

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CIVIC AMENITIES ACT 1967

HURWORTH CONSERVATION AREA.

Part I of the Civic Amenities Act 1967 is designed to secure the protection and improvement of the character of areas of special architectural or historic interest by the designation of Conservation Areas. The emphasis on areas, which can include whole streets, village greens, groups of trees, means that all the elements which compose an attractive scene can be protected as a whole, and improvements planned and changes controlled comprehensively. Thus the Act strengthens the powers already available.

It is felt desirable that those villages and towns in the county which have substantial visual or historical qualities should benefit from the provisions of the Act, and therefore, after consultations with the local authority, part of Hurworth has been designated a Conservation Area.

The built up part of the Conservation Area centres on the village green and its continuation eastwards to East Terrace, which forms a strong visual termination to the village. The north side of the village street presents a nearly continuous frontage of buildings of all periods from the eighteenth century onwards, many of which are listed and others are of group value. The pattern south of the green is of large detached houses in extensive grounds set among trees. Immediately west of the village is an open field surrounded by trees which is extremely important to the appearance of the village, an open space contrasting with the village street and visually separating the village from the new development to the south and north. The trees surrounding it also form a visual termination from within the village and successive belts of planting westwards to Hurworth Grange fringe the main road and form a necessary contrast to new development to the south. Many of these trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, but it is felt that their importance would be further emphasised by inclusion within the Conservation Area, and this would in turn strengthen the policy of maintaining the separation of Hurworth Village from Hurworth Place.

After designation, greater emphasis will be placed on improvement work including improvements to property. In addition to house improvement grants, in certain cases grants or loans may be available from the County Council towards repair, mainly to meet the additional cost of more appropriate external materials than might otherwise have been used. Certain properties which make an outstanding contribution to the village scene may become unsound, and the District Council would be asked to give early notice of any clearance programmes in case the planning authority should wish to make representations about the possibility of rehabilitation. The improvement of the village through minor repairs such as fencing, paving, painting, improved street furniture, will be encouraged and schemes for the removal of overhead wires put in hand. A condition requiring tree planting and landscape work will be attached, where appropriate, to new development and the protection of trees by Tree Preservation Orders will be extended.

It will be necessary to decide how far new development should or should not be permitted and control of new development will be exercised to ensure that it accords with the special architectural and visual qualities of Hurworth. In particular it will be important to

avoid causing permanent breaks in the continuity of the street by isolated demolitions. Any application, which in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority would affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be advertised and comments invited and taken into consideration. It should be made known to the public that the advice of the planning department is freely available at any stage before an application is made and early consultation could in many cases be helpful. In appropriate cases permissions will be given or detailed applications only and no conditional or outline approvals issued, as is provided for by the General Development Order. The Council will seek directions under Article 4 of the General Development Order in order to bring under control certain classes of development, especially external alterations to houses and walls, which are at present permitted under that Order. Control of advertisements will be strengthened.

Schedule of the Area Designated

The whole of the old village including parts of East Terrace, and land and properties north of road C.38 as far as and including Hurworth Grange.