



Brancepeth

APPROVED

2009

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1 Introduction

1.1 Conservation Areas

There are over 9,000 conservation areas in England. These vary widely in size and character. The first areas to be designated were town centres in the main, but conservation areas now include villages, model housing layouts, and simple open spaces. There are currently 14 conservation areas in the Durham City area, and each has its own unique character and appearance.

The planning system is currently being reformed. This appraisal forms part of a suite of documents that form the conservation policy for the City of Durham. Therefore the Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- City of Durham Local Plan 2004.
- Conservation Management Proposals.
- Emerging planning documents: Local Development Framework for County Durham.

1.2 What is a Conservation Area?

20 years after the production of the first lists of buildings of special interest, it was recognised that whole areas would also need special protection.

The definition of a conservation area is given in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as;

‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

A conservation area seeks to protect the special historic and architectural character of an area and not just individual buildings. It's the combination of many elements, for example buildings, green spaces, boundaries and gardens, that produces a place special enough to justify conservation area designation.

1.3 Who designates Conservation Areas?

Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Local Planning Authorities have a duty to designate Conservation Areas.

The City Council, between 1968 and 1981, designated 14 Conservation Areas within the City of Durham.

Conservation Areas and designation dates	
Durham	6-Aug-1968
Durham (enlargement)	25-Nov-1980
Brancepeth	4-May-1972
Brancepeth (enlargement)	28-Apr-1981
Sunderland Bridge	2-Mar-1976
Brandon Village	2-Mar-1976
Shadforth	30-Nov-1976
Shincliffe	30-Nov-1976
Hett	1-Feb-1977
Bowburn	4-Sep-1979
Sherburn	4-Sep-1979
Pittington Hallgarth	3-Feb-1981
Sherburn House	3-Feb-1981
Burn Hall	28-Apr-1981
Holywell	28-Apr-1981
Old Cassop	30-Jun-1981

The boundary for each conservation area within the City of Durham is provided in the Adopted City of Durham Local Plan. Copies of the Local Plan are kept at the City Council Offices and at local libraries within the District.

1.4 What does designation mean?

The designation of a conservation area imposes additional controls over development within or adjacent to the area. It encourages proposals to have a sound design basis and achieve high quality buildings to maintain the character of the area. In certain circumstances an application may be required for Conservation Area Consent and/or Planning Permission.

These circumstances include:

- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition, total or substantial, of any building of 115 cubic metres or more within the conservation area;
- Some forms of minor development, which would normally be permitted development, require planning permission within a conservation area;
- Advertisements;
- The protection of trees.

These additional controls allow the Local Planning Authority to control works which may have a negative impact on the character or appearance of the area.

Policy E22 of the Adopted Durham City Local Plan states that all applications for new development either within a conservation area or affecting the setting of one will have to demonstrate that they either preserve or enhance the quality of the Conservation Area.

A Conservation Area Appraisal will help to make this assessment. Extra controls to preserve the character and historic interest of a conservation area can have other benefits.

These include helping to improve the local economy, encourage tourism, attract grants and investment, raise property values, prevent un-neighbourly alterations, encourage traditional trades, and save residents money through repair rather than replacement of traditional building features.

1.5 What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

Aim:

A conservation area appraisal aims to understand and appreciate the significance and character of a specific area.

Objective:

The objective of a conservation area appraisal is to provide a benchmark assessment of an area from which to measure and assess the impact of development proposals.

An appraisal assesses, analyses and defines the significance of the area and the elements that contribute to its special historic and architectural character.

It sets out what opportunities there are for preservation and enhancement, what detracts from the quality of the area and identifies the areas considered to have a neutral effect on the conservation area.

It ensures that all development within the designated area responds to the local context and reinforces local distinctiveness.

It supports appropriate, sustainable, durable and adaptable proposals.

Therefore, an appraisal is necessary to:

- Promote an understanding of why the area was designated a conservation area, by setting out its significance and vulnerabilities;
- Understand the local context of what should be preserved or enhanced;
- Draw up effective policies and proposals to support the preservation or enhancement of the area;
- Introduce design guidance that creates a framework for the conservation area within which new development can be assessed for its appropriateness and sustainability.

The benefits of making a comprehensive assessment of the conservation area are that it forms a sound basis for development control decisions, policy formulation and for development initiatives to improve the area.

In addition the appraisal will have wider benefits for the community as an educational and informative document.

Conservation area appraisals by their nature cannot be completely comprehensive, because of the dynamic, changing nature of the areas. The omission of any building, feature or space from the appraisal should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

1.6 What is the definition of Special Interest, Character and Appearance?

Conservation areas are complex environments covering multiple periods of development.

There are a range of physical and visual relationships between buildings, open spaces and vistas. They are living, evolving, changing environments and usually accommodate many different activities.

When considering any change to these designated areas it is the special character or appearance of the conservation area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The term 'character' includes, but is not limited to:

- Important buildings both listed and non-listed;
- Materials, textures and colours;
- Scale, height and massing;
- Principle land uses;
- Landmarks and focal points;

- Historic patterns and styles of building;
- Unique or unusual features;
- Street patterns and scenes;
- Archaeological landscape;
- Landscape, open spaces and vegetation;
- Views into, within and out of the conservation area;
- Individual areas within the conservation area as a whole;
- Less tangible assets such as the cultural history of the area;
- Elements that make a positive, neutral or negative contribution.

1.7 Conservation Area Management Proposals

In association with the preparation of conservation area appraisals Local Planning Authorities are required from time to time to review, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

Conservation area management proposals will be published alongside the appraisal setting out proposals for the long-term management of the conservation area.

1.8 Who will use the Conservation Area Appraisal?

A conservation area appraisal will provide useful guidance to a number of different groups with an interest in the conservation area.

These groups include:

- Local Residents to help further their understanding of the conservation area or who propose to make an alteration to their property;
- Architects and Developers in designing and formulating proposals for a planning application;
- The Design and Heritage, Development Control and Forward Planning sections of Durham County Council in assessing conservation area Consent and Planning Applications.

2 Brancepeth Conservation Area

2.1 The Context of the Conservation Area

The area is adjacent to the outer edge of Brandon, a largely 20th Century suburban development.

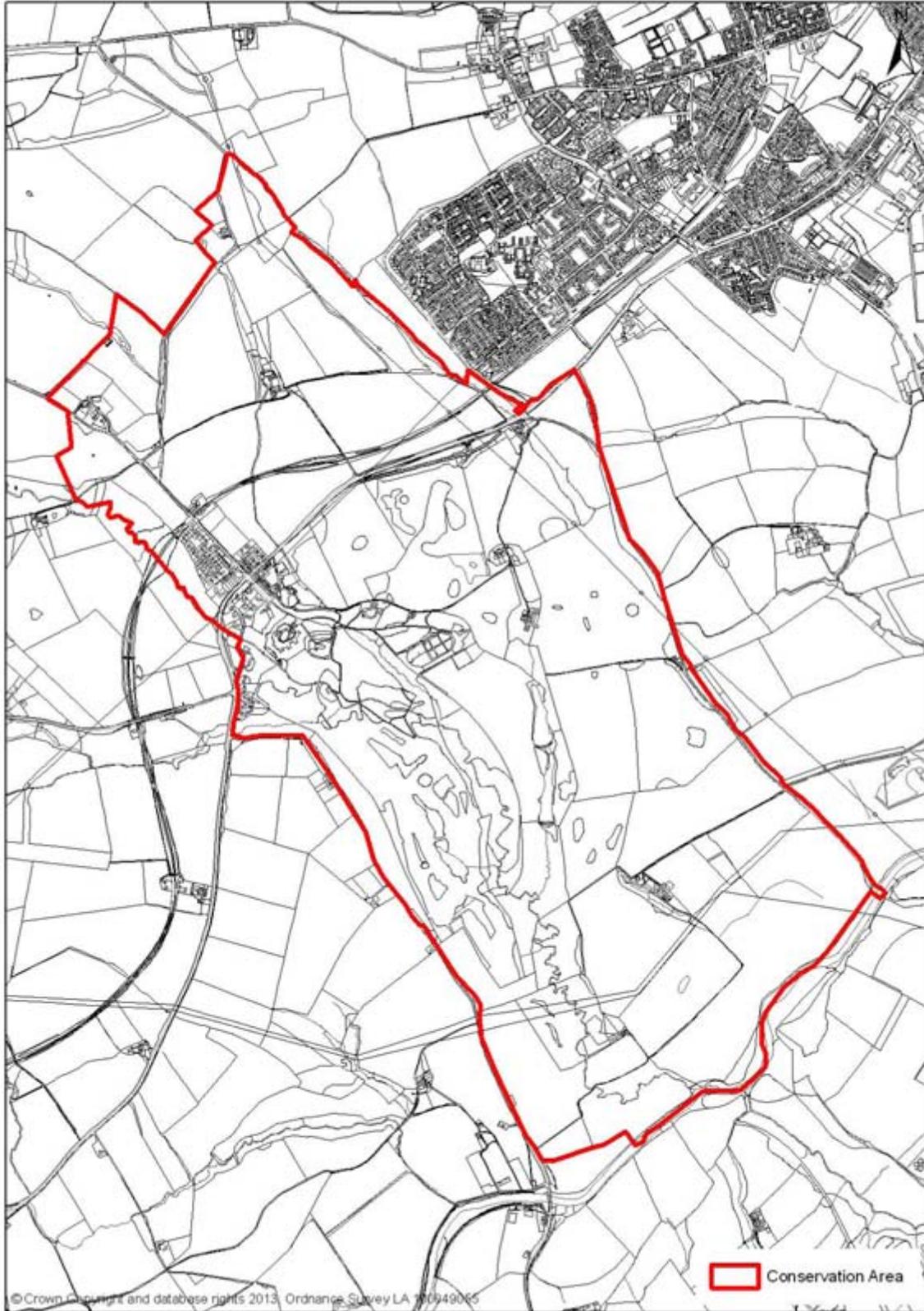
The farmland and parkland within the conservation area form the setting to the outer edge of Brandon and Meadowfield and act as a buffer and surround to Brancepeth Castle and the village. The conservation area is otherwise surrounded by farmland of reasonable quality.

The A690 road runs from Durham through Brandon and on to Willington. This road and its busy traffic sever the main village street. Adjacent to the Southern boundary of the Conservation Area and out of the district is the estate surrounding Whitworth Hall. The deserted medieval village of Stockley lies to the west, within the Wear Valley district.

Brancepeth is predominately a large estate, incorporating a small village and a number of important listed buildings and other interesting structures. The estate encompasses attractive historic parkland, open spaces, estate style cottages and small farm buildings.

The area is centred on the impressive Brancepeth Castle and incorporates many other historically important buildings of considerable architectural quality within its boundary including St Brandon's Church. All of the estate farms have been constructed in the architectural style of the main Brancepeth Estate, and add considerably to the unity and character of the area.

Map 1
Brancepeth Conservation Area
Designated 28th April, 1981



The combination of castle, historic parkland, planned village core and estate farmland is unique within the district and together they form a significant addition to local landscape, settlement quality and Durham's heritage. It adjoins the Holywell and Brandon Village Conservation Areas. Together they form a substantial historic area adjacent to the urban edge of the Brandon estates and Meadowfield.

2.2 Designation

Brancepeth village centre was designated a Conservation Area in 1967. The original Conservation Area boundary included the Castle and Church, Foxes Row, Durham Road and the Estate Village. In 1981 the Conservation Area was extended to include other important landscapes and buildings, such as Quarry Hill, Morely Farm, Scription Farm, East Park Farm, Garden House and Brancepeth Park and the former Castle Stables.

The original conservation area boundary and the 1981 enlargement are shown on the plan on page 7.

The Brancepeth Conservation Area totals approximately 600 hectares and within its boundary are

- 31 Grade II Listed Buildings;
- 3 Grade II* Listed Buildings;
- 2 Grade I Listed Buildings.
- 1 Grade II registered Historic Park and Garden

- 29 recorded archaeological sites.

The area also includes two areas of ancient woodland.

2.3 Description of the Area

The Conservation Area includes the Castle, Church and estate village of Brancepeth together with the planned parkland and associated farmland.

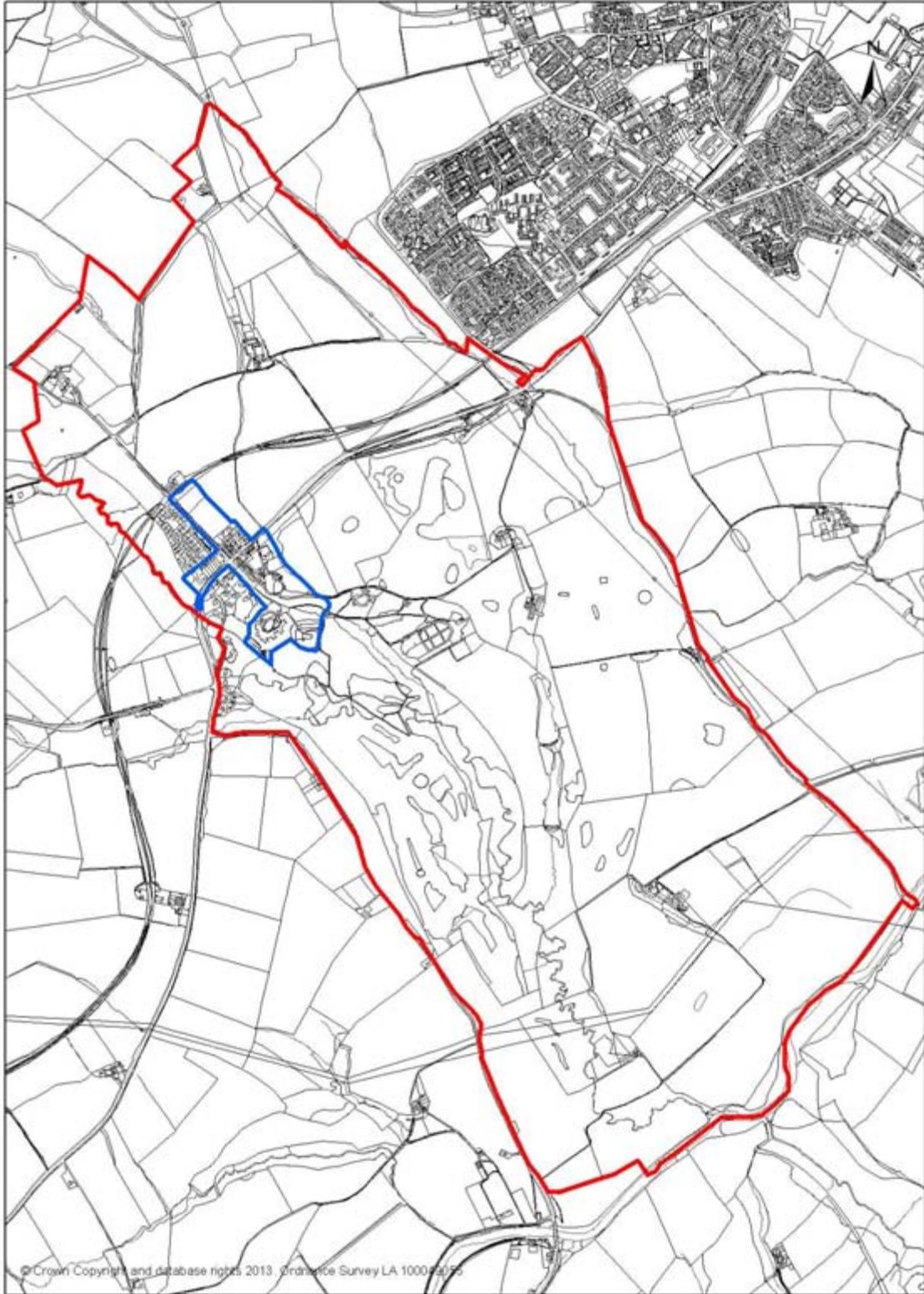
It embraces most of the estate farms whose common architectural features set in an attractive landscape create the distinctive character of the estate lands.

2.4 Schedule of the Area

The Conservation Area covers the entire village, Brancepeth and its estate. The boundary is defined on the map in page 6 and described as follows:

Starting on the River Wear (OS NZ 24743668) the boundary runs upstream along the city district boundary, then north west to Whitworth Lane through Stockley Gill Wood (OS NZ 21483829), across the field behind Quarry Hill, the bordering Morley Lane to the north of Morley Farm (OS NZ 22103972), then south east along Scription Gill to the A690 (OS NZ 23313865) Continues north east to Scription Bridge, then south east along Scription Lane embracing the eastern side tree belt running down to the River Wear.

Map 2
Brancepeth Conservation Area
*Original boundary (blue) and
enlargement (red dashed)*



2.5 History of the Area

The history of Brancepeth is a rich and deep one with many connections to figures and events on a national and regional scale that at first seems out of proportion with the scale of the village but become clear and engaging once this history is understood. This history revolves around the estate of Brancepeth, the heart of which is the Castle and is largely a story dating from the Medieval period to the 19th century.

Earliest History and tradition

The very earliest history of the area is sketchy. A flint knapping site and flint scatters show that people were active in the area in the Mesolithic, which is before farming was introduced to the British Isles. This activity continues into the Neolithic period whilst the Bronze Age may be represented by a possible burial mound near Stockley Beck. The course of a Roman road can be traced running roughly parallel with the straight stretch of the A690 just north east of the main village and random finds of a glass bead and a pottery sherd also hint of Roman occupation.

The name 'Brancepeth' is by tradition thought to derive either from 'The Boars Path' a path cleared by a huge mythical wild boar or 'Brandon's Path' which cites the village's position on the track worn by St Brandon, one of the twelve Apostles Of Ireland and, by another tradition, the discoverer of the New World in the 5th century.

Whatever the truth behind the tradition the parish church is dedicated to him. The strict translation of this Old English place name is 'Brant's path', referring to a local landowner or 'path to Brandon'.

The Saxon and Medieval Periods

The first recorded owners of Brancepeth are the Bulmer family, a prominent Saxon family that held substantial estates throughout County Durham and North Yorkshire both before and after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The estate was passed onto the influential Norman family of the Neville's through marriage in 1174. Brancepeth, after Raby Castle, formed one of their principal residences for around 400 years until their lands and possessions were forfeited to the Crown through the 5th Earls participation in the Rising of the North, a rebellion against Elizabeth I to secure Mary Queen of Scots on the throne and so return the country to Catholicism.

The influence of the Neville's and to a lesser extent, the Bulmer family shaped the present village and its surroundings. The present Castle, though much altered in the 19th century, is that which Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmoreland rebuilt in 1398 on the foundations of a previous structure dating back, at least, to the early 13th century. St Brandon's Church is a 12th century replacement of a Saxon Church with later alterations, all presumably built at the expense of the Neville family.

The surrounding countryside contain traces of ancient woodland, parkland and agricultural practice from this period. The village too, though largely containing 19th and 20th century buildings appears to have been laid out in the medieval period. Recent research on the plan form of the village has reached the interesting conclusion that the area north of the castle was laid out as the foundation for a town and not a village. This is based on the long, wide and straight main street that stretches for half a mile from the Castle to Quarry Hill Farm. This street would house the town house plots with the Castle and Church at its head, possibly with an open market place just north of the castle cut through by the Stocksley Durham Road. The fact that a town did not develop suggests that it was a speculative development by the Neville family that never grew, either through circumstance or objection, say from the Bishops of Durham to whom they were setting up in competition.

17th to 19th Centuries

Following the demise of the Neville family the estate passed to the Crown and then to Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester and Baron Carr of Brancepeth who was a favourite of James I, but reverted back to the Crown soon afterwards. The estate then passed through several different owners until it was bought around 1800 by William Russell, a local industrialist. His son, Matthew, spent £120,000 on remodelling the Castle around 1818-21, employing the architect John Patterson who

used a fanciful 'romantic' Norman style throughout, transforming the building's appearance into its present form.

In 1850 the estate passed by marriage to the Boyne family who held the estate until the First World War. The impact of the Boynes is mostly felt within the village and surrounding farmsteads as it is probable that most of the Victorian buildings date from their period of ownership. They created a greater formality and definite style to the estate through its architecture that characterises so much of the area today. Of particular note is the old village school and masters house, the Jacobean style houses that 'book-end' the south eastern section of The Village and Castle Lodge.

20th Century to Present

The development of the village in 20th century was characterised by a gradual breaking up of the estate into separate ownerships and residential expansion of the village. In addition the village played an important role in both World Wars whilst in 1998 a catastrophic fire destroyed the interior of St Brandons and one of the best Church interiors in the North of England was lost.

During the First World War the Boyne family offered the Castle as a war hospital. Following the War the Boynes vacated the Castle due to increased maintenance costs. Subsequently the Castle became the headquarters for the Durham Light Infantry and an army camp was constructed just south of the Castle

on the Crook Road, roughly where the small Stockley Grove estate is now. Both the hospital, headquarters and the camp brought Brancepeth into the lives of many servicemen, forming a link between the village and the wider world that was to endure for decades.

Brancepeth Golf Course was founded in 1924 with a course laid out by Lord Boyne and designed by HS Colt and Major JSF Morrison, who were considered amongst the leading course architects of the day.

The Brancepeth estate was sold to the Duke Of Westminster in 1948 and again in 1959 when it was divided into lots, the majority of which going to Castle Estates Ltd. The Durham Light Infantry vacated the Castle in 1962 and were followed by the Pyrex glass firm who used the building as a research centre for a short time. By the 1980s the Castle had been brought by the Dobson family who still own and maintain the property as a family home.

The history of Brancepeth has been and continues to be written about by many people. The Brancepeth Local History Group is engaged with a number of ongoing research projects, most notably Brancepeth during the Wars. The collective knowledge of the Societies members is invaluable in understanding the development of the village.

For a thorough introduction to the history of Brancepeth see 'Brancepeth 900' by JP and MP Merrington 1985.

3 Character Zones

3.1 General

The Principal Character Areas within the Conservation Area are:

- 1.0. Estate Farmland** – Estate farmland relating to the Brancepeth Estate and including planned farm buildings of positive quality.
- 2.0. Historic Parkland** – Land not in agricultural use, primarily now the setting of the Castle, Church and Churchyard and including them. Includes parkland occupied by the golf course.
- 3.0. Ancient Woodland** – Otherwise would link to historic parkland but now separated by modern development.
- 4.0. The Village Core** – This includes the principal historic Village areas and also the more modern but appropriately scaled William Russell Homes development. It is subdivided into the closely developed main street and backlands with outbuildings and separated houses.
- 5.0. Peripheral Development** – Based on primarily modern housing additions to the Village core. An area of neutral impact but including buildings with a positive contribution and landscape features. Divided into a main area and secondary developments to the east and southwest sides of the Village core.

These zones are identified on the aerial plans and described below.

3.2 Zones A and B

Estate Farmland

Zone A



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Zone B



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These areas lie to the north and south of the Conservation Area. Zone A lies either side of the Wolsingham Road (1).

This Road forms the attractive northern approach to the village linking Quarry Hill in the north to Brancepeth Castle in the south. It adjoins the Historic Parkland at the A690.

The land to the east of the road consists of working farmland rising steeply to the north. The eastern boundary is formed by an un-made track following Scription Gill Road to the A690.

Stockley Gill Wood forms the western boundary.

Zone B lies to the south of the estate. The land slopes gently down from the boundary of the historic farmland to the River Wear. It is bounded to the East by a track road off Scription Lane and the West by Whitworth Lane. It contains East Park Farm.

Key Characteristics

- Individual farm buildings (Little White Farm and Morley Farm and Quarry Hill - a modest country house, East Park Farm);
- Mature Trees forming avenues and hedgerows;
- Distinctive estate farm character that contributes to the Conservation Area and helps to providing the setting for Brancepeth Village;
- Zone A punctuated by ex railway track, now walkway.

3.3 Zone C

Historic Parkland

English Heritage Historic Parkland
Boundary (green).
Conservation Area (red)



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This Zone forms the major part of the Conservation Area and consists of the planned parkland associated with the Castle Estate. The Castle (2) lies to the south of the village. It is slightly smaller than the English Heritage designated Historic Parkland as it excludes areas of development at the edge of the village.

An additional area is associated with this zone to the east of Hoppy Acres on the basis that it associates most closely with the Parkland but is not actually part of it.

The boundary to the north is formed by the A690. Whitworth Lane forms the western boundary.

To the east of the Castle lie the former stables which have been converted to the golf club house.

A number of buildings are located further into the park land, including Park Lodge, Scription Lodge, the Pepermires and Garden House. All are of various styles and periods. Adjacent the Garden House there is the walled kitchen garden (3). This is an elongated polygonal shape incorporating a terrace walk on its outer west and south sides.

The Castle lies in the northwest corner of the parkland and is the principal building within this zone. Brancepeth Castle consists of a succession of towers and linking ranges around a central courtyard. It occupies a small prominence that overlooks Brancepeth Bridge.

St Brandon's Church (4) dates from the late 12th Century and lies to the southeast of the castle in a churchyard surrounded by mature trees.

The western extremity of the Conservation Area is marked by Scription Farm (5) a two-storey farmhouse in the Brancepeth estate style enclosed by mature trees.

The golf course (built 1924) forms part of the parkland area (6). It extends to the south and east. Apart from the course itself it comprises elements of mature planting with scattered trees throughout. The parkland contains three pools.

Key Characteristics

- Remnant Historic Parkland formed from historic Deer Park;
- Castle and Church dominate the core;
- Outlying larger houses of mixed age and style;
- Golf course across area Parkland;
- Mature trees and copses, smaller area of ancient woodland;
- Parkland, designed landscape including pools.
- Relict ridge and furrow within the parkland/golf course.

3.4 Zone D

Ancient Woodland - Stockley Gill Wood



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Zone D consists Stockley Gill Wood lying to the rear of Goodwell Lea (7) and running northwards. It is a large area of dense ancient woodland forming an important green backdrop to the western edge of Brancepeth Village. Half of the woodland was felled in the second half of the 20th century but retains its 'ancient' description due to the canopy floor.

The woodland continues south and originally adjoined Brancepeth Park. It is now fragmented by modern housing to the western edge of the Village and severed by the 1950's realignment of the A690 that made the earlier Brancepeth Bridge redundant except for local access. It is complemented by another area of ancient woodland lying in the centre of the historic parkland area.

Key Characteristics

- Mature woodland;
- Steeply sloped Dene through which Stockley Gill flows.

3.5 Zone E

The Historic Village



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This area contains the historic core of the village and other more recent buildings that associate well with the older buildings.

This zone can be separated into two. It is broken by the A690, which does not visually sever the village but is a deterrent for pedestrians and generates noise and distraction.

Numbers 1 to 19 The Village

This area of the village is the principle image and identity of Brancepeth and underlines its charm and historical interest. Its character is compact and traditional for a planned estate.

The building facades have a strong vertical emphasis and consistent terraced building line continuing the strong linear form.

These buildings are of two distinctive phases and styles of building and of considerable architectural quality and consistency. They provide a fine picturesque approach to the Castle and adding character to the Conservation Area.

A wide green verge exists on the western side of the road (south of A690) with a planned avenue of trees enhancing the approach to the Castle and helping to screen more modern development to the west.

The fine decorative Castle gates terminate the wide road. The two terraces, numbers 1 to 12 (8) and numbers 13 to 19 (9) are separated by the A690.

Brancepeth Station

The western extent of the village is marked by the now disused railway line. The Station House and Station Cottage remain and stand at the edge of the village, slightly detached from the main area of historic development. These are simple but well-built buildings, typically Brancepeth estate and typically Victorian.

Backland Areas

To the rear of the Village street (southern section) there is a further part of the village that consists of a number of buildings huddled around large well-used allotment gardens (10) with linkages through to Durham Road and the main Village street.

There is a variation in building style, ranging from grand private houses with large domestic gardens such as Hoppy Acres and Constable Meadows (11), to Numbers 1-4 Durham Road: a symmetrical pair of 19th century Tudor Gothic style buildings, traditional single-storey barns and simple stone out buildings.

This mix of building styles and types creates an interesting variation that adds visual interest and character to the area. The Rectory is a more typical 20th century building that is included because of its plot form and that it would otherwise form an isolated single unit. It forms the access to Thornbury Garth. Its open character and design detract from the otherwise historic backland development.

The allotment gardens are well cultivated and provide an important social function. The large gardens, green space and mature trees further enhance the rural feel of the village.

The Village Hall to the east of number 1 The Village is a very prominent building and an important and well-used community focal point.

Other Buildings

There is a late 19th century two storey villa in the Brancepeth Estate style (12) east of the entrance to the Forge development, Durham Road (A690).

Two large stone pillars set either side of an un-made access road from the A690 mark the entrance to

The Close that lies behind numbers 12 to 19 The Village.

Foxes Row (13) is a further terrace of houses to the east of the northern section of the main village street. They were originally a backland development but the A690 was extended to form their boundary in the 1950s.

The 1950's William Russell homes are also included in the historic village zone because of their 'village green' frontage and complementary village scale design and massing.

Key Characteristics

- Planned estate workers cottages to wide street;
- Complementary modern development;
- Rear areas with outbuildings;
- Informal surfacing to rear access tracks;
- Larger houses in mature garden plots to backland.

3.6 Zones F, G and H

Peripheral Development



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Peripheral development forms a large area to the east of the historic village, the small Forge development to the west and an outlying cul de sac to the south on the A690. The Village and part of the historic parkland separate them but they have similar characteristics in contrast to the village core.

It includes some buildings of positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The 20th century buildings are of different styles and character though all are typically of their time, in that they follow national, rather than local, suburban styles and as such have a largely neutral impact on the character of the conservation area.

Stone boundary walls and mature trees within the larger gardens are features that are associated with these properties that do have a positive impact on the conservation area.

The larger plots are set back from roads and partly concealed by trees and this helps to retain the rural distinctiveness of the village and lessen any suburban impact that these buildings may have.

Zone F

Zone F comprises modern housing on the western side of the village on the northern and southern sides of the A690. It includes the small modern estate, Goodwell Lea and a number of individual buildings (16).

An avenue of trees along the Village street verge fronts the Goodwell Leas development. The openness of this area is in contrast to the more tightly built form further into the Village

Zone G - The Forge

The Forge (17) lying to the a little further to the east is a small scale modern housing development and although built in the 20th century has little impact on the visual quality of the area.

Zone H Stockley Grove

An outlying recent development (18) sits apart from the Village and separated from the Castle by its Historic Parkland setting. It was included in the English Heritage Parkland boundary but is built over a collection of Estate outbuildings.

Key Characteristics

- Suburban cul-de-sacs of neutral impact;
- Larger plots with mature tree settings;
- Occasional positive features such as walling;

4 Townscape and Landscape Analysis

4.1 Distinctive Character

Key Characteristics:

- Historic village core;
- Peripheral, primarily recently built areas ;
- Brancepeth Castle and Church within historic Parkland;
- Estate farmland.

The immediate context for the village is provided by the historic parkland/estate farmland and supplemented by woodland and tree groups.

The historic deer park, originally based on Brancepeth Park is now divided into landscaped parkland and a golf course.

These areas and woodland contain and shelter the village. The village subdivides into the modern developments and the earlier village core. There is a further 'backland' area subdivision lying to the south east of the historic core. The historic area has a small open space and tree group important to its character.

Whilst the historic core is visually tied together its unity is weakened by the A690 Durham Road. This is an obstacle to movement, source of noise and an intrusive factor for properties closest to it.

The peripheral, mainly modern, developments generally envelop the historic core but their design or screening reduces their impact on the integrity of the village core.

The Castle and Church are separated from the village by woodland save for the gates and drive way leading from the Village, which open up to the parkland to the South.

In summary, the area is a unique combination of historic Castle, planned village and parkland linked to estate farmland.

The area contains historical buildings of considerable architectural quality incorporating fine decorative elements.

The use of traditional building materials and finely maintained frontages results in the retention of historic character. A high density of mature trees, especially those planted in long avenues, further enhances its character.

Buildings combine with green spaces and the parkland setting. Modern developments have not detracted from the key historic areas.

The combination of these factors has allowed the village to retain its rural essence.

4.2 Archaeology

The Conservation Area is rich with archaeological evidence spanning almost all periods. The County Durham Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) has details of all recorded archaeological remains in the county. This record shows that there are currently 69 recorded sites within the Conservation Area, including listed buildings. Although the main focus is from the Medieval period onwards centred around Brancepeth Castle and St Brandon's Church, a known Roman road from Willington to Chester-le-Street fort passes through the village following the alignment of the A690 or just to the south of it.

The historic parkland has retained features relating to the Medieval agricultural use of the land in the form of relict ridge and furrow.

4.3 Principal Land Use

The primary land use within the village is residential, there is no commercial element, active farmsteads exist in the Conservation Area surrounded by working agricultural lands.

4.4 Plan Form

The Conservation Area is centred on the historic core of Brancepeth Castle, St Brandon's Church and Brancepeth Village. This central area is relatively small in terms of the overall scale of the Conservation Area that is otherwise parkland or farmland.

The village form, with historically important terraced cottages leading to decorative iron gates guarding the way to the Castle and Church, is unique in County Durham.

This interrelationship between the Village, Church, Castle and parkland is the essential component of the character of the Conservation Area.

'The Village' is the main principal street and creates a strong linear pattern. Fortunately this pattern is not disturbed by modern backfill development within the rear gardens of the terraces or away from the core area.

The farms outside of the village are of varying character and scale and are set within a landscape of irregular field patterns linked together by small rural lanes and un-made tracks.

A number of the farmhouses and associated outbuildings are historically important and have strong links to the castle estate.

4.5 Views into, within and out of the Conservation Area

The mature landscape to the north allows the most important views towards the village. Mature parkland trees and woodland heavily screen the village from other points of the compass, and the imposing Castle can only be seen in views from the south.

Views out of the village are restricted by a tight built environment and an abundance of trees. However the intersecting roads, lanes, and tracks throughout the Conservation Area allow strong linear vistas out into the surrounding countryside. Occasional reminders of the village's wider landscape setting appear in glimpsed views between buildings and over boundary walls. These views are rare in the centre of the village and gradually increase in number and breadth towards its edges.

There is a fine view to the north from the car park west of Station House (a). This presents an open vista across a wide area of grazing land with the tall mature trees of Stockley Wood forming a green border to the west.

Wolsingham Road enters the village from the north offering important views across wide areas of open countryside.

To the south of Station House the low stonewall allows a attractive view out across a large expanses of open countryside and mature tree belts beyond (b).

Views of historic buildings are of equal importance. Of particular note is the view from the cross roads towards the castle. The historic terrace of properties on the western side of the road forms a picturesque scene. Rounding the corner from the gate piers to the Castle presents the most striking and surprising view within the whole Conservation Area with the huge round towers dominating the skyline.

From the Castle's southern range there is a fine view out across its parklands and over the golf course, giving a further glimpse of the landscape setting of the area (c).

The golf clubhouse itself offers vistas across large expanses of open farmland to Brandon Village, occasionally broken by mature tree belts (d).

4.6 Street Patterns and Scenes

North West

The north-western extremity of the Conservation Area is Quarry Hill, a Grade II* Listed Building. The house is surrounded by mature trees and hedgerows and lies within an open landscape setting.

Quarry Hill lies adjacent to Wolsingham Road (1), the main approach to the village from the north. The road into the centre of the Village crosses the ex- railway line and passes the former railway station on the eastern side.



(1) The approach to Brancepeth Village from the north along Wolsingham Road.

The road continues on towards the Village, the view here is dominated by a fine avenue of trees lining either side of the roadway and set within a well-maintained grass verge (2). The large mature trees cast wide shadows across the road and public footpaths creating a dramatic green tunnel entrance to the village and drawing the viewer's attention away from the surrounding buildings.



(2) Views north and south along Wolsingham Road the most attractive approach to the village dominated by mature trees.

North Village

The Village has a strong linear form, the tightly packed buildings front the wide through road running north to south. Although the wide tarmac road has a strong impact on the Village centre mature trees mitigate its scale.

A690 Crossing

There is a part quartering of the Village on the crossroads where Wolsingham Road meets the A690 and crosses to the Village street leading to Brancepeth Castle.

The visual and character links across the road are sufficient to retain the single street as the dominant characteristic.

This area is subject to a large volume of fast flowing traffic generating a considerable amount of noise that contrasts with the peace and tranquillity of the village to the north and the area surrounding Brancepeth Castle and church.

The form of the village is most apparent from the centre of the through road at the northern end of The Village. It presents an uninterrupted view from Station House straight through to the entrance gates of Brancepeth Castle to the south.

South Village

The linear form is further strengthened and enhanced by well-defined property boundaries, avenues of trees and public footpaths. Vistas are created along these various straight lengths whereas lateral views out of the village are restricted by the tight-knit arrangement of buildings and extensive tree cover.

A number of buildings are set well back in their plots with large prominent front gardens and taking advantage of their position.

These private gardens help to create an attractive setting for the buildings and add interest and colour to the street scene.

The village has evolved in relation to the main historic combination of Brancepeth Castle (first built in the 13th century), its estate and the 12th century Church of St Brandon's.

Whilst this historic core has remained intact over the previous hundred years, the overall street pattern of the village has evolved over time. It is a mix of planned and informal development.

Many properties appear to have been constructed as individual buildings rather than terraced development, modern buildings have been inserted during different periods. Other buildings have been altered and extended creating a variation of house plan and building style.

20th Century Village

The varied mix of properties within the village, although predominantly 20th century sit well into the landscape and add visual interest whilst not greatly detracting from the village's traditional character (3).



(3) A modern building along the main street frontage set back within its plot and surrounded by a well landscaped garden.

The South West

Leaving the village to the south west via the A690 the sharp left turn leads to Brancepeth Old Bridge a Grade II listed structure and ancient monument of post Medieval date.

The road continues south out of the City District boundary and turns a sharp left back into the Conservation Area leading to a cul-de-sac of modern residential properties.

This area is formerly the site of an extensive nursery and garden belonging to the Castle up until the early 1900's.

Properties are accessed via steep inclined driveways and hidden from view by an abundance of mature trees and shrubs creating a small quiet urban environment that feels isolated from the rest of the village. The former entrance to the nursery is marked on the eastern side by two large stone pillars now forming the access to Roman Chare a 20th century private dwelling.

4.7 Pedestrian Routes

Access to the surrounding countryside is good due to the ex railway path and country lanes.

There are not many public rights of way. A very important pedestrian route follows the line of the former railway, the tree lined unmade track linking Brancepeth with Brandon to the east and Willington to the west (4).

It offers important links to the surrounding countryside and into Stockley Gill Wood to the east.



(4) The view west along the Brandon – Bishop Auckland walk.

Many un-made paths and tracks link farmsteads further out into the Conservation Area and there is a complex network of tracks within the castle parkland incorporating footbridges over the becks. These are not rights of way.

A track leads from the former stables to the home farm (now the Golf Club) is surrounded by traditional estate fencing. The Neville's developed paths in the 19th century, forming a pedestrian linkage between Home Farm, Castle and Church but are not, again, rights of way.

There is also the Weardale Path that runs along the Wear from Durham and up into the Dales.

4.8 Landscape Setting, Open Spaces and Woodland

The Conservation Area is characterised by a range of landscape types encompassing agricultural land (estate farmland) forming open countryside to the north and east, a dense area of ancient woodland to the west and the castle estate parkland (5) and golf course to the south which are edged with more agricultural land (6).

The Castle parkland is large, spacious and well-landscaped, consisting of mature trees including a belt of exotic species running along the approach road to the castle.

Brancepeth Beck runs northwest to southeast through the former deer park, running south of the Castle. The golf course grounds consist of attractive areas of open grassland, scattered mature trees and 20th century planting.



(5) The approach to the village from the south along the Whitworth Lane with the Castle in the distance set within its parkland.



(6) The view from the southern range of Brancepeth Castle towards East Park and the golf course.

The Beck forms the boundary of the golf course and provides separation from the parkland to the east.

The strong relationship between the village and the surrounding landscape is supported by substantial green space set behind and around buildings. Roadside verges and an abundance of trees also reinforce this rural character.

There is a distinctive rural feel within the village enhanced by positive green elements including individually distinctive trees and hedgerows. Footpaths, un-made tracks, back lanes and well-maintained private garden spaces enhance this. The surrounding countryside is easily accessible through a number of footpaths, which open up the green backdrop the village and form a distinctive contribution to the character of the area.

Appendix 1 is a full description of Brancepeth Park taken from the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

Green Spaces

There is no formal open space within the village, such as a village green or public park. There is limited accessible green open space for public enjoyment. Access to the surrounding landscape and parkland helps offset this.

Alternative spaces have been formed by enhancing gaps between and around buildings and spaces along the roadside.

Although these are restricted in size green elements as lawn areas, hedgerows, trees, verges and private

gardens combine to give a rural feel to the village.

Key roadside verges exist to the front of numbers 13 –19 The Village, and prominent grassed areas exist either side of the access road to The Forge This incorporates a stone bus shelter.

Of particular note is a long narrow verge running south from Station House on the eastern side through the whole village terminating at the cross roads. Nearby the trees around the Forge development soften the edge of the road.

There is a wide well-maintained lawn area to the front of William Russell Homes enclosed by a mature hedgerow and timber fencing and incorporating tall trees within its boundary along the roadside (7). This significantly contributes to the overall attractiveness of the street scene and the character of the village.



(7) William Russell Homes, single storey sheltered housing constructed in the mid 20th century.

The large area of paddock to the south of Station House lies at the heart of the village. The former cricket ground is currently used as grazing land and also adds to the rural character. The random rubble stone boundary wall runs tight against the footway, adding to the character and following the traditional village form.

Smaller Private Spaces

A strong part of the village's character is that recent houses have large frontage gardens and are set amongst trees and this helps to create a pleasant environment which softens the impact of such development on the historic village.

The private gardens in the village vary in size and content but are very well maintained (8).

Many front the main village street and help to contribute to the overall attractiveness of the area. This introduces a variety of colour and helps to create a landscape setting, much of which can be viewed from public footpaths.

Private allotment gardens lie to the rear of numbers 1-12 The Village and are surrounded by random rubble stonewalls with small timber gates (9). The allotments are well cultivated and enhance the rural scene and provide an important social focus for the village.



(8) Number 13 The Village a Grade II Listed Building occupying a prominent corner position in the village enhanced by well maintained landscaped elements.

Ancient Woodland

Stockley Wood runs north to south along the western edge of the village. It is an ancient woodland with mature trees and a diverse range of flora and fauna.

The woodland provides an important green backdrop to the village in views from the east and adjoins Brancepeth Park to the south.



(9) The allotments to the rear of the main village.

Trees

Trees contribute significantly to the character of the village (10). It is fortunate in having considerable numbers of both fine individual trees and attractive avenues and groups of trees. These enhance general views, individual buildings or groups of buildings.

There are also over thirty smaller woods throughout the Conservation Area, all of which form distinctive landscape elements. These enhance the area's character and visual amenity.

There are a number of individual trees, avenues of trees and groups of trees scattered through out the village. These vary in species and age and further enhance the village setting.

Prominent Avenues and Groups

A prominent avenue of trees is on both sides of the main through road of the village, to the front of Goodwell Lea. The planned avenue consists of Copper Beech, Sycamore, Oak and Lime.



(10) Trees are a very important element of the Conservation Area enhancing public spaces and softening the effect of modern development.

Another key avenue exists along the access road to Foxes Row, on both sides of the A690 to the west, along the western side of the approach to Brancepeth Castle and within and forming the eastern boundary of The Forge.

There are a number of key groups of trees (Beech, Copper Beech and Sycamore) to the front of Russell Close Together with the Beech trees around Durham Road they contribute much to the village.

On the western side of the road to the Castle an avenue of trees follows the winding access forming a fine approach to the Castle and Church. The Castle is set in a wide area of green space and overlooks its lands to the south.

A large area of mixed hardwoods consisting mainly of Beech, Horse Chestnut, Yew, Lime, Elm, Oak, Gean and Ash is located immediately north of Brancepeth Castle.

A key group of trees surround and screen the 12th Century Church of St Brandon. A wide gravelled road giving access to the Church and the medieval graveyard cuts a view through this screen. The group consists of Cedar, Pine, Elm, Sycamore and Beech.

Large trees and shrubs border the approach to the golf club house to the east of the Castle echoing the approach to the Village from the north. The tightly packed trees closely edge the road giving a strong feeling of enclosure.

4.9 Built Form

Important Historic and prominent Buildings

Station House

At the northern end of Brancepeth Village, the former railway station is now a private detached house (11). It was built for the opening of the railway in 1864 in the Brancepeth 'Estate style', as a two-storey building with one-storey side extension and porch.

The railway and this station closed in 1965. It remained derelict until it was converted to a house. The modern windows detract from the quality of the building, but they are all in the original openings.

Around the house are a number of surviving railway features such as the entrance gate and railway fencing. 'Station House' itself is set back from the main Village street in an attractive rural setting, surrounded by trees and open fields with a long stone rubble wall linking the house to the main street.

The Village

The two terraces to the eastern side of the village either side of the cross roads consist of fine buildings that were originally cottages for the estate workers.

These are of considerable architectural quality and historic interest and combined with the Castle and Church form Brancepeth's historic identity.



(11) Station House although un-listed is of considerable quality and provides a valuable link the village's past.



(12) 1-12 The Village a terrace of Grade II Listed Building.

The buildings are constructed in the estate style and combine together to form a picturesque setting and approach to the Castle.

The construction of these properties is principally of two periods, mid to late 18th century and mid 19th century, and the character is compact and very traditional.

The residential properties are set back slightly from the pavement by a cobbled strip, low random rubble stone boundary walls and estate style railings. These all reinforce the historic core's character.

Mid to Late 18th Century Terrace

The terrace, consisting of numbers 1 to 12, is formed by two storey estate cottage style dwellings that are of a stone construction many with pebble dashed render (12). Brick chimneystacks are a consistent feature adding interest at roof level, along with steeply pitched red pantile roofs and narrow front entrances. Stone mullioned windows exist throughout.

The buildings have original 16 pane sash windows with glazing bars in a white painted finish, fine panelled white finished doors with decorative elements, projecting sills mainly of stone and traditional cast iron rain water goods.

A number of the buildings are covered in ivy and other climbing plants adding to the character and enhancing the scene. No5 and No8 have replacement windows.

The properties at the end of the terrace, No's 1 and 12, are constructed in the Jacobean style with steeply pitched graduated green slate roof, set in 3 bays and again incorporating features such as fine panelled doors, stone-mullioned windows, and large ornamental brick chimney stacks and have decorated ball finials on fine well detailed and prominent gables (13).



(13) Number 12 The Village.

Mid 19th century Terrace

The terrace a little further north, numbers 13 to 16, are two storeys, built in the mid 19th century of squared sandstone in the Tudor style (14).

The buildings have steeply pitched graduated green slate roofs with a fine symmetrical frontage, vertical ribbed doors, double chamfered stone mullioned windows, fine dormer windows and prominent decorative white finished overhanging bargeboards.

No's 17,18 and 19 were formerly the site of the Saw Mill in the 1880's and later in the early 1900's the Village school and Masters house. They are now three private dwellings again constructed in the Tudor style with 4 large hip roofed dormers and interesting tall cylindrical chimneystacks.

Low stonewalls enhanced by planting exist to the frontages with low stone steps allowing access up to the properties. Ivy and other climbing vegetation on the end bays, a low prominent hedgerow fronting the central bays and other planting elements enhance the considerable quality of the terrace.



(14) Numbers 13, 14, 15 and 16 The Village a fine terrace of 4 Grade II Listed estate cottages.

The Close and back lane

To the rear of numbers 13-19 The Village is a small back land area consisting of a number of garages and small outbuildings. The stone built outbuildings reflect the traditional linear building form of the village and add to the character of the area (15).

Two large stone pillars set either side of an un-made access road from the A690 mark the entrance to The Close, a late 19th century two storey villa. The villa is built from squared sandstone in narrow courses in the Brancepeth Estate style and has a purple slate roof with ashlar chimneystacks.



(15) Access from Durham Road to The Close with the stone build out buildings on the left and the Grade II Listed villa to the right.

1-4 Durham Road

Numbers 1-4 Durham Road to the east of the main village street are a pair of semi detached one and a half storey cottages of Tudor Gothic style built between 1880 and 1896 (16). They are constructed of smooth square coursed rubble with bay windows to ground floors, mullioned windows, stone chimneystacks and have decorative fish.

Each has a well-used and well-planted front and side garden with low stone boundary walls of coursed rubble fronting the footpath.



(16) Numbers 1 and 2 Durham Road.

Rectory Cottages

1-2 Rectory Cottages further south were originally designed as a large, cube-shaped pitched-roof block. The building has one Victorian sash window on each floor to the rear, whereas the front of the building has a simple batten door and fanlight.

The surrounding walls are of coursed rubble sandstone with prominent quoins.

Rectory Cottages have interesting early 19th century outbuildings, built from two inch handmade bricks. These buildings are of good quality, and have appreciable design quality.

Village Hall

To the east of number 1 The Village lies the larger scale Village Hall. A very prominent building built by the parishioners in 1924.

Outbuildings

The rural character is enhanced by the presence of converted agricultural buildings and stable blocks in the heart of the village (17). These are of interest and retain much of their traditional character.

The garaging fifteen metres to the north east of number 12 The Village is the former village coach house built in the mid to late 19th century.

The building is of two storey and constructed of coursed rubble stone with a slate roof, set in four wide bays with large boarded double doors and is a Grade II Listed Building. Opposite lies a similar former stable of a L-shaped plan with several double opening doors and openings and add character to the village.

Brancepeth Castle

From the main village street, the Castle estate is entered through a fine stone gateway.

This was built in the mid 19th century and consists of a central carriageway flanked by pedestrian entrances with decorative elements.

Although the gateway is in need of repair it is a prominent and interesting feature marking the entrance to the estate (17).

Through the gateway the road continues past the Castle Lodge on the right a detached architect designed Lodge built in the early 20th century in the estate style.

The Lodge is a two storey stone building to a L-shaped plan with mullioned windows and a coat of arms in a panel on the gable.

The building has a steep hipped roof and is set in fine landscaped grounds. The Lodge was built around 1890 and has a fine landscaped garden retaining much of its original charm.

The impressive drive continues, flanked by large mature trees, to the Castle which cannot be seen until the last moment, when the viewer is taken by surprise by the sheer dominance of the castle and its two large round central towers (18).

The south western range offers a glimpse into the Castle's past with various stages of construction spanning over four hundred years visible in the stone work.

The Castle is the principal historic building in the village beginning life as a simple house built by the Bulmers (a Saxon family from the 12th century). The Bulmers also built a simple wooden shrine to St Brandon later beginning St Brandon's Church. When William the Conqueror marched north, the Norman influence saw the house fortified and the tiny church established. Prior to rebuilding in the 19th century the castle was predominately a military stronghold with domestic accommodation.



(17) The 19th century entrance gates to the Castle Estate from the Village.

The Castle is built from smooth solid ashlar stone and has an almost continuous curtain wall, punctured on the north by two watchtowers and on the south by two larger towers.



(18) The castle has a large irregular circular courtyard enclosed by a curtain wall and linking ranges principally of a mix of Norman and Gothic styles.

Although much of the Castle was rebuilt in the early 19th century there are visible joints in the curtain wall showing traces of original medieval masonry.

Due to the numerous additions and alterations, the Castle is largely a Gothic Revival rather than truly medieval building. This is particularly evident on the inside of the curtain wall and the gatehouse ranges.

The gatehouse itself is a massive three-storey construction with its archway flanked by battered round towers.

Although the windows throughout the castle are largely 19th century, there are earlier examples. Some of the original walls and towers of the Neville Family house still exist although most have been lost due to the 19th century reconstruction.

Church of St Brandon

The 12th Century Church of St Brandon is situated south east of the castle, at the southern end of the estate. Entrance to the Church grounds is through an attractive set of sandstone gate piers, approached by a wide gravelled road (19). This entrance dates from the early 18th Century, and is grade II Listed.

The stone wall surrounding the churchyard is built partially of medieval grave covers, and the church is set amongst mature trees.



(19) The entrance to St. Brandon's Church.

The origins of the Church pre-date Durham Cathedral, and it has been the Christian centre of worship in Brancepeth for over a thousand years.

The church tower is 12th century and the lower part of the nave 13th century. In the 14th century the nave was extended, transepts built, and the aisles enlarged to enclose the tower. By the late 14th century the chancel was added, as was the chapel on the south of the chancel.

The Church (20) is a Grade I Listed Building and recognised as one of the finest examples of medieval architecture in Northern England.



(20) St. Brandon's Church

From the 16th century until 1998 the interior was particularly splendid, containing several medieval artefacts and a unique set of complete 17th century furnishings in a richly carved Gothic style.

Catastrophically, the glorious carved woodwork was destroyed in the devastating fire of 1998. The church was restored in 2005.

Other Buildings in the Conservation Area

Within the Conservation Area there are a number of historic farmhouses and associated outbuildings principally of early to mid 19th century date, although some are much older. Principally the farmhouses are two storey with steeply pitched roofs, brick/stone chimney stacks (some octagonal) and stone mullioned windows with sash windows a common feature.

Morley Farm

Of particular note is Morley Farm an important historical farmstead accessed via a minor road north of the Castle. It is an attractive group of stone and pantiled buildings in a pleasant landscape setting. The listed farmhouse is of two storeys the main block comprising of three bays with the former cottage adding a further two bays to the south.

It incorporates substantial remains of a 13th century building and an 18th century barn and gin-gang; itself a listed building. Within Morley Farm are a group of farm buildings centred round a courtyard.

The buildings were built in the 18th and 19th century's and listed for group value with the farmhouse and cottage.

Estate Parkland

Within the estate parkland there are a number of buildings of various periods which have a strong historic link to the castle including Pepermires, originally the castle's laundry rooms now modernised and divided into two private dwellings.

Golf Course

To the east of the Castle the golf clubhouse was formerly the Castle stables belonging to Lord Boyne. Accommodation was incorporated into the stables during the building of the golf course in 1924.

Garden House

Garden House is a grade II Listed two-storey building, set in attractive surroundings close to the enclosed Kitchen Gardens. It has gabled wings and a central link, and an attractive semi-circular porch with paired Doric columns to the façade. The building appears to be of an early estate design built between 1830 and 1850, evidenced by the size of brick. Although unlisted, the walled garden adjacent to Garden House is of a high quality and contributes to the setting of the main house.

Tudhoe Grange

To the east of Garden House the Grade II Listed “Tudhoe Lodge” was formerly named East Lodge, and built by Lord Boyne in 1870. It was designed as the estate gardener’s home, and built to the estate style.

It is two-storey, of smooth snecked stone rubble, and has mullioned windows with a coat of arms in the panel on the gable.

Scripton Farm

Scripton Farm and Scripton Lodge mark the eastern boundary of the estate lands approaching from Brandon.

It is constructed in the architectural style of the main Brancepeth Estate and adds considerably to the character of the area.

The farmhouse is now two dwellings and is of sandstone construction, originally built in the mid 19th century but with 20th century additions to the rear. It is in the Tudor style with a graduated green slate roof, fine panelled doors, 12 pane sash windows and tall octagonal chimneystacks seen elsewhere on the older buildings within the Village.

Blacksmith’s Shop

The 20th century Forge development incorporates the 18th century former blacksmiths shop (21) and although the building is unlisted, it is of a high quality and a surviving tribute to one of Brancepeth’s rural industries.

The blacksmith shop’s conversion to residential use has retained the original horseshoe decorative door surround.



(21) The former Blacksmiths shop; now a private home and a valuable link to the village’s industrial past.

Foxes Row

Foxes Row lies at the south western end of the village. It is a row of seven houses constructed at different times. No 1 is the oldest and incorporates a date stone of 1748. It may have been built in conjunction with a large nursery which adjoined the property. Nos 2 & 3 are fine late 20th century estate cottages of a quality that suggests they were made for ‘upper officials’. The remaining properties were built in the mid 20th century as forestry workers houses.

William Russell Homes

On the western side of the North section of the Village, the single storey sheltered housing from the mid 20th century has a steeply pitched grey slate roof with brick chimneystacks and central bay windows.

A stone plaque dates the William Russell Homes as 1955. Whilst not of significant architectural quality they do contribute to the character of the village and reflect the traditional building pattern.

The building frontage has a fine wide and well maintained front lawn running its length with timber seats and one red serpent style seat. The red paint on the seat is a survival of an estate colour and once all the cottage doors within the village were painted in the same red.

See Appendix 2 for Listed Building and key unlisted building descriptions.

4.10 Materials, textures and colours

The village is characterised by a good standard of traditional building materials.

Many buildings are constructed of rubble stone and many exteriors of buildings are finished in wet-dash/wet-cement or painted render, though there has been a recent trend to remove this and return to the natural stone finish. The 20th century properties are predominantly brick.

There is an obvious inconsistency between the materials used for the various 20th century development which unfortunately is a negative contrast and often at odds to the uniformity of the historic are of the village.

Roofing

The traditional roofing materials of the village are predominantly red pantiles and grey slate (22). Some of the older buildings have graduated green slate roofs. Replacements have occasionally taken place, steeply pitched roofs, overhanging eaves and traditional cast iron rainwater goods are all common.

Brick chimneystacks are an important feature of the buildings and help to establish a strong rhythm in the street scene and along the ridgeline of houses. The large octagonal chimneys of the older buildings form a distinctive and prominent feature.



(22) Variation in roofing materials and colour on the older buildings of the village.

Windows and Doors

Window styles can be divided between those to historic and those on modern properties.

Older buildings have a mix of sash windows with glazing bars in white painted finish and stone mullioned windows with distinctive lintels and stone cills (23).

A number of properties have bay windows and occasional dormers appear in the roofline.

Windows in historic buildings have occasionally been altered in favour of more modern designs and openings have been altered to accept these modern insertions.



(23) Variation in window styles and detailing openings tend have flush stone lintels and projecting cills.

There is a variation of door styles: Victorian, panelled and modern, many with glazing elements in a variety of colours (24). The older buildings have panelled and ribbed doors a number with overlights in moulded surrounds. The ribbed doors are unusual and suggest an estate style, much in keeping with

the medieval and Tudor styles used on the 19th century buildings. The newer buildings have UPVC windows and doors in a variety of styles.

(24) Variation in door styles.



Boundary Treatments

Property boundaries are well defined in a variety of styles and materials. Most common around the older buildings are random rubble stone walls, some with half round copings. Iron railings of various styles all in black paint finish can be found throughout the village.

There is a variation of styles of timber fencing including a more traditional estate style (25).

Many are well constructed and there is a variation in height and they are appropriate to the rural context of the Conservation Area.

The western side of Brancepeth Park is enclosed by iron railings topped with elegant tulip bud heads. Some of the railings have disappeared, but a considerable amount survives.



(25) Various boundary treatments can be found through the Conservation Area vertical and horizontal timber, traditional cast iron railings and random rubble stone walls.

4.11 Scale, Height and Massing

Buildings in the village are principally of two storeys. However there are a number of larger private homes.

Hoppy Acres and Constable Meadows exceed the principal height and are 3 storeys although they are set well back from the main village street and enclosed by tall mature trees and hedgerows.

4.12 Street Furniture and Utilities

Fortunately there are a small number of traditional style seats and a number of half barrelled planters. The presence of telephone, electricity and street lighting columns diminish from the rich and varied roofline of the Village. Many are softened or obscured by trees or situated to the rear of buildings.

There is a lack of visual clutter and roadside elements such as road signs and bollards. There is no visible overrunning damage to the roadside verges despite a lack of off-street parking.

4.13 Unique or unusual features

A number of unique and interesting features add charm, character and variety to the village street scene.

1 Gate

An intriguing old timber gate adds interest to the paddock adjacent to Station House. There is no historical map evidence going back to 1860 for a building on this site, although the large plot of land is shown on the 1938 Ordnance Survey plan as a cricket ground with a small pavilion to the east.

However the gate appears to be of a much earlier date.

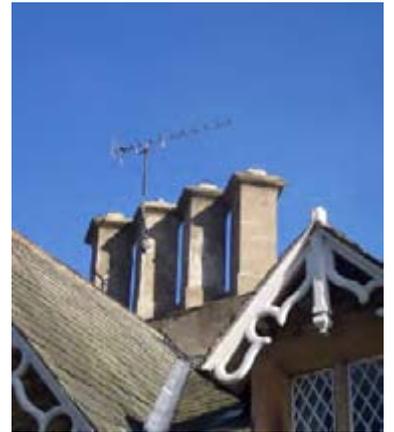
2 Gas Lights

There are a number of traditional decorative gas lights on the older buildings on the village street just below roof level adding visual interest.



3 Drinking Fountain

A Grade II Listed water fountain, 2.5 metres high and set against a stone wall, lies in between number 2 and 3 Durham Road. It is built from ashlar stone with baroque detailing, and originally intended for the use of estate workers.



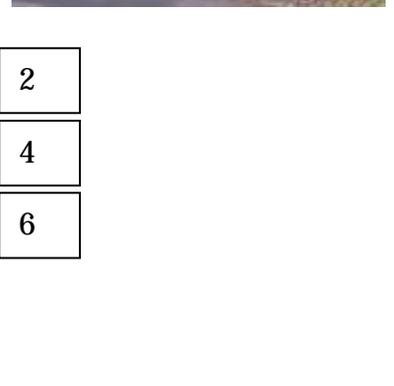
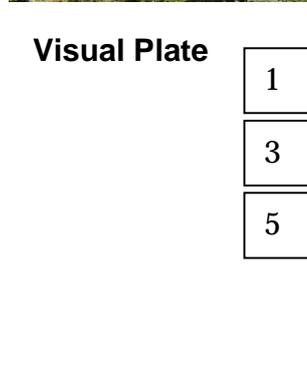
4 Chimney Stacks

There are a number of tall octagonal chimney stacks on some of the older buildings within the Village and on the estate farmhouses.



5 Bellcote

Number 17 has fine prominent gabled bellcote (housing for a bell) with a single opening, a reminder of the buildings past use as the village school.



6 Lamp post

A Grade II Listed lamp post dated 1863 set in cast iron with a number of decorative lion and spear motifs lies on the corner of the road adjacent to number 12 the Village.

Visual Plate

1	2
3	4
5	6

4.14 Positive, Neutral and Negative Elements

This section of the appraisal aims to identify features, which contribute positively, features that make no positive contribution, or features that detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as an area of special architectural and historic interest.

Identified are;

Key Features

Essential elements which help to define the special character of the village.

Positive Buildings and Elements

Buildings and features which contribute positively to the character of the area and which it are considered desirable to preserve or enhance.

Neutral Buildings and Elements

Buildings and features whilst not forming part of the special character of the area do not detract from it.

Negative Buildings and Elements

Buildings and features that do not contribute positively to the character of area.

Areas of Improvement

Potential work that would help to improve the visual quality of the village.

Key Features

Street Pattern

Brancepeth Village is a small settlement developed along a strong linear form stemming from its relationship with Brancepeth Castle and St Brandon's Church. The core historic street of the Conservation Area remains relatively intact and there is a variation of building styles from different periods fronting the main through road. New development within the village does not detract from the visual quality of the area and generally fits well into its context. There is an intimate relationship between the buildings and the surrounding landscape

Historic Buildings

There are a number of historic buildings within the Conservation Area that are of considerable and distinctive architectural quality constructed in the unique estate style and with a strong use of traditional materials. These buildings along with the Castle, 12th century Church, and other buildings of individual quality in a pleasant parkland setting form the essential components of the area's special architectural and historical interest.

Surrounding Landscapes, mature trees and green spaces

These are significant elements contributing to the character of the Conservation Area.

Green verges and footpaths, open spaces and private gardens are all well maintained and create the Village's character.

They enhance the setting of the buildings and act as a foil to the tightly packed urban form.

The parkland and surrounding farmland has many large mature trees. These, together with the village's street trees, large garden trees and areas of woodland have created a backdrop of tree canopies which may be seen from all parts of the Conservation Area both as long views and between buildings. This backdrop is a highly distinctive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Topography

The village is enclosed by mature parkland, dense woodland and open farmland. The area surrounding the village is generally hilly and well cultivated and is of a picturesque appearance. It is an attractive setting to the village and contributes to the character of the Conservation Area.

Materials

A strong use of traditional materials makes a valuable contribution to the quality of the village and enhances its character.

Positive Buildings and Elements

Buildings

Quarry Hill
Morley Farm
Station House
1-19 The Village
The Close, Durham Road
Tudhoe Lodge
Old Blacksmiths Shop
2-3 Foxes Row
Rectory Stables
Golf Club House
Brancepeth Castle
St Brandon's Church
Hoppy Acres
Constable Meadows
Village Hall
Castle Lodge
Rectory Stables
Garden House
Scripton Farm
William Russell Homes
1-2 Rectory Cottages
Park Lodge
Little White Farm
Coach House
East Park Farm House
Thornberry Garth

Other Positive Elements

Landscape

Lines of trees and green spaces
Well-maintained public spaces
Cobbled paths
Estate style railings
Consistent use of building materials
Attractive parkland setting
Views out into open countryside
The Village's landscape setting
Tranquillity

Outbuildings and Other Features

Rubble stone boundary walls
Stone outbuildings
Listed Tombstones in medieval churchyard
Gateway to Castle
Gate piers, stone walls, stile and overthrow entrance to St Brandon's Church

Neutral Buildings and Elements

Modern Buildings (20th Century)

Significant pockets of modern housing development, although potentially detrimental to more traditional surroundings, do not significantly intrude on the visual quality of the area. They tend to be very well maintained and sit well in the landscape.

Some of these new buildings might otherwise be regarded as negative but for the neutralizing effect of boundary treatments, the use of tree cover and the siting of the building deep within their plots all ensure that they do not dominate the area. The planned nature of the historic village and its close relationship with the surrounding landscape has also helped to absorb new development with limited consequence.

The two larger areas of modern housing development are located on the western side of the village north and south of the A690.

Goodwell Lea is a 20th century small housing estate consisting of two storey properties with white UPVC rainwater goods, windows, doors, a number have attached single storey garages and wide tarmac driveways.

The modern buildings to the north west of the Castle have been built as individual buildings. These are very well concealed being hidden from the main road by an important avenue of mature trees. Brancepeth Park encloses the buildings to the southwest and southeast.

Although modern these buildings are older than those of Goodwell Lea and the area has a more traditional feel.

The Forge is a smaller modern housing development of 11 properties accessed via the A690. Although built in the 20th century the care in the building detail, use of appropriate materials and the fine avenue of mature trees ensures that the development does not significantly intrude on the visual quality of the area.

Neutral Buildings

Station Cottages
1-30 Goodwell Lea
1,4,5,6,7 Foxes Row
Westacre
The Copse
2-10 The Forge
Downsgarth
Dukes Meadows
West Wood
Peppermires
Quarry Hill Cottages
Littlewhite Farm

Scripton Lodge
Brancepeth Manor
Bridge Lane House
Buck Burns
Caer Urfa
Castle Rigg
Castle Firs
Chares
Sylvan Towers
Old Road End
Tanglewood
1-7 Stockley Grove

Negative Buildings and Elements

Buildings

The Rectory
Garages 20m east of Village Hall

Other negative elements

Landscape and Street Furniture

Unmaintained grassed areas
Overgrown spaces
Poor surfacing
Speed limit signs
Plastic litterbins and red seats
Tarmac roads
Standard road signs

Other Building Features

TV aerials
UPVC windows and rainwater goods
Satellite dishes
Yellow alarm boxes

4.15 Community Involvement

The proposed stages for publication adoption, consultation, amendment and confirmation of final Appraisal are as follows.

1. Approval of draft one by Head of Cultural Services;
2. Issue of draft one to City of Durham Ward councillors and approved by the council service portfolio holder (amendment if required);
3. Publication of draft two to local stakeholders including the Parish Council, issue to other stakeholders (amendments to from Draft four);
4. Draft two to public exhibition and consultation. Amendment to form final draft.
5. City of Durham approval and adoption of final draft.
6. Amendment to Conservation Area Boundary.

The original Conservation Area was drawn to cover closely the Village in 1967. It was subsequently substantially enlarged to cover the Castle and Church, the Historic Parkland and sections of the Estate farmland.

There is nothing that has been identified within this appraisal that indicates any areas were unduly incorporated in the Conservation Area boundary or issues that would be resolved by extension of the boundary.

Further analysis is required under historic character assessment of the wider landscape area. This may reveal refinements to cover the Estate farmland boundary or possibly Brancepeth Deer Park. . This assessment, if carried out, would confirm the links and characteristics to identify character areas relating to historical similarities.

This appraisal has concentrated on the built areas and major character zones within the Conservation Area boundary.

4.17 Issues and areas for Improvement

Potential Issues arising from this appraisal are:

Within the Conservation Area there are elements that would benefit from improvement works and help to further enhance the area as a whole.

Road signs and street furniture

- Replace or overhaul (some signs are listed and historically important) road signs and street furniture throughout the village.

Railings

- Repairs are necessary to areas of estate style railings throughout the village particularly around the Village Hall and road leading to the Golf Club House. The estate railings are also in poor condition, sections are missing and reinstatement would have a positive impact.

Gaps in Stonewalls

- Sections of stonewalling are missing at The Close, reinstate sections of wall or insert more appropriate solid gates.

Missing architectural features

- Reinststate missing finials and chimneys from the older buildings within the village.

Castle Gates

- Repair and re-painting works are needed to the Castle gates that show visible vehicle impact damage.

The Rectory

- This offers potential for more sympathetic improvement to accommodate the building into the Village core.

Traffic Management

- Traffic management, namely on the A690, is a constant and serious issue for the village. Whilst it is not the purpose of the appraisal to comment on highway issues, traffic calming measures, if sensitively designed, have the potential to enhance the conservation area by improving the overall sense of amenity.

Surfacing

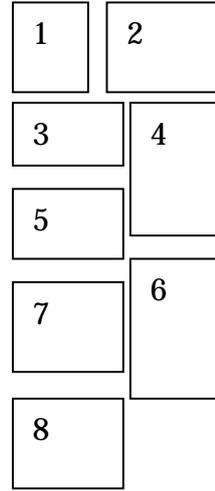
- Tar macadam finishes and pre cast concrete kerbs can be considered for replacement with more appropriate modern or traditional surfacing materials in the historic core of the village.

Tree and Woodland Management

- Large areas of mature trees and in particular ancient woodland are vulnerable to under-management due to lack of resources.
- The potential threat, if any, needs further study to ensure the distinctive character of the area is not vulnerable to longer-term loss.

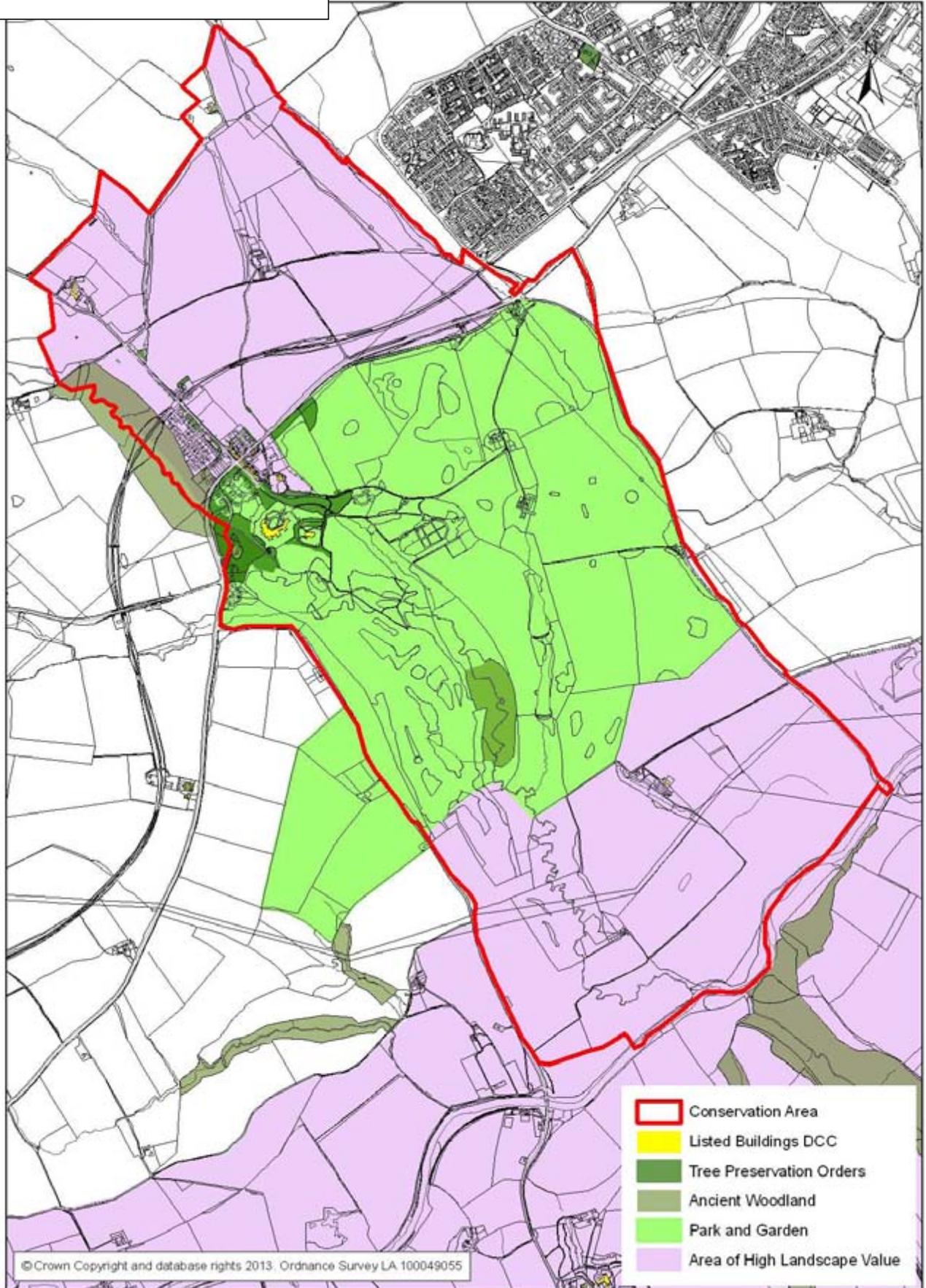
The Current Designations Plan is shown on page 51.

Visual Plate



- 1 Inappropriate road signage along the main village street.
- 2 Missing railings adjacent to the Village Hall.
- 3 Gaps in the stone walls along at The Close.
- 4 & 6 Damage to Listed gates from general erosion and vehicle damage.
- 5 Missing finial.
- 7 The Rectory inappropriate in the Conservation Area and the historic context.
- 8 Poor surface treatment in a high quality historic environment.

Map 3
Brancepeth Conservation Area
Current Designations



5 Management Strategy and Proposals

5.1 Management Strategy

The principal objectives arising from this appraisal are:

1. To apply protection to the historic area and landscape to continue to conserve the value of the area.

Justification – The area is not subject to substantial threat of inappropriate change or significant degradation. Its values should be upheld.

2. To work with stakeholders to understand emerging issues relating to conservation of the area's major historic assets.

Justification - To assist, within resources, the management of the larger and major assets likely to be subject to financial constraints.

3. To liaise with developers and work within the development control system to ensure the suitability of new development in respect to the character of the Conservation Area.

Justification – Further development has the potential to adversely affect the character of the Historic Village.

4. To work with owners and stakeholders to enhance neutral features and improve negative features.

Justification - The appraisal has identified issues in relation to some negative features, generally minor, and also the presence of neutral features. To enhance or improve these will increase the Conservation value of the area.

5. To work with stakeholders to create improvements to the public realm or publically accessible areas.

Justification - To work within financial constraints to raise the quality of the public realm and improve public access to key features.

6. To pursue greater understanding of the historic landscape including the estate farmland and Historic parkland. In particular to identify Historic Landscape Character zones in greater detail than possible in the current appraisal.

Justification - To ensure an authoritative understanding of the complex historic development of the area and its remnants.

7. To pursue greater understanding of the ecology and bio density value of the landscape areas, in particular the ancient woodland and parkland.

Justification – To ensure a full understanding of ecological and bio density value of the landscape areas.

5.2 Change Monitoring

The rate of change within the Conservation Area is slow. It is possible that a combination of smaller changes will affect the character of the village.

Any more major development can be assessed in the context of the appraisal and management plan and dealt with individually. Any change within the parkland or listed buildings can also be dealt with on an individual basis. In order to check for accruing change an annual check is recommended to:

- Identify planning applications received;
- Check the village for accumulation of minor changes;
- Assess for impact and consider need for further action.

6 Design Guidance and Application within the Conservation Area

6.1 General

Development in Brancepeth Conservation Area must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The development must either make no impact on the distinctive character of the area or key buildings and/or appear as part of the existing street or landscape when completed.

Alternatively the development must make a positive contribution to the area through sensitive design that respects the existing character and setting.

Development proposals which detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or its setting will not be permitted.

Supporting Statement to Accompany Planning Applications

A supporting statement sets out how a proposal will impact on the Conservation Area. The statement should be short and concise and accompany any planning application and/or application for Listed Building Consent within a Conservation Area.

The purpose of the statement is to help the planning or conservation design officer understand the design justification for the proposal.

6.2 Local Plan policy

The City of Durham Local Plan 2004 protects Brancepeth Conservation Area from inappropriate development. A number of policies within the Local Plan have been designed to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the historic environment and the Conservation Area.

The Local Plan sets out a broad land use framework to guide new development proposals. As well as policies designed to protect the Conservation Area, Local Plan policies also relate to listed buildings, landscape value, the protection of trees and hedgerows, nature conservation and the historic environment.

The Council's policies relating to the Conservation Area are set out within the Adopted City of Durham Local Plan, policies E3, E6, E21, E22, E23 and of the City of Durham Local Plan Deposit Draft (2001) (Appendix appendix of local plan or appraisal?*)).

The Conservation Area designation signifies a commitment by the Local Authority to the preservation and enhancement of an area's character. To ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas are preserved or enhanced, a positive and pro-active approach to development control is required.

New development in or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must protect or enhance its character. Consequently it is vital that any new development, or alterations and extensions are of a high quality and are appropriate to their settings.

To ensure that this is achieved, applications for development in conservation areas will usually require the applicant to provide detailed proposals of development.

The City of Durham is committed to detailed assessment of all proposals for development within conservation areas. Specialist conservation and urban design advice is available from the Heritage and Design Section at Durham City Council.

External agencies such as English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture for the Built Environment can also be actively involved in major projects.

Conservation area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings. It provides a basis for policies designed to preserve and enhance all aspects of character or appearance that define the conservation area. It is the character of the area and not just individual buildings that the designation seeks to preserve or enhance.

Conservation Area designation means that special consideration is given to proposals for change. In order to assist the Local Authority some special planning controls are applied in Conservation Areas.

The consequences of designation and major controls in operation in conservation areas are set out below:

- Anyone wishing to demolish a building within a conservation area must first apply for Conservation Area Consent to the Local Planning Authority.

- New development within conservation areas will be limited and controlled to ensure that it accords with the special architectural and visual quality of the area
- Improvements to the conservation area through minor repairs and improvements to fencing, painting, paving and street furniture will be encouraged where appropriate.

6.3 Local Development Framework

The Local Plan 2004 as described remains in force but the planning system is changing to the Local Development Framework and associated policy documents.

The Local Development Framework will consist of various core, area specific and technical documents and will cover Durham County, following the 2009 Local Government Review.

6.4 Specific design guidance to Brancepeth

Any development in Brancepeth must preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. In particular this applies to the identified potential development area to the east of the North section of the village. This section is intended to guide consistency in decision making in relationship to planning development control.

Preserving the character

Building frontages opening onto the street (or landscape areas) are an important part of Brancepeth village's character. New development must preserve this feature.

The low boundary walls around the village form an important link with its agricultural past. These walls are key features and should be maintained and preserved. The wall between the village and the former station is of particular importance.

Similarly, any development of historic agricultural buildings or outbuildings must be carried out with sensitivity to their design in order to preserve the historic character of the area.

When passing through the village, gaps between buildings offer "glimpse views" to the parkland and farmland beyond. These views are important – not just from an aesthetic standpoint, but also in the context of the relationship between the village and its surroundings.

Any pressure to develop these "gap sites" must be resisted.

Preserving individual buildings

Many of the buildings in Brancepeth retain their original form, and have not suffered from inappropriate extensions. This originality must be maintained, and major extensions to property should not be permitted.

Many of the village's buildings have received replacement doors and windows.

However, original timber windows are often better constructed and of better materials than modern examples, and should be retained wherever possible. Original windows and doors also enhance the appearance of properties. If original windows require replacement, the replacements should be exact replicas in painted softwood. If the windows are already replacements, where possible the design should be taken back to the original.

The size of window openings adds to the character of Brancepeth Village, and proposals to increase the size of window openings should be resisted.

A number of buildings in Brancepeth have lost their original cast iron gutters and downpipes. If replaced, new gutters and downpipes should be made of traditional cast iron, not plastic. In certain circumstances, painted aluminium guttering may be acceptable.

Outbuildings of traditional character should be retained and not demolished wherever possible.

Introducing new Development

New development should compliment the scale and character of existing buildings.

There may be a desire for owners of property in Brancepeth to commission new modern design for new building. It is unreasonable to suggest modern design should not be allowed, just because the village is a conservation area.

There are many examples of excellent modern design fitting into a historic area.

Achieving a suitable design in the Brancepeth Conservation Area will require consideration of prevalent building heights, scale, building line and orientation. Consideration should also be given to respecting the estate style of historic buildings in Brancepeth. This style is best described as a mixture of 19th century Gothic and Tudor revival styles.

Flat roofs will not be acceptable. Although many unquestionably good modern building incorporate flat roofs, in Brancepeth Conservation Area there is a preponderance of traditional building forms and flat roofs would not easily be accommodated.

Only natural roofing materials (either slate or clay tile) should be used on buildings. Roofs of new construction should be of an appropriate pitch.

The archaeological implications of all new build including extensions within the village should always be considered when new developments are being considered. The village is recorded from at least the 12th century and likely dates back to pre-Conquest times and as such the potential for archaeological remains to be preserved in situ within the historic village and around the castle and church should be considered high.

Developers should always take into account national planning policy guidance note 16 (PPG16) and policy E24 of City of Durham Local Plan and which set out how archaeological matters will be dealt with in the planning process generally and in relation to the local planning authority in particular.

Conversions of traditional farm buildings may require archaeological building recording either in support of a planning application or as a condition of development where the conversion will result in the loss of original features. These are usually completed by professional archaeologists or architectural historians and comprise more detail than architectural plans and elevations.

Archaeological building recording may sometimes be required during internal or external works, whether alterations or extensions, to historic buildings. This is typically required where original features may be removed or alternatively exposed during works.

This work would usually be discussed with the Conservation Officer and County Archaeologist in the course of pre-application discussions.

7 Historic Building Maintenance

7.1 General

There are no buildings that are currently considered at risk and advice is tied to a general approach to maintenance. This is with the exception of the Castle and other features such as Estate walls and railing that inevitably require substantial upkeep.

Proposals to alter listed buildings may require Listed Building Consent prior to any works being undertaken. Carrying out works to a listed building without consent is a criminal offence. Before undertaking any works to a listed building contact the Heritage and Design Section of City of Durham Council for advice.

In respect of general maintenance to older buildings the following guidance should be followed.

All repair/maintenance works require certain choices to be made:

- How much is repair needed?
- What materials are most appropriate to the building?
- What technique is to be used?
- Will the repair affect the character of the building?
- Should it be repaired at all, or left alone?

The key to maintaining a historic building is striking a balance between two extremes. On one hand too little alteration can result in a building being unsuitable for modern needs, whilst too many changes can destroy historic features or the building's character.

Minor work to historic buildings such as cleaning gutters, repairs to roofs, attention to drains, etc, are a far better use of resources than have to undertake major repairs if the building gets damaged through lack of maintenance. Major problems to historic buildings are very often the result of neglect. If addressed earlier they can be reduced or prevented, so regular inspection is essential. Maintenance will prevent deterioration now, and help to prevent major expenditure later.

Regular maintenance and sensitive repairs to an historic building is not just a matter of specifying traditional materials and techniques.

It requires an appreciation of why the building is significant, how this significance is embodied within the buildings fabric and what impact potential repairs might have on it. Almost all repair/maintenance techniques have the potential to cause damage if undertaken incorrectly or insensitively.

That so many fine historic buildings in the Durham area exist today is primarily a tribute to their owners. They have demonstrated the two important principals of conserving an historic building - maintaining it in

good physical condition and assuring its viable use.

Keeping a building in use and in good repair protects its long-term value. Most owners are proud to maintain their listed and historic properties, even though some repairs may be more expensive than they would be for a modern building.

7.2 Alterations

There is no reason why a historic building cannot evolve in a sympathetic manner to suit different needs. The City of Durham can offer guidance on modernising a listed building without damaging its fabric or character.

Some works to historic buildings may involve extra costs to owners depending on the nature of the repair.

For example:

- Decaying stone slates should be restored with slates that match the original, and not synthetic alternative tiles.
- Crumbling cornices should not simply be removed, but instead carefully restored.
- Repair to brickwork should always be carried out with bricks of the same type as original and in the same bond.

- The replacement of windows and doors in historic buildings requires careful treatment and should be repaired on a “like for like” basis.

The conservation of historic buildings is not only a simple matter of retaining and repairing an original façade, but taking care to retain all the examples of fine craftsmanship that features inside many properties.

Fireplaces, panelled doors and frames, plasterwork and staircases are all examples of important internal features worthy of attention and regular maintenance.

The exterior of the building requires careful consideration as its appearance affects the entire streetscape, not just the individual building. In particular, care should be taken to ensure new colour schemes do not conflict with the character of the building.

Listed Building Consent is required for any alteration made to a listed building that is not “like for like”. For example, if a building’s timber windows were proposed for replacement with UPVC examples then Listed Building Consent is required. Consent would still be required for replacing windows in the same material (e.g. timber) but different design.

If an owner has neglected a listed building and failed to take reasonable steps to preserve it, the Local Authority has statutory powers to serve a Repairs Notice or an Urgent Works notice.

This allows the authority to execute urgent repairs to listed buildings, should the owner fail to do so. The cost of these repairs may be then recovered from the owner.

8 Enforcement and Permitted Development Rights

8.1 General

It is possible to consider removal of permitted development rights under an Article 4 direction. The appraisal did not reveal sufficient issues resulting from permitted development to consider this option.

However, in relation to the advice above enforcement action should be considered for inappropriate unauthorised alterations and development in order to maintain the essential character as defined in the appraisal and identified in this advice.

9 Green space, tree, ecology/biodiversity strategy

9.1 Trees

General

Trees and hedgerows have great visual amenity value that can significantly enhance the appearance of the locality. They can enhance the quality of life for those who live or work within the conservation area.

Trees bring nature into urban settings and re-enforce rural settings. Prominent trees often become local landmarks held in high regard by local residents.

A single tree can have a major impact on a street scene or view. Brancepeth Conservation Area includes many significant groups of trees.

The Local Authority will not only consider protecting buildings within the conservation area, but also which trees significantly contribute to the area's character.

All trees in a Conservation Area are protected. Anyone wishing to lop, fell or cut down a tree(s) within the Conservation Area must give 6 weeks notice to City of Durham Council before works are proposed to commence (a Section 211 Notice).

The City Council will then consider whether the tree should be afforded additional protection through a Tree Preservation Order.

Tree Preservation Order

A number of the trees in Brancepeth are given further protection in the form of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). This means that anyone wishing to carry out works to trees covered by a TPO must first apply for consent from the Local Authority.

It is an offence to carry out works to any trees within a Conservation Area without first obtaining consent.

Details of the Brancepeth Tree Preservation Order can be found in Appendix 3.

9.2 Ecology and Biodiversity

The purpose of this appraisal has been principally to concentrate on the built and historic areas. The existence of Ancient Woodland and the Historic parkland based on an earlier Deer Park offer substantial opportunity to gather information on the ecology and bio diversity of the area. This should form part of further study of the wider Conservation Area.

10 Urban design, public realm, framework-spaces and movement

10.1 Street Furniture

There will be a periodic need to replace and introduce street furniture. This may be the responsibility of the Council, statutory agencies or service providers. Items should be well-designed and as inconspicuous as possible.

Full use should be made of the benefits of rationalisation or combination of items, in order to avoid a cluttered effect.

The use of items of street furniture designed in a traditional style should be encouraged, and existing items of good quality preserved.

The central lamp post is a listed structure, but other items of street furniture require careful protection.

This would include the bench at the crossroads, which may be a surviving piece of furniture from Brancepeth Railway Station.

Wherever possible, the opportunity should be taken to route wires underground. External wiring on buildings should be avoided at all costs.

10.2 Surfacing

The main roads through the Conservation Area are all tarmac-surfaced, with pre cast concrete kerbstones. The outstanding character of the village's architecture, coupled with its mature trees and green spaces helps to mitigate the effects of these standard street surfaces. Ideally traditional surfacing materials could be used in the historic core of the conservation area, but budgetary constraints may preclude this. Examples of this exist to the front of numbers 1-19 the Village.

Maintenance of the existing surfacing, in particular avoiding unnecessary "patching", should help preserve the conservation area's appearance.

In view of the uniformity of construction materials in the conservation area, it is of particular importance that new surfacing should respect the simple colour palette of the area, for example the use of coloured tarmac should be avoided.

To the rear of the main street, a number of buildings and properties are linked via a series of unmade, but well maintained foot paths and tracks. These buildings were formerly in use serving the estate, whether as an industry such as the Blacksmiths or simply as an estate workers' house. By avoiding municipal style surfacing, the unmade nature of these lanes helps to preserve the sense of a private estate.

Any attempt to hard surface the roads in this area will erode the character of the conservation area and should be resisted.

10.3 Enhancement schemes, management/improvement of public realm maintenance or planned replacement

There is insufficient need identified in the appraisal to consider a concerted programme of public realm improvements. This is unlikely to achieve funding without an overriding need. It is possible to encourage smaller schemes or variations in provision as a result of planned maintenance.

10.4 Development of economic regeneration strategy

The relative economic stability of the village and lack of commercial interests do not form a basis for developing this type of programme.

It is likely that the Castle and many estate features will be in need but this approach is not likely to offer funding.

Appendix 1

English Heritage Historic Park and Garden Description

DURHAM
BRANCEPETH
NZ2237

Early C19 landscape park, c.50ha, within larger C16 deer park, at most extensive c.220ha.

Brancepeth Castle originally C13, much C14 work, substantially altered and enlarged 1818-19 by John Paterson for Mathew Russell. Further alterations 1829 by Anthony Salvin, further work by Salvin 1864-75. Gate piers 200m to north, by Castle Lodge. Scpton Lodge 31/4 km to north-east, Park Lodge 1/2km to east, all C19. Stables 400m to north-east (now golf club), C19 walled formal garden.(now used as nursery) 1/2km to east, and 100m to south of Park Lodge. St Brandon's Church, 150m to south-east of Castle forms part of the visual landscape scheme.

Brancepeth Park originally a deer park (recorded 1569). Brancepeth Beck runs from north-west to south-east through park, passing to south of Castle. Vestigial fishponds 1km south-east of Castle. Park developed late C18 - plan by Adam Mickle 1783. West side to Whitworth Lane enclosed by iron railings with tulip heads.

Late C19 and early C20 development of walled formal garden, lawns, rose garden and shrubberies mainly to east of Castle.

Associations with Tennyson, related to Matthew Russell - Brancepeth being one of the claimants for the garden of 'Maud'. In C20 park in divided use - southern area adapted as golf course from 1924.

Holme C, Gardens of England in the Northern Counties, 1911, Pl.15-16. Jacques D, Georgian Gardens, 1983, 116. Pevsner N, and Williamson E, County Durham, 1983.

Appendix 2

Key Listed and non-Listed Buildings

Within the Village there are a number of important buildings. These comprise of both listed and non- listed buildings.

**Descriptions from The Buildings of England, County Durham, Nikolaus Pevsner, (architect historian), second edition.*

Brancepeth Village

Key Non-listed Important Buildings

The Old Blacksmiths Shop

Former blacksmith's shop, recently converted into a private dwelling as part of a new housing development. The original shop dated from the 19th century, and the new dwelling incorporates the original horseshoe-form entrance.

1-2 Rectory Cottages

Two cottages designed as one large cube shaped block with a large pitched roof, gable end to the front elevation. Built in the mid 19th century and incorporating Victorian sash windows on each floor.

Rectory Stables

Early 19th century coach house incorporating a stable block. A single-storey rubble structure with hipped roof.

2-3 Foxes Row

Two storey, semi-detached pair of private dwellings with rubble stone walling and slate roof. Dated 1907, but mimic the Brancepeth Estate style.

Station House

Former railway station, now a private house. Built 1862 in the Brancepeth Estate style. A two storey block with one storey extension.

Thornberry Garth

Two-storey house of coursed rubble stone with ashlar quoins. Early 19th century with a later rear extension.

Golf Club House

Former stables for the Brancepeth Estate, now the golf club house. The building has an impressive large arched entranceway, and a number of traditional sliding sash windows.

Key Listed Buildings

Durham Road, The Close, Durham Road, Grade II Listed:

A detached two-storey double fronted house mid 19th century and designed in the Estate style.

Durham Road, Coach House, Grade II Listed:

Two-storey building of squared coursed rubble walls with hipped slate roof. Built in the mid 19th century in the Brancepeth Estate style. Former Coach House now garaging.

The Village (east side), Hoppy Acres and Constable Meadows, Grade II Listed:

Former rectory, now two private dwellings. "Hoppy Acres" is the original wing built in 1820, while the rear wing, (Now "Constable Meadows") was added in the late 18th century. Both properties have rebuilt brick chimneystacks and Welsh slate roofs.

Durham Road (south side), numbers 1,2,3,4, Grade II Listed:

A pair of semi-detached 1 1/2 storey cottages. Each pair has an asymmetrical elevation and they are built in the Tudor-Gothic of the Brancepeth Estate. Walling is smooth squared coursed rubble with ashlar trimmings, and all have bay windows to the ground floor.

The Village (east side) numbers 1-12, Grade II Listed:

Two-storey residential properties built in the mid to late 18th century (now displaying some 20th century alterations) for the Brancepeth Estate. Form the attractive approach to the Castle gates.

The Village (south end), Castle Lodge, Grade II Listed:

The Former estate gate lodge is now a private dwelling. Built in the mid 19th century to the Brancepeth Estate style, in squared sandstone with narrow courses with ashlar dressings. A two-storey building, with two bays.

The Village (east side) No's 13,14,15,16, Grade II Listed:

A terrace of four estate cottages built in the mid 19th century as part of the Brancepeth Estate. The cottages have symmetrical frontages and are two storeys with graduated green Westmorland slate roofs and rendered chimneystacks.

The Village (east side), No's 17, 18, 19, Grade II Listed:

Former Village School and Schoolmaster's House, now three private dwellings. Built in 1857 to the estate style and converted into housing in the mid 20th century.

North Drive (south side), Brancepeth Castle, Grade I Listed:

Imposing (and picturesque) composition comprising some mediaeval works but largely a 19th century building. Large, irregular, circular courtyard enclosed by a curtain wall and ranges, projecting towers and gatehouse to the northeast.

"The sight of Brancepeth Castle from a distance, especially from the south, is on of the greatest thrills one can experience in the county. It seems as first almost as fine as Haddon." "The original castle, first mentioned in 1216, was the chief military stronghold of the Neville's, Earls of Westmorland, until they fortified it in 1569"

North Drive (south side), Church of St Brandon, Grade I Listed:

Parish Church with 12th century tower and early 13th century aisled nave, extended in the 14th century.

"In the ample grounds of the castle and in its own churchyard, with no other house in the neighbourhood but the castle and that not to close either. The church is big and important-looking enough to afford such a situation" "there is hardly another in the country so completely and splendidly furnished in the C17"

Wider Conservation Area

Out of the core of the village there are a number of important buildings which are located within the Conservation Area. These include:

Key Listed Buildings

A690 (east side), Brancepeth Old Bridge, Grade II Listed:

A Listed Building and Ancient Monument of post Medieval date, spanning a narrow valley with a single stone arch. Crosses Stockley Burn, and a 19th century rebuilding of an earlier bridge.

North Drive (south side), Ice House South of Brancepeth Golf Club House, Grade II Listed:

An early to mid 19th century Ice House for the Brancepeth Estate. Built from rubble with a brick-lined vault. A large structure lying beneath a tree covered mound, with a steep flight of stairs leading down to the boarded door.

North Drive (south side), Brancepeth Park, Garden House, Grade II Listed:

Picturesque former head estate gardener's house, now a private dwelling (see right). Built to a "H" plan with two storeys and three bays. Mid 19th century with a large semicircular porch and graduated green slate roof.

Scripton Lane (west side), Tudhoe Lodge, , Grade II Listed:

Tooled, snecked sandstone with ashlar dressings and a graduated green slate roof with a ashlar chimneystack. Built to a T-plan of two storeys and three bays, with a projecting gabled centre bay forming the leg of the "T".

Scripton Lane (west side), Scripton Farmhouse, Grade II Listed:

Former farmhouse, now two dwellings, with former dairy/cheese room attached. Of sandstone construction, built in the mid 19th century for the Brancepeth Estate. The property has two storeys and three bays with 20th century additions to the rear of the farmhouse.

"C19 cottage estate farmhouse gabled with ornamental bargeboards"

Morley Lane (west side), Morley Farmhouse, cottage and linked barn , gin-gang and byre Grade II Listed:

Attractive group of stone and pantiled buildings, situated in a pleasant landscape setting. Included in the Listing is a barn, gin-gan and byre. The 18th century Farmhouse includes remnants of a mediaeval building and a later 19th century cottage.

Mid to late 18th century barn and gin-gang, mid 19th century byre now used for storage. Barn retains some original roof trusses with thin tie beams and swept principals, halved and crossed at ridge. Listed for group value.

Scripton Lane (west side), East Park Farmhouse and outbuildings, Grade II Listed:

Mid 19th century farmhouse built for the Brancepeth Estate with an attached range to the rear. Constructed in squared sandstone in narrow courses with ashlar dressings.

Brancepeth Estate style; consisting of two storeys with a narrow central bay, flanked by a slightly projecting cross-gabled bay of two storeys plus attics.

Wolsingham Road (north side), Quarry Hill and adjoining outbuilding, Grade II Listed:*

Early to mid 17th century house restored and extended in the 19th century. The main house is to a "T" plan design with two parallel 19th century ranges on the rear stair wing. Two-storey dwelling, with three bays and a 19th century Jacobean-style interior.

"Basically C17 much renovated C19, three storeys, three gables and a gabled porch projection, Mullion and transom cross windows to the two lower floors"

Appendix 3

Brancepeth Tree Preservation Order

Order No: PNI/315

Served: 9th January 1975

Confirmed: 7th October 1975

Order consists of: 78 Individual Trees (various species), 25 Groups of Trees (various species), 10 Areas of Trees (various species), 6 Woodlands (various species)

Grounds of serving the order:

The trees form an integral part of the environment of this visually attractive village. They serve to enclose and separate the village from the recent housing developments and to mitigate the effects of the busy main through road.

The TPO imposed to control felling and replanting in association with various new and proposed building development, The TPO also lies within the Brancepeth Conservation Area.

The majority of the trees once formed part of the Brancepeth Castle Estate and are important in views and vistas to and from the village.

Species covered by the order include Ash, Beech, Elm, Horse Chestnut, Lime, Oak and Sycamore.

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