



Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011



Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

this is Redcar & Cleveland

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PHYSICAL SETTING AND TOPOGRAPHY	3
3. HISTORIC ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT	5
4. CHARACTER APPRAISAL	11
5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	25
6. CONCLUSIONS	27
References	29
Bibliography and Acknowledgements	31
APPENDIX 1: Conservation Area Boundary	33
APPENDIX 2: Listed Buildings & Scheduled Monuments	35
APPENDIX 3: Planning Policies	39
APPENDIX 4: Guisborough Conservation Area: An Archaeological Assessment	41



Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of its continuing duties under the Planning Acts, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council has prepared appraisals for 15 of its 17 conservation areas².

Guisborough Conservation Area designation

- 1.2 Guisborough Conservation Area was designated by the North Riding of Yorkshire County Council on 25th March 1971³. It was designated for its general townscape qualities rather than for the presence of many buildings of major architectural or historic interest. The designation report stated: "The Council's policy will be to retain the present character of Guisborough by careful consideration of all development proposals within the proposed Conservation Area"³. The original conservation area boundary was tightly drawn to include Church Street, Market Place, Bow Street, most of Westgate and the north end of Belmangate together with the ruins of St Mary's Priory and its landscape setting.

Conservation Area extensions 1978

- 1.3 After an extensive survey and analysis of the conservation area and its setting in the mid 1970s, the boundary was extended in April 1978⁴ to include the following:-
- Albion Terrace, Bakehouse Square, Chaloner Street, Chapel Street, Patten Lane, and Westgate Road;
 - Parts of Fountain Street, Redcar Road, Reid Terrace, the site of the auction mart and Union Street;
 - The backlands and burgage plots of properties on Belmangate, Church Street, Market Place, and Westgate;
 - Chaloner Cottages and properties standing opposite on Belmangate.

Conservation Area extensions 1992

- 1.4 On 24th March 1992⁵ the conservation area was again extended to include the following:-
- Gisborough Hall (Hotel), Gisborough House (former stable block) South Lodge and the surrounding parkland and open land towards the priory ruins on the north side of Whitby Road;
 - Nos. 2-14 Reid Terrace and No 1 Gill Street;
 - The east side of Redcar Road, between Avenue Place and the garage;
 - A small extension at the south end of Belmangate.

Article 4 Directions

- 1.5 Article 4 Directions were approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 8th September 1978 (general) and 30th October 1978 (agricultural)⁵. The directions withdraw certain permitted development rights for domestic, commercial 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. The directions do not apply to properties falling within the extensions to the boundary of 1992 and 2007.

Tree Preservation Orders

- 1.6 There are four Tree Preservation Orders within the conservation area⁵, as follows:-
- L/TPO 7 dated November 1969 protecting 23 mixed species on land to the south side of Albion Terrace.
 - L/TPO 8 undated protecting 31 mixed species in New Upper Garth Gardens (north of Westgarth, 96 Westgate).

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

- L/TPO 10 dated July 1975 protecting 11 mixed species at the Church Hall, Bow Street.
- L/TPO 52 dated June 1984 protecting 12 mixed species on land north of Walton Terrace (Morrison's Car Park).

Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

- 1.7 The revised statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest was published in April 1984⁶. The listed buildings and scheduled monuments located within the conservation area, including those that have been demolished since the list was published, appear in Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

Conservation Policies

- 1.8 In December 1978 the local planning authority adopted a comprehensive set of conservation policies⁴ for "building, area character, advertising, landscape, floorscape, and street furniture" together with a number of 'Development Principles' aimed at safeguarding the special character of the conservation area. The principles, which expound elements of good design, were to be employed when considering planning applications for development. Although still relevant, most of the policies have been superseded by those contained in the Redcar and Cleveland Local Development Framework (LDF)¹.

Planning Policies

- 1.9 The Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework (LDF) includes policies relating to the conservation area. They are set out in Appendix 3.

Conservation Area Appraisal

- 1.10 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 Guisborough Conservation Area by recording, evaluating and presenting all of the key elements which together make up its special interest and character. It also raises issues relating to the appropriateness of the conservation area boundary and the extent of the Article 4 Directions while identifying negative features and opportunities for improvement.

- 1.11 **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 6th 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 1.**

- 1.12 While the appraisal covers the topics referred to in PPG 15⁷ and in guidance issued by English Heritage⁸, it is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2. PHYSICAL SETTING AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 Guisborough lies approximately 15-Km (9½ miles) south-east of Middlesbrough and 12-Km (7½ miles) south of Redcar and 9-Km (5½ miles) south-west of Saltburn. It has grown around the convergence of historic routes (A 173 and A 171) connecting Middlesbrough, Thirsk, Whitby, the East Cleveland coastal towns and villages and moorland settlements. The town is now relieved of much through-traffic by the Guisborough by-pass.
- 2.2 It is situated on the undulating floor of a broad vale defined by the south-facing dip slope of the Eston Hills and the higher, main scarp slope of the Cleveland Hills to the south. The vale is covered by glacial drift comprising heavy clay occasionally relieved by patches of lighter sand, gravel and alluvium. It was on one of these larger patches: a better drained, slightly elevated, gently sloping and south-facing site bounded to the south by Chapel Beck that much of Guisborough developed. At the eastern end of this vale Wiley Cat Beck enters by a narrow gorge at Slapewath, formed by glacial action at the end of the last Ice Age when the retreating ice caused diversions in pre-glacial drainage patterns. In the 1850s the gorge conveniently provided a level railway route from Guisborough into the East Cleveland iron ore field.
- 2.3 To the west the low morainic hills near Windle Bridge form a watershed causing the westward-flowing Chapel Beck to make a 'U-turn' to eventually join the north-easterly-flowing Skelton Beck that enters the North Sea at Saltburn.
- 2.4 The main scarp slope of the North York Moors rises abruptly to the south of Guisborough to heights of over 300m (1,000 feet) at Highcliff Nab. Behind it the open moorland plateau, with a general altitude of over 240m (800 feet) is free from glacial drift having only thin and poor soils overlaying the Jurassic sandstones and shales. The scarp slope is forested presenting a densely wooded, visually dominant backdrop to the settlement. On the opposite side of the vale the Eston Hills are lower, between 120m and 210m (400 and 700 feet) and are covered with glacial drift which makes for better farming, leaving only the higher slopes as managed woodland and uncultivated moorland.
- 2.5 The local geology and geomorphology have also had a significant influence on human activity and the character of the built environment, particularly through exploitation of the building sandstones from the upper slopes of the escarpment, the jet and alum of the Upper Lias shales and the ironstone of the Middle Lias. While the moors and ancient indigenous forests doubtless provided the earliest building and roofing materials such as timber, heather, thatch and sods, the orange/brown sandstone quarried from the escarpments was used from at least the Anglo Saxon period.
- 2.6 From the middle of the 17th century bricks and tiles were at first imported from the Low Countries and then manufactured locally from the indigenous clays to make the orange/red bricks and pantiles that are now so characteristic of the broader local area. The development of the railways in the 19th century gave access to a more eclectic range of building materials from diverse and distant sources, including roofing slates from Cumbria and North Wales.

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

3. HISTORIC ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

3.1 The historic development of Guisborough has shaped the distinctive elements that make up its particular special character today. Its history is well documented⁹ and this report consequently provides only the outline of the past to show the context of the conservation area. A report on the archaeology of Guisborough¹⁰ is provided in Appendix 4.

Local Historical Context

3.2 The Redcar and Cleveland area is a mix of industrial, urban, semi-urban and rural settlement, which gives it its distinct character. Although most of the older settlements were founded or re-founded from the late 11th century, there were exceptions where occupation was continuous from earlier times, as at Guisborough. Basic settlement form and layout remained largely unaltered from these earlier times until changes in farming practice were introduced in the 18th and 19th centuries, or, until industrialisation and urbanisation altered them - sometimes beyond recognition.

3.3 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 and demands of the 19th and 20th century development of the wider Tees Valley area. Its history shows that over the last 150 years urban and industrial developments have dramatically changed its appearance.

3.4 In the context of the 17 other conservation areas in the Redcar and Cleveland area, Guisborough broadly ranks alongside Loftus, Skelton and Saltburn viz.:-

- **Loftus:** an urbanised medieval market town incrementally re-developed in the 18th and 19th centuries with a major 19th century 'industrial' extension.

- **Skelton:** the centre of an urbanised medieval market town and stronghold incrementally re-developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, with an 'industrial' 19th century extension and 'satellites.'
- **Saltburn:** a planned, Victorian, cliff-top seaside town with the remains of the much earlier fishing village on the shore below.

3.5 These together with Guisborough are the best surviving of the historic rural market town settlements, retaining much of their historic character while having escaped the worst effects of urbanisation.

Early History of Guisborough

3.6 Centuries of diverse land uses and over a thousand years of urban development have obscured much of the evidence of the original settlement, so we do not know when, or by whom, nor for what purpose Guisborough's site was first used. As is usually the case, prehistoric sites have come to light on the now comparatively unused upland areas of North East Yorkshire, but this does not obviously preclude some kind of early utilisation of the lower land in locations like Guisborough.

3.7 Guisborough does not appear in written records until 1042 AD11. Forty-four years later the Domesday Survey records a church, a mill and around 3,000 acres of farmland¹² indicating the existence of a well-established Anglo Saxon or earlier settlement. The following evidence confirms this:-

- Archaeological finds discovered on the priory site in 1985.
- A series of stray archaeological finds from dispersed locations can be dated to the Roman period when the Guisborough valley was probably occupied by people living on dispersed farmsteads.

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

- The scattering of local place names of Scandinavian and Saxon origin.
- 3.8 The derivation of the prefix of the name 'Guisborough' is unknown but may represent a Norse personal name. The suffix: 'borough' traditionally indicates a fortified place, implying it was a high status defended settlement. The two spellings: 'Guisborough' for the town and 'Gisborough' for the priory and the Gisborough Estate, are still retained.
- 3.9 The original main street of Guisborough, and maybe the site of the earliest settlement, appears to have been Belmangate¹³ on the opposite side of Chapel Beck to the rest of the town. Even after the development of Westgate, Market Place and Church Street in the 12th century, Belmangate appears to have remained as a detached or separate entity. J. W. Ord writing in 1846 lists 'Bellmangate' as a separate hamlet attached to the town¹⁴. This appears again in a directory of 1874⁹.
- 3.10 The original layout would have comprised farmhouses and cottages occupying tofts of land on either side the main route to the moor, in similar fashion to other moorland fringe villages such as Carlton-in-Cleveland and Great Broughton¹³. 18th century and early 19th century estate plans show Belmangate falling into two areas. The southern end had a loose scatter of farmhouses with long, wide garths behind them and a common rear boundary, whereas the northern end had, as it does now, a denser layout of relatively small cottages and short garths - perhaps accommodating the lesser servants of the priory.
- 3.11 Beyond the 'common rear boundaries' lay the working open fields characterised by the ridge-and-furrow patterns formed by the method of cultivation. Evidence of medieval activity in the form of earthworks and ridge and furrow still survive on the east side of Belmangate in the pastures at Belmont Farm¹⁵.
- 3.12 Belmangate straddled the ancient drove road leading from the mouth of the River Tees, by way of Wilton, up onto the moor and beyond towards Commondale and other inland settlements. Hence, the 'sunken road' or 'hollow-way' formed along much of the street, by centuries of traffic. A stretch of flagged path or trod on the east side, just north of the railway bridge, survived until about 25 years ago.
- 3.13 After the Norman Conquest, much of East Cleveland including Guisborough became part of the extensive land holding of the de Brus family of Skelton Castle. In 1119 Robert de Brus II founded and lavishly endowed Guisborough's Augustinian Priory. For four centuries the priory flourished and expanded, becoming one of the most powerful monastic establishments in Yorkshire. Rebuilt and enlarged in the 13th and 14th centuries, by the time of the dissolution it is probable that its buildings filled the whole of the area bounded by Church Walk, Church Street, Bow Street, Whitby Road and a straight line drawn between and beyond Priory Cottage and the surviving east end of the priory church¹⁶.
- 3.14 A church has existed in Guisborough since Saxon times, probably on the same site as the present Church of St Nicholas which incorporates several building periods stretching from the 15th century chancel and tower to the last major transformation in 1904-08 by architect Temple Moore.
- 3.15 Church Street, Market Place, Northgate and Bow Street appear to have developed in response to the foundation and prosperity of the priory and the ensuing growth of Guisborough's population and commercial life. Westgate seems to have been an extension to this development, being planned on a

straight east-west axis through the earlier open fields⁹ with each of the properties on either side occupying a long narrow plot of land, often with slightly curving boundaries. This is particularly evident on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map¹⁰ the most pronounced being the 'Town Garths' on the north side of Westgate. These boundaries reflect the pattern of the early medieval strip fields suggesting that the foundation of this part of the settlement along Westgate occurred at a date after medieval agriculture had been established.

- 3.16 There is no direct archaeological evidence to suggest how early the development of Westgate took place. Only limited archaeological excavation has been carried beyond the priory site and this has not provided any clear evidence predating the late 15th century. Future research and archaeological investigation may shed more light on Guisborough's early history and development.
- 3.17 By owning all the land around Guisborough the priory was able to dominate the life and fortunes of both the town and the surrounding countryside throughout the Middle Ages. Yet, although the priory possessed trading, mining and manufacturing rights these do not seem to have resulted in the development of Guisborough much beyond the status of a village with frequent markets. It was never granted a borough charter as the priory wished to retain direct control of the economic affairs of Guisborough. Consequently, it never achieved the status of a town and therefore failed to acquire its own independent, wealthier class of merchants and craftsmen who would have led such a community.

Post Medieval

- 3.18 In the mid-16th century, after the dissolution of the priory, its lands and buildings passed by degrees to the Chaloner family, who have continued to

be Lords of the Manor of Guisborough to the present day. Thereafter, the priory buildings were systematically demolished, the stone removed and used in and around Guisborough as a building material to replace earlier buildings constructed from less durable materials. Some architectural fragments from the priory buildings are visible in buildings such as 34 Westgate and 7 Market Place. However it is likely that many more exist in the town's older buildings but are as yet unrecorded.

- 3.19 Substantial quantities of masonry salvaged from the ruins were doubtless used by the Chaloner family to construct the Old Hall in Bow Street, one of their earlier residences, demolished in the early 19th century. They did however spare the east end of the priory church, the dovecote and the remains of the Church Street gatehouse to serve as 'romantic ruins' decorating the ornamental gardens of the Hall. These ancient structures still survive today.
- 3.20 The loss of the priory's welfare role was compensated in 1561 when Jesus' Hospital was founded by Robert Pursglove to provide a school and almshouses. This institution was reorganised in the 1880s to become Guisborough Grammar School and a new set of buildings designed by architect Alfred Waterhouse were erected on Church Walk.
- 3.21 During the post-medieval period Guisborough continued to function as a small market town with regular markets and stock marts, but it did not prosper and expand as well as other Cleveland towns. This probably due to the loss of the priory as a driving force and the town's relatively isolated location, hemmed in by hills and moors, with poor communications by road. The town's lack of a wealthier class of merchants such as could be found at Yarm and Stockton, is reflected in the scale of the buildings in Guisborough, with a predominance of cottage-type

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

dwellings with only a few better class town houses and inns developing in Market Place and Church Street later in the 18th century.

3.22 From 1606 the development of the alum¹⁷ industry in the hills above Guisborough brought wealth to the area but did not greatly increase the size of the town. Economic activity appears to have been based on the local agriculture which would have supported the usual trades - dairy products, blacksmiths, coopers, leather-working, woollen and linen textiles, etc, with regular markets for the trade of goods.

3.23 Knyff's etching of Guisborough published c.1700¹⁸, shows Guisborough Old Hall, its ornamental gardens and adjacent parts of the town centre, with the remains of the ruined priory beyond. It also shows the earlier market cross and the Toll Booth that preceded the present Town Hall.

3.24 A "prospect of Guisborough" of c.1720, in Samuel Buck's Sketchbook¹⁹ shows a small town centred on Westgate, Market Place and Church Street, with the manor house, church and priory ruins at its east end. Curiously the sketch shows an absence of buildings on Belmangate, suggesting the possibility of some shrinkage in the size of the Guisborough.

3.25 Jefferys' Map of 1772²⁰ shows the core of the settlement centred on the staggered crossroads formed by Westgate, Market Place, Northgate, Church Street, Bow Street and Belmangate. This same layout is confirmed by the First Edition, 6-inch scale, Ordnance Survey sheet of 1855/57²¹ and its revision of 1895²².

The 19th century

3.26 In 1808 Guisborough was described as comprising: "...one principal street running east and west, which is broad and spacious, and many houses being built in a modern style, the town has a neat and pleasing appearance."²³.

3.27 In 1821 the ancient tollbooth in the Market Place, was replaced by the existing Town Hall. Initially a two-storey building, a date stone records its elevation by an extra storey in 1870.

3.28 A most dramatic impact on the settlement came from the development of the Teesside iron and steel industry, based on the exploitation of the main seam of Cleveland ironstone, discovered in the Eston Hills in 1850. This same seam re-appears in the escarpment to the south of Guisborough and once the railway had been extended from Middlesbrough to Guisborough, mines were opened on the high ground on both sides of the vale and at Spawood and Slapewath.

3.29 Guisborough was transformed. Mining brought in immigrant workers from across the British Isles causing an increase in population that required many new houses, some of which survive in the streets off Westgate²⁴.

3.30 The railway station - a terminus - and a terrace of railway workers cottages, stood on the site of the present health centre and Fountain Street car park. The Cleveland Railway by-passed the station and continued across the bridge over Belmangate into the East Cleveland iron ore field.

3.31 The Guisborough (later: Blckett Hutton) Foundry developed from 1861 on a site lying between Chapel Beck and the railway tracks. It closed in 1997.

3.32 In 1857 the Chaloner family built a 'new' Guisborough Hall to the east of the town as a country house and the surrounding farmland was landscaped to create an attractive parkland setting. The Hall was extended in 1907 in the same Jacobethan style. Having served as a restaurant for many years, the house was recently extended and is now the Borough's largest hotel, while the Chaloner family occupy the former stable block re-named Guisborough House.

The 20th century

- 3.33 Steady expansion of the town continued for the first fifty years. However by the 1960s and 70s the burgeoning petrochemical industries on Teesside created a new demand for housing away from the urban heartland. New suburban housing estates quickly appeared to the south and west of Guisborough trebling its population to around 20,000.
- 3.34 Historically, Guisborough's development tended to be generated by activities related to the surrounding land and to the minerals that lay beneath it. However, during the last 50 years the influence of the land has waned as the local economy has become inextricably linked to that of the outside world and in particular to Teesside for which it has become a 'dormitory.'
- 3.35 Most of the local ironstone mines closed in the 1920s, 30s and 40s and the railway finally closed after the closure of the last Cleveland ironstone mine at North Skelton in 1964.

Summary

- 3.36 The gradual renewal of buildings and structures has taken place over the centuries but generally on the footprints of their predecessors. Consequently, the layout of the settlement has survived largely intact if not the fabric itself. With the exception of the older parts of the parish church and the priory ruins, the building fabric of the town dates largely from the seventeenth century onwards - albeit often incorporating salvaged priory stone - with all subsequent architectural and building styles being represented here.
- 3.37 No evidence has come to light of the above-ground survival of buildings dating from before the medieval period. The earliest standing buildings in Guisborough are clearly parts of the church and the remains of the priory. In the Market Place there are two and three storey domestic and commercial

buildings of apparent 17th and 18th century date, most of which probably conceal much earlier cores. It is very likely that historic building analysis of other older properties in Guisborough would reveal structural elements from earlier periods than their external appearance might suggest - possibly even medieval. Examples are: 50 Belmangate, 9 & 11 Market Place and the Black Swan on Westgate where part of a late medieval timber cruck blade can be seen in the lobby. It is therefore very important that opportunities that exist under the Planning Acts and other legislation and advice, to investigate, record and conserve historic fabric and particularly interiors of buildings, are pursued at every opportunity.

4. CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Although the conservation area is a coherent whole it is also the sum of its several parts, each of which has its own identity and special character. The area articulates into four clear and well defined 'identity areas' as follows:-

- Town Centre
- The Priory Precincts
- Gisborough Hall and Park
- Belmangate

4.1 Town Centre

4.1.1 Above all else, it is the buildings of a conservation area and the ways in which the spaces between them are used that determine its character. Allied to these the diversity of a constantly evolving range of land uses and other activities brings the area to life ensuring its dynamic vibrancy and sustainability. Gisborough town centre is a complex area of townscape, but it does possess a number of common unifying characteristics that help to make up its special architectural and historic qualities. They are as follows:-

4.1.2 Building form, character, materials and use

- Rows of buildings opening directly onto the street are a common characteristic of historic settlements. They were probably intended to enhance the enclosure and defence of the street while maximising the useable land on the burgage strips at the back. In Gisborough they are present in profusion in Market Place, Westgate, Bow Street, Church Street, Chaloner Street, Fountain Street and Belmangate.
- The historic burgage strips are important to the integrity of the historic layout of the town and should be used to advantage. Development has traditionally taken place along the strips rather than across them, thus retaining their pattern. This historic precedent should therefore be used to guide the pattern of future developments in order to preserve this important characteristic feature.
- Buildings vary in height from one to three storeys and have varied eaves and ridge lines.
- The restrained architecture of individual buildings tends to lack the exuberance found in other historically more prosperous settlements, but it nonetheless includes a mixture of traditional vernacular buildings as well as those expressing the styles of architecture and refined decoration fashionable at the time they were built. When occurring in groups such buildings have considerable collective value.
- Employment of the indigenous building stone in its diverse hues of orange, brown, grey and yellow tones used diversely as smooth ashlar, as stone blocks having a diversity of surface dressings, and as coursed and random rubble. Many examples have now weathered to a mature patina.
- The diverse forms and uses of brick, from the early imported and locally manufactured orange/red handmade bricks to the early machine-made bricks.
- High quality stone, bricks and terracotta/faience, of various textures, hues and dimensions, imported from other parts of the UK, often for higher status buildings.
- Examples survive of rendering and painting used as an original intended finish. However, in most cases such finishes were improvised remedies for dampness, masonry decay, or were used to hide the scars of past alterations. When used in appropriate circumstances as historically authentic finishes, render

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

and paint can enhance the attractiveness of the street scene.

- Roofing materials include traditional orange/red clay pantiles, grey/blue/black and green slates brought here from Wales and Cumbria and lead. A number of buildings still survive that would have been thatched. In recent times man-made slates and tiles have been used, but these lack the enduring subtleties of patina and colour manifest in their more natural counterparts.
- Wooden sash windows are of two principal types: vertically sliding and horizontally sliding, in a variety of forms and patterns. Many have multiple panes with glazing bars and some vertically-sliding sashes have rounded or pointed heads, in keeping with the style of the building's architecture.
- Window heads comprising stone or timber lintels, or, arches of stone or brick, and stone sills.
- Wooden doors of the cottage type with vertical boards and many doors of two, four or more panels, frequently set in Classical style doorcases or architraves in keeping with the style of the building.
- The earliest surviving historic shop fronts in the town centre are at 9/11 Market Place and 7 & 9 and 51 & 53 Westgate, both of them grade II listed buildings. Other substantially intact shop fronts survive at 82/84 Church Street, 16/18 Chaloner Street. A few modern shopfronts together with their signage are in keeping with their historic settings, but most do a disservice to their host buildings and of the area, being of poor design and inappropriate materials.
- Advertisements, signs and notice boards make significant positive as well as negative contributions to the

appearance of the area. The small number of surviving historic fascias, signboards and projecting signs serve as exemplars. Current Local Plan policies have inadvertently encouraged the inappropriate placing of projecting signs on or below fascias, whereas historic precedence shows they were set at higher levels on the buildings.

- Boundary treatments are diverse and include brick or stone walls, timber fences, traditional and ornamental ironwork and hedges of various species. Two world wars wiped out most of the characteristic wrought iron railings in the town, making the rare survivals all the more precious. Since the designation of the conservation area a number of property owners have reinstated railings and gates, some of them to a very high standard.

- 4.1.3 Employment of any one or more of the materials or components referred to above, when it has been used honestly, is usually indicative of the period of the structure in which it is used - a language that speaks the age and status of the building.
- 4.1.4 Many buildings have sadly lost some of their authentic features, particularly windows and doors, frequently under the recent onslaught of the UPVC invasion. Later unsympathetic alterations and additions, such as enlarged window openings, poorly designed shop fronts and over-large dormer windows, not only detract from the character of the individual building but also spoil the look of the entire area.
- 4.1.5 A problem commonly found in most town centres and to be found in equal measure here in Guisborough, is the disuse/underuse of the upper floors of buildings. Generally found in the context of commercial and retail uses, the problem is of long standing²⁵ and has led to deterioration of the building

fabric and the consequent down-at-heel appearance of many properties.

The spaces between the buildings

- 4.1.6 The ways in which the spaces between the buildings are treated has a significant effect on the special character of the area.

The spaces between the buildings: hard surfaces

- 4.1.7 For the most part hard surfaces comprise modern concrete unit paving and tarmacadam. Historically, the earliest hard surfacing would have been in the form of Yorkstone flags and locally sourced cobbles, used around some of the more important buildings such as the parish church. Elsewhere, surfacing would have comprised compacted earth, sand, gravel and roadstone. In the 19th century, as the volume of traffic increased, hard surfacing became a practical necessity to prevent the erosion of roads and footpaths. Cobbles continued in use supplemented with whinstone setts quarried from the local Cleveland Dyke and patterned scoria blocks made from blast furnace slag, as a by-product of Teesside's iron and steel industry. Compacted roadstone would also have made an appearance at this time followed in the 20th century, by tarmacadam and pressed concrete flags.

- 4.1.8 Surviving examples of historic surfacing in the town centre include the following:-

- The 'hard shoulders' used by the markets, along both sides of Westgate, surfaced in a mixture of traditional polychrome cobbles and black/grey whinstone setts, bordered with gulleys of scoria blocks. (Most of these areas were re-laid from Feb 2000.)

- Roadside drainage gulleys and 'crossing points' throughout the historic core of the town.
- Yards and lanes off the main thoroughfares, such as Chaloner Mews and Prospect Place.

- 4.1.9 In an attempt to regain the character of historic floorscapes, traditional stone setts and flags have been used to resurface a number of pedestrian environments, the most important being the areas in front of the parish church and Highland Laddie in Church Street and the new Yorkstone paving around the Market Cross. Other new materials such as resin bonded gravel - successfully used in the Johnson's Yard redevelopment, off Westgate - offer an attractive and cost-effective alternative to stone paving. Some of the previous attempts at repaving were much less successful, e.g. around the Town Hall.

The spaces between the buildings: soft landscaping

- 4.1.10 The visual amenity of any area is enhanced by its soft landscaping. However within Guisborough's town centre, soft landscaping is limited. The avenue of trees in Westgate (between Chaloner Street and Wilson Street) originally planted to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, adds to the attractiveness of the townscape by allowing views along the street to unfold as one progresses. Many of the trees are somewhat stunted owing to damage by vehicles or have been mutilated by injudicious pruning, while some have been replaced. Other important groups of trees are referred to in the text below.

- 4.1.11 Many of the properties that break the common building line and are set back from the pavement edge, have mature front gardens or planting of a more 'municipal' style. These serve as an attractive and visually enriching foil to predominance of hard surfaces in the town centre.

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

4.1.12 Tree Preservation Orders (see 1.6 above) have been successfully used over many years to protect and extend the life of important older tree groups and specimens. However, the practice has not been extended to the protection of younger trees and since many protected trees have passed maturity and either died or have been felled, there is an absence of protection other than the statutory requirement for 6 weeks notice to be given to the local planning authority.

4.1.13 The town centre car parks are largely devoid of soft landscaping, although that in Fountain Street is fringed by mature trees and a hedge.

The spaces between the buildings: street furniture

4.1.14 Many of the spaces between the buildings and especially the highway, tend to be cluttered with a plethora of street furniture that detracts from the character and otherwise attractive townscape qualities of the conservation area. In recent years positive steps have been taken to improve this situation through the introduction of new street lights of a more appropriate design and scale along Westgate, together with cast iron bollards and litter bins, neat stone-faced planters, metal tree guards and attractively designed information panels.

4.1.15 The duplication of traffic and street name signs including the use of a separate pole for each sign, and statutory undertakers' unsympathetically and inconveniently located pole-mounted service wires and distribution cabinets, all combine to create a sense of clutter. Coherent and rational approaches are required to address these issues.

4.1.16 Still to be found is the occasional survival of early metal, enamelled, and carved stone street name signs on buildings in the town centre. After many years most of these are still serviceable

and in design terms they provide much more discrete and sustainable models for imitation than many of their modern counterparts.

Backlands

4.1.17 In many urban areas the backs of properties tend to be hidden from view and their condition has little effect upon the appearance of the area. In Guisborough the network of back lanes and publicly accessible green spaces means the backs of many properties, particularly the historic burgage strips, are clearly visible and therefore have a direct effect upon the town's appearance. Most of the residential properties have attractive mature back gardens, frequently populated with a broad mix of youthful and mature trees, the larger of which serve as attractive backdrops to the front views of the houses. However many rear curtilages, particularly those attached to commercial premises, have an untidy, neglected appearance with underused or abandoned rear wings and outbuildings, giving the area a down-at heel appearance.

4.1.18 Such properties are frequently those where the upper floors are also disused and there is clearly a need to identify and embrace opportunities for improvements and developments that will respect the historic burgage strips and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area while helping to revitalise individual properties and the town centre as a whole.

4.1.19 Some rear curtilages have inappropriate uses such as the builders' merchant's premises behind Nos. 121-133 Westgate, set amidst residential properties. Backlands in Northgate and Reid Terrace have been cleared and surfaced to serve as car parks, the former having a block of public toilets. Sadly these facilities have few redeeming qualities and lack the

welcome one might expect from an historic town.

Sub-areas of the Town Centre:

- 4.1.20 Market Place, Westgate and the streets leading off comprise the present town centre. Here retail uses predominate, interspersed with old coaching inns, banks, and other typical town centre uses and activities. The area also holds many of the landmark buildings that one would expect to find in the heart of a settlement of this type - the Town Hall, Market Cross, Churches, etc, and all under the shadow of the towering east gable end of the priory church.
- 4.1.21 Most of the streets have their own distinctive character and are therefore described here as sub-areas of the town centre.

Market Place

- 4.1.22 The heart of this area is centred on the symbolic late 18th century Market Cross occupying the open space created by the convergence of Market Place with Bow Street and Northgate, forming a staggered crossroads. For centuries this has been the gathering point for the local community to witness proclamations, floggings, preaching, hirings, royal celebrations, etc.
- 4.1.23 On the north side of the space buildings form a continuous frontage comprising a mixture of both wide and narrow-fronted, two and three storey domestic and commercial buildings of apparent 17th and 18th century date, some of which probably conceal much older cores within. In recent years the space in front of these buildings and around the Market Cross, has been 'reclaimed' from the highway and is now surfaced with stone paving forming an informal pedestrian space, a refuge from the traffic and the bustling market day crowds and a venue for small events and other gatherings.
- 4.1.24 The strong sense of enclosure formerly possessed on the east side of the

Market Place, was significantly weakened in the 1960s when a substantial block of buildings was demolished to widen the opening into Church Street to permit two-way traffic. Today the surviving buildings, of similar form and age to those on the north side of the Market Place, articulate around the sharply curving and sloping corner down into Bow Street, in ungainly steps and cranks, creating a unique frontage of high townscape quality.

- 4.1.25 Standing forward of the rendered, painted and hipped roofed Seven Stars Inn, and within its own partly pedestrianised island site, the dignified, 3-storey Town Hall visually dominates the south side of Market Place as well as the views into it from north, east and west. This sorely neglected and underused building now used as solicitors offices, could make a much more positive contribution to the special character and vitality of the Market Place.
- 4.1.26 Apart from the Town Hall, the building frontages to the Market Place are architecturally undistinguished but nonetheless characterful, some being grade II listed buildings. Most of the shop fronts are modern and not in keeping with the character of their historic setting, but a small number, particularly that at Nos. 9 & 11 are of special architectural and historic interest.
- 4.1.27 Key buildings are the grade II listed Buck Hotel, the former Golden Lion at No 34, Nos. 7-13 and the Town Hall, together with the Market Cross decorated with sundials, weather vane and Victorian drinking fountain. The Market Cross is the cultural symbol of Guisborough's long market and trading traditions and is a key focal point in views into the space.
- 4.1.28 At its west end Market Place merges seamlessly into Westgate.

Westgate

- 4.1.29 Westgate is wide and spacious. It is wider at its middle, between Chaloner Street and New Road, reflecting the traditional northern characteristic of the two-row settlement. The sloping site means that the north side is elevated above the south, affording a different perspective of the properties opposite and of views of the distant forested escarpment through the gaps in the street frontages (i.e. Bow Street, Chaloner Street and New Street) and above the rooflines. Each side of the street has a continuous linear building line with only the occasional 'stagger' and gentle curve as Westgate widens and narrows. It incorporates a wide variety of building heights and widths and a harmony of different building styles, materials and detailing, with pitched roofs of varying steepness, occasionally hipped but mostly gabled. Some of the frontages have through-passages or the blocked up remains of them intended to connect to the burgage strips behind. Projecting shop fronts, bay windows, gabled and catslide dormers and chimney stacks of all shapes and sizes, further enrich the drama of the street scene and serve to articulate otherwise flat elevations, adding further interest to the townscape aesthetic.
- 4.1.30 The continuous building line on Westgate is broken by only eight properties whose building frontages are set back behind often sizeable front gardens and boundary walls of stone or brick, some with decorative iron railings. They are all on the south side and include: Sunnyfield House, the United Reformed Church, Holly House, the Registry, Westgarth, Lower Garth and Nos.132 &132a Westgate. Such breaks in an otherwise continuous frontage serve to relieve the hardness of the street scene by introducing 'islands' of garden vegetation and the occasional mature tree.
- 4.1.31 The distinctive cobbled hard shoulders of the street contribute greatly to the Guisborough's market town character and are well used by traders on market days and for parking at other times. The cobbles were removed many years ago from the southern side of Westgate, beyond Chaloner Street.
- 4.1.32 Commercial activities gradually peter out towards the west end of Westgate where residential uses predominate, and while buildings are of less stature they are nonetheless characterful and include several listed buildings.
- 4.1.33 The approach from the west along Westgate is one of a gradually unfolding vista. The avenue of mature trees planted in the cobbled verges, helps to break up the elongated perspective of the street to partially screen the view to the Market Cross and its architectural backdrop framing the opening into Church Street. In the distance, the view is closed by the landmark church tower partly veiled by the adjacent mature trees, whose visual prominence is enhanced by the rising ground.
- 4.1.34 Westgate's landmark buildings include the red brick and terracotta Methodist Church of 1907, its tall narrow gabled frontage standing head and shoulders above its neighbours. Few people regard it as a fine example of architecture, but it is an honest witness to its time in history and helps make the townscape of Westgate unique and quite special. Others are the Three Fiddles Inn, the HSBC Bank at No 12 and Kemplah House.
- 4.1.35 The plain but dignified Georgian Sunnyfield House is also a very special building in Guisborough. Quite apart from its special architectural and historic interest and its long service to Guisborough people as a surgery, a hospital, public building and community centre, it was, along with Westgarth and Kemplah House one of Guisborough's few larger private residences. Its site on the corner of Westgate Road affords it

visual prominence, but the unique, recently restored geometric-patterned, wooden, front boundary screen and landscaped front garden in complementary style, give the building particular distinction. The only unattractive feature is the loss of the rear boundary wall alongside Westgate Road and the use of the rear garden for car parking. Standing on the opposite side of Westgate Road and now in the garden of No 1, is a little stone tower or gazebo, an attractive curiosity and the last of the garden buildings that once belonged to Sunnyfield House.

4.1.36 In 1978 the former Co-operative Coal Depot between Westgate and Chapel Beck, was included in the extensions to the conservation area boundary, in order to influence the character of its envisaged redevelopment that was carried out in the 1980s. However, this resulted in the demolition of the listed buildings fronting Westgate, of which only replicas now survive. The former Coal Depot was replaced by the present supermarket, car park and service yards to this and other retail outlets. The area now possesses nothing of special character, other than the mature specimen woodland trees along the edge of Chapel Beck, which are protected separately by a Tree Preservation Order.

4.1.37 Several attractive, intimate and secluded, enclosed yards and side streets run off Westgate. Each one is contained within the burgage plot of the property and is characterised by small terraced and individual cottages. They are Greear Garth, Prospect Place, Sun Croft and the attractively redeveloped Johnson's Yard. Another secluded area and attractive green space is tucked behind the Public Library is the historic Quaker burial ground. Its simple round-headed gravestones are set in a grassed enclosure, enhanced by the visually enriching, mature, mixed woodland trees on this site and spilling over into adjacent gardens.

4.1.38 Other public green spaces include the entrance to the small public park just beyond No 187 Westgate, the lawned strip fronting Kemplah Mews on New Road and Bakehouse Square. The latter is tucked behind the Town Hall and is enclosed by the backs of properties fronting the surrounding streets, affording a strong sense of enclosure. It has the character of an informal town centre 'pocket park' with a well treed, grassed square dissected by a footpath recently re-surfaced in traditional Yorkstone flags with whinstone sett edgings. Setts also surface the adjacent track running down to the Chapel Beck cart-wash, where an unpretentious footbridge crosses into Fountain Street back lane. Although enclosed by a number of properties with an untidy, down-at-heel appearance, Bakehouse Square has potential for regeneration and improvement.

4.1.39 Developers traditionally turned the backs of their properties to Chapel Beck, which for many years had a neglected appearance. In recent years general improvements and repairs to its distinctive stone-faced retaining walls, have succeeded in helping it to become a more attractive feature and a haven for wildlife, complementing adjacent landscaped areas and buildings as it passes through the town.

4.1.40 The burgage strips behind Westgate strongly influenced the locations and layout of many of the terraces of late 19th century industrial workers dwellings e.g. Cleveland Street, Mill Street and Chaloner Street. Of these Westgate Road and Chaloner Street are still characterised by their domestic Victorian and Edwardian terraces displaying the harmonious use of materials and architectural detailing. Similar 2½ storey villas on Reid Terrace visually terminate the view along Westgate Road, enhancing its sense of enclosure and containment.

4.1.41 In Chaloner Street and Chapel Street undistinguished brick 2 & 3 storey

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

terraces are relieved by buildings such as the Italianate Mechanics' Institute with its polychrome brickwork, of 1861, the stylistically unusual Freemasons Hall of 1875 and the chapel converted to the Conservative Club. Many houses and cottages have been converted to shops and other commercial uses since the 1970s and where there were Victorian bay windows, there are now neat modern shop fronts, most of them stylistically in keeping with the character of the buildings. Leading off the west side of the street are Chaloner Mews, a pleasant enclave lined with shops, and the largely residential Chapel Street.

striking remains of its Norman gatehouse. The rounded archway frames dramatic views towards the octagonal 16th century dovecote and to the woodland and countryside beyond. Fronting the perimeter walls are several mature woodland trees rising from a narrow grassed verge. Attractive wrought iron railings that once edged the verge and guarded the gatehouse, were sacrificed to the 'war effort' in the 1940s, to be replaced by the existing crude wooden fence the appearance of which does great injustice to the character of this important scheduled monument.

4.1.42 Attractive, Edwardian style street lighting units fitted to the front elevations of the relatively narrow Chaloner Street have helped relieve the street of unnecessary clutter.

4.1.46 Here the carriageway sweeps to the left through 90° crossing the first square diagonally, leaving two triangular-shaped spaces: one serving as the forecourt to the parish church and the other fronting the 'L-plan' block of shops.

4.1.43 Victorian terraced cottages in other streets off Westgate, such as New Road and Mill Street have been so comprehensively altered that they possess little of their original character or appearance and are consequently not included within the boundary of the conservation area.

4.1.47 In the 1990s the two spaces were greatly improved by environmental improvements comprising hard landscaping using traditional stone setts, Yorkstone flagged paving and new street furniture including street lighting and bollards, together with judicious tree planting. This has greatly enhanced the pedestrian environment and has created a more fitting setting for the surrounding buildings and the attractive grade II listed war memorial on its stepped 'island' base.

Church Street

4.1.44 Church Street climbs gently uphill from Market Place, narrowing as it passes the high stone wall of The Rectory, to open out into two interlinked squares in front of and alongside the Parish Church of St Nicholas. The north side of the street repeats many of the characteristics of the built infrastructure of Westgate and Market Place with buildings of 2 and 3 storeys. Beyond the attractive, narrow yard leading off the north side of the street, the frontage steps down to a consistent 2-storey 'L' shaped block of shops: Nos. 49 to 61 Church Street (rebuilt in the 1980s) where the street opens into the first square.

4.1.48 As Church Street continues north to become Redcar Road, the second square opens up. It is enclosed on its north and east sides by 2 and 3 storey domestic buildings still retaining most of their characteristic historic architectural features, and on the south side by the nave and tower of the grade II* listed St Nicholas' Parish Church. By way of contrast, this square is used as a public car park and not having benefited from environmental improvement is visually sterile, still retaining its tarmac and concrete flagged surfaces.

4.1.45 On the south side of the street are the perimeter walls of the priory and the

4.1.49 The character of these spaces emanates from the juxtapositions of terraces and individual buildings forming the squares, from the understated architecture and from the harmony of different building materials. Also important are the effect of the mature trees and hedges in front of the Church and the priory ruins and those more recently planted elsewhere, in softening the hard lines of buildings and enhancing the drama of views within, into and out of Church Street. Visually dominating this whole is the embattled belfry tower of the parish church, with the priory arch looming above in the near distance.

4.1.50 The key landmark building is the parish church, set in its ancient, well-treed churchyard - an important open space in the conservation area. Many years ago most of the headstones were uprooted and placed in 'tidy rows' sadly impairing the true character of the churchyard. However, a number still survive in situ, including the memorial to noted local historian John Walker Ord¹⁴. Externally the church is an Edwardian re-working of medieval ecclesiastical architecture, but the core of the nave and the whole of the chancel are very much older. It is therefore probably the earliest relatively intact building still in use in Guisborough.

4.1.51 Moving north along Church Street and Redcar Road, the historic infrastructure changes from 18th and 19th cottages and small town houses to a predominance of Victorian and Edwardian terraces, some in a better state of preservation than others. Pursglove Terrace is a rare surviving example of a typical plain terrace of workers cottages in relatively unaltered condition. The conservation area boundary wraps around Nos. 2-36 Redcar Road before continuing along Walkers Row, Union Street and Patten Lane to Reid Terrace.

4.1.52 As with Westgate, Church Street has a number of characterful side streets,

yards and back lanes, one of these being Albion Terrace. This is a delightful, enclave formed by a single terrace of relatively unaltered two and three storey houses. They face a large, private and well-wooded, mature garden or square, separated from the terrace by a private gravelled drive flanked and closed by decorative period iron gates and railings. The trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The attractiveness of the houses lies in their Classical detailing, the mock-Tudor style of Miltoun House and the overall harmony of buildings and landscape.

4.1.53 A narrow lane alongside the Parish Church becomes Church Walk. This attractive stone-flagged footpath passes the churchyard on its south side and is flanked on the north by a grade II listed stone boundary wall giving way to a mature hedge and modern 'period' railings fronting the garden of the Victorian, stone, brick, terracotta and Lakeland slate of the grade II listed former Grammar School (now Prior Pursglove College). At its east end the path forks to Laurence Jackson School and across The Applegarth to Whitby Road. The conservation area boundary includes the Victorian school buildings and their later extensions but the boundary runs west to Avenue Place excluding the college buildings lying to the north.

Bow Street

4.1.54 From Market Place the opening into Bow Street forms a pinch-point beyond which the street gradually widens out. On the west side, sandwiched between much older terraced properties and set slightly back from the building line, is The Fox Inn: an attractive ashlar and pebbledash faced, roadhouse style hotel that replaced its much earlier counterpart in 1925. At its right hand corner is a curious listed building in the form of a well-worn, stone mounting block surviving from the days of horse-drawn traffic.

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

4.1.55 In contrast to the west side of Bow Street, the curved terrace of single and 2-storey shops of mixed age on the opposite side, abruptly terminates at the ancient, high, sandstone boundary wall fronting the church hall. The recent felling of over-mature deciduous trees behind the wall dramatically changed the views along Bow Street revealing the somewhat functional appearance of the mid 20th century church hall and its adjoining car park. The few remaining trees are now all the more precious and a re-planting scheme is called for to reinstate the lost sense of enclosure along Bow Street.

4.1.56 In the angle formed where the boundary wall steps forward, there are the neglected remains of the "Spout" - now a 'hole-in-the-ground' from which the public drew their water supply until c.1940. Further south, on the corner of Whitby Road, is the Bow Street Centre an attractive, grade II listed group of brick and stone farm outbuildings converted to business units. Parts of these buildings together with the stone boundary wall may be all that survive from the Old Hall of the Chaloners.

4.1.57 On the opposite side of Bow Street the late 20th century, flat-roofed and functional Health Centre has no redeeming qualities in terms of form, scale or architecture and its appearance is relieved only by the mature trees in the grassed frontage and chapel beck. The building is included in the conservation area so that due regard may be had to any changes to the site that might affect the setting of the buildings opposite and on Fountain Street.

4.1.58 Fountain Street is one of very few domestic terraces in Guisborough where the houses are predominantly of three storeys. Here the fairly typical Victorian architecture drawn from Classical influences is enhanced by the varied use of detailed design elements in the different builds, giving interest and vitality to the overall 'composition.'

Many of the diverse commercial uses in occupation here emerge from the backs of the properties to face the back lane running alongside Chapel Beck and Bakehouse Square beyond. This lane has its own dishevelled character that is not unattractive.

4.1.59 On the south side of Fountain Street, remains of the sandstone boundary wall to the former station yard, helps to screen the 'sea' of tarmac that serves as the town's principal car and coach park. Although outside the boundary of the conservation area it nonetheless has an adverse impact upon its setting.

4.2 The Priory Precinct

4.2.1 Guisborough's beautiful priory ruins are the most notable and visually prominent feature of the town. This 'precinct' includes the ruins of St Mary's Priory, the Priory Gardens and the field immediately beyond the east end of the priory church and brings the countryside right into the town centre.

4.2.2 The priory site, a Scheduled Monument, occupies a raised flat 'shelf' of land from which the ground slopes gently down to the town centre. To the south the ground steps down in terraces formed by retaining walls in the Priory Gardens, towards Whitby Road. The site is screened from the town centre by buildings fronting Church Street, Market Place and Bow Street and by the high stone boundary wall alongside the parish church, access being gained only by a 'hole-in-the-wall' doorway. This creates a strong sense of enclosure and detachment - a secluded enclave and an escape from the hustle and bustle of the town centre. Possessing the atmosphere of a secret garden the priory is frequently and successfully used for theatrical performances and other events.

4.2.3 The surviving remains of the once massive priory are scant, the most complete building being the

eyecatching, 16th century dovecote. Other structures are the ruined gatehouse, the remains of an undercroft and the east gable of the priory church. This large, otherwise empty space is attractively lawned and is gently terraced up to the towering, arched, sandstone, east gable end of the priory church standing nearly 30m (97 feet) high. Being by far the tallest structure in Guisborough and clearly visible for miles around, it is a key landmark not just within the conservation area, but also for the whole town. Understandably it has served as an enduring symbol for the broader community for many years.

4.2.4 From the priory grounds important views roll out across the market garden to Pond Wood and beyond to the forest-clad backcloth of the Cleveland escarpment. The priory arch window also serves to frame views out across the ha-ha and the somewhat denuded former parkland, towards Horse Parks Wood enclosing Gisborough Hall. This large field, punctuated by the occasional mature or over-mature tree and crossed diagonally by The Applegarth, is a popular and well-used tarmac surfaced footpath. Here, the conservation area boundary follows the south and east boundaries of school playing fields before turning north to wrap around horse Paddocks Plantation and the ridged-and-furrowed field forming its foreground²⁶.

4.2.5 To the west the priory grounds are lined by the backs of the 2 and 3 storey buildings on Church Street, Market Place and Bow Street. A few of these properties have an unsightly appearance owing to neglect and past alterations, extensions and the addition of curtilage buildings. Their appearance is therefore unsympathetic to both their individual and collective character and to the setting of the priory ruins and conservation area.

4.2.6 The priory site is managed on behalf of English Heritage by Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council²⁷.

4.2.7 Adjoining the priory ruins is Priory Gardens, the former kitchen gardens to Gisborough Hall. For many years it has been operated as a commercial market garden but large areas are now neglected and overgrown. The gardens are subdivided into a series of intimate interlinked spaces by high walls of brick and stone, most of which are protected by listing. To the east the gardens give way to over-mature mixed woodland.

4.3 Gisborough Hall and Park

4.3.1 The approach to the conservation area from the east along Whitby Road is rural in character, passing the landscaped grounds of Gisborough Hall and the remains of the open parkland setting of Foxdale Farm.

4.3.2 Gisborough Hall is Victorian Jacobethan style mansion with an adjacent, architecturally understated, but attractive and well-screened stable block. Set well back from the main road in acres of parkland the Hall is framed by strategically sited blocks of mixed woodland, and by the impressive backdrop of Horse Parks Wood. The Hall enjoys unsurpassed views across the vale to the wooded escarpment and the North York Moors and is consequently itself a principal feature of views into the conservation area from public rights of way and from the main road leading into the town.

4.3.3 Having operated as a restaurant for very many years the Hall was recently sympathetically extended and is now a 70-bedroom hotel. In floorspace terms the original Hall is dwarfed by the new extensions, but their massing and physical relationship has been successfully handled allowing the Hall to remain visually dominant in the landscape. The new entrance and driveway are softened by the mature hedge fronting the site and the recent

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

landscaping and planting will mature in time further enhancing the hotel's setting.

- 4.3.4 At this point the conservation area boundary follows the field boundaries running along the south side of Whitby Road and then turns through 90° to run north along the eastern edge of Horse Parks Wood.
- 4.3.5 Screened from Gisborough Hall by Fishpond Plantation and hard up against the road edge, is the very attractive, Jacobethan style, grade II listed, South Lodge. This is screened by high, sandstone ashlar, crescent-shaped walls, gates and gatepiers flanking the entrance to the driveway leading to the Hall.
- 4.3.6 The mature mixed woodland bordering the north side of Whitby Road has recently been thinned and many over-mature trees having been felled. While this has changed the ambience of this stretch of road by weakening the strong sense of 'backdrop,' an element of drama has been inadvertently created with occasional glimpses of the distant priory arch through the gaps between the trees. The visual impact of the mature roadside hedgerow has also been strengthened by this change. Within this woodland belt is the ancient and attractive, stone-lined Hall Pond, reputedly one of the medieval fishponds belonging to the priory.
- 4.3.7 The south side of Whitby Road is defined by its boundary treatments. They include traditional steel estate fencing, now in a poor state of repair; mature mixed species hedgerows and the occasional mature specimen tree, along the edge of the fields; and a modern concrete and steel 'birdsmouth' fence lining the edge of the road. Separating the two edges is Chapel Beck which joins the road edge after crossing the fields opposite Gisborough Hall.
- 4.3.8 Concealed behind a clump of mature trees in the middle distance is Foxdale

Farm, an early-to-mid 19th century farmstead comprising farmhouse, farm cottage and a substantial range of farm outbuildings. The clump is a focal point in views across the fields which themselves comprise a well-preserved and coherent remnant of the medieval and post medieval rural landscape. This includes ridged-and-furrowed fields with broad, well-developed reverse S-shaped ridges characteristic of those created by medieval plough teams¹⁵. The mature hedgerows with their mature trees are a major feature of this landscape. They probably date to the 18th century but clearly respect property boundaries of greater antiquity as reflected in their curving shape. This tangible evidence is important to the history and special character of Guisborough. The conservation area boundary was extended to include this area in 2007.

- 4.3.9 As Whitby Road draws closer to the town, the woodland on its north side is matched by a belt of mature deciduous trees to the south, creating a strong sense of enclosure and a dramatic tunnel effect as one approaches the crossroads.

4.4 Belmangate

- 4.4.1 At one time this area would have had central importance in Guisborough, although in the last 40 years it has once again become a main thoroughfare, this time leading to the suburban Hunters Hill housing estate. It is otherwise quiet and residential in character.
- 4.4.2 Many of the "common characteristics" described for the town centre (see under paragraphs 4.1.2 to 4.1.16 above) equally apply to Belmangate and help to make up its special architectural and historic character. Like Westgate, Belmangate has a mix of building types that lack uniform building heights and plot widths, although here the buildings are predominantly of two storeys.

- 4.4.3 Upon approaching Belmangate from the town centre the eye is drawn by the old police station (1857-1928)²⁸ together with the former Admiral Chaloner Cottage Hospital (1873) extended and converted to apartments in 2005. The former is a multi-gabled, 2-storey building with mullioned windows, soot-blackened, rockfaced sandstone walls and Welsh slate roof, relieved by its neat painted picket fence and cream coloured chimney pots. The former hospital is an imposing Victorian Gothic structure of red brick with stone dressings and prominent chimney stacks, enhanced by its slightly set-back setting on a grassy bank behind decorative iron railings along the edge of Chapel Beck. Its recent extensions in matching style harmonise well with the original building. These two buildings are of particular townscape importance to the character of the conservation area.
- 4.4.4 Chapel Beck which serves as a ditch alongside Whitby Road, changes in character in front of Admiral Chaloner House and the old police station, making a positive contribution to their setting.
- 4.4.5 The view along Belmangate is of a winding street that climbs gently up between sandstone and brick cottages towards the escarpment through the round arch of the rockfaced sandstone railway bridge and past the plain grade II listed Belmont Farmhouse and its two fine ranges of historic farm outbuildings. Filling a gap in the east side of the street are traditional allotment gardens fronted by an attractive Victorian brick boundary wall with stone copings. Further along and set back behind and above mature front gardens are Chaloner Cottages: a substantial, 2-storey row built of patterned polychrome brickwork for estate workers in 1872. These divergences from the continuity of the frontages successfully introduce elements of surprise to enrich the street scene.
- 4.4.6 Beyond Chaloner Cottages, dwellings of the mid-to-late 20th century predominate, only Nos. 65, 67 and 98 being witness to a much earlier age. Here the character of the street changes significantly with detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows set back from the road behind attractive gardens fronted by brick or stone boundary walls and mature hedges.
- 4.4.7 Most of the mineworkers cottages in the rows running off the west side of Belmangate were modernised in the mid-to-late 20th century, losing their original character. For this reason they are excluded from the conservation area.
- 4.4.8 As Belmangate begins its gentle climb, the road seems to enter a gulley or “hollow way,” the visual expression of the settlement’s ancient origins. This is referred to in paragraph 4.10 above. It is flanked by narrow verges surfaced with whinstone setts giving way to neatly mown grassed banks at its southern end.
- 4.4.9 In the fields to the east of Belmont Farm there is evidence of medieval activity in the form of ridge and furrow, clearly representing several phases of ploughing with both broad and narrow ridge varieties present. In 2007 the boundary of the conservation area was extended to include this area, together with the “hollow” way of Belmangate.
- 4.4.10 From the elevated southern end of Belmangate, views are obtained back across the conservation area to the town centre and the priory arch that punctuates the skyline.
- ## 4.5 Conclusions
- 4.5.1 Guisborough Conservation Area embraces most of the historic town centre along with the medieval priory site, the historically separate ‘sub-settlement’ of Belmangate and the Victorian Gisborough Hall in its extensive wooded and parkland setting. The several parts of the area each have

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

their own distinctive architectural, historic and environmental character, and these successfully meld together to form a coherent whole.

- 4.5.2 While the historic core of the town is already included in the existing Conservation Area, much of the later 19th century industrial housing was largely excluded. Sadly very few well preserved examples of this type of housing have survived owing to extensive modernisation and refurbishment and particularly re-glazing undertaken in recent years. The only truly coherent groups of this period are already within the conservation area.

5. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 5.1 Guisborough is not without its negative elements which are summarized here:-

Changes to the historic built infrastructure

- 5.2 The erosion of authentic architectural and historic features of buildings, particularly windows and doors, the addition of unsympathetic extensions, and the introduction of modern man-made building materials lacking the enduring qualities of their traditional counterparts are all particularly damaging. They detract from the historic integrity of the individual buildings and from the character and appearance of the entire area.
- 5.3 The many modern shopfronts of poor design and inappropriate materials that together with their signage, do a disservice to the character and appearance of their host buildings and of the area as a whole.

Neglect and disuse of buildings and land

- 5.4 Despite Guisborough's economic well being, there are still many neglected and disused buildings and areas of land, giving the area a down-at heel appearance. These tend to be found on the traditional burgage strips at the backs of commercial and retail premises throughout the town centre and include Priory Gardens where significant areas are now neglected and overgrown. Such properties are frequently those where the upper floors of the buildings themselves are also disused. The problem is one of long standing²⁵ and if allowed to continue unchecked will inevitably lead to the deterioration and loss of historic building fabric. There is clearly a need to identify and embrace opportunities for improvements and developments that will revitalize individual properties and the town centre as a whole, while respecting historic burgage strips and enhancing the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.5 The visually dominant Town Hall in Market Place is a sorely neglected and underused building which could make a much more positive contribution to the special character and vitality of the town centre.

- 5.6 The use of the backlands at the rear of Nos. 121- 133 Westgate as builders' merchant's premises is particularly inappropriate in the context of the surrounding residential properties.

Boundaries

- 5.7 Most boundaries of properties have attractive hedges, railings, fences or walls, which contribute to the character of the area. Some have been replaced using inappropriate materials or are neglected, such as the steel estate fencing and concrete and steel 'birdsmouth' fence alongside Whitby Road.

Trees

- 5.8 A number of the trees on the highway in Westgate have been mutilated by injudicious pruning and in recent years many significant trees in the conservation area reached the end of their natural lives and had to be felled, notably on Bow Street and Whitby Road. Those that remain are now all the more precious and more sensitive arboriculture and re-planting schemes are called for to help overcome the sense of loss.

The Highway Infrastructure

- 5.9 A key issue in Guisborough Conservation Area is the impact of the highway infrastructure on the historic infrastructure.
- 5.10 While car parking detracts from the character and attractiveness of the conservation area it nonetheless contributes to its vitality and activity, an essential component of a thriving market town. It is however important not to 'over-organise' such activities by marking out spaces or introducing

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

meters, ticket machines, insensitive signage and other paraphernalia. The town centre car parks tend to be characterless places, 'seas' of tarmac and concrete, devoid of soft landscaping, although that in Fountain Street is fringed by mature trees and a hedge. The architecturally unsympathetic blocks of public toilets compound the problem by failing to present the image visitors might reasonably expect of an historic town.

frequently a hindrance to the maintenance and repair of buildings and other structures. A coherent and rational approach to civic design and management is clearly called for.

- 5.11 Footpaths and other hard surfaced areas generally have modern, serviceable concrete or tarmac finishes which contribute little to the character of the town, especially where they are in need of repair. However, in recent years great strides have been made with the resurfacing schemes round St Nicholas' Church and the Market cross and the restoration of the cobbles in Westgate. There is still much scope for further similar improvements.
- 5.12 Many of the spaces between the buildings and especially the highway, tend to be cluttered with a plethora of street furniture that detracts from the character and attractiveness of Guisborough's townscape qualities. In recent years a positive steps have been taken to improve this situation through the introduction of new street lights of a more appropriate design and scale in Westgate, Chaloner Street and Church Street, together with attractive cast iron bollards and litter bins, neat stone-faced planters, robust metal tree guards and attractively designed tourist information panels.
- 5.13 Further progressive efforts are clearly being made by eradicating the duplication of traffic and street name signs and consolidation of signs onto single rather than multiple poles. The apparatus of statutory undertakers' pole-mounted service wires and distribution cabinets are particular eyesores, largely owing to their ill considered and inconvenient locations creating a sense of clutter and

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The architectural, historic and environmental quality of Guisborough Conservation Area is rooted in its historical development in the medieval period as a market town and centre for religious activity and in its much later industrialisation and expansion from around 1850. The reasons for its designation are just as valid today as they were in 1971, perhaps more so, and the continued protection of its elements is therefore considered key to the future survival of its special character. The conservation area boundary includes the whole of the historic core of the settlement together with the ruins and site of the priory, Gisborough Hall and its parkland setting, excluding the late 20th century suburban sprawl beyond.
- 6.2 This appraisal summarises the special characteristics and qualities that justify its designation as a conservation area. It also identifies the negative aspects of the area that serve to undermine its special quality. Clearly further work is required to identify and develop solutions and practical ways of addressing these issues.
- 6.3 The present conservation area boundary is for the most part coherent, cohesive and consistent with the town's historic core. However, in the 35 years since the first designation values have changed, local knowledge has expanded and buildings and areas then regarded as being of minor or even no significance are now seen as having a greater importance. The dynamic, evolving townscape and landscape have also contributed to changed perceptions of the conservation area. The appraisal consequently raised a number of issues indicating the need to review the conservation area boundary.
- 6.4 Since the last review of the boundary in 1992, further research has demonstrated the historical importance of two areas of farmland, the first to the south of Whitby Road, the other to the east of Belmangate. The former is centred on the 19th century farmstead at Foxdale Farm while the latter lies to the east of Belmont Farm. Both areas include significant well preserved and coherent remnants of the medieval and post medieval rural landscape, tangible evidence, important to the history and special character of Guisborough.
- 6.5 The Belmont Farm site is contiguous with that part of Belmangate's ancient "hollow way" lying beyond the existing conservation area boundary and which extends beyond the railway bridge to the foot of the escarpment. The "Archaeological Assessment" of the conservation area recommended extensions to the conservation area boundary to include these two areas of medieval landscape together with the southern stretch of Belmangate and its "hollow way"²⁹.
- 6.6 The loss of the buildings and backlands of Nos. 71-81 and 87-93 Westgate to redevelopment in the 1980s - now a supermarket and other retail units together with the car park and service yards to the rear - has left nothing of special character, other than the replica frontages facing Westgate. In the car park, the mature, specimen, woodland trees alongside Chapel Beck, are separately protected by a Tree Preservation Order. There is consequently no longer any justification for this area to remain in the conservation area, save for the front elevations facing Westgate.
- 6.7 These matters were given full consideration and after public consultation the Council resolved on 6th September 2007 to amend the conservation area boundary accordingly. The plan in Appendix 1 shows the approved, amended conservation area boundary.
- 6.8 Article 4 Directions, approved in 1978, withdrew certain permitted development rights for domestic, commercial and agricultural properties throughout the conservation area in order to prevent

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

further erosion of the special character of historic buildings and the erection of inappropriate forms of enclosure. However, these directions do not apply to properties falling within the extensions to the boundary of 1992, nor will they apply within the extensions suggested above. It would therefore be appropriate to apply Article 4 Directions to all extensions to the conservation to achieve consistency and coherence throughout the area.

- 6.9 The four Tree Preservation Orders within the conservation area are referred to in paragraph 1.6 above. However, the practice has not been extended to the protection of younger trees and since many protected trees have passed maturity and either died or have been felled, there is an absence of protection other than the statutory requirement for 6 weeks notice to be given to the local planning authority. It is therefore considered appropriate to undertake a survey of trees in the conservation area in order to determine a practical approach to their protection.

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22. Ordnance Survey Six-Inch-to-One-Mile sheet for 1895.
23. Reverend John Graves, "History of Cleveland" 1808.
24. E.g. Cleveland Street (built 1857) and Bolckow Street (built 1875) (Rowe, Peter, Tees Archaeology: "Guisborough Conservation Area: an Archaeological Assessment" Report: TA03/05, April 2003)
25. Cleveland County Planning Department, "Guisborough Conservation Area: Report of Survey," June 1976.
26. Tees Archaeology: Heritage Environment Record No 3418.
27. Gisborough Priory is owned by Lord Gisborough, but is subject to a 'Guardianship Agreement with English Heritage.
28. Nos. 1 (Russell House), 1A (Lambert House) and 3 (St Bee's) Belmangate.
29. This approach has been taken elsewhere in the district with the revision of the boundary of the Liverton Conservation Area to include its surrounding medieval field system and also at Cowpen Bewley Conservation Area in Stockton-on-Tees. (Rowe, Peter, Tees Archaeology: "Guisborough Conservation Area: an Archaeological Assessment" Report: TA03/05, April 2003)

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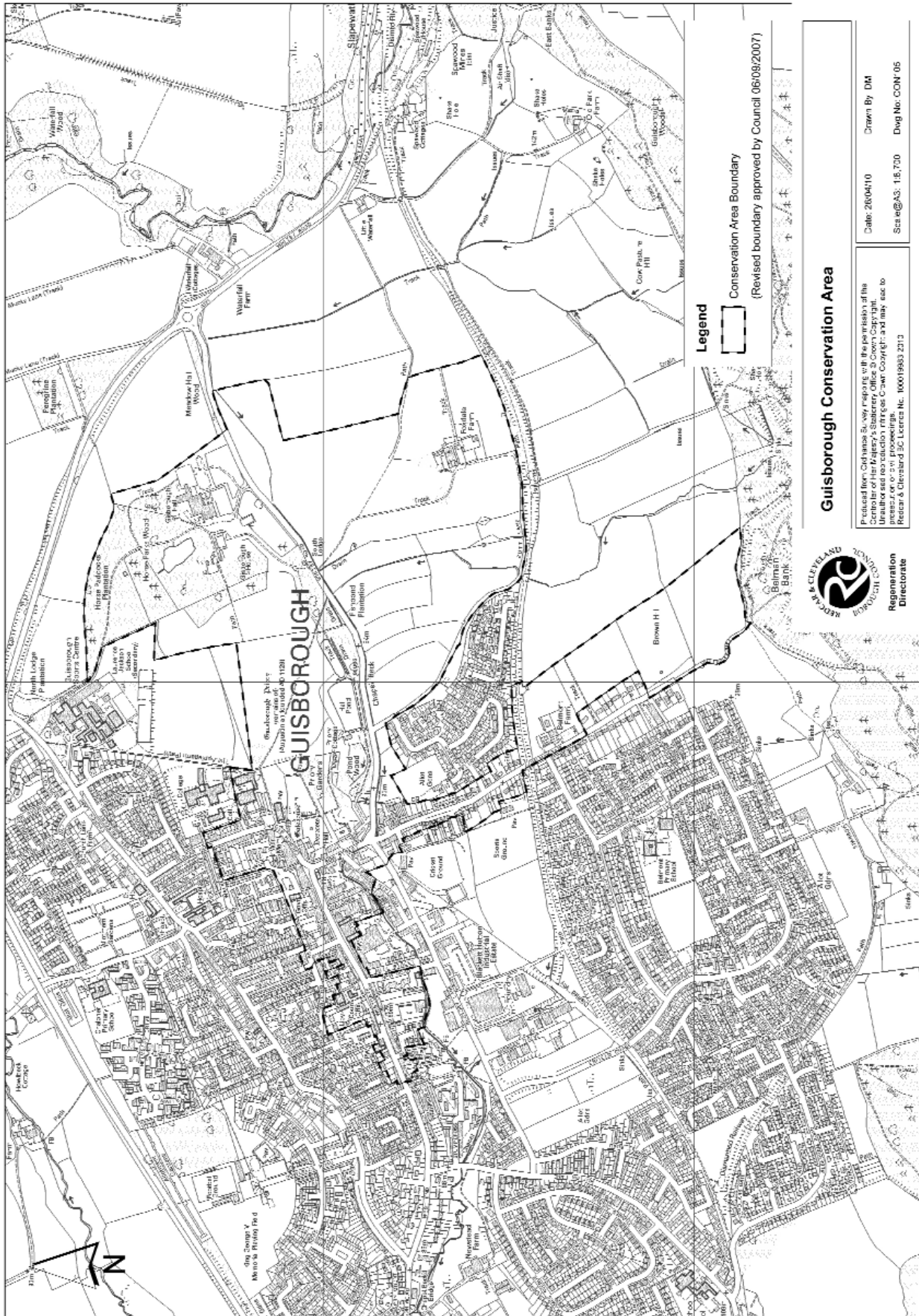
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APPENDIX 1: Guisborough Conservation Area Boundary

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



APPENDIX 2: Listed Buildings & Scheduled Monuments in Guisborough Conservation Area

Extracted from The 17th List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the Borough of Langbaugh (Cleveland) (that part comprising the former Guisborough Urban District), Department of the Environment, 25th April 1984.

The grade of listing follows the address of each property, i.e. grades I, II* or II.

(SM) signifies Scheduled Monument.

Numerals in brackets e.g. (3) signify the number of buildings included in the list entry

Belmangate:

39 Belmangate, II (2)

10, 12 & 14 Belmangate, II (4)

Anchor Inn, 16 Belmangate, II (1)

18 & 20 Belmangate, II (2)

50 Belmangate, II (1)

52 & 54 Belmangate, II (2)

Bow Street:

Boundary wall to Parish Church Hall, II (2)

Priory Gardens Cottage, Estate Office, workshops, stables and coach house, II (4)

Ornamental gateway north of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

Workshop south-east of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

Boundary wall south-east of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

Garden wall E of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (2)

Garden wall 50m north of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

Garden wall north-east of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (2)

Garden wall 65m north of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

Garden ornament north-east of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

Boundary wall north-east of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1)

8 Bow Street, II (1)

Mounting block at corner of The Fox Inn, II (1)

Church Street

Boundary wall alongside The Rectory, II (1)

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

St Mary's Priory Gatehouse, I (1) **(SM)**

St Mary's Priory ruins, I (5) **(SM)**

Priory Dovecote, I (1) **(SM)**

Boundary wall west of St Mary's Priory ruins, II (1)

Boundary walls adjoining and to NE, E & SE of St Mary's Priory ruins, II (3)

Church of St Nicholas, II* (1)

War Memorial, Church St, II (1)

46 & 48 Church Street, II (2)

50 & 52 Church Street, II (2)

66 Church Street, II (1)

70 & 72 Church Street, II (2)

76 Church Street, II (2)

63 & 65 Church Street, II (2)

Church Walk

Prior Pursglove College, II (4)

Boundary wall between 46 Church Walk and Prior Pursglove College, II (1)

Market Place:

Market Cross, II (1)

7 Market Place, II (2)

9 & 11 Market Place, II (1)

The Seven Stars, 19 Market Place, including outbuilding & cottage, II (3)

Town Hall, II (1)

Buck Hotel, 4 Market Place, II (2)

34 Market Place, II (2)

Westgate:

Black Swan, 2 Westgate, II (2)

12 & 12A Westgate, II (1)

The 3-Fiddles, 34 Westgate, II (1)

Sunnyfield House, 36 Westgate, II (1)

Boundary wall & gate piers south of 36 Westgate, II (2)
38 Westgate, including front railings & north extension, II (3)
Coach house, stables & outbuildings north of 38 Westgate, II (3)
Boundary wall & gate pier north of 38 Westgate, II (2)
Gazebo & adjoining boundary wall, north of 38 Westgate, II (2)
40 & 42 Westgate, II (2)
48 & 50 Westgate, II (2)
52 & 54 Westgate, II (2)
Holly Garth & Holly House, Nos. 58 & 60 Westgate, II (2)
Boundary wall & gatepiers south of 58 & 60 Westgate, II (3)
West Garth, 94 Westgate, II (2)
Coach house at 94 Westgate, II (1)
Boundary wall & gate piers south of 94 Westgate, II (2)
Lower Garth, 96 Westgate, II (1)
Boundary wall, railings & gates south of 96 Westgate, II (2)
98 & 100 (l & r) Westgate, II (3)
134 & 136 Westgate II (2)
1, 3 & 5 Westgate, II (3)
7 & 9 Westgate, II (2)
The Tap & Spile, 11 & 13 Westgate, II (1)
15 & 17 Westgate, II (2)
19, 21 & 23 Westgate, II (2)
51 & 53 Westgate, II (3)
95, 97 & 99 Westgate, II (3)
Kemplah House, 105 & 107 Westgate, including railings & gate piers, II (5)
109 & 111 Westgate, II (2)
113 & 115 Westgate, II (2)
147, 149, 151, 153 Westgate, II (4)
181 Westgate, II (1)
183 Westgate, II (1)
185 Westgate, II (1)
187 Westgate, II (1)

Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

Whitby Road:

Priory Cottage, II (1)

South Lodge, II (1)

Entrance gates, piers & boundary walls south of South Lodge, II (4)

Gisborough Hall, including retaining walls, balustrade, piers & steps, II (2)

Stable Block (Gisborough House), west of Gisborough Hall, including screen wall & gate piers II (1)

Horse gin, west of Gisborough Hall, II (1)

LISTED BUILDINGS DEMOLISHED SINCE 25 APRIL 1984.

- Garden ornament north-east of Priory Gardens Cottage, II (1) reported missing prior to December 2000
- 45 Church Street, II (1) demolished for redevelopment c.1987
- 49 & 51 Church Street, II (2) demolished for redevelopment c.1987
- 53 Church Street, II (1) demolished for redevelopment c.1987
- 55 & 57 Church Street, II (1) including adjoining outhouse demolished for redevelopment c.1987
- Builder's Store, Patten Lane II (1) demolished for redevelopment c.1985
- 71 & 73 Westgate, II (1) demolished for redevelopment c. 1985
- 75 & 77 Westgate, II (2) demolished for redevelopment c.1985
- 79 & 81 Westgate, II (2) demolished for redevelopment c.1985

APPENDIX 3: Planning Policies

Local Development Framework Policies (LDF) affecting Guisborough 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
- 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 spatial strategy for Guisborough (Core Strategy policy CS7) indicates that for the location generally, the Council and its partners will build on the Market Towns Initiative to improve the environment and streetscape of the town centre (part of which lies within the conservation area), will enhance its role for tourism and business development, support the development of tourism related facilities, and safeguard and enhance buildings, sites and areas of heritage and cultural importance.
- 4 The western part of the conservation area is located within the 'Limits to Development' and the eastern part is outside the limits to development. Policy DP1 of the Development Policies DPD sets out the limited types of development that will be permitted outside the limits to development, and indicates that within the limits, development will generally be acceptable, subject to other development plan policies and designations. The limits to development are indicated on the Proposals Map.
- 5 The north-eastern corner of 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)
- 6 The conservation area is subject to LDF Core Strategy Policy CS22 for the protection and enhancement of the Borough's landscape.
- 7 There are four parcels of land within the conservation area that are identified as "Open Areas" on the Proposals Map. These are important to the landscape and townscape qualities of the Conservation Area and are of special historical significance. Development Plan policy DP9 does not permit built development on these areas.
- 8 Part of the conservation area is also identified as a district centre in the LDF (Policy CS18 refers) and its extent is indicated by the town/district/local centre notation on the Proposals Map. Policy CS18 is to focus town centre uses (retail, leisure, social, education, arts, cultural, office, residential and commercial) within this area, and to maintain and, where appropriate. This includes enhancing the appearance and environmental quality of the centre and promoting the reuse of vacant buildings.
- 9 There is also a scheduled ancient monument (Guisborough Priory) within the conservation area, whose character and special features are given particular protection by Core Strategy policy CS25, and protected from development that would adversely affect it by Development Policies DPD policy DP11.

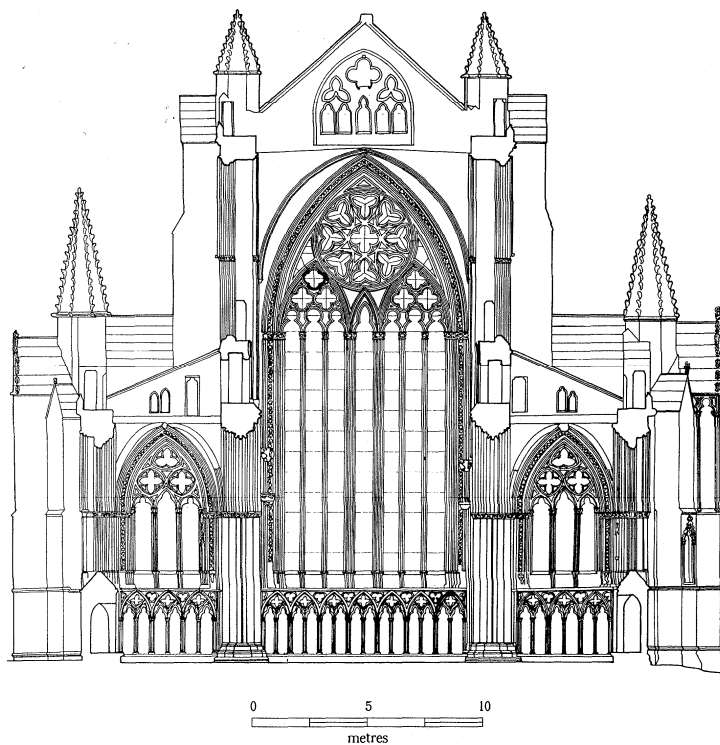
Guisborough Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

- 10 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.
 - 11 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.
 - 12 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 or contact: 01287 612356.



APPENDIX 4: Guisborough Conservation Area: An Archaeological Assessment

Guisborough Conservation area: An archaeological assessment



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Guisborough Conservation area:

An archaeological assessment

April 2003

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Contents**Page**

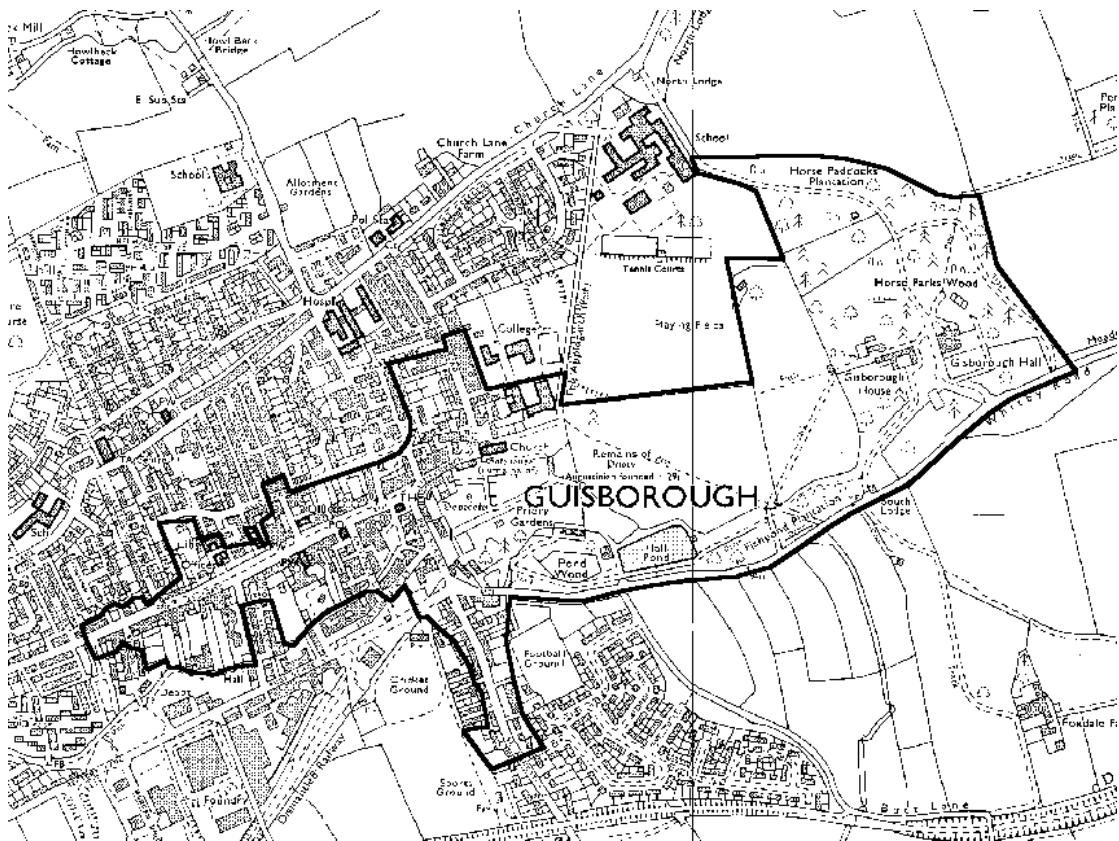
1	Guisborough Conservation Area	1
2	The archaeological development of the town	2-7
3	Recommendations and Conclusions	8-9
	Bibliography	10

Figures

Cover	Reconstruction of Guisborough Priory	Cover
Fig 1	Guisborough Conservation area	2
Fig 2	Belmangate in 1856	3
Fig 3	Westgate in 1856	4
Fig 4	Foxdale Farm aerial photograph	7
Fig 5	Belmont Farm aerial photograph	7
Fig 6	Proposed extension to Guisborough Conservation Area	9

1 Guisborough Conservation Area

1.1 Guisborough is one of 15 conservation areas in the district of Redcar & Cleveland (see figure 1). The districts conservation areas reflect its wealth of architectural, historical and archaeological sites.



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Figure 1: Current Conservation Area boundary.

1.2 The Council has a duty to review its conservation areas based on a detailed analysis of the elements that contribute and detract from it (Redcar & Cleveland Local Plan, 1999, para 2.24). English Heritage recognise that Conservation Areas may have a strong archaeological dimension (English Heritage, 1996, p. 40). The current document provides a study of the archaeological significance of the town of Guisborough and the development of its layout through the ages. Recommendations are made for the enhancement of the Conservation Area by changing the boundary to include two areas of medieval landscape currently excluded.

2 The archaeological development of the town

2.1 *The Roman Period (1 - 400AD)*

2.2.1 The earliest evidence of human activity at Guisborough comes in the form of a series of stray finds found in and around the town. Three Roman coin hoards were discovered at Guisborough in the 19th century, including one found during the construction of the Grammar School in 1888. A splendid bronze gilded parade helmet dating from the 3rd century AD was found at Barnaby Grange in the 19th century. The helmet is a national treasure and is on display in the British Museum.

2.1.2 It is probable that the pattern of settlement in the Guisborough valley in the Roman period was one of dispersed native farmsteads with associated open field systems. There is currently little evidence for the Romans imposing their own military and urban presence in this part of its Empire.

2.2 *The Anglo-Saxon Period (400AD - 1066AD)*

2.2.1 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement is extremely sparse on a national scale. There is however evidence of Anglo-Saxon structures beneath Gisborough Priory. Excavations here in 1985 revealed four post holes set out in a row approximately 10 metres in length. Late Saxon pottery and a coin of Eadberht (AD 737-58) were also found here (Heslop, 1995, p. 54-57). This phase of Saxon occupation was followed by a period of abandonment when soil built up over the remains and the land subsequently ploughed prior to the establishment of the priory.

2.2.2 The place name Guisborough is first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as 'Gighesborc' or 'Ghigesburg' (Smith, 1928, p. 14-150). The first element of the place name may represent 'Gigr', an old Norse personal name. The 'burh' element traditionally represents a fortified place. This implies that a high status defended settlement pre-dated the Norman invasion at Guisborough.

2.2.3 The Domesday survey of 1086 also states that Guisborough had a church, a priest and a mill. These features would undoubtedly pre-date the Norman invasion of 20 years earlier and again imply an important settlement. In spite of the evidence from the Domesday Book there is little archaeological evidence to allow a reasoned model of pre-Norman settlement to be established.

2.3 The early Medieval Period (1066AD - 1119AD)

2.3.1 Belmangate was originally the main street of Guisborough (see figure 2). It was a principal medieval routeway leading across the moors towards Commondale. The original aspect of Belmangate would have been distinctly rural with a number of farmhouses occupying tofts of land on either side. Many contemporary moorland fringe villages such as Carlton-in-Cleveland and Great Broughton have a similar pattern of settlement laid out along either side of the main route to the moor.

2.3.2 Belmangate appears to have been regarded almost as a separate entity from Guisborough itself until relatively recently. J. W. Ord writing in 1846 lists 'Bellmangate' as a separate hamlet attached to the town (Ord, 1846, p. 202). A directory of 1874 also describes it as a hamlet (Harrison & Dixon, 1981, p. 57).

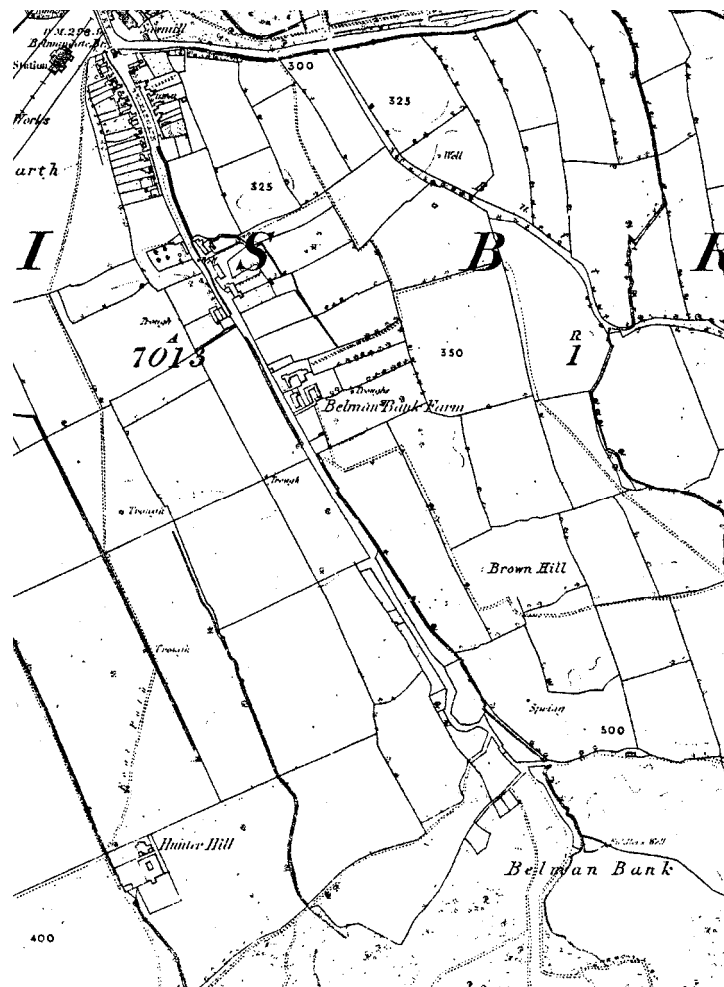


Figure 2: Belmangate from the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1856.

2.3.3 It has been hypothesised that there are two distinct elements to the layout of Belmangate (Harrison & Dixon, 1981, p. 57). The first edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1856 (see figure 2 above) shows that the southern part of the settlement has wide long properties (middle of figure) running back from Belmangate

to a common boundary. The northern end of Belmangate (top left of picture) has narrower and shorter property plots occupied by smaller cottages. It is argued that this was a later addition from at least the 13th century. These plots may have been added to provide accommodation for the labourers and servants of the priory.

2.3.3 The southern end of Belmangate retains much of its medieval layout with Belmangate itself having a sunken character reminiscent of a medieval hollow-way caused by centuries of heavy traffic. At the south end of Belmangate lies Belmont Farm (marked as Belman Bank Farm of fig. 2). This farm comprises a series of 19th century agricultural buildings that are Listed grade II. The remainder of properties on Belmangate are a mixture of very modern houses intermingled with early cottages dating from, in some cases, the early 1700's. Many of the cottages along Belmangate are Listed buildings as is the disused rail bridge that carried the former Cleveland Railway over the road.

2.4 *The Medieval Period (1119-1540 AD)*

2.4.1 Gisborough Priory was founded by Robert De Brus II in a charter dating to circa 1119 AD. The early 12th century was a time of great religious revival and many religious houses were established throughout the country by wealthy landowners. The priory appears to have dominated the town from its inception to its dissolution in 1540. The remains of the Priory are a Scheduled Monument and part of the site is in guardianship and open to the public. Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council manage the site on behalf of English Heritage.



Figure 3: Westgate from the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1856.

2.4.2 Shortly after the foundation of the priory the axis and emphasis of the town was altered with the creation of Westgate as the main thoroughfare (see figure 3). The properties on either side of Westgate each occupy a long narrow plot of land, often with slightly curving boundaries. This is particularly evident on the 1st edition map (see figure 3 above). These boundaries reflect the pattern of former early medieval strip fields suggesting that the foundation of the settlement along this routeway occurred at a date after medieval agriculture had been established. It is

assumed that this happened in the mid twelfth century as there is an early Norman gate to the priory at the east end of Westgate.

2.4.3 Medieval documentary sources of the middle to late twelfth century also record a grant of land to the priory by Adam de Lyum. This piece of land was a slice of toft and croft 62 perches (300 metres) north to south. This is exactly the correct size and orientation for the garths on the north side of Westgate.

2.4.4 There is no direct archaeological evidence to suggest how early the development of Westgate took place. Only limited archaeological excavation has been carried out outside of the priory and this has not provided any clear evidence predating the late 15th century.

2.4.5 Unlike other medieval settlements of similar size Guisborough was not granted borough status. This was resisted by the Priory who wished to retain control of the economic affairs of the town. As a result Guisborough was not as prosperous as towns such as Yarm that attracted a wealthier merchant class. The dominant building type would have been stock housing consisting of smaller cottages.

2.5 *Outlying farmsteads*

2.5.1 The landscape surrounding Guisborough would have been predominately agricultural in the medieval period. A series of dispersed farmsteads and their associated field systems survive in the vicinity. Evidence of medieval activity in the form of earthworks and ridge and furrow survive at Howlbeck Farm Belmont Farm and Foxdale Farm. The ridge and furrow at Foxdale Farm lies adjacent to the Conservation Area (see figure 4). It forms a well preserved coherent block with well developed reverse S-shaped ridges characteristic of those created by medieval plough teams. The farm and its outbuildings are Listed Grade II.

2.6 *The post-medieval period*

2.6.1 Guisborough continued as the principal settlement in this part of East Cleveland following the dissolution of the priory. The Priory and its land were purchased by Thomas Chaloner in 1550. Much of the stone from the priory was removed and used in and around the town as a convenient source of building material. Some architectural fragments are visible in buildings such as 34 Westgate and 7 Market Place. However it is likely that many more exist and are as yet unrecorded.

2.6.2 Despite the discovery of alum at Guisborough in 1606 the subsequent industry that grew up about did not greatly increase the size of the town.

2.6.3 The earliest standing buildings in the town other than the church and priory date from the 17th century. These include 50 Belmangate, a cottage to the rear of 183 Westgate and 9 & 11 Market Place. It is very likely that historic building analysis of properties in Guisborough would reveal structural elements from earlier, possibly even medieval buildings. For example the Black Swan at number 2 Westgate has a partially exposed full-cruck construction masked by 19th century remodelling.

2.6.4 The most coherent group of early buildings are at Market Place where a good stock of 17th and 18th century properties survive. These were probably the most wealthy properties in Guisborough at the time they were built but are modest in comparison to merchant housing seen in towns such as Yarm and Stokesley.

2.6.5 The town was transformed in the mid 19th century with the development of ironstone mining and the arrival of the railway. The industry brought an increase in population that required the building of new housing which can be seen in the streets to the rear of Westgate such as Cleveland Street (built 1857) and Bolckow Street (built 1875). This housing usually takes the form of terraced properties with a direct frontage on to the street. The majority of these properties have been reglazed and modified in recent years.

2.6.6 In 1857 Gisborough Hall was built to the east of the town as a country house. The Hall is a listed building and its grounds make up the easterly part of the current Conservation Area.



Figure 4: Foxdale Farm – Medieval land use



Figure 5: Belmont Farm – Medieval land use

3 Recommendations and Conclusions

3.1 Based on the current knowledge of the historical development of Guisborough many of the principal archaeological features are currently included in the designation. The following recommendations should however be considered to enhance the Conservation area.

3.2 The current Conservation Area at Guisborough focuses heavily on the built core of the settlement. Two areas outside, but adjacent to, the current Conservation Area are coherent elements of the more open rural medieval landscape and should be considered for inclusion. This approach has been taken elsewhere in the district with the revision of the boundary of the Liverton Conservation Area to include its surrounding medieval field system and also at Cowpen Bewley in Stockton-on-Tees.

3.3 The council recognises in its Local Plan that open areas within Conservation Areas can add to their character. The councils policy is to identify spaces within Conservation Areas that ‘provide attractive vistas or settings to buildings... or have particular historic or landscape importance’ (Redcar & Cleveland Local Plan, 1999. para 2.30).

The two areas that meet this criteria are: -

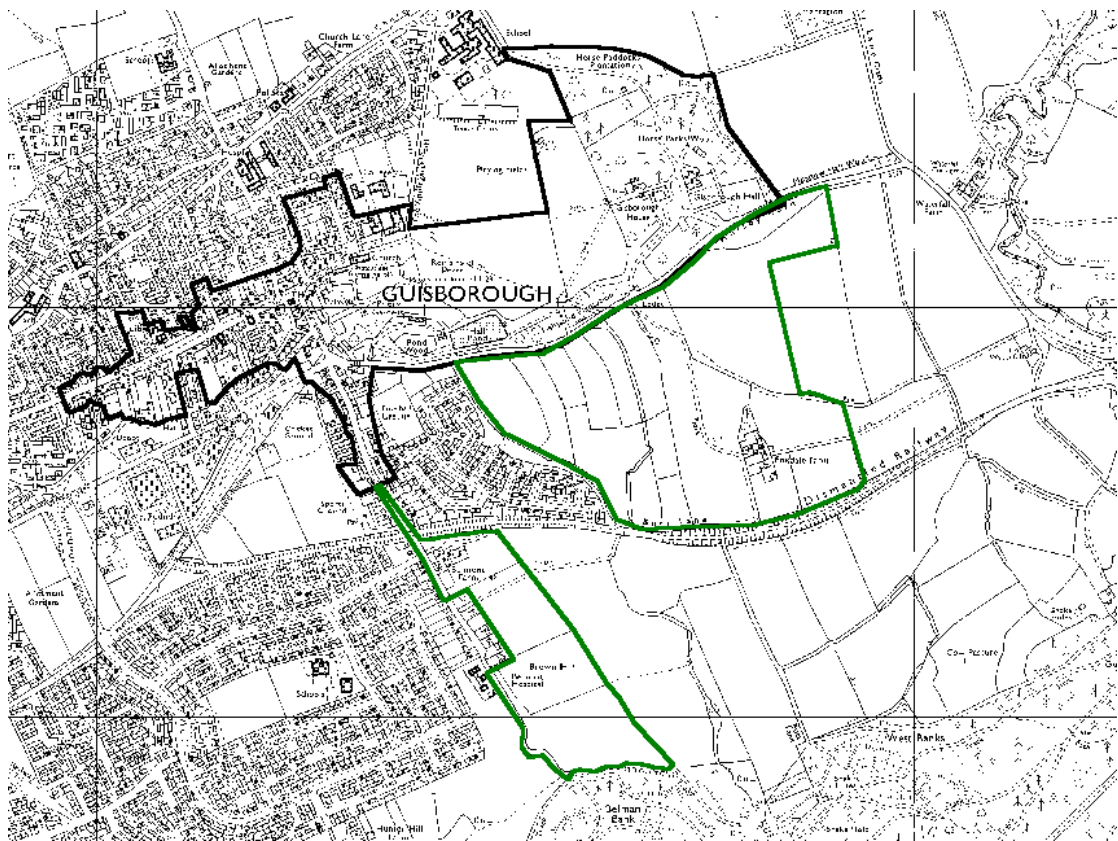
Foxdale Farm (see figure 4)

The group of listed buildings at Foxdale Farm and surrounding ridge and furrow fields are a well preserved remnant of the medieval and post medieval rural landscape. These open fields are characterised by broad curving ridges indicative of medieval cultivation. The hedge lines probably date to the 18th century but clearly respect property boundaries of greater antiquity as reflected in their curving shape.

Belmont Farm and Belmangate (see figure 5)

The northern part of Belmangate is currently included in the Conservation Area. The southern part of Belmangate is excluded but contains a group of listed buildings at Belmont Farm and also a listed rail bridge. Traces of ridge and furrow can be seen on the east side of Belmangate. This ridge and furrow relates directly to the former medieval settlement and clearly represents several phases of ploughing with both broad and narrow ridge varieties present.

Figure 6 (below) shows the proposed extension to the Conservation Area boundary.



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Figure 6 – Proposed extensions to Guisborough Conservation Area

3.3 The 17th and 18th century elements of the town are already covered by the existing Conservation Area. The 19th century industrial housing at Guisborough is largely excluded from the designation. There seem to be few opportunities to include well preserved buildings of this type given the substantial amounts of modification and particularly reglazing of individual properties in recent years. The most coherent group of terraced buildings of this period are the terrace at Mill Street along with the two former schools on Rectory Lane.

3.5 The 19th and 20th century buildings currently included along Redcar Lane seem to have little conservation value. It may be prudent to more tightly define the Conservation Area boundary in this location.

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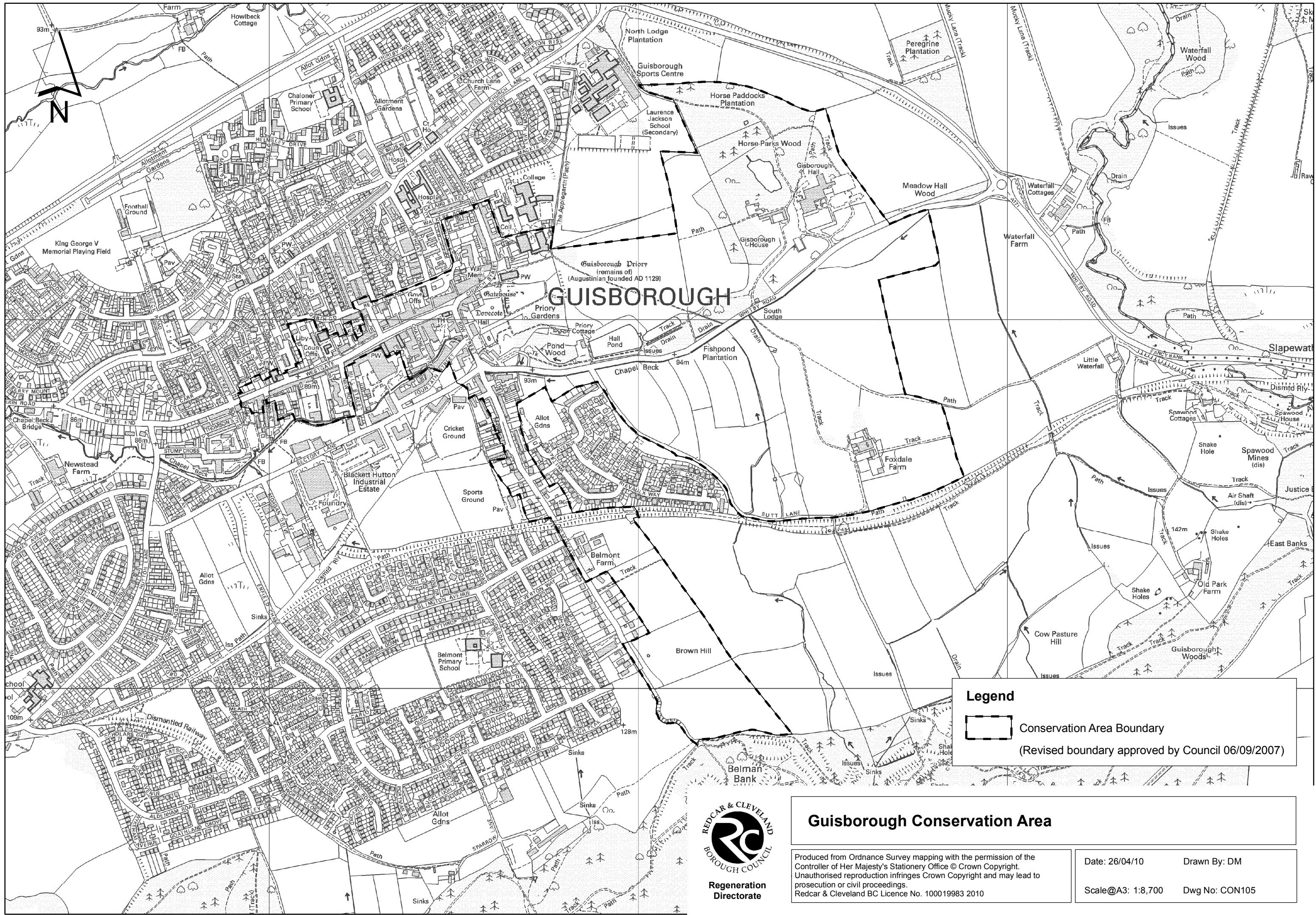


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GUISBOROUGH

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



Guisborough Conservation Area

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