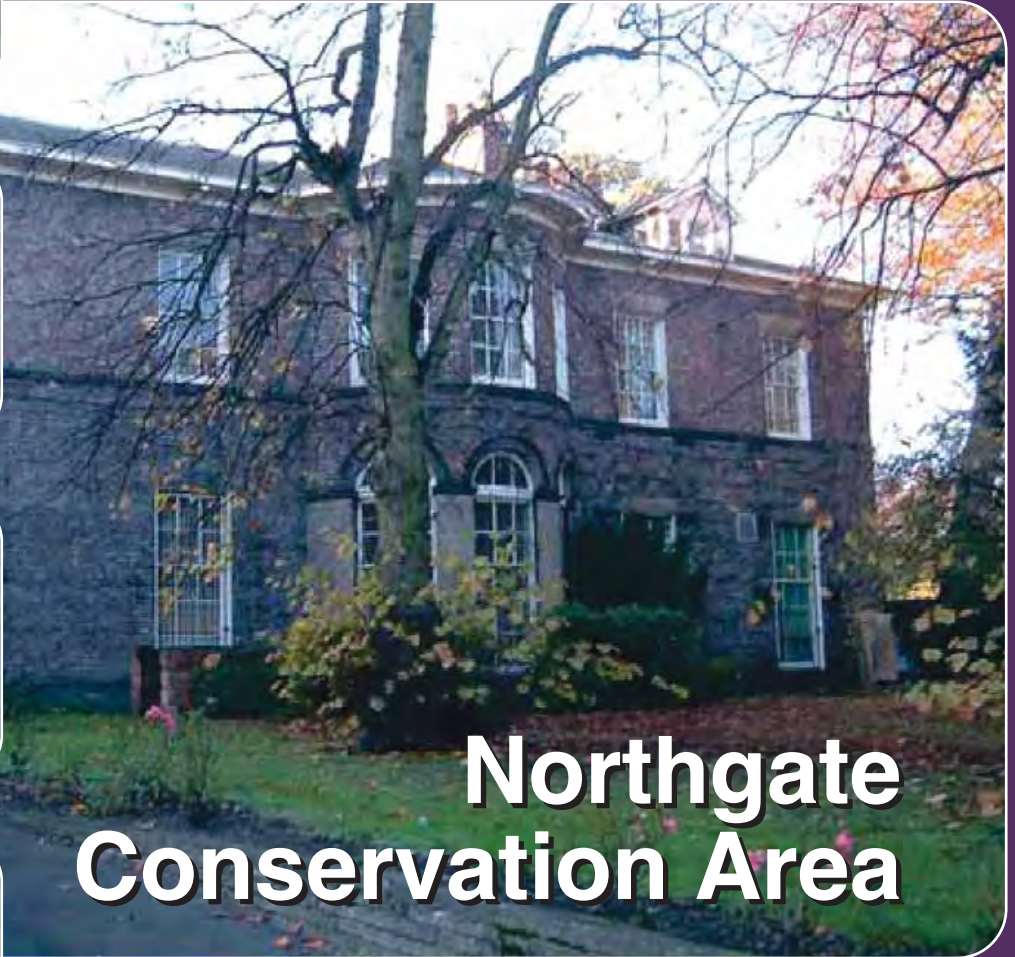


Darlington Borough Council



**Northgate
Conservation Area**

Character Appraisal



January 2007

Darlington Borough Council
Northgate Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

January 2007

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Planning policy framework
3. Assessment of special interest:
 - a. The special interest of the area
 - b. Location and setting
 - c. Historic development and archaeology
 - d. Character analysis
4. Management Strategy

Figures

Northgate Conservation Area: Location

Appraisal Plan

Character Areas Plan

Photosheet 1a and b: Listed Buildings

Photosheet 2a and b: Key Unlisted Buildings and Features of Local Interest

Photosheet 3: Negative Features

Photosheet 4: Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme – Before and After

Historic Mapping

Northgate 1858

Northgate 1898

Northgate 1938

Appendices

- A. Darlington Borough Council Conservation Policies
- B. Sources of Information

1.0 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 This Draft Final Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared by Building Design Partnership for Darlington Borough Council.
- 1.2 It outlines the historical development of the Northgate Conservation Area and defines the special interest, character and appearance of the built and natural environment within and adjoining the area.
- 1.3 Extensive use has been made of the most recently issued draft guidance from English Heritage:
 - a. Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, August 2005;
 - b. Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, August 2005.
- 1.4 North Road Station Conservation Area was designated on 14 November 1974 (1). On 4 December 1997 (2) this was incorporated into the Northgate Conservation Area. On 21 July 2003 the area was extended to include additional properties to the east side of Northgate, High Northgate and the River Skerne Bridge, to form the Conservation Area boundary today (3).



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Darlington Borough Council
Location Plan
Northgate

2.0 Planning Policy Context

Introduction: What is a Conservation Area?

- 2.1 A Conservation Area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.2 The Council has a duty to pay special attention to preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in exercising its planning powers. This appraisal will therefore contribute to providing a consistent and sound basis upon which to determine applications. It will also help in defending appeals against refusals of planning applications, which could have a detrimental impact on the Conservation Area. This appraisal also identifies what contributes towards the special character of the area and any negative or neutral features. This provides a useful base upon which to develop proposals for preservation and enhancement if the opportunity should arise through the planning system.
- 2.3 Every effort has been taken to include or analyse those elements that are key to the special character of the area. Where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted, it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value to the Conservation Area. This document is intended to be an overall framework and guide, within which decisions can be made on a site-specific basis.
- 2.4 This Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the following policy documents, which provide information on local and national policy relating to Conservation Areas:
 - a. National planning policy, including Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994);
 - b. Local policy, including the adopted Borough of Darlington Local Plan (1997, incorporating Adopted Alterations, September 2001).

National Policy

- 2.5 The Appraisal has been produced in line with the following Acts and guidance:
 - a. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
 - i. Section 71 places the local authority under a duty to “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas”;
 - ii. Section 69 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The designation of a Conservation Area by the Council introduces additional planning controls that are intended to ensure that any alterations do not detract from an area’s character or appearance and to conserve or improve the “special interest” of an area.
 - b. Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) of which Section 4 relates specifically to Conservation Areas;
 - c. Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (1990);

- d. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- e. Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development;
- f. Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (English Heritage, August 2005);
- g. Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (English Heritage, August 2005).

Local Policy

- 2.8 The Borough of Darlington Local Plan (adopted 1997) contains a comprehensive set of conservation policies, both general and specific to the Northgate Conservation Area. A summary of relevant policies is provided in Appendix A: Borough Council Conservation Policies.
- 2.7 The Tees Valley Structure Plan was prepared on behalf of the five Tees Valley local planning authorities by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit and adopted by Darlington Borough Council in 2004. It provides a strategic framework for the Local Plans prepared by the five unitary authorities, Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. Policy ENV12 remarks that “The character and appearance of conservation areas and listed buildings, and their settings, will be protected, maintained and enhanced. New development which preserves or, where appropriate, enhances their character will be encouraged.”

Development Control: Effects on Owners & Residents

- 2.8 In normal circumstances, householders have certain permitted development rights to carry out certain minor works to their properties, such as the erection of garden buildings, front porches or satellite dishes. However in a Conservation Area these rights are much reduced. For example:
- a. The consent of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings, whereas in normal circumstances, only notification is required.
 - b. The removal of boundary walls, fences and gates would require permission.
 - c. The pruning or felling of trees requires six weeks prior notification.
 - d. Any alterations to front elevations may require permission.
 - e. Applications for proposals that affect the character or appearance of the area are advertised in local newspapers.
 - f. Any new developments (including extensions) would be expected to be in keeping with the character of the area.

Grant-aided Restoration

- 2.9 In April 2005 the Council secured match funding from English Heritage for a two year grants programme to help restore business and residential premises in Northgate and High Northgate between the town centre and North Road Railway Station. The Northgate Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (PSCA) is a grant scheme, jointly funded by English Heritage and Darlington Borough Council. In 2006-7 the Council aims to encourage the restoration of historic and architectural features and to assist with grant-aiding of properties suffering from structural problems to roofs and walls. The restoration of existing historic features and re-introduction of lost historic features is also within the scope of the scheme (4).
- 2.10 This scheme has superseded the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) grant scheme, which ended in March 2005. The HERS programme was funded by English Heritage, One NorthEast and Darlington Borough Council.

3.0 Assessment of Special Interest

Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the report contains an assessment of:
- a. The special interest of the Conservation Area;
 - b. Location and setting;
 - c. Historical development;
 - d. Character analysis.

A: Summary of Special Interest

- 3.2 Several references quote Darlington as the 'birthplace of the railways' (5) and it is from North Road Station that the steam-powered engine 'Locomotion' began its journey on the world's first publicly-owned passenger-carrying railway (6).
- 3.3 Together Northgate and High Northgate form the historic linear spine of Northgate Conservation Area, aligned along the former Great North Road, which linked pre-industrial Darlington with its pioneering railway. At the southern end of Northgate are the former houses of Edward Pease and the other Quaker founders of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. At the northern end around North Road Station remains some of the earliest railway-led urbanisation in the world, with a significant number of properties dating from c.1830's and 40's
- 3.4 Today Northgate is one of the principal gateways to the town, carrying over 25,000 vehicles per day. However, the area has a run-down appearance, with a high degree of social deprivation and physical dilapidation and an economy which has been reduced to a largely peripheral role. Action is required to break the downward spiral of decline, in order that the area can project an image of Darlington in keeping with its important past.
- 3.5 Significant recent improvements to a number of properties have been made through the HERS scheme, which have helped to lift confidence in the area (see Photo sheet 4). However, more needs to be done to reverse decades of under-investment.

B: Location and Setting

- 3.6 Darlington is a town of almost 100,000 people. It lies adjacent to the A1(M) and approximately 15km west of Middlesbrough. Northgate and High Northgate formed part of the Great North Road, and subsequently the A1, until the opening of the A1(M) bypass in 1966. Local and national railway connections join in the town centre, including the East Coast Mainline, and the nearby A1(M) provides excellent north-south links. The River Skerne runs through the town, joining the Tees 3km to the south.
- 3.7 Northgate lies immediately to the north of Darlington town centre and is separated from it by the dual carriageway inner ring road, which was built between 1969 and 1973. The Conservation Area extends approximately 800m northwards along Northgate as far as the Darlington to Bishop Auckland branch railway. The area includes the North Road Station group of buildings at the northern end, Northgate and High Northgate forming the spine to the Eastern edge, and North Lodge Park to the south.

C: Historical Development

Pre-Industrial History

- 3.8 There is known to have been significant agricultural activity in the Darlington area since the early Neolithic period (7). Roman presence was predominantly military and concentrated at Piercebridge. The town of Darlington began in Anglo-Saxon times due to its protected south-facing aspect in the Skerne Valley, and its position as the best crossing point over the river. Since the Norman invasion, Darlington has been a Borough in its own right, possessing an important local market.

Industrial History

- 3.9 In 1826 the town extended as far as what is now 156 Northgate, reported to be the former home of Edward Pease (of which more below)(8). To the north, lay open land in the ownership of other leading local Quaker families.
- 3.10 The 1858 map shows that the town had expanded modestly along Northgate, with North Lodge and North Terrace being constructed. Beyond Cocker Beck, High Northgate had developed as an industrial area loosely clustered around the Stockton and Darlington Railway Carriage Works at North Road Station. The railway lines and associated coal depot extend almost all the way to Northgate Bridge.
- 3.11 By 1899 there was a continuous frontage along Northgate and High Northgate, with roads to the east and west having been constructed such as Westbrook Villas. North Lodge Park was defined by terraces along North Lodge Terrace and Elmfield Terrace, and the Technical College was built to the south eastern corner of the park. New railway lines were put in place to join with the east coast mainline, along with goods stations to the north and south of North Road Station itself.
- 3.12 By 1938 the area outside the current Conservation Area was largely developed, with large amounts of terraced housing having been built to the west of the Conservation Area.

The Railways and Railway Pioneers

- 3.13 The North-East was known as the “cradle of the railways”(9), providing important technical innovations and witnessing in 1825 the first passenger journey (although the railway was formed to carry coal (10). The route of the original Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) line passes through North Road Station, built in 1842 and one of the oldest in Britain (11). The railway was the first in the world, proving that the new-fangled steam power could work on an industrial basis; it was a giant 26 miles long (rather than a few miles) and its earliest trains weighed 100 tons. It represented the biggest step in the industrial revolution, from little inventions on a cottage industry level to a truly industrial scale.
- 3.14 This historic event could not have happened without the pioneers of the railway age, foremost of which was **Edward Pease**, born in Darlington in 1767 (12). Like his father he joined the wool trade, and during his time buying and selling wool he realised that there was a need for a railway to carry coal from the collieries of West Durham to the port of Stockton. Pease and a group of businessmen formed the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company in 1821 (13). On 19th April 1821 the Stockton & Darlington Railway Act was passed to allow the company to build a horse-drawn railway that would link West Durham, Darlington and the River Tees at Stockton (14).

- 3.15 **George Stephenson** met with Pease at the latter's home in Northgate and persuaded him to use steam powered locomotives on the railway, when all previous discussion had involved using horse-power. Stephenson also convinced Pease that the locomotive should run on rails raised above the ground rather than tram tracks set into the ground. These two factors (especially the first) separated the Stockton & Darlington Railway from all the other colliery railways and changed the history of Darlington, the North East, and probably the world. Pease had been so impressed with Stephenson that he gave him the post of Chief Engineer of the Stockton & Darlington Company. Following intense lobbying, a second Act of Parliament was passed to allow the company "to make and erect locomotives or moveable engines" (15).

Post-Industrial Darlington

- 3.16 Towards the end of the 1960s employment in the railway, engineering and woollen industries declined, leading to a degree of local degeneration. For a time Northgate retained its status as the key route into Darlington from the north, being part of the Great North Road – and subsequently A1 – until the opening of the A1 (M) bypass in 1966.
- 3.17 The construction of the ring road in the early 1970s cut a swathe through Northgate, dissecting it to such a degree that it has since led to the development of two separate streets with different characters (16). A number of buildings were demolished to the south of the Technical College. The route, now the A167, remains very important locally and regionally and has some of the heaviest traffic flows in Darlington.
- 3.18 Services decreased after the war and by 1972 only one line ran through the station. Reversing decades of dilapidation, the Darlington Railway Centre and Museum was opened on 27 September 1975 exactly 150 years after the first steam powered passenger train – Locomotion – made its historic journey.
- 3.19 In an attempt to reverse decades of under-investment, improvements have been made to some properties through the Northgate HERS scheme (some examples are included on Photo sheet 4). Its successor (the PSCA scheme) for Northgate aims to continue this work through grant-aiding serious structural repairs and encouraging the restoration of buildings' historic and architectural features.
- 3.20 Parts of the Conservation Area – particularly the Eastern side of High Northgate – currently has a run-down appearance, with a high degree of social deprivation and physical dilapidation and an economy which has been reduced to a largely peripheral role. However, a number of recent developments signal rising confidence in the area, including the SureStart centre on the corner of Station Road and McNay Street, and the residential redevelopment of Stephenson Street just south of North Road Station. The current PSCA scheme is also assisting in improving the external appearance and historic character of many of the residential and commercial properties along Northgate and High Northgate.

D: Character Analysis

- 3.21 In this section the special character of the Conservation Area is assessed, including an appraisal of the historic character of important listed buildings and an assessment of townscape value.

Phases of Development

3.22 The Northgate Conservation Area can clearly be divided into three broad phases of development:

- a. Pre-railway development to the southern end of Northgate, included late Georgian edge-of-town villas such as 156 Northgate, and the late Georgian terraces such as the (now significantly altered) row to the western side of Northgate between 143 and 163. This period also saw the construction of the homes of the railway entrepreneurs (chief among whom was Edward Pease), engineers and senior railway management to the southern end of Northgate at North Lodge and at Westbrook Villas;
- b. North Road Railway Station and related infrastructure from the early 19th Century included rail sheds, workshops, bridges and railway-related housing to the northern end of Northgate and along High Northgate, and included the earliest examples at 69-81 High Northgate, and the tightly-packed terraces on Stephenson Street;
- c. The centre section between Chesnut Street and the Cocker Beck is dominated by larger format modern uses such as cinema and furniture retailers. This section does not have the density of historic buildings present in the rest of the Conservation Area, but it could contribute to the townscape quality to bridge the gap between the two earlier phases of development as described above.

3.23 In order to analyse the special characteristics of an area it is useful to divide the area into smaller sub-areas, each with its own character, as shown (from north to south) on p.15.

- a. North Road Station and associated early railway development;
- b. High Northgate;
- c. Westbrook Villas;
- d. Northgate;
- e. North Lodge Park.

3.24 The listed buildings in the Conservation Area are included in the summary table below, and are shown on the attached photo sheets.

Table: Listed Buildings

Address	Building	Grade	Description
Station Road	North Road Station	II*	Attractive, but understated late Georgian design. Two storey centre with single storey wings. Date is probably 1842. Darlington Railway museum since 1975.
Station Road (East side)	Building ESE of North Road Station	II*	Former Goods Shed, c.1840, contemporary with North Road station and probably the world's oldest surviving example. Still in use by a Locomotive Preservation Trust.
Hopetown Lane	Stockton and Darlington Railway Carriage Works	II	Former Carriage works, c.1853, built for the construction and repair of carriages. Still in use by Locomotive Preservation Trusts.
Hopetown Lane	Lime Cells	II	Mid C19 brick, stone and timber clad building on two levels.
McNay Street (North side)	Nos 1 and 2	II	Early-mid C19, contemporary with the North Road station complex, originally the Goods Agent's offices.
Northgate (East side)	Nos 138 to 148 (even)	II	Early-mid C19 but altered, modern shop fronts on ground floor, capable of restoration. Includes the house where Pease met Stephenson.
Northgate (East side)	No 156	II*	Early C19, two storeys and basement, 3 bays, wide pedimented front
Northgate (East side)	Northgate United Reformed Church	II	Late C19 church in C13 style in coursed freestone
Northgate (East side)	Forecour railings & gate piers to United Reformed Church	II	Late C19, two massive gate piers, gates are modern
Northgate (West side)	Central House (formerly Central School, east block)	II	1896 by G.G. Hoskins in elaborate perpendicular style
Northgate (West side)	North Lodge	II	Early-mid C19 villa of 2 storeys. Plaque records residence of John Beaumont Pease 1803-1873
Northgate (West side)	Front garden wall to North Lodge	II	Early-mid C19
High Northgate	Railway Viaduct	II	Built 1856 for S&D Railway; listed partly for this association
North Lodge Park	Bandstand to west of bowling green	II	Late C19 octagonal bandstand

North Road Station

- 3.25 Darlington's international significance for railway-related architecture is displayed in the townscape of the North Road Station area. By 1840 the beginnings of an industrial settlement were discernible, although physically separate from the town centre (17).
- 3.26 Following the opening of the Stockton and Darlington railway line in 1825, North Road Station itself opened in 1842 to replace the original 1833 station located on the east side of North Road. It is constructed in a simple late-Georgian style, with a two-storey centre and single-storey wings with an entrance under a canopy supported by cast-iron columns. Listed Grade II* (18).
- 3.27 Built in 1833, the Grade II* listed former Goods shed is located to the south east of North Road Station. It is now used as a repair workshop for locomotives, and has a distinctive tall single storey square clock tower, although the clock itself has long since disappeared.
- 3.28 The former carriage works fronting Hopetown Lane are Grade II listed and still used by two locomotive preservation trusts for the building and restoration of locomotives, reputedly the oldest such association in the world.
- 3.29 At the northern gateway into the Northgate Conservation Area is the original stone viaduct of 1825 built by George Stephenson and the architect Joseph Brown, widened in brick in 1854. (19).
- 3.30 At the north eastern tip of the Conservation Area is an elegant stone bridge, which was built in 1825 by Ignatius Bonomi to carry the railway over the River Skerne. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is believed to have been the first – and certainly the only architect-designed – bridge on the Stockton and Darlington Railway (20). The bridge became known as the '£5 bridge' after being shown on the banknotes.
- 3.31 The Grade II listed 1-2 McNay Street was also railway associated as goods agents' offices. This is the only building to the north side of the street. 2a is now a creche and nursery run by the Early Years Service of Darlington Borough Council. Together with the recently completed SureStart centre built on the former car park at the corner with Station Road, the area provides an important range of services for the local community.
- 3.32 The Station Road/Hopetown Lane junction is extensive, containing a planted flowerbed within a traffic island. This feature had been the former railway sidings of the short branch-line, which ran south-east from the North Road Station to connect the main railway with coal depots by the Northgate bridge over the Cocker Beck (21).
- 3.33 The recently Grade II listed lime cells provided the link between rail and road travel, and received lime for building as well as coal. This now, partially timber-clad building fronts Hopetown Lane.

High Northgate

- 3.34 The buildings fronting the Station Road/Hopetown Lane junction to the south of the station date largely from the last quarter of the 19th Century, set together in terraces of substantial scale on the main frontages to Station Road and Northgate. At the junction of

Station Road and Northgate are a group of the oldest buildings of this area – 69 to 81 Northgate – dating from c1840.

- 3.35 Although much altered, the three rows of terraces on the eastern side of the road to the south of the railway viaduct (54-136 High Northgate) form an important part of the history of the area; their arrangement is an important element in this part of the Conservation Area. Original windows, doors and finishes have been altered to such a degree that these properties now present a poor first impression of Northgate when arriving from the north.
- 3.36 The properties to the western side of High Northgate are some of the earliest railway-related housing and have fared better, with assistance from Darlington Borough Council, OneNE and English Heritage through various regeneration schemes (see before and after photographs included on Photosheet 4).
- 3.37 Nos. 6 to 16 High Northgate, including The Railway Tavern, built by John Carter, Stockton & Darlington Railway's first architect-cum-builder, largely retain their traditional features. Bill Fawcett in his 'History of North East Railway Architecture' (Vol 1) , remarks that it was built by the Quakers, as a place for the carters to wait for trains, ready to load their wagons from the lime cells. The Tavern was originally owned by the Stockton and Darlington Railway and was originally called 'The Blue Bell Inn' (first mentioned in 1791). With the arrival of the railways the inn was renamed and provided accommodation and hospitality for rail travellers. The Railway Tavern is probably the world's first railway-associated inn (22). In 1827, Kelly's directory mentions a 'Railway Bridge Inn' which may allude to the current Railway Tavern.
- 3.38 Next door to The Railway Tavern is a curious building at 1 Leadenhall Street / 4 High Northgate, erected by the stonemason Robert Borrowdale (23). As with many of Borrowdale's creations the building has peculiar individual stone features including a lion atop the gable and stone heads within the walls.

Westbrook Villas

- 3.39 This is an area of distinctive character, with a group of Victorian villas pre-dominantly dating from the 1860s (24); these villas range from two to four storeys in height with each semi-detached pair having its own particular gothic design and detailing. This pair were designed by notable local architect G.G. Hoskins. A key element of the special character of Westbrook Villas is the fine landscape setting of the Cocker Beck. This secluded and leafy riverside setting away from the busy main route of Northgate attracted the more affluent owners, including colliery agents, railway employees and important local craftsmen such as the stonemason Robert Borrowdale (25).

Northgate

- 3.40 The southern gateway to the Northgate Conservation Area includes important groups of listed buildings on both sides of the road. The earliest buildings of the area are 138–148 Northgate, which are Grade II listed and probably date from the 1820s. Although today this group has an incongruous and run down appearance, it was here that the meeting between George Stephenson and Edward Pease was reportedly held. At this meeting it was agreed to build a "railway" - being on protruding rails - rather than a "tramroad", a

- groove in the ground into which carriage wheels slotted, and that the railway would be powered by steam (26).
- 3.41 Number 146 erroneously bears two plaques which state “First Public Railway Inaugurated Here” and that it was “Where Edward Pease resided 1820”. In fact, Pease lived in at least part of the current numbers 136 to 142, moving here in 1798 and meeting Stephenson in 1821. It is therefore likely that the plaques contain the wrong date and wrong information, and are probably in the wrong place (27).
- 3.42 To the south side of the entrance to North Lodge Park is the substantial Grade II listed Central House, designed by well-known local architect G.G. Hoskins and opened on October 8, 1897 (28) as a Technical College. It later became the Darlington Central Comprehensive School, before changing to its current use as Darlington Borough Council offices. This building presents a visually imposing frontage to Northgate and the North Park entrance, with purple brick and yellow terracotta elaboration.
- 3.43 Bulmer’s Stone, named after the early 19th C town-crier stood on it to read out the headlines, a large square-shaped boulder of granite, is an interesting street feature mounted behind railings between the pavement and Central House. The ancient stone is one of Darlington's oldest monuments (29), having moved down what became Northgate during the melting of the ice at the end of the last ice age.
- 3.44 For centuries the boulder was a significant local landmark, occupying a prominent position on Northgate's pavement in close proximity to the road. In the nineteenth century Willy Bulmer, Darlington's unofficial town crier, read the London news standing on the boulder and it is probably from him that it derives its name (32). Local legend states that when the boulder hears the clock strike twelve the Bulmer Stone turns around nine times (30).
- 3.45 It is also said that George Stephenson (a colliery engineer from Northumberland) and Nicholas Wood (a colliery manager from Northumberland) sat on the stone to re-tie their boots, having walked from Stockton to Darlington to see Edward Pease and to convince him of the benefits of steam locomotives. It was as a result of this meeting that Pease chose to appoint Stephenson as the Chief Engineer of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (31).
- 3.46 In 1923 it was decided that the boulder had become a traffic hazard, and hence it was mounted behind the bars of Central House (33).
- 3.47 The Grade II* listed 156 Northgate was built around 1800 by the Robson family (34). Historic maps from the early 1800’s show extensive ornamental gardens to the rear, as the Robson’s – like their neighbours the Peases – cultivated a long garden down to the River Skerne. Subsequently it became the Domestic Science Department of the Technical College and is currently a restaurant.
- 3.48 The entrance to North Lodge Park from Northgate is framed by North Lodge, built around 1832 for Edward Pease’s nephew John Beaumont Pease (35). North Lodge is a two-storey Georgian villa set back from Northgate amongst mature trees. Features include 12 pane sash windows, a semicircular bay with arched windows on its symmetrical main

facade and a porch with Doric details to the south facade. It has a hipped roof with large overhanging eaves. North Lodge is listed Grade II.

- 3.49 Immediately north of North Lodge lies Elmfield Terrace, at 143-163 Northgate, (including North Villa at 163 Northgate). The terrace is of a sober Georgian design. Substantial alterations in the mid-twentieth century included the addition of a run of single storey ground floor retail units (including an interesting art-deco 1930's marble shop frontage at no.149), which now fronts the street, resulting in the loss of original front gardens; many original windows and other details have also been subsequently removed or altered. The alterations are such that the terrace was de-listed on 5 February 2003 (Index of Listed Buildings, Darlington Borough Council).
- 3.50 The current, poor quality modern designs of many of the shop fronts detract from the terrace's appearance. A sensitive restoration scheme may yet be capable of restoring these properties, to build upon the successful restoration of no.151 Northgate (among others) through the HERS and PSCA schemes (see Photo sheet 4).
- 3.51 The United Reformed Church, originally St George's Church, built in 1861-2 by J.P. Pritchett & Son (36) is an imposing Grade II listed church, with a prominent spire, which is a very visible landmark for some distance. The front boundary railings and gate piers are also Grade II listed and give a positive frontage to the street.
- 3.52 The Salvation Army Citadel (158-166 Northgate) opened on February 4, 1888 (37) and although unlisted, is a large and imposing building with distinctive crenellated turrets.
- 3.53 Between 182 and 230 Northgate are a variety of largely retail buildings including the Odeon Cinema. Although not listed these buildings form an important and substantial frontage to Northgate and offer some diversity to the shopping experience.

North Lodge Park

- 3.54 Having acquired the grounds of North Lodge and Elmfield in 1904 the Darlington Corporation turned them into a park. Although the boating lake and folly were filled in and demolished in the 1950s (38), the park is still a fine public open space, with many mature trees and with ornamental non-native shrubs around the putting green in the north east corner (39). The bandstand is Grade II listed and is centrally located at the confluence of the paths that cross the park. At the time of writing, the bandstand is boarded up, but plans exist to restore and re-open it for public use.
- 3.55 The present boundaries of the park date from around 1900 when the building of North Lodge Terrace and Elmfield Terrace established its eastern and northern edges. On the south side, Gladstone Street through to Northgate completes the southern boundary of the park, although today the quality of this edge has been degraded by modern development and open car parking.
- 3.56 To the northern edge of the park, the unlisted St George's Hall has been converted to residential use. The adjacent surgery at 29 Corporation Road incorporates a distinctive curved window and together these buildings form an interesting group at the northern entrance to the park.

Streetscape

3.57 An important element of the area's distinctive character is the blue-coloured blocks, which were laid in back lanes and alleyways during the C19, sections of which exist, exposed along surface water drainage channels and alleyways in the Northgate area (40). These bricks known as "Scoriae" bricks were produced by The Tees Scoria Brick Co. Ltd. of Bank Top, Darlington (possibly from 1899) and were the by-product of the steelmaking industry in Middlesbrough. The high mineral content of the brick resulted in the recognisable blue colouring (41). Designed to combat disease-ridden back alleys, the bricks were easily washable. Other small areas of historic pavings – predominantly stone flags and setts – are still visible through later surface finishes in a number of locations within the Conservation Area.

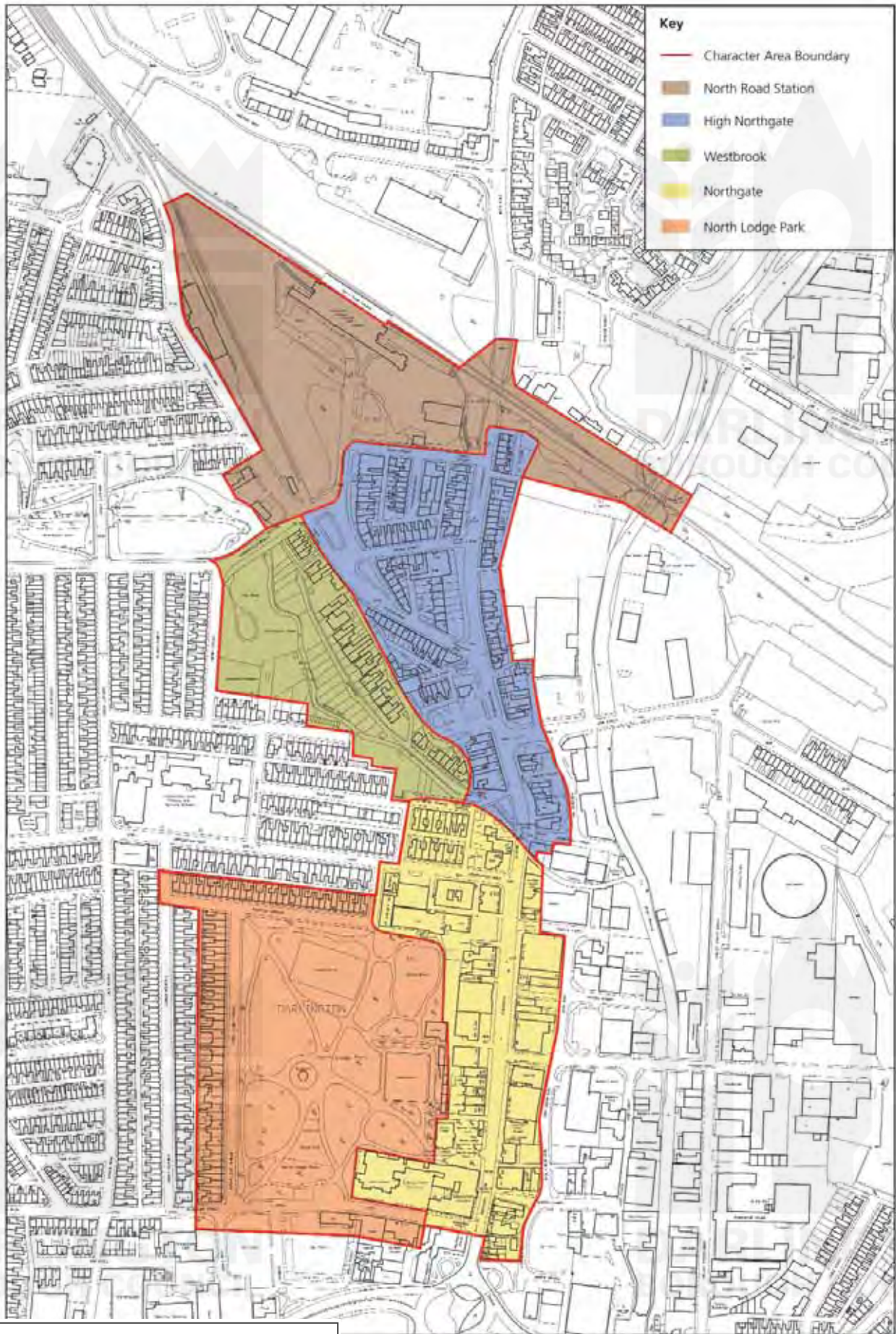
Loss, Intrusion and Damage

3.58 There has been some loss of buildings from the key periods of the area's development, mainly to make way for modern retail units and petrol stations. The replacement buildings of the late C20 are, in the main, low grade buildings of poor architectural quality, out of character with their context and unsympathetic in their design; and they are in consequence visually intrusive. There has also been significant damage to the character of many surviving early 19thC buildings. Many historic shop fronts have been lost and replaced with poor quality modern alternatives. On upper storeys along Northgate and in much of the housing stock in the Conservation Area, traditional timber sash windows and other historic features such as cast iron rainwater goods and boundary walls topped with cast iron railings have been lost and replaced with various inappropriate and modern alternatives.

3.59 Northgate suffers from high levels of traffic and a cluttered streetscape, which combine to reduce the attractiveness of the area for pedestrians. These contribute to the area's lack of trade and investment. Many of the footways are obstructed by poorly located sign posts, litterbins and lampposts, and a number of junctions lack proper pedestrian facilities (42).

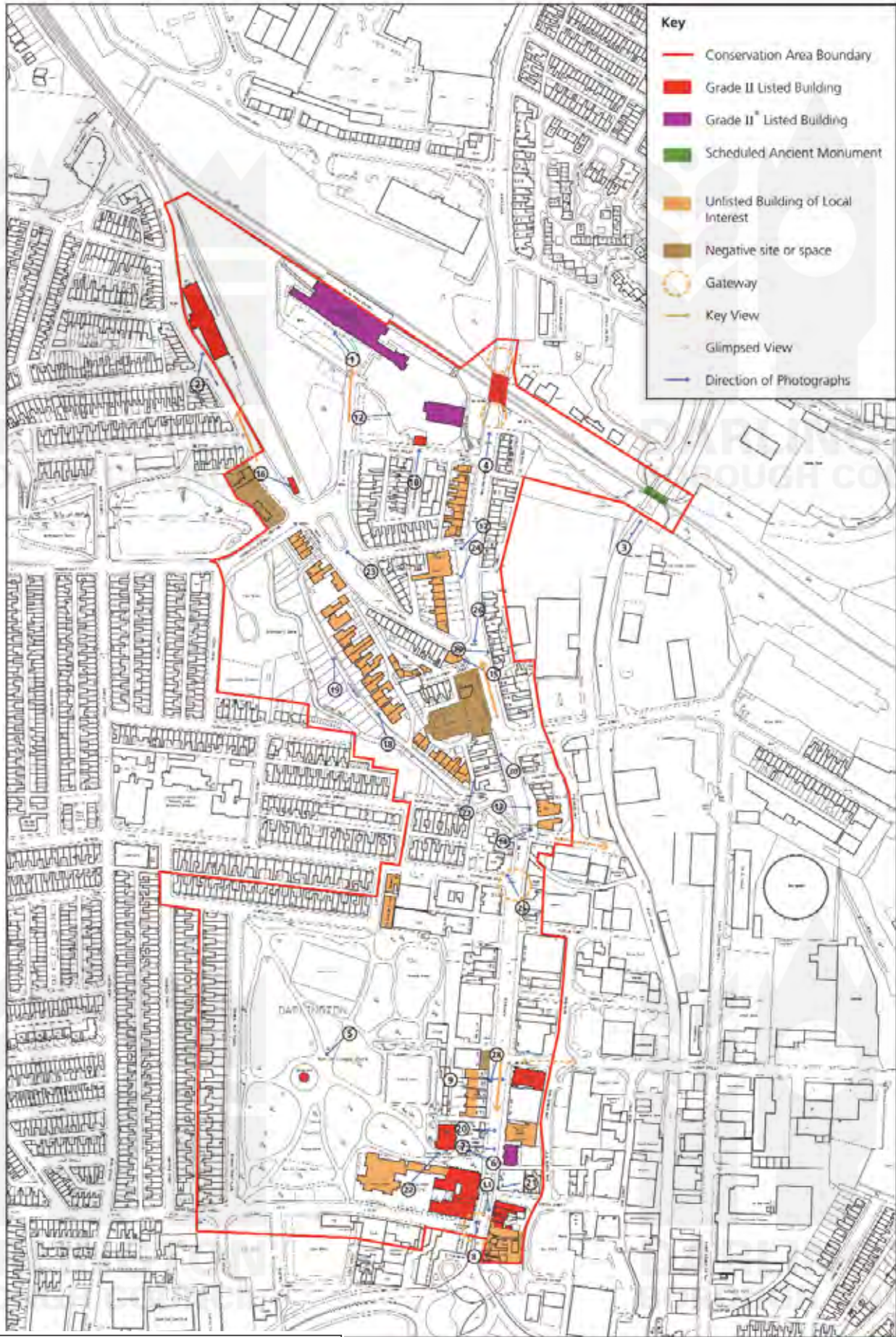
3.60 As highlighted throughout this report, there are sites within the area that do not contribute positively to townscape character. Examples of this are:

- a. The garage site on Widdowfield Street/Hopetown Lane, which is an unsightly site located directly opposite historic railway workings;
- b. The petrol filling station on High Northgate, which replaces a former cinema and terraces and is a gap in an otherwise strong street frontage;
- c. The forecourt to 161-163 Northgate (formerly known as North Villa);
- d. The much altered frontages to 143-163 Northgate, which are largely unattractive, lack unifying features, with overlarge signage panels and are generally poorly maintained.



Key

- Character Area Boundary
- North Road Station
- High Northgate
- Westbrook
- Northgate
- North Lodge Park



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Darlington Borough Council
Appraisal Plan
Northgate



1. North Road Station (Grade II* listed) contains the Darlington Railway Centre and Museum.



2. The former S&DR Carriageworks (Grade II) strongly defines the boundary of the area. Now occupied by the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust.



3. Skerne Bridge, a scheduled Ancient Monument. (SAM)



4. The railway viaduct which crosses High Northgate is the northern gateway into the Conservation Area. (Grade II)



5. The late 19th Century bandstand (currently boarded up), which forms the centrepiece of North Lodge Park. (Grade II)



6. North Lodge, Grade II listed and the entry feature to the park from Northgate.

Darlington Borough Council
Conservation Area Appraisal
Northgate Photosheet 1a: Listed Buildings & Scheduled Ancient Monuments



7. The grade II* listed 156 Northgate



8. The Grade II listed Central House, an imposing and substantial building at the southern gateway into the Conservation Area



9. Grade II listed United Reformed Church, Northgate, constructed of locally-quarried stone from Houghton Bank (24)



10. Grade II listed 1-2 McNay Street



11. Grade II listed 138-148 Northgate, one time the home of Edward Pease, where he met George Stephenson to discuss proposals for the S&DR (now substantially altered).



12. Grade II* listed railway workshops to the south east of North Road Station

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Conservation Area Appraisal
Northgate Photosheet 1b: Listed Buildings**



13. The Railway Tavern (6-10 High Northgate); the area's development is closely linked to that of the railways.



14. 4 High Northgate by Robert Borrowdale, including rusticated stone detailing.



15.1 Melville Street: a characterful 19th Century building at the corner of Melville Street, High Northgate and Station Road, originally a Cocoa palace.



16. The former lime cells at the junction of Hopetown Lane and Station Road, (Grade II)



17. The Darlington Club & Institute, 83-89 High Northgate.



18. Westbrook Villas, Westbrook, originally built for the more wealthy railway employees.



19. Many of the properties on Westbrook include individual detailing. This example was built by GG Hoskins in 1865.



20. The distinctive Salvation Army Citadel, 158-166 Northgate



21. Bulmer's Stone, reputed to be where the town of Darlington began



22. Commemorative plaque marking North Lodge as the former home of John Pease



23. Former railway sidings, Hoptown Lane / Station Road, now a planted traffic island.



24. 69-81 High Northgate, the first railway-related residential properties in Darlington



25. The Navy Club, Northgate / Corporation Road, of 1960's design and unsympathetic to the character of the area.



26. The BP Garage on High Northgate replaces an earlier terrace, leaving a gap in the urban fabric.



27. An example of a back alley off High Northgate, with recent alterations.



28. Art Deco frontage to late 19th Century shop fronts, now vacant (151 Northgate).



29. Original window and door openings have been replaced, and a poor state of repair prevails (High Northgate).



30 21-23 (nearest) High Northgate, with windows boarded up and generally in a poor state of repair, at time of writing, being restored with grant funding.

**Darlington Borough Council
Conservation Area Appraisal
Northgate Photosheet 3: Loss, Intrusion & Damage**



29 High Northgate, before



29 High Northgate, after



95 - 109 High Northgate, before



95 - 109 High Northgate, after



151 Northgate, before

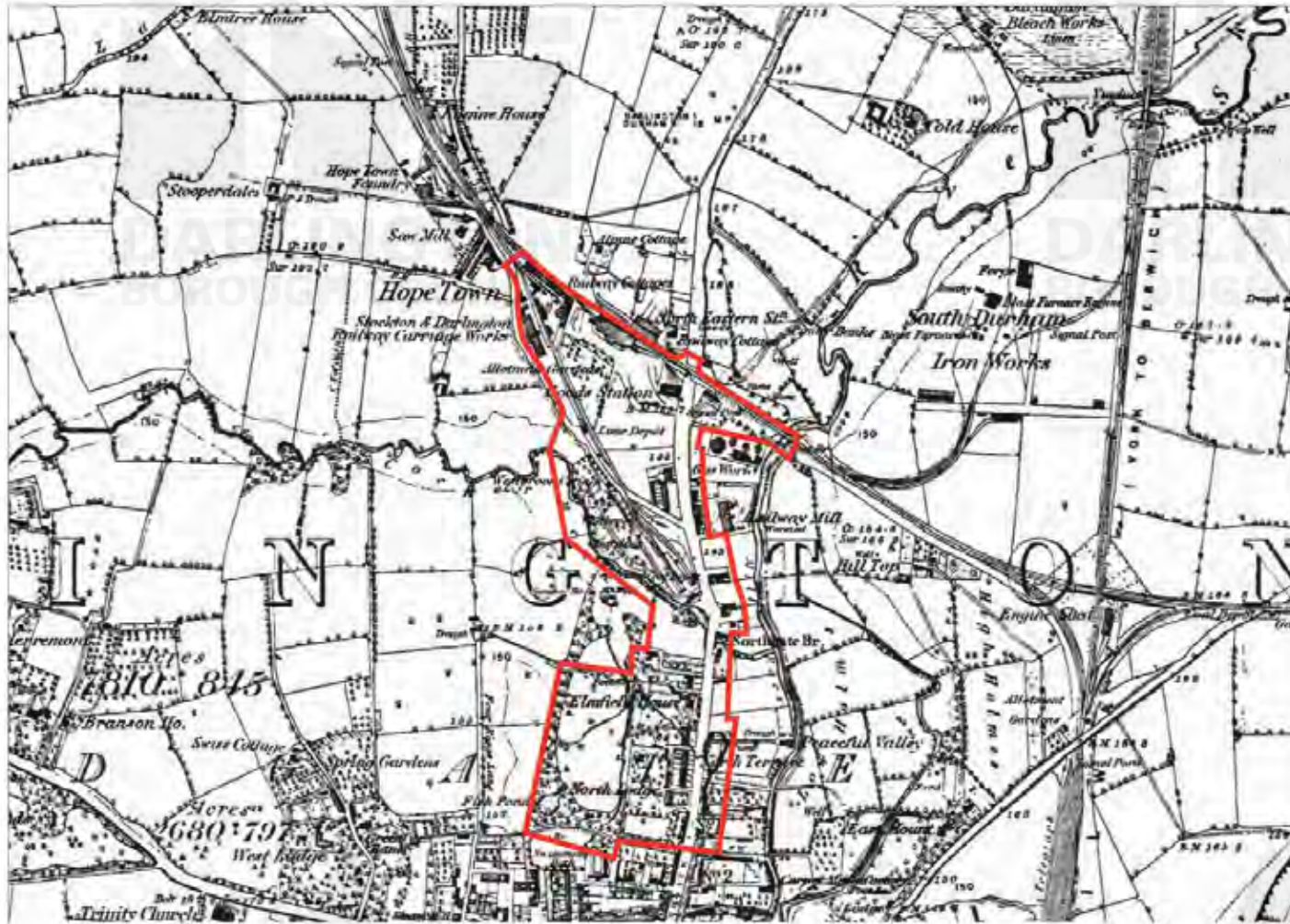


151 Northgate, after

**Darlington Borough Council
Conservation Area Appraisal
Northgate Photosheet: Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSCA) Scheme - before and after**

4.0 Management Strategy

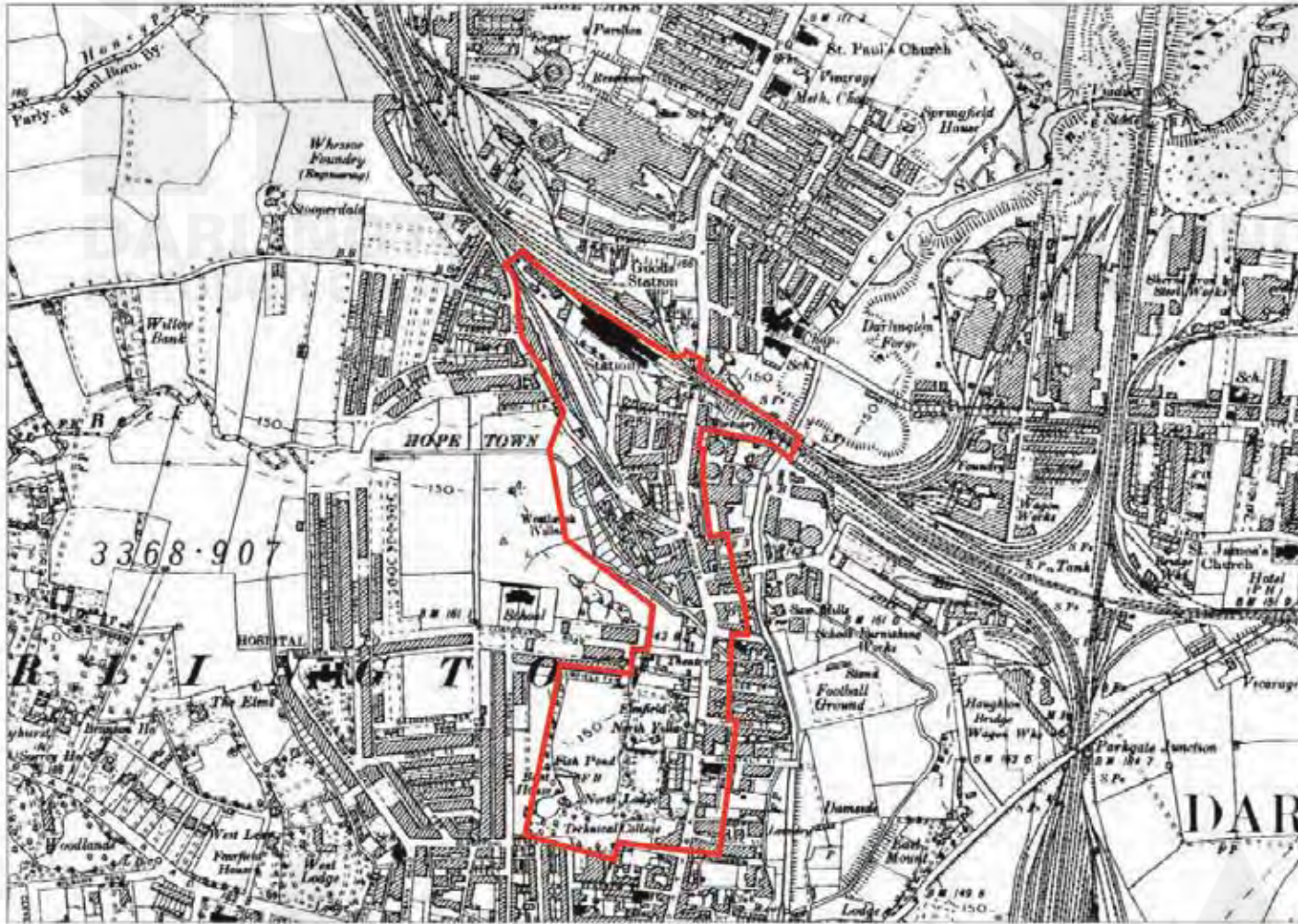
- 4.1 Northgate retains significant capacity for beneficial change, and would benefit from a Conservation Area Management Plan. Such a plan would consider and assess appropriate measures to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area described in this document. The measures outlined below could facilitate positive change:
- a. Planning applications for new development or redevelopment should take design cues from the diverse and rich character of the surrounding buildings and townscape.
 - b. To encourage custom and confidence in Northgate, the quality of the streetscape could be improved. This would involve close collaboration with highways authority traffic engineers to ensure appropriate designs to encourage pedestrian and cycle use and the use of appropriate palette of materials based on the traditional materials of the area.
 - c. The impact on the Conservation Area of any development in the Skerne Valley east of Northgate should be carefully considered.
 - d. The continuation of grant-aided assistance through the PSCA scheme (and any subsequent schemes) should assist in encouraging the repair of existing historic building fabric and the reinstatement of historic architectural features;
 - e. An Article 4 Direction is being prepared to restrict inappropriate alterations to frontages of buildings, windows, doors and boundary treatments currently carried out as permitted development, within parts of the Conservation Area;
 - f. The use of planning agreements or contributions towards improving the quality of the public realm, access arrangements or parking;
 - g. The continued careful management of North Lodge Park; and
 - h. The promotion of the conversion of upper floors to residential use to maintain them in active.



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Building Design Partnership

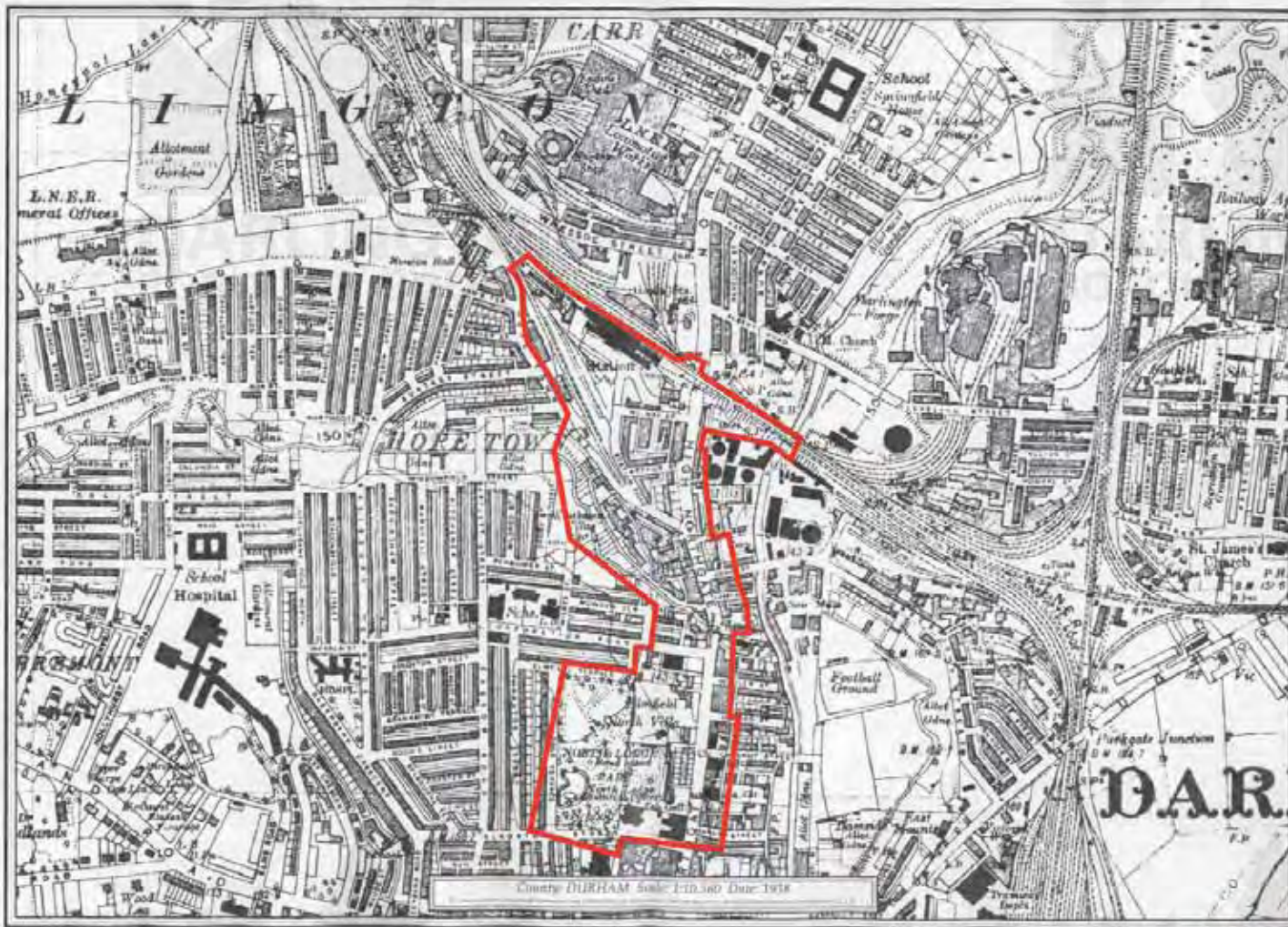
Darlington
Northgate in 1858 with
current boundary overlaid



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Building Design Partnership

Darlington
Northgate in 1899 with
current boundary overlaid



Building Design Partnership

Darlington
Northgate Conservation Area
1938

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Appendix A: Borough Council Conservation Policies

Introduction

The Borough of Darlington Local Plan November 1997 incorporating Adopted Alterations 2001 contains a comprehensive set of conservation policies that relate to the Northgate Conservation Area:

- a. Policy E29 - a keynote policy requiring new development to respect its townscape setting and the protection of features of townscape importance.
- b. Policies E30 and E31 - relating to the protection of listed buildings and their settings, and the control of changes to them.
- c. Policy E32 - the Council will compile a non-statutory list of buildings of local character and townscape value.
- d. Policies E35 and E36 - set out the Council's approach to designating and protecting conservation areas. The supporting text states that the Council will consider making Article 4 directions where required.
- e. Policy E37 - states that priority for environmental improvement schemes will be given to the town centre and conservation areas.
- f. Policy E38 - deals with alterations to business premises, including the replacement of shopfronts and installation of roller shutters. The Council also has Supplementary Planning Guidance on this.
- g. Policies E39 and E41 - regulate outdoor advertising and provide special protection to conservation areas.
- h. Policy E42 - street furniture should not detract from listed buildings or conservation areas, co-ordination will be encouraged and clutter removed.
- i. Policy E43 - the Council will encourage appropriate new uses on vacant upper floors of commercial properties, in particular listed buildings and in conservation areas.

4.2 Other policies that relate to the Conservation Area are:

- a. Main Road Network (Northgate): T7 and T8;
- b. Fringe Shopping Areas: S9, S18, S19, T26;
- c. Parklands (North Lodge Park): E9;
- d. Housing Environment Improvement Area: H16;
- e. River Skerne E18;
- f. Passenger Railways T44 and T46; and
- g. Darlington Railway Centre and Museum: TO8, TO9 and T46.

Appendix B: Sources of Information

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Historic Mapping sourced from Landmark Information Group.

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