



North Tyneside Council

St. Mary's Island Conservation Area Character Appraisal

April 2010



www.northtyneside.gov.uk



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St Mary's Conservation Area

Scale 1:4400

0 50 100 150 200 Meters



MAP 1

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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.¹ 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
- 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.² The Local Planning Authority also has extra powers in conservation areas over demolition, minor developments, and tree protection (see page

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s69.

² Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s72 and s71

29). Government policy in PPS5³ stresses the need for local planning authorities should ensure that they have evidence about the historic environment and heritage assets in their area and that this is publicly documented.

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.⁴ 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

St. Mary's Island conservation area was designated on 1st November 1974. This character appraisal was prepared during Summer 2009 by North Tyneside Council. This draft version will be put out for four weeks public consultation from 5th February 2010, and this final version was adopted as North Tyneside Council planning policy in April 2010. It can be downloaded from 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 new 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 22).

1.4 Further Information

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³ Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, 2010

⁴ North Tyneside Council LDS, March 2005, para 3.8

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2 Location and Context

2.1 Location

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

The conservation area is around ten miles northeast of Newcastle city centre, with large green open spaces. There are two dwellings in the conservation area, which is within the St. Mary's ward.

2.2 Boundary

St. Mary's Island conservation area was designated in November 1974. The boundary is based on St. Mary's Island, the adjacent coastline and surrounding open space (*Map 1*).

2.3 Context

2.3.1 Geology

The St. Mary's area is in the Tyne & Wear Lowlands National Character Areas (no.14)⁵ 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.

2.3.2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

St Mary's Island and adjacent coastline supports a rich variety of wildlife and habitats. The island itself, with its extensive area of rock pools, possesses a diverse range of marine life. It is also an important vantage point from which to observe seabird movements, while the inter-tidal area is a favourite feeding and resting place for many waders, terns and gulls. Waders also favour the wetland on the cliff top and the site is an important landfall for passing migrants in spring and autumn. The cliff top at Curry's Point is also one of the few remaining semi-natural grasslands in North Tyneside and shows some good examples of maritime and sub-maritime flora. The cliffs form part of the Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), whilst the foreshore is part of the Northumberland Coast SSSI. The area is also part of a Ramsar site and Special Protection Area (SPA).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The Conservation area contains two different SSSIs; units nineteen and twenty of The Northumberland Shore and unit one of the Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice site. The Tynemouth to



⁵National 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.

Seaton Sluice SSSI was first notified as a site of national Geological interest in 1965 and was revised in 1989. The coast from Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice provides one of the best exposures of Coal Measures strata in Great Britain, showing a continuous lower Westphalian B sequence from the Plessey to the High Main seams. It includes outcrops of numerous coal seams, and several mudstone horizons yielding non-marine bivalve faunas, which together provide a tight stratigraphical control on the sequence. Of particular importance are outcrops of sandstone bodies, which have been interpreted as braided river deposits in marked contrast to the meandering river deposits, which dominate the Pennine coalfields to the south. This implies that the Northumberland Coalfield, and was then probably rather further from the sea. The site is thus of considerable importance for interpreting the palaeogeographical structure of Britain during the Middle Carboniferous. The Northumberland Coast area was designated as a SSSI in 1992 for its role in providing an internationally important habitat for a number of shorebird species. Natural England must be consulted over proposals to develop or change the management and use of any SSSI. Saved policy E12/2 of the UDP sets out the criteria for assessment of any development proposals within the boundaries of the designation.

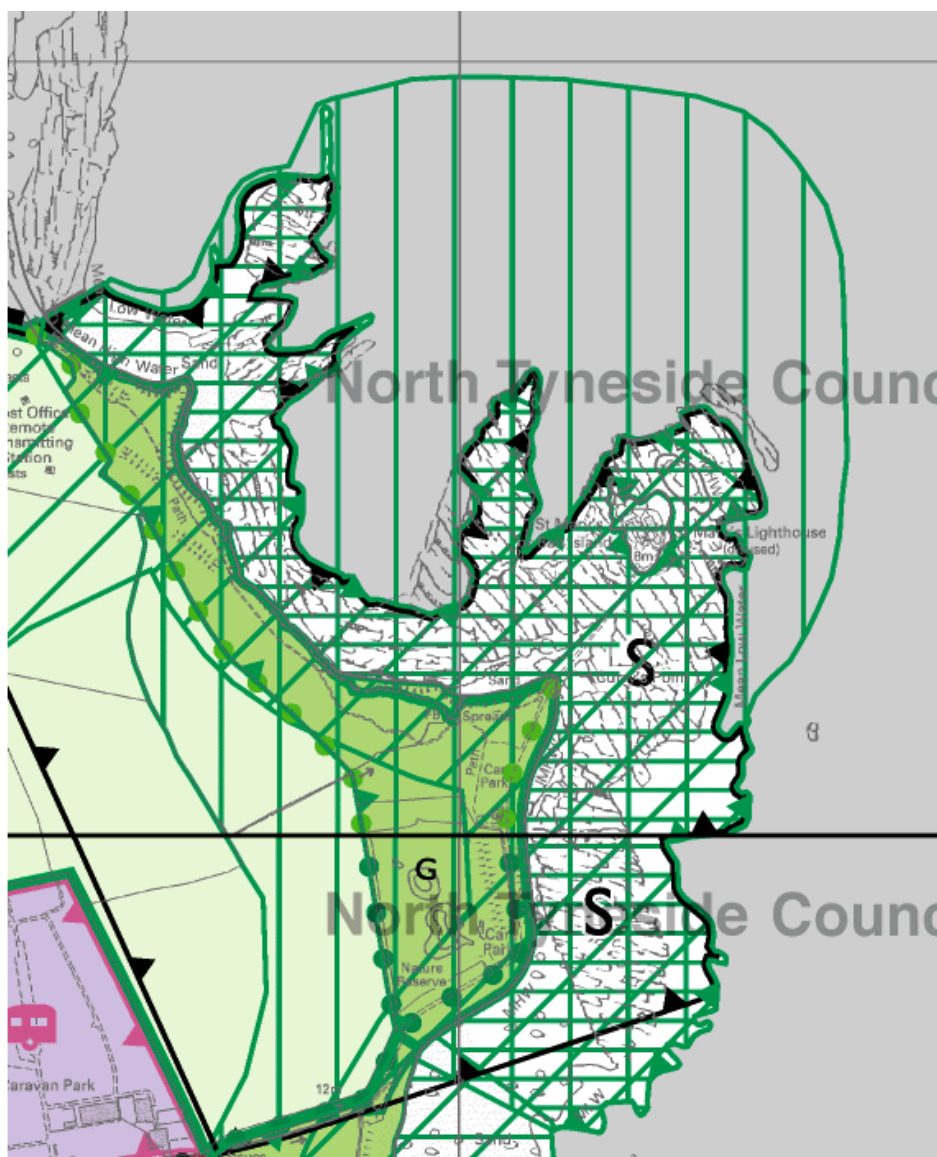
ENVIRONMENT

-  Sites of International Nature Conservation Interest
E12/1
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest
E12/2
-  Wildlife Corridors
E12/6
-  Conservation Areas
E16 E16/1 E16/2 E16/3 E16/4 E16/5
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments
E19/1
-  Hadrians Wall Military Zone
E19/2 E19/3
-  Area of Coastal Protection
E26 E26/1

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

-  Open Space R2/1 R2/2 R2/3 R2/6 R3/2
A Allotments
E Education
G General Open Space
-  Recreation Corridors
R4

UDP biodiversity designations within the conservation area, right, and key, above



Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites

These are sites derived from various international conventions or European Directives. The Northumbria Coast is recognised as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar convention and also as a SPA under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. The Ramsar site comprises of several discrete sections of rocky foreshore between Spittal, in the North of Northumberland, and an area south of Blackhall Rocks in County Durham, with St.

Mary's Island Conservation Area lying in one of these sections. The Northumbria Coast SPA includes much of the coastline between the Tweed and Tees Estuaries in north east England. Northumbria Coast was designated as both a SPA and a Ramsar site in the year 2000. Under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, most new development proposals likely to affect a Ramsar site will require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

In summer, the SPA supports important numbers of Little Tern, whilst in winter the mixture of rocky and sandy shore supports large number of Turnstone and Purple Sandpiper.

Sites of Nature Conservation Interest

St. Mary's Island, the surrounding coastal area and the shoreline are designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). These are sites of regional nature conservation importance identified by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust. Saved policy E12/3 of the UDP sets out the criteria for the assessment of any development proposals within the boundaries of this designation.

The site qualifies as a SNCI under article 4.2 of the EC Directive (79/409/EEC) as 1% or more of internationally important bird populations, including the Purple Sandpiper and the Turnstone, use it regularly. In addition the site supports nationally important populations of Sanderling, Redshank, Artic Tern and Golden Plover. Almost the entire breeding population of Roseate Terns nest on Coquet Island near Amble Northumberland, and are thus attracted to the Island from late July to September as part of the post-breeding tern flocks.

The variety, number and seasonality of birdlife to be seen at St. Mary's Island are tremendous for a location in such close proximity to a major conurbation. Species of seabirds, waders, wildfowl and land birds are all to be seen. The site is an important landfall for migrating birds. Spectacular offshore passages of migrating seabirds can also be witnessed from the Island.

The wetland has become an invaluable additional roosting area and a surprising range of birds has also nested here and on the surrounding farmland, including the Amber-listed Lapwing. The fields west of the wetland are also important for roosting and feeding waders (such as Golden Plover and Curlew), and also for hunting short-eared Owls during the winter months.

Wildlife Corridors and Links

This conservation area forms part of the Wildlife Corridor that stretches along the northern boundary of the Borough. Wildlife Corridors recognise the importance of links between nature conservation sites and saved policy E12/6 of the UDP sets out the criteria for assessment of any development proposals within the boundaries of the corridors and links. There are also designated and well used public rights of way on the headland, one following the shoreline up to the causeway to the Island and another going north/south along the boundary of the farmland.

Protected Open Space

The open land along the shoreline is designated as protected public open space within the UDP, and the whole land-based part of the conservation area is designated as part of the Borough's Green Belt. Green Belts are primarily designated in order assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and are covered by several policies in the UDP.

The cliffs and beaches of the conservation area have been designated as an Area of Coastal Protection, which runs the length of the North Tyneside Coast. The UDP policy protection afforded to the coast due to this designation is that its conservation valuable natural qualities and man-made features are balanced with conflicting interests, such as tourism and recreation.

Trees

The designation of the area as a conservation area brings with it immediate protection for all trees within the boundary. Any persons proposing to undertake any work to trees within a conservation area must first give the Council six weeks prior written notice.

2.3.3 Topography and Aspect

The coastal location of this conservation area creates some interesting differences in topography. The contrast of the causeway and rocks with the elevated Island and mainland creates a drama unique to such a place, with views along the rugged coastline and the importance of the Lighthouse intensified by its raised position.



The differences in topography create a dramatic landscape

2.3.4 Setting and External Relationships



Views to Whitley Bay Holiday Park (top) and Old Hartley (bottom) signify important relationships with the conservation area

By virtue of its position, St. Mary's Island conservation area is completely bordered to the east by coast. Indeed, some parts, including the Island itself, are almost fully surrounded by sea. Open fields, creating a peaceful, rural setting, border a large proportion of the western and southern edges of the conservation area. The south west corner is bordered by Whitley Bay Holiday Park. Although a good aesthetic relationship is not provided by this development, the relationship between the Holiday Park and the tourist facilities on and attractions of St. Mary's Island and coastline is important. To the north of the conservation area is Old Hartley (not in

North Tyneside), where there is a further caravan park and remnants of the old village (such as converted farm buildings and an 18th Century public house) that relate well to the conservation area in that they invoke a sense of the area's early developments.

2.3.5 Views out of the Area

The coastal position of the conservation area allows for some spectacular views out to sea. Equally, the views from the Island back to land allows for some fantastic sights, including the panorama of the entire length of North Tyneside's coast that takes in Tynemouth Priory, St. George's Church and the Spanish City dome amongst other landmarks. This view is maximised when taken from the top of the lighthouse.



Panorama looking south that takes in North Tyneside's coastal landmarks

Looking inland from the mainland gives several contrasting views. As discussed, Whitley Bay Holiday Park is not a physically attractive site but views of it do remind us of the importance of



tourism in this area. Undeveloped fields to the west give an open aspect, only to be interrupted by the trees at Holywell Dene some 400 metres away. Trees are a feature of the view to the south west, with Whitley New Cemetery just outside of the boundary. Beyond the cemetery sees the beginnings of Whitley Bay's residential areas, including eight 1930s Art Deco-style properties whose quality have been recognised through local registering.

3 Historical Development

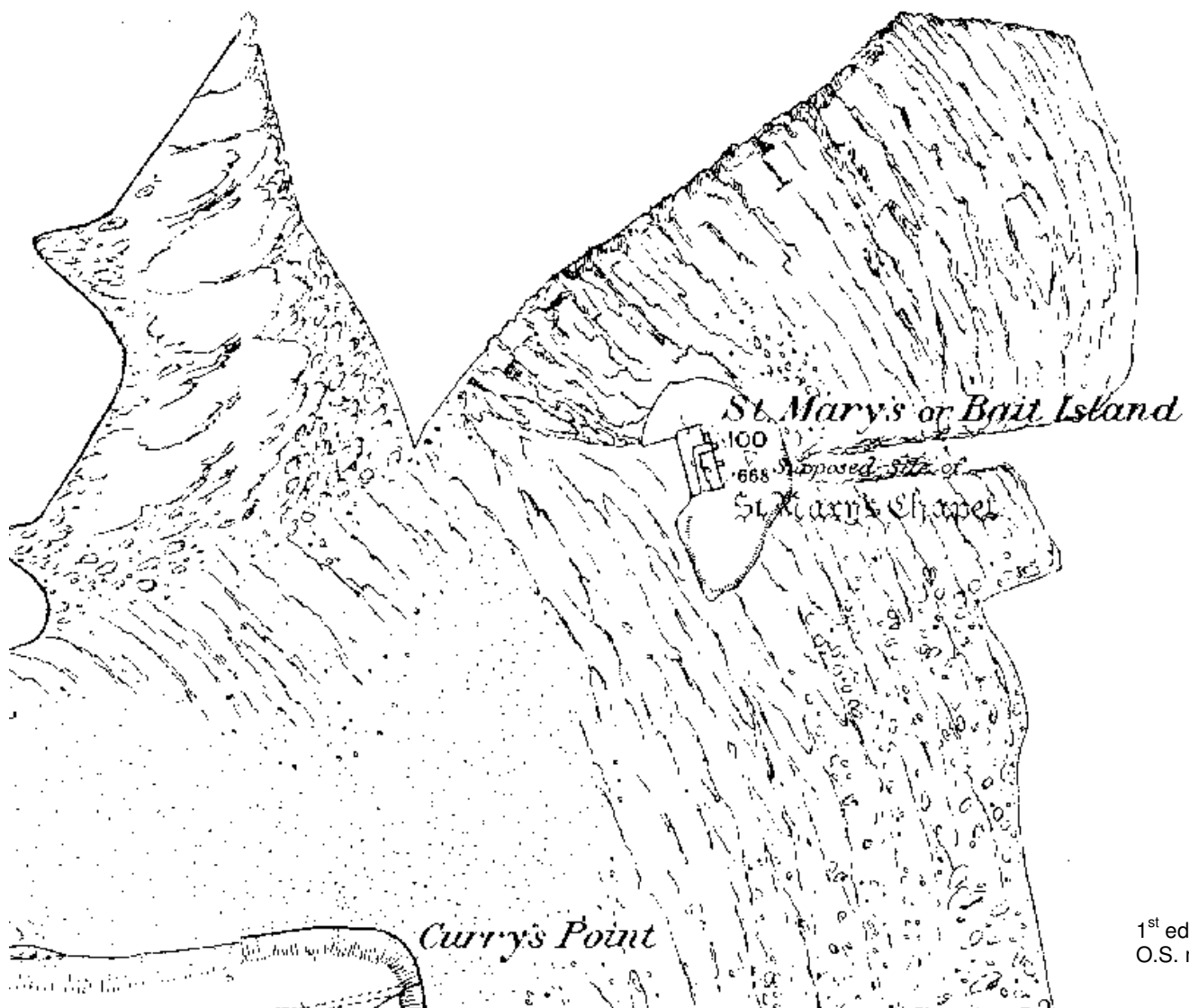
3.1 Development History

3.1.1 Pre-Map History

The Island to which the name of the conservation area is given is said to have a long and chequered history. Anecdotally it is believed the Romans had a beacon on the island, but no substantive evidence exists. Sometime after 1090 a chapel dedicated to St. Helen was built by the monks of Tynemouth Priory on the north side of the island, within which was a light, known as a "St. Mary's Light", to warn sailors of the rocks.

St. Mary's Island is sometimes known as Bates Island, The Bates, Bateshill or Hartley Bates, after previous owner Thomas Bates, surveyor for Northumberland under Queen Elizabeth I in the 1580s.

Despite its religious connections, the Island has known its share of violence and crime over the years. The deep winding channel on the north side of the island is known as "Smugglers' Creek". In 1722 Anthony Mitchell, Surveyor of Customs, was found dead near there, thought to have been murdered by two criminals who used to smuggle brandy. It was said that the smugglers hid their hoards in haystacks along the Links. In 1739 Michael Curry, a glass worker from Seaton Sluice, was



hanged for the murder of Robert Shevil, the landlord of the inn at Old Hartley. As was the custom then, his body was strung within sight of his crime, on what is today known as Curry's Point. In 1989, a blue plaque was unveiled on the point to commemorate this event.

The north east coast of England suffered attacks from the French privateers during the Seven Years War. In 1761 a Newcastle newspaper reported that a French pirate ship had seized a vessel off St. Mary's Island. In 1799 the island was used to isolate Russian soldiers who had developed cholera on a voyage south to fight Napoleon, and those who died were buried on the island.

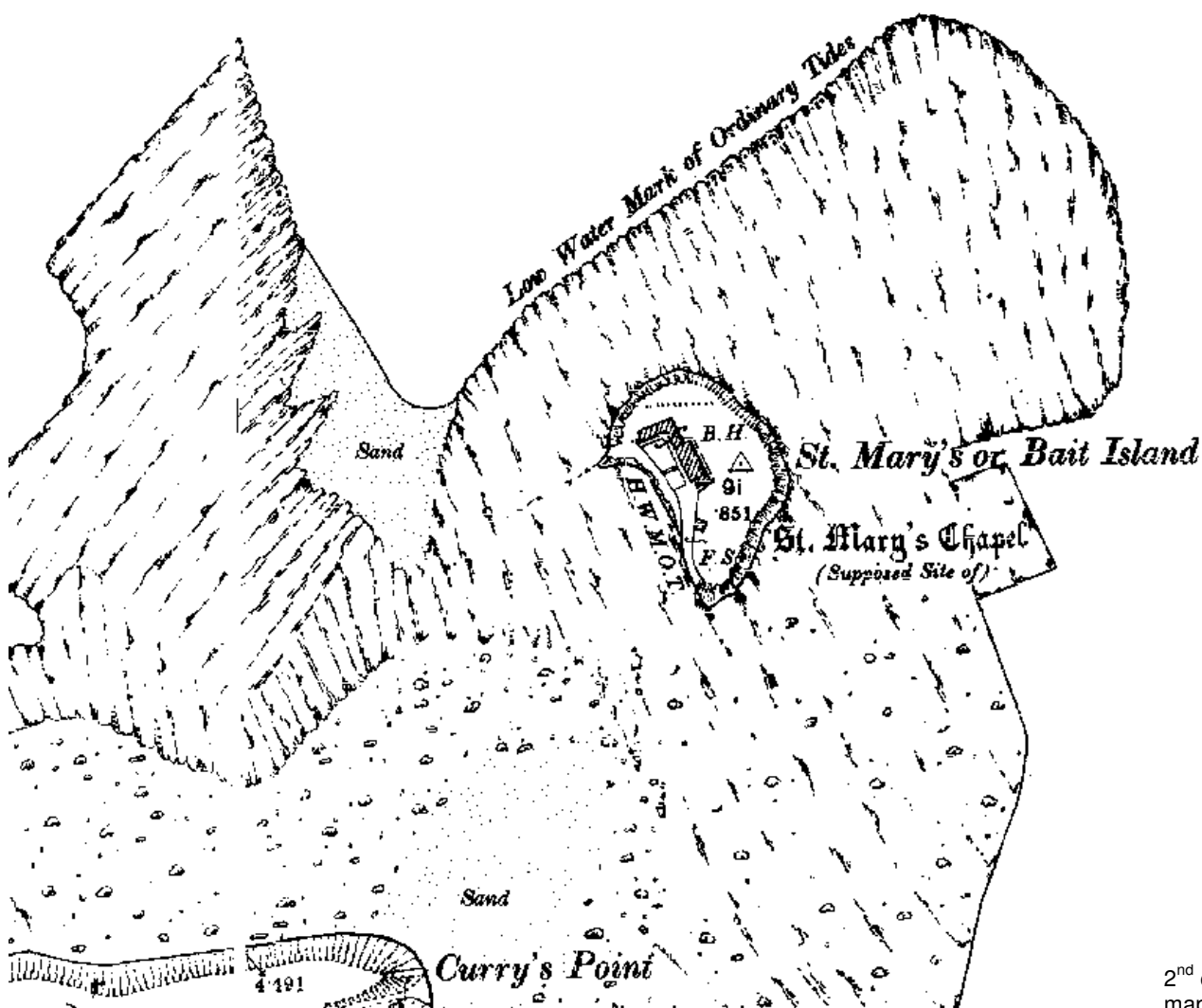
In 1855 a fisherman called George Ewen from Aberdeen built the cottage on the Island, with the help of Lord Hastings of Delaval. He had rented the salmon fishing rights since 1852 and had a hut in which to keep his nets and boats. In 1862 he turned it into an inn called 'The Freemason's Arms', known locally as 'The Square and Compass'.

3.1.2 First Edition O.S. Map c.1858

The first edition Ordnance Survey (O.S.) map recorded only "the supposed site of St. Mary's Chapel" on the Island; the antiquarian Tomlinson confirmed this in 1889 with his admission that every trace of the chapel had long since gone. Buildings are evident on the Island that are presumably Ewen's cottage and inn. Curry's Point is also clearly marked on this map.

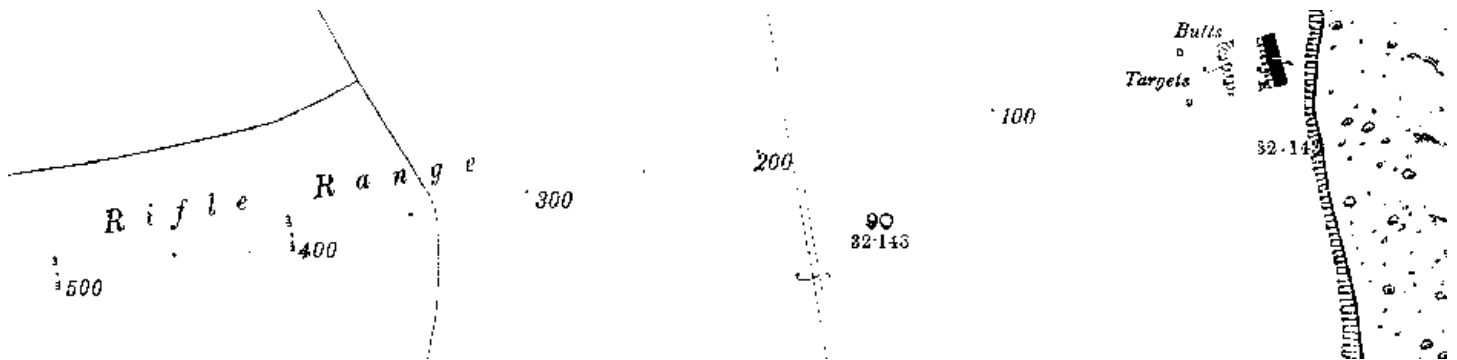
3.1.3 Second Edition O.S. Map c.1897

Little change is evident on this map in comparison to the previous map. Despite this, much activity had occurred within the conservation area.



2nd edition O.S. map

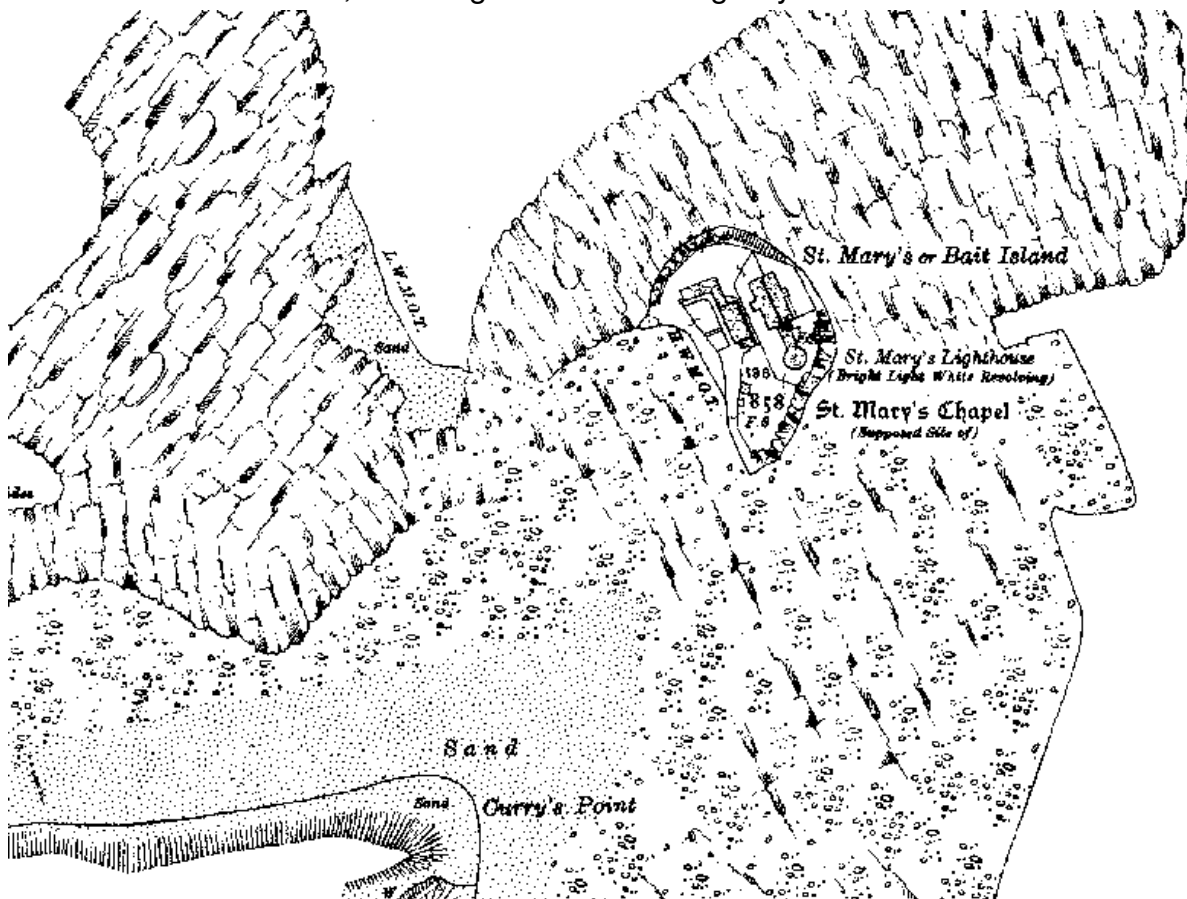
In 1894, Joseph Patterson, of Hartley East Farm, let a field on the mainland to the army for use as a rifle range. This is evident on the map, to the south west of St. Mary's Island. A dispute arose between Patterson and Ewen about the right of way used by visitors to the inn and the danger of bullets flying over the island. Patterson accused Ewen and his friends of damaging his property and of opening the inn on a Sunday.



Army rifle range south west of St. Mary's Island

On 13th and 14th November 1895, the Ewen family were evicted. There was a great deal of sympathy in Whitley Bay for John Ewen, his father, his two sons and three daughters. During their occupation over some fifty years the Ewen family had prevented the Island from being washed away and they had made St. Mary's a popular venue for visitors. On 16th November, Lord Hastings made a statement explaining the eviction; his reason being, he said, that Ewen was disputing the ownership of the house. John Crisp was the new tenant in the cottage, who reopened it as a temperance hotel and one of his first guests was the Trinity House Surveyor. In the autumn of the following year, work was started on the building of the lighthouse. Descendents of John Crisp still live in the cottage today.

It was believed that the navigational light at Tynemouth Priory was becoming obscured by industrial smoke from the Tyne, and a light was needed in this area, following several large ships being wrecked on the rocks, including the "Gothenburg City".



3.1.4 Third Edition O.S. Map c.1916

The third edition O.S. map is the first to feature the lighthouse, which was completed in 1898 at a cost of £8,000. Mr. J. Livingston Miller, of Tynemouth, carried out the contract. Messrs. J. Tweddle and Co., of Newcastle, provided the ironwork used in the construction of the lighthouse, and Mr. T. Matthews C. E., engineer-in-chief to the Trinity House Board, designed the lantern.

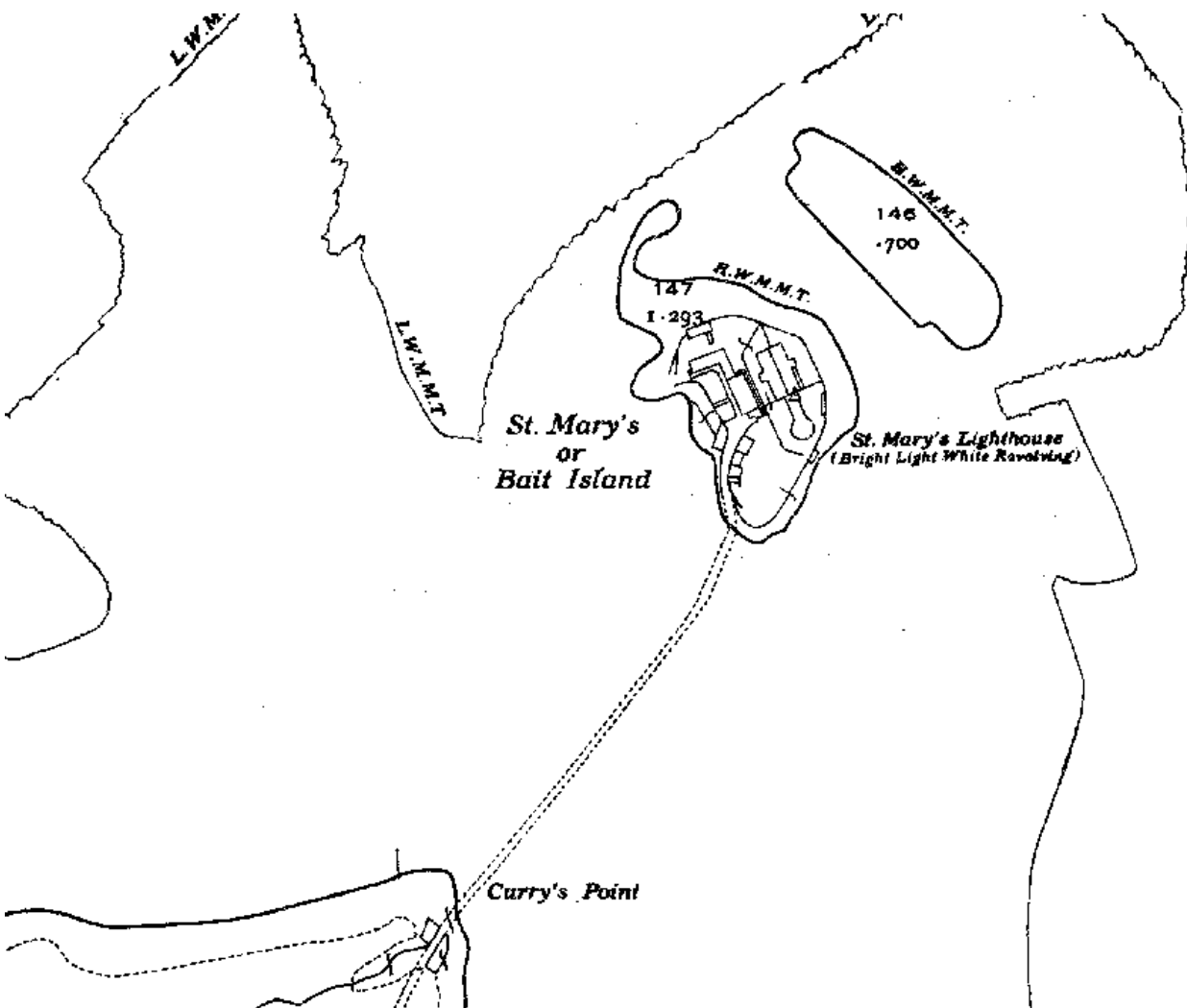
The daughter and niece of the builder first put the light in the lantern on 31st August 1898, in the presence of a large number of ladies and gentlemen who had been invited to the inaugural ceremony.

The buildings were made from Heworth Stone and the 126ft tower was constructed using cement-covered brick. On 1st September 1898, The Shields Daily News reported that numerous difficulties had been encountered during the construction, which included adverse weather conditions.

The Keepers' house was not complete until February 1899 and the tower was not painted until September 1900. A concrete pillar off the East Coast of the island was built in 1914 as a rangefinder for coastal defense guns at Tynemouth Priory.

3.1.5 Forth Edition O.S. Map c.1938

There was no man-made causeway to the island until 1929, as shown on this map. However, access was still proved difficult due to the continuous submersion of its mid-section; this was not remedied until a full concrete causeway was built in the mid-1950s.



The pitched roof now present on the Visitors' centre and Keeper's Cottage was added in the 1930s.

3.1.6 Modern Map c.2000

For modern map, see Map 1 at the beginning of the document. Developments on the Island evident since the early edition O. S. maps include the bird hide beside the lighthouse. This was originally a degaussing station built in 1959, the function of which was to demagnetise ships to protect them from mines laid during the war.

The Lighthouse remained operational until 1984 when it was superseded by modern navigational techniques. Since then North Tyneside Council has operated the Lighthouse and former keepers' cottages as a visitor centre.

The transmission station and masts in the northern part of the conservation area are a modern development. Their positioning here is due to the site's strategic importance given as one of three coastal sites in the UK that are part of an international network for shipping. A further modern feature of the conservation area are two large car parks.

3.2 Archaeology

There are no scheduled ancient monuments in this conservation area. However, as the area has several interesting entries on the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record, archaeological investigation could reveal much about early settlements and could contribute to the understanding of the history of the area and settlement of the Borough.

4 Spatial Analysis

4.1 Development Pattern, Layout and Density

The conservation area is made up of St. Mary's Island, adjacent coastline and open space. The coastline forms the eastern extent of the boundary, the southern extent is formed by the access road to the Island and the northern extent is made up by the borough boundary. The western extent does not follow any pre-determined boundary line, which is a quite incoherent approach.

Development on the Island has been determined by its position, jutting out to sea. It was this positioning, along with its location: nearly midway between lighthouses at Souter Point and Coquet, that made it the perfect place for a lighthouse. Surrounding buildings and structures on the Island (for example, the concrete pillar and degaussing station) were developed here to take advantage of the positioning.

The conservation area is generally very low in density, with almost all buildings concentrated on the Island. The majority of the conservation area consists of undeveloped open space.

4.2 Views within the Area

Views within the conservation area generally reflect the development pattern – generally open and clear. An area of open space where this is not the case is at the Nature Reserve where hedgerows, long grass and trees shield some views; however this works to show the good biodiversity practice here. The topography of the area creates some fantastic views, and this has been discussed.

On St. Mary's Island itself the views are quite different, most of them short due to the building density. In these cases the eye is drawn upwards and this is helped

Eyes are drawn up to the lighthouse



with the interesting roofscapes of the buildings. From any point within the conservation area, views are always going to be drawn to the Lighthouse due to its scale, positioning, colour and overall landmark quality.

5 Character Analysis

5.1 Character Sub-Areas

The conservation area has three distinct character areas: St. Mary's Island, the open space on the mainland and the car parks.

5.2 Land Use

The dominant land use in the conservation area is undeveloped, open space. This land is part of North Tyneside's Green Belt and is protected accordingly – see associated policies from page 25. 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.



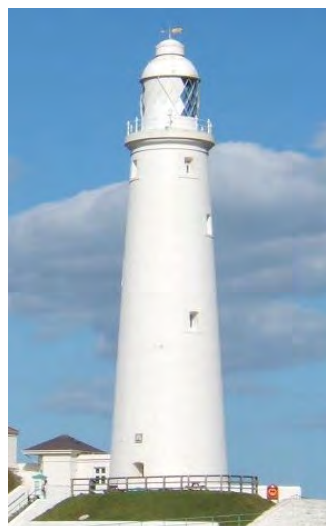
Undeveloped agricultural land forms the majority of the conservation area

The most dominant built land use is that of a Visitor Centre, which is housed in the lighthouse and its associated buildings.

5.3 Buildings

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

5.3.1 St. Mary's Lighthouse



This is the structure at the top of the hierarchy of not just the conservation area, but arguably of the North Tyneside coast. Its architectural and historic importance is recognised in its locally registered status. The Lighthouse has an imposing size and scale, reaching 126ft and containing 137 steps.

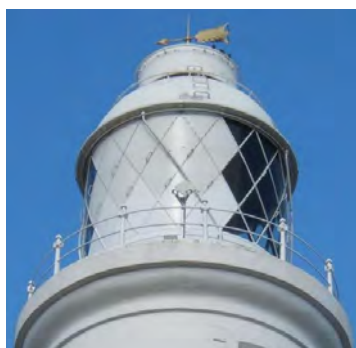
The tower is constructed of cement-covered brick, which has been painted white. Interestingly the lighthouse was not painted until 1900, two years after completion. The building has few windows relative to its size; they are deeply recessed in curved-top opening with raised architrave. The actual windows are timber casement and are not of historic interest.



Deeply recessed windows at the lighthouse

The top of the lighthouse sees a glazed lantern with diamond shaped panes of glass, a metal railing circling the tower, a metal domed roof and a weather vane.

2008 saw a restoration project at the lighthouse that involved work to fix the roof and glazing of the tower and external painting.



Glazed lantern and domed roof of the lighthouse

5.3.2 Keeper's House



The considerable size and presence of the Keeper's House is evident when viewing from afar

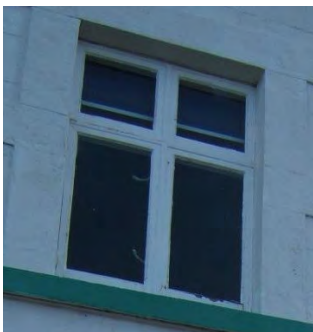
As discussed, the Keepers' house was complete in February 1899. It is a building of considerable size and presence. It is constructed of Heworth stone that is painted white with green paint highlighting certain features such as sills. This white and green colour scheme adheres to the Trinity House tradition.

Trinity House took down the original passageway linking the tower and the dwellings in the 1970s. A new link, now forming the reception area, was created in the late 1980s, employing a design drawn by Council architects that is sympathetic to the original fabric.

Another change the building has undergone is the addition of a pitched, hipped roof in the 1930s. The roof covering is natural slate with red ridge tiles. Due to weathering, the slate has discoloured to a lighter shade. The roof has no overhang and there is a simple timber fascia at eaves level. The building has four chimneys, positioned symmetrically with two in the centre and two at either side of the building. They stand tall and proud, making a significant contribution to the roofscape. Like the building as a whole, they are simple in their detailing, with terracotta pots providing a contrast to the bright white of the stonework.



Chimneys are tall and intact



Typical window at the Keeper's House

Doors are of little historic significance, having probably been replaced when the conversion to a visitor centre occurred in the late 1980s. Windows are not original but perhaps date from the 1930s and are timber casements.

The Lighthouse and Keeper's House are surrounded by an irregular stone wall with a rusticated rounded stone coping, which has been painted white. A simple timber fence is used on the southern end of the grounds, which seems appropriate for the small grassed area with picnic benches it surrounds. Leading down from the raised area on which Lighthouse and Keeper's House are situated are some good remnants of historic fabric; stone stairs on the west side and iron railings on the east side. Within the grounds of the Keeper's House is some planting, nicely maintained by the Friends of St. Mary's Island, on the west side



Within the grounds of the Keeper's House is some planting, nicely maintained by the Friends of St. Mary's Island, on the west side



Open spaces (above) and remnants of historic fabric (left) within the grounds of the lighthouse and Keeper's House

that adds some colour and vibrancy to what would be an otherwise empty, dull space. This is the case on the east side, which unfortunately is not helped by the presence of a large tank surrounded by tall palisade metal fencing.

5.3.3 Cottages

As previously discussed, these cottages have an interesting history, with past uses of an inn and temperance hotel. They are the oldest structures on the Island, built in 1855, with extensions to form a barrel room and washing room to the north end of the cottage in 1861.

The cottages are one storey in height, with the main part also making use of the roof space as a further storey.

The cottages are constructed of random rubble brought to course, although in places this has seen some insensitive re-pointing.



The stone cottages have an interesting history

Early rainwater goods

There is a selection of windows in the property, but they generally adhere to being multi-pane timber casements with timber lintels. Although potentially not the original windows, they remain in keeping with the age and style of the property. uPVC replacements would be alien to the property and should be avoided. Doors are simple solid timber. Rainwater goods are not a particular feature of the architecture although there is an early example of an iron gutter and drain pipe on the eastern elevation.



Multiple chimneys

The roof was originally thatched but has since been replaced with terracotta pantiles. It is a steeply pitched, unhipped roof with deep overhanging eaves. On the western elevation of the roof are three vertically proportioned dormers windows that are relatively modern, having been added sometime in or after the 1930s. The roof has several irregularly placed brick chimneys that stand tall with cream pots.



Outhouse

To the south of the cottages is a small out-house that, due to its visual similarities and proximity, appears to be associated with them. A large portion of the western elevation has been rebuilt in brick at some time; this different layer of history adds considerable interest to the building.



Transmission station and mast

5.3.4 Other structures: Transmission Station, Toilets, Bird Hide, Concrete Pillar, Pillbox

There are several other smaller buildings and structures in the conservation area that require some discussion.

One of the more substantial structures is the transmission station and its

associated masts, situated in the north west of the conservation area. The transmission station is a one storey, flat roof building in pale brick and is not of any architectural quality. The building, along with its masts, does not positively contribute to the rural character of the area. However, they are not too prominently located and their use does serve to remind that this is an important site in the UK's shipping network.



The toilet block is sited in a prominent location

A structure that is prominent however, is the public toilet block in the visitors' car park. It is a one storey, flat roofed building. It is constructed of red brick with some cream render, and a felt roof. Like the transmission station, while of no architectural quality, it does serve an important purpose; in this case it serves the many visitors to the area. A more appropriate siting (perhaps in the far north west of the car park) would have possibly lessened its impact.



Bird Hide's original 1950s window (above) and view out to sea (right), which takes in the concrete pillar



On the eastern side of St. Mary's Island is a Bird Hide, built in 1959 as a degaussing station to demagnetise ships to protect them from mines. This is yet another layer of history to the Island. Now it serves as an

excellent location to watch wildlife, which, as discussed earlier, is plentiful in the area. Another one storey, flat roofed structure, it is rendered and painted white with green details like the Keeper's House. A long, horizontal opening on the east elevation reveals some fantastic views out to sea, whereas a 1950s window on the west elevation (although in poor condition) is a good original remnant.



Military remnants: concrete pillar (left) and pillbox (right)

One of the sights from the Bird Hide is an interesting concrete pillar. Built in 1914, it was used in the calibration of the coastal defence artillery at Tynemouth Castle. A further reminder of the area's military past is the hexagonal concrete pillbox on the western side of the Island. It would have been constructed in 1940 or 1941 and remains in a good condition. This pillbox is one of around 28,000 built in the British Isles that were sited at road junctions, canals and other strategic points to prevent an anticipated German invasion.

5.4 Contribution of Spaces

Spaces, both large and small, make a significant contribution to the detailed character of the area. Together these represent a significant amount of green and open space in the conservation area, and there is more beyond that is not within the boundary. The green nature of the area can be seen in the aerial photograph (overleaf).



It is not a particularly well-treed area and there are no Tree Preservation Orders in place, but all trees there are given protection as part of the conservation area status.

The main spaces in the conservation area are:

Agricultural land

A major part of the conservation area (the western part) is made up of agricultural land. This uncluttered space allows for open vistas (discussed earlier) and contributes to the area's special rural character.

Nature reserve

To the south of the conservation area lies a Nature Reserve, which was established in 1997. At present the reserve is enclosed with post and wire fencing. The reserve features natural wetlands, small trees, shrubs and grasslands. Although there is no entry to the public, it is possible to view into the reserve. The contribution the reserve makes to biodiversity in the area is substantial.



The nature reserve has a high biodiversity value

Cliff Top Walk

The north eastern boundary of the conservation area sees a walk along the cliff top, with gravel paths and long grass. The area has a very natural and rural feel to it, and the lack of development is appropriate in order to protect views along the coastline and out to sea. Unfortunately the cluster of wooden benches creates clutter.

The rural feel of the cliff top

Promenade

In contrast, the cliff top walk on the south side of the island has been stripped of its natural quality, to be replaced with a tarmac promenade with metal railing. This is a much more tourist-orientated walkway, for those wanting a more genteel stroll than offered on the north side. Similarly to the





Wooden benches along the promenade

situation on the north side of the island, the slightly erratic and plentiful placement of wooden benches creates a somewhat untidy appearance to the promenade.

Car parks

The conservation area is served by two sizable car parks. While their large expanses of tarmac detract from the more natural feel of the conservation area, they do work to remind that this is a well-loved and well-visited place. The maintenance of the car parks is good but there is an area just south of the most northern car park, with cracked concrete and potholes that is in some need of attention.



The car parks are not visually attractive but do serve the many visitors to the area

Rocky area



The rugged landscape creates a dramatic setting for the lighthouse

The Island's surrounding rocks contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their natural, rugged landscape provides significant visual interest, a habitat for a diverse range of marine life and a fascinating visitor attraction for young and old alike.

5.5 Atmosphere



The conservation area's character is gained not only from the built fabric and spaces around it, but also the atmosphere it creates. The several facets of St. Mary's Island mean that a considerable amount of character is created here: the long and interesting history of the island, the rural feel of its undeveloped spaces and the tourist buzz.



Character is created in more than just a visual sense. The sounds and smells of the sea contribute to the experience of the area, along with the sounds of those exploring the rockpools.

A group of locals interested in the Island formed the Friends of St. Mary's Island in 1990. Its members are engaged in a number of activities that contribute to safeguarding the future of the lighthouse and its nature reserve. The group obtained charitable status in 2002. Knowing that people care so much about the area

and are so involved creates a significant feeling of pride and this contributes greatly to the atmosphere of the conservation area.

Sadly a lack of maintenance with regards to some fixtures and street furniture means that this atmosphere is not recreated completely throughout the conservation area. Unfortunately the poor states of the bins and railings to the north of the island adversely affect the character of the conservation area.



6 Management

The lack of maintenance adversely affects the character of the conservation area

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 St. Mary's Island 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 follows⁶:

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

The most relevant ones to St. Mary's Island 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.

⁶ Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, 2005

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 Boundary Review

Paragraph 4.4 of PPG15⁷ states that conservation area boundaries should be based on a coherent assessment. The western extent of this conservation area does not follow any pre-determined boundary line, instead cutting through the centre of several individual fields. A boundary review therefore of the conservation area should be a priority. The need for this is identified in the March 2002 UDP, which highlights St. Mary's Island as an area where the boundary might change significantly. There would need to be full public consultation on any proposal to change the boundary.

6.2 Article 4(2) Directions

There are currently no Article 4(2) Directions in the conservation area. 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.

6.3 Thematic Policy Guidance

Some local policy guidance to deal with certain historic environment issues is already in place, but more specific guidance for this conservation area would be a proactive way of managing future change. Possible topics could relate to some of the architectural features described from page 16, 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.

⁷ Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning & The Historic Environment, 1995

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.

0	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
0	Listed Buildings
1	Locally Registered Buildings
0	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. The conservation area currently has no entries on the statutory list. Contact us for more advice (see page 6).

7.1.2 Local Register

North Tyneside Council has recently put together its register of buildings and parks that are of special 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 decision). 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. The register will be updated every other year, where new nominations will be considered. The following are included in the Local Register. Please consult us for more information (see page 6).

St. Mary's Lighthouse And Keeper's House, Whitley Bay

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.

There are currently no TPOs in St. Mary's Island conservation area.

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>.

No.	Site Name	Period	Site Type
773	St. Mary's Island, chapel	Medieval?	Chapel
774	St. Mary's Island, chapel cemetery	Post Medieval	Churchyard
781	Hartley, flints	Prehistoric	Flint Scatter
1037	St. Mary's Lighthouse	Early Modern	Lighthouse
1038	Whitley Bay, Blyth Road	Early Modern	Toll Road
1039	Whitley Bay, Sand Pit	Early Modern	Sand Pit
1054	Whitley Bay, Firing Range	Early Modern	Firing Range
1791	St. Mary's Island, Pillbox	Modern	Pillbox
1987	St. Mary's Island, Concrete pillar	Early Modern	Marker Post
5358	Whitley Bay, pillbox	Modern	Pillbox
7695	Whitley Bay, Curry's Point	Post Medieval	Punishment Place
7696	St. Mary's Island, ale-house	Early Modern	House
9428	St. Mary's Island, lighthouse keeper's house	Early Modern	Lightkeeper's 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.

Nature Importance

E12/2 Development which will adversely affect a designated or proposed site of special scientific interest will not be permitted unless no alternative site is reasonably available and the benefits of the proposed development would outweigh:

- (i) the intrinsic national importance of the designation; and
- (ii) the national value of the network of such sites.

In all cases where development is permitted, appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, any adverse effects will be secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or planning obligations.

E12/3 Development which would adversely affect a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), a Regionally Important Geological or Geomorphological Site (RIGS), a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) or Voluntary Marine Nature Reserve (VMNR), will not be permitted unless:

- (i) no alternative site is reasonably available and the benefits of the development would outweigh the importance of the site; or
- (ii) appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, all the adverse effects are secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or planning obligations. in all cases any adverse effects of development shall be minimised.

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.

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.

Coastal Protection

E26 An area of coastal protection is defined on the proposals map, whose open character will be maintained and where possible enhanced. Its tourism and recreational potential will be encouraged to the extent that this does not adversely affect its landscape and nature conservation value. Land management practices which would achieve a balance of these interests will be encouraged.

E26/1 Development within the area of coastal protection will not be permitted unless:

- (i) it does not adversely affect the landscape or nature conservation value of the coast, or
- (ii) the nature of the development requires a coastal location. in all cases where development is permitted, appropriate measures of mitigation of, or compensation for, any adverse effects will be secured, where appropriate through planning conditions or planning obligations.

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.

R2/3 Development of land shown on the proposals map for the purpose of open space use and used or recently used for formal recreation or sport will not be permitted unless either:

- (i) sports and recreation facilities within a site can best be retained and enhanced by means of

resources generated through the development of a small part of that site, provided this does not lead to the loss of any part of a playing pitch, or of the essential margins there of; or
(ii) any playing field or playing fields which will be lost as a result of the development will be replaced by a playing field or playing fields of an equivalent or better quality, in a location accessible to the existing users, and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements, prior to commencement of development; or
(iii) there is clear evidence of a surplus of provision of formal recreation and sports facilities.

R2/6 In considering proposals for development within major areas of recreational open space identified on the proposals map (1) Open space within the coastal protection zone defined in policy E26 (2) Rising Sun Country Park (3) Wallsend Denes (4) Backworth Hall estate permission will only be given for development relating to the enjoyment of open space and recreation, the design of which reflects the quality of the landscape and natural environment of these areas.

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 Coastal Area Action Plan (AAP)

The conservation area is within the boundary of the Coastal Area Action Plan (AAP). The AAP will earmark sites for development, improve the environment and seek to provide places that people can enjoy. The AAP consulted on its Issues and Options Paper (November 2009) and welcomes comments throughout its preparation. It is expected to be adopted in July 2012. At Issues and Options stage the AAP does not outline sites for development, set any standards, but gathers opinions and issues that can be worked upon through the plan making process that will cumulate in a document that will form part of the LDF. As part of the plan making process, studies have been commissioned to form part of the evidence base for the Coastal AAP, including the Hotel Accommodation study, Retail Centres study, Coastal Masterplan and the Green Infrastructure study. Please see <http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/planning> for further details.

7.6 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

7.6.1 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.

7.6.2 Minor Developments

Within in a conservation area, legislation⁸ 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.

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.

7.6.3 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.

7.7 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 asked⁹:

- 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?

⁸ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008

⁹ Taken from *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, English Heritage, August 2005

- 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.

7.8 Sources and Further Reading

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

- *Friends of St. Mary's Island* website, www.friendsofstmaryisland.co.uk
- *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, English Heritage, 2005
- *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, English Heritage, 2005
- *North Tyneside Council* website, www.northtyneside.gov.uk
- *St. Mary's Island Conservation Area Character Statement*, North Tyneside Council, 2005
- *The Buildings of England, Northumberland*, Pevsner et al., 2002, Yale University Press
- *Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record* website, <http://sine7.ncl.ac.uk/sl/Home.htm>
- *Unitary Development Plan*, North Tyneside Council, March 2002

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

- www.english-heritage.org.uk
- www.buildingconservation.com
- www.victoriansociety.org.uk/
- www.savebritainsheritage.org/
- www.naturalengland.org.uk



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