

Shieldfield

In the medieval period Shieldfield, roughly the area between the Swirle, on the west side and Ouse Burn, on the east, lay outside the boundaries of Newcastle itself and formed part of the manor and township of Byker. In 1354 it is recorded that Robert of Byker died (in 1349) in possession of 42 acres in Shieldfield, including a windmill (HER 1383) in Shelewood of no value because of the prevailing poverty...and a limekiln (HER 1384) worth 3s 3d. A mill is also recorded there in 1428-9 (HER 1693) – its location may have been on the site of a windmill recorded in 1746. Shieldfield was transferred to Newcastle in 1549. In the 17th century a fort (HER 285) was constructed there which fell to the Scots in 1644 but was subsequently repaired and may have remained serviceable for a short period thereafter. A house of this period (HER 1865) survived until 1960 in Shield Street, overlooking the 'Shield Field' (HER 5471), where Charles I was permitted to play golf whilst imprisoned in Newcastle during the Civil War. The industrialisation of the region in the late 18th and 19th century touched Shieldfield, with a brickworks (HER 4143) and ropery (HER 5767) amongst the industries known to be present, and the Victoria tunnel (HER 4091) passing below ground. Over-land transport was also important in the area: the New Bridge was built over Pandon Dene in 1812, by John Reed, mason, prior to the completion of the toll road from Newcastle to North Shields. The Tynemouth and Newcastle railway was constructed by the Blyth and Tyne Railway in 1864, with New Bridge Street Station by John Dobson at the Newbridge Terminus and Manors Goods Station a little to the south. Despite its industry and transport links, Shieldfield served mainly as a residential area (e.g. Ridley Villas - HER 5769) for the city of Newcastle and the adjacent industrial zone of Byker. The great industrialist, Sir William Armstrong was born there in the early 19th century. Much of Sheildfield was cleared for redevelopment in the 1960s and '70s, but some locally important architectural features survive, notably terraces of 19th century housing adjacent to Jesmond Road, as well as Victorian churches and public houses.