



North Tyneside Council

# Sacred Heart Church, Wideopen Conservation Area Character Appraisal January 2009





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**SACRED HEART CHURCH  
WIDEOPEN CONSERVATION AREA**

Scale 1: 1250



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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 17 in North Tyneside, as set out below:

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

## **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

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

enhancement, and to consult local people on them.<sup>2</sup> The Local Planning Authority also has extra powers in conservation areas over demolition, minor developments, and tree protection (see 24). 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, please contact us (see below).

### **1.3 This Character Appraisal**

Sacred Heart Church, Wideopen conservation area was designated on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2007. This character appraisal was prepared during Summer 2008 by North Tyneside Council. This draft version will be put out for four weeks public consultation from 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008 and a final version is expected to be adopted as North Tyneside Council planning policy in February 2009. 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, North Tyneside 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 18).

### **1.4 Further Information**

For further information on this conservation area 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>2</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s72 and s71

<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***

This conservation area is in the north west of the Borough of North Tyneside, which is part of the Tyne & Wear conurbation in the north east of England.

The conservation area is part of a wider suburban area around five miles north of Newcastle city centre, with varied housing, large green open spaces and industrial units. There is one dwelling in the conservation area. The area is in the Weetslade ward.

### ***2.2 Boundary***

Sacred Heart Church, Wideopen conservation area was designated in 2007 and the boundary has not changed since designation. The boundary is formed by the Great North Road, Sandy Lane and the Sandy Lane bypass, and takes in the grounds of the Old School House and Cottages and the grounds of Sacred Heart Church (*Map 1*).

### ***2.3 Context***

#### ***2.3.1 Geology***

The Wideopen area is in the South East Northumberland Coastal Plain countryside character area (no.13)<sup>5</sup> that is characterised by widespread urban and industrial development, extending north from the urban edge of Newcastle, with mining towns and villages, merging into rural landscape towards the north. The area has large scale open cast coal mining sites and frequent areas of open water and wetland in areas of mining subsidence. Also to be found in the area are large open fields of arable crops, with scattered large country houses, and establishments such as hospitals, in open countryside. Also prominent are blocks of mixed and coniferous woodland on reclaimed colliery sites, with broadleaved woods on steeper valley sides, and within parkland estates.

The conservation area is indeed set in an area of former collieries, and also once formed a part of the Gosforth Park estate.

#### ***2.3.2 Setting and External Relationships***

The majority of the surrounding area is made up of open space; this is an important setting to the conservation area, providing a clean undeveloped backdrop, characteristic of the very early relationship the buildings here once had with rural land around them. A large part of the surrounding area is made up of Gosforth Park and this represents an important reminder of the history behind the conservation area. To the north west of the conservation area is a residential area developed mostly in the 1930s.

#### ***2.3.3 Views out of the Area***

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



North Gosforth Cemetery, across the road to the west of the conservation area

As said above, the majority of the surrounding area consists of undeveloped open space. Much of this space is void of trees so is in large contrast to the heavily treed, dense character of the conservation area. Views

out of the north west of the conservation area are mostly made up of built-up residential areas and as a result are not of particular quality. To the west is North Gosforth Cemetery, its railings and large stone gate piers providing an attractive view in this direction. A boundary formed by large trees here works as a curtain, obscuring the cemetery, encouraging the visitor to explore further.

Very busy, main roads form two of the three boundary sides of the conservation area. While they do have negative impacts: visual (a drab, grey expanse), noise and potential dangers, they do serve to provide and confirm their stark contrast with the green nature and tranquillity of the conservation area itself.



Residential area and main road to the north west of the conservation area

### 2.3.4 Views into the Area



Looking into the conservation area from the south west, Sacred Heart Church cannot be seen

Most of the conservation area forms part of North Tyneside's Green Belt, and therefore we should consider how it looks when viewed from its environs, including the adjoining areas of Green Belt. This is important to do in accordance with paragraph 3.15 of PPG2: "The visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice the purposes of including land in Green Belts, might be visually detrimental by reason of their siting, materials or design."

From all viewpoints into the conservation area, there is a dense tree cover, and it is very obvious from this green nature that this is very important "piece" of the Green Belt. There are breaks in tree cover, provided by Sacred Heart Church and the remains of the Old School House and Cottages but as the tree cover is so thick, one doesn't notice these buildings until you actually arrive at them. These unexpected reveals have surprising rewards, as the buildings that are exposed are (or in the Old School House and Cottages case, *were*) very special indeed. They shall be discussed further on in the document.

## 3 Historical Development



## 3.1 Development History

### 3.1.1 Introduction

This area has a long and interesting development history, from beginnings as a small corner of the vast Gosforth Park estate to its own enclave on the outskirts of the borough of North Tyneside. Despite some modern development, its early origins are still very apparent in both layout and detailed fabric.

### 3.1.2 Pre-Map History

In 1566 Sir Robert Brandling acquired North Gosforth, and in 1760 Charles Brandling moved the family seat there from Felling, employing the architect James Paine to design Gosforth House, now a grade II\* listed building. About half the township was then turned into a park as a setting for the house. This involved widespread landscaping and the building of several structures including a park wall with gates and lodges, stables, walled gardens, a steward's house and an icehouse.

Eventually Reverend Ralph Brandling inherited the estate, but after falling into debt he broke up the land and sold it. Much of the land was acquired in 1852 by the shipbuilder Thomas Smith.

### 3.1.3 First Edition OS Map c.1858

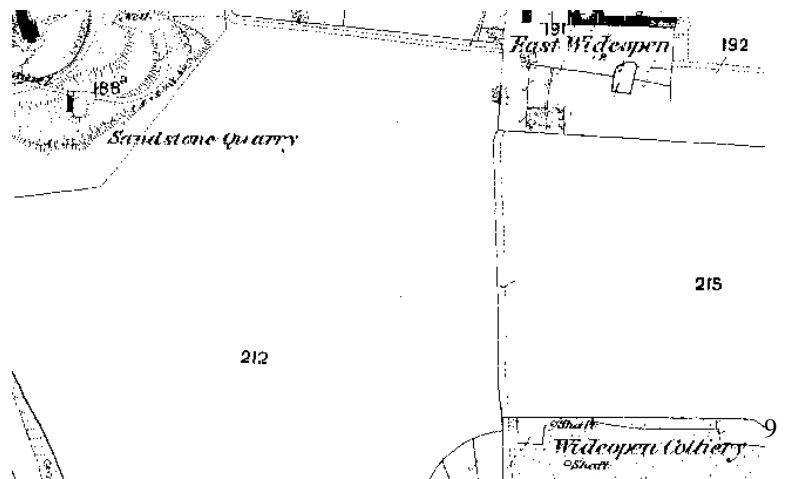


1<sup>st</sup> edition O.S. map, with the conservation area highlighted in black, showing its position as part of Gosforth Park

This map shows the site of the conservation area around 1858, when as yet, it had not been built on, although it had by now been passed on from Thomas Smith to his younger brother William in 1856, then inherited by his son Thomas Eustace Smith. Viewing from further out, its setting as part of the Gosforth park estate is apparent. Despite the lack of building within the

site, it is clear from the established surrounding road network that the wider area has witnessed some development.

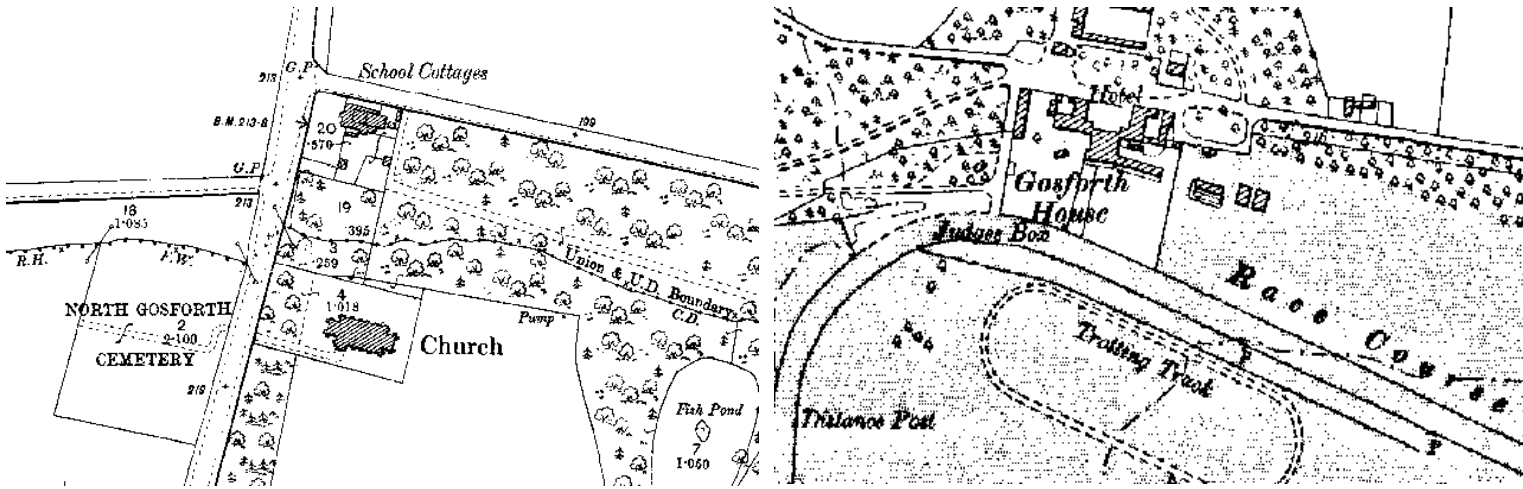
Indeed, at this time the immediate environs had developed into a quite important industrial area, with the Gosforth Tile Works (600 metres to the east), Wideopen Colliery (400 metres to the north), Wideopen Sandstone Quarry (630 metres to the north) and Brunton Sandstone Quarry (770 metres to the south west).



The area was developing into an important industrial area, seen here in these nearby collieries and quarries

### 3.1.4 Second Edition OS Map c.1897

This is the map where we first see buildings within the conservation area: Sacred Heart Church and the Old School House and Cottages. Both were built around 1865 (each shall be discussed later in the document).



Several changes had occurred in the area since the 1<sup>st</sup> edition O.S. map, including the building of Sacred Heart Church, the School House and Cottages, and the development of North Gosforth Cemetery and the Racecourse

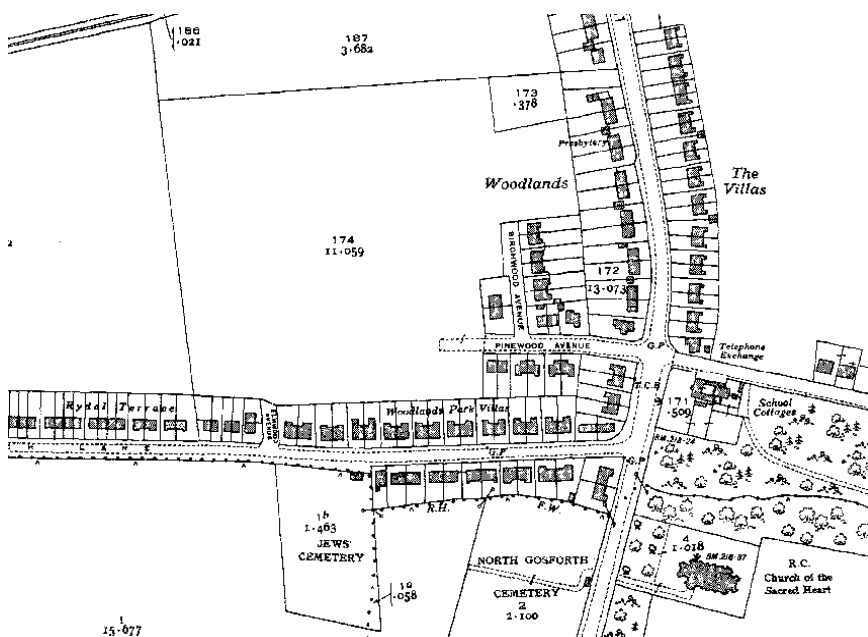
Further changes of land ownership had occurred in and around the area. In 1880 High Gosforth Park Company brought 1,807 acres of Thomas Eustace Smith's land and turned the area into a racecourse, and Gosforth House was altered to create a hotel, stadium, and stables.

Also worth mentioning is the formation of the North Gosforth Cemetery to the immediate west of the conservation area. This, along with the building of the church, shows a growth in population in the area.

### 3.1.5 Third Edition OS Map c.1916

We see no significant changes, both within and in the surrounding areas of the conservation area.

### 3.1.6 Fourth Edition OS Map c.1937



Here we see the first changes in the area for around 40 years; although there are none within the conservation area itself, there has been some ribbon development along roads to the north and west, namely Woodlands Park, The Villas, Rydal Terrace and Woodlands Park Villas, also the smaller streets of Birchwood Avenue and Pinewood Avenue.

Residential development in the area featured for the first time on the 4<sup>th</sup> edition O.S. map

### **3.1.7 Modern Map c.2000**

Looking at the modern map (see Map 1 at the beginning of the document), it is clear to see that the conservation area has seen change in the form of two new buildings within the grounds of Sacred Heart Church: a Parish Hall and a Presbytery. Both are discussed later in the document.

The most prominent change however, is the addition of the Sandy Lane bypass that creates the conservation area boundary and has made the conservation area into an island, separate from the Gosforth Park Estate of which it once formed part.

## **3.2 Archaeology**

There are no scheduled ancient monuments in this conservation area. However, with nearby Wideopen being the site of evidence from both Roman and Bronze Age settlements, archaeological investigation could reveal much about such early settlements and could contribute to the understanding of the history of this area and settlement of the Borough.

# **4 Spatial Analysis**

## **4.1 Development Pattern**

The conservation area is made up the grounds of the Old School House and Cottages and the grounds of Sacred Heart Church. The boundary to the west is made up of the Great North Road, which follows the route of Roman roads and was the main route through Britain. The east boundary was formed by the insertion of the Sandy Lane bypass in 1989/90.

The church was built in the far north west of the Gosforth Park Estate. Thomas Eustace Smith responded to the wish of John Besley, vicar of Longbenton, to provide for the spiritual needs of the growing population in the north of his extensive parish. Thus the church was built and the new ecclesiastical district of North Gosforth was established on 18th May 1865. The Old School House and Cottages were built around the same time, again funded by Thomas Eustace Smith, for the education of the children of his estate workers.

## **4.2 Layout and Density**

The conservation area is set in no particular layout. The buildings are placed where they are within the conservation area by virtue of their positioning on the outskirts of the Gosforth Park Estate. The density of the conservation area has changed dramatically over the last year and a half, with the loss of the majority of the Old School House and Cottages through arson and unlawful demolition.

## **4.3 Views within the Area**



Right: eyes are drawn up to the tree canopy. Left: the open area of the car park

Being a small conservation area, there is not a huge scope for views within. This is exacerbated by the majority tree coverage; the area is very enclosed, the views are generally short and the eye is drawn up to the tree canopy and glimpses of the sky above.

Probably the largest clearing within the conservation area is provided by Sacred Heart Church's car park. Although the car park itself offers nothing aesthetically pleasing, it is surrounded by a neat boundary of trees and some attractive and well-maintained rose planting.

Another of the rare clearings within this conservation area is a small pocket on the west side. This clearing allows for the full reveal of the Church's front elevation with its striking, imposing tower. This provides the definitive view of the conservation area (certainly since the loss of the Old School House and Cottages), as seen on the front cover of this document.

## **5 Character Analysis**

### **5.1 Character Sub-Areas**

Based on their age and character, three different types of development can be identified in Sacred Heart, Wideopen conservation area.

- **Pre 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings:** Sacred Heart Church and the remains of the Old School House and Cottages.
- **Late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings:** Sacred Heart Church's Parish Hall and Presbytery
- **Undeveloped Spaces:** the densely tree-covered remainder of the conservation area

### **5.2 Land Use**

The dominant land use in the conservation area is undeveloped, tree-covered open space. Part of the land in this conservation area is part of North Tyneside's Green Belt and is protected accordingly – see associated policies on page 22. The impact that the open space has on the area is profound, helping to provide low density, high amenity (from both an aesthetic and biodiversity point of view) pieces of land.

The most dominant built land use is that of a Church and its associated buildings of a Parish Hall and a Presbytery.

Prior to its loss, the Old School House and Cottages provided a very small amount of residential use in the conservation area in addition to that provided by the Church's Presbytery.

### **5.3 Buildings**

Due to the small number of buildings within the conservation area, it is possible to discuss each in detail.

#### **5.3.1 Sacred Heart Church**

This church, as discussed earlier, was built circa 1865, but has also seen some later alterations. The architect is unknown but it is possibly the work of William Butterfield or one of his pupils, or R. J. Johnson. It was listed as Grade II in October 2006.

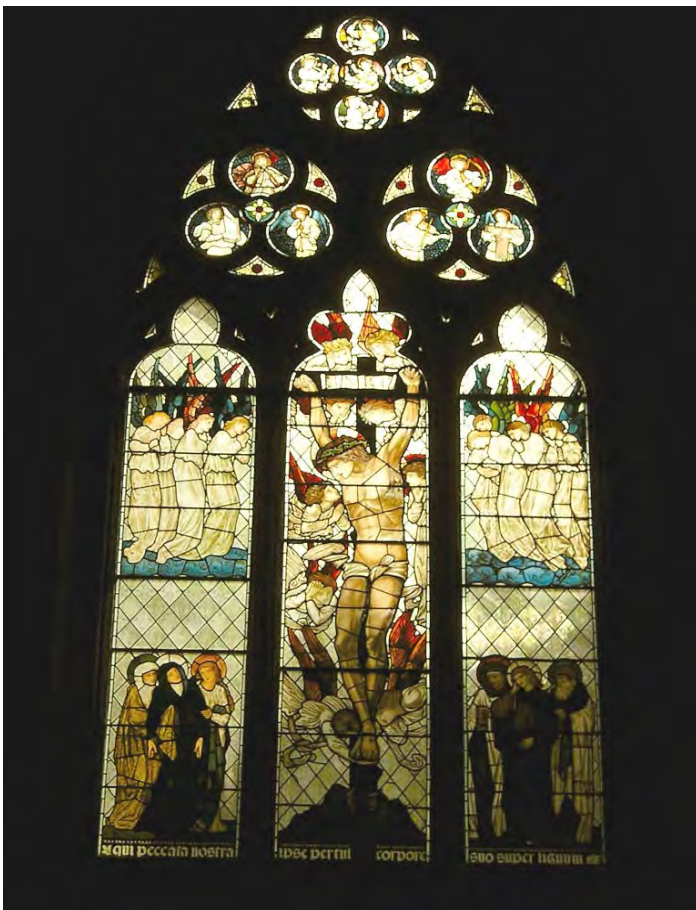
The Church has an imposing size and scale, with the main part of the building reaching around three storeys and the tower reaching around five. This is the building with the largest footprint in the conservation area.

It is built in Early English gothic style with a chancel nave, four bays and two aisles. Its masonry is coursed ashlar sandstone with steeply pitched slate roofs. It has a west end truncated tower, the four westernmost buttresses of which all have unusual deep statue niches that are gabled with ogee arches. Each niche contains a small Catholic statue. The tower also features a central clock. The capped tower is self-evidently incomplete; it has been suggested that possible ground subsidence prevented the tower being taken higher, but the other evidence of incompleteness (for example, lacking finish to some of the exterior and interior stonework) invites other explanations.



The doorway is situated on the west end of the south side of the Church. It features within an ornate gabled porch and is flanked by gabled buttresses with blind tracery. The door itself is timber with decorative iron scrollwork.

The windows of Sacred Heart Church are considered to be very special indeed. The west elevation of the tower features a three light mullion window below a three light window with intersecting tracery with daggers and mouchettes. These windows, along with the statues that flank them, result in the lower half of the tower being rather ornate; this is in contrast to the simplicity and plainness (almost austerity) of the upper half.



Several of the Church's windows date from between 1872 and 1875 by Morris and Co. Morris and Co. existed in various incarnations between 1861 and 1898, but was a design studio and decorating company originally constituted as an artistic brotherhood with seven partners including William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown. The period was one of wide scale renaissance that built on the gradual revival of the art of stained glass making during the first half of the nineteenth century. Some of the firm's designs have a top place among the best Victorian windows, and can be considered some of the finest stained glass produced in at least three hundred years.

The "pièce de résistance" of these windows (as considered by English Heritage) is the three light window of the east elevation, principally designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. The central light depicts a half-profile crucifixion, with Christ ministered by nine red-winged angels. The left and right lights each have four angels with coloured wings at Christ's head, while at his feet

in the left light are Mary, Mary Magdalene and Mary, wife of Cleophas; and in the right light St. John, St. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Above these three lights are two trefoil roundels and one quatrefoil, depicting eleven winged minstrels playing instruments (these last five figures being designed by William Morris). An inscription across the foot of the window reads “Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum” (who bore our sins in his body on the cross). This is thought to be the only window in which all of these designs are combined. The window in the north chancel wall shows St. Mark and St. Matthew, by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown respectively.



Modern block paving, and well-maintained planting and grassed areas within the Church grounds

Around a half of the grounds of Sacred Heart Church covered with dense trees. The remainder mostly consists of the buildings themselves and a large amount of hard standing for car parking. The hard standing does have a starkness to it but this is somewhat softened by the surrounding trees and planting. Where planting does exist, it is very attractive and clearly very well maintained. The same can be said for the grassed areas within the grounds. The pathways within the grounds are made up of modern block paving; although not in keeping with the earlier style of the Church itself, they are, at least, in keeping with the more modern Parish Hall and Presbytery.

A simple, tall sandstone wall forms the boundaries of the Church grounds. Around the entrance, this wall is reduced in height and topped with unfussy railings, although not the originals, which we could assume would have been more ornate. Also at either side of the entrance are tall, square sandstone gate piers, the gablets atop of each featuring blind tracery that echoes (but does not match) that of the buttresses of the Church’s doorway. Also atop of each pier is a pleasant lantern sat on a swan neck bracket. These are nice features but (like the railings) could do with some maintenance



Wall, railings, gate piers and lanterns



to fully make a positive contribution.

### 5.3.2 Sacred Heart Church Parish Hall

The Parish Hall was granted planning permission in 1997 and was opened in 1999. The building has a large footprint and is one storey in height. The roof, in contrast to the steeply pitched slate roofs of the Church, is shallow pitched in reconstituted slate. The main materials used in the building are pale-coloured breezeblocks, which give

the building a simple, almost yet-to-be-finished look. The small band of dark brown bricks running along the base of the building, however, reveals to the visitor that this is not the case; this is simply the design of building and unfortunately it fails to meet the high standard of the Church. Additionally, a covered walkway between the two buildings that infringes into the symmetry of the Church sadly compromises the quality of its architecture.

### **5.3.3 Sacred Heart Church Presbytery**

The Presbytery is also late twentieth century in construction, and also like the Parish Hall, contributes little in terms of architectural quality. The building is two storey, with a pitched, un-hipped roof in dark tiles. A flat roofed single storey offshoot is found on the northern elevation. The masonry used in the building is dark cream brickwork, and thus there is no uniformity of the materials used in the three buildings within the Church grounds. A small offering of architectural enlivenment comes in the form of a three-sided bay window (which, like the remainder of the windows, is uPVC casement) on the lower left bay of the southern elevation, and also a reasonably tall chimney on the ridge at the west end of the building.



### **5.3.4 Old School House and Cottages**

The Old School House and Cottages originally consisted of master's house in the cross wing to the west and schoolroom. It was built at a similar time to the church, and like the church, no architect can be identified, however, R. J. Johnson has again been suggested. In late Victorian times, with the addition of dormers and some internal re-ordering, the structure became one dwelling and two cottages. Although lost, the building shall still be described briefly in recognition of its quality and the contribution it made to the conservation area.

The building had two storeys, although the first floor was mostly concealed under a steeply pitched, un-hipped roof. The building's masonry was irregular sandstone and the roof was slate. There were multiple cylindrical chimneystacks. The roof also contained particularly attractive, large dormers. Each had two pointed arched windows, a quatrefoil decoration and decorative bargeboards. It is believed these features were added when the conversion from school to residential occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



West elevation



North elevation

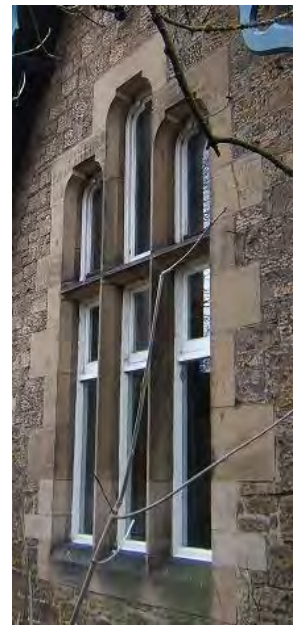
The bargeboard feature was also found on the gables of the building. Timber was also used in the colonnade of the porch running along the north elevation of the building.

Most of the original ground floor windows were double chamfered mullions with carved shoulder arched lintels and the doorways had identical surrounds and lintels. A three light window in the west elevation followed identical form, as did a three light stepped window an original projecting south wing. The doors themselves were timber, with no window openings, and with ornamental brackets.

The building had several modern extensions that failed to meet the high standards of the original, yet they could not distract from the considerable architectural and historic charm and character this building had.



A selection of the high quality architectural details of the Old School House and Cottages



To the rear of the former school there are remains of two enclosed yards, which probably functioned as playgrounds. The grounds of the Old School House and Cottages had boundaries of predominantly high stone walls. However, the wall in front of the School House (to the west) is low with a coping and the remains of iron railings.

## 5.4 Undeveloped Spaces

The undeveloped spaces make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area, and are protected accordingly. This should be recognised in any future management and development of the conservation area.

There is a significant amount of green, heavily treed space in the conservation area, and there is more beyond that is not within the boundary. These trees make a significant contribution. This conservation area is rich in mature, native trees (sycamore, ash, horse chestnut and many other species- see TPO details on page 21).



Trees provide light and shade, beauty and a sense of history. Seasonal changes mean they provide variation throughout the year. Additionally, the contribution that they make to urban ecology is high. The green nature of the area can be seen in the aerial photograph above.

This mature green character should be protected and managed into the future to ensure long-term sustainability. The area is covered by the Sandy Lane West Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 2007 and this serves to formally protect the majority of trees here. All other trees are given protection as part of the conservation area status.

Furthermore, most of the conservation area is protected as part of North Tyneside's Green Belt. The southern half of the conservation area forms part of a Wildlife Corridor. See from page 21 for details of the policies entailed with these designations.



## 5.5 Challenges

The main challenge facing the conservation area at present is the former site of the Old School House and Cottages, and its potential redevelopment.

The loss of these architecturally and historically important and much-loved buildings was (and is still felt to be) massive. What remains on the site have exacerbated this negative feeling: fire-



Current remnants of the Old School House and Cottages

damaged remnants and piles of stone serve to provide an unattractive and poignant reminder of what has been lost.

At the time of writing, the site is for sale as a “development opportunity”. While it is acknowledged that the derelict site cannot remain in its current state, any proposed development will be subject to intense scrutiny and extremely careful consideration to ensure that it is deemed suitable for this sensitive site and be able to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 5.6 Atmosphere

The conservation area’s character is gained not only from the built fabric and spaces around it, but also the atmosphere it creates.

It is easy to feel from the highly maintained and attractive Church grounds that this is a well-loved place that people enjoy visiting and have great pride in. The fairly recent development of a new Parish Hall suggests the Church is well patronised by an involved and interested community.

Attractive, well-maintained floral displays create an atmosphere of a well-loved place

The new Parish Hall suggests a highly involved community



History plays a part in the creation of atmosphere here. Knowing that this is a former part of the vast Gosforth Park and all the interesting stories involved with it (see *Historical Development*, from page 8) makes this conservation area more than just an average place. Sadly the loss of the Old School House and Cottages has lessened this feeling somewhat.

Due to the number of trees, the feel of the place is also heavily influenced by the

seasons. A cold winter’s morning strolling in the area can feel very different from a warm summer’s evening. 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 environment. While this is true within the conservation area, sadly this atmosphere is unfortunate to be challenged by high levels and speeds of traffic on the outskirts.



The seasonal differences can create very different atmospheres

## 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 Sacred Heart Church, Wideopen conservation area will therefore be an essential way of preserving and enhancing their character and appearance into the future. In accordance with new English Heritage guidance, North Tyneside 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>6</sup>:

- boundary review
- article 4 directions
- enforcement and monitoring change
- buildings at risk
- site specific design guidance or development briefs
- enhancement opportunities
- trees and green spaces
- decision making and community consultation
- available resources

The most relevant ones to Sacred Heart Church, Wideopen conservation area are briefly discussed below. In addition, issues that relate to all conservation areas in the Borough should be applied to this conservation area, 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 6.

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

There may be some sites within the conservation areas, where a formal lead by North Tyneside 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.

The preparation of briefs is not undertaken lightly and they may best be reserved for particularly problematic sites. As discussed above, the site of, and the potential redevelopment of the Old School House and Cottages is a challenge for this conservation area. A development brief for this site is a possibility.

Government guidance on development briefs sets out good practice, including on preparation, consultation and implementation. It explains that a brief should contain realistic and unambiguous guidance based on the following:

- objectives and background to preparing the brief,
- site information and constraints,
- policy context,
- the development response, such as uses sought, infrastructure, layout, parking, design issues, landscaping and off-site requirements,
- the role and status of the brief, and where to find out more.

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<sup>6</sup> *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, English Heritage, 2005

The UDP sets out how the Council's development briefs should contain advice specific to the features of the site and the nature of the proposed use. Briefs would also set out contributions that might be necessary and relevant to the development that could be secured from developers as part of a planning obligation.

Guidance suggests ensuring appropriate specialist expertise is used to prepare briefs for different locations. For this site, the expertise required may include urban design, archaeology and nature conservation. PPG15 reinforces that for sites in conservation areas, briefs should concentrate on design issues such as scale, height, form, massing, pattern of frontages, vertical or horizontal emphasis, materials, etc.

## **6.2 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
1	Listed Building
1	Locally Registered Building
1	Tree Preservation Order (TPOs)
1	Article 4 Direction

#### **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 6).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Designated</b>
Church Of The Sacred Heart	II	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2006

#### **7.1.2 Local Register**

In February 2007, North Tyneside Council adopted a Register of buildings and parks that are of local architectural and historic interest (the Local Register). Unlike nationally listed buildings or registered

parks and gardens, Local Register 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 recommendation). In addition, it is hoped that the Local Register will raise the profile of and give recognition to the buildings, parks, etc. that are of special importance to our Borough. Sacred Heart, Wideopen conservation area had one Locally Registered building, the Old School House and Cottages. Please consult us for more information (see page 6).

### **7.1.3 Tree Preservation Orders**

North Tyneside 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. Please consult us for more information (see page 6).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Trees</b>	<b>Species</b>
Sandy Lane West 2007	10 and 1 group	Sycamore, ash, birch, alder, beech, cherry, elm, holly, horse chestnut, whitebeam, willow

### **7.1.4 Article 4 Directions**

Under Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1997, there can be further measures imposed to restrict 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. An Article 4(2) Direction, effecting the Old School House and Cottages, was made by the Council on 13 February 2007.

## **7.2 County Historic Environment Record Entries**

The following entry from the Tyne & Wear HER (previously known as the Sites & Monuments Record, SMR) is within, or partly within, the conservation area's boundary. There are however, several others just outside of the boundary. 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>.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Site Type</b>
9248	Wideopen, Great North Road, Sacred Heart Church	Early Modern	Church
9417	Wideopen, Sandy Lane, School Houses	Early Modern	House

## **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. North Tyneside 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.

### **Green Belt**

*E20* A Green Belt is defined which:

- (i) extends the existing green belt across the borough to the coast.
- (ii) checks the unrestricted spread of the built-up area of north tyneside.
- (iii) prevents the merging of the following settlements: Killingworth with Wideopen, Dudley/Annitsford and Seghill; Shiremoor/Backworth with Seghill and Seaton Delaval/Holywell; Whitley Bay with Shiremoor, Seaton Delaval/Holywell and Seaton Sluice
- (iv) maintains the separate character of: Seaton Burn, Wideopen/ Brunswick Green, Dudley/Annitsford, and Earsdon
- (v) assists in the regeneration of the older parts of the urban area
- (vi) safeguards the borough's countryside from further encroachment

*E20/2* Permission will not be given for any inappropriate development which would be harmful to the Green Belt by:

- (i) prejudicing a purpose of the Green Belt (see policy E20)
- (ii) prejudicing fulfilment of an objective of the Green Belt
- (iii) failing to maintain high environmental standards which are expected in the Green Belt

*E20/3* Within the Green Belt there will be a presumption against planning permission being given for new buildings unless they are for the following purposes:-

- (i) agriculture and forestry

- (ii) essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation
- (iii) essential facilities for cemeteries
- (iv) essential facilities for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- (v) alteration and replacement of existing dwellings
- (vi) extension of existing dwellings, provided these did not increase the size of the original dwelling by more than 25% in terms of the gross floor area or involve a material increase in its height and it did not create a new dwelling.

*E20/4* Where a new building is proposed, for a purpose covered by policy E20/3 such development will be expected to be located and constructed in such a way that it would minimise visual detriment to the landscape. the conversion of an existing building or location of a new building within or adjacent to an existing building group would normally be preferable in these circumstances.

*E20/5* Proposals for the siting of a residential caravan within the Green Belt will be considered as if the proposal was for a new dwelling.

*E20/8* A programme of environmental improvement schemes will be carried out within the green belt as resources permit. The overall aim of this programme will be to enhance the landscape and its nature conservation value and improve the environment for activities within it such as recreation and agriculture. Priority will be given to land which is derelict, or on the urban fringe, or alongside transport or recreation corridors.

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)

## ***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>7</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,

<sup>7</sup> Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1997



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 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>8</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.

- North Tyneside Council website, [www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)

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<sup>8</sup> Taken from *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, English Heritage, August 2005

- *Planning and Development Briefs: A Guide to Better Practice*, 1998, Department for Communities and Local Government.
  - *Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts*, 1995, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
  - Sacred Heart Parish website, [www.sacredheartng.org.uk](http://www.sacredheartng.org.uk)
  - Sitelines, the Historic Environment Record website of Tyne and Wear, <http://sine7.ncl.ac.uk/sl/Home.htm>
  - *The Buildings of England, Northumberland*, Pevsner et al., 2002, Yale University Press
  - *Unitary Development Plan*, North Tyneside Council, March 2002
- 
- 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)





**North Tyneside Council**

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