

M10. Other Strategic and development management policies

The two files on the Local Examination page [PD02 Publication Representations \(Green Michael\)](#) need to be 'opened', not simply viewed on the page, to access LINKS within each document. Both files are relevant to M10. They deal with *Green Wedges, Local Green Space, Historic Environment and Urban Parklands*

Communication with Council and representations at Regulation 19, were made on behalf of 'Parkland Heritage Network.' ([Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#) (Appendix D-H Ethnographic Study Part 6 found in Green Space Submission2020' p49)

Introduction

It is not possible to address the Inspector's questions without reference to:

- (i) Composition of Heritage Network. (ii) Involvement of the community*
- (iii) 010 and Blackwell Parkland Policies Map (v) Heritage Impact Assessment.*

Heritage Network: Composition

- Regional Surveyor/property valuer: Local Authority experience
- Local Diocese/lay Reader.
- Independent journalist/author. Former BBC correspondent/investigative journalist.
- 5th Baronet and QC – Blackwell Grange Havelock-Allans. Patron of the Golf Club
- Former Local Councillor
- Former Teacher (Natural Sciences)
- Former Courts' Social Worker
- Local Paramedic
- Local Harriers Youth Coach/International athlete
- Parish Priest
- Retired Engineer/respected community member
- Australian descendants of the Allans of Blackwell Grange
- Descendants of Local Historian William Hylton Longstaffe
- Members of Local Naturalists' Field Club + retired Medical Officer
- Ex-pat conservationist & Director of UN-supported Ethical Investment.

- Ex-pat barrister/Deputy District Judge.
- Business Support Consultant IT /Admin.
- Retired Medical Consultants x 2 . GP/Psychiatrist
- Construction Company project managers
- Member(s) Local and National Friends of the Earth Group
- Local Arts Group Co-ordinator
- Local/National Green Party Members.
- Movie maker
- North East Historical researcher.
- Former LEA Officer
- Mentor/Guide (Theology Centre)
- Woodland Trust Volunteer Warden & Natural Sciences researcher.
- Environmentalist & Community Campaigner (s)
- Former Local Authority Project Officer: experience of land transfer and finance.

Aims and Purpose

- * To see the Blackwell Parkland and curtilage securely protected for future generations. [*Town House Resolution - 2018*']
- * To see a partnership of Community and Local Authority aiming for a sensitive restoration plan. [*Green Space Submission2020*': [SD29 Heritage Impact Assessment Update \(2020\)](#)]
- * To be a voice for individuals, campaign groups and interest groups opposing development on the Historic Parkland. [*DBC Consultations 2015, 2018, 2020*].

Catalyst and Wake up Call

February 2018 saw the devastation of meadows, ponds and habitats, adjacent to the Blackwell Parkland, and the loss of over 200 trees to developers within the space of a week or so. (Referred to as 010).

<https://vimeo.com/262078375>

The shock and protest, spread very quickly from neighbourhood, through the Ward, the community, and the whole town.

Action began with the realisation that the Parkland was next, through plans revealed by the Council in 2015. Interest groups became involved, the *Ethnographic Study* was born.

Note. At this point, site 403 was regarded as part of the Parkland.

Growth of the Heritage Network **Through Ethnographic Study:**

The *Blackwell Parkland Network Campaign* developed as an extensive Ethnographic Study.

- The aim of Ethnography is to get “*under the skin*” of a problem and ‘*associated issues*’, to achieve deeper understanding of all issues and *design a better solution*.
- Ethnography is a qualitative *method*. Researchers observe/interact with a study’s participants in their real-life environment.
- Qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data (text, video, audio) understanding concepts, opinions, experiences, leading to insights, generating *new ideas*.

“As co-authors we were not spearheading a new campaign, but designing a solution. Campaigns were launched from 2013 onwards, by others, when plans to sell the Blackwell Meadows and the Historic Parkland were revealed. It was simply a drawing together of the facts, with the expectation that there would be this true understanding, designing a better and justified solution.” (page 36 Local ‘Green Space Designation’ Submission 2020)

The ‘*better solution*’ did emerge as a resolution in 2 parts: (*Local Green Space Submission 2020 pp16,33 [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#)*)

Part (i) of the resolution achieved:(*“Town House Resolution”*)

Amendment of draft Local Plan by the removal of any housing allocation from the main body of the Blackwell Parkland (Cabinet and Full Council, February 2020.)

Part (ii) of the resolution yet to be achieved.: *The protection of the Parkland by designation as ‘Local Green Space ‘/‘Green Wedge’/‘Field-in-Trust’/‘Town Green’*

Incorporated Individuals, Campaign and Interest Groups.

The Blackwell Action Group "Say No" 2012-present (page 18 Part 5. Ethnographic Study "One Thirds Two Thirds." 07.01.19) [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#)

#Lovedarlotrees & lovedarlotrees-movement February 2018 (Appendix 8 Part 5. Ethnographic Study. "One Thirds Two Thirds." 07.01.19)

Blackwell Parklands Association 2013-2018 (Appendix 7 Part 5. Ethnographic Study. "One Thirds Two Thirds." 07.01.19)

Community Response

- . 1300 signature petition 2015 (*Part 1 Study "Prior to the Draft Local Plan" p 9*)
- . 175 responses giving over 1000 individual comments following the initial Local Authority information day 2015 (*page 46 Local Green Space Designation Submission Summer 2020. Appendix III*) [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#)
- . 280 household community survey 2018 (*Part 1 Study "Prior to the Draft Local Plan". Appendix 3 & 5, and Part 3 of Study "Compilation and Update" Appendix 'K p.99'*)
- . 200+ comments and letters: Local Press
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MniIAhoEyd2V7B64xqjxW37snLqSdAE/_view?usp=sharing (*Part 4 Study "Scrapbook: the Happenings" pp29-61*)
- . 89 comments on the Draft Local Plan Portal June/August 2018 (*page 45 Local Green Space Designation Submission 2020. Appendix II*) [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#)
- . 350+ signed "*Protection Resolutions*" [*Paper Copies*] and over 1000 on-line

Recognition

Views have been presented by *Network Members* through:

- Lobbying and meetings with Officers and Elected Members
- Scrutiny Committee; Cabinet Meetings; Council Meetings
- Hard copies / electronic documents held by Elected Members
- Representation at Regulation 19 level.
- Submission as a Local Green Space for the Blackwell Parkland

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/17783164.study-sparks-move-preserve-historic-darlington-parkland/?fbclid=IwAR38FfteMBqdmv6wn-dlafzACG8njlPb0UwUN6DQkH1JSRsBwrZ7Z4vKKA>

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/local/darlington/18014127.mayor-heralds-work-historic-parkland-preservation-group/>

M10. Other Strategic and development management policies

Much of our response to Matter 10 questions refers to *process, decision making and the community's experience* relating to Site 010, Site 403 and the Blackwell Parkland. (*Policies MAP 9: Blackwell/Skerne Park Green Wedge*)

Confusion over process, contributed to the '*dismay, outcry and wake-up call*' referred to earlier, and detailed in *Green Space Submission: [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#) Appendix VI "Part 1 Ethnographic Study pp11-24"*

The consultation portal of 2018 and 2020 and representation at Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council has been a successful and essential part of the process, leading to modifications to the draft Local Plan (*Cabinet and Full Council February 2020*).

This process removed proposals for development within the original curtilage of the Blackwell Parkland and its former orchards.

However decisions covering *Local Green Space, Wildlife Sites, Green Wedges and Heritage Sites* seem less clear ([ENV1-ENV6](#))

To illustrate:

- (i) **Council Response PQ26:** *"There have been two errors in plotting local wildlife sites.*

The one overlapping site 403 should be amended to omit the area of the proposed housing allocation. The area of the wildlife site covered by housing commitment Site 010 (Blackwell Grange West) should also be omitted. Appropriate changes to the Policies Map will be made."

"The site (403) is not being proposed as a local green space although a submission was made for it's consideration at Regulation 19 stage."

- (ii) **Main Issues Regulation 19 Comments** Page 68:Mr Michael Green (APPENDIX C of Main Local Plan) **Recorded Summary:** *"The policy in Appendix 'C' Darlington's Heritage Assets is considered not to be effective or justified and therefore 'unsound' as it omits to list the Historic Parkland and the Blackwell Grange as a 'significant heritage asset'.*

Officer Response: *'Blackwell Grange is a Listed Building. Appendix C provides a link to a full list of listed buildings in Darlington Borough on the Council's website. There are a large number of listed buildings so this approach was considered more effective and also allows for the list to be updated more easily.'*

No reference to the Parkland, and processes leading to the response unclear. [SD65 Blackwell Grange Park Statement of Significance](#) SD65 clearly evidences this historic value, and Table C.1 *'Criteria for assessing non-designated heritage assets'* listing (p156), is a future aim of the Council,

Historic environment (*policies ENV1:ENV2*)

Q10.1. Subject to the Council's proposed modifications, would policy ENV1 provide an unambiguous approach so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to a development proposal that affects the historic environment when read alongside relevant parts of the NPPF, PPG and the statutory tests?

'Parkland Heritage' response:

- It would be useful if more measurable *objective* criteria, as in Table C.1 *"Criteria for assessing non-designated heritage assets"* p156 Local Plan formed part of the process alongside existing policy. The production of a local list remains the *'goal of the Council'*.

"If the potential asset meets two or more of the criteria set out in the table then it should be considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset."
(Table C.1 *Criteria for assessing non-designated heritage assets* p156 Local Plan)

- "The Council is looking at options to set up an interactive way for people to nominate local heritage as well as comment on those put forward by the Council." [Assessment of Heritage Significance 9.1.29](#)

'Parkland Heritage' response: What would be the process for creating this list? A collaborative approach with *local interest groups* eg Historical Society/Wildlife Trust, would ensure avoiding the outcry referred to earlier. Communities would have a greater feeling of a *'common stake'* in the planning process (*Blake&Mouton Managerial Grid.1960*)

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/16142958.chris-mcewan-calls-proactive-discussions-following-blackwell-tree-row/>

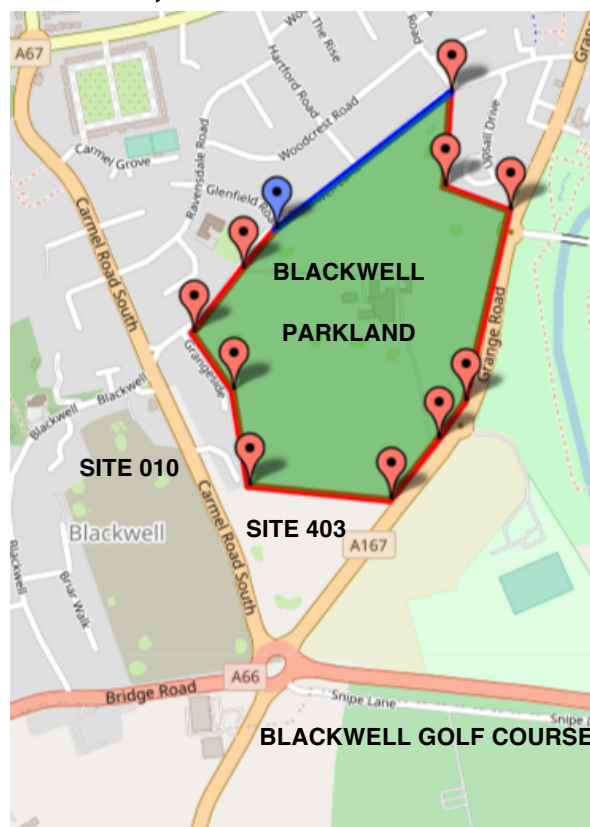
Importance of Local List and Non-designated Heritage Assets (Appendix C p156).

Undervaluing the Blackwell Parkland:

Ambiguity can be the hallmark of policy interpretation. Establishing the list as in Table C1 as part of the process, could safeguard against the risk of development on potentially important heritage sites through ‘*undervalued classification*’ viz:

- *Impoverished description* of the “Bland’s Corner Triangle.” [site 403 - Blackwell Grange East] ‘*The site is located to the south of the main urban area of the Borough and is an area of open space (disused golf course)*’ Appendix B p148 Local Plan.

Sites 010, 403 and Blackwell Parkland



SD29 Heritage Impact Assessment Update (2020): As an example of this ambiguity, SD29 holds accurate historic details (pp14-20) but confusing and inaccurate introduction to the Grange and Parkland (p12) which

may impact the Inspector's comment for **ENV6** and the submission for Green Space designation of the Parkland.

Accurate records and descriptions of Blackwell and Parkland include Bouldon Book 1183; Hatfield's Survey; 1343-81; Appendix 'A' Chronology <https://www.aenvironment.co.uk/download/app-a-blackwell-grange-chronology/>

Finally, in response to Q10.1 it is not possible for decisions to be made through **ENV1** only, without having regard the spirit of the **Policy ENV3[C]**

"Retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban and rural parklands...", and core policy **SH1** with particular reference to *environment, heritage and mitigation*:

"Failure to respect the scale and function of places can lead to inappropriate development and loss of environmental quality and local character."

To ensure "potential adverse impacts of development are mitigated."

(Development) "Where this does not prejudice heritage or nature conservation, or impinge on land protected for recreational purposes."

Core policySH1

Green wedges (policyENV3)

Q10.3.

Inspector comment: Green wedges (policy ENV3) The Council's response to PQ62 clarifies that the three "green wedges" of Cocker Beck/Mowden, Blackwell/Skerne Park, and Haughton/Red Hall referred to in policy ENV3(A)(2) are designated on the policies map.

'Parkland Heritage' response.

- *What are the criteria?*
- *What is the process at Officer level?*
- *Elected Member level?*

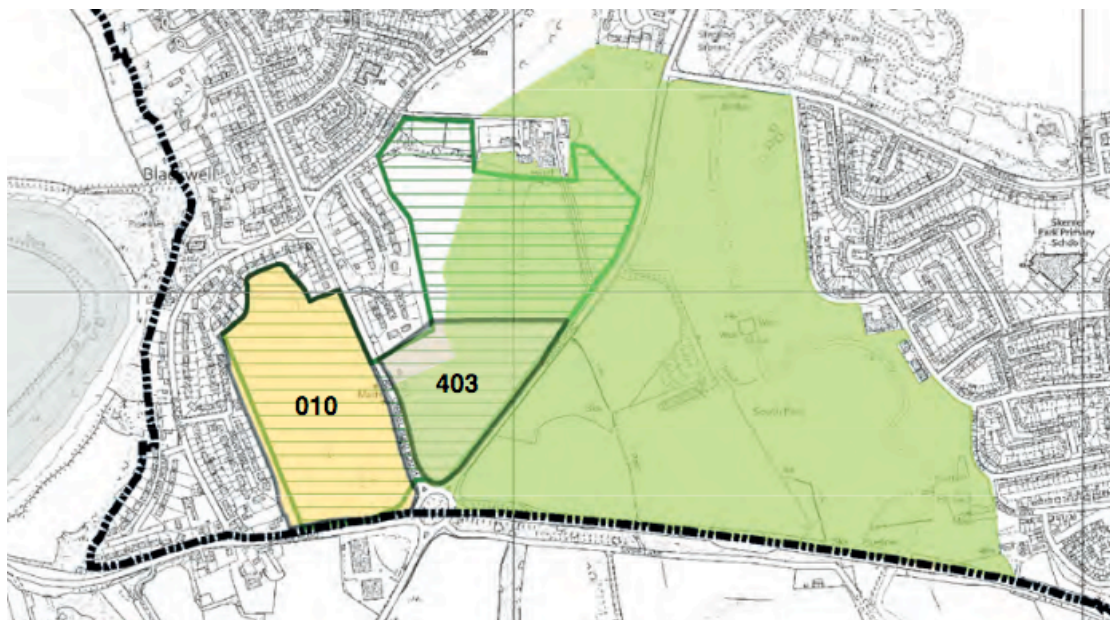
Q10.3. Is policy **ENV3(A)(2)**, which seeks to retain the openness and green infrastructure functions of the green wedges of Cocker Beck/Mowden, Blackwell/Skerne Park, and Haughton/Red Hall by restricting development to that which meets criteria (i) to (v), justified?

Parkland Heritage' response. *In the case of Blackwell/Skerne Park, points (i) to (v) are not sufficiently robust to protect the green wedge.*

viz:

- In 2018 Site 010, adjacent to the Green Wedge of Blackwell/Skerne Park, was lost to developers.*
- It had 'full protection/mitigation' for species, 2 ponds 200+ trees and Local Authority ecologist in order to 'enhance biodiversity, and protect habitats and species.'*
- The outcome was unsatisfactory. ([Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#) Green Space Submission. Appendix VI Part 1 Ethnographic Study. Pages 11-15)*

<https://vimeo.com/262078375>



Policies MAP 9 Blackwell/Skerne Park Green Wedge, Wildlife Sites
Urban and rural parklands (**policyENV3**)

The Council's response to PQ62 proposes changes to the policies map to indicate the "urban and rural parklands" referred to in policy ENV3(C)

Q10.9. Is policy **ENV3(C)** relating to the specified urban and rural parklands justified? If so, should the policies map be changed to define those routes as proposed by the Council?

Council : "The Green wedges are already included on the Policies map so can be viewed on these. Urban and rural parklands will be added to the Policies map and will be provided as soon as this has been completed."

'Parkland Heritage' : Yes: modification to Policies Map on completion, Indicating *Urban Parklands* as well as *Green Wedges* :

ENV3C) 'Retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban and rural parklands: South Park, North Lodge Park, West Cemetery, **Blackwell Grange**, Rockcliffe Park, MiddletonHall, Walworth Castle, Redworth Hall, Hall Garth, Newbus Grange and Neasham Hall.'

Loss of existing open space (policyENV4)

Q10.10. Subject to the Council's proposed modification, is policy **ENV4** consistent with national policy? Is it necessary to identify other sites on the policies map in addition to those already included or that the Council proposes to add so that the geographical areas to which the policy will apply are defined?

Parkland Heritage' response: Identify, yes. See Policies Map 9 page 10. Blackwell Parkland: Incomplete 'infilling' of the Green Wedge. This may permit development, continuing erosion of Blackwell's green areas. (M4 response site 403)

Modification required: Update Policies Map 9 to complete infilling of Green Wedge north of the Parkland along the Blackwell Lane curtilage

<https://www.flipsnack.com/5A8DDEEEFB5/blackwell-parkland-timeline/full-view.html>

Local Green Space (*policy ENV6*)

Q10.12 Subject to the Council's proposed modification, is the wording of policy *ENV6* consistent with national policy?

'Parkland Heritage' response: [SD28 Local Green Space Designation Report January 2020 Update](#) This 2020 update, including proposed modifications appears to be consistent with National Policy and organisations 'Open Spaces Society' and 'Fields in Trust'

Question: Is the designation of each of the ten sites listed in [Table9:1](#) as Local Green Space consistent with national policy and justified?

'Parkland Heritage' perceptions:

Par 9.5.6 and Assessment Methodology *SD28*, coupled with some flexibility is of particular value for those sites not designated.

Criteria, Flexibility. Process and Appeal.

- *Assessment Methodology in SD28 offers flexibility for the Council when making a decision: "Scope out sites with extant planning permission/allocations/proposed allocations unless the proposed development is no longer capable of being implemented or the approved development would be compatible with the Local Green Space designation."*
- [POLICY:ENV6:Paragraph9.5.6](#) also offers this flexibility:
"Whilst the Local Plan does not designate any Local Green Spaces that currently fall within sites allocated for development in the plan, future reviews of the Local Plan will enable these areas to be reconsidered once there is more certainty over the layout of proposed development on these sites and any necessary compensatory measures resulting from the planning application process."
- There is further opportunity within the spirit of NPPF (Revised February 2019):
para-a plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change *p8NPPF*

para-d) be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, p25NPPF

The Inspector's comment for ENV6 notes: *"a number of sites were assessed for designation."*

'Parkland Heritage' response:

What is the assessment process for the final decision?

Involvement of Cabinet Portfolio Elected Members?

Role of Planning Committee?

Route for appeal?

**Submission for designation as 'Local Green Space' 2020
Blackwell Parkland (Within Blackwell/Skerne Park Green Wedge)**

Blackwell Parkland was not on this list *'due to timing'* and awaits designation. There have been significant changes to the Local Plan throughout the consultation process regarding mitigation and Site 403.

'Flexibility' is the key, now that there *"is more certainty over the layout of proposed development."* (Cabinet&Full Council 2020)

ie: *"Scope out sites with extant planning permission/allocations/proposed allocations unless the proposed development is no longer capable of being implemented". Viz:*

- (i) Significant changes to proposed allocations are outlined in "Local Green Space-Reduced (Submission)" on [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#) 'proposed allocation removed'. (page 16 'Cabinet and Full Council February 2020. Heritage Assets')
- (ii) Below we refer to main Issues, implementing **PolicyENV3(C)** : *Local Landscape Character (Strategic Policy):*

*"Retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban and rural parklands at South Park, North Lodge Park, West Cemetery, **Blackwell Grange**, Rockcliffe Park, Middleton Hall, Walworth Castle, Redworth Hall, Hall Garth, Newbus Grange, Neasham Hall"*

Main Issues Regulation 19 Comments

(11th March Page 53: Mr Michael Green DBLPPS5: Policy ENV6)

- Recorded Summary : “*Request that Blackwell Parkland be designated a Local Green Space.*”
- Officer Response. “*A supporting submission has been made and this will be assessed prior to the relevant hearing sessions.*”

It is *reasonable and just* for the Blackwell Parkland to be designated as Local Green Space by (a) having due regard for ‘*flexibility*’ when considering the ‘*timing element*’ and (b) taking into account *delays*, the lengthy process for Community and Council through lobbying, Regulation19 consultation, Cabinet and Full Council, and applying:

(i) NPPF 2019 criteria (*para99-101.p29*) and [SD28 Local Green Space Designation Report January 2020 Update](#) which the submission fulfills.

(ii) *Assessment 6 SD28*: the community rôle of ‘*Parkland Heritage Network*’:

“Was it instigated by the community or parish council? Is there a petition? Are signatures from local people? Does the evidence show that a large proportion of the community use or value the site?”

(Appendix 7 page 64 *Ethnographic Study -Part 5* on [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#) and *Green Space Submission p10,28*)

(iii) *Appendix B* Housing and Employment Allocation Statements *Blackwell Grange East*: Issues and Requirements.

General

In order to justify the designation process, at final assessment stage or appeal, it would be *transparent and beneficial* to all, if local interest groups had involvement and inclusion in the ‘*common stake*’. (*Part 1 Ethnographic Study p16 para3-6, pp38-39 located ‘Green Space Submission’ Appendix VI: [Green Michael DBLPPS5, 16, 53](#) (Blake and Moulton Managerial Grid.1960-91)*)