



LUC

# Northgate Urban Design Framework and Masterplan

Version 1.0  
February 2021  
Prepared by LUC

## Document control

Version	Date	Status	Prepared	Approved
1.0	Feb 2021	Draft	JWA / EB / BW	TJ
1.1	Dec 2021	Final Draft	JWA / BW	TJ
1.2	March 2022	Final	JWA	TJ

### Project

Northgate Urban Design Framework and Masterplan

### Client

Darlington Borough Council

### LUC Project Number

11321

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### Date

December 2021

All comments and contributions to the development of the study are gratefully acknowledged.

### Note

This document and its contents have been prepared by LUC for Darlington Borough Council and is intended solely for use in relation to the Northgate masterplan project.

LUC assume no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

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## Introduction

As an area with **significant opportunity** - found within its historical built fabric and riverside setting - **Northgate** is ripe for conservation-led management that promotes positive change.

### Background

Darlington Borough Council (DBC) appointed LUC in 2020 to produce an Urban Design Framework and Masterplan for Northgate, an area located to the immediate north of Darlington town centre. The masterplan area is located partly within the Northgate Conservation Area.

Northgate is one of the principal gateways into Darlington. Together Northgate and High Northgate form the historic linear spine of the Northgate Conservation Area, aligned along the former Great North Road which linked pre-industrial Darlington with its pioneering railway. At the southern end of Northgate are the former houses of Edward Pease and other Quaker founders of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. At the northern end around North Road Station remains some of the earliest railway-led urbanisation in the world, with a significant number of properties dating from c.1830s and 40s.

In spite of this geographical and historical prominence, the Northgate area has a run-down appearance, with a high degree of social deprivation and physical dilapidation and an economy which has been reduced to a largely peripheral role.

A masterplan approach will ensure that Northgate's special heritage interest will be a 'golden thread' of place-making across social, cultural, economic and environmental themes.

### Funding

DBC is preparing business plans to secure funding, allocated following a successful pre-selection process to government's Towns Fund. Key projects within the Towns Fund are aligned to features within the Northgate Masterplan.



The North Road gateway incorporating the Skerne Bridge



Edward Pease's house along the southern section of Northgate close to the town centre

The Council has secured £20m towards the development of the Railway Heritage Quarter at the top end of Northgate, which is estimated to attract 200,000 new visitors per annum. The Northgate masterplan will connect the Railway Heritage Quarter to the town centre, maximising its economic potential and driving overnight stays, visitor spend, footfall and vibrancy within the town centre.

## Purpose of the report

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) will establish the design principles for future Masterplan proposals, through a process of desktop and site analysis, mapping, urban characterisation and signposting best practice.

Design principles will be progressed to a preferred Masterplan via a process of co-design and collaboration. Visualisations will demonstrate the application of design principles outlined within the UDF

The report will be used to provide evidenced-based design principles to guide future development within Northgate.

## Report structure

The structure of this report will be in two parts:

- Part One: Urban Design Framework;
- Part Two: Masterplan.

Part One will set out the site context for the study and include a suite of site analysis information, culminating in a set of design principles for the project.

Part Two of the report will focus on the Masterplan development - taking the design principles through to the

proposed Masterplan, illustrating key spaces and explaining the role of consultation and collaborative working along the way.

Appendix One contains SWOT analysis from the Northgate Conservation Area Character Assessment (2021).

Appendix Two comprises an socio-economic review for the Northgate Masterplan (Forever Consulting, 2021).

## Key documents

Key reports that the project will refer to include:

- Urban Design Compendium (2000, HCA)
- Darlington BC: Characterisation Study (2008)
- Darlington BC: A Conservation Management Plan for Darlington Town Centre Fringe (July 2010)
- Darlington BC: New Development Supplementary Planning Document (July 2011)
- Northgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2021).



Part one  
**Urban Design Framework**

## Site context and analysis

A fundamental starting point in LUC's design process is gaining an **understanding of the place**, its history, opportunities and constraints as well as local culture through an initial period of analysis.

This knowledge will provide design guidance and ensure that local constraints and opportunities present across Darlington are recognised and responded to within the masterplan and urban design framework.

### Strategic context

The Northgate area is located to the immediate north of Darlington town centre. It is centred upon the A167 Northgate which connects the town centre with Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne to the north, and Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough in the east (via the A66).

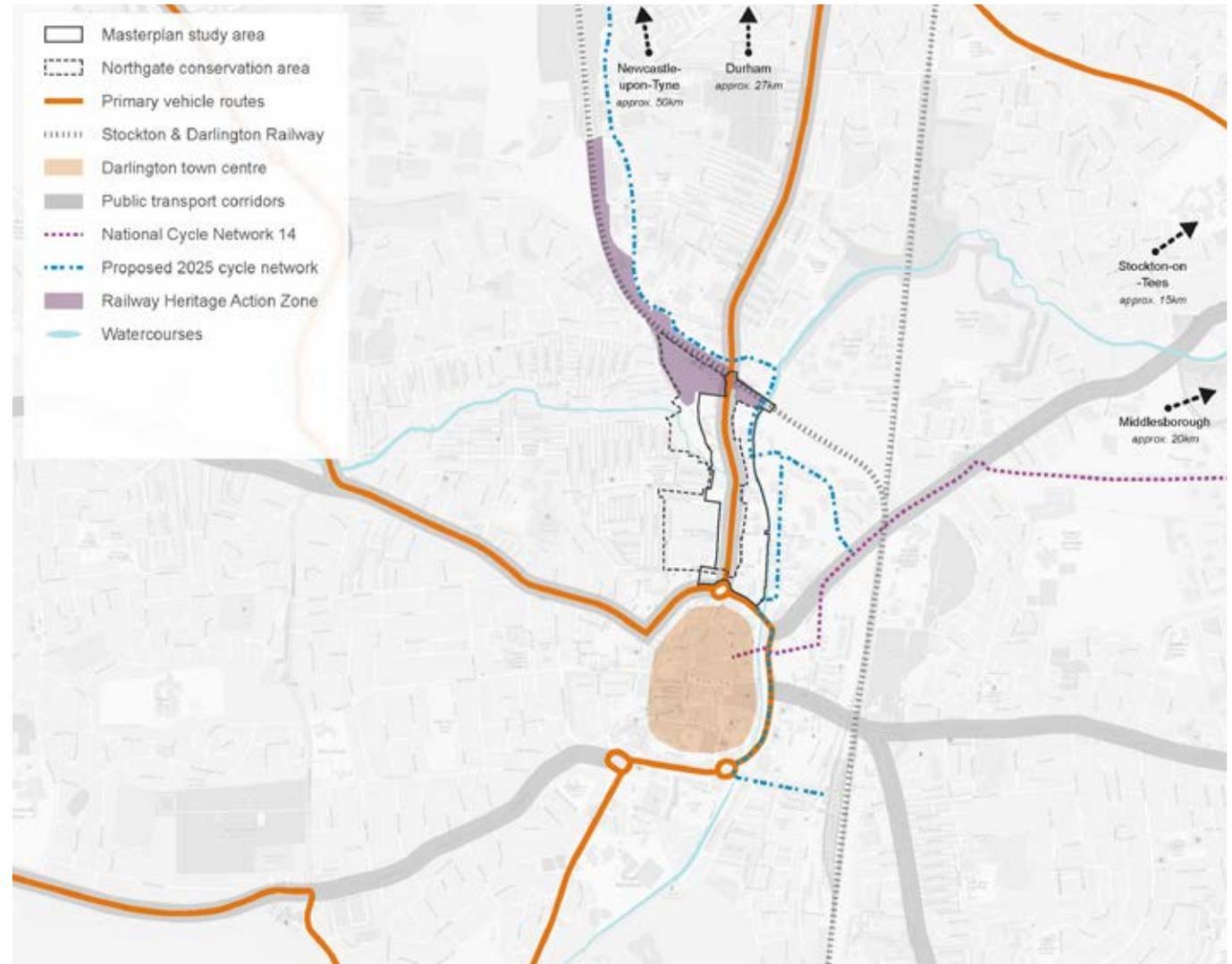


Figure 1: Strategic context map

## Landmarks, topography and key views

The masterplan study area is located within a valley landscape which ranges from 40m AOD along the river Skerne and Cocker beck up to 50m AOD along its northern extent at the North Road railway embankment.

Within gaps in development along Northgate and High Northgate, there is a greater sense of inter-visibility to areas in the east, and appreciation of the valley landscape.

There is an abundant number of landmarks within the area which are intrinsically tied to the story of Darlington and its growth as a railway pioneer. North Road Rail Station and the Goods Shed are both Grade II\* Listed buildings, along with the former Central School Annex along the southern section of Northgate.

Key views are aligned with key landmarks, where there is opportunity within the existing townscape from which to appreciate the feature. Examples include wide views of the Skerne Bridge (Scheduled Monument), channelled views of the former Technical College (now Council Offices) from Garden Street and the prominence of Northgate Tower within the wider area due to its significant height.

Bridges that span the river Skerne provide opportunities for variation within the view. Views of the water are not easily obtained from other locations within the masterplan study area of Conservation Area.

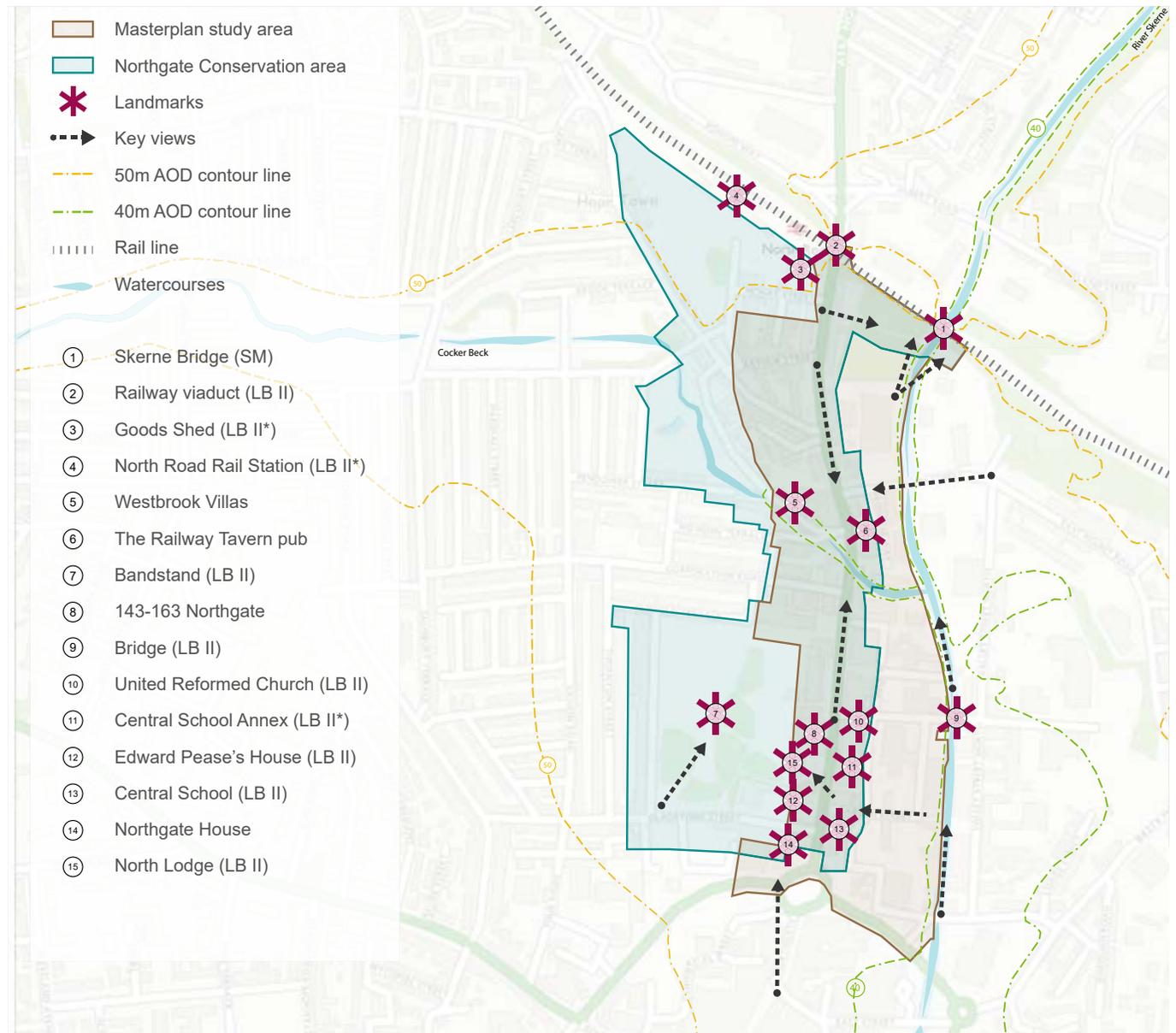


Figure 2: Landmarks, topography and key views

## Urban experience

Key destinations feature North Road train station and the Head of Steam museum in the north of the study area, places of worship, leisure outlets and North Lodge Park.

The A167 (Northgate, High Northgate) and A68 provide primary access to and from the area, and these are very busy routes which form a barrier to pedestrian movement. Secondary routes associated with the study area are John St and Chestnut St in the east and Station Rd and Gladstone Street in the west. Key gateways are aligned along these routes.

Existing key nodes are located at road intersections along Northgate and High Northgate. An emerging key node is located at McNay St incorporating the gap between development at 124-126 Northgate and connecting down to the river. Northgate roundabout forms a key pedestrian and vehicular gateway connecting Northgate to the town centre.

Active frontages are located along Northgate and these are generally associated with retail, food and beverage. Vacant units can be found intermittently along Northgate and High Northgate and these detract from the setting.

Other visual detractors include modern buildings where the building line, massing, and materiality is out of sync with the historical fabric; inappropriate additions to historic buildings; and industrial commercial properties in the east of the study area.

There is a disproportionate amount of surface level car parking across the masterplan study area. Recently demolished buildings tend to be replaced by surface level car parks.

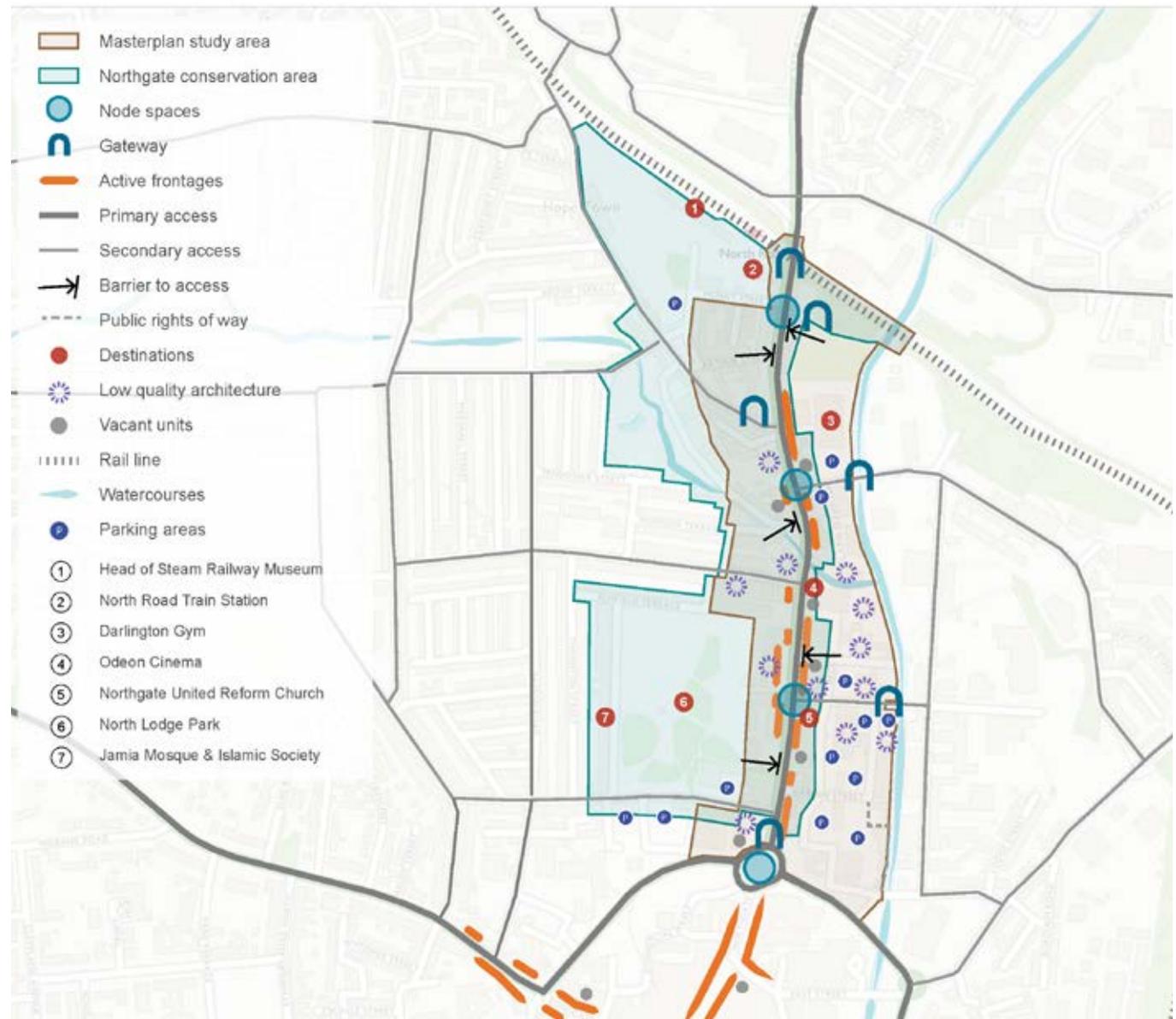


Figure 3: Urban design site analysis

## Land use

The predominant land uses within the masterplan area are residential, commercial food & drink (takeaways, cafés) and retail, although this tends to be independent shops on a small scale.

Office development is more prominent within larger plots along the southern section of Northgate due to proximity to the town centre. Large scale retail is evidenced along a section of the route but it is not common for the area as a whole (Kwik-fit, The Wood Floor Company, UK Bathroom Solutions).

Within the east of the study area, there is a prevalence of commercial industrial uses with sheds. Exercise4less is a large gym to the north of John St. The structure is very similar to the commercial industrial sheds in the east.

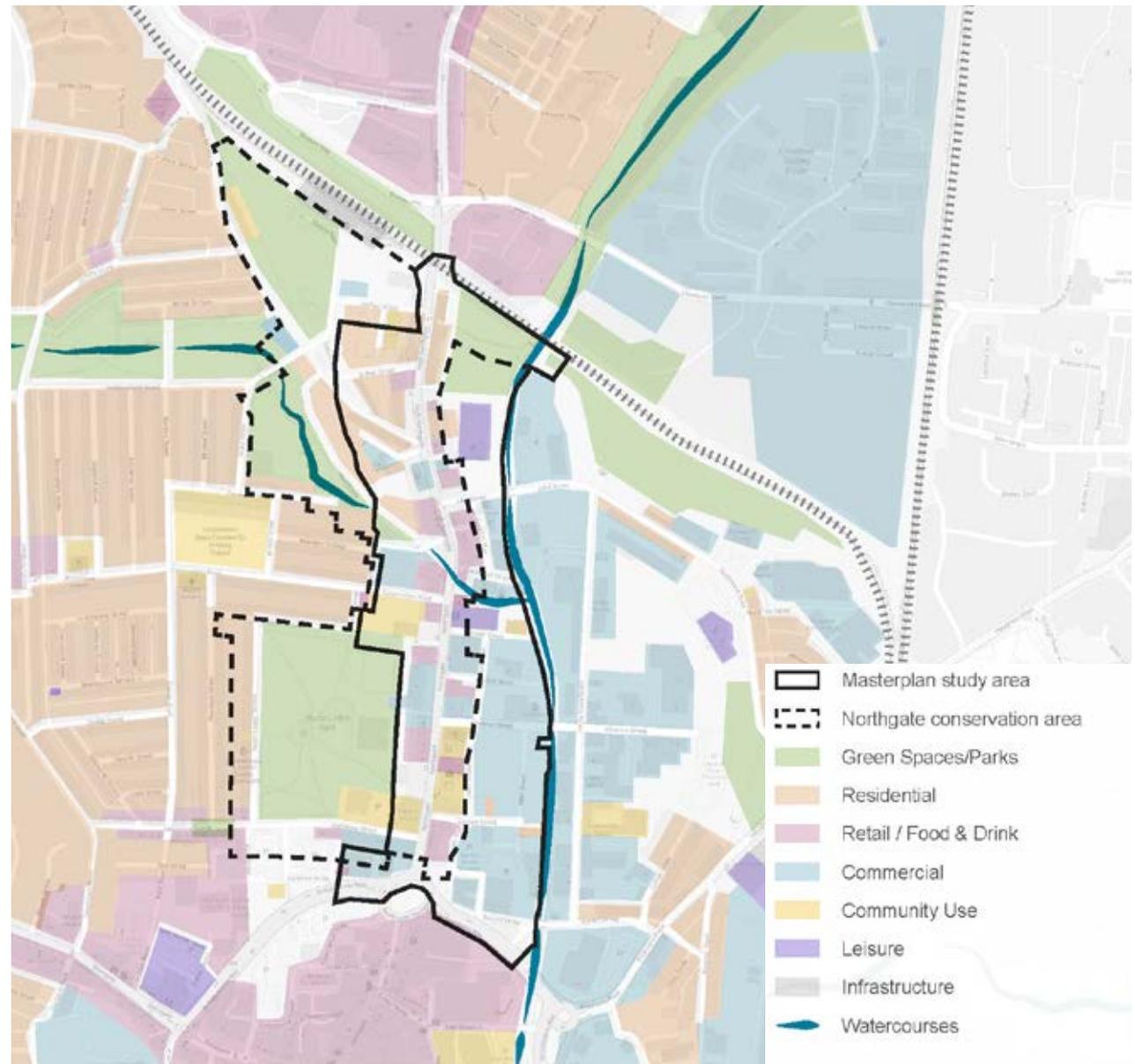


Figure 4: Land use

## Street layout and pattern

The following diagrams track the development of street layouts from 1855 through to the present day.

Northgate and High Northgate feature as the primary north to south route, intersected by Station Rd and Bondgate, both of which also appear as wide routes. In 1855, the secondary routes are the lateral routes connecting Northgate to Bondgate. The routes connecting Northgate to the river are considered tertiary routes, perhaps akin to alleyways, following the direction of strip plots associated with development along Northgate. The river Skerne takes on a natural meander through the study area, and green space other than agricultural land is associated with Elmfield House and North Lodge, owned by prominent Darlington bankers.

By 1899, there is considerable growth in the number of streets amid railway-associated development. Main routes now include John St, Russell St and East St which traverse the river. Residential streets are laid geometrically in a grid pattern, with alleyways to the rear to enable pedestrian access.

Alleyways are shown in the east of the study area, between Northgate and the Skerne, in order to demonstrate how access was, and remains, constrained by the river. In some areas, the grid pattern is evidenced with residential streets and rear alleyways. In other areas, access is more sparse. In order to aid access, north to south alleyway routes are now present. A section of the river from Garden St to Chestnut St is canalised, with a new north to south alleyway (Weir St) along its former alignment.

The growth continues into 1923, particularly in the west of the study area. By this time, North Lodge Park has been

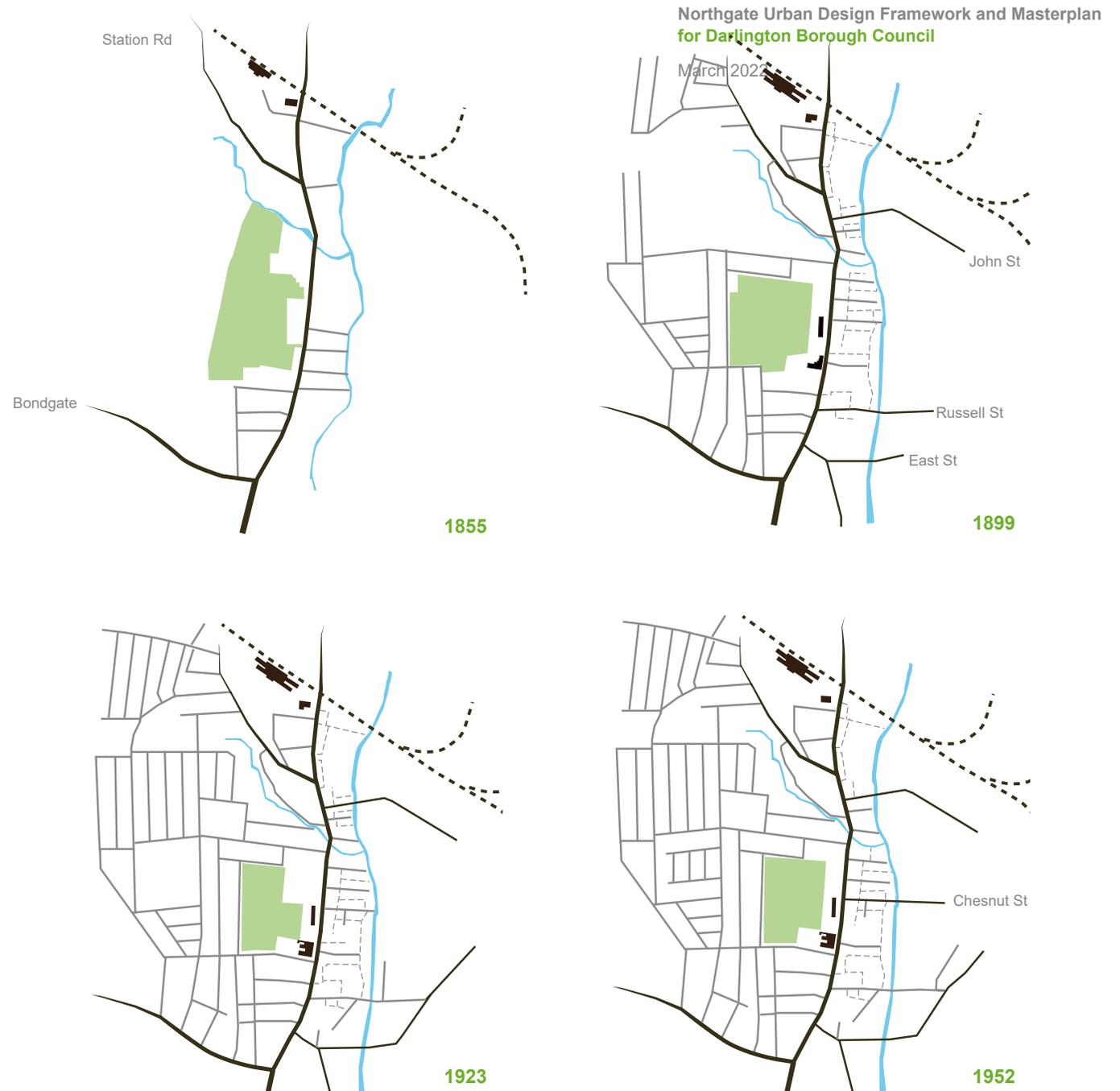


Figure 5: Changes to street layouts from 1855 to 1952

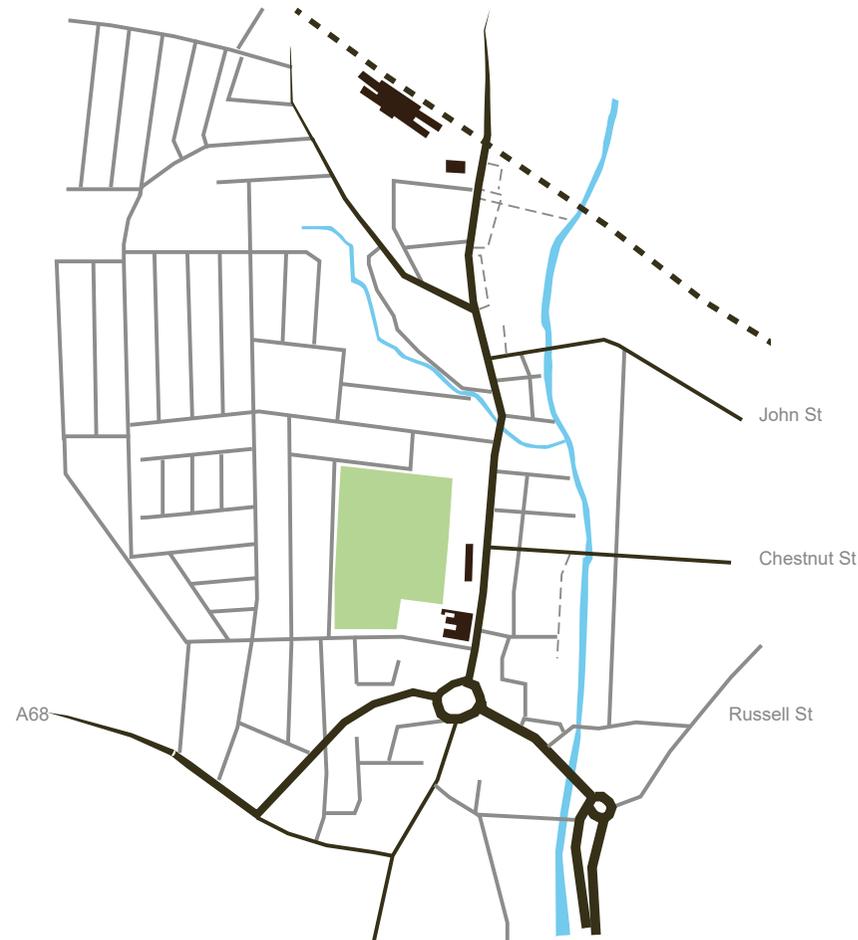
laid out as a public park. Further development is laid out to the west of the park by 1952.

Significant changes occurred to the street layout as a result of the construction of the A68 and Northgate roundabout (circa 1980s). This development effectively severed the grid pattern and formed a barrier between Northgate and the town centre. Once legible through-routes have become eroded by frustrated dead ends.

Much of the grid pattern associated with Victorian and Edwardian residential development remains intact. The narrow rear alleyways continue to provide access for residents.

In the east of the study area, former north to south alleyways have become wider asphalt routes serving two way traffic. These routes, which are an important feature of the area's historic form, have been removed over time which has eroded the character. Narrow 'alleyway' routes are still observed at Weir St as well as to the rear of 94-136 Northgate and north of John St.

A new route has been introduced to connect Garden Street and Russell Street, via Weaver's Way and Ianson Square which has changed the historic street pattern considerably.



Weir St, a former north to south alleyway with scoria brick surfacing and no pavement space



Progress Way, a former north to south alleyway with asphalt surfacing and pavement on either side of the route

Figure 6: Current street layout

## Understanding risks to the built fabric and form

The historic fabric and form of the Northgate Conservation Area and wider Masterplan study area is in a state of deterioration. The Northgate Conservation Area Appraisal (2021) sets out SWOT analysis to highlight the framework for emerging design principles. This is included in Appendix 1.

The masterplan will need to address the following key points:

### 1. Location, Access and Form

- Create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere along Northgate which minimises the impact of the car
- Improve connections from the town centre
- Restore the historic building line along High Northgate and enhance harmful alterations
- Enhancement of existing plot boundaries
- Reinforce historic plot size in order to ensure development of human scale
- Retention of historic buildings with new purpose
- Reinforce historic character through new built form
- Retention of historic surfaces to conserve character.

### 2. Spaces and Natural Environment

- Development of purpose and identity of the Westbrook green space, to add value to the existing character, increase amenity value and biodiversity value.
- Risks to historic character of the river Skerne and Cocker beck.



Historical built form close to North Road Station with opportunities for aesthetic enhancement



Remnant historical built form providing evidence of style and orientation of former residential development in the east of the area



Decaying historical fabric on Progress Way



Run-down historical built form on Oxford Street with opportunity for re-purposing

### 3. Built Structures and Detailing

- Identify opportunities for restoring historic details - windows, doors, boundary treatments, high level features such as chimneys and masonry and shop frontages
- Reinforcing character appropriately in the design of new builds (windows, doors and boundary treatments).



Three storey georgian townhouses at 143-163 Northgate with single storey commercial additions to the front facade which detract from the grandeur of the historical built form

## Constraints and Opportunities

### *Improvements to the setting of landmarks*

The Conservation Area and wider Masterplan area have an abundance of historical and natural features, and there are significant opportunities to improve their setting. Particular areas for improvement include the area fronting the Railway Tavern on Northgate, the setting of the Edward Pease House, and the setting of the Skerne Bridge and its connections to Northgate and the Rail Heritage Quarter.

### *Key nodes and gateways*

Gateway sites will become important locations to orientate visitors to the area through landmark built form, quality public realm design, wayfinding and interpretation. Existing identified key nodes at junctions are opportunity areas for enhancement, particularly in relation to improving pedestrian movement and flow.

Proposed key nodes are highlighted at the intersection of the Cocker beck with Northgate, and the junction of the beck with the river Skerne. These locations offer significant promise in terms of opening up areas of natural character which will add interest to the built character and create destinations points along a journey.

### *Enhancement of existing historic form and fabric*

There are opportunities at Weir St and off John St to build upon the historical fabric of the former alleyway, retaining the blue scoria bricks and restoring the built form. Retention of historical built form should be prioritised, evaluating opportunities for enhancement, re-purposing and better integration within the proposed streetscape. Buildings that detract from the historical character highlight opportunities for

improving their aesthetic appearance or replacing with new design which responds appropriately to historical form.

### *Riverside walk and improved access to the river Skerne*

There is little opportunity for pedestrians and cyclists to engage with the setting of the river and the beck, and most if not all development turns its back to the river. Presently, there are riverside routes in the south and north of the masterplan area but these are discontinuous. Prioritising the delivery of pedestrian-friendly route, connecting the town centre to Northgate and the Railway Heritage Quarter will improve footfall into the area, offer health and well-being benefits and bring a unique and vibrant natural aspect to the existing Northgate character. This route should work with the historic grain and development pattern to create a network of pedestrian-friendly spaces.

The riverside setting presents opportunity to create riverside development, with open visual access of the river accessed by a network of high quality and well-sited footpaths.

There are further opportunities to create alternate green routes through the masterplan area, incorporating North Lodge Park.

### *Rationalisation of car parking*

Reducing the prominence of the car is a priority for the Northgate masterplan. There are opportunities for increasing pavement widths and crossing points, softening the urban environment and elevating quality generally throughout. The over abundance of surface level car parking areas presents significant development potential within the east of the area.



Pedestrian footpath along the river Skerne from Russell Street to Weir Street



Improvements to a key node close to North Road Station will have significant impacts on pedestrian movement and the setting of important historic assets

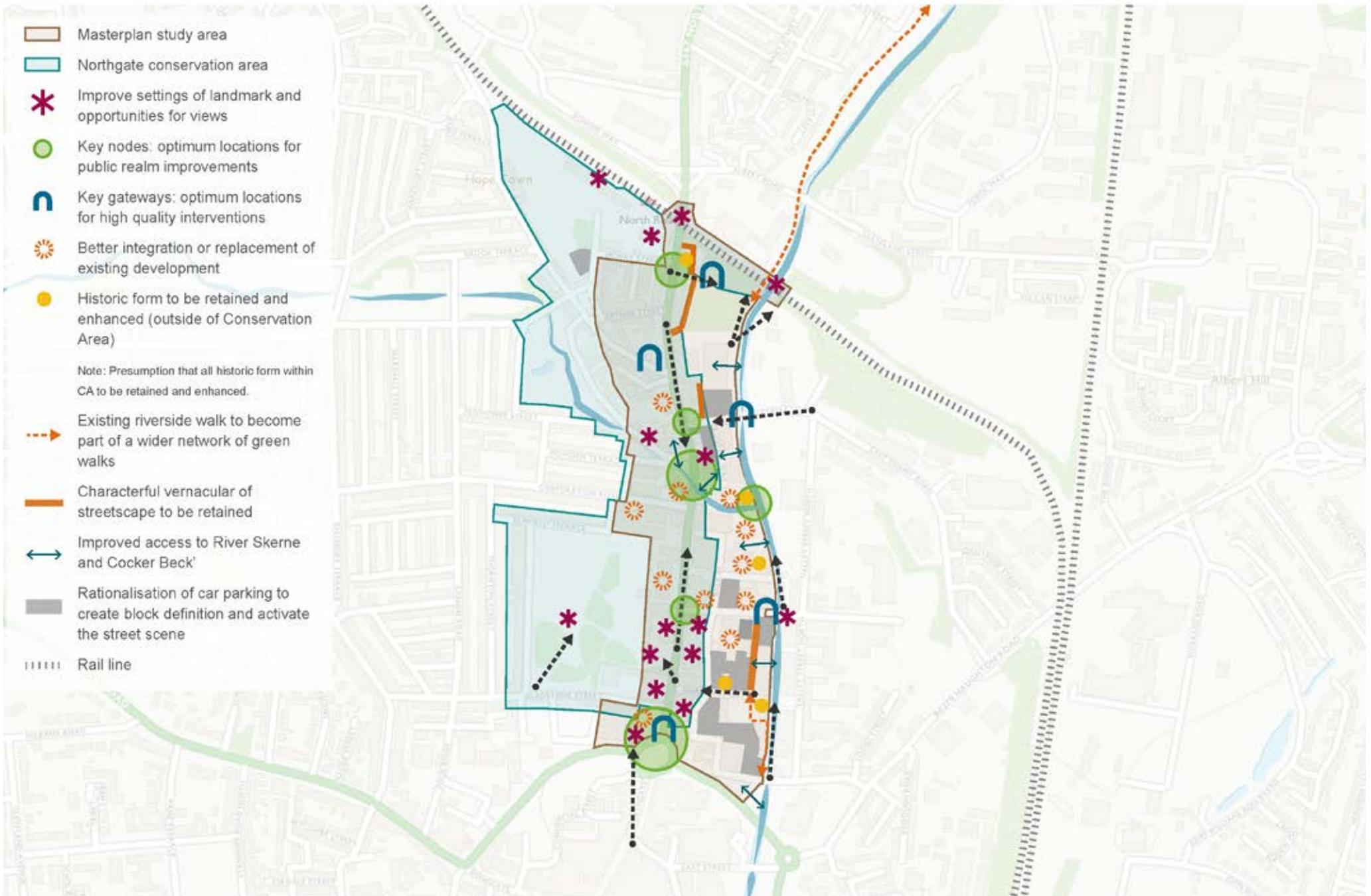


Figure 7: Constraints and opportunities plan

# Street characterisation

## Introduction

10 streets have been selected for inclusion within the street characterisation section of the report. Selection was based on the following criteria:

- The streets should reflect some of the intrinsic qualities that make Northgate unique and different from the surrounding area. These include:
  - Architectural styles and detailing
  - Building layout
  - Street pattern and street geometry
  - Use of local materials/vernacular
- The streets should reflect different functions, i.e. some are purely residential streets whilst others such have a mixed use function; and
- The streets have different roles as part of Darlington's transport infrastructure, i.e. some are primary routes such as Northgate, whereas others are secondary

routes.

This part of the report contains analysis of historic street typologies that are already present in Northgate and Darlington. We have identified key characteristics and considered the following principles of urban design:

### 1. Streets and spaces:

Pattern, width, hierarchy, parking, paving materials, sense of arrival, means of enclosure, landscape features and street trees, integration with surrounding areas and sense of identity.

### 2. Urban blocks:

Size, block definition, building plots, density, relationship of buildings to spaces/streets, relationships of buildings to other buildings and boundary treatments.

### 3. Buildings:

Uniformity, age, size and scale, materials, windows, doors, decoration, condition and use.

### 4. Views; and

### 5. Ambience and the pedestrian experience.

## Purpose of the analysis

This analysis will become the foundation of the design principles for different street typologies, ensuring that the historic character of Northgate is embedded within all future development moving forward.



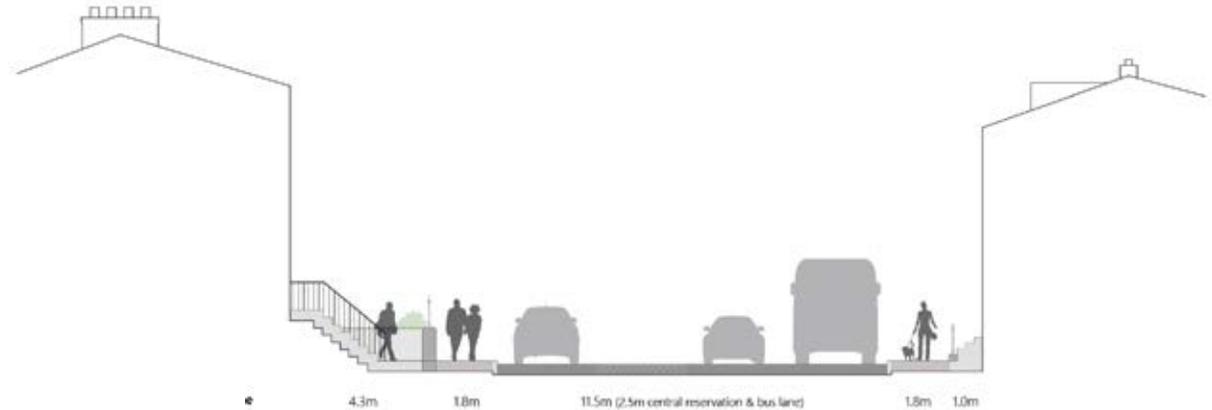
## High Northgate between Arthur Street and McNay Street

### Overview

This section of High Northgate is a predominantly residential, lying at the northern end of Northgate, close to North Road Station. It has an urban character comprising of late 19th century family sized terraces houses and smaller railway terraces. Commercial properties are few and located intermittently, including a tattoo parlour, upholsterer and window showroom. Local focal points include the Grade II\* Listed Goods Shed, and the Grade II Listed railway viaduct associated with North Road rail station.

### Key characteristics

- Strong sense of identity due to coherency of architectural style and materiality
- Urban blocks relate strongly to one another in terms of scale, style and density
- Building set-backs and front gardens are an attractive feature
- Greenery is limited to planting within front gardens along the western side of the street
- The street is located within the Northgate Conservation Area
- The volume of traffic is a detracting feature of the street
- Pedestrian movement is impeded by the volume of traffic and limited crossing points.



Two storey terraced townhouses along High Northgate, set back from the road.



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

High Northgate is a primary vehicular route, surfaced in asphalt. It is a strong linear form with a generous width of 11m incorporating two lanes of traffic and a bus lane. Pavement widths feel narrow by comparison although these are generally 1.8m. Minimal building set-backs on the east of the street results in a constrained space which contrasts with the western side of the street. On-street parking is prohibited along the street.

The railway bridge spanning High Northgate provides a high degree of visual enclosure from the area to the north. The uniformity of the built form provides a sense of arrival, and the tones within the brick and rendered surfacing complement one another and add character to the street scene. The architectural detailing found within the properties is an attractive feature.

There are no street trees along High Northgate and greenery is provided within front gardens along the western side of the street. Boundary treatments are consistent and feature stone walls with vertical bar railings, painted black.

### Urban blocks

High Northgate is comprised of terraced blocks, the largest of which is approximately 80m in length. There is little block definition on the eastern side of the street. Along the western side, the block at the junction with McNay Street has quoin corner detailing to its full height, with sash windows facing onto McNay Street. A corner shop demarcates the junction with Arthur Street.

Building plots are of a small to moderate size and moderate to high density, creating a compact urban form. Terraced housing blocks relate strongly to one another in terms of style, scale

and layout. Terraces can be narrow, and the rear yards here are also relatively shallow, to a depth of 5 - 6m.

Townhouses on the west of the street have 4m set-backs and are accessed via a flight of steps which encourages a sense of separation from the street scene, along with natural surveillance. On the east of the street, the houses are located in closer proximity to the pavement.

### Buildings

There is an equal mix of red brick and rendered facades along the street. Rendered buildings are a variety of complementary colours and this adds to the character of the street. Front doors are often recessed within the curtilage of the built form and accentuated by a decorative stone lintel which forms a porch. Sash canted bay windows are a common feature of the ground floor, with sash windows with stone sills and lintels to upper floors. 124-136 High Northgate have simpler features than neighbouring properties, without the front porch or bay window features. However, their built form and shaping of the windows is characteristic of the predominant urban form.

### Views

The Goods Shed associated with the rail station is a Grade II\* Listed local landmark and potential focal point, although this is presently densely screened by vegetation. The railway viaduct at the top of High Northgate is Grade II Listed and forms a key focal point for this section of the street. Its stone piers are well integrated into the stone retaining walls which line the street upto the junction with McNay Street. Views are channelled along High Northgate by the almost continuous built form, and where there are gaps in the built form, views eastwards are possible connecting through to the river and Skerne Bridge, a Scheduled monument.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Northgate is the primary route into Darlington from the north and it is relentlessly busy with traffic heading to and from the town centre. There is a steady stream of pedestrian movement up and down Northgate between the rail station and the town centre. Pedestrian movement was also observed in an east – west direction, via a single uncontrolled pedestrian crossing, as people used the gap in development to access the riverside.

The busyness of the road at times makes for a hostile, intimidating, noisy and smelly environment for pedestrians. Movement is frustrated by narrow pavements and limited opportunities for crossing.



Less generous set-backs along the east of the street.

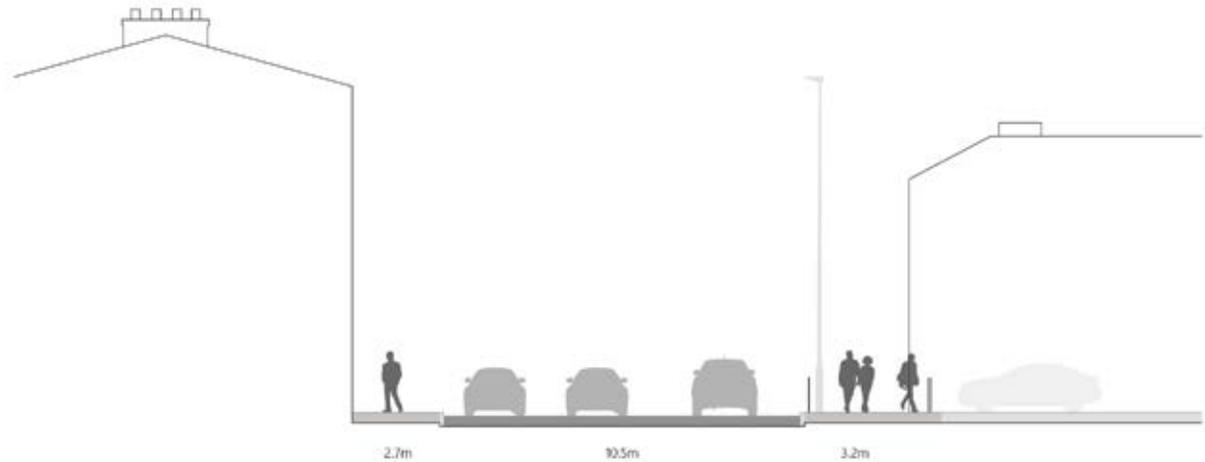
## High Northgate at junction of John Street

### Overview

Located centrally along Northgate, this section of the route consists of shops to the ground floor with residential or businesses to the upper floors. The buildings date from the late 19th century. Building heights differ - on the east side, buildings are three storeys high whereas they are two storeys to the west.

### Key characteristics

- Strong sense of identity due to coherency of architectural style and materiality
- Three storey development signalling proximity to town centre
- Urban blocks relate strongly to one another in terms of scale, style and density
- Characterful corner block detailing at junction with Westbrook Terrace
- Greenery is limited to John Street junction, and around the Cocker Beck
- The street is located within the Northgate Conservation Area
- The volume of traffic is a detracting feature of the street
- Pedestrian movement is impeded by the volume of traffic.



Three storey terraced properties along High Northgate opposite the junction with John Street



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

High Northgate is a primary vehicular route, surfaced in asphalt. It is a strong linear form with a generous width of 10.5 m which incorporates three lanes of traffic. Pavement widths are generous and range from 2.7 – 3.2m, although guard rails around the junction of John Street make it feel more constrained. On-street parking is prohibited along the street.

The three storey built form on the west of the street provides a strong sense of enclosure, although this contrasts with the openness created by the wide junction with John Street in the east. The uniformity of the three storey built form provides a focal point at the junction, and the increase in scale heralds a sense of arrival into the town centre. The shared vernacular and building materials add character to the street scene. The architectural detailing found within the properties is an attractive feature.

There are few street trees in the vicinity, at the junction with John Street and along the Cocker Beck to the south.

### Urban blocks

This section of High Northgate is comprised of terraced blocks, of varying lengths: 52m along the west side of the street and 14m and 28m to the east.

A corner block with a chamfered building line provides an attractive definition at Westgate Terrace. Properties at both ends of this block feature bay windows to upper floors, which is an additional detail afforded to bookend the block. Block definition is weak elsewhere, demonstrating changes that have occurred to urban blocks over time, and particularly in relation to the widening of the junction. The petrol station to the north replaced an earlier terrace, likely of a similar scale to

the three storey blocks, leaving a gap in the urban fabric.

Building plots are of a small to moderate size and moderate to high density, creating a compact urban form. Terraced blocks relate strongly to one another in terms of style, scale and layout. However, they can also be narrow, particularly those on the east of the street. The plot depth is generous, at up to 22m, with built form enclosing the rear yards. Access into the rear yards is generally via metal shutters.

### Buildings

Unlike other sections of High Northgate, there is an absence of red brick within the late 19th century buildings found in this location. Properties along the west of the street have a pale buff / grey brick or white painted brick façade. The brickwork is particularly interesting with its Flemish bond. There is a consistent rhythm to the window composition of windows, although some have become altered over time which detracts from the feature. Ground floors comprise shop fronts with signage boards. Front doors are often recessed within the built form to provide a porch.

Properties on the east of the street have simpler arrangement of features than neighbouring properties. Their built form and shaping of the windows is characteristic of the predominant urban form, however.

### Views

The ridgeline along Northgate becomes very apparent at the junction with John Street, with views stretching out across the valley to the east. Low level development next to the river, combined with a wide junction, mean the three storey properties become a focal point within the wider area.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Northgate is the primary route into Darlington from the north and it is relentlessly busy with traffic heading to and from the town centre. Furthermore, it is lined with buildings in commercial, retail, residential and leisure use, and links the town centre with Northgate station, all of which ensures a steady stream of pedestrian movement.

The busyness of the road at times makes for a hostile, intimidating, noisy and smelly environment for pedestrians. Pedestrian movement in this location is constrained by guard rails and controlled crossing points.



Characterful corner block definition

# North Lodge Terrace

## Overview

North Lodge Terrace is a predominantly residential street located to the west of North Lodge Park, dating from the early 20th century. The family-sized terraces were developed at the same time as the park, reflecting the importance of access to green space within the Victorian public park movement.

## Key characteristics

- Strong sense of identity due to coherency of architectural style and materiality
- Defined by a continuous line of built form to the western side of the street
- Building set-backs with front gardens contribute to the street scene
- Relatively wide street with designated parking located on both sides of the street
- Access to green space within North Lodge Park
- The street is located within the Northgate Conservation Area
- On-street parking detracts from street scene.



Bay windows are a common features of terraces along the street, here accompanied by attic windows



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

North Lodge Terrace is a linear asphalt-surfaced road and is characteristic of the ordered layout of Victorian residential streets which lie to the east of Northgate. It is a reasonably wide street, at 8.5m wide and this generous width is accentuated by the openness of North Lodge Park. Pavement widths are comfortable for a residential street at 1.8m on both sides, and properties along the street are set-back 2.5m providing a greater sense of space. There is on-street parking available on both sides of the street within designated bays, and traffic calming measures are in evidence via raised tables.

There are no street trees, although trees located along the edge of the park make a valuable contribution to the character of the street. Feelings of openness and enclosure vary along the street due to the arrangement of trees within the park and the absence of development along Gladstone Street to the south. At the northern end of the street there is a greater sense of enclosure as the built form along the west of the street is mirrored by a linear composition of mature parkland trees to the east. North Lodge Park is an open space which counterbalances the tight urban form within the locality.

Boundary treatments tend to be formed from low brick walls, although there is variety in additional elements such as hedges, vertical bar railings and decorative concrete bricks and coping.

### Urban blocks

North Lodge Terrace is comprised of a singular block of terraced properties, measuring an extraordinary 250m in length. The ends of the block are accentuated by a gable profile with windows facing out onto Gladstone Street in the south and Enfield Terrace in the north. There is a corner shop

at the junction with Gladstone Street providing a destination. Building plots are of a small to moderate size, with built form of a moderate to high density, creating a compact urban form along the western side of the street. Properties are set 2m back from the street, which accentuates the width.

Terraced housing blocks relate strongly to one another in terms of style, scale and layout. The repetition within the terraces is somewhat visually disrupted at a mid-way point, by the Jamia Mosque. However, the built form is not interrupted as the building's footprint mirrors that of two terraced houses along the street.

### Buildings

Red brick building materials are prominent in this area. Front doors are located within minor recesses at ground level accentuated by an integrated overhanging stone lintel to form a porched area. Sash canted bay windows are a common feature of the ground floor, with sash windows with stone sills and lintels to upper floors. There are attic windows within the roofline, and these can vary in height and roof type. The mosque provides a break in uniformity of doors and windows with a larger front door and double height decorative windows.

### Views

Views are generally channelled across the street towards North Lodge Park, with particular focus towards the bandstand which is located centrally in the park. Two very mature lime trees along the boundary of the park provide a focal point to the street. Development encloses the view northwards, whereas the southern aspect is more open and views of the wider area are possible.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

North Lodge Terrace has a reasonably strong sense of place. It has a relatively tranquil atmosphere and is of welcoming, intimate, and human scale. The change in character and scale from Northgate is striking, but the traffic noise from Northgate and the A68 is audible in this location.

Although pavement widths can feel generous, there is a significant number of parked cars which impacts the movement of pedestrians and cyclists. The proximity of the green space improves the pedestrian experience.



Jamia Mosque is integrated within the extraordinary length of terraces

# Weir Street

## Overview

Weir Street is a predominantly industrial commercial street located to the east of Northgate and to the immediate west of the River Skerne. The street varies in character, with the unified building form of two storey brick warehouses or residential properties, with single pitched roofline and gable end fronting onto the street. The west of the street is more varied, with a predominance of surface level car parks and a row of single storey brick industrial commercial buildings. Brick is the predominant material, with scoria bricks to the carriageway.

## Key characteristics

- Consistent use of red brick as a building material providing identity to Weir Street
- Consistent rhythm to the pitched roofline with gable-end facing onto the street
- Blue scoria brick road surfacing provides interesting character which compliments the red brick
- On-street car parking and lack of footpath space impedes pedestrian movement
- Variety of boundary treatments which detracts from street
- Urban blocks relate strongly to one another in terms of scale, materiality and roofline.



Rhythm to pitched roofline creates interest within a relatively industrial tertiary street



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Weir Street is a straight narrow street, surfaced in scoria brick which is common surfacing for back alleys within the study area. Surfacing materials, a narrow width and a lack of pavement indicate the route is tertiary. The narrow width accentuates the sense of enclosure brought by the built form along the street. The width opens up where demolitions have occurred, on the west of the street, resulting in relatively expansive areas of surface level car parking.

The uniformity of the built form provides a sense of arrival, along with the intact characterful and colourful surfacing materials which compliments the red brick warehouse vernacular. The quality of the enclosed residential development on the east of the street is an attractive feature.

Parking relating to nearby businesses is evidenced along Weir Street, which detracts from the street. Residential development contains parking within its enclosed courtyard space. Surface level car parks are located to the immediate west of the street.

### Urban blocks

Weir Street is comprised of low density, one and two storey blocks, ranging from 9 – 45 metres in length. The range of block lengths is directly related to the different types of land use on the street. Block definition is weak, particularly at the junctions of Chestnut Street and Garden Street due to the presence of surface level car parks in these locations. Urban blocks have a consistent appearance on both sides of the street, although they provide a contrast with one another. To the east, the orientation of the built form, with the gable end facing onto the street, is a unifying feature. There are no building set-backs, and the building line is strengthened along

the eastern side of the street via a brick wall enclosure to a private residential car park area. To the west, the single storey urban blocks are orientated with gables at a perpendicular angle to the street. Boundary treatments are a mixture of red brick walls, palisade security fencing and metal shutters.

### Buildings

Red brick building materials are prominent along the street, although some industrial units have painted or pebble-dashed the façade. Roof materials include sheet metal to the industrial commercial units, and slate to residential buildings. Expansive metal roller shutters fronting onto the street mark the primary entrance to industrial commercial properties. Entrances to residential properties are concealed from the street, located within enclosed courtyards.

### Views

Where there is built form, views along Weir Street is channelled along the street. Where demolitions have occurred, views are opened up to the west where the backs of properties along Northgate are easily discerned. Weir Street's topographical setting within the valley floor is evidenced at junctions where the incline up to Northgate is evident. At junctions, there are views of landmark buildings along Northgate, such as at Garden Street which provides a framed view of the entrance to the former Technical College ( now Council Offices ). The continuous form of urban development along the east of the street prevents views through to the river or the industrial commercial development beyond.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

The low quality of the industrial development and prominence of car parking, particularly on vacant land, are key detractors affecting ambience. There is potential for vehicular activity to dominate the street during peak hours due to the prominence of car parks and the narrow width of the street. During off peak hours, the street is likely to be used solely by residential occupiers. The proximity of the river has the potential to increase ambience.

Weir Street is a predominantly industrial commercial street with an absence of active frontage and natural surveillance. There are no pedestrian footpaths and the narrow carriageway discourages comfortable interaction. The materiality of the carriageway provides a pleasant aspect which has the potential to contribute to a pedestrian experience.



Industrial development has taken cues from historical buildings along the street

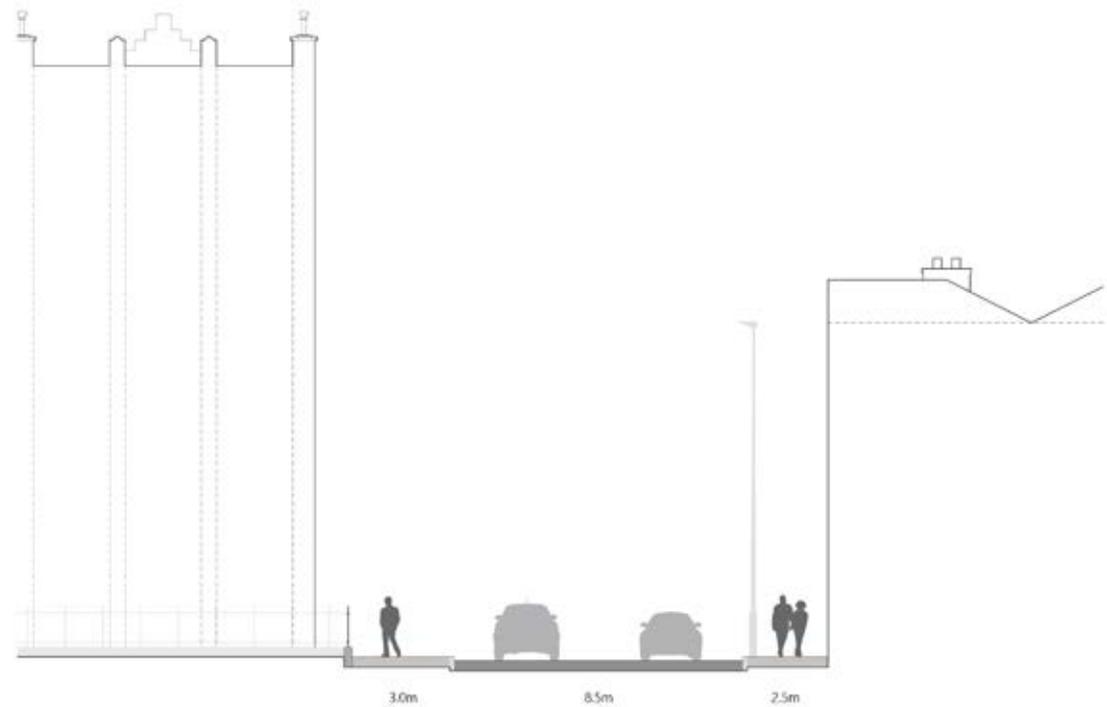
# Northgate

## Overview

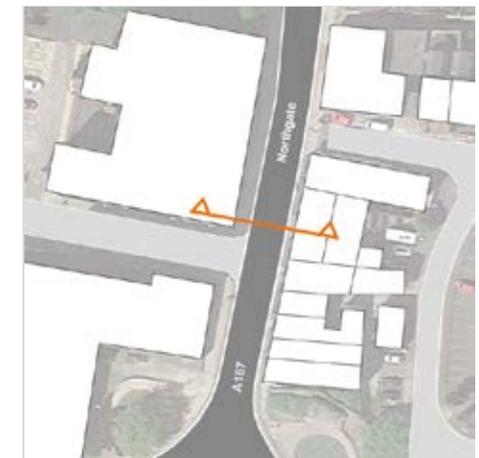
Located close to Northgate roundabout, this section of the route features an eclectic mix of buildings styles, blocks and plot sizes. Along the east of the street, properties are predominantly retail to the ground floor and residential or businesses to the upper floors. Larger scale buildings are located along the west of the street and have been built as, or re-purposed into, offices. Building heights are generally 3 storeys, although taller development is present along the west of the street, up to 10 storeys at Northgate Tower. Darlington Council's offices are located within the Grade II Listed former Technical College.

## Key characteristics

- Lack of coherency within architectural style and materiality
- Historically significant buildings appropriated for modern day use, with varying degrees of success
- Taller scale and massing within development signalling proximity to town centre
- Greenery is limited to Northgate roundabout junction, and where North Lodge Park interfaces with the street.
- The street is located within the Northgate Conservation Area
- The volume of traffic is a detracting feature of the street
- Pedestrian movement is impeded by the volume of traffic.



Eclectic mix of architectural references showing development of the street over time



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Northgate is a primary vehicular route, surfaced in asphalt. It has a strong linear form and a relatively narrow width of 8.5 m, incorporating two lanes of traffic. Pavement widths are reasonable width and range from 2.5 – 3.0 m, although guard rails around the roundabout junction make it feel more constrained in this location. On-street parking is prohibited along the street.

Built form provides a strong sense of enclosure, and this contrasts with the openness created by the roundabout to the south. Locally prominent buildings such as Northgate Tower and the Council Offices (formerly Darlington Technical College), and the increase in scale heralds a sense of arrival into the town centre. There is great variety in the building vernacular which adds character to the street scene, however, the inappropriate architectural additions and visual clutter at ground level associated with shop frontages is a major detraction. The absence of an active frontage at Northgate Tower negatively impacts the street scene.

Street trees along this section of Northgate are concentrated around Northgate roundabout and where North Lodge Parks interfaces with the street.

### Urban blocks

This section of High Northgate is comprised of a mix of terraced blocks, at 50-60m in length generally, and prominent stand-alone blocks with sizeable footprints.

A corner block with a chamfered building line provides an attractive definition at 146 Northgate. Block definition is generally strong across the detached blocks, such as at the former Technical College and Central School Annex, due to the symmetrical nature of the architectural styling.

Building plot sizes vary from small to large. Density is generally moderate, with the exception of Northgate Tower which is high density. There are gaps in built form along the street which can interrupt the flow of development.

### Buildings

There is an assortment of materials in this section of Northgate, ranging from the pink brick and buff terracotta tiles of the former Technical College, to rendered facades of a variety of colours, red brick buildings with stone lintels and the brown brick, imprinted concrete and coloured glazing of Northgate Tower. The former Technical College has highly decorative qualities, with a central tower, pitched roof detailing with statues as finials, and octagonal corner turrets. The symmetry in its built form – its central porch, the composition of windows - contrasts markedly with the properties along the east of the street where the rhythm of architectural components feels disjointed. Delineation between ground floor and upper floors appears confused due to differences in signage styles and heights. Windows styles and heights are inconsistent, although the historic built fabric is discernible.

### Views

Views are channelled along Northgate due to the density of the built form. Where there are gaps in the built form, such as at Garden Street, views eastwards are possible connecting through towards Weir Street, the river and development beyond. There is intervisibility with the town centre from this section of Northgate. Northgate United Reformed Church at the junction with Chestnut Street provides a local focal point to the north. Along with Northgate Tower, the spire of the church is visible when walking to the study area from Darlington rail station.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Northgate is the primary route into Darlington from the north and it is relentlessly busy with traffic heading to and from the town centre. Furthermore, it is lined with buildings in commercial, retail, residential and leisure use, and links the town centre with Northgate station, all of which ensures a steady stream of pedestrian movement.

The busyness of the road at times makes for a hostile, intimidating, noisy and smelly environment for pedestrians. Pedestrian movement in this location is constrained by a lack of crossing points.



Prominent Grade Listed buildings along Northgate with generous massing and scale

# Skinnergate

## Overview

Skinnergate is a pedestrianised shopping street within the Town Centre. The route features an eclectic mix of buildings styles, blocks and plot sizes. Retail and food & drink are predominant features to the ground floor. The built scale increases within the southern part of the street, although this doesn't exceed 3 storeys. The street is located within the Town Centre conservation area and features a high number of Listed buildings of prominence to the development of Darlington.

## Key characteristics

- Predominantly retail and food & drink outlets, with a Friends Meeting House
- Building scale is generally 2 - 3 storeys and scale is most pronounced along the southern part of the street
- Historically significant buildings appropriated for modern day use, with varying degrees of success
- Absence of green infrastructure along the route
- The street is located within the Town Centre Conservation Area
- The pedestrianised environment is an attractive feature of the street
- Vehicular movement is restricted to service vehicles only, at certain times
- The Yards are an impressive and characterful townscape feature.



The widened junction at Blackwellgate demarcated with street trees and prominent buildings



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Skinnergate is a long linear route, primarily for pedestrians and surfaced in stone flag paving and setts. Servicing vehicles have access to the street at certain times of the day. It has a strong linear form with a width ranging from 7m in the north to 9m in the south. On-street parking is prohibited along the street, unless used for servicing within designated timings.

Built form provides a strong sense of enclosure, which opens out at junctions. Building scale increases close to the junction with Blackwellgate in the south, however, the route is wider here so enclosure remains comparable to areas in the north. Locally prominent buildings located along the southern end of the street, such as the Grade II\* Listed Friends Meeting House, the Grade II Listed Lloyds Bank and the Grade II Listed Mechanics Institute, herald a sense of arrival at a destination. The Mechanics Institute has a small building set-back which adds to the street scene – the boundary wall of the building maintains the built line.

There are no street trees along Skinnergate although two mature street trees have been planted to demarcate the junction with Blackwellgate.

### Urban blocks

Skinnergate is comprised of two to three storey blocks of varying lengths: the longest being 173m along the western section which has fewer yards. The junction with Blackwellgate provides two impressive corner blocks that provide an attractive definition to the entrance to Skinnergate; one chamfered and one curved. A corner block with a curved building line provides an attractive definition at Duke Street. The entrances to corner blocks are located at the centreline of the curve and chamfer, which are aligned with windows to the upper floors.

Plot sizes vary with larger plots featuring at the southern section of the street. Density is moderate size creating a compact urban form. Plot depth is relatively shallow, but also hard to define due to built-up nature of the yards and developmental change that has occurred over the years.

### Buildings

There is good variety in the building vernacular which adds character to the street scene, however, late 20th century architecture provides a detracting contrast.

Building materials are generally brick or rendered / painted brick. Lloyds Bank at the junction of Blackwellgate also includes terracotta dressings around windows and along balustrading to highlight the prominence of this corner plot. Sash casement windows are a common feature of the built form, although there is a vast array of different window shapes along the route which weakens the character. Due to the variety of architectural styles, scales and dates of buildings, the rhythm of architectural components and delineation between ground floors and upper floors often feels disjointed.

### Views

Views are channelled along Skinnergate due to the density of the built form. Views open out at the junctions with Bondgate and Blackwellgate, and to some extent at Duke Street. Channelled, winding views are perceptible eastwards along Post House Wynd. Yards - such as Mechanics Yard, Clarks Yard, Buckton's Yard - demarcate historic plots boundaries along former service yards and glimpsed views are available from Skinnergate.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Skinnergate is a pedestrian zone with restricted vehicular access for the purpose of loading only. Although the carriageway is demarcated with setts, and the adjacent footways surfaced in high quality stone, the absence of a kerbline provides a greater width for pedestrians and cyclists. Parking is limited to loading only, and during outside of peak hours, cars and vans litter the route. Yellow road markings detract from the setting.

Skinnergate is a secondary shopping street in Darlington which connects Blackwellgate and Bondgate. Consequently there is a steady stream of pedestrian movement accessing businesses along the route, or using the route as a cut through.



Prominent Grade Listed buildings with alleyways connecting through to the Yards

# Southend Avenue

## Overview

Southend Avenue is a residential street located to the south west of Darlington town centre, north of the A167 and opposite a narrow linear park. The street forms part of the West End Conservation Area and reinforces Darlington's built and natural heritage. The street has an urban character comprising late 19th Century terraced red brick townhouses. The predominantly brick, 2 ½ story properties face onto and overlook a narrow rectangular shaped linear park containing mature trees and grassed areas.

## Key characteristics

- Strong sense of identity is created due to consistent architectural styles, materials and detailing;
- Continuous single fronted terrace of high-quality town houses that relate very strongly to one another in terms of scale, style and detail;
- Bay windows and traditional doorways with stone corbels, pediments and transom lights are a strong feature amongst nearly all of the buildings;
- The south eastern side of the street is open to mature trees which compliment the buildings and create a strong sense of identify
- The street is located within the West End Conservation Area
- The vehicular traffic is low and un-intrusive.



Continuous single fronted terrace of high quality townhouses



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Southend Avenue is a residential street, which is surfaced in asphalt. It has a strong linear form with a width of 8.5m which incorporates on-street parking on both sides of the carriageway. Pavement widths are generally 2.0m. The street has good sense of proportion and scale with the trees within the linear park boundary mirroring the height of the buildings along the street.

The built form and tree cover form provides some sense of enclosure, although this is limited in places due to gaps in tree cover.

There are a significant number of mature trees and green open spaces within the neighbouring park and some additional greenery is provided within front gardens along the eastern side of the street. Boundary treatments are largely consistent and feature low brick walls with stone copings, and occasional vertical bar railings. Traditional panel doors with pediments add to the charm and character of the street. The back streets are paved with the pale blue scoria blocks.

The linear park opposite the properties, provides an alternative pedestrian and cycle route that runs through mature trees and grassed areas. There is no boundary wall along its boundary with Southend Avenue and the green space runs into the street. Along the Grange Road elevation, a low stone boundary wall separates the park from the carriageway. This is broken with regular access points. Set into this boundary wall is a historic drinking fountain made of carved sandstone with pink granite bowl, and central bird motif with shields to either side. Whilst in good condition it is not connected to the water supply.

### Urban blocks

Southend Avenue consists of a four rows of large terraced townhouses, with rows being approximately 70 - 90m in length. Plot sizes tend to be very uniform along the street, and the set back from the carriageway largely constant along the length of the street. All buildings face onto the street which provides good natural surveillance.

### Buildings

Bay windows are a dominant feature along the street. These are usually of masonry construction, with brick columns but lintels and cills constructed from stone and painted white. The bays extend over two storeys and have a pitched top. Almost all buildings have a decorative tile dentil courses at the eaves. Roofs are constructed of slate and where the roofline is penetrated by dormers these are an original feature of the buildings. The most southerly row of terraced town houses feature dominant dormers in the roofscape. All properties are constructed from either red or the slightly lighter coloured pease brick.

### Views

Long distant views down the entire length of the street are not obtainable due to branches from the adjacent mature trees which overhang the carriageway. There are also occasional mid distance views across the linear park towards Grange Road. These views are however limited due to the large number of trees in the park.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Southend Avenue is a quiet residential street with no through traffic and as a result vehicle movement is low and the experience for pedestrians is very positive. This is enhanced by the presence of the linear park which borders the entire length of the street.

Parking can be a dominant feature of the street at certain times of the day however mature trees in the park provide a positive distraction to the parking. The buildings provide consistency and harmony which adds to the pedestrian experience.



Bay windows are a prominent feature of the street

# Stanhope Road North

## Overview

Stanhope Road North is a residential street located to the west of Darlington town centre, south of the A68 and adjacent to Stanhope Park. The street has an urban character comprising 19th Century terraced townhouses. The predominantly brick, 2 ½ storey properties face onto and overlook Stanhope Park, a small rectangular shaped park containing mature trees and tennis courts.

## Key characteristics

- Strong sense of identity is created due to consistent architectural styles, materials and detailing;
- Continuous single fronted terrace of high quality town houses that relate very strongly to one another in terms of scale, style and detail;
- Bay windows and traditional doorways with corbels, pediments and transom lights are a strong feature amongst the buildings;
- The western side of the street is open to parkland and mature trees which compliment the attractive buildings and create a strong sense of identify
- The street is located within the West End Conservation Area
- The vehicular traffic is generally low and un-intrusive
- On-street parking is a dominant feature of the street.



Consistent architectural styles, material and detailing



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Stanhope Road is a residential street, surfaced in asphalt. It has a strong linear form with a width of 8.45m which incorporates two lanes of traffic and on-street parking on both sides of the carriageway. Pavement widths are generally 2.0m. Minimal building set-backs result in a space that has a good sense of proportion and scale with the trees along the park boundary mirroring the height of the buildings opposite.

The built form and tree cover provide some sense of enclosure, although this is limited in places due to gaps in tree cover on the park boundary. The architectural detailing found amongst the properties is an attractive feature of the street providing character and a strong sense of place.

There are a significant number of mature trees and green open spaces within the neighbouring park and some additional greenery is provided within front gardens along the eastern side of the street. Boundary treatments are consistent and feature low brick walls with stone caps and copings, often painted white and vertical bar railings, painted black. Brightly coloured traditional panel doors add to the charm and character of the street. The back streets are often paved with scoria blocks, a pale blue colour block which was manufactured from by-products of local foundries.

### Urban blocks

Stanhope Road consists of a single row of terraced townhouses, which is approximately 270m in length. Plot sizes tend to be very uniform along the street, and the set-back from the carriageway largely constant along the length of the street. All buildings face onto the street which provides good natural surveillance.

### Buildings

Bay windows are a common feature along the entire street. These are usually of masonry construction, painted and unpainted and often extending over two storeys. They almost always have a flat top. Almost all buildings have a decorative dentil courses above decorative brick lentils or at the eaves. Sandstone is commonly used for details around windows and doors as well as to provide banding. There are also two double fronted properties towards the junction with Duke Street which are faced entirely in sandstone. Both houses also have generous porticos again constructed in sandstone. In most cases roofs are constructed of slate and where the roofline is penetrated by dormers these are often designed in at the outset and therefore more successful than those which are retrofitted. Most properties are constructed from the local pease brick, which the light-coloured buff brick unique to the area, and produced as a by-product of mining activities.

### Views

Long distant views down the entire length of the street are not obtainable due to a kink in the road at its junction with Trinity Street. There are, however, good views up and down the street from this location as well as mid-distance views across Stanhope Park towards the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. These views are filtered due to the large number of mature trees in the park.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Whilst not a primary route into Darlington, Stanhope Road is one of several streets that link the A68 in the north to A167 in the south and at peak times it can be busy with traffic

attempting to avoid the town centre. Outside peak hours vehicle movement is generally low and the experience for pedestrians is very positive. Parking can be a dominant feature of the street at certain times of the day, however, mature trees and the park provide a positive distraction to the parking.

Attractive townhouses provide an interesting backdrop to the street and street geometry and architectural styles also remains consistent along the entire length of the street providing consistency and harmony which adds to the pedestrian experience.



Double fronted properties close to the junction with Duke Street

# Victoria Embankment

## Overview

Victoria Embankment is a residential street located to the south of Darlington town centre, and connects the town centre to South Park. The street is located just outside of the West End Conservation area but nevertheless reinforces Darlington's built and natural heritage. The street has an urban character comprising smaller late 19th Century terraced red brick townhouses. The predominantly brick, 2 story properties face onto and overlook the River Skerne corridor which contains mature trees and grassed areas.

## Key characteristics

- Strong sense of identity is created due to consistent architectural styles, materials and detailing;
- Two rows of single fronted terraced townhouses that relate very strongly to one another and face onto the River Skerne;
- Bay windows and traditional doorways with pediments and transom lights are a strong feature amongst nearly all of the buildings;
- The western side of the street is open to mature trees which line the River Skerne
- The street is located just outside the West End Conservation Area
- The vehicular traffic is low
- On-street parking is a dominant feature of the street.



Terraced townhouses with a strong sense of identity



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Victoria Embankment is a narrow residential street, which is surfaced in asphalt. It has a strong linear form with a width of 7.0m which incorporates on-street parking on both sides of the carriageway. Pavement widths are generally 1.8m. The street has good sense of proportion and scale with the trees that align the River Skerne mirroring the height of the buildings along the street. The continuous built form, narrow street and tree cover form provide a strong sense of enclosure.

There are a significant number of mature trees and green open spaces along the embankment of the River Skerne. Boundary treatments are largely consistent and feature low brick walls with stone copings, and occasional vertical bar railings. Traditional brightly coloured panel doors with painted corbels and pediments add to the charm and character of the street. The back streets are paved with the pale blue scoria blocks.

### Urban blocks

Victoria Embankment consists of a 2 rows of small terraced town houses, with rows being approximately 120 and 300m in length. Plot sizes tend to be very uniform along the street, and the set back from the carriageway largely constant along the length of the street. All buildings face onto the street which provides good natural surveillance.

### Buildings

Bay windows are a very dominant feature along the street. These are usually of timber construction a painted different colours. The bays extend over two storeys and have a flat top. Roofs are constructed of slate and all properties are constructed from red brick although some are rendered.

### Views

Long distant views along much of the street are obtainable due to the straight form of the street. There are also occasional mid distance views across the river towards Darlington Cricket Club. These views are however limited due to the large number of trees along the banks of the River Skerne.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Victoria Embankment is a quiet residential street with no through traffic and as a result vehicle movement is low and the experience for pedestrians is very positive. This is enhanced by the presence trees and vegetation that grown on the embankments of the River Skerne which borders the entire length of the street. Parking can be a dominant feature of the street at certain times of the day.



The properties look out onto the River Skerne embankment with wildflowers and mature trees

# Beechwood Avenue

## Overview

Beechwood Avenue is a residential street located to the south west of Darlington town centre, north of the A167 and opposite St Augustine's Roman Catholic School. Being part of the West End Conservation area, the street makes a significant contribution to the wider character of the town and reinforces Darlington's high quality built and natural heritage. The street has an urban character comprising late 19th Century terraced townhouses. The predominantly brick, 2 ½ storey properties face onto and overlook Augustine's Roman Catholic School which has a belt of mature trees and hedgerow along its boundary with Beechwood Avenue.

## Key characteristics

- Consistent architectural styles, materials and detailing;
- Continuous single fronted terrace of high-quality town houses that relate very strongly to one another in terms of scale, style and detail;
- Dormer roofs, bay windows and traditional panelled doorways with porches and transom lights are a strong feature amongst all of the buildings;
- The north eastern side of the street is open to Augustine's Roman Catholic School and mature trees which line the boundary to the school at this location create a strong sense of proportion as well as identity
- The street is located within the West End Conservation Area
- The vehicular traffic is low and un-intrusive
- On-street parking is a feature of the street.



Large dormers are an attractive feature of the roofscape, often with a rendered facade



Plan highlighting block and plot sizes

### Streets and spaces

Beechwood Avenue is a residential street, surfaced in asphalt. The whole street of terraced houses has been designed with a high degree of uniformity and almost all of the original features such as the bay windows, doors, boundaries and dormer roofline remain intact. It has a strong linear form with a width of 8.0m which incorporates two lanes of traffic and on-street parking on both sides of the carriageway. Pavement widths are generally 2.0m. The street has a good sense of proportion and scale with the trees along the school boundary mirroring the height of the buildings along the south western edge of the street.

The strong built form and continuous tree line opposite provide a strong sense of enclosure. The architectural detailing found amongst all of the properties is also an attractive feature of the street providing character and a strong sense of place.

There are a significant number of mature trees within the neighbouring school grounds and additional greenery is provided within front gardens of the properties. Boundary treatments are consistent and feature low brick walls with clay tile copings, and vertical bar metal railings. The back street is paved entirely with the pale blue scoria block.

### Urban blocks

Beechwood Avenue consists of two rows of terraced townhouses, which are approximately 60m and 90m in length. Plot sizes are very uniform along the street, and the set back of the buildings from the carriageway is very constant along the entire length of the street. All buildings and habitable rooms face directly onto the street which provides good natural surveillance.

### Buildings

Bay windows are a common feature along the street. These are usually of timber construction, often painted white and in places extend over two storeys particularly on properties that are located closer to the junction with Southend Avenue. They almost always have a flat top. All of properties are constructed from the local red brick. In all cases, roofs are constructed of slate and large dormers are a key feature of the roofscape. The face of the dormers is often rendered providing a contrast to the red brick. Wide panel doors with leaded windows, transom windows and side lights are also a dominant feature of the buildings.

### Views

Long distant views down the entire length of the street are obtainable due straight linear form of the street. The large number of mature trees in the school grounds limit views towards the north east.

### Ambience and Pedestrian experience

Beechwood Avenue is a quiet residential street with no through traffic and as a result vehicle movement is low and the experience for pedestrians is very positive. Parking can be a dominant feature of the street at certain times of the day however mature trees in the school grounds provide a positive distraction to the parking.

Attractive townhouses with good architectural detailing provide an interesting backdrop to the street. The buildings remain consistent along the entire length of the street providing consistency and harmony which adds to the pedestrian experience.



Two rows of terraced townhouses with uniform plot size along the street

## Case studies



Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne: recent regeneration has transformed a centre of the industrial revolution to a cultural axis, linking with the creative areas in the universities and colleges of Newcastle and Gateshead.



Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne: the refurbishment of a Victorian mill into the Toffee Factory - a serviced office space for a range of digital and creative businesses



Ouseburn, Newcastle upon Tyne: A riverside walkway features a series of pocket parks. Street art adds a sense of place and distinctiveness.



Fowler's Yard, Durham: former stables and warehouses transformed into a series of creative workspaces for artists and craftspeople. Visitors have the opportunity to meet the artists and observe the creative processes in action.





Kelham Island, Sheffield: Formerly an industrial area, the island itself was created by the building of a goit. The area is home to an industrial museum, independent businesses, and former mills and factories converted to residential.



The Calls, Leeds: Formerly an area of industry in Leeds, it has now been regenerated with the careful conversion of listed building warehouses and new builds in a sympathetic style for offices, residential and leisure.



Hebden Bridge: Heritage has played a major role in the sensitive uplift of the town centre.



Kelham Island, Sheffield: Removed from Historic England's 'At Risk' register in 2019, the 'urban village' was since named as the best place to live in the UK at the Urbanism Awards.



Oldham Town Hall: a translucent glass light-box, creates a new façade on Clegg Street. The Town Square shopping centre and an active and animated street environment, especially at night.



Hebden Bridge: Linear green space plays an important part in the town through footpaths and cycleways along the canal.

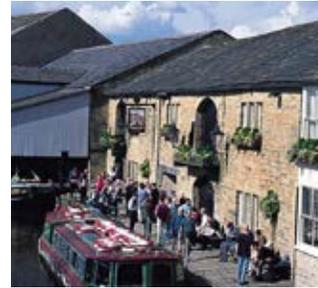




Rochdale: the River Roch was previously hidden, running through a culvert in the heart of the town, but has now been reopened. This improved the setting of a number of assets and emphasised the civic quality of the space



Weaver's Triangle, Burnley: A modern name for a regenerated area on the banks of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal that was once at the heart of Burnley's textile industry.



Hull: The revitalised public realm includes 14 streets and 4 new public squares and has increased connectivity across the city.



The Malings, Newcastle upon Tyne: The Malings, to the right, is opposite the Toffee Factory. A pioneering residential quarter in a previously derelict, post-industrial zone.



The Malings, Newcastle upon Tyne: A simple, syncopated architecture of locally-sourced brick walls and timber windows has hidden subtleties, curving with the landscape and avoiding repetition. Back gardens and shared garden plots are terraced across the steep slopes of the site



Ordsall Chord, Manchester: drab and hidden structures combined with poor lighting made this a hostile neighbourhood to pedestrians and cyclists. The Ordsall Chord project uses landscape and lighting to reverse this situation.



Ordsall Chord: The scheme has created an active, riverside, urban neighbourhood with the railway structures, including the Grade I-listed Stephenson Viaduct, at the heart.



Matilda Street Pocket Park, Sheffield: one of Sheffield's first examples of natural flood management in an urban environment. It provides both a public park and extra space for the previously narrow river to hold back and slow flood water.



Marmalade Lane, Cambridge: originally a plot left over from a previous housing development, now an 'urban idyll' of brick-clad homes, car-free streets, with community gardens and grow plots.



Byker Community Garden, Newcastle: the transformation of a derelict church yard into a community space for people to meet, learn and grow with stunning views across the Tyne Valley, the city and its famous bridges.

# Urban Design Framework

## Design Principles

The following design principles have been devised based on an appreciation of the characteristics of streets within the area and our understanding of the site's townscape and landscape features.

The design principles should be used to guide the development of the masterplan and help new development reflect the intrinsic qualities found within the Northgate and Darlington's townscape, creating sense of place and a strong identity.

The design principles have also been informed by the following guidance:

- Urban Design Compendium (2000, HCA)
- Darlington BC: Characterisation Study (2008)
- Darlington BC: A Conservation Management Plan for Darlington Town Centre Fringe (July 2010)
- Darlington BC: New Development Supplementary Planning Document (July 2011)
- Northgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2021).



## Topography & Built Form



### Topography

- **Development should relate positively to the existing built form and topography.** Where the ground level falls towards the river, buildings should step down with it. Building footprints and streets should follow contour slopes.
- **Development should promote positive skyline landmarks** along Northgate and High Northgate, including the Skerne Bridge, Northgate United Reformed Church spire, the former Technical College. Development should maintain key views of these features.

### Built form

- **The survival of historic fabric and form is key to retaining character** of the existing built form and restoring character within the Northgate Conservation Area. The existing fabric should be adapted to develop proposals for change. Harmful alterations (shop frontages and extensions) become opportunities to restore character.
- **Existing voids and fragmented buildings and features should be developed to enhance the local character.** The building line should be reinstated, forming continuity and integrity of the streetscape. Where the building line cannot be moved, trees can be used architecturally to demarcate the historic built line.

- **New development should be high quality, reflect its context, incorporate appropriate architectural detailing** in terms of windows and door proportions and add to the area's architectural legacy.
- **New development should connect with the surrounding neighbourhood by respecting and maintaining building lines and heights, established plot sizes, rhythm and setting.** Around High Northgate, the building scale is small and consistently 2 to 2 ½ storeys in height, with a regularity in form and scale. Building scales increase to the south, with heights typically 2 to 5 storeys. Variations in height are common within a row of buildings, particularly in the historic core area.
- **A fine grained pattern of development should be reflected generally between Northgate and the river Skerne,** minimising leftover space and generating more opportunities for active frontages. Existing larger plots and 'big-boxes' should be wrapped with smaller plots, ensuring rear elevations and servicing is not exposed to the street. This will also create a more 'human scale' environment, reinstating a more pedestrian friendly link between the area and the town centre.
- **Buildings should be built up to the pavement edge or have a small defensible space of no more than 2.0m.**

# Streets



- Existing street layouts should be retained as they indicate a historic pattern of development.
- Existing alleyways with characterful vernacular should be retained and enhanced.
- New streets should be orientated to the historical geometric street pattern where this is considered viable. Where spatial constraints indicate this is not viable, street orientation within the wider area should be referenced.
- The curvilinear form of the river Skerne and Cocker beck present opportunities to break from the rhythm of the historic linear street pattern.
- All existing and new streets should be designed as high quality, low speed pedestrian friendly environments with a clear hierarchy.

The following street typologies are indicative of what would be appropriate.



## Main Street

A street geometry orientated towards the pedestrian with generous footways, narrower carriageways, clear crossing tables, robust and aesthetically pleasing materials.

Slowed traffic will encourage a walkable and cycle friendly area and ensure that the most vulnerable users have priority. Slow drivers will have increased awareness of pedestrians enabling all users to engage with their surroundings whilst moving through the public realm.

- Street geometry:  
Reduced carriageway width to 6.8m where feasible, with additional space added for segregated cycle lanes. Pavements typically 3.0m – 4.0m width.
- Parking:  
Provision of short stay parking integrated with street trees and other SuDS features. Parking for residents at rear of properties only.
- Materials: High quality palette.
- Green infrastructure:  
Boulevard trees a dominant feature of the street. Substantial planting in the ground to help create a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Built edge:  
A continuous building line which celebrates and enhances the historic plot boundaries.

Locations: Northgate, High Northgate



### Secondary Street

- Secondary spines off the main road and key gateway routes.
- More generous street geometry (road and pavement widths) closely aligned to the main street.
- Variety of architectural styles forming a continuous built edge
- Variety of building heights and plot sizes to create visual interest.
- Boulevard trees to help define the route.
- Integrated wayfinding.
- Small provision of short stay parking integrated with street trees and other SuDS features. Parking for residents at rear of properties only.

**Locations:** John St, Chesnut St



### Green Street

- Development fronting onto green space / riverside setting.
- Integrate shared surfacing.
- Vegetation and planting are a key feature of the road.
- Strong definition between public and private space created by formal boundary treatments.
- Generous width of footpaths to integrate pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduced vehicular speeds and on-street parking.
- Small front gardens with minimal set-backs.
- Architectural vernacular strongly associated with detailing of Victorian housing.

**Locations:** New streets facing onto the river Skerne, Cocker beck and other green space.



### Residential Street

- Secondary spines off the main road but with restricted access for residents only.
- Buildings define the street and front onto it to provide natural surveillance.
- Small front gardens with minimal set-backs.
- Strong definition between public and private space created by formal boundary treatments.
- Reduced vehicular speeds and on street parking.
- Architectural vernacular strongly associated with detailing of Victorian housing.

**Locations:** Garden St



### Alleyways

- Pedestrian priority, with pavement width occupying the available space.
- It is important that reference is made to the historical materials found in new back lanes and alleys. Scoria bricks are unsuitable for widespread new surfaces but can be included as a limited detail alongside both the base and supplementary high quality material palette.
- The built line becomes the definition between public and private space.
- No on-street parking or urban greening.

**Locations:** Weir Street, John Dobbin Road, Beck Road

# Public Realm



## Public Realm Spaces

- **The design of public realm space should take care to include multi-functionality**, encouraging pedestrian participation, and invite activity. This might include markets, recreation, festivals, events, gathering and resting points, play, art, café culture, and pop-up opportunities.
- **The convergence of the river Skerne and Cockerbeck demarcates a key node for a new public space** which promotes engagement with a unique asset to the Northgate area. The surrounding geometric street pattern provides a clear contrast with the curvilinear form of the beck, and public realm space would provide a function for the 'left-over' space between the two areas.
- **Promoting an evening economy and encouraging a residential population** around these spaces will extend the activity within these spaces and ensure natural surveillance.
- **The facades of building, in particular those that face onto the public realm, will help to define the streetscape.** These buildings should be of high architectural quality and present an active frontage.

## Public Art

- **Public art should impart character and create civic pride**, acting as a focus within the public realm.
- **Local history should inform the choice of public art**, to collectively strengthen the local identity. The Westbrook Villas Art Project and Heritage Trail presents an interesting local example.
- **Public art should not be limited to traditional forms.** Signage, lighting schemes and architectural detailing should all be considered to integrate public art within an area, for example:
  - References taken from the railway and quaker heritage, including patterns, historical maps or railway junctions translated into paving patterns or drainage channels.
  - Renovating or covering an unwanted, existing feature with commissioned graffiti or mural.
  - Reference suspended overhead lines within catenary lighting.
  - Bespoke street furniture with engraved quotes and crediting the historical past.

## Lighting

- **The public realm should benefit from adequate levels of lighting** to BS-EN standards, preferably white in colour.





- **The lighting of both historic and contemporary buildings** provides visual richness and assists with legibility and interpretation. Integrated architectural lighting should form the requirement for new feature development.
- **Care must be taken to consider which buildings are lit in terms of hierarchy.** Key buildings, structures and material features should be identified for appropriate light illumination, picking out themes of historic and industrial links.
- Lighting should be used to accentuate an enclosed character along an alleyway, for example.

### Street Furniture

- **Using a consistent palette of street furniture will help produce a coherent image** that positively contributes towards the public realm. It should be appropriate to the location, co-ordinated with new development and surrounding buildings through a well-defined and controlled palette of colours, textures and materials.
- **The design should be contemporary and elegant,** yet also reflect the heritage of the site through material, colour or detailing.
- **Seating should be designed to accommodate the needs of all users** of varying height and ability.



- **Adequate provision for waste disposal and recycling** will also be required in all public realm spaces.

### Wayfinding

- **Signage and interpretation should be clear, legible, and effective** at assisting both residents and visitors in navigating their way around the site.
- **It should also help to build a narrative** and provide education and learning opportunities, ensuring Northgate's key stories are understood.

# Green and Blue Infrastructure



## Street Trees

- **Street trees should be semi-mature**, with a minimum girth of 0.3m, and clear stem of at least 2.0m, particularly along main and secondary street typologies.
- **Species should seek to create diversity in the local tree population**, in agreement with the local authority tree officer.
- **Tree placement should take into account factors such as mature crown spread, highway visibility sight lines, location of services, and minimum offsets from intrusive elements.** Care should also be given to ensure natural surveillance is not impeded, and important facades and visual linkages between streets and spaces are not impeded.
- **Trees should always be planted in the ground in the first instance**, rather than in raised planters. Below ground tree infrastructure must include 1nr. irrigation point per tree, 2nr. aeration points per tree, appropriate root barrier protection to prevent conflict with surfacing services and foundations, and structural cells.

## Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- **Both existing and proposed development should utilise SuDS unless there are practical reasons for not doing so.** SuDS components in the street could include one or a number of the following depending on the context, opportunity and site constraints, and that are appropriate for both design-in or retrofitting:

- ‘Living roofs’ (green, brown or blue roofs) to provide source control;
  - Integrated water management strategies that can be delivered as part of redevelopment or road improvement schemes, for example street tree planting, de-paving and bioretention areas;
  - Permeable pavement construction;
  - Rainwater harvesting by installing water butts and storage tanks.
- Main streets and secondary streets should incorporate opportunities for rain gardens where feasible, alongside the design of parking.

## Amenity space at Cocker beck

- **Existing amenity space at Cocker beck should be enhanced to maximise its contribution to the public realm space in this location.**
- **Improvements should facilitate public interaction and engagement**, but also ensure a balance between managing biodiversity. The Friends of Cocker Beck are a useful delivery partner.

## The Left Bank / The Lost ‘Peaceful Valley’

Although the removal of the flood defences along the Skerne should not be undertaken lightly, there should be a better balance which combines the amenity value of the river, its natural energy resource and its value as a wildlife habitat, but which still protects the area from flooding.



- **A network of 'green' space should be introduced along the River Skerne's western bank and Cocker beck that are of high quality, overlooked, and multi-functional.** In addition to opportunities for gathering, rest and relaxation, opportunities for play, art, learning, and events should also be considered. This will help to activate the spaces adjacent to the River, turn the town back towards the waterfront, and encourage appreciation and recreational enjoyment.

- **The green spaces should contribute to the River Skerne flood mitigation strategy and be able to cope and adapt to flooding.** SuDS features appropriate in flood zone areas should be introduced/retrofitted, including de-paving, permeable paving, bioretention and street tree planting. The reduction of hard surface materials and replacing with new green space will improve flood management as the vegetated surfaces are able to intercept and store water, reducing the volume of rainwater run-off.

- **Trees, areas of planting, attractive footpaths, and wayfinding** should be used to connect the green spaces and form corridors, that encourage the movement and growth of wildlife, as well as the local community and visitors. Links should be made to the Cocker Beck.

- **The building line should be at least 5.0m back from the western bank of the Skerne** along short sections to help re-establish the river as a townscape feature and amenity asset, and allow for the



introduction of green spaces.

- Green infrastructure should make reference to the prevalence of historic strip plots associated with properties along the eastern section of Northgate with access down to the river Skerne.
- In addition, green infrastructure should be suitably selected in order to reflect the historical form, fabric and scale of the area without impeding views or concealing character.
- The setting of the Edward Pease house should form a key location within the 'green' network, with the design including references to the Quaker gardening tradition and the fruit trees that it was once renowned for including vines, figs, apricots, peaches, mulberries, cherries and plums.

## Boundary Treatments



- **Boundary treatments should be introduced on residential streets** to delineate plot boundaries where there is a small defensible space.
- **For existing development, boundary treatments should be re-introduced and restored as appropriate** in order to define historic plot boundaries and reinforce character. The design should be informed by historic precedent where it survives so that subtle differences in designs across the area are not lost.
- **Common front boundary treatments** include:
  - cast iron vertical bar railings
  - brick walls with coping stones, topped with cast iron railings
  - low brick walls with coping stones.
- **Common rear boundary treatments** are modest brick walls, typically red in colour unless locally distinctive Pease bricks.
- There are some fine examples of historic railings, walls and gates across the area – to both public and private spaces. They are important in helping to define and delineated plot boundaries and so help illustrate the planning and development pattern of the area. They also contribute greatly to the aesthetic values of the area through their historic design quality and finish of the materials.



## Parking



- **Cycle parking** should be secure, covered, easy to use and located adjacent to the cycle and pedestrian network, and close to the main entrance of a building.
- **Vehicle parking** should be overlooked, welcoming, attractive and well-lit in appropriate locations, and use permeable paving to ensure surface water can infiltrate into the ground.
- **Street trees and landscaping, including SuDS features such as rain gardens**, should be used to break up long lengths of on-street parking bays.

## Materiality



- **Using a co-ordinated palette of materials will help produce a clear, attractive, and coherent image.** A graded surfacing strategy should be proposed which identifies a hierarchy of material quality.
- **Opportunities for ‘storytelling’ will be encouraged through all material palettes, including references to the local character and history of the area.** Paving inlays and inscriptions, ground-level interpretation, and wayfinding are all ways in which the story can be told, and help to establish a strong sense of place.

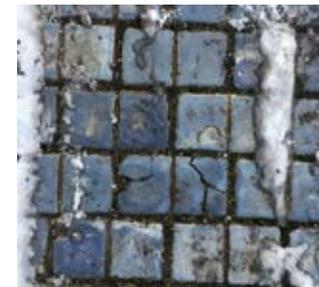
### Highest quality palette

**The focus for the highest quality materials should be within the heart of the site, and the immediate peripheries. This will include materials and details which reinforce the historic character and local identity, and include the following:**

- **Sandstone:** locally sourced, high quality sandstone in both flags and setts, with colour and density chosen to express the natural variations in the material.
- **Granite:** Shap granite, with its pink hue, is characteristic of the historic use of granite in Darlington and should be used appropriately for paving paving and kerbs.
- **Scoria blocks:** Usually found in back lanes and alleys, these locally distinctive blocks should be limited to detailed inclusion in small areas alongside other materials.



Local sandstone reflected in the built structures and some boundary treatments



Characterful pale blue scoria brick paving to rear alleyways. Where the ground level is on an incline, the central strip within the surfacing is local sandstone for greater slip resistance



Shap granite, with its pink hue, local to the area and also present on site through the Bulmer stone, Darlington’s oldest landmark



Part two  
Masterplan

## Introduction

**This section of the report will focus on the development of the Masterplan, taking forward the project's aims and objectives into an illustration of a design response.**

The possibilities for Northgate will be explored through the illustration of an overall Concept Masterplan. The Masterplan will be supported via a series of plans exploring development possibilities, access & circulation, green infrastructure and sustainability.

Key spaces will also be identified and imagined. The Masterplan, along with the layout of key spaces, will fulfill the design principles set out in the Urban Design Framework, established in Part One of this document.

This will include a discussion on:

- Built form
- Streets
- Public realm spaces
- Public art
- Lighting
- Street furniture
- Wayfinding
- Green and Blue Infrastructure
- Boundary treatments
- Parking and
- Materiality.

## The Vision for Northgate

The masterplan for Northgate will breathe life into a forgotten part of town. It will become a revitalised neighbourhood on the doorstep of Darlington town centre, with high quality development and public realm spaces. It will place significant value on access to green space and nature, and promote walking and cycling as a primary mode of transport.

Northgate will build upon its special heritage interest and socio-cultural legacy to generate a distinctive identity which respects its historic fabric and form whilst also embracing creativity and innovation in design.

Northgate will offer unique experiences - a place to live, work and socialise, set within a valley landscape with exceptional heritage assets, lush riverside environments, improved connectivity to a broad network of green and blue infrastructure - just a short walk from Darlington town centre.



## Masterplan aims and objectives

The following issues will be addressed to achieve a masterplan proposal that enhance the site and wider town.



### *Enhancement of existing historic fabric & form*

Retention of historical built form should be prioritised, evaluating opportunities for enhancement, re-purposing and better integration. Buildings that detract from the historical character highlight opportunities for improving their aesthetic appearance or replacing with new design which responds appropriately to historical form.



### *Creation of walking and cycling routes with improved access to the Skerne*

Prioritising the delivery of a pedestrian and cycling friendly route, connecting the town centre to Northgate & the Railway Heritage Quarter will improve access into the area, offer health and well-being benefits and bring a unique and vibrant natural aspect to the existing Northgate character.



### *Strengthening Darlington's green & blue infrastructure network*

The Northgate masterplan should strengthen the network. A stronger network offers greater resilience to climate change including minimising flood risk, increasing the capture and storage of carbon and reducing temperatures.



### *Improving the setting of landmarks*

The study area has an abundance of historic and natural features which are intrinsically tied to the story of Darlington, its Quaker heritage and its growth as a railway pioneer.

Improving the environment along the length of Northgate should be a long term ambition of the Masterplan.



### *The creation of destination public realm spaces*

The masterplan must consider the development of new nodes and gateways in order to improve the environment for the community and encourage visitors into the area.

Such locations will offer significant promise in terms of opening up areas of natural and built character and create destinations points along a journey.

## Consultation and collaboration

The development of the Masterplan was an iterative process, undertaken across a series of stages and in consultation and collaboration with the following parties:

- Darlington BC (Highways, Planning and Sustainability teams)
- Historic England
- The Environment Agency
- The Brightwater Partnership
- Key community stakeholders identified by the client team.

### Emerging issues

Key issues emerging from consultation include:

- Ensuring an integrated approach with the Head of Steam Masterplan, in particular with regards to the setting of the proposed Head of Steam car park and making sure it improves the setting of the Skerne bridge and the riverside and embraces sustainable materials and GBI.
- Managing expectations in relation to improving the pedestrian and cycling environment along Northgate due to the pressures from the existing volume of traffic. Long term ambitions will take into account changes in modal behaviour (from car use to walking and cycling) which other elements of the masterplan brief will deliver in the short to medium term.
- Further consultation will be required in order to obtain wider community buy-in, particularly with local businesses.



Virtual whiteboard outputs as part of consultation process

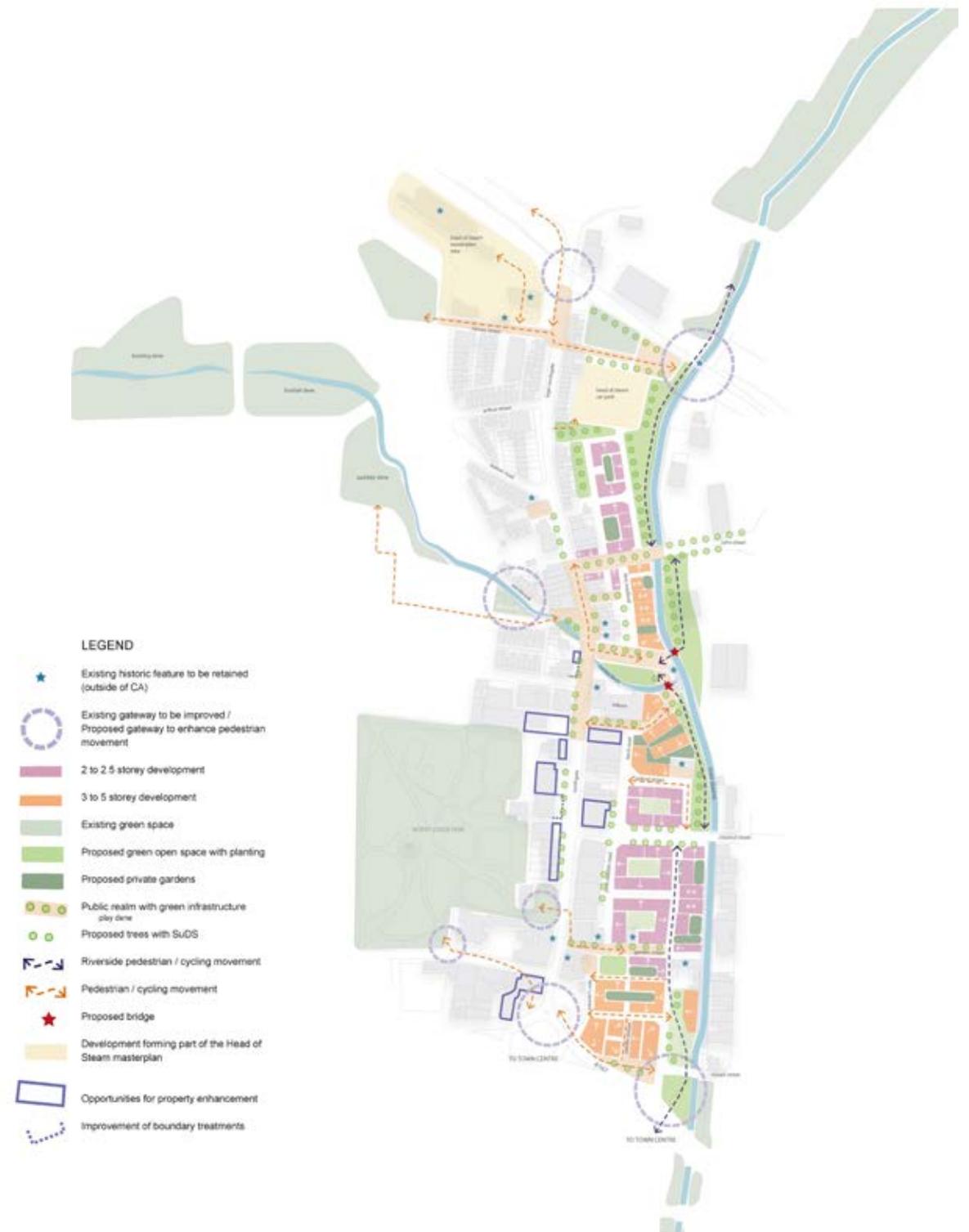


# Concept Masterplan

## The concept masterplan imagines the possibilities for Northgate

The following components are essential components of the masterplan:

- Opportunities to make significant improvements to the historic fabric and form, along Northgate itself but also weaved through the masterplan area. These developments are anchor points which guide movement through the masterplan in order to strengthen viability for retention and re-use but also to maximise the assets for place-making purposes.
- A focus on improving connectivity within the area, via improving existing gateways into Northgate, from the town centre, to and from the Skerne valley and opening up access to the wider network of green and blue infrastructure (GBI) in the borough.
- The creation of a new walking and cycle route which breaks down barriers to movement between the town centre and Rail Heritage Quarter and makes it easy to choose sustainable modes of transport and fully appreciate the benefits of a modal shift. This new walking and cycling route is an opportunity to provide a circular walking route (alongside Northgate) whilst offering an entirely different sensory experience.
- Understanding the role of Northgate in unlocking the true value of Darlington's green and blue infrastructure network. Ensuring a stepping stone of green spaces alongside an improved river Skerne and Cocker beck, and sustainable water management will open up significant gains to the local and wider area.



# Conservation-led development

## *Enhancement of historic fabric and form*

The historic fabric and form of Northgate Conservation Area and its surroundings are in a state of deterioration. Retention of historical built form is to be prioritised, evaluating opportunities for enhancement, re-purposing and better integration within an improved environment. Particular opportunities for enhancement include:

- Georgian terraces at 143-163 Northgate
- 185-191 Northgate
- 219 Northgate
- the former Edward Pease house.

## *Improving the setting of landmarks*

The study area has an abundance of historic and natural features which are intrinsically tied to the story of Darlington, its Quaker heritage and its growth as a railway pioneer. Views of key landmarks should be retained, and adjacent new development should be sympathetically designed.

The Skerne bridge is a significant historic landmark in the north of the study area. Its setting would benefit from an improved public realm space incorporating high quality paving, integrated interpretation, seating, lighting and planting. Improving the environment generally along the length of Northgate is a long term ambition of the masterplan.

## *Rediscovering 'hidden gems'*

Hidden historic form within the study area will be retained as key anchor points within the masterplan. These anchor points informing legibility and movement through the study area, which will increase footfall and development viability. Key gems include:

- Derelict property on Oxford Street, which has the potential for a complementary area of public realm to its frontage, and a riverside view



Proposed conservation-led development priorities

- Derelict property at 18 Leadenhall Street, which will be re-purposed as part of the Cocker Beck node space development.

*Improving boundary treatments along Northgate*

Development along Northgate with poor quality boundary treatments or without a defined plot boundary are opportunities to restore the historic fabric of the area. Plot boundaries can be re-defined through lines of tree planting, integrated interpretation such as in-laid metals, or through walls in-keeping with the local vernacular.

*New landmark development*

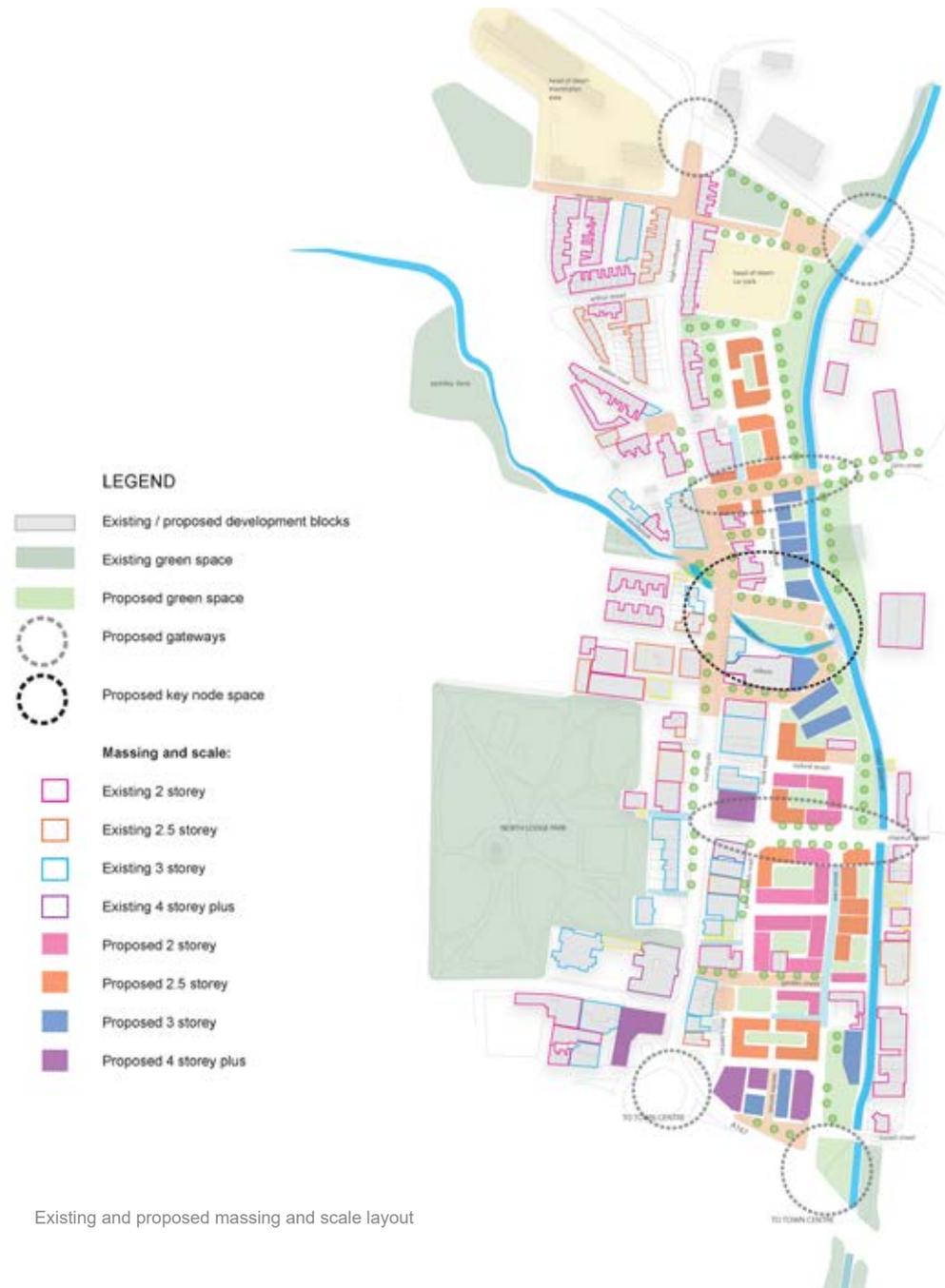
Buildings that detract from the historical character highlight opportunities for improving their aesthetic appearance or replacing with new design which responds appropriately to historical form. Examples of where this is appropriate include:

- the former Northgate Tower
- 214 Northgate
- 182-190 Northgate.

**Massing and scale**

Proposed massing and scale should reflect the existing pattern of existing massing and scale. 2 to 2.5 storey development is generally common along High Northgate, within the residential area to the west and industrial commercial area to the east. Taller development and larger plot sizes are prominent along Northgate, and in particular south of Cocker Beck.

Areas of proposed taller development will be appropriate at gateway locations, along Northgate and around the landmark nodal space at the Cocker Beck. Other development should lie within the 2 to 2.5 storey range in order to integrate new and historic development.



Existing and proposed massing and scale layout

## Access and circulation

The masterplan features a hierarchy of movement which is based on:

- an understanding of existing circulation,
- analysis of historic circulation as identified in the Urban Design Framework
- where it is proposed that movement will be introduced to improve the access network
- and the connections between the existing and proposed network.

The proposed network comprises:

- **Existing primary access along Northgate**

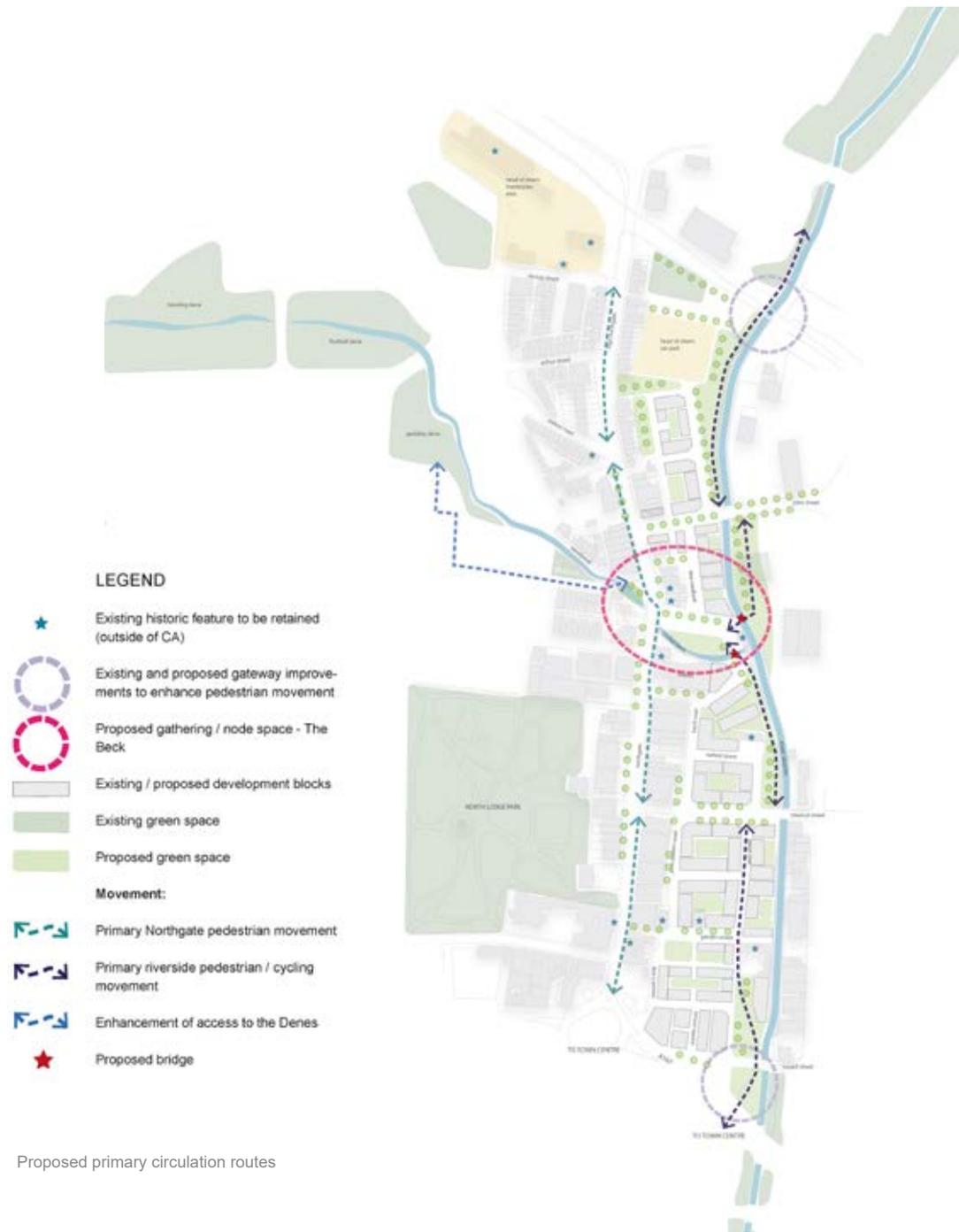
The masterplan proposes a long term ambition to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment along the route. In the short - medium term, this will be delivered adjacent to the proposed node at the Cocker Beck which is anticipated to form a new gateway onto Northgate.

- **Proposed primary riverside active travel route**

The creation of an alternative walking and cycling experience is proposed, which opens up access to the river whilst also engaging with characterful areas within the study area. The route will have a strong green character, and become a key green asset within Darlington. The route will connect existing gateways in the north and south and provide a new walking experience to and from the town centre.

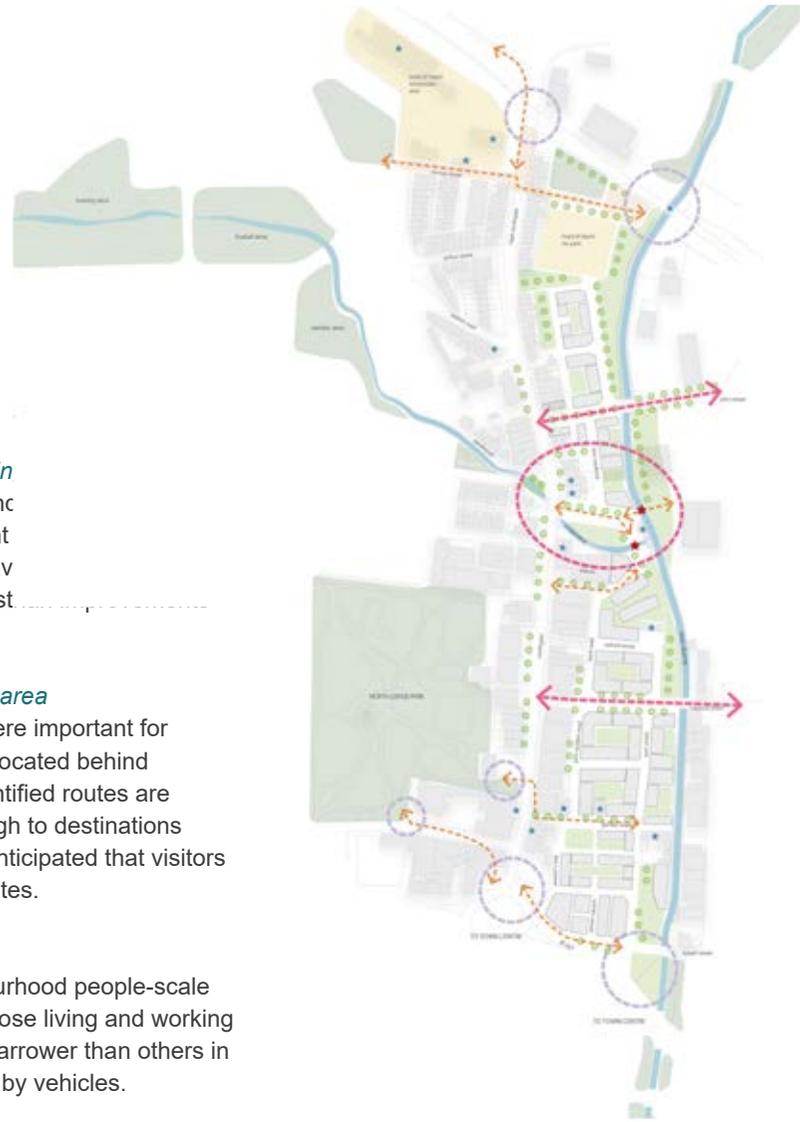
- **New connectivity to existing green assets**

The masterplan has an opportunity to strengthen Darlington's existing green and blue infrastructure network by improving access, particularly through to the Denes, and vice versa.



Proposed primary circulation routes

- **Existing east-west routes connect**  
Existing routes such as John St and strategic role for vehicle movement routes tend to be wider due to heavy flow, and would benefit from pedestrian and urban greening.
- **Existing east-west routes in study area**  
Historically, these lateral routes were important for providing access to development located behind Northgate. Going forward, the identified routes are considered key connections through to destinations along Northgate, and where it is anticipated that visitors will move between the primary routes.
- **Local streets network**  
These streets will have a neighbourhood people-scale focus, utilised predominantly by those living and working in the area. These routes will be narrower than others in the study area, and less trafficked by vehicles.



Proposed east - west routes



END

- ig historic feature to be retained (e of CA)
- ig and proposed gateway improvement to enhance pedestrian movement
- sed gathering / node space - The
- ig / proposed development blocks
- ig green space
- sed green space
- ment:
- streets network
- pedestrian/cycling movement to site
- neighbourhood pedestrian/cycling network
- sed bridge

Proposed local network

# Sustainability

## Green and blue infrastructure network

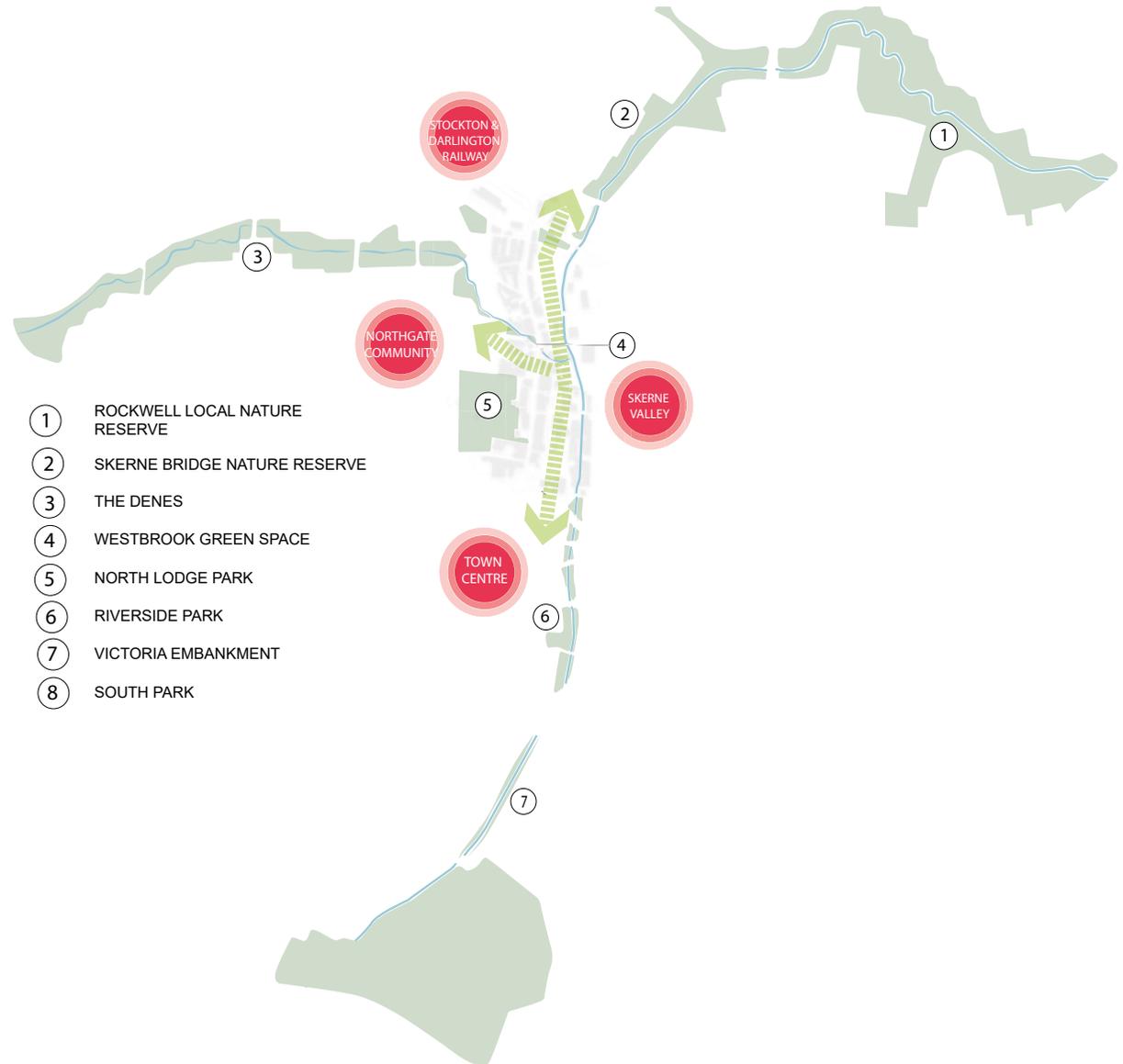
Green and blue infrastructure (GBI) is defined as a network of natural or semi-natural spaces and corridors. These might include open spaces such as parks and gardens but also allotments, woodlands, hedges, grass verges, footpaths, cycle routes and watercourses.

There is an established network of green assets in the immediate vicinity of Northgate, comprising the Denes and North Lodge Park to the west, two Local Nature Reserves to the north, and Riverside Park, Victoria Embankment and South Park to the south. Blue assets comprise the river Skerne and Cocker Beck, which already offer an established connection between these green spaces.

Presently, there are riverside routes to the north and south of the study area but these are not joined up.

Northgate is in an ideal location to strengthen the existing network, connecting green space in the town centre through to Skerne Bridge & Rockwell Local Nature Reserves in the north, and the Denes in the west. The benefits will be significant and multi-functional:

- Improved access to nature for the local community will lead to improved mental and physical well-being
- Creating green routes will encourage more sustainable modes of travel
- A stronger network brings benefits to water quality and flow
- Riverside views offers greater development viability.



Green and blue infrastructure network

## Climate change adaptation

A stronger GBI network offers greater resilience to climate change in the following key ways:

### *Minimise flood risk by creating sponge landscapes*

The incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is essential to the development of the progression of the Masterplan. Within the public realm, these could feature as SuDS-enabled tree pits, rain gardens, grassed areas to act as flood storage, and areas of permeable paving. For development, this comprises living walls, alongside, green, blue and brown roofs and rainwater harvesting.

### *Increasing the capture and storage of carbon*

Active carbon sequestration within the landscape will be key to achieving the nation's 'net zero' goals. Tree & woodland planting and well-managed grasslands and wetlands play an important role in achieving this. Enhancing the water environment along the beck and river will form an essential part of the masterplan.

### *Reducing temperatures or the 'heat-island' effect*

Tree planting should be actively considered along all routes, where the street geometry allows. Tree canopies play a crucial role in reducing temperatures particularly within urban areas where temperatures are higher. Planting more trees will future-proof development areas.

## Biodiversity

Joining up habitats will strengthen the ecological network - providing corridors for wildlife, opportunities to improve water quality and riverside habitats for foraging wildlife, and enabling the introduction of pollinating species for insects.



Pollinators along wildflower verges are evidenced within the surrounding area, such as along the A167



Improved riverbank environment along the river Skerne, south of the A167

## Flood risk

Part of the study area is located within Flood Risk Zone 3 meaning it is susceptible to 1 in 100 year flooding. Presently there is a flood wall to prevent overtopping. There is an opportunity for the masterplan to enable a positive landscape response to flooding - through the creation of a sponge landscape.



# Network of green space

The masterplan comprises a network of green space and blue infrastructure.

## Improved access to existing open space

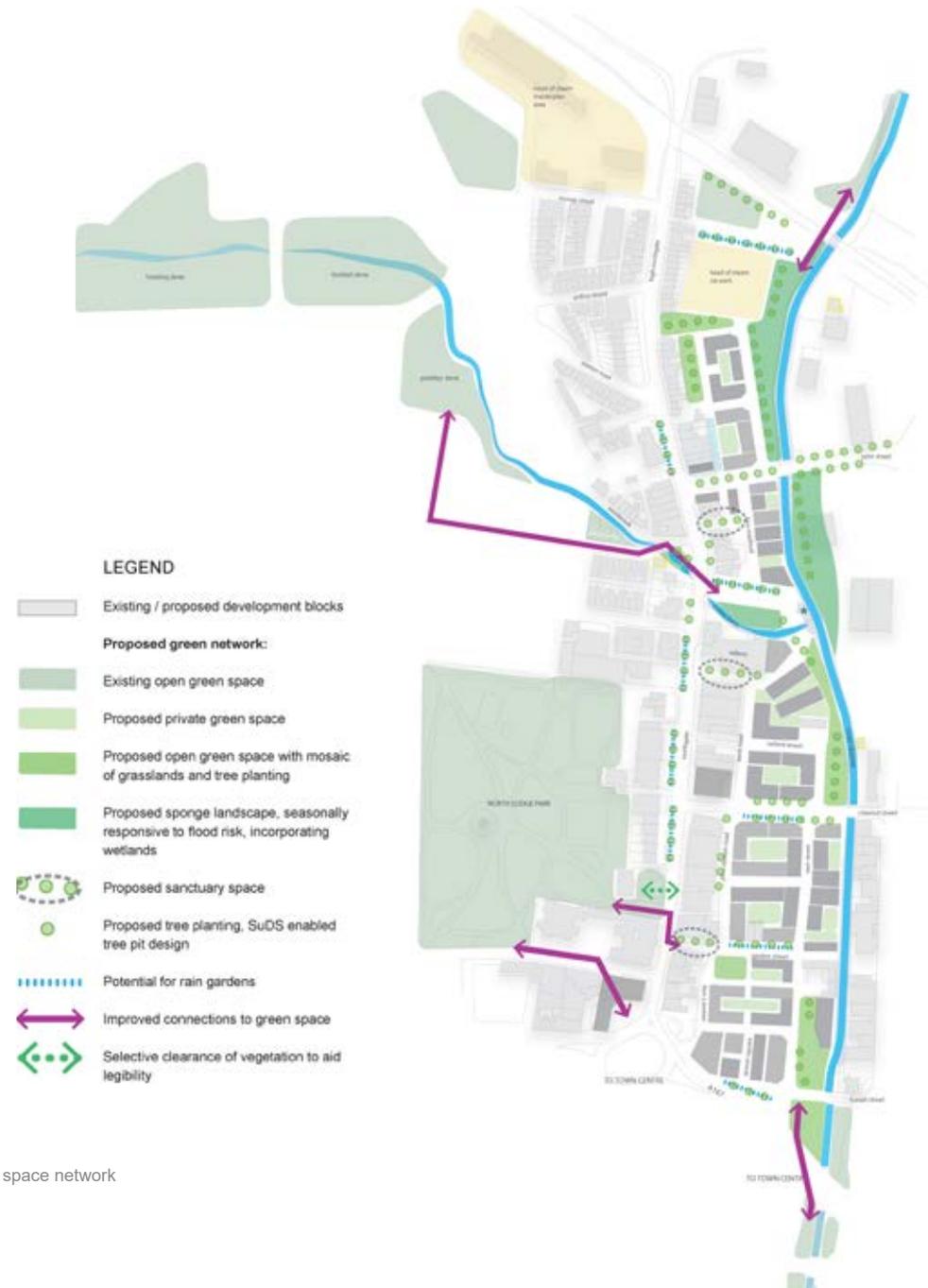
Access to existing open green space will be improved via improved wayfinding and legibility within the study area. The formally laid out North Lodge Park is accessed from the study area via Garden Street and along Northgate. New development on the former Northgate Tower plot should consider a new connection from the pedestrian underpass to the park to improve access from the town centre. Better signing of the park from Northgate will be essential to improving perception, alongside selective clearance of existing vegetation along the Northgate boundary.

## Proposed areas of new open space

The redevelopment of Edward Pease's house heralds a significant opportunity to develop a new area of public realm to provide a setting to the destination. The inclusion of a new area of open green space within the setting emphasises the former garden associated with the house. The strip landscape plot could be further echoed within private green space.

## Proposed linear park

A new linear park environment is proposed adjacent to the River Skerne, opening up visual and physical access to the river. The park is a feature of key gateways into the masterplan study area, from the north and south, and ties into the existing character within the town centre. The linear park will incorporate tree planting, a mosaic of habitats, footpaths, seating and wayfinding.



Green space network

### *Climate positive landscapes*

The linear park in the vicinity of the Skerne bridge is located within Flood Risk 3 which means it is susceptible to 1:100 year flooding. In order for Northgate and Darlington to become more resilient to flooding, areas should be designed to flood seasonally. Introducing a sponge landscape within Northgate will slow the flow of water downstream and potentially minimise catastrophic events.

### *Proposed pedestrian sanctuary spaces*

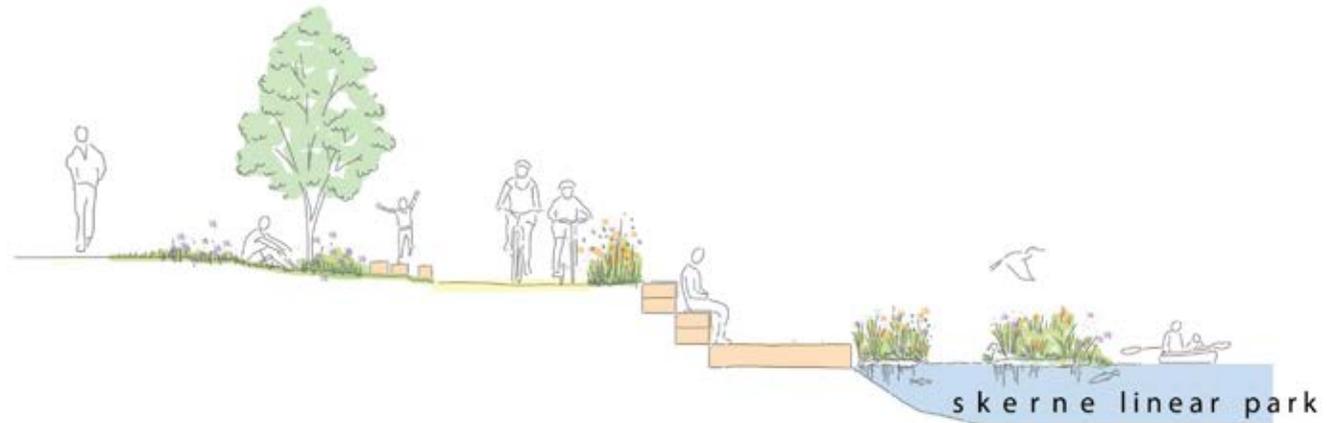
These locations are sited at former through routes, which have been closed off to vehicular traffic. They lack character and feature parked cars which are a visual detractor. They present an opportunity to create attractive areas of public realm, with seating, public art and lighting, where pedestrians and cyclings can take sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of Northgate.

### *Tree planting*

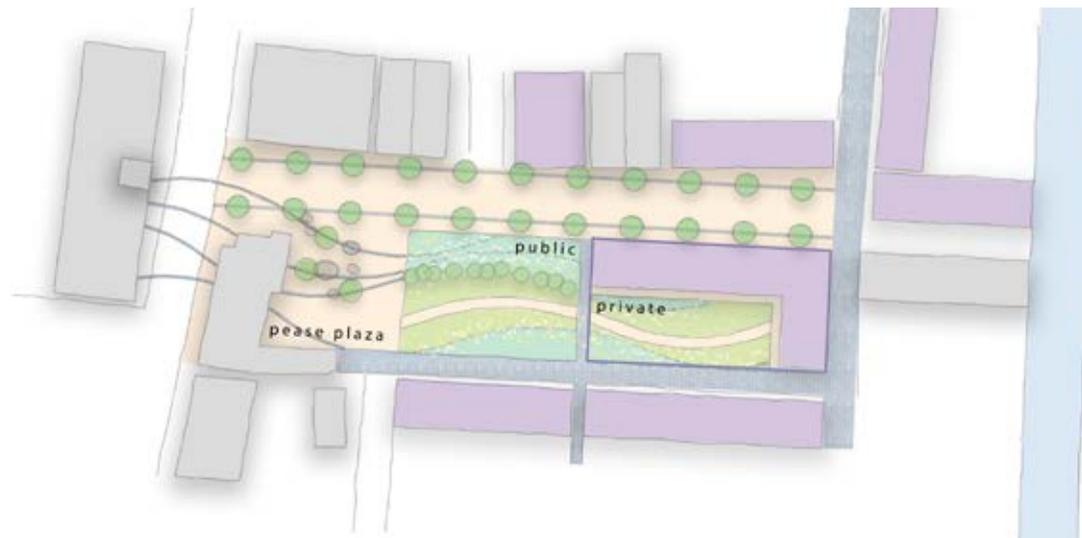
The introduction of tree planting will provide a step change in the character of the Northgate area generally. Trees will be a characterful addition to streets and bring benefits for wayfinding, climate capture and providing shelter from the sun.

### *Rain gardens*

The potential for rain gardens should be explored on a street-by-street basis, where the space allows. Sustainable drainage should be explored before consideration of positive drainage.



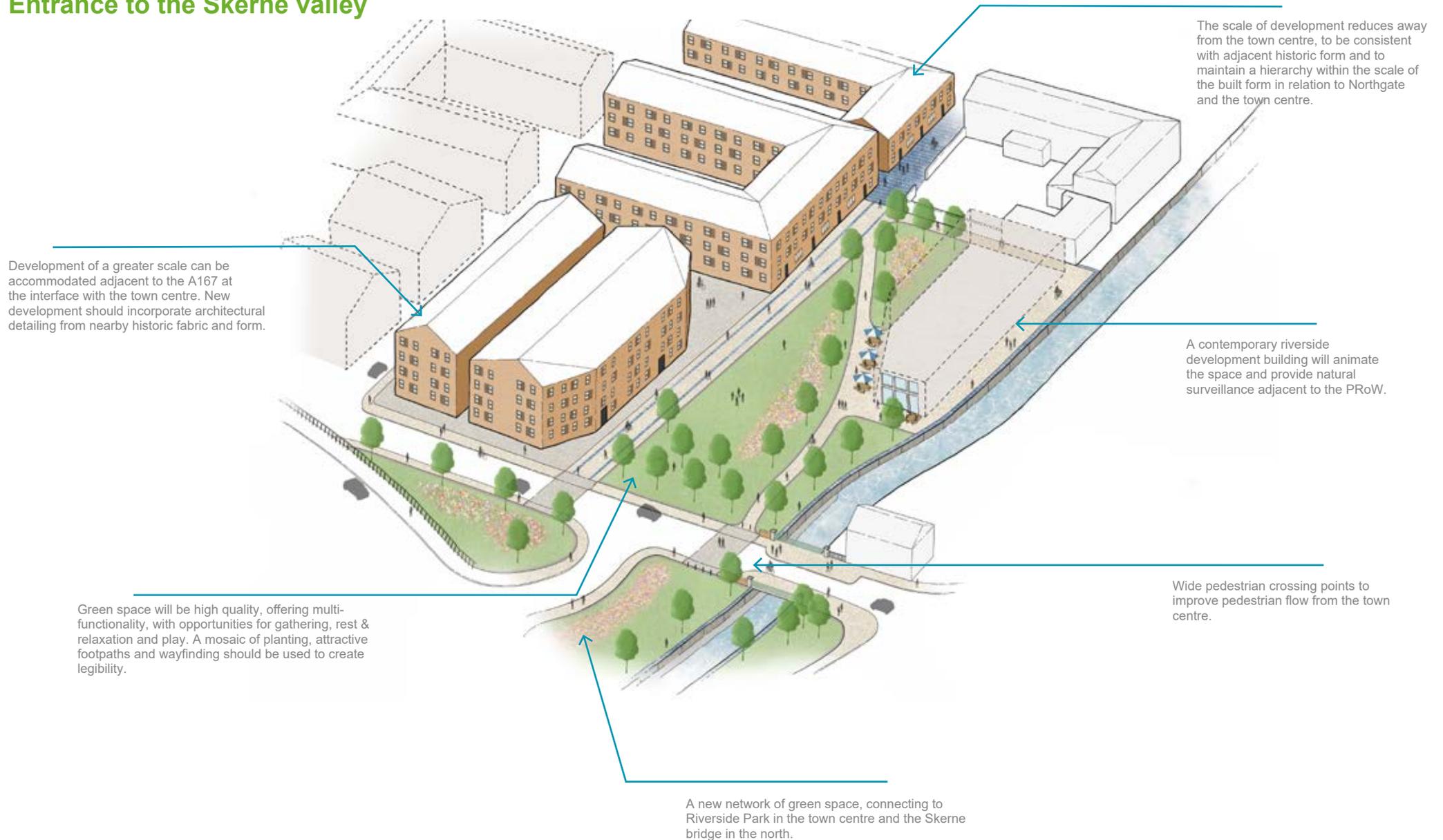
Climate positive landscape at the Skerne bridge linear park



Concept proposals for green space at the Edward Pease house

# Key masterplan areas

## Entrance to the Skerne valley



Development of a greater scale can be accommodated adjacent to the A167 at the interface with the town centre. New development should incorporate architectural detailing from nearby historic fabric and form.

The scale of development reduces away from the town centre, to be consistent with adjacent historic form and to maintain a hierarchy within the scale of the built form in relation to Northgate and the town centre.

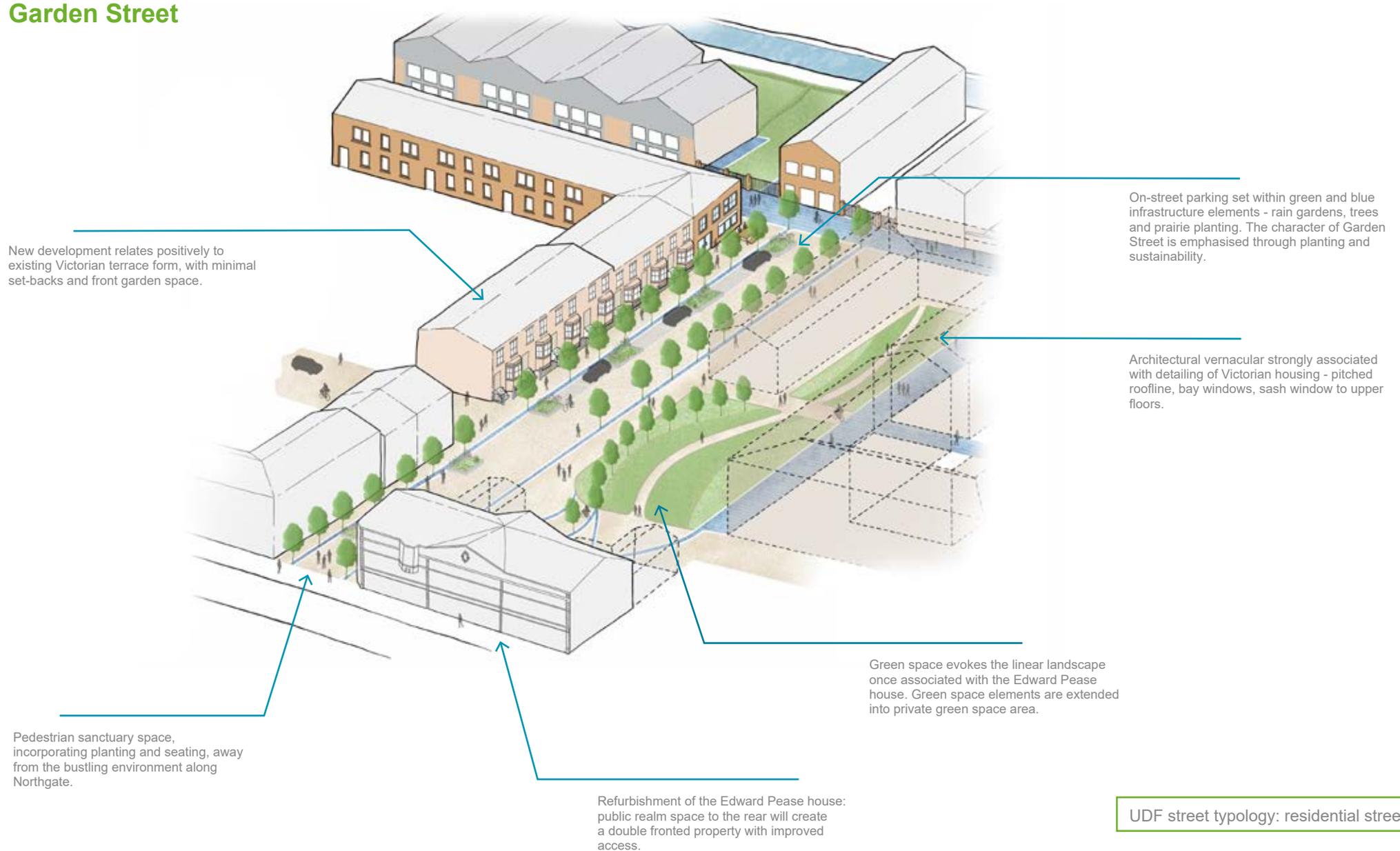
A contemporary riverside development building will animate the space and provide natural surveillance adjacent to the PRoW.

Green space will be high quality, offering multi-functionality, with opportunities for gathering, rest & relaxation and play. A mosaic of planting, attractive footpaths and wayfinding should be used to create legibility.

Wide pedestrian crossing points to improve pedestrian flow from the town centre.

A new network of green space, connecting to Riverside Park in the town centre and the Skerne bridge in the north.

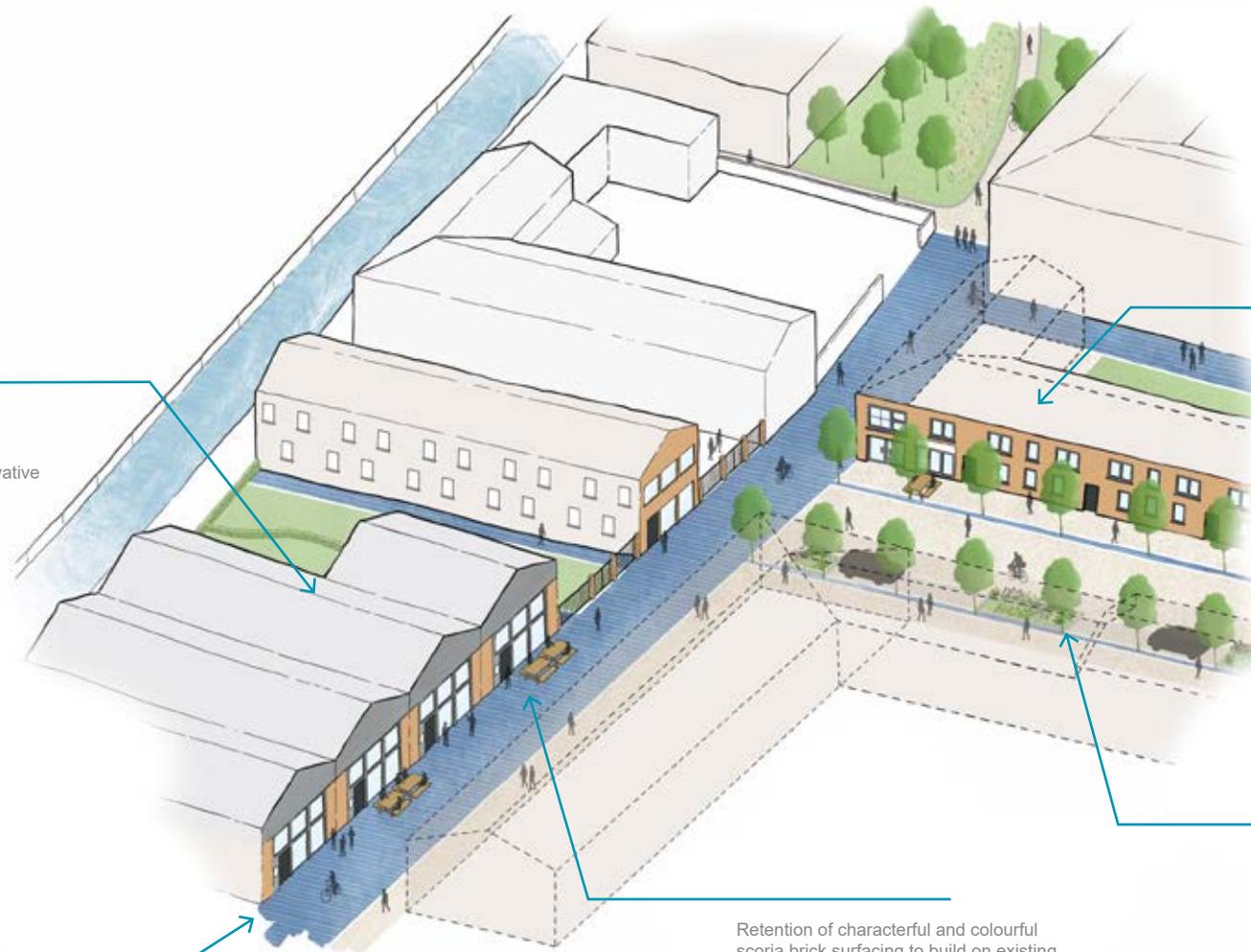
## Garden Street



## Weir Street

New development should promote the rhythmic pitched roofline of existing development, and retain the industrial character and build on it to attract innovative mixed-use development.

Pedestrian priority with pavement width occupying the available space. An absence of green infrastructure with potential to be mitigated by architectural lighting along the street.



Architectural vernacular strongly associated with detailing of Victorian housing - pitched roofline, sash window to upper floors.

Retention of characterful and colourful scoria brick surfacing to build on existing character and local distinctiveness. Any new surfacing introduced to gain additional width for residential development would need to complement the quality and coloration.

On-street parking set within green and blue infrastructure elements - rain gardens, trees and prairie planting. The character of Garden Street is emphasised through planting and sustainability.

UDF street typology: alleyway

## 'The Beck'

The public realm should be a high quality, flexible space to incorporate multi-functionality - with tree planting, sustainable drainage, seating, lighting, wayfinding and artwork.

A new grassed amphitheatre provides access to the beck, where visitors will be able to interact with the natural environment in the Northgate area. The amphitheatre has a green aspect, designed to withstand seasonal flooding.

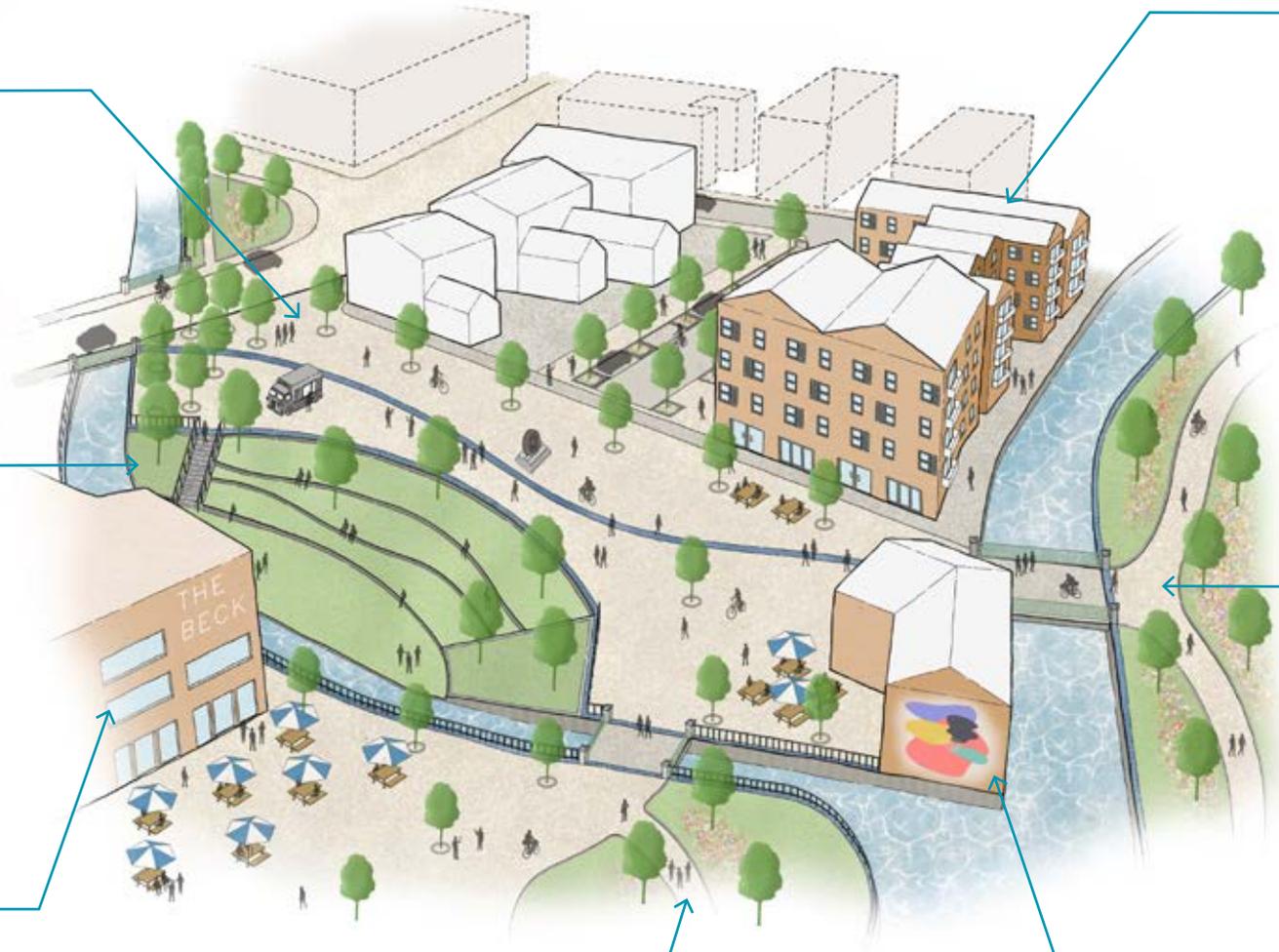
A new destination to the rear of the existing Odeon development offers the potential for creating an active frontage which will provide natural surveillance and animation.

The proposed linear park will provides access to the gathering space at Cocker Beck. Footfall will be generated by people walking to the RHQ from the town centre.

New development relates positively to the existing riverside warehouse form - buildings emerging out of the river, with architectural detailing in-keeping with the era.

The incorporation of the left bank opens up greater possibility for circulation and access to the riverside environment. New bridge structures provide walking and cycling access.

Re-use of existing historic development which are key anchor points within the masterplan. Windowless facades have the capacity to be utilised for place-making purposes, incorporating locally distinctive artwork.



## Node space at the Railway Tavern

Existing historic fabric and form to be retained and enhanced.

The public realm should be a high quality, flexible space to incorporate multi-functionality - with tree planting, sustainable drainage, seating, lighting, wayfinding and artwork.

Pedestrian sanctuary space, incorporating planting and seating, away from the bustling environment along Northgate.

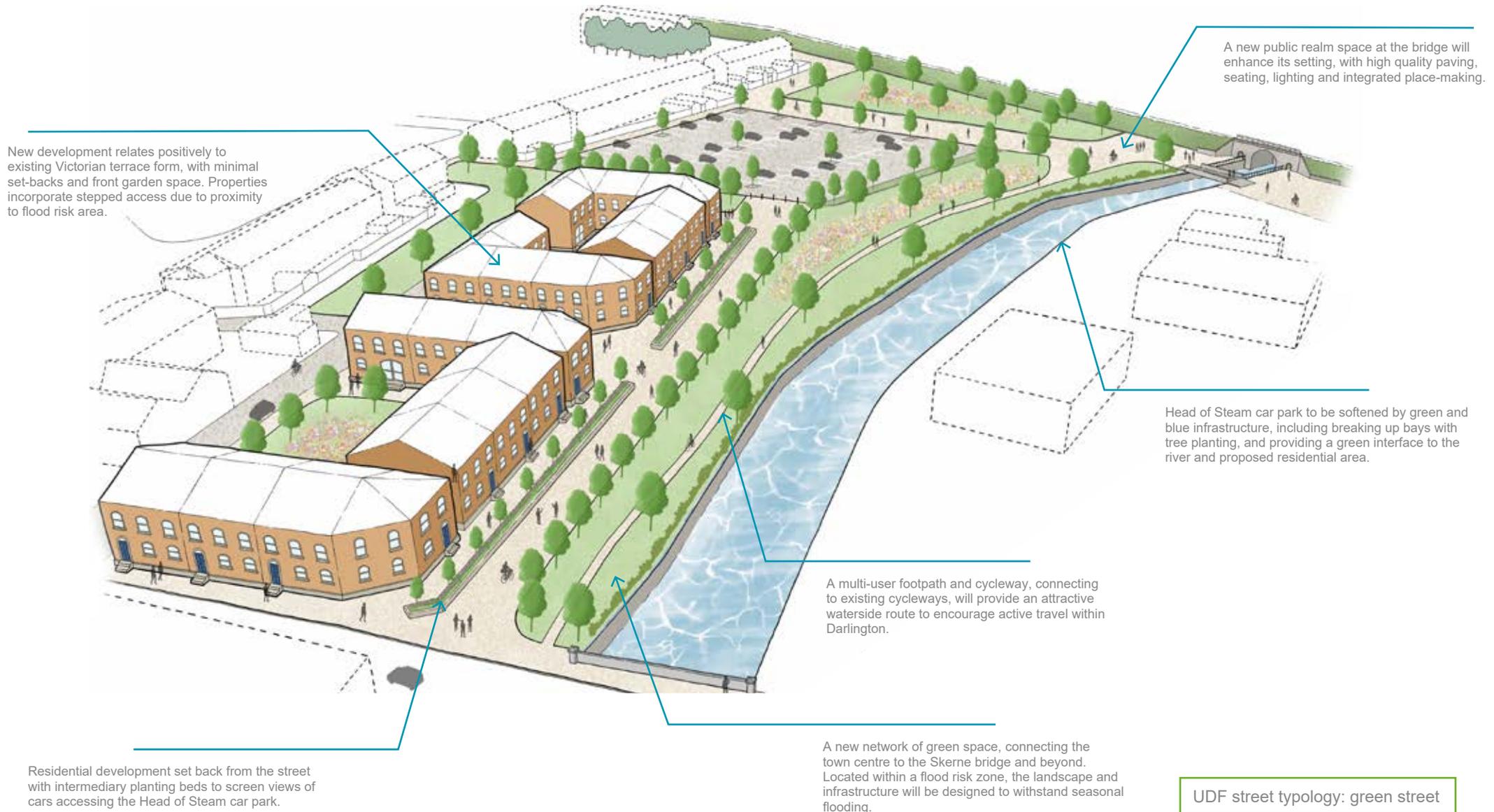
Pedestrians are given priority at the key mid-way point between the town centre and the Rail Heritage Quarter. Crossing should be facilitated via an extension of the surfacing onto the carriageway.

The Northgate environment at this key nodal space will be improved with a consistent, high quality, paved surfacing with tree planting and seating to accentuate the setting of important historic development.

Improved access to and from 'The Denes' network of green spaces will be provided via an improved 360 public realm across Northgate.



## The setting of the Skerne bridge



New development relates positively to existing Victorian terrace form, with minimal set-backs and front garden space. Properties incorporate stepped access due to proximity to flood risk area.

A new public realm space at the bridge will enhance its setting, with high quality paving, seating, lighting and integrated place-making.

Head of Steam car park to be softened by green and blue infrastructure, including breaking up bays with tree planting, and providing a green interface to the river and proposed residential area.

A multi-user footpath and cycleway, connecting to existing cycleways, will provide an attractive waterside route to encourage active travel within Darlington.

Residential development set back from the street with intermediary planting beds to screen views of cars accessing the Head of Steam car park.

A new network of green space, connecting the town centre to the Skerne bridge and beyond. Located within a flood risk zone, the landscape and infrastructure will be designed to withstand seasonal flooding.

UDF street typology: green street

## Georgian terraces, Northgate



The rhythm of the upper floor sash windows and chimneys provides a uniformity which is balanced by variety within the ground floor treatment. This variety creates an energy and vision for the possibilities that are available.

There is scope for variety within boundary treatments dependent on the use of the building. The wing walls define the plot boundaries and provide consistency in the streetscape.

The removal of the retail extensions brings multiple benefits - the opening up of the original facade of the properties, the incorporation of a retail use within the ground floor, and the improved public realm within the curtilage of the boundary wall.

Integration of tree planting with SuDS enabled tree pits help to soften the intense urban environment along Northgate.

## Application of street typologies

### *Main street: Northgate*

The long term ambition for Northgate includes the potential for the incorporation of street trees and on-street parking into the wide street geometry. Proposed potential enhancements within private boundaries (Georgian Terraces) make a significant contribution to the public realm.

### *Secondary street: Chesnut Street*

Wide secondary routes have enormous potential in the reappropriation of vehicular space to green infrastructure and widened footpaths to accommodate and encourage active travel

### *Alleyway: Beck Road*

Streets like John Dobbin Street and Beck Road have the potential for narrowing, which would improve their present character and be more in-keeping with their historic form. Narrowing the route would also generate more land for development. Adopting a shared surface treatment, akin to Weir Street, would evoke the original character of the route, provide a pedestrian priority space and limit vehicular movement.



## Summary and next steps

The Urban Design Framework (UDF) establishes the **design principles** for the Northgate Masterplan. These design principles are taken forward and illustrated within the **Northgate Masterplan**, which has been drawn up via a process of co-design and collaboration.

Visualisations demonstrate the application of design principles outlined within the UDF.

The report will be used to provide evidenced-based design principles to guide future development within Northgate.

### Next Steps

The Masterplan provides DCC with a long term ambition. The Towns Fund will commence the delivery of these projects.

Darlington's Town Fund Deal features four project areas within the Northgate gateway:

1. Railway Heritage Quarter
2. Edward Pease House
3. Linear Park/Skerne Valley
4. North Road & Northgate House.



## Deliverables



### Key priorities:

- Key land and property acquisitions at strategic locations: Edward Pease house.
- RHQ masterplan design and delivery.
- Strategic active travel improvements such as the development of an improved cycle route connecting the RHQ to the town centre via Northgate. Environmental improvements along these routes will encourage regeneration and economic growth.
- Developing the concept design of key public realm and green spaces further in areas aligned to the Towns Fund Linear Park project:
  - The Garden Street / Weir Street area is one of these areas where an initial phase can be progressed which delivers access improvements, public realm improvements and property acquisitions in the vicinity of the Edward Pease house.
- Seeking opportunities for meanwhile use.
- Developing public realm and property enhancements along Northgate.

### Funding:

£14.3M secured from Towns Fund for Northgate area, with £1.96M for the Linear Park.

### Key priorities:

- The early successes of the Towns Fund and developments at the RHQ are expected to generate momentum and medium term knock-on effects. There is an expectation that interest and investment in the area will grow from private developers around high quality residential development.
- Further land and property acquisition and improvement opportunities will be identified to ensure the area maximises its potential as a place to be:
  - Subject to funding, the Garden Street / Weir Street area has the potential to be progressed further through property acquisitions, new residential development and public realm improvements.

### Funding:

Funding opportunities to be sourced from Central Government (for example, the Levelling Up Fund)

Capital investment from private developers.

### Delivering the long term priorities:

- The area has the potential to become an established cultural quarter for Darlington, with quality residential which takes advantage of its setting adjacent to the river and proximity to the town centre.
- A fully realised network of high quality public realm, active travel routes and green spaces which has a distinctive identity.
- Retention and bringing back into use derelict historic development and improvements to the appearance of existing fabric and form.
- A fully connected strategic network of green and blue infrastructure across Darlington.
- Environmental improvements to the Northgate vehicular route to support active travel in anticipation that access improvements during the short and medium term phases will generate a modal shift from car use to walking and cycling. In turn this will reduce the number of car journeys along Northgate which will facilitate the re-allocation of space given to vehicles.

A key aspirational case study for the Northgate Masterplan is Ouseburn, Newcastle. This case study has been reviewed from a socio-economic perspective in **Appendix B**.



**Appendix A**  
**Northgate Conservation Area**  
**Appraisal SWOT analysis**

## Location, Access and Form

### Location and access

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The area is an important and historic gateway to the core of the town. The area is located a short distance from Darlington town centre and is serviced by Northgate, North Road railway station and primary bus routes.</p> <p>High Northgate / Northgate is the principal approach from to the town from the north. It follows the historic line of the old north road, and this legacy is legible in the breadth of the street and its gently winding form.</p>	<p>The area has been disconnected from the town centre and Bank Top railway station by the ring road. Access routes around the area and connecting it to adjacent parts of the town have prioritised car users.</p> <p>Vehicular traffic travelling through the area along Northgate is relentless, and infrastructure to facilitate pedestrian movement (for example, crossing facilities) is poor; Northgate / High Northgate especially is an intimidating and unfriendly environment for all non-car users.</p>	<p>The width of Northgate means that there is room to accommodate both cars and pedestrians, but the balance between the two needs redressing, with more focus on the pedestrian experience.</p> <p>There is also the potential for the land east of the conservation area including the riverside to become a means of reinstating a more pedestrian friendly link between the area and the town centre, enticing people to visit and linger in the area.</p>	<p>Without a stronger pedestrian link with the town the economic viability of the area will continue to be constrained, potentially leaving historic buildings at risk of redundancy, neglect and decay.</p>

### Development pattern and building form

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The strong lines of street frontages in Northgate – of both commercial and residential properties – are a fundamental part of the development pattern and character of the area. They provide visual and historic illustrative interest through the architectural merit of buildings, by conveying the use and status of the building, and by containing and directing views.</p>	<p>The historic building line along High Northgate has been lost in places, principally through the infilling of front gardens of residential buildings with single-storey, flat roof extensions to accommodate commercial uses, but also from total loss of historic buildings without replacement or replacement to a different building line .</p> <p>The front extensions to buildings have also blurred the lines between plots through the removal of boundary treatments and obscuring the façade of the historic building behind.</p>	<p>Where there are gap sites there is the opportunity to reinstate the building line and the continuity and integrity of the streetscape.</p> <p>Any opportunities to remove modern infill buildings and reinstate plot and building forms should be taken, as this would have a considerable, positive impact on the character and appearance of the area and help better reveal its historic form and significance. In the meantime, consideration could be given as to how the design of building fronts might better reveal historic plot boundaries and former uses.</p>	<p>Further loss of historic buildings and the introduction of new forms that contrary to historic precedent will continue to dilute historic character and set unhelpful precedents.</p> <p>Incorporation of new buildings should respond to the historic form of the plot and the area, and be appropriately detailed and located according to function, to ensure it is reinforcing existing historic character</p>

<p>The narrower back lanes of the area are an important feature of its historic form. Their quieter, enclosed and functional character contrasts with the busier streets and higher-status frontages of buildings. The views of plainer offshoots, outbuildings, and coal hatches – where they survive – offer an insight into the more practical and everyday aspects of ordinary lives. It is here too that historic surfacing is to be found, amplifying the historic character of the spaces.</p>	<p>Fly tipping is an issue down back lanes, as are poor repairs and maintenance of surfacing and, on occasion, loss of boundary walls and infilling of plots. All of this detracts from the historic character of the area and is not an inviting prospect.</p>	<p>There is growing public interest in the stories of past lives and everyday people, and many of these streets are close to the museum and can help tell that story.</p> <p>For instance, the back alley behind Westbrook has been enlivened by artworks inspired by local history set in timber cases, as part a community engagement project with local schools.</p>	<p>Incremental changes and unsympathetic repairs to surviving historic surfaces will continue to dilute historic character.</p>
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**Table 1.1: Examples of issues and opportunities: location, access and form.**



The shop fronts built onto the elevation of Elmfield, one of the earlier larger villas on Northgate. Not only are the form and appearance of the shop fronts not in-keeping with historic precedent, but clearly detract from our appreciation of the historic building and its former plot.



Gap site on High Northgate. Not only a loss of building line but also now has a neglected and unattractive appearance.



Fly-tipping in the back lane behind Arthur Street / Stephenson Street.



Large footprint, modern commercial buildings, contrary to historic precedent for this type of building, being gable end on and set back from the pavement edge to allow for parking. The use of blue engineering brick banding is also incongruous in the area.

## Spaces and Natural Environment

### North Lodge Park

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The park is an important green space in the area, providing amenity and aesthetic value, but also contributing to understanding of the historic development of the area, and Victorian sensibilities towards public health and town planning.</p> <p>The surrounding terraces, offices and the police station make the space feel rooted in the local community as well as providing natural surveillance.</p>	<p>The park has lost some of its historic features, including the fishpond and boat house, and there have been alterations to the historic path network. This has left a lot of large, open, uninspiring grassed areas with no real sense of identity or purpose.</p>	<p>The vastness of the site lends itself well to events and activities which can encourage people to make more use of the open space.</p> <p>The park benefits from being in a densely populated residential area as well as being close to the town centre. There are opportunities to use the space to engage the community, raise awareness of the parts historic interest, and reinforce local identity.</p>	<p>Vandalism and antisocial behaviour are a problem in the park and are off-putting to visitors, as well as detracting from its aesthetic value.</p>
<p>The survival of park features such as the perimeter railings, gates and the bandstand give structure and historic character to the space.</p> <p>The link between the green space and North Lodge is an important reminder of the origins of the park as a villa landscape.</p>	<p>There is a vast number and design assortment of park furniture, notably the benches around the bandstand. Although they encourage people to stop and spend time in the area, their inconsistent design and arbitrary placement detracts from the aesthetic quality and identity of the park.</p>	<p>There is a chance to create a stronger identity for the asset by reintroducing a more consistently applied, bespoke design for the structures within it. Surviving features such as the bandstand provide evidence of the historic design aesthetic and this can be used to inform new design. This has the potential not only to enhance the appearance of the park, but also the contribution it makes to the wider conservation area, as well as the setting of the listed structures around it.</p>	<p>Further incremental changes and introduction of more standard designs to the park furniture will continue to dilute historic character.</p> <p>The introduction of replacement features needs to be part of a wider design scheme for the park. They need to be appropriately detailed and located to ensure they reinforce existing character and whilst also encouraging use and activity into the space.</p>
<p>Trees are a fundamental part of the structure of the space, helping to subdivide it and providing movement, texture, depth and verticality.</p>	<p>The tall poplars in the park are not appropriate species for the date of the park and dominate the surrounding area. Furthermore, at the age and size they are (mature / overmature) they will start to fail.</p>	<p>Monitoring of condition should be carried out and consideration given at some point to succession planting, potentially with more historically appropriate trees.</p> <p>There is also opportunity for this succession / selection process to take into consideration changes in climate.</p>	<p>The trees pose a potential risk to public safety if not properly monitored and maintained – especially given their location in a public park surrounded residential streets. Equally, removal of specimens without cause or replacement will erode the character of the park. Public sensitivities around tree removal and management need to be carefully managed.</p>

## Hopetown Lane / Station Road

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The green space and trees around the museum and to the south of it give the area a softer, more natural character that acts as a counterpoint to the harder urban environment. It provides visual amenity for residents and visitors, as well as being an important part of the green infrastructure of the area and providing habitats for wildlife.</p>	<p>The space was once a vital part of the railway industry infrastructure in the area, but the surviving infrastructure and small historic buildings are not prominent enough to illustrate this former use well.</p> <p>The area has not been properly reclaimed for any new use, however, with most of it given over to widen roads. This in turn makes the isolated pockets of green space too small to sustain any real purpose or identity. The broad width of Hopetown Lane / Station Road / Widdowfield Street encourages car users to speed quickly through this residential area, making the use of the green areas an even less welcoming prospect.</p> <p>The high fence around the museum and its green space / overflow car park may be understood from a security perspective, but it is unattractive and limits the amenity value to the local community. Interpretation boards within the museum grounds tell of the history of the site, but the grass and vegetative growth undermines appreciation and understanding of this historic interest.</p> <p>The trees are largely unmanaged, self-seeded specimens, principally sycamore or ash. Their longevity and visual amenity value are compromised by their poor condition.</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to reclaim and reconfigure this space to help better reveal its historic form and use, to give it a new purpose and identity that adds to the area's character and appearance, and to realise the potential of its amenity value for local residents and visitors to the area.</p> <p>Monitoring of the condition of trees should be carried out and consideration given at some point to the approach to replacement – whether this is desirable in principle and, if so, what the succession planting would be most appropriate. Thinning back the vegetation would help open up the area and reconnect the station and industrial railway buildings with their residential counterparts.</p>	<p>There is potential for industrial archaeology to survive in the area both below and above ground. Any works that would require ground disturbance could result in further loss of historic fabric and interest.</p> <p>The trees pose a potential risk to public safety if not properly monitored and maintained. Further self-seeded specimens are not desirable either from a management perspective or in relation to better revealing the historic interest of the site. Public sensitivities around tree removal and management need to be carefully managed.</p>

## Westbrook green space

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The more natural character of the area provides a counterpoint to the more planned form of North Lodge Park. The</p>	<p>This area lacks identity and its more informal character is starting to take the</p>	<p>There is an opportunity to give this space a new purpose and identity that adds to the area's character and</p>	<p>Without closer management, the condition of the trees and vegetation will limit their longevity and their ecological</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>mature trees appear in the backdrop of views from around North Road Station and contrast with the urban form of surrounding housing.</p> <p>The area provides habitats for local wildlife and forms part of an important corridor in the green infrastructure of the of area, as part of a wider network of green space along the Cocker Beck.</p>	<p>appearance of unmanaged, rather than natural.</p> <p>Trees in the area are largely self-seeded, formally coppiced but now generally of poor form with multiple, ivy-clad stems.</p>	<p>appearance, and to realise the potential of its amenity value for local residents. Its more natural character lends itself well to improving habitats and the area's ecological and biodiversity values, for example through the introduction of wildflowers to encourage more pollinators, without compromising its contribution to the conservation area. Selectively replacing of trees with specimens that have greater longevity and reduce the risk or failure (safety issues) will reduce resource input but maintain its character.</p>	<p>and aesthetic values, as well as presenting a potential public safety issue. Equally, removal of specimens without cause or replacement will erode the character of the area. Public sensitivities around tree removal and management need to be carefully managed.</p>

**Table 1.2: Examples of issues and opportunities: spaces and natural environment**



The open green space of North Lodge Park, this view from around the bandstand. Important and valuable space, but an abundance of benches and bins in disparate designs detracts from an area that should have a strong and distinctive identity and appearance.



The trees (and off-putting fencing) that line the overflow car park for the museum. Their longevity, visual amenity and habitat value are compromised by their poor condition.



The broad swathe of Hopetown Road, leading into Station Road and, in the middle distance, the marooned pocket of green space.



Westbrook green space, its valuable amenity and ecological values undermined by its lack of identity and the condition of trees.

## Built Structures and Detailing

### Windows and doors

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Surviving examples of original and other historic windows and doors – included their surrounds – add to the depth of character of the area and illustrate the design intent.</p> <p>Along North Road, buildings designed with residential flats above integrated commercial / retail premises at ground level often incorporate oriel windows to upper floors. They are not a ubiquitous feature, but their principally decorative function is illustrative of a desire for social distinction, and today they help animate and distinguish the street frontage.</p>	<p>There has been substantial loss and alteration of historic features throughout the area, including changes in the proportions of window opening on some terraces and blocking-up of door and window openings. Where this has happened it has undermined not only the architectural quality of the building but the contribution it makes to the visual distinctiveness of the area. However, reinstatement can be expensive and may require specialist input.</p> <p>In order to effectively reinstate character across terraces, it would also require coordinated, wholesale replacement of the features to re-establish coherence, but there is little currently little incentive / guidance for such area wide interventions.</p>	<p>Reinstatement / restoration of these features will help restore historic character and potentially improve thermal efficiency and environmental conditions for occupants. Design should be informed by historic precedent where it survives so that subtle differences in designs are not lost.</p> <p>These features could also be incorporated into the design of new builds to reinforce character.</p> <p>There is additional opportunity to restore features in the setting of the museum to help illustrate the surround streets' links to the railways, seeing them as another historic artefact that the museum can use to tell the story.</p>	<p>Incremental / unauthorised changes to these features will continue to dilute historic character.</p> <p>Incorporation of historic detailing into new buildings needs to be appropriately detailed, located (on the building and within the area) and paired appropriately to the building's function to ensure it is reinforcing existing character and not a token gesture / an incongruous addition.</p>

### Boundary treatments

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>There are some fine examples of historic railings, walls and gates across the area – to both public and private spaces. They are important in helping to define and delineated plot boundaries and so help illustrate the planning and development pattern of the area.</p> <p>They also contribute greatly to the aesthetic values of the area through their historic design quality and finish of the materials. Where they survive as a set across multiple properties they help sustain a commonality of character that</p>	<p>There has been considerable loss of front boundary treatments throughout the area, which undermines the architectural quality of individual properties and the visual unity of set groups of buildings. However, reinstatement can be expensive and may require specialist input.</p> <p>In order to effectively reinstate character across terraces, it would also require coordinated, wholesale replacement of the features to re-establish coherence, but there is little currently little incentive /</p>	<p>Reinstatement / restoration of these features will help restore and sustain historic character across the area. Design should be informed by historic precedent where it survives so that subtle differences in designs across the area are not lost.</p> <p>Where there are no surviving examples left, there is the opportunity for the characteristics of similar surviving examples – form, height, placement, materials, colours etc. – to inform a modern interpretation. Applied across plots or terraces, a sensitive but modern</p>	<p>Incremental / unauthorised changes to these features will continue to dilute historic character.</p> <p>Incorporation of historic detailing into new buildings needs to be appropriately detailed and located (on the plot and within the area) to ensure it is reinforcing existing character and not a token gesture / an incongruous addition.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>unites street frontages and created a strong sense of local distinctiveness.</p>	<p>guidance for such area wide interventions.</p>	<p>interpretation of historic form could help add to the character and architectural legacy of the area.</p> <p>There is additional opportunity to restore features in the setting of the museum to help illustrate the surround streets' links to the railways, seeing them as another historic artefact that the museum can use to tell the story.</p>	

### Shop fronts

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The mix of uses in the area is an important part of its character, bringing activity, movement, and use-specific architectural features – such as shop fronts. Some original examples survive, and they add to the architectural quality and diversity of the area.</p>	<p>Many shop fronts have been lost or covered up, which has had a detrimental effect on the historic character and integrity of the area.</p> <p>The introduction of disproportionately sized facias and incongruous detailing on modern shop fronts has exacerbated this effect and eroded historic character.</p>	<p>Reinstatement / restoration of these features will help restore and sustain historic character across the area. Design should be informed by historic precedent where it survives and appropriate comparators where it does not.</p>	<p>Refurbishment of remaining shop fronts or conversion of building to other uses could result in the further loss of historic features, which would erode the character of the area. Conversion of commercial and institutional buildings to residential use should be a last resort, as it not only will result in the loss of features but a homogenising of building use that is contrary to its character.</p> <p>The sheer weight and dominating visual impact of modern shopfronts detracts from the historical integrity of individual buildings and, consequently, the area in general. This makes it difficult to see the potential for restoration, and makes promoting the benefits of a more sensitive approach to design – and incentivising owners to adopt a more sympathetic approach – much more difficult.</p>

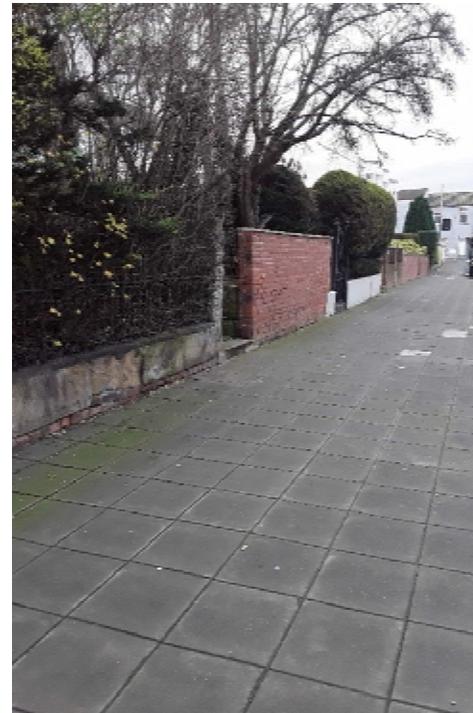
Table 1.3: Examples of issues and opportunities: architectural detailing and form



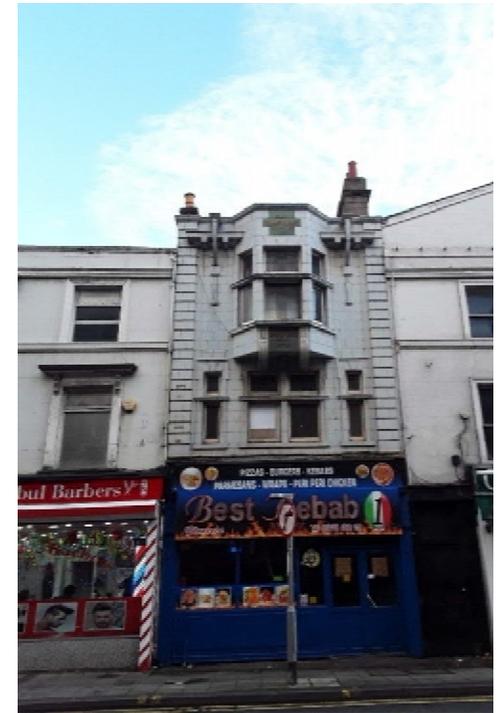
Changes to window proportions, materials and styles fragment terraces and dilute historic character.



The importance of attention to detail: although this new build has the right kinds of features in name, their odd proportions and positioning undermines the success of the composition and is incongruous in its historic surroundings.



The height and use of brick for this front boundary is incongruous in the streetscape, detracting from the coherence of the terrace and visually dominating the frontage.



The appearance and proportions of the shop front detract from one of the most important historic buildings in the whole area.

## Materials

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>The use of different materials not only adds to the visual variety of the area but subtly conveys different uses, status, and plot hierarchy. This story can be seen repeated throughout the area.</p> <p>The survival of historic fabric brings with it a finish and individuality – a patina of age – that can only be achieved with the passage of time. It adds richness to streetscenes and helps convey a sense of time depth and historic character.</p>	<p>Many of the buildings have had their facades rendered, obscuring historic detailing and fragmenting the appearance of streetscapes.</p> <p>Similarly, timber windows and doors have been replaced piecemeal with UPVC in mixes of inappropriate, standard designs.</p> <p>Some of the alterations that have already been made will be costly to rectify, some will be impossible to rectify (if the materials are no longer in production and removal will cause more damage than good).</p>	<p>Even small, piecemeal changes can make a big difference to character, and every little move that re-establishes a historic material or detail will be one more step towards reinforcing historic character and local identity. As such, every chance to reinstate original materials should be seen as a valuable opportunity, as should the opportunity for new builds to reinforce character through careful selection of materials.</p> <p>Standards can start to be set through public realm work, which can draw attention to the area's character, help lift the quality, and encourage others to do the same. Clear design guides can help here too, whilst targeted use of Article 4 Directions help to better manage works and reduce further loss.</p> <p>There is additional opportunity to restore features in the setting of the museum to help illustrate the surround streets' links to the railways, seeing them as another historic artefact that the museum can use to tell the story.</p>	<p>Incremental changes and replacement of materials with alternatives can not only be detrimental to the character of the area, but the introduction of modern materials – such as cement and plastic – can cause or accelerate decay in building materials. This can have lasting on the condition of the building and, ultimately result in the damage and loss of historic features.</p>

## Public realm surfacing

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Northgate is extremely fortunate in that many of the back lanes and side streets retain historic flooring, most prolifically Scoria setts, but also some stone, and sometimes combinations of the two (often where cart access was required). The distinctive appearance of the Scoria setts is especially striking, especially when they survive along a whole street, and the well-known origin of the material</p>	<p>Some of the Scoria setts have been tarmacked over, and this is the material of choice for principal roads as well as some pavements; others are covered with standard concrete paving, which are worn and cracked in places. These are the same standard as found throughout the country, and so do nothing to contribute to historic character or sense of place.</p>	<p>Replacing the current standard pavement materials will not affect the historic character of the area, and is in fact an opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment as well as introduce a more sympathetic and distinctive finish.</p> <p>There is the opportunity in Northgate to create a distinctive, coherent and comprehensive design guide for public</p>	<p>Incremental changes and unsympathetic repairs to surviving historic surfaces will continue to dilute historic character. Works carried out by utility companies and highways authorities are harder to manage and are often carried out without reference to the local historic environment. This has the potential not only for further loss of historic fabric, but also for any new, comprehensive design</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
creates a strong local connection and sense of place.		realm that would help remedy its currently fragmented appearance, reinforce local distinctiveness, and celebrate historic character.	approaches to be undermined by incongruous repairs and alterations.

Table 1.4: Examples of issues and opportunities: materials and public realm



Further unfortunate infilling of front gardens with flat-roofed shop units, but this is not helped by the red and white tiled frontage, an incongruous material choice for this area.



A pebble-dashed elevation disrupts the unity of a terrace, this example on Arthur Street. Note though the historic door and window surrounds and cornice detailing that does survive on adjacent terraces and can be used as evidence for reinstatement and design guides.



An expanse of ubiquitous concrete paving and uninspiring public realm, this example along High Northgate.



Scoria setts, tarmacked over but now showing through. They are an extremely durable material and add great depth of character to the area where they do survive.

Appendix B  
**Socio-Economic Context and  
Benefits**

**STEPHENSON  
STREET**



# NORTHGATE MASTERPLAN

**PROJECT:** SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND BENEFITS

**PREPARED FOR:** DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**DATE:** NOVEMBER



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## INTRODUCTION

Darlington Borough Council (DBC) appointed LUC in December 2020 to produce an Urban Design Framework and Masterplan for Northgate, an area located to the immediate north of Darlington town centre. The masterplan area is located partly within the Northgate Conservation Area. Northgate Conservation Area is referred to as 'Northgate' throughout this report.

Forever Consulting is working with LUC and have produced this document in support of the Masterplan. The purpose of this report is to:

- ∞ Provide the socio-economic context of the area,
- ∞ Present a case study demonstrating how a similar area went through a huge transformation using a similar approach to that proposed in the Masterplan, and
- ∞ Highlight potential socio-economic benefits associated with the implementation of the Masterplan.



## ABOUT NORTHGATE CONSERVATION AREA

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This section sets out the socio-economic profile for the Northgate Conservation area. Comparisons are made to the national average. These figures are typically illustrated in brackets. Some data is quite old and should be treated with a degree of caution. The year the data was released is highlighted in square brackets.

### About Northgate...

Northgate is one of the principal gateways to Darlington town centre. Together, Northgate and High Northgate form the historic linear spine of the Northgate Conservation Area, aligned along the former Great North Road which linked pre-industrial Darlington with its pioneering railway. At the southern end of Northgate are the former houses of Edward Pease and other Quaker founders of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. At the northern end around North Road Station remains some of the earliest railway-led urbanisation in the world, with a significant number of properties dating from the 1830s and 40s.

Despite this geographical and historical prominence, Northgate has a run-down appearance, with a high degree of social deprivation and physical dilapidation and an economy which has been reduced to a largely peripheral role.

The main land uses within Northgate are residential, commercial, food & drink (takeaways, cafes) and retail, although this tends to be independent shops on a small scale. There is limited, but some large-scale retail in the area.

Office development is more prominent within larger plots closer to the town centre. There are also some commercial industrial uses with sheds.

### Ethnically diverse, transient working age population...

Around 900 people live in the Northgate Conservation area. A high proportion (74.1%) are of working age i.e. 16 to 64 (compared to 62.3%) [2020]<sup>i</sup>.

It is an ethnically diverse and transient population. Key characteristics include:

- ∞ 15.3% who are Asian (compared to 7.8%), of which most are Bangladeshi (11.9% of the total population, compared to 0.8%) [2011]<sup>ii</sup>.
- ∞ 22.1% of the population moved home within the previous 12 months (compared to 12.3%) [2010]<sup>iii</sup> and 2.2% are overseas migrants (compared to 0.6%) [2021]<sup>iv</sup>.

### The community can be defined as 'constrained city dwellers' who are passive and uncommitted internet users, with a low sense of community belonging but with good access to green space...

Key characteristics here include:

- ∞ The Northgate community are described as 'constrained city dwellers' by the ONS Area Classification. This type of community is typically defined as living in densely populated areas and are more likely to be single or divorced. Households are more likely to live in flats and there is a higher prevalence of overcrowding. There is a higher proportion of people whose day-to-day activities are limited, and lower qualification levels than nationally. There is a higher level of unemployment also [2011]<sup>v</sup>.
- ∞ People within Northgate are most likely to be 'passive and uncommitted internet users' as defined by the Internet User Classification. This means that they have limited or no interaction with the internet [2018]<sup>vi</sup>.
- ∞ According to Community Dynamics indicators, the community within Northgate have a low sense of belonging, low level of satisfaction with the local area as a place to live and have poor local social relationships [2016]<sup>vii</sup>.
- ∞ However, they have access to a much larger extent of green spaces. Around 20.9% of the area is green space (compared to 2.2%) [2017]<sup>viii</sup>.

### **There are vulnerable groups with high levels of worklessness, deprivation, disability, mental health, and crime...**

Key characteristics here include:

- ∞ Northgate is in the top 10% most deprived areas overall in the country. Additionally, it is in the top 10% most deprived in five of the seven domains measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. These are: income, employment, education, health, and crime [2019]<sup>ix</sup>.
- ∞ A significant proportion (24.3%) are workless (compared to 11.0%). Worklessness is high in younger and older people, as well as both males and females [2021]<sup>x</sup>.
- ∞ Different measures suggest disability rates are double the national average. 13.1% of people in Northgate claim Personal Independence Payments (compared to 6.5%). These payments help with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health, or terminal ill-health. Additionally, 9.9% of households claim Universal Credit due to a limited capability for work (compared to 2.3%). The total proportion of Universal Credit claimants in the area is 34.7% [2021]<sup>xi</sup>.
- ∞ Three times the national average of people who are 'searching for work' (15.5% compared to 5.0%) [2021]<sup>xii</sup>.
- ∞ Almost a third (29.2%) of households on Universal Credit rent privately and are eligible for housing entitlement. This is to help with housing costs (compares to 6.0%) [2021]<sup>xiii</sup>.
- ∞ A large proportion of children live in low-income families in Northgate. 53.0% of children live in a relative low-income household, which is defined as a family in low income before housing costs (compared to 19.3%) [2019]<sup>xiv</sup>.

- ∞ Double the amount of people are claiming mental health related benefits (4.7% compared to 2.2%) [2021]<sup>xv</sup>.
- ∞ Almost four times the rate of recorded crimes in Northgate with 31.7 per 1,000 of the population (compared to 8.4) [2021]<sup>xvi</sup>

### **Homes are predominantly older buildings which are terraced or flats, they are affordable but with issues around over-crowding, lacking central heating and a high number of vacant dwellings...**

Key characteristics here include:

- ∞ Nearly all (88.9%) dwellings are terraced (38.5%), purpose-built flats (22.4%) or flats in converted houses (28.0%) (compared to 24.5%, 16.7% and 4.3% respectively) [2011]<sup>xvii</sup>.
- ∞ Over half (56.0%) are rented from a private landlord or letting agency (compared to 15.4%) [2011]<sup>xviii</sup>.
- ∞ The average house price (£100,412) is three times lower than the national average (£335,984) [2020]<sup>xix</sup>. Homes are affordable for those who are earning. The total affordability ratio demonstrates the number of years' worth of earnings required for a deposit. In Northgate the affordability ratio is 2.1, this compares to 5.5 [2017]<sup>xx</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Vacant dwellings are households that do not have any usual residents. This includes households that may still be used by short-term residents, visitors who were present on census night, or a combination of short-term residents and

- ∞ Almost a quarter (23.9%) of homes are overcrowded (this is where there is at least one room fewer than needed for household requirements as defined by ONS), this compares to 8.7%. There also exists almost double the rate of homes lacking central heating (5.1% compared to 2.7%) and three times the proportion of vacant dwellings<sup>1</sup> at 15.5% compared to 4.3% [2011]<sup>xxi</sup>.
- ∞ Over four-fifths (83.0%) of homes were built before 1939, compared to 36.3%.

### **The Northgate population has low skills levels, low household income with a high proportion of those in employment in elementary occupations. Businesses are predominantly in the: retail; hotel and catering; and arts, entertainments, recreation, and other services sectors...**

Key characteristics include:

- ∞ Almost a third (29.4%) of people have no qualifications and a further 18.0% have up to level one qualifications. On the other hand, only 16.0% have graduate/ level 4 qualifications. This compares to 22.5%, 13.3% and 27.4% respectively [2011]<sup>xxii</sup>.

visitors. It also includes vacant household spaces and household spaces that are used as second addresses

- ∞ Average household income is £29,300, compared to £43,966 [2018]<sup>xxiii</sup>.
- ∞ A high proportion of those in employment are in elementary occupations (19.5% compared to 11.1%) [2011]<sup>xxiv</sup>. Linked to low income, it is likely that those who are working experience 'in-work' poverty.
- ∞ Competition for jobs is also high in Northgate with 15.1 claimants per job advertised (compared to 3.4) [2012]<sup>xxv</sup>.
- ∞ Almost half (45.6%) of businesses are in: retail (20.4%); hotels and catering (13.6%); and arts, entertainment, recreation and other service (11.6%) sectors [2020]<sup>xxvi</sup>.

### **There are low levels of car ownership, but residents largely live within walking distance of key services...**

Key characteristics here include:

- ∞ Car ownership is half the national average. 54.9% do not have access to a car or van (compared to 25.8%) [2011]<sup>xxvii</sup>.
- ∞ But average distance to the following services is low:
  - ∞ Job centre at 0.8km (compared to 4.6km)
  - ∞ GP at 0.5km (compared to 1.2km)
  - ∞ Pub at 0.2km (compared to 0.7km)

- ∞ Post office at 0.6km (compared to 1.0km)
- ∞ Whereas, the distance to a secondary school is the same as the national average (2.1km) [2010]<sup>xxviii</sup>.

### **There exist numerous economic, transport and heritage assets that present opportunities...**

Darlington dates to the 10th Century and the town has several economic, transport and heritage assets across the borough. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Darlington underwent substantial industrial development led by the establishment of the world's first permanent steam-locomotive-powered passenger railway. Much of the vision behind the railway's creation was provided by local Quaker families. Darlington continues to be a centre for engineering.

Other local assets include the indoor Market Hall, Clock Tower (whose bells are the sister bells to those in the Elizabeth Tower at the Houses of Parliament), and the Head of Steam museum.

## LOOKING ELSEWHERE: HOW HISTORIC REGENERATION CAN IMPROVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

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This section presents a case study demonstrating how a similar area went through a huge transformation using a similar approach to that proposed in the Masterplan.

The area is Ouseburn in Newcastle. 30 years ago, it was an area of neglect with a small population and is now a sought-after place to live, work and play.

The following sets out how this was achieved and presents valuable lessons for DBC going forward.

### **The history of Ouseburn...**

Ouseburn was known for its glass making, pottery, lead mining, lime works and transporting goods down the Ouseburn River. As these goods started to be carried by other modes and the manufacturing industries declined many of the sites were adopted for small scale industry such as furniture making and motor car repairs.

By the 1960's the area was characterised by abandoned and neglected properties (many of which were large). There were a very limited number of residential properties.

### **The beginning of community activity setting out a new vision...**

Newcastle City Council set out proposals for a new working group in the early 1980s. This would comprise local people who would protect and promote the local heritage, as well as setting out their vision for Ouseburn.

In 1988, the 'Ouseburn Project' was formed. Its objectives were to identify, protect and promote heritage in the valley; improve access; encourage housing in the valley; and, develop proposals for the future and involving local people in producing these outcomes.

### **Establishing a development trust...**

In 1996, the Ouseburn Trust was formed as a Development Trust and incorporated as a Limited Company. They quickly started to apply for Single Regeneration Budget funds. This would help drive the regeneration forward. More detail about activities is set out below.

### **Ouseburn is now thriving...**

The area is now an arts and creative industries hub. Assets include: the Biscuit Factory (open gallery); the Mushroom Works (affordable studio place for creative industries); North Grange Glass (stained glass gallery and cafe); 36 Lime Street (oldest and largest studio group in

the North East, housing over 40 artists, makers and designers); Cobalt Studios (artists space and studios); and Seven Stories (the national centre for children's books).

The Ouseburn Trust remains a landlord and developer in Ouseburn, and seeks to involve people in the heritage and regeneration of the area through its programme of free walks, talks and volunteering activities.

There are now around 14,000 people living in Ouseburn and 4,500 people working there<sup>xxix</sup>.

**Appendix One** highlights key milestones in the journey for Ouseburn.

### **Important lessons for DBC...**

There are many similarities in what has been achieved in Ouseburn and the vision for Northgate. Some important lessons taken from Ouseburn include:

- ∞ The scale of the regeneration in Ouseburn is impressive. However, it has taken about three decades to fully turn the area round. The transformation of Northgate won't happen overnight.
- ∞ There have been numerous groups and partnerships leading the regeneration. However, everyone has remained focussed and tied to the same vision and shared principles. These include:
  - Promoting and sustaining an interest in the local heritage. They have always opted to enhance heritage assets.
  - Supporting the improvement of the physical, social, and economic environment of Ouseburn.

- Acting as a voice for all parts of the local community.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment especially improving the appearance, use, water quality and ecological value of the Ouseburn River.
- Improving accessibility such as promoting public transport or improving pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Creating vibrancy by increasing the number of arts and culture-based organisations and activities which would be of interest to residents and draw in visitors.

- ∞ Ouseburn has created a distinctiveness by evolving but at the same time remaining loyal to its heritage. For example, when creating the riverside walkway, improving access and including pocket parks, they incorporated street art which references its heritage.
- ∞ Much of the work has been delivered through focussed sub-groups which includes board members, staff and volunteers. These groups include: heritage, social enterprise, outreach and engagement.

## POTENTIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

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### The Vision for Northgate

The implementation of the Northgate Masterplan has the potential to bring about a wide range of socio-economic benefits. It should breathe life into a forgotten part of town and revitalise a neighbourhood on the doorstep of Darlington town centre with high quality development and public realm spaces.

It will place significant value on access to green space and nature and promote walking and cycling as a primary mode of transport. It will build upon its special heritage interest and socio-cultural legacy to generate a distinctive identity.

### Socio-Economic Benefits

The implementation of the Masterplan will likely realise the below socio-economic benefits.

#### Improved health and well-being of residents...

A critical aspect of the Masterplan is new cycling and walking infrastructure. This includes new routes between the town centre and Skerne Bridge and the Rail Heritage Quarter, linking existing and proposed routes together.

There is high traffic along Northgate and DBC has an ambition to encourage modal shift (from car use to walking and cycling) in journeys. Suitable infrastructure is needed to enable this shift as current provision is poor.

With low levels of car ownership in the area, this project has excellent potential to encourage an increase in cycling and walking.

It will also generate an opportunity for further areas of interest and leisure opportunities with greater connectivity to the River Skerne and through developing underutilised riverside assets.

A key benefit of this will be improved health and well-being from an increase in cycling and walking as well as a potential reduction in accidents (by introducing improved cycling infrastructure and reducing traffic). There will also be improvements in air quality, including CO<sub>2</sub>, providing further health benefits and supporting net zero ambitions.

#### An increase in footfall and visitor numbers...

The implementation of the Masterplan should lead to an increase in footfall, dwell time and visitors' numbers by:

- ∞ Improving walking and cycling links between key assets and making it easier to access them.
- ∞ Developing high-quality green spaces and a public park and opening up the River Skerne to provide improved tourism infrastructure and an enhanced visitor proposition.
- ∞ 2025 will be an opportunity for Darlington to celebrate 200 years since the birth of the modern passenger railway. The development of the Rail Heritage Quarter, Edward Pease House and other assets

linked to this Masterplan present a key opportunity to appeal to a wide audience through the heritage trail.

- ∞ The increased investment and activities should lead to an improved vibrancy and appeal. This will naturally increase the number of people within Northgate, bringing in visitors and residents, who will spend money on goods and services, supporting local businesses.

### **Improved sense of belonging...**

As highlighted earlier, the existing community within Northgate have a low sense of belonging and satisfaction with the area. The improvement of heritage assets, greater public realm and green spaces and the facilitation of good quality residential development can create a vibrant social area and make it a place people are proud of.

This in turn will encourage more people to live and visit here and help develop the community further. However, there is a high likelihood the new development will push up demand and property prices over time and potentially push the existing community out. As highlighted in Ouseburn, it is important to ensure the existing community do not feel excluded or pushed out.

There are numerous ways to prevent or at least minimise the exodus of existing residents including, but not limited to:

- ∞ Keeping the dialogue open with the existing community to understand the changing challenges faced.

- ∞ Ensuring they have access to training that links to the new employment opportunities.
- ∞ Working closely with landlords to try and avoid excessive increases in renting costs.
- ∞ Development of a Community Land Trust such as seen in Granby Four Streets CLT in Liverpool<sup>2</sup>.
- ∞ Ensuring a suitable level of social and cooperative housing.

### **Greater economic activity opportunities...**

Northgate is a deprived area with many vulnerable groups. The implementation of the Masterplan should stimulate investment through some of the activity described above as well as the enhancements to shop fronts and other buildings. This should not only lead to new businesses forming but also increase the viability of existing businesses.

This will have the benefit of increased business rates for DBC as well as new employment opportunities for residents to access.

### **An increase in local commercial land values...**

Additionally, the improved public realm, active travel improvements and enhanced shopfronts should lead to an uplift in retail land values.

### **An increase in the local population...**

The improved conditions and opportunity for residential development should lead to an increase in the number of people living in Northgate.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.granby4streetsclt.co.uk/history-of-the-four-streets/>

For example, The Northgate House site is a vacant office block, which alongside adjacent privately owned property and car parks owned by DBC along Gladstone Street, create a significant and strategically placed area for residential development.

### **A reduction in crime...**

There are several interventions within the Masterplan that could lead to a reduction in crime locally. These include improved lighting and installation of CCTV. An increase in footfall may also lead to this benefit too, through enhanced natural surveillance.

### **A better-connected community...**

The existing Northgate community have limited interaction with the internet. It is unknown whether this is due to a lack of interest, skills, or affordability but likely to be a combination of all three.

The inclusion of widespread Wi-Fi alongside the Masterplan will provide many benefits to existing residents (as well as visitors) who cannot currently afford it.

## APPENDIX ONE: OUSEBURN MILESTONES

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### There have been many important milestones over the last 35 years...

The following sets out key milestones in the regeneration of Ouseburn<sup>xxx</sup>.

- ∞ 1982 - Mike Mould buys 36 Lime Street and occupies the top floor with Bruvvers Theatre Company. He lets the lower floors out to local artists over time.
- ∞ 1983 - Foundry Lane Industrial Estate Units are completed on land designated for open space. This loss of open space is balanced out by the City Council buying and filling in the Quayside railway cutting below Tarsset Street at the top of the 'steps to nowhere'.
- ∞ 1984 - Pauline Murray of punk rock band Penetration establishes Polestar Rehearsal Studios.
- ∞ 1986 - Artists form a co-operative and sign a long lease at 36 Lime Street.
- ∞ 1987 - Ouseburn Working Group is formed. It produces a strategy for the Ouseburn Valley: where an urban village is proposed.
- ∞ 1988 - East Quayside Group convened and engaged residents to with proposed developments by Tyne and Wear Development Corporation. This leads to the formation of the East Quayside Monitoring Panel the following year. Legendary Yorkshire Heroes Ltd renovate a derelict factory on Foundry Lane to transform it into their Head Quarters and 25 studios/workshops which later becomes mainly band practice rooms.
- ∞ 1989 - Shepherds Scrap Metal moves from St. Peters to the former Co-op warehouse on Quality Row – later taken over by Ward Bros.
- ∞ 1991 - Stepney Bank Stables is established. They complete two riding arenas. Former Sailors Bethel on Horatio Street (famously painted by LS Lowry in 1965) is converted into offices by TWDC.
- ∞ 1993 - Newcastle City Council opens Quayside Business Development Centre as business incubators in the former Ouseburn School. A local Development Trust is established, and they persuade the Council not to demolish the Maynard's building which had been devastated by a fire.
- ∞ 1994 - The Ship Tavern on Maling Street becomes The Tyne Bar.
- ∞ 1995 - The Ouseburn Trust is formed. 36 Lime Street artists organise the first Open Studios Event in November.
- ∞ 1997 - The Ouseburn Partnership, led by the Ouseburn Trust partnered by Newcastle City Council, secured £2.5M in SRB funding, concentrating around the Village Green area on Lime Street. The first Ouseburn Festival takes place. Development of the Quayside flat complexes begins with Mariners Wharf.
- ∞ 1999 - The Cluny Bar opens at 36 Lime Street and continues until 2002, when it is taken over by the Head of Steam Company and transformed into a leading live music venue.

- ∞ 2000 - As an Ouseburn Partnership project the former Co-op Boot and Shoe Works on Lime Street is converted into nineteen flats. Newcastle City Council adopts the Lower Ouseburn Valley as a Conservation Area. Work starts on converting 10 - 16 Boyd Street into Cobalt Studios, creating workspace for artists. A pop up event space is created here in late 2015 and becomes permanent space in May 2017.
- ∞ 2001 - Study into the water environment in the lower Ouseburn Valley is completed. The Biscuit Factory idea is hatched by Ramy Zack. He transforms his building into the largest Art Mart in the UK, a restaurant and 30 artists' studios. He later creates Biscuit Tin studios, the Holy Biscuit gallery, the Biscuit Room and the Biscuit Box artists and music studios which is to open in September 2018.
- ∞ 2002 - Seven Stories purchases 30 Lime Street. After a £6.5m conversion Seven Stories opens in 2005 as the Centre for Children's Books. The museum gains national status in 2012. The Fighting Cocks Public House on Albion Row is bought and converted to office space for Karol Marketing. The Wimpey Tower bid for a 32 Storey tower block next to Mariner's Wharf first appears. The City Council's newly formed 'Ouseteam' move to office space at 53 Lime Street, home of the Ouseburn Trust. This same year the Ouseburn Advisory Committee is first convened. Evolution music festival is first held on Spiller's Quay.
- ∞ 2003 - Quayside flats at High Quays and Ouseburn Wharf are completed.
- ∞ 2004 - Ouseburn Farm re-opens on the site of the original Byker City Farm. The Mushroom Works on St. Lawrence Road is converted by furniture maker Nick James into studio space for artists. Following strong opposition, Wimpey drops their proposed development for their Ouseburn mouth site.
- ∞ 2005 - The Tall Ships Race takes place and coincides with the Ouseburn Festival.
- ∞ 2006 - Newcastle City Council staff move into Ouseburn Water Sports Association building on Spiller's Quay, renaming it Byker-Ouseburn Regeneration Centre. The Star and Shadow Cinema convert and move to the old Tyne Tees TV Warehouse on Stepney Bank, sharing with Art Works gallery. Heritage Lottery funds are successfully secured to fund work to open the Victoria Tunnel to the public. McPhee's Yard is transformed into a public car park designed to be also used for events.
- ∞ 2007 - Another of Mike Mould's projects, The Round Theatre, opens at 34 Lime Street in time for the Ouseburn Festival weekend in July with performances by Bruvvers Theatre Company. George Wimpey proposes a new 13 Storey development for their Ouseburn mouth site.
- ∞ 2008 - Work starts on the long-awaited Barrage at the mouth of the Ouseburn. La Gabbia restaurant opens as part of conversion of 1 Boyd Street in conjunction with office space. The scrapyard on Union Street is replaced by Maling Court, a new office complex.
- ∞ 2009 - The Round Theatre becomes Cluny 2, another live music venue. Charlie Hoult returns to Newcastle to run Hoult's Yard

(former Maling Ford B Pottery) and develops the yard as a media and digital hub for film, fashion, and software. He converts several spaces for events from Radio 4's Any Questions? to musicians The Fall, Ben Howard – and DJs Judge Jules, Laurent Garnier. By 2017, Hoult's Yard is home to 150 firms with 700 staff. The Biscuit Tin Studios opens and joins Ouseburn Open Studios annual November event. The Media Exchange office development is completed. One North East purchase the Ice Factory, Heaney's Coachworks and the Wimpey site and agree funding for public realm works and the Toffee Factory conversion.

- ∞ 2010 - The first student housing block on the northern edge of Ouseburn is completed.
- ∞ 2011 - Tyne Bank Brewery opens at Hawick Crescent Industrial Estate, the first of a number of craft breweries to settle in Ouseburn. The first creative businesses move into the Toffee Factory. The Ouseburn Riverside Walkway is completed in time for the Ouseburn Festival.
- ∞ 2012 - Spiller's Mill is demolished. Ouseburn Management Board disbanded.
- ∞ 2013 - Newly formed Ouseburn Futures formally asked by Newcastle City Council to lead on the implementation of the Ouseburn Regeneration Plan.

- ∞ 2014 - The Cycle Hub opens in the former Ouseburn Watersports building on Spiller's Quay. Ouseburn Futures secures LEAF grant for volunteer-led work on Ouseburn green spaces. This forms the basis of a continuing programme of environmental maintenance in the valley. The first residents move into The Malings, 76 new homes on the former Heaney/Ice Factory sites.
- ∞ 2015 - Farm View flats on Foundry Lane completed for Tyne Housing Association directly on the route of Hadrian's Wall. A pop up event space is created at Cobalt Studios in late 2015 and becomes permanent space in May 2017. Completion of 13 student accommodation blocks.
- ∞ 2016 - August Bank Holiday Monday saw the first Ouseburn Valley Cross event. Tyne Bank Brewery move to larger premises on Walker Road with a Tap Room.
- ∞ 2017 - Ouseburn Trust and Ouseburn Futures converge to become one organisation committed to drive the ambitious yet sensitive regeneration of the Ouseburn Valley. Opening of various venues in central Ouseburn - The Kiln, Arch 2, Reebok Fitness and The Valley Climb Newcastle. The Cluny and The Ship are taken over by independent operators.

## APPENDIX TWO: SOURCES AND DATA REFERENCES

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<sup>i</sup> Source: ONS, Mid-year Population Estimates, 2020

<sup>ii</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>iii</sup> Source: Population Turnover Rates, 2010

<sup>iv</sup> Source: DWP, 2021

<sup>v</sup> Source: ONS, Area Classification, 2011

<sup>vi</sup> Source: ONS, Internet User Classification, 2018

<sup>vii</sup> Source: Community Dynamic Indicators, 2016

<sup>viii</sup> Ordnance Survey, 2017

<sup>ix</sup> Source: MHCLG, 2019

<sup>x</sup> Source: DWP, 2021

<sup>xi</sup> Source, DWP, 2021

<sup>xii</sup> Source, DWP, 2021

<sup>xiii</sup> Source, DWP, 2021

<sup>xiv</sup> Source, DWP, 2019

<sup>xv</sup> Source, DWP, 2021

<sup>xvi</sup> Source: [data.police.uk](http://data.police.uk), 2021

<sup>xvii</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>xviii</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>xix</sup> Source: Valuation Office Agency, 2020

<sup>xx</sup> Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas, 2017

<sup>xxi</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>xxii</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>xxiii</sup> Source, ONS, 2018

<sup>xxiv</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>xxv</sup> Source, ONS and Job Centre Plus, 2012

<sup>xxvi</sup> Source: ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey, 2020

<sup>xxvii</sup> Source: ONS, Census, 2011

<sup>xxviii</sup> Source: Road distances - Commission for Rural Communities: Distance to Service dataset (2010)

<sup>xxix</sup> Source: ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates (2019) and Business Register and Employment Survey, 2020

<sup>xxx</sup> Source: [www.ouseburntrust.org.uk](http://www.ouseburntrust.org.uk)

