Plate 62: Towers Avenue, view looking east along former carriage drive leading to Jesmond Towers

Remnant Copse

3.147 Remnant Copse (Key component reference 22) has **CONSIDERABLE** landscape significance.

3.148 This remnant copse, see Plate 63, which lies to the south western corner of the present day estate and within what was known as Scotts Leazes field formed part of the agricultural holding of the 18th century farmfold present on the site and appears on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844. The remnant of the copse comprises a small group of horsechestnut and lime trees, which are considered to be of an age consistent with 1844 and therefore of significance.

Plate 63: Remnant Copse, view looking south along western boundary towards copse
Tennis Courts

3.149 Tennis Courts (Key component reference 23) has **NEGATIVE** landscape significance.

3.150 The hard surfaced tennis courts with a chain link ball fence are located to the southwest of the present day estate. These are a modern addition, installed circa 1970’s for La Sagesse School, see Plate 64. The tennis courts are in poor condition and considered to be an intrusive element within the context of the landscape setting and would benefit from removal.

3.151 Eliminating or mitigating negative characteristics may help to reveal or reinforce heritage values of this estate and thus its significance.

Plate 64: Tennis Courts, view looking southeast

Playing Fields

3.152 The Playing Fields (Key component reference 24) has **CONSIDERABLE** landscape significance.

3.153 The former grassed playing fields to the south of North Jesmond House occupy an area of land that was originally part of the field known as Scotts Leazes and appears on the ‘Plan showing Field Names’ of 1630. This formed part of the agricultural holding of the 18th century farmfold present on the estate and appears on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844. This area, whilst developed as a grassed playing field for La Sagesse School, has remained undeveloped by buildings preserving the crucial open aspect. In this context, whilst there are no obvious signs of former agricultural activity, it has some landscape connection to its past.

3.154 Today, the green open space preserves the open aspect of the former agricultural field of Scotts Leazes, enlivened by the belt of trees to the north which provide a green backdrop,
and which contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of the estate, as viewed from the surrounding key receptors, see Plate 65.

Plate 65: Playing Fields, view looking southeast towards southern boundary

Western Access to Former La Sagesse School

3.155 Western Access to Former La Sagesse School (Key component reference 25) has MARGINAL landscape significance.

3.156 The present day access leading to North Jesmond House and complex of school buildings from Towers Avenue to the south served the La Sagesse School and is a modern addition, appearing on the 1941 OS plan, see Plate 66. The route lies to the west of the former Friday Fields Lane.

Plate 66: Western Access, view looking north towards North Jesmond House
Entrance to former Farmhouse and North Jesmond House circa 1844

3.157 Entrance to former Farmhouse and North Jesmond House circa 1844 (Key component reference 26A) has MODERATE landscape significance.

3.158 This entrance formed the original access from Jesmond Dene Road leading to the southern frontage of the 18th century farmfold, see Plate 67, which comprised a group of three buildings (farmhouse and farm buildings?) with woodland and Scotts Leazes field to the south. The two rectangular-shaped buildings are shown with this western access leading to the southern frontage with a further access between the buildings to a yard and a ‘U’ shaped building to the rear to the northeast, (part surviving today as Former Outbuildings, Key component reference 6). This arrangement appears on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844 and remains unchanged until the OS Second Edition of 1898.

Plate 67: Entrance to former Farmhouse and North Jesmond House, view looking north

Remains of drive to North Jesmond House circa 1898

3.159 Remains of the drive to North Jesmond House circa 1898 (Key component reference 26B) has MODERATE landscape significance.

3.160 The OS Second Edition of 1898, shows the addition of a lodge (West Cottage, Key component reference 13) to the east of the access with a realigned drive which swings further south in a curve sweeping up to North Jesmond House (this is the first reference to the property on the OS plans) which is known to have been acquired by Dr Charles Mitchell sometime after 1869 from Richard Burdon-Sanderson 11, and rented to his friend and partner Henry Frederick Swan (brother to Mitchell’s wife) so that the two families could live...
within 100 yards of each other. Similar to Sir Thomas Burdon before, Mitchell owned Jesmond Towers and had control over both estates.

3.161 The remains of the route of the drive leading from Jesmond Dene Road to the southern frontage of North Jesmond House still remains today and used as part of the access and servicing arrangements to North Jesmond House and complex of former school buildings, see Plate 68.

Plate 68: Remains of drive to North Jesmond House c1898, view looking east

Woodland circa 1844

3.162 Remnant Woodland circa 1844 (Key component reference 27) has CONSIDERABLE landscape significance.

3.163 This woodland appears on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844 which shows two clumps of trees within the field (Scotts Leazes) to the south of the buildings.

3.164 The OS Second Edition, 1898 shows an extension of the planting groups to the south with the introduction of conifers along with a series of garden paths, lawns and an area of water to the east.

3.165 By the 1940’s during the occupation by La Sagesse Convent, the woodland is shown reduced to the south as shown on the OS 1941 edition, to accommodate tennis courts and playing fields.

3.166 The woodland, see Plate 69, has retained its historic shape and some trees within the remnant of the woodland are considered to be of an age consistent with 1844 and therefore of significance. Other trees are secondary woodland and of later addition and origin.
3.167 The woodland contributes to the high environmental and historic character of the Jesmond Dene Conservation Area and forms part of the mature tree cover which is considered an important amenity and element of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Plate 69: Remnant Woodland c1844, view looking west

Remnant Tree Planting

3.168 Remnant Tree Planting (Key component reference 28) has MODERATE landscape significance.

3.169 This remnant group of trees, see Plate 70, appears on the OS Second Edition, 1898 which shows an extension of the planting groups to the west with the introduction of conifers along with a realigned drive.

3.170 By 1940’s onwards during the occupation by La Sagesse Convent, buildings appear to the west, eroding tree cover in these locations which is further exacerbated In 1950, by the stopping up of the right of way of Friday Fields Lane and relocation to the west boundary of the site, leading from Towers Avenue through to Jesmond Dene Road.

3.171 There are some remnant trees which are considered to be of an age consistent with 1890’s, possibly earlier, and therefore of significance.
Remnant features of access to farmhouse and garden with several significant trees

3.172 The remnant features of access to the former farmhouse and garden with several significant trees (Key component reference 29A) have MODERATE landscape significance.

3.173 The arrangement of the group of three buildings (farmhouse and farm buildings including the later somewhat modified mansion of North Jesmond House) is shown on the OS First Edition, 1858 with a north western access from Jesmond Dene Road leading to the southern frontage. Small groups of tree planting are shown to the north of the present day farmhouse (Father’s house) with a rectangular garden and to the boundary to Jesmond Dene Road. The immediate areas to the buildings to the north and west appear to be subdivided into an arrangement of small fields or animal pens. The OS Second Edition, 1898 shows an extended Farmhouse to the northeast (remnant of which forms the Gymnasium and Music, Key component 9) and with outbuildings along the north eastern boundary (no longer present) with an access, opposite Matthew Bank, from Jesmond Dene Road, which bifurcates southwards directly to the farmhouse and eastwards to the rear of North Jesmond House. The map would appear to show a distinct division with separate entrances between the farmhouse with a north, rather than south, facing entrance and North Jesmond House with the addition of lodge and sweeping drive leading from the north western access from Jesmond Dene Road around to the south.

3.174 Remnant features of the northern access to the farmhouse and garden are still discernable, despite subsequent alterations and additions, with several trees that are considered to be of an age consistent with 1890’s, see Plate 71.
3.175 The remnant features of access to stableyard / outbuildings and walls with several significant trees (Key component reference 29B) have MODERATE landscape significance.

3.176 As described above the arrangement of the group of three farm buildings went through a series of alterations and additions which in turn included the modified mansion of North Jesmond House and a separation between the farmhouse to the west and North Jesmond House to the east.

3.177 On the OS Edition of 1858, a small group of tree planting is shown adjacent to the boundary to Jesmond Dene Road with further tree planting shown around the yard area to the north of North Jesmond House in 1898. By 1898, during the occupation of Swan, a lodge is constructed to the east of the access leading from Jesmond Dene Road with a realigned drive which swings further south in a curve sweeping up to North Jesmond House. North Jesmond House is shown extended to the north and south with a conservatory to the southeast. The former ‘U’ shaped building to the rear is shown with the northern section reduced (the current Former Outbuildings, Key component 6) and a number of out buildings added. An extension of the planting groups appears to the south and west with the introduction of conifers along with a series of garden paths, lawns and an area of water to the east which no longer remain. The fields to the south remained unchanged as part of Scotts Leazes.

3.178 There are level changes present due to the steep topography sloping down to Jesmond Dene
Road and the Ouseburn. Remnant walls, level changes and access features to the north with yard(s) and outbuildings (for stabling etc) are still discernable, despite subsequent alterations and additions. Several trees that are considered to be of an age consistent with 1890’s, with a horse chestnut tree to the northern boundary that may possibly be earlier (1800’s?), see Plate 72.

Plate 72: Remnant Features, view looking north towards horse chestnut tree with remnant walls

Remnant woodland circa 1844/secondary woodland with some significant trees

3.179 The remnant woodland circa 1844/secondary woodland with some significant trees (Key component reference 30) has CONSIDERABLE landscape significance.

3.180 The first detailed depiction of the setting of Jesmond Towers, referred to as West Jesmond Hall, is shown on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844, and includes the maturing planted woodland mentioned in 1925 by Mackenzie.

3.181 The area of woodland planting to the north extends eastwards from Friday Fields Lane, encompassing the kitchen garden, and along the lower sloping section of the estate boundary with a series of lawned terraces to the north of West Jesmond Hall with what appears to be a circular walk and a round clump of trees to the northeast. The boundaries to the north and east are shown wooded, following old field patterns.

3.182 The OS of 1858 shows the layout of the setting of the hall, now depicted as West Jesmond House, as much the same as in Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844 but with further tree planting and additional paths added, notably to the previously lawned area immediately to the north of the house which is shown planted with trees in a formal arrangement (?) but still retaining the
3.183 By 1898 the tree planting to the north and west is shown removed in parts leaving a more open aspect once again to the former lawned areas to the north and east with steps leading down to the northern boundary woodland.

3.184 1919 OS edition shows very little change to the estate, but by the 1940’s encroachment with residential development tight up against the western and southern boundaries of the present day estate with Crossways and Towers Avenue constructed and Bemersyde Drive to the south of Jesmond Towers. The woodland planting to the north is much the same as the 3rd edition.

3.185 By the late 1970’s, further development of residential houses to the east of Jesmond Towers and erosion of the eastern boundary and woodland has occurred. In 1988 the development of the gymnasium hall by Ainsworth Spark with project architect Ralph Pattisson to the north of Jesmond Towers resulted in the intrusive addition of a building introduced into the woodland, although this avoids the historic woodland shape of 1844.

3.186 The woodland to this present day has generally an intact historic shape as depicted on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844, although planting additions and interventions to the south and east have come and gone, see Plate 73. Species composition and structure has significantly altered over time with remnant scattered older trees of an age consistent with the early 19th century present but predominantly comprising of secondary woodland in poor condition due to a number of factors including:

- The effects of Dutch elm disease. Elms were a component of the woodland and their deaths have resulted in gaps in the tree canopy. This has provided opportunities for natural regeneration of native species, but quite often the more aggressive non-native species are more successful with sycamore seedlings being prevalent although ash has been successful in locations;

- Invasion of Japanese knotweed. Large stands of Japanese knotweed have established suppressing native species and regeneration and which requires appropriate eradication;

- Lack of appropriate and informed woodland management to maintain age diversity, structural diversity and species composition;

- Individual older trees in danger of loss unless felling or management is well informed.
3.187 The historic woodland shape is considered have CONSIDERABLE significance, and forms an integral element of Jesmond Towers and landscape setting, providing the northern curtilage and a designed relationship evoking a striking backdrop and sense of place.

3.188 The woodland also provides a number of important strategic urban design functions including:

- To appreciably enrich the cultural and historical resource of the Conservation Area;

- Its relationship to Jesmond Dene and borrowed landscapes within the wider visual envelope, enhancing each of their settings and exploiting long views in and out with significant potential for reintroducing designed views of Jesmond Towers from the dene to the north;

- Providing an area of woodland and trees within a residential suburb which enhance the environment and make a valuable contribution to the amenity value and character of the Conservation Area and ‘sense of place’;

- Helping to define and structure spaces, and by framing and consolidating views. In all these ways, the woodland softens the harshness of the built environment;

- Forming an important habitat for a wide range of wildlife and instrumental in encouraging animals and birds into an area.

Source: AJT Environmental Consultants, 2010

Plate 73: Remnant woodland c1844 remnant woodland c1844 looking east
Northern access from Jesmond Dene Road

3.189 The Northern access from Jesmond Dene Road (Key component reference 31) has CONSIDERABLE landscape significance.

3.190 The first detailed depiction of the setting of Jesmond Towers, referred to as Jesmond Hall, is shown on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844 with a tree lined access shown leading up from Jesmond Dene Road to the west of West Jesmond Hall. By 1898 the addition of North Lodge to the northeast at Jesmond Dene Road is shown.

3.191 This survives relatively intact today, see Plate 74, although the entrance from Jesmond Dene Road has been walled up, but its earlier provenance is unknown and its link to the original building of Jesmond Towers before 1817 and the ambiguity surrounding this may be revealed by future study. The line of the northern access is almost certainly considerably earlier than the 19th century, following the field boundaries between Scotts Leazes to the west and Jesmond Banks (formerly Jesmond Common) to the northeast and North Avenue as shown on Figure 5, Plan showing Field Names of 1630. These were enclosed by John Coulson early in the eighteenth century, the largest landowner. John Blenkinsop Coulson, sold all his Jesmond lands to a number of purchasers. The devolution of the central and main part was purchased by Sir Thomas Burdon and included the eastern section of the present day estate. Between 1805/9 to 1816 Sir Thomas Burdon built West Jesmond House, the architect/builder for which is unknown.

Source: AJT Environmental Consultants, 2010

Plate 74: Northern access from Jesmond Dene Road, view looking north
Remnants of gardens

3.192 The remnants of the gardens to Jesmond Towers (Key component reference 32) have CONSIDERABLE landscape significance.

3.193 A detail description of the setting is described in Jesmond Towers (Key component reference 1). Whilst only remnants and historic shapes are present of a designed relationship from the early 19th century between Jesmond Towers and the immediate surrounding landscape, features and elements have in part survived of a kitchen garden, woodland, garden features, drives, boundaries, lodges and access which at the time reflected the social changes during the 19th century and the development of suburban villas with 'mini-estates' for wealthy industrialists and coal owners.

3.194 It is known that West Jesmond House was built for Sir Thomas Burdon in the early 19th century, the architect/builder for which is unknown. This was added to by John Dobson in 1817 presenting a dramatic north front as the public façade of the Hall with further additions in 1823 - 27. Mentions by the local historian Mackenzie in 1825 of recently planted woodland at "West Jesmond" with a further mention made of the erection of an "elegant gateway" at the entrance of the coach-road.

3.195 The ‘English garden’ style, which emerged in England in the early 18th century was the dominant style and was revised in the early nineteenth century to include more ‘gardenesque’ features, including shrubberies with graveled walks, tree plantations to satisfy botanical curiosity, and, most notably, the return of flowers, in skirts of sweeping planted beds. This is the version of the landscape garden most imitated in Europe in the nineteenth century.

3.196 Gardening was no longer the exclusive hobby of the upper classes. As industry and commerce prospered, a wealthy middle class emerged who wished to live near their source of income but away from the squalor and overcrowding they had helped to create in the cities and towns. Improved transport and roads made it possible for villas to be built on the outskirts of towns where there was fresh air and an opportunity to display new-found wealth. There was a desire for gardens with ostentatious features, following the latest fashions and themes, rather than harmonising with the landscape. Communication speeded up with the arrival of the steam engine which epitomised the pace and energy of the time and was a period celebrated for its progress, invention, new ideas and discoveries. Edwin Budding's new lawnmower invention meant that people could have manicured lawns, while gadgets such as ‘cucumber straighteners' were becoming increasingly popular.
3.197 When the Victorians were not inventing or constructing they were writing about developments in books and magazines so others could benefit. Better printing systems made it possible for more people to gain horticultural inspiration from the garden writers of the day, such as Loudon. The impact and spread of knowledge was greater and quicker than ever.

3.198 Wealthy Victorians also created public spaces. Loudon in the 1830s and 1840s was responsible for designing many public parks, encouraging the use of more broad-leaved trees and plants in place of evergreens. Intricate bedding schemes and patterns were popular. After the Allotment Act in 1887, space for growing plants became available at a reasonable rent to this rapidly expanding urban class.

3.199 Fern collections became extremely popular and were kept in specially designed glasshouses known as ferneries. It is said that the pond feature with its constructed cascade/rock wall at Jesmond Towers contained a collection of ferns. There is no evidence of this on site but merits further research and investigation. Growing exotic fruit such as figs and dessert grapes in greenhouses became popular and it is known that exotic fruits were grown in the kitchen garden at the time of Mitchell. So did training hardy fruit trees in styles like espalier, cordons and fans, which would adorn the sides of walled gardens.

3.200 Woodland gardens or 'arboretum' were a very popular way to display the new rhododendrons and azaleas from China and again it is said that a gift of a rhododendron was given to Mitchell by the Emperor of Japan, although no evidence of this has been found. The discovery of ornamental trees from abroad prompted wealthy landowners to enhance properties with an arboretum.

3.201 Low box hedging would surround flowerbeds filled with bright contrasting bedding plants. Tender or half-hardy varieties, such as geraniums and lobelia, were varied from year to year or season to season. These gaudy displays were an ideal vehicle to show off the owner's financial wellbeing and their gardener's talents. Bedding plants organised in intricate patterns became fashionable in both private gardens and public parks in the 1830s, as tender flowering plants began to arrive from places such as South Africa and Mexico. Plants including pelargoniums, heliotropes, salvias, lobelias and cannas were used to add bright splashes of colour.

3.202 Roses, chrysanthemums and dahlias were going through a rapid evolution via hybridisation. By 1840 there were more than 500 cultivars of dahlias. In this period, the fashion was to have a separate formal rose garden within the boundaries of the main garden. It is thought that the circular garden to the east of Jesmond Towers (now built over by residential
development) was likely to have been a rose garden with a rose garden known to have existed up to the 1970’s during the period of occupation by the Filles de La Sagesse.

3.203 The first detailed depiction of the landscape setting of Jesmond Towers, referred to as Jesmond Hall, is shown on Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844 and is clearly a designed landscape, although the designer(s) is unknown. This shows a straight avenue of trees and former carriage drive along the present day Towers Avenue which led into the estate from the west with a lodge to the entrance to the southwest. This would provide an imposing entrance to the main avenue to the Hall, which was superior to many estates nearby and stretched southwards to the present day Burdon Place, and created a strong ‘set piece’ with designed views and glimpses to the hall within a sweep of open parkland and fields with a woodland background and clumps of trees and groves.

3.204 The avenue swept north eastwards towards the Hall and was more informal in nature in a setting of groups and clumps of trees with open lawns which frame the approach to the hall with a circular turning area to the main entrance. The gardens to the east and north of the hall are open with a series of lawned terraces immediately north of the hall with what appears to be a circular walk and a round clump of trees to the northeast. A kitchen garden lies to the west adjacent to Friday Field’s Lane.

3.205 In 1858, the layout of the setting of the hall, is now depicted as West Jesmond House, and remains much the same as in Thomas Oliver’s Plan of 1844 but with further tree planting and additional paths added, notably to the previously lawned area immediately to the north of the house which is now shown planted with trees in a formal arrangement (?) but still retaining the series of paths or walks. A footpath link is shown leading from the west of the house across to the north of the kitchen garden to Friday Fields Lane and to Jesmond Dene Road.

3.206 Richard Burdon-Sanderson 11 succeeded his father Richard Burdon-Sanderson 1 in 1865 and additions to Jesmond House are undertaken by Thomas Oliver Junior in 1865. West Jesmond House is sold to Dr Charles Mitchell in 1869, who employs Thomas Oliver Junior to enlarge the house further, now known as Jesmond Towers, and again in 1884 and 1895 and subsequent estate works (e.g. the north and west lodges to the park). Mitchell builds upon the framework of Burdon with additions and aggrandisement.

3.207 In 1898, the OS edition plan shows the addition of West Lodge, north of the main avenue entrance and the addition of North Lodge at Jesmond Dene Road, which followed Thomas Oliver Junior’s enlargement of Jesmond Towers in 1869, to the northwest of Jesmond Towers (previously known as West Jesmond House (Hall) with an access leading to the west
of the house. Friday Fields Lane, the public right-of-way, running from old Jesmond village to Gosforth, cuts across the Jesmond Towers and North Jesmon House estates, passing from just west of Thomas Ralph Spence’s 1882-3 South Lodge for the Jesmond Towers estate (on Osborne Road), and running northwards between the two houses to Jesmond Dene Road. The lane also crossed the lime-tree avenue, via a cutting and under-pass, which led from the West Lodge up to Jesmond Towers. The tree planting to the north and west is shown removed in parts leaving a more open aspect to the former lawned areas to the north with steps leading down to the northern boundary woodland and west with the introduction of a water feature to the northeast of Jesmond Towers and a circular garden to the east where a circular group of trees were previously situated along with additional paths. The gardens to the south are shown extended southwards with clumps of tree planting and a rectangular feature and garden structure to the east and a water feature to southeast. Further southwards, development of the cricket ground and pavilion with St George’s Church, Vicarage and Hall are shown beyond with a formal avenue walk from Jesmond Towers to the church. Glasshouses and buildings associated with the kitchen garden are shown south of the stables and stable yard, and known to comprise of warm and cold orchid houses, a melon house, a peach house, two vineries, etc. which stood south of the stabling near to the Friday Fields Lane wall. This includes the present day gardener’s store to the southeast.

3.208 From the photographic plates of circa 1885 to 1890, after completion of extensions, it is possible to glean the look of some of the landscape elements with sweeping graveled paths, neatly manicured lawns, and specimen trees (many comprising elms) framing the building, shrubs of a similar mix as those found within the Dene including an understory of yew, holly and rhododendron with woodland as a framework. Consultation\textsuperscript{17} with Sister Pauline Gifford (the former school headmistress) remembers a large specimen elm tree to the south front of Jesmond Towers being felled due to Dutch Elm disease. A rhododendron is purported to have been given to Charles Mitchell by the Japanese Emperor, although there is no evidence of a rhododendron of this age within the estate now.

3.209 The Executors of the late Mrs Charles William Mitchell sold Jesmond Towers in 1926 after an abortive attempt in 1910, which was subsequently occupied by the Osborne Grammar School for Boys (later known as Akhurst Preparatory School) until 1946. The photographic catalogue plate of 1910 for the abortive sale of Jesmond Towers shows a view looking southwest towards the north elevation of Jesmond Towers with tiered lawns, groups of shrubs and a set of steps leading down the terraced slope towards the woodland. The pond feature and stone lion appear overgrown with ivy and unkempt reflecting the demise of the estate.

\textsuperscript{17} Research consultation conducted by AJT in 2010 by telephone with Sister Pauline Gifford, now residing in Romsey.
3.210 In the 30's land along the southern boundary was also sold for private housing by the Trustees of Mrs Charles William Mitchell for the development of Towers Avenue, Mitchell Avenue and Bemersyde Drive. A plan by architects Dixon and Bell for an extension to Bemersyde Drive into the grounds of and surrounding Jesmond Towers was approved in 1936 and works commenced.

3.211 OS 1919 edition shows very little change to the estate for Jesmond Towers. Considerable encroachment from the south is shown as the population of Jesmond continues to expand. The development is creeping in to the east with erosion of a strip of woodland by the development of Adderstone Crescent and their gardens adjacent to the tree lined walk from Jesmond Towers to St George’s Church. Considerable development to the west of Osborne Road has occurred with encroachment into the fields to the south of the main avenue with dwellings beginning to be constructed along Mitchell Avenue, along with the appearance of the cricket ground to the south, later tennis courts.

3.212 OS 1941 edition shows residential development now tight up against the western and southern boundaries of the present day estate with Crossways and Towers Avenue constructed and Bemersyde Drive to the south of Jesmond Towers. To the south of Bemersyde Drive, development of tennis courts (Northumberland Tennis Club) replacing the cricket ground and Newborough Crescent are now depicted. The vicarage, hall and church remain but with partial remnants of the avenue walk to the east which is shown now severed from Jesmond Towers by Bemersyde Drive. South Lodge remains but subsumed into residential development but with the Lodges to the west (including West Lodge) redeveloped by a church and housing.

3.213 The main access into Jesmond Towers is shown now leading from Bemersyde Drive, as the present day arrangement, through the site to the south of the Jesmond Towers, and reconnecting with the eastern-most section of Bemersyde Drive. The gardens to the south are shown much curtailed with all the tree planting removed and two partially constructed dwellings buildings (purportedly “up to eaves level”) constructed to the southwest, which formed part of the proposed extension to Bemersyde Drive in the grounds of Jesmond Towers by architects Dixon and Bell approved in 1936 but halted by the Second World War and subsequently demolished after the war when the property company went into liquidation.

3.214 The circular garden to the east appears to have in most part disappeared although remnants of the features are recognisable. Many of the paths and the gardens have been removed along with the kitchen garden and associated buildings, stables and yard. The only remaining building to the south is the present day gardener’s store.
3.215 In 1946 La Sagesse convent school acquired and occupied Jesmond Towers until it closed in 2008. The OS 1968 shows extension of gardens from Bemersyde Drive to the south of Jesmond Towers and the drive access terminating to the front of The Towers, although an access is still shown to the east from Bemersyde Drive. The structures built to the south of Jesmond Towers are shown removed (building works commenced but halted by the Second World War and now shown demolished).

3.216 The OS 1979 edition shows the public right of way along the western boundary and the closed Friday Fields Lane and a structure (portacabin) to the east of Jesmond Towers. Further development of residential houses is shown to the east of Jesmond Towers, over the former circular garden (said to be used as a rose garden in the 1970's during the occupation by the Filles de la Sagesse) and erosion of the eastern boundary. OS circa 1999 shows a further portacabin to the east of the existing cabin.

3.217 As with the original building designer of Jesmond Towers pre 1817, no significance can be gained from association with a landscape designer but the structure and framework of the setting to the building is clearly evident in 1844 and to have existed in the early 19th century at the time of the original building. The immediate landscape around Jesmond Towers survives to a certain degree though altered and not well preserved, but with the extent and shape of the historic woodland to the north little altered. The wider landscape to the south and east has been subsumed by residential development and infrastructure as Jesmond expanded and as the building changed hands, but the immediate landscape setting to Jesmond Towers has escaped more dramatic development and significant change. New buildings have had some impact upon the landscape but there is considerable potential for conservation of individual surviving elements and for reconnecting and interpreting them. The portabins with temporary planning consent for the Filles de La Sagesse expired, are of an ephemeral nature and should be easily removed. Most notably, Jesmond Towers is still visually important as an expression of the 19th century Gothic Revival style within its setting, albeit much reduced and which forms part of a collection of fine Victorian mansions set within 'mini-estates' or as suburban villas along Jesmond Dene. The significance and value of the Estate and its contribution to the wider area is recognised within the Jesmond Dene Conservation Area Character Statement.

3.218 At present, the remnants of the designed gardens and landscape setting to Jesmond Towers contributes to its distinctiveness and its sense of quiet and seclusion despite its location within a residential suburb of the city of Newcastle. In particular the scale of open space and the woodland belt to the north, conceal much of the visual and noise intrusion creating a strong sense of calm and tranquility within an urban context, see Plate 75.
3.219 Within the wider visual envelope, the woodland planting, open space and surviving designed views (a number now constrained by secondary woodland and buildings) contribute to the setting and amenity value of the Conservation Area and act as a strategic buffer between residential development to the south and Jesmond Dene to the north. There is potential for designed views lost to be reopened and intrusive features and treatments within the remnant gardens and initiated as part of the school development to be removed and reconnected to the landscape.

![Remnants of the gardens, view looking northeast towards the woodland](source: AJT Environmental Consultants, 2009)

**Plate 75:** Remnants of the gardens, view looking northeast towards the woodland

**Estate walls and entrances to northern boundary**

3.220 Estate walls and entrances to northern boundary (Key component reference 33) have CONSIDERABLE landscape significance.

3.221 The tall sandstone estate walls and entrances to the northern boundary have remained relatively unchanged due to the constraints of the sloping topography of Jesmond Dene and Jesmond Dene Road. The walls and entrances (some now blocked up) are considered to be of an age consistent with 1890's and therefore of significance, see Plate 76. The boundary features of the estate contribute to the character of the Conservation Area with Jesmond Dene Road comprising one of the oldest roads in this Conservation Area, created in 1840 and realigned in the 1870's. The section of the road abutting the Jesmond Towers Estate is
narrow and almost single lane from Matthew Bank to the bottom of The Grove.

Plate 76: Estate wall and entrances, view looking north towards northern boundary

**Eastern access to former school, footpaths and car park**

3.222 Eastern access to former school, footpaths and car park (Key component reference 34) has MODERATE landscape significance.

3.223 The eastern drive access with footpaths and car park serving the former La Sagesse School were installed circa 1940’s when Jesmond Towers was acquired by The Filles de la Sagesse in 1946 and occupied until it closed in 2008, see Plate 77. These features are a modern addition, as the estate of Jesmond Towers was broken up and sold for residential development. However as shown on the OS First Edition, 1858, the eastern drive access overlays in part the line of a former minor access which led northwards from the main Carriage Drive and curved eastwards connecting with several footpaths from the kitchen garden to serve an entrance to Jesmond Towers to the west, with the main drive and entrance to the south.

3.224 Although the latter day introduction of entrance, drive and infrastructure are an addition, they do not significantly interfere with or destroy the underlying layout and understanding of the landscape setting to Jesmond Towers. Indeed, the additions have overlaid or adapted what was there and echoes of the earlier design of the 1800’s survive in places. There is potential for the more inappropriate modern interventions to be removed and a reconnection and interpretation of surviving elements.
Plate 77: View looking northwest towards eastern access footpaths and car park

**Significant trees**

3.225 Significant trees (Key component reference 35) have **CONSIDERABLE** landscape significance.

3.226 This group of trees appears on the OS Second Edition, 1898 which shows new planting groups around Jesmond Towers consistent with the development of gardens along with a series of garden paths, lawns and an area of water to the east and a realigned drive.

3.227 There are trees present that are considered to be of an age consistent with 1890’s and therefore of significance and contribute to the setting of the house, see Plate 78.
All Weather Pitch

3.228 All weather pitch (Key component reference 36) has MODERATE landscape significance.

3.229 The all weather pitch to the south of Jesmond Towers is a modern addition, installed circa 2000 (?) for La Sagesse School, see Plate 79. The all weather pitch is in poor condition and the surfacing treatment is considered to diminish the character and understanding of the place within the context of the landscape setting of Jesmond Towers, a listed II* building. However, this area, whilst developed as an all weather pitch preserves the crucial open aspect and setting to the south front of Jesmond Towers and retains a sense of open space and views towards Jesmond Towers from surrounding key receptors and the Conservation Area and from within the estate, although the wider visual envelope to the south has been lost to encroaching development and to the north by woodland and the sports hall.

3.230 Interestingly a plan by architects Dixon and Bell for an extension to Bemersyde Drive into the grounds of and surrounding Jesmond Towers was approved in 1936 and works commenced in the location of the all weather pitch but were halted by the Second World War and the development area used purportedly for allotments. After the Second World War, the partially constructed buildings (purportedly “up to eaves level”) were demolished when the developer, the Brandling Property Trust, went into liquidation. Jesmond Towers was subsequently acquired by the Filles de la Sagesse in 1946 to extend the school and the area used for grassed tennis courts with latterly the construction of an all weather hockey pitch.

3.231 Whilst little survives on the ground of the gardens and setting to the south of Jesmond Towers, there is considerable potential for the inappropriate modern interventions to be removed and a reconnection and interpretation of elements that build upon its sense of place.

Source: AJT Environmental Consultants, 2009

Plate 79: All weather pitch, view looking north across pitch to Jesmond Towers
### Pond Feature

3.232 The Pond Feature (Key component reference 37) has **CONSIDERABLE** landscape significance.

3.233 The pond feature to the northwest of Jesmond Towers, first appears on the OS Second Edition, 1898 edition which shows tree planting to the north removed in parts, leaving a more open aspect to the former lawned terraces to the north, with steps leading down to the northern boundary woodland and the introduction of a water feature to the northeast of Jesmond Towers and a circular garden to the east where a circular group of trees were previously installed (possibly rose garden which was said to be in existence in the 1970’s during the occupation by the Filles de la Sagesse).

3.234 This created pond feature clearly is part of a designed landscape and is present within the estate today, although in poor condition and considerably overgrown. This feature with a constructed rock cascade or wall designed and built to look like natural outcrops of bedrock and aligned to suggest a bedding plane. Plants such as ferns were often used to conceal the joints between the stones. This type of feature was popular in Victorian times and it is said that the pond contained a fernery, although there are no longer ferns present today. The pond was reportedly cleaned out with a butyl liner introduced by the school in the late 1970’s.

3.235 The pond feature resides alongside a stone lion, see Plates 80 and 81, to the southwest of the pond, which is elevated and looks northwards towards the dene and to be viewed from afar. The Victorians revelled in an explosion of garden styles from the past, reviving every design, from Renaissance formality to Gothic and rustic. New mass-production techniques meant new garden ornaments were available to aspiring middle-class customers as well as wealthy landowners. Mail-order catalogues were full with reproduction Roman statues, Celtic plant troughs, Greek urns, stags, lions and elephants which were transported by the new rail network to the eagerly awaiting customer. Classical goddesses were given key positions on terraces, where paths met and where avenues terminated whilst statues of nymphs, cherubs and animals had less formal positions. Lions stood guard on steps and dolphins leapt in ponds.

3.236 These garden features are worthy of further investigation and research with considerable potential for conservation of individual surviving elements and reconnecting and interpreting them within the landscape and setting to Jesmond Towers. These features, remnants of a designed landscape and which form part of the curtilage and setting of Jesmond Towers, contribute to the understanding of the place and in conjunction with other surviving...
component elements provide a historic record and marker of the social changes during the 19th century and the rise of the wealthy industrialists and coal owners with the development of suburban villas and their 'mini-estates'.

![Image](source: AJT Environmental Consultants, 2010)

**Plate 80:** Pond Feature, view looking south towards pond and rock cascade

![Image](source: AJT Environmental Consultants, 2010)

**Plate 81:** Stone lion, view looking west with Sports Hall in background

### Historical Significance

3.237 Jesmond Towers Estate has an interesting and many faceted and layered history ranging from the origins of the medieval cultivated common field system, through the enterprising Victorians who lived and worked on Tyneside, to the acquisition by the Filles de la Sagesse in 1917 for a school and its history extending over 90 years bringing a significant contribution and value for educational use. Each has waxed and waned over its period of tenure. Many more associations can be told, particularly from the surrounding local community of Jesmond and those that attended the convent school of La Sagesse, but some will have lower
historical significance as they cannot relate firmly back to evidence on the ground and within the fabric of the estate.

3.238 Some elements can demonstrate more of their history than others, such as Jesmond Towers and the woodland planting or boundary estate walls to Jesmond Dene than say the remnants of the 18th century farmfold or of the gardens. The estate has lost much of its historic setting and layout which has diminished its ability in parts to authentically tell its story, however overall, Jesmond Towers Estate has **CONSIDERABLE** historical significance due to the region’s history and associations with various individuals, who have influenced it and also within a wider context as part of a collection of fine Victorian mansions set within 'mini-estates' or as suburban villas along Jesmond Dene for the newly emergent wealthy industrialists within proximity of their businesses. The freedom to experiment with aesthetic choices at this time resulted in a diverse variety of differing styles which so epitomised architecture and other design of the era and of which Jesmond Towers Estate embodies.

Victorian Gothic revival was built in stark contrast to the tranquil classical facades found within the pastoral landscapes of the landed gentry outside of the towns and cities.

3.239 The historical significance of the site is shown in Figure 25.

3.240 Several aspects of the history of Jesmond Towers are considered of **EXCEPTIONAL** historical significance due to its diversity of associations and influences. The history of the estate and of Jesmond Towers is closely tied to the social, political and economic history and development of Tyneside and the region, with key periods and events influencing, individuals being influenced by and the development of the site. The most prominent of these include:

**Industrial Revolution**

3.241 The change in the 1800’s from an agrarian landscape due to the industrial revolution which generated the desire of rich magnates and industrialists, many of whom came from humble circumstances, to move their homes out of the polluted industrial centre. This resulted in the rapid expansion of the population and growth of Jesmond with the development of villas and large houses, dominated by the setting of the Dene, and close to the places of work.

3.242 Most of the characteristics relating to the agrarian landscape have disappeared and been subsumed by development fuelled by the industrial revolution but there is surviving evidence and remnants of the former farmfold present. The affluence and style of the early nineteenth century industrialist, is found within the quality and fabric of the buildings, whilst diminished in parts, are particularly relevant to the aspects of the social and economic history and growth of the area and the story it tells of the wealth and power exercised by great industrialist
families and the growing middle classes in Jesmond and on Tyneside. This includes the families of Burdon and Mitchell described in more detail below.

**Burdon Family**

3.243 The Burdon family held the Jesmond Towers estate, from circa 1805 to 1869, acquiring in 1821, under the bankruptcy of Robert Warwick, the neighbouring so called 'mansion-house', now known as North Jesmond House along with the fields known as Scotts Leazes and a farmhouse then in the occupation of Robert Anderson. Sir Thomas Burdon, Alderman, Soldier and Knight, built West Jesmond House (now known as Jesmond Towers) and its estate, the architect/builder for which is presently unknown. It was added to by John Dobson in 1817 and later in 1823-7. Next came additions by Thomas Oliver Junior in 1865. Richard Burdon-Sanderson I succeeded his father and in turn was succeeded by his son Richard Burdon-Sanderson II in 1865. About the year 1869 Richard Burdon-Sanderson II sold West Jesmond House to Dr Charles Mitchell.

3.244 Much of the estate setting relevant to this family’s tenure has not survived but more crucially elements of the building fabric of Jesmond Towers is evident and fundamental to the historical interpretation and story of the estate.

**Mitchell Family**

3.245 Next came the Mitchell family, with the rise in 19th century Tyneside of a number of men, many of whom came from humble circumstances, and included Charles Mitchell, shipbuilder. He attended Aberdeen University and after an engineering apprenticeship in London, became a ship designer working for John Coutts' Newcastle-upon-Tyne yard in 1842. Mitchell was introduced to the banker Matthew R. Bigge, whose family members were coal owners and industrialists. Bigge provided the capital for the establishment of Mitchell's Low Walker yard in 1852. The buildings were erected by Richard Cail, a builder and future mayor of Newcastle. Mitchell became a shipbuilder in his own right at the Low Walker yard on the Tyne in 1852, which joined in partnership with the Armstrong yard to form Armstrong Mitchell in 1882. Starting in 1857 he built ships for Russia, and in 1862 he set up shipyards in St Petersburg. He received a diamond studded snuff box worth 3,000 guineas and a national decoration for his work for Russia. He was a benefactor of the University of Aberdeen after whom the Mitchell Tower (1895) and Mitchell Hall are named. His university conferred on him the degree of LL.D. He was decorated with the Imperial Order of St Stanislaus, 2nd class (normal for foreign nationals), and this may be seen in the coat of arms over the door of Jesmond Towers, see Plate 82. Expanding his interests, Mitchell established a repair yard at
Wallsend in 1871. He was a director of the Wallsend Slipway Company, together with Henry and Charles Swan, and the retailer Thomas Hudson Bainbridge. As part of Newcastle’s integrated elite, Mitchell formed links with many prominent men and had a lucrative sideline in building luxury yachts for his associates. In 1866, for example, he built the yacht Northumbria for George Robert Stephenson (1819-1905), head of Robert Stephenson and Company. The majority of Mitchell’s ships were built for the coal trade, which made him a lynchpin of industrial relations in the North East.

Source: Peter Derham, 2010

Plate 82: Coat of arms over the door of Jesmond Towers depicting the Imperial Order of St Stanislaus, 2nd class

Charles Mitchell, see Plate 83, lived initially at Low Walker, in close proximity to his shipyard. Following the example of the Newcastle gentry, however, he moved to Jesmond in 1869, purchasing West Jesmond House from Richard Burdon-Sanderson and renamed the house Jesmond Towers. He subsequently acquired the adjoining lands to the north of what is now Osborne Road (developed in 1880) and included North Jesmond House, which he rented to his friend and partner Henry Frederick Swan (brother to Mitchell’s wife) so that the two families could live within 100 yards of each other and within a half mile radius of the houses of Armstrong and Noble which could be viewed from the estate. Charles Mitchell employed Thomas Oliver Junior to enlarge Jesmond Towers in 1869 and then in 1884 and 1895 and subsequent estate works (e.g. the north and west lodges to the park).
3.247 In 1871, Mitchell was among those greeting the High Admiral, Grand Duke Constantine at Newcastle Central Station, after which the party drove on to Jesmond Towers. The Russian guests had come to visit the Low Walker yard and have a quick tour of the river.

3.248 In 1883, Charles Mitchell employed Thomas Ralph Spence for further enlargements to Jesmond Towers, along with additions to the gardens and estate with warm and cold orchid houses, a melon house, a peach house, two vineries, etc. which stood south of the stabling near to the Friday Fields Lane wall. It is clear from the 1885 descriptive account that the view of the north front of the house was once very dramatic, its four storeys appearing to stand precipitously above the fall of the ground down to Jesmond Dene. This was the principal public face of the house, looking down onto the dene and his neighbour Lord Armstrong’s estate and pleasure grounds. In 1890 Anne's sister, Emily, who was in a state of depression following the death of her husband, threw herself from the battlements of Jesmond Towers and was said to haunt the building when occupied by La Sagesse School and was referred to as the Pink Lady.

3.249 Mitchell amassed great wealth but was enigmatic in his politics and his role as a philanthropist. A frustrated charity worker is said to have exclaimed, “It is not worth spending a penny stamp on him”. Yet Mitchell did provide amenities for his workers and spent large sums on himself, his family and his immediate social circle. It seems that his philanthropy was thoroughly strategic. Mitchell built several institutions for his workers, in whose welfare he had a vested interest, including a Mechanic’s Institute and Hall in Bath Street, Walker...
(1861). He built Walker Infirmary to provide medical attention for workers injured in his shipyard. This was a modest two-storey brick building that was domestic in character. The building cost £2,000, but each worker was required to pay one halfpenny per week towards its upkeep. It was opened in May 1870 by the mayor of Newcastle, James Morrison.

3.250 In 1887, Mitchell, an unofficial ‘Lord of the Manor’ for Jesmond, conceived the idea of providing a church to serve the population at the north end of Jesmond. Mitchell donated the land from the Jesmond Towers Estate and £30,000 for the construction of the elegant art nouveau church of St George’s Church, Jesmond. He commissioned Thomas Ralph Spence (1848-1918) as architect, the secretary of the Newcastle Arts Association. The building is high and dramatic inside and of excellent workmanship throughout (commented upon by Bernard Shaw on his visit in the 1890s). The coloured glass is especially fine, and the mosaic figures were designed by Mitchell's own son, Charles William Mitchell. The splendid Lewis organ was originally provided with air by two powerful hydraulic engines supplied by Mitchell's neighbour in Jesmond Dene, Lord Armstrong.

3.251 Right up to his death at the age of 75 he directed the ship building activities of Sir W.G. Armstrong, Mitchell and Co. In 1897, after he died, the firm became Armstrong Whitworth which is now part of Rolls Royce plc and BAE Systems.\(^{18}\)

3.252 Charles William Mitchell succeeded his father in 1895 but died eight years later in 1903. Charles William Mitchell had no doubt come into increased funds as a newly appointed director of Armstrong, Whitworth & Co with funds to carry out improvements c 1902\(^{19}\), the detailing of this work is highly characteristic of Thomas Ralph Spence.

3.253 In 1926 the Executors of the late Mrs Charles William Mitchell sold Jesmond Towers, which was subsequently occupied by the Osborne Grammar School for Boys (known subsequently as Ackhurst School) until 1946. In the 1930’s land along the southern boundary for private housing was sold by the Trustees of Mrs Charles William Mitchell for the development of Towers Avenue and Mitchell Avenue and Bemersyde Drive.

3.254 The decline of the estate is a typical example of the gradual erosion of such estates after the First World War with the changes in social and political attitudes matched by a shift in taxation and economic and political ideals. Death duties, the loss of a generation of young men in the War and a change in social attitudes brought an end to the extravagances and display of wealth of the previous century, a pattern of which was repeated across the country.

\(^{18}\) Obituary in The Times, Monday, Aug 26, 1895; pg. 7.

\(^{19}\) 1910 Anderson & Garland sale catalogue.
3.255 Parts of the estate were gradually sold and alternative uses for the buildings sought. This today reflects the similar predicament of the current Owners of the estate in finding a suitable solution, with economic viability at the forefront, to ensure the long term safeguarding and sustainable conservation and survival of the best parts of Jesmond Towers Estate.

3.256 The library and art collections, including furniture, tapestries, sculpture and paintings were largely auctioned by the trustees in the 1940’s, shown in sales catalogues. A number of the paintings by Charles William Mitchell which hung in the gallery at Jesmond Towers are currently residing in the Laing Art Gallery, an example of which is shown in Plate 84.

Plate 84: Hypatia, 1885, by Charles William Mitchell (1854 - 1903) (other version). Oil on canvas, 244.5 x 152.5 cm, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne
The Filles de la Sagesse

3.257 In 1715, in La Rochelle, France, Marie Louise Trichet co-founded the Filles de la Sagesse (Daughters of Wisdom) which, after a rather rapid expansion, is now some 300 years old and dispersed among 21 countries. The Daughters of Wisdom travelled the world and founded many schools. They travelled from France to England and established a school in Low Fell in 1906 before buying North Jesmond House to the west of the estate in 1917 for a school and convent, costing at that time £34,000. The school was recognised by the Board of Education in 1938 and as a memento of this, the Jubilee Gate (? To be located) was erected in Towers Avenue. During the Second World War, the school was evacuated for a short time to St Mary's Ursuline Convent in Berwick but the authorities gave permission for the school to reopen at Jesmond. By the end of the war, due to the rise in the number of pupils, additional accommodation was required. In 1946 La Sagesse School acquired Jesmond Towers from the Ackhurst Boys Preparatory School and was opened as the senior school on June 15th 1948 by his Lordship the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, the Rt. Rev. Joseph McCormack, D.D. The school occupied the whole estate until it closed in 2008. The acquisition by the Filles de la Sagesse of both North Jesmond House and Jesmond Towers set in motion major intervention by new buildings, sports facilities and playgrounds and the relocation of the right of way of Friday Fields Lane to the west boundary of the site in 1950.

3.258 This chapter of the estate's history as a girls convent school provides an insight into the nature of single sex private convent schools of the period, and how the buildings were adapted to meet the needs of the convent and school, with a number of buildings creating another layer to the estate's varied and interesting history. The school's contribution to private education in Tyneside in providing a site of educational use for the benefit of pupils over a 90 year period is evident. The table below shows the growth in pupil numbers over a period of 62 years reflecting its peak in the 1970's with many pupils recipients of scholarships from five surrounding education authorities, as there was no local Catholic Grammar School provision in the area.
Table 2 - Growth in pupil numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Pupil Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Parent Teachers Association Newsletter, June 1974 (lent by Mrs M Charlton)

3.259 In the 1930’s, over one third of pupils were boarders, many day pupils stayed for lunch and the boarders dining room (subsequently a senior classroom) held them all comfortably. After lunch two members of the lay staff took all the pupils by crocodile for a walk in the Dene.

3.260 Prize days were held in the People’s Theatre where seniors gave a performance at one event of Les Cloches de Corneville produced by Sister Ernest and with Pearl Travers (film star Bill Travers young sister) in the leading role. Bill Travers elder sister Florence Linden-Travers who also attended the school made her first stage appearance at the Newcastle Playhouse in 1933. She made her West End debut the following year in Ivor Novello’s Murder in Mayfair, and appeared in her first film, Children of the Fog, in 1935. She played a substantial role in Carol Reed’s Bank Holiday (1938). One of her most widely seen performances was as Mrs. Todhunter in Alfred Hitchcock’s The Lady Vanishes (1938). She also appeared in The Stars Look Down (1940), The Ghost Train (1941) and Quartet (1948).

John Dobson

3.261 John Dobson, 1787-1865, was a 19th century English architect and is one of the North East's most eminent architects and has achieved national fame. In a practice which lasted over 50 years, he designed many fine country houses including Nunnykirk Hall, Meldon Park, Mitford Hall, Lilburn Tower, churches, public buildings and streets. His work transformed the look of towns in the region with such masterpieces as Newcastle’s Eldon Square, Grainger Markets, Central Station, and the now demolished Royal Arcade and for his work with Richard Grainger developing the centre of Newcastle in a neoclassical style.
**Thomas Ralph Spence**

3.262 The designer, decorator and architect Thomas Ralph Spence, 1855-1903, was born in Yorkshire into a family of builders. He studied as an architect, and then settled in London, where he became a painter of architectural scenes. He exhibited in the Royal Academy in the 1890s and was the subject of a solo exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1910.

3.263 Spence’s architectural work included the additions and enlargements in 1884 to 1895 to Jesmond Towers for Dr Charles Mitchell and also again for Mitchell in 1888 to 1889 with the design of St George’s Church, Jesmond, Newcastle. His work also included in 1891 the interior of All Saints Church, Ennismore Gardens, London, where the semi-dome was handed over to Spence for decoration. Recently moved to London from the North East, Spence who had made a name for himself with St George’s Church, Jesmond, painted the semi-dome “after the manner of work characteristic of Northern Italy” with a view of an Eastern city surmounted by Christ in Majesty. On either side were standing figures of saints and above them a tier of angels. The predominant tones were yellow, russet and brown, on a rich blue background. Within only a few years, however, Spence’s painting was obliterated, and no record of it appears to have survived, although a sketch model was shown at one of the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions. (ref. 204) (fn. c). Spence's work was sacrificed for a much more ambitious programme of decoration, carried out between 1896 and 1903 by the Arts and Crafts designer Heywood Sumner.

3.264 Spence’s best work consisted of Greek and Roman subjects in the Classical style of the artist Alma Tadema. These include very long canvases with lots of figures, including a series showing scenes from the Odyssey. He also produced a number of girls on marble terraces, again in the style of Alma Tadema, but usually including a perspective and middle ground, invariably avoided by the latter artist.

**Henry Frederick Swan**

3.265 Henry Frederick Swan was born at West Farm, Walker on 10th September 1842. Not a lot is known of his early life as he seems to have been privately educated. It is said he joined the firm Charles Mitchell and Co. at 16 years of age, as an apprentice. Charles Mitchell picked him out for promotion in 1862 by sending him to take over the construction of warships in St Petersburg as the Company's manager in charge. In 1854 Mitchell married Anne Swan, the

sister of Swan, and this connection brought Mitchell valuable business contacts. From the
time of being a partner in the Mitchell business, it seems that he took a very active and
important part in guiding the firm and promoting new ideas. In 1883, oil tanker design took a
large step forward. Swan designed a set of three tankers. Instead of one or two large holds, Swan’s design used several holds which spanned the width, or beam, of the ship. These holds were further subdivided into port and starboard sections by a longitudinal bulkhead. Earlier designs suffered from stability problems caused by the free surface effect, where oil moving from side to side could cause a ship to capsize. But this approach of dividing the ship’s storage space into smaller tanks virtually eliminated free-surface problems. This approach, almost universal today, was first used by Swan in the Nobel tankers Blesk, Lumen, and Lux. The Glückauf, see Plates 85 and 86, represented a large step forward in tanker design which was another design of Colonel Swan, and the ship has been called the “true progenitor of all subsequent tanker tonnage”. Its features included cargo valves operable from the deck, cargo main piping, a vapor line, cofferdams for added safety, and the ability to load seawater ballast when empty of cargo.

3.266 Swan had many interests and his participation in the Volunteer movement extended over a period of 42 years rising to Lieutenant-Colonial of the 2nd Northumberland Rifle Volunteer Corps. On his retirement in 1902 he was created a Companion of the Bath (C.B) and enrolled as Honorary Colonial of his regiment.

Photograph courtesy of Tyne & Wear Museums

Plate 85: Glückauf, The world’s first ocean-going tanker
Plate 86: Gluckauf, the world's first ocean-going tanker- Detail from a profile plan of yard number 473, 'Gluckauf', the world's first oil transporter (ref TWAS: DS.VA/2/5588; TWM: G7722)

3.267 Swan was the first churchwarden of St George’s Church, Jesmond and there is a brass plate on the wall just inside the church recording the fact that Henry Frederick Swan was the first churchwarden in 1888.

3.268 Swan twice married, resided in 1881 in Jesmond House (North Jesmond House), for some 30 years, and then he was recorded in 1900 living in Prudhoe Hall, Prudhoe, where he died on 25th March 1908.

3.269 The window as presented in Plate 87, (made by Barnett, Newcastle) at Walker Parish Church was erected by Henry Frederick Swan in memory of his first wife Mary Calvert Swan who died March 28th 1869 aged 27 years and also their infant son Henry Mitchell Swan who died July 15th 1868 aged 5 months.
Plate 87: Window made by Barnett, Newcastle at Walker Parish Church

- **Panel 1**
  
  Illustration - Jesus holding a child.  
  Inscription - Suffer the little children to come unto me. (Luke 18:16)

- **Panel 2**
  
  Illustration - Jesus being anointed by a woman.  
  Inscription - She hath wrought good work on me. (Matthew 26:10)

- **Panel 3**
  
  Illustration - The Virgin Mary with the baby Jesus.  
  Inscription - Behold the Lamb of God. (John 1:29)

- **Panel 4**
  
  Illustration - St Peter and Dorcas.  
  Inscription - All the widows stood by Him weeping and showing Him the coats and garments which Dorcas made. (Acts 9:39) Tabitha Arise (Acts 9:40)
Ecological Significance

General Ecology

3.270 The estate has been assessed for nature conservation value and is overall of MODERATE ecological significance. Its main ecological value is as an area of woodland, comprising La Sagesse Wood SLCI, and buildings which provide a range of habitats including roosting and nesting opportunities for both bats and birds. Due to its size, position on the edge of the suburb of Jesmond and its proximity with Jesmond Dene SNCI, the estate forms part of a valuable wildlife refuge along the Ouseburn valley.

3.271 In this wider context, the whole estate is part of a much larger area of CONSIDERABLE significance that connects sites of wildlife value for movement of species along the Ouseburn Wildlife Corridor. The most important bird habitats are the Ouseburn itself, and the semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, which holds a wide range of breeding birds, including several Red and Amber list species. Over 120 species of bird have been recorded, of which 37 species are regular breeders and a further 26 species are regularly recorded or on passage. Some of the most notable species are kingfisher, song thrush, great spotted woodpecker, tawny owl, dipper, nuthatch, treecreeper and spotted flycatcher. Species also found within Jesmond Dene include otter and red squirrel.

3.272 Whilst the habitats generally within the estate are of limited diversity due to past management, they have the potential to support a number of local BAP species, but are unexceptional with features that are of no more than local interest.

3.273 The presence of bats, European protected species, recorded at the site is considered to be of ecological significance, although further survey work is ongoing with bat activity surveys currently being undertaken. An ornithological survey is also ongoing to assess the significance of the estate for supporting breeding and non-breeding bird species, with specific regard to species of national conservation concern.

3.274 The site has the potential to support a range of species of bird, including those of conservation concern, invertebrates and small mammals. The woodland tree cover to the site should be retained as part of any regeneration initiatives and managed for biodiversity and as a setting to the historic listed Jesmond Towers.

3.275 The negative characteristics of the site, which diminish the potential nature conservation value of the site and its surroundings, include:
• Urbanised setting with severance by roads, footpaths and built development;

• Intensively managed and maintained estate with amenity grassland and regular mowing and management of the grassland;

• The regular level of disturbance from immediate surrounding areas;

• The recorded presence of large stands of Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria (Fallopia) japonica*) within the site, an invasive alien plant species, which will suppress the growth of native plants and grasses and should be appropriately removed;

• The presence of grey squirrel which can cause damage to woodland regeneration including beech and yew and predation of birds' nests (and competition with priority species) and should be appropriately controlled;

• Presence of rhododendron, an exotic Victorian introduction, within the woodland, will suppress the growth of native plants and grasses if unmanaged and in turn lead to the consequent loss of the associated native animals. This species should be appropriately managed and controlled;

• Security lighting to the buildings and around the main building core.

3.276 The estate is the subject of regeneration initiatives desired by the new Owners to find renewed sustainable use for the buildings and their landscape setting. The ecological and biodiversity survey has been undertaken to help guide the future proposals and to be used as a planning tool. Any change or intervention and development works within the estate has the potential to have an effect upon the habitats present and species of animal and bird protected under UK and European legislation along with breeding birds and would require careful and appropriate mitigation and protection from disturbance or harm during any works.

3.277 The ecological significance of the habitats and therefore ecological sensitivity to change or intervention is presented in Figure 26. The significance is based on survey work undertaken to inform this Conservation Plan and graded as **EXCEPTIONAL** (Exceptional Ecological value), **CONSIDERABLE** (High Ecological value), **MODERATE** (Moderate Ecological value), **LOW** (Low Ecological value), **MARGINAL** (None/Negligible Ecological value) and **NEGATIVE** (Threat to Biodiversity and Wildlife Value of Site). There are no grades of **EXCEPTIONAL/CONSIDERABLE** significance present within the site due to the nature of the habitats, although there is significant potential for enhancement.
Bats

3.278 There appear to be low risk of protected species within the estate, with the exception of bats where signs of a bat roost in the eastern elevation of the modern temporary laboratory classroom were recorded in 2009. There are buildings and structures present and a number of suitable trees within the woodland on the site which provide potential roosting habitat for bats. The estate and its wider context provide high quality foraging habitat for bats. Further surveys are currently being undertaken to understand more fully the use of the site by bats and ensure that there is no adverse impact upon the species through intervention works or development within the site. A European Protected Species Licence would be required to allow works affecting a roost site and an appropriate mitigation strategy devised.

Ornithology

3.279 An assessment of the ornithological interest of the site is currently being undertaken to advise on any ecological issues which need to be addressed and help inform the management of the site to encourage a greater variety of species.

3.280 The site currently offers a moderate range of suitable nesting habitats for a limited range of British birds. The site as a whole is considered to be of Moderate Potential for breeding birds. The poor structure and composition of the woodland generally supports relatively common bird nesting and foraging habitats, which are either well represented elsewhere in the vicinity or are more favourable for this taxon group. The open grassy areas of the estate and the hardstanding areas are likely to favour commuting and foraging birds rather than nesting.

3.281 The adjacent landscape within the dene supports a range of favourable bird nesting habitats, including ancient woodland and associated scattered and dense scrub areas. It is considered that the Jesmond Towers Estate offers comparatively poorer nesting habitat for a range of migrant and resident birds.

3.282 Where clearance of vegetation is essential within the site, this should be undertaken between October and February, inclusive, to prevent disturbance and destruction of nesting areas. Work on or near buildings should also be done in this period as the buildings within the estate can also support nesting birds.

Potential

3.283 Potential exists to significantly enhance the nature conservation value of the site through the management of the existing habitats and the creation of new habitats. The following measures include:
• Provision of new tree and shrub planting to provide nest sites and autumn and winter berries attractive to foraging birds;

• Creation of habitats to provide breeding and roosting sites for bats, birds and other small mammals;

• Provide native and wildlife friendly plants and create species diversity with a mixture of flowering and fruiting plants to improve the foraging habitat for insects and therefore bats and birds;

• Enhance habitats in key locations by creating hedgerows (with at least five native species e.g. hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, hazel, dog rose or elder) along the site boundaries, verges and grassland margins for invertebrate communities;

• Use of new native trees and shrubs in a planting scheme to promote wildlife diversity;

• Enhance habitats in key locations by creating hedgerows, verges and grassland margins for invertebrate communities;

• Increase biodiversity interest of the site to complement habitats present within the local area and to support a range of plants and animals;

• Provide roosting sites for bats within buildings;

• Provide bird nesting boxes for hole nesting birds such as starling and house sparrow;

• Provide deadwood habitat;

• Provide wildlife refuge features such as log piles or insect houses;

• Encourage management of existing woodland, trees and shrub to promote wildlife diversity;

• Management of the existing pond by de-silting and re-excavation to increase water depth and removal of organic matter with enhancement measures using marginal and aquatic planting;

• Provision of a Management Plan for the estate to further enhance the wildlife value of the site through a number of management measures, which could include simple measures such as-
• Provide a 0.5m minimum radius around trees as a buffer from mowing around the base of the trunk to create/promote areas of longer grass. Where trees are grouped, this buffer could be enlarged;

• Changes in management of areas of grassland for wildlife enhancement by introducing differential mowing regimes such as leaving grass swards in selected areas to establish during the summer months by less frequent cutting (mid-late July) and/or cutting to a higher sward height. Removal of the cuttings after mowing would prevent further enrichment of the soil and enhance conditions for planting wildflower plugs, or sowing seeds of locally native wildflower species;

• Areas around the site boundaries could be left unmanaged to allow scrub areas to establish. Such habitat provides foraging and nesting opportunities for birds and small mammals.

3.284 Correctly managed through a carefully devised Management Plan, the habitats present within the estate can contribute to locally important species, make a contribution to biodiversity and provide valuable habitats for invertebrates, song birds and mammals.

3.285 This would contribute to local biodiversity and meet the requirements of the Newcastle Local Biodiversity Action Plan, which has specific targets for the enhancement of biodiversity resources within the City. The aim of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is to protect existing wildlife and look for opportunities where enhancement can be achieved. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is not only about protecting important species, but also encourages enhancement for common species, such as birds and butterflies. In accordance with the guidance contained in the national Biodiversity Action Plan, Natural England Natural Area Profiles, and the Local BAP, management and enhancement works would ensure that the value of created habitats are maximised and thus provide opportunities to enhance habitats within the site.
Social/Community Significance

3.286 Jesmond Towers Estate is considered overall to have **MODERATE** Social and Community significance within a local context. The Social and Community significance is presented in Figure 27. The key areas of benefit for the community lie in the following themes:

**A Community Resource**

3.287 There is little significance in terms of an economic or educational resource primarily due to the estate being under private ownership with no public access and no available interpretation. None of the buildings within the estate are currently in long term productive use, but there is potential for Jesmond Towers Estate to be an asset to the local area and which could have a wider appreciation in the local community.

3.288 There is also potential for education on local history, conservation, ecology and industrial and shipbuilding history. A number of educational establishments have been approached as potential users but this has not to date been productive.

3.289 The BBC has been utilising North Jesmond House and grounds to film Tracy Beaker, a TV drama for children based on the popular Jacqueline Wilson's bestselling books, see Plate 88. This has provided an income in the last year, to help contribute towards the costs of running and maintaining the estate. We would suggest there maybe some potential link with CBBC and the educational, social and historical aspects about the buildings used for filming. There appears currently no acknowledgement within the children’s website link of the estate or buildings used in the filming of the programme, which is an interesting and potential ‘behind the scenes’ story in itself.

Source: CBBC website, Tracey Beaker (North Jemond House)

Plate 88: Former Farmhouse
3.290 Restoration of the Picture Gallery within Jesmond Towers is currently being considered by the Owners, which is in most respects structurally complete save for its painted decoration. The intention is to use the gallery as an exhibition space and discussions have taken place with the Laing Art Gallery.

3.291 The Owners have a large private collection of plans, artefacts and models relating to ships designed and built at Mitchell's Low Walker yard. Many ships were completed under the Mitchell name up to 1882, with three of them being launched in a unique triple launch at the yard in 1856. Yard nos. 15, 17 and 18 were launched simultaneously – an event that was never repeated on the Tyne and which must have been quite a spectacular event. Mitchell later bought a second yard in Wallsend, which he later handed over to brother-in-law Charles Swan, who set up Swan Hunter. There is great potential for the provision of a small exhibit/museum concerning shipbuilding history on the Tyne at Jesmond Towers and a local history resource and interpretation. Jesmond Towers draws part of its identity through Charles Mitchell and his link with shipbuilding, as do the current owners Shepherd Offshore, who later acquired Low Walker yard and now own the former home and shipyard of Charles Mitchell which is a story in itself.

3.292 The main value of the estate for the local community is in its amenity value and contribution towards the townscape, as viewed from several public vantage points, providing within a residential suburb of Newcastle, a backdrop of woodland and green spaces with an attractive and historic Grade 11* listed building and an area for wildlife that complements the natural world found in Jesmond Dene. The site provides a valuable asset for the setting of the adjacent residential development, the neighbouring Dene and Jesmond Dene Conservation Area. There is significant potential for the enhancement in terms of nature conservation, biodiversity and woodland management.

Identity of the Local Community

3.293 The green and wooded character of the estate, with a strong sense of place and feeling of tranquility and past history is much valued by the neighbouring residents and adjoining communities who have the benefit of a ‘borrowed’ landscape’ and setting which has a strong impact on local people and helps to define this part of Jesmond and the Conservation Area. The wooded site and dene valley provide the wider setting to the Ouseburn and the former pleasure gardens of Jesmond Dene.

3.294 The site however is under private ownership and whilst a number of neighbouring residents
are allowed to walk their dogs within the estate as part of the endeavour of the new Owners to provide a benefit for the immediate neighbours and encourage stewardship through natural surveillance and caring for the estate, its public use is restricted. The Owners arranged a large firework display on the estate in November 2009, as part of its links with the local community, and this was much appreciated, particularly that their role as neighbours was valued and from the Owner’s perspective that the estate should function as part of the wider community.

**Valued by the Community**

3.295 The local community is interested in the future of Jesmond Towers Estate, as it has had an important role within Jesmond for over 200 years. There is interest in the main elements of significance and value within the estate and with particular recent attention upon the trees and those that may present a risk to the public or property due to condition and structural issues.

3.296 The interest has been demonstrated by the number of people who during the research and development of this Conservation Plan, have come forward with memories, photographs and historical information about Jesmond Towers Estate, notably those connected to the La Sagesse convent school.

3.297 The most telling aspect of this evaluation of significance is the numbers of people who have every day experience of Jesmond Towers Estate, even if they are not consciously aware of it. The green and treed presence of the estate spills out beyond the confines of the boundaries and provides the ever present backdrop to Matthew Bank, Jesmond Dene Road and Jesmond Dene, the most popular public park in Newcastle which attracts people from a wide area. The Dene, along with Jesmond Towers Estate, and the adjoining collection of 19th century mansions, villas and monuments are of significant townscape and landscape value, providing drama and a variety of scenery in a large industrial city. The landscape and the vegetation and wildlife it supports, gives a small taste of wilderness in the middle of the city. During the winter months when the leaves are not on the trees, glimpses of the upper castellated sections of Jesmond Towers can be seen rising above the dene and can be viewed as far away as Paddy Freeman’s Park.

3.298 Towers Avenue forms perhaps one of the finer examples in the city, if not the ‘only’ tree-lined drive to have become a street of houses and retained its trees. Those residents that live on and use the former tree lined carriage drive day to day, perhaps in a subconscious way, get close to the essence of the place with its views towards the collection of buildings and its
landscape setting.

3.299 This means that several major elements are key to the place’s social and community significance, even if they are not overtly expressed or realised and include:

- The woodland (Key component reference 30)
- Remanant of woodland (Key component reference 27)
- Jesmond Towers (Key component reference 1)
- Towers Avenue (Key component reference 21)

3.300 The future and management of Jesmond Towers Estate requires a careful and open approach, and therefore consultation with the community will be a vital step towards the embracement of the Conservation Plan and any planned future changes and interventions of the estate. There are no known community groups linked directly with the estate apart from the La Sagesse School Old Girls Association, although there is a Jesmond Residents Association and Jesmond Dene Estates Residents’ Association who have a watching brief on the estate and who all will need to be part of any consultation process.

**Summary Statement of Significance**

**Introduction**

3.301 The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of Jesmond Towers Estate is set out in this section as a statement of significance. Table 3 and Figure 28 give an analysis of the various measures of significance for the main elements or components of the estate.

3.302 The range of values for each element and themes may combine to enhance the overall significance of Jesmond Towers Estate, but some values may be in conflict with one another, as for example the temporary portacabins (Key component reference 15 and 16) which are in poor condition with expired temporary planning consent and support an aspiration for them to be demolished (= negative value), even though their ecological value remains higher due to the presence of a bat roost.

3.303 Expressions of value may also be implicit in the current state of the historic environment, where they can be nurtured or, if they are negative, transformed by appropriate intervention or management. They may also help to bring issues into focus as to which heritage assets
are designated as being of special interest, whether any others meet the criteria and do the existing designations accurately reflect the type and level of significance identified.

3.304 In judging the significance of each element it has been particularly helpful to consider the following criteria and how, and to what degree they are met:

- Rarity: Does it exemplify a type or feature seldom or never encountered elsewhere? It is often assumed that rarity is synonymous with historical importance and therefore high value, but it is important not to exaggerate rarity by magnifying differences and downplaying common characteristics.

- Representativeness: Is its character or type representative of important historical or architectural/design trends? Representativeness may be contrasted with rarity.

- Aesthetic appeal: Does it (or could it) evoke positive feelings of worth by virtue of the quality (whether designed or artless) of its architecture, design or layout, the harmony or diversity of its forms and materials, or through its attractive physical condition?

- Integrity: Does it retain a sense of completeness and coherence? In a historic landscape with a high degree of integrity the functional and hierarchical relationships between different elements of the landscape remain intelligible and nuanced, greatly enhancing its evidential value and often its aesthetic appeal. Integrity is most often used as a measure of single-phase survival, but some buildings and landscapes are valuable precisely because of their multiple layers, which can have considerable evidential value.

- Associations: Is it associated with important historic events or people? Can those associations be verified? If they cannot, they may still be of some significance, as many places and buildings are valued for associations that are traditional rather than historically proven.

3.305 The assessment of relative significance is, inevitably, a comparative process, and for this reason it has relied heavily on the careful analysis of a range of information, including the knowledge of local people. It aims to establish whether Jesmond Towers Estate or a building or other feature within it, is of local, regional, national or international significance.
3.306 The overall significance for each theme is summarised below.

**Architectural Significance**

3.307 The early period of the establishment of the estate has undoubtedly had the greatest impact upon the nature of the place as it stands today and is overall of **CONSIDERABLE** regional architectural significance. It marked the sale of agrarian land bordering Jesmond Dene by the Coulson family to new owners and the consequent development of a house, West Jesmond House now Jesmond Towers, of **EXCEPTIONAL** national significance and set within its own ‘mini-estate’ along the Ouseburn valley side on one site and a farm conversion to a so called mansion, North Jesmond House, of a more modest arrangement on the other.

3.308 Successive owners of Jesmond Towers and its landscape have made powerful statements of the importance of the standing of their families and business connections by continuous additions and enlargements always by eminent architects of the day in a sympathetic Gothic Revival style with Art Nouveau Aesthetic and much embellishment of the landscape setting and gardens.

3.309 As the 19th century drew to a close, the growth of the so-called mansion of North Jesmond House on Scotts Leazes was less auspicious. A medley of alterations confused rather than enhanced the style.

3.310 This was nothing to the changes wrought in the 20th century. Whilst the two sites were now in single ownership again, the division by Friday Fields Lane as a right of way, was preserved by the creation of a cutting or tunnel under the lime tree drive to the West Lodge. This was to remain until acquisition by the Filles de la Sagesse led to its diversion to the west of the estate. Whilst little major destruction followed, degrading became an issue with a multiplicity of extensions, alterations and interconnections of adjoining buildings of Convent, Chapel, Gymnasium and Classrooms and landscape occurred, each of which had been designed carefully but with hopeless disregard for neighbouring buildings and the landscape setting.

3.311 Particularly maladroit was the siting of the modern Sports Hall, the only permanent addition to the eastern part of the present day estate, which detracts from Jesmond Towers, its setting and views, as do a number of the alterations made by school conversions.

3.312 Jesmond Towers Estate is considered to appreciably enrich the architectural resource within the context of its locality or neighbourhood, particularly the Conservation Area.
3.313 In wider sense, Jesmond Towers is an important survivor of 19th century Gothic Revival and Art Nouveau Aesthetic in Newcastle upon Tyne, and provides a valuable connection and relationship with its long standing neighbour Jesmond Dene, forming part of a significant and EXCEPTIONAL collection of other 19th century mansions and villas along with the listed buildings not least the grade 1 St George’s Church, scheduled ancient monuments, protected trees and features of interest of high environmental and historic character set in the mature landscape of the Dene.

**Landscape Significance**

3.314 Jesmond Towers Estate is composed overall of a landscape of CONSIDERABLE local significance, predominantly comprising those elements and features that have survived from the 19th century (some earlier), albeit not intact and generally not in good condition, and mainly focussed around Jesmond Towers.

3.315 Jesmond Towers house is considered to be of EXCEPTIONAL local landscape significance forming the principal building within the estate and as an important survivor of the 19th century Gothic Revival style which significantly contributes to the character and appearance of both the estate and Conservation Area and for its contribution to the wider townscape and important views.

3.316 Under successive owners, the estate landscape has received several phases of major changes and developments, reflecting the uses, affluence, tastes and needs of the time. Most of these overlaid or adapted what was there, but echoes of earlier features and elements, along with historic shapes do survive in places.

3.317 The designer(s) of the landscape to Jesmond Towers in the early 19th century, is unknown but appears to have been developed as a ‘mini-estate’ in the style of the ‘woodland garden’, an approach and style fashionable with the newly emergent wealthy industrialists at that time, although more modest in scale and arrangement in comparison to its neighbouring and very fine example at Jesmond Dene, but which nevertheless established Jesmond Towers in the upper stratum of its group of nearby peers and the cluster of similar industrialists and coal owner’s estates around Jesmond.

3.318 It is apparent that there was a conscious decision for the aesthetics and culture of the period to influence the designed relationship between Jesmond Towers and the landscape, utilising the adjacent steep wooded Dene to enhance the setting of the house, as it had no river, dene or rock outcrops of its own. Indeed, the estate as a whole was designed into views using Jesmond Dene, as a ‘borrowed' landscape, to enhance the prospect of the house,
positioned to be a prominent feature in the landscape looking directly over Jesmond Dene House and the Dene itself.

3.319 The theatrical roofline of Jesmond Towers could be observed from important vantage points from within the landscape of Jesmond Dene and surrounding area through natural breaks in the planting, although these views have regrettably been largely lost, obscured by encroaching secondary woodland and the large modern sports hall built by La Sagesse School in 1977.

3.320 The landscape has evolved through a number of changes and uses from the mid 19th century onwards, and whilst the estate no longer remains intact with component parts significantly eroded from the south and east due to the rapid expansion and development of Jesmond, it still retains its boundary to the north constrained by Jesmond Dene Road and its steeply sloping banks and to the west which contains the remnant Friday Fields Lane and its long standing neighbour North Jesmond House. Core features survive but considerably altered in detail and not well preserved of a Carriage Drive, Kitchen Garden, Gardens and Garden features, Woodland and a Lodge.

3.321 Today, the landscape of Jesmond Towers Estate contributes to its sense of tranquility and seclusion, even though the estate is situated within the urbanised setting of the city of Newcastle. The woodland and trees within the estate help to screen and filter noise and visual intrusion of urban living providing in association with the neighbouring Dene, a quiet and green haven and backdrop within an urban context.

3.322 The landscape provides a number of important environmental and townscape functions and include:

- Providing the curtilage and setting to Jesmond Towers, a building of architectural significance and recognised in its listed status at Grade 11*, and set within an urban environment;

- To appreciably enrich the cultural and historical resource within the context of its locality or neighbourhood, particularly the Conservation Area;

- Its relationship to Jesmond Dene and its proximity to a collection of 19th century mansions and villas along with the listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, protected trees and features of interest;
• Providing areas of green open space and trees within a residential suburb which enhance the environment and make a valuable contribution to the amenity value and character of the Conservation Area and ‘sense of place’;

• Helping to define and structure spaces, and by framing and consolidating views. In all these ways the landscape and trees soften the harshness of the built environment and also form an important habitat for a wide range of wildlife and are instrumental in encouraging animals and birds into an area.

3.323 There are opportunities for enhancement and intervention to safeguard and benefit the longer term conservation of landscape elements worthy of retention.

**Historical Significance**

3.324 Jesmond Towers Estate has an interesting and many faceted and layered history ranging from the origins of the medieval cultivated common field system, through the enterprising Victorians who lived and worked on Tyneside, to the acquisition by the Filles de la Sagesse in 1917 for a school and its history extending over 90 years. Each has waxed and waned over its period of tenure.

3.325 The estate has lost much of its historic setting and layout which has diminished its overall ability to authentically tell its story, however overall, Jesmond Towers Estate has **CONSIDERABLE** local historical significance due to the region’s history and associations with various individuals, who have influenced it and also within a wider context as part of a collection of fine Victorian mansions set within ‘mini-estates’ or as suburban villas along Jesmond Dene for the newly emergent wealthy industrialists within proximity of their businesses. The freedom to experiment with aesthetic choices at this time resulted in a diverse variety of differing styles which so epitomised architecture and other design of the era and of which Jesmond Towers Estate embodies. Victorian Gothic revival was built in stark contrast to the tranquil classical facades found within the pastoral landscapes of the landed gentry outside of the towns and cities.

**Ecological Significance**

3.326 The estate has been assessed and is considered overall to be of **MODERATE** local ecological significance with its main ecological value as an area of woodland and buildings which provide a range of habitats including roosting and nesting opportunities for both bats and birds.
3.327 In a wider context, the whole estate is part of a much larger area of \textbf{CONSIDERABLE} local/regional significance that connects sites of wildlife value for refuge and movement of species along the Ouseburn Wildlife Corridor.

3.328 Species of significance recorded include bats (Pipstrelle bats) and a range of bird species including a number of conservation concern. The adjacent landscape within the dene supports a range of favourable bird nesting habitats, including ancient woodland and associated scattered and dense scrub areas, whilst Jesmond Towers Estate offers comparatively poorer nesting habitat for a range of migrant and resident birds.

3.329 Potential exists to significantly enhance the nature conservation value of the site through the management of the existing habitats and the creation of new habitats which will contribute to locally important species, make a contribution to biodiversity and provide valuable habitats for invertebrates, song birds and mammals.

3.330 The woodland tree cover to the site should be retained as part of any regeneration initiatives and managed for biodiversity and as a setting to the historic listed Jesmond Towers.

\textbf{Social and Community Significance}

3.331 At present, Jesmond Towers Estate has \textbf{MODERATE} local Social and Community significance in terms of its amenity value for the local community. The estate contributes towards the townscape and views from several public vantage points, providing within a residential suburb of Newcastle, a backdrop of woodland and green spaces with an attractive and historic Grade 11* building and an area for wildlife that complements the natural world found in Jesmond Dene. The site provides a valuable asset for the setting of the adjacent residential development, the neighbouring Dene and Jesmond Dene Conservation Area and is a feature and landmark valued by the local community.

3.332 There is potential for the enhancement in terms of conservation and ecology and woodland management to the benefit of the townscape and amenity of the surrounding area.
### Table 3: Summary of Significance of Each Element by Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Architectural</th>
<th>Landscape/Townscape</th>
<th>Historical</th>
<th>Ecology</th>
<th>Social/Community</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Jesmond Towers</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>North Lodge</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Convent</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Restorability</td>
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<td>Condition</td>
<td>Significance</td>
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<td>Moderate – confirmed bat roost in 2009</td>
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<td>Temporary Laboratory East</td>
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<td>Garden Stores</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
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<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Kitchen Garden remains</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
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<td>Marginal</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Towers (Lime) Avenue - Carriage Drive</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
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<td>Not surveyed-outwith site</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Remnant Copse with significant Trees</td>
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<tr>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Playing fields</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Western access to former school</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26A</td>
<td>Entrance to former farmhouse and North Jesmond House c1844</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26B</td>
<td>Remains of drive to North Jesmond House c1898</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remnant woodland c1844 with some significant trees</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Remnant tree planting with a few significant trees</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Remnant features of access to farmhouse and garden with several significant trees</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>29A</td>
<td>Remnant features of access to stableyard / outbuildings and walls with several significant trees</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>29B</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Remnant woodland c1844/secondary woodland with some significant trees</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Northern access from Jesmond Dene Road</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Remnants of gardens</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Estate walls and entrances to northern boundary</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Eastern access to former school, footpaths and car park</td>
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<td>Considerable</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Significant trees</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>All weather pitch</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Pond feature</td>
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4 MANAGING CHANGE

Introduction

4.1 All heritage assets are vulnerable or at risk in some way, which is why the heritage assets need special care at Jesmond Towers Estate. This involves managing change in ways that sustain, reveal or reinforce its cultural and natural heritage values and is not just limited to physical intervention, but includes activities such as the interpretation and sustainable use of places. It may also simply involve maintaining the current position, intervening only as necessary to counter the effects of growth and decay, but equally may be achieved through major interventions and can be active as well as reactive.

4.2 Change to a significant place such Jesmond Towers Estate is to be expected, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effect on the heritage values. Change is only harmful if significance is eroded. Good management of the estate therefore depends upon understanding how and why Jesmond Towers Estate is vulnerable, and using that knowledge to inform decisions and adopting a consistent and rigorous approach. This is, in effect, the next stage of the conservation planning process and discussed further in this section.

4.3 A lack of resources is a common reason why sites are seen to be vulnerable, with insufficient money for vital repairs or site management, however vulnerability is more complex than that. There may be resources available, but they could be allocated to other priorities; there may be conflicts between different uses or users on a site or compliance with legislation might be seen as potentially threatening the importance of the site.

4.4 This section of the plan sets out the issues facing Jesmond Towers Estate, and how they make significance vulnerable. It covers a wide range of issues, from condition through to ownership, use, boundaries, resources, previous management regimes, access, contents and public expectations. It also explores competing priorities, e.g. conservation, protected species legislation and commercial pressures.

4.5 However, it is accepted that to keep a significant place such as Jesmond Towers Estate, in use, it is likely to require continual adaption and change, provided such interventions respect the values of the place. Indeed Jesmond Towers Estate is a palimpsest with the work of successive generations and their architects and designers contributing to its layers of interest and significance. It is therefore not the intention within this Conservation Plan to discourage
the adding of further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that the recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process.

4.6 The shared public and private interest in sustaining Jesmond Towers Estate in productive use, demands mutual co-operation and respect between the Owners and regulators. The best use for a significant place, its “optimum viable use”\(^{21}\), is one that is both capable of sustaining the place and avoids or minimises harm to its values in its setting. It may not necessarily be the most profitable use if that would entail greater harm than other viable uses.

4.7 This section sets out the ways in which Jesmond Towers Estate’s significance is vulnerable and the scale or nature of risks to the site.

**Sufficient Information**

4.8 A comprehensive desk based and field survey has been undertaken of the estate. However this material alone does not provide sufficient understanding of Jesmond Towers Estate. The information gained is therefore set in the context of the knowledge of the social and cultural circumstances that produced the place. Documentation underpinning any existing statutory designations is also important. The historical and archaeological archives have also assisted with understanding how and why the place has changed over time, as with personal recollections collected during the process, which have contributed to identifying some historical and communal values.

4.9 Nonetheless, there is more to be learnt about the place and there are gaps in knowledge or evidence which require further investigation. It should be noted that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, especially of concealed or buried remains.

4.10 The following areas where there are gaps in knowledge are identified as follows:

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\(^{21}\) PPS 5, Policy HE 9.4(i), in the context of additional policy principles guiding the consideration of applications for consent relating to designated heritage assets.
Architecture

4.11 Jesmond Towers, Pre 1805 - Sir Thomas Burdon built West Jesmond House, the architect/builder for which is unknown and further research is required as to the building form and designer.

4.12 North Jesmond House - Mr Robert Warwick executed the partial conversion of the farmfold to a Mansion before his bankruptcy in 1821. Little is known about the conversion works or of the original farmfold and further research is required.

4.13 Glass - Care and cleaning of glass of significance at Jesmond Towers requires more research for their long term protection and heritage value. This can best be achieved by commissioning the author of the Preliminary Report (see Appendix 13), to deliver a full report on a window by window basis.

4.14 Wallpaper - An investigation should be made of remnant wallpapers at Jesmond Towers. This should be advanced by commissioning a Wallpaper Conservator to make an assessment after examination.

4.15 Servant’s Tunnel - A reported servant’s tunnel leading from Jesmond Towers to the kitchen garden. This is said to lead via a manhole currently tiled over in Basement Room No.76. Further research and investigation is required to substantiate and record this feature.

Archaeology

4.16 In the Mediaeval Period, Jesmond Towers Estate fell partially within the field known as Scotts Leazes to the west and to the northern part of the field known as North Avenue with the north western and north eastern section of the estate within Jesmond Common and during this period the agrarian landscape defined the site.

4.17 There is no certain above ground landscape evidence remaining of this on the site, although no archaeological assessment has been undertaken as part of this study. However, this agrarian landscape does provide the spatial basis and boundaries for later development within the estate and one element, the current playing fields to the south of North Jesmond House, lies within part of the field known as Scotts Leazes and has from this period remained undeveloped by buildings. A further element, the sloping access leading from Jesmond Dene Road and North Lodge up to the west of Jesmond Towers, appears to follow the old field
boundaries and has remained relatively intact, although its provenance and relationship to the Jesmond Towers, pre 1805, is unknown and warrants further study.

4.18 The original built form of Jesmond Towers and the farmfold, pre 1805, is worthy of additional investigation and research as highlighted in Architecture above. The cellars of Jesmond Towers in particular merit further study to help inform the original footprint of the house and potential buried archaeological deposits or concealed structures.

4.19 The former kitchen garden to Jesmond Towers contained an array of buildings, including the remaining present day gardener’s stores and further illustrated by the scars present on the eastern face of the remaining section of Friday Field’s wall. The collection of buildings was known from records and maps, circa 1800’s, to include stabling and yards to the north and glasshouses etc to the south. Around the Second World War, it would appear that the buildings were removed and it is known under the occupation of the Filles de La Sagesse, that the levels of the area were raised and levelled for tennis courts. Further investigation of the former kitchen garden may reveal additional historical information and building evidence.

4.20 The gardens to Jesmond Towers which include the water feature and stone cascade/wall (possible fernery) and lion would benefit from further detail examination. Currently a number of topographic features which are present on the site, some overgrown, may be remnants of the former gardens and more detail mapping, targeted investigation and recording may possibly reveal further information as to the historic design and layout of paths, terraces and other features, currently concealed.

4.21 Given the above gaps identified, an archaeological assessment is required of Jesmond Towers Estate to evaluate its archaeological potential and in order to determine the need for and nature of any archaeological work that may be required in response to intervention proposals. The resulting report will assess the likelihood and possible nature of any archaeology present, and the risk that change may pose to it. At the core of this would be the preparation of a detailed photographic and drawn survey of the structures concerned, supported by background historical research. From this information, the structural history of a building and its setting and changes in its function can be determined and significant architectural, landscape and historical features can be identified and recorded.
Landscape Design and Features

4.22 The mini-estate of Jesmond Towers, Pre 1805 - Sir Thomas Burdon built West Jesmond House set in a designed landscape, for which the designer is unknown and further research is required as to the origins, layout and designer.

4.23 More detail investigation as described above in Archaeology, with regard to possible remnants of the historic design for a clearer understanding of the features and elements which are remaining today.

4.24 Little is known about the stone lion and water feature with its stone cascade/wall (possible fernery) which form remnants of a designed garden in the 1890’s for Jesmond Towers. Further research and detail survey is required to try to further understand the landscape setting and features that sustain the site and their heritage value and significance.

Ecology

Bats

4.25 The protected species survey did not find any evidence of species with legal protection within the site with the exception of bats where signs of a bat roost in 2009 to the eastern elevation of the modern temporary western laboratory classroom were recorded. The potential of the buildings and structures are considered high risk in terms of supporting roosting bats. There are also a number of trees within the site suitable for supporting roosting bats and the site and wider area provide high quality foraging habitat.

4.26 A European Protected Species (EPS) licence would be needed to allow any intervention or change to proceed if any works impact on bat roosts. Further bat survey work during the activity period of 2010 is currently ongoing, to gain further knowledge of bat use of the buildings, species and population size. This will fully inform the management of the estate for bats and ensure that any intervention or change can be fully assessed to ensure that no harm to the significance of the estate is eroded.

Birds

4.27 The woodland, building structures and areas of vegetation cover on the site provide habitat for birds, including species of conservation significance.
4.28 All birds and their eggs are protected with rarer species receiving additional protection from deliberate disturbance during the breeding season. Potential intervention or development of the site may impact upon nesting and breeding birds, a number of which may potentially include species of conservation concern, if clearance of vegetation cover/tree pruning/felling and building works takes place within the breeding season (March to August inclusive).

4.29 An ornithological survey is currently ongoing during 2010, to assess the significance of bird habitat for supporting breeding and non-breeding bird species, with specific regard to species of national conservation concern. This information will fully inform the management of the estate for birds and will ensure that any intervention or change can be fully assessed to ensure that no harm to the significance of the estate is eroded.

**Badger**

4.30 Whilst no evidence indicating the presence of badger within the estate was found during the ground survey for the extended Phase 1 survey, a more detailed checking survey is currently ongoing in 2010.

4.31 Badgers have historically been given legal protection since 1973 however The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidated and strengthened previous legislation. Potential intervention or development of the site may impact upon badgers and this information will fully inform the management of the estate and will ensure that any intervention or change can be fully assessed to ensure no harm to badgers or the significance of the estate is eroded.

**Invasive species**

4.32 Large stands of Japanese knotweed, an aggressive thicket forming perennial, are present within the woodland which is spreading throughout the site. It is a threat to the heritage value and significance of the site, not only in terms of the threat to the fabric of the buildings within the site and the integrity of the Conservation Area but also to the nature conservation value of the site and surrounding habitats.

4.33 Legislation puts a duty of care on landowners to be proactive in the control and eradication of Japanese knotweed. All parts of the plant and any soil contaminated with it are classified as controlled waste and are required legally to be removed and disposed of by a licensed waste control operator. A detail assessment of the estate is required to accurately record stands of Japanese knotweed in order that it is not disturbed and to inform subsequent management,
maintain good site hygiene and formulate a Japanese Knotweed Plan (JKP) and eradication programme.

4.34 It is an offence to plant or cause Japanese knotweed to spread in the wild under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), and all waste containing Japanese knotweed can be classified as controlled waste under Part II of the Environmental Protection Act (1990). To ensure the control of the Japanese knotweed, it is recommended that the management of Japanese knotweed is continued by either destroying or disposing of it appropriately at the earliest opportunity.

**Arboriculture**

4.35 A number of the trees that are identified with significant structural issues and with a high target potential pose a significant risk to life or property should a tree fail. These trees require further detail survey investigation to inform the most appropriate management and replanting works to safeguard the long term tree cover and heritage value of the site.

4.36 Trees are dynamic and generally throughout their lives increase in size until they become senile or are adversely affected by pests, diseases or man’s activity. Further detail assessment is required of existing trees (i.e. root morphology, shading, extent and density of the crown) in close proximity to buildings or structures of significance to ensure that the processes of growth, change and decay, and other factors which may in the short or long term impact upon the integrity of the building or structure and make the significance of the place vulnerable to harm or loss.

**Social History**

4.37 The collection of artwork that hung in the Jesmond Towers Gallery including works by Charles William Mitchell, was sold along with the majority of the house contents as part of Messrs. Anderson & Garland Sale, reference *Jesmond Towers sale catalogues*, Monday 20th & Tuesday 21st September 1926. A complete catalogue (including photographic record) of the artworks acquired by the Laing Art Gallery should be undertaken. This would contribute to both the historical and archaeological value of the estate, although reuniting the art collection with its former setting would be a desire, as permanent separation devalues both place and objects. The contribution of such works to the heritage value of Jesmond Towers, even if they are currently held at The Laing, is therefore expressed as an aspiration for their union.
4.38 To enable further understanding of how and why Jesmond Towers Estate has changed over time, continued collection and recording of personal recollections of the place are fundamental to identifying some historical and communal values where there may be gaps. Potential exists to invite people who relate to the place, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory to share their memories, stories and experiences. This could be initiated by contact with the various known groups with links with the estate such as the La Sagesse School Old Girls Association, Jesmond Residents Association and Jesmond Dene Estates Residents' Association. The social values of Jesmond Towers Estate may not be recognised by those who share them, and may only be articulated when the future of a place has raised awareness within the local community or is threatened. The social value of a place may indeed have no direct relationship to any formal historical or aesthetic values that may have been ascribed to it.

4.39 The spiritual value attached to the La Sagesse convent and school has not fully been understood and further consideration is needed. Spiritual value can emanate from the beliefs and teachings of an organised religion such as the Filles de La Sagesse, or reflect past or present-day perceptions of the spirit of the place. Spiritual value is often associated with places sanctified by longstanding veneration or worship and may apply to the chapel and overall pervading culture of the place, when occupied by Filles de La Sagesse, as a place of worship and convent school over tenure of some 90 years. The value is generally dependent on the perceived survival of the historic fabric or character of the place, and can be sensitive to changes to that character. Currently not enough is known about the present day connection to the spiritual values that may still be held for the convent and school, although the status of the chapel and whether it is deconsecrated is being investigated.

**Effects on Authenticity and Integrity**

4.40 Design values, particularly those associated with the landscape or buildings within the site, may be harmed by losses resulting from disaster or physical decay, or through ill-considered alteration or accretion. Design value may be recoverable through repair or restoration, but perhaps at the expense of some evidential value.

4.41 The decision as to which value should prevail if all cannot be fully sustained requires a comprehensive understanding of the range and relative importance of the heritage values involved which is guided by the assessment of significance set out in the previous section and what is necessary (and possible) to sustain each of them. Retaining the authenticity of
Jesmond Towers Estate may not always be achieved by retaining as much of the existing fabric as is technically possible.

4.42 A desire to retain authenticity should ensure that any deliberate change is distinguishable, that is, its extent should be discernible through inspection. The degree of distinction that is appropriate must take account of the aesthetic values of the place. In repair and restoration, a subtle difference between new and existing, is more likely to retain the coherence of the whole than jarring contrast.

4.43 Integrity can apply, for example, to a structural system, a design concept, the way materials or plants are used, the character of a place, artistic creation, or functionality, all of which are relevant to Jesmond Towers Estate. Decisions about recovering any aspect of integrity that has been compromised must, like authenticity, depend upon a comprehensive understanding of the values of the place, particularly the values of what might be lost in the process.

**Continuity of Use**

4.44 The greatest threat to the heritage value and significance of Jesmond Towers Estate is long term vacancy. Remarkably the estate has been in unbroken use until it was vacated in 2008 by the Filles de la Sagesse. Whilst it is fortunately now in the hands of new Owners, nevertheless they need to find new and sustainable uses for the historic buildings and their setting within the Conservation Area.

4.45 Temporary and ephemeral uses of the site present a potential risk and should only be instigated in full cognisance and understanding of the heritage values of the site and accord with the statutory and planning regulations which provide protection. This will ensure that any inadvertent harm or long term consequences of the proposals can be avoided or minimized. Such use would benefit from a ‘Conservation Tool Kit’ which sets out key operational parameters for any appropriate temporary use.

**Physical Condition**

4.46 Jesmond Towers is in reasonably sound condition with some traces of dampness in the basement. There has to be concern about the proximity of the insidious Japanese knotweed to the fabric in the immediate landscape.
4.47 Recent spate of thefts to copper piping and lead to North Jesmond House ancillary buildings with resultant damage in early 2010 is a concern for the whole estate, and goes hand in hand with the threat from long term vacancy and the potential for this to materially harm the heritage values of the place or its setting. Increased security within the site has been initiated but the threat of arson, theft of materials etc are still a real problem.

4.48 Other buildings are also in reasonably sound condition with the exception of the temporary buildings which are in a poor state.

4.49 The landscape setting is currently being managed in the same manner (for amenity) as by the previous occupants, La Sagesse convent and school, which simply involves maintaining the ‘status quo’, and in this context the landscape is regularly maintained and cared for. The overall condition however of the heritage value of the landscape and its features are in poor condition and as above there is concern about the presence of large stands of Japanese knotweed and its effect upon the significance of the place.

**Previous Interventions**

4.50 Many previous interventions have had an effect upon the significance of the site, some with a positive impact and others with a negative impact. Importantly those to Jesmond Towers by eminent architects, all of whom have respected the Gothic revival style, have produced an interesting building and setting today, the modern alteration of which for the school use is reversible.

4.51 The original 18th century Farmhouse was first in part converted to a Mansion, itself extensively extended and then subsumed by a succession of additions, extensions and inarticulately connected schoolrooms, convent and chapel.

4.52 All the remaining buildings on the estate added during the 20th century and whatever their individual merits have been introduced without regard for the setting of what was the existing historic landuse, designed landscape and built form. The Sports Hall, the only permanent building to be added to the east side of the estate, was sited at the north front of Jesmond Towers and to the east ‘temporary’ schoolrooms that stand to this day and form intrusive elements with a negative impact upon the heritage value, including townscape and important views, and significance of the site.
4.53 The setting of the estate is a palimpsest of a number of different influences and layers, which reflect its history, past land-use and landscape design. There is evidence of an evolving landscape from an agrarian landscape, through a designed landscape of the early 19th century developed as a ‘mini-estate’, to a 20th century use as a school. The estate has therefore evolved from a series of interventions through a number of ownerships, changes and uses from the early 19th century, with component parts significantly eroded due to major economic and social changes after the First World War and the rapid expansion and development of Jesmond. All these contribute to its layers of interest and significance. It is therefore not the aim within this Conservation Plan to discourage the adding of further layers, provided that the recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process.

Setting

4.54 Jesmond Towers Estate is situated at the northern end of the Jesmond Dene Conservation Area and enjoys the protection that this gives to its future well being. It has a heritage of the best of both rural and urban worlds, being part of a rich and diverse wooded tributary of the Tyne and yet within a mature urban settlement of a city. However, the immediate setting of the buildings and its historic landscape could be at risk of inappropriate development and also erosion from illegal land take by neighbouring landowners.

Access

4.55 The original access to Scotts Leazes was from Matthew Bank. The original access to West Jesmond House (later Jesmond Towers) has still not been discovered, but what of course became a grand approach entered at West Lodge (long gone) and through the Lime tree lined carriage drive that is now Towers Avenue and famously protected by Dr William Mitchell who tunnelled under what is now the north end of Jesmond Avenue North to maintain the right of way of Friday Fields Lane. The private drive was lost with the sale of land for housing by the Trustees of Mrs Charles William Mitchell’s estate in the 1930’s. However, Towers Avenue is recognised by the Newcastle City Council, as the ‘only’ tree-lined drive to have become a street of houses and retained its trees and forms an important element within the Conservation Area.

4.56 The present day access, a more modern addition, for North Jesmond House and its associated range of former school buildings, convent and chapel is served from North Jesmond Avenue, with Towers Avenue to the west and Bemersyde Drive to the east. The access drive leads northwards to the west of the former Friday Fields Lane and swings
westwards up to the main entrance of North Jesmond House with a central island and car parking. The access road leads further west with a series of footpaths to access the adjacent former school buildings and around to the gated entrance at West Lodge which forms a secondary access leading from Matthew Bank.

4.57 Jesmond Towers is accessed from Bemersyde Drive through a gated entrance and again a more modern addition, along an access drive to the main southern entrance of Jesmond Towers. To the northwest, at North Lodge, a former access leading originally from Jesmond Dene Road is now blocked up.

4.58 The site benefits from a restricted number of accesses and clear delineation between private and public ownership with all boundaries bound by either walls or fences and gated entrances which are locked at night.

4.59 The site is under private ownership with no public access, although a number of neighbouring residents are allowed to walk their dogs within the estate as part of the endeavour of the new Owners to provide a benefit for the immediate neighbours and promote stewardship through natural surveillance and informal custodianship for the estate. However, the site due to its secluded and wooded character and vacant buildings is vulnerable to damage and harm by theft and vandalism, despite 24 hour security.

4.60 There are concerns relating to several structurally unsound trees and public safety, a number which are of historic value, and these require appropriate and sensitive management to ensure public safety, yet safeguard the heritage value of the trees which form part of a designed landscape and the long term continuity of tree cover.

Ownership, Control and Responsibility

4.61 The property is wholly owned by Shepherd Offshore Ltd who is actively seeking parties interested in occupation of the estate.

4.62 The Owners have been in discussion with a range of institutions that have shown some interest in part of the estate. These discussions have not found a new occupant and therefore the Owners are now in discussions with a number of parties with an interest in developing the western side of the site for housing. This is considered the most likely attractive use for this part of the site particularly if it brings forward investment in Jesmond Towers itself and its immediate setting. In this venture, it is the Owners intention to look to ensure that the
management of the landscape and ecological aspects of the whole estate are protected and fragmentation avoided.

4.63 The Conservation Plan has described the Jesmond Towers Estate in relation to the 2009 topographical survey commissioned by the Owners Shepherd Offshore that owns the site. The survey charted all the land within the curtilage of the existing boundary defined by the stone and brick walls, fencing and entrance gates. The Conservation Plan has already made reference to the ‘wedge’ of land to the northeast which is a steeply sloping wooded section in the ownership of the City Council and located within the stone wall boundary with Jesmond Dene Road. There is also a small section of land to the south of Jesmond Towers of which entitlement is disputed between the current estate Owners, Shepherd Offshore Ltd, and an adjacent resident at Bemersyde Drive who has enclosed the area within their garden and is subject of further legal investigation.

4.64 The property is under twenty four hour surveillance. Maintenance staff are on site daily attending to background heating and ventilation of the historic building as well as gardening maintenance throughout the grounds. However, there has been recent criminal activity with the theft of lead and copper from buildings on the western part of the site, principally North Jesmond House. The Owners immediately doubled the level of night time security with some success but whilst the site is unoccupied and new uses proving elusive, the problem of vandalism and theft will remain.

4.65 Temporary emergency repairs to roofing and rainwater goods have been carried out with the permission of English Heritage, Tyne Wear Conservation Team and Newcastle City Council.

4.66 All such work is under the direction of the appointed Conservation Architect and the Consultant Landscape Architect.

**Development and Intervention**

4.67 Change in the historic environment of Jesmond Towers Estate is inevitable, caused by a range of effects such as natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change. The aim of this Conservation Plan is that the process of managing change to Jesmond Towers Estate in its landscape setting, will be undertaken in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.
4.68 Development or changes within Jesmond Towers Estate has the potential to generate risk to the site’s significance if it is not well informed and well guided. A high quality of design of proposed interventions is essential at Jesmond Towers Estate regardless of any unavoidable harm. New work should aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued both now and in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but should respect the significance of the place in its landscape setting and of the wider Conservation Area.

**Conflict between the use of the Estate and its historic past**

4.69 Three uses have dominated and shaped the attributes and elements of the estate which most honestly reflect and embody the heritage values attached to it:

1. Agrarian of which only the remnants of a farmhouse and part of Scotts Leazes and Friday Fields Lane remain.

2. Residential for which there remains a listed mansion and a much altered house together with a lodge and a cottage as well as remnants of a designed ‘mini-estate’ landscape and gardens within a woodland setting.

3. Educational which pervades the building fabrics, external spaces and playgrounds and sports fields of the landscape.

4.70 The problems associated with change in the past have impacted on the estate and notably along its southern border. For the present, decisions about change in the historic environment of the estate demand the application of expertise, experience and judgment, in a consistent, transparent process guided by public policy.

4.71 The range and depth of understanding, assessment and public engagement should be sufficient to inform and justify the decision to be made, but efficient in the use of resources and proportionality should govern the exercise of statutory controls.

4.72 Potential conflict between sustaining the heritage values of Jesmond Towers Estate and other important public interests should be minimised by seeking the least harmful means of accommodating those interests. If conflict cannot be avoided, the weight given to the heritage values, articulated within this Plan, in making the decision should be proportionate to the significance of the estate and the impact of the proposed change on that significance.
Regeneration shall be the least invasive if it respects the built form and landscape of the past. Future use or uses of the estate should preserve and ideally enhance its significance.

**Planning Policy Context**

The planning policy context relating to the future of Jesmond Towers Estate offers little risk and should essentially strengthen its heritage significance. Listed Building and Conservation Area legislation, along with Local Planning Policy should be used to guide its future care. Government Planning Policy Statements (PPS) taken with published guidance from English Heritage and other specialist conservation groups will assist in this process and its protection. Indeed, the aim of the policies within PPS 5, ‘Planning for the Historic Environment’ (March 2010), is to conserve these assets for the benefit of this and future generations, by supporting their maintenance and requiring that change to them is managed in ways that sustain and where appropriate enhances the heritage significance.

The current planning consent for Jesmond Towers Estate is for educational use which may present a restrictive use upon the whole estate and a potential risk, given that the current owners have been actively marketing the site for educational use without avail and with the intention of securing the long term productive use of the site. This may require review and a more flexible approach to change of use, in terms of securing the long term sustainable use of the estate (or parts). Most places of heritage value such as Jesmond Towers Estate are capable of being used for some practical purpose. The relationship between use and heritage values can range from mutual support (in the normal situation of use justifying appropriate maintenance) to conflict. Certain uses of Jesmond Towers Estate could generate wider social and economic benefits, for example as an inward economic investment, although the potential to do so is affected by external factors. Use and market values, and instrumental benefits, are different from heritage values in nature and effect.

Therefore, understanding and articulating the values and significance of Jesmond Towers Estate through this Plan is necessary to inform decisions about its future. The degree of significance determines what, if any, protection, including statutory designation, is appropriate under law and policy.
Sustainability

4.77 Jesmond Towers Estate should be used and managed in ways that will, wherever possible, ensure that its significance can be appreciated by generations to come, an established aspect of stewardship. Sustaining the value of the historic environment as a whole depends also on creating in the present the heritage of the future, through changes that enhance and enrich the values of the estate. Both objectives involve the difficult task of anticipating the heritage values of future generations, as well as understanding our own. John Ruskin in his ‘Seven Lamps of Architecture’ linked the concept of sustainability to conservation.

4.78 Sustaining heritage values at Jesmond Towers is likely to contribute to environmental sustainability, not least because much of its historic environment was designed for a comparatively low-energy economy. Traditional landscape management patterns have been sustained over centuries. The traditional buildings and building materials within the estate are durable, and perform well in terms of the energy needed to make and use them. Their removal and replacement would require a major reinvestment of energy and resources.

4.79 The re-use of sound materials derived from the place being repaired or altered is traditional practice and contributes to the sustainable use of energy and material resources. Mixing old and new materials in exposed situations, however, may be inadvisable. Maintaining demand for new traditional and local materials will also stimulate their continued or renewed production, and help to ensure a sustainable supply and the craft skills to utilise it. Therefore, the re-use of sound traditional materials recovered from alteration and demolition from the site and elsewhere can also contribute to sustainability, provided they are not derived from degrading other significant places primarily because of the value of their materials.

Reversibility of Changes

4.80 Interventions may not perform as expected. As perceptions of significance evolve, future generations may not consider their effect on heritage values positive. It is therefore desirable that changes are capable of being reversed, in order not unduly to prejudice options for the future. However, Jesmond Towers Estate should not be rendered incapable of a sustainable use simply because of a reluctance to make modest, but irreversible, changes. Moreover, intrusive changes are certainly not justifiable simply because they are temporary or reversible, as they risk becoming a permanent feature.

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Options

4.81 Proposed changes ideally will cause no harm to any of the values of Jesmond Towers Estate, and the correct decision will be evident. However, in reality there tend to be a number of options for achieving the objective of proposed change, of which each will have different impacts (in terms of scale, and whether positive, negative or neutral) on the identified heritage values and on the significance of the estate as a whole. The predicted long-term or permanent consequences of proposals should provide the reasoned basis for a decision, where necessary taking other interests into account.

4.82 Where there are options for the conservation management of change, or reconciling conservation and other interests, ‘heritage impact assessment’ should be used to compare the predicted effects of alternative courses of action (including taking no action) on the values identified for the site, in order to provide the optimum solution. This approach can be refined by weighting different values to reflect their relative importance for the site and its significance based upon the values and significance presented in Table 3 and Figure 28 which gives an analysis of the various measures of significance for the estate. Heritage impact assessment can be particularly useful if applied at the conceptual stage of a proposal, and refined at each successive step towards making a decision. This should provide the reasoned basis for a decision, where necessary taking other interests into account.

Mitigation

4.83 If a negative impact or loss of fabric within Jesmond Towers Estate is unavoidable, whether as a result of decision or inevitable natural process, mitigation should be considered to minimise harm. This will include making records and archiving parts of significant elements, including archaeological deposits, that will be removed or altered prior to and during the work. Where such loss is the direct result of human intervention, the costs of this work should be borne by those who benefit from the change, or whose role it is to initiate such change in the public interest.

4.84 A high quality of design of proposed interventions is not mitigation; it is essential in any significant place\(^\text{23}\), regardless of any unavoidable harm. Mitigation should not be confused

with compensation, non-essential benefits to other aspects of the place, or to other heritage interests.

**Monitoring and Evaluating Outcomes**

4.85 The management of Jesmond Towers Estate should include regular monitoring and evaluation of the effects of change in the form of accessible records with the justification for decisions and the actions that follow them. These are central to maintaining a cumulative account of what has happened to Jesmond Towers Estate, and understanding how and why its significance may have been altered.

4.86 This also provides the basis for action to address ongoing change. Outcomes of decisions can be compared with expectations, often revealing unanticipated consequences, and informing future policy and decisions. If, the unexpected is revealed even with prior investigation, proposals should, so far as is reasonably possible, be amended to minimise harm.

4.87 Conservation management plans, regularly reviewed, can provide a sound framework for the management of significant places, particularly those in responsible long-term ownership.
5 CONSERVATION POLICIES

Introduction

5.1 This section of the Plan sets out the guiding principles to care for Jesmond Towers Estate. They are consistent with local, regional, national or international policies and specific and tailored to the site.

5.2 The policies cover everything from the vision for Jesmond Towers Estate, through to finding appropriate uses, enhancing public appreciation and access, dealing with conflicts, allocating resources, retention, security and complying with statutory requirements.

5.3 Conservation is a process and not just a one off event. Inevitably the process involves a series of decisions informing actions, some of which are regarded as long term, others as ‘day to day’. The Conservation Plan is concerned with assisting the process of arriving at and agreeing the former, the long term, possibly wide-ranging Policies, from which the shorter term ‘day to day’ management decisions are derived.

5.4 The statement of significance provides a comprehensive assessment of the heritage and cultural values of Jesmond Towers Estate and defines what elements are of merit, what the key issues are, what opportunities exist for preservation/enhancement and which elements detract from the significance. Its purpose is to provide a benchmark for assessing the best ways of managing the estate to sustain or enhance its significance and a basis for action to address ongoing change.

Vision

Vision Statement

The overarching principle for Jesmond Towers Estate is to manage the historic environment in ways that will best sustain its heritage values whilst recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

5.5 This is the overarching principle for Jesmond Towers Estate, from which flows a series of policies for the management of this significant place, and will stand through time and is unlikely to be changed.
5.6 It is accepted that to keep a significant place such as Jesmond Towers Estate in sustainable use, it is likely to require continual adaption and change, provided such interventions respect the values of the place. Indeed Jesmond Towers Estate is a palimpsest with the work of successive generations and their architects and designers contributing to its layers of interest and significance. It is therefore not the intention of the Conservation Policies to discourage the adding of further layers of potential future interest and value, provided that the recognised heritage values are not eroded or compromised in the process.

5.7 The estate is comprised of two distinct compartments and characteristics with Jesmond Towers to the east and North Jesmond House to the west, divided physically by the remnant Friday Fields Lane. When the Filles de la Sagesse acquired North Jesmond House in 1917 for a school, this set in motion significant intervention by new buildings, sports facilities and playgrounds to the western section of the site which was carried on by their later acquisition of Jesmond Towers in 1946. Further erosion occurred in the 1930’s when the Trustees of Mrs Charles William Mitchell sold land along the southern boundary for private housing and the subsequent relocation of the right of way of Friday Fields Lane to the west boundary of the site in 1950.

5.8 Jesmond Towers, notably the larger and more significant part of the estate, is bound by residential development to the east and south but still retains its boundary to the north constrained by Jesmond Dene Road and its steeply sloping banks and to the west which contains the remnant Friday Fields Lane and its long standing neighbour North Jesmond House. Remnants of a kitchen garden, carriage drive, lodge, gardens and woodland are present which surround the principal building of Jesmond Towers, providing its setting and unique character.

5.9 North Jesmond House, to the west of the Jesmond Towers, is a very much smaller and more modest site with its origins from an 18th century farmfold and agrarian landscape of that time. The site in the 19th century appears to have functioned in two separate parts as a working farmhouse and group of farm buildings and fields alongside the converted ‘Mansion’ with what was a more modest arrangement of lodge, drive and gardens. The North Jesmond House part of the estate to the west is of lesser sensitivity to development or change than its neighbouring Jesmond Towers which is of much higher significance.

5.10 The aspiration for the estate is to lay the foundations for future change or adaption rather than to influence development of the site itself. This will allow a general approach that comprises many different tools. Broadly, the approach is landscape based, and considers the site as a whole in relationship to its local context and generic type. It starts by acknowledging
that the historic environment is the ubiquitous context for making new places, and that almost any site has a history that can be exploited to shape its future. It is thus defined by using an understanding of change to contribute to the place making agenda. It draws upon the results of many similar heritage based techniques such as historic landscape characterisation, urban surveys, historic area assessments and conservation area appraisals. It is, however, a relatively rapid technique because it collects, collates and evaluates existing knowledge rather than undertaking new surveys and research. Its aim is to see how the inherited landscape can be used in regeneration, rather than to identify which parts of the historic environment need special treatment. It is change led not conservation led. Historic characterisation identifies many of the key functional areas, structures (e.g. road and tracks, land boundaries) and components (e.g. buildings, walls) that contribute to a site’s distinctive character and quality, and how it links to the patterns observable in the surrounding area. The overall inherited character of a site, which can be used to influence the manner and design of redevelopment, comprises a broad menu of separate but often interconnected functional components.

5.11 Planning for change and development is a dynamic process. It needs to be informed by a clear understanding of a site’s past history. Sustainable use of the inherited landscape of the past can maximise both the economic and the social and environmental value of regeneration. As PPS1 explains, “economic development, if properly planned, can have positive social and environmental benefits, rather than negative impacts”. (Paragraph 24) Initial investment in characterisation pays off in two major ways: de-risking site development, and contributing through context and change to the design process. It reveals both the strengths and the weaknesses of a site’s inherited character, identifying what can be capitalised on to create and catalyse successful contemporary development. Accessible, legible historic character (and a clear understanding of the series of changes through time that have created it) is a key element of a sense of place; it is recognised as one of the principal reasons for why people want to live and work in an area. It is embedded in government policy “The condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and …conservation …brings social and economic benefits for local communities.” (PPS1 paragraph 18). The early comprehensive understanding of a site’s historic development created by characterisation, informs and also identifies issues that will impact on the successful progression of the site’s development. Stakeholders involved at the outset are more able to assist in identifying and resolving potential problems when they have been engaged in the non adversarial process of assessing character. Understanding place, people and proposals accelerates preapplication discussion and facilitates smooth and rapid progress through the planning system.
5.12 The following sets out broad guidance to inform the design of development within the Jesmond Towers Estate and covers matters such as scale and massing, footprint, setting and materials.

5.13 Development which is sustainable will be encouraged. Measures to improve energy efficiency should also be considered, with reference to Code for Sustainable Homes assessment rating criteria. The use of sustainably sourced materials is in keeping with the Local Agenda 21 programme, which seeks to promote environmentally sustainable forms of development.

5.14 Urban Grain

- The historic grain of the area falls into three character periods – the C19 built environment, the landscape setting and the surrounding C20 residential development. The existing street pattern is largely C20 in origin;
- The key characteristic is the relationship between the footprints of the buildings and the landscape setting in which it sits;
- New development should look to develop a footprint which is materially smaller than the site to ensure that the spaciousness, setting and appearance of the estate is maintained and enhanced;
- Where the demolition of existing buildings to redevelop is considered acceptable, development should respect the footprint of the existing building;
- Development should look to maintain clear visual separation from adjacent buildings to preserve the appearance of the area and avoid a terracing effect in houses not designed to be terraced;
- Buildings should avoid turning their back on the landscape setting but rather overlook it.

5.15 Scale and Mass

- Typically, existing surrounding buildings are between 2 and 3 storeys in height with the exception of remaining C19 houses within the Jesmond Towers Estate (and Jesmond Dene House) which are much grander in scale despite still being 2-3 storeys;
- Development should respect the scale and massing of the neighbouring properties;
The development should consider the topography of the site and key views from and into the Dene or through the Conservation Area, when considering potential scale and massing. Large plot sizes should be avoided to encourage variation in scale and massing.

5.16 Design

- Given the diversity of building design within the Jesmond Towers Estate and of the surrounding Conservation Area, from the development in the C19 to that of the C20, new development should naturally be of the C21 and should not look to copy existing designs;

- Design solutions should be of the highest quality. Contemporary design solutions which reflect the context of the setting of Jesmond Towers Estate and the wider Conservation Area should be welcomed.

- Pastiche or pattern book designs are not considered appropriate and would neither enhance the appearance of Jesmond Towers Estate nor maintain the existing diversity of design, a key characteristic of the surrounding Conservation Area.

5.17 Materials

- Structurally, stone is typically found in the earlier, C19 developments whilst brick is typical of the C20 developments;

- It is recognised that other materials, such as timber, glass and steel, can contribute to character and appearance but the manner in which such materials are used is particularly important and should add detail to the building;

- Materials should be of a high quality and should have a long life span. The use of sustainable materials will be encouraged;

- The tone and colour of materials is important and will help contribute towards the integration of new development within the existing landscape and setting. For example, the use of a local material to add detail to a modern building can often help give the new building context in its location.
5.18 Landscape and Ecology

- The Tree Strategy for Newcastle upon Tyne contains policies and action for trees and tree management guidance for private owners;

- The Local Biodiversity Action Plan contains policies and action for wildlife species and habitats which must guide management;

- Green spaces...your spaces, Newcastle’s Green Spaces Strategy contains an action plan with detailed management plans for green spaces, tackling anti-social behaviour, and a design code for green spaces;

- Emerging documents which provide for the future management of aspects of the Conservation Area and therefore of relevance for Jesmond Towers Estate include:
  - Ouseburn Parks Conservation and Management Plan (part of the HLF bid)
  - Highway Design Guide
  - Newcastle Character Assessment

5.19 Setting and Views

- Development should look to maintain the spaciousness of the existing built form. Whole sites should not be considered purely for buildings but should include for the setting of the building on all sides;

- Space between developments should be allowed for, to maintain visual separation of buildings within the streetscene, and encourage new views into or out of the estate;

- Key views into and out of the estate should be maintained by new development;

- Where possible new development should enhance existing key views. Development which obscures or has a detrimental impact on such views will not be considered appropriate to the enhancement of the appearance of Jesmond Towers Estate;

- Key views are centred around Jesmond Towers and views across, into or out of the Dene from the east, west and the various bridges which bisect the Dene.

5.20 Boundary treatments

- Where original detailing survives it should be repaired and reinstated where missing, replicating original detail and materials;
Where remnants of earlier details, relating to historical developments survive, such as gate piers, these should be incorporated into the boundary scheme and should influence the choice of materials and design.

5.21 Landscape setting

- New planting shall follow design guidance on species and will be undertaken to a high quality design and standard of workmanship. Any replacement planting shall match existing;

- Measures will be implemented via a management plan to control the invasive Japanese knotweed, and other pernicious weeds, where these species are becoming established.

Ownership, Management Responsibilities and Funding

Policy 1
The management of all aspects of the fabric, setting, access and interpretation of Jesmond Towers Estate will be a fully coordinated process, taking into account the needs and responsibilities of all stakeholders, and will be carried out to a high standard.

Legal responsibilities

5.22 Ownership of all land connected to the estate along with responsibilities for boundaries and rights of access are not fully understood:

- Review ownership of all sections of the estate, including those sections which are subject to dispute, and create a full record in graphic form;

- Review any rights of access over, to and through the estate and any other historic rights and responsibilities;

- Ascertain any obligation to maintain or repair by others (e.g. other land owners or public bodies).
Coordinated management

5.23 In order to facilitate the conservation of Jesmond Towers Estate to the best possible standards there is need for co-ordination of management actions between those who have responsibility for differing aspects of the estate.

- Formulate a full schedule of all those who have a management interest in the fabric of the estate and its surroundings, which will include departments within Shepherd Offshore Ltd (e.g. legal, maintenance, security, finance and accounts etc), Newcastle City Council, Tyne & Wear Specialist Conservation Team, English Heritage, the Highways Authority, statutory undertakers, and other bodies and private owners;

- From this schedule constitute an integrated representative management team, with the remit of co-ordinating activities which take place on and around Jesmond Towers Estate including physical works, maintenance, access and security, interpretation and events;

- Consider the appointment of a named person (e.g. Custodian (Keeper) of Jesmond Towers Estate) who would have high level responsibility for the estate, who would lead the management body, and who would report direct to the Shepherd Offshore Ltd;

- Ensure that management of the estate is co-ordinated through the activity of the overall management body.

Forward planning

5.24 Many of the activities associated with Jesmond Towers Estate are capable of, and benefit from long term forward planning. This permits better liaison, securing of permissions and not least budgeting.

- Create a Forward Management Plan for Jesmond Towers Estate for an agreed period (5 or 10 years) setting out an overall vision for the estate, with a series of aims and shorter-term objectives. This will constitute an agreed programme for the carrying forward of the policies proposed within this Conservation Management Plan;

- Secure adequate budget allocations to enable security in forward planning.
Disaster Planning and Recovery

5.25 In order to facilitate an organised response in the event of a major disaster or event e.g. fire at Jesmond Towers Estate and the risk or harm to the fabric and significance of the estate, there is need for co-ordination of management actions between those who have responsibility for differing aspects of the estate.

- Formulate a full disaster and recovery schedule and plan of actions of all those who have a management interest in the fabric of the estate and its surroundings, which will include departments within Shepherd Offshore Ltd (e.g. legal, maintenance, security, finance and accounts etc), Newcastle City Council, Tyne & Wear Specialist Conservation Team, English Heritage, the Highways Authority, Emergency Services, statutory undertakers, and other bodies and private owners;

- Action taken to counter harmful effects of natural change, or to minimise the risk of disaster, should be timely, proportionate to the severity and likelihood of identified consequences, and sustainable.

Routine Management and Maintenance

Policy 2

The conservation of Jesmond Towers Estate is founded on appropriate routine management and maintenance to the highest standard that befits the heritage significance.

5.26 The values of landscapes and buildings tend to be quickly obscured or lost if long-standing management and maintenance regimes are discontinued. Such regimes are often closely linked to historic design, function and stewardship, and dependent on traditional processes and materials. Since most habitats in England are the result of long-established land management practices, sustaining their ecosystems can depend upon continuing those practices. Reinstating a lapsed regime can help to recover both cultural and natural heritage values.

5.27 Regular monitoring will inform continual improvement of planned maintenance and identify the need for periodic repair or renewal at an early stage. If a permanent solution to identified problems is not immediately possible, temporary works should be undertaken to prevent the problems from escalating. Temporary solutions should be effective, timely and reversible.
5.28 A handbook should be developed of all specialist cleaning techniques and operations for delicate fabric and features within the estate.

5.29 A log should be kept of all future interventions with brief descriptions and date of execution, (see Appendix 18 for sample Log Sheet). Where appropriate this Conservation Plan should be updated by additions and extractions and always the date of issues to be noted.

5.30 Maintenance falls into three main phases:

1. Phase 1 – Inspection
   Visually inspecting a building (both internal and external) and its landscape and checking any installations;

2. Phase 2 – Repair
   Carrying out any maintenance work identified in Phase 1;

3. Phase 3 – Renewal
   Replacing materials (including plant species) or items, lost or at the end of their life.

5.31 Inspection and maintenance timetable. A suggested checklist and timetable for the inspection and maintenance of the property is set out below:

**Cleaning**

- Paths, steps, hard surfaces and pond will be cleaned frequently to keep them clear of litter. Additional cleaning will be carried out in autumn and winter to remove fallen leaves.

**Lighting**

- External security lighting and floodlighting will be inspected frequently to ensure that it is functioning. Local reporting of failed luminaries will be encouraged.

**Drainage**

- Drainage channels, gulleys, gutters, hoppers and pipes will be inspected for leaks and blockages and cleaned at regular intervals and necessary repairs effected.
- Check and attend to overflowing coldwater cisterns.
Alarms and Extinguishers

- Test smoke alarms
- Test burglar alarms
- Check fire extinguishers

Painting

- A pre-planned cycle of painting or treatment of wood and metal fittings will be carried out.

Signs and panels

- Signs and panels will be inspected regularly and cleaned, repaired or replaced as necessary.

Winter safety

- The condition of the paths, hard surfaces and steps will be carefully monitored in frosty conditions. The application of salt to icy surfaces is a potential cause of long term damage to the masonry and will be reviewed. Non – damaging physical removal of snow and ice is preferred.

Funding

- A cost for the maintenance regime will be established and appropriate budget set aside annually.

Every Spring

- Inspect roofs for broken and displaced slates and tiles that need re - bedding and or pointing. Perforated lead flashings and gutter linings and perished felt underlay. Check for deterioration of stone and brick faces and for unsound pointing to walls, parapets and chimneys. Also make sure that stone and brick vents are unobstructed. Arrange for any external painting required. Check condition of glazing and putty and operation of windows and doors. Arrange for routine servicing of boilers and inspection of gas appliances and flues.
Every Late Spring

- Take any opportunity to examine under floor voids for dampness, rot and the adequacy of ventilation. Check conditions of staircases and balconies. Examine internal screens, panelling, partitions, doors, frames and ironmongery. Examine wall and ceiling finishes. Check washers to ballcock valves and taps in cold and hot water and heating systems.

Every Autumn

- Clean out gutters, hoppers, down pipes and gullies as often as necessary during and after leaf fall. Clean out manholes and rod drains if necessary. Inspect broken manhole covers and gulley grates.

Every Winter

- Clear snow regularly from vulnerable areas. Inspect roof spaces for water and vermin penetration, adequacy of ventilation and check condition of entire roof structure including that of any insulation in voids. Check water based heating systems and bleed radiators. Check even heat distribution throughout buildings.

Annually

- Arrange servicing of fire extinguishers. Check boundary walls, fences and gates. Check paved areas paths and steps. Check operation of panic bolts/latches to emergency exit doors.

Every Five Years

- Arrange for testing of electrical installations and lightning conductors.

5.32 Further information is available from the Heritage Officer, Historic Environment Section, Urban Design & Conservation Group, Planning and Transport Division, Newcastle City Council, Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8PH, Telephone (0191) 277 7192. www.newcastle.gov.uk.
Periodic Renewal

Policy 3

Periodic renewal of elements within Jesmond Towers Estate, intended or inherent in the design, will only be carried out without any harm caused to heritage values and which could be recovered over time.

5.33 Periodic renewal, such as re-covering roofs, differs from maintenance in that it occurs on a longer cycle, is usually more drastic in nature and often has a greater visual impact. It involves the temporary loss of certain heritage values, such as the aesthetic value of the patina of age on an old roof covering, or the value of a dying tree as a habitat for invertebrates. However, these values are likely to return within the next cycle, provided the replacement is physically and visually compatible (normally 'like for like', to the extent that this is sustainable). By contrast, the consequence of not undertaking periodic renewal is normally more extensive loss of both fabric and heritage values.

5.34 The justification required for periodic renewal will normally be that the fabric concerned is becoming incapable of fulfilling its intended functions through more limited intervention; and additionally, in the case of landscapes, that succession planting cannot achieve the objective in a less drastic way. Harm to values that will normally be recovered during the next cycle can, in most cases, be discounted, but potential permanent harm cannot be ignored in making the decision.

5.35 Periodic renewal of elements necessary to sustain the heritage values:

- As part of the Forward Management Plan for Jesmond Towers Estate, set out a renewal programme and cycles for individual elements.

- Secure adequate budget allocations to enable periodic renewal of elements.
Repair

Policy 4
Repair works to sustain the heritage values of Jesmond Towers Estate will only be carried out to the highest possible standard based on a thorough understanding of the present construction, the constituent materials and appropriate repair techniques.

5.36 Repair necessary to sustain the heritage values of Jesmond Towers Estate is only desirable if:

- there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposals on the significance of the place; and

- the long term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future; and

- the proposals are designed to avoid or minimise harm, if actions necessary to sustain particular heritage values tend to conflict.

5.37 It is important to look beyond the immediate need for action, to understand the reasons for the need for repair and plan for the long-term consequences of inevitable change and decay. While sufficient work should be undertaken to achieve a lasting repair, the extent of the repair should normally be limited to what is reasonably necessary to make failing elements sound and capable of continuing to fulfil their intended functions.

5.38 The use of materials or techniques with a lifespan that is predictable from past performance, and which are close matches for those being repaired or replaced, tends to carry a low risk of future harm or premature failure. By contrast, the longer term effects of using materials or techniques that are innovative and relatively untested are much less certain. Not all historic building materials or techniques were durable – iron cramps in masonry, or un-galvanised steel windows, for example, are both subject to corrosion. Some structural failures are the inevitable, if slowly developing, consequences of the original method of construction. Once failure occurs, stabilising the structure depends on addressing the underlying causes of the problem, not perpetuating inherent faults.

5.39 The use of original materials and techniques for repair can sometimes destroy more of the original fabric, and any decoration it carries, than the introduction of reinforcing or
superficially protective modern materials. These may offer the optimum conservation solution if they allow more significant original fabric to be retained. In historic landscapes, planting may need to utilise alternative species, to resist disease or the effects of climate change. Before making decisions, it is essential to understand all the heritage values of the elements concerned, and to consider the longer term, as well as the immediate, conservation objectives.

5.40 Sometimes, the action necessary to sustain or reinforce one heritage value can be incompatible with the actions necessary to sustain others. Understanding the range, inter-relationships and relative importance of the heritage values associated with a place should establish priorities for reconciling or balancing such tensions. While every reasonable effort should be made to avoid or minimise potential conflict, contrived solutions requiring intensive maintenance are likely to be difficult to sustain.

*General Repair Programme*

- Prepare a programme of repairs with costings and establish capital and revenue budgets for the carrying out of the works;

- Using Photogrammetric Survey information and tested specifications as a base, prepared detailed schedules and specifications of works;

- Consider the most effective long term method of carrying out repair works; options may include one off contracts, a term contract or the employment of a small direct labour force;

- Carry out repair and maintenance programmes as defined;

- Carefully record the details of works carried out using the Photogrammetric Survey as a base in order to build up a bank of information to inform future works. (See also Policy 5 concerning record keeping).

*Structural monitoring*

5.41 Evidence of any structural movement and proposed remedial action must be based on a thorough understanding of causes.
Where it is concluded that long term monitoring of structures is desirable, instigate or continue this process at the prescribed intervals, with arrangements for reporting and drawing conclusions at intervals or at the end of fixed periods.

Water penetration

5.42 Water penetration as well as at concentrated runoff points causing superficial, and/or structural, damage.

- Identify areas which suffer particularly from the effects of water penetration and seek to identify and group causes (paving run off, cracks in paving, ineffective drainage systems etc.);

- Develop solutions and instigate a programme of repairs to deal with these problems.

Pointing

- Prepare prioritised programme of repairs and pointing;

- Develop appropriate repair specifications with reference to trial samples of mortar if necessary.

Vegetation

5.43 Certain classes of non-woody vegetation may be regarded as benign e.g. mosses, lichens and algae, as well as shallow and fibrous rooted annuals or perennials. However the vigorous, woody growths of some perennials and shrubs including invasive species such as Japanese knotweed known to be present on the site, as well as some trees may be harmful as they force the masonry apart, causing eventual collapse if not removed.

- Identify any other harmful growths, kill and/or remove roots. Carry out repair or other works to mitigate against future growths where vulnerable.

- Identify sources of which may produce harmful growths and carry out any preventative action.

- Initiate a series of regular inspections and plant control regimes.
- Initiate Japanese Knotweed Plan and prepare management programme for treatment to avoid Japanese knotweed spreading further. **URGENT**

### Intervention to Increase Knowledge of the Past

#### Policy 5

All the processes and aims of Conservation, including recording, repair, management and promoting understanding of Jesmond Towers Estate will be based on the best current understanding of the history, development and condition of the estate.

5.44 Intervention primarily to increase knowledge of the past, involving material loss of evidential values, should only be acceptable if:

- preservation in situ is not reasonably practicable; or

- it is demonstrated that the potential increase in knowledge cannot be achieved using non-destructive techniques;

- and is unlikely to be achieved at another place whose destruction is inevitable; and

- is predicted decisively to outweigh the loss of the primary resource.

5.45 If acceptable, an intervention demands:

- A skilled team, with the resources to implement a project design based on explicit research objectives;

- Funded arrangements for the subsequent conservation and public deposit of the site archive, and for appropriate analysis and dissemination of the results within a set timetable;

- A strategy to ensure that other elements and values of the place are not prejudiced by the work, whether at the time or subsequently, including conservation of any elements left exposed.
5.46 The historic environment provides a unique record of past human activity, but differs from written archives in that ‘reading’ some parts of it can only be achieved through the destruction of the primary record. This policy applies particularly to the excavation of buried archaeological deposits, but can be relevant to the physical investigation of structures. It concerns intervention that goes beyond the evaluation and targeted investigation that may be necessary to inform and justify conservation management decisions.

5.47 The continuing development of investigative techniques suggests that, in future, it will be possible to extract more data from excavation and intervention than is currently possible, just as now it is usual to extract much more information than was possible a few decades ago. This demands a cautious approach to the use of a finite resource, and seeking to avoid loss of integrity, but it cannot reasonably exclude all research at a significant place. It must be recognised that much of the evidential value of the primary archive – the place itself – lies in its potential to increase knowledge of the past, to help protect the place and other similar places by a better understanding of their significance, to stimulate research, to encourage the further development of techniques to extract data, and to train successive generations of archaeologists.

*Archive and Historic Environment Record*

5.48 There is currently no organised archive of records. In order to develop the understanding of Jesmond Towers Estate and of the conservation processes a more thoroughgoing system is required to:

- Organise and catalogue records collected, including maps, plans, photographs and relating to historic research;
- Organise and catalogue records relating to repairs and maintenance work;
- Consolidate records of architectural and design interventions;
- Prepare thorough cross-referenced indexing system based on theme and also location.
Conditions survey

5.49 It is essential that repair works are preceded by a full survey of the condition of the structure(s) so that funds and effort are targeted at the highest priority work.

- Carry out, or upgrade the existing Conditions Survey of the estate to identify specific areas in need of repair, and prioritise the items;

- Develop and maintain a written and photographic record and physical examples of materials and techniques to act as a reference for future works.

Further historic research

5.50 Current understanding of Jesmond Towers Estate develops largely on the research and findings for this Conservation Plan and ad hoc individual effort. However a research agenda for the estate should be initiated:

- Confirm agreement of prioritised forward Research Brief / Programme and obtain funding and support for initiation;

- Arrange for the necessary consents, editing, funding and publishing of reports accessible for peer evaluation and as a contribution to developing understanding;

- Manage research programme, with an annual progress review and ensure publication of reports in appropriate journals.

Archaeological survey

5.51 There currently is no archaeological survey record of the estate, upon which to base archaeological evaluation, interpretation and maintenance planning.

- Create a brief for archaeological survey to take into account fabric maintenance and interpretation needs and commission survey work;

- Obtain funding and commission survey work.
Ecological Survey

5.52 There is a legal duty to avoid disturbance of protected flora and fauna except in controlled circumstances. In connection with Jesmond Towers Estate the principal species likely to be affected are bats and birds. Preliminary Survey assessment of bats and birds have been carried out but the importance of the species found has not been fully understood or assessed.

- Carry out further detail bat and bird surveys.

Environment and Setting

Policy 6
The visual setting of Jesmond Towers Estate will be managed and presented to the highest possible standard commensurate with the historical, ecological and visual importance and to ensure that that features of significance are not harmed or lost.

Key Views

5.53 Viewed from key visual receptors there are a number of elements whose visual appearance detracts from the overall quality of the setting of Jesmond Towers Estate, the dene and the Conservation Area as a whole.

- Identify viewpoints to the estate where there is potential for enhancement;

- Develop a schedule of management and enhancement actions for the purpose of raising standards;

- Ensure that, in the Forward Planning process, opportunities to enhance the setting of the Jesmond Towers Estate are created;

- Ensure that in the consideration of Planning Applications for sites within the immediate vicinity, or near view of the estate, the aspect of the development which fronts the estate, is given adequate and appropriate consideration.
Protection of views

5.54 Certain key views of the Jesmond Towers Estate from both inside and outside the curtilage have become established as part of the distinctive character of the City and appear in many photographs and paintings as well as having significance for the local and wider community and should be protected.

- Formally identify key views of the estate as ones which should be specially protected;
- Through the Development Control process schemes which impinge on these views should be given special consideration as to their appropriateness, particularly where any obstruction of view is entailed;
- Engage with adjacent neighbours where appropriate to ensure that buildings, trees and infrastructure are managed with respect for these key views.

5.55 Elements or features are identified as being of negative or of intrusive value:

- Sports Hall
- Canteen
- Kindergarten
- Temporary Laboratories (East and West)
- Tennis Courts

Interpretation

Policy 7
The interpretation of Jesmond Towers Estate for local residents and the wider community will be based on the most authoritative information available, using a variety of media and in such ways as make the story of the estate available to the widest audiences. It will be kept up to date to reflect developing understandings and the changing requirements of different user groups.

Interpretation

5.56 There is currently no interpretation provision available for Jesmond Towers Estate accessible to the local and wider community, stakeholders and interest groups:
• Carry out additional research into the requirements of residents and stakeholders to act as a basis for the development of an Interpretation Plan for Jesmond Towers Estate and its heritage values;

• With reference to the latest published and unpublished material review the ‘story’ of Jesmond Towers Estate and establish the body of historic material which is to form the basis of the interpretation;

• Directly, or through external commission formulate an Interpretation Plan to cover all aspects of Jesmond Towers Estate including planning private visits and tours;

• Media will include:
  • Web based media
  • Downloadable text and images

• Adopt the Interpretation Plan, obtain funding and carry out the provisions of the Plan to an agreed programme.

Restoration

Policy 8

Restoration work is only justified based on a thorough understanding of Jesmond Towers Estate in accordance with evidence and respects previous forms of the place.

5.57 Restoration is intervention made with the deliberate intention of revealing or recovering a known element of heritage value that has been eroded, obscured or previously removed, rather than simply maintaining the status quo. It may also achieve other conservation benefits, for example restoring a roof on a roofless building may make it both physically and economically sustainable in the long term. Restoration of some elements may be a desirable precursor to the introduction of new work which will necessarily take over where the evidence for restoration ends.

5.58 Careful assessment of the values of the elements affected is essential. Where the significance of a place is the result of centuries of change, restoration to some earlier stage in its evolution is most unlikely to meet this criterion.
5.59 Mitigation through recording is particularly important in restoration work. The results should be integrated with and used to update the initial analysis of the evidence for restoration (which will often be expanded and modified in detail during the early stages of work), and the result deposited in the appropriate Historic Environment Record.

5.60 It is essential to consider the long term implications of a proposed restoration for viability and sustainability.

5.61 Restoration should only be acceptable if:

- the heritage values of the elements that would be restored decisively outweigh the values of those that would be lost;
- the work proposed is justified by compelling evidence of the evolution of the place, and is executed in accordance with that evidence;
- the form in which the place currently exists is not the result of an historically-significant event;
- the work proposed respects previous forms of the place;
- the maintenance implications of the proposed restoration are considered to be sustainable.

New Work and Alteration

Policy 9

New work or alteration will only be executed if it does not materially harm the values of Jesmond Towers Estate nor prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

5.63 New work or alteration should only be acceptable if:

- There is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;
- The proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;

- The proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;

- The long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

5.64 The recognition of the public interest in heritage values is not in conflict with innovation, which can help to create the heritage of the future. Innovation is essential to sustaining cultural values in the historic environment for present and future generations, but should not be achieved at the expense of places of established value.

**Integrating Conservation with Other Public Interests**

**Policy 10**

*Change which would harm the heritage values of Jesmond Towers Estate will only be acceptable to make the place sustainable, or to meet an overriding public policy objective or need.*

5.65 Changes which would harm the heritage values of a significant place will be unacceptable unless:

- The changes are demonstrably necessary either to make the place sustainable, or to meet an overriding public policy objective or need;

- There is no reasonably practicable alternative means of doing so without harm;

- That harm has been reduced to the minimum consistent with achieving the objective;

- It has been demonstrated that the predicted public benefit decisively outweighs the harm to the values of the place, considering
  - its comparative significance;
  - the impact on that significance, and
the benefits to the place itself and/or the wider community or society as a whole.

5.66 The integration of heritage and other environmental interests with economic and social objectives at every level of strategic planning – national, regional, local – helps to minimise conflict. A willingness to consider and compare the impacts on the significance of a place of a range of options to achieve the public objective concerned is essential, as is selecting an option that either eliminates, or (as far as is possible) mitigates harm. This will often involve those representing heritage interests in employing the skills necessary critically to appraise the case and options for development, as well as its promoters employing the skills needed to evaluate heritage implications. The heritage case should be put fully and robustly.

Enabling Development

Policy 11
Enabling development that will deliver substantial benefit and secure the future of Jesmond Towers Estate without causing significant harm to the heritage values of the place or its setting.

5.67 Enabling development that would secure the future of a significant place, but contravene other planning policy objectives, will not be acceptable unless:

- It will not materially harm the heritage values of the place or its setting;
- It avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the place;
- It will secure the long term future of the place and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose;
- It is necessary to resolve problems arising from the inherent needs of the place, rather than the circumstances of the present owner, or the purchase price paid;
- Sufficient subsidy is not available from any other source;
- It is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the place, and that its form minimises harm to other public interests;
The public benefit of securing the future of the significant place through such enabling development decisively outweighs the disbenefits of breaching other public policies.

5.68 Enabling development is development that would deliver substantial benefit to a place, but which would be contrary to other objectives of national, regional or local planning policy. It is an established planning principle that such development may be appropriate if the public benefit of rescuing, enhancing, or even endowing a significant place decisively outweighs the harm to other material interests. Enabling development must always be in proportion to the public benefit it offers.

**Sustainability**

**Policy 12**

To develop and implement sustainable management strategies that will best maintain the significance of Jesmond Towers Estate in its setting, based upon a sound understanding of its heritage and natural values.

5.69 Sustainable management of a place begins with understanding and defining how, why, and to what extent it has cultural and natural heritage values, in sum, its significance. Communicating that significance to everyone concerned with a place, particularly those whose actions may affect it, is then essential if all are to act in awareness of its heritage values. Only through understanding the significance of a place is it possible to assess how the qualities that people value are vulnerable to harm or loss. That understanding should then provide the basis for developing and implementing management strategies (including maintenance, cyclical renewal and repair) that will best sustain the heritage values of the place in its setting. Every conservation decision should be based on an understanding of its likely impact on the significance of the fabric and other aspects of the place concerned.

*Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)*

5.70 Before the mid 20th century, most surfaced areas were pervious surfaces often surrounded by trees and covered with gravel to minimise mud problems.

- Specify porous paving and create the added benefit of controlling storm water runoff;

- Where treatment of runoff water is required provide an impervious barrier below a pervious surface to direct runoff to an oil-water separator and/or a treatment facility.
**Water Efficiency**

5.71 Reducing water use can negatively impact historic plantings and landscape features.

- Preserve historic plantings and landscape features by balancing the water goals within the building and site.

5.72 Historically water conservation was a part of daily life. Cisterns collected rainwater and water was reused. Modern grey water recycling systems have evolved from traditional water conservation methods.

- Specify low flow lavatories or consider options similar to historic technology.

5.73 ‘Cultural landscapes’ often play central roles in the overall makeup or character of historic properties. They also need water to survive. Therefore, like historic structures, they must be cared for respected, even historic plantings that may not be native species.

- Efficient irrigation systems may be used to save water, and recycled ‘grey’ or rainwater may be captured for use in gardens and surrounding landscapes.

**Energy and Atmosphere**

- Retain tall windows to allow natural light to penetrate a building. With the added benefit of higher ceilings, natural light can travel far into a space;

- Buildings in a ‘C’ or ‘E’ plan form were common and essentially functioned to facilitate natural light and ventilation;

- Additionally, skylights provide a flood of natural light, and were often used on the north face of a roof so not to produce glare;

- Historic masonry buildings are exceptionally durable and benefit from significant thermal mass. Thermal mass helps regulate the temperature inside by storing heat and cold within the mass of the wall.

5.74 With proper maintenance, windows built from old growth wood can function indefinitely and their performance can be substantially bolstered by using storm windows, caulk, and weather-stripping. Studies have shown that these simple improvements can result in efficiency similar to that of new insulated glass windows. Modern windows also have a
relatively short lifespan and can be difficult, if not impossible, to repair. Once modern windows fail, there are few ways they can be recycled, and they will likely end up in landfills. This begins an environmentally insensitive cycle of removal and replacement.

**Materials and Resources**

- Consider use of appropriate salvage historic materials for restoration of lighting, hardware, and other specialty items. Most mid-sized cities have resources for salvaged building materials. Upgrade, rather than replace, historic fixtures;

- Early paints and stains featured pigments made from natural plant materials and minerals. Use low volatile organic compounds (VOC) finishes;

- Value of durable materials in sustainable building, use of durable, renewable natural materials conserves resources in the long-term and is one of the significant sustainable aspects of historic buildings. Consider the embedded energy of existing materials in approaching rehabilitation of interior spaces.

**Elements for Change**

**Policy 13**

The reversal of relatively minor but harmful changes, to restore a place to a form in which it recently existed as a complete entity, will be acceptable as long as it does not contradict the principle of ‘respecting previous forms of the place’.

5.75 The future use and function of the estate brings a need to rationalise the building stock and put in place a landscape, biodiversity and arboricultural management plan:

5.76 The management plan is based on the Statement of Significance and has four objectives,

1. To establish and define the significance of the Jesmond Towers Estate as a whole and of the individual elements which contribute to that significance, building on the value appraisals;

2. To assess and define the threats and opportunities within the area and how these impact on the significance of the individual elements and of the estate as a whole.

3. To provide a benchmark for assessing and managing change.
4. To provide policy guidance to ensure that the significance of the estate will be maintained through the effective management of change and that those opportunities to enhance the values are maximised

**Actions**

- Prepare policies for individual elements and features of Jesmond Towers Estate and its setting;
- Initially all the nondescript additions and isolated fabrics that confuse the site should be removed;
- Instigate implementation of woodland, landscape and ecological management plan;
- Implement Japanese Knotweed Management Plan **PRIORITY**

5.77 Using Fielden's degrees of intervention\(^{24}\), each property is addressed in turn.

**Jesmond Towers**

5.78 Preventative measures are already in place having been instructed by the Owners and under the direction of the retained Conservation Architect. Preservation of this cultural property is of paramount importance. A major present threat is the spread of Japanese knotweed which is in close proximity to the house and about which advice is being sought from the Local Authority. The Owners have instructed the Conservation Architect to prepare schemes for the restoration of the Picture Gallery whilst fitting it for rehabilitation with adaptive alteration so as comply with 21st century regulations.

5.79 Future use of Jesmond Towers would ideally be as a private house although other residential uses could be appropriate ranging from Hotel through to Apartments but these would bring a greater degree of intervention upon the historic fabric. Institutional use not least Educational use from School to College would also be appropriate, albeit as can be seen from its last use, this does bring intervention that impacts. Other institutional uses such as Commercial Headquarters, Museum or Gallery etc would be fitting, as the major spaces would find a function and the smaller rooms have a cellular role. Reuse is key to the protection of this nationally significant building and all uses shall bring a degree of adaptive alteration, its original use being the least invasive.

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\(^{24}\) Conservation of Historic Buildings by Bernard M. Fielden first published 1982. ISBN 0-408-10782-0. The seven degrees are: (1) prevention of deterioration; (2) preservation of the existing state; (3) consolidation of the fabric; (4) restoration; (5) rehabilitation; (6) reproduction; (7) reconstruction.
**Sports Hall**

5.80 Whilst the building is by no measure historic, preventative measures are in place for its protection during vacancy and it is under the same threat of Japanese knotweed as described above. Preservation is not a consideration and demolition would contribute to the restoration of the northern aspect from and the view towards the historic north front and setting of Jesmond Towers. Alternatively depending on a future use found for Jesmond Towers, it could continue as a sports facility or similar function.

**North Lodge**

5.81 The property is being preserved as found, albeit having lost nearly all of its interior finishes and fittings. The importance of this Lodge lies in its relationship to Jesmond Towers and it must be preserved. It simply must be restored as a dwelling of significant importance to the Conservation Area. Adaptive alteration of the interior shall be needed for its rehabilitation but the intervention can be minimal and should include the restoration of the surviving chimney piece, its stone surround and interesting spit feature.

**Canteen**

5.82 Unworthy fabric which should be demolished.

**North Jesmond House and associated buildings**

5.83 These seven properties, albeit each with its own distinctive historic quality, have to be considered as a piece such is the interconnection driven by the order of their origination and also as viewed from afar by key public vantage points. The seven properties include:

- North Jesmond House
- Convent
- Chapel
- Gymnasium & Music Room
- Classrooms
- Laboratory & Arts
5.84 First of all it has to be said that preventative measures are in place for their protection and that there is, at the time of writing, temporary occupation by the BBC who have again leased the accommodation for the production of another episode of ‘Tracy Beaker’, their run away successful children’s programme. The production has made for some reversible cosmetic alterations to the unlisted property.

5.85 The Former Farmhouse and North Jesmond House were originally parts of the same farmfold and as such have a significance which however cannot be preserved, such have been the alterations over the century. In a similar way the purpose built Classrooms, Laboratory & Arts, Convent, Chapel and Gymnasium & Music Room are all blighted by the considerable overbuilding of each and every fabric, so that what remains of the Farmhouse is uninhabitable through the building of classrooms to its south façade, the Convent whilst on an ideal north south axis has no daylight or sunlight from the west because of North Jesmond House, the remainder of buildings now make little sense excepting the Chapel, but its future use as such would very much depend upon the future use of the remainder. All in all, whilst the first presumption has to be to find new uses for existing fabrics, something has to give with this complex because the layout as found is unusable without some demolition.

5.86 With limited demolition, it would be possible to adapt parts of the complex to residential use. Alternatively clearance and rebuilding with a similar albeit rationalised footprint and in scale, proportion and materials suitable to the Conservation Area would be appropriate.

Former Outbuildings

5.87 Again it has to be said that preventative measures are in place for their protection although notwithstanding these, the property has suffered a recent break in. As with the Former Farmhouse and North Jesmond House above, these were originally parts of the same farmfold and have significance although much diminished due to drastic alterations over the years. The fabric is a minor feature in the Conservation Area and it would therefore be beneficial if a service function could be found for it, depending upon a reuse of this site.

West Cottage

5.88 This Cottage, whilst not an historic property, is in good order and must be retained as a dwelling of significant importance to the Conservation Area.
Kindergarten

5.89 A modest fabric which however is not worthy of preservation and should be demolished.

Temporary Laboratory Buildings 1 & 2

5.90 Fabrics with expired planning permission which should be demolished, although in accordance with statutory protection of a bat roost and a Statement of Method.

Garden Stores

5.91 The remnant fabric of Jesmond Tower's kitchen garden and as such, despite their parlous state as garaging should be restored.

5.92 In summary, the following should be taken as the starting point for investigating the impact which new development may bring to Jesmond Towers Estate:

- Assessing the reversal of some previous interventions;
- New development should respect the mature woodland tree cover which is an important element of the character and appearance of the Jesmond Dene Conservation Area;
- Adaptation of a building for compliance with access for the disabled which shall need sensitive detail, particularly in areas of high decorative significance;
- Any development must be reconciled with neighbouring properties in respect of use, access, form, scale and setting.

5.93 Friday Fields Lane is worthy of a form of preservation, not as its former use, as a right of way, but with markers to record a fragment of the history of the place.
**Setting**

5.94 The Jesmond Towers site is an attractive wooded enclave in a good quality suburban residential quarter of the City. The grounds form a green backdrop to the streets that surround it and connect visually and physically with Jesmond Dene.

5.95 However, the site’s principal building Jesmond Towers has lost its historical position, now hidden behind a screen of secondary woodland to the north, losing its outlook and lost to the eyes of the passing public who could at one time see it perched handsomely on the high ground above the dene and Matthew Bank. The wooded areas that lie along the northern boundary of the site have been neglected and the unwelcome spread of both rhododendron and more worryingly Japanese knotweed needs to be addressed. Furthermore some of the trees are in a poor state of health with a number considered to be unsafe and requiring some immediate action.

5.96 The grounds themselves have been the subject of poor quality interventions to support past educational uses, in particular the temporary science laboratories and the all weather pitch that now provides an incongruous setting for the fine frontage of Jesmond Towers.

5.97 It is considered that:

- A comprehensive landscape and biodiversity management plan is prepared for the whole site, which will set out short, medium and long term measures to enhance the quality of the landscape and biodiversity value, and its contribution to the setting of Jesmond Towers.

**Design**

5.98 The site is situated in a popular, attractive residential area of the city where house values are high and densities relatively low. The opportunity to develop and regenerate the western part of the site is acknowledged as the purpose-built buildings are no longer considered suitable for educational use. There will need to be a careful consideration of options for the area, but with a clear and firm requirement to adopt high quality design skills and materials in any new build.

5.99 It is considered that in developing options for the future use of the site, great emphasis shall be placed on the quality of design for any new construction. The choice of materials will also need to be of the highest quality and be respectful of the area’s conservation status and Jesmond Towers itself.
5.100 The estate is being well served by its owners whose management strategy includes informed care and conservation of historic estates.

5.101 Previous uses of residential and or education remain ideal but with other uses might be leisure, office, culture and tourism.

5.102 As government guidance suggest, where an historic structure’s original use is no longer viable, a new economic use must be found to ensure the structure is sustainable. Accommodating new economic uses is therefore a balance between enabling the structure to be viable and ensuring it maintains its heritage significance.

5.103 The aim is to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with fabric, interior and setting of the built form, landscape and ecology of the estate and which may not necessarily be its most profitable use. The English Heritage Conservation Principals document provides guidance under a series of headings. Routine management and maintenance; periodic renewal; repair; restoration; new work and alteration.

5.104 This is the crux of the discussion about conservation and regeneration, the two forces must complement rather than compete with each other.

Implementation and Review

5.105 The need to monitor the Plan, to make sure that the Owners and those responsible for the estate are using it to make decisions and to care for the site.

5.106 The Plan will need to be reviewed within about five years. Circumstances change, as does our understanding of a site or the issues facing it. It is useful to update the Plan to reflect this.

5.107 Having identified what needs to be done, a statement should be prepared setting out the actions necessary to preserve the cultural and historic significance of the site. These might include:

- Repairs needed to any structure, finishes and contents, setting out priorities and categorising them as Urgent, Necessary and Desirable, as appropriate;
- Actions required to conserve or restore the setting of the site;
- Identification of appropriate materials and technical skills and their sourcing;
- Compliance with statutory requirements;
- An ongoing maintenance schedule;
- A management plan appropriate to the site;
- Provision or retention of public access, and its promotion;
- Enhancement of the presentation of the site to improve public understanding and enjoyment;
- Creation of a framework for site management and any future interventions;
- Recording of change, and the maintenance of an archival resource;
- Opportunities for development, and design parameters.

5.108 The Action Plan should identify clearly who has responsibility for the actions proposed. It should also identify possible sources of funding for the implementation of the action plan, with any time restrictions on expenditure.

_Review arrangements_

5.109 The Conservation Plan will set out the arrangements and timescale for a periodic review of the contents of the Plan and their implementation of the action it recommends.
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