

Annfield Plain
DRAFT
May 2013

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Consultation

The successful management of a conservation area relies on the support of the local community and it is important that the local authority and the community work together to preserve and enhance the special character of Annfield Plain.

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Closing date for comments: **12th July 2013**



CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Annfield Plain

May 2013

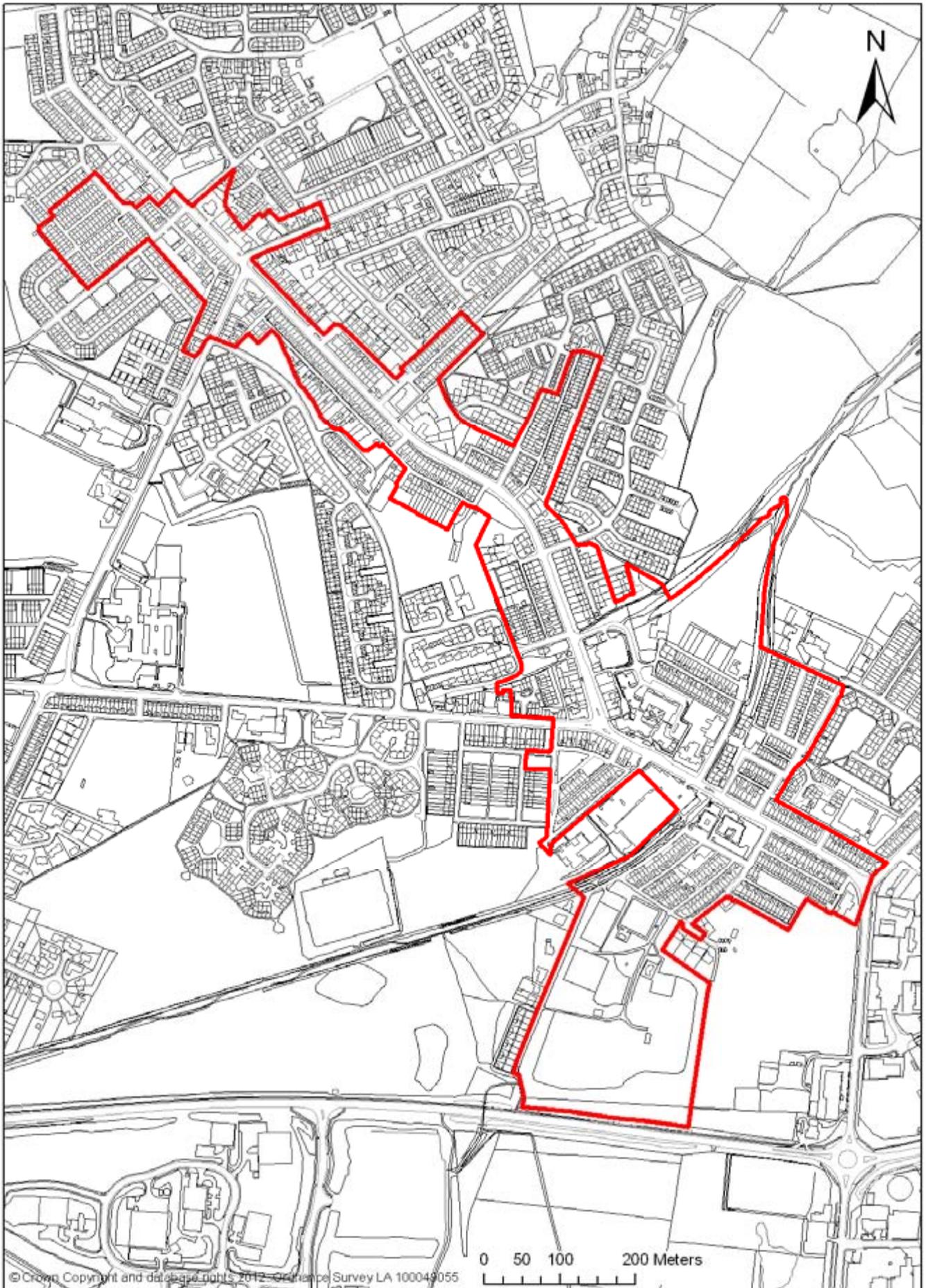
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Heritage, Landscape and Design
Durham County Council

Designated May 2003
 1st Draft Appraisal 2003
 2nd Draft Appraisal August 2012
 3rd Draft Appraisal May 2013



Conservation Area Boundary



Summary of Special Interest

The special character of Annfield Plain Conservation Area is derived from its rapid growth in Victorian times as a town associated with the mining industry and the associated railway development. Its townscape consists predominantly of two storey stone built terraced housing with Welsh slate roofs. The town centre still reflects its former Victorian grandeur, with two and three storey buildings with some original features, particularly at first and second floor level and some traditional shop fronts.

Public Consultation

Public consultation is an integral part of the appraisal process. This revised draft document is the basis for consultation with local people and other interested parties, after which it will be amended where necessary before being presented to Durham County Council's Cabinet in October 2013. Once approved, the next stage will be the preparation of a Management Plan programme for all our conservation areas. Initial management proposals have been included in this document for consideration.

It is acknowledged that the extent, scale and quality of alterations, alongside new development IN Annfield Plain, combined with the level of erosion of traditional architectural features and details has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area. An option to de-designate the conservation area has therefore been included in the summer 2013 public consultation in light of residents comments received in autumn 2012.

Planning Legislation

A conservation area is defined in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent development, but to manage change in a positive and proactive way that benefits current and future generations.

Conservation area status means that a special form of Planning Permission called Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building over 115m³ in size, the demolition of a boundary wall over 1m in height next to the highway or 2m elsewhere. There is a general presumption against the loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Additional controls are also placed over trees within the area, meaning that an owner must submit a formal notification of works to the Council six weeks before starting work. Permitted development rights (works that can be done without Planning Permission) are also slightly different within designated conservation areas.

The primary legislation governing Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This legislation includes certain statutory duties which the Council as Local Planning Authority must uphold. s69(1) of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas, and under s69(2) to review such designations from time to time. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas from time to time.

When assessing applications for development, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas under s72(1) of the Act. This does not mean that development will necessarily be opposed, only that this should not be detrimental to the special interest of the wider conservation area. Specific guidance relating to development within conservation areas can be found within the National Planning Policy Framework published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, at national government level.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal represents the first phase of a dynamic process aimed at the conservation and enhancement of the conservation area. It is an assessment of those features and qualities that make an individual conservation area special. These can include individual buildings, groups of buildings, other structures, architectural details and materials, open spaces, landscaping, street furniture, and the relationships between all of these.

The appraisal also seeks to identify any factors which detract from the conservation area's special qualities, and to outline management proposals to help safeguard or enhance those qualities.

The aim of this appraisal is to define the character and importance of the Annfield Plain Conservation Area. It will help to raise awareness and appreciation of Annfield Plain's special character, while also providing a consistent and evidential basis on which to determine planning applications affecting the village.

The appraisal discusses a wide range of structures and features within the Annfield Plain Conservation Area but no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

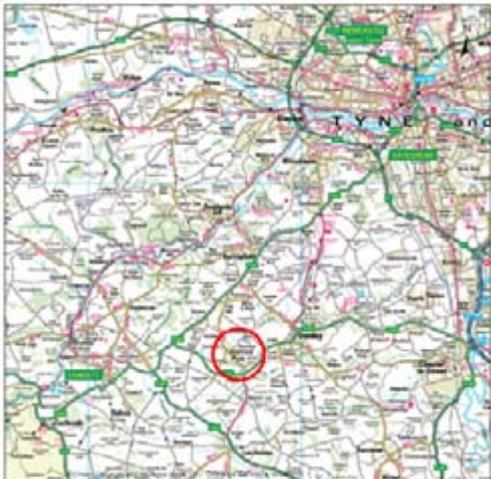
The current conservation area boundary covers the largely Victorian development in the 19th century and early 20th century that originated from the mining and railway industries. The conservation area boundary includes the large villas in Station Road, the three and two storey commercial buildings in Front Street and West Road and continues northwards into Catchgate, including the stone terraces in New Front Street, the listed Library and further commercial development at Catchgate crossroads.

Location and Setting

Annfield Plain is situated in the north-west of the County of Durham, some 15 miles south-west of Newcastle upon Tyne, 12 miles from Durham and midway between the towns of Chester le Street and Consett.

The town is situated approximately 230m above sea level in the former North West Durham Coalfield, on a high ridge plateau, within the Durham Coalfield Pennine fringe. The population of the Annfield Plain ward which includes the parishes of Collierley and Greencroft is today 3,655, in 1901 at the height of its growth it had a population of 12,481.

The area has been heavily influenced by the mining industry with scattered mining towns and villages and busy roads giving it a semi-rural or urban fringe character. The adjacent town of Stanley and villages of Kyo and Harelaw can be seen in the landscape from views out of the conservation area.



Location of Annfield Plain

Also visible are the open ridges of pastoral farmland, with regular grids of dry stone walls or thorn hedges crossed by straight enclosure roads and lanes. On certain hills fragments of heathland survive on infertile acid soils. Old agricultural buildings are visible on the ridge tops from the centre of Annfield Plain. These vernacular buildings are of local sandstone with roofs of stone or Welsh slate.

Relics of the mining industry can be seen throughout the town itself with new green pathways leading out into the countryside. Restored opencast coal workings are also a locally prominent feature in the landscape surrounding the village. Extensive areas of land have been opencast or reclaimed and their landscape often lacks maturity.

The immediate environment outside Annfield Plain Conservation Area is characterised by additional high density late Victorian terrace housing, of stone and brick with Welsh slate, the lower density inter-war housing estates and post war Council housing. The adjacent areas are of little visual quality in terms of conservation.

Historical Summary

This section presents an outline history of Annfield Plain. A more detailed history is provided in Appendix 3.

Before the mid 19th century Annfield Plain did not exist, only the small village of West Kyo existed, as did a few isolated farms and houses eg. Fines House in 1755, Annfield House and Loud Hill in 1778.

It was the development of the coal industry in the early 19th century and stimulated in part by John Buddle (1773 - 1843) a famous engineer and manager of the coal mines that brought Annfield Plain into existence.

The town started to develop solely to service the local mining industry and then was later influenced by its role in the local rail network. Between 1831 and 1841 four pit shafts and coke ovens at Bankfoot were established and in 1832 the Stanhope and Tyne Railway was opened.

The railway line originally ran across Front Street in Annfield Plain and helped to revolutionise the fortunes of the area and led to the development of engine sheds, coke ovens, station buildings, goods yards, further pits. The 1860 OS map and the relationship of the railway line with the development of the town.

The town started to develop within a relatively short timescale as the result of the need to have local workers in the pits and in the railways. The specific need for workers housing and short build period has given the town a distinctive character epitomised by the numerous rows of stone built terraced houses and associated facilities such as shops and public houses.

In the decade 1862 - 1872 the population increased from 3,718 to 7,010 due to the sinking of additional new pits. Housing started to develop eastwards and southwards as the new Pontop to South Shields and the Annfield Plain Branch Line opened in 1863 in the eastern part of the town, crossing Station Road. In addition new estates developed westwards on the fringes of the central area towards Catchgate where the new pits were located.

The 1896 OS map shows the urban pattern of development, with extended rows of villas, cottages and commercial buildings along Front Street, Station Road and West Road, with parallel rows to the north. These buildings were close to the mines, the new railway lines, station, industry and new facilities, for example the schools, churches, shops and parks.

The town continued to develop in the 20th century, expanding outwards and northwards until the later closure of the mines and the railway. However the central core still reflects strongly the Annfield Plain built in the mid-19th century.

Form and Layout

The key features can be summarised as follows:

- Wide carriageways along Front Street, Station Road and West Road, signifying the importance of the centre of the town.



- Arterial routeways of North Road, New Front Street and Durham Road leading into the centre of the town with linear development and tree lined roads.



- Grid iron and linear rows of high density terraced houses, fronting onto pedestrian routeways with back yards and roadways behind.
- This type of housing is particularly ingrained in the history and development of mining and railway industries in the North East and it is for this reason that these areas are included in the conservation area.
- Linear green amenity spaces on former railway routes and industrial land.

Architectural Character

Evidence of Annfield Plain's origins having developed as a result of the mining and railway industries is still evident today. Traces of this 19th and early 20th century development can be seen throughout the central townscape. The commercial buildings in Front Street show the development of a busy Victorian shopping and service centre which grew up as a result of the success of coal mining and railways. The two and three storey buildings, some rather large in scale, still show some of the grandeur of the late Victorian period with bays, ornate dormers, sash windows and heavy cornices being prominent. However, many of the later shopfronts and modern signage do not reflect the historic character of the street. The development took place over a period of 20 to 30 years resulting in an interesting overall townscape in Front Street, West Road and Station Road. Buildings of quite different character provide individuality and interest to the overall appearance of the townscape. The use of stone was a key element although dark red brick and render were also used in key buildings. The timescale over which development took place and the changes in scale resulted in an interesting roof line, with roofs behind parapets, hidden behind dormers and roofs broken up with windows and chimneys. Slate was the predominant roof covering.



The surrounding development to the north, east and south consists of Victorian terraces eg William, Mary and Elizabeth Streets and Vincent, Mordue and Johnson Streets. These buildings are an integral part of the historical development pattern of the town. The terraces were built to house miners and railway workers who worked in the adjacent industries. Solid stone robust terrace cottages sprung up in the 19th century in a grid pattern. The cottages were symmetrical of the same plot width and scale throughout, hard up against the pavement. Windows had a strong vertical emphasis with sash windows, although unfortunately few are retained which has significantly harmed the traditional appearance and uniformity of the terraces. The roof line was of a rigid repeated pattern, interspersed by stone chimneys.

There are only two listed buildings in Annfield Plain, the first is the War Memorial built in 1919 of Portland stone, a tall pylon with a moulded plinth commemorating the First World War. This is located in the public park which provided recreational facilities for the workers. Although some of the original trees and hedges are retained, as well as the original metal gates, few of the other Edwardian landscaping is intact.



On the eastern side of Station Road, opposite the Tesco supermarket, is the Annfield Plain Mixed Board School, a fine 1875 stone building which has a strong presence in the streetscene. The solid stone structure with attractive roof line broken up by projecting gables and large floor to ceiling windows provides a very attractive frontage. The headmaster's house and the infant school behind were built in the same period and are of a similar style. The robust projecting front elevations of the infant school provide an interesting frontage to the railway line that ran through the town here at this point. Sadly, only five foot high stone walls and the embankment remain of the original railway line. Also adjacent to the former railway is the Central Methodist Church, a tall front gable structure of the line with prominent pinnacles, built in stone interspersed with arched window and door openings. This late Victorian Church has a sense of grandeur in the streetscape and was rebuilt after a fire in 1994.

To the east of this leading into Durham Road the tall stone terrace villas with their attractive bays, vertical proportioned sash windows and their steep roofs provide a strong vertical emphasis. These terraces retain more traditional features than in other parts of the conservation area. These imposing terraces sit behind front gardens, stone walls and railings and lead out to the entrance of the town and the key building St Aidan's Church, a dark red austere building, simple in style, with no decoration.



To the north of the commercial buildings in Front Street, new Front Street leads to larger villas of the early mid-Victorian period, some of these were originally detached houses, more horizontal in appearance, yet retaining a fine sense of symmetry. These houses lead on to the other listed building, the public library built in 1908 by Edward Cratney and paid for by Andrew Carnegie. The building constructed of sandstone ashlar is 'baroque in style, a simple one storey building with three bays with an attractive purple grey roof with a belfry ventilator. Adjacent to this striking building is the simple Catchgate Methodist Church, which has a large solid stone gable with pinnacles providing some interest to the roofscape. There is little ornamentation but the arched windows and doors provide some balance and overall harmony.



Further north in Catchgate, there is a group of older buildings of architectural interest, early Victorian stone housing, a former dairy, public house and bakery. Blackett Terrace is a quiet attractive stone terrace of low two storey cottages, with prominent half dormers with attractive parapets. Opposite is the large dwelling which was the former dairy which once had stables attached. The stone building is significant in size, a simple symmetrical elevation to the original house with a large extension built in early Victorian period with prominent roof structure and stone dentils. The windows have been replaced with uPVC units which detract from the overall quality of the building

The large building adjacent at the crossroads is the former bakery with the overall appearance of an early Victorian stone building. The former bakery was four storeys in height but was reduced in scale due to a fire. The attractive stonework and fenestration pattern and overall scale complement the Smith Arms public house on the opposite side of the main road.



At ground level few remnants of the 19th and 20th century traditional shop fronts have survived, while others have been totally replaced by large fascias, modern signs, crude shop window openings in aluminium, plastic and timber. The surviving shopfront details include the standard design elements of stallrisers in panelled timber, stone or brick, pilasters usually in timber with fluted embellishments, decorated in timber and stone consoles and brackets and moulded cornices, framing a painted fascia board. A Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas (known as P*Si*CA) operated by Durham County Council and English Heritage resulted in the grant funded restoration of a number of traditional shopfronts and windows, particularly on Front Street. Unfortunately the improvements carried out were not replicated elsewhere in the area, and the overall quality of many of the shopfronts has significantly undermined the special interest of the conservation area.

Above the shopfronts the fenestration pattern is varied although few of the original window openings are retained. However, some of the dormers with attractive timber finials, bays and bargeboards are retained, as well as first floor windows with their robust stone mullions and stone surrounds.



The building form to the commercial buildings is quite varied with a blend of simple stone and rendered dutch gables. Two and three storey, late Victorian and Edwardian, stone and brick imposing buildings, in a simple solid style are typical commercial buildings.

Vertically proportioned openings are also a characteristic of the rows of Victorian stone terrace housing. Sadly many of the former sash windows have been replaced by modern replicas. Stone sills and lintels remain as do the slate roofs and endless rows of stone chimneys that break the roofscape and provide interest to the skyline.



Few examples remain of the original ground surfaces and street furniture. Original stone setts, scoria blocks and stone kerbs are visible occasionally adjacent to the roadway. In the centre of the town, along Front Street, West Road and Station Road and in the commercial heart of Catchgate, Yorkstone paving flags and granite setts have recently been restored and attractive street furniture and lighting has been installed. However most of the pavements within the conservation area are covered in tarmac or modern concrete flags. One detail that has remained in the streetscape is a small cast iron bollard, very stout and compact in the base with a sphere and a small crown above. The retention and replication of this is considered desirable.

Building Materials

The development of Annfield Plain dates from the early 19th century as a result of the growth of the coal industry and the railways. The materials used throughout the Victorian town were a result of this growth and the Industrial Revolution taking place throughout Britain.

There was a rapid growth of housing between 1850s and 1870s, due to the development and success of these industries. Miners and railway workers had to live close to the pits and lines and the need for houses meant that local products close at hand were used. The local sandstone was cheap and from fairly thinly beaded seams but it was of good quality and was used throughout the town. It was laid in rough courses with lime mortar.



Dressed ashlar stone was used from thicker seams at other quarries for the more important buildings, such as the Public Library, the Democratic Club and the Queen's Head Public House. The same sandstone was used in stone walls built in the same period, a feature seen throughout the town and in the

surrounding fields enclosed by the dry stone walls. The railways allowed easy access and cheap transport for other materials, which resulted in the introduction of Welsh slate. The town's roofs are covered with good quality grey slate from North Wales, although in many instances there are examples where the roofs have been replaced with concrete products. At the turn of the 19th/20th century, red brick was starting to be introduced, transported from potteries in the south of the County eg. Bishop Auckland potteries. The red brick was generally laid in stretcher bond and some buildings display attractive decorative courses.

The successful development of the industries led to a fine number of rather grand imposing looking Victorian buildings in Front Street. Attractive stone cornices, pilasters and arches began to appear on these buildings in contrast to the domestic vernacular scale. Simple timber shopfronts with fascias, consoles and pilasters were introduced to provide attractive commercial frontages.

Generally the impression of the town's industrial architecture is one of buildings constructed of robust stone and slate, with a limited palette of materials. The unfortunate alterations / improvements in the last 40 years with the introduction of concrete roofs, plastic windows and shopfronts have significantly harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area but elements of the original character of the buildings are still evident.

Boundaries and Means of Enclosure



Throughout the conservation area attractive random rubble sandstone walls with rounded copings can be found. These are boundary walls to the former railway lines which dissected the town. Other typical means of enclosure are low stone walls to the frontage of terraced properties, sometimes with railings or picket fencing on top, encompassing small forecourt gardens and tall brick walls to rear yards.



Open Spaces and Trees

The green spaces in the town consist primarily of the Park and reclaimed areas of former railway and industrial land, most notably the land now converted into part of the c2c national cycleway track and the triangular area of playing fields formed at the convergence of the two former railway lines. Below is a summary of spaces created between the buildings which provide an important sense of place.



On arrival in Durham Road, there is a feeling of openness in contrast to the tightly knit terraces to the rear. This is largely as a result of the type of dwellings, attractive stone terrace villas set back behind small front gardens, guarded by stone walls and railings. The sense of space develops as the pavements are wide enough to provide room for raised flower beds and tree planting. In addition the road, which is one of the main approaches to the town centre, is relatively wide and straight and uncluttered, being free from overhead wires, signs and too much lighting.

Travelling up Durham Road entering Station Road the openness continues, with wide pavements and wide roads while some of the main buildings are set well back, e.g. the School, the Doctor's Surgery, the Residential Home and Tesco. There is still some sense of enclosure achieved by the shrub and tree planting to the car parks, amenity space and the walls and railings to the south.

A very small yet attractive space provides an end to this attractive entrance. The corner site on the western side of Station Road, adjacent to Tesco, provides an open area which has been resurfaced in recent years with new paving.



A strong sense of enclosure is provided in Station Road by the two and three storey terraced Victorian shops on the south side and the modern yet attractively detailed and planned Community Care Home on the north side. The two groups of buildings frame the vista westwards up the street to the important focal point, the Corner House Public House, which is located prominently at the busy road junction with West Road and Front Street.

In West Road this sense of enclosure continues with shops and housing on both sides, two and three storey in height facing directly onto narrower pavements.

In Front Street the grandeur of the buildings becomes particularly obvious in the streetscape and the street widens to provide a more open feel. The imposing two and three storey buildings have larger entrances set back behind wide pavements and a wider roadway. These spaces are relatively clutter free, if not a bit sparse especially when looking westwards.

Outside of the commercial environment the character changes. The pavements and roads are reduced in width, the nature of the buildings change to residential and the scale to two storey terrace and semi-detached housing. Trees, verges and walls at the front of the dwellings along Front Street and New Front Street help to make the transition in scale from the large Victorian and Edwardian commercial development to the local vernacular of the modest Victorian Terrace. The trees, hedges, walls and flower beds in New Front Street provide an attractive entrance into Annfield Plain from the north and help soften the robust architecture.



In the north of the conservation area, a tree lined verge helps soften the appearance of the busy road junction in Catchgate. Here a small cluster of stone shops on the eastern side of the main road are set well back, with Yorkstone paving and granite setts to delineate parking areas providing an attractive forecourt area.

The tight formal streetscape of lines of terraces can be seen to the rear of the main roadways through the conservation area. This dense urban townscape is very typical of the development in the industrial revolution, cheap, well built housing located close to the places of work. Gardens, amenity space, and views were not important to the colliery developers, although some terraces do now face onto green fingers of land created by former railway lines and used for recreation.

Views

Views within the conservation area tend to be linear, along the main routeways and along the shorter terraces behind. Views out of the conservation area tend to be to either immediate green areas, such as the Park or areas of amenity spaces created by the reclamation of former industrial land, or to the rural and urban landscapes beyond.



Activity

The Annfield Plain Conservation Area is primarily residential in nature, although the main streets of West Road, Station Road and Front Street, together with North Road in Catchgate also have a large element of commercial activity. Other activities within the conservation area include doctor's surgeries, care homes, schools, churches and a library.

Public Realm

Front Street is characterised by two very large pavements. The former modern concrete brick paviors and flags in a rather over elaborate design have been replaced in recent years by a high quality traditional paving scheme using Yorkstone paving flags and granite setts to delineate parking bays. This paving continues along West Road and on the southern side of Station Road to the front of the commercial premises. It has also been installed to the forecourt of the commercial premises on the eastern side of north road in Catchgate. The street furniture was upgraded to include attractive street lighting, cast iron bollards and litter bins.



Character Areas

Character Area 1: Durham Road / Station Road

One of the three major arterial routes into the town, Durham Road is marked by its broad expansive nature with wide pavements with raised planters. The carriageway is flanked by slate roofed, attractive stone terraces which slope westward down into the town centre. The rhythm of the southern terrace is broken by the modern surgery and supermarket, both are set back from the established building line and are at odds in terms of scale and proportion with the traditional streetscene (the supermarket site is not included in the conservation area). In contrast the Manor House retirement home, located on the former Co-op site, fits in well with the established fabric of the town.



The line of the former Consett and Sunderland railway splits the surgery and supermarket sites and continues on the opposite side by the carriageway behind the Kyo Law School Board Primary School (1878). This has now become part of the national cycleway network and forms an attractive amenity space for the town.



Over the past 20 years the streetscape of the town centre areas of Station Road, West Road and Front Street have benefitted from public realm improvements, including the installation of Yorkstone paving, with granite setts to delineate parking bays. Attractive street lighting and street furniture, including cast iron bollards and litter bins, have been installed.



The streetscene has also been improved by the restoration of a number of traditional shop fronts and traditional windows to first and second floor. This work was done through investment via a grant scheme, with funding from English Heritage and the County Council. However, there are still a number of properties which would benefit from further investment in improving their appearance and restoring their traditional character, should more funding become available in the future, including a number of properties which are vacant, giving the town centre a poor neglected image.



Character Area 2: Front Street

Front Street is the retail centre of the town with a mixture of 2 to 3 storey retail units with accommodation above.



The properties are infinitely varied in style, design and fenestration and although varied in height, they are predominantly slate roofed with dormers. The roof forms are varied and Dutch gables are an interesting addition to the streetscene.

This area of the town has also benefitted from investment a few years ago by means of the above grant scheme and traditional shop fronts and windows above have been restored. However many upper storeys of these retail units are under-utilised or redundant and some ground floor premises are also empty adding to the neglected feel of the town centre.

The highlights in architectural terms are the Queens Head Hotel, the Democratic Club and Institute. Unfortunately the Plainsman Public House has recently suffered a major fire resulting in the loss of its roof and the interior has been totally destroyed.



The nature of the townscape changes beyond the retail area with the start of the former Council houses which step back behind large gardens, giving the streetscape a more open nature, with grass verges and mature trees, leading into New Front Street.

Character Area 3: West Road

West Road is one of the major arterial routes into the town. The area adjacent to the junction on the southern side is characterised by imposing two and three storey stone commercial buildings which turn the corner, demonstrating a variety of styles and fenestrations and providing an enriched streetscene. The roofs are mainly slate and are characterised by large dormers. Some of the buildings have still managed to retain some of their original features despite the insertion of modern shopfronts and alterations to the fenestration. Some buildings are vacant and new uses would bring added vitality to this area.



To the rear of the northern side of West Road, the small housing development of Hutton Court, on the site of the former Co-op warehouse, has restored this previously run down area. The houses have been constructed from a mellow brick which blends comfortably with the stone of the area.

On the northern side of West Road, the simple overall design of the two storey properties provides an interesting contrast to the more dominant three storey building on the southern side of the street. Despite many modern alterations, the buildings retain their overall form, with an interesting and varied stepped slate roofline.

Character Area 4: New Front Street

New Front Street has contrasting characteristics to both sides of the road - compact and formal terraces close to the carriageway to one side and the interspaced short terraces e.g. Bourne Terrace, Finnes Terrace, Library Terrace and detached/semi-detached post war housing, which is set back from the road behind large gardens, to the other.



Front Street and New Front Street are dissected by the line of the former railway line. To the east of this intersection is an attractive area of trees on the northern side of the road and a handsome stone wall to the south. To the east of the built up area, to the rear of Front Street and Station Road, the two former railway lines merge and former railway sidings which form a triangular area between these lines have been reclaimed to form playing fields and hence introducing green amenity space to this former industrialised area.



Character Area 5: North Road

North Road commences with the Catchgate Methodist Church, an imposing and attractive building dating from 1840 and the grade II listed Arts and Crafts Library (1908) with its distinctive domed belfry ventilator providing an interesting feature in the skyline.



The carriageway rises up from the town centre. It is framed by familiar stone terraces to the west of the road which display changes in style reflecting the phases of construction. To the eastern side of North Road, development demonstrates a more informal layout, with the building line stepping in and out, with a mix of traditional and later post-war housing. This allows for grass verges and mature trees, which increase the attractiveness of the area.

The commercial area of Catchgate is centred around the Hobson's buildings and a number of commercial premises on the western side on North Road. This area also benefitted from the Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas grant scheme and works including the installation of Yorkstone paving, granite setts, attractive street lighting and bollards, as well as the reinstatement of a traditional shop front.



To the north east of the conservation area is an attractive area of open space (former industrial land) with flower beds and tree planting. This has become the

focus of the local community, with an attractive metal work sculptured seat and a large metal frame encompassing two pictorial banners by local school children and fret work silhouettes of miners in metal work below. A handsome stone wall with rounded coping runs along the eastern edge of this site.



***Character Area 6: Terraces to West of Durham Road
(Duffy Terrace, New Durham Road, Laverick, Vincent, Mordue and
Johnson and St. Andrew Terraces)***

Duffy Terrace, Laverick Terrace and New Durham Road are uniform, late Victorian terraces with the exception of the occasional end terrace property which has been added later. These terraces mark the end of the built up area of the town to the south, beyond which lie allotment gardens. To the front of Duffy Terrace, in front of the pedestrian routeway, is a grassed area which provides a welcome green amenity space.



Vincent Terrace, Mordue Terrace and Johnson Terrace form a regular block of workers housing which are bounded to the south west by the Annfield Plain Park and to the north east by the modern doctor's surgery and nursing home which front onto Durham Road.



Vincent Terrace is a good quality stone and slate terrace of workers' housing with feature gables for half its length. The vehicular carriageway also extends for half the length of the terrace with a pedestrian route and green amenity space extending for the remainder of the terrace. This canted stone terrace marks the edge of the Victorian expansion of Annfield Plain.



Johnson and Mordue Terraces (see above) are matching stone built workers housing, small in scale with slate roofs which step to take into account the site conditions. The end terraces in this area still have a number of small-scale workshops and garaging which adds to the diversity and interest in the streetscape. They exhibit the familiar pedestrian route between rows of workers' terraced housing which are characteristic of the town and still form a vital function today. As elsewhere, the use of uPVC windows and doors, and truncating of chimneys has affected the traditional appearance of these properties.

St Aidan's Terrace (see below) is a fine stone built terrace of workers' housing which curves follow the line of the former Consett and Sunderland Railway Line. The small front gardens are demarked by timber picket fencing, much of the crescent's length faces onto an unadopted carriageway. A high stone wall demarks the boundary of the former railway line, which is an important amenity space for the town and is also a designated wildlife area.



At the eastern end of St. Aidans Crescent, opposite the housing, is an area of green amenity space which has been restored in recent years and has a seating area and an interesting sculpture on it.



Character Area 7: The Park

The Annfield Plain Park caps the end of Vincent Terrace, Mordue Terrace, Johnson Terrace and St Aidan's Crescent. It has a formal entrance, which has attractive metal work gates and stone gate piers capped with stone ball finials. This has attractive lawned areas with trees, hedging and planting. It also houses tennis courts, bowling green, playing fields, a putting green, a pond, a play area and the Grade II listed War Memorial circa 1919 constructed in Portland stone. The park is an important amenity area for the town.





Character Area 8: Northgate

This area of the town still has the mix of small industrial units and workers housing with traditional walled back yards and outbuildings. The rear of Northgate faces onto the open aspect of the modern Tesco Supermarket development, car park and the Annfield Plain Infants School, which demarks the edge of the proposed conservation area with a quality stone boundary wall. The front of the terrace faces onto small gardens with low stone walls and privet hedging providing the boundary to the pedestrian routeway into the town. Canted end gables reoccur at the street ends defining the end of the old town.



Character Area 9: Terraces to west of New Front Street and North Road (Dunn Street, Queen's Parade and Victoria Terrace)

This area consists of Victorian stone/slate terraces, which face to the west onto open ground. Once again the stepped roofs dissected by robust chimneys follow the contours of the land and provide a wonderful sense of symmetry, although the consistency of detailing has been eroded by modern alterations.



The northern end of Queen's Parade changes in character to the western side of the carriageway where individual plots of land are associated in the main with the houses on the opposite side of the road. These are used primarily for recreation/storage purposes with garages, vegetable gardens, glass houses etc and form an important amenity space for the occupants. The exception to this usage is the coachworks and storage area, which is located midway along the back of Victoria Terrace. Due to the unkempt nature of this area it is considered that it could be removed from the conservation area boundary.



Granville Avenue (see below left) consists of Stone terraced workers housing, slate roofed with brick detailing to gutters. The terrace steps down the hill to the north creating an interesting and varied roofscape. The stone/brick boundary walls conceal yards and outbuildings. This format is reflected both sides of the road. To the west of the properties to Granville Avenue is a mix of open space and retirement bungalows. To the northern end of Granville Avenue is Pontop Court, which is a detached modern housing layout with inappropriate brick and tile roofs. This is preceded by a short run of 20th century former Council properties, which step down the hill northwards.



Old Blckett Street (see above right) is a major routeway through Catchgate. Immediately adjacent to the junction with North Road is the attractive stone terrace of 1 - 12 Blckett Street, two-storeys with gabled upper storey windows and small front gardens and stone boundary walls and hence its inclusion within the conservation area.

Character Area 10: Terraces to the east of New Front Street & North Road

Clowes Terrace, to the east of New Front Street, descends the slope northwards out of the town and the tight traditional terraced form breaks down into the modern housing layout of Fines Park. The workers housing in this area follows the established pattern of rear yards and access roads. Its elevated position gives views out to agricultural land beyond.

Wesley Terrace provides an attractive linear terrace and former railway cottages fronting onto the original sidings. The lines have been replaced by long linear green pathways and amenity areas, providing a surprising vista in this part of the town.



Kyo Road descends north-east from the centre of Catchgate, providing views in the distance over open agricultural land. The attractive stone villas of Bethany Terrace are representative of the majority of workers' housing within the town, although the stone detailing is finer than many with decorative chimneys and stone quoins.

The most interesting building in this area, Hobsons Building, is situated on the corner of Kyo Road/North Road. It is a formal stone building with large central chimney stacks forming an attractive feature on the skyline.



The other building worth noting is the Stanley Christian Fellowship Church, a brightly rendered Church frontage with a curved entrance porch.

**Character Area 11: Terraces to the east of Durham Road
(William, Elizabeth, Mary and Thomas Street - these four streets from a grid enclosed by Welsh Terrace and James Street)**



These former workers' houses are two-storey of stone/slate construction which steps down the incline. This area is characterised by broad streets, rear yards and narrow access ways. A number of corner properties in this area of the town are of higher status, such as Wesley Manse on the corner of William Street and Durham Road. Again the quality of the properties has been noticeably affected by the introduction of uPVC windows and loss of traditional details.



Neale Street and Mitchell Street are attractive stone terraces with south facing gardens with trees and hedgerows providing an interesting backdrop. The Villa, to the east of Mitchell Street, is an attractive detached stone property tucked away with its own grounds.



Future Challenges

Run down shop fronts and commercial properties

Whilst there has latterly been investment within the Annfield Plain Conservation Area in the form of an English Heritage "Partnership Scheme in Conservation Areas" (conservation) led regeneration scheme, there is still much that could be done to continue to improve the character and appearance of the conservation area. Many of the local traders and residents find it difficult to justify major capital improvements, partly because of the actual costs but also due to the lack of confidence in the future trading prospects. Hence there are still a number of premises which are in a very dilapidated condition, with galvanised roller shutters and inappropriate signage. The traditional shop fronts which have been reinstated; and the traditional fenestration patterns which have been restored above these shopfronts helped to enhance the character and appearance of the commercial centre of the conservation area and improve its vitality and viability. However it is important to continue to maintain and build upon these improvements to the built environment by building upon these success stories in a more comprehensive regeneration scheme.

Loss of architectural and historic features

The centre of Annfield Plain still manages to retain the proportion and fenestration pattern of the original windows, doors and shopfronts. Some of the original timber sashes, doors, cornices and shopfronts remain, whilst others have been restored and reinstated by means of the recent Partnerships Scheme. However, modern replacements such as uPVC doors and windows and modern aluminium shop fronts are a common feature in commercial and residential areas and have adversely affected both the character and appearance of the conservation area. Opportunities could be taken to reverse this loss of traditional features through the use of stricter planning controls and

to seeking further grant assistance if possible, however much of the harm is considered unfortunately irreversible.



Building condition

Some of the commercial buildings and flats above in the centre of Annfield Plain still present a neglected image and need extensive repairs. Slates are often missing, chimneys are unstable and rainwater goods are faulty. Some shopfronts have rotten woodwork and some windows and doors are in poor decoration. Again enhancement opportunities should be taken to seek improvements whenever possible through the Planning system and by harnessing any future investment opportunities. If investment is not made to upkeep properties it is likely that the character and appearance of the conservation area will continue to decline to the point where it is no longer of sufficient merit to warrant conservation area status.

Vacancy rates

Although the town centre has a good range of shops including bank, post office, newsagents, green grocers, etc the vitality and viability of the town has started to decline, with a number of shops vacant on Front Street, West Road and Station Road. Some of the upper floors above the commercial properties are also vacant.



Public Realm

Whilst there have been some significant improvements to the public realm in the central commercial area in recent years, there is still more that could be done to improve poorly surfaced footpaths, streets, roads and car parks; to improve the quality of street furniture and lighting columns; to minimise street clutter and to lessen the visual intrusion of overhead wires.

Management Proposals

The following management proposals have been identified to ensure that the future changes to the conservation area are directed in a proactive way. This is not an absolute list but outlines the main issues and possible tasks. It should be made clear that the Council cannot give a definite commitment to undertake these tasks, which will ultimately depend on future financial and staff resources.

- Protection of buildings and details of buildings that contribute to the character of the area.
- Protect important open spaces within the conservation area.
- Protect trees that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Protect features that contribute to the setting of the conservation area.
- Ensure that new development is only permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- Conserve historic boundary treatments.
- Work to preserve and enhance the quality of the public realm.
- Retain a mix of uses in the commercial centre of the town and in Catchgate to ensure the vitality and viability of the village.
- Increase community understanding and involvement in the conservation area.
- Ensure that any future streetscape improvements continue the palette of traditional materials already used for the public realm improvements which have taken place.
- Progress opportunities to run overhead wires underground.
- Advertise availability of guidance and advice on repairs and alterations to historic buildings.
- Monitor erosion of historic features and traditional detailing and consider whether further planning controls are required to halt decline.

Proposed Boundary Changes

It is proposed that the boundary of the conservation area should be amended to conform, where relevant, to current property boundaries and landscape features. The proposed changes are as follows:

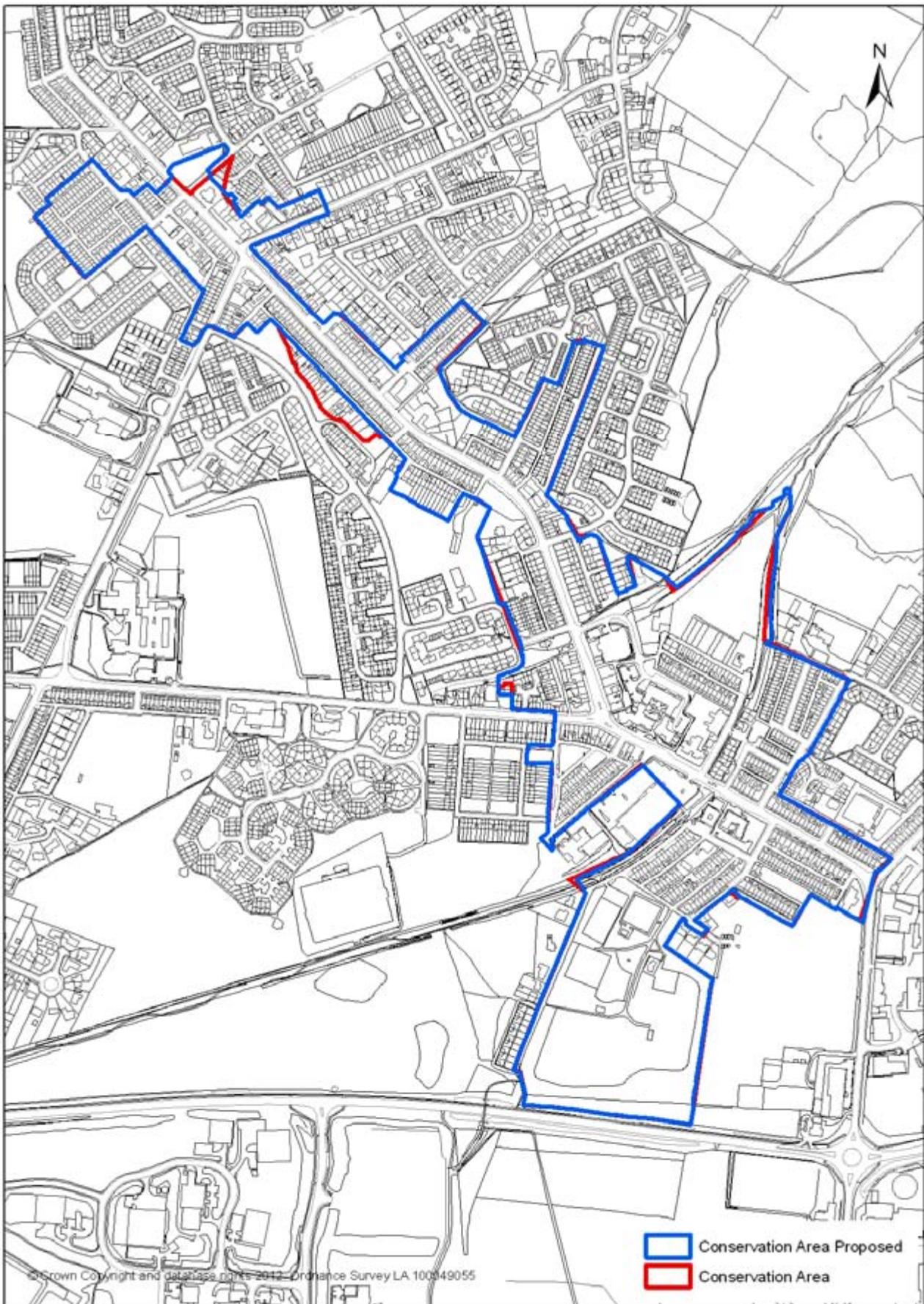
1. Inclusion of the attractive area of open land to the north of the existing conservation area boundary which includes trees and flower beds, a metal sculptured bench and a metal framework encompassing two banners made by local school children above fret work silhouettes of miners. Also to be included is the attractive stone boundary wall which runs along the northern edge of the site and is historically associated with the former rail and industrial era.



2. Exclusion of the back of Victoria Terrace, which consists of gardens, allotments and workshops. This area is relatively unkempt and does not benefit conservation area status.



Existing and Proposed Conservation Area Boundary



Contacts and References

Bibliography

National Heritage List produced by English Heritage

County Durham Historic Environment Record

Keys to the Past website

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All images Durham County Council, unless otherwise stated.

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Appendix 1: Listed Buildings

There are only two structures which are statutorily listed for their architectural or historic interest. This means that Listed Building Consent is needed for any internal or external alterations. The listed status includes any later extensions or additions and any ancillary structures such as garden walls or outbuildings which were built before 1948. The details below are copied directly from the national register. Further information on the National Heritage List which includes listed buildings and other statutory designations can be found online at:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/list

Building	Grade
<i>War Memorial Durham Road</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>Public Library North Road</i>	<i>II</i>

War Memorial Grade II



War memorial; circa 1919. Possibly Portland stone. Tall pylon, the top scroll-moulded with recessed labelled band, on moulded plinth and steps with raised centre sections. Names of dead of Annfield Plain in both world wars in dark letters on both narrow sides and all sides of plinth; sword and wreath decoration.

Public Library Grade II



Public lending library. 1908 by Edward Cratney of Davidson and Cratney; Southsen and Johnson contractors; site given by John Wilkinson Taylor, M.P.; paid for by Andrew Carnegie of Skiko Castle N.B. (copper plaque in entrance). Sandstone ashlar; incised render left return; roof of graduated purple-grey slates with red roll-moulded ridge tiles. Baroque style. One storey, 3 wide bays. Central half-glazed double door and fanlight in keyed round-headed surround within open-pedimented porch, with labels on panelled pilasters; similar higher surrounds and dentilled pediments to flanking Diocletian windows with leaded glazing and sill aprons. Name on labelled inscription over door in recessed flat-coped central bay; coping stepped over side bays with pilasters and central blocks above pediments. Dentilled cornice of pediments continues around corner pilasters and right return; left return partly obscured by adjacent buildings. Roof has domed square belfry ventilator with corner pillars.

Appendix 2: Notable Unlisted Buildings

The following buildings are not statutory listed but do make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and as such are considered to be buildings of local interest. There is a presumption against demolition of any of these structures. The omission of any particular building should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

1	Parish Church of St Aidan's, Durham Road
2	Methodist Church, Railway Street
3	Catchgate Methodist Free Church, New Front Street
4	Bethany Church, Kyo Road, Catchgate
5	The Plainsman Public House, Front Street
6	No 17 and 19 Front Street
7	The Democratic Club, Front Street
8	The Queen's Head Public House
9	No 9 Front Street
10	5 and 7 Front Street
11	Nos 34 and 36 Front Street
12	Nos 32, 30, 28 and 26 Front Street
13	No 24 Front Street
14	No 20 Front Street
15	No 16 Front Street
16	No 14 Front Street
17	Nos 4, 6, 8 and 10 Front Street
18	The Corner House Public House, Front Street
19	Nos 1/3 Station Road/West Road
20	No 5 Station Road/West Road
21	Nos 7, 9 and 11 Station Road/West Road
22	Nos 13, 15 and 17 Station Road/West Road
23	Nos 19, 21, 23 and 25 Station Road/West Road
24	Nos 27 and 29 Station Road/West Road
25	Nos 4, 6, 8 and 10 Station Road/West Road
26	Nos 12, 14 and 16 West Road
27	The Annfield Plain Board School, Station Road
28	The Walls of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway Line
29	The Gates to Annfield Plain Park
30	Bourne Terrace - Terrace Villa
31	Bourne Terrace - Detached House
32	Fines Farmhouse
33	The Smiths Arms, North Road, Catchgate
34	The Building to the Rear of the Smiths Arms
35	Blackett Terrace, Blackett Street
36	The Former Bakery, North Road

Parish Church of St Aidan's, Durham Road



A plain, dark red, brick building built in 1928 consists of a nave, chancel and vestry and is cruciform in shape. The designers Hicks and Charlesworth of Newcastle also included a bellcote containing one bell. A memorial stained glass window depicting the scene on Calvary is a dominant feature as is the internal panelling and oak alter table. The building was erected originally as a Mission Hall and is now used as a Church Hall.

Methodist Church, Railway Street



The Primitive Methodists originally had a Chapel on Front Street, but this was affected by subsidence and in 1895 they moved to a new church just east from the Board School. The stone gable fronted chapel built in 1895 is characterised by a prominent steep pitch roof, a central arched entrance and projecting vestibule, with two large ornate finials. The coursed stonework is broken up by a number of arched openings.

Catchgate Methodist Free Church, New Front Street



The first Methodist Free Church was built in 1873. It was of corrugated iron and was situated above Blakett Street. This was replaced by the new church situated next to the library built in 1908. The stone gable fronted chapel is characterised by a prominent steep pitch roof, it has an attractive frontage with central rounded top entrance, large arched window with two narrow adjacent arched windows above. The stone cornices, water tables and stone finials provide an interesting elevation and complement the adjacent listed library.

Bethany Church, Kyo Road, Catchgate



The Church was home from 1880 to the Independent Methodists, Quaker Methodists or singing Quakers. They practised the plain manners and dress of Quakers but used music in their worship. The Stanley Christian Fellowship now use this church. It has a white stucco rendered frontage, with steep slate roof. Castellated entrance vestibule with arched entrance doors, large arch window above, with two arched windows at the side.

The Plainsman Public House, Front Street



The former Stanhope and Tyne Railway Hotel (now the Plainsman) was located at the level crossing built in 1835 by Charles Allan, a contractor to the line. It is an attractive two storey stone building, with original slate roof replaced by modern pantiles and stone chimneys, with coursed sandstone, prominent quoins, painted stone sills and head. Modern first floor casements have replaced sash openings. Attractive ground floor large frontage shop windows in timber are broken up by timber pilasters, above timber fascia, cornices and consoles. In the mid 19th century there was a brewery to the rear and stables operating until 1880. Unfortunately this building has recently suffered a devastating fire and has now lost its entire roof and the interior.

No 17 and 19 Front Street



Located between the Plainsman Public House and the Democratic Club these two modest two-storey buildings were built in the late Victorian period. The pair have a linked slate roof, central chimney and rendered frontage. Modernised first floor window openings and shopfronts replace original timber windows and shopfronts. The building is important for its group value in the street.

The Democratic Club, Front Street



Built pre-1896, this grand two and a half storey building providing an imposing frontage adjacent to the Queen's Head in Front Street. Slate roof, brick chimneys, half-dormers with pitch roofs. Left section of the roof has a Dutch gable with stone finial and ornate stone cornice. Second and first floor ornate stone bays break up the elevation with modern replacement windows, to the right modern casement windows which replaced sash openings. Below, also to the right, a modern shopfront has replaced a stone frontage, while to the left the stone cornice is retained with a plain infill wall in the frontage below.

The Queen's Head Public House



The original Queen's Head Public House was a smaller building, less grand in style, located on the same site, built in early 20th century. It was rebuilt at the turn of the 20th century. A large imposing substantial building, three storey in height, it is built in late Victorian style, with slate roof, red brick chimneys, central gable with stone finials, red brick frontage, stone stringcourses and faïences and stone surrounds to the sash windows at first and second floor level. There is a grand central mullion window at second floor level and large central arched window at first floor with modern timber openings. Ground floor stone is now rendered; original pilasters retained and painted cream. Modern large picture windows and fascia inserted above.

No 9 Front Street



A two storey building built approx in 1896, with slate roof and brick chimney; two gables break the roof line with ornate bargeboards and finials. Below, at first floor, three former sash openings, two small and one central larger opening are present. The building has a white render frontage with modern shopfront below which replaced the original shopfront. The building is important for its group value.

No's 5 and 7 Front Street



Lloyds Bank and A H Cuthbertson Ltd built in approx 1896. The building has coursed stonework in local sandstone with two separate slate pitch roofs, broken up by stone chimneys and stone water table and attractive dentil details under eaves. Modern windows in original first floor retain sash opening proportions. A modern shopfront to No 7 replaces original details and the Bank at No 5

retains the original stone pilasters, consoles, cornice and stallriser details. The building is important for its group value in the street.

No's 34 and 36 Front Street



Built before 1896 this building is of coursed sandstone with prominent quoins, which have discoloured over the years. It has a dutch gable frontage of three storey height with a slate roof. The original sash windows have now been reinstated, original window proportions and stone sills and heads have been retained. The traditional shopfront has now been reinstated.

No's 32, 30, 28 and 26 Front Street



Built late Victorian period (before 1896), the pair of buildings read as one prominent three storey building. Symmetrical details still prevail and there is a slate roof, stone chimneys and stone dentils. The building is constructed from coursed sandstone with stone sills, heads and stone mullions at third storey level; the left mullion has been replaced. Below this the right hand side bay has been reinstated. The right hand shop front has also been reinstated in traditional fashion. The building is important for its group value and impact on street scene.

No 24 Front Street



This building has a double fronted gable with two steep prominent pitch slate roofs built before 1896. The two gables have prominent white fascia boards which replaced the original ornate bargeboard detail with attractive finials above. The overhang of the roof in render is partly retained here yet the original dark timber is replaced by additional white boarding.

Below coursed stonework surround the two bays, which have recently been reinstated with attractive sliding sash windows. Overlarge white fascias are a prominent feature with restored traditional shopfronts below. To the rear of No 24 Front Street the building extends to provide a group of two storey outbuildings enclosing a small private courtyard. The group consists of a

mixture of render and stone buildings of different scale and roof heights built before 1896. These are likely to have been the storage buildings and stables to No 24. Stone and brick walls surround the rear courtyard.

No 20 Front Street



dormers. Modern crude Victorian shopfront.

This is an attractive two and a half storey, mid-Victorian, double fronted building, with prominent slate roof broken up by ornate half dormers and intricate cornice details and embellishments. Original sash windows have been replaced by timber boarding. First floor bays with prominent timber cornices are retained with casement openings. The white stucco render at first floor continues above the fascia and shop frontage replaces original timber

No 16 Front Street



There is a narrow frontage to this late Victorian two-storey building, with a slate roof, modern dormer which replaced original and stone dentils at eaves level. Coursed stonework is present at first floor and the original bay replaced by a traditional timber shopfront. The building is important for its group value and impact on street scene.

No 14 Front Street



There is a prominent two and half storey rendered frontage to this mid-Victorian building. The slate roof, water tables, brick chimneys and attractive ornate domed dormers are retained and the sash windows have been restored. The rendered frontage is broken up by two large casement windows which are now boarded up. The original timber shopfront has been restored.

No's 4, 6, 8 and 10 Front Street



These buildings were built before 1896. The pair of buildings read as a prominent two-storey building. Symmetrical details still prevail despite modern alterations. The building has a slate roof with a modern dormer which replaces original sash openings, stone dentils, coursed

sandstone and stone sill, heads and mullions. The left mullion has been replaced at first floor level. Traditional sliding sash windows and shopfronts have been recently restored. The building is important for its group value and impact on street scene.

The Corner House Public House, Front Street



The former Railway Inn (now the Corner House) was rebuilt at the turn of the century. The prominent corner building faces onto Station Road, Front Street and West Road. The former stone frontage has been recently restored. The slate roofs, with dormers and stone chimneys are prominent in Front Street and West Road. The original sash windows at first floor level have been replaced by modern openings, heads and sills have been retained as have quoins. On the ground floor, large modern window openings are surrounded by original ornate cornices, pilasters and stallrisers. At ground floor level only, single storey, large picture windows below an ornate balustrade project on corner facing West Road, and Station Road. The door to Front Street is oversailed by ornate stone carved entablature bearing the date 1899.

Nos 1/3 Station Road/West Road



No 1 – A tall two-storey building built early 20th century, with slate roof, half dormer and modern openings have replaced original sashes. Stone dentils, coursed stonework and a stone stringcourse are present at the base of dormer. Original stone sills and heads are retained. Modern first floor windows replace sash openings. The building has a timber shopfront, with original cornice and consoles retained, with modern fascia and stallriser.



No 3 – The building was constructed in the mid-20th century. It has a slate roof, stone chimney, stone dentils and random space stonework. Modern casement windows have replaced original openings. The shopfront is of modern design. Both buildings are important for their group value and the impact in the street scene.

No 5 Station Road/West Road



This is a three storey prominent end terrace building, of early 20th century construction, with a slate roof, stone chimneys, stone cornice detail under eaves and constructed from coursed stonework. There are three symmetrical sash openings at second floor with stone lintels and sills. A castellated bay is present at first floor level, with stone mullions, sash windows. Stone cornice, consoles and pilasters are retained at ground floor. However a modern

shop window and door have been inserted, replacing original timber shopfront. The building is important for its group value and impact in the streetscene.

No's 7, 9 and 11 Station Road/West Road

These are two-storey buildings built in the early 20th century, a group of three consist of two symmetrical buildings lower in scale, adjacent to the taller central building. All have slate roofs, stone chimneys and stone dentils. Nos 7 and 11 have pitched roof single dormers. Original windows and side lights have been replaced. No 9 has a double dormer with prominent cornice. At first floor of all three, there are symmetrical pairs of double sash with stone mullions and single sash windows. The buildings are constructed from coursed pale sandstone, with stone sills, surrounds and heads retained. Modern shopfronts replace the three original timber Edwardian shopfronts. The buildings are important for their group value and impact in the streetscene.

No's 13, 15 and 17 Station Road/West Road



These two and half storey buildings were built during the early 20th century. The group of three consist of three symmetrical buildings, with slate roofs, stone chimneys, half dormers with slate roofs, finials, timber bargeboards and modern casement openings. No's 13 and 17 have stone mullion windows and modern casements have replaced previous sashes. Stone lintels, cornice and stone stringcourse are still retained at sill level. No 15 has a stone

bay with modern casement replacing original sashes and a stone cornice above coursed stonework in mellow sandstone, there is a stone stringcourse below dormers. Modern shopfronts have replaced original timber Edwardian shopfronts. The buildings are important for their group value and impact in the streetscene.

No's 19, 21, 23 and 25 Station Road/West Road



These two storey buildings were built in the early 20th century. The group consists of four symmetrical buildings, with slate roofs, stone chimneys and coursed stonework of local sandstone, although No 25 has first floor stone

frontage replacement by modern random stonework. There are large stone mullion central windows and single windows at first floor level with modern openings, replacing original sash. Stone sills, heads and surrounds are retained however no 25 has replaced mullion windows. Modern shopfronts have replaced original timber shopfronts. Nos 21 and 19 have retained some of the stone surrounds to doors and shop windows. The buildings are important for their group value and impact in the streetscene.

No's 27 and 29 Station Road/West Road



Two and a half storey buildings built early 20th century. No 27 is slightly smaller in scale than the end corner building. Buildings have slate roofs, stone chimneys, half dormers with bargeboards, finial details, coursed stonework with stone stringcourses at sill level to the dormers and first floor openings. No 27 has a upvc bay replacing an original timber bay and single casement window at first floor level. No 29 has a casement window with attractive architrave above, the original sash window has been replaced. The modern shopfront has an elongated fascia to No 27 and replaced original timber shopfront. No 29 original has stone pilasters, stallrisers, fascia, cornice and console details, fanlight has been retained with modern small paned shop window below. The buildings are important for their group value and impact in the streetscene.

No's 4, 6, 8 and 10 Station Road/West Road



Two storey buildings built pre-1896. The three buildings form a group of solid stone robust shop/commercial buildings. No 4/6 is a tall end building, with slate roof, brick chimney, stone water table and stone dentils. Buildings are constructed from coursed stonework, modern casement windows replace original sash window and modern shopfront replaces original timber Victorian shopfront. Nos 8 and 10 have a slate roof lower in height and brick chimney. No 8 is white painted. There is a modern window at first floor and modern shopfront below. No 10 is of coursed stonework and stone surrounds with sills and heads, original sashes have been replaced by casements. A modern shopfront replaces the original timber shopfront. The buildings are important for their group value and impact in the streetscene.

No's 12, 14 and 16 West Road



Two storey building built pre-1896, with slate roofs, stone chimneys, half-gable roof to No 14 and gable frontage to No 16. They have attractive coursed stonework, stone heads, sills and quoins. Modern casement windows replace original sash openings at first floor, although stone mullions are retained

at No 16. The stone canopy above No 14 front door is retained. Modern doors throughout replacing original timber panelled doors. Modern shopfronts replace original Victorian shopfront. The buildings are important for their group value and impact in the streetscene.

The Annfield Plain Board School, Station Road



The schools were founded by the Kyo Laws School Board in 1875. The mixed board school was erected in 1875 and 1902 when it was enlarged by 120 additional children, accommodating a total of 245 children. The attractive stone building is very prominent in Station Road behind attractive stone walls, piers, ornate gates and cast iron railings. The main building is one and a half storeys high, characterised by steep pitch slate roof, stone chimneys, stone water tables, stone gables. The large prominent stone gables are located adjacent to the central small single storey front entrance gable. The attractive coursed stonework with prominent quoins is interspersed with small lancet windows at first floor and large stone mullion classroom windows below throughout the ground floor. The windows and door openings are as original.



To the rear the former headmaster/caretakers residential home is a simple stone detached house built in 1873, with slate roof, stone chimneys, stone dentils, coursed stonework and quoins. Windows are symmetrical and casements replace sash openings, there is a small stone pointed architrave above front door, which is a modern replacement to original panelled door.



The infant board school was erected later in 1898 for 225 children opposite the former railway line. The building fronts onto Spring Close. The single storey building is characterised by large prominent half gables. The roof is interspersed by four large gables, elaborate in design with attractive architrave and cornice details. The four gables have large mullion windows below with the original casement and sash openings intact. The interesting fenestration provides a sense of symmetry and uniformity and creates an attractive frontage.

The Walls of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway Line



Annfield Plain was named after the railway incline (Annfield Plane until 1855), after the inclined plane of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway Line. The route of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway Line crossed Front Street adjacent to the Plainsman Public House. The Pontop and South Shields Railway serving the Consett Steel Works was located adjacent to the Board School where a crossing in Station Road was located. The mining and railway industry went into gradual decline by the 20th century. The large railway industry and services that developed as part of the Stanhope and Tyne Railway suffered significantly from the closure of the pits within the area and the closure of the Consett Steel Works in 1980. The passenger line closed in 1955 and goods line closed in 1980 resulting in the demolition of a number of key buildings, engine sheds, robust sandstone walls that followed the routes. The stone walls are constructed of coursed stonework, attractive stone copings and stone piers.

The Gates to Annfield Plain Park



Annfield Plain Park was opened in the 1920s by the Council to provide facilities for the whole community. The Park originally consisted of a 14 acre park with children's play area, Bowling Green, sports pavilion, War Memorial, bandstand and rose garden, tennis courts and football pitch, tree and shrub planting within and along the boundaries and metalwork gates with stone gate piers and ball finials. The attractive scrolled

metalwork is of good quality, simple in design and of the some character.

Bourne Terrace - Terrace Villa



This end of terrace stone villa built approx 100 years ago is considerable in size and is very prominent in New Front Street. The building has its original fenestration pattern with three sash windows at first floor level and double bays linked together with the front door under the same canopy. This pattern of openings provides a very lively and

attractive elevation. The slate roof, the chimneys, the stone boundary walls and railings are also completely intact.

Bourne Terrace - Detached House



At the far end of Bourne Terrace towards Fines farmhouse is a fine detached house. The building still retains its architectural character despite the modern alterations to the windows and doors. This imposing house built at the turn of the 20th century also retains its original attractive stonework, stone mullions, heads and sills, slate roof and stone water tables and chimneys. It is particularly important for its group value when viewed with the rest of Bourne Terrace and the adjacent farmhouse.

Fines Farmhouse



Fines House between Annfield Plain and Catchgate on New Front Street is the oldest building in Annfield Plain dating back to 1755. The house consisted of a detached residential building with attached farm outbuildings. The house originally owned a considerable amount of land stretching north, with a larger frontage facing the main road. Although this frontage has been partly developed providing room for Bourne

Terrace, it still retains an attractive frontage with its original stone walls and trees and vegetation. The house is of a classic farmhouse design horizontal in proportion, fairly low in height and narrow in width, it retains the original stonework but the windows and roofing material have been altered in recent years.

The Smiths Arms, North Road, Catchgate



An important key building located at the busy crossroad in Catchgate. The original stone two and three storey building has been a public house for the last 150 years. The building has an imposing frontage which has been rendered, interspersed with sliding sash windows. The two slate roofs have attractive and prominent stone chimneys that help break up the roof line.

The Building to the Rear of the Smiths Arms



This large detached house which has a very symmetrical and simple elevation on its western flank, with large stone extensions and projections to the north and east has an interesting history. It is reported that the building was part of the stables to the Smith Arms and a dairy in the last century. The stone building is quite imposing and retains some of its original features despite changes to the window pattern. The stone walls, dentils

and slate roof are prominent features.

Blackett Terrace, Blackett Street



This row of nine, low two storey cottages, with prominent half dormers and attractive parapets is of considerable character. The fenestration pattern and the interesting roof line provides a wonderful sense of symmetry. These cottages date back to early 19th century and retain many of their original features.

The Former Bakery, North Road



This very imposing three storey building sits at the junction of North Road and Kyo Road and provides an important focal point. The building is one of the oldest in the area, approx 150 years old, built as a bakery to serve the growing population of Catchgate and Annfield Plain. The building was originally four storeys in height but due to a fire the roof line was lowered, yet the original chimney remained. The building retains the attractive sandstone and prominent quoins, the sash windows and doors. A simple railing at the side of the building is also retained.

Appendix 3: Origins and History of Annfield Plain

It was the development of the coal industry in the 19th century, stimulated in part by John Buddle, that brought Annfield Plain into existence. John Buddle (1773 - 1843) who was born in Kyo; was to have a very great effect in modernising the north east coal industry. Buddle was the son of the village schoolmaster, who himself had improved the engineering and management of collieries by providing proper calculations to replace the 'rule of thumb' and who became manager of first Greenside and Wallsend Colliery. John Buddle succeeded his father as a coal mining manager in 1806 and introduced numerous innovations to Annfield Plain and the North East. He pioneered the use of cast iron sections to line mine shafts, in place of timber, he improved forms of underground working and ventilation, he urged the development of the safety lamp (and was a correspondent of Sir Humphrey Davy); as a consultant to Lord Londonderry, he was influential in bringing the creation of Seaham Harbour; and he brought about systematic presentation of mining records. He was considered a model employer, careful of his men's welfare and paying relatively high wages.

The first major mines were sunk at South Tanfield or Oxhill Colliery. By 1837 this had reached the Five Quarters and Brass Thill Seams. In 1839 a second shaft was sunk. The settlement began to slowly develop around these mines. At this time the Stanhope and Tyne Railway had opened across the area linking the lime stone quarries of Stanhope with the Tyne at South Shields, via the coal districts of North West Durham. The difficult route opened between Stanhope and Annfield Plain in May 1834 and to South Shields in September 1834 and used a mix of horse and locomotive traction, self-acting inclines, and stationary engines.

The Stanhope and Tyne Railway was a financial disaster and it was saved as a route by the speedy intervention of Robert Stephenson who put together a new company to rescue the line. In 1841 therefore the western part of the line, between Stanhope and Medomsley, was taken over by the Derwent Iron Company to serve its Consett Ironworks. The eastern section became the Pontop and South Shields Railway. The Pontop and South Shields Railway was acquired by George Hudson in 1845 and became part of the North Eastern Railway when the latter was formed in 1863. On the 1895 map the route is marked as the Pontop and South Shields branch, running across Front Street at the level crossing that was a major town landmark. The line helped to revolutionise the fortunes of Annfield Plain and further pits were sunk in the wake of its opening.

In 1872 the Willie Pit was sunk and then the Hutton and Bankfoot. Much of the coal from all three pits in this area was used for coking at the Bankfoot and Pontop Coke ovens. Originally, beehive ovens were used and according to local historian F J Wade. The coke ovens, owing to their warmth were the refuge of many undesirable characters known as 'Rodneys' men who lived either alone or with others in empty ovens, picking up a precarious living by filling coke into wagons, begging or doing any kind of off-hand jobs. The Willie and Bankfoot

pits closed in the 1920s. The site was levelled in the early 1960s and housing built on it.

The industrial development caused the population of the area to grow rapidly during the 19th century. Kyo Parish which included most of Annfield Plain north of West Road and Durham Road, had a population of 412 in 1831. This rose to 965 in 1841, 1,401 in 1851, 1,679 in 1871, 2,502 in 1881, 4,065 in 1891 and 7,366 in 1901. The urban pattern shown on the 1895 map, is one of extended rows of cottages. The years between the date of this map and the outbreak of the First World War, saw more long rows built. Eden Terrace opposite Joicey Terrace, further terraces (with some parallel rows to the north) along Shieldrow Lane and more terraces extending northwards along New Front Street. A few terraced streets were also built north of Durham Road. There was an urban focus at the lower end of Front Street, and to a lesser extent north of the crossroads at Catchgate.

The earliest industrial housing in Annfield Plain were Pontop Rows on either side of Front Street built in 1830s by the Stanhope and Tyne Railway. These stone cottages included an array of back to backs unusual for the North East. Two other different responses for the urgent housing need were also provided. Clavering Place, known popularly as the Wood Rows, was built by John Dickinson, the owner of Bankfoot Pit. These were quite literally wooden houses, a choice of material justified by Dickinson on the grounds that the colliery would eventually be worked out and that the stone houses could not be removed as easily. The radical Newcastle Weekly Chronicle in 1872 in its series 'Our Colliery Villages' remarked of the Wood Rows that *"the pit houses are merely navvies huts there were no ash pits, no drains, no sanitary arrangements of any sort"*. This also applied to the second type of housing in Lizzie Square to the west, in the traditional 'barrack square' arrangement of miners' housing. The mid 19th century was the Klondike period for North West Durham, with the winning of coal and profit, the priority and the development of decent living facilities coming far behind. As the century progressed and the new communities coalesced, the situation began to improve. As well as the Woods Rows and other early housing, the map shows better housing. In the long tentacles of cottages stretching along the major roads, some of this housing would have had open views before the pit heaps crept along the valley sides.

Other facilities came from the 1870s. From 1872 water was provided to parts in the growing town by the Consett Water Company. NWC correspondent noted mournfully *"that even though clean water was available in certain places before, some seemed to prefer exceedingly so-so beer. This would have been available from several seemed to prefer exceedingly so-so beer"*. This would have been available from several inns and pubs on the 1895 map. This included in 1835 the Stanhope and Tyne Railway Hotel (now the Plainsman) marked as 'Inn' by the level crossing. It had a brewery behind it, operating until the 1880's. Further south on Front Street were the Queen's Head and the Railway Inn (now the Corner House).

Schools were founded by the Kyo Laws School Board in 1875 at Annfield Plain, rebuilt in 1878 and still functioning, and a small but handsome library was opened in 1908 on the Catchgate Road.

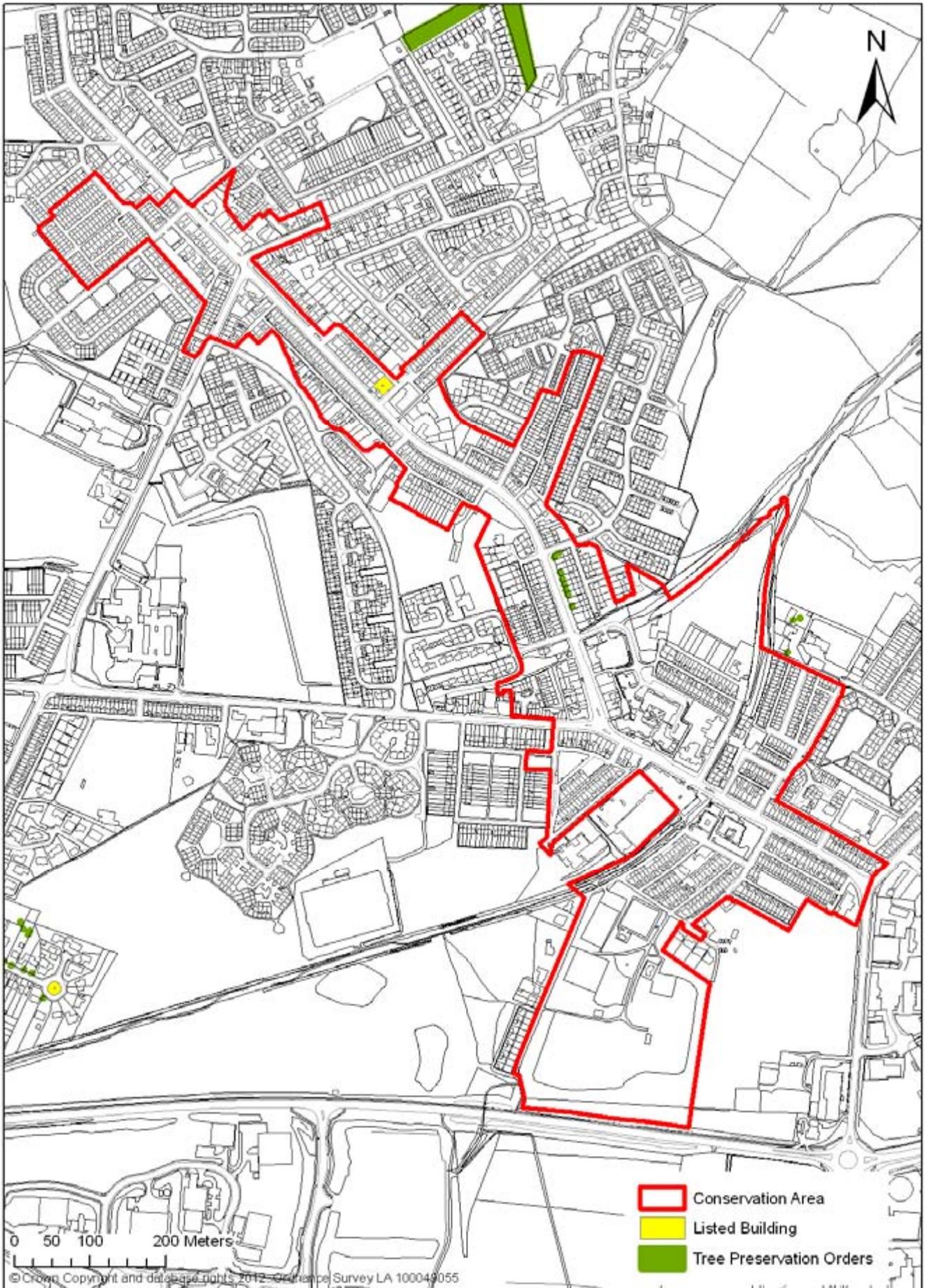
The primitive Methodists had a chapel in Front Street but this was affected by subsidence and in 1895 moved to a site near the Board School. The Free United Methodists had an iron Church on Blckett Street, but an influx of Cornish miners meant that they needed larger premises and they moved into a new Church near the library. The Bethany Church at Catchgate was the home from 1880 to the Independent Methodists. In 1912 Annfield Plain became an ecclesiastical parish in its own right but it wasn't until 1929 that St Aidan's Parish Church opened in Durham Road.

Progress also brought new shops in Front Street, Station Road and West Road to add to the capital shops noted in 1872. The Annfield Plain industrial Co-operative Society was founded in 1870 and occupied various premises around the corner of Front Street and Station Road. The Co-op building was subsequently dismantled and re-erected at Beamish Museum.

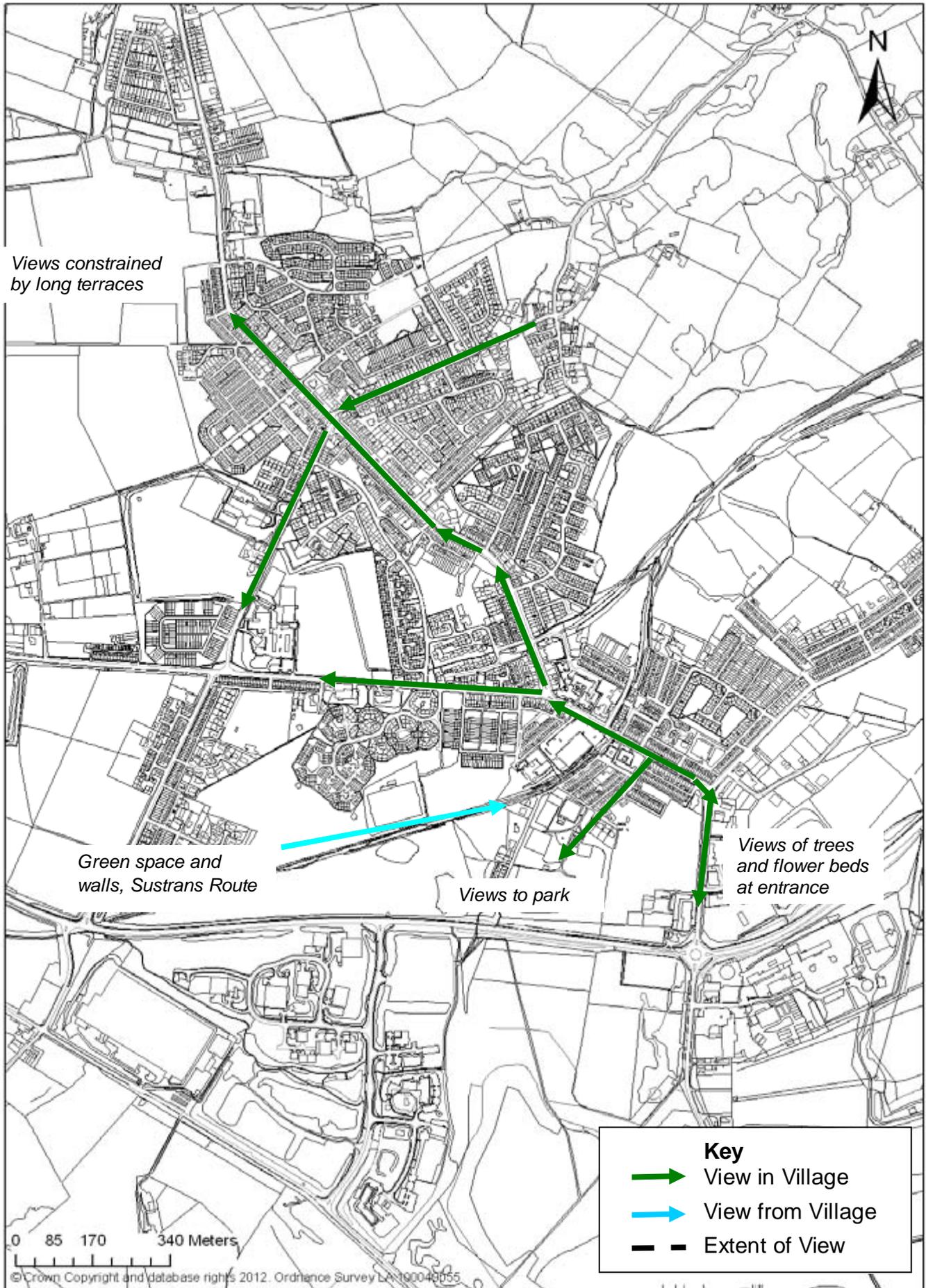
The town had a Cricket Club, and from 1880 football became popular and the miners enjoyed quoits and pigeon shooting contests. In 1921 tennis and bowling became popular as the Town Park opened.

Two further developments benefited the town; by diverting the line southwards in 1886 to bypass the Loud Hill inclines and in 1893 the Annfield Plain Branch was opened running north of Oxhill and Stanley allowing through locomotive working between Consett and the Tyne. This also allowed passengers in 1894, however passenger services ceased in 1955 and goods in 1964, although the line remained open to serve the Consett Steelworks until they closed in 1980.

Appendix 4: Current Designations



Appendix 5: Key Views



Comments

1. Do you agree that Annfield Plain should be a designated conservation area?
2. Is there any important information that has been missed from the appraisal?
3. Are there any statements in the appraisal that you disagree with?
4. Do you consider that the appraisal is a fair assessment of the character and appearance of Annfield Plain?
5. What key words would you use to describe Annfield Plain.
6. Do you agree with the proposed amended boundary of the conservation area? If not please suggest any properties or spaces you would like to see included

For a copy of this appraisal or if you have any further comments or queries please contact:

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Closing date for comments: 12th July 2013

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