

# Bishop Auckland Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) Consultation Summary information

## Introduction

The full CAMP, which you can access from the council's consultation webpage, is presented in two parts:

- The Appraisal
- The Management Plan

This document is a summary of the information it contains.

The CAMP contains the following elements:

- Information about what a Conservation Area is, what designation means, what a CAMP is and how it has been prepared.
- Information about the Bishop Auckland Conservation Area designation, including a clear map of its boundaries.
- An assessment of why the Conservation Area is of special interest.
- An assessment of the characteristics that make it special for example, its historic, buildings, streetscape, views, green spaces and the activities which take place within the area.
- Identification of the issues the Conservation Area is facing, such as the erosion of traditional detailing, vacant buildings etc and the opportunities for improvement.
- Guidance on managing future change in the Conservation Area, for example, advice on new development, extensions and alterations, and guidance on best practice maintenance and repair.
- Recommendations by area for potential improvements.
- Proposed changes to the boundary of the conservation area with reasoned justifications.

## Conservation Areas

### What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an ““area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

When an area is designated as a Conservation Area, it recognises the quality of a place as a whole, which comes from the combination of individual buildings, streets, green spaces, trees and other features.

There are currently 93 Conservation Areas within County Durham that are designated as being of special architectural or historic interest where the character and appearance should be preserved or enhanced.

Being in a Conservation Area might mean that properties are affected by special controls (called 'Article 4 Directions'). These restrict work that can normally be done without planning permission.

Local Authorities, such as Durham, have a duty to consider new, and regularly review existing, conservation areas under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 71 of the Act further requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish

proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed.

Bishop Auckland was originally designated as a conservation area in 1969. This covered a small area focused on the Market Place and Newgate Street. The area was extended in 1990 and 1993 to include the parkland associated with Auckland Castle and more areas of Newgate Street and Etherley Lane. A detailed review was undertaken in 2014 which resulted in some minor boundary changes and the publication of a detailed conservation area character appraisal. Read more about the existing Conservation Area on the council's website at:

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/BishopAucklandCA>

### Guide to living and working in a conservation area

A common fear or view is that conservation area status will prevent change to the detriment of those living and working within the area. The purpose, however, is not to prevent change, but to manage it in a way which preserves the special interest of the conservation area.

#### I am a householder: do I need to apply for planning permission?

If you live in a single, unlisted residential dwelling outside of a conservation area, there are a number of things which can be carried out without planning permission under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (GPDO), commonly termed 'permitted development rights'.

However, Permitted Development Rights are reduced in a conservation area, meaning that planning permission is needed for works which materially affect the external appearance of a building including the following:

- Extending the building to the rear if the extension would have more than one storey.
- Extending the building to the side.
- Installing external render or cladding such as external insulation, weatherboarding, plastic, timber, tiles, stone or false stone.
- Installing roof dormers or change the roof shape.
- Fixing a satellite dish to a chimney, wall or roof that faces onto, and is visible from, a highway.
- Fixing a solar panel to a wall that faces onto and is visible from a highway.
- Installing a standalone solar panel in the garden, if visible from a highway.
- Fixing a heat pump to a wall that is visible from a highway.
- The total or substantial demolition of any building with a total cubic content in excess of 115 cubic metres.
- The construction, alteration or demolition of a chimney visible from the street.

This list is not exhaustive and it is wise to contact the Council for advice on what planning permission is required before you consider making any changes.

Further, within the boundary of your property you will require planning permission for:

- Erection of an outbuilding such as a shed or garage to the side of a property.
- Works to trees with a diameter of 75mm or greater, measured at 1.5m from soil level.
- Demolition of a structure or wall over 1m in height including gate piers.

#### My commercial property is in the conservation area. How will this affect me?

Commercial properties have limited permitted development rights, therefore small works to your business premises are likely to require planning permission. If your property is within a conservation

area the Council will only grant planning permission when they are satisfied that the works would preserve or enhance the special character of the area. Works that may require planning permission can include changing windows and putting up new signage.

#### What is an Article 4 Direction and am I affected?

Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (GPDO) gives local planning authorities the power to limit 'permitted development rights' to some properties; generally, these usually apply to householders of single dwellings. There are no Article 4 Directions in Bishop Auckland at present, but this does not mean to say that they will not be introduced in the future.

Article 4s, were they to be introduced can require planning permission to:

- Make changes to the front elevation including replacing windows, doors or adding porches and extensions.
- Make changes to the roof, such as the type of roof covering and the chimney.
- Make changes to the front of properties, such as adding parking, and making changes to walls, gates and fences.

In all cases it is wise to contact the Council for advice on what planning permission is required before you consider making any changes.

#### Listed Buildings

In addition to planning permission, Listed Building Consent is required for works of alteration, demolition or extension to any Listed Building internally or externally, whether in commercial use or otherwise. Contact the Council for further information on what permission is required before you consider making any changes.

For further information and advice about when planning permission is required within a Conservation Area, see the guidance on the Government's Planning Portal or contact the Council's Planning Department.

### The Bishop Auckland Conservation Area Management Plan

#### What is a Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP)?

A CAMP helps reinforce the positive character of a historic area as well as helping to avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impacts identified as affecting the area, and potential threats to its special interest and character.

A CAMP aims to provide an evidence base and to offer practical guidance to owners and developers, as well as helping to tackle specific issues within the area, whilst fitting into wider local policies

It is a priority of our partner, Historic England, to encourage urban areas to develop CAMPs and the CAMP development was a key part of the delivery of the Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone.

A CAMP supports the following:

- It brings various people and partners together to work collectively for the better in terms of conservation.
- It can provide an important evidence base for future funding bids.

A key focus of the Bishop Auckland CAMP will be to support and help facilitate positive regeneration within the town, through managing change, identifying opportunities for improvement and

regeneration, and providing clarity for future developments within the conservation area and its setting.

After the last CAMP for the area was produced, the Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone was established in 2017. It carried out a five year programme, now complete, which helped to revitalise some neglected historic buildings and bringing them back into use for the local community and visitors. You can read more on the [Historic England's website](#).

### How has the draft CAMP been prepared?

The CAMP is being produced on the Council's behalf by Purcell, who are a leading practice of conservation architects and heritage consultants. Historic England is also heavily involved in the process.

The steps taken to develop and review the conservation area are as follows:

- Site visits – to develop knowledge and understanding of the conservation area.
- Research – to understand the area's past.
- Early engagement – to understand what is valued by local stakeholders. An informal drop in session was held in March 2024 when staff from Purcell were available to explain what is being done.

We've now prepared an initial draft of the Bishop Auckland CAMP and potential boundary changes which we'd like your feedback on. The public consultation is in two phases. Following this first phase, we'll make any revisions and then put it out for comment again before a final version is produced.

The CAMP consultation process offers local people and businesses the chance to highlight issues within the conservation area and for the Council to develop positive actions and aims through the management strategy, and, along with a robust monitoring programme, help to bring about positive change within the town.

The final CAMP will be approved by the Council's Head of Planning and Housing under delegated decision powers.

### Why is Bishop Auckland special? (the character appraisal)

- The area has been settled from at least the medieval period, the town retains evidence of its medieval layout including a marketplace, tenement plots and ancient routeways like Wear Chare, Castel Chare and Durham Chare.
- Newgate Street is thought to follow the line of a Roman road, Dere Street.
- It has strong ties with the Bishops of Durham and Auckland Castle from the 12th century.
- The castle is one of the most important medieval residential complexes in England.
- Auckland Park is a valuable green space for the local community and visitors, featuring a unique Deer Shelter.
- It has dramatic topography and its location on a promontory allow for magnificent views towards open countryside.
- The quality and scale of its surviving commercial, institutional, educational and civic buildings, frequently adopting the Gothic Revival style, including the Town Hall.
- It retains a variety of residential houses, including a number of early survivals, though the majority reflect the growth in population, the variation in wealth and status and the success

of Bishop Auckland's industries in the 19th and 20th centuries, with the vestiges still found in the area around Railway Street.

- Surviving historic bridges such as the Newton Cap Bridge, the Gaunless Bridge, Jocks Bridge and the magnificent former railway viaduct now carrying the A689.

### Proposed Changes to the Conservation Area Boundary

The following changes to the conservation area boundary are proposed (see map below).

#### The addition of the Railway Street Industrial Area.

Although elements of Bishop Auckland's railway and industrial past were swept away in the twentieth century, Peel Street, Chester Street and Railway Street retain their industrial character and the area was identified by Historic England as of historical significance. The streets form a grid-pattern which has seen only minor changes to its layout in the later nineteenth century. The area remains a busy hub with many businesses still operating from historic buildings. Generally, the buildings in this area are functional in appearance, one or two storeys and constructed in brick (although many have since been rendered). Notable survivals are the units which once formed part of the former premises of Lingford Gardiner and Company between Chester and Railway Street and on the south of Railway Street and east side of Union Street.

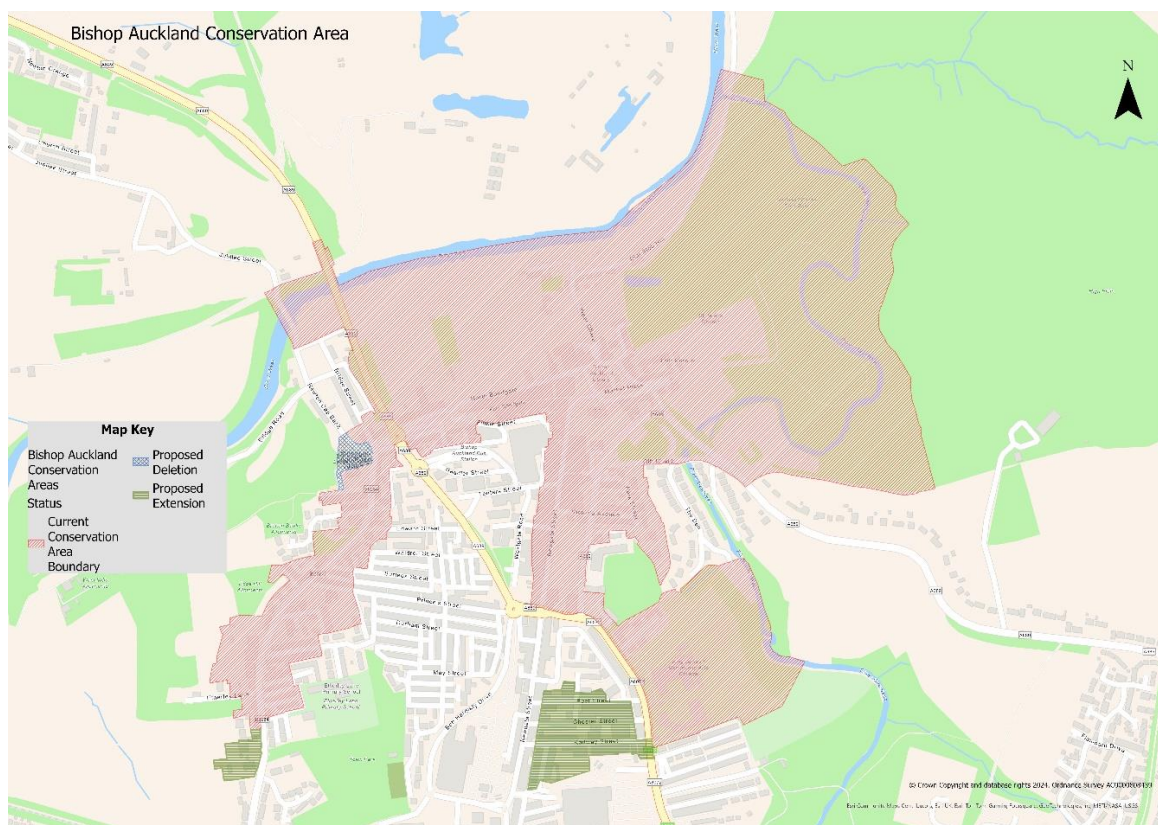
Businesses in this area may be concerned that it will result in new restrictive planning controls, however permitted development rights are already restricted for businesses so inclusion will result in little or no change for them. Instead, it is hoped that businesses will have equal access to additional grant money available to those within conservation areas. (see the guide to living and working in a conservation area section below).

#### The addition of No.s 60 and 58 Etherley Lane.

No 60 Etherley Lane was once known as Thornfield House, a stone-built house now a care home. No.58 Etherley Lane, is a late Victorian or Edwardian residence, set in private grounds with an attractive corner tower with conical roof.

#### The deletion of Bishopgate Lodge Care Home.

This is a large modern brick building which makes no contribution to the special interest and character of the conservation area.



## The Management Plan in detail

In order to prepare the draft CAMP, an assessment of the issues and opportunities in the Bishop Auckland Conservation Area was made using a SWOT analysis.

From this work and the other steps taken to develop and review the CAMP (outlined earlier), ten themes have been identified, to include in the new management plan. These themes will provide analysis and guidance to help remove the Bishop Auckland Conservation Area from the 'at risk' register and help it to thrive. The themes are as follows:

### Theme 1: Vacancies

The vacancy level within the commercial core is one of the foremost threats to the Conservation Area and the wider economic success of Bishop Auckland. Key vacant historic buildings which are significantly impacting on the appearance of the Conservation Area include:

- The Postchaise, Market Place
- Queen's Head Hotel, Market Place
- The Castle Bar, Market Place
- Masonic Hall, Victoria Avenue
- Mechanics Institute, Victoria Avenue
- Former Beales (Co-operative), Newgate Street
- Clairmont, Princes Street

The opportunities to consider include:

- Encourage window displays and exhibitions in empty shops
- Encourage temporary uses in buildings rather than them standing empty, these could be seasonal or associated with events

- Encourage letting agents to be proactive in marketing available properties
- Support new uses on upper floors which will reduce vacant space
- Encourage different uses in the town centre other than traditional retail, this could be food and drink as well as leisure uses

### Theme 2: Condition, Maintenance and Repair

Whilst many people take pride in their buildings there is evidence of localised disrepair and a lack of maintenance. There is evidence of poor repair methods which utilise inappropriate materials for historic buildings such as hard cement which is leading to stone decay.

The opportunities to consider include:

- Keeping buildings in good repair can significantly improve the appearance of the Conservation Area.
- Repairs need to be addressed immediately – doing so can massively reduce repair costs in the long term.

### Theme 3: Alteration of Historic Buildings and Loss of Traditional Features

The issues include:

- The loss of traditional windows and doors which are replaced with uPVC in inappropriate styles.
- Painting and rendering of frontages.
- Inappropriate additions to buildings.
- Loss of shop fronts.

The opportunities to consider include:

- Possible introduction of Article 4 restrictions to limit external works.
- Replace as a last resort.
- Repair existing historic windows and doors.
- Reinstate lost features with suitable alternatives.

### Theme 4: Shopfronts and Advertising

The issues include:

- The loss of traditional shopfronts.
- Proliferation of poor quality, poorly repaired modern shopfronts.
- Poorly designed and often overly large fascia signage.
- External, solid roller shutters.

The opportunities to consider include:

- Best practise guidance produced by the council for shopfronts.
- Continue the work of the Heritage Action Zone.
- Replace inappropriate shopfronts with well-designed alternatives, appropriate for the street and the building.
- Creation of a more positive shopping experience resulting in increased footfall and sales turnovers.

### Theme 5: Public Realm and Street Furniture

Public realm means outdoor areas in towns which are accessible to the public.

The key points in this theme are:

- Public realm should be of the highest quality for residents and visitors.
- Continue to plan-in green spaces and improve the number of trees where possible.
- Ensure a consistent approach in future improvements, e.g., benches, rubbish bins, lighting columns, surfacing materials

#### Theme 6: Sustainable Development and Climate Change

The key points in this theme are:

- The continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable.
- The management plan provides advice and links to best practice guidance on energy efficiency measures and retrofit for historic buildings.
- It's not just about windows - a 'whole building' approach is advocated.

#### Theme 7: Visitor Welcome and Connectivity

The key points in this theme are:

- Work on a new car park and new bus station and improved connectivity for pedestrians from North Bondgate and Kingsway is underway.
- Need to continue to improve the welcome along Newgate Street and at the rail station.
- Need for new visitor toilets, and provision of food and beverage, entertainment and accommodation outlets.

#### Theme 8: Detracting Buildings

The key points in this theme are:

- These are buildings with poor quality design, inappropriate scale and massing, limited articulation, no or low-quality detailing.
- Encourage the improvement to, or removal of, negative buildings.

#### Theme 9: New Development

The key points in this theme are:

- It is not the purpose of conservation area designation to prevent change, but to guide it so it retains or improves the Bishop Auckland conservation area.
- A high standard of new development is a core principle of Durham County Council
- New development in heritage contexts in the conservation area will be of the highest quality and be guided by:
  - Local character and distinctiveness
  - Local history
  - Geography and topography
  - Existing scale and materiality

#### 10 Opportunities and Recommendations by Area

The key points under this theme are:

- Continue to encourage more visitor services such as food, beverage, entertainment, and accommodation to increase footfall and dwell-time of visitors in key areas.
- Continue to expand on the activities in the Market Place.
- Encourage urgent works to improve the condition of St Andrew's Church.
- Improve vacancy levels of retail units on Newgate Street and Fore Bondgate.



- Work with owners to deliver new uses for Beales, Masonic Hall and Mechanics Institute.
- Improve appearance of Victoria Road carpark and Kingsway.
- Encourage repairs to improve the appearance of buildings on Newgate Street.
- Consider removal of the entrance canopy of Newgate Shopping Centre which conceals a historic building.
- Control street art in a way that does not negatively impact on the appearance of the area of Peel /Chester and Railway Street.
- Control fly tipping and repair historic surfaces in the Peel /Chester and Railway Street Area.

### How to have your say

- Fill in our online survey at [www.durham.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.durham.gov.uk/consultation)
- Email [design.conservation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:design.conservation@durham.gov.uk) with your comments
- Pick up printed information and a survey from Bishop Auckland Town Hall or one of our Customer Access Points.
- Attend an event at Bishop Auckland Town Hall on Wednesday 23 July.

The closing date for comments is 5.00pm on Monday 19 August.