



Eydon is a place of special character and historic interest.

This appraisal and management plan sets out the features that contribute to its distinctiveness and identifies opportunities for its protection and enhancement.

Eydon

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Draft for consultation October 2011

Comments are welcome by 09 December 2011. Please see final page for contact details

Summary

Summary of special interest

Eydon is an attractive village in rural Northamptonshire. Its special interest lies in the good survival of its planned street-village layout, with long narrow plots stretching back from the High Street to Lime Avenue, and in its rich stock of historic buildings, many dating from the 17th Century. The village's built environment is of high quality, as is the public realm, with little street clutter or intrusive road markings.

Summary of issues and opportunities

Eydon is a desirable place to live. Most of its working population commute to well-paid jobs outside the parish. The majority of the village's farmsteads have been converted to residential use in the past 50 years, which has altered the formerly strong agricultural character of the core of the settlement. There is, nevertheless, very good survival of the historic street-village plan form. It is important that this historic plan form, including stone boundary walls, is retained and respected in the future.

Given its relative isolation and absence of services, Eydon is unlikely to experience significant housing growth in the foreseeable

future under the present planning system.

The Conservation Area Boundary

Eydon Conservation Area was first designated in 1970 and was reviewed in 1987.

It is proposed to slightly amend the existing conservation area boundary to respect plot boundaries as they exist on the ground. At present, the conservation area runs across some gardens in a way that is difficult to clearly define on the ground, and includes half of one modern house. The proposed amendments would eliminate these irregularities.



Figure 1: Ironstone and thatch are the vernacular building materials within Eydon .

Summary

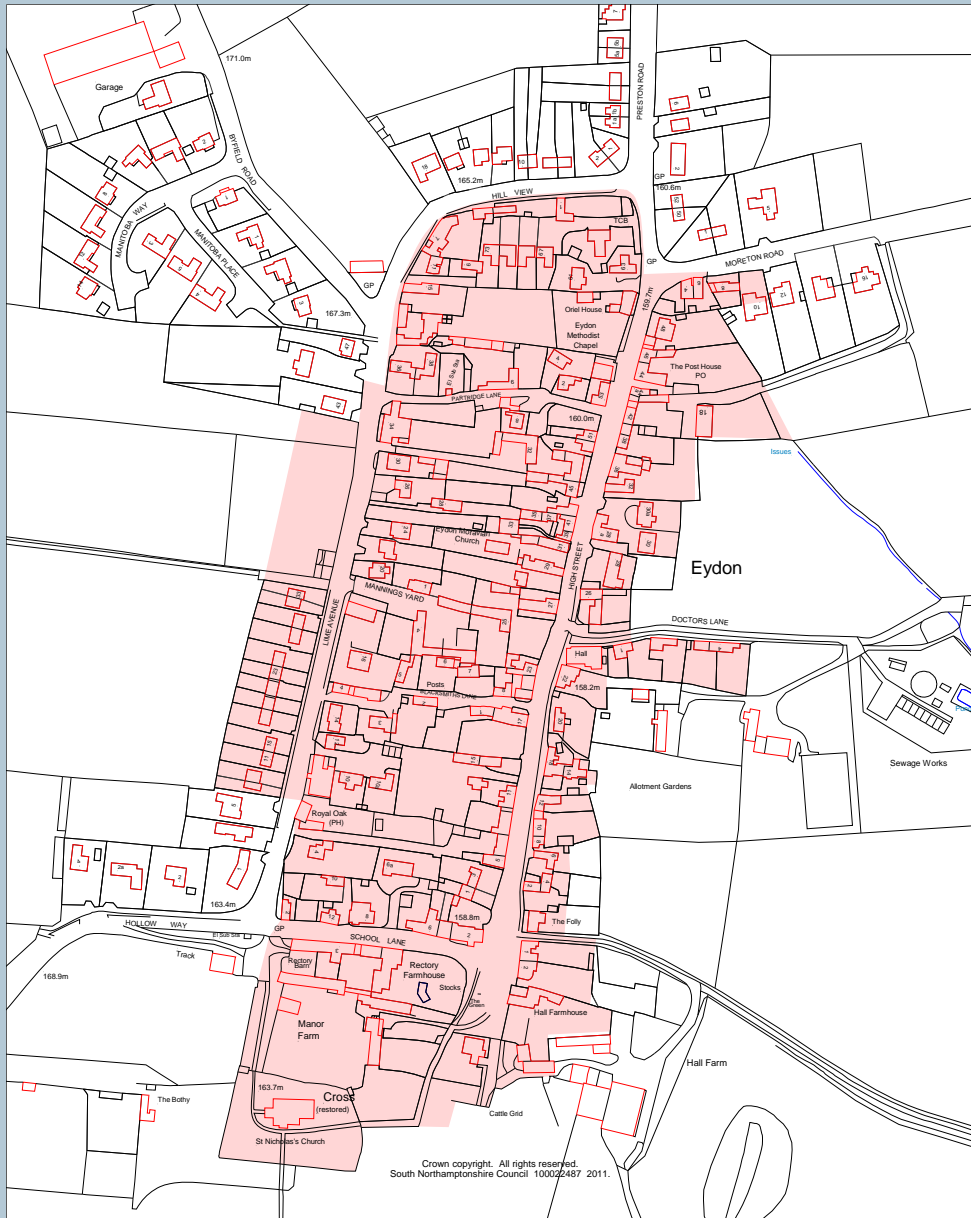


Figure 2: The Existing Eydon Conservation Area boundary © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. South Northamptonshire Council. 10002487 2011.

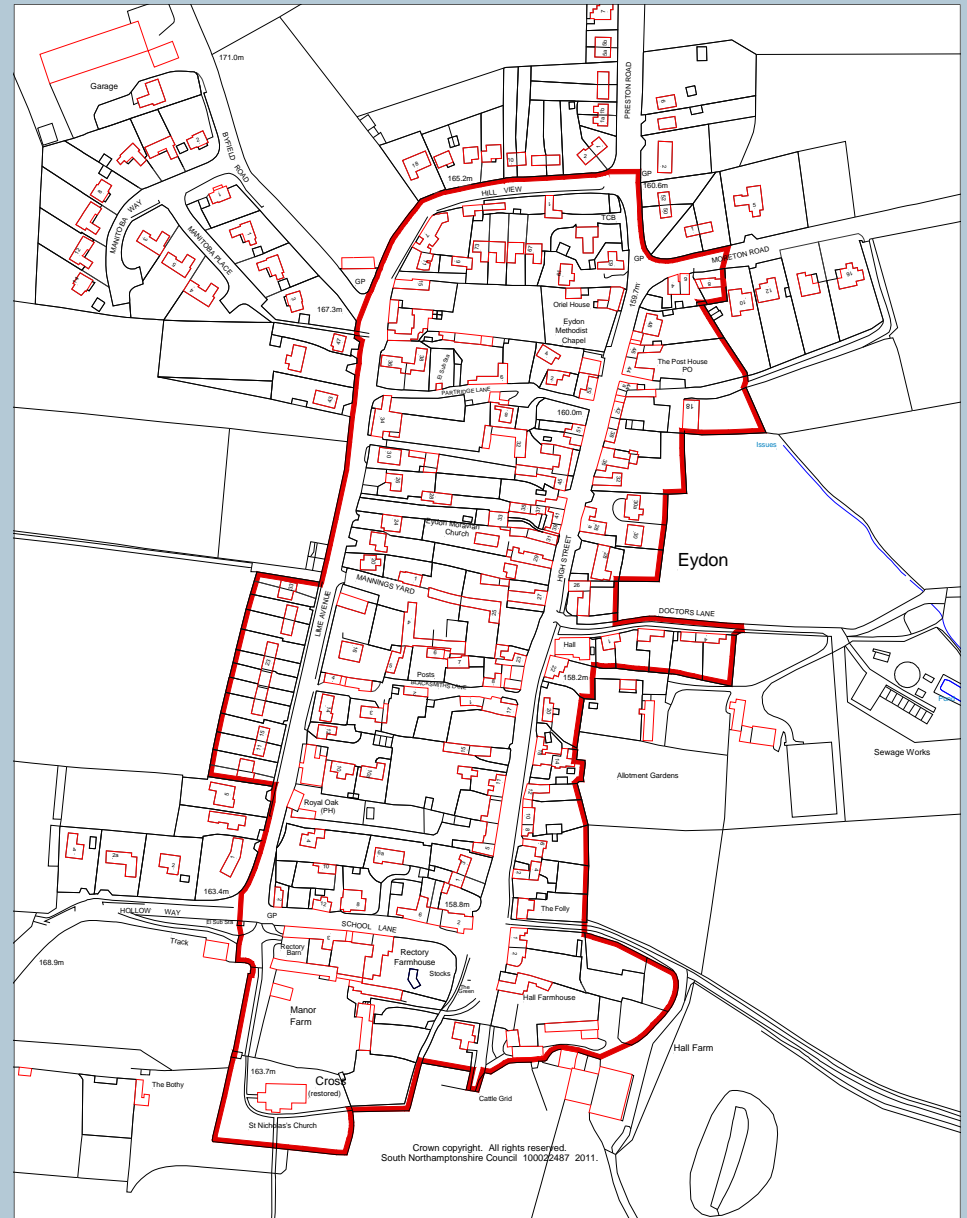


Figure 3: Proposed Eydon Conservation Area boundary © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. South Northamptonshire Council. 10002487 2011.

1. Introduction and Planning Policy Context

1.1 What is a conservation area?

Conservation Areas were introduced under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. That Act required local planning authorities to identify areas (not individual buildings) of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas.

Since 1967 around 10,000 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 53 in the South Northamptonshire District to date. The Eydon Conservation Area is one of those 53 areas having originally been designated in March 1970 and modified in 1987.

1.2 Planning Policy context

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the Act of Parliament which today provides legislation for the protection of the nation's heritage of buildings and places of architectural and historic interest.

Section 69 of the 1990 Act defines a conservation area as:

“an area of architectural or historic interest the character and

appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The 1990 Act also places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to consider revisions to the boundaries of their conservation areas “from time to time”. It is now considered appropriate to review the Eydon Conservation Area in order to further define its key characteristics.

This document is an appraisal of the Eydon Conservation Area and is based on a standard recording format derived from advice contained within English Heritage's 2006 guidance ‘*Conservation Area Appraisals*’ and their 2011 consultation document ‘*Understanding Place: Conservation Area, Designation, Appraisal and Management*’.

By updating the conservation area appraisal for Eydon, the special character and appearance of the area can continue to be protected. This conservation area appraisal and management plan will provide the basis for making informed, sustainable decisions about the positive management, protection and enhancement of the conservation area.

The appraisal seeks to give a clear assessment of the special interest of Eydon by explaining how the

settlement has developed, analysing its present day character and identifying opportunities for enhancements.

This draft appraisal is the subject of public consultation. Following consultation, the appraisal will be revised to take account of comments received and will then be put forward for adoption by South Northamptonshire Council to become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within the conservation area and its setting.

The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.

This appraisal should also be read in conjunction with the wider national and local planning policy and guidance including Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment under which a conservation area is deemed to be a Heritage Asset.

The South Northamptonshire Local Plan adopted 1997, saved in part on 28 September 2007, is also of relevance. Policies EV10 and EV11 continue and state that: “The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the

special character or appearance of conservation areas” and that, “Planning permission will not be granted for any development proposals outside of a conservation area which have an adverse effect on the setting of the conservation area or any views into or out of the area.”

1.3 What does conservation area status mean?

Conservation Area status provides the opportunity to promote the protection and enhancement of the special character of the area. Designation confers a general control over development that could damage the area's character. The details are complex but can be summarised as:

- Most demolition requires permission and will be resisted if the building makes a positive contribution to the area.
- Some minor works are no longer “permitted development” and will require planning permission. Examples include external cladding and satellite dishes.
- Most works to trees have to be notified to the Local Planning Authority for its consideration.
- Generally higher standards of design apply for new buildings and alterations to existing ones.

2. Location and Topography

Location

Eydon lies in the west of South Northamptonshire district, not far from the county boundary with Oxfordshire. The village is 12 miles west of Towcester and 11 miles north-east of Banbury. The north and east sides of the parish form the district boundary between South Northamptonshire and Daventry District.

General character and plan form

Eydon is a medium-sized village with a single-sided street-village plan form. Linear plots run back from the High Street to Lime Avenue (formerly known as The Back), with a strong building line facing the High Street. The east side of the High Street is also largely built up, but its plot layout is more informal than that of the west side of the street and there is no back lane separating garden plots from the open countryside beyond.

The focal point of the village is the small green at the southern end of High Street. The village pump and a set of stocks, with a whipping post at one end, still stand on the green. The gardens of Rectory Farmhouse, which served as the village's rectory until the mid 19th Century, define the western boundary of the green.

The parish church and Manor House lie to the south of the green. The present Manor House, built around 1790, stands somewhat apart from the rest of the village, within its own substantial grounds and its separation from the village is accentuated by the gates and lodge at the southern end of the green.

Topography, landscape and geology

The Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Strategies were published by the River Nene Regional Park CIC in 2009. These strategies included environmental, landscape and biodiversity character assessments for the county.

In relation to Eydon the assessments concluded that the settlement is located in the West Northamptonshire Uplands. This is an area of undulating hills and valleys underlain by intractable Lias Group Clays capped locally by the ironstone bearing Marlstone Rock and Northampton Sand Formations. This results in well defined features such as steeply sloping prominent hills which contrast with softer landscapes where capping by a thick mantle of boulder clay has occurred.

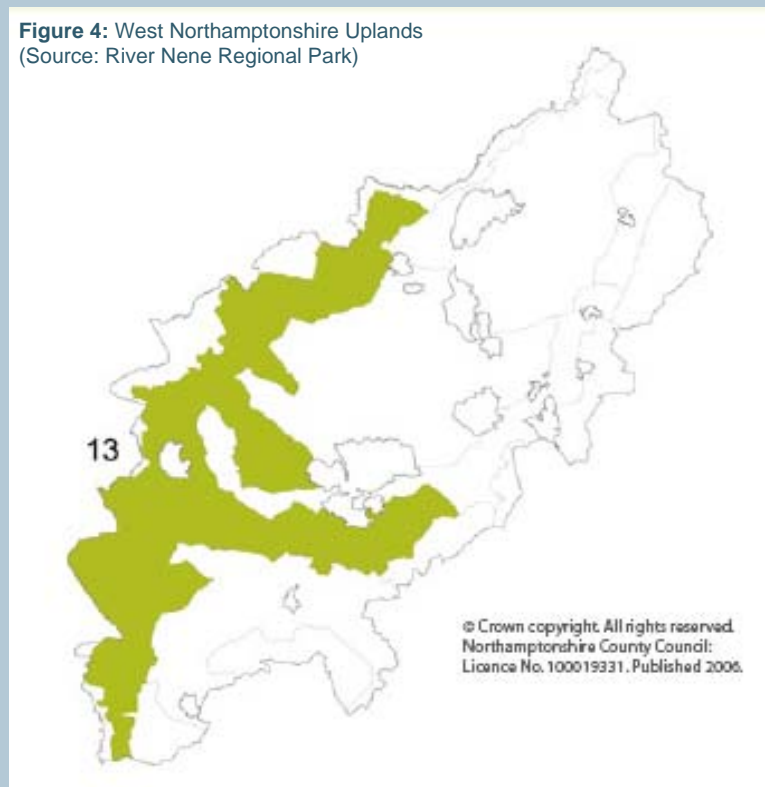
The topography around Eydon is gently undulating, with wide, open views punctuated by mature hedgerows and thick copses of trees, particularly in the valley bottoms.

The landscape surrounding the village is rural, consisting primarily of improved long-term and permanent pasture interspersed with smaller areas of arable land. Field size and shape indicates the effect of the 18th Century Enclosure Acts in the parish.

In contrast to other parts of South Northamptonshire district, mature hawthorn hedgerows are a significant feature of the landscape, and the area is well wooded when compared with the more heavily improved farmland elsewhere in the district.

The land falls away gently to the east of the village, giving rise to attractive long views towards Moreton Pinkney and Canons Ashby.

Figure 4: West Northamptonshire Uplands
(Source: River Nene Regional Park)



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3. History and development

Prehistory and Roman

The historic environment record for the parish is sparse, suggesting that the parish has not been the subject of very much archaeological investigation in recent decades. There is no record of prehistoric or Roman activity in the village, but since the surrounding area was known to be settled, it is likely that there was some form of occupation or use of land in the parish. The relative lack of modern development in the parish means that the opportunity for archaeological excavation work has been limited.

Medieval

In 1086, at the time of the Domesday survey, Eydon was an agricultural village described as having five carucates of arable land and one mill with two acres of meadow. There were 12 villeins recorded living in the parish, who between them farmed three of the five carucates. Two carucates and two servants were listed as the demesne (manorial) holding.

For much of the medieval period, land in the parish appears to have been divided between two principal landowners. However, there is evidence for just one manorial site,



Figure 5: Historical map of Eydon produced by Jeffrey & Eyre in 1791

which lay to the south of the church, in the grounds of the present Manor House.

Analysis of aerial photography and historic maps indicates that the village operated an open-field farming system, with two large common fields. The field to the east of the village was used for arable crops, and some remnants of the ridge-and-furrow pattern from this

period is still visible, while the west field was used both for arable and grazing.

17th Century

The 17th Century was a volatile period for Eydon, as it was struck by a series of major events. In 1605, plague struck the village and it is recorded that 16 people died. The

Civil War was bitterly fought in the region, with several bloody battles and skirmishes taking place in Northamptonshire and Warwickshire between 1642-3. Parliamentary troops held Birmingham and Coventry, while Banbury was held by Royalists as part of their defensive ring around Oxford, and it is likely that some Eydon men would have been conscripted to fight. At least one soldier, who was probably from Birmingham, was buried in Eydon after escaping the battle of Edgehill in 1642 and dying shortly thereafter in the village.

On 13 August 1651 a major fire consumed 25 houses in the village, as well as barns and stables. 223 loads of corn and hay were destroyed, and the damage was valued at over £1,000 in the money of the period, equivalent to £75,500 today. The loss of a year's hay harvest must also have been devastating for the farmers affected, as breeding livestock would be less likely to survive the winter and produce strong offspring without an adequate supply of winter forage.

Quakers and Anabaptists were recorded as having a presence in Eydon from 1654. Nonconformists were regarded with great suspicion in this period and were seen as enemies of the State. A letter was

3. History and development

written by the parish to Parliament in 1660 to inform them of the presence and activities of the Quakers and Anabaptists in Eydon and Culworth. Until the 1689 Act of Toleration, it was illegal for Nonconformists to set up their own places of worship.

Hearth Tax records from 1668 indicate that there were 62 houses in Eydon at that time. 40 of these had just one hearth and were probably occupied by the poorest members of society, while a further 13 had two hearths. The Manor House had 15 hearths, while one other house is recorded with 8 hearths and one with 7. It is likely that at least one of the buildings with many hearths could have been an inn, but the wide disparity between the majority of the population with a single source of heat to provide for cooking, hot water and comfort, and the wealth of a very few, is clearly marked.

18th Century

The greatest change to the village in the 18th Century came about as a result of the Enclosure Act in 1762. This permanently altered both the landscape and agricultural practice in the parish. Enclosure was a great benefit to the larger farmers and landowners, but cottagers and smallholders generally lost out as they lost their rights to common

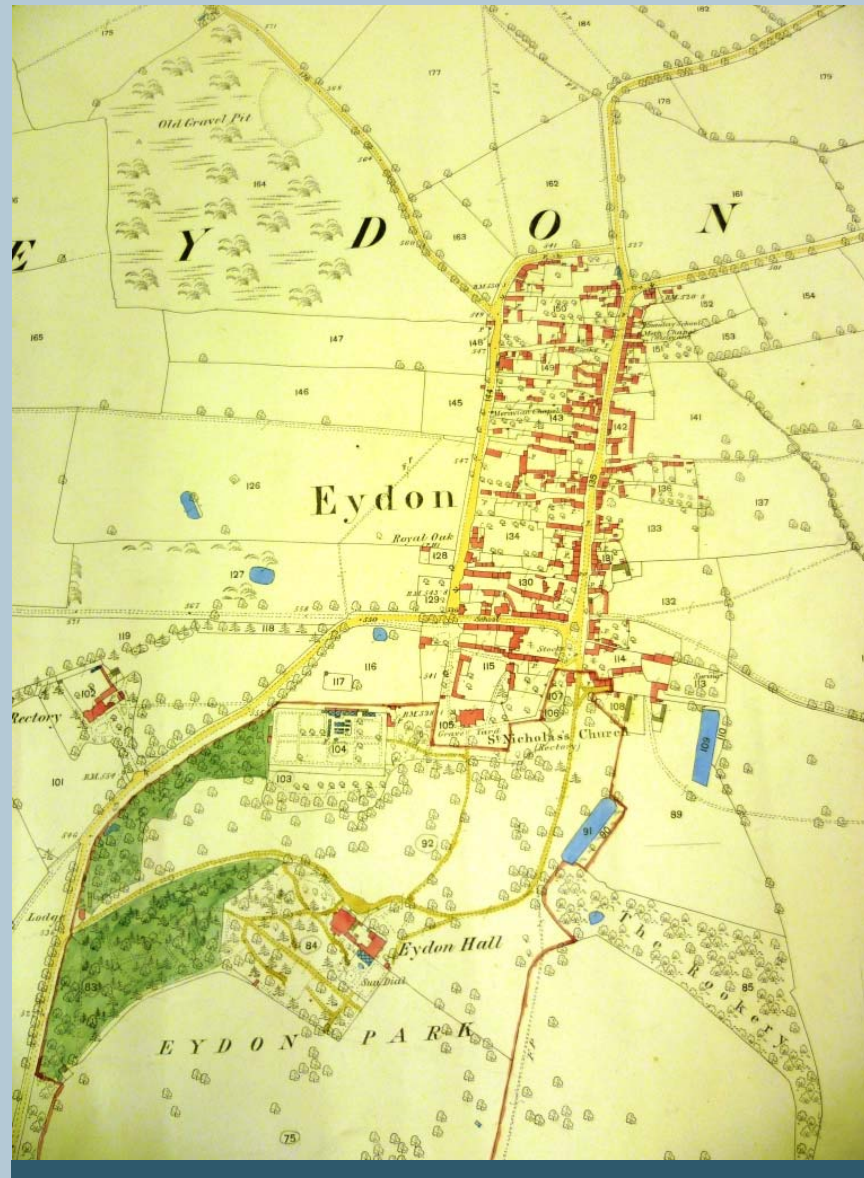


Figure 6: Historical map of Eydon dated 1885

grazing areas and fuel sources. In addition, the cost and labour involved in fencing the newly-enclosed land, while easily manageable for a prosperous landowner, was prohibitive for many smallholders, and led in some cases to the forfeiting of what little land they had. Eydon Manor was owned by an absentee landlord for the latter part of the 18th Century, which appears to have resulted in a lack of strong regulation of the post-enclosure process. A number of encroachments were made, in defiance of the Enclosure Award, which remain to this day, most notably the narrowness of the road to Byfield.

In 1788 the old Manor House was demolished to make way for the present house, which was built between 1789 and 1791.

19th Century

The population of the parish as recorded in the 1801 census was 484. By 1841 this had risen to 647, but fell back by the end of the century to around 500. In 1825 the then Rectory (now known as Rectory Farm) ceased to be used as the vicarage. In 1856 a new, larger Rectory was built in a large field to the south-west of the village. The first village school was completed in 1851 and opened that year.

3. History and development

Archaeological research potential

Eydon does not appear to have been the subject of archaeological study in the recent past. It is therefore difficult to estimate the archaeological potential of the village, as it is not clear how well artefacts have survived.

Visible earthworks in the fields on the west side of Lime Avenue suggest that remnants of medieval house platforms may survive here. If disturbance to the ground is likely to take place in this area, it would be advisable to seek advice from the County Archaeologist on the desirability of archaeological study or a watching brief.

The house and garden plots either side of the High Street have been continuously occupied for many centuries. There may be archaeological remains surviving below the current ground level. In order to build up a better understanding of Eydon's history, it is suggested that any finds of archaeological remains are reported to the County Council's archaeological service in order to be noted on the Historic Environment Record.

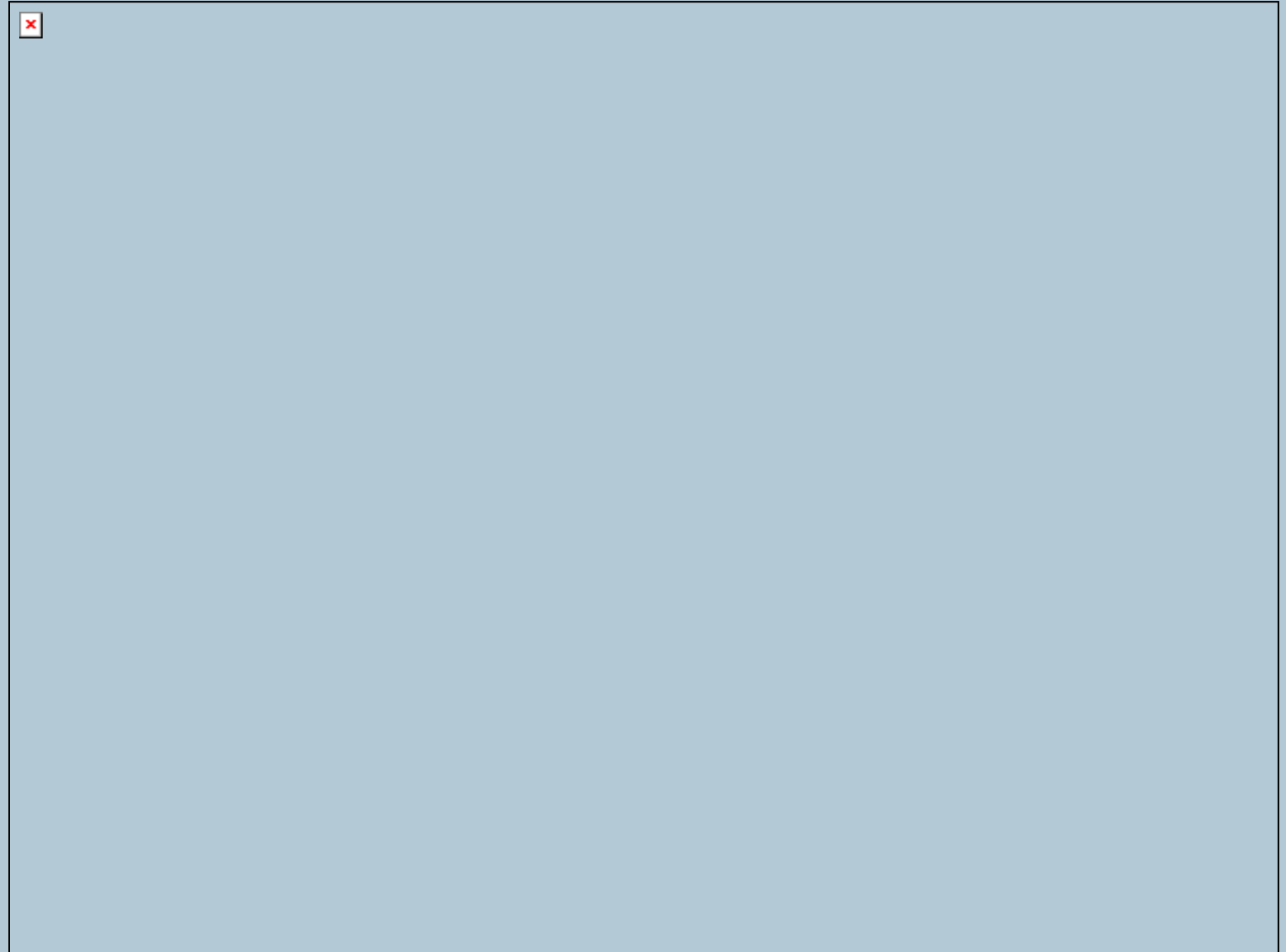


Figure 7: Eydon 1891

Spatial & Architectural Analysis

Street pattern, footpaths, means of enclosure

The linear character of Eydon's "street-village" layout is emphasised by its pattern of lanes and streets. Several narrow lanes link the High Street and Lime Avenue. They run between plot boundaries and allow the backland areas to be experienced as part of the village's historic environment.

Limestone walls, laid in narrow courses with the mortar well back from the face of the stone, are the principal means of enclosure in the conservation area. Walls delineating the linear plot boundaries between High Street and Lime Avenue are particularly important to the character of this area.

Trees and open spaces

Lime trees line the west side of Lime Avenue, growing at the back of the footway. The semi formality of these trees and the contrast with the adjacent informal pasture land contributes to Eydon's distinctive character.

The principal public open space within the conservation area is the green at the southern end of High Street. It makes a significant contribution to the character of the village.



Figure 8: Traditional stone walls are an essential element of the character of the conservation area.



Figure 9: Narrow lanes linking the High Street with Lime Avenue allow permeability and reinforcing the linear character of the spaces.



Figure 10: The green is the focal point of the village and an important open space.



Figure 11: Mature lime trees in Lime Avenue, formerly called "The Back".

Spatial & Architectural Analysis

Settlement form

The settlement form is strongly linear, with a strong and fairly regular building line edging the High Street. There are few private gardens fronting the High Street, giving a more dense settlement form than is common in many rural villages. The planned street-village layout survives well in the long narrow plots (many still delineated by stone walls) which run between High Street and Lime Avenue.

Scale, grain and massing

The buildings along the principal roads are almost entirely two storey in height. The majority of buildings facing High Street are aligned parallel with the road, whereas towards the rear of plots they tend to be aligned parallel with plot boundaries. The scale of the built environment is modest, with low-eaved cottages the predominant form.

The built environment is generally fine grained, with building footprints generally linear and fairly narrow. The linear grain of plots facing Lime Avenue is weaker than the High Street, partly as a result of gradual development during the 20th Century and partly reflecting the “back lane” character of the street.

Landmarks

The village green, with its stocks and pump, is the key landmark in the conservation area (Figure 15). It marks the meeting point between the village cottages and the seats of historic power and authority: the church and manor house.

While the church tower (Figure 12) is a key landmark in the wider landscape, the church and churchyard stand somewhat separated from the village, with footpaths to the church walled on either side creating a sense of journeying from the village to the church.

Key views and vistas

Views within the conservation area are progressive, following the linear nature of the public realm. More informal linear views are revealed as one walks up the narrow lanes connecting High Street and Lime Avenue.

Glimpsed views of open countryside beyond the built up area of the village emphasise its rural setting and make a positive contribution to the character of the spaces within the conservation area (Figure 14). Views into the conservation area from outside are limited by the way the



Figure 12: *The church is separated from the secular landscape of the Green by almost maze-like stone walled footpaths.*



Figure 13: The building line along High Street is set against the pavement edge, giving a sense of density and enclosure.

village nestles into the topography of



Figure 14: Glimpsed views from the High Street over the countryside beyond the village connect the settlement with its rural setting.



Figure 15: The Green is the key public open space in the village.

Spatial & Architectural Analysis

Architectural characteristics

The majority of historic building in the conservation area are vernacular in character, with a strong horizontal emphasis.

Many of buildings in the village date from the 17th Century. They are characterised by the steep pitch of their roofs and evidence for small window openings, which may have been altered over time. It is possible to see evidence of fire reddening of some of the stone in buildings which survived the historic fires in the village.

Building materials

The predominant construction material in the conservation area is locally-quarried ironstone, which is a warm orange-grey in colour and fairly fine in texture. The near-universal use of this material lends a strong sense of unity to the built environment.

While there are no longer any active quarries in Eydon, it is possible to source ironstone from other local quarries that is a reasonably good match with the local stone. If new stone is used in the conservation area, attention should be paid to the size and shape of the blocks to avoid

an over-regular block-like finished appearance.

Roofscape

Roofs are generally covered with Welsh slate, which became more readily available from the end of the 18th Century when canal transport facilitated its import. The slate is likely to have replaced earlier thatched or tiled roofs. Today, just one thatched roof exists in the village and makes an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. Clay plain tiles were made in the area until the end of the 19th Century, but there is little evidence of historic tiled roofs in the village today.

Windows and doors

There are a good number of stone mullion windows in the conservation area, most of which appear to date from the 17th Century. They typically have a plain chamfer without complex mouldings, and some have hood moulds over the windows, with simple label stops. In some cottages on High Street, earlier stone mullions have been replaced with two-light or three-light timber casements, and most 18th and 19th Century cottages have timber casement windows. There are a small number of 19th Century sash windows.



Figure 16: Roofs are mainly slated in Welsh slate, or plain tile. A single thatched roof serves as a reminder of the traditional predominant roofing material in the area.



Figure 18: The three storey building occupied by the Royal Oak inn is dated 1692. It is one of very few three storey buildings in the conservation area.



Figure 17: 17th Century stone mullion windows and a four-centred arched doorway with hood moulds over give this building an imposing presence on School Lane.



Figure 19: This row of cottages on Lime Avenue is one of the few buildings in the conservation area with 19th Century sash windows.

Management Plan

Opportunities for management and enhancement

Eydon is an attractive and distinctive settlement. While its special historic character is clear, it is important that the features which contribute to its character are formally recognised and celebrated. It can also be useful to identify opportunities to enhance the conservation area. Positive conservation management will ensure the ongoing protection of the village's special character.



Figure 23: The Church of St Nicholas

Boundary walls

Limestone boundary walls constructed of narrow-coursed rubble and pointed in lime mortar, are a significant element of the character of Eydon. Existing walls taller than one metre next to a highway and two metres elsewhere in the conservation area are protected from unauthorised demolition. Any new boundary walls should be constructed of suitable stone and be of appropriate height and coursing to fit well with existing walls.

Action: Boundary walls which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be retained. New boundary treatments should match the character of existing boundary walls.



Figure 24: Boundary walls are important

Tree management

Conservation area designation affords protection to trees from unauthorised felling or lopping. The lime trees along the Lime Avenue make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. There are also several attractive trees on the green, which act as a landmark and enhance this part of the conservation area.

Action: The existing avenue of trees along Lime Avenue should be retained. The trees on the green should be managed to promote their longevity. Opportunities should be taken as appropriate to plant young trees in order to ensure the continued presence of mature trees in the future.



Figure 25: Eydon village green

Street surfacing and markings

Street surfacing in Eydon is in reasonably good condition and does not detract from the attractiveness of the built environment. There are few painted road markings or highway signs and little street clutter. Simple white finger posts mark directions at junctions and are in keeping with the character of the conservation area. The absence of intrusive highway signs and markings is one of the positive elements of the conservation area and the present approach to highway marking and signage should be continued.

Action: Highway markings and signs should be kept to a minimum in order to minimise visual clutter and retain the character of the conservation area.



Figure 26: Road markings can impact on the character of the area

Management Plan

Protect archaeological remains

Eydon has been inhabited for around 1000 years and buried evidence of past occupation may survive below existing buildings and gardens. The archaeological potential in the conservation area is not fully known, but it is possible that exciting finds could be made. Development which may affect archaeological remains may require a watching brief to ensure that any archaeological finds are properly recorded.

Action:

Development which involves below-ground excavation should have regard to the potential for archaeological finds.

Protect surviving historic architectural forms

Despite the high level of listed building coverage in Eydon, there has been some incremental loss of traditional architectural detailing from unlisted buildings in the conservation area. The replacement of windows, doors or other architectural features with inappropriate materials and designs harms the appearance of individual buildings and also affects the wider streetscape. At present, there are no Article 4 Directions in

place in the conservation area. Article 4 Directions restrict harmful change to street-facing elevations by requiring owners to apply for planning permission to alter windows, doors or other elements on street-facing elevations.

Action:

Consult the community on placing Article 4 Directions to ensure that traditional architectural features of unlisted historic buildings are retained and alterations to street-facing elevations do not harm the character of the conservation area.



Figure 27: Evidence of historic detailing

Sensitive new development in the conservation area

To be successful, any future development within the conservation area needs to be mindful of the local character of the village, while at the same time being distinctly of the 21st

Century and addressing issues such as sustainability and energy efficiency.

Successful new development in historic areas should:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it
- Respect important views
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.

(Source: CABE & English Heritage publication 2001, *'Building in Context: New development in historic areas'*)

Action:

New development should respond sensitively and creatively to the historic environment.

Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

Development at the edges of the conservation area can have a significant impact on the character of the area and its sense of place. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area should have regard to its historic context and make use of traditional materials, appropriate scale, massing and plot layouts to reinforce the distinctive character of Eydon.

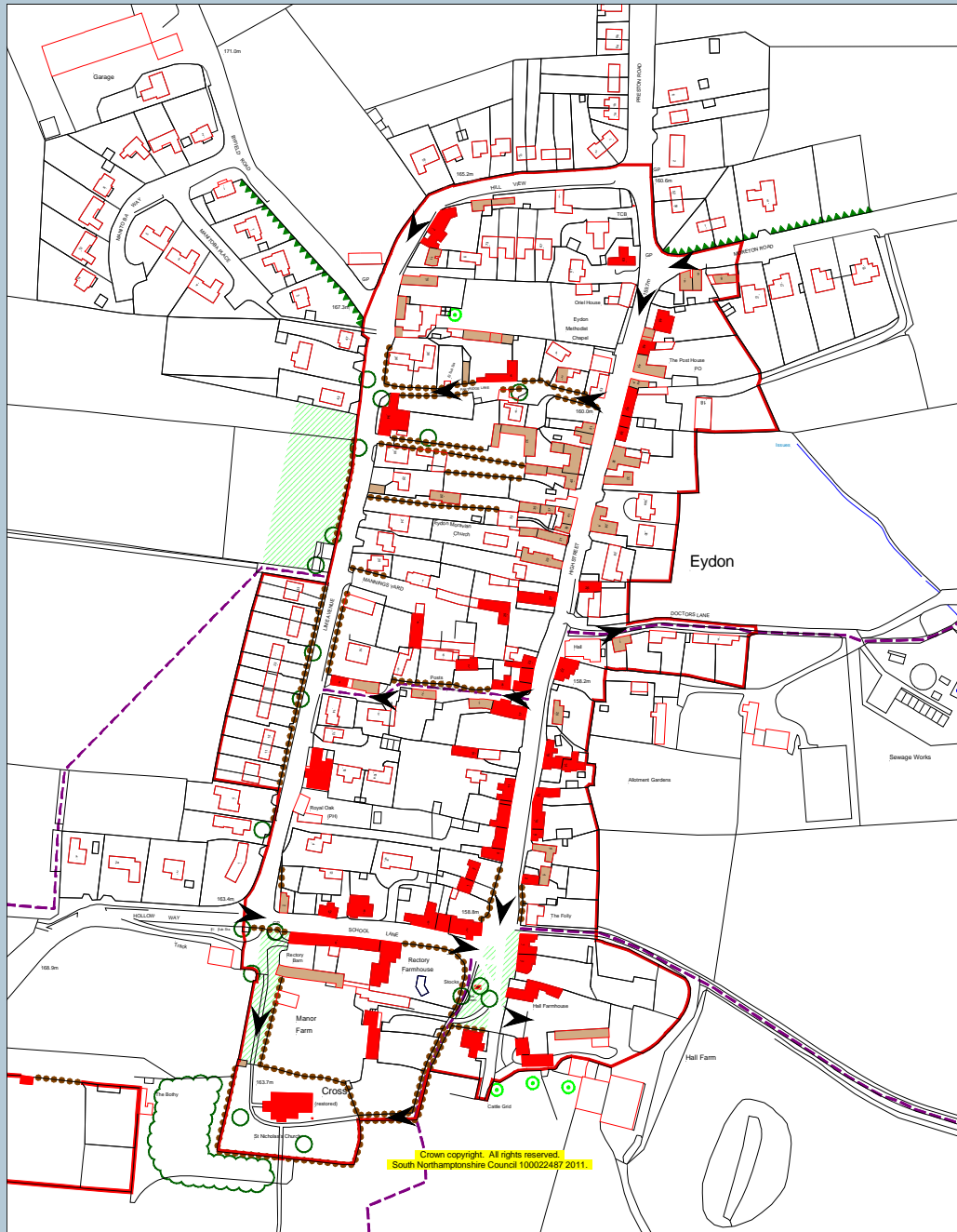
Action:

The impact of development on the character and appearance of the conservation area will be a consideration in the planning process. This applies equally to development outside the conservation area if it is likely to affect the setting of the conservation area.



Figure 28: Evidence of Eydon's agricultural past.

Key map: Eydon Conservation Area



Eydon Conservation Area



Figure 29: Important features within the Eydon Conservation Area © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. South Northamptonshire Council. 100022487

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Sources of Further Information

References

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Acknowledgements

Much work has been done by Eydon Parish Council in the preparation of a Village Design Statement for the parish. It is anticipated that this appraisal document will be used in conjunction with the Village Design Statement.

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How to find out more about historic buildings and local history

Brackley Library has a local history collection which includes books on historic buildings.

There are also a wide range of national societies devoted to the study and conservation of historic buildings. Many of these national bodies have regional groups in this area.

- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) www.spab.org.uk . A good source of practical information about looking after buildings of all periods.
- Ancient Monuments Society www.ams.org.uk . Devoted to the study and conservation of ancient monuments, historic building and fine old craftsmanship, with a particular interest in church buildings.
- Georgian Group www.georgiangroup.org.uk Interested in the study and conservation of 18th and early 19th Century buildings.
- Victorian Society www.victoriansociety.org.uk Interested in the appreciation and conservation of 19th and early 20th century buildings of all types.

The following websites are a useful source of local history information:

- <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/> - national archaeological data service.
 - www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ - historic public records online.
 - www.britishhistory.ac.uk/ - digital library of local history resources.
- www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/Environ/historic/Pages/smr.aspx—Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record

Eydon local history

Eydon Historical Research Group is an active local history group in the village. The group usually meets at 8:30pm on the last Tuesday of the month at the Royal Oak to discuss progress and share research. New members are welcome to attend but please make contact first to confirm date, time and place.

www.eydonhistoricalresearchgroup.org