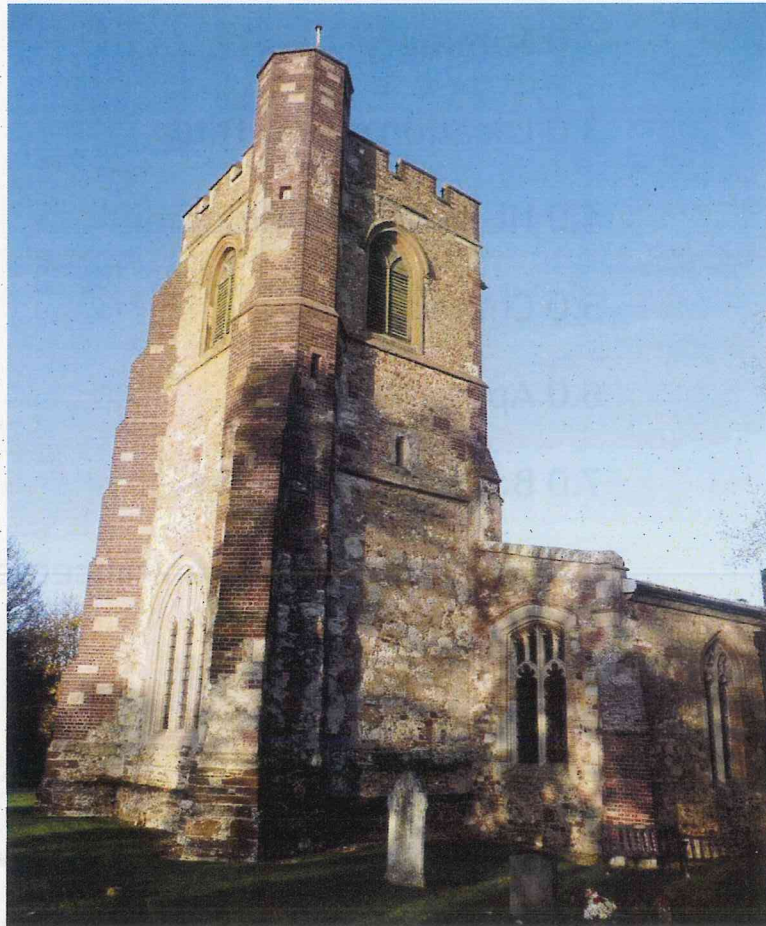


STREATLEY

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL DRAFT

DECEMBER 2009



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

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Streatley Conservation Area was designated by Bedfordshire County Council in 1976. It was reviewed in 1993 and extended in the 1995 South Bedfordshire Local Plan. The designated area presently covers 10.694 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 Streatley Conservation Area through the planning system.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The special interest that justifies designation of the Streatley Conservation Area derives from a number of architectural, historic and environmental factors, including:

- Small rural village in a countryside setting;
- Important mix of historic buildings including fourteenth century, Grade I Listed, St Margaret's Church, vernacular cottages and farm buildings
- Important individual and groups of trees;
- Extensive and far reaching views and glimpsed views to open countryside throughout
- An attractively restored village pond in its semi-rural setting.

3.0 LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1 Streatley lies approximately five miles north of central Luton. The village is situated just to the west of the A6, and is the first village encountered on travelling north long the A6 from Luton.

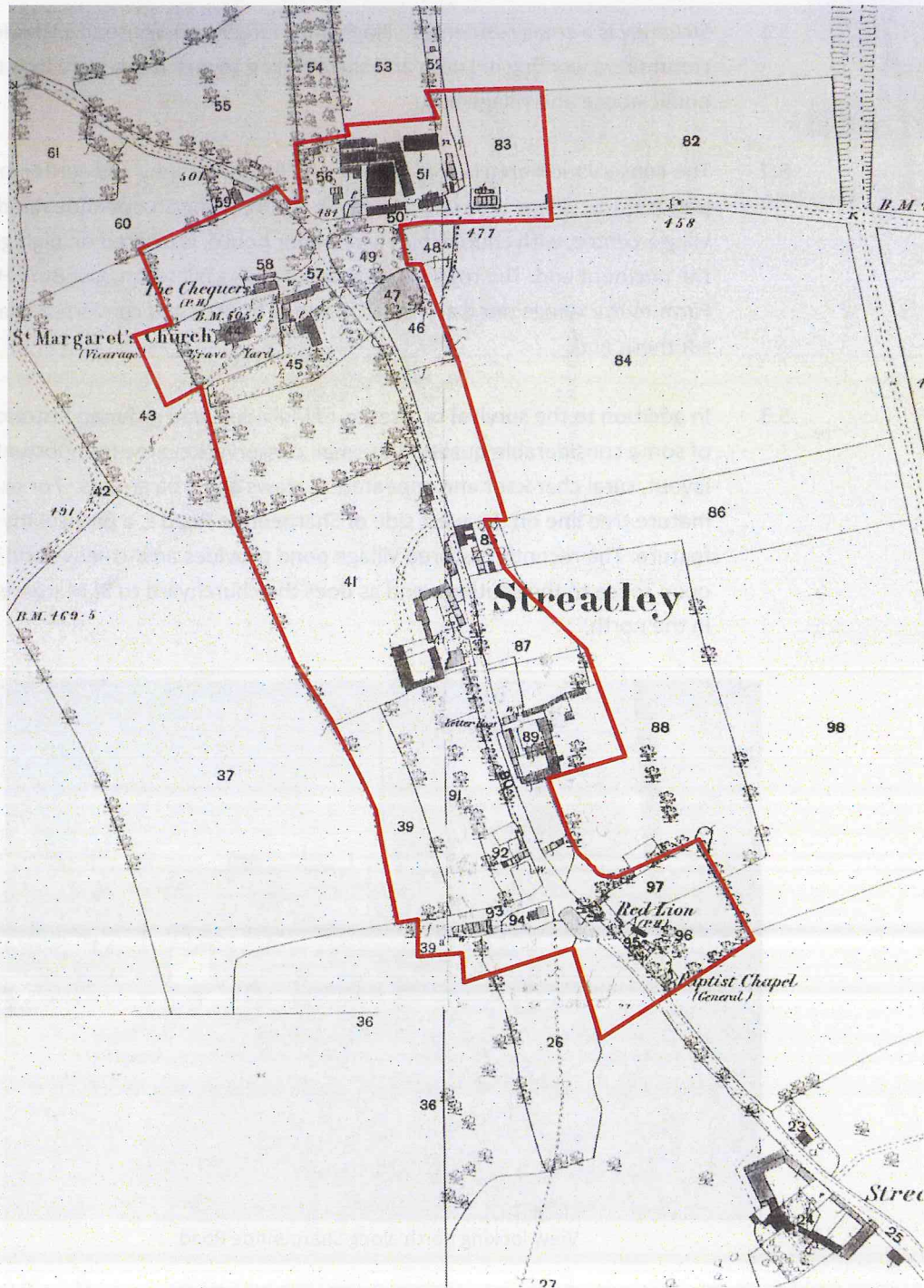
3.2 The village has a strongly defined linear form which is mostly a single plot depth, lining the roadside as it steadily drops down the hill to the south. The principal group of historic buildings consists of the church (Grade I listed), with the red brick manor-house (Grade II listed), and a small public house at the north-east angle, the 'Chequers,' which may be the successor of the mediaeval church-house. A short distance to the north is Top Farmhouse, with the rest of the village lying to the southeast; a series of mostly vernacular houses and farm buildings, with a small green and a pond to the southern edge.



4.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 There are no records of a permanent settlement until its mention in the 1086 Domesday Book, which records thirteen villeins, twelve bordars and five serfs living in the area. So it can be assumed the Streatley of today dates back to the twelfth century, the name meaning 'the clearing by the street'. The manor of Streatley with Sharpenhoe belonged at this time to Hugh de Beauchamp, and had been held by Aschil a thane of King Edward.
- 4.2 The Lincoln Episcopal Registers show that the advowson, vicarage and rectory of Streatley belonged to Markyate Priory from its foundation in 1145. The Church was confirmed to Markyate in 1402 and remained in its possession until the Dissolution. The present church has its origins in the fourteenth century.
- 4.3 In the eighteenth century the village had a mill, known as Barton Mill as it originated from the village of Barton. It was burnt down sometime between 1792 and 1826. Streatley Hall was also built during the eighteenth century. In 1770 the church steeple collapsed and the church fell into disrepair.
- 4.4 By the nineteenth century Streatley comprised a loose arrangement of buildings consisting of the Church, four main farmsteads and other houses and cottages strung along the road. As the nineteenth century progressed Streatley slowly began to expand. The Chequers Public House was open by c.1820 and in c.1830 the Red Lion Public House was built, it is now a private house. By c.1870 a Baptist Church was built for the community. This was replaced by a new chapel in 1931 which closed in the 1980s. The village school followed in 1883.
- 4.5 The twentieth century saw The Chequers Public House destroyed by fire in 1908, and subsequently re-built. In 1917 the church was dilapidated and forced to close. It was not until 1938 that major restoration work was carried out and the church reopened. The latter half of the century saw new housing and in 1986 the demolition of the village school. The Streatley parish population was 1707 in 2001.

ORDNANCE SURVEY 1ST EDITION 1880
With Conservation Area Boundary





5.0 CHARACTER

- 5.1 Streatley is a small residential village, now largely a dormitory settlement for commuters working in Luton and surrounding towns. It is served by a church, public house and village hall.
- 5.2 The conservation area is characterised by its topography and settlement pattern. The village is strung out, north-south, along Sharpenhoe Road. The village centre, with church, pub and manor house, is located on high ground at the northern end. The road extends down a long hill south past Bury House and Farm to the village pond and small group of houses and converted chapel at its southern end.
- 5.3 In addition to the survival of a series of individual and grouped historic buildings of some considerable quality, this small conservation area is important for its layout, rural character and appearance, views and tree groups. For example, the mature tree line on the west side of Sharpenhoe Road is a particularly strong feature. The recently restored village pond provides an attractive and important open space to the southern end as does the churchyard to St Margaret's Church in the north.



View looking north along Sharpenhoe Road

5.4 The conservation area can be split into three distinctive character areas. The village 'centre' with church, pub and Streatley House forms an area with a strong identity and historic character. The long Sharpenhoe Road with Church Road is characterised by its far reaching views, and mix of modern and traditional buildings. Finally at the junction with Bury Lane there is a small area focused on the village pond and containing a good group of buildings including Nos. 70-72 (the former Red Lion public house), the former chapel and the listed thatched cottage.

5.5 There have been small but significant twentieth century infill housing developments which have changed the character of the Streatley Conservation Area, increasing its building density. Infill on Sharpenhoe Road has imposed uniformity and created a building line that is not representative of the historic settlement. St Margaret's Close, north of the church, has attempted to integrate itself into the village, but it shares few of the characteristics of the historic settlement. It is, however partially hidden from view and does not dominate the attractive core of church, 'Chequers' public house and Streatley House. It should be noted that further intensification will diminish the qualities for which the conservation area has been designated.



6.0 APPEARANCE

The village predominantly comprises brick buildings, the exception being the fourteenth century stone nave to the church. Brickwork is generally seen in Flemish bond. Some brickwork is painted and there are also examples of rendered and painted houses. Tile hanging (quite unusual for vernacular buildings north of the Thames) is used on a selection of buildings, for example Streatley Hall and weather boarding to others, for example No. 133. The traditional roof covering is natural slate with some clay pantiles to the agricultural buildings at Bury House and clay tiles to Streatley House and Hall. No. 64 is one of two thatched buildings within the conservation area, only No. 64 is Grade II listed. Both have combed wheat reed with block cut ridges. Modern buildings are constructed of red brick laid in stretcher bond with concrete interlocking roof tiles. Red brick stacks are common with terracotta clay pots.



Streatley Hall with its distinctive tile hanging

- 6.1 The conservation area has some survival of timber windows. There is a variety of small pane timber sashes and casements with good examples at Bury House, The Chequers and Streatley Hall. There has been extensive replacement with uPVC for example along Bury Lane, No. 133 Sharpenhoe Road and the terrace on Church Road. There are some fine architectural features including the classical doorcase with panel door to Bury House and the six fielded panel door with architrave and bracketed decorative doorhood to Streatley House.



Bury House

- 6.2 The public realm contains few features of note. There are standard concrete kerbstones to the pavement (with some granite sets to openings), concrete street lights and modern street signs. Boundary treatments vary in quality. There are some good mixed hedges on sections of Sharpenhoe Road and Bury Lane and an attractive yew hedge to the front of Bury House, other hedges are conifer. Boundary walls and railings are also varied. No. 64 the thatched cottage has a striking white painted picket fence and the converted farm buildings next to Bury House have iron railings. There are modern brick walls to Nos. 91-93 and Streatley Hall and rather better walls and entrances to Bury House and Streatley House.



- Church environs**
- 6.3 This area is one of contrasts with a diverse mix of old and new buildings. At the northern approach to the village is the modern St Margaret's Close development of ten houses set back from Sharpenhoe Road to the west. Entering the village there is a lack of enclosure with a large car park on the west side opposite the junction with Church Road. This car park serves The Chequers Public House, a modest but attractive early twentieth century building set beyond a small green which forms part of its setting and that of the church. A poorly maintained and weathered tarmac lane runs to the side of the public house, past outbuildings of

Streatley House, to the Church of St Margaret. The close proximity of pub, church and house create an excellent group of buildings of considerable local architectural and historic importance, essentially defining part of the village character of Streatley. There are two modern red brick detached houses to the opposite (east) side of the road.



The Chequers

- 6.4 Church Road is headed by Top Farm, a two storey brick house with double height canted windows and half-timbered gables. Behind the house lies a collection of modern agricultural buildings with corrugated asbestos and profile metal roofs still in use for storage. Three modern brick detached houses have been inserted into the streetscene east of Top Farm, their modern construction materials, satellite dishes and conifers in the gardens have more of a suburban than rural character. A rough gravel and tarmac driveway to the east leads to the main farmyard and additional farm buildings. Beyond the farm is a row of eight nineteenth century terraced houses, all rendered and painted white, most with uPVC windows and additional front porches. They retain their low brick boundary walls and some still have their natural slate roofs. The survival of the large central stacks with terracotta pots provides unity and rhythm to the group.



Top Farm



Altered terrace of houses to Church Road

- 6.5 There are views of the open countryside looking east down Church Road, out of the conservation area. The church is surprisingly hidden from view but there are good views of the tower to be had looking over the roofs of outbuildings north of Streatley House.



View west to the church tower with outbuildings to Streatley House in the foreground.



Sharpenhoe Road central

- 6.6 This character area follows the road from north to south as it runs down the hill from Streatley House to Streatley Hall. The road, although wide and with a pavement along its east side, feels comfortably enclosed by tall hedges and roadside trees to both sides. This sense of enclosure opens out at the village hall, a low single storey red brick building set back behind a large open car park, bounded to the north by a tall brick wall and to the south by a low hedge. A group of six modern red brick semi-detached houses follows the hall, set off the road behind hedges and driveways, but there is still on-road parking. The houses have more in common with the development on Stanley Road than they do with the conservation area. Opposite are four much larger detached modern properties in a secluded close hidden from view by trees. No. 133 Sharpenhoe Road survives on the west side of the road and, despite alterations and the wholesale replacement of timber windows with uPVC, it still has some townscape quality.



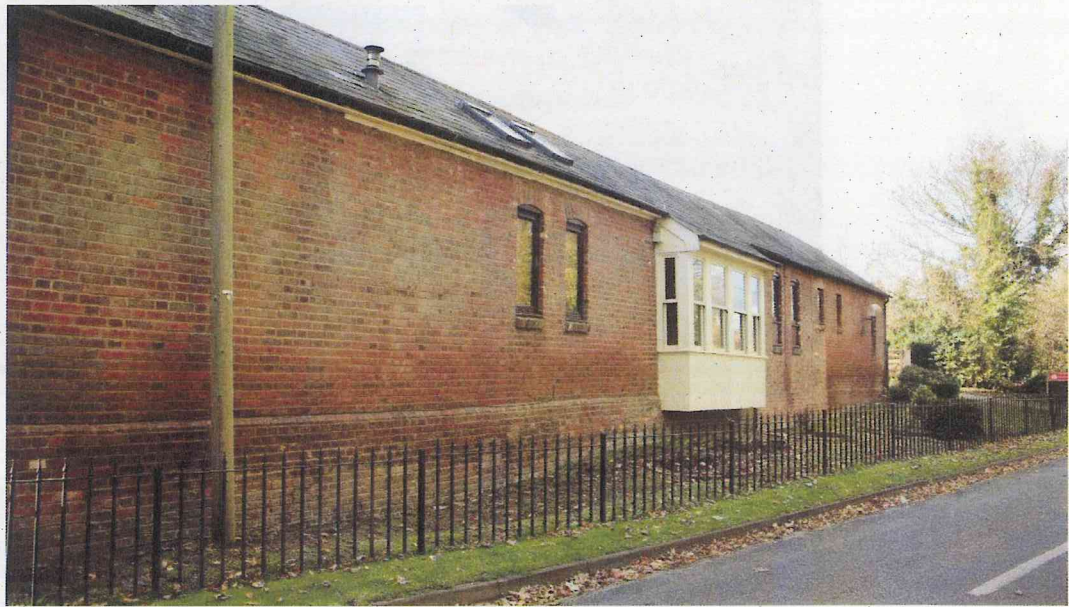
Streatley Village Hall



No. 133 Sharpenhoe Road

- 6.7 South of the junction with Stanley Road are a positive group of buildings comprising Bury House and farm buildings (formerly Middle Farm), some of which have been converted into offices. The neo-classical red brick house has some interesting architectural features which include; tile-creased arches, very tall timber sashes and an excellent classically inspired doorcase with a quirky

fanlight and large panelled door. Further south on the opposite side of the road is Streatley Hall and outbuildings which form a positive group. This long two storey brick house has been sympathetically extended and its tile hanging and timber sashes help to unify the building.



Farm buildings converted into offices north of Bury House

- 6.8 The character area enjoys good views of the surrounding countryside. There are intriguing enclosed views down the gently curving Sharpenhoe Road opening out to countryside as the village pond comes into view. Immediately south of the village hall there are glimpsed views east to the countryside beyond. These become open views standing on the junction with Stanley Road, as the modern houses drop away from view to reveal the hedge-lined ridge of the hills beyond standing out against the skyline.



- Sharpenhoe Road south**
- 6.9 This character area is focused on a varied group of buildings on Sharpenhoe Road and Bury Lane. On the east side of Sharpenhoe Road are three positive buildings comprising; the dark brick Nos.70-72, the listed thatched cottage No. 64 and the former chapel (presently under repair following a fire). Opposite Nos.70-72 is the small, recently restored village pond which is set into the corner of the road junction and bounded by trees on its western side. A low post and rail fence demarks the plot from the roadside.



No. 64 The Thatched Cottage

- 6.10 Bury Road has two modest two-storey brick semi-detached houses, No. 59 is rendered and painted with mock-timber framing to its eastern elevation. These houses close the local view looking west along Bury Lane. Immediately north of Bury Lane are the two large modern semi-detached houses (Nos. 91- 93) set behind a blank brick wall and thick conifer hedge.



Houses closing the view west along Bury Lane

- 6.11 This area is characterised by its rural setting, trees and open countryside views. There are views south, out of the conservation area over fields to the nearby Streatley-Bury Farm. A five bar tubular steel field gate leads to paddocks and rough grazing on the north side of Nos. 70-72 with views to the low lying open countryside.



View north, the village pond on the left and No. 70-72 on the right



View east across open countryside

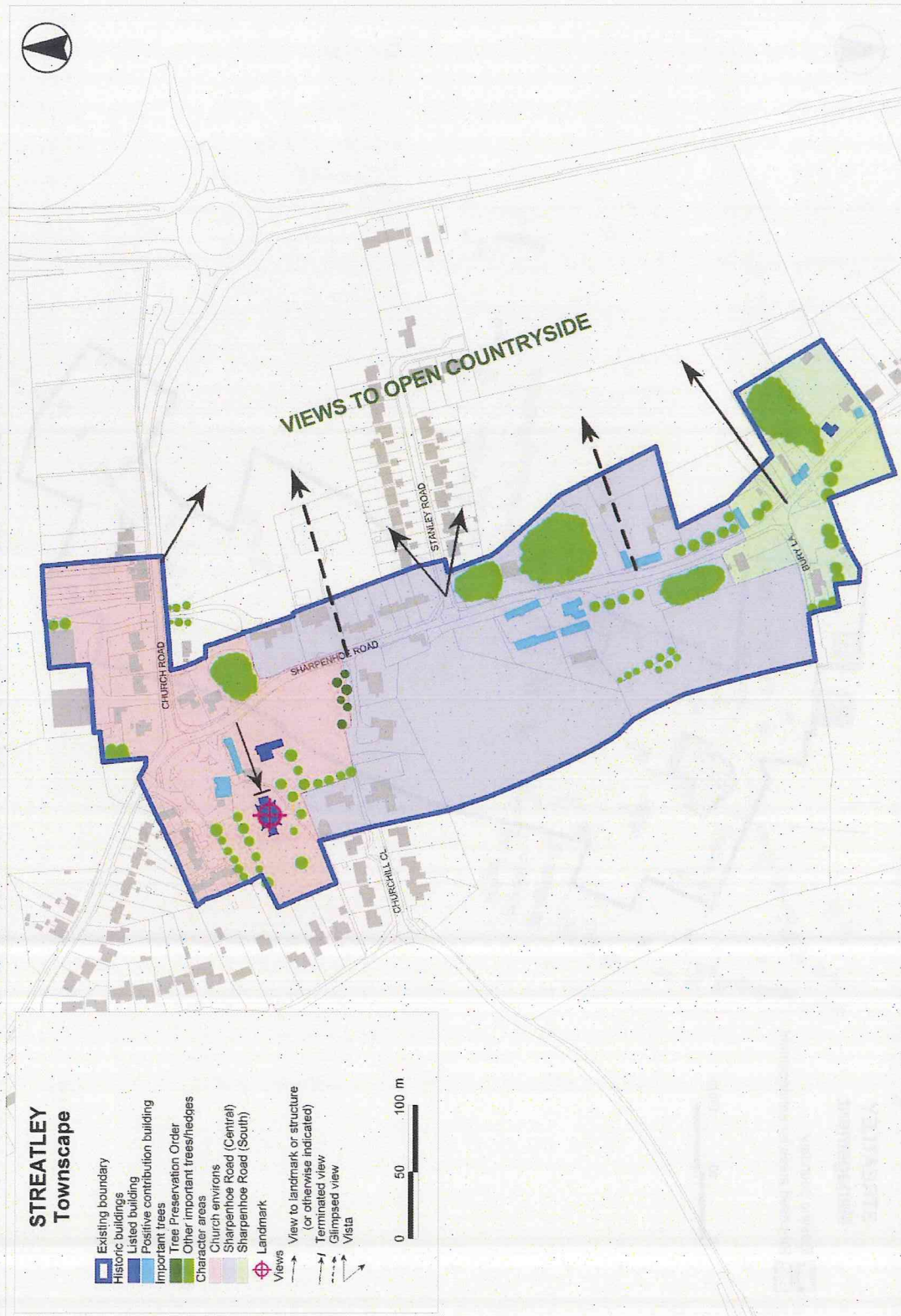
7.0 BOUNDARY CHANGES

- 7.1 There are no proposed amendments to the conservation area boundaries.

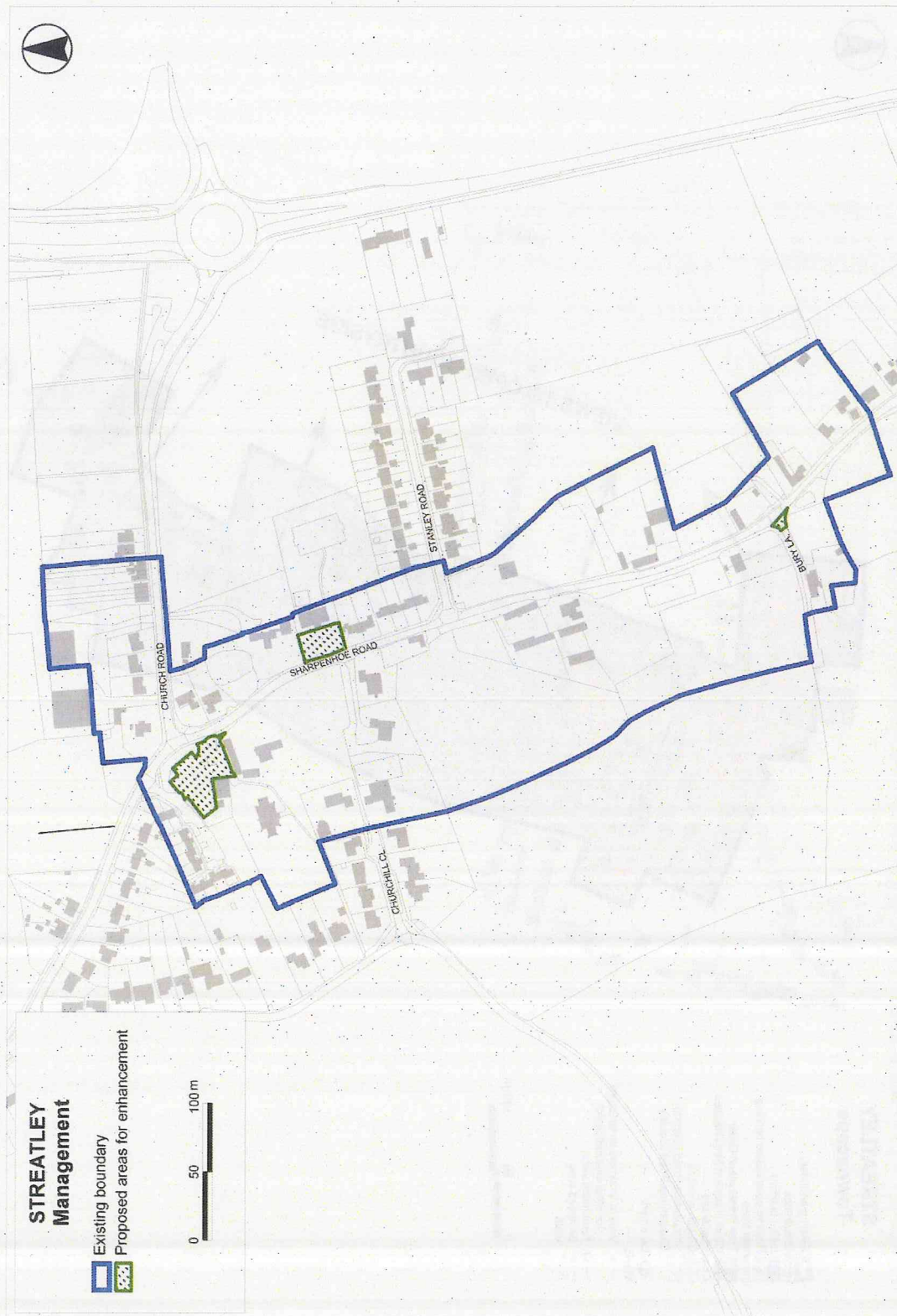
8.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

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

- Improvements to the treatment of roadsides and footways including the re-surfacing of Bury Lane and the lane leading to the church.
- Encouragement to be given for the reinstatement of traditional doors and windows, particularly on Church Road and Bury Lane.
- Encouragement to be given for the reinstatement of traditional long straw thatch with plain flush ridges.
- Street furniture should be well-designed and co-ordinated.
- Careful consideration of appropriate future boundary treatments including walls, fences and hedges.
- Careful consideration given to sites where enhancement schemes (such as resurfacing) would benefit the character and appearance of the conservation area including the open parking area next to The Chequers and the car parking area in front of the village hall.
- Retention and management of trees and hedges on Sharpenhoe Road.



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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/streatley_timeline.htm
- St Margaret's Church <http://www.stmargaret-streatley.org.uk/StMargarets.htm>
- Streatley Parish Council <http://streatley.bedsparishes.gov.uk/short-history/>

Maps:

- Ordnance Survey – 1880 1:2500
- Ordnance Survey – 1901 1:2500
- Ordnance Survey – 1924 1:2500

APPENDIX 2: LISTED BUILDINGS

GRADE I

CHURCH OF ST MARGARET, SHARPENHOE ROAD (west side)

GRADE II

THE THATCHED COTTAGE, SHARPENHOE ROAD (east side)

STREATLEY HOUSE, SHARPENHOE ROAD (west side)