

John Dobson: Rebuilding Newcastle

After the fire was finally extinguished the amount of damage became clear. Over 800 homes and businesses were lost in the fire.

It was decided to take advantage of the fire so that some good would come out of all the evil. The living and working conditions along the quayside had been poor before the fire. The streets were narrow with the houses almost on top of each other and many families living in each house. They had been built in medieval times and were known as chares. There was often only one tap that served several streets and toilets were also shared by streets of people.

A programme of redevelopment began with architect John Dobson leading the way. John Dobson lost his son, Alex Dobson in the fire so this was a lasting tribute to Alex.

Let's have a think about how we would rebuild Newcastle...

What materials would you use?

How would you lay out the streets? Would you build houses or shops or factories?

What rules would you put in place to stop this from happening again?

This plan shows the buildings and streets destroyed by the fire in Newcastle. Look how narrow the chares are. Lots of these streets no longer exist as they were knocked down after the fire.



Can you design a new street plan for Newcastle Quayside?



This map shows the layout of the streets on the Newcastle Quayside today. Only a few of the original chares still exist today.



John Dobson ensured that the houses and buildings were all built out of stone and made the streets much wider. If there had been another fire it would not have been able to spread as easily and it also improved the living conditions for residents.

