

# Washington Village Conservation Area

Character Appraisal and  
Management Strategy

PLANNING GUIDANCE





# Washington Village Conservation Area

## Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

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# Background

## Conservation Areas

Conservation areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Local authorities are obliged to determine which parts of their district are of special interest and declare them conservation areas. Designation is dependent on the overall quality and interest of an area, rather than individual buildings, although it is common for such areas to contain a number of Listed Buildings. There are currently 14 conservation areas in the City of Sunderland, ranging from City Centre areas to pre-conquest villages, the Victorian suburb of Ashbrooke to the coastal resort of Roker. Each conservation area has its own unique character and appearance. Designation as a conservation area has a number of implications. In all cases "special" consideration must be given to the impact that development would have on the character and appearance of the area. Importantly, it requires planning consent to be gained for the demolition of buildings within conservation areas and for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development. These generally cover various types of cladding, the insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes, the erection of satellite dishes and radio masts/antennae. Designation also brings extra controls over works to trees.

## Appraisal of Character

The protection of an area does not end with conservation area designation. The Government's Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 15 "Planning and the Historic Environment" urges Local Authorities to prepare detailed assessments of the special interest, character and appearance of their conservation areas. A character appraisal defines and analyses the special qualities and the architectural and historic interest which warranted the conservation area designation. PPG15 states that "the more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area". Character appraisals should therefore provide a framework against which development proposals can be assessed for their appropriateness in the historic environment.

## Management of Conservation Areas

Local Authorities are under a duty from time to time to "formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas" (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (LBCA)) Act 1990, s. 71). English Heritage guidance on the management of conservation areas advises that such proposals should take the form of a mid-to-long term strategy, setting objectives for addressing the issues and recommendations for actions arising from character appraisals, and identifying any further and more detailed work needed for their implementation.

## Washington Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy

This Character Appraisal and Management Strategy has been prepared in response to the guidance outlined above and, as such, discharges the City Council's obligations and duties under the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, as well as complying with English Heritage's recommendations. Following a formal consultation process the City Council will adopt the finalised document as formal planning guidance to the adopted City of Sunderland UDP and future LDF and will be a material consideration when considering applications for development within the conservation area.

# Introduction

Washington Village Conservation Area was designated in 1975 in recognition of its architectural and historic interest.

The Conservation Area is based on the historic village of Washington, and is of a broadly similar character throughout, although within the Conservation Area sub-areas of special character may be established. At the heart of the village is the Green, a focal point at the crossroads of key historic routes through Washington and the location of a medieval two-row settlement. Buildings of particular note in Washington Village include Washington Old Hall, seat of the Washington family of which George Washington was a descendent, Dame Margaret Hall and Holy Trinity Church.

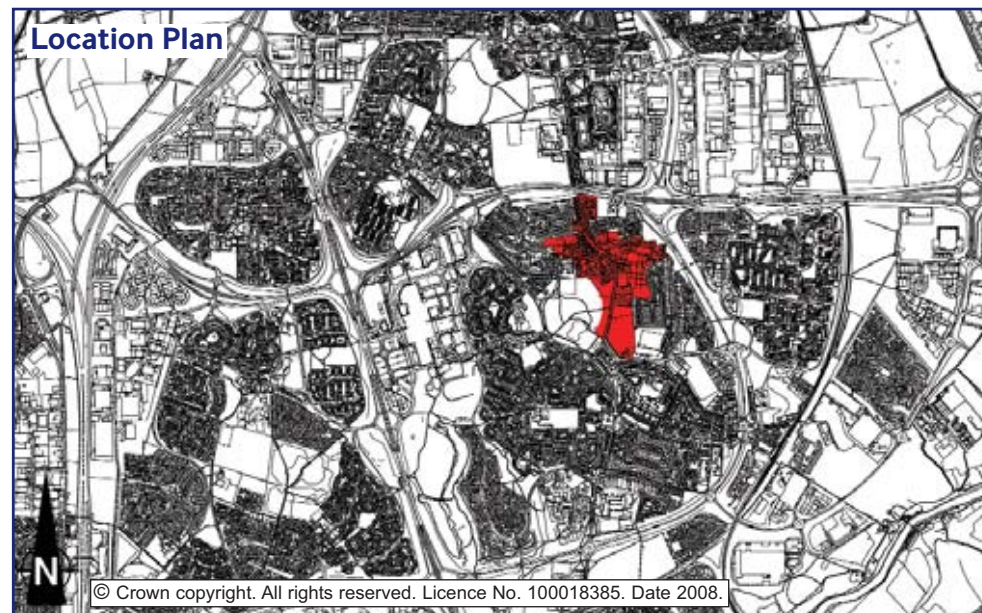
This document combines an appraisal of the Conservation Area's character and appearance with management proposals for preserving and enhancing its special qualities. Part One, the Character Appraisal, identifies and assesses those characteristics and features that give the area its special architectural and historic interest and considers the current issues which threaten its unique quality. Part Two of the document comprises a management strategy and contains a series of management objectives and proposals to address the issues raised in the Character Appraisal. This includes consideration of the resources needed, further work required and envisaged timescales to implement the management proposals.

## Location

Washington Village lies roughly in the centre of Washington New Town, which was planned and built in the late 1960s and now surrounds the historic core of the village. Washington lies to the north of the River Wear, some 10 miles inland, to the west of Sunderland city centre.

## Boundaries

The boundary of the Conservation Area follows the pattern of the crossroads at its core, encompassing all of the historic buildings and spaces in the immediate area and is largely enclosed by modern residential estates to the east and west. To the northern tip of the Conservation Area the Sunderland Highway provides a clear boundary; to the south west the large open space that was formerly Washington Glebe Colliery acts as a significant buffer. The boundary was drawn to take in significant areas of open space that provide the setting of Dame Margaret Hall.



## UDP Conservation Policies

Policy B4 of the City of Sunderland UDP states that: "All development within and adjacent to Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance". Under this policy the council is obliged to prepare supplementary guidance in the form of character assessments for each of its conservation areas. These will identify features and characteristics that contribute to the area's special interest, identify opportunities for enhancement and, where appropriate, establish design criteria for new development and restoration projects. The Washington Village Character Appraisal is one of a series of such assessments that will cover all of the city's conservation areas.

Certain buildings and structures within the Conservation Area are Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and are thus protected by tight planning controls. Policy B8 presumes in favour of the retention of Listed Buildings whilst policy B10 seeks to preserve the setting of Listed Buildings.

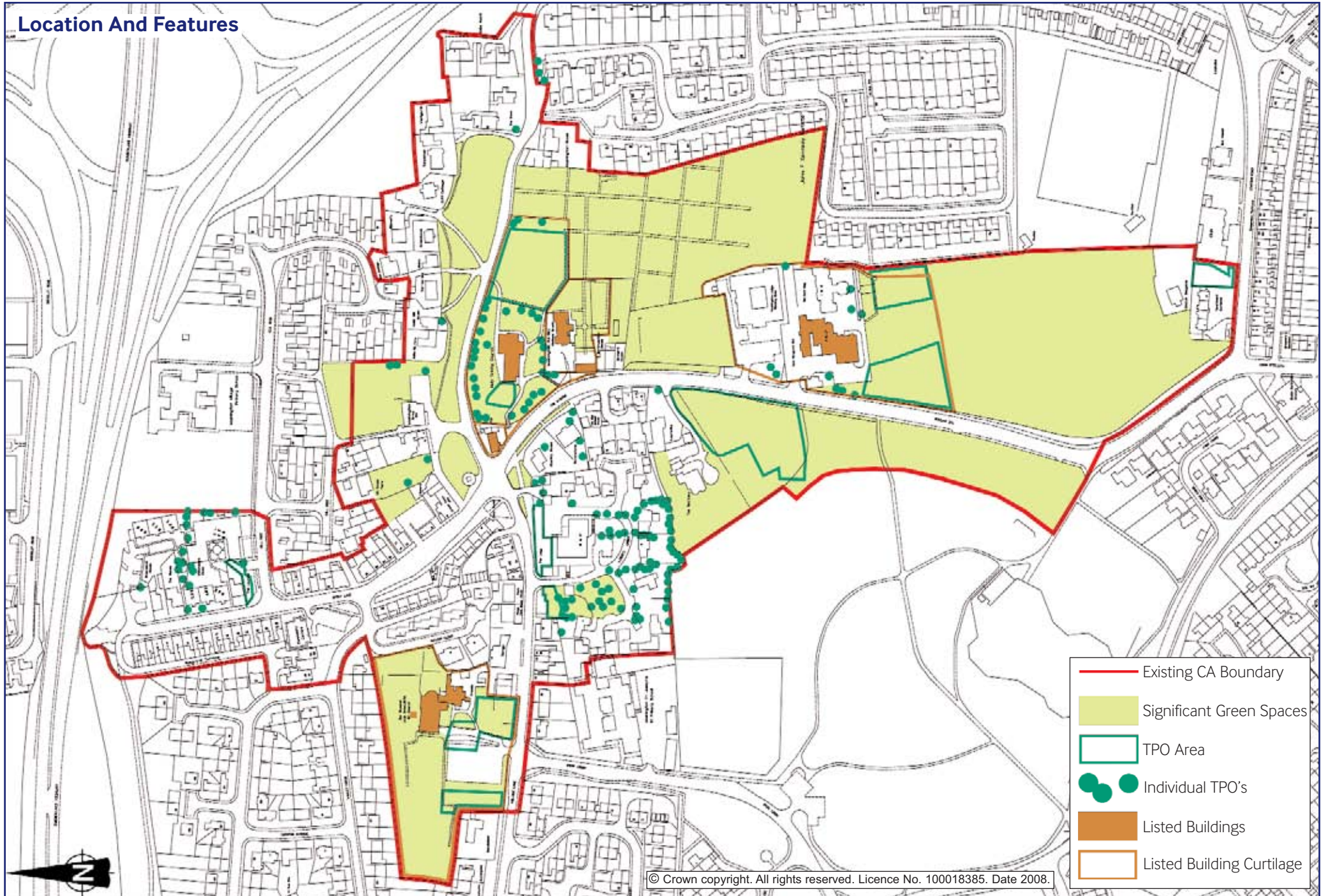
Policy B6 sets out measures the council will take to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas, including encouraging the retention of open spaces, historic street patterns and plot boundaries and exercising control over landscape features such as mature trees. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are a good example of this; they ensure that the consent of the council must be obtained before trees can be cut down, topped or lopped.

However, within Washington Village Conservation Area the potential for loss of features, both architectural and natural, gives cause for concern and raises the issue as to whether further measures should be introduced that would provide better protection for the Conservation Area. To this end, a number of supplementary policies have been formulated to provide clearer policy guidance on certain issues of particular importance to Washington. These proposals are set out in Part Two of the study.

All UDP policies relating to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are reproduced in full in the appendix to this study.



## Location And Features





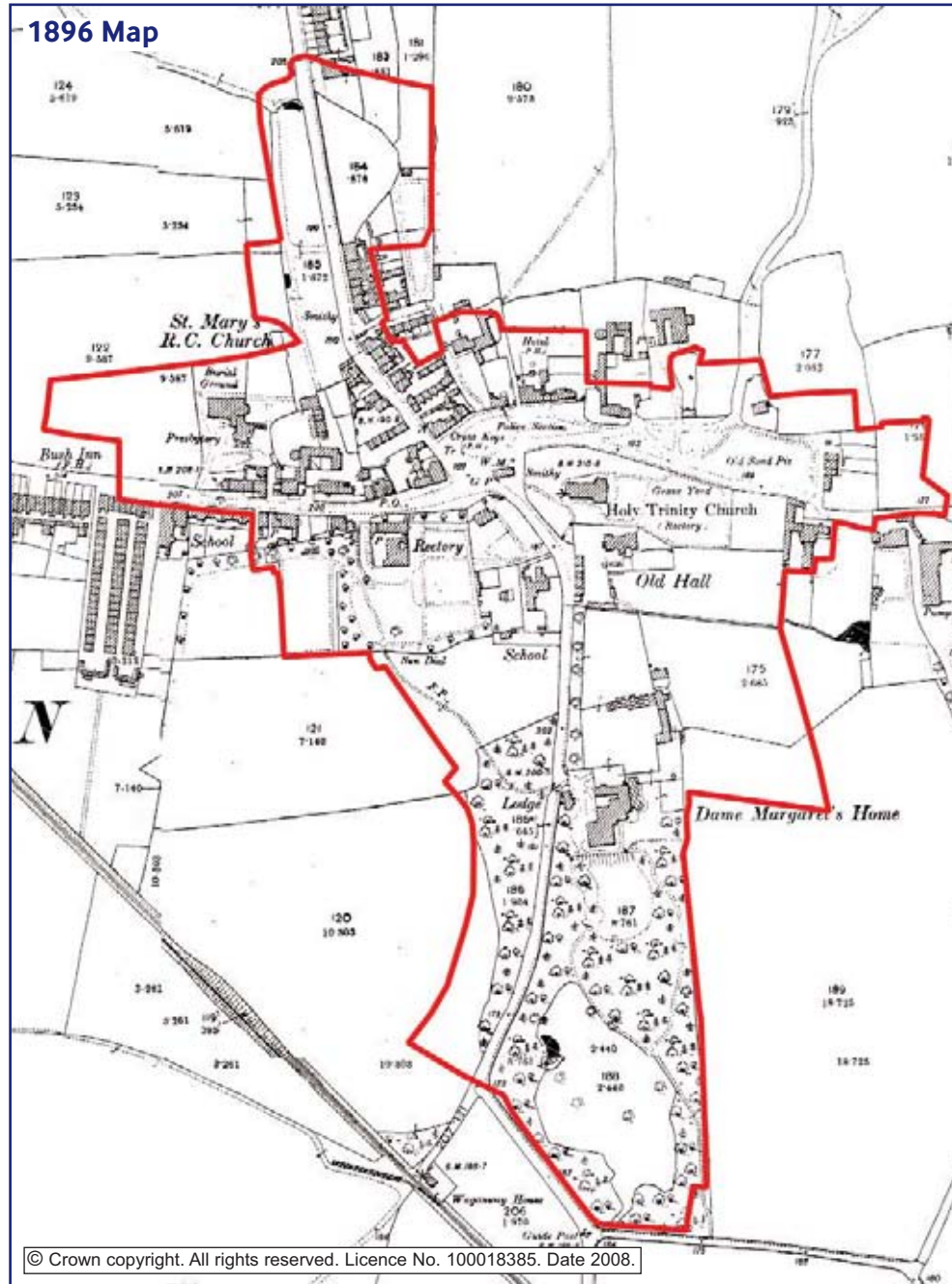




# Part One Character Appraisal



# Historical Development



The name Washington is derived from Wessington, and is thought to be of Anglo-Saxon origin. There are a number of possible explanations for the meaning of the name, including 'the place where Wassas people live', or alternatively that it refers to the word Wessing (an early version of the modern German Wasser - water) meaning soaking or steeping, implying marshy land. Ton is widely recognised as meaning settlement, or farmstead, but an alternative explanation may be that it is a derivation of 'tor', which can be taken to mean 'holy hill'. It has been suggested that the site of Holy Trinity Church may be such a holy hill, particularly as it is possible that it may have been a sacred Celtic site long before it became a Christian churchyard in the 12th century. Indeed, the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record suggests that the unusual round churchyard (long since extended in conjunction with the expansion of Washington) associated with Holy Trinity Church may have originated as a late prehistoric enclosure, although supporting archaeological evidence is lacking.

There is evidence that there was probably Roman agricultural activity in the vicinity of Washington; the Roman road that crossed the Black Fell to Chester-le-Street and a haul of 4th century Roman coins found in 1939 both point to Roman activity in the area although there is no evidence of major military or civilian population.

The first documentary reference to Washington as a settlement appears in a Saxon charter which states that King Edgar granted the settlement of Washington to the Monks of Thorney Abbey, Cambridgeshire, in AD 973. In the 11th century the English (along with the Scots and Danes) suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of William the Conqueror's Norman Army - generally known as the 'Harrying of the North'. The population of the area, including Washington, was largely slain or driven away and the lands were given to the Bishop of Durham. It is thought that the lands remained largely unpopulated for up to a hundred years subsequent to the battles, hence the omission of the area from the 1086 Domesday Book census.

The settlement and its Norman church are, however, referred to in an 1112 Charter by Bishop Flambard of Durham. The Norman church, which stood for at least 700 years, was of an unusual square plan rather than the more common cruciform (cross-shaped) arrangement.

The Boldon Book of 1183 refers to the fact that William de Hertburn acquired the land from Bishop de Puiset in exchange for the village of Hartburn, near Stockton: he subsequently took the surname Wessington (later Washington). William Wessington built a feudal Manor House on the south side of the hill upon which the church stood. Unusually for the time the Manor was built of stone, indicating the Wessingtons' wealth and importance. The Manor was sold to Bishop James in the early 17th century but was largely rebuilt as Washington Old Hall to the design seen today. Some of the original 12th century fabric is incorporated in the existing Hall, including the original stone archways between the current kitchen and the Great Hall.

In 1830 the Norman church was demolished due, apparently, to instability caused by the vaults below the church containing the Washington family's remains. The new church (the existing Holy Trinity) was officially opened in 1833, at a build cost of around one thousand pounds. A simple structure, it soon came to be known locally as 'the barn' and subsequently underwent a number of alterations including a remodelling of the basic structure in the 1880s and replacement of the bell tower in the 1960s. Elements of the original Norman church survive today in the form of the font and the archway at the entrance to the nave.

Unlike the site of Holy Trinity church, which has been considered sacred for many hundreds of years, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Roman Catholic church was built to accommodate rising demand for a catholic meeting place larger than the school hall being used at the time. It was built in 1878 on land obtained from the owner of the local chemical works (Mr. Newall) by the village's first priest, Friar Cambours.

Washington Glebe Colliery was sunk in 1901 and provided a source of local employment until 1972, when it was closed and subsequently landscaped. At its peak in 1914 and again in 1960 the pit employed 690 people and ran on 4 seams. The proximity of the colliery to the village is likely to have influenced the early 20th century expansion of Washington, particularly the terraced housing on Spout Lane. As with so many small settlements, the late 19th/early 20th century was a period of growth; during this time Washington Village experienced significant axial development along the two main intersecting routes through the village.



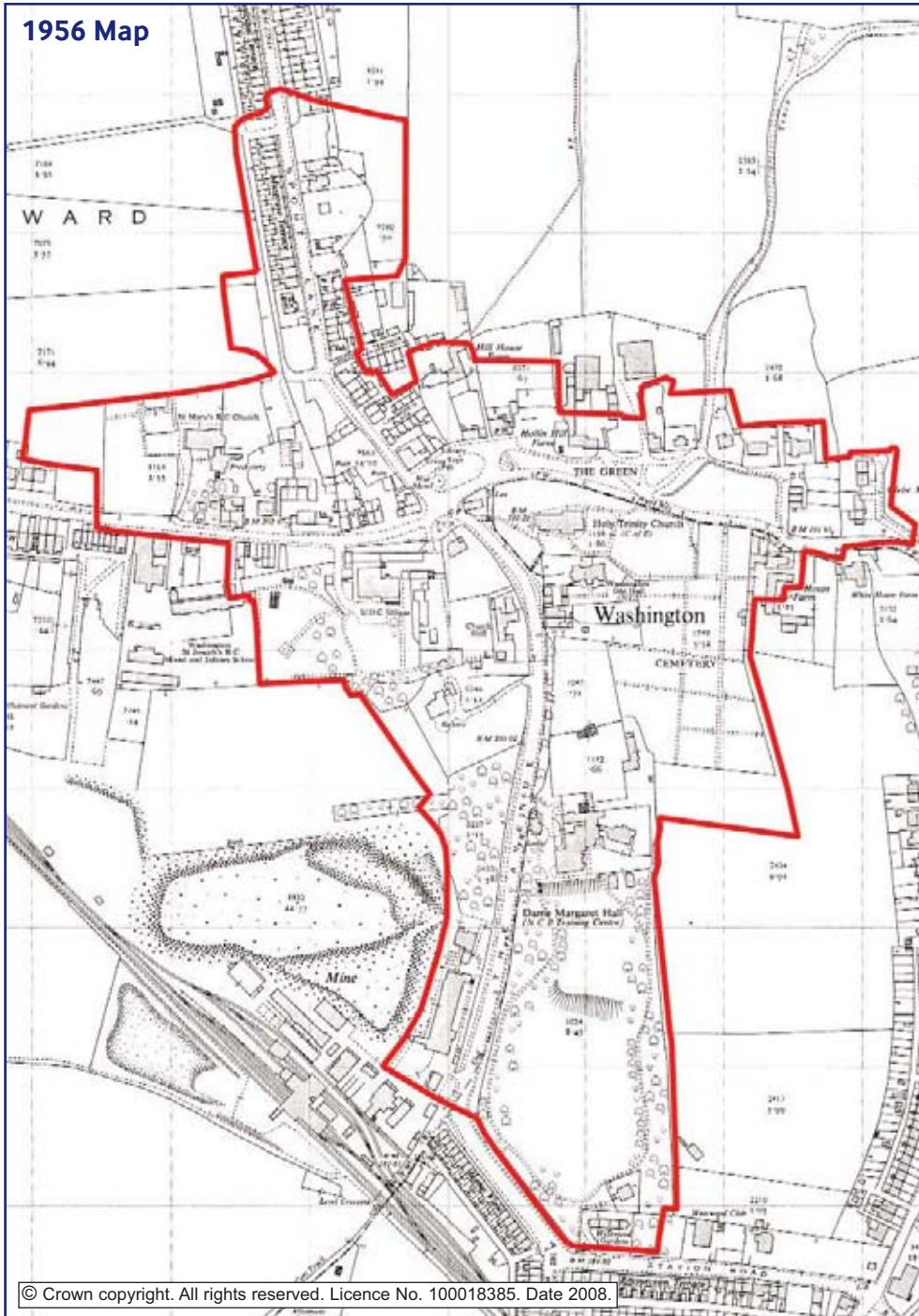
An old postcard (thought to date from the late 19th century) showing The Smithy. Picture courtesy of David Walmsley.



A 1960s view across The Green, showing the War Memorial, Cross Keys pub and a number of buildings that have since been demolished. Picture courtesy of Tyne and Wear Museums.



## 1956 Map



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By the 19th century Washington Old Hall had become tenement housing and fell into significant disrepair. In 1936 the building was condemned and left derelict and no doubt would have been lost but for the dedication of local historian and schoolmaster Frederick Hill. Hill created a preservation society in the 1930s and raised funds from the US and UK to restore the Hall based upon a 1667 inventory of the building's furniture and layout. Hill died in 1955 - the same year the Hall was finally reopened and two years before it was given to the National Trust.

By the 1960s Spout Lane had become a busy through road, but the New Town works included the curtailment of the street - this was apparently controversial at the time as it was a key route for villagers to access the doctors' surgeries and shops in nearby Concord. The Sunderland Highway dual carriageway now forms the northernmost boundary of the Conservation Area, and Spout Lane is truncated. The works successfully prevented the village from remaining a busy through route and have, on balance, probably had a significant positive effect on the character of the village.

The declaration of Washington Village as a Conservation Area in 1975 was partly in response to the designation of Washington as a New Town in the preceding decade. The creation of the Conservation Area formally recognised the special historic interest, character and appearance of the village, and its nature as something of an oasis in the heart of a planned conurbation. Today, this discordance rings as true as ever, with a distinctly marked contrast between the village and the New Town in terms of character, appearance, grain and layout.

The layout of Washington Village has not changed significantly in the last 200 years - the focal point of the crossroads and village green has remained largely unchanged as the village has developed around it. The general streetscape of the village has altered little since the late 19th century, with the exception of fairly recent residential development to the west of Spout Lane and on the old Borough Council site, in the grounds of the former Rectory. Infill development has also occurred in the latter half of the 20th century, in which numerous 'gap' sites have been utilised for housing and a number of historic buildings and terraces have been replaced with unsympathetic modern developments.



# Local characters, legends and historical connections

**George Washington** (1732-1799), the first president of the United States of America, was a direct descendant of William Washington: the Washington family coat of arms is widely considered to be the basis of the Stars and Stripes and is certainly the origin of the Washington State flag. George Washington led the forces that gained independence from British Colonial rule during the American Revolution and became the first president of a united America. Washington Old Hall, the ancestral family home, is now a hugely successful tourist attraction, particularly with US tourists. Sunderland now enjoys a Friendship Agreement with Washington DC, which formalises the unique historical link with the US capital. Under the Agreement, the two cities will co-operate and exchange ideas and information on economic development and tourism promotion, initiatives to increase social inclusion and citizen participation, and cultural and educational programmes to improve the quality of life of residents of both cities.

**Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell** (1815-1904) was an eminent figure in the northeast; born in Newcastle and educated at university in Edinburgh he moved to Washington at the age of 35 to take over the chemical works. An ironmaster and metallurgist, he developed the Washington chemical works into one of the northeast's most important plants and, in 1860, one of the first in the world to manufacture aluminium. Sir Isaac commissioned Washington Hall in 1854 (later to become known as Dame Margaret Hall), which featured a number of later additions by Phillip Webb (see below). After the Bells left Washington the Hall stood empty for some time until Sir Isaac gave it away to become a home for waifs and strays, on the condition that it was renamed after his wife Margaret.

**Gertrude Bell** (1868-1926), granddaughter of Sir Isaac, scholar, poet, historian, mountaineer, explorer, linguist and diplomat was born in Dame Margaret Hall in 1868. Subsequent to an Oxford education, Ms Bell became honorary secretary of the women's anti-suffrage league. With a degree in modern history one of her passions was archaeology, which influenced many of her travels in her 20s and 30s. Summoned by the government to Egypt in 1915 Bell became the first female political officer in the British Army. Later, as a diplomat for Arab countries in Africa and the Middle East, she liaised with Lawrence of Arabia and was successful in persuading the Arabs to join the allies in WW1. Bell was also closely involved in the creation of the Kingdom of Iraq in the early 1920s.

**Phillip Webb** (1831-1915), of Oxford, was one of the main theorists of the national Arts and Crafts Movement. A trained architect, Webb set up his own practice before joining William Morris & Co. in 1861, where he is credited with drawing almost all of the birds and animals that feature in Morris' textile designs. Together with Morris, Webb also co-founded SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings), a building conservation organisation that continues to this day. Webb's most prolific output was the design of houses, including additions to Washington's Dame Margaret Hall (such as the Turkish Baths, sadly now lost). Sir Isaac later employed Webb again, this time to design a model village on his Rounton Estate, near Northallerton.

## The Highwayman

In the 18th century there were numerous robberies by highwaymen on Long Bank at Wrekenton, Gateshead. Legend has it that on one occasion in 1770 a coach was held up in full view of the local post boy. The occupants of the coach described the highwayman as wearing a mask and riding a fine grey mare. Later that day the post boy was watering his pony at the Smithy in Washington Village where he recognised the grey mare being re-shod by the village blacksmith. The boy alerted the authorities and the highwayman, named Robert Hazlitt, was arrested on his return to the Smithy. Hazlitt was hung at the assizes in Durham and his body was put into a cage and hung from a gibbet at the foot of Long Bank as a deterrent to other highwaymen.

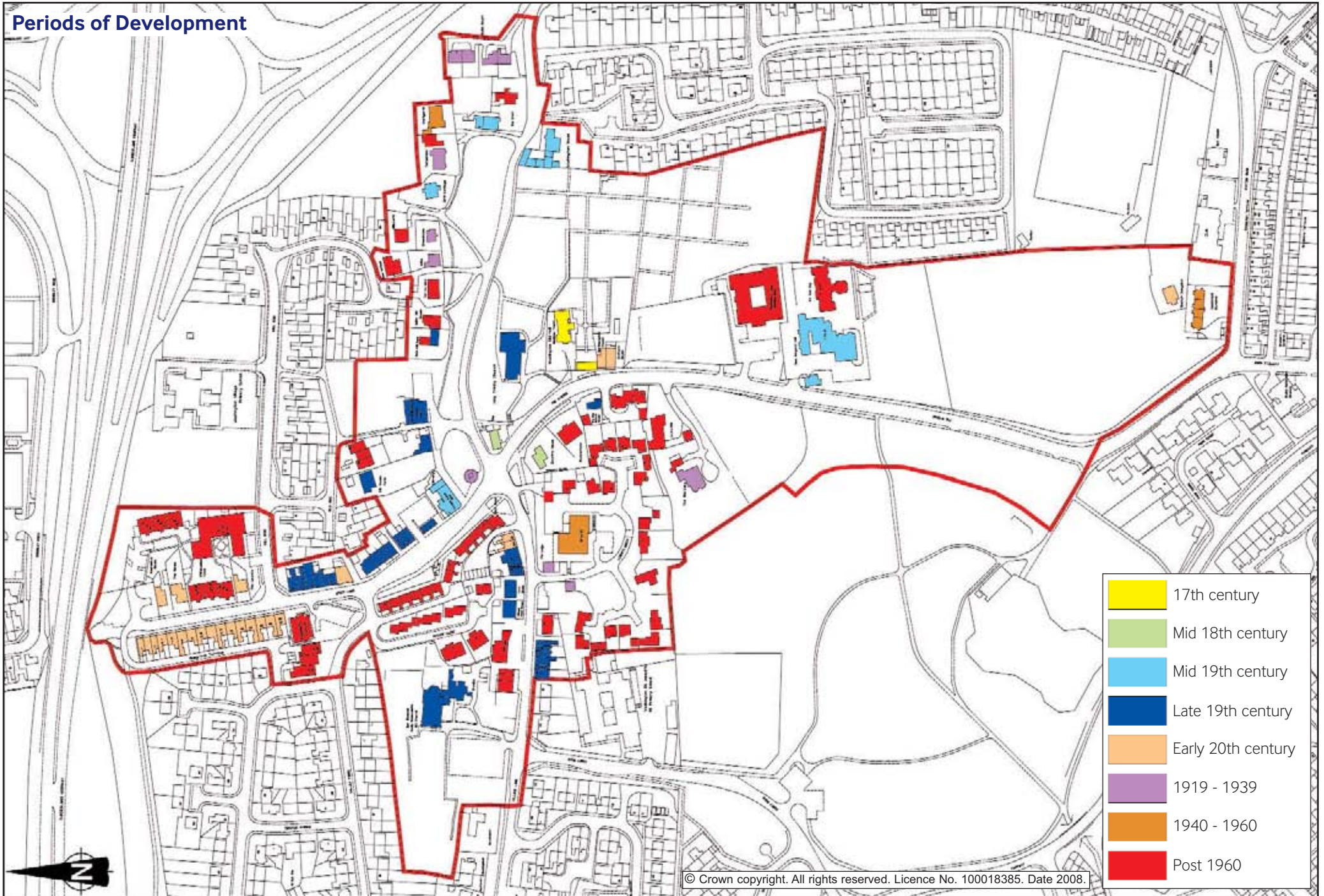
## Witch

Another local legend claims that what is now the village green was once a pond, in which a local lady named Jane Atkinson was tried as a witch in 1696. Although she sank three times, indicating that she was not in fact a witch, rather tragically she drowned on the third ducking. Despite being cleared in this way her death was supposedly recorded in the parish register with the title of witch beside her name; there is, however, no evidence to support this in the surviving parish registers.

## Parish Beadle

In 1800 the village didn't have its own policeman; instead it had Job Atkinson, the Parish Beadle. The Beadle locked people such as drunks into the stocks, which were situated between the Old Smithy and Holy Trinity Church. Sadly no trace of these remains today, although it is documented that the wall fixings were still evident in the wall until at least the 1960s.

# Periods of Development



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# Fundamental Character

The fundamental character of Washington Village Conservation Area is largely derived from its historic development around a crossroads and green - a traditional focal point for the village. A key component of the Conservation Area's character is an abundance of mature, dense greenery and open spaces including the cemetery, Green, Sandpit and former colliery.

Key buildings contributing to the character of the Conservation Area include Washington Old Hall, the Old Smithy, Holy Trinity, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate and Dame Margaret Hall. A number of attractive historic residential and commercial properties in brick and stone also contribute significantly to the charm of the village.

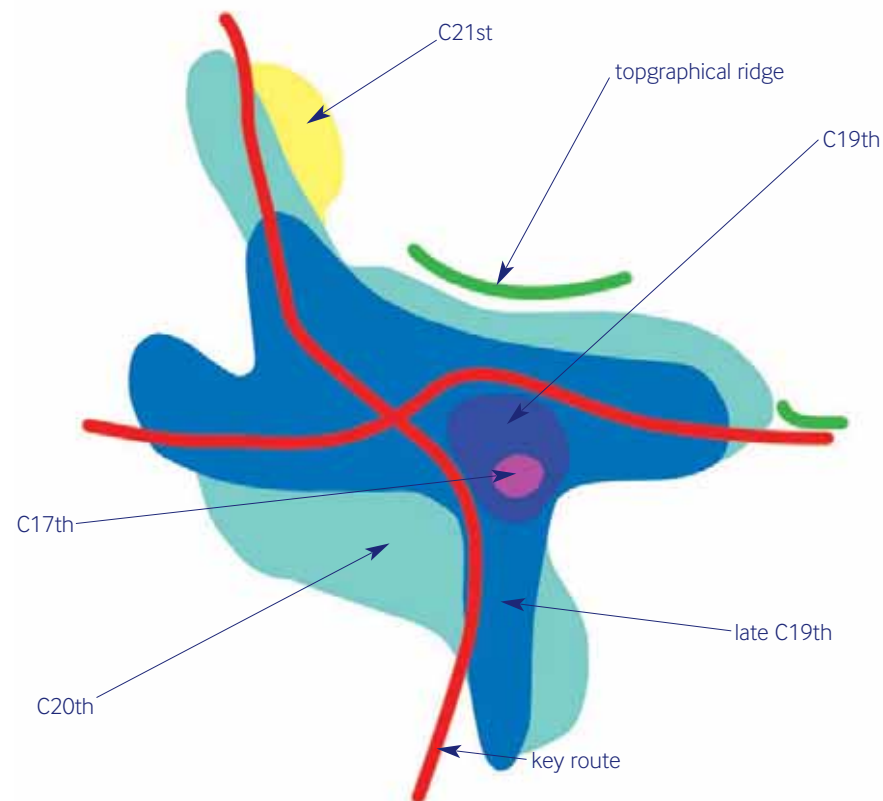


## Layout

The village developed around the very early focal point of the Manor House, which later became Washington Old Hall, and two key historical routes - one north-south and one east-west. Development was largely confined to alongside the two roads; this axial pattern can still clearly be discerned in the layout of the village.

The topography of the village has also been key to its layout; Holy Trinity Church and grounds enjoy an elevated position and the bank of the sandpit creates a natural 'theatre' with houses set above the road.

## Phases of development



## Built form

The scale and massing of properties in the village varies; Spout Lane features a number of uniform terraces, while other parts of the Conservation Area largely feature individual houses in small grounds. There are also a small number of significantly grand properties in fairly extensive grounds, although some of these have been developed in recent years for infill housing (the former council depot, for example). The irregular grain and apparently quite random distribution of properties in the majority of the village gives the impression of organic growth, as one would expect from a village with a long history as opposed to a planned development such as the New Town surrounding it.





Above left, relatively uniform stone terraced properties on Spout Lane, mostly in commercial use. Right, the charming jumble of housing surrounding the Sandpit, which is of a variety of styles.

### Architectural Style

As is typical of a small village, the Conservation Area has no strong architectural theme uniting it. With the obvious exception of landmark buildings such as Dame Margaret Hall and the Old Hall, the majority of properties are simple stone or brick buildings, with a minimum of decorative features. Residential properties, particularly around the sandpit, display a variety of styles but are largely unified by a limited palette of traditional local materials.

### Building materials

A significant proportion of the historic properties in the village are of sandstone with Welsh slate roofs and timber windows, although a number of original windows have unfortunately been lost in favour of uPVC replacements. The oldest properties (and some of the more recent ones) feature red pantile roofs. The village features a red brick terrace, and a number of individual brick properties. Recent development in the Conservation Area has largely been of brick, although the later 20th century houses on the edge of the green and Spout Lane feature a mixture of brick, pebble dash render and tile hung panels.

### Landscape

Washington Village is set in the midst of intense mature greenery that effectively conceals the wider landscape of Washington New Town which, along with a number of dual carriageways and large busy roundabouts, now completely surrounds the Conservation Area. The topography, layout and mature trees of the village create a tranquil historic enclave that gives the observer absolutely no indication of the wider development of Washington New Town. The topography of the village is relatively understated, but a number of fairly gentle slopes and elevated points, such as the high ground that Holy Trinity Church is built upon, have strongly influenced the built form of the area and facilitate views within the village.



Above, topographical variations add interest and character.

Despite an overall sense of enclosure within the village, there are a number of significant open green spaces - these allow glimpsed views of key buildings, provide vital amenity space, and yet also maintain a sense of enclosure due, in large part, to the influence of large mature trees bordering the spaces.



Above, the former gardens to Dame Margaret Hall are maintained as playing fields and provide a glimpse of the Hall through the trees.

## Usage

The pattern of usage in Washington Village Conservation Area reflects its traditional development with a commercial core of small shops, pubs, a library, community centre, and two churches, with residential properties largely making up the remainder of the village. Washington Old Hall is now a museum and a very popular northeast tourist attraction which brings many American visitors pursuing the George Washington connection.



Commercial properties in the Conservation Area.

## General Condition

The Conservation Area is, on the whole, in excellent condition. Historic buildings are well cared for, green spaces appear to be managed appropriately, and public areas such as the green and war memorial appear clean and tidy. There are few, if any, properties in the village that are neglected or have been allowed to fall into disrepair, resulting in a highly desirable residential location with the benefit of attractive green spaces and numerous mature trees.

## Key Components of Character

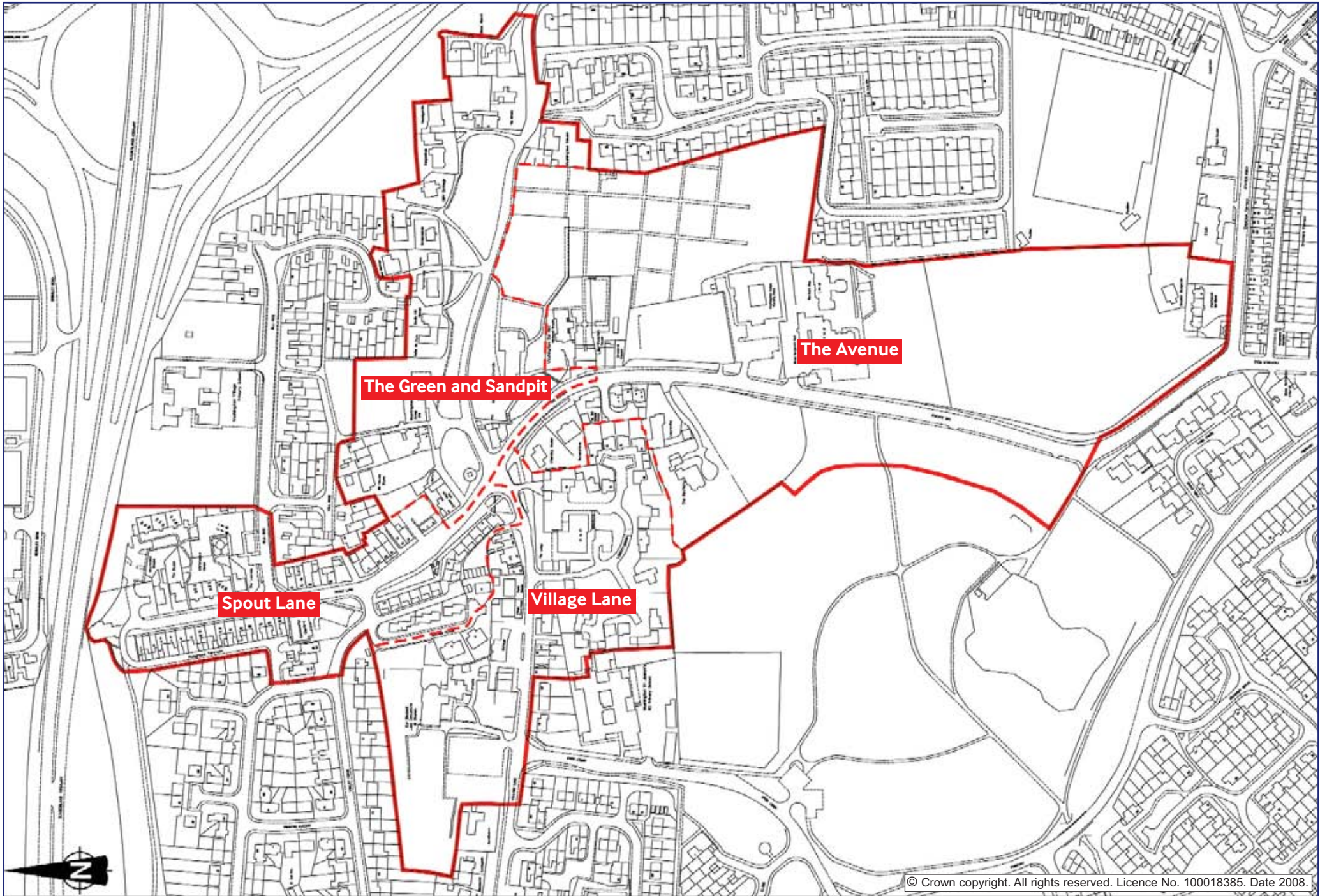
For the purposes of a more detailed study of its character, the Conservation Area has been divided into four sub-categories that take the form of areas of broadly similar character, which combine to create the special character of the Conservation Area as a whole.

## Fundamental character of Washington Village Conservation Area comprises:

- Historic development around the focal point of the crossroads, Green and high ground of the Old Hall and Holy Trinity Church
- Abundance of mature greenery has a strong influence on the character of the village and provides an overwhelming sense of enclosure throughout, giving a certain rustic charm despite its New Town context
- Use of locally quarried sandstone
- Holy Trinity Church; Grade II Listed
- Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church; Grade II Listed
- Washington Old Hall and formal gardens; Grade I Listed
- Dame Margaret Hall and former gardens; Grade II Listed
- Village centre with shops, library and pubs
- Significant open spaces, particularly to the south of the village, including some that contribute to the Conservation Area's character despite not being inside the boundary
- Gentle topographical changes influence the layout of the village, and views within the Conservation Area
- Character remains totally distinct from the New Town that surrounds it

All of the above combine to give a high degree of local distinctiveness





The Avenue

The Green and Sandpit

Spout Lane

Village Lane



# Landmarks, views and vistas

Washington Village Conservation Area contains a number of buildings and landscape features that come together to create a legible townscape. This is further emphasised by the development of the village around four main routes intersecting at the focal point of the Holy Trinity Church and village green.

A number of landmark buildings are easily identifiable, most significantly Washington Old Hall and provide a sense of location within the village. The topography and dense greenery of the village provide strong boundary definition and well defined edges to the area of 'special interest', and a distinct sense of enclosure throughout.

## Key characteristics of the landmarks, views and vistas of Washington Village.

- Series of built features of individual character/styles that are easily identifiable as local landmarks
- Excellent individual buildings, including the hugely significant grade I listed Washington Old Hall
- Green and war memorial/Old Smithy/Holy Trinity Church provide focal point to the layout and community of the village
- Dense mature greenery provides sense of enclosure and limits views in/out
- Strong physical boundary - largely due to mature greenery, topography, boundary walls and in some cases the building line
- Topography/morphology lends itself to gradually revealing views within the Conservation Area; these tend to be glimpses rather than sweeping vistas
- Sinuous, sloping streets reveal unfolding views and encourage further exploration

## Washington Old Hall

A Grade I Listed Building of extremely significant architectural and historical importance not only to Washington Village but to the wider Sunderland area, the Hall is a key



landmark in the Conservation Area. In a commanding position on the south side of a hill, the Hall is slightly elevated above The Avenue, with views across stepped Jacobean-style gardens.

Built of local, honey-coloured coursed sandstone blocks, the Hall is of an H-shaped layout, typical of the 17th century. The roof is pantiled, windows feature stone mullions and metal frames, and the interior of the Hall features large stone fireplaces (e.g. right) and two pointed stone arches that are believed to be 12th century remnants of the original manor house.



The interior of the Hall also features a number of items of historical interest that were brought from elsewhere in the country during the restoration project. This includes the impressive wood panelling in the Panelled Room, which came from the old Manor House in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire and the staircase (left) which came from the White Hart Hotel in Guildford.



## Timeline of Washington Old Hall

- 1183 William de Hertburn acquires lands of Washington (Wessington) from Bishop de Puiset; William takes the Washington name. Original Manor possibly built at this time, or may have been bought with the land, records are unclear.
- 1183-1300s A number of alterations made to original Manor house, including addition of a Great Hall - elements of which remain in today's Hall.
- 1304 King Edward I visits Washington family; demonstrates status of family in medieval period.
- 1399 Senior branch of Washington family have ceased to live in the Manor (having relocated to Lancashire in late 1200s following marriage of Robert to Joan de Strickland of Sizergh Castle). Manor passes to Eleanor Washington, and then to her daughter, Dionisia Washington (marries Sir William Mallory and the Manor passes into the Mallory family).
- 1613 Mallory family sell the manor to William James, Bishop of Durham, for £4,000.
- 1617 Upon the death of William, the Manor passes to his son Francis.
- 1623 Francis marries and is subsequently thought to be responsible for the re-building of the Hall to the design seen today.
- 1656 John Washington, descendent of William Wessington, leaves Lancashire during the Civil War and emigrates to Virginia.
- 1662 Upon the death of William James, Francis' son, an inventory of goods is taken, revealing a good standard of living at the Hall. Hall subsequently let to a series of tenants and becomes increasingly dilapidated.
- 1732 George Washington, great grandson of John, is born in Virginia.
- 1789 George Washington becomes the first president of the United States of America following his success in leading the forces that gained independence from British Colonial rule.
- 1891 Despite its historical and architectural significance, the Hall becomes tenement housing, recorded in 1891 as having 35 people living there in poor conditions.
- 1932 The Hall is condemned as unfit for habitation and left to dereliction. Soon after this the Preservation Committee is formed by local people, headed by Frederick Hill (schoolmaster) and Cyril Lomax (rector).
- 1951 Shortly after the end of WWII restoration begins on the derelict shell of the Hall, supported in particular by Viscount Gort who contributed knowledge and a number of internal features, and by American benefactors who donated funds and furniture.
- 1955 Hall reopens to the public, opened by the American Ambassador.
- 1956 Hall given to the National Trust who continue to manage the property today.

In addition to the Listing of the Hall itself, the Lodge and Gate Piers are Listed separately, both at Grade II. The Lodge is an extremely attractive sandstone rubble house with red clay pantiles, and the gate piers were a gift from Chapter XI of the Colonial Dames of America. Comprising 18th and 20th century components, the two tallest piers (right) are topped with 18th century urns which were brought to Washington from the Old Clock House in Ascot.



The gardens to the Old Hall have been recreated over recent years to designs based on typical periods in the building's life; there are no records as to what the Hall's gardens previously looked like. The National Trust has created a beautiful garden setting for the Listed Building, featuring for example a Jacobean style knot garden and other formal gardens featuring parterres (compartments) with old English flowers and herbs.



Old English garden with parterres.

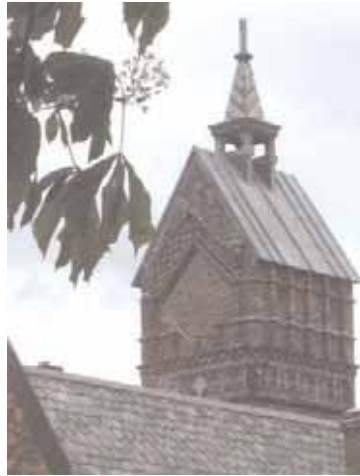


Jacobean Knot garden by the Lodge.

The Hall today is a visitor attraction and is regularly used as a venue for various social events and weddings. This vibrancy and continued use is maintaining the long-term sustainability of the Hall in the Village and the wider context of the northeast region. Particularly vital to the continued success of the Hall is its American patronage and huge popularity with visiting Americans who make the pilgrimage to the Old Hall to seek out the historical connections between Washington Village, the Washington family and the birth of the United States of America.

### Dame Margaret Hall

Built between 1854 and 1857 for chemical manufacturer Isaac Lowthian Bell, this Grade II Listed Building is of the Free Tudor style. The Hall is of red brick with ashlar and terracotta dressings, the roof is of Welsh slate with attractive 'fishscale' bands and the skyline is dominated by a four-storey tower. The Hall was given away by the Bell family in 1891 as a home for waifs and strays.



In 1910 the Hall became the North Branch HQ of Barnardo's, then later served as an NCB training centre and a school until it was redeveloped as a private housing development following restoration work.



### Holy Trinity Church

Known locally as 'the Barn' due to its simple design, Holy Trinity was built in 1832, following the demolition of the medieval church that stood on the same site. The West entrance is all that remains of the medieval building. In 1878 residents of the village undertook a modification scheme (albeit less grand than originally planned due to financial restraints); later additions include the bell tower in 1962. The churchyard features a 12th century font that was rediscovered in use as a cattle trough in 1965 by the Rector.

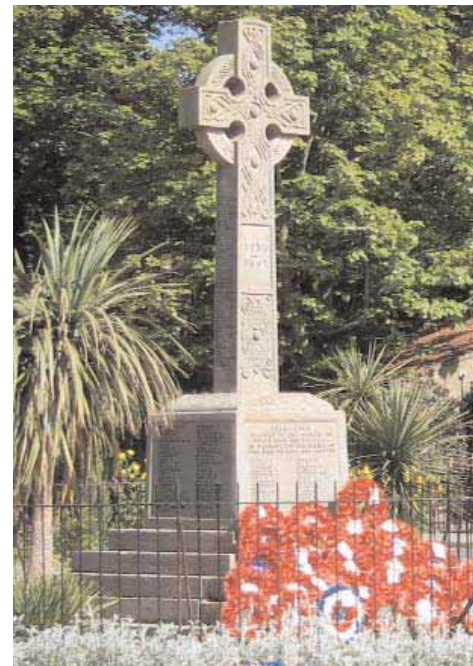


### Our Blessed Lady Immaculate RC Church



Built in 1878, the church is a fine example of the Neo-Decorated style. The church was built to accommodate rising demand for a catholic meeting place larger than the school hall they were using at the time. In the 1860s Washington's first priest, Fr. Francis Cambours, obtained the site from Mr. Newall, of Washington Chemical Works, and had plans drawn up for the church and presbytery. Until 1880 the church was known as St. Joseph and Aloysius.

### War Memorial



War memorials are an important part of our local and national heritage and are found at the heart of almost every community. As well as providing an insight into the tragic history of the local families who lost relatives in the Second World War, the Celtic cross-shaped memorial is a focal point of the village Green, at the geographical and cultural centre of Washington Village.



## Views



Views into and out of conservation areas can help to indicate their significance within the wider area. In the case of Washington Village, there are very few glimpses out of the Conservation Area - instead the village has a strong sense of enclosure and of boundaries, due largely to the topography and street layout. Gentle slopes ensure that views within the Conservation Area are never fully revealed - as one moves up or down hills additional components of the street scene come into view. Likewise, the gentle curves of the four main roads through the village cause the viewer to rarely have a clear view towards the focal point of the crossroads and Green, enticing the observer to follow the road and discover the hidden treasures around each bend.



Bends and slopes in roads through the Conservation Area, in some cases combined with the strong vertical emphasis of boundary treatments, lead the eye and invite the viewer to investigate further.

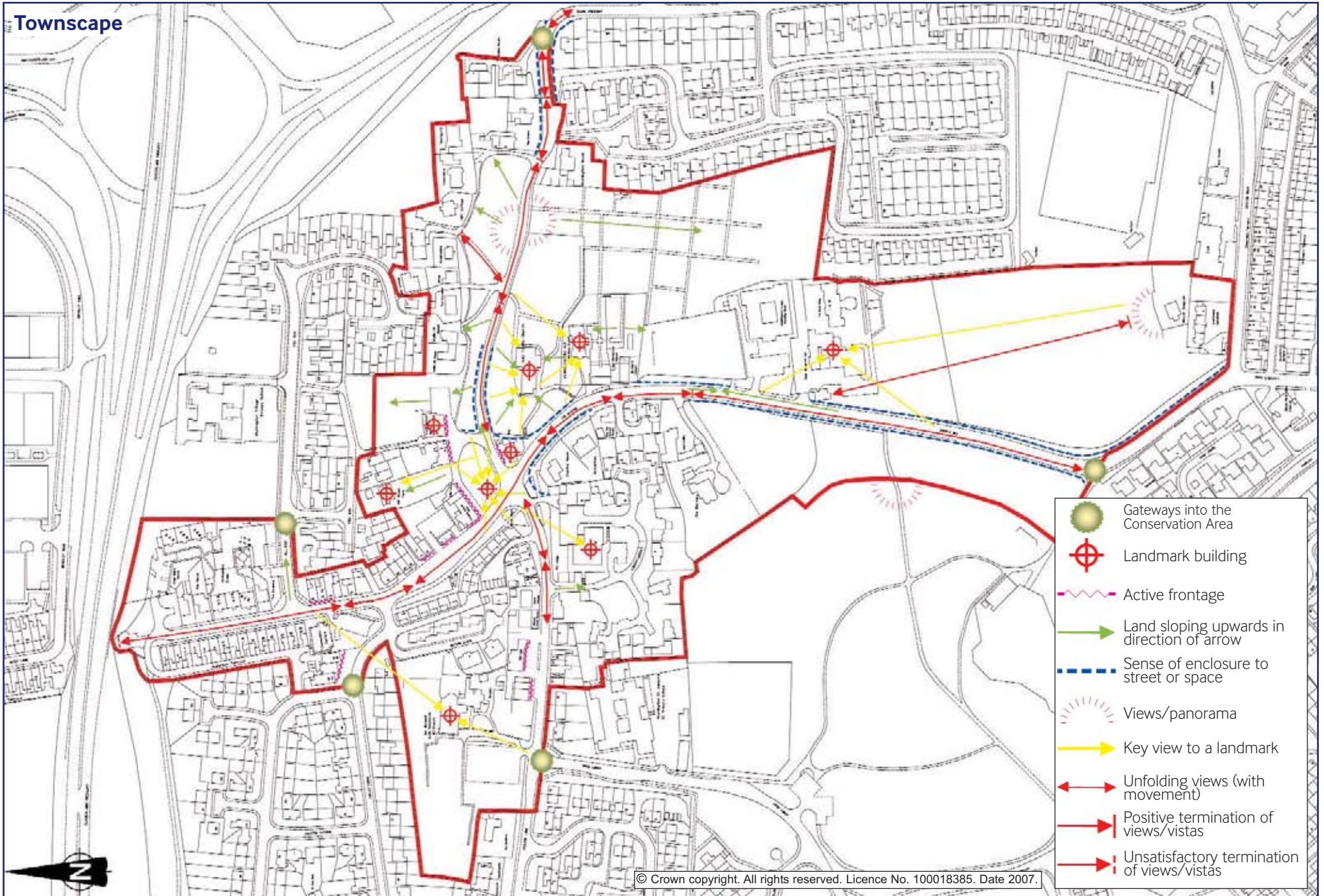
## Vistas

Two key open vistas within the village are across the Sandpit and the Green. Unlike other parts of the Conservation Area, which are largely fairly narrow and enclosed, these two areas feature clear vistas that contain a number of buildings of interest and attractive landscape elements. Note that even these areas maintain a sense of enclosure to their boundaries due to a combination of topography, building line and mature planting.



Top: The Sandpit area of the village; open spaces and gentle slopes facilitate views up to houses which enjoy an elevated position above the road. Below: the Green and views across the War Memorial and Old Smithy to Holy Trinity Church.





- Gateways into the Conservation Area
- ⊕ Landmark building
- ~ Active frontage
- Land sloping upwards in direction of arrow
- - - Sense of enclosure to street or space
- ⌒ Views/panorama
- Key view to a landmark
- ↔ Unfolding views (with movement)
- Positive termination of views/vistas
- Unsatisfactory termination of views/vistas

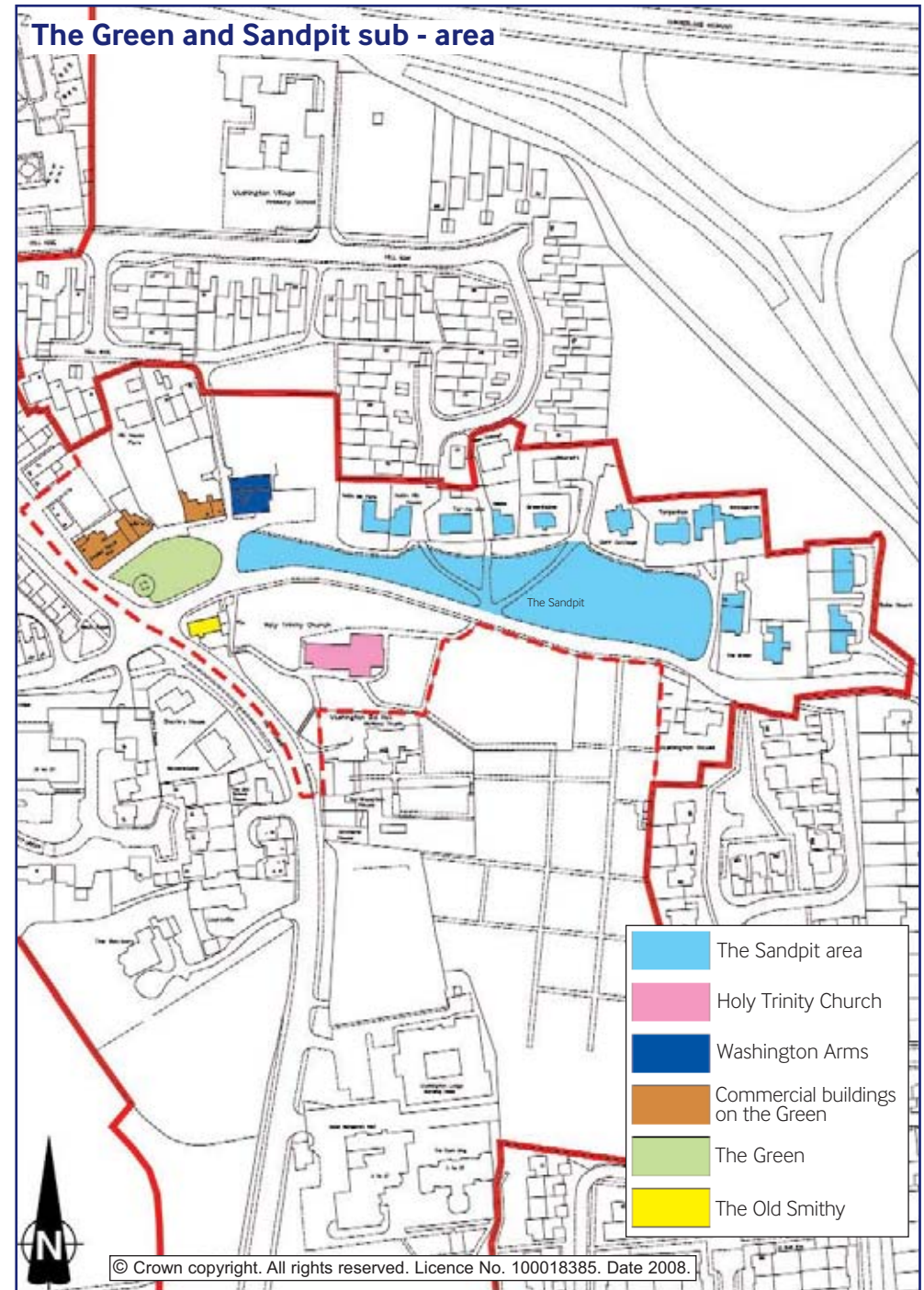


# The Green and Sandpit sub-area

This tranquil sub-area with many fine trees is the heart of the historic core around which the town developed in later centuries. The sub-area encompasses the 12th century church and its grounds, and 17th century buildings associated with the church and its former incumbents. The character of this area is quite distinct from the retail and residential parts of the town, and its character influences the remainder of the settlement, in terms of its historic development and townscape value.

## Key characteristics of the The Green and Sandpit sub-area:

- Holy Trinity Church (Grade II Listed) is given added emphasis due to its positioning on high ground above the Green
- Old Smithy; Grade II Listed
- Bowl shaped area of the Sandpit results in interesting landscape
- Houses elevated on a ridge around the Sandpit
- Village Green, focal point of Conservation Area at crossroads of four key routes through the village
- Key community buildings surround the Green, including two pubs and the library
- Greenery - grass and trees - make a significant contribution to the character of this sub-area
- Range of building styles and ages unified by materials
- Views into churchyard/cemetery





## The Green

The village Green is a major focal point of the Conservation Area, at the crossroads of the four main routes through the village. The buildings around the Green include some key community buildings, such as pubs and the library.



## The Old Smithy

Grade II Listed, this mid-18th century red pantiled former stable served as a Smithy before it came under threat of redevelopment in the 1950s. A Mrs V Morawety entrusted a sum of £350 to the council to purchase the Smithy in 1955, which was then used as a pottery for a number of years. It has subsequently been used as a café, a National Trust shop and is now once more in use as a restaurant.



## Commercial buildings on The Green

Commercial buildings, particularly around a focal point such as a village green, help to create a vibrant, healthy community heart. These properties are all in good condition and have retained attractive frontages - the Green Library in particular features an excellent eye-catching historic shopfront, with beautiful stained glass panels.



Above: Ye Olde Cop Shop Guest House, The Green Library, The Cross Keys Pub.

## The Sandpit



Historic maps show that this grassed area was formerly a sandpit, probably used for both the industrial extraction of sand and by locals when they were building houses. The gentle slopes and curves of the land here result in an extremely attractive arrangement of houses that enjoy an elevated position above the road. The slopes also facilitate views into the churchyard and cemetery. Although houses around the Sandpit are of a range of ages and styles, including the former farm buildings, they achieve the appearance of an attractive grouping through careful choice of natural materials, scale and proportion. Houses on the Sandpit are accessed via informal lanes that add character and charm to the area.



## Holy Trinity Church

Holy Trinity Church makes a significant contribution to the character of the sub-area, acting as a punctuation point at the northernmost tip of The Avenue. Sitting above the Conservation Area on a high piece of ground its bell tower is a key landmark.



## Washington Arms

There has been a public house on the site of the Washington Arms since at least 1856, although the footprint of the building has altered several times over the years. The pub in its current form is an attractive feature of the village and forms a classic centrepiece of views within this part of the Conservation Area.





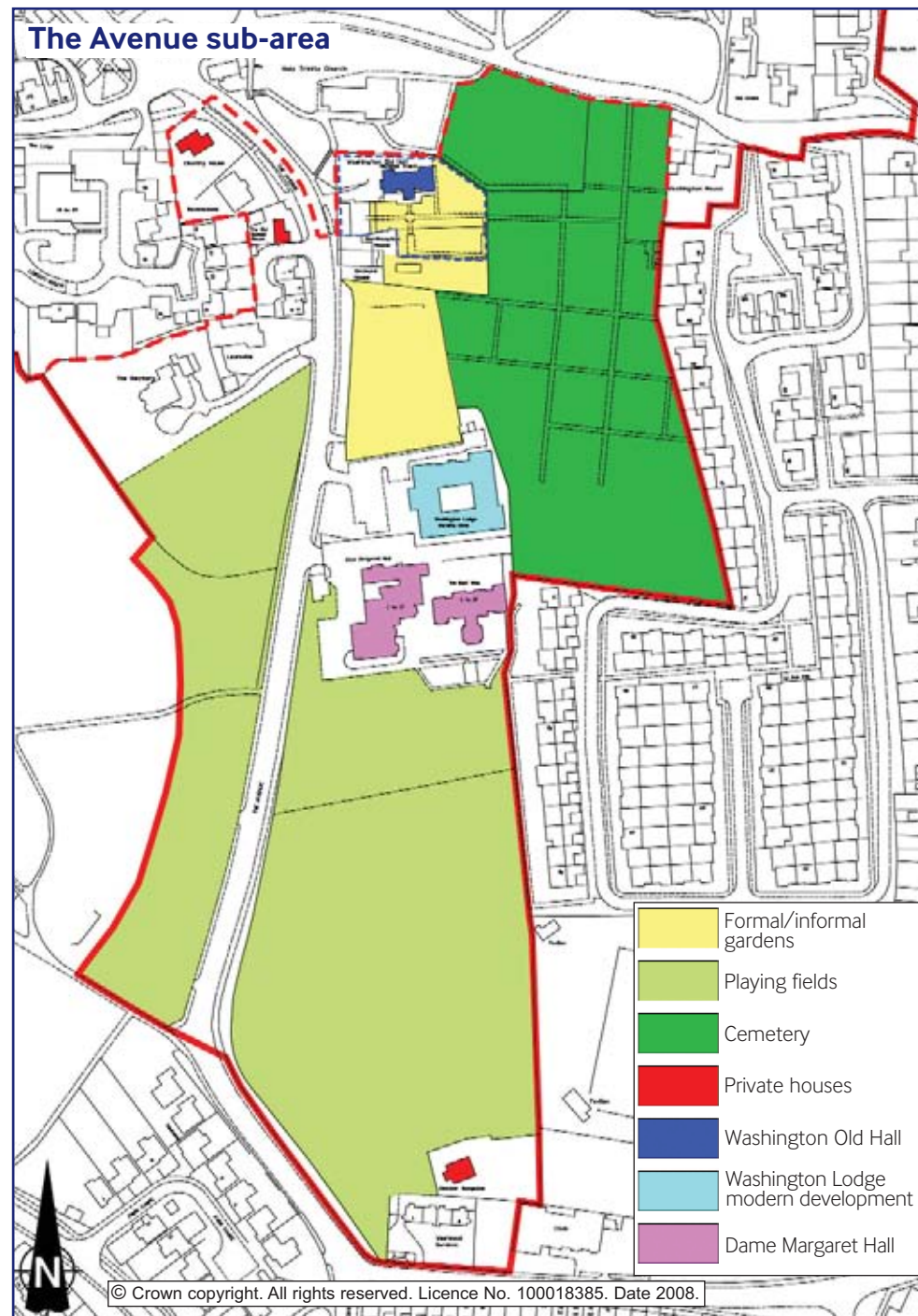
# The Avenue sub-area

The Avenue is a key route into the Conservation Area and has a very distinct character as for much of its length it is undeveloped and flanked to either side by large open green spaces and heavy swathes of mature trees. Once into the heart of the village The Avenue becomes increasingly developed, predominantly featuring attractive historic residential dwellings.

Dame Margaret Hall and Washington Old Hall are both landmark buildings that contribute greatly to the character of the sub-area, despite being significantly screened from the road by interesting and attractive boundary treatments and a proliferation of greenery.

## Key characteristics of the Avenue sub-area:

- Washington Old Hall; Grade I Listed
- Dame Margaret Hall and boundary wall; Grade II Listed
- Open spaces and mature tree cover, including the tranquil cemetery and church grounds
- Sinuous and gently sloping streetscape
- Attractive residential properties such as the Old School House and Chantry House



## Cemetery



Holy Trinity churchyard and adjacent cemetery provide an attractive, peaceful and pleasant backdrop to both the Sandpit area and Washington Old Hall. The dappled shade provided by mature trees makes a significant contribution to the character of this area. In addition to the large cemetery area, there are also a number of extremely old gravestones in the grounds to the church.

## Private houses

Particularly interesting examples of individual historic dwellings in this sub-area include the Old School House (below left) and Chantry House (below right). Built in 1757, Chantry House means the Curate's house; the building was in the ownership of the Church for many years and has been used as a location for choir practice and as a community centre. It is now a very attractive private residence.



## Open spaces/mature trees

Open green spaces make a highly significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, particularly in the southern part of the village. The former Glebe Colliery site (below) is the largest green space in the village, reclaimed subsequent to its closure in 1972.



## Streetscape

The streetscape of The Avenue is markedly different to that of other parts of the Washington Village Conservation Area. The Avenue is a long, wide street that slopes gently away from the centre of the village, leading the eye round sweeping curves, such as below. The street quickly leads one out of the built environment and into open green spaces surrounded by dense tree cover. Looking south along The Avenue from the Old Hall the proliferation of mature greenery hints at the nature of the streetscene to come, and creates a strong sense of enclosure to the street.



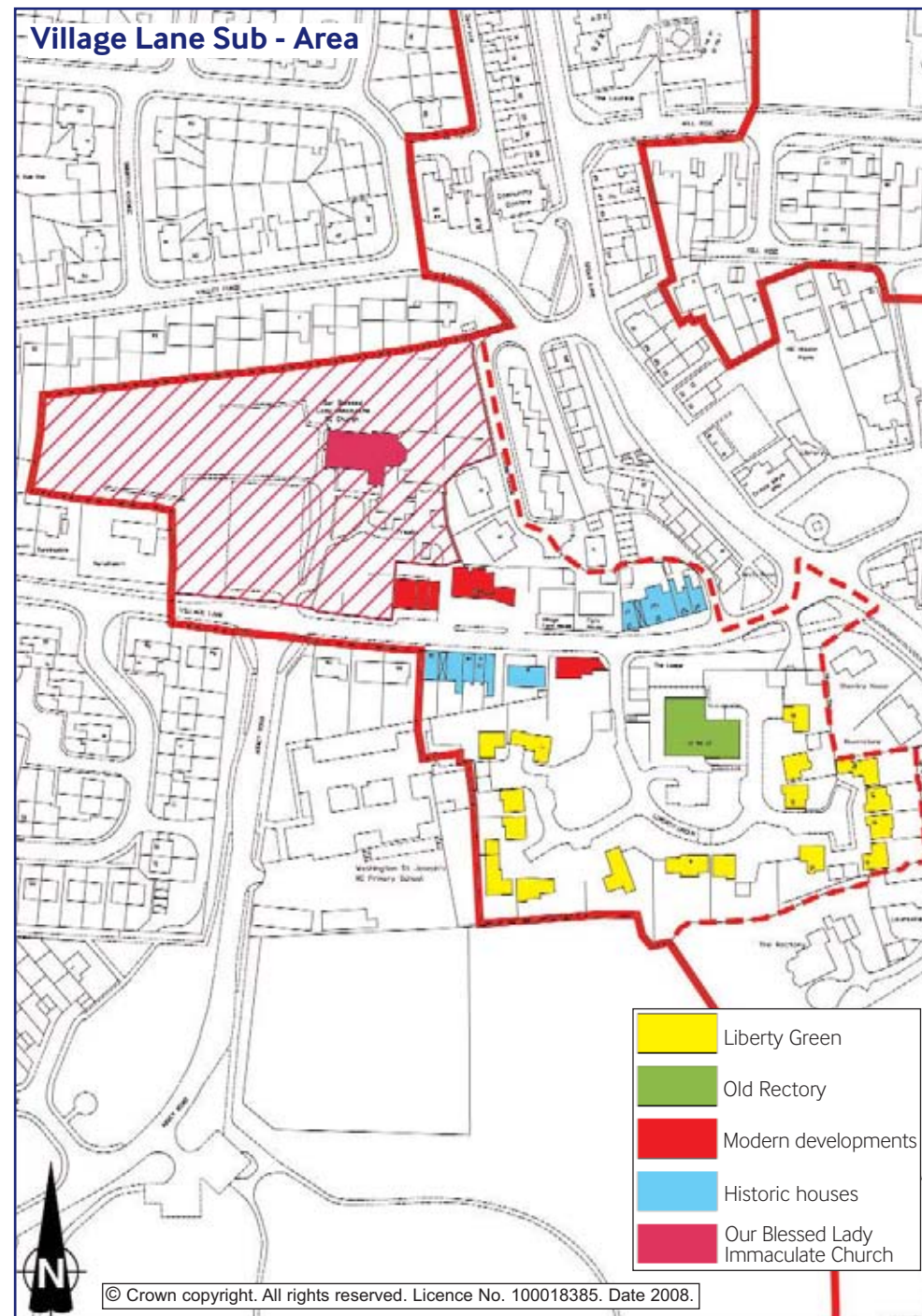


# Village Lane sub-area

Village Lane is another of the key routes through the village, featuring a mixture of historic stone residential terraces and more recent residential and commercial development, including a small precinct of shops and a petrol filling station. The area encompasses the Roman Catholic church of Our Blessed Lady Immaculate and its grounds, and the former UDC offices - a large Georgian-style property, the grounds of which were developed from use as a council depot to executive housing in 2001. Village Lane itself curves gently, eventually revealing the attractive open space of the Green.

## Key Characteristics of the Village Lane sub-area:

- Grade II Listed Our Blessed Lady Immaculate R.C. Church and grounds, inc. miners' memorial, Listed in its own right
- Historic stone terraces - residential and commercial
- Old Rectory; former council offices now residential apartments
- Liberty Green 'executive housing'
- Unfolding views to village Green



## Our Blessed Lady Immaculate RC Church

In the attractive, peaceful grounds to the church is a memorial (below left) to 42 miners killed in an accident at Usworth Colliery in 1885. Designed by Emley and Sons of Newcastle and erected by the miners of Usworth Colliery the memorial is a reminder of the former industrial character of the surrounding area and is Listed in its own right.



## Historic terraces

Village Lane features a number of attractive stone terraced properties of great townscape value and individual interest. The former post office, with its high quality historic shopfront, was originally a greengrocers; evidence of this can be seen in the fruit details of the timber carvings on the consoles.



## Streetscape

The gentle curve of Village Lane leads the eye to the heart of the village - the Green, Old Smithy and Holy Trinity Church. Views are framed to the north by the historic stone terrace and to the south by mature trees on the former council depot (now Liberty Green).



## Former rectory and council depot



The original rectory, built in the early 1700s, was an elegant brick mansion. Washington Urban District Council took over the rectory as their offices but the building was destroyed by fire in 1949. The present building was erected in a style similar to the ancient Rectory, but with stone, and is now residential apartments.

## Liberty Green

The land associated with the Old Rectory was redeveloped as 'executive' housing in 2001 - large detached properties sit in a green space populated by mature trees. The properties are significantly different to the historic parts of the village in terms of layout and grain, but they use a palette of materials that largely respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



## Modern developments on Village Lane

More recent developments on Village Lane are largely subservient to their historic counterparts in terms of scale, and tend to feature a limited palette of materials. The petrol filling station, while not a particularly desirable element of the streetscape, avoids being too incongruous due to its minimal signage and relatively unassuming massing, although the canopy is a poor quality, intrusive feature.





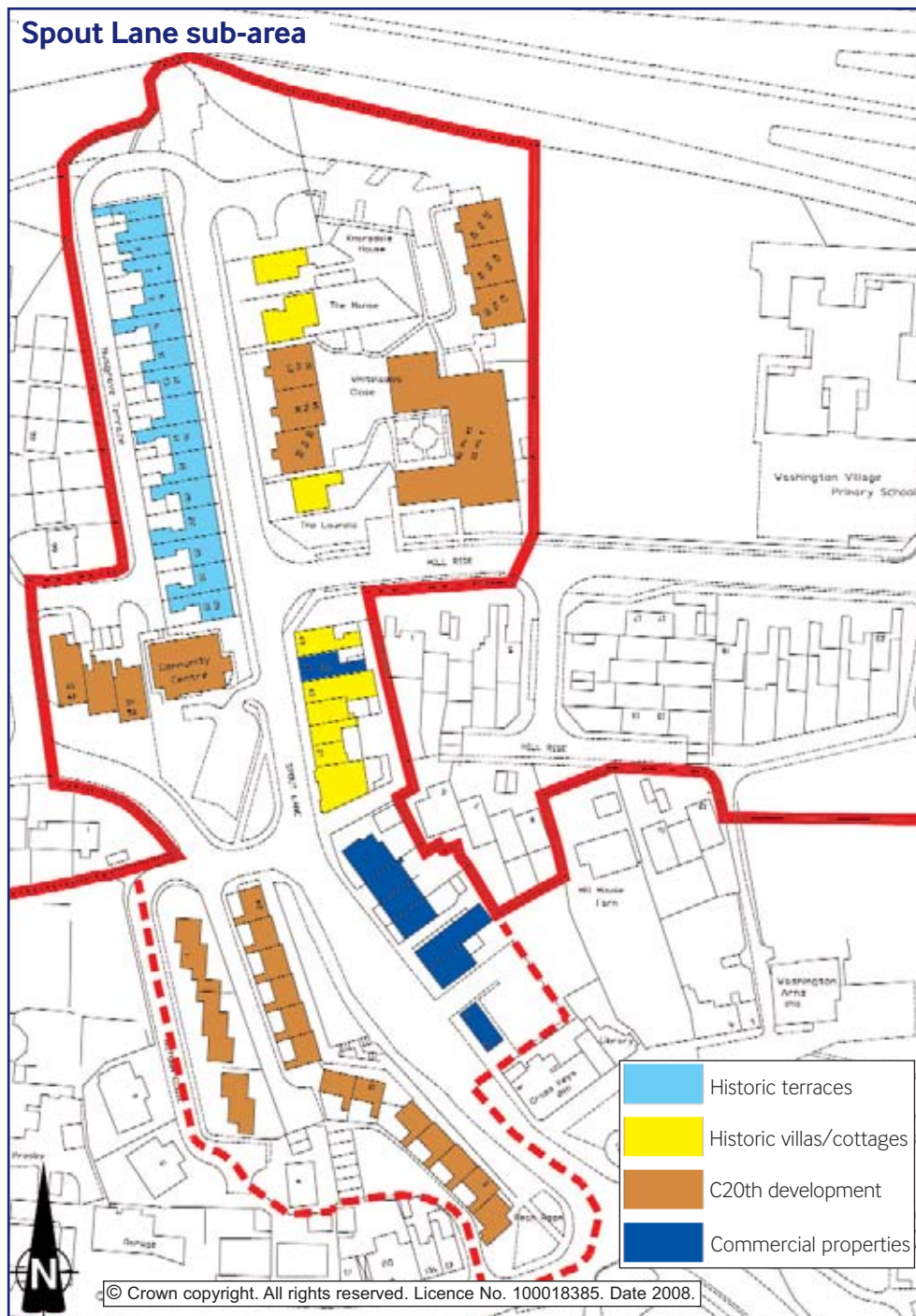
# Spout lane sub-area

The Spout Lane sub-area has a different character to the rest of the Conservation Area due to a higher density of terraced properties and a higher incidence of more recently built properties. The street itself is fairly wide as it used to be a busy through road, although it is now curtailed at the northern end and as a result experiences much less vehicular traffic than it did in the 1960s.

The sub-area features both residential and commercial properties, including a number of small shops. Unlike the other sub-areas of the Conservation Area, Spout Lane does not feature a great deal of green space or mature landscaping.

## Key characteristics of the Spout Lane sub-area:

- Early 20th century red brick terraces of the 'Tyneside Flat' style
- Stone terraces in a mix of residential and commercial uses
- More recently built terraces line parts of the street
- Attractive red brick village hall
- The former club at 35 Spout Lane is an attractive and fairly impressive double fronted stone property
- Broad sweeping street
- Mature trees frame the underpass at the northern end
- Flanked to the east by fairly unsympathetic mid-late 20th century development



### Early 20th century terraced housing

Built in the 'Tyneside Flat' style, the terraces on Spout Lane are peculiar to this sub-area. The terraces are early 20th century, of simple red brick design with basic sandstone dressings. Most properties have undergone a degree of alteration, including installation of uPVC windows and doors. Such alterations have had a detrimental effect upon the appearance and uniformity of the terrace, but they are, nonetheless, an attractive mass of properties.



### Historic stone houses

Across the road from the red brick terraces are older sandstone properties, which are particularly attractive and more similar in character to the rest of the Conservation Area. Small terraces of houses with narrow, well kept front gardens and low boundary walls run along the east side of the road, along with the former club, a large detached property. This property, recently converted to apartments, is of a fairly grand design and is quite unusual in the village.



Former Teachers' Club, 35 Spout Lane.



Terraced cottages on Spout Lane.



### The underpass

The northern end of Spout Lane was closed with the creation of the New Town and an underpass created to allow pedestrian access beneath the Sunderland Highway. The underpass does not provide a satisfactory termination of the street scene, although in summer it is screened to a degree by mature trees.

### Commercial properties

Spout Lane features a number of stone buildings in commercial use, including a public house, hairdressers and an estate agent. A number of the properties feature attractive shopfronts that sit well in the historic context of the Conservation Area, while others could benefit from improvements.



### Mid - 20th century development

More recent development along Spout Lane includes this modern terrace; the individual properties display a strong horizontal emphasis, in contrast with the vertical emphasis of the majority of historic properties in the area. Whilst not unpleasant, they contribute little to the merit of the streetscene and could have been much more sympathetic to the historic village.



### Streetscape

Spout Lane is much wider than other streets in the village, as it was once a very busy through-road. Since the road was closed at the northern end the street has become very quiet once more, and the road appears too wide for its context - unlike the rest of the Conservation Area the street lacks a sense of enclosure.





# Current Issues and Possible Solutions

The historic and architectural interest and integrity of the Washington Village Conservation Area are potentially at risk of degradation through, for example, the unsympathetic alteration of residential properties. As with most attractive historic locations, the Conservation Area is seen as a desirable place to live and in which to develop property, giving rise to potential development pressure. The protection of mature trees and open spaces in the Conservation Area is a particularly important issue, given their contribution to the fundamental character of the area. There is, however, a range of possible options to address these issues: these are outlined below. The Management Strategy in Part Two of this document considers in more detail many of the following issues and establishes a series of objectives and proposals for the future management of the Conservation Area.

## Boundary Review

### Issue:

- English Heritage guidance on the preparation of Character Appraisals and Management Strategies states that Local Authorities should, periodically, undertake a review of the boundaries of existing conservation areas. Many early conservation area boundaries were drawn too tightly and may warrant extension; conversely in some areas subsequent erosion of character may warrant removal from the designated area.

### Solution:

- The boundary of the Conservation Area follows the pattern of the crossroads at its core, encompassing all of the historic buildings and spaces in the immediate area and is largely enclosed by modern residential estates to the east and west. To the northern tip of the Conservation Area, the Sunderland Highway provides a clear boundary, to the south west the large open space that was formerly Washington Glebe Colliery acts as a significant buffer.
- The council - adhering to English Heritage guidance - has reviewed the existing Washington Village Conservation Area boundary. The existing boundary is considered to remain appropriate and reasonable; there is no clear argument to either reduce or extend the Conservation Area.

## Building maintenance and alteration

### Issues:

- Buildings in conservation areas are sometimes seen to be suffering the symptoms of a general lack of maintenance, which can lead to the degradation of historic fabric and features. Some owners are, unfortunately, reluctant to devote the necessary resources to maintain their premises to a standard befitting their architectural or historic importance, or that of their surroundings. This is particularly likely to be the case where the viability of a business concern is already marginal and no gain can be seen in spending money on a building's external elevations. It is notable, however, that there are currently no buildings in the Washington Village Conservation Area that appear to be suffering from a lack of maintenance. This is a reflection of the value and pride residents and businesses place on the location in which they live or operate and is an admirable characteristic of the Conservation Area.
- Relatively minor alterations to buildings can, over time, have a significant effect on the street scene and overall quality of character and appearance of an area. Many modern alterations, such as the replacement of timber sliding sash windows with uPVC alternatives, appear harsh and are damaging to the historic fabric.
- Important historic features to protect in Washington Village include doors and doorcases, original windows, natural slate roofs, chimney stacks and pots, cast iron rainwater goods and traditional boundary enclosures.

### Solution:

- In the first instance, regular maintenance should be carried out to prevent or at least delay the need for repairs. Repairs should only be undertaken where considered strictly necessary to slow down the process of decay without damaging the character of the building. A guide on how to assess the maintenance needs of historic buildings is available from the council's conservation team.
- Where repairs are considered, a traditional approach should be adopted, replacing decayed material on a like-for-like basis. In certain circumstances, the fabric may be beyond repair and the replacement of features necessary. It is imperative, however, that the unnecessary loss of historic fabric is avoided. In some cases original windows have been replaced when they could have been more appropriately repaired. The discreet insertion of modern draught seals can greatly enhance the performance of sash windows in respect of heat retention and ease of use. There are local contractors that can undertake such work far more cheaply than the cost of replacement.

- Design guidelines for residents on the general approach to be taken when contemplating repairs and alterations are set out on page 39. Owners and occupiers should, however, always seek the advice of the conservation team before carrying out works to their buildings.

## Shopfronts and signage

### Issue:

- There are a small number of poorly designed modern frontages using poor quality materials that detract from the character and appearance of the individual buildings and the street scene in general. Shop front security measures can have a major impact on the appearance of the historic street scene and character of the Conservation Area. Typically, external roller shutters have been used in the past but these create unattractive 'dead' frontages when lowered in the evening to the detriment of the character of the buildings and general ambience of the area.

### Solutions:

- Design guidance is set out in the management strategy and will form the basis for future decisions on planning applications.



Above: modern shopfronts on Village Lane with unsympathetic signage and unattractive roller shutter security measures.

## Mature trees

### Issue:

- Given the maturity of the trees in the Conservation Area there is a risk of their coming under threat from death or disease, and becoming dangerous. Unauthorised felling is also a threat.

### Solutions:

- The council is responsible for a large number of trees of townscape significance in the area; as such it monitors and manages the green canopy and undertakes appropriate replanting schemes when and where it becomes necessary.
- The council can also consider placing Tree Preservation Orders on specific trees that are deemed worthy of individual protection.
- Local landowners are responsible for trees on their own land, and are encouraged to maintain their green cover to a high standard.
- If a tree requires removal then the council will usually require a suitable replacement to be planted in a location to be agreed.

## Open space

### Issue:

- Open space in the Conservation Area makes a significant contribution to the character of the village, but may come under development pressure in the future or become neglected.

### Solutions:

- The council can, through the planning system, protect areas of open space from development. This is strengthened in the Character Appraisal and Management Strategy by identifying spaces important to the character and appearance of the conservation area as 'significant green spaces' to be protected from development.
- The council is responsible for the maintenance of a number of key spaces within the village, including the cemetery; the council will continue to maintain these spaces to the highest standards, and will investigate potential schemes to further improve the quality of such areas.
- Green spaces in private ownership, including even the smallest gardens, also make a key contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Owners are encouraged to continue to maintain these spaces to a high standard, and the council will continue to resist development pressure in large garden spaces.

## Usage

### Issue:

- While the Conservation Area has a vibrant community core, with many of the facilities that contribute to a thriving village centre, there are a number of pressures on the amenity of the village created by certain land uses. In particular it has been noted that hot food takeaways create associated traffic and parking issues, and at school lunchtimes there are issues with litter dropping around these premises. In the past there have also been issues with members of the public leaving the pubs in the village under the influence of alcohol and causing damage to the public realm and, in particular, the war memorial.



### **Solution:**

- It is beyond the remit of this document to identify and define acceptable uses for the Conservation Area. Nonetheless, the council will, in the process of determining planning applications for change of use, give due consideration to the potential impacts on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Additional premises for hot food takeaways, licensed drinking establishments and other uses that generate significant traffic and/or anti-social behaviour will as far as possible be resisted within the Conservation Area.
- In order to mitigate for some of the impacts of existing commercial uses in the Conservation Area, it may be possible for the council to investigate more effective parking arrangements (particularly on Spout Lane where the road is very wide and could possibly accommodate designated parking bays).
- Local schoolchildren could be encouraged to consider citizenship issues such as stewardship of the local environment and understanding and respecting the historic environment. Additional litter bins could also be provided within the Conservation Area to encourage a reduction in littering. It is important however that any additional street furniture is provided as part of a wider co-ordinated public realm scheme.

### **New Development:**

#### **Issue:**

- New development can pose a significant threat to the historic environment. The character of Washington Village has particularly suffered from the effects of modern housing developments, especially along its main spine of The Avenue and Spout Lane where several infill developments (as illustrated opposite) sit uneasily alongside and opposite the area's key historic buildings. The Conservation Area now has limited available space for new development, as most gap and infill sites have already been utilised. Nonetheless, it is a possibility that applications will be made to redevelop existing buildings or develop currently unused spaces/large gardens, and as such strict design control will be necessary to ensure that any new development enhances the Conservation Area.

#### **Solution:**

- New development may make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, but not if it involves the loss of historic buildings or spaces of significance. A building or feature that is contemporary to Washington Village's key periods of development (early 19th century or older) will, therefore, contribute to the Conservation Area's special interest and hence proposals to demolish will be resisted in accordance with UDP policy. The following map identifies those buildings and spaces which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and will not normally be considered by the council as appropriate for redevelopment. It also identifies

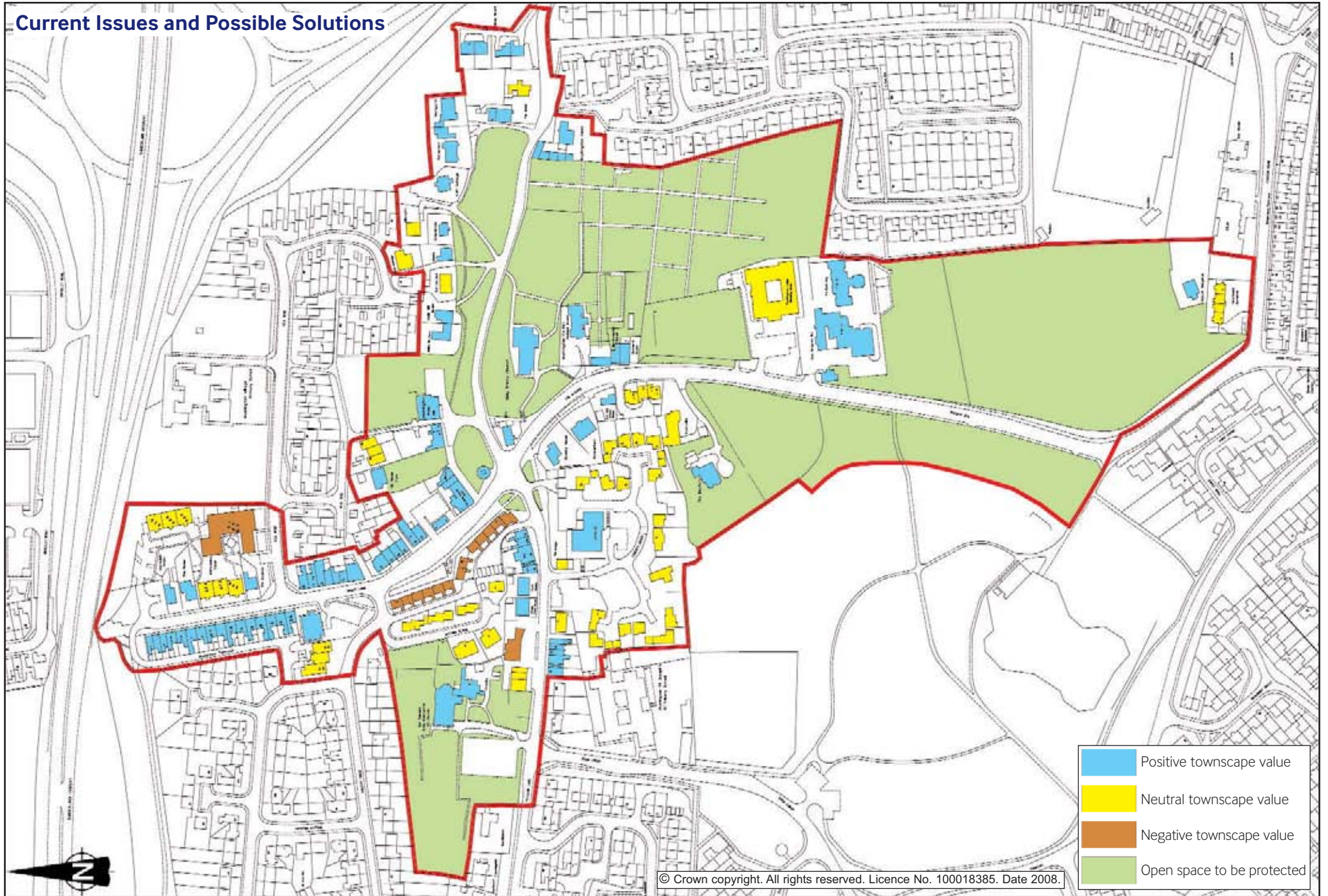


buildings that have a negative impact on the area's townscape value where redevelopment may be welcomed in the future.

- The Management Strategy provides general design advice for new developments in the area, to be applied in specific cases by the Conservation Team.



# Current Issues and Possible Solutions



- Positive townscape value
- Neutral townscape value
- Negative townscape value
- Open space to be protected









# Part Two Management Strategy



# Management Strategy introduction

Part One of this study has identified and appraised the special characteristics and features of Washington Village Conservation Area. Part Two, the 'Management Strategy', addresses in more detail the issues raised in the Appraisal. It establishes a number of management objectives and proposals to facilitate the more sensitive and proactive management of the Conservation Area, thus ensuring that its special interest is better preserved and enhanced into the future. Measures through which the objectives and proposals may be achieved are discussed and an agenda is established that will be pursued as resources allow, to secure the sustainable future of the Conservation Area. Its primary objective may therefore be expressed as follows:-

**PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:** To ensure that the special architectural or historic interest of the Washington Village Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations and for the enrichment of the city's built heritage.

## Management Objectives and Proposals

The primary objective sets out the overarching vision of the Management Strategy; that is the sustained conservation of the heritage assets that make up Washington Village Conservation Area. The following Strategy is divided into sub-sections that reflect the nature of the proposals, e.g. those that apply to the public realm. Each sub-section has a management objective which establishes the broad vision for that topic, followed by several management proposals which are the means by which the objective may be achieved and which will be pursued as resources allow. The proposals seek to address the key issues that threaten the integrity of the Conservation Area and vary in their nature, ranging from enhancement of the public realm to providing design guidance for householders and businesses. These proposals form the basis of a mid-to-long term strategy for the future management of the Conservation Area and are summarised in the final section of the study, which also discusses the factors that will affect their implementation and the envisaged timescales involved.

N.B The Management Strategy has been devised as planning guidance to assist the council in preserving and enhancing the 'special architectural and historic interest' of the Conservation Area. It is not a management plan for the area in a wider sense. For example, it does not contain proposals for the general management of Washington Village in terms of nature conservation, wildlife habitats etc., nor does it consider social issues in the area such as crime and antisocial behaviour. Such issues are beyond the scope of this document.

# Management Strategy & Proposals: public realm

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 1:** To continue to preserve and enhance the historic public realm of the Washington Village Conservation Area.

**PROPOSAL 1a:** The council will continue to carefully manage mature trees to ensure that a desirable tree canopy is sustained throughout the Conservation Area.

The green cover in the Conservation Area is fundamental to its special character. As such, it is vital that the council continues to afford this feature the highest possible protection, whilst also managing the canopy to prevent trees from becoming too large or potentially dangerous. This green canopy falls within both public and private spaces. Trees in Conservation Areas are under limited controls, in that notice must be given to the local planning authority before works can be carried out to them (this includes lopping as well as felling). Many trees in the area are subject to additional protection by virtue of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). All TPO's are shown on the map on page 3. Local landowners are responsible for trees on their own land, and are encouraged to appropriately maintain them.



**PROPOSAL 1b:** The council will continue to afford significant green spaces in the village protection from development and ensure the ongoing maintenance of public spaces.

As identified in the character appraisal, open space within Washington Village makes a significant contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area. Many of these spaces, such as the former colliery site, are already protected from development through existing planning policy. The council will regard all spaces identified on the map on page 3 as Significant Open Spaces to be protected from development.

As part of its ongoing maintenance programme the council will continue to maintain to a high standard public spaces in the village and will investigate the possibility of working in conjunction with the Washington Village in Bloom Society and local residents in future to coordinate a public realm improvement scheme.



The Green (above) and the former Glebe Colliery site (below): both open spaces are key elements of the area's special character and are thus protected from development.





PROPOSAL 1c: The council will investigate the possibility of implementing a public realm improvement scheme in the Conservation Area to improve street surfaces.

While the overall quality of the Conservation Area is high, there are a number of areas that might benefit from public realm improvements. Spout Lane has benefited from some works in the past, such as the planters shown below, which have been coordinated by the Washington Village in Bloom Society. Ideally any future public realm works should be designed in conjunction with the Society in order to create a fully inclusive and coordinated scheme that is appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Paving outside the Cross Keys pub might benefit from improvements: should a public realm scheme become possible in the future, the council will seek to pursue proposals that strongly reflect English Heritage advice from the Streets For All publication.



Above left: Poor mix and quality of surface materials, poorly repaired and with chewing gum stuck on flags. Above right: 'barrel' planters have been installed to add colour and interest to the street scene.



Above left: despite the roadside planters these tarmac footways create a poor public realm and fail to inspire civic pride. Above right: remnants of historic street surfaces survive to the rear of the Old Smithy - these are attractive, high quality materials and should be preserved.

PROPOSAL 1d: The council will seek to prevent the over-specification of the lanes in the Sandpit area in order to maintain its current informality.

The lanes that criss-cross the Sandpit are extremely attractive and informal historic features of the area. Originally footpaths, presumably, these gravelled lanes are narrow and full of character. It would be highly unfortunate to lose their special character to hard surfacing such as tarmac and to standardised highway dimensions.



Above: the lanes on the Sandpit, off the Green.

# Management Objectives and Proposals: landmarks, views and vistas

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 2:** To ensure that individual buildings continue to make a strong positive contribution to the Conservation Area's special character and interest.

**PROPOSAL 2a:** The council will continue to liaise and work closely with the National Trust, English Heritage and the Friends of Washington Old Hall to ensure that the significance of the Old Hall and its gardens as a unique heritage asset and tourist attraction is sustained into the future.

Washington Old Hall is the most significant building in the Conservation Area and one of the City of Sunderland's most prized heritage assets and tourist attractions. Historically, the Hall is hugely significant with its ancestral connections to George Washington (see page 14 for full details) and this has been successfully utilised by the National Trust to make it a major tourist attraction and highly desirable events venue. It is important, however, that the desire to capitalise on the tourist potential of the site does not conflict with the requirement to preserve the intrinsic exceptional



architectural and historic interest of the Grade I Listed asset. This is a management issue which, to date, the National Trust, as owners and custodians of the site, have very successfully managed in consultation with the council, English Heritage and the Friends of Washington Old Hall. It is essential that such partnership working is continued into the future to ensure that the significance of the site is suitably sustained for future generations.

**PROPOSAL 2b:** The council will continue to support the owners and managers of key buildings in the Conservation Area, offering design guidance with a view to "informed conservation".

Key buildings such as the Old Smithy, Holy Trinity Church and the Public Houses about the Village Green are all particularly significant in terms of the contribution they make to the traditional character of the village as an Old English Village. Other buildings, such as Dame Margaret Hall and Our Blessed Lady Immaculate Church, are important landmarks at key gateways into the Conservation Area. It is imperative that all of these buildings and their settings continue to be protected and sensitively managed and conserved in order to preserve their historic significance and landmark qualities. The council's Conservation Team will offer design guidance to encourage (and where necessary require) owners to take special care in conserving their properties to appropriate conservation standards.

**PROPOSAL 2c:** In assessing development proposals the council will have special regard to protecting key views into and within the Conservation Area.

Key views in the Conservation Area tend to converge on and disperse from the village green. The importance of such views and the vistas they create are highlighted on page 15 and in PPG15, which states that the effect of a proposed development on the setting or views of a conservation area is a material planning consideration.

It is vital to the preservation of the character of the Conservation Area that all key views and vistas are protected from development. Whilst it is unlikely that new building development would impact on these views given the protection afforded to green spaces and the settings of Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area, other works, for example road signage, street lighting and telecommunications installations, could potentially intrude into important views and vistas.



# Management Objectives and Proposals: building maintenance, repairs and alterations

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 3:** To safeguard and restore the architectural and historic integrity of buildings in the Conservation Area.

**PROPOSAL 3a:** The council will approach owners of properties that become vacant and/or in need of maintenance to encourage appropriate improvements.

Properties in the Conservation Area are currently in good condition; none have been allowed to fall into disrepair. Should this happen in the future, however, particularly if the building in question is of historic significance then the impact on the special character of an area as a whole could be seriously detrimental. On the other hand, simple maintenance works such as repainting facades and window frames can make a dramatically positive contribution to the street scene. The council will continue to monitor the state of properties in the Conservation Area in order to preserve the special character and appearance of the village.

**PROPOSAL 3b:** The council will continue to provide design guidance to owners of residential and commercial properties in the Conservation Area for both major and minor alterations.

Relatively minor alterations to buildings can, over time, have a significant effect on the street scene and overall quality of the character and appearance of an area. Many modern alterations, such as the replacement of timber sliding sash windows with uPVC alternatives, appear harsh and will damage the historic fabric.

Original timber windows should not be replaced unless absolutely necessary. In most cases they can be successfully upgraded in-situ by a joiner, bringing energy efficiency up to the requirements for historic buildings in part-L of the Building Regulations, at a fraction of the cost of replacement. There is also a strong argument to suggest that timber windows are a far more sustainable option than plastic - uPVC windows require a relatively high energy input in the creation stages, involving the use of chemicals and hydrocarbons that are potentially harmful to the environment, whereas timber can be repaired easily and can be obtained from sustainable sources.

Plastic windows also have a relatively short life: they cannot be repaired in the same way as timber and cannot be painted when, with time, they begin to discolour. Furthermore uPVC cannot be recycled when, it is at the end of its useful life, unlike timber, which is biodegradable.



Non-traditional uPVC windows appear incongruous on this historic stone property (above left), particularly when compared to the timber sliding sashes on the pub (above right).

In addition, the visual characteristics of uPVC units are quite different to the traditional appearance of wooden windows. Their shiny texture, method of opening, proportions of glazing bars and general lack of detailing all give a very different visual effect to typical wooden sash windows. As a result, uPVC windows appear out of context in historic buildings and are generally harmful to the historic character of the Conservation Area.

Likewise, artificial roof slates or 'eternits' do not reflect the traditional appearance of natural slate, and whilst some concrete pantiles can quite closely imitate the appearance of natural clay pantiles initially, their weathering characteristics are quite different and over a relatively short period of time tend to appear poor by comparison.

In view of the above and in the interests of conserving the special historic interest of the Conservation Area, the council will always encourage (and require wherever possible) the use of appropriate traditional materials when carrying out repair and alteration works.

## Guidance for householders

The following guidance is provided to assist householders and others proposing to make alterations to properties within the Conservation Area. (N.B. In many cases alteration works will require Planning Permission and / or Listed Building Consent; advice should therefore always be sought from the Conservation Team prior to carrying out any works..

### Historic fenestration

Scenario	Action
Original windows have survived and are in situ	Encourage retention and repair/refurbishment as necessary. Installation of replicas acceptable if originals beyond repair. Modifications may be incorporated to improve ease of operation and heat retention.
Original windows lost, existing are in timber but of poor form	Encourage reinstatement of original (usually working sliding sash timber frame) windows using surviving original windows as model for style.
Original lost, UPVC put in place	Encourage reinstatement of timber frame windows using surviving original windows as a model for style. UPVC sliding-sashes may be acceptable as last resort when designed with regard to original format. Note: to be acceptable they must operate as sliding sashes. Hinged casements are not acceptable.

### Roofscape

Scenario	Action
Rooflights to front elevation	Should be of the conservation style, kept to a minimum in terms of number, size and scale and ideally limited to no more than one in the front elevation.
Rooflights to rear elevation	Should be of the conservation style and kept to a minimum in terms of size and scale.
Original Welsh slates have survived and are in situ	If repairs / replacement necessary, use of Welsh slate encouraged wherever possible. Other natural slates may be acceptable, but different slate types and old and new slates should not be mixed on the same roof plane.
Original Welsh slates have been replaced with artificial slates or tiles	Encourage reinstatement of natural slates where re-roofing has become necessary.
Original clay pantiles have survived and are in situ	If large scale repairs become necessary encourage retention of all good tiles to be reused on front elevation. Rear elevation may be re-covered in other clay pantiles. Tiles should not be mixed on an elevation.
Original clay pantiles have been replaced with artificial tiles	Encourage reinstatement of clay pantiles where re-roofing has become necessary.
Original chimney stack and pots have survived and are in situ	Encourage retention and repair/refurbishment as necessary. Installation of replicas acceptable if originals beyond repair.
Original chimney stack and pots have survived and are in situ	Encourage reinstatement of chimney/pots using surviving original chimneys/pots as models for style.

### Rainwater goods

Scenario	Action
Original timber or cast iron gutter and cast iron downpipe in situ	Require retention and encourage repairs where necessary. If irreparable, replace using exact replicas i.e. timber box / cast-iron gutter and cast-iron down pipe.
Originals lost. UPVC gutter and/or downpipe in place.	Encourage reinstatement of timber / cast iron elements as appropriate. Cast aluminium may be an acceptable alternative to cast iron provided it matches the dimensions, colour and profile of the original guttering / downpipe.

### Doors

Scenario	Action
Original timber panelled doors have survived and are in situ	Encourage retention and repair/refurbish as necessary. Installation of replicas acceptable if originals beyond repair.
Original doors lost, existing are in timber but of poor form	Encourage reinstatement of appropriate timber doors using surviving original doors as model for style, where this is possible.
Original lost, UPVC put in place	Encourage reinstatement of timber doors using surviving original doors as a model for style, where this is possible.
Original timber architrave has survived and is in situ	Require retention and repair/refurbishment as necessary. Installation of replicas acceptable if originals beyond repair.



# Management Objectives and Proposals: shop fronts

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 4:** To secure the preservation, restoration or improvement, as appropriate, of shop frontages in the Conservation Area through the application of the following design guidelines.

The quality of shop fronts in Washington Village varies and poor examples can detract considerably from the historic street scene. Only a few historic shop fronts have survived in their entirety. Some shop fronts have been wholly replaced with modern designs, some more successfully than others, and some properties in the Conservation Area would therefore benefit from shop front improvements. The following design guidelines have been formulated to ensure that:

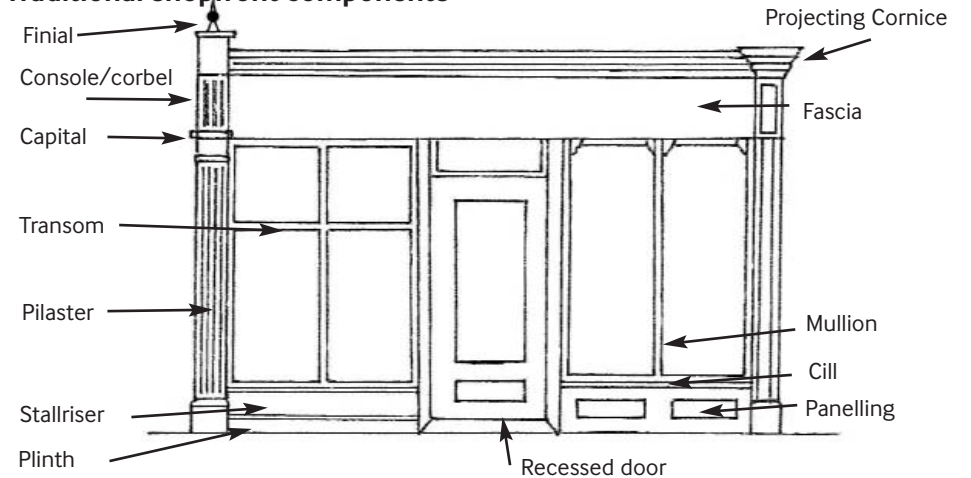
- High standards of design and workmanship are evident in all replacement and improved shop fronts in the area;
- The new/improved shop front is appropriate to the host building and benefits the appearance of the wider street scene;
- A consistent approach is achieved in particular streets or character areas that enhances the Conservation Area as a whole.

These guidelines refer specifically to Washington Village Conservation Area and primarily to Spout Lane and Village Lane.

## General guidelines

The first decision to be made when proposing to improve/replace a shop front is whether to opt for a traditional or contemporary approach. In the majority of cases, a traditional approach will be required to reinforce the historic character of the area, especially where evidence of the original shop front exists either in the form of surviving features or old photographs/drawings. The main components of a typical Victorian shop front are illustrated in the drawing opposite. These should be incorporated into all new or improved traditional shop fronts. More detailed design guidance on reinstating historic features follows.

## Traditional shopfront components



## Traditional shopfronts

**PROPOSAL 4a:** The council will require the retention of surviving traditional shop fronts and features and seek to secure their reinstatement wherever possible.



Above; historic shop front on the Old Post Office - an excellent example of traditional features.

A selection of very good quality and well-preserved traditional shop fronts survive in the Conservation Area and add considerably to its fundamental village character. For instance, the Old Post Office (illustrated below), the Green Library and the frontage of the Cross Keys Public House. These shop fronts are wholly intact and feature a range of finely carved architectural features and detailing. Examples are given below. The council will require these shop fronts to be retained in their entirety for the contribution they make to the Conservation Area. Where architectural elements are missing or in need of replacement or repair, they should be done so to precise workmanship standards, replicating for instance the pattern and detailing of pilasters, glazing bars and cornices.



It is also important that suitable colours are used for maintenance work/re-painting schemes. Traditional timber shop fronts should be painted in a good quality semi-gloss paint, using darker, richer colours that were typical of the Victorian period i.e. burgundy red (like that of the Old Post Office), dark red, dark green (like the Green Library) and navy blue, leaving the window display to provide the light. The council will encourage the use of such colours to protect the historic integrity and character of the shop fronts. Garish colours, such as bright yellow, orange etc appear obtrusive and should be avoided.

Village Lane contains a concentration of poor quality modern shop fronts in generally poor quality modern buildings that detract from the Conservation Area's character. These are illustrated on page 42. Modern shopfronts can, in some cases, make a positive contribution to a conservation area if well-designed and constructed. Good quality modern shop fronts tend to display certain characteristics and design standards with regard to their proportions and materials. Proposals to replace or improve modern shop fronts in the area should demonstrate such high design standards.

Proposal 4b: The council will exercise strict control over the display of advertisements in Washington Village Conservation Area to ensure that signs are designed and located to respect the character and appearance of the host building and historic street scene.

Special attention will be given to the size, form and location of adverts in the Conservation Area in the interests of conserving and improving its character and appearance.



Above: an example of painted lettering; to be encouraged in the Conservation Area.

The main name sign for the premises should be restricted to the shop front fascia, and should be well proportioned in relation to the length and depth of the fascia and its position within it. Only two types of name sign are considered appropriate. These are painted lettering (as illustrated above) or cut-out freestanding metal or wood letters fixed individually to the fascia. The height of the lettering should be no more than two-thirds the height of the fascia and normally centred about its horizontal and vertical axis. Whole fascias of plastic, whether illuminated or not, such as those shown in the photograph overleaf, will not be permitted. Likewise, projecting 'box' signs are not acceptable as they appear clumsy and obtrusive.

Traditional hanging signs, which take the form of a signboard hanging from a metal bracket, are generally acceptable for business premises (especially for the area's public houses) but should be limited to one per property to avoid creating clutter. A reasonably good example is illustrated opposite on the Cross Keys PH.





Illumination, where necessary, should be low key and any lighting carefully integrated into the design of the shop front. For free standing letters, only halo illumination will be permitted. Traditional hanging signs should be lit from above or below via a light source concealed within an appropriately designed fitting attached to the bracket of a sign (as shown overleaf on the Cross Keys PH). Miniature spotlights discreetly fixed to the ground, or to the building without causing damage, may in some cases be used to illuminate signs or architectural features.

Proposal 4c: The council will seek to ensure that shop front security measures are designed to cause no significant harm to the character and appearance of historic buildings and general street scene.



Above; poor signage and inappropriate security measures have a negative impact upon the area.

Preferred methods of security are those which do not affect the exterior of the shop front, such as laminated glass or internal lattice grilles behind the shop window.

External roller shutters, which have commonly been used in the past, will no longer be permitted in the Conservation Area as they detract from the historic character and appearance of the buildings and have a 'deadening' effect on the street scene when lowered in the evening. Removable mesh grilles that are fitted over window and door openings without obscuring fascias, pilasters and stall risers may be used, especially where they are designed as an integral feature of the shop front.

Occasionally, external roller grilles may be permitted provided they are of the open lattice type, cover the glazed areas only, and form an integral part of the overall shop front design. The shutter box must be fully recessed behind the fascia and any runners, retainers and fixings suitably concealed within the shop front structure i.e. pilasters, sills.

# Management Objectives and Proposals: new development

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 5:** To ensure that all new development within and around the Conservation Area enhances its character and appearance.

**Proposal 5a:** The council will require all forms of new development in the Conservation Area to display high quality designs that will respect and enrich their historic context and the fundamental character of the village.

The essential village character of the Conservation Area has been compromised by numerous modern housing developments of poor design quality in the second half of the 20th century. Newer infill housing along The Avenue/Spout Lane presents a particularly incongruous intrusion into the historic village core, whilst more peripheral developments have detrimentally impacted on the compactness and cohesiveness of the village.



Whilst few sites remain with development potential in the area, unless opportunities arise for buildings of negative or neutral townscape merit to be redeveloped, it is important that any new development demonstrates the highest standard of design and harmonises with its historic surroundings. The more recent development of a new block of apartments alongside Dame Margaret Hall (shown opposite) has in this regard had more respect for its context, particularly in terms of its general scale, form and materials used, although some of the architectural elements and windows appear slightly disproportionate when viewed against the Listed Hall.

The council's Conservation and Urban Design Teams will provide design guidance for new developments. The council provides a pre-application service that allows applicants to liaise with Development Control, Urban Design and Conservation planners prior to the submission of applications and thus avoid potentially abortive work.

An archaeological appraisal is likely to be a preliminary requirement in any proposals for redevelopment in the Conservation Area, as recommended in PPG16: Archaeology and Planning and the Sunderland Unitary Development Plan.



# Management Strategy: summary and recommended action

Proposals	Timescale: Short (1-3 yrs) Mid-long (3-10 yrs)	Financial sources/ implications	Recommended action
<b>Public realm</b>			
1a Tree management	Continuous	Ongoing maintenance budget	Continuation of careful management
1b Protect green spaces	Continuous	None	Control and guidance
1c Public realm improvement	Mid-long term	Partnership funding required	Consult and investigate
1d The lanes, Sandpit	Continuous	None	Control and guidance
<b>Landmarks , views and vistas</b>			
2a Washington Old Hall	Continuous	None	Consult and liaise
2b Key buildings	Continuous	Private investment	Control and guidance
2c Views	Continuous	None	Control and guidance
<b>Building maintenance, repairs and alterations</b>			
3a Encourage maintenance	Short term	Private investment	Circulate "A Stitch in Time" (English Heritage) with covering letter
3b Design guidance	Continuous	None	Provide design advice, monitor/control through planning process
<b>Shopfronts</b>			
4a Traditional shopfronts	Continuous	None	Control and guidance
4b Signage control	Continuous	None	Control and guidance
4c Shopfront security	Continuous	None	Control and guidance
<b>New development</b>			
5a New development guidance	Continuous	None	Provide design advice, monitor/control through planning process

## Implementation of management objectives

Whilst the council can effectively manage and improve aspects of the Conservation Area and satisfy certain management objectives and proposals through direct physical measures, its development control function and providing advice and guidance, the implementation of several proposals will be dependant on factors outside its direct control.

## Financial implications

Many of the proposals will require significant public and/or private investment to facilitate their implementation. For example, the implementation of further public realm improvements and other environmental enhancement works will require considerable public investment. Such funding is difficult to secure, especially in the current financial climate with the council facing increasing budgeting constraints from Central Government.

## Further work required

Further and more detailed work will, in addition to securing funding, be required to bring forward certain objectives. In particular, further research and design work will be needed to inform any further environmental improvements.

## Envisaged timescales

The timescales indicated in the table for the implementation of the management objectives are deliberately vague due to the uncertainty surrounding the factors they are dependant upon. Some of the objectives may not be achieved in the next 10 years, whilst others might be implemented sooner than envisaged. In the final analysis, the availability of financial support will be the key factor in expediting many proposals.

# Appendix - City of Sunderland UDP Conservation Policies

## Conservation Areas

B4 All development within and adjacent to Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance. To this end the council will issue planning/design guidance for the various areas from time to time.

B6 The council will preserve and enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas; measures will include:-

- (i) Encouraging the retention of existing buildings and the improvement Of features, open spaces, historic street patterns and plot boundaries
- (ii) Encouraging the retention of existing mature trees;
- (iii) Introducing controls over the display of advertisements;
- (iv) Seeking, where appropriate, to control development by the use of Article 4 Directions;
- (v) Giving special attention to the preservation of important views into and out of the area;
- (vi) Restoring highways and verges by use of appropriate materials and planting, encouraging utility companies to respect such works;
- (vii) Reducing the impact of traffic where possible by diversion and traffic calming measures; and
- (viii) Promoting environmental improvement and enhancement programmes.

B7 Applications for demolition of unlisted buildings in a conservation area will be determined by the extent to which the integrity, character and appearance of the area is affected, taking into account any replacement proposals. Where unlisted buildings make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, the criteria in Policy B8 which concern the demolition of listed buildings will apply.

## Listed Buildings

B8 There will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. Demolition in whole or substantive part will only be given consent when all other avenues for retention (including preservation or enhancement in charitable or community ownership) have been explored and found not to be feasible or it is considered that redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition. Consent will only then be given when planning permission for an acceptable replacement development has been granted, which will also be subject to conditions requiring the letting of a contract prior to demolition.

B9 The City Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character and qualities of those buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest:-

- (i) Refusing permission for extensions or alterations which would adversely affect their architectural or historic character;
- (ii) Giving financial assistance (where available) for appropriate works of restoration or repair in accordance with City policies;
- (iii) Giving favourable consideration to a wider range of uses than might normally be appropriate to help bring otherwise vacant buildings back into beneficial use, providing these do not adversely affect the architectural character or setting of the building or amenity of nearby residents;
- (iv) The acquisition and restoration of important buildings, particularly in Conservation Areas, if this is the only way to secure their preservation.

B10 The City Council will seek to ensure that development proposals in the vicinity of listed buildings do not adversely affect their character or setting.



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