

# Conservation Area Appraisal



## Shildon

December 2011



## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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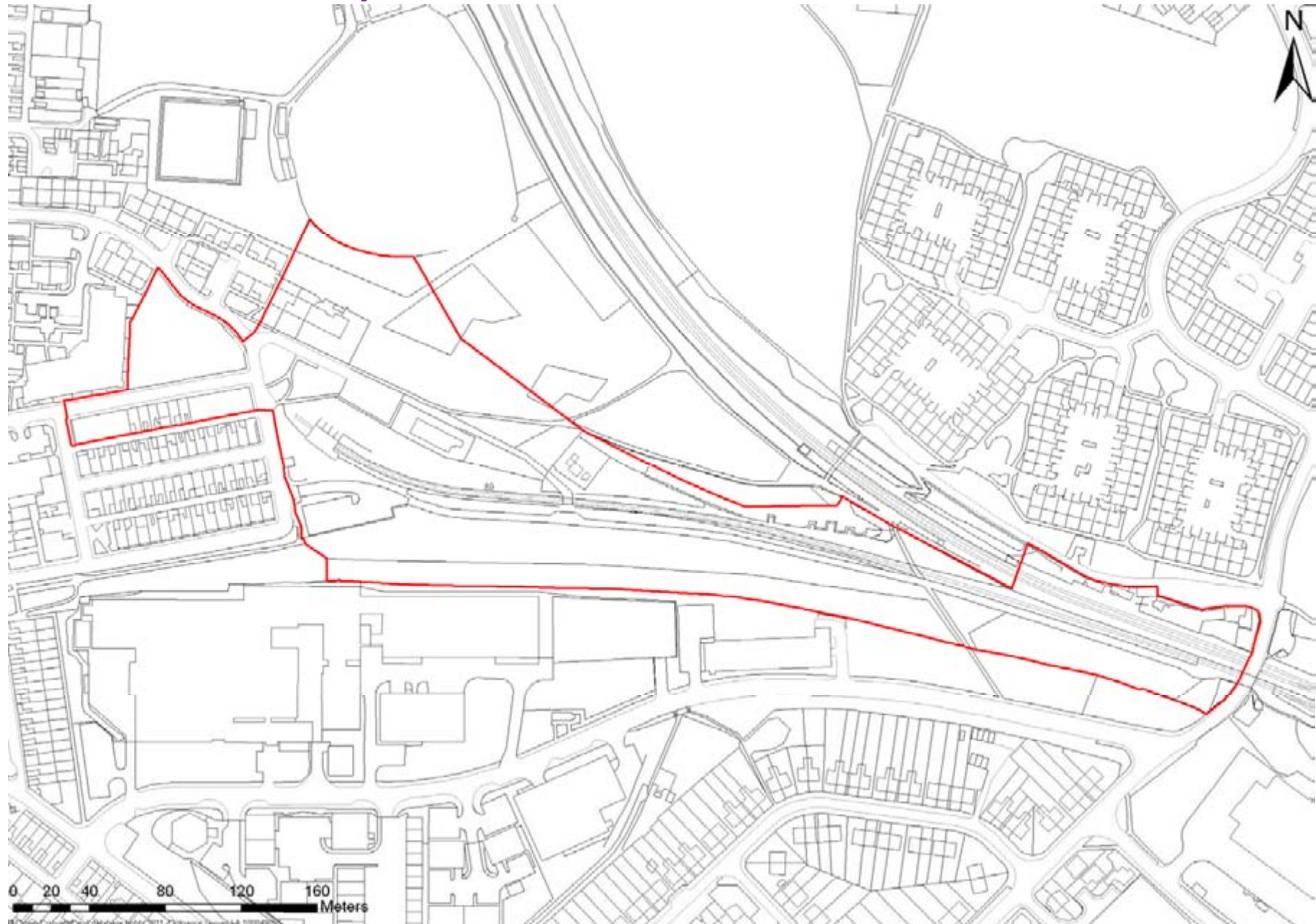


*Heritage, Landscape and Design*  
 Durham County Council

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**Conservation Area Boundary**





## Summary of Special Interest

The Shildon Conservation Area lies approximately 400m south east of the town centre, on the south side of the modern railway line. It is focused on the surviving elements of the old Stockton & Darlington Railway and the Soho Works associated with the railway pioneer, Timothy Hackworth. It includes a number of listed buildings associated with these works including an engine shed and stables, as well as a length of surviving track, paths marking the course of the former tracks and sidings, coal drops, workers' housing, non-conformist hall and boundary walls.

There are three key types of building which form the character of the area, each of these are quite distinctive although they are unified visually by the use of local materials and some design features. The first of these is domestic housing, the earliest examples of which are the row of early 19th century cottages in the north west of the area. These are known as Soho Cottages and include the former house of Timothy Hackworth (No. 1). They are built of regular, coursed and squared sandstone blocks with stone lintels and cills and red pantile roof (later replacement). They stand in contrast to the later Victorian workers housing to the west of the site along Soho Street, Victoria Street and Station Street. These terrace houses, largely dating to the second half of the 19th century, are similarly constructed of sandstone but are much more uniform in style and simpler in design with few embellishments, although all have lost their original windows and doors.



*Late 18th century housing on the north western side of the Conservation Area. The celebrated engineer, Timothy Hackworth, lived in one side of this property with his brother living next door.*

Alongside the domestic structures there are two significant public buildings. At the western end of Soho Street is the sandstone built former Methodist chapel erected in 1876, and at the eastern end of the row the red brick building of the Sunday School. Both of these, alongside the housing, reflect something of the lives of the 19th century railway workers, although Hackworth's strict Methodist values meant that the other mainstay of the community - the ale house - was located outside the immediate environs of the Works.

The final element is the industrial buildings and related features which make up the remains of the Soho Works and the Stockton and Darlington railway. These are predominantly constructed of coursed rubble, or roughly squared sandstone blocks, with dressed quoins and window/door detail, and Welsh slate roofs; the latter undoubtedly brought in by railway. The buildings include a large engine house with chimney, goods shed, stables and a range of very fine coal drops. In

addition, there is also a length of track surviving in-situ, which is crossed in two places by gated level crossings. Other original elements include six Victorian gas lamps each in a very good state of preservation.



*Soho Engine shed built in 1828 and restored in 1975. A Grade II listed building and now part of Locomotion.*

## 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 115m<sup>3</sup> 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 Shildon'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

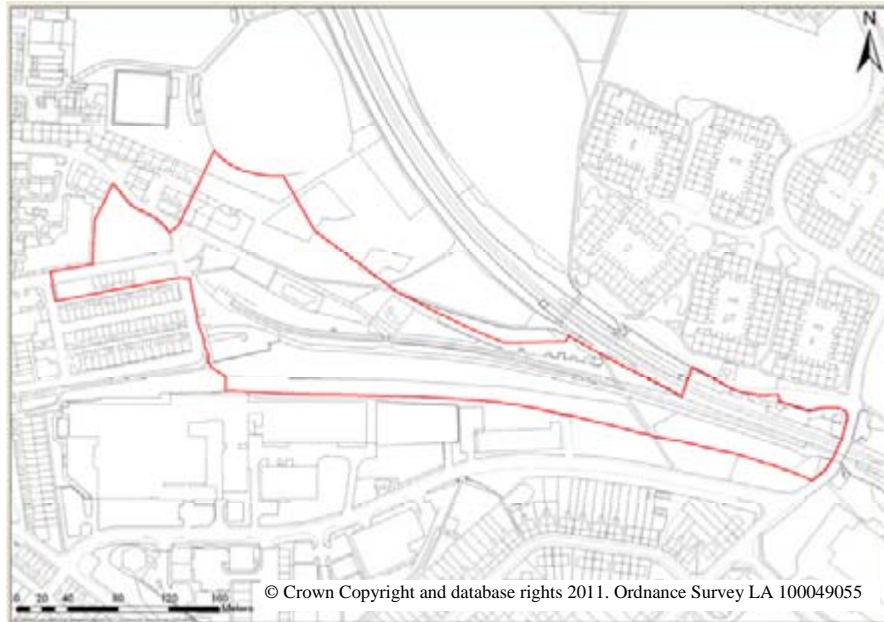
outline proposals for schemes which could lead to the safeguarding or enhancement of those qualities.

This appraisal discusses a wide range of structures and features within Shildon, 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*

The town of Shildon lies to the south west of the Borough of Sedgefield, approximately 2 miles south east of Bishop Auckland, 11 miles north of Darlington and 13 miles south of Durham. Today it is accessed by the B6282 which runs between the A688 and A6072, however, the foundation and success of the town lies firmly with an earlier mode of transport – the railways. In the early part of the 19th century Shildon held a key position in the development of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, being for a number of years effectively the end of the locomotive-hauled line. The rise of the railways saw the rapid expansion of the original settlement located at the junction of what are now Main Street, Byerley Road and Auckland Terrace. New development also stretched to the south along the line of the new railway. New Shildon, as this became known, grew up around the Stockton and Darlington engineering works, and its rival the Soho Works. It is this section of this area which forms the focus of the Shildon Conservation Area.



*Current Shildon Conservation Area*

### Setting

Shildon lies just within the East Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau on the edge of the Southern Limestone Escarpment. The landscape here is transitional falling between the Limestone Escarpment of the Wear and the Coalfield Valleys which lies to the west. This is scattered with the numerous mining towns and villages which made up the Auckland coalfield, making Shildon a prime location for a transport link between the productive pits to the west and the Tees at Stockton. In addition, the rise of the land to the west at Brusselton provided for the incline railway which rose to 150ft before descending east towards Shildon. This made the site an ideal transitional point to connect the horse drawn waggons

with the new locomotive railway. All these factors contributed to the siting of New Shildon and the subsequent town which grew up around it.

Today the rail network has been largely replaced by a series of trunk roads circling the town and smaller link roads connecting with the various industrial estates and business parks which have arisen in the area in the last twenty years. Outside the urban areas the surrounding landscape is marked by open arable farmland set in shallow valleys and low, gently sloping ridge-tops which run between denser urban settlements like Shildon. To the east of the conservation area the land rises towards the limestone escarpment, a large outcrop of which can be seen just to the north east of the site (opposite Locomotion) at the old Thickley Quarry site (Limestone). The quarry is set in an area of open farmland but is hidden from the conservation area by the bridge at the east end.



*Thickley Quarry and surrounding landscape, visible just beyond the eastern end of the conservation area*



## Historical Summary

The town of Shildon will forever be associated with the 'Age of the Steam'. Renowned as the 'Cradle of the Railways', it is here that the first steam hauled public train began its historic journey on the 27th September 1825. It ran from the Mason's Arms to Stockton along the Stockton & Darlington Railway, with Stephenson's aptly named 'Locomotive No. 1' at its head. Since then the railway industry has dominated the town until the sudden closure of the Shildon Works in 1983.

The Shildon Conservation Area covers almost 4 hectares of land at the heart of the town's railway heritage and includes the site of the former Soho Works, established by Timothy Hackworth (1786-1850), one of the great unsung heroes of the steam age. Hackworth is widely held, both locally and further abroad, to have been a comparable engineer to Stephenson and to have perfected the designs of the somewhat volatile early engines to produce a series of stable and reliable commercial locomotives which would ensure the future success of the country's railways.

Shildon is justly proud of its associations with Hackworth and his contribution to the development of locomotive design; many of which were conceived and built at the Soho Works. His powerful six-coupled 'Royal George' (1827) was the first engine in the world to establish steam power as a viable and economic alternative to horse power. Earlier engines like 'Locomotion' had all been prone to run out of steam and were also highly susceptible to explosion. Hackworth therefore set about developing powerful, fit for purpose steam engines which were cost efficient and reliable. Among his many achievements was the development of the blast pipe and

return flue boiler, the sprung safety valve, the characteristic plug wheel and the prototype 0-6-0 mineral engine which became the standard wheel arrangement for goods and mixed traffic engines right up until the late 1960s.

Hackworth's House lies within the conservation area along with a number of industrial buildings associated with the former Soho Works. These comprise an impressive engine shed, stables and boundary wall, and later buildings including a range of coal drops, a goods shed and parcel office. The buildings are all situated along a length of track, with the location of other lines and sidings represented by the course of various paths crossing the site east to west. There are a series of important views down the track in both directions, drawing the eye naturally along the line towards the distant vanishing point.

In the later 19th century there was an influx of new workers into Shildon following the growth of both the Soho Works and the Stockton & Darlington Railway Works at New Shildon. A number of Victorian terraces were erected in the surrounding area to house the new workforce. Three of these terraces are still preserved to the west of the site and one, Soho Street, is included in the conservation area. At one end of this street is a Grade II listed Wesleyan chapel and at the other end an associated Sunday School built in 1888.

All of the buildings, except for the Sunday School, are constructed of local stone, and apart from Hackworth's House and cottages all have Welsh slate roofs brought in by the new railway. The use of local sandstone and limestone unites together the four main building types: early domestic, industrial, civic and later workers' housing. All of those

surviving buildings associated with the former Soho Works form part of the museum and have retained much of their historic character. The Soho Chapel is a Grade II listed building and is therefore protected by its designation, and the Sunday School, although not listed, has remained relatively unaltered. However, the Victorian terrace has not fared so well. It has been marred by the wholesale replacement of the original windows and doors with unsuitable modern uPVC alternatives. In addition, the historic character of the area is also threatened by the scale, form and location of the various signs and notice boards associated with the museum and other elements of street furniture. These detract from the character of the area, dwarfing the buildings and making the resulting streetscape cluttered and distracting.



*19th century housing*

Today the remains of the Soho Works forms part of 'Locomotion', part of the National Railway Museum, which opened in 2004. The main body of the collection is housed in an impressive new exhibition hall located just to the east of the conservation area. This popular museum attracts many visitors to the site every year and is operated as a partnership between Durham County Council and the trustees of the Science Museum.

The Shildon Conservation Area is arguably one of the most historically important early railway sites in the world. During the second quarter of the 19th century it became an invaluable testing ground for the technical development of locomotives and improvements to railway track. By the time the company was amalgamated into the North Eastern Railway in 1863, the Stockton and Darlington Railway had become simply the most profitable railway company in the country and contributed to, amongst other things, the opening up of Teesside as the largest iron ore centre in the world. Much of the company's success was attributable in no small part to the engineering genius and foresight of Timothy Hackworth.

### Form and Layout

The Shildon Conservation Area was designated in July 1993 by Sedgefield Borough Council. In total it covers almost 4 hectares and includes 9 Grade II Listed Buildings. The area was designated to protect the remains of the buildings and features associated with the Stockton and Darlington Railway and Soho Works which played such an important part in the foundation of the town and the development of the country's railways. It is focused on a collection of buildings first laid out when the railway opened in 1825. This includes the listed

Soho Cottages (Nos. 1 – 4) and the land to the rear which was once occupied by the erecting shed and workshops (demolished in the 1940s).

Although the site remained in use for a considerable period of time, there was little change to the works after 1880. Following this period any major phase of expansion was limited to the Shildon Works to the west of the Mason's Arm's Crossing. The character of the area is, therefore, surprisingly unified largely as a result of the wide scale use of the local sandstone and the classical style of the buildings. This style is carried through from the reserved and uncluttered facade of the Soho Cottages, to the arches and symmetry of the industrial buildings (including the engine shed and coal drops) and finally the pediments and pilasters of the Soho chapel.



*Historic railway tracks*

The overall layout of the area is governed, as might be expected, by the path of the former railway tracks, preserved both in-situ and in the line of the pathways which run east to west across the area. These provide a series of long, linear views in both directions, a feature which characterises the site giving a considerable feeling of distance and perspective. A section of the old track is still preserved running through the site, although on a slightly different alignment to the original line. The remains of the buildings and track are interspersed with areas of open green, bordered with self seeded and planted stands of trees and shrubs.

In recent years, the opening of the Locomotion museum has had a marked impact on the layout of the area. New signs and information boards have been erected and additional street lighting and pedestrian walkways provided. To the west of the site lies the car park for the museum with the main visitor route to the exhibition hall running along the southern boundary of the site.

The layout of the Shildon Conservation Area has been well preserved although new development just outside the boundary of the site has the potential to considerably affect its character. Unfortunately, many of the Victorian terraces have been pulled down and replaced with new housing, most recently the large development to east of Alma Road which has had a considerable impact on views into and out of the conservation area. Areas of particular concern are the patch of green in front of this development and the area of housing to the south and west of Soho Street.



*Open space adjacent to Soho Street with new housing at Alma Road*

## Character Areas

The specific character and appearance of the Shildon Conservation Area is influenced by a range of factors not least its association with the Stockton & Darlington Railway company and the historical development of the railways but also changes in: population and workforce; production and economy; ownership; styles and fashions, and transportation. These various influences are reflected in different aspects across the site, and while no distinct character areas or zones within the conservation area have been identified there are three clear representative groups:

### *Early domestic housing*

This group comprises the worker's cottages and Superintendents house and its surroundings including the Victorian lamp standards, the railings and the green at the front of the buildings. This group is characterised by the form of the early 19th century buildings, their scale and design features, as well as the surrounding gardens, green space and tree.

### *Later workers terraces*

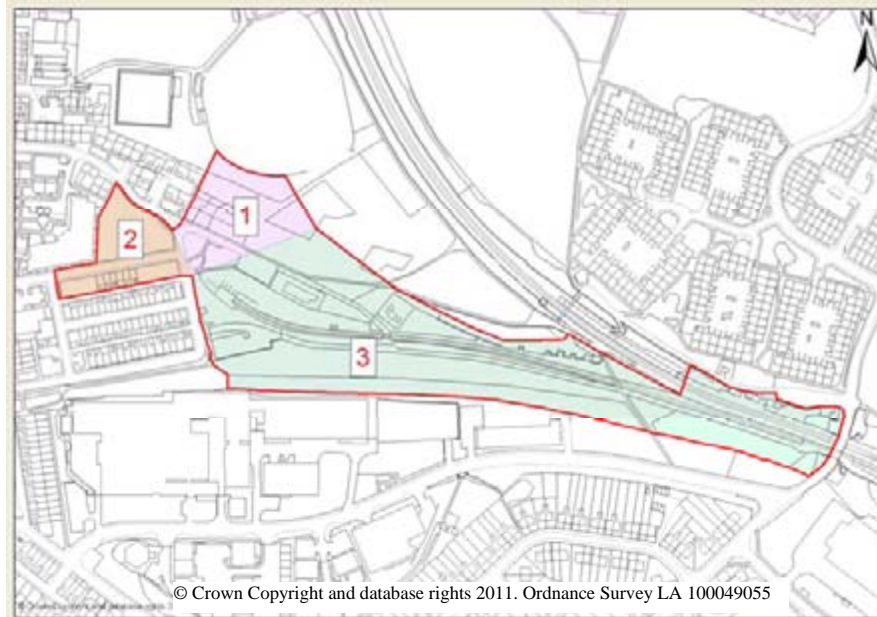
This group is currently represented by Soho Street and includes the two-up-two-down terrace cottages and the Soho Chapel and Sunday School. The group is associated with the influx of workers into the area following the rise of the railways, the provision of mass housing for the new workforce and something of their social and spiritual welfare. It is important to our understanding of Shildon's growth and development in the late 19th century and the changing nature and demands of that society.

### *The industrial buildings*

This group comprises all of those buildings associated with the Stockton & Darlington works, the Soho Works and the later NER. This lies at the heart of the conservation area and is the chief reason for its designation. This group features a number of high quality examples of early and mid to late Victorian railway buildings within their historical context. These have subsequently become part of the National Railway Museum. In addition to these three building groups the spaces between the buildings are also important both as a factor of the historic



layout of the area, as in the case of the course of the former tracks and sidings, and also for their aesthetic appeal, views and vistas. Particularly notable are the green in front of Soho Cottages and the recreation area to the rear and east, as well as the green in front of Soho Street. All of these areas help define the character of the place and often have considerable amenity and wildlife value.



*Character areas within the Sildon Conservation Area*

### Architectural Character

#### Early buildings

The earliest buildings within the conservation area are the Soho Cottages which comprise Hackworth's House and the row of adjacent workers cottages. These domestic buildings

date to the foundation of the Stockton & Darlington works in 1825, and were built to provide housing for the workers and a house and offices for the new superintendent. A reminder of the close connection with the company is the Stockton & Darlington Railway plate still in situ on the front of No. 3 Soho Cottages. These cottages are quite simple in design, constructed of squared and coursed sandstone with red pantile roof and flush stone lintels and cills. They feature 6 x 6 double sash windows (restored) and later replacement period doors, as well as cast iron rain goods and buff brick chimneys. Together with the adjoining house they make a key focus group of the Character Area and can be clearly seen from a number of vantage points.



*Worker's cottages adjacent to Hackworth's house; these are the earliest examples of worker's housing on the site*



*Hackworth's House c. 1950 – taken from NRM display board*

Hackworth's House, to the east of the cottages, is an example of a medium sized early 19th century house. All of the windows and the doorcases are later, added when the building was restored in 1975 but they are in keeping with the form and design of the period, if not the character of these individual buildings which may have been slightly less grand. A photograph of the house c. 1950, shows that the building had undergone considerable modification in the late 19th and early 20th century.

### **Early Industrial Buildings**

The earliest industrial buildings on the site, those associated with the Soho Works, are constructed of coursed rubble with roofs of Welsh slate. Although rubble built, they are of a high standard, and reflect some of the features found in the domestic buildings including the coped roof gables and kneelers. Even the smaller ancillary buildings were of high

quality including the surviving Black Boy Stables (Grade II listed) which are built of squared and coursed sandstone with Welsh slate roof, flushed sandstone lintels and quoins, and projecting stone cills.

### **Later Industrial Buildings**

Later buildings on the site, including the goods shed and coal drops, continued the tradition of high quality design. The goods shed echoes a number of the features of the earlier engine shed but also introduces the arched doorway and window, with dressed voussoirs and keystone. The arch theme is repeated to considerable effect in the coal drops. These strictly utilitarian structures show significant architectural merit, and reflect the pride of the Victorian era in its industrial engineering; a period which saw the engine house and municipal works rival the churches and cathedrals of previous centuries.



*Goods shed*

Following the amalgamation of the Stockton & Darlington Railway with the NER, and the suspension of locomotive production at Shildon, there seems to have been very little development in the area of the former Soho Works as the bulk of the work shifted to the main works at New Shildon. There were a number of smaller, later buildings erected, the only surviving example of which is the parcel collection hut c. 1910. This weatherboard hut stands at the western end of the site and was restored in 2008.

### Later 19th Century Housing

The 19th century saw the introduction of a range of new building materials and with these a greater standardisation in construction and design. This can be seen in the terraces at the western end of the site. Station Street, on the south side of the group, is probably the earliest and features some variety in design, particularly at the eastern end where some of the houses feature kneelers and eave courses. The two-up-two-down terraces probably built for the railway workers (the miners being housed in terraces to the south of the colliery). The rows to the north of Station Street are of poorer quality and are probably later. These are all of a standard design with no embellishment.

### Important Buildings

Within the conservation area, particular buildings and features are more prominent because of their location within the street plan or local topography. As a result of their prominent position they have the capacity to make a greater impact on the character of the area than they would otherwise have in a less prominent position. This can impact in a positive or a

negative way and, therefore, their condition can be considered to be a higher priority than more secluded buildings. Most of the buildings in the Shildon Conservation Area fall into this category.

Timothy Hackworth's house, on the northwest side of the conservation area is one of a pair of houses which date to the foundation of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825. The two storey properties are constructed of squared and dressed sandstone, probably brought from the local quarry on the Surtees line shown on the first edition map. The house features dressed sandstone quoins, kneelers and roof coping. The property was restored in 1975 and the red pantile roof renewed, including terracotta ridge tiles. The windows are all 6 x 6 double hung sashes set quite flush to the façade with a solid stone lintel above and stone cill. Each house is divided into three bays with a central six-panelled front door (replaced) with four-paned overlight. The door is set in a new surround with fluted pilasters and entablature. To the rear is a six-bay extension.



*Timothy Hackworth's house and restored doorframe*



Possibly the most prominent building on the site is the Soho Works engine house with its square chimney to the rear built around 1826 containing the 1833 beam engine. It is located just to the south east of Hackworth's house and was restored at the same time. Rectangular in plan, it is constructed of coursed sandstone rubble with dressed quoins and a low-pitched Welsh slate roof with coped gables and kneelers, similar to those on Hackworth's house. The building is seven bays wide and was built initially as a paint shop, although later converted to house two engines with stores and pattern room above. It commands a dominate position within the conservation area and can be seen from most vantage points. Perhaps more than most, this building epitomises the industrial heritage of the site. Like Hackworth's House, it is now one of the exhibits of the National Railway Museum.

In addition to the engine house, the goods shed at the western end of the site opposite the Sunday School is also a prominent building because of its design and location. It dates to a later phase of development than the engine house, and first appears on the 1898 second edition OS map. However, it is quite similar in design to the earlier building, constructed of coursed rubble with a low-pitched roof, coped gables and kneelers. It features dressed quoins and large arched door on the southern side with dressed voussoir a stressed key stone.

To the east of the goods shed, the range of Grade II listed coal drops on the north side of the existing track is both an impressive and significant feature. Built in the early 19th century to re-fuel the locomotives, they are constructed of dressed sandstone with buff brick arches.



*The goods shed and coal drops; both date to a second phase of development surrounding the Soho Works*

The structure comprises two sections; the first is an approximately 50 metres long incline which rises to a second 60m long platform paralleling the track. This features four coal drops. The incline has open arches of diminishing height, some of which have been infilled with later buttressing. The arches of the coal drops are all open. The graceful curve of the coal drops, and the quality and visual impact of the array of high arches make this a dramatic and important historical feature of considerable architectural merit.

Another prominent building is the signal box (Grade II Listed) and associated buildings to the east of the modern station. This building marks the only surviving structures of the former Shildon station which first opened in 1842. The signal box itself was built in 1887 and altered in 1928 and 1984. It is two-storeys high and constructed of red brick and timber with a slate roof. On the south side are two 3 x 3 paned windows, each set into a large blank panel. Above these is a projecting balcony overlooking the track with an array of six windows with timber boarded panels above. The building retains its internal fittings installed in 1928. East of the signal box is a brick built structure with hipped roof which has been much



modified, and adjacent to this a sandstone pitched roof building, possibly the signalman's cottage. This little group is quite distinctive and stands out because of the shape of the signal box and the nature of the red brick. It is also a form of building so classically associated with the history of the railway. However, although the signal box is in good repair the two associated buildings are blocked up and abandoned although in relatively good state.



*Listed signal box and associated buildings, although currently outside the conservation area these buildings constitute a prominent group which can be seen from a number of vantage points*

Of those buildings not immediately connected with the engineering works, possibly the most impressive is Soho Chapel (Grade II Listed). Although the main façade is not clearly visible, except from Cross Street, the four tall arched windows mark the end of Soho Street and contribute to the visual impression of this side of the conservation area. Built in 1876 the building is constructed of coursed sandstone with dressed quoins and window surrounds. It is two storeys high and with a pitched roof of Welsh slate, and built in an

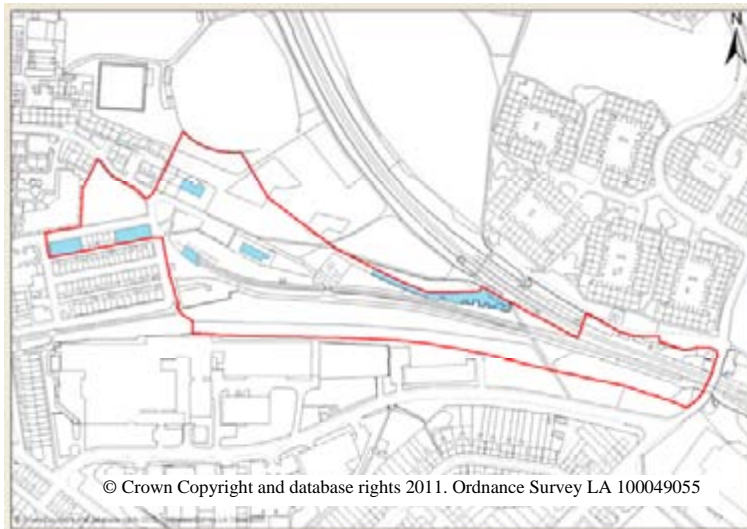
Italianate style, quite elaborate for a Wesleyan chapel. The front features a chamfered plinth with raised-and-chamfered quoins and in the centre a pedimented porch with flanking Tuscan square pilasters. Above the porch are three windows with tympanum above featuring the name and date. A key feature is the six, tall, round-arched windows each with keystones, impost bands and projecting stone cills set on consoles. The chapel stands in contrast to the newly constructed Salvation Army building which now stands opposite.



*Soho Chapel and adjacent manse built in 1876 and the red brick Sunday School built 1888*

Adjacent to the chapel is the former Manse built at the same time as the chapel, and Grade II listed as 4 Soho Street. The building is constructed of squared sandstone with a pitched, Welsh slate roof. Two storeys high, it is divided into three bays and lit by three 6 x 6 sash windows on the first floor and two on the ground floor. The door is a simple four-panelled door with single paned overlight and flush sandstone lintel. This building is prominent through its proximity to the chapel and difference in size and form from the other houses.

At the other end of Soho Street stands the Sunday School, now the Museum welcome building. This building is prominent in terms of its location, design and colour, being constructed of red brick in contrast to the sandstone buildings which surround it. Built in 1888 the building features a central entrance with semi-circular sandstone pediment, moulded archivolt and central relief carving with the date shield. The door is flanked by two brick pilasters with sandstone scroll at the base. On each side of this are two foundation stones. The entrance design is echoed in the two Venetian windows on each side of the door. The building has a coped gable with ball finials at the apex and eaves, and brick modillions along the eave line. It is seven bays long with a projecting and gabled central bay. The windows are all arched with rubbed brick voussoirs and stone keystone. There is considerable skill in the execution of this building with many of those features anticipated in a stone building found here executed in brick.



*Prominent buildings with a significant impact on the streetscape*

## Building Materials

The underlying geology of the Shildon area spans the sandstones, mudstones and shales of the Millstone Grit series overlain by the Carboniferous coal measure just to the north of the town and the soft Magnesian Limestone of the Limestone Plateau. Both groups have been quarried locally for generations to provide good quality local building stone. The buildings within the conservation area are dark yellow-brown sandstone probably produced by the quarry at Old Shildon shown on the first edition map. This stone is very versatile and relatively durable and can be used in a number of forms from dressed blocks to more basic rubble constructions. The Victorian terraces (and possibly the main structure of the chapel) are probably constructed of limestone from the nearby quarry at Thickley. This has similar qualities to the local sandstone and is quite difficult to distinguish between the two. Almost all of the buildings on the site are constructed of stone apart from the red brick Sunday School which was almost certainly built of bricks from the Shildon Brick and Tile works further west on the Surtees Line, or the New Shildon Brickworks adjacent to the Stockton & Darlington Railway Works at New Shildon (also shown on the first edition map).

The primary roofing material is Welsh slate, certainly brought in by the railways. The improvement in goods transportation meant that much of the local vernacular character of an area begins to dissipate after the mid 19th century. The progression of this can be seen with the gradual move from the individuality of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Soho Cottages to the more standardised later terraces of Soho Street and Victoria Street. However, the Victorian terraces do still retain something of their local character by being constructed in local

stone rather than the cheaper brick which was becoming more and more prevalent as the 19th century progressed. The terraces on Station Street show more variety and finer architectural detail like kneelers and stone eaves courses. These are earlier and of a slightly higher quality than the other two surviving streets.

All of the terraced houses have the same basic fenestration, two windows at first floor, one at ground, with flush sandstone lintels and cills. Unfortunately all of the original windows and doors have been replaced with modern uPVC replacements which take little account of the character of the area. Similarly all the doors have also been replaced. The most common form of windows for terraces of this period would have been 4x4 paned, or 2 x 2 paned, hanging sashes and four or six panelled doors, possibly with a plain overlight.

Other features of note in the area include the iron railings in front of Soho Cottages. These might be replacements but do add to the character of this group. Hackworth's House also features cast iron rainwater goods and two over door lanterns; both added during restoration.

### Boundaries

The current conservation area boundary is centred around the industrial core of the site then runs across a public access recreation area on the south side of the railway embankment. The boundary continues east, passed both the new and old Shildon station towards the railway bridge which marks the eastern extent of the area. Beyond the bridge is the new Locomotion exhibition building which is outside the conservation area boundary. The southern boundary of the

area follows the line of the former Haggerleases branch line and runs west to a footbridge at the western end of the site. From there the boundary heads north back towards Soho Cottages, extending west just before this point to include the worker's housing and chapel along Soho Street.

### Open Spaces

The open space to the rear of the listed Engine Shed is the most significant and includes a number of trees which have amenity value. This large green space seems well used for recreation and provides a soft setting to the adjacent industrial buildings. Smaller private spaces around the Soho Cottages interrelate well with this larger space and together create an attractive walking route for visitors and residents. The proposed boundary amendment to include the open space adjacent to Soho Street and the Alma Road development will further protect the green buffer around the historic buildings.

### Views

Views to and from the conservation area are predominately linear in nature, running along the course of the former railway tracks and sidings. The body of the site is largely hidden from view from outside and there are no significant views which mark the approach into the area. The approach from Locomotion is possibly the most important from a visitor perspective, although partially obscured by the railway bridge. Similarly the approach from the west is limited by another bridge and narrowness of the access path. The northwest access to the site is via a network of urban roads without clear views until you are largely within the boundary of the area. The only exception is the approach from the north east



through the recreation area. Here the path leads over the crest of the embankment rise to provide views out over the railway track and engine shed, across west to Soho Cottages, and east to the old station.



*View east down the track towards the Shildon station signal box and the Spout Lane bridge at the east end of the site*

However, although there are only limited views into and out of the conservation area there are numerous impressive views within the site itself. You can stand virtually anywhere on the path of the former rail lines and be rewarded with interesting, and in many cases beautiful, views up and down the site. Due to their layout, the linear nature of the tracks provides distant views that draw the eye towards the vanishing point and then outward to take in the various buildings and points of interest on either side. This creates a heightened sense of distance in what is actually quite a small area, and is a key characteristic of the site. In particular there are impressive views in both directions from the two gated crossing points over the former

surviving track. The optical effect of the in-situ sleepers further adds to the illusion of distance and is offset positively by the vertical slope and perspective of the coal drops. There is a similarly impressive view from the eastern end of the site where you pass under the railway bridge and then the area suddenly stretches out before you along the line of the Haggerleases line with the engine shed in the middle distance.



*View west from just underneath the railway bridge at the eastern end of the area. This is the primary view for visitors approaching from Locomotion.*

There are also a series of near views which are important. These include views along the Victorian terraces and between key buildings across the site. Possibly the most significant short view is that north east from the Sunday School across to Soho Cottages. This north west corner of the conservation area is the only section where there is not such a strong linear focus. Consequently, there are broader views across the green in front of the cottages and Soho Street towards the modern development along Hackworth Close. Much of this



comprises single 1960/70s houses which have a limited impact, but on the east side of Alma Road is a newer apartment development which can be clearly seen from Soho Cottages and Soho Street. In contrast to the linear lines of the track and Victorian terraces, this complex is a broad solid block, the facade of which is only broken by a series of slightly higher window bays. Built of red brick and artificial stone/concrete, the materials also reflect little of the character of the area. While not wholly objectionable, the complex does very little to complement or sympathise with the historic character of conservation area and attempts might be made to lessen its impact by the planting of trees on the green in front. This area was previously occupied by Victorian terraces so is not intrinsic to the layout of the site itself. It is also recommended to extend the boundary of the conservation area to include the green and provide some protection from future development.



*Unsympathetic modern development on the east side of Alma Road; this low, rectangular block fails to compliment the linear lines of the railway track and surrounding Victorian terraces*

However, perhaps the greatest threat to the views of the area is the sheer number of signs, information panels and other street furniture found across the site. This has a particularly detrimental effect on the nature of the linear views which are often broken and disjointed by poorly designed and over dominant signage and lighting (see below).



*An important short view across to Soho Cottages from outside the Sunday School at the corner of Soho Street. The view is somewhat marred by the intrusive signage of the museum*

### Activity

The importance of the railway throughout the 19th century, and the opening of new coal mines in and around Shildon, saw a significant expansion of the village from just over 100 people in 1801 to 11,759 in 1901 and 14,165 in 1921. However, the decline of heavy industry since the 1960s, and the closure of the Durham coal fields in the 70s and 80s, has had a devastating effect on the town's economy, the final blow being the closure of the railway works in 1984. In more recent

years Shildon has been the focus of a multi-million pound regeneration scheme which has seen improvements to the town centre, new road layouts and the development of industrial and trading estates. While this work has injected a new vitality into the town it also represents an ongoing threat to Shildon's historic character and the potential loss of key buildings, housing groups and street patterns.

In 2004 the town saw the opening of the £11 million railway museum 'Locomotion', a joint venture between Sedgefield District Council and the National Railway Museum. Located just to the east of the conservation area, this has proved a popular tourist attraction and has won a raft of awards including the European Museum of the Year in 2006. The conservation area encompasses the large majority of the museum's external exhibitions and as such includes associated signage and information boards. The popularity of Locomotion also means that the Shildon Conservation Area is now very much in the public eye. As a result, there are a range of new issues which come to bear on the future preservation and management of the area.



*Locomotion, the Shildon Railway museum opened in 2004. The conservation area encompasses many of the museum's external exhibits and displays, although the main building lies just to the east of the boundary.*

## Public Realm

Other features contribute to Shildon's built environment including: a number of boundary walls; surviving sections of track; street furniture like benches, litter bins, railings; traffic signs; exhibition signs and displays, and public sculpture. All of these contribute to the village's unique local character, although some not in a positive way.

The six Victorian gas lamps which are clustered in the north west sector of the conservation area are an important feature, although not original these are in keeping with the historic character of the area and are visually significant. They are a reminder that Shildon was one of the first places in the region to have gas street lighting, and their design and position contributes much to the character of the area. However, in recent years these have been dwarfed by new signage, security camera and more modern street lighting which reflects nothing of the scale and design of its Victorian predecessors.



*One of Shildon's gas lamp posts with adjacent railings in front of Hackworth's house. The Grade II listed wall south of the engine house and sections of surviving track add context and depth to the area's surviving buildings, and were repaired in 2008.*

Other elements which contribute more positively to the character of the area include the section of preserved track which gives a focus to the site and context to the surviving buildings. In addition there are the various associated features like the waggon by the goods shed, the crossing gates and signal posts. The various boundary walls linking together some of the surviving buildings are important as a built element and also operate as a visual factor, drawing the eye from the track, along the walls, to the buildings. A section of wall to the southwest of Black Boy Stables is a Grade II listed structure. This runs west for 150 metres to the south of the engine shed. It is constructed of squared and dressed sandstone with segmental coping and measures 1.5m high. This probably dates to the first phase of the Soho Works sometime between 1833 and 1866.

Retaining historic features keeps the streets individuality and helps create a sense of place. Changes to street furniture, overhead cabling and road signs all have the potential to adversely affect Shildon's streetscape, especially within the area of the former Soho Works. Changes associated with the opening of the museum have seen a plethora of signs and information boards erected across the site. These signs are completely out of keeping with the area and reflect nothing of its historic character. They are out of scale with the buildings, overpowering and dominating, and their colour, design and location detracts from the overall sense of place of the area. This is compounded by other elements of the streetscape including the design of the lighting, which varies across the site with no consistency. This is particularly significant with regards the linear views which characterise the site. These are considerably influenced by the design of lighting bordering the length of the various paths and walkways.



*Threats to the streetscape – museum signs and information boards detract and dwarf from the very features they represent and poorly designed lighting, bins and benches add to the problem*

Other areas of concern are security cameras, dog fouling bins, rubbish bins and road/path marking, all of which are unsympathetic in design and pollute the local streetscape. In general, the historic character of the area is spoilt by extraneous and badly designed clutter.

The issue of signage was perhaps the most remarked upon item during the public consultation, and was brought up by all of those who contributed. It should be added that there was sympathy for the difficulties and problems encountered when the signs were first commissioned and erected but that it was now time for a radical re-think of the museums strategy.

Vandalism remains a perpetual threat, not least the burning down of the restored Black Boy stables, but there does not appear to be a problem with it on a day-to-day basis. The erection of CCTV cameras to address any perceived threats of vandalism is not recommended as these would have a detrimental impact on the historic environment. However, less extensive measures might be encouraged such as



neighbourhood watch schemes. Overall street lighting is good, although the design of the lamps is not always in keeping with the character of the area.

Litter is a perpetual problem, although not extensive. The main problem area appears to be the pathway to the south of the site, along the old railway line. This is one of the main thoroughfares out to the industrial estate and business centre and receives a lot of use. There are litter bins all along the route (again not of the best design) but the problem still persists. However, given the amount of street furniture already, it is not recommended that any further bins are added, although some re-thinking of where the existing bins are placed might be considered.

Litter and vandalism was one of the main concerns voiced by the town council during the 2010 consultation. Any plans to re-design signage and street furniture must take it consideration the potential problems vandalism but this should not be to the detriment of fitting in with the historic character of the conservation area.

### General Condition

Most of the buildings in the Shildon Conservation Area are in good condition and well cared for, although there are one or two exceptions. The Black Boy Stables were set on fire by vandals in 1985 are now in a poor state. The building has now lost its roof, further threatening the stone work. Prior to the fire the stables had been restored including erecting a new roof, however, there is now photographic evidence that the building may have originally been castellated, a characteristic feature of Stockton & Darlington Railway structures from this period

The building is of considerable importance, a factor reflected in its Grade II listed status. It is recommended that the building be restored as a matter of some urgency and that suitable measures be put in place to protect it from future acts of vandalism.

The coal drops are also in need of some attention to stop the growth of small self seeding trees and shrubs which could threaten the integrity of the stone and brickwork although some works were carried out in 2004 and 2008. These are amongst the most important and iconic features of the site, and need to be regularly maintained.



*The Black Boy stables c.1925 and the building today. This Grade II listed building was set on fire by vandals in 1985.*

Immediately outside the current conservation area boundary, the buildings adjacent to the listed signal box are also of concern. These 19th and early 20th century buildings are part of the signal box group but are in a state of poor repair with blocked windows and have become an eyesore which is visible from a number of vantage points around the site. During the 2010 consultation there was a considerable amount of public concern about the possible fate of this collection of buildings and much support for extending the



conservation area to include the signal box and so provide an additional level of protection.

There has been a significant loss of the historic features associated with the Victorian terraces along Soho Street. Many of these buildings have been modernised and their key features lost. In particular, all traditional window and door styles have disappeared and been substituted with modern uPVC replacements with little consideration for the original form of the building. In contrast, the office building at the end of the row, next to the chapel, has recently been restored using traditional window forms. This has transformed this end of the row showing that loss of character is not irreversible and, while it is best not to lose the original features at all, sensitive period replacement windows can be found.

In addition to the more obvious windows and doors, the area is at risk of losing the smaller fixture and fittings which give it character. Most of these have already gone but might include door knockers, bells, handles, rainwater goods, overlights and the street name plates. These elements are at considerable risk from change but need to be preserved where present and restored or replaced where damaged or lost.

The wholesale replacement of the windows and doors, and the painting of one of the facades, has also damaged the unity of the Soho Street terrace group. This type of terracing would have been characterised by every house in the group having the same windows, doors, fixtures and fittings. The replacement of original windows and doors, and changes to wall coverings can have a devastating effect on this unity, especially when window apertures are widened or blocked.



*Example of loss of group unity – the terraces on Soho Street have lost much of their character and unity due to poorly replaced windows, window blocking and variations in wall treatment*

## Boundary Changes

Two extensions to the conservation area were made in 2011 to protect the area more fully. The first included the open space adjacent to Soho Street and secondly an extension of the north east boundary to include the listed signal box associated with the former Shildon Station.

### *Extension of the western boundary to include the green space adjacent to Soho Street*

The boundary of the conservation area was extended to include the open space in front of Soho Street which contributes to the setting of the conservation area and terminates views through from the listed Engine Shed. The inclusion of this space also allows for greater control over the quality of any further new development in the future.

### *Extension of the north eastern boundary to include the signal box*

The north-eastern boundary of the site was extended to include those areas of the former Shildon Station. This included the listed signal box and adjacent buildings. This area is important in understanding the development of the site and is also significant in that it can be seen from a number of vantage points around the site. The condition of the two adjacent buildings could leave them open to redevelopment or demolition in the future and an extension of the conservation area offers some protection to ensure that the historic character of the area is not compromised.

## *Other extensions which were considered*

Consideration was given in 2010 to extending the western boundary of the site along the line of the former track to the Mason's Arms and also to include the area surrounding Maddison Street (former Adelaide Street). This area is intrinsically connected with Locomotion's historic first journey and marked the cross over point between horse drawn and engine hauled transport. However the buildings are some distance from the existing conservation area and English Heritage guidance is clear that a boundary should not be extended to protect one building in this way. Inclusion in the Council's future local list would be a more appropriate option.

An extension to include Station Street and Victoria Street within the conservation area boundary was also considered during the 2010 consultation period. The three streets together represent a small pocket of the type of housing which once surrounded the site and the layout of the group is important to our understanding of the growth of the area. However the interest of the buildings has been substantially eroded by the loss of historic features and unsympathetic alterations. It has therefore been determined that Station Street and Victoria Street are now of insufficient quality to merit inclusion in the conservation area, and would not meet the national 'special interest' standard.

Lastly some public support was expressed for an extension beyond the signal box to the modern museum exhibition hall. However this again is some distance from the main historic core of the conservation area and so will not be progressed at this time but could be reconsidered in the future.

## Management Proposals

The following management proposals have been identified to ensure that the 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:

- 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.
- Submit an application to English Heritage for the goods shed to be considered for national listing.
- Seek to improve the signage around the museum and reduce street clutter wherever possible.
- Retain traditional boundary features.
- Preserve the open spaces within and around the boundary which contribute to the setting of the conservation area.
- Consider further boundary amendments based on more detailed research.



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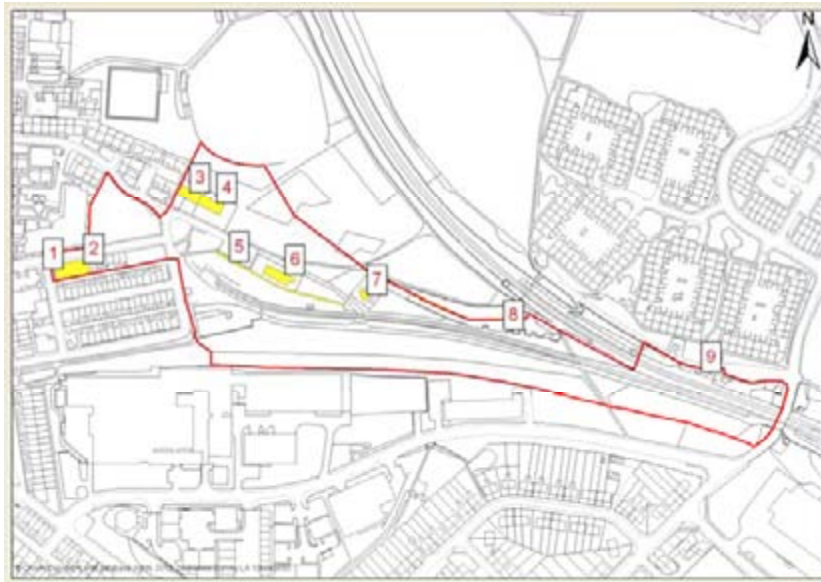


## Appendix 1 Listed Buildings

9 of the most important structures within the conservation area are statutorily listed for their architectural or historic interest – all 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/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/)



Ref	Building	Grade
1	Former Methodist Chapel, 2 Soho Street	II
2	Former Durworth Ltd Offices, 4 Soho Street	II
3	Soho Cottages	II
4	Hackworth Museum	II
5	Wall to south of Soho Engine Shed	II
6	Soho Engine Shed	II
7	Black Boy Stables and Outbuildings	II
8	Coal Drops	II
9	Signal Box	II

### Former Methodist Chapel, 2 Soho Street



Former chapel now a factory. 1876. Squared sandstone with ashlar dressings. Welsh slate roof. Italianate style. 2-storey, 3-bay, open-pedimented front has chamfered plinth and raised-and-chamfered quoins. Pair of 3-panel doors and blocked 2-pane overlight in projecting pedimented porch with Tuscan

antae. Flanking, boarded, round-arched windows in archivolt with keystones, impost bands and projecting sills on consoles. Group of 3 small round-arched windows above porch. Tympanum has semicircular cemented panel in archivolt with keystone. 4-bay left return has boarded, round-arched windows with identical details. Stone eaves cornice. Interior: Former gallery, with pierced panels, on cast-iron columns. Later inserted ceiling at gallery level.

**Former Durworth Ltd Offices, 4 Soho Street**



Former manse now offices. Circa 1876. Squared sandstone, Welsh slate roof and grey brick chimneys. Attached to rear of chapel. 2 storeys, 3 bays. 4-panel door and overlight in right

bay. 12-pane sashes with flush lintels and projecting sills. Stone eaves cornice. Roof has coped gables and end chimneys. Included for group value.

**Soho Cottages**



Pair of cottages. Circa 1840 for the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company, restored 1975. Dressed masonry, renewed pantiled roof and grey brick chimneys. Cottages attached to left return of the Hackworth Museum. Single storey, 7 irregular bays. Replaced 6-panel doors, with flush lintels, in bays 2 and 7. 5 replaced 12-pane sashes with tooled-and-margined lintels and projecting sills. S.&D.R. plaque (G,9) between bays 4 and 5. Low-pitched roof has central ridge and end chimneys.

### Hackworth Museum



Pair of houses. Early C19, restored 1975. Dressed sandstone, renewed pantiled roof and grey brick chimneys. 2 storeys with dressed quoins. Each house, of 3 bays, has a central, replaced 6-panel door and 4-pane overlight in a new doorcase with fluted pilasters. Blank bays above doors and replaced 12-pane sashes with flush lintels. Stone eaves cornice. Low-pitched roof has central ridge and 2 end chimneys. Lower 6-bay rear has replaced fenestration and end bays which break forward. No. 1 was formerly the home of railway engineer Timothy Hackworth and both houses are now a museum to the railway history of Shildon.

### Wall to South of Engine Shed



Wall. Mid C19. Hammer-dressed sandstone with tooled, segmental coping. 1.5 metres high. Wall, 10 metres south-west of the Black Boy Stables, runs west (to south of Soho Engine Shed) for about 110 metres. Wall then continues west-north-west for about 40 metres and is terminated by a later C20 concrete post, 15 metres east of east end of Soho Street. Included for group value with Soho Engine Shed.



### Soho Engine Shed



Former engine shed and paint store, now a museum housing railway relics. Circa 1833, restored 1975. Coursed rubble with dressed quoins. Welsh slate roof. Rectangular shed with square-plan chimney and lean-to addition to rear. Tall, 7-bay shed. Gabled front has replaced sliding doors. Low-pitched roof has coped gables and shaped kneelers. Returns have late C20 fixed lights with external shutters. Tall chimney has short and narrower top section above offset course. Lean-to addition under low, monopitch roof. Interior: Shed retains 2 engine pits and remnants of C19 heating system. Lean-to addition, formerly a fireproof paint store, has a massive steel door and a stone-flagged inner roof of iron beams. Of

historical interest as the most important surviving fragment of Timothy Hackworth's Soho Engine Works.

### Black Boy Stables and Outbuildings



Stables and outbuildings. Early C19, restored in late 1970's. Hammer-dressed sandstone and Welsh slate roofs. Single-storey, 3-bay stable has central boarded door flanked by square openings with flush lintels and projecting sills. Set-back, 2-bay lean-to addition to left has dressed quoins, similar openings and a monopitch roof (concealed to rear of left return by a short section of flat-coped parapet). Later gabled addition to rear of left return. Detached, square-plan building, to right of stable, formerly embattled and known as the "castle cabin".



The stables were built where coal wagons left the Black Boy and Brussleton Inclines to join the horse-drawn system. The buildings were damaged by fire in 1985 and were derelict and partly roofless at time of survey.

### Coal Drops



Range of coal drops. Circa 1856. Dressed sandstone with grey brick relieving arches. Approximately 50-metre long inclined section to left of elevated, 60-metre long section with coal drops. Inclined section has relieving arches with open spaces beneath, some infilled by later buttressing. Elevated section has similar relieving arches and 4 coal drops.

These coal drops were used for fuelling railway locomotives.

### Signal Box



GV II Signal box. 1887, altered 1928 and 1984. Built for the Central Division of the North-Eastern Railway Co. Ltd., possibly designed by the Thomas Prosser, architect to the NER. This box is a variant of the Central Division's Type C2 signal box. Red brick and timber with a slate roof. 2 storey. North, track front, has two glazing bar windows, 3 x 3 panes, each set into a large blank panel. Above a projecting balcony with iron railings, and six windows in a row with timber

boarded panels above. The outer two windows on either side are two light sliding sashes and the central two windows have fixed lights, both 3 x 3 panes. East front has blank ground floor and two windows above, both 4 x 4 panes, with balcony. South front to street has blank wall central projecting brick stack, the upper section rebuilt C20. West front has external staircase leading to half-glazed door and two windows to left. INTERIOR retains McKenzie & Holland pattern 16 frame lever system installed in 1928, and reduced from 55 levers to 42 levers in 1984. This is a well designed signal box with group value and a well preserved, if reduced, lever frame for controlling and changing the points.

## 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 areas. 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



Former Methodist Sunday School built in 1888 and now the welcome building for the Museum and housing the Sans Pareil engine. Unusual use of red brick, as the surrounding buildings are all constructed in stone.



Former goods shed originally used to house items delivered to the railway by horse and cart. The building first appears on the 1898 OS map and is constructed in coursed rubble with a low-pitched roof, coped gables and kneelers.



The 1910 weather boarded Parcel Collection Hut which stands to the west of the site and was restored in 2008 and is currently being repainted.

## Appendix 3 Origins & History

*“With engines built in Shildon shed  
These engines gave the town this bread”*

Father of the Railways by Thomas Ronald Spedding

Shildon owes much of its present form and character to the rapid rise and expansion of the railways in the 19th century. Considered to be ‘the cradle of the railway’ the town grew up around the Stockton to Darlington line and the associated Soho Works which lie at the heart of the conservation area. However, there has been a settlement at Shildon at least since the early medieval period, first mentioned in 821 and again in 900 when the land was brought under the jurisdiction of South Church, Bishop Auckland. The name itself derives from the Old English ‘syclfe’ meaning shelf and the suffix ‘dun’ which is hill, so ‘shelf hill’ which undoubtedly refers to its topographic location on the limestone escarpment. Another possibility is that the name originates from the Old English ‘sceld’ or ‘scyld’ meaning refuge or shieling ground.

The original settlement lay to the north-west of the conservation area at the junction of Main Street and Byerley Road. During the medieval period the manor was divided between the Byerleys at Middridge Grange and the Lilburn family at Thickley, the latter sold their holding in the estate in 1717. In 1801 the hamlet of Shildon was recorded as having a population of just 100 people, most employed in agriculture but some in coal mining and in the burgeoning textile industry. However, within the next fifty years the population was to rise from 115 recorded in 1821 to 2,631 by the census of 1841 and 11,759 by the end of the century. At this time the Age of Steam was at its peak, and Shildon for a time, was at its heart.

### *Early development of the steam engine*

In the early 19th century Britain was firmly in the grip of industrial expansion. Foreign trade trebled between 1783 and 1802 and iron production rose from 68,300 tonnes in 1788 to a staggering 2,701,000 tonnes in 1852. There was also rapid growth in the textile industry with new mechanised mills appearing all over the country. This expansion was fuelled by coal, a large percentage of which was supplied by the Durham coal fields. Small collieries were springing up all over the Auckland coalfield to meet the increasing demand of manufacture but the task of transporting coal from these emergent pits to the County’s ports became a considerable issue. Colliery owners were willing to invest large sums of money in providing a solution to the problem which threatened to seriously hinder the potential expansion of the industry.

In 1767, Robert Whitworth first proposed the construction of a canal linking together Stockton and Darlington. Several surveys were conducted between 1768 and 1813 to evaluate the scheme. The eventual cost of construction was estimated to be in the region of £205,283 but by this time the concept of an overland railway had already been mooted as a cheaper and more viable option. Leonard Raisbeck, Recorder for Stockton, had first raised the issue of a Stockton to Darlington railway in a public meeting at the town hall in 1810. Later on the 13th November 1818, a general resolution was proposed to apply for an Act of Parliament to construct a rail or tram road, based upon the plan produced by George Overton. The prospectus for the venture stated that the aim was *“to extend from Stockton to the collieries in the Auckland district, by one continued main line, until it approach to the coalfield, where it is intended to separate into the principal branches”* On the



23rd May 1825 the Stockton and Darlington Railway Act was passed through parliament and the railway age had begun.

Collieries had employed horse drawn wagons for transporting coal since the early 1700s and later, stationary engines were used to haul coal along inclined railways; however these were quite restrictive in their use. The main breakthrough came in 1801 with the invention by Richard Trevithick of the first high-pressure steam engine which could haul waggons along a track. The owner of Wylam colliery, Christopher Blackett, was quick to recognise the potential advantages of steam powered transport to the industry and ordered an engine from Trevithick in 1805. This was built at Whinfield's Foundry, Pipewellgate, Gateshead, then owned by John Winfield, Trevithick's agent for the North East. However, the engine did not prove suitable and was never put into use. In 1812 Blackett approached Trevithick again but he was too busy to complete the order. Instead the manager at Wylam, William Hedley, aided by Jonathan Foster, the enginewright, and Timothy Hackworth, the colliery blacksmith, began work on a new locomotive - The Puffing Billy. This was followed a short time later by Wylam Dilly. Both engines were still in operation at the colliery in the 1860s.

Following Blackett's success, local industrialists began to invest heavily in the advancement of railway engineering. In 1825 Edward Pease, a successful wool merchant and colliery owner, joined forces with George Stephenson and his son, Robert, to form 'Robert Stephenson & Company' the world's first locomotive builder. Later Timothy Hackworth was recruited to join the venture.

### *The inaugural journey*

The first commercial railway locomotive was finished in September 1825. Initially called Active, it was later re-named Locomotion No. 1. A few days later on the 27th September the Stockton to Darlington railway officially opened. Shildon was the northern terminus of the line allowing for the transfer of coal from the incline railway at Brusselton to the locomotive-hauled line and from there along the 27 miles of track to Stockton.



*Locomotion on its inaugural journey, 27th September 1825.*

Locomotion had been transported from Newcastle by horse-drawn wagon and put on the rails at Heighington from which it was brought to the Mason's Arms crossing, just to the west of the conservation area. At 8 o'clock the ceremony convened at Brusselton where wagons filled with sacks of coal and flour loaded at West Auckland, where hauled up the incline by the stationary engine. These were then lowered down to the east and coupled to Locomotion waiting at the Mason's Arms. Hundreds of onlookers lined the track to witness the spectacle and see George Stephenson at the controls of his steam engine pulling the 36 wagons which also included passenger coaches filled with local dignitaries and investors. Three hundred tickets in all were issued for the journey but over 700 people were thought to have, pushed, scrambled and elbowed their way on board for the momentous journey.

The Durham County Advertiser later reported:

*“The scene, on the moving of the engine, sets description at defiance. Astonishment was not confined to the human species, for the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air seemed to view with wonder and awe the machine, which now moved onward at a rate of 10 or 12 mph with a weight of not less than 80 tons attached to it” (1st October 1825)*

### **Timothy Hackworth – unsung hero of the Steam Age**

Timothy Hackworth was master of ceremonies at the opening and also acted as the first guard during the fleeting journey. He was born in Wylam in 1786 and at fourteen left school to succeed his father as foreman of the smiths at the nearby colliery. Whilst at Wylam, he worked with Hedley and Foster on the design and construction of a number of steam engines including Puffing Billy and Wylam Dilly, and was responsible for all maintenance and improvement work. In 1816 he left Wylam to become foreman of Walbottle colliery. Eight years later, in 1824, George Stephenson invited Hackworth to oversee his newly built locomotive works at Newcastle upon Tyne, where Locomotion was in the process of construction.

During his time at the Newcastle Works Hackworth had considerable influence on the design of Locomotion, rebuilding the engine three times with a succession of modifications and improvements including the system of coupling the wheels with outside rods and a return crank rather than chains. Later he designed the first reliable engine to withstand the rigours of everyday commercial use, the Royal George (1827), a powerful six-coupled locomotive which was the first in the

world to establish steam power as a viable and economic alternative to horse power.

Locomotion had been dogged by design problems, on one occasion killing its driver, John Cree, when the engine exploded at Heighington. It was also prone to run out of steam and was patently not suited to hauling heavy waggons along the 30 mile route.

The Royal George was a far superior machine, and the first engine in which the cylinders drove directly onto the wheels and employed a correctly aligned and valved steam blastpipe. This allowed steam to be safely and efficiently vented reducing the risk of explosion. The concept was used on all later engine designs, including Robert Stephenson’s Rocket. Other improvements conceived by Hackworth included the characteristic plug wheel and the prototype 0-6-0 mineral engine which was to become the standard wheel arrangement for goods and mixed traffic engines right up until the last days of the steam locomotive in the late 1960s (Walton, pers.com).

*‘The old Stockton & Darlington Railway had a short memory for the man whom they delighted not to honour. It beautified George Stephenson, canonised Edward Pease, and ignored the man who contributed so much to the success of both. In 1863 it was absorbed by the North Eastern Railway Company, by which time the policy of blotting out such historic interest as Shildon possessed had been fully accomplished.’ Robert Young, 1923.*

In 1829, another of Hackworth’s engines, the Sans Pareil competed against the Rocket in the Liverpool to Manchester railway trials. This was a six day trial during which the engines

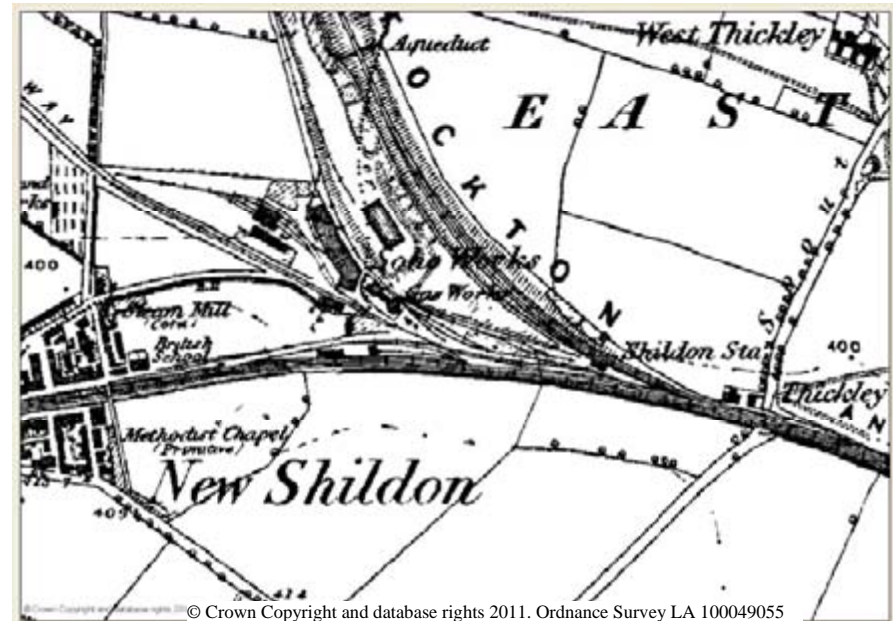
had to run ten trips over the ground at Rainhill in order to assess whether they were fast and reliable enough to make the return journey between Liverpool and Manchester. Five engines competed for the £500 prize; however, the Sans Pareil burst a cylinder and lost out to Stephenson's Rocket. Local feeling has it that the cracked boiler, which was cast and bored at Stephenson's works had been deliberately sabotaged by the rival company.

### The Soho Works

When the new Stockton and Darlington Railway opened in 1825 Hackworth was appointed the first locomotive superintendent and set up his head quarters at New Shildon, just to the south-east of the village centre. The choice of the site was a logical one, next to the Stockton & Darlington Railway Black Boy line, the private Surtees railway and the Brusselton incline line (Hackworth was responsible for the maintenance of the stationery engine as well as the locomotives). By the terms of his contract he was to receive a salary of £150 per annum and the Company was to *'find a house, and pay for his house, rent and fire'*. At the time New Shildon comprised just four houses and Hackworth moved into one of these, known as Soho House or Cottage, located on the south western side of the conservation area. This later became the Timothy Hackworth Victorian and Railway Museum now part of the National Railway Museum.

Shortly following the opening of the railway Hackworth supervised the building of a blacksmith's shop, joiner's shop and small engine shed (with space for two locomotives) close to his house. These were built for the maintenance and repair of the company's locomotives and wagons. In 1833 Hackworth

renegotiated his contract and took over the workshops, starting his own engineering works - the Soho Locomotive Building Company. He acquired further land and set about erecting more workshops, forges and sheds, providing facilities for the building of engines not just their repair. The first edition 25" Ordnance Survey map shows the extent of the Works in 1860. On the north side of the works is the Stockton & Darlington Railway main line next to this the Black Boy branch line, Surtees line and finally the Haggerleases branch line leading from the Brusselton incline.



First edition 25" Ordnance Survey map dated 1860 showing the extent of the Soho Works

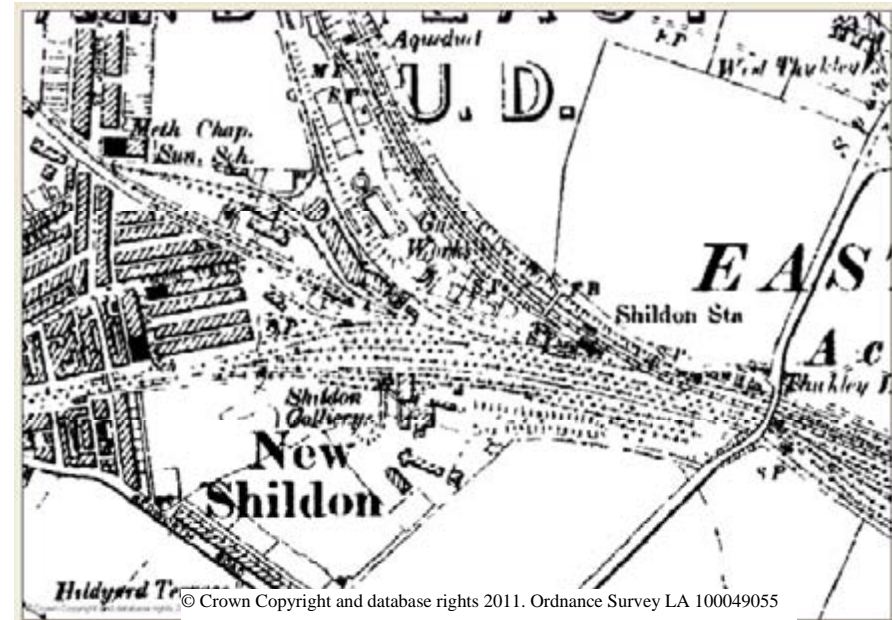
The buildings shown on this map include the two storey erecting shop to the rear of Hackworth's own house. This featured a fitting shop and pattern rooms and could house up



to 10 locomotives at any time. It was demolished in 1946. To the east of the erecting shed was a range of workshops (also demolished in the 1940s) which included pattern shop and storage, foundry, machine shop and blacksmith's shop. To the north of these was a large reservoir for both the locomotive and workshop engines. On the south side of the Surtees line is a large shed believed to have originally been built by Kitchings of Darlington as a paint shop, with an under floor hypocaust system to speed up the drying process. Later the building was converted for use as the Soho engine shed which still stands today as do the Black Boy Stables to the east, which were built to accommodate the horses of the horse-drawn incline. The site also featured its own gas works built in 1841 to provide for both the Soho Works and the railway. This provided the town with gas lighting, the only other area to be afforded such luxury at the time being Grey's Street in Newcastle.

In response to the opening of the Soho Works the Stockton & Darlington Railway expanded their own operation at the Shildon Works to the west of the Mason's Arms Crossing. New buildings included a wagon repair shop, erecting beds and brass foundry were constructed and further offices opened. Together the two engineering works put Shildon on the map. To meet demand they required a large workforce and men and women flocked to Shildon from all over the country seeking employment. This was intensified by the opening of the Shildon colliery, to the south of the Soho Works in 1873. This placed a huge demand on accommodation and new terraces grew up around the Works to house this influx of people. Station Street, Victoria Street and Soho Street were built for the engineering workers in the latter half of the 19th

century. This was good quality housing for the period with each property having its own yard with netty.



Second edition 25" Ordnance Survey map dated 1898

The pattern of this new housing can be clearly seen on the 1898 second edition Ordnance Survey map.

Hackworth was a strong Methodist, and a member of the Wesleyan Society. He sought to ensure the spiritual well being of his workforce by building a chapel and providing no less than 30 preachers to edify the people of Shildon. On his death this work was continued by his son, John Wesley Hackworth, and in 1876, the large Wesleyan Chapel, which now stands at the end of Soho Street was built. Two years later the red brick Sunday School was built at the other end of the row.



In 1855, five years after Timothy Hackworth's death, the Stockton & Darlington Railway bought out the Soho Works and it became an extension of the main works at New Shildon. During its operation it had produce a large number of influential locomotives including the Royal George, Sans Pareil, Lord Brougham, Shildon, Magnet' and Arrow. In 1836 a 2-2-2 locomotive using the 'double-trunk' principle developed by Hackworth was constructed for the Russian government. This was to become the first locomotive to run in Russia and was shipped over and supervised by Hackworth's son, then only sixteen years old. Later in 1838 three 0-6-0 engines were commissioned by the Albion Mining Company and shipped to Nova Scotia, Canada. Following the closure, engines still continued to be built at the Shildon Works until 1866 when the North Eastern Railway (NER), which had amalgamated with the Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1863, moved production to the Darlington North Road Works. The Shildon Works continued to operate but shifted focus to the repair and construction of wagons, expanding in 1886 and again in 1899; although the former Soho Works remained largely unchanged.

### *Electric rail transport*

In addition to its significance in the history of the steam railway, Shildon also played an important role in the development of electric rail transport. In the first quarter of the 20th century, Sir Vincent Raven, the chief mechanical engineer of the NER, advocated the potential advantages of the main line electrification for the transport of rail freight. The Tyneside Electrification project, which opened the first section of track in 1904, had already proved the technology viable for urban passenger transport. However, Raven wanted to test

the potential of the technology to replace steam locomotives in the transport of both coal and passenger, with plans to eventually extend the electrification of the line from Newcastle to York. In 1913 the company agreed to allow him to demonstrate his ideas by the electrification of the Shildon to Newport freight line. This 18 mile route was chosen because it was relatively self-contained and carried a large quantity of mineral traffic from Shildon to the docks, blast furnaces, and iron works in the Stockton-Newport area (LNER Railway Encyclopaedia, 05.-3.09).

In 1914 the electrification of the line using the new 1500V DC overhead system was begun and was operational by 10th January 1916. The Bo-Bo locomotives (LNER EF1) themselves were designed by Raven and built by Darlington Works and could start a 1,400 ton train and haul it on the level at a minimum speed of 25mph, making them much more powerful than the existing LNER ES1 locomotives which worked the Newcastle Quayside Branch. Electrical equipment was supplied by Siemens Bros (ibid).

Unfortunately, a number of factors contributed to the poor success of the Shildon to Newport freight line. Not least the war and the subsequent decline in coal production in the immediate post-war period and following economic recession. Much of the rolling stock was also old and poorly maintained meaning that during its twenty years of operation, from 1915 to 1935, the locomotives were never really used and tested to their full capacity. Nothing today survives above ground of the line and network of overhead cables which once criss-crossed the site. However, the area remains an important reminder of this chapter in the history of railway development.

### *Decline of the rail industry at Shildon*

Production continued apace at the Shildon Works throughout the early 20th century and by 1976 Shildon had become the largest wagon works in Europe building over 1,000 wagons a year and repairing many more. It occupied an area of some 44 acres with roofed workshop space of 13 acres and employed 2,600 people. The sidings alone comprised over 27 miles of track and were reputed to be the largest in the world until the construction of the Chicago marshalling yards in 1927. In 1983 the Works, then part of British Rail Engineering Ltd, were abruptly closed after British Rail had started leasing wagons and allowing private firms to repair the current stock. It won a temporary reprieve but finally closed for good in 1984.

The Soho works had been abandoned since the 1940s and by the 1970s many of the buildings were in poor repair and scheduled for demolition. However, a last minute reprieve was granted and work started on the restoration of the buildings with the intention of opening a museum celebrating Hackworth and the railway; this opened on the 17th July 1975. In 2004 the restored buildings and museum became part of the National Railway Museum - Locomotion - with a new building on the site of the old sidings west of the Darlington to Bishop Auckland passenger line.

### *Below ground archaeological remains*

To date there has been very few recorded archaeological discoveries pre-dating the early 19th century within the conservation area and its immediate environs. A flint tool was found some distance away at Old Eldon which might indicate

some pre-historic activity in the area but given the density of industrial and post industrial development the survival of material from this period would not be anticipated.

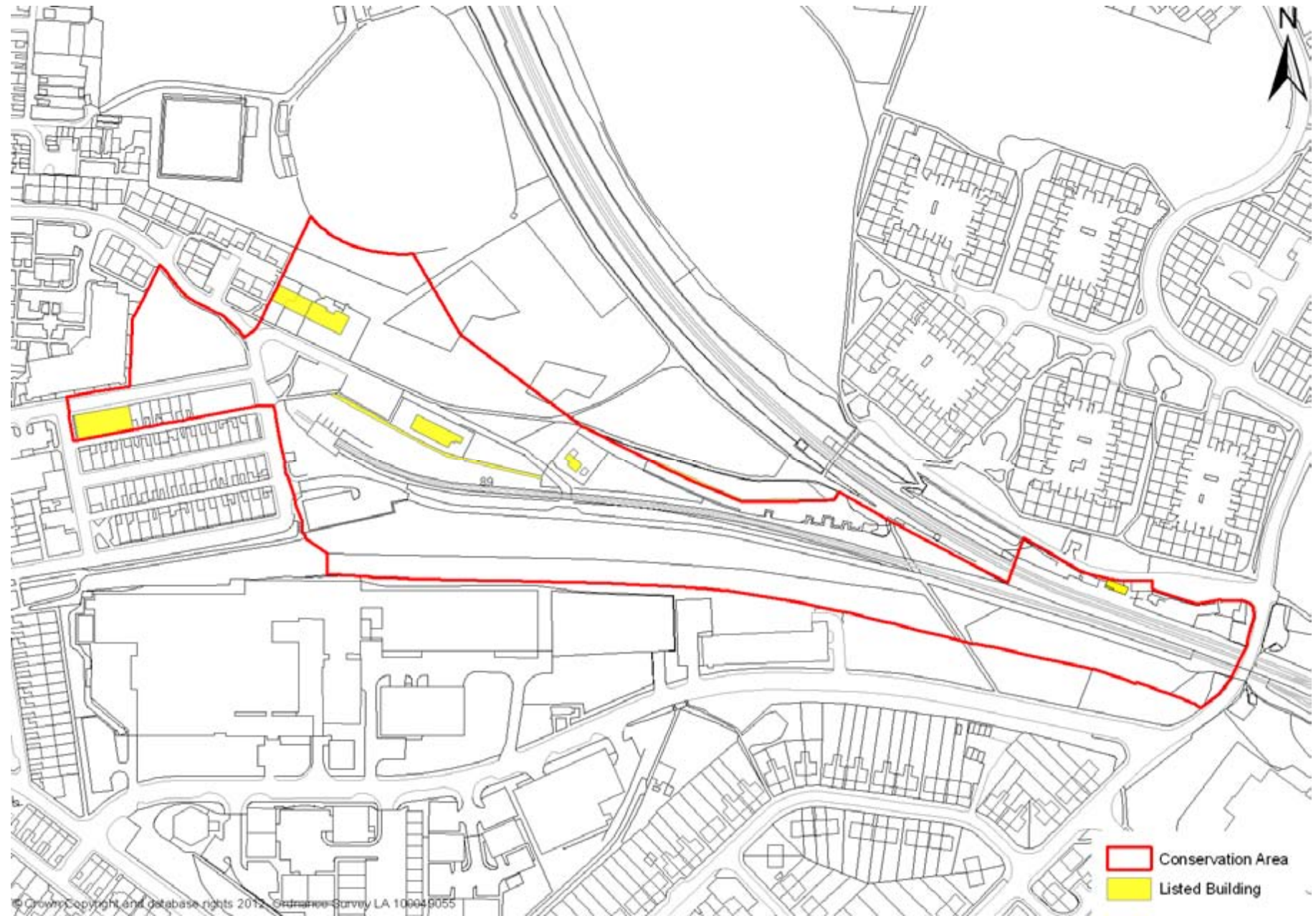
At Brusselton Wood to the west of the site, traces of a Roman road have been identified but again there is no indication of either a continuation of the road, or an associated settlement at Shildon. The earliest evidence for the foundation of the town is the early medieval (Anglo Saxon) place name which would suggest that there was settlement here at least by the 9th century. However, once more there is no archaeological material found to support this. Similarly, Shildon was a known medieval manor, along with nearby East Thickey (known as Thickey Punchardon), Mid Grange and Eldon. At East Thickey, approximately 300m east of the conservation area, earthworks associated with the former medieval village have been identified. However, medieval Shildon was almost certainly located to the north of the conservation area and, therefore, the potential for archaeological material dating to this period is believed to be low.

The greatest potential for the survival of below ground industrial remains are those associated with the industrial period. These include the known buildings identified from earlier maps particularly in the area behind and to the east of Soho Cottages where the erecting shed and workshops stood. Archaeological evidence associated with these structures might include: machine bases, engineering pits, vats, track bed, foundry flues and chimney bases. There may also be surviving deposits in the broader area associated with the railway and operation of the Works including smaller ancillary structures, water tanks, track bed, signal, levers and turntables.

On the west side of the site, near to what is now Soho Street, the first edition OS map shows a steam powered corn mill where the Soho Chapel now stands. Evidence for this structure may survive in the vicinity. In addition, an unclassified archaeological site has recently been identified 200m east of the conservation area by aerial photographic mapping, part of an ongoing mapping project commissioned by English Heritage.

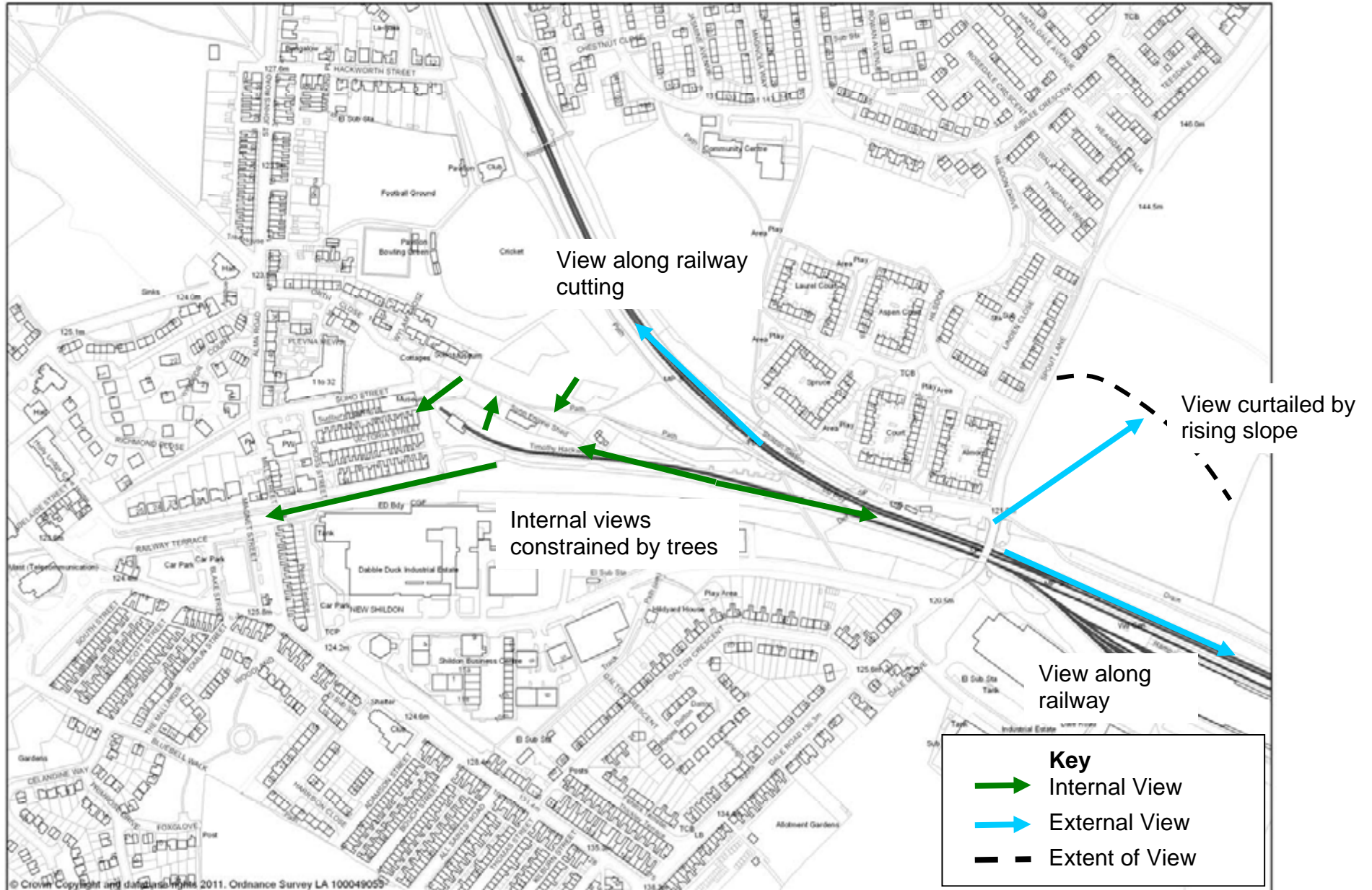
As archaeological material is predominantly below ground it generally tends to have less of an impact on the visual character of an area. However, given that the Shildon conservation area is predominately designated and characterised by its industrial past the buried archaeology has the potential to provide a greater understanding of the form and layout of the original site and its subsequent development. Because of this, and the additional research questions which these buried deposits might help illuminate, these archaeological remains are protected through the planning process and some additional legislation.

### Appendix 4 Current Designations





Appendix 5 Key Views







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