

Heritage Impact Assessment

Little Haven Hotel, South Shields NE33 1LH



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Executive Summary

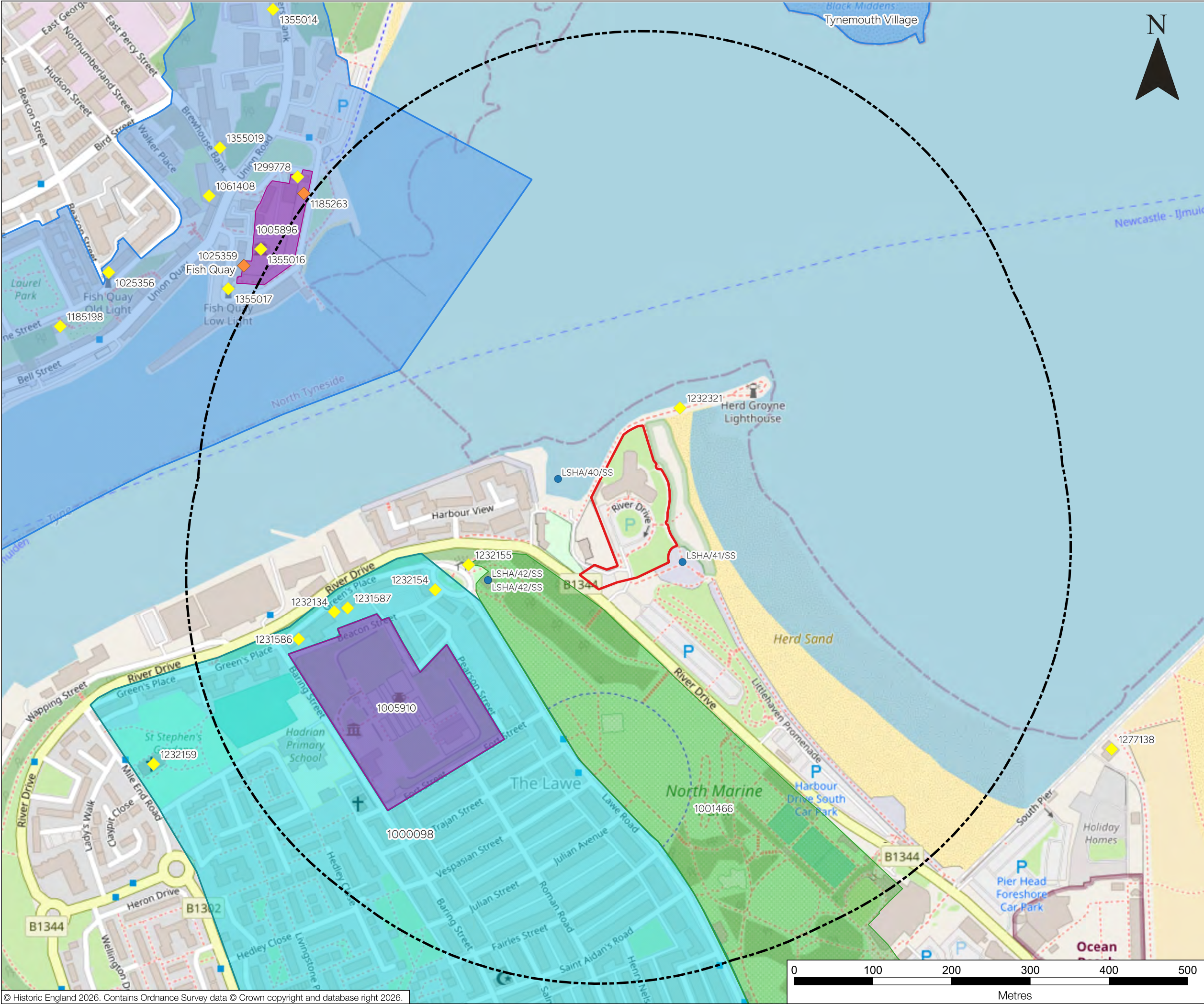
Heritage Potential was commissioned by Little Haven Hotel Ltd to produce a Heritage Impact Assessment to inform planning permission for a proposed scheme of alteration and extension at Little Haven Hotel, River Drive, South Shields NE33 1LH. The property comprises a hotel constructed in 1998.

The Site does not contain any designated assets and only one non-designated heritage asset; however, no heritage assets will be physically or directly affected by the proposed development.

This report sets out the development and significance of the Little Haven Hotel, before assessing the nature, siting, and impact of the proposed changes.

Considering all elements, the overall impact of the proposed development on the significance of nearby assets is considered to be nil.

Overall, the proposals are considered to be consistent with the provisions of the Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), Section 66(i), the NPPF, as well as the relevant provisions of the South Tyneside Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (June 2007).



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 500m Study Area
- World Heritage Sites
- Conservation Areas
- Scheduled Monuments
- Parks and Gardens

Listed Buildings

- I
- II*
- II
- Locally Listed Buildings

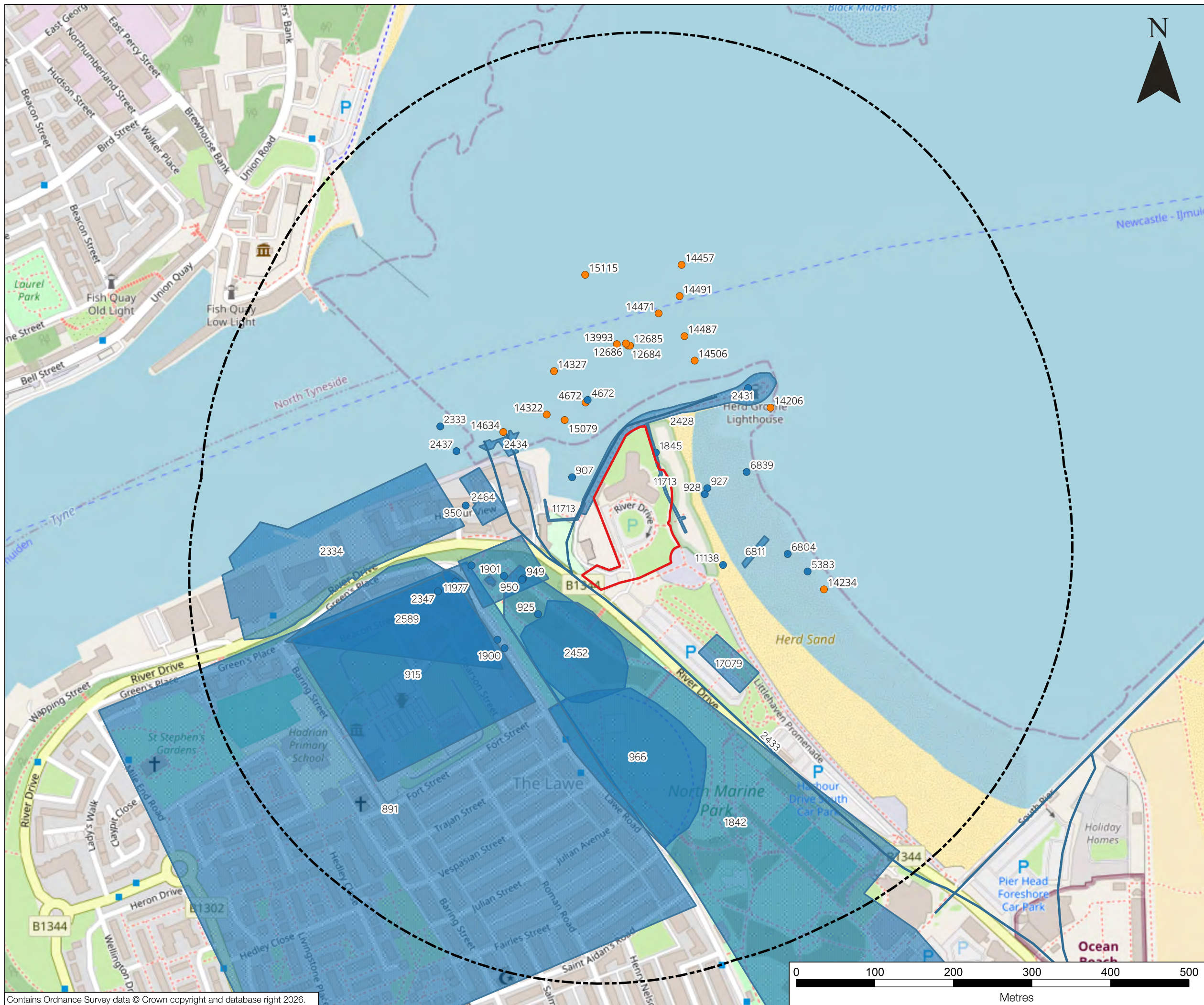
Little Haven Hotel, River Dr, South Shields

Heritage Statement

Designated Heritage Assets

Figure 1

Scale 1:8,000 @A3	Date January 2026
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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 500m Study Area
- Shipwrecks (Point)
- HER (Point)
- HER (Line)
- HER (Polygon)



Little Haven Hotel, River Dr, South Shields

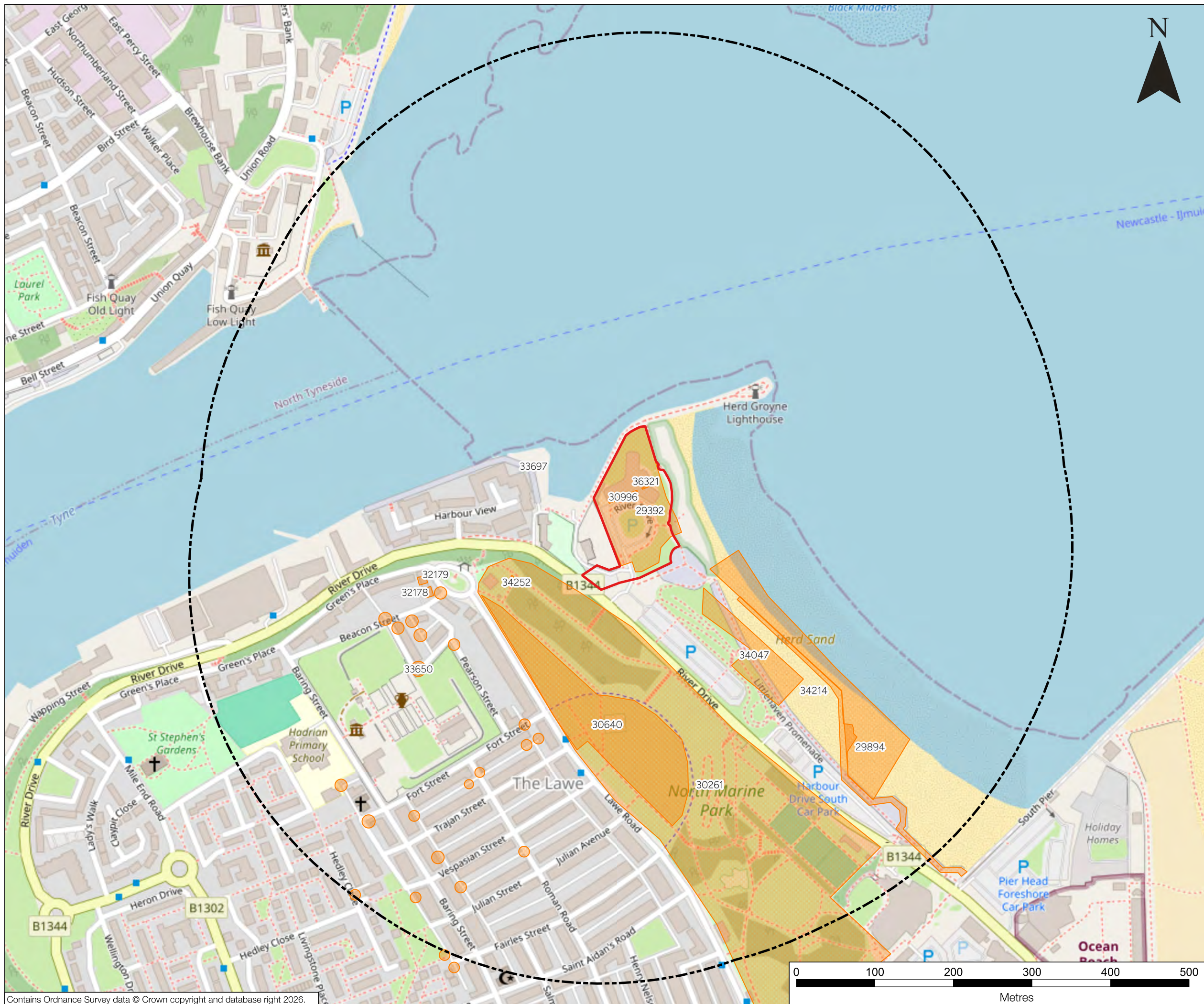
Heritage Statement

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Figure 2

Scale 1:8,000 @A3

Date January 2026



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 500m Study Area
- Events



Little Haven Hotel, River Dr, South Shields

Heritage Statement

Previous Archaeological Events

Figure 3

Scale 1:8,000 @A3

Date January 2026



1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared on behalf of Little Haven Hotel Ltd (hereafter 'the Client') to inform a proposed scheme of alteration and extension at Little Haven Hotel, River Drive, South Shields NE33 1LH (hereafter 'the Site'), which is centred at NGR NZ 36775 68193. The property comprises a hotel constructed in 1998.
- 1.2. The Site currently consists of a c.0.65 ha plot housing a late 20th-century 62 no. room hotel, private carpark, gardens and picnic area leading directly onto the beach, at Littlehaven, which is located at the mouth of the River Tyne on the South Shields side, overlooking Littlehaven Beach and the harbour entrance.
- 1.3. The proposed scheme is for the proposals to the existing hotel to provide improved and extended facilities and the construction of a new gym and a beach nursery including supporting facilities.
- 1.4. This report considers the historic development of the Site, including any contributions made by its setting, and thus any heritage assets outwith the Site which have the potential to be impacted by the proposed scheme.
- 1.5. The Site does not contain any designated heritage assets, nor does it contribute more than a minor amount to the significance of any designated heritage assets within the area as part of their setting. As such, future development is anticipated to conform with the relevant provisions of the NPPF (2024), The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the LPA's Local Plan policies.
- 1.6. This assessment has been prepared in compliance with, and with regards to, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024), South Tyneside Local Plan (Draft 2023-2040), Historic England guidance, in addition to standards set out by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Relevant local plan policies are included at Section 2.
- 1.7. The methodology employed during this assessment was based upon relevant professional guidance, including the CIfA's *Standard and guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* (CIfA 2020), and relevant technical guidance issued by Historic England, including *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (2019). A methodology and glossary of key terms is provided in Section 2.



Plan 1 Site Plan

1.8. Planning History

- 1.9. Subsequent alterations to the hotel and the wider plot are evidenced in a review of relevant planning applications below. Such most recent alterations include a proposed widening of launch ramp (Ref: ST/0439/11/EIA), which concluded no EIA was required, with more detailed applications as follows:

Description	Reference	Decision
Erection of hotel with function rooms and leisure facilities provision of coach/car park and new vehic/pedestrian access	ST/0244/91/UD	1991 – Withdrawn
Proposed upgrading of existing CCTV cameras and installation of 11no. new CCTV cameras.	ST/0303/09/FUL	2009 – Approved
Conversation Piece Harbour Drive Adj Littlehaven Hotel River Drive South Shields 1 HARBOUR DRIVE, SOUTH SHIELDS, TYNE AND WEAR, DELETED	ST/0517/98/LA	1998 – Approved
Proposed erection of 63 bedroomed hotel and construction of new access	ST/0697/97/UD	1997 – Approved
Submission of details of a machine cut trial trench to discharge condition 9 attached to the previously approved application for the proposed 63 bedroom hotel and access	ST/0697/97/01/DM	1998 – Approved
Submission of Condition 3 Details of car parking spaces	ST/0697/97/02/DM	1998 – Refused
Submission of part condition 8, Details of Compound and Site Cabins, for proposed Hotel	ST/0697/97/03/DM	1998 – Approved
Submission of condition 3a Details of materials, Roof: Matt Polyester, Brick Red, Profile- Scanroof by Plannja Ltd and Ivory walls, White window/door surround by Snowcem and Torridon Blend by Ibstock wall brick.	ST/0697/97/04/DM	1998 – Approved
Submission of details of part condition 6: landscaping	ST/0697/97/05/DM	1998 – Refused

2. Legislation, Policy and Guidance

2.1. Key Terms

2.2. The NPPF helps to define key terms within heritage policy. These are provided within the table below.

Term	Definition
Heritage Assets	<i>A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).</i>
Designated Heritage Assets	<i>A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation</i>
Non-Designated Heritage Assets	<i>Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.</i>
Significance	<i>The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.</i>
Setting	<i>The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.</i>

2.3. Chapter 16 specifically relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paras. 202-221).

Significance

2.4. Current national guidance for the assessment of the significance of heritage assets expresses significance in terms of 'interests', as used within this report, and as per the NPPF definition (see *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England 2019). Interests are analogous with 'special interest' as used within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and with the 'values' as set out in Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (English Heritage 2008). The interests set out under the NPPF include:

- *Archaeological Interest: there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point*
- *Architectural and Artistic Interest: these are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.*
- *Historic Interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity*

- 2.5. These interests should not be seen as prescriptive, but rather as a guide for understanding the significance of a heritage asset; for example, a heritage asset may have interests beyond the scope of archaeological, architectural, or historic interest – they may have communal value or may be significant for their group value, etc.
- 2.6. This assessment was also informed by the advice published by Historic England in the document entitled *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (2015) and *Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage* (2021).

Setting

- 2.7. The setting assessment within this report was guided by the recommendations outlined in *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning. Note 3* (Historic England 2017), which align with the general EIA process. The guidance advocates a staged approach to the assessment of the effects of development on the significance of heritage assets due to a change within their setting, using a five-step process:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by the proposed development

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow their significance to be appreciated

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance of the identified heritage assets, or on the ability to appreciate it

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm to that significance

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes

Harm

- 2.8. Potential development effects (impacts) to heritage assets are discussed in terms of 'harm', with reference to the NPPF (2024). Harm, in heritage terms, relates to a negative effect stemming from a change which results in a diminishment of the significance of a heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. The NPPF allows that harm may be either substantial or less than substantial and may vary within each category. How harm is assigned will trigger differing tests under the NPPF. Where harm to a designated heritage asset, or a non-designated heritage asset of equivalent significance, is identified, it must be given great weight in the planning decision. While it is up to the decision maker to determine the nature and degree of harm, they must take into account necessary expertise, and the particular significance of any heritage asset which may be affected (NPPF paragraph 207).

- *Substantial harm (or total loss of significance)*

An impact which results in a '*...total loss of significance...*' (NPPF paragraph 214). The National Planning Policy Guidance sets out that substantial harm

Is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting'. Substantial harm can be defined as having '...such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced;*¹ and*

- *Less than substantial harm*

Being any lesser level of harm than that defined above; recent case law has confirmed that this includes any level of harm (not considered substantial) regardless of its quantification, e.g., the finding of a 'negligible' level of harm to a designated heritage asset must still be treated as less than substantial harm and be weighed in the balance under paragraph 215.

¹ *Bedford Borough Council v Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government & Anor* [2008] EWHC 2304 (Admin).

- 2.9. The PPG provides that the category of harm identified for any given asset be '*explicitly identified*', and that the extent of that harm be '*clearly articulated*'. For purposes of this assessment, this is done with reference to a '*spectrum*', e.g., at the lower/upper end of the spectrum of less than substantial.
- 2.10. Where an impact, or harm to, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset is identified, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.11. Where there is no harm to a heritage asset, an impact may be neutral or may enhance its significance. Statute and the NPPF indicate that great weight should be afforded any development or aspect of a development that would preserve or enhance the significance of a designated heritage asset.
- 2.12. As clarified in the High Court, preservation does not mean that change is not possible; it specifically means no harm. This is echoed in *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 2* (GPA 2), which states that '*Change to heritage assets is inevitable but it is only harmful when significance is damaged*'.

2.13. South Tyneside Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (June 2007).

Policy EA1 Local Character and Distinctiveness

- 2.14. To conserve the best qualities of South Tyneside's built and natural environment the Council will:

A improve the distinctive urban characters of South Shields, Jarrow and Hebburn;

B protect and enhance the openness of Green Belt;

C preserve the special and separate characters of the urban fringe villages of Boldon Colliery, West Boldon, East Boldon, Cleadon and Whitburn; and

D implement the Great North Forest's strategies for access, education, enterprise and biodiversity in a forestry framework by:

- i) enhancing the River Don Valley farmland into a well-wooded recreational landscape enclosing a network of open corridors;
- ii) reconstructing the Boldon / Cleadon fringe as an informal and wooded local recreation area that softens intrusive urban edges;
- iii) conserving the open limestone grassland character of the Cleadon Hills;
- iv) enhancing North Sunderland fringe by significantly increasing tree cover; and
- v) restoring the small-scale agricultural field pattern of Downhill.

Policy EA2 The Coastal Zone

- 2.15. To reinforce the coastal zone as a strategic multi-purpose corridor the Council will work with partners to:

A conserve and enhance the character of the Undeveloped Coast as a high quality natural environment and resource for biodiversity and outdoor recreation;

B promoting the Developed Coast as a major leisure and tourism destination with strong links to South Shields town centre; and,

C reduce the risk of coastal erosion, especially at:

i) Littlehaven;

ii) Trow Quarry;

iii) A183 near Marsden Lime Kilns; and,

iv) Old Harbour Quarry, Whitburn. D reduce the risk of flooding along the developed and undeveloped coast.

2.16. South Tyneside Local Development Framework: Development Management Policies (December 2011).

Policy DM6 Heritage Assets and Archaeology

- 2.17. We will support development proposals that protect, preserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character and heritage, visual appearance and contextual importance of our heritage assets and their settings, including:

A the following Scheduled Ancient Monuments/World Heritage Sites:

- i) Arbeia Roman Fort (and Vicus as part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site);
- ii) Marsden Lime Kilns; and
- iii) St. Paul's Monastery and the site of the former Village of Jarrow (as part of the candidate Wearmouth-Jarrow World Heritage Site).

B the following Conservation Areas, including their historic settlement cores, distinctive open spaces and boundary walls:

- i) Cleadon;
- ii) Cleadon Hills;
- iii) East Boldon;
- iv) Hebburn Hall;
- v) Mariners' Cottages;
- vi) Mill Dam;
- vii) Monkton Village;
- viii) St. Paul's, Jarrow;
- ix) West Boldon;
- x) Westoe Village; and
- xi) Whitburn;

C listed buildings and structures, non-listed buildings and structures included on the council's list of locally significant heritage assets, significant landscape features of local heritage and archaeological value and archaeological deposits and remains.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Proposals Map.

- 2.18. Archaeological deposits and remains, below ground and on the surface should be recorded, and where possible, preserved in situ. Proposals for built development on:
- i) previously undeveloped sites; or
 - ii) previously developed sites where archaeological interest has been established by a previous find recorded in the Historic Environment Record;
- 2.19. will not be determined until the potential impact of the proposed development on archaeological deposits and remains has been adequately assessed and evaluated, and any adverse impacts will be avoided, minimised or mitigated, or in the absence of adequate information, will be refused.
- 2.20. Planning permission will be refused if the impact of development on heritage assets and archaeological remains is unacceptable. Where appropriate, we will use Article 4 directions, planning conditions and planning obligations to secure mitigation measures to ensure that development is acceptable in planning terms.

3. Historical Background

- 3.1. The following section provides an overview of the historic development of Little Haven Hotel based on an assessment of the building, the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record (HER), relevant historic mapping and documents, and online data sources.

3.2. South Shields

- 3.3. South Shields stands on the south bank of the River Tyne close to the mouth, and on an ancient ferry crossing point linking to North Shields. The two Shields have very different ancestries but have been paired not only in name but also in fortune, enjoying together periods of prosperity interspersed with episodes of upheaval and decline.
- 3.4. Strategic factors clearly determined the location of the Roman fort at South Shields on The Lawe, a headland 20m high. The location at the mouth of an important river was also a primary factor in the economic development of South Shields. Fishing, the shipping trade, shipbuilding and associated industries formed the industrial base of the town. The topography reflects the underlying geology, the soft magnesian limestone forming gently undulating hills, with the riverside area of the town standing on a mantle of boulder clay approx. 12m in depth. Settlement initially grew up on the headland and the secondary focus of settlement was on the riverside around the Mill Dam, a tidal inlet. Filled in during the 19th century, this feature is shown on Fryer's map of 1772 as running almost as far inland as the main north-south route out of South Shields towards Gateshead, the present-day Fowler Street.
- 3.5. Historically South Shields was part of an Anglo-Saxon district called Wirralshire – the name of the coastal land between the Tyne and Wear. The name derives from Anglo-Saxon or the medieval era, referring to 'Scheles': temporary fishermen's huts, sheds or shelters on the south side of the Tyne. South Shields was also the site of a Roman fort and a Saxon monastery but the name South Shields is not recorded until 1228 when it is called 'the Sheales upon the South'. It is then recorded as 'Shelis' in 1296, as 'Suthshelis' in 1313 and as 'Le Shels' in 1365. For most of its history, South Shields was a fishing village belonging to the Priors of Durham Cathedral monastery.
- 3.6. South Shields was a suitable site for a medieval port but Newcastle legally claimed control of trade on the Tyne and was protective of its status as Tyneside's dominant port. Newcastle merchants resisted attempts to develop rival ports and were determined the 'Sheales' on both sides of the Tyne should remain nothing more than huts.
- 3.7. In 1768 during the reign of George III, South Shields, with its small chapel dedicated to St Hilda, was still little more than a long narrow street or track running alongside the Tyne. The street was adjoined by a collection of lanes and side roads and was bordered by hills of ballast created by the offloading of visiting ships.
- 3.8. South Shields was in need of major changes to cope with its continuous industrial growth and trade. In 1768 the Reverend Samuel Dennis and the Dean and Chapter of Durham (successors of the earlier Priors of Durham) obtained an Act of Parliament allowing them to undertake the development of eight acres of church land. Onto this land were moved the fairs and markets of South Shields. An extensive marketplace was built along with several new streets laid out in a grid iron pattern.
- 3.9. At the centre of the marketplace, a small square-shaped town hall was built (1768) by the architect John Wooler. Now the 'Old Town Hall', it can still be seen opposite St Hilda's church. The new streets built in this vicinity included a new principal thoroughfare called King Street which was completed by 1826 during the reign of George IV.
- 3.10. It was not until 1848 that North and South Shields came to be officially recognised as ports that were separate from Newcastle. Customs houses were established at both places but the customs house at South Shields was subordinate to that at North Shields though its jurisdiction extended south to Souter Point which formed the border with that of Sunderland.
- 3.11. In the 1850s the Town Hall and markets were purchased by the South Shields Corporation from the Durham Dean and Chapter. In the early 1900s a new town hall was built further to the south, but King Street is still South Shields' main commercial street, although it was rebuilt in the late 19th and early 20th century.
- 3.12. The Market Place at South Shields suffered from a particularly devastating bombing raid during the Second World War. On the night of October 2-3, 1941, the German Luftwaffe dropped bombs over the town which left 66 men, women and children dead and the marketplace "looking like the ruins of Ypres", as one local journalist later described the scene. The old town hall which took a direct hit remarkably survived as did St Hilda's church.

3.13. Little Haven Hotel

- 3.14. The Site is situated at the River Tyne's Gateway in South Shields. Little Haven Hotel thus stands at Littlehaven, at the mouth of the River Tyne on the South Shields side, overlooking Littlehaven Beach and the harbour entrance. This area has long been strategically and economically significant, forming part of South Shields' maritime, industrial, and defensive landscape for centuries.
- 3.15. It is accessed from a serpentine driveway which runs west/northwest directly off River Drive which allows access and egress to the Site. The Site comprises a c.1.42ha plot featuring a late 20th-century 62 no. room hotel, private carpark, gardens and picnic area leading directly onto Shields Beach. The building was constructed in 1998 as part of wider waterfront regeneration in South Shields, which sought to transform former industrial land into leisure, tourism, and residential uses.
- 3.16. Abutting the grounds of the Site to the east are sand dunes and, further to their east is Herd Sand which opens out to the sea. To the northeast of the Site is South Groyne, a small groyne in the river mouth. To the Site's west is the South Shields Sailing Club including its associated boat yards and club house which allows access, to the north, to the slipway. Finally, to the southeast of the Site, further along the coastline, is a public car park, known as Harbour Drive (north and south) and allows access to Littlehaven Beach.

3.17. Cartographic Regression

- 3.18. The 1838 Tithe Map of the Parish of Westoe (TNA Ref: IR 29/11/276) shows the southwestern portion of the Site occupying Plot 85, merely comprising grassland, and known as 'The Bents' (Plate 1). It was owned by John Wilson Esquire and occupied by John Potts and Others.
- 3.19. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map from 1857 shows that much of the Site comprised sand dunes though with a shipyard to the very west (Plate 2). There were several workshops dotted along the area of the Site and a saw pit but nothing upon the immediate Site plot besides wooden posts marking the land edge.
- 3.20. The 1862 OS map similarly shows the shipyard but in more detail with the land boundary marked as 'Sand End' and the Site area featuring the Herd Sand Beacon and known as The Wheel; however, much of this is open space on the mapping and so this map is not reproduced.
- 3.21. By the 1896 OS map, the Groyne lighthouse is clearly identified upon the South Groyne area leading into the sea (Plate 3). The Site itself is merely sand dunes. There is little change following this on the historical mapping besides, by 1947, the construction of a road and roundabout, labelled Harbour Drive, which is still extant as the road leading into the Site (Plate 4). However, there is no built development at this time. By 1955, the Site area is identified as the North Foreshore Caravan Camping Site (Plate 5), with a small linear structure to facilitate the campsite to the west of the Site, along the now extended road from the roundabout by 1972 (Plate 6).
- 3.22. Google Earth imagery from 2001 (Plate 7) then shows the hotel constructed on the former campsite, adjacent to the former roundabout and with landscape gardens surrounding the plot. Harbour Drive is now River Drive. The South Shields Sailing Club structures appear to be located upon or in proximity to the former linear structures.

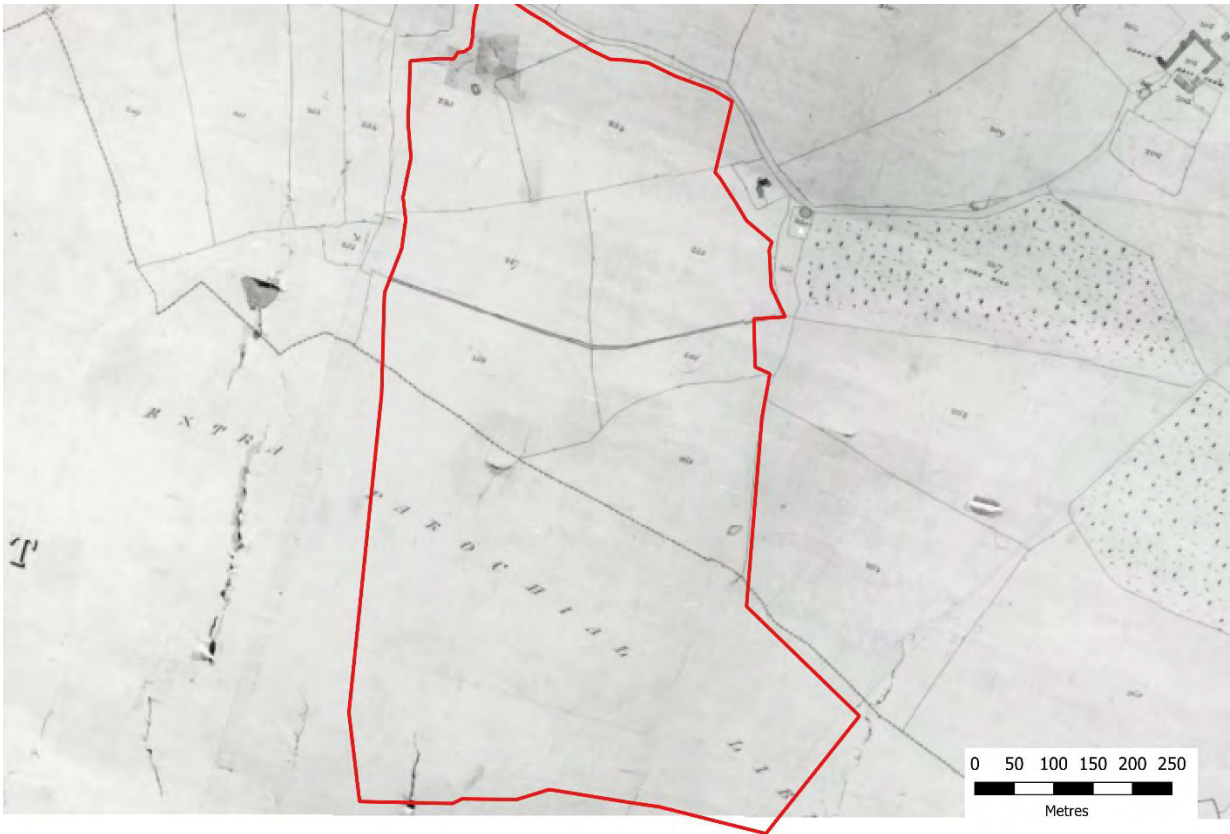


Plate 1 1859 Tithe Map of the Parish of Westoe

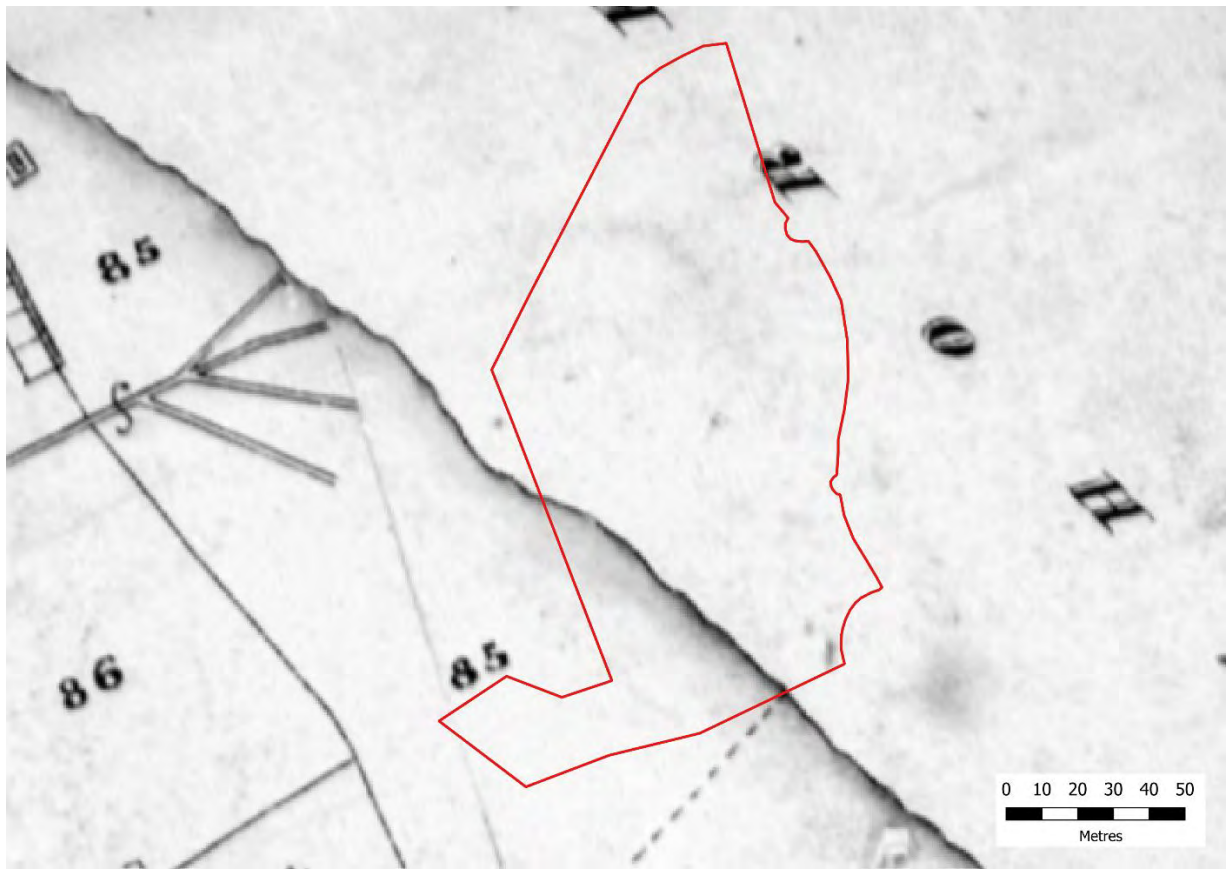


Plate 2 1857 Ordnance Survey Map

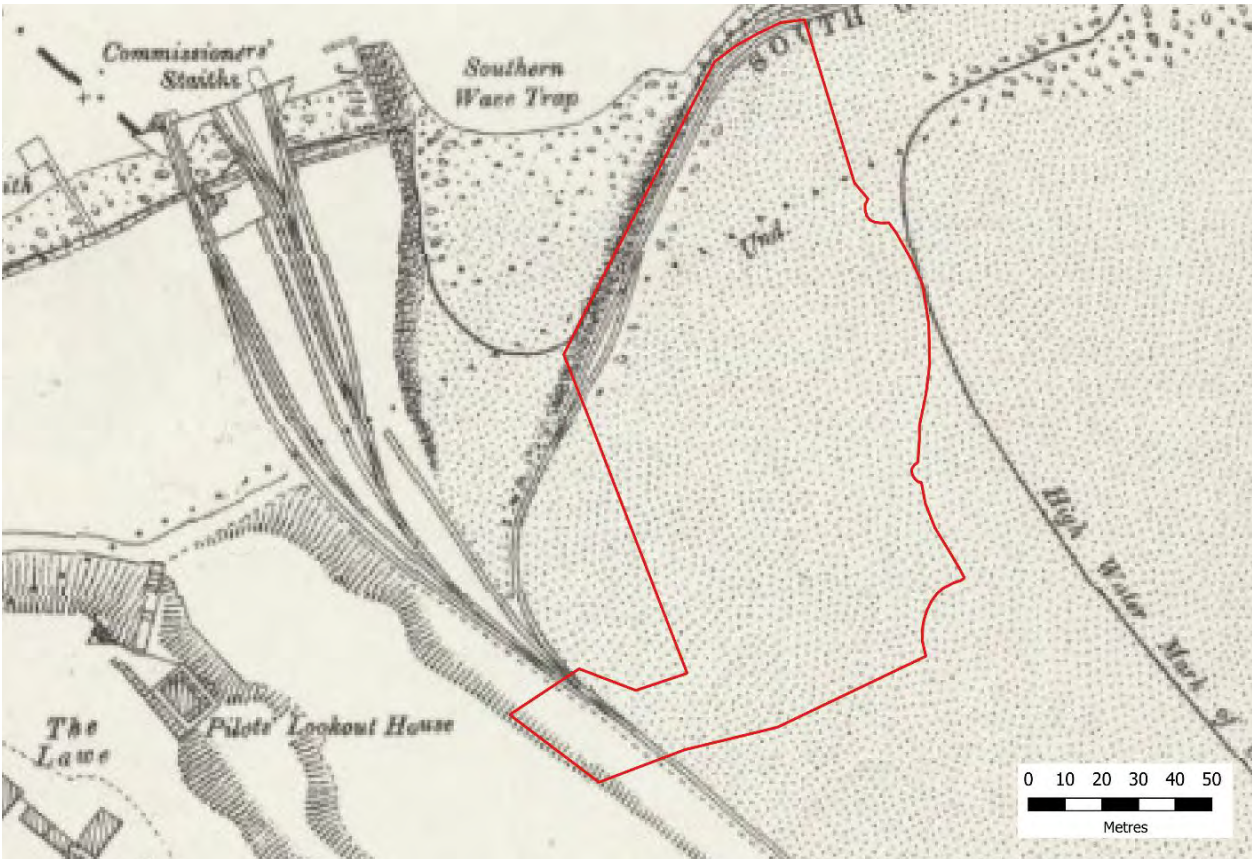


Plate 3 1896 Ordnance Survey Map



Plate 4 1947 Ordnance Survey Map



Plate 5 1955 Ordnance Survey Map



Plate 6 1972 Ordnance Survey Map



Plate 7 2001 Google Earth Imagery

4. Scoping

- 4.1. This section considers which heritage assets have the potential to be affected by the proposed development, through either direct physical change or a change to setting. To do so requires an understanding of the Site and its development, the nature of the proposed development, and how the proposed development might impact upon the significance of any identified heritage assets.
- 4.2. Designated Heritage Assets are presented in **Plate 1** and Historic Environment Record (HER) monument and event areas data is presented in **Plate 2** and Finds and Events on **Plate 3**. Data is presented on the figures within a 500m study area, incorporating data from beyond the study area within the assessment below where relevant.
- 4.3. The HER does not record any heritage assets within the Site nor its immediate vicinity, nor has the Site been subject to previous archaeological fieldwork.
- 4.4. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site proper. No designated heritage assets would therefore be physically impacted by the proposed development.
- 4.5. However, the following designated assets are located within a 500m study area of the Site: 1x Scheduled Monument: Roman fort, South Shields (NHLE: 1005910), located c.280m southwest of the Site, as well as the Grade II Listed North and South Marine Parks and Bents Park Registered Park and Garden (NHLE: 1001466), located c.110m west of the Site, the West Beacon (NHLE: 1232154), located c.232m west of the Site, East Beacon (NHLE: 1232155), located c.179m west of the Site, and The South Groyne (NHLE: 1232321), located c.165m northeast of the Site.
- 4.6. The only non-designated asset within the Site is a tank trap and site of a former pillbox (HER: 11713) which runs to the east of the Site's boundaries and formed part of the defences against tanks in the war era (see **Figure 2**); however, this will not be affected by any of the proposed works (owing to the nature of the asset and the fact the Site contributes nothing to its significance through setting, as well as the intervening topography) and is therefore scoped out of the assessment.
- 4.7. No other designated or non-designated heritage assets outwith the Site (within the study area) are likely to be affected by the proposed development owing to the nature of the proposed works, the fact that the majority are internal or to non-listed structures, and the existing character of the Site, which is such that it does not contribute to the significance of any heritage assets in the wider area. All other heritage assets were separated from the Site by either distance or banked and screened topography, and/or intervening built form which includes the Grade II Listed North and South Marine Parks and Bents Park Registered Park and Garden (NHLE: 1001466), which lies to the Site's west, adjacent yet upon high ground to the immediate west of River Drive and thus cannot be viewed or easily accessed from the vicinity of the Site and therefore will not be impacted.
- 4.8. During the Site visit, it was thus established that the only designated heritage assets within the setting of which the Site is located that may be impacted by the proposed development due to a change to setting and owing to proximity to the Site are as follows:
 - The South Groyne.
- 4.8.1. It is unlikely therefore that redevelopment of the Site would impact upon the significance of any further heritage assets as a result of a change to setting. As such, this should not preclude development within the Site in principle and any further heritage assets beyond the Site have been scoped out of this assessment.
- 4.9. **The Site does not form part of the setting of any other designated asset and therefore there would be no impact on their significance as a result of the proposed development.**

5. Proposals

- 5.1. Full details are included within the planning submission application pack as well as in the plans created by Tony Hills Studio Limited.
- 5.1.1. The proposals comprise the construction of a two-storey beach nursery and outdoor play area with first floor soft play and cafe, a subterranean gym, set within the extant mound central to the entire Site, in addition to various extensions to the main hotel including a sun lounge to the south façade, a conference extension to the eastern terrace and a northern extension comprising a restaurant featuring a green living roof and paved roof terrace. The existing cabins to the west of the Site are also to be refurbished as seating booths.
- 5.1.2. The design of the beach nursery has been compiled to sit harmoniously with the surrounding landscape and dunes and therefore feature green living walls and integrated solar PVs to the roof and lantern atop. Similarly, the gym has been designed subterranean so to appear indistinguishable from the central mound, and with glazed entrance and surrounding wildflower and grass lawns. As such, it will be sited virtually out of sight in kinetic views when entering the Site from the southwest (as the proposed nursery will be sited in the existing mound though this will be increased in height and therefore will likely block any intervisibility between the hotel and Groyne) and thus minimising any impact to the nearby assets. The rest of the Site therefore will be constructed utilising sympathetic materials in-keeping with those of the existing hotel; additionally, the fenestration design of the proposed development has been directly influenced by extant windows.
- 5.2. The intention behind the proposed plans will enable the Site to fulfil its optimum use whilst also ensuring the internal layout is oriented to make the most efficient use of the plot.
- 5.3. The proposals seek to minimise any impact on the existing character and appearance of the nearby heritage assets, and be in keeping with the design of the surrounding development.
- 5.4. The rationale for the works is to enable a viable and sensitive use of the plot, including providing new opportunities to enable the long-term continued utilisation of the Site.

6. Statement of Significance

- 6.1. In line with the requirements of the NPPF, this section of the report will set out the significance of any identified heritage assets, and the contribution that setting, and the Site, makes to its significance, if any. Particular regard is given to regional and national listing selection guidance, regional character statements, and relevant assessment guidance.
- 6.2. The following assessment is thus proportionate, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 207, with the significance of any identified heritage assets and the likely impact of the proposed development. In *Statements of Heritage Significance*, Historic England (2019: 11) confirm that it is

important that the level of detail given in a statement of heritage significance is proportionate to the impact of the proposal', and that 'an analysis of the setting of the heritage asset is only needed where changes to the setting by the proposal would affect the significance of the heritage asset or how that significance is appreciated.

- 6.3. The heritage interests pertaining to the assets identified above, and the contribution of those interests to the assets' significance, are described below.

6.4. The South Groyne

- 6.5. At its closest point, the Site is located 165m to the northeast of the asset.

Historical Background and Description

- 6.6. Also known as the Herd Groyne, the structure was constructed between 1861 and 1867, as evidenced by two plans prepared by the Tyne Improvement Commissioners c.1882. Newcastle Trinity House erected the Iron Lighthouse on the groyne during this period. The 1867 plan depicts the groyne as a straight structure; however, by 1883 the Commissioners had begun forming a southern wave trap at its western end, giving rise to its present cranked form. These alterations were undertaken as part of the wider programme of works associated with the construction of the South Pier, carried out between 1854 and 1895. The outer faces of the groyne are constructed of large, roughly dressed stone, while the upper surface has since been modified and now comprises a mixture of concrete slabs, asphalt, and related materials.
- 6.7. The lighthouse has featured on Barbour clothing since the local company - whose headquarters are still in South Shields - issued its first clothing catalogue in 1908.

Significance

- 6.8. As a Grade II Listed Building, The South Groyne is considered to be a designated heritage asset of less than the highest level of significance, as defined by the NPPF.
- 6.9. The Herd or South Groyne is one of the North East's most recognised and unique landmarks. Erected by Newcastle Trinity House during the later 19th century, the lighthouse formed an integral component of the extensive improvement works undertaken by the Tyne Improvement Commissioners to stabilise the river mouth and facilitate safe navigation for increasing volumes of maritime traffic.
- 6.10. Historically, the lighthouse illustrates the concerted efforts to address long-standing navigational hazards at the mouth of the Tyne, where shifting sands, strong currents, and exposure to North Sea conditions posed significant risks to shipping. Its construction on the South Groyne reflects the mid-Victorian emphasis on coastal engineering solutions and the close relationship between harbour infrastructure and aids to navigation. The lighthouse is thus emblematic of the technological and administrative responses to industrial expansion during the 19th century. In this historic location, it would clearly have had some local dominance, being such a prominent landmark on the coast but today, the area surrounding it, along the South Groyne has been paved to lead an observer's gaze in two directions, i.e. to and from the coastline.
- 6.11. Evidentially, the structure retains clear physical and contextual links to the phased construction of the South Pier and associated groynes between 1854 and 1895. The surviving masonry fabric of the Groyne, together with the lighthouse superstructure, provides tangible evidence of Victorian marine engineering practice, materials, and workmanship. The evolved form of the Groyne, including its cranked plan, further illustrates adaptive responses to coastal processes and wave action over time.
- 6.12. Aesthetically and communally, the South Groyne Lighthouse has become a prominent landmark within the coastal townscape, widely recognised as a symbol of South Shields and the River Tyne. Its enduring visibility, both from land and sea, has fostered a strong cultural and associative value, contributing to local identity and collective memory. As such, the lighthouse possesses significance not

only as a functional navigational aid but also as a powerful reminder of the region's maritime heritage and historic relationship with the sea.

- 6.13. Setting contributes somewhat to the heritage significance of the asset, but to a much lesser degree than its fabric. The building was clearly Listed for its architectural, historical and communal interest, as detailed in its List description, which specifies materials and shape. The structure has historic interest as an altered marine structure with origins in the Victorian era and thereby serving that community for centuries hence its communal value. It has occupied the site upon which it is located acting as a nucleus of the associated and surrounding area and coast since foundation, thereby holding a functional association with the adjacent landscape.
- 6.14. However, the wider setting of the asset has experienced notable change since its construction, with the erection of Little Haven Hotel itself, the South Shields Sailing Club and the extensive residencies around River Drive, not to mention the increasing road traffic activity caused by the latter.
- 6.15. The structure's setting is also largely confined to the immediate vicinity of the asset – greatest to the south pier and banking below – from which its architectural and historic illustrative interest can be appreciated, and the surviving coast to which it is associated.
- 6.16. With regards to its current experience, it is clearly best appreciated in views looking east along the South Groyne from Harbour View or even North Marine Park.
- 6.17. The Site is co-visible with the asset, but not in the key views mentioned above. Rather, views are possible looking from the side of the asset to its rear.
- 6.18. There are some views to the asset from the Site and vice versa, notably as it situated down the northeastern coast, along the South Groyne, but these are largely from the rear of the hotel site and only in some peripheral or oblique views, nor is there or as there been any functional associations between the asset and the Site.
- 6.19. As a 1990s hotel, the Site does not better reveal the significance of the asset and does not contribute to the heritage significance of the asset through setting.
- 6.20. Indeed, being part of the wider landscape around an asset does not automatically engender a contribution to a heritage asset's significance through setting. An area must contribute to the experience and understanding of an asset in a way that contributes to its heritage significance.
- 6.21. Regardless, though it forms part of the historic rural surrounds of the lighthouse with which it has some though very limited intervisibility, the land within the Site is considered to make no contribution overall to the lighthouse's heritage significance as part of its wider setting.
- 6.22. It is therefore important to note that an assessment, as supported by case law, is clear pertaining to changes to an asset: harm only occurs when the relationship a site has with an asset is more than remote and ephemeral and *'which in some way bears on one's experience of the listed building in its surrounding landscape or townscape'*.²

² Catesby Estates Ltd v. Steer, EWCA Civ 1697, 2018.

7. Impact Assessment

- 7.1. The proposed scheme presents an appropriate approach to preserving and enhancing the existing nearby assets, and responds positively to the proposed Site's setting.
- 7.2. **The South Groyne**
- 7.3. The proposed development will not harm the fabric of the asset, from where it derives most of its significance, or the enveloping coastal bank and high ground of the asset, from where it is best appreciated.
- 7.4. Regardless, the current boundary planting along the east of the Site and the intervening dunes and grass, and the topography of the coast here largely screen the structure from much of the Site but particularly the hotel's principal elevation which lies to the south/southwest – there is thus no real intervisibility (just glimpsed/oblique) between the asset and Site here. There is only intervisibility from the eastern elevation and, although this is to be extended with a restaurant, there will be no impact on the significance of the Groyne through this change to setting as there is no functional or historical association or connection remaining between the Site and the asset, nor will the extension impact the wider setting as a result of the development by anything more than a minor visual change to this intervisibility. However, views between the asset and the Site are not significant, nor are they key views. The immediate setting of the heritage asset will thus be unaffected by the proposed development as the way that the asset is experienced will remain unchanged.
- 7.5. Furthermore, even if glimpsed views are possible of the development works from the higher ridges of the asset over the current intervening coastal landscape, which lies between the lighthouse and Site, there is no evidence to suggest that such views from/to either were historically important.
- 7.6. The development of the Little Haven Hotel will not affect the heritage significance of the lighthouse through setting, as it makes no contribution to the significance of the asset through setting.
- 7.7. The proposed built form will be co-visible with the lighthouse in non-key views northeast from the principal southern elevation of the hotel, yet the Site is appreciably set back from the immediate setting of the asset. The ability to see the proposed development in conjunction with the structure will not undermine the appreciation of the asset's significance, however. Indeed, the Groyne is not intervisible from the majority of the southern principal façade of the hotel though glimpsed views are apparent from the eastern corner here of the eastern grounds of the hotel. Moreover, the Groyne's designed views are in other directions (largely north/east), and it is not considered to be sensitive to built form at such a distance as the hotel is.
- 7.8. Being part of the wider landscape around an asset does not automatically engender a contribution to a heritage asset's significance. An area must contribute to the experience and understanding of an asset in a way that contributes to its heritage significance. Thus, the vast majority of the Site, including those areas which will experience the greatest change (i.e. the eastern elevation of the Site) make no contribution to the heritage significance of the aforementioned asset. The significance embodied in the asset will remain intact.
- 7.9. Change to the setting of a designated heritage asset can result in harm to its significance or an appreciation of that significance, but only where that element of setting can be demonstrated to enhance significance in the first place. Change is the process through which the historic environment occurs. Change to setting in and of itself does not definitively harm significance, with much change having a neutral effect. The judgment should be whether the proposed development would affect the significance of the asset. Views out from the asset that neither contribute to significance nor allow appreciation of significance are a matter of amenity rather than of setting. The proposed development would not be readily experienced in conjunction with the asset.
- 7.10. Affecting a view of a designated heritage asset also does not, in and of itself, affect its significance. Visual impact does not necessarily equate with heritage harm.
- 7.11. A recent example with regards to the extent of harm where a development only affects the setting of a designated heritage asset, is as follows:

*In cases where the impact is on the setting of a designated heritage asset, it is **only the significance that asset derives from its setting that is affected**. All the significance embodied in the asset itself would remain intact. In such a case, unless the asset concerned **derives a major proportion of its significance from its setting**, then it is very difficult to see*

*how an impact on its setting can advance a long way along the scale towards substantial harm to significance.*³ (Own emphasis)

- 7.12. No views that affect the Groyne's significance would thus be affected. Its immediate setting could reasonably be described as open yet secluded, and the proposed development will not change this.
- 7.13. Overall, the proposed development would result in no harm to the Grade II Listed South Groyne, through a change to its setting.

³ Appeal Reference APP/H5390/V/21/3277137 (dated 4 July 2022), - Core Document K.15., c.f. Paragraph 13.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. The assessment provided above has concluded that the proposed development would not result in any impact to the setting of the Grade II Listed South Groyne.
- 8.2. Though the Site falls within the wider setting of the lighthouse, the contribution the Site makes to its significance is nil. Neither does the Site contribute towards an understanding of the asset's remaining historical and architectural interest, within which its significance is primarily vested.
- 8.3. Full reasoning for the contribution that the Site makes to this significance has been provided to justify the findings, based on an objective understanding of where the asset's significance lies, where and how it is sited within its setting, and how this setting has evolved over time. In my assessment, the category of harm to the lighthouse will be nil within the meaning in paragraph 215 of the NPPF.
- 8.4. As such, future development is anticipated to conform with the relevant provisions of the NPPF (2024), the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the LPA's Local Plan policies.
- 8.5. **Considering all the elements therefore, the overall impact of the proposed development on the significance of the aforementioned heritage assets is considered to be nil.**
- 8.6. The proposed development thus protects and enhances the historic environment, one of the key contributory indicators of sustainable development as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024). There is thus a presumption in favour of development which actively preserves or enhances the setting of a listed building.
- 8.7. The Scheme therefore complies with the relevant heritage planning policies as set out within the NPPF (2024) and under relevant policies within the South Tyneside Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (June 2007) including Policy EA1 Local Character and Distinctiveness and EA2 The Coastal Zone as well as South Tyneside Local Development Framework: Development Management Policies (December 2011) Policy DM6 Heritage Assets and Archaeology.

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10. Site Photographs



Photo 1 West (Lawe) Beacon



Photo 2 Roman Fort, South Shields, sited to west of Site



Photo 3 View from North Marine Park northeast towards Site



Photo 4 Southern principal elevation of Site looking east towards South Groyne



Photo 5 Looking southeast from centre of mound within hotel car park



Photo 6 Looking northeast from southwest of Site showing hotel southern elevation



Photo 7 Looking northeast again from north elevation of Site towards South Groyne



Photo 8 Looking northeast from car park to north of Site showing hotel and glimpsed view of Groyne



Photo 9 Looking north along coastal path with eastern elevation just in shot and Groyne to the east



Photo 10 Looking directly north from coastal pathway adjacent to Site's eastern elevation



Photo 11 Looking east towards the Groyne from coastal pathway to Site's east



Photo 12 Eastern elevation of Site



Photo 13 Looking northwest up path leading to South Groyne



Photo 14 Looking southwest along adjacent pathway and gardens to hotel's east



Photo 15 Looking southeast



Photo 16 Looking north showing hotel site with central mound



Photo 17 Looking south over central mound and towards entrance



Photo 18 Entrance from hotel into restaurant (east)



Photo 19 Looking northeast from entrance to restaurant showing service areas



Photo 20 Looking north from hotel restaurant



Photo 21 Looking east from entrance to hotel restaurant



Photo 22 Looking northwest towards cabins