



Durham City Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP)

Part I: Strategic Overview



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I. Introduction



1.1 What is a Conservation Area?

The statutory definition of a conservation area, as defined in the primary legislation, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is:

"An area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance"

In determining the above there is no specific set criteria upon which an area is designated, but there are a number of key elements that are generally considered. This includes the topography and landscape, building ages and architectural styles, the materials used and detailing, street patterns, land uses, the public realm, green spaces, boundary treatments, and views.

The extent to which buildings and structures contribute positively generally derives from their frontages onto the street that is most experienced in the public domain. But in many places the sides and rears of buildings and streets can also be viewed, particularly in Durham City where many buildings and areas can be seen three dimensionally, owing to how the buildings respond to the landform and how the city has evolved over the centuries.



Fig 1, the medieval commercial streets of Saddler Street and Old Elvet Bridge a hive of pedestrian activity and key routes to the cathedral.

Spaces can contribute very positively, connecting buildings and places, dictating movement and creating interactions. These range from key open historic civic spaces such as Durham Market Place, to the contemporary Millennium Square, intimate medieval streets, narrow historic vennels and lanes, and the riverside footpaths.

Green spaces are in abundance in Durham City, and they contribute significantly to its special character, distinctiveness, and sense of place. They vary widely in type, use and extent ranging from large areas of dense ancient woodland, local nature reserves, community allotment gardens, public parks, private front gardens in the streetscene, roadside verges, the riverbanks, and street trees. Such green infrastructure assets and the wider

surrounding landscape have high scenic and aesthetic qualities that enhance the setting of buildings, streets, spaces and the city as a whole. While all of the above, and the varying topography can provide very different visual experiences, and ambiances, with notable historic landmarks featuring in a range of different views.

The designation of a conservation area under the Town and County Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/69> gives the Local Planning Authority (LPA) certain statutory and general duties:

- **s69(1)** requires the LPA to designate from time to time any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas,
- **s69(2)** requires the LPA to review such designations from time to time.
- **s71(1)** requires the LPA to formulate, prepare and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas from time to time.
- **s72(1)** requires that when assessing applications for development in conservation areas, the LPA must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas.

1.2 The Durham City Conservation Area

Durham City Conservation Area was originally designated on 9th August 1968. This boundary focussed on the peninsula and the medieval town plan. In 1980 it was significantly enlarged to take in the wider city centre and the natural bowl which contains the built form, in succession capturing much of its later growth and setting. The conservation area was last reviewed in 2015 with the boundary amended in 2016. This included a number of minor revisions to correct anomalies, and an extension in the south taking in part of the Elvet Hall Estate along the south side of Potters Bank.

The 2016 conservation area boundary was very extensive stretching from Newcastle Road in the west as far as Young Street near the Sunderland Road and Sherburn Road junction in the east. In the north it bounded the modern residential area of North End and the A167 adjacent to Durham Johnston School. In the south it stretched as far as Great High Wood and Old Durham where it shared a boundary with Shincliffe Village Conservation Area.

The evolution of Durham City Conservation Area including the 1968, 1980 & 2016 boundary maps can be found at **Section 5.1** of this document.

Fig 2, Location map of Durham City Centre in the county context.



Durham City is centrally located within County Durham. It is a hilly city, claiming to be built upon the symbolic seven hills. Upon the most central and prominent position high above the River Wear, Durham Cathedral dominates the skyline. The steep riverbanks are densely wooded, adding to the picturesque beauty of the city.

West of the city centre, another river, the River Browney, drains south to join the River Wear to the south of the city. The city is well connected to many strategic road and rail routes, including the A1(M), and the east coast mainline, and it is the administrative centre for the county.

1.3 What is the purpose and scope of the Conservation Area Management Plan for Durham City?

It is essential to understand the special architectural and historic interest, character and significance of conservation areas in order to manage future change appropriately and sympathetically within them. Aligned with this, and as previously mentioned, the LPA has duty under the Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas and to periodically review these proposals. This can be presented in the form of a Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP), part of which is a detailed appraisal of the conservation area.



Fig 3, the view down Saddler Street looking into the Market Place, showing the fine collection of historic buildings of high architectural quality.

The CAMP process seeks to

- Establish, define and capture in time the special interest, and character of the Durham City Conservation Areas and identify the elements that contribute positively.
- Identify, assess and define, the issues, problems, and potential threats to that special interest and character.
- Provide a deliverable overarching management strategy with clear aims and actions to ensure that the special interest and character of the conservation areas is preserved.
- Identify clear potential opportunities for regeneration, improvement and enhancement within the conservation areas.

The CAMP is intended to be comprehensive focussing on the key characteristics of the place, and the key issues found within it. It is not possible to mention every historic building, view, or green asset, and omission should not be interpreted as meaning the element is not important and does not contribute positively to the conservation area.

It is a statutory requirement for the CAMP to be subject to public consultation. As a result, this strategic context document, the seven individual conservation area character appraisals and the overarching management strategy will be subject to consultation with key stakeholders, partners, interested bodies and the general public. A detailed public engagement exercise was developed in conjunction with Durham County Council’s Consultation Officer Group. The views expressed will inform the final CAMP for Durham City.



Fig 4, the Market Place, the civic and commercial heart of the medieval city hosting the Town Hall and Guildhall.

2. Executive Summary



2.1 What are the key aims, objectives and aspirations?

Introduction

Following a comprehensive review of the 2016 Durham City Conservation Area boundary, the decision was taken to sub-divide this into seven smaller designated areas. These would each be more historically, and character focussed and more manageable.

The seven individual conservation area appraisals set out what defines their special architectural and historic interest, character, and sense of place, to warrant designation. The management strategy document gives the key principles, aims and actions, that can be undertaken to preserve and where possible enhance, that special interest and character.

This strategic context document plays an important role by providing an understanding of the city as a whole, in terms of its special architectural and architectural interest, the challenges it faces and the potential opportunities for its regeneration and enhancement.

This document sets out to explain in detail the methodology behind the CAMP process and why it has been used for Durham City. The planning policy context, and a detailed summary of the reasoning behind designating seven smaller individual conservation areas for Durham City.

Finally, it identifies the key overarching themes that can be applied across the seven conservation areas, thereby the city as a whole, to inform the headlines for the management strategy.

Despite being a historic city known for its world heritage site and home of the renowned Durham University, the city has a number of challenges to address. This includes defining a clear identity, encourage investment, dilapidation and a run-down appearance, and like many other towns and cities, addressing vacancy rates on the high street. Added to this there are historic buildings that stand empty and deteriorating, and gap sites that detract from the character and appearance of the place.

The overall aim of the CAMP is ambitious, yet it can be used as an important tool to help address different issues formed within the limits of what is realistically deliverable. It is designed to help bring about tangible positive change in the city and to the lives of the people who live, work, and visit Durham.

To achieve this, six key objectives are identified as set out on the following page.



Fig 5 the long term disused and deteriorating early 20th century former City of Durham Public Swimming Baths, the empty boarded over former Marks & Spencer's store on Silver Street, and the heavily vandalised grade II listed St Cuthberts Well.

The six key objectives of the CAMP

1

To review, establish and define the special interest of the seven individual Durham City Conservation Areas and the collective whole.

3

To ensure that the city's cultural heritage is the key mechanism for positive change across social, cultural, economic and environmental themes.

5

To provide a robust evidence base to guide positive change while preserving special interest and maximising opportunities for regeneration and enhancement.

2

To identify the issues, threats and problems, define how they impact on the special interest of the place and to offer potential solutions.

4

To draw from the key challenges and opportunities identified within the city and to seek to establish its profile and identity going forwards.

6

To build upon, and work alongside, work that has already been completed, and to align with existing strategies, and plans and those emerging.

What are the key regeneration aims of the CAMP?

The CAMP supports wider strategic plans, policies and strategies and wider regeneration aims with the following key aspirations identified to help deliver positive change within the city.

Fig 6 an example of an empty retail unit in Silver Street undergoing refurbishment prior to reuse.



1
Tackle the economic challenges.

2
Attract inwards investment.

3
Focus and co-ordinate positive regeneration activity.

4
Unlock the city's cultural, economic and community potential.

5
Create a better place to live, work, study and visit for all.

6
Improve health and wellbeing.

Fig 7 people enjoying the weekly 5k park run community event.



Understanding Durham City as a whole

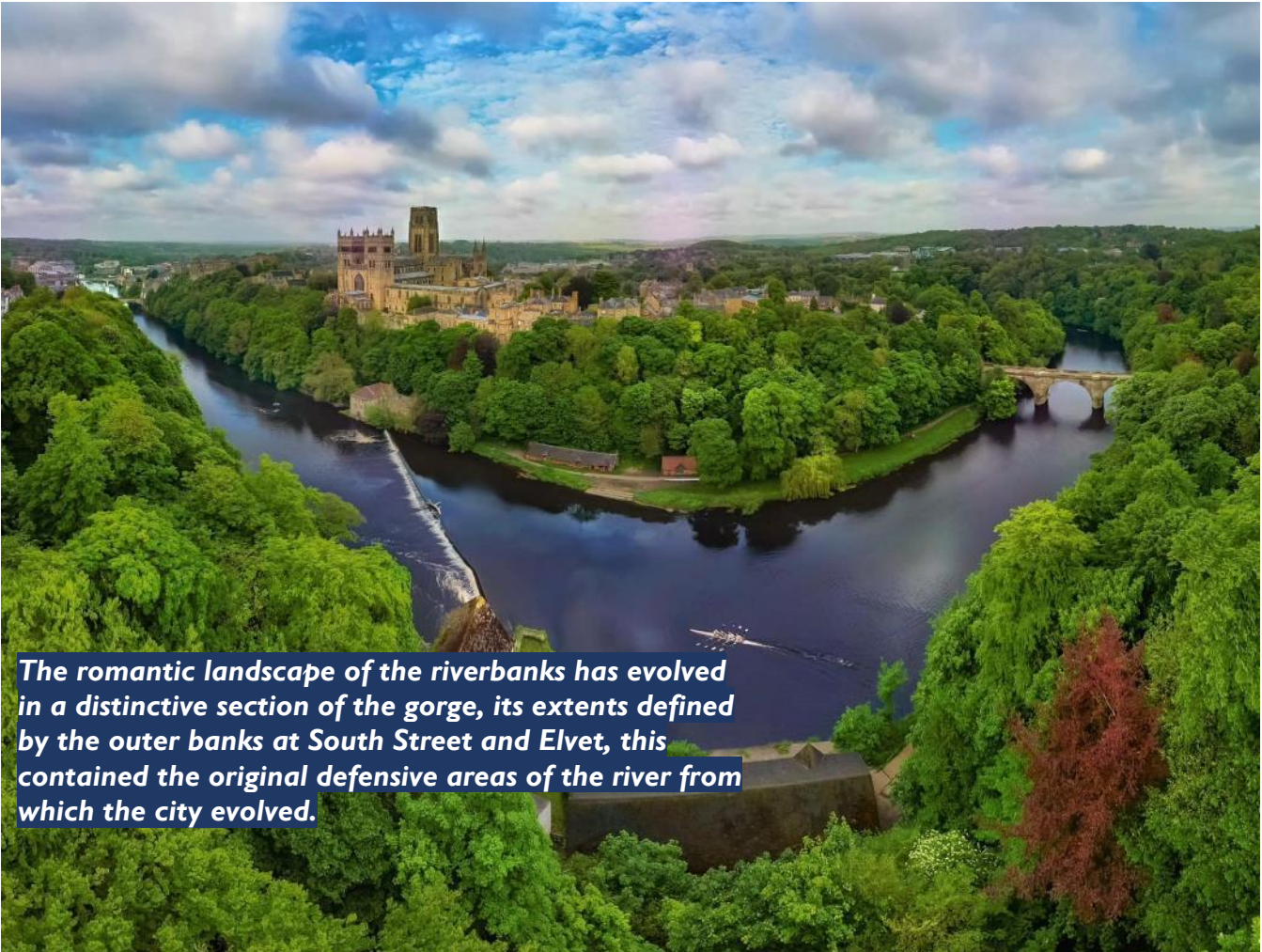
The conservation area, designated in 1980 and its subsequent revision in 2016, was extensive, taking in the medieval town plan and the 19th and 20th century areas of development as the city expanded. In addition, it encompasses areas of more modern residential development within the historic streets, spaces, and routes. Dense areas of woodland, countryside and open spaces are included which contribute to the setting of the buildings and the character of the wider city. All this is dictated by different land uses and laid out across the unique and highly varied topography.

Of the utmost importance is the recognition that fragmenting the conservation area into several smaller designated conservation areas may raise concerns. This is in terms of blurring the origins of Durham as a city and the way in which it has evolved over the centuries and losing sight of this. Sub-division potentially implying that there is no interrelationship between the separate conservation areas. When in fact the relationships are fundamental with indivisible links between all of the areas and the central core of the peninsula from which they spread out. While the character and visual appearance changes from place to place, it is experienced as a single evolving living river city.

In response, the CAMP has been structured to convey the message that it is the collective special interest of the seven individual conservation areas that combines to form the special architectural and historic interest and heritage significance of

Durham City as a whole. This relates to the intrinsic historic, intangible, physical, spatial, and visual interrelationships between the individual conservation areas, including townscape, river corridor, and landscape contexts and how they are experienced, understood and appreciated.

Fig 8 a drone view of the glorious Durham Peninsula in the Summer.



The romantic landscape of the riverbanks has evolved in a distinctive section of the gorge, its extents defined by the outer banks at South Street and Elvet, this contained the original defensive areas of the river from which the city evolved.

Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

Key opportunities

Durham City is a unique place that offers a number of key opportunities and advantages to help deliver the aspirations of the CAMP and other wider strategic aims, policies, and plans.

Durham City is a key settlement in County Durham, economically, socially and culturally. It is the main employment centre for the county, accounting for around a quarter of the county’s employment and provides access to education, health and retail services for communities across the County.

Durham City is the county’s main office location. The city centre and business parks represent a distinct offer within the county.

The city offers excellent public transport links. Durham railway station on the east coast mainline offers direct links to London, Edinburgh, and other cities across the UK. The new bus station provides connections across the region. These together increase footfall in the city.

Durham City is a key draw for visitors with its cultural, leisure and tourism offer, day and night. This includes Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site, other cultural attractions, and many popular annual events.



Fig 9, above left drone view of Durham Cathedral, above right, the Gala Theatre, middle, Durham Train Stations, bottom, the public art piece “Reflect” from the Lumiere event in 2023. Cathedral image © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

What are the aspirations and potential outcomes of the CAMP?

- Joined up DCC working and intelligent spending of diminishing resources where they will have the most benefit.
- Stronger links and co-operation with key stakeholders and partners and developing new ones to positively share the city’s management with a collaborative approach.
- Inspiring the public who have a vested interest in the city so that they have a sense of ownership and participation in the city’s active management.
- Opportunities to seek high quality replacement development, or aesthetic improvements, appropriate to context, of buildings identified as detracting or neutral in contribution.
- Opportunities for appropriate and sympathetic new development of detracting or neutral gap sites providing enhancement.

- Opportunity to bring attention to, and repurpose, vacant historic buildings, sites, and buildings in a deteriorated or declining condition.
- Opportunity to give better protection to the preservation of unlisted historic buildings and potentially reverse previous unsympathetic alterations.
- Opportunity to improve architectural design standards within the city drawing from the local distinctiveness, character, and wider townscape context.
- Opportunity for conservation to contribute to climate change targets for example by guidance to help owners adapt buildings without harming the special interest of the area.
- Opportunities to protect and improve important views and vistas, and create new, to better reveal significance and enhance the experience of the city.

- Opportunities for public realm improvements and in succession townscape enhancement, potentially with green infrastructure, air quality and biodiversity net gains.
- Opportunities to improve interpretation, wayfinding, and accessibility, and making a safer environment.
- Opportunities to protect, potentially enhance and create new green infrastructure assets within the city adding positively to the existing assets.
- Opportunities to improve the design standards for new shop fronts and signage, and to improve existing detractors or those which are neutral.

A series of sites, spaces, and places have been identified for potential opportunity, regeneration and improvement as part of the review of the conservation area. Some of these are already earmarked for potential redevelopment and/or have extant planning permission. Some sites are considered in more detail in the management strategy to bring about a proactive approach to change management.

What are the specific potential opportunities, improvement, and redevelopment sites?

**Green Infrastructure
(air quality & biodiversity net gain)**

- **Upper part of Crossgate Peth to entrance of St Johns Road** (north side) – supplementary street trees and hedging dependent on location.
- **Alexandria Crescent** – potential reinstatement of private street frontage gardens.
- **Sutton Street to North Road roundabout** – well considered and designed townscape improvement scheme, street trees, low level planting, improvement to existing green spaces.
- **Framwellgate Peth / Milburngate development** – free standing street trees and vegetated screen but needs to be considered as part of Milburngate redevelopment.
- **New Elvet/Dunelm House (west side of street)** – free standing street trees, possible enhancement subject to detailed design, needs to form part of Elvet Riverside

- redevelopment, possible improvement to existing green spaces near Dunelm House.
- **Leazes Road** – free standing trees, hedges, shrub etc, supplementing existing greenery, potential for enhancement as part of wider scheme, needs to consider redevelopment of Hilde and Bede frontage.
- **Gilesgate Bank** – potential low level planting on carriageway bank.
- **Elvet Park, Elvet Riverside** (bowling green and toilet block site).
- **Riverbanks** (general environmental improvements identified in riverbanks management plan).
- **Gilesgate Village Green** – general environment improvements to public realm green spaces badly impacted by vehicles, with areas historically lost to hardscape.

Spaces, Streets & Routes

- **Market Place** – general de-clutter, co-ordinated approach to street furniture and signage, surfacing improvements perhaps.
- **Millennium Place** – general improvements to public realm “cultural hub”.

- **North Road** - general improvements to public realm.
- **Riverbanks** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Saddler Street** – general improvements to public realm.
- **North and South Bailey** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Church Street** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Hallgarth Street** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Moatside Lane** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Drury Lane** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Jailers Yard** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Fowlers Yard** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Area around Boathouse PH, riverbanks** – general improvements to public realm.
- **Maynard’s Row, Gilesgate** – general improvements to public realm entrance to Vane Tempest Hall.

- **Flass Lane** – general improvement to surfacing, cutting back vegetation, revealing Flass Well.
- **Framwellgate Waterside** – general improvements to car parking areas and service yard entrances.
- **Elvet Waterside** – general improvement of redevelopment of car park site to side of baths building.

Development & redevelopment

- College of St Hild and Bede/Leazes Road (PBSA₁).
- James Barbour House (PBSA₃).
- Elvet Hill Car Park (PBSA₄).
- St Marys College (PBSA₅).
- Elvet Riverside, Former Swimming Baths Sites.
- Next phase of Millburngate House redevelopment.
- Hanover Court Crossgate (detracting buildings).
- Elvet House, Hallgarth Street (detracting building).

- Palmers Garth, Hallgarth Street (detracting building).
- Nos 55-56 & 58-62 North Road (detracting buildings).
- No 20 North Road (detracting building).
- Nos 33 & 36 Neville Street (detracting buildings).
- Building on north boundary at Durham School (detracting building).
- Elvet Riverside 1 & 2 (detracting buildings).
- Durham School (development opportunities).
- Prince Bishops Shopping Centre (development opportunity).
- St Leonards School (development opportunity).
- Nos 13-17 Claypath (development opportunity).
- North Road toilets (repurpose opportunity).
- St Cuthberts House (adjacent Sidegate/Diamond Terrace).

- Gap sites at Back Silver Street, The Avenue, John Street, St Johns Road, Claypath (development opportunities).

Key historic buildings (vacant)

- South Street Mill (repurpose).
- Fulling Mill / Archaeology Museum (repurpose).
- Counts House (repurpose).
- Boathouses (reuse).
- North Road Miners Hall (repurpose).
- Industrial buildings Back Western Hill (repurpose/redevelop).
- Former Swimming Baths (repurpose/redevelop).
- Mount Joy Farm buildings (repurpose/redevelop).

Additional sites identified in Durham University Master plan (Strategic Development Sites)

- Green Lane & Hollow Drift.
- Lower Mount Joy and St Marys Field (outside the conservation areas but potential setting impacts).
- Elvet Riverside 1 & 2.
- Mount Oswald (outside the conservation areas but close to Hill Colleges boundary, potentially setting impacts)

Additional Peripheral (potential conservation area setting impacts)

- Aykley heads.
- Houghall College

Fig 10 below Elvet Hill Carpark, industrial buildings Back Western Hill, below Back Silver Street, riverside, and Flass Lane.

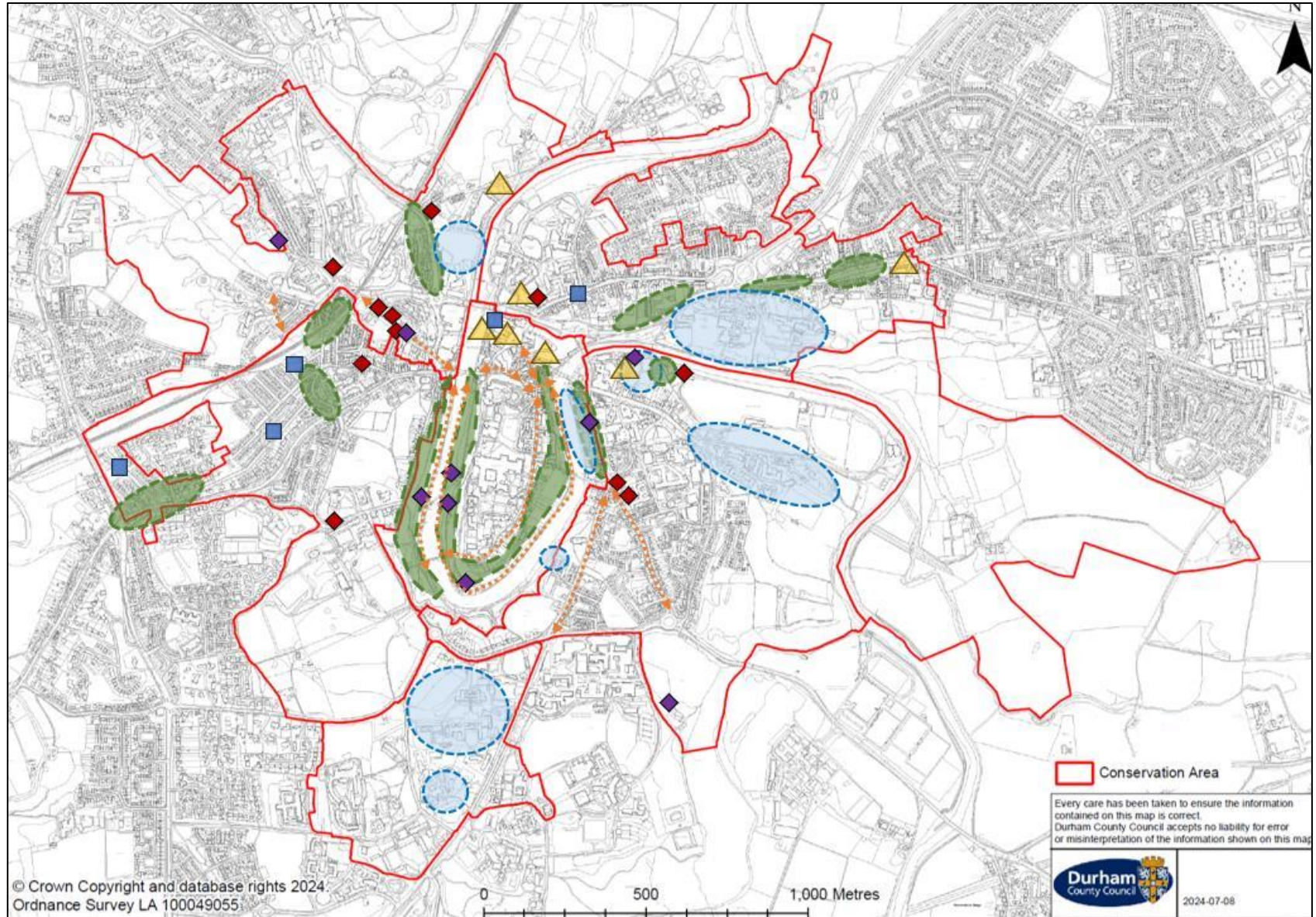


Fig 11 Opportunities and improvements map.

Key to map

-  Green infrastructure
-  Major development site
-  Gap site
-  Detracting building
-  Vacant/derelict historic building
-  Space
-  Street / Lane / Vennel / Route

***Note map is a work in progress and subject to change.**



2.2 What are the key challenges & vision for Durham City?

Durham City means different things to different people, residents, businesses, students, workers and visitors, and there are a number of competing challenges within the city that impact upon its special interests and how it is experienced.

Economic

The economic viability of city centres and high streets across the county have suffered over recent years due to many different factors including the rise of online shopping, strong competition from out of centre retail parks offering free car parking, the continued challenges post-COVID-19 and from the rising cost of living. This is evident in Durham City where there has been a noticeable shift from primarily shopping to one more of an eating drinking and leisure culture alongside limited niche retail.

During the Summer months there is a strong 'café culture' when the city streets are busy with outside eaters and drinkers. This not only contributes to its economic viability but adds vibrancy. Added to this is the vibrant night life with a diverse offer ranging from traditional public houses, modern bars, Michelin starred restaurants, to traditional fish and chips, cinema, and theatre.

There is a need for balance to support the different audiences and create a sustainable and vibrant local economy that supports business and enhances peoples experience and enjoyment of the city centre.

The County Durham Town Centre Surveys are conducted annually, covering 3000 units of different retail uses (shops, financial and professional services, restaurants & cafes, drinking establishments and hot food takeaways) across thirteen of the largest town centres, two district centres and three retail parks in the County.

The 2023 survey showed that Durham City continues to evolve as a popular destination and while the number of retail units has fallen in recent years, the number of vacant units has decreased significantly. Durham City has the highest percentage of restaurants and cafes, with the second highest percentage of drinking establishments.

The level of vacancy rates in the city has improved during the ongoing post-COVID-19 recovery, but within certain commercial streets empty ground floor retail units and vacant upper floors are still a noticeable problem. The city's economy is also significantly influenced by the large student population and their part-time presence.

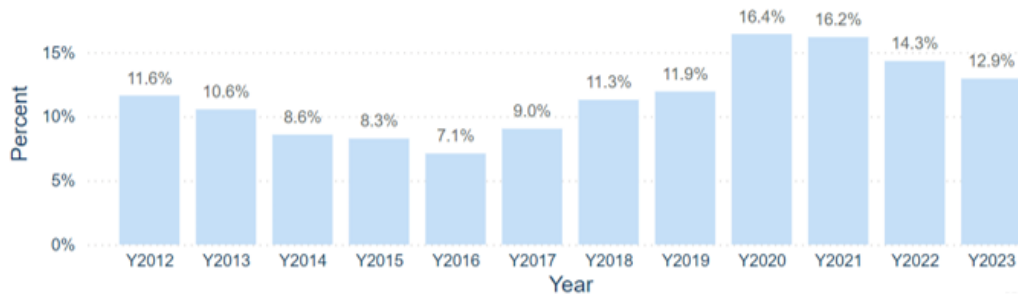
Town Centre Summary Durham City (*data is correct as of June/July 2023*)

- There has been no change in the number of financial and professional service units which still remains the highest in the county at 11.8% or 49 units.
- The number of retail units has fallen by 2 to 140 accounting for 33.6% of all the units in the city, the lowest proportion of retail units in the county.
- Restaurants and cafes have increased by 4 units to 71, 17% of all units, the highest in the county.
- The number of drinking establishments has remained the same with 29 units equating to 7%, the second highest in the county.
- Durham City has seen the highest reduction in the number of vacant units since 2022, the vacancy rate is 12.9% (54 units) a decrease of 6 units that is lower than the national average for high streets of 13.9%.
- The number of hot food take-away units has remained the same since 2012 at 2.9% or 12 units.

Fig 12, sequence of graphs demonstrating the decrease in retail use types, increase in restaurant, café and drinking establishment use, and change in vacancy rates in the city centre between 2012 and 2023.

Retail Use Type Percentage - Timeseries

Retail use ● Vacant Units



Retail Use Type Percentage - Timeseries

Retail use ● Drinking Establishments



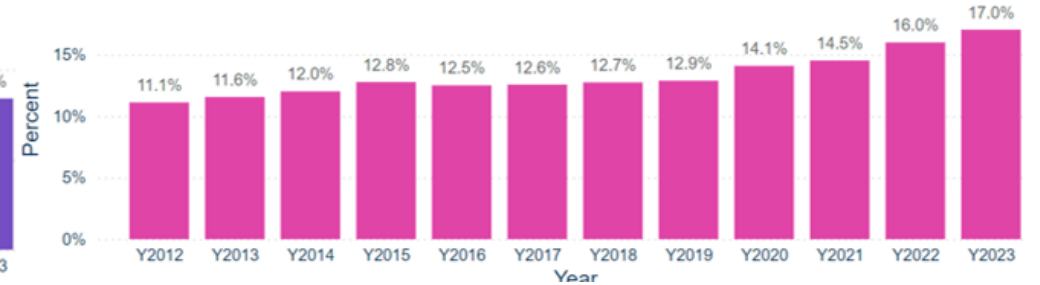
Retail Use Type Percentage - Timeseries

Retail use ● Shops



Retail Use Type Percentage - Timeseries

Retail use ● Restaurants and Cafes



Tourism

County Durham is a developing tourism destination with more than £1 billion annually flowing into the county from its visitor economy, employing over 13,000 people. The 2024 Durham Tourism Management Plan identifies the visitor economy performance, with the value of tourism, and the contribution made by Durham City (this is set out in the info graphics to the following page). The visitor economy continues to be an important sector for growth that is recognised by DCC in its regeneration statement and in a range of frameworks and strategies concerned with the county and the region’s economic development and growth.

The strategic vision is to create the conditions for residents, businesses, and the environment to benefit from sustainable growth in Durhams visitor economy. By supporting and marketing the county’s distinctive heritage, landscapes, and a warm welcome to grow both day and overnight visits and make County Durham a compelling visitor destination.

A priority for Durham as a visitor destination is to offer a visitor experience that matches its outstanding natural landscape and internationally famous built heritage. With the visitor economy supporting long term social, economic and environmental sustainability across the county and to be recognised by the county’s residents as important to the quality of their lives.

This must draw from the fact that Durham is fundamentally a heritage and countryside destination with an emerging arts and cultural offer to attract new and repeat visits, with heritage the product that visitors most closely associate with it. But there are a number of challenges including driving overnight stay numbers and expenditure, the great fluctuation in visitors according to calendar month, that lack of variety in accommodation type, quality and range, and the number of city centre visitor attractions compared to other cities that have a cluster of higher profile attractions. As such the following targeted outcomes are identified as relevant to Durham’s future success.

- Lengthen the amount of time visitors stay (dwell time/spend)
- Improve the quality of the experience post-arrival (experience)
- Differentiate the county for external audiences (positioning)
- Attract new staying visitors (visitor attraction)
- Retain existing day visitors (visitor retention)
- Address seasonality.
- Develop new product/support existing product (product)
- Improve business performance.

It is recognised that a visitor may be a local or reginal resident, travelling from another part of the UK or an international traveller and the immediate outcomes must focus on.

- Visitor retention
- Visitor attraction
- Visitor acquisition

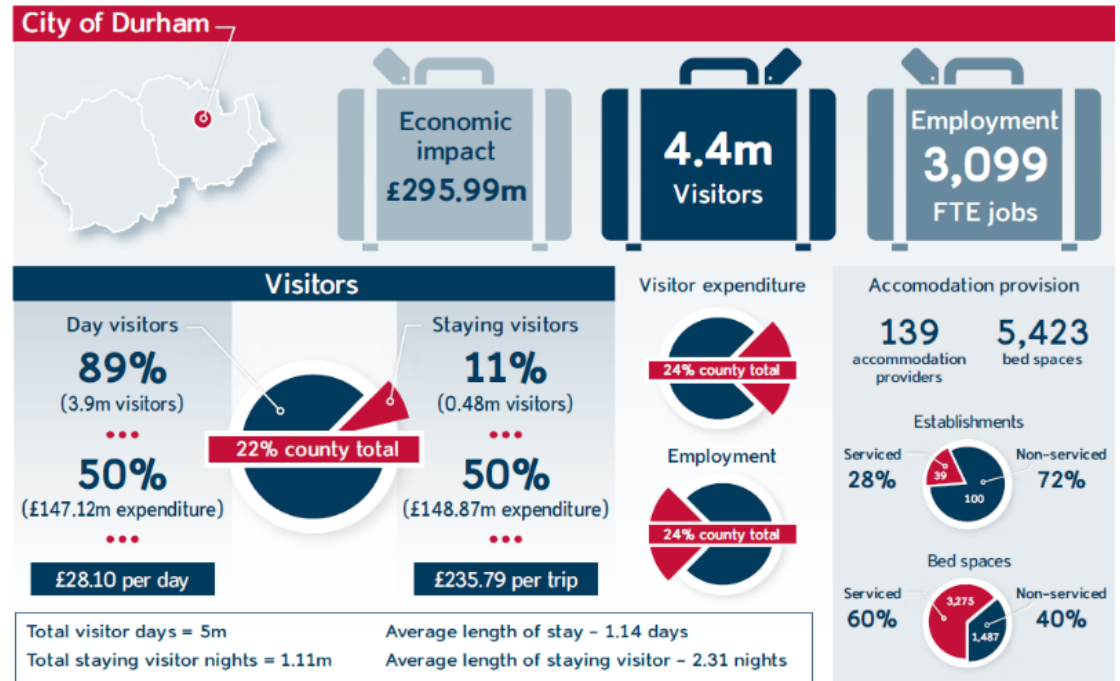
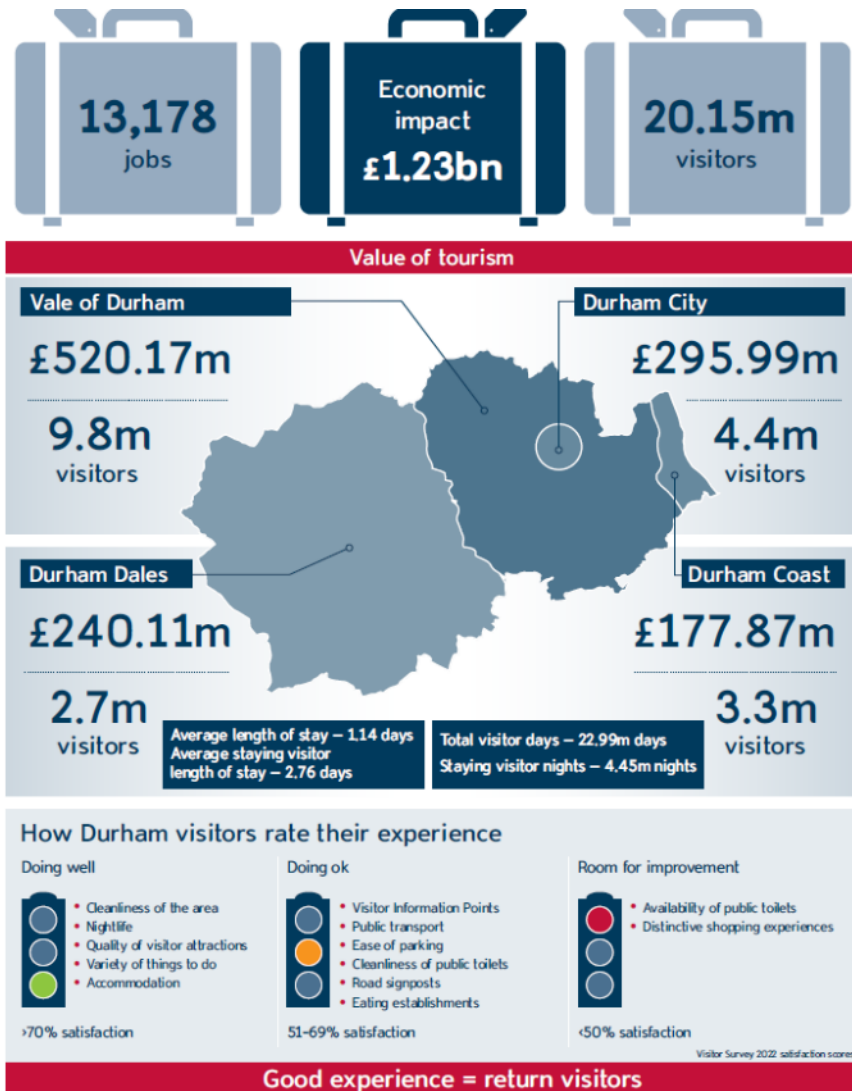
These will support the achievement of the overall vision leading to sustainable growth that balances the needs of visitors, businesses, communities, and the environment

Events

The city has a series of annual events that are very positive in terms of economic, community and social impacts. These include Lumiere, Durham Fringe, Durham Regatta, Durham Pride, Brass Festival, and the Miners Gala. They attract a large number of visitors to the city that are very important economically to local businesses while appealing across ages, genders and social profiles. These events have strong cultural heritage links with the challenge being to sustain the strong branding and to build upon them in the future.

Added to the above, the University and Cathedral are catalysts for inbound tourism from open days, congregations, conferences, concerts and performances, tours, and museums.

Fig 13, statistic from the 2024 Durham Tourism Management Plan, May 2024.



Durham University

The city is the home of the world renowned Durham University. It was founded in 1832 and has a claim to be the third-oldest university in England. The university makes a major positive contribution to the city and the local, regional and UK economy, for example through direct investment, as a large employer, an extensive supply chain and staff and student spending. The university attracts students from all over the world with 22,130 students in the city in 2022/23 (National HESA statistics), and the university is committed to increasing this number, and they employ 4,300 staff.

This presents challenges to the compact historic core of the city and its setting in terms of the amount of new development required to accommodate the university’s predicted academic and residential growth. In addition, the university facilities are unevenly spread out across the city and the intention is to better consolidate academic disciplines in distinct geographical zones, while at the same time easing pedestrian congestion and reducing travel distances.

The University Masterplan identifies a number of major strategic investment sites that present a number of challenges in terms of meeting the universities requirements and protection of the city’s distinctive historic environment.

The estate also comprises of 383 buildings many of which are historic and there is need to continue a proactive maintenance regime, and to refurbish student accommodation that must be aligned with preserving heritage.

** Information from Durham University Strategy and Masterplan 2017-2027.*



Fig 14, graduation day on Palace Green.

There is the ongoing debate over the “studentification” of the city, continually increasing with ongoing expansion of student housing affecting the community balance.

This varies from place to place but impacts on the character and ambiance of the city creating “ghost streets” outside of term-time, and in some places, there is the perception of a lack of annual general maintenance and upkeep to some properties by absent landlords.

Sustainability

Tackling climate change and ensuring sustainability is a corporate aim for DCC. Added to this is the university’s vision and commitment to reducing emissions to net zero by 2035. A key part of this is to encourage the prudent use of non-renewable resources, contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change (mitigation) and consider the unavoidable consequences (adaptation).

It is recognised that there are opportunities for accessing renewable energy that exist across the city centre and wider county. However, their exploitation must be carefully balanced against the need to protect and conserve the unique built, historic, and natural environments of the city.

Added to this is the water environment that is vital for its contribution to the county’s biodiversity and is important to the quality of life of people both within and outside the county. The key challenge is how to manage, including reducing pollutants, this reducing the risks of flooding effectively, improving accessibility and encouraging greater usage, without harm to the historic environment.

Built Environment

Many elements contribute to Durham’s unique character including the castle and cathedral which are arrestingly positioned on a wooded peninsula and the city’s historic centrepiece; its historic medieval core incorporating many listed buildings and much of the original medieval street pattern; its location in a shallow bowl of hills which form a magnificent backdrop to the historic core; and the close proximity of the surrounding countryside to the very centre of the city. The interplay of the natural and built environments, with the varied surroundings that this creates is also a significant attribute to the character of Durham City.

The main factors influencing new development within the city are the varied topography, Durham WHS and its setting, the river, flood plain and surrounding landscape, and the general historic built environment predominantly constrained within the confines of the medieval town plan and later c.1900 expansion.

It is vital that the city’s special architectural and historic interest and character is conserved and where possible enhanced. This is to ensure that the remarkable heritage values of Durham City that belong to everyone are safeguarded for this and the future generations.

This can present serious design challenges for new development proposals that must be high quality, sustainable, relate well to, and be inspired by, the site’s specific local and wider contexts, and maximise opportunities for enhancement.



Fig 15, view of the contemporary mixed use riverside development at Milburngate taken from Milburngate Road Bridge.

Landscape

The wider setting of the city is formed by the topographical features known locally as the “Durham Bowl” comprising of the surrounding hills and ridgelines which provide containment and important visual context to the historic city core. To the north and east the character is notably more rural, while in the south it is historic leafy parkland, giving a different feel and dimension to the city. At a local level the moderately steep slopes, surrounding hilltops, and green wedges penetrate into the urban form, and the varying landform creates a range of views and vistas.

Future proposals for new development and redevelopment of existing sites within in the city must respect and respond positively to the character, quality, and distinctiveness of the unique Durham City landscape in both the local and wider contexts and the wealth of green infrastructure assets the city boasts.



Fig 16 view of the cathedral in its setting taken from the upper ridge within Pelaw Woods, and the view down Gilesgate Bank with the encircling city woodland “wall”.

Drawing from the challenges, opportunities, and the character appraisals, across the seven conservation areas 10 key overarching themes have been identified around which the management strategy can be developed.



3 Key questions...

Question 1

What is the city today?

Question 2

What does it want to be?

Question 3

What needs to change?

So, the vision for
Durham City is....

2.3 What is special about Durham City?

The City of Durham is regarded as one of the most important historic cities in Britain. It is a complex place where the special interest, character and appearance, and how this is experienced, is the result of a unique combination of many different factors. In assessing the city’s significance, the key values have been used from Historic England’s *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008). The aim is that by understanding the heritage significance of the city, this supports the quality of decision-making, with the ultimate objective of creating a positive management regime for all aspects of the historic environment. This significance is explained in much greater depth in the individual conservation area character appraisals.

1. Historic & Evidential Value.

Historically the establishment of the city is linked to the arrival of the small community of monks from Lindisfarne seeking a safe haven for the body of their saint St. Cuthbert, following Viking raids. At Durham they found a natural defensibly advantageous location. However, there is evidence of earlier human settlement on the peninsula and in the vicinity, possibly from 2000BC onwards.

The present city can essentially be traced back to AD95. the medieval town consisted of a number of separate boroughs largely established by around 1250. Significantly, this medieval plan form remains highly intact and legible to this day.

As a result, the city has a strong urban form with a rich townscape of intimate narrow medieval streets, later wider historic streets and vennels, laid out over the hilly topography that creates ever-changing street scenes, views and vistas.

The high historic value of the city is embedded in the surviving historic buildings, structures and features, its archaeological significance, as well as its layout and plan form, and how it has evolved, providing physical evidence and illustrating both the ancient and more recent past.



Fig 17, the splendid view of the castle, cathedral and Framwellgate Bridge in its river corridor and part townscape setting taken from Milburngate Road Bridge

2. Architectural & Aesthetic Value.

Durham Castle and Cathedral crown the peninsula dominating the skyline over the fragmented historic townscape. In 1986 these monuments, along with The College and Prebends Bridge, were designated as a World Heritage Site.

The justification in brief lies in the cathedral being the finest example of early Norman architecture in Europe. Although the cathedral is Romanesque in style, the use of architectural mechanisms such as rib vaults, structural pointed arches and lateral abutments were pioneering constructional techniques of their day.

The castle visually illustrates the concept of the motte and bailey castle prevalent in the Norman period. It includes features of notable architectural interest such as the Norman Chapel (the oldest building in the city), the Norman Gallery and the richly decorated Great Hall. The building is also significant in demonstrating the change in function from castle and protector to Bishops Palace, to University.



The built environment comprises of a wide variety of buildings and structures of high historic and

architectural value. They are from different periods displaying architectural trends and technologies of the time, ranging from medieval houses to grand Georgian townhouses and cottages, Victorian and Edwardian terraced streets, detached villas, and historic landmarks such as the many churches, the ancient bridges, Crook Hall, the Viaduct, civic buildings such as the Town Hall and Guildhall, and many others such as Kepier Hospital, Old Shire Hall, Vane Tempest Hall, and Old Durham Gardens.

The architectural diversity, quality and coherence of the buildings, combining such medieval elements with Georgian and Victorian later interventions, contributes significantly to the special interest of the city.



Fig 19, view of the historic streetscape along Allergate



Fig 20, view of the different architectural styles to the historic buildings along Sadler Street.



Fig 21, view of a typical example of a Victorian terraced street at Flass Street

Added to the above is the fact that these buildings are laid out across a conserved and legible medieval framework radiating out over the dramatic topography, that is one of the most striking attributes of the city.

Durham exists because of the river, beginning life as a defended fortress with the river providing a natural defensive function, its fortification enhanced by the castle walls and gates. The Durham riverbanks are a richly wooded landscape that cloaks the river gorge around the peninsula. It contributes to the landscape setting of Durham WHS and is an important natural resource within the heart of the historic city. It is a complex historic landscape shaped by people from the 17th century onwards creating engineered paths connecting separate places, and terraced walks, with designed views.

Typically, Durham’s topography has been described as bowl like surrounding the historic city core with an inner and outer bowl providing a dramatic and unique wooded backdrop to the city’s townscape. In reality it is more fragmented with valley intrusions and ridgeline. For this reason, the setting of Durham WHS is described as the inner and outer setting.

The topography also creates sequential visual experience that are fundamental to the areas distinctiveness and sense of place. The openness of the river corridor and bridges provide some of the finest views within the city centre, whereas narrower enclosed approaches give teasing views of the castle and cathedral that disappear and

reappear with movement before opening up in dramatic surprise. In the wider landscape the cathedral is a designed eyecatcher reflecting its high status and helping pilgrims to find their way.

In places the combination of woodland and open countryside gives the city a semi-rural character enhancing the setting of the historic buildings and being of high visual amenity value.

The abundance and diversity of green infrastructure assets are a fundamental part of the city’s special character and visual amenity value that include, the riverbanks, green corridor approaches, intimate green lanes, larger areas of historic green open space such as the racecourse and the sands, densely wooded areas such as Flass Vale and Pelaw Woods, leafy parkland, the encircling hills and ridges, and other green spaces such as the churchyards and allotment gardens.

These form a green network providing valuable recreational and community space, that significantly enhance the character and appearance of the townscape.

There are important historic vennels, paths and lanes, which are part of the early layout of city and have a formative impact on access and movement and are characterful distinctive routes contributing positively. The historic routes are still legible and navigable, with obvious routes to the cathedral. Some of these are potentially part of the network of pilgrim routes, although this is conjectural, adding to the better known linkages to paces such as Finchale, Beaurepaire, and Kepier.

Throughout the centuries, pilgrimage has been an important social and economic stimulus and was the historic origin of tourism and this remains significant today. Durham Cathedral remains a place of pilgrimage and pilgrims from around the world continue to be welcomed there. This gives significant intangible interest to the city.



Fig 22, view overlooking the river and racecourse area taken from Pelaw Woods, showing open playing fields, the ancient woodland at Maiden Castle Woods, local trees and hedgerows and wider woodland backdrop.

In contrast to the densely developed urban environment and continuing the landscape theme Old Durham is a very distinctive and idyllic rural area, of high historic interest, which forms an important continuation of the river corridor landscape up to Shincliffe. The manor house and gardens having a fundamental visual and axial relationship with the cathedral.

South of the city centre the purpose-built ‘Hill Colleges’ (St Marys College, Trevelyan College, Grey College, Van Mildert, Collingwood College and Grey College) located on Elvet Hill, important to the evolution of the city’s built development and the University’s post-war expansion programme. They comprise individually designed buildings of high architectural quality embracing the unique landscape setting. Their architectural styles vary widely creating very distinctive sites each with their own identity and sense of place many being innovative for Durham City during the period.



Fig 23, Van Mildert college, the buildings set around a water feature that gives the building a floating appearance from certain vantage points.

4. Communal Value

The city's communal value draws from the war memorials, art pieces, places of worship, and buildings such as public houses. There are the experiences drawn from the public streets and shared spaces where interactions occur, and through popular events such as the Miners Gala that have meaning for the people who relate to them and evoke individual experiences. These play a significant role in the community and aspects of people's collective memory and how they identify with the city.

5. Summary

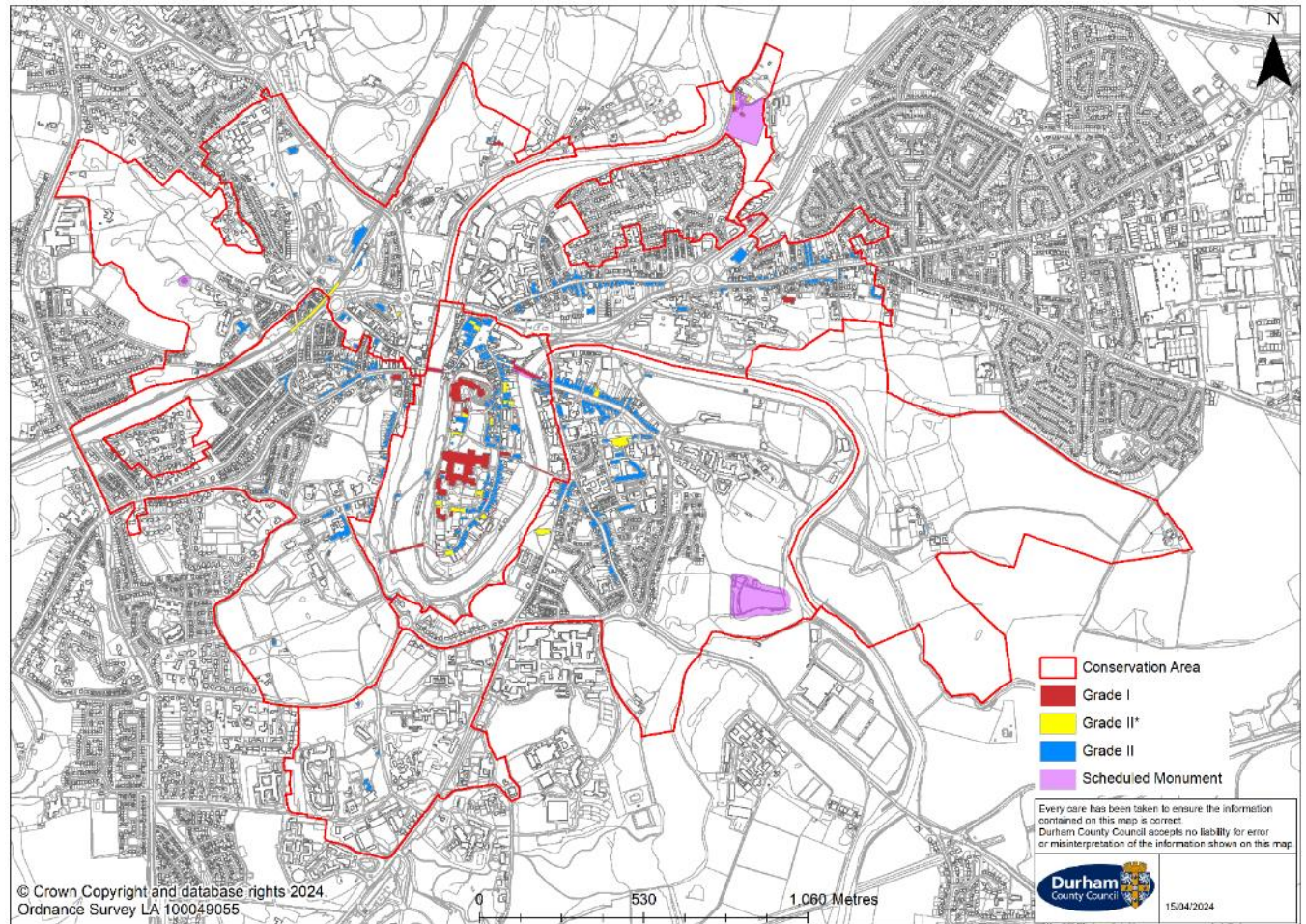
The cultural heritage of the city is of high historic, evidential, architectural, archaeological, social, communal, and aesthetic value with Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site of international significance at its heart. It has remained in constant use for 1000 years as a centre for religion, education and pilgrimage. This is what makes the city so unique and special. This is not limited to just the built form; it is inextricably linked to the diversity of use – residential communities, businesses, educational, ecclesiastical and cultural life – the unique natural topography and landscape, and the intangible qualities which are equally as fundamental to its special interest and character. This special interest is forged from the collective of, and interrelationships between, the seven individual conservation areas that make up the physical fabric of the city as a whole.

Fig 24, The racecourse, and public art piece framing the view of Durham WHS.



Fig 25, Map of the listed buildings within the conservation areas.

The special architectural and historic interest of the townscape is recognised by the high number of designated heritage assets in the form of listed buildings (grade I 43, grade II* 24, grade II 371) and scheduled monuments (43). These are identified on the map along with the seven new Durham City Conservation Area boundaries. Images below of the listed No 20 Church Steet, Kepier Gatehouse, Dunelm House, the Pemberton Building on Palace Green, No 36 Saddler Street, and Durham Viaduct.



2.4 Durham City Historic Timeline

Early History AD 80

The beginning

Roman artefacts found on the peninsula together with evidence from recent excavations at St John's College indicative pre-Norman occupation meaning it is no longer believed that the peninsula was densely wooded and uninhabited, with new historical research beginning to question the previously accepted chronology and theories. Further information can be found in a full excavation report [Project title \(archaeologydataservice.ac.uk\)](#)

The Romans occupied Durham in about AD 80, building several forts and a road through the county from York to Scotland. The first possible documented date for a settlement at Durham is found in the The Anglo Saxon Chronicle AD 762 referencing a place called "Aelfet or Aelfet Island" with claims made that this refers to Elvet.

There was further Roman occupation at Old Durham where the remains of a civilian type of Roman Villa were uncovered in the 1940s and 50s, dating back to the 2nd century AD with further archaeological work recording two circular buildings. It is said to be the most northerly villa in the Roman Empire, while a Roman road existed in the area near Old Durham Gardens that travelled north to Kepier and Chester-le-Street beyond.

St Cuthbert

Durham City grew up from the peninsula after the arrival of the Community of St Cuthbert in 995. The increasing wealth of the Lindisfarne monastery brought in by pilgrims and travellers also attracted the Vikings, who attacked Britain's holy places.

The Vikings reached Lindisfarne in 793 and again in 875, and the monks fled with the coffin containing the body of their saint and treasured possessions. The community wandered for several years settling down on an old Roman site in Chester-le-Street, then they proceeded west to "Dun Holm". They initially settled across the river from the peninsula near to the site of St Oswald's Church, in Church Street.

It is said they found the peninsula covered with dense woodland with the sole exception of a cultivated plain, again indicating earlier occupation. The peninsula formed a naturally and easily defensible site as a resting place for their saint, and it was likely fortified prior to the Norman conquest

The White Church

Once on the peninsula they cleared an area of thick woodland and erected a temporary shelter, said to have occupied the site of St Mary Le Bow Church, North Bailey. This was replaced a short time later with a whitewashed wooden building called "The White Church" or "Alba Ecclesia" that remained in use until the consecration of the great stone church.

As Durham's reputation grew as a place of pilgrimage and an impregnable fortress, it became the focus of northern resistance against the Norman conquerors.



Fig 26, St Cuthbert's coffin on display in the Great Kitchen, the coffin is regarded as the most important wooden object surviving in England before the Norman conquest.

Medieval History

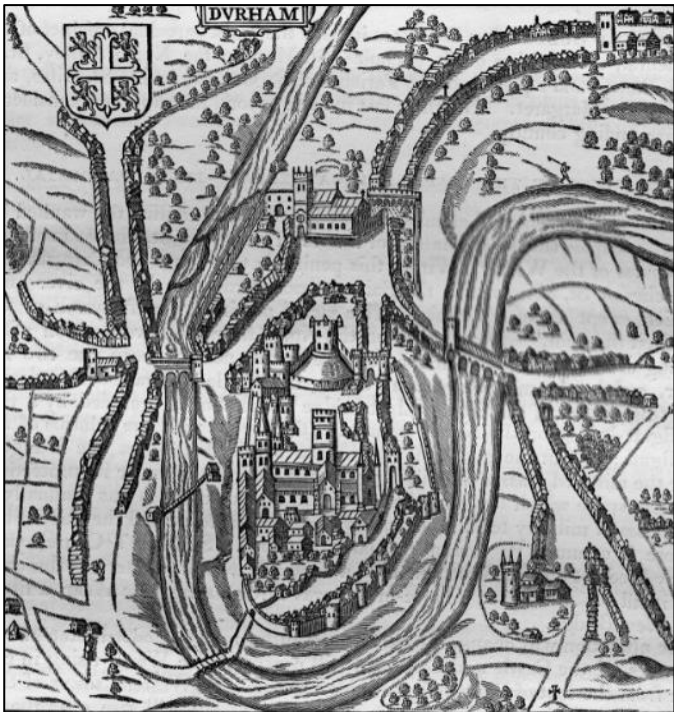
The Conquerors Visit

In 1069 William the Conqueror sent 700 men to Durham but the Norman army was massacred by the native Saxons. Gradually, William’s men gained control and in 1072 Durholme Castle was built on Williams orders on his return from Scotland. The castle was a key fortress in the defence of the border with Scotland and was gradually transformed in more peaceful times into an imposing palace for the Durham Prince Bishops. The Prince Bishops were given powers allowing them to hold their own parliament, raise their own armies, administer their own laws, levy taxes, create fairs and markets and mint their own coins.

It was Bishop Walcher who led the foundations of a reformed monastery at Durham, but he was killed in 1080, and William appointed a new Prince Bishop called William St Carileph who was responsible for building the cathedral after the castle 1093. The construction of the cathedral taking just 40 years.

Bishop Flambard

Bishop Ralf Flambard was a great builder and man of vision, and he did more for Durham than any other Prince Bishop. He cleared the domestic houses from Palace Green and other buildings between the castle and cathedral, providing a formal linking open space. He improved the defensive capabilities of the castle by constructing a defensive circuit of walls and gates. He constructed Framwellgate Bridge to connect the outer borough with the rest of the city, founded Kepier Hospital in 1112 and built St Giles Church.



By the middle of the 13th century Durham’s identity as a city was becoming apparent with the great crossing tower of the cathedral completed. The town continued to expand, and the plan of the city was largely established by 1250, it altered little over the following six hundred years, only significantly expanding in the 19th century. The city was split into a number of boroughs which were independent urban communities with their own courts and churches. The trade of the city also continued to grow with the focus on the Market Place. Durham offered a livelihood to local traders and the Bishops Castle and city walls provided protection. This again helped to encourage traders to come to the city and in turn increase its wealth. In the city there were also a number of working mills grinding flour and used for fulling.

Burgage plots heavily dictated the medieval layout and house plans. These comprised of long narrow domestic curtilages with houses placed end-on to the street and compacted side by side, that can still be seen in some medieval streets.

Fig 27 left Speeds Map of Durham published 1627, one of the earliest representations of the city, the plan form and layout still surviving to this day. Reproduced with permission University pictures in print Record Number 403.

Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Century

Battle of Neville's Cross

The Scots attacked the city in 1312 and again two years later before the townspeople in the Market Place could construct the wall granted to them by the Bishop. There was then a period of stability up until 1346 with the Battle of Nevilles Cross. This took place during the 2nd war of Scottish Independence on 17th October half a mile to the west of the City Centre. An invading army of 12,000 led by King David I was defeated with heavy loss by an English army of approximately 6,000 to 7,000 men led by Ralph Neville, Lord Neville. After the battle accounts state that David was hiding under a bridge over the River Browney when his reflection was spotted in the water by English soldiers, and he was taken prisoner with all the Scottish captives ordered to London.

The Black Death

The bubonic plague, also known as the Black Deal, swept across Europe in the 14th century. In 1349 it reached Durham and took its toll on the population. Further outbreaks of bubonic plague struck the city in 1416, 1438, and in the 16th century. Over one third of the city's population perished. The economy of the city suffered as pilgrims stopped visiting the shrines of St. Cuthbert and St. Bede.

During the medieval period, Durham was no longer a scene of major border warfare and it settled into a

quieter medium sized urban community reflecting the traditional patterns of English medieval towns.

Rising of the North

In 1595 the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland initiated the Rising of the north to restore the old religion. Their forces marched to Durham, however the rebellion collapsed when Spain failed to deliver the military support that had been promised. The rebellion triggered other misfortunes, the countryside was impoverished by the fines levied against landowners who had supported the revolt and in 1587 there was famine after the harvest failed.

A new charter

In 1601 the city was granted charter status by the Queen, but the bishop decided that it infringed his rights and refused to accept. Instead, he appointed one of his supporters as mayor and drew up his own charter which gave Durham a limited say in its own affairs.

Cosins Durham

John Cosin became Bishop of Durham after the restoration in 1660 and almost at once proceeded to make good the damage caused to the buildings. He repaired the cathedral and castle, rebuilt schools and the county court on Palace Green, erected a library and built almshouses.

He erected a new conduit to carry water across the river from Elvet Moor to the peninsula.

Changing Durham

The blue coat school was opened in Durham in 1718. In the early 18th century, a mustard making industry began in Durham. Durham's first theatre opened in 1722 in Saddler Street. In 1729 a statue of Neptune was erected in the Market Place. By the middle of the 18th century Durham probably had a population of about 4,000-5,000. Growth spread outwards to reach the hamlets around the town.

In 1771 Durham suffered a severe flood which damaged Elvet bridge and destroyed the precursor to Prebends Bridge. At the time only the Bishop had the authority to instruct the construction of new bridges, originally toll bridges to support upkeep.

Many of the wealthy residents had prospered from exploiting coalfields beneath their lands. Fortunately for Durham thin seams beneath the city were not worth working. Over the years Bishop Van Mildert released more and more church land for development and in 1832 he moved his palace from the castle in order that it could become part of the new university. With the death of Bishop Van Mildert in 1836 the old order passed, and the temporal powers of the bishop were transferred to the crown.

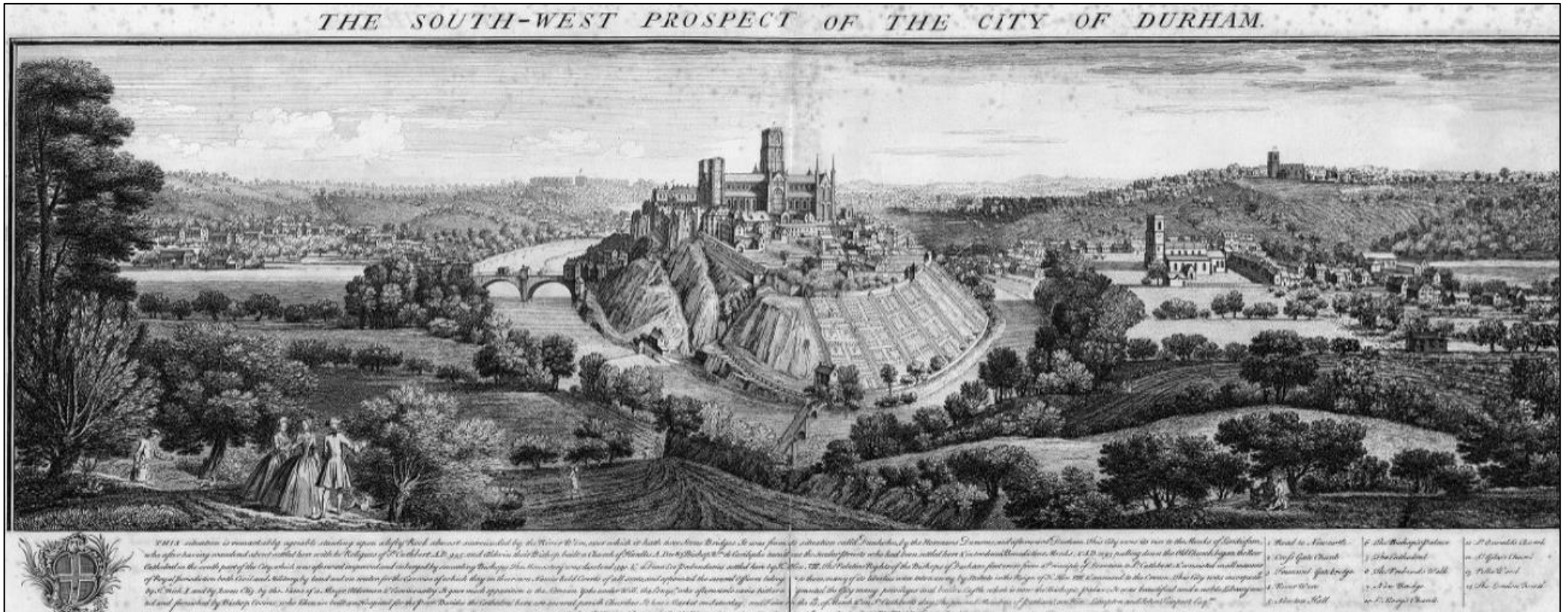
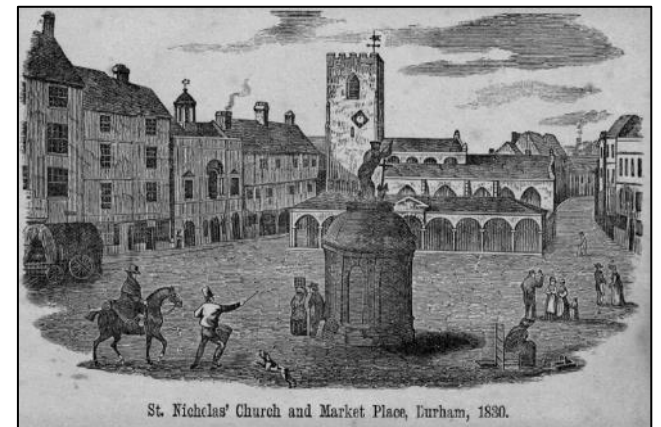
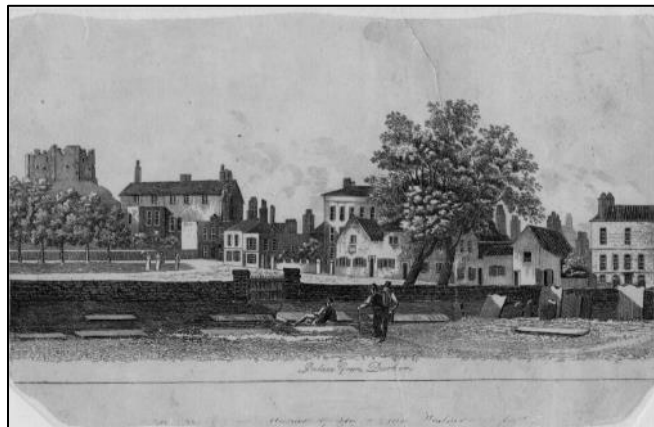


Fig 28 Above, a large detailed panoramic south-west view of Durham City, Samuel Buck 1696-1779. It shows the peninsula void of trees with the Baily gardens sloping down to the river. The churches of St Oswald's stands prominent, with St Giles on the ridge in the background. Right, Palace Green showing the castle keep ruinous and the cathedral graveyard in the foreground, 1827-1831, and the Market Place 1826.

Reproduced with permission University pictures in print Record Number 403, 708 and 1979.



Nineteenth Century

Arrival of the Railway

The greatest change to the city came during the mid-late 19th century as a result of the arrival of the railway with the main station being built in 1857 for the Northeast Railway Company and in the same year the Viaduct. This had a dramatic impact outside the peninsula.

This was a period of rapid growth with new housing built on undeveloped land. This comprised terraced housing, that then became the norm in the middle of the century.

The appearance of this new housing was markedly different with a switch from the use of local materials to the gradual dominance of the red factory brick and Welsh slate brought along the new rail network.

During this period Durham prison was built in 1820. In 1824 Durham was given gas street lighting. In 1836 Durham gained its first police force. In the mid-19th century Durham was described thus:

County hospital was built in 1860. In 1861 a statue of the Marquess of Londonderry was erected in the Market Place. In 1871 the first miner’s gala was held in Durham.



Fig 29, view from a garden near the top of Claypath looking towards Elvet Bridge published 1828. Reproduced with permission University pictures in print Record Number 1709.



Fig 30, construction of Durham Railway Viaduct 1857, County Records Office

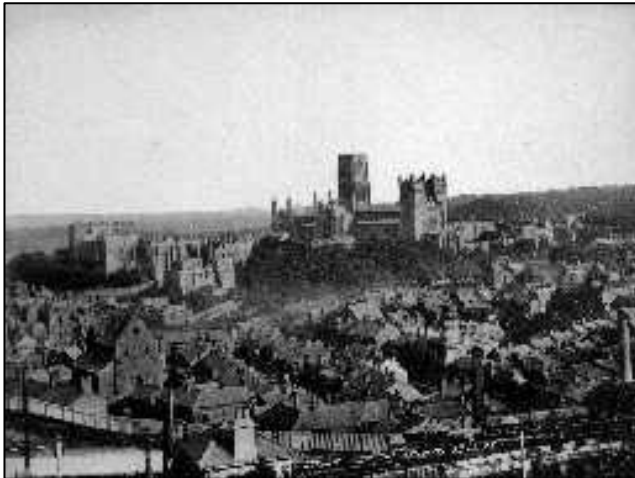


Fig 31, view across the city from Durham Railway Station in 1890, County Records Office

Twentieth Century

There was significant change in the city during the mid-20th century. The university expanded with St Marys College built in 1952. In 1960 the school of oriental studies opened, and this was followed by Grey College in 1961. Then came St Aidan's College in 1965, Van Mildert College in 1966, Trevelyan College in 1967 and Collingwood College in 1973.

The national savings office building, Milburngate House, opened in 1961, followed shortly by Kingsgate Bridge in 1964, the magistrate's court in 1964, and Leazes Road in 1967. Significant later development continued to shape the city with the building of New Elvet bridge in 1975 and Millburngate shopping centre in 1976. This was enlarged in 1987, and then in 1999 the Prince Bishops shopping centre was opened.



Fig 32, construction of the through road and bridge 1970-80, Durham County Records Office.



Fig 33, view of New Elvet, c.1901, Durham County Records Office



Fig 34, general view in water colour from 1901-25, Durham County Records Office



Fig 35, view of North Road in 1901, Durham County Records Office

Durham Today

“A new 21st century quarter”

Entering the 21st century the city continued to develop the first major change was the mixed used Walkergate Development on the site of a former carpark at the bottom of Claypath and the former carpet factory site fronting Freemans Place. This included Millennium Square the Gala Theatre, Claypath Library and a series of commercial units, and apartments cascading down to the riverside. At Freemans Place. The former Ice Rink was demolished to make way for new office developments, on the opposite side of the river the Raddison Hotel was built on the site of a former depot that preceded a greyhound stadium, overlooking the new Penny ferry footbridge.

More recently The Gates shopping centre was part demolished and part remodelled to create Riverwalk. The University’s new business school was built on the site of a former car park, and the 1960s Milburngate House was demolished in 2016/17 as part of a major mixed use redevelopment of the area. This has created a 21st century riverside quarter to the city.

The university has continued to grow through this time with the estate comprising 183 buildings, 17 colleges and student numbers rising to just over 22,000.



Fig 36, view of lower Claypath in the 1970s, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00921), now the site of the Walkergate Development.



Fig 37, view of Leazes Road looking across to the former multi-storey car park today, Prince Bishops Shopping Centre, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00955)



Fig 38, view of the riverside 1950s-75, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00801), now the site of the Milburngate House development and Raddison Hotel site in the background.



Fig 39, view of the riverside 1950s-75, Durham County Records Office (Ref.DR00805), showing the gas works and ice rink. The far side of the river is now the site Freemans Reach, Wearside House and the University Business School.

2.5 The Topography & Landscape Context of Durham City

Durham City lies within the broad valley of the Wear Lowlands which lies between the low escarpment of the East Durham Limestone Plateau to the east and the higher ridges and valleys of the West Durham Coalfield to the west. In the floor of this gently undulating lowland vale the River Wear carves an incised meandering course, in places lying deep within narrow gorges cutting down through the underlying sandstones and shales, in others wandering across open floodplains flanked by steep wooded bluffs.

The topography has had a profound influence on the evolution of the city and the way that it is experienced today.

The historic core of the city is focussed on a deeply incised gorge forming a tight bend in the river which provided a strong defensive site and an arresting setting for the Norman castle and cathedral. The medieval city lay on the peninsula behind its defensive walls, spreading out across the neck of the peninsula and onto the opposing riverbanks from Framwellgate and Elvet bridges and up the ridge to the north-east towards Gilesgate.

This pattern of development was maintained in the post-medieval period with the city retaining a compact form and modest scale and largely confined to the incised river valley. Terraced

housing, small mines and factories of the industrial period were concentrated in the same areas.

Fig 40, Durham City landscape context map.



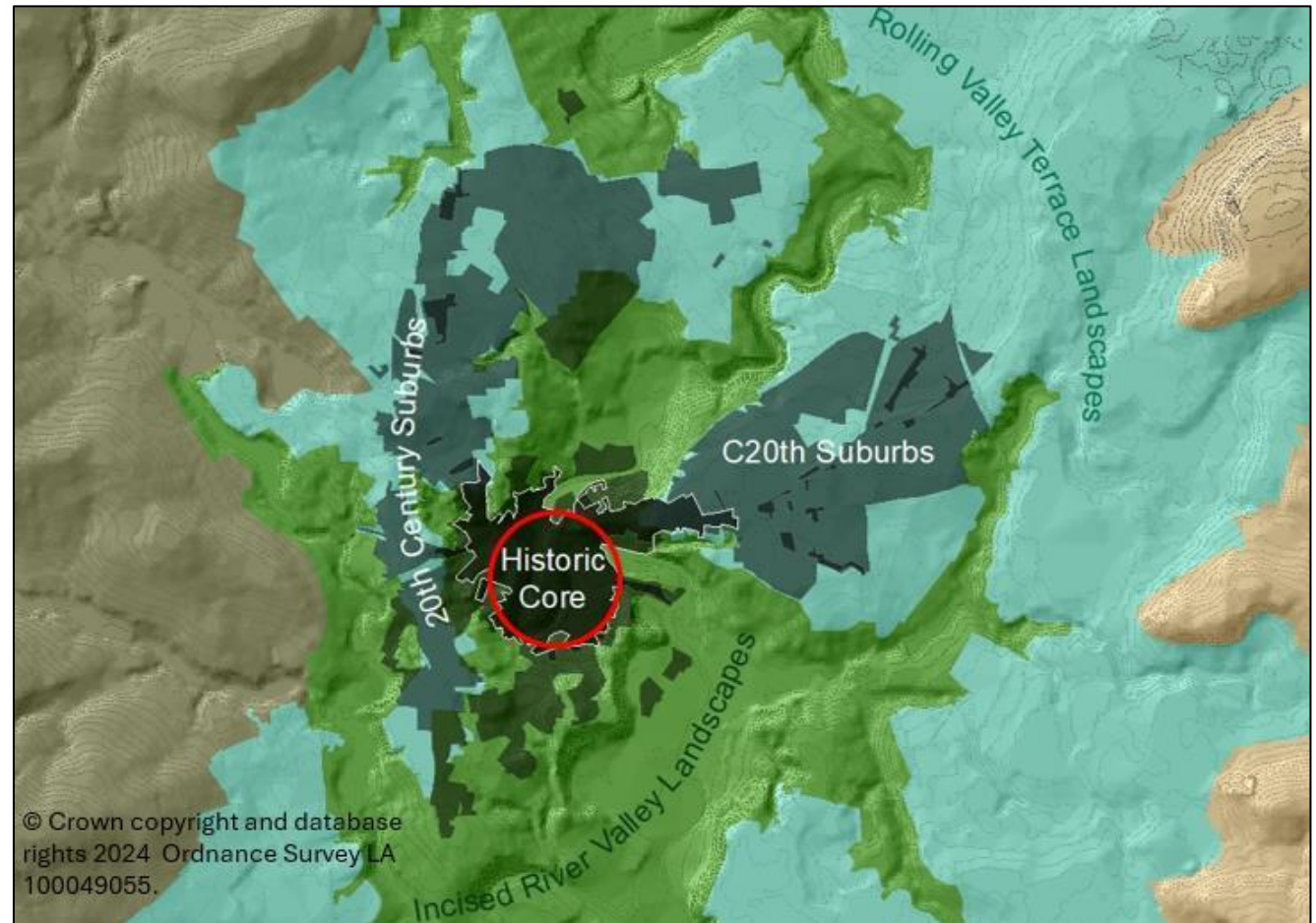
The map shows the landscape context of Durham City Centre (highlighted in red) the city occupying a strategic site in the centre of the broad Wear Lowland valley of the meandering River Wear with the coalfield in the west and limestone plateau in the east. Images right for general context.

The 20th century saw significant expansion. In contrast with earlier development much of this took place on the higher, more level ground of the rolling valley terraces with suburbs developing at Crossgate Moor and Merryoaks in the west, Framwellgate Moor and Newton Hall in the north and Gilesgate Moor, Carrville and Belmont in the east.

The absence of development in the main river valley north and south of the historic core and on the steep slopes of the peninsula. Observatory Hill and Flass Vale gives the city a very open form with robust corridors of farmland and woodland penetrating deep into its heart. The physical separation of the suburbs from the historic core and their lack of prominence in general views makes the city feel small and strongly defined.

The 20th century also saw areas of farmland and historic parkland on the northern, eastern and southern approaches to the city developed in a very open form. In the south the colleges and teaching buildings of the University developed in open campuses creating a gradual leafy transition with the surrounding countryside. In the north the hospital and civic complex of Aykley Heads were set in extensive grounds separating the northern suburbs from the city's core.

Fig 41, Durham City evolution in relation to topography map.



The map shows Durham City Centre (highlighted in red) and how the surrounding built form has evolved in relation to the topography, with 20th century suburbs created on high ground to the historic core and avoiding most of the river valley terrace

Despite the high density of urban form in places the combination of woodlands on steep slopes such as the peninsula gorge, Flass Vale, Pelaw Woods and Great and Little High Woods and trees in farmland, parks and campuses gives the historic core of the city a very high urban tree canopy cover – in excess of 30% - which contributes significantly to the local and wider character and to the quality of views.



Fig 42 a view from the sky above Durham School Chapel demonstrating the abundant tree canopy cover across the historic core of the city and beyond.

Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

Fig 43 map showing the abundant tree canopy across Durham City.



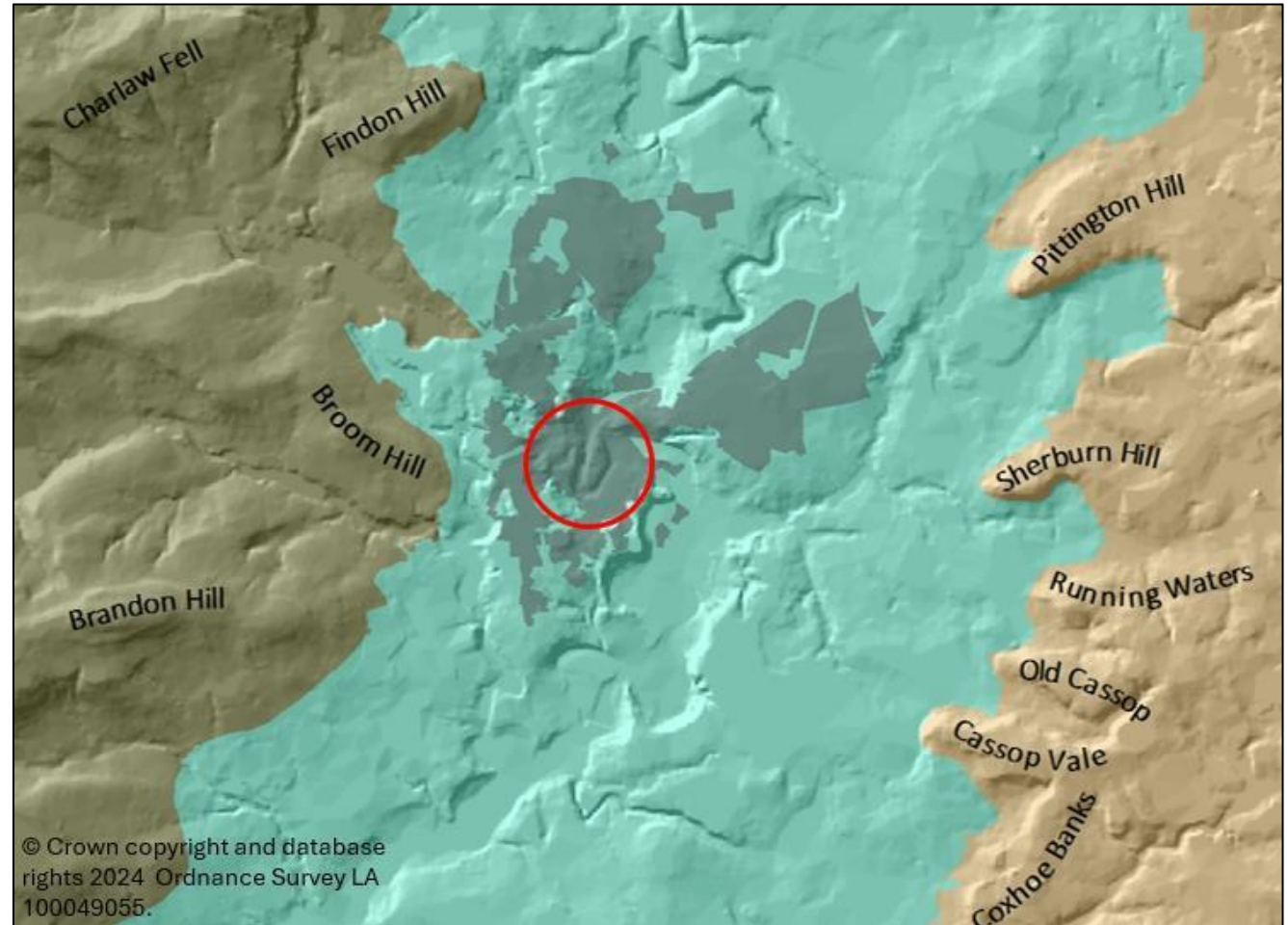
The complex of ridge lines that encircle and divide the city figure strongly in the backdrop of many views across the conservation areas and provide a leafy and often dramatic setting to notable buildings.

The outer setting of the city is formed in the west by the distant high ground of Brandon Hill, Findon Hill and Charlaw Fell. In the east and south the limestone escarpment forms an undulating skyline. The nearest spurs of Pittington Hill, Sherburn Hill, Old Cassop and Cassop Vale are often notable features. Penshaw Hill is a distant landmark in the north.

Within the city itself, encircling ridges of high ground form a more immediate and intimate backdrop to the city's historic core. The peninsula and the Market Place sit at around 60m AOD. Ridges to the east, south and west lie at around 90 to 100m AOD creating a strong sense of enclosure. The undulating glacial terrain formed by the meeting of ice in the Wear and Browney valleys resolves locally into discrete hills in this arc of high ground – Whinney Hill, Mount Joy, Buck's Hill, Elvet Hill, Windmill Hill, Observatory Hill, Red Hills, Western Hill, Windy Hill and Beacon Hill. These provide both landmarks in views across the city and vantage points from which to view it.

The ridge of high ground that starts with the peninsula and rises through Gilesgate to around 90m divides the city and provides further enclosure.

Fig 44, map showing the topographical outer setting of Durham City



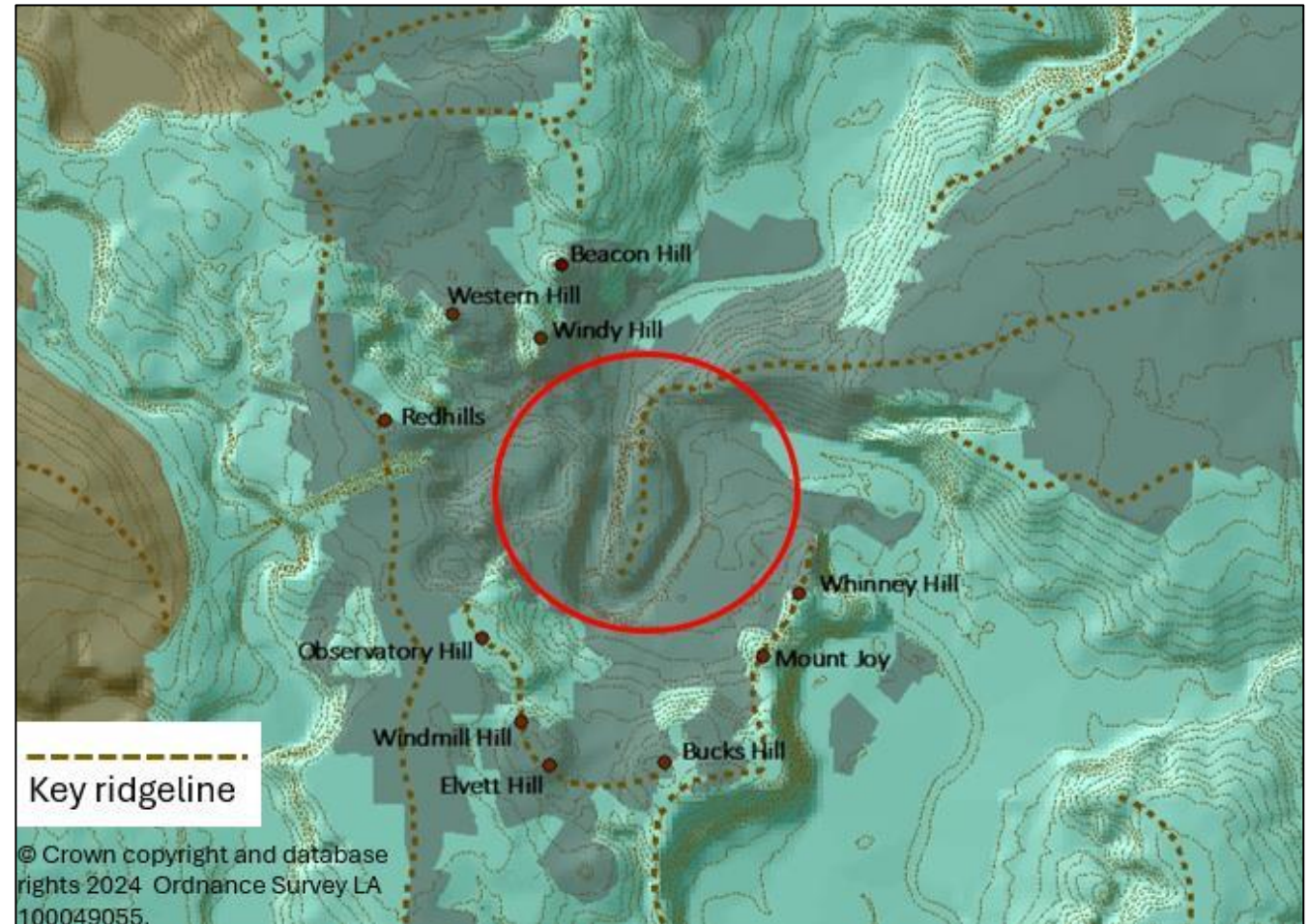
The map shows Durham City Centre (highlighted in red) and the surrounding complex of wider ridges and hills that inform its outer setting and feature in background of many views.

In views from the east, from higher vantage points such as Whinney Hill and Mount Joy, the ridge running through Crossgate Moor forms the immediate backdrop, with the high ground of Charlaw Fell forming the skyline beyond. The woodlands of Flass Vale, the open fields of Observatory Hill and the canopies of street and garden trees combine to give the backdrop a leafy character.

In views from the south and south-west from high ground such as Observatory Hill and Windmill Hill the limestone escarpment forms the distant skyline. Penshaw Monument is a notable landmark to the north over the ridge running through Frankland Park in the middle distance. The closer ridge line running through Gilesgate taking in the leafy parkland of Hild and Bede colleges and Pelaw woods encloses views to the north-east.

In views from the north and north-west the ridge running through Maiden Castle, Whinney Hill, Mount Joy and Great High Wood creates a verdant rolling backdrop to the city. The steep bluffs of Shincliffe Banks across the river to the southeast may be visible in the col (the lowest point of a ridge between two peaks) between Whinney Hill and Mount Joy with Cassop Vale and Coxhoe Banks forming a distant skyline from higher vantage points such as Wharton Park (Windy Hill).

Fig 45, map showing “inner” hills and ridgelines encircling the Durham City Centre.



The map shows Durham City Centre (highlighted in red) and the encircling ridges and hills that inform its inner setting, that provide the more intimate backdrop and many views of Durham WHS.

Fig 46, examples of views from surrounding hill and ridges.



View from Whinney Hill



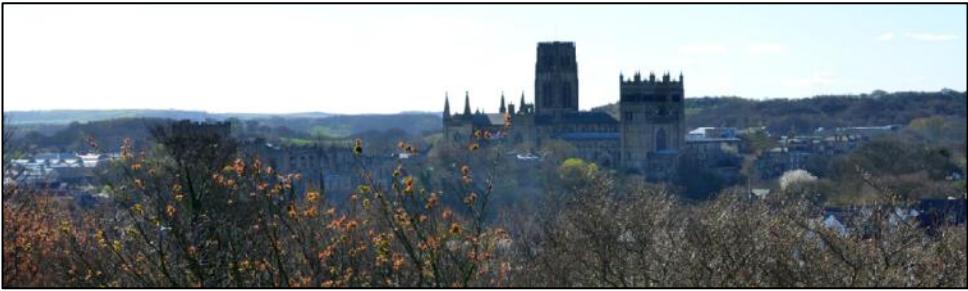
View from Mount Joy



View from Windmill Hill



View from Observatory Hill



View from Wharton Park



View from Western Hill

In views from lower ground within the city the wider landscape setting is rarely visible, and the immediate backdrop glimpsed above and between buildings is formed by the closer high ground which creates an intimacy of scale and a sense of enclosure.

Fig 47 below a sequence of views from within the city streets showing the green “wall” that contains the City’s urban area giving hints at its distinctive topography and landscape setting. Views from Gilesgate Bank, Ravensworth Terrace, Claypath, Leazes Road and Framwellgate Peth.



Fig 48 map showing the Area of Higher Landscape Value and the seven Durham City Conservation Area boundaries

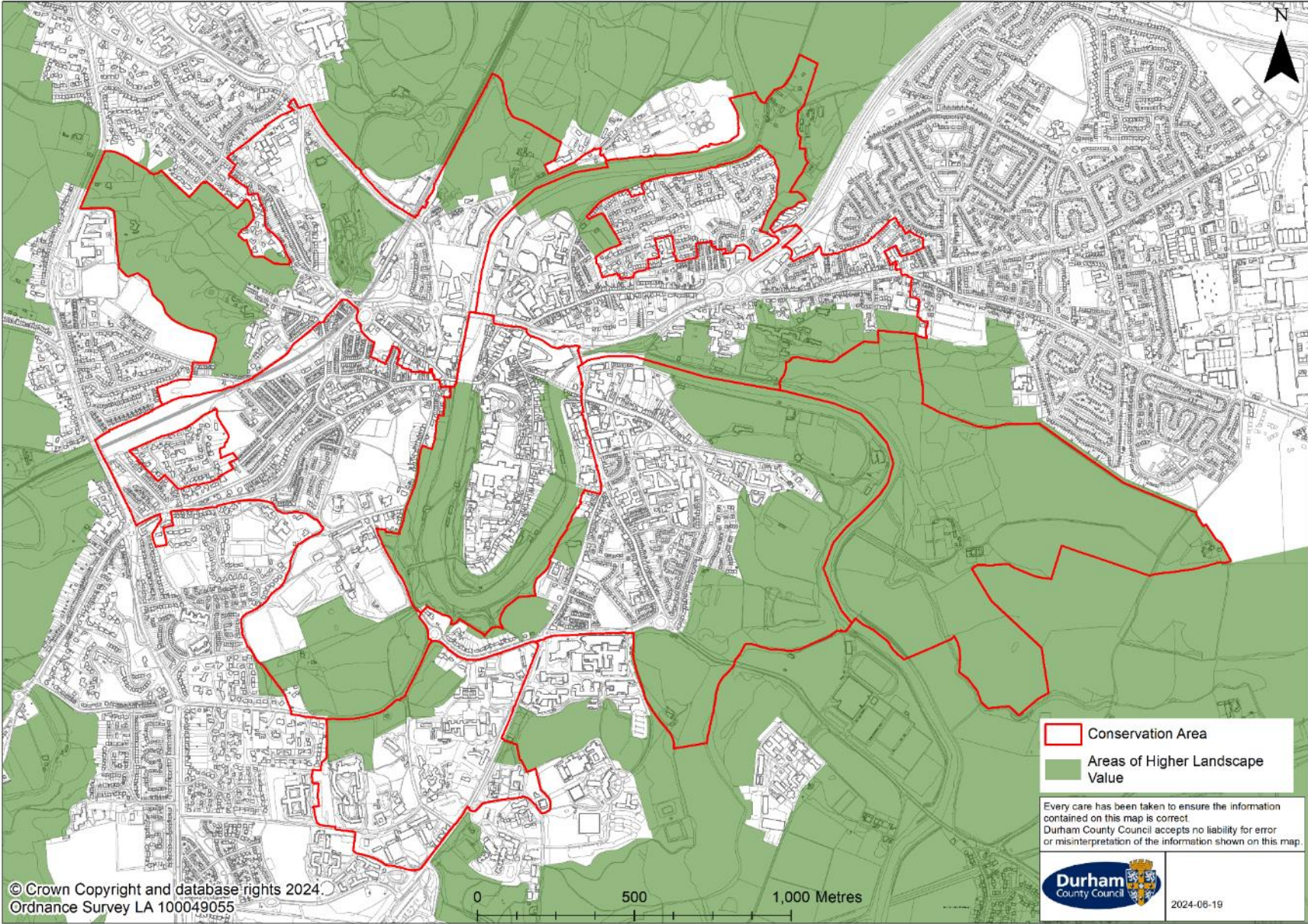


Fig 49 map showing the Green Belt and the seven Durham City Conservation Area Boundaries

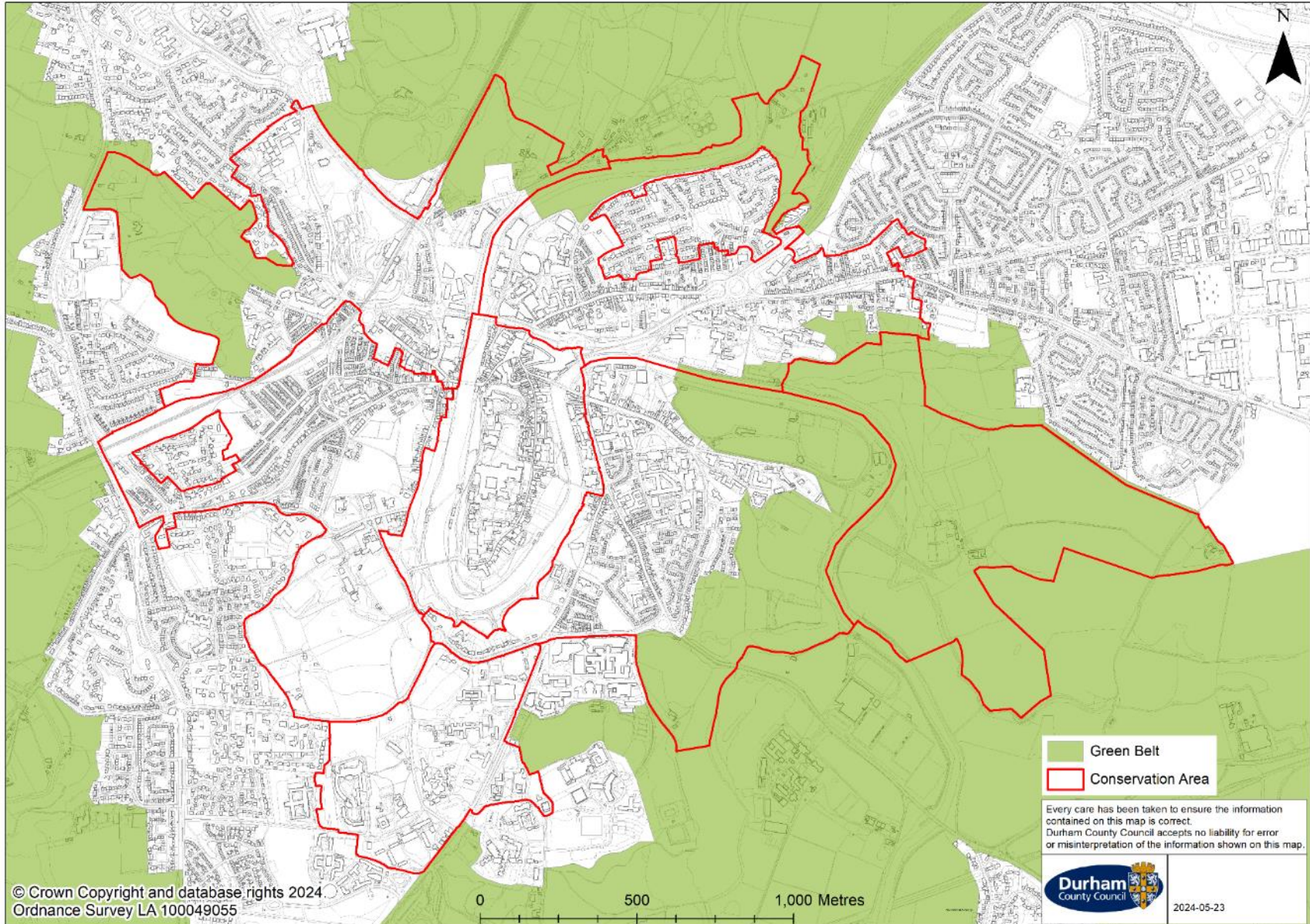
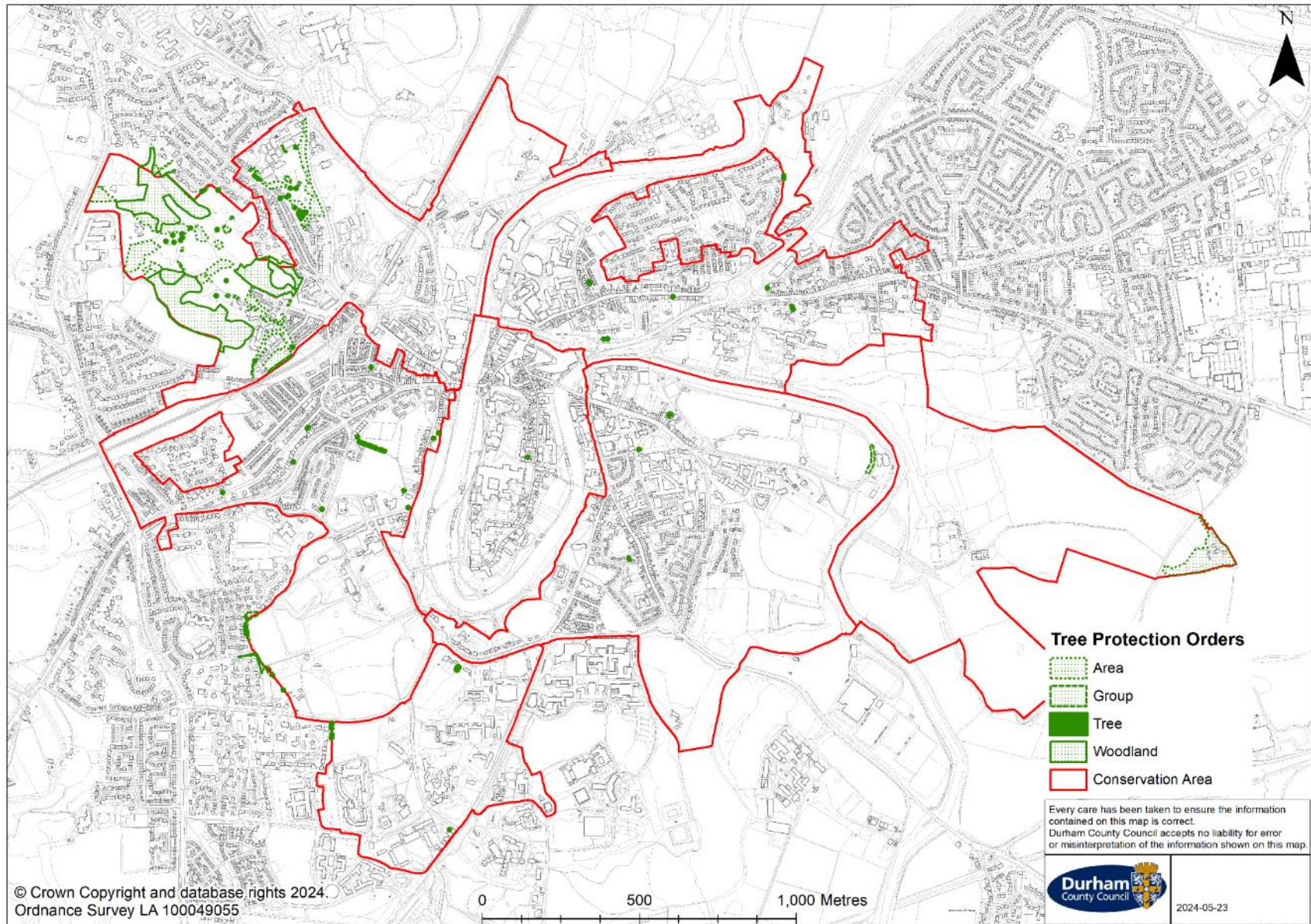


Fig 50 map showing the tree preservation orders within the seven Durham City Conservation Area boundaries.



Green Infrastructure Assets

Green infrastructure (GI) asset is the term used to describe the important network of natural and semi-natural features within urban areas. They can be a wide variety of types, uses, spatial scales, and characters, that thread nature into the built environment.

Durham City boasts an abundant range of such GI assets that are fundamental to its special interest, character and distinctiveness. The networks of merging greenery found throughout the individual conservation areas, not only have high visual amenity value, but also provide leisure, health and environmental benefits. They support and provide biodiversity, climate change mitigation, improve air quality, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and exercise, and can add to the inward investment and tourism offer.

The GI assets across the seven Durham City Conservation Areas have been classified into two hierarchy types. First, is the broad GI assets that are commonplace such as general highway and footway grassed verges, roundabouts with soft landscaping, street trees, street hedgerows, the railway embankments, playgrounds, green corridor approaches, sports pitches, and private gardens visible in the streetscene.

The second category are of greater interest because of their historic, evidential, design, wildlife, community/social, leisure, ecological and archaeological value(s).

Some of these GI assets have added significance by being either contained within, or integral to the setting of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site. These GI assets are:

- The River Wear Corridor (including the peninsula woodland/riverbanks, The Racecourse and The Sands).
- Durham Cathedral Precinct (including Palace Green, The College grounds, South Baily allotment, the Bailey gardens, walls and promenades).
- Old Durham Gardens.
- Kesper wood and associated agricultural landscape.
- Crook Hall gardens.
- Wharton Park.
- Observatory Hill.
- Flass Vale.
- Pelaw Woods.
- Maiden Castle Wood.
- Mount Joy/Great High Wood.
- Gilesgate Village Green.
- Graveyards & Cemeteries (St Cuthberts, St Margarets, St Giles, St Oswald, St Bede’s, St Nicholas, and Bow Cemetery)
- Allotment Gardens (St Margarets & North End/Flass Vale)
- Hill College grounds and parkland (including Windmill Hill Plantation, Buckshill Plantation),
- Durham School Grounds.

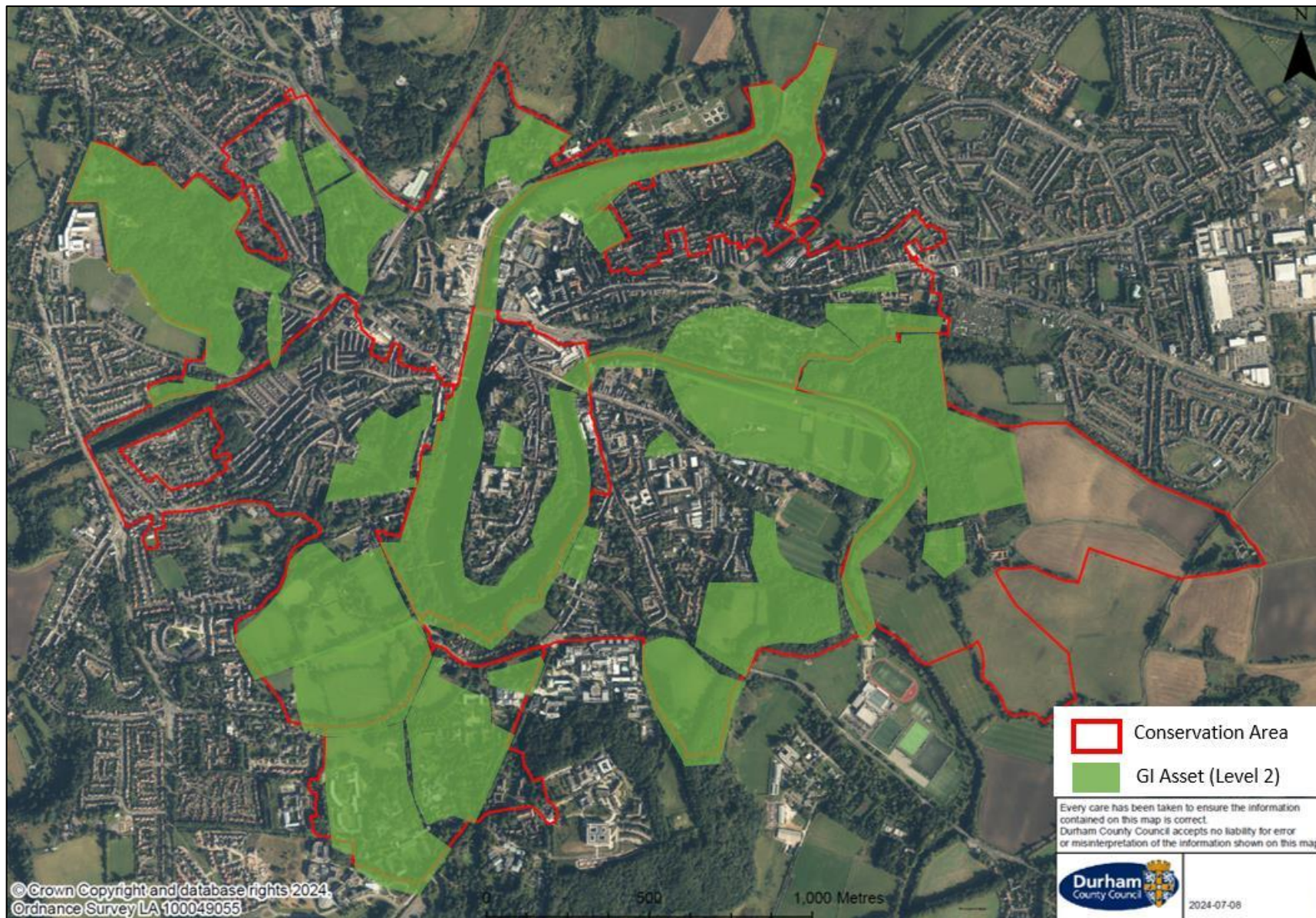
- St Hilde & Bede College grounds and parkland.
- Bow School Grounds.
- St Leonards School Grounds.
- Green space in front of Durham Crown Court.
- Historic “green lanes” of Blind Lane, Clay Lane, and Flass Lane.
- Elvet Park (adjacent to the former city swimming baths at The entrance to The Racecourse).





Fig 51 examples of GI assets in the Durham city Conservation Areas, left column, North End and St Margarets Allotment Gardens. Middle, Gilesgate Village Green, St Hild & Bede College. Right, Maiden Castle Wood/Racecourse area and Old Durham Gardens.

Fig 52 map identifying the key green infrastructure assets within the conservation areas.



Blue Infrastructure Assets

The River Wear is the principal reason for the location of Durham City and has significantly shaped the evolution of the urban form. The natural defence provided by the river in its deep steep sided gorge meant that only the neck of the peninsula needed substantial fortification to complete the defences at "Dun holm" the "hill island". It is the most significant natural landscape feature of the city while its contribution to the conservation areas and the world heritage site cannot be overstated.

The riverbanks provide the setting to the urban townscape with the woodland softening, framing and enhancing many picturesque viewpoints, and contributing to a number of iconic and world-renowned views. Different parts of the river provide different views that add significantly to the overall experience.

During the 15th and 16th centuries the river and its riverbanks served as a castle moat, working quarry, and industrial power source, and it was treeless for defensive reasons. The Bishops of Durham quickly built bridges to avoid fords and ferries across the polluted waters, and by the 17th and 18th centuries the "greening" of the riverbanks began, completed in the early 19th century.

A romantic landscape evolved with a deliberate plan to create a place of tranquillity and great beauty in the best traditions of English garden design. This "Romantic" landscape is a key attribute of the world heritage site's outstanding universal value. It is informed by the undeveloped stretch of river, the steep, forbidding, mature tree lined riverbanks, the remaining stretches of the castle walls and the way in which they have been partially covered by the vegetation and eroded by time, and by Prebends Bridge and the view it provides of this ensemble of nature and buildings.

The River Wear corridor is a special and unique part of the region's natural environment and a significant natural component of the wider city that crosses and unites multiple conservation areas. It has high community, social and recreational value with the network of riverside paths, including a series of historic routes, is well-used for leisure activities, areas are used for events, and it provides an important wildlife corridor.

There are three small streams within the City, those in the north called "burns", and in the south "becks" that are tributaries of the River Wear. These can be found at Old Durham, Pelaw Woods, and at Barkers Haugh on the west bank opposite Kepier Farm.

Fig 53 right, images from different parts of the river, top the view north from Millburngate Road Bridge, middle rowing boats along the stretch of river around The Racecourse, and the familie sight of the river cruiser near South Street Mill.

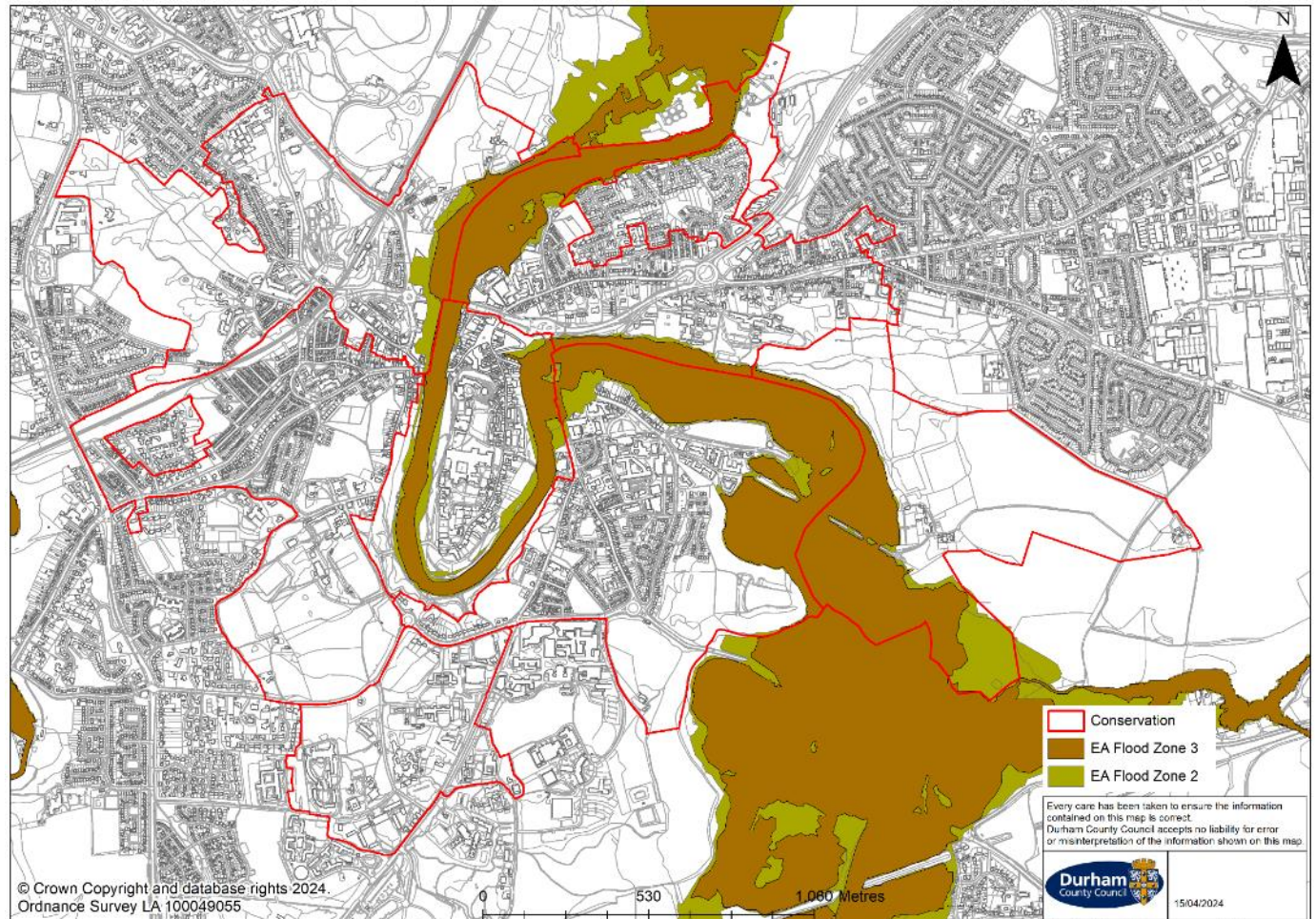


Fig 54 map identifying the flood zone within the conservation areas

County Durham is characterised by high ground to the west, and lower undulating ground to the east. The River Wear corridor runs through the heart of the county, along which a wide tranche of relatively low-lying land extends in a northerly direction, encompassing the towns of Chester-le-Street and Durham City.

There is a long history of flooding in the county, with records dating back to the 14th century, with river flooding within the county primarily due to the overtopping of the River Wear and its tributaries in towns and villages along its length. Riverfront areas in Durham City Centre have experienced flooding from the River Wear on numerous occasions and historically there have been major floods every few years. The great flood of 1771 is the most notable, affecting several rivers including the Tyne, Tees and Wear in the city three arches of Elvet Bridge were destroyed, the original Prebends Bridge was swept away, and the mills so badly damaged they needed to be rebuilt.

Fig 55, historic image of a floor at Framwellgate Waterside.



Zone 2 denotes medium risk, with a 1% chance from rivers or 0.5% from the sea. **Zone 3** has the highest risk, with a 1% or higher chance from rivers or 0.5% from the sea, often underpinned by historical flood records.

2.6 Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site & its setting

Standing high on the peninsula and rising majestically into the city skyline is Durham Castle and Cathedral, the crowning glory of the city centre. The peninsula with its steep riverbanks provided a natural line of defence, that was essential for the community of St. Cuthbert, who came to Durham in the 10th century in search of a safe haven, and for the Prince Bishops of Durham, protectors of the turbulent English frontier.

The cathedral was built between the late 11th and early 12th century to house the bodies of St. Cuthbert (634-687 AD) and the Venerable Bede (672/3-735 AD). It is the largest and finest example of Norman architecture in England, and the innovative audacity of its vaulting that foreshadowed Gothic architecture.

The cathedral lies within the precinct of Durham Castle, constructed in the late 11th century under the orders of William the Conqueror. The Norman defences likely replacing earlier Anglo-Saxon fortifications. The castle was the stronghold and residence of the Prince Bishops who were given virtual autonomy in return for protecting the northern boundaries of England, and thus held both religious and secular powers. Within the castle precinct are later buildings reflecting the Prince Bishops' civic responsibilities and privileges, and Palace Green, a large open space connects the various buildings. This once provided the Prince Bishops with a venue for processions and gatherings befitting their status.

Fig 56, a stunning aerial view of Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site.



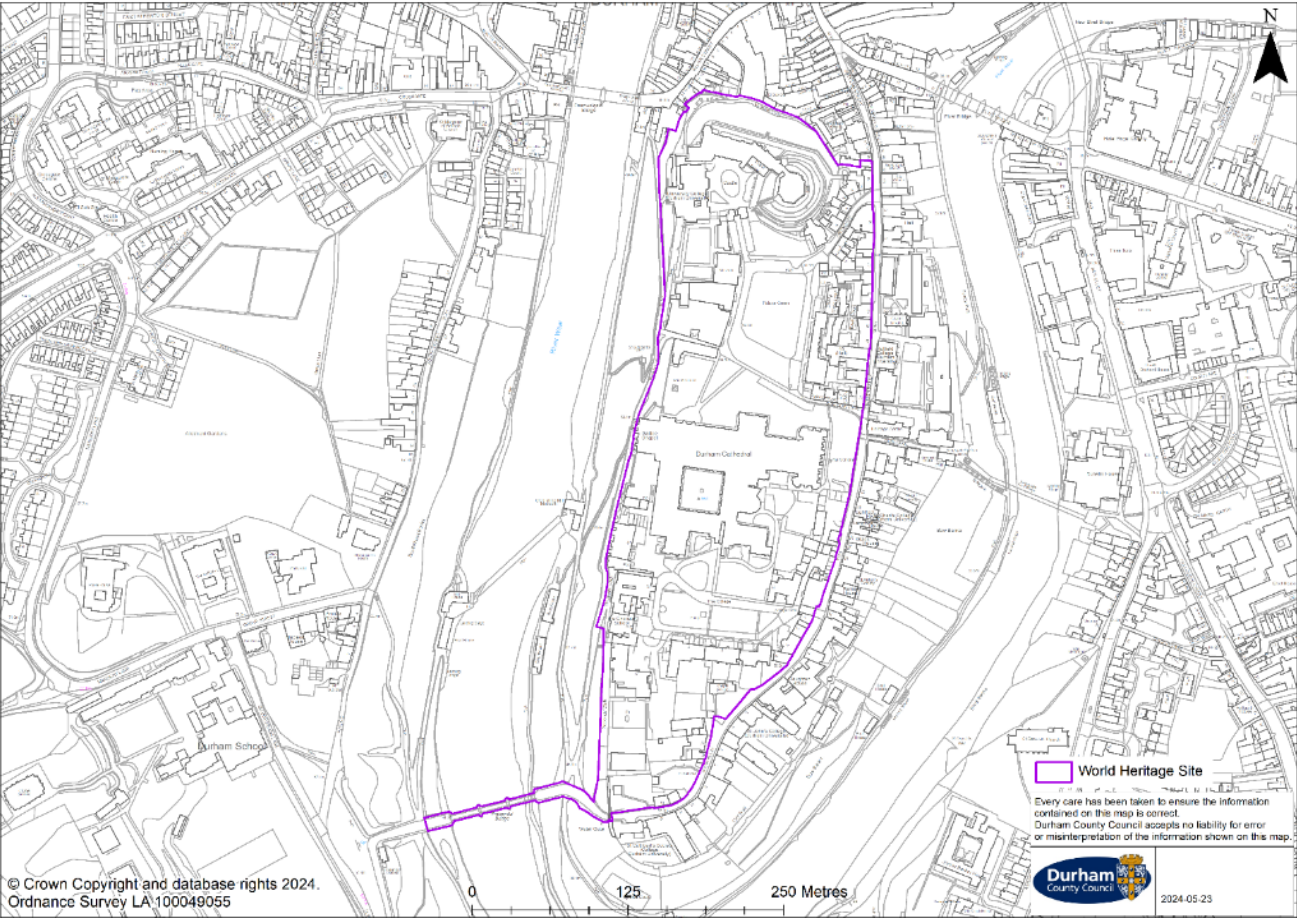
Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.


The importance and significance of the site was recognized by being inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986. The Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site is defined as:

1. The property has exceptional architecture demonstrating architectural innovation;
2. The visual drama of the Cathedral and Castle on the peninsula and the associations of the site with notions of romantic beauty;
3. The physical expression of the spiritual and secular powers of the medieval Bishops Palatine that the defended complex provides;
4. The relics and material culture of the three saints buried at the site.
5. The continuity of use and ownership of the site over the past 1000 years as a place of religious worship, learning and residence;
6. The site's role as a political statement of Norman power imposed upon a subjugate nation, as one of the country's most powerful symbols of the Norman Conquest of Britain
7. The importance of the site's archaeological remains, which are directly related to the site's history and continuity of use over the past 1000 years;
8. The cultural and religious traditions and historical memories associated with the relics of St Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede, and with the continuity of use and ownership of the site over the past millennium.

The original 1986 inscription used a building-based approach that produced a tightly defined boundary separating the cathedral and Prebends' Bridge from the principal castle buildings and also the surrounding defences of the peninsula. The 2008 modification (map right) resulted in the inclusion of Palace Green and the buildings lining the east and west sides of the green.

Fig 57 map showing the current world heritage boundary as amended in 2008.



A photograph of the interior of Durham Cathedral, showing the nave vault and a large rose window. The image captures the grand scale of the Gothic architecture, with high stone vaults and massive columns. The rose window is a prominent feature, filled with colorful stained glass. People are visible in the foreground, seated in pews, looking towards the altar area.

The Earliest surviving stone vault of such scale in the world. The nave vault of Durham Cathedral is the most significant architectural element of the World Heritage Site marking the turning point in the history of architecture. The pointed arch was successfully used as a structural element for the first time in the Cathedral.

Image © Durham Cathedral, used with permission

What is meant by setting?

Setting refers to the surroundings in which the heritage asset is understood, experienced, and appreciated, and includes present and past relationships to the surrounding townscape and landscape. The importance of setting lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset.

Not all aspects of a heritage asset's setting will contribute to its significance, and the extent of setting is not fixed and may change as the heritage asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting can make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of a heritage asset or may be neutral.

Setting includes not only the sites definable curtilage but both its immediate and broader surrounding environment, including built development, landscape and natural features, topography, views, and historic and contemporary uses, associations, relationships, and intangible qualities and connections.

The CAMP has a management role in preserving and where possible enhancing the OUV of the world heritage site, part of which is its setting and will work alongside the WHS management Plan and Setting Study. Information regarding the WHS Management Plan can be found in section 3.1 of this document. The setting study was commissioned to develop a clear understanding of the role setting plays in the significance of the

WHS, serving to further develop the understanding of its nature, extent, and value, and to provide a robust evidence base for the revised WHS Management Plan, to inform the development management process, and to support the CAMP.

Fig 58, a drone view across the city from the south showing the buildings on the peninsula in its summer immediate and broad landscape surroundings.



Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission.

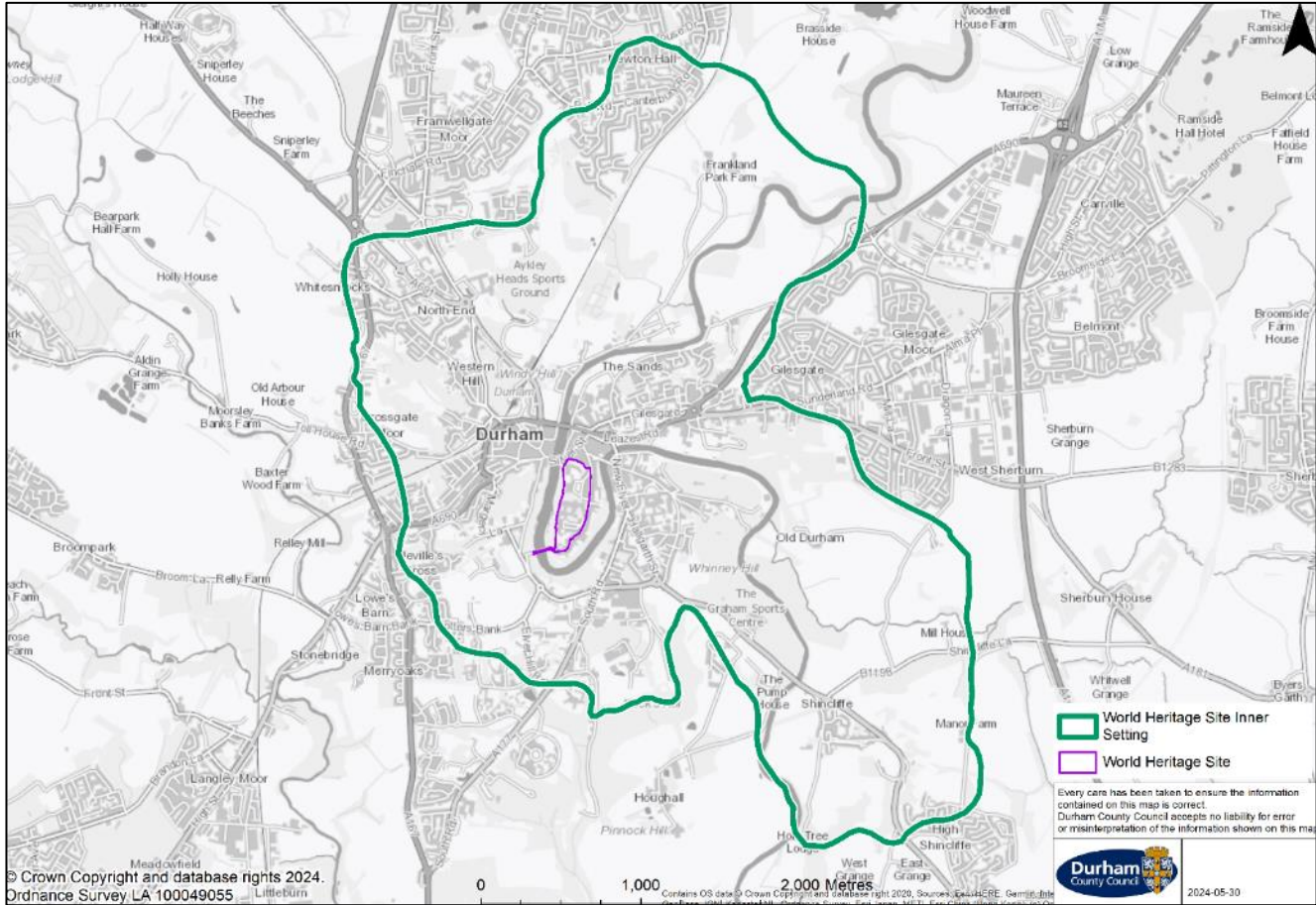
Durham WHS inner setting

Part of the values of the Durham WHS and attributes of its cultural heritage significance stem from its location on the peninsula and the surrounding river gorge supported by its inner and outer settings.

The inner setting is defined as the surrounding townscape and landscape that extends beyond the city centre to include the wider encircling ridgetops, valley terraces and open countryside. This inner setting provide a wide range of routes and views from which the WHS can be visually experienced, appreciated and its significance understood. These range from wide open river corridor views, teasing glimpses between buildings and over rooftops, panoramic views from elevated vantage points, and views channeled by streets.

This setting features a series of historic approaches including along Claypath, Gilesgate, Elvet, Crossgate and from Finchale Priory through Frankland Park. There are other informal approaches called "peths" cutting through the hillsides around the city, and historic lanes such as Blind Lane and Clay Lane. All such views, and routes, and many others, are of significance to the setting of the WHS.

Fig 59, map showing the boundary of Durham World Heritage Site and its inner setting.



*It should be noted that the setting boundary is indicative and is reproduced from the Durham WHS Management Plan.

Fig 60, a digital “viewshed” map demonstrating where the cathedral and castle are visible from across the city centre.

The map shows areas where the cathedral and castle are visible from, modelled at a range of heights: ground level; main roof; western towers; central towers. Modelled using OS terrain data with OSMM buildings extruded 8m and not showing effects of other structures or vegetation that potentially block or reduce the extent of these views.

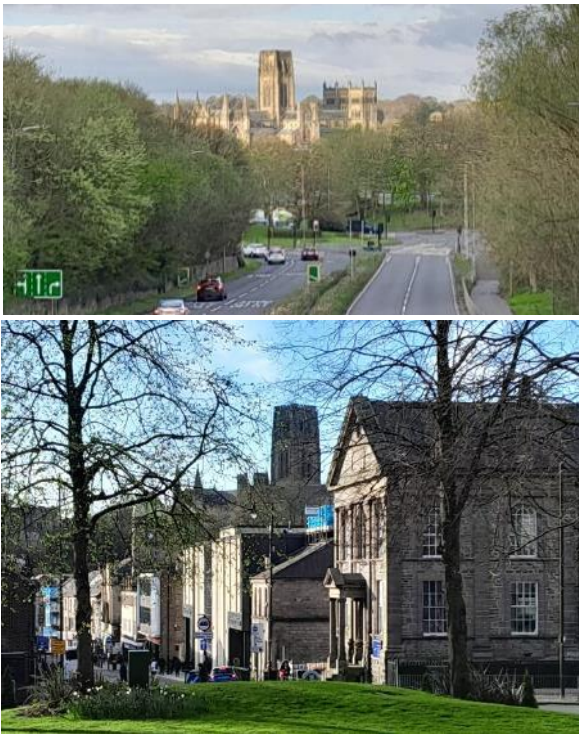
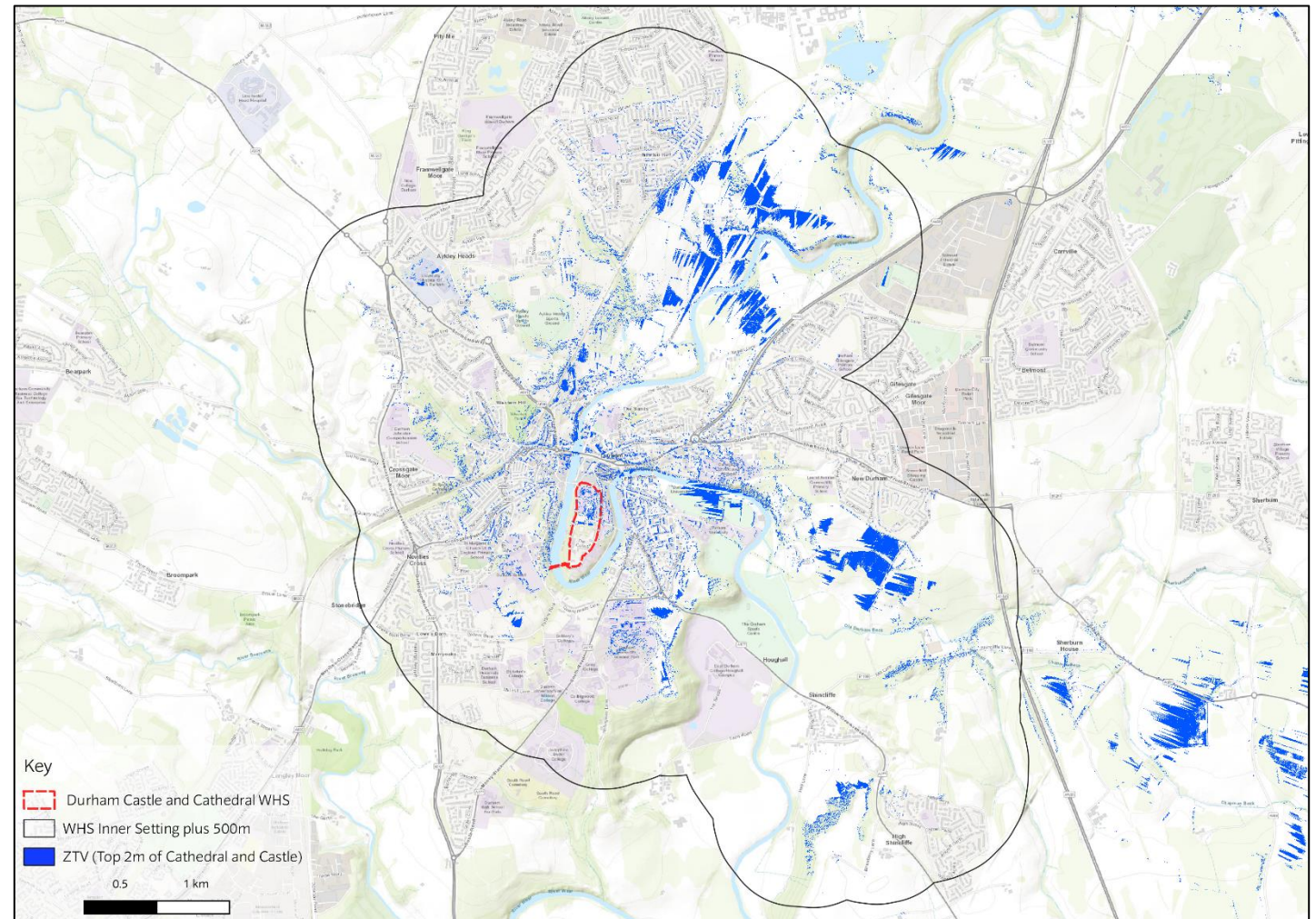


Fig 61 above views of the cathedral from the footbridge over the A690 from Gilesgate, and from North Road.



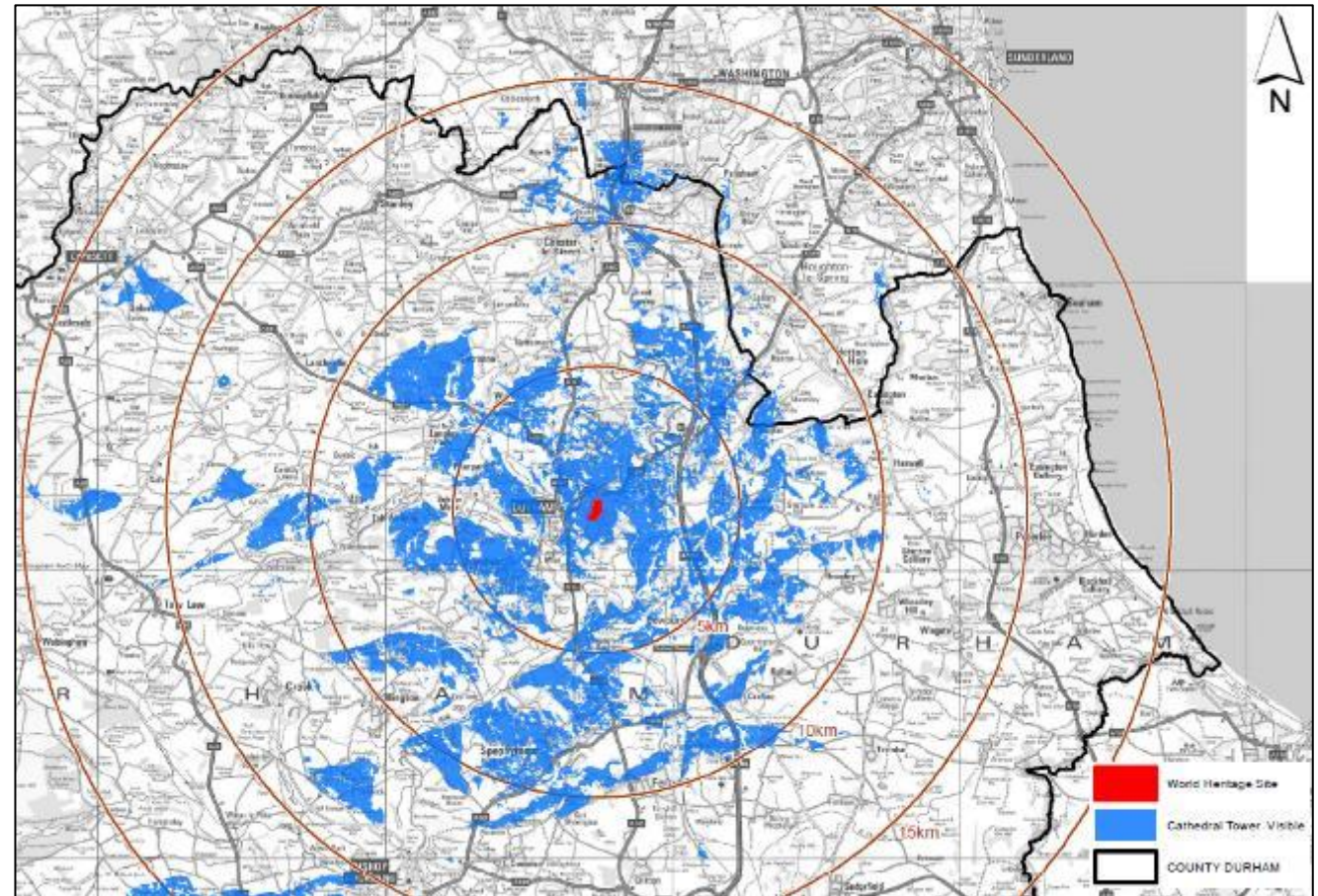
Durham WHS outer setting

The full extent of the outer setting of Durham WHS is very difficult to define and describe, as there are many views of the cathedral from many different directions at long distance that are of importance in demonstrating its status and dominance.

The outer setting is generally considered to comprise of the more distant high ground with a succession of slopes, ridges and hills that provide either views of the cathedral or are important in the backdrop of views of Durham WHS.

Beyond this there is wider visibility, with the cathedral seen up to 20km away. The Cathedral acts as a beacon summoning pilgrim to the shrine of St Cuthbert. The pilgrimage views have evolved over the centuries as the cathedral has been altered and extended.

Fig 62, map showing the cathedrals wider setting



The map shows the visual influence of the WHS and where the cathedral is visible from, that is up to 20km away, without considering buildings or trees, based on topography and computer analysis. Such long distance views are significant in terms of the demonstrating the visual reach of the cathedral testifying to its high status, visual drama, and iconic symbolism at the historic heart of Durham City

Durham WHS proposed extension

There is the potential for an extension to the boundary of Durham WHS, to encompass the wider castle precinct, the circuit of defensive castle walls, North and South Bailey, the river and full extent of the river gorge. These features support the attributes of the statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) as listed in the UNESCO designation and WHS Management Plan. The modification, through its clear boundary designation and description of significance, could assist in providing a greater understanding of the impact of development within the WHS and its setting, giving the site wider protection while adding to and upholding the sites OUV.

The extension could include the outer river gorge to recognise the true defensive extent of the WHS and the area containing the remains of the landscape that it developed within. It is a historic 'leisure' landscape that was formed on a functional working infrastructure but has since evolved into the internationally recognisable setting of the WHS. This provides the basis for the romantic setting of the WHS as currently defined.



Fig 63, the “classic” and famous view of the River Wear Corridor from Prebends Bridge that has inspired many artists and poets over the centuries.



Image, © Graeme Hall, used with permission

2.7 How do the new Durham City Conservation Areas contribute to the setting of the WHS?

As referenced earlier in this document the medieval street pattern and building plots survive that are the foundation of the current urban grain. This built form consists of historic streets tightly packed with buildings and structures of different ages, traditional in scale and form, with pitched roofs and fragmented heights in response to the topography. This has created a unique townscape setting for Durham WHS and its key buildings.

A key characteristic is that from within the narrow intimate medieval streets of Silver Street and Saddler Street, the civic space of the Market Place, and a long section of the Baily, the castle and cathedral are mostly unseen despite proximity. The cathedral dramatically unveils itself approaching up Owengate, along Framwellgate Waterside, and from Station Approach providing a strong sense of arrival. In places such as Elvet, and from parts of the outer suburb of Gilesgate, there is a stronger visual connection and relationship to Durham WHS owing to the flat open land of the floodplain, and high ridge line respectively.

The combination of this historic layout, fine grain, fragmentation of the city’s built form along, with the enclosing landscape, means that the built development is visually subordinate in relation to the castle and cathedral that is a fundamental

aspect of its visual and perceptual dominance, which is invaluable and remains conserved.

All of this is experienced, to different degrees, through the City’s historic streets, along the pilgrim routes, and other historic approaches to the WHS. These offer the most recognisable relationship to the WHS, providing a sequence of views and experiences moving towards the Cathedral and Castle. In reverse, views out from the WHS emphasis the sense of the Castle and Cathedrals, power, status, scale, and dominance over the City.

These experiences and “setting” qualities reinforce the site’s OUV and are all set within the physical fabric and framework of the seven individual Durham City Conservation Areas. The conservation areas therefore not only inform the inner setting but contribute invaluable to attributes of the WHS OUV.

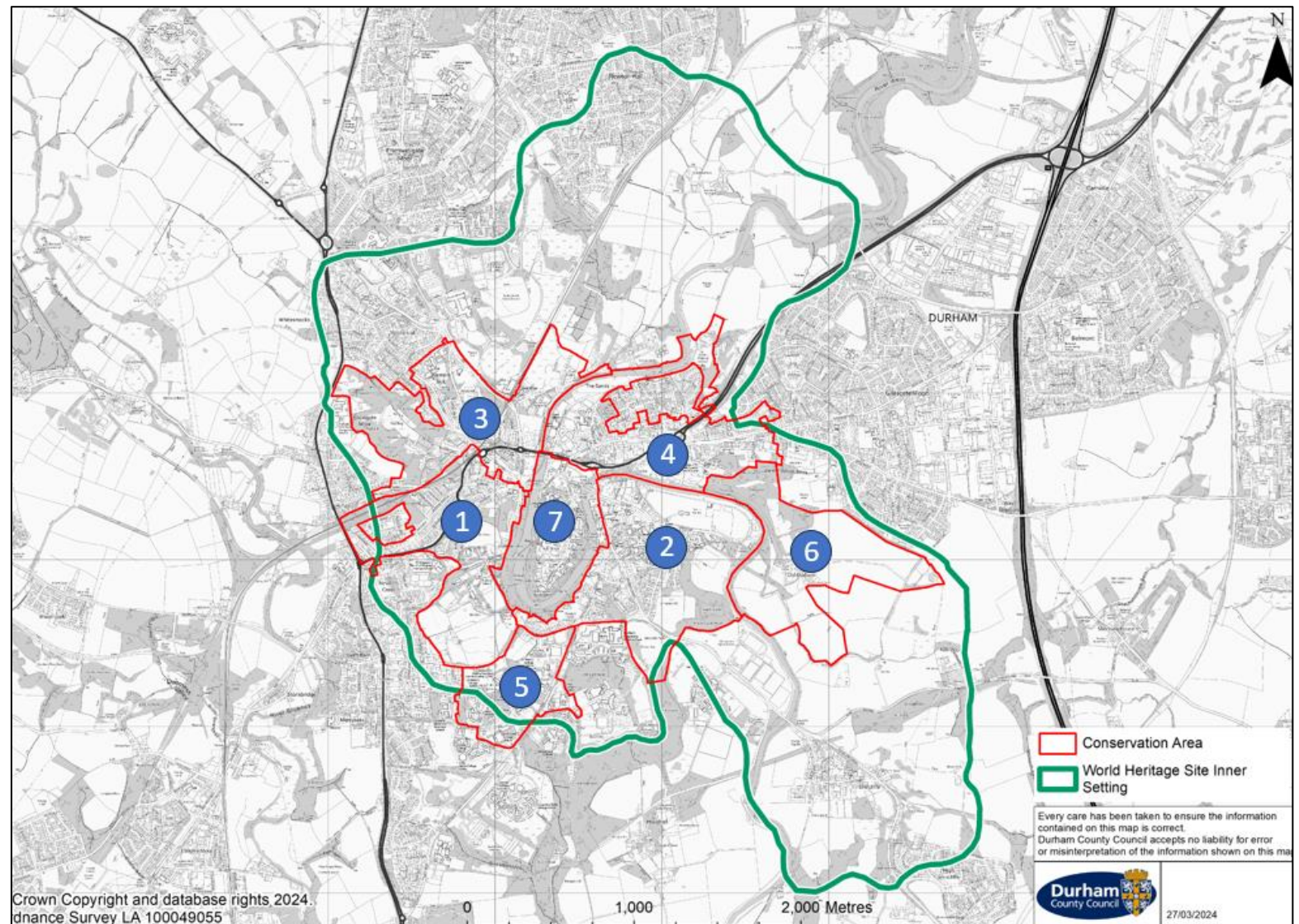
In the case of Durham City Peninsula Conservation Area, this is obviously of greater note as it informs the physical fabric and immediate setting of the WHS comprising of the buildings on the peninsula the loop of the River Wear, the steep mature tree-lined gorge and riverbanks, the sections of surviving fortifications and castle walls, and the bridges that provide significant open views.

Fig 64, Right, key streetscapes from different conservation areas top, Hallgarth Street, middle, Gilesgate Village Green, bottom, Old Elvet, all providing important approaches to Durham WHS.



Fig 65, map showing the seven Durham City Conservation Areas and the inner setting of Durham WHS, demonstrating the intrinsic geographical, spatial relationship and importance of each to one another, making up the special interest of Durham City as a whole.

1. Durham City Crossgate
2. Durham City Elvet
3. Durham City Framwellgate
4. Durham City Gilesgate
5. Durham City Hill Colleges
6. Durham City Old Durham
7. Durham City Peninsula



Visual experiences of Durham WHS

There are a range of different visual experiences across the Durham City Conservation Areas of various authenticity, and intensities. Vantagepoints form the most recognised way in which the significance and setting of the area is experienced, understood and appreciated. They can provide visual connections between different places, give an understanding as to how buildings, places and spaces, have developed and designed relationships between the urban and natural environments.

A category approach to has been adopted relating to extent, quality and contribution to the conservation area; Some are seasonal with the visual appreciation of significance greater during Winter months.

Only views contained within the conservation area boundaries have been included. Durham WHS provides a number of splendid views out, but these are excluded. The best vantage points outwards are from places such as the castles north terrace and the Bishops Garden, and obviously from the cathedral central tower, that are not experienced by the general public on a regular basis.

In the public realm, vantage points and views towards Durham WHS are more significant, the monuments designed to be looked at; Durham Castle to dominate for defensive purposes and to act as a symbol of Norman power, the scale of

Durham Cathedral was in essence to reflect the status of St Cuthbert and to catch the eye of pilgrims in the wider landscape.

Tier 1 – this can be a well-known (including internationally), historic or designed vantage point or view, can be sequential along a historic route, or key approach, providing unfolding drama of the WHS. The view has high integrity, authenticity, and high aesthetic quality, demonstrating the visual drama and dominance of the WHS in its conservation area context. The WHS forms the historic focus in the view either out, through or across the conservation area to which it contributes very positively. The view may be experienced by a high number of people on a daily basis.

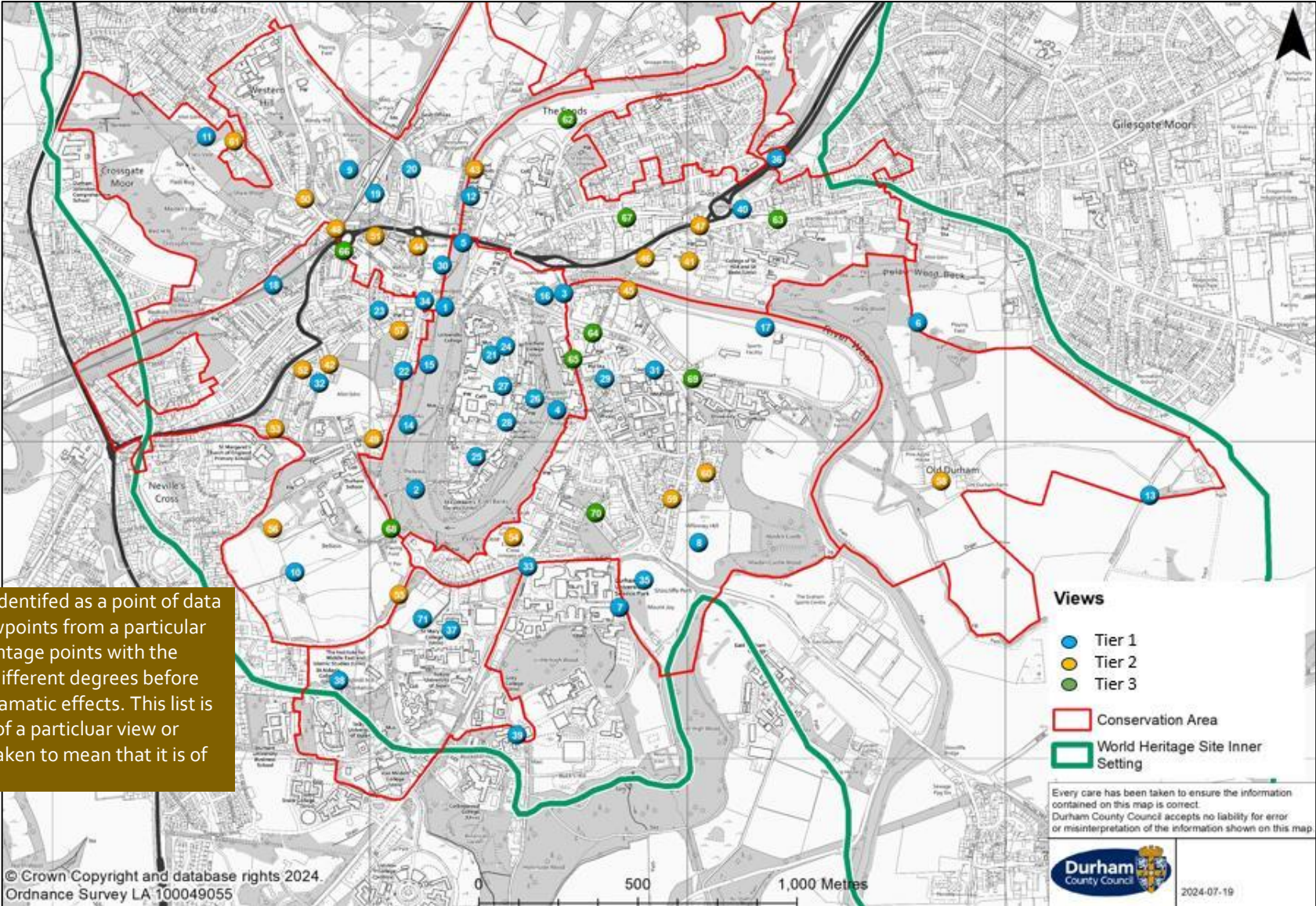
Tier 2 – the WHS may not completely form the full central focus of the view, but its significance is still well represented in its conservation area context. It may be a good view, or designed view retained in consideration of surrounding development. The view makes a positive contribution but is not exceptional nor the best place to view the WHS. Different elements of WHS may not be seen together. View may be reduced or obscured in extent and aesthetic quality, by intervening features and detractors in the foreground. May be a lesser known and lesser experienced view.

Tier 3 –the significance of the WHS is still appreciable in its conservation area context and the view still makes a positive contribution to the visual experience but at a lesser level. The view may be reduced to greater extent or its aesthetic quality more undermined by interventions. View of lesser quality overall compared to other views, and not the best viewing place to experience and appreciate the WHS to its fullest extent. Maybe a partial view, passing glimpses between, shielded or intruded by built development to a greater degree. Even so it can still contribute positively as part of a sequential view ending at a dramatic reveal.



Fig 66, the view of the cathedral from the junction of Grove Street and Pimlico, the view reduced in the Summer months.

Fig 67, map showing the categorised views of Durham WHS identified within the Durham City Conservation Areas.



It should be noted that while identified as a point of data many are not in fact fixed viewpoints from a particular location but are sequential vantage points with the moving in and out of view to different degrees before revealing itself to different dramatic effects. This list is not exhaustive and exclusion of a particular view or vantage point should not be taken to mean that it is of no importance.

Fig 68 a series of nighttime views from Baths Bridge, South Street and Owengate demonstrating the different visual experience.



By day the city provides a spectacular picture whether arriving by train or by walking through its narrow streets and by the river. It also possesses a unique night-time environment, with dark areas of natural landscape sitting close to the illuminated urban core that combine with a pattern of light generated by the activity of the city.



This takes place amongst a rich and diverse collection of historic buildings, streets, urban and garden spaces, crowned by the cathedral and castle illuminated by an architectural lighting scheme. The city has also not been dramatically over-lit improving the quality of the night-time visual experience.



Within the conservation areas there are a number of key nighttime views that generally align with some of the important day time views but give a very different visual experience of high aesthetic value.

Below are Facebook posts about the view of Durham Cathedral from the train arriving in the city demonstrating the attachment between people and the place.



“Fabulous. It always sends a message to my heart that I am home”

“As a child I travelled from Kings Cross to Newcastle on the Flying Scotsman – 10.00 am from London. This view was always the one I looked forward to”

“that view and the view from the river just screams England and is stunning”

2.8 Townscape Context

From the earliest settlement on the peninsula in the 12th century, or earlier, to the later 19th century expansion, the physical fabric of the city centre provides an irreplaceable resource of information about the origins and evolution of the city through the centuries. The townscape is organic, reflecting and emphasising the unique topography of the peninsula and river corridor, with the tightly knit grain of the medieval core of the city increasing as development moves outwards to a much coarser grain with larger sites to the north and northwest.

The city is surrounded by hills and vales encapsulating the urban form, topped by the castle and cathedral displaying exceptional and dramatic architecture and the power and influence of both the Norman conquerors and the Prince Bishops. The surrounding medieval townscape is characterised by burgage plot patterns with linear narrow frontage plots and facades expressed vertically, creating densely packed streetscapes. The medieval streets are narrow, enclosed and intimate. They incorporated vennels to access the backland, and to divide plots, but as development pressure increased, by the 15th century many were built over to create continuous frontages, with many such vennels hidden.

There is a distinctive mixture of historic buildings of different uses ranging from the 12th and 14th centuries with some timber framed buildings still legible. They are recognisable by being jettied, or with visible exposed timber framework including remnants of former buildings, or are expressed by general scale and physical form, others hidden behind later remodelled facades.

The houses of the medieval city varied considerably depending on their position, width of burgage plot, and the wealth and social status of their occupiers. A handful of timber framed buildings are known to exist such as in Silver Street and Saddler Street. Such buildings are highly significant as reminders of the medieval house plan types that characterised the ancient city.

Between the mid-16th and 19th centuries timber framing was gradually replaced by brick and stone, and extension upwards and backwards within burgage plots. This significantly changed the visual appearance of the city. Such buildings sit alongside brick and render buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries and civic, ecclesiastical, and cultural buildings of stone construction declaring their status and importance.

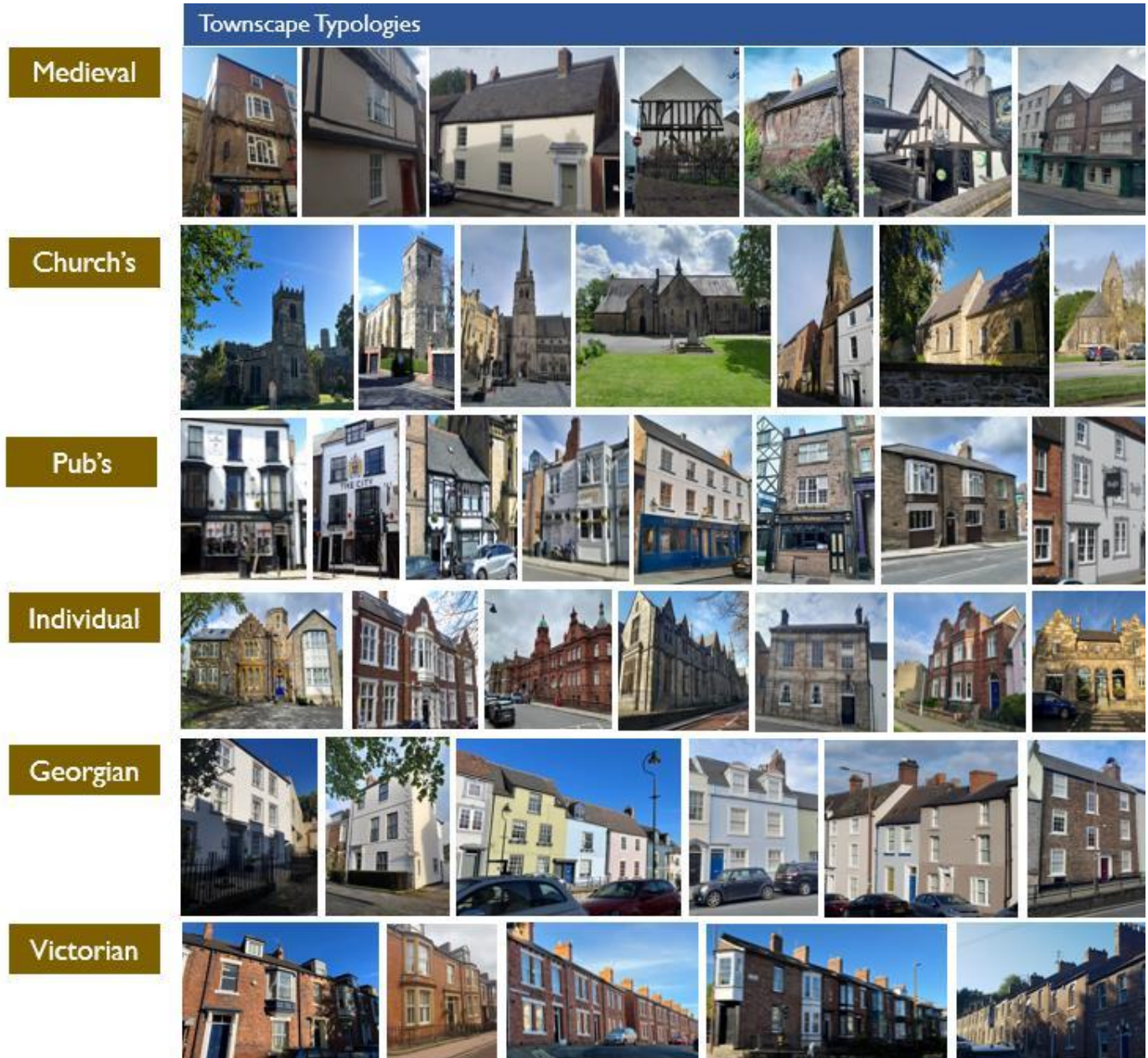
Added to this is the Victorian development that characterises the majority of the western side of the city and interjected into some of the medieval streets. These buildings are linked to the industrial heritage of the county and are a familiar building typology.

Most of the Victorian development in the city is from the modest end of the spectrum, but the streets are well planned and of strong character. There are of course some streets from the era that aspired to the more middle class that are architecturally more embellished.

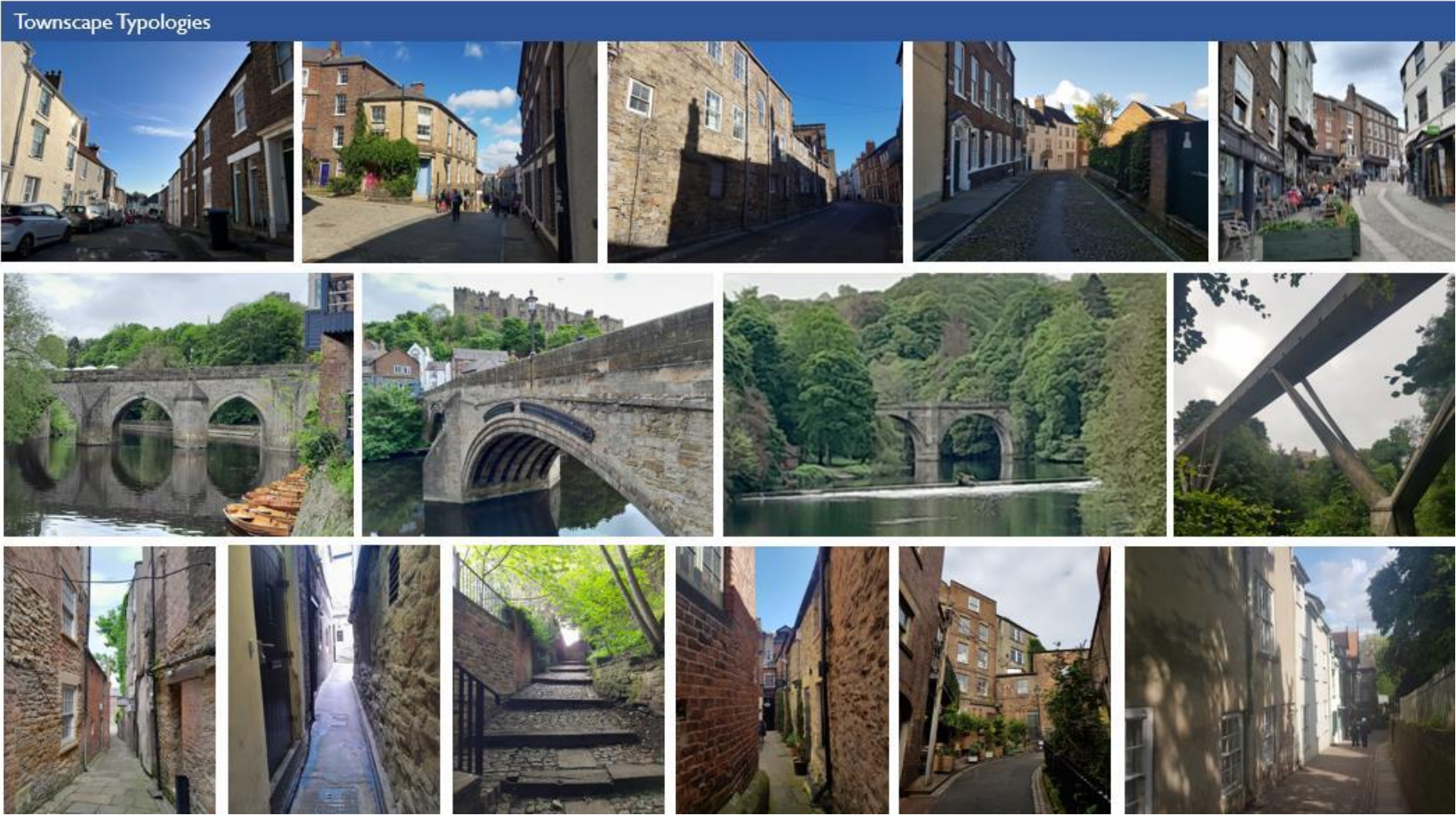
There are examples of Edwardian development that enrich the townscape reflecting many of the traits of the early Victorian buildings in terms of structure but with a bolder architectural language.

The eastern side of the city contains the majority of the city's inter-war housing. This is distinctive from the earlier Victorian and Edwardian terraced streets and characterised by wider format houses in semis or shorter terraced blocks, with a more distinct suburban character.

Right, a compilation of images showing the different building typologies that characterised the city from the medieval to the Victorian period.



Below, a compilation of images showing the primary elements of the historic plan form of the city narrow medieval streets, bridges, historic vennels and lanes.

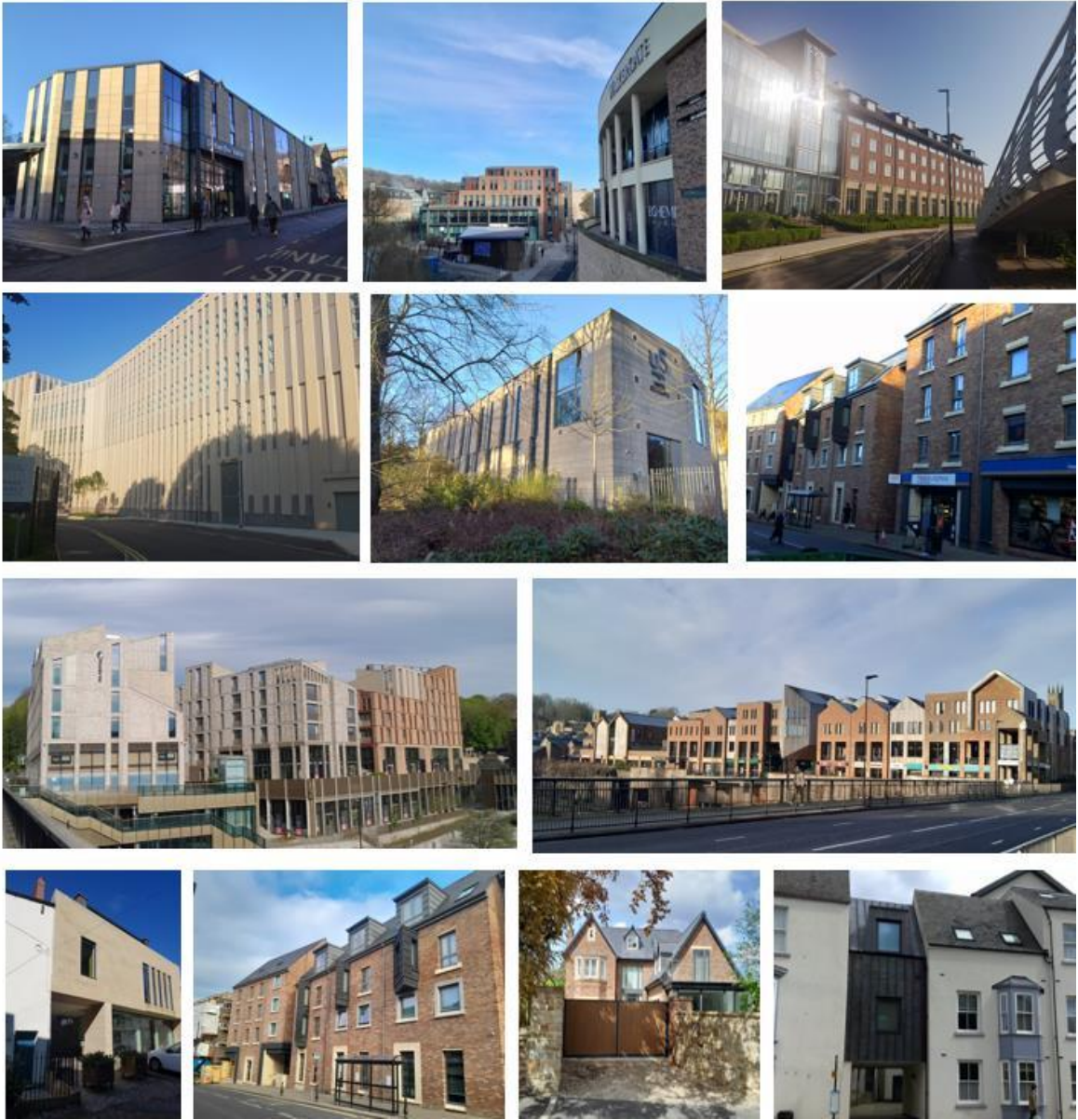


The modern layer of development spread throughout the city is markedly different to the historic form of development and is of variable design quality and townscape contribution.

Many buildings from the mid to late 20th century bear little comparison to the local vernacular. There has been a preference for flat roofed larger blocks of horizontal form with wider frontages, and of bland materials, that lack richness in detailing and aesthetic interest. At the lower domestic scale, rear flat roofed and mono-pitched roofed extensions are prevalent, many reminiscent of their Victorian hosts by being of a narrow vertical format, but other designs are more dominating flat roofed additions, that are out of character.

More recent 21st century development is bolder and unapologetically contemporary in aesthetic but in a manner that pay references to the Durham vernacular. Their design often places an emphasis on fragmented forms, vertical articulation and proportions, variation in roofscape, ordered fenestration patterns, simple detailing, and a limited palette of materials. While design is subjective, such contemporary developments add a distinctive modern layer of build form and visual interest to the townscape, some more so than others.

Contemporary



2.9 Archaeology

Although not an obvious component of the conservation area, archaeological remains contribute to understanding how the city and its environs have developed resulting in their current appearance. The character of the modern city has been heavily influenced by buried archaeology through the persistence down the centuries of street patterns, land divisions and property plots.

Archaeological excavations in recent years have disclosed the existence of prehistoric settlements at various locations across the conservation area. These include a Bronze Age enclosed settlement at Mountjoy on the south side of the River Wear, Maiden Castle Iron Age hillfort and an Iron Age roundhouse on the site of 18-29 Claypath. The remains of Iron Age structures have also been found to the rear of 17 South Bailey. The existence of other sites is suggested by chance finds. Given the spatial distribution of Late Iron Age sites in the central and eastern sectors of the county as revealed by discoveries during the last two decades, the existence of other, unknown, sites of this period within the boundaries of the Durham City Conservation Area must be a strong possibility.

Roman activity is currently represented by traces of field systems found in the Mountjoy area and there have been sufficient finds of Roman artefacts across the peninsula to suggest the existence of a farmstead somewhere on this highly attractive site. A villa complex, the most northerly known in the Roman Empire was discovered at Old Durham

during gravel quarrying in the 1940s and 1950s but was unfortunately destroyed by those operations. A Roman road, known in modern times as Cade’s Road, passed by the peninsula, about 1.5 km to the north-east, probably crossing the Wear somewhere in the vicinity of Kepier Hospital.

That a settlement existed at Durham by the 10th century if not earlier, most probably focussed on the peninsula, is suggested by the fact it was chosen as the final resting place for St Cuthbert’s coffin in 995, many years after its removal from Lindisfarne following Viking raids. A timber church and monastery were constructed. Recent excavations at 17 South Bailey yielded evidence of occupation well before this event. The city withstood sieges by Scottish armies in 1006, 1012 and 1040 indicating that it already possessed substantial defences. Traces of a clay bank potentially defensive in nature were found in the gardens of Nos 4 and 6 South Bailey in 2010. Although undated this clearly pre-dated the city wall and may have been part of the putative pre-Norman defences.

Lying at the heart of the conservation area the peninsula includes the castle and the cathedral, both possessing rich and complex archaeological sequences. The city which continued to develop around them in the 11th and 12th centuries, both within and beyond the walled area, featured closely packed properties along the street frontages. Streets such as North and South Bailey, Saddler Street, Old Elvet, Hallgarth Street, Claypath and Gilesgate. The plots to the rear of such properties

possess high potential to include archaeological deposits containing artefacts and paleo-environmental material of great importance for understanding the prosperity, lifestyle and diet of the inhabitants in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The street frontage buildings themselves may also of course retain features within or beneath them relating to structural phases earlier than the fabric visible today.



Fig 69, image showing archaeologists excavating at 5-8 South Bailey © Ecus Ltd.

2.10 Why a CAMP for Durham City and what process has been followed

There is a statutory duty of care to review conservation areas from time to time. In Durham City there is an additional need to reflect the current planning policy framework, notably with the adoption of the County Durham Plan, as well as the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adoption of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (DCNP) which were not in place during the previous review of the conservation area in 2015.

Added to the above, the built environment of the city has changed considerably since the last review with a series of historic and modern buildings demolished, major and lower scale new developments of mixed architectural output, that have shaped the place and evolved the city's aesthetic. There are a number of other factors that have reinforced the need for a CAMP highlighted to the right.

- To address criticism of not sufficiently taking on board the special interest of Durham City in previous planning decisions.
- To address political pressure regarding the condition of the city's public realm.
- To support cabinet member commitment to revitalising the commercial parts of the city centre.
- To address the need for an overarching document to pull together the delivery of competing interests such as Durham University's Masterplan, the WHS Management Plan and the emerging WHS setting study.
- To provide a robust evidence base for potential future funding bids.
- To support the delivery of the wider DCC strategic framework.
- Historic England are actively encouraging CAMPs/CARPs (Conservation Area Regeneration Plans) in urban conservation areas.
- The existing 2016 character appraisal is out of date.



Outcomes & Delivery

The CAMP will be an important vehicle for conserving and celebrating the special interest and distinctive character of Durham City, while identifying opportunities where conservation can help to deliver wider social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits within the city. The CAMP will assist with the protection and safeguarding of Durham’s WHS and its setting, and the separate conservation areas, that inform that setting in the local context.

The CAMP will be a strategic document that will align with other ongoing and emerging plans, strategies and projects and will form the management framework for the future conservation and enhancement of the city. It is delivery focused and includes a Management and Maintenance Action Plan, that specifies resources required to maintain the upkeep of the conservation areas over the long term.

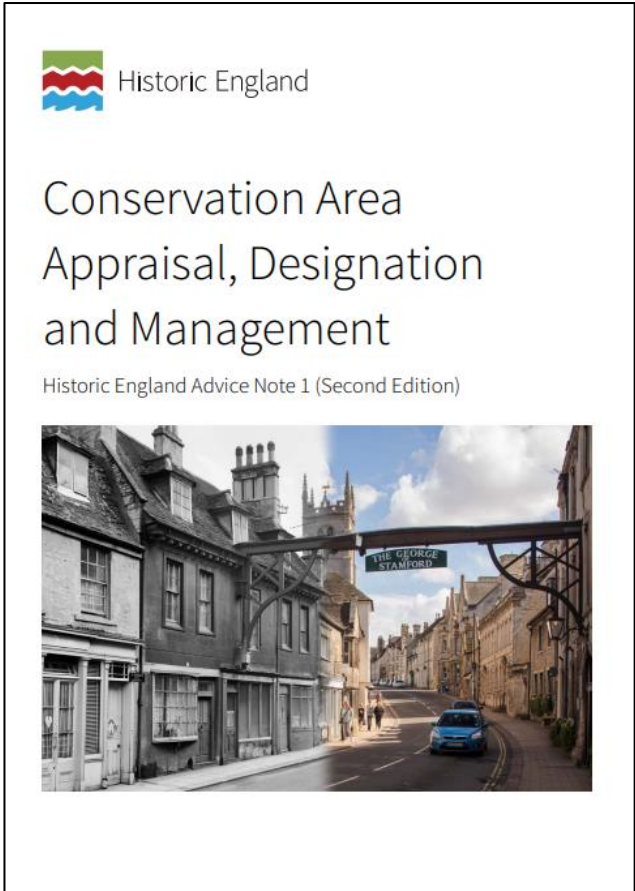
The process involves active collaboration with stakeholders and partners local communities, and relevant DCC functions. The CAMP will be a key tool to ensure continued engagement when works or changes are planned within the city bringing relevant specialisms together to achieve an outcome that conserves or enhances the special interest and qualities of the city.

A Staged Approach

The designation and management of heritage assets within the historic environment should follow a logical staged approach. Beginning with identifying the heritage assets and informing an understanding of their individual, and collective, significance, and any contribution made by setting.

The next step is moving on to an understanding of the problems, issues, potential threats, detractors, and possible negative impacts on significance, then formulate ways to avoid, minimise and mitigate those impacts while exploring opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.

The CAMP staged approach is set out in more detail on the following page and accords with the principles within Historic England guidance note 1 [Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management | Historic England](#)



The CAMP processes

APPRAISE

An appraisal is the starting point for a conservation areas designation to inform the justification and evidence base for the formal designation process.

The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding the special interest of the area and articulates why the area is special, historically and architecturally, and what elements contribute to that special interest. This can include historic street patterns, plots and boundaries, characteristic building styles, materials and detailing, trees and green spaces, topography, and views.

Once adopted the appraisal is a material consideration in planning decisions within the conservation area boundary.

*information from Historic England Advice Note 1 (second edition), Conservation Area, Appraisal, Designation and Management, published 8 February 2019.

DESIGNATE

Conservation area designation is then undertaken to recognise the special architectural and historic interest of the place and/or in answer to the impact of development, neglect and other threats, on areas which are considered to have definite special architectural or historic interest.

The designation of conservation areas is a vitally important way of protective the areas heritage for this and the future generations.



MANAGE

The management strategy then sets out the principles, aims and actions to positively manage the conservation area moving forward in a manner that conserves the special interest defined in the appraisals.

This includes maximising identified opportunities for inward investment, regeneration, and improvement.



REVIEW

The local planning authority has a statutory obligation to review their conservation areas from time to time.

The CAMP will set out a review and monitoring strategy to track progress. This is an important part of the process as regular reviews will highlight what has changed within the areas, is used to set out any new recommendations or revisions to the management strategy.



The Durham City CAMP Structure



2.11 Conclusion

The CAMP process considers that the existing conservation area boundary is too large, unwieldy and difficult to manage with significant benefits to the subdivision to seven smaller conservation areas in terms of long term protection, conservation and future management of the city’s special historic environment. The seven conservation areas are places of high historic and architectural interest, quality, and distinctiveness each with their own sense of place, to warrant individual designation. Yet, collectively they form the special interest of the city as a whole and provide a major part of the inner setting to Durham WHS.

The adopted CAMP documentation will assist the local authority, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment legislation, the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance, the local planning policy framework of the County Durham Plan, and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan.

The CAMP provides the evidence base required to inform decisions affecting the conservation areas and the city as a whole, giving particular attention to identifying opportunities where conservation can help to deliver wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits and where there may be opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

These approaches conform with the statutory duty of local planning authorities to *“pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area”*.

The CAMP has identified that the city’s historic environment is in a fair condition overall, but that its historic character, heritage and cultural significance is very strong. The city’s historic environment remains a rich and invaluable cultural resource handed down from the past, that has a key role to play in shaping the growth and development of the city, and it must adapt to various changing needs and challenges.

The CAMP has identified opportunities for positive change, some of these will not only benefit the historic environment but also help improve the city’s economic viability, and vibrancy, with opportunities for other net gains, making it a better place for all.

Ten overarching themes have been identified with a series of management aims and actions developed around them. But there must be a key focus on their delivery as and when opportunities arise. Given current and no doubt future financial constraints available resources must be used intelligently where they can have the most benefit for the most people.



Fig 70, an image of the popular public artwork piece at Riverwalk.

3. Partnerships and Policy



3.1 Crossover

The CAMP brings together numerous strands of cross-departmental service delivery across the Local Authority and supports wider stakeholder groups in the delivery of their aims and objectives. It correlates with a broad range of existing and emerging associated plans, policies, and strategies, examples of which are provided below. This crossover is fundamental in guaranteeing that the city is managed effectively and sensitively moving forward.

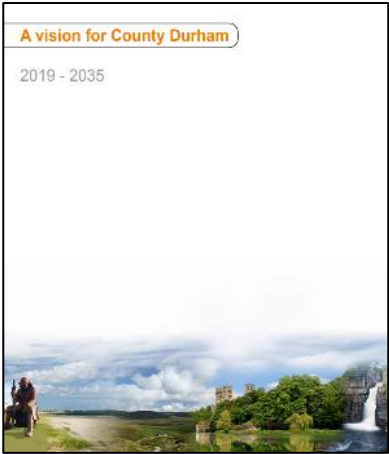
Vision for County Durham 2035

The County Durham Vision 2035, which was developed together with partner organisations and the public by the County Durham Partnership. It sets out what we would want the county to look like in 15 years' time. This vision is structured around three ambitions:

- More and better jobs
- People live long and independent lives
- Connected communities

It is to provide direction to key public, private and voluntary sector organisations that make up the County Durham Partnership enabling them to work together to improve the quality of life of our residents. A shared understanding of the issues we face and our vision for the future will help organisations work together, removing boundaries and co-delivering services for the benefit of our residents.

The CAMP will primarily support the delivery of the more and better jobs and connected communities' ambitions by helping to build on the successful tourist economy through culture-led regeneration to broaden the leisure experience for residents and visitors to the county and delivering a city centre which is well used, clean, attractive and safe.



[Durham2035-Vision.pdf](#)



The Council Plan 2024-2028

The council plan describes how the above vision will be achieved through the contribution of DCC. Written in line with the council’s financial strategy the plan is based on a strategic assessment of need using the intelligence platform Durham Insight as the evidence base. It sets out:

- How corporate priorities for improvement will be considered.
- The key actions DCC will take to achieve the longer-term ambitions in the Vision 2035.
- The DCC improvement agenda.

The ambitions within the Plan are structured around five themes for the county council:

- Our economy
- Our environment
- Our people
- Our communities
- Our council

The CAMP will support the delivery of services and projects under every theme of the Council Plan.

[Durham County Council, Council Plan 2024-28](#)



We want to create a sustainable, inclusive economy with a diverse range of jobs to meet all skill levels, with targeted learning programmes from school age, aligned to the needs of businesses and innovation opportunities



Inclusive Economic Strategy

The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy sets a clear, long-term vision for the area’s economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy.

The Inclusive Economic Strategy seeks to overcome barriers in order to transform levels of growth and harness the county’s potential, with all partners actively working towards this shared vision. The strategy has also been informed by feedback from residents, businesses and young people gathered during the Big Econ-versation, an extensive stakeholder engagement process. The vision within the strategy is built on five key areas:

- **People** - supporting people into education, training and jobs and enabling them to excel in their careers and in business.
- **Productivity** - supporting business innovation, growth and higher levels of productivity.
- **Places** - improving places and planning infrastructure so that people and businesses can access opportunities.
- **Promotion** - promoting the county, its assets and opportunities to businesses, investors, visitors, developers and residents.
- **Planet** - investing in people, technologies, research, development and businesses in order to help achieve net zero emissions in County Durham by 2045.

The CAMP will primarily support the delivery of the vision for productivity, places, promotion and planet.



[Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022 – 2035 \(countydurhampartnership.co.uk\)](https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk)

Climate Emergency Response Plan

In 2019 Durham County Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to:

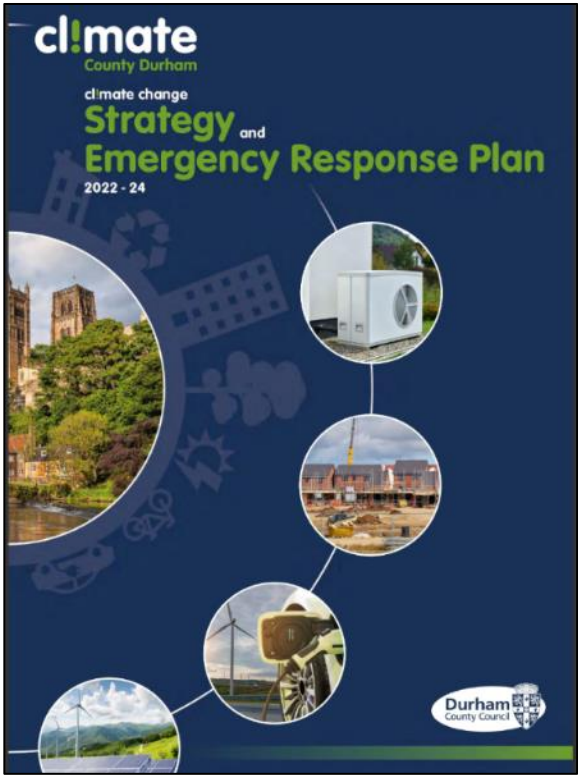
1. Reduce carbon emissions from Durham County Council's operations by 80% from 2008/09 levels by 2030, making significant progress towards making Durham County Council and County Durham as a whole carbon neutral.
2. Investigate what further actions are necessary to make County Durham Carbon Neutral by 2050 and pledge to achieve this.

A Climate Emergency Response Plan was presented to Council on 17 July 2019. To ensure goals are met, two fully costed action plans have been drawn up, one for the council's target and one for the countywide target. Each plan is written in detail for the first two years and presents an outline of what will be required for the rest of the process and will be updated on an ongoing basis. An updated version of the Response Plan will be made public every two years, including two new action plans for the next two years of work toward achieving our two goals.

The County Durham Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP2) is a two-year (2022-24) action plan adopted by Cabinet in July 2022 and followed on from the original action plan 2020-2022. CERP2 has over 150 specific actions over the two years.

The CAMP will assist in meeting the objectives and targets of these ongoing plans by supporting

appropriate sustainable development and the adaption of historic buildings in Durham City.



[Climate Emergency Response Plan \(climatecountydurham.org.uk\)](https://climatecountydurham.org.uk)

Durham City Strategic Place Plan

Since 2009, the Council has identified, and created, current and future development in the county through masterplans and regeneration frameworks. Durham City has benefited from such documents. Strategic place plans will replace masterplans with an initial focus on Durham City. The changing nature of town centres is leading to a greater emphasis on leisure and entertainment, and the ongoing challenges of accessibility and connectivity had paved the way for the new plans.

The CAMP will support the development of this document and inform consultation and engagement which underpins the process.

Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Management Plan

The World Heritage Site Managements plan is a plan for all those with an interest in and responsibility for managing the World Heritage Site. The UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention state that “each nominated property should have an appropriate management plan or other documented management system which must specify how the outstanding universal value (OUV) of a property should be preserved, preferably through participatory means”. UK Government policy aims to ensure a management plan is in place for all UK World Heritage Sites.

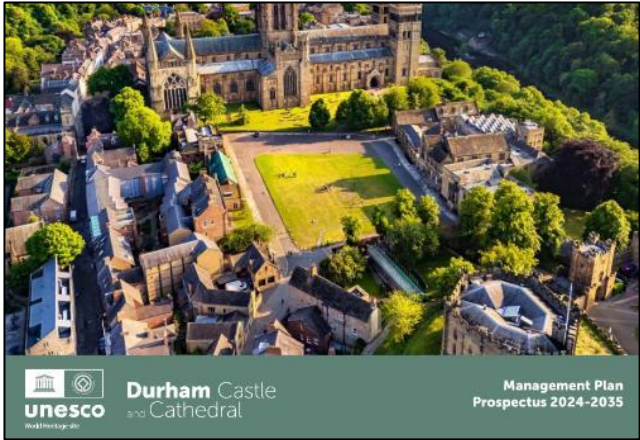
The aims of the Management Plan are to:

- Protect the Site’s Outstanding Universal Value and setting
- Conserve and enhance the Site and its setting
- Support understanding and awareness of the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value and of World Heritage
- Support communities in realising the economic, social and cultural opportunities and benefits World Heritage status can bring
- Support visitor and communities’ access, their enjoyment of the Site and its benefits
- Provide WHS management to deliver all aims

As the WHS forms an integral part of the Durham City Peninsula Conservation Area and all of the Durham City conservation areas lie within its setting the CAMP and management plan must work together to ensure the above are delivered. The CAMP also has a management role to play in preserving the OUVs of the site.

The Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site Management Plan <https://www.durhamworldheritagesite.com/files/Durham%20WHS%20Management%20Plan%202017.pdf> Sets out the significance of the site and its outstanding universal values, the range of challenges and opportunities, and provides a robust management system vital for its protection and development.

The management plan is currently being refreshed, with the prospectus for 2023-35 headlining the themes and projects of the next period [2024-2035MgtPlanprospectusfinal-compressed.pdf \(durhamworldheritagesite.com\)](https://www.durhamworldheritagesite.com/2024-2035MgtPlanprospectusfinal-compressed.pdf)



Durham University Strategy 2017 – 2027

The current university strategy which covers the period from 2017 – 2027 is based on 13 strategic areas including three academic core strategies, four transversal strategies (those which cut across different functions and management practices) and six enabling strategies.

At the halfway point in delivery, the strategy was refreshed to reflect unprecedented external pressures including the global pandemic, high inflation, rising costs and the increased challenges of climate change. Sustainability remains at the core of the strategy with enshrined commitments to net zero by 2035, switching to renewable energy sources, minimising waste and promoting recycling, reuse and sustainable transport and achieving a biodiversity net gain by 2032.

Whilst the impact of the wider estates and conservation operations on the conservation areas are clear, the university has a much wider role to play in the diversity and vitality of not only the conservation areas but the wider city and region. The strategy addresses volunteering, outreach and engagement and the support of culture led regeneration and partnerships to name but a few.

The estates and accommodation strategy expresses the aim to provide safe and inspiring living and workspaces to enable staff and students to achieve their best.

The estate covers 383 buildings. It also commits to university buildings minimising adverse impacts on the environment whilst delivering high quality new and refurbished academic buildings that provide world class environments for delivering education and research.

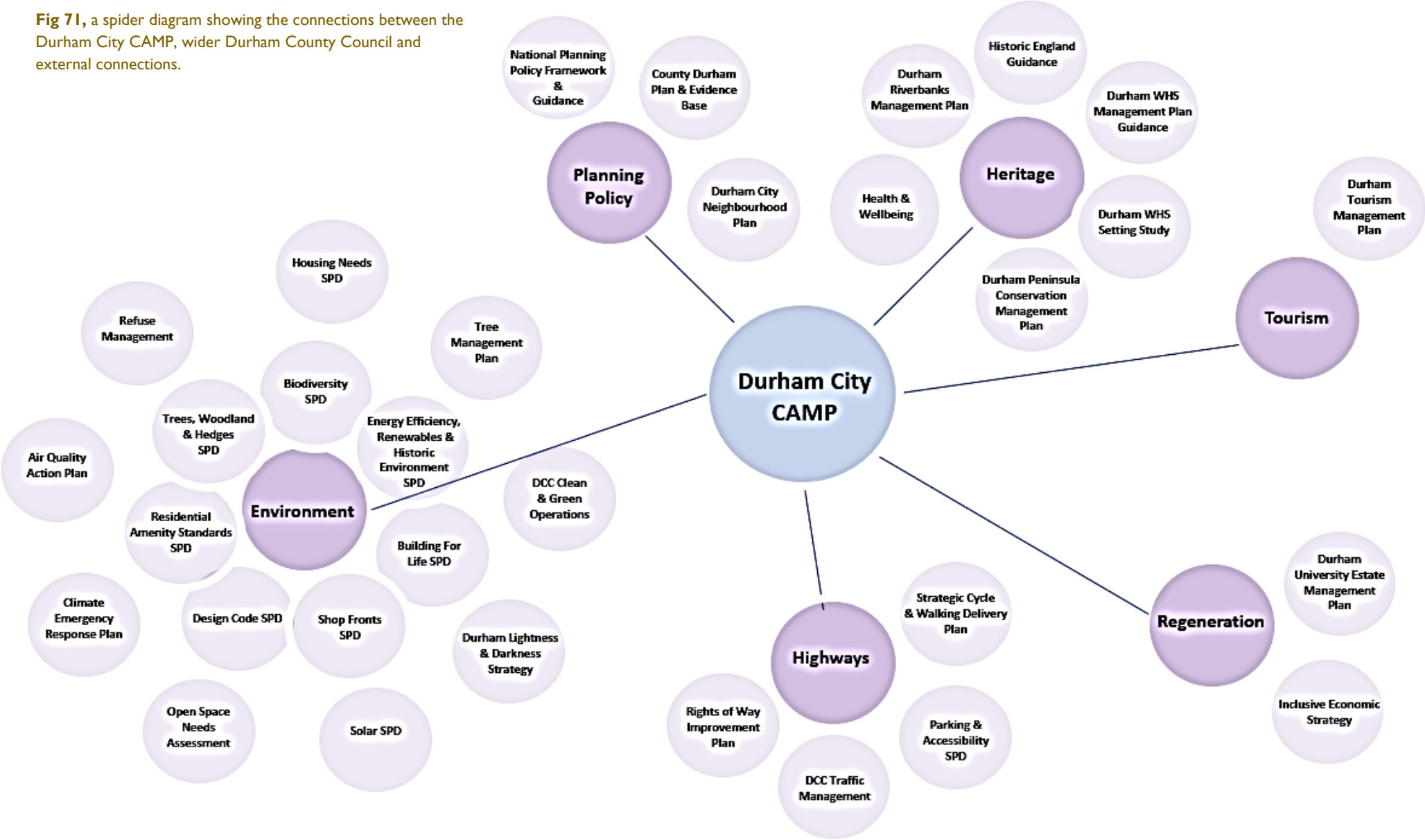
In terms of site specific objectives, the following have implications for the Durham City conservation areas:

- Establishment of the Waterside building as the new Business School
- Development of a vision for the former baths site as a cultural quarter
- Development of new research and laboratory facilities at Upper Mountjoy
- Continued refurbishment of student accommodation across the colleges
- Review of options for the redevelopment of the Leazes Road site
- Preserving the heritage by ensuring that proposed estate development is aligned with heritage policy requirements



[University Strategy - Durham University](#)

Fig 71, a spider diagram showing the connections between the Durham City CAMP, wider Durham County Council and external connections.



3.2 Legislation and Planning Policy

Planning legislation, policy and guidance, at national and local levels, enables the effective management of change within conservation area and secures the preserved and enhancement of the character, appearance and significance of the place. This section outlines the planning policy framework for the Durham City Conservation Areas.

National Legislation and Policy

The legislative framework for the conservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is set out in the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

Section 69 requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to designate areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas. Section 72 requires that special attention should be paid to ensuring that the character and appearance of these areas is preserved or enhanced.

The LPA also has the duty to review these areas and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly. Section 71 also requires the Local Planning Authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF outlines the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets [National Planning Policy Framework - 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)



states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Paragraph 197 informs that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

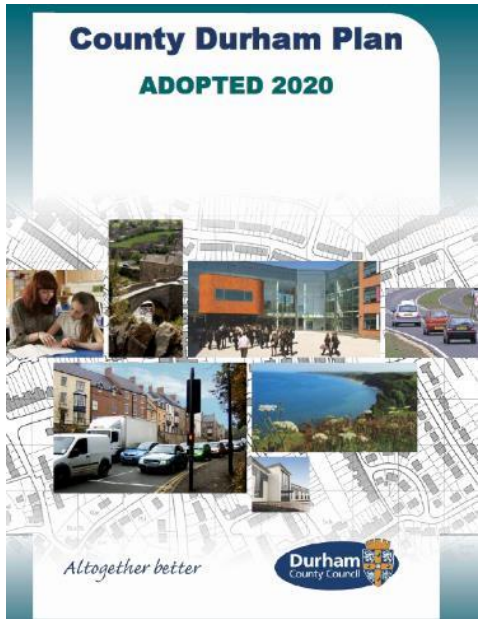
While LPAs should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites to enhance or better reveal their significance, Paragraph 213 sets down that not all elements will necessarily contribute to its significance.

The NPPF also highlights the importance of good design as one of twelve core principals of sustainable development. Sustainable development relies on sympathetic design, achieved through an understanding of context, along with an appreciation of the character of the area in which new development is sited.

Planning Policy Guidance informs that a conservation area appraisal can be used to help local planning authorities develop a management plan and plan-making bodies to develop appropriate policies for local and neighbourhood plans. A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.

Local Policy

Local planning policy is set out in the [County Durham Plan ADOPTED 2020](#).



Policy 44 (Historic Environment) establishes, amongst other things, that development will be expected to sustain the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting.

Development proposals should contribute positively to the built and historic environment and should seek opportunities to enhance and, where appropriate, better reveal the significance and understanding of heritage assets whilst improving access where appropriate.



Fig 72, above an example of a contemporary redevelopment scheme that has enhanced the riverside frontage and the conservation area, enhancing the visual experience of Durham WHS.

With regards to conservation area specifically, proposals should demonstrate understanding of the significance, character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality sustainable development, which is respectful of historic interest, local distinctiveness and the conservation

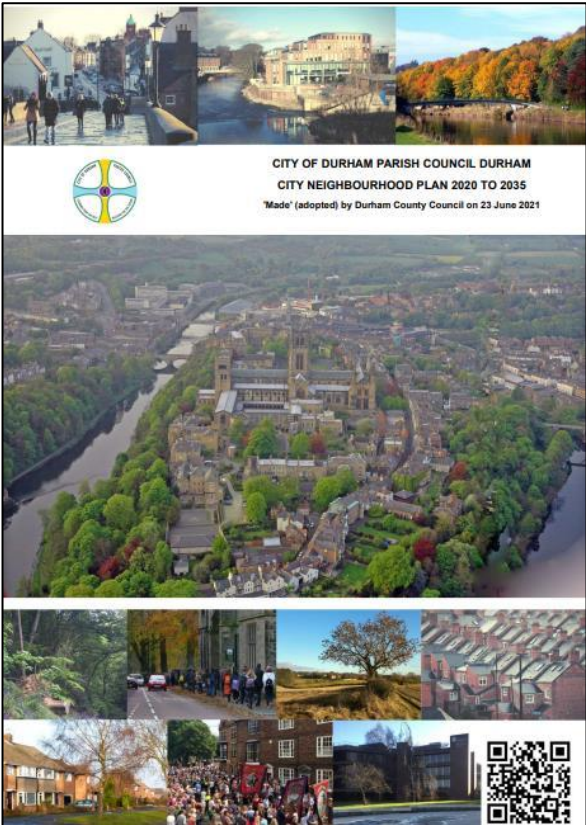
or enhancement of the asset; the manner in which a proposal responds positively to the findings and recommendations of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals; and respect for, and reinforcement of, the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including pattern, layout, density, massing, features, height, form, materials and detailing).

Policy 45 (Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site) covers the World Heritage Site (WHS). It sets down specific requirements for development within or affecting the WHS, which should sustain and enhance the significance of the designated asset; be based on an understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site, having regard to the adopted World Heritage Site Management Plan and Statement of Outstanding Universal Value; protect and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value, the immediate and wider setting and important views across, out of, and into the site.

Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) establishes the general design requirements for new development across the County. It is supported by key supplementary materials including the County Durham Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Design Code SPD. The Design Code is further supplemented by Settlement Character Studies, which provide additional texture and detailing around the history, form, morphology, distinctiveness and materiality.

Additional SPDs are expected to be adopted in 2024 including the Trees, Woodlands and Hedges SPD, Shopfront Design SPD, Energy Efficiency, Renewables and The Historic Environment SPD and Non-Designated Heritage Assets SPD.

The [Durham City Neighbourhood Plan | Developing a neighbourhood plan for Durham City](#) was adopted in June 2021.



It includes policies which sit alongside those of the County Durham Plan to provide an extra layer of detail specific to the City.

S1 (Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Re-development Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions).

This captures, amongst other things, that proposals should conserve the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness, important views, tranquillity and the contribution made to the sense of place by Our Neighbourhood’s designated and non-designated heritage assets. Appendix B includes a list of non-designated heritage assets which is derived from Durham City Conservation Area Character Area documents (2016).

Policy S2 (The Requirement for Masterplans or Other Design and Development Frameworks) is also of relevance to the CAMP insofar as it requires major development to be positively supported by appropriate supporting design materials.

Policy H1 (Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site) requires, amongst other things, development proposals within the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site to sustain, conserve, and enhance its Outstanding Universal Value and support the current adopted management plan.

Policy H2 (The Conservation Areas) sets down detailed requirements in relation to Durham City Conservation Area, and how it can be sustained and enhanced.

The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies a number of Local Green Spaces under Policy G2, creation of the ‘Emerald Network’ under G3 and a general requirement to protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure in accordance with Policy G1.




4. Review Process & Results



4.1 Conservation Area review

The starting point of the CAMP was a comprehensive review of the existing conservation area, with a survey methodology established at the beginning of the process for assessing the conservation areas present-day character and condition. The survey was undertaken on a street by street basis using a modified version of the survey form utilised for the last review in 2015. The form follows Historic England best practice guidance.

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT (C.A.T)
DETAILED CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SURVEY DETAILS	
CHARACTER AREA AND NO	ELVET, SUB AREA 4 (OLD ELVET AND NEW ELVET)
STREET NAME	Whinney Hill
DATE AND TIME	06/06/2023 10am
1. BUILDINGS	
ASSESSMENT CATEGORY	COMMENTS
TOVNSCAPE – GENERAL COMMENTS (BUILDINGS/SPACES)	A long street running north-south between Old Elvet/Green Lane and Stockton Road/Shincliffe Bank/Halgarth St. Consistency in townscape comprising of separate blocks of interwar local authority housing stock, and prison officers housing with Hill-Durham dominating at the north end of the street. Contemporary housing development on site of form school. Historic buildings in the area relate to the C19 prison wings and medieval farm buildings of the Prison Officers Club.
BUILDING CONDITION	Good overall. Medieval farm buildings identified previously as being at risk to significant erosion of masonry fabric, considered in detail as part of BAR survey.
BOUNDARY TREATMENTS	Wide mixture, prison officers housing have brick walls with stone pillars and copings, around the Prison area there are metal railings and tall brick walls around the car park, followed by different types of timber fencing and hedging to the residential properties. The steeply raised roadside verges have metal railings and handrails to steps. In the south part some have brick walls. Contemporary development has brick walls of different heights and sections of timber fencing, with stone gabions forming the northern boundary. Farm buildings are enclosed by a mixture of modern brick and historic masonry walls.
USES (PRESENT)	Residential and HMP
USES (HISTORIC)	Residential and HMP
CONTRIBUTION OF BUILDINGS TO THE SPACE	Positive contribution.
BUILDING AGE	Medieval, C19, Mid C20 and C21
BUILDINGS HEIGHTS, MASSING AND SCALE	Mixed, in main front street all are two storied with one and two storied extensions, but there is variation at the south end of the street there are detached and semi-detached properties that are taller and wider, consistent scale and massing to the local authority housing, on the former school site the built form is 2-4

Fig 73, example of a survey form.

The scoring categories are as follows:

Optimal – the condition of the area is very good and retains the vast majority of historic fabric and architectural detailing. Public realm is in good condition and there are no major issues identified in any of the categories.

Fair– the condition of the area is generally good, but there is some loss of historic materials, features or architectural detailing. Public realm may require improvement or repair, but the overall area is clearly forming a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Poor – the condition of the area is clearly deteriorated. There may be fewer remnants of historic fabric or architectural detailing that remain. Public realm may be very poor and require significant improvement.

Very bad – the condition of the area is so deteriorated that it is not possible to discern its contribution to historic or architectural interest of the conservation area. There may be few to no historic buildings remaining or the substantial loss of historic fabric or architectural.

The main headlines for assessing the conservation area relate to

- Context, townscape, and landscape,
- Historic development, and use,
- Spatial analysis (layout, form, views, open spaces, boundaries, public realm, greenery/trees),
- Architectural character (building ages, styles, materials, features and detailing),
- Ambiance and general sense of place,
- Issues, problems, potential threats and opportunities to enhance.

Additional to the primary toolkit surveys, the following theme specific surveys have been undertaken.

- Shop front and signage audit
- Views analysis
- Non-designated heritage assets audit
- Heritage at risk review
- Article 4 review

The condition survey found a series of overriding issues and problems across the city as set out below.

Public Realm

- Some insensitive street surfacing materials to historic context.
- Mix matched street surfacing materials (type, colour, module) un-coordinated and lacking an interface material between different materials.
- Surfacing repairs carried in different materials resulting in a poor visual appearance.
- Deterioration of street surfacing materials, tarmac broken down by use, distortions and disintegration, fractured and broken paving slabs, uneven surfaces.
- “Hot spots” visually cluttered by abundance of street furniture items.
- Uncoordinated and outdated items of street furniture and wayfinding signage.
- A-boards cluttering pavement and hindering movement.

- Lack of co-ordinated and meaningful interpretation.
- Heritage vandalism and anti-social behaviour issues.

Buildings

- Redundant historic buildings.
- Loss of traditional fabric for modern alternatives such as timber replaced with upvc and natural slate for fibre cement.
- Loss of traditional features such as doors and windows, replaced with unsympathetic modern alternatives.
- Low quality modern dormers.
- Loss/reduction of chimney stacks and missing pots.
- Lack of general upkeep, maintenance and deterioration of building fabric.
- Low quality modern development and infills detracting or neutral in contribution.
- Modern clutter fixed to elevations.

- Low quality modern shop fronts and advertisements, shop windows visually cluttered.

Green Infrastructure

- Unmanaged trees blocking, or heavily reducing extent and quality of WHS views.
- Loss of private front gardens for hard standing parking areas.
- Green spaces damaged by vehicles.
- Unmanaged and overgrown green spaces.

Boundaries

- Loss of historic boundary treatments and features.
- Damage and deteriorating fabric of historic boundary treatments.
- Rendering/painting over historic materials.
- Insensitive alterations and rebuilding in lower quality materials.

- Modern boundaries visually harsh and inappropriate to surroundings and context.
- Instability of walls caused by trees.

Highways

- Associated paraphernalia excessively cluttering spaces.
- Parked vehicles cluttering historic streets and spaces.
- Conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians and congested narrow historic streets.

Other

- Gap sites and vacant sites detracting from street scene.
- Poor back lane and vernal environments.
- Refuse bins visible within streets often a high number collected in one place, in places impeding pedestrian movement.
- Lighting column style not in keeping with historic context.

Examples of issues



Shop and signage audit

The city contains a wide range of shop frontages, and those that are well-designed can be of great importance in terms of contributing to the character and appearance of the place, and the conservation area as a whole. They can also be of historic and architectural interest in their own right. However, poorly designed shopfronts and signs can detract from local visual amenity.

Given the above, it is important to review the existing shop fronts and signage within the city, their quality, value, and condition. This will then help to develop specific management aims and actions to secure appropriately designed new shop fronts and signs in the future, secure potential improvements to the existing shop fronts, and continue to monitor the situation in terms of potential harmful unauthorised changes. This information can be used as an evidence base for heritage repair, regeneration, and potential re-instatement of lost historic and architectural detail.

The methodology used for the audit was based on fieldwork, during which all shop fronts were visually inspected and recorded with any issues noted. This included an analysis of the quality of the shop front and signage in terms of its contribution within the conservation area being regarded as positive, neutral or negative. It also included highlighting potentially unauthorised advertisements.

Fig 74 examples of different shop fronts good quality traditional designs and lower quality modern designs with poor signage



Views and Vistas analysis

Durham is a city of views, where the topography, historic development, and layout combine to generate a high number of important and evolving views, vantage points, and vistas that contribute significantly to the conservation areas character.

As referenced previously in this document, many views within and across the conservation areas are obviously drawn towards the castle and cathedral gloriously dominating the skyline. The time of day, weather and seasons impact on views, that can create striking images further highlighting the castle and cathedral and how they relate to the river, riverbanks and surrounding townscape.

But the city is not just about the WHS, there are many more landmarks, focal points and splendid streetscapes that add historic depth, character and visual interest to the place, and set the areas historic identity.

It would not be possible to identify and assess all of the views within the city, the approach taken was to identify the key views from the public domain that capture historic landmarks and focal points, and the more notable historic streetscapes that demonstrate the special character and distinctiveness of the place.

The views identified range from those that provide a sequence evolving with movement, panoramic views from surrounding hills and ridges, enclosed channelled views and static views from a specific "viewing place". Key nighttime views were also identified that are focused upon the WHS.

In order to provide structure and consistency to the assessment process "English Heritage, *Seeing the History in the View, a method of assessing heritage significance within view, May 2011*" and "Historic England, *The setting of Heritage Asset, Good Practice Guidance Note 3, second edition*" have been used as the baseline methodology. The views are identified within in the individual conservation area character appraisals.

Fig 75 the view of the Viaduct from East Atherton Street, right top the view along Pimlico, Durham Castle from Framwellgate Bridge, and the bottom the view along Old Elvet.



Non-designated heritage asset audit

The city boasts a rich and varied historic environment reflecting its unique history and development. This is recognised by the fact that there is a high number of designated heritage assets (listed buildings and scheduled monuments). Added to these there is a significant number of other buildings, structures and features, that contribute to the city’s history, character, and special interest that are not statutorily recognised. These are categorised as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA), defined as *“buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes that have a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets”*.

A key part of the review process is identifying such NDHAs so that they are documented, recognising their positive contribution, and protected for the future generations. Such heritage assets help make the place special for local people; they carry history, traditions, stories and memories into the present day and help give the city its distinctive identity.

A list of NDHAs within the city has been produced based upon an initial compilation of all the known existing NDHAs as identified within the local list for Durham City, the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan, the existing Conservation Area Character Appraisals, DCC Historic Environment Record,

those identified through the planning process and detailed survey work.

The list was then filtered down by removing buildings known to have been demolished since being previously identified, some since discounted as NDHAs following further research including heritage statements as part of planning applications, and buildings, structure and sites that were repeated in the different lists. Each asset was then assessed using the methodology as set out in the draft NDHA SPD with a pro forma completed for each one based on 5 key headings:

- Age and rarity
- Group Value
- Architectural or artistic interest
- Historic interest
- Archaeological interest



The headings are then sub-divided into individual criteria with a question approach to assessment, the end scoring being as follows

Criteria Met	Level of significance
0	No significance
1 – 2	Low Significance.
3 – 5	Moderate Significance
6 – 9	High Significance
10+	Exceptional Significance (Locally listable & potentially nationally listable)

A final total of 314 NDHA’s were identified following the above process, these are mapped and listed within the individual character appraisals. It should be noted that this excludes those on the local list for Durham City, and that this list is not exhaustive and continues to be updated.



Fig 76 examples of different NDHA a private college chapel and the main college building at St Hilde and Bede College

Heritage At Risk Review

Historic England’s Heritage At Risk [Heritage at Risk 2023 Registers | Historic England](#) programme is important in helping to understand the overall state of the historic environment within the country. The programme identifies those sites that are most at risk of being lost as a result of vacancy, neglect, decay, or inappropriate development.

Historic England produces a Heritage at Risk Register annually, the end result being a dynamic picture of the sites most at risk and in need of safeguarding for the future. Added to this, the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan, the existing Conservation Area Character Appraisals, and conservation area review survey work identifies buildings at risk. In combination the above information provides an overall picture of heritage at risk within Durham City.

The methodology for the review adopted Historic England’s Conservation Areas At Risk overall assessment of risk status. This is based upon the answers to a series of questions and flow chart combining the existing condition of fabric, level of vulnerability, and trajectory/trend, to give a final risk assessment of Not at Risk, Vulnerable, or At Risk.

In Durham City

- 5 Grade I or II* listed buildings are included on the national Risk Register
- 18 Grade II listed buildings and Non-Designated Heritage Assets in the City have been identified as part of the conservation area review process.

Fig 77 examples of different buildings at risk, the former Miners Hall North Road, South Street Mill building on the riverbanks, the redundant Edwardian outbuildings at Mount Joy Farm, and former public swimming baths at Elvet Riverside.



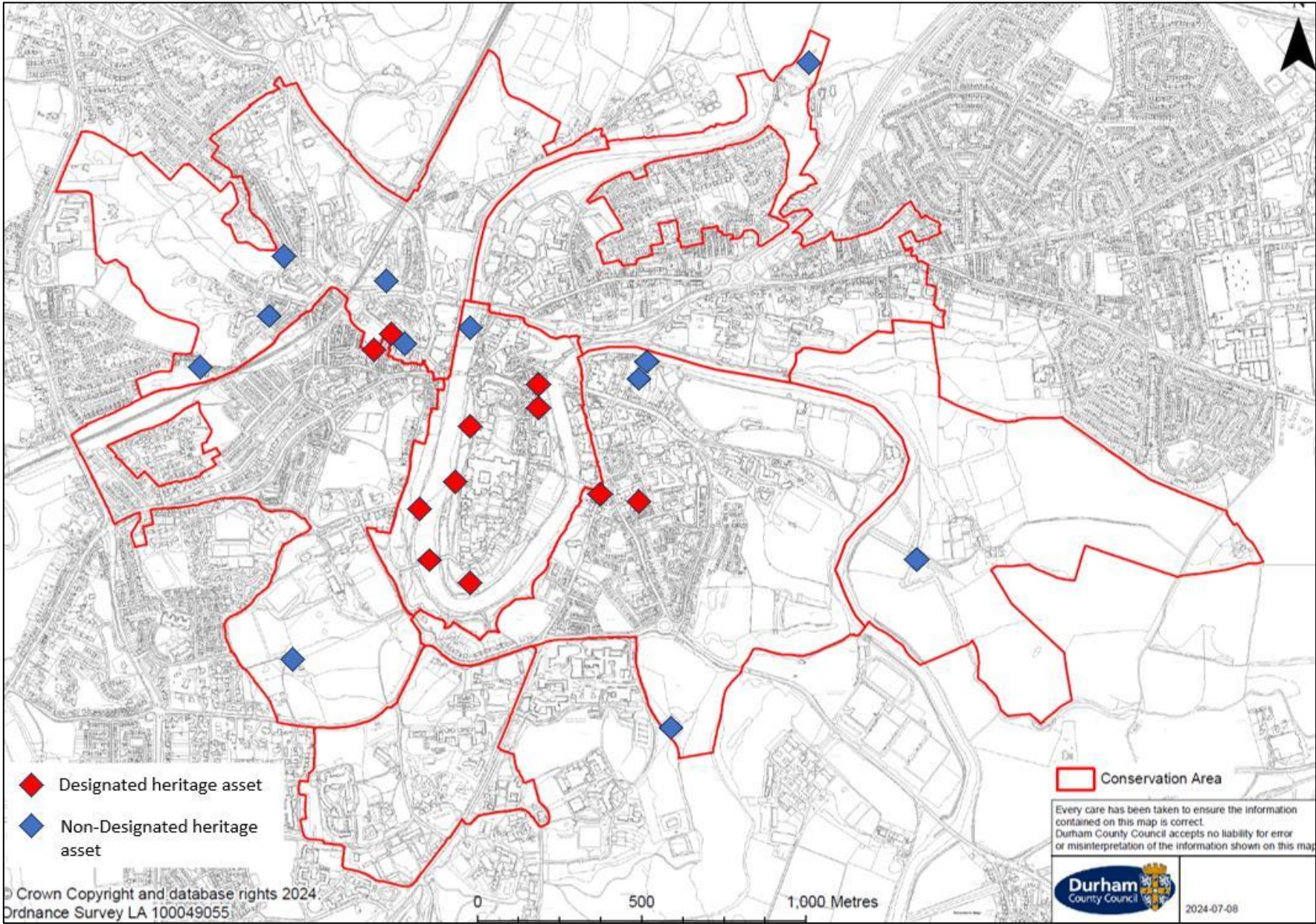
Heritage “At Risk” List

1. Prebends Bridge, grade I listed and Scheduled Monument.
2. Castle wall behind 3 North Bailey, grade I.
3. No 4 North Baily and Castle walls, grade II*.
4. Durham Prison Officers Club Tithe Barn, grade II*.
5. South Street Mill, riverbanks, grade II.
6. Fulling Mill, riverbanks grade II.
7. St Cuthberts Well, riverbanks, grade II.
8. Counts House, riverbanks, grade II.
9. Nos 31,32,33 Church Street, grade II.
10. Former Miners Hall, 15-17 North Road, grade II.
11. United Bus Company Canteen, (Childrens Nursery Building), North Road, grade II.
12. Former public Swimming Baths, Elvet Riverside (NDHA).
13. Detached cottage to rear of former Swimming Baths, Elvet Riverside (NDHA).
14. Mount Joy Farmhouse & associated outbuildings (NDHA).
15. Brick railway brick and abutment remains, riverside (NDHA).
16. Industrial Buildings, Back Western Hill (NDHA).
17. Flass Well, Flass Lane (NDHA).
18. St Bede’s Cemetery Walls and Lychgate, Redhills Lane (NDHA).
19. Walls at Observatory House, Potters Bank (NDHA).
20. Former brick kiln Kepier (NDHA).
21. Former Cinema (Babylon) North Road, (NDHA).
22. Railway walls Station Approach (NDHA).
23. Weirs River Wear (NDHA).



Fig 78 *Prebends Bridge and the Counts House.*

Fig 79, map showing the locations of the heritage assets at risk.



Article 4 review

The Article 4 Review is a critical part of the appraisal process, as minor domestic alterations that can normally be carried out without planning permission can be detrimental to the character and visual appearance of historic properties. The Article 4 is an important legal instrument that can bring certain types of development back under the control of the LPA to residential properties only to protect historic and traditional fabric and architectural features that contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The review process and outcomes are explained in detail in the **Management Strategy** document.

Regulation 7

Following a public consultation and application to the Secretary of State a Regulation 7 Direction was served in parts of the city to give control of the number of to let boards on display. These were increasing significantly in number in specific streets within the conservation area associated with an increase in the delivery of student accommodation. To let boards serving to be detrimental to the character and special visual amenity of the conservation area, with significant representation made to the Council over a period of time concerning such impacts.

The Regulation 7 is a key tool for such works which are otherwise difficult to control, due to letting boards being a class of advertisement that benefit from “deemed consent”. The CAMP supports the continuation of this regulation to ensure the aesthetic qualities of the conservation areas are not harmed by the proliferation of such items in the streetscene.

Identifying the Conservation Area boundaries

An important aspect of the appraisal (and review) is considering where the conservation area boundaries should be drawn (and whether the boundaries of an existing conservation area should be re-drawn). An explanation of why the boundary is drawn where it is (or extensions are suggested, in the case of existing conservation areas), and what is included and what is excluded, is also part of the process.

This is covered in greater depth in **Section 5.3**, but the detailed survey work was a significant part of the evidence base in terms of identifying the buildings/structures, sites and areas that possess sufficient special architectural and historic interest that justifies their designation and to inform the overall individual conservation area boundaries. In addition, further fieldwork was undertaken to assess natural features and a review of areas on the periphery of the existing boundary for potential inclusion.

The final boundaries are considered to be clearly defined by logical physical built and natural features while seeking to avoid for example running along the middle of a street, or through a property/dwelling plot. They also include correcting anomalies found as part of the review process to the existing conservation area boundary.

4.2 Consultation & engagement

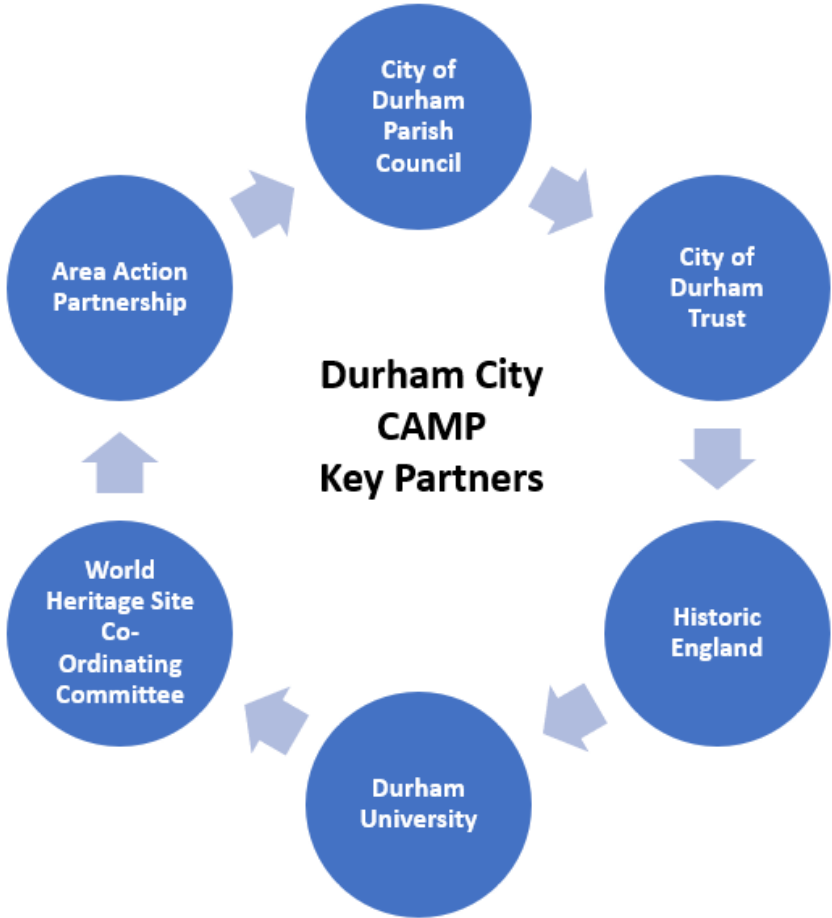
The production of the draft CAMP has been a collaborative process involving cross-service and wider external stakeholder consultation and engagement. There has been both formal consultation at key stages in the programme and informal engagement through the process at certain points. Added to this the local community has assisted with specific on-site survey work.

Public consultation is an integral part of the appraisal process. By consulting local communities and owners on new designations, and when appraising and reviewing conservation areas, consideration can be given to relevant information they might present, helping to ensure decisions are robust. Local communities and owners provided proactive assistance in identifying the general areas that merit conservation area status and defining the boundaries and can add valuable and depth to the evidence base. In return this gives the local community a sense of ownership of the appraisals and future management strategy.

The public consultation process is underpinned by the Council's ongoing commitment to its [Consultation and Engagement statement](#). In respect of this, in collaboration with the Councils Consultation Officer Group, a project initiation document, engagement plan, communication plan, and equalities impact assessment have been produced that in combination provide the full formal consultation plan for the CAMP project.

This focuses upon two main phases of public consultation, both online, and face-to-face at an organised drop-in event.

Once the two main phases of public and stakeholder consultation have ended, all of the submitted and recorded responses will be reviewed, carefully considered and used to evolve the conservation area boundaries and documentation etc as necessary.



5. Designation and Justification



5.1 Designation & History of the Durham City Conservation Area

Designation is the formal process of the LPA establishing a conservation area that must be properly followed otherwise the designation could be challenged.

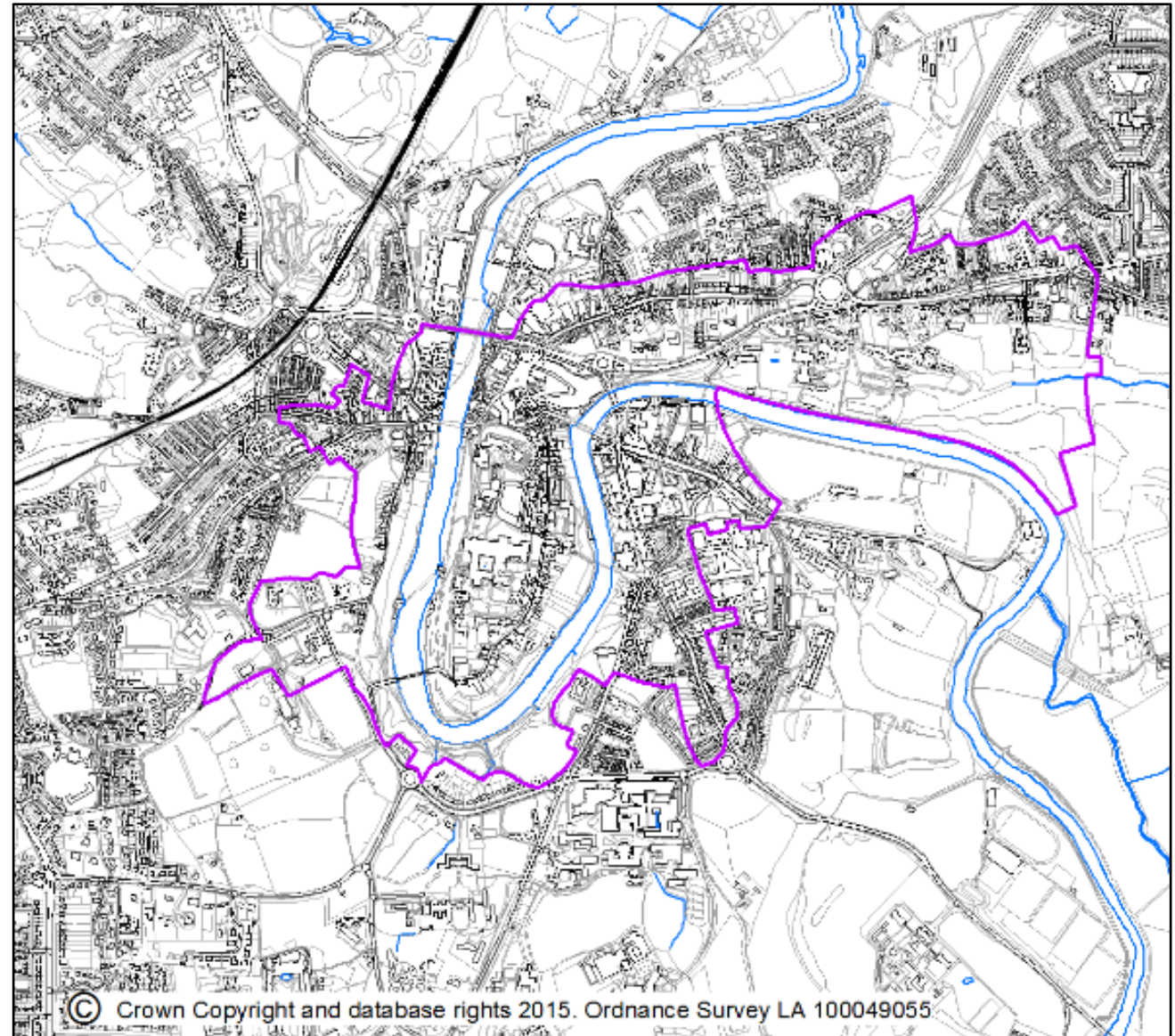
Background

Durham City is of very high heritage significance, this was recognised by its designation as a conservation area originally in 1968 focusing on the peninsula and the medieval town plan. In 1980 it was significantly enlarged to take in the wider city centre and the natural bowl in which the built form is settled, and thus much of its later growth and setting.

The original designation included the peninsula with Durham Castle and Cathedral as its centrepiece, the Market Place and the Medieval streets leading out from Silver Street, Crossgate Allergate, South Street and Grove Street in the west, Claypath and Gilesgate up to the Sunderland Road/Sherburn Road junction in the northeast, then Elvet, Church Street and Hallgarth Street in the southeast.

This boundary was drawn to concentrate on the historic core of the city but did not include the larger areas abutting the Medieval core which possess separate identities.

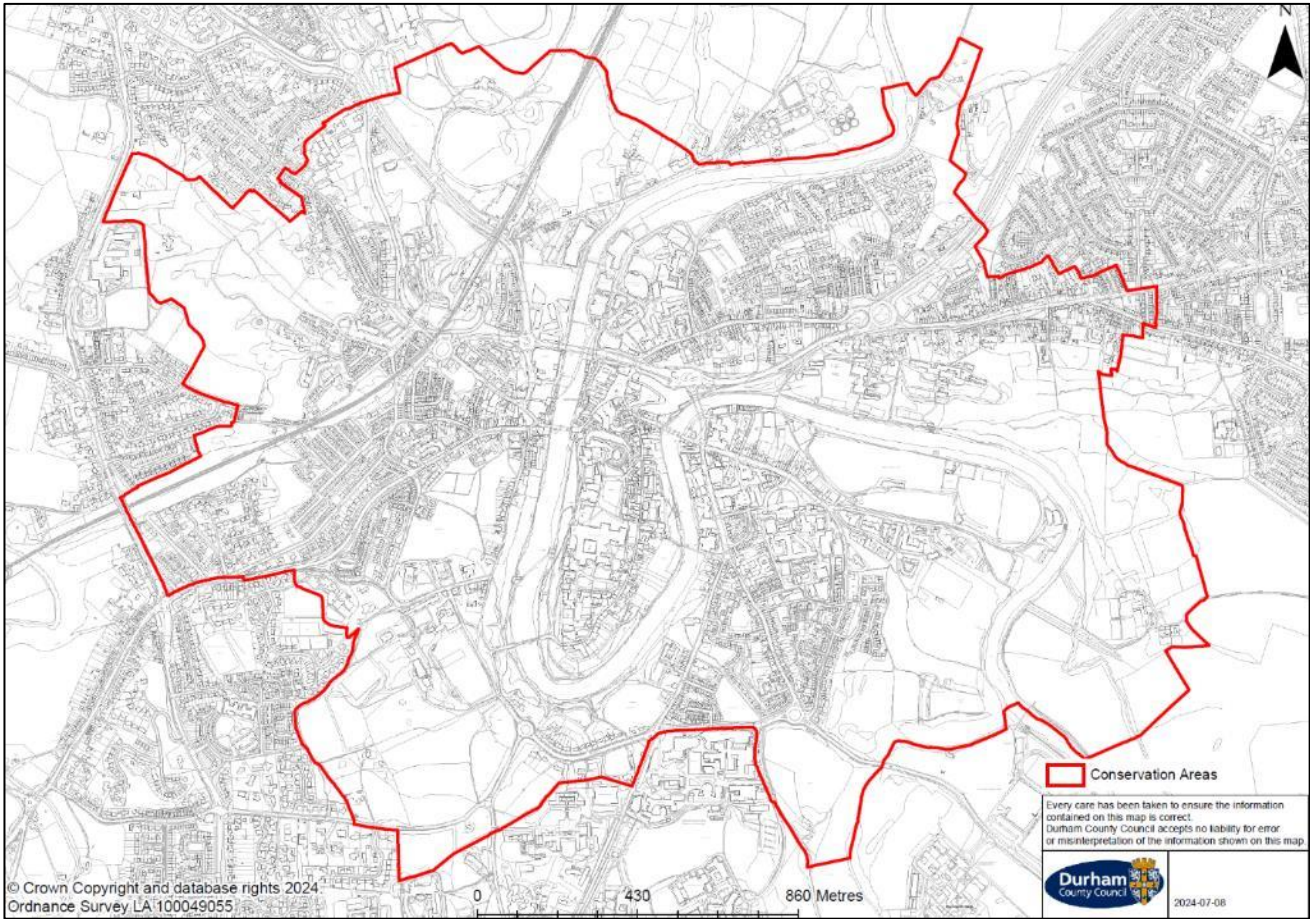
Fig 80 map showing the original Durham City CA boundary designated in 1968.



On the 25th of November 1980 the conservation area boundary was significantly enlarged to incorporate a much wider part of the city centre. Encompassing the pre-1900 expansion of the city, surrounding areas of landscape and including Framwellgate Peth, Albert Street, Flass Vale, Crossgate Peth, Farnley Hey Road, Quarryheads Lane, Potters Bank, Mount Joy, Whinny Hill, Old Durham, The Sands, and the site at Kepier Hospital.

The 1980 area was initially conceived as taking the Durham landscape bowl, as a single entity, and then cutting out the substantial areas of more modern development that would not reach conservation standards. Views across the bowl obviously being critical to the character and visual appearance as well as successful future planning of the city.

Fig 81 boundary of Durham City CA as amended in 1980.



During the last review of Durham City Conservation Area in 2015, the boundary was amended and adopted on 14th July 2016. There were a series of small scale modifications to correct inaccuracies, with a minor extension to the landscape surrounding Old Durham Gardens and in the south of the City at Potters Bank and at St Aidan's College to take in a parcel of landscape deemed to be of high scenic value.



Fig 82 the amended Durham City CA boundary 2016.

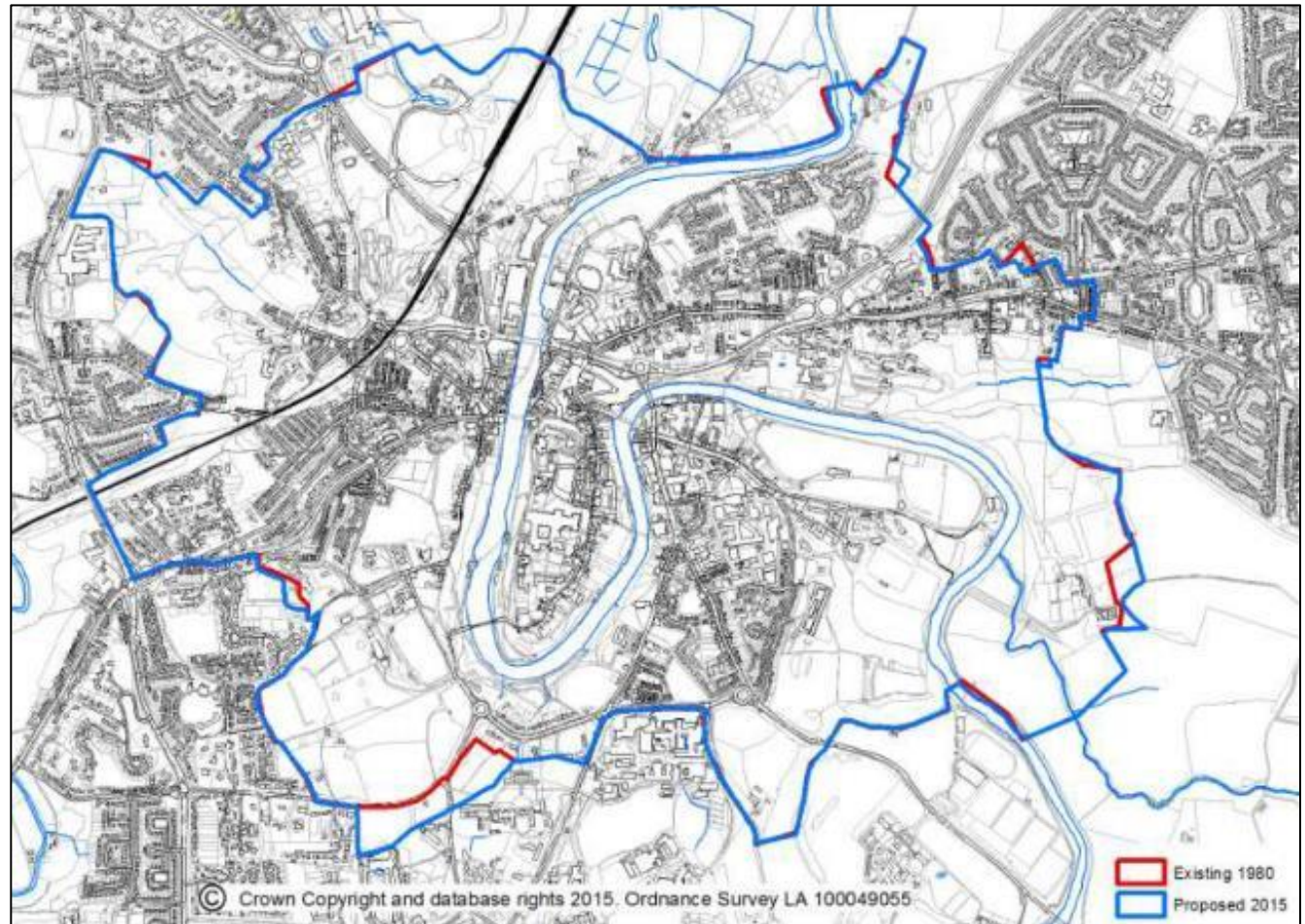


Fig 83 the images left show the boundary extension in the south capturing the hill to the west side of St Marys College and the splendid view of the cathedral this provides, and below St Cuthberts Cemetery recorded on the 1st edition OS map c.1856-65.

5.2 Understanding significance as an approach to heritage & new guidance

'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the [Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework](#) as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- **Archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types.

Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

- **Historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms '*special architectural or historic interest*' are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.

In addition to the above, Historic England's system of heritage values is set out in the 2008 publication Conservation Principles, which identifies four categories, evidential, historic, aesthetic, and communal, that together amount to the "significance" of a place. It is the summary of the built, cultural, natural and intangible heritage values and how they interrelate which distils the particulars of the place and shapes its visual appearance and how it is experienced.

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals, and to manage future change positively and proactively including identifying opportunities for inward investment, regeneration, and general improvement

5.3 The new Durham City Conservation Areas

The City Centre is a large and very complex environment with many different functions evident including commercial, residential, cultural, educational, and recreational interlaced over multiple periods of historic development. It is not a homogenous place and due to the very broad scale of the conservation area it can be difficult to effectively manage whilst decreasing the level of protection it can be afforded under policy today.

Since the last review the *County Durham Plan* and the *Durham City Neighbourhood Plan* have been adopted and the National Planning Policy Framework has been updated. In addition, Historic England’s *Advice Note 1* notes that within conservation areas

“change is inevitable, and often beneficial [and conservation areas should] manage change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas”.

To aid reviewing and assessing the conservation area, Historic England’s guidance has been used:

- *Conservation Area Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008)

- *Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management* (2019)

- *Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017).

This guidance from Historic England included criteria for considering whether an area has special interest to aid in considering any changes to the existing conservation area boundary:

- The still-visible effects/impact of the area’s historic development on its plan form, townscape, character and architectural style and social/ historic associations and the importance of that history.
- Architectural quality and built form, including any particular architectural interest resulting from a past use, planning or design, important phases of development, the integrity or group value of buildings or provision of a record of development over time through the architectural record.
- The contribution to the special interest made by the setting on the area, that is what the setting can contribute to the significance of a heritage asset, and how it can allow that significance to be appreciated.
- Local distinctiveness and a sense of place which make the area unique, including the influence of sources of building materials

and historic industries that have come to contribute significantly to the area’s present identity.

- How the places within it are experienced by the people who live and work there and visitors to the area (including both daily and seasonal variations if possible).
- The design, planting or past use of open spaces, green areas, parks and gardens, and trees, including the representation of particular species or varieties that reflect key periods of horticultural interest, collecting or design.
- Designated and other heritage assets, their intrinsic importance and the contribution they make to the townscape – this will normally provide an indication of past recognition of special interest, whilst a focus of assets of a similar type may suggest the area as a whole has a particular special interest.

What are the benefits of having smaller Conservation Areas?

The creation of seven conservation areas will result in:

More defined, concise boundaries based upon individual character and significance.

Each area has its own character along with individual issues, challenges and opportunities. Within the existing boundary, the quality of the built development varies with large expanses of 20th century housing that does not meet the criteria for special historic and architectural interest, revising and reducing the boundaries allows for such areas to be excluded, so the special interest is not diluted in this regard.

Stronger arguments for harm in the planning process.

The planning concept of “less than substantial” harm and “substantial” harm to a designated heritage asset is now identified in the National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 207 states that, where proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of) the significance of a heritage asset, local authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm.

While the level of harm is often open to interpretation, should for example, a major development have a serious impact on the significance of the existing conservation area, given the geographical scale of the designated area, it could be argued that taking into consideration the whole that its significance is not very impacted, detracted or reduced. Thereby the level of harm is “less than substantial”. Para 208 is then applied stating that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Taking the same development in the context of a much smaller conservation area more focused on its individual significance, then the degree of harm could potentially be elevated to one that seriously affects/detracts a key element or elements of its special historic and architectural interest to be considered “substantial” harm.

Aligned with the above, in planning decisions consideration must be given to the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage assets, and how it can enable that significance to be appreciated, understood and experienced. All heritage assets have a setting, and the extent and importance of that setting is not just referenced by visual considerations.

The setting of a heritage asset is not fixed and can change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.

There can often be a difficulty in where to draw the line when considering the setting of a heritage asset. However, in respect of smaller individual conservation areas it is their interrelationships and sum total that makes up the special interest of the city as a whole, hence settings are intrinsically linked.

More effective management and different levels of opportunity

The existing conservation area boundary is large and unwieldy. While there are a number of similar issues, pressures, and future threats, for which a generic management aim and action can be developed, there are some issues more specific to individual areas that can be addressed by inserting specific local level actions, that can maximise the use of resources in a proportionate way. Likewise, there are greater opportunities within some parts of the city compared to others, and some that experience more detractors in terms of lower quality built development or vacant/gap sites offering the potential for redevelopment and regeneration influenced by specific positive characteristic of the area.

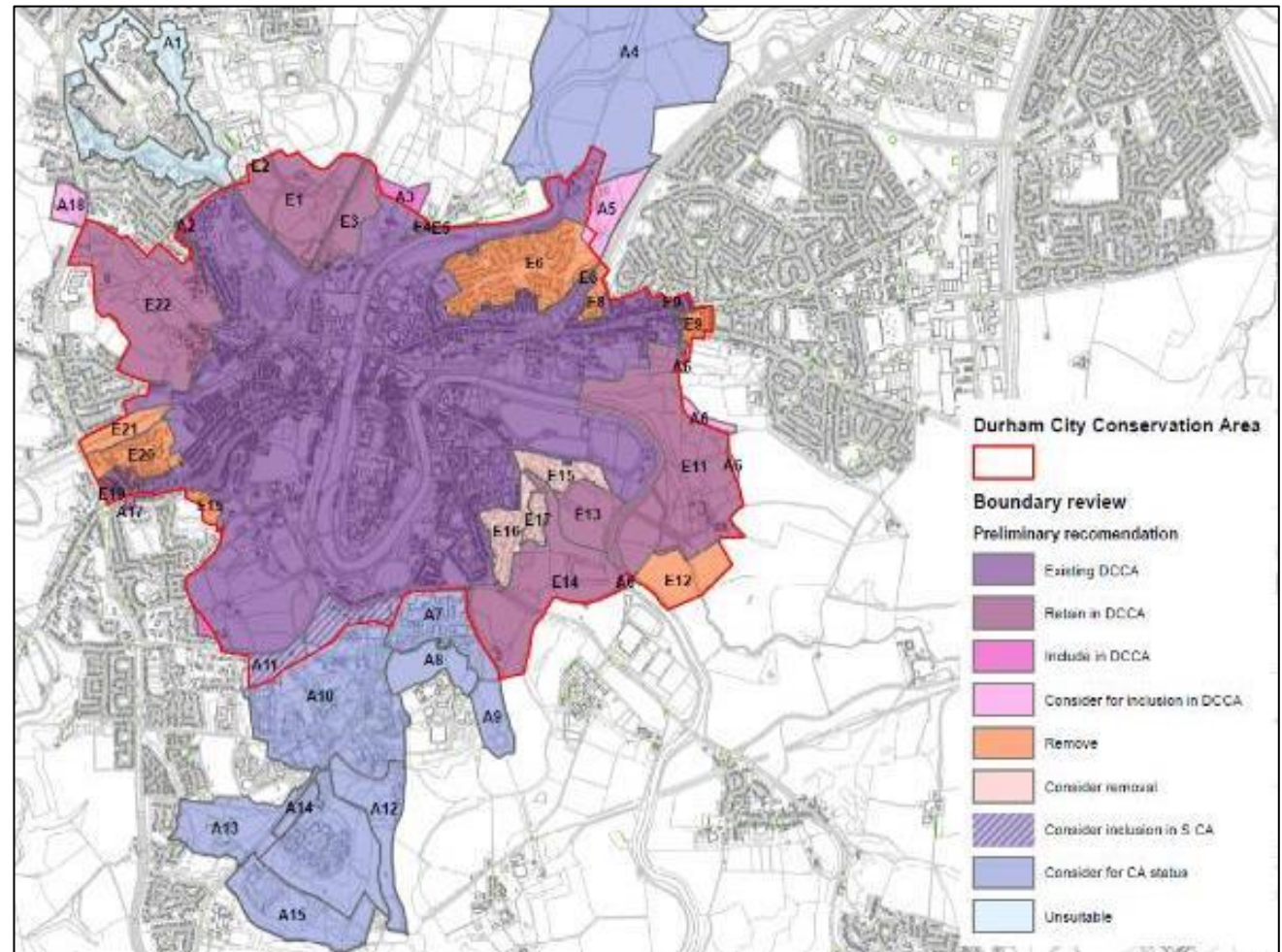
How have the new conservation area boundaries been determined?

In formulating the seven proposed new conservation area boundaries for Durham City, the starting point was a rigorous review of the existing boundary. This included considering areas around the periphery for potential inclusion, identifying areas within the boundary of no special architectural or historic interest not meriting designation to be removed, and correcting irregularities such as where the boundary line has been drawn inaccurately. This process involved desk based research alongside many on site surveys over the course of several months.

The process involved different rounds of engagement with internal specialist officers and external key partners and stakeholders, with the boundaries reviewed and amended accordingly at each key stage. Detailed records have been kept throughout the process to demonstrate how the final proposals have been informed.

In addition, since the designation in 1980 values have changed, local knowledge expanded, with some buildings and sites known to have greater significance, and some lesser, than previously thought, while the built form of the city has continued to evolve, which has also helped inform the boundary decision making process.

Fig 84 Map of Durham City showing how the boundary review was undertaken.



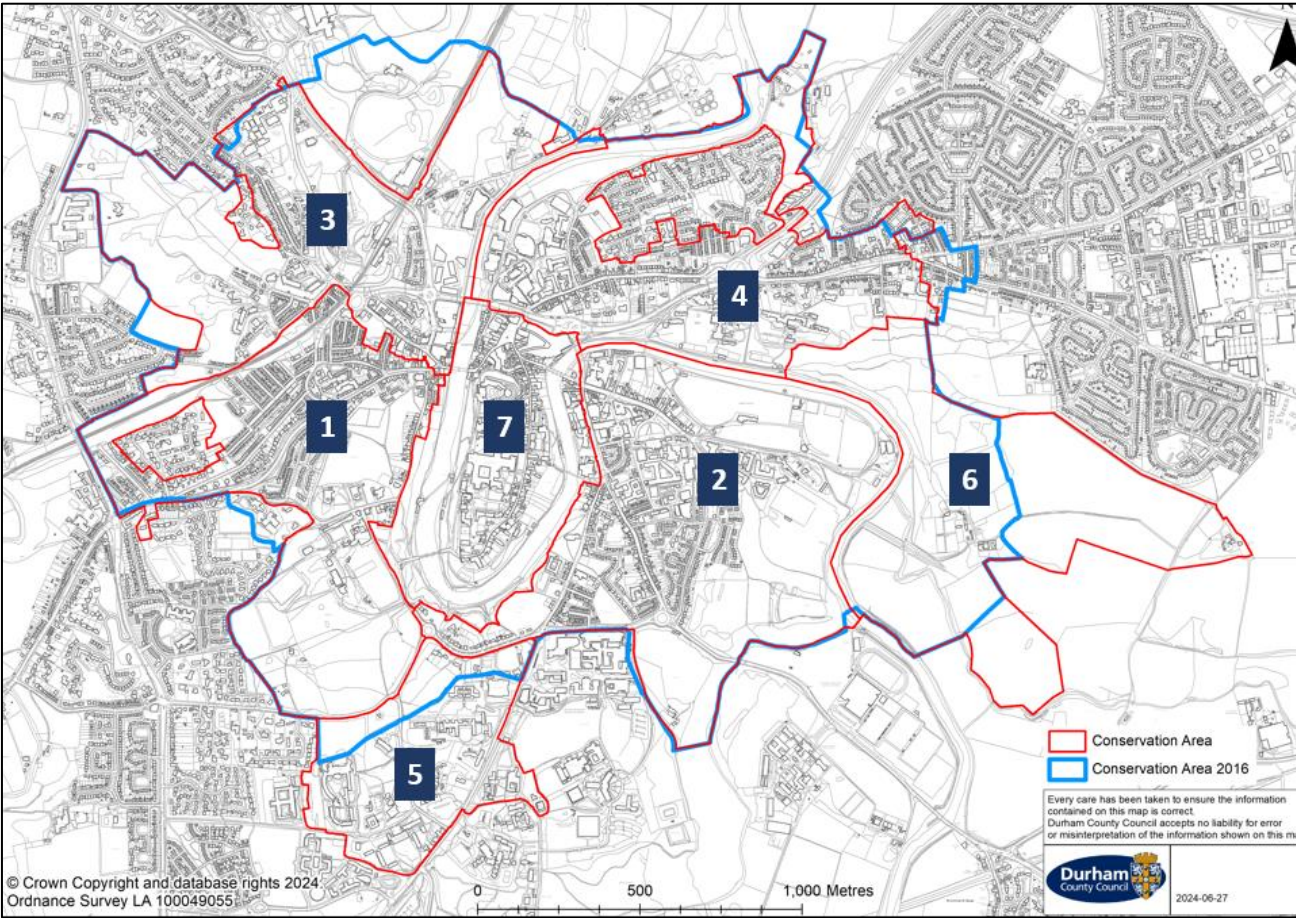
The map shows the preliminary review of the existing conservation area that included assessment of potential expansions to the north, south and east. Each area was given an identification number and colour coded based on the outcome of field work in assessing its special historic and architectural interest. This review and the boundaries evolved over several months.

The seven new conservation areas for Durham City will be designated with individual character appraisals setting out in detail what make them special. The conservation areas are:

- 8. Durham City Crossgate
- 9. Durham City Elvet
- 10. Durham City Framwellgate
- 11. Durham City Gilesgate
- 12. Durham City Hill Colleges
- 13. Durham City Old Durham
- 14. Durham City Peninsula

The plan shows that in combination the seven individual boundaries cover the same general geographical area as the long standing single large conservation area boundary. The exceptions are the omission of pockets of modern 20th century development of no special historic or architectural interest. Land at Aykley Heads and around the DLI Museum building has been excluded due to its disconnection to the other built development by being located on the north side of the railway line set in modern surroundings. More landscape at Old Durham has been included along with Bent House Farm. The extension south of the city includes the University Colleges, plus St James Church and McNally Place in Gilesgate have been added.

Fig 85 Map showing the 2016 conservation area in blue and the combined boundaries of the seven new conservation areas in red.



Examples of areas removed within the conservation areas.

Housing developed piecemeal that has altered character

Early 20th century terraced properties but separate from main urban core

Modern 20th century housing of no architectural interest

Buildings heavily altered weakening character and uniformity



Better examples of building typology elsewhere in city centre

Fragmented streetscapes of no cohesive character

Back land development with no presence nor positive contribution to character

Modern mid-to-late 20th century development of no special interest.

Significantly conflicts with historic character and detracts from key route into/out of the city

Examples of areas included within the conservation areas.

Hill Colleges, non-designated heritage assets due to architectural quality of distinctive individual designs by well-known architects.



Expansion at Old Durham to capture the start of the significant view of the Cathedral

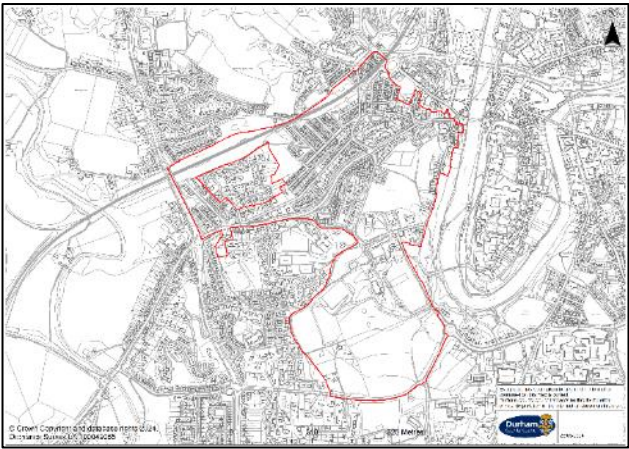


McNally Place, Gilesgate, good examples of social housing from the mid-20th century period.

Bent House Farm, included traced back to 1771 as part of the Old Durham Estate.

Additional rural landscape fundamental to the character and setting of the historic farm group and part of the Od Durham Estate.

Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area



Durham City Crossgate Conservation Area occupies the southwestern part of Durham City Centre. It is comprised of two distinctive parts: Firstly, the main urban area in the north that developed around the main streets of Allergate, Crossgate, and Crossgate Peth, with secondary streets of c.1900 housing development. The second part to the south which is semi-rural in character consists of the landscaped elements around Observatory Hill, and Durham School on the edge of the urban settlement.

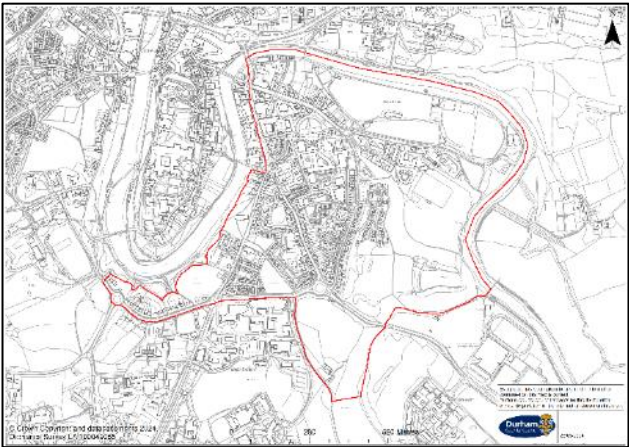
Summary of significance

- Historic interest as part of the wider medieval town plan, one of the c.1250 “old boroughs.”
- Historic residential character informed by buildings from the C18, C19 and C20.
- Preservation of its medieval streets of Crossgate, Allergate, and South Street, and their high quality of domestic architecture
- The importance of the grid layout, brick ranks and slate roofs of Victorian terraced streets as part of the evolution of the city with industrial roots.
- Unique collection of the grand Victorian educational buildings at Durham School.
- The dramatic presence of the historic landmarks of the viaduct and St Margarets Church.
- The unique varying topography and setting informed by the River Wear gorge and riverbanks woodland.
- The fine views of Durham Castle and Cathedral.

Fig 86 below Allergate, Church of St Margarets of Antioch in Crossgate, and East Atherton Street.



Durham City Elvet Conservation Area



Durham City Elvet Conservation Area occupies the eastern part of the city centre, its boundary informed by the River Wear corridor stretching from Prebends Bridge down to Maiden Castle footbridge.

Elvet is a large, distinctive and complex part of the city comprising of a medieval core focused around Old, New Elvet, and Church Street, with late 19th and 20th century interventions and surrounding developments extending south to Stockton Road and westwards to the end of Quarryheads Lane.

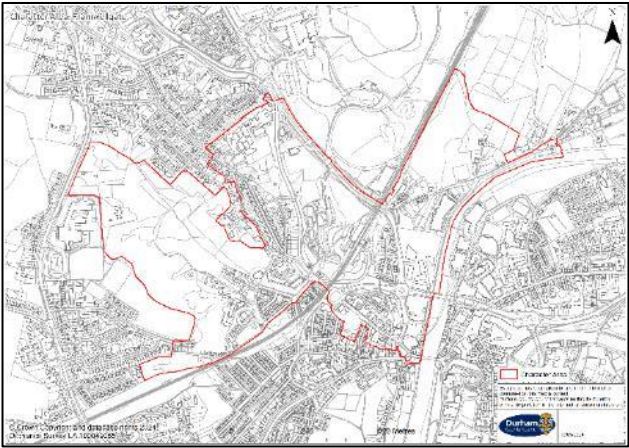
Summary of significance

- Historic interest as part of the wider medieval town plan, established by c.1250.
- Historic significance relating to the area’s occupation prior to the arrival of the community of St Cuthbert on the peninsula.
- Preservation of its medieval plan form.
- The richness, diversity, and quality in architecture and the distinctive street scenes this creates.
- The important level of intactness in terms of prevalence of traditional materials, features and detailing.
- The unique and varied topography, high landscape quality and setting.
- The wide variation in views including historic landmarks and significant views of Durham WHS.
- The abundance of green infrastructure assets and intrinsic relationship with the river.
- The changing visual experiences, ambiances, and sense of place with historic depth and strong identities.

Fig 87 below Hallgarth Steet, Old Elvet, and The Racecourse



Durham City Framwellgate Conservation Area



Durham City Framwellgate Conservation Area occupies the northwestern part of the city centre. The area comprises of a medieval core of Framwellgate Peth, Millburngate, and Sidegate, along with the medieval manor at Crook Hall. It includes a major part of the city’s c.1900 expansion in the form of the commercial street of North Road, the distinctive site of Redhills Miners Hall, and the residential streets around the viaduct. Finally, there is the large scaled mixed-use 20th and 21st century riverside developments along Framwellgate Waterside.

Landscape features include the landscape surrounding Crook Hall that rises steeply up to the railway line in the north and the wider open countryside on the urban limits of the city in the east.

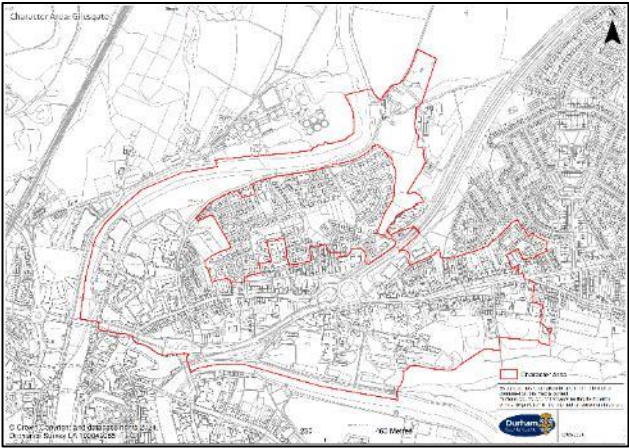
Summary of significance

- Historic interest as part of the wider medieval town plan, and c.1900 expansion associated with the wider industrial heritage of the county.
- Historic significance of the Crook Hall site dating back to the medieval period.
- Preservation and legibility of the areas historic plan form.
- The architectural language of the area dominated by the Victorian period.
- The juxtaposition of historic buildings with contemporary development that emphasizes the evolution of the city.
- The unique and varied topography, from the flat open flood plain to the steep sided river valley terrace rising.
- The significant green assets of Wharton Park, Flass Vale, historic gardens and open farmland on the valley terrace, and other landscape features of high aesthetic value.
- The changing visual experiences, ambiances, and sense of place with historic depth and strong identities. Including significant views of the WHS and other landmarks

Fig 88 below Sidegate, Albert Street and Redhills Miners Hall.



Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area



Durham City Gilesgate Conservation Area occupies the northeastern part of the city centre, it is a substantial, distinctive and complex environment with a medieval single street layout at its historic core, a route that was once continuous down Claypath into the Market Place. The area grew up around St Giles Church and the medieval village green in the east and is lined by domestic buildings ranging from the 17th to the 20th century.

The conservation area includes the historically important medieval Kepier Hospital site with its orchard and farmland, the late 19th century College of St Hild and St Bede and its parkland, a series of characterful Victorian terraced streets such as Leazes Place, Ravensworth Terrace and Magdalene Street, and large scale individually designed 21st century riverside development.

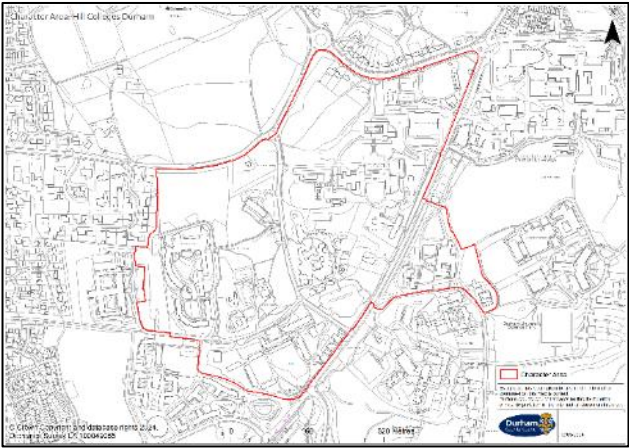
Summary of significance

- Historic interest as part of the wider medieval town plan that is well preserved and legible.
- Historic significance of the Kepier Hospital site and its historic connection to St Giles Church.
- High significance of the collection of Victorian buildings and leafy parkland at Hild and Bede College and its connection to Durham University.
- The architectural richness and diversity creating changing street scenes of high quality, including notable landmarks.
- The important level of authenticity and integrity seen on the main historic streets.
- The unique and varied topography, forming a major ridge through the city that is the backdrop of main views contrasting with the flat floodplain.
- The significant green assets of the village green, The Sands, river corridor and Kepier estate.
- The high value views and changing ambiances from the busy streets to the quiet rural areas.

Fig 89 below Gilesgate Village Green, Claypath, and St Giles Church.



Durham City Hill Colleges Conservation Area



Durham City Hill Colleges Conservation Area occupies the south part of the city centre bounded by Quarryheads Lane, the A177 South Road, Potters Bank, and the rear plots of the 20th century housing are at Chevallier Court. The conservation area is focussed on and characterised by the Durham University Hill College, southern campus comprising of St Mary’s College, Trevelyan College, Grey College, St Aidan’s College, and Van Mildert College, and also includes a limited number of 19th century buildings.

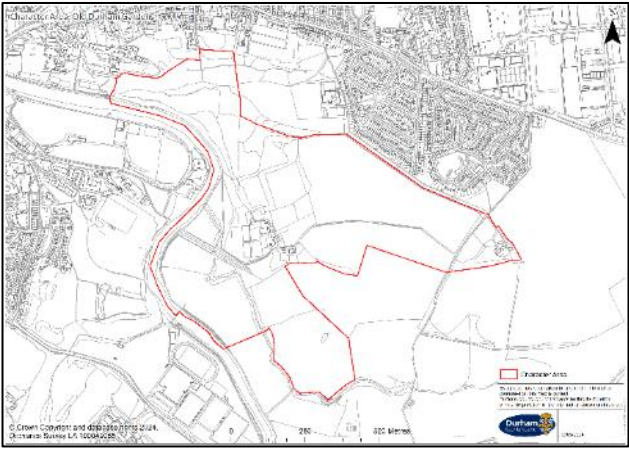
Summary of significance

- Modern college development informed by a historic framework of streets and lanes surviving as recorded in detail on the OS map c.1856-65.
- High architectural quality individually designed buildings with boldness, by well-known architects.
- Buildings designed to embrace the unique topography, landscape features and setting with designed sightlines to the cathedral.
- College foundations dating back to the 19th century.
- Significant part of the university’s post war expansion program representing a distinctive phase in the city’s development.
- The scattering of 19th century buildings of different uses and character.
- The leafy parkland character, and overall landscape quality enhancing the setting of the buildings.
- The importance in terms of the collective memories of college and university life for previous students and staff.

Fig 90 St Marys College, Trevelyan College and St Aidan’s College.



Durham City Old Durham Conservation Area



The Old Durham Conservation Area is located 1 mile from the Durham Peninsula across the eastern side of the River Wear where it loops around The Racecourse and Maiden Castle southwards down towards Shincliffe Village.

Old Durham is unique in the city centre owing to its distinctive, idyllic, rural character comprising of an isolated farm settlement of three distinguishable groups, and the 17th century public pleasure gardens that have been shaped and modelled over the centuries by the different landowners.

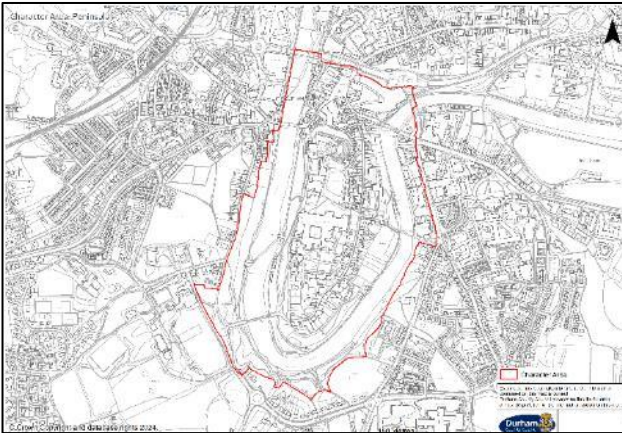
Summary of significance

- Historic interest with evidence Old Durham was a Roman settlement.
- Historic significance as part of the medieval Kepier Hospital estate, and associative interest relating to ownership by well-known Durham families.
- Historic interest and evidential value of the 17th century pleasure grounds, a fine example of formal garden design developing over the centuries.
- The architectural character and quality of the gardens and the farm buildings is exclusively historic.
- The important level of intactness in terms of prevalence of traditional materials, features and detailing.
- The distinctive and varied topography and unspoilt high-quality landscape character, including significant green infrastructure assets.
- The wide variation in views including historic landmarks and significant views of Durham WHS.
- The magnificent "hidden" view of Durham WHS, and the designed axial view of the cathedral.

Fig 91 views from Old Durham of the gardens.



Durham City Peninsula Conservation Area



The Durham City Peninsula Conservation Area occupies the historic heart of the city centre, the buildings set on a distinctive raised plateau defined by the incised meander of the River Wear. The area is defined by the outer gorge, the historic and modern river crossing points, the Market Place, Elvet Riverside development and Dunelm House. It includes all of the castle and cathedral precinct contained within the medieval defensive circuit of castle walls, the steep sided gorge, woodland and the associated built features.

Summary of significance

- The topographical and geological formation of the River Wear gorge a distinctive natural feature of regional and local importance, the river is the reason the city exists.
- The crowning glory of the castle and cathedral or international significance and recognised around the world.
- The historic significance stemming from it being a place of defense, place of worship, Bishop's palace, center for education, and the continue religious and pilgrimage that remains today.
- The surviving medieval plan form and built features from this period, and archaeological interest and potential.
- The important level of intactness in terms of prevalence of traditional materials, features and detailing.
- The high architectural richness, quality, and diversity and the shifting street scenes and visual experiences this provides.
- The range of high-quality views of Durham WHS, intimate historic street scenes, open river corridor and townscape views.

Fig 92 the view of Saddler Street from Magdalene Steps, and the view of the cathedrals rose window from North Bailey.



5.4 Proactive conservation

Designation of a conservation area should not be regarded principally as a means of increasing control, but rather as a commitment to take positive action to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. When effectively and proactively managed, conservation areas can anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, improve economic viability and the vitality of the area, and add to the overall positive quality of life.

Past approaches to conservation area management have too often been based on a limited understanding of the heritage resource involved, or with an overemphasis on standing the place in time and regulation with a lack of clarity over priorities for general improvement, and wider cross corporate strategies.

A 21st century approach is required with an overall strategy and vision for the city to help determine priorities and focus available resources where they can make the most difference. At the same time this must be set within the present-day planning policy framework. This is far easier to achieve based on the priorities of several smaller separate conservation areas with different issues, problems and opportunities.

There needs to be a strong focus on regeneration and recognition of the important role heritage can play in the city’s sustainable development. Heritage providing the foundation for the city’s distinctive character and sense of place relative to the individual conservation areas contained with it.

The current adopted conservation area character appraisal provides a detailed historic and descriptive narrative as opposed to setting a clear long term vision and strategy for the city for conserving and protecting its historic environment, and capitalising on opportunities for attracting investment, conservation-led regeneration and positive place shaping.

The aims and actions needed to achieve this are set out within the management plan used for delivering the objectives of the CAMP, and to identify who is responsible for delivering these and potential sources of funding and delivery mechanisms.

To be successful, the strategy must be championed across all council departments and will also require the involvement of the community and contributions from a range of external partners.



Fig 93 vacant gap site at the end of John Street suffering from graffiti and with refused bins visible in the street.



Fig 94 Hanover Court 20th century infill development insensitive within the medieval street.

6. Further Information & Sources

Planning Legislation

[Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)

Planning Policy, Advice & Guidance

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[County Durham Plan - Durham County Council](#)

[Durham City Neighbourhood Plan](#)

Historic England Guidance

[Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance, Historic England](#)

[Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management, Historic England](#)

[Historic England Advice Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets](#)

7. Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Active frontage	ground floor level frontages that are not blank, in order to encourage human interaction. For example, windows, active doors, shops, restaurants and cafés.
At risk	a historic building, landscape, structure or feature which is threatened due to vacancy, damage, or destruction by neglect and sever lack of maintain or need for consolidation, and or repair and restoration.
Ashlar	stone walling consisting of courses of finely jointed and finished blocks to give a smooth appearance.
Building line	the line of buildings along the edge of a pavement or road that may be regular, broken by gaps, or irregular.
Conservation Area	'An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance', designated under what is now s69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (HE, Conservation Principles, 2008, 71).

Classical style	architecture derived from the principles of Greek and Roman architecture of classical antiquity, or sometimes more specifically, from the works of the Roman architect Vitruvius.
Contemporary (architecture)	Architecture of the 21 st century, not a movement but a style reflecting the trends of the time.
Detractor	a building, structure or spaces that undermines the character and appearance of the conservation area
Designated heritage asset	buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas, landscapes or archaeology that are protected by legislation: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield and Conservation Area.
Eaves	the part of the roof which projects beyond the side of the building.
Edwardian	the architectural period broadly from 1901 to 1919.
Elevation	view of a structure in the vertical plane at 90 degrees from the viewer.
Façade	front (or sides) of a building facing a public space.

Fenestration	the arrangement and style of windows.	Landmark	a prominent building or structure (or sometimes space). Its prominence is normally physical (such as a church tower) but may be social (a village pub) or historical (village stocks).
Georgian	the architectural style between 1714 and 1837.	Legibility	the ability to navigate through, or 'read', the urban environment. Can be improved by means such as good connections between places, landmarks and signage.
Gothic style	an architectural style that was prevalent in Europe from the late twelfth to the sixteenth century, characterised by pointed arches and pointed windows. Gothic revival is a style based upon these forms popular in the nineteenth century.	Massing	the arrangement, shape and scale of individual or combined built form.
Gothic	a style of architecture loosely based upon medieval Gothic forms which was popular in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, often characterised by the pointed arch.	Medieval	the period from the Norman Conquest in 1066 through to the succession of the Tudor dynasty in 1485.
Hipped roof	a pitched roof with four slopes of equal pitch.	Movement	how people and goods move around – on foot, by bike, car, bus, train or lorry.
Ionic	one of the Classical Orders characterised by fluted columns and capitals with scroll-like ornaments.	Non-designated heritage asset	a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which does not have the degree of special interest that would merit designation at the national level, e.g., listing.
Keystone	a central stone, often wedge-shaped, above a window or door, or at summit of an arch.	Oriel	window which projects from the building above ground level

Neutral (conservation)	a building, feature or space, that does not contribute positively but equally does not cause harm	Public realm	the publicly-accessible space between buildings – streets, squares, quaysides, paths, parks and gardens – and its components, such as pavement, signage, seating and planting.
Pediment	triangular gable derived from a classical temple.	Render	a material (such as aggregate or stucco plaster) added to the face of a wall to create a uniform decoration.
Permeability	the ease at which people can move through an area, the many streets, lanes, and tracks make a place more permeable.	Repair	work beyond the scope of maintenance, to remedy defects caused by decay, damage or use, including minor adaptation to achieve a sustainable outcome, but not involving restoration or alteration (HE, Conservation Principles, 2008, 72).
Pilaster	flat classical column in shallow relief attached to a building	Roofscape	the 'landscape' of roofs, chimneys, towers etc.
Pinnacle	small upright projection, often with the appearance of a spire.	Rusticated	treatment of masonry to imply strength, including recessed joints and textured stonework.
Pitched roof	a roof with sloping sides meeting at a ridge. Include m-shaped roofs, hipped roofs and semi-hipped.	Quoins	dressed stones at the angles of a building.
Post-medieval	generally referred to as the period of the accession of the Tudor monarchy in 1485 through to the start of the eighteenth century.	Sash window	fixed or moveable (often sliding) window. Scale – Proportion, size or extent usually in relation to surrounding structures.
Preserve	to keep safe from harm (HE, Conservation Principles, 2008, 72).		

Scale	proportion, size or extent usually in relation to surrounding structures.	Townscape	the 'landscape' of towns and villages – the interaction of buildings, streets, spaces and topography.
Setting	the aspects of the surroundings of an historic building, structure, landscape, site, place, archaeology or conservation area that contribute to its significance	Tudor style	revival style based upon the final development of medieval architecture in England and Wales, during the Tudor period (1485–1603) and characterised by steeply pitched gable roofs, decorative stonework and the use of half-timbering.
Significance (in heritage policy)	the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. (NPPF, 2018, 71).	Value	an aspect of worth or importance, here attached by people to qualities of places (HE, Conservation Principles, 2008, 72).
Sill	stone beam below the opening of a window.	Vernacular	traditional forms of building using local materials.
Slate	thin fissile roofing material of fine grain. Often lustrous or micaceous in finish. May derive from Wales or Cumbria	Vennel	A narrow urban passage (lane or alley)
Streetscape	the 'landscape' of the streets – the interaction of buildings, spaces and topography (an element of the wider townscape, see below).	Victorian	the architectural style between 1837 and 1901, i.e., during the reign of Queen Victoria.
Stucco	see render		

