



# Wilton

## Conservation Area Appraisal

2011



Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**this is Redcar & Cleveland**

**Wilton Conservation Area Appraisal 2011**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of its continuing duties under the Planning Acts, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council has prepared appraisals for 15 of its 17 conservation areas. (Staithes and Hutton Lowcross Conservation Areas fall within the planning jurisdiction of the North York Moors National Park Authority.)

## The Designation of Wilton Conservation Area

1.2 Wilton Conservation Area was designated by Teesside County Borough Council on 16 March 1971. It was considered to be special for the architectural quality of its buildings, laid out as an early 19<sup>th</sup> century planned estate village, and for its setting in mature wooded parkland. The conservation area boundary included the whole of Wilton Village, the church and Castle, together with surrounding areas of woodland, the avenue and much of the historic parkland stretching away west towards Lazenby. The parkland to the south of the avenue and the wooded escarpment, originally excluded from the conservation area is now included.

## Other Protective Designations within the Conservation Area

1.3 The Castle and Church of St Cuthbert were listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, in 1952. In April 1988 most of the other buildings in the village were listed including the following:-

- North Lodge, grade II
- Wilton Castle, grade II (1952)
- Retaining wall & stair to forecourt of Wilton Castle, grade II
- Garden wall, SE of the Castle, II
- Stable block, W of the Castle, grade II (1952)

- Church of St Cuthbert, grade II\* (1952)
- Wilton Farmhouse (former Vicarage), grade II
- The Cottage, stable & coach house, E of Wilton Farmhouse, grade II
- 1 & 2 Wilton Village, grade II
- 3 & 4 Wilton Village & wall attached, grade II
- 5 Wilton Village, (former School House) grade II
- Former Village School, grade II
- K6 Telephone Kiosk, W side of Former Village School, grade II (listed 10/04/1989)
- Ivy Cottage, 6 Wilton Village, grade II
- 7 & 8 Wilton Village, grade II
- 9 & 10 Wilton Village, grade II
- Pine Trees & wall attached, Wilton Village, grade II
- 16 & 17 Wilton Village, grade II
- 18 to 21 Wilton Village, grade II

1.4 A “blanket” Article IV Direction was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 10 May 1974. The Direction withdraws certain permitted development rights for domestic and agricultural properties throughout the conservation area in order to prevent further erosion of the special character of historic buildings and the erection of inappropriate forms of enclosure.

1.5 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.

1.6 There are no Tree Preservation Orders within the conservation area.

## Planning Policies affecting Wilton Conservation Area

1.7 The Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework (LDF)

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includes several policies relating to the conservation area. They are set out in Appendix 1.

## Conservation Area Appraisal

- 1.8 A conservation area appraisal is the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area. This appraisal provides a clear and sound understanding of Wilton Conservation Area by recording, evaluating and presenting all of the key elements which together make up its special interest and character. It also identifies negative features and opportunities for improvement.
- 1.9 **After public consultation, this appraisal and its recommendations including changes to the boundary of the conservation area, was approved by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007. This appraisal has been revisited to ensure it remains relevant and up to date. The present conservation area boundary is shown on the plan in Appendix 2.**
- 1.10 While the appraisal covers the topics referred to in PPG 15 and in guidance issued by English Heritage, it is not intended to be comprehensive and does not provide detailed descriptions of all individual historic buildings. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.11 The appraisal should not be regarded as a static document. It will be subject to periodic review and update, especially in the light of new research and as more information and knowledge becomes available. The next step of the process is the formulation of conservation area management proposals to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about the conservation area's future.

## 2. HISTORIC ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

- 2.1 Wilton village is largely a product of the early-to-mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently, the special character of the conservation area is only marginally influenced by its early history and development and only the key aspects are therefore given here. Also considered is the context of Wilton relative to other historic settlements in the broader local area.

### Local Historical Context

- 2.2 The Redcar and Cleveland area is a mix of industrial, urban, semi-urban and rural settlement, which gives it its distinct character. Most of the older settlements were founded or re-founded from the late 11<sup>th</sup> century. Their basic medieval form remained largely unaltered until changes in farming practice were introduced in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries or, until industrialisation and urbanisation altered them beyond recognition.
- 2.3 While the district still retains a large rural base most of its settlements have taken on an urban and semi-urban character under the influence of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century development of the wider Tees Valley area. Wilton is one of the very few settlements to have survived these urbanising influences thereby retaining much of its rural character.
- 2.4 In the context of the 15 other conservation areas in Redcar and Cleveland, Wilton broadly ranks alongside Kirkleatham, Ormesby and Upleatham, viz.:

**Kirkleatham** - Group of 18<sup>th</sup> century estate buildings based on manor house, with earlier archaeology.

**Ormesby** - Medieval manor house, church, parkland and suburbanised remains of settlement incrementally redeveloped in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Upleatham** - Shrunken medieval settlement and surrounding fields, re-planned as estate village in late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 2.5 These together with Wilton are the best surviving of the emparked estate villages to have escaped the worst effects of urbanisation. However, Wilton is unique in the district in being the best preserved example of a planned estate village and country house in a parkland setting.

### Early History

- 2.6 No formal archaeological investigations have been undertaken in Wilton, but it is possible that evidence of early settlement could survive close to or beneath the present settlement layout.
- 2.7 The Sites and Monuments Record refers to several archaeological sites as follows:-
- St Helen's (or Ellen's) chantry chapel founded in 1523 by Sir William Bulmer.
  - A watermill, close to the Castle.
  - A 'ridge and furrow field system' within the parkland north of the Castle and the avenue.

The sites of the chapel and watermill are imprecise, although the remains of the former were recorded as being in the middle of the village in 1808 shortly before demolition in 1811.

- 2.8 Documentary evidence suggests that Wilton has existed as a settlement since at least the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In 1330, the Bulmer family obtained a Royal Licence to "crenellate" their Wilton manor house which became a significant stronghold and was from that time, referred to as a castle.
- 2.9 The Church of St Cuthbert, now the oldest building in the village, dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Despite extensive alterations and "restoration" it still

retains a number of original and important architectural features.

## The 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

- 2.10 After several changes in ownership, the Wilton Estate was acquired by the Lowther family in 1748, by which time the Castle had fallen into a ruinous state. In 1802 John Lowther became its first resident landlord for several hundred years and set about re-developing the entire village in the manner fashionable at the time. (At their principal family home: Lowther Park, near Askham, Cumbria the Lowther family cleared and rebuilt the entire village to a very formal, “model” layout in the Georgian style to designs by J. Adam, between 1765 and 1775. The rebuilding of Lowther Castle followed in 1806-11.)
- 2.11 Revolutionary changes in agriculture began in the North East of England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They led to the elimination of medieval communal farming through the enclosure of the open field system and to the establishment of isolated farmsteads located away from the villages. This in turn, generally resulted in the rationalisation and often the rebuilding of long established settlements.
- 2.12 Such practices continued until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century coinciding with the fashionable trend pursued by landowners, of rebuilding their mansions around which large areas of farmland were taken out of food production to create landscaped parklands. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the dictates of good taste favoured rebuilding in the “Picturesque” or “Romantic” Gothick manner, contriving new settlements to look as “natural” as possible, like the landscapes being painted by artists in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.13 In many instances “emparkment” of the agricultural landscape involved the relocation of either the mansion or the village, as at Kirkleatham, Marton and Guisborough. Here at Wilton, both the mansion (Castle) and the village appear to have been rebuilt on the sites of the old leaving only one “modern” truly vernacular dwelling (Ivy Cottage, probably erected towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) and the medieval church untouched. Although the redevelopment and “emparkment” swept away most of the evidence of medieval settlement, it did serve to protect a remnant of the former open field system. This survives in the form of ‘ridge-and-furrow’ markings within the parkland to the north of the Castle and avenue.
- 2.14 The “new village” was developed in stages. First, in 1807 came the mansion: in an eccentric English Tudor Gothick style to designs by Sir Robert Smirke (not completed until 1886/87). Also, estate workers’ cottages and a small school in a similar but more restrained domestic style, possibly also by Smirke. (He also designed Lowther Castle, 1806-11, for the same family. He is most celebrated for his design for the British Museum of 1823-47.) The development of remote farmsteadings on the Wilton Estate resulted in a much smaller “new village” than before, with just 17 cottages needed to house general trades-people and those employed at the Castle.
- 2.15 In 1844/5, on a site detached from the core of the settlement, a new Vicarage was erected (now called Wilton Farmhouse). Although built from the same materials as the “new village” it is in a contrasting Italianate style. The designer was probably the celebrated Durham architect: Ignatius Bonomi.
- 2.16 The second building phase began around 1850. It comprised the addition of 6 cottages to fill the south side of the Square (see under 3.15 below), North Lodge on the north carriage drive, and a new, larger school and school house (1854). The same Gothick architectural style was adhered to for these buildings, but they were faced in “imported” cream-coloured Pease



bricks (fronts) and locally-made red common bricks (to backs and sides) instead of the indigenous sandstone.

2.17 The parkland appears to have been developed gradually throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A north carriage drive to the Castle was constructed before 1850 and the west drive and a double avenue of trees were added towards the end of the millennium.

2.18 While the old church survived the initial rebuilding period, it was heavily restored c.1850 when it acquired multiple spirelets of which only those at the west end still survive. Further alterations and restoration works were carried out in 1907/08 by architect Temple Moore.<sup>21</sup>

### **The 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

2.19 John George Lowther sold the Wilton Estate to Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd (ICI) in 1945. Thereafter, the low-lying land to the north, beyond the A174 road, was developed with the petrochemical works complex visible from the settlement today. ICI continued to manage Wilton as an estate village, the centre of their farming enterprise, while the Castle became the company's administrative headquarters and the park to the west of the Castle, was adapted to serve as a golf course.

2.20 In 1999 the Estate was again sold with some properties going to sitting tenants and the rest to a developer. While this has brought pressures for change it has also presented the opportunity for investment in the repair, maintenance and restoration of the historic fabric. In 2001 Planning permission was granted for the following:-

- The development of a new 2-storey dwelling to the east of Nos. 1 & 2.
- The rationalisation and conversion of the remains of the early-19<sup>th</sup> century school building to create a new dwelling.

- The conversion of the Castle, the stable block and outbuildings to flats and cottages.

2.21 The 19<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding of Wilton had produced a settlement largely residential in character, even though its tenants were directly employed by the Estate. This factor, together with the continuity of its role as an estate village until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, enabled Wilton to make the transition from estate village to dormitory with relatively little impact upon its special character.

2.22 The only buildings erected within the conservation area during the 20<sup>th</sup> century are the former Flying Angel Seamen's Mission, erected in 1965, comprising a hostel, vicarage and sports pavilion. The hostel was extended and converted to Castle Dene Rest Home in 1984.

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### 3. CHARACTER APPRAISAL

#### Physical Setting, Topography and Landscape

- 3.1 Wilton is situated on north-facing, sloping ground just below the steep escarpment of the Eston Hills. It is located approximately 6.5 Km (4 miles) south-west of Redcar and 3.2 Km (2 miles) east of Eston, on Wilton lane, south of the A174 Teesside Parkway and is set within gently undulating parkland and woodland. Wilton is one of a string of historic settlements occupying the same contour just below the escarpment and above the flood plain of the River Tees.
- 3.2 Geology and geomorphology have had a fundamental influence upon the location and character of Wilton. The geology of the area is of two distinct types. The escarpment consists of Middle Jurassic shale, ironstone and sandstone, while below the escarpment the older Triassic lias and marls are covered by irregular sheets and mounds of heavy clay, gravel, and sand, left behind at the end of the last ice age 10,000 years ago.
- 3.3 The glacial deposits shaped by natural drainage from the escarpment, together created the site of the settlement: a plateau dissected by converging streams issuing from Waterfall Gill and Castle Gill to form a shallow valley separating the church and village from the Castle. To the north of the Castle the "valley" turns to the west and continues towards Lazenby. The steep incline of the escarpment, south of the village, is densely wooded presenting a visually dominant backdrop to the settlement.
- 3.4 While ancient indigenous forests would doubtless have provided the first building material, the orange/brown/yellow sandstone quarried from the escarpment, was used from at least the Anglo Saxon period. From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century local industrialisation and development of the railways gave

access to a more eclectic range of materials from diverse and distant sources including 'Pease' bricks from the County Durham coalfield and slates from Cumbria and North Wales.

#### Identity Areas

- 3.5 The settlement divides into 4 quite different identity areas linked by meandering lanes, driveways and tracks and most importantly by the mature planting. They are as follows:-
- The Village and its approach from the north
  - The Church
  - The Castle, its approach from the north and its grounds to the south
  - The parkland to the north and west of the Castle

#### The Village

- 3.6 The village is approached from the north along the gently ascending, serpentine Wilton Lane, a tarmac-surfaced footpath along its east side. The middle stretch of the lane is raised like a causeway above the level of the surrounding ground and is flanked along most of its length by mature hedges, timber post-and-rail fences and belts of mixed deciduous trees.
- 3.7 A line of timber service poles carrying electricity and street lighting along the east side of the lane, terminate at Wilton Farmhouse, from which point services are under-grounded and modern street lamps are provided. Beyond the tree belt on the east side of the lane are reservoirs constructed in the 1970s to store water for the ICI chemical works. They are now successfully screened from the lane by a mix of mature and youthful deciduous planting. Except for a small clump of mature trees mid-way along the lane, most of this planting was outside the conservation area boundary.

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- 3.8 In summer, the tree-screens form dense “walls” to left and right and shut out much of the light, creating the mysterious visual effect of a corridor or tunnel. In winter there are attractive views out to the west across the open, rolling parkland of the Golf Course.
- 3.9 The secluded Wilton Farmhouse is screened from the lane by a modern, high, close-boarded timber fence, while attractive, early-Victorian, sandstone crescent walls, tall pyramid-capped gatepiers and richly decorated “wrought iron” gates frame the entrance to the drive.
- 3.10 As the lane climbs towards the village the belts of trees on either side draw the eye towards the Old School and School House. Before reaching the old school views out (east) over the Victorian cast iron railings with spear-head finials, lead the eye across gardens, paddocks and brick and stone outbuildings to a distant, screening fringe of mature trees, through which rolling sheep-grazed parkland can be viewed in winter.
- 3.11 On entering the settlement the tree screens give way to buildings, gardens and open space. The buildings within the core of the village form two groups:-
- An informal group comprising the old school and schoolhouse, Nos. 1 to 4 (consecutive) and the remains of the original (c.1810) school, fronting the east side of the lane.
  - A more formal arrangement of 17 cottages linked by high screen walls, around an open square on the west side of the lane.
- 3.12 All are of a similar “picturesque” Tudor Gothic style and of two periods: c.1810 and c.1850 reflected by their materials and form. The earlier properties are constructed from amber-coloured, chevron-dressed, indigenous Jurassic sandstone, now weathered and soot-blackened, while the later builds are of cream coloured Pease brick imported from County Durham. The common roofing material is Welsh slate with clay pantiles restricted to outbuildings and the original school.
- 3.13 The most prominent single building in the core of the village is the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century School in a more flamboyant Tudor Gothick style than the rest, with turrets, spirelets, ornate finials, parapet crestings and a tall, pointed, ecclesiastical-style window in its gabled front.
- 3.14 Cottages are two storey, terraced and semi-detached. They have pyramidal, hipped and gabled roof forms, many with substantial chimney stacks and timber-mullioned windows under hoodmoulds. Many cottages lost their original windows in the 1950s. However, these and other alterations to properties are gradually being restored to their original appearance.
- 3.15 For convenience, throughout this text the group of cottages on the west side of the lane will be referred to as the “Square”.
- 3.16 The architectural elevations of the Square face outwards and many of the cottages are entered from the large open space it encloses. The Square is approached via a lane passing through a narrow opening in its east side (between Nos. 7 & 9) and winds around the Square to serve the cottages. A strong sense of enclosure here is further enhanced by the belt of mature, mixed deciduous trees closing the north side of the Square.
- 3.17 This is the “working” side of the dwellings, concealed from the sight of visitors to the village. Elevations are plain and unpretentious with later cottages faced in common brick. They are nonetheless representative of their period and of the local vernacular in terms of materials, windows, doors, etc.
- 3.18 The middle of the square a communal area is sub-divided into gardens-cum-allotments and is fringed with

mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century prefabricated lock-up garages, one or two old stone-built privies and grassed verges. The visual muddle is nonetheless a positive component of the character of the Square and of the conservation area.

- 3.19 The cottages on the east and west sides of the Square have narrow front gardens enclosed by a mix of laurel and hawthorn hedges and timber picket fences.
- 3.20 Wrapping around the outside of the Square on its south and west sides is a wide expanse of lawn. (For convenience, throughout this text, it will be referred to as the "Lawn".) It stretches towards the Church and is punctuated by the few mature conifers surviving from the original landscaped planting. Along the edge of Wilton Lane and backed by a laurel hedge the Lawn is enclosed by a white-painted "ranch-style," post-and-rail fence, the scale and proportions of which are incongruous to the character of the area. This otherwise attractive open space gives a sense of openness that is important to the character of this part of the settlement.
- 3.21 Wilton Lane swings west around the Lawn before climbing Wilton Bank to the south.
- 3.22 Standing on rising ground, just beyond (south of) the historic core of the village and visually screened from it by a belt of mature woodland, is Castle Dene Rest Home. This 2-storey block is faced in a mixture of buff-coloured brick, rock-faced random rubble sandstone and has a concrete tiled roof. In scale, form and materials it is out of character with the historic settlement from which only its visual detachment have reduced its otherwise detrimental effect.
- 3.23 The "manager's house" further east, has minimal impact by virtue of being screened by woodland and the main block of the Home, while Willow Lodge, the modern bungalow to the west, clad in cream coloured brick, is in scale with

cottages in the village and has a more benign visual impact.

- 3.24 Views from this part of the village are closed by mature stands of trees, except to the south where beyond the Rest Home a sloping meadow leads the eye to the distant wooded escarpment.

### **The Church**

- 3.25 An unadopted, tarmac drive leading from Wilton Lane curves across the Lawn to give access to the north side of the parish church and churchyard. The sensitively maintained churchyard enclosed by metal estate fencing, contains innumerable historic and more recent gravestones in a variety of different styles and stones, providing an attractive and appropriate setting for the church.
- 3.26 The building itself is of a modest scale, constructed from amber-coloured sandstone and consists of a relatively plain nave and chancel. Its attractive qualities emanate from its mix of Romanesque and Gothic styles and the curious spirelets at the west end flanking the larger timber spire capping the bell turret.
- 3.27 Being well screened by mature trees both around and within the churchyard, this ancient and attractive building is difficult to view in its entirety. Only tantalising glimpses can be had to and from the village Lawn and from the Castle and its gardens, giving it the character of a "secret place."

### **The Castle**

- 3.28 The Castle can be approached from the village, along the drive through the trees close to the churchyard, but the main access is along the Castle drive, leading off the A174 to the north. On leaving the road, the attractive Pease-brick-faced North Lodge of c.1850 is passed on the right marking the entry into the park. From the broad curving drive flanked by traditional metal estate fencing, are impressive, pastoral views

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- across mature, rolling, open parkland to the entrance front of Wilton Castle, set high on grassy terraced banks and beyond to the wooded escarpment terminating at Eston Nab.
- 3.29 The drive then passes through a block of woodland to emerge in the on the forecourt on the north side of the Castle. This is a flat, rectangular, tarmac and concrete-flagged area, above which towers the Castle.
- 3.30 The Castle is a 2 and 3-storey, rectangular-plan mansion with symmetrical elevations facing north and south. It is constructed from the local sandstone, has slate roofs and is in the "Romantic Tudor Gothick" style with towers, turrets, bay windows, embattled parapets and gables and decorated with arrow-loops, shields and other medieval symbolism.
- 3.31 To the west of the Castle are the largely single-storey, mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century stable block and outbuildings, of stone and slate, on three sides of an open courtyard. Although well screened from sight, historically and visually it is an integral part of the Castle and its setting
- 3.32 North of the Castle forecourt the ground falls away steeply, giving it the appearance of a raised "platform" commanding a panoramic view across open parkland towards the dramatic, expansive bulk of the Wilton Chemical Works Complex. The view is framed to left and right by dense mature woodland. From the middle of the dwarf wall enclosing the forecourt, a flight of stone steps give access to the terraced grassy banks and tarmac driveway (to the Golf Club) below.
- 3.33 East of the Castle is a sunken garden and tennis court occupying a natural, steep-sided gill or ravine, closed at its north end by a crescent-shaped "dam". This may have been constructed to form a moat or ornamental lake alongside the Castle.
- 3.34 On the south side of the Castle a roughly square formal garden is laid out with geometric-pattern gravel walks around and between lawns. At the angles are recently-planted specimen conifers. The centrepiece, a Victorian, cast-concrete fountain lately converted to a flowerbed, no longer draws the eye. Instead, mature yew hedges along the east and west sides of the garden direct the eye south across a crenellated dwarf sandstone wall, to the rolling parkland and wooded escarpment beyond.
- ### The Parkland (north)
- 3.35 A double avenue of pollarded, over-mature deciduous trees planted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, straddles the disused west carriage drive to the Castle and served as the southern boundary of this part of the conservation area until its extension in 2007. The avenue runs for half a mile towards Lazenby, almost to the edge of the conservation area and terminates at a crude metal farm gate opening onto Lackenby Lane. Beyond this point broad belts of mature deciduous woodland flanked the lane.
- 3.36 The avenue is the most important single landscape feature within the conservation area and ranks highly in the context of the Borough. Walking along it affords views northwards across the parkland towards ICI and Lazenby. Sadly, the avenue is neglected, the trees showing little evidence of management. The surface of the drive is breaking up and is being used for the disposal of discarded earth dumped in mounds along its entire north side.
- 3.37 Although the parkland to the north of the avenue and Castle is used as a golf course, this has had minimal effect upon its landscape quality. Many young trees: individual specimens as well as groups have been planted over the last 40 years, reinforcing the ageing original planting and ensuring the continuation of the area's parkland quality into the future. The fringe of woodland along the

northern edge, screening the A174 road from view, also has a thriving crop of recently planted trees. A dressed sandstone boundary wall encloses this woodland on its north side, serving as a strong visual and physical edge to the conservation area.

- 3.38 A visually important feature of this area of parkland is the 'open field system' with its 'ridge-and-furrow' markings forming broad stripes running from north to south. They are most prominent in views from the Castle forecourt and from the avenue, especially when a low-lying sun casts shadows across the furrows.

### **The Parkland (south)**

- 3.39 The area of parkland, to the west of the castle, was outside the conservation area boundary until 2007. Within this area and immediately to the west of the Castle outbuildings are the Golf Club buildings comprising:-

- The single-storey Woodlands Day Nursery constructed from artificial rockfaced stone with a slated, shallow-pitched, hipped roof (c.1990).
- The 2-storey, brick-clad, flat roofed Golf Club House (c.1980) and Club shop (c.1950).
- Substantial brick and metal-clad outbuildings to the west of the club house.
- The attendant tarmac surfaced car parking areas, lit by semi-industrial galvanised steel lighting columns with floodlamps.

- 3.40 Most of the above structures have been developed since the designation of the conservation area. However since they were located outside the boundary, little or no attempt was made to ensure their design harmonised with and respected the area's character. Fortunately the mature woodland, avenue, parkland and a screen of young poplars recently

planted to the south of the complex provide a reasonable level of screening, so their impact is substantially less than it otherwise might be.

- 3.41 To the south of the Golf Club buildings and the avenue there is open parkland within which many historic clumps of trees and specimen trees have been replanted in recent years. Having similar characteristics to the parkland north of the avenue its appearance is enhanced by the impressive backdrop of the wooded escarpment and the mature woodland screen at its western end stretching from the end of the avenue to the escarpment. As with its northern counterpart, use as a golf course has not unduly diminished its landscape quality or character.

### **Views and Vistas**

- 3.42 There are few views into or out of the conservation area owing to its wooded parkland setting which screens and subdivides the village. Even vistas within the area are restricted by enclosing fringes and screens of mature trees, although the sense of containment varies according to the season with a greater sense of openness in winter.
- 3.43 Some views and vistas are referred to above (paragraphs: 3.8, 3.10, 3.24, 3.27, 3.28, 3.32, 3.34, & 3.36). Others are as follows:-
- During winter, glimpses of the Castle can be had from the A174 road, through the screen of trees on the edge of the conservation area.
  - One of the best views of the Castle is to be obtained from the footpath along the edge of the woodland to the south-west of the church.
  - One of the most significant views out of the conservation area is from the castle forecourt across open parkland towards a screen of mature trees alongside the A174 and

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beyond to the visually dramatic  
Wilton Chemical Works complex.

### Unifying Features

3.44 The principal unifying features of Wilton Conservation Area are the integrity of the planned 19<sup>th</sup> century estate village built in the Tudor Gothick style, and its largely intact wooded parkland setting. Other common features are as follows:-

- The use of the indigenous sandstone, cream-coloured "Pease" brick and slates from Cumbria and North Wales.
- Mixed evergreen (largely laurel) and deciduous mature hedges with traditional timber post-and-rail and picket fences and metal estate fences



## 4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.1 The conservation area is not without its negative elements. They are as follows:-

- Woodlands Day Nursery, the Golf Club House and ancillary buildings.
- Mid 20th century, single-storey, flat roofed extensions in common brick, to the rear of the cottages at the east and west end of the square.
- The alteration and loss of doors, windows and other original features of historic buildings throughout the area.
- The neglected double avenue and drive and the use of the driveway as a waste tip for discarded earth.
- The white painted “ranch-style” timber post-and-rail fencing enclosing the village Lawn.
- Modern residential street lighting within the core of the village and close to the Castle.
- The general use of tarmac surfacing and concrete edgings for roads and concrete flagged paving throughout the area.

4.2 The visual impact of the overhead electricity and telephone lines at the lower end of Wilton Lane, are visually overpowered by their woodland backdrop. They do not therefore seriously affect the appearance of the area.

4.3 The Castle Dene buildings are by virtue of their design, scale, form and materials, unsympathetic to the character of the conservation area. However, owing to their relatively well-screened location and separation from the core of the village, their impact can be read as more benign than negative.



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## 5. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

- 5.1 The former conservation area boundary was for the most part coherent, cohesive and consistent with the historic core of Wilton village, the castle and their landscape settings. No significant developments or adverse changes in character had taken place that would have justified exclusions from the conservation area, but opportunities to amend and extend its boundary were identified.
- 5.2 The boundary along the northern edge of the conservation area was drawn prior to the dualling of the A174 road and has therefore been re-drawn to follow existing physical structures.
- 5.3 The belt of trees on the east side of Wilton Lane and the reservoirs beyond did not exist when the conservation area was designated in 1971. The trees provide an important visual buffer between the reservoirs and the conservation area and have now been brought within its boundary.
- 5.4 The avenue and parkland to the west of the castle appear to have been included because of their value as historic parkland and for the survival of 'ridge-and-furrow' markings between the avenue and the A174. The area of parkland to the north of the avenue is very similar in character and appearance, but was outside the conservation area boundary. This inconsistency has now been addressed by extending the boundary to the northern edge of the escarpment woodland.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This appraisal of Wilton Conservation Area summarises the key elements that collectively make up the special interest, character and attractiveness that justify its designation. It also identifies negative aspects of the area that undermine its special quality and suggests opportunities for improvement. The appraisal also considered whether any changes to the conservation area boundary were needed.

6.2 Wilton Conservation Area embraces the whole of the historic settlement. Since its designation in 1971 no historic buildings have been demolished and there has been little erosion of character through unsympathetic alterations and extensions. Wilton's architectural, historic and environmental qualities as an early 19<sup>th</sup> century planned estate village set in mature parkland are therefore still clearly evident. The conservation area still retains a strong visual cohesion and the reasons for its designation are perhaps even more valid today than in 1971. Its continued protection as a conservation area is therefore considered crucial to the future survival of its special character.

6.3 The survey of the conservation area undertaken in connection with this appraisal identified the need to clarify its northern boundary, while two areas of woodland and parkland were omitted from its boundary. These matters were given full consideration and after public consultation Council resolved on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to make changes to the conservation area boundary as follows:-

- To modify the boundary on the northern edge of the conservation area and west sides of the village to relate to follow existing physical structures.
- To include the belt of trees on the east side of Wilton Lane.

- To include the area of parkland to the north of the avenue is very similar in character and appearance, but was outside the conservation area boundary. This inconsistency has now been addressed by extending the boundary to the northern edge of the escarpment woodland.

The plan in Appendix 2 shows the approved, amended conservation area boundary.

6.4 Regarding the negative elements that undermine the special qualities of the conservation area, further work is required to develop practical, coherent solutions and opportunities for improvement and should be addressed in the context of a Conservation Area Management Plan.



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# APPENDIX 1: Planning Policies

## Local Development Framework (LDF) Policies affecting Wilton Conservation Area

- 1 The Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework, which includes policies in the adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies Development Plan Documents (DPDs) as well as saved policies of the adopted Local Plan, set out several policies relating to this conservation area. Those current at the time of writing are set out below; for future updates please visit the Council's website: [www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/ldf)
- 2 Policy CS25 of the Core Strategy indicates that development proposals will be expected to contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment of the Borough, and that the character of the built and historic environment will be protected, preserved or enhanced.
- 3 The whole of the conservation area is located outside the 'Limits to Development' beyond which development will not be permitted. (Policy DP1 of the Development Policies DPD refers)
- 4 The conservation area falls within the Tees Forest area, within which there is a strategy to regenerate and revitalise the green space, creating well wooded environments. (Policy CS22 of the Core Strategy refers, notated on the Proposals Map as Community Forest).
- 5 The conservation area is subject to LDF Core Strategy Policy CS22 for the protection and enhancement of the Borough's landscape.
- 6 A small part of the southern part of the conservation area is within an area identified as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, which Core Strategy Policy CS24 seeks to conserve and enhance. Development Policies DP2, DP3 and DP4 indicate that biodiversity interests must not be seriously adversely impacted and that any biodiversity interest is fully incorporated in any proposals.
- 7 General criteria around site selection, sustainable design and the matters that the Council may seek developer contributions for are set out policies DP2, DP3 and DP4 of the Development Policies DPD. Policies DP9, 10 and 11 set out development control criteria for conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeological sites and monuments respectively.
- 8 The northernmost corner of the conservation area is within an area where any proposed development is notified to the Health and Safety Executive, because of its proximity to a hazardous installation or a site where hazardous substances are handled. Two high-pressure natural gas pipelines also cross the conservation area, near to its north-eastern boundary.
- 9 Local Plan Policy ENV 2 (new conservation areas and reviewing existing conservation areas) and Appendices 2 to 4 (providing detailed design guidance for conservation areas, listed buildings, shop fronts and advertisements) are relevant.

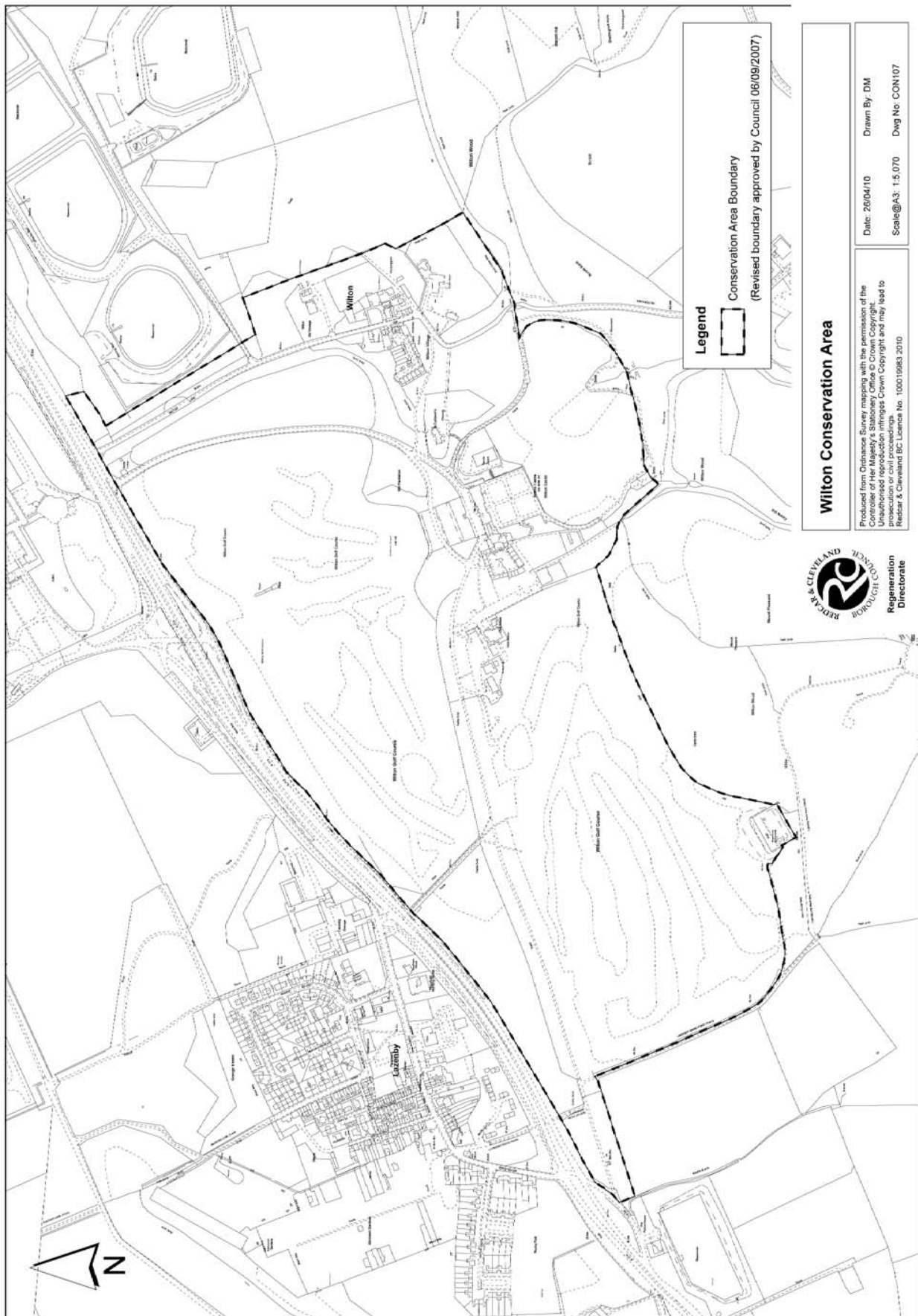
### NB

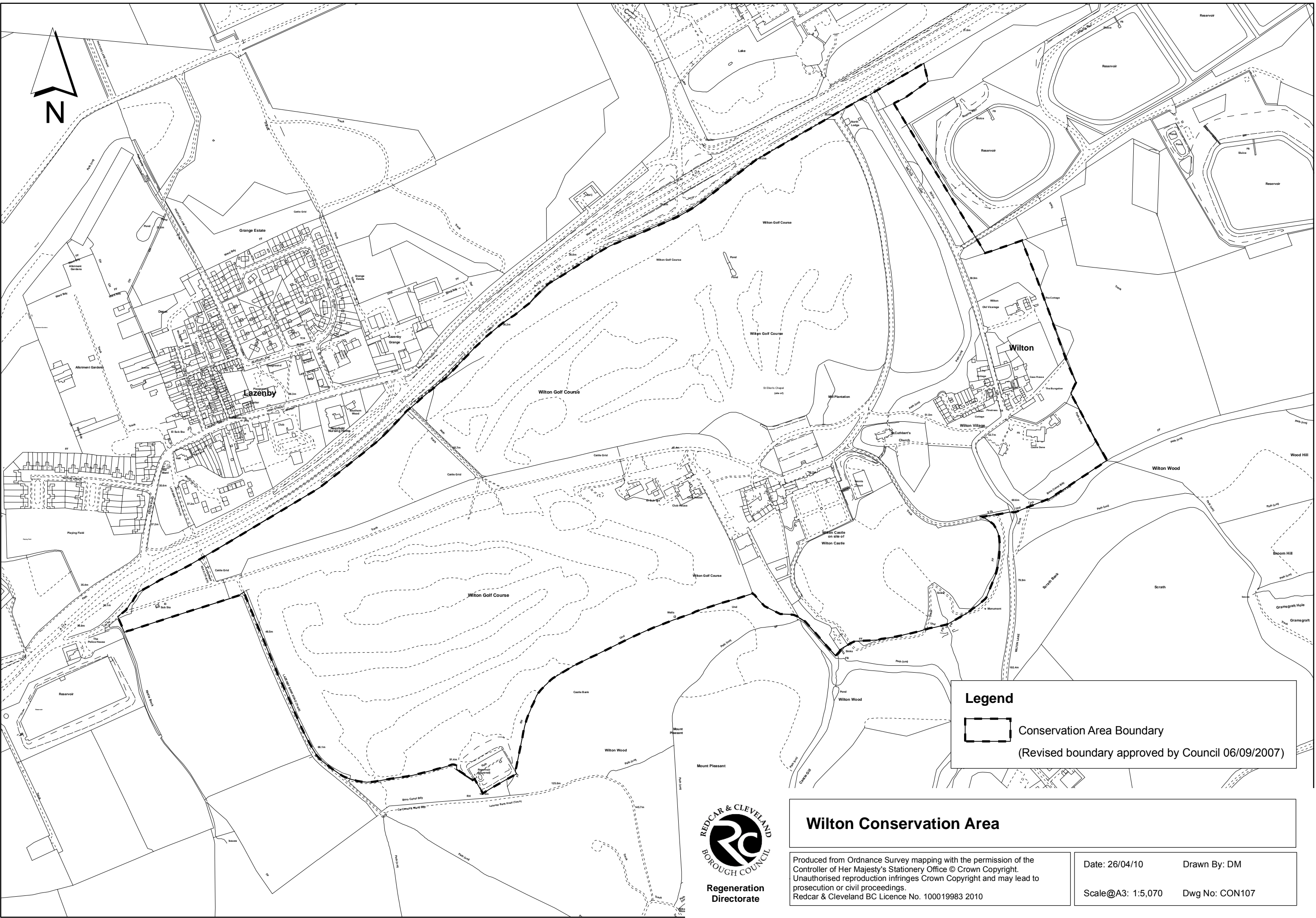
The planning policies referred to above are current at the time of writing; for an up to date list of extant policies, please visit the Council's website, [www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/ldf) or contact: 01287 612356.




# APPENDIX 2: Plan of Wilton Conservation Area

**NB** Plan is available as a more detailed separate download at:  
<http://www.redcarcleveand.gov.uk/conservationareas>





**Legend**

 Conservation Area Boundary  
 (Revised boundary approved by Council 06/09/2007)

**Wilton Conservation Area**

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 Scale@A3: 1:5,070      Dwg No: CON107



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