

Dunston

The earliest recorded evidence of human activity at Dunston is a Roman brooch mould (HER 1504) found in 1973. There is no recorded evidence from earlier or indeed medieval periods, although this may well be due to the lack of fieldwork in this area, as well as because of industrialisation and urbanisation in the modern period. Dunston was a small farming settlement where small-scale coal working had been carried out for centuries until its location close to the river led to the development of large-scale coal mining there in the 17th century. At Dunston Hill are the remains of an Elizabethan colliery, now a Scheduled monument of recognised national importance (HER 1666). The well preserved remains of the wagonway cuttings and embankments are amongst the finest examples of pre-1720 railway engineering in the country. Later, mining in Dunston centred on the Team and Norwood Collieries (HER 3732 and 3734), and Dunston Colliery (HER 6166). During the 19th and 20th centuries Dunston became a largely industrial area including colour and chemical works (HER 3476), patent nail works (HER 3477), firebrick works (HER 3475-8), engine works (HER 6162), Crowley's ironworks (HER 5988) and sawmills (HER 6163). Dunston Staiths (HER 1001), completed in 1893, was one of the river Tyne's major staithes for the transhipment of coal and other goods – it is now recognised as a structure of national importance and protected as a Scheduled Monument. As a result of its industrial development it also grew as a residential area (HER 1635), incorporating a variety of public buildings and amenities, including churches and chapels (HER 6168, 6167), schools (HER 6169) and a transport infrastructure (HER 3447). Later important industrial activities at Dunston included the Norwood Cokeworks, Soap works and a Power Station (HER 1625) which operated between 1931 and 1981. The cokeworks (HER 5136) were built in 1912, and upon completion were producing 225,000 tons of coke per year. They finally closed in 1980 and in 1990 the site was used as part of the Gateshead Garden Festival. The soap works on Colliery Road were built between 1911-1914 and increased in scale by a second phase of building in the 1970s. These buildings are the last, early reinforced concrete buildings to survive along the River Tyne; they were also the first major manufacturing premises of the Co-operative Wholesale Society outside the Manchester area. Modern sites of importance to the local cultural heritage include World War Two pill boxes (HER 1832 and 5347) and a road block site (HER 5808).