



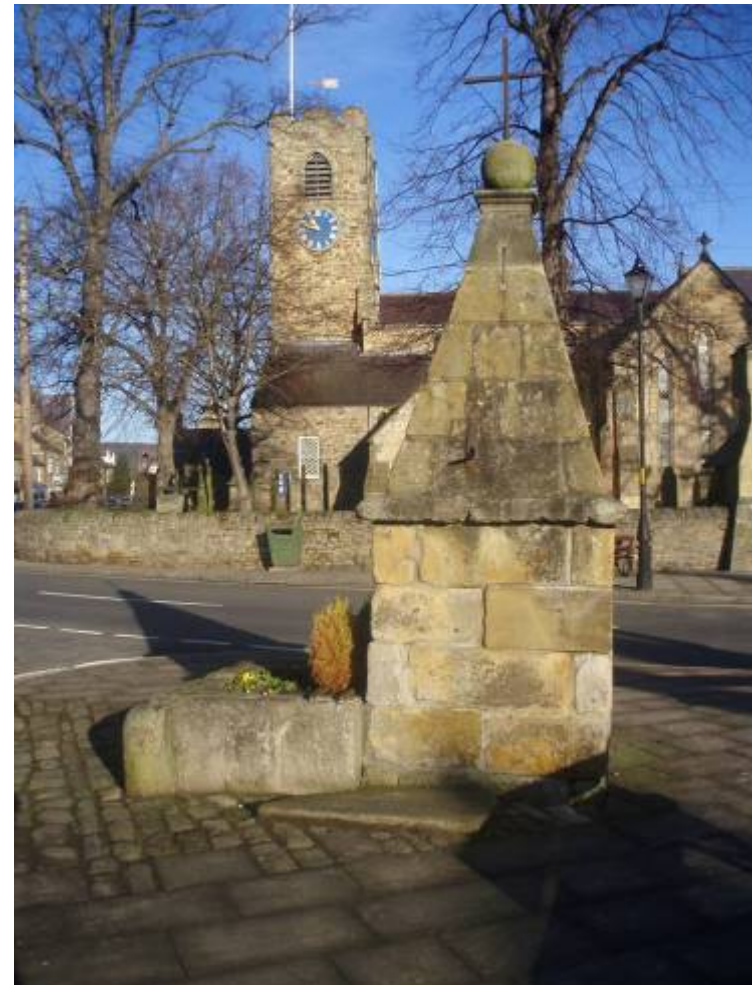
CORBRIDGE Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Adopted March 2009

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Corbridge Conservation Area

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 and street furniture. 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.

Corbridge Conservation Area was designated in March 1974 and revised in March 1996 in response to the clear historic and architectural significance of the village that can be traced back to Saxon times with the construction of St Andrew's Church in the

seventh century. The nearby Roman town and fort of Corstopitum adds depth to the settlement's historic envelope and a ready source of building material in past times. The collection of 31 listed buildings in the conservation area is testimony to its heritage importance. The boundary of conservation area was amended in March 1996 (Appendix 3: Map 1).

1.2 Planning Context

Conservation area 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. This includes when determining planning applications. It also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for its preservation and enhancement, and consult local people on them.

The protection and preservation of historic environments are now extensively recognised for the contribution that they make to the country's cultural and historic heritage, its economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for conservation – both in the built and natural environments – is also well established. National and regional government guidance reflects this. It is not the purpose of

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

conservation areas to prevent change but to manage change in such a way as to maintain and, if possible, strengthen the area's special qualities. Current legislation is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This places a duty on the Council to declare as conservation areas those parts of their area that they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest. It also imposes on the Council a duty to review past designations from time to time. Conservation area status also means that there are stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land including the need to secure consent to demolish any building, strengthening controls over some minor forms development and the automatic protection of all trees in conservation areas. Government policy is set out in PPG 15.²

Tynedale Council has adopted a number of policies that are directed towards preserving and enhancing the character of the conservation area. Detailed in Appendix 1, they cover new development, alterations, demolition and protecting the setting of the conservation area.

² Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

Following the introduction of 'Best Value Performance Indicator (BV219: Preserving the special character of conservation areas, ODPM, 28th February 2005)', the duty to regularly reappraise conservation areas – and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these – has become more urgent.

1.3 Corbridge Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This appraisal is the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area (Appendix 3: Map 1). It defines and records the factors that make the conservation area special, thereby providing a baseline for decisions about the area's future. It also identifies features and problems that detract from the special quality and suggest, by means of outline management and enhancement proposals, the ways in which the special interest could be safeguarded or improved. The appraisal also provides the opportunity to review the boundaries of the conservation area and, where appropriate, propose amendments.

The survey and appraisal were carried out during January and February 2008 following the methodology suggested by English Heritage. To ensure that a complete picture is built up about the

value and character of the area the Council will consult with people who live, work and visit the area to secure their views, including what they like or dislike about the area, and their ideas about how the area could be preserved or enhanced.

The next stage the process will be to prepare a detailed Management Plan for the conservation area. This will be undertaken once the appraisal has been through the consultation exercise and approved by the Council.

This document is not exhaustive. Omissions should not necessarily be regarded as having no interest or making no positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The character appraisal will be updated about every five years in order that it can take account of changes in the area.

Further information

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This document can be downloaded from:

<http://www.tynedale.gov.uk/residents/docushow.asp?serviceid=73>

2 STATEMENT OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Corbridge is an area of great historic and architectural significance. It is the successor settlement of the nearby defended Roman town of Corstopitum that thrived until the fifth century. Corbridge has altered over the centuries as a consequence of warfare and social and economic change with only part of the church tower surviving from the Saxon period. However, the layout of the historic core at the junction of two ancient routes and focusing on the Market Place probably reflects the shape of the lost Saxon and pre-Conquest village. The extant layout still retains the outline of the later medieval pattern that is deeply rooted in the region's history and of immense value. The streets twist and turn, narrow and broaden out to reflect the gradual organic spread of the village, a configuration that is interlaced by narrow lanes that lead into and between the buildings. This creates framed views and glimpses that are contained and terminated by buildings – views from streets and public spaces across open countryside are limited to only a few vantage points.

The historic core of the Corbridge has a distinct eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century character with many buildings dating from this period. They are interspersed with earlier properties

ranging from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, a combination that creates an historic blend of styles and scale that is both attractive and instructive. This includes a number of charming nineteenth century shopfronts that introduce colour, visual interest and well crafted details. Stone and slate dominate throughout the conservation area with pitched roofs, chimney stacks and pots creating simple and robust architecture and an attractive silhouette, particularly when viewed against the northern skyline from across the Tyne valley.

The riverside setting is outstanding and provides a superb landscape foil to the edge of the village as it skirts along the scarp of the river terraces. This edge, with the tower of St Andrew's peering over the top, is a defining view of Corbridge and particularly vulnerable to the consequences of change. Greenery penetrates into the built core to provide attractive counterpoints to the continuous building facades that dominate the street scene.

The conservation area contains high quality architecture wrapped around a medieval street pattern that rises up the side of the valley from the bridge and across elevated river terraces. The subtle combination of topography, street pattern, the age and function of buildings, the wide range of old styles and details and clear sense of history give Corbridge its distinctiveness and character.

3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Prehistory and Roman occupation

The Tyne valley would have been inhabited in prehistory. Its rich hunting grounds, agricultural fertility, command of communication routes, defensive topography and supply of water would have attracted nomads and settlers for millennia. Although there is no physical evidence of prehistoric settlements in Corbridge, a palisaded enclosure containing a circular hut dating from the Bronze Age was found beneath part of the neighbouring Roman fort in 1952. Chance finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age polished axes together with fragments of Bronze Age rapiers and daggers in and around the village reinforce the presumption that the area had an active prehistory. This ran through to the Iron Age where the large nearby hillfort of Warden Hill continues to shape the landscape.

Hadrian's Wall was built between AD120 and AD130 to defend the northern frontier of the Roman Empire. The military line initially reinforced and eventually replaced a series of forts that had been built to the south of the Stanegate. This included the Roman fort, Corstopitum, located immediately to the west of Corbridge, which was first established in the first century. Evidence from the Vindolanda writing tablets suggests that it may have been known as

Coria at that time. Corbridge continued to have an important role after the construction of the Wall because of its position on the crossroads of Dere Street, the main supply route north to Scotland which ran from York to Corbridge and then up the North Tyne valley and the east to west Stanegate that formed part of the communications link between the North Sea and Irish Sea. This strategic location led to the redevelopment of the fort. By the mid-second century the extensive civilian settlement had become a defended market town which continued to be occupied until the late fifth century at least.

The Roman fort is not within the conservation area unlike the remains of the Roman bridge that carried Dere Street over the Tyne and led directly into the fortified civilian settlement.

It is thought that the Roman town was abandoned in the fifth century following the re-ordering of the Empire and the associated retreat from Britain at which time a new Saxon settlement was established nearby on the hill to the east. It is probable that the decaying Roman settlement continued to provide shelter as the village became established with the Roman town being used as a convenient quarry for building stone. A stunning example of this recycling of material can be seen in St Andrew's church where the

round-headed tower arch is thought to be a re-set Roman feature from the fort.



The Roman piers and arch in St Andrew's Church



Remains of the Roman bridge

3.2 Medieval Period to the mid-eighteenth century

In 786 Alduf was consecrated Bishop of Mayo in what was referred to at that time as the monastery at Corbridge. The only surviving Anglo-Saxon structure in the village is part of the tower of St Andrew's church suggesting that this could have been the monastic site although there is no other evidence to corroborate this supposition. It is believed that the eighth century king of Northumbria, Ethelred, had a residence in Corbridge when it received borough status. In 923 following a battle between the Danes and Northumbrians at Corbridge, the victorious Scandinavians probably destroyed the town. Following the Norman

Conquest the town was re-established and when in 1201 King John granted Corbridge the status of a royal borough, it resumed the benefits derived from being a royal possession. Its location at the junction of two major highways made Corbridge a natural point where a commercial centre should develop and prosper. Corbridge remained at the junction of the two routes for many centuries and became the destination of new roads as it again became a bridging point across the Tyne. The increasing importance of the town led to its enclosure by a defensive ditch, the only evidence of which is the hint of an embankment that runs across the modern Chains housing site. The main east-west road, the Carelgate, was used until the eighteenth century and carried traffic between Newcastle and Carlisle via Corbridge. Carelgate left Corbridge via Colwell Chare (now Well Bank).



Armstrong's map 1769 showing line of east/west Carelgate



Carelgate, now Wellbank

The realigned Dere Street, which later became known as Watling Street, continued in use throughout the medieval period from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. It was converted to a turnpike in 1800 but became less important after the construction of the Great North Road. The importance of Corbridge as a crossing point on the Tyne was guaranteed after the old disused Roman bridge was replaced by a new structure in 1235. This stood on the site of the present bridge, which was built in 1674 and was the only bridge on the Tyne to withstand the floods of 1771.

In the thirteenth century the town was at its most prosperous and had become the second largest borough town in the region after Newcastle. It was during this period that the surviving town centre street pattern was laid out around the Market Place. Buildings would have clustered around the edge of the Market Place and alongside Marketgate/Westgate (now Watling Street), Fish Shamble Gate (now Hill Street) and Smithy Gate (now Main Street) occupying burgage plots with their traditionally long, thin, gardens and yards. The outline pattern of burgage plots can still be traced. The town's prosperity declined at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries partly as a result of repeated attacks during the Border Wars, particularly a Scottish invasion in 1296, and a fall in

population as a consequence of the Black Death in 1349. There is evidence that dwellings on individual plots were rebuilt a number of times during this period of unrest.

A significant medieval building, the Vicar's Pele Tower, survives to the east of St Andrew's church. The tower is mentioned as the vicar's property in a list of fortresses drawn up for Henry V in 1415. Although there is no record of its erection, it is built in a style of about 1300. Another medieval building in the conservation area, Low Hall, also known as Baxter's Tower, is thought to be the oldest house in the village apart from the Vicar's Pele. The nucleus of the building is a medieval tower, three stories high which retains many of its original features including a vaulted ground floor.

During the medieval period a subordinate hamlet became established on the land around the prior's manor house and the lost Norman Trinity Church, built on the site of the late nineteenth century Trinity Terrace.

Iron working, an important activity in the Roman town, continued to play a role in the economy of medieval Corbridge. Four new forges were entered in to the Provost's account of 1525 and ironwork was known to be a principal commodity sold at Stagshaw Fair, with lists of purchases from the fair in 1298 and 1299 including horseshoes,

nails and ironware. Main Street in Corbridge was formerly called Smith Gate because of the number of iron working shops that were located there. The medieval street name Hidemarket suggests a tanning industry and brick-lined tan-pits are said to have been found nearby in about 1760.



The 1674 bridge sits on the site of the thirteenth century crossing



Fryer's map (1820) showing the medieval hamlet to the north west of the village centre

3.2.1 Mid-eighteenth century onwards

Despite the end of hostilities with Scotland in the mid-eighteenth century, Corbridge did not expand until after the opening of the Newcastle to Carlisle Railway in 1835, when the town spilled over onto the south bank of the river and the historic core of the town on the north bank became more built up. However, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries new building in the town occasionally adapted but more frequently began to replace existing

properties to begin to establish the predominant architectural character of Corbridge. This includes Monksholme located at the eastern end of Main Street which is one of the finest old houses in Corbridge, possibly dating to the sixteenth or seventeenth century but with much nineteenth century restoration. Nearby is Byethorne House, originally called 'The Willows', with 20 acres of gardens, parkland and woodland overlooking the River Tyne. Hill Street was built up by the end of the eighteenth century. Although Corbridge was undergoing a gradual process of regeneration during this period, it still lacked positive ambience, being described by Hutchinson in 1765/6 as, 'Though the town makes a pretty appearance at the foot of the vale when you see it from Hexham, it disappoints the traveller greatly on his entrance to find it dirty and disagreeable'.³ This condition prevailed until at least the early decades of the nineteenth century when Hodgson described Corbridge as 'the town, for such is its antiquity demands that it be styled, is dirty, and in all the streets except that through which the Newcastle and Carlisle road passes, is filthy with middens and

³ History of Corbridge : Robert Foster 1881

pigsties....but still the place bears the appearance of being ancient'.⁴

The nineteenth century saw changes that reflected the general surge in the nation's economy as a consequence of industrial expansion and its impact as a global trading nation. Although Corbridge was not an industrial town dominated by factories, Corbridge Pottery in Milkwell Lane established in about 1840 with its two impressive early nineteenth century bottle ovens being the most prominent works, it had relatively strong 'niche' businesses including shoe making for the army of lead and coal miners employed in and around the Allen valley and for export. Traditional iron working also continued in the town, with five smiths recorded in 1855. It is likely that some local street names were derived from this industry, such as Filers Row, located at the Market Place end of Middle Street. Cottage industries, such as weaving, gradually faded as industrial processes elsewhere produced similar goods at lower prices. Environmentally more benign activities expanded, particularly orchards and market gardens, where soft fruits, particularly plums, were grown to supply the nearby towns and

⁴ ibid

cities. The absence of heavy industry, the presence of clean spring water and air and the development of the railway to Newcastle fostered Corbridge's growing reputation as a healthy and convenient place to live and visit. This in turn led to the spread of 'beautiful villa residences' (on Prospect hill).⁵

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the demolition of many thatched homes and their replacement by new good quality stone and slate houses together with public and civic buildings. Amongst the casualties was poor house built in 1767 at the west end of Watling Street to house the destitute. It was demolished in the 1840s when Hexham Union Workhouse was built, with Dunkirk Terrace being built on the cleared site in. The name 'Dunkirk' relates to an even earlier building – a Presbyterian Chapel – known as the 'Dun-Kirk'.

Housing spread beyond the confines of the early village with Trinity Terrace, St Helen's Place and West Terrace stretching the built settlement to the north. Public buildings, including the National School off Princes Street, and chapels were built. The Wesleyan Chapel and School at the corner of Hill Street and Princes Street,

⁵ Ibid

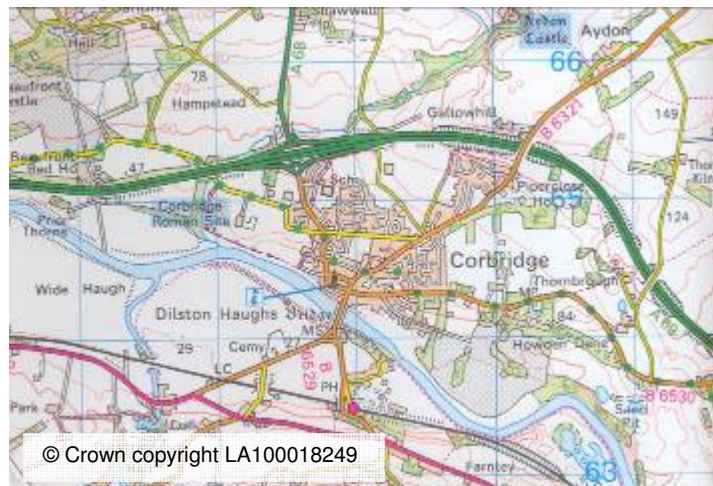
now used as a library and tourist information office, and its neighbouring Town Hall introduced fine Gothic Free Style architecture into the streetscene providing landmark buildings. They were complemented in 1909 by the construction of the mansard roofed Edwardian Classical Free Style Lloyds Bank at the junction of Middle Street with Bridge Bank. This period saw the introduction of sewers, mains water supplies and gas lighting that greatly enhanced the quality of life of the community (Appendix 3: Maps 4 and 5).

The twentieth century has seen the village grow with its population of about 1,650 in 1891 rising to its current figure of about 3,000. The village has expanded to accommodate this increase, particularly to the north and east with the development of post-WWII housing estates. The impact of twentieth century building in the conservation area includes both relatively discrete infill development such as Cooper Court off St Helen's Lane and more conspicuous and visually intrusive schemes such as the recent Chains housing development over the former allotment site. The twentieth century developments have not radically altered the historic street pattern within the conservation area that remains remarkably unchanged from the earliest plans dating from the eighteenth century.

4 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

4.1 Location

Corbridge is located in the Tyne valley some five kilometres to the east of Hexham and 35 kilometres to the west of Newcastle. It is ranged along the northern side of the River Tyne and immediately to the south of the A69. The rail line and Corbridge station is on the south side of the river valley and detached from the settlement. The village is located within Corbridge Parish and Corbridge Ward. Its centre is at National Grid reference NY 988645.



Location of Corbridge in its valley and communications setting

4.2 Context

4.2.1 Geology and building materials

Geology

Corbridge is situated over carboniferous limestone that is penetrated by thin coal seams. A substantial part of the settlement lies over terraces of river gravel and layers of fireclay that are superimposed over the limestone.

Building Materials

Clay

Brick is the most common material using clay. There is a limited range of brick types and colours employed in the area, most commonly laid in English Bond or English Garden Wall bond. Façade bricks on the late nineteenth/early twentieth century buildings in the village centre tend to be buff and pale yellow to mimic the tone and colour of stone. There are a small number of fine Victorian/Edwardian red brick houses elsewhere in the conservation area together with some mid to late twentieth century brick properties, some painted or rendered, particularly in the Well Bank area. Red brick is commonly used to replace scorched chimney breast stone and, together with buff coloured bricks, in the

construction of chimney stacks. Red bricks are also used on side and back elevations and in the construction of some extensions. Clay is used to manufacture roof pantiles, ridge tiles and finials and occasionally to provide relief and decoration. There is a mixture of buff and red clay chimney pots representing an interesting variety of styles and shapes, including Bishops, Louvered Bishops, Round, Fluted Round, Captains, Plain Square, Spiked Square, Square Panelled, Venetians, Champions and Beehives. Chimney stacks and pots make a vital contribution to the character of the conservation area.



*Nineteenth century
cream bricks*



Clay pantiles



Chimney stack and pots

Stone

Stone is the predominant building material used in the conservation area. It tends to be local cream sandstone frequently tinted grey with age where used as a building material or for ornamentation and Welsh slate when used on roofs. Rough, rock finished and tooled stone are used throughout Corbridge with ashlar and carved masonry providing decorative features such as window and door surrounds and quoins. Stone is laid in courses or as random rubble. It occasionally shows signs of wear, particularly at street level where erosion is accelerated by road and pavement spray contaminated by salt and acids.

Stone is also used as copings on front boundary walls and some gateposts. The use of stone setts is extremely limited, the prime example being St Mary's Chare. Some stone gutters and kerbs survive along the edge of carriageways. Stone flags have been used in recent street improvements in the Market Place. Roofs, which are a combination of pitch and hipped profiles, are predominantly covered in Welsh slate with some of the oldest properties being covered in split stone flags.



*Rock faced stone walls
with fine surrounds*



Stone roofs



Stone setts



Timber shopfront



Window shutters



Panelled doors

Timber

Timber is used for the manufacture of window frames, window shutters, doors and barging. It is invariably painted. A number of fine nineteenth century timber shopfronts survive throughout the village centre. They are of varying size and decorative complexity and remain one of the most distinctive and attractive elements in the townscape. Generally, original joinery survives and appears to be generally well maintained. However, there are replacements in uPVC to reduce perceived maintenance liabilities. The survival of historic timberwork is vital for the heritage wellbeing of the conservation area.

Metal

The most common use of metal is through the fabrication of rainwater goods. They are invariably cast iron and tend to be plain and utilitarian. Unfortunately nearly all historic metal fences were removed during WWII with only a handful surviving, such as the short length in front of the Primitive Methodist Chapel in the Market Place and fragments on Corchester Terrace and Stagshaw Road. Replacement modern mild steel fences have occasionally been installed along boundary lines. Metal is used for functional purposes such as the pant spouts, and as decorative features including the wrought ornamental railings mounted onto first floor lintels at Barclays Bank in the Market Place and the remarkable 1814 cast iron market cross. Lead is sometimes used as flashings, particularly

on shopfronts, and wrought iron fastenings can be seen clamping stones together.



Cast iron rainwater goods



Wrought iron boundary fences



Cast iron pant spouts

Render and paint

Render and pebbledash is used as decorative element in the original design of some later properties. Virtually all timberwork is painted. Some stone and brickwork is also painted to provide decoration and weather protection. However, this can be aesthetically damaging and lead to high maintenance costs.



Paint and render



Painted shopfront



Painted stonework

Other materials

Modern materials, such as concrete roof tiles, are used sparingly. However, their use is visually jarring and detracts from the appearance of the area in general and to specific sweeps of roof in particular. Artificial or composite stone is used in some modern buildings to the detriment of the area. Plastic is used to replace rainwater goods. uPVC windows have been extensively introduced throughout the area. These often have clumsy, chunky proportions and are usually placed flush with the face of the building, rather than being set back into an appropriate reveal, thus losing depth and shadow to the building's architecture. Roads and footpaths are generally surfaced in asphalt with concrete blocks occasionally used as a decorative contrast material.

4.2.2 Topography and Setting

The village lies on the second river terrace that wraps around the hill that nudges into the Tyne valley where the Cor Burn cuts through the northern slope and across the flood plain before discharging into the river. The land undulates where the waters of both the Tyne and the Cor Burn have risen, receded, changed course and scoured the land over many thousands of years. The highest point of the conservation area is approximately 52 metres and the lowest approximately 32 metres above sea level.

The wider setting of the conservation area is largely determined by topography. Corbridge sits in the glacial Tyne valley that is interrupted by gaps and rounded knolls formed by tributaries running off the fells. The base of the valley is broad allowing the river to meander over its flood plain. The valleys to the east and west of Corbridge provide contrasting landscapes. To the west the valley is largely decorated by fields interlaced by areas of woodland with clear views to Hexham some 5 kilometres away. The flattened 'U'-shape of the valley is clear. To the east, the shape of the valley is substantially lost behind woodlands that come to the river edge with highly attractive but relatively small tree lined

meadows that form part of the landscaped grounds of Bythorne and Howdon Dene ranged along the north side of the river.

To the north and south of Corbridge the sides of the valley are a mixture of woodland and fields interspersed with small farmsteads and hamlets. The buildings tend to be lost in thickets of trees.

A number of large country houses with estates were built in the valley in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Beaufront Castle to the west of Corbridge can be seen from the village and its wider envelope to provide a glimpse at the past Regency and Georgian character of the valley.

4.3 Views out of the Area

Views to the south and north are controlled by the rising slopes and skylines of the Tyne valley. They provide a rural visual context that is dominated to the south by the sharply rising ground of Prospect Hill that sweeps down to form the tributary valley that carries the Devil's Water to the Tyne. This panoramic view of fields and woodlands is limited to the properties that flank the southern edge of the settlement, the paths that run along the river banks and the approach to the bridge and glimpses over roofs from the Market Place. To the north, views that combine fields and woodlands are

less expansive with ground gently rising towards the ridge of the valley and ripples in the slopes occasionally creating foreshortened skylines. Again, they are limited to only a few vantage points, principally glimpses from Stagshaw Road and Corchester Lane.



View to the south over Prospect Hill



View to the north along Stagshaw Road

Views to the west, principally from the river banks, Corchester Lane and Well Lane, follow the flattening slopes and broad base of the Tyne valley as the river moves along its course. The views are contained by the distant thin line of High Warden and Haydon Fell to the west of Hexham. The low and visually discrete visitors centre at Corstopitum Roman fort sits in the foreground on the plateau overlooking the Cor Burn with Egger UK, the visually invasive industrial complex, straddling the valley floor in the middle distance. Views to the east are channelled along Main Street and Aydon Road as they twist out of the village, the most expansive view being

along the river valley from the bridge. This view is attractive but foreshortened where the river loops behind woodlands backdrops.



View westwards towards Hexham



Foreshortened eastern view along valley floor

5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Development pattern and layout

5.1.1 Medieval development pattern

Little is known about pre-Conquest Corbridge other than references to the 'monastic settlement'. The surviving Saxon fabric in St Andrew's Church suggests that the building was the focus of the seventh to tenth century settlement which benefited and prospered from its royal town status. The constant warring between rival factions and states led to the destruction of the settlement in the tenth century with nothing surviving to indicate street and building arrangements.

The post-Conquest medieval development pattern of Corbridge probably grew around the Dere Street/Carelgate axis that ran between Low Hall at the eastern end of Main Street, past the thirteenth century bridge and through the Market Place to Colwell Chare (Wellbank). It is probable that this outline street plan at the core of the conservation area has remained substantially unchanged since the twelfth/thirteenth century in spite of the damaging consequences of centuries of border warfare. The c.1780 Tithe map (Appendix 3 Map 2) and subsequent Ordnance Survey

plans (Appendix 3 Maps 3, 4 and 5) illustrate this arrangement and how subsequent changes have not radically distorted the historic pattern over the succeeding two and a half centuries.

The medieval focus was the Market Place which was located where the street turned at near right angles around the shoulder of the scarp that provided the village development platform. Buildings overlooking the river and the site of the Roman fort would have ranged around the southern and eastern edge of the Market Place with burgage plots stretching down the slopes of the scarp towards the river bank and the river haughs. It is possible that the medieval Market Place was larger than the extant space with the conglomeration of properties along the northern edge of Front Street, both sides of Middle Street and the southern side of Hill Street being added over succeeding centuries to form the late medieval arrangement shown on the 1780 Tithe Map. The Black Bull Inn in Middle Street incorporates sixteenth/seventeenth century fabric that provides an indication that this section of the historic core was built-up by the late medieval period. Furthermore, the graveyard around St Andrew's Church has shrunk. Nineteenth century drainage works in Scramble Gate (the western end of Hill Street) and building works between Hill Street and St Helen's Street have revealed many full and part skeletons laid along an east-west

axis. Robert Forster claims that they had lain there for ‘five or six centuries or longer’.⁶

The town was contained by a defensive ditch to define its limits and protect property and inhabitants. As mentioned in section 3.2 above, a small hamlet became established at the north west of the medieval town at the junction of Stagshaw Road and Corchester Way. It clustered around the fourteenth century Prior’s Manor. At that time the Prior of Hexham was appointed Sub-deacon of Corbridge and as a consequence built a residence together with a chapel, Trinity Church, and accommodation for his retinue. Nothing survives although the cottage beside the later mid-seventeenth century Old Prior Manor might contain medieval fragments. A post-Conquest chapel, St Helen’s, was built to the north of the Market Place but inside the town ditch to serve the manorial hall. Despite excavations in the area, the remains of both buildings have failed to materialise, although the extant boundary wall to the north and west of the Parish Hall contains some substantial medieval fabric.

⁶ ibid

5.1.2 Post Medieval

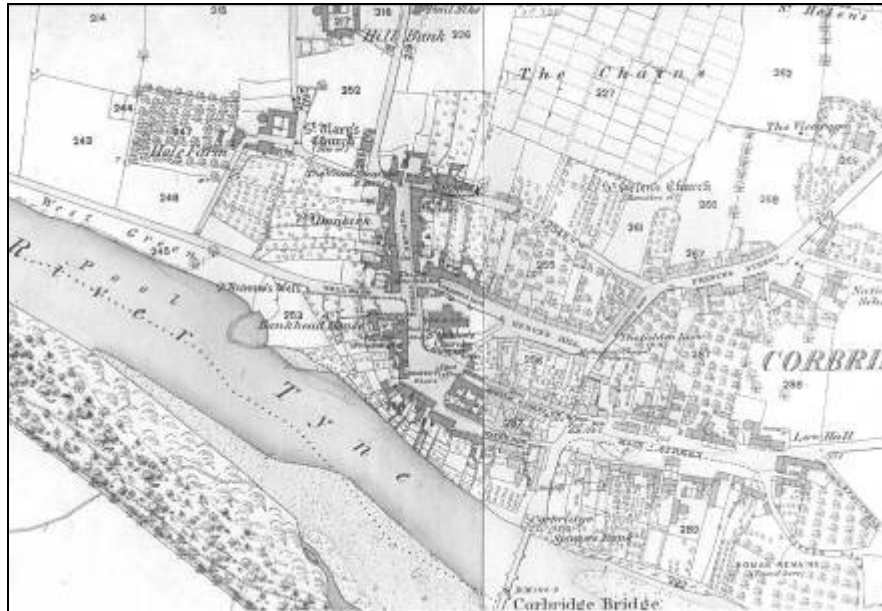
The form of the historic town became firmly established in the immediate post medieval period. The relatively level east-west axis between the Low Hall and Wellbank continued to provide the spine around which the village consolidated and developed. A late eighteenth century Tithe map shows the general arrangement of streets that has remained substantially unchanged since then.



Late eighteenth century Tithe map (larger version in Appendix 3: Map 2)

Main Street, the wide eastern approach to the heart of the village, resembles the shape of rectilinear village greens that are common

in medieval villages throughout the region. It is a contained space with routes in and out squeezed through gaps that are off-set or foreshortened and barely visible. The road through the middle was flanked by open space, the principal feature and probable gathering point being the pant towards the eastern end. The 1860 Edition Ordnance Survey (Appendix 3 Map 3) shows farms on both sides of the street, their positions given away by gin-gans.



1860 Ordnance Survey (larger version in Appendix 3: Map 3)

The split gardens on the south side are probably the descendants of medieval burgrave plots. The appearance of Main Street has changed with the removal of smiths' workshops and the gradual development of houses that accelerated from the mid to late eighteenth century and the insertion of Bishops Garage on the northern side in the early twentieth century.

Until the late nineteenth/early twentieth century when a handful of large villas were built along Appletree Lane, the land between Main Street, Princes Street and Appletree Lane was given over to gardens and orchards with a paddock/field behind Low Hall providing the interface with the village's rural hinterland. The area has been developed since then with both detached and terraced houses, but in a way where open space continues to dominate. This stretched the built envelope of the village eastwards with the conversion of the old brewery beside Low Hall into stabling for Monksholme in 1892, the construction of Appletree Rise in the 1990s and the recent development of the boxey Corbridge Health Centre. The mid to late twentieth century saw the rapid expansion of Corbridge to the north and east of Appletree Lane with the development of a large housing estate.

Main Street leads to the centre of the village via its junction with Bridge Bank and the Coigns. This would have been a pivotal point

in the village for social interaction. The junction was a large space until the late nineteenth/early twentieth century when it was reduced in size through the narrowing of the Coigns and the construction of Lloyds Bank. This created greater geometry and defined 'gateways' into the Market Place via the gently curving Middle Street and Front Street with the ancient cobbled path, St Mary's Chare, leading from the bridge to Front Street twisting behind the mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth century collection of workshops and houses that front onto Bridge Bank.



*Lloyds Bank 'gateway' to
Middle Street*



Front Street/Bridge Bank junction

It is probable that the main route into and through the Market Place was originally along the line of Front Street with the buildings along its southern edge overlooking the river defining the edge of the old, larger, Market Place that might have joined Main Street to create a single space. As the town expanded throughout the Middle Ages,

the space would have been gradually developed with traders and residents building houses, workshops and shops to create the Middle Street complex. Most of the surviving properties date from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, almost certainly replacing earlier buildings. This process of development continued until the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century with the construction of Jubilee Buildings at the west end of Middle Street in 1897. Narrow passages into back yards are slotted between buildings on Main Street and Front Street with only one alley linking the two roads

The Market Place is clearly the focus of the village. It would have been dominated from the middle ages by St Andrew's Church, albeit in an increasingly reduced and dilapidated form until its restoration and development in the late nineteenth century, together with the Vicar's Pele. It would have wrapped around the church, with old and lost street names such as Fish-Market Gate, Horse-Market Gate and Hide Market Gate indicating the way that the market was zoned. The irregular shaped Market Place is now limited to the area to the south of the church with Hill Street forming a detached space within the interlocking street pattern. The current retail heart of the village spreads from the Market Place with shops, public houses and commercial properties, some dating from the nineteenth century, ranged along part of Watling Street, Middle

Street and Hill Street reflecting the historic commercial character of the former extended Market Place.



Shops in Market Place and Middle Street

Still within the historic core, the area between Hill Street and St Helen's Street was occupied by long gardens and orchards until the development of housing started to make inroads along both the southern edge of St Helen's Street and throughout the backland which was sufficiently wide to accommodate the construction of short lengths of terraced housing and, latterly, Cooper Court flats and the telephone exchange. This has altered the historic settlement pattern with large scale post-WWII buildings changing the character of the area.

Victorian Corbridge spread beyond the limits of the late medieval village along Stagshaw Road and Princes Street. Fine terraces were built on rising ground along Corchester Lane and its returns to

the west and immediately to the north of St Helen's Street. To the east, late nineteenth and early twentieth century housing was provided along St Wilfred's Road and Windsor Street and on both sides of Prince's Street. The 3 hectare Chains provided an extensive area of green space that was cultivated by generations of residents for over 150 years. The recent development of the site has introduced a new pattern of housing into the village. The buildings are high density and grouped into terraces and courtyards ranged around and facing onto a large green space that retains some of the open character of the allotment site. There are no other examples of this type of building to green space arrangement in Corbridge.

Modern housing, including the old people's bungalows beside Charlotte Starker House care home and Glebelands, complete the matrix of development that has grown between St Helen's Street and St Helen's Lane.

5.2 Layout, grain and density

The layout of the historic core of the conservation area is characterised by terraces of properties of varying length and age reflecting a two hundred and fifty year development period. They date primarily from the mid-eighteenth to late nineteenth century

with many sitting on the footprints of older buildings. Built along the edge of streets, most do not have front gardens with former backlands that are frequently developed with either outbuildings or as infill sites. This leads to high density and spatial intimacy. The buildings on Main Street, Front Street, the Market Place and Watling Street sit on the elevated scarp of the river terrace. Their gardens fall down the slope to provide a green skirt around the base of Corbridge. This is an important and hugely attractive part of its character.



The landscape scarp along the southern edge of the village

The remainder of the conservation area tends to be a mix of late nineteenth and twentieth century houses combining terraced, detached and semi-detached dwellings with some apartment and institutional developments that are interwoven throughout the former rural hinterland to the north and east of the old village. The

density becomes more relaxed towards the edge of the village where later larger Victorian terraces and twentieth century housing estates conform to more generous space standards with front and back gardens.

The grain of development tends to follow a street pattern that flows along the contours of the slope of the scarp. Princes Street leading to Aydon Road and Hill Street are the principal exceptions, the former as it rises up the side of the hill towards the B6318, the military road. Other cross streets between Princes Street and Stagshaw Road run along contours to create a series of building platforms that reinforces the village's predominantly east-west development axis. Small lengths of terraces are occasionally slotted in between the major runs on a north-south axis taking advantage of infill development opportunities.



Orchard View and Garden Terrace slotted in between Hill Street and St Helen's Street

Most twentieth century developments tend to cut across the historic pattern. They conform to typical post WWII estate layouts that comprise arrangements and combinations of cul-de-sacs and distributor roads that bear little regard to contours and village tradition.

5.3 Land use

Corbridge is predominantly residential (Use Classification C3). Its historic role as a service and trading centre and as a settlement astride important road junctions extends into the twenty first century with shops (Use Classification A1 and A3), cafes and public houses (Use Classification A4) being spread throughout the historic core, principally Middle Street, the Market Place, Hill Street and Watling Street. Private and public sector office based businesses (Use Classification A2 and B1) enrich the commercial mix. Churches and their ancillary buildings (Use Classification D1) together with the Parish Hall provide community and spiritual support whilst the Working Men's Club and pubs provide recreational outlets for both visitors and residents. Corbridge's employment base focuses on supporting services and trades. Tynedale District Local Plan recognises that policy constraints do not permit the allocation of

further sites for economic development in Corbridge, recognising that the village is well placed to benefit from employment opportunities provided in Hexham and Prudhoe.

5.4 Views within the area

Views within the area are varied and attractive. They tend to be informal with no 'grand design' creating formal squares and boulevards. The two features leaning towards this latter approach are the Town Hall that sits at the end of Hill Street and Lloyds Bank at the junction of Bridge Bank and Middle Street, both of which are positioned at carefully selected fulcrum points where they are designed to make striking contributions to the streetscene.



The Town Hall and Lloyds Bank provide visual anchor points



Channelled views permit glimpses or are stopped by buildings

Views are channelled along the streets at the historic core – Main Street, Front Street, Middle Street, Hill Street, Princes Street and Watling Street – with end stops formed by buildings and cross streets. Gentle curves knit buildings together or create narrow gaps through which more distant structures and views can be glimpsed.

Main Street with its front gardens is decorated by trees and shrubs. The other streets tend to be unremittingly urban with little or no greenery. Views open out into the Market Place which is contained by buildings of varying height and appearance. St Andrew's Church with its landscaped graveyard, the Vicar's Pele and the Market Cross attract the eye to confirm the historic significance of the space. This is interrupted by the spread of parked cars that provide an invasive and wholly unattractive twentieth century metal plinth to the buildings. Views leading away from the historic core wind

around bends as roads move towards and beyond the edge of the settlement. This creates visual drama, particularly along Princes Street where there is a combination of twists and inclines.

Glimpses into backlands show an intriguing, and frequently random, arrangement of spaces and infill buildings. The views become physically less restrained and more general further away from the centre.

6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

The Conservation Area has been divided into three character areas for the purpose of the appraisal (Map 5):

- The historic core
- To the north and east of the historic core
- The River Tyne

6.1 Character Area 1: The historic core

6.1.1 Townscape and building form

The historic core of Corbridge stretches from the junction of Spoutwell Lane with Main Street to the junction of St Helen's Street with Watling Street where it grew alongside the Dere Street and Carelgate that wrap around the contours of the promontory formed between the Cor Burn and the Tyne valleys. It focuses on the Market Place that has diminished in size over the centuries as a consequence of the development of shops, houses and workshops to service the growing population and commercial significance of the village. By the mid-nineteenth century the shape of the village centre had settled and has remained substantially unchanged since then. This interrelationship of buildings to streets and the spaces

within which they are set has modified with some infill development and extensions, but the scale and pattern of the townscape retains much of its historic charm and stability. The changes that have taken place since the mid-nineteenth century generally add to townscape quality, particularly the large buildings added at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

The wide Main Street with its echoes of a lost rectangular village green gives way at its junction with Bridge Bank to the compact narrow streets that gradually bend to converge onto the Market Place. Main Street with its extant fifteenth to seventeenth century roots firmly established at its eastern end contains a mixture of large two storey detached houses and fine terraces that are permeated by paths and drives leading to back gardens. They replace more humble cottages and workshops, particularly smithies, which flanked the green. The properties on the south side are set back from the road to provide front gardens and relaxed landscaped spatial settings. The width of the street, set-backs and presence of mature trees together with the visual dominance of Bishops Garage creates an informal and staggered building line. The mixture of building types and their assortment of ages is reflected in this loose arrangement. Views to the east are contained by Monksholme where Main Street is twisted and squeezed past the building on its

way eastwards. Monksholme and the backdrop of trees create the impression that this is the built boundary of the village, a visual deceit that mirrors the mid nineteenth century development pattern. The west end is contained by the serrated phalanx of buildings that herald the edge of the historic core of the village where Front Street and Middle Street lead to the Market Place.



The wide Main Street is contained at its eastern end by Monksholme

Front Street, that wraps along the scarp that overlooks the river Tyne, is the line of the medieval Carelgate, the main road between Newcastle and Carlisle. It curves around the contour of the hill, bounded on both sides by almost continuous building lines of high quality predominantly two storey houses, mostly dating from the early to mid nineteenth century, that almost certainly replace medieval burgage properties along the southern edge. There are one or two gaps leading to back gardens and yards with one lane

linking Front Street with Middle Street. The eaves and pitched roof lines are relatively level, occasionally broken by substantial gables introduced as design features in some late nineteenth century houses such as 12 to 16 Front Street and Narrowgate House. This contrasts with Bridge Bank at the eastern end of Front Street where roof lines tumble down the slope to create a jumble of planes and pitches. Chimney stacks and chimneys play an important role in the streetscape.



Gables on Front Street



Tumbling roofs on Bridge Bank

Middle Street is, in part, the consolidation of the medieval open market into shops. The tight narrow street provides a direct link between Main Street and the Market Place. Containing buildings that span over three centuries, it includes a fine collection of shopfronts and building styles ranging from the eighteenth century Black Bull Inn with its seventeenth century roots to the elegant early

twentieth century Lloyds Bank. The staggered roof line reflects the incremental development of the street as does the variety of building techniques. The street gently curves to squash views into the Market Place. Views to the east are dominated by the mature trees in and around Main Street. Gaps lead into backlands that have been developed with outbuildings and cottages.



*Eighteenth century Black Bull
with earlier fabric*



*Cottage in backlands behind
Middle Street*

The Market Place is the commercial and historic heart of the village. Irregularly shaped to fit the rounded knoll of the promontory, it grew alongside the line of Carelgate as it bent around the hill to create a sheltered defensible space. It is firmly contained by substantial building lines along its east, south and west edges and punctuated by Watling Street, Middle Street and Front Street and a limited number of barely visible gaps that lead to gardens, yards and the riverside. The Market Place is dominated by St Andrew's Church,

the conservation area's oldest, tallest and most venerable building, and the Vicar's Pele. The trees in the churchyard add to the variety and form of the space. The asymmetrically positioned Market Cross and pant in the square provide traditional focal points around which some recent floor/surface improvements have been undertaken. Buildings range from two to three storeys in height with pitched roofs. Important glimpses of Prospect Hill to the south can be seen across the some rooflines where they dip below their neighbour's bringing the village's rural hinterland into the visual envelope.

The shops that surround the square include a mixture of old and new frontages, the latter not always displaying the modest restraint and sensitivity of the former.

Watling Street leading off the Market Place is almost entirely nineteenth century combining a rich mixture of large and small terraces with the castellated Riverview and Dunkirk Terrace on the west side set back from the road. High boundary and retaining walls take Watling Street around a corner to Wellbank and Stagshaw Road. Wellbank, formerly Colwell Chare, channels views over Orchard Vale to distant horizons. The housing along the northern side of Wellbank is not of historic interest but impacts upon the visual character of the conservation area.



Watling Street twists through high walls



Twentieth century housing on Well Bank

Hill Street that links Watling Street with Princes Street undulates and bends across the slope. The rise and fall foreshortens horizons and creates a dynamic streetscape where rooflines stagger up and down inclines. The street is wide, possibly reflecting an historic pattern that was driven by the shape of the medieval Market Place and the extent of the graveyard. The street appears to have been substantially built on a property-by-property basis through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries sharing party walls but displaying different building styles, heights and detailing. This creates a rich and interesting townscape where individuality is a key characteristic. Again, shopfronts provide visual and functional interest but of varying quality. The junction of Hill Street with Princes Street and The Coigns is dominated by the Gothic Town Hall and its neighbours, the Golden Lion and the former United

Methodist Chapel to create a fine, robust and architecturally interesting group of buildings. The Coigns is an important historic space where Dere Street and Carelgate met. It was used for hirings and possibly as a market. The residual area of The Coigns following its narrowing in the late nineteenth century has been redesigned as a public space. Later buildings in this area tend to be poorly designed with little or no visual affinity to the distinctive historic character of the historic core.

The former gardens and orchards along the northern side of Hill Street have been redeveloped. This process started in the late nineteenth century with the construction of Orchard View, an intimate group of terraced houses, and culminated in the recent development of the apartment block, Cooper Court. The development of the backlands coincided with the gradual emergence of St Helen's Street with its mix of traditional two storey pitched roof nineteenth century terraced housing and modern buildings including the inappropriately designed post WWII telephone exchange that lacks any visual association with its historic setting.

6.1.2 Key buildings

The key buildings provide historic anchor points, visual focus, aesthetic quality and influential examples of local building type.

St Andrew's Church with its Saxon roots and the neighbouring fourteenth/fifteenth century Vicar's Pele, both using Roman stone robbed from nearby Corstopitum, are the historic bedrock of the village in terms of their age, position and visual profile. They provide a material link to the founding of Corbridge as a significant settlement in the Tyne valley. The church tower dominates the skyline, rising above all other buildings at the historic core and providing a landmark from distant viewpoints.

The thirteenth/fourteenth century Low Hall and early seventeenth century Monksholme are important by virtue of their age and location. They combine to visually seal the east end of the historic core of the village. Similarly the Wheatsheaf Inn, although of less architectural significance, contains the northern edge of the historic core as Watling Street curves around the building.

The Town Hall and Lloyds Bank are located in pivotal positions where they dominate approaches to and from the village centre. Both are fine examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth

century architecture as it moved from Victorian Gothic Free to Edwardian Classic Free styles.

Other key buildings provide outstanding examples of period house design such as the Georgian Corbridge House, Waverley House, Holly House and Glenthorne on Main Street. The late eighteenth century Golden Lion that wraps around the junction of Hill Street and Princes Street is substantially built from fine tooled stone brought from Dilston Castle following its demolition in 1765 and is noteworthy because of its material content, robust design and group value with the town hall.



The Golden Lion, Hill Street



Corbridge House, Main Street

Some key buildings reflect different aspects of historic village life including the former forge on Bridge Bank; Orchard View's converted farm units and surviving barn on Wellbank, the Angel Inn representing the tradition of coaching inns that have served

travellers for centuries and the many shops and commercial properties of which Norma James in Middle Street and Sidgate House on Hill Street are particularly fine examples.



Barn/stables at Orchard View



The Angel Inn

6.1.3 Green elements

There are no public green spaces in the character area. Curtilage space, including the churchyard and gardens, provide landscapes that form part of the comprehensive townscape. The most significant are the churchyard and the gardens around the properties on the southern side of Main Street where mature trees provide backdrops and green punctuations in the streetscene.



St Andrew's churchyard



Main Street

6.1.4 Details

Details are woven throughout the character area making decisive contributions to its distinctive character and sense of place. They include the incorporation of Roman masonry as both convenient building materials and as decorative elements, prime examples being the tower arch in St Andrew's Church, the north-west corner of the Vicar's Pele and the Roman alter set into the wall of Orchard Vale Cottage. Similarly stone acquired following the demolition of the fifteenth century Dilston Castle was used in the construction of the Red Lion and the Riverside Hotel bringing fine, large, tooled stonework into the materials mix.



Roman altar, Orchard View



Golden Lion stonework from Dilston Castle

Pants, or water pumps, are found throughout the village. They played a crucial role in the wellbeing of the community providing a supply of clean water that helped to reduce the threat of disease and serviced local agriculture and industry. Supplies of fresh water were celebrated through the design of the pants, particularly Hugh Percy's 1815 pyramidal extravagance in the Market Place and the slightly less elaborate but still substantial mid-eighteenth century pump in Main Street. Some are still working whilst others have been converted into decorative flower boxes.

Historic shopfronts make a distinctive and attractive contribution to the quality and architecture of the character area. With some going back to the mid/late nineteenth century they bring charm, texture and variety into the streetscene. Details such as console carvings, lintels and stall risers are of both architectural and historic value.

There are traces of lost shopfronts, such as wide timber lintels embedded into stone elevations that describe how the function of buildings has changed. They also illustrate how some shopfronts have changed over the last century. Generally older shopfronts are well maintained. Some new shopfronts and fascias do not reflect the traditional design and scale of historic facades. They are intrusive and diminish the quality of the conservation area.



Spoutwell pant, Spoutwell Lane



Nineteenth century shopfronts Hill Street

Original doorway and fanlight openings largely survive. Doors would either have been planked or panelled. Examples of both can be found, such as along the north side of St Helen's Street and Front Street. Fanlights tend to be three paned glazing units, some with diamond inserts, which are simple but attractive. Door surrounds add visual interest and occasional grandeur such as the wooden doorcase and broken pediment to 14 Watling Street. Openings in

terraces are sometimes grouped in threes with the middle door leading via alleys to back yards and gardens. Unfortunately some doors are now being replaced by uPVC units that compare unfavourably with their timber counterparts.



Nineteenth century door, surrounds and fanlight



Nineteenth century window and glazing

Window openings also remain substantially unaltered. A variety of original windows survive including early nineteenth century eight over eight pane and later two over two and single pane sliding sash windows, some cylinder glass adding to their aesthetic quality. Variety is introduced through the presence of different types such as the Yorkshire sash windows with blacksmiths' glazing along the front of Bridge Bank Cottage and its adjacent workshop. As with the doors, some windows are being replaced with uPVC units which

have a negative impact upon the appearance of individual properties and the wider streetscene.

6.1.5 Neutral and negative features

Neutral features are those which have a balance of positive and negative characteristics. There are no neutral features in the character area.

Negative features

Negative features are those which detract from the overall character and appearance of the place. There are several negative aspects.

- As mentioned in section 7.1.4 above, original timber joinery is occasionally being replaced by synthetic materials. The success of uPVC windows which attempt to copy the design and proportions of traditional windows depends on the width and profile of the frames. uPVC frames are usually thicker and more angular than timber ones and can not accurately incorporate details such as mouldings, horns and beading. uPVC 'glazing bars' are often false strips superimposed onto glazing which have a flat, flimsy appearance. uPVC does not take on the patina of time in the same way as timber. The result almost always harms the appearance of the character area.

- Some adverse changes to buildings are visually suppressed in terms of their wider impact because of their location and magnitude. Others, because of their prominence or scale, have a disproportionately adverse impact on the street scene. These include the clumsy first floor box bay which replaced a much more elegant angled bay attached to the west elevation of Jubilee Buildings overlooking the Market Place, the inarticulate and damaging 1950s extension to the front of Eastfield House on Main Street and the blunt and bland extensions attached to the backs of some houses in Garden Terrace. Many of the south facing elevations of properties on Front Street that overlook the river valley have changed through the addition of large conservatories and garden rooms. This has radically altered their historic appearance and the quality of the contribution that they make to the character of the area. The strong vertical emphasis created by gables and traditional fenestration together with robust stonework has been replaced by panels of glass that merge to create horizontal bands. This highly important historic edge to the village sitting along the extremely visible exposed scarp of the knoll has been damaged by the alterations.

- A number of post WWII buildings are not designed to reflect the distinctive vernacular character of the area and consequently have an adverse visual impact. They include the telephone exchange on the south side of St Helen's Street.
- Parked cars in the Market Place are invasive and litter the space. It is difficult to appreciate its historic and visual qualities and the relationship of buildings and monuments to space because of the swathe of parked vehicles.
- Traffic signage adds clutter although it is brought together to minimise its impact. The support poles are utilitarian grey and scar footpaths.
- Overhead cables and their support columns.

6.2 Character Area 2: To the north of the historic core

6.2.1 Townscape and building form

The area to the north and east of the historic core gradually developed as the village expanded from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. It contains a wide range of house type and styles together with community and public buildings such as the Parish Hall, the former Charlotte Straker Cottage Hospital and the former National School, now converted to residential use. The area includes two

former farms, Hole and Hill Bank, now called Orchard Vale and Town Farm, also changed into dwellings.

The north eastern part of the conservation area rises up the slope of the valley with early/mid nineteenth century buildings clustered along the edge of Princes Street, the most notable buildings being the National School, the Vicarage and Cross House, the latter containing views to the north from the historic core. By the early twentieth century new terraced housing had been built off Princes Street along St Wilfred's Road, St Wilfred's Terrace and Windsor Terrace. Stone built to traditional, standard and modest designs they mark a phase in the development of the village where social and economic improvements meant that artisans could aspire to better living standards. They bent around the old infants school and an open space, probably originally set aside to accommodate more terraces. This area was developed in the late twentieth century with the construction of a bulky angular block of apartments, Windsor Court, which introduces a style, material content and large building mass that weakens the historic character of the area. Post WWII housing fills the gap between Windsor Terrace and St Helen's Street.



Windsor Terrace



Windsor Court

The National School on the east side of Princes Street is substantially lost to public view behind high walls and other buildings with glimpses of tall gables and rooflines revealing its location. The terraces that front onto and built at right angles to Princes Street are substantial, Greencroft Avenue reflecting a reduced form of the mixed medieval style with bays and gabled porches. The road was gated to reinforce the sense of seclusion and grandeur. A terrace built in the late nineteenth century with unusual box bays sits where Princes Street twists to stop views. This terrace replaces an earlier group of buildings, one of which survives at the northern end.



The former National School



Late nineteenth century box bay development on Aydon Road

Appletree Lane links Princes Street with Main Street. It rises and falls over the scarp flanked on both sides by old and new houses. These include a collection of fine late nineteenth century brick and stone built detached houses set in mature gardens. They include both traditional mid-Victorian Gothic and the emerging, later, Free Gothic styles. The lane is contained by high walls, hedges and trees. Infill development along the northern edge of Main Street, including the new bland and utilitarian Corbridge Health Centre, completes this part of the character area.



Appletree Lane



Gothic detached house, Appletree Lane

Moving to the north west of the historic core, Town Farm and Orchard Vale stretched the village towards the hamlet that grew around the fourteenth century Prior's Manor (section 4.2). The cottages that can be seen at the crossroads on the 1860 Ordnance Survey (Appendix 3 Map 3) had been demolished by the end of the nineteenth century. New substantial terraces were built in combinations of rock faced and tooled stonework. They both rise up inclines with staggered roof lines punctuated by chimney stacks and pots and across contours. Remnants of metal front railings and gates survive on Stagshaw Road and Corchester Terrace to give a glimpse of original late Victorian settings. The brick built detached house, Corchester Towers, and Corchester Avenue establishes the boundary of the built settlement. The latter forms a serrated edge

with buildings including both two storey houses and bungalows tucked behind a hedgerow.



Corchester Avenue



Corchester Towers

The layout and appearance of Town Farm has been changed as a consequence of its conversion to dwellings. This includes the development of new, large, detached houses in styles that do not correspond to the character of the original farmstead.

A pattern of large detached houses along the northern edge of St Helen's Lane has become established, starting in the mid seventeenth century with the construction of the Old Prior Manor and continuing to recent times. They sit on rising ground where they command fine views although they are barely visible from the road with mature gardens acting as substantial screens. This creates a robust and attractive landscaped edge to the road.



New development, Town Farm



North side of St Helen's Lane

From 1849 the south side of St Helen's Lane was dominated by the Chains, an extensive area of allotments/town gardens. Although reduced in size in the twentieth century to accommodate the development of housing to the east of Charlotte Straker House, it continued to provide a community facility and a large area of green space. The recent removal of the allotments and the construction of the Chains housing estate have changed its character and appearance. The design of the estate includes a landscaped green area that is contained by a mixture of two and three storey houses town houses and apartments.

Charlotte Straker House care and nursing home, formerly Prior House, is located at the junction of Stagshaw Road and St Helen's Lane. It was extended in 1992 with the addition of a new large, boxey, and featureless south wing which looms over properties that

front onto Stagshaw Road. New bungalows, Manor Cottages, to the south of the home do not enhance the character of the conservation area whereas the neighbouring late nineteenth century West End Terrace is of both historic and visual merit.



The Chains housing development



New south wing to Charlotte Straker House

The north side of St Helen's Street, the southern boundary of the character area, embraces at its western end the Wheatsheaf public house and a terrace of early nineteenth century houses which includes a cobbled arced entrance that led to orchards/gardens before the development of West End Terrace. The east end includes the former co-operative shop and the Parish Hall built in 1922 to replace the drill hall. The street is varied in appearance and includes a range of building types and styles that creates an interesting mix. This includes the attractive and rare early to mid-nineteenth century single storey cottages, Dukes Cottages.



The Wheatsheaf public house



Cobbled arched access to former orchard/gardens



Dukes Cottages



Former Co-operative shop

6.2.2 Key buildings

Key buildings in the character area include Cross House and the Wheatsheaf whose positions contain views as roads twist away from the historic core. Furthermore, they are attractive and present fine examples of eighteenth century architecture, the latter with

nineteenth century modifications. The Wheatsheaf originally had a thatched roof and incorporates Roman masonry in its outbuildings. The Vicarage with its tall boundary walls and Croft House on Aydon Road are both high quality historic buildings that were built in the rural hinterland but now absorbed into the built envelope (Appendix 3: Map 4). The brick built late nineteenth century Corchester Towers and the outstanding 1731 Orchard Vale still retain their open rural setting, protected by their proximity to the Roman fort and the Green Belt.



Cross House, Princes Street



Croft House, Aydon Road

Boundary walls are dominant and crucial elements in the built form of the character area. They are of historic and visual importance threading their way alongside roads and lanes containing spaces and views. They include the field/garden boundaries to the north and west of the Parish Hall that incorporate fabric from the lost

medieval St Helen's Church and the walls flanking Appletree Lane together with retaining walls such as those beside the lane leading to Orchard View.



Boundary wall, Town Farm



Historic walls around the Parish Hall

6.2.3 Green spaces

Generally this character area has a looser layout that includes a number of detached properties with gardens. They introduce greenery into the streetscene including mature trees that overhang roads and footpaths. The proximity of the rural edge alongside the western boundary introduces a countryside backdrop to the conservation area with long views down the Tyne valley. Open green space within the character area is limited to the new landscaped park within the Chains housing development that, once completed, will have recreational as well as visual value. Small

pockets of green space are laced through some of the twentieth century housing developments.



*The Chains housing area
green space*



*Green space in modern
housing estates*

6.2.4 Details

Some details common to eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings found in the historic core (section 7.1.4) extend to this character area. They include window and door designs together with a limited number of shopfronts. The late nineteenth century terraces have a regularity and rhythm driven by standard size openings and consistent use of single or double pane sliding sash windows. However, variety is occasionally introduced through the use of details such as bays and raised gables that add modelling and visual interest.

Panels are present including the fine early nineteenth century pump decorated by iron lion mask spouts at the junction of Princes Street with Orchard Crescent. Other examples of historic ironwork include gates and a short length of railing on Corchester Terrace and Stagshaw Road.

A rare area of nineteenth century stone setts and flags survives beneath the arch that leads from St Helen's Street to West End Terrace with traditional stone cobbles still present in Orchard Vale farmyard.



Surviving metal gates



Flags and setts in St Helen's Street

6.2.5 Neutral and negative features

Neutral features

The post WWII housing estates built to the north of Windsor Terrace and West End Terrace and to the south and east of

Charlotte Straker House are typical of their period and designed without reference to the historic character of Corbridge. Nevertheless, they provide a range of house type that is popular and necessary. The balance is neutral.

The Chains housing development provides much needed contemporary housing at the heart of the built settlement. The lost allotments have been replaced elsewhere. The scheme includes a landscaped green space that will be of visual and amenity value. However, the need to provide a high number of dwellings and green space has resulted in the construction of some large blocks and an urban appearance, particularly along the northern edge of the site, that do not conform to the historic development pattern. The provision of town housing with some structured landscaped space neutralises the reduction in size of the Chains open space.

6.2.6 Negative features

Negative features include:

- The loss of original timber joinery and its replacement by synthetic materials (section 5.1.5 above).
- Inappropriate repair techniques and materials. This includes ribbon and smeared pointing, the use of hard cements and cement repairs to stonework.
- The poor condition of some historic fabric, such as parts of the boundary wall behind the Parish Hall.
- The construction of large buildings which do not reflect the distinctive vernacular character of the area or introduce high quality contemporary design that could enrich the character of the conservation area. They consequently have an adverse visual impact. They include Windsor Court, Corbridge Health Centre and the south wing attached to Charlotte Starker House.
- Incremental erosion of the character of the area through the development of small infill sites with buildings, particularly bungalows, that conflict with established two storey terraced streetscapes together with new properties that do not include historically important details such as chimney stacks and pots.
- Some changes to historic buildings are inappropriate. These include loss of original architectural details together with unsuitable designs, materials and repair techniques. The insertion of bow windows, use of plastic rainwater goods and repointing using incorrect methods and cements are the type of

problem that not only diminishes the aesthetic quality of old properties but can cause long-term damage to historic fabric.

6.3 Character Area 3: The River Tyne

Corbridge sits on the promontory that is carved on the second river terrace overlooking the Tyne. It commands views across the broad sweep of the valley and to the west where Hexham can be seen, now marked by Egger UK and the column of steam rising above the complex. The village grew around a river crossing that was established during the medieval period when it shifted a few hundred metres from the lost Roman bridge. The conservation area includes the river and its banks from the site of the Roman bridge to a point to the east of Bythorne House. It includes a variety of landscapes including scrubland haughs and natural woods along the southern bank and meadows and woods on the northern side, the latter forming part of the historic setting of Byethorne House.

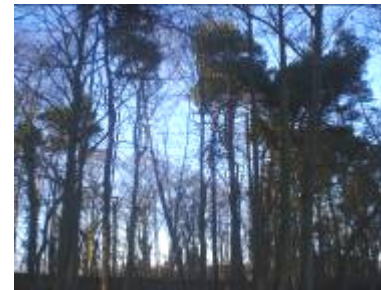


Haughs and woodland to the west of the bridge



Meadows and woodland to the east of the bridge

In the nineteenth century the haughs was an area of woodland known as the Plantation with paths that provided attractive walks for villagers. Little remains of this landscape with gorse and grass colonising the space that ultimately spreads across an expansive open area towards the south side of the valley. The woodland to the east of the bridge is maintained as a coppice containing a variety of species. Recent planting includes many beech trees, a native deciduous tree that is found throughout the village and its setting.



Woodlands to the east of the bridge



Byethorne House and its meadowland park

The northern side is dominated by the slopes that skirt the western edge of the village. They accommodate gardens dropping down from properties ranged along Front Street and Main Street leaving a narrow footpath along the river edge that runs past the Roman fort to the west and as far as Byethorne House to the east. The banks of the river past Byethorne are particularly attractive with tree lined

meadows moving across the base of the valley and up the side of the river terrace.

The Bridge, built in 1674 is the oldest crossing the Tyne. It is of immense significance in the landscape drawing the built envelope of the village across the river. It is an elegant stone structure that was altered in the early and late C19th in a way that does not affect its aesthetic qualities.

As mentioned in section 7.1.5 above, many of the south facing elevations of properties on Front Street have changed through the addition of conservatories and garden rooms. This has radically altered their historic appearance and compromised the quality of the contribution that they make to the character of the area.



The 1696 bridge



*The modified southern elevation of
Front Street*

7. PUBLIC REALM

Public realm is the space between and within buildings that are publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, and open spaces.

The quality of the public realm throughout the conservation area is varied. Very little historic fabric survives, the two obvious examples being the sandstone setts in St Mary's Chare leading from Front Street to the bridge and the cobbled King's Oven on Watling Street. Stone kerbs and some setted gutters can also be found with other surfaces possibly surviving under asphalt.



*Wide spread use of asphalt
Main Street*



Concrete paving slabs, Front Street

Asphalt has been applied as a road and footpath surface across much of the conservation area to create a generally dull floorscape with only minor exceptions such as the concrete flags along the

northern side of Hill Street towards its eastern end, along part of the west side of Watling Street and Front Street.

Work has recently been undertaken to introduce a more attractive environment in the Market Place and along Middle Street. This includes placing Yorkstone flags, setts and granite kerbs around the base of the Market Cross and pant and in front of the churchyard. Unfortunately some of the flags have been cracked by overriding vehicles. Footpaths in Middle Street have been resurfaced using concrete blocks. The remainder of the floorscape in the Market Place, the principal public space in the village, is unsightly and in varying stages of disrepair. Maintenance work has left scarred areas displaying a variety of materials. This approach also affects other areas, including St Mary's Chare.



New Yorkstone flags, Market Place



*Concrete block paving,
Middle Street*



Condition of Market Place carpark Inappropriate reinstatements

Car parking dominates the centre of the village with line marking, signs and meters making their contribution to the public realm. The grass banks that once sloped between the footpath and road at the eastern end of Hill Street have been either replaced by tarmac or levelled with retaining walls to create parking bays. Footpaths have been narrowed to permit the introduction of parking with bays painted on the paths in Watling Street.



Narrowed footpaths to provide car parking, Watling Street



Slope removed to provide car parking, Hill Street

Period style lighting columns have been introduced into the Market Place and Middle Street. Elsewhere grey painted standard columns and heads are used. A variety of public benches have been introduced reflecting the incremental nature of their procurement and installation. The Coigns has been redesigned and rebuilt to provide a sitting area.

Overhead cables and their support columns continue to blight parts of the centre of the village with views along Watling Street crowned by an assortment of wires.

8. MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Boundary review

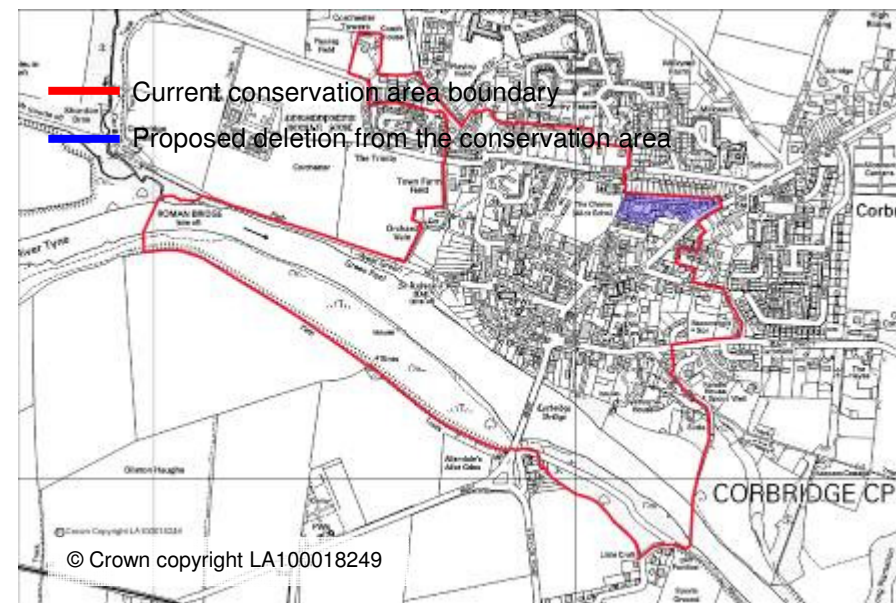
The Council has a duty to review the boundaries of conservation areas from time to time and to determine whether or not they should be amended. Tynedale District Local Plan addresses issues relating to proposals affecting the setting of a conservation area. Policy BE18 states:

Outside a conservation area, development will be permitted if it would not harm the character, setting or views into or out of the conservation area.

This means the boundary can be revised to identify an historically coherent area that has an identifiable character in the knowledge that it will not be adversely affected by inappropriate changes to its setting. Consequently it is proposed that the boundary is amended to exclude an area of post WWII housing which does not have sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit inclusion in the conservation area.

It is recommended that the boundary is amended to exclude Glebelands housing area (Map 7).

It is further recommended that two small areas be included in the conservation area. The first is the triangular grassed area with trees on Greencroft Avenue, in order to give more protection to this green space. The second is an area to the north of Spoutwell Lane, to include Spout Well, offering a degree of extra protection to the area around the structure.



Map 7: Proposed conservation area boundary changes (larger version in Appendix 3: Map 2)

Future consideration should be given to the inclusion of Randle House and the three properties to the west, which are located close to Spoutwell Lane, within the conservation area.

8.2 Buildings at risk

There are no buildings in the conservation area included on the English Heritage Building at Risk Register. However, there are two properties that pose a local risk. They are:

- The vacant disused shop to the north of Barclays Bank, Market Place, where some repair work has recently been undertaken. Long term vacancy will continue to pose risks its historic fabric and well being.
- Bridge Bank Cottage and workshop. This building is unoccupied with historic fabric showing signs of decay and dilapidation.

8.3 Listed buildings

There are a number of listed buildings in the conservation area (Appendix 2). The listing of buildings of architectural or historic interest is carried out by English Heritage on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Additions to the list can only be suggested.

The listed buildings include good examples of period architecture and buildings of historic interest. There are other buildings that encapsulate the heritage distinctiveness of the village that could be worthy of consideration for inclusion on the list. They include shops with surviving nineteenth century frontages and terraced houses. It is recommended that they should be researched to discover whether any are worthy of listing.

8.4 Future protection and enhancement opportunities

A number of opportunities exist to protect, enhance the appearance and reinforce the heritage significance of the conservation area. They include:

- Gradually improve the quality of the footpath, roads and street furniture through the introduction of a co-ordinated design approach and the use of traditional materials wherever possible. This should include an audit of traditional materials used throughout the conservation area in order to devise a palette that ensures that the village's historic character can be reinforced.
- Ensure that all future highway work, including maintenance works, will preserve and enhance the character of the area.

- Promote the undergrounding of overhead cables.
- Encourage through the planning process the reinstatement of missing architectural features and the replacement of unsuitable materials and details with historically appropriate alternatives. This includes windows, doors and chimneys.
- Encourage through the planning process the maintenance, and where appropriate, upgrading of shop fronts to reflect the historic appearance of the area.
- Prepare a shopfront design guide for Corbridge.
- Prepare a general design guide for historic buildings, particularly highlighting good practice in carrying out sympathetic alterations.
- Encourage the reinstatement of front boundary railings to reflect the original appearance of the area.
- Resist the painting and rendering of stone and brickwork.

8.5 Future Management

Conservation status does not mean that the area should remain preserved as a museum piece but that it should be managed in a way that responds to its heritage significance, ensuring that

changes enhance its special character. Good design, careful maintenance and sensitive handling of public space will allow the area to live and develop but in a way that responds to the conservation of its special character. A Conservation Area Management Plan will be prepared following the adoption of this Character Appraisal. The Management Plan will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish and define the significance of the conservation area as a whole and of the individual elements found within it such as architectural, historical, residential, commercial, ecclesiastic, landscape and social components.
- To assess and define the threats and opportunities within the area and how these impact on the significance of individual elements and of the conservation area as a whole.
- To provide policy guidance to ensure that the significance of the conservation area will be maintained whilst changes occur rather than being lost or damaged and that opportunities for enhancement are maximised.

English Heritage recommends that the following topics should be considered in the preparation of the Management Plan:⁷

- Article 4 directions
- Enforcement and monitoring change
- Buildings at risk
- Site specific design guidance or development briefs and thematic policy guidance
- Specific enhancement opportunities
- Trees and green spaces
- Urban design and public realm
- Regeneration issues
- Decision making and community consultation
- Available resources

The overall purpose of this Character Appraisal is to provide a benchmark for assessing the impact of development proposals on

the character and appearance of the conservation area. The management plan will be based on the characteristics identified in the character assessment and provides policy guidance for their preservation and enhancement.

⁷ Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage 2006

9. APPENDIX 1

Relevant Council Policies

Tynedale Council has a raft of policies that are designed to protect and enhance the historic environment. The Council is moving towards the completion of its Local Development Framework (LDF). This is the folder of local development documents that outlines how planning will be managed in the future. It will gradually replace the adopted Tynedale District Local Plan. The LDF consists of several documents and plans that form a framework for planning future development in Tynedale, including where new housing, employment and community facilities will be located and for safeguarding the environment of the District. Three important documents have already been adopted including the Core Strategy. The Local Plan is slowly being superseded by the LDF documents but elements of it will remain as "saved" while further new documents are produced.

The key relevant parts of the LDF Core Strategy and saved Local Plan policies that impact upon the conservation area are as follows:

a. The LDF Core Strategy:

Core Strategy BE1 includes:

To conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the quality and integrity of Tynedale's built environment and its historic features including archaeology giving particular protection to listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas.

Core Strategy GD3

The existing boundaries of the Northumberland Greenbelt will be maintained. It is designed, in part, to protect the character and setting of historic settlements.

b. Saved policies from Tynedale District Local Plan

BE19 - Demolition of Listed Buildings

The total or substantial demolition of a listed building will not be permitted.

BE18 - Development affecting the character and setting of a Conservation Area

Outside a conservation area, development will be permitted if it would not harm the character setting or views into or out of the conservation area.

BE20 - Demolition of structures in the curtilage of a listed building

Listed building consent for the demolition of structures within the curtilage of a listed building will be permitted where:

- the structure to be demolished does not make a significant contribution to the character of the Listed Building or its setting,
- any redevelopment proposals meet the requirement of Policy BE22; and
- the structure is not listed in its own right or mentioned in the list description

BE21 - Alteration and extension to listed buildings

Proposals for the alteration or extension of listed buildings will be granted consent where:

- the essential character of the building is retained and its features of special interest remain intact and unimpaired,
- the works proposed make use of traditional and/or sympathetic building materials and techniques which match or are in keeping with those found on the Listed Building,
- the architectural details (e.g. doors, gutters, windows) match or are in keeping with the Listed Building; and
- the proposal meets the requirement of General Development Policy GD2.

All applications for such development must be accompanied by detailed drawings of both the existing structure and the proposed development

BE22 - The setting of listed buildings

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the essential character or setting of a Listed Building will not be permitted.

Proposals for development within the setting of a listed building will only be appropriate where the following criteria are met:

- the detailed design is in keeping with the listed building in terms of scale, height, massing and alignment; and
- the works proposed make use of traditional or sympathetic building materials and techniques which are in keeping with those found on the listed building

BE23 - Change of use of listed buildings

The change of use of a listed building in order to restore or maintain its viable use will be permitted provided the proposal accords with Policy BE21

BE27 - Regional and locally important archaeological sites and settings

Development which would be detrimental to regionally or locally important archaeological sites or their settings will not be permitted unless the proposed development is considered to be of overriding regional importance and no alternative site is available

BE28 - Archaeological Assessment

Where it is not clear how important an archaeological site is, or where the impact of a development proposal on an existing archaeological site is uncertain, the developer will be required to provide further information in the form of an archaeological assessment and, where such an assessment indicates that important archaeological remains may be affected, a full archaeological evaluation.

BE29 - Development and preservation

Where sites or monuments of archaeological importance would be affected by development, their preservation in situ is preferred. Where the site is not considered to be of sufficient importance to merit preservation in situ and development is subsequently permitted, planning permission will be subject to an archaeological condition, or a Planning Obligation will be sought, which will require the excavation and recording of the remains prior to or during the development. In such instances, publication of the findings will also be required.

Appendix 2: Listed buildings

The following listed buildings are located within the conservation area

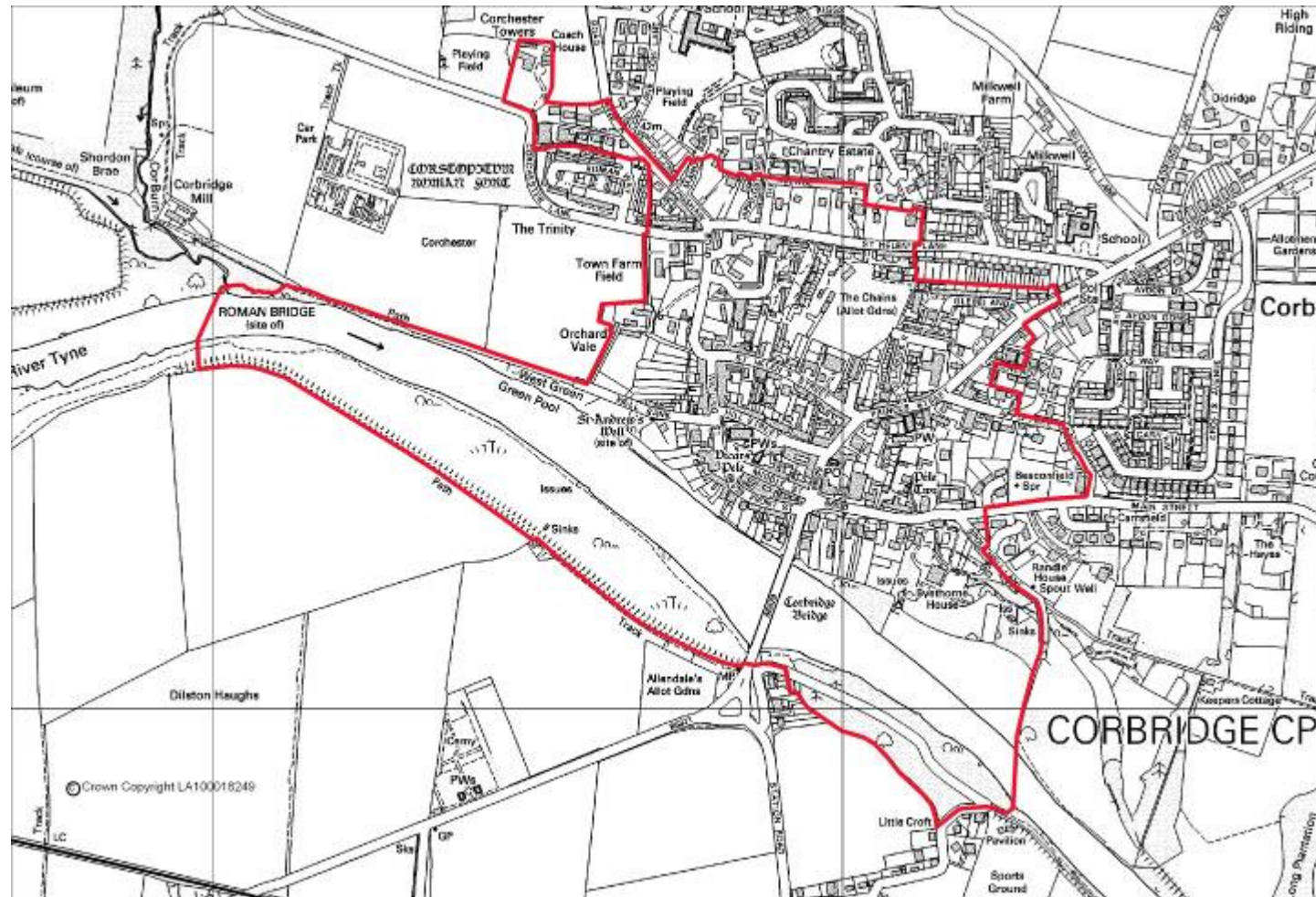
Property	Grade
Croft House, Aydon Road	II
The Old Vicarage, Aydon Road	II
Corbridge Bridge, B6529	I
Spout Well B6530	II
Bridge Bank Cottage and adjacent workshop, Bridge Bank	II
Garden wall to east of Bridge Bank Cottage, Bridge Bank	II
The Forge House, Bridge Bank	II
12 – 16 Front Street	II
18 – 22 Front Street	II
8,10 Front Street	II
14,16 Hill Street	II
Heron House, 18 Hill Street	II

28-34 Hill Street	II
St Andrews Cottage, Hill Street	II
The Golden Lion public house, Hill Street	II
Corbridge House, Main Street	II
Low Hall, Main Street	II
Wall and gate piers, Low Hall, Main Street	II
Monksholme, Main Street	II
Pant in front of 5 Main Street	II
Eastfield House, (Smiths Gore and Christies) Main Street	II
Riverside Hotel, Main Street	II
The Angel Inn, Main Street	II
Waverley House, Holly House and Glenthorne, Main Street	II
8 Market Place	II
Church of Saint Andrew, Market Place	I
Fawcett Headstone, Church of St Andrew	II
Lumley Headstone, Church of St Andrews	II
Lumley Memorial	II

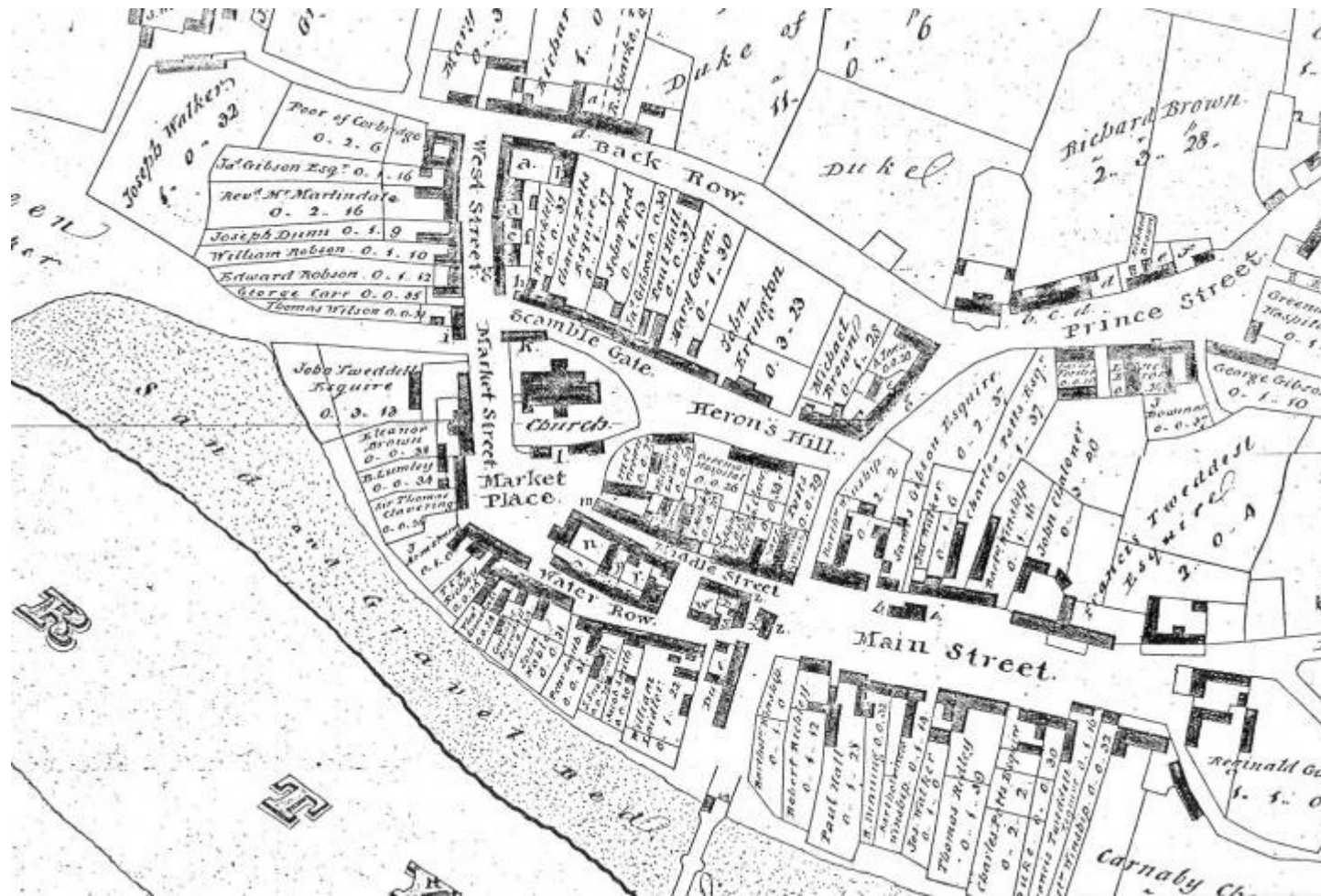
Property	Grade
Lychgate to churchyard, Market Place	II
Market Cross, Market Place	II
Market Place Chapel and railings	II
Noble headstone, Church of St Andrew	II
Old Market Cross, Churchyard Wall, Market Place	II
Pant, Market Place	II
Vicar's Pele, Market Place	I
Wilson Tomb, Church of St Andrews	II
Black Bull Inn, Middle Street	II
Lloyds Bank, Middle Street	II
Norma James shop and attached cottage, Middle Street	II
Sydgate House, Middle Street	II
5 and 7 Princes Street	II
Cross House (East and West), Princes Street	II
Forecourt walls and gate piers to Cross House (East and West), Princes Street	II
Hydrants and trough at junction of Orchard Crescent	II

and Princes Street	
Town Hall with shops, Princes Street	II
1 and 3 Princes Street	II
3 St Helens Street	II
Boundary walls to the north and west of the Parish Hall, St Helen's Street	II
Forecourt walls and attached outbuilding to north of Orchard Vale, Stagshaw Road	II
Hydrant and trough west of the Wheatsheaf public house, Stagshaw Road	II
Old Prior Manor and Prior Manor Cottage, Stagshaw Road	II
Orchard Vale and Orchard Vale Cottage, Stagshaw Road	II
Town Farmhouse and garage, Stagshaw Road	II
14 Watling Street	II
4 to 6 Watling Street	II
Churchyard wall with hearse house, Church of St Andrews, Watling Street	II
Wheatsheaf Inn, Watling Street	II

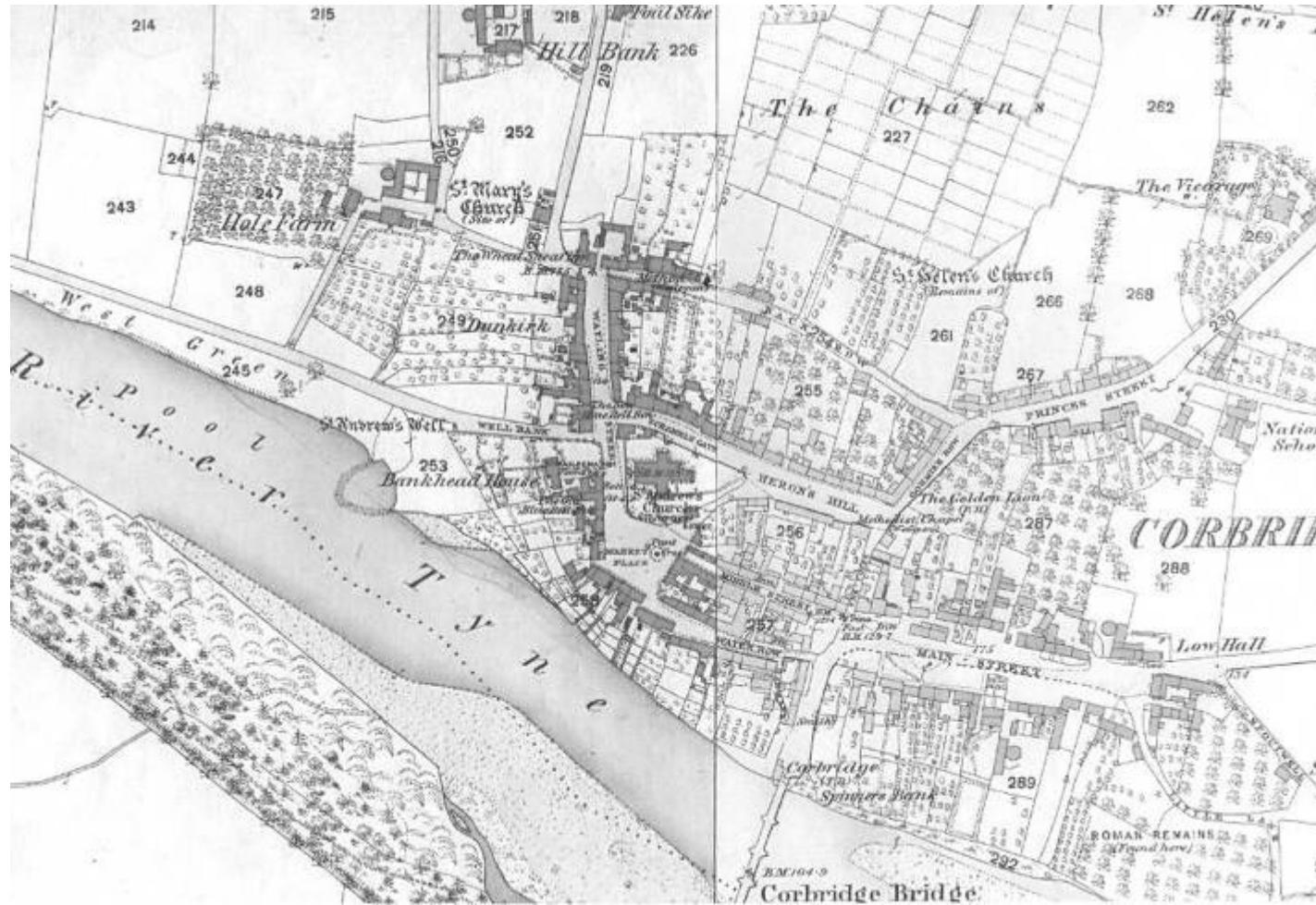
Appendix 3: Maps



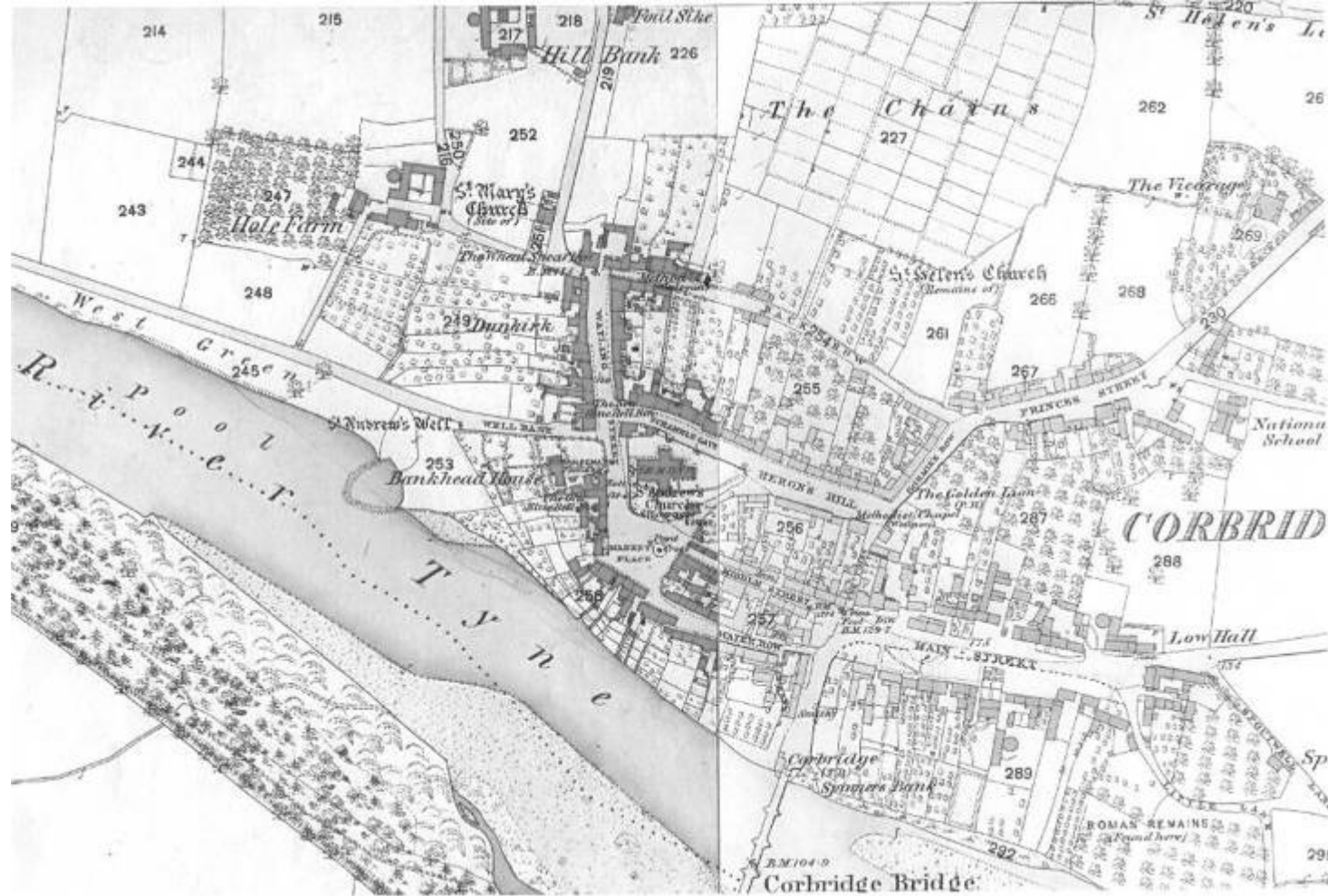
Map 1: Conservation Area boundary



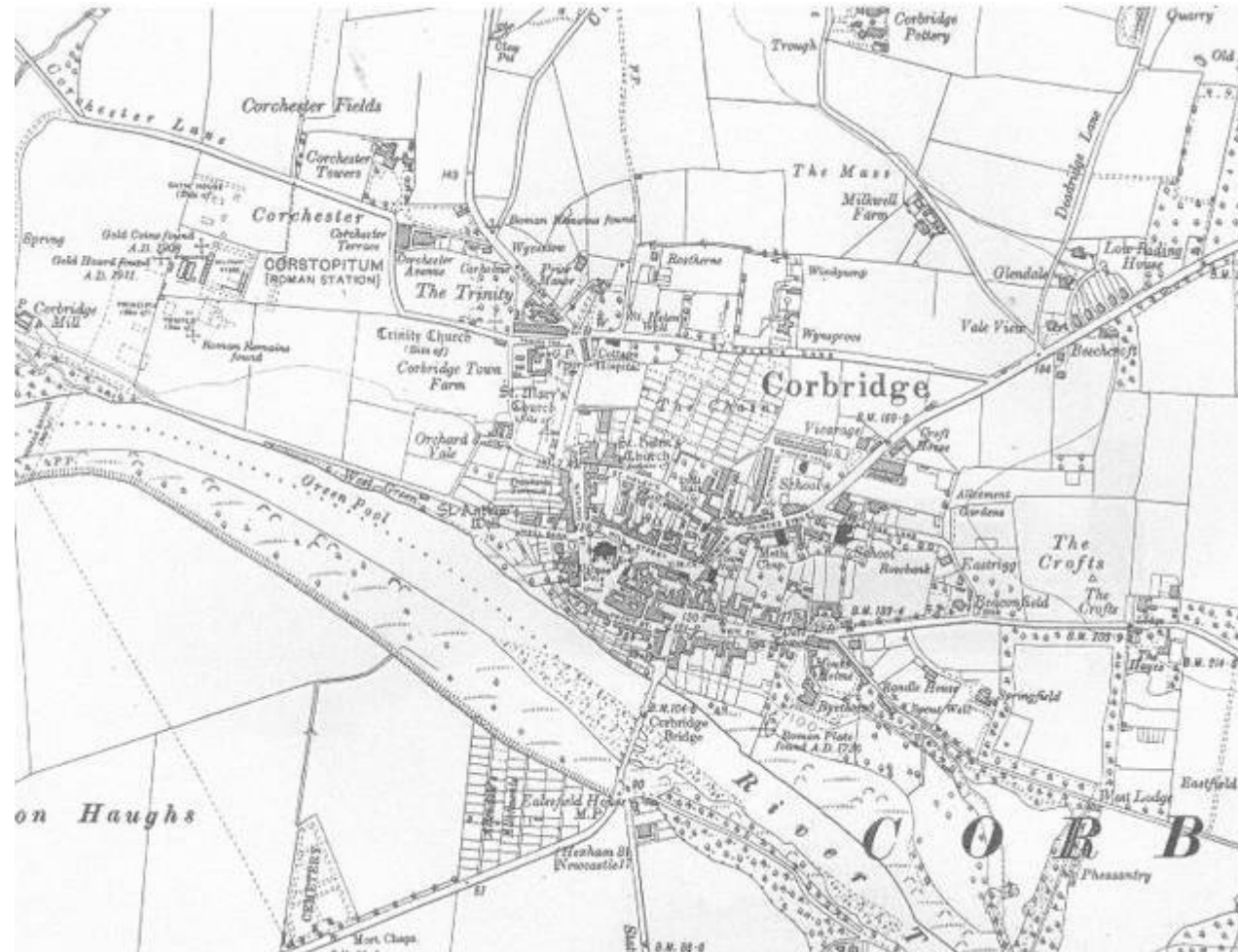
Map 2: Late eighteenth century Tithe Map



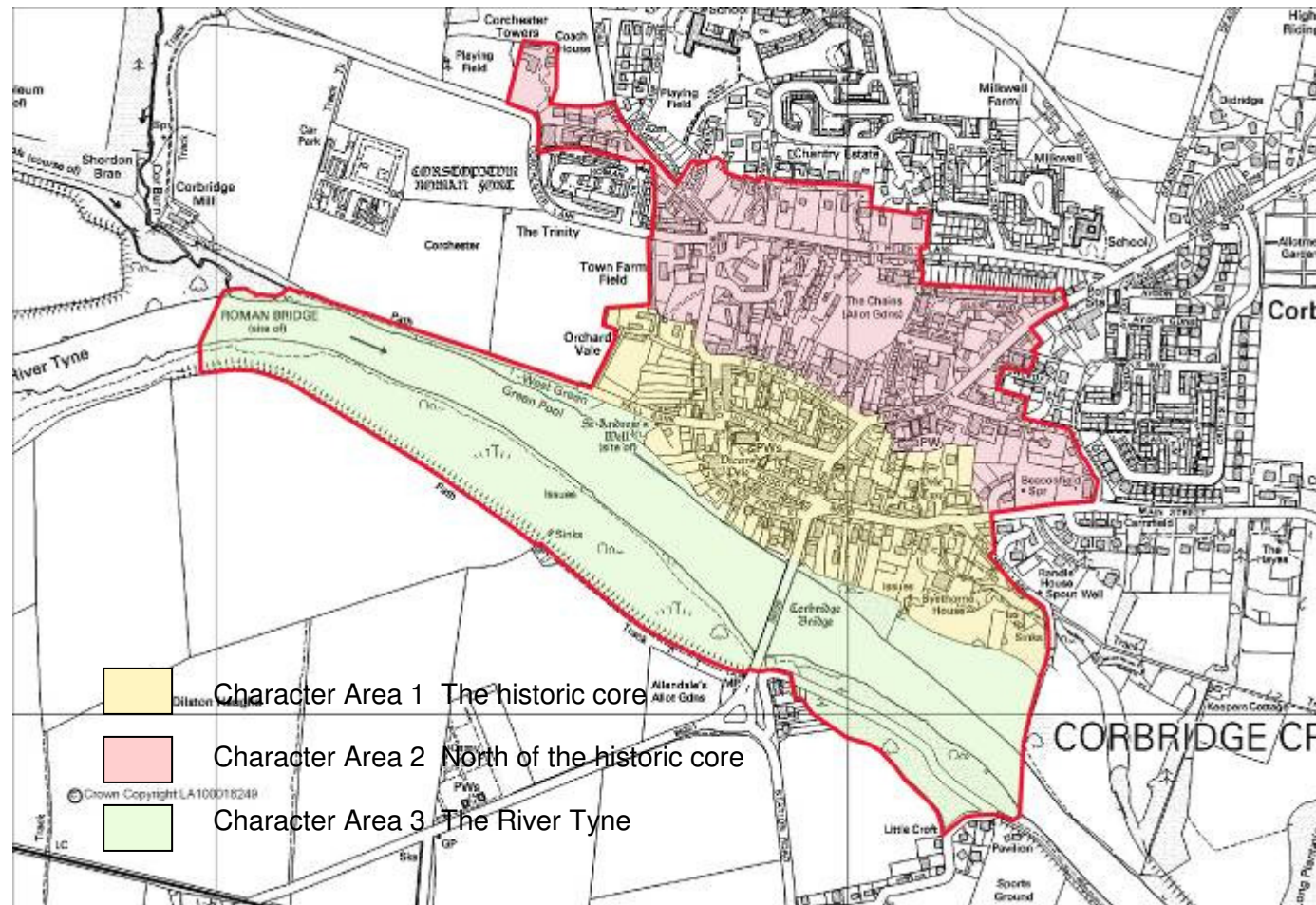
Map 3: 1860 Ordnance Survey



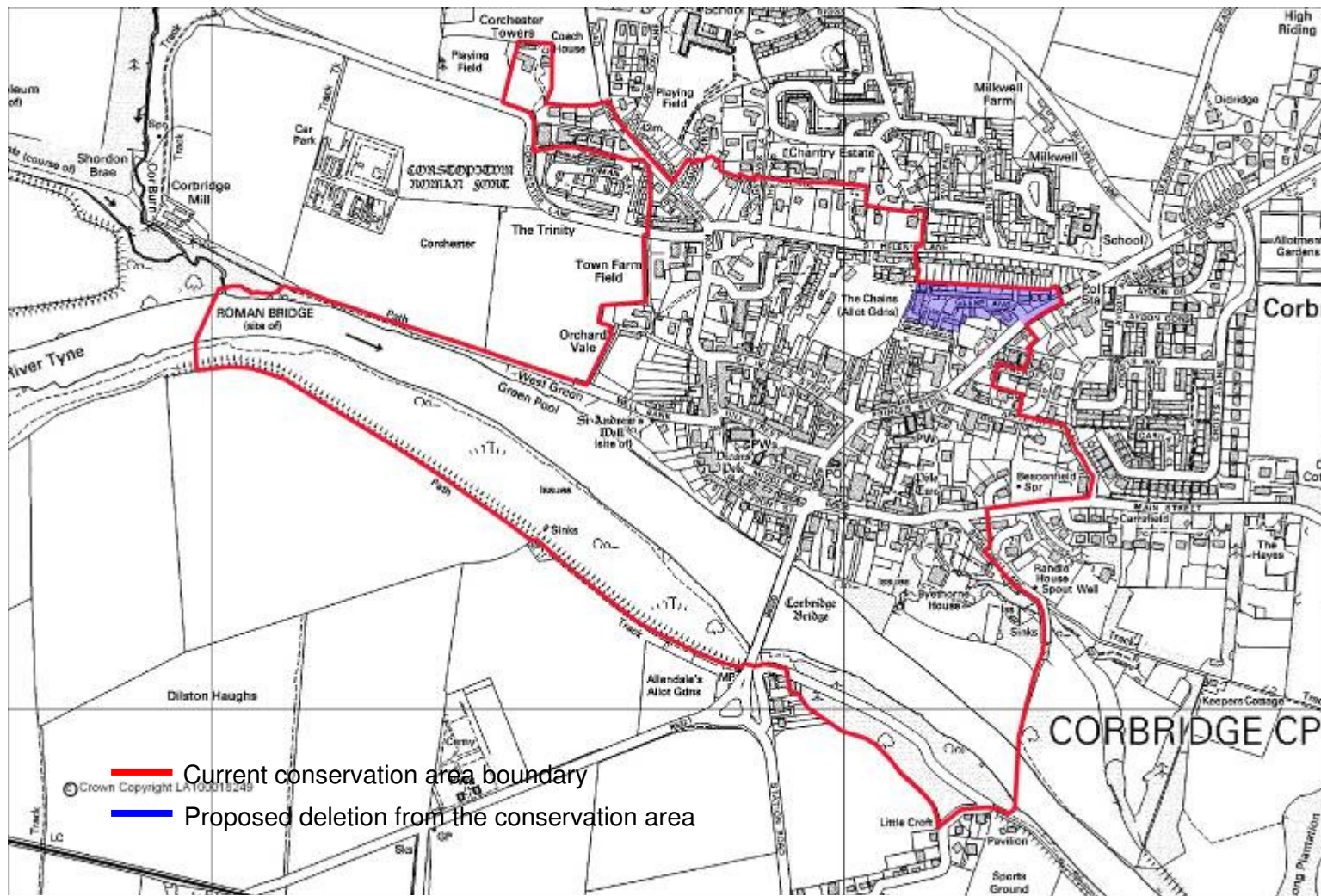
Map 4: 1897 Ordnance Survey



Map 5: 1920 Ordnance Survey



Map 6: Character Areas



Map 7: Proposed boundary changes