

Bishop Middleham County Durham Conservation Area

Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

Prepared for Durham County Council

September 2010

Report No: 0056/1-08



Durham County Council
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL



Archaeo-Environment Ltd
Marian Cottage
Lartington
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 9BP

Tel/Fax: (01833) 650573
Email: info@aenvironment.co.uk
Web: www.aenvironment.co.uk

Contents

<i>Summary and Acknowledgements</i>	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. ABOUT BISHOP MIDDLEHAM CONSERVATION AREA	6
Location and Context	6
Origins and Development of the Settlement	8
Description and Summary of Statement of Significance	14
Archaeological Significance	15
Form and layout of the Conservation Area	18
Vistas and Views	21
The Built Heritage	22
3. CHARACTER AREAS	24
The Church Character Area	30
The Green Character Area	32
4. SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSERVATION AREA	36
5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY	38
6. PROPOSALS TO PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE CONSERVATION AREA	40
7. REFERENCES	43

List of Figures

1	Location Plan
2	Bishop Middleham Conservation Area Boundary in 2009
3	1 st edition OS map dating to 1856-60
4	2 nd edition OS map dating to 1898
5	Conjectural evolution of settlement
6	Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area according to grade
7	Areas of archaeological potential
8	Key views from the Conservation Area
9	Location of two distinctive Character Areas
10	Significance Map
11	Map showing the location of the deer park walls, scheduled area and conservation area
12	Proposed minimum extension to the Conservation Area

Summary

Bishop Middleham is a Conservation Area based around a village green, but which may have originally grown up around the Bishop's Castle to the south. The village displays considerable civic pride with new railings along pathways, a welcoming monument, a Millennium Garden and a wildlife park. The conservation area consists of two main character areas, one based around the Church with an agricultural character and another based around the village green. The green is located on steeply sloping land and is bisected by paths and steps. There are buildings in prominent positions of considerable historic interest, however one of the main characteristics of the village is the loss of historic character through some modern development on the green which fails to fit in with existing historic character and through the replacement of traditional window and door styles with modern plastic substitutes in inappropriate styles.

The village has important visual and historic links with the Bishop's Castle and with the countryside to the south which still displays evidence of the once waterlogged landscape which had the effect of attracting settlement to the higher ground on 'islands' within a sea of wetland and linked by causeways. There is also considerable evidence to the south of the village for the medieval deer park which surrounded the Bishop's Castle and medieval and post medieval field systems and these links need to be maintained.

Acknowledgements

The production of a conservation area appraisal is best carried out where there is an existing local knowledge base in the form of a published local historian. This appraisal has been made easier to produce because of the work by Frank Bellwood and the late Newton Hale, both of Bishop Middleham, whose researches were incorporated into this report. John Smith of the local history group has also shared his knowledge and passion for the village and for this I am extremely grateful. The local consultation exercise was helped considerably by the hard work of a number of residents including Michele MacCallum and Lindsay Johnston and the parish council who funded additional display material to coincide with the village fete. Finally I am grateful to Bill Kataký of the former Sedgefield Borough Council who commissioned this report in 2008 and to Elaine Hogg and Sandra Robertson of Durham County Council who commissioned the additional public consultation exercise in 2010.

Report author: Caroline Hardie, Archaeo-Environment Ltd

Additional advice on the extent of the deer park walls: Niall Hammond, Archaeo-Environment Ltd

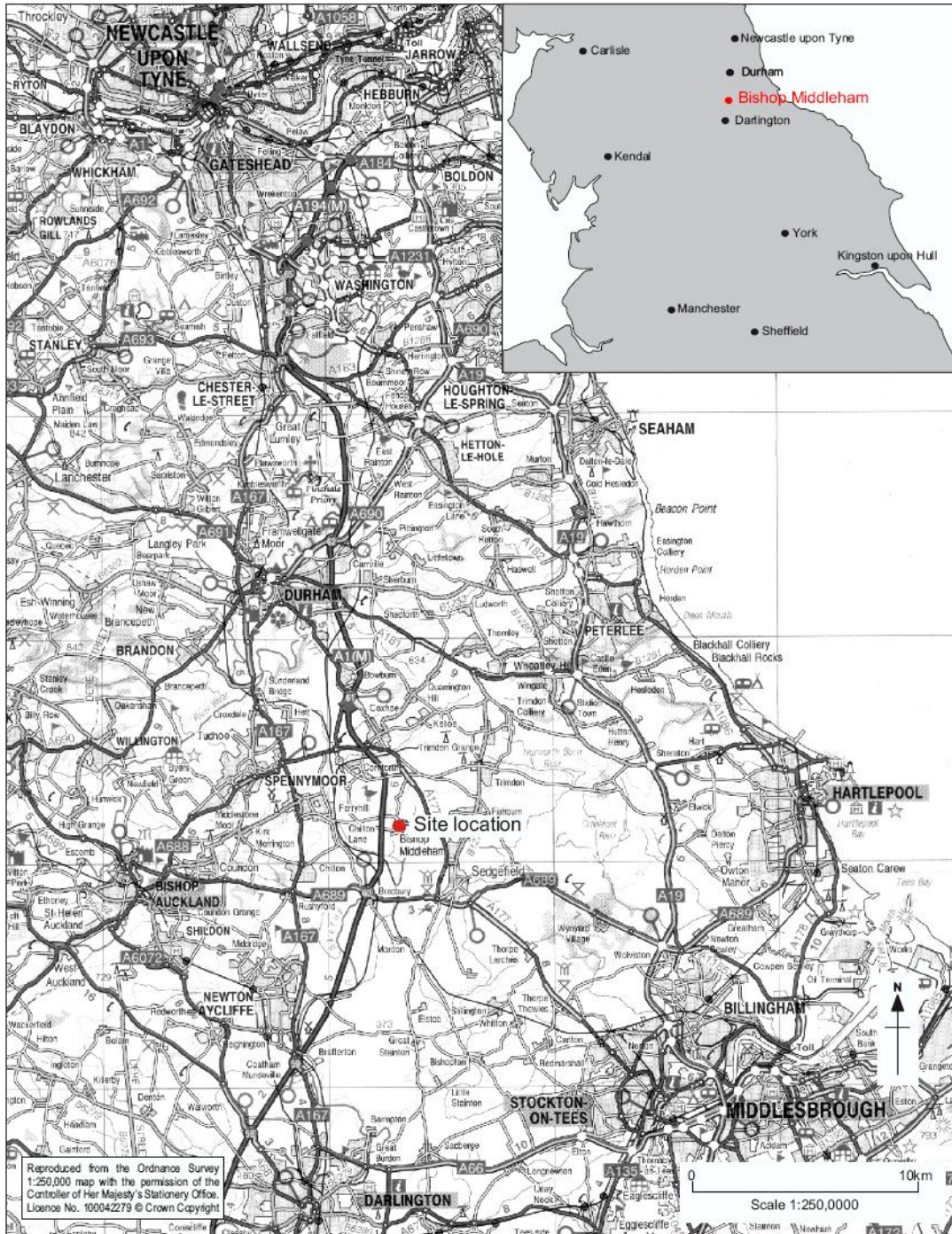


Figure 1. Bishop Middleham Location

1. INTRODUCTION

This study of the Bishop Middleham Conservation Area was commissioned by Sedgfield Borough Council in 2008 and a subsequent public consultation phase by the new Durham County Council in 2010.

Conservation Areas are places where buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of special quality and interest. These places are protected under the provision of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which defines them as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are over 8000 Conservation Areas in England of which 94 are in County Durham. Conservation Areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings as all features whether listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognised as part of its character. Research by central and local government has noted the strong links between living and working in well managed historic places and a good quality of life and a strong economy.¹ It is therefore important to protect them and ensure that decisions about their future are based on sound information and an understanding of their origins and value.

Bishop Middleham was designated as a Conservation Area in 1993 by Sedgefield Borough Council. Designation brings certain duties upon local planning authorities. Currently local authorities are required:

- (a) To formulate and publish from time to time proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and submit them for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.
- (b) In exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas.

This Conservation Area Appraisal is an assessment of those features and qualities, which give Bishop Middleham its own special character. This does not come from the quality of its buildings alone. 'The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular 'mix' of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; and trees and street furniture, which contribute to particular views - all these and more make up the familiar local scene'.² It aims to give a consistent and sound basis upon which to determine planning applications and to raise awareness of its special character. However, no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space in Bishop Middleham, should not imply that it is of no interest.

¹ Arup 2005, 49

² What is a Conservation Area? On the English Heritage web site <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.00100200800g008>

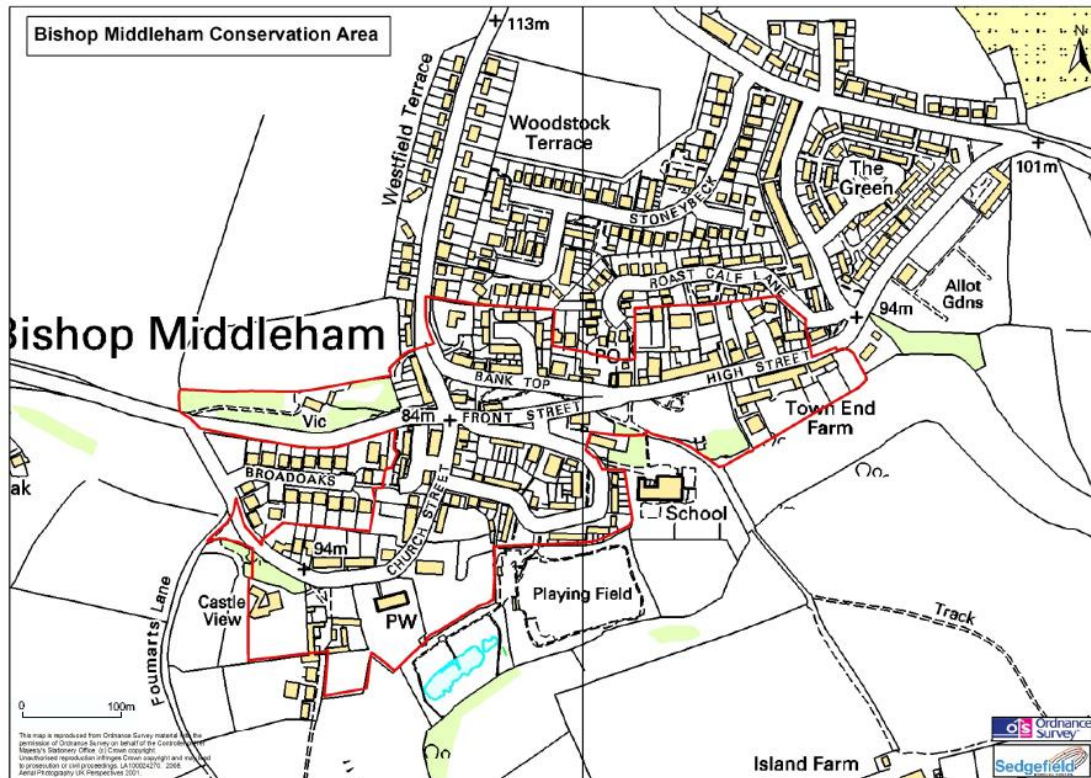


Figure 2. The Conservation Area boundary in 2009

2.0 ABOUT BISHOP MIDDLEHAM CONSERVATION AREA

2.1 Location and Context

'The village of Bishop Middleham is irregularly built on the sides of two declivities and in the valley between them...' (Whellan 1894, 244)

The village of Bishop Middleham lies between the settlements of Ferryhill and Fishburn, about 20km from Durham City. The village lies on a gently rolling magnesium limestone escarpment in the East Durham Plateau (DCC accessed 16.11.08). The key settlement pattern characteristics of this area are old agricultural villages scattered thinly across the landscape. Buildings are of local limestone or carboniferous sandstone with roofs of slate or clay pantile and are often set around a village green, such as Bishop Middleham. Where settlements have a medieval origin, the edges usually consist of 19th and 20th century housing and local authority housing is often on the settlement edge, although at Bishop Middleham it is also to be found within the heart of the historic core. The landscape is locally dominated by industrial land use and its associated infrastructure including major roads, railways and transmission lines, particularly in the coastal A19 and central A1M corridors. The A1 corridor is less than 0.5km away and creates significant noise pollution, but the surrounding fields are now largely agricultural despite industrial activity throughout the 19th century.



Plate 1. Reverse S-shape field boundaries typical of medieval times and often enclosed in the 16th century in the fields off Fougarts Lane

The broader landscape, within which Bishop Middleham sits, has been heavily influenced by coal mining both in its settlement pattern and infrastructure, and in the substantial areas of derelict and recently claimed land in the urban fringe. Bishop Middleham has been less affected by these industrial processes than many other villages in the area. The escarpment and parts of the plateau have also been affected by the quarrying of limestone. Large active and disused quarries occupy prominent sites on the escarpment. A number of older quarries that have naturally revegetated are managed as nature reserves but at Bishop Middleham the land between the castle and the A1 is carr land which has been waterlogged for centuries. While coal mines in the area were open, the water table was lower, but this has

risen again to pre-industrial levels. This carr land was considered to be of low value throughout medieval times and in need of drainage, however it was also put to good effect by using it for fish ponds and for keeping swans. The presence of this largely waterlogged landscape has dictated the location of settlement in the area with the village and adjacent farms, such as the appropriately named Island Farm, being positioned on high ground and linked by causeways across the carr land. These causeways can still be seen, such as the holloway³ which runs east of the school to Island Farm. The visual effect of these apparent islands within wetland may also have held spiritual meaning (there was a long association of prehistoric religious associations with wetlands and early Christian associations with islands and promontories which set the religious life slightly apart from the secular one). This would have made an ecclesiastical base at Bishop Middleham attractive and it may also have been attractive to a secular power base because of its inherent defensibility.

The wider landscape is generally open and broad in scale although the plateau terrain rarely affords long distance views. From the higher ground of the escarpment there are panoramic views across the Wear lowlands to the Pennine fringes beyond, and south across the Tees plain to the Cleveland Hills. The landscape of the plateau has been heavily influenced by urban and industrial development and its scattered mining towns and villages and busy roads give it a semi-rural or urban fringe character in places (DCC accessed 16.11.08).

³ An ancient path which has gradually worn deeper into the ground through constant use over many centuries

2.2 Origins and Development of Settlement

Bishop Middleham is thought to have Anglo-Saxon origins. Middleham literally means the middle settlement, but it is less clear what it was the middle of. It may have been the central stopping off point for the bishop travelling between his castles at Durham and Stockton, or it may have been a vill in the centre of an Anglo-Saxon estate (Watts 2002, 77). Middleham is almost central to the neighbouring villages of Cornforth and Sedgfield, along with Mainsforth and the disappeared village of Holdforth; at least two of these villages are known to have existed before the Norman Conquest. Perhaps these villages combined mark out the original Anglo-Saxon estate? The prefix Bishop (or rather Bushopp as it was) was not added until 1613.

The high land to the south of the present day village was used as a high status building for the bishops from about the 11th to the 14th century. This suggests that the construction of the castle was the reason behind the settlement, however it would not be out of character for the bishops to choose an old power base from earlier Anglo-Saxon times as their administrative centre; indeed the curious mixture of island and wetland may have made it an attractive place to settle from prehistoric times.

Of the once noble Castle of Middleham few vestiges now remain. Portions of the massive foundations still to be seen bear witness of its former strength and magnitude.’ (Whellan 1894, 244)



Plate 2. A conjectural reconstruction of the Bishop's Castle, St Michael's Church and the fishponds before the village has grown up around Church Street. (Courtesy of Durham County Council.) In fact the village had probably already become established by the time the stone church was being built

The castle must have been a fine site. The marshy ground which resulted in the lands being used for fish ponds, meadowland and even a swannery, probably meant that the Bishop's castle was surrounded with water; access being restricted to a causeway between the church and the castle which can still be seen. It is no wonder that it was a favourite residence of at least two of the bishops. Bishop Pudsey may have had a house there about 1183, when the demesne of the manor was in his own hands; Bishop Philip de Poitou (1197–1208) certainly stayed at Middleham, and charters and letters were frequently dated here from 1241 onwards. Two bishops died at their manor-house of

Middleham - Robert of Holy Island in 1283 and Richard Kellaw in 1316. Bishop Louis Beaumont, successor of Kellaw, built a kitchen here and began a new hall and chapel. From an account roll of 1349–50 it seems that Bishop Hatfield was at that date executing extensive repairs. However the dramatic position of the castle and its consequent defensibility were positive aspects of what was poor unproductive land in dire need of drainage. By 1384 the manor-house was worth nothing beyond reprises and after that date the references to the bishops' occupation of it cease. It seems probable that they gave up using it as a residence at the end of this century (Page 1928) and so they let the land to the bailiff and subsequently through a number of private hands. The power of the Bishops waned after the Reformation and by 1561 when the first protestant bishop was appointed, permission was granted to villagers to use stone from the castle at Bishop Middleham to build their cottages.

The residence of the Bishops now only survives as earthwork remains to the south of the village, but they are Scheduled as an Ancient Monument and therefore considered to be nationally important. The scheduling does not extend to the walls of the deerpark which surrounded it, nor to the linking causeway between village and castle.

In 1146 Osbert, the nephew of Bishop Flambard, gave the Church of Middleham to the Prior and Convent at Durham; this is the first recorded mention of the church, although the village may have already been established for some time. In 1183 the 'Baldon Book', a survey of all the land owned by the Bishop of Durham, records that there were some 32 households in the village, which was surveyed along with neighbouring Cornforth. The survey was particularly detailed and names a number of individuals such as Arkil, Ralph and William the Headborough.

'Arkill holds in Middleham 4 bovates⁴ and pays 14s. Ralph 2 bovates and pays 10s, and 5 cart-loads of wood. 7 cottagers each of whom holds 6 acres and works from the feast of St. Peter's Chains⁵ to the feast of St Martin⁶ for two days a week and from the feast of St. Martin to the feast of St Peter's Chains for 1 day a week. Four bondsmen pay 4s for 4 tofts and crofts and do 4 obligatory days in the autumn.' (Austin 1982, 25)

The 11-12th century bishops of Durham were associated with a particular kind of village plan form, namely houses and farms around a village green. Each farm would have a linear plot of land to the rear, known as a toft, and on this plot small scale industry could take place, the cess pit would be located and some vegetables grown. Village greens had particular uses. They could serve as grazing land for cows in milk and tethered horses. Where a market was permitted, it would be set up on the green with each stall holder being allocated a particular

⁴ A bovate is a unit of land about 6 hectares

⁵ This falls on Lammas Day (or loaf mass day) about the first day in August

⁶ This is Martinmas and marks the start of winter and falls on November 11th

area depending on what wares they were selling. The green was a communal area and any buildings on it were limited to a smithy, ale house, pinfold and sometimes a herd house for the common herder in charge of the animals. Generally, any further historic encroachment post dates medieval times and is often 18-19th century in date, for example the Old School House



Plate 3. A possible bread oven in the gable end of 1 Front Street

and no.s 5 and 7 Front Street appear to be such encroachments, built once the green was no longer sacrosanct. However village greens can also arise simply because of the meeting of roads creating waste space in the centre. This can be compounded by the topography as at Bishop Middleham where the steepness of the slope makes its use for anything other than a communal green area difficult. Without further

research it is not possible to say whether the green was part of the original design of the planned village or whether it evolved over time on waste ground created by the meeting of roads. Whatever its origins it has clearly been valued as a green for many centuries.

Historic documents dating to 1384 describe the tenants in Middleham and the existence of a common bakehouse which belonged to John Atthegate at a rent of 4s. 6d. Such bakehouses were a normal feature in medieval villages and were used for daily baking to avoid lighting numerous ovens in individual dwellings. (The location of this 14th century communal oven is not known, but a lump on the gable end of 1 Front Street (see plate 3) looks like a domestic bread oven). There are also references to land being enclosed from waste which suggests that the field pattern close to the village has 14th century origins.

'There were only six bondage or villeinage tenements in Middleham, each consisting of a messuage and 2 oxgangs of 15 acres, the tenants paying 6s. for cornage. The vicar had two of these villeinage holdings. Thirty-two tenants held 'exchequer land' generally in small holdings of 6 or 7 acres, some of which are described as newly-inclosed from the waste.' (Page 1928)

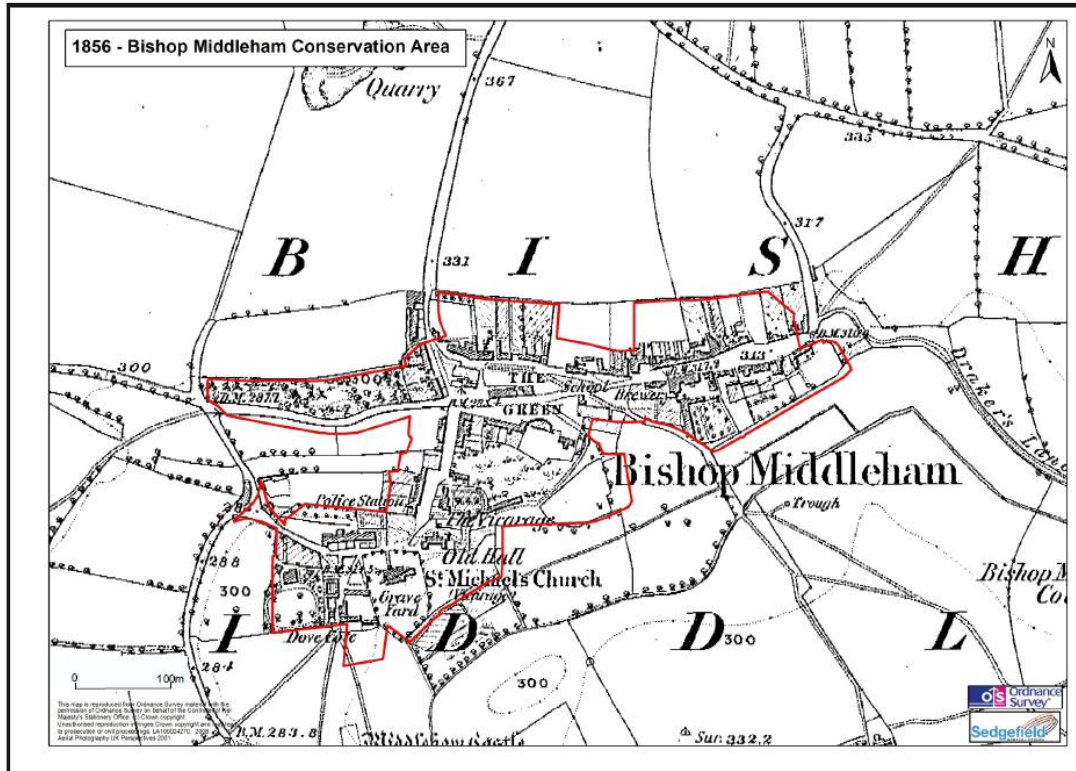


Figure 3. The 1st edition 1856 Ordnance Survey 6 inch map of Bishop Middleham showing the village before the 20th century development. The two historic cores around the Church and the Green are quite clear here as is the difference in street pattern. The church area is a loosely knit group of scattered houses, while the Green area is a typical medieval layout with properties to the rear of Bank Top and along both sides of High Street having long plots or tofts typical of medieval settlements

The church served a much wider area than it does today covering in addition to Bishop Middleham, Mainsforth, Cornforth, Thrislington and Garmondsway. The common fields around the village were enclosed in 1693 (Haile 1970, 12) resulting in a change of landscape character and a shift from small scale farming to larger farms being run by fewer labourers. Two charities were established to help the poor in 1724 and 1742. In 1700 a brewery was built in the village using a private water supply from a local well also used by local people (although only on certain days of the week). This building was burnt down in 1899 but the new building was to make a prominent impact on residents and visitors alike with its pagoda roof. In 1770 the first Church of England school was built by subscription on the village green with an additional small piece of land enclosed for the school master's garden. The extension to what is now called The Old School dates to 1876; it remains one of the most distinctive pieces of architecture in the village.

The village contains 'four public houses, a brewery, and a few tradesmen's shops.' (Whellan 1894, 244)



Figure 4. There is very little additional development in Bishop Middleham by the end of the 19th century despite the growth of coal mining and quarrying in the area (2nd ed OS map 1898).

There is very little difference between the size of the village in the mid 19th century and the late 19th century as seen in early Ordnance Survey maps (see figs 3 and 4). This surprising level of stagnation at a time when other east Durham villages were expanding is not at all typical. The lack of growth at a time when other villages were becoming dwarfed in terraced housing has been explained because of the high water levels in the area. A pit shaft expected to lead to expansion east of Island Farm in 1870 had to be abandoned due to waterlogging and the expected consequent population boom was halted.

In 1894 Francis Whellan described the village as:

'very primitive appearance; several of the dwelling houses and cottages with their antique sun dials in front bearing marks of great age'.

These sun dials and their historic cottages were one of the casualties of the mid 20th century. The last sun dial was to be found on the Red Lion Inn on Bank Top. Most of the development beyond the historic core of the village occurred in the 20th century. In the early years of that century Perm Terrace and Kirtley Terrace were built as was the Vicarage in 1902; this location chosen for its prominent but secluded position on what was known as Nut Garth. By the 1950s Woodstock Terrace, Westfield Terrace and the housing estate at The Green were also built, introducing styles of architecture which were no longer distinctive to the village. Kiln

Crescent was laid out by the 1960s and within the next decade the large development at Stoneybeck had been built. The 1950s and 60s took their toll on Bishop Middleham with the demolition of some of its historic houses around the green to be replaced with council houses. While this period marked the decline of design and sympathetic historic character, Bishop Middleham did have some development which makes a positive contribution to the village today, for example the houses at Bishops Garth tucked behind Church Street with distinctive red pantile roofing, steeply pitched roofs, rendered walls and horizontal metal glazing bars so typical of the 1950s. Modern houses around Kiln Crescent are also in keeping with the character of the village with steeply pitched pantile roofs, pastel coloured render and external chimney stacks. Unfortunately none have retained their traditional window style.

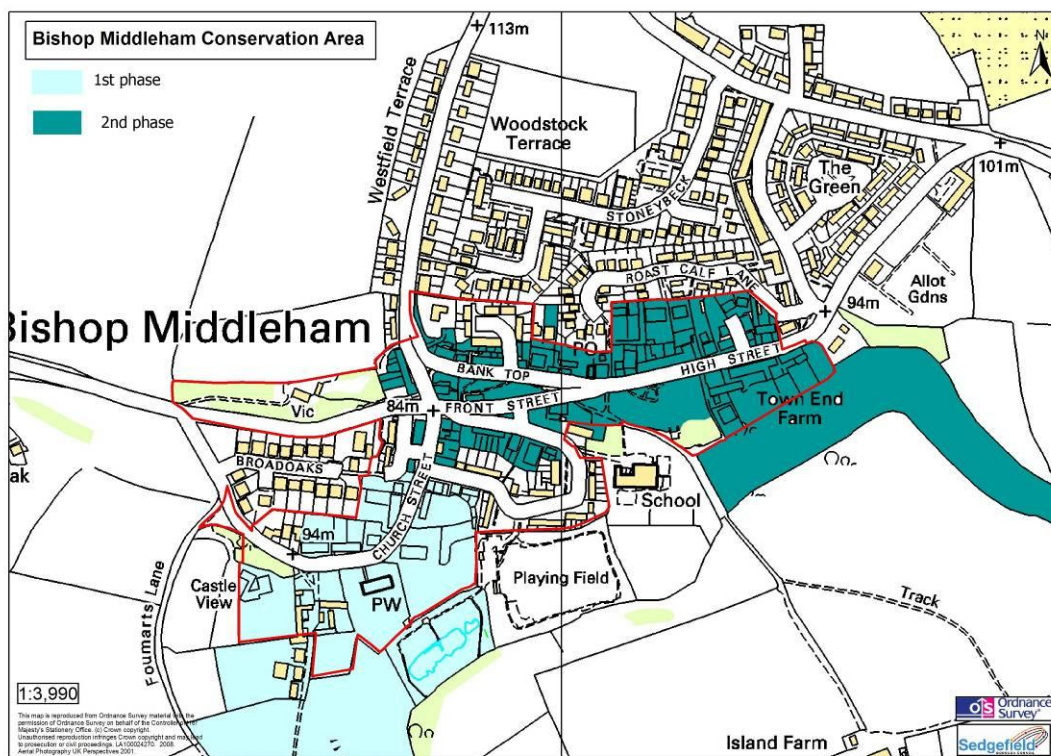


Figure 5. The conjectural evolution of settlement in Bishop Middleham. This is based on street pattern only and does not take the age of current buildings into account which can be modern. It assumes that the settlement around Church Street is earlier (pale blue) and grew up along side the Bishop's Castle and the church. The second phase (teal) is based around a village green and maybe 12th-13th century in date. Further research is required

2.3 Description and summary statement of significance

There are a number of particularly distinctive features of Bishop Middleham. The undulating contours of the village green provides varied walking surfaces, linking steps and pathways across the greens, resulting in a mixture of views across competing red pantile rooflines and out to the countryside beyond. Many smaller historic details have been lost, but there are interesting survivals, mainly in listed buildings such as the Tuscan door case at no.s 12 and 14 High Street, the possible bread oven at no. 1 Front Street, the Dun Cow inn sign and its mounting block, the terracotta ridge tiles over porches on Bank Top, the near ruinous farm buildings at Hall Farm Cottages and the historically important Town End Farm, the scoria blocks at Hall Farm Cottages and the patched limestone walls which run throughout the village, but particularly around Church Street. Holloways also feature in the village lending an air of times past with sunken paths slowly worn out of the ground by footsteps of residents over nearly one thousand years.



Plate 4. Some of the locally distinctive features of Bishop Middleham: external chimney stacks, steps and paths linking varied ground levels across greens, holloways, views across rooflines and patchy limestone walls.

A strong feature of buildings in the village whether old or new is the external chimney stack. While those at the Old Manor House and Kirtley Terrace are as result of the partial demolition, many others are a deliberate choice of style which occurs throughout the village. The ruins of Bishop Middleham Castle are an important historic context for the Conservation Area and are a crucial part of the story of the origins of Bishop Middleham. They are linked to the village by ancient causeways and rural paths across waterlogged fields with relic medieval field boundaries forming their distinctive reverse -S shape.

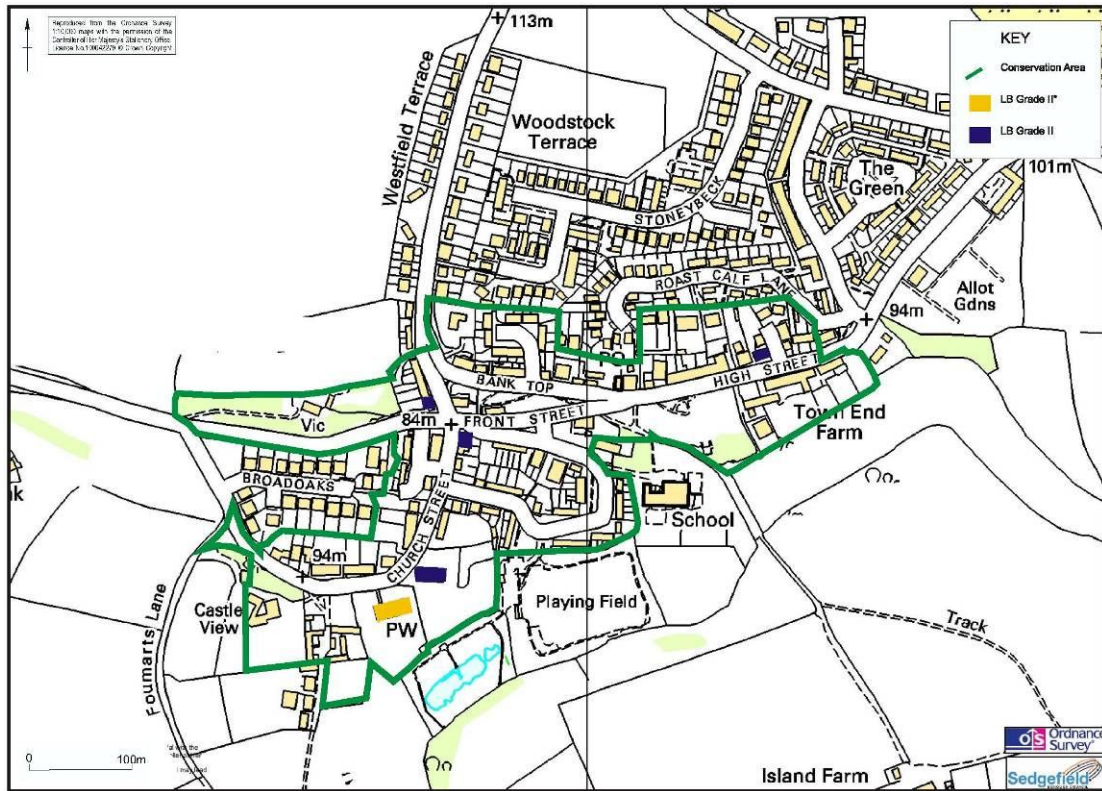


Figure 6. Listed buildings in the Conservation Area according to grade.

2.4 Archaeological significance



Plate 5. Remains of the deer park wall. This stretch is clearly in two phases, presumably the deer park wall has been lowered and rebuilt over the centuries (photo: John Smith, Bishop Middleham)

There is some evidence of ancient activity in the area in the form of prehistoric and Roman stray finds, but nothing to suggest occupation on the site of the village. A group of human burials were uncovered in 1932 in a cave during quarrying but it is difficult to relate this to a particular place of occupation. The Roman Road known as the Cades Road which ran from Brough on Humber to Newcastle upon Tyne also runs through the parish. No Roman period buildings have been found here, but a small bronze statue and a set of four Roman pans indicate some sort of presence in the area. The presence of these pre-medieval finds tell us little about the nature of settlement in the area prior to the Norman Conquest, but they are a reminder that a site suitable for the building of an early medieval settlement is also a good site for a prehistoric one. Prominent hill top positions such as the top of Church Street, the site of the Bishop's Castle, Island Farm or even Bank Top or their south facing slopes are

all potentially attractive places to prehistoric ancestors, all the more so if surrounded by water. Low lying ground adjacent to occupied higher ground is also of interest because of the potential for well-preserved waterlogged remains such as pollen which will not only allow a more detailed picture to be constructed of the wider landscape and what was growing in the area at different times, but through the preservation of organic deposits such as wood and leather.

The majority of archaeological remains likely to be found within the village will relate to its medieval occupation. Houses within the historic core are built on the site of houses which may have been located there since the 11th or 12th centuries. A number of houses appear to contain the remains, albeit fragmentary, of earlier houses, certainly 17th century in date, but possibly earlier. Back gardens are likely to be on the site of burgage plots which may have subterranean evidence of medieval cess pits, small scale metal working, or arable production. Houses beyond the historic core may be built on the medieval fields or deer park which encircle the village. The village green has presumably been a green since the 11th or 12th centuries, so any archaeological remains below that will relate to encroachment, pinfolds, former smithies, the site of the stocks or the layout of market stalls.

To the south of the village are the remains of the Bishop's Castle, the deer park and associated infrastructure such as fishponds. The degraded hedgerows which form the redundant field boundaries around the village are often typically medieval in form, possibly set out in the 11th or 12th century, but fossilized with hedgerows boundaries in the 14th to 16th centuries. The deer park may contain evidence of earlier settlement patterns which pre-date the 11th century, or the remains of deer houses or park keepers' quarters. Fragments of the original walling and gates also survive.

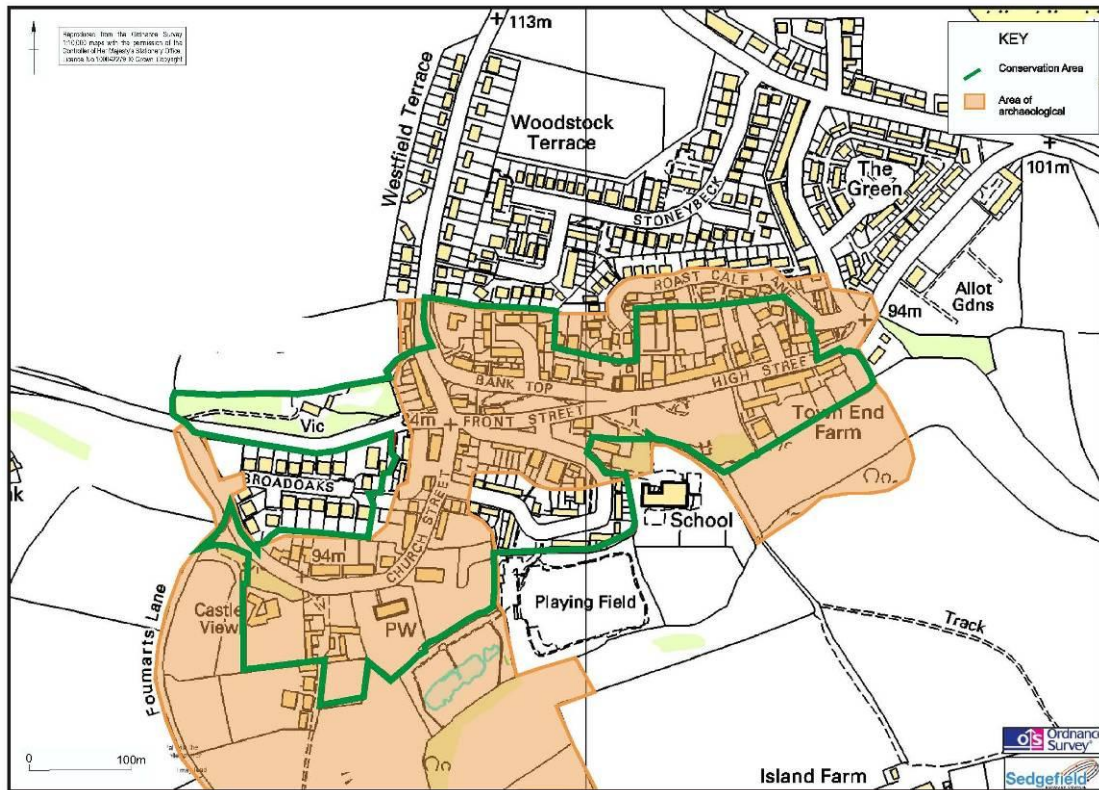


Figure 7. Areas of archaeological potential in Bishop Middleham

When such remains are below ground they tend to have less impact on the character of the present day village. They do however contribute towards our understanding of why the village takes the form that it does today. Because of this and the additional research questions which buried deposits can help to answer, archaeological remains are protected through the planning process and some additional legislation. The village therefore has the capacity to inform us about medieval life and the role of the bishops in designing the layout and controlling the social and economic infrastructure in medieval villages in Durham. As such the entire Conservation Area, plus the site of the deer park and the castle should be regarded as one archaeological site.

Historic buildings whether listed or not may also contain evidence of earlier structures and so where there is sufficient suspicion of such remains existing, archaeological recording in advance of works, should help to understand the significance of the buildings and whether there are remains which should inform the design process. There are two buildings which may come up for development in the near future and which appear to be of historic significance namely Town End Farm and Hall Farm Cottages. Other historic buildings worthy of recording include in addition to listed buildings, 1 Front Street, The Old School and a number of buildings on Church Street between the Dun Cow and the Old Hall.

2.5 Form and layout of Conservation Area

'Bishops-Middleham...being situated...on the sides of two hills, ascending from a deep vale, through which the road passes.' (Slater 1854, 63)

Bishop Middleham is formed around two historic areas, namely the village green divided into two by Front Street and Bank Top until they join to become High Street and the area around the church and castle around Church Street and Foumart Lane.⁷ The two areas may have different origins. That around Church Street has a less uniform street pattern and being closer to the Bishop's Castle maybe the earlier of the two. The village around the green may have later origins and relate to the expansion of the village sometime after the 12th century.

Front Street runs through the centre of the village green with a steeply sloping bank to the north and a level area dominated by the old school buildings to the south. The green has several fine trees and shrubs. The tree planting was originally laid out to celebrate the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902 (Haile 1970, 18).



Plate 6. Front Street looking up towards Bank Top

7 Foumart's Lane – named after the Polecat also known as Foulmartin or Foumart. There must have been enough of them around to have given their name to the lane. The lane is not named on the 1st or 2nd edition OS maps

The road rises steeply to the east on to High Street from where there are attractive views to the rolling open countryside to the south beyond the village. Another area of green exists here, once the site of the Brewery and now with a sundial laid out to commemorate the Millennium. This is not to be confused with the modern housing estate based around The Green just off Roast Calf Lane (called this after 19th century feasting which was held here where a calf was roasted (Chatt 1960)). A narrow sunken path, once known as Muck Back Alley runs along the side of the green down to the site of an old spring and returns to the village passed the modern school via a medieval holloway flanked with patchy limestone walls. It also heads off towards the appropriately named Island Farm as a causeway linking with the village.

Properties front on to the roads around the green and are mainly simple two storey houses in short terraces. Some front directly on to the road, but many have small front gardens. The house styles vary representing a range of building types and dates which lends an air of informality to the village.

Church Street slopes steeply towards the 12th century St Michael's Church and Hall. The road is flanked by high stone walls with a hidden flight of steps through an arched doorway to the back of the Hall. Two storey houses line both sides of the road and give a close knit feel to this lane. The west of the church has a more open character with an agricultural feel around old and converted farm buildings and the wooded grounds of Castle View.



The vicarage is situated in a prominent position on rising ground in a stand of mature trees. These trees along with the stone highway boundary and fine gateposts create an attractive entrance to the village from the west. Recent development here has sought to reflect the agricultural character of this part of the village with hemmel arches and hoists over gable ends.

Plate 7. Church Street looking up towards St Michael's

The changes in levels within the Conservation Area are a distinctive aspect of Bishop Middleham's character. Views from raised areas over rooftops in the village centre are particularly important as are the intersecting paths which join the different levels of green and the interlinking limestone walls. The survival of many paths which have their origins in medieval times is also distinctive of Bishop Middleham. Muck Back Lane is now a footpath,

albeit it somewhat overgrown; Mary Lane at the west end of the Vicarage garden led into the villages West Field, Well Lane led to the water supplies; Drackers Lane was the main route to East Field. Roast Calf Lane was named after the revival of a Michaelmas Feast in the 1890s which had a roasted calf as its central attraction. However at the time Roast Calf Lane was a narrow cobbled vennel leading to Garden House which had a large oven suitable for roasting. Its character and location has changed significantly. Many other historic names have gone out of use.⁸

Then and Now....

1918



2010



The maturing of tree cover is the most significant difference and disguises the loss of the brewery roofline which was a distinctive skyline feature. Road markings, street lighting and bins create a more urban feel.

⁸ Among the field names of the demesne of Bishop Middleham mentioned in 1384 are 'Grewhondes place,' 'Edmundesmedow,' 'Spornlawosmedow,' 'Redkar,' 'Horseker,' and 'Wylowker.' (VCH 1928). Those names ending in 'ker' or 'kar' presumably relate to carr land – wetland.

2.3 Vistas and Views

As the village is located on sloping ground distant views are an especially important aspect of the village's character. Looking towards the village from the west the red pantile roofs of Broadoaks draw the eye towards the top of Church Street where visually dominant buildings can be seen. From the top of Church Street heading down Fomarts Lane, glimmers of water catch the sunlight providing an important visual link with this once waterlogged landscape. In this area, the Bishop's fish ponds were located providing an alternative to meat on fast days.

Swans were also kept here in the 14th century (Chatt et al 1960, chp 1).



Plate 8. Glimpses of waterlogged fields (possible medieval fishponds) from Church Street

Heading through the village along Front Street, the Vicarage commands views across the village from its lofty height, while views across to the rooftops of Church Street can also be appreciated from the raised pavement cut into the sloping ground. Houses along Bank Top have fine views over the village to the south and out to open countryside. Continuing along Bank Top to High Street these views continue across to open countryside. The approach to the village from the north passed Westfield Terrace also command views over the village to the countryside below. Figure 6 shows the key vistas and views which can be obtained from within the village and which need to be retained.



Plate 9. Views over rooftops is typically characteristic of Bishop Middleham

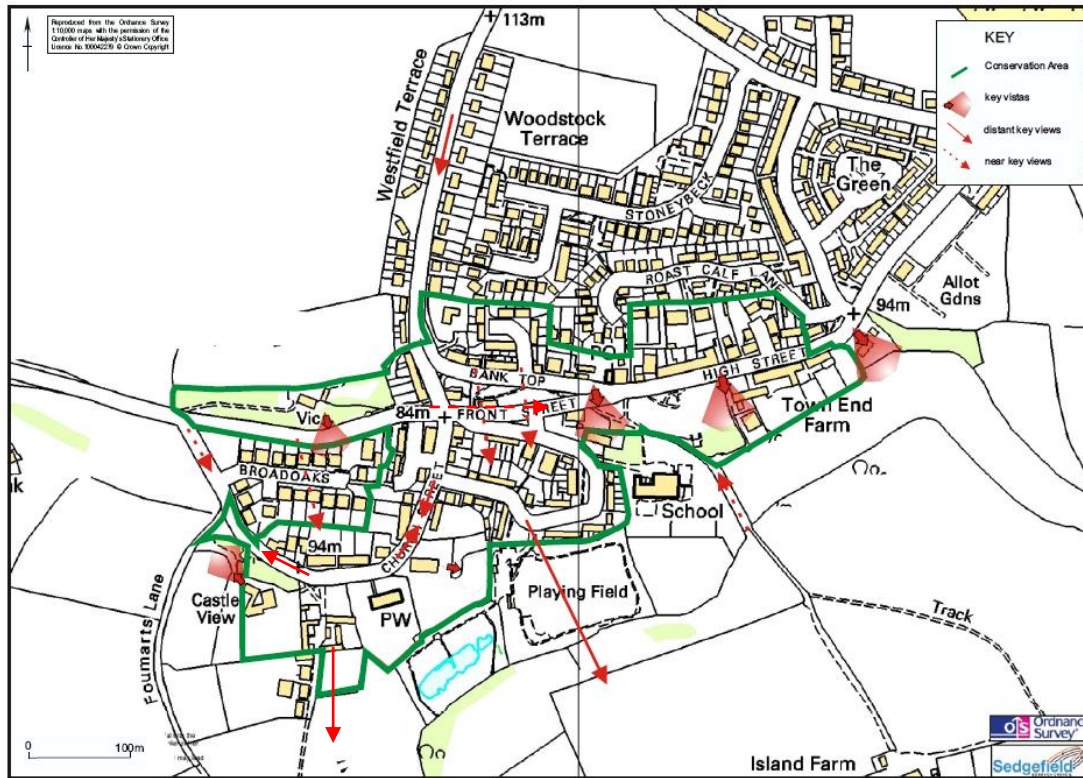


Figure 8. Key views from the Conservation Area

2.4 The Built Heritage

The Evolution of Architectural Styles

The majority of historic buildings in the town date to the 18th and 19th centuries, however there are a few earlier survivals. St Michael's Church is an 11th or 12th century church presumably dating to the layout of the village. Much of the visible architecture dates to the 13th century, such as the pointed lancets, outer doorway and porch and the 19th century when it was remodelled. Below the bellcote are the arms of the Bishops' of Durham; this may have been removed from the castle (Pevsner 1990, 109), although their presence on the church would not be unexpected.



Plate 10. The Manor House form and steeply pitched roof are suggestive of a pre-18th century date

There is some evidence of pre-18th century buildings in the village. Cottages prior to the 18th century were likely to be reed thatched with reed from the nearby carrs and mostly single storey with small casement windows. Thatching tends to require steeply pitched roofs to throw off water and a number of rooflines in the village still display a fairly steep pitch (see the Manor House where the gable end shows rebuilding). These thatched

cottages were probably fairly typical of houses from medieval times to the mid 18th century.



Plate 11. The Old Brewery House and neighbours with a typical 18th century side elevation, modernised to the front c.1900

The mid 18th century saw a considerable period of rebuilding nationally, made possible by increasing wealth. Small cottages were either demolished and replaced or altered to meet the new fashions for larger stone built houses with stone or pantile roofs and lighter rooms. In Bishop Middleham properties such as the Dun Cow have an 18th century appearance, but is reputed to be 16th century in date (Bellwood 1997, 39) with an inn sign which looks 17th century. The Old Brewery House on High

Street is a typically 18th century style in elevation, although its frontage has been modernised c.1900 with square ground floor bay windows and Tuscan door frames. It is no surprise that the larger houses should also undergo considerable enhancement in the 18th century too. The Old Hall was built 1765 on the site of an earlier building. Unusually for this village it has a stone flagged roof rather than pantiles.



Plate 12. 19th century terracing on Palmers Terrace.

The 19th century saw considerable changes to the town and the introduction of new styles of architecture. These styles would be less distinctive to Bishop Middleham, but were a result of blue-print designs brought in from the wider region. This shift from the vernacular was made possible by the universal availability of building materials through the much improved transport network, in particular the growth of the railways from 1825 onwards. The Victorian

developers experimented with a variety of different building styles, fuelled by increasing affluence and much of this is captured in the built heritage of the village. In Bishop Middleham the most popular 19th century building style was the terraced house (see Bank Top). More detail was added to houses for the wealthier middle classes; ridge tiles, ornamentation to doorways, steps up to front doors, shaped overlights and bay windows. East Garth House is a one-off design in the village. Built of yellow Pease brick with window detail and string courses in red brick it is most reminiscent of railway architecture. The majority of 19th century terraced houses in the village have lost their historic details, however a small colourful row on Bank Top (no. 1-3A) retain their traditional windows, porches and terracotta ridge tiles and an equally colourful 1-6 Palmers Terrace has no traditional windows but has retained the decorative shield above each window on the ground floor bay, corbelling below the eaves and some cast iron downpipes.

Then and Now....

1928



2010



The Old Manor House has lost two bays to road widening (hence the buttress) and has lost its traditional multi-pane windows to first floor level. The roofing materials have changed and the stone detailing around the windows has been covered with render.

The nineteenth century also saw the growth of civic architecture and the development of large country houses. These houses sat within their own grounds creating leafy barriers from the outside world. They used the tall gables and bargeboards typical of the time, Welsh slate for roofing materials and continued with sandstone as the main building material.



Plate 13. East Garth House with brick detail in a style reminiscent of Victorian railway architecture

The 20th century styles are varied and saw the rapid expansion of the village. Early terraces such as those along Kirtley Terrace are similar in style to the earlier Victorian ones, although they have suffered considerably from a loss of historic character. The 1930s saw the start of council house building and for the most part these houses lacked design or a desire to fit in with existing architecture, for example Westfield Terrace.

Worse still a number of historic houses were demolished, particularly in the 1960s. For example, two houses at the end of the Dun Cow Inn stables demolished in 1960, Ivy Cottages demolished in 1962, Harpers Buildings demolished in the late 1960s, the loss of Brigg Dyke cottage in 1955 (named after the connecting causeway between the castle and the common fields) and Maggie's corner shop demolished in 1962 to make way for two council houses (Bellwood 1997, 47). However not all modern buildings lacked style. The row of red pantiled houses on Bishop's Garth to the rear of Church Street offered post war residents light rooms and gardens. Windows were designed with horizontal metal glazing bars and the sloping front roof lines picked out the predominance of cat slide roofs in the village and the dormers created interesting roof lines.



Plate 14. 1950s housing behind Church Street on Bishops Garth. Only no.3 retains its original horizontal metal glazing bars, probably purchased from Darlington which at that time supplied most metal windows in the UK.

However the biggest impact on the village was the large housing estates which ran along the north side of the village creating housing estates with cul-de-sacs, wide, windy roads, with an emphasis on car parking and gardens at Roast Calf Lane, Stoneybeck and to the south west, Broadoaks.

Then and Now....

1924



2010



The main Dun Cow building has had only minor changes with a new roofing materials and the loss of chimney pots. However the old coach house buildings have been through more modifications with the loss or alteration of openings and new door furniture. Additional development has extended the row.

Public architectural styles did few favours in the village. The Village Hall is in a prominent position, but contributes nothing positive towards locally distinctive character and the school is also an off-the-peg style used by all local authorities for schools and libraries and contributes nothing positive architecturally. It is however set back from the green and is therefore hidden from view.

Development in the late 20th and early 21st century has concentrated on adapting old buildings. A new development opposite the church has sought to retain the agricultural form of the buildings while converting them into housing, while a set of ruinous farm buildings opposite and another set on High Road await a similar conversion before they become too ruinous to repair. Modern development has sought to make buildings fit in with traditional styles by using red pantile roofing, steeply pitched roofs, external chimney breast and timber porches, while not creating too many constraints to creative design.

Building Materials, Textures and Colours

The predominant building material is smooth render over rubble in older buildings or dressed stone or brick in more recent buildings. One or two stone faced buildings do exist and brick is used as a finish.

Roofing is of mixed materials however the red pantile predominates albeit in some cases by using modern materials. Some older properties have stone slate, although the majority of modern houses have concrete or artificial slates. Modern and old buildings alike favour external chimney breasts. Chimney pots are replaced more often than roofing materials so many are later 19th century brick examples with clay pots.

Traditionally buildings in the village would have had multi-pane sash windows in 18th century and some Yorkshire sliding sash windows. Mid 19th century houses up to early 20th century houses would have favoured the traditional sliding sash with four panes. In the 1930s and 50s horizontal metal glazing bars, probably made in Darlington, were used which reflected the low but broad nature of architecture at that time. However front elevations of all buildings of any age have seen a loss of historic character with the replacement of traditional



Plate 15. 19th century chimney pot with brick detailing

windows and doors with modern styles, often PVC, which alters the character of the buildings concerned. Where such changes have taken place often enough, they also alter the character of the street. Many of the modern day alterations have been misguided and have reduced the historic

character of the houses and have interfered with the breathability of the materials leading to potential condensation and damp problems. The late 19th and early 20th century terraces seem to have suffered most with the loss of traditional wooden sliding sash windows and solid panelled doors and the introduction of modern wall coatings such as pebble dash.



Plate 16. Early 20th century terracing (this example outside the Conservation Area) has suffered from the loss of traditional features such as sliding sash windows and solid wooden doors with panelling. This is compounded by the use of wall coatings which do little to enhance the street and store damp problems for the future. On the plus side a number have retained detailing on the stone lintels and the old street name plate has survived on the end house below the eaves.

Street surfaces are predominantly modern tarmac, but there is some survival of scoria blocks in the farm yard at Hall Farm Cottages. These locally produced blue/grey bricks made from iron waste would have been more predominant in the 19th century, but have largely gone out of use, being relegated to drains and verges.

3.0 Character Areas.

The village falls naturally into two main character areas which may also reflect the development of the original settlements. The first is the area around Church Street leading up to the church, the Old Hall and Castle View. The second is based around the village green.

1. The Church Character Area

Character in a nutshell: secluded hill top site with ancient church and tomb stones, high limestone walls forming an enclosed corridor, small green, large country houses set within tree lined grounds, views out across the village and to the waterlogged countryside and Bishop's Castle to the south, derelict farm buildings and converted farm buildings, steps and stone archways, holloways and causeways, views towards wetlands and historic links with the Bishop's Castle and deer park, rendered cottages with multi-pane sashes, gateposts with scroll and leaf brackets, hemmels and hoists, the sound of traffic from the A1

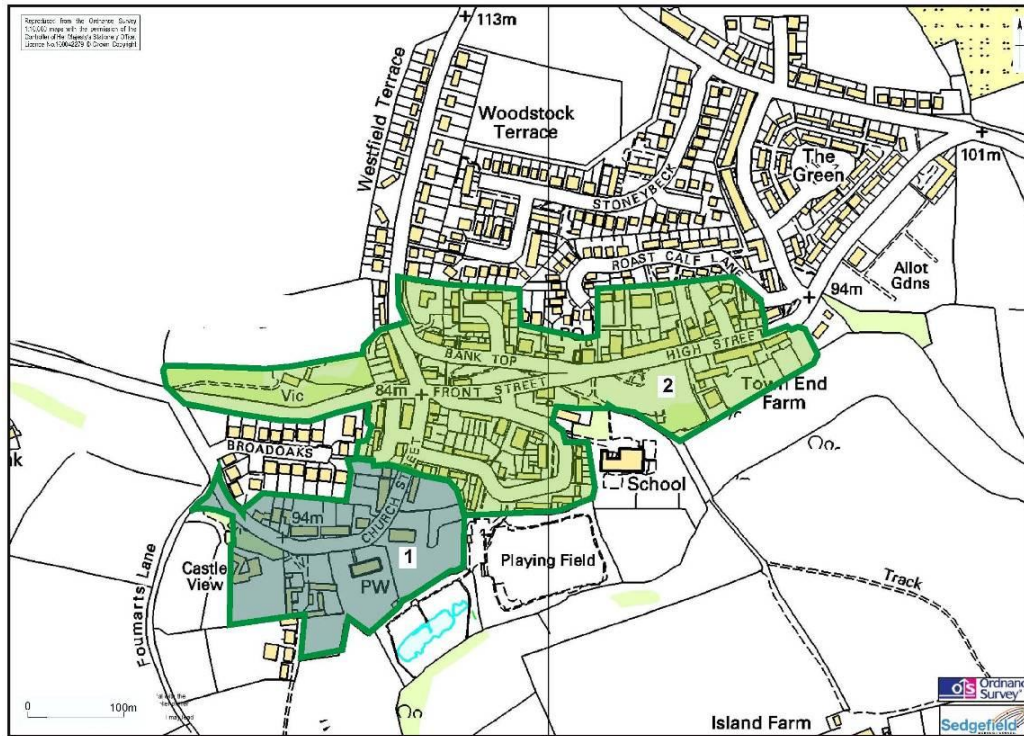


Figure 9. The location of the two distinctive character areas in Bishop Middleham

Streetscape, views and open spaces

This character area is approached along Church Street which is an ancient tree-lined sunken road exuding considerable historic character. The limestone rubble walls, patched with an assortment of materials, is a distinctive feature to settlements in this limestone landscape and here they form a narrow winding corridor overlooked by cottages, the Old Hall and Castle View. Leading off this corridor is a small archway leading to a set of steps which brings users out around the back of the Old Hall. This entranceway may have the remains of a circular staircase set within. The use of a bellcote instead of a tower might make the church less prominent than many but, the number of tomb stones sitting on the high ground of the graveyard and the church's hill top position both draw the eye to the top of Church Street. Views back into the village are rewarded with a competing hotch potch of roof lines predominantly red pantile with white rendered walls and brick chimney stacks, while views along Church Street to the west capture glimmering wetlands.



Plate 17. Tombstones sit above high limestone walls which form the enclosed corridor of Church Street; limestone slabs form a garden boundary; steps through an arch lead up to the back of the Old Hall and a green area sits between two sets of farm buildings, one set is now converted to residential use the other is sadly ruinous.

The Buildings

This character area is one of secluded individual houses and agricultural buildings set around an open green space. It is dominated by a group of large buildings on the top of church hill, namely The Old Hall, Castle View, The Old Barn, Meadow View and the Church. All to a certain extent are shielded from view by high limestone rubble walls and trees except the Old Barn and Hall Farm Cottages which face directly on to the green. The modern conversion has retained hemmel arches reflecting the earlier agricultural character of the area and the new build has been fitted with hoists to be reminiscent of granaries, however this little detail on otherwise modern detached houses borders on the pastiche. As the hill declines on both sides the density of houses increases and they face the road as seclusion becomes less significant, but there are hints that some of these buildings are much older than they appear. No.s 26 and 30 are rendered and with traditional multi-pane sash windows to first floor and tripartite multi-pane sashes to lower floors. Both have good solid doors, although that of no. 26 suits an outbuilding or passageway, while no.30 is a typically Victorian door with overlight above. The presence of the ledged and braced door on no.26 plus a variation in render to the front elevation suggests that this was once a house with a range of outbuildings which have been converted to domestic use.



Plate 18. no.s 26 and 30 Church Street

Other houses are modern such as Newohm views of which are framed by people leaving the church through its porch. Hall Farm House presents a distinguished 18th century appearance on its gable end but the front has lost all historic character through the use of inappropriate plastic windows and concrete roof tiles. No. 32 is typical of much modern architecture by creating an inaccurate pastiche of the past with bull's eye windows set in Dickensian bays, a mock Georgian door and curiously dressed stonework. It has all the hallmarks of the 1980s,

but apparently encases the remains of an earlier building.⁹ Opposite, historic buildings are masked by their use of modern windows and render and may merit further investigation. Towards the north the density of housing increases towards Broadoaks, a modern housing estate development which reflects some of the character of the village by using modern pantile roofing, however the layout, scale and density of the buildings is less typical of the earlier village plan form.

Doors



Plate 19. A selection of doors from the Church Street Character Area. (i) the 13th century church doorway (ii) a simple ledged and braced door on an outbuilding (iii) a similar ledged and braced door now on a house (iv) a Victorian four panel door with overlight (v) a pastiche of a Georgian pedimented doorway with 6 panel door (vi) a modern double garage door – the use of brickwork and solid timber doors goes some way to making this development fit in.

Windows



Plate 20. A selection of windows from the Church Street Character Area. (i) the church uses a mixture of 13th century lancets and later 19th century copies. (ii) derelict farm buildings retain some blocked up agricultural windows, but the entire range needs to find a new use. (iii) The Old Hall has 12 pane sash windows set within an architrave, typical of 18th century styles. The conversion of former agricultural buildings has retained the hemmels to reflect the agricultural character, but other windows fit in less well with inaccurate modern pastiche.

The Details



Plate 21. Small details indicating historic depth add to the interest of an area: (i) the ornate gate piers into the Old Hall, (ii) a blocked coal door in an outbuilding at the foot of Church Street, (iii) while historic character is often lost on the front of a house through the replacement of historic windows and doors with modern ones, great age can still sometimes be determined in the gable ends, (iv) many roofs are now covered in concrete tiles, but where water tabling and kneelers remain, historic character does too.

⁹ Information on the old remains encased within the building kindly supplied by the owner

2. The Green Character Area

Character in a nutshell: steeply sloping green with paths and steps cutting across, limestone walls, views across rooftops to countryside beyond, street fronted housing, millennium sun dial, seating, holloways and causeways, prominent old school building, external chimney breasts, red pantile roofing, bread oven, hill top vicarage, brick, render and stone buildings, loss of traditional features, sounds of children playing

Streetscape, views and open spaces

This character area has a number of open public spaces displaying considerable civic pride. The Millennium Green on the site of the Old Brewery sits on the high green and Park Lane leads to the community wildlife park and playing field outside the Conservation Area. (During the consultation process, some concerns were expressed regarding the management and uses of this wildlife park). The presence of a tiered village green with mature tree cover is a significant aspect of this character area. It defines the plan form and growth of the village and the views which can be obtained. The green consists of a grass covered south facing slope criss-crossed with paths and steps and divided by roads. Housing along the top of the green commands fine views to the south and over the rooftops in the village. This grassy limestone ridge continues out of the historic core of the village to the west where the Vicarage sits on top in splendid isolation. The southern half of the green is a level area while the high green is larger than originally intended due to the demolition of the Old Brewery. Roads lead off the green. Those to the north head up hill where terracing is set into the slope. Those to the south are more level until they reach the foot of Church Hill and another character area. Other ancient paths also cross the village. On the high green a narrow lane slips down the side of the green to a former spring site and heads towards Island Farm or returns to the village passed the modern school via a holloway enclosed by typical high limestone walls. Other flights of steps passed curving ancient limestone walls join Palmers Terrace to Bank Top. These secret steps and sunken paths are a significant aspect of the village's historic character.



Plate 22. Streetscape, views and open spaces. (i) The sloping village green affords fine views across the village only marred by some disappointing modern development such as the village hall. (ii) the mature tree cover is an important aspect of the village's character (iii) steps and stairs link differing levels within the village and offer sneaky shortcuts (iv) holloways are a tangible link with the past – this one charmingly called Muck Back Lane joins the high green area with a spring fed water supply.

The Buildings

The buildings in this character area are varied. Properties front on to the green or the road and are mainly simple two storeys in short terraces. Some front directly on to the road but a few have small gardens. There is a variety of house types from different periods which lends an air of informality to the village. The earliest type of building appears to be 18th century in date such as no.s 12 and 14 High Street, but there are hints of earlier remains at the Old Manor House, The Dun Cow, 1 Front Street and Town End Farm. The Manor House is 17th century in appearance, partially demolished to make way for road widening, leaving a three bayed three storeyed house. It is built of painted limestone rubble and painted brick dressings. The roof is laid in pantile with rendered stone gable copings and 19th century yellow brick chimneys. The left return has the remains of earlier walls and houses two external chimney stacks which give this corner an historic feel. The Dun Cow has a mid 18th century appearance and is in painted rough render with ashlar dressings, two storeys high and eight bays wide. Although it is now two houses, that part on the north side is the former stable. The roof is of French red pantiles and the chimneys of modern brick. There are a number of features of historic interest. Above the Tuscan doorway is an inn sign in a folk art style, possibly even older than the present day building. The stable arch in the sixth bay has been blocked and replaced with a modern window as have two further arched openings. The rear of the inn is a catslide roof; another locally distinctive feature of Bishop Middleham.

No. 1 Front Street has suffered from a considerable loss of historic character but the distinctive signs of a bread oven in the west facing gable end is a reminder of an older building trying to get out.

This junction of Church Street, Palmers Terrace and Front Street is important as the location of this collection of buildings which emphasise the great age of the village; all exude historic character. This is rapidly lost by the presence of architecturally undistinguished local authority houses which have been imposed on the green frontage on Front Street at the expense of what were presumably far more distinctive historic buildings.



Plate 23. Brightly coloured terracing on Bank Top is a pleasant surprise when approaching from the green below

The majority of buildings in this character area appear to be 19th century in date such as the terraces on Bank Top and Palmers Terrace, while terracing continues to be popular in the opening years of the 20th century at Kirtley Terrace, outside the Conservation Area.

Despite this range of buildings there are some architectural features which draw them together. The majority have red pantile roofs (or modern equivalent), brick chimneys and water tabling. There is a fondness for external chimney stacks in old and new buildings alike. The majority of older properties are in pale renders, but brick and stone are also used offering ample opportunity to ensure that new development fits in. Each period of building style brings with it a particular combination of details which help to add interest. Georgian buildings such as 12 and 14 High Street are quite simple with detailing being limited to moulded kneelers and multi pane sash windows. Victorian architecture has a greater fondness for detail as seen along the porches at Bank Top with terracotta ridge tiles and the bay windows with ornamental shields on Palmers Terrace.

There is however a considerable loss of historic detail with many windows and doors being replaced with modern, less well designed substitutes. Other typical Victorian details seem to be missing altogether, such as boot scrapers, engraved stone street name signs, named gateposts and gothic detailing.



Plate 24. Partial demolition explains the presence of a number of external chimney stacks and buttresses (i, ii, iii) but they have also been incorporated into new build or added to older properties.



Plate 25. The Old School House and roofing detail; it originally had a bellcote



Plate 26. The mismatch of historically inappropriate windows and doors does much to reduce historic character along Bank Top, while the basic architectural proportions and colours of roofing, chimneys and render were designed to fit in. These houses originally matched those on Bishop's Garth but have fared less well with the loss of their traditional windows and doors

While the majority of buildings are two storeyed terraces in render with red pantile roofs there are some oddities which stand out. The Old School House

is probably the most prominent building in the village and its unusual roof design (adapted when the bellcote was removed) adds distinctiveness to the village. It goes some way to compensate for the loss of the highly ornate and unusual roofline of the former Brewery.

The survival of historic character gradually declines along Bank Top towards the east. While survival of historic features in no.s 1-3 Bank Top is relatively good, the extensive use of plastic windows and doors in all sorts of inappropriate styles has done much to devalue the historic character of the buildings. The loss of the sun dials which were once so distinctive of this part of the village is particularly unfortunate. Nevertheless the architectural proportions are good with pale renders and red pantiles with chimneys and so much of the damage is reversible.

Doors



Plate 27. A selection of doors from the Green character area. (i) A tongue and groove board door typical of basic Victorian doorways and earlier Georgian styles. The overlight is Victorian in style. (ii) a pair of doorways, possibly once access to the residence on the left with the overlight and a passage to the rear on the right, but both now domestic. The six panel door is a modern reproduction of a Georgian style and the four panel door a Victorian style. (iii) a Tuscan door surrounding a modern door at no. 13 High Street (iv) a Victorian 4 panel door on Bank Top and another pair of twin doorways, this time Victorian but with a modern door replacement on Palmers Terrace.

Windows



Plate 28. A selection of windows from The Green Character Area in broad chronological order. (i) a Yorkshire sliding sash window from the Manor House (ii) a 12 pane sash from 14 High Street (iii) a square bay from 13 High Street (iv) a Victorian bay from Bank Top and (v) a rear window opening with lintel detail on Kirtley Terrace (outside the Conservation Area) in a style used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but with a modern window.

The Details



Plate 29. Small details are easily lost but have a significant contribution to make towards historic character. (i) the Dun Cow inn sign, possibly 17th century (ii) a mounting block outside the former stables of the Dun Cow (iii) pub and shop signs in a traditional style contribute towards historic character (iv) small embellishments such as terracotta ridge tiles are easily lost but can be added or replaced where appropriate

4.0 Significance of the Conservation Area

There are particular elements within the village that contribute more or less towards the overall character. Figure 5 shows in more detail which buildings and spaces are thought to be most significant and those of less value. This can be used as a guide in determining which should be protected, which could be enhanced and which spaces should be protected from adverse change. For example the village greens and holloways and causeways are considered to be positive open spaces, and listed buildings are marked as being protected. A large number of buildings provide a clear value, but the majority are of townscape value because they are historic buildings sitting in historic locations but have lost considerable historic character through inappropriate maintenance. This is of course reversible. The map does not show individual listed tomb stones, but the graveyard is marked as a positive open space as it is part of the setting of the church and an important public amenity space. The property boundaries which appear to be survivals from medieval times and which are located north of High Street and south of Town End Farm should be considered as significant. However the houses south of the green which are not considered to be significant, are located, for the most part, within what appear to be medieval property boundaries and these boundaries should therefore be retained.

There are a few buildings which detract from the historic character of the village. These are generally more recent developments which do not have the qualities of age, style, materials and detail to be found in the older properties. A number of these are individual 'one-offs' and so have a limited impact on the overall historic character of the village. Others are grouped around the edge of the Conservation Area and so have been excluded. However, of particular note for its lack of design and any attempt to fit into the character of the village is a row of houses along the southern boundary of the village green. This is part of a larger estate of 1960s local authority houses which only pay regard to the existing character of adjacent houses by using pantile roofing and retaining older property boundaries. Unusually this estate has a central and prominent position within the Conservation Area and so makes a significant detrimental impact (see figure 5). On the plus side the estate off the green has incorporated open green space into the design thus reflecting the layout of the historic village.

There are two sets of agricultural buildings which make an important contribution to the village in terms of retaining its earlier agricultural character and may contain evidence of archaeological interest. One group is Town End Farm and the other is Hall Farm Cottages, adjacent to the church. These buildings are at risk from deterioration and the subsequent loss of historic features; indeed Hall Farm Cottages were condemned in the 1950s. New uses, probably domestic conversion, needs to be found which will retain their essential historic and agricultural character, although their considerable age and historic locations means that a statement of significance may be required before development proposals are progressed to an advance stage.



Plate 30. Town End Farm with stepped roof lines

While survival of traditional features is generally good in listed buildings and on 1-3a Bank Top, the majority of houses have suffered from a loss of traditional windows, doors, roofing materials and inappropriate wall coatings. This is particularly prevalent on terraced housing although a good number of detached and semi detached properties along High Street, Front Street and Church Street have also suffered. Unfortunately the wholesale loss of historic features along rows of terraces on High Street (and Perm Road and Kirtley Terrace outside the Conservation Area)

has resulted in a huge change in character.

The significance of the conservation area also relates to its wider landscape setting. The reason that this location was chosen for a settlement is inextricably linked to the island landscape created by areas of high ground and wetland. Each 'island' was linked by a

causeway and these causeways survive today. Further there is a strong historical link between the castle and the village, but the castle is currently outside the conservation area. Until that is remedied, the castle must be considered to be within the setting of the conservation area. Any proposals which seek to diminish the visual or actual links between the island landscape and the village, or between the castle and the village should therefore be treated as adversely affecting the setting.

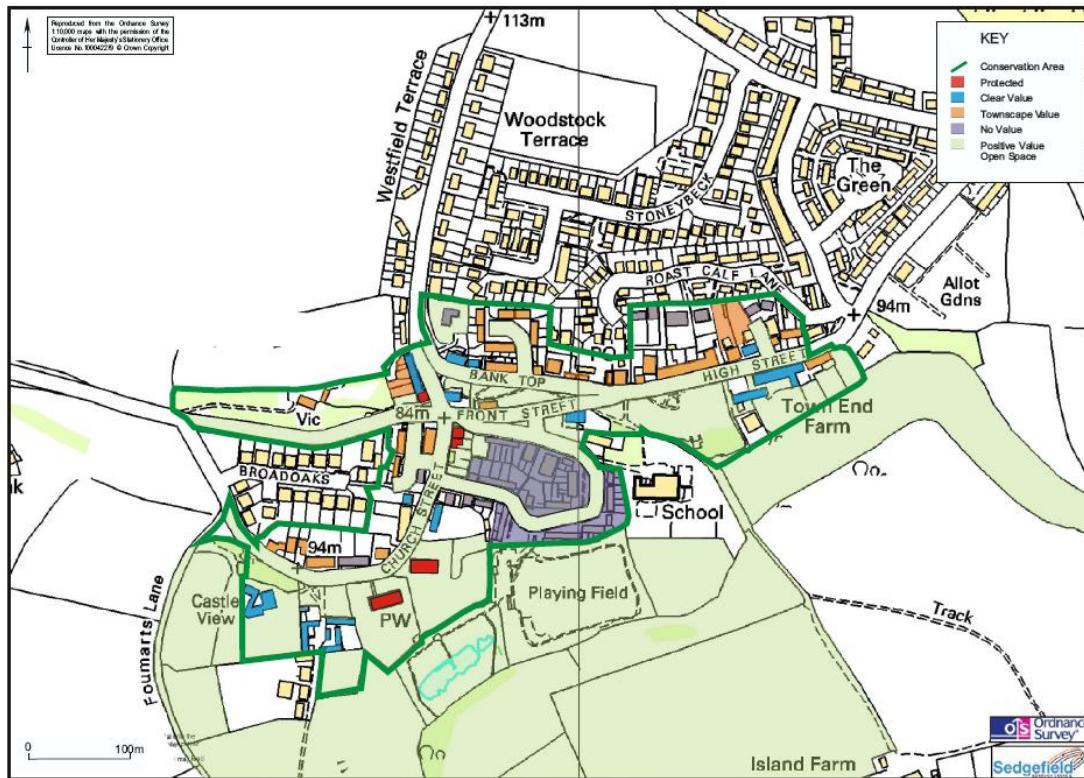


Figure 10. Significance map showing the relative importance of buildings and open spaces.

5.0 Proposed Changes to the Conservation Area Boundary

The growth of Bishop Middleham is inextricably linked with the Bishop's Castle located on a high ridge to the south of the village. The area also included a deer park of about 70 acres (VCH 1928) and fish ponds remnants of which can still be seen from Church Street. The village is linked to these earthworks by the historic path, Foumart Lane; a lane used in medieval times to access the fish ponds, vivary (swannery) and the water meadows and a causeway from Hall Farm Cottages to the castle. The park was located around the castle and enclosed within its walls 270 acres of land. Although the castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and therefore already considered to be nationally important, the linking causeway, deer park and fish ponds are not protected. The Conservation Area should be extended to include the castle and linking causeway, but the deer park and fish ponds, plus the visual relationship with Island Farm should be considered as the setting of the conservation area so

that the link between the village and its waterlogged 'island' landscape can be retained. The area currently included in the scheduling is inadequate and should be extended after further investigation in order to include the fishponds and deerpark.

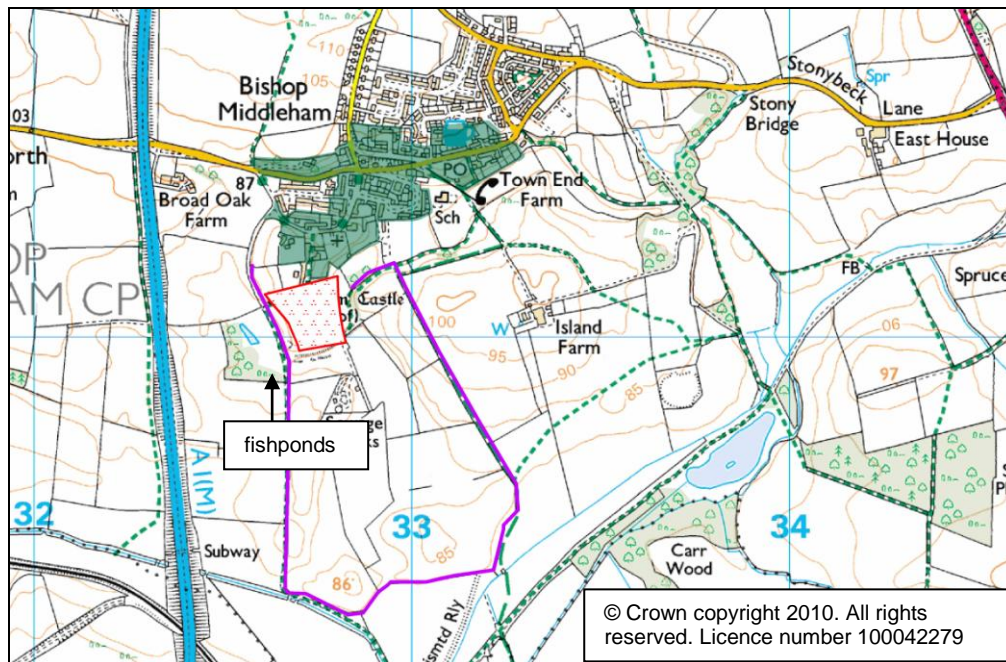


Figure 11. Map showing the location of the deer park walls in purple which are currently unprotected. The castle scheduled monument is shown in red – this bears little relation to the actual archaeological interest. Other related features such as the fishponds are not protected.

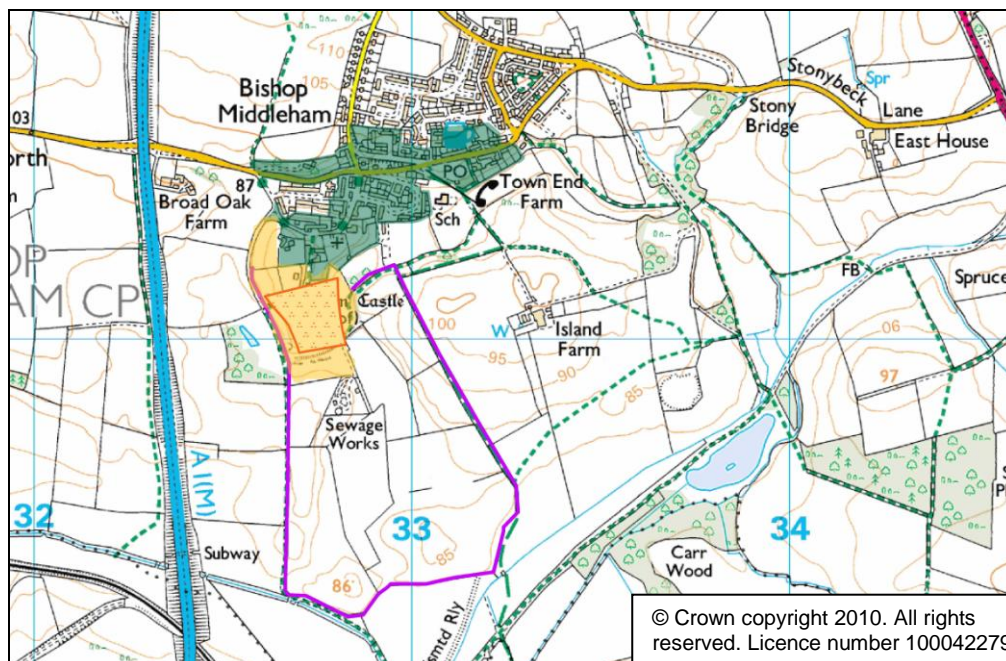




Figure 12. The conservation area (in green) should be extended to include as a minimum, the causeway, Fournarts Lane and castle (yellow) and possibly the deer park walls and fishponds, but further work on the archaeological interest within the deer park would help to clarify not only the extent of the conservation area, but also the scheduling and the most appropriate means of protecting this landscape.

6.0 Proposals to Preserve and Enhance the Conservation Area

A number of trends in the decline of the historic character of the village have been identified as well as key architectural features which contribute towards character. Proposals to enhance the Conservation Area need to first halt then reverse the loss of historic character. Proposals to enhance the Conservation Area should include the following in priority order.

	<p>Agricultural buildings Restoration of farm buildings at Hall Farm Cottages adjacent to church possibly through development. Town End Farm is also an important group of historic buildings with an important townscape contribution but which are deteriorating. Ensure that a statement of significance informs a design brief which highlights features to be retained and that adequate archaeological recording is carried out prior to development. If options to conserve are not possible in the short term then a programme of archaeological recording of the structures should take place as soon as possible. Also retain agricultural character to byre on Bank Top. There was considerable support for this in the consultation exercise.</p> 
	<p>Withdrawal of permitted development rights to prevent further loss of historic character primarily to windows and doors. Ideally this should be accompanied by grant aid to reverse the decline in traditional windows and doors. The replacement of windows and doors is considered to be higher priority than roofing materials or wall coverings as they make a larger detrimental impact. This should target the houses around the village greens, along High Street and Church Street in the first instance. There was support for this in the consultation exercise.</p>

	<p>Initiate a scheme to carry out repairs to the limestone walling in the village. The highest priority area is around Church Street where mature tree growth is causing major structural cracks. The character of this walling is patchy using a variety of material to carry out repairs, but particularly brick as well as limestone rubble. Repairs should reflect this tradition. There is support for this from the consultation exercise and also from the Limestone Landscapes project which was running concurrently.</p>
	<p>Ensure that future development does not further undermine the medieval property boundaries or the limestone walling in the village. This is particularly relevant at Town End Farm where the early boundaries do appear to survive.</p>
	<p>The interpretation panel at the site of the castle has become faded with old age and needs to be replaced or an alternative source of information provided.</p>
	<p>Floorscaping materials are currently unsympathetic. The village has lost its cobbled lanes. Where funding permits, new surfacing should be laid along Church Street, Front Street and High Street. This will have the added advantage of being a traffic calming measure. Scoria blocks at Hall Farm Cottages should be retained. The network of lanes, holloways and causeways should be retained and new development required to respect this tradition. This was raised in the consultation process.</p>

	<p>Any review of street lighting should install designs more sympathetic to Conservation Areas. Some traditional (1950s?) lampposts (pictured) have been identified in Kiln Crescent and Bishop's Garth and should be retained. This was also flagged up in the consultation process.</p>
	<p>Preparation of a local list of buildings to better represent buildings of historic interest than the current listing does.</p>
	<p>The consultation exercise flagged up that the trees on the green should be trimmed below head height to improve views along Bank Top and towards the Old School.</p>
	<p>Public consultation flagged up concerns regarding the condition of the south east section of the deer park wall and associated structures such as the pack horse bridge and linking causeway. This combined with its inadequate scheduling and the need to assess it further for re-scheduling or possible inclusion in the conservation area, would suggest that further survey work is required here.</p>

7 REFERENCES

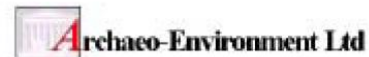
- Austin, D 1982 *Boldon Book*
- Bellwood, F (and Sedgefield History Society) 1997 *Sedgefield and Bishop Middleham*
- CABE and English Heritage 2008 *Character and Identity. Townscape and Heritage Appraisals in Housing Market Renewal Areas*
- Chatt, D, Turner, D and Wilkinson J 1960 *The Story of Bishop Middleham*
- English Heritage, 2006 *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas*, English Heritage.
- English Heritage, 2006 *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, English Heritage.
- Fordyce, William *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham.*
- Haile, Newton 1970 *A Short History of Bishop Middleham*
- Page, William 1928 *The Victoria History of the County of Durham*, The St Catherine Press. (also accessed through <http://www.british-history.ac.uk> 23.08.08)
- Pevsner, N and Williamson, E 1990 *The Buildings of England. County Durham*
- Royal Town Planning Institute, 1993 *Conservation of the Built Environment-discussion paper*, RTPI.
- Royal Town Planning Institute, 1993 *The Character of Conservation Areas*, RTPI.
- Sedgefield District Council, 1993 *Conservation Areas in Sedgefield District*, Sedgefield District.
- Sedgefield Borough Council, 1997 *Sedgefield Borough Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance*, Sedgefield Borough.
- Watts, V 2002 *The Place Names of County Durham*
- Whellan, Francis & Co, 1894, *History, Topography and Directory of the County Palatine of Durham*, Ballantyne, Hanson & Co, London.

Relevant Planning Policies

At the time of writing, the local development framework was going through considerable change. Policies from the County Structure Plan and the former local plans were being amalgamated into a new Durham Plan and the Regional Spatial Strategies were due to be abolished and the Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document was out to consultation. The key planning policy document used is therefore PPS 5, a national government policy statement on the historic environment.



Prepared By
Caroline Hardie,
Archaeo-Environment Ltd 2008 and 2010



Archaeo-Environment Ltd
Marian Cottage
Lartington
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 9BP

Tel/Fax: (01833) 650573
Email: info@aenvironment.co.uk
Web: www.aenvironment.co.uk