

CIVIC AMENITIES ACT

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designated under the Act

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TEMPSFORD CHURCH END  
CONSERVATION AREA

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DECEMBER 1971

## CIVIC AMENITIES ACT 1967

This document describes a Conservation Area which the County Council has designated under the above Act.

Just as there are individual buildings of architectural and historic interest which need safeguarding, so also are there areas of good architectural quality, historic importance, and special interest. The aims of a Conservation Area however are not only to preserve but also to enhance the character and appearance of an area. Although it may not be possible to justify the preservation of some features, the aim is that these should be replaced with something at least as good.

This document describes the important features of the area, and attempts to show how its attractive nature can be safeguarded and improved.

The aims of the Conservation Area procedure can only be fully realised with the willing co-operation of the Rural District Council, the Parish Council, and other organisations and individuals with an interest in the area. The County Council are already grateful to these people whose comments have been invaluable in preparing this document.

## THE CONSERVATION AREA

The village of Tempsford is composed of two principal groups of houses; the first, including the Church and Rectory lying to the west of the A1 Trunk Road and the second, known as Langford End, to the north along the road leading to the former Tempsford railway station.

The Conservation Area consists of the first of these two groups, namely Tempsford Church End. Since the 'by-pass' was built in 1961 Church End has reverted to a pleasant village, undisturbed by the traffic on the dual-carriageway to the east. It is also fortunate that when the new by-pass was constructed the belt of trees previously fringing Tempsford Hall were left intact so forming a vital feature in the character of the village.

The most attractive approach to Church End is from the north; through the avenue of mature trees is seen the chequer-board walling of the church-yard, an unusual combination of iron-stone and ashlar blocks. Adjacent, in contrast, is the Gannocks, a fine example of half-timbering of the late 16th Century. This dwelling was probably formerly an inn and is a Grade II building on the Statutory List of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest.

The alternative entry to Church End from the south, whilst pleasant does not have the same dramatic approach.

St. Peter's Church is a fascinating combination of three distinct periods of architecture. There is no evidence of work earlier than the middle of the 14th Century, to which period the main structure belongs, nor is there any definite evidence of the earlier church from which the present building has developed. Considerable repairs were made in 1621, especially in the south-west part of the Church and the tower. The whole building was 'thoroughly restored' in 1874. Inside the most interesting features are the wall paintings on the north side which show the martyrdom of St. Katherine, and the 15th Century pulpit. A tablet by the altar commemorates a date one thousand years ago when Tempsford first came into history. The village has a bitter memory of those days for in 921, when Danes and Saxons fought for the village, King Edward captured Tempsford and slew every man, woman and child.

To the south-west of the Church, also included within the Conservation Area, is Gannocks Castle. This is an Ancient Monument in the form of earth-works measuring some 215' x 185' which is frequently quoted as a Danish fortress. (The name Tempsford means ford on the Thames which suggests that the Ivel was known as the Thames in Danish times). However, no army of any size could have sheltered within so small an area, and the moat which is only 20ft wide could not have withstood a siege. It would therefore seem more likely that this was a fortified farmstead site of about the 12th Century and an underground passage is said to connect it to the Rectory.

Close to the Church is the Rectory, a Grade II Statutory Listed Building. It is in the main a Victorian building and the east-wing only is of any interest. This wing of the old timber built house is of the 15th Century or 16th Century and consists of two bays with other 15th Century detail, including a wooden shaft and capital in the present larder; the roof, now hidden by a plaster ceiling, is said to have carved or moulded timbers.

On the east side of Church Street is an extremely important group of farm buildings consisting of No.28 Church Farmhouse, the barn and the brew house, all Statutory Listed Buildings dating from the 16th and 17th Centuries.

Mill Lane, leading to the Ivel, is an unspoilt rural by-way pleasantly

lined by tall trees and hedges. It provides access to Tempsford Saw Mill which is situated some 800 yards upstream of the confluence of the Ivel and Ouse. The Mill is in good working order and is used intermittently for sawing wood on the Tempsford Estate. The wheel is housed within the wooden structure of the Mill. It is an undershot wheel, 16ft in diameter and 8ft in width. Power from the wheels is transmitted to the saws by means of a system of leather belts. Downstream of the Mill is Ouse Farm, a Grade II Listed Building, mainly of the 18th Century but possibly with an earlier core.

The setting of the Ivel forms an integral part of the Conservation Area and for this reason all the trees, hedges and walls which provide this very attractive back-cloth have been included.








It should be noted that buildings are marked as "important" on the map if they have architectural merit or value within a group, or if their positions or building lines contribute to the characteristic village and street scenes. Every effort will be made to preserve these buildings but there is no legal obligation to do so unless they are on the Statutory List. Similarly, trees have been marked "important" if they make a significant contribution to the village scene but they are legally protected only where there is a Tree Preservation Order in force.

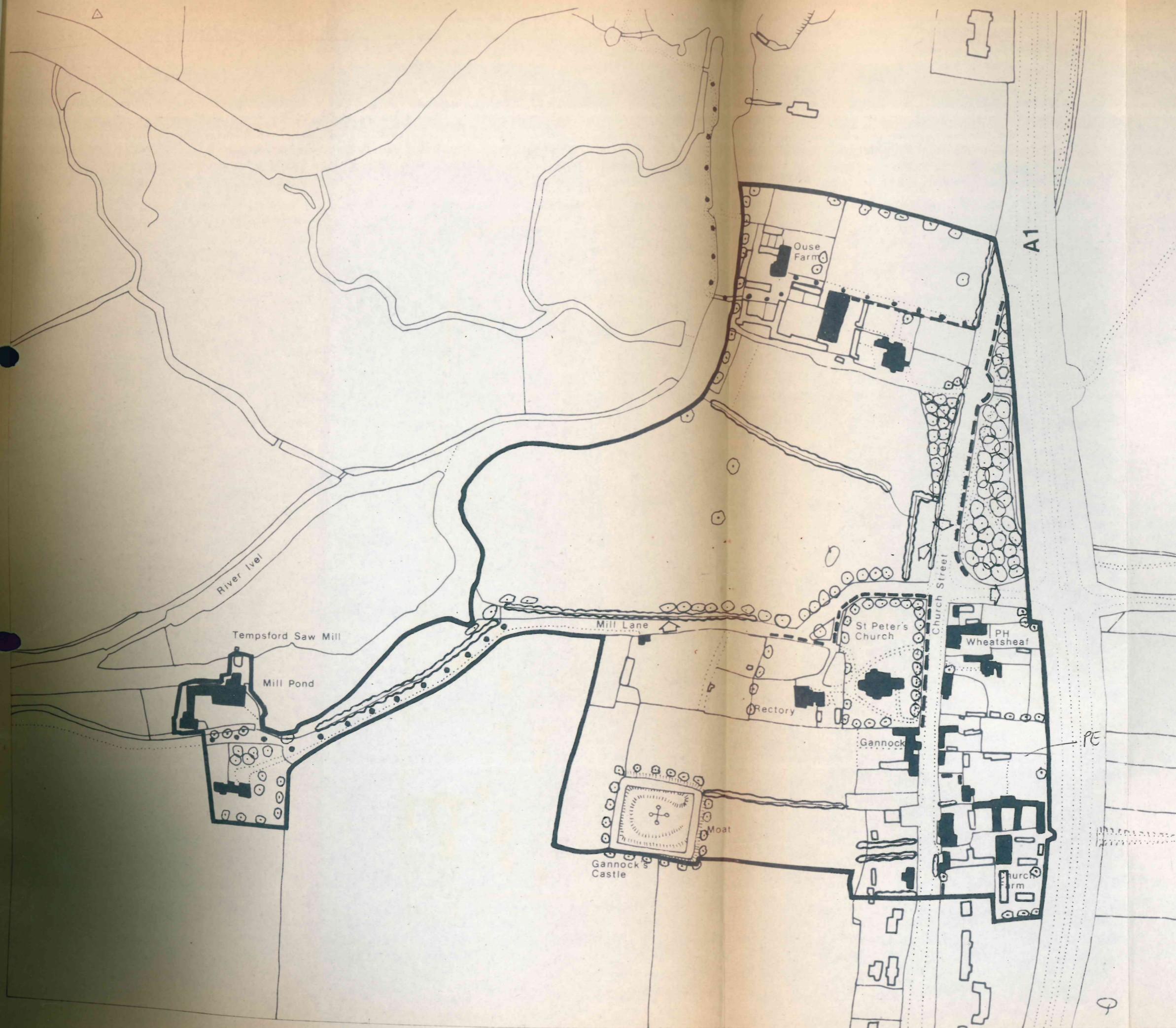
#### GENERAL POLICY

In order to maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the Conservation Area it will be necessary to:-

1. retain important buildings and boundary walls and encourage the improvement of existing buildings rather than their re-development;
2. retain the lines formed by existing buildings, boundary walls, particularly the iron-stone walls, and hedges. Ensure that the shape and definition of the important spaces are maintained;
3. ensure that any new building, or replacement, be designed as part of the group in which it is situated and not as an isolated structure;
4. retain trees and hedges wherever possible, see that they are properly maintained and replaced when necessary. All important trees will need to be identified in greater detail and their protection secured by agreement with the land owner concerned, or by the making of Tree Preservation Orders to support the existing. To achieve this, the help of the Parish Council will be necessary. Trees lying just outside the Conservation Area, to the west, will also be taken into account because they form an essential background to the area;
5. encourage the maintenance of the Castle site;
6. encourage planting of trees and shrubs along the west boundary of the Al Trunk Road, behind the existing dwellings in Church Street, to shield the village from the by-pass.

Civil Amenities Act 1967  
Conservation Area

-  Boundary of Conservation Area
-  Important buildings including Listed buildings
-  Important tree groups
-  Important hedges
-  Important walls
-  Important views out of village
-  Important footpaths



TEMPSFORD  
CHURCH END

CONSERVATION AREA

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County Planner  
Bedfordshire County Council

Date	Scale
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