was created to the west of the Rookhope Burn; this extended over about 7 square miles and was enclosed by a park pale some 13 miles in length. At the same time as setting up the deer park, the Bishops of Durham attempted to increase revenues from the forest by setting up a number of 'vaccaries' (cattle ranches) in what became known as the 'High Forest' north and west of the new deer park. Originally, these were occupied only seasonally, with people and beasts moving back down the Dale for winter. Bowes lists 31 of these mid 13th century shielings, four of which are in the area covered by this appraisal: Ulls Field (originally known as Ireshopeburnpapworthhill), Gate (Ireshopeburnmouth) and Earnwell, all within the Ireshopeburn conservation area, and West Blackdene.

Peter Bowes (in his book 'Clearing the Forest') uses West Blackdene as an example to illustrate his suggested development of these new vaccaries into permanently occupied farmsteads. The deciduous woodland of the chosen site was cleared, and a temporary summer hut (shieling) built near a tributary stream, in this case the Elmford Burn. A stone wall was constructed to enclose an area of rough grazing, to which the cattle would be brought each spring, descending back down the dale to more hospitable winter grazing lands, or for slaughter, in the autumn.

After perhaps a few years, a second enclosure was constructed for the cattle and the original field, now much improved by animal-manuring, became a hay meadow. The shieling was replaced with a permanent dwelling, a byre built for the wintering of the beasts, and a haybarn constructed for winter fodder; despite the high elevation and the severity of the winter weather, it was now possible for the farm to be occupied by people and beasts throughout the year. The hay was harvested in the late summer, after which the meadow was grazed during the autumn to improve soil fertility for the following season, and the basic agricultural cycle was underway, continuing to this day at many farms and villages in Upper Weardale. Above the enclosed land, common land, still grazed by red deer, was used as further rough pasture for sheep and cattle.

Subsequent agricultural and industrial activity has resulted in considerable change to the local landscape, but evidence of medieval activity may still await discovery. For example, evidence of the original 13th century farms may lie buried within present-day fields, or beneath buildings, and some stone walled enclosures, although rebuilt many times, may still lie on medieval foundations.

In addition to securing income through the new vaccaries, the Bishops of Durham also sought to exploit the lead resources of Upper Weardale. In 1154, King Stephen granted all mineral rights in Weardale to the Bishops who would make a fortune from them over subsequent centuries. We don't know how much lead mining took place around Ireshopeburn during medieval times, but it was probably undertaken on a relatively small scale by 'miner-farmers' who worked the land as well as the mines, with most lead smelted in simple 'bole' furnaces, holes in the ground on high, west-facing slopes which would be filled with ore and charcoal, the wind providing the blast necessary to achieve the high temperatures necessary to smelt the ore. The extra income available from mining may have been crucial to the development of Ireshopeburn village and West Blackdene as permanently occupied settlements during the 15th and 16th centuries.

We know that lead mining was underway in West Blackdene by 1401 as in this year Roger Thornton leased the lead mines known as 'Blakden, the Easter and the Wester' (ie. East and West Blackdene). He had rights to use timber from the surrounding land in the mines, and had a shelter for his horses which were used to transport lead ore from the mines. Ireshopeburn, in contrast, is not shown as a village on maps prior to the 19th century so was perhaps not recognised in earlier times as a distinct settlement, but instead existed as a loose group of scattered farmsteads that extended (and still extends) into the surrounding landscape.



Maire's map of Durham, dated 1711, shows 'Westerblackdeen' but not Ireshopeburn .

Post Medieval Ireshopeburn

Lead mining occurred on a growing scale from the mid 16th century. As demand for lead increased for roofs and windows, as well as for lead shot, mines became larger and deeper, requiring substantial investment. The Bishops introduced the 'moor master', who leased all mines on the moors (above the enclosed land on the lower slopes around the villages) and also built and ran four water-powered smelt mills. The moor master was now responsible for all investment and administration of the lead industry, paying the Bishop an annual fee. After payment of expenses, the moor master retained all profits. There was thus a huge incentive to maximise production, and by the 1660s no less than 118 mines were in operation throughout upper Weardale.

The population of Weardale expanded as incomers arrived to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the rapidly expanding lead industry. Many of these newcomers set up new farmsteads, often quite high up on the moors, while others built houses in existing settlements such as Ireshopeburn.



Amritas, now incorporated within the riverside terrace at West Blackdene, appears to have been a detached bastle house, probably dating from about 1600 and is probably the oldest surviving house within the conservation areas. This view dates from the early 20th century.

In 1689, Sir William Blackett purchased all of Sir John Fenwick's Northumbrian estates, including several farms and lead mines in Allendale. He then decided to expand his lead mining operations into Weardale, in 1696 he took on the moormaster lease alongside a separate lease for some enclosed land within the dale. These leases were retained by the Blackett-Wentworth-Beaumont family right through until 1883, when they were taken over by the newly formed Weardale Lead Company.



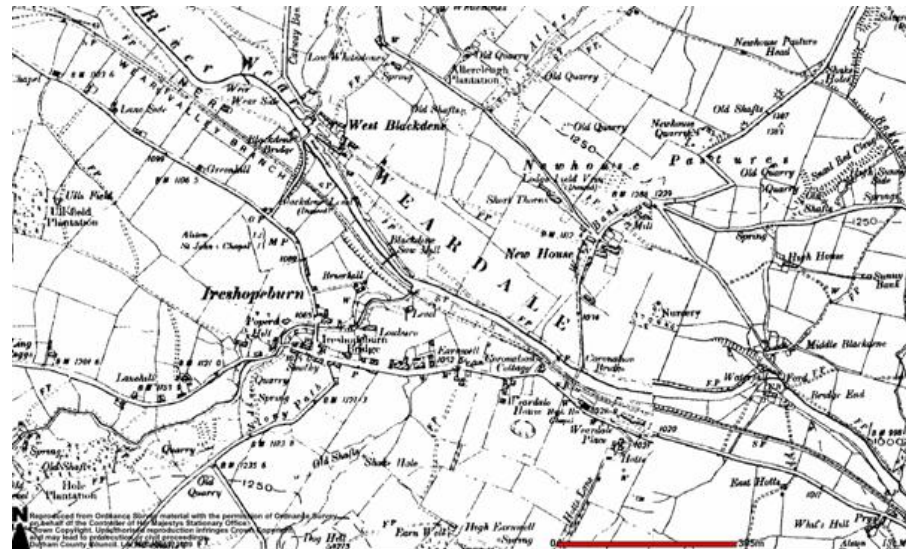
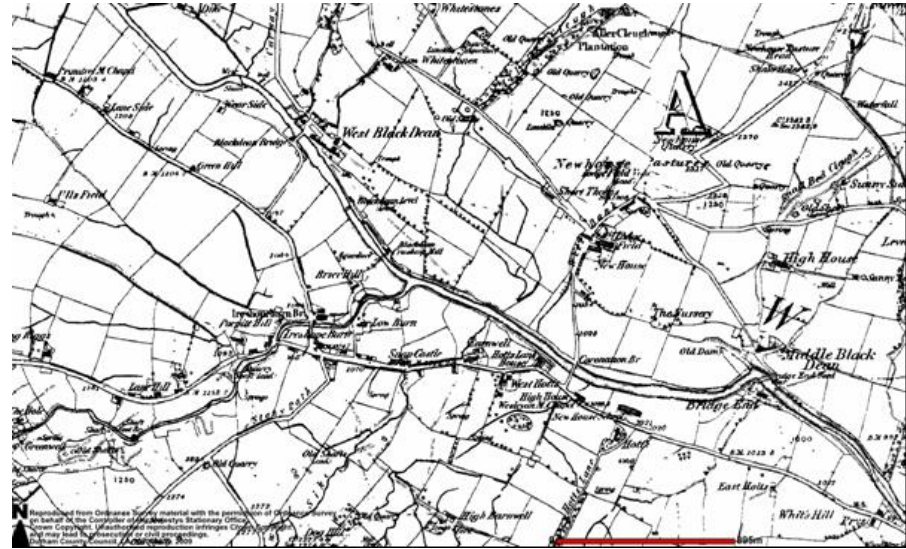
Greenwood's map of 1820 shows 'Ireshope', 'West Black Dean' and 'New Houses'. The general pattern of roads and buildings is similar to that of today,

In 1728, Sir Walter Blackett succeeded to the estate and oversaw the creation of Newhouse as the Weardale Agent's residence and headquarters for the Weardale lead mining operation. The decision to base the Weardale headquarters here had a huge influence on the development of Ireshopeburn throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Coronation Bridge was built in 1840 to provide appropriately grand access from Ireshopeburn village across the Wear up to Newhouse.



Newhouse and Coronation Bridge. Illustrations dated 1840, reproduced from J. R. Featherston's *Weardale Men and Manners*.

High House Chapel dates originally from 1760 and has been in continuous use as a place of worship ever since. The Minister's House (now the Weardale Museum) was added to its west gable in c1804. In 1872 the chapel was substantially enlarged, including the raising of the roof and a major extension to the east, including the present-day façade, on land donated by WB Beaumont. Newhouse School, now the Weardale Inn, was built 'for the education of all religious denominations' in 1854, on land donated by WB Beaumont adjacent to High House Chapel.



Ordnance Survey maps from c1860 (top) and c1896 (bottom). Most of today's buildings were already standing by 1860, the main development between the two maps being the construction of the Weardale Railway.

The Weardale Railway came to Ireshopeburn in the 1890s, and while this was important for local industry and made the valley more accessible than ever before, Ireshopeburn itself did not have a station; passengers had to travel either to Wearhead or St John's Chapel.



Above: 1905 photograph of High House Chapel.

Below: The newly constructed railway at bridge at West Blackdene.

In 1883, control of lead mining in Weardale passed to the newly formed Weardale Lead Company, which also managed its operations from Ireshopeburn. Weardale House was rebuilt as the Managing Director's home, offices were located at Coronation Cottage, and company workshops were built between the road and the railway, north of Weardale House. The company relocated its headquarters to Boltsburn in 1947, after most mining had become concentrated in the Rookhope Valley.

20th and 21st century Ireshopeburn

Following the decline of the local lead industry many properties in and around Ireshopeburn were abandoned and fell into decay. Agriculture again became the basis of the local economy. All shops in the village have now closed, and the village school is now a pub (The Weardale Inn).

Mining and processing of fluorspar continued at West Blackdene into the late 20th century, but the mine and processing plant are now no more; the site has been landscaped and is now a hayfield. The wide road and bridge across the Wear linking the site with the A689, essential for the export of quarry material once the railway had closed, still survives but is little used.

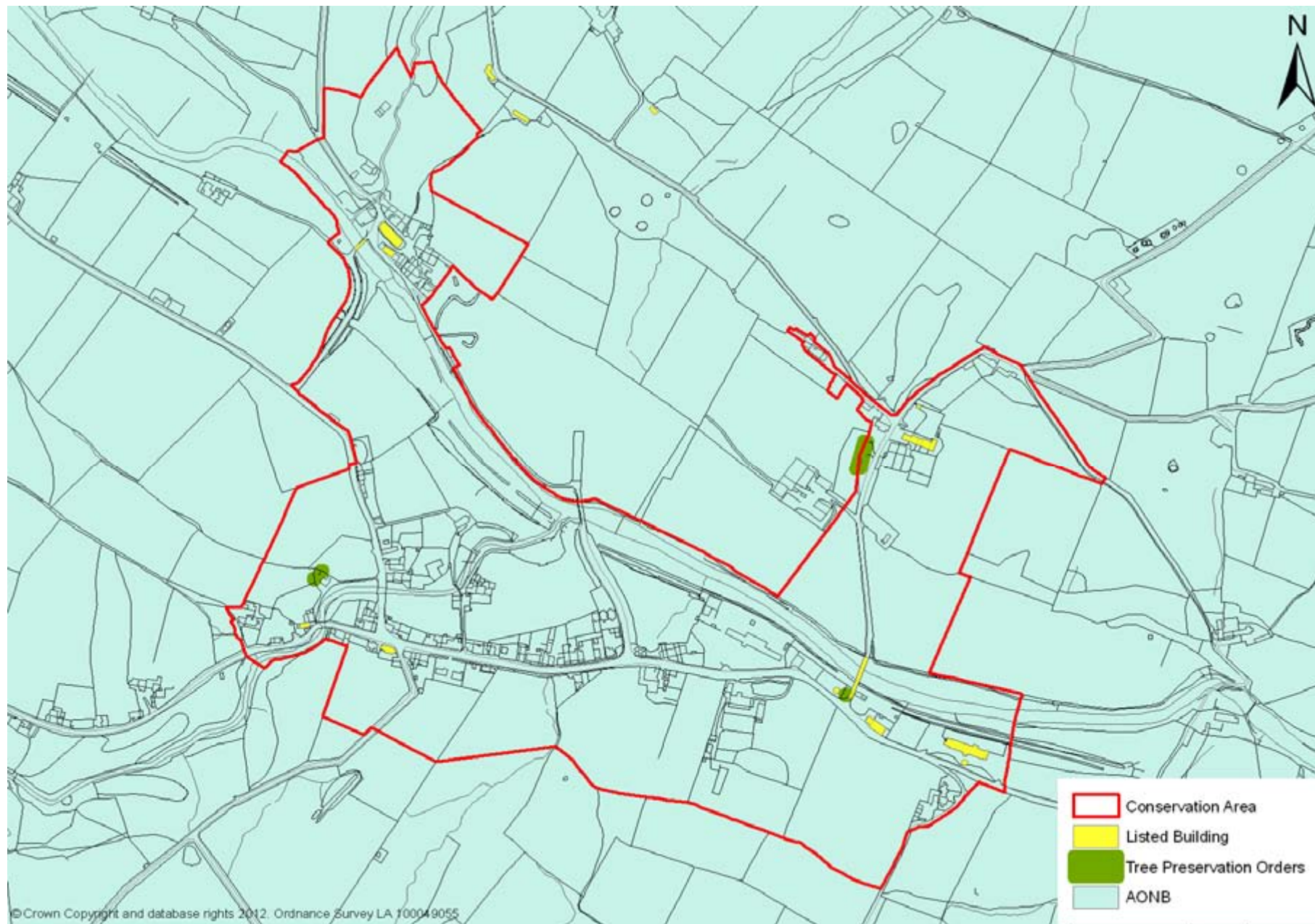
Ireshopeburn village, Newhouse and West Blackdene saw few new buildings during the 20th century and their historic form, and much of their character, remains unblemished by modern development. However, several properties have been 'improved' over recent decades through the provision of extensions and new doors and windows; sadly these in many cases pay little regard to local tradition and undeniably detract from the village's historic character.



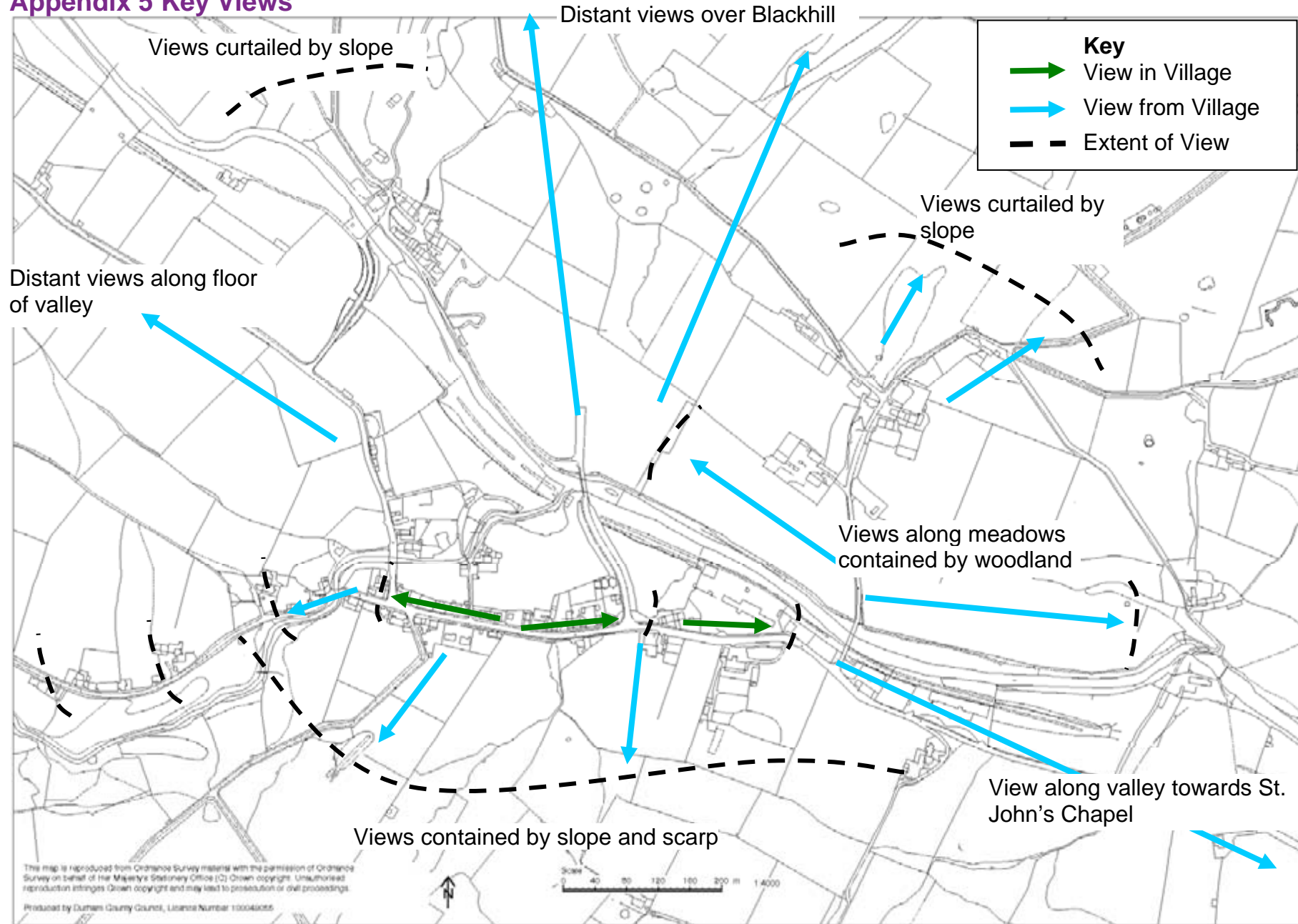
Early 20th century photographs show that Ireshopeburn has changed remarkably little over subsequent decades, despite the addition of a few new houses.



Appendix 4 Current Designations



Appendix 5 Key Views



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