



Newton on the Moor

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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Contents

	Preface	1
1	Introduction	2
2	Historical Character	3
3	Architectural and Townscape Character	5
4	Management Recommendations	10
	Conservation Boundary 2006	11
	Bibliography	13

Appendices:

1	Conservation Area Boundary and Listed Buildings	
2	Glossary	

Preface

Section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that 'It shall be the duty of a Local Planning Authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.' In fulfilment of this statutory obligation Alnwick District Council commissioned Robin Kent Architecture & Conservation, on 27 October 2004, to undertake conservation area character appraisals focusing on 8 of the Council's 10 conservation areas: Alnwick, Alnmouth, Eglington, Felton, Glanton, Lesbury, Newton on the Moor and Whittingham.

Conservation areas are built-up areas with special architectural or historic character, which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. When conservation areas were first introduced in 1967, designation carried no special restrictions. In 1974, the control of certain kinds of demolition and the protection of trees was introduced. In certain cases, Article 4 Directions may be made, restricting permitted development.

The main aim of conservation areas is the preservation of buildings and the spaces between them, to suggest stability and continuity in a rapidly changing world. By preserving distinctive local character, conservation areas can improve the local economy, encourage tourism, attract grants and investment, raise property values, prevent un-neighbourly alterations and encourage traditional building trades.

These character appraisals closely follow the framework set out in the Council's brief and the consultant's proposal dated September 2004, including guidance published by English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, English Historic Towns Forum and other authorities. They include information supplied by the Council, supplemented by archival research and townscape analysis; nevertheless they are necessarily 'snapshots' of each area at a particular time and exclusion of any aspects should not be taken as implying they are of no importance. The commission included reviewing the boundaries of the conservation area, outlining other issues relating to management and making recommendations for changes.

1 Introduction



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Newton-on-the-Moor is a village 5 miles south of Alnwick and 14 miles north of Morpeth, where the road from Rothbury and Longframlington dips to meet the original route of the A1, now bypassed just to the east.

The village is built on the north-east-facing slope of Swarland Hill as it slopes down to the Hazon Burn, a tributary of the Coquet. Although the village is fairly high (c.145m) its position to the lee of the hills makes it relatively sheltered. The geology, Yoredale Series limestone with thin coal seams, has contributed to the industrial growth of the settlement in the past.

The 2001 census gives the population of Newton-on-the-Moor and Swarland (which is considerably larger) as 822, in 331 households. The village has a high proportion of retired people.

The conservation area was designated in 1972. It contains only three listed buildings.



Newton-on-the-Moor Conservation Area

2 Historical Character

Early remains in the locality include stone and bronze axes and Iron age camps and farmsteads.

Newton-on-the-Moor was established as a borough (ie allowed to hold a market) in 1249. At that time, it probably consisted of the village street, possibly wider than at present and forming a green or market place, with a well on the site of the pant.



Based on 1860 OS map - possible early building line and remnants of village green visible at west end. (Old CA boundary)



South elevation of Old Manor House, 1890's (originally 2-storey) from Dixon.

The Old Quarry site marks the east end of the village and separates it from the main road. Until very recently the village proper did not stretch east past the quarry site, and the only buildings outside the main settlement were two pubs, each with a smithy (now the Cook & Barker Arms and Quarry House) on the Great North Road, and The Square, which was possibly built in connection with the quarry. The secondary road to the south of the Old Quarry, with its slightly shallower gradient, may have been constructed or re-routed later in connection with the quarry.

Several of the cottages originally date from the 18th century, and in the early part of the century, the village had at least two larger houses, no 20 (the Old Manor House) and the Reading Room, both 2 storeys high. They may have been the first to be constructed forward of the traditional building line, beginning the colonisation of the green, and giving their location historic importance.



Reading Room (originally 2- storey house)

Relics of past industrial uses are important to the historical character of the conservation area. With easily obtainable limestone and coal, the area was ideal for lime burning. The 1860's OS map shows industrial areas with lime kilns and quarries sited to the west of the village, and below it to the east across the main road, as well as a limekiln and quarry in The Old Quarry site, a coal shaft on the site of Fairlawns and Newton Colliery just up the main road to the north. The proximity of the Great North Road made transport of burnt lime and other industrial products possible, and the lowered parts of the road through the village may result from re-grading of the road to make haulage easier. Clay was also obtained locally, with a clay pit to the south of the school and a tile works at Newton Lowsteads; the red pantiled roofs which are part of the special character of the conservation area may therefore have been locally produced.



Methodist Chapel – much altered in conversion to dwelling.



The commemorative pant at the road junction.

The village has no parish church, though in 1852 a small Methodist chapel was built (now a house).

In the later 19th century, although lime burning continued on the site to the east, rural industries were generally becoming less important and the village street was 'improved' by the estate landowners, including the re-roofing of many cottages and the construction of a reading room and village hall (1887). This also involved reducing the Old Manor House and the Reading Room to single storey, to give the desired 'model village' effect which is so important to the character of the village.

The pant was built by the estate tenants in 1914 and is significant as the only public monument.

In 1923, when the 3rd edition OS map was published, the village boundaries were virtually unchanged from 1860. However in the later 20th century considerable development took place on the outskirts, expanding the village beyond its historic boundaries with the building of houses in the old quarry, to the east of the old A1 and to the north and south of the village street.

Summary of historical features:

- Wide village street
- Use of locally made pantiles
- Single-storey buildings
- 'Estate village' character

3 Architectural and Townscape Character

Setting

Its site at the end of a ridge high above the coastal plain, means Newton on the Moor is visible from a distance both from the A1 and when approaching from the high ground to the west.

Townscape and built form

The conservation area has two distinct character sub-areas within it .

Area 1:

'The Village', (the historic core of the village).

Townscape

The village street is wide and straight as it runs up through the eastern half of the village to the Jubilee Hall, defined by building facades to the south or cottages set back behind boundary walls to the north. Many cottages are raised up on banks or retaining walls, containing and emphasising the importance of this area. The western half is flatter, with buildings set further back, but vegetation and walls preserve the sense of enclosure.

At each end, the street narrows suddenly and changes direction; to the west it reverts to a meandering country lane, while to the east it dips steeply down between walls, hedges and trees to emerge at the Cook and Barker Arms and the A1 link road, producing an important green entrance tunnel to the village.

Roofs are prominent and chimneys are an important feature of the skyline, giving rhythm to views along the road. The road junction at the pant allows distant views of the sea and coastal hills, emphasising the sudden drop in levels to the east. Views between the buildings to north and south are also important as reminder of the proximity of the countryside.

Key buildings

The gable end and domed bellcote of Jubilee Hall punctuate the street and mark the centre of the area physically as well as functionally, giving the building special importance.

Houses 13 & 14 effectively mark the west end of the village, forcing a sudden narrowing and change of



Wide street, lined with low cottages and boundary walls - looking west.



View east towards pant.



No's 13/14 visually marks west end of conservation area as road narrows at curve.



No's 1&21 form 'gateway' at east end, with view framed by trees



View of trees and countryside between buildings



Prominent tree beside Old School



Typical cottage form



Typical materials and colours - Hall and Reading Room



Timber detailing on Old Post Office (identical to Cook and Barker Arms)

direction of the road. Beyond this point, the stone boundary walls of the Old School and Pine View Cottage provide an important transition to the surrounding countryside and panoramic views to the northwest. At the other end of the village no's 1 and 21 perform a similar 'gateway' function, as described above, and are therefore important.

The pant has special importance at the low point of the street, marking the road junction and providing a focus in views to the east.

Green spaces, trees etc

Informally edged grass verges and banks provide a foil to the stone boundary walls and a link with the private and semi-private spaces of gardens, where planting and hedges often spill out over the walls. The prominent tree between the Old School and number 14 visually marks the beginning of the village; and large mature trees in gardens and at both ends of the street are valuable as a constant reminder of the surrounding countryside.

Built form

Houses are rectangular in basic plan, single storey, grouped in terraces of 2-4, parallel to the road with ridge lines stepped up the slope of the hill. Some are built up to the pavement or road line and some have walled front gardens. Roofs are gabled, with chimneys on the ridge and stone gable copes. Window openings tend to be regular, often with a wide vertical format.

Materials, colours

The predominant walling material is buff sandstone but with occasional ochre, grey and pink stone, generally laid as coursed rubble, used for both buildings and boundary walls. Roofs have clipped or open eaves and are mainly red clay pantile, with some Welsh slate to buildings on the south side of the street.

Doors and rainwater goods are often painted a dull bluish-green (presumably the Estate colour), windows being white-painted timber sashes or side-hung casements, with glazing bars

Details

The plain character of the architecture in general makes details such as the Reading Room canopy, kneelers and chimneys, the Hall bellcote and timber porches on the Old Post Office and Cook and Barker Arms stand out, and gives them special importance.

Summary of architectural/townscape character: Area 1

- Road narrow at ends, wide in centre, defined by key buildings and trees
- Views at ends of street and between buildings
- Grass verges and mature trees in gardens and at both ends of the village street
- Buff sandstone with occasional ochre, grey and pink stones, laid as course rubble for buildings and boundary walls
- Roofs red clay pantile or Welsh slate, stone gable copes, stone or brick chimneys with clay pots
- Windows white painted timber sashes or side-hung casements with glazing bars, green paint on Estate buildings' doors
- Few decorative details



Banks and hedges - view west past Old Quarry



View of roofs and coast - looking east over Old Quarry



Cook and Barker Arms



Scattered houses – view north east from old A1

View east, from old A1

Area 2:

The old A1. Centred on the Cook and Barker Arms, but mainly developed in the later 20th century.

Townscape, green spaces, trees etc

This area is dominated by vegetation rather than buildings, which are dispersed and experienced as individual features within the landscape, with little relation to each other or the road. The width of the old A1 is emphasised by the open land falling to the east with its relatively low, scrubby vegetation in contrast to the walls and hedges of the Old Quarry site opposite. These continue past The Square, until at the top of the Old Quarry the straight section of road has a view over rooftops to the coastal hills. Banked grass verges are a feature of the road beside Old Quarry.

Key Buildings

The Cook and Barker Arms is the largest and most prominent building in this part of the conservation area, as well as the only public building. However, it is not visible from the majority of points within the rest of the area.

Built form

This area is characterised by single-storey detached houses in their own gardens. Plan forms vary considerably, although most have gables and some have a chimney. Windows are a mixture of horizontal and vertical format. A few houses have porches.

Materials, colours

The three older houses in this area are of buff sandstone, and others in varying materials. Roofs are mainly red clay pantiles, many with boxed eaves and bargeboards. Windows are white painted.



Summary of architectural/townscape character: Area 2

- Buildings dominated by vegetation.
- Views east and north
- Grass verges, hedges and mature trees
- Single storey houses with detached, varied plan form
- Walls - coursed rubble buff sandstone
- Roofs - red clay pantiles
- White windows

4 Management Recommendations

Neutral and negative factors

The whole of character area 2 can be considered as neutral, as it is not of sufficient quality or value to comprise a conservation area in its own right and has little effect on the remainder of the area. Sycamore Syde could be seen as negative as it is highly prominent in views approaching the village from the East End of Longframlington Road.



Sycamore Syde

Box dormers are apparent on the street frontages of several buildings in the conservation area. While the small scale of the cottages makes this understandable, it inevitably reduces the quality of the individual buildings and the conservation area as a whole. Dormer windows of any type should be discouraged on street elevations, as they are not traditionally part of the area's character. Roof-lights however, may be acceptable in some circumstances.



Box dormers - The Village

Some poor quality alterations have occurred in the village to unlisted properties. These are not always in keeping with the original character of the buildings.

The majority of the older houses in The Village have had replacement windows or doors, and many of these are unsuitable in design or materials. Small additions and alterations have reduced the quality of the conservation area.



Example of non-native hedging in the Conservation Area - beside Old Quarry

The coloured surface dressing on the tarmac road through the village is effective, toning with the pantiled roofs. However, pavements and repairs are black top. Overhead wires are obtrusive.

Some planting, particularly boundary hedges, uses non-native evergreens (mainly cypress trees) which do not conform to the rural character of the conservation area.

Listed Buildings

The village has few listed buildings, all Grade II; all are in the historic core.



Obtrusive overhead wires and poles

Management

This section assumes that the boundary changes recommended above are carried out.

Further new housing development within the conservation area would not be appropriate. Any development outside it should not affect views out of the area.

A public realm audit should be carried out. Some areas, such as the pant, would benefit from more imaginative street surfacing to enhance their appearance and townscape importance. An effort should be made to ensure road repairs use the same coloured dressing as the remainder of the road. Street lighting could also be improved, for example by replacing modern lamp standards with suitable fittings attached to the buildings, or more imaginative fittings in keeping with the historic character of the conservation area.

Trees and hedges are important at the east and west ends of the area, and should be protected, and replanting encouraged. An advisory note regarding use of native species could be produced.

As so many alterations have already been carried out, it would not be worth introducing Article 4 directions in the conservation area, unless this would limit the spread of box dormers. However a photographic survey of all building frontages is suggested, to act as a baseline for future management.

Boundaries Changes 2006

A large section of the village was de-designated in 2006 as it was considered not to conform to the character or quality of the village. This reduced the size of the conservation area considerably.

The area south of the old part of the village and south of the Cook and Barker is characterised by modern suburban style housing and of no historic or architectural interest with the exception of The Square.

The Square and Quarry House which are shown as outlying houses on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, and of some importance historically. However, their position, surrounded by the later housing, does not easily allow them to remain in the Conservation Area but their

importance and position should be protected in LDF policies for the village.

The Old School has been retained for its importance in views from the west, but not no. 12A and Gilpin which are situated opposite the Old School; these buildings are not comparable in quality to the rest of the conservation area and contribute little architecturally or historically. Ashlea is retained within the boundary as it is in the back land of no. 12 and Sycamore Syde has also been retained, in order to safeguard and hopefully encourage improvement of the approach from the west. The stone boundary walls along the front of Gilpin and 12A remain part of the conservation area.

Summary of management recommendations:

- Consider buildings for listing
- Strictly limit alterations to roofs
- Public realm audit and streetscape improvements, including street furniture and surfaces, and overhead wires
- Protect important trees and encourage replanting with native species
- Photographic survey of all building frontages

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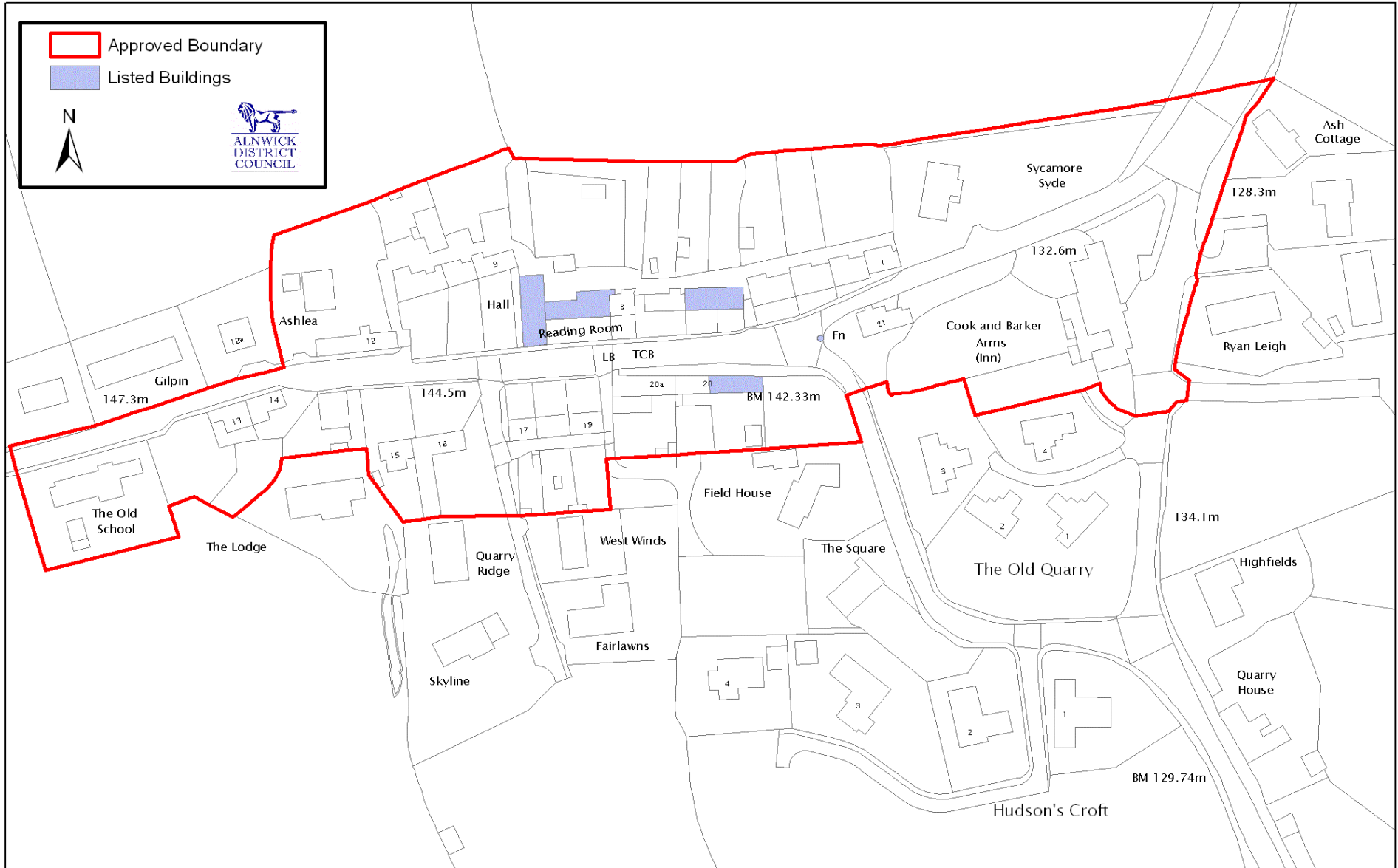
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Newton on the Moor Conservation Area



Glossary

Public Realm Audit Streetscape Surveys

A focal point of conservation area designation is the careful maintenance and use of public space. This incorporates assessment of signage use, surface materials, street furniture, parking and traffic management issues. A public realm audit/streetscape survey considers the suitability of these elements against the character of the area and the practicality of their position and location and provides an opportunity to define and enhance the conservation area environment.

Article 4 Directions

The aim of an Article 4(2) Direction is to encourage the retention of high quality architectural features on buildings and to preserve and enhance the conservation area of which they are part. 'Like for like' repairs and reinstatement of architectural features will be encouraged, along with the removal of previously unsympathetic changes to buildings.

In order to keep control over development in Conservation Areas and very occasionally outside Conservation Areas, the Council is able to make an 'Article 4 Direction', the effect of which is to take away 'permitted development' rights, meaning that Planning Permission will be required.

Where there is not a Direction, owners of houses within a conservation area have rights to undertake considerable alterations to their property without the need for planning permission (Permitted Development Rights). Where these rights are unchecked they can undermine and erode the 'special interest' of a conservation area, allowing changes to the windows and doors, additions such as porches and general lack of attention to detail.

Design Information and Guidelines

Alnwick District Council has undertaken a study of the district to identify the principal characteristics of the built environment. This has provided the basis of three documents that aim to provide recommendations for new development and design guidelines for alterations to existing buildings

The following publications are available from the Alnwick District Council -

- **Guide to historic windows**
- **Colour Schemes**
- **Conversion of Rural Buildings**

A.O.N.B – Design Guide

Northumberland County Council together with Alnwick and Berwick District Council's, have a responsibility to protect and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To achieve this aim, a series of 'Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guides' have been produced. These guides focus not only on the character of traditional local buildings and their repair and maintenance but incorporate a strategy for quality housing design that benefits both the rural community and environment.

Alnwick District Council - Historic Buildings Grant scheme.

The main purpose of Historic Buildings Grants scheme is to ensure the continued survival of important historic fabric, and to enhance and preserve the appearance of listed buildings or buildings of architectural importance.