



# Urban Landscape Study of the Tyne Gorge

Final Report

January 2003





# **Urban Landscape Study of the Tyne Gorge**

**Prepared for English Heritage, CABE, Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council**

**by  
Land Use Consultants**

**January 2003**



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The study has been steered by an Advisory Group comprising the following members:

|                     |                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Graham Bell         | North East Civic Trust (Chair) |
| David Lovie         | English Heritage               |
| Martin Roberts      | English Heritage               |
| Roosje Barr         | CABE                           |
| John Worters        | Gateshead Council              |
| Matthew Wansborough | Gateshead Council              |
| Michael Crilly      | Newcastle City Council         |
| Liz Bray            | Newcastle City Council         |

We are most grateful for the guidance and advice provided by the Advisory Group. However, the views and recommendations in this report are those of Land Use Consultants alone.

The study has involved gathering of existing data and information and we appreciate the time and trouble taken by those individuals and organisations involved in this exercise. In particular we are most grateful to Blaise Vyner for his specialist input to the study, and to David Heslop, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer and John Nolan of Northern Counties Archaeological Services who kindly provided information on the archaeology and early history of the Tyne Gorge area. We are also grateful to Ian Ayris and Tony Wyatt, Newcastle City Council and to David Leeder, Gateshead Council for their advice and guidance.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### The Brief

The pace of change along the Tyne Gorge has accelerated in recent years, not least as a result of the Baltic and the Millennium Bridge. This has meant there is now a need for a study that can set the context for managing future change. The brief was developed by the commissioning partners - English Heritage, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council. The brief required the consultants to:

- define the geographical extent of the study area;
- analyse the historical development of the Gorge and its two settlements, Newcastle and Gateshead;
- undertake a visual analysis of the Gorge;
- indicate the importance of different areas of the Gorge;
- identify threats and opportunities within the Gorge;
- indicate principles for the protection and development of the Gorge in the future.

### Approach to the Study

It is now widely accepted that protection of sense of place is an important part of decision making. Character appraisal is an invaluable tool in understanding and evaluating the significance of a place - it identifies

the unique combination of features that make a place distinctive. Land Use Consultants (LUC) were instrumental in developing the technique of landscape character assessment, which provided the foundations for the first Countryside Commission guidance on the subject. Most recently LUC have produced, in association with the University of Sheffield, the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance on behalf of the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage. This background in landscape character appraisal and assessment has informed LUC's more recent application of the method to townscape appraisal. The importance of assessing townscape character has recently been brought to light in Government Policy, for example through PPG1, PPG7 and PPG15, as well as through publications such as *By Design*<sup>1</sup>, *Power of Place*<sup>2</sup> and *Building in Context*<sup>3</sup>.

### Study Process

In response to the brief the study was divided into six discrete tasks. These are described below.

**Task 1: Establishing the Wider Study Area:** The purpose of this stage of the project was to set the limits for the wider study area, to ensure that the context of the Tyne Gorge was taken into account and to establish the zone within which new buildings in the Gorge could potentially be visible.

**Task 2: Understanding the Shape of the Landscape:** Within the wider study area underlying physical characteristics, such as geology, topography and hydrology were recorded. This physical data allowed broad types of landscape to be mapped across the wider study area. For example this shows how Newcastle lies on plateau coalfields while Gateshead sits on the edge of a landscape of higher rolling hills. Low lying coastal coalfields lie to the east and limestone hills lie away to the south-east.

1 DETR and CABE (2000) *By Design*

2 English Heritage (2000) *Power of Place*

3 English Heritage and CABE (2001) *Building in Context*



**Task 3: Pattern of Settlement:** Physical factors influence the pattern of settlement. For example, the topography of the area indicates why the first bridging points of the Tyne were in the Gorge. The growth of the urban form was mapped, but this did not produce a true reflection of character of the settlements today. A map of re-developed areas was therefore produced which provides a truer picture of built influences on the character of the Gorge today. This section also explains how the first settlements of Newcastle and Gateshead were focussed along the water's edge, then moved back away from the riverside.

**Task 4: Visual Analysis of the Gorge:** The aim of this task was to identify key landmarks along the Gorge (both positive and negative) and to identify types of viewing experience around the Gorge. In planning for new development and landscape change it is crucial to know the location and nature of important viewcones so that they can be protected, or enhanced, in the future. Fourteen strategic or 'quintessential' views were identified and their viewcones plotted. An analysis of each view is provided in Chapter 4.

**Task 5: Character Appraisal of the Gorge:** The aim of this task was to classify the Gorge into areas of unique and distinctive character, to describe the historic evolution of each area, to articulate its character, to describe the visual environment and the role it plays in strategic views, to comment on quality and value, to comment on sensitivity, to identify threats to character and identify principles for accommodating new built development within the area. Twenty-three distinct areas were identified and their analyses are presented in Chapter 5.

**Task 6: Broad Principles for the Siting and Design of New Development in the Tyne Gorge:** This section fulfilled the final requirement of the brief, that is to provide guidance for the siting and design of new development in the Gorge as a whole. The guidance was

divided into six topics: relationship to the public realm, access corridors leading into the Gorge, views to and from landmarks, opportunities for tall buildings, use of the waterfront and character area descriptions.

## Outputs

One of the study outputs is a fully illustrated, desk-top published report in colour that is available in hard copy format as well as in digital format on CD. However, the outputs are not confined to this static report and an important part of our approach to this study is to provide an updateable and expandable resource. The data collated as part of the study was entered into a Geographical Information System (GIS) database which allows multiple data sets to be viewed in layers, to zoom in and out of particular areas and to explore relationships between different datasets in 3 dimensions. The updateable and expandable capabilities of the GIS database means it can also be linked with additional information in the future. The GIS database includes topographical information and landscape types across the wider study area, both accurate to 1:50,000. It also includes more detailed topographical information, distribution of key landmarks, strategic views and their viewcones, the historic development of NewcastleGateshead, areas of re-development in NewcastleGateshead, character areas within the Gorge and its immediate setting, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings all accurate to 1:10,000.

## Potential Uses of the Assessment

It is envisaged that the outputs of the study will be used in a number of ways. For example, it is hoped that the report findings will be used by Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council to inform Supplementary Planning

Guidance for the Gorge or other relevant conservation/development studies. It is hoped that the two Councils and other relevant bodies, such as English Heritage and CABE, will find the report useful in reviewing planning applications, but equally it is hoped that developers will find it a useful background document to draw up proposals that respect sense of place. The report may also be used by residents of NewcastleGateshead as a basis for more local community initiatives such as 'Placecheck'.



## INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

### BRIEF

The brief for this urban landscape study of the Tyne Gorge was developed by the commissioning partners, that is English Heritage, CABE, Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council.

The brief required the consultants to define the geographical extent of the study area, analyse the historical development of the two settlements, appraise their architectural quality, undertake a visual analysis of the Gorge, indicate the importance of different areas of the Gorge, identify threats and opportunities within the Gorge, and to indicate principles for the protection and development of the Gorge in the future.

### METHOD OF APPROACH

The success of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts and the recent media interest in the Millennium Bridge across the Tyne and the Sage Gateshead (under construction) has resulted in great pressures for change along the Tyne Gorge. This means there is now a need for a study that can set the context for managing change in future years.

NewcastleGateshead is a fast changing, contemporary and yet historic city that has just been voted England's top short break destination, named one of the eight top creative cities in the world by Newsweek International and has been shortlisted for Europe's Capital of Culture 2008. The Capital of Culture bid is part of the region's ten-year regeneration strategy in which cultural investment is wedded to economic and social development in order to yield sustainable benefits in jobs, housing, tourism, and

transport. The success of projects such as the Millennium Bridge and the Baltic is already helping to change the profile of NewcastleGateshead, as evidenced by the wide range of proposals for new developments in the area now being considered by the Councils.

Notwithstanding the potential benefits of such developments for the users of these new buildings and structures, ways must also be found to ensure that the full range of qualities that give existing places their particular character, i.e. their history, buildings, open spaces, traditions, culture, and social life, are kept alive for the inhabitants of those places and for future generations, and that these qualities are not undermined by new development and preferably are enhanced. Understanding the past helps inform consideration of future actions. How things have changed, why a place looks the way it does, and who and what have influenced its development are fundamental to both appraisal and guidance for the future.

This report aims to articulate the unique qualities of the Tyne Gorge, set out potential threats to its character, and present guidance for accommodating new built development. In so doing it will also form a baseline against which future change can be monitored.

We have adopted an approach that considers urban character as well as important views within the urban area. Hopefully this avoids the classic mistake of preserving viewing corridors at the expense of the remaining townscape character.

## OUTPUTS

### Report

The main output from this study is a fully desktop published technical report, with an accompanying data base which complements the report.

### Database

This study used a Geographic Information System (GIS) to compile and present much of the data. A database with extensive attribute information linked to geographic distribution was established. The 'raw' database has been made available to the client on completion of the project. The advantages of such a database are that, unlike a static report, it provides a framework from which datasets may be extracted, updated or modified, and additional datasets may be added.

The importance of a database for the Tyne Gorge as a whole is that it presents consistent data for both north and south banks of the river. The following data is available as part of the GIS database:

- Character Areas within the Gorge and its Immediate Setting;
- Distribution of Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings.
- Topography at 5 and 10m contour intervals;
- Landscape Types across the wider Study Area (accurate to 1:50,000);
- Location of Key Landmarks;
- Strategic Views and their Viewcones;
- Historic Development of Gateshead/Newcastle;
- Re-development of Gateshead/Newcastle;

## THE SETTING OF THE TYNE GORGE

### RELEVANT ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE

The first task was to define the study area for the project relating the Tyne Gorge to its *setting*. The extent of the visual influence of potential new buildings within or adjacent to the Tyne Gorge (i.e. the area from which such structures could potentially be seen, subject to any intervening obstruction such as trees, buildings etc.) was a major factor in defining the extent of the study area. This was identified through an analysis of the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) of a theoretical tall building at six points along the Gorge. The height of the theoretical building was taken to be 106m above the Quayside. This represents the highest structure (an 86m hotel proposal on Pottery Lane) forming part of current planning applications to Newcastle City and Gateshead Councils.

Six sample locations both north and south of the river along the Gorge were chosen for the siting of this hypothetical building (Dunston Coal Staithes, Tyne Bridge and Spiller's Mill) and their zones of visual influence calculated. The ZVIs were plotted using Key Terra Firma software, in conjunction with Digital 3D Panorama topographical tiles at 1:50,000 scale, to a distance of 8km from the building location. 8km is considered to be the maximum distance at which the eye can see clearly under average atmospheric conditions. *Figures 2.1* and *2.2* illustrate the resultant ZVIs from which the extent of the study area has been defined.

### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Tyne Gorge and its surrounds was formed as a result of the various influences that have, over vastly different timescales, acted upon it. The character of the area has

evolved in response to physical factors such as geology, landform and drainage that in turn influence the soils, land cover and land use of an area. The following account describes the physical influences that have contributed to the formation the landscape of Tyne Gorge that we experience today.

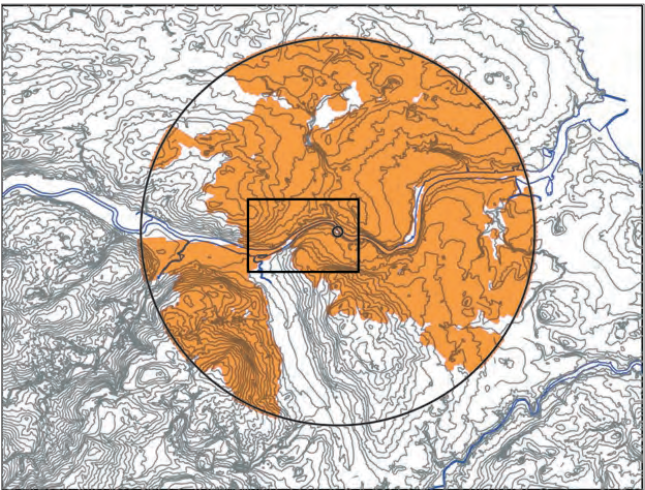
### Geology

The basic structure of any landscape is formed by its underlying geology. The actions of weathering, erosion and deposition alter the form of this geology, creating drainage patterns and soils which, in turn, influence patterns of vegetation and landuse. *Figure 2.3* illustrates the solid geology of the study area.

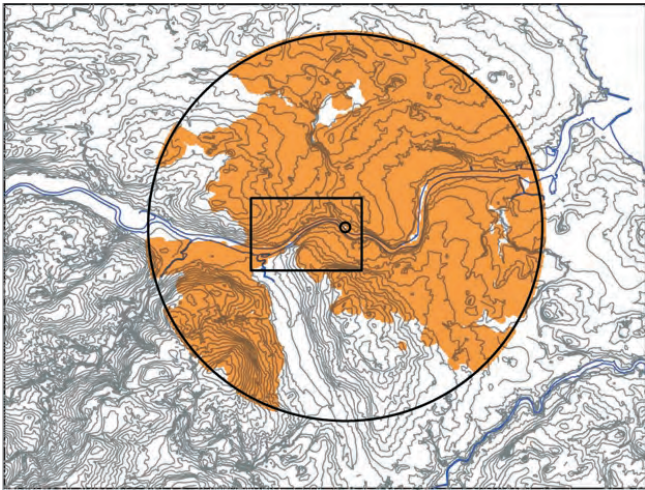
The Tyne valley lies within an area of Coal Measures rocks of Upper Carboniferous age. During the Carboniferous age, some 300 million years ago, the area was frequently covered by water. Large deltas accumulated sand, mud and thick vegetation and as the sea receded coal swamps were formed. This occurred repeatedly leading to the formation of a complex sequence of rocks that are characterised by a succession of shales and sandstones with numerous coal seams. These strata were then lifted up out of the sea and folded. The sandstone that underlies the central part of the study area provides the ridge on which the settlements of Newcastle and Gateshead were built. This sandstone became the predominant local building material as can be seen in many prominent older buildings around the Tyne Gorge.

As the strata were lifted up out of the sea and folded this was accompanied by faulting resulting in features such as the Ninety Fathom Fault that runs east-west across the area. Cutting through the Carboniferous rocks are dolerite dykes, formed as a result of volcanic activity in western Scotland during the Tertiary period, some

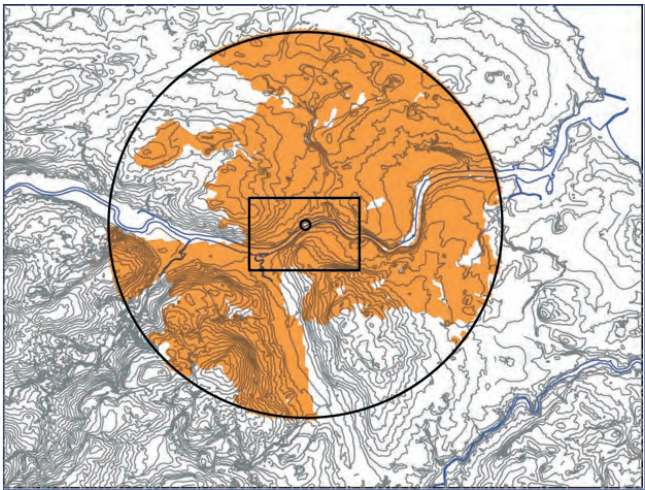




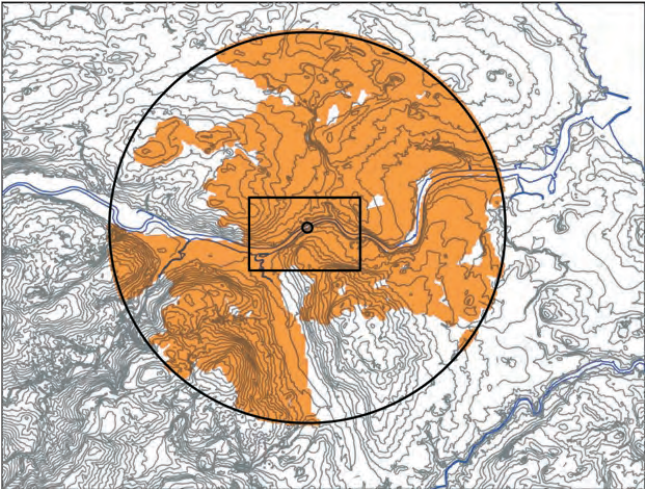
Location 1: Quayside Level 6.88m



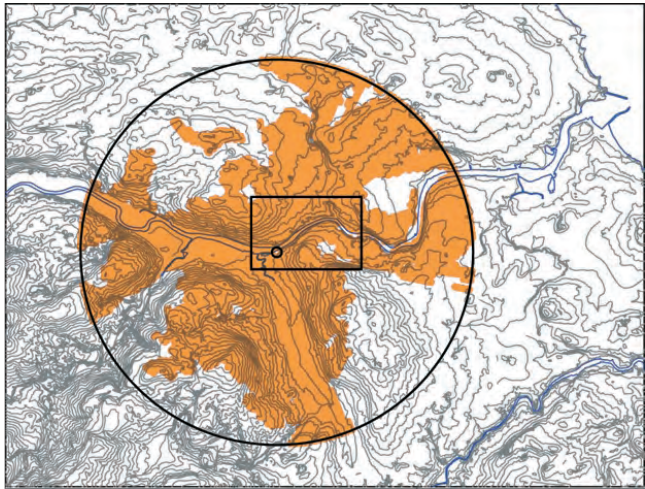
Location 2: Quayside Level 6.72m



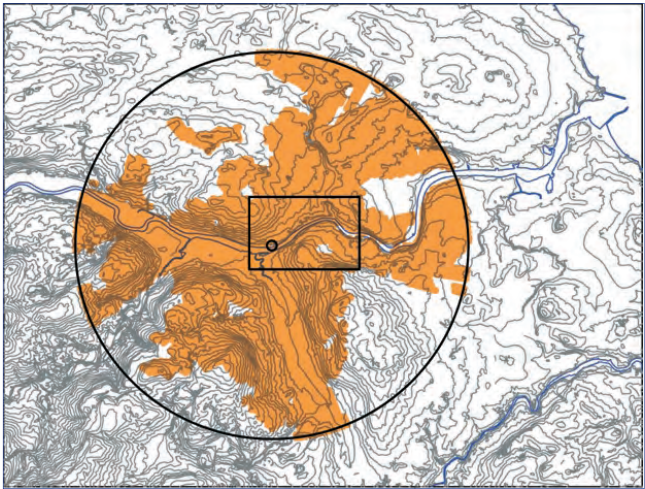
Location 3: Quayside Level 6.76m



Location 4: Quayside Level 5.89m



Location 5: Quayside Level 5.01m



Location 6: Quayside Level 5.24m

**Figure 2.1**  
**6 Individual ZVIs for**  
**Hypothetical Building**

Height of hypothetical building 106m above quayside level  
Range of ZVI shown = 8km

Topographical data from Newcastle City Council based upon the 2002 Ordnance Survey Map with permission of the Controller of H.M.S.O Crown Copyright Reserved LA 076244







**Figure 2.2**  
**Combined ZVIs for**  
**Hypothetical Building**

Height of hypothetical building 106m above quayside level  
Range of ZVI shown = 8km

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25 million years ago. Whin dyke crosses the area from north-west to south-east.

The shape of the land today is greatly influenced by the last ice age. The study area would have been covered with glacial ice to a depth of about half a mile<sup>4</sup>. A major ice stream moved through the Tyne Gap spreading across Newcastle from the west, a second ice stream moved southwards from the Cheviot Hills while a third ice sheet flowed along the line of the Northumberland Coast. The main deposit formed during this time was till, representing debris torn from the ground overrun by the ice and deposited downstream. This till is seen as surface deposits of boulder clay on the map in Figure 2.4.

Glaciation also altered drainage patterns, by blocking the original route of the river Wear north, causing it to divert eastwards cutting a new channel through the Magnesian Limestone Plateau to flow into the North Sea at Sunderland. The abandoned course of the pre-glacial Wear is now occupied by the river Team.

In the last stages of the glacial period, temporary lakes were formed locally, in which deposits of fine silt and clay accumulated. These fluvioglacial sands and gravels and laminated clays (including Pelaw Clay) were laid down over the lowlands.

The surface geology of the study area is now dominated by Quaternary drifts deposited by the receding glaciers some 15,000 years ago (see Figure 2.4 for distribution of geological drift). These quaternary deposits (particularly the boulder clays and laminated clays) have been exploited for brick making.

Increased flow of streams during deglaciation caused severe downcutting of existing river courses. One of the most dramatic of these is the Tyne Gorge, a steep sided channel cut through an upstanding sandstone ridge. This

period also resulted in the formation of the 'denes' or steep sided valleys in which tributaries of the Tyne flow (see Figure 2.5). These valleys were to be later filled by glacial tills, for example in the Team Valley. It is evident that, stripped of their glacial deposits, many of the river valleys would be below sea level today.

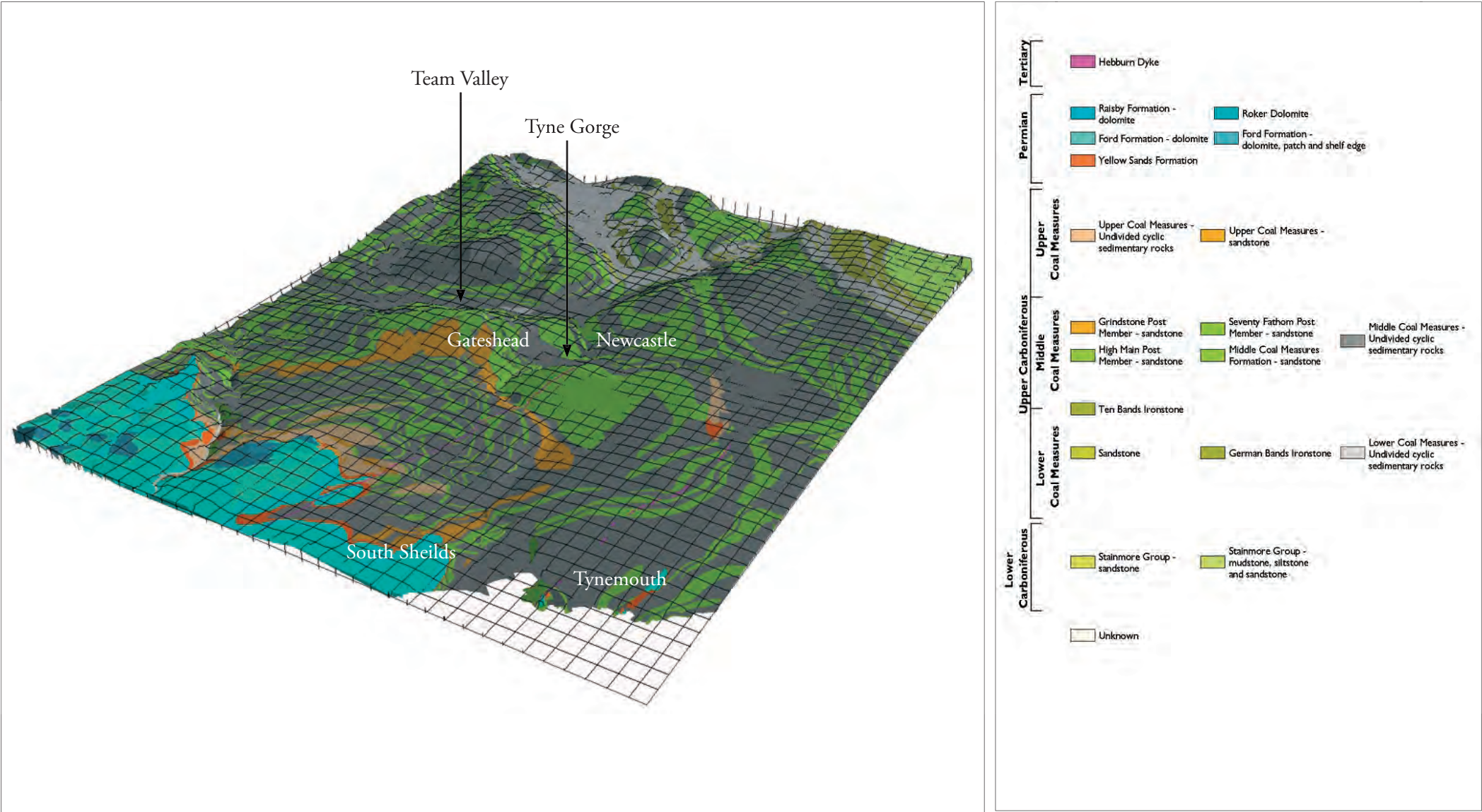
In the last 15,000 years change to the geomorphology of the landscape has occurred as a result of human exploitation of the physical resource. This has resulted in the formation of clay pits in the glacial till, and old mine workings and quarries in the bedrock which have been subsequently filled with mining spoil as well as household and industrial waste. Subsidence and land slips resulting from the working of coal seams are also features of the physical landscape in this area today.

### Topography

The shales of the Northumberland, Durham and Cumberland coalfields form relatively low ground close to the coast. However, to the west of Newcastle and Gateshead the ground rises in response to subdued escarpments formed by thicker sandstones. One of these sandstone ridges passes underneath Newcastle and Gateshead. *Figure 2.6* shows a cross-section across the Gorge at NewcastleGateshead illustrating how the land rises to a plateau on the Newcastle side and rises more steeply onto a rounded hill on the Gateshead side.

Further south the Permian Magnesian Limestone forms outcropping hills between the low-lying coalfields and the coast. These hills have a prominent west facing scarp (for example seen at Durham) and dramatic coastal cliffs. *Figure 2.7* illustrates the topography of the wider study area.

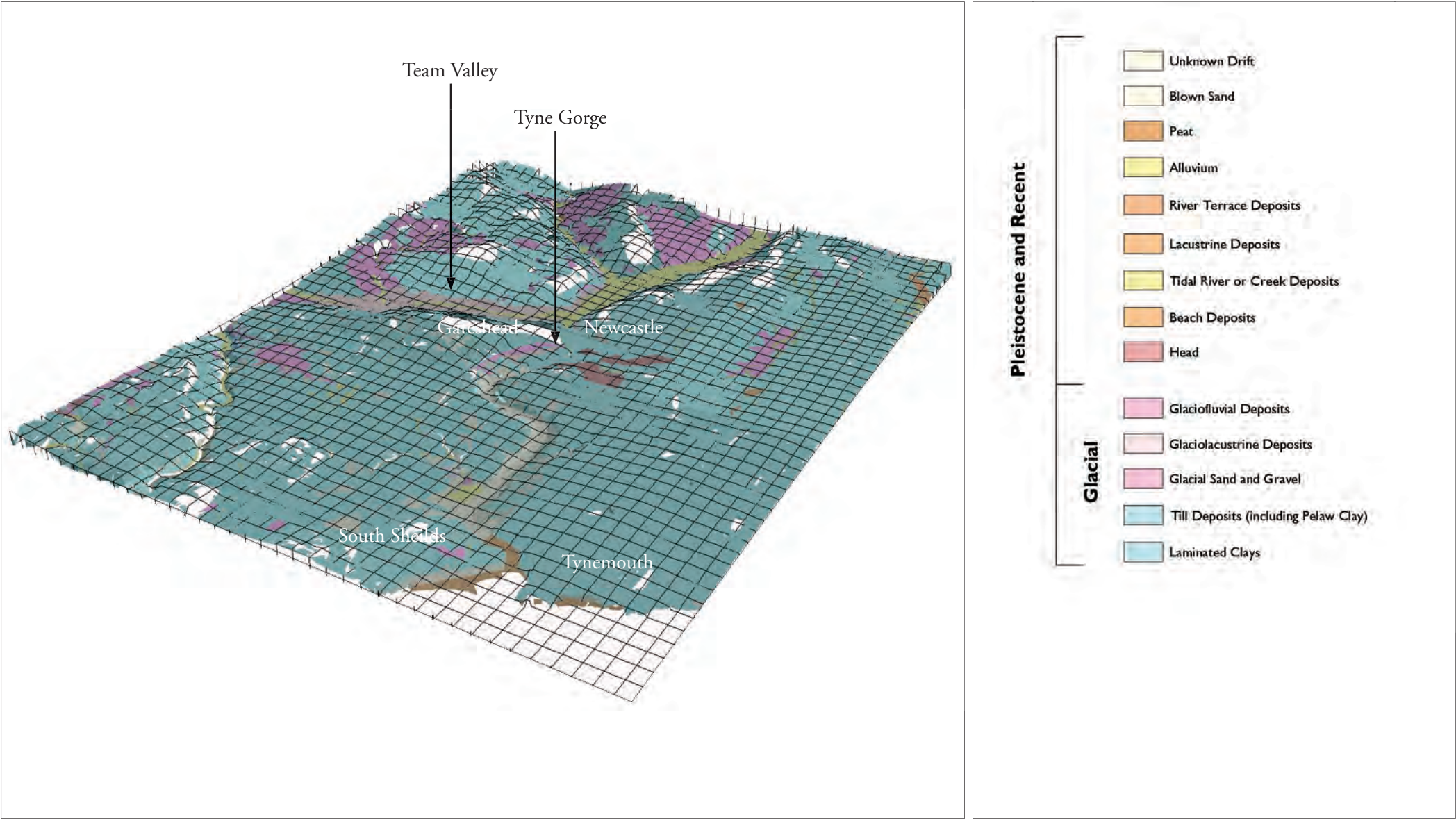
<sup>4</sup> M Barke & R J Buswell (1992) Newcastle's Changing Map, Newcastle upon Tyne City Libraries and Arts



**Figure 2.3**  
**Solid Geology of Wider Study Area**

Solid geology data  
Source: British Geological Survey  
View angle 63° towards bearing of 235°; vertical exaggeration of 5.





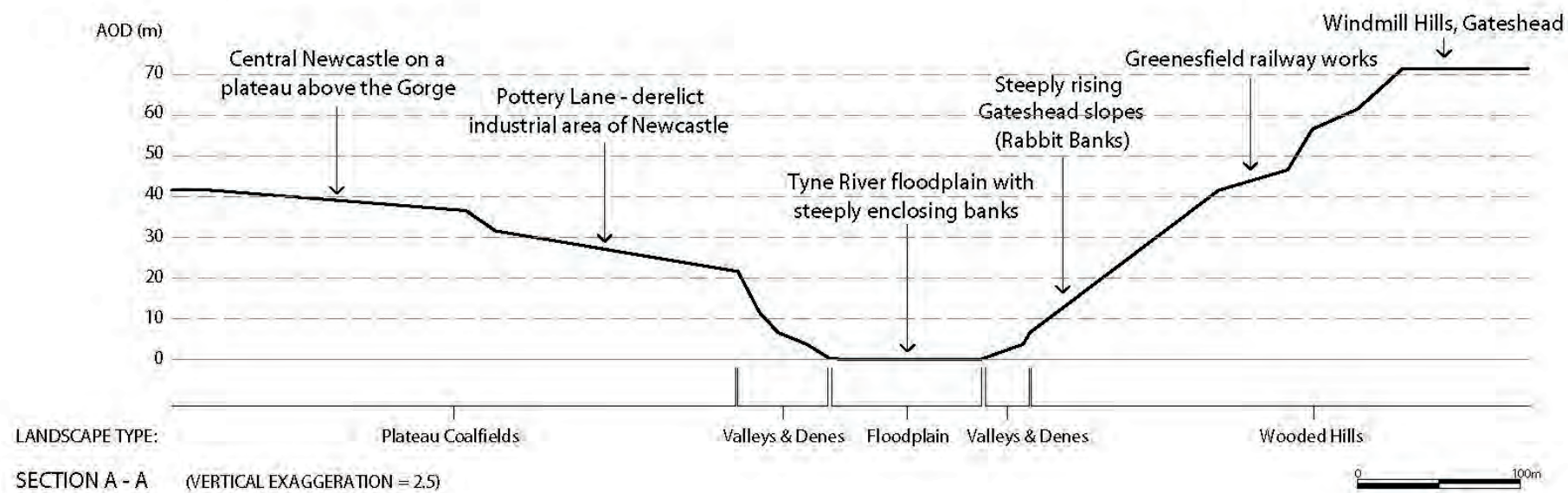
**Figure 2.4**  
**Drift Geology of Wider Study Area**

Drift geology data  
Source: British Geological Survey  
View angle 63° towards bearing of 235°; vertical exaggeration of 5.









**Figure 2.6**  
**Cross-section illustrating Topography of the Gorge**

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**Wildlife Issues**

The River Tyne is a Wildlife Corridor as identified in the Newcastle upon Tyne Unitary Development Plan to reflect the importance it plays in nature conservation. In addition there are a number of nationally and locally important sites for nature conservation reflected by designations along the north and south banks of the Tyne reflecting its great variety of habitats, from broadleaved woodlands to grasslands and wetlands. Relevant habitat action plans for the Tyne Gorge are scrub, shrub and hedgerows, broadleaved woodland, industrial land, man-made structures, Tyne Estuary and tidal streams. Relevant species actions plans are for Otter and Song Thrush. In addition Kittiwakes, a species of European Conservation Concern and UK Species of Conservation Importance, are part of the character of the waterfront of the Tyne. The Tyne Bridge is the most inland man-made nesting site for Kittiwakes in the country.

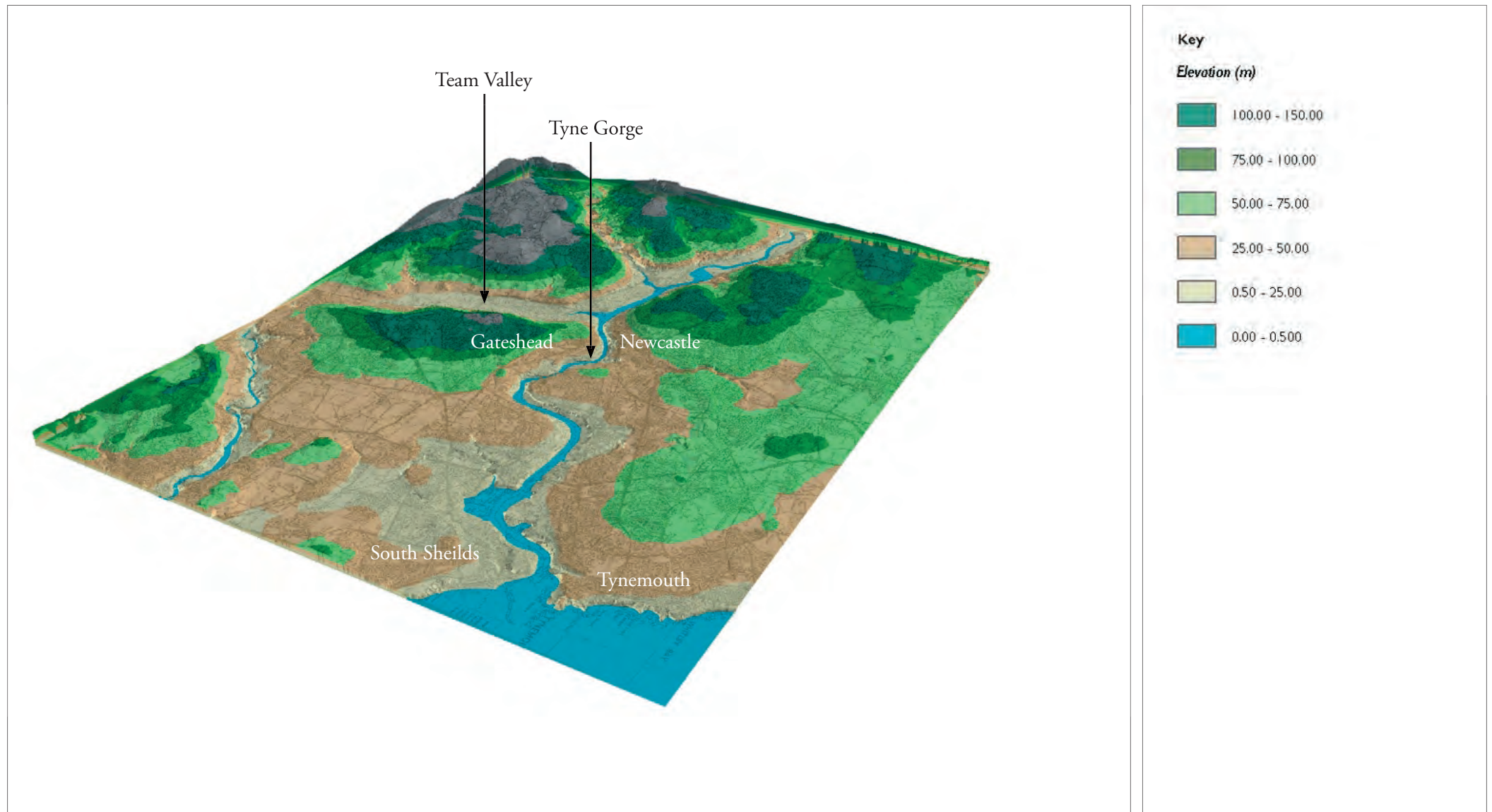
At its most basic level landscape character assessment provides a means of identifying areas of distinct character that result from different combinations of geology, topography and hydrology. The definition of these 'landscape character types' is a way of describing the shape of the land and enables us to appreciate how the Tyne Gorge fits into its wider landscape context. Six landscape types occur across the study area. These are illustrated in *Figure 2.8* and are described in the table below

**OUTLINE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT: THE SHAPE OF THE LANDSCAPE**

This area is described in the Countryside Agency's assessment of landscape character across the whole country<sup>5</sup> as an area of undulating landform incised by the rivers Tyne and Wear and their tributaries with well-wooded, steep, valley sides. It is a landscape of considerable recent change with a long history of coal mining and influenced by urban settlement, industry and infrastructure. However, this national character assessment does not consider the landscape within urban areas. Therefore as part of this study we have undertaken a character appraisal of the wider study area, considering the character of the whole landscape including that underlying the urban areas.

5 Countryside Agency (1999) Countryside Character Volume 1: North East

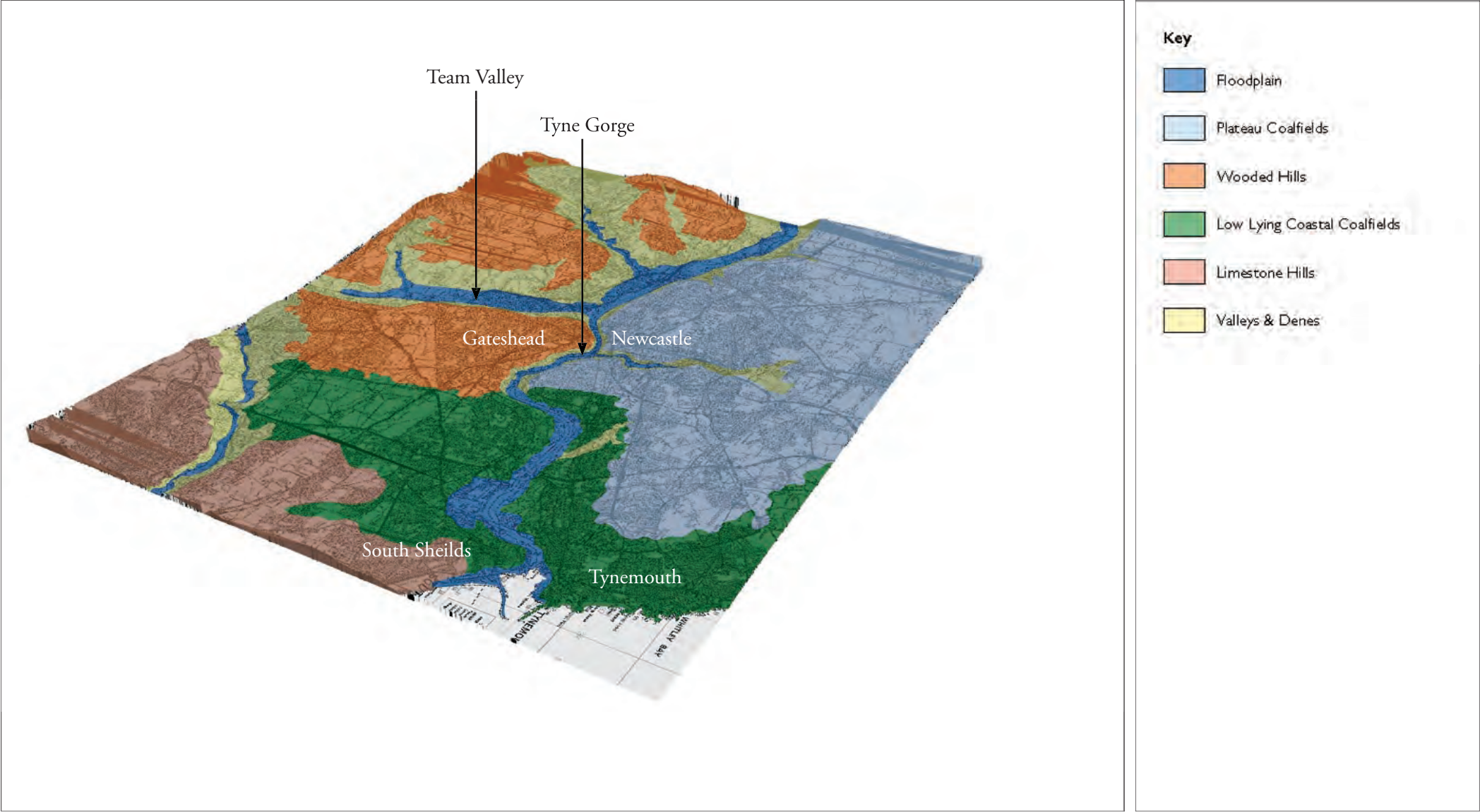




**Figure 2.7**  
**Topography of the Wider Study Area**

View angle 63° towards bearing of 235°; vertical exaggeration of 5.  
 Topographical data from Newcastle City Council based upon the 2002 Ordnance Survey Map with permission of the Controller of H.M.S.O Crown Copyright Reserved LA 076244  
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**Figure 2.8**  
**Landscape Types**  
**across the Wider Study Area**

View angle 63° towards bearing of 235°; vertical exaggeration of 5.  
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### Landscape Character Types within the Tyne Gorge

| Landscape Character Type | Key Characteristics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Flat Valley Bottoms      | <p>Flat valley bottoms are typically underlain by riverine alluvium and/or glacial lake deposits, although they also include areas of man-made fill. These 'floodplains' tend to be widest in the glacially over-deepened valleys such as the Team and Tyne to the west of the Gorge. They provide flat land for industry and settlement. Areas that remain undeveloped provide important wildlife habitats.</p> <p>There are typically long views up and down the valley bottoms - constrained only by the next bend in the river.</p>                                                                                            |
| Plateau Coalfields       | <p>The plateau coalfields are relatively low-lying areas (between 50 and 100m AOD) underlain by a complex sequence of rocks that are characterised by a succession of shales and sandstones with numerous coal seams. However, Quaternary drifts and boulder clays deposited by the receding glaciers some 15,000 years ago dominate the surface geology. There is evidence of small scale open cast mining and settlement, including in the city of Newcastle. Views tend to be constrained by intervening features on the plateau top, but there are dramatic views across adjacent landscapes from the edge of the plateau.</p> |

|                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wooded Hills               | <p>The settled and wooded hills are characterised by their upland hill landform (typically between 100 and 200m AOD). This rolling topography, incised by deep river valleys, allows long views across the landscape. The underlying geology of sandstone has given rise to the prominent hill forms, such as the hill on which Gateshead lies. The underlying coal seams have resulted in the presence of many disused coal mines in the landscape today.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Lowland Coastal Coalfields | <p>The shales of the Northumberland, Durham and Cumberland coalfields form the lowland coastal coalfields. The underlying rocks are overlain by a mantle of boulder clay or till such that natural exposures of Coal Measures rocks are few. Wind-blown sand, of post-glacial age, occurs on the low-lying coast south of the river Tyne at South Shields. These areas are typically heavily influenced by urban settlement, by industry and infrastructure, and the impacts of widespread mineral extraction past and present. Large open fields of arable crops, with an urban fringe of pony grazing and other miscellaneous activities around settlements, are a familiar sight.</p> |

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Limestone Hills   | <p>Permian Magnesian Limestone forms outcropping hills between the low-lying coalfields and the coast. These hills are predominantly arable farmland and dip southward and eastward, with incised 'denes' cut into the coastal edge. They support widespread industrial development, with large scale active and disused quarries, landfill sites and derelict, under-used or recently restored colliery land. The hills support urban development including larger mining towns and villages. There are dramatic views over the surrounding landscape from the scarp slopes.</p> |
| Valleys and Denes | <p>The valleys and 'denes' are typically glacial, over-deepened and steep sided with well wooded flanks (semi-natural oak or oak-birch woodlands) and include the Wear and Tyne and their tributaries (including the Derwent, Team and Ouseburn). There are deeply penetrating views into the steep sided, wide 'denes' and valleys of the Tyne, Derwent and Team, and framed views into narrower 'denes' such as the Ouseburn.</p>                                                                                                                                               |

## THE PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT AND LAND USE ACTIVITIES AROUND THE TYNE GORGE

### Introduction

The physical structure of the landscape has had a strong influence on patterns of human occupation and activity around the Tyne Gorge. The influence of human activity, in turn, makes a major contribution to the character of the landscape. At least five thousand years of human settlement have left many layers of history. The following section provides a summary of the evolution of Newcastle and Gateshead, with particular reference to the growth of the urban form and how this has influenced the character of the Gorge today. The growth of the urban form is illustrated in *Figure 3.1*. Newcastle and Gateshead have seen a large amount of redevelopment, particularly in the early Victorian and twentieth century. The present urban morphology of the Gorge and its setting can therefore only be understood by also mapping these areas of redevelopment, as shown in *Figure 3.2*.

### Early Beginnings (to AD43)

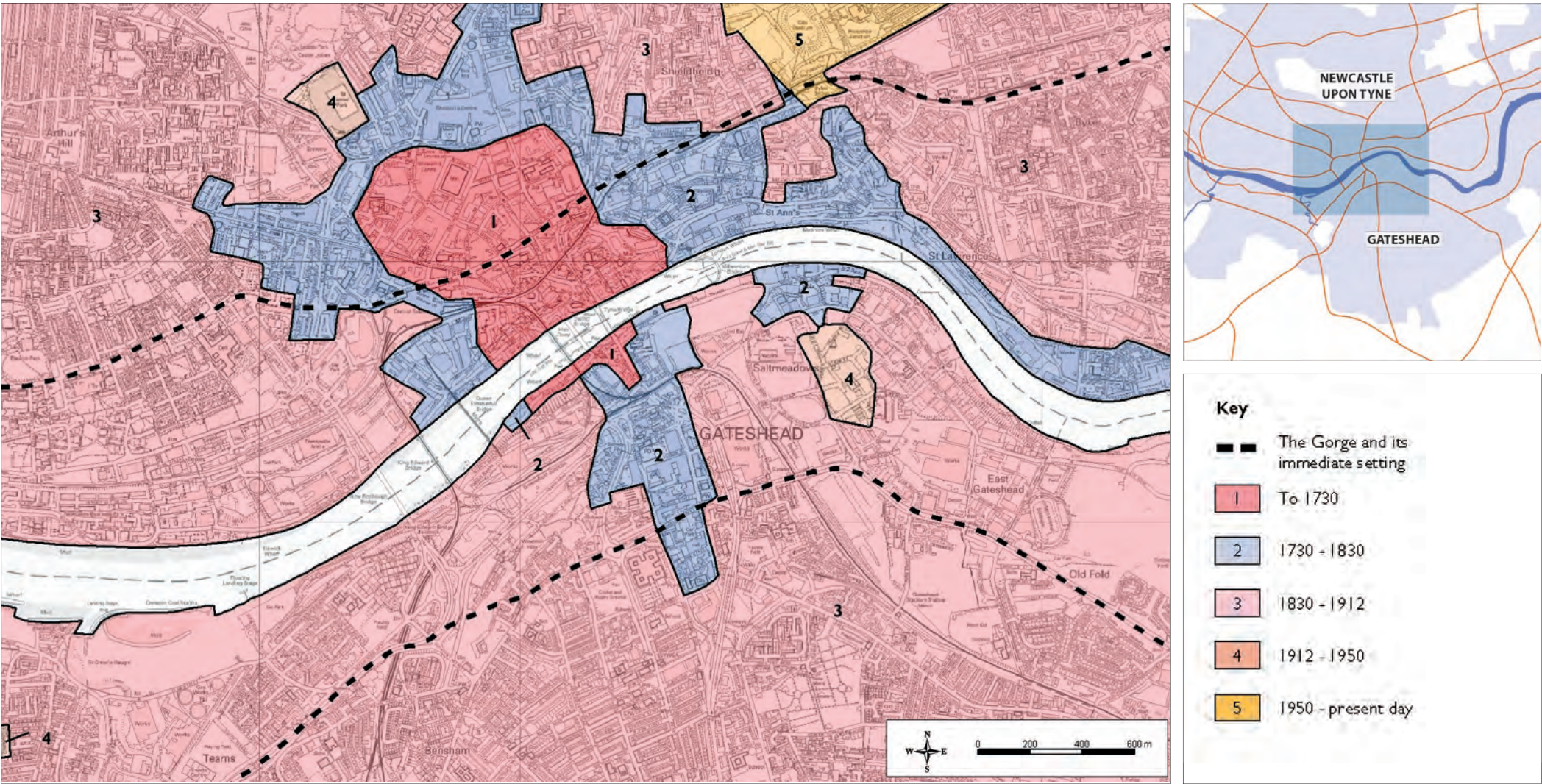
The extent of the Tyne valley conurbation, and the extensive reconstruction of much of its historic structure, limits the visibility of archaeology so that little survives of medieval activity, while formerly large areas of later industry have been substantially re-developed. Furthermore, even areas of relatively recent redevelopment have been renewed. For example, much of the present study area has seen intense and successive periods of settlement and industry resulting in significant landscape change which has been further amplified by topographical constraints. Only in the past decade or so has redevelopment been required to include archaeological investigation among other

environmental impact assessments. Opportunities for archaeological investigation have thus been lost in the past, as is clearly demonstrated by the results of recent excavation in advance of redevelopment on the Quayside and Gallowgate in Newcastle, and on Bottle Bank in Gateshead.

Early archaeological investigation in the area was focused for many years on Hadrian's Wall and associated structures. During the 1970s, largely through the work of the City and County Archaeologist, Barbara Harbottle, attention began to be paid to the important medieval archaeology of the city, with excavation carried out on the pre-Conquest and later cemetery around the Castle, the monastic establishments of the Blackfriars and Whitefriars, and on the medieval defences of the town. Perhaps not surprisingly, in view of the 1960s and earlier transformations, no archaeological excavation had taken place in Gateshead prior to the recent excavation of the Tyne Hilton site on Bottle Bank and the Sage Gateshead site to the east.

Early prehistoric settlement in the area is hard to find. However, it is now becoming clear that the major river valleys of the region - among them the neighbouring rivers to the south, the Tees and the Wear - were focuses for major ritual (and presumably settlement) activity from the Neolithic period (c. 4000 - 2000 BC) onwards. Air photography of the Wear valley sites and recent large scale excavation in the Aire valley show that these complexes of monuments included substantial earthwork enclosure 'hengés', together with timber circles and burial mounds. The use of these monuments continued through the early Bronze Age, extended into the middle Bronze Age (1500 BC), and may have lasted into the pre-Roman Iron Age. Although the evidence is yet to be found, it is likely that another major prehistoric ritual complex was located somewhere along the lower Tyne. Favoured locations tend to be low-lying areas adjacent to rivers, often within



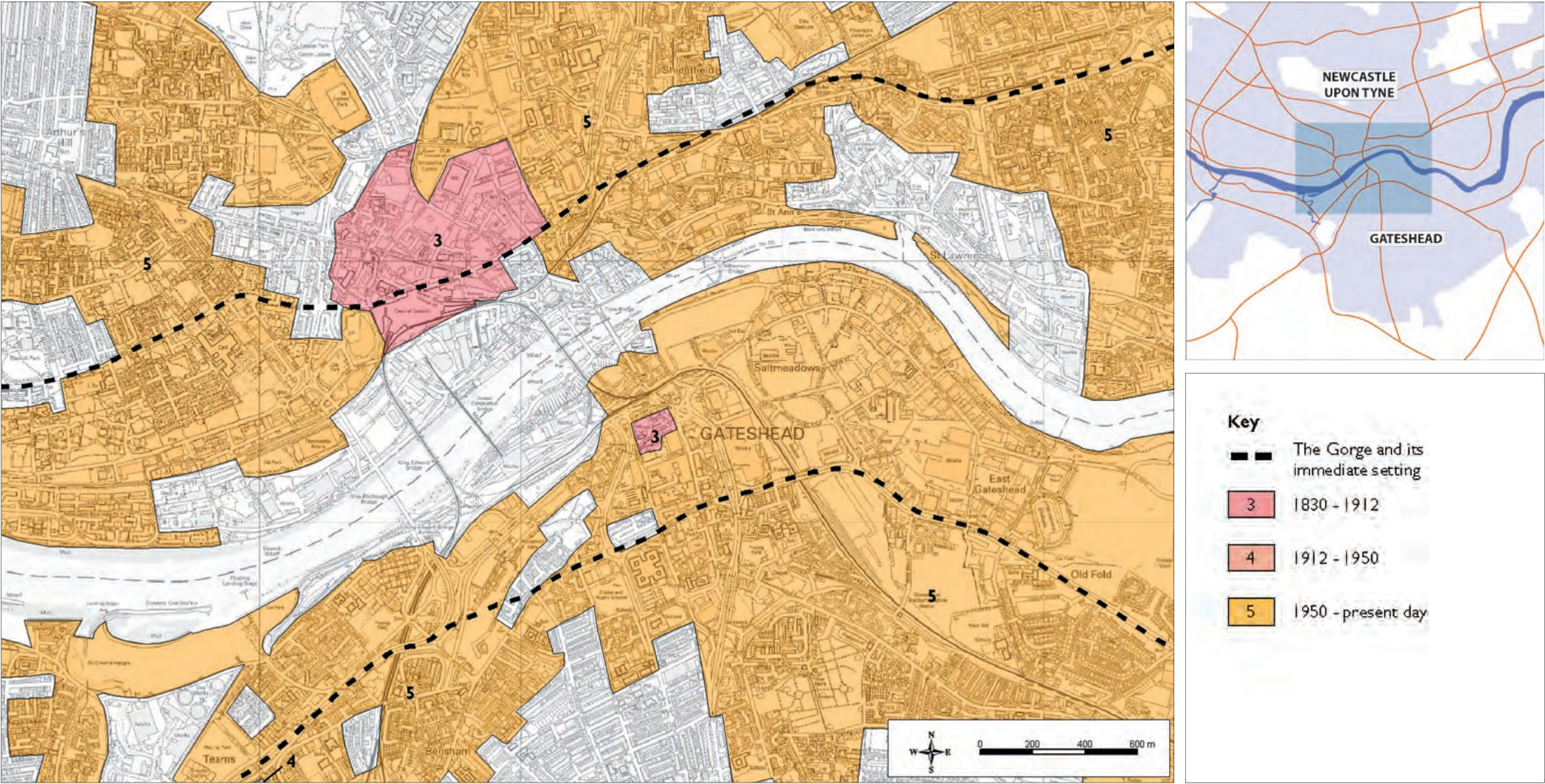


**Figure 3.1**  
**Development of**  
**Gateshead/Newcastle**

James Corbridge's Map of 1723; Plan of the Town and County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Borough of Gateshead from a survey by T. Oliver (1830); Bacon's Plan of Newcastle and Gateshead 1912; 1912 Ordnance Survey 6" sheets; 1951 Ordnance Survey 6" sheets  
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**Figure 3.2**  
**Re-development of**  
**Gateshead/Newcastle**

Source of data:  
Plan of the Town and County of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Borough of Gateshead from a survey by T. Oliver (1830); Bacon's Plan of Newcastle and Gateshead 1912; 1912 Ordnance Survey 6" sheets;  
1951 Ordnance Survey 6" sheets  
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the confluences of tributary streams, which would suggest a location to the west of the Tyne Gorge.

The Tyne, like many of the rivers on the east coast of England, has recovered a number of items which might have been deposited ritually during the Bronze Age. Dredging of the Tyne has produced, among other bronze items, a sword and a spear of middle Bronze Age date (1600 - 1200 BC), as well as a sword of Late Bronze Age date (1200-800 BC). These weapons were all found during dredging of the river in the Gorge to accommodate increasing river traffic during the period 1875 and 1890. An extended interest in the deposition of items in the river is suggested by the discovery, downstream of Newcastle, of an Iron Age sword belonging to the 3rd century BC. While continued dredging may well by now have removed all items of archaeological interest from the main channel of the river, the Gorge section of the Tyne retains considerable archaeological potential where the former riverside has been reclaimed. In addition to the recovery of long-buried artefacts, archaeological investigations carried out in conjunction with future redevelopement of the riverside might well uncover further information relating to the prehistoric use of the river.

There is little evidence for domestic settlement of Bronze Age date in the lower Tyne valley, but this appears to be a characteristic of the north-east lowlands as a whole. Extensive upland settlement of this period suggests that this would have extended onto lowland areas, and, as it appears not to have been substantial enough to be recognised through air photography, may yet be recovered by chance.

Settlement during the Iron Age (600 BC to mid-1st century Romanisation) is known to have developed throughout north-east England. East of the Pennines, enclosed farmsteads are now known to extend on the lowlands of County Durham northwards into south-

east Northumberland. The assumption that settlement also took advantage of the good quality agricultural land bordering the Tyne Gorge is supported by the chance discovery at South Shields of a pre-Roman Iron Age round house, demolished to make way for the construction of a Roman fort.

By the first century AD, to judge from the evidence which survives beyond the conurbation, the landscape around the Tyne Gorge contained prosperous mixed farming settlements and fields linked by tracks, and a local population of sufficient size to provide the Roman army with supplies and taxes when they made their way north in the later part of the first century AD. Not surprisingly, since the insubstantial evidence for this kind of agricultural settlement is best revealed through marks in growing crops, Iron Age settlement has yet to be discovered in the area of the Tyne Gorge itself. The plateau areas above the Tyne would have been very suitable for agriculture during the Iron Age, as they continued to be until the industrial development of these areas. Although it is likely that this later industry will have destroyed any archaeological evidence, the River Tyne itself, like other rivers, has produced Iron Age finds which were probably votively deposited by a local population. The discovery of a wooden canoe of this period speaks of the use of the river as a means of transport at this time.

### **Roman to Medieval (AD43 - AD1066)**

The first physical impact of the Romans in the area of the Tyne Gorge was the construction of Hadrian's Wall, around AD 120. Initially this extended east apparently only so far as the area of the modern centre of Newcastle, perhaps terminating splendidly above the Gorge itself. An accompanying fort appears to have been of timber construction - later to be rebuilt in stone, while a bridge crossing of the Tyne at this period has

always been considered likely. The fort is known to have occupied the promontory which became the site of the later Castle, although the detail of its shape and layout remains unclear. Topographical limitations suggest that the standard playing-card shape may not have been accommodated on this site. Extra-mural civilian settlement grew up beside Roman forts with an economy based on trade and services, but also housing the families of the soldiers - locally most clearly seen at Housesteads and Vindolanda. It is likely that a similar settlement accompanied the fort at Newcastle, most probably situated on Forth Banks between the fort and the Skinner Burn, as suggested by occasional finds of Roman material in the past. However, although the presence of Roman, and post-Roman settlement at Newcastle is well attested by occasional finds, continued research has yet to recover extensive structural information which surely must survive still to be examined.

It is noteworthy that the street plan on either side of the Gorge appears to owe little to the Roman period - in Newcastle the former lower part of Westgate Road (Bailiffgate) may reflect the Roman *Via Principalis*, while on Bottlebank, Gateshead, the metalling of a north-south Roman road may be continued in the line of West Street and Mirk Lane. In this latter area recent archaeological excavation of the Tyne Hilton site has uncovered evidence of early 2nd century activity which may have been associated with settlement near the bridging point of the Tyne on this southern bank. Thus it may well be that there was settlement on both sides of the Tyne Gorge, but with the only lasting impact of the Romans being the continuance of a major river crossing at the most likely point, at or near the present location of the Swing Bridge.

The river continued to be important as a ritual focus during the Roman period, as attested by a series of significant finds from the area of the Swing Bridge. Four

fragments of a substantial altar in honour of Neptune were dredged up in 1875, its base discovered separately in 1903. This was associated with the 6th Legion and dates to AD 122. It has been suggested that the sculpture may have formed part of a monumental terminus to the first stage of Hadrian's Wall set on the river bank, or even part of a substantial bridge structure. The lengthy maintenance of such a monument is implicit in the discovery, at more-or-less the same location, of a statue dedicated to Fortuna erected 36 years later by the same legion.

There is at present no evidence for nucleated settlement in the area during the post-Roman centuries. Deposition of burials in a cemetery in the vicinity of the Castle took place over a long period from the 8th century AD, with some evidence to suggest the presence of a stone church of this period on the later Castle site. As elsewhere in the region, where the living population was is not known. On the southern side of the Gorge there is still less evidence for settlement activity extending into the post-Roman period.

### Medieval Period (1066AD - 1499AD)

The origins of the existing settlements at Newcastle and Gateshead are perhaps more truly founded in the medieval period, and it is certainly to this time that the principal morphology of the two urban centres can be traced. The shape of medieval Newcastle is probably well represented by John Speed on his map of 1610. While the location of the Castle would have been an important factor in the development of the settlement, a number of significant topographical limitations were imposed by the steep bank of the river and its then narrow margins. There were also tributary streams, the Skinner Burn, Lort Burn, and Pandon Burn, which ran in steep-sided valleys down to the river. While the plateau around the Castle site was an attractive area for settlement, it was

the river and its potential for the development of trade which was an equally important focus. Established as a timber structure in 1080, the Castle was rebuilt in stone soon afterwards. The inland circuit of the Town Wall was constructed in the 14th century, with the riverside length being built early in the 15th century. In their finished condition, the walls were up to ten feet thick and twenty-five feet high, with a walk along the top, fronted by a wide deep ditch. Portions of the wall remain, in places surviving almost to its full height, for example in Bath Lane.

Much of the street pattern had developed before the Town Wall was established in the 14th century, and some streets were truncated by the course of the wall. This was less of a problem than it might have been because Newcastle's walls encompassed a large enough area to accommodate relocation of houses as well as the establishment of a number of religious institutions. The Blackfriars had one of the few permitted private passages through the town walls, enabling them to reach their lands lying outside. Substantial visible remains now exist only of Blackfriars. Much of the friary was demolished after the Dissolution of the monasteries when it was given over to crafts guilds but the remaining buildings were finally restored in 1981. The large area included within the Town Wall, the continuing defensive purpose in unstable political territory, and a local innate conservatism, effectively contained settlement within the walls until the 18th century. Speed's map shows development outside the walls limited to ribbons along the major routes north and west.

On the other side of the river Gateshead became a favourite place of residence of the Prince Bishop of Durham, who was attracted by the extensive hunting forests. However his clearance of some of these forests led subsequent Bishops of Durham to gradually lose interest in Gateshead's hunting grounds. Nevertheless

the Bishops remained determined to protect rights to allow ships to trade from the south side of the River Tyne despite strong opposition from the merchants of Newcastle who wished to control the trade on both sides of the Tyne.

The late thirteenth century Newcastle was regarded as the leading English port for exporting leather, benefitting from a plentiful supply of local livestock in the Northumberland countryside. However, it was around this time when the border wars destroyed the town's trade that Newcastle began to exploit the exposed coal outcrops along the banks of the River Tyne, using the river as a means of transportation.

The Tyne quickly developed into the major river for exporting coal to London. By the 13th century coal mining was well established along the Tyne. Although Newcastle's defensive walls were falling into decay, they were enough to protect the town's coal trade from Scottish raids. By 1334 Newcastle was the fourth wealthiest town in England after London, Bristol and York. Recorded coal mines supplying coal to Newcastle in medieval times existed at Elswick, Winlaton, Heworth and the Town Moor. By 1378 Newcastle shipped 15,000 tons of coal per year and exported coal to many parts of Europe as well as importing iron ore from Sweden. By the late fifteenth century Newcastle was the most important port in the region.

Shipping and shipbuilding were also important in Newcastle and the town was building ships from at least 1296, the year in which a galley was completed for King Edward's fleet. Newcastle was not only the richest town in the north, but was beginning to rival London in its wealth.



### Post Medieval (1500AD - 1730AD)

By 1547 a group of powerful merchants called the Hostmen had taken control of local mines and coal export. By 1615, Newcastle had a virtual monopoly on exporting coal with considerable control over rival ports like Sunderland, albeit it lost its control over rival North Eastern ports after the Civil War of the 1640s.

Newcastle's wealthy merchants continuously tried to restrict trade on the south side of the river and several attempts were made to annexe Gateshead as a part of Newcastle. Finally they were successful and in 1553 John Dudley Duke of Northumberland annexed the town of Gateshead to Newcastle. However, the annexation only lasted a few months with Gateshead returning to Durham with the accession of Queen Mary to the throne.

In 1574 another attempt was made by Newcastle to annex Gateshead but the Gateshead people fiercely petitioned Parliament against this. The petition was successful but the Newcastle coal merchants did not give up and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I they finally gained control of Gateshead's coal trade in a grand lease of ninety nine years. The coal mines of Gateshead were worked very heavily during this period and all the wealth from these mines went into Newcastle pockets of the Newcastle merchants and not to the Bishops of Durham.

Coal mining continued to increase in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the centres of activity being concentrated around Tyneside and the Washington area of Wearside. Seventeenth century colliery railways were called 'Newcastle Roads' and enabled the coal mines to be opened slightly further away from the rivers Tyne and Wear. The railroads were better suited to the hilly terrain of Tyne and Wear countryside, where the building of canals would have been impossible. The 'Newcastle Roads' were built first of wood and later of iron. They

were the first railways in the world and were operated by horse drawn wagons.

### Georgian Period (1730-1830)

Until the mid 18th Century Newcastle remained a compact settlement within the Town Walls, focussed towards the waterfront with streets dominated by medieval burgage plots. However, the latter part of the 18th century witnessed important changes in the physical characteristics of the town as wealthy landowners built large farms and introduced improved farming methods under the Enclosure Acts of the late 18th century. This meant that fewer agricultural workers were needed, so most moved to the towns and became the work force of the early Industrial Revolution. Between 1763 and 1812 all the gates and many of the sections of the Town Walls were demolished<sup>6</sup>. Reorganisation of the city centre and suburban growth were beginning to alter the morphology of the town. There was a gradual shift away from the riverside as wealthy houses were created at Charlotte and Hanover Squares and Clavering Place. The limited amount of level and dry ground ensured that from an early date the riverside and valley of the tributary stream, the Lort Burn, began to be infilled. Dean Street was built on the infilled valley of the Lort Burn and Mosley and Collingwood Streets were constructed to allow improved traffic movement. Important public buildings were also built in the classical style, for example the Assembly Rooms (1776), the Theatre Royal (1788) and the Moot Hall (1812). The town thus developed new elements typical of the English Urban Renaissance. The riverside wall that had been developed in the early 15th Century presented a considerable restriction and was demolished piecemeal from the later 18th century.

Major changes to the cityscape occurred in the 1820's and 1830's. Richard Grainger, working with architects Walker

and Wardle, John Dobson and the brothers Benjamin and John Green, re-planned and virtually rebuilt the upper town in the classical style. The monument to Earl Grey, built at the same time, was the focal point of the new streets. This new city centre, with its regular planned street pattern and neo-classical sandstone buildings, contrasted with the organic form of the medieval town. It improved the status of the city, attracting financial and retailing interests.

Despite the early development of coal mining in the Gateshead area, the settlement remained a rather small place which in the eighteenth century was still little more than a large village, noted for its 'oak trees and windmills'.

### **Victorian Era**

Victorian Newcastle produced entrepreneurs, engineers, inventors, architects and designers. With the birth of the 'Newcastle Roads', the North East of England can easily claim to be the cradle of railways, but coal mining in the region also drove on the development of steam locomotives and the great railway age of steam. George Stephenson, inventor of the world famous 'Rocket' and father of the railways, had workshops in Forth Street, Newcastle, where he developed prototype locomotives. His son Robert designed one of the Tyne's famous bridges, the High Level Bridge - opened in 1849 - which brought the railway into the heart of the city. Central Station was built in 1850, and Grainger Street was extended to link the Station to the new city centre.

In Gateshead the rural character was beginning to change as industrialisation brought about a continuous increase in Gateshead's population and an increasingly overcrowded riverside area. In 1854 a fire, emerging in a Gateshead factory close to the River, quickly got out of

control and spread to an adjacent warehouse containing huge stores of salt, iron, lead, manganese, nitrate of soda, guano, arsenic, copperas, naphtha, and brimstone. The whole building suddenly exploded. The explosion was heard far off in Berwick upon Tweed and houses were damaged as far up the Tyne as South Shields. The flying debris caused a second huge fire to break out on the northern bank of the river, which ultimately destroyed many of the medieval buildings on the Newcastle quayside. Hundreds of people were made homeless by the event which was known for many years after as 'The Great Fire of Newcastle and Gateshead'.

The Great Fire destroyed nearly all of the few historical buildings that existed in Gateshead and this is possibly one of the reasons why Gateshead has a greater share of the less attractive modern concrete buildings than its more famous city neighbour across the Tyne.

The Swing Bridge (built by Armstrong and opened in 1876) crosses the river at about the same point as the Roman and Medieval Bridges. This bridge contains a hydraulically-operated swivel mechanism allowing taller fixed-mast vessels to reach upstream.

The urbanisation of Newcastle, and Tyneside, really took off during the 19th century as the Industrial Revolution hammered Britain into an industrial world power and Newcastle saw great poverty and great wealth side by side. Newcastle achieved city status in 1888.

### **Early 20th Century**

Although the Tyne Bridge is the most famous of the seven bridges that cross between Newcastle and Gateshead, it was only finished in 1928 (when it was the largest single span in the world). This new bridge, as a result of its high level crossing, caused re-orientation of traffic flows in

Newcastle and Northumberland Street became the focus for shopping, moving the city centre northwards. *Figure 3.3* shows the high level crossing of the Tyne Bridge across the Gorge. Some major public buildings including the Police and Fire Stations were built in this period.

### Post-War Newcastle

The two world wars helped to boost the need for coal in industry, but in the later half of the twentieth century colliery closures began to increase. One major event in the history of the mines was the nationalisation of the industry in 1947, when the coal mines, previously under the management of private concerns, were brought under the control of the government. In the two decades from 1950-1970 around a hundred North East coal mines were closed often with shattering consequences for small mining communities which relied on coal mining for work.

The attempt to modernise Newcastle in the 1960's with a massive redevelopment plan placed much of Westgate Road under severe planning blight. The building of Eldon Square Shopping Centre meant the demolition of the elegant old Eldon Square, cut off Clayton Street (which has since steadily declined) and moved the focus of the City north. The new shopping centre turned its back on its surroundings and this set the trend for many other developments in the 1960s and 1970s that did not respect the scale or quality of the city's townscape context. Despite these city centre developments of the 1960s and 1970s Grey Street survives largely unscathed and has recently been voted the favourite street in Britain in CABI's recent 'Streets of Shame' study. This gently curving and rising street has been said by many to be amongst the greatest streets in 'England if not Europe'. Grainger Street and Market Street have also remained intact apart from some rather unpleasant shop facades.

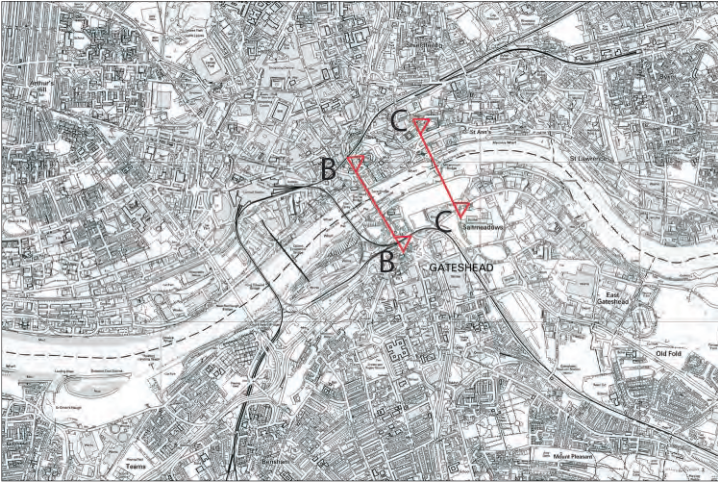
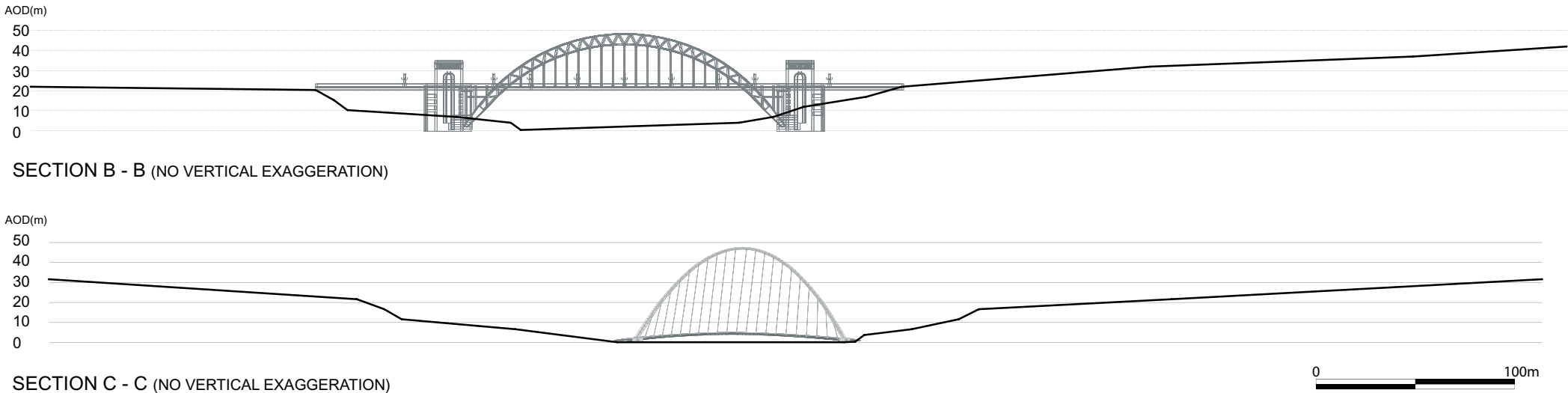
There were also some planning success stories during the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Ralph Erskine's public housing scheme at Byker is one of Europe's most successful and impressive housing projects. Byker was one of the first major attempts in Britain to create a dialogue between community and architecture. Erskine oversaw the development of this famous project allowing for tenant co-operation and architectural innovation on a large scale to provide housing protected from motorway noise and the rebuilding of a whole estate near the city centre. The Byker Scheme has been proposed for listing. Another major development in the later 20th Century was the building of the Tyneside Metro, the first rapid transit system in Britain, opened in 1980. This was accompanied by the construction of the Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge, the fifth bridge to cross the Tyne Gorge. The New Redheugh Bridge closely followed in 1982-3.

### The New Millennium

The new millennium has already brought the seventh crossing of the Tyne. The Gateshead Millennium Bridge, which opened in September 2001, is the first low level bridge to be built since the Swing Bridge and has helped to attract people back onto the quayside, *Figure 3.3* shows this low level crossing of the Tyne Gorge. The regeneration of the Newcastle and Gateshead quaysides is now well underway providing an exciting focus for inner city restoration and development, with a prosperous future.





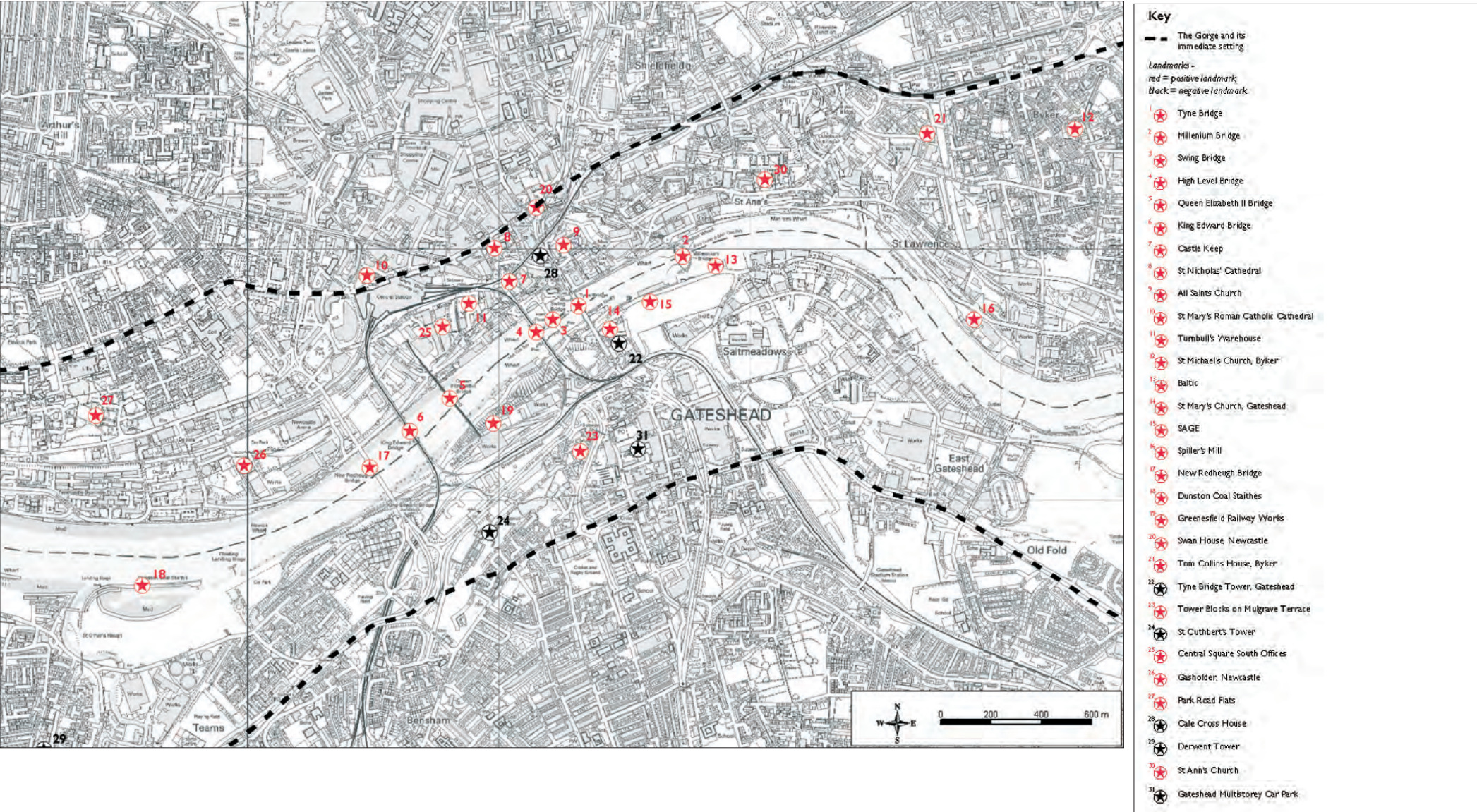


**Figure 3.3**  
**High Level and Low Level**  
**Crossings of the Gorge**

Three-dimensional CAD drawings of Tyne Bridge and Millennium Bridge supplied by Insite Environments  
OS data supplied by Gateshead Council. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of H.M.S.O Crown Copyright LA07618X 2001







**Figure 4.1**  
**Key Landmarks within the Gorge and its Immediate Setting**

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## THE SKYLINE AND STRATEGIC VIEWS

### KEY LANDMARKS

A number of buildings/structures form key landmarks along the Gorge by reason of their location and visual prominence. These have been recorded as part of this study along with our assessment of their contribution to the landscape of the Gorge.

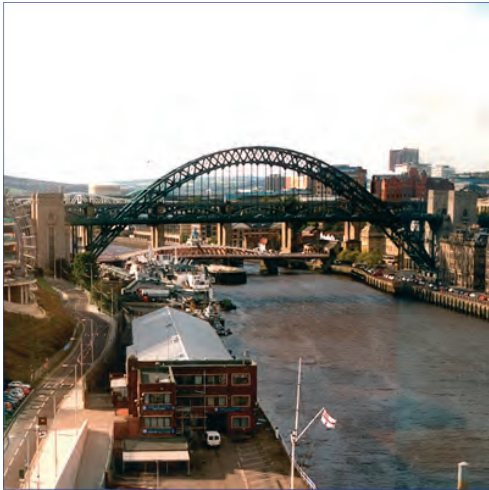
The landmarks identified in this study are those that fall within the 'immediate setting' of the Gorge (see *Figure 4.1*). The Gorge and its immediate setting may be defined as the river, Gorge slopes, Gorge lip and adjacent areas encompassing the main road and rail approaches up to the nearest convenient boundary feature on the ground. This broadly equates to the visual setting of the Gorge i.e. it encompasses all areas in which buildings and other features are visible when standing at the bottom of the Gorge. This boundary is described in more detail in Chapter 5 of this report.

It is important to note that there may be other prominent landmarks within the wider setting of the Gorge (for example St James' Park Stadium), but these fall outside the Gorge's immediate setting and have not therefore been included in the list below. It should also be noted that the landmarks in the list are *key* landmarks, not the only landmarks, and that other landmarks exist.

Most of these landmarks are positive contributors to the Gorge landscape as a result of their unique form, cultural importance or historic value. It is desirable to preserve views of these buildings and structures. On the other hand there are a few landmarks which detract from their surroundings due to their lack of architectural quality, incongruous form, location, etc. which, all other things being equal, it would be better to remove or for their

negative impacts to be mitigated in some way.

Each of the key landmarks identified in *Figure 4.1* is described in greater detail in the following pages.



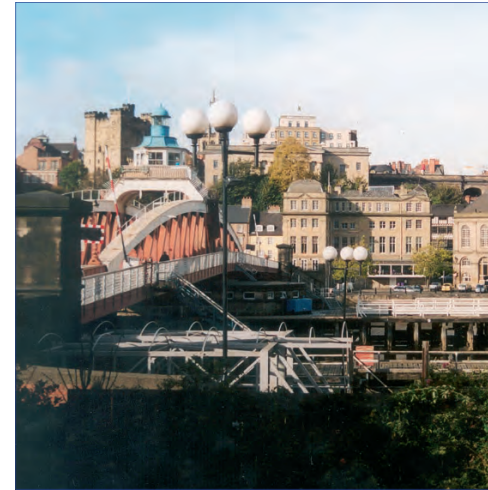
### 1. Tyne Bridge (1928)

Unique and immediately identifiable bridge form that is instantly recognisable as the landmark of Tyneside. Has an intimate relationship with topography, is visually prominent and provides a sense of excitement on viewing its form spanning the Gorge.



### 2. Millennium Bridge (2001)

A major new landmark again instantly recognisable for its architectural quality, distinctive shape, unique tilting mechanism and visual prominence. It provides a sense of excitement on viewing its form spanning the Gorge particularly as it echoes the shape of the adjacent Tyne Bridge.



### 3. Swing Bridge (1876)

The bridge is located at the point where the former Roman and Georgian bridges crossed the Tyne. It not only marks an historic crossing point but is also of importance in its own right for its unique turning mechanism and attractive and ornate built form.



### 4. High Level Bridge (1849)

Robert Stephenson's high level bridge is an instantly recognisable structure of the Gorge that provides an interesting contrast to the Tyne Bridge against which it is often compared. It has been identified as a landmark structure for reasons of its visual prominence, relationship to the topography and its distinctive form.





#### 5. Queen Elizabeth II Bridge (1980)

The QE II Metro Bridge has been identified as a landmark structure for reasons of its visual prominence, relationship to the topography and its distinctive form.



#### 6. King Edward Bridge (1902-6)

The King Edward Bridge, which carries the mainline railway, has been identified as a landmark structure for reasons of its visual prominence, its relationship to the dramatic topography of the Gorge and its distinctive form as viewed from along the river.



#### 7. Castle Keep (late 12th century)

The Castle Keep has been identified as a landmark structure as a result of its commanding position on the lip of the Gorge, its visual prominence and its history. It is a landmark of historic Newcastle.

#### 8. St Nicholas' Cathedral (12th-15th century)

St Nicholas' Cathedral has been identified as a major landmark of the Gorge as a result of its prominent position on the Gorge lip and its distinctive and instantly recognisable 193 ft crown spire forming part of the skyline of the Gorge.



#### 9. All Saints Church (1786-96)

All Saints Church has been identified also as a result of its commanding position on the Gorge lip and its visually prominent spire that contributes positively to the Gorge skyline.



#### 10. St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral (1844)

St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, with its visually prominent spire, is in prominent position on the lip of the Gorge lip.



#### 11. Turnbull's Warehouse (1897-8)

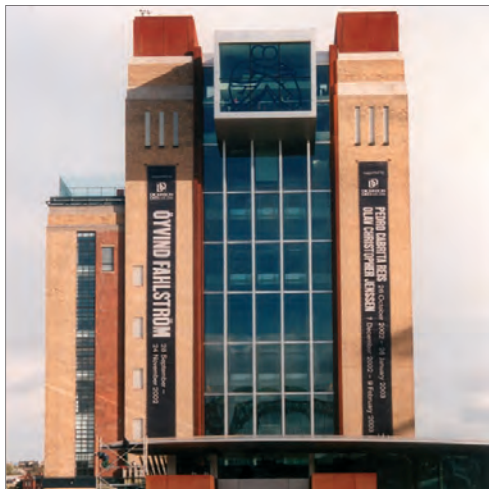
Turnbull's Warehouse (old tobacco warehouse) has been identified as a major landmark of the Gorge as a result of its commanding position on the Gorge lip and its instantly recognisable imposing red brick form.



#### 12. St Michael's Church, Byker (1862-3)

St Michael's Church has been identified as a landmark as a result of its prominent position at the eastern end of the Gorge and its elegant and instantly recognisable spire. It is visible in the backdrop of many views, and indicates the historic centre of Byker.





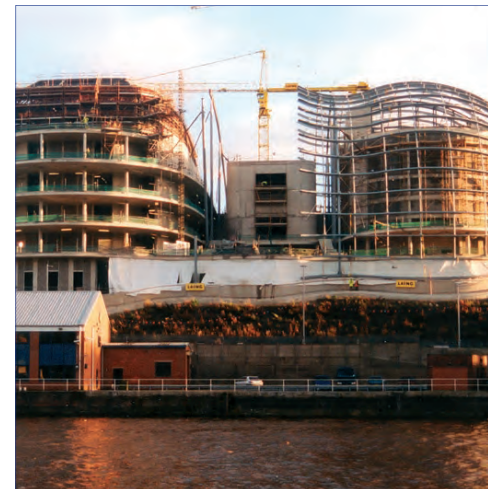
### 13. Baltic (1950)

The Baltic is a major landmark of the Gorge for reasons of its prominence, its close relationship with the water and its distinctive architecture. Its recent successful conversion to the new Centre for Contemporary Art means it has become a central focus for the Gateshead Quays.



### 14. St Mary's Church, Gateshead (late 12th century)

St Mary's Church is an important landmark on the south side of the Gorge because of its prominent position on the Gorge lip, its historic importance as the first church in Gateshead and the oldest surviving feature on the south side of the Gorge. It is, unfortunately, overshadowed by the Tynebridge Tower office block (no. 22) which lies immediately to the south.



### 15. Sage, Gateshead (under construction)

The new Sage music centre which is currently under construction is already an important landmark on the south side of the river for reasons of its highly distinctive architectural form, which in part echoes the form of the adjoining Tyne Bridge, its prominence on the south side of the Gorge and its positive image in the regeneration of Gateshead Quays.



### 16. Spiller's Mill (1936)

Spiller's Mill is a major landmark of the Gorge for reasons of its location where it acts as a 'gatehouse' at the eastern 'entrance' to the Gorge, its visual prominence and its close historic relationship with the water.



### 17. New Redheugh Bridge (1982)

The new Redheugh Bridge has been identified as a landmark structure for reasons of its visual prominence, relationship to the topography and its distinctive form that contrasts with the other bridges. This bridge may not be considered to be an exceptional structure in its own right, but its relationship to the other bridges means it makes a positive contribution to the Gorge.



### 18. Dunston Coal Staithes (1893)

This structure forms a major landmark by virtue of its position at the western entrance to the Gorge at the confluence of the Rivers Team and Tyne, its visual prominence and its connection to the industrial history of the Gorge.



### 19 Boiler Shop of Greenesfield Railway Works (1854)

The former Boiler Shop forms a landmark as a result of its position on the lip of the Gorge and its connection to the important railway history of Gateshead. It is highly visible from both the railway and Metro bridges.



### 20 Swan House, Newcastle (1960s)

Swan House is a prominent building located at the junction of Mosley Street and Pilgrim Street, on the road to the 1930s Tyne Bridge. It was built in the 1960s as telecommunications centre. It is a landmark because its large mass occupies a prominent position on the top of the Gorge and it represents progress at a time when the telephone was still cutting edge technology. Although a prominent public building for many years, Swan House is now undergoing conversion to city housing.





**21 Tom Collins House, Byker (1970s)**

Tom Collins House forms a landmark by virtue of its distinctive shape and its prominence as a landmark of the revolutionary Byker Wall housing development designed by Ralph Erskine in the 1970s.



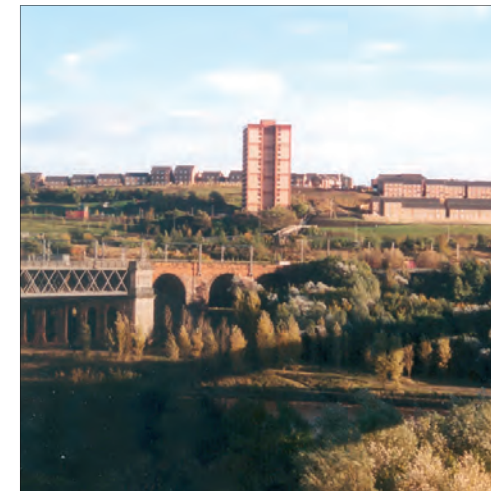
**22 Tyne Bridge Tower, Gateshead (1972)**

The Tyne Bridge Tower is a prominent landmark building at the southern bridgehead of the Tyne Bridge which unfortunately overshadows the historic landmark building of St Mary's Church, Gateshead (No. 14) and therefore detracts from the Gorge landscape.



**23 Tower Blocks on Mulgrave Terrace (early 1970s)**

Although the tower blocks on Mulgrave Terrace are not visible from the floor of the Gorge, they have been identified as landmarks because of their visual prominence within the Gorge's immediate setting. This cluster of tall buildings indicates the location of the centre of Gateshead and for this reason they are considered to contribute positively to the Gorge landscape.



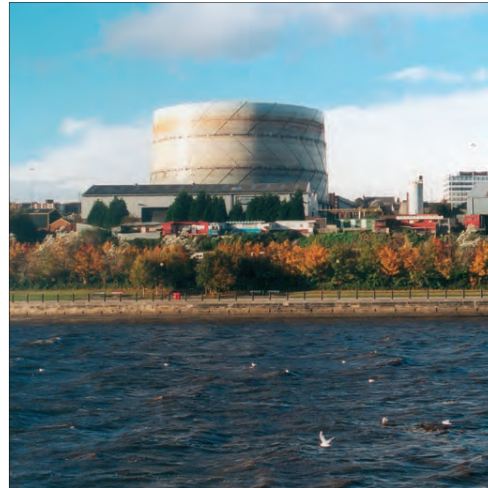
**24 St Cuthbert's Tower (early 1970s)**

Although St Cuthbert's Tower is not visible from the floor of the Gorge, it is identified as a landmark because it is an extremely prominent building in the Gorge's immediate setting. As an isolated tower block of indifferent architectural quality located in a generally low rise area on the western edge of Gateshead, it is an incongruous and incompatible element that detracts from the landscape of the Gorge.



**25 Central Square South Offices (2000)**

The Central Square South development (south of the old post office sorting offices) is a landmark as a result of its prominent position on the lip of the Gorge. The facade and roofline are clearly visible from both the road and rail bridges across the Tyne, particularly at night when the floodlit tented atria are highly visible. Although this development forms a positive focal point on the Gorge lip during the day, at night it detracts from its surroundings by drawing the eye away from more culturally and historically important landmarks.



**26 Gasholder, Newcastle (1860)**

The gasholder on the Gorge side, adjacent to Newcastle Arena, is a prominent landmark by virtue of its size, shape and location on the Gorge side. Despite its large footprint, its height does not overwhelm the scale of the surrounding topography and as a result it is not considered to detract from the landscape of the Gorge.



**27 Park Road Flats (date unknown)**

The Park Road Flats and library in Elswick are identified as a landmark as a result of their distinctive form in a prominent position at the western end of the Gorge where the river turns northwards. They form a recognisable cluster of buildings indicating the western end of the Gorge and the centre of Elswick.



**28 Cale Cross House (1972-8)**

Cale Cross House has been identified as a landmark for reason of its size and prominent position on the lip of the Gorge. However, it obscures views of historic landmarks (ref. strategic view from the public viewing gallery on the 5th floor of the Baltic) and for this reason is considered to have a negative impact on the Gorge landscape.





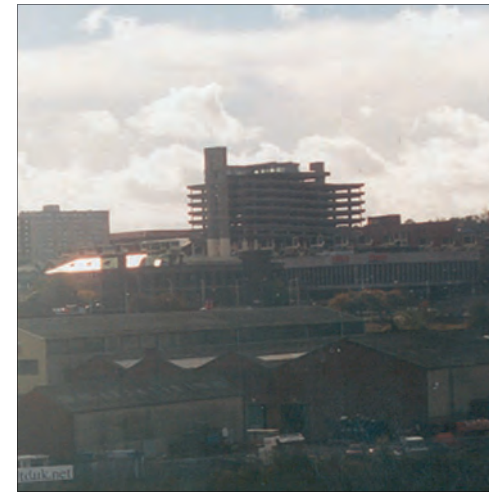
### 29 Derwent Tower (early 1970s)

Also known as the 'Dunston Rocket' this tall (29 storey) building is a prominent landmark whose towering form rises dischordantly out of the flat Team floodplain. As an isolated tower block located in a generally low rise area of the flat Team floodplain, it appears as an incompatible element of the floodplain landscape.



### 30 St Ann's Church (1794-8)

St Ann's Church is a fine sandstone church that has been recorded as a landmark as a result of its prominent position at the edge of the St Ann's Plateau, on the Gorge lip, and its elegant spire.



### 31 Gateshead Multi-storey Car Park (1967)

Gateshead's multi-storey car park is in a prominent position on the skyline of Gateshead. It is an instantly recognisable landmark whose angular concrete form is loved by a few and hated by many. Despite its association with the film 'Get Carter', it remains a jarring feature of Gateshead's skyline.





## TYPES OF VIEWING EXPERIENCE

The structure of the landscape, which in this case is particularly influenced by topography and townscape morphology, conditions our viewing experience within that landscape. This in turn affects the way we perceive our surroundings and sense of place.

For example, the rolling topography and the low density of built form to the south of the Gorge (Gateshead side) means that there are opportunities for glimpses into the Gorge before arrival at the Gorge edge, while the plateau topography and tighter urban grain to the north of the Gorge (Newcastle side) means views are obscured by buildings until the last minute, providing a sense of excitement and anticipation on arrival at the Gorge lip.

There are some very distinctive viewing experiences in and around the Tyne Gorge which we have classified into four types:

- Panoramic Views;
- Contained/Broad Prospect Views;
- Surprise Views;
- Unfolding Views;
- Terminated Vista.

Examples of each type of view are given in *Figures 4.2*.

### Panoramic Views

These are long distance views, usually from a high point where the foreground, middle ground and background are all important, for example views from the high

level bridges. The middleground and skyline are often the most important aspects of these views. Threats to these views tend to be in the form of new tall or bulky buildings that may interrupt the rhythm of the skyline, or new development that alters the scale and grain of the middleground. Examples include:

- view from St Mary's Church, Gateshead;
- view from the 5th Floor of the Baltic;
- view from Windmill Hills Town Park, Gateshead;
- view from the Old Redheugh Bridgehead;
- view from Gateshead's multi-storey car park;
- view from St Lawrence's Road towards the Baltic;
- view over the Gorge and its two settlements from St Michael's Church, Byker;
- approach to the Redheugh Bridge from the south;
- crossing the Tyne bridges (New Redheugh Bridge, King Edward Railway Bridge, Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge, High Level Bridge, Swing Bridge, Tyne Bridge, Gateshead Millennium Bridge).

### Contained/Broad Prospect Views

These are broad views that either have a clearly defined edge (e.g. along a street) or a changing edge condition to a recognisable urban element (e.g. along a river). The foreground and middleground tend to be most important in these views. Threats to these views tend to be in the form of development that may obscure parts of the view, or loss of structures that frame the view. Examples

include:

- view towards the Tyne Bridge from Baltic Square;
- view towards central Newcastle and the High Level Bridge from Pipewellgate Car Park;
- view from the Tyne and Wear Footpath back along the river to the east;
- view from Hadrian's Way east towards the Tyne bridges;
- view of the Millennium and Tyne Bridges from Mariner's Wharf;
- view up river from Ouseburn Watersports Centre;
- approach to the High Level Bridge from both the north and south;
- approach to the Tyne Bridge from the north and south.

### Surprise Views

Surprise views are views that suddenly open out over a short distance, such as views from the high level bridges that cross the Gorge or views from underneath railway arches. These views are typically blocked until the last minute by buildings either side of the bridgehead or by the railway embankments. When the views open out they are often dramatic. The quality and character of the foreground is a crucial element of the view, although middle ground and background are also important to the experience. Threats to these views come from loss of building density that currently creates the surprise element of the view, or built development that would

obscure the dramatic topography of the Gorge. Examples include:

- breaking out from the Gorge sides and across the Gorge on the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge (on the Metro);
- reaching the Gorge lip on the King Edward Railway Bridge;
- reaching the Gorge lip on the High Level Bridge;
- reaching the Gorge lip on the Tyne Bridge;
- emerging from the turret stairs of the Castle Keep.

### Unfolding Views

Unfolding views are views that unfold as one moves through space. This viewing experience is typically found along routes that descend the sides of the Gorge, such as the narrow roads or by steep steps. The foreground, middle ground and background are all equally important in these views and threats to this viewing experience may arise from built development that alters the direction of views or blocks views into the Gorge. Examples include:

- unfolding views down Bottle Bank/Bridge Street;
- approach to the Swing Bridge from both the north and the south;
- approach to the Gorge down Mill Road;
- approach to the Gorge down City Road;
- approach to the Gorge down Forth Banks;

- approach to the Gorge down The Side;
- unfolding views down the many narrow stairways that descend the Gorge sides e.g. Castle Stairs.

### **Terminated Vista**

These views are typically fairly long, enclosed views towards a landmark building or feature and are typically along streets. The quality and character of the street facades and the terminating landmark are crucial elements of these views. Threats to these views come from alterations to street facades that would interrupt the frame of the view or intermediate elements that block views of the terminating landmark. Examples include:

- view from Newcastle Quayside up King Street to All Saints Church.



Panorama from Tyne Bridge looking west



A 'Broad Prospect' view along the River Tyne

**Figure 4.2**  
**Types of Viewing Experience**  
**around the Gorge**







A 'Surprise View' of the Gorge opens up on approaching the High Level Bridge from the north



Unfolding views on descending the Gorge slopes along Redhough Bridge Road



Terminated Vista up King Street to All Saints Church

**Figure 4.2**  
**Types of Viewing Experience**  
**around the Gorge**





## STRATEGIC VIEWS

The issue of tall buildings and their impact on views is a hot topic at the moment. Proposals for tall buildings are coming forward in greater numbers now than at any time since the 1960s<sup>7</sup>. This is particularly true in successful regeneration of areas such as the Tyne Gorge. In planning for new development (particularly tall buildings) and landscape change (for example new tree planting) it is crucial to know the location and nature of important viewcones so that they may be protected or enhanced in the future.

Such views have been equated in this study with the 'quintessential' views of the landscape of the Gorge, and were selected through discussions with the Local Authorities and our own fieldwork. For each 'quintessential' view we have identified:

- the type of view;
- composition of the view (including important landmarks);
- the value of the view in terms of aesthetic, cultural and historic values;
- the compositional quality of the view;
- perception/experience of the view; and
- key issues/threats to the view.

7 English Heritage, CABA (June 2001) Guidance on Tall Buildings: Consultation Paper

## **St Mary's Church, Gateshead**

### *View Type and Composition*

Panoramic - a wide view looking across the Gorge towards Newcastle Quayside. The principal focus of the view from here is the composition of the Tyne Bridge and Newcastle Quayside with All Saints Church behind. The dramatic viewing angle of the Tyne Bridge, the regular quayside buildings in Newcastle, glimpses of the Castle Keep and the Millennium Bridge and the prominent landmark of All Saints Church on the lip of the Gorge make this a quintessential view.

### *Landmarks*

The Tyne Bridge and All Saints Church are the major landmarks in this view, with the Castle Keep and the Millennium Bridge as other Gorge landmarks being less prominent, but still visible.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued both for its aesthetic interest (dramatic Tyne Bridge, rhythmic quayside buildings and prominent church spire) and its historic significance - St Mary's Church is the oldest building on the Gateshead side of the river. This view has been used on advertisement posters for Newcastle

### *Quality*

The quality of the view is determined by its character and condition. In this case the view has a strong character and elements are in good condition. The quality of the view may therefore be described as high.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is a dramatic view of the Tyne Bridge that gives the overall view a pleasing composition.

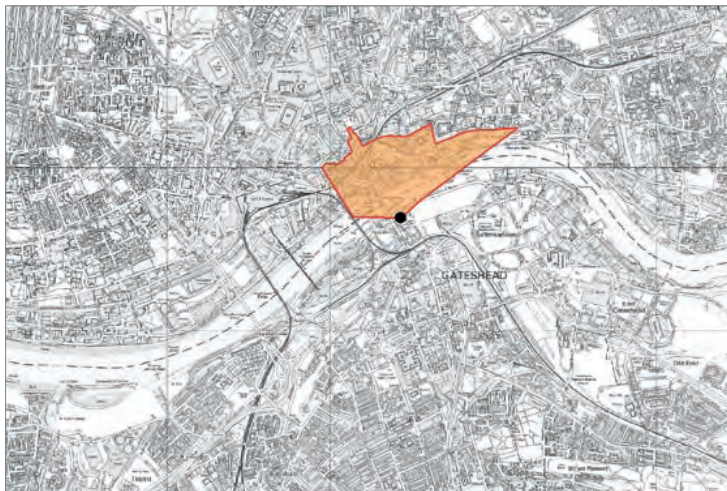
### *Key Issues/Threats*

Key threats to this view could arise from built development on the Gateshead quayside that would block the view of Newcastle, or, alternatively, the introduction of tall buildings on the northern side of the Gorge (in Newcastle) which could affect the rhythm of the skyline.





A panoramic view looking across the Gorge to Newcastle Quayside



Viewcone

**St Mary's Church, Gateshead**

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## Baltic Square

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view from the Baltic entrance/exit looking towards the Tyne Bridge and the historic core of Newcastle. This is a special view because it encompasses a unique composition of the new Millennium Bridge, The Sage Gateshead, the Tyne Bridge and the High Level Bridge with the historic core of Newcastle as a backdrop. The distinctive skyline of Newcastle defines the edge of the Gorge in this view.

### *Landmarks*

The new Millennium Bridge, The Sage Gateshead, the Tyne Bridge, the High Level Bridge, the Castle Keep and All Saint's Church spire are important landmarks in this view.

### *Value*

This view is a new public viewpoint within the Gorge and is already highly valued for its aesthetic interest (including the recently constructed Gateshead Millennium Bridge) as well as its historic significance (a unique view of the historic core of Newcastle and the Tyne and High Level Bridges). The cultural significance of the foreground of the view (i.e. the visible regeneration of Gateshead Quays) is also likely to be highly valued by the many people who visit Baltic Square.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is in flux as the Gateshead Quays are undergoing a process of regeneration and building works are in progress. The middle ground and background to the view are considered to be of high quality as a result of their strong character, high architectural quality and good condition.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is a pleasing view that gives a real sense of the structure and scale of the Gorge and its iconic bridges that span the river.

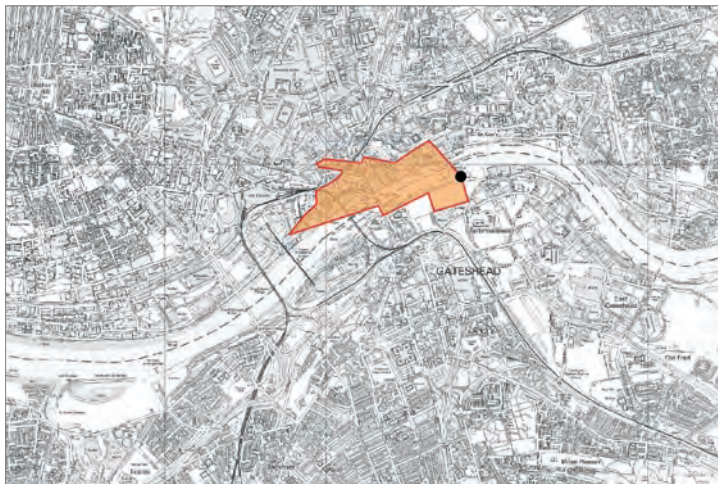
### *Key Issues/Threats*

Key threats to this view could arise as a result of inappropriate development along the Gateshead Quayside that could block views to landmarks such as the Tyne Bridge. Threats to the backdrop of the view could arise as a result of tall or bulky buildings on Newcastle's skyline that would overshadow existing historic landmarks (e.g. Castle Keep and All Saint's Church).





A broad prospect view across Baltic Square to the Tyne Bridge



Viewcone

**Baltic Square**

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## 5th Floor of the Baltic

### *View Type and Composition*

A panoramic view from the public viewing platform on the 5th floor of the Baltic looking north-west along the Gorge. This is currently the only elevated public viewpoint along the quayside and it therefore offers a unique perspective on the Gorge. It provides a dramatic view of the Millennium and Tyne Bridges which span the Gorge and act as the central focus of this composition. Newcastle's quayside and skyline provide an important backdrop to the view.

### *Landmarks*

The new Millennium Bridge, The Sage Gateshead, the Tyne Bridge, the High Level Bridge, the Swing Bridge, the Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge, Turnbull's Warehouse, the Castle Keep, St Mary's Cathedral Spire, St Andrew's Church Tower and All Saint's Church Spire all form important landmarks in this view.

### *Value*

As the only elevated public viewpoint within the Gorge, it appears to be highly valued and well visited, particularly as a result of its location within the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. The cultural significance of this view is important - this view reflects the new cultural quarter of Gateshead/Newcastle.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is in flux as the Gateshead Quays are undergoing a process of regeneration and building works are in progress. The middle ground and background to the view are considered to be of high quality as a result of their strong character, high architectural quality and good condition.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is a unique and awe-inspiring view of the Gorge. It gives a real sense of the structure and scale of the Gorge and is greatly enhanced by the presence of the iconic bridges that span the river.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

There are few threats to sight lines owing to the elevated location of this viewpoint. However, threats to the middleground or backdrop of the view could arise as a result of tall or bulky buildings within Newcastle or Gateshead that would compete with the existing landmarks listed above.





A panoramic view from the public viewing platform on the 5th floor of the Baltic



Viewcone

### 5th Floor of the Baltic

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## **Bottle Bank/Bridge Street, Gateshead**

### *View Type and Composition*

A series of unfolding views experienced on descending Bridge Street culminating in a framed view at the junction of Bottle Bank/Bridge Street. The view is strongly defined by the High Level Bridge to the west and by the Tyne Bridge to the east.

### *Landmarks*

The Tyne Bridge, the High Level Bridge, the Swing Bridge, the Castle Keep and St Nicholas Cathedral Spire all form important landmarks in this view.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued because of its relationship to the historic core of Newcastle on a well-travelled historic route between the two settlements. This viewpoint provides a dramatic view of the Gorge - a view with historic and cultural value which is closely associated with the famous painting by J.W Carmichael.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is poor as a result of the traffic dominated environment. However, the middle ground and background of the view are of high quality as a result of their strong character, architectural quality and good condition.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is a dramatic view that opens up on descending the steep Gorge side down Bottle Bank from central Gateshead. It conveys a sense of excitement on arriving in the Gorge and approaching Newcastle.

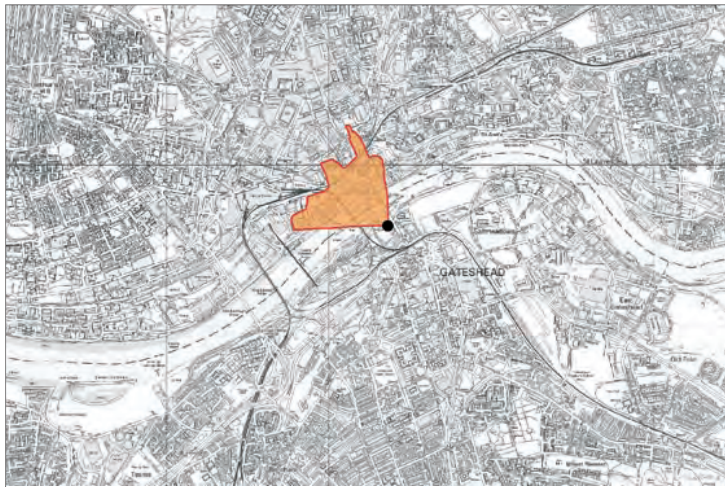
### *Key Issues/Threats*

Sight lines to key landmarks in the view could be threatened by new development in this historic waterside area of Gateshead. Equally the backdrop/skyline of the view could be adversely affected by new built development on Newcastle's skyline. Other key issues include the lack of townscape definition in the foreground and an erosion of a sense of enclosure due to recent demolitions on Bottle Bank that allows views to 'leak' out sideways.





A framed view of Newcastle from the bottom of Bottle Bank/Bridge Street



Viewcone

**Bottle Bank/Bridge Street,  
Gateshead**

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## **Windmill Hills Town Park, Gateshead**

### *View Type and Composition*

A panoramic view from Windmill Hills Town Park looking into the Gorge and across the city of Newcastle. This view encompasses a large portion of the Gorge, from the distant hills around Whickham and Blaydon to the Tyne Bridge.

### *Landmarks*

The New Redheugh Bridge, King Edward Railway Bridge, Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge, High Level Bridge and Tyne Bridge are all important landmarks in this view. Other important landmarks include Turnbull's Warehouse, St Nicholas' Cathedral Spire, the Castle Keep and All Saint's Church Spire.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for its extensive panoramic views of Newcastle and the bridges across the Tyne. This view is packed with visual interest, encompassing old and new elements, including long distance views to the surrounding hills.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is high - comprising a newly created park for Gateshead. However, there are some unsympathetic buildings in scale and form in the middle ground, but generally the skyline has a strong character, and the condition of elements is good thereby providing a high quality viewing experience.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is a breathtaking view of a large section of the Gorge and the city of Newcastle. It inspires a sense of awe as a result of its wide panorama and elevation above the Gorge.

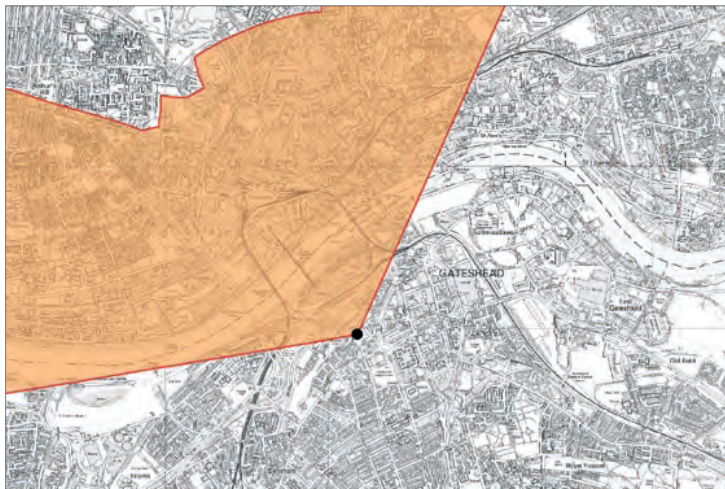
### *Key Issues/Threats*

Sight lines to key landmarks of the view could be threatened by tall development in the area of the Greenesfield Railway Works or on the slopes of Windmill Hills. The backdrop of the view could be adversely affected by new built development on Newcastle's skyline.





A panoramic view of the Gorge from Windmill Hills Town Park



Viewcone

**Windmill Hills Town Park,  
Gateshead**

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## Pipewellgate Car Park, Gateshead

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view both up and down the Tyne River from the Pipewellgate Car Park. This view encompasses the New Redheugh Bridge in the west and the High Level Bridge to the east. The middle ground of the view is the most dominant part of the composition comprising the Copthorne Hotel and the offices on South Street on the northern bank of the Tyne. Most of the visual interest is on the eastern side of the view.

### *Landmarks*

The New Redheugh Bridge, King Edward Railway Bridge, Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge and High Level Bridge are all important landmarks in this view. Other important landmarks include Turnbull's Warehouse, Central Square South Offices, St Nicholas' Cathedral Spire and the Castle Keep.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for its impressive view of the bridges and of central Newcastle on the eastern side of the view. However, this is a little used car park and the viewpoint is not frequented by many people.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is moderate. Although the condition of individual elements on the river frontage is fair, the foreground does not have a strong character. Similarly the quality of the middle ground is not high owing to the bulky nature of the Riverside buildings, for example the Copthorne Hotel, that block views of the finer buildings behind. Despite this the skyline has a strong character and the condition of elements is generally good thereby providing a moderate quality viewing experience overall.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is an impressive view up and down the Gorge, although most of the visual interest is on the eastern side of the view.

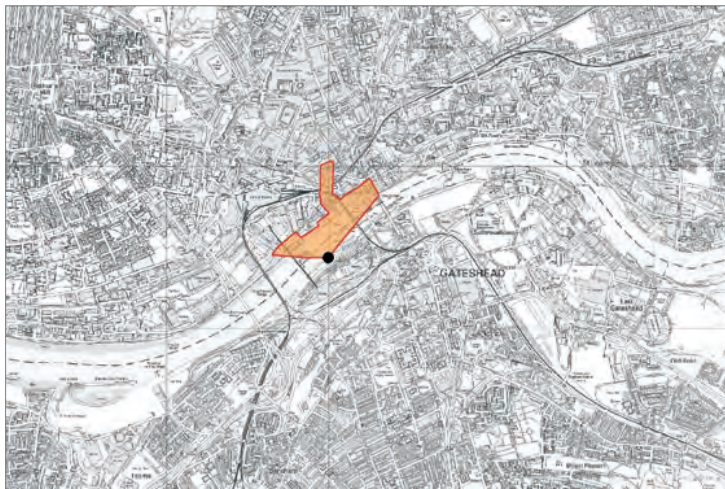
### *Key Issues/Threats*

Threats to this view could arise from new built development along the waterfront blocking views to key landmarks, particularly in the east of the view (the High Level Bridge, Turnbull's Warehouse, St Nicholas' Cathedral Spire and the Castle Keep). The middle ground of the view focuses on the northern Gorge slopes - any new built development in this location that does not reflect the topography of the Gorge sides would threaten the character of the middle ground. The backdrop/skyline of the view could be affected by new built development on Newcastle's skyline.





A broad prospect view from Pipewell Gate Car



Viewcone

**Pipewell Gate Car Park,  
Gateshead**

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## **Tyne and Wear Footpath, West of Redheugh Bridge**

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view looking east along the Tyne. This view encompasses all of the bridges (except the Gateshead Millennium Bridge) in line. The whole view is framed by the Gorge slopes on either side of the Tyne.

### *Landmarks*

The New Redheugh Bridge, King Edward Railway Bridge, Queen Elizabeth II Metro Bridge, High Level Bridge, Swing Bridge and Tyne Bridge are all important landmarks in this view down the Tyne.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for its impressive view of the bridges in line. It illustrates the impressive feat of engineering involved in bridging the Tyne Gorge. However, it would appear that this footpath is infrequently used at present.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is low - the riverside has a run-down appearance and the old waggon way along which the footpath runs has fallen into disrepair. The quality of the middle ground and background is high with a strong character and good condition.

### *Perception/Experience*

This viewpoint is remote from the main centre of activity and feels somewhat uncomfortable and even threatening. Despite this, it provides a unique and impressive view of the Tyne bridges.

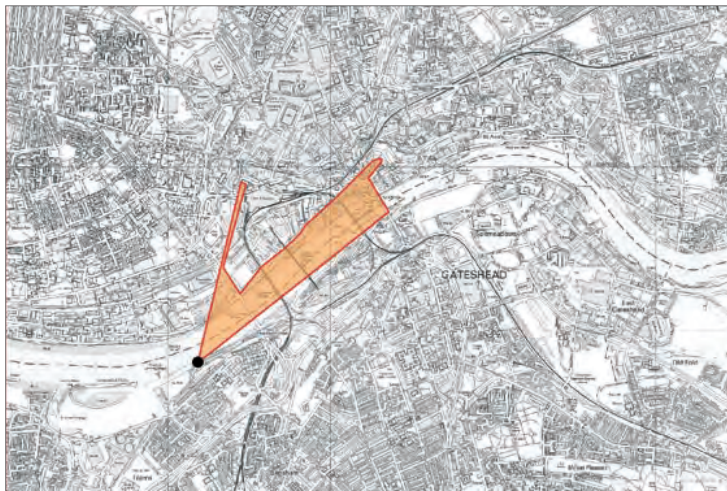
### *Key Issues/Threats*

Threats to this view could arise from new built development along the waterfront blocking views to the bridges. The middle ground of the view focuses on the Gorge slopes that frame the view and provide a wooded setting to the bridges. Any new built development that obscures the topography of the Gorge sides, or loss of woodland, could threaten the character of the middle ground. The backdrop/skyline of the view could be adversely affected by new built development if it was to rise above the skyline provided by the bridges.





A broad prospect view along the Tyne showing all bridges in alignment



Viewcone

**Tyne and Wear Footpath,  
West of Redheugh Bridge**

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## **Old Redheugh Bridgehead, Gateshead**

### *View Type and Composition*

A panorama from the Gorge lip looking into the Gorge. This view presents a view of the Gorge spanned by the New Redheugh Bridge and King Edward Railway Bridge. The tip of the Tyne Bridge is also visible.

### *Landmarks*

The New Redheugh Bridge, King Edward Railway Bridge, and Tyne Bridge are all important landmarks in this view across the Tyne.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for its panorama, its elevated location at the lip of the Gorge, and its impressive view of the Redheugh and King Edward Bridges.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is high - the Riverside Sculpture Park on the Gorge slopes has a strong character and is actively managed. The quality of the middle ground is moderate - the northern banks of the Tyne are dominated by vegetation (including amenity planting associated with Newcastle Business Park) and industrial buildings that do not contribute a strong character to the view, and the condition of elements in the middle ground is variable. The background to the view is dominated by the skyline of Arthur's Hill that is prominent as a result of its tower blocks.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is an impressive panoramic view. However, it is not the best view of the bridges or of Newcastle.

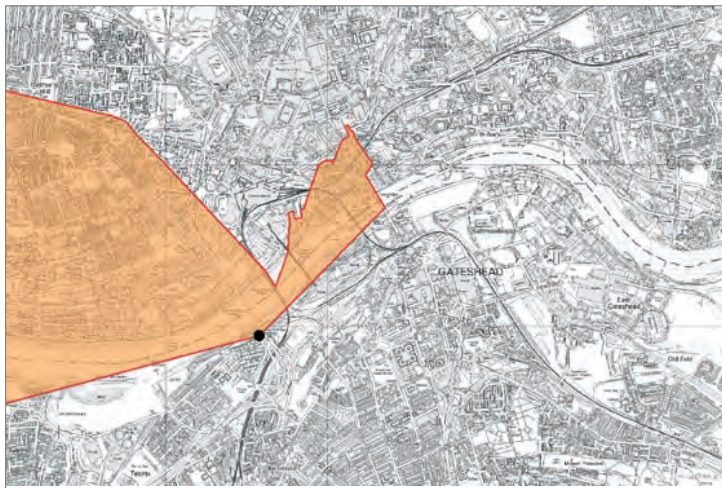
### *Key Issues/Threats*

There are not likely to be many threats to this view because the foreground is protected open space. The biggest threat could come from large or bulky new built development on the north slope to the Gorge that might diminish the sense of topography of the Gorge and affect the setting to the bridges.





A panoramic view from the top of the Gorge



Viewcone

**Old Redheugh Bridgehead,  
Gateshead**

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## Newcastle Quayside

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view from Newcastle Quayside, east of the Tyne Bridge, on the main route from central Newcastle to the Millennium Bridge. Although the main focus of this view is the Millennium Bridge and the Baltic, framed by the Gorge sides, the whole of the Gateshead Quays are visible. Byker hill forms a wooded backdrop to the view.

### *Landmarks*

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge and the Baltic are the main components of this view down the Tyne. However, the Sage Gateshead is also a major feature and the Church of St Michael's, Byker is visible on the skyline in the background.

### *Value*

This view is of significant value for the composition of the Millennium Bridge and the Baltic.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is high - the foreground (set by the Tyne and Newcastle Quayside) is in good condition and has a strong character. The middle ground of the view is also of high quality as a result of the strong character and high quality of architecture of the Millennium Bridge and the Baltic. The character of the background is animated by the spire of Byker's St Michael's Church and the wooded hills gives the backdrop a distinctive profile. Overall the quality the viewing experience from this viewpoint is high.

### *Perception/Experience*

This view of the Millennium Bridge and the Baltic is seen by many on the route from Newcastle to the Gateshead Quays, as well as those using Hadrian's Way pedestrian and cycle route. It is an impressive composition and one of the most photographed perspectives of the Millennium Bridge.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

There are not likely to be any threats to sightlines because the foreground of the view is open water. The main threat to the view could arise as a result of large or bulky new built development in the middle or back ground that could compete with the Baltic and Millennium Bridge landmarks.





Strategic view from Newcastle Quayside



Viewcone

## Newcastle Quayside

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## Hadrian's Way East of the Metro Bridge, Newcastle

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view from Hadrian's Way promenade looking east. This view presents a view of the High Level Bridge, Tyne Bridge, Swing Bridge and Millennium Bridge in line along the Gorge. The view is framed by the wooded side slope of Rabbit Banks on the Gateshead side and the Copthorne Hotel on the Newcastle side.

### *Landmarks*

The High Level Bridge, Swing Bridge, Tyne Bridge, Gateshead Millennium Bridge are the main components of this view down the Tyne. The Tyne Bridge Tower is the most prominent element on the Gateshead side of the river, with St Ann's Church clearly recognisable on the Newcastle skyline in the background of the view.

### *Value*

This view is of significant value for the composition of the four bridges in line.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is high - the Tyne, its riverside promenade and wooded banks are in good condition and have a strong character. The middle ground of the view is also of high quality as a result of its strong character, largely as a result of the distinctive bridges across the Gorge, and the good condition of individual elements. The character of the background is animated by the spire of St Ann's Church. Overall the quality the viewing experience from this viewpoint is high.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is an impressive view of the four most easterly bridges across the Tyne at the narrowest point of the Gorge. It is a pleasing composition in which the complementary forms of all four bridges are visible.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

There are not likely to be any threats to sightlines because the foreground of the view is open water. The main threat to the view could arise as a result of large or bulky new built development in the middle or back ground that could compete with the bridges as landmark elements of the view.



A broad prospect view down river to the Tyne Bridges



Viewcone

**Hadrian's Way East of the  
Metro Bridge, Newcastle**

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## **Mariner's Wharf, Newcastle**

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view from Newcastle Quayside looking west. This view presents the Gorge spanned by the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and Tyne Bridge behind. The new Sage Gateshead music centre and the Baltic Arts Centre are also major components of the view.

### *Landmarks*

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge, Tyne Bridge, the Baltic, and the Sage Gateshead are important landmarks in this view up the Tyne.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for the composition it provides of the Millennium and Tyne Bridges whose graceful arches complement each other. The curved façade of The Sage Gateshead further enriches the composition.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is high - the recently regenerated Newcastle Quayside is in good condition and has a strong character. The middle and background of the view also have a very strong character and are of high architectural quality. Overall the quality the viewing experience from this viewpoint is very high.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is an impressive view of some of the newest elements of the Gorge i.e. the restored Baltic Flour Mill silo, The Sage Gateshead (under construction) and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. It is both the novelty and the quality of this visual experience within the Tyne Gorge that no doubt attracts people to this viewpoint. It is a very pleasing view where all of the elements complement one other.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

There are not likely to be any threats to sightlines because the foreground of the view is open water. The only threat is likely to come from large or bulky new built development on the quaysides that could compete with the landmark elements of the view in terms of their size, shape and visual character.



A broad prospect view along the river from Mariner's Wharf



Viewcone

**Mariner's Wharf, Newcastle**

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## **Ouseburn Watersports Centre, Newcastle**

### *View Type and Composition*

A broad prospect view from the Ouseburn Watersports Centre on the north side of the river looking west along the Gorge. This view presents the Gorge spanned by the Gateshead Millennium Bridge with the Tyne Bridge behind. The view is framed on the left by the vegetated banks of the Gorge and on the right by the regular facades of St Ann's Wharf.

### *Landmarks*

The Baltic and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge are major components of the view. Other important landmarks include the Tyne Bridge, The Castle Keep and All Saint's Church Spire.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for the composition of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and the Baltic against the historic backdrop of Newcastle.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is high - the mouth of the Ouseburn with its fishing boats provides a foreground full of character and colour. The middle ground is dominated by the regular facades of St Ann's Wharf. This recently regenerated Newcastle Quayside is in good condition and has a strong character. The background of the view also has a very strong character and architectural quality is high. Overall the quality the viewing experience from this viewpoint is very high.

### *Perception/Experience*

This is an impressive view of some of the newest elements of the Gorge i.e. the restored Baltic Flour Mill silo and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. The gentle bend in the river further enhances the composition of the view, drawing the eye into the Gorge and encouraging further exploration.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

There are not likely to be any threats to sightlines because the foreground of the view is open water. The only threat comes from large or bulky new built development on the quaysides that could obscure the scale of the Gorge's topography, or large buildings on the skyline that could compete with the landmarks on Newcastle's distinctive skyline.





A broad prospect view down river from the Ouseburn Watersports Centre



Viewcone

**Ouseburn Watersports Centre,  
Newcastle**

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## **St Lawrence's Road, Ouseburn**

### *View Type and Composition*

A panoramic view from St Lawrence's Road looking west along the Gorge. This view presents the Gorge spanned by the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and Tyne Bridge behind. The Baltic is also an important component of the view.

### *Landmarks*

The Baltic and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge are major components of the view. Other important landmarks include the Tyne Bridge, the spires of St Nicholas' Cathedral, All Saint's Church and St Ann's Church. The Gateshead multi-storey car park is also a prominent element in the view.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for the composition of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, Tyne Bridge and the Baltic within the Gorge.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is moderate/low - the area is in a poor state of repair with many derelict sites around the mouth of the Ouseburn and on St Lawrence's Road. The middle ground is dominated by the regular facades of St Ann's Wharf as well as the focal landmarks structures of the Baltic, Millennium Bridge and Tyne Bridge - these present a high quality middle ground. The background is provided by the skyline of Newcastle that has a strong character and elements are in a good state of repair. The overall quality of the viewing experience is therefore moderate - high.

### *Perception/Experience*

This location provides an exciting view of some of the newest elements of the Gorge i.e. the restored Baltic Flour Mill silo and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. The gentle bend in the river further enhances the composition of the view, albeit that the currently derelict foreground detracts from the overall viewing experience.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

Threats to sightlines could occur as a result of inappropriate new built development on the eastern end of St Ann's Wharf. Threats to the middle ground could arise as a result of new built development that upsets the scale and rhythm of the development along St Ann's Wharf or around the Baltic. The background could be affected by tall buildings that would alter the distinctive skyline of Newcastle.





A panoramic view from St. Lawrence's Road



Viewcone

**St Lawrence's Road, Ouseburn**

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## **St Michael's Church, Byker**

### *View Type and Composition*

A panoramic view over Newcastle and the Tyne Gorge from the prominent hill at the eastern end of the Gorge. The composition of this view is dominated by the texture and pattern of middle ground elements, including the landmark structures of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and the Tyne Bridge. The background to the view is provided by the distant hills whose green, rolling forms provide contrast to the urban fabric of the middle ground.

### *Landmarks*

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge and Tyne Bridge are major components of the view - their arching forms stand out against the rectangular built environment either side of the Gorge. Other important landmarks include the Baltic, Central Square South Offices, Turnbull's warehouse, All Saint's Church Spire, St Nicholas Cathedral and Tom Collins House.

### *Value*

This view is highly valued for its composition of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge and Tyne Bridge whose graceful arches complement each other. It is of particular value because it is one of the few views along, rather than across, the Gorge.

### *Quality*

The quality of the foreground of the view is moderate - apart from the presence of derelict and boarded up

property around St Michael's Church, the condition of the environment is good and vegetation provides a leafy frame to the view. The middle ground is dominated by the urban fabric of Newcastle and Gateshead - the area has a strong character as a result of the many instantly recognisable landmarks, including the bridges that span the Gorge and the river itself. The backdrop to the view is provided by the rolling hills to the west of Gateshead. These have a strongly rural character and provide a high quality backdrop. Overall the quality of viewing experience is high.

### *Perception/Experience*

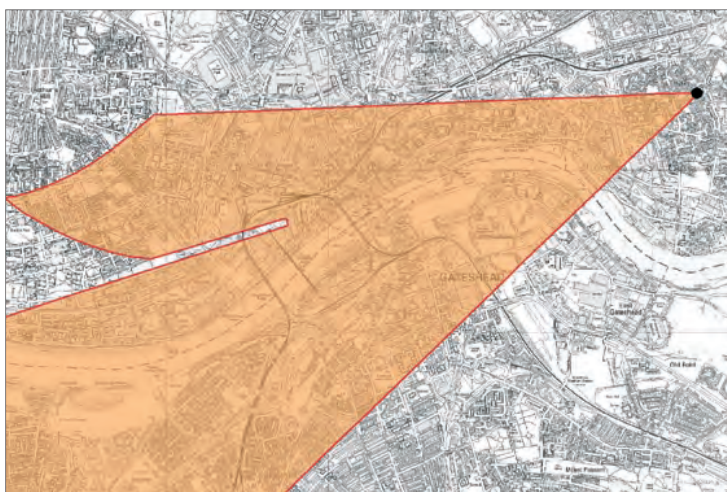
This is a breathtaking view of the Gorge, showing the bridges, particularly the new Gateshead Millennium Bridge, in their full glory. There are few other views of the Gorge that provide such an elevated viewpoint of the bridges from their side elevation.

### *Key Issues/Threats*

Threats to sightlines may occur as a result of redevelopment around the Church or in the foreground of the view. Threats to the middle ground could result from the addition of new elements that conflict with the height or elegant form of the bridges or alter the rhythm of the surrounding urban fabric. Threats to the background could occur as a result of large scale building on the hills. The most likely threat to this view is the blocking of sightlines as a result of development around St Michael's Church.



A panoramic view over the Gorge and Newcastle from St. Michael's Church, Byker



Viewcone

**St Michael's Church, Byker**

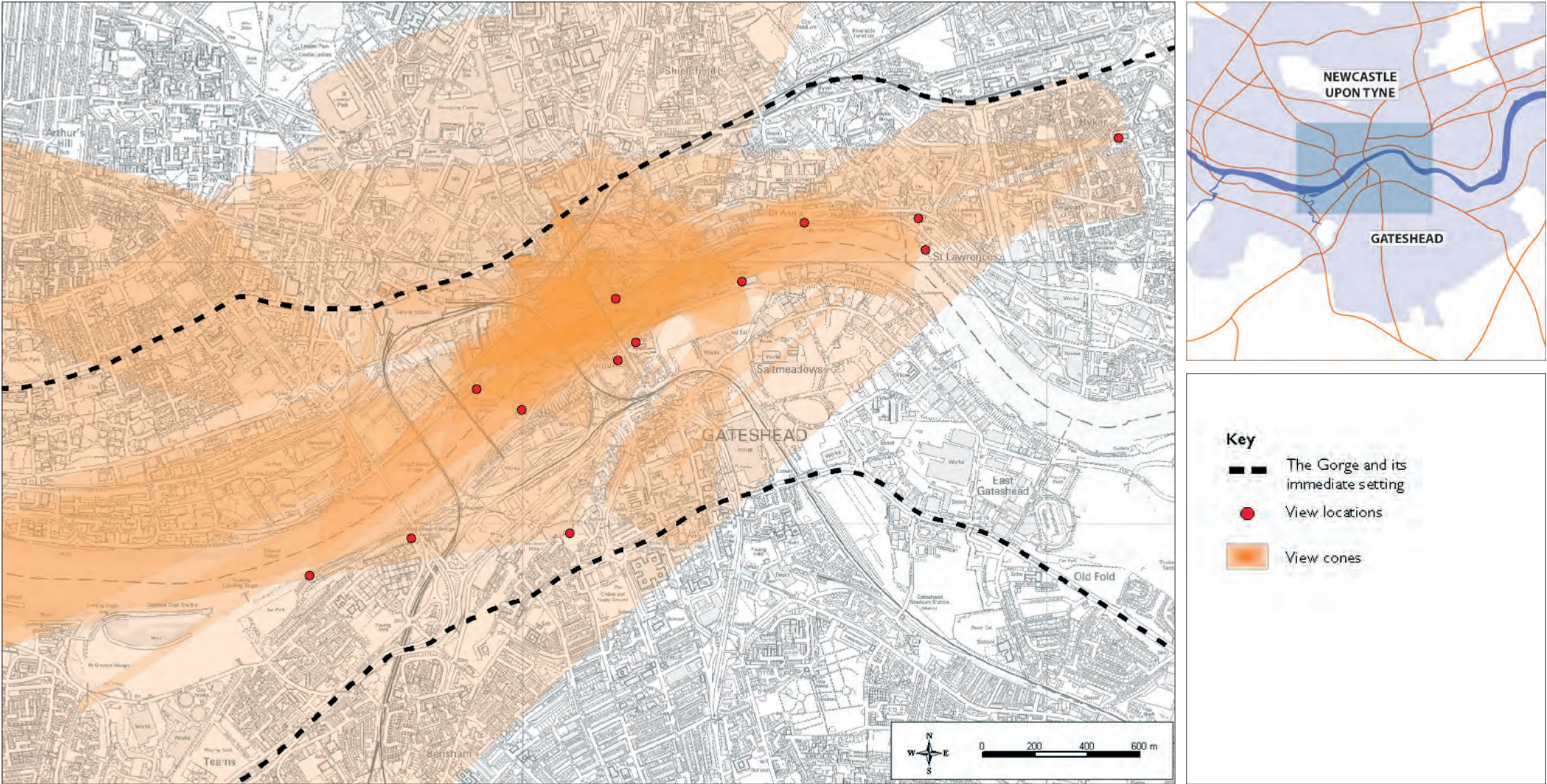
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## **AREAS OF VISUAL SENSITIVITY**

By combining the viewcones for each strategic or 'quintessential' view it is possible to indicate where viewcones overlap and therefore where the most visually sensitive areas within the Gorge are located. This is illustrated by the graphic in *Figure 4.3*.





**Figure 4.3**  
**Combined View Cones**

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## THE CHARACTER OF THE TYNE GORGE BETWEEN DUNSTON COAL STAITHES AND SPILLER'S MILL

### CHARACTER OF THE GORGE AND ITS IMMEDIATE SETTING

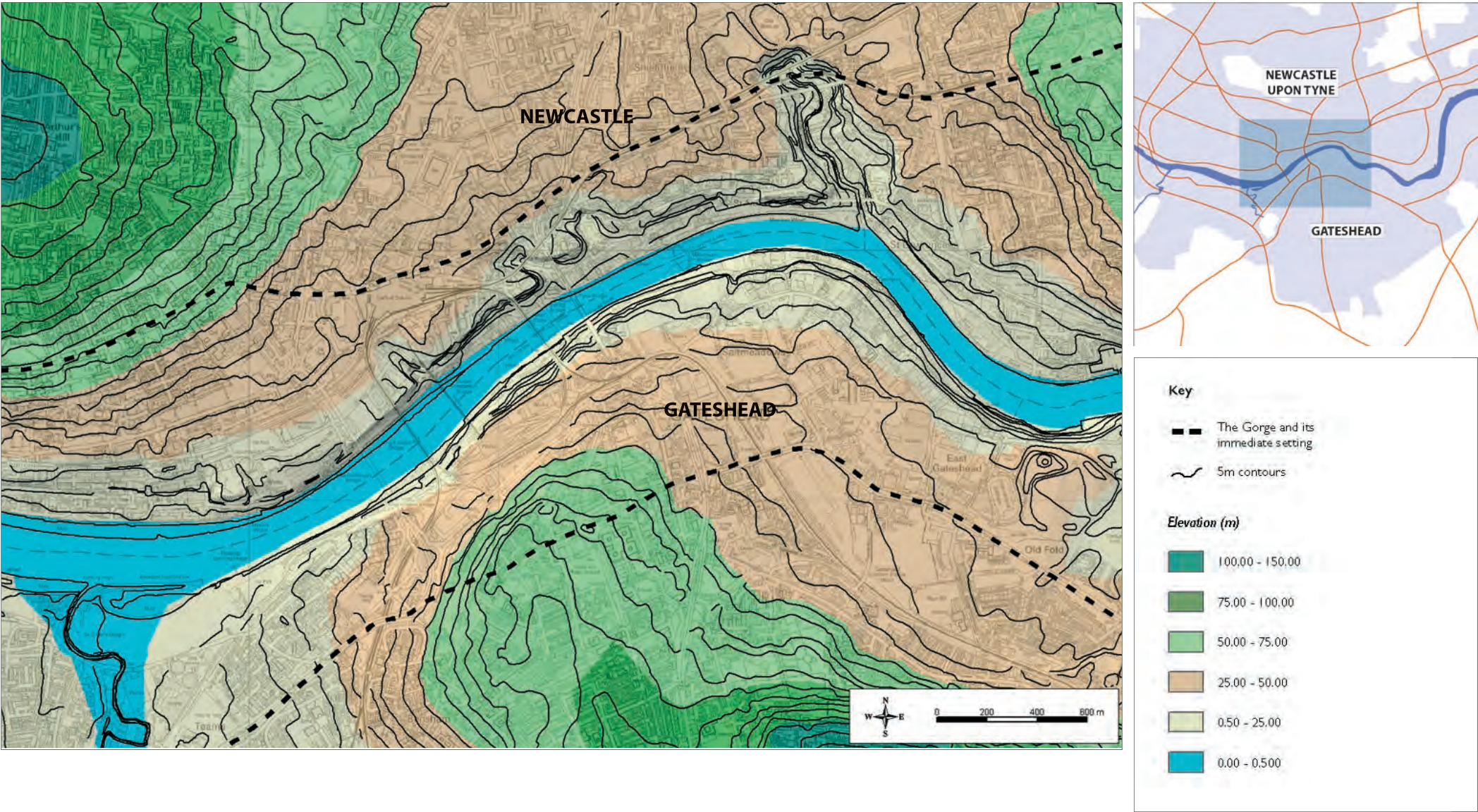
For the purposes of carrying out a more detailed assessment of the character of the Tyne Gorge it is necessary to establish a boundary to the setting of the Gorge. This may be defined as the river, Gorge slopes, Gorge lip and adjacent areas encompassing the main road and rail approaches up to the nearest convenient boundary feature on the ground. This broadly equates to the visual setting of the Gorge i.e. it encompasses all areas that are visible when standing at the bottom of the Gorge. The boundary of the Gorge and its immediate setting has been drawn to the nearest convenient feature on the ground and for the most part follows main roads.

The Gorge and its immediate setting has been divided into a number of discrete character areas based upon underlying physical characteristics (particularly topography - see Figure 5.1), urban morphology and land use. It is important to note that the boundaries of the character areas are indicative and in no way should they be seen as definitive. The boundaries have been mapped at 1:10,000. Areas of unique and distinctive character have been identified as follows:

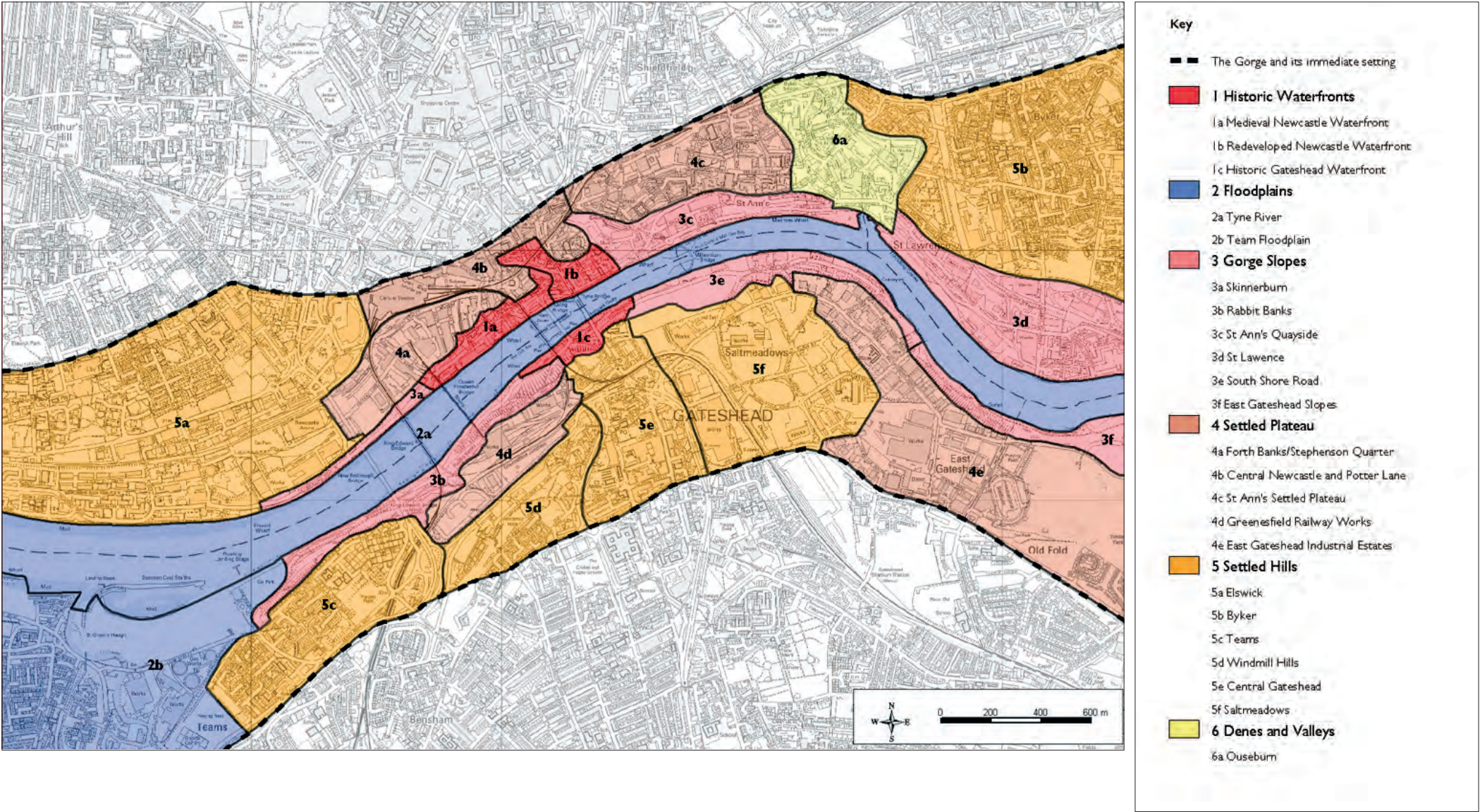
| Character Type         | Character Area                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Historic Waterfronts | 1a Medieval Newcastle Waterfront<br>1b Redeveloped Newcastle Waterfront<br>1c Historic Gateshead Waterfront                                                       |
| 2 Floodplains          | 2a Tyne River<br>2b Team Floodplain                                                                                                                               |
| 3 Gorge Slopes         | 3a Skinnerburn<br>3b Rabbit Banks<br>3c St Ann's Quayside<br>3d St Lawrence<br>3e South Shore Road<br>3f East Gateshead Wooded Slopes                             |
| 4 Settled Plateaux     | 4a Forth Banks/Stephenson Quarter<br>4b Central Newcastle<br>4c St Ann's Settled Plateau<br>4d Greenesfield Railway Works<br>4e East Gateshead Industrial Estates |
| 5 Settled Hills        | 5a Elswick<br>5b Byker<br>5c Teams<br>5d Windmill Hills<br>5e Central Gateshead<br>5f Saltmeadows                                                                 |
| 6 Denes and Valleys    | 6a Ouseburn                                                                                                                                                       |

The location of these areas is presented in *Figure 5.2*.









**Figure 5.2**  
**Character Areas within the Gorge and its Immediate Setting**

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Over the following pages we record the location and extent of each character area and its relationship to the landscape types identified over the wider study area (see *Figure 2.8*). We then provide a brief review of the history of the area before describing the characteristics that make each area distinctive. This information is recorded for two purposes. Firstly it provides a description of the unique characteristics that make each place distinct or 'special', and secondly it establishes a baseline of current conditions against which future change may be monitored.

The 'visual environment' section comprises our assessment of the main visual characteristics of each area, including any important visual sequences, and identifies what role the area plays in the foreground, middle ground or background of the 'Strategic Views' identified in Chapter 3 of this report.

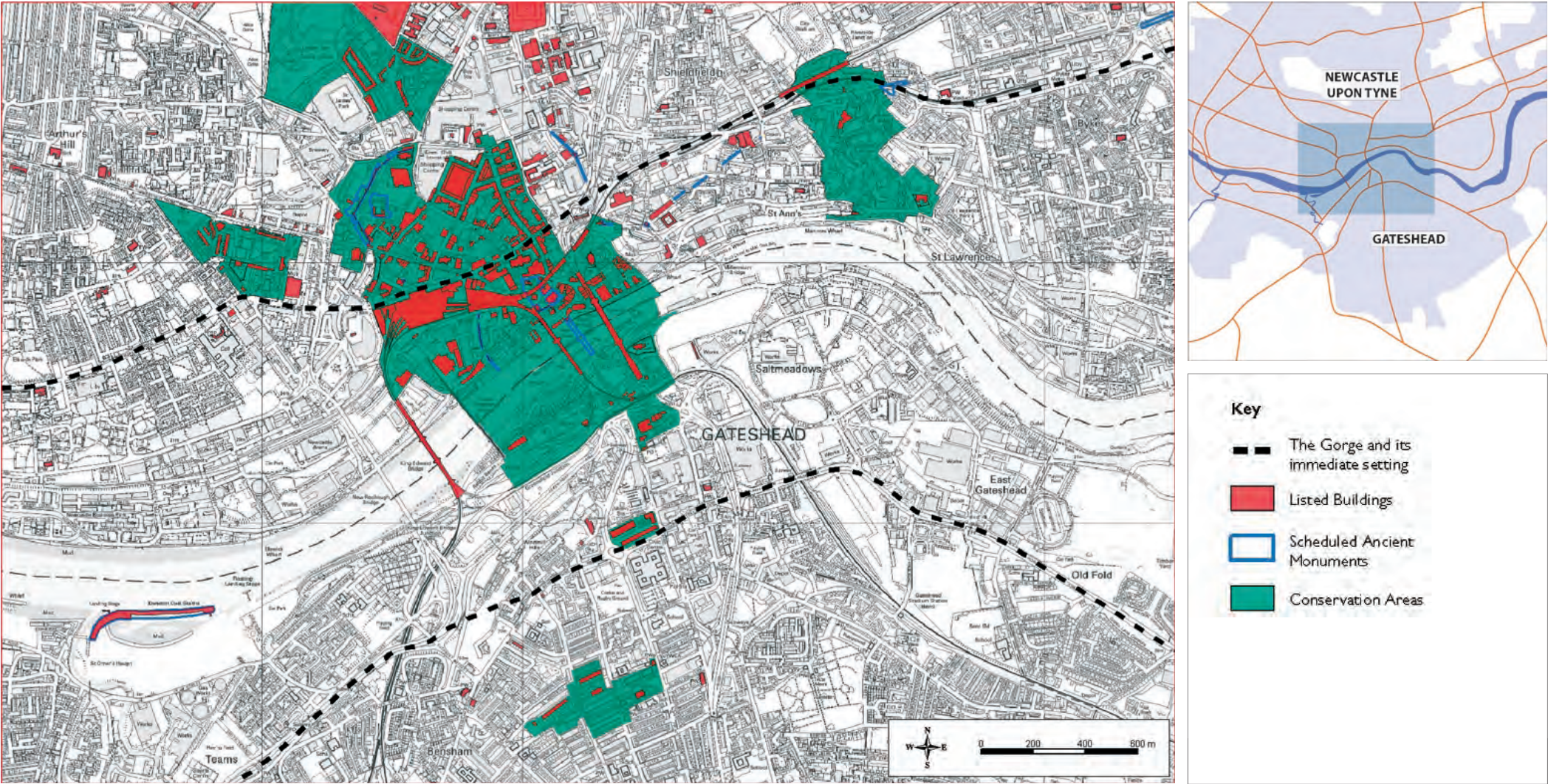
Our impressions of the 'quality' of each area are then recorded (from fieldwork). This is primarily a matter of the state of repair of elements that make up the character area and its integrity/intactness. Understanding quality can lead to strategy formulation. The 'value' of each area refers to the relative value or importance attached to the area for reasons of visual amenity, historic connections, architectural quality or strength of character. The historical and architectural value of an area is also reflected in Conservation Area designations and Listed Buildings. These designations are recorded on *Figure 5.3*.

Character appraisal helps us to understand a location's sensitivity to development and change. Sensitivity is based on an understanding of the ability of an area to accept change without adverse consequences on character and can indicate the capacity an area has for change. Sensitivity is therefore dependent upon the type of change being considered. In this section we present our assessment of the capacity of each area to accept change, focussing on built development, including tall buildings

The section on 'Threats to Character' aims to identify potential changes that could affect the special character of the area.

The final section of each character area evaluation - titled 'principles for accommodating new built development' - aims to provide a robust means of guiding development such that high quality historic character is preserved, positive character and local distinctiveness is reinforced, and less positive aspects of character are addressed through restoration and enhancement strategies. For each character area we provide guidance on the capacity of the area to absorb change and how change may best be accommodated.





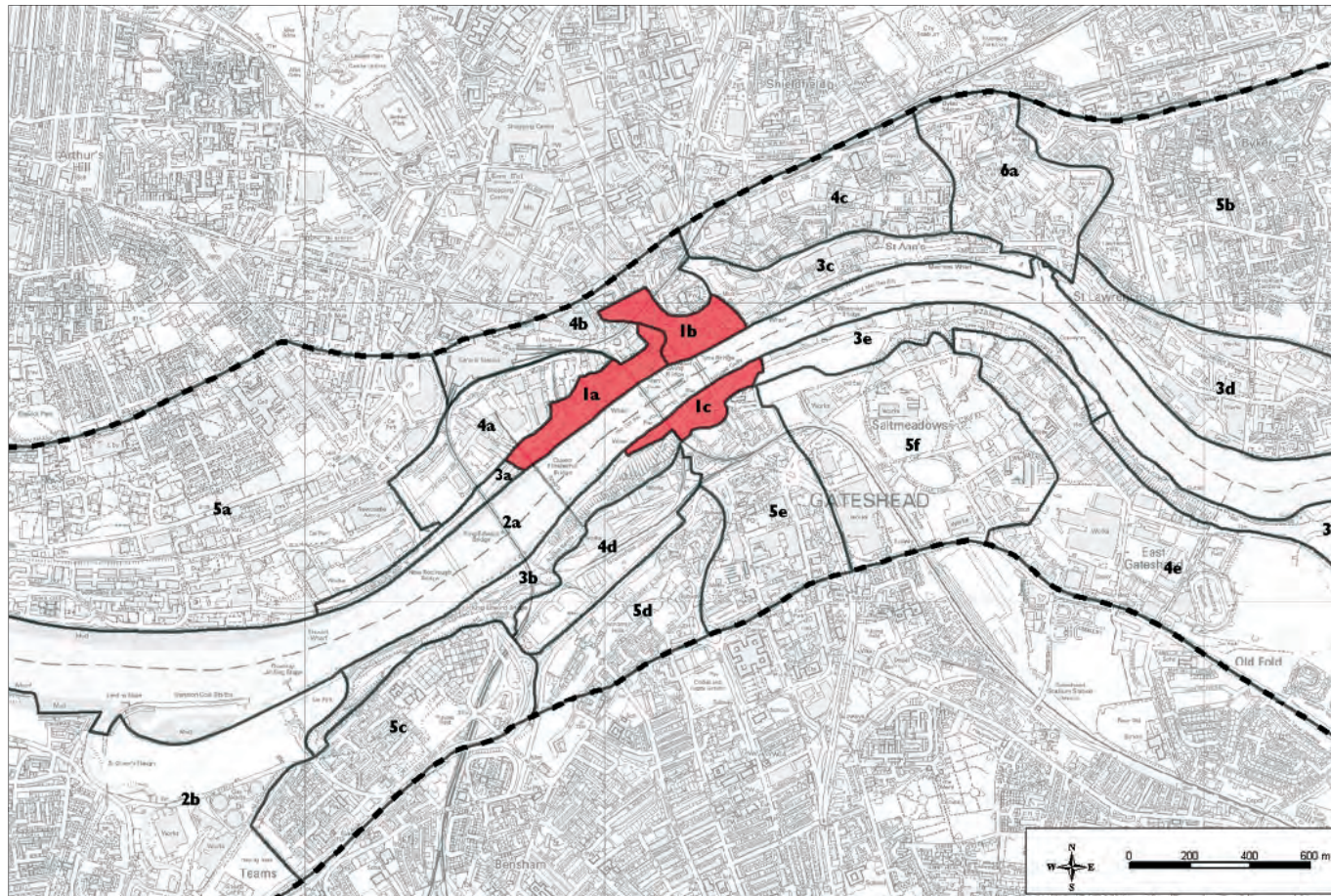
**Figure 5.3**  
**SAMs, Listed Buildings**  
**and Conservation Areas**

Source: Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council  
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## TYPE 1: HISTORIC WATERFRONTS

This character type is defined by the historic cores of the waterside settlements at the bridgeheads of the Swing Bridge (also the site of the Georgian Bridge, Mediaeval Bridge and Roman bridging point of the Gorge). It represents the oldest parts of the settlements along the Tyne Gorge. There are three distinct character areas within this type:

- Medieval Newcastle Waterfront
- Redeveloped Newcastle Waterfront
- Historic Gateshead Waterfront

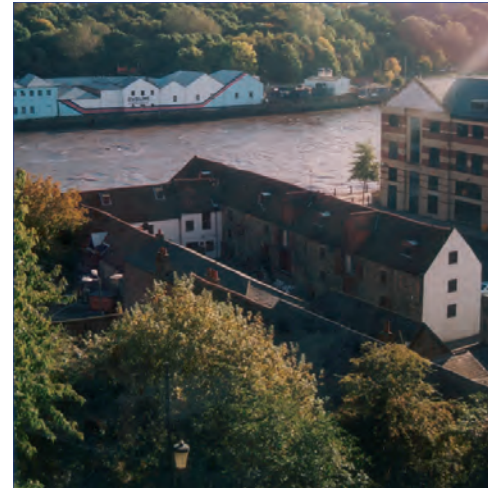




Buildings are typically 3-5 stories in height. The High Level Bridge adds a sense of drama



Coloured render on buildings along Sandhill enlivens the street scene



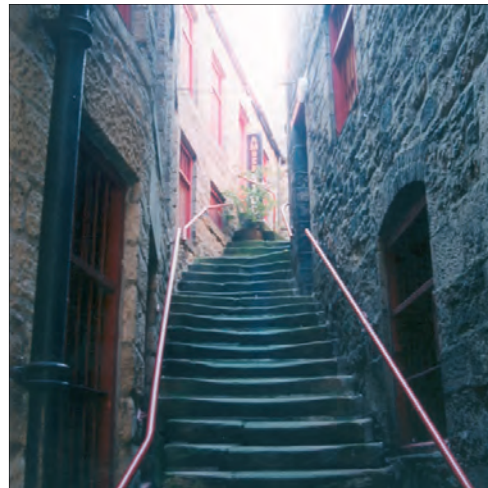
The Quayside Bar in the foreground is one of the oldest timber framed buildings in Newcastle



Paving materials are distinctive. Unfolding views are characteristic of the Gorge side



Sandstone detailing on brick warehouses



Narrow stairs provide access between the top and bottom of the Gorge



Derelict warehouses along Hanover Street

## 1A MEDIEVAL NEWCASTLE WATERFRONT

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies a small area on the north banks of the Tyne between Forth Banks (the former course of the Skinner Burn) and The Side (the former course of the Lort Burn). Its northern boundary is a topographical line following the lip of the Gorge. This area straddles the *Denes and Valleys* and *Floodplains* landscape types (as identified in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*).

### Historic Evolution

The development of this historic quayside area is related to the first crossing of the Tyne, the Pons Aelius. The subsequent replacement of this bridge by the Medieval Bridge (1248), its replacement Stone Bridge of 1781 and the present day Swing Bridge (1866-1876) has ensured that the quayside has remained accessible. It encompasses the area between the early 2nd Century AD Roman fort (on the site of the later Castle) and the river. The flat strip of land which forms the north bank of the River Tyne on the Newcastle side is artificial, having been created through gradual, piecemeal reclamation. Reclamation took place in a series of waterfront advances, held in place by revetment walls. In some places, quays were constructed which projected out into the river, at more or less right angles to the revetments. The major period of reclamation was between the 13th and 15th centuries, but it possibly began in the 12th century.

The majority of this area was enclosed within the 14th century Town Wall, much of which, with encumbering structures now removed, is now visible descending the Gorge sides from Forth Bank. The Side became the road access up the Gorge side between the river and the Castle,

following the course of the former Lort Burn. Elsewhere - where the Gorge side was steepest - there was (and remains) a series of stairs. In order to increase utilisation of the area the valley of the Lort Burn was progressively infilled to be completely culverted during the 18th century. Archaeological investigation has shown how the mouth of the stream - Sandhill - was systematically reclaimed. The street plan of the area has remained largely as it is depicted on John Speed's map of 1610, the principal rebuilding having taken place along the Close, the southern side of Sandhill, and the east row of the Side. By the mid eighteenth century the quayside was inhabited by merchants, hoastmen and brewers - the streets were full of taverns, ale-houses and coffee-houses. The arrival of the railway resulted in the bridging of the Tyne by the High Level Bridge (1846-1849). This bridge is now a dominant feature of the quayside. The surviving core of more ancient buildings encompassed by this character area is simply the remaining coherent group of structures relating to the medieval and later medieval development which were more widespread throughout the centre of the city but have subsequently been demolished.

### Archaeological Interest

The principal known archaeological interest in this area is the evidence deriving from the development of the town during the medieval and later medieval period. The potential for the survival of important information for these periods has already been confirmed by excavation at various points along the foot of the gorge on the Newcastle bank, most recently at the mouth of the Pandon Burn. The necessity to maximise the extent of land available for domestic and commercial occupation in areas adjacent to the river resulted in the reclamation of the slopes bordering the Tyne and its tributary streams. The build-up of material, which included ballast and all manner of waste and rubbish, has ensured the preservation of

successive periods of activity, including information on the processes of reclamation itself. To date, on the few areas which have become available for modern archaeological examination, archaeological deposits extend back only so far as the medieval period. However, it is more than likely that there was activity around the Roman bridgehead on the Newcastle bank during the Roman period. Earlier activity is also a possibility - this is considered in more detail in area 2A, *Tyne River*.

New development in this area therefore has to contend not only with the very variable ground conditions which obtain here, but also with the very real prospect that archaeological evaluation will reveal archaeological evidence which would require more extended examination. In addition to the likelihood of the preservation of a wide range of artefacts, waterlogged conditions also preserve organic materials such as wood and leather, as well as a wide range of palaeoecological evidence. This potential should be factored into redevelopment proposals in the knowledge that the information to be derived can further strengthen the unique identity and character of the city.

### **Distinctive Characteristics**

The steep Gorge side topography and the hidden tributaries of the Tyne have a large influence on the character of this area. The steep topography allows many opportunities for views over the Tyne and makes for an interesting skyline. The street pattern is simple with the main road running east-west along the base of the Gorge side. This road (The Close) is one of Newcastle's oldest streets and provides the main approach to the Low Level Swing Bridge, at the location of what is thought to be the original crossing of the Tyne. Also characteristic of this area is Hanover Street that gently ascends the Gorge side, traversing the contours at an angle. The Side marks the eastern boundary of the area, ascending the Gorge side

along the path of least resistance following the tributary valley of the culverted Lort Burn. The majority of buildings are located to the north of The Close/Sandhill where their densely packed facades face out towards the river. Larger, landmark buildings are located on the waterside, for example the 19th Century Fish Market and the more recent over-sized Copthorne Hotel and Bridge Court.

The urban morphology has a fine grain characteristic of medieval cores. One of its most characteristic features is the narrow building plots that are divided by 'Chares', or narrow alleys, and narrow granite stairs that provide access between the top of the Gorge and the waterside. These routes to the waterfront provide a series of unfolding views that open out at the water's edge. Another distinctive feature of the urban fabric is the hidden courtyard. These are accessed through archways in the façade. Although buildings tend to be only 3-4 stories in height, a sense of enclosure is provided by the presence of narrow alleys between the buildings. The steepness of the Gorge side is emphasised by the buildings that step up the Gorge side. The presence of the High Level Bridge and Queen Elizabeth Bridge add another, almost surreal, dimension to the townscape. They contribute a sense of height and drama and cast strong shadows over the historic quayside.

The dominant building materials are brick, timber and sandstone. White or coloured render is a feature of the quayside buildings, contributing to a colourful waterside scene. Paving materials are important in adding texture - stone blocks are often found in alleys, courtyards and underlying the tarmac on older roads. Hanover Street is a special example where two parallel lines of Shap granite blocks provide a smooth uphill trackway through the surrounding uneven hard stone sets. Street furniture is black and 'heritage' style characteristic of other historic areas elsewhere in the Country.



This is an exciting part of the Tyne Gorge where hidden alleys, streets and stairs encourage exploration and present unfolding experiences and high visual stimulation both by day and by night. However, some of the quieter stairs and alleys feel slightly uncomfortable even in daytime. The area presents constantly changing views and experiences - a place of contrasts and surprises - and provides an opportunity to view the High Level Bridge from some of the most dramatic angles.

### Visual Environment

This waterside area is highly visible from the Gateshead side of the river, particularly from the *Gateshead Historic Waterfront*, *Rabbit Banks*, *Central Gateshead*, *Windmill Hills* and the *Greenesfield Railway Works* character areas. It also forms an important middle ground in strategic views from Pipewellgate Car Park, Tyne and Wear Footpath and St Mary's Church, as well as forming a more subtle middle ground in views from the Entrance/Exit to the Baltic, 5th Floor of the Baltic, Bottle Bank, and St Michaels Church, Byker.

### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of moderate quality. Although the area shows an intactness in its historic urban grain and architecture, towards the west of the area the state of repair of elements is poor and derelict sites are common. Despite this the area is highly valued for its waterfront location and historic buildings of which notable examples include Bessie Surtees House (a merchant's house dating from the 16th Century), the Cooperage (one of the oldest timber framed buildings in Newcastle), and the Quayside Bar (a medieval warehouse).

This quality and value of the area is reflected in its designations - the majority of this area is within the extended Newcastle Central Conservation Area.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This is a highly sensitive area as a result of its intact historic street and block pattern, its important buildings and its role in forming an important middle ground in strategic views into and within the Gorge. Despite the area's sensitivity, there is some capacity to accommodate further built development in the west of the area where derelict sites prevail.

The area has very little capacity for tall buildings as the urban morphology is characterised by 3-5 story buildings and any taller structures would alter the rhythm of the urban grain and overshadow the scale of the Gorge side that gives this area its distinctive character.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- Further dereliction and demolition of historic buildings such as the warehouses along Hanover Street (including Amos Spoor's warehouse 1841-44).
- New built development that is too large in scale and masks the intricate historic urban grain and sense of topography along the Gorge side.
- Built development that turns its back on major public spaces and through-routes,
- New built development that blocks views to the water's edge, severing the close relationship with the river.

- Loss of distinctive paving materials through piecemeal repairs or total re-surfacing of roads and lanes with tarmac.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy for this area of conserving the existing historic buildings and regenerating area around Hanover Street the following design and development principles should apply:

- Preserve the remaining warehouses on Hanover Street/The Close.
- Ensure any new built development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form, supporting the existing townscape features rather than drawing attention away from them.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access between the top and bottom of the Gorge.
- Maintain visual links between the Gorge side and the water - ensure new built development along the waterfront does not block links to the river.
- Conserve floor materials such as stone setts and stone flags, replacing them where they have been lost. Reflect this pattern in any new access roads/paths - detailing is crucial to the overall effect of new development in this area.
- Consider using native planting on the Gorge sides to form a setting to new built development.
- Ensure new development enhances, rather than diminishes, the topography of the Gorge side.

This may be achieved by maintaining a constant number of stories of buildings at the bottom and top of the slope, or by marginally increasing storey height towards the top of the slope.

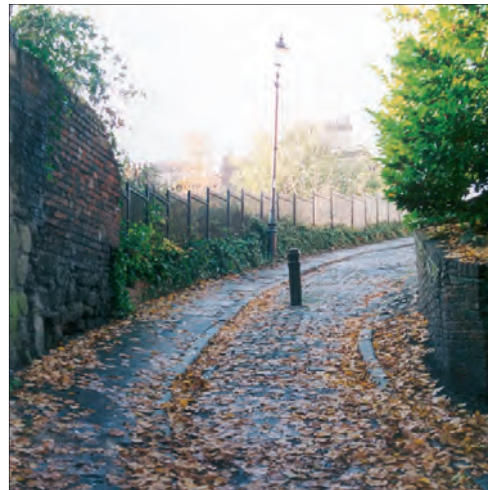
- Maintain a high density in the built form and a fine urban grain.
- Conserve the pattern of unfolding views along routes into the Gorge.
- This area provides the opportunity for the use of colour render to enliven buildings on the waterfront.
- Both the 'fronts' and 'backs' of buildings are visually important in this area - although the waterside façade is important, the majority of people passing through the area will view the side that faces away from the water.
- Any new development on the quayside should follow the scale and grain set by the medieval burgage plots.







Hidden courtyards are accessed through facades



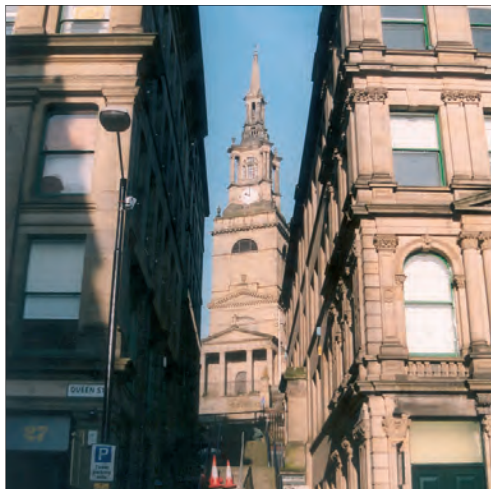
Curving lanes ascend the Gorge sides  
e.g. Dog Bank



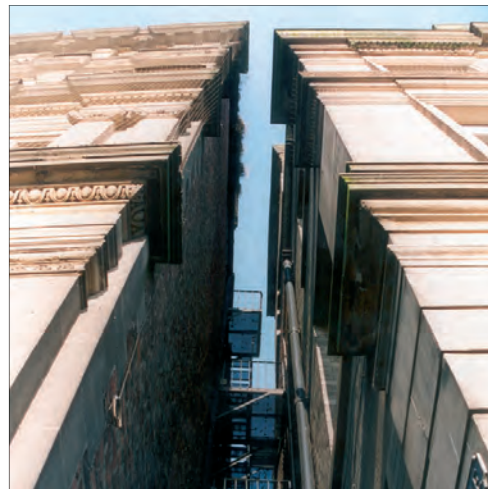
Narrow lanes are typical of Quayside area



Brick warehouses on Broad Chare



Narrow stairs provide access up and down the Gorge side



Tall buildings and narrow alleys provide a great sense of enclosure



The Tyne bridge adds a magical quality to the townscape

**Character Area 1B:  
Redeveloped Medieval Waterfronts**

## 1B REDEVELOPED MEDIEVAL WATERFRONT

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area forms part of the historic quayside on the north banks of the Tyne between The Side (the former course of the Lort Burn) and Broad Chare (the former course of Pandon Burn). It rises up the Gorge side from the waterside to the lip of the Gorge, straddling the *Denes and Valleys* and *Floodplains* landscape types (as identified in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*).

### Historic Evolution

This area forms part of the same historic quayside area as *Area 1A, Medieval Newcastle Waterfront* and therefore shares the same early history of piecemeal reclamation. Between Sandhill and Sandgate, the spaces between the quays, which were presumably water-filled when the tide was high, were made into solid ground by deliberate dumping creating a continuous platform of raised ground. By the end of the 13th century, as property divisions and buildings were established on this reclaimed platform, long lanes allowing access down to the riverside were laid out over what had been the piers. This pattern of development created the characteristic 'chares' of Newcastle's waterfront.

This area was enclosed within the 14th century Town Wall along with the neighbouring Medieval Newcastle Waterfront area. The Side, following the western bank of the Lort Burn, provided the main route down the Gorge side to the riverside and the bridge crossing of the Tyne. East of The Side the difficult access between the valley bottom and the upslope settlement was achieved by a series of steep lanes, or 'chares', and steps. The factor that marks this area out from the Medieval Newcastle

Waterfront is the substantial redevelopment that took place after the Great Fire of 1854. This resulted in the arrival of the symmetrical sandstone facades of Dobson's buildings that form a continuation of Newcastle's 'Grainger Town' and characterise the area today. In 1928 the Tyne Bridge was opened carrying the Great North Road over the river and onto the plateau above the Gorge. This towering structure greatly enriches the visual drama of the quayside area.

### Archaeological Interest

There is likely to be considerable archaeological interest and potential in this riverside area. The location and nature of post-Roman early medieval settlement is difficult to predict. Settlement of this period is generally elusive and its discovery - like that of prehistoric occupation - largely a matter of serendipity in this built-up area. The limits of the cemetery established around the location of the Castle during the 8th century AD are not known, with the possibility of yet further discoveries of burials. Above the waterline, the banks of the Tyne, Lort Burn, and Pandon Burn were settled from at least the medieval period, indeed, a degree of Roman commercial activity may well also have been present. Evidence for this may well survive best close to the waterline, where deliberate build-up has been undertaken. While the recent examination of an area above the eastern bank of the Pandon Burn revealed only limited medieval archaeology, its survival should be expected where subsequent activity has not involved the construction of major walls or cellars.

### Distinctive Characteristics

As in the *Medieval Newcastle Waterfront* character area, the steep Gorge side topography and the hidden tributaries of the Tyne have a large influence on the character of this

area. The steep topography allows many opportunities for views over the Tyne and provides for an interesting skyline. The street pattern is broadly on a grid except where roads follow the routes of least resistance up the Gorge side, curving in response to the landform. The Side marks the western boundary of the area, ascending the Gorge side along the path of least resistance, following the tributary valley of the culverted Lort Burn. Similarly, the eastern boundary is marked by Broad Chare that ascends the Gorge side along the tributary valley of the culverted Pandon Burn. The medieval pattern of long narrow burgage plots still survives, divided by narrow 'chares' that allowed access, for example Plummer Chare. Broad Chare is the most easterly surviving of the medieval 'chares' today. Narrow stairs provide direct access up the Gorge sides at right angles to the river (King Street) while steep, curving lanes ascend the Gorge sides at a more gentle angle, for example Akenside Hill and Dog Bank. Another distinctive feature of the urban fabric is the hidden courtyard that is accessed through an archway in the façade.

Despite the survival of the medieval street pattern, the character of the area today largely reflects the major redevelopment after the Great Fire of 1854. The area is characterised by the beautifully regulated sandstone facades of the classical buildings that form a continuation of Newcastle's 'Grainger Town'. The similarities in building styles (classical), materials (sandstone) and heights (typically reaching 4-5 stories) give this part of the quayside its distinctive character. The area possesses a great sense of enclosure as a result of the continuous run of 4-5 story buildings along narrow streets. The presence of buildings such as Trinity House, Live Theatre and the Baltic Vaults reveal the maritime history and entertainment functions typical of the area. The Tyne Bridge adds an awesome and magical quality to this quayside area - visitors often do not believe their eyes as they glimpse buses and cars moving above and between

the rooftops for the first time.

The dominant building material is sandstone, although brick is a prominent material used in the older Georgian buildings, particularly the warehouses along Broad Chare. Paving materials are important in adding texture - stone setts are often found in alleys, courtyards and underlying the tarmac on older roads. Street furniture is black and 'heritage' style. This formal quayside area successfully integrates Victorian architecture into a medieval street pattern resulting in an exciting environment where alleys, stairs and courtyards provide an ever-changing visual experience.

### Visual Environment

The *Redeveloped Medieval Waterfront* is highly visible from the Gateshead side of the river, particularly from the *Gateshead Historic Waterfront*, *Central Gateshead* and *South Shore Road* character areas. This waterside area forms an important foreground in the strategic view from Newcastle Quayside as well as an important middle ground in strategic views from St Lawrence Road, Bottle Bank, St Mary's Church, Entrance/Exit of the Baltic, 5th Floor of the Baltic, Pipewellgate Car Park and the Tyne and Wear Footpath. It also forms a more subtle middle ground in views from Mariner's Wharf and St Michaels Church, Byker.

### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of high quality as a result of its intact medieval street pattern, its high quality architecture and the good condition of the built fabric. The area is highly valued for its waterfront location, Victorian sandstone buildings (for example the Exchange Buildings and the Guildhall), and surviving historic buildings with links to the water. Notable examples of older buildings include the Custom House (1766, rebuilt



1833) and Trinity House (site acquired 1505).

The quality and value of the area is reflected in its designation as part of Newcastle's Central Conservation Area while the high architectural and/or historic quality of individual elements is reflected in the high density of listed buildings.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

This area is highly sensitive to change as a result of its intact historic street pattern and high quality architecture and its role in forming an important middle ground in strategic views across the Gorge. There is little capacity to accommodate further built development in the area.

The area has very little capacity for tall buildings as the urban morphology is characterised by 4-5 story buildings and any taller buildings would alter the rhythm of the urban grain that gives the quayside its distinctive character.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- New built development that is too large in scale and masks the intricate historic urban grain and sense of topography along the Gorge side.
- Changing building frontages as new bars and restaurants open.
- Loss of distinctive paving materials through piecemeal repairs or total re-surfacing of roads and lanes with tarmac.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

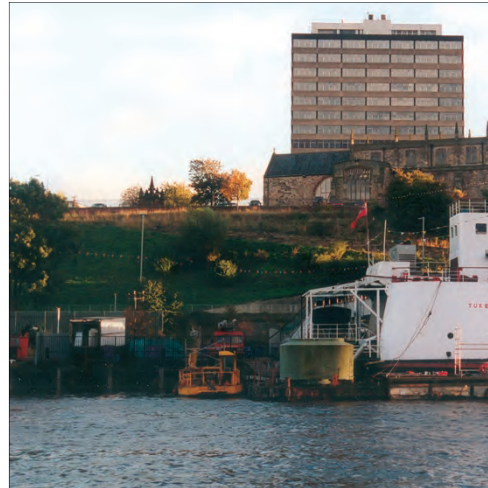
It is recommended that within an overall strategy to conserve the Medieval street pattern and the regularity

of the sandstone facades the following design and development principles should apply:

- Ensure any new built development responds to the existing scale and grain of the urban form, supporting the existing townscape features rather than competing with existing landmarks.
- Maintain and, where possible enhance, access between the top and bottom of the Gorge.
- Maintain visual links between the Gorge side and the water - ensure new built development along the waterfront does not block links to the river.
- Conserve floor materials such as stone setts and stone flags, replacing them where they have been lost.
- Ensure new development enhances, rather than diminishes, the topography of the Gorge side. This may be achieved by maintaining a constant number of stories of buildings at the bottom and top of the slope, or by marginally increasing storey height towards the top of the slope.
- Maintain a high density in the built form and a fine urban grain.
- Conserve the pattern of unfolding views along routes into the Gorge.
- Both the 'fronts' and 'backs' of buildings are visually important in this area - although the waterside façade is important, the majority of people passing through the area will view the side that faces away from the water.



Remnant buildings at the southern bridgehead of the Swing Bridge present a colourful facade



Steep Gorge banks are colonised by trees and scrub



New buildings are reinstating a sense of enclosure



Impressive view of Newcastle from Bottle Bank



Bottle Bank in 1925 showing density of built development and framed views towards Newcastle



Low rise buildings on the river bank allow views to the Gorge side



The street pattern is based upon the historic bridge approach

**Character Area 1C:  
Historic Gateshead Waterfront**

## 1C HISTORIC GATESHEAD WATERFRONT

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area forms part of the historic quayside on the south bank of the Tyne between the High Level Bridge and Gateshead Quays. It includes the quays either side of the Swing Bridge and the steep Gorge side to the lip of the Gorge half way up Bottle Bank. It therefore straddles the *Denes and Valleys* and *Floodplains* landscape types (as identified in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*).

### Historic Evolution

This area is located at the southern bridgehead of the first crossing of the Tyne, probably near the Swing Bridge, where several Roman altars have been found in the channel. Excavations on the site of the Tyne Hilton on Bottle Bank have recovered evidence for a Roman road which appears to have continued the line of West Street and Mirk Lane down Bottle Bank. This, then, may have been the approach to the Roman river crossing. The excavations on Bottle Bank also revealed evidence for Roman activity of uncertain nature; although the existence of a Roman fort on the Gateshead bank of the Tyne has been postulated in the past, the opinion of the excavator is that these remains are more likely to represent the Roman equivalent of the Team Valley Trading Estate, expediently placed adjacent to the river crossing.

Whatever the nature and extent of Roman and Early Medieval activity, this area appears to have comprised medieval Gateshead, based upon Pipewellgate, Hillgate, and Bottle Bank. As on the north bank, the edge of the river was built up and extended with the deposition of rubbish and other material in order to maximise the level ground at the foot of the Gorge side. During

the 18th century industrial activity expanded, gaining increasing momentum and mass during the 19th century. Clearance of industrial sites, as elsewhere along the river bank, gathered impetus following the fire of 1854, with continuing decline in riverside activity thereafter. The High Level Bridge (1849) took the railway high over the Gorge, bypassing the riverside and emphasising its redundancy. Further decline took place and clearance was largely consolidated in the 1930s.

### Archaeological Interest

Until 1990 there had been no archaeological excavation undertaken in Gateshead. Since that time a number of investigations have taken place in advance of new development. These show that, although successive development has resulted in considerable damage to archaeological deposits, important evidence survives of earlier, undocumented phases of settlement here. A recent survey of the archaeological potential of Gateshead (Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Historic Towns Survey 1999) draws attention to a number of research focuses, of which a few may be singled out. Because of the substantial nature of remains and the propensity for the survival of artefacts, the form and extent of Roman settlement on the south side of the river, and the location of the Roman bridge, are questions which may well be answerable.

### Distinctive Characteristics

As in the *Medieval Newcastle Waterfront* and the *Redeveloped Medieval Waterfront* character areas, the steep Gorge side topography has a large influence on the character of this area. The steep topography allows many opportunities for views over the Tyne, particularly on descending Bottle Bank. The street pattern is simple and



based on the historic route between the original bridge crossing of the Tyne and central Gateshead.

The present day character of the waterside is dramatically different to its historic character. Many years of dereliction, decay and demolition have resulted in large scale building loss and poor survival of the historic small scale, high density urban grain and sense of enclosure. The present day character is therefore dominated by roads and traffic with very little focus and few buildings. However, new building works, such as the new Hilton Hotel on Bottle Bank, are re-instating a sense of enclosure that once characterised the area. Elsewhere the steep Gorge banks are now colonised by trees and scrub. The unfolding visual sequences typical of this townscape type have been altered by the removal of buildings. A few buildings remain by the southern bridgehead of the Swing Bridge where a pub, restaurant and offices present a colourful face to the waterside. Cobbles and stone setts are typical surface treatments, although most have been covered over by tarmac.

Despite the dereliction and lack of focus, this is an exciting area as a result of its dramatic topography, proximity to the river, and the drama provided by the Tyne Bridge and High Level Bridge overhead.

### Visual Environment

The *Historic Gateshead Waterfront* is highly visible from the Newcastle side of the river where the remnant waterside buildings are important elements in the view. However, the large form of the floating restaurant/nightclub, the Tuxedo Princess, obstructs views to the majority of this area from Newcastle. The area (including the Tuxedo Princess) is particularly obvious in views from the *Newcastle Medieval Waterfront*, *Redeveloped Medieval Waterfront*, *Central Newcastle* and *St Ann's Quayside*

character areas.

This waterside area forms an important foreground in views from Bottle Bank and St Mary's Church, and the middle ground in strategic views from the 5th Floor of the Baltic and from the car park on the northern bank underneath the King Edward Bridge.

### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of low quality as a result of loss of the urban grain, loss of buildings and poor condition of the public realm. Despite this, the area is highly valued for its waterfront location and surviving road pattern that dramatically descends to the historic Swing Bridge crossing of the Tyne. The value of the area is reflected in its designation as part of the Bridges Conservation Area.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This is a highly sensitive area as a result of its position at the southern bridgehead of the historic crossing point of the Tyne, its historic street pattern, its gateway location to Gateshead Centre and Quays and its role in forming an important foreground in strategic views from Bottle Bank and St Mary's Church. There is substantial capacity to accommodate further built development in the area.

The area has very little capacity for tall buildings - the built form in this area has typically been low rise that does not mask the dramatic topography of the Gorge side and the only opportunity for a tall building at the southern edge of the area mirroring the Gorge side slope has already been taken by the skillfully designed new Hilton Hotel. Elsewhere tall buildings would compete with St Mary's Church as a positive landmark of Gateshead's

historic waterside.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that is too large in scale and masks the intricate historic urban grain and topography along the Gorge side.
- Dominating traffic flows and poor pedestrian access.
- Loss of buildings resulting in lack of enclosure and changing visual experiences.
- Loss of distinctive paving materials through piecemeal repairs or total re-surfacing of roads and lanes with tarmac.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

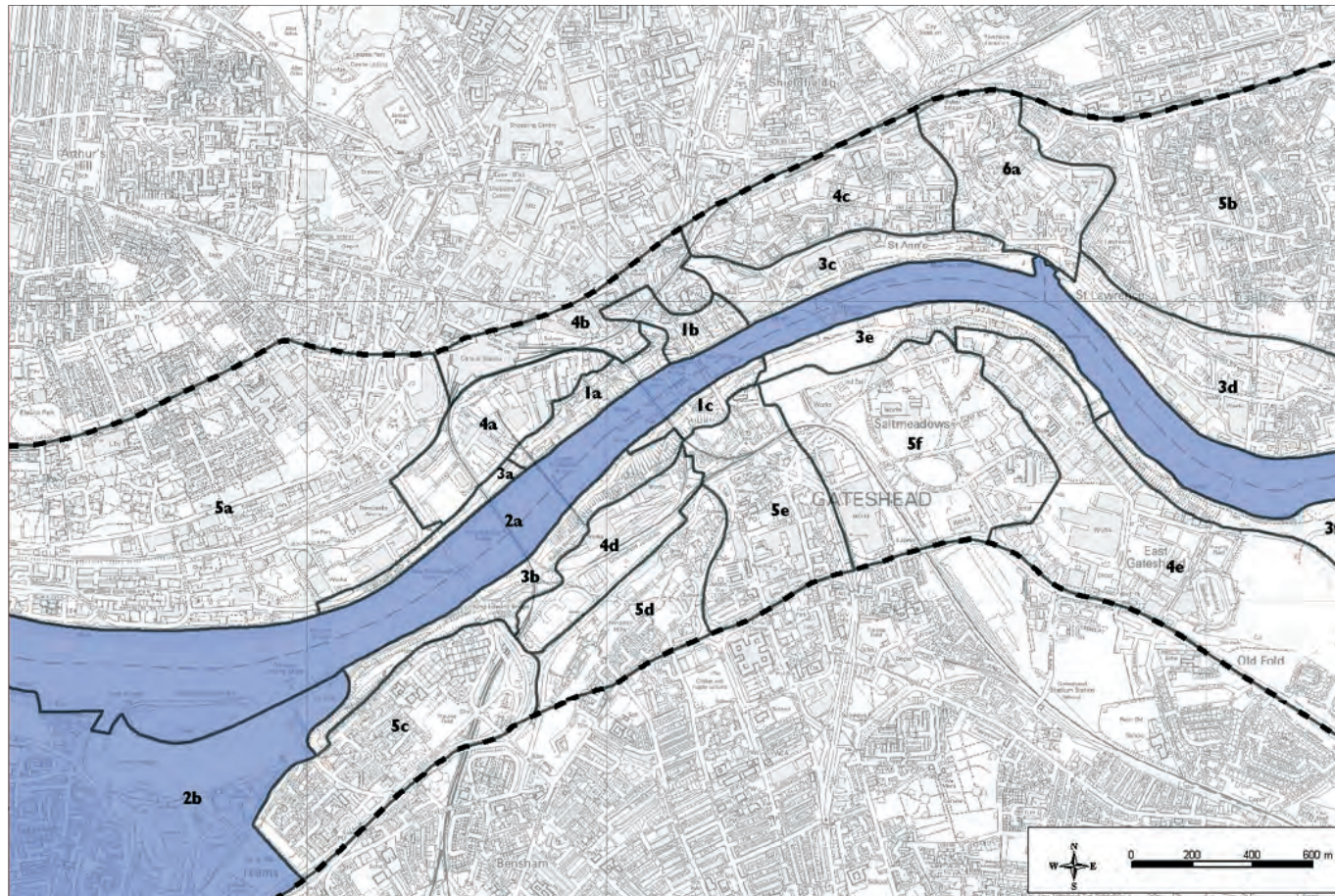
It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to re-create the historic settlement pattern along the waterside in this character area, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider using historical cross-sections to inform new patterns of development down the Gorge slopes that enhance, rather than diminish, topography.
- Small scale development along the waterside would enhance the character of the waterside.
- New built development on Bottle Bank could re-instate the visual and townscape character of this important historic street.

- Any new development by the water's edge should follow the scale and grain of existing buildings to allow views over the rooftops from the Gorge slopes.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from Bottle Bank and St Mary's Church.
- Consider sea level rise in planning for any new development along the water's edge.
- Ensure that new built development does not compete with St Mary's Church as the dominant landmark of Gateshead's historic waterside.
- Maintain and, where possible, enhance access between the top and bottom of the Gorge.
- Maintain visual links between the Gorge side and the water - ensure new built development along the waterfront does not block links to the river.
- Conserve floor materials such as stone setts and stone flags, replacing them where they have been lost.
- This area provides the opportunity for the use of colour render to enliven buildings on the waterfront.
- Conserve important areas of woodland and other areas of nature conservation interest.







## TYPE 2: FLOODPLAINS

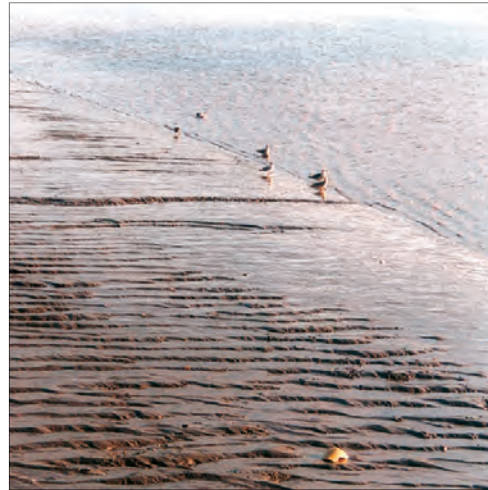
This character type is defined by the floodplains of the major rivers in the study area. This type is underlain by river alluvium, glacial lake deposits and made ground. It varies in width depending upon the physiography of the different parts of the valley. The typical land use of this character type is open water and industry. There are two distinct character areas within this type:

- Tyne River
- Team Floodplain





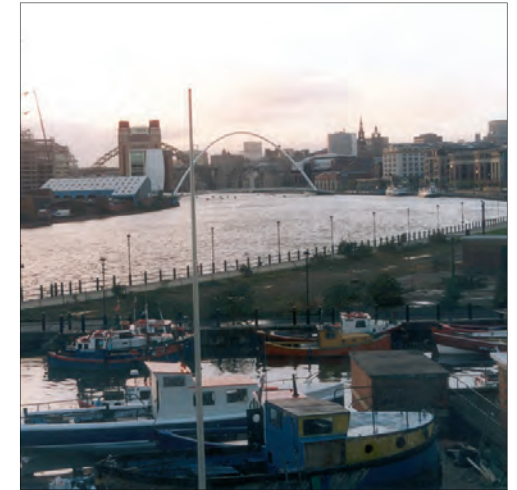
Bridges provide the main visual focus of the River Tyne



The River Tyne is a dynamic environment that constantly changes with the rising and falling of the tides



Boats on the river add colour and movement



The open water provides an important setting to development on the Gorge sides



Boats and moving bridges add an additional dimension to the vitality of the river

**Character Area 2A:  
Tyne River**



## 2A TYNE RIVER

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area runs the length of the Gorge, representing the open water of the Tyne floodplain only. It does not include the flat riverside areas because they have been artificially heightened and now form part of the adjacent townscape areas. This area includes the narrowest section of the *Floodplains* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

### Historic Evolution

Before the mid 19th Century much the Tyne was only navigable at high tide and there were numerous sand banks and islands. The invention of the steam dredger had a massive effect on the use of the river and it was extensively dredged to allow ships access to Elswick and Dunston. Up to the 1860s this area was a rural riverscape, the main feature being the King's Meadows a 30 acre island complete with a pub. It provided a venue for recreational activities such as horse racing and regattas and the cows were kept to supply the village of Elswick with milk. By 1890 the island had been dredged to make way for industrial shipping and by 1901 the Tyne was the busiest river in Britain after the Thames and was the premier coal port in the United Kingdom<sup>8</sup>. Changes in the character of the river have occurred since the wharfage for commercial shipping was moved closer to the mouth of the Tyne in 1981. Once again the river is forming banks of silt.

### Archaeological Interest

Over the past twenty years the importance of rivers

in the preservation of archaeological information has been emphasised by a variety of discoveries across the country. While underlining the archaeological potential of riverine locations, however, these also tend to point up the difficulty of predicting what might be present at any particular location. From earliest times rivers provided transport routes as well as a focus for fishing and wildfowling, while during the Neolithic period they began to act as boundaries which sometimes survive to the present day - boundaries around which a variety of ritual activities might have been focused. In general the earliest archaeological evidence tends to be of Bronze Age date (from 2000 BC onwards), a period from which a number of timber canoes and more sophisticated craft, as well as timber wharf-like structures, are known. The Tyne itself has produced a preserved timber canoe.

The votive deposition of weapons and other objects in rivers is known to have taken place from the early Bronze Age onwards, and the record of stray finds dredged up during the major improvement of the river channel in the later 19th century shows that the Tyne was used for this purpose, possibly for a period of a thousand years or more. While the river continued to have a ritual significance for the Romans, it was important in the Tyne gorge for its crossing point, the bridge acquiring added importance in symbolising the northern limit of empire. Decorative stonework finds from the river suggest that the bridge, and possibly the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall, were here commemorated in monumental form. It is reasonable, also, to assume that there was a stone quayside where supplies to the eastern wall forts could be unloaded. It may be anticipated that transport use of the river continued in the post-Roman period, but this is unlikely to have resulted in recoverable archaeological deposits.

Continued dredging of the river has probably removed any remaining traces of this early activity from the

8 M Hoy & V Histon 2002, NewcastleGateshead Quayside Guide, Tyne Bridge Publishing



main channel, but the consolidation of both banks of the river from the medieval period onwards has been demonstrated to preserve contemporary archaeological deposits. The medieval consolidation will also have sealed earlier deposits; that they have not yet been found is a reflection of the limited archaeological investigation which has taken place, and its location some distance from the probable early focus on the bank in the area of the Swing Bridge, or around the now infilled inlet of the Lort Burn.

While there is potential, therefore, for the discovery of archaeological information from at least the early Bronze Age onwards, the principal expectation must be the recovery of structural information for the Roman use of the Tyne. For later periods, information the chronology and construction of the consolidation of the river bank is contained in the series of timber and stone reinforcing walls and quayside frontages. Fragments of these have already been examined, but much more must remain.

### Distinctive Characteristics

The open water of the Tyne is a dynamic environment that constantly changes with the rising and falling tides. Bird life, boats and moving bridges add an extra dimension of vitality to the river. Kittiwakes are part of the intrinsic waterfront character of the Tyne.

Although the river itself forms the main spine to the Gorge, it is the series of bridges spanning the river that provide the principal visual focus within this character area. The different height and form of the bridges complement each other, particularly when viewed in alignment. The recent addition of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge has enhanced this dramatic perspective of the Tyne Gorge and extended its influence further downstream. The Dunston Coal Staithes are also

a strong visual element in the river.

### Visual Environment

The *Tyne River* is highly visible from the both sides of the Gorge where it forms an important setting to views across and within the Gorge, including all of the strategic views listed in Chapter 4. The bridges are major landmarks in these views and are visible over a large area.

### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of high quality as a result of its simple form and prominent landmark bridges that are high quality feats of engineering in their own right. For example the double-decker High Level Bridge by Robert Stephenson, 1849, has been described as '*one of the finest pieces of architectural ironwork in the world*' while the Tyne Bridge, and now the Gateshead Millennium Bridge have become the most widely recognised symbols of Tyneside. The combined effect of the bridges when viewed in alignment further enhances architectural and townscape quality. Although the majority of the river does not form part of any Conservation Area, the value of the area is reflected in its close relationship with the descriptions of the Gorge and the recognition of the value of the bridges in their inclusion on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest designated by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The southern half of the river, between Rabbit Banks and Gateshead, forms part of the Bridges Conservation Area (Gateshead side). The Dunston Coal Staithes and Swing Bridge are both Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This is a highly sensitive area as a result of its open character, its position at the centre of the Gorge and its vital role in all of the strategic views.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- New bridge crossing points could affect the character of the Gorge in positive or negative ways.
- Potential built development on any new islands or floating platforms could adversely affect the open aspect of the river.
- Increased transport or recreational use of the river could affect the character either positively or negatively.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to restore the transport and recreational character of the Tyne the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider enhancing the transport and recreational use of the River Tyne now that its use for industrial shipping has declined.
- Creation of any new islands or floating platforms (including large permanently moored vessels) should consider the historic context and take into account views from strategic viewpoints.
- Any new bridge crossing points should be analysed

carefully in terms of their location in relation to existing bridges and the potential changes in strategic views.

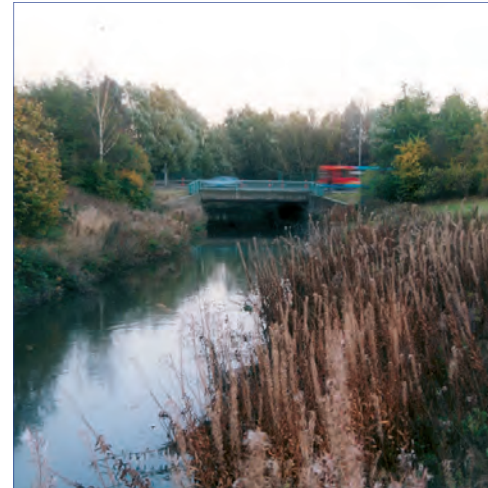
- New built development, for example on any floating or free standing platforms, could provide an opportunity for a new landmark within the Gorge. However, care should be taken not to block strategic views towards existing positive landmarks along the Gorge.
- Ensure that new development does not threaten the breeding populations of Kittiwake that are a protected species and enliven the river.
- Consider the provision of additional strategic viewpoints on any new platforms/structures.
- Consider the effects of predicted sea level rise in planning for any new development within the floodplain.



Landscape elements are in poor condition



The area is dominated by industry



The River Team lies hidden behind industrial buildings for much of its length



Vegetation along Team Street blocks views into the Team Valley from the Tyne



Derelict industrial sites present a threatening and potentially polluted environment

**Character Area 2B:  
Team Floodplain**





## 2B TEAM FLOODPLAIN

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the lower section of the Team floodplain where the River Team joins the Tyne Gorge. It forms part of the *Floodplains* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

### Historic Evolution

This is the low lying mouth of the River Team, along the western side of which the Team now flows. Like much of the area to the west of Gateshead, the area survived under mixed agriculture until relatively recently, the industrial development and expansion of Gateshead having been eclipsed by that of Newcastle during the second half of the 19th century. Although the south bank of the Tyne was traversed by the Newcastle to Carlisle Railway from 1838, as well as by waggonways bringing coal to the river, development in this area did not start on a large scale until late in the 19th century. Dunston coal staiths, a hugely long and massive construction for the delivery of coal from railway waggons to waiting ships, opened in 1893 (Listed Grade II). Much of the later industrial development of the area has now been cleared, and the area was the location for the 1990 National Garden Festival.

### Archaeological Interest

There is no record of any archaeological discoveries from this area, and the low lying nature of this part of the Team valley suggests that the human activity here will in the past have been episodic with settlement, as demonstrated by the medieval village of Dunston, located on the

somewhat higher land to the west of the Team. Chance finds relating to hunting and wildfowling are perhaps the most that might be expected.

### Distinctive Characteristics

The *Team Floodplain* forms part of the valley floor of the River Team at its confluence with the River Tyne. The area is underlain by a mixture of glacial lake deposits, river alluvium and large areas of made ground, particularly towards the confluence of the Team with the Tyne. The reclaimed area is largely occupied by industrial premises resulting in a distinctive skyline that is visible from adjacent areas. Clockmill Road follows the western boundary of the area and Team Street crosses the floodplain in an east-west direction. These are major through routes from which minor roads access discrete industrial areas. There is no clear street and block pattern, and a variety of styles, shapes and scales of industrial building are scattered throughout the area with no particular orientation. Although some of the individual structures are large (for example the gasometers), the built form is generally low rise and low density. Red brick is the dominant building material in both boundary walls and buildings, and stone setts are visible beneath the tarmac in older areas.

The floodplain landscape is generally masked by industrial estates, amenity grassland and new building plots on reclaimed land which means that the natural landscape does not show through in many places. The river is mostly hidden behind industrial buildings, although where it is revealed it is lined by trees and vegetation. Natural regeneration of vegetation on derelict industrial sites adds to the sense of enclosure. Public footpaths access the area and playing fields provide open space, although the industrial environment creates a sense of incongruity, and even threat. It is therefore an area that it would appear most people pass through rather than stop

to appreciate.

### Visual Environment

The *Team Floodplain* is well hidden as a result of its low lying location and the presence of vegetation to the north of Team Street that blocks views up the valley. The most visible area is immediately behind the Dunston Coal Staithes, to the north of Team Street. The area does not feature in any of the strategic views.

### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of low quality as a result of its unremarkable built form, lack of natural floodplain landscape elements and derelict land. The industrial land use of the area is obviously valuable to the economy of Gateshead, but the lack of floodplain character means this area is not valued for its wildlife or landscape quality. There are no architectural or heritage designations attached to this area.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is not particularly visually sensitive to new built development because it is well hidden by its valley landform and the presence of vegetation. However, it is intrinsically sensitive as a result of its floodplain location - floodplains are typically undeveloped areas that provide important flood storage capacity, riparian habitats and recreational opportunities.

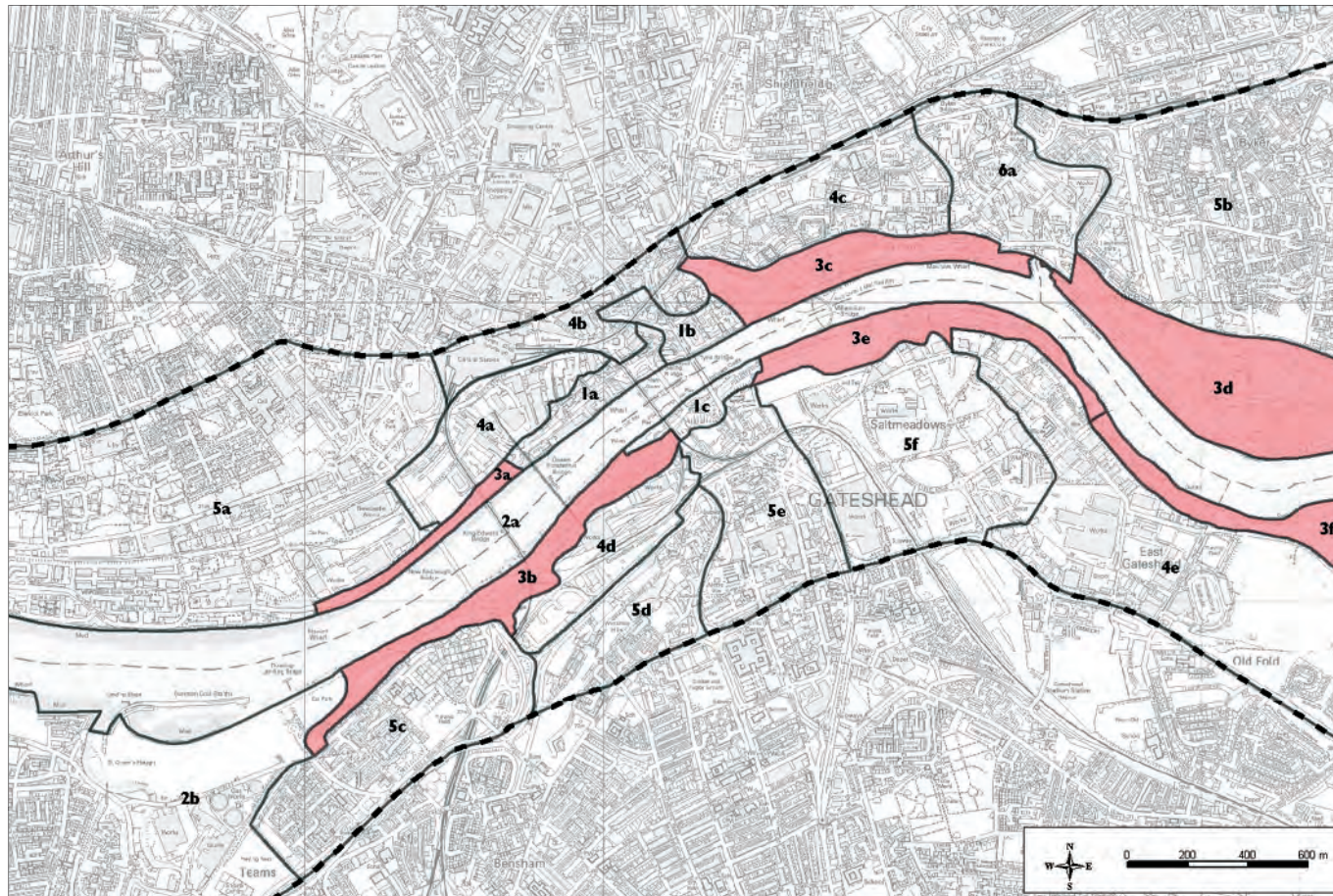
### Threats to Gorge Character

- Further dereliction of sites within the floodplain is likely to result in an increase in vandalism and pollution (through fly tipping and lack of site maintenance) and an even more threatening environment.
- Further loss of landscape features will increasingly undermine the floodplain character in this important tributary of the Tyne.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within an overall strategy to re-create the floodplain character and enhance the river corridor, the following design and development principles should apply:

- This floodplain environment provides opportunities for use of materials such as wood and glass and native planting.
- Provision of public open space and creation of natural floodplain habitats should accompany any new built development.
- Maintain an open swathe alongside the river to provide wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities.
- Consider the effects of predicted sea level rise in planning for any new development within the floodplain.



### TYPE 3: GORGE SLOPES

This character type is defined by the steep Gorge slopes that enclose the River Tyne and the flat riverside strip. The solid Coal Measures out of which these Gorge slopes have been carved are typically overlain by Boulder Clay. The riverside quays are made ground. Some slopes are wooded while others are settled. They are typically steep and provide good views across the Tyne from the Gorge lip. Steep footpaths, narrow stairs and ascending roads provide access between the top and bottom of the Gorge. There are six distinct character areas within this type:

- Skinnerburn
- Rabbit Banks
- St Ann's Quayside
- St Lawrence Quayside
- South Shore Road
- East Gateshead Wooded Slopes





The wooded Gorge slopes provide a setting for the King Edward and New Redheugh Bridges



Wooded Gorge banks above Skinnerburn Road



Municipal promenade provides access along the riverside



A strip of amenity planting separates Skinnerburn Road from the riverside promenade

**Character Area 3A:  
Skinnerburn**



### 3A SKINNERBURN

#### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the narrow, steep Gorge slopes running west from Forth Banks to the Newcastle Business Park on the north banks of the Tyne. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

#### Historic Evolution

Although Skinnerburn now presents a prospect of wooded banks, the story of the use of this area is a mirror of that seen on Rabbit Banks on the south side of the Tyne. Intensive industrial use developed from the early 19th century. Initially reflecting the opportunities presented by the river, the development of the railways effectively bypassed these sloping banks where, in any case, topographical limitations precluded sustainable development. From the late 19th century, and before, the inadequacy of these sites ensured their eventual demise and clearance. The present aspect of deciduous tree cover on the slopes, falling to paved riverside boulevard, is entirely a construct of successive clearance and landscaping undertaken largely in the past twenty years.

#### Archaeological Interest

As elsewhere along the steep gorge sides, there is no record of any early activity and it seems unlikely that any might have survived the industrial activity of recent centuries. Although it is likely that the detail of successive activity has not been entirely mapped, the intensity of activity combined with its eventual clearance to suggest that

cartographic and documentary evidence is likely to be the most effective way of researching the past here.

#### Distinctive Characteristics

*Skinnerburn* is the name given to the steep, wooded Gorge slopes to the west of the tributary valley of the Skinner Burn (now Forth Banks). The steep Gorge sides have remained free of built development, persisting as an area of woodland that reflects the rural character of *Rabbit Banks* on the opposite side of the river. The side slope also provides a platform for the northern bridgeheads of the King Edward and New Redheugh Bridges that contribute a sense of drama and cast strong shadows over the Gorge. A designed open space and viewing platform has been created underneath the Redheugh Bridge, but this is an underused and slightly uncomfortable space, masked by trees and shaded by the towering concrete structure of the bridge overhead. However, the presence of deciduous woodland ensures that the landscape changes colour through the seasons.

Skinnerburn Road runs along the bottom of the Gorge side, providing access east-west adjacent to the river. From this road the wooded Gorge slope rises sharply, enclosing the road to the north. A strip of municipal amenity planting separates the Skinnerburn Road from the municipal riverside promenade. The promenade provides pedestrian and cycle access along the water front and forms part of Hadrian's Way off-road cycle route. There are also a number of parking places on the riverside with access from Skinnerburn Road. These provide opportunities for views over the Tyne in cold weather.

There is only one access between the top and bottom of the Gorge, along a narrow lane that lies adjacent to the Redheugh Bridge. This is a steep route that winds down the Gorge side and is characterised by unfolding views of the river.

### Visual Environment

*Skinnerburn* is highly visible, particularly from the Queen Elizabeth II, King Edward and New Redheugh Bridges and from *Rabbit Banks* character area on the south bank of the Tyne. The riverside promenade is important in the foreground of the strategic view from the Northumbrian Water information board underneath the Redheugh Bridge, as well as in the middle ground of strategic views from the Tyne and Wear Footpath, the Old Redheugh Bridgehead. There are clear views of the south bank of the Tyne, including the Riverside Sculpture Park and Greenesfield Railway Works.

### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of moderate quality as a result of its mature and semi-mature vegetation, intact and naturalistic Gorge sides and reasonable condition of elements. The dramatic topography provides a valuable setting for the bridges and a green backdrop to the Tyne. However, beyond providing a green backdrop, its value is limited.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location. Although the Gorge sides are presently wooded, it would appear that the woodland is not of great ecological value, it performs no recreational function, and

the area is enclosed on either side by built development. It is therefore not highly sensitive to new built development. Development could provide opportunities to enhance the character and value of the area.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that is large in scale and masks the topography of the Gorge sides.
- Poor public access resulting in few people and a threatening environment.
- Loss of native deciduous woodland.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to enhance the character and value of this area, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider new patterns of development down the Gorge slopes that enhance, rather than diminish the topography.
- Small scale development may be suitable along the waterside that allows views over the rooftops from the Gorge slopes.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to strategic views from Northumbrian Water information board underneath the Redheugh Bridge, the Tyne and Wear Footpath, Pipewellgate Car Park and the Old Redheugh Bridgehead.



- Maintain access along the water's edge.
- Maintain existing, and consider providing new, access between the top and bottom of the Gorge.
- Encourage active woodland management on the Gorge side to enhance its ecological value.
- This area could provide an opportunity for new development that has a close visual relationship with the river.



The wooded Gorge side provides an attractive setting to the Tyne Bridges



Naturally regenerating vegetation provides a rural environment close to the town centre



Access roads zig-zag up the steep Gorge side



Woodland on the Gorge side provides a sense of enclosure



The banks now support the Riverside Sculpture Park

**Character Area 3B:  
Rabbit Banks**



### 3B RABBIT BANKS

#### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the narrow, steep Gorge slopes running west from the High Level Bridge to the Team Floodplain on the south bank of the Tyne. Its southern boundary is clearly defined by the lip of the Gorge and its northern boundary by the river. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

#### Historic Evolution

Pipewellgate is the site of an early area of settlement occupying the narrow strip of land between the steep Rabbit Banks to the south and the river to the north, approximately as far west as the Redheugh Bridge. This was a busy trading community which relied on the river for its transport. However, it also had access to the south by the main London to Newcastle road and to the north by the forerunner to the Swing Bridge. Until the 19th Century this area was a thriving residential and commercial area with buildings clinging to the steep slopes. However, during the middle of the 19th Century people began to move out to more attractive areas. This outflow was compounded by the building of the Tyne Bridge that encouraged traffic to by-pass the riverside, and the major slum clearances of the 1930s. Further developments in road, rail and tram all by-passed the riverside and steep Rabbit Banks resulting in further decline. The banks were landscaped in 1969-70 and the area now forms a Sculpture Park created as part of the 1990 National Garden Festival.

#### Archaeological Interest

As elsewhere along the steep gorge sides, there is no record of any early activity and it seems unlikely that any might have survived the industrial activity of recent centuries. Although it is likely that the detail of successive activity has not been entirely mapped, the intensity of activity combined with its eventual clearance to suggest that cartographic and documentary evidence is likely to be the most effective way of researching the past here.

#### Distinctive Characteristics

*Rabbit Banks* is an area of naturally regenerated woodland on the steep Gorge sides below the Greenesfield Railway Works, south of the Tyne. It is an area of informal parkland and woodland containing sculptures by artists, including Andy Goldsworthy, forming the 'Riverside Sculpture Park'. The wooded character provides a green backdrop to the River Tyne and a setting for the Queen Elizabeth II, King Edward and New Redheugh Bridges that contribute a sense of drama and casts strong shadows over the Gorge. Brett's Oil and Grease Company, established in 1877, is the only surviving industrial premises.

The presence of deciduous woodland ensures that the landscape changes colour through the seasons. It is a pleasant, peaceful, rural environment which survives within a stone's throw of the town. However, the poor public access and relative absence of people means in places it can feel threatening. Access tracks zig-zag down the steep Gorge side linking Pipewellgate/Tyne and Wear Footpath with the Greenesfield Railway Works and Teams.



## Visual Environment

*Rabbit Banks* is highly visible, particularly from the Queen Elizabeth II, King Edward and New Redheugh Bridges and from *Skinnerburn, Forth Banks/Stephenson Quarter* and *Elswick* character areas on the north banks of the Tyne. The area is important in the foreground of the strategic views from Pipewellgate Car Park and Old Redheugh Bridgehead, as well as in the middleground of the view from the Northumbrian Water information board underneath the Redheugh Bridge.

## Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of moderate quality as a result of its intact mature and semi-mature vegetation, naturalistic Gorge sides, and reasonable condition of elements. The dramatic topography and open space is valued by local residents and is designated as a Protected Open Space in Gateshead's UDP. It is also valued as a wooded setting to the Tyne bridges.

## Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is highly sensitive to new built development as a result of its highly visible location.

## Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that is large in scale and masks the topography of the Gorge sides.
- Poor public access resulting in few people and a threatening environment.
- Loss of native deciduous woodland.

## Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to enhance the character and value of this area, and restore the historic pattern of built development where appropriate, the following design and development principles should apply:

- In planning any change consideration should be given to strategic views from Pipewellgate Car Park, Old Redheugh Bridgehead and the parking area underneath the King Edward Bridge, Newcastle.
- Consider sea level rise in planning for any new development along the water's edge.
- Ensure that new elements do not compete with the listed Boiler Shop of Greenesfield Works Building as the dominant landmark on the Gorge side.
- Maintain access between the top and bottom of the Gorge.
- Encourage active woodland management on the Gorge side to maintain and enhance a healthy habitat.





Sailor's  
Bethel

The distinctive roofline of Sailor's Bethel forms a landmark at the eastern end of the Quayside, at the mouth of the Ouseburn



New built development is large in scale and masks the dramatic topography of the Gorge side



The Pitcher and Piano pub introduces new building materials to the quayside (steel and glass)



The scale of development reduces towards Ouseburn - here the dramatic Gorge side topography is revealed



Old warehouses on Quayside reveal the historic block pattern



The street pattern follows the historic pattern - narrow 'chares' divide building plots



The Co-Operative Wholesale Society Warehouse (1899-1900) is now a hotel

### Character Area 3C: St Ann's Quayside





### 3C ST ANN'S QUAYSIDE

#### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the Gorge slopes and waterside between Broad Chare in the west and Ouseburn in the east on the north side of the view. City Road and the riverside form firm boundaries to north and south. To the east the *St Ann's Quayside* character area terminates at the mouth of the Ouse Burn and to the west the boundary is defined clearly by Broad Chare. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

#### Historic Evolution

The western portion of this area, at the mouth of the Pandon Burn, lies within the Town Wall area and was developed for river-related purposes from medieval times, that activity extending eastwards along the river during the 18th century. There are few surviving buildings of any antiquity in this Quayside area and those that remain have mostly been converted to new uses - for example one of a number of substantial 19th century brick warehouses is now flats, while the Co-Operative Wholesale Society Warehouse has been converted into an hotel. While the east-west running streetscape reflects earlier arrangements, to all intents and purposes this area is now characterised by new development which began in the 1980s and gained particular impetus in the last decade of the millennium, based on a masterplan drawn up by Terry Farrell. Building works continue today. Most recently the building of the low level Gateshead Millennium Bridge has encouraged greater pedestrian use of this area.

#### Archaeological Interest

The medieval Town Wall extended eastwards to encompass the valley of the Pandon Burn and its settlement, cutting through buildings on Pandon Bank in much the same way as it had on Gallowgate. The wall extended north around the east side of the Pandon Burn and survives to mark the boundary of this character area north of City Road in the form of the Sallyport Tower, now visible in the much altered form of the Ship's Carpenter's Company's Hall (1716). The Wall then turned west to cross the Pandon Burn and its valley, on the west side of which part of a corner tower stands in the shadow of the City Road bridge. From here the Wall struck northwards, to be truncated by the East Central Motorway. Within the walled area there is potential for the survival of archaeological deposits of medieval and late medieval date, especially around the Pandon Burn itself, which like the other Newcastle watercourses, was infilled and culverted to maximise the area available for occupation. These deeper deposits are likely to encapsulate archaeological remains which elsewhere may have been destroyed by later development.

Outside the Town Wall, however, the late development of the agricultural area suggests that any archaeological remains would be likely to be of pre-medieval date, although there is no specific evidence. The name Battle Fields applies to an area north-east of St Anne's Church, this may have some significance as elsewhere the discovery of human bones ascribed to an unrecorded battle has been shown to refer instead to stray finds from a Saxon cemetery. The industrial archaeology resource is mainly now cartographic and documentary.

## Distinctive Characteristics

The street and block pattern set out in the Farrell masterplan is an interpretation of the historic quayside pattern with narrow 'chares' providing access between buildings down to the quayside, and roads running east-west ascending the Gorge side at an oblique angle to achieve an easier gradient. The built form is a variety of mixed modern development which is particularly massive in its western and central section, moving to smaller scale apartments east towards Ouseburn. The area now houses the Law Courts, affluent offices, smart eating places and hotels. Neat apartments compete for a view of the River. Proportions are often large scale east-west, with a smaller dimension north-south (the opposite to the older quayside buildings). The roofscape and skyline is varied with tall rectangular outlines, some sweeping sinuous rooflines and curved walls. The overtly modern outlines of the buildings are particularly noticeable when viewed from the Gateshead quayside on the other side of the river.

The main building materials are brick, sandstone, glass, granite and steel. Paving materials include tarmac, flagstones and concrete block paving. The street furniture is characterised by a proliferation of road and other signs, modern lighting, and extensive use of public art. The only vegetation in the area is the 'wild' area on the east bank of Pandon Burn, just north of the Travelodge.

The relationship between the public and private realms is more clear-cut than elsewhere in Newcastle, because the distinction has been deliberately incorporated into the design. There are private accesses, gated car parks, and entryphone-protected apartments and offices. The dominant use of the area is commercial and residential. Amenities are limited to eating places. The character of the pedestrian walkways is dominated by road traffic - moving and parked - and the quayside road is difficult

to cross. However, the main pedestrian route along the riverside is car free and forms part of the Hadrian's Way off-road cycle route. The overall mood is stimulating. In contrast with other areas of the Gorge, this area is busy with pedestrians, both by day and by night, particularly at its western end around the Gateshead Millennium Bridge's northern bridgehead. The area is open to sunlight from the south and west, but evening comes early and the rear of many buildings is shadowed by the Gorge side.

## Visual Environment

This area is highly visible from the opposite, southern, side of the Gorge, and from the northern riverbank beyond Ouseburn which provides a sweeping view westwards along the quayside. From within the area itself the eye is drawn westwards to and through the Tyne bridges, or across the river to the Baltic and adjacent developments. Visual stimulation is provided by the architectural interest of the buildings and bridges and glimpses down the new narrow 'chares' to the river. St Ann's Quayside forms an important foreground in strategic views from Mariner's Wharf. It also forms the all important rhythmic middle ground in strategic views from St Mary's Church Gateshead, Newcastle Quayside, Baltic Square, the public viewing area on the 5th floor of the Baltic, Ouseburn Watersports Centre, St Lawrence Road and St Michael's Church, Byker.

## Quality and Value

Despite the extensive influence of recent redevelopment in this area, there are several modern buildings and landmarks of high architectural quality including: the Law Courts (1984-90, brick/granite/glass); the Co-Operative Wholesale Society Warehouse (1899-1900 -

now Malmaison Hotel - concrete); Piano and Pitcher pub (glass and steel); and Keelrow House (brick/sandstone). The eastern end of the Quay is marked by an area of cleared land waiting for redevelopment behind which is the distinctive roof of the Sailor's Bethel - this eastern end of the quayside forms part of the Ouseburn Conservation Area. The strong character of the area and good condition of most of the elements ensures that this area is perceived as being of high quality. This area is valued for its views of the Millennium Bridge and the Baltic as well as the important backdrop it provides to the river.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

This area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location on the waterside, directly opposite Gateshead Quays redevelopment site. However, the robust character of the redeveloped quayside means that the urban structure is not sensitive to accommodating new built development except in the few remaining undeveloped quayside sites.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- New built development that is overly large in scale, for example development that masks the scale of the topography of the Gorge sides.
- Poor pedestrian access and the dominance of traffic leading to user conflicts.
- Loss of the remaining native vegetation on the Gorge sides.
- New built development that alters the rhythm of quayside buildings.

- New built development that obscures local landmarks along the lip of the Gorge, for example Keelman's Hospital, St Ann's Church or Sailor's Bethel.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to conserve the rhythm of built development along the quayside and enhance the topography of the Gorge side slope, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Maintain the scale, pattern and rhythm of the built quayside, responding to the reduction in building scale and height towards Ouseburn in the east.
- Ensure new built development does not compete for attention with local landmark buildings such as the Co-Operative Wholesale Warehouse, St Ann's Church and Sailor's Bethel.
- Have regard for adjacent character areas (Ouseburn, the Redeveloped Newcastle Waterfront and St Ann's Settled Plateau) in any proposals for new built development.
- Maintain pedestrian access along the waterside.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to strategic views from from Mariner's Wharf, St Mary's Church Gateshead, Baltic Square, the public viewing area on the 5th floor of the Baltic, Ouseburn Watersports Centre, St Lawrence Road and St Michael's Church, Byker



- Maintain existing, and consider providing new, access between the top and bottom of the Gorge.
- Consider new native planting on the Gorge sides and in the infilled valley of Pandon Dene and encourage active management of vegetation.
- Maintain a simple building palette using traditional materials (muted red brick and sandstone) with limited use of more modern materials (wood, glass, granite and steel).
- Any new development should maintain a close visual relationship with the river.





Ouseburn Watersports Centre



Built form is dominated by low rise industrial buildings



The cleared quays are open for informal public access and recreation



Spiller's Mill is located at the eastern 'gateway' to the Gorge



View along St Lawrence's Quayside from the mouth of the Ouseburn. Showing the Ouseburn Watersport Centre with Spiller's Mill beyond

**Character Area 3D:  
St Lawrence Quayside**





### 3D ST LAWRENCE QUAYSIDE

#### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the Gorge slopes and waterside on the north side of the river between Ouseburn in the west and St Peter's in the east. The Ouse Burn provides a clear western boundary and Walker Road divides this area from domestic Byker. The eastern extent is defined broadly by the turn in the river and the residential area of St Peter's. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

#### Historic Evolution

The Ouseburn valley was an early focus for industrial development on Tyneside, and the importance of the river still finds a resonance in the few fishing vessels moored at the Ouseburn mouth. Industries spilled along the north bank of the Tyne, with successive developments reflecting the changing economic developments of the later 18th and 19th centuries. Late 18th century glassmaking and other chemical industries were replaced by engineering and warehousing activities of the 19th century, now represented only by Spiller's Warehouse at the east end of the reach. The area is otherwise now cleared, the only recent development being the pleasantly low-key Ouseburn Watersports Centre.

#### Archaeological Interest

There are no records of archaeological interest in this area and, since it lies well away from known early development of the Tyne, it is probable that land-use prior to the 18th century was restricted to the utilisation of timber and

scrub from the slopes. Along the river itself land-hungry crafts like rope-working and net-making, like to have been undertaken in these areas prior to being ousted by more intensive industry, would leave little trace even in the best of circumstances for survival.

#### Distinctive Characteristics

The street and block pattern responds to the landform. At the steeper western end of the area the street pattern is reminiscent of St Ann's Quayside with roads running east-west along the bottom and top of the Gorge side slope. St Lawrence Road provides access between the top and bottom of the slope by ascending the Gorge side at an oblique angle. In the less steep eastern part of the area the street pattern is more informal in its layout. Sinuous service roads provide access to industrial premises. The block pattern is typically large scale buildings at a low density. Glasshouse Street is an important route that provides access between Byker and the waterside.

The built form is dominated by low density, low rise industrial buildings of mid-20th century origin associated with fenced yards. Materials include, in chronological order, brick, concrete, cement render, and steel. There is little archaeological interest in the area. The skyline for the most part is formed by anonymous buildings or tree cover resulting from the extensive natural regeneration that has occurred between plots and in vacant spaces. The image of the area is of an opportunity 'waiting for something to happen'. The white block of Spiller's Mill is a key landmark sitting in a commanding position at the eastern 'entrance' to the Gorge. The Ouseburn Watersports Centre forms another local landmark building, albeit because of its recreational function. Leisure use of the river bank area contrasts with the more intimidating areas of the valley side. While the now-cleared quays are open for informal public use, most of the area is not currently

conducive to public access and this results in an air of discomfort where it is easy to feel vulnerable.

The perception of the area is influenced by the colour of the environment, dominated by greens and greys. The area has a slightly unsettled character as a result of its marginal position and poor public access. Despite this, visual stimulation is provided by key buildings, particularly Spiller's Mill and the Ouseburn Watersports Centre.

### Visual Environment

This area is highly visible from St Ann's Quayside (looking east) and from the industrial Gateshead bank of the river. A key characteristic of the area are the good views westwards to the Tyne bridges. The view of the bridges (from the Ouseburn Watersports Centre and from St Lawrence's Road) have been identified as *Strategic Views*. The area forms an important background in the strategic view from Newcastle Quayside.

### Quality and Value

Currently the character and condition of the area is very varied, from near derelict yards (guarded by short tempered Alsations on long ropes) to the potential shape of things to come (Ouseburn Watersports Centre a refreshing new arrival). Spiller's Mill imparts a strong character to the area, but the overall condition and quality are variable.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location on the riverside, at the eastern 'gateway' to the

Gorge. However, the present derelict condition of many parts of the area means it has substantial capacity to accommodate new built development.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that is overly large in scale, for example development that masks the scale of the topography of the Gorge sides.
- Poor pedestrian access to the area from adjacent areas.
- Loss of native vegetation on the Gorge sides.
- New built development that competes for attention with existing landmarks such as Spiller's Mill and the Baltic.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to create a new landscape at the eastern 'gateway' to the Gorge, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider using patterns of development down the Gorge slopes that enhance, rather than diminish, the topography.
- The area presents an opportunity for further development of river related leisure activities.
- Maintain pedestrian access along the waterside.

- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the foreground of strategic views from Ouseburn Watersports Centre and from St Lawrence's Road.
- Maintain existing, and consider providing new, access between the top and bottom of the Gorge side slope.
- Consider new native planting on the Gorge side as a setting to new built development.
- Maintain a simple palette of building materials using traditional materials (muted red brick and sandstone) as well as limited use of more modern materials (wood, glass, granite and steel).
- Any new development should maintain a close visual relationship with the river.
- Spiller's Mill presents a significant opportunity for a prestigious development site at the eastern 'gateway' to the Gorge.
- Ensure new built development does not compete for attention with Spiller's Mill as a landmark, but is **complementary to it**.





The Gateshead Millennium Bridge provides a new low level pedestrian link to the Quays



The Gateshead Quays are a valuable redevelopment site



The Baltic flats (currently under construction) do not detract from the landmark Baltic Mill



The Sage sits in a commanding position on the lip of the Gorge



The Baltic is particularly outstanding as a landmark



La Farge's minerals depot is dependent upon the river for its operation/transport

### 3E SOUTH SHORE ROAD

#### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area lies as a narrow strip between the Tyne River to the north and the Gorge lip to the south, encompassing the Gorge slopes and waterside strip between Hillgate Quay in the west and Albany Road in the east. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

#### Historic Evolution

Thomas Oliver's Perambulatory Survey (1831) says: *...we shall turn up Hillgate, which is another long narrow street crowded with buildings. An oil and vinegar factory are on the north side, and on the south runs a precipitate hill the full length, clustered with houses, which joins Church Walk. At the east end of Hillgate, a ferry boat landing and boat builders yard adjoins the Tyne, together with smiths shops etc. On the south the road from Oakwellgate leads down the steep hill, past a number of smith's shops and two lime kilns. A ropery is here situated, with a rope walk extending east to New Greenwich.'*

The 1858 OS shows a timber yard in the area of the Baltic. The land-hungry ropewalks became squeezed out during the mid-19th century, the Baltic site, like most along here, has a history of successive industrial uses, but the constricted nature of the area, and its lack of direct link to the main road and railway network ensured its decline.

#### Archaeological Interest

There is no record of archaeological discovery in this area, which lies east of the area of the Gateshead bank developed during the medieval period. Given a low level of activity in this location prior to the 19th century, the archaeological potential is low.

#### Distinctive Characteristics

The steep Gorge topography makes this area particularly distinctive. The street pattern in this area forms an extension of Hillgate, following the shoreline along the bottom of the Gorge slope. Mill Road and Deptford Road provide access up the Gorge side. Pedestrian access has recently been provided along the waterside promenade as far as the Baltic car park, but at this point it stops. This was historically an industrial area where the built form was dominated by industrial works and warehouses facing onto the Tyne. Today the area is a valued redevelopment site (particularly the western end) and is progressively being redeveloped by large scale buildings with a cultural/leisure or residential function. The Sage Gateshead (new music centre) and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art are particularly outstanding for their visual prominence and distinctive architectural forms. These new developments have brought with them enhancement of the public realm, for example the creation of the new Baltic Square.

This is an exciting area where new developments are in progress and new public access is allowing perspectives of the Gorge that have not been publicly experienced before.

## Visual Environment

This quayside area is highly visible from *St Ann's Quayside*, *St Lawrence Quayside*, and from the *Redeveloped Newcastle Waterfront* character areas on the opposite bank of the Tyne. Key views from the area include those westwards to the Tyne bridges, and across the river to *St Ann's Quayside*, *St Lawrence Quayside* and the *Redeveloped Newcastle Waterfront*.

The quayside forms the foreground in the strategic views from Baltic Square and the public viewing gallery on the 5th floor of the Baltic, as well as forming an important middle ground in the strategic views from Newcastle Quayside, Mariner's Wharf, Ouseburn Watersports Centre, St Lawrence's Road, and St Michael's Church, Byker.

## Quality and Value

Currently the character and condition of the area is in flux, from near derelict industrial works at the eastern end of the area, through building sites, to the newly refurbished Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. A new character for Gateshead Quays is taking shape and its condition is improving. This area is now a highly valued location within the Tyne Gorge with many developers keen to move into the area.

## Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location on the riverside opposite the confluence with the Ouseburn. However, the changing character of the quays means this is an area well able to accommodate new built development.

## Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that is overly large in scale, for example development that masks the scale of the topography of the Gorge sides.
- Poor pedestrian access along the waterfront.
- Poor pedestrian access from adjacent areas.
- Loss of native vegetation on the Gorge sides.
- New built development that could compete for attention with existing landmarks such as the Baltic and the Sage Gateshead.

## Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to continue the successful regeneration of the Gateshead Quays, the following design and development principles should apply:

- This area has the capacity for additional built development.
- Ensure new development does not overshadow, or diminish the impact of, important landmarks such as the Baltic and the Sage Gateshead.
- Ensure new development allows for a degree of permeability between and around buildings. Development close to the river edge will need to be generally lower rise to allow views of the river from the edge of the Gorge.



- Consider adopting patterns of development down the Gorge slopes that enhance, rather than diminish, topography.
- Consider reflecting the scale, rhythm and pattern of development on the opposite bank of the Tyne i.e. that of the Redeveloped Newcastle Quayside and St Ann's Quayside.
- Maintain, and extend, pedestrian access along the waterside.
- Encourage native planting to create a natural setting for new built development on the Gorge side.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the foreground of strategic views from Baltic Square and the public viewing gallery on the 5th floor of the Baltic.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the middle ground of strategic views from Mariner's Wharf, Ouseburn Watersports Centre, St Lawrence's Road and St Michael's Church, Byker.
- Maintain existing, and consider providing new, access between the top and bottom of the Gorge side slope.
- Maintain a simple palette of building materials.
- Any new development should establish a close visual relationship with the river.
- Continue to actively manage wooded banks to preserve their strong character and ecological value.



This pub is the only building in the character area



The wooded Gorge slopes beyond La Farge's mineral depot

### 3F EAST GATESHEAD WOODED SLOPES

#### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area encompasses the narrow, steep Gorge slope running east from La Farge's minerals depot to Felling Shore on the south banks of the Tyne. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

#### Historic Evolution

This area saw very little activity prior to the 19th century. During this time the slopes formed part of the trading community which relied on the river for its transport and an access route was built down the Gorge side. However, it was never built up in the same way as the other banks along the Tyne and remains a rural wooded area today.

#### Archaeological Interest

There is no record of archaeological discovery in this area, which lies east of the area of the Gateshead bank developed during the medieval period. Given a low level of activity in this location prior to the 19th century, the archaeological potential is low.

#### Distinctive Characteristics

The *East Gateshead Wooded Slopes* encompasses the steep, wooded Gorge slopes below the *East Gateshead Industrial Estates*, on the south side of the Tyne. The street pattern responds to topography - the main road runs along the top of the ridge in the adjacent *East Gateshead Industrial Estates* character area. There is one access road down to

the waterside at South Shore Road. This track traverses the steep contours obliquely. Despite the lack of access by vehicle, there are pedestrian routes along the length of the area, either beside the river or through the woodland on the Gorge side. The steep slopes are dominated by woodland and have not been built upon, except for an isolated pub on South Shore Road. The wooded character provides a green backdrop to the River Tyne as seen from St Lawrence Quay, and is defined as an Urban Countryside site in the Gateshead UDP.

The presence of deciduous woodland ensures that the landscape changes colour through the seasons. It is a pleasant, peaceful, rural environment which survives within a stone's throw of the town. However, the limited access and absence of people means at times it can feel threatening.

#### Visual Environment

The *East Gateshead Wooded Slopes* are highly visible, particularly from St Lawrence Quayside. There are also good views from the area back across to the St Lawrence Quayside. Despite the prominent location of this area on the Gorge side, it does not form part of any of the Strategic Views identified in Chapter 4 of this Report.

#### Quality and Value

Overall this is an environment of high quality as a result of the extent of intact mature and semi-mature vegetation, intact and naturalistic Gorge sides, and reasonable condition of elements. The dramatic topography and open space is valued by local residents and the area is recognised as Public Open Space in Gateshead's UDP.



**Sensitivity to New Built Development**

This area is sensitive to new built development as a result of its highly visible location and rural character.

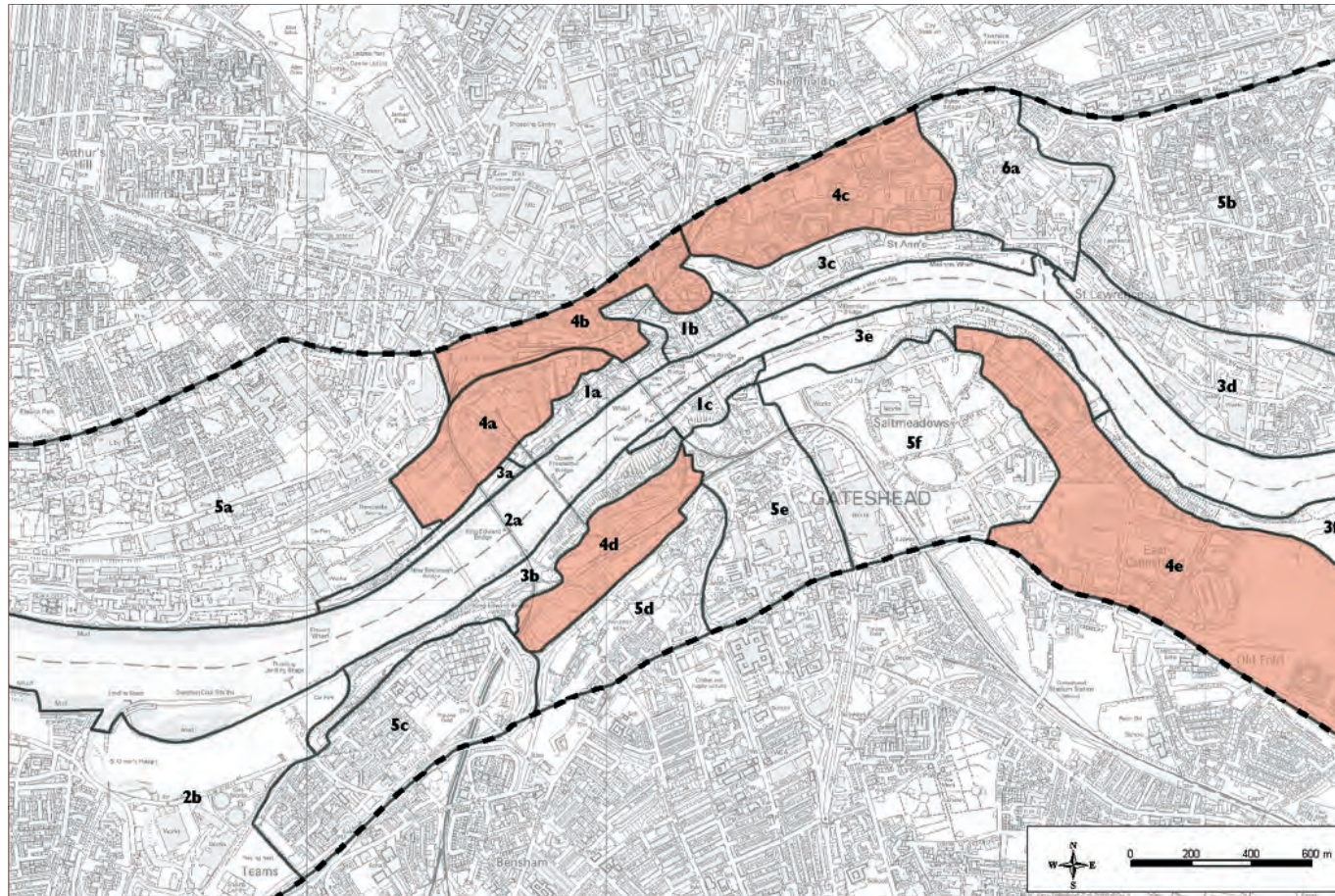
**Threats to Gorge Character**

- New built development that could affect the rural character of this site.
- Poor public access resulting in few people and a threatening environment.
- Loss of native deciduous woodland.

**Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to conserve the rural character and wooded setting to the Tyne, the following design and development principles should apply:

- It would be desirable to preserve the rural character of the Gorge in this area.
- Continue to actively manage the woodlands to preserve their strong visual character and ecological value.
- Maintain access between the top of the Gorge and the waterside.
- Any new development should establish a close visual and functional relationship with the river, and be in character with its surroundings.



### TYPE 4: SETTLED PLATEAUX

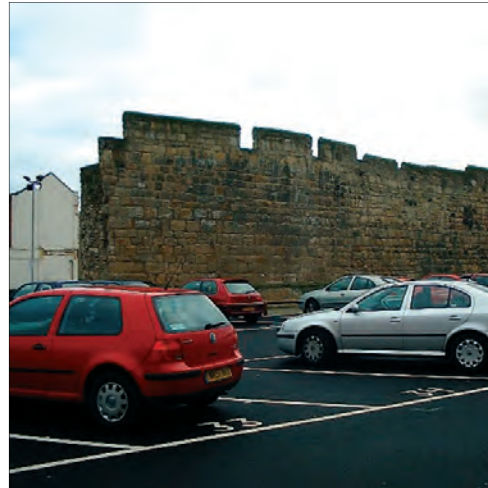
This character type is defined by the flat plateaux that lie above the Gorge slopes. These areas are well settled and buildings on the edge of the plateaux (at the Gorge lip) are often prominent features of the Gorge. Approaches to the Gorge through these areas are characterised by 'surprise views' which open up on arrival at the Gorge lip. These characteristics are common throughout the following character areas:

- Forth Banks/Stephenson Quarter
- Central Newcastle
- St Ann's Settled Plateau
- Greenesfield Railway Works
- East Gateshead Industrial Estates





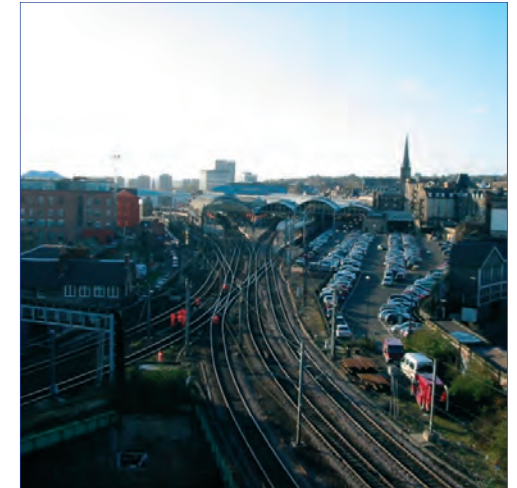
Grand houses pre-dating the railway survive in Claving Place



The Town Walls cut through areas currently used for parking



Streets are enclosed by brick warehouses and Stephenson's works offices



The railway lines form the northern boundary to Stephenson's Quarter



Warehouses have been converted to offices, for example Central Square South Offices



Railway arches are used as workshops



Red brick and sandstone are typical built materials. Cobbles are still visible.

**Character Area 4A:  
Forth Banks/Stephenson Quarter**





#### 4A FORTH BANKS/STEPHENSON QUARTER

##### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the plateau south of Central Station. The railway line provides a strong boundary to the north and east while the Gorge lip and steep river bank define its southern extent. However, the western boundary is not so well defined, partly because of recent building/site clearance. The proposed extension to the Conservation Area uses the railway line as a western boundary, but although now largely cleared, Pottery Lane extends this character area further west. The area forms part of the *Plateau Coalfields* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

##### Historic Evolution

The eastern part of the area was from the 13th century included within the City Walls, and it was here that the White Friars were established. The maintenance of the walls ensured that fields and market gardens to the west survived until early in the 19th century - a large plot here was in the later 17th century provided with tree-lined walks, a bowling green and a tavern. Cartographic evidence suggests that, even within the walls, at the beginning of the 19th century settlement on the western plateau in this area was not intensive. From the early 19th century the Skinner Burn area became a focus for 'dirty' industries such as chemicals, glassworks, potteries, and brewing, while the sloping Forth Banks above the Close were occupied by engineering industries that underpinned the development of manufacturing in Newcastle, in which Robert Stephenson and R and W Hawthorne were major figures.

The arrival of the railway and the construction of Central Station consolidated the generally industrial nature of the area to the south of the railway line. - although some Georgian houses in an unfinished square remained around Clavering Place, and terraces of workers housing were developed closer to Forth Banks. While much of the old industrial infrastructure has declined, the area has not been the subject of large scale clearance. Instead, redevelopment has been somewhat haphazard and piecemeal. While there are a number of empty plots, semi-utilised areas, and new developments, several fine buildings survive in varying states of maintenance and neglect.

##### Archaeological Interest

From an archaeological point of view, large industrial buildings have advantages for the preservation of archaeology in that they are often not cellared, while large roof spans allow the survival of coherent areas of archaeological deposits. The area is crossed north-south by the medieval Town Wall, stretches of which have been cleared of masking structures, so that the wall can now be seen climbing the steep Gorge side and running north onto the plateau beside the Casino building. Within the walled area there is considerable archaeological potential for the recovery of artefacts relating to the Roman civilian settlement and any later activity in the western part of the area, which was relatively undeveloped in medieval and later periods. In this western part also some of the site of the medieval Whitefriars remains to be examined. Parts of the Roman fort and the later cemetery extend into the area from the east, an area where medieval occupation was more dense. The archaeological potential and interest of this area is therefore high.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This plateau is incised by the tributary valley of Skinner Burn, now culverted. The dominant street pattern is of principal east-west streets (Forth Street and Pottery Lane) with north-south streets oriented off these. Most of the south facing streets terminate in dead ends at the Gorge lip. An underlying strong pattern of streets provides access to properties. The block pattern is large with individual industrial/warehouse buildings located between parallel streets, interspersed by large areas of car parking. Smaller scale terraces of Stephenson's works offices face onto the north-south streets are also characteristic and it is surprising also to stumble across a pocket of grand Georgian houses in an unfinished square around Clavering Place. Large scale buildings are prominent features, particularly where they occur on the plateau edge, for example Turnbull's Tobacco Warehouse (now private apartments) and Central Square South Offices. Another prominent element of the built environment is the recent lightly structured red and green Chinese restaurant at the foot of Forth Banks.

The character of the built environment is greatly influenced by the presence of a range of low railway viaducts, storage yards and workshops. Building materials are, roughly in chronological order, brick, brick/sandstone/timber, concrete, brick/glass/steel. However, brick is still an important component of the built environment and provides a warm hue to the area. The general image of the area is where urban industry in decline is being superseded by apartment living. Open spaces have a somewhat menacing character, although in the daytime the streets feel surprisingly unthreatening for industrial semi-wasteland.

A wide range of paving materials is present. Beside the inevitable tarmac are stone flags, block paving and sandstone setts. Lighting is mostly unattractive modern

standards, but a few old fittings on derelict buildings survive, as do a limited range of iron gratings and manhole covers. It is these details that add character to the area. Sharp contrasts between light and shade are provided by moving through cleared areas into the narrow streets and surviving close-set buildings. The outlines of Turnbull's Warehouse and the multicoloured block of Central Square Offices whose lit atrium is particularly visible at night, provide a distinctive skyline to the area.

The achievements of the engineer, Robert Stephenson, has led to part of this area being dubbed 'Stephenson Quarter' for the purposes of conservation, development, and marketing. To focus on the one individual, however, is to unfairly ignore the Hawthornes and other engineers and industrialists who contributed to the industrial and commercial fortunes of the period. Today this area houses a range of uses, from apartment living through offices to service industries and small-scale workshops.

### Visual Environment

This is an area of high visual stimulation, not just for the occasional spectacular building, but for the variety of scale and style of buildings. Visual sequences are characterised by contained views down streets on the plateau top plus, perhaps most impressively, unexpected panoramas from the plateau edge. Another type of viewing experience, the unfolding view, is demonstrated on descending the Forth Banks, along the former course of the Skinner Burn.

The plateau edge is highly visible from the south bank of the Tyne (from Pipewellgate/Rabbit Banks) and on approaching Newcastle by railway across the King Edward Bridge. The area also forms an important middle ground in strategic views from Windmill Hills Town Park. Buildings within this area form the skyline in strategic views from the 5th floor of the Baltic, Pipewellgate Car

Park, Old Redheugh Bridgehead, St Lawrence Road, and St Michael's Church, Byker.

### Quality and Value

Although the character of this area is very strong, its current condition is very varied, from derelict spaces (particularly in the west, along Pottery Lane) to newly built office spaces (Central Square South). Despite the decay, the area appears relatively intact and much traditional building material is still in evidence. Traditional paving materials also survive but to a lesser extent.

The area is valued for its landmark buildings, particularly Turnbull's Warehouse, that forms an important landmark on Newcastle's skyline, and for its historic connections to the railway industry which underpins its strength of character. This value is recognised in its designation as a Conservation Area incorporating a number of listed buildings, that make some frontages unbroken.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location at the lip of the Gorge. The edge of the plateau is the most visually sensitive location. However, the present derelict condition of many parts of the area means that it has a substantial capacity to accommodate new built development.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- The plateau topography in this area means that it is easy to block views into the Gorge by siting large buildings at the lip of the Gorge.

- Loss of rich historic detailing, including paving materials, lighting and street furniture.
- New built development that dramatically alters the skyline or has an overbearing effect on historic buildings, particularly on existing landmarks such as Turnbull's Warehouse.
- Extensive areas of ground level car parking.
- Poor pedestrian access to the area, as well as through the area into the Gorge.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on conservation and restoration with opportunities for new landscape creation to the west, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider providing a well-designed multistorey car park to allow a greatly improved streetscape to be created by removing areas of untidy and wasteful car parking.
- Consider re-use of presently derelict or empty buildings, concentrating on restoration of existing buildings before newbuild.
- This area provides an opportunity for new low rise residential development based on the surviving remnants of Georgian courtyards.
- Consider providing clear pedestrian access from the back of the Railway Station to the river frontage through this area.

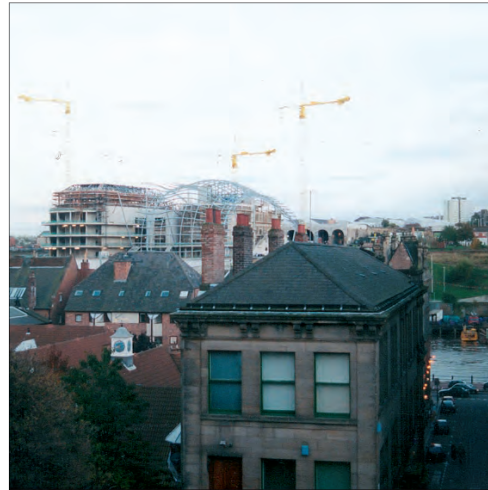


- It would be desirable to maintain links to the railway history of this area.
- Newbuild should consider the use of traditional materials - brick, timber, and slate.
- A Conservation Area Management Plan would provide a useful local framework for the further development of the area.
- Conserve the street plan, close-set buildings, range of building materials, and variety of paving surfaces.
- Reinforce and strengthen pedestrian access into and through the area.
- Ensure that new built development does not have an overbearing effect on historic buildings, particularly on existing landmarks such as Turnbull's Warehouse.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the views from the train when crossing the King Edward Bridge, and as seen from strategic viewpoints at Windmill Hills Town Park, the 5th floor of the Baltic, Pipewellgate Car Park, Old Redheugh Bridgehead, St Lawrence Road, and St Michael's Church, Byker.





The built form is dominated by Grainger's rebuilding of Central Newcastle in the Victorian classical style.



There are views into the Gorge from the plateau edge, e.g. this view from All Saints Church



Narrow alleys that form part of the medieval street pattern give a feeling of enclosure



The High Level Bridge extends across the Gorge from this area



Views towards the Gorge are prevented by the railway viaduct



Prominent buildings on the edge of the plateau are landmark features of the Gorge



## 4B CENTRAL NEWCASTLE

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the plateau above the Swing Bridge. The south-eastern boundary of the area is defined primarily by topography and extends to the lip of the Gorge. Its characteristic curve responds to the landform associated with the infilled Lort Burn. To the south-west a series of railway viaducts separate this central area from *Forth Banks/Stephenson Quarter*. To the west there is a clear-cut boundary between the Victorian Central Station and the new Centre for Life. To the east the ring road forms the boundary with *St Ann's Plateau*. This character area forms part of the *Plateau Coalfields* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment - see *Figure 2.8*.

### Historic Evolution

This area encompasses the oldest part of Newcastle, as marked by the area of the Roman fort established on the site of the later Castle in the early 2nd century AD. The promontory occupied by the fort became the site of a cemetery which was in use from the 8th century until the establishment of the Castle. There is no evidence for any nucleated settlement which may have continued from the Roman occupation, however a rectangular stone building which has been excavated within the Castle bailey may be the remains of an early church associated with the burial ground. The construction of the Castle within the strategically important, but limited, area of the promontory would have prompted the removal of cemetery and church, most probably northwards to the site of the church (later cathedral) of St Nicholas. Despite this older and probably complex history, the earliest visible remains comprise the Castle. This was originally established as a timber structure within an earthwork in

1080. The Keep was then rebuilt in sandstone 1168-78, and the gatehouse in the mid-13th century.

The medieval route to the west followed Westgate, as the Roman road probably had before it, while those to the north traversed Cloth Market and Newgate. The principal medieval street pattern is therefore retained in Westgate Street to the west, and Groat Market/Newgate Street running northwards.

Although settlement pre-dated the establishment of the Town Wall, from the 14th century onwards most buildings were contained within the circuit of the walls. However, with the burgeoning development of the town from the 18th century onwards the medieval walls and the street system became a constraint and it is not surprising that here, in the heart of the developing town, were made the first major changes to the street plan since the construction of the Town Wall. Mosley Street and Dean Street were constructed between 1784 and 1789. Mosley Street created a new east-west link between Pilgrim Street and the foot of Groat Market, while Dean Street provided a direct route between Mosley Street and the river via The Side. A little later, in 1810, Mosley Street was extended to Westgate Street with the creation of Collingwood Street.

Following the construction of these streets, the next two major phases in the development of the street pattern of central Newcastle lie largely outside the present Study Area. Richard Grainger was central to the development of the new urban Newcastle on the northern side of the town during the 1830s. Within the present Study Area the principal - and for Newcastle the most significant - development was the creation of Grey Street to extend the line of Dean Street north of its intersection with Mosley Street. The second period of significant town planning affecting this area was inaugurated by the construction of the Tyne Bridge (opened 1928), which carried the Great North Road over the river and onto Pilgrim Street. The

even more ruthless construction of the Central Motorway East represented the inevitable consolidation of this route according to plans drawn up in the mid-1960s and implemented in the late 1960s and early 1970s. On the eastern side of the character area the junction of Mosley Street and Pilgrim Street Motorway East was relandscaped to accommodate an intersection with the new Central Motorway East, the dislocation emphasised, if emphasis was needed, by the overarching Swan House which now blocks the east end of Mosley Street.

While there are some survivals of the 18th century, the majority of the built fabric belongs principally to the earlier and later parts of the 19th century, extending into the early 20th century. Later 20th century developments are present, but are much more prevalent beyond the boundaries of this Character Area.

### Archaeological Interest

The northern part of the Roman fort lies in the west of this area, together perhaps with associated civilian settlement - a vicus, but their layout and extent remains unknown. Westgate marks the main Roman route westwards, and its lower part, formerly known as Bailiffgate, may reflect the Via Principia of the Roman fort. While Westgate Road is thought to reflect the alignment of Hadrian's Wall, its original terminus, relationship to the Roman fort, and extended line eastwards remain largely matters of conjecture. The Roman civilian settlement may not have been substantial enough to survive the later development of the town and city, but the potential for recovering information on the more substantial structures of the Roman fort and Hadrian's Wall remains high.

The location and nature of post-Roman early medieval settlement is less predictable. Settlement of this period is generally elusive and its discovery - like that of prehistoric

occupation - largely a matter of serendipity in this built-up area. The limits of the cemetery established around the location of the Castle during the 8th century AD are not known, with the possibility of yet further discoveries of burials.

The area from Neville Street eastwards to the Pandon Burn lay within the area protected by the Town Wall. In this Character Area its western side is overlain by the Central Station and railway lines, while its eastern return lies inside the *St Ann's Plateau* Character Area adjacent to the east. Speed's map - if adequately reflecting settlement pattern of a couple of centuries before - suggests that medieval settlement within this Character Area was fairly intense. It has yet to be tested archaeologically because the 19th century redevelopment is in many areas substantially intact, while elsewhere the sweeping redevelopment of lower Pilgrim Street with Swan House and the associated roundabout and dual carriageway was not accompanied by archaeological investigation.

The substantial nature of many of the 19th century buildings - quite apart from the now limited likelihood of their demolition - reduces the potential for the recovery of archaeological information, although the less substantially developed yard areas may well retain extensive remains. The potential is underlined by recent archaeological excavation in advance of the redevelopment of the bus station on Gallowgate, outside the Study Area. This has uncovered significant remains of the medieval buildings which flanked the former line of St Andrew's Street before it was truncated by the construction of the Town Wall in 14th century. Consideration therefore has to be given to the continuing potential for recovering information relating to a period of the City's history which is scarcely visible in the modern commercial core.

### Distinctive Characteristics

The street pattern in this commercial heartland of Newcastle has arisen from several phases of development. Westgate Road is a distinctive street whose dead straight form dates from Roman times. The medieval grid of streets has also survived in places. However, it is the planned grid of streets dating from the early 19th century that dominate the street pattern today. Major east-west routes across the plateau (Neville Street, Mosley Street) are crossed by north-south routes (Dean Street, Grey Sreet, St Nicholas' Street). These historic streets have since been overlaid by more modern routes, for example the A167(M) ring road that cuts across the grid. The area is also crossed by the railway line which, on its viaduct, carves the area in two. For example, the Castle Keep and its gatehouse are ruthlessly separated in the mid-19th century by a railway line.

The block pattern is dominated by large scale blocks that sit between the grid of streets. The built form is dominated by the Victorian classical rebuilding of Central Newcastle associated with Grainger's urban planning. A recurrent series of ornate sandstone facades presents a solid face to the larger streets and presents a continuity across the area. Buildings are typically 3-5 stories in height, although the narrow medieval alleys make them seem taller. The presence of narrow alleys and courtyards also betray the area's medieval roots. The built materials relate to the age of buildings. Older buildings are typically brick while the extensively redeveloped Victorian streets are in sandstone. More modern buildings have utilised granite as a building material.

The plateau is recognised from the Gorge by its two promontories. The westerly promontory was exploited for its prominent position above the Gorge, providing a perfect look-out for the Castle keep. The Moot Hall and Vermont Hotel also sit on this plateau edge. The

easterly promontory provides a dramatic setting for All Saints Church, although this setting has been somewhat eroded by the 1960s Bede House offices that have been built within its setting. St Nicholas Cathedral, although set back, also sits on the edge of the Plateau where it is seen as another landmark from the Gorge.

The Tyne Bridge and High Level Bridges extend from this area and unmistakably belong to it. The High Level Bridge, built in 1849 brought the railway into the heart of the city. Central Station occupies most of the western part of this area, built in 1850 by John Dobson as part of Grainger's plans to concentrate railway provision into a single terminus. The station faced northwards towards the newly redeveloped town centre, rather than towards the water and this is still the case today.

This area is seen as a unit as a result of the even age of its built environment (attributable to the early Victorian classical rebuilding of the town centre). This is perceived as an exciting area where narrow alleys lead to hidden spaces.

### Visual Environment

Ornate sandstone facades, intimate alleys and historic buildings provide a rich visual environment. This is further enhanced by the contrasts between brightly lit and shadowed streets. Visual sequences within the area are characterised by contained prospects down streets, framed by the street facades. Views to the Gorge are masked until the last minute by buildings and by the railway that runs on viaduct. However, once through the arches underneath the viaduct, views open towards the Gorge. Perhaps the most exciting views are the unexpected panoramas from the plateau edge, for example the view from All Saints Church and the views from the northern bridgehead of the High Level Bridge and the Tyne Bridge.



Views into this area from the Gorge are limited because of the flat topography and screening effect of the railway viaduct. However, the prominent buildings on the plateau edge form important landmarks in many views along the Gorge, for example The Castle Keep, Moot Hall, Vermont Hotel, St Nicholas' Cathedral and All Saints Church.

The area forms an important middle ground in strategic views from the 5th Floor of the Baltic, Bottle Bank/Bridge Street and Windmill Hills Town Park. It also forms an important skyline in strategic views from St Mary's Church Gateshead, Baltic Square, Pipewellgate Car Park, Old Redheugh Bridgehead, Mariner's Wharf, Ouseburn Watersports Centre, St Lawrence's Road and St Michael's Church, Byker.

### **Quality and Value**

The character of this area is very strong and it communicates a sense of intactness. Individual elements are in good condition. The quality of the built environment is further enhanced by the presence of high quality paving materials (particularly the York flags) and a co-ordinated palette of black street furniture. Some vacant buildings and others recently changed in use underline current transitions from commercial and financial heartland to more marginal service and restaurant provision.

The area is valued for its landmark buildings, particularly the Castle Keep, St Nicholas' Cathedral and All Saints Church that form important landmarks on Newcastle's skyline. It is also valued for its substantial Victorian redevelopment and for its outstanding architecture. Grey Street has recently been voted the best street in Britain. The value of the area is recognised in its designation as a Conservation Area and the value of the architecture is recognised by the extremely high density of listed

buildings.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

This area is visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location on the Gorge lip. The edge of the plateau is the most visually sensitive location. Despite the intact character of the area, there are some opportunities for accommodating new built development within its limits.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- The plateau topography in this area means that it is easy to block views into the Gorge by siting large buildings on the Gorge edge.
- New built development that dramatically alters the skyline or has an overbearing effect on historic buildings, particularly on existing landmarks such as the Castle Keep, St Nicholas' Cathedral and All Saints Church.
- Low grade design of new development.
- New built development that alters the rhythm and scale of the urban grain that is so distinctive in this area.
- Built development that obscures surprise views from bridge approaches and from plateau edge.

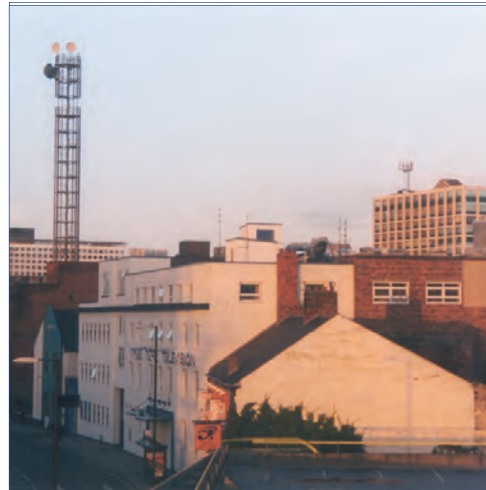
### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on conservation, the following design and development principles should apply:

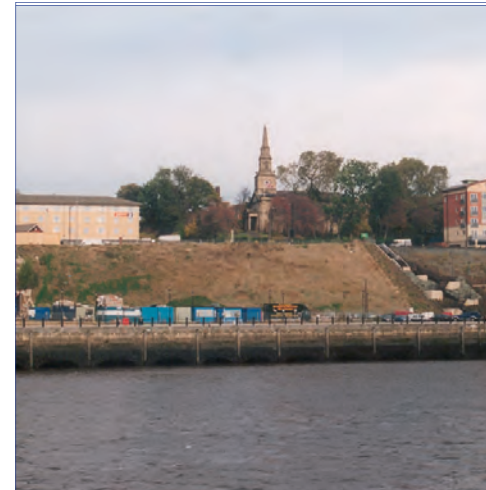
- Consider eventual removal of office blocks (Bede House) that impinge on the setting of All Saints Church and Cale Cross House that blocks views of St Nicholas' Cathedral from Gateshead.
- Ensure that new built development does not have an overbearing effect on historic buildings, particularly on existing landmarks such as the Castle Keep, St Nicholas' Cathedral and All Saints Church.
- Newbuild should consider the use of traditional materials - brick, sandstone and slate.
- A Conservation Area Management Plan would provide a useful local framework for the further development of the area.
- Reinforce and strengthen pedestrian access from this area into the Gorge.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from the 5th Floor of the Baltic, Bottle Bank/Bridge Street, Windmill Hills Town Park, St Mary's Church Gateshead, Baltic Square, Pipewellgate Car Park, Old Redheugh Bridgehead, Mariner's Wharf, Ouseburn Watersports Centre, St Lawrence's Road and St Michael's Church, Byker.



Sallyport House is prominently sited on the plateau edge, overlooking the infilled Pandon Burn



The area supports a mixture of building ages and styles



St Ann's Church is a key landmark on the edge of the plateau



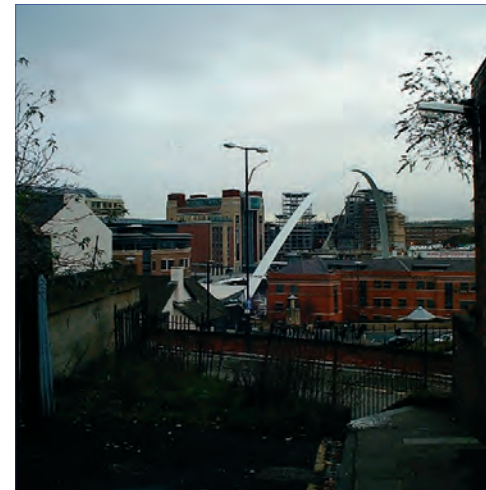
Melbourne Street supports a mixture of building ages and styles



Flats and offices are often set back from the road in open grounds



There are views over the Gorge from St Ann's Church



One of the few views from the plateau over the Gorge. This view is from the end of Tower Street

**Character Area 4C:  
St Ann's Settled Plateau**





#### 4C ST ANN'S SETTLED PLATEAU

##### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the Gorge-top plateau above St Ann's Quayside. Its southern boundary is a topographical boundary, formed by the lip of the Gorge along the course of City Road, while its northern boundary is defined by the Metro line. It lies between the infilled course of Pandon Burn to the west and Ouseburn in the east. It forms part of the *Plateau Coalfields* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment.

##### Historic Evolution

The area lies mostly outside the eastern section of the Town Wall and remained largely undeveloped during the medieval and later medieval periods, albeit a chapel is known to have existed on the site of St Anne's Church. The south-east area of the walled town - around the mouth of the Pandon Burn - extends into this Character Area. The Keelmen's Hospital - established in 1701-04 - was an early and significant development outside the Town Wall. The area finally became built up with a mix of industrial and domestic development during the Victorian period and has since been substantially redeveloped.

##### Archaeological Interest

The medieval town wall extended eastwards to encompass the valley of the Pandon Burn and its settlement, cutting through buildings on Pandon Bank in much the same way as it had on Gallowgate. The wall extended north around the east side of the Pandon Burn and survives to enter this Character Area north of City Road in the form of the Sallyport Tower, now visible in the much altered

form of the Ship's Carpenter's Company's Hall (1716). It then turned west to cross the Pandon Burn and its valley, on the west side of which part of a corner tower stands in the shadow of the City Road bridge. From here the wall struck northwards, to be truncated in 1972 by the East Central Motorway. Within the walled area there is potential for the survival of archaeological deposits of medieval and late medieval date, especially around the Pandon Burn itself, which like other Newcastle watercourses, was infilled and culverted to maximise the area available for occupation. These deeper deposits in the valley bottoms are likely to encapsulate archaeological remains which elsewhere may have been destroyed by later development.

Outside the Town Wall, however, the late development of the agricultural area suggests that any archaeological remains would be likely to be of pre-medieval date, but there is no specific evidence of this. The name Battle Fields applies to an area north-east of St Anne's Church. This may have some significance as elsewhere the discovery of human bones ascribed to an unrecorded battle has been shown to refer instead to stray finds from a Saxon cemetery. The industrial archaeology resource is mainly now cartographic and documentary.

##### Distinctive Characteristics

This is a self-contained area on the plateau above St Ann's Quayside. The Victorian street pattern has been remodelled in places, but survives in the south-west and north-east. Melbourne Street/Howard Street provides a spine to the area. The block pattern was historically Victorian terraces and industrial buildings/warehouses that enclosed streets, such as found along Tower Street. However, remodelling in the 20th century has led to mostly low density buildings along relatively wide streets, for example Melbourne Street lined by large office blocks

(e.g. BT) and blocks of flats (e.g. Melbourne Court) set back from the road in open grounds. This has led to a variety in street and block form and in the sense of enclosure along streets.

There is also a great variety in the character of the public/private realm interface, from overtly public areas, notably St Anne's churchyard, the semi-private areas such as the green areas outside blocks of flats, and the more private areas around the surviving older streets. These semi-public areas are extensive areas of grass with amenity tree planting. The skyline is open and mostly low, broken mostly by regular blocks. St Anne's Church spire provides particular interest.

There are a number of distinctive buildings and landmarks in this area, including The Wall Knoll Tower, (a sandstone tower that forms part of the Medieval town walls), the Keelmen's Hospital, a fine square brick building built in 1701, the large bulk of the BT building constructed from modular concrete, the steel clad Tyne Tees television building and, of course, the magnificent sandstone church of St Ann's.

Built materials vary with date. Use of materials in chronological order include sandstone, brick, concrete and steel. Tarmac dominates the floorscape, but stone flagging is notable in a few places and stone setts are distinctive in Tower Street. The dominant colour of the area was historically a warm red/terracotta. However, more recent buildings have resulted in harsher tones and a dominance of grey/cream. The land use of the area is a mixture of business and domestic, but generally fairly clearly zoned. Tower Street feels slightly threatening with blind walls and a few decaying premises.

## Visual Environment

Like other areas of the plateau, this area is not especially visible from outside. Large buildings on St Ann's Quayside tend to block views into the area. Despite this St Ann's Church remains an important feature of the skyline. There are few views out of the character area even where it seems there should be - views south to the Tyne Gorge down Tower Street or Crawhall Road, for example, are mostly blocked. Good views of the Tyne Gorge from St Anne's Church are across a vacant site on the quayside and thus may be short lived. However, there are some dramatic views from the edges of the plateau over adjacent valleys, for example over Ouseburn valley from the eastern edge of the plateau, e.g. from Grassy Hill public open space.

St Ann's Plateau forms an important middle ground in views from St Mary's Church, 5th Floor of the Baltic, Windmill Hills town park and St Michael's Church, Byker, as well as an important skyline in strategic views from Ouseburn Watersports Centre and St Lawrence Road.

## Quality and Value

The Townscape quality of this character area is influenced by its perceived integrity and state of repair. The area has a sense of integrity despite its extensive redevelopment. There is a wide range of architecturally interesting buildings, from the medieval (the Tower), 18th century (St. Anne's Church 1768 and the Keelmen's Hospital 1701-04), Victorian period (warehouses and domestic terraces) and the 20th century (Melbourne Court and the BT building). Keelman's Hospital is one of three early and significant surviving brick buildings. The area is mostly well-kept and generally in a good state of repair. Although, the area around Tower Street has some of the

most interesting townscape features, it is in a poor state of repair.

Overall this is judged to be an environment of moderate quality as a result of its varying condition and intactness. A somewhat similar conclusion is drawn in relation to its architectural quality as reflected in its scattering of listed buildings.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

This area is not highly sensitive to new built development because it is characterised by built development of a variety of periods and its plateau landform means it is not highly visible from outside. The most visually sensitive part of the area is the plateau edge.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- The plateau topography in this area means that it is easy to block views into the Gorge by siting large buildings on the edge of the Gorge.
- Demolition or substantial alteration of the highly visible buildings on the plateau edge (e.g. Pandon Buildings, Sallyport House and Keelman's Hospital). These form an important façade and rhythm in the middle ground of views.
- New built development that overshadows existing landmarks such as St Ann's Church.
- Dereliction of older buildings and warehouses.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on conservation of the scale and rhythm of the buildings on the plateau edge and regeneration of decaying areas, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Conserve the facades of the highly visible buildings on the plateau edge (e.g. Pandon Buildings, Sallyport House and Keelman's Hospital) that form an important middle ground in strategic views.
- Consider the regeneration of historic buildings and streets, for example the area around Tower Street.
- Encourage access between the plateau and the Tyne waterfront by enhancing access routes down the Gorge slopes.
- Ensure that new built development does not have an overbearing effect on historic buildings, particularly on existing landmarks such as St Ann's Church.
- Newbuild should consider the use of traditional materials - particularly brick and sandstone.
- In planning any new development, consideration should be given to the strategic views from St Mary's Church, 5th Floor of the Baltic, Windmill Hills town park, St Michael's Church, Ouseburn Watersports Centre and St Lawrence Road.





Despite the poor rate of repair, the site has a strong sense of place as a result of its industrial legacy



Railway works buildings are visible on the lip of the Gorge



Block pattern was predicated by the railway lines. Note the distant views to the Tyne Bridge



Current character is determined by the successive abandoned and derelict buildings with wide spaces between



Many buildings lie derelict



Historic stone buildings are worthy of conservation

## 4D GREENESFIELD RAILWAY WORKS

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the Gorge-top plateau above the steep Gorge slopes of Rabbit Banks to the south of the Tyne. Its boundaries are clearly defined by topography and land use. The northern boundary is a topographical boundary, formed by the lip of the Gorge while its southern boundary is clearly defined by the A184 dual carriageway (Askew Road). It forms part of the *Settled and Wooded Hills* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment.

### Historic Evolution

This was agricultural land until the 1830's when Greene's Field became the centre of Gateshead's railway industry. A station and engine shed were built first. The North Eastern Railway's locomotive works were added later and by the end of the century it was the largest employer in Gateshead with 16,000 men. Unfortunately, the site at Greenesfield was too small and the N.E.R. transferred the engine building part of the works to Darlington in 1909. In 1932 the rest of the works were closed. However, they re-opened again for repairs during World War II, closing once more in 1959. The remaining buildings were used as warehouses which remained in use until the 1980s. Abandonment and dereliction soon set in. Redevelopment for housing and leisure is now underway, with proposals which allow for the retention of the best surviving and most interesting architectural fragments.

### Archaeological Interest

As with other areas which were green fields until 19th

century development, there is no known archaeology although the history of agricultural use is likely to extend back at least to the pre-Roman Iron Age. The scale of the works associated with industry here - which included six waggonworks roundhouses - will have destroyed anything earlier. Industrial archaeological remains will be present, however, which may amplify the cartographic and photographic record.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This is an exciting area positioned on the plateau high above the Gorge - the steep Gorge sides of Rabbit Banks fall away to the Tyne to the north. Although it forms part of the *Wooded Hills* landscape type, it is on a distinct terrace before the land starts to rise at Windmill Hills to the south. The area is underlain by Coal Measures over which lies a mantle of boulder clay. The area's block pattern was established in response to the Gorge edge and the now-removed railway lines, aligned east-west. However, as so many of the original buildings and infrastructure have been demolished, little of the block pattern remains. The current character is therefore determined by the succession of abandoned and damaged buildings with wide open spaces between. Despite this, the remaining works buildings on the Gorge edge are important visual elements on the Gorge's skyline. The area has a close relationship to the mainline railway and Metro. The King Edward Railway Bridge forms an extension to this area, taking the railway line across the Gorge into Newcastle Station. The Metro bridge also forms an extension to the area, crossing the Gorge to the east of the mainline railway bridge.

Historically there has been little public access to this area. The enclosing stone walls provide distinctive boundary features. The current re-development of the site will open up this space to the public. The dominant

building materials are sandstone and brick. Distinctive buildings include the former Station Hotel and adjacent workshops, and the listed boiler shop. There is no street lighting or street furniture. The character of the area is currently in flux - its neglected state is being transformed and the noise of demolition machinery is ever present.

### Visual Environment

This is an area with high visual interest, partly due to its natural setting on the Gorge lip and partly as a result of the important and visually dramatic railway works buildings. Like other areas of the plateau type, this area is not especially visible from outside as a result of the flat aspect beyond the Gorge edge. However, the dramatically rising hills of Windmill Hills to the south allows clear, elevated views over the site. Views from the area are mostly from the Gorge lip, from where there are clear views across the Gorge to Newcastle and the Tyne Bridges.

The *Greenesfield Railway Works* forms an important middle ground in views from Windmill Hills town park, as well as an important skyline in strategic views from Hadrian's Way east of the Metro Bridge. It is also highly visible when travelling into Newcastle by train or travelling across the Gorge on the Metro.

### Quality and Value

The townscape quality of this character reflects its perceived integrity and state of repair. Although the area is currently in a poor state of repair the whole area has an integrity and an extremely strong sense of place. It is highly valued in townscape terms for its location on the edge of the Gorge and its important railway history that shaped the development of Gateshead. The Station Hotel and the railway works boiler shop are important

good quality early railway buildings which assume an even greater significance in the context of the previous removal of much of the railway architecture of northern Gateshead. The value of the area is reflected in its designation as part of the Bridges Conservation Area, and the presence of two listed buildings.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is highly sensitive to new built development because of its visually sensitive Gorge edge location, its important industrial archaeology and its location close to the historic core of Gateshead and the famous Tyne Bridges. The most sensitive part of the area is the plateau edge and the area adjoining the historic core of Gateshead. The typical built form of existing development is low lying. However, there could be an opportunity for a landmark building (for example, if it was similar in scale to the Turnbull's Warehouse on the Newcastle side of the river) provided that it was of high quality both in its design and use of materials.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- The plateau topography in this area means that it is easy to block views into the Gorge by siting large buildings on the Gorge edge.
- Demolition or alteration of the facades of the highly visible buildings on the plateau edge (e.g. the former boiler shop and other railway works buildings).
- Dereliction of older buildings and warehouses and eradication of the industrial archaeology and railway history of the area.



- Development that does not relate to the historic core of Gateshead and the famous Tyne Bridges.
- Tall buildings that would impact on the generally low-rise nature of the area.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy to conserve the scale and rhythm of buildings on the plateau edge and to regenerate decaying areas, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Conserve the facades of the highly visible buildings on the plateau edge (e.g. the former boiler shop) that form important skyline landmarks.
- Conserve as far as possible the important industrial archaeology and railway history of the area, and incorporate this in any new development.
- Ensure development in this area respects and supports the historic core of Gateshead and the famous Tyne Bridges.
- The low-rise nature of the area should be generally adhered to. However, there could be an opportunity for a landmark building (similar in scale to the Turnbull's Warehouse on the Newcastle side of the river) as long as the building is of high quality both in its design and use of materials
- Conserve the stone walls boundaries and consider new boundaries of a similar character.

- Consider views from mainline railway and Metro in planning any new built development.
- Encourage access between the plateau and the Tyne waterfront by enhancing access routes down the Gorge slopes.
- Newbuild should consider the use of traditional materials - particularly brick and sandstone.
- In planning any new development, consideration should be given to the strategic views from Windmill Hills town park and Hadrian's Way east of the Metro Bridge.



Buildings on the edge of the plateau are visible on the skyline of the Gorge



Views are constrained by street and block pattern



The Baltic business centre is one of the distinctive buildings in the area

## 4E EAST GATESHEAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the Gorge-top plateau above the steep Gorge slopes that form the south bank of the Tyne. Its boundaries are clearly defined by topography and land use. The northern boundary is a topographical boundary, formed by the lip of the Gorge, while its western boundary is marked by a transition to the prominent hill that underlies the Saltmeadows area. Its southern boundary is defined by the edge of the study area, although in reality the character area continues beyond this boundary. It forms part of the *Settled and Wooded Hills* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment.

### Historic Evolution

Until the mid-19th century this area was agricultural land; although prehistoric settlement may have been present here, there is no evidence of prior activity other than agricultural use which appears to have continued from at least medieval times. The western part of this area was developed following the arrival of the railway. The largely post-War redevelopment of the industrial infrastructure was accompanied by the extension of service and industrial activity eastwards.

### Archaeological Interest

There is no recorded archaeological interest, and no record of medieval activity. Although earlier settlement is a possibility, the likelihood of surviving evidence is limited.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This is a flat plateau area between the steep Gorge slopes to the north and the rising hills of Mount Pleasant to the south. The street pattern is dominated by Saltmeadows Road, a principal east-west road which forms a spine running roughly parallel and inland from the Gorge lip. A network of service roads branch off from this main route. Buildings are mostly low-rise and medium density light industrial buildings dating from the second half of the 20th century. Visual sequences are constrained by the regular street and block pattern, although curved roads (formed in response to the Gorge edge) provide changing views and some visual interest. However, most of the visual interest comes from external views to Newcastle from the lip of the Gorge. Fairly recent amenity tree and shrub planting provides some visual interest and breaks up some blank walls.

The roofscape is dominated by block forms, particularly visible from the opposite bank of the river, and provides little visual interest. Built materials are typical of late 20th century light industrial buildings and include steel cladding, concrete and some brick. There are few distinctive buildings in this area - the most distinctive are Gateshead International Stadium and the Baltic Business Centre. There are no listed buildings. The dominant colour of the environment is green/grey which is not characteristic of older industrial areas along the Tyne. There are no distinctive boundaries, floorscapes or street furniture in this area. Overall this is a rather monotonous environment that lacks either a strong character or interesting focal points. It has the appearance of a service area with little pretension, or indeed reason for pretension, in its architecture.



## Visual Environment

From the north bank of the Gorge the area is only visible along its plateau edge where the buildings form the ridgeline - these are generally low and unobtrusive. From within the area, views outwards are constrained by the street and block pattern.

Buildings on the edge of the *East Gateshead Industrial Estates* form an important skyline in strategic views from St Lawrence Road. It is also visible from St Michael's Church.

## Quality and Value

The townscape quality of this character area is influenced by its strength of character and state of repair. Although the area is in a satisfactory state of repair, the lack of distinctive character/ sense of place and the use of generally cheap building materials diminishes the perceived sense of quality. There are no value designations associated with this area. The main value attributed to this area is as a result of its location and setting on the southern edge of the Gorge.

## Sensitivity to New Built Development

The plateau edge/lip of the Gorge is visually sensitive to new built development because of its visually sensitive Gorge edge location. However, areas further back from the plateau edge are less sensitive. The existing townscape fabric is not sensitive to change and consequently the area has a capacity to accommodate new built development which may help to enhance its sense of place.

## Threats to Gorge Character

- The plateau topography in this area means that it is easy to block views into the Gorge by siting large buildings on the Gorge edge.
- Lack of visual interest or sense of place could threaten Gorge character.
- New built development that competes with existing landmarks along this part of the Gorge e.g. the Baltic, could be a threat to character in adjoining areas.
- Development on the Gorge lip that is of poor quality design and materials could be a threat to character in adjoining areas.
- Lack of public access could result in a hostile environment.

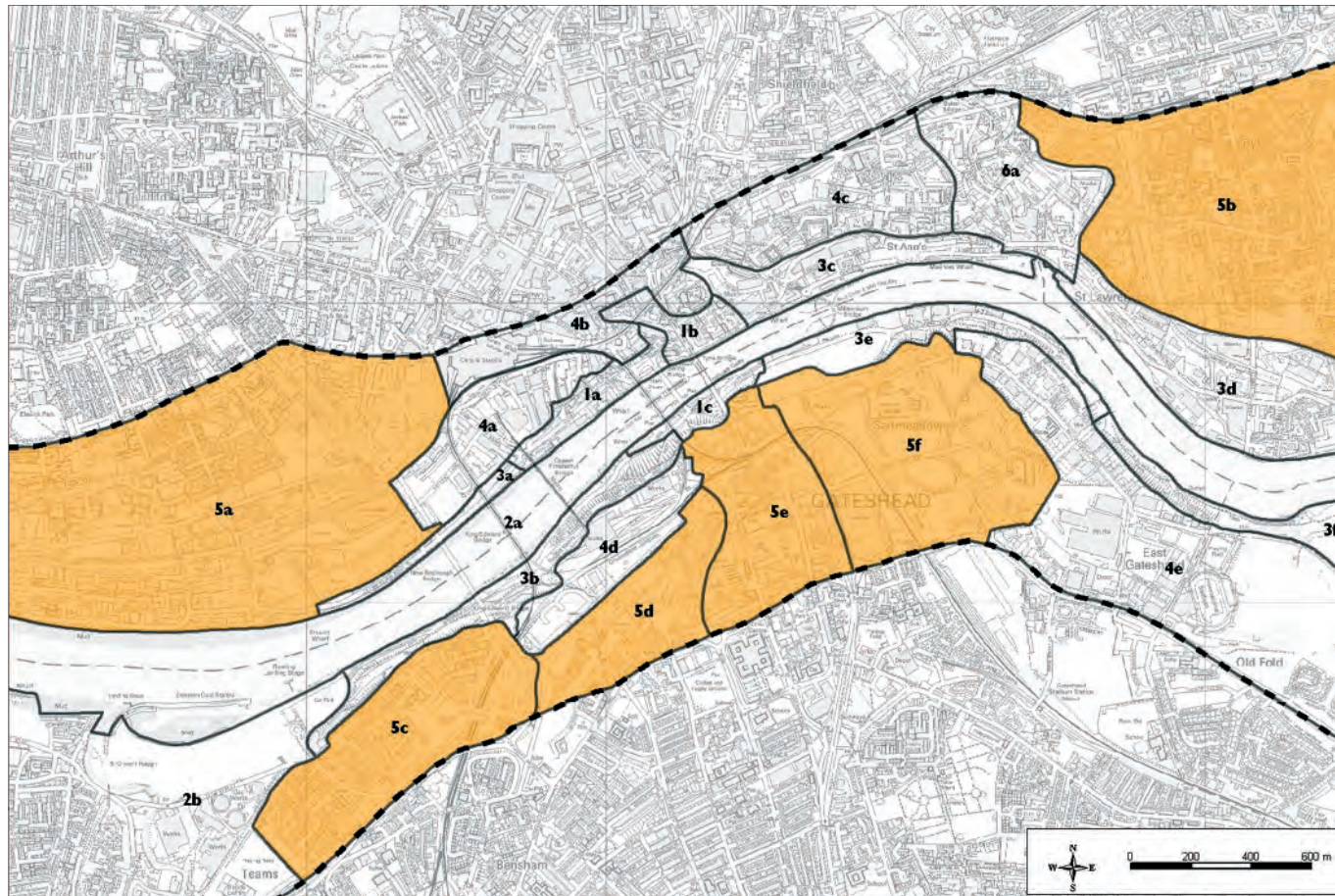
## Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on enhancement of the townscape and sense of place, the following design and development principles should apply:

- There may be opportunities for bold new additions to the townscape in this area.
- Consider opportunities to increase the visual interest of the skyline of the Gorge lip.
- Consider new built development and detailing to create focal points and help to enhance sense of place.

- There may be an opportunity to increase the density of development in this area.
- Encourage new linkages both with historic Gateshead and with the River.
- Aim to increase the availability of views across the Gorge and enhance public access in this area, particularly along the Gorge edge.
- In planning any new development, consideration should be given to the strategic views from St Lawrence Road and St Michael's Church, Byker.





### TYPE 5: SETTLED HILLS

This character type is defined by the locally prominent hills that rise above the Gorge slopes. These hills are upstanding as a result of their underlying geology - they tend to occur on the bands of sandstone that form part of the Coal Measures geological strata. These areas are well settled and buildings are placed to make the most of views. As a result, many of the buildings are visible from within the Gorge, particularly those that occupy the lower slopes or those on the 'skyline'. Due to the gently rising topography, there is not such a dramatic 'Gorge lip' as is associated with the *Settled Plateauxs*. These characteristics are common throughout the following character areas:

- Elswick
- Byker
- Teams
- Windmill Hills
- Central Gateshead
- Saltmeadows

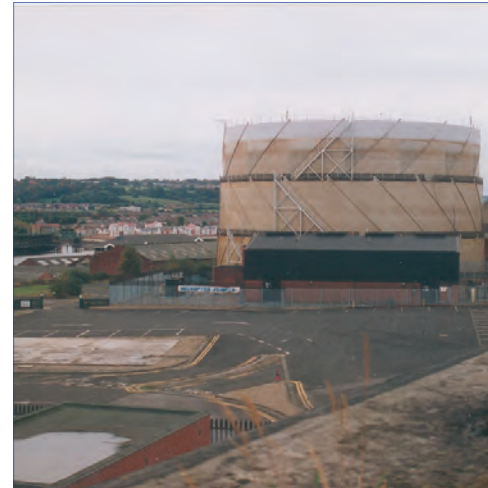




This area is a product of 20th Century redevelopment of a Victorian suburb of Newcastle



The Park Road flats are prominent features of this area



The gasholder is a prominent landmark at the western end of the Gorge



Earlier ranks of Victorian terraces have been replaced by large scale new developments, such as the Newcastle Arena and car park



The lower slopes are dominated by industrial buildings



The residential suburb of Elswick lies on a hill



The area has undergone substantial redevelopment in the second half of the 20th century

### Character Area 5A: Elswick



## 5A ELSWICK

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the gently rising Gorge slopes of the northern bank at the western end of the Gorge. The character area is large in extent - its southern boundary meets the waterside of the Tyne while its northern boundary is defined by the extent of the visual envelope of the Gorge and stretches up to Westmorland Road. It forms part of the *Plateau Coalfields* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment.

### Historic Evolution

The arrival of the railway in 1839, followed by Armstrong's factory in 1847, heralded the beginning of a massive wave of housebuilding. The ubiquitous Tyneside flat, where two separate dwellings are combined in a single house, were laid out in a gridiron pattern, following the fashion in America. However, Elswick's reliance on heavy manufacturing had grave implications for its community in the inter War depression - large Victorian houses fell into multiple occupancy, and munitions manufacture was turned to light engineering. By 1964 the post war "slum" clearance meant that the community was dispersed. Few historic buildings remained after this period of wholesale demolition. New high-tech business parks now occupy the lower slopes, while the upper slopes are given over to late 20th century residential development.

### Archaeological Interest

Any evidence for medieval settlement here has been lost - and none of this or any other date is recorded. As in other areas of the broader conurbation, archaeological

discoveries relating to early settlement might arise as chance finds, but none can be predicted.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This area is located on the lower southern slopes of Arthur's Hill at the western end of the Gorge. It is characterised by its large scale topography where the contours are evenly spaced (see *Figure 5.1*). The character of the area today is largely a product of later 20th century re-development of a Victorian area. The earlier geometric ranks of Victorian terraces have now been replaced by a maze of streets and cul de sacs, typical of current estates, or by large scale open car parks. The proliferation of dead-end streets means there are few passers-by or through traffic in this quiet suburban environment. The soft landscape is dominated by municipal planting on road verges and in communal areas outside flats where species such as birch, ornamental cherry and ash are typical.

The built form is visually dominated by large scale blocks, whether it be large industrial units (Newcastle Business Park), public buildings (Newcastle Arena, Centre for Life) or residential blocks (Park Road flats). The Park Road flats stand out as distinctive features on the skyline. There is also a small pocket of smaller scale low rise housing organised into neighbourhood squares. Extensive re-development means much of the historic fabric has been lost. Only a scattering of historic buildings remain including the Rye Hill Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital Almshouses, Rye Hill.

Any remnant Victorian infrastructure is confined to the lower industrial slopes below the Newcastle Arena (see *Figure 3.2*). Here, the presence of stone wall boundaries and cobbled yards provide a reassuring sense of permanence

## Visual Environment

The visual environment is of interest mainly because of its setting/riverside position. The loss of the majority of the historic fabric has meant a reduction in the visual stimulation provided by the townscape. The real interest in the visual environment lies in the views out of the area and into the Gorge. These views tend to be down roads and from the edge of the Newcastle Arena. The whole hillside is highly visible from the opposite bank of the Tyne, particularly from the Tyne and Wear footpath west of the Redheugh Bridge, from Teams, from Windmill Hills, and from the Redheugh Bridge approach to Newcastle.

The area forms an important middle ground in the strategic views from the Old Redheugh Bridgehead, as well as an important backdrop in strategic views from Windmill Hill's Town Park and St Michael's Church, Byker.

## Quality and Value

This area lost its sense of intactness during the large scale redevelopment of the area in the later 20th Century. Despite this, some strength of character is provided its dramatic natural setting on the edge of the Gorge, and its robust industrial elements including the prominent gasholder. Elements are in varying condition.

Although townscape quality is not high, the area is valued for its riverside location, its landmark buildings (Gasholder, Park Road Flats) and its light scattering of listed buildings.

## Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is highly visually sensitive as a result of its location on the rising northern banks of the Tyne. However, the character of the existing townscape is not sensitive to change and there is some capacity for this large scale landscape to absorb new development.

## Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that dramatically alters the skyline or has an overbearing effect on the remaining historic buildings.
- New built development that alters the urban grain of the hillside.

## Principles for Accommodating New Development

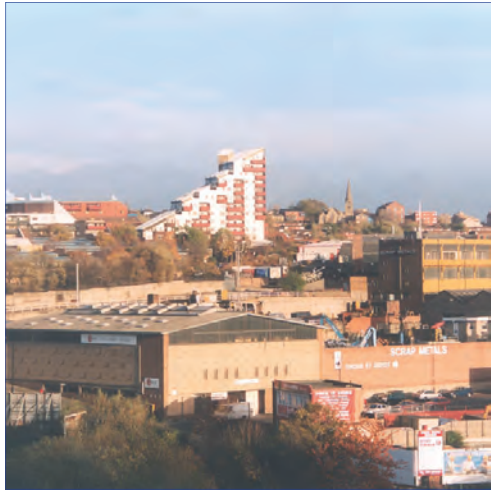
It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on enhancement and regeneration, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Reintroduce an urban grain that is human in scale and can help to attract people back into the area, so increasing density in an area that is close to the city centre
- Maintain historic infrastructure, such as boundary walls, in any new developments.
- Ensure any new development maintains a close relationship with topography and visual linkages with the River.
- Maintain, and enhance, access down to the River

re-creating the sequences of framed and unfolding views that are characteristic of the Gorge sides.

- Re-create a sense of enclosure in areas where this has been lost.
- Consider increasing the native vegetation cover to form a natural backdrop to the western end of the Gorge.
- Consider providing public open space with viewpoints over the Tyne.
- In planning any new development, consideration should be given to the strategic views from the Old Redheugh Bridgehead, Windmill Hill's Town Park and St Michael's Church, Byker.





The jagged forms of the Byker estate and St Michael's Church spire form a distinctive skyline



View from St Michael's Church, distinctive blue roofs of the Byker estate in the foreground

## 5B BYKER

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the gently rising hill at the eastern end of the Gorge. The southern boundary is formed by Walker Road which separates Byker from the industrial area to the south. The western boundary is defined by the edge of the Ouseburn valley. The northern and eastern boundaries continue beyond the limits of the study area. It forms part of the *Plateau Coalfields* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment.

### Historic Evolution

The area was until the 19th century one of mixed agriculture around the medieval village of Byker. Extensive domestic development took place during the Victorian period, then in the mid-20th century extensive clearance of Victorian terraced streets was undertaken, with replacement housing characterised by low rise blocks and linked blocks, as well as the famous Byker Wall.

### Archaeological Interest

Successive redevelopment will have removed any intelligible remains of medieval settlement. While there is no record of any earlier activity the possibility cannot be excluded, although the likelihood of any evidence surviving is limited.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This area is located on a prominent hill at the eastern end of the Gorge - the last upstanding hill before the

coastal lowlands to the east. The earlier geometric ranks of Victorian terraces have now been replaced by a maze of streets and cul de sacs at seemingly random orientations lined by short and long terraces of houses and flats, all enclosed by the curved form of the Byker Wall to the north. This is an exposed and windy hill with little shelter, except up close to the Byker Wall. The built form varies, but it is the Byker Estate stands out as distinctive - the use of timber stain reflecting the Scandinavian influence of the architect Ralph Erskine. The roofscape and skyline is distinctive with colourful roofs visible stepping up the hillside against the green leafy backdrop. Tom Collins House and St Michaels' Church are prominent landmarks on the skyline.

The proliferation of dead-end streets means there are few passers-by or through traffic in this area leading to a quiet suburban environment. The landscape is dominated by municipal planting on road verges and in communal areas outside flats - species such as birch, ornamental cherry and ash are typical species. Despite the lack of clarity between the public and private realm, open spaces tend to be well maintained and cared for. Boundaries and edges are typically wooden fences, although the stone walls around St Michael's church are evidence that a more historic settlement existed before the Byker housing project.

The impression is homogenous throughout much of the area, but with unexpected features such as St Michaels' Church, the Byker Wall and views down the Gorge enlivening the suburban scene. This is a domestic area with a strong identity which contrasts strongly with the more open development in St Ann's and the upmarket apartments on the Quayside.

## Visual Environment

The visual environment is somewhat variable - not all the more recent housing offers much of interest. The real interest lies in the views up the Gorge that are afforded from the hillside. The area around St Michael's Church is an important area in the foreground of the strategic view from St Michael's Church.

The position of this hill at the eastern end of the Gorge means that it forms a backdrop to the eastern end of the Gorge and forms an important backdrop in the strategic views from Hadrian's Way East of the Metro Bridge and from Newcastle Quayside.

## Quality and Value

The character of this area is strong, mainly due to the defining presence of the Byker Wall. Despite varying condition of individual elements, the area has an integrity that provides a strength of character. Quality is therefore considered to be moderate. The architectural quality of this area varies from fairly mundane social housing to unique and innovative architecture of international interest.

The area is valued for its landmark buildings, particularly Tom Collins House and St Michael's Church which give the area a distinctive skyline. The value of the architecture of the Byker Wall is recognised by its proposed listing.

## Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is highly visually sensitive as a result of its highly visible location at the Eastern end of the Gorge. The skyline of the hill is the most visually sensitive location.

## Threats to Gorge Character

- New built development that dramatically alters the skyline or has an overbearing effect on historic buildings, particularly on existing landmarks such as Tom Collins House and St Michael's Church.
- New built development that alters the urban grain of the hillside.
- Built development that obscures views from the hillside down into the Gorge.

## Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on conservation of historic areas and enhancement of the public realm, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider increasing the native vegetation cover to form a natural backdrop to the eastern end of the Gorge.
- Consider eventual removal of housing that impinges on the setting of St Michael's Church. Consider enhancing the area around St Michael's church as a public open space and viewpoint.
- Ensure that new built development does not have an overbearing effect on existing distinctive landmarks such as Tom Collins House and St Michael's Church.
- Reinforce and strengthen pedestrian access from this area to the waterside, through the St Lawrence Quayside.

- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from St Michael's Church and Hadrian's Way East of the Metro Bridge.

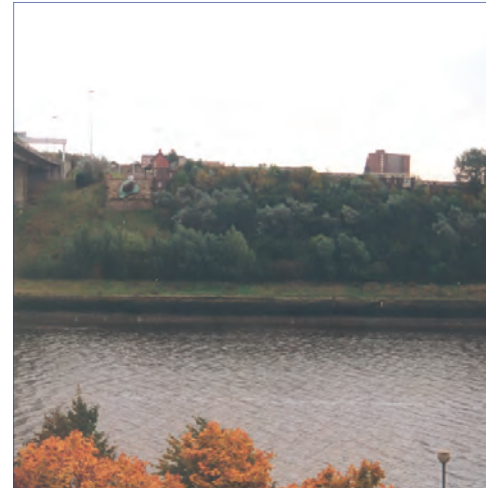




The area is dominated by post-war suburban housing along wide streets



There are views over the the Gorge to Newcastle from the northern edge of the area



The Gorge side provides a wooded setting to the housing estate



There are views over the area from the Redheugh Bridge



Low rise development lies along curvilinear roads and culs de sac



Built development is low lying and unintrusive (church and tower block are outside the area)

### Character Area 5C: Teams



## 5C TEAMS

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Types

This character area occupies the gently rising hillside above the Tyne Gorge (to the north) and the Team floodplain (to the west). Its northern boundary is a topographical boundary, formed by the lip of the Gorge while its southern boundary is artificially defined by the limit of the 'Gorge and its Immediate Setting' (drawn along the A184 dual carriageway). The eastern boundary is formed by the Redheugh Bridge approach roundabout beyond which lie the distinct character areas of the *Greenesfield Railway Works* and *Windmill Hills*. The ground drops away in a westerly direction to the floodplain of the River Team. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 landscape assessment.

### Historic Evolution

This area lies on the eastern flank of the Team valley. This area was first developed in the Victorian period when regular rows of terraces were built on the gently sloping valley sides. Extensive demolition and re-development of the site post-war has resulted in the present day suburban townscape.

### Archaeological Interest

No archaeological evidence is recorded from this area. As in other areas of the broader conurbation, archaeological discoveries relating to early settlement might arise as chance finds, but none can be predicted.

## Distinctive Characteristics

This character area is in a strategic position at the confluence of the Team and Tyne. The eastern part of this area is dominated by the major junction associated with the Redheugh Bridge approach and the mainline railway. The remainder of the area is therefore isolated from Central Gateshead by major infrastructure. The earlier geometric ranks of Victorian terraces of this suburb have been replaced by a maze of streets and cul de sacs lined by short and long terraces of houses and flats. This is an area of suburban low rise development. Short terraces are constructed from grey or red brick. Playing fields on the upper slopes provide a green backdrop to the Gorge and amenity planting contributes to the wooded character of the skyline.

## Visual Environment

This area contains little of visual interest. Visual patterns within the area are confined by street and block pattern and views out of the character area to the north are restricted by the vegetation growing along the Gorge edge. There are more opportunities for views westwards into the Team valley, particularly on descending Askew Road West and Rose Street. The area is most visible in views from the Newcastle side of the river (for example from the Newcastle Arena) and from the Redheugh Bridge approaches. It does not form part of any strategic views.

## Quality and Value

Townscape quality is influenced by its perceived strength of character and state of repair. Although the area is in a satisfactory state of repair, it does not have a strong sense of place. Quality cannot therefore be described as high.

However, it is valued for its Gorge edge location. There are no Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings in this character area.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

The north-eastern part of this area is particularly visually sensitive to new built development because of its location close to the lip of the Gorge. However, the townscape fabric is not sensitive to change.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- Loss of vegetation would lead to loss of the wooded character that forms a backdrop to the Gorge.
- Continuing difficulty in moving between this area and the town centre could lead to a hostile environment.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on maintaining the wooded backdrop it provides to the Gorge, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider additional native planting to enhance the skyline.
- Enhance access between this suburban area and the town centre.
- Consider providing additional opportunities for views across the Gorge.







St Cuthberts tower is an unlikely building in this generally low rise area



Traditional building materials include sandstone



This is an extremely exposed area with views of distant hills in the background



There are magnificent panoramic views over the Gorge from Windmill Hills



Windmill Hills is currently undergoing redevelopment for housing

#### Character Area 5D: Windmill Hills



## 5D WINDMILL HILLS

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies the steeply rising hillside on the southern side of the Gorge. Its northern boundary is clearly defined by topography (where the steep hillside meets the Greenesfield plateau) and by the Askew Road dual carriageway. It is bounded to the east by Gateshead Centre and to the west by Teams. It forms part of the *Settled Hills* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 assessment.

### Historic Evolution

From medieval times Gateshead had been a centre for milling corn. Windmills are mentioned as early as 1189. As may be deduced from its name, most were to be found in this area of 'Windmill Hills'. The hillside was common land for many years until an Enclosure Act was passed in 1814 and this ancient right came to an end. The fields and plots were quickly sold as building land over the next three decades. Windmill Hills was the site of the first public park in Gateshead (circa. 1861). It was also during the nineteenth century that the windmills fell into disuse or were used for other purposes such as storehouses and tenement dwellings. The last mill on Windmill Hills was demolished in 1927. All the Victorian terraces on Windmill Hills were demolished to make way for St Cuthbert's Village in the 1960s/1970s. This 'village' was demolished for yet more redevelopment in the late 1980s, albeit one tower block, St Cuthbert's House, at the end of St Cuthbert', was retained.

### Archaeological Interest

No archaeological information is recorded from this area, although, as has been discussed elsewhere, agricultural utilisation of the area has probably taken place since the pre-Roman Iron Age. It is highly unlikely that archaeological evidence, if any such existed, would now survive.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This area is located on a prominent and steep-sided hill on the south side of the Gorge. Its street pattern responds to the topography of the area with a series of curvilinear access roads running along the contours, parallel with Bensham Road. These streets tend to end in cul de sacs - there is therefore no through-traffic resulting in a quiet 'backwater' character. Two storey suburban later 20th century semi-detached houses and short terraces line the east-west streets and cul de sacs. These regular rows of houses form a very stark skyline when viewed from the opposite side of the Gorge. A notable exception to this pattern is St Cuthbert's House, a prominent tower block at the base of the hill. Overall the housing is at a low density, partly because of currently undeveloped plots and partly due to the incredibly steep slopes.

This is an extremely exposed and windy site with breathtaking views up the River Tyne. Its immature landscape, with no trees and only limited areas of amenity planting and grass, further compounds the feeling of exposure. Windmill Hills Town Park is a newly created town park for Gateshead with panoramic views over the Gorge. Boundaries are typical of late 20th Century suburban estates and include railings, wooden palisade fences and low red brick walls. There are few distinctive built elements remaining. However the Georgian brick Romulus Terrace across the Bensham Road, the local

sandstone Borough Arms and the Victorian Tyne View nursing home lift the spirit slightly. St Cuthbert's House (c.1970) is an old structure compared with the rows of new (2001) terraced and semi-detached houses. These built elements are evidence of previous built communities in this area.

This is a highly stimulating area, not for reasons of its townscape character, but for its elevated and exposed position on top of a hill. In fact, it is a little too stimulating and does not feel comfortable due to driving winds and exposure to the elements. In contrast, the townscape character is monotonous due to the suburban style housing that lacks local sense of place.

### **Visual Environment**

The visual environment is highly stimulating owing to the magnificent panoramic views over the Tyne Gorge and Newcastle. The hill forms a very prominent skyline - the highest skyline within the Gorge and its immediate setting. Its prominence means that it forms an important skyline in views from the northern banks of the Tyne as well as in views from the Redheugh Bridge. However, the eye is always drawn by St Cuthbert's House. The area forms an important foreground in the strategic view from Windmill Hills Town Park.

### **Quality and Value**

Townscape quality is influenced by its perceived integrity and state of repair. The area has seen demolition and rebuilding in several phases in its history. This means that the intactness and integrity of the townscape has been lost. State of repair of individual features is variable. Sense of place is high owing to its setting and position overlooking the Gorge. However, the townscape fabric

itself has little character or sense of place. Despite this, it is valued for its magnificent views over the Gorge. The value of the remaining Victorian buildings is reflected in their designation as listed structures.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

This area is highly visually sensitive as a result of its visible skyline location.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- New built development that dramatically alters the skyline or has an overbearing effect on the remaining historic buildings.
- New built development that alters the urban grain of the hillside.
- Built development that obscures views from the hillside down into the Gorge.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on re-creating an exciting, dynamic townscape in this unique location, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider increasing the native vegetation cover to form a natural backdrop to the Gorge and to provide a sense of shelter and enclosure for residents.
- Innovative housing designed to provide shelter and protect against the elements in this highly

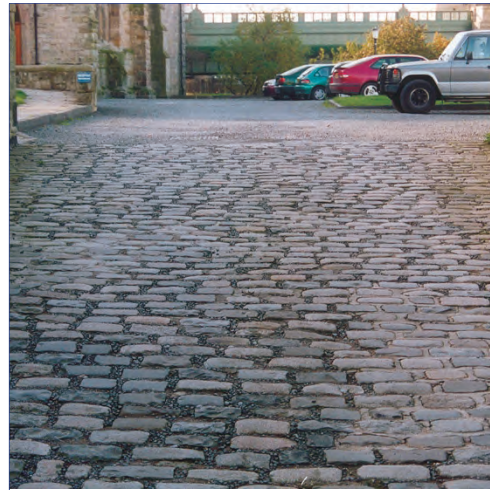
exposed situation would enhance the character of this unique location.

- Consider eventual removal of St Cuthbert's House to prevent the eye being distracted by this tower block in views along the Gorge - this would also open up views for other residents behind St Cuthbert's House.
- Ensure that new built development complements the existing layers of history such as the Georgian brick Romulus Terrace across the Bensham Road, the local sandstone Borough Arms, the Victorian Tyne View nursing home, and the Windmill Hills Nursing Home.
- Reinstate a human grain to the townscape and create new features that will enliven the street scene.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from the 5th Floor of the Baltic and Windmill Hills Town Park as well as views from the Redheugh Bridge.





St Mary's Church is located on the Gorge lip



Stone walls and stone setts convey a sense of history



Walker Terrace is an important surviving feature of the townscape



Swinburne Place retains its historic buildings and sense of enclosure



The public realm is dominated by traffic and the stern facades of post war buildings



The townscape today is dominated by 1960's rebuilding and arterial roads



Demolition of historic buildings has resulted in loss of enclosure and sense of place

**Character Area 5E:  
Central Gateshead**



## 5E CENTRAL GATESHEAD

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Types

This character area occupies the gently rising hillside above the steep Gorge slope that forms the *Historic Gateshead Waterfront*. Its boundaries are defined by topography and townscape morphology. The northern boundary is a topographical boundary, formed by the lip of the Gorge while its southern boundary is artificially defined by the limit of the 'Gorge and its Immediate Setting'. The eastern and western boundaries are historic boundaries and relate approximately to the extent of the town up to 1830. The eastern boundary is drawn along the present day A167 and the western boundary is formed by Prince Consort Road. It forms part of the *Settled and Wooded Hills* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 landscape assessment.

### Historic Evolution

Archaeological investigation on and around Bottle Bank, to the north, has led to the suggestion that West Street leading north to Mirk Lane and Bottle Bank may mark the course of the Roman approach to the Tyne crossing, although there is as yet no evidence for Roman activity in this upper area.

The earliest medieval development of the town took place on the lip of the Gorge, on the present site of the parish church of St Mary. To the south was established what became, from the mid-13th century, the Chapel and Hospital of St Edmund (later Holy Trinity and now the Trinity Centre) on the present High Street. The 13th century front to the chapel is the oldest building remaining in Gateshead. It has been suggested recently that the High Street may, with the now dislocated Oakwellgate, have formed a principal spine route in a

planned medieval settlement, a layout which might have been comparable with Yarm, on the Tees. Ultimately the development of settlement on the grid of streets in which is now thought of as central Gateshead took place chiefly from the late 18th century and in the earlier 19th century. In almost as short a period of time the area was essentially re-modelled, from the 1950s onwards, as the town espoused the clearance of town and edge of town houses in favour of high rise flats and, perhaps more ruthlessly than elsewhere, imposed a new road system.

### Archaeological Interest

The archaeological potential of this area remains untested and has most likely been removed from the sites of recent road, commercial and domestic development. Less substantially constructed buildings may well overlie archaeological deposits. The principal issues which may yet be addressed are the extent to which Roman and medieval activity developed above Bottle Bank, and confirmation or otherwise of the suggested planned medieval town.

### Distinctive Characteristics

The street pattern in Central Gateshead is based on an historic grid of roads with main north-south routes (Bankwell Lane/West Street, Bottle Bank/High Street and Oakwellgate/East Street) crossed by east-west routes (Half Moon Street/Brandling Street, Lambton Street, Ellison Street, Bensham Road/Jackson Street). This small scale local street pattern has been cut about and through by major arterial roads (most notably the A167 approach to the Tyne Bridge) and railway lines. The block pattern was historically tightly packed terraces and prominent public buildings that enclosed streets with a human scale, such as found along Swinburne Street and Swinburne Place. However, remodelling in the 20th Century has led to the creation of large scale buildings at a low density along

widened streets, for example West Street and Oakwellgate. Many of the post 1950s buildings are set back from the road or interspersed with open car parks and pedestrian precincts that has led to a loss of enclosure along streets and has diluted the once strong visual sequences.

Fragments of the historic street grid and built environment have been dominated by 1960s rebuilding. However, they remain important elements of the townscape and include the old Public library and adjoining buildings, the former Holy Trinity church and the Post Office. Building materials were historically dominated by sandstone and brick, but concrete and steel now predominate. Noteworthy structures from the re-building phase in the 1960s include Trinity Square shopping precinct with its multi-storey car park (famous for its role in Get Carter 1964-67), the brown rounded blocks of the Metro Interchange (1970s) and the adjoining new powder grey and glass bus station.

The large imposing post 1950s buildings have stern facades and their enormous scale contributes to a hostile environment for the pedestrian. The problem is further compounded by the public realm that is traffic-dominated, composed of poor quality materials and supports limited trees or vegetation. The floorscape is dominated by tarmac and concrete slabs and the overriding colour of the environment is dark and oppressive. However, stone setts on infrequently used roads provide echoes of the 19th Century. User conflicts arise from the conjunction of traffic and pedestrians. Despite the relatively poor quality of the public realm the centre of Gateshead is a busy centre with a neighbourly feel.

## Visual Environment

This is a visually confusing area due to its many layers of history and redevelopment. There are elements of

visual surprise on finding intact historic terraces or ornate public buildings amongst dreary buildings of the 1960s re-building. Only the lower slopes are visible from within the Gorge itself, and in these views St Mary's Church and the Tyne Tower are key landmarks. The upper slopes are visible from more elevated locations, such as from tall buildings within Newcastle. The multi-storey car park is a focus in these views. From within the area the eye is taken to interesting views to the south, towards the Tyne Bridge and beyond to the skyline of Newcastle. The lack of enclosure provided by the built environment means that there are many opportunities for views. The most dramatic views are from the lip of the Gorge, for example from St Mary's Church. There is a particularly good panoramic view from the top of the multi-storey car park.

*Central Gateshead* forms an important foreground in strategic views from St Mary's Church as well as an important middle ground in views from the public viewing gallery on the 5th Floor of the Baltic and St Michael's Church, Byker. It forms an important skyline in views from Mariner's Wharf and St Lawrence Road.

## Quality and Value

Townscape quality is influenced by its perceived integrity and state of repair. Although the area is currently in a varying state of repair and condition, it has an integrity and sense of place as a result of its underlying historic structure. It is valued for its historic remnants (particularly St Mary's Church that form an important landmark on Gateshead's skyline), its position at the southern bridgehead of the High Level, Tyne and Swing Bridges, and its location close to Gateshead Quays. The value of the northern part of the area is recognised in its designation as a part of the Bridges Conservation Area. The value of the remnant Victorian terraces is recognised by the Walker Terrace/Regent Street Conservation Area.



The value of the remnant historic buildings is recognised by their listed status.

### **Sensitivity to New Built Development**

The northern part of this area is particularly visually sensitive to new built development because of its location close to the edge of the Gorge. The historic infrastructure and buildings are sensitive to change, but the area as a whole could accommodate new built development.

### **Threats to Gorge Character**

- Further dereliction of historic buildings and obliteration of historic routes.
- The presence of the Tyne Tower that overshadows the landmark of St Mary's Church.
- New built development that would detract from, or obscure views to, St Mary's Church.
- Loss of human scale within the townscape.
- Lack of access from Central Gateshead to the waterfront within the Gorge.

### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on re-creating a human scale and tight urban grain based upon the medieval pattern, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Conserve the tight grid pattern of historic routes in any redevelopment of the town centre.

- Ensure new built development respects the setting to St Mary's Church and does not overshadow this important historic landmark.
- Create a new townscape with human scale. High density building is appropriate in this town centre location - this will also help to re-create the framed views down streets that once characterised this area.
- Details such as floor materials, street furniture and boundaries are all important in creating sense of place.
- Enhance the character of the public realm and enhance the pedestrian experience. Create safe pedestrian access from Central Gateshead to the waterfront within the Gorge.
- Consider eventual removal of the Tyne Tower that overshadows St Mary's Church.
- Consider eventual removal of Gateshead multi-storey car park that is a negative landmark in the town centre.
- Consider use of lighting to draw out important skyline features, such as St Mary's Church, at night.
- Quality and character of newbuild in this area should reflect the high quality of the historic buildings - consider use of local materials such as sandstone and brick.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from St Mary's Church, the public viewing gallery on the 5th Floor of the Baltic, St Michael's Church, Mariner's Wharf and St Lawrence Road.





Approach to the old Oakwellgate Passenger Station



There are views towards the Tyne Bridge Station



There is a lot of open space and waste ground in this area



The Coal Drops along Maiden's Walk mark the site of the former Oakwellgate Passenger and Goods Terminus



Buildings are at a low density



There is only one pub left in this area



Older buildings are constructed from red brick

**Character Area 5F:  
Saltmeadows**



## 5F SALTMEADOWS

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Type

This character area occupies a low hill on the top of the Gorge slope behind the Gateshead Quays. Its boundaries are defined by topography and townscape morphology. The northern boundary is a topographical boundary, formed by the lip of the Gorge while its southern boundary is artificially defined by the limit of the 'Gorge and its Immediate Setting'. In reality this character area would continue beyond the A184. It borders the historic core of *Central Gateshead* to the west and falls to the *East Gateshead Industrial Estates* plateau to the east. It forms part of the *Settled and Wooded Hills* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 landscape assessment.

### Historic Evolution

Although prehistoric settlement may have been present here, there is no evidence for activity prior to the agricultural land use which appears to have continued from at least medieval times until the mid 19th Century. The area was first developed following the arrival of the railway locomotive builder, Coulthard and Co. of Oakwellgate. In 1836 Oakwellgate Station was built as the terminus of the Brandling Junction Railway to the west of Maiden's Walk. Soon after this the Maiden's Walk Coal Drops were built onto the Station to allow the transfer of coal from the railway down to the Gateshead Quays. Coulthard and Co. of Oakwellgate built engines for use by railway companies between 1839-65, but the premises were taken over by Black, Hawthorn and Co. who moved them to the Greenesfield workshops. Oakwellgate Station ceased to operate as a passenger station in 1844, but continued to work as a goods terminus. The largely post-War redevelopment

of the industrial infrastructure was accompanied by the extension of service and industrial activity eastwards.

### Archaeological Interest

There is no record of medieval activity and although earlier settlement is a possibility, the likelihood of surviving evidence is limited. The main interest is in the industrial archaeology of the area. The importance of the Maiden's Walk Coal Drops lies not only in the survival of the historic fabric but also in the role which the structure plays in interpreting the coal industry and railway industry of Gateshead upon which growth of the town was based.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This area was once the industrial and transport centre of the Borough of Gateshead. It forms a low hill, standing proud from the East Gateshead plateau, overlooking the Gorge to the north. The townscape morphology responds to this landform - the street pattern provides a through-route around the bottom of the hill (Hawk's Road) as well access up onto the hill (Quarryfield Road, Dorset Road, Norfolk Road, Albany Road).

Buildings are at a generally low density in this area. The large block forms of the buildings are separated by large expanses of open grassland or wasteland. The elevation and open aspect of the area means it is an exposed site with little sense of enclosure. However, these same characteristics bring benefits in the form of views into the Gorge. The large areas of open grassland combined with the lack of public access provides a sense of 'wilderness' in an area close to the town centre.

A local railway line (formerly the Brandling Junction

Railway) passes through the area, providing a barrier to movement east-west. However, it is the infrastructure associated with this railway line that provides most of the interest in the area. Remnants of the railway indicate the area's importance for industry and transport activity in the past. The Maiden's Walk Coal Drops mark the site of the former Oakwellgate passenger and goods terminus, now behind the Sage Gateshead building site. Stone walls are unifying features of the area. Pubs were once also characteristic, although only one remains today, left isolated after demolition of surrounding buildings. Older works buildings are constructed from red brick while newer buildings are of a variety of cheaper materials.

### Visual Environment

This is an area with high visual interest due to its position overlooking the skylines of Gateshead and Newcastle and as a result of the remnant railway works infrastructure. Its gently rising slopes are not visible from within the Gorge itself, but are visible from more elevated land, such as Byker Hill, on the opposite side of the Tyne. From within the area the eye is taken to interesting views to the south, where the skyline is punctuated by high-rise buildings both in Gateshead and across the Tyne in Newcastle. The tip of the Tyne Bridge is also visible from here, indicating its proximity to the River.

The *Saltmeadows* forms an important middle ground in views from the public viewing gallery on the 5th Floor of the Baltic and St Michael's Church, Byker and forms an important skyline in strategic views from St Lawrence Road and from Newcastle Quayside.

### Quality and Value

Townscape quality is influenced by its perceived integrity

and state of repair. Although the area is currently in a poor state of repair, it has an integrity and sense of place mostly as a result of its industrial nature. It is a highly valued area for its location close to Gateshead Quays and its important industrial/transport history. The site of the former Oakwellgate Station and the Maiden's Walk Coal Drops is important in the context of the area. The value of the Coal Drops is reflected in its designation as listed structure.

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is visually sensitive to new built development because of its location close to the edge of the Gorge and close to Gateshead Centre. However, it is an area that can accommodate much more development.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- Further dereliction of historic workshops, pubs and boundary features.
- Eradication of the industrial archaeology and railway history of the area.
- Development that does not relate to the historic core of Gateshead and the Gorge.
- Lack of access to the area from Central Gateshead and Gateshead Quays.

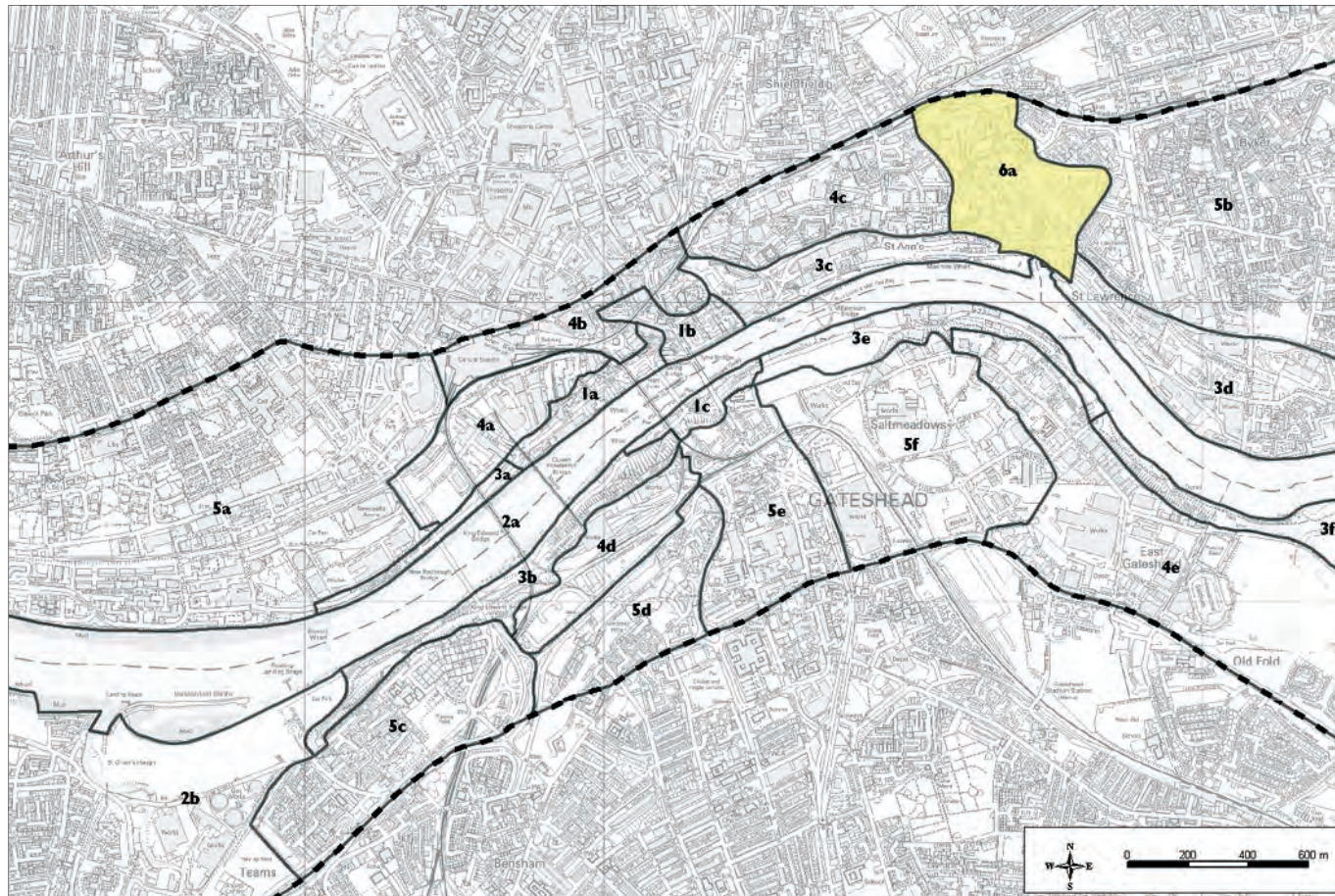
### **Principles for Accommodating New Development**

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on enhancing the sense of topography and skyline and retaining the historic industrial/railway character of the area, the following design and development principles should apply:

- The addition of landmark buildings in this area could enhance the topography of the Gorge as seen from the north bank of the River.
- Quality and character of newbuild in this area should reflect the high quality of building on the Gateshead Quays, particularly for buildings that would be visible in the backdrop to the Quays.
- Conserve the important industrial archaeology and railway history of the area and respect this in any new development.
- Conserve remaining historic workshop buildings and boundary features.
- Encourage better links with the historic core of Gateshead and Gateshead Quays.
- Consider providing residential buildings/local services to bring people back into the area.
- Incorporate native vegetation into any newbuild scheme.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from the public viewing gallery on the 5th Floor of the Baltic, St Michael's Church, Byker and St Lawrence Road.







### TYPE 6: DENES AND VALLEYS

This character type is defined by the incised tributary valleys that feed into the Tyne Gorge from the north. These valleys are steep-sided and often well wooded which gives them a sense of enclosure and shelter. Many of these denes and valleys have been filled in to make room for built development over the years and today there is just one such valley remaining in the study area:

- Ouseburn

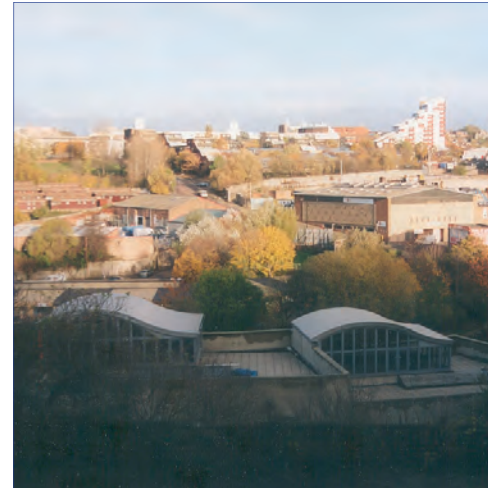




Historic warehouses are important features of the townscape



Native vegetation provides a setting to the built environment



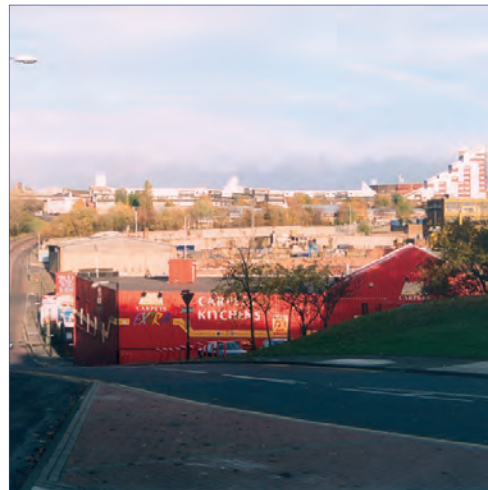
There are panoramic views over the Ouseburn Valley from the edge of *St Ann's Plateau*



Topography has a large part to play in the character of the valley



Seven bridges cross the Ouseburn - the same number that cross the Tyne Gorge



The jagged form of the Byker Estates forms a prominent skyline to the East



Red brick buildings and chimneys provide an interesting skyline. Fishing boats line the river at the mouth of the Ouseburn

### Character Area 6A: Ouseburn

## 6A OUSEBURN

### Location and Relationship to 1:50,000 Landscape Types

This character area occupies the steep valley of the Ouse Burn, an important tributary of the Tyne. Its boundaries are clearly defined by topography and land use. The eastern and western boundaries are topographical boundaries (clearly seen on the topographical map on *Figure 5.1*). The northern boundary is artificially formed by the limit of the 'Gorge and its Immediate Setting'. The southern boundary abuts the two quaysides of St Ann's and St Lawrence and the open water of the Tyne River. It forms part of the *Valleys and Denes* landscape type as defined in the 1:50,000 landscape assessment.

### Historic Evolution

With good access to the Tyne, industry focused on the gently sloping banks of the Ouseburn from the later 17th century. The water course supported a chemical industry which included glass and lime works, and a transport system which allowed the development of warehouses and manufacturing works. Housing on the banks above Ouseburn (now largely removed to the Character Areas of St Ann's and Byker) provided the workforce for these operations. The valley is crossed by a number of bridges. One of the least prominent, the mid-18th century sandstone Crawford's Bridge, is one of the oldest structures in the valley. During the later 20th century redevelopment of parts of the valley introduced modern low density industrial and service buildings.

### Archaeological Interest

Archaeological records here refer only to the standing buildings, but there may be opportunities here to recover information relating to the early industrial development of Tyneside.

### Distinctive Characteristics

This is a discrete area of industrial and commercial development that was once the industrial power-house of Newcastle within the dramatic, steep-sided valley of the Ouse Burn. The street pattern is broadly on a grid with organic north-south routes following the river - Lime Street/Ouse Street on the west bank and Foundry Lane/Ford Street on the east bank. These north-south routes are crossed by east-west routes on bridges. Just as in the Tyne Gorge, there are high level and low level crossings. A total of seven bridges cross the Ouseburn - the same number cross the Tyne Gorge.

The built environment has a human scale with a high density of buildings of different sizes and orientations crammed into the tight valley bottom. The steepest valley slopes support native vegetation and these provide a green backdrop to the valley. A great sense of enclosure and shelter is provided by the steep valley sides and the closely set brick terraces and warehouses that line the narrow cobbled lanes. Many views are foreshortened by high brick walls, buildings, short streets and valley sides. The roofscape has considerable variety - roofs and chimneys break the skyline. The dominant built material is red brick, but sandstone and concrete is also typical of the valley. Flagged pavements and cobbled lanes provide added interest and stone walls or iron railings form consistent boundary features.



There are a number of areas of modern low density industrial and service buildings with a variety of claddings which do not make a positive contribution to the streetscape. At the bottom of the valley part of the former Ouseburn School is a reminder of the former domestic element of the area, while two public houses on the east side of the Ouseburn Mouth provide a linkage with the River Tyne. Notable buildings include the stone warehouses in the valley bottom, Allan House and the Quayside Business Development Centre as well as the recently built Eco-Centre, designed to be energy efficient and constructed using recycled and environmentally friendly materials. The public realm is remarkably good in this industrial area with a number of green areas interspersed among industrial and service buildings and access to the riverside. Despite this there appear to be few pedestrians, which combines with the absence of domestic occupation to create a slightly threatening atmosphere. The valley mouth is a more relaxed area, partly because of the open aspect to the Tyne and partly because this area attracts pedestrians from the Newcastle quayside area.

### Visual Environment

This is a visually disorientating area due to the winding streets and steep topography. However, visually it is a very stimulating area with a high density of individually distinctive buildings of different sizes and orientations over a small area. Views into the Ouseburn Valley from the Tyne Gorge are blocked by the bridges that span its mouth. However, the Tyne Pub and the Quayside Business Development Centre high at the entrance to the valley provide key landmarks. Despite the limited views from the River Tyne itself, there are panoramic views across the valley both from the edge of *St Ann's Settled Plateau* and from *Byker*.

From within the area the eye is taken to the bridges that span the valley and above to the jagged skyline of the Byker estates. From the road bridge at its southern end are views up the valley and, from here also, a local view over the Ouseburn mouth and its boats with the River Tyne beyond.

*Ouseburn* forms an important foreground/middle ground to the far right of the composition in the strategic views from the Ouseburn Watersports Centre and St Lawrence Road.

### Quality and Value

Townscape quality is influenced by its strength of character, integrity and its condition. Although the area is currently in a varying state of repair, it has an extremely strong character and sense of place as a result of its dramatic natural setting, past industrial use and remnant historic structure. It is highly valued for its dramatic setting, its historic industrial remnants and its position close to the Newcastle Quayside and is the best surviving example of the industrialised tributary stream valleys of the Tyne, with a variety of interesting buildings survivals within a coherent townscape. The value of the area is recognised in its designation as a Conservation Area and the quality of built form by the scattering of Listed Buildings. Stepney Bank is important as an area which retains much of its 19th century character, including the still-working Stables, the Ship Inn, the Cluny Warehouse (1848, sandstone ashlar lower floors, brick upper floor, Grade II listed), and the Lime Street flour mill (c.1840, brick with ashlar dressings, Grade II listed).

### Sensitivity to New Built Development

This area is not visually sensitive to built development because it is well enclosed within the valley form. However, the townscape fabric/character is sensitive as a result of its large number of historic industrial buildings. Despite this, the condition of elements means that the area could accommodate improvements, including some new built development.

### Threats to Gorge Character

- Further dereliction of historic buildings and loss of industrial character.
- New built elements that rise above the existing landmark chimneys and buildings.
- Loss of human scale within the townscape, including the mouth of the Ouseburn.
- Restrictions in access from the Tyne Gorge up into the Ouseburn Valley.

### Principles for Accommodating New Development

It is recommended that within the context of an overall strategy focussed on conservation of the historic industrial character of the valley and regeneration of the valley, creating new opportunities for living and working, the following design and development principles should apply:

- Consider providing residential buildings/local services to bring people back into the area and reduce the threatening character.

- Conserve the high density of buildings and the variety in sizes and orientations that is so distinctive of the valley.
- Maintain public access to the Ouse Burn and public open space on the valley sides that can provide a green backdrop to the development.
- There may be some opportunity for further warehouse style buildings in strategic locations. However, there is most opportunity for small scale buildings that emphasise topography and provide a setting for the 'set pieces'.
- Conserve and restore the historic industrial buildings as features of the valley.
- Stone walls are a unifying feature. Details such as floor materials, street furniture and boundaries are all important in creating sense of place
- Conserve the features that contribute to the unique skyline, such as brick chimneys and the Quayside Business Development Centre.
- Consider extending the Conservation Area down to the mouth of the Ouseburn and maintain a human scale throughout this area.
- Promote pedestrian access from the Tyne Gorge up into the Ouseburn Valley to bring people back into the valley.
- Quality and character of newbuild in this area should reflect the high quality of the historic buildings - consider use of local materials such as sandstone and brick - the shade and tone of the brick will be crucial in integrating new development.

- There may be some opportunity for more modern materials such as wood and glass if used in limitation.
- In planning any new development consideration should be given to the strategic views from Ouseburn Watersports Centre and St Lawrence Road.

## BROAD PRINCIPLES FOR THE SITING AND DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE TYNE GORGE

### Introduction

The aim of this study is not to prevent development in and around the Gorge; rather it is to ensure that where new development does occur it is respectful of its surroundings and does not detract from the widely acknowledged quality of the existing environment. Indeed, in certain situations it is anticipated that new development has the potential to enhance this quality, either by creating new landmarks such as the Millennium Bridge, or by rectifying past mistakes.

It also should be recognised that the existing situation is extremely dynamic. The one thing that everyone agrees upon is the need to avoid sending out the wrong signals to the development community that their interest in the Gorge is not welcome. While there is undoubted potential for new or re-development in parts of the Gorge, subject to the broad principles outlined below, we have also taken it as part of our brief to consider where in townscape terms new development might occur beyond the immediate confines of the Gorge. For reasons that we discuss below, it is concluded that the most obvious opportunity of this nature is likely to occur in the lower reaches of the Ouseburn Valley, and particularly on the bend of the River in the St Lawrence area. In our view it is important to agree these locations as soon as possible, if only so as to ensure that development within the Gorge does not stymie this future potential in townscape terms.

One of the problems in trying to define broad principles for the siting and design of new development in the Tyne Gorge is the question of what language we should use to describe such principles. While inevitably much of

what we propose is in written form, we have also used photographs, diagrams, and GIS maps which are geo-referenced to the Ordnance Survey. The availability of GIS is particularly useful in that the various data bases which it comprises can, for example, be updated to take account of new development once constructed, or change the extent and ingredients of protected areas. In this way the recording and consideration of new development can keep pace with the dynamic nature of this part of the city. One of the products of this study is therefore a copy of the GIS digital data base.

While the written language of much of this report is somewhat technical, we have also given some thought to the best way to describe the relationships in the Gorge in a more accessible way. This is not a new problem when discussing urban design issues, and many learned texts are peppered with references to urban 'good manners' and the avoidance of 'visual dominance' or 'overbearing effect'. This is the language of human relationships which we feel can appropriately be applied to the consideration of new development in the Gorge.

If the river is seen as a grand processional way (for example the Mall in London), where the bridges are the objects of interest (e.g. the Royal family in their carriages), most new and existing developments are like spectators lining the route. If the spectators are good mannered and generally respectful of the situation, they will make room for more elderly people and let smaller children and others who would have difficulties seeing to go to the front or to leave them a clear line of view. Alternatively, a bad tempered crowd might push so hard that the ones at the front have to leave the scene or, worse still, get trampled underfoot. Worst of all, there may be elements in the crowd that don't want spectators to watch the procession but instead wish to be the main object of attention. These people will try to stand out from their surroundings by making lots of noise or pushing themselves in front of others and



generally making a nuisance of themselves.

The same is true in the Tyne Gorge. The main object of attention is the River and the amazing collection of bridges of different types and ages all of which accentuate the natural topography of the Gorge by their 'springing' nature. Old buildings and other landmarks line the River and the rim of the Gorge thereby enriching the visual experience by adding lateral interest and implied connections. Both the bridges and these older buildings and landmarks deserve respect and should be given space so that their connection to the River and the Gorge can be maintained.

Other buildings lining the Gorge are like general spectators. As long as they show respect for their surroundings and do not seek to push others out of the way, they can be considered as essential ingredients of the scene (a procession without a crowd is a sad affair). However, if they push to the front and obscure others views, or, worse still, seek to draw all the attention to themselves, they will undermine the occasion and spoil it for others.

Of course this analogy begins to break down when applied to everyday life. We do not, thank goodness, live in such a well ordered society that everyone knows their place, and there is no room for change. A dynamic society is one that can accommodate change without falling apart. The same is true, we would argue, for a dynamic city. It has its structure but this structure is not so rigid that it cannot accommodate change.

When applied to the design of new development in the Tyne Gorge, the issue becomes one of classification. Is the new development part of the intrinsic structure of the Gorge (the processional way lined by banks of spectators) or is it seeking to stand out in contrast with its surroundings. And if the latter is it an addition which

enhances the character of the Gorge (e.g. the Millennium Bridge), or will it detract from its surroundings and spoil the pleasure for others.

### **Relationship to the Public Realm**

The key to answering this question, we believe, concerns the role of new development in relationship to the public realm. Is the development for the use and enjoyment of the public at large, and if so, does it enhance or detract from the rest of the public realm, or is it for private use and benefit which in part depends on 'feeding off' the quality of the existing townscape. The Baltic is a good example of development benefiting the public realm. While it has no doubt always been considered as a positive addition to the townscape of the Gorge because of its former use, architectural quality and location, this value has been enhanced immeasurably by the fact that it is now accessible to the public and provides a new and exciting cultural attraction.

### **Access Corridors Leading into the Gorge**

However the same principle also applies to more humble developments, particularly along the quayside and where they form the definition of the various access corridors that introduce the spectator to the Gorge. For example, as seen from the mainline railway approaching the Gorge via the Team Valley, or following the various steep sided 'denes' leading down to the water's edge via old drainage lines, such as Forth Banks (see *Figure 6.1*). In each case it will be important to assess the impact of proposed new development to see to what extent it might affect these approaches to the Gorge, and whether or not this effect is positive or negative (i.e. would it enhance or detract from the experience of entering the Gorge).

### Views to and from Landmarks

As already mentioned, the experience of the Gorge is enriched by the presence of numerous landmarks of historic, or cultural, or architectural value (sometimes all three, such as St Ann's Church). These landmarks provide important references enabling the spectator to better appreciate and understand the use of particular areas of the Gorge and the way in which the settlements of Newcastle and Gateshead have evolved in relation to the River. They also often have the benefit, in townscape terms, of linking the main focus of attention of the buildings and structures in the Gorge back into their adjoining urban centres which from a tourist perspective helps to defray some of the people pressure around the main attractions, and to spread economic benefit more widely throughout the city.

There are therefore good economic as well as environmental and cultural reasons for maintaining strong visual links with these landmarks (i.e. by ensuring that new development does not block views from the main vantage points of these landmarks, and vice versa, so that the setting of these landmarks is not impaired).

### Opportunities for Tall Buildings

Although there are a number of tall buildings<sup>10</sup> in Newcastle and Gateshead that lie within the visual envelope of the Gorge, it is mainly the churches, such as St Nicholas' Cathedral and All Saints Church with their prominent and highly distinctive spires, which make a particularly positive contribution to the townscape of the Gorge. All other tall buildings either constitute relatively minor contributors to the townscape of the Gorge (such as Tom Collins House or the tower blocks on Mulgrave Terrace) or are in conflict with the intrinsic character of their

surroundings and as such detract from the overall quality of the Gorge. Examples of such detractors include St Cuthbert's Tower and Cale Cross House.

Given these conclusions about the value of existing tall buildings, it is difficult to see where new tall buildings could make a positive contribution to the landscape of the Gorge unless they represented buildings of high community/cultural value (such as the churches) and were located in such a position as not to detract from the other design principles described in this section of the Report. In these terms we do not see any scope for tall buildings on the lower slopes or along the quayside within the main central section of the Gorge, although there may be some opportunity if they were to be set further back behind the lip of the Gorge, and as long as they did not detract from the skyline where this is important in key views.

The only other opportunity for tall buildings that we have identified as part of this study is where such buildings would help to bring definition at the ends of the Gorge where the topography is not nearly so strong, and there is a need to make a transition from the Gorge to adjoining areas.

For example an area with it seems great potential for redevelopment is either side of the River downstream of the Baltic. This includes the lower reaches of the Ouseburn, the waterfront at St Lawrence, and La Farge's minerals depot on the inside bend of the River. However the choice of location is all important. For example if a tall building or a series of tall buildings was to be located at Mariner's Wharf upstream of the junction with the Ouseburn, this would achieve a degree of 'visual closure' at the end of the Gorge **but** at the expense of developments downstream which might benefit from a visual link to the Gorge. On the other hand if a tall building or a group of tall buildings was to be located downstream of the outfall of the Ouseburn in the St

<sup>10</sup> We have defined a tall building as a building that is proportionally much taller than it is wide and which appears to tower above its surroundings.

Lawrence area this would both provide a degree of 'visual closure', **and** make the transition to the area downstream of the bend in the River, while at the same time not precluding a development offshoot up the lower reaches of the Ouseburn.

The force of this suggestion can be seen in the way Spiller's Mill already performs some of these functions; i.e. it helps to give definition to the end of the Gorge, and makes a visual transition with the area further downstream. The fact that it is still used as a flour mill with a strong connection with the River only serves to reinforce its townscape value.

### **Use of the Waterfront**

From a development point of view it is a *sine qua non* of the development industry that property fronting water commands a much higher value than property without such as connection. All other things being equal, the property developer will therefore seek to cluster his development to the water's edge, or, if this is not possible, to seek to overlook water. Apart from the intrinsic interest of water and water related activity, it seems the principal rationale behind this approach is that if there is water in front of your property it is very unlikely that anyone else can come in and block your view. However, the same benefits would be obtained if the buildings were set further back and the area between them and the water's edge was to remain open, for example as public open space or a public walkway. In this way the developer gets the benefit of views of the water and is reassured that no-one can come and block the view, and the public obtain access to the water and the pleasure of walking along the water's edge.

As a general principle we therefore recommend that no development be allowed to come to the water's edge in

the Gorge, and that wherever possible the water's edge be reserved for public use or a public footpath/cycleway. The only exception to this principle would be where there are natural water's edge habitats which would be disturbed by human activity, or where there is an existing river related use such as La Farge's mineral depot which contributes to the commercial life of the River.

### **Character Area Descriptions**

The support for the design principles outlined above may be found in the analysis of the character areas described in Chapter 5 of this Report. However, the level of detail which they provide gives a much richer source of local information which the designer hopefully will find useful in detailing up his/her proposals and which in turn, the local community and others charged with making development control decisions will find helpful in appraising such proposals.

Our final design principle is therefore to recommend that all new development proposals within the Gorge's visual envelope should be able to demonstrate how they have taken the 'character area' descriptions into account, such that the existing character is maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced, with particular reference to the effects on the public realm.





**Figure 6.1**  
**Main Approaches to the Gorge**

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## **Urban Landscape Study of the Tyne Gorge**

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