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Section 1
Introduction

Conservation Areas
Conservation areas are “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

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

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

The first conservation areas were created in 1967 and now over 9,300 have been designated across England and Wales, varying greatly in character and size. There are currently 22 in Gateshead, as set out below:

- Axwell Park
- Birtley
- Blaydon Bank
- Bradley Park
- Bridges (Gateshead)
- Chowdene
- Clara Vale
- Coatsworth
- Crowhall (Felling)
- Gibside
- Lamesley
- Lintzford
- Lowfell
- Marley Hill
- Path Head
- Ravensworth
- Rowlands Gill
- Ryton
- Saltwell
- Sheriff Hill
- Walker Terrace/ Regent Street (Gateshead)
- Wickham

Town Planning Context
Current government policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) and includes para. 169 which requires local planning authorities to “have up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area”.

The local development plan for Gateshead is the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted in 2007 and now saved for advisory use alongside the emerging Local Development Framework. Under the government’s current planning system, a Local Development Framework (LDF) is a portfolio of planning documents used to plan and control development across the borough which includes the emerging local plan.

The saved UDP shows that the Council is keen to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated Conservation Areas, this is also true of the LDF. Together they set forward a number of policies which aim to guide and improve development within a Conservation Area to compliment and improve the existing character.

As such, in accordance with these development plan documents, the Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the enhancement of conservation areas. It also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals.
which assist in the enhancement of such areas. This process includes consultation with local stakeholders. The local planning authority also has extra powers in conservation areas over demolition, minor developments, and tree protection.²

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**This Character Appraisal**

Bridges Conservation Area was designated in 1991 and a character statement was approved for the area in 1994. In 2006, IPA17 was formally adopted which included updated character statements for all conservation areas, including Bridges. This character appraisal was prepared in 2012 by North of England Civic Trust for Gateshead Council.

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

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

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**Further Information**

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Section 2
Location and Context

Location

Bridges Conservation Area is situated in Gateshead, a large town on the south banks of the River Tyne, and is part of the Tyne and Wear conurbation in the north east of England. It is in Bridges ward. The Conservation Area is based on the original town centre on the river banks, and the modern town centre is immediately to the south. A series of road, rail and pedestrian links connect the area with the Newcastle city centre across the river. The conservation area covers approximately 27.7 hectares.

Bridges Conservation Area comprises some of the earliest development in the borough with the town originating from the riverbank. The area, at one time, was the centre for industry and was also packed with housing, churches and all the trappings of a small industrial town centre. The development of the rail links and bridges is one of the main features of the conservation area and is essential to its character. This has lead to the area being bypassed over time. It has diversifed from its former uses but much of the historical features remain and, in general, there is a strong sense of place to the Bridges Conservation Area.
**Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)**

In recent years, part of Bridges Conservation Area was included in a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), a Heritage Lottery funded regeneration scheme to restore and reinstate authentic architectural features, particularly focusing on commercial premises.

The area of focus was the enclosed space within the railway viaducts and the closely surrounding areas. This allowed the improvements to be made to the highest concentration of buildings of historic and architectural value. The improvements also impacted on the wider conservation area and areas of public realm were also significantly enhanced through the THI. The high-quality conservation standards of the improvements have enhanced the area’s appearance and added to the conservation area’s character.
Context

Geology

Gateshead is in the Tyne & Wear Lowlands countryside character area (no.14). It is characterised by undulating or rolling land which is incised by the valleys of the major rivers and their tributaries. Almost all of the Tyne & Wear Lowlands area is underlain with coal measures of carboniferous rocks which combine shale and sandstone with numerous coal seams. This is overlain by glacial debris of boulder clay or till and deposits of fine silt and clay can be found from the glacial lakes. The soils developed are heavy clay loams with smaller areas of silty alluvial soils and free-draining sands.

This geology has influenced the character of the conservation area. Sandstone became a prominent building material in the area which can be seen through some of the older buildings in the conservation area. The deposits of boulder clays and laminated clays have also been exploited for brick making, another popular building material.

Topography and Aspect

The Bridges Conservation Area is situated on the southern bank of the River Tyne gorge and is thus on a steep incline and ridge top. The Conservation Area can almost be split into two sections in this manner: the riverside which is fairly flat land, and the upper levels which are on a constant incline which levels out a little at the ridge top but continues to slope southwards beyond the conservation area. The two sections are separated, in most places, by a steep bankside but where road links are prominent, the steep bankside has been adapted for this purpose.

Development in most places is of individual buildings, each responding to the topography of the land. In many places buildings change height from one side to another as they are built into the incline. Where buildings are attached to each other, the rooflines are generally stepped to respond to the changing topography.

The steep slope rising southwards creates a dramatic landscape which is emphasised by the overlaying structure of the bridges and viaducts.

Setting and External Relationships

Bridges Conservation Area contains the remains of the earliest settlement of Gateshead town. Tightly packed medieval burgage plots created crowded and high density areas with industrial buildings interspersed but as the development pressure moved southward, the area was cleared to be replaced by nineteenth and then twentieth century developments. With much of the historical aspects of the area still intact with some modern developments and features also present, the conservation area’s surroundings create an almost isolated time-deep environment.

The conservation area is within the Tyne Gorge which was formed as a result of the various influences that have acted upon it. The character of the area has evolved in response to physical factors such as geology, landform and drainage that in turn influence the soils, land cover and land use of an area. The physical structure of the landscape has had a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity around the Tyne Gorge which have made a major contribution to the character of the area.

To the north of the Bridges Conservation Area is the city of Newcastle upon Tyne with three bridges in this conservation area connecting the two settlements.

Immediately to the south of the area is Gateshead town centre with the suburban housing of Gateshead stretching beyond that and to the west. The viaducts act as a visual and character barrier within the conservation area from all angles. The extensive road network leading to the bridges also isolate the area.

The three bridges – High Level, Swing and New Tyne – create major thoroughfares to Gateshead and Newcastle both by road and rail. The recently restored High Level Bridge is now a prime bus route between the two settlements, whilst the Tyne and Swing Bridges carry a high volume of vehicles even out of rush hour. However, most of this activity is bypassing.
the area rather than interacting with it, leaving the area itself relatively light on vehicles in most places.

**Views out of the area**

Views out of the area link the Bridges Conservation Area with its surroundings and are, in places, key to its character. Despite the dramatic topography of the land, the majority of views are blocked by the viaducts – unless one is on a train – but the main views are north toward Newcastle.

Panoramic views across the river to Newcastle create interesting and ever-changing vistas with rich architectural features, from the quayside up to the city centre horizon. The bridges are constantly within sight and often interplay with the panoramic views creating interesting glimpses through the arches. From St Mary’s Church and around, on the middleground of the riverbank, an extraordinary view of almost all of the main section of Newcastle Quayside can be seen with the Tyne Bridge forming a border to the west. The skyline of the city creates intriguing views and the city’s landmark buildings and features can often be seen.

To the west, travelling down Bottle Bank to the southern bridgehead of the Swing Bridge, the views of Newcastle Quayside unfold with each movement. Here, the Tyne Bridge and the High Level Bridge frame the views more tightly, creating in particular an iconic portrait of Newcastle’s Guildhall, St Nicholas Cathedral, and Castle Keep.

Further west still, beyond the High Level Bridge the panoramic views continue across to Newcastle where more modern developments are located. Looking further to the west of the conservation area boundary, panoramic views of Gateshead and Newcastle can be seen, with both settlements split by the river and bounded by the rise of the banksides. In the foreground, individual buildings can often be seen amongst the trees and vegetation which becomes thinner as the view progresses.

To the east, The Sage Gateshead, Gateshead Millennium Bridge and BALTIC the Centre for Contemporary Art add to the dynamic, panoramic views across the river.

To the south, much of Gateshead is hidden behind the bulky railway structures with glimpses through tunnels and bridges which connect the area with its surroundings. At this point largely characterised by extensive modern road layouts and large late twentieth century buildings.

1) Panorama across to Newcastle Quayside from Hillgate
2) The imposing Law Courts on Newcastle Quayside from Hillgate
3) The BALTIC Centre and Gateshead Millennium Bridge
Gateshead to the nineteenth century

The settlements that became Gateshead and Newcastle developed originally due to their location at one of the lowest bridging points over the Tyne. After Roman occupation, it appears that Gateshead became a monastic site, with Abbot Utta noted as being there in 653. An early church, that existed in 1080 and was burnt down by locals angered at Norman violence, probably lay near the site of St Mary’s.

Gateshead, which had been granted borough rights in 1164 by Bishop le Puiset of Durham, began to develop east and west from the south bridgehead (near St Mary’s church) along Hillgate and Pipewellgate, and along the road which led south up Bottle Bank (from the old English ‘bottle’, for dwelling) and High Street. Either side of, and at right angles to these roads, medieval burgage plots were created. The back lanes that developed from those not fronting onto the river became, almost certainly, Mirk Lane, Oakwellgate and West Street. To the west, the riverbank was known as Rabbit Banks. South of St. Mary’s, the street pattern suggests that Oakwellgate may have been intended as a significant thoroughfare by the Bishops of Durham and, together with the streets that are now High Street and West Street, to form the beginnings of a planned town.

Widening out to the north and lined with important buildings, Oakwellgate may have been planned to lead to a river crossing to the east of the existing Tyne bridge, extending the south-north route up Broad Chare in Newcastle. However, this possibility came to nothing and a stone bridge replaced the earlier wooden bridge c.1250, on or near the alignment of the original Roman bridge. Bottle Bank and High Street were major thoroughfares, forming part of the route linking London to Edinburgh and carrying the Great North Road over the Tyne, although so steep was the bank leading south from the river, that in 1790 Church Street was created as an early bypass for vehicles, leaving Bottle Bank almost completely free of traffic. The main road from the east linked Gateshead to Sunderland and, from the west, Hexham.

By 1264 there were markets in Gateshead and by 1576 the borough was home to 400 householders. The medieval burgage plot divisions, such as existed on the west side of Bottle Bank until the early twentieth century, were established during the fourteenth century. Oakwellgate, Collier Chare and High Street (originally via Regia or King’s Street) were named during this period. A number of small craft workshops and industrial businesses had been located in and around the town from the medieval period, including coal and pottery. From the latter half of the seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century, Gateshead was a centre for clay pipe manufacture (archaeological evidence for which has been discovered at Oakwellgate and Bottle Bank). Other industries included metalworking, mustard and flax making. The town’s industrial potential was

1) St Mary’s Church
2) High Street, looking north, before the construction of the New Tyne Bridge
further exploited through coal, iron, glass, chemicals, rope, railways and heavy engineering, and the effect of the industrial revolution on the settlement is clear in the rise of population from 8,597 in 1801 to 19,843 in 1841, more than tripling to 65,845 just forty years later in 1881.

A new Gateshead Borough Council had been created in 1835, following the Municipal Corporations Act, and it became a county borough in 1880. By 1860, The Tyne was the second busiest river in the UK, after the Thames, by which time High Street’s back lane had been formalised as a second, parallel north-south route in West Street (c. 1830, the beginning of the modern town plan).

Expansion of the borough continued southwards, away from the river and its squalid housing, with residential suburbs developing in the guise of terraces (frequently of the ‘Tyneside’ variety) alongside more quality houses, including villas. The High Level Bridge (constructed between 1845-49) followed by the massive Quayside fire in 1854, were the catalysts for extensive clearance of the original riverside settlement, for which scarce evidence now remains.

**The Railway Effect**

Newcastle & Carlisle Railway was the first to run to the Gateshead area, with a temporary eastern terminus opening at Redheugh in 1837. Two years later, the Brandling Junction Railway linked Redheugh to Oakwellgate by means of a half mile viaduct (the arches designed for use as warehouses), and opened a line between the station at Oakwellgate and South Shields. In 1844, Darlington and Gateshead were linked by the Newcastle & Darlington Junction Railway, and the opening was celebrated by a train load of ‘gentlemen’ travelling from Euston to Gateshead in just over eight hours. It was observed that never before had anyone covered 303 miles in such a short time. The same year, a new act allowed the building of a railway station on Greene’s Field, as well as the construction of the High Level Bridge. Ironically, the latter would make the new station largely redundant, as Greenesfield station itself had struck the death knell for Oakwellgate as a passenger station. However, such was the significance of the new station to Gateshead Corporation at the time that it decided to relocate the Town Hall from Oakwellgate to Greenesfield.

The High Level Bridge ended Gateshead’s short-lived prominence as the end of the line from London. The new bridge allowed what had been the long-term aim of the railway companies – a through route from London to Edinburgh. A basic railway station, later called Gateshead East Station, was built on the High Level Bridge approach viaduct. Greenesfield Station and hotel were now bypassed by the new line and effectively stranded, but this allowed them to take on a new life. In 1851-2, Greenesfield Station was converted and extended to become a locomotive repair depot, with the Station Hotel converted into offices. It became the main works for the North Eastern Railway and, from 1873, a running shed. As such, for many years it was the largest employer in...
Gateshead, and by the early twentieth century more than 3,000 men worked there. The Swing Bridge was built in 1868-76, to replace Mylne’s earlier Tyne Bridge of 1775-81. It had become necessary in order to allow upriver navigation for seagoing vessels and was, at the time it opened, the largest of its kind in the world.

The criss-crossing of the various railway lines through Gateshead – another line, running west to the Team Valley, opened in 1868 – resulted in the haphazard layout of the Bridges area, with bridges, viaducts and roads springing up in all directions, and creating an area physically dominated by its relationship to the railway. The second Gateshead East Station, replacing the earlier one, was built on the approach to the High Level Bridge c. 1885-6, replacing the Greensfield station for passenger traffic (an earlier Gateshead West Station, accessed from Hudson Street, had been opened in 1868). The Gateshead Railway Club & Institute on Hudson Street was begun in 1887. Built as a literary institute for the North East Railway Company workers, and previously housed in the Old Rectory in Gateshead, it could hold 600 and included a lecture room, class rooms, billiard rooms, two large dining rooms, caretaker’s apartments and a library. By 1890, the Central public house on Half Moon Lane, built originally as a business premises in 1854 by wine merchant Alderman Potts, had become a hotel.

The decision in 1863 to build a new council headquarters led eventually to the construction of the Town Hall on West Street, from 1867 to 1870. This established the area as a new centre of the town, and therefore an obvious choice for locating new services and commerce. Swinburne Street became a principle east-west route and, over the next few decades, was developed with fine sandstone buildings, consolidating this part of the town centre. In 1871, the Town Hall was joined at the other end of Swinburne Street by the National Provincial Bank, with the Post Office following in 1873-75, on the corner of Swinburne Place. The Gateshead Institute Permanent Benefit Building Society opened next to the bank C.1880, and the Gateshead Free Library opened in 1885, with public reading rooms and book stores on the ground floor and in the basement, and an art school on the first floor. Directories suggest a number of other organisations also used some of the buildings on this side of Swinburne Street at this time, including the Gateshead & South Shields Highways Board and various insurance agents, accountants and solicitors.

Dramatic reform of English local government took place in the nineteenth century, starting with the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. Poor law, health and sanitary acts followed, notably in 1873 and 1875, and then local government acts in 1888 and 1894. By the 1890s, there was great momentum in the provision of a wide range of municipal services at a local level. With it came the need for new accommodation to house their administration. Council services inevitably outgrew the Town Hall in the later nineteenth century, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, parts of what would become Swinburne House were in municipal use.
The town’s population had reached its peak of 125,000 in 1921, by which time it was becoming a working class suburb of its larger neighbour, Newcastle, but the period between 1910 and the mid 1930s was perhaps its most difficult economically, with a decline in industry which was so sharp in Gateshead that the government intervened, awarding almost £2m for economic regeneration under the Special Areas (Development and Improvement) Act, 1934. This resulted in the Team Valley Trading Estate. The riverside area changed dramatically during this period. Piecemeal demolition of the slum areas on the riverside had taken place by 1925, but it wasn’t until the 1934 Housing Act, which empowered local authorities to eradicate slum properties, that wholesale demolition was possible. The erection of the Tyne Bridge also necessitated the removal of buildings on the east side of Bottle Bank in 1926, along with the majority of Bridge Street and Church Street. Locomotive repairing ceased at Greensfield Works in 1932 (briefly re-opening during World War II, it finally closed for good in 1959).

After World War II, civic uses began to move from Swinburne Street and West Street. In 1954, a new Borough Treasurer’s Department opened at Shipcote (described then as ‘Civic Centre First Stage’), then a police station (1972) and courts (1976) in the town centre. During this period, the town centre was radically altered by comprehensive redevelopment. Much of nearby High Street and the north side of Swinburne Street were demolished after 1971. These changes ultimately led to improved east-west movement across the town, one of the original benefits of Swinburne Street itself.

The last few decades

St Mary’s Church, having survived serious fires in 1854, 1979 and 1983, was refurbished and used first as an auction room and, from 2008, as a heritage centre. The council retained Swinburne House in its portfolio and, in recent years, a series of commercial and third sector tenants have made their home there, including arts, social care and environmental bodies. The 1980s saw demolition of the 1854 Oakwellgate baths and wash house buildings, clearing the land around the 1969 Gateshead flyover and dual carriageway leading over the Tyne Bridge. From 1980 to 1984, the Metro opened to the public in progressive phases, running from Newcastle over the purpose-built Queen Elizabeth II bridge. The same decade brought the Council’s public art programme, and the creation of a sculpture park on the now wooded Rabbit Banks below the former Greensfield Works, with further installations along the hillside leading down to Pipewellgate, as a result of the Gateshead Garden Festival in 1990. The Bridges Conservation Area was designated in 1991, and more recently the Bridges Townscape Heritage Initiative has seen the refurbishment of a number of key buildings including the Central pub. Much of the Greensfield Railway Works have been replaced by the Ochre Yards housing development, begun in 2002, and a number of new streets are named after NER locomotive engineers, such as Fletcher and Worsdell.
Map Development

**John Speed’s Map of Newcastle, 1611**
This representational map of Newcastle shows a small section south of the Tyne, depicting the early development of Gateshead east and west away from the south bridgehead. Hillgate, Pipewellgate and St Mary’s Church are shown, with the visible surrounding area completely rural.

**Corbridge Map of Newcastle, 1723**
The more accurate Corbridge map shows a similar section of Gateshead with more concentrated development along Hillgate and Pipewellgate, reaching back to the river bank. The road leading from the bridge curves south up Bottle Bank towards the High Street. The visible surrounding area is blank and undeveloped.

**Beilby’s Plan of Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead, 1788**
By this time, development has intensified along Pipewellgate, Hillgate and Bottle Bank leading onto Gate Head (now High Street) with development spreading up the banksides at Rabbit Banks. Bridge Street (which later became Church Street) and Oakwellgate now appear, connected by Church Walk and Cannon Street, and a ropery along the river also appears to the east of Hillgate. Oakwellgate Lane, below the fields south of the ropery, leads to further industrial development at New Greenwich. The most intensive development lies between Oakwellgate and Gate Head, and ribbon development extends south, with significant areas to the rear of the properties used as gardens. To the west of the development along Gate Head, the beginnings of West Street can be seen bordering field boundaries and the street which was to become Bailey Chare links West Street to Oakwellgate.

**John Wood Map of Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead, 1827**
There is little change between the Beilby plan and this map – the main difference is the appearance of lime kilns to the east of the ropery, which had been constructed between 1802 and 1827, and further industrial development along the river bank to the east. Bailey Chare is noted and runs east-west from Oakwellgate to West Street.
**Oliver’s Map of Newcastle, 1830**

Again, although the focus of this map is Newcastle, the Bridges area of Gateshead is visible enough to note that the road network is essentially the same with Gate Head now shown as High Street. The pattern of burgage plots running back from the main arterial routes is clearly visible, and the extensive gardens to the west of Bottle Bank and the High Street are being lost to burgeoning residential development. The development along Rabbit Banks has also intensified in the east with the west largely remaining open space whilst Bailey Chare has joined to a new route leading south into Gateshead.

**Bell’s Map of the Great Northern Coal Field, 1843**

Although this map was drawn to identify the coal mines driving the area’s economy, and the waggonways and railways running to the staithes, docks and harbours of the Great Northern Coal Field area, it also serves as evidence of the development of Gateshead. The beginnings of the effect of the railway on the area are clear, with lines running to the Brandling and Oakwellgate staiths on the river, and the Brandling Junction Railway line linking Oakwellgate to South Shields. The Greennesfield station, which was completed the following year, is also annotated. It is still clear that development is concentrated around the bridge head, and that there is still much open land, with scattered farming and mining settlements. The impact of the 1814 Act to permit enclosure and fragmentation of the town fields can be seen, with formal streets laid out off Bensham Road, and burgeoning residential terraces, and the spread of industry along the river continues to develop.
**First Edition OS Map, 1856**

The thriving industrial activity and impact of the railway is striking on this map, the most significant addition being the High Level Bridge, built between 1845-9. The medieval burgage plots are beginning to disappear, to be replaced by timber yards, sulphuric works, vitriol works and iron foundries, and there is less residential development around the river.

The consequence of the great fire in 1854 can be seen, which laid waste to much of Hillgate, encouraging the move for housing away from the river. To this day, much of the bankside area is still open space. Greensfield Railway Workshop, the Smiths Shop and Engine Shed dominate the redundant Greensfield Railway Station, north of which the Town Hall is situated.

Wellington Street had been created to allow West Street and the new Hills Street to link to the bridge. Bailey Chare is now Half Moon Lane, which forms a flattened triangle with the Hills Street and Wellington Street, and accommodates the newly built Central pub (1854). The Gateshead Railway Station appears on the approach to the High Level Bridge, having replaced the Greensfield station for passenger traffic c.1887. High Level Parade, a number of single storey shops set into the stonework of the railway bridge of the station, had been built by this time (c. 1850).

Brandling Street now joins Oakwellgate to High Street, and Nelson Street appears, lined with houses, south of Swinburne Place, with the Dispensary on the corner with West Street.

The Oakwellgate Baths & Wash Houses of 1852 appear south of Rector’s Field, in which The Old Rectory next to St Mary’s is situated.
Reid’s plan of the Borough of Newcastle upon Tyne and part of the Borough of Gateshead, 1879

The pathways, which still run through the sculpture park on Rabbit Banks today, are visible on this map, and the beginnings of new industrial development along Hillgate. A new railway line, the Team Valley Branch of the North Eastern Railway, runs west from the High Level Bridge, and Gateshead West station is on what is now Hudson Street, leading to Wellington Street. The Half Moon Hotel, built c. 1873 (recently demolished), is tucked away on Half Moon Lane. Swinburne Place has become Swinburne Street, with the newly erected Town Hall (1868-70), the Post Office (1873-5) and National Provincial Bank. The Town Hall and Post Office were a significant part of the townscape at this point. The Tyne Bridge has now been replaced by the Swing Bridge, the road and pedestrian bridge built by W G Armstrong between 1868-76, on the site of the Roman and Medieval bridges.

Second Edition OS Map, 1895

The industrial development between Pipewellgate and the river, to the west of the High Level Bridge, has again intensified by this point, and there is some further development along Hillgate Quay. However, the most significant change from the First Edition is the amalgamation of the Greensfield Railway Works into one large building, with further associated development. The Tinners Shop and Store (1884), with the Brass Tube Shop at right angles, which later became Kenilworth House, borders High Level Road immediately to the north. The second Gateshead East Station is now in place along Wellington Street, with the Railway Club on Hudson Street. Swinburne Street now accommodates the Gateshead Institute Permanent Benefit Building Society (c.1880), and the Gateshead Free Library (1885), with Swinburne Place cutting through to Nelson Street.

By the time of the Third Edition, there is some clearance of development between High Level Road and Rabbit Banks, to the west of the High Level Bridge. Further development to the Greenesfield Works is visible – as befits the largest employer in Gateshead at the time, the buildings dominate the area. The Tyne River Police Station, built in 1910 for the Tyne Improvement Commission and replacing an earlier station which appeared on the First Edition, appears on the corner of Bridge Street and Pipewellgate. The King Edward Bridge had opened in 1906, parallel to the High Level Bridge, to cater for the east-coast railway route, negatively impacting on the Gateshead West Station. Other than this, there is little change to note. The Fourth Edition shows much of the Hillgate Quay built up, and there is a new access to the riverside next to the Swing Bridge. The effect of the economic depression is apparent – the industrial concerns on the riverside have noticeably thinned, and by this time demolition of the slums has taken place, following the Housing Act of 1934, and the whole of Rabbit Banks and the bankside between Hillgate and St Mary’s have been cleared. The most significant development is the New Tyne Bridge (1924-28) constructed by Dorman, Long and Company’s Bridge Division, using the same design as the later and much larger Sydney Harbour Bridge, which was built by the same company. The new bridge had a major impact on the Bridges area, with the clearance and re-aligning of Church Street and Cannon Street, and the further loss of medieval burgage plots. The new development between Oakwellgate and Church Street is more formally planned, with the Art Deco Kent House and even the new lavatories opposite, lending an air of grandeur to the Tyne Bridge approach. Partial clearance of Bottle Bank has also taken place, as well as around Nelson Street, and is well under way in the wider area between Melborne Street and Mulgrave Terrace, and between East Street and High Street.
**Bridges Conservation Area Map, 2012**

The current map of the area shows little remaining of the medieval origins of Gateshead, save for St Mary’s Church and the historic streets such as Pipewellgate, Hillgate and Bottle Bank.

The declining economy led to the industrial buildings along the riverside being demolished leaving large open spaces, particularly at Hillgate and to the west of the conservation area. Brett’s Oil and Grease Works is the only surviving industrial premises at Pipewellgate. Rabbit Banks was landscaped in 1969-70, and later saw the creation of Gateshead Riverside Park.

At Bottle Bank, the remaining medieval burgage plots and street layout has been replaced by new modern developments (the Hilton Hotel and residential apartments). The restored and partially rebuilt Greene’s Tannery to the rear of the new development remains one of the oldest buildings in the area.

Despite the rapid changes in the area, there continues to be a strong Victorian presence around Half Moon Lane, Wellington Street and Hudson Street, with remaining buildings including the Railway Club and The Central. To the west, the Greenesfield Railway Works was finally closed in 1959, although the buildings continued as a freight depot until 1963. Since then, extensive redevelopment has occurred, with the area now mostly occupied by the Ochre Yards housing development, with some remaining undeveloped land. The former Boiler Shop and Tinner’s Shop (now Kenilworth House) still exist and are important survivals of this era of the town’s development.

Further south, significant clearance of the areas surrounding the Town Hall and Swinburne House occurred. Extensive road networks now dominate the area, providing links to the Tyne Bridge, Swing Bridge and the Redheugh Bridge further west. The extensive clearance left the Town Hall and associated buildings largely disjointed from the townscape.
Sources

The above historical notes are compiled from:

- *Pevsner Architectural Guides: Newcastle & Gateshead*, Grace McCombie 2009
- Stafford Linsley report
- National Heritage List for England
- *Newcastle & Gateshead: Architecture and Heritage*, Thomas Faulkner, Peter Beacock and Paul Jones 2006
- John Nolan, summarised Development History of Gateshead
- Tyne & Wear Historic Environment Record
- http://isee.gateshead.gov.uk/
- www.gateshead.gov.uk/Leisure%20and%20Culture/Local%20History/heritage/Background%20and%20History.aspx
- www.localhistorygateshead.com/local-and-family-history/gateshead-topics/gateshead-quays2
- www.nexus.org.uk/history/history-metro
1) Town Hall,
2) West Street viewing the Town Hall and Dispensary
3) Church Street before it was re-aligned, c.1925
4) St Mary’s Church
5) High Street at the junction of Hill Street, c.1925
6) Medieval plots on High Street
7) Pipewellgate and the banksides before clearance
8) Warehouses at Hillgate
1) Looking over the banksides to Greensefield Railway Works
2) Greensefield Railway Works
3) Workers at the Railway Works
4) Gateshead East Station, Wellington Street
5) Swing Bridge open
6) High Level Bridge from Pipewellgate
7) Construction of the Tyne Bridge
8) Construction of the Tyne Bridge
Section 4
Spatial Analysis

Development Pattern
The Bridges Conservation Area covers the original core of Gateshead from where the town initially developed. It represents a time-deep environment in which many changes have taken place and, consequently, there is a diverse pattern of development with different stages overlaying one another. This, combined with the sloping topography, creates a complex spatial pattern.

With a long development history, fragments of early street patterns can still be seen in places, overlain and interconnected with later layouts – see Appendix A. This layered core underpins the character with key phases including medieval, Victorian and twentieth century. The industrial revolution and the railways have also played a major role in the area’s development, being a catalyst for much of the growth.

The core of Gateshead developed from an organic T-shape along the riverside, rising south. A strong axis still remains on this line with east-west Pipewellgate and Hillgate, and north-south routes from the bridges, some older than others. Very little change in spatial pattern has been seen on the east-west axis (even if the buildings which populate it have changed radically) particularly where the routes have remained.

The north-south axis has evolved considerably through redevelopment, as has the pattern of development feeding of these axes. The original medieval development pattern would have been based around tightly packed streets and plot layouts in the core of the area. This layout would have grown and intensified as the area’s population expanded and the economic status increased. Although in some places, such as Half Moon Lane and Mirk Lane, evidence of this layout remains, the majority of the area has been redeveloped changing the pattern. This evolution and the dramatic juxtapositions it creates are a big part of the special interest of the area.

With the addition of the large railway viaducts in the nineteenth century, the development pattern in the area intensified further. The tightly packed layout was overlain with large, heavy structures creating sharp angles and enclosed spaces. This spatial feel still remains around Half Moon Lane and Wellington Street.

As the core of Gateshead expanded, tightly packed streets spread south and east. Around St Mary’s Church, in the east, the medieval street layout was clear, however redevelopment also affected this area, particularly with the introduction of major infrastructure. In the south, the clearance of the medieval streets made way for grand municipal buildings for use as a town hall as well as a bank, library, post office and dispensary. These buildings, which could match the footprint of many of the pre-existing industrial buildings nearby, were

Half Moon Lane and Hills Street - sharp angles, enclosed spaces and a tightly packed medieval layout.
situated facing north on an east-west linear cut into the higher, flatter riverbanks. The position creates a feeling of grandeur overlooking the historic centre of the town and its railways and acted as a counterpoint to Newcastle’s city centre facing on the opposite bank.

Evolution continued throughout the twentieth century. Clearance of medieval streets associated with the opening of the New Tyne Bridge and the subsequent modern developments was dramatic. Structures, infrastructure and the sites they created left a larger scale and grain of development towering above the underlying layers. The road layout and plots evolved further in the post-War period, notably around the south of the conservation area where extensive road networks and cleared plots have left development prominent and exposed.

In the west of the conservation area, the large scale nature of development resulted from the industrial railway works, a very different development pattern to the rest of the area. The pattern is little changed here despite the demolition of much of the railway works. This western section of the conservation area houses large-scale developments which reflect its original magnitude.

From the clearance of sites more recently, a number of development opportunities now exist in the conservation area posing new challenges. The conservation area is characterised by its ever-changing nature and would welcome a new chapter in its development but new elements must not be to the detriment of other individual sites or buildings.

The development pattern in Bridges Conservation Area is about more than what we can see today; it is also about what used to be present and the evolution the area has gone through over several centuries. The complex layers and development pattern creates a very distinctive area which can only be fully understood through its history. Appendix A shows the age of the streets and spaces in the area to aid understanding of the layers in the area.

1) Grand municipal buildings on Swinburne Street
2) Large modern buildings have overlain the tightly packed medieval layout
3) Industrial buildings bordering the river at Pipewellgate
Layout, Grain & Density

The layout, grain and density of the area is strongly influenced by the layers of development pattern described above and is generally characterised by irregular layouts across the different parts of the area resulting in a patchy grain with little uniformity. This variety of layout is part of the area’s character.

In the core of the area, there is still evidence of the tightly packed grain of the early area, even if a simple relationship between burgage plot and street is no longer apparent. The area enclosed by the viaducts around Half Moon Lane and Wellington Street create the impression of high density and a tightly packed layout, emphasised by the rhythm of the viaduct arches. Glimpsed views of buildings through tunnels and under bridges emphasise this compact feeling.

Just beyond the viaducts, much of the original street layout has been lost to large modern developments and infrastructure, with new layouts introduced. Formality was retained on the re-aligned Church Street, with new plots facing neatly onto the pavement. To the east of Church Street, on Oakwellgate, the layout is very erratic and does not address the street, thus struggling to create a sense of place.

Elsewhere, although the medieval street pattern sits at the bottom layer, it has been overlain in the most part by buildings with a much larger-scale footprint, creating a lower density and a much broader grain of development.

Greenesfield now contains its own, self-enclosed layout and grain based on a formal grid with its own character, illustrating the difficulty in reflecting massive historic industrial plots in modern residential layouts. The riverside is similar to this with irregular plot sizes, but they are much smaller scale compared to the area beyond the steep slopes of the riverbanks. Here, the industrial plots border the river Tyne and the area of green between the upper and lower levels of the riverbanks creates a welcome break in the large scale developments and provides a green lung to the conservation area.
Views in the Area

There are a multitude of views within the area created by the interplay of topography, layout, development patterns and buildings. It is not possible to do justice here to the quantity and quality of interesting views which characterise the area.

Most views in the area are either contained by clearly defined edges or are surprise views providing glimpses and snippets of interesting features or scenes. Views can be very vertical as well as horizontal. However, no matter where you are in the conservation area, the main views tend to contain at least some part of a iconic bridge or railway viaduct, which are essential to the area’s character.

From the east of the conservation area, St Mary’s Church creates an interesting view with the historic building situated in a green setting and with a backdrop of the Tyne Bridge representing the changing nature of the area. From the riverside at Pipewellgate, the views are of the bridges towering overhead creating heavy structures within the buildings bordering the river and a panoramic view in sharp perspective of Newcastle Quayside in the background.

One of the key views in the area is at the junction of Pipewellgate and Bridge Street looking across the river. Here the historic Swing Bridge creates an interesting view with the High Level Bridge and Tyne Bridge providing a clear edge.

Moving south in the conservation area, the topography of the land rises but due to heavy structures and, in places, the vegetation and trees, views to the riverside are generally blocked. From the central area at Wellington Street and Half Moon Lane, inside the triangle of railway viaducts, the area is quite enclosed and surprise views are created through the railway bridges and tunnels creating intriguing short vistas.

In the west of the conservation area, at Pipewellgate, fairly short linear views east along the riverside can be seen as the road curves to meet the roads at the southern bridgehead of the Swing Bridge. These views are generally bound by buildings and the banksides creating
intriguing vistas but these begin to change moving east with the heavy structures of the bridges being introduced. Approaching the High Level Bridge from Pipewellgate creates contained views bound by the bridge.

Remaining the west of the conservation area but moving up the banksides to the former site of the Greenesfield Works, the views are generally bound by large towering buildings, some historic and others more modern. From High Level Road and Rabbit Banks Road, linear views are created looking west-east but other than this views are blocked south by the large buildings and largely blocked looking north by the trees and vegetation.

In the most southern section of the conservation area, the grand structures of the Town Hall and Swinburne House stand tall on the rising slope. Despite this, looking south from most points in the conservation area, they can barely be seen because of the visual barrier of the viaducts. Equally, from Swinburne Street, only the tops of larger buildings to the north and glimpses of the New Tyne Bridge can be seen over the viaducts.

With the irregular grain in a largely built-up area, there are very few panoramic views. Those that do exist are from the riverside across to the Newcastle Quayside.
Section 5
Character Analysis

Character Zones
The Bridges Conservation Area is a diverse and complex place resulting from the abundance of changes that have taken place over the years. As a conservation area, there is a coherent character created of a once prominent commercial area giving the place a special atmosphere and appearance worthy of protection. However, there are noticeable differences in details and features, and five general character zones can be identified, the boundaries of which can sometimes overlap:
- Riverbank Zone – includes the area bordering the river, the Swing Bridge, the green banksides and St Mary’s Church
- Central Zone – includes the railway viaducts, the High Level Bridge and the area around Bottle Bank
- Greensesfield Zone – the upper level beyond the banksides and to the west of the railway lines leading to the High Level Bridge, focussed on the former Greensesfield Railway Works.
- Tyne Bridge Zone – the area to the east of and including the Tyne Bridge
- Swinburne Zone – beyond the southern boundary of the railway lines to include Swinburne House and the Town Hall.
Although these general character zones are identified, all of the features should be considered within the wider context of the conservation area. Focusing on smaller sub-areas allows a greater understanding of the place and how the character is created but should not be taken as an individual area. Appendix B-D shows the contribution of the individual buildings and spaces.

The Bridges

Each of the bridges in the conservation area sit within a different character zone and are absolutely essential to the character of the conservation area.

The Swing Bridge, built in 1868-76 and Grade II* listed, is built on the site of the former Roman and medieval bridges and is situated within the Riverbank character zone. The bridge is designed as a swing road and pedestrian link into Newcastle. With granite abutments and piers, the wrought iron structure has two spans over the land approaches, two fixed spans over the water and two rotatable spans controlled by electric pumps.

The High Level Bridge, 1849 and Grade I listed, is an integral part of the Central Zone linking the triangle of railway arches to an escape across the river into Newcastle. With a two tiered design, it is also a major thoroughfare for buses and pedestrians. The bridge towers over much of the riverside development and can often be seen throughout Bridges Conservation Area.

The Tyne Bridge, 1928 and Grade II listed, is an important aspect of the conservation area contributing both in terms of architecture and of planning. With a trussed and tied steel arch with approach spans supported on octagonal steel columns, it is of historic interest as a forerunner of the larger Sydney Harbour bridge built by the same company. The bridge has overlain earlier significant features but adds another layer to the history of the area.

Although their individual character is important, considering their impact on the wider surrounding area is also a major element of their significance. With the Gateshead Millennium Bridge situated to the east of the conservation area, and the Queen Elizabeth II to the west, together the five bridges have iconic group significance. The image of Gateshead - Newcastle stems from the five bridge view along the river and each represent a different era in the history of the area.

The three bridges contribute significantly to the character of Bridges Conservation Area, particularly as they are never out of sight. The two bridges situated just outside the conservation area also contribute to the setting and the cultural significance of the group as a whole.
Riverbank Zone

The Riverbank Zone runs east to west in the north of the conservation area and is defined largely by the topography with the ridge. It includes landmarks such as the Swing Bridge and St Mary’s Church, but has changed greatly from its early development with much clearance.

The road layout based on Pipewellgate, Hillgate and Bridge Street is intact, but little remains of the original development pattern and changes in the land use have dramatically altered the area. The majority of the commercial activity has moved north into Newcastle or south into Gateshead’s town centre leaving the Riverbank Zone largely cleared. The historical high density urban grain has largely been lost and has opened the area and removed the sense of enclosure it would have once had. All of this happened in the mid twentieth century.

The character of the Riverbank Zone is, itself, in zones. The dominant feature in the centre of the Riverbank Zone is the Swing Bridge with its southern bridgehead located at the junction of Bridge Street, Pipewellgate and Hillgate. This busy road junction leading to the bridge creates a focal point, particularly where Bottle Bank meets Bridge Street. The surrounding buildings house various uses such as bars, restaurants and offices which have diversified from the original, more industrial, uses.

Situated on the corner of Pipewellgate and bordering the Swing Bridge is Pipewellgate House, the former River Police Station. The building displays some of the most integral character of the Riverbank Zone and is important in setting the tone for other developments in this part of the area. Built in 1910, the double-fronted two and a half storey building was designed to make a statement with the primary frontage towards the river and a gabled Welsh slate roof creating visual drama.

Modern developments neighbour Pipewellgate House to the west and are tucked under the High Level Bridge. The buildings have been designed to sit alongside the historic building, creating a visual link in form and materials.

Further West in the Riverbank Zone, beyond the High Level Bridge, low-rise industrial buildings remain bordering the river. Large in scale, with workshop and outdoor space, the buildings are clearly designed to be functional rather than decorative. Brett’s Oil and Grease Company, established in 1877, does remain, but, like many of the industrial buildings at this location, is vacant and in poor condition which detracts from the area. Nonetheless, it does provide a tangible link to the area’s industrial history and the maritime paint colours add to the appearance.
Stretching up from the riverside, the steep green banksides lead to the Greensfield Zone with its cliff-like composite edge of buildings along the ridge. Historically, in the nineteenth century, this site was once a dense residential and commercial area. However, the expansion of industry saw residents move further south to more attractive homes leaving the area derelict. Clearance of the bankside and most of the riverside took place in the early twentieth century which also means any archaeology may also have been lost.

The green bankside now provides a distinctive border between the industrial buildings located on the riverside and upper levels of the banks with the majority of visual contact blocked by mature trees and vegetation. The bankside was landscaped in 1969-70 to make way for the locally listed Gateshead Riverside Park and, despite clearance, the existing pathways are the surviving skeletons of roads and pathways from the nineteenth century providing a tangible link to the past.

In the east, the green bankside is mirrored leading from the riverside at Hillgate up to St Mary’s Church, providing a welcome setting for the original Gateshead Parish Church which is now Gateshead Visitor Centre. With a very similar history to that of the west, both bankside areas contribute to the historical context and understanding of the Riverbank Zone particularly with St Mary’s Church linking to the origins of Gateshead. The bankside areas are an important part of the character of Bridges Conservation Area providing a welcome break of green, open space in an otherwise busy and compact area.

St Mary’s Church is largely fourteenth century with elements of eighteenth and nineteenth century alteration work visible. The Church is situated in a formally laid out town churchyard and is a prominent feature in the area greatly contributing to the conservation area’s character, particularly with the retention of the part brick, part stone original walls and wrought iron railings all list Grade II.

The area bordering the river to the east of the Swing Bridge was once an important industrial area. In 1854, a fire devastated much of the area and it was only in the early twentieth century that the majority of land was built up completely as warehouses. With the area now vacant after the deomition of the warehouses, the land is left as an open space, an area which does not add greatly to the character of the conservation area.

1) Brett’s Oil and Grease Works borders the riverside but is now vacant
2) St Mary’s Church, an important and prominent feature in the area
3) Vacant land bordering the river at Hillgate with little to contribute to the character
**Relationship to other Zones**

The relationship the Riverbank Zone has with the other character zones almost creates its individual character with the form, height and scale of the buildings in the zone constantly overshadowed by the large structures of the bridges. For example, the High Level Bridge towers above the low-rise industrial developments of the riverside.

The west of the area is fairly segregated from the Greenesfield Zone by the steep slopes of the riverbanks which add to the character of the Riverbank Zone. The former railway works at the upper levels of the banks were very much closed to the public and the segregation of the zones retains this feeling.

St Mary’s Church, despite being situated in a prominent position on the bankside in the east of the Riverbank Zone, finds itself in a less than ideal setting due to the Tyne Bridge Zone developments and the Tyne Bridge approach. The churchyard does provide an oasis of calm amongst the busy area with unusual and intriguing views of the bridges but, on the whole, the Church is now disjointed from most of the townscape.

**Quality and Significance**

The area is an integral part of Gateshead’s history but the poor condition of some buildings detracts from the character of the area. With the early twentieth century clearance of most of the area having been removed, original road layouts still exist and, particularly on the bankside in the west surviving skeletons of nineteenth century pathways and routes do still exist. This provides a tangible link to the area’s history.

The more modern developments and more recent changes have added to the many layers of change in the zone. With the Riverbank Zone often being by-passed by the major transport routes, the area has become neglected and, despite retaining historical links, has almost become a setting for the bridges and other character zones, particularly in the west. Reclaiming land for development along the riverside which follows in the footsteps of the buildings neighbouring Pipewellgate House, would go some way in improving the area.

The Swing Bridge and St Mary’s Church significantly add to the quality and significance of the townscape and are essential features within Bridges Conservation Area. The steep slopes of the riverbanks is also a positive feature and is designated a Protected Open Space in Gateshead’s UDP. Improvements to the riverside would significantly enhance the area and effort should be made to do so as the area is an integral part of the town’s history.
Central Zone

The Central Zone is the site of the core of the original development of the town, rising from the riverbanks. Quite unlike the rest of the conservation area, this zone has the unmistakable sense of being a fragment of historic town centre, captured and saved by the same massive infrastructure which bypassed it. But, like the rest of the area, there have been many changes which have eroded some of that special quality.

In a fairly small location, the Central Zone has a wide range of uses including a range of shops, a hotel, pubs, housing and food establishments. Main transport links contribute to the varied and unusual nature of the area.

Historically, the railway would have been the dominant feature in the area with the various railway lines built through the nineteenth century and the siting of three railway stations. With the construction of the High Level Bridge, Gateshead was bypassed to travel onto Newcastle and so the area evolved and diversified. The ‘Railway Triangle’ consisting of the viaducts is one of the core historic features in the Central Zone coupled with the High Level Bridge. They contribute significantly to the character of Bridges Conservation Area.

Approaching the ‘Railway Triangle’ from West Street, once of the prominent entrances to the Central Zone, the area is quite open and uncharacteristic of the rest of the zone. With the route crossing Askew Road, a very busy road network, there are a lot of highway necessities which intrude on the character of the area.

Within the ‘Railway Triangle’, the Central Zone retains its integrity and sense of place, particularly due to the level of surviving historic features. The stone railway viaducts interspersed with railway bridges and pedestrian tunnels all provide a tangible link to the past and help to understand the place. The tightly packed layout, particularly visible around Half Moon Lane and Mirk Lane, retains the enclosed feel with the railway viaducts helping to create sharp angles with buildings tucked amongst them. A pedestrian tunnel to the west of the Central Zone can also be found leading from Hudson Street which may have been part of a seventeenth century route leading away from the town centre.

Beyond the stone viaduct triangle, the majority of the Central Zone has been redeveloped with the Hilton Hotel and residential apartments changing the feel of the Zone. The more modern developments have overlain the historic medieval street layout which would have been present in this location. The modern infrastructure and road layouts beyond the Central Zone have also affected the historic character of this part of the Zone.
Back inside the ‘Railway Triangle’, tall three and four storey buildings are situated in the centre island, towering over the heavy railway structures, adding to the historic character. The dominant building materials are brick and sandstone, both sourced locally. In many places, distinct architectural features are created where buildings have been designed contextually to fit with the site, for example, buildings situated on sharp corners create curved details.

One of the most noticeable buildings is Worsdell House, the former NER Railway Club & Institute, and is one of the highest quality buildings in the Zone. Adjoining this is a series of fairly uniform three storey properties with shopfronts to the ground floor. Nearby, tucked into one corner of the triangle is the Station Hotel pub, once again showcasing the tightly packed nature of the area. This set of buildings as a whole represents the character of a captured historic fragment, exaggerated by the enclosure of the viaducts and bridges, which positively contributes to Bridges Conservation Area.

The viaducts themselves house a number of businesses which add a quirky character to the area, as well as evidencing the tightly packed layout. On Wellington Street, the arches have traditional shopfronts, recently benefiting from restoration through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The arches facing onto Askew Road also house a number of businesses, however, some have not yet been improved and create an untidy appearance which is also the case on Brandling Street. One of the arches within the ‘Railway Triangle’ is the former entrance to the second Gateshead East Station in 1887 - this archway has noticeably different features.

The former railway station ramp can also still be seen in this part of the Central Zone which adds to the unusual layout of the area. Although this is a positive characteristic of the conservation area, the lack of maintenance has left the former station untidy. The same can also be said for the large car park site and the vacant land which detract from the appearance.
Just outside of the viaduct triangle, the Central pub is another key historic example of the quality, scale and layout of the Central Zone. The pub responds to the site and location on a flattened triangular plot and complements the architecture within the boundary of the railway. The Central has recently undergone restoration improving its appearance greatly. Also in this area are enamel blue-and-white street nameplates which retain the area's integrity. The buildings within the 'Railway Triangle' positively contribute to the character of Bridges Conservation Area retaining a sense of place and the historic feel.

Situated next to the Central pub, the modern developments begin to tower over the historic elements. Neighbouring the pub is a modern residential apartment block, which is restricted at this point to three storeys, however, as the topography of the land descents towards the southern bridgehead, the storey height increases to five. The cliff-face Hilton Hotel, next to the residential block, radically changed the character of the Central Zone which was not characterised by high-rise towering buildings.

 Shielded behind the modern developments and bordered by the railway approach, the former Greene’s Tannery has been rebuilt. Although this building retains character, the extensive changes and modernisations has resulted in the listed status being removed.
**Relationship to other Zones**

The Central Zone is the core of Bridges Conservation Area. The inner section of the zone, inside the railway lines, the other zones are only accessed through a number of bridges and tunnels. This creates intriguing views of small sections of the other character zones. To the east of Half Moon Lane and Hill Street, the Central Zone is very open onto the Tyne Bridge Zone with the dominant Tyne Bridge and its approach. The large expanse of road networks is not the ideal setting for the historic core of Gateshead but nonetheless shows its importance in the development of the town.

The railway viaducts and bridges are rarely out of sight in the conservation area providing strong links back to the Central Zone for all the other character zones.

**Quality and Significance**

On the whole, the zone retains its integrity and sense of place with a large part retaining its nineteenth century historic features to a great degree. The Central Zones adds great value to the townscape of Gateshead and represents a time-deep environment which preserves many of its features.

The High Level Bridge and railway approaches are never out of sight in this zone and the distinctive character is created through the confined spaces and sharp angles. The coherent townscape owes its survival to the movement of pressures for redevelopment southward but the modern developments of the residential apartments and Hilton Hotel have changed the character of that area significantly, overlaying large areas of medieval burgage plot development pattern around the core of the town’s earliest settlement. As part of the redevelopment, however, the rebuilding of the oldest and most precarious vernacular industrial building in the area is a major contribution to the area’s integrity.
**Greenesfield Zone**  

The Greenesfield Zone is the former site of the Greenesfield Railway Works, an integral part of Gateshead’s history and development as a town. The area is bounded by the railway lines and the topography of the land, with a steep slope down to the river to the north.

The area was developed during the nineteenth century and by the turn of the twentieth century the whole site was built up with industrial buildings. Despite the zone once being an all-important area, the majority of the buildings have now been demolished meaning those that do remain are crucial to the area’s historic understanding.

Despite the demolition, the most northern and eastern sections of the Greenesfield Zone retain their historical integrity and sense of place linking the zone to the railway industry - a major part of this conservation area.

The most intact and interesting buildings and features, such as the railway sheds, have been retained - with the exception of the Station hotel which was demolished. However, the prominent land use has changed from industrial to residential with some office space.

Kenilworth House, the former brass tube shop and now residential, and the former Boiler Shop both face onto High Level Road overlooking the river and the panorama of Newcastle. Both buildings are of an industrial scale and represent the former activity on the site. The former Railway Offices, recently restored, are of a smaller scale with two storeys and a pitched roof.

The main historic building material in the area is snecked squared stone with all of the architectural detailing in smoother sandstone to contrast against the uneven texture of the main elevations.

A large proportion of the Greensfield Zone remains a large open space after the demolition of the works. This includes the former Station Hotel and is uncharacteristic of the area, however, the space is earmarked for development.

New developments in the far west of the area are currently in the process of regenerating this part of the conservation area which was previously inaccessible to the public. The introduction of modern architecture changes the feel with very little historic character remaining and is adding a new layer to the area.

The unashamedly modern developments which are situated to the west of the site are coherent in scale with the industrial building; however, the architectural features are considerably different.
Relationship to other Zones

The Greenesfield Zone is isolated from the other character zones and from the wider townscape due to the topography and the route of the railway lines around it. It developed as an industrial enclave with a lack of public access and its continued isolation reflects this. To the north the zone is bounded by Rabbit Banks Road and the steep descent down to the riverside through Gateshead Sculpture Park. The contrast in character here is stark. The railway lines provide the boundary to the east and south whilst the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge to the west segregates the area from those further west.

Despite this segregation, the zones are closely linked through the historical aspects of the sites and their former uses which add to understanding the area.

Quality and Significance

The area, despite the many changes, new developments and conversions, retains its integrity and sense of place as one of the most important industrial sites of Gateshead town. The large open spaces created by the demolition of the original railway works open up the site, and although retaining these buildings would have only added to its integrity, the area can begin to be redeveloped into a better state of repair.

The townscape is highly valued in terms of its location and importance in Gateshead’s history and the remaining buildings add to its significance. Although the area is largely cut off from surrounding areas it is still of high visual interest due to the visually dramatic railway works buildings which are prominent when approaching Newcastle on the train or Metro and the views of the Bridges themselves.

Former Boiler Shop to the northern edge of the zone. Again, large storey depth to the ground floor suggesting a warehouse/workshop use. Now vacant with the modern developments bordering it to the south.

Derelict land after the demolition of the majority of railway works buildings. Open and vacant land is uncharacteristic of the area.

Unashamedly modern developments to the west of the zone changing the area’s character. The large scale nature has been retained and to the north of the site, stone has been used to tie the design to the historic elements.
Tyne Bridge Zone

The Tyne Bridge Zone developed later than the Riverbank, Central and Greenesfield Zones, sparked by the building of the New Tyne Bridge in 1928. The development pattern that existed before this was coherent with that of the Central Zone, a medieval street layout between High Street, Bottle Bank and Oakwellgate, the historic secondary route parallel with High Street. However, clearance of this layout and the building of the Tyne Bridge changed the area significantly, overlaying on much of the original street pattern and creating additions of a more modern design. The land use of the area is mixed commercial with garages, restaurants, and offices, and only a few of the buildings contribute significantly to the area.

The approach to the Tyne Bridge covers much of the area with large roads as it is one of the major transport routes to cross the Tyne into Newcastle. The locally listed two storey Kent House, a sinuously curved building, and the listed octagonal converted toilet block situated close to the bridge approach create a more characterful setting than the rest of the Tyne Bridge Zone with unusual and unique design elements.

Kent House is a typical Art Deco warm red-brick building with artificial stone detailing. As it ascends the street, the height of the building rises from two to three storeys finished with a feature tower displaying a flagpole on a hexagonal plaque. The building represents the forward-looking atmosphere at the time of its construction and is a strong feature situated next to the approach to the Tyne Bridge.

Behind this strong streetscape, more functional 20th Century buildings which suit their secondary commercial use create an unattractive backland area - there is little here which defines the character of Bridges Conservation Area. Caught between the historic solidity of the railway viaducts and St Mary’s Church, this collection of buildings and plots do little to enhance the conservation area or the historic route along Oakwellgate.

The former site of the Tyne Bridge Tower is located in this area. The demolition of the tower has enhanced the Tyne Bridge Zone as well as the wider conservation area and has left an area of open space. This newly created space provides development opportunities that would be more suitable and positive for the conservation area as a whole.

The Brandling Street railway arches provide relief from the uninspiring townscape in the area whilst the massive retaining walls of the 1839 Brandling Junction terminus site (outside the conservation area) also add to the character and historical understanding of what would have once been a bustling route.

Tyne Bridge approach is approximately 5 lanes wide with a lot of clutter associated with large road layouts. As a main route across the Tyne, the traffic levels are heavy at all times during the day but particularly during rush hour. The introduction of this layout has changed the character of this area significantly from its medieval roots, but the Tyne Bridge is a major contribution to the character of Bridges Conservation Area.
Relationship to other Zones
The Tyne Bridge Zone mainly borders the Central Zone with the Tyne Bridge approach providing a large expanse of roads which bypasses rather than links to the rest of Bridges Conservation Area. Also bordering St Mary’s Church as part of the Riverbank Zone, the Tyne Bridge Zone provides a poor setting for an area with such a history.

The iconic Tyne Bridge dominates the development below and, along with the High Level Bridge describes the layers of changes that define the area’s history.

Quality and Significance
The Tyne Bridge Zone contributes to the character of the Bridges Conservation Area with the iconic Tyne Bridge and the unusual Kent House bordering the re-planned roadides. Despite the negative aspects, such as the large expanse of roads approaching the bridge, the Tyne Bridge Zone represents a new chapter in the area’s history which is important in showing the town’s development.

The rest of the Tyne Bridge Zone along Oakwellgate contributes less to the conservation area, overall and could be enhanced through redevelopment.

Kent House is in red-brick with artificial stone strong courses, simple cornice features and window surrounds. Now a restaurant, the ground floor has a restored timber shopfront painted in a traditional colour with canopies and has carved mullions and transoms creating a toplight window with leaded glass. A strong feature situated next to the Tyne Bridge approach.

This Grade II listed architect’s office was once a public toilet. Its unusual shape makes it stand out in the Tyne Bridge Zone.

The form and materials of the Brandling Street arches embody the character of the Railway Zone which forms the heart of the conservation area.
**Swinburne Zone**

The Swinburne Zone developed in stages in the mid to late 19th Century but has changed dramatically since the expansion of the road network. There are some important and positive buildings and features in this zone which contribute greatly to the character of the conservation area, however, the zone can often feel disjointed from the wider townscape.

The Old Town Hall and Swinburne House are the most prominent elevations in this character zone and are situated on the rising banks in the south of the conservation area. When they were originally built, they would have been part of the nineteenth century townscape, however, clearance and the associated expansion of the Tyne Bridge approach separated them from the rest of Bridges Conservation Area. The character and appearance of this zone and immediate surrounding areas is a poor setting to these buildings and the new road layout has also impacted on the north-south movement of pedestrians which further increases the problem of separation.

Only slightly changed from their former appearance, most of these buildings housed Gateshead Council’s principal functions during the twentieth century until the opening of Gateshead Civic Centre in the 1987. Now, a mixture of third sector arts, cultural and environmental bodies use the buildings as office space and the Town Hall is used for various cultural bodies as well as a venue for hire whilst the buildings on High Street are used for offices and a bank.

Swinburne House, a group of four buildings each separately listed as Grade II, and the Old Town Hall, also listed as Grade II, are the most prominent buildings within this character zone. The grand appearance of the building group adds greatly to the character of Bridges Conservation Area and demonstrates their status as Gateshead’s most impressive surviving municipal and commercial town centre buildings. They provide evidence of the shift in the focal centre of the town southward from the Tyne. The confidence of the Victorian architecture creates a positive and prominent view which has been opened further by demolition of much around them, exposing their position alongside the open expanse of road networks. This is not an ideal setting for such buildings which were designed to be part of a tighter, more coherent town centre development pattern.

Moving further south in this character zone is the former dispensary, identified by a blue plaque recognising its use from 1832-1946, along with another two...
buildings, Lloyds TSB bank and the former Post Office which replaced that on Swinburne Street. They each represent a small fragment of the traditional townscape scene that once characterised West Street.

The Swinburne Zone is filled with varying architectural details and elaborate properties of high quality which positively contribute to the character of Bridges Conservation Area. The spaces surrounding the buildings have changed significantly with the main transport links all bordering the area. The open spaces around the area make the properties prominent in the townscape but isolated by the transport networks.

**Relationship to other Zones**

The Swinburne Zone is fairly isolated from the rest of the Bridges Conservation Area but is no less significant. The heavy railway viaducts and modern road layouts provide a barrier to the rest of the conservation area but the prominent building group situated in the rising slopes still create a feeling of grandeur. The glimpses under the railway bridges into the Central Zone create interesting views. West Street to the west of the Swinburne Zone provides a link from the Central Zone and is a popular bus route.

**Quality and Significance**

The Swinburne Zone has significant value within the Bridges Conservation Area and within the wider Gateshead townscape. The Swinburne Zone creates a time capsule of evidence relating to Gateshead’s municipal and commercial development. The individually significant buildings add to the historical understanding of the development of the area. Despite being surrounded by dominant road networks, the building group has communal value as the ultimate municipal symbol of growth, stability and ambition. Buildings of this period, style and quality are rare in Gateshead and much of it is still intact. It could act as a major anchor for new development in the vicinity to knit it back into the town centre.

The expanse of roads surrounding the area detracts from the buildings’ setting and it would be beneficial to create a better layout, particularly around Swinburne House and the Old Town Hall.
Unity

The area’s significance as a whole is underpinned by its status as a series of fragmented layers of the origins of Gateshead which coincide with the dramatic topography. There are great variations between the design and detailing of buildings in the different character zones which provide distinctive set pieces relevant to that zone’s history. There are also fascinating instances of townscape at the junctions between the zones. These differences create the unique character of Bridges Conservation Area as a whole.

The area has always been, and will continue to be, an area of great change and the mixture of historic buildings and modern developments signify that. The notable differences between zones all still have a special architectural and historic interest which is worthy of protection through conservation area status.

The individual aspects of the area do have merit on their own and this is recognised by the various other heritage designations applied to many of the buildings, shown in Appendix E. However, the combined impact of the features creates the area’s special and unique character. All of the description should always be considered within the wider context of the area.
Contribution of Spaces

The main spaces within the conservation area are:

- roads, pavements and tunnels
- open spaces and vacant sites
- public art

Roads & Pavements

Bridges Conservation Area contains some of the busiest road links into Newcastle meaning parts of the area can become very busy and heavily congested through the high volume of traffic. Other parts are very quiet indeed and almost off the mental map of the town, as the busier roads bypass them. Some parts of the conservation area have been conserved and enhanced through public realm improvement schemes and retain their historic feel.

The Tyne Bridge approach is the busiest transport node and has a great expanse of tarmac, junctions and crossings. It is one of the main links to Newcastle and this has taken priority in terms of its appearance and impact on the conservation area. Roads are in grey tarmac but the bridge itself, including its characterful lampposts, has recently been repaired to a high conservation standard.

In the majority of other places, the roads are narrower and retain the enclosed feel which is an essential aspect of the area’s character. This is particularly true in the Central Zone which has maintained its tightly-packed layout.

In recent years, extensive public realm improvements through the Townscape Heritage Initiative and other complimentary schemes, have sought to restore and reinstate traditional surface materials and have considerably improved the appearance of the conservation area in some parts.

Around Half Moon Lane and Wellington Street, major improvements have enhanced the area’s character, opened the streets to the public and added historical value. Granite setts and natural paving stones have been installed around the area which sit alongside the cobblestones which have also been restored in places. A small piazza has been created between Half Moon Lane and Hill Street on the site of one of the earliest railway stations, Gateshead East built in 1849, including information boards about the history of the area and the railway. The enhanced public realm around these streets has considerably added to the character of the area. Enamel street signs are also visible in some places which, again, adds to the historic understanding and feel of the place.

Many of the pedestrian tunnels in the conservation area have also benefited from improvements. Previously, some were closed to the public and others were very dark which discouraged use. However, the installation of

1) Public realm improvements, Wellington St.
2) Enamel nameplates near Half Moon Lane
3) Pedestrian tunnel improvements
lighting and the reinstatement or restoration of the granite setts and cobbles has improved their historic appearance as well as made it easier to use them. In particular, the pedestrian tunnel leading from Hudson Street to High Level Road, and those either side of the A184 have created a much improved, more accessible, public realm.

Where new developments have taken place in recent years, such as the Hilton Hotel and the new residential developments in the Greensfield Zone, the paving surfaces and areas of public realm have been well designed to fit with the other improvements that have taken place in the area. Natural materials are a core feature in the area, and these have been used where new developments are taking place.

The use of natural materials for reinstatement and the restoration of existing original materials should be continued into the future to further enhance streetscapes within the conservation area. In some places, where concrete flagstones and kerbs can be seen, it does detract from the character and public realm improvements should be sought for these areas to enhance the appearance. Further improvements to some pedestrian routes and links could be sought, these have already been suggested in the Evaluation Report from the Bridges Townscape Heritage Initiative.

The Swinburne Zone is part of one of the best set-pieces in Bridges Conservation Area. It is excellent evidence of the commercial vigour which drove development in Gateshead town centre in the mid to late nineteenth century. An attractive and authentic scene of great grandeur is created through the group of buildings, particularly as there is no similar surviving group in the town centre or in any other Gateshead conservation area.

**Open Spaces & Vacant Sites**

As the area was once the tightly-packed heart of the town and an industrial location, open spaces were not always a characteristic of the landscape. However, through the many changes that have taken place over the years, open spaces have been created, some of which are now integral to the area’s character, some not.

St Mary’s churchyard is a very significant open space adding considerably to the character of the area. As formal church grounds, it provides a setting to the church and, as an important site within the conservation area, it provides local amenity value and enhances the historic character area.

1) St Mary’s Churchyard, formally laid out church grounds
2) Former Boiler Shop bordering Rabbit Banks Road, currently in disrepair
3) Former site of the Greensfield Works, vacant and derelict land in need of re-use and repair as part of a new development
Other than St Mary’s Church, the area was not characterised by green open spaces, but where pockets of them do exist, they add to the area’s appearance and enhance the character.

The largest, green open space is Gateshead Riverside Park. Originally filled with a mixture of street, plots and industrial buildings clutching the bank sides, a large clear open space was created when the area was cleared. This was landscaped to create attractive informal parkland, now with mature trees, other vegetation and winding paths. Artworks have been installed in various places throughout the parkland, sensitively sited and in balance with the natural features of the area. The large northern elevations of the former Greenesfield works buildings tower over as a reminder of the area’s industrial origins. The High Level Bridge emerges from the landscape to the east of the park. All of the features create an interesting and valued open space which enhances the character of the area.

Two large sites of open space also exist as development opportunities. In the Greenesfield Zone, the former location of Greenesfield Railway Works is vacant. The remains of one of the buildings can be seen to the northern edge of the site but is in serious disrepair. This open space provides a development opportunity to contribute to the regeneration of this area alongside the new residential developments.

This particular site adds historical character to the conservation area but as a large vacant site, it goes against the nature of the industrial area.

Another development site is the former location of the Tyne Bridge Tower situated near to St Mary’s Church. The Tyne Bridge Tower was a high-rise office block and was demolished in 2010. This significantly enhanced the area and the setting of St Mary’s Church and the Tyne Bridge. Historically, the site was built-up and sensitive new development here could contribute to the area’s character.

Public Art

Public Art in Bridges Conservation Area is a large part of its modern character and is part of wider art programmes around the town. The art situated around the conservation area contributes to the unusual character and adds a modern aspect to the historic buildings.

The main group of public art which adds to Bridges Conservation Area is the Riverside Park situated on the steep banksides leading from Pipewellgate to Rabbit Banks Road. Approximately thirteen pieces of public art are located around this area including ‘Rise and Fall’ by Lulu Quinn which marks the entrance of the park to create a new focus. Also within the Riverside Park is ‘Rolling Moon’ by Colin Rose which is an 11 metre high curved steel sculpture representing the moon’s effect on the ocean’s tides and the effect on maritime history.

Many of the artworks symbolise the industrial history of the area adding to the character of the conservation area by improving links with the past and adding to the historical understanding of the place in a more unusual fashion.

Another important aspect is the Clocktower in the forecourt of Town Hall, listed Grade II. It is a 25 foot high iron clocktower of Gothic design which was a Mayoral gift. It is a replica of that in Victoria Station, London, and has recently been restored and is working.
Some individual artworks are located in other areas, including the ‘James Hill Monument’ by Peter Coates situated on Bottle Bank celebrating the life of a 19th Century fiddle player who lived in Gateshead. Another prominent but temporary feature is the ‘No No No No No’ artwork on the Brandling Street railway arches. This is aimed at encouraging passers by to question the world around them and creates a new dimension to the character at this location which is otherwise dominated by large expanses of road. Public art is an important thread running through Bridges Conservation Area providing new dimensions of character and interesting features.

Public Art consistently appears through Bridges Conservation Area. Understanding what the artworks represent is important in understanding how they add to the character of the conservation area.

Situated opposite the Old Town Hall, ‘Acceleration’ by John Creed, 2004, aims to provide a link between the town centre and the quays. Although just outside the conservation area, it continues the theme of public art.

Temporary artwork on the Brandling Street railway arches. ‘No No No No No’ by Cath Campbell and Miles Thurlow, 2007, encourages passers by to question the world around them.

‘James Hill Monument’ by Peter Coates, 2006, is situated on Bottle Bank, one of the historic routes in the conservation area. The artwork celebrates the life of a 19th Century fiddle player who was a resident of Gateshead. The stone matches that of the Tyne Bridge.
Loss, Intrusion & Damage

Bridges Conservation Area is, historically, an area of change as land uses have evolved. In many cases, planning permission may have been granted during less conservation-minded times. In other cases, permitted development rights can cause changes in the area i.e. work that does not require planning permission. However, the Bridges area has also suffered through vacancy and dereliction as sites have been cleared and vacated.

Gradual changes in a place generally occur over time which can weaken the character and appearance of a place. There is not one particular instance which has damaged the character, but, for example, Welsh slate roof materials – a key architectural feature – can become outnumbered by alternatives.

Fortunately, parts of the Bridges Conservation Area have been restored by the recent Townscape Heritage Initiative which sought to repair and reinstate original architectural features and regenerate the area. The results of this are highly visible with the majority of the historic buildings in the area retaining original features or sporting authentic replacements.

Negative Areas to be Improved

In some instances, parts of the conservation area can detract from the area’s character and appearance. The layout or materials may be inappropriate or a development may not be in keeping with the area’s character and may need to be improved:

• The parking area at Hudson Street and the neighbouring vacant land detracts from the character of the area. Both sites are bounded by a metal fence creating an untidy appearance in an otherwise intact historic area. Overgrown vegetation behind the car park is also untidy. New development here would help complete the tightly-knit pattern of the Central Zone but, in the meantime, it could be significantly enhanced through the use of traditional surface and boundary materials, and better maintenance.

• The remains of the former Gateshead West Station (1868) have great historical value and character but currently create an untidy appearance. In this sense, it detracts from the character of the area but with some improvement works, the historical significance could be recognised and enhanced.

• The forecourt area facing Askew Road, to the south of the railway viaducts, has quite an untidy appearance. It is a high profile area due to the volume of traffic

1) Car park on Hudson Street creates an untidy appearance
2) Former Gateshead West Station
3) Untidy area on Askew Road
along Askew Road and is one of the least characterful and most visually intrusive parts of the conservation area. The much-improved treatment of the Wellington Street arches could be used as a template.

- The pedestrian links from the riverside up to the Hilton Hotel and onto Bankwell Lane/High Level Parade embankment could be improved to be more accessible.

- The area to the east at Oakwellgate is one of the least characterful streets in the conservation area. The remaining railway structure just beyond the conservation area retains some of the historic character which has been lost through the modern intrusions. Improvements here would restore some character and provide a more positive setting for St Mary’s Church. For example, frontage onto Oakwellgate would open the area and liven up the scene.

**Vacant Sites**

Vacant sites within Bridges Conservation Area are also a large issue as this is uncharacteristic of the area and often detracts from the character and appearance:

- To the east of the conservation area, between Kent House and Oakwellgate, the area is predominantly commercial and office buildings. There is vacant land where the former Tyne Bridge Tower was situated and a lot of car parking. Just outside the conservation area, the retaining walls of the original railway station (Oakwellgate, 1839) can be seen and the developments to the east of the conservation area detract from this historic setting. St Mary’s Church is also in close proximity and the uninspiring space does little to provide a worthy setting for the church. Improving the area would enhance the character and link it more coherently with the rest of the conservation area.

- In the Central Zone, within the ‘Railway Triangle’ there is a section of vacant land which detracts from the area. This particular character zone retains its historical character and evidences the tightly packed layout of the once industrial area. Vacant land is uncharacteristic and development would contribute to the layout and grain of this area.

- The former Greenesfield Railway Works site is currently vacant land with the remains of a derelict building associated with the works. The rest of the land at this location has been developed for modern residential apartments which helps retain the built-up character of the area. The land should be developed to retain the layout and scale of this area.

**Amenity Issues**

Bridges Conservation Area can be affected by amenity issues that impact on the environment, some which are more difficult to resolve than others. Nonetheless, these issues detract from the character of the conservation area.

One of the most harmful issues is the volume of traffic in the conservation area as it is a major thoroughfare for vehicles travelling to Newcastle. The Tyne Bridge approach, in particular, is extremely busy causing congestion and a high level of noise. The expanse of the road network and the volume of traffic also restricts pedestrian accessibility, mainly the north-south movement between the quays and the town centre.
**Condition of Buildings**

In general, the condition of many of the buildings within the conservation area is excellent. The recent Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) has improved the historic buildings through the restoration and reinstatement of original architectural features. The evaluation report shows the before and after affects of the THI which emphasises the great work that was achieved through the scheme.

In this sense, there has been relatively little incremental change and harm to architectural features that hasn’t been addressed through the THI and that still remains in the area today. The designs and materials as well as the methods of repair and alterations were all carried out to a conservation standard as is required for a heritage-led regeneration scheme.

However, in some places, historic buildings which have not been addressed through the THI are still in need of repairs and improvements. In particular, the former boiler shop which was part of the railway works (Greensfield Zone) is an example of where improvements could be made as the building has great historic value and adds to the historic understanding of the area. Unfortunately, due to its vacant status, the building has fallen into disrepair and although the basic materials and features do add to the character, improvements to the buildings would significantly contribute to the area’s appearance.

Overall, by ensuring appropriate methods of repair, alterations and new work, further improvements to the area would strengthen the historic character of Bridges Conservation Area. Following on from the high-quality work produced through the THI, the area could be further improved.

An ongoing issue within the conservation area is the vegetation growing on and through the railway structures. The vegetation can be damaging to the structures themselves by growing into the mortar so that it becomes weakened and ultimately lost. The vegetation is also harmful to the appearance of the area and this is particularly apparent within the railway zone.

Unmanaged vegetation growth usually affects buildings that aren’t in use and is a particular problem in the railway zone.
Appendix A - Ages of Streets and Spaces in Bridges Conservation Area. Shows the development of the area's 'layers'. © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey Gateshead Council 100019132
Contribution of Streets/Spaces to the Conservation Area's Character

This map shows the characterful nature of all the streets and spaces within the conservation area. Each is considered on its own merits and it is important to disassociate the aesthetic influences of the enclosuring buildings. The purpose is to establish whether the space itself is integral to the area's character.

KEY:
- Streets/spaces contributing to character
- Streets/spaces neutral to character
- Streets/spaces detracting from character
- Building footprints

Appendix B - Contribution of Streets & Spaces © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey Gateshead Council 100019132
Appendix C - Contribution of Buildings © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey Gateshead Council 100019132
Contribution of Streets, Spaces and Buildings to the Conservation Area

This shows the individual contribution that the streets, spaces and buildings make to the character of the conservation area. It allows the sharp conflicts between characterful areas and incoherent or bland areas to be readily identified. It also recognises areas that are wholly positive or negative.

**KEY:**
- Buildings contributing to character
- Buildings neutral to character
- Buildings detracting from character
- Streets/spaces contributing to character
- Streets/spaces neutral to character
- Streets/spaces detracting from character

Appendix D - Contribution of Streets, Spaces and Buildings © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey Gateshead Council 100019132
Overall, by ensuring appropriate methods of repair, alterations and new work, further improvements to the area would strengthen the historic character of Bridges Conservation Area. Following on from the high-quality work produced through the THI, the area could be further improved.

An ongoing issue within the conservation area is the vegetation growing on and through the railway structures. The vegetation can be damaging to the area and can require regular maintenance. The vegetation is also harmful to the appearance of the area and this is particularly apparent within the railway zone.

Appendix E - Heritage Designations © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey Gateshead Council 100019132