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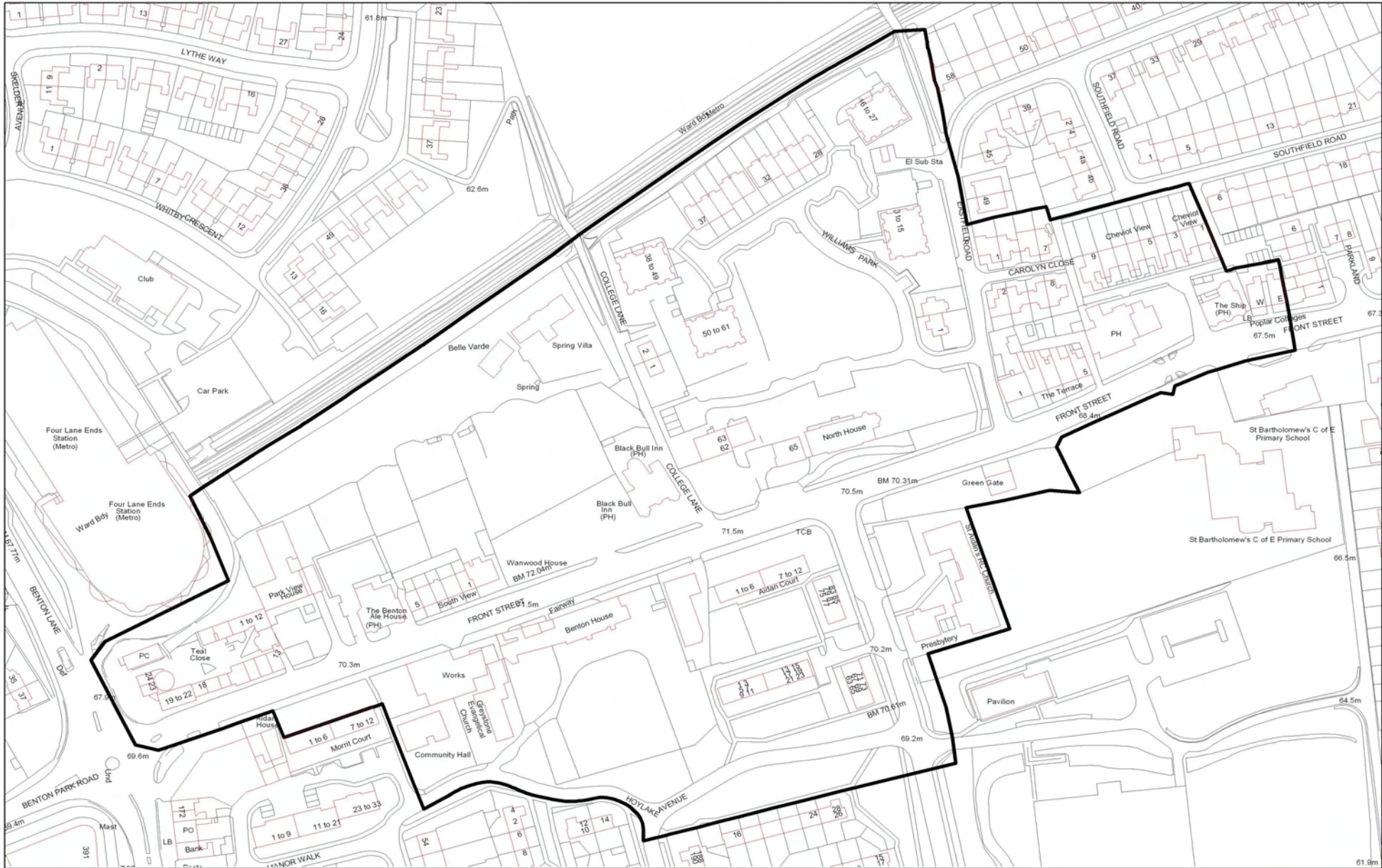


**North Tyneside Council**

**Longbenton and Benton**  
**Conservation Areas Character Appraisal**  
**October 2007**

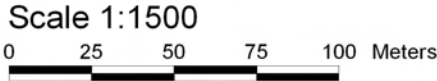


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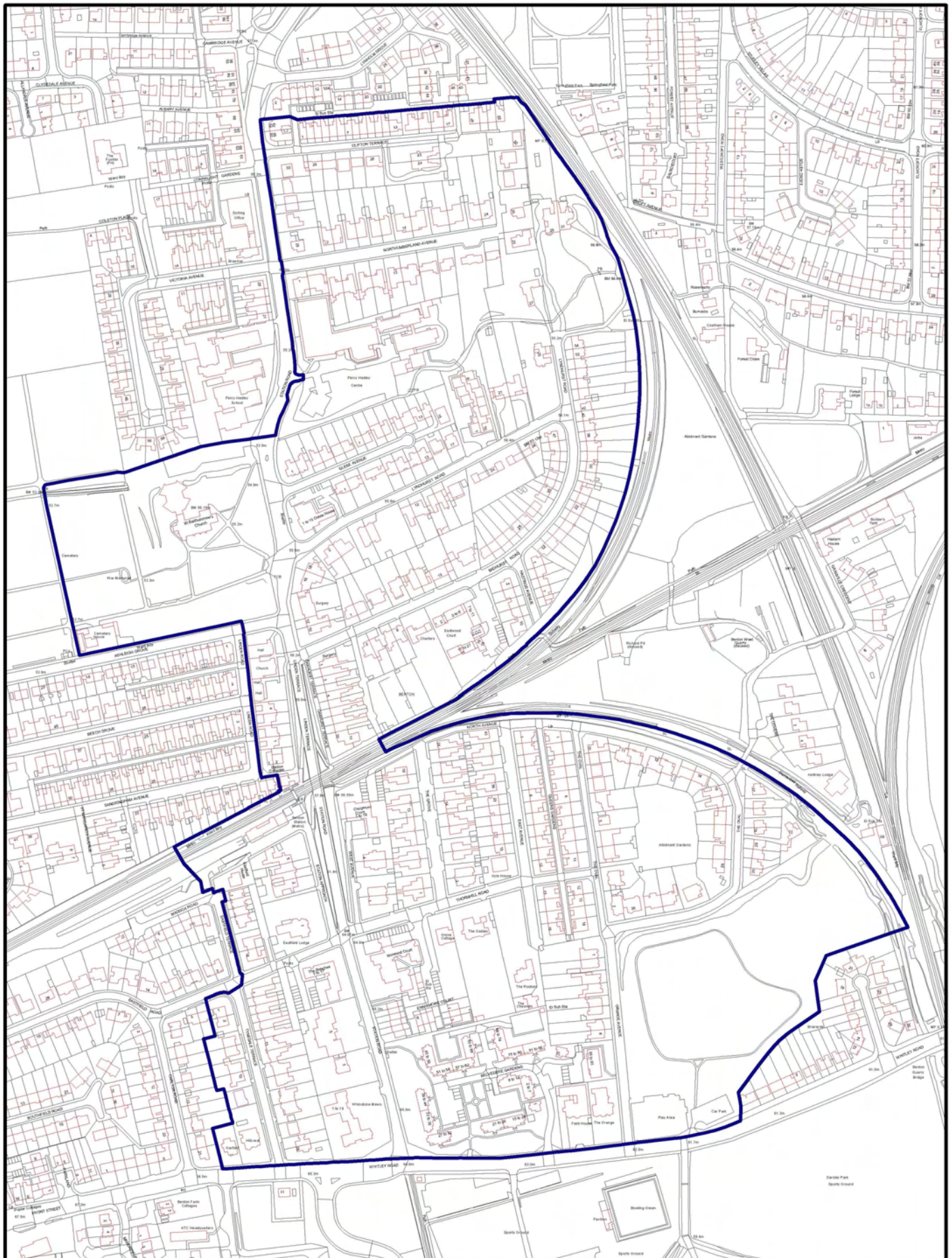


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# Longbenton Conservation Area



Map 1



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# Benton Conservation Area

Scale 1:2750



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# 1 *Introduction*

## 1.1 *Conservation Areas*

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.<sup>1</sup> They are designated by the Local Planning Authority using local criteria.

Conservation areas are about character and appearance, which can derive from many factors including individual buildings, building groups and their relationship with open spaces, architectural detailing, materials, views, colours, landscaping, street furniture and so on. Character can also draw on more abstract notions such as sounds, local environmental conditions and historical changes. These things combine to create a locally distinctive sense of place worthy of protection.

Conservation areas do not prevent development from taking place. Rather, they are designed to manage change, controlling the way new development and other investment reflects the character of its surroundings. Being in a conservation area does tend to increase the standards required for aspects such as repairs, alterations or new building, but this is often outweighed by the cachet of living or running a business in a conservation area, and the tendency of a well-maintained neighbourhood character to sustain, or even enhance, property values.

The first conservation areas were created in 1967 and now over 9,100 have been designated, varying greatly in character and size. There are currently 16 in North Tyneside, as set out below, with a further conservation area at Cullercoats planned for designation in the coming years:

- Backworth
- Benton
- Camp Terrace
- Earsdon
- Fish Quay
- Killingworth Village
- Longbenton
- Monkseaton
- New Quay
- Northumberland Square, North Shields
- Preston Park, North Shields
- Sacred Heart Church, Wideopen
- St. Mary's Island
- St. Peter's, Wallsend
- The Green, Wallsend
- Tynemouth

## 1.2 *Town Planning Context*

Designation remains the principal means by which Local Authorities can apply conservation policies to a particular area. The Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. It also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for preservation and enhancement, and to consult local people on them.<sup>2</sup> The Local Planning Authority also has extra

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<sup>1</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s69.

<sup>2</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s72 and s71

powers in conservation areas over demolition, minor developments, and tree protection (see page 49). Government policy in PPG15<sup>3</sup> stresses the need for Local Planning Authorities to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts.

The current development plan for North Tyneside is the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted March 2002. Under the government's new planning system, the Council is working to update this as a Local Development Framework (LDF), a portfolio of planning documents used to plan and control development across the Borough. One of these documents, the Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out how the LDF will be prepared. It explains that the Council attaches a high priority to the protection and enhancement of the built environment but is not intending at this stage to include this or other Conservation Area Character Appraisals as a formal part of the LDF.<sup>4</sup> Instead, this appraisal will be adopted initially as an informal statement of Council planning policy. However, in view of its potential value in supporting the LDF, a review of the LDF may propose the appraisals become formal Supplementary Planning Documents in the future. For more information on this, contact the Council (see below).

### ***1.3 This Character Appraisal***

Longbenton conservation area was designated in November 1985 and Benton conservation area was designated on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007. This character appraisal was prepared during Spring/Summer 2007 by North Tyneside Council. The draft version was put out for 6 weeks public consultation and a final version was adopted as Council planning policy in October 2007. It can be downloaded from [www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk).

By its very nature, this document cannot be exhaustive. Omissions should not necessarily be regarded as having no special interest or making no positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The appraisal should be updated every five years or so, taking account of changes in the area and further understanding of the place.

In accordance with English Heritage guidance, the Council intends to continue its programme of producing corresponding Conservation Area Management Strategies for many of its conservation areas in the next few years (see page 42).

### ***1.4 Further Information***

For further information on these conservation areas or this character appraisal, please contact the Planning team on 0191 643 2310 or [development.control@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@northtyneside.gov.uk)

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<sup>3</sup> Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning & The Historic Environment

<sup>4</sup> North Tyneside Council LDS, March 2005, para 3.8

**Information can also be provided in other languages and alternative formats e.g. Braille, audiotape and large print.**

**For further information please telephone 0191 643 2310 or fax 0191 643 2426.**



## **2 Location and Context**

### **2.1 Location**

These conservation areas are in the west of the Borough of North Tyneside, which is part of the Tyne & Wear conurbation in the north-east of England (*Map 3*).

The conservation areas are part of a wider suburban area around three miles northeast of Newcastle city centre, with varied housing and large green open spaces. Combined, there are around 760 dwellings in the conservation areas with a resident population of about 1200 (extrapolated from the 2001 Census), plus a small number of local services and businesses. The area is mostly in Benton ward, but a small part of the Benton conservation area is within Longbenton ward.

The conservation areas are mainly part of Benton but merge northwards into Forest Hall, and locally the boundary between the two means different things to different people. Much of that in the north of the Benton conservation area is regarded by many as being in Forest Hall.

### **2.2 Boundary**

Longbenton conservation area was designated in 1985 and the boundary has not changed since designation. The boundary is based on the medieval village and the development around it (*Map 1*).

Benton conservation area was designated in March 2007 and the boundary has not changed since designation. The boundary is based on Victorian and Edwardian suburban development in Benton and Forest Hall (*Map 2*).

The two conservation areas are in very close proximity to each other and are only separated by around three streets. These streets were not considered to have the special character required for conservation area status. Additionally, the boundaries of the two conservation areas, especially Benton, generally exclude other similar housing around that has less intrinsic special interest, or where the concentration of high interest is diluted by areas of lower interest or of significant alteration and loss of character.

### **2.3 Context**

#### **2.3.1 Geology**

The Benton, Longbenton and Forest Hall area is in the Tyne & Wear Lowlands countryside character area (no.14)<sup>5</sup> that is characterised by gently undulating and rolling land incised by river valleys and tributaries. Carboniferous coal measure rocks create this landform, stretching from southeast Northumberland through to Co. Durham, which comprises of shales and soft sandstones with numerous coal seams. Permian rocks overlaying those outcrop as cliffs at the coast. There are also glacial lake deposits of fine silts and clays.

This geology has somewhat influenced the character of the conservation area. Local sandstones were used in some of the older buildings and early boundary walls. The impact of coal-related industries and transport routes in wider North Tyneside and Newcastle are important to understanding this area's significant expansion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

#### **2.3.2 Topography and Aspect**

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<sup>5</sup> Countryside character areas, devised by the Countryside Agency, provide a context to local planning and development. There are 159 areas in England, unique in terms of landform, historical and cultural attributes.

The Longbenton conservation area appears to sit at the peak of a large dip that slopes down in a northern direction. This is probably most evident by looking at the view from Teal Close northwards up Benton Lane. The main part of the conservation area is generally flat, but the gradient does become noticeable when behind Front Street's northern side, for example, on College Lane.



Topography along East Avenue

As Benton conservation area is situated slightly to the north of Longbenton conservation area, it finds itself within the "dip" much more. This is particularly noticeable on Station Road, where you travel down under the Metro bridge, with steep stairs at the side to take you up to North Avenue. Despite this, the built-up area here does appear to be reasonably flat; only in particular streets do you notice a slight gradient, for example, East Avenue, where the houses are stepped in height along the street.

### 2.3.3 Setting and External Relationships

The Longbenton conservation area is an enclave largely distinct from development around it, mainly because the historic development pattern faces inwards. The majority of the surrounding area is made up of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century housing.

The Benton conservation area also has an obvious boundary to its southern and easterly parts, with these areas being made up of green land. The land to the east partly comprises of a former quarry. This, together with the topography of the area and the constraints of the railway infrastructure, render these areas unsuitable for development. Part of this railway infrastructure consists of the "Benton Curve", a disused line that has been left to grow, forming a rich wildlife habitat that is treasured by many locals. The areas to the south of the conservation area are made up of sports fields, used since 2003 as the training facilities for Newcastle United Football Club. The northern and western areas of the conservation area have a less distinct boundary, as there is, in some parts, housing of a similar age and style.



Land east of Midhurst Road

### 2.3.4 Views out of the Area



The area in which these conservation areas are has a number of main roads, either running through them or making up part of their boundary. It is along these roads where most of the views out of the area will be obtained. The amount of traffic on these roads often dictates the kind of view that is achieved. The most "special" view is the one that takes advantage of the topography of the area, looking north up Benton Lane from Teal Close. From here one can see Longbenton Estate, Balliol Business Park and the green land that surrounds this area.

As stated above, housing surrounds much of Benton conservation area; this therefore restricts views out of the area. Another building group on the outskirts of the Benton conservation area boundary is the Percy Hedley School on the west side of Station Road. At the centre of this group of buildings is the former Hampeth Lodge, a circa early 20<sup>th</sup> century home.

Unfortunately the modern school buildings of which it is a part obscure the building and these create an imposing view out of the area. The presence of these buildings creates a weakened townscape quality and hence this part of the Percy Hedley School does not form part of the conservation area, unlike the other part of the School immediately to the east across Station Road.



Former Hampeth Lodge surrounded by modern buildings that are imposing when viewed from Station Road



## 3 Historical Development

### 3.1 Development History

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

The Longbenton and Benton area has a long and interesting development history, from beginnings as a small medieval village, to the thriving suburban centre it is today. Despite suburbanisation, its early origins are still very apparent in both layout and some detailed fabric, and much of what came later also has significance in its own right. The result is a combination of historic village (Longbenton conservation area) and high quality suburban growth (Benton conservation area) creating a characterful neighbourhood with much to preserve and enhance.

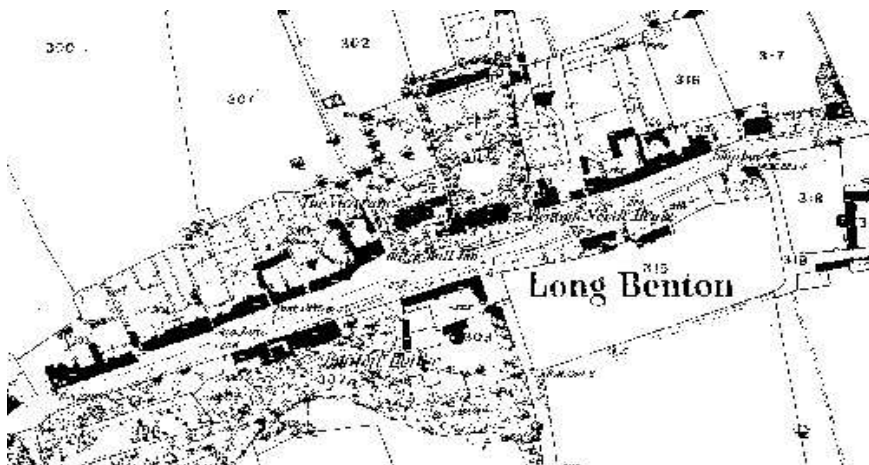
#### 3.1.2 Pre-Map History

Long Benton (formerly Magna Benton) was a member of the barony of Merlay or Morpeth. The barony dates from the beginning of the 12th century, though whether Benton is explicitly named before the 13th century is not clear. The village was served by the Church of St. Andrew (dating back from 820AD), which was inexplicably built around a mile north of the village, halfway to Killingworth. A local legend states that builders did want the Church to be in Longbenton village, but any work completed during the day was pulled down by the Devil and rebuilt on the present site in order to discourage attendance. Though the church was described as ruinous in 1663, the medieval nave was not demolished and rebuilt until 1790-91 to a design by William Newton. The new church was dedicated to St. Bartholomew.

When the barony was divided after 1266, so was Benton, one half ending up with the Brandlings of Gosforth, the other with the Stotes of Jesmond. Though there were few freeholders in the Middle Ages, it was a large village, with 14 taxpayers in 1296, and 18 in 1312. It was an exceptionally long, two-row, settlement, stretching eastwards from Four Lane Ends to the modern Tynedale Terrace.

Over the following few hundred years, the area in and around the village was divided a number of ways and changed ownership several times. By the mid-1700s, the village consisted of a street of cottages, some farms and two public houses, one on the site of The Benton Ale House and one on the site of the Black Bull (regarded as the oldest public house in the area). Also around this time, a number of large homes (often described as mansions) were built in and around the village for the wealthy mine owners who were moving to the area. These included Benton Grange, Benton Lodge, Benton Park and Benton House (built 1740 as the seat and estate of the Bigge family), with the latter being the only survivor. Another large house built at this time was Longbenton Church Vicarage, built c1734.

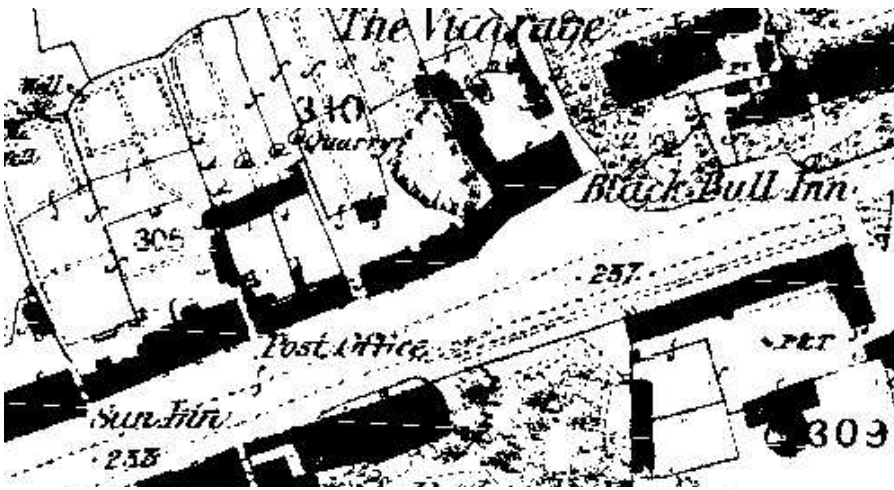
#### 3.1.3 1842 Tithe Map



This map clearly shows the main roads and routes through the area: Whitley Road, Coach Lane, the Four Lane Ends junction and Station Road. The latter, although at this point an undeveloped route, would soon determine the location of most of the early building in the area. Excluding the few individual buildings, such as The Hall and Longbenton Church, Longbenton Village is the only built-up area in the locality.

First Edition OS Map, similar but more detailed to the Tithe Map

### 3.1.4 First Edition OS Map c.1858

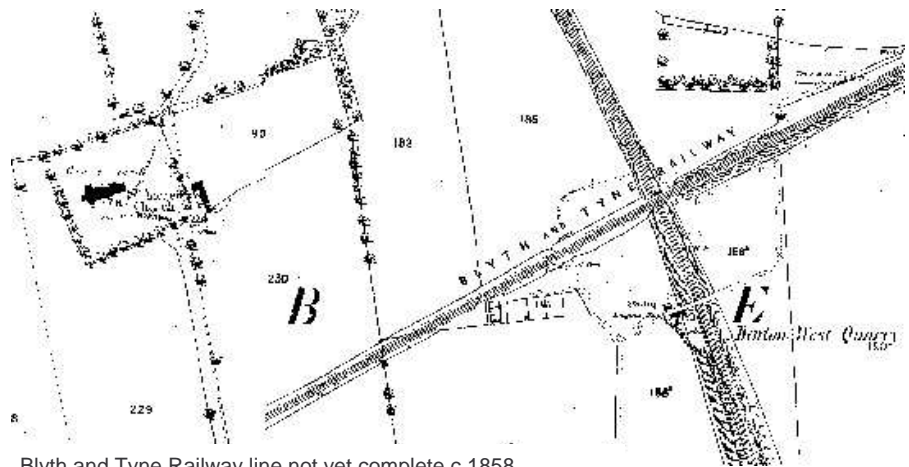


In terms of buildings, this map does not show any great change from the previous 1842 map, although it does offer further details on the scale and the names of particular buildings. For example, we can now clearly identify and locate the village's three public houses, Ship Inn, Black Bull Inn and Sun Inn (now the Benton Ale House).

Pub names clearly shown on the First Edition OS Map (c.1858)

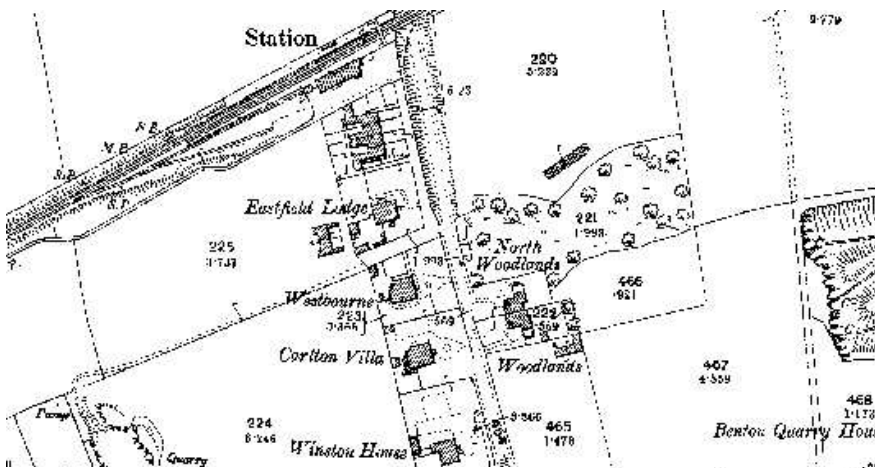
Important changes that have occurred however are the presence of Benton Quarry, Benton West Quarry and Billy Pit (to the south and outside of the two conservation areas' boundaries).

More new development is the new mainline railway running north-south and the almost-complete Blyth and Tyne Railway running east-west.



Blyth and Tyne Railway line not yet complete c.1858

### 3.1.5 Second Edition OS Map c.1897

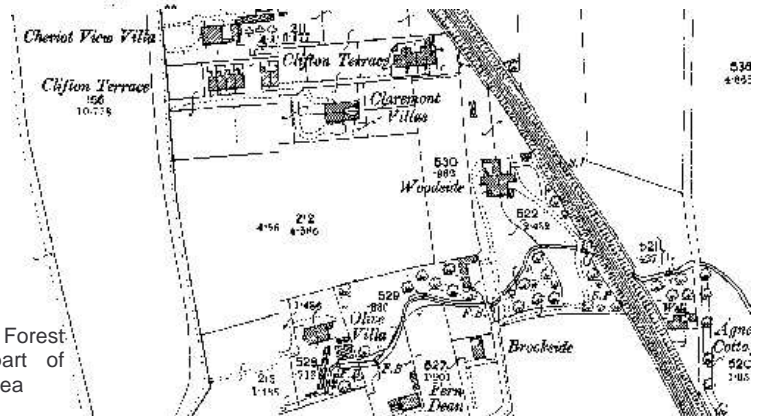


Large properties and Benton Station now evident, c.1897

Again, no major change is evident in Longbenton village on this map, perhaps a few new small buildings. Several large homes have been built up Station Road from the junction with Whitley Road, including Winston House and Carlton Villa. The Blyth and Tyne Railway is now complete and Benton Station has been built (opened 1<sup>st</sup> March 1871). Either side of the railway line has seen the development of the terraces

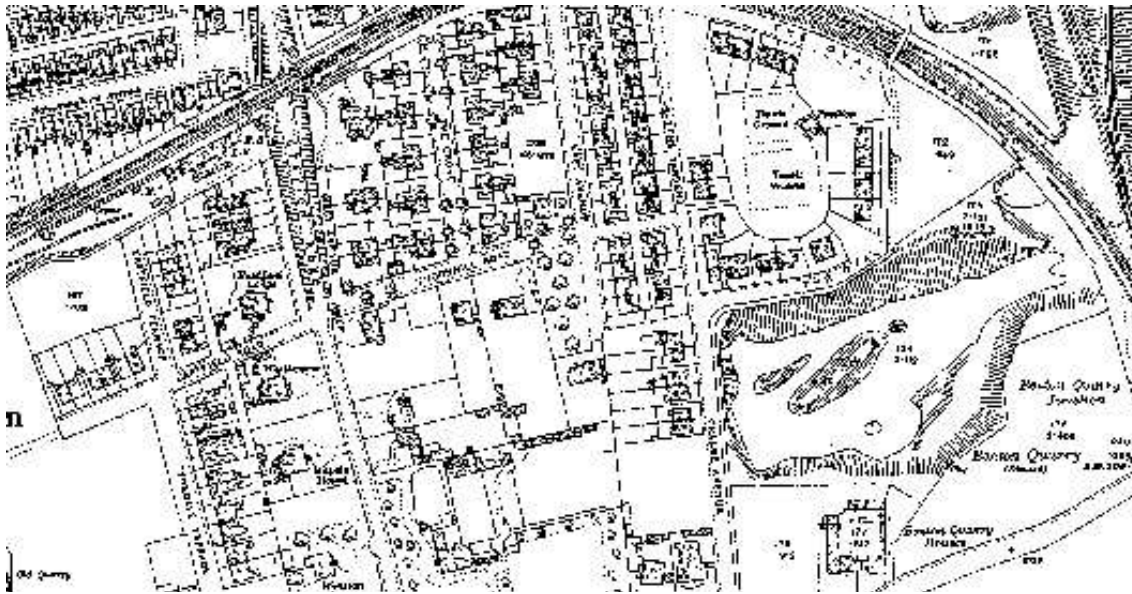
Oakhurst Terrace and Station Approach. Up into the north area of the Benton conservation area are Olive Villa, Fern Dean, Brookside, Woodside, Clifton Terrace and Claremont Villas. These new buildings represent some of the first development in Forest Hall.

Early development in Forest Hall in the north part of Benton conservation area

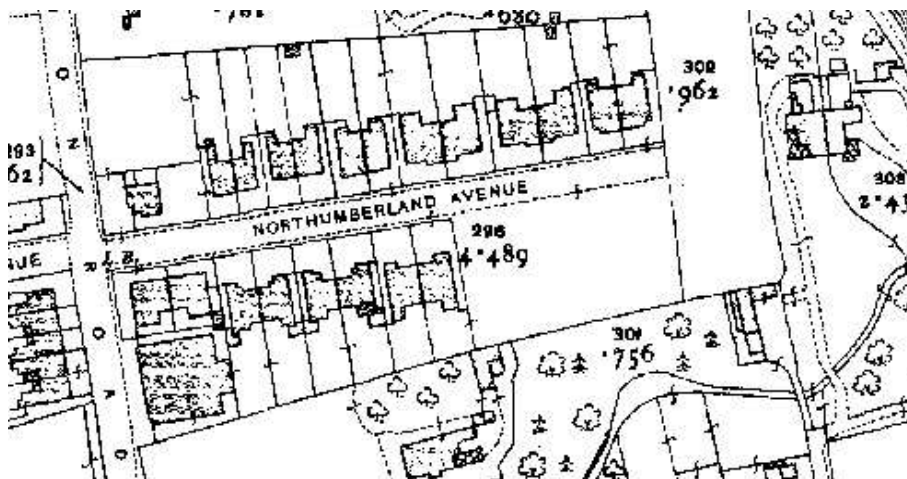


### 3.1.6 Third Edition OS Map c.1916

Once again, we see no significant change in Longbenton village, except the establishment of a new terrace (Cheviot View) and of St. Aidan's R.C. Church at the junction with Coach Lane. In contrast, the Benton conservation area has seen substantial change. The majority of the area south of the railway line has been developed to what we recognise now. West Avenue, Queens Gardens and The Grove are complete. The Oval is incomplete to what we know today, but has in its centre the Oval Tennis Club, its facilities being a pavilion and two tennis courts.



The area south of the railway line had been largely developed around the time of the Third Edition OS Map.



Northumberland Avenue on the Third Edition OS Map, also with the Assembly Rooms on Station Road.

In the area north of the railway line, the streets of Midhurst Road, Lyndhurst Road and Northumberland Avenue are beginning to take shape. A large building can be seen at the junction of Northumberland Avenue and Station Road; this was the Assembly Rooms, where various events and performances were held. The building was to become the Embassy Ballroom and was destroyed by a fire in 1963.

### 3.1.7 Fifth Edition OS Map c.1950

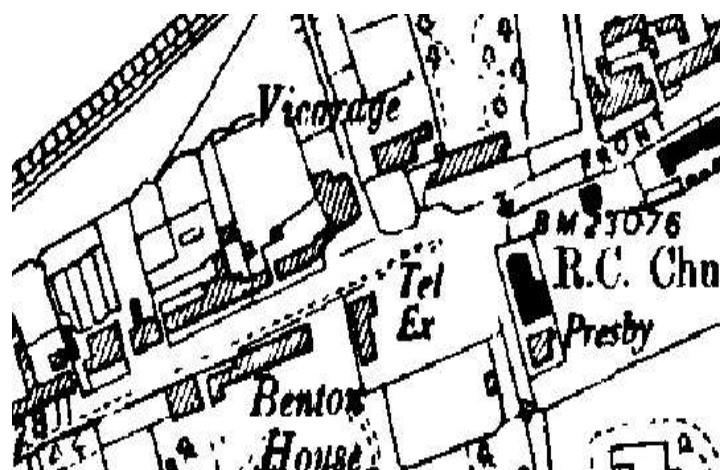
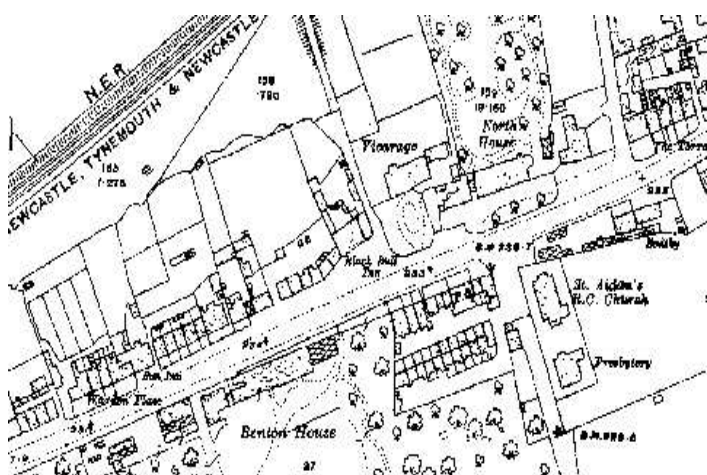
By around the time of the putting together of this map, many of the "gaps" in the streets of the Benton and Forest Hall area had been filled. Midhurst Road and Lyndhurst Roads are now complete, and the new streets of Glebe Avenue and Hastings Avenue have now been formed.

Once again, we see little change in Longbenton village, showing that this area (up to this point in time at least) had seen very little in the way of modern development. There is however, one small change: the lost of terraces at the corner



Completed streets in Benton c.1950.

of Coach Lane and Front Street and their replacement with a Telephone Exchange. This terrace loss is an early indication of the changes about to occur in the village, as discussed in the next point.



Replacement of terraces with more modern buildings, as seen here with the terraces shown on the c.1916 map replaced with a Telephone Exchange on the c.1950 map

### 3.1.8 Modern Map c.2000

Looking at the modern map (see conservation area maps at the beginning of the document), it is very noticeable to see the first major changes in Longbenton village since the early origins of the village. The buildings at Manor Farm have been converted to flats however, although there has been some additional building as part of this development, the modern parts are not easily seen from the main street. A small terrace to the west of the Benton Ale House has been replaced with a car park that serves the imposing Park View House to its rear. Another row of properties have been lost to a car park, this time the Black Bull's. The public house, although rebuilt in the 1930s, does remain in its original place. A particularly large-scale development that has recently taken place has been the Williams Park housing development in the late 1990s. This involved the demolition of Ethel Williams Hall, The Cottage and several smaller buildings in order to create 62 new dwellings. The scheme involved the retention of the former Vicarage and North House. The development does not have a large impact from Front Street but its modern style is very apparent from Eastfield Road. Half of The Terrace has been lost and in its place is the restaurant Casa Antonio, formerly a Social Club and a nightclub.

On the south side of Front Street, there has been the loss of St. Aidan's Church, replaced by a newer church, consecrated 13th December 1990. The original Presbytery does remain. Despite the presence of Benton House and its former stable building (North View House), its extensive grounds have been consumed by social housing. Other more modern developments in this area are the Community Hall and Greystone Evangelical Church on Hoylake Avenue.

The Benton Conservation Area has also seen much change. Almost all the large Victorian villas that lined Station Road northwards from Whitley Road have been lost and replaced by modern housing developments, the largest of which being Belvedere Gardens (granted planning permission in 1997) on the former site of the estate of Graham House. In terms of the streets of housing, there has been little change, only some more "gaps" being filled in, for example, at The Oval (where the Tennis Club in the centre has been replaced by allotments), East Avenue, Northumberland Avenue and Clifton Terrace. Also the disused Benton Quarry is now a park and play site.

## 3.2 Archaeology

There are no scheduled ancient monuments in these conservation areas. However, as the supposed site of a medieval village, archaeological investigation could reveal much about such early

settlements and could contribute to the understanding of the history of Benton, Longbenton and Forest Hall and settlement of the Borough.



## 4 Spatial Analysis

### 4.1 Development Pattern

The conservation areas are based on the medieval village core of Longbenton, plus suburban development along the main historic routes leading from it and stretching away from the railway station into Benton and Forest Hall. This suburbanisation of an historic village has left a varied development pattern with most of its medieval rural road layout intact and much of the later development pattern based on pre-existing field boundaries. As the village grew dramatically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this led to a mix of development, responding to two different influences- rural village beginnings and suburban fashions of the time.

#### 4.1.1 The Village Core

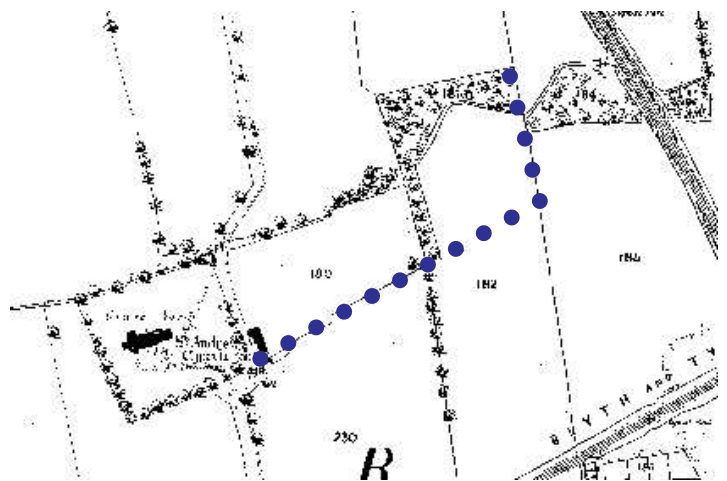
As is traditional of medieval village forms, the original settlement developed as a cluster of buildings at an appropriate point along a main linear route. The route was a main east-west route through the area (now Front Street and Whitley Road). As stated by the Historic Environment Record entry for the medieval village (see page 46), it does seem clear that it was principally a two-row village, i.e. two strings of buildings lining a wide street. It is possible that the early village was defined by a village spring, which is situated at the land north of the Black Bull, which could have made unsuitable ground on which to build. Some of this early basic development pattern survives intact through the inward looking development pattern. However, despite this survival, nearly all of the buildings lining the streets in and around the village are now from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

#### 4.1.2 The Railway and Suburban Growth

The rest of this area's development pattern is defined by two influences: railway lines and field boundaries. The arrival of the railway in the early 1870s had a profound effect on Benton, not only on its development pattern but on its size, as hundreds of acres of agricultural land were eventually laid out as suburban streets, initially spreading southeast from the station, then northwest (not in the conservation area), then eventually spreading out in all directions.

By studying earlier OS maps with modern street layouts, one can see that field boundaries are evident in the formation of the many streets in the area; Grange Avenue, Eastfield Terrace, and the top parts of Lyndhurst Road and Midhurst Road are probably the most obvious. Also, a closer look reveals that some of the larger land plots run along the lines of some old field boundaries, for example, the boundary between 18 and 20 Lyndhurst Road.

The influence of the railway lines is clear to see, with the layout of The Oval and especially Midhurst Road working with the curve of the lines rather than going against it.



Line of Lyndhurst Road along old field boundaries

### 4.2 Layout, Grain and Density

Within this pattern of streets, the layout and density of development adopts traditional characteristics, but there are variations.

#### 4.2.1 The Village Core

The village core's early layout was based on a series of plots stretching away from Front Street, each with a building pushed to the front of the plot to face the street. Individual buildings were built up against each other forming strings of buildings with a linear, but informal edge that flowed organically with the street and topography rather than being planned and rectilinear. Behind this edge were secondary buildings and structures in gardens or yards, including cottages, barns and circular horse-driven gin-gans. There does not appear to be any service lanes to access to the rear of each plot so access would have been from the front through small breaks in the string and perhaps through arches. This pattern was almost exclusive to the north side of Front Street, with Benton House and its grounds taking up much of the south side. This early layout is probably most evident now at Teal Close (former Manor Farm).

Later insertions and redevelopment of the village core tend to follow layouts and densities typical of the time, for example, the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Cheviot View has a typical formal rectilinear terrace layout. It also faces away from the village (maybe to form a back lane with The Terrace on Front Street). The mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Local Authority flats at the junction of Coach Lane have a reasonably municipal layout, echoing the way in which the same kind of blocks are laid out at nearby Longbenton Estate, set out in a square (roughly) with a large area of open space in the centre. Another more modern housing development is the one at Williams Park. However, this development could be argued as having little effect on the density in the village, as it has been built in an area that was not typical to the ordinary two-row village layout. Looking at early edition OS Maps, it can be seen that the layout of Williams Park is not dissimilar to that of the Vicarage, North House and their grounds and outbuildings.

Not all changes within the village have fitted in so comfortably. The Black Bull's car park (which was formed following the 1950s demolition of a row of cottages adjoining the pub) is a large expanse of open space that does not follow the traditional layout pattern or density of the village. As is the case with Park View House and its car park.

#### **4.2.2 Suburban Growth**

The layout of the areas of suburban growth also adopt traditional characteristics of their time; there are two main different types of layout and density:

- Lower density detached or semi-detached houses sited to the front of the plot to a common building line, leaving a much bigger back garden than that at the front (for example, east side of Tynedale Terrace, Grange Avenue and Northumberland Avenue)
- Higher density terraced houses with small front gardens and back yards instead of back gardens (for example, north side of Clifton Terrace, east side of East Avenue and Queens Gardens).

The most dominant type of suburban growth areas here are of the first type. Here, the building is pushed to the centre of the plot allowing access down the side, meaning plots back onto each other. In the second, rear access to each plot is off back lanes, separating the terraces.

Within the first theme there is some variation. For example, where plot depths vary, back gardens are left smaller in order to retain a common building line to the front. This is the case on the east ends of Hastings Avenue and Midhurst Road where, in order to echo the size of front gardens, some homes have very small or very large back gardens, depending on their location along the curve of the railway line.

This area of Benton has seen a great number of large homes set within extensive grounds. Although some remain (for example, Grove Cottage and The Gables on Thornhill Road), many have been lost. Where this has happened, the plots have been filled with more modern housing developments. Some of which date from around the 1960s/70s, such as Craigmont Court on the site of the mansion Craigmont and The Beeches on the site of the large property Westbourne. The late 1990s was another time for large-scale redevelopment of these sites: Belvedere Gardens and Whinstone Mews

being examples. Although there is little argument that all of these new housing sites have changed the traditional layout and density of the area, some in particular have had little recognition to the scale of the site they have been built in and the surrounding buildings. Ennismore Court and the bungalows at 19 Lyndhurst Road display this by having a rather squeezed in appearance.

### 4.3 Views within the Area

Views within the conservation areas are controlled by the development pattern to make most short, apart from in the heart of the village and in the large open spaces. The three main types of view are:

- linear views along streets,
- wider scenes across the open spaces
- longer views through the main route through the village.

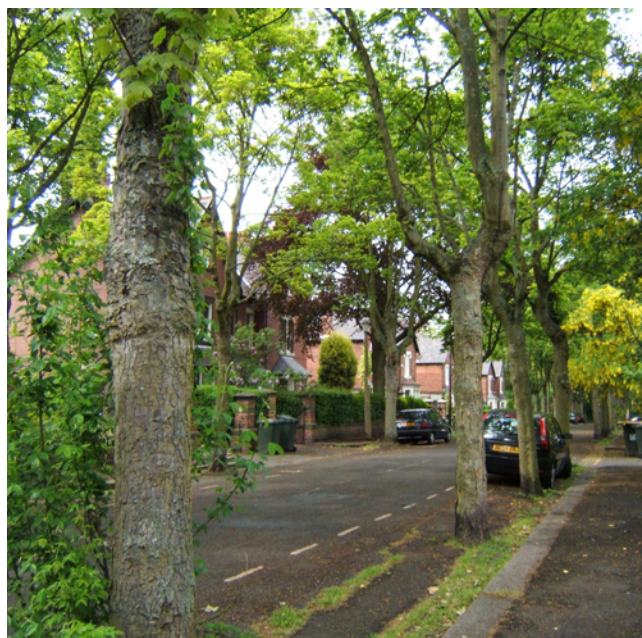
Throughout the area, the skyline is formed by rooftops of development within it and trees. The linear views are generally short because either the streets are short, or because curves in their length land curtail the view. For example, views along Midhurst Road and The Oval are deflected by the bends in their length created by the railway line, whilst views along The Grove, East Avenue and Northumberland Avenue are closed at the end by trees and development.



Oblique views of the streets and terraces tend to bring the architecture to life; its bays, chimneys and garden subdivisions in particular creating attractive visual rhythms. Street trees also create these attractive rhythms and, more fundamentally, make a significant contribution en masse to the attractive, leafy suburban scene throughout the area. Similar oblique linear views to the rear of some of the terraces are less intrinsically attractive except where groups of surviving offshoots echo the grain and rhythm of the front elevations.



Rhythm created by bays and chimneys at Clifton Terrace, by rear offshoots at East Avenue and by street trees at The Grove



The open spaces in the area create a range of interesting views. In Benton Quarry Park, what begins as an enclosed area of trees and long grass with little in the way of long views eventually opens out to a large expanse of field creating a full, wide view. This mixture makes the park very visually

interesting. Also interesting is St. Bartholomew's Churchyard. This is a large area of open space but long views are cut short, mostly due to the amount of mature tree coverage. This tree coverage gives this space an intimate feel. More on the impact of the spaces in these areas is included from page 34.

Possibly the longest uninterrupted view in the area comes from the east-west view along Front Street in the village core of Longbenton conservation area. Despite the large amount of traffic here, the view is made quite attractive by the mature trees lining either side of the road.



Interrupted views at St. Bartholomew's Churchyard and uninterrupted views along Front Street

## 5 Character Analysis

### 5.1 Character Sub-Areas

Despite being closely linked by development history and underlying development pattern, three separate sub-areas can be identified which have quite different character and appearance. They are based on the age and basic layout of development within them. They are:

- **Village Core Sub-Area (i.e. Longbenton conservation area):** the historic Longbenton village plus its newer redevelopment.
- **Suburban Growth Sub-Area (i.e. Benton conservation area):** nineteenth and twentieth century residential streets north, south and east of the Metro station.
- **Open Spaces Sub-Areas:** the green areas of Benton Quarry Park and the open space of St. Bartholomew's Church.

### 5.2 Land Use

The dominant land use in the area is residential, although in the village core we also see some leisure, business, community and retail.

Most land uses in the area are those generally found in traditional villages centres and suburban neighbourhoods: residential, churches, pubs, parks and a railway station. However, local retail and local services such as a post office, library and health services cannot be found here. This can be explained by the presence of Four Lane Ends (to the southwest) and Forest Hall (to the north); Longbenton and Benton conservation areas are sandwiched between these two local shopping centres and they more than adequately fill those service gaps.



Residential is dominant, the majority being single family dwellings

Traditionally there were a few more retail outlets in the area. Longbenton, through its development as an isolated village, had several shops such as grocers, butchers and a sweet shop, plus a blacksmith amongst other services. Presumably these outlets dwindled in popularity and eventually ceased to be following the development in the mid-1900s of the shopping centre at the Four Lane Ends.

A handful of commercial uses are still found in the area, namely the deli in the west wing of Benton House and Black's Newsagents on Sandringham Avenue.

The dominance of residential use defines the character of much of the **Village Core Sub-Area** and all of the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, much of the latter being single family dwellings. Conversions of single family dwellings to flats could begin to harm character and appearance if they result in incremental changes to elevations, leave gardens un-green and communal areas unmanaged, if greater parking demands have knock-on effects such as increased hard-standing or removal of boundary walls, or if there were a general decline in residential amenity.

For these reasons it will be important to pay particular attention to controlling increases in the number of dwellings in these sub-areas. There are several blocks of flats, but the high number of dwellinghouses as well as flats in both built sub-areas also means particular attention should be paid to the impact permitted development rights might have on the character and appearance of the area over time. This is discussed more under *Management* from page 43.

The impact that the **Open Spaces Sub-Areas** have on the area is also profound, helping to provide low density, high amenity pieces of land in the area. In terms of land use, the impact that the Metro station now has is quite low, even if it was one of the defining factors of the area's development historically.

### 5.3 Hierarchy of Buildings

It is common in historic villages for there to be one or two houses which appear more important than the others due to their size or location; in Longbenton's case, these buildings would be Benton House, the former Vicarage and the former North House, with Teal Close (former Manor Farm) not far behind.

The three pubs also have landmark qualities due to their scale, setting and architectural qualities. In terms of scale and setting,



and setting, Park View House and Casa Antonio vie for attention, but unfortunately their unattractiveness prevents them from being too highly thought of amongst the other buildings on the street.



Scale, setting and architectural quality make some buildings more dominant than others

Because of the number of large homes within large plots in Benton, it seems obvious that it would be these buildings would be at the top of the hierarchy in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**; this is indeed the case with properties such as Field House, The Grange, Hillcrest and The Gables amongst others. However, some of these larger properties, despite being large in terms of both the building and the plot, do not have a huge impact simply because they cannot be seen from the public highway (for example, 29 and 31 Lyndhurst Road).



With regards to the majority of the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, as there is a reasonable consistency of layout and grain there is little planned hierarchy between the buildings here. But some do have a greater presence than elsewhere due to their lower density and grander scale, for example, West Avenue and The Grove.



There are four buildings that, by their design, siting and use, do have true landmark qualities: the Metro station and the three churches of St. Bartholomew, St Andrew and St. Aidan (though the latter probably has landmark qualities through its siting rather than its design). The churches sit on the main roads of Station Road and Coach Lane and are therefore very prominent. The Metro station, however, due to not being positioned on a main route and unfortunately suffering from some neglect, means it

Buildings in Benton conservation area that have a greater dominance than others: Field House, West Avenue and St. Andrew's Church



does not have the focal presence that might be expected.

## 5.4 Architectural Qualities

### 5.4.1 Form, Height and Scale



The **Village Core Sub-Area** has one dominant built form of the two-storey building with a pitched roof. Most buildings of such form are two or three bays wide, the oldest ones often symmetrical (for example, former North House). Some use attic space as a third storey. Some buildings are grouped in terraces. This simple, traditional built form is inherently attractive. It is the basis for most early buildings on Front Street, (for example, the former Vicarage) plus some of the Victorian and Edwardian development that followed (for example, The Terrace). The pubs also adopt this basic form but with the embellishments expected of such a building. Some enliven their shape with bays, porches, offshoots, hips and gables, whilst earlier buildings tend to be simpler (for example, Manor Farm).

Two-storey, pitched roof, symmetrical buildings in Longbenton conservation area - some simpler than others



The remainder of buildings in the Longbenton conservation area do not fit into one particular built form, indeed, it could be fair to say that each building (or group of buildings) is individual. The buildings range from the one-storeys, such as North View House, to the three-storey flats at Aidan Court, Hoylake Avenue and Williams Park. The building with the largest footprint in this area is Park View House, the four-storey office block. It could be argued that the positioning of the car park to the front of the building reduces the impact the building makes to the street by setting it back. On the other hand, it could be argued that the car park

makes an untidy contribution to the street.



The one-storey North View House and the four-storey Park View House, showing the range of building scales in Longbenton conservation area

In the **Suburban-Growth Sub-Area**, the dominant type is also the two-storey house with a pitched roof, but they are to a much larger scale with considerable variety in the detailed form. Many also have a third storey in the attic space, but none are actually three stories plus a pitched roof.



Houses in this sub-area are some of the largest in the Borough, in both their floor plan and storey heights. Their grand scale is very impressive (compared to, say, the more diminutive South View, also two storey) but their size is skilfully disguised with an expert approach to architectural design. Most use a variety of shaped footprints with bays, offshoots, wings and garages, plus varied roof forms with gables, hips and dormers to break up their mass.



Still two-storey plus pitched roof, but much larger scale in this sub-area, and many with a third storey in the roof. Plus interesting and varied plan forms with gables, offshoots, etc.



The overall result is a collection of lively, layered built forms of considerable visual appeal, demonstrating an intrinsic quality and

thoroughness of design. Probably due to their original size, there have been few extensions to the larger houses in this sub-area (at least not noticeable from the street) and much survives in three dimensions. However, side extensions over garages are more common and, where these abut the neighbouring building, a detrimental terracing effect is created. Buildings become attached at both stories, losing the visual separation that defines detached and semi-detached buildings, harming the perceived low density of the area, and interrupting the rhythm of elevations when viewed obliquely along streets. This effect is probably most obvious at the north end of Midhurst Road.



Terracing effect created by extensions over garages in Midhurst Road

There are planned terraced forms in this sub-area too, for example, East Avenue, Queens Gardens and Clifton Terrace, which tend to follow the form and height of those of the Village Core, i.e. two stories with pitched roofs and narrow offshoots to the rear.



Terraced homes in Queens Gardens



## 5.4.2 Periods and Styles

Due to the area's incremental development history, its buildings are from several different architectural periods, and adopt several different styles. There are buildings from almost every architectural period from Georgian to late twentieth century. The main architectural periods in the conservation area are:

- *Georgian*

The main architectural style of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was based on Classical style and proportions. Georgian architecture is simple, usually symmetrical and based on polite ideas and designs that often came from style handbooks. The proportions and detailing of Georgian architecture follow rigorous principles, and result in unfussy, straightforward buildings. The few Georgian buildings left here are Benton House, the Vicarage and North House.

- *Victorian*

Dating from the mid nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth, Victorian architecture is very varied with many sub-categories, but much is based on showy, confident themes designed to demonstrate the wealth and grandeur of the building owner with splendid, high-class architecture. Rich, traditional materials are used such as brick, stone, iron and timber with good quality, solid construction and plenty of flare. The three strongest Victorian revival styles were Gothic (defined by verticality, asymmetry, pointed arches, gables and carving), Italianate (with low roofs, bracketed eaves and some stucco) and Queen Anne (red brick with Dutch gables, white joinery, doorcases and terracotta). There were also other revival styles and, in reality, much followed an eclectic, yet thoughtful approach to style. In addition, the Arts & Crafts or Vernacular Revival style began in the late nineteenth century, continuing into the mid twentieth (see below).

- *Edwardian*

Smart and attractive, Edwardian architecture is a less-flamboyant continuation of Victorian grandeur in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is concerned with presenting an impressive face to the public with thoughtful, well-designed buildings usually in red brick, and with plenty of fine detailing in brick, stone, terracotta, tile, timber and glass. Edwardians revived and mixed architectural styles including those from the Victorian era plus Tudor, Jacobean and Classical themes. Art Nouveau also developed as an influence.

- *Early to Mid Twentieth Century*

The post-First World War housing boom saw suburban semi-detached houses and bungalows spread throughout many towns, plus townhouses and shops in revived town centres. Architecture of the 1920s and 1930s developed along three main styles; Tudorbeathan or Old English rustic cottage revival style, a Georgian revival (especially for townhouses), and the Moderne or International style. Art Deco developed during this period, with geometry, abstract shapes, and smooth, sleek lines. The Arts & Crafts style developed further with high quality, individualistic architecture based on traditional, unassuming vernacular ideas that created informal, picturesque and rustic buildings with a great attention to detail, high quality materials and traditional skills.

- *Mid to Late Twentieth Century*

The second half of the twentieth century saw a wide range of stylistic approaches develop and merge. Much in the 1960s and 70s were based on the purist, functional forms of Modernism or the International style (plain flat-roofed boxes with little decoration and large windows).

High quality housing from the late Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and early to mid twentieth century periods is often some of the most desirable and valuable in urban areas, with comfortable, well-built, well-presented dwellings in leafy surroundings. Many of the buildings have been specifically designed with a flare for high quality architecture. This can be rare in suburban areas, much everyday housing only using styles in a cursory way and without reference to context, generating generic buildings with a lack of depth. Here, however, most the area has architect-led schemes specifically aimed at

contributing well-informed, distinctive, set-piece buildings or groups of buildings which sit well with their neighbours to create an authentic, harmonious suburban neighbourhood of great character.

### 5.4.3 Features, Detailing and Materials

The quality of these conservation areas' architecture relies on a range of architectural features and detailing, which are treated in different ways, influenced by the sub-area it is in, the architectural styles used, and the staged development of the area.

The features are:

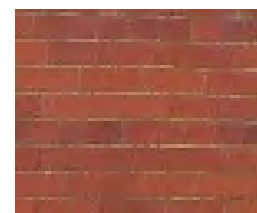
- masonry
- doorways, including porches
- windows, including bay windows
- shopfronts
- roofs, including ridges, eaves, verges, gables and dormers
- chimneys
- rainwater goods, such as drainpipes and gutters

A few of these details have been altered over time but a great number of authentic architectural features are intact in detail.

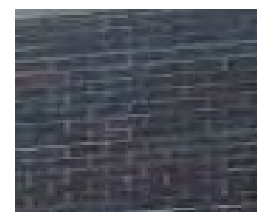
### 5.4.4 Masonry

The interesting treatment of masonry is one of the area's defining characteristics. In both the **Village Core Sub-Area** and the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, buildings use a combination of brick, render, stone and several other treatments. Brick is the main material and is the basis of most buildings' warm, well-matured visual appearance. Bricks used vary considerably, older ones generally rougher in texture and mottled in appearance, newer ones more smooth and crisp. All have attractively stained and weathered with warm, uneven tones across elevations. Broadly, there are two main brick types in the area:

- smooth, red, late Victorian and Edwardian bricks (for example, the Metro station and the Ship Inn),
- darker, brown bricks in much of the early to mid twentieth century buildings (for example, semis on Midhurst Road and The Exchange).



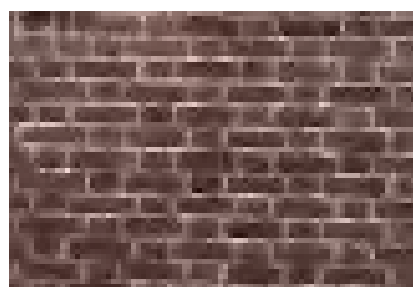
Smooth red brick at The Ship, darker brown brick at The Exchange



English garden wall bond at Benton metro station, Flemish bond at The Exchange and stretcher bond at 6 Tynedale Terrace

Within these there is considerable variety, illustrating the area's phased growth. Many of the earlier buildings are laid in English garden wall bond (mainly 3 or 4 rows of stretchers to 1 of headers). Examples of this are at 23 and 24 Clifton Terrace, Benton Station House and Station Approach. Generally, stretcher bond is used on later buildings. Part of the ground floor of The Exchange is unusual in its use of attractive Flemish bond

(the original and oldest part of the building?). Pointing, the way mortar is finished off between the bricks is generally flush or slightly recessed. As bricks in the older buildings are more rough, pointing tends to be more visually prominent, whilst the crisper lines of later brickwork makes pointing finer and less noticeable.



Brick is often used instead of stone for architectural detailing in the **Suburban**

**Growth Sub-Area**, to highlight windows (4 Grange Avenue), doors (25 Clifton Terrace), gables (The Grange), eaves (Queens Gardens) and chimneys (1-12 Clifton Terrace), as quoins (10 Tynedale Terrace), and as patterning in elevations (Station Approach), particularly in the early to mid twentieth century buildings.



Brick used as detailing around windows, doors, on chimneys, gables, as quoins, etc.

In the **Village Core Sub-Area**, the choice of brick in more recent buildings is not always good; for example, the different coloured bricks used at Williams Park create, although interesting, an elevation

that perhaps does not fit in with the more uniform character of the area. An example of unsuitable choice of brick in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area** is at the bungalows at 19 Lyndhurst Road. This brick is far too light and yellow in colour compared to the surrounding buildings.



Choices of brick that are perhaps unsuitable for this area



The second main masonry treatment is roughcast render, used extensively in the late Victorian, Edwardian and early to mid twentieth century buildings, though less so in the terraces. It is often used on upper floors above red brick. Most roughcast render is and should remain unpainted to retain its rich patinated character.

Render used on the first floor at The Oval



Use of local yellow and non-local red sandstone



Use of stone for detailing on both older and more modern buildings



Several of the prominent earlier buildings in the **Village Core Sub-Area** are in stone, such as Benton House, the former Vicarage and former North House. The stone is natural, local, yellow sandstone, being either rubble or ashlar, laid in uneven courses. It has gained the rich patina of age, creating an attractive, mature, weathered texture. Sandstone is used for architectural detailing in both the **Village Core Sub-Area** and in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area** where, in some houses, bay windows, porches, door surrounds, quoins and other features are expertly moulded to enliven elevations. Numbers 32 and 34 The Oval have non-local red sandstone detailing on their window surroundings, echoing rather than contrasting with its bricks. Artificial stone detailing is used in more recent brick buildings (for example, Belvedere Gardens). All natural stone would originally have been unpainted and much remains so, patinating to an attractive rich, textured appearance. All unpainted stone should remain unpainted to retain this



character. Local sandstone is also used in many historic boundary walls (see from page 36).



Another masonry treatment of the area used as detailing to enliven elevations, particularly in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, is red clay tile hanging. This is common on bay windows, often with shaped patterns.

Red clay tile hanging at 2 Tynedale Terrace and 1 Eastfield Road

### 5.4.5 Doorways

Attention to detail with doors and doorways illustrates the high quality of both built sub-areas. They are adapted to the architectural style being used and are often designed to make impressive statements of status where they will be seen by visitors and passers-by.



In the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, most doorways are emphasised with porches or hoods (hoods being the most common).

Many of these are extremely showy features,

with moulded or turned joinery supporting roofs in a variety of both simple and complex shapes. Most porches are open, but some are glazed with low brick plinths and beaded timber windows. A few are in stone, and a few are

solid masonry with feature sidelights in painted or leaded glass. Such a concentration of well-maintained, high quality craftsmanship is a large part of the area's special interest. In cases where hoods or porches are not used, doorways are often emphasised with

example, Oakhurst Terrace) or lintels (for example, Kyle

Variety of doorways in the Suburban Growth Sub-Area, ranging from simple hoods to detailed porches

House, where the name is carved into it).



In the **Village Core Sub-Area**, there are fewer porches, doorways instead emphasised with simple sandstone doorcases. Georgian North House has a Tuscan doorcase with delicate fanlight. Doorways in the earlier, simpler terraces tend to have only a stone lintel and steps, such as The Terrace. The lintel of Wanwood House has a particularly special feature in that it has its name carved into it (like Kyle House). The doorways of the Ship Inn are particularly worthy of a mention, with their stone quoin surrounds and richly moulded hoods. Porches can be found on some properties, for example, the Romanesque porches at Greengates (Ionic columns) and Benton House (Doric columns).

Doorways in the Village core sub-area, including the Romanesque columns of Greengates and Benton House



Throughout the conservation areas, earlier doorways incorporate an overlight rather than having glass in the door (if the door is original), but the doors of later properties are usually part-glazed, often with intricate glazing bar patterns or leading. Many will also extend the use of high quality natural materials from the front step onto the lobby, perhaps with coloured clay floor tiles, or timber wall panelling.

The many original timber doors in place in the area are integral to the authentic presence of doorways, particularly where they have decorative panels, mouldings or beading. The



most historically appropriate ones are in dark, rich colours such as black, reds, browns, greens and blues. Frames are nearly always white or off white. Plenty of traditional door furniture survives, generally in brass, including knobs, keyholes, knockers, letter boxes and bell pushes, which all add richness to doorways.

Original front door and overlight at 2 Eastfield Terrace

Unusually for landmark public buildings, the churches and station do not make particular play of their doorways. Benton Station's entrances are typical of a modern Metro station and do not fit in with the surrounding area. The doorway of St. Andrew's Church is a large, gothic style porch with steps and moulded lion head details. When the church was built in 1904, this was the main doorway on the main elevation, but a church hall built just to the north in 1937 resulted in the doorway being enclosed within a



Doorways at St. Andrew's Church and St. Bartholomew's Church

courtyard, thus reducing its significance. The more modern churches of Longbenton conservation area do not have feature doorways at all. The doorway of St. Bartholomew's Church is the exception in that is of significance. It consists of a castellated porch with a variety of moulded stone details and a deeply recessed arched door under an ogee drip mould.

### 5.4.6 Windows

Like doorways, treatment of windows is part of the high quality attention to detail in the area's architecture.



Strongly vertical windows and newer horizontal windows with a vertical emphasis



Earlier window openings are strongly vertical, one of the defining features of late Georgian and Victorian architecture. Early window openings in the **Village Core Sub-Area** are simple with square or angled natural sandstone sills and lintels (often with chamfered edges or other modest detailing). Most of the later openings are larger and more horizontal, but subdivision of the windows within them still strongly emphasises verticality. The ground floor windows of The



Exchange are interesting with their Romanesque arches, although the large, horizontally emphasised first floor windows are not as attractive. Window openings in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area** can be particularly big to match the scale of the buildings, and there are a few different shapes too (round-headed, circular, etc.), as well as copious brick, timber or stone detailing. Openings in more recent buildings can be meagre by comparison, the window-to-wall ratio very low, creating a blank appearance.



Circular and round-headed windows on Northumberland Avenue

Bay windows are found in some the earliest buildings of the **Village Core Sub-Area**, but they are common on later ones, for example, the pubs. However, in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area** bay windows are a definitive feature of the architecture. Here a wide variety of single and two-storey, angled, curved, faceted or square bays are used to animate the elevations. Some match the house in materials whilst others are enlivened with contrasting sandstone, brickwork, tile, or render, plus lead, slate or tile roofs.



Bay windows at the Black Bull and the Ship Inn on Front Street



Double-height bays often extend up into roof gables and most flat roofed bays have solid parapets. Roofs of single storey bays often extend sideways to cover the doorway as a porch. Bay windows are attractive, prominent features that help define the distinctive grand nature of the architecture in this sub-area.



The range of bay windows in Benton conservation area

Of the conservation areas' windows themselves, many survive from late Victorian, Edwardian and early to mid twentieth century buildings, but there are several losses, especially in the earlier terraces in the village core. Of the few original windows are in place in the terraces here, for example, 2 The Terrace, they add so much to the proportion and character of the building and it would of benefit to see them retained. Traditionally, all windows (in brick properties) would be set back from the face of the building in a reveal of at least a header's depth adding life and character to elevations. This feature has the potential to be eroded and a flattened elevation produced due to the insertion of modern window replacements.

Traditional windows in the area's late Georgian and Victorian buildings would be double-hung vertical sliding timber sashes. As Victorians produced larger panes of glass, glazing bars were used less (for example, 2 and 4 Midhurst Road, Oakhurst Terrace) but, by the Edwardian period and later, glazing bars were reintroduced as decorative features, usually only in the top sash (for example, Northumberland Avenue), which was often smaller than the bottom sash. Early to mid twentieth century buildings began to used side and top-hung casements instead of sliding sashes, still with smaller toplights containing leaded, painted or textured glass (for example, 8 and 10 Tynedale Terrace, Glebe Avenue), whilst others used a mixture (for example, the



Sliding sash windows and later examples with decorative glazing bars. Plus, casements with painted glass

Benton Ale House has first floor sliding sashes and ground floor casements, probably as a result of later added bay windows). PVCu windows are alien to the area and are an inferior substitute for traditional timber windows. The permitted development rights of homeowners have seen the loss of many original windows but, like doorways, many do survive to contribute to the area's special interest.

Surviving original windows to 28 Northumberland Avenue have an Art Deco style in their horizontal shape and glazing bars. Also with a 1930s/Art Deco style are many of the leaded and coloured window designs of the properties of that time. The authentic use of leaded glass is important to many windows, where each pane is individually leaded into the window,

Art Deco style windows at 28 Northumberland Avenue



creating intricate and lively reflections that add to the vitality of the architecture. Lead is sometimes applied to a single pane of glass instead, but this does not have the same effect, leaving a flatter appearance.



Late Georgian and Victorian window frames were usually painted off-white. Later ones are nearly always white, but it is traditional for some Edwardian and early twentieth century windows to have the timber sub-frame painted the same colour as the front door, and only the window frame itself painted white, for example, at 1 Eastfield Road.

Window at 1 Eastfield Road



The main, feature windows of both churches in the Benton conservation area are gothic style arched windows. Also St. Andrew's has some very attractive Art Noveau windows that have unfortunately been hidden by metal grates. At the two churches of Longbenton conservation area, the windows, like the doorways, are not of particular merit. Looking at Benton Station, the windows that are there have been boarded up and look very run-down and unattractive. This is unfortunate because despite being rather modest in their scale, they are deeply recessed and have quite grand stone lintels and cills, and better care could make them attractive features.

Boarded up windows at Benton Station



Art Noveau windows at St. Andrew's Church obscured by metal grates

### 5.4.7 Shopfronts



There are two shops in this study area (as said previously, shopping provision is supplied at the nearby centre of Forest Hall and Four Lane Ends). Simmz Deli is an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century shopfront inserted into the west wing of Benton House, and is part of a listed building. It has understated but attractive timber detailing and the multi-paned upper part of the windows echo the Georgian windows on the first floor of the building. It is a smart and clearly well cared for shopfront.



1 Sandringham Avenue has an over 100-year history of being a newsagents. Now, as Black's, it has unfortunately lost its historic shopfront and it has been replaced with an unattractive plastic sign, large windows and large roller shutter boxes. It has no design coherency.

### 5.4.8 Roofs, Gables and Dormers

Most roofs in the conservation areas are unaltered and are important architectural features that enliven the character of the area considerably.

Traditional dual pitch roofs without hips are the basis for much of the **Village Core Sub-Area**, illustrating its simple architectural beginnings. Some buildings have dormers, such as the Vicarage,





Dual pitched, un-hipped roofs prevail in Longbenton conservation area, but some do have dormer windows. Half dormers at Cheviot View

Gables can vary from a peak above a window to almost a full additional storey



Traditional roof coverings are found across the conservation areas. Natural Welsh slate is used on most Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Welsh slate is rough-looking with slightly uneven edges and subtle variations in shade and tone, often with purple hints, which helps define the richness and texture of the area's character. Some of the older properties (Benton House, former North House) use Lakeland slate, which is similar to Welsh but has a green tone. Most of the early to mid twentieth century buildings across the conservation areas use either red clay plain tiles or red interlocking clay pantiles. The first are thicker and smaller, creating a vibrancy to the roofscape and various tones and textures are used. Interlocking pantiles are much brighter, bringing the roofscape prominently to life. Much of the original older roofs have a patina and slight roughness brought about from years of weathering; where they have been replaced they have an unnatural appearance.

North House and the Benton Ale House. Cheviot View has interesting half-dormers at both the front and rear of the buildings. The flat roof of buildings such as The Exchange and Park View House are not in keeping with the area.

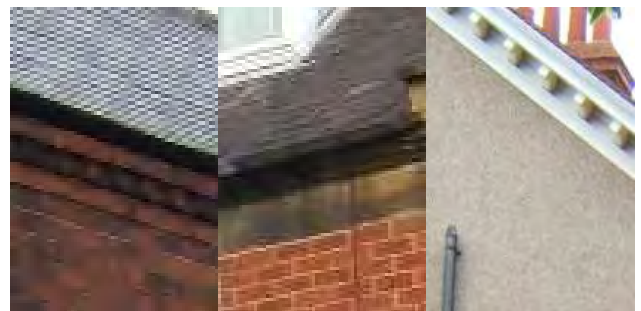
In the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, roofs take on more energy with complex, stepped shapes bringing the roofscape to life. A variety of gables and hips are used to create dramatic, cascading forms that are key to this sub-area's special interest. Most roofs here have a large gable to the street, varying in size and design, from the quite modest - just peaks above bay windows - to what can be almost a full additional storey in the roof space. Gables create attractive visual rhythms along the streets, many being visually prominent through and above the trees. Designs are quite varied, demonstrating individuality and architectural quality. Dormer windows are quite rare in the area and of the ones that do exist, they are almost all not original. Some of the more modern blocks of flats have flat roofs that are atypical of the area.



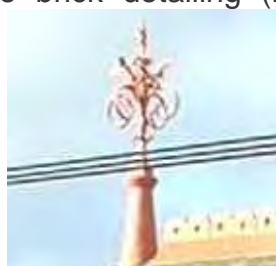
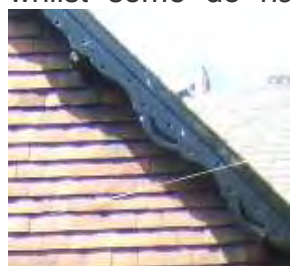
Unusual eaves at 17 Lyndhurst Road

Eaves are treated in a variety of ways but are mostly quite modest. Eaves on the later buildings tend to overhang more. Number 17 Lyndhurst Road is unusual in that the eave

of the curving roof overhangs so much that it forms a porch-like feature. Similarly to eaves, verges are rather modest. On many buildings they are plain, whilst some do have brick detailing (for example,



The treatments of verges include brick detailing, watertabling and timber detailing



Bargeboard at The Grove, and crested ridge and ornate finial at Benton Metro Station

East Avenue and Queens Gardens), stone watertabling (for example, 13 and 15 Tynedale Terrace) and timber detailing (for example, The Grange). Some properties have bargeboards; Midhurst Road in particular has many properties with this detail, both the earlier properties of the street and the later semis. The bargeboards found in the area are generally very simple, although some slightly more ornate examples can be

found at The Grove. Most ridges are red clay but some on earlier slate roofs are grey (for example Eastfield Terrace). Ornate but quite small-scale finials are occasional features and crested ridges can also be found. The most ornate examples of these features can be found at Benton metro station. Valleys are traditionally lead lined.

Benton conservation area's churches of St. Bartholomew and St. Andrew are traditional with their pitched, Welsh slate roofs. The churches of Longbenton conservation area are not traditional-style churches and this is reflected in their roofs. The Greystone Evangelical Church has a dark grey tile roof but an unusual curved roof. St. Aidan's Church's roof has a both dark grey tiles and greened copper, but is pitched.

Non-traditional roofs at the churches of Longbenton conservation area



### 5.4.9 Chimneys

Chimneys are a recurrent traditional feature in both conservation areas. They add to the roofscape considerably, particularly where trees do not obscure rooftops, for example, East Avenue and Clifton Terrace. In the **Village Core Sub-Area**, in older buildings, main chimneys are usually at the ridge. Some are quite "grand", such as those at Cheviot View, where they have brick detailing and many pots (although some chimneys have seen a great loss of these). The chimneys of The Ship Inn stand particularly proud: tall in red brick and stone detailing. Newer chimneys are usually smaller, more square and lower, such as those on the 1950s blocks of flats. The chimneys of Benton House look unusually short and have no pots; it may therefore be the case that these features have seen works to them at some point in time.

In the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, chimneys are used as part of the architectural vocabulary of the buildings, most being stout and sturdy in appearance with sizeable proportions. Nearly all chimneys in the area are brick and the detail varies, but most have shaped tops. Many pots survive, most cream or red clay. Particular examples of where chimneys make an interesting contribution are on East Avenue (east side) where the chimneys alternate wide and thinner along the street and at 28 Northumberland Avenue, where the two chimneys are topped with what look like miniature houses. Also, whereas most chimneys are found at the ridge of a roof, the two chimneys of Kyle House are situated centrally halfway down the roof slope, a great detail that adds to the symmetry of the building. Where chimneys are absent in more modern buildings, roofscapes appear much blander (for example, Ennismore Court and Williams Park).



Examples of particularly interesting chimneys: 28 Northumberland Avenue, Ship Inn, East Avenue, Cheviot View, and Kyle House



### 5.4.10 Rainwater Goods

Gutters and downcomers (drainpipes) are generally not prominent features of the architectural design but many survive in place, even if discretely. In the terraces, downcomers add to vertical rhythm, for example, East Avenue. There are generally two types of gutter: those concealed within moulded or parapeted eaves, probably lead lined, and those applied directly to eaves. In the first type, the downcomer cuts through the moulded eaves; in the second type, where eaves overhang, the downcomer tends to be shaped around them. The quality and periods of the architecture in the area

mean almost all rainwater goods would have been cast-iron painted black; much of this survives (on some houses the colour matches the joinery colour scheme, there are some examples of this on Northumberland Avenue). There are examples of modern plastic rainwater goods that are not historically accurate. Few good hoppers survive but they can be found, such as at The Grove. Particularly distinctive rainwater goods are robust square section iron hoppers and downcomers at 21 and 23 Tynedale Terrace and the Art Nouveau examples at The Ship Inn.



Rainwater goods at 21 Tynedale Terrace and Ship Inn

## 5.4 Contribution of Spaces

Spaces, both large and small, make a significant contribution to the detailed character of the area in all sub-areas. The **Open Spaces Sub-Area** is obviously defined by the character of its spaces. The main spaces in the conservation areas are:

### *Village Core and Suburban Growth Sub-Areas*

- Land north of Front Street
- Williams Park
- Belvedere Gardens
- Land south of Benton House
- Front Gardens
- Back Gardens

### *Open Spaces Sub-Area*

- Benton Quarry Park and Play area
- St. Bartholomew's Churchyard

As well as these, the roads, pavements and verges are also considered.

Together these represent a significant amount of green open space in the conservation area, and there is more beyond the boundary elsewhere in the neighbourhood, including allotments and school fields. Trees make a significant contribution to most of these spaces. The area is known for its green nature- "Leafy Benton".

The collective contribution that these spaces make to urban ecology must be high, and this should be recognised in their future management.

Two spaces make a negative contribution, one in each conservation area. These are the land at the corner of Thornhill Road and East Avenue, and the land around the Community Hall and Greystone Evangelical Church on Hoylake Avenue. Both are discussed below.

### 5.5.1 Land north of Front Street

This is the area between the Black Bull car park and the Metro line. The car park itself was created around the 1950s, when an offshoot of older properties was demolished. Such a large open space on the main street is not what would be expected of a medieval village layout, but its presence for around 50 years means that this is now a definite and accepted feature of Front Street. It is a large expanse of tarmac but a particularly pleasant grassed and treed area at the rear softens any harshness created by this.



Undeveloped land north of Front Street

Behind this area, reached down steep College Lane is a large green

space that has never been developed (apart from two circa 1980s bungalows). It has dense tree coverage and the grass has been left to grow. The lack of development may be due to topography and access issues; the area can only be reached via College Lane, likely to be sufficient for the few homes there at present, but perhaps not for a larger number of properties. Any potential development would have to take this into consideration.

### 5.5.2 Williams Park



Open spaces at Williams Park

Williams Park is a late 1990s housing development that is situated mostly in the former grounds of North House and the Vicarage. These properties, which are listed buildings and were in use as student accommodation, have been retained and converted into flats. Many surrounding, less significant buildings were demolished and replaced with several blocks of flats and houses.

In terms of open space, by keeping the buildings to the outskirts of the development, the historical density has been retained, i.e. the site is not any more built-up than it was in the past. The retention of so much space has allowed for some incredibly attractive, well-maintained open spaces.

### 5.5.3 Belvedere Gardens

This is another late 1990s housing development, built in the former grounds of Graham House, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century home, and later used as North Tyneside Council offices. The density of the layout of Belvedere Gardens is not historically accurate, as it occupies a site that was for a long time occupied by one large home and is now occupied with fifteen large apartment blocks, two bungalows and several garages.



Open spaces at Belvedere Gardens

Of the open space available, the main component is a Georgian-style formal square in the centre of the site, complete with boundary walls and railings and a central fountain. The remaining space is made up of grassed areas with small, neat bushes. Similarly to Williams Park, the open spaces in this area are maintained to a high standard and are attractive.



### 5.5.4 Land south of Benton House



Listed ha-ha at Benton House

Most of this land consists of Benton House's gardens, which are completely surrounded by mature trees. The gardens themselves are made up of mainly a large lawn surrounded by flowers and shrubs, and at the northern end, a grade II listed 18<sup>th</sup> century ha-ha. This space is a wonderful remnant of 18<sup>th</sup> century grounds, of which there is historic map evidence that the layout has not seen significant change for at least a hundred years.



Open space with rural character

Just south of these gardens are an area of public open space, with a number of mature trees and a winding, rustic red gravel path. The rural character created here is refreshing to see in an otherwise reasonably built-up area.

### 5.5.5 Front Gardens

Most back gardens in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area** are the larger of the two gardens; however that is not to say that the front gardens are not of a reasonable size. A way in which this is evident is by the many properties that have seen their front gardens turned into parking area for vehicles and still have space for lawns and planting.

The majority of front gardens are generally well-established and well-cared for. Many have lawns, with flowers and shrubs, bushes of varying size and trees ranging from ornamental to large-scale. For gardens of small size, or where they have been largely paved and therefore there isn't space for a lawn or larger-scale planting, owners have injected greenery through potted plants, hanging baskets or a small bush. There are some examples where the garden has been converted completely into hardstanding, without any greenery, and unfortunately these examples make a negative contribution to the street.

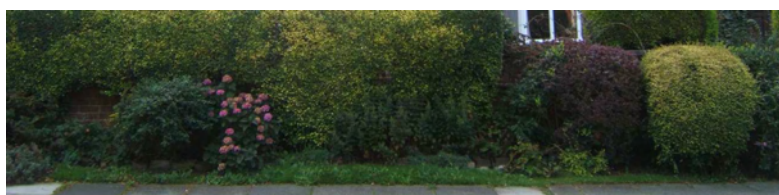


Selection of front gardens; most are mature and well maintained

The majority of gardens in this area are bounded by a low wall and many have a hedge topping this wall- most small, but occasionally in some parts the hedge can be quite tall, for example Queens Gardens. The wall's materials generally match the architecture of the property, i.e. most stone properties have a stone wall and most brick properties have a brick wall (there are exceptions, for example, Station Approach has a stone wall despite consisting of brick properties). Many (at one time, probably all) of the brick walls have a sandstone topping, often rusticated and mostly reasonably simple. Several properties have gate piers and these too are treated quite simply, some with pyramidal caps. There are a small number of particularly special wall and pier topping details, probably the most unusual being at 21 and 23 Tynedale Terrace, where on top of the pier is what appears to be a miniature domed building. Another unusual detail at Tynedale Terrace is the grass verge that runs along the street (and down into Eastfield Terrace) outside of the front gardens. Most



Unusual pier topping at 21 Tynedale Terrace



The verge at Tynedale Terrace adds special character with its flowers and shrubs, including this sunflower



of these verges are well kept, with flowers and shrubs, and they add special character to these streets.

There is less variation of front gardens in Longbenton conservation area; this is due to the small number of private dwelling houses, all of which are of a similar age, compared to Benton conservation area. They nearly all tend to follow the pattern of a low wall topped with a hedge (see above). The difference here, however, is that the gardens (front and back) are generally of a much smaller size.



Railings are not common, but the number of empty holes along the tops of so many walls tells us that this was not the case in the past. As stated above, most walls are covered over by a hedge, but there are a few cases where replacement railings have been put in place. The most ornate and possibly most authentic examples can be found in the railings and gates of Oakhurst Terrace.

Ornate railings at Oakhurst Terrace



Walls and gate at St. Andrew's Church and the well maintained gardens at St. Aidan's Church



The grounds of St. Andrew's Church are mostly plain grass, kept neat and tidy. A sandstone wall with large, detailed

gate piers forms the boundary. The grounds of St. Aidan's Church and Presbytery are beautifully maintained, with lawns, flowers and shrubs. A stone wall surrounds most of these grounds, although not original. The presbytery appears to have retained some of the original wall but it has been topped with the more modern version.

A note worth mentioning when discussing walls is the retention of so many old stone walls that would have once formed the boundary to a particular piece of land. These are particularly surprising and special features when found in more modern parts of the conservation area, such as the east side of Carolyn Close and south of Aidan Court. They make a significant contribution and deserve to be retained.



Old stone walls at Carolyn Close and Aidan Court



### 5.5.6 Back Gardens

Because of the way the plots are laid out in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, back gardens are less visible, but they are generally much larger than front gardens and are just as important in their contribution to the low density, high amenity character of the area. For most, a large, sheltered, well-established back garden is an indispensable part of living in Benton Conservation Area and care should be taken not to weaken their intrinsic significance either by infill development, removing trees, or eroding green maturity.

In contrast, the back gardens of the **Village Core Sub-Area** are generally smaller than the front. This is due to the number of terraced streets where such properties typically have a very small back garden or yard. This can also be said for the terraced streets in the **Suburban Growth Sub-Area**, for example, East Ave (east side).

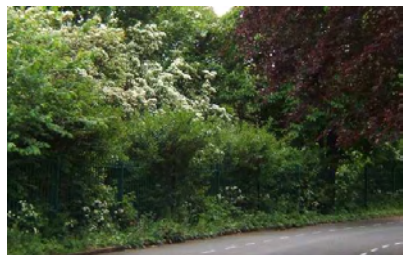


East Avenue's back lane

### 5.5.7 *Benton Quarry Park and Play area*

Benton Quarry Park is a surprisingly large site within the Benton conservation area. It is one of North Tyneside's Local Neighbourhood Community Parks, being defined as a park that offers a landscaped environment with some nature conservation interest and a range of facilities such as children's play court games, sitting out areas and gardens.

The park is located on the site of Benton Quarry, displayed on the second edition OS map (c.1897) as being in full service and on the third edition (c.1919) as being disused. Presumably this land is unfit to build on, otherwise it surely would have disappeared at some point during Benton's development.



The park has smart green railings as a boundary, which in many places is disguised by the thick tree coverage inside the park. The south boundary facing Whitley Road sees the retention of an old stone wall. The central area of the park is made up of a gravel path circling

areas of grass that has been left to grow to encourage nature conservation and surrounded by dense tree coverage. This is in contrast to the northeast area, where this enclosed character opens out to a sweeping, large, open field. The south area of the park has a children's playsite and car park. Other user-friendly facilities are the provision of a few logs for visitors to sit on and enjoy their surroundings- a nice touch that is in keeping with the natural feel of the park. Also there are a few bins; enough to keep the park litter-free but not too many to over-urbanise a place with a more rural character.



This park is a wonderful facility. It is a place where people can walk, play or relax, whilst being a place that encourages biodiversity. It is a rural-feeling haven in an urban environment; it is quiet and peaceful, which is amazing considering the busy Whitley Road runs along its boundary.

### 5.5.8 *St. Bartholomew's Churchyard*

There has been a church on this site since the 9<sup>th</sup> century and although the present church dates from 1790, it can be assumed that there has been some form of churchyard on this site since the earlier date. Today, mature tree coverage of several different species adds a wealth of character, as well as working to shield and open out views. The layout of the winding walkways allows the visitor to choose several different routes. It is worth noting that these





walkways have been positioned like this since at least the late 1800s.

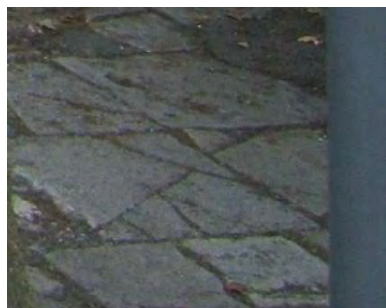
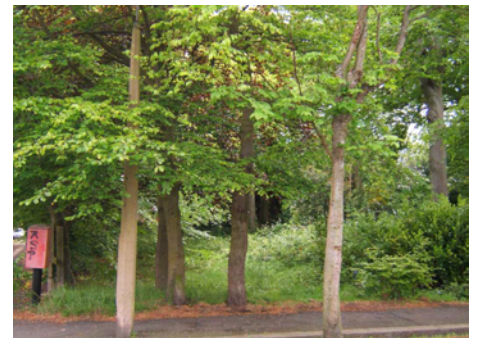
It is peaceful and beautiful space, surrounded by a simple stone wall. Inside the churchyard are gravestones dating back several hundreds of years, stunning ironwork surrounding private graves and a tall and elegant WWI Memorial. Not to forgotten, of course, is the centrepiece: the grade II listed Church of St. Bartholomew.



### 5.5.9 Negative Sites

Two small sites currently detract from the appearance of the area. These sites require at least some initial tidying up and continued maintenance and possibly some sensitive development.

The first is a site of open space at the corner of Thornhill Road and East Avenue. This plot of land has never been built on but was occupied by a lawn tennis court in the early part of the last century; it was for the personal use of the owners of The Rookery as at that time it formed part of their garden. In recent decades, there have been a number of planning applications and enquiries that have been refused, the decisions mostly based on the detrimental effect development would have on the protected trees within the site. The site has been left to overgrow and despite its value as a piece of green land, it now looks particularly untidy within an area of a generally high standard of upkeep. Excessive growth also encroaches onto the footpaths and therefore, in addition to affecting the visual amenity of the area it also affects pedestrian access.

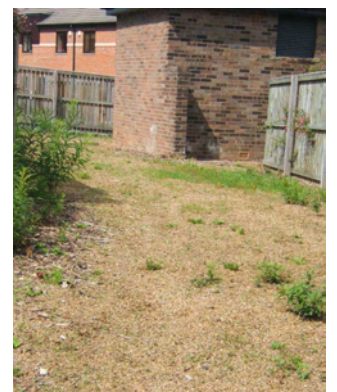


The other negative site is the land around the Community Hall and Greystone Evangelical Church on Hoylake Avenue. Here, hardstanding has been left unmanaged for some time and is cracked and untidy in appearance. In addition, in the grounds of the Community Hall there are areas of substantial weed growth. Although this area is slightly tucked away out of sight

of the main part of the conservation area, it could do with some attention.



Although perhaps not as large or noticeable but are also worth mentioning are the toilets opposite Four Lane Ends Metro station and the substation at the northeast of Williams Park. The toilets, being a flat-roofed and boxy building, are already reasonably unattractive, but





their boarded-up, abandoned condition further exacerbates this. The substation in Williams Park is surrounded by a fence on all sides, apart from the side leading onto Eastfield Road. The problem created by this is that there is a very large opening that allows passers-by to very easily see inside where the gravel path is starting to grow weeds and it generally looks untidy (clearly this part is not cared for as well as the rest of the site, which is on the whole immaculate).

### 5.5.10 Roads, Pavements and Verges

Many roads, pavements and verges contribute quite strongly to the character and appearance of the area. Like development that lines them, roads have been suburbanised over the decades, overlaying visual references to the early village and suburban sprawl with crisp kerbs and standardised surfaces. This is only to be expected, but where minor evidence of past character exists, this should be retained and preserved.

Some less-used streets like College Lane have a softer more relaxed feel than, say, Front Street, which should be protected from being stripped away. This does not, however, mean that these areas should be neglected, such as the case at the moment at Cheviot View.



Neglected path at Cheviot View



White and yellow lines on East Avenue

Roads are mostly black tarmac. Road markings, including allocated parking bays, can be quite prominent in places; no doubt they have been placed there for various reasons, but it is a shame that copious white and yellow lines detract from the

simple, restrained appearance that would better reflect the character of the area.

Another feature that was no doubt positioned for necessary reasons is the narrowed road with traffic lights outside Casa Antonio Restaurant. While the potential safety benefits of this cannot be denied, especially considering its proximity to a school, there is too much going on here (lights, road markings, railing, etc.), which creates an unattractive feature on Front Street. Perhaps painting the railings a darker colour would bring an improvement to this feature.



Traffic calming measures on Front Street



Surviving granite kerbs at Thornhill Road, sett-lined gullies at The Oval, rare granite back lane at Cheviot View and eroded tarmac over setts at the Ship Inn.

Kerbs are either concrete or granite, the latter very important to the historic appearance of the streets. There are examples of where setts have been covered over with tarmac, but erosion has allowed them to be seen. However, sett-lined gullies survive in many places, not having been topped with tarmac. A rare intact granite chip back lane to the west of Cheviot View is an important survival, indicating the nature of historic surfaces in the area and generating a rich texture to the scene.



Pavements are generally either concrete flags or dark tarmac. These can be patchy in appearance, with various works from over the years being covered

over with ill-matching materials. This is unfortunate, as it has often resulted in an unattractive feature in an otherwise attractive street.

An unusual treatment for paths is the slightly gravelly red path used from 18 to 36 The Oval, which is similar to the path south of Benton House. This red path creates a rural feel, especially at the south end of The Oval where it faces the rear of Benton Quarry Park. Unfortunately



Gravel path at Williams Park

this path has also suffered from inappropriate infill. Another different path treatment is the use of gravel in the “old” part of Williams Park (the area where the listed buildings have been retained). This is much more suitable than the black tarmac that is used in the “new” part of the site.



Ill-matching infill on Midhurst Road and The Oval



Black tarmac used in the “new” part of the site.

Street trees make a particularly significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Benton is well known for a significant number of mature native trees in its streets, gardens and open spaces (sycamore, ash, beech and other species- see TPO details). Collectively they are an important indicator of the age of much of the development in the conservation areas. Trees are crucial to the leafy, well-established suburban street scene and make particularly strong contributions along Northumberland Avenue and The Grove. This mature green character should be protected and managed into the future to ensure long-term sustainability. See page 45 for TPO details.

Street trees at The Grove



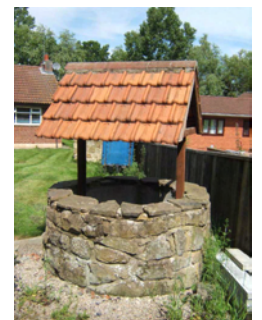
Old iron nameplate at South View and a painted-over example at North Avenue

Of street nameplates, a few old iron ones survive, but most are modern. A



Sign and well at College Lane

particularly prominent one is South View’s on Front Street. A painted-over example on North Avenue is a sad hint to the disregard that has been had for these special features. A particularly interesting sign is at College Lane, pointing out the road to Balliol College Farm, some 800 metres to the north. It is difficult to age this sign, but an indication may be that the area in-between the two



sites was clear from development up until around 50 years ago, aging the sign older than this. Further down College Lane, just south of Belle Varde Cottage and Spring Villa, is a well, which is a pleasant reminder of the village’s rural past. Teal Close has several bollards that add a wealth of history and quality to the area; although they may not be original, they are certainly accurate looking late Victorian/Edwardian replicas. In and around Williams Park are some Victorian style streetlights, which are attractive but too tall to be historically accurate. Also, where they would be acceptable in the “old” part of Williams Park, they seem a little contrived in the “new” part.



Authentic bollard at Teal Close and less-authentic streetlight at Williams Park

Not all features found in the streets of the conservation areas make positive contributions like the ones above. In places, there is evidence of “street clutter” in the form of adverts and signs. Where some may be important, perhaps not all

are necessary and certainly in some cases, a more understated scale and design would be more appropriate.

Street clutter in the form of signs and adverts



## 5.6 Atmosphere

The conservation areas' character is gained not only from the built fabric and spaces around them, but also the atmosphere they create. The area's buildings and spaces generate particular types of social use that combine to create a stimulating mood and rhythm to the place, of the bustling village centre, of the peaceful nature of Benton Quarry Park, of doing a spot of gardening, or of a quick drink down the pub. The comfortable, mature nature of the area's layout and buildings creates a gentle, well-established feel to the place, of a suburban neighbourhood still characterised by its medieval/rural past but proud of the quality of its later expansion. Civic pride that recognises this should be generated and nurtured.

Due to the number of trees and green spaces, the feel of the place is also heavily influenced by the seasons. A cold winter's morning strolling along Northumberland Avenue can feel very different from a warm summer's afternoon relaxing in Benton Quarry Park. Trees also contribute pleasing sounds to the experience of the area: bird song and the rustling of leaves, which are a benchmark of a rich, green suburban environment. This atmosphere is challenged along the central through routes of Front Street and Station Road by the level and speed of traffic that can have a detrimental effect on the atmosphere of the conservation areas. Overall, however, the buildings, spaces, streets, and their uses combine to generate an area of considerable attraction with an inherently appealing atmosphere.

## 6 Management

Change is an inevitable component of most conservation areas; the challenge is to manage change in ways that maintain and, if possible, strengthen an area's special qualities. The character of conservation areas is rarely static and is susceptible to incremental, as well as dramatic, change. Some areas are in a state of relative economic decline, and suffer from lack of investment. More often, the qualities that make conservation areas appealing also help to encourage over-investment and pressure for development in them. Positive management is essential if such pressure for change, which tends to alter the very character that made the areas attractive in the first place, is to be limited.

Proactively managing Benton and Longbenton Conservation Areas will therefore be an essential way of preserving and enhancing their character and appearance into the future. In accordance with new English Heritage guidance, the Council intends to start a programme of corresponding Conservation Area Management Strategies for many of its conservation areas in the next few years. Management topics that could be addressed are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

- boundary review
- article 4 directions
- enforcement and monitoring change
- buildings at risk
- site specific design guidance or development briefs
- thematic policy guidance (for example, on windows or doors)
- enhancement opportunities
- trees and green spaces

<sup>1</sup> *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, English Heritage, 2005

- urban design and/or public realm
- regeneration issues
- decision making and community consultation
- available resources

The most relevant ones to Benton and Longbenton Conservation Areas are briefly discussed below. In addition, issues that relate to all conservation areas in the borough should be applied to these conservation areas, including borough-wide Local Development Framework policies, dealing with enforcement, agreeing a way of monitoring change in the area, agreeing processes for decision-making and community consultation, and addressing the availability of resources to deal with all management issues.

For further information on conservation area management and to find out how you could become involved, use the contact information on page 7.

### **6.1 Article 4(2) Directions**

There are currently no Article 4(2) Directions in the conservation areas. Making an Article 4(2) Direction would require planning permission to be sought for certain types of development that would otherwise be permitted without the need for consent. Directions are made to further protect character and appearance from minor, incremental changes that, over the years, can accumulate to cause considerable harm to character. Article 4(2) Directions can control:

- enlargement, improvement or alteration of a house
- alteration of a roof (including, for example, a dormer window or rooflight)
- erection, alteration or removal of a chimney
- erection of a porch
- provision of hardstanding
- installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite dish
- erection, alteration or demolition of a gate, fence, wall or means of enclosure
- provision or alteration of a building, enclosure or pool in a house's curtilage
- painting of the exterior of building or enclosure

Directions would only apply to dwellinghouses and only control development that fronts a highway, open space or watercourse. It would also be normal to only select the most relevant of the above categories to control, and to apply the Direction only to specific parts of the conservation area. A review should be carried out to see whether an Article 4(2) Direction would positively help to protect the area's special local character and, if so, there would need to be public consultation.

### **6.2 Site Specific Design Guidance or Development Briefs**

There may be some sites within the conservation areas, either now or in the future, where a formal lead by the Council would help smooth the development process. A design or development brief could be prepared that clearly sets out the characteristics of the conservation area to which new development should respond, and define the constraints and opportunities created by the spatial and character traits of the site. Such a clear picture would help smooth the planning process, provide certainty for developers, and allow issues to be resolved with the local community through consultation prior to an application being submitted. As well as controlling expected development, briefs can also be used to encourage development where it would be welcome. However, due to the workload involved, preparation of briefs is not undertaken lightly and they may best be reserved for particularly problematic sites.

### **6.3 Thematic Policy Guidance**

Some local policy guidance to deal with certain historic environment issues is already in place, produced by the Tyne & Wear Specialist Conservation Team (see page 51). But more specific guidance for these conservation areas would be a proactive way of managing future change. Possible topics could relate to some of the architectural features such as windows or roofs, the aim being to encourage a particular approach to works to individual buildings that preserves and enhances the overall character.

## 6.4 Trees, Green Spaces and Public Realm

The Council's Biodiversity Action Plan should be used to inform management of trees and green spaces in the conservation area. An agreed approach to managing street trees, other trees in the public realm, and those on private land that contribute to the character of the area, should be a positive step to protecting their contribution well into the future. A review of Tree Preservation Orders would also indicate any further opportunities for controlling the important contribution trees make to the area.

Future opportunities should be considered for the preservation and enhancement of roads, paths, verges and street furniture.

## 7 Other Information & Guidance

### 7.1 Other Heritage Designations

The following heritage designations are found within the conservation area. For information on what these designations mean, go to [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk).

0	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
7	Listed Buildings
7	Locally Listed Buildings
20	Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
0	Article 4 Directions

#### 7.1.1 Listed Buildings

Entries on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest cover the whole building (including the interior), may cover more than one building, and may also include other buildings, walls and structures in the building's curtilage. Contact us for more advice (see page 7).

##### Longbenton Conservation Area

Name	Grade	Designated
Benton House, Front Street	II	27 Feb 1950
Benton House and shop in west wing, Front Street	II	19 Feb 1986
Ha Ha South Of Benton House, Front Street	II	19 Feb 1986
Ethel Williams Hall (formerly listed as North House)	II	19 Feb 1986
Ethel Williams Hall (formerly known as the Northern Counties Orphanage)	II	19 Feb 1986
Manor House, Teal Close	II	04 Dec 1957

##### Benton Conservation Area

Church of St. Bartholomew	II	27 Feb 1950
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#### 7.1.2 Local List

North Tyneside Council has recently put together its list of buildings and parks that are of special local architectural and historic interest. Unlike Nationally Listed Buildings or Registered Parks and Gardens, Local List status does not put any extra planning constraints on a property; rather it would be a material consideration if a development was proposed (i.e. the historical and architectural quality of the building would be taken into consideration when the planning officer was making their decision). In addition, it is hoped that the Local List will raise the profile of and give recognition to the buildings, parks, etc. that are of special importance to our Borough. The following are included in the Local List. Please consult us for more information (see page 7).

### Longbenton Conservation Area

North View House, Front Street
Black Bull Inn, Front Street

### Benton Conservation Area

1-4 West Avenue
Benton Metro Station
Grave Of Charles W Mitchell, St Bartholomew's Churchyard
Grave Of Henry Fredrick Swan St Bartholomew's Churchyard
War Memorial St Bartholomew's Churchyard

### 7.1.3 Tree Preservation Orders

The Council protects trees by making Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). A TPO aims to protect trees that make a significant contribution to the visual amenity of an area. The Local Planning Authority can make a TPO in respect of a tree, group of trees or woodland. The effect of a TPO is to make it an offence to carry out most works to trees without the Local Planning Authority's consent.

Not all of the following TPO designations may be in the conservation areas. Please consult us for more information (see page 7).

### Longbenton Conservation Area

Order	Name	Trees	Species
60	9 Cheviot View, Benton 1985	1	Ash
73	Fairways Estate, Longbenton 1992	133 & 5 groups	Sycamore, Willow, Beech, Holly, Birch, Lime, Norway Maple, Purple Beech, Oak, Elm, Rowan, Cherry, Hawthorn, Poplar, Horse Chestnut, Whitebeam
123	Ethel Williams Hall, Benton 1997	43 & 4 groups	Acer, Tilia, Horse Chestnut, Ash, Beech, Holly, Gingko, Birch
142	St. Aidan's RC Church, Benton 2001	5	Sycamore, Horse Chestnut, Hawthorn, Lime

### Benton Conservation Area

9	Clifton Terrace, Forest Hall 1980	1	Sycamore
11	Eastwood Court, Benton 1982	19	Lime, Maple, Sycamore, Horse Chestnut, Beech, Black Poplar, Willow
25	Station Road, Longbenton No.1 1971	36, 11 areas & 9 groups	Weeping Ash, Elm, Sycamore, Beech, Birch, Lime, Cherry, Poplar, Mountain Ash, Western Cedar, Willow, Horse Chestnut, Cypress,

			Hawthorn, White Beam
30	Midhurst Road, Benton 1969	17	Sycamore, Lime, Poplar, Horse Chestnut, Gean, Ash, Birch
48	The Rookery, Benton 1984	34	Beech, Oak, Sycamore, Horse Chestnut
49	The Vicarage, Station Road, Benton 1968	31	Sycamore, Lime, Horse Chestnut, Beech, Elm, Poplar
82	Eastfield Lodge, Longbenton 1991	6	Sycamore, Elm, Horse Chestnut
91	Field House, Whitley Road, Benton 1993	2	Beech, Lime
98	Tynedale Terrace, Benton 1994	9	Horse Chestnut, Lime, Ash, Sycamore, Swedish White Beam
109	Norwood Court, Benton 1995	11	Beech, Yew
110	22 Northumberland Avenue, Forest Hall 1995	3	Horse Chestnut, Sycamore, Cherry
120	Clifton Terrace, Forest Hall 1996	1 group	Sycamore, Ash, Sorbus, Beech, Horse Chestnut
122	The Oval, Benton 1998	1 & 9 groups	Hawthorn, Ash, Sycamore, Sorbus
125	Belvedere Gardens, Benton 1999	11 & 6 groups	Sycamore, Beech, Hawthorn
128	Grove Cottage, Benton 2000	13	Yew, Holly, Beech, Sycamore, Cherry,
129	The Gables, Benton 2000	30	Sycamore, Holly, Poplar, Yew, Norway Maple, Silver Birch

## 7.2 County Historic Environment Record Entries

The following entries from the Tyne & Wear HER (previously known as the Sites & Monuments Record, SMR) are within, or partly within, the conservation areas' boundaries. The Tyne & Wear Specialist Conservation team holds the HER. Records for these entries can be viewed at <http://sine7.ncl.ac.uk/sl/Home.htm>.

No.	Site Name	Period	Site Type
1410	Benton, flint flake	Prehistoric	Flint Flake
785	Longbenton, church of St. Bartholomew	Medieval	Parish Church
786	Longbenton village	Medieval	Village
1084	Longbenton, Benton Station (North)	Early Modern	Railway Station
1085	Longbenton, Benton Station (South)	Early Modern	Railway Station
1095	Longbenton Smithy	Early Modern	Blacksmith's
1124	Longbenton, Benton Quarry	Early Modern	Quarry
5783	Longbenton, WW2 Roadblock	Modern	Road Block
5784	Longbenton, Station Road WW2 Roadblock	Modern	Road Block

## 7.3 Unitary Development Plan Policies

The following is an extract of some of the relevant policies from the North Tyneside Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted March 2002. Other UDP policies may also be relevant, including those on housing, design, local retail centres, advertisements and highways. The Council has started the process of replacing its UDP with a Local Development Framework, more information on which can be found at [www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk).

## ***Wildlife Corridors***

*E12/6* Development which would adversely affect the contribution to biodiversity of a wildlife corridor identified on the proposals map will not be permitted unless:

- (i) no alternative site is reasonably available, or
- (ii) appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, all the adverse effects are secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or obligations.

In all cases any adverse effects of development shall be minimised.

In addition the positive effects of a proposed development on the contribution to biodiversity of a wildlife corridor will be taken into account in determining planning applications.

## ***Trees and Landscaping in Urban Areas***

*E14* The local planning authority will seek to protect and conserve existing trees and landscape features within the urban environment and will encourage new planting in association with development and wherever possible in other suitable locations.

## ***Conservation Areas***

*E16/2* Development which would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance, or setting of a conservation area, will not be permitted. In assessing a development, particular consideration will be given to:

- (i) its design, scale, layout and materials,
- (ii) the impact on trees,
- (iii) the treatment of surrounding spaces, and
- (iv) its relationship to surrounding development

*E16/3* The Local Planning Authority will in considering a proposed development give particular weight to the contribution made to the enhancement of a conservation area by the development in applying other policies and standards of the plan.

## ***Sites of Archaeological Importance***

*E19* The Local Planning Authority will protect the sites and settings of sites of archaeological importance from damaging development and will seek to enhance the setting and interpretation of sites of archaeological importance.

## ***Protection of Open Space & Playing Fields***

*R2/1* Land shown on the proposals map for the purpose of open space use, including playing fields of schools, other educational establishments, government and private organisations; will be retained in its present use.

*R2/2* Development of land shown on the proposals map for open space use will not be permitted where this will either:

- (i) result in a reduction in the open nature of the land where this causes a significant loss of local amenity; or
- (ii) result in insufficient provision for informal recreation in the locality; or
- (iii) adversely affect the environment or adjoining land uses. unless existing use is shown to have had an excessive adverse impact on the local neighbourhood in terms of noise, disturbance or other reason.

The UDP also contains a number of Development Control Policy Statements, some of which may be relevant to the conservation area, including:

- 8: Development Within Conservation Areas (*see 7.4 below*)



- 9: Residential Extensions - Detailed Design Considerations
- 10: Flat Conversions
- 11: Housing on Backland Sites
- 12: Houses in Multiple-occupation
- 15: Shopfront Design and Signage
- 17: Security Grilles and Shutters
- 30: Siting of Domestic and Commercial Satellite Dishes

## **7.4 Development Within Conservation Areas (DCPS 8)**

The North Tyneside UDP contains the following Development Control Policy Statement.

### **Materials planning criteria to be taken into account when considering individual proposals:**

- The extent to which proposals should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.
- The extent to which proposed car-parking affects the appearance of conservation areas due to its scale or the materials used.
- The extent to which traditional building materials, for new buildings and extensions, will be used (e.g. brick, slate, timber).
- Whether the scale, design and materials of new buildings and their settings will complement and enhance the character of buildings in the conservation area.
- The extent to which existing trees, stone walls and other attractive features will be retained and incorporated in new developments.
- Whether additional tree planting and landscaping are proposed on new developments.
- The impact of any new proposal on the loss of light, effect of overshadowing, or loss of privacy to adjoining property.
- The potential traffic generation, both vehicular and pedestrian, of the proposed activity.
- Where commercial property is involved, the effect of service vehicles, refuse storage and disposal, opening hours and proposals for signs/adverts.
- Where an intensification of use is proposed on upper floors the effect of any external fire escapes.
- Where cooking on the site is proposed (i.e. restaurant / takeaway food) the effect of any extract flues.
- The design and location of means of enclosure, fencing walls and gates.
- Where existing unsightly buildings, car parks, means of enclosure or advertisements are to be removed.
- The views of consultees and nearby occupiers.
- The potential affect of the change of use of a building that may lead to the need to adversely alter the fabric of the existing building, or generate additional vehicular traffic to the site.

### **Conditions that may be applied to a grant of planning permission:**

- Materials to be used.
- Car-parking scheme to be agreed (including materials to be used).
- Landscaping including the retention of existing planting and other features.
- Details of refuse disposal.
- Hours of operation (commercial activities).
- Details of means of enclosure.
- Restrictions on permitted development rights to control extensions, fences, etc.
- Details of advertising.
- Details of appearance of any means of odour suppression.
- Details of means of escape in case of fire.

### **Reasons:**

Conservation areas are particularly attractive and sensitive areas of the Borough where the Council has particular responsibilities to ensure that their environmental character is preserved or enhanced. Accordingly, all development proposals will be expected to be of the highest quality of design, should respect the existing scale and character of the area, be constructed in appropriate traditional materials, and include landscaping where possible.

## **7.5 The Implications Of Conservation Area Status**

The Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing character and appearance of conservation areas in exercising their planning powers. In particular, the local authority has extra controls over the following in conservation areas:

- demolition
- minor developments
- the protection of trees

### **7.5.1 Demolition**

Outside conservation areas, buildings that are not statutorily listed can be demolished without approval under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Within conservation areas, the demolition of unlisted buildings requires conservation area consent. Applications for consent to totally or substantially demolish any building within a conservation area must be made to North Tyneside Council or, on appeal or call-in, to the Secretary of State. Procedures are basically the same as for listed building consent applications. Generally, there is a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

### **7.5.2 Minor Developments**

Within in a conservation area, legislation<sup>2</sup> states that there are certain cases where permission must be obtained before making alterations that would normally be permitted elsewhere. This is to ensure that any alterations do not detract from the area's character and appearance. The changes include certain types of exterior painting and cladding, roof alterations including inserting dormer windows, and putting up satellite dishes that are visible from the street. The size of extensions to dwellinghouses that can be erected without consent is also restricted to 50m<sup>3</sup>.

Under Article 4 of the same legislation, there can be further measures to restriction other kinds of alteration that are normally allowed under so-called "permitted development rights". These measures, called Article 4 Directions, can be selective in the buildings they cover within the conservation area, and the types of restriction they impose depending on how they might affect key building elements and so character and appearance. These Directions effectively control the proliferation of relatively minor alterations to buildings in conservation areas that can cumulatively lead to erosion of character and appearance over time. Development is not precluded, but selected alterations would require planning permission and special attention would be paid to the potential effect of proposals when permission was sought. Examples might be putting up porches, painting a house a different colour, or changing distinctive doors, windows or other architectural details. The Local Authority has to give good reason for making these restrictions, and must take account of public views before doing so.

To many owners, any tighter restrictions or additional costs, such as for special building materials, are more than outweighed by the pleasure they derive from living in such an area.

### **7.5.3 Trees**

Trees make an important contribution to the character of the local environment. Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area, whether or not it is covered by a tree preservation

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<sup>2</sup> Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1997

order, has to give notice to the Local Planning Authority. The Authority can then consider the contribution the tree makes to the character of the area and if necessary make a tree preservation order to protect it.

## **7.6 Unlisted Buildings In A Conservation Area**

When considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, the following questions might be asked<sup>3</sup>:

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has it qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics that reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials, or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces, including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as a significant wall, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

North Tyneside Council believes any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and values have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

## **7.7 Sources and Further Reading**

The following sources were used in the preparation of this appraisal.

- *Bygone Days of Longbenton, Benton, Forest Hall, West Moor and Killingworth*, W. G. Elliott and Edwin Smith, 1999, W. G. Elliott
- *Bygone Days of Longbenton, Benton, Forest Hall, West Moor, Killingworth, Palmersville and Benton Square*, W. G. Elliott, 2000, W. G. Elliott
- *The Parish and Church of St. Bartholomew, Long Benton- A Social History*, W. G. Elliott, 2002, W. G. Elliott
- *The Buildings of England, Northumberland*, Pevsner et al., 2002, Yale University Press
- *Unitary Development Plan*, North Tyneside Council, March 2002
- Sitelines, the Historic Environment Record website of Tyne and Wear, <http://sine7.ncl.ac.uk/sl/Home.htm>
- [www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)

Other publications and websites that may be of interest include the following:

- *Living In a Conservation Area*, Tyne & Wear Specialist Conservation Team (available free of charge from North Tyneside Council)
- [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
- [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com)

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, English Heritage, August 2005







**North Tyneside Council**

## **Development Directorate**

Planning Policy  
North Tyneside Council  
Quadrant  
The Silverlink North  
Cobalt Business Park  
North Tyneside  
NE27 0BY

**Tel: 0191 643 2310**

**Fax: 0191 643 2426**

**Email: [planning.policy@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@northtyneside.gov.uk)**