



# Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area

Character Appraisal and  
Management Strategy

**PLANNING GUIDANCE**





# Bishopwearmouth 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 13 conservation areas in the City of Sunderland, including City Centre areas, pre-conquest villages, the Victorian suburb of Ashbrooke and 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. Most importantly, the Local Authority is required to give "special" attention to preserving or enhancing the conservation area in exercising its planning functions. Also, planning consent must be gained for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development, such as various types of cladding, dormer windows, satellite dishes and radio masts / antennae. Consent is further required for the demolition of buildings within conservation areas. Designation also brings extra controls over works to trees.

## Appraisal of Character

The protection of an area does not end with conservation area designation. Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15 "Planning & the Historic Environment" urges Local Authorities to prepare detailed assessments of the special interest, character and appearance of their conservation areas. Local Authorities' performance in producing such character appraisals is currently monitored as a 'Best Value Performance Indicator' (BV219b). 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). This requirement is formalised in BV219c which monitors the percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals. 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 action arising from the character appraisals, and identifying any further and more detailed work needed for their implementation.

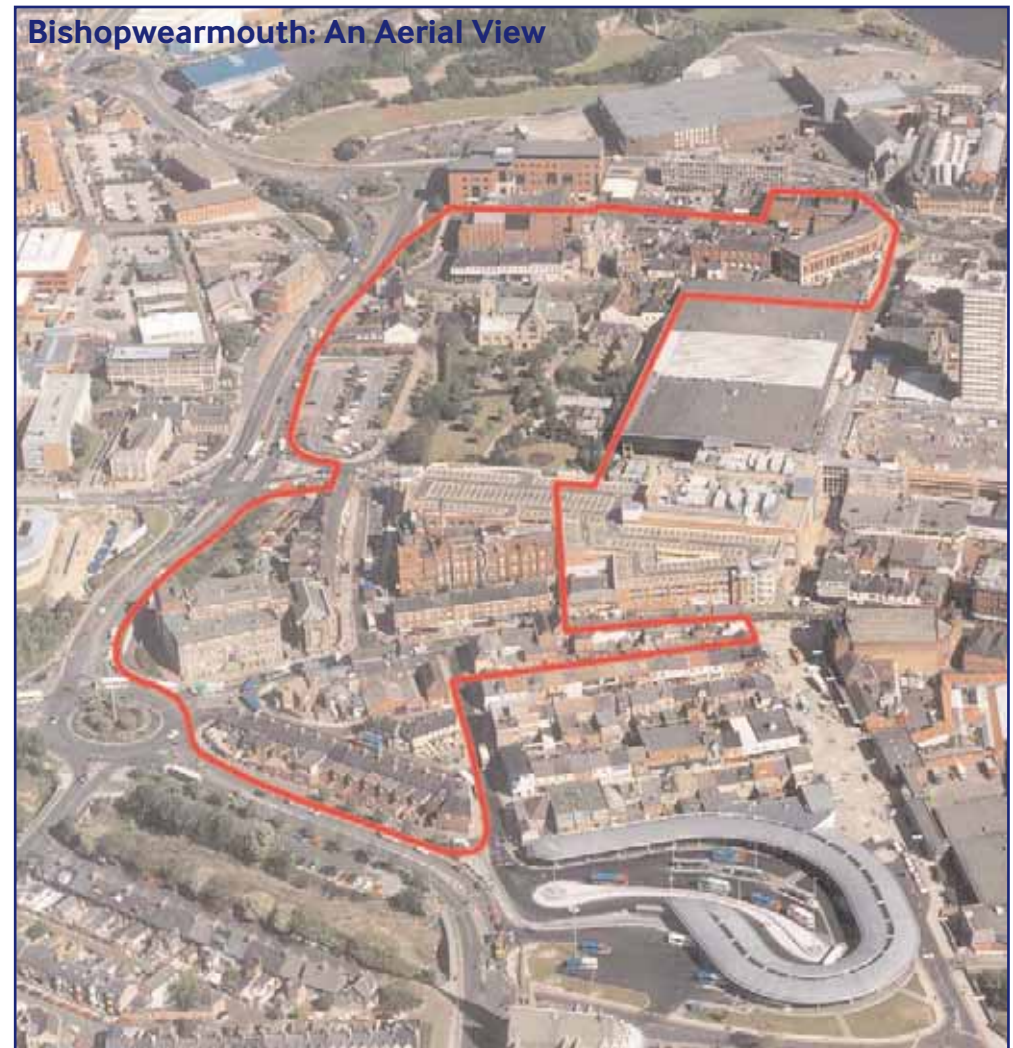
## Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area Character Appraisal / Management Strategy

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



# An Introduction

Bishopwearmouth was initially declared a Conservation Area in 1969 around the heart of the former medieval village in recognition of its architectural and historic interest, and further extended in 1989 to take in surrounding 19th and early 20th century development. It comprises fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings set within the surviving medieval street plan and the remnants of the former village green, now Town Park. It obtains much of its character from its many landmark buildings with their distinctive architectural features. This document combines an appraisal of the Conservation Area's character and appearance with management proposals for preserving and enhancing its special qualities. Part 1, the Character Appraisal, identifies and assesses those characteristics and features that give the Area its special architectural and historic interest and considers current issues which threaten its historic integrity. Part 2 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.



Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area comprises one of the most historically important and architectural unique environments in the City. It is situated in the western part of the City Centre, to the south of the River Wear and covers an area of 7.63 hectares. It is irregular and elongated in shape, its boundaries best defined to the east by Crowtree Leisure Centre and Crowtree Road and to the west by the Ring Road. Elsewhere, the boundaries are less clearly defined but the area generally encompasses the site of the pre-conquest village of Bishopwearmouth.



## UDP Conservation Policies

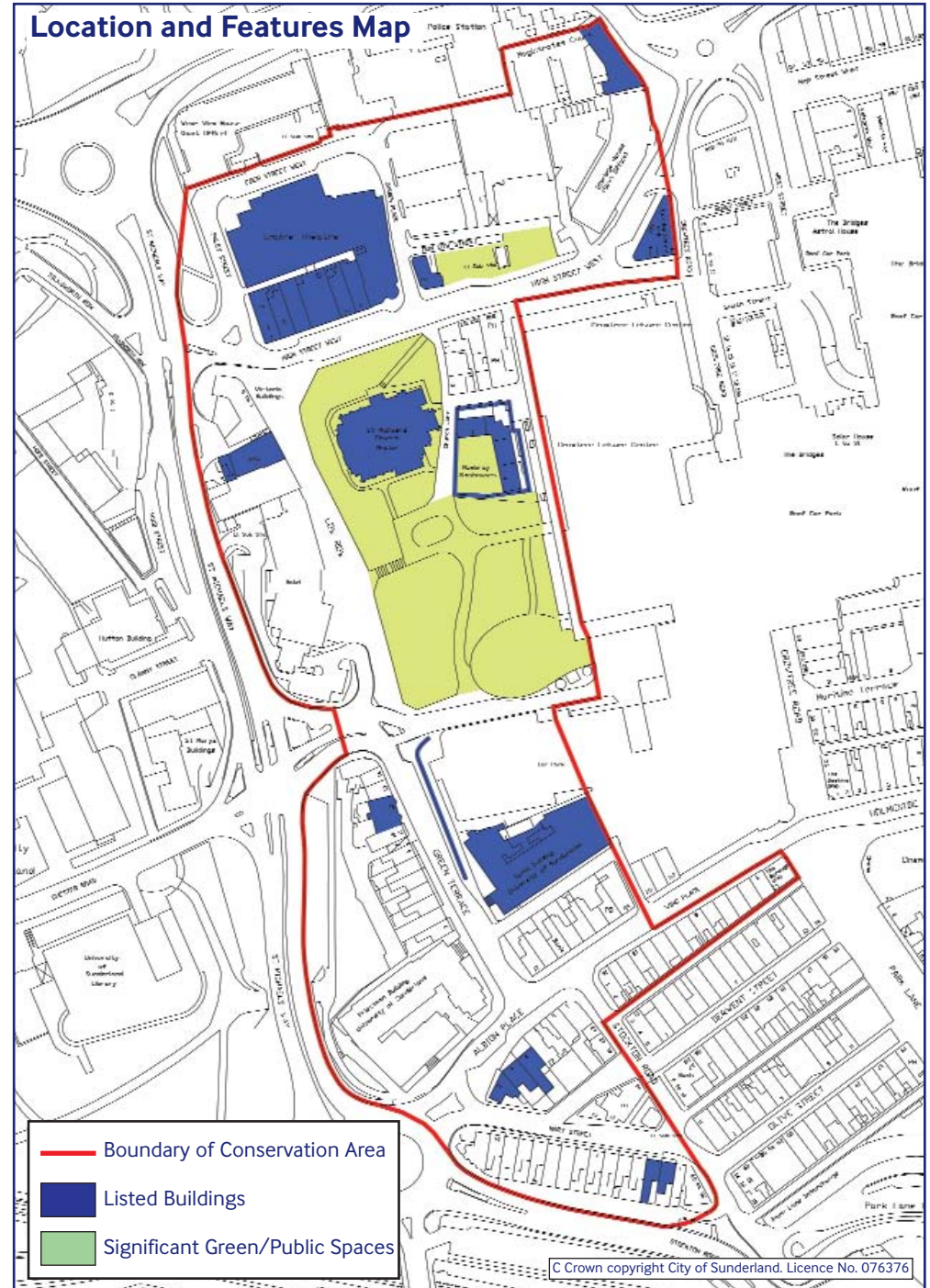
Policy **B4** of the City of Sunderland UDP states that: "All development within and adjacent to Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance". Under this policy the Council is obliged to prepare supplementary guidance in the form of character assessments for each of its conservation areas. These will identify features and characteristics that contribute to the areas' special interest, identify opportunities for enhancement and, where appropriate, establish design criteria for new development and restoration projects. The Bishopwearmouth Character Appraisal and Management Strategy is one of a series of such assessments that will cover all 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 **B9** aims to prevent these buildings from undergoing extensions and alterations that would adversely affect their architectural or historic character. Policy **B10** seeks to preserve the setting of Listed Buildings.

Policy **B6** further encourages the retention of unlisted buildings and their features, open spaces, historic street patterns and plot boundaries and for the Council to exercise 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. This policy also seeks to control the display of advertisements in conservation areas.

However, within Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area the gradual loss of features, both architectural and natural, the impact of signage on historic buildings and the effects of new development gives cause for concern and raises the issue as to whether further measures should be introduced that would better protect and enhance the Conservation Area. To this end, the Management Strategy in part 2 of the document expands upon existing UDP policy to give clearer guidance on issues of particular importance to Bishopwearmouth

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







**Part 1**  
**Character Appraisal**



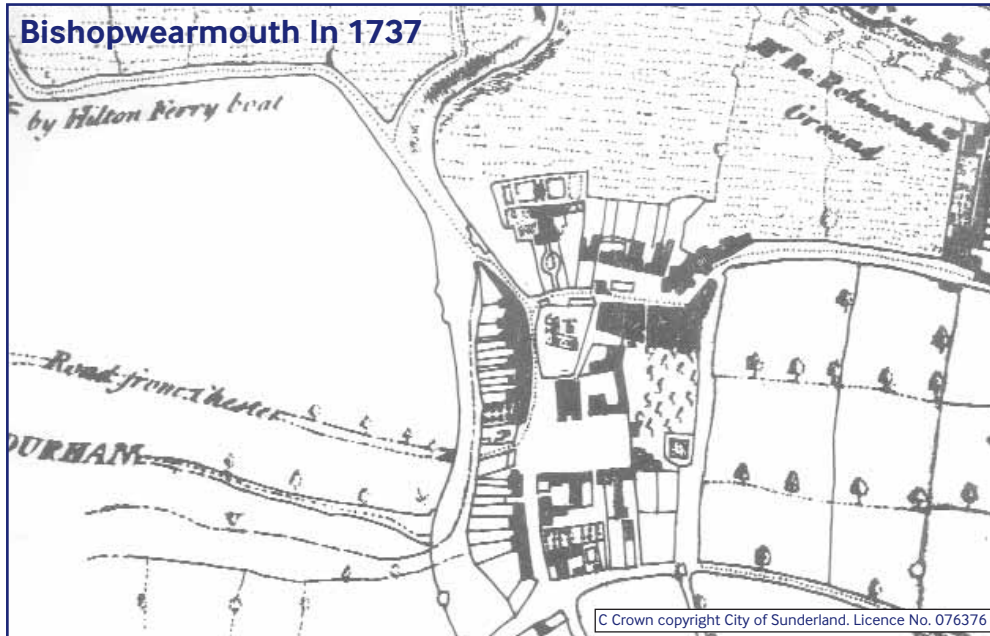
John Rain's Eye Plan 1785-1790



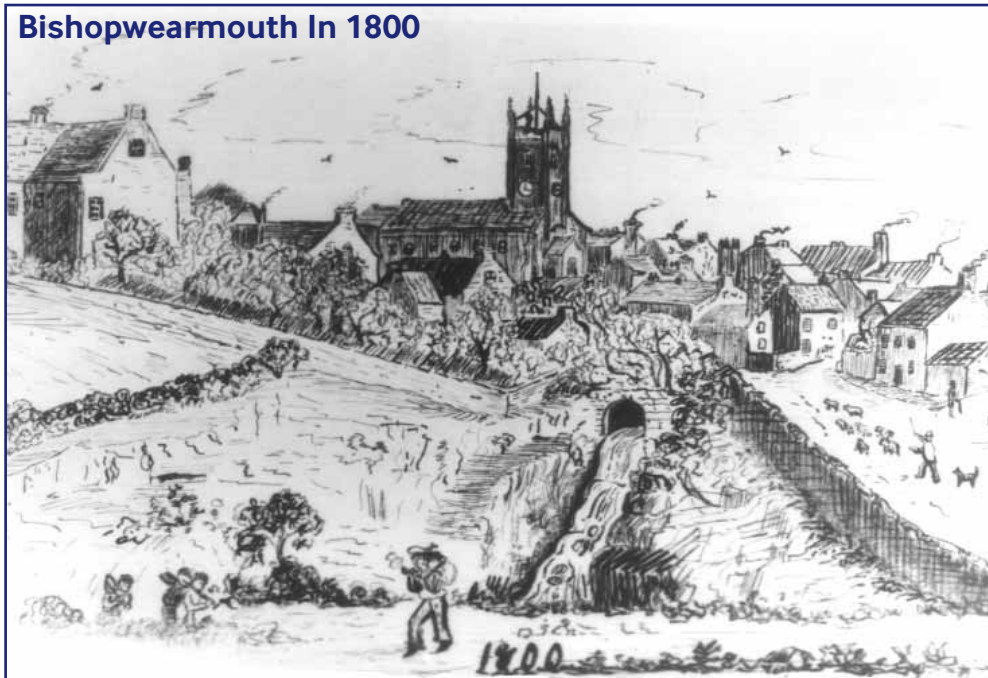


# Historical Development

**Bishopwearmouth In 1737**



**Bishopwearmouth In 1800**



Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area encompasses all the area that once formed the original village of Bishopwearmouth, one of the three settlements that would eventually coalesce to form Sunderland, and subsequent Victorian and Edwardian developments within and around the village.

The village has Anglo Saxon origins, the earliest reference thought to be about 930 AD when King Athelstan gave "South Wearmouth" and its appendages to the See of Durham. Thus, as its name suggests, the village was established on lands belonging to the Bishops of Durham. It is believed that the first stone church was built upon St Michael's rocky knoll around the middle of the 10th century.

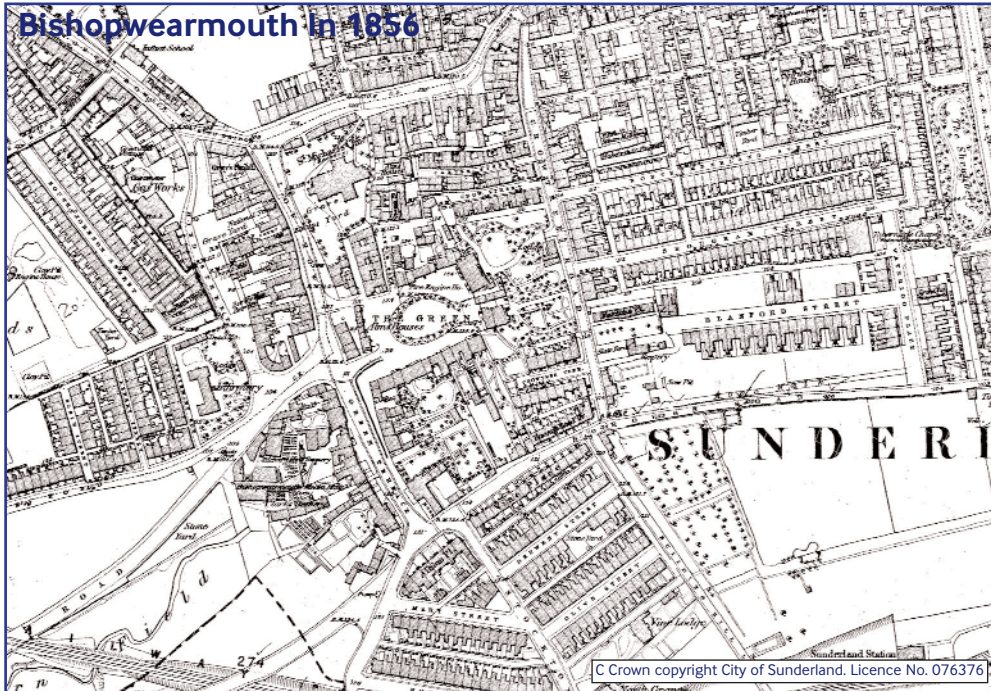
During the middle ages Bishopwearmouth grew into an important and thriving farming community and religious centre. The village was quite small and dominated by the medieval Church of St Michael, although the Parish it served was extensive covering an area of some 20 sq. miles and included the small fishing port of Sunderland. Physical links between Bishopwearmouth and the port were strengthened during the 15th and 16th centuries by the development of salt production, ship-building and coal-exporting industries along the banks of the river. The people of Sunderland would walk up Sunderland "Lonnin" now High Street to worship at St Michael's until 1719 when Sunderland's expansion demanded the creation of a separate parish with its own church, Holy Trinity, thus severing a long-standing social link between the two towns. Around 1800 the population served by St Michael's, which seated several hundred, was between 7000 and 8000 compared with 12,000 in Old Sunderland.

During the 18th century Bishopwearmouth was a small self-contained village set in a patchwork of fields punctuated by hedgerows and trees, as shown opposite on Burleigh and Thompson's map of 1737. Cottages with courtyards and narrow garden plots lined the village road which curved around the hill-top church on its way to the port. Bishopwearmouth Green has always been common land lying at the heart of the medieval village with Durham Rd., Chester Rd., Stockton Rd., and High Street all converging on it.

Around the Green were a multitude of small houses and terraces, interspersed with workshops, corn mills, slaughter houses and tanneries. Bull baiting also took place on the Green. A bull would be tethered by a rope to an iron ring and dogs set upon him. It was claimed that the meat of the bulls so treated tasted better and such events were quite common place. The last bull baiting occurred on the Green in 1788.



**Bishopwearmouth in 1856**



The Rectors of Bishopwearmouth were usually well-connected gentlemen and scholars who lived well, paying curates to carry out their more onerous tasks. The first development to occur outside the medieval bounds of the village seems to have been the building of a fine Rectory to the north of The Lonnin. The Rectory dated from the middle ages and was refurbished and extended in the 17th and 18th centuries to give it a handsome Queen Anne style. Unfortunately, it was demolished in 1855.

As the two centres of Bishopwearmouth and, in particular, Sunderland expanded there was a tendency for ribbon development to occur especially along the North side of "The Lonnin". This trend was exacerbated with the opening of the first Wear Bridge in 1796 that linked the two settlements with Monkwearmouth and led to the development of the Fawcett Estates and the eventual coalescing of the villages into one town.

By 1826 the village contained additional spacious houses built by industrialists and merchants and by the mid 19th century it was clearly no longer a village but had become part of the urban borough of Sunderland, chartered in 1835. The haphazard lay-out of cottages and yards of the old village, was surrounded by more orderly residential development. Large houses with extensive semi-formal gardens contrasted with the elegant terraced houses of Crowtree Terrace and Borough Road, and the back-to-back houses of Carter Street and Crow Street.

A surprising number of inns and smithies served the needs of the larger local population and of travellers through the area. Part of Little Gate had become Church Lane, and had been closed to wheeled traffic at its northern end.

The Mowbray Almshouses were erected in 1863 in an L shape on land once occupied by cottages, where Church Lane joined Little Gate. The original almshouses, built around 1740, had been removed to provide a vehicular link between Church Lane and Back Carter Street. The Bowes Almshouses were also in existence by the common land of The Green, and served to complete the enclosure of this space for a subsequent hundred years. However, as time went by less and less of The Green retained its original seclusion and tranquility.

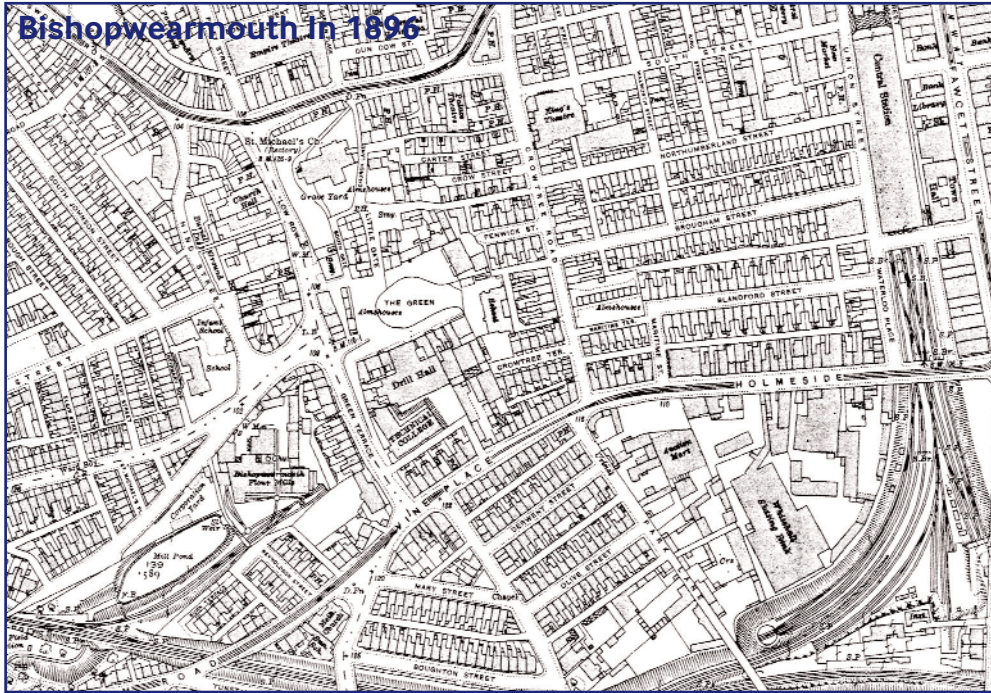
In 1892 Bishopwearmouth still had something of the atmosphere of a village with the pantiled, white-washed cottage on the corner of Little Gate and the church closing the view up this narrow lane. The cobbled carriageway across the corner of The Green was an ominous hint of things to come. By this time two sets of tramlines had been laid along High Street West for the horse-drawn trams of the period.

**Low Row In 1890**





**Bishopwearmouth In 1896**



Towards the end of the 19th century several terraces were built to the south of The Green, some of these incorporated into the Conservation Area when it was extended in 1989, for example Vine Place. In the early years of the 20th century, several key Edwardian developments took place, especially along High Street West with the construction of some very impressive buildings such as the Empire Theatre and the Dun Cow and Londonderry Public Houses. The photograph opposite from around 1930 shows how the tower of the Empire Theatre dominates the north side of High Street West. Key landmark buildings such as the Empire and St Michael's Church came close to being destroyed during the war. Mowbray Almshouses and their garden railings were actually damaged by bombings in 1943 but have since been restored.

Until the 1960's the area still retained many of its industrial enterprises that were part of a mixed use village; for instance a flour mill was located to the rear of Green Terrace and Low Row was the home of a toffee factory and a laundry. By 1960 decayed parts of the old village had been demolished and their sites left vacant. The demolition of the Bowes Almshouses had once again opened up The Green. By the end of 1973, all of the buildings in Little Gate, South Gate, Fenwick Street, Crow Street and the buildings to the north and east of The Green has been removed to make way for car parking. The area to the south of St. Michael's has since been landscaped to form, in conjunction with the remnants of The Green, the Town Park.

**High Street West In 1930**

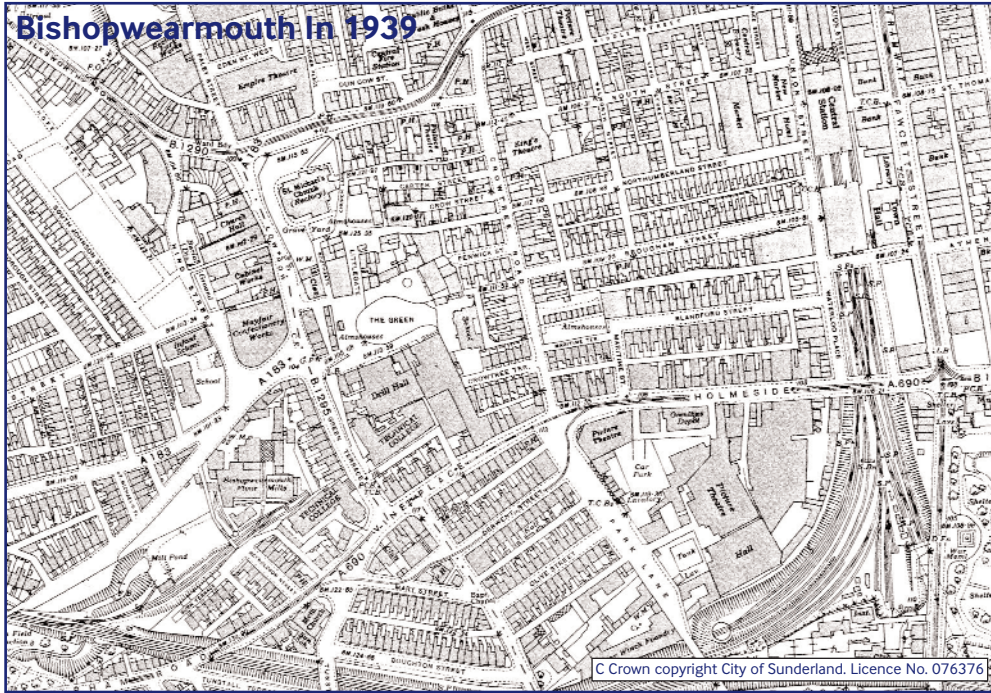


In the latter half of the 20th century, office and retail uses have come to dominate and more recently an influx of leisure-based operators. The 1990's and new millennium have witnessed large-scale developments taking place, consistent with a modern City Centre. For example, a new office development was completed in 1992 on the site of the former High Street Baths and in the last few years a hotel erected on Low Row.

No architectural trace of the medieval village remains today, having been obliterated by redevelopments in the Victorian Period except for the general street pattern and the remnant of The Green now incorporated into the Town Park. However, the Victorians left a fine legacy of terraced properties, now used almost exclusively for commercial purposes, along with some very notable Edwardian buildings.



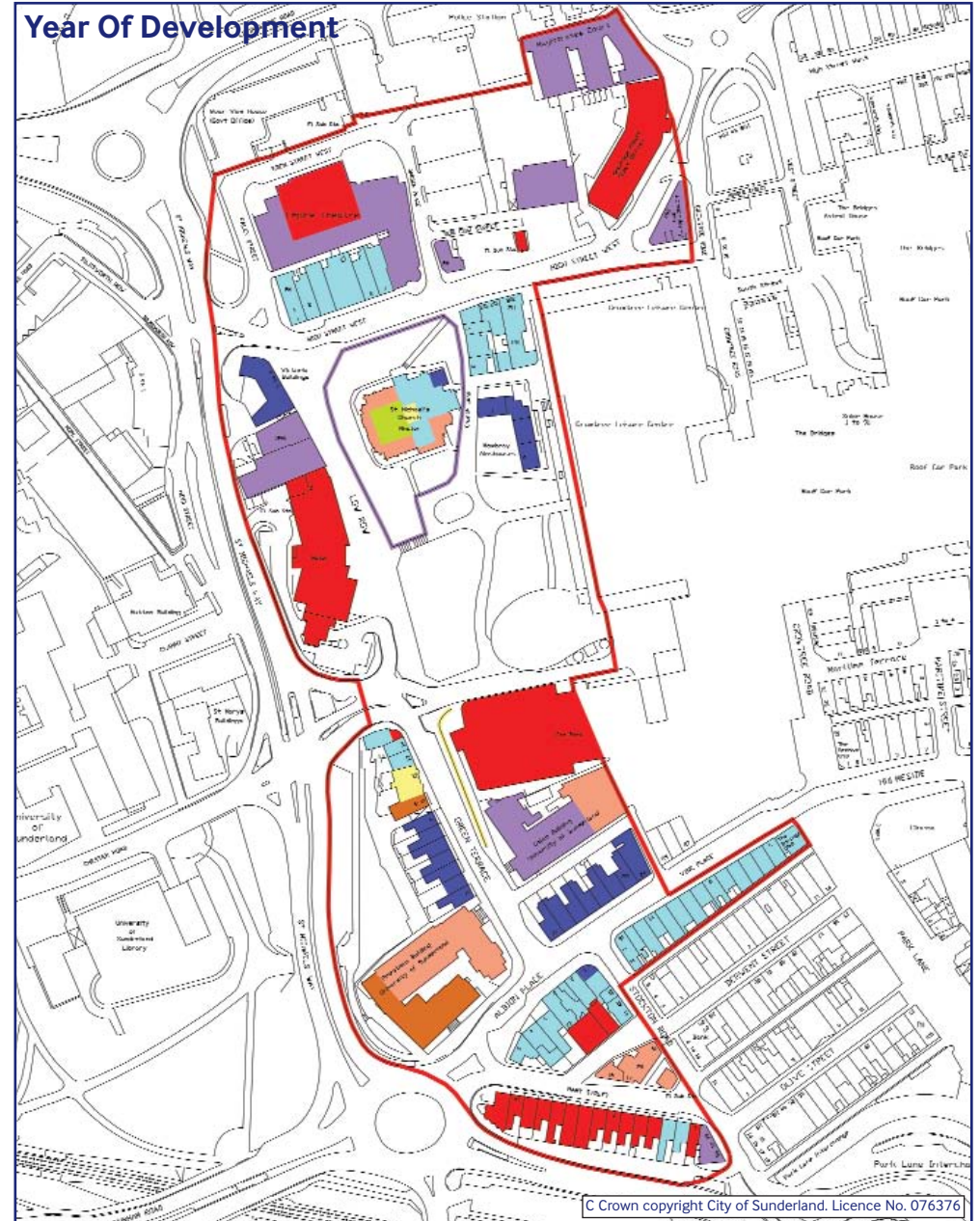
**Bishopwearmouth In 1939**



**Bishopwearmouth In 1959**



**Year Of Development**

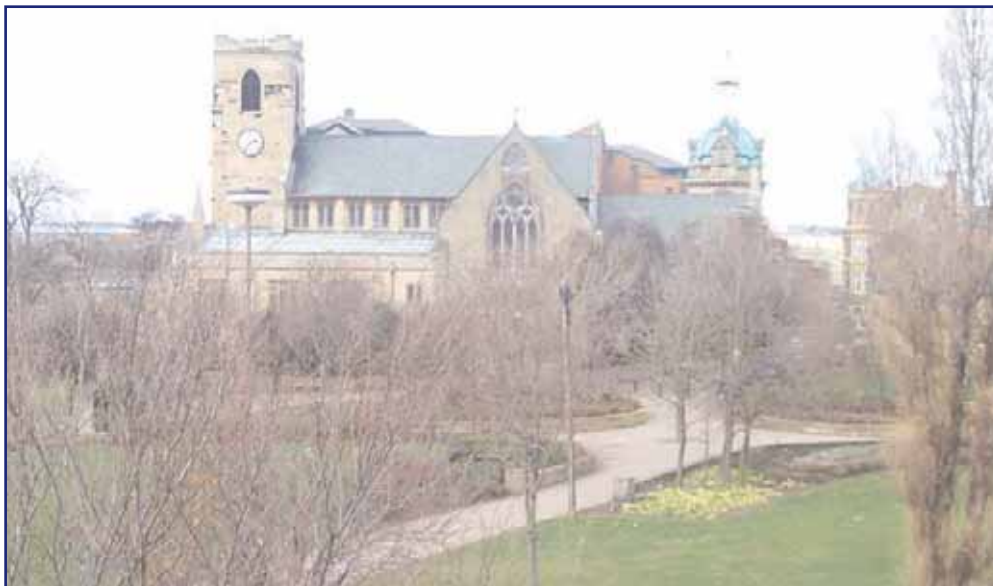


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| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: cyan; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 1827 - 1856        | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 1920 - 1939   |  |



# Fundamental Character

The fundamental character of Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area derives from a combination of its medieval origins and subsequent Victorian and Edwardian development. It is predominantly characterised by distinctive landmark buildings with towers, domes and cuppolas rising above refined terraced streets all set within a medieval street pattern and around an elevated Town Park upon which St Michael's Church, the City Minster, proudly stands as the dominant feature of the conservation area.



Views from surrounding high points reveal the prominence of St Michael's Church and the true essence of Bishopwearmouth's distinctive roofscape.

## Layout

The general street pattern and remnants of The Green are almost all that remains of the medieval village of Bishopwearmouth today. Inevitably, with the rapid expansion of the Town during the 19th and 20th centuries the layout of the area has since developed, with the formation of several additional terraced streets particularly in the southern part of the conservation area. Also, by the 1970's, with the exception of Church Lane the narrow cobbled lanes which led from The Green had all but disappeared, all the buildings in Little Gate and South Gate having been demolished to make way for car parking and subsequently the Town Park. Nevertheless, the principal medieval street plan - High Street West (formerly the Lonin), Low Row, Vine Place (Back Lane) - remains in evidence as the main vehicular or pedestrian routes through the area.

## Townscape / Built Form

One of the defining and most distinctive characteristics of Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area is the variation and detail in the roofscape provided by several key buildings. The variety of towers, domes and cuppolas that punctuate and dominate the skyline are particularly attractive features that can be admired from close and afar, especially when 'lit-up' in the evening. Elsewhere, the predominance of two-three storey terraced streets provides much of the area with a relatively consistent built form which, when contrasted with the distinctive individual qualities of the major landmark buildings, gives the area immense townscape value. Some newer developments, especially the Crowtree Leisure Centre, in terms of scale, massing and general form have not responded well to their historic context and have unfortunately obscured views of key landmarks as well as wider views into and out of the conservation area.

## Architectural Style

Bishopwearmouth contains some of the finest architectural examples of historic buildings in Sunderland and exhibits a range of styles and influences. Most significant are the works of renowned local architects, W. and T.R. Milburn, who were responsible for designing several key buildings to the north of High Street West in the years after the turn of the 20th century, including The Empire Theatre, The Magistrates Courts and The Fire Station. These buildings show how particularly adept the Milburns were at handling a style derived from the classical model and favoured by the Edwardians. Several buildings in the vicinity have been described as being built in a free Baroque style, including The Empire Theatre and Magistrates Courts and the works of other notable architects Benjamin F. Simpson and HTD Hedley at the Dun Cow and Londonderry Public Houses respectively.

About Town Park, at the centre of the former village, influences were clearly Gothic; the style of buildings here bearing testimony to Bishopwearmouth's medieval origins. St Michael's Church retains fabric and features of its medieval predecessor but much of what is visible today is the work of W.D. Caroe, although his 1930's extension are tied to the Gothic past. The nearby Mowbray Almshouses are notable for their Gothic dormer windows.

Elsewhere, the terraced streets in the southern part of the conservation area are predominantly classically influenced, ranging from the formal late-Georgian terraces of Mary Street and Albion Place to the more peculiar neo-classical Green Terrace in the late-Victorian period.



The variety building forms, styles and materials adds significantly to Bishopwearmouth's character.

### Building Materials

There are two main types of building material in the conservation area - red/ brown brick, in various shades, and sandstone. These contrast and complement each other perfectly and are an essential part of the area's distinctive character and appearance. Most of the major buildings are built from sandstone, ranging from the smooth ashlar sandstone used in the construction of the Magistrates Courts and The Dun Cow and Londonderry Public Houses to the coursed square rock-faced sandstones at St Michael's Church and Mowbray Almshouses. Several of the pubs in the area also feature granite plinths.

Certain landmark buildings are especially distinguished by their materials. For example, the Galen Building is built from very distinctive and unique bright flemish red bricks with terracotta quoins, dressings and other architectural detailing. Red bricks and the decorative use of terracotta for door casings and window surrounds are also evident nearby at Green Terrace and part of Albion Place.

Most terraces in the southern part of the conservation area are built from the rough, reddish-brown brick in English garden wall bond. These buildings also feature timber shop fronts and/or door casings. Several buildings in the conservation area have rendered or painted white frontages, most noticeably around the junction of High Street West and Low Row.

Slate is the predominant roofing material in the area, predominantly Welsh slate but also significant amounts of graduated lakeland slate evident on many of the sandstone buildings. The use of copper, lead and fishscale for domes and cuppolas significantly enhances the appearance of the roofscape.

### Landscape / Streetscape

Significant open spaces in Bishopwearmouth are few but important. Town Park, the only soft landscaped area in the conservation area and one of the few green spaces in the City Centre incorporates the "Village Green" and provides a highly desirable setting for the Minster. The Park and adjacent churchyard act as an attractive setting to key listed buildings and provides the centre of the conservation area with a quiet and spacious character, quite unlike anywhere else in the City Centre. An abundance of mature trees and shrubbery enhances the Park's natural environment.

Elsewhere, the area's streetscape is largely uninspiring with most historic surfaces having been replaced by typically bland modern materials to suit cars. The quality of surface treatment in Low Row is however generally of a higher standard and provides an attractively paved pedestrianised area.



A wide mix of uses gives certain parts of the conservation area a vibrant atmosphere during the day and evening.

### Usage

Bishopwearmouth contains a wide range of uses, including retail, office, civic, cultural and leisure uses. Retail uses are predominantly confined to Vine Place and are mostly of a specialist nature, such as jewellers, craft shops and hair salons.



This area also contains a number of office users, mainly concentrated in Mary Street but also in the upper floors of Vine Place.

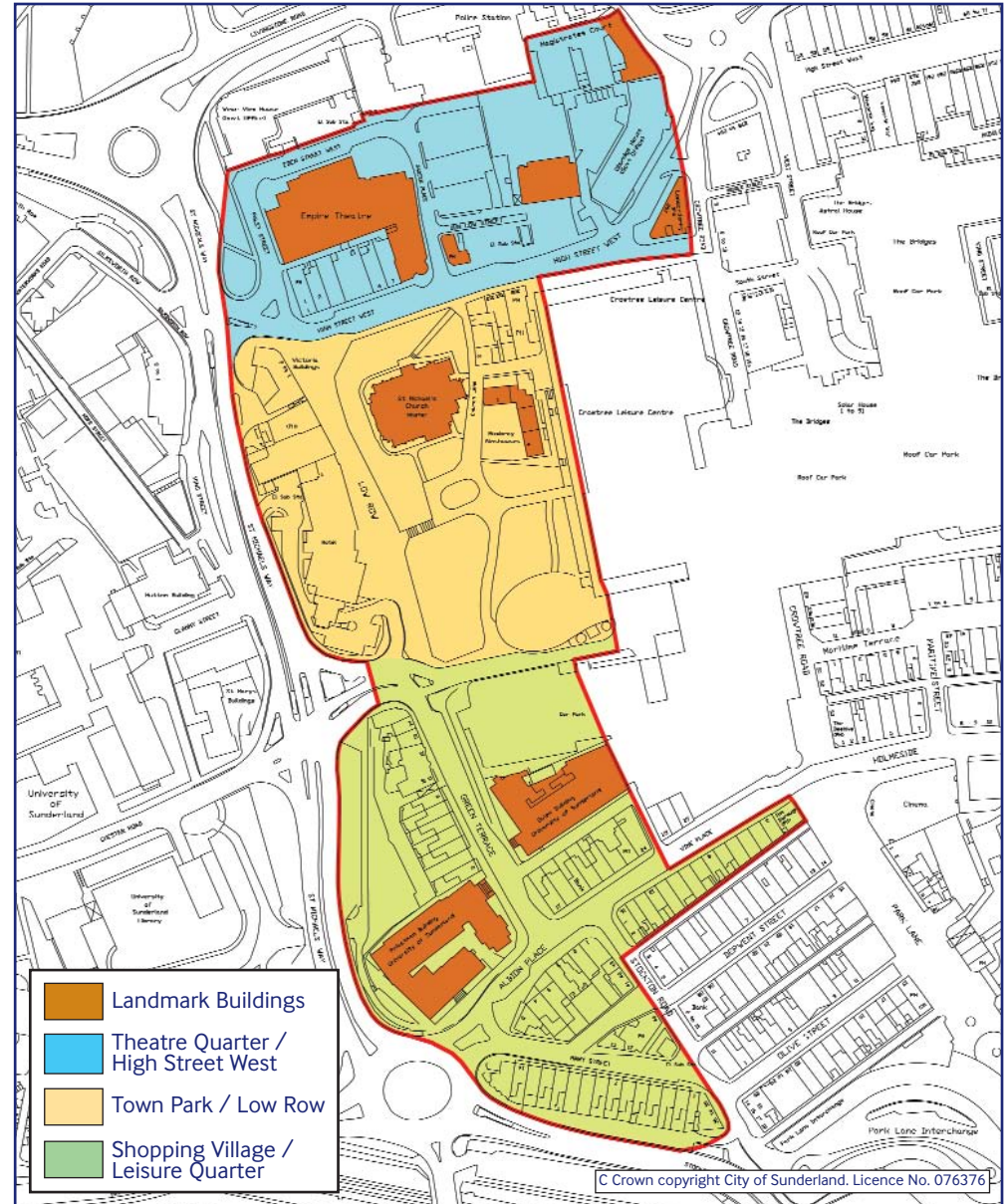
The Empire Theatre gives an emphasis to cultural activities in the northern part of the conservation area, where there are opportunities for other complementary uses. The location of the Magistrates Courts in this vicinity also gives a focus to civic functions. By far the biggest change over recent years in the usage of the conservation area has come with the widespread proliferation of leisure-type uses, mainly in the form of bars and nightclubs, but also restaurants and a hotel. It is unfortunate, however, that many commercial operators have demands for signage and security measures which can often conflict with the desire to preserve and enhance the area's historic character.

### Fundamental Characteristics of Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area

- ❖ City Centre Victorian and Edwardian developments set within surviving street pattern and remnants of former medieval village.
- ❖ Dominant central feature, St Michael's Church, perched upon elevated Town Park.
- ❖ Soft, spacious and quiet green spaces at core of conservation area.
- ❖ Distinctive and architecturally significant landmark buildings designed by the finest local architects.
- ❖ Refined busy terraced streets, many properties retaining traditional Victorian shopfronts and other timber features.
- ❖ Varied and distinctive roofscape punctuated by a series of attractive towers, domes and cuppolas.
- ❖ Complementary mix of high quality natural materials.
- ❖ High degree of local distinctiveness.

### Key Components of Character

For the purposes of a more detailed study of its character, Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area has been divided into three broad character zones. In addition, due to the special qualities of numerous key buildings within the various zones, there is first of all a section devoted to landmark buildings.



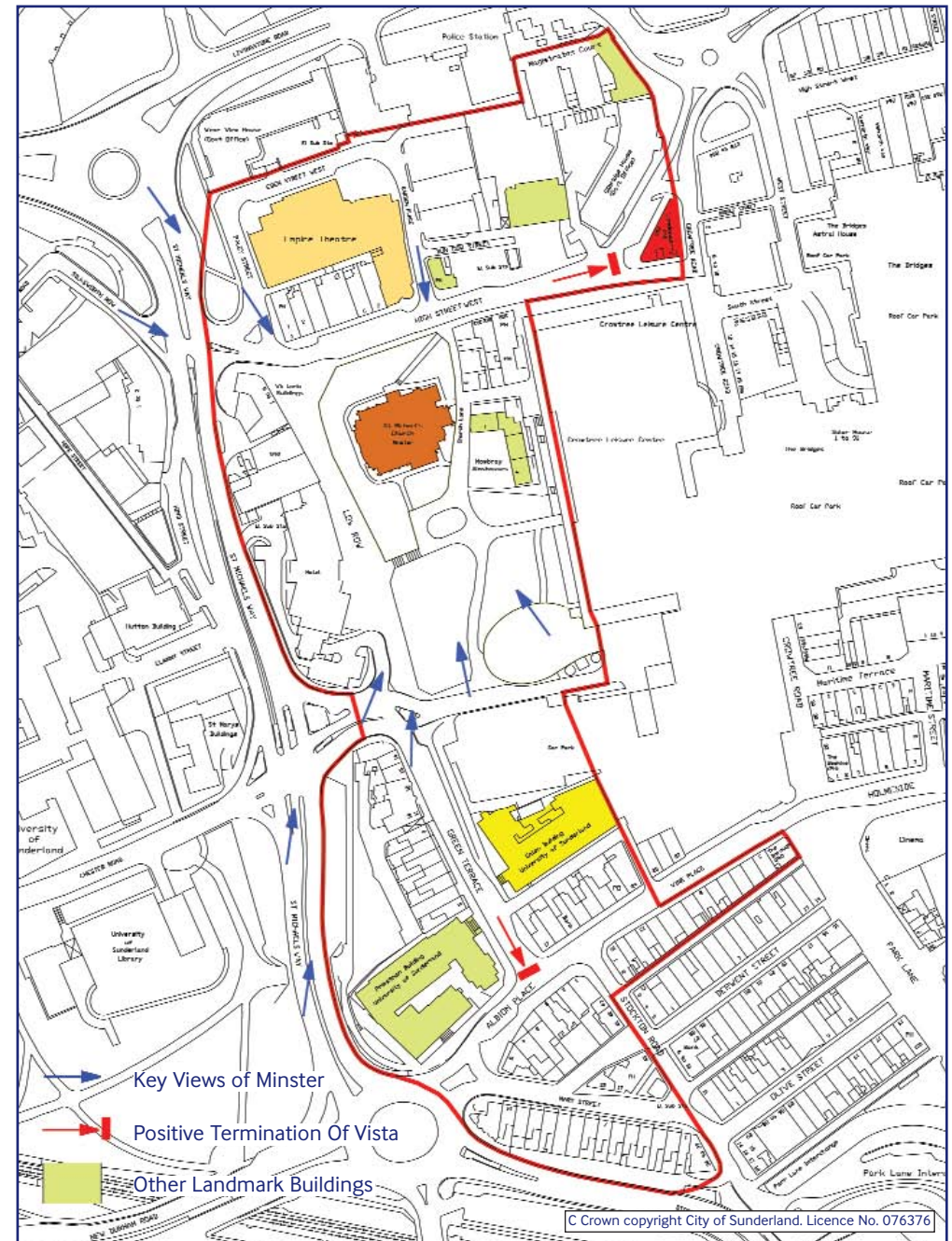


# Landmark Buildings

Many buildings in Bishopwearmouth have attractive individual qualities of their own and most are of a scale and form that enables them to blend in with their neighbours to form a successful visual unit. Several buildings, however, stand out due to their scale and form and act as readily identifiable landmarks within the Conservation Area and City Centre. Some of these buildings, most notably St. Michael's Church, have features such as towers, domes, cuppolas etc that are prominent in the skyline from more distant views and make them much admired landmarks in a City-wide context. Many landmark buildings were designed by the finest local architects, such as The Milburns, as exemplars of their style and period and are as notable for their architectural quality as for their scale and form. Combined together, such attributes have created buildings with an imposing presence, demonstrated admirably by The Empire Theatre and Galen Building for instance.

## Key Characteristics of Bishopwearmouth's Landmark Buildings

- ❖ Dominant central landmark feature, St Michael's Church, at heart of conservation area.
- ❖ Several buildings of imposing scale and form and outstanding examples of local architecture.
- ❖ Series of towers, ornate domes and cupolas give the skyline a distinctive appearance.



## St Michael's Church



St Michael's Church stands dominant on Church Lane and provides a very important landmark feature which can be seen or glimpsed from many locations. It is a quite remarkable building of a free neo-perpendicular style with a variation of roof heights and shapes. A Grade II\* Listed Building, it demonstrates a sensitive handling of period material on a scale not often seen in 20th century churches. Although largely rebuilt in the 19th century and again in the 1930's, it retains the character, fabric and features of its medieval origins. Unfortunately, views of the Church have been partially obscured by recent developments.

## Empire Theatre

The Empire is an impressive Edwardian Theatre and Grade II\* Listed Building. Built 1906 / 1907 in a free baroque style, it has a colonaded entrance, rear auditorium and lobbies built of brick with ashlar dressings and slate roof. The building is dominated by its huge drum tower in ashlar and copper cuppola, surmounted by an effigy of Terpsichore, the Greek Muse of Dance. The Empire Theatre is the most notable building in the conservation area to be designed by W.M. and T.R. Milburn and is a fine example of Sunderland architecture. It is also a venue of regional importance.



## Londonderry Public House

The Londonderry Public House is another of several buildings in the vicinity designed by the Milburns. It was built 1901/02 in a simple baroque style to an unusual triangular plan with each corner surmounted by distinctive bell-shaped lead turrets, making it an immediately recognisable building. It is constructed of sandstone ashlar with granite entrance columns and Lakeland slate roof.



## Galen Building



The Galen Building was built in 1899 and opened as a 'technical college' in 1901. It is a quite spectacular bright red brick and terracotta building with a large square tower surmounted by a dome making it the most prominent building in the southern part of the conservation area. It is richly decorated with intricate architectural features, such as a detailed frieze over the elaborate entrance portico. The building has recently been subdivided into two properties and converted into a Wine bar and two nightclubs.

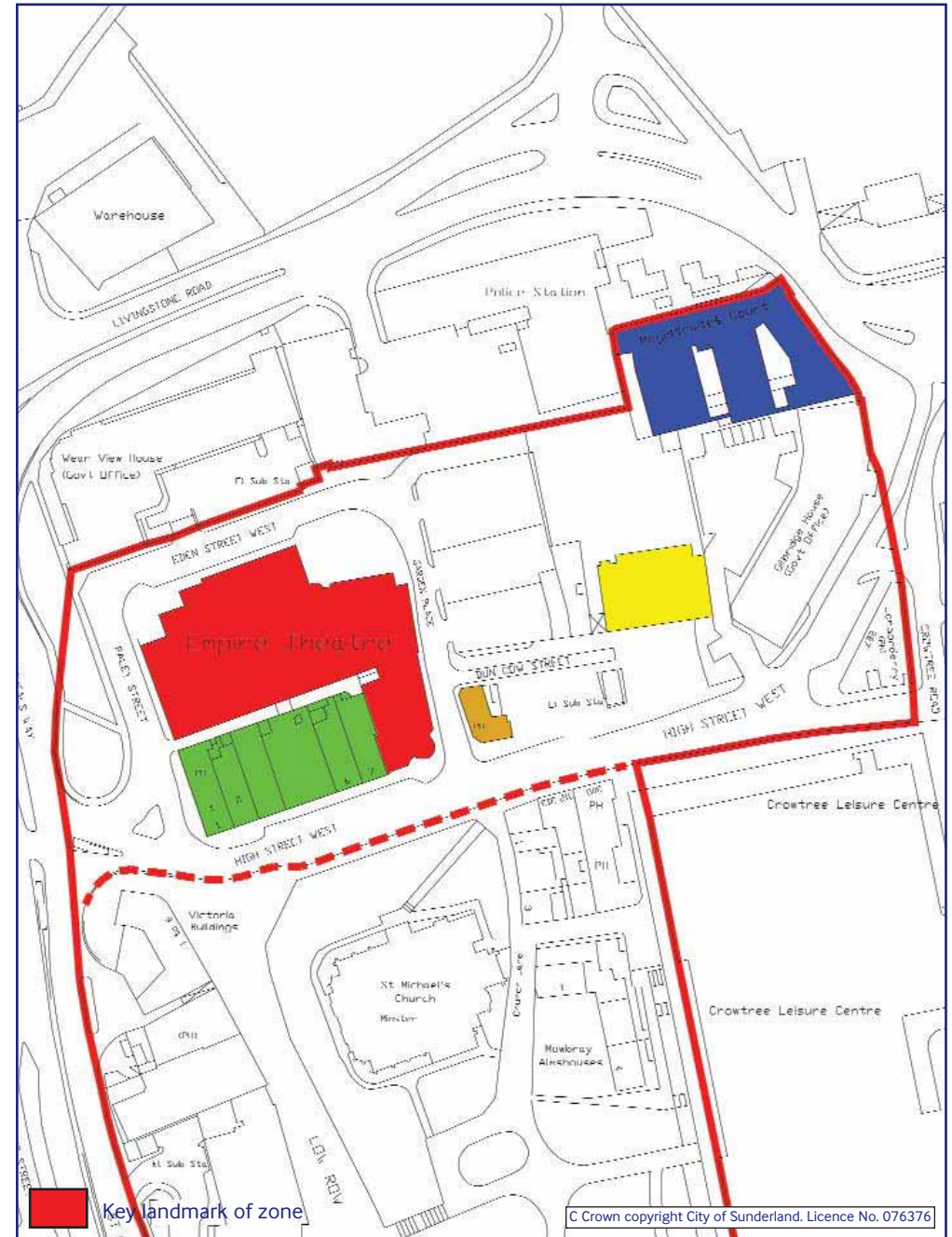


# Character Zone 1 - Theatre Quarter / High Street West

This Character Zone generally comprises that part of the conservation area north of and including High Street West. The area is predominantly characterised by landmark historic buildings alongside several terraced properties together with a newly formed public square to the front of the vacant fire station. The designs of W.M. and T.R. Milburn and other important local architects are particularly prominent in the area, giving it some of the finest buildings in the conservation area. The buildings along High Street West vary in scale and style and there is an abundance of bars, many in former terraced houses. The area is also often described as Sunderland's 'Theatre Quarter' due to the location of the Empire Theatre and the potential for nearby vacant sites and buildings to be developed / converted for associated cultural uses.

## Key Characteristics of Character Zone 1

- ❖ High concentration of listed buildings, many with landmark qualities.
- ❖ Strong influence of renowned local architects, W.M & T.R. Milburn, in area's architecture.
- ❖ Empire Theatre, a grade II\* listed building of regional importance.
- ❖ Attractively landscaped public square to front of fire station with associated street furniture and lighting.
- ❖ Surface car parks contribute to reduced streetscape quality and detract from character of area.
- ❖ Vacant buildings / sites available for re-use / redevelopment.





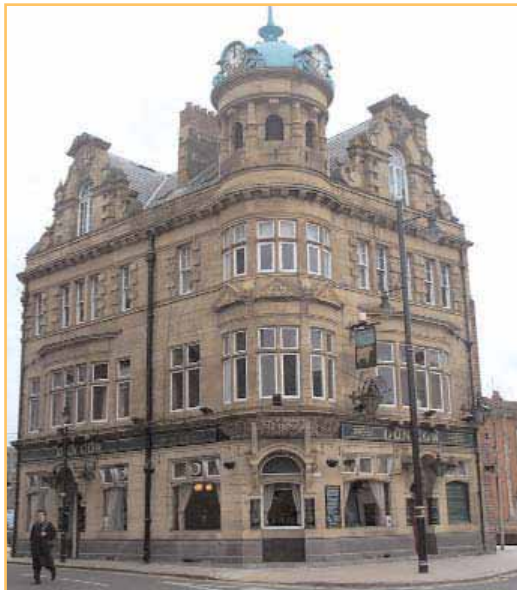
## 1-7 High Street West



These 'listed' 19th century former terraced houses adjacent the Empire Theatre have long since been adapted from their original use into shops and offices and more recently into bars. They are quite simple buildings with understated features, but well proportioned and solid in their form and appearance. Their relatively uniform painted frontages and the retention of traditional shopfront features and other fenestration details gives the street scene in this part of the High Street a quite distinct character.

## Dun Cow Public House

The Dun Cow Public House is an Edwardian building constructed of sandstone ashlar and perfectly compliments the materials that have used in the conservation area. The building has a rounded corner bay surmounted by an ornate drum and copper cupola. Its entrance has a granite plinth, marble features and together with richly embellished dormer windows makes a significant visual statement. It's interior contains one of the most stunning back bars in Britain, featuring richly decorated and delicate Art Nouveau style woodcarving. Several vacant and dilapidated properties adjacent the Dun Cow were demolished a few years ago. There is potential to redevelop this site to re-establish the street frontage in this part of High Street to form a group with the fire station.



## Fire Station



The Fire Station is one of several historic buildings in the vicinity designed by W.M. and T.R. Milburn. A very attractive building, it is currently unused but provides an ideal opportunity for regenerating a building of distinct local character to provide uses with active frontages at street level that complement and reinforce the use of the newly formed but under-utilised public square it faces onto.

## Magistrates Courts



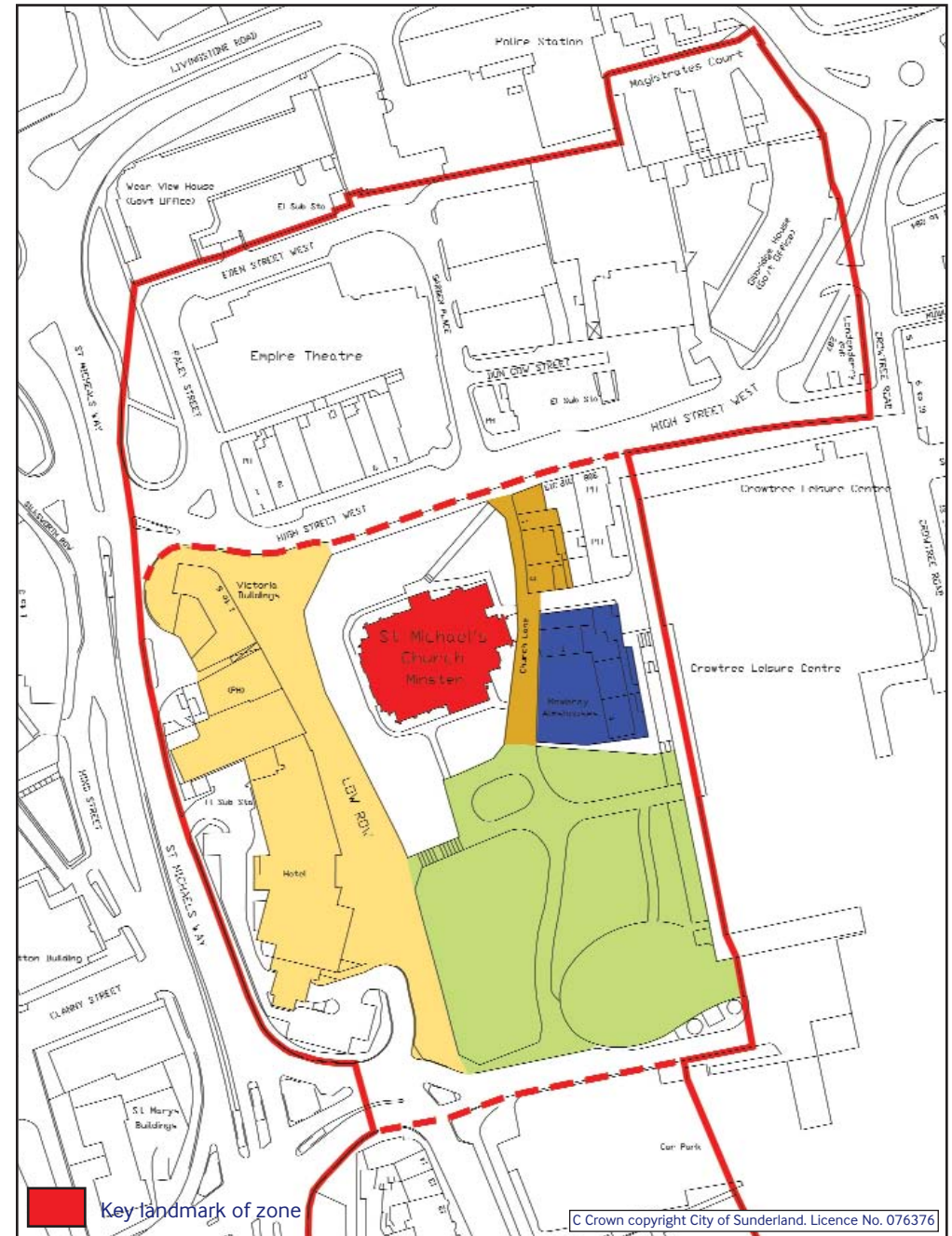
The Magistrates Courts, also designed by the Milburns, were constructed in 1907 of sandstone ashlar and feature a square clock tower with a vaulted open stage and ball finial. Gillbridge House was built adjacent the Courts in 1992 and incorporates the entrance portico that was salvaged from the public baths that formerly occupied the site.

# Character Zone 2 - Town Park / Low Row

This area is the most unique of the three character zones. It is much quieter and spacious, with a lot of appeal and strong historic character being the heart of the former medieval village. It is centred upon St Michael's Church, formerly the medieval Parish church now Sunderland Minister, which acts as the centrepiece of the conservation area and stands prominently on Town Park perched above surrounding buildings. The Town Park is the remnant of the village green and sets the area within a pleasant landscape. The Mowbray Almshouses and houses on Church Lane are the only surviving group of buildings that give a clue to the former character of the Green. To the west, Low Row was one of the busiest roads in the City before the Ring Road was built. It has since been pedestrianised and is very lively in the evenings due to numerous pubs along the street. The Town Park / Low Row area also forms a major pedestrian route between the University's Chester Road Campus and the City Centre.

## Key Characteristics of Character Zone 2

- ❖ Historic core and surviving remnants of medieval village of Bishopwearmouth.
- ❖ Soft, spacious and quiet character of Town Park.
- ❖ St Michael's Church, the centrepiece and most dominant feature of the conservation area.
- ❖ Charming, quaint and unique character of Mowbray Almshouses and Church Lane.
- ❖ Attractive pedestrianised thoroughfare of Low Row with vibrant evening atmosphere.





## Town Park



The Town Park is a small primarily soft landscaped area with an abundance of mature trees and shrubbery. The inclusion of the remnants of Bishopwearouth Green gives it immense historical significance, it also provides a pleasant setting for St Michael's Church and Mowbray Almshouses, although some over-mature vegetation obscures views of these key buildings. In conjunction with the Church grounds, the Park has the quality of a quiet and spacious City Centre space. Unfortunately, it suffers from being grossly underused and would benefit from improvements to attract visitors to this valuable asset.

## Mowbray Almshouses



Mowbray Almshouses were built in 1727, rebuilt between 1806 and 1810 and then extensively renovated in 1983. Grade II listed, these two-storey Gothic style buildings are constructed of thin courses of squared sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings and a Welsh Slate roof with red ridge tiles and tall ashlar chimneys. The buildings are arranged around a well-landscaped communal garden and provide this part of the conservation area with a pleasant domestic character.

## Church Lane

Church Lane comprises mainly two-storey cottages and shops, of a small scale with a simple and uniform appearance. The area has acquired a charm and quaintness of its own that is distinctive and unique to the City Centre. This is due to the absence of vehicular traffic, the narrowness of the lane and resultant intimate enclosure of space. These characteristics are typical of such small-scale developments that were historically clustered about the Green.



## Low Row



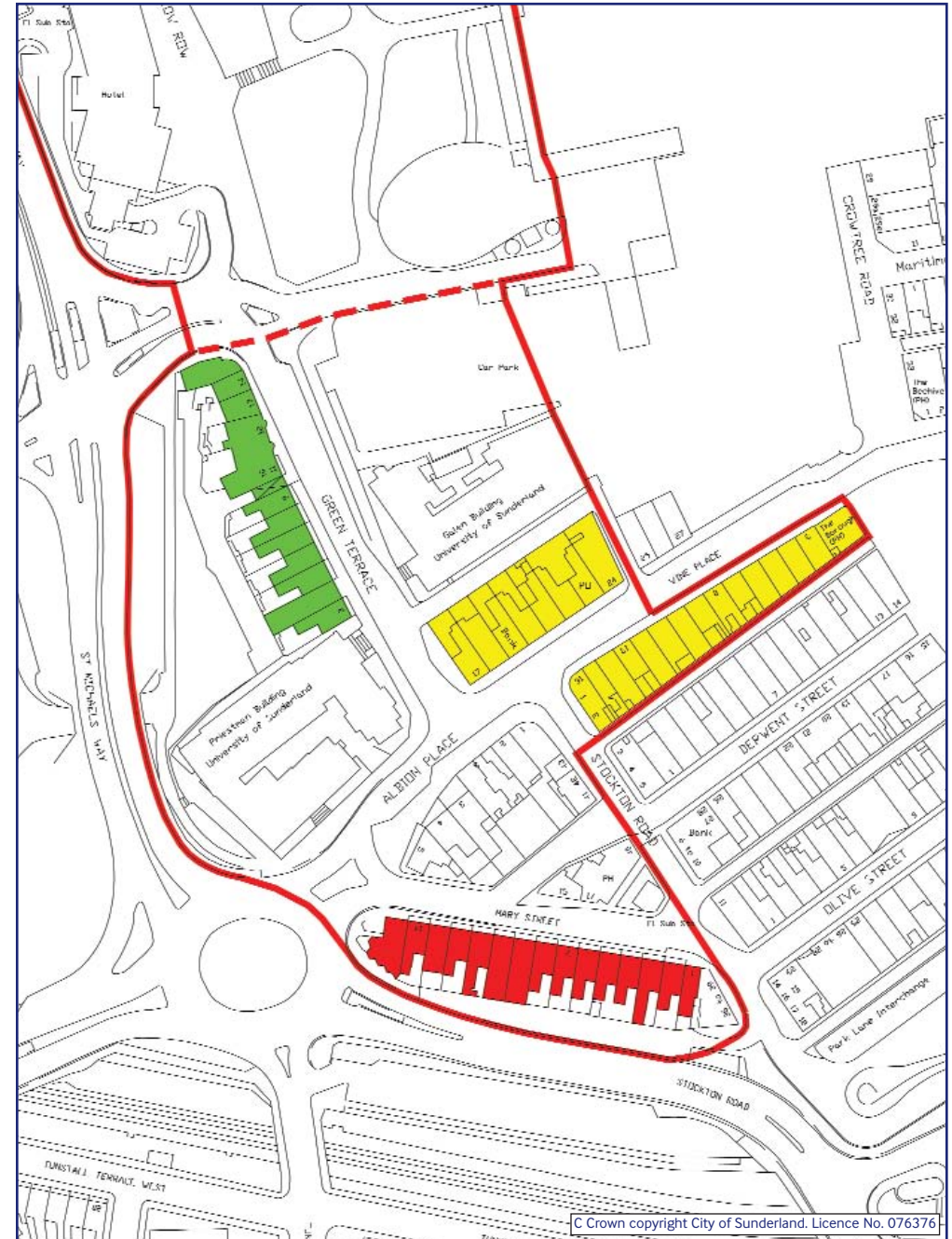
Low Row is an attractive paved area with seating and planting. At the northern end stands an attractive group of public houses, including Victoria's Buildings and Greens Public House, the former making quite a visual statement as it sweeps around the corner. Greens Public House was built in 1901 and is the most significant building in the group, a grade II listed building it features a granite plinth and pink marble to the doorcase and a beautiful vaulted ceiling, unfortunately now hidden by a lower suspended ceiling. The former Low Row car park has recently been redeveloped with the erection of Travel Lodge, incorporating yet more bars at street level to add to the lively evening atmosphere.

# Character Zone 3 - Shopping Village / Leisure Quarter

This area has some similarities with the other zones but is generally quite different in terms of its overall character. It is without doubt the busiest and most vibrant part of the conservation area. The area contains an abundance of bars, specialist shops, restaurants, several nightclubs and offices, mainly in the upper floors. The area's built form is predominantly characterised by streets of refined two/three-storey terraces. Terraces such as Vine Place contain active shop frontages at street level, many retaining their traditional form and architectural features. In contrast, Mary Street and Green Terrace have retained their domestic appearance, although apart from some upper floor flats none remain in residential use. Elsewhere, the area is notable for containing two major landmark buildings, the Priestman building and more significantly the Galen Building. Unfortunately, the area has suffered from a multitude of unsympathetic modern additions and alterations which undermine the appearance of some buildings. Historic shop fronts have been lost and the demands for signage by commercial occupiers can often conflict with the desire to preserve domestic frontages.

## Key Characteristics of Character Zone 3

- ❖ Concentration of refined 2/3 storey terraced buildings containing a wide mix of uses.
- ❖ Prominent landmarks, Galen Building and Priestman Building.
- ❖ Some of the finest surviving examples of period shopfronts in the City.
- ❖ Poor quality design and materials of replacement modern shopfronts.
- ❖ Characteristic domestic frontages to Mary Street and Green Terrace.
- ❖ Retention of original offshoots to Vine Place and Mary Street give rear lanes unusually distinctive appearance.





## Green Terrace



Green Terrace is an attractive red brick group of late Victorian buildings in a peculiar neo-classical style with terracotta doorcases. Unfortunately, the domestic character of some of these fine properties has been marred as a result of their conversion into a café bar, their interiors having been gutted, insensitive signs erected and overbearing rear extensions added. Within the terrace is an earlier late 18th century stuccoed villa, featuring particularly fine bowed windows. Now a wine bar, it was extensively restored in 1992 and gives an idea of the character of the buildings of an earlier period of the village.

## Mary Street



Mary Street comprises Victorian terraced houses that are now predominantly used as offices. With a uniform and quite simple appearance, they were extensively restored in the 1980's and together create a strong townscape feature. As such, it is important their domestic form and features are retained and not allowed to be subject to the type of alterations and additions that have degraded many other properties in the conservation area.

## Vine Place



Vine Place, once the back lane of the medieval village, is now a busy shopping street. The southern terrace contains a jumble of fairly non-descript building styles, however, collectively they present a charming informality and feature several notable shopfronts of the late 19th century. Some very ornate pilasters and finials remain that enliven the street scene. In contrast, where historic shopfronts have been replaced with modern ones, there is a general lack of quality in their design and materials. The northern group of tall 3-storey terraced properties are simple yet quite refined buildings, but notable for almost exclusively retaining the basic framework features of historic shopfronts, such as the carved pilasters, consoles and cornices. These properties have also kept their original offshoots, giving the rear lane a distinctively rhythmic appearance, as illustrated below.





# Typical Features of Bishopwearmouth

This page identifies some of the typical features of terraced properties within Bishopwearmouth, ranging from traditional period shop fronts, doorcases and windows to rainwater goods and railings. It also identifies some of the area's more unique features, which are attributed to certain landmark buildings. These features must be retained as they reflect elements of the history of the area and significantly enhance its appearance. The re-instatement of original features will always be encouraged where they have been lost in the past.

## Examples Of Features To Be Retained On Historic Properties In Bishopwearmouth



1. Slate roof
2. Cast iron guttering downpipes
3. Sliding-sash windows
4. Stone window surrounds
5. Traditional hanging signs
6. Traditional shop front framework
7. Traditional shop front infill
8. Timber doors

## Shop Fronts



Traditional shop fronts were historically designed to successfully integrate the shop front with the building as a whole and enhance the appearance of the street generally. Perhaps the best example of an historic shop front in the conservation area, albeit belonging to a pub rather than a shop, is shown above at The Black Bull. Elsewhere, Vine Place is notable for retaining a number of fine Victorian shop front features which contribute considerably to the historic street scene. The decoratively carved timber features illustrated below are particularly distinctive components of these shop fronts. Whilst there is a variety of shop front infills in Vine Place, properties in the northern terrace have almost exclusively retained timber consoles, pilasters, and cornices to form



the basic framework of a traditional shop front and guide subsequent infill improvements. Shop owners will always be encouraged to adopt a traditional approach when improving their shop fronts, replicating original timber detailing to achieve harmony of design in the terrace and reinforce its historic character. Signage is also an essential element of an attractive shop front. The lettering above is of an appropriate form and well-proportioned in relation to the length and depth of the fascia. Detailed design guidance on shop fronts and associated signage is given on pages 31-36.



## Windows



Certain terraces have retained their original domestic appearance and feature traditional timber sliding-sash windows at ground and first floor, contributing significantly to their character. To the left, the simple, formal pattern of fenestration in Mary Street is typical of the appearance of Georgian buildings. Certain properties in Green Terrace have been altered to add timber bay windows at street level, which have been used as a type of shop front by many occupiers utilising their fascias for the display of signage. Elsewhere, there are a variety of styles of bay windows above ground floor level in Vine Place, such as those above right.

## Doors and Doorcases



Traditional timber panelled doors surrounded by decorative doorcases are particular characteristics of Mary Street and Green Terrace. The latter, shown left, features detailed terracotta door heads, unique to this terrace. The doorcase to the right, from Mary Street, is composed of classical pilasters and entablature and surrounds a traditional Sunderland style six-panel pattern door that folds back to form reveals for the inner doors.

## Roofscape



Bishopwearmouth's roofscape is especially striking and highly distinctive. The multitude of towers, domes and cuppolas that rise above surrounding buildings are outstanding features of the skyline. The level of detailing and ornamentation evident in many of them is of the highest standard and demands respect for the craftsmen of the period. In the centre, the huge drum tower and copper cuppola surmounted by an effigy of Terpsichore, the Greek Muse of Dance, is particularly distinctive and makes the Empire Theatre instantly recognisable, especially when 'lit-up' in the evening.

## Walls and Railings



The Limestone walls which enclose St Michael's Church, illustrated above, and stretch along much of Green Terrace act as the central axis of the conservation area and are particularly strong features. These walls are notable for fossilised remains in the stonework which would not be evident in replacement stones. It is important that the walls are repaired in situ and not rebuilt unless absolutely necessary. Original railings are a rarity in the conservation area, the ones surviving at St Michael's Church, shown above, are missing a number of cast heads and in need of repair. Both Mary Street and Green Terrace have installed replacement mild steel railings which do not replicate the decorative cast heads and detailing that characterises traditional designs.

# Current Issues and Possible Solutions

Bishopwearmouth's architectural and historic integrity is becoming increasingly undermined as developers and commercial operators seek to capitalise on the area's new found status as the 'nightlife' quarter of the City Centre. An influx of bars and nightclubs is having a serious impact on historic buildings which were not originally designed for such uses. The alterations made to some buildings to accommodate these operators have been quite dramatic and have changed the very essence of their character. The loss of traditional shop fronts and use of inappropriate signage are issues of particular concern. Elsewhere, the quality, accessibility and public usage of Town Park needs to be seriously considered if its role as a valuable City Centre space is to be fully capitalised upon. The Management Strategy in Part 2 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.

## Shop Fronts and Signage

### Issues:

- ❖ The loss of period shop fronts is a common problem in Bishopwearmouth. Too often traditional Victorian shop fronts have been replaced with poorly designed and maintained modern frontages, using poor quality materials, which detract considerably from the character and appearance of not only the individual building but the street scene in general. This problem is most acute along the south side of Vine Place where only scattered remnants of original shop fronts remain and there are numerous examples of poor quality shop fronts that require improvement.
- ❖ The proliferation of signage associated with the influx of new bars and night clubs into the area is cause for concern. The competition amongst such operators to attract custom is leading to a desire to erect increasingly obtrusive forms of advertising that detract severely from buildings of historic interest. The character of Green Terrace, with buildings of a domestic scale and form that are not suited to leisure uses, has particularly suffered from inappropriate forms of advertising.
- ❖ 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.



The property to the left exhibits all the defects of a poor quality, modern shop front including a plastic internally illuminated fascia, projecting box sign and external roller shutters, giving it a very poor appearance. In contrast, the premises to the right have retained many traditional shop front features and make a positive contribution to the historic building and street scene.

### Solutions:

- ❖ Improvements to shop fronts must meet high standards of design and workmanship and seek to achieve consistency in the street scene. In most cases, shop owners will be required / encouraged to adopt a traditional approach, restoring / reinstating historic shop surrounds and inserting new infill shop fronts to a traditional pattern to reinforce the historic character of the area. Contemporary shop fronts can in some instances also achieve attractive results and will be considered in certain areas if they are well-designed using good quality materials. Detailed design guidance on improving shop fronts is given on pages 31-36.
- ❖ All signs should clearly relate to the building to which they are attached and there should be consistency over the type of signage within a particular street or character area. Guidelines are provided on page 36 on the types and amount of signs that will be permitted in various parts of the conservation area.
- ❖ Security measures should cause no significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and wider street scene. Generally, measures which allow light to spill onto the street in the evening such as internal lattice grilles and laminated glass will be preferred to external shutters. Solid external roller shutters will no longer be permitted anywhere in the conservation area.



## Building Alterations and Extensions

### Issues:

- ❖ The trend for open plan style bars has had highly unfortunate consequences for several of the area's historic buildings. In Green Terrace the 'gutting' of the interiors of several former houses to accommodate new bars has all but destroyed their domestic character. All evidence of their historic layout has been obliterated and any surviving original features such as fireplaces and staircases lost, leaving only the shell of the historic houses. This trend also threatens the survival of historic bar interiors, of which the area has several fine examples.
- ❖ A desire to increase the floorspace of premises has resulted in some over-bearing and poorly designed rear extensions in the conservation area, most notably along the south side of Vine Place and more recently in Green terrace. Such additions have significantly altered the former character of the rear lanes in these areas.



The rhythm and uniformity that originally characterised the rear of Green Terrace has been spoiled by the addition of the above extension.

### Solutions:

- ❖ It is important that the area's pub heritage is maintained. Fortunately, the best bar interiors in the area are protected via their buildings' listed status, The Management Proposals on page 37 seek to ensure that such survivals are preserved for the future.
- ❖ In certain areas, such as the north side of Vine Place and Mary Street, original

offshoots are largely intact and they give a certain rhythm and symmetry to the appearance of the rear lanes. Extensions that disrupt this continuity of built form will generally be resisted which, in practical terms, means that no rear extensions will be permitted above ground floor level. Elsewhere, two-storey rear extensions will only be considered if they are consistent with the established character and display high quality designs and materials, particularly where the rear elevations are visually prominent like Green Terrace.

## Impact of New Developments

### Issues:

- ❖ Some major city centre developments of the 20th century have occurred in locations within or on the edge of Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area and have had negative effects on its townscape value. These are identified on the map on page 38. For instance, the Crowtree Leisure Centre has seriously compromised the setting of the Mowbray Almshouses and several other historic buildings. It also forms a very unattractive hard edge to High Street West and along the eastern boundary of the conservation area adjacent Town Park. This hinders pedestrian movement between the core of the City Centre and Bishopwearmouth and, as a result, discourages the use of Town Park as a valuable public space.



The Crowtree Leisure Centre has no redeeming design features, presenting little more than an ugly wall of metal cladding behind the Mowbray Almshouses.

- ❖ There are some fine views of key buildings in the area, especially the Minster, on approaching and leaving the City Centre. Some of these views have been partially obscured by recent developments; there is concern that future developments should not further obstruct important views.

### **Solutions:**

- ❖ The Management Proposals in Part 2 seek to ensure that future developments in and around the Conservation Area are of a higher standard of design quality and do not adversely effect the settings and views of the area's historic buildings and features.

### **Town Park**

#### **Issues:**

- ❖ Bishopwearmouth contains some key city centre public spaces, most notably Town Park. Unfortunately, the Park is vastly underused for a number of reasons but offers considerable potential. The relatively poor landscape quality of Town Park is a key issue, particularly with regard to the former 'village green' which is suffering from neglect and whose historical importance is not appreciated by visitors. A lack of facilities and active frontages to the Park discourages activity spilling into it and is a major factor in the under-use of it.



Poor quality landscape and surface materials in Town Park create an environment that is not conducive to an attractive and well-used public space.

#### **Solutions:**

- ❖ New food and drink and retail developments with active frontages along the eastern boundary of Town Park would draw people to the park and greatly enliven the space. Environmental improvements to the park, including the introduction of high quality surface materials, landscaping, street furniture and public art, and the promotion of a range of outdoor activities would further increase its attractiveness.

### **Former Fire Station**

#### **Issues:**

- ❖ The former fire station is a key building in the area that has been vacant and its condition slowly deteriorating for a number of years. The public space to the front of the fire station is, in contrast to the soft landscape of Town Park, an attractive paved square but like the Park is under utilised.

#### **Solutions:**

- ❖ The securing of new uses for the vacant former fire station would help to sustain a building of local importance whilst also attracting much needed activity to this part of the Conservation Area.



varsity

Part 2

Management Strategy

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# Management Strategy: Introduction

Part 1 of this study has identified and appraised the special characteristics and features of Bishopwearmouth 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 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 future conservation 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 Bishopwearmouth 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 Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area. The following Strategy, like the preceding Character Appraisal, is divided into sub-areas or common building types. Each section has a Management Objective which establishes the broad vision for the area / buildings, 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 which threaten the integrity of the Conservation Area and vary in their nature, ranging from measures to ensure the future preservation of key buildings, features and views, environmental improvements to Town Park, to design guidelines for shop fronts and new developments. 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 timescale 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 traffic management in the area or social issues such as crime and antisocial behaviour.

# Management Objectives & Proposals: Landmarks & Views

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 1:** To protect and improve the settings and key views of Sunderland Minster and other landmark features in the Conservation Area.

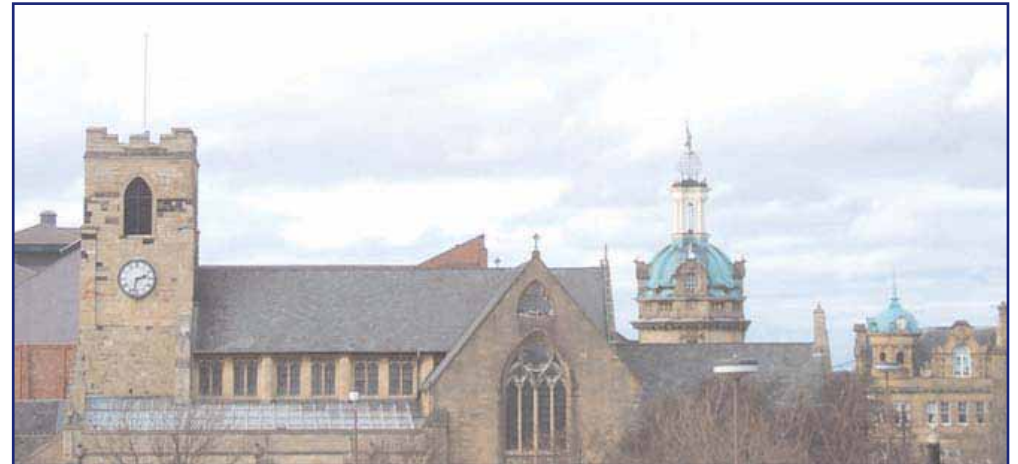
**PROPOSAL 1a:** The Council will require all future development proposals to respect the setting and preserve existing views of the Minster from St Michael's Way, Low Row, Green Terrace, High Street West and from other distant vantage points.

There are several important views of Sunderland Minster from outside the Conservation Area, particularly from the western edge of the City Centre via St Michael's Way, one the main approaches into the City. These 'key' views are identified on the map on page 12; an example of one of the views is illustrated below. Unfortunately, some of these views have been partially obstructed by recent developments and have to some extent compromised the setting of the Minster. It is essential that remaining views of this important landmark building are protected from further development, to preserve its status as one of the most prominent and attractive features viewed on approaching and leaving the City Centre.



Views of the Minster from the east have been almost totally obscured for some time by latter 20th century City Centre developments such as the Crowtree Leisure Centre. The possible redevelopment of the Leisure Centre could potentially provide an opportunity in the long term to 'open-up' historic views of the Minster from Crowtree Road and the east. This warrants further analysis in the context of any feasibility study into the future of Crowtree Leisure Centre.

**PROPOSAL 1b:** The Council will seek to ensure that all future development proposals preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the distinctive roofscape of Bishopwearmouth.



Bishopwearmouth's landmark buildings punctuate the skyline with numerous attractive towers, domes and cupolas. As illustrated above, views across the Conservation Area from surrounding and distant high points reveal a roofscape of variety, interest and distinction. The Council considers it important that any new development within and adjacent the Conservation Area is of a scale and form that does not obstruct these views or introduces features of an intrusive nature into the roofscape.



# Management Objectives & Proposals: Town Park

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 2:** To ensure the enhancement of Town Park is informed by its historic significance and seeks to improve the setting of key Listed Buildings and create a higher quality, more attractive, secure and usable public space.

**PROPOSAL 2a:** The Council will seek as resources allow to improve the quality, attractiveness and accessibility of the Park to users through a range of environmental improvements, including the introduction of high quality surface materials, landscaping, street furniture and interpretation material.

An environmental enhancement scheme for Town Park should ideally be informed and inspired by the history of the area and the surrounding architecture (although not that of later developments i.e. Bridges Car Park / Crowtree Leisure Centre). Reference to historic street names and patterns, such as Little Gate and South Gate, could be incorporated into the re-design of the Park.

The choice of surface materials and street furniture to be used in the Park will be particularly important to enhancing the quality and character of this historic space. The existing blocks surface and the style and condition of the seating / bins, as illustrated below, detracts considerably from the Park. Any enhancement



scheme should seek to remove these inappropriate products and introduce high quality traditional paving materials together with the co-ordinated upgrading of street furniture using more sympathetic styles. Certain improvement works may potentially be undertaken in the short term in advance of a more comprehensive enhancement scheme for the Park in order to give some immediate 'impacts'. These proposals are discussed in detail below.

**PROPOSAL 2b:** The Council will seek to enhance the settings and visual links of key Listed Buildings through the selective removal of tree and shrub planting.

Excessive tree and shrub planting in the Park currently obscures views of surrounding listed buildings such as the Minster (as shown in the photograph below), Mowbray Almshouses and the Empire Theatre. The Council will seek, as part of any enhancement scheme for the Park, to open-up views of these key buildings and enhance their settings through the removal of much of the existing shrubbery and selected trees that do not contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. The 'opening-up' of the Park in this way would also improve public safety, security and access through it.



**PROPOSAL 2c:** The Council will carry out environmental works to preserve and enhance 'Bishopwearmouth Green' and increase through the provision of interpretation material understanding and appreciation of its historic importance.

A key element of the environmental improvements to the Park will be to enhance the status of 'The Green', both visually and historically. Currently, The Green is largely unused and forgotten about and visually unattractive. A pathway through its centre has severed The Green in two (as illustrated below); the removal of this path would at least reinstate its historic form, coupled with landscaping works to improve its appearance. Sensitively designed seating may be placed around the edge of The Green to encourage people to stay and enjoy the space, this being the purpose for which village greens were traditionally formed.



Generally, the public does not appreciate the historic significance of The Green as common land at the heart of the original Anglo-Saxon settlement of Bishopwearmouth (see page 5 of Character Appraisal). The Council will therefore identify suitable forms of interpretative material to be displayed within / about The Green to help increase understanding of its importance and encourage visitors to it.



# Enhancement Objectives & Proposals: Shop Front Design Guidelines

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 3:** To secure the preservation, restoration or improvement, as appropriate, of shop frontages in Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area through the application of the following design guidelines.

The quality of shop fronts in Bishopwearmouth is generally poor and detracts considerably from the historic street scene. Only a few historic shop fronts have survived in their entirety; most consist of the remains of the original framework with poorly designed and constructed modern infill frontages. Some shop fronts have been wholly replaced with modern designs, some more successfully than others, but rarely to a standard worthy of the conservation area. Hence, large parts of the conservation area would benefit from comprehensive shop front improvements. The following design guidelines have been formulated to ensure: -

- ❖ 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 Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area and primarily to Vine Place, Stockton Road, High Street West and Low Row. They build upon UDP policies S8 and SA83 (re-produced in appendix 1).

## 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.

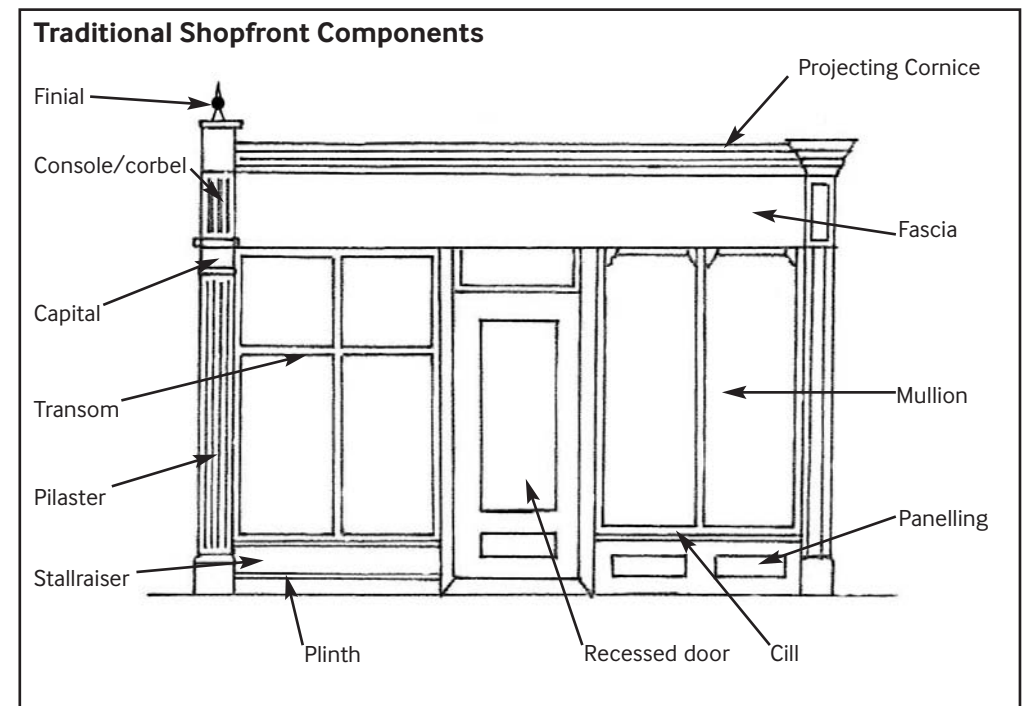
Where historic evidence is lacking and the particular circumstances of the premises favour a non-traditional approach, contemporary style shop fronts will be

considered. Good quality modern shop fronts tend to display certain characteristics and design standards with regard to their proportions and materials. These are illustrated and discussed in more detail on page 33. Contemporary designs will only be considered that achieve such high standards.

## TRADITIONAL SHOP FRONTS

**PROPOSAL 3a:** The Council will require the retention of surviving traditional shop fronts and features and seek to secure their reinstatement wherever possible.

The individual components of a traditional Victorian shop front can for the purposes of these guidelines be divided into two groups. Firstly, the 'surrounding framework' that is generally made up of the pilasters and entablature. Secondly, the 'shop front infill' which is broadly comprised of the stall riser, door and fanlight, window display and glazing bars.



## Surrounding Framework

Historic properties along the north side of Vine Place, Stockton Road, Low Row and no's 1-7 High Street West predominantly display traditional shop front frameworks with a unified design for each terrace. Vine Place, in particular, is notable for almost exclusively retaining its decorative pilasters featuring deeply carved consoles, and the entablature composed of the fascia and indented cornice. This framework must be retained where it exists and, where necessary, carefully repaired. Where missing, the historic framework should be reinstated as part of any shop front improvement proposals, replicating the pattern and detailing of pilasters and cornices along the street. This approach will also be required for no's 41-43 Stockton Road and 1-7 High Street West. Thus, the Council insists that a traditional approach be followed for these terraces based on surviving historic, surrounding frameworks in order to maintain and enhance the harmony and uniformity of these elements of the street frontage.

Elsewhere, in the south side of Vine Place only scattered remnants of the historic frameworks survive. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence in surviving pilasters, friezes and cornices to enable designers to replicate these features with a view to full reinstatement of the surrounding framework. This is the preferred approach, however, it will only be insisted upon where at least some elements of the Victorian shop front have survived on a property to prevent further incremental losses of historic features. In other cases, modern shop fronts will also be considered provided they achieve the design standards set out in these guidelines.

## Infill Shop Fronts

For traditional shop fronts a Victorian approach will be required for the infill shop front to be inserted into the basic framework, although some flexibility in the design will be permitted. Victorian shop fronts are characterised by vertical glazed panes, subdivided by window mullions, above a stall riser. The preceding diagram shows a typical Victorian shop front.

The infill shop front must be slightly recessed within the surrounding framework, normally no more than 100mm behind the face of the pilaster shaft. The stall riser helps to protect the display windows from damage and is important to the proportions of the shop front. It should generally be aligned with the top of the pilaster base and should feature a slightly recessed moulded timber panel and continuous plinth at pavement level.

Traditional shop doors should also be timber panelled to match the stall riser and should appear as a continuation of the shop window. The main doorway is normally recessed behind the display window and often positioned in the centre of the shop front. Mullions should be appropriately spaced within the display window, as illustrated in the diagram, and delicately moulded on the outside.

## Materials and Painting

Painted timber which is both versatile and durable is the standard material for traditional shop fronts. Modern glossy materials such as acrylic, perspex and uPVC appear incongruous against the traditional materials of historic buildings and will not be allowed anywhere in the conservation area.

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, dark red and navy blue, leaving the window display to provide the light. Gilding or lighter colours may be used sparingly to highlight architectural features and mouldings. Garish colours, for example bright yellow and bright green, are considered obtrusive and will not be accepted. The photograph below illustrates how the use of such colours can spoil a shop front and detract from the character and appearance of the building and street scene.



This pub frontage was formerly painted a traditional burgundy red which helped it to integrate with the building as a whole much more successfully than it does now.



## Modern Shop Fronts

**PROPOSAL 3b:** The Council will give consideration, where all elements of a traditional shop front have been lost, to the installation of high quality, contemporary shop fronts that integrate with the host building and street scene.

Well-designed and constructed modern shop fronts can, in some instances, make a positive contribution to the historic street scene. Such an approach will normally only be considered in the south side of Vine Place on properties where all evidence of the original shop front has been lost. In exceptional circumstances there may be justification for inserting a modern shop front infill within a predominantly traditional framework, but only where it is designed to achieve a strong relationship between these two elements of the shop front and integrate with the building as a whole.

There can be some distinct differences in the detailing and materials of a good quality, modern shop front to those of a traditional design, although the general proportions should remain the same. Thus, fascias should be of a comparable



The shop front above successfully mixes traditional and contemporary materials in a simple yet high quality modern design to provide an attractive frontage that relates to the upper floor.

size and align with those of traditional shop fronts in the terrace so signage is provided at a consistent level throughout the street.

There is slightly more flexibility in the choice of materials for modern shop fronts; timber is still preferred but other natural materials such as stone can also be appropriate. Stall risers are normally made from dark granite or similar material. Aluminium frames may occasionally be considered if they are appropriately anodised. A wider range of paint finishes beyond the normal 'heritage' range may be used on modern shop fronts but bright colours should still be avoided.

Modern designs are generally devoid of the elaborate mouldings and architectural detailing that typifies Victorian shop fronts, although occasionally do successfully incorporate some decorative features. However, good quality modern shop fronts are generally notable for their simple design, as illustrated opposite.

## Domestic Frontages

Certain terraces in the area, namely Mary Street and Green Terrace, have not been subjected to the evolution of shop fronts. Some windows have been enlarged and signage provided on a small fascia above but, by and large, the buildings have retained their original domestic frontages. In these streets shop fronts will not be permitted in any form. The size, shape and form of the existing windows and doors must always be retained to preserve the domestic appearance of the street.

## Signage

**PROPOSAL 3c:** The Council will exercise strict control over the display of advertisements in Bishopwearmouth 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.

## Fascia Signs

The main name sign for the premises should be restricted to the shop front fascia, unless a sub-fascia forms part of the traditional design in which case it should be used for the main shop sign. The name sign 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, regardless of whether they are to be applied to a traditional or modern shop front. These are painted lettering or cut-out freestanding letters fixed individually to the fascia.



Hand painted lettering is generally more suitable for historic shop fronts. It should therefore be in a traditional typeface and suitably coloured to contrast with the fascia, preferably a light colour against a dark background.



Freestanding letters should be made from metal or wood and not project more than 50mm from the fascia. The height of lettering should be no more than two-thirds the height of the fascia and normally centred about its horizontal and vertical axis, leaving reasonable space at each end of the fascia. Acrylic letters may be accepted on modern shop fronts provided they present a matt appearance and are suitably coloured. Whole fascias of plastic will not be permitted, whether illuminated or not.

## Hanging Signs and Banners

The Council will exercise strict control over projecting signs in the conservation area. Traditionally hanging signs, which take the form of a signboard hanging

from a metal bracket on the fascia, are generally acceptable but will be limited to one per property to avoid creating clutter. Hanging signs should have a vertical emphasis, being no more than 750mm in height, and not project more than 600mm from the fascia. Such signs were commonplace in the 19th century, particularly for public houses. A good example exists at the Dun Cow in High Street West, as shown below.



Banners may very occasionally be an alternative option to hanging signs for certain properties but both types of signage must not be mixed together on the same building. Each proposal for a banner will be considered on its individual merits, depending on the suitability of the building concerned to this type of sign and its impact on the wider street scene. Where banners are allowed they must be canvas, must be no more than 1800mm in height and will be limited to one banner per property. Solid banners will not be permitted. Banners are the only signs that may be erected above ground floor level. An example of an appropriate form of banner is illustrated above.

Projecting 'box' signs, whether illuminated or not, will not be permitted anywhere in the conservation area as they are historically inappropriate and appear clumsy and obtrusive.

Other specialist forms of signage may be permitted where the particular nature of the building warrants this. For example, display boards are highly desirable for the Empire Theatre to promote its productions and have been accepted following negotiations to secure a suitable design.



## Illumination

As a general rule illumination, where necessary, should be low key and any lighting carefully integrated into the design of the shop front. Only three types of lighting are considered appropriate, depending on the type of signage to be illuminated.

- ❖ For freestanding letters, only halo illumination will be permitted.
- ❖ Traditional hanging signs and banners should be lit from above via a light source concealed within an appropriately designed fitting attached to the bracket of the sign (as shown in the photograph far left).
- ❖ Miniaturised spotlights fixed to the ground below or discreetly located on the building without causing damage to it may alternatively be used to illuminate signs or, especially on larger buildings, architectural features.

**PROPOSAL 3d:** 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.

## SECURITY

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. It is essential that the roller mechanisms for internal grilles are concealed behind the fascia so that the retracted shutter can not be seen from the street.

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 as illustrated top left. 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, such as in the example top right.



## Blinds / Canopies

'Dutch canopy' style blinds and other types of plastic blinds are considered to be particularly intrusive on historic buildings and will not be permitted in the conservation area. Only traditional canvas awnings will be considered, which should be designed as an integral part of the shop front to not obscure any architectural features, such as pilasters and consoles, and be concealed in a blind box flush with the fascia when retracted. When open they must be no lower than 2.4 metres above the pavement and at least 1 metre in from the kerb in the interests of highway and pedestrian safety.

The table overleaf has been devised to assist the implementation of the shop front design guidelines in specific parts of Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area. It sets out which types of shop front and signage are considered, subject to their particular design, acceptable in particular streets and for individual buildings within the Area.

Street/ Buildings	Shop Front		Signage						Illumination		
	Traditional	Modern	Painted letters	Individual letters	Plastic fascia panels	Hanging Sign	Banner	Projecting box sign	Halo	Light fitting attached to sign or bracket	Miniature spotlights
Vine Place (south)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Occasionally	No	Yes	Yes	No
Vine Place (north)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Occasionally	No	Yes	Yes	No
Stockton Road	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
3-5 Albion Place	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Mary Street	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Green Terrace	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
1-7 High Street West	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Church Lane	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Victoria Buildings, Low Row	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Galen Building	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Beach, Albion Place	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Londonderry, Dun Cow, Greens Baroque	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Three Bulls Head	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No



# Management Objectives & Proposals: Historic Pubs of Bishopwearmouth

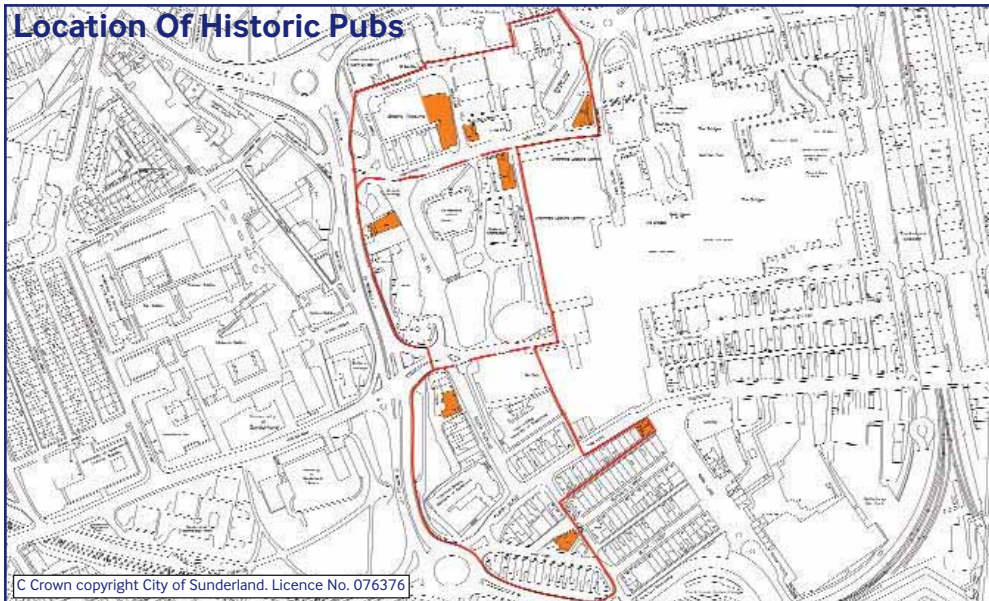
**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 4:** To ensure the preservation of the distinctive qualities and historic character of public houses in Bishopwearmouth.

## Historic Pubs in Bishopwearmouth

Bishopwearmouth is notable for containing a fine variety of historic pubs mainly from the Edwardian period, most 'listed' and many with distinctive architectural qualities. These are identified on the map below; their key characteristics are appraised at various points in the Character Appraisal in Part 1 of this document. They include, for instance, the Dun Cow and Londonderry Public Houses which are distinguished by their landmark qualities and high degree of architectural embellishment.

The preceding shop front design guide establishes guidelines to protect or secure the reinstatement of traditional pub frontages and forms of signage for the Conservation Area's historic pubs. The following management proposals build upon these guidelines and propose further measures that seek to ensure that the special architectural and historic qualities of the area's traditional public houses are preserved for the benefit of existing and future patrons and visitors.

### Location Of Historic Pubs



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**PROPOSAL 4a:** Special control will be exercised over the display of signage on historic pubs in the Conservation Area, in order to conserve their special traditional character.

The recent trend for adapting public houses into modern style 'disco' or 'theme' bars can often be very intrusive to the historic character of formerly traditional drinking pubs. Garish 'fun pub' type signs using bright colours, such as those shown in the photograph on page 34, invariably appear as very obtrusive features on traditional pubs and, as such, as a general rule will not be permitted. A traditional approach will be required to be adopted for erecting signage on such buildings, in accordance with the preceding shop front design guidelines and table on page 36. Thus, signage should be limited to a name sign of either painted lettering or freestanding cut out letters and a traditional timber hanging board sign.

**PROPOSAL 4b:** The Council will give special attention to the retention of surviving historic pub interiors in the interests of preserving the Conservation Area's distinctive pub heritage.

The desire of modern pub operators to maximise their capacity by providing spacious open-plan bars can be very destructive of historic pub interiors. Unfortunately, such has been the pace of modernisation that only a few original pub interiors now remain in the area; the Council therefore considers it especially important to preserve those that do survive. The interior of the Dun Cow is the best surviving example and is quite stunning. It features one of the most



remarkable back-bars in Britain, as described on page 15 and illustrated below. Other historic interiors survive at the Londonderry and in the Empire Theatre. Fortunately, all these buildings are listed and thus their interiors are afforded statutory protection; any proposals to remove or alter original bar fittings in these premises will therefore normally be resisted.

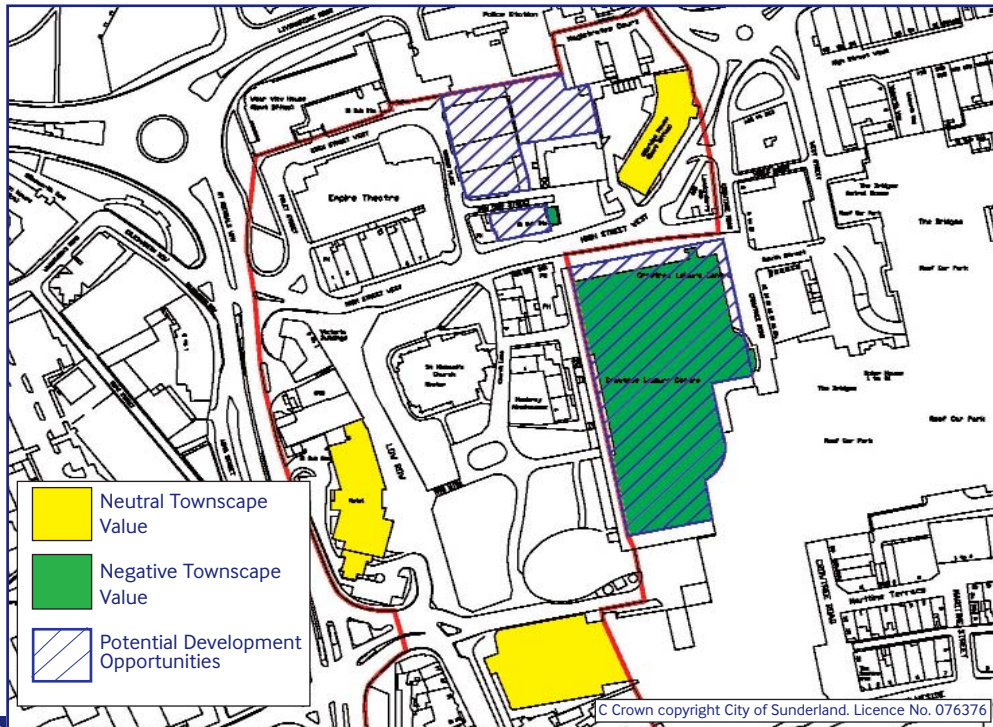


# Management Objectives & Proposals: High Street West / Theatre Quarter

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 5:** To secure the enhancement of the Conservation Area through the reinstatement of a desirable street frontage to the historic High Street

**PROPOSAL 5a:** The Council will require all forms of new development along High Street West to display high quality contemporary designs that will respect and enrich their historic context, having special regard to the massing and materials of surrounding listed buildings.

High Street West is notable for containing some of the finest architecture in the City, best expressed by the works of the Milburn's and Benjamin Simpson at the Empire Theatre and the Old Dun Cow respectively. The Council will require the highest standards of design in any new developments along the High Street so as to reinforce its architectural quality. There are two particular sites on the High Street with development potential, these are identified on the map below and discussed opposite: -



## 1) Land adjacent Dun Cow Public House, High Street West

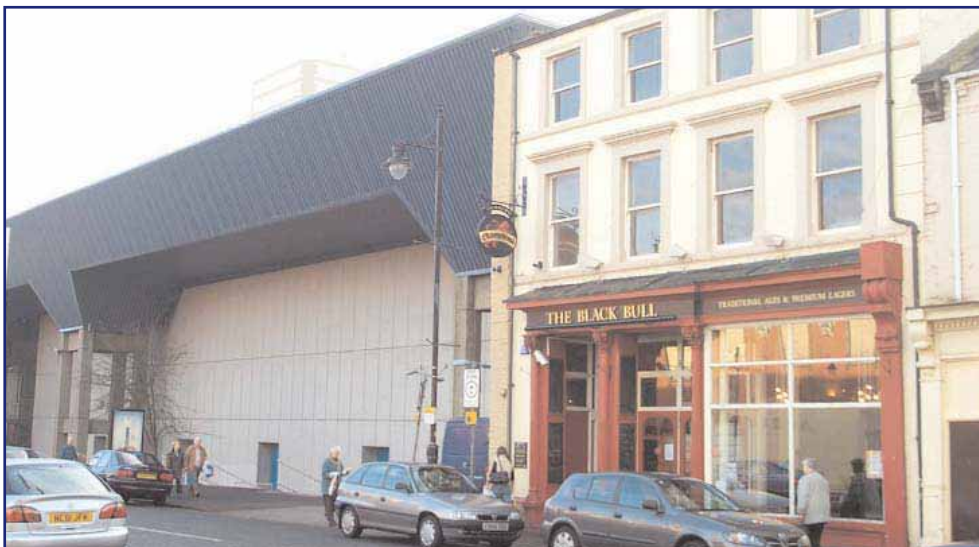


The land directly adjacent the Dun Cow Public House on High Street West was until fairly recently occupied by a range of vacant buildings which, due to their dilapidated condition and poor quality appearance, were required to be demolished. The site now presents a key development opportunity to re-establish a street frontage in this part of the High Street. The design of new buildings in this area should seek to reinforce the established character of the High Street, particularly in terms of building heights, building lines and materials, and should preserve the settings of historic buildings in the vicinity, such as the former fire station.

## 2) Crowtree Leisure Centre

The scale and form of Crowtree Leisure Centre, whilst just outside the boundary of the conservation area, significantly impacts upon its character and appearance. The Centre was quite an innovative building in its day and a very successful sporting facility and venue; but the total lack of any active frontage to any street has proved to be unsympathetic to the area's townscape value. The Leisure Centre currently dwarfs surrounding historic buildings, compromising their settings and presenting generally unsatisfactory blank facades to all aspects such as illustrated opposite on the High Street. There is a possibility that it may become available for redevelopment in the longer term, probably to make way





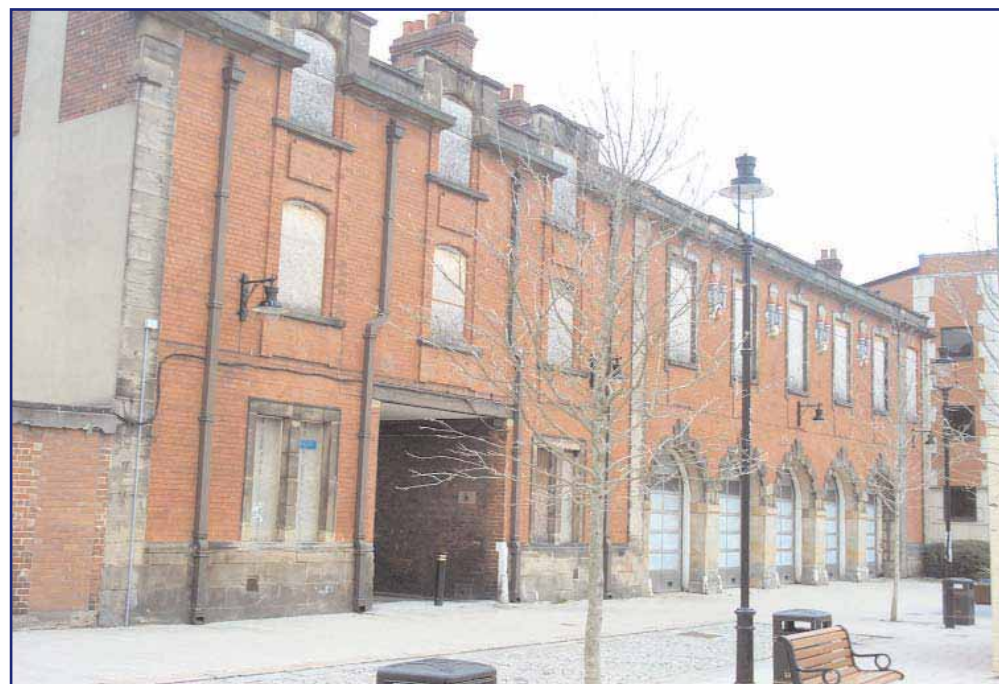
for a further extension to the Bridges Shopping Centre. Should this transpire, it presents a major opportunity to reinstate the High Street frontage next to the Black Bull and provide new active frontages along the eastern boundary of Town Park. Any future redevelopment will need to be very carefully considered given the sensitivity and importance of the site and its surroundings. A high quality and imaginative design solution will be required with issues such as scale, height and elevational treatment being of paramount importance.

**MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE 6: To secure the future in beneficial uses of a building of local historic and architectural significance and importance to the character of Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area**

**PROPOSAL 6a: The Council will encourage proposals for the re-use and refurbishment of the vacant former Fire Station to ensure this locally important building is sustained into the future.**

The former fire station (illustrated opposite), despite not being listed, is a building of immense local character. Set back from the High Street, it is one of several buildings in the vicinity designed by renowned local architects W.M. and T.R. Milburn. A very significant group value can therefore be assigned to the cluster representing the variety, quality and importance of the Milburn's work to the City's built heritage and essential character of this part of the

Conservation Area. The fire station makes a key contribution to this architectural collection, being quite unlike any of the other Milburn designs.



The Council will therefore encourage proposals to bring this key building back into beneficial uses. Appropriate uses may include, for instance, cultural or leisure uses to complement the Empire theatre. Ground floor uses with outdoor seating such as cafes and restaurants will be particularly encouraged to support greater use of the square to the front of the station. Prospective developers will be required to adopt a sympathetic approach to repairing and adapting the building for conversion to ensure that its architectural and historic integrity is not compromised. There are several modern extensions to the rear and side of the fire station that detract from its historic character. The removal of these structures would be welcomed as part of any proposals.

The land to the rear and side of the fire station, currently used as a car park, potentially presents an opportunity for major new development. It is essential that new buildings on this site respond to their historic context; the satisfactory resolution of issues of scale and height in relation to the fire station and 'listed' Magistrates Courts opposite will be vitally important to achieving a distinctive and desirable location of character for the Theatre Quarter.

# Management Strategy: Summary and Recommended Action

Management Strategy: Summary of Management Proposals			
Proposals	Timescale: short (1-3yrs)/ mid-long (3-10yrs)	Financial Sources/Implications	Recommended Action
<b>Landmark /Views</b>			
1a. Protecting views of Minster	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
1b. Roofscape	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
<b>Town Park</b>			
2a Environmental Improvements	Mid-long	Public / partnership funding required	Research and initial design work /investigate funding sources.
2b. Enhancing settings of key listed buildings	Short	Limited public investment	Prepare & implement scheme
2c. Improvements to 'The Green'	Short	Limited public investment	Prepare & implement scheme
<b>Shop Fronts</b>			
3a. Traditional shop fronts	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
3b. Modern shop fronts	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
3c. Signage	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
3d. Security	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
<b>Historic Pubs</b>			
4a. Signage	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
4b. Pub interiors	Continuous	None	On-going control, advice and guidance
<b>High St West / Theatre Village</b>			
5a. High Street West developments	Mid-long	Major private investment	On-going control, advice and guidance
6a. Fire Station	Short	Major public / private investment	On-going control, advice and guidance

## 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 dependent 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 an environmental improvement scheme for Town Park will require significant public investment, most likely involving the Council in partnership with other funding agencies. Such funding is difficult to secure, especially in the current financial climate with the Council facing increasing budgeting constraints from Central Government.

Any new development on the High Street will inevitably be reliant upon substantial investment from private developers. The Conservation Area has attracted some major new-build developments over the last decade, such as the Travel Lodge and associated bars/clubs on Low Row, and the area remains a focus for leisure operators. However, this flow of investment cannot be assured and is susceptible to market conditions.

## 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 detailed design work will be needed to expedite an environmental improvement scheme for Town Park.

## 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 dependent 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 all mid and long term Objectives.



## 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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