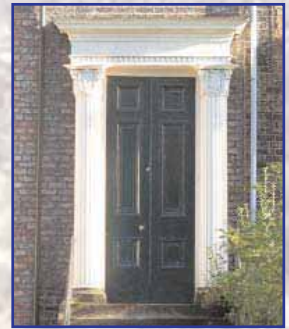


# Supplementary Planning Guidance

# Ashbrooke Conservation Area Character Study



# Supplementary Planning Guidance

## Ashbrooke Conservation Area Character Study

January 2005

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*City of*  
**SUNDERLAND**  

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*Development and  
Regeneration  
Directorate*

# Background

## Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and are defined as "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Local authorities are obliged to determine which parts of their district are of special interest. Conservation Area designation is more dependent on the overall quality and interest of an area, rather than individual buildings, although it is common for such areas to contain a number of Listed Buildings. There are currently 13 conservation areas in the City of Sunderland, including City Centre areas, Victorian suburbs such as Ashbrooke and former villages. Each conservation area has its own unique character and appearance. Designation as a conservation area has a number of implications. Most importantly, the Local Authority is required to give special attention to preserving and enhancing the conservation area in exercising its planning functions. Also, planning consent must be gained for certain types of development which are elsewhere classified as permitted development, such as various types of cladding, dormer windows, satellite dishes and radio masts/antennae. Consent is further required for the demolition of buildings within conservation areas. Designation also brings extra controls over works to trees.

## Appraisal of Character

The protection of an area does not end with conservation area designation. PPG15 "Planning and the Historic Environment" urges Local Authorities to prepare detailed assessments of the special interest, character and appearance of their conservation areas. A character appraisal defines and analyses the special qualities and the architectural and historic interest which warranted the conservation area designation. PPG15 states that "the more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions, as well as for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area". Character appraisals should therefore provide a framework against which development proposals can be assessed for their appropriateness in the historic environment.

## Preservation and Enhancement of Character

Local Authorities are under a duty from time to time to "formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas" (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (LBCA)) Act 1990, s. 71). English Heritage guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals encourages Local Authorities to prepare subsequent Conservation Area Studies where there are considerable conservation needs. These studies should contain proposals for preserving and enhancing the character of the conservation area and form supplementary planning guidance to the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) or Local Development Framework (LDF). The study may include guidance on works to buildings for owners and occupiers, consideration of additional development control powers through Article 4 Directions, and design criteria for new development.

## Purpose of Ashbrooke Conservation Area Character Study

This Character Study has been prepared in response to the guidance outlined above and, as such, discharges the Council's obligations and duties under the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990, as well as complying with English Heritage's recommendations. The study forms Supplementary Planning Guidance to the adopted City of Sunderland UDP and is a material consideration when considering applications for development in the conservation area.

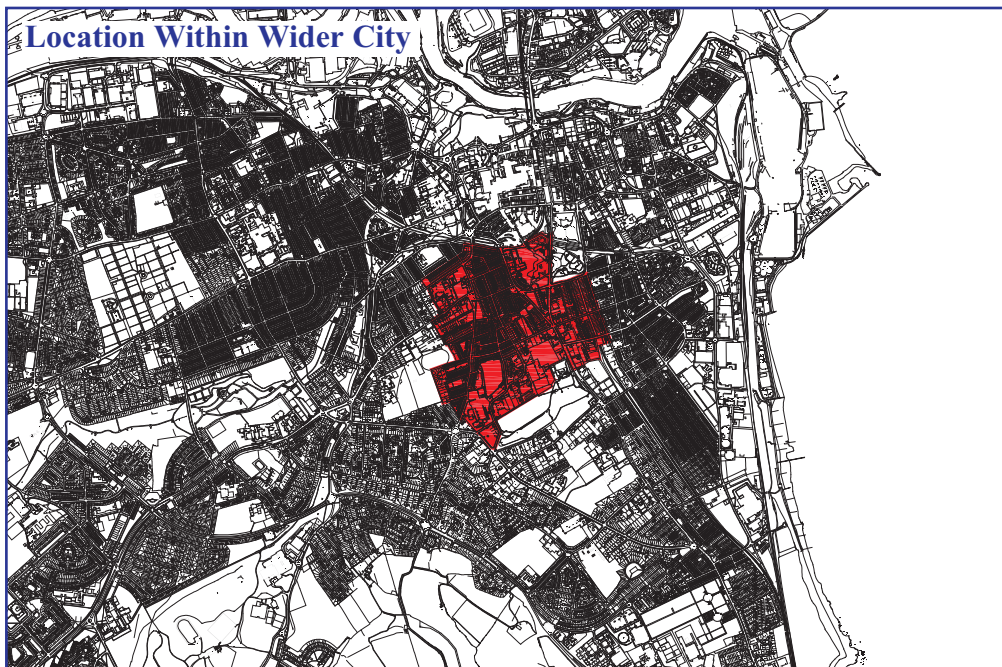
# Contents

Background/contents	<i>i</i>
Introduction	1
<b>Part 1 : Character Appraisal</b>	
Historical Development	3
Fundamental Character	5
Landmark Buildings	8
Terraced Housing	10
Private Parks	12
Villas	14
Typical Features of Ashbrooke Housing	16
Boundary Enclosures : Walls, railings and gates	18
Landscape	19
<b>Part 2 : Preservation and Enhancement of Character</b>	
Current Issues and Potential Solutions	21
Maintain Character : Approach to Repairs and Alterations	23
Maintain Character through extra controls : Article 4 Directions	25
Enhancement Opportunities : New Development	27
Enhancement Proposals : Design of New Development	29
Appendix	31
References	32



# An Introduction

Ashbrooke was declared a Conservation Area in 1969 in recognition of its architectural and historic interest. It is a spacious, leafy suburb that contains many examples of Victorian terraced housing punctuated by fine church architecture and adjoining historic parks. This Character Study combines an appraisal of the conservation area's character and appearance with guidelines, policies and proposals to preserve and enhance its special qualities. The first part of the study identifies and assesses those characteristics and features that give the area its special architectural and historic interest. Part two of the document builds upon existing built heritage policies in the City's Unitary Development Plan (UDP). It considers current issues which threaten Ashbrooke's integrity as a fine Victorian suburb and possible solutions to such threats, including advice and guidance to residents on maintaining the area's character and proposals for additional protection for terraces of particular merit. It also identifies opportunities for enhancement through new development and sets out design criteria to be followed.



Ashbrooke Conservation Area encompasses one of the most pleasant environments in the City. It is situated just south of the City Centre and covers an area of some 74.86 hectares (185 acres), making it by far the largest conservation area in the City. It is irregular in shape; the existing boundaries are best defined to the south by Backhouse Park and to the east by Mowbray Road and Toward Road. The remaining boundaries are less clearly defined but the area contains most of Ashbrooke's Victorian terraced housing.



## UDP Conservation Policies

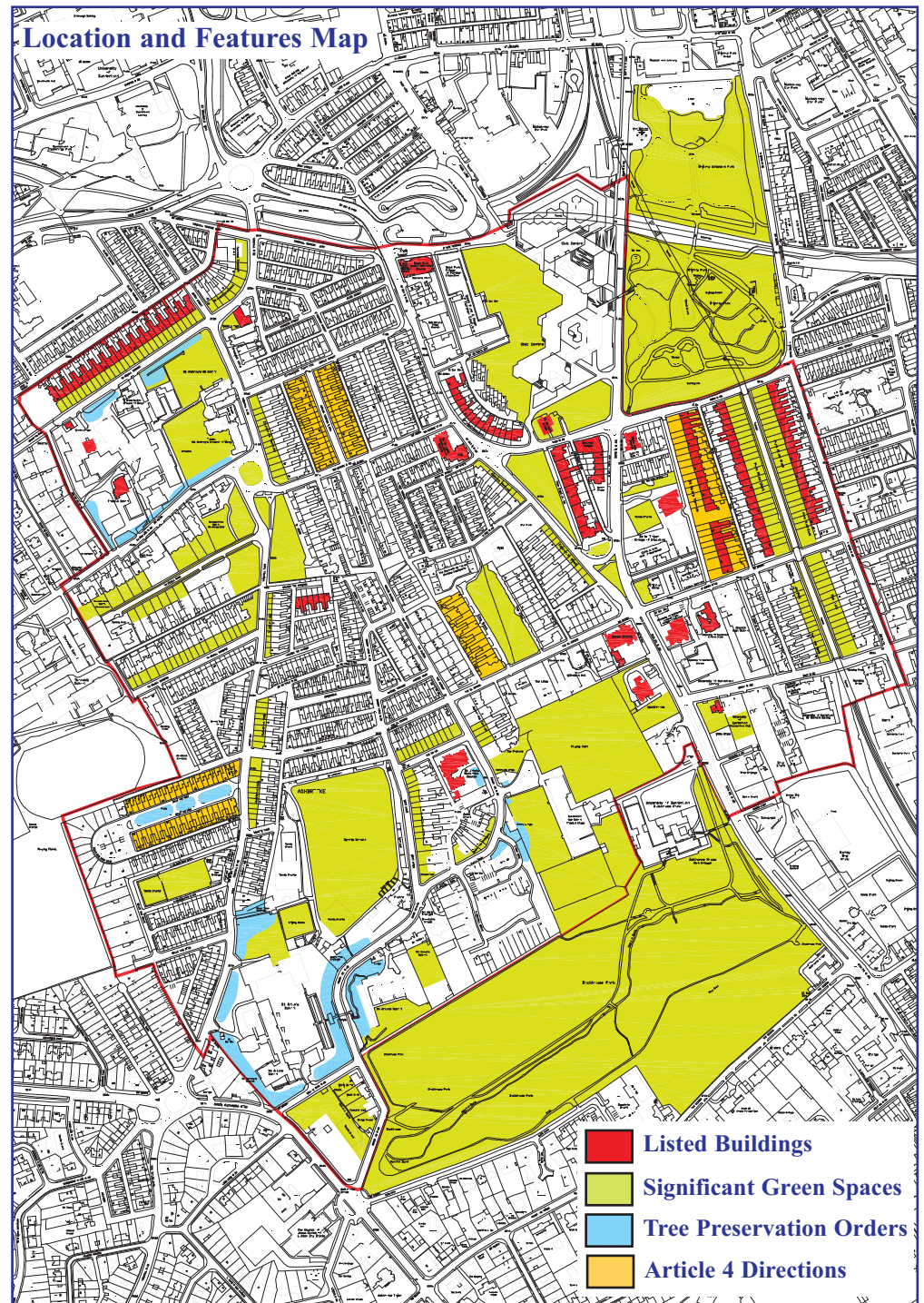
Policy **B4** of the City of Sunderland UDP states that: "All development within and adjacent to Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance". Under this policy the Council is obliged to prepare supplementary guidance in the form of character assessments for each of its conservation areas. These will identify features and characteristics that contribute to the areas' special interest, identify opportunities for enhancement and, where appropriate, establish design criteria for new development and restoration projects. The Ashbrooke Character Study is the first in a series of such assessments that will cover all the City's conservation areas.

Churches and certain villas and terraces within Ashbrooke are Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and are thus protected by tight planning controls. Policy **B8** presumes in favour of the retention of Listed Buildings whilst policy **B9** aims to prevent these buildings from undergoing extensions and alterations that would adversely affect their architectural or historic character. Policy **B10** seeks to preserve the setting of Listed Buildings.

In order to protect unlisted buildings from inappropriate alterations, the Council can seek under policy **B6** to make Article 4 Directions where considered appropriate, requiring planning permission to be gained for development which is normally 'permitted' in the case of dwellinghouses. The policy also encourages the retention of open spaces, historic street patterns and plot boundaries and for the Council to exercise control over landscape features such as mature trees. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are a good example of this; they ensure that the consent of the Council must be obtained before trees can be cut down, topped or lopped.

However, within Ashbrooke the gradual loss of features, both architectural and natural, gives cause for concern and raises the issue as to whether further measures should be introduced that would provide better protection for the Conservation Area. To this end, a number of supplementary policies have been formulated to provide clearer policy guidance on certain issues specific to Ashbrooke. These policies are set out in Part 2 of the study.

All UDP policies relating to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are reproduced in full in the appendix to this study.



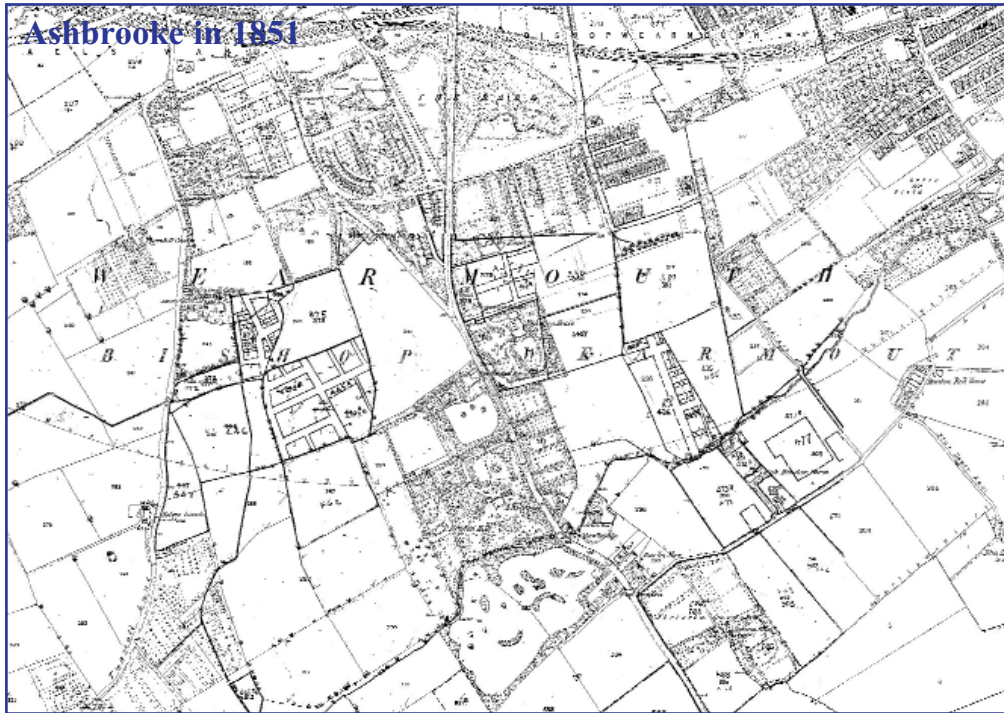


# Part 1

# Character Appraisal



# Historical Development

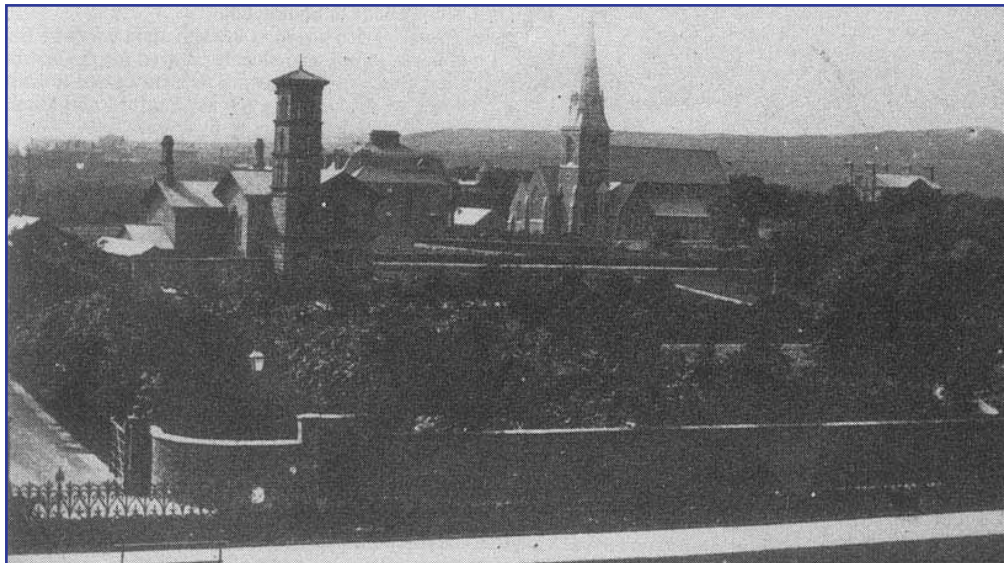


In the early decades of the 19th century the Ashbrooke area was predominantly agricultural. However, in 1831 a cutting was made through Building Hill (now part of Mowbray Park) that inspired the initial development of this area south of the town centre. The construction of Burdon Road through Building Hill extended the Fawcett Street axis to link with the Stockton Turnpike. The Ashbrooke area thus became land with immense potential and appeal by virtue of its ease of access to the commercial heart of the town being within a short coach ride. The construction of fine upper and middle class terrace housing during the mid to late 19th century bears testimony to this. The earliest terraced housing was built closest to the town centre and building gradually extended south.

By 1856 Grange Crescent, The Esplanade, Park Place East and West, Douro Terrace and the terraces at St George's Square (now demolished) had been erected. A number of large country houses had also been developed in their own grounds. Bede Tower and West Hendon House are examples of this. These villas were occupied by the town's civic leaders and captains of industry, such as the Backhouse Family.

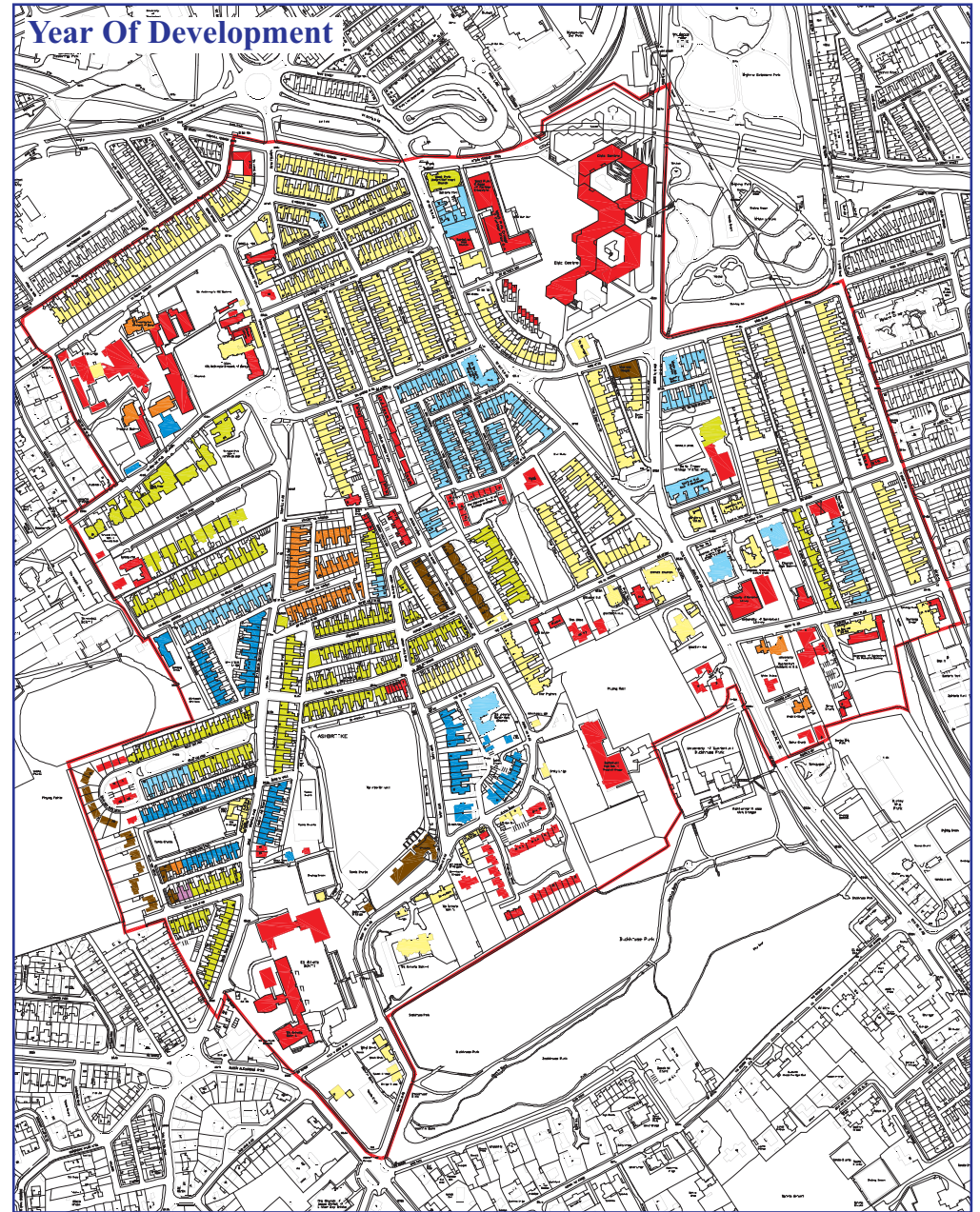
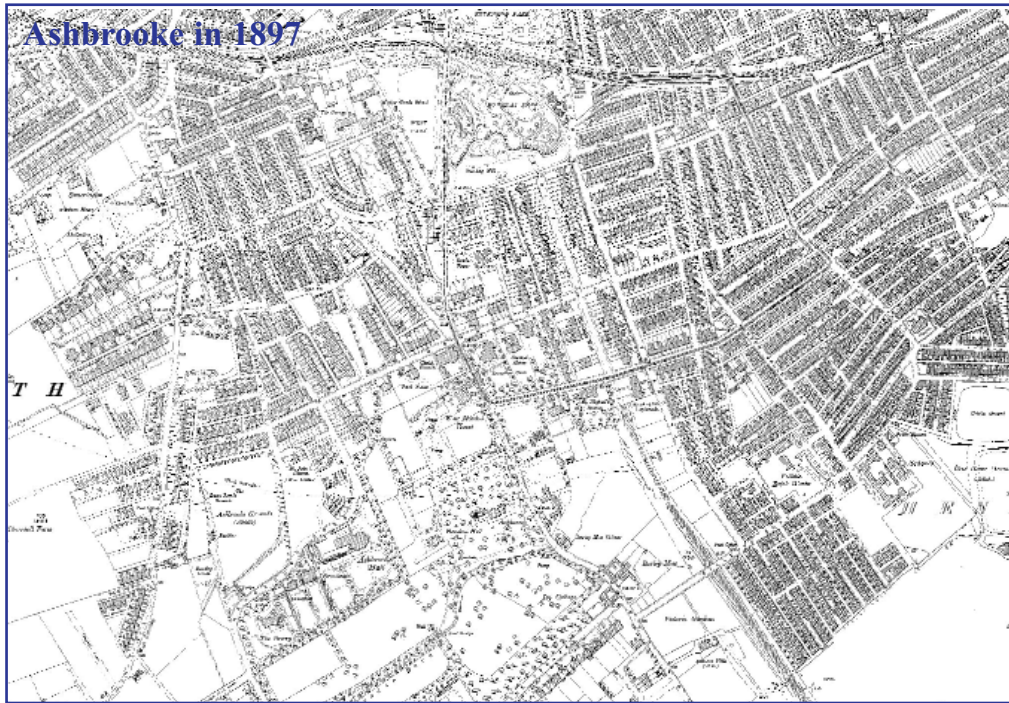
In the second half of the 19th century, much of the housing that was built was constructed along either Mowbray Road and The Cloisters axis or round Tunstall Road and Tunstall Vale. Residential areas to be developed in this period included Thornhill Terrace, The Elms and Belle Vue Crescent, with areas such as West Lawn and Holmelands Park being developed just before the turn of the century. This period also saw the erection of some of the most notable buildings in the area, including St. Johns Methodist Church, Christ Church and Langham Tower.

After the turn of the century the pace of development slowed considerably, with little new development taking place in Ashbrooke in the inter-war period or, indeed, through the post-war period. Some limited new development has occurred in the latter part of the 20th century, much of it being focused on the introduction and expansion of civic and educational facilities on three peripheral sites - The Civic Centre, St. Aidans School and Sunderland High School. In addition to this, some new residential development and rehabilitation has occurred and a number of the large houses have been subdivided into flats or bedsitting rooms. However, the quality of accommodation is often very poor and has led to an evident decline in the fabric and character of particular groups of houses.

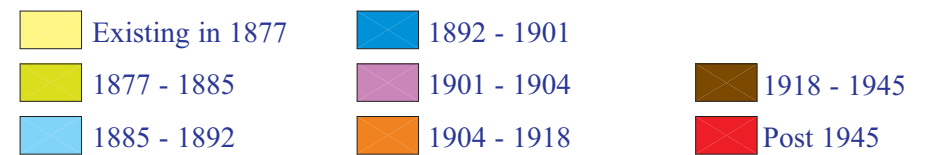


A view of Bede Tower and Christ Church taken from Buildings Hill around 1870.  
Source: Tyne & Wear Museums Service.





View of St. George's Church and Grange Terrace looking south down Stockton Road 1976.





# Fundamental Character

The fundamental character of Ashbrooke Conservation Area is derived from its extensive concentration of attractive Victorian terraced housing interspersed by a variety of fine villas and churches amidst an abundance of mature trees, historical parks and other green spaces. This pattern of buildings, features and spaces is characteristic of the conservation area and is the essence of Ashbrooke's distinctive, diverse and inherent quality as a spacious, leafy Victorian suburb.



The built and natural environments of Ashbrooke have a cohesive strength, giving the area a distinctive and varied character.

## Layout

The layout of the conservation area was largely complete by the turn of the 20th century and remains almost entirely intact. Some new access roads have been formed to serve new developments but by and large the historic street pattern has been left virtually untouched with the exception of some road widening and the provision of roundabouts to accommodate the advent of the motor vehicle. The predominance of terraced housing provides common building lines and boundary walls to create a strong linear townscape edge and distinctive street pattern of long narrow plots generally with a garden to the front and yard to the rear. In contrast, many villas were historically set within large landscaped gardens. Unfortunately, some of these garden spaces have been substantially developed or lost to car parking, although several remain and are a particularly significant feature of Ashbrooke. One unusual aspect of Ashbrooke's layout is that several villas turn their back on the road network, effectively making the rear of these properties the public face of the buildings and hiding away their more attractive frontages.

## Built Form

The predominance of terraced housing in Ashbrooke gives the area a relatively consistent built form and a fairly even roofscape, albeit punctuated intermittently by several churches and certain villas, giving the area considerable townscape value. The scale and massing of the terraces is typical of domestic buildings of the period, mostly 2 or 3 storeys with tall narrow frontages, although deceptively large due to their considerable depth. The villas are unsurprisingly much bigger and of more varied form but generally of comparable height to the terraces. Some of the newer developments have not, in terms of scale and massing, responded well to their historic context and as a result detract from the area's townscape often in the form of a rather unsatisfying pastiche.

## Architectural Style

Ashbrooke exhibits a range of architectural styles and influences. The majority of the terraces and certain villas are classically influenced, making this the predominant style of architecture in the conservation area. There is, however, a strong hint of the Arts and Crafts in the design of several villas, most notably Langham Tower which was clearly influenced by Norman Shaw's Cragside - this building being one of the most outstanding examples of the Arts and Crafts Style. The interior of Langham Tower has been described as comparable to that of Cragside's in terms of the quality of its rich decoration. Other villas display quite different influences, such as the Tudor Style Carlton House with its Gothic features and the Italianate St. Bede's Tower.

Elsewhere, Ashbrooke's range of fine churches add considerably to the variety of architectural styles in the area, all primarily Gothic revival but ranging from the free 13th century style of St George's Church to St John's Methodist Church which is very Anglican in style and layout with geometric tracery.

More recently, a number of developments in the 1960's and 1970's are typically modernistic, functional in form and generally devoid of the craftsmanship and ornamentation that gives the conservation area much of its special character.

## Building Materials

One of the most distinguishing aspects of Ashbrooke's special character is the range and quality of materials in the area. Red brick and Welsh slate are the principle building materials, complemented by the use of heavy timber for many of the buildings' architectural features. Various shades of brick are evident in the conservation area. The rough reddish- brown brick used in the construction of



A variety of architecture, building forms and materials provides interesting contrast in the street scene, significantly enhancing its townscape value.

Thornhill Terrace, Grange Terrace, St Bedes Terrace and many other terraces and villas is by far the most common brick type. Elsewhere, brighter more glazed bricks have been used, for example at Holmelands Park, Valebrooke and West Lawn, where they are complemented by some fine terracotta detailing instead of the timber features of earlier developments. Valebrooke Gardens are built from a very unusual white glazed brick, not found anywhere else in the conservation area, giving the terrace a particularly distinctive appearance. The almost universal use of Welsh slate as the roofing material in Ashbrooke along with brick chimneys gives the area a very distinctive roofscape, which is often enhanced by carved timber guttering and brackets that add emphasis to the eaves.

Sandstone is the predominant building material for the area's churches as well as certain villas and provides interesting variation in the street scene and skyline. Rock-faced sandstone is the characteristic material for the churches, ranging from the red sandstone of St George's Church to the light rusticated stone at Christ Church and St John's Methodist Church. Smoother, even faced Ashlar sandstone was used in the construction of St. Bede's Tower and Carlton House and also as a dressing for many other buildings.

Boundary enclosures were originally rubble limestone or brick walls or cast iron railings set in stone plinths. Many of the walls have survived but most of the railings, which were originally in a variety of styles some being quite innovative, were removed as part of the War effort. Unfortunately, replacement boundary treatments are often a mis-match of low walls, fencing and hedges and rarely continuous throughout a terrace.

### Landscape

Ashbrooke's fine landscape, in all its varied forms, makes a significant contribution to the area's special character. The land is gently undulating and the abundance of mature trees, historical parks, gardens and tree-lined grass verges that give the landscape its special quality are not always evident from street level. The level of greenery, in particular the heavy canopy of trees, is more readily appreciated from distant high points.



Panoramic views into Ashbrooke from surrounding high points reveal a heavy tree canopy punctuated by church spires.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Ashbrooke is the private, landscaped parks and gardens associated with several terraces and villas. These spaces are a particular feature of the area and set the properties they serve apart from the normal pattern of terraced housing, significantly enhancing the setting of the buildings and making them particularly desirable places to live. The many fine mature trees in the parks and gardens and throughout Ashbrooke along verges and pavements creates superb contrast in the street scene and softens the built environment, providing the perfect backdrop for many of the area's historic buildings.

Ashbrooke Sports Ground is the most extensive green space in the area in terms of size. Its formal, open aspect is quite different from the enclosure provided by the trees and parks found elsewhere.



## Usage

Whilst predominantly a residential area, Ashbrooke does support a variety of other uses. Most notably, educational uses in the form of Sunderland University, Sunderland High School and Saint Aidan's School along with a scattering of other educational institutions. The University is in the process of re-locating to the riverside and, as a consequence, many of the area's finest buildings will soon be seeking new users. The northern part of the conservation area, closest to the City Centre, contains a greater range of uses than elsewhere. These include several retail outlets on Stockton Road and a number of small professional firms, other office uses and bistros close to the Civic Centre, primarily in The Esplanade, Grange Crescent and Grange Terrace.



Several buildings along Stockton Road contain retail outlets at street level and have retained many original shopfront features, such as the carved timber pilasters and cornices.

## Fundamental Characteristics of Ashbrooke Conservation Area

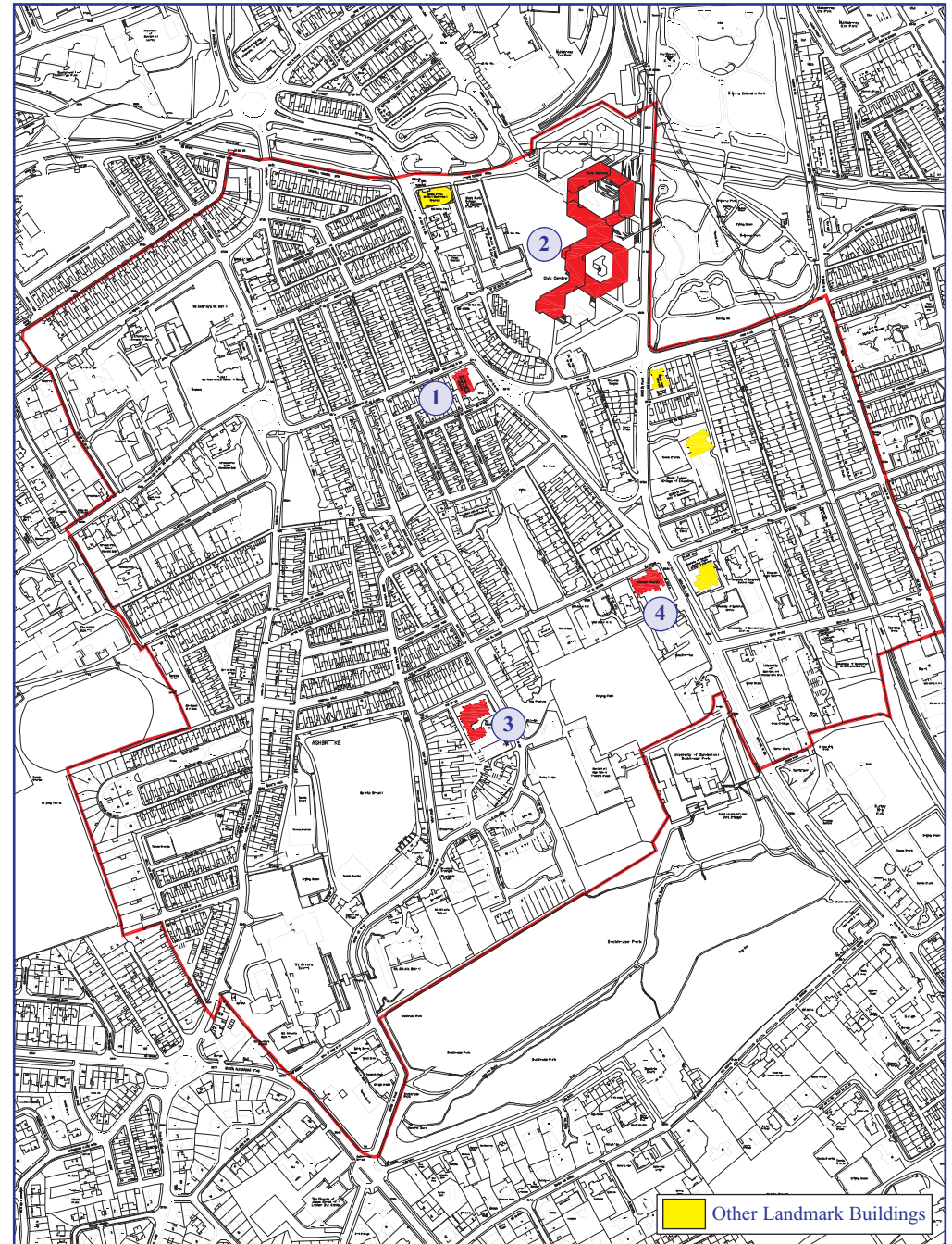
- ◆ Extensive concentration of fine Victorian terraced housing
- ◆ Attractive variety of late 19th and early 20th century villas and churches
- ◆ Abundance of mature trees, historical parks and other green spaces
- ◆ Surviving historic street pattern of irregular linear form
- ◆ Distinctive townscape created by consistency of built form
- ◆ Impressive range of architectural styles and influences
- ◆ Complementary mix of high quality natural materials
- ◆ Abundance of heavy timber features and use of Welsh slate
- ◆ High level of craftsmanship and ornamentation in relation to architectural features
- ◆ All the above combine to give high degree of local distinctiveness

# Landmark Buildings

Ashbrooke contains a variety of fine churches which act as readily identifiable landmarks within the conservation area. These churches soar above surrounding buildings and punctuate the skyline from distant views, giving Ashbrooke a strong sense of location within the City of Sunderland. Certain villas, namely Langham Tower and St Bedes Tower, have particularly distinctive townscape qualities and can also be described as landmark buildings. Many of the most notable buildings were built as exemplars of the fashion of the day. It is perhaps a matter of some regret that more recent developments have failed to capture the confidence and exuberance of the Victorian architects to create landmark buildings of contemporary design. Most notable of contemporary schemes is the Civic Centre, by far the most substantial building in Ashbrooke. It dominates the most northern part of the conservation area, sitting prominently upon Building Hill overlooking the City Centre.

## Key Characteristics of Ashbrooke's Landmark Buildings

- ◆ Several fine examples of church architecture in a variety of styles and materials with high townscape value.
- ◆ Tall, soaring church spires and towers dominate the skyline and define the conservation area when viewed from distant points.
- ◆ Distinctive townscape qualities of Langham and St. Bedes' Towers make these villas immediately identifiable landmarks.
- ◆ Well-designed, distinctive contemporary civic building adds considerably to the range of building types and styles in the area.



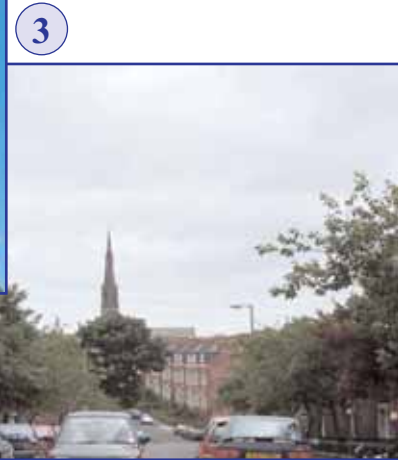
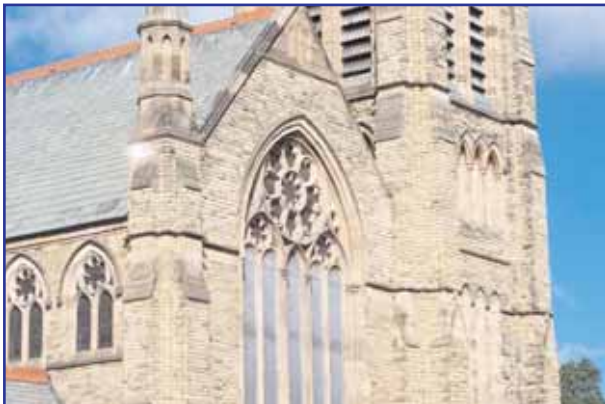




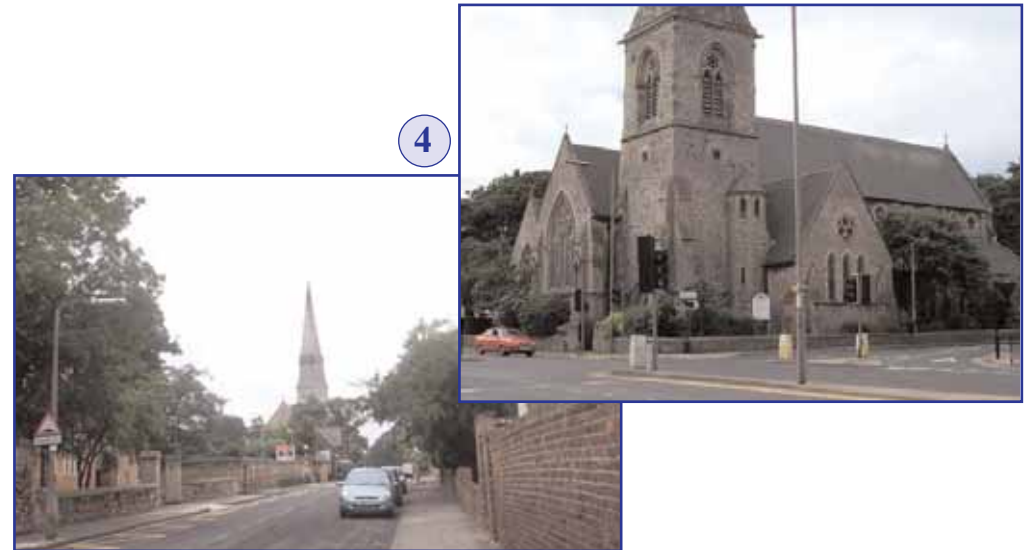
1 Built in a 13th century style, the impressive Presbyterian church and hall of St. George's stands dominant on Belvedere Road. Both the church and adjoining hall are constructed from red sandstone with Lakeland slate roof. The church's distinctive high open tower makes it a readily identifiable landmark.



2 The Civic Centre was erected upon Building Hill in 1970, the design based on 3 lineally contingent hexagons. The aim of this design was to project a progressive image of local authorities to the public. The building was awarded a Royal Institute of British Architects Gold Medal and a Civic Trust Award for the way in which the design sensitively relates to the site.



3 St. John's Methodist Church is one of the outstanding buildings in Ashbrooke. Constructed in 1888 from evenly coursed rusticated stone, it is in geometrical gothic style and features a spectacular four stage tower and tall stone spire with angle spirelets. The roof is of westmorland slate, the courses diminishing in size as they rise. Its graceful spire provides a clear focal point in the area.



4 Christ Church is a much-loved landmark of the city with great appeal and townscape qualities. Constructed in 1862-1864 from snecked rusticated stone with ashlar dressing, this large dignified church echoes the style of the 12th century. The north-east tower has a stone broaded spire and octagonal staircase turret. The verger's cottage adjoining is a later addition of 1877 and has a rather fanciful round tower.



# Terraced Housing

Terraced housing is the dominant form of housing within Ashbrooke. However, these terraces vary in scale from the attractive artisan houses of Tunstall Terrace to the grand residences of The Esplanade or Thornhill Terrace. Many of the more formal terraces in Ashbrooke are classically influenced and are typical of the Victorian period. Many terraced houses also incorporate a number of timber features as a consequence of the abundance of high quality timber in town due to the local shipbuilding industry. This industry also resulted in the use of significant amounts of Welsh slate throughout Ashbrooke.

## Key Characteristics of Ashbrooke Terraces

- ◆ Extensive concentration of fine Victorian terraced housing
- ◆ Common building lines create strong townscape edges of linear form
- ◆ Uniformity and rhythm within individual terraces
- ◆ High degree of local distinctiveness
- ◆ Variation in scale and architectural detailing between individual terraces
- ◆ Abundance of heavy timber features and use of Welsh slate
- ◆ High quality craftsmanship evident in relation to architectural features throughout the terraces





### 1 Azalea Terrace



At Azalea Terrace North the Council has, in partnership with English Heritage and property owners, comprehensively restored these distinctive terraces which have unique timber features. Grant assistance is increasingly difficult to secure and owners need encouragement to follow maintenance regimes for the properties and so remove the need for future repair projects.

### 3 The Esplanade



The Esplanade is an elegant red brick terrace that features some heavily detailed entrances. However, The Esplanade has been adapted from its original use as town houses and now accommodates several commercial concerns. A uniform colour scheme and floodlighting enhances the formal architecture of the terrace.

### 2 Grange Crescent



Built in 1850-1855, Grange Crescent is a particularly impressive mid-19th Century convex terrace. Insensitive roof extensions in the past detract from the roofscape. Successful enforcement against the use of PVC windows has helped to preserve the façade. Secondary glazing has resolved the problem of traffic noise without requiring the loss of historic windows.

### 4 West Lawn



West Lawn is an impressive late 19th Century red brick terrace. It features some fine terracotta detailing and enjoys an open aspect over Ashbrooke Sports Ground opposite. Although not typical of the genre of terraced housing within Ashbrooke its presence adds to the character of the area.

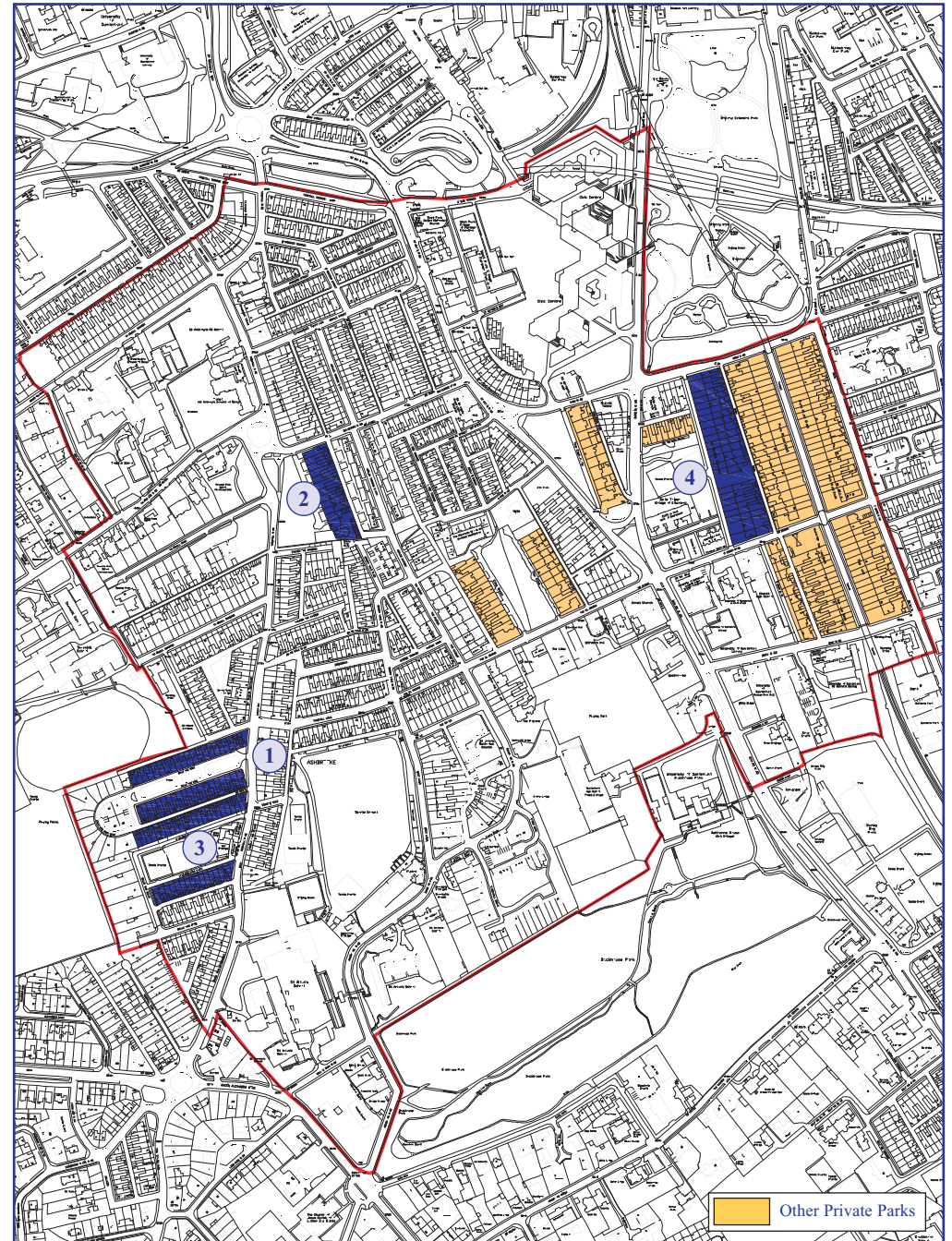


# Private Parks

Many residential areas of Ashbrooke have private, landscaped parks. These private parks feature private gated roads or grounds, often containing an abundance of mature trees, and are a reflection of the aspirations of the 19th-century middle classes for whom they were originally constructed, separating the houses from the public. The parks act as invaluable communal spaces for the residents of the terraces they serve and provide extremely attractive settings to the buildings. In some places, evidence of carriage turning circles remain. In other areas of Ashbrooke, coach houses and hay lofts have survived and are important evidence of the Victorian way of life and domestic arrangements.

## Key Characteristics of Ashbrooke Private Parks

- ◆ High quality Victorian terraced housing facing onto communal space in a parkland setting.
- ◆ Well-tended landscaped spaces, many distinguished by an abundance of mature trees.
- ◆ Pleasant, spacious environments that enhance the setting of the buildings.
- ◆ Private roads with gated entrances allowing residents semi-private communal gardens to the front of properties.
- ◆ Co-ordinated community involvement in maintaining and improving the parks through the forming of residents groups





## 1 Belle Vue Park



Belle Vue Park consists of two rows of splendid brick terraces behind a gated entrance, separated by a canopy of mature trees. Each has an upper and ground floor bay window, and many of the porticos retain their slender fluted columns, with cast iron balconies above. An Article 4 Direction is in place to give added protection to these distinctive features. However, features are lost from time to time through unauthorised works. The awareness and appreciation of such features by householders needs to be increased; and effective maintenance regimes encouraged.

## 3 Holmelands Park



Well-tended communal space at Holmelands Park greatly enhances the setting of the houses and is a valuable asset to the residents. The forming of residents' groups and the undertaking of co-ordinated programmes of maintenance and enhancement can result in schemes of considerable value.

## 2 Woodside



Woodside is an attractive private, landscaped park and the limestone walls at the front of the site enhance its appearance. These walls enhance the area considerably and must be retained where possible. However, another characteristic is the planting of forestry stock trees whose growth can topple such walls and invade foundations.

## 4 Saint Bede's Terrace



St. Bede's Terrace dates from 1849 and all properties are Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. However, some of these houses have fallen into a serious state of disrepair due to neglect particularly from absentee landlords and may be the subject of future action by the Council.

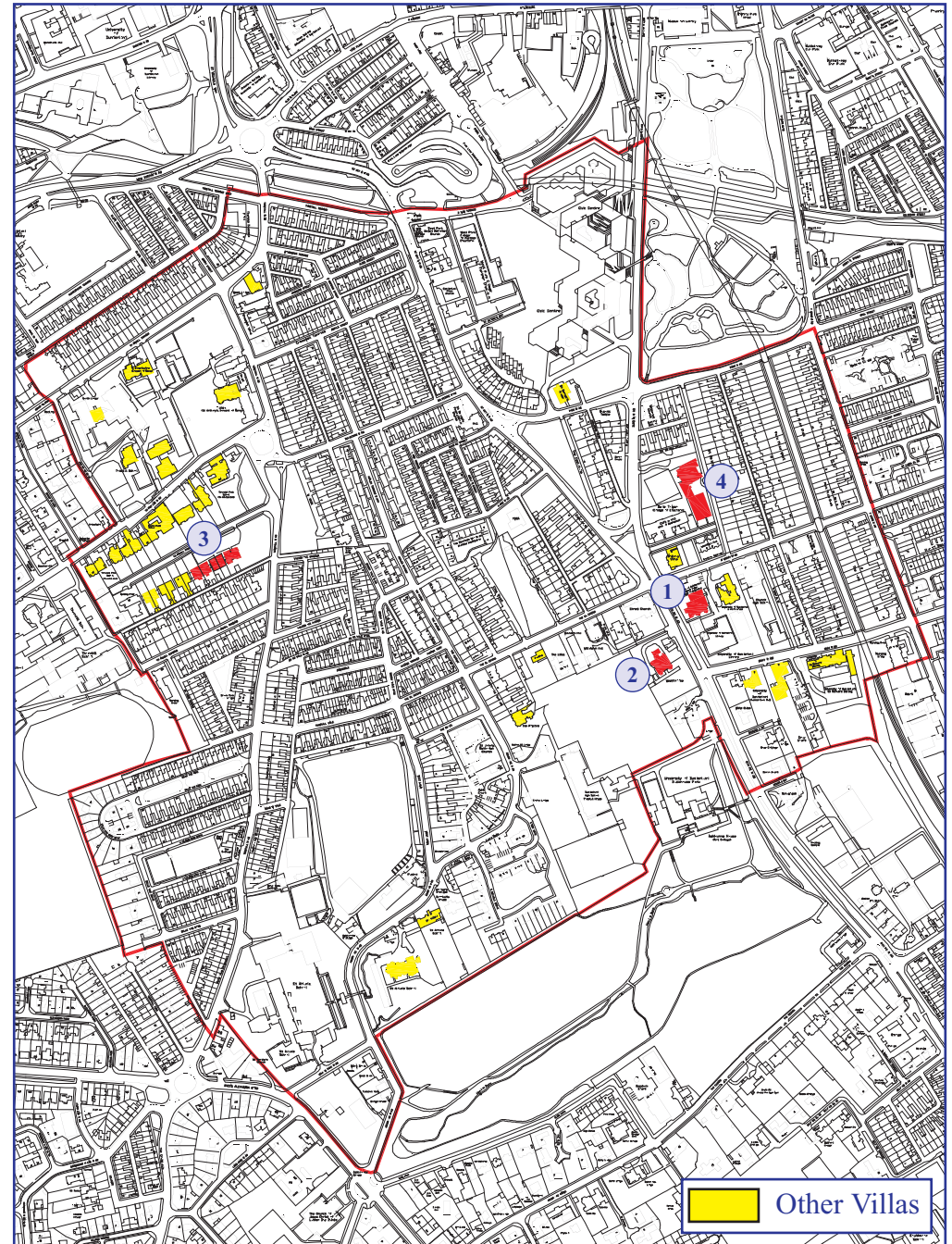


# Villas

The large villas that intersperse and complement the formality of the terraces exhibit a particularly diverse range of architectural influences, ranging from the Arts and Crafts at Langham Tower, the Gothic style of Carlton House to the Italianate St. Bede's Tower and the more formal Neo-Greek classically influenced West Lodge. Their architectural quality is demonstrated by the fact that several are Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. A number of villas turn their back to the road and are set within attractive landscaped grounds, a particular feature of the conservation area. Many villas are currently occupied by Sunderland University but face uncertain futures due to the University's imminent move to the St. Peter's Campus. Close monitoring of the condition of these buildings and the encouragement of imaginative conversion schemes needs to be promoted to secure their future.

## Key Characteristics of Ashbrooke Villas

- ◆ Large villas, many set within attractive landscaped gardens
- ◆ Several villas orientated facing away from the road
- ◆ Variety of architectural styles, influences, detailing and materials
- ◆ Architectural quality reflected in high proportion of listed buildings
- ◆ Villas currently occupied by Sunderland University will require new users in the near future.





## 1 Langham Tower



Langham Tower was built in 1889 and includes a large brick tower with a half-timbered attic storey above the battlements and a Gothic-arched entrance in the base. The interior of the building is quite spectacular. The grand rooms are embellished with outstanding decoration and are particularly impressive. The property, currently part of Sunderland University, faced an uncertain future until Sunderland High School recently agreed to acquire it. Care must be taken to ensure that new users do not compromise the building's architectural and historic integrity, both externally and internally.

## 3 1-4 Thornhill Park



Thornhill Park is a particularly impressive street containing imposing semi-detached villas on a much grander scale than surrounding terraced properties. No's 1-4 Thornhill Park, currently owned by Sunderland University, are already showing signs of disrepair as the University scale down their use of the building before vacating it completely. Some of the windows are boarded up, portraying an image of dilapidation and neglect that has implications for other properties in the vicinity.

## 2 West Hendon House



West Hendon House is largely hidden away behind large boundary walls, concealing many of the building's interesting features. Among these is an Observatory that can be seen projecting above the roof. The house was originally built for Thomas Backhouse, a local financier and amateur astronomer.

## 4 St. Bede's Tower



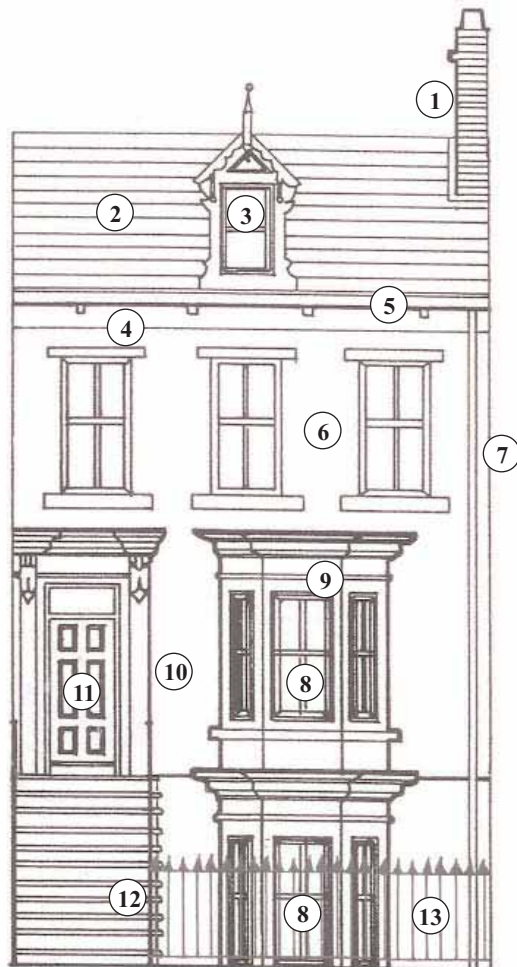
Built in 1852 this Italianate building, with a splendid five-storey tower, was built for the Mayor A.J. Moore and shows the influence of Queen Victoria's Osbourne House. This distinctive property is owned by the University, as are several others in the vicinity, and is thereby under some threat as the University seeks to develop its campus at St. Peters at the expense of these notable houses.



# Typical Features Of Ashbrooke Housing

This page identifies some of the typical features of terraced housing within Ashbrooke. These features should always be retained as they reflect elements of the history of the area and significantly enhance its appearance. Ashbrooke displays a high degree of local distinctiveness. One of the most pleasing aspects is the quality of craftsmanship that is evident throughout the conservation area in relation in particular to key features such as doors and windows.

## Typical Features To Be Retained On A Terraced House In Ashbrooke



1. Chimney stacks and pots
2. Welsh roof slates
3. Dormers
4. Cornice / eaves detailing
5. Timber guttering and brackets
6. External brickwork
7. Cast-iron downpipes
8. Sliding-sash windows
9. Bay window
10. Door surrounds
11. Panelled doors
12. Steps and handrails
13. Railings / walls

## Dormers



Ashbrooke exhibits an attractive range of dormer windows which contribute considerably to the appearance of the roofscape. Each terrace tends to display a particular style of dormer but variety between individual terraces adds to the local distinctiveness of the area. Unfortunately, the rhythm of the roofscape has been disrupted in some terraces with the addition of modern dormer extensions.

## Windows



Heavy timber bay windows at ground floor and basement level, illustrated to the right, are a particular feature of Ashbrooke. In contrast, the property to the left features a terracotta bay which is unique to this particular terrace and further evidence of local distinctiveness. The retention of original timber sliding-sash window frames contributes significantly to the character of the buildings. In many terraces bay windows and frames, doorcases, cills and lintels have been painted uniformly, enhancing the appearance of the street scene.



## Eaves / Gable Detailing



The heavy eaves detailing above is reminiscent of classical cornices and entablature and has the effect of creating distinctive shadow lines.



Terraces with front facing gables often feature decorative bargeboards, often uniformly painted to give the roofscape a quite striking appearance.

## Ironwork



Decorative cast iron balconies are an attractive feature of Belle Vue Park. Grange Crescent is one of the few terraces where original cast-iron handrails have almost exclusively survived intact. The detailing evident in such features is rarely found in mild steel replacements.



## Doors, Doorcases And Porches



One of the most striking features of Ashbrooke is the quality and variety of door surrounds in the area. The doorcase to the left is composed of formal classical detailing and surrounds a traditional split six-panel door which, when opened, forms a panelled lobby to the inner door. The property in the centre displays a richly decorated terracotta door casing featuring a lion's head, unique to this terrace. Above, the heavily detailed terracotta porch is full of intricate decoration. This kind of ornamentation is typical of the quality of craftsmanship throughout Ashbrooke; such features must always be retained.

## Internal Features

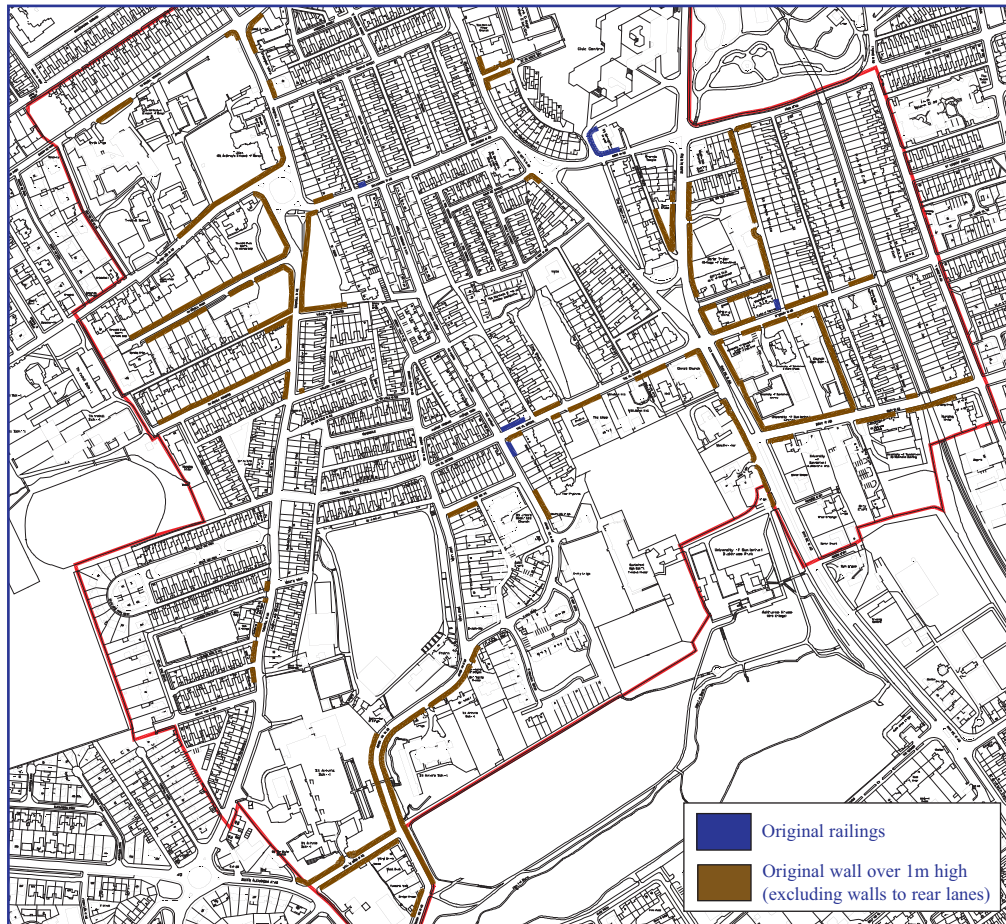


Although not part of the street scene, the interiors of houses add considerably to the area's character. Important features, such as original fireplaces, staircases, doors, architraves, cornices and skirtings, should be retained as far as possible.



# Boundary Enclosures: Walls, railings and gates

Ashbrooke exhibits a range of types of boundary treatment. Traditional forms of enclosure generally consisted of limestone or brick walls and cast-iron railings and gates. Whilst large stretches of original walls have survived, many of the cast-iron railings in Ashbrooke were sacrificed during the Second World War leaving the front boundaries of properties bare. In most cases poor quality and inconsistent replacements have been erected, detracting from the appearance of areas of high quality terraced housing. A co-ordinated programme of boundary re-instatement is desirable in the conservation area to ensure consistency within particular terraces.



## Walls

Ashbrooke has retained a number of original brick and locally-quarried limestone boundary walls which give definition to the street pattern and add to the setting of many villas and certain terraces such as Woodside. The heights of these walls give properties a strong sense of enclosure and seclusion.

Subtle brick detailing and heavy stone copings are particular features of brick walls in the conservation area. Limestone walls are notable for fossilised remains in the stonework which would not be evident in replacement stones. This distinctiveness makes a significant contribution to Ashbrooke's character and it is important that such walls are repaired in situ and not rebuilt unless absolutely necessary.



## Railings

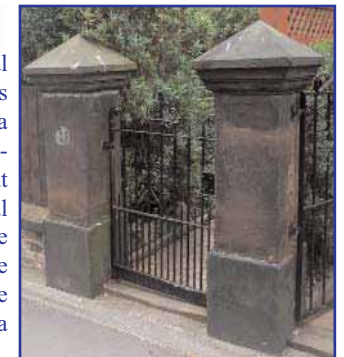
Where original railings have survived, they are often in a poor state of repair. Where historic evidence exists, either in situ or from previous records / drawings, missing railings should be reinstated accurately to the original pattern and detailing. Some properties have installed replacement plain mild steel railings which do not display the decorative cast heads and detailing of traditional designs such as those opposite left. In the absence of historic evidence, a modern design in wrought or cast iron can often achieve satisfactory results.

Unfortunately, the majority of householders have erected a mixture of low walls, fencing and hedges to the front of their properties, which in many cases is not an appropriate form of enclosure for the buildings. These treatments are never continuous throughout a terrace and therefore detract from their uniformity. In some cases, all that remains is the stone plinth from the original railings to give a clue to their original form. Rear boundaries are characterised by high brick walls incorporating vehicular access. Security concerns have led to a multitude of insensitive alterations at the expense of historic fabric, including the proliferation of roller shutters which detract from the appearance of the rear lanes.



## Gates & Gateposts

Ashbrooke contains a variety of original stone and brick gateposts. The gateposts to the left have attractive terracotta copings. The timber gates are characteristic of the period and style of the time but prone to damage and decay. Original wrought iron gates, illustrated right, are rare in the conservation area. These features must be retained, repaired where necessary, and not be replaced with a modern design.





# Landscape

The gardens and other spaces, the adjoining Mowbray and Backhouse Parks and the many fine mature trees in the area form extremely pleasant settings for the buildings and help to define the area when viewed from distant high points. Indeed, the fine landscape in Ashbrooke was an important factor in the designation of the conservation area. Some of this open space is coming under development pressure and it is important that the character of Ashbrooke is maintained. One way of doing this is through the imposition of preventive measures such as Tree Preservation Orders to protect the trees from unlawful pruning and lopping. However, there are numerous examples of trees conflicting with buildings being located or allowed to become self seeded near to foundation or boundary walls. The inevitable loss of some trees should be made good by careful re-planting where appropriate.

## Key Characteristics of Ashbrooke's Landscape

- ◆ Attractive range of historically significant green spaces and other natural features.
- ◆ Distinctive formal open spaces in small private parks and Ashbrooke Sports Ground.
- ◆ Pleasant landscaped gardens within the grounds of several villas.
- ◆ Heavy canopy of tree cover throughout the area due to an abundance of mature trees.
- ◆ Tree-lined streets and spaces significantly enhance the setting of the area's historic buildings.





## Ashbrooke Sports Ground



Ashbrooke Sports Ground is an extensive formal open space set in Tunstall Vale that has historically been used for recreational activities. Totally enclosed, the size of the ground is not readily appreciated.

## Formal Open Space



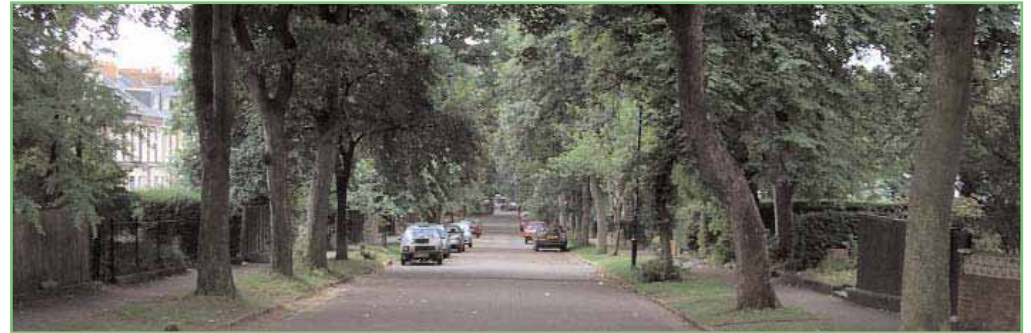
Throughout the area there are a number of mainly formal open spaces such as small parks and tree lined streets. Many of these are private and gated to exclude through vehicular traffic with the result that pleasant, almost traffic free, environments have been created.

## Private Gardens



The private gardens of several key terraces and villas are outside the scope of planning authorities but have an important role to play in enhancing the landscape character of Ashbrooke and establish a sense that the area is cared for and valued.

## Mature Trees



Ashbrooke enjoys a generous cover of mature trees, many of which are planted along grass verges. The mature trees throughout the area create perfect backdrops and screens, through and against which the older buildings are seen at their best.

## Backhouse Park



## Mowbray Park



Despite being outside the designated conservation area, Backhouse and Mowbray Parks act as particularly fine settings for Ashbrooke on its north eastern and southern boundaries.



The background image shows a multi-story brick building with a prominent bay window on the ground floor. A large, leafy tree is positioned to the left of the building. The overall scene is a classic urban street view with historic architecture.

## Part 2

# Preservation And Enhancement Of Character



# Current Issues and Possible Solutions

Ashbrooke's integrity as a fine Victorian suburb is increasingly under threat for a number of reasons. Poor levels of maintenance and an insensitive approach to carrying out repair/alteration work are, unfortunately, a regular occurrence, leading to the loss of important features. Continuing pressure for new development is threatening the very existence of certain buildings and the future role of open spaces. Intensification of traffic and increased requirements for off-street parking creates problems of their own, whilst the loss of mature trees is a matter for concern. There is, however, a range of possible options to address these issues.

## Building Alterations and Maintenance

### Issues:

- ❖ A major problem in Ashbrooke is the poor standard of maintenance evident in many properties. Absentee landlords in particular are reluctant to devote the necessary resources to maintain their premises to a standard befitting their architectural and historic importance. A number of terraces have been marred by the replacement of original features with inappropriate modern fittings. A common example of this has been the removal of sliding-sash windows and their replacement by poor quality casement windows often in PVC.
- ❖ Many terraced properties and villas in Ashbrooke were built as large single family dwellings for the Victorian middle classes and many people consider them no longer suitable for the needs of modern households. With a growing student population in the area there is increasing pressure to sub-divide the properties into flats and bedsits / houses in multi-occupation (HMO) and this can often result in extensive damage to their historic fabric, especially the interiors. HMO's in particular are associated with poor levels of maintenance and excessive alterations, policies are in place to control such conversions.
- ❖ The loss of period shopfronts may only effect a handful of properties in Ashbrooke but is nevertheless an issue of concern and should not be dismissed. Too often traditional Victorian shopfronts have been replaced with poor quality and unattractive modern frontages that do not relate to the upper floors of the historic building.
- ❖ The use of appropriate signage is also an important consideration for commercial premises, especially in a predominantly residential area like Ashbrooke. The conversion of residential properties into commercial premises such as offices

raises the issue of how to effectively advertise a business without detracting from a building's domestic appearance and the fundamental residential character of the area.



This property exhibits the symptoms of a lack of maintenance and inappropriate alteration. The entablature to the doorcase is missing and the original sliding sashes have been replaced by casement windows of poor form.

### Solutions:

- ❖ Offer design guidance to encourage residents to repair rather than replace original elements and that advice on repairs and alterations is available from the Council's Conservation Team. Its effectiveness is dependent of the willingness of householders to observe it. It is often the case that most 'minor' alterations to unlisted buildings do not require permission and the results often compromise their historic interest and architectural integrity. This issue is currently being addressed by the Government and changes in regulations may follow.
- ❖ In certain areas financial assistance may be made available to property owners who are prepared to carry out restorations that reflect the character and history of the Conservation Area. However, grants cannot be assured as funding is often not available.



- ❖ The Council has placed Article 4 Directions on particular groups of buildings requiring property owners to get permission for certain types of change. However, residents in some areas of Ashbrooke continue to exercise their permitted development rights and their properties are increasingly under threat. To counter this threat, the number of Article 4 Directions in the conservation area could be increased. Terraces of particular note that warrant such action are identified in policy ASH1 on page 25. Groups of residents who desire this added protection, particularly if they wish to implement restoration works, will also be considered.
- ❖ Shop owners will in most cases be required / encouraged to adopt a traditional approach when improving their shopfronts, reinstating original timber features where appropriate to successfully integrate the shopfront with the building as a whole thus reinforcing its historic character and enhancing the appearance of the street scene.
- ❖ Signage must be of an appropriate form and well-proportioned in relation to the length and depth of the shopfront fascia. Individual lettering is traditionally the most appropriate type of sign for historic shopfronts; the projecting box signs shown in the photograph below left are not an appropriate form of advertising and detract from the historic street scene. Illuminated signs will generally not be accepted in the conservation area due to its residential nature. Advertisements on residential properties in commercial use should be particularly discreet, normally limited to no more than a small wall plate alongside the doorway and, where desired, a well-designed free-standing sign in the garden, such as those illustrated below right.



## Threat of New Development

### Issues:

- ❖ New development can be a significant threat to both open space and the built environment of Ashbrooke. Open areas and the garden space of villas are under constant pressure from developers keen to secure the land for other uses. Some of the larger villas themselves are under pressure from developers proposing demolition and redevelopment for purpose-built flats.
- ❖ Sunderland University currently provides numerous villas with a contemporary use that has allowed them to remain in good condition. However, the imminent move of the University campus from Ashbrooke to the Riverside area casts a doubt over the future of these villas. Changes to fire and disabled access regulations makes the conversion of many villas more difficult and costly. As a result, many developers would prefer to demolish them and develop the land from scratch.



This site was originally occupied by Corby Hall, a Victorian Villa that was demolished in the 1980's to make way for redevelopment of much inferior quality. The gateposts to the Hall remain, as do the stable blocks which have been imaginatively converted into mews cottages.

### Solutions:

- ❖ Imaginative building conversions must be encouraged as an effective method of ensuring the retention of old buildings in a suitable use, allowing much of their original character to be kept and preventing them from falling into disuse. The Council may require the developer to commission an architectural and historic assessment of the building to inform the architect and the relevant Council officers of the existence and significance of features, and so guide the design process.



- ❖ New development can in some cases make a positive contribution to the conservation area but the number of occasions where this can be accomplished without first requiring the loss of historic buildings are few. A building or feature that is contemporary with the 19th century development of Ashbrooke will in the vast majority of cases contribute to the area's special interest and, hence, proposals to demolish it will be generally resisted in accordance with UDP policy. The onus is therefore on the developer to prove his case with particular reference to policies ASH2 & ASH 3 on page 28. Where planning applications for new developments are being determined, the design criteria in policy ASH4 on page 29 will be applied to ensure that an appropriate standard of development is achieved..

### Tree Protection:

#### Issues:

- ❖ Trees in Ashbrooke are under threat generally, despite being protected, due to their age, vulnerability to disease, and also due to unlawful and damaging lopping and felling.

#### Solutions:

- ❖ The tree canopy can be maintained through direct action by the Council making Tree Preservation Orders where warranted, providing grants to individuals or residents groups for suitable stock to be planted, and also by penalising those who fell trees unlawfully through fines and/or the requirement to replant suitable replacements.



Several streets in Ashbrooke are regularly utilised for overspill parking by those wishing to avoid charging in the City Centre.

### Traffic and On-Street Parking

#### Issues:

- ❖ The intensification of development in Ashbrooke over the last 30 years has led to increases in vehicular traffic and on/off street parking which, along with increases in road widths, street furniture and noise vibration, has had a detrimental impact on the quality of the environment.
- ❖ On-street parking within the conservation area can be visually intrusive and make some streets less attractive places to live. Parking on grass verges is increasingly common but is destructive of their appearance and can lead to requests for hard surfaces.

#### Solutions:

- ❖ The implementation of parking control measures is an option that must be considered. For example, raising kerb heights may discourage the practice of parking on verges.

### Telecommunications

#### Issues:

- ❖ The paraphernalia of equipment, masts etc associated with telecommunications installations can often be very visually intrusive. Whilst the Council has an obligation to facilitate the growth of telecommunications networks in all parts of the City, the impact of such installations can be particularly damaging in historically sensitive environments such as Ashbrooke.

#### Solutions:

- ❖ In all circumstances, the least conspicuous sites available should be identified for telecommunications installations so as to minimise their visual impact. Wherever possible, installations should be 'disguised' within an existing structure, such as a flag pole, lighting column or chimney stack, but ensuring that no damage will be caused to historic building fabric in the process.



# Maintain Character: Approach to Repairs and Alterations

The proliferation of relatively minor building alterations is incrementally eroding the character and appearance of Ashbrooke Conservation Area. Many modern alterations appear harsh and can be very damaging to historic building fabric. Important original features threatened by such alterations include timber sliding sash windows, doors and door cases, wrought/cast iron handrails and rainwater goods, clay chimney pots and stacks, and boundary enclosures. It is important, therefore, that property owners and occupiers adopt the right approach to repairs and the replacement of features.



The uPVC windows installed to the right fail to match the slender proportions and historic detailing of the original sliding-sashes and have an unnatural and bulky appearance that detracts from the character of both the property concerned and the terrace.

## General Principles

In the first instance, regular maintenance should be carried out to prevent or at least delay the need for repairs. Repairs should be undertaken only where considered strictly necessary to slow down the process of decay without damaging the character of the building. In the vast majority of cases, a traditional approach to repair should be adopted, replacing decayed material on a like-for-like basis. Occasionally, it may be more appropriate to use non-traditional materials and methods if they have been tried and tested over a long period and allow more existing fabric to remain undisturbed in situ.

In certain circumstances, decay may be so advanced that the fabric is beyond repair and the replacement of the features may be necessary. Care should, however, be taken to avoid the unnecessary loss of historic fabric. For example, there have been instances in Ashbrooke where original sliding-sash windows have been replaced when they could have been more appropriately repaired. The discreet insertion of modern draught seals can greatly enhance the performance of sash windows in respect of heat retention and ease of use. There are local contractors that can undertake such work far more cheaply than the cost of replacement.



Rainwater goods are often designed to form part of an ornate cornice (illustrated to the left) contributing considerably to the building's appearance. To replace this with a plastic half round gutter, shown on the property to the right, is a very poor choice.

The following guidelines are intended to advise residents of Ashbrooke of the general approach to be taken when contemplating external repairs or alterations. Owners and occupiers should, however, always seek the advice of the Council before carrying out works to their buildings. A guide to how to assess the maintenance needs of historic buildings is available from the Council's Conservation Team.



## Guidelines for External Repair and Alteration Work

### ❖ Roofs:

The replacement of roof slates should be carried out re-using sound existing slates and/or new natural slates laid in courses to match the existing. Reclaimed and new materials should not, however, be mixed together on the same pitch. The slates should be appropriate to the conservation area. In Ashbrooke, Welsh slate is the predominant type of roof covering material.

### ❖ Chimneys:

Chimneys requiring repair should be reinstated or rebuilt accurately to the original height and profile, in materials to match the existing which, in most cases in Ashbrooke, is brick. Original clay chimney pots should be replaced appropriately or reinstated where necessary.

### ❖ Rainwater Goods:

Generally, any new or replacement rainwater goods required should be in cast iron, to the original pattern. Timber gutter boxes are a particular feature of Ashbrooke and should be repaired or replaced appropriately, lined in lead or, more economically, in bitumen.

### ❖ Re-pointing and Rendering:

Brick and stonework re-pointing, and rendering where appropriate, should be carried out using a suitable lime-based mortar. Advice on mortar mixes and methods of application and finishing should be obtained from the Council or an approved independent expert. Cement mortars will often accelerate the deterioration of brick and stone.

### ❖ Windows and Doors:

Existing windows and external doors should be retained and carefully repaired wherever possible; it is important to retain and repair early surviving casements. In Ashbrooke, most original windows are of a timber sliding-sash design. If replacement is unavoidable, new windows should be accurate replicas to the original design, in both pattern and detail. PVC frames will fail to do this.

### ❖ Ironwork

Decorative ironwork, such as balconies, canopies or railings, should be retained and carefully repaired or, if absolutely necessary, reinstated accurately to the original pattern and detail, in a similar material, usually wrought or cast iron. Replacements in mild steel often corrode very quickly.

### ❖ Boundary Treatment:

Original walls, fences, railings and gates should be repaired to match the existing, or reinstated to the original design wherever possible.

## Internal Alterations

The sub-division of historic properties into flats and HMO's can often result in extensive damage to the internal fabric and features of the buildings. It is important, therefore, that a sensitive approach is taken when carrying out works to adapt the interiors of such properties. As a general rule, alterations should be kept to a minimum and internal features retained as far as possible in order to preserve the integrity of the buildings. Where alterations are inevitable, they should be easily reversible without damaging the existing fabric. It is often the case that the desire to conserve features will conflict with the requirements of current Fire and Building Regulations. However, Part L of the Building Regulations 'Conservation of Fuel and Power' (DTLR, 2001) acknowledges the special requirements of historic buildings in satisfying energy conservation requirements. It recognises that there is a need to strike an appropriate balance between historic building conservation and energy conservation. There are products and techniques that can satisfy both requirements and avoid the unnecessary destruction of features in most instances. These should be researched carefully before irreparable damage is done. The Council's Conservation Team can advise on this.

### Important Internal Features

- Staircases
- Fireplaces
- Doors and door handles
- Architraves
- Cornices
- Dado rails
- Skirtings
- Shutters
- Panelling
- Decorative plasterwork, brass/copper work
- Decorative tiles, mosaics



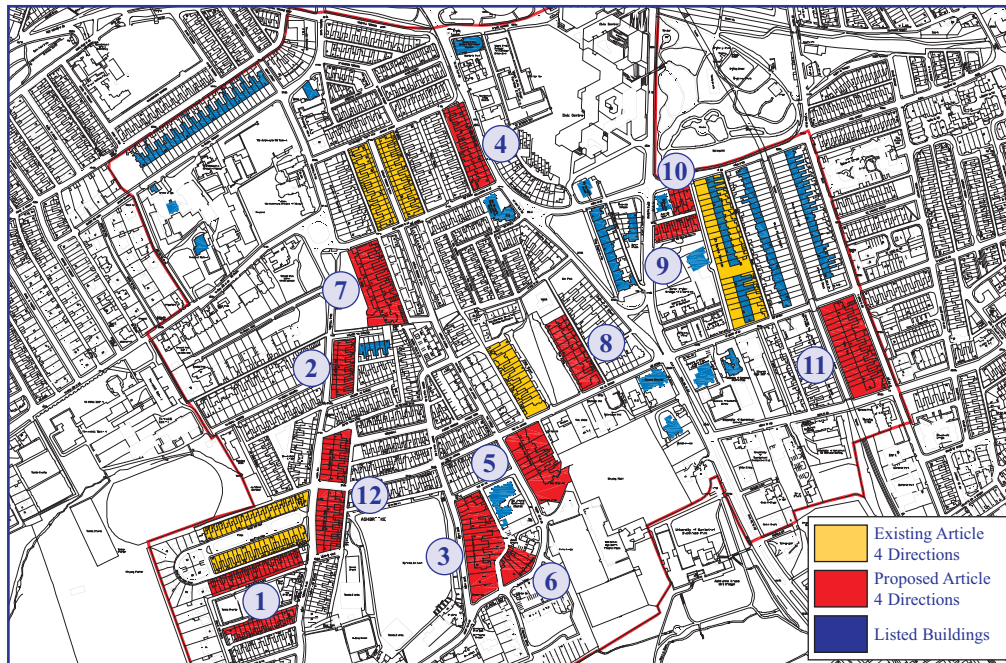
Owners/occupiers of listed buildings should be aware that any alterations which affect the character of both the interior and exterior require consent from the Council. It is a criminal offence to undertake work without first obtaining consent from the Council.



# Maintain Character Through Extra Control: Article 4 Directions

Article 4(2) Directions can be imposed by local planning authorities to control certain alterations to dwellings and other works that would otherwise be automatically granted consent by the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Thus, for example, the replacement of windows, doors, roof coverings etc. can come under planning control, the object being to protect the historic fabric, features and appearance of the buildings. It should be noted that such Directions only apply to properties in use as dwelling houses and not flats or commercial premises.

Policy B6 of the UDP states that the Council will preserve the character and appearance of conservation areas by seeking, where appropriate, to control development by the use of Article 4 Directions. The Council has already placed Article 4(2) Directions on a number of terraces in Ashbrooke Conservation Area - Azalea Terrace North, Belle Vue Park and The Elms West - requiring planning permission to be obtained for the types of development listed opposite. The Council proposes to extend this coverage to other well-preserved properties in Ashbrooke where there is a particular need to protect historic features. These twelve terraces are considered to be of such architectural and historic merit to warrant additional protection. They are identified on the map and are listed in the following policy.



## **POLICY ASH1:**

The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the distinctive qualities and features of the following terraces by placing an Article 4(2) Direction on all dwelling houses in the terraces, requiring planning permission to be obtained for the classes of development listed in the schedule below: -

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Holmelands Park    | 7) Woodside        |
| 2) Valebrooke         | 8) The Elms        |
| 3) West Lawn          | 9) St. Bede's Park |
| 4) Grange Terrace     | 10) Park Road      |
| 5) Ashbrooke Terrace  | 11) The Oaks East  |
| 6) Ashbrooke Crescent | 12) Humbledon View |

## **Schedule of Classes of Development covered by Article 4(2) Directions in Ashbrooke Conservation Area:**

- ◆ Enlargement, improvement or other alteration to the public face of a dwelling house.
- ◆ Cladding of any part of the exterior with any material including stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
- ◆ Addition to or material alteration to the roof of a dwelling house.
- ◆ Erection or construction of a porch outside external door of a dwellinghouse.
- ◆ Provision within the front curtilage of a dwelling house of a hard surface for car parking.
- ◆ Installation, alteration or replacement of a TV satellite antenna or dish.
- ◆ Erection, construction, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.
- ◆ Painting of the exterior masonry of any building.

## **Criteria for Selection of Terraces for Proposed Article 4(2) Direction**

- ◆ Architectural quality and intactness of terrace
- ◆ Importance of features to be protected to special interest of conservation area
- ◆ Established or degree of potential threat to such features



### Architectural Quality and Intactness

The architectural quality of a terrace is most evident in the detailing and level of craftsmanship of its key features, such as windows and doors, and the extent to which such features have survived throughout the terrace. These have been primary considerations in the selection of the above terraces which are, apart from those 'listed', the most architectural significant and best-preserved terraces in the conservation area.



The terraces in Holmelands Park are, for example, especially notable for their architectural quality and intactness. The properties are distinguished by decorative white fascia boards and door canopies set against red brick and red roof tiles. It is this contrast that emphasises their architectural form. Significantly, such features are almost entirely intact throughout the terraces with very few properties marred by insensitive alterations. It is important that this harmony is retained.

### Importance of Features to be Protected to Ashbrooke's Special Interest

The preceding character appraisal establishes the architectural features of Ashbrooke's terraced houses to be essential elements of the area's special interest. The relative contribution such features make to Ashbrooke's special interest was a key factor in considering which terraces were selected.



For instance, several terraces have been chosen for their range of heavy timber features as the best examples of the more typical, classically-influenced style of terraced housing that is characteristic of Ashbrooke. Grange Terrace, for example, is composed of grand residences featuring heavy timber bay windows and neo-greek doorcases.

Ashbrooke Terrace, Woodside, The Elms, The Oaks East and Humbledon View are similar in character to Grange Terrace, all notable for the retention of classically derived, carved timber features worthy of preserving.

In contrast, other terraces were selected for the relative uniqueness of their features, making them highly distinctive and especially important to protect. Examples are given below.



Park Road is a small but very distinctive terrace. The use of sandstone for the bays and balustrade detail, door surrounds and gutter feature is exclusive to this terrace, giving it uniqueness within the conservation area. Valebrooke, to the right, derives much of its character from the distinctiveness of the red brick that the properties are built from and the richly decorated terra cotta door cases featuring a lion's head. This kind of detailing gives the terrace its individuality. Fine terracotta work with intricate decoration similarly distinguishes West Lawn and Ashbrooke Crescent. These terraces have been largely unaffected by the degradation of architectural features.

### Established or Degree of Potential Threat to Features

All residential terraces in Ashbrooke face the potential threat of losing important architectural features due to householders exercising their permitted development rights. However, in certain terraces the evidence of this risk is more pronounced.



For example, until very recently original windows in Valebrooke were almost exclusively intact, all timber sliding-sashes having been retained with the exception of one property in the terrace. However, in recent months a further two properties have installed replacement uPVC windows, as illustrated in the photograph above, and this has had a noticeable detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the terrace. Such alterations need to be prevented in future otherwise the distinctiveness of Valebrooke will be gradually lost.

At Grange Terrace, a mix of commercial and residential properties has created an anomaly of controls whereby part of the terrace i.e. those premises in office use, does not benefit from permitted development rights, whilst dwelling houses in the street do so enabling some owners to make certain changes to their properties without the need for consent while others cannot. This situation has allowed the owners of several properties to replace traditional features with modern alternatives and this detracts considerably from the rhythm and harmony of the terrace. It is considered important, therefore, that the situation is regularised with controls put in place that achieve consistency throughout the terrace and prevent further damaging alterations to this very attractive and prominently located terrace.

#### **PRACTICE NOTE: USE OF ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTION**

The following practice note has been prepared to inform residents of the Council's standard practice in response to householder enquiries and planning applications to replace the fenestration and roofing materials on properties subject to an Article 4(2) Direction. The note is intended to establish consistency and clarity over the Council's general principles in the use of Article 4(2) Directions in Ashbrooke Conservation Area.

In all scenarios, where alterations are proposed or are to be enforced, the following practice note will be applied. The Conservation Team will in all cases be afforded the opportunity to require or encourage the reinstatement of original features and materials.

### **Historic Fenestration**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Action</b>
Original windows have survived and are <i>in situ</i> .	Require retention. Installation of replicas acceptable if necessary; repairs and modifications may be incorporated to improve ease of operation and heat retention.
Original windows lost, existing are in timber but of inappropriate type.	Encourage reinstatement of timber sashes using surviving sashes in street as a model for pattern of glazing bars etc. UPVC sliding sashes may be acceptable as a last resort when designed with regard to original form. Note: to be acceptable they must operate as sliding-sashes. Top- or side-hung windows are not acceptable.
Original lost, UPVC put in place pre-designation of Conservation Area.	Encourage reinstatement of timber sashes using surviving sashes in street as a model for pattern of glazing bars etc. UPVC sliding sashes may be acceptable as last resort when designed with regard to original format. Note: to be acceptable they must operate as sliding-sashes. Hinged case-ments are not acceptable.
Original lost. UPVC put in place post-designation of Conservation Area and Article 4 (2) Direction.	Enforce to reinstate original where this was, at time of designation, the desired timber sliding sash. Can only enforce to return fenestration to its form at the time of the making of the Article 4(2) Direction. <u>But</u> do not restore to inappropriate type.

### **Roofing Materials**

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Action</b>
Original Welsh slate roof in situ.	Require retention, if replacement necessary use Welsh slate wherever possible but a natural slate of matching size and colour may be acceptable.
Replacement tiled roof, not in Welsh slate.	Replacement using Welsh slate wherever possible but a natural slate of matching size and colour would be acceptable.
Householder proposes to recover roof in synthetic slate e.g. Eternit.	Few synthetic slates can replicate the appearance and weathering of natural slate - proposals will be refused unless a convincing case can be made.



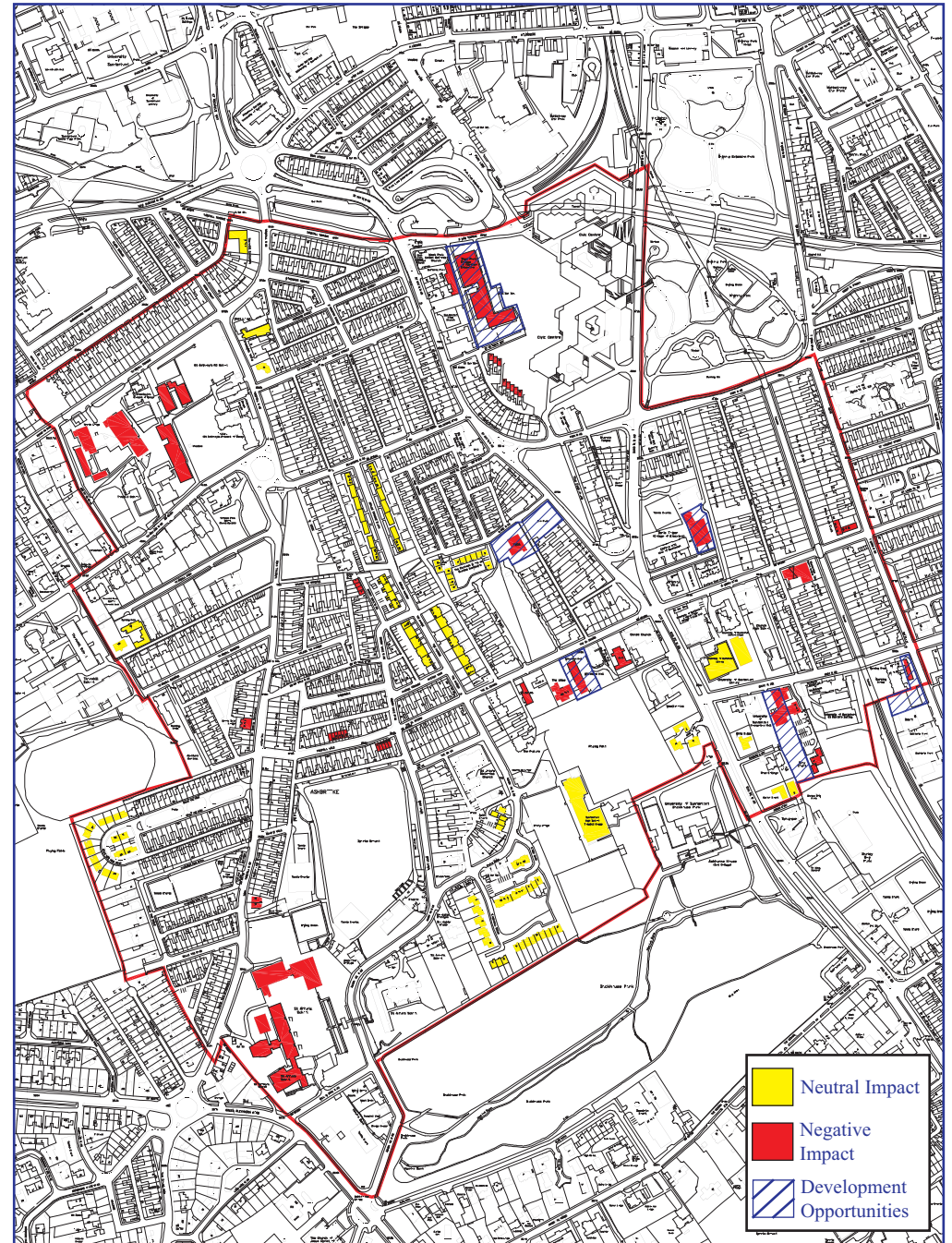
# Enhancement Opportunities: New Development

## New Developments in Ashbrooke

The suburb of Ashbrooke was largely laid out by the early 20th century and, as a result, relatively little space was left over for subsequent development. Where new development has occurred only a few examples of good design exist and it has often involved the loss of a more attractive historic building. A number of developments have taken place in the latter part of the 20th century that have failed to respect their traditional surroundings. As a result, these buildings have a negative impact on the conservation area. A number of these sites offer potential for redevelopment and provide the opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Elsewhere, opportunities for new development are few and far between and, consequently, there is a disturbing and potentially destructive pressure to redevelop existing buildings and/or their grounds.



These properties are an example of poor quality design. The development does not respect the existing roofline of the adjacent terrace, is devoid of detailing and neither harmonises with or complements the style of the Victorian buildings.





### Redevelopment of existing buildings

Under UDP policies B7 and B8 there is a strong presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Ashbrooke Conservation Area. Consequently, there have to be exceptional circumstances to justify the demolition of these buildings to make way for new development.

#### **POLICY ASH2:**

**Proposals to demolish a building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Ashbrooke Conservation Area will be refused unless it can be proven that: -**

- ❖ **The building is structurally unsound and physically incapable of conversion.**
  - or
  - ❖ **It is no longer suitable for its original use and is unable to accommodate modern uses.**
- and, in both cases**
- ❖ **All other avenues to sustain the existing use or find a new use for the building have been explored and found not to be feasible.**

**In all circumstances, there must be clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain and re-use the building, including an assessment against the criteria in paragraph 3.19 of PPG15.**

This policy applies to all buildings in the conservation area other than those identified on the map on page 27 as having a negative or neutral impact. Where the demolition of a building is proposed, an application must first be made to the Council, as local planning authority, for 'conservation area consent'. Conservation area consent is required to totally or substantially demolish most buildings within the conservation area. Each application must be accompanied by an assessment against the criteria in paragraph 3.19 of PPG15 concerning the demolition of listed buildings and unlisted buildings in conservation areas. These are re-produced in appendix 2 and include, with specific regard to policy ASH2, evidence of the building's condition in the form of a full structural survey and proof that the building has been marketed widely and at a realistic price reflecting its condition. In deciding whether or not consent should be given, the Council will have regard to whether demolition will lead to preserving or enhancing the locality's character. Consent for demolition will not be given unless detailed and acceptable plans to redevelop the site are in place that enhance the conservation area. The Council will require a full recording and research exercise of the building prior to its demolition if its architectural or historic interest is considered significant enough to warrant this.

### Development of green space

UDP Policies B3 and B6 seek to protect green space from development where it is important to the established character of an area. Most green spaces in Ashbrooke Conservation Area are historically significant and exceptional circumstances must exist to justify the development of these spaces.

#### **POLICY ASH3:**

**Proposals for development on green space in Ashbrooke Conservation Area will normally be refused if the space is considered to be important to its overall character in terms of the following: -**

- ❖ **The space contributes to the original settlement pattern of Ashbrooke. For example, it is included within the curtilage of historic buildings or is an integral part of the historic street scene i.e. a grass verge.**
- ❖ **The space is visually important. For example, it provides, or forms part of, an attractive setting to a listed or other important building(s). The space facilitates important views into and out of the conservation area or provides a pleasant view from surrounding properties.**
- ❖ **The use of the space is historically significant. For example, it has historically been used as a public/private park or associated with recreational activities i.e. as part of a sports ground.**



Several villas in Ashbrooke are set within attractive private landscaped grounds, containing many fine mature trees. These garden spaces are a particular feature of Ashbrooke. They provide extremely pleasant settings for the buildings and are historically significant, being part of the original settlement pattern of the area. Unfortunately, such spaces are increasingly coming under pressure for development. It is especially important, however, that they are retained in order to preserve the distinctive character of the conservation area.



# Enhancement Proposals: Design of New Development

## Approach to Design of New Development: Building in Context

It is important that future new development in Ashbrooke demonstrates the highest possible standards of design and harmonises with the existing physical surroundings. New buildings must make a positive contribution to the conservation area. All significant forms of development should be supported by a Design Statement, which will demonstrate key principles of good design have been applied and the proposed development has been informed by a thorough understanding of the site and its context. Guidance regarding the preparation of a design statement is contained within the City of Sunderland 'Design Statement' document. Further advice and guidance on residential developments is contained in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3, 'Residential Design Guide'.



This development has used the steep topography of the site to its advantage whilst also respecting the scale, style and materials of the adjacent Victorian villa.

## Design of New Buildings

UDP policy B4 states that "All development within and adjacent to conservation areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance. To this end the Council will issue planning/design guidance for the various areas from time to time". In fulfilling this obligation, the following policy has been formulated to assist the implementation of Policy B4 in Ashbrooke specifically.

### **POLICY ASH4:**

#### **General Design Criteria for New Development within Ashbrooke Conservation Area.**

All forms of new development should:-

- ❖ Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of historic development, including street patterns, open spaces, plot boundaries and boundary treatments.
- ❖ Preserve and reinforce the distinctive landscape character of the area. Any new landscaping should be designed as an integral part of the overall development, providing an attractive setting for the new buildings whilst also respecting the existing landscape.
- ❖ Relate well to its specific site, taking into account the physical constraints, such as the positioning of trees. The building(s) should sit within the site in a sensitive and elegant way.
- ❖ Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the conservation area.
- ❖ Preserve the landscape setting of key Ashbrooke villas and terraces and other buildings of historic importance.
- ❖ Reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the conservation area through an informed understanding of distinctive building forms and styles, features and materials. Pastiche forms of development and the superficial echoing of historic features in new buildings should be avoided.



- ❖ Reinforce the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. Terraced housing is the main building type in Ashbrooke and generally 2-3 storeys high. It is essential that new development is not out-of-scale with existing buildings by way of its height, floor levels, size of windows and doors and overall bulk.
- ❖ Reinforce existing building lines and the orientation of existing development. The predominance of terraces in Ashbrooke gives a strong alignment of building frontages and this should be respected by new development.
- ❖ Demonstrate that the choice of materials has been informed by a thorough understanding of the site and its context. Characteristic building materials in the Conservation Area consist of red/brown brick, Welsh slate and timber features. New materials should be durable and weather and age well so as to settle into the surrounding townscape.
- ❖ Demonstrate an understanding of sustainability issues, such as how it is constructed, orientated and serves the needs of all the community. New buildings should be capable of alteration and adaptation in response to changing future needs.
- ❖ Minimise the visual impact of parked vehicles and the provision of parking areas on the streetscape and landscape setting of historic buildings.

The design criteria set out in policy ASH4 should be applied to all proposals for new development in the conservation area. In applying the criteria, the preceding character appraisal of the area should be used to inform the design process. Each opportunity for new development will also have site-specific design issues that are particularly relevant to the site concerned. Examples are given opposite.

## 1) Land Adjacent Langham Tower



This 1960/70s development tends to diminish rather than reinforce the distinctive character of the area and has a negative impact on the setting of key listed buildings. The site within the grounds of Langham Tower and Carlton House has attracted interest as a residential development opportunity, although its immediate future has been secured for educational use. The sensitivity and importance of the site will demand a high quality and imaginative design solution, which is informed by a thorough understanding of the site and its context, should it become available for redevelopment at some time in the future.

## 2) West Lawn



This unusual gap site in West Lawn offers an opportunity to explore a range of design solutions, which may range from an accurate replication of the adjoining properties to a solution using contemporary forms, details and materials. Planning permission has recently been granted for the latter approach with the architect employing a high level of design expertise to achieve a quality solution using brick, glass and steel.

# Appendix 1 - City of Sunderland UDP Conservation Policies

## CONSERVATION AREAS

B4 ALL DEVELOPMENT WITHIN AND ADJACENT TO CONSERVATION AREAS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THEIR CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE. TO THIS END THE COUNCIL WILL ISSUE PLANNING/DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR THE VARIOUS AREAS FROM TIME TO TIME.

B6 THE COUNCIL WILL PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF CONSERVATION AREAS; MEASURES WILL INCLUDE:-

- (i) ENCOURAGING THE RETENTION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF FEATURES, OPEN SPACES, HISTORIC STREET PATTERNS AND PLOT BOUNDARIES;
- (ii) ENCOURAGING THE RETENTION OF EXISTING MATURE TREES;
- (iii) INTRODUCING CONTROLS OVER THE DISPLAY OF ADVERTISEMENTS;
- (iv) SEEKING, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO CONTROL DEVELOPMENT BY THE USE OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS;
- (v) GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE PRESERVATION OF IMPORTANT VIEWS INTO AND OUT OF THE AREA;
- (vi) RESTORING HIGHWAYS AND VERGES BY USE OF APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND PLANTING, ENCOURAGING UTILITY COMPANIES TO RESPECT SUCH WORKS;
- (vii) REDUCING THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC WHERE POSSIBLE BY DIVERSION AND TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES; AND
- (viii) PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES.

B7 APPLICATIONS FOR DEMOLITION OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN A CONSERVATION AREA WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE INTEGRITY, CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA IS AFFECTED, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ANY REPLACEMENT PROPOSALS. WHERE UNLISTED BUILDINGS MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA, THE CRITERIA IN POLICY B8 WHICH CONCERN THE DEMOLITION OF LISTED BUILDINGS WILL APPLY.

## LISTED BUILDINGS

B8 THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF RETAINING LISTED BUILDINGS. DEMOLITION IN WHOLE OR SUBSTANTIVE PART WILL ONLY BE GIVEN CONSENT WHEN ALL OTHER AVENUES FOR RETENTION (INCLUDING PRESERVATION IN CHARITABLE OR COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP) HAVE BEEN EXPLORED AND FOUND NOT TO BE FEASIBLE OR IT IS CONSIDERED THAT REDEVELOPMENT WOULD PRODUCE SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY WHICH WOULD DECISIVELY OUTWEIGH THE LOSS RESULTING FROM DEMOLITION. CONSENT WILL ONLY THEN BE GIVEN WHEN PLANNING PERMISSION FOR AN ACCEPTABLE REPLACEMENT DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN GRANTED, WHICH WILL ALSO BE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS REQUIRING THE LETTING OF A CONTRACT PRIOR TO DEMOLITION.

B9 THE CITY COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE CHARACTER AND QUALITIES OF THOSE BUILDINGS LISTED AS BEING OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST BY:-

- (i) REFUSING PERMISSION FOR EXTENSIONS OR ALTERATIONS WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC CHARACTER;
- (ii) GIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (WHERE AVAILABLE) FOR APPROPRIATE WORKS OF RESTORATION OR REPAIR IN ACCORDANCE WITH CITY POLICIES;
- (iii) GIVING FAVOURABLE CONSIDERATION TO A WIDER RANGE OF USES THAN MIGHT NORMALLY BE APPROPRIATE TO HELP BRING OTHERWISE VACANT BUILDINGS BACK INTO BENEFICIAL USE, PROVIDING THESE DO NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OR SETTING OF THE BUILDING OR AMENITY OF NEARBY RESIDENTS;
- (iv) THE ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION OF IMPORTANT BUILDINGS, PARTICULARLY IN CONSERVATION AREAS, IF THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO SECURE THEIR PRESERVATION.

B10 THE CITY COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE VICINITY OF LISTED BUILDINGS DO NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR CHARACTER OR SETTING.



## Appendix 2 - Extracts from PPG15 (Planning & the Historic Environment)

### 3 LISTED BUILDING CONTROL

#### Demolitions

3.19 Where proposed works would result in the total or substantial demolition of the listed building, or any significant part of it, the Secretaries of State would expect the authority, in addition to the general considerations set out in paragraph 3.5, to address the following considerations:

- i. the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use. Any such assessment should be based on consistent and long-term assumptions. Less favourable levels of rents and yields cannot automatically be assumed for historic buildings. Also, they may offer proven technical performance, physical attractiveness and functional spaces that, in an age of rapid change, may outlast the short-lived and inflexible technical specifications that have sometimes shaped new developments. Any assessment should also take account of the possibility of tax allowances and exemptions and of grants from public or charitable sources. In the rare cases where it is clear that a building has been deliberately neglected in the hope of obtaining consent for demolition, less weight should be given to the costs of repair;
- ii. the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use. The Secretaries of State would not expect listed building consent to be granted for demolition unless the authority (or where appropriate the Secretary of State himself) is satisfied that real efforts have been made without success to continue the present use or to find compatible alternative uses for the building. This should include the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building on the open market at a realistic price reflecting the building's condition (the offer of a lease only, or the imposition of restrictive covenants, would normally reduce the chances of finding a new use for the building);
- iii. the merits of alternative proposals for the site. Whilst these are a material consideration, the Secretaries of State take the view that subjective claims for the architectural merits of proposed replacement buildings should not in themselves be held to justify the demolition of any listed building. There may very exceptionally be cases where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community which have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation. Even here, it will often be feasible to incorporate

listed buildings within new development, and this option should be carefully considered; the challenge presented by retaining listed buildings can be a stimulus to imaginative new design to accommodate them.

### 4 CONSERVATION AREAS

#### Conservation area control over demolition

4.26 In exercising conservation area controls, local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in question; and, as with listed building controls, this should be the prime consideration in determining a consent application. In the case of conservation area controls, however, account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole.

4.27 The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Secretary of State expects that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (Paragraph 3.19 above). In less clear-cut cases - for instance, where a building makes little or no such contribution - the local planning authority will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment. It has been held that the decision-maker is entitled to consider the merits of any proposed development in determining whether consent should be given for the demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area.

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