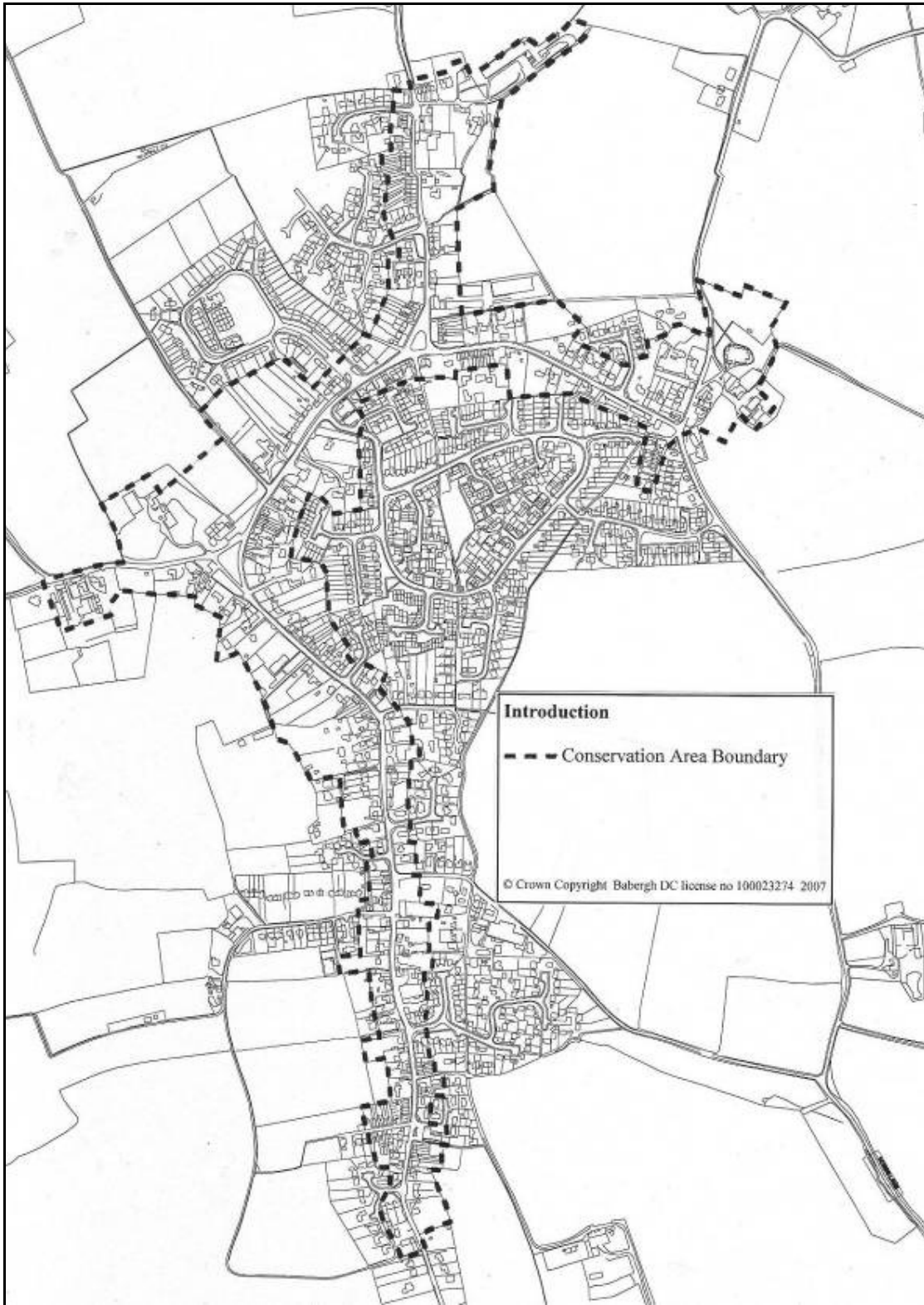


conservation area appraisal



Introduction

The conservation area in Glemsford was originally designated by West Suffolk County Council in 1973, and inherited by Babergh District Council at its inception in 1974. The boundary was revised by Babergh in 2001.

The Council has a duty to review its conservation area designations from time to time, and this appraisal examines Glemsford under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's new 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' (2006).

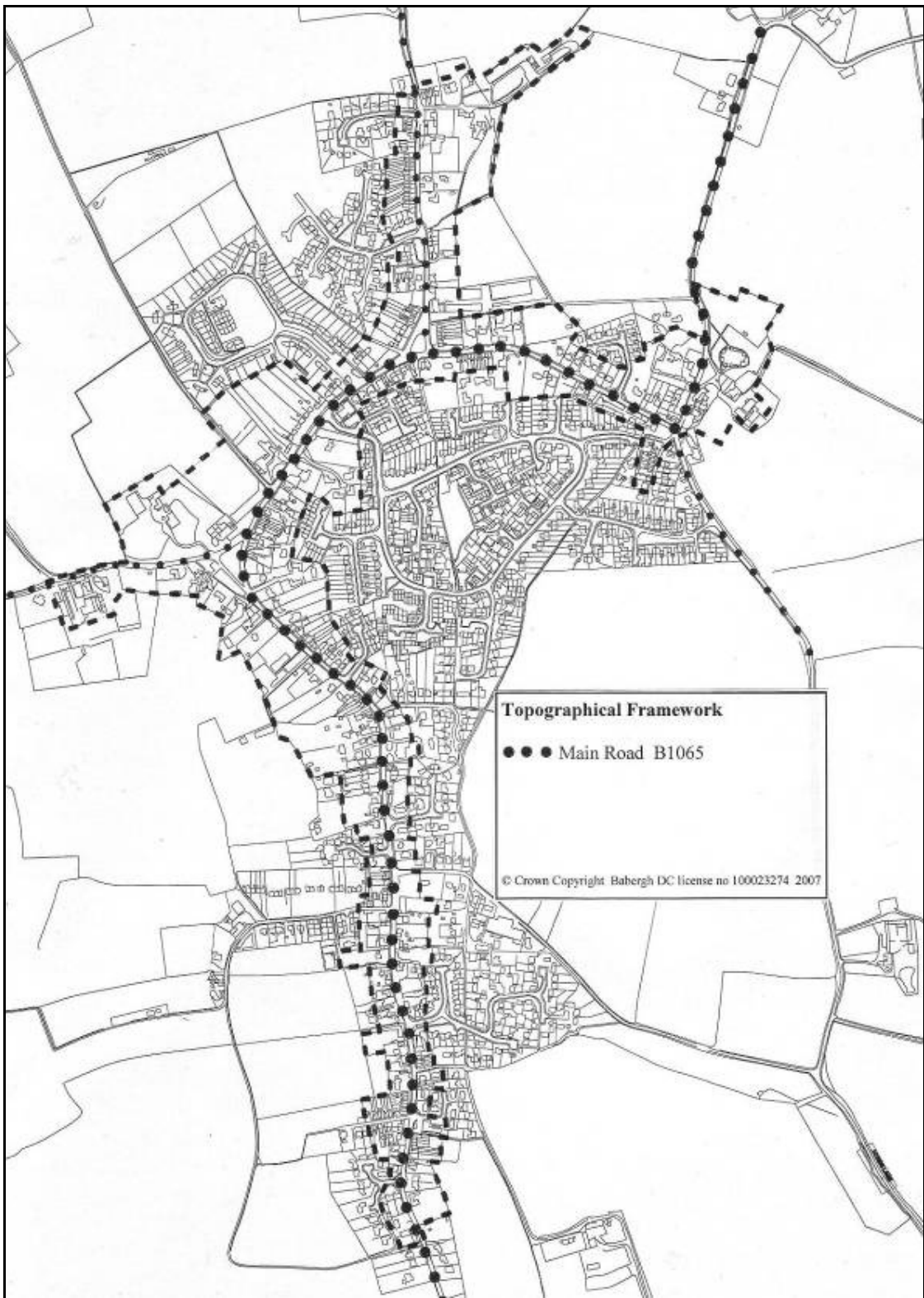
As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Glemsford's built environment in conservation terms and is essentially an update of a document produced in 2000, when the village was the subject of a HERS grant scheme.



As a document it is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient for the briefing of the Planning Officer when assessing proposed works in the area. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.

As the English Heritage guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.

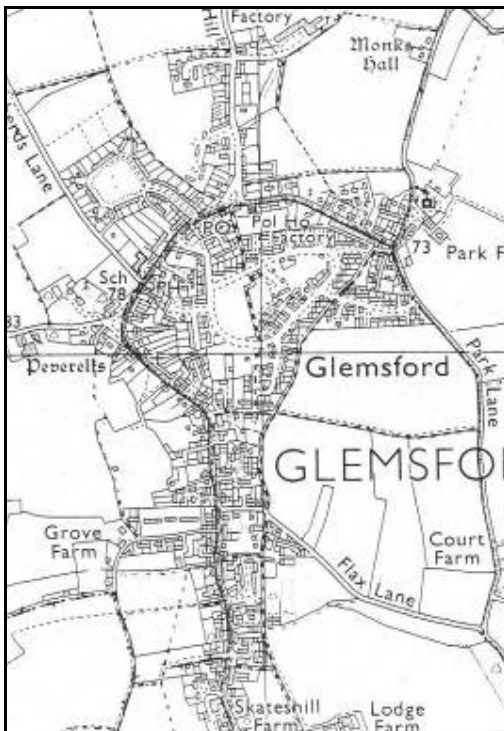
Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Babergh District Council 2007.



Topographical Framework

Glemsford is a large village in west Suffolk, most of which is strung out along about two kilometres of road that stretches over a hill between two river valleys. The southern valley is that of the river Stour, here flowing eastwards en route for Sudbury and its eventual meeting with the sea at Harwich.

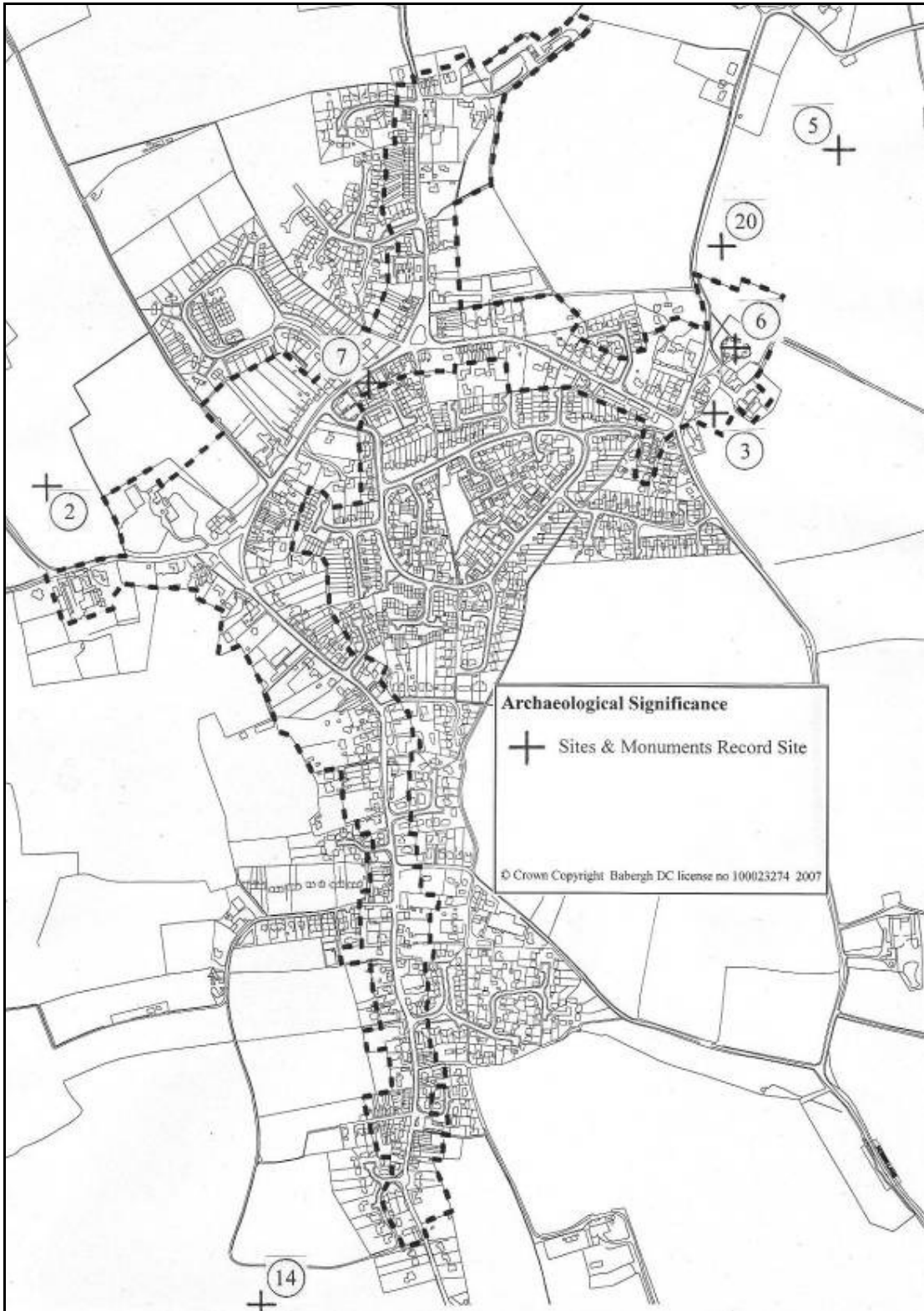
Immediately north of here, up Skate's Hill, lies Egremont Street, one of the village's historic nuclei. Beyond this, ascending further, up Hunt's Hill, lies the northern part of the village with three further historic nuclei, centred on Tye Green, Fair Green and across to the east, Churchgate.



Beyond this the land dips away again to the east, falling to the valley of the river Glem, a south flowing tributary which meets the Stour at Glem Bridge in the south-eastern corner of the parish.

Historically the river valleys have been the main routes of communication, the Stour valley containing both the railway and the A1092, former turnpike road from Sudbury to Clare, whilst the Glem valley contains the B1066 running north towards Bury St Edmunds.

The local geology is mostly boulder clay overlying chalk, but there are patches scattered around the village, just off the higher ground, of glacial sands and gravels.



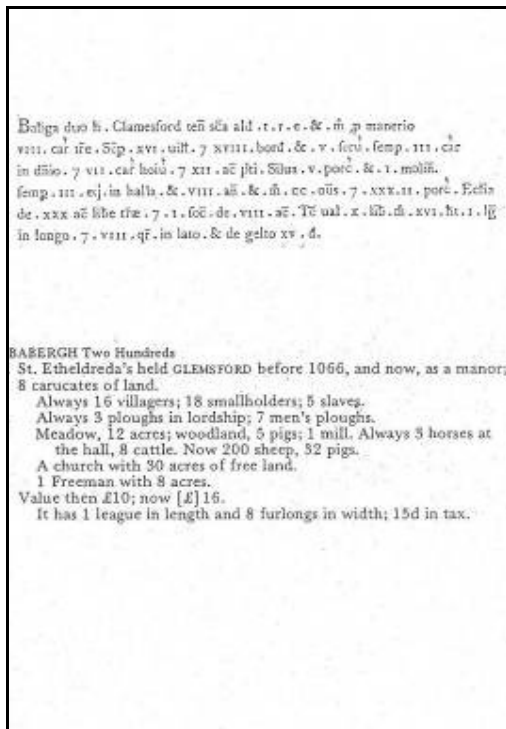
Archaeological Significance

Glemsford parish is fairly rich in archaeological remains, although few of the sites listed in the Suffolk Sites and Monuments Record are within the built up area.

A cluster of sites to the east around the medieval church comprise a ring ditch, a Saxon find and a medieval moated site.

Another cluster of sites can be found in the south-eastern corner of the parish, near Glem Bridge, comprising two ring ditches, an enclosure and a tumulus.

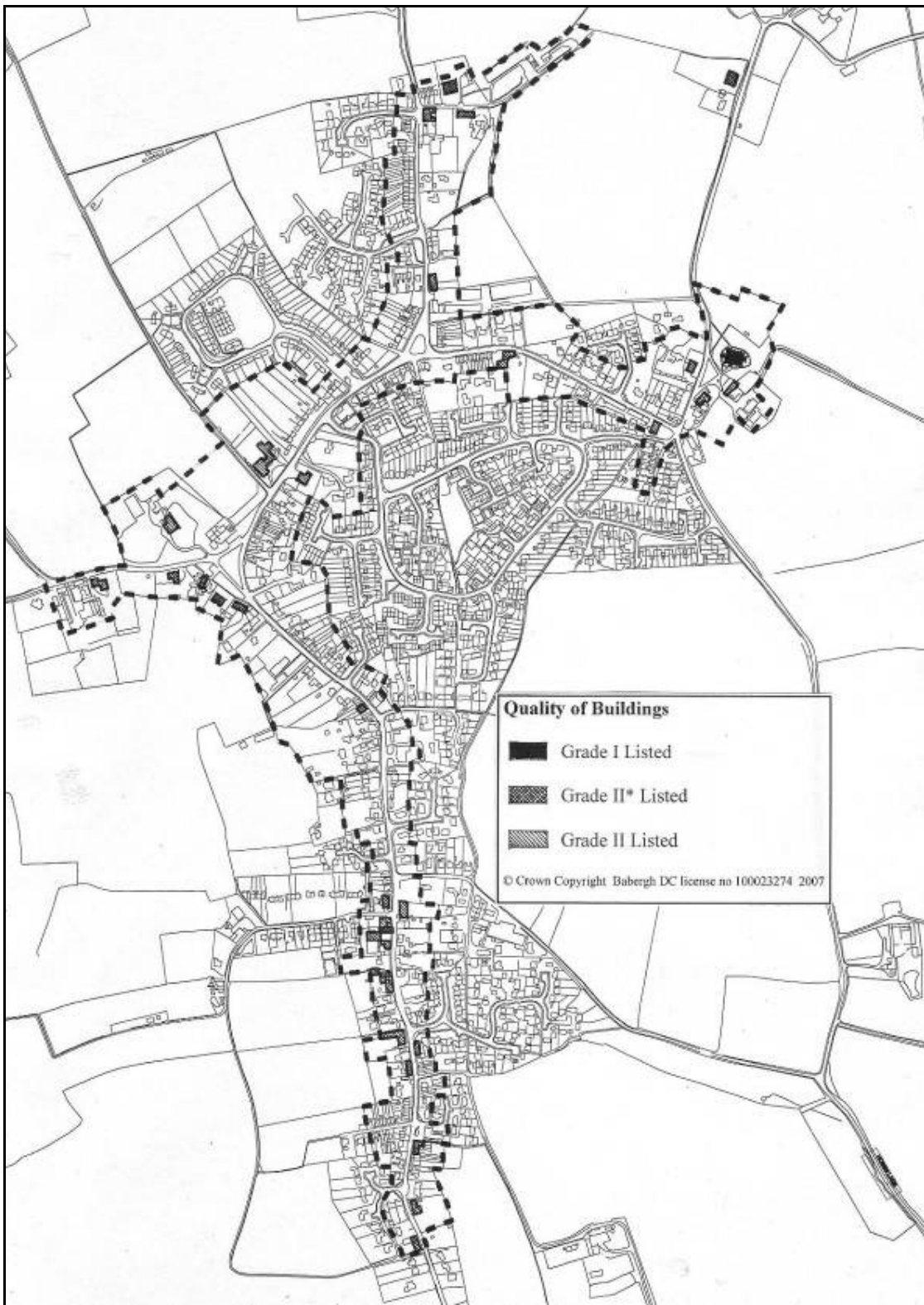
From here the A1092 road to Clare across the south of the parish follows the route of a former Roman road.



Elsewhere there are remains covering all periods from a Mesolithic flint axe and Neolithic axe head, through further ring ditches to the post-medieval remains of a watermill and the site of a priest's college.

Glemsford is included in the Domesday survey of 1086, which mentions twelve acres of meadow, woodland for five pigs, a mill and a church with 30 acres of free land, all held by St Etheldreda's.

There are two remnants of ancient woodland in the south-eastern corner of the parish, and there is documentary evidence of a medieval deer park.

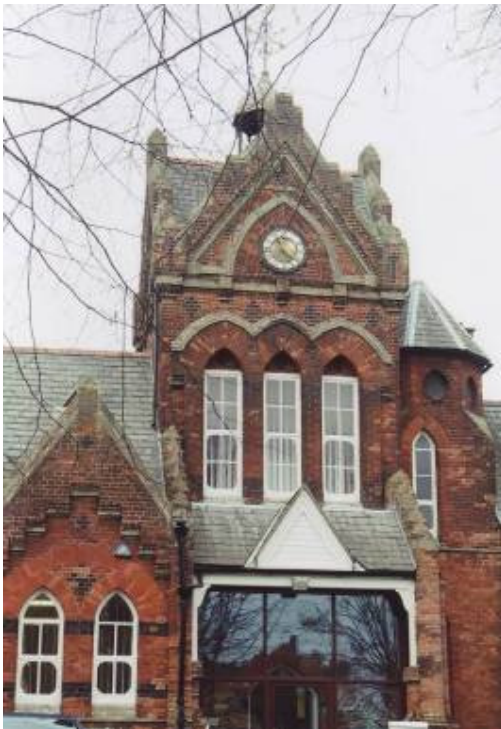


Intrinsic Quality of Buildings

The listed buildings in Glemsford fall roughly into four separate clusters that represent the areas of historic settlement.

The majority are grade II listed houses of timber frame construction, but each cluster has its own little gem. Angel House in Egremont Street to the south is a grade II listed house adjoining the Angel Inn. It has exposed timber framing with a jettied first floor and a fine corner post depicting the Archangel Michael and a dragon. This may signify the Gildhall for the Egremont Street settlement, remote from the Church.*

Further north on Tye Green is Peverells, another grade II listed house originally a 15th Century hall house, again with exposed timber framing.*



At the far north end of the village off Brook Street is Chequers, 13-17 Chequers Lane, again grade II with exposed timber framing and very similar in design to the grade II* Monk's Hall, out of the village to the east.*

Finally in the eastern cluster is the grade I listed Church of St Mary, dating from the 14th Century. It has a Decorated west tower and the more usual Suffolk church Perpendicular elsewhere. Pevsner describes "a good north aisle roof with carved beams".

One other building deserves note; the grade II listed school near Tye Green in red brick with its large clock tower was built in 1874.



Traditional Building Materials

Glemsford is fairly typical of south Suffolk in terms of the building materials employed there. Many of the older buildings, the majority of those listed, are rendered timber frames, some of the finer ones with exposed studwork, not otherwise much seen in Suffolk.

Later buildings are more often in brick, usually the local soft red variety (including an interesting unlisted one in rat trap bond on Hunt's Hill) and occasionally in the harder white brick or with white brick detailing.

The brick buildings have sometimes been rendered or painted, but fortunately this has not impinged on the many fine red brick terraces.



The now converted Ebenezer Baptist Chapel and its adjoining cottage on Egremont Street are unusually of shuttered clay construction with a lime render finish, not quite the 'clay lump' more common in north Suffolk.



Traditional windows feature widely around the village, and where they occur on unlisted buildings, the threat from the uPVC salesmen has now been averted by the 2002 Article 4(2) Direction.

Roofs are variously thatched on the older buildings, or plain tiles where this has been replaced, and slate on the more recent brick buildings. There is also a scattering of clay pantiles on outbuildings and some corrugated metal or asbestos roofs on the more recent industrial buildings.



Hierarchy of Spaces

Glemsford village is essentially linear in its historic form, punctuated at its northern end by the three greens at Tye Green, Fair Green and Churchgate.

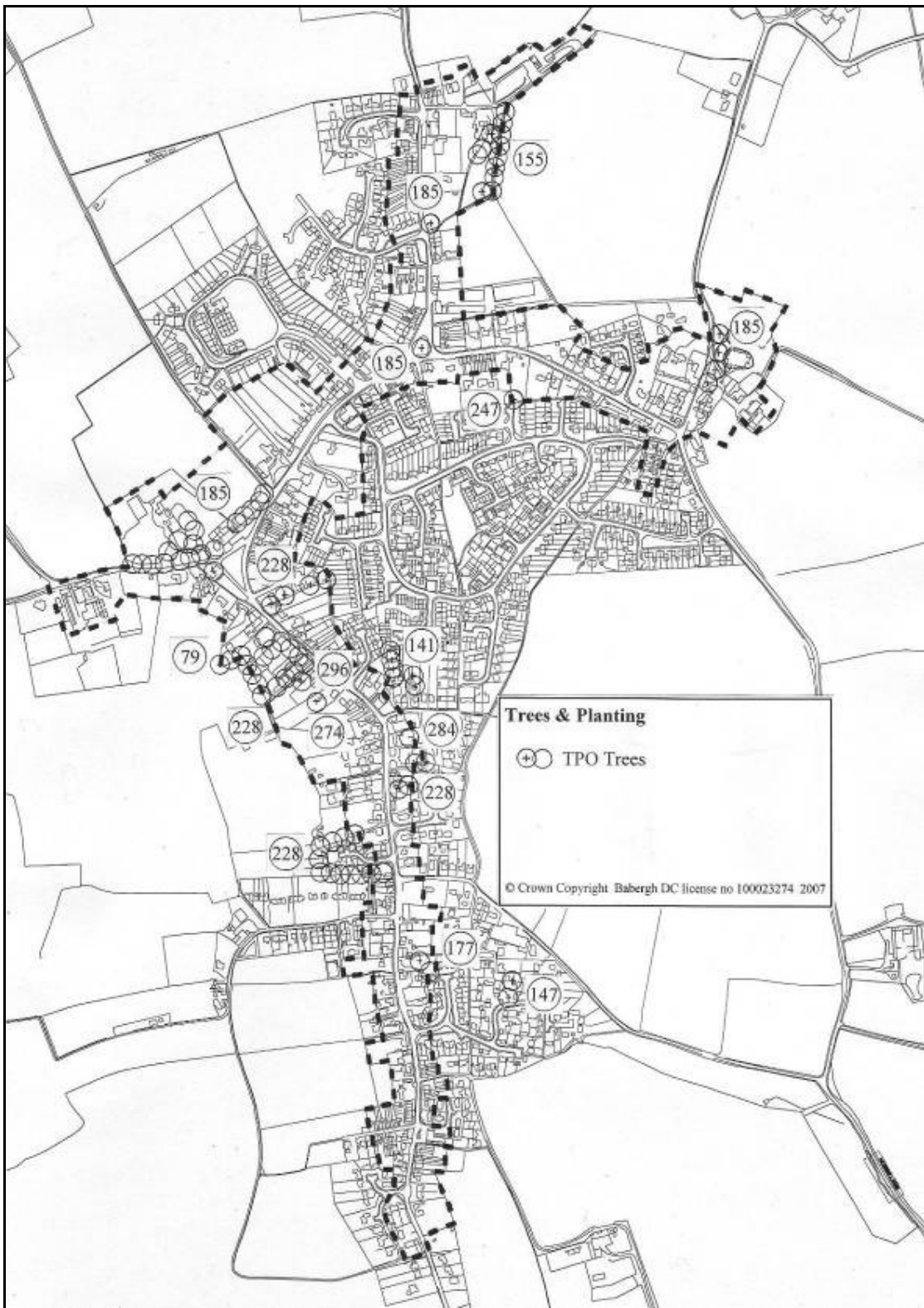
The B1065 that links all these together ascends Skate's Hill from its junction with the A1092 and gently winds left and right along Egremont Street and Hunt's Hill. It continues curving gently to the right for nearly a whole kilometre, turning a full 180 degrees by the time it reaches Bell's Lane.



From Tye Green, Cavendish Lane heads off westwards through the trees; from Fair Green, Brook Street heads off northwards gently downhill and from the end of Bell's Lane the road turns abruptly left into Churchgate.

Within Egremont Street many buildings are fairly tightly packed onto the street giving a good sense of enclosure and achieving an almost urban feel as the street winds gently back and forth.

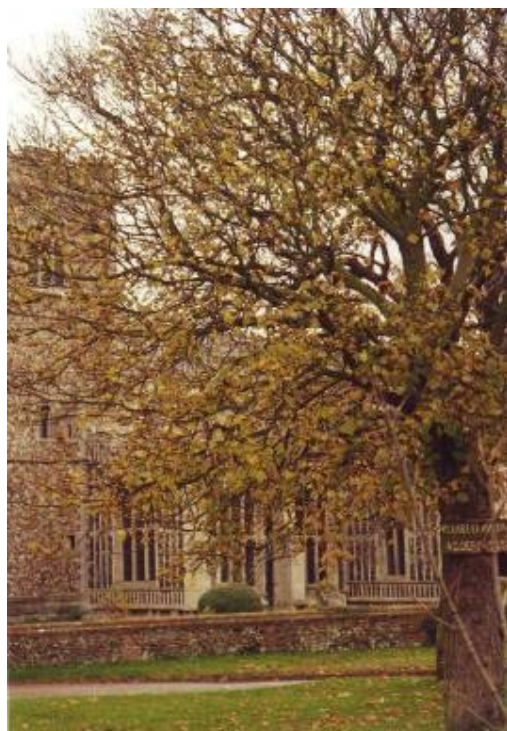
To the north the greens provide three foci of a more rural and relaxed settlement pattern. Any one of these would be an asset to a typical Suffolk village, and their rural quality should be maintained.



Trees & Planting

To the south-east of Glemsford village towards the river Glem there are two ancient woodland remnants: Court Wood and Lumpit Wood.

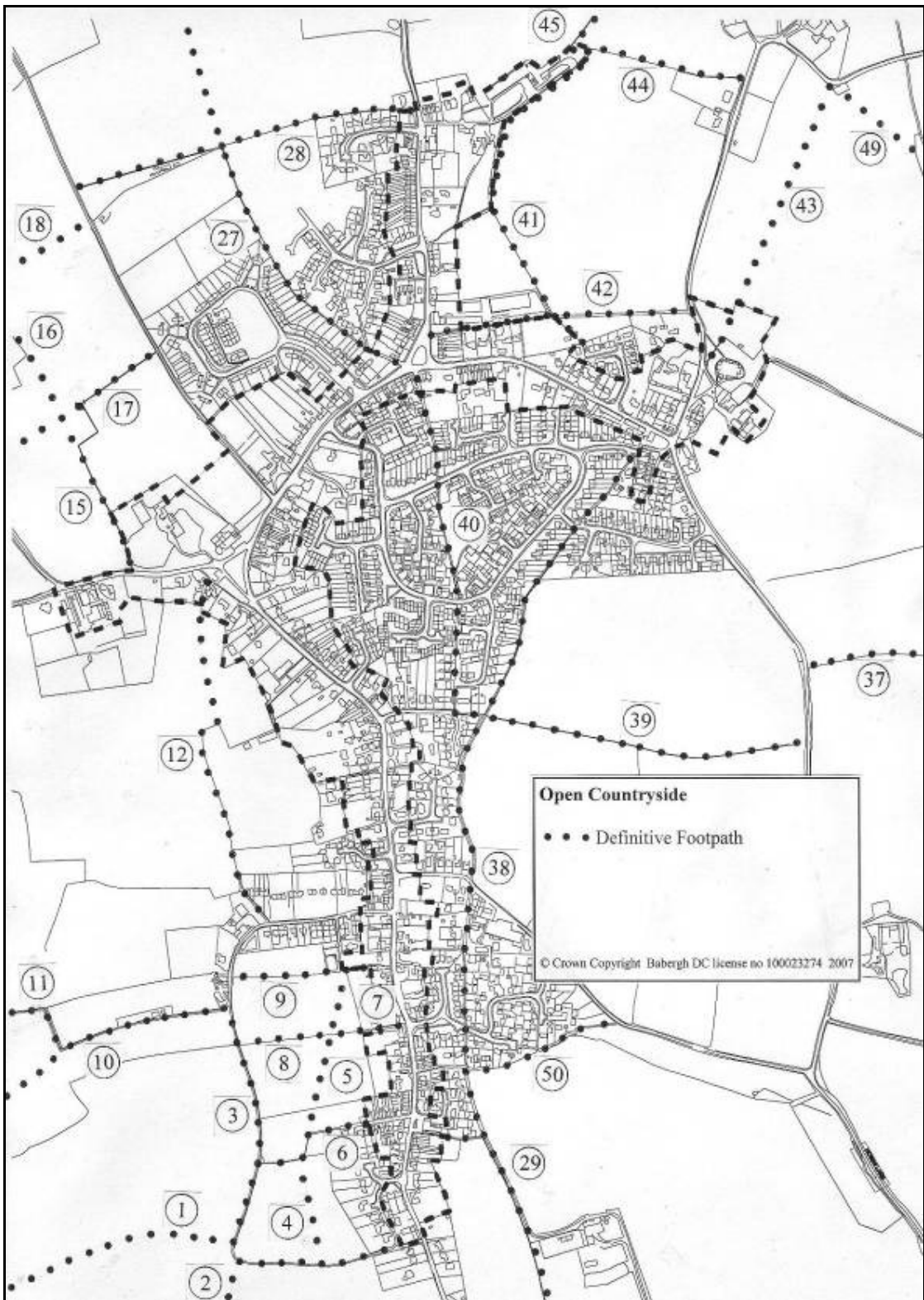
Within the village a number of individual trees and areas of trees have been felt of sufficient importance to be given the protection of Tree Preservation Orders over the years. The earliest of these, T.P.O. 79, covered four Wych Elms, now replaced by Oaks, in behind Tye Green. T.P.O. 185 is more extensive, covering a large area of trees (Yew, Pine, Horse Chestnut, Beech and a fine specimen of Wellingtonia) in the grounds of Coldhams on Tye Green, along with trees near the church and a few other individual trees.



The last of the pre-1974 West Suffolk County Council T.P.O.s, no. 228, again covers several areas including around the village hall and groups of trees off Hunt's Hill.

More recent orders by Babergh D.C. have covered several small groups of trees and individuals under threat and include a high proportion of Walnut trees, mainly to the rear of properties along the main route through the village.

Apart from the trees the three village greens provide important grassed areas and visual amenity both maintaining a rural character and providing the setting for many of the listed buildings.



Relationship to Open Countryside

Most of Glemsford's recent growth has been the housing estates that fill in the area between Tye Green and Bell's Lane, the geographical centre of the village. Some of these areas of housing abut rather uneasily with the adjoining countryside, such as on the approach to the village up Park Lane, where assorted rear gardens back onto the fields.

The outer edges therefore remain much as they were especially to the west and north with countryside immediately behind one plot deep development.

Two exceptions to this with newer development outside the main arc of road are along Angel Lane, west off Egremont Street and Schoolfield and adjoining developments, to the north off Broadway.



Because of its original spread out nature and sheer size, the village has a well developed network of footpaths, both interconnecting the different parts of the village and providing links out into the wider countryside. Some of the former have fortunately been maintained within the more recent developments, such as The Causeway (FP38) which probably provided the route for burials from Angel House across to the Church.

A little distance from and parallel to the Skate's Hill / Egremont Street / Hunt's Hill stretch of road, there is on each side of the village a comprehensive north-south footpath from the river Stour valley right up to the northern part of the village. These meet and cross many other footpaths out of the built up area along their respective routes.



Prevailing & Former Usage

Glensford's former glory was during the 16th Century when it was a major centre for Suffolk's woollen cloth industry, which explains the quality of some of its timber-framed buildings.

Out of three silk factories present in the 19th Century, one at the north end of Brook Street still operates, whilst the former horsehair factory buildings, rather workhouse like in their early 19th Century appearance, dominate the east end of Bell's Lane, now converted to housing. There were also two coconut matting factories in and around the Egremont Street area and during the 19th Century the village had its own brickworks, as witnessed in the numerous terraces of red brick workers' cottages, particularly in Brook Street and Egremont Street.



In addition to these industries, Glensford also had its share of the more usual Suffolk village enterprises with several farmsteads, a timber yard, two smithies, a gravel pit and its own malthouse adjoining the Black Lion Inn.

Although no windmills remain in the parish, old maps show that at least one existed south of the village, and another is hinted at by the name of Mill Hill Farm to the north. The water mill on the Stour at the south end of Skate's Hill may have dominated this trade locally.

There are a number of other smaller light industrial buildings, mostly early 20th Century, at various locations around the village, which maintain Glensford's slightly industrial feel.

Loss, Intrusion & Damage



Whilst the industrial nature of the village is one of Glemsford's important qualities, it is the industrial buildings of more recent times that can let it down.

The old works buildings facing Fair Green could be improved and the former coconut matting factory on Egremont Street would benefit from the restoration of its mid 20th Century features. There are also asbestos roofs remaining, such as on additions to earlier works at the silk factory in Chequers Lane.

There has also been some erosion of traditional features on older buildings. Many of the houses now used as shops, have had modern shopfronts, blinds and signs applied with little regard for the host building.



Housing has also produced some intrusions of a non-traditional nature; some of the modern infill, especially that in the form of bungalows, is less appropriate as part of a traditional Suffolk village. In addition the visibility splays giving access to estates have not always been handled very sensitively, leaving large gaps in the street scene.

Some stretches of 19th Century terraced brick housing, particularly Brook Street, although little affected by modern paint or render finishes, have lost many original features. Replacement windows and doors are common and the lack of front boundary walls, largely removed to make parking spaces, now detracts en masse from the overall street scene. These are now protected by the Article 4(2) direction implemented in 2002.



Brook Street also suffers from excessive overhead wiring, contrasting with Egremont Street where it was removed as part of an enhancement scheme some time ago. Wiring is also a problem on Fair Green, although now softened by the recent enhancement that replaced areas of black tarmacadam with additional grass.

At the top of Egremont Street, two listed buildings nearly opposite each other are both in need of repair, one of them considered serious enough to warrant its inclusion in Suffolk's register of 'Buildings at Risk'.

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Tithe Map & Apportionment 1839 Glemsford Suffolk Records Office

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Committee 6 March 2008*