

TINGRITH  
CONSERVATION AREA

JANUARY 1973

## THE CONSERVATION AREA

Tingrith, a small village of 190 people, lies 300' above sea-level in a sheltered depression in the Greensand four miles south-west of Ampthill. Two small valleys drain eastwards to a larger one which is followed by the M1: the more northerly contains large ornamental fish-ponds of the former manor house and the southern is followed by the village High Street. The land thus rises on either side of the main village road and Tingrith is grouped round a T Junction where the cul-de-sac Church Street climbs north from High Street to the church. Between the two valleys the grounds of Tingrith House covered 120 acres and with their fine elms and cedars gave Tingrith a park-like situation. The area lies in the proposed Green Belt for South Bedfordshire and that part north of High Street is shown on the County Map as an area of great landscape value.

Tingrith was an agricultural village centred on the Manor House. A sandpit half a mile to the north also gave some employment. But this pattern has been radically altered. Tingrith House has been demolished (the outbuildings remain) and replaced by a new estate of 12 houses which has added a residential function to the village. The sandpit (where over 2000 bronze Roman coins were once found, in mint-fresh condition) lay in the path of the M1. The motorway has greatly improved north-south communications with, for example, Luton, 9 miles and Dunstable, 7 miles (though access to centres in other directions is less direct) but, less than half a mile from the village and banked above the surrounding countryside, it has also created a barrier of continuous noise and intruded a belt of constantly moving traffic into the rural scene. The former lodges of Tingrith House are rather sad reminders of the contrast between old and new - those at the western entrance on the road to Eversholt remain relatively quiet but the eastern lodge is now on the edge of the motorway.

Only minor roads serve the village, however, linking it with Eversholt on the west and (under the M1) with Westoning and Flitwick on the east, and through traffic remains light. Just west of the village, Long Lane runs south to Toddington.

The Conservation Area covers all the older part of the village. Two buildings (the church and Tanqueray House) are on the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest kept by the Department of the Environment, and half a dozen others (Swan Inn, 8-18 High Street, 4 Church Street, former School, Village Hall, Keeley House) on the Supplementary List. These are among the buildings marked 'important' on the map which means that they are regarded as making a valuable contribution to the appearance and character of the village scene because of their architectural merit, group value, position or building line. Buildings in the Conservation Area are well grouped and mainly of brick or roughcast with much white and cream wash, and with tile or slate roofs.

'Important' trees and hedges also contribute greatly to the scene. Within the Conservation Area, Preservation Orders cover the fine belt of trees running along the north-side of High Street, the west-side of Church Street, and wrapping round behind the church, and also the single cedar (now leaning) near Keeley House. There are other fine trees to the north of the church, in the grounds of Tanqueray House and opposite the Swan Inn. Hedges are very important along High Street and by the Village Hall and former School in Church Street.

Approaching from the east, the village begins rather untidily with some comparatively recent houses, now suffering from motorway noise. The Manor Farm group is an attractive beginning to the Conservation Area, built right up to the highway boundary as the road bends. The roadside buildings, creosote or white and with tiled roofs, channel the eye towards the village and form a courtyard with the farmhouse behind which is early 19th Century, white and well

proportioned. The white wash is especially important in giving unity to the group and visibility on the bend, and for the visual link with the Swan Inn to the west. The farm group is also a pleasant feature when looking east from Church Street - here the creosote building at right angles to the road is important; in this view even the white pair of semis to the north contribute to the scene, 'reading' with pub and farm.

To the west is an open field with a hedge and three fine large trees by the roadside - the view west from the Church Street junction is channelled between the trees and an outbuilding of the Swan Inn. This field is important in views down Church Street which are at first partly blocked by cottages in High Street and then expand uphill to a belt of trees which, however, do not sufficiently hide a range of rather unsightly farm buildings south of Manor Farm. Some 'clutter' opposite the Church Street junction also spoils the view - poles and wire, litter bin and various signs form separate elements which could be combined or perhaps moved elsewhere (the bin and County Council notices could be more discreetly sited, suitably designed, within the shelter on the corner of Church Street).

The Swan Inn and its outbuildings form an attractive whitewashed group which includes the Post Office and general stores. The inn is early 19th Century brick with a red tiled roof and ground floor bay windows. Even the roadside parapet walls are white and the two groups of pub and farm are a fresh and pleasant entry to the village.

West of the pub is a terrace of cottages set well back from the road, their front gardens and side wall forming another 'space' of some importance; they form a link with Church Street and are described more fully later.

Approaching from the west, the road is bordered by trees. The fine belt on the north side stretches round into Church Street; of the many species, cedar and pine are especially prominent and tower behind a good hedge of holly. The tree belt on the south side has been thinned out and does not conceal some unattractive garages and chicken runs.

At the western entrance to the Conservation Area are some pleasant white and cream washed cottages with tiled roofs and some timber framing. Beyond, set back from the road and creating another 'space' framed by adjacent cottages, is the red brick Queen Anne 'Tanqueray House', the former Rectory. The Tanquerays were rectors of the church, father and son, for over 100 years between 1787 and 1899. The house has a hipped tiled roof, extensive mid 19th century additions in pale brick and some fine trees in the grounds.

The red brick cottage immediately to the east is under repair and a leaning tree also adds to the rather untidy note. This is the end cottage of a group important for their shallow building line and as a terminus to views down Church Street; they are modest buildings of roughcast or brick, some cream or white wash, and tiled roofs, and behind them are various sheds and farm buildings.

Church Street is the most attractive area. Numbers 8-18 High Street are 18th and 19th Century cottages wrapping round the corner into Church Street and linking architecturally with the houses further north. Numbers 8-16 are set well back from High Street and built of roughcast with red tiled roofs, casements and some door-hoods; the eastern ones are higher. Number 16, on the corner, has a side elevation in white which links with the houses in Church Street. Number 18 is actually in Church Street: rendered in white, it has lattice windows, door-hood and red tiled roof; the side (south) elevation has 19th Century barge-boards which introduce one of the most characteristic features of Church Street.

On the opposite corner are seats grouped round the old village pump.

The view uphill to the church is framed by tall trees on the left and houses with steep gabled roofs, tall chimneys and a bell cote forming an attractive skyline on the right. There are four 19th Century buildings which share many of the same architectural features - roughcast walls, steep Welsh slate roofs, ornamental bargeboards to end gables and to closed gabled porches, lattice casements, 'Tudor' rendered chimney stacks - but in colour and position form two related pairs. Number 4 Church Street and the former school are built close to the roadside, and coloured white or grey; the former school, now a house with the date 1841 above the door and a wooden ridge bellcote, is pivotal, lying opposite the new estate road junction and forming the end of a row before the houses are set back, to form the second pair. These are the Village Hall and Keeley House, with important hedges and trees in their front gardens. They are rather simpler in style and of browner roughcast. The Village Hall displays the date 1858 and is mainly one storey with a narrow attic window over a two-fold central door. Keeley House is set even further back.

Adjacent is a tall cedar, now leaning, which is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order, and a new brick house which closes the view to some extent - once past it, on the footpath, the view expands over a brow and down into a valley to the hills beyond. But the valley contains the M1 and a belt of constantly moving traffic distracts from the view, whilst the noise carrying over the fields contrasts with the quiet of Church Street further south.

Returning south, the staggered positions of Keeley House and Village Hall 'lead' one into Church Street. Outside the new house and Keeley House an ironstone wall parallels that of the churchyard opposite. The colour of walls, church and houses at the top of Church Street is predominantly brown but as the churchyard gate is reached the dominant note is set by the white or grey of houses in Church Street and High Street.

The Parish Church of St Nicholas is of ironstone and in the Perpendicular style. It was rebuilt in the latter half of the 15th Century and restored in 1845-6, and is now in need of repair. A fine belt of trees curves round behind the churchyard and down the west side of Church Street, mostly concealing the new estate which is alien in style, layout and density to the rest of the village.

#### GENERAL POLICY

The general policy regarding future development will continue to be restrictive and in order to maintain the distinctive character of the Conservation Area it will be necessary to:-

- (1) Retain important buildings and boundary walls and encourage their improvement rather than redevelopment.

Consideration will be given to the addition of some buildings to the Statutory List and the Secretary of State for the Environment will be advised of these.

- (2) Retain the existing layout and scale of roads and buildings and the lines formed by walls and hedges, and protect the important spaces.

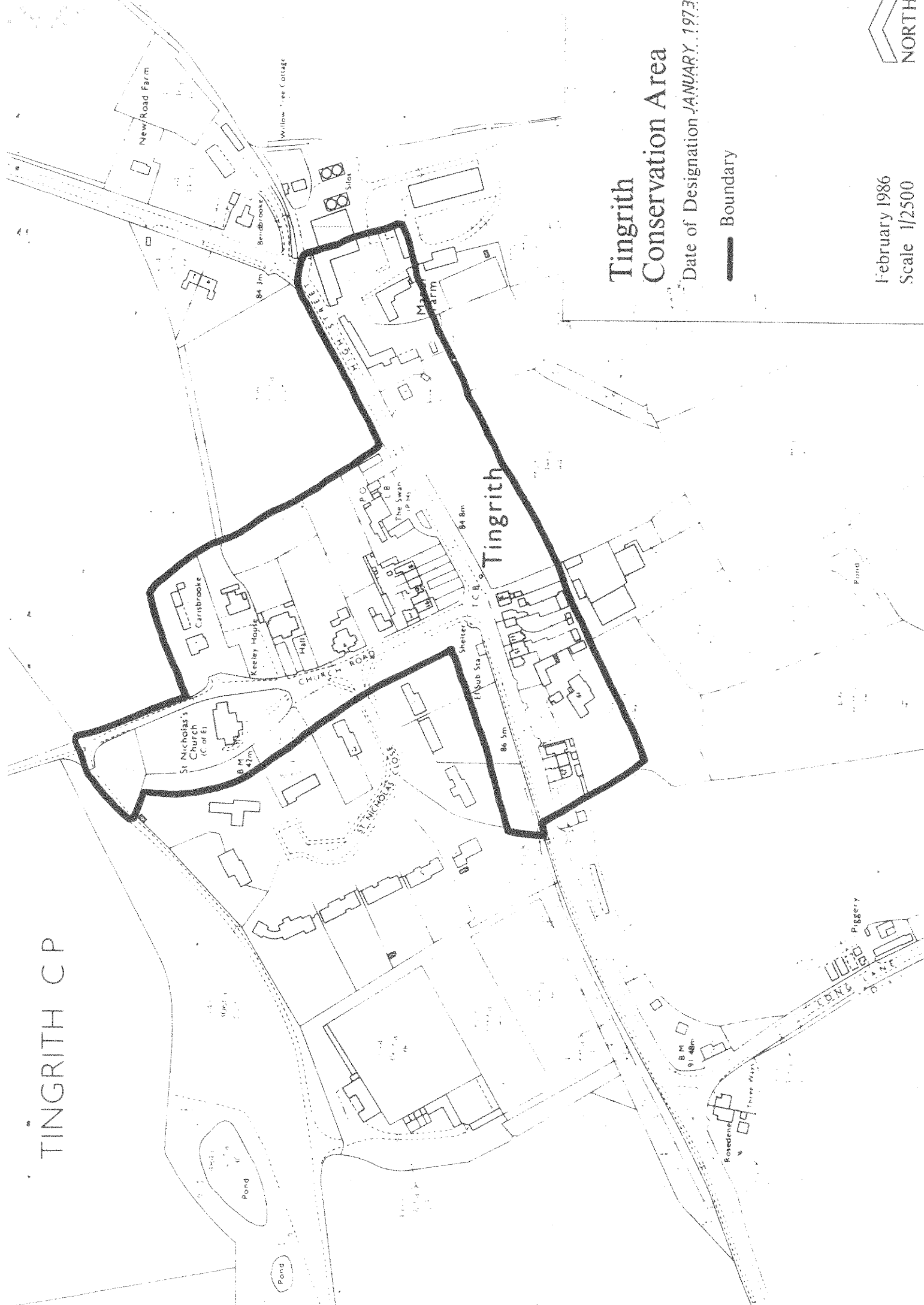
This will mean paying careful attention to the implications of building lines and road safeguarding lines. The line of existing buildings should be abandoned only where there is an overriding road safety reason. No new access roads with their associated visibility splays should be allowed to break open the hedges and tree belts.

- (3) Ensure that any new development or redevelopment makes a positive contribution to the character of the area and that it is entirely appropriate in terms of siting, design and materials. In particular any new building should be designed as part of the group in which it is situated and in relation to surrounding trees and landscape, and not as an isolated structure. Applications unsupported by details will not normally be acceptable.
- (4) Retain trees and hedges wherever possible, see that they are properly maintained and replaced when necessary and encourage new planting where this would improve the scene. All trees will need to be identified in greater detail and their protection secured by agreement with the landowners concerned or by making Tree Preservation Orders. To achieve this the help of the Parish Council will be necessary. Trees lying just outside the Conservation Area will also need to be taken into account if they form an essential back-ground to the area.

Some trees in the Conservation Area are leaning rather dangerously. A little more planting could hide the farm buildings south of Manor Farm and thicken the tree group on the south side of High Street just west of the Conservation Area. Planting near the M1, on a much larger scale, would reduce the visual intrusion of traffic.

- (5) Investigate the possibility of replacing the overhead electricity and telegraph poles and wire by underground services, and ensure that new installations do not harm the appearance of the area. Poles are particularly intrusive, for example, in High Street opposite the Swan Inn and opposite the Church Street Junction.
- (6) Continue to use gravel surface dressing on the carriageways as it blends well with the buildings and landscape.
- (7) Protect the important views of the Church and out of the village.
- (8) Tidy the 'clutter' of signs etc. opposite the Church Street Junction.

TINGRITH CP



# Tingrith Conservation Area

Date of Designation JANUARY 1973

— Boundary



February 1986  
Scale 1/2500