

Eglington

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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Preface

Section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that 'It shall be the duty of a Local Planning Authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.' In fulfilment of this statutory obligation Alnwick District Council commissioned Robin Kent Architecture & Conservation, on 27 October 2004, to undertake conservation area character appraisals focusing on 8 of the Council's 10 conservation areas: Alnwick, Alnmouth, Eglingham, Felton, Glanton, Lesbury, Newton on the Moor and Whittingham.

Conservation areas are built-up areas with special architectural or historic character, which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. When conservation areas were first introduced in 1967, designation carried no special restrictions. In 1974, the control of certain kinds of demolition and the protection of trees was introduced. In certain cases, Article 4 Directives may be made, restricting permitted development.

The main aim of conservation areas is the preservation of buildings and the spaces between them, to suggest stability and continuity in a rapidly changing world. By preserving distinctive local character, conservation areas can improve the local economy, encourage tourism, attract grants and investment, raise property values, prevent un-neighbourly alterations and encourage traditional building trades.

These character appraisals closely follow the framework set out in the Council's brief and the consultant's proposal dated September 2004, including guidance published by English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, English Historic Towns Forum and other authorities. They include information supplied by the Council, supplemented by archival research and townscape analysis; nevertheless they are necessarily 'snapshots' of each area at a particular time and exclusion of any aspects should not be taken as implying they are of no importance. The commission included reviewing the boundaries of the conservation area, outlining other issues relating to management and making recommendations for changes.

1 Introduction



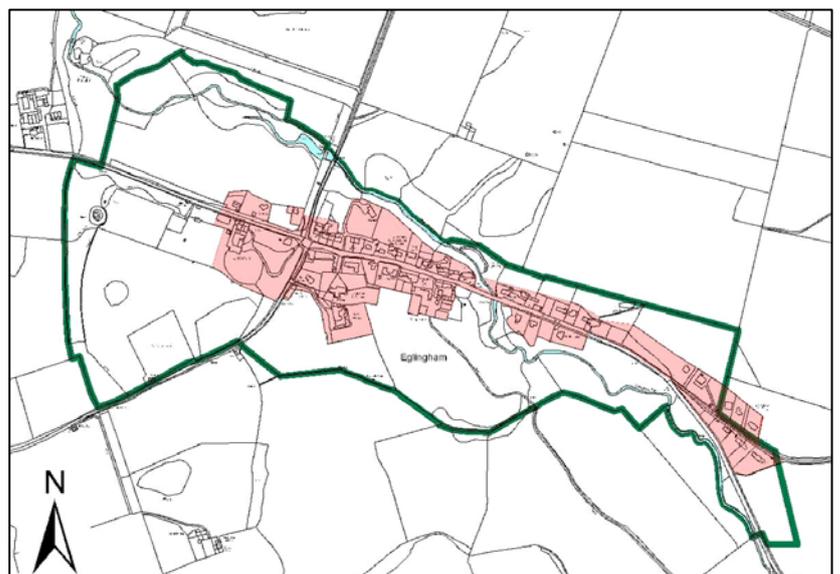
Reproduced from OS map. Crown copyright.

Eglingham is about 10 miles from Wooler and 7 miles from Alnwick, on the B6346; it straddles the valley of the Eglingham Burn, a tributary of the River Aln. The nearest station is 'Alnmouth for Alnwick' on the main East Coast railway line.

The surrounding area is characterised by the Countryside Commission as the 'Northumberland sandstone hills', the underlying geology being Carboniferous Fell sandstone; much of the building stone in the village was probably quarried from the site opposite the Mill. Building stone was also available locally on Beanley Moor. Coal seams are also present. The surrounding countryside is recognised to be of High Landscape Value in the District Plan.

The Parish population is 357 in 137 households (with approx 100 living in the village itself, in 58 households). The village has a high proportion of retired residents, and in common with several of the areas studied, property prices are too high for many local people. There is a local primary school in the village, but there are no shops only a Village Farm that sells vegetables at the gate.

The conservation area was designated in 1972, and includes almost all the settlement and a considerable amount of surrounding land.



Eglingham Conservation Area - settlement shown pink, boundary of conservation area green.(old boundary)

2 Historical Character



The church, with C13 tower

Eglingham is sited on the historic route between Alnwick and Wooler, and a church was in existence here in about 750; however, the site of the present church building, on the edge of the settlement, may imply that the church was re-sited here in the 12th or 13th century.

There are several early burial sites, Iron Age defensible sites and hut circles in the immediate surroundings, however, there is no evidence of a pre-Anglican settlement within the conservation area, apart from the tumulus and burial cist in the grounds of Eglingham Hall.



Armstrong's map of 1769 shows the Hall and Church enclosed, houses both sides of the road between the Church and Mill, and the old road south to Alnwick.

The number of settlements locally which have had medieval churches and chapels implies a relatively high population and extensive farming during this period; and the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation are also evident in parts of the conservation area. The corn mill (now the site of the village hall), recorded in 1378 but probably founded much earlier, would have been central to the local economy, and is the focus of several historic roads and tracks. The present village seems to have grown organically along the road between the two focal points of the church and mill, the necessary re-grading of the road for horses and carts resulting in the raised areas on either side which are part of the historic character of the conservation area. In the past, the road widened towards the mill, forming a space for animals to wait and vehicles to be turned; this survives as the open area in front of the community centre, now walled-in. The large millpond was constructed in the 1770's when agricultural improvements upstream meant that the previous mill lade no longer carried enough flow. Though now derelict and partially reclaimed by natural vegetation, it is important historically and as a local beauty spot.



The millpond - Tarry Road

The road past the millpond led to the Tarry Colliery on the moor to the north, and is now well used for recreation. The colliery was in production by the 18th century, and possibly earlier, as remains of iron smelting has been found on the moors. However mining has never been as important here as in some parts of Northumberland: in 1861 approximately 15% of the working population of the village were miners, compared to 30% in agriculture and 25% in domestic service. The colliery was closed in 1910.



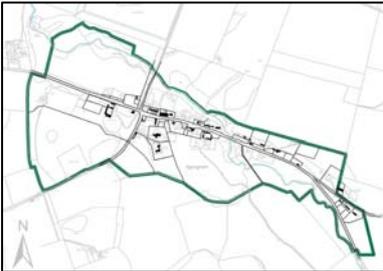
Eglingham Hall from the south, in its designed landscape.

From the Reformation until the early C20 the north side of the village was owned by the Ogle family and the area



The Lodge, Eglingham Hall

round the Tankerville Arms and Village Farm by the Earls of Tankerville; the Church retained some land on which a succession of vicarages was built, most recently in the early 1980's. Eglingham Hall was an Ogle residence; the building probably originally dates from the 16th or 17th century, and may be on the site of an earlier bastle house, apparently described in 1650 as 'a savage retreat for a discontented and gloomy laird'. This mixed ownership has resulted in the lack of a village' style' of building.



Eglingham in the 1860's - based on 1st edition OS map

Delph Cottage (1823) and the Lodge (1826) were built when the roads were re-aligned and the landscaped park extended. The dressed stone walls of Tarry Road may date from this time, and the trees and 'Rookery' shown on the 1860's OS map as extending as far as Cockhall, are still visible as relics of the designed landscape.

Before the formation of the turnpike road linking Alnwick and Wooler in 1826/7 and the construction of a bridge to replace the 'High Ford'; the Alnwick road followed the line of the footpath from the mill south-east over another ford across the burn to Bassington, through Hulne Park. The footbridge just south of 'Finials' is important in marking its line.



Pillbox - Eglingham Hall

The houses to the east of the burn date from after the construction of the new road; the Ogle Arms (now Ogle House) was a stage for coaches between Alnwick and Wooler. The group of houses further east, beyond the fork in the road on land in the Church's ownership, have until very recently been physically separate from the rest of the village, giving them less importance in the conservation area.

Three pillboxes dating from WW II are sited in the village, important as part of the national Stop-Line defences which locally ran from the coast inland to Wooler and back to the coast via Alnwick.

Summary of historical features:

- Church and mill as focal points
- Ribbon development along single road, lowered in places
- Designed landscape of Eglingham Hall and associated features
- Development contained within the traditional settlement boundary
- Pillboxes, millpond

3 Architectural and Townscape Character

Setting

Eglingham is set in the gently rolling countryside between the rivers Breamish and Aln. The church is on a promontory between the main valley of the Eglingham Burn to the north and a shallower depression on the south containing a small tributary; the village slopes down from east and west towards the Burn, with views of the church spire from the west. The surrounding hills form the backdrop to the village street, contributing to the peaceful, rural atmosphere, which is part of its special character.

Townscape

The main road is foundational to the townscape, unifying the village.

At the west end of the conservation area it enters through a thin screen of trees, swooping down to Eglingham Hall stables, which marks the start of the village, glimpsed as roofs beyond. The nearly straight path of the road, stepping down to the bridge at the centre, allows long views and gives a strong sense of direction. The conservation area is characterised by small groups of houses dotted irregularly along the road, set back slightly, with three slightly larger groups of buildings on the south side - the Hall stables, the Church with vicarages, and Village Farm - providing interest along the way and creating more intimate semi-enclosed backwaters. However there has been very little backland development otherwise.

Building density is highest in the historic centre, between the church and bridge, but even here the impression is one of open linearity with tightly framed views between buildings, of the surrounding hills. The narrow road is given a sense of spaciousness by the setting of the buildings a short distance back from the road, behind low stone retaining walls or raised on grassy banks, increasing the sense of enclosure and directional movement along the street. At the burn, the road narrows suddenly to the bridge, but views open up dramatically to the south.

To the east of the bridge, the street is level and the houses more dispersed, with some, such as the old smithy, set well back from the road. A backdrop of trees and larger houses rises to the north with important open



View of the conservation area from the east



Buildings more dense in the village centre - Tankerville Arms



Houses strung along the road - looking east from the bridge



Trees and walls - Tarry Road



Fences and hedges - Beanley Road

views continuing between the houses towards the river valley and hills to the south.

Tarry Road, with its tunnel of mature trees, has something of the character of an estate drive, gently curving downhill, lined by retaining walls of high quality masonry, encouraging exploration of the millpond area.



Mill House

Beanley Road, on the other hand, with agricultural fencing and the remains of hedging, retains the character of a rural lane as it circles round the grounds of Eglingham Hall and meanders up into the countryside beyond.

Key buildings

The largest buildings in the conservation area, the Church and Eglingham Hall, have very little direct impact on the streetscape. However they act as nuclei for several important building groups, centred on the Hall stables, the Church and Village Farm with symbolic as well as townscape value (Village Farm being particularly important in views from the bridge), but generally buildings are modest and low-key in character, though of good quality, a relatively large number being listed (see Appendix 1)



Building group - Village Farm

Green spaces, trees etc

As noted in 1 above, the open spaces surrounding the settlement form a major component of the conservation area. The views thus protected are key to the character of the area, and the buildings at times are subservient to the views. This is obvious at the burn; the geographical centre of the village, where uninterrupted open views to the south, contrast with the steep riverbank and dense planting to the north.



Dense planting at the community centre to N and open view to S - the bridge

Apart from roadside verges, there is very little publicly accessible green open space, making wooded lanes, such as Tarry Road, important for public amenity and recreation.



Building group - the church

Mature trees are important to the conservation area. They mark important buildings such as the community centre, church and Hall, (although they actually obscure the community centre) and give Tarry Road much of its special character. Planting in front gardens softens the



Building group - Eglingham Hall Stables



Delph Lodge

line of buildings along the street. In the outlying parts of the conservation area large individual trees in hedgerows is a reminder of the essentially rural nature of the conservation area.

Built form

House types are varied, contributing to the informal, picturesque character of the area. However, they can be generally described as one or two storey, rectangular in plan with the ridge parallel with the road and ridgeline chimneys at gables. Some have clipped eaves and gable copes, and others projecting eaves and bargeboards. A few have dormers or gabled porches. Windows are vertical format, in a range of historic styles including shouldered, arched and with various glazing bar configurations adding special interest.

Materials, colours

The predominant walling material is buff sandstone, laid as coursed or random rubble, used for both buildings and boundary walls. Roofs are mainly Welsh slate.

Cast iron gutters and downpipes are painted black, and timber sash windows painted various colours, though white predominates.

Details

The gothic gable end of Mill House, the windows of Delph Lodge and other details on individual houses underline the special character of the village. There is also some interesting metalwork.

Many of the roadside walls are of good quality masonry with distinctive triangular section or castellated copes. Roadside details such as the mounting block and horse trough opposite the Tankerville Arms and several old style 30mph signs give special interest.



Wall copes – main road and Tarry Road



Window head detail



Metal gates – main road



Summary of architectural/townscape character:

- Small groups of houses along main road, with a few building groups stretching back from it
- Buildings set back slightly from road behind low walls with distinctive copings
- Open views of valley at village centre
- Walls and trees along Tarry Road
- Houses 1 or 2 storey, rectangular plan, gables and chimneys
- Windows vertical with varied detailing, dormers, porches etc
- Walls coursed buff sandstone, roofs Welsh slate
- 'Gothick' detailing, metal gates

4 Management Recommendations

Neutral and negative factors



3-storey buildings, raised above road, not on building line - The Terrace

In general the conservation area retains much of the character and interest for which it was originally designated. However, some neutral and negative factors can be distinguished.

The large new buildings to the west of The Terrace are out of scale and character with the remainder of the conservation area, particularly in their placement on the site. Some of the modern infill houses are also out of character with the area, either in their position on their site, form or details.



Old Smithy, Ogle Arms - B6346

Several of the older houses have unsuitable replacement windows or doors.

There is little public open space from which to appreciate the conservation area. This is particularly noticeable at the bridge, where it is difficult to stop and enjoy the views and the two large evergreen trees beside the Community Centre obscure the buildings and constrict the open space at this central point of the village.



Community centre and river bank obscured by trees and shrubs - the bridge

Listed Buildings

Besides Eglingham Hall and the Church, both listed Grade II*, several smaller buildings are listed Grade II. This includes Village Farm house (listed as Home Farm); its stone outbuildings could possibly be included for group value, in order to safeguard the complex if conversion to housing is ever proposed (See Appendix 1).

Buildings at Risk

No buildings in the village appear on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register. The Grade II listed Smithy is in poor condition, but undergoing renovation; it retains its forge, and forms an important part of the Ogle Arms complex to the east of the bridge, every effort should be made to encourage its conservation.

Management

If the shrubs at the Community Centre could be removed, and the area re-landscaped, a public area could be created forming a breathing space along the road with



New house respects plan form and building line - B6346



Importance of vegetation - B6346

room to sit and enjoy views over the valley to the south, as well as the picturesque river bank to the north.

Sympathetic development within the Conservation Area need not be ruled out; the new house being constructed next to the Tankerville Arms at the time of the audit seems to respect the conservation area in terms of siting and materials. As well as infill of this type additions and improvements to the existing building groups mentioned above could be considered, and could for example improve the important view of Village Farm from the bridge.

Street lighting is of indifferent quality and overhead wires disrupt views. Surfaces are generally tarmac, but stone kerbs survive. A public realm audit should be carried out; enhancements including re-surfacing which could both enhance the appearance of the conservation area and act as a traffic calming measure should be considered. Details such as the features in the wall opposite the Tankerville Arms and the 30mph signs should be carefully preserved.

Trees are important in the area, although a few are very mature and may be reaching the end of their life; replanting has unfortunately been carried out, using unsuitable non-indigenous species. A tree survey should be carried out to assess the age of trees and inform planned replanting to retain the character of the conservation area.

It would be worth considering the introduction of Article 4 directions in the conservation area, to prevent the erosion of the area's character by the accumulation of further small alterations. A photographic survey of all building frontages within the conservation area is suggested, to act as a baseline for future management.

Boundary Changes 2006

The rationale behind the original boundaries of the conservation area has apparently not been recorded. After the reappraisal of the area a few amendments have been recommended.

Much of the designed landscape of Eglingham Hall is within the conservation area, and it was suggested that the continuation of the tree belt and planting at Waulkmill Crag, should be included for completeness as it forms the northern setting of the conservation area. This

decision was decided against as there was little historical support for this change.

The three houses at the west end of the village on the Terrace have been included as they enclose the northern side of the Terrace - an important historic approach into the settlement from the east. Although the houses are relatively recent additions to the Terrace, they reflect the architectural style of Eglingham and merit inclusion. However, the main road to the east below the Terrace has always been outside the historic boundary of the village, and both it and the fields adjacent to the road do not contribute to the character of the remainder of the conservation area, therefore the area has been de-designated. Moreover, the current boundary has no rationale on the ground and the proposed revised boundary is considered more defensible.

Summary of management recommendations:

- Formation of new public space at Village Hall
- Carefully controlled infill development
- Consider Village Farm steading for listing
- Public realm audit and streetscape improvements, including street furniture and surfaces, traffic calming measures
- Tree survey, encourage appropriate replanting
- Article 4 directives to protect important details and finishes, particularly windows and doors, and prevent further erosion of character
- Photographic survey of all building frontages
- Consider buildings for listing, including Village Farm
- Boundary changes - include area A, exclude B

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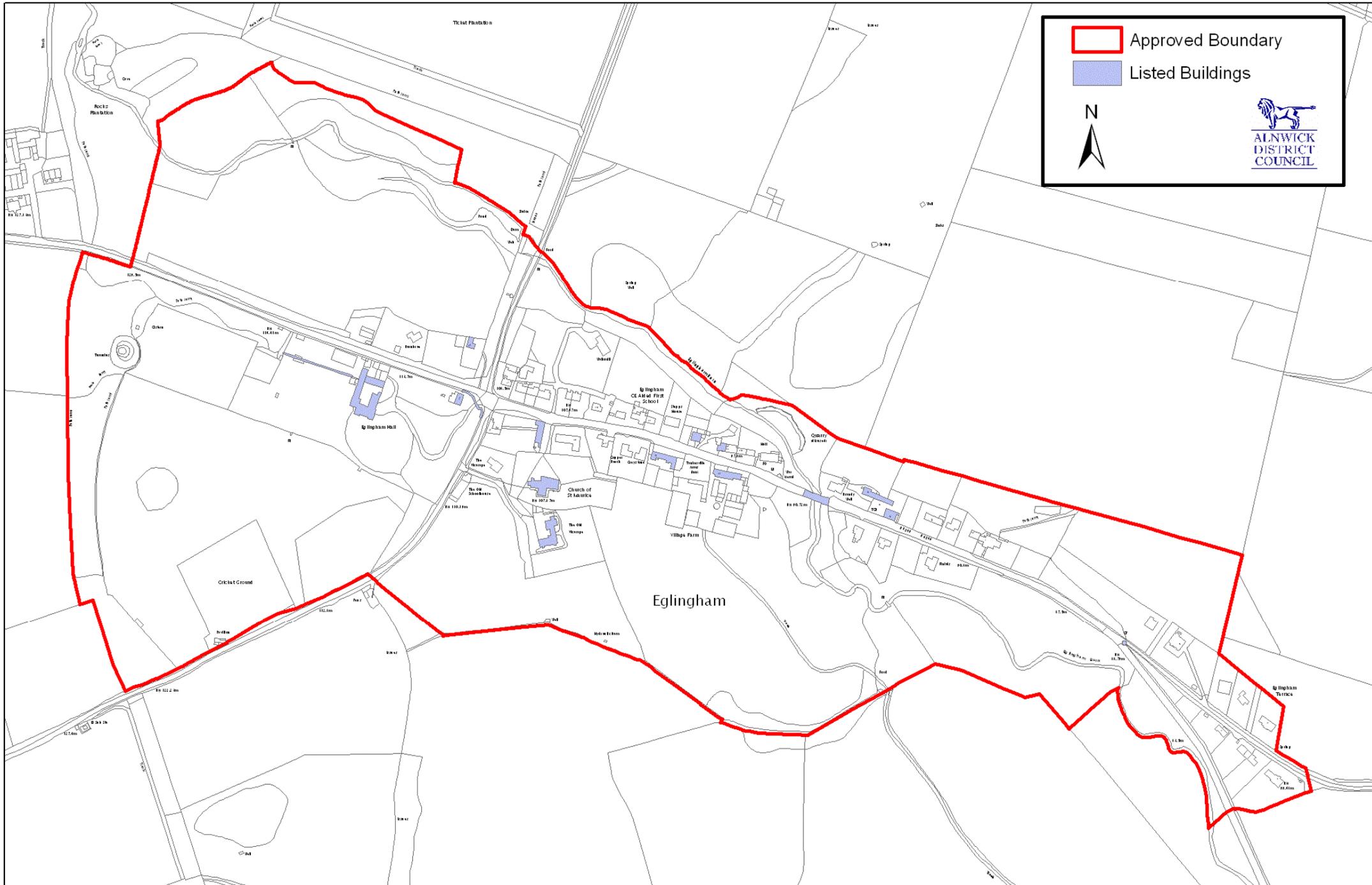
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Eglingham Conservation Area



Glossary

Public Realm Audit Streetscape Surveys

A focal point of conservation area designation is the careful maintenance and use of public space. This incorporates assessment of signage use, surface materials, street furniture, parking and traffic management issues. A public realm audit/streetscape survey considers the suitability of these elements against the character of the area and the practicality of their position and location and provides an opportunity to define and enhance the conservation area environment.

Article 4 Directions

The aim of an Article 4(2) Direction is to encourage the retention of high quality architectural features on buildings and to preserve and enhance the conservation area of which they are part. 'Like for like' repairs and reinstatement of architectural features will be encouraged, along with the removal of previously unsympathetic changes to buildings.

In order to keep control over development in Conservation Areas and very occasionally outside Conservation Areas, the Council is able to make an 'Article 4 Direction', the effect of which is to take away 'permitted development' rights, meaning that Planning Permission will be required.

Where there is not a Direction, owners of houses within a conservation area have rights to undertake considerable alterations to their property without the need for planning permission (Permitted Development Rights). Where these rights are unchecked they can undermine and erode the 'special interest' of a conservation area, allowing changes to the windows and doors, additions such as porches and general lack of attention to detail.

Design Information and Guidelines

Alnwick District Council has undertaken a study of the district to identify the principal characteristics of the built environment. This has provided the basis of three documents that aim to provide recommendations for new development and design guidelines for alterations to existing building

The following publications are available from the Alnwick District Council -

- **Guide to historic windows**
- **Colour Schemes**
- **Conversion of Rural Buildings**

A.O.N.B – Design Guide

Northumberland County Council together with Alnwick and Berwick District Council's, have a responsibility to protect and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. To achieve this aim, a series of 'Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guides' have been produced. These guides focus not only on the character of traditional local buildings and their repair and maintenance but incorporate a strategy for quality housing design that benefits both the rural community and environment.

Alnwick District Council - Historic Buildings Grant scheme.

The main purpose of Historic Buildings Grants scheme is to ensure the continued survival of important historic fabric, and to enhance and preserve the appearance of listed buildings or buildings of architectural importance.