

Kenton

The discovery of some fifty Neolithic flints in 1978 (HER 4609) is the earliest recorded evidence for prehistoric human activity at Kenton. The first historic reference to Kenton is contained in a mid 12th century document stating that William of Newham gave Kenton (HER 1345) to his daughter. It was a member of the barony of Whalton, with six 6 taxpayers in 1296. The original shape of the hamlet is uncertain, but it was perhaps T-shaped, with a two-row layout at right-angles to another running southwards to the Town Moor. Other references to medieval Kenton include a late 13th century windmill (HER 1346), a manor house (HER 1348) and a mid 14th century quarry which apparently remained in use until the mid-20th century (HER 1347) – Kenton Quarry (HER 4251), another early quarry site supplied material for the buildings of Grainger Town. Kenton has long been associated with mining. The remains of early mining exist on the adjacent Town Moor and major collieries are recorded there in the early 18th century. Mining continued in Kenton until well into the 20th century - the engine house known as Kenton Tower at the Kenton colliery was demolished in 1928 – and the sites of coal workings, engines and wagonways are shown on historic Ordnance Survey maps of the area (HER 3993, 4019, 4247 and 4252). Kenton Lodge (HER 1872) was built in 1795 for John Graham Clarke, a local coal owner but in 1908 was replaced by the present neo-Georgian House. By the mid 19th century the medieval settlement had become elongated by the addition of post-medieval miners' dwellings, but on the fringes of the settlement farming continued alongside industrial practices – a number of 18th and 19th century farm complexes survive (e.g. HER 1934 and 5085). The recent history of Kenton is primarily as a residential centre serving Newcastle. Extensive housing estates, their associated public buildings – notably a Methodist chapel and National School - and an infrastructure of roads and services were built up to the mid-20th century in response to the housing demands of an increasing population during the industrial period. However there are a number of modern sites of cultural heritage importance, including the Kenton Bar Bunker (HER 5035) which was built in 1940 as a World War Two underground operations room and is now one of only five such well-preserved bunkers in the country (its sister-site, the filter room, survives at nearby Blakelaw). Pill boxes were also constructed in the same period (HER 5376-8), but do not survive.