

North Shields

The New Quay and The Fish Quay
Conservation Areas



FISHcast Community Character Statement

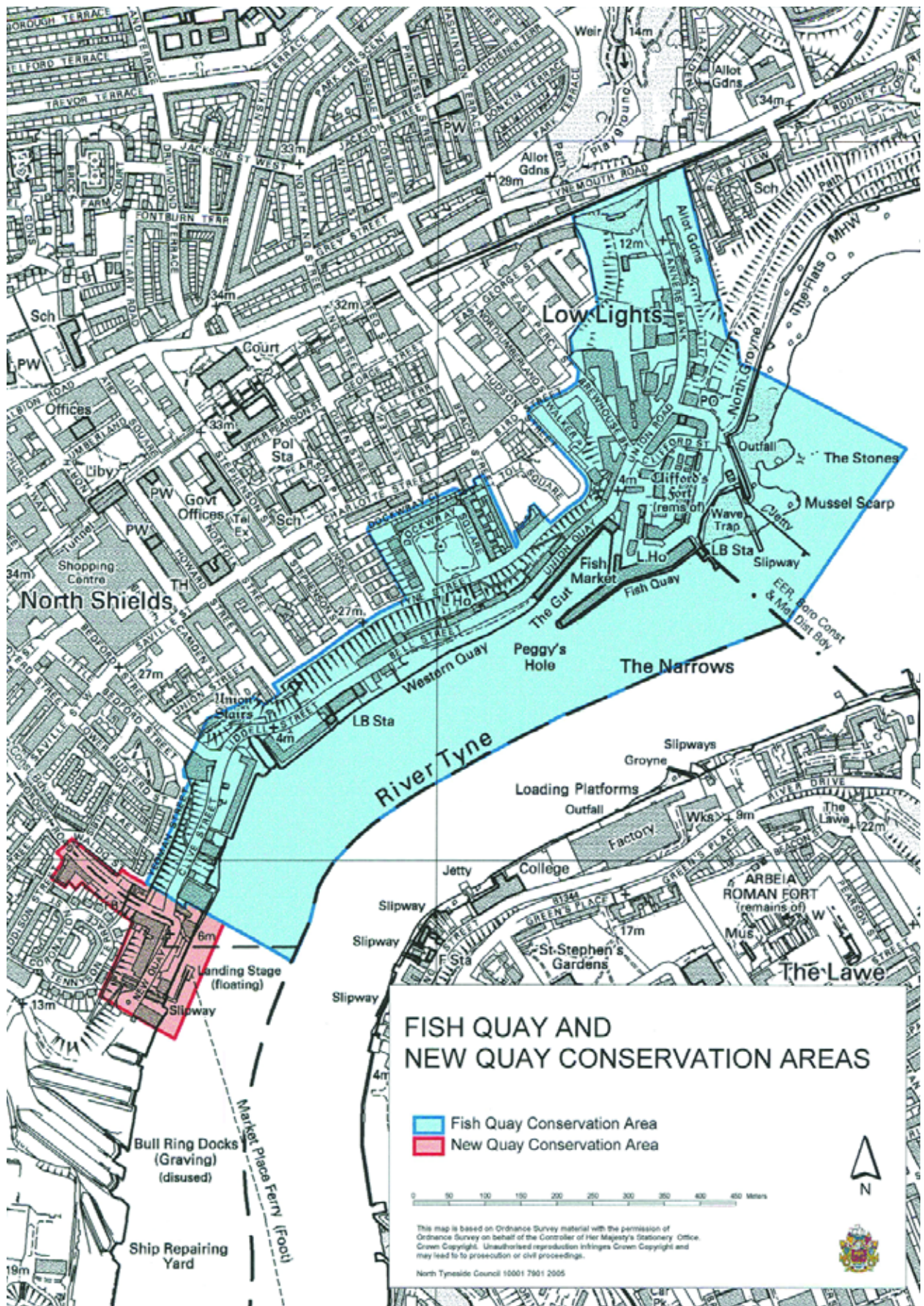




Image courtesy of Newcastle upon Tyne Trinity House

Introduction

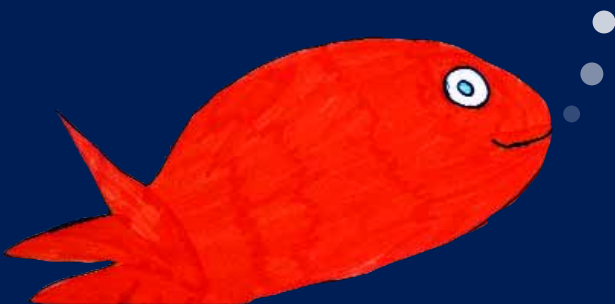
Two conservation areas within North Shields are covered in this Character Statement, namely the Fish Quay and the New Quay. Between them the two adjoining areas extend from the Low Lights and Clifford's Fort in the east, to Duke Street and the Shields ferry landing in the west. They include the approaches along Borough Road and Tanners Bank together with the bank sides, Dockwray Square, Trinity Buildings and the High Lights. They cover a unique and historically important river frontage near the mouth of the Tyne. The New Quay conservation area was designated by the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation in 1990. North Tyneside Council designated the Fish Quay conservation area in 2003 after extensive public consultation had demonstrated solid local support for this.

The Northumberland Square conservation area, which includes the former Stag Line building, lies next to the Fish Quay conservation area, underlining the stature of this part of North Shields. Camp Terrace, also a conservation area, stands only a kilometre away near the town's 17th century parish church. Another conservation area, covering the village of Tynemouth with its medieval Castle and ancient Priory, lies within two kilometres, whilst six kilometres up-river the World Heritage site of Hadrian's Wall ends at Segedunum.



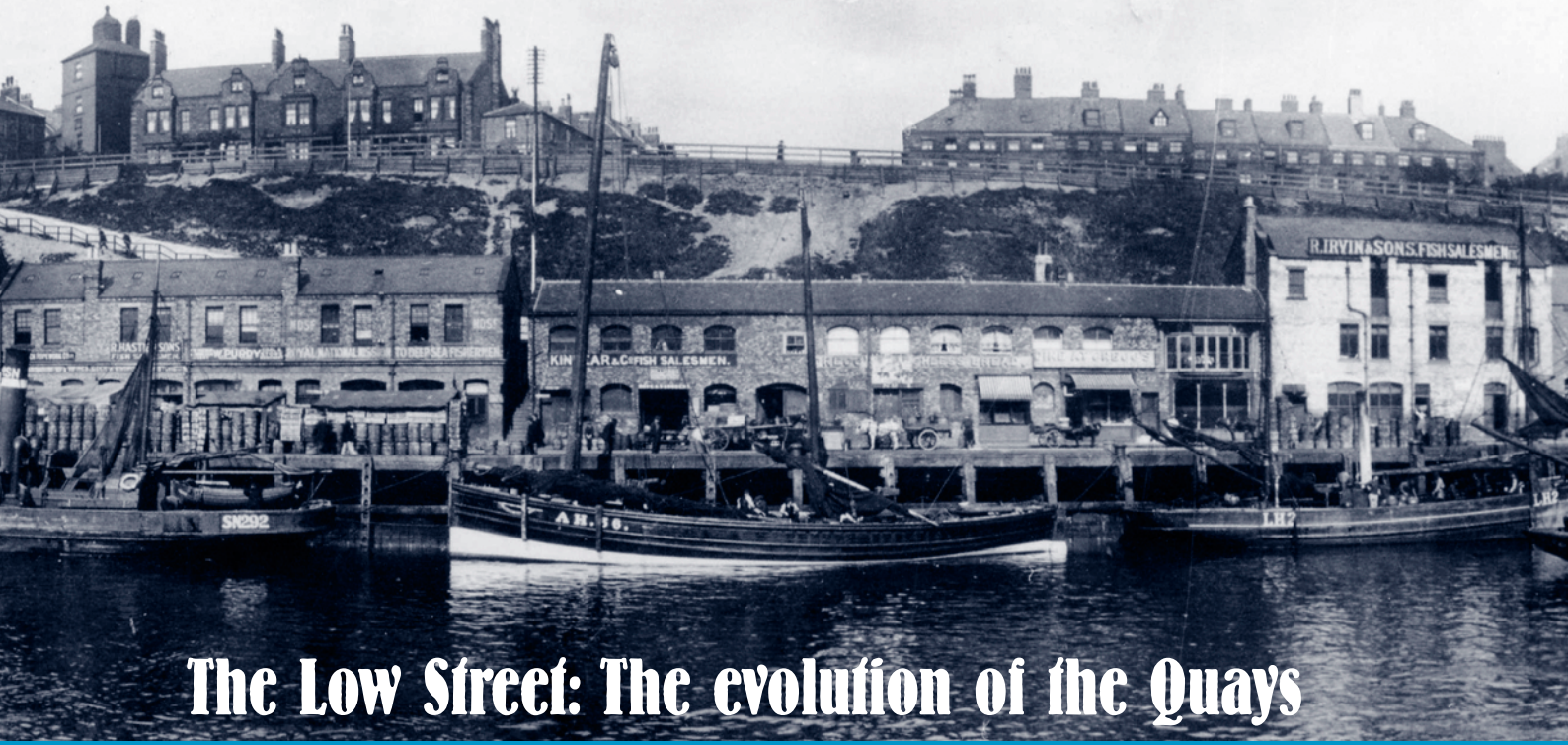
This is a place of which to be proud, where North Shields originated and from which its prosperity derived. Its unique mix of buildings reflects the area's history and gives it a very special character that would be destroyed by inappropriate development. Future changes are inevitable, but they must be sensitive to the essence of the area so as to preserve and enhance that character. In their report of 2001, EDAA recognised that the unique character of the Fish Quay needed protection and warranted high standards of design for new work. As a result this is now a priority regeneration area for the Council. Careful management of change will help to protect the natural and built environment and open up the fascinating history of North Shields to a wider public whilst encouraging business growth.

This document was created under the stimulus of Planning Policy Guidance 15 by people who live, work or have an interest in the conservation areas, and who care about their future. It aims to show what makes the areas special so that planning decisions are not taken in isolation from the context in which new developments will sit, and so the 'specialness' can be maintained. Comments apply to both the Fish Quay and the New Quay conservation areas except where stated otherwise.



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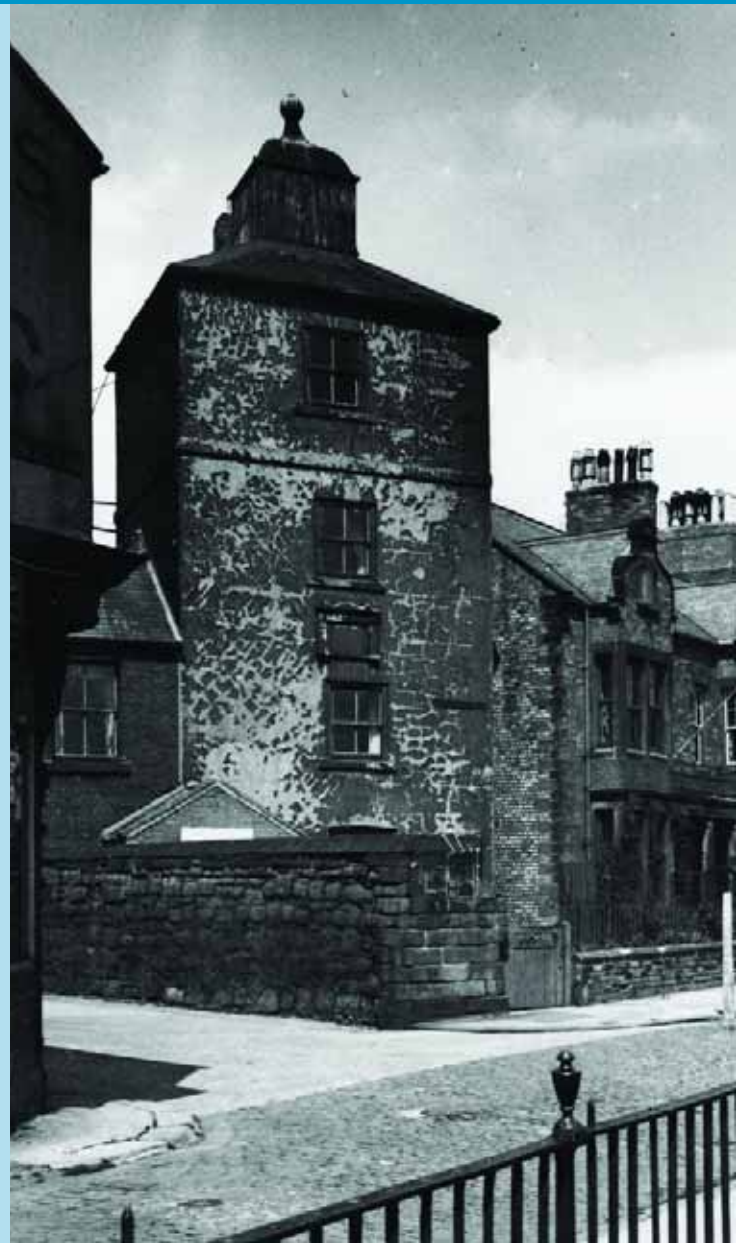


The Low Street: The evolution of the Quays

The recorded history of North Shields dates back to 1225. The then Prior of Tynemouth had built, beside the Pow Burn, a hamlet of 27 huts or shielings (hence North Shields). The small settlement, to the east of the present Fish Quay, soon grew to include mills, bakehouses, a fish quay and brewery. However, legislation favouring Newcastle as a port hindered the development of North Shields, effectively preventing the loading and discharging of cargoes other than salt or fish. North Shields struggled with Newcastle over trade for several centuries.

Because of the area's strategic importance Clifford's Fort was built in 1672 to defend the river during the third Dutch War. The Fort's use changed with military needs and in the 1880s it became the base of the Tyne Division Royal Engineers (Volunteers) Submarine Miners, which was to become the Tyne Electrical Engineers. They eventually moved out in 1928.

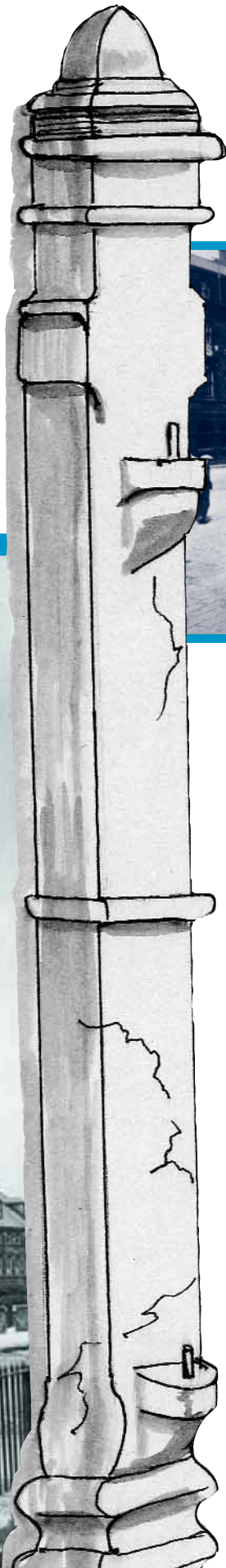
In 1727 the Master and Brethren of Trinity House of Newcastle-upon-Tyne built two new leading lights to guide ships into the river, one on the top of the bank above the river and the other within Clifford's Fort. They replaced lights dating back to the 16th century and were themselves replaced by the New High (tower 1808, John Stokoe) and Low Lights (tower 1807, John Stokoe) that marked what was then the safe channel. Beside the old High Light, Trinity House also built Trinity Buildings (1887, W. Hope of North Shields).



Until the 1760s North Shields was confined to the riverside, along what was known as the 'Low Street'. The additional houses, workshops, chapels and public houses piled up the bank sides were reached by a series of steep stairways. There was virtually no building on the bank top until Dockwray Square was laid out in 1763, complete with a communal garden for the residents. The south side was left open to afford views of river traffic to the ship owners and master mariners who lived there.



Built in 1806 by the Duke of Northumberland, the New Quay was the town's first deep-water quay. It provided an open area for a market and fairs, and a first rate hotel, the Northumberland Arms (later to gain worldwide notoriety as 'The Jungle'). The Sailor's Home to its east was added in 1851, supported by the Duke and £3000 subscribed by the public. The Porthole public house, for most of its life the Golden Fleece (hence the sheep carved above the door) was the first pub in the district with the 'long bar' system. It was rebuilt in 1897 (W. & T. R. Milburn, architects from Sunderland). The ha'penny dodger and penny ferries plied from the New Quay to South Shields, as does the modern ferry, and the New Cut (now Borough Road) was created in the 1840s, as a route for passengers between the ferry and the railway, which had arrived in Shields in 1839 and has since been adapted for the Metro.



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The New Quay was once 'one of the busiest places in the town' thanks to the Customs House, Shipping Office and Sailors' Home, with chandlers, grocers, fruiterers and butchers all catering to private trade as well as shipping. Here was held the market, and the fairs, and this district was so busy that it used to be said that 'you had not been in Shields unless you had been on the [New] Quay, along the Low Street to the Wooden Bridge, up Union Street and along Tyne Street.'



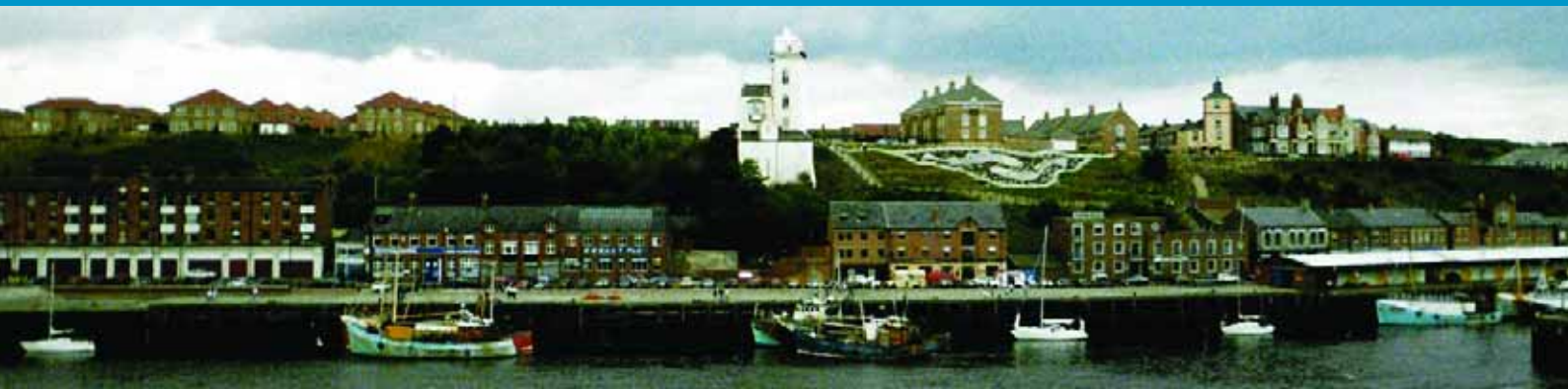
From 1850, when the Tyne Improvement Commission was established, a programme of works was begun to improve the navigability of the river. These improvements assisted the development of the fishing, as well as shipping and allied industries and, in 1870, work on the present Fish Quay began. Also known as the Gut, this was constructed at the mouth of the Pow Burn to provide fishing vessels with facilities to unload catches and take on supplies. The jetty was built to protect boats from the sea, as the tide race here is very strong. Subsequently the number of fishing boats using the port grew very rapidly and the quay had to be enlarged several times in the first 20 years of its life. The first market sheds were built in 1871 as protection from the weather, with new sheds and offices being added over the years.

Supporting trades also found homes around the Fish Quay. Boats were built and repaired, and masts, blocks, ropes, nets, chains and anchors were made to fit them out. The fishermen, and other crews calling at Shields bought food, drink and clothes, as well as charts and navigation instruments. As now, catches had to be traded, processed (by salting or smoking, for instance) and transported to distant markets.

Bell's Court (1927, Tynemouth Corporation Housing Architect) now Quayside Court, was built to rehouse people displaced by improvement of the Pant Street and Bird's Yard area on the bank top. There were stores on the ground floor because the Council did not believe people should live on a level with the Low Street. The nett effect of the slum clearances of the 1930s was to reduce the resident population. Large numbers of people were moved to the Balkwell and Ridges estates. Services followed the people or folded, as St Peter's, the 'Sailor's Church' did though its remains are still at the bottom of Borough Road. A number of industries have deserted these areas leaving little trace and these include canning, brewing, tanning, salt making, pottery, iron founding, fish-manure making and gas supply.

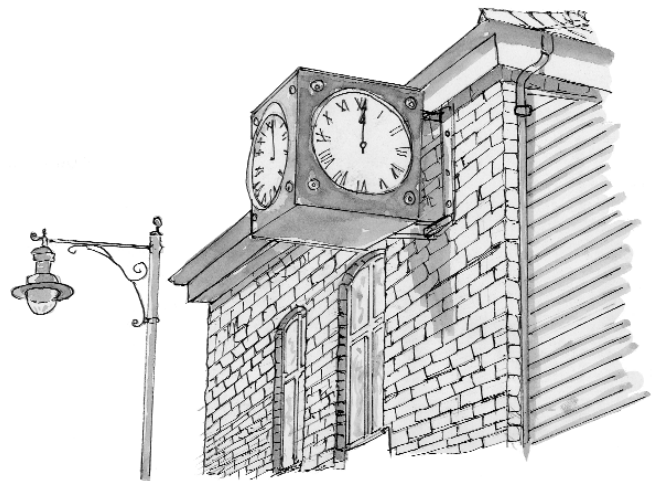
More detailed information about the rich history and archaeology of the settlement can be found in the report, 'Small Towns Survey for North Shields,' produced by the County Archaeologist in 2003.

Literary and artistic connections



The particular character of the area, and the harsh conditions endured by those earning their living from fishing and the sea, have inspired visual artists and writers of both fiction and fact.

Painters such as J. Wilson Carmichael, George Horton, Robert Jobling, John D. Liddell, Victor Noble Rainbird, John Falconer Slater, Bernard and Thomas Hemy, John Mogford, Stephen Brownlow, Frederick Davison and J. M. W. Turner have left us with wonderful images of the past. Their pictures demonstrate both changes and continuities in buildings, and that the present character of the area was established centuries ago.



Peter Mortimer's book 'The Last Of The Hunters' details the tough reality of day-to-day life during his recent time on a trawler fishing out of North Shields, whilst Robert Westall's books, such as 'The Promise' and 'Kingdom by the Sea', refer to the Fish Quay and the New Quay areas providing a fictionalised account of the district as it was more than half a century ago. A worker in the local fishing industry, Tom Hadaway wrote a portfolio of plays including 'The Filleting Machine' and 'The Long Line' as well as contributing to the TV series, 'When the Boat Comes In'.

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The areas are also home to a number of pieces of artwork. Outside the New Dolphin public house the Dolphin Mooring Post is a replica of those which were once common in the Tyne, complete with a cormorant on top drying its wings. There are two large cod frolicking on Nater's Stairs, designed by Maggie Howarth and sculpted by Richard Broderick and Graham Robinson. The small mosaic creatures around the cod were made by local school children.

FreeForm Arts Trust can be credited with these as well as with decorative street furniture along Union Quay and Bell Street including railings, benches, bollards and streetlights, and the metal grilles in the wall enclosing the fish quay and market. These grilles, designed by Maureen Black, depict herring girls at work.

Martyn and Jane Grubb's Wooden Dolly stands beside the Prince of Wales Tavern, and there is another Wooden Doll outside the public house that now bears that name. Robert Olley's Stan Laurel is the centrepiece for Dockwray Square.

The first of a series of Wooden Dolls was installed on the Low Street nearly 200 years ago but the works of public art detailed above are relatively recent creations that have already become an essential ingredient of the overall streetscape. More public art and other street furniture would be welcome, though the artefacts either need to be of a size large enough to deter vandalism or removal, or funds set aside to provide replacements.





The New Quay and The Fish Quay in the present

Since the adjacent ship yards closed, the New Quay's market place is used solely as a car park and the road is, at present, a through route only for pedestrians and cyclists to and from the ferry landing, the link between the two Shields. The area is something of a residential backwater; the bustle is no more. One pub remains, The Porthole, noted for its jazz nights.

The Fish Quay is a rugged, hardworking area with commercial activity in the setting of a number of historic structures. It has its own characters, as well as a character that is conveyed not only by the sights but by the smells of the sea, the fish frier and the restaurants, and the sounds of the boats' engines throbbing and gulls crying overhead. Changes to the street-scene facilitate al fresco eating, when the weather permits, and outdoor stalls which all add to the atmosphere.

The Fishermen's Mission on Union Quay, along with the array of wet fish shops, is a powerful reminder that the Fish Quay is still a working environment. The North Shields white fishing industry may have declined so the Gut is less crowded than formerly, but the essence of the Fish Quay remains. This is England's premier prawn port and it is home to the country's only fish filleting training school. Indeed, fish are brought from other ports to the processing facilities in North Shields. Steeped in history, but inevitably subject to change, the Fish Quay continues to feed the national appetite for fish.



Although some people might like to see a marina here, discussions with the local fishermen regarding the Gut confirmed that conditions there are not suitable for mixing pleasure craft and working fishing boats. The main problems are:

- The movement of working boats
- The large variation between high and low tide
- The need to employ watchmen to tend to the vessels
- The large amounts of debris deposited in the Gut by the tide and flood water
- It has been known for the Gut to be packed solid with ice floes following a sudden thaw on the upper reaches of the river, which endanger small craft.

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Recent regeneration has increased the resident population, especially at the New Quay and Dolphin Quays, though not to former levels, and there are no schools in the conservation areas. However, the Fish Quay is recognised as a valuable educational resource by both local and distant schools and children play a major part in the colourful, annual Fish Quay Festival, which attracts thousands of visitors to the area.

The High and Low Lights are icons of the Tyne in general and North Shields in particular. They have been superseded as navigational lights but are still landmarks used by mariners and pedestrians alike to find their way. The long-established nautical instrument manufacturer John Lilley and Gillie Limited, at Clive Street, is important both nationally and internationally and safety is the continuing concern of the operational Lifeboat Station by the Low Light.



The open spaces in the vicinity have their own nature conservation designations and, as plants and wild animals do not respect boundaries, the green and the built-up areas influence each other. The steep banks between Union Quay and Tyne Street, and between Clive Street and Yeoman Street, are designated as protected public open space within the Council's Unitary Development Plan. The green area leading from the river up Tanners Bank right up to the Metro line and Northumberland Park, and the River Tyne itself, are identified in the Tyne and Wear Nature Conservation Strategy as Wildlife Corridors and Wildlife Links. The foreshore area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and an area from the mouth of the Tyne down to the Black Middens is a Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site with international significance. Providing a variety of habitats, this site of regional nature conservation importance is identified by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

With a mix of river traffic, industry, leisure, nature, history and housing, the Fish Quay and the New Quay form a vibrant area with something of interest for everyone. There are a number of traditional pubs and excellent fish restaurants which attract local trade and customers from afar, including cyclists for whom the area is the 'first and last watering-hole' on the Coast to Coast (C2C) cycle route. Yet the Fish Quay continues as the local fishing industry's working environment. Here, work, living, leisure and safeguarding the environment need to sit comfortably side by side.





Seeking the community's ideas

To identify the character of the conservation areas more precisely, and how local conditions and developments contribute to or detract from that character, a workshop was held at the Fishermen's Mission on the Fish Quay on June 4th 2005. The event was publicised by articles in local papers, posters on notice boards in libraries and churches, and by distributing leaflets door to door as well as to visitors to the Fish Quay Festival.

A questionnaire was designed for completion by local residents, business people and visitors. This was used at the workshop to capture the views of those involved, and was made available to local businesses via the Chamber of Commerce.

Local schools contributed to the consultation by way of an art competition in the 2005 summer term, and in the autumn term a workshop was held for them. The children were asked to identify aspects of the area contributing to its character, and what they considered to be particularly good or bad features. Two workshop sessions were held at which questions were answered via a TV remote control style keypad. The computerised results were then displayed within minutes in pie-chart form. The report that was also generated allowed these young peoples' views to be incorporated into this document together with elements of the artwork from the competition.



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Current perception of the area: overarching themes

Key themes and concerns were common to all parts of the two conservation areas and were identified by a large majority of participants.

First impressions matter greatly, and with careful planning and maintenance the approaches, from Tanners Bank to the Tennyson Terrace stairs, can be both attractive to visitors and beneficial to wildlife. The banksides are a vital green corridor for the borough, inhabited by an astonishing range of species, but regeneration of tall vegetation near the bank top needs to be suppressed to keep open the views from areas like Yeoman, Howard and Tyne Streets. Landscaping in line with North Tyneside Biodiversity Action Plan should enhance habitats while retaining vistas. It is even more important to stop buildings from obscuring the views. Events like the Tall Ships Races would have had far less impact on Tyneside if no-one could have seen the ships, but it is not just at special times that the banktop streets draw people to drink in the views.

Projects like 'Working Above the Shops' and the rejuvenation of Vita House are already improving the appearance of the area, preserving some of the buildings that give Union Quay its character. More such work is needed, and every encouragement needs to be given to owners to maintain all aspects of their premises in good order. All new developments should also be carried out in line with the area's traditional characteristics.



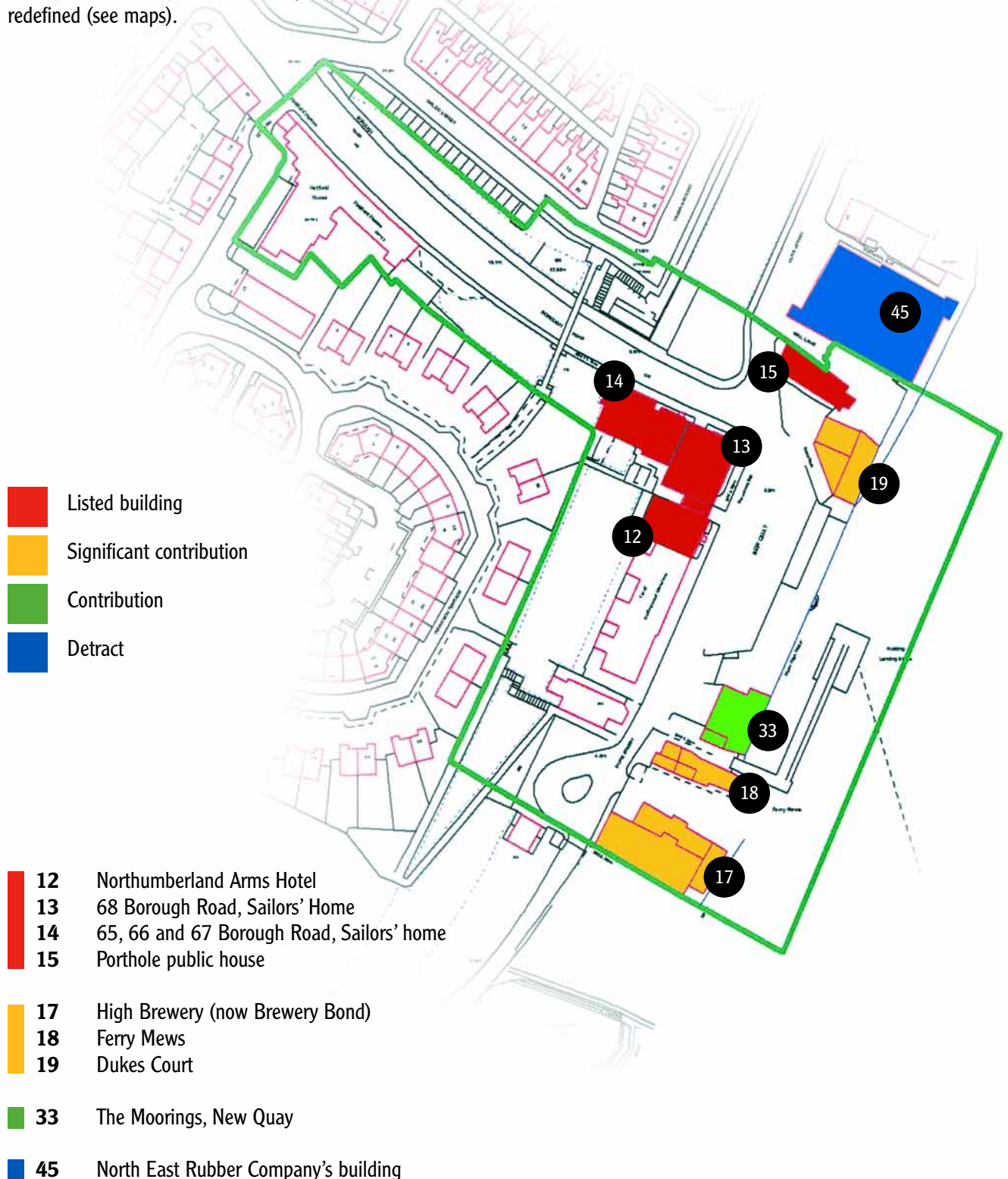


Traffic management is also critical in these constricted areas: lorries and other working vehicles need to operate around the working quay and industrial buildings without endangering pedestrians or the cycles, cars and buses of visitors. Restrictions are needed to minimise through traffic but without introducing too many road markings, signs or bollards.

Visitors need more to do and places to shelter, as well as more retail and commercial outlets. Much can be made of the history of the area, and more, well-maintained, public art should be provided. With constraints on through traffic, the area would become even more pleasant for walks and welcoming to wheelchair users and cyclists. The conservation area would thus become even more of a resource for education and for health for all age groups and abilities.

Current perception of the area: detailed considerations

Together the two conservation areas cover a lot of ground (see map inside the front cover). To accommodate this, workshop participants divided into groups, each considering a particular section in detail. The consultation's findings follow, though for ease of reporting the sections have been redefined (see maps).





The New Quay

Once a market, the New Quay is a magnificent space framed by a set of impressive buildings. In contrast to the Fish Quay, the dominant building material here is natural sandstone and this is a major contributor to the atmosphere.

The north side of the Quay is especially imposing. The centre of the block is one of the original buildings, the Northumberland Arms (1806, David Stephenson) sympathetically extended to the west in the late 1980s/early 1990s to create Collingwood Mansions. The new block balances the Sailors' Home (1851, Benjamin Green) on the other side of the old Northumberland Arms but should, ideally, have been of natural stone. To the east of the Quay is the Porthole pub which, though not of stone, is of the quality that few but brewers could afford by the 1890s. The houses to its south and the buildings along Ferry Mews, almost all nineteenth-century and mostly of sandstone, harmonise well with each other and their setting. From the river, the ghosts of other, industrial buildings in the walling along the quay edge display the area's busy past.

To the west is the Brewery Bond, saved in 2001 by adaptation of the derelict High Brewery (rebuilt in 1871), but only the façade of the Chain Locker public house is being preserved. (This was originally The Crane House, rebuilt 1904-5 to designs by Joseph Oswald and Son). Both have been incorporated into new flats and opinion is divided on how well the modern elements marry with the older fabric, or with the neighbouring buildings. Some people believe that a more traditional approach would have been preferable, while others feel that good modern design can work in these situations if it is of very high quality, understanding and respecting the historical context.



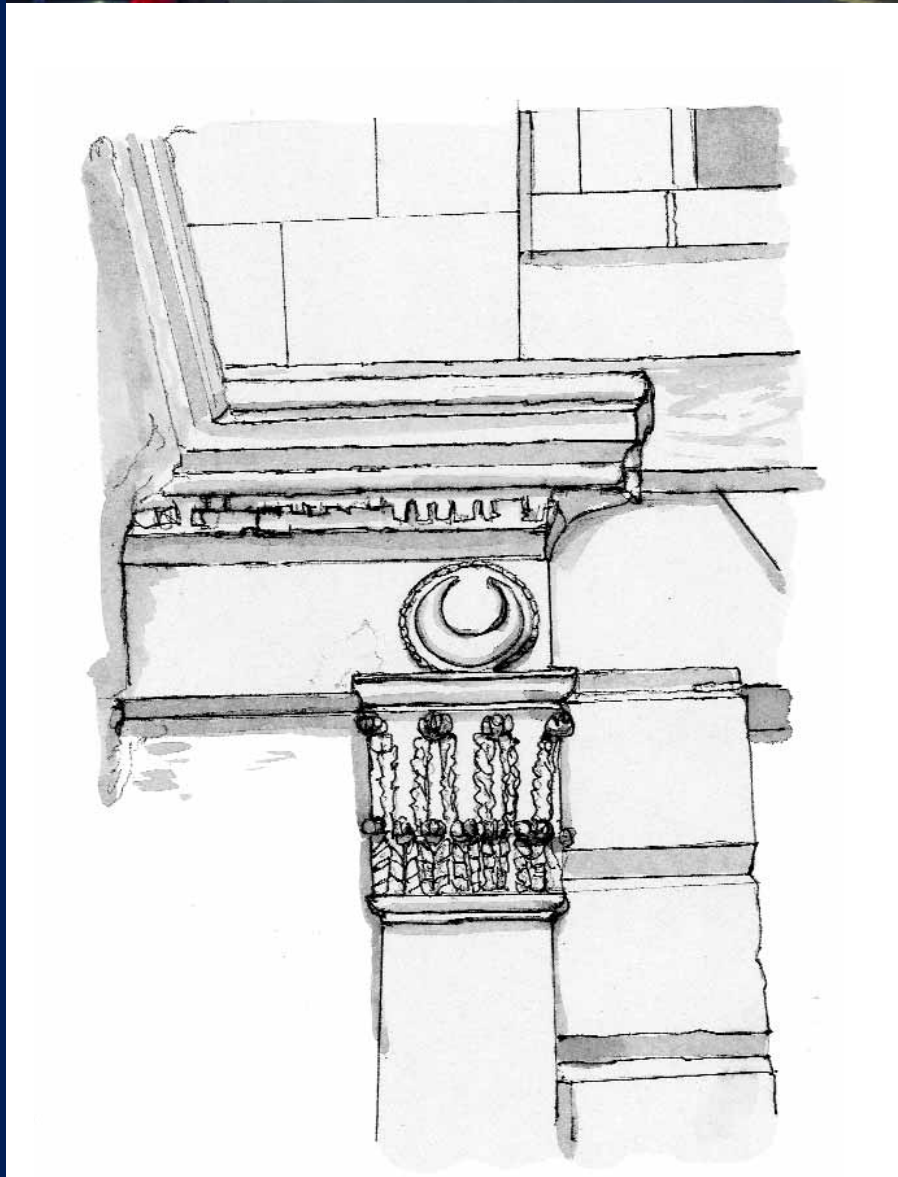
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The surviving setts in the drive of the Sailors' Home and on the car park are in keeping with the New Quay. If more setts could be found and laid in the New Quay this would enhance the area. On the Borough Road the retaining walls and bridge abutments are of massive stone blocks that match the buildings and unite the area with an air of 'solidity' and 'quality' that it is important to maintain. The iron bridge, connecting the ropery banks and part of the cycle route, is another important contributor to the character of the New Quay conservation area.

Hatfield House, at the top of the conservation area, is a modern building that retains the general shape and bulk of George Otto and Co.'s bonded warehouse, which it replaced. Here, a building of such size was appropriate. Opposite, but just out of the conservation area, is the clubhouse for the Tyne Steam Packet Provident Society (1897, Davidson & Bendle), another reminder of the importance of shipping to this part of town.

Just past the Porthole, on Clive Street, is the now unoccupied North East Rubber Company building, a large, modern structure out of keeping with the area and due for redevelopment. This is a very sensitive site and whatever is built must be of a scale that does not overshadow the Porthole or it will endanger the present character of the New Quay, especially as seen by passengers emerging from Ferry Mews (built in the late 1870s to house waiting rooms and offices for the steam ferry). Similarly, the way that the Smith's Dock site to the west is developed must leave the New Quay as the dominating feature of the river front. Looking from the Porthole towards Duke Street, the New Quay should catch one's eye, not the new buildings beyond.





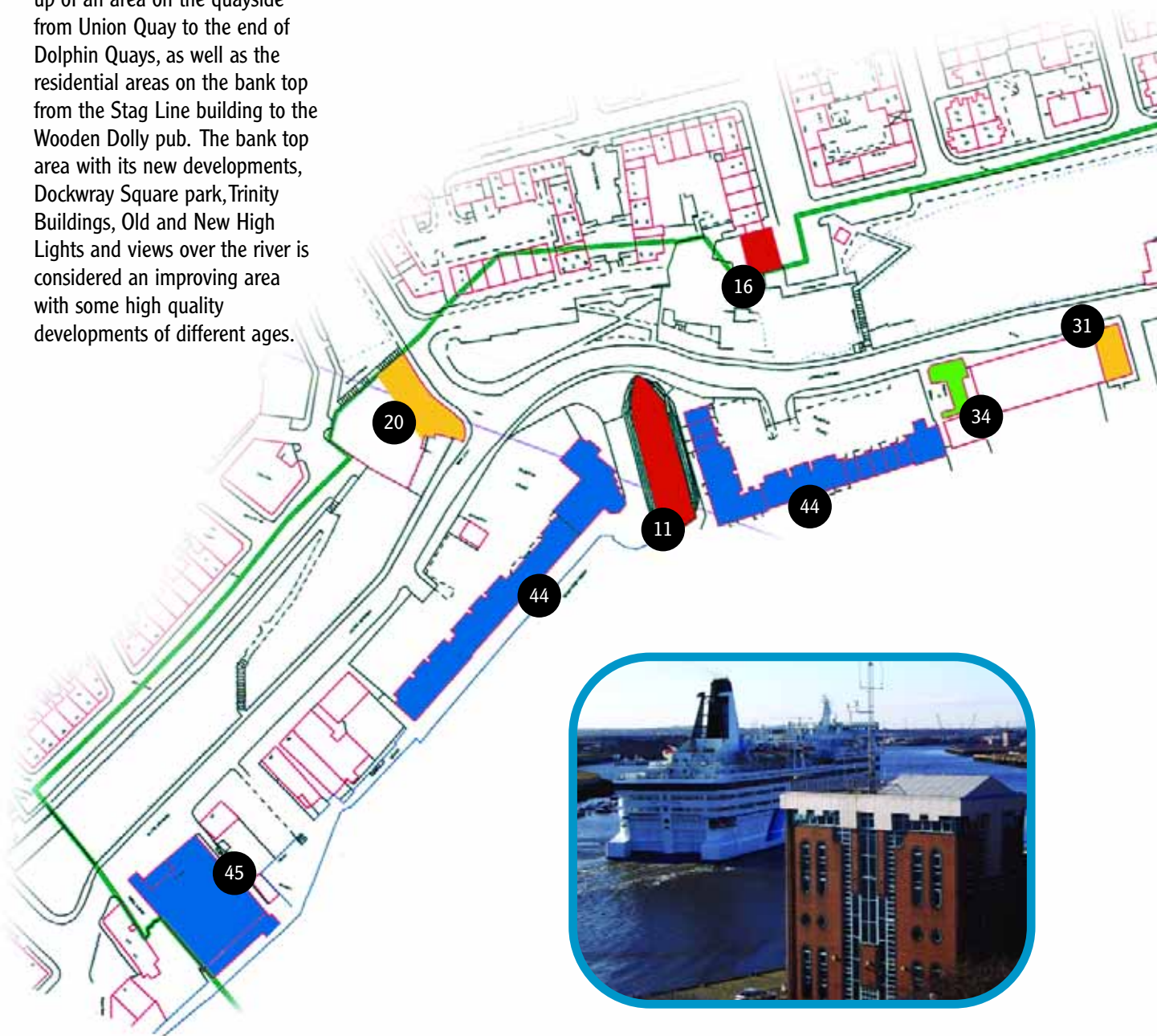
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Residential corridor

The residential corridor is made up of an area on the quayside from Union Quay to the end of Dolphin Quays, as well as the residential areas on the bank top from the Stag Line building to the Wooden Dolly pub. The bank top area with its new developments, Dockwray Square park, Trinity Buildings, Old and New High Lights and views over the river is considered an improving area with some high quality developments of different ages.



- Listed building
- Significant contribution
- Contribution
- Detract



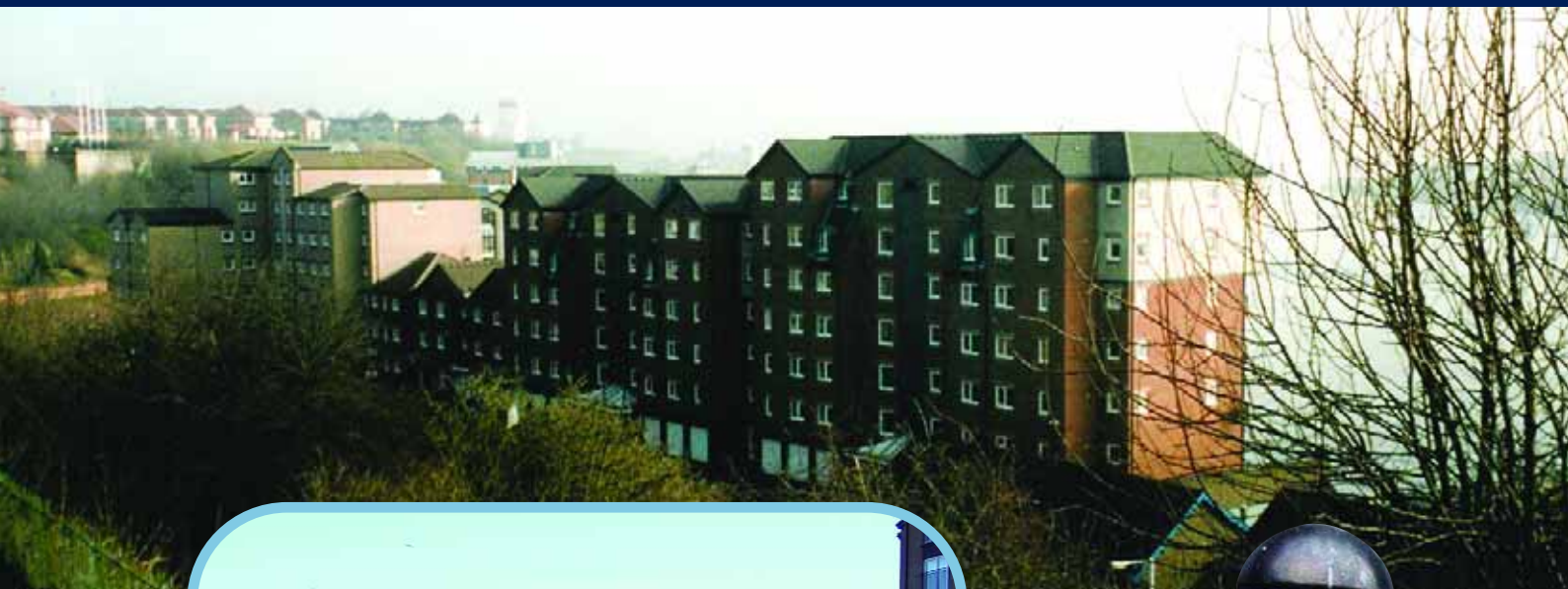
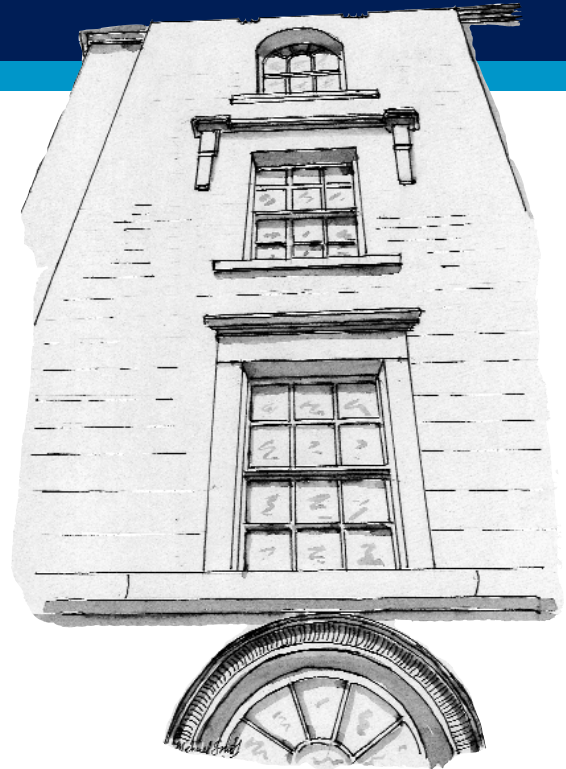
- 4 Beacon House (Old High Light)
- 5 New High Light and house attached
- 11 Low Dock
- 16 Stag Line Building (Maritime Chambers)
- 20 Grieves building and stairs
- 21 Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen
- 22 Wight's Shipping Grocer, 1 Union Quay
- 23 Riverview Fisheries, Kristians Restaurant, 2-6 Union Quay
- 24 Kristians Takeaway/Sambuca, 7-11 Union Quay
- 29 Wooden Doll public house, Hudson Street
- 30 2-6 Trinity Buildings
- 31 Neville House
- 32 Fish Quay sheds
- 34 The Prince of Wales Tavern (Old Wooden Doll), 2 Liddell Street
- 35 Quayside Court, Bell Street
- 36 Previous Irvin building, 17 Union Quay and buildings right along to the Irvin building
- 44 Dolphin Quays
- 45 North East Rubber Company's building
- 46 Ice factory tower



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The road at the bottom of the bank was, though, considered the bleakest part of the conservation area. Dolphin Quays has the appearance of a fortress, separating the public way from what is otherwise an open and communal area. It blocks the views to the river and restricts public access to the waterfront. Its height also goes against rather than with the contours of the ground, ironing out the difference between the upper and lower levels. Design cues should not be taken from these buildings. By contrast, the Union Stairs complex has an interesting roofline and gives the impression of being a series of units rather than a solid block. The canyon created by Dolphin Quays has few redeeming characteristics, other than the brick facing on the retaining wall and the light that is admitted where the preserved graving dock breaks the wall of buildings. This dock is a welcome reminder of the area's ship-repairing history.





Although they are not residential, the older buildings are of a more appropriate scale. Reflecting the topography, the handsome Grieves building at the corner of Lower Bedford Street was built in 1874 to the designs of F. R. N. Haswell, a prolific local architect. His work can also be seen in the Tynemouth and Preston Park Conservation Areas. The Prince of Wales Tavern is swamped by the high buildings that now surround it but is worthy of its rescue from demolition in 1992. This may have been the site of an inn from the seventeenth century (there is a date stone of 1674), and the rebuilding of 1927 (architect F.R.N.Haswell & Son) is notable for the high quality of its brickwork. The upper storey of the façade of smooth red brick and the back premises of rougher brick are in English garden wall bond, which is unusual for the 1920s. The lower portion of the façade is of dark green glazed brick in stretcher bond and is very neatly pointed. The ‘kneelers’ on the gables, the chimney stacks and the corbelling out of the chimney at the east end are also attractive. This is typical of the quality, materials and workmanship that define the key buildings in these areas.



The working Quay: Bell Street to Tanners Bank including Clifford's Fort, The Low Lights and The Foreshore

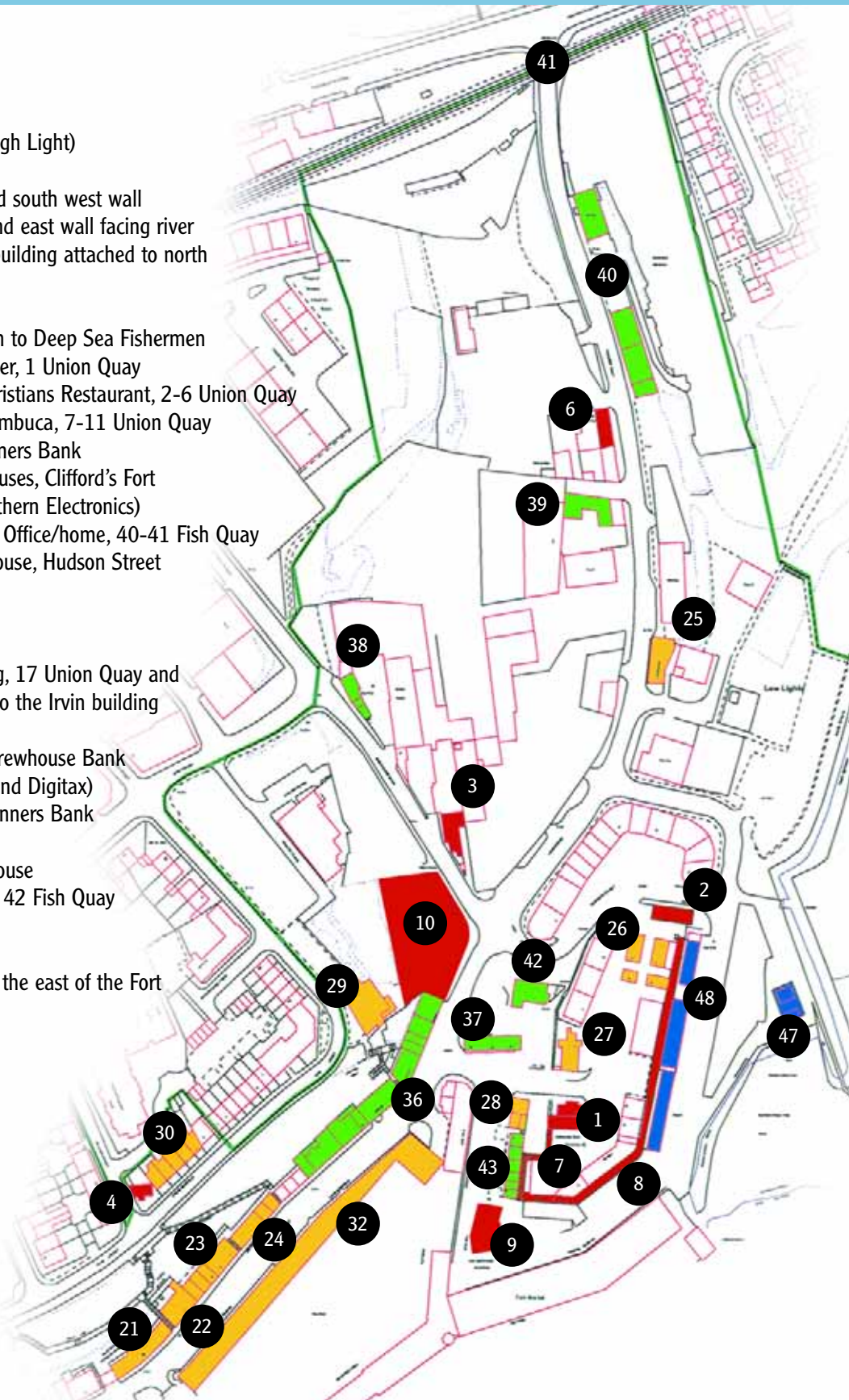
- 1 Old Low Light
- 2 Ballard's smokehouse
- 3 Low Lights Tavern
- 4 Beacon House (Old High Light)
- 6 The Old Maltings
- 7 Clifford's Fort west and south west wall
- 8 Clifford's Fort south and east wall facing river
- 9 Low Lighthouse and building attached to north
- 10 Irvin Building

- 21 Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen
- 22 Wight's Shipping Grocer, 1 Union Quay
- 23 Riverview Fisheries, Kristians Restaurant, 2-6 Union Quay
- 24 Kristians Takeaway/Sambuca, 7-11 Union Quay
- 25 Caley's Chandlers, Tanners Bank
- 26 Mine Stores/Smokehouses, Clifford's Fort
- 27 Barrack building (Southern Electronics)
- 28 Former Quay Master's Office/home, 40-41 Fish Quay
- 29 Wooden Doll public house, Hudson Street
- 30 2-6 Trinity Buildings
- 32 Fish Quay Sheds

- 36 Previous Irvin Building, 17 Union Quay and buildings right along to the Irvin building
- 37 Vita House
- 38 Industrial buildings, Brewhouse Bank
- 39 Ex-smoke house (behind Digitax)
- 40 Industrial buildings, Tanners Bank
- 41 Metro bridge
- 42 New Dolphin public house
- 43 Northern Print Studio, 42 Fish Quay

- 47 Old Lifeboat House
- 48 Industrial buildings to the east of the Fort

- Listed building
- Significant contribution
- Contribution
- Detract



The Gut, Union Quay and Bell Street

The Gut, Union Quay and Bell Street form an area favoured by artists and photographers when composing portraits of the Fish Quay, as many see it as representing the character and essence of the quays between the New Quay and the Fish Quay. The character of this part of the conservation area derives from many features, some quite small, such as traditional paving and kerbs, the variety of mooring bollards along the quay edge or the winch blocks at upper-storey loading doors. Features such as these must be maintained even when redundant: they are more than decoration, having been essential to the workings of the area.

The Fish Market is located downstream of the jetty and on the landward side of the Gut the net shed presents a nearly solid barrier to the public with tantalising glimpses through the grilles. The public is naturally interested in this area and as much visual access as possible should be accommodated. The outside of the shed wall might benefit from some embellishment.



The shop occupied by Wm. Wight's Shipping Grocers was originally the Highlander public house, rebuilt in 1878 to the design of H. Miller. Though now altered to a degree, it still retains interesting architectural details that with the outdoor stall and other features all add to the character of the area. Between this well known shop and the Irvin Building the run of buildings is of particular significance in providing character as they were built specifically to be useful to the fishing and allied trades. They are of the right scale for their site and have been adapted readily into restaurants, for take-away fish and chips, and as wet fish shops. Their recent renovation to bring the upper floors back into use is welcomed. These, like the others on this side of the road, form a linear terrace broken only by stairways. Once past the net sheds, the buildings face an open expanse with unhindered public views across the river in marked contrast to the canyon effect further west along the Low Street.



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Another building that is right for its site is that of the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen (1952, George H. Gray & Partners). The design is inspired by the Modern Movement and its love of the nautical is reflected in the balconies, porthole windows and curved frontage. Its scale and materials are also appropriate.

More recent still, the Northern Sole responds to the nature of the area by its materials, height and reproduction loading door and pulley block on the top floor. Compared with the rougher nature of neighbouring buildings the façade is flattened by having its windows nearly flush with the wall. The elevation would have been livelier had the windows been set back into a reveal.

The Irvin building (1913, Hope & Tasker) divides opinion, being marked down almost equally as positive and negative but its greatest drawback, at the time of writing, is its state of dilapidation and this is remediable. It stands as a monument to the fishing industry at its height, when such a large building was needed and when there was both money and pride enough for the decoration of the offices. The removal of the redundant ice factory on Bell Street would meet widespread approval.

The stairways are important to the character of the whole of these conservation areas. Their names remind us of long gone people and businesses and they are most concentrated here. Sadly and causing some inconvenience, those linking Yeoman Street and Clive Street were destroyed in the process of stabilising the bank, and the stair north of the Stag Line building was lost in the Union Square development. Where practical, perhaps at the site of St. Peter's Church, these should be reinstated. The others must be maintained, even if, as happened to

Library Stairs, their course needs changing slightly. At times

like the Fish Quay Festivals they act as safety valves allowing crowds to disperse. The names and routes also preserve the history of the area. Displaying the stair names at both top and bottom would help people find their way and inform them about local history.



The wind would blow
The sand would glide
The boats would come
and go.
The fish would swim
the birds would smile
and the rats were down
below.



The Low Lights: Clifford's Fort and Tanners Bank

The area around Clifford's Fort and Tanners Bank contains most of the oldest buildings in these conservation areas, and is notable for variety and idiosyncrasy in architecture. Whilst buildings should not be preserved purely because of their age, most of these are valuable, often because they have served a number of purposes already.



Clifford's Fort, a scheduled ancient monument, is on English Heritage's national 'Buildings At Risk' Register. Because it has suffered from vandalism and unauthorised works it is designated as a 'priority C' (slow decay with no solution agreed). The local authority recognises it as a major heritage asset, in the 'Clifford's Fort Conservation Plan', needing a conservation led approach to secure its future. There is strong support in the local community for the renovation of the Fort with both restoration of the missing rampart sections and representation of the gatehouse. The mid-twentieth-century buildings are considered to detract from the Fort, but the mine stores, barracks building (Southern Electronics) and Old Low Light are important parts of the complex's military and river-related history.

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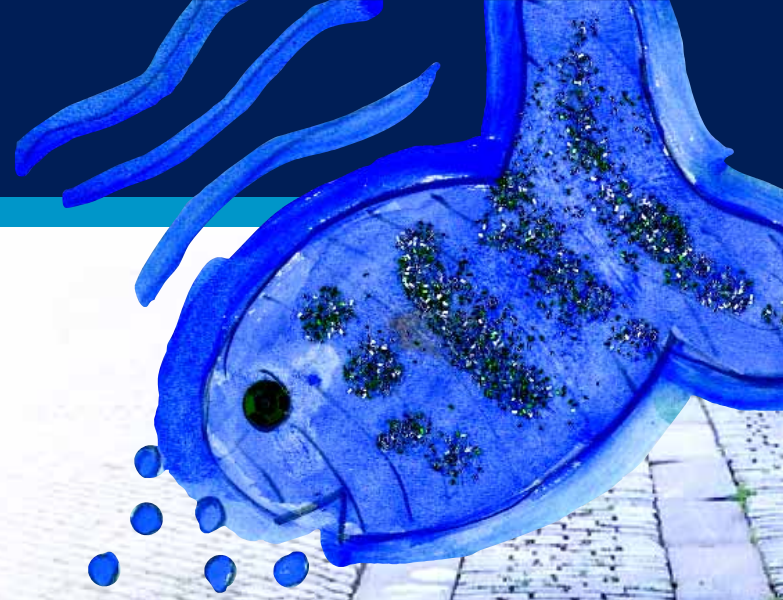


Beside the Fort the New Low Light dominates the area. Alongside this, the horse and cart tracks and setts are a rare relic and should be preserved. This section, together with a short piece between Vita House and the Fort, is all that remains of the tracks which once extended the full length of the conservation area including the four roads leading to the town and bank top. The setts were probably laid when the road was created in 1884, cutting off the Low Light from the river. This left one mooring ring high and dry, and this needs to be preserved, together with its stretch of quayside topped by a lively blue railing.

Once the Fort and its environs are cleared of irrelevant buildings the view of the river entrance from the Fort will be superb. Also the removal of the industrial buildings outside the east wall, in what was the moat or ditch, provides an opportunity to tidy up the breakwater region and improve the view of the Fort.



The Northern Print Studio demonstrates how well buildings can be adapted from their original fishing-related functions to accommodate new kinds of working space. The renovation celebrated the area's heritage with its wave-patterned balustrades and balcony, and fishy ridge tiles along the roof. The alleyway beside the Studio is paved with old setts, bordered by new fish-embossed pavors, and modern pavors that blend well with the setts. This is a good example of how to combine the preservation of old materials with appropriate use of new.





Beyond the alleyway (which leads to, and affords a glimpse of the Old Low Light) is a polychrome brick, Victorian Gothic building in a style popular for small railway stations. Once the home and office of the Quaymaster it was probably built in 1871 to the design of the Borough Surveyor, J.P. Spencer and is certainly an asset to the visual variety of this part of the Quay. Now rejuvenated, the nearby Vita House, originally part of the gas works, is also an asset. Beside Vita House is the New Dolphin pub, another building which is thought to have been recycled: it was possibly the winding house for the wagonway from Whitley Colliery to the

coal drop at the Low Lights. A little further north, the Caley Fisheries Ships' Chandlers (1913, John W. Meadows) was built in reinforced concrete as a store for R. Hastie & Sons who were seeking to avoid a repeat of the fire that had destroyed their previous building.



The very names of Tanners Bank and Brewhouse Bank conjure their productive past, though they now have large green areas which are part of the wildlife corridor. Although the return of tanning and guano works would not be welcome, these roads with their fragmented street frontages offer opportunities for sensitive infill developments. They would be suitable for light industrial and commercial use, such as the fish processing units under construction on the site of the old tannery.

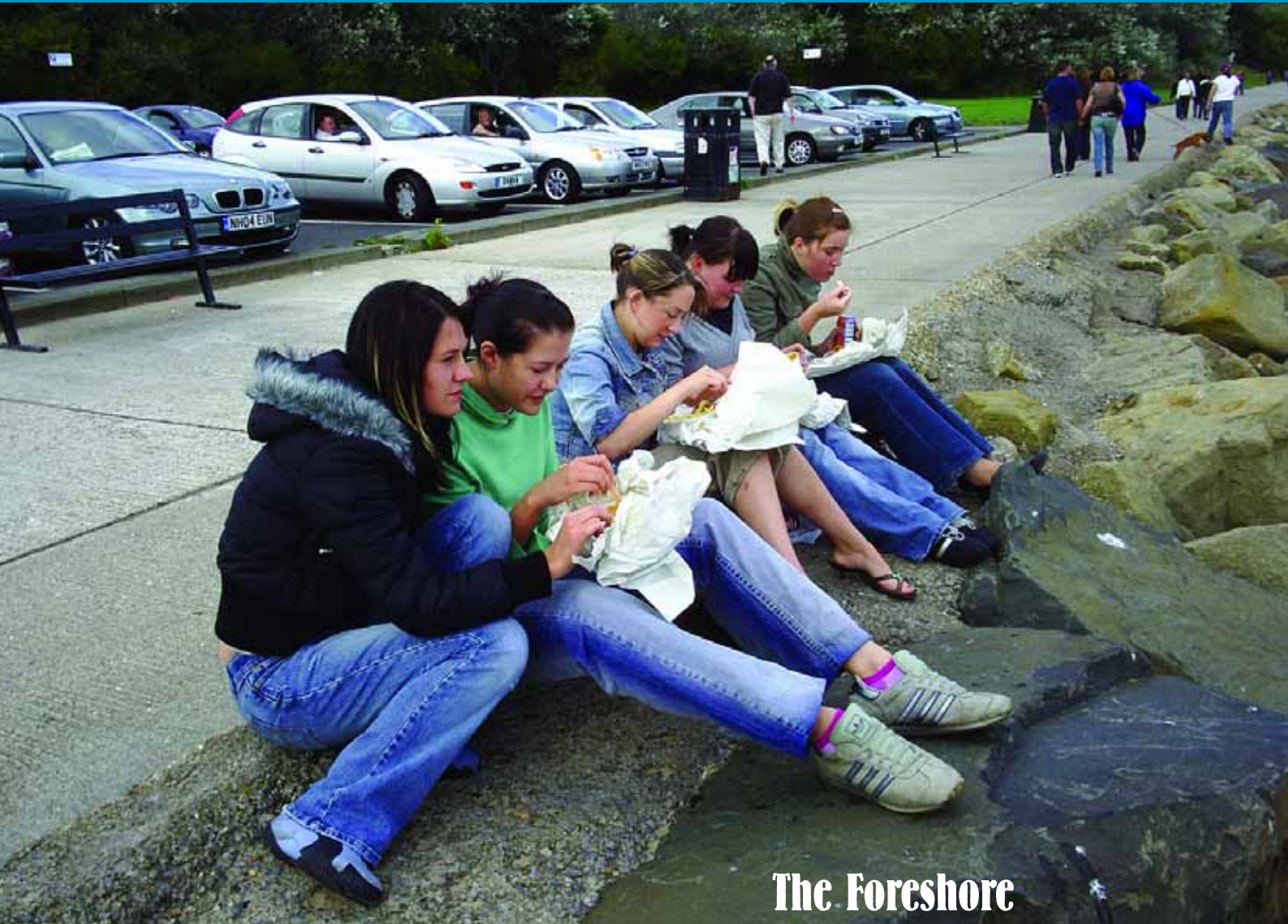
Where possible older buildings should be preserved and adapted, with any new buildings in sympathy with their sizes and materials. This is especially important for such gems as the Maltings on Tanners Bank (which incorporates an even earlier gable of hand made bricks with tumbling-in) and the Low Lights Tavern on Brewhouse Bank.

Construction work needs to be carried out in collaboration with archaeologists as the nature of the ground here may preserve much older remains. In 1819, during the construction of gas tanks in an area called the Salt Marsh, on the Pow Burn down stream of the tannery, an oak wharf or pier and a wooden pipe were found. In 1849, during sewer works, an old roadway was unearthed.



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The Foreshore



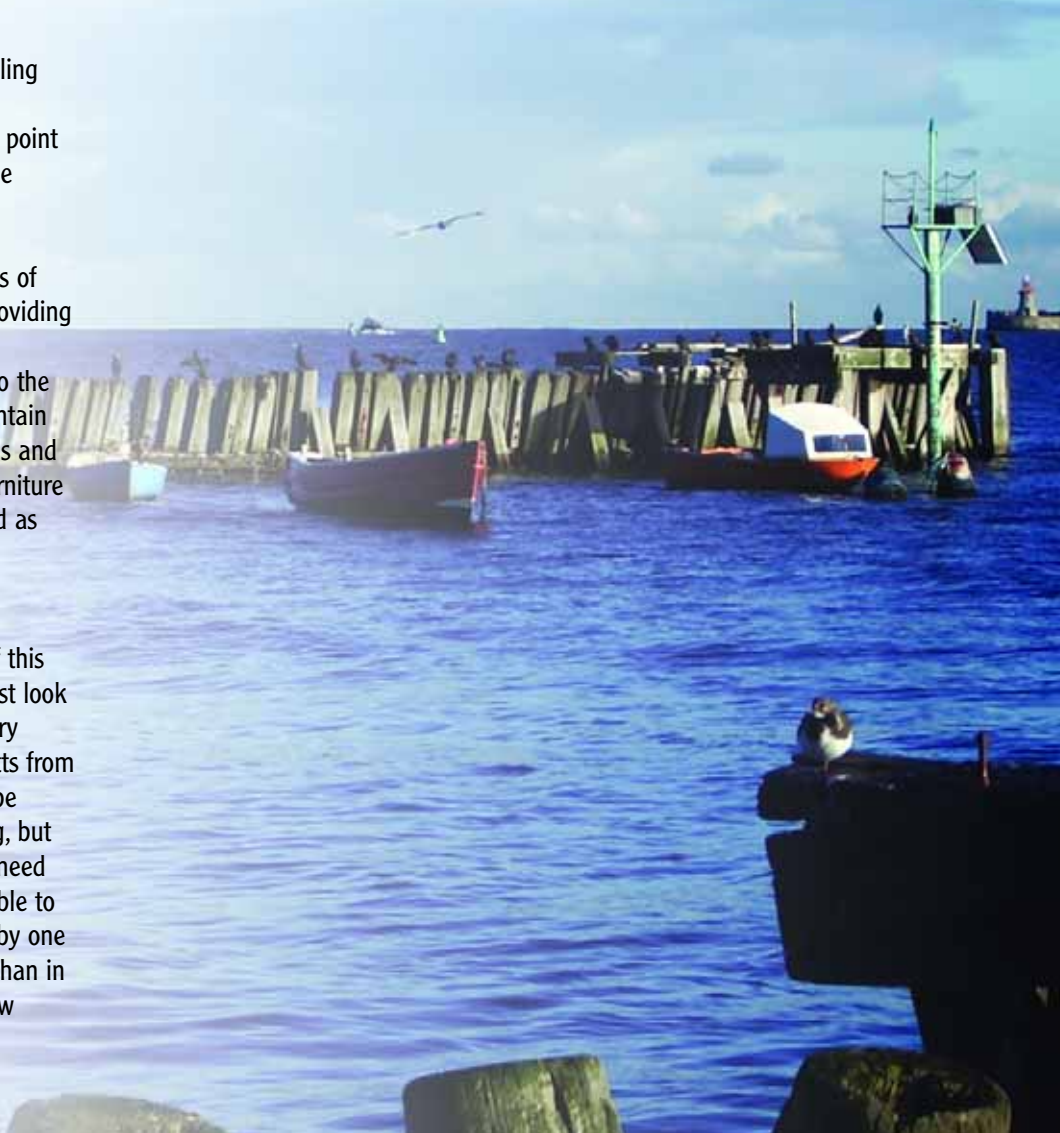
The foreshore is North Shields' beach and, although swimming is not recommended here, people do come to play on the sand. Many park to enjoy the views, fish and chips, and ice cream. It is also the starting point for walks, with or without dogs, and of bicycle rides on this section of the Coast to Coast route. Birdwatchers are drawn here, able to get close to normally wary species such as turnstone and sanderling. Depending on the state of the tide, bait diggers and anglers are also in evidence. With so many people using the area a high volume of rubbish is generated. This needs to be removed frequently and effectively if it is not to attract vermin.

This is still a working area that needs to be available to local fishermen to beach their boats for annual maintenance or repairs. With increasing numbers of visitors, car parking will need to be managed effectively if Lifeboat crews are to have unimpeded access to their station in emergencies.

Lloyds jetty is no longer used for hailing ships but it is a well known, historic landmark and an important roosting point for cormorants and gulls so should be retained.

Recent changes have improved views of shipping and wildlife on the river, providing an unobstructed vista, which is now enjoyed by inhabitants and visitors to the area. The objective should be to maintain this, avoiding unnecessary signboards and clutter. Essential signs and street furniture must be in keeping with the Fort and as unobtrusive as practical.

Creative but non-fussy paving and landscaping will enhance the look of this open area. Materials and plants must look smart and welcoming but survive very harsh conditions. Continuing the setts from the road near the Low Light would be appropriate and discourage speeding, but cyclists and wheelchair users would need their own track. It would be preferable to surface car parks in grass stabilised by one of the honeycomb materials, rather than in tarmac, to green the area and to slow down the run off after heavy rain.



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The character of the Fish Quay and the New Quay

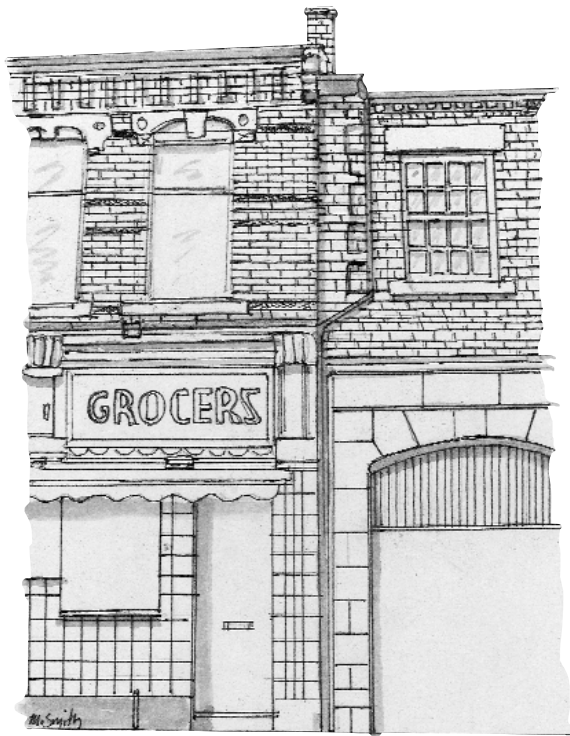
Various themes emerge from the above detailed consideration of the different sections of the two conservation areas. These themes should bear upon all future decisions about these areas and should also influence what changes are made in the areas surrounding them. The character of these areas has developed over the years and many parties from the Prior to the Dukes of Northumberland have contributed. More recently families such as the Irvins, Grieves and Hasties have made their mark, as have Trinity House, the RNLI, Lloyds and the RNMDSF. Thomas Clifford must not be forgotten, nor the Local and Port Authorities.

The character of the conservation areas stems from their site at the mouth of the Tyne that here runs in a deep, steep-sided ravine. Not surprisingly, part of the areas are in high risk Flood Zone 3. The geology has dictated the layout of the streets creating the drama of the streetscape with the different layers of buildings and the stunning views from the river and the banktops. Future developments must maintain the street layouts, preserve the views and conserve those positive aspects of the area that reflect its industrial, commercial, shipping and military history. They must also achieve a balance between the diverse current needs of the fishing industry, tourism and residents.

From the business perspective the Fish Quay is a working environment, and industry should take precedence over residential and visitor development. Maintaining existing working space here is essential for future sustainability. Sites need to be available close to where potential employees live to provide adequate space for modest growth, in expectation of an upturn in the fishing industry. Quayside working may not match normal working hours, a fact that needs to be recognised by any development proposals. The noises of engines and reversing alarms can be a problem for residents trying to sleep. Lorries and forklift trucks on/off-loading boats need the room to manoeuvre, and large commercial vehicles need access, without compromising the safety of pedestrians and other road users.

Increases in traffic from other leisure, commercial and residential activities will add to the problems. Special events such as the Fish Quay festival need careful management to minimise the impact on the fishing industry while maintaining public safety. Future small businesses need to be encouraged to cater for existing workers and residents, and to attract further visitors.





The development of Clifford's Fort as an attraction is seen as very worthwhile, and improving its setting as something to be supported. There is a need for a visitor centre near the Fort to provide an insight into the history of the Fort and the development of the area and port. The siting of a marine archaeology unit within the Fort's boundaries seems a good marriage. The area needs good parking facilities to take some of the strain off local and residential parking. As part of the developments the immediate surroundings of the Fort need to be improved with seating and picnic areas provided, looking out across the river mouth. Clifford's Fort is part of the lively scene visible from the banktops, and this must continue to be the case.



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The vision that came out of the character statement surveys was that of an appealing mix of cafes, bars, galleries, market and shops on the quayside supporting any visitor attractions and attracting business into the area. This would be a working environment that still provided a spectacle to visitors, as a link with or reminder of the past, whilst remaining pertinent to today's fishing industry.

As shown above, the area contains a range of structures. With their mixture of functions and materials together with their spread of periods this produces visual diversity across the different sections of the conservation areas. Any new developments should reflect these in type, scale, massing and quality. The height of new buildings must work with the topography and should be controlled very carefully to fit the context, respecting patterns of windows, eaves and rooflines. On the Low Street, new buildings should only exceed the heights of those that are being replaced if this is appropriate. The existing height variety is a very attractive characteristic of the Fish Quay. Against the bankside a maximum of three domestic storeys, plus pitched roof, for any part of a new building would keep open the views of the river and the bustle on the quay. It is also important that an interesting roofscape is presented, when viewed from above. This should, for example, be punctuated by chimney stacks and pots. A similar requirement should apply to any building sited nearer to the water but these should not exceed two storeys and roof. The visual relationships between the two pairs of lighthouses must also be protected and interpreted.



There are a number of listed buildings in these areas (see maps) and due regard must be given to them when any alterations are being considered as they are sensitive to changes in their context. Whether listed or not, traditional building materials should be used for all structures in the conservation areas: brick and natural stone. Remembering the importance of the way roofs here look from above as well as below, these should be of natural slate, or pantile where appropriate. Artificial 'slates' and concrete tiles lack subtlety of texture so deaden the appearance of the roofs reducing the overall quality. Turf roofs are energy efficient and reduce flood risk, and new technologies such as photovoltaic tiles also contribute to sustainability but should be used in visually unobtrusive ways. Any such innovations should be sited carefully where they can't be seen from above, as in the area off Tanners Bank where the new fish processing units are. Bay windows are a feature of older buildings that need to be retained, using traditional materials not the newer ones as used for more recent buildings along parts of Tyne Street. Windows should all be well proportioned and set back in an acceptable reveal. They should also be appropriately 'framed' by sandstone lintels or brick arches, for instance, in line with those in older buildings.





Aerial photographs show just how much green space there is in the conservation areas. Nothing should be done to affect this adversely. Most of it is in the public domain rather than in private gardens. If managed well, with low-maintenance native species of trees and shrubs, this will provide an open environment, foster wildlife and provide colour and interest. Most of the buildings in the conservation areas are deemed to be at risk at times of extreme flooding and planted areas have the added advantage of soaking up rainwater, slowing run-off into drains and watercourses and so reducing flood risks. Trees on the bank side should be kept low to keep open the views from the banktop. It is not only the river that is attractive, but also the sights of the quaysides and the roofscapes. Adequate provision needs to be made for gardens or 'off road' play areas for children such as open areas or parks as part of any residential scheme.

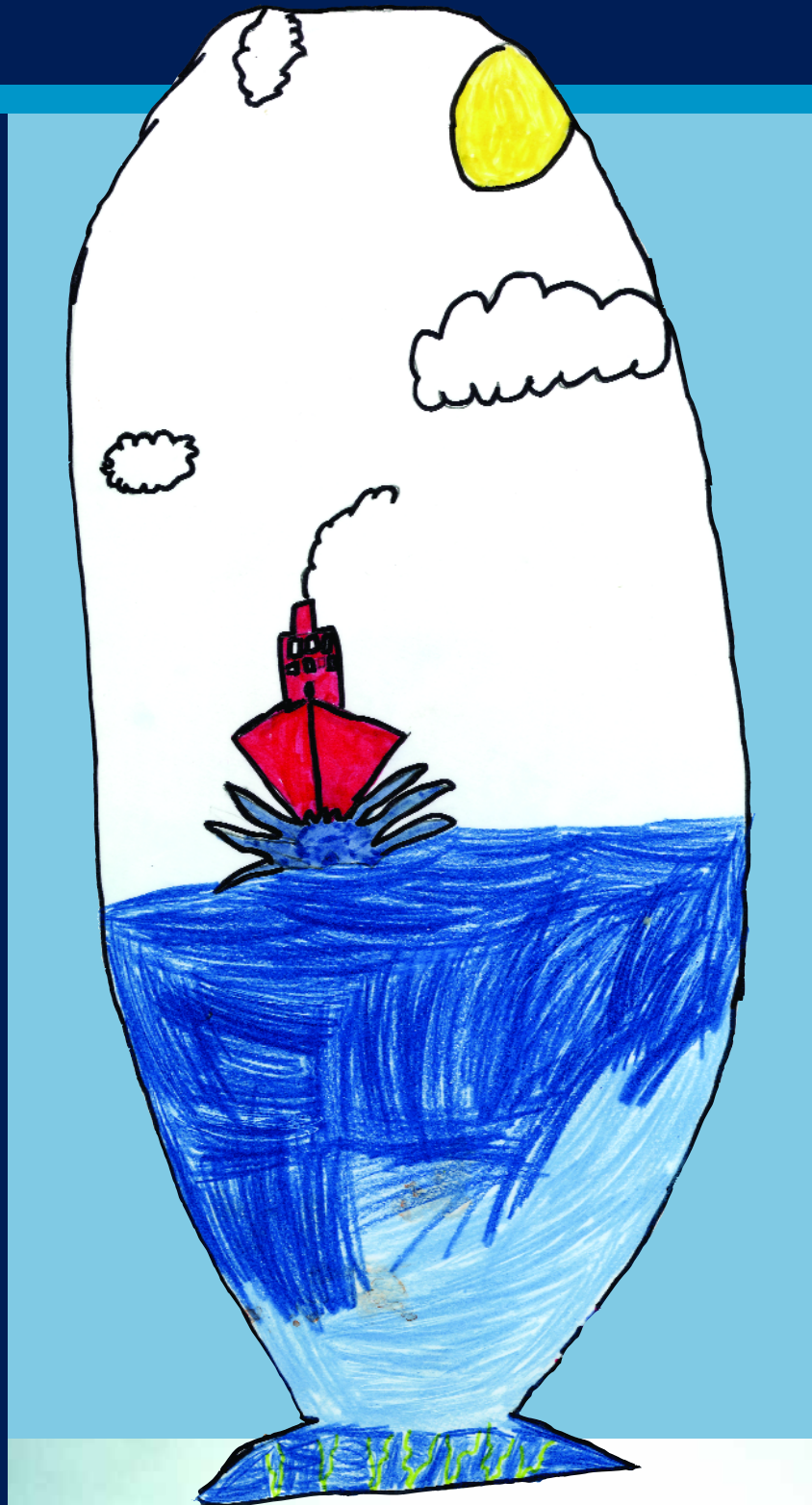
North Shields

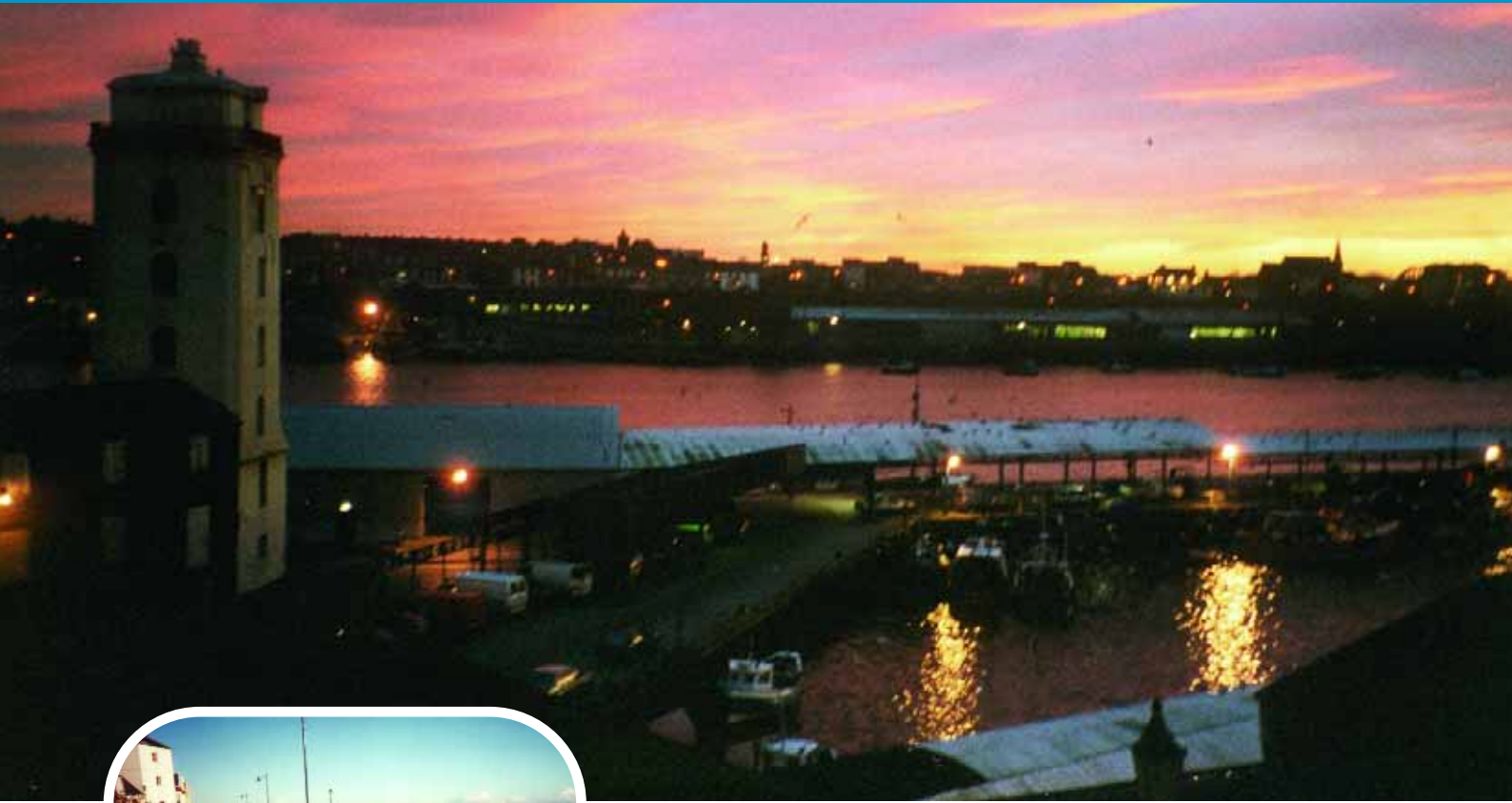
The New Quay and The Fish Quay Conservation Areas

The demands for continued improvements to pedestrian facilities and access, and the retention of public access to the waterside need to be given appropriate weighting. This will require that pedestrian and road approaches are kept in good repair and vegetation sympathetically controlled, requiring provision for better maintenance and upkeep of the area. Open spaces are important and should be uncluttered. So are mysterious nooks and gaps leading the eye to other buildings or spaces, giving the effect of a collage and increasing the visual interest. For pedestrians the area would be enhanced by having lively, active and visually stimulating street level building frontages to draw their eyes as they pass. Ornamental glasswork, including stained glass, should be used to brighten façades and the use of solid roller shutters should be discouraged.

New housing development should be controlled and must not be allowed to increase the already strained capacity for parking or increase traffic volumes through these areas. This, when combined with visitor and commercial requirements, may prove too much for the conservation areas' current infrastructure. Schemes should include realistic off-road car parking because, while reducing reliance on cars is the ideal, public transport is not adequate for present, let alone future, need. Past experience of festival crowds and town centre parking initiatives show that careful thought is needed to keep open entry to residents' and businesses' own parking places, and for unrestricted access by emergency services, pedestrians and wheelchairs.

The provision of additional visitor attractions, for example the proposed renovation of Clifford's Fort and suggestions such as an education centre or further art workshops will require: shelters, public toilets, additional cafes offering light refreshments, and increased public car park facilities, all of which will impact on both the working environment and local residents. Environmentally the hoped-for increase in business and visitors will also have to be catered for with litterbins for both business and visitors: type, size and programme of emptying will need to be tailored to reflect the changing needs of the area. Within new developments there should be space for keeping waste and recycling containers out of sight and secure from vermin and vandals.





Where relevant and when it can reasonably be expected, a commitment should be required from new development projects to the upkeep of the area. The creation of a maintenance fund directly related to, and of a fair size for, each development as part of initial funding would ensure that maintenance does not become an issue in the future. Well-maintained structures have a longer life so less impact on resources, maintain their own value, and enhance the value of the area.

These areas are blessed with views near and distant that change constantly with the weather and tide. Along their entire length they are bordered by open green spaces and the river, each of which supports a great variety of wildlife, including the ever-present gulls. Any future developments whether visitor, commercial or residential should understand and respect all of this as well as reflecting the local character of the built environment. Creative solutions to development opportunities will be needed that do not compromise design quality. Improvements must continue, but not to the point of over sanitising the area. It is, after all, primarily an operational port.



Glossary

Bond: The way the bricks or stones are arranged in building a wall etc. Wm. Wight's Shipping Grocer has examples of three bonds. The white bricks of the front demonstrate Flemish bond. On the side, up Nater's Stairs, the red bricks were laid in English garden wall bond then the window openings were filled in later using stretcher bond.

Corbelling: Brickwork that projects further from the wall in each successive course to support something such as a chimney stack, as in the east wall of the Prince of Wales, or an oriel window such as the one on the river front of Ferry Mews.

EDAW: The design firm founded by Garrett Eckbo. The name was coined during his partnership with Francis Dean, Don Austin and Edward Williams.

English garden wall bond: Three or four rows of bricks laid with the longer side showing (stretchers), alternating with single rows with the headers showing.

Façade: The face or frontage of a building.

Flemish bond: The bricks in each row alternate header and stretcher. The header in each row will be over the middle of the stretcher of the row below.

Gable: The triangular part of the wall that fills the end of a ridged roof. Sometimes capped by coping stones to protect the top of the wall from the weather.

Gothic/Victorian Gothic architecture: Gothic was the usual style of architecture in this country in the Middle Ages and is characterised by pointed arches, window openings and doors (as at Tynemouth Priory). This style was widely copied in the middle to late nineteenth century, as in the Quay Master's office and house, near the Low Light.

Graving dock: An earlier term for a dry dock, that is one with watertight gates so it can be pumped dry to allow work on the hull of the vessel in the dock. The Low Dock on Liddell Street is the oldest surviving graving dock on Tyneside.

Gut, The: The harbour created by the protection jetty that extends the Pow Burn's reach into the Tyne.

Header: The end or shortest face of a brick.

Kneeler: A large stone on the top corner of a wall and base of the gable that supports the coping stones of the gable and stops them sliding off. The buildings housing Kristian's Fish and Chip Restaurant, and their take-away department have stone kneelers. The Prince of Wales has brick kneeler shapes on its gables.

Oriel window: A window that projects from the wall. Unlike a bay window it overhangs so needs to be supported in some way.

Polychrome: Of more than one colour. In the Quay Master's office and house, for example, there are two shades of red bricks, white bricks, and stone.

Ramsar: The Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971.

Sett: Rectangular blocks of stone, often granite, used for paving.

Stretcher: A brick laid so that its longer side shows in the wall.

Stretcher bond: Bricks arranged so that all the rows show the long side of the brick. In each row the bricks will lie across the joints between the bricks in the row below.

Tumbling-in: Rows of bricks laid at a right angle to the slope of the gable. The downhill gable end of the Maltings includes an earlier, smaller gable with tumbled in bricks that is probably eighteenth century.

Wagonway: A road or line of rails on which coal wagons are run.

Buildings of note

The listed buildings in the Fish Quay and the New Quay conservation areas or adjacent to these:

Grade II	Old Low Lighthouse, Trinity House Almshouses and boundary stone attached
Grade II	Ballard' smokehouse (ex-military workshop)
Grade II	Low Lights Tavern
Grade II	Beacon House (Old High Light)
Grade II	New High Light and house attached
Grade II	The Old Maltings
Grade II*	Clifford's Fort west and south west wall
Grade II*	Clifford's Fort south and east wall facing the river
Grade II	Low Lighthouse and building attached to north
Grade II	Irvin Building
Grade II	Low Dock
Grade II	Northumberland Arms Hotel
Grade II	68 Borough Road, Sailors' Home
Grade II	65, 66 & 67 Borough Road, Sailors' Home
Grade II	Porthole public house
Grade II	Stag Line Building (Maritime Chambers)

Buildings that make a significant contribution to the conservation areas:

High Brewery (now Brewery Bond)	Ferry Mews
Dukes Court	Grieves building and stairs
Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen	Wight's Shipping Grocer, 1 Union Quay
Riverview Fisheries, Kristians Restaurant, 2-6 Union Quay	Caley's Chandlers, Tanners Bank
Kristians Takeaway/Sambuca, 7-11 Union Quay	Mine stores/smoke houses, Clifford's Fort
Barrack building, 10 Clifford's Fort (Southern Electronics)	Wooden Doll public house, Hudson Street
Former Quay Master's Office and house, 40-41 Fish Quay	2-6 Trinity Buildings
Neville House	Fish Quay sheds

Buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation areas:

The Moorings, New Quay
 The Prince of Wales Tavern (Old Wooden Doll), 2 Liddell Street
 Quayside Court, Bell Street
 Previous Irvin building, 17 Union Quay, and buildings right along to the Irvin building
 Vita House
 Industrial buildings on east side of Brewhouse Bank, including the former cottage designed for the Ice Factory foreman (1901, Mould and Tasker)
 Ex-smoke house behind Digitax, 31 Tanners Bank
 MB Circuits and the two similar industrial buildings on east side of Tanners Bank
 Metro bridge
 New Dolphin public house
 Northern Print Studio, 42 Fish Quay

Also important:

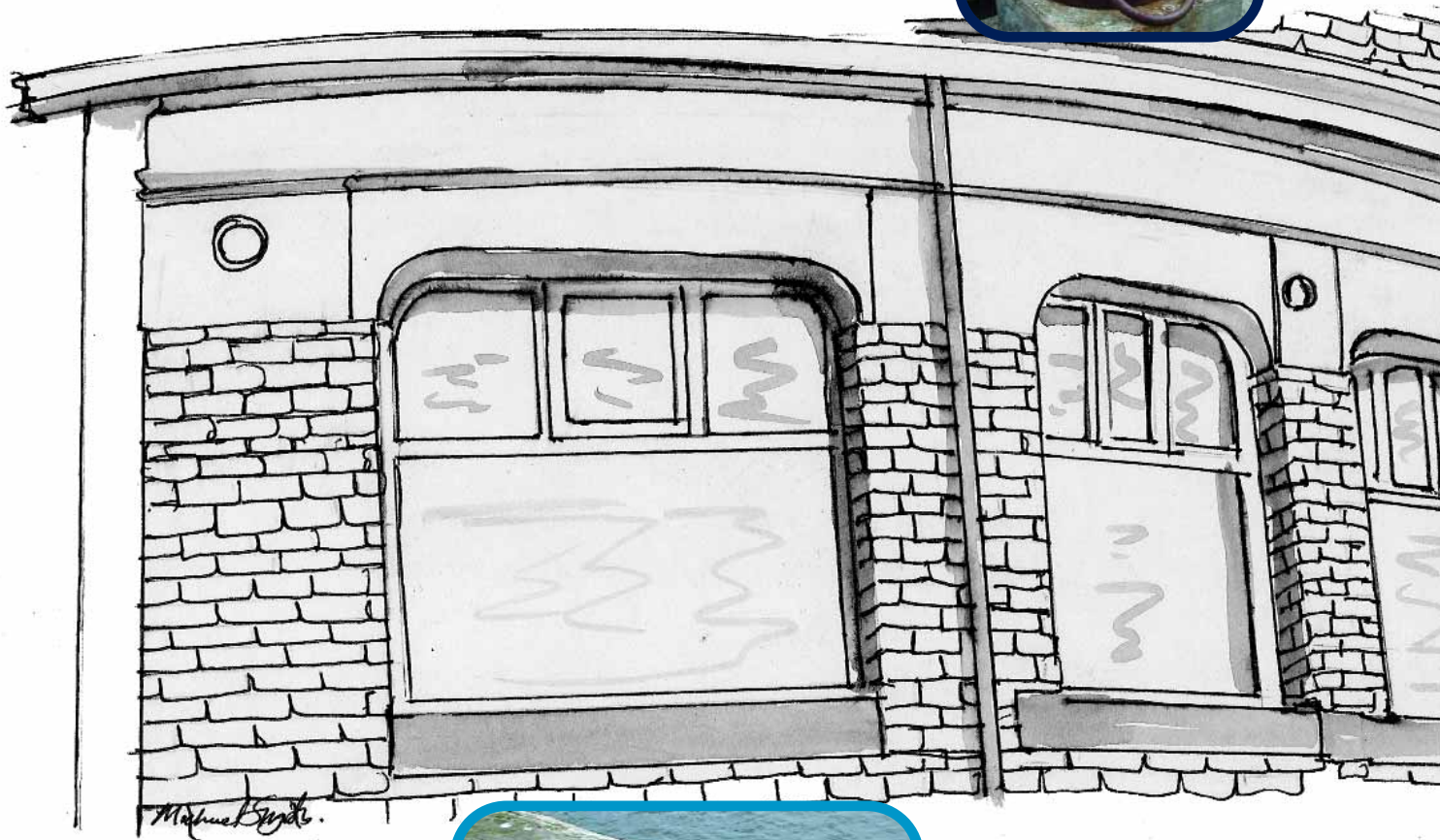
Local street/stair layout and street/stair names	Market place on New Quay
Foot bridge over Borough Road	Areas paved with setts

Buildings that detract from the character of the areas:

Dolphin Quays	North East Rubber Company's building
Ice factory tower	Old lifeboat house on the foreshore
Industrial buildings to the east of the Fort, in the moat or ditch	

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- Don Gruer (treasurer)
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- Peter Bensimon
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- Bill Stephenson
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- The Environment Agency.

Other photographs were the group's.

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The dawn of a new era, reflecting the area's past into the future