

# EGGINGTON

## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

MARCH 2010



A conservation area is an *area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. This document is one of a series of up-to-date conservation area character appraisals published by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The purpose of the appraisal is to define which features contribute to the special interest, what is significant and what requires preservation. Opportunities for enhancement are also identified in the appraisal.

Central  
Bedfordshire

## CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Summary	2
3.0 Location and Setting	2
4.0 Historical Development	3
5.0 Character	6
6.0 Appearance	8
7.0 Boundary Changes	21
8.0 Opportunities for enhancement	21

## APPENDICES

- 1 References
- 2 Listed Buildings



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Eggington Conservation Area was designated by Bedfordshire County Council in 1974. It was reviewed in 1993 and extended in the 1995 South Bedfordshire Local Plan. The designated area presently covers 11.383 ha.
- 1.2 This document assesses the setting, character and appearance of the conservation area. It also identifies opportunities for improving the character of the area. The appraisal is, therefore, the basis for the management of the Eggington Conservation Area through the planning system.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The special interest that justifies designation of the Eggington Conservation Area derives from a number of architectural, historic and environmental factors, including:
- A small rural village in a countryside setting;
  - An historic settlement formerly associated with a vast village green and ancient trackway (Theedway);
  - Good examples of local timber-framing tradition;
  - Important historic buildings embedded in the history and 'fabric' of the village (Manor Farm and Eggington House);
  - The survival of Manor Farm with working farm buildings perpetuating the historic agricultural character of the village;
  - Important groups of trees and views to woodland;
  - Views to open countryside at the east and west ends and glimpses of open countryside between built form;

## 3.0 LOCATION AND SETTING

- 3.1 Eggington lies approximately three miles east of Leighton Buzzard in rural Bedfordshire. To the northwest lies Clipstone, Hockliffe to the northeast and Stanbridge to the south.
- 3.2 The village is a linear settlement strung out west-east along its High Street. Travelling east toward Manor Farm the village becomes more rural in character, its extent marked by Eggington House as the road sweeps north past the junction with Mill Road. Eggington House, a fine late seventeenth century brick manor house, is located on the east side of Mill Road, overlooking the village.

- 3.3 The village is contained within a loop of the road south of the A4012 Leighton Road. Its rural character is reinforced by the location of nearby farms including Charity Farm to the west, Hill Farm, and Stockwell Farm to the northwest, the former Claridge's Farm and Church Farm within the village itself and the working Manor Farm to the east.
- 3.4 The village's setting is influenced by its undulating topography with Charity Farm built on high ground to the west, flatter land to the south and undulating ground to the north, falling away towards the A4012, and rising to the east towards Eggington House and Hill Farm beyond. Surrounding fields are mainly laid to pasture interspersed with collections of mature trees and belts of young plantations, part of Stockwell Farm's Woodland Project to create three new woods. A brook runs south of the village in front of Langley Cottage.
- 3.5 The conservation area comprises a long strip of land following the High Street on both sides from Olde Timbers in the west to Manor Farm in the east. Beyond Manor Farm the boundary opens out to the south and north along Mill Road to include Eggington Lodge, Eggington House, and their grounds.

#### 4.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT



- 4.1 Eggington dates back to the twelfth century when it was known as Ekendon. The name Eggington means *Oak-grown hill*. The present (Grade II\* Listed) Church of St. Michael dates back to the thirteenth century, with origins as a Chapel of Ease to the parish church at Leighton Buzzard.
- 4.2 The settlement originated as a 'planned' single-row village laid out along the northern edge of a vast green (nearly 1km long and between 150 and 430m wide), which was laid out along the ancient Theedway, whose line is now marked by the parish boundary which runs to the south of the village.
- 4.3 The green existed largely intact until parliamentary Enclosure in 1840, with only the encroachment of the church site and, later, the manor house (Manor Farm) interrupting the planned unity of the settlement. The present village has shrunk, the original building row continuing north east beyond Manor Cottage, and now represented by distinctive 'toft' and 'croft' earthworks in fields to the north of Manor Farmhouse.
- 4.4 The first reference to the manor appears in 1518 when it was in the possession of William Man. The Man family have a long association with the village, with the name of John Man listed in 1393 as a trustee in a settlement. Through the sixteenth and seventeenth century various members of the Man family held the

manor, although it is not clear from documents what the relationship between successive owners was.

- 4.5 In 1656, a John Man, the lord of the manor died, and it was probably his son John (husband to Mary Elkin) who transferred the title of ownership to John Gardner in 1710. In 1722 it had become the possession of Susannah Calfe, who still held Eggington manor in 1741. Subsequently, and only for a short period, Sarah Huxley was the owner, and by 1787 ownership was with John Bond. John alienated in 1790 to Thomas Goodwin and at the beginning of the eighteenth century George Goodwin was the lord of the manor.
- 4.6 Eggington House was built for the Huguenot family of Reynal (Renouille) in c.1696. The family were refugees from Montauban in Languedoc who became tailors in the City of London. John Reynal became Sheriff of Bedfordshire.



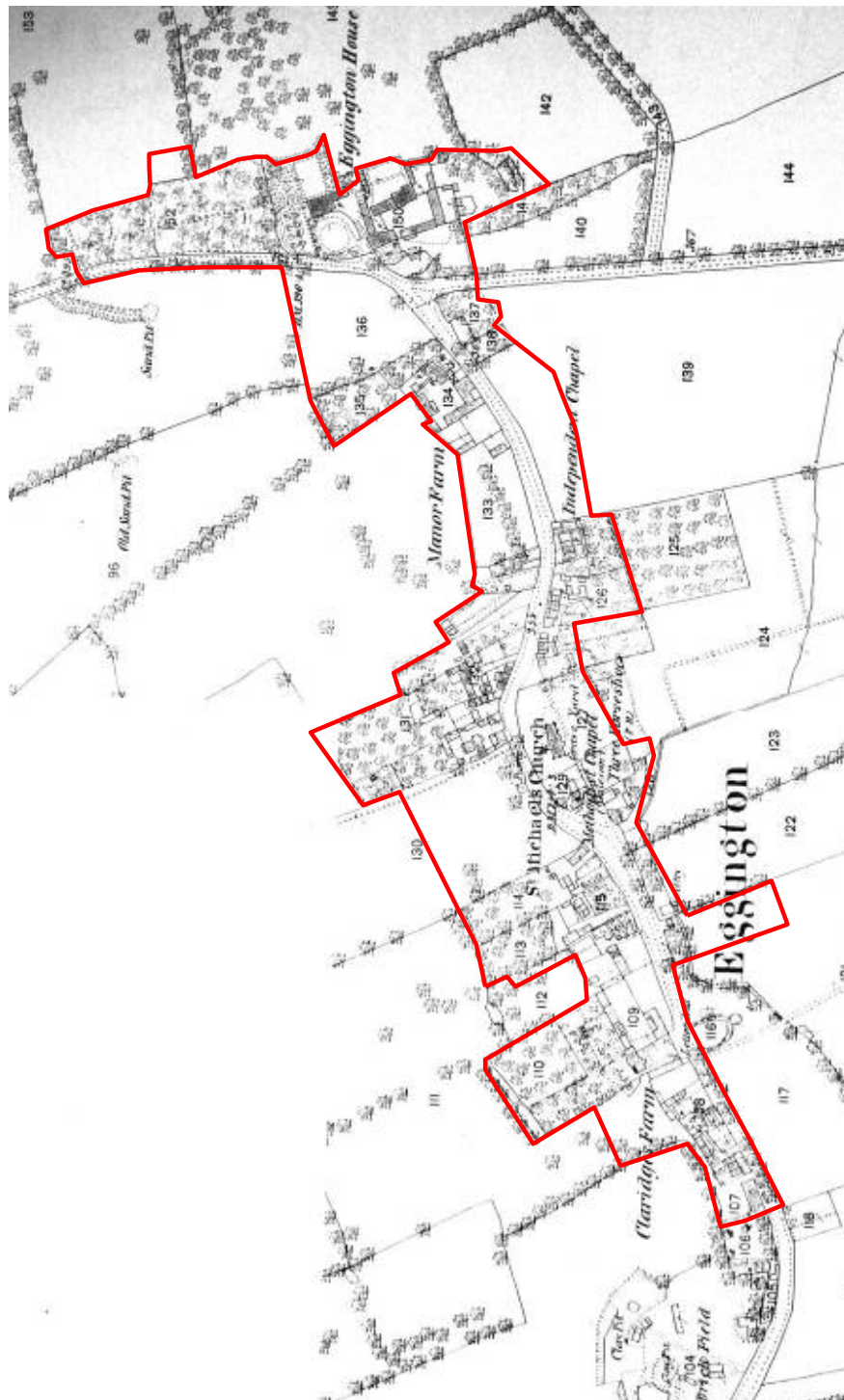
View east across fields to the rear of Manor Farmhouse (to right) showing village earthworks and Eggington House in the distance (to left)

- 4.7 In 1801 the village's population numbered 206. This rose to a height of 439 in 1861, but by 1991 this had declined to 266, rising slightly to 288 in 2001.

- 4.8 The rise of Eggington's population in the nineteenth century saw the opening of The Plough Inn in 1836, now Plough Cottage, and the opening of an Independent Chapel and Methodist Chapel in 1840 and 1867 respectively. By 1880 Eggington's population warranted its first school to be opened.
- 4.9 Eggington's population dipped in the twentieth century and in 1979 the General Stores and Post Office closed, followed by the school in 1983. The Independent Chapel was demolished in the 1970s and the Methodist Chapel converted to a dwelling in 1988.
- 4.10 The White House – a former parsonage in the village – became a home for displaced children during and after the war. In the late 1970s it became a care home for the elderly.



# ORDNANCE SURVEY 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION 1879 With Conservation Area Boundary





## 5.0 CHARACTER

- 5.1 Eggington is a quiet residential village, its conservation area characterised by a varied mix of building types, styles and periods. The buildings of the conservation area range from the medieval church and manor house through to seventeenth and eighteenth century timber-framed and stone cottages, to nineteenth century red brick terraces, chapel and school interspersed with substantial detached residences and, to the east, with the agricultural buildings of Manor Farm.
- 5.2 The simple layout and development of the village is key to its character. Ribbon development, strung out along the High Street, is largely confined to the north side of the road with the former Three Horseshoes public house and the Church of St Michael situated on the south side on a bend of the road tucked away in trees which line the roadside. The road continues out of the heart of the village, through Manor Farm, to the impressive Eggington House which stands at the 'head' of the settlement overlooking the fields to the north of Manor Farmhouse.
- 5.3 The sweeping main road with its wide grass verges, indigenous deciduous trees and established mixed hedges, together with unmade farm tracks and views of open countryside has a sylvan, semi-rural appearance.



View east over fields to Langley Cottage at the west end of the village



- 5.4 Despite its simple linear layout the conservation area has a complex character. At the western approach the houses are set back from the road in garden plots facing open fields to the south. Travelling eastwards the road begins to curve around the church which is set back to the south in trees. Houses on the north side are set on the roadside creating a high degree of positive enclosure and sense of intimacy. This active street frontage continues beyond the church on the south side with a short terrace of modest houses opposite more open plots to the north. Carrying on out of the village views open out to fields approaching Manor farm, the farmstead straddling the road and lining both sides with working agricultural buildings. Further to the east more of a sense of open countryside is gained as the road meets the junction with Mill Road and curves north. The boundary wall of Eggington House forms a strong edge, the three storey house itself set back from the road, glimpsed through the entrance gates.



Eggington House glimpsed behind its boundary wall and hedge

- 5.5 There are a high number of modern infill buildings distributed throughout the conservation area including a recent development on Church Walk. These buildings, predominantly designed with regard to the appearance of the area with the use of red brick and casements, do not dominate the rural village character epitomised by the church, small green, traditional red (K6) telephone box, post box and cottage scale houses to the north side of High Street.



## 6.0 APPEARANCE

- 6.1 Buildings in the conservation area exhibit a wide array of materials. In the middle ages, the local material for most buildings was timber. In Eggington its use continued into the seventeenth century. Good examples of timber-framing survive within the conservation area. Manor Farm, re-faced in red brick in 1947, originated as a fifteenth century hall house. More obvious seventeenth century timber framed houses include Claridges, Olde Timbers and Osborne Cottage. Claridges and Osborne display brick noggin, Olde Timbers having plaster infill.



Osborne Cottage

- 6.2 Stone was used for high status buildings such as the church which has an ironstone nave and Totternhoe stone chancel. The late seventeenth century Eggington House used, what was at the time, very fashionable high quality hand made red/orange brick.
- 6.3 Many buildings within the conservation area are of brick construction including a few early examples. A brick field is shown west of Claridge's Farm on the first edition ordnance survey map. In addition to Eggington House the seventeenth century colour-washed brick of Broadmead Cottage, late seventeenth century blue and red brick Waylands (The Old House) and eighteenth century red brick Pear Tree Cottage stand out as excellent examples.

- 6.4 Later buildings exhibit a good range of brick colours, often polychrome design, with reds, yellows and blues. Bonding is mainly Flemish with occasional English (Manor Farm) and rat-trap (Manor Farm boundary wall). There are also a number of rendered buildings painted in shades of white or cream. A few buildings exhibit stucco dressings and quoins but this is rare. Red brick stacks are common, occasionally yellow brick with yellow or terracotta clay pots. Roofs comprise thatch (combed wheat reed or water reed with raised decorated ridges), a variety of old clay tile and pan tile and natural slate. There has been limited replacement and new build with concrete interlocking tiles.
- 6.5 The conservation area has a high survival of timber windows. There is a variety of small pane timber sashes and casements with leaded lights. Yorkshire (horizontally sliding) sashes are a feature on some buildings, for example Pear Tree Cottage. School House has some interesting and unusual large casements with very small panes. Most houses have plain brick window and door arches but they are occasionally emphasised with different colour combinations, for example Church Farm Cottage.



Wide variety of windows from conventional vertical sliding sashes to Yorkshire sashes, and casements

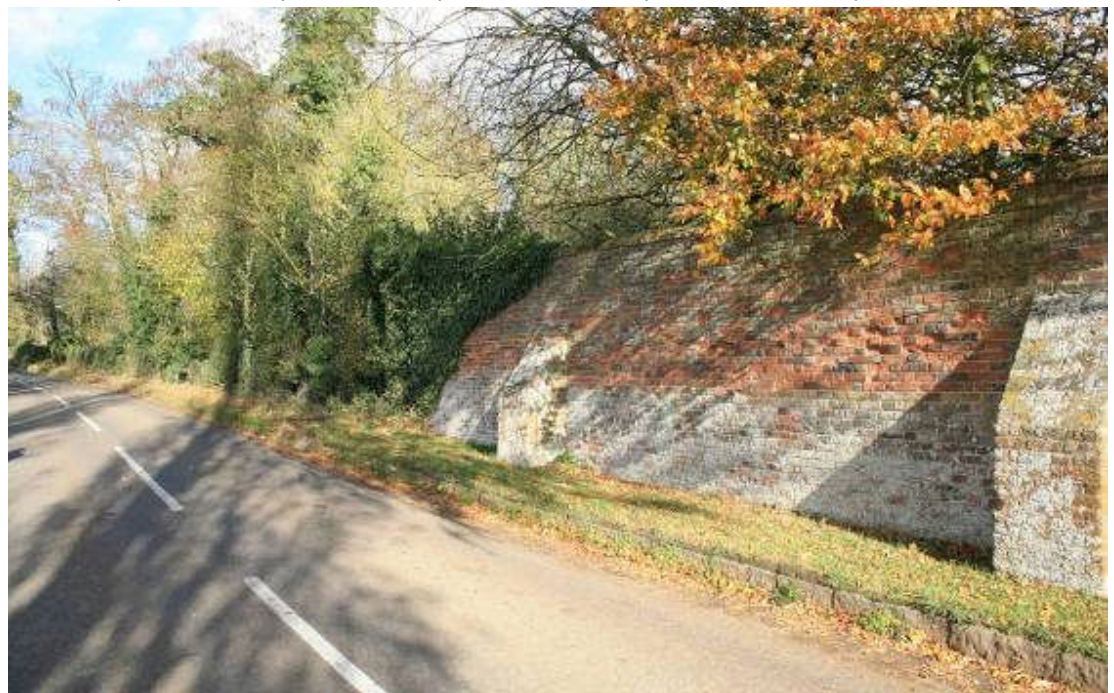


- 6.6 There is an unusual survival of original granite kerbstones to sections of the road, particularly on the south side of the road near the church and on the road beyond Manor Farm to Eggington House. Boundary walling is present in red brick and also in the distinctive local ironstone (Church Walk). These walls provide enclosure and help to define the built form of the village. Boundary walls outside properties give strong definition to domestic curtilages marking gardens and grounds.



### Eggington House

- 6.7 Eggington House sits above the village on an area of higher ground. The extensive grounds, set behind the hedge topped eighteenth century red brick wall include woodland to the north, formal garden to the northeast and a walled garden to the rear of the property. The walled garden is open to the east, divided from the fields by a ha ha (a sunken wall and ditch to prevent animals grazing formal lawns). Views looking west from the house over the gardens and open fields are punctuated by a cross of trees, planted as a focal point.



Eggington House boundary wall

- 6.8 To the south lies the lodge house and outbuildings with a horse ménage built in the vicinity of an old pond. The glasshouses, tennis court and further outbuildings to the southeast are presently outside the conservation area.
- 6.9 The road has a strong sense of enclosure on its east side with the boundary wall, hedges and trees. To the west there is an open aspect across sloping fields to the



village properties set back off the road and their rear gardens. This is a key view in the conservation area showing the interaction between settlement and countryside. Well defined views are also to be had south along the hedge-lined Mill Road which extends into the distance.



View west over the fields towards the village



View south along Mill Road out of the conservation area



- 6.10 Groups of trees characterise this section of the conservation area. Four poplars on the ridge of the field on the opposite, west side of the road to the house provide a good visual boundary to the conservation area. A collection of mature trees including oak, beech and cedar surround the house partially hiding it from view.



View north at the junction with Mill Road

### Manor Farm



- 6.11 The Grade II listed Manor Farmhouse, dating from the fifteenth century, is a prominent building to the east end of the conservation area. A typical working farmstead, it has a collection of traditional farm buildings and twentieth century sheds which are spread over both sides of the road.



Manor Farmhouse



View east towards Eggington House

- 6.12 The rural character of this section of the conservation area is reinforced by the boundary treatment of the road. The absence of kerbs and pavement seen in the village is replaced by grass verges which emphasise the rural character of



this part of the conservation area. In addition to traditional farm buildings, the road is bounded by native mixed hedges continuing a sense of enclosure and setting buildings (such as Manor Farmhouse) in landscaped settings. East of the farm, on the south side of the road, lies an old pond now much overgrown.



The pond – in need of positive management



- 6.13 The farm buildings, which include cattle shelter sheds, loose boxes and hay barns, are a mixture of brick, concrete block and weather boarding with clay tile roofs and corrugated iron sheeting. Interestingly the long roadside range nearest the farmhouse has a flint plinth. The farmhouse is set back behind a low brick wall and partially hidden from view by the boundary laurel hedge and surrounding trees.





Cattle shelter sheds, Manor Farm



Brick boundary wall in distinctive Rat-trap bond, Manor Farmhouse

### **The village east**

- 6.14 This is an area of contrasts. On the approach to the village from the east the nineteenth century red brick terraces and modern detached red brick houses are dominant on the south side of the road. Set close to the roadside this consistent

building line is not mirrored on the north side where detached houses are set back from the road in large plots. Lanes lead to further houses set back to the north. One of these lanes has been widened and surfaced as Church Walk, serving a new housing development of five houses set around a close. Fortunately it retains the attractive ironstone boundary wall which extends from High Street to The Waylands (The Old House). An unmade track further west leads to the buildings of Church Farm.



Church Walk, The Waylands (The Old House) set behind the wall



- 6.15 The centre of the village is concentrated around the church, Plough Cottage (a former public house) and Eggington School. A small green with a bench, post box and traditional red K6 telephone box is located east of the church as the road starts to curve around the churchyard. The green provides an attractive setting and approach to the church from the east and the buildings, telephone box, post box and church form an important group. On the north side of the road is a good group of four detached two-storey houses comprising Rodells, Church Farm Cottage, Russet Cottage and Plough Cottage. These houses singularly and collectively partially close views along the road and provide a positive sense of enclosure and intimacy to this part of the conservation area. Views north between Plough Cottage and Church Farm Cottage take in the agricultural buildings of Church Farm, linking the village to its agricultural past. A public footpath continues past Church Farm to Peck's Wood, a new plantation which is part of Stockwell Farm's Woodland Project.





View west to Plough Cottage, Church Farm Cottage & Rodells

- 6.16 Due to the positioning of the houses on Church Walk, although contrary to the established settlement pattern, the new development does not draw attention away from the focus of the village. Nevertheless some modern interventions are noticeable in this part of the conservation area, including inappropriate boundary treatments, replacement concrete interlocking tiles and uPVC windows which are to the detriment of the historic character of the village.



Terrace with concrete interlocking roof tiles

- 6.17 There are good open views east along the road to Manor Farm and glimpsed views north along lanes to School House and Church Farm. The position of the church, set back from the roadside on the bend, provides key views from the road through gateways and gaps in the churchyard trees.

### The village west



- 6.18 This character area, west of the church, comprises substantial detached properties set back from the north side of the road. On the south side the modern St Michael's vicarage is partially screened from view by trees. Adjacent is the former Three Horseshoes Public House, now an Indian restaurant, set back with its gable end facing on to the road and a car park to the front. Further west Langley Cottage is set back in its own grounds. The north side of the road has a mixed character with a high number of listed buildings, many of which are timber-framed, interspersed with modern red brick bungalows and detached houses, some with mock timber-framing.



Methodist Chapel, c.1867, now a residential conversion

- 6.19 The area has wide grass verges with drainage ditches to the north side of the road. Mature trees are dotted along the road side, often partially screening houses including Claridge's and The White House. On the south side of the road between Langley Cottage and the former Three Horseshoes pub is a timber field gate leading to a new woodland plantation known as Fee's Wood, which is part of Stockwell Farm's Woodland Project.



Verge treatment



- 6.20 Boundary treatments in this area vary from attractive hedges to Osborne Cottage and Pear Tree Cottage and the agricultural character of the post and rail fence to fields on the south side of the road to the suburban screen block wall of Bella Vista, blank red brick walls to Claridge's and the rather incongruous red brick and concrete panel wall and iron gates of Claridge's Farmhouse.
- 6.21 Positive buildings include The Patch and Woodbine Cottage to the west, The White House to the east , the former Three Horseshoes pub and Langley cottage to the south.





The Patch & Woodbine Cottage



The White House



- 6.22 There are excellent open views across fields on the south side of the road and east to Langley Cottage, its square and diamond chimney stacks prominent. There is a glimpsed view south to the new Fee's Wood and good views between trees to the west end of St Michael's Church.

## 7.0 BOUNDARY CHANGES

7.1 The following amendment of the conservation area boundaries is shown on the management map (p.24):

1. Extension of the conservation area to encompass the immediate (domestic) grounds of Eggington House and Eggington Lodge including the area of glasshouses east of the house.

Reason:

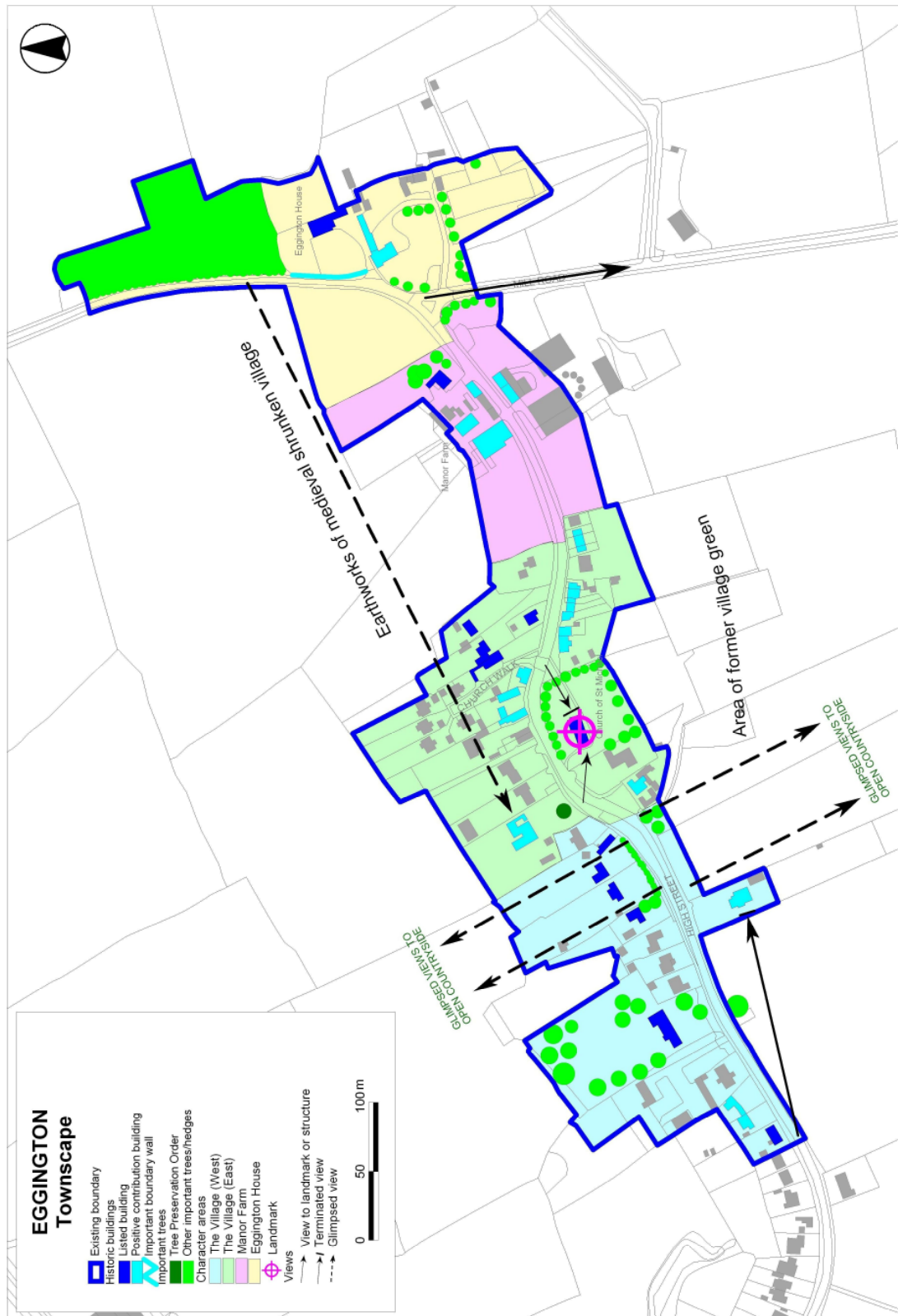
This area forms part of the immediate historic setting of the house and lodge, clearly connected to the domestic grounds and separate from the open countryside to the east. The area of glasshouses east of the house represents the expansion of the grounds by 1926. The proposed extension regularizes a previous anomaly and follows best practice of including all of the domestic gardens of properties within a conservation area designation rather than truncating these areas as is presently the case.

## 8.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

8.1 While the general condition of the conservation area is good, the following are considered as opportunities to enhance buildings and spaces:

- Street furniture should respond to the rural character of the area and be well-designed and co-ordinated.
- Encouragement to be given for the reinstatement of traditional timber doors and windows.
- Encouragement to be given to the reinstatement of natural slate roofs to nineteenth century terraces east of the church and reinstatement of traditional long straw thatch with plain flush ridges.
- Removal of unauthorised satellite dishes and advice provided on the careful placing of satellite dishes and an examination of possible alternatives.
- Restoration of the pond opposite Manor Farmhouse. A similar project has been very successful in Streatley.
- Careful consideration of appropriate future boundary treatments including walls, fences and hedges.
- Establish through archaeological field survey the extent and composition of earthworks of village shrinkage at the east end of the village for possible inclusion within the conservation area as part of future conservation area review.







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## APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES

- Ed. William Page – *A History of the County of Bedford: Volume 3* – Victoria County History 1912
- Bedfordshire Libraries; Eggington Timeline of events  
[http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.digitised\\_resources/eggington\\_timeline.htm](http://www.galaxy.bedfordshire.gov.uk/webingres/bedfordshire/vlib/0.digitised_resources/eggington_timeline.htm)
- <http://www.leighton-linslade.com>

### Maps:

- Ordnance Survey – 1879 1:2500
- Ordnance Survey – 1901 1:2500
- Ordnance Survey – 1926 1:2500



## APPENDIX 2: LISTED BUILDINGS

### GRADE II\*

- EGGINGTON HOUSE, MILL ROAD
- CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL, HIGH STREET (south side)

### GRADE II

- OSBORNE COTTAGE, HIGH STREET (north side)
- PEAR TREE COTTAGE, HIGH STREET (north side)
- SCHOOL HOUSE, HIGH STREET (north side)
- BROADMEAD COTTAGE, HIGH STREET (north side)
- CLARIDGE'S, HIGH STREET (north side)
- EGGINGTON SCHOOL [Village Hall], HIGH STREET (north side)
- K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK, HIGH STREET (south side)
- MANOR COTTAGE, HIGH STREET (north side)
- MANOR FARMHOUSE, HIGH STREET (north side)
- METHODIST CHAPEL, HIGH STREET (north side)
- OLDE TIMBERS, HIGH STREET (north side)
- WALL AND GATE PIERS TO EGGINGTON HOUSE, MILL ROAD
- THE WAYLANDS [now The Old House], CHURCH WALK