

# South Tyneside Planning Group

Shaping Our Future

## Living in a Conservation Area: A guide for residents

November 2013



South Tyneside Council



‘Informed conservation’ means understanding the historical development, and significance, of your building or area and identifying the most appropriate approach to its management.

#### **What is a conservation area?**

While buildings, both listed and unlisted, make a significant contribution to an area’s distinctive character or appearance and usually form the basis of a conservation area, designation recognises that buildings do not stand alone but are part of a bigger picture. The historic layout of roads and paths, characteristic building and paving materials, public and private spaces, green spaces and trees and the different uses of buildings all contribute to the charm and look of an area.

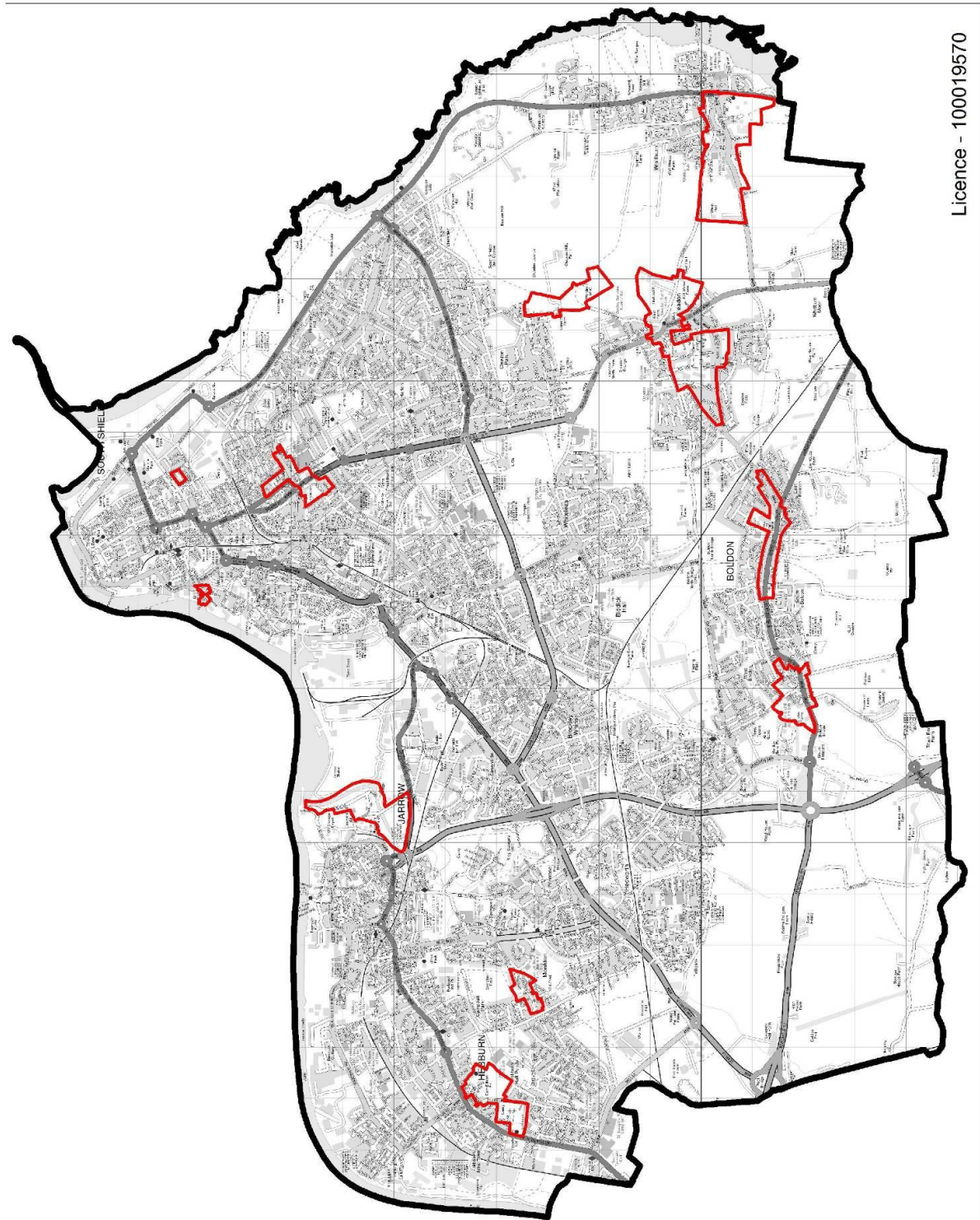
#### **Is my property in a conservation area?**

If you buy a property that is located in a conservation area it will be identified through your search of the Local Land Charges Register. When a new conservation area is designated, or the boundary of an existing one is amended, the council places a formal notice in the press and informs owners and occupiers.

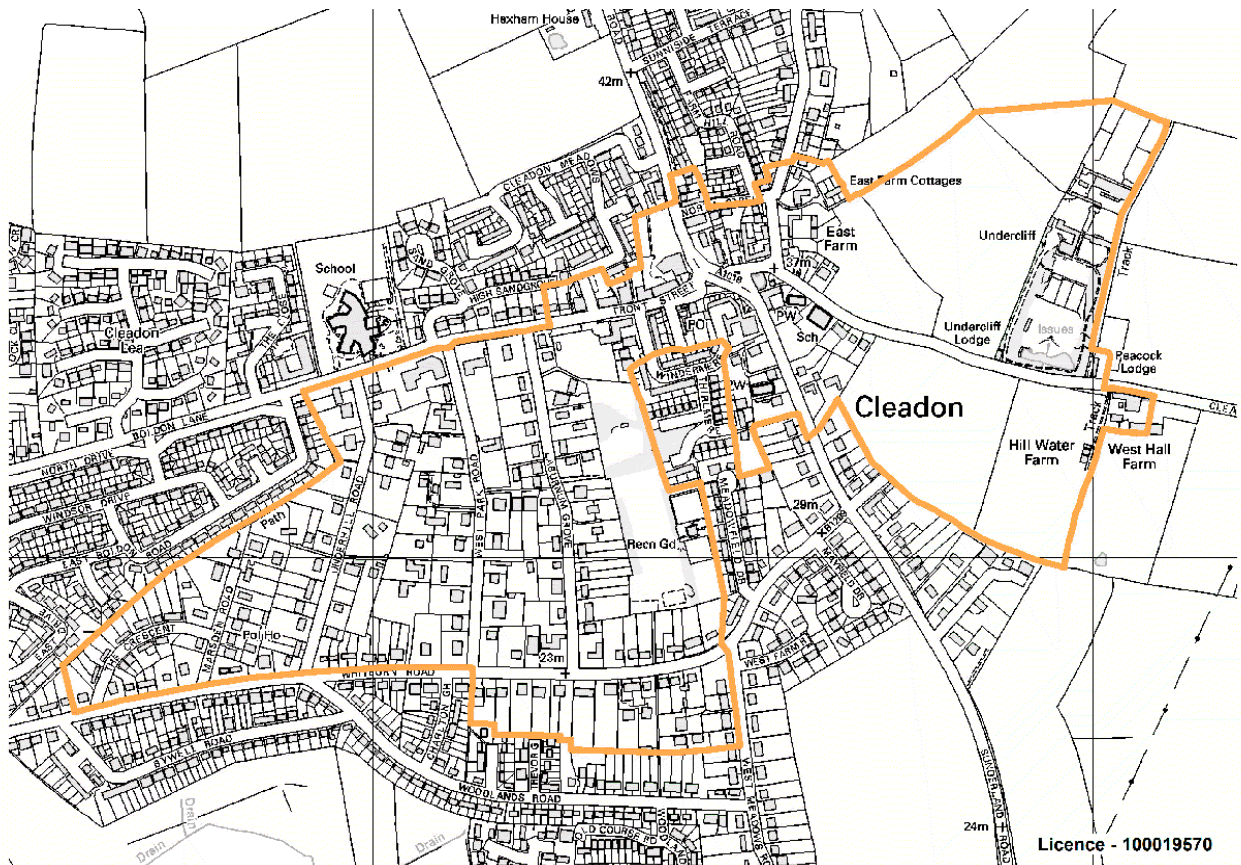
The map on the next page shows the location of South Tyneside’s 11 conservation areas.

The designation of a conservation area aims to manage, not prevent, change.

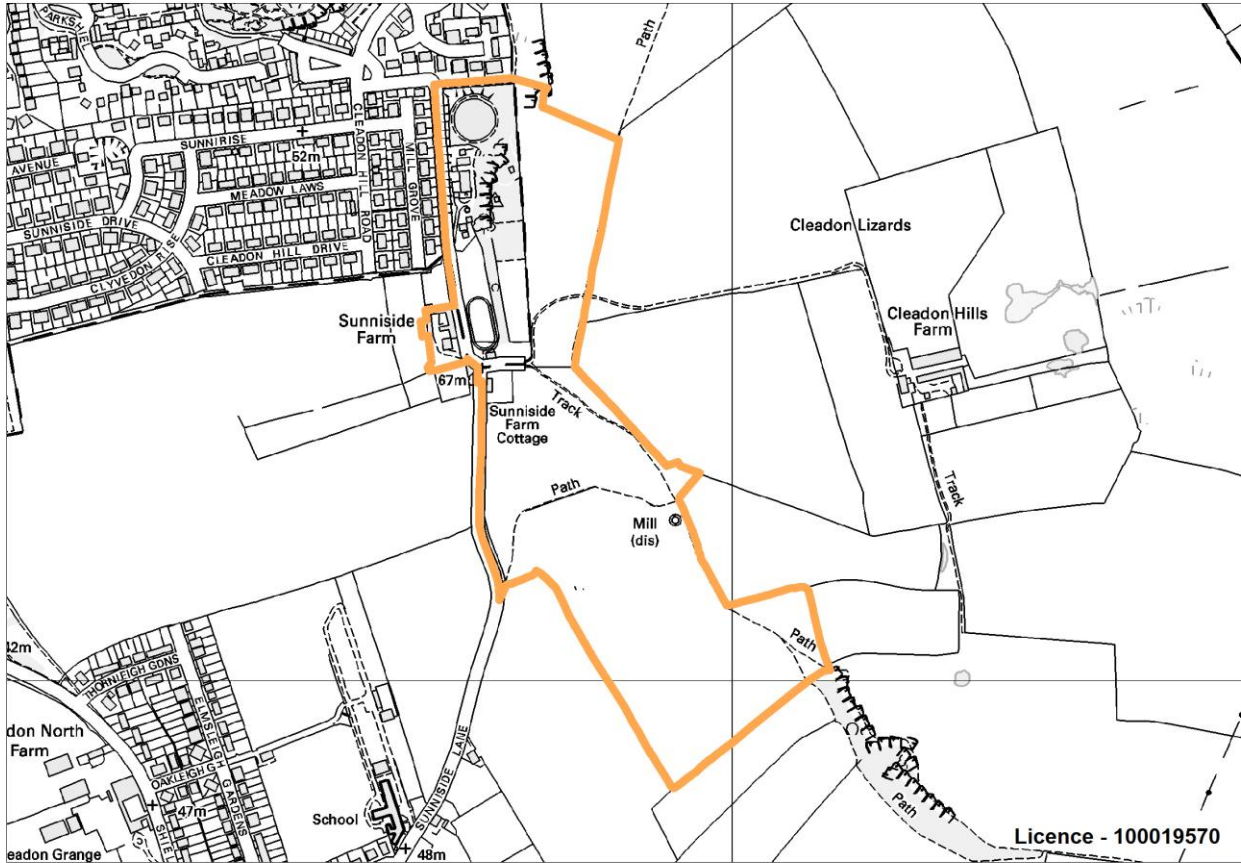
## The location of South Tyneside's 11 conservation areas



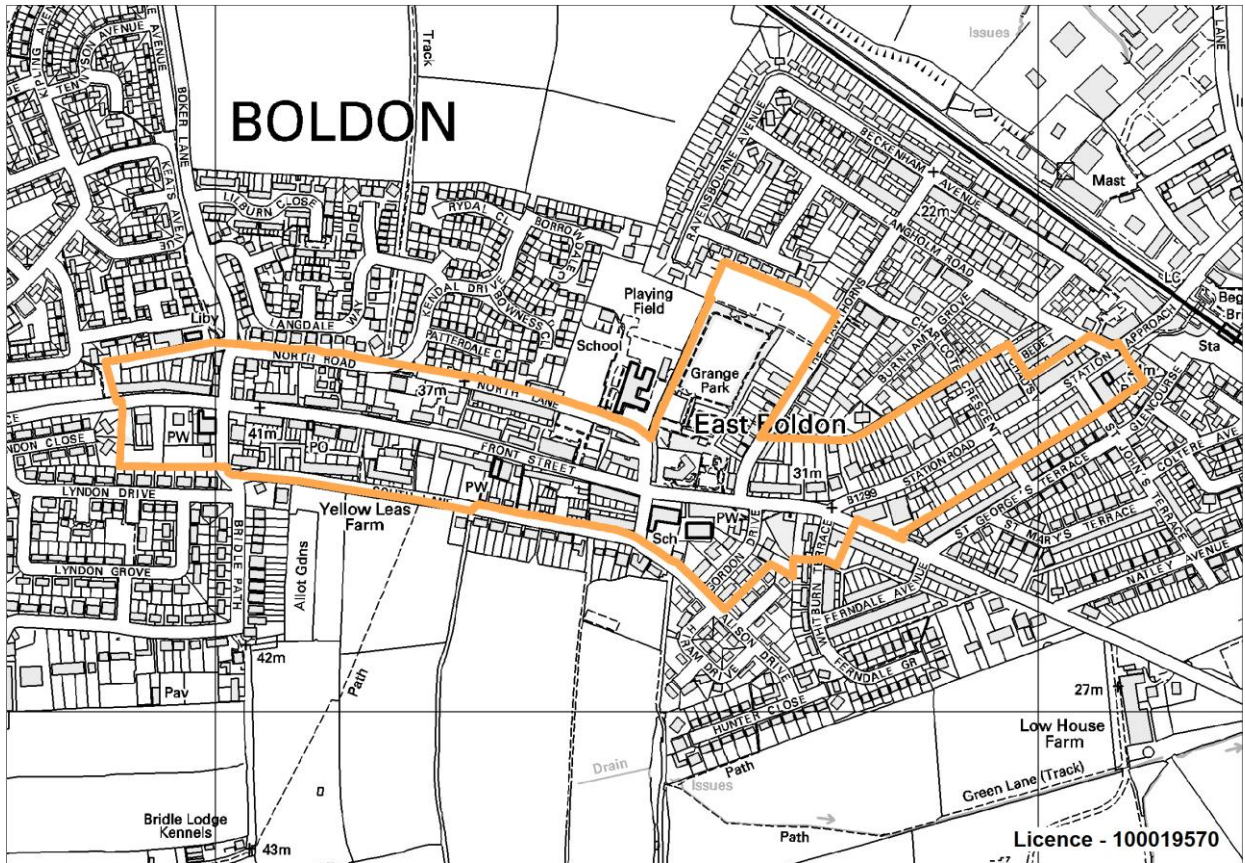
For more detailed maps, please check on the council website at [www.southtyneside.info/conservation](http://www.southtyneside.info/conservation)



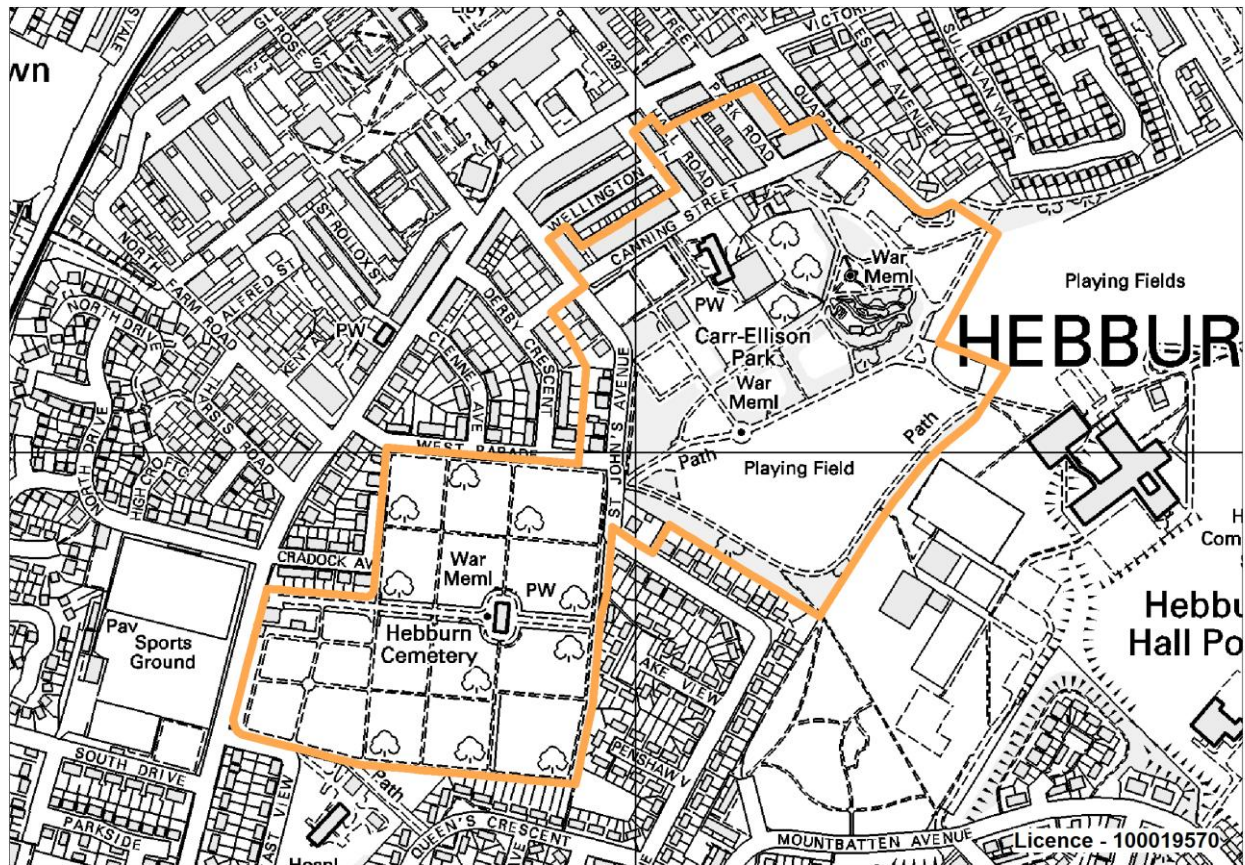
**Cleadon Conservation Area**



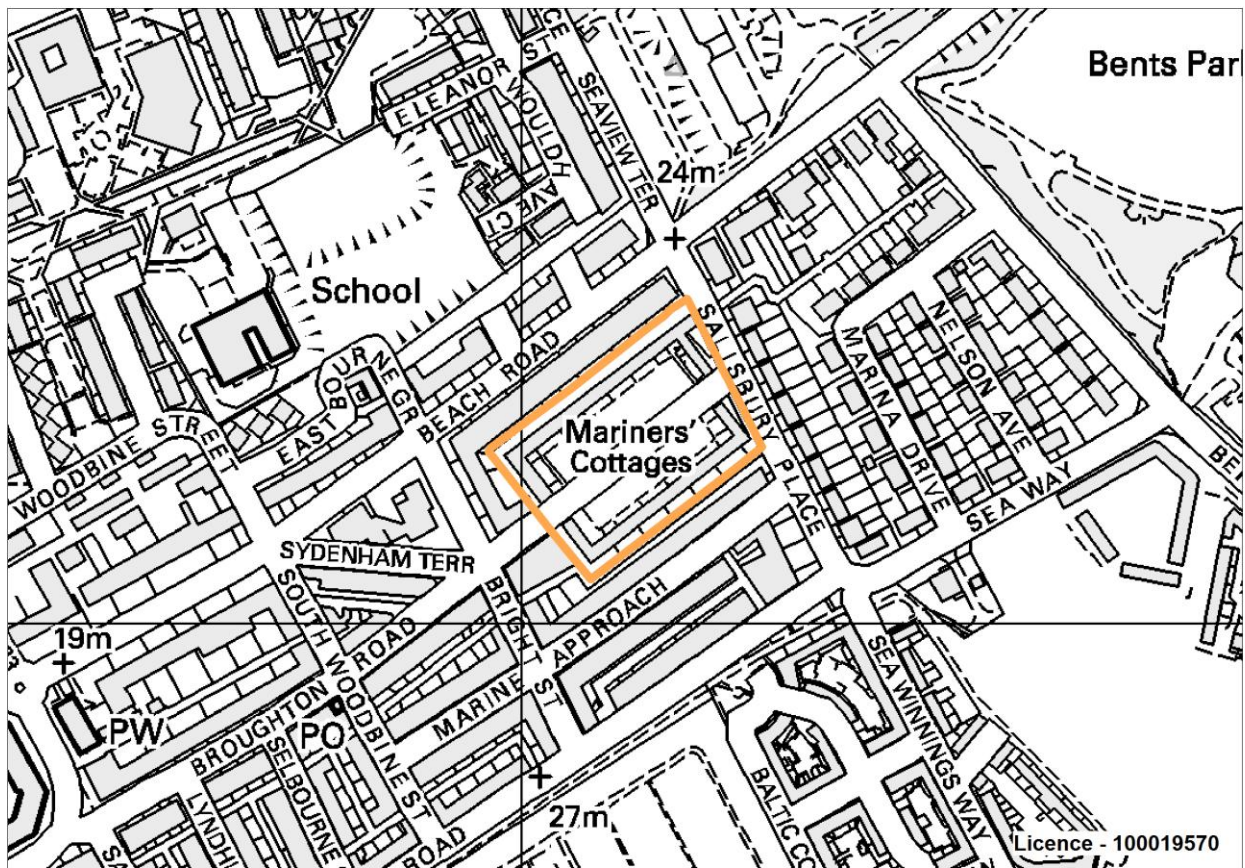
**Cleadon Hills Conservation Area**



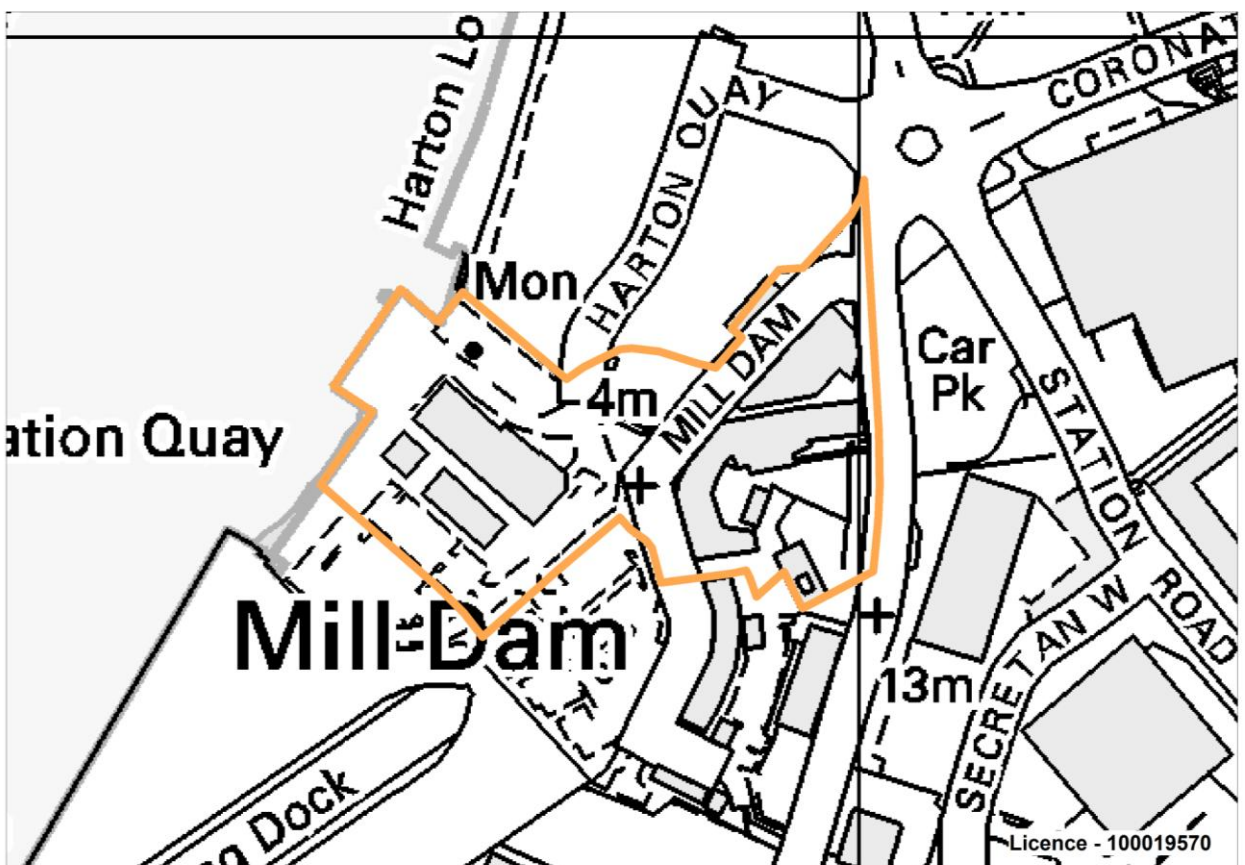
East Boldon Conservation Area



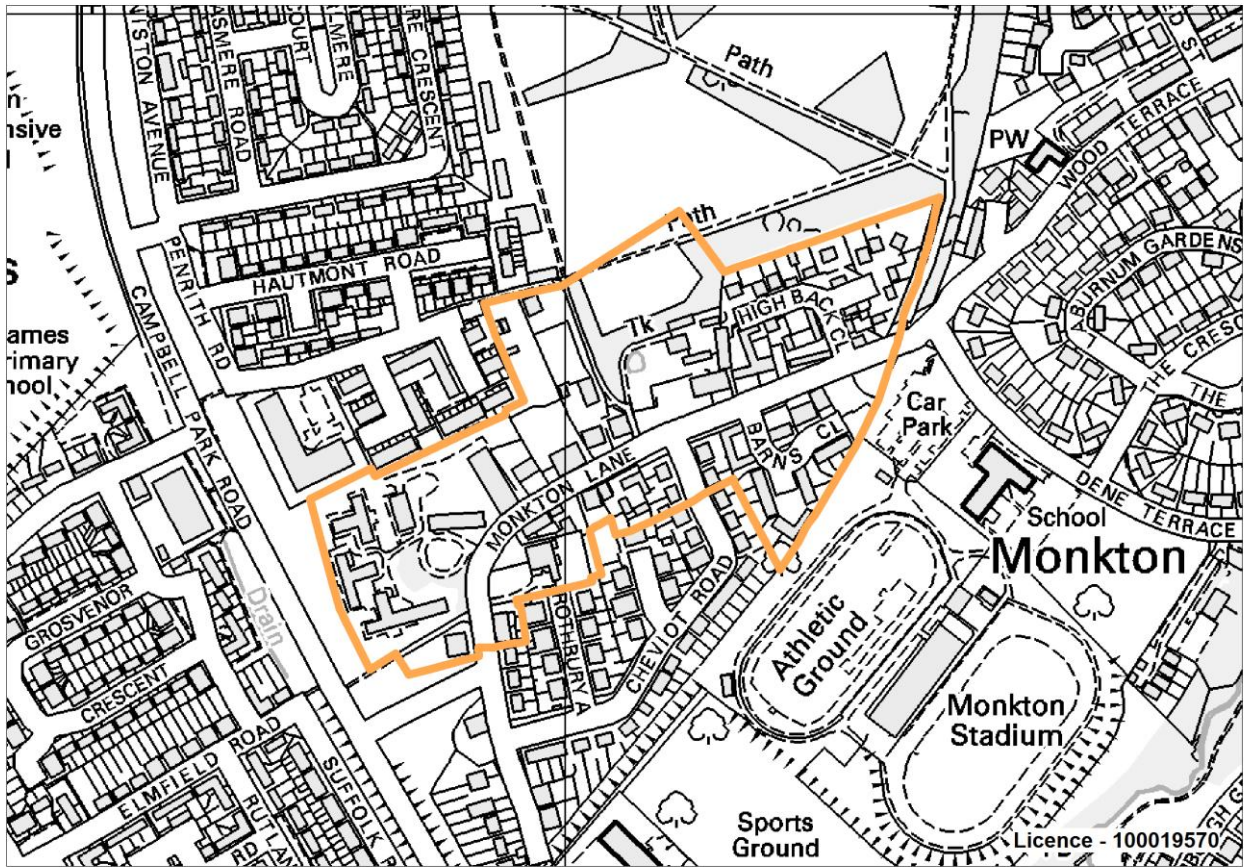
Hebburn Hall Conservation Area



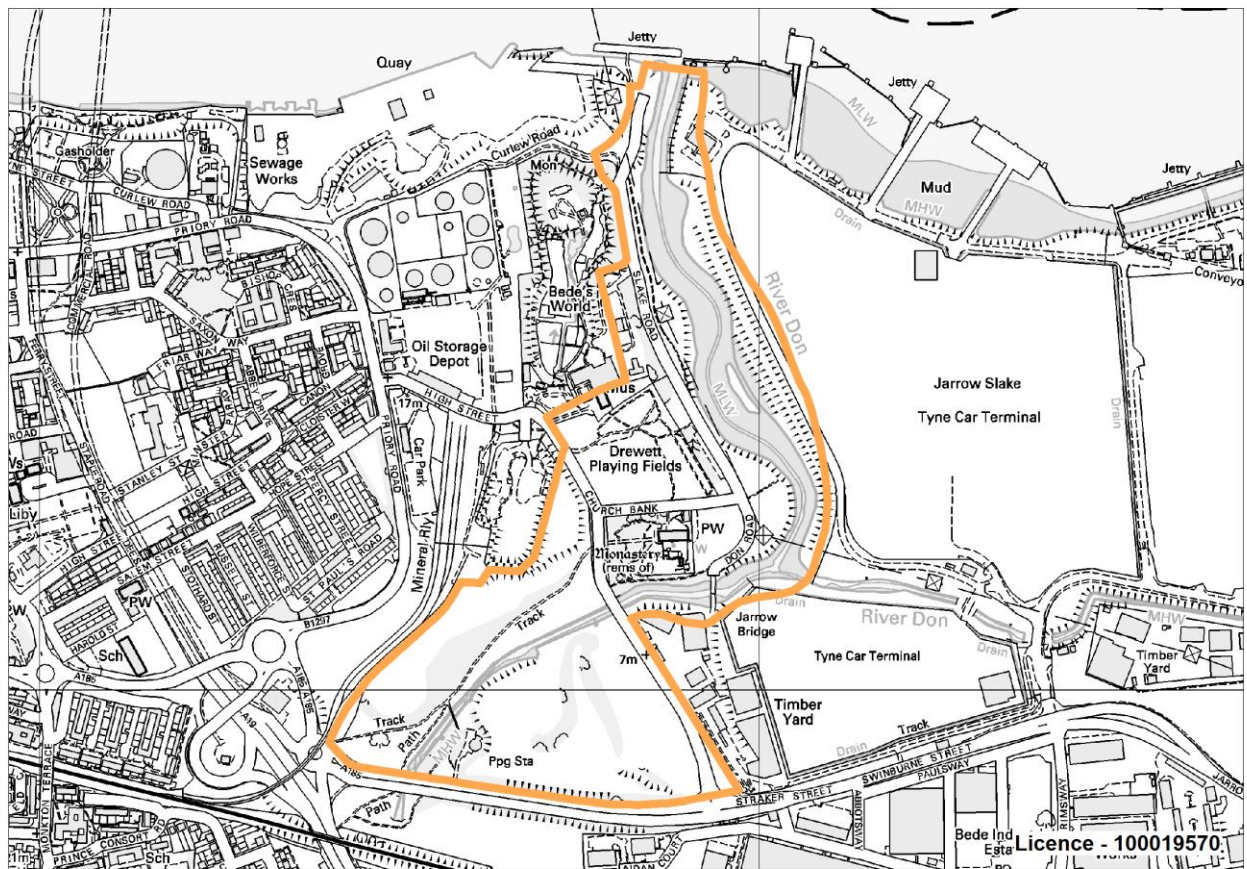
Mariners' Cottages Conservation Area



Mill Dam Conservation Area

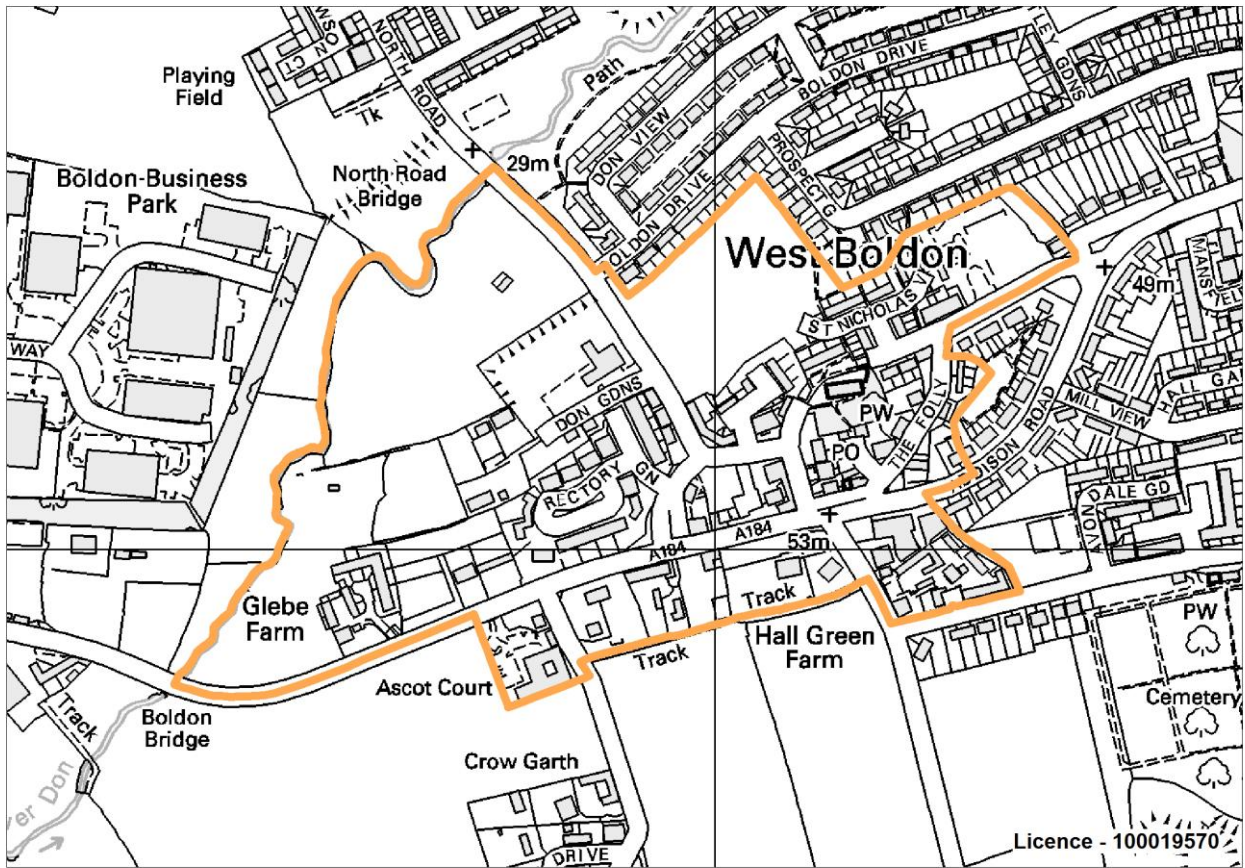


**Monkton Conservation Area**

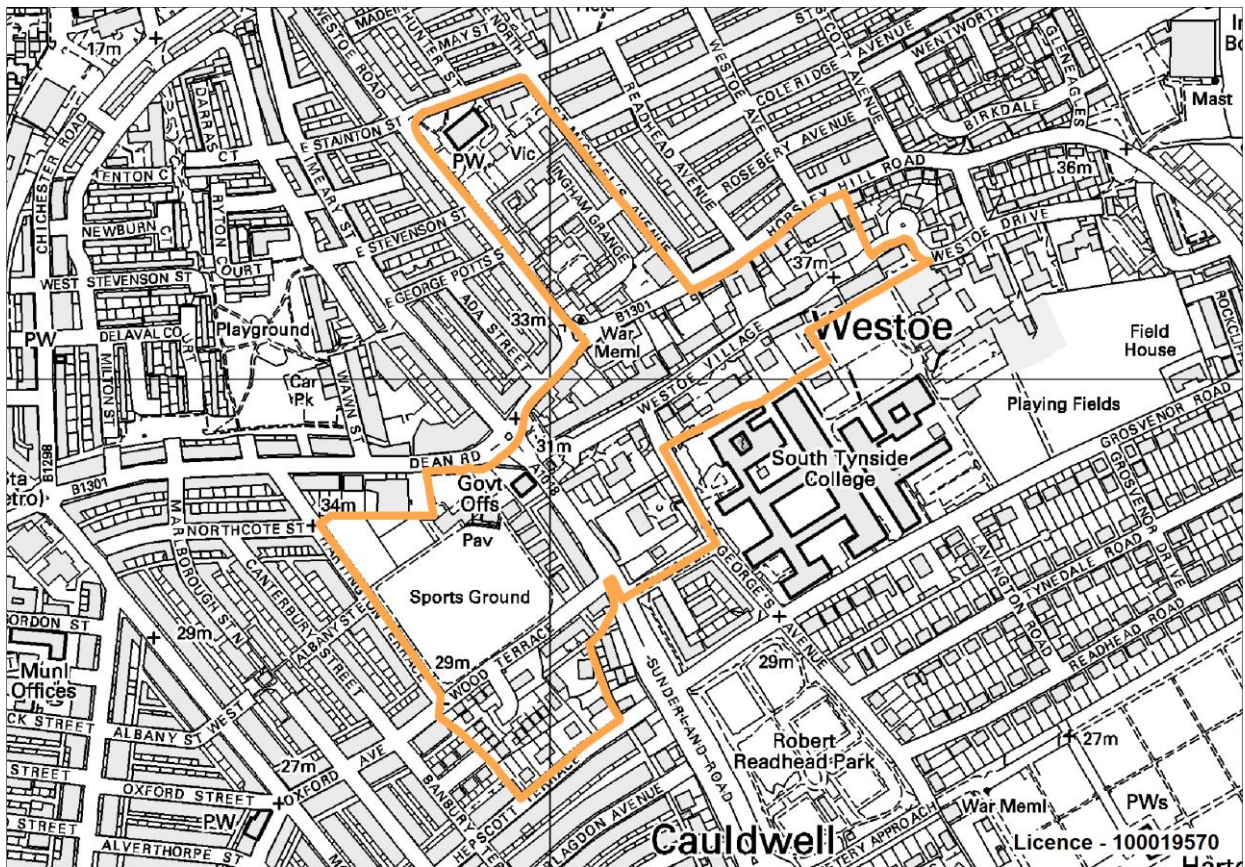


**St Paul's Conservation Area**

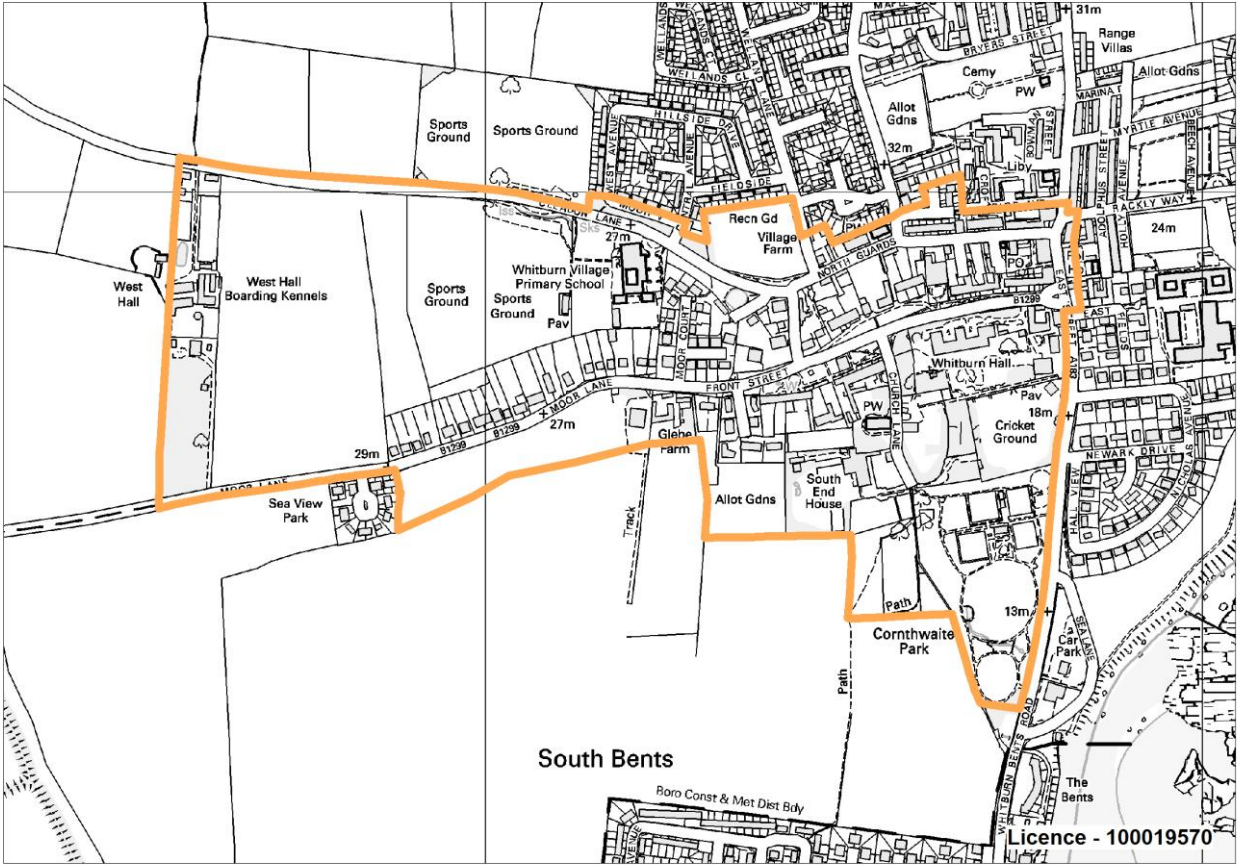




West Boldon Conservation Area



Westoe Village Conservation Area



Whitburn Conservation Area

## Special planning procedures within conservation areas

The council has a duty to only allow developments in a conservation area that 'preserve or enhance its character or appearance'. Planning permission for demolition may be required. You can check what needs consent on the Government's Planning Portal website: [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

The council may in certain circumstances issue an Article 4 Direction, which removes **permitted development rights**. These are the rights that people have to extend or alter their house or bungalow without first obtaining planning permission. If these rights are removed, planning permission would then be needed for specific minor developments such as the replacement of windows or alterations to boundary walls. Like conservation areas, an Article 4 Direction is a registered Local Land Charge and will show up on a search when purchasing a house. To check if your property is covered by an Article 4 Direction, and what classes of development are restricted, please check with the Planning Group.



Grange Terrace in East Boldon is protected by an Article 4 Direction.

Unlike other applications for planning permission, an application that is required purely because there is an Article 4 Direction in place carries no fee.

It is always advisable to discuss any proposals within a conservation area with the council's Planning Group at the earliest opportunity.

In respect of a property which is a listed building, please see our separate leaflet: "Listed Buildings: A guide for owners and occupiers".

The council generally requires more detail than usual with applications relating to buildings within a conservation area. Guidance on what you need to submit in each instance is available on the council's planning website: [www.southtyneside.info/planning](http://www.southtyneside.info/planning) and will depend on the specifics of the application. Before submitting an application, you should check that you have all the relevant information by consulting the Tyne & Wear validation checklist, which is also available on the council's website.

All of South Tyneside's conservation areas have a **Character Appraisal and Management Plan**. These documents are adopted by the council as formal planning guidance and provide detailed, area-specific guidance. The documents can be found on the council's website: [www.southtyneside.info/conservation](http://www.southtyneside.info/conservation)

You should consult these documents before making an application in case it contains information that either supports your proposals or would require you to alter any designs you might have been considering. This is likely to save you time and money in the long run.

## Works to Trees

Many trees in conservation areas are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), which make it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, willfully damage or willfully destroy a tree without our permission.

All other trees in Conservation Areas are also afforded some protection. Therefore, if you want to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a conservation area, you will need consent from us. You have to give the council 6 weeks' notice before carrying out the work (known as a Section 211 Notice). During this period the council will consider whether a Tree Preservation Order should be made on the tree.

In giving notice you should specify precisely what works you wish to carry out.

Contact the tree team by emailing: [TreeTeam@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:TreeTeam@southtyneside.gov.uk) or telephoning (0191) 424 7532.



Mature trees, hedges and other greenery often make a significant contribution to the character of a conservation area.

## Advertisements

Deemed consent rights are more limited in Conservation Areas. Before displaying any form of advertisement you are advised to consult "Outdoor advertisements and signs: A guide for advertisers". This can be viewed through the Planning Portal website at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

## Undoing Damage

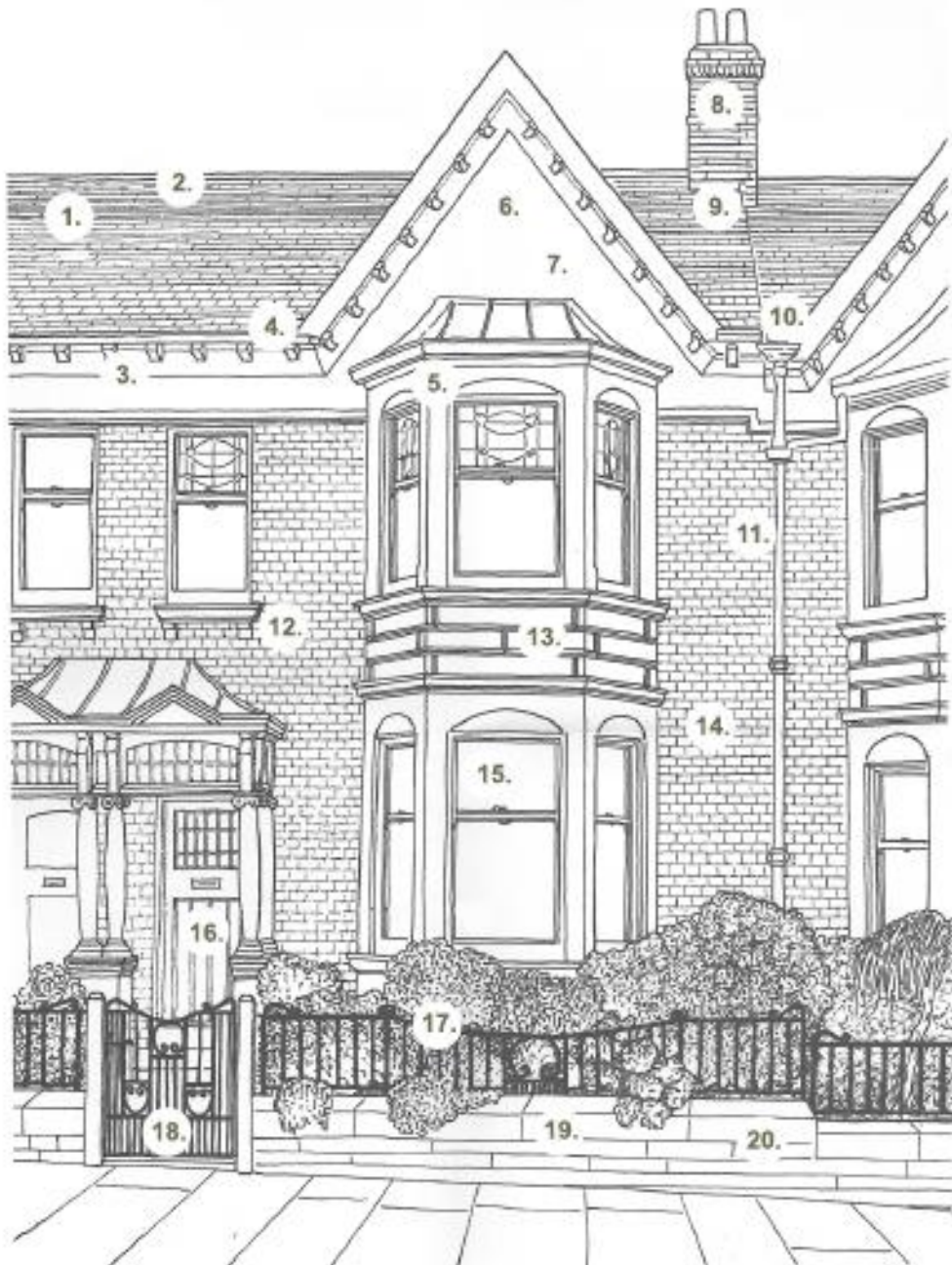
The council will use opportunities created through planning applications or other proposals to negotiate improvements which remove unsympathetic alterations or additions from existing buildings and which secure the proper repair or restoration of buildings, other structures and the landscape.

## Enforcement

The failure to comply with any of the special planning procedures listed above could lead to an enforcement action. It is always advisable to consult the council's Planning Group before proceeding with any works which might affect the character or appearance of a conservation area.

**The following page illustrates a typical traditional terraced building. While this building may not look exactly like your own, it provides a useful guide to some of the features that are typical to historic buildings. The subsequent pages give an explanatory guide to the features shown.**

A typical traditional terraced house



- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Roofs                   | 11. Rainwater pipe                  |
| 2. Ridge                   | 12. Window cill                     |
| 3. Gutters                 | 13. Stone dressings                 |
| 4. Eaves                   | 14. Masonry, brickwork and pointing |
| 5. Bay                     | 15. Sash window                     |
| 6. Fascia                  | 16. Door                            |
| 7. External joinery        | 17. Garden, grounds and trees       |
| 8. Chimney stacks and pots | 18. Gate                            |
| 9. Lead flashing           | 19. Railings                        |
| 10. Hopper head            | 20. Boundary wall                   |

## Roofs

The roof is one of the most important parts of a property as it makes the building wind and watertight and can bring harmony to a townscape. Where possible, the original roof material (such as natural slate), ridge-tiles and hip-tiles should be retained and repaired, or replaced in the same materials and design (where repair is not possible). Imitation slates are a poor substitute in quality and appearance for natural slate and detract from the character of a building.



Traditional terracotta ridge detailing to a roof covered in Welsh slate.

Timber eaves, fascias and bargeboards can also contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the roof and should be retained and maintained.



Timber eaves details add interest to a property.

## Dormer windows and rooflights

The conversion of loft space often requires the installation of dormer windows or rooflights, which can have a negative impact on the appearance of a building or its setting.

In some streets dormer windows may be acceptable, but they must be designed to sit sensitively within the street scene: often this will mean a small, pitched roof dormer of traditional design and materials.



The conservation style rooflights on the left lie flush with the roof, whilst the standard rooflights on the right are more obtrusive.

Rooflights should be in the 'conservation style' to sit flush with the roof slates, taking care that they are limited in size and number, and carefully located so as not to affect the overall layout and proportions of the property. Where possible, rooflights should be aligned with existing windows and should have a vertical emphasis.

Rooflights should preferably be restricted to the rear elevation wherever possible.

## Stone, brickwork and pointing

When repairing a building in a conservation area the original character of stone and brick walls should be maintained by paying particular attention to the size, shape, colour and surface texture of the replacement materials; cement repairs are damaging and are not acceptable.

Cleaning historic brick or stone work for purely aesthetic reasons is damaging, and should be avoided. If brick or stone work has been inappropriately painted or rendered in the past then limited cleaning of the historic brickwork is likely to be acceptable, provided it is undertaken using a gentle, non-abrasive, non-chemical steam-based process. In all cases it is advisable to consult a specialist stone mason.

Re-pointing of masonry is sometimes necessary; on a traditional building this should generally be carried out in a lime, rather than cement, based mortar.



The cement used to repair this stone wall in Westoe Conservation Area is harder than the stone, which is causing the softer stone to erode at an accelerated rate. This is not only unsightly but also very damaging.

## Windows and doors

Windows and doors are extremely important features of a building and any alteration or replacement can significantly alter the character and appearance of a house. Wherever possible the original windows and doors should be retained and repaired to preserve the original character and proportions of the building.

Good joiners can usually do in-situ patch repairs to windows to avoid the complete loss of an otherwise undamaged window. The energy efficiency and soundproofing of traditional windows can be improved dramatically through relatively inexpensive procedures such as inserting draught seals, or easing and re-hanging sashes.



The upper floor windows have been replaced in bulky plastic. Changes like this not only affect the character and appearance of a property, but can also affect its value.

Where historic windows absolutely cannot be repaired any longer, it is important to think carefully about the replacement windows: imitation styles and inappropriate materials such as uPVC are poor alternatives for traditional timber windows as they usually fail to replicate the original proportions and elegance of design. Poor replacements impact negatively on the proportions and overall appearance of a building. Anything except an exact replica will require planning permission as it would be a material alteration to the external appearance of the property.

## Chimney stacks and other architectural features

The shape, height and variety of chimney stacks and other architectural details on buildings in a conservation area contribute greatly to the local character and should be retained and repaired.



The removal or shortening of a chimney stack, or loss of pots, can have a negative impact on the appearance of your property, and on the rest of the street.

## Flues, soil and vent pipes

Homeowners commonly upgrade boilers and central heating systems or install additional bathrooms. This often results in the need to insert new flues, soil and vent pipes into properties.

These should always be located in as unobtrusive a location as possible, preferably to the rear of the property. They should be limited in size and number, and in a colour that does not stand out too much against the host wall.

Care should be taken when designing new systems, or deciding where to locate new boilers, in order to minimise the impact of the works on the external appearance of the property.

## Rainwater goods

Original cast iron rainwater goods, such as gutters, brackets, downcomers and hopper heads contribute to the character and

appearance of buildings in a conservation area.

Plastic rainwater goods have a negative impact on the appearance of a traditional house, particularly where they are finished in a colour other than black. Wherever possible, original rainwater goods should be retained and repaired, or replaced on a like-for-like basis.

In some circumstances, cast aluminium, to the original profile, may be an appropriate alternative.

## Aerials, satellite dishes, CCTV and alarm boxes

Aerials, satellite dishes, CCTV equipment and alarm boxes can have a detrimental impact on the appearance of a building. Where possible they should be situated inside or to the rear of the property or carefully located to minimise the impact on the character of the building.



Care must be taken when installing such features to avoid cable runs on the surface of brickwork, which can spoil the otherwise good appearance of a building.





## Colour and painting

The architectural unity of a property or street may depend on the use of specific colours for the decoration of external rendered walls, joinery or railings. Where they are evident, original colour schemes should be retained.

Walls and stone detailing which have traditionally not been painted should remain undecorated.

## Gardens, grounds and trees

The original pattern of gardens and grounds and the presence of trees can contribute greatly to the character of a conservation area, and should be retained.

It is a common trend to convert front gardens into hardstandings for private car parking, resulting in the loss of attractive and valuable green space, and often also the loss of historic boundary walls, fences or hedges. This can be very damaging to the appearance of both the property and the wider street scene, and will always be discouraged in conservation areas.



The removal of traditional boundary features can disrupt the character and appearance of a street.

## Boundary treatments

Original boundary treatments, such as walls, railings and hedges, play an important part in the character and appearance of a conservation area and should be retained and maintained or reinstated where possible. Where reinstated or replaced, original walls and railings should be replicated in terms of material, proportions and design.



Hedges and traditional timber palisade fencing are characteristic of Cleadon Plantation (above), whilst in Whitburn boundary walls are predominantly made out of magnesian limestone (below).



You would normally be expected to demonstrate that the designs are based on evidence of the original treatment – either in the form of remaining structures on the street, or where possible, original building plans or photos. It may be possible to find these at the Tyne and Wear Archives (see back for contact details).

## Micro generation

Planning permission is usually required for the installation of micro generation equipment (such as solar panels, photovoltaic cells, solar thermal water heaters and domestic wind turbines) in conservation areas.

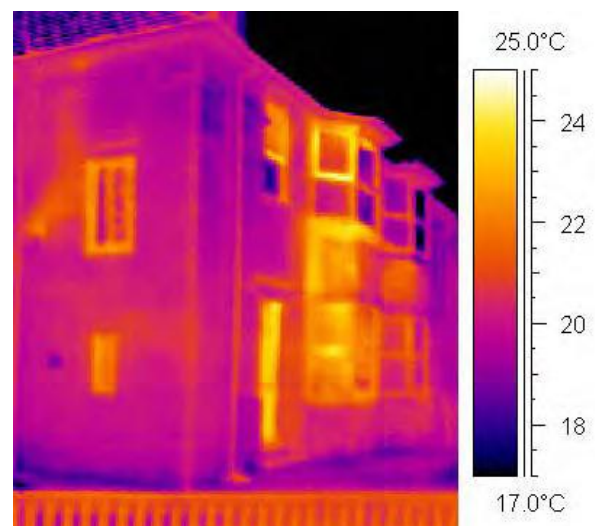
In order to be acceptable, the visual impact of the equipment must be minimised and should not be located on main elevations.

It is worth noting that cutting demand for energy is as important as finding alternative means of generating it. Before deciding whether to install a renewable energy technology in a building, all available energy-saving measures, including low-energy light bulbs, heating controls and improved insulation, should already have been taken. Detailed guidance on this subject, and the wider issue of energy conservation in traditional buildings, is available in *Energy Conservation in Traditional Buildings*, which is free on the English Heritage website [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

## Insulation

Retrospective measures such as cavity wall insulation can have a very harmful impact on the external face of a building and are therefore not recommended for historic buildings.

The drilling associated with cavity wall insulation in particular can be extremely disfiguring to brick and stonework and is difficult to make good to appropriate standards. There are numerous alternative methods of improving insulation in historic buildings including loft insulation, upgrading of historic windows with draught seals, hanging heavy curtains, or internally lining walls, which do not have a detrimental effect on the property.



Above: Thermal imaging reveals the worst areas of heat loss on a traditional 1930s building.

## Contacts for further information

You may also be interested in the other guides in this series:

- Listed Buildings: a guide for owners and occupiers
- Repair and Maintenance of Historic Buildings

These are available from the council's planning team and the council website [www.southtyneside.info/conservation](http://www.southtyneside.info/conservation)

## Other organisations

Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record  
[www.twsitelines.info](http://www.twsitelines.info)

Heritage Gateway  
[www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)

Newcastle Heritage Partnership  
[www.heritagepartnership.org.uk](http://www.heritagepartnership.org.uk)

English Heritage  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk) and  
[www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

Institute for Historic Building Conservation  
[www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

English Historic Towns Forum  
[www.historictownsforum.org](http://www.historictownsforum.org)

Historic Scotland  
[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

Royal Institute for Chartered Surveyors (RICS)  
[www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org)

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)  
[www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)



**To find out more about Planning, please contact:**

The Planning Group  
Development Services  
South Tyneside Council  
Town Hall and Civic Offices, Westoe Road  
South Shields, Tyne & Wear NE33 2RL

Telephone: **(0191) 424 7421**  
E-mail: **[planning.enquiries@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enquiries@southtyneside.gov.uk)**  
Visit: **[www.southtyneside.info/planning](http://www.southtyneside.info/planning)**

If you know someone who would like this information in a different format contact the communications team on (0191) 424 7385