

# Conservation Area Appraisal



**Edmundbyers**

December 2011



## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

### Edmundbyers

December 2011

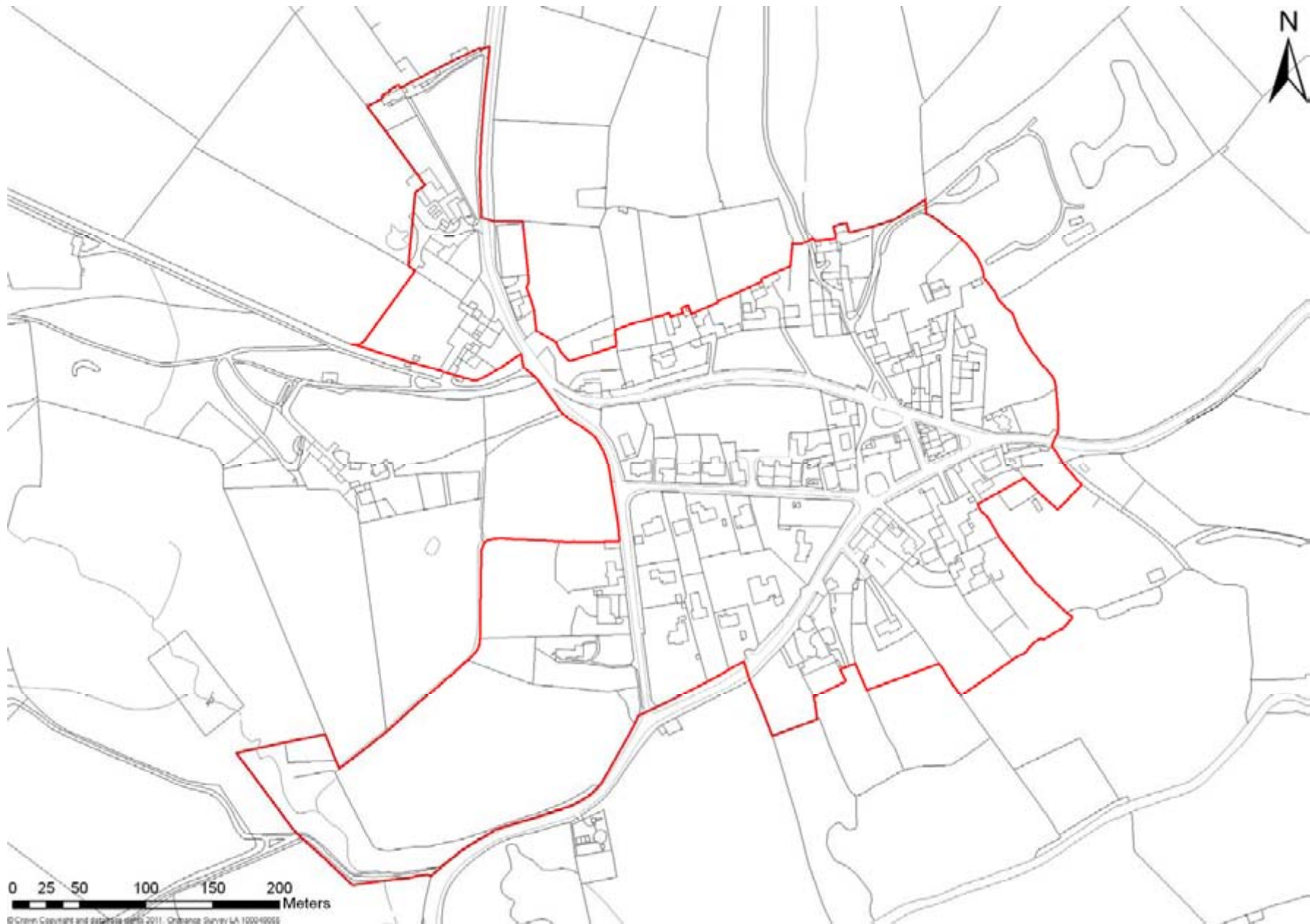


*Heritage, Landscape and Design*  
Durham County Council

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<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page</i>
Summary of Special Significance .....	4
Public Consultation .....	5
Planning Legislation .....	5
Conservation Area Character Appraisals.....	6
Location and Setting .....	6
Historical Summary .....	8
Form and Layout.....	9
Character Area 1: Historic Settlement .....	9
Character Area 2: The Church and South-West Area .....	10
Character Area 3: 20th and 21st Century Development.....	10
Character Area 4: Hepple Hill .....	11
Architectural Character .....	12
Important Buildings .....	13
Building Materials.....	14
Boundaries .....	18
Open Spaces and Woodland .....	19
Views.....	21
Activity.....	21
Public Realm .....	22
General Condition .....	24
Management Proposals .....	25
Boundary Changes .....	25
Appendix 1 Listed Buildings .....	27
Appendix 2 Notable Buildings .....	29
Appendix 3 Origins and History.....	39
Appendix 4 Current Designations .....	46
Appendix 5 Key Views .....	47

### Conservation Area Boundary



## Summary of Special Significance

Edmundbyers is a small historic village located towards the north-east corner of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It lies high on Edmundbyers Common, overlooking the Burnhope Burn. It is a loose-knit village containing a linear village green is probably a remnant of a once much larger green. A focal point is created through the convergence of roads adjacent to the Punchbowl Inn.

It is considered that the special character of Edmundbyers is derived from:

- Its location on the edge of the moors with expansive views along the Burnhope Burn valley.
- The undulating topography of the village.
- The extensive use of traditional building styles and materials.
- Mature tree cover, particularly the roadside trees along the road entering the village from the south-west, and around the churchyard.
- Drystone boundary walls within and around the settlement.

The historic character of the village has been partially compromised by the construction of late 20th and early 21st century housing over the former exceptionally large village green. The development diminishes the legibility of the historic core of the village and its spatial relationships.



*Distant view of Edmundbyers from the south.*

## Public Consultation

Public consultation is an integral part of the appraisal process. The Character Appraisal was subject to a public consultation phase, after which it was discussed by Durham County Council's Cabinet in December 2011. The next stage will be the preparation of a management plan programme for all our conservation areas. Initial management proposals have been included in this document for consideration.

## Planning Legislation

A conservation area is defined in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act as "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent development, but to manage change in a positive and proactive way that benefits current and future generations.

Conservation area status means that a special form of Planning Permission called Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building over 115m<sup>3</sup> in size, the demolition of a boundary wall over 1m in height next to the highway or 2m elsewhere. There is a general presumption against the loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Additional controls are also placed over trees within the area, meaning that an owner must submit a formal notification of works to the Council six weeks before starting work. Permitted development rights (works that can be done without Planning Permission) are also slightly different within designated conservation areas.

The primary legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This legislation includes certain statutory duties which the Council as Local Planning Authority must uphold. S69(1) of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as conservation areas, and under s69(2) to review such designations from time to time. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas from time to time.

When assessing applications for development, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas under s72(1) of the Act. This does not mean that development will necessarily be opposed, only that this should not be detrimental to the special interest of the wider conservation area. Specific guidance relating to development within conservation areas can be found within PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment and its accompanying practice guide which are published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, at national government level.

## Conservation Area Character Appraisals

The Conservation Area Appraisal represents the first phase of a dynamic process aimed at the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. It is an assessment of those features and qualities that make an individual conservation area special. These can include individual buildings, groups of buildings, other structures, architectural details and materials, open spaces, landscaping, street furniture, and the relationships between all of these. This appraisal will help to raise awareness and appreciation of Edmundbyers special character, while also providing a consistent and evidential basis on which to determine planning applications affecting the village.

The appraisal also seeks to identify any factors which detract from a conservation area's special qualities, and to present outline proposals for schemes which could lead to the safeguarding or enhancement of those qualities.

This appraisal discusses a wide range of structures and features within Edmundbyers, but no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should certainly not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

## Location and Setting

### Location

Edmundbyers nestles on a south facing slope above the north bank of Burnhope Burn about 1.5 kilometres south west of its confluence with the River Derwent. The slope rises to the open moorland of Edmundbyers Common. Although not visible from the village, Derwent Reservoir lies just 1 km north of the settlement. The village lies at the junction of the B6306 and the B6278, the latter leading to the A68 some 4 kms to the north east at Carterway Heads.



Ordnance Survey map showing location of Edmundbyers.

### Setting

Edmundbyers lies within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is characterised by a distinctive landscape of high moorland and broad upland dales. In terms of landscape quality, the AONB, also a UNESCO European Geopark, is of high value in terms of appearance with geological and ecological interest.

The solid geology of the Edmundbyers region consists of thinly bedded sandstones, mudstones and limestones of the carboniferous limestone series, overlain by similar rocks of the millstone grit series. Overlying the solid geology is a thick mantle of glacial boulder clay with pockets of sand and gravel. Local geological resources have been quarried and mined throughout Edmundbyers' history, however, signs of the once intensive lead mining industry in the vicinity of the village have virtually disappeared.



*View northwards over the valley of the Burnhope Burn towards Edmundbyers.*



## Historical Summary

This section presents a brief summary of the history of Edmundbyers, a more detailed overview is provided in Appendix 3.

There is no evidence of prehistoric settlement in the village and its immediate hinterland. Scattered worked flints show human presence in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Ages and earthworks, probably dating from the Iron Age, have been identified on nearby moorland. It is probable that the earthworks relate to the Roman occupation and the development of farms to feed the army and associated civilian populations. However, direct Roman settlement and activity does not appear to have made any impact in the Upper Derwent Valley despite its proximity to Dere Street and Ebchester Fort. Similarly, the Dark Ages have left no mark other than the place name which derives from the pre-Norman Conquest Old English 'Edmund's Byre'.

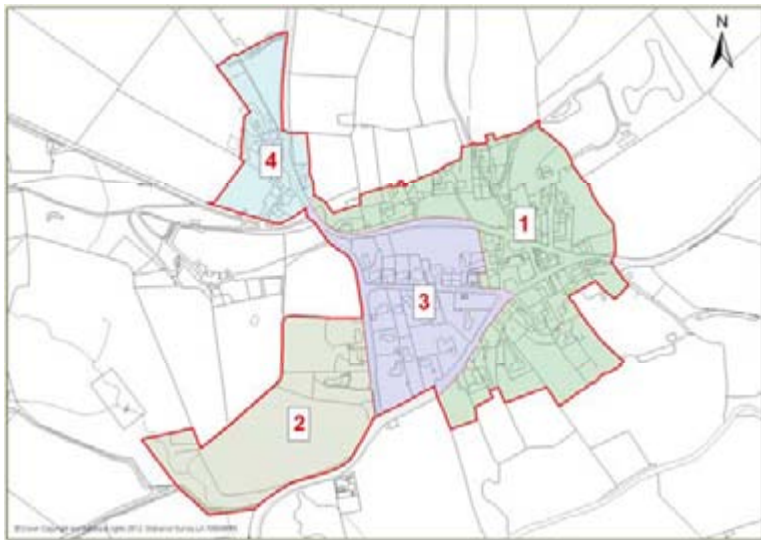
The 12th century origins of the Church of St Edmund, which can be traced in parts of the nave and two narrow lancet windows which survived two 19th century 'restoration' schemes, mark the earliest evidence of settlement in Edmundbyers. The earliest written reference to the village appears in the Boldon Book of 1183 with other references from the 14th century relating to land disputes. Medieval rig and furrow, distinctive elements of the historic landscape, suggest a settled medieval population. No medieval houses have been found in Edmundbyers, the earliest complete building dating from the 18th century.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey (1856) shows the shape of the 19th century village which was contained by houses along the northern and eastern edges of the green with the church and rectory detached to the west of the main settlement. The 20th century has seen the village green substantially developed by new housing, a process that has altered the shape of the village and partly obscured its historic layout.

## Form and Layout

Edmundbyers has the unusual characteristic of having its most modern housing at its core, surrounded on all sides by historic buildings. In an attempt to reflect this pattern, the Edmundbyers Conservation Area has been divided for the purposes of this appraisal into four character areas:

1. The historic (17th to 19th century) settlement extending to the north, east and south of the conservation area.
2. The south-west, including the church and vicarage, a large pasture field and the woodland at the south-west extremity of the conservation area.
3. The area of 20th century infill development at the centre of the village.
4. The buildings on Hepple Hill.



Map showing the four character areas within the Edmundbyers Conservation Area. (Base map: Durham County Council GIS)

## Character Area 1: Historic Settlement

With the exception of the church and adjacent properties in Character Area 2, this contains all of the conservation area's historic buildings. Although many earlier buildings once stood here, the earliest surviving structures, which have all been much altered, appear to date from the 18th century. They are almost all agricultural in character and may originally have been built as widely separated farmsteads, loosely clustered around the green. Fordyce in the mid 19th century described the buildings as 'scattered' around the green, and there is certainly no suggestion that the overall form of the village was planned. Many 19th century buildings now stand in the spaces between the surviving older buildings, and while these are of little historical or architectural interest they collectively play an important role in defining the character of the village. Some 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings have also been built in this area, notably in the south-west corner, and many of the older buildings were altered during the 20th century.

In addition to its buildings this area includes the present-day village green in the north and the Village Field adjacent to the village hall. It also includes a large number of historic stone walls which are important features of the Edmundbyers' landscape.



Views of Character Area 1.

### **Character Area 2: The Church and South-West Area**

The church, although substantially rebuilt in the 19th century, is the only building in Edmundbyers known to date back to medieval times. It presumably provided a focus for the medieval settlement. The only other buildings in its vicinity are the Old Rectory and, to the north, the property known as Oldsteads. The rectory gardens contain many fine trees, and the substantial buttressed garden wall to the north and ha-ha between the gardens and the churchyard are interesting historic features.

The area to the south-west of the church consists of a single pasture field bordered by a visually impressive line of mature Scots pine running along the north side of the B6278 and a copse of Scots pine on the Black Burn, just north of Burnhope Bridge.



Views of Character Area 2.

### **Character Area 3: 20th and 21st Century Development**

This area contains housing of exclusively 20th and early 21st century date. In contrast to the loosely knit, evolved arrangement of earlier properties throughout the village, these later dwellings demonstrate a high degree of planning, with the latest examples arranged in a rigid line facing south onto the road across the open green space. The oldest properties in the area, in the south-west opposite the church, date from before WWII, but all other buildings are of later date. The first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps (1856 and c.1890) show the area as being completely clear of buildings. These maps show the area crossed by a single road on an east-west alignment, with two large stone-walled fields to its north and another two to its south. These stone walls largely survive, and many more walls of similar construction now subdivide the many plots set out within the area. The road shown crossing the area on the old OS maps still survives, providing a boundary between generally mid to later 20th century housing to its south and the zone of early 21st century housing that is still being developed.

Although the current layout of Character Area 3 retains the basic plan in terms of roads and field walls as shown in the 19th century maps, none of its buildings are of significant architectural or historic interest.



*Views of Character Area 3.*

#### ***Character Area 4: Hepple Hill***

An extension was made to the conservation area boundary in December 2011 to include a group of 19th century properties on Hepple Hill. The farm is a group of two storey buildings and is shown on early OS maps, although extended since then. The former parochial school (now a dwelling) further up Hepple Hill is also late 19th century and contributes positively to the conservation area.



*Views of Hepple Hill*

## Architectural Character

The architectural character of the village can be split into the old, predominantly late 18th/early 19th century, buildings and new, primarily post WWII, developments.

### *Historic building character*

- The historic character is dominated by robust stone built two storey detached and semi-detached properties, many with agricultural roots, with dual pitch Welsh slate roofs topped by substantial chimney stacks and pots. Some stacks have been rebuilt using cream bricks.
- Some properties have sandstone flagged roofs and some have been unfortunately re-covered using interlocking concrete tiles.
- Some properties are rendered or painted, but most have exposed masonry in accordance with local tradition.
- The remains of earlier openings can occasionally be seen, tracing the development history and use of old buildings.
- Some cast iron rainwater goods spiked onto eaves survive, but fascia mounted gutters are present.
- Windows and doors, the former originally timber sliding sash or casements set into deep reveals, are gradually being replaced in modern materials to the detriment of

their appearance and the general character of the conservation area.

- The position of windows and doors create balance and frequent symmetry, typical of this period.

### *New building character*

- There is a mix of two storey houses and bungalows, principally stone built with dual pitch roofs using both natural slate and concrete tiles.
- The buildings have timber fascias and near flush fitting windows with no or small chimney stacks.
- Some new buildings do not reflect the established traditional character of the village and diminish its sense of local distinctiveness and visual cohesion.
- The layout of the most recent new housing is designed to a relatively high density with little separation between buildings creating a semi-urban feel.

## Important Buildings

There are 3 statutorily listed buildings within the conservation area which are recognised as being of national importance for their special architectural or historic interest. (see appendix 1 for more details)

<b>Building</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<i>Church of St Edmund</i>	<i>Grade II</i>
<i>Summerson tomb, south of Church of St Edmund</i>	<i>Grade II</i>
<i>Edmundbyers Youth Hostel</i>	<i>Grade II</i>

In addition to the listed buildings, many other buildings combine to give the village its unique built heritage (see Appendix 2 for more details). There is a presumption against the demolition of these structures in accordance with government guidance found in PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment.

<i>The Old Barn, north of the green</i>
<i>Village Farm, north of the green</i>
<i>The Punch Bowl</i>
<i>Edmundbyers House, Cottage and outbuildings</i>
<i>The Old Rectory</i>
<i>The Shooting Box</i>
<i>Holmlea</i>
<i>Buildings behind Holmlea</i>
<i>Oldstead</i>
<i>The former Wesleyan Chapel</i>
<i>Stone Croft</i>
<i>North View</i>

<i>Swinburne Cottage</i>
<i>The Village Post Office</i>
<i>Ivy Cottage</i>
<i>The derelict barns in the north east corner of the village</i>



Edmundbyers' unique architectural heritage includes a variety of buildings constructed and modified over three centuries. The Punch Bowl, seen here from the rear, may have begun life as a farmhouse or an inn during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but its present form results from numerous alterations over the past couple of centuries.

## Building Materials

One of the defining characteristics of Edmundbyers is the variation in its historic buildings; most are detached and of two stories, but no two are alike. All are of local sandstone, but historic masonry takes on a range of forms; sometimes neatly coursed blocks and often more roughly coursed rubble, often with corners defined by stone quoins. Many buildings display different masonry of varying character, giving clues to their historical development. The old vicarage is unusual in extensive brickwork, though small areas of brick also appear within alterations to other historic structures. A few historic properties are rendered or painted, but local tradition is very much to leave masonry exposed without addition of render or paint.



*Examples of different types of historic masonry from within the conservation area.*

Most historic buildings in Edmundbyers have single pile roofs of Welsh slate, several with red ridge tiles. Many must once have had stone flagged roofs, but few of these survive – notable examples being the church, the range in the grounds of Edmundbyers House, the ruined barn at village farm, and occasional outbuildings. Old photographs and documentary sources demonstrate that heather thatched roofs were popular within Edmundbyers, but no examples survive today. A few buildings have double-pile roofs. A few properties have dormer windows set within the roofs, but these are not common. Some recent buildings have roofs of artificial slates or pantiles, but these are not traditional. Most historic properties retain chimneys; these vary greatly in form but are generally of stone, though some have been replaced in brick. Some houses have stone gable copings, rarely with kneelers, but most do not.



*Details of historic roofs.*



Window and door openings are generally formed by plain stone surrounds, or by plain lintels and sills. Several examples of doorways formed by plain jambs and lintels with small, square-sectioned intermediate blocks survive in buildings of 18th century date. The Old Rectory and Holmlea are unusual in having quite grand, moulded doorways. Doors range from traditional forms in timber to modern plastic alternatives. Traditional windows are sliding sashes, sometimes multi-paned but often single-paned. Frames are traditionally of wood, usually painted white. Holmlea has unusual sashes with horizontally set panes. Many of the Punchbowl's windows are set beneath distinctive carved lintels. Oldstead has rather grand mullioned window openings with drip moulds of apparent 16th/17th century date, perhaps salvaged from an older building but now containing thoroughly inappropriate modern windows. Similarly, many other properties contain modern windows unsympathetic to their historic settings; the mass introduction of such windows has done much damage to Edmundbyers' historic character.



*Examples of traditional doors and windows from various buildings within the conservation area.*



*Examples of modern windows in historic buildings. These detract from Edmundbyers' historic character.*

Several dwellings are conversions from original agricultural buildings, and the Wesleyan Chapel has been developed as the village hall. These conversions have generally been done sympathetically. Many buildings within the conservation area have had extensions added at various times, most of which merge with the original historic fabric, adding to the interest of the buildings rather than detracting from them.

Stone outbuildings, some retaining stone-flagged roofs, survive in the grounds of a few properties. These are important contributors to local historic character but appear to be in generally poor condition.



## Boundaries

Stone walls, both within the village and throughout the surrounding landscape, are crucial aspects of Edmundbyers' character, binding the various elements of the village together and merging it with its surrounding landscape. These exist in a variety of forms. Some of the walls are in very poor condition, while others have collapsed and been replaced with post and wire fences.

Many of the historic field boundaries on the fringes of the conservation area were hedgebanks rather than stone walls. Today these appear as low banks of stone and earth, often surmounted by post-and-wire fences, with occasional old hawthorn trees (remnants of the old hedges) growing out them. In some places these old boundaries are clearly curved rather than straight and appear to relate to the old medieval ridge-and-furrow field system.

In some places around the village hedges are still maintained as field boundaries, though usually in association with post-and-wire fences to ensure that they remain stock proof. Hedges also occur round some gardens within the village, usually in association with low stone walls.



*Stone walls, of a variety of forms, are crucial elements of the Edmundbyers landscape. Top left: High wall around the garden of the Old Vicarage. Top left: Collapsed stone wall south-west of village. Bottom left: Traditional stone walls surround many 20th century houses. Bottom right: Old hedgebank along the line of the old road to the south-east of the village.*

In addition to stone walls and hedges, a few field boundaries close to the village are of timber; these, however, are recent, and this form of boundary is not characteristic of Edmundbyers' heritage.

## Open Spaces and Woodland

Open spaces and woodland within and surrounding the conservation area play a key role.

Large expanses of agricultural land, mostly pasture fields bounded by a combination of drystone walls and hedgebanks, extend right up to the rear boundaries of properties within the village. This creates an attractive and distinctive rural setting to the village. Many fields contain ridge-and-furrow undulations, much of which probably dates back to medieval times when the land around the village was farmed as vast open fields. To the south, the conservation area boundary is drawn tightly up against properties and their private gardens, excluding the area of old fields extending downslope towards the Burnhope Burn, and the boundary is similarly drawn to follow the rear of properties to the north of the village green.

Within the village the main open space is the village green. As discussed elsewhere in the appraisal, the village green was much larger. It is now restricted to the area north of the B6303. It consists of an irregular grassed area, very narrow in the west widening to its maximum width at its east end, and is crossed by three tracks to properties to its north. Several trees have been planted on it, including one commemorating the golden jubilee of the Women's Institute Federation in 1965.

To the south of the village green, on the other side of the B6278, is an extensive area of rough grassland.



*Left. View westwards from Church Bank.*

*Above right. Ridge-and-furrow in field to east of village.*

*Below right. Edmundbyers from the Muggleswick road to the south-east.*

Another currently overgrown open space is crossed by a public footpath at the north-east extremity of the conservation area, between Village Farm and the caravan site. Here, within a stone walled field, stand three substantial but derelict stone barns, one of which still retains much of its stone slate roof. A large rapidly collapsing timber building stands adjacent to one of the barns. These abandoned structures are surrounded by rough grassland and building debris.



*Left: The open green from the south-west. Right: the Village Hall Field.*

The Village Hall Field (originally set aside as the site for a new village hall prior to the decision to adapt the old Wesleyan chapel instead) is maintained as a public open space opposite the village hall. This field is surrounded by a drystone wall and is accessed via a metal bar gate. It is a grass field, retaining low but clearly visible ridge-and-furrow marks demonstrating that it has been ploughed at some time in its history. Several trees have been planted around its perimeter. The field is a surviving remnant of the open space at the heart of the settlement. It provides an important link to the historic shape of the village

Further open space, including a carpark and a lawned garden, once the fenced-off bull ring, occupies the land to the south of the Punchbowl Inn. To the inn's north (rear) elevation is another lawned area, occupying the space between the building and the road.

The churchyard, with its ancient stone wall and mature trees, is another key public space within the village.

Private gardens also play an important role in the character of Edmundbyers, especially as many properties are set back

from the road behind front gardens. These vary considerably in character, with those surrounding the new properties in Character Area 3 only recently planted in contrast to others that contain mature trees and shrubs.

Trees play a particularly important role within and around the conservation area, providing seasonal variation to the views to be enjoyed from numerous points within and around the village. Of particular note are the copse to the south-east of the village, the trees in the grounds of the church and vicarage, and the line of roadside trees which links the two. The 1940 air photograph and c1890 OS maps demonstrate that they have now been established for well over a century. Elsewhere within the village, several mature trees stand within private gardens, most notably in the grounds of Edmundbyers House to the south of the B6278, and at the north-west corner of the village on the lower slopes of Hepple Hill around Heatherlea.

Ten individual Tree Preservation Orders, one area Tree Preservation Order and five group Tree Preservation Orders have been made in the conservation area.



*Entering the conservation area from the east and the north*

## Views

Edmundbyers is set on the edge of the moors with extensive views to the south over Burnhope Burn valley as it rises towards and across Edmundbyers Common and to the east to the A68. Views to the north and east are foreshortened by rising slopes and vegetation.

Roads dip and twist as they enter and leave the village giving foreshortened views into and out of the settlement. This adds variety and surprise. Views are channelled along paths and roads to the south of the village as it drops into the valley and the development platform cuts into the rising slope, whereas to the north the aspect is more open as then road runs across the exposed open fields in the northern half of the village.

Edmundbyers cannot be seen in its entirety from any viewpoint within the village, the most extensive being from the B6303 where the historic northern edge of the village, the new development on the green and expansive views of the Burnhope Burn valley can be seen.

## Activity

Edmundbyers is traditional village green settlement that grew as a consequence of agricultural expansion and intensification in the late 18th and 19th centuries and the local lead mining industry. The latter ceased completely in the late 19th/early 20th century and agriculture is now of little consequence in the economy of the village.



*Left: Mature Scots pine line the road approaching the south-west corner of the conservation area.  
Above: The tree-lined southern end of Church Bank.*

The village is primarily a commuter settlement for Tyneside, the older farms having been converted to houses and new development being almost exclusively residential.

The village supports a large pub/restaurant which attracts trade from a wide area, and a shop. The village hall provides a venue for community activities and a base for the local Women's Institute.

The village attracts visitors due to its proximity to outstanding scenery, walks and cycle routes. The Youth Hostel, opened in the early 20th century in a former inn at the eastern entrance into the village marking the significance of Edmundbyers as a tourist destination.

## Public Realm

### Roads

Roads throughout the conservation area are tarmac, other than the tracks across the village green which are unsurfaced. Pavements are also generally of tarmac, with concrete kerbstones. There is no surviving evidence of historic road surfaces within the village; presumably some areas could have been partially surfaced with stones picked from fields, although the tracks leading out into the hills, and perhaps also the main roads prior to the turnpike era, were probably never anything other than dirt tracks.



*Dry stone walls, hedging and grass verges at the junction of The Closes and the B6278.*

In some places, notably along the B6278 between Church Lane and the Punch Bowl, roads are bordered with wide and well maintained grass verges.

### Signage

Other than road signs, Edmundbyers is relatively free of signage. Traditional pub signs stand to the front and rear of the Punch Bowl and signs decorate the front door of the Youth Hostel. Notice boards stand at the entrance to the churchyard and on the wall of the village hall. Many houses have name-plaques and/or datestones and carved stone village entrance plaques are built into drystone walls at the three main entry points to the village.

Traditional cast iron road signs stand on a low pole at the east end of the village enhancing the historic character of this part of the village. Elsewhere throughout the village road signs are of standard modern specifications.



*Traditional road sign at east entrance to village. Signs on Youth Hostel. Signs outside The Punch Bowl.*



Above left: general view of street furniture on village green.  
 Left: troughs on village green.  
 Above: roadside trough on B6278.



Clockwise from top left. Notice board at churchyard entrance. Sign by tree on village green. Sign within stone wall at west entrance.

### Street Furniture

The village is relatively free of street furniture, although a number of traditional benches are located on the village green, with another at Hepple Hill. The milk-stand and water troughs on the village green tell of historic times, when milk churns were collected from local farms, and water was piped into the troughs. A further trough is set into the ground on the north side of the B6278 opposite Edmundbyers House.

There is a blue litter bin on the village green. Also on the village green is a bright red plastic bin for dog waste, fixed to a road sign; another of these is located by the bench on Hepple Hill. The bright red colour of these bins is understandably designed to make them visible to dog owners, but also succeeds in making them the brightest objects in the village. They are not in keeping with the historic character of the conservation area.





A network of telegraph poles supports overhead electricity and telephone cables throughout the village, and many of these double as lamp posts. Collectively, these poles and cables detract from the character of the conservation area.



*Hepple Hill. Street lights and overhead cables, east side of village.*

### General Condition

The condition of the buildings appears to be generally fine reflecting the status of Edmundbyers as a desirable place to live. There are one or two vacant and dilapidated farm outbuildings which need repaired to ensure their survival. They are important reminders of the village's agricultural past and with careful restoration and development make a substantial contribution to reinforcing the historic character of the settlement.

Some drystone walls are in a state of disrepair. Their loss would diminish the appearance and character of the village.

## Management Proposals

Edmundbyers is a well preserved rural village. There is a need to preserve and enhance its special character and appearance and ensure that any future developments are sympathetic and sustainable.

The following management proposals have been identified to ensure that the future changes to the conservation area is directed in a proactive way. This is not an absolute list but outlines the main issues and possible tasks. It should be made clear that the Council cannot give a definite commitment to undertake these tasks, which will ultimately depend on future financial and staff resources:

- Protect views from, into and across the conservation area.
  - Protect tree cover and remaining areas of open space in the village.
  - Effectively manage and control development works to ensure that sites are kept tidy and associated amenity works, including landscaping, are completed within an acceptable time frame.
  - Prepare design briefs for any future proposed development and householder design guides.
  - Encourage the repair of stone boundary walls and hedge laying.
  - Monitor erosion of traditional details, and consider whether an article 4(2) direction removing householder permitted development rights is needed to preserve the character and appearance of the area.
  - Promote greater understanding of the village and the upper Derwent Valley through interpretation.
- Underground overhead wires.
  - Undertake further research into the rig and furrow field systems around the village, and the origins of buildings.
  - To promote the North Pennines AONB Buildings Design Guide to encourage good design

## Boundary Changes

The boundary of the conservation area was amended in December 2011 as follows:

- To include the properties on Hepple Hill from its junction with Church Lane as far as, and including, the original mid-19th century Parochial School. The inclusion of the buildings and their curtilages, mostly constructed in the 19th century but possibly incorporating earlier fabric, brought the northern approach to the village into the conservation area.
- The inclusion of land along the southern edge of the village where gardens have extended the edge of the village envelope. This rationalised the boundary and corresponds to the new settlement layout.
- The deletion of a small area of open space in the south west corner of the conservation area to conform to field boundaries.

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### Contact

Heritage, Landscape and Design Team  
Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
DH1 5UQ

Telephone: 0191 383 4196  
Email: [design.conservation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:design.conservation@durham.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 Listed Buildings

Three of the most important structures within the conservation areas are statutorily listed for their architectural or historic interest – all Grade II. This means that a special type of Planning Permission called Listed Building Consent is needed for any internal or external alterations. The listed status includes any later extensions or additions, and any ancillary structures such as garden walls or outbuildings which were built before 1948.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<i>Church of St Edmund</i>	<i>Grade II</i>
<i>Summerson tomb, south of Church of St Edmund</i>	<i>Grade II</i>
<i>Edmundbyers Youth Hostel</i>	<i>Grade II</i>



Listed buildings in Edmundbyers Conservation Area. 1, Church of St Edmund. 2, Summerson tomb about 4m south of Church of St Edmund. 3, Edmundbyers Youth Hostel.

Further information on the National Heritage List which includes listed buildings and other statutory designations can be found online at:

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/)

### EDMUNDBYERS YOUTH HOSTEL

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NZ0179150070 LBS Number: 1229332



3 houses, now Youth Hostel. Mid/late C18; Youth Hostel dated 1936 on lintel. Render with crockery sherds impressed; ashlar dressings. Welsh slate roof. 2storeys, 9 bays and one-storey, one-bay left addition. Alternate-block jambs and flat stone lintel to blocked door in second bay; plain stone surround with dated lintel to renewed door in 5th bay; rendered plain surround to blocked door in 8th bay. Double boarded vehicle doors at right end. Irregular fenestration, mostly late C19 sashes of various sizes, those on ground floor with flat stone lintels and projecting stone sills; large window in 7th bay. First floor has smaller windows at eaves. One-storey left extension has renewed fixed light with glazing bars. End chimneys and square stack in fifth bay have tall yellow pots. Included for historical interest.

## CHURCH OF ST EDMUND

Grade: II

Date Listed: 31/01/1967

NGR: NZ0144149917 LBS Number: 1229331



Parish church; C12 and later, restored c.1859. Sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings; east wall thin courses of squared stone; quoins. Stone-flagged roof with stone gable copings. 4-bay nave with south porch; 3-bay chancel with north organ

chamber and vestry. Porch has double boarded doors in chamfered round-headed surround under gable with mask corbels supporting coping with ring-cross finial. Inner doors diagonally-boarded with elaborate iron hinges. C19 round-headed nave windows with drip moulds, in panels with corbel tables. West roundel in round-headed panel. Slightly lower set-back chancel has 3 round-headed windows, one C19, of varying heights, the medieval ones narrow and chamfered; 2 short buttresses. Similar east buttresses flank C19 round-headed window with nook shafts under billet drip mould. Roof has flat gable copings on mask corbels; angelus and east stone cross finials; west gabled bellcote. Interior: rubble with ashlar dressings; re-used roof of collared trusses with struts on chamfered tie-beams; chancel roof C19 king-post trusses. Restored chancel arch flanked by inserted lower round-headed arches serving as lectern and pulpit. Chamfered ambry and round-headed piscina in south wall. Glass, faded in east window, including south aisle memorial to William Featherstonhaugh, Rector 1856-1904, by C.J. Baguley of Newcastle. Acorn and oak-leaf poppyhead bench ends. Wood vestry in west end is

C20 construction, as memorial to members of Marjoribanks family, using C17 elements, door from Shepherds Dene House, Riding Mill; priest's pew from Auckland Castle; organ case from All Saints, Clifton; fragments from Durham Castle and Cathedral.

## SUMMERSON TOMB ABOUT 4 METRES SOUTH OF CHURCH OF ST EDMUND

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/06/1987

NGR: NZ0143549911 LBS Number: 1279146



Grave-cover. Circa 1679, commemorating John Summerson. Sandstone slab, plain except for inscription:

HEAR LYETH THE  
BODY OF JOHN SUMMERSON  
OF COOPERHAUGH WHO

DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE SEVENTH DAY OF  
FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD GOD 1679.

## Appendix 2 Notable Buildings

This section presents brief descriptions of a representative range of buildings located throughout the conservation area. The omission of any particular building should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest. More detailed descriptions of listed buildings and structures can be found in Appendix 1.

Other than the concentration of recent buildings within Character Area 3, buildings of different ages and styles are spread throughout the village, with 19th and 20th century buildings merging with several much-altered 18th century structures to give the impression of an unplanned settlement structure. Again with the exception of Character Area 3, where many buildings are of a standard design, buildings display individual characteristics. There are no terraces of workers' cottages as appear in many Weardale lead-mining villages, or any examples of 20th century brick-built semis, nor areas of social housing on the outskirts.

### *Pre-18<sup>th</sup> century architecture*

Although there are claims that it may have pre-Conquest origins, the church appears no earlier than the 12th century. Its present form is the result of a thorough 'restoration' in 1858, when much medieval fabric was removed or rearranged. The church is of sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings; the east wall being of contrasting thin courses of squared stone. The roof is of stone flags with stone gable copings, with a gabled bell-cote to the west.



*(Clockwise from top) St Edmund's Church. Clockwise from top left: church from the south-east; church from the north-east; stone head at south-east angle; early masonry in north wall of nave; stone head on east wall of porch.*

In a fascinating paper about the 1858 restoration, published in 1859, the then vicar of Edmundbyers, Walker Featherstonhaugh, also refers to another restoration twenty years previously that did much damage to ancient fabric and introduced inappropriate new features, including the triple chancel arch.

Although much altered in the 19th century, the nave appears to be the oldest surviving part of the building, with the chancel added later, though apparently not later than the end of the 12th century. The south wall of the chancel incorporates two narrow chamfered windows of apparent 12th century date, and one dating from the 19th century rebuild. The door in the nave (though not the porch) may also be 12th century. Two medieval grave slabs, of late 12th or 13th century date are built into the inner face of the porch's west wall. The pilaster buttresses and corbel table of the nave's south elevation appear to be largely 19th century but may echo earlier features as some of their stonework appears early; the 19th century work may actually have 'restored' rather than introduced these features.

The church has been in continuous regular use from the 12th century through until the present day, and there were presumably many repairs, additions and alterations made during the centuries between 1200 and 1858. However, the present structure appears to be largely of 12th and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century date, though also incorporating some evidence of substantial structural alterations during the 18th century. Today, the interior is largely 19th century, but incorporates some earlier features such as a stone altar thought to be 16th century. The bell is said to have been cast in 1693 and the roof timbers may be medieval. The flat topped window in the

north wall is thought to have been a plaque window, so that the infected could still participate in services.

A clear join in the fabric of its north wall suggests that the nave has been extended to the west at some point. Peter Ryder (1988) suggests this may have been during the 18th century, with the bellcote added at the same time; he also considers the distinctive carved heads on kneelers (arguably the single most distinctive architectural features in the whole of the village) to be of similar date. Differential weathering suggests that these may actually date from different times, with some perhaps added at some point to mimic earlier examples.

A painting of Joseph Dawson (appointed Rector of Edmundbyers 1811, died 1837) appears to show an accurate representation of Edmundbyers church (prior to its 19th century 'restorations') in the background. Frustratingly, this only shows the north and east elevations, but does demonstrate that the 19th century alterations retained the basic framework of an earlier structure rather than tearing everything down and starting again as occurred in many other places.

The churchyard contains a variety of interesting gravestones dating back to the 17th century, including that of John Summerson (died 1679). The churchyard gates are dedicated to Sir Andrew and Lady Common, formerly of Hunter House.

Edmundbyers House has not been subjected to detailed architectural survey, but although its original appearance has been much disguised by the addition of later cross-wings, it is a 17th century linear house and byre, displaying much similarity to the 18th century Village Farm including original

door jambs of long, vertical stone blocks. The rear of the property, overlooking the Burnhope Burn to the south, has been much altered by the addition of dormers and a large conservatory, as well as the application of render.



*Edmundbyers House, Edmundbyers House Cottage (with its rear elevation to the road) and outbuildings in the grounds of Edmundbyers House, collectively form an attractive group.*

### **18th century architecture**

Several buildings in the village appear to have origins in the 18th century, possibly at about the time the church was undergoing a substantial programme of restoration. These buildings have undergone much subsequent development, but collectively their 18th century characteristics constitute an important part of the village's character. In her 2004 report, Caroline Hardie identifies eleven buildings with probable 18th century origins, and suggests that some of these could prove

to be seventeenth century if subjected to detailed survey. Here we will concentrate on half a dozen that best display 18th century characteristics: The Old Barn and Village Farm to the north of the green; the Punch Bowl and the Youth Hostel in the east of the village; Edmundbyers House and cottage in the south; and the Old Rectory (the former vicarage) in the south-west.

The Old Barn appears to have originally been a stable or byre with hayloft above; there is no surviving sign of a contemporary house that may originally have been associated with it. It is of roughly coursed sandstone rubble with substantial quoins. Surviving ventilation slits are set unusually high in the west gable, while another probable slit sits at a lower level on the front elevation; detailed analysis of the stonework might provide clear evidence of more than one phase of construction. Caroline Hardie (2004) notes that a datestone above a first floor window reads 1786, but that this is in a curious position and may date the building's conversion from byre to dwelling rather than the its initial construction. The conversion included the blocking of the first floor doorway and the addition of new windows. Both ground and first floor door openings are of 18th century character, as are the first floor windows. The ground floor windows have concrete sills and are much later. The windows are modern, but designed to appear from a distance as paired four-pane sashes. The roof, of Welsh slate, appears recent. There are substantial square stone chimneys, each with a single yellow chimneypot, to both gables.





*The Old Barn, facing the village green.*

Its massive boulder plinth suggests that Village Farmhouse may have 17th century origins, thus perhaps making it the oldest of the village's farmhouses. Its walls are of sandstone rubble construction, with ashlar quoins which were been disturbed when the adjacent byre was added. The door in the front elevation is of 18th century character, while the window openings, with plain sills and lintels, appear to be 19th century. The windows are recent replacements, designed to appear from a distance as nine-pane sashes. The roof, originally of heather thatch but now of Welsh slate, was raised in the early 20th century as part of major changes that saw the house widened to the rear. The first floor windows were raised

at this time. Chimneys to both gables have been rebuilt in brick. Both house and byre have red ridge tiles.



*Village Farm (left) and the Youth Hostel (right).*

The Youth Hostel, traditionally known as 'Low House', probably originated as a linear house and byre in the mid to late 18th century, with the house to the east end and the byre to the west. However, local knowledge suggests that it was built in the 17th century. During much of the 19th century it was the Miners' Arms, subsequently becoming three houses and a cafe, then, in 1936, the Youth Hostel. It is now a nine-bay structure, with the 9th (right hand) bay with vehicle door clearly a later addition. A further extension, set at an angle and currently rendered, stands at the east end. The original masonry is of varied character, consisting of roughly squared sandstone blocks quite neatly coursed in places, with roughly coursed sandstone rubble elsewhere, having substantial quoins. The doors in the second and fifth bays, although different in character, appear to both be 18th century. The windows are all 19th century insertions, mostly traditional four or six-pane sashes although the large ground floor window is less traditional. The windows are set between flat stone lintels and projecting stone sills which are painted black. The first

floor windows are set tight in below the eaves. The rear elevation is rendered with a curious render incorporating shards of pottery. The roof, presumably originally of heather thatch, is now of Welsh slate, with chimneys set centrally and to each gable, all with yellow pots.

The Punch Bowl has been much changed over the past two centuries, but seems also to have originated as a linear arrangement not dissimilar to the Youth Hostel. Early 20th century photographs show a range of three buildings, the easternmost of which appears to be poorly maintained, still retaining a black thatch roof; this was demolished by 1919, leaving the surviving two buildings, now much altered, that form today's pub. Assessment of the chronology of the surviving structure must await detailed survey, but much of what is visible today, including the unusual decorated window lintels, appears to be 19th century.



*The Punch Bowl from the south, c1900 (left) and today. (Source: Peter Natrass. Reproduced from Hardie & Hammond 2008).*

The main house is of roughly coursed sandstone rubble, with ashlar dressings and substantial quoins. Unusually for Edmundbyers, the later additions include some brickwork. Roofs are of Welsh slate throughout, although the cottage in

the grounds (probably another 18th-century structure) retains an impressive stone slate roof. The cottage faces south towards Edmundbyers House, and is thus unusual in offering its featureless rear elevation to the road. It has two extensions to the west with progressively lower roof lines, exactly as would be recommended in a modern day design guide.



*The Old Rectory from the churchyard to the south (above left). Left: doorway with datestone in east elevation. Above right: historic brickwork to east elevation.*

The Old Rectory differs greatly from the buildings described above owing to the fact that it was built to function as a rectory while the others all originated as agricultural buildings. Its detailed chronology and structural history are unclear, though a possibly repositioned datestone dates one phase, possibly the original build, to 1738. In 1788 the property is described as 'parsonage house, stable, barn and byre, all under one roof. It seems to have undergone extensive development between the first (1856) and second (1897) edition OS maps, growing substantially in size and gaining extensive formal gardens. The house displays a variety of masonry styles and also the only historic brickwork in the village that contrast with the surrounding stonework.

In summary these buildings, other than the Old Rectory which exhibits distinctive individual characteristics, display broadly similar characteristics that we can regard as typical of 18th-century Edmundbyers. Some seem to have begun life as linear 'laith-houses' (houses with adjacent attached byres, but without an interconnecting passage as found in the 'hearth-passage houses' of broadly similar date). They are constructed of roughly coursed sandstone rubble with roughly formed quoins. Lintels over door and window openings are rectangular blocks of sandstone or limestone, sometimes chamfered. Door jambs are formed by either alternate wide and narrow quoins or vertical blocks laid on end; despite being on opposite sides of the village, doorways on the Old Barn and the Youth Hostel are of identical construction, with single long jambs laid on wider plinths and overlain by smaller jambs (square in section) on which the lintels are lain. Roofs were presumably originally of heather (black) thatch, replaced by either stone slabs or Welsh slate.

### 19th century architecture

The 19th century saw the continued occupation and development of the earlier buildings noted above, and also the construction of many new buildings. A key characteristic of Edmundbyers' 19th century architecture is perhaps its variety; although they are constructed from identical materials using traditional techniques, no two buildings are alike.

In her 2004 report, Caroline Hardie identifies about forty buildings that were built or substantially developed during the 19th century although some are rumoured to be of earlier origin

The Shooting Box, occupying a prominent position overlooking the Burnhope Burn to the south, is rumoured to have 16th-century origins. It is constructed in a revivalist vernacular style; Welsh slates were readily available by this time, but the property was roofed with heather thatch. The symmetrical front elevation has two protruding wings, with steep gables, either side of a central entrance. The walls are of roughly coursed sandstone blocks with very roughly formed quoins. Window openings, which are original, are formed by stone lintels with slightly protruding stone sills. An old photograph depicts the house with its thatched roof and four-pane sash windows to both wings; the present day windows are very similar in form. The window above the doorway is less authentic in appearance. The original doorway is concealed behind a recent extension.



*The Shooting Box c1900 and today (reproduced from JW Wood 2010)*

Holmlea stands at the south end of a unique arrangement of conjoined properties. It is built into gently sloping ground in such a way that Holmlea is of three stories while other properties in the block are only of two. The chronology of the properties within this block is currently unclear although should be resolvable through detailed survey. The front

elevation of Holmlea consists of two conjoined gables with a central entrance accessible via a flight of stone steps. The entrance is set within a simple but nevertheless quite impressive architrave, the lintel of which is inscribed 'JC 1858'. The walls of Holmlea are of unusual thinly-coursed sandstone slabs with large ashlar quoins, and the windows, set between plain lintels and sills, are unusually proportioned four-pane sashes. The first floor windows are set just one course above the door and ground-floor windows.



*Clockwise from top left: The Holmlea block from the south-west, the north-west, and the north-east. The doorway to Holmlea, south elevation.*

The properties behind Holmlea are very different in character but may be of similar date. They include two houses with bay windows to the west, the northernmost of which is of sandstone rubble, very different in character from the neat masonry of Holmlea. The central property is currently rendered, hiding the join with Holmlea. The east-facing property within the block is also rendered, thus hindering its interpretation. All the buildings in the block are covered by two joined double-pitched roofs of Welsh slate.

Oldstead is located to the north of the Old Rectory and was once its stables according to a local resident. At first glance it appears to be much older, largely on account of the apparently 16<sup>th</sup> century mullioned windows with drip moulds. However, close inspection reveals that these have been inserted into the building, with the roof raised slightly to accommodate them. Whether these windows were salvaged from an older property, or made specifically for this house is unclear. The windows set within these openings are modern, creating an odd pastiche of late 20th century windows within 16th century settings, within a 19th century house.



*Left: Oldstead. Right: the old Wesleyan Chapel, now the village hall, and adjacent house.*



19th century architecture. Top left: Ivy Cottage, with outbuilding retaining stone slate roof. Top right: Stone Croft (the old smithy), with render currently hiding the historic masonry, hindering its interpretation. Centre: Heatherlea, with 1846 datestone. Bottom: derelict barns in the north-east corner of the conservation area.



The former Wesleyan Chapel, now the village hall, was erected in 1835 and largely rebuilt in 1893. It was converted after WWII as a retreat for ministers, and later converted into the village hall. Its south elevation is of quite regular stone blocks, while its side elevations are of roughly coursed rubble. The south elevation has recent single-storey extensions, with a triple arched window above. There are further arched windows to the side elevations.

Several other houses in the village are also of 19th century date. These include Stone Croft, originally the village smithy, North View, Swinburn Cottage, the village Post Office in the early 20th century, and Ivy Cottage. Heatherlea at the north-west corner of the conservation area has a datestone in its south wall dating its construction to 1846. As will be clear from the illustrations shown here, these buildings display much variation in form. None of them is of any great architectural interest, but collectively they make a substantial contribution to the historic character of the building. They are bound together by their use of local stone and Welsh slate roofs, and several still retain sash windows of various types.

Several agricultural buildings within and around the conservation area are of 19th century date. Of particular note are the derelict barns to the north-east corner of the village. These display many traditional features (one has doors suggestive of an 18th century date, while another retains much of its stone late roof), but are in a perilous state of disrepair and consequently at risk.

### *20th and 21st century architecture*

Many houses were added to Edmundbyers during the 20th century, when some older ones were radically modified. A good example of the latter is Briarwood in the north-east corner of the conservation area which comprises a conversion of a later 19th century range combined with a substantial early 20th century extension. Unfortunately, Edmundbyers' 20th century buildings have generally been sited and constructed with little reference to the village's historic character. New buildings have been scattered across the historic village green and elsewhere, notably towards the south-east corner. None of Edmundbyers' 20th century buildings are of any historic or architectural importance.

The southern area of the open space is occupied by mid to late 20th century widely-spaced detached dwellings of varying character, while the area to the north of the road is lined with several stone-built properties dating from the early 21st century. Some of these can be seen under construction in the 2004 air photograph in this appraisal. The large open area between them and the surviving village green had planning permission for a number of further dwellings of similar character which has now expired. Home Farm Lodge, with its distinctive dormer windows and roof of varied slates, occupies a prominent position east of The Old Barn, overlooking the green, and is of late 20th century date, although it may occupy the site of an earlier building.



*Above left. Briarwood, a 20th century house incorporating late 19th century agricultural buildings.*

*Above right: Moorlands, dating from the 1930s.*



*Left: Recent housing in the south-east of the village.*



*Later 20th and 21st century architecture. Top: later 20th century housing in the southern sector of the old village green. Centre left: early 21st century housing in the northern sector of the old village green. Centre right: Home Farm Lodge, a distinctive building overlooking the green. Bottom left: View over new housing on the old village green. Bottom right: the toilet block and telephone exchange.*

## Appendix 3 Origins and History

### *Before Edmundbyers*

There is very little evidence relating to human settlement around Edmundbyers prior to medieval times. Occasional finds of flint tools from the North Pennines demonstrate that people were active here in Mesolithic times, from about 10,000BC, and on the basis of evidence from elsewhere it can be assumed that mobile bands of hunter-gatherers passed through the Edmundbyers area as part of a seasonal cycle of movement around the landscape. Farming was introduced into the region during the Neolithic period (c4500-2500BC), but most communities in the North Pennines probably maintained mobile lifestyles throughout this period, perhaps tending temporary fields on a seasonal basis and herding cattle rather than simply following wild herds as their Mesolithic ancestors had done. A few finds of worked flint flakes demonstrate that people were present at Edmundbyers, but sadly tell us nothing about the nature of local settlement.

Although Bronze Age settlements remain elusive, several early Bronze Age burial mounds have been recorded close to Edmundbyers, including one at Burnhope Bridge just south of the village. A number of other recently recognised earthwork sites in the immediate vicinity of the village, including one particularly intriguing large banked and ditched enclosure that could be of Iron Age (c750BC-AD100) suggests that there is much potential to learn more about local prehistory through a carefully planned campaign of fieldwork. The recovery of part of a prehistoric quernstone from Black Hill, just west of the village, certainly suggests that people were farming here in the centuries before and during the Roman occupation.

The Roman army arrived in northern England in AD79 although there are no signs of Roman occupation in the vicinity of the village. The Romans exploited parts of the North Pennines for lead, silver and other minerals, and for hunting, and although the Roman takeover must have had some bearing on life here, there is no evidence in any great change in settlement pattern or agricultural practice in the vicinity of Edmundbyers. It can be assumed that farmsteads in the Edmundbyers area would have been linked to Dere Street and to the wider Roman world via a network of tracks, possibly supplying produce to the garrison at Ebchester.

Following the end of Roman rule in the early 5th century AD, and after much political upheaval during the 'Dark Ages', the Edmundbyers area found itself incorporated within the great Anglian kingdom of Northumbria, eventually coming under the ownership of the Community of St Cuthbert, based at Durham. Little is known of developments around Edmundbyers prior to the Norman Conquest, but there must have been a settlement here as the name is Old English, originally meaning 'Eadmund's byre'. Local tradition claims that the settlement was named after King Edmund (King of England, 939-946), but it is perhaps more likely that it was founded by someone with the same name, and may have existed for a long time as little more than a farmstead. Alternatively, the fact that the church is dedicated to St Edmund, a 9th century king of East Anglia, suggests that the place-name might be linked to that of the church. There is a local tradition that the church has pre-Conquest origins, and some of its masonry looks early, but there is currently no clear evidence of a pre-Conquest structure here. If it can be proved that the church is pre-Conquest then there must also have been a village, rather than just a farmstead, here at the time.



### Medieval Edmundbyers

Other than the church, which dates back at least to the 12th century, no buildings within Edmundbyers are known to date back to medieval times. Our understanding of the development of the village is therefore based on a combination of documentary sources combined with a degree of informed speculation based on what we know of the form of the post-medieval settlement. The following account is based largely on information and opinions provided by Caroline Hardie (2004).

Any pre-Conquest settlement at Edmundbyers would almost certainly have been destroyed or abandoned during William the Conqueror's 'harrying of the North' in 1068-70. It is possible a farmstead or small village here may have survived this episode and evolved into a larger settlement in post-Conquest times.

The earliest known reference to Edmundbyers is in the Bolden Book, a survey of the holdings of the See of St Cuthbert at Durham, dated 1183. This states that Edmundbyers was held by Alan of Bruntoft 'for his services in the forest'. Surviving documentary references give occasional glimpses into life in the village throughout medieval times, for example the records of the Durham halmote court record the destruction by fire of a house worth 30 shillings in 1367, and note disputes over landholdings following the Black Death of the mid-14th century. Documents also record the ownership of Edmundbyers, which passed to the Prior and Convent of Durham in 1328.

These documentary sources tell us little about the form of Edmundbyers in medieval times. Based largely on a detailed analysis of post-medieval maps, Caroline Hardie (2004) suggests that the medieval village was probably established by the Bishops of Durham at some point in the 12th century. This usually comprised houses set around a village green but there is no direct evidence that this model was applied to Edmundbyers. Each property would have had its own toft to the rear, and the whole would have been surrounded by large open fields of ridge-and-furrow. There would have been areas of managed woodland, and the high hills would have been exploited seasonally for rough grazing.



*Grave slab of early priests 12th or 13th century date, now built into the porch of the church of St. Edmund*

This model is convincing, but is thrown into some doubt by the fact that the earliest available maps suggest Edmundbyers was a linear village, located in the area of the village green to the north of the current village and consisting of a linear arrangement of properties along the old road from Blanchland to Muggleswick. The existence of ridge-and-furrow on the

current village field has led to the suggestion that this area was under the plough in medieval times and therefore could not be part of the green, which would not have been ploughed. However, the earliest maps do not show the settlement in any detail and should not be relied upon as indicators of its medieval form, and the ridge-and-furrow on the village field could be relatively late in date and therefore irrelevant to medieval times. The lack of ridge and furrow over the rest of the central area (in contrast to the surrounding fields within which large tracts of it survive to this day) argues against the area having been ploughed in medieval times and lends support to the suggestion that this was indeed the village green.

No medieval houses have been located at Edmundbyers, although it seems that one may have survived until relatively recently. A cruck-built house of typical medieval form, known as 'the Firehouses' is said to have been standing as late as 1900, but its fate and exact location are not known. All medieval houses were probably of cruck construction, with heather thatched roofs. Although the sites of many such houses will have been built upon in post-medieval times, others probably lie buried in accessible positions around the green and, if they can be located, could potentially tell us much about the medieval village.

Caroline Hardie suggests that the surviving 18th century properties at the north of the village may originally have been built behind a line of older buildings facing onto the north side of the green, and that these older buildings were subsequently abandoned, the green expanding to encompass their site. She suggests that 'humps and bumps' on the green may therefore

be evidence of medieval buildings, and that the archaeological investigation of these may prove rewarding.

Although the medieval economy of Edmundbyers must have been primarily agricultural, there is some evidence of early lead working in the local landscape and it is probable that some villagers were engaged in the mining and smelting of lead, and possibly also in other industrial activity, in addition to their agricultural duties.

### *Post-medieval Edmundbyers*

Whatever the nature of the medieval village, it seems to have undergone radical change during the 18th century, a period of great agricultural reform when previously open medieval fields and moorland were enclosed with hedgebanks and stone walls. From this time, the land was divided up between individual farms rather than being worked communally as in medieval times.

Several buildings in the village seem to have originated as farmhouses or agricultural buildings during the 18th century. These include The Old Barn, and Village Farm to the north of the green, Struthers Farm, the Punch Bowl Inn and the Youth Hostel to the east, and Edmundbyers House to the south. The Old Rectory, adjacent to the church to the west of the green, seems also to have 18th century origins.

Although Edmundbyers is depicted on several maps from 1569 onwards, these do not depict the form of the village in any detail and in some cases may even be misleading. For example, Armstrong's map of 1768 shows the village lying on a single road (the old road from Blanchland to

Muggleswick, followed in part today by a public footpath), but also shows the smelt mill to the south-west; there must have been a track of some kind linking the smelt mill and the village, and a track almost certainly lead south over the moors to Weardale by this time, although no hint of it is given by Armstrong. This road was turnpiked at some point around 1800, and it may have been at this time that Burnhope Bridge was constructed on the site of a ford that had presumably been in regular use for centuries.



Lord Burleigh's map of Durham (1569; left) and that by Saxton (1576; above) both depict Edmundbyers but do not show it in any detail. (Source: Durham Record Office).

The earliest reliable cartographic evidence for the form of the village is an estate map for Muggleswick of 1800 which is in Durham Cathedral Archives. Greenwood's map of 1820 shows the road network (including tracks heading up into the

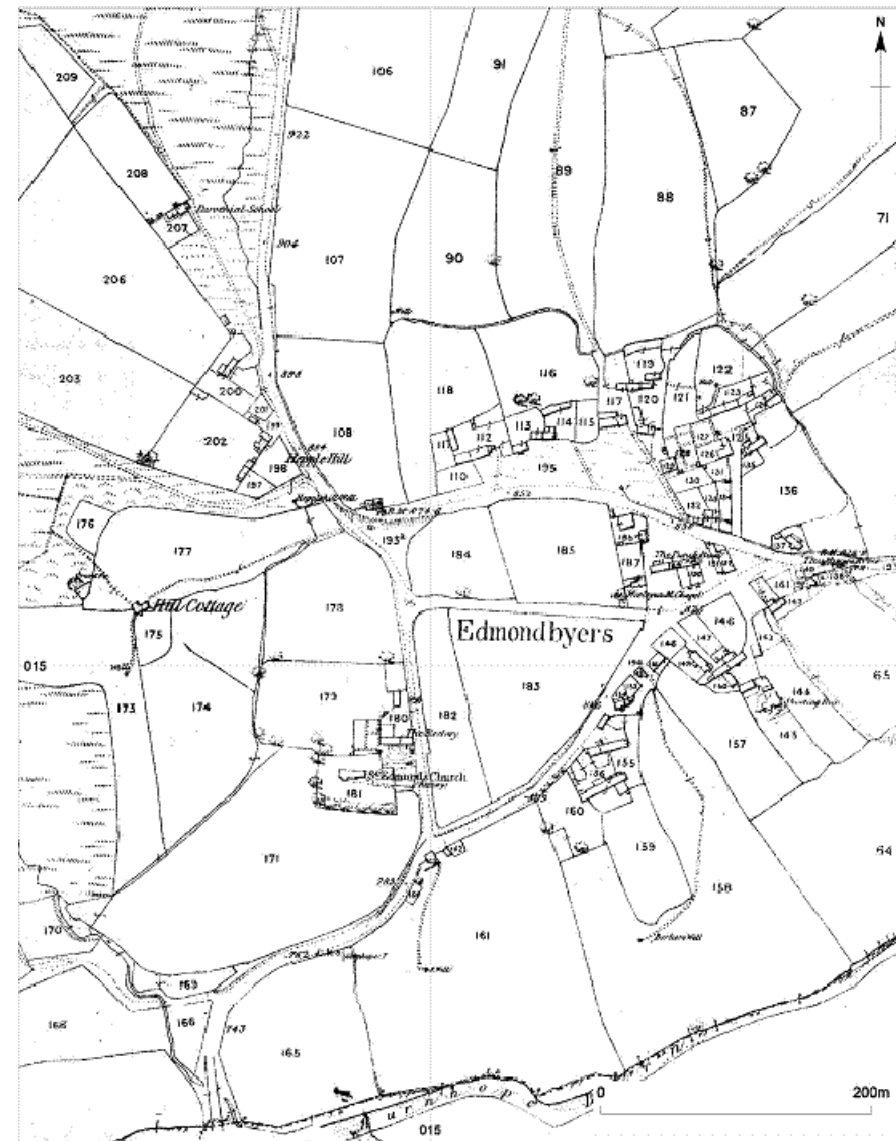
surrounding hills) and basic layout of the village in a form remarkably similar to today. However little detail of individual buildings is provided; for this level of detail we must turn to the tithe map of 1841 and the OS 1st edition map of 1856, which show almost identical levels of detail.



Greenwood's map of 1820 gives an indication of Edmundbyers' form at this time. (Source: Durham Record Office).

The 1856 First Edition OS map shows the central area (that we assume to have been the medieval village green) divided by stone walls into four large fields. The area round the village is similarly divided up into fields by a web of stone walls and hedgebanks. The earlier fields, closer to the village with irregular boundaries, are easily distinguishable from the surrounding later (probably late 18th or early 19th century) fields with straight sides. Within the village, there is some encroachment onto the eastern side of the old green, with the Wesleyan Chapel and a couple of other buildings now standing here in addition to the Punch Bowl Inn. Methodism was very popular in Edmundbyers as it was throughout the lead mining areas of the North Pennines; many villagers continued to attend St Edmund's Church, but whereas the church was redesigned to accommodate 100 people in 1858, the Wesleyan chapel had been built in 1835 to hold 200.

Although lead working occurred in the vicinity of Edmundbyers in medieval times, it took place on a much larger scale from the 17th century when the Feldon Smelt Mill, 2km south-west of the village on the Burnhope Burn, was constructed by the Blackest family to serve mines throughout the local landscape. Competition from cheap imports resulted in the substantial collapse of the lead mining industry by 1900. Many Edmundbyers residents must have been employed in the local mines and at the Feldon smelt mill, and despite the village's rural atmosphere today its 18th and 19th century prosperity was substantially due to the local lead industry.



The Ordnance Survey 1st edition (1856) map shows Edmundbyers in great detail. (Source: Hardie 2005).

18th and 19th century historians provide some fascinating insights into historic Edmundbyers. In the late 18th century William Hutchinson describes the village in less than flattering terms:

*Burden-hope, a considerable rivulet, washes the skirts of this place, and where Feldon-beck runs into it at a little distance, are the lead mills belonging to the Blakett family. The whole of this parish consists of about twenty farmholds, all of leasehold tenure under the dean and chapter. The aspect of the country is meagre and without shelter; and the cattle and sheep are of a very inferior kind. Agriculture is discouraged by the various disadvantages of situation, for all the lime is supplied from the banks of Were near Stanhope, and to be brought over the intervening desert, in bad roads, with much labour. The lead works employ the inhabitants, and bring in some foreign money, or the country would become desolate.*

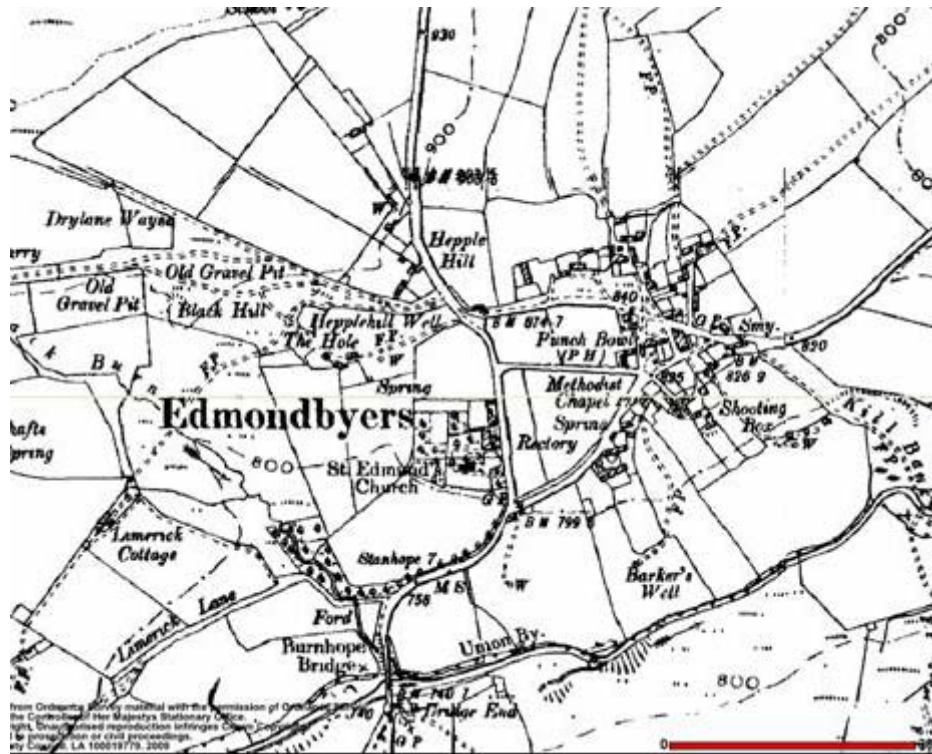
William Fordyce (1857) observes that the village of Edmundbyers consisted of 'about 40 thatched cottages irregularly disposed around a village green'. There were two public houses in the village; the Punch Bowl and the Miners' Arms (now the Youth Hostel). A school was located north of the village on Hepple Hill.

Whellan (1894) notes that the population of the Parish of Edmundbyers rose from 215 in 1801 to 484 in 1831; this rise must have been associated with the expansion of the lead industry. By 1891, when the North Pennines lead industry was in terminal decline, the population had fallen to 252. Industrial employment was not, however, restricted to the lead industry; several quarries (providing stone for building projects within

the village and for fieldwalls) and a gravel pit were worked in the vicinity of the village during the 18th and 19th centuries.

### *20th and 21st century Edmundbyers*

Following the decline of the local lead industry, agriculture has been the basis of the local economy, with tourism playing an increasingly important role. Edmundbyers has developed during the 20th century as a dormitory village for people earning a living in the towns and cities away to the east. Its accessibility from Durham and Newcastle, and many smaller towns, coupled with its idyllic rural location, led to the demand for more housing during the 20th century. Several houses were built during the earlier and mid 20th century, with another group at the turn of the millennium. The dramatic effect of these new houses on the form of the historic settlement is immediately obvious from the cartographic evidence; the previously open central space has become cluttered with houses, the appearance of which owes little to local tradition. Many older properties have seen extensions and other alterations including replacement doors and windows that pay little if any heed to local tradition.

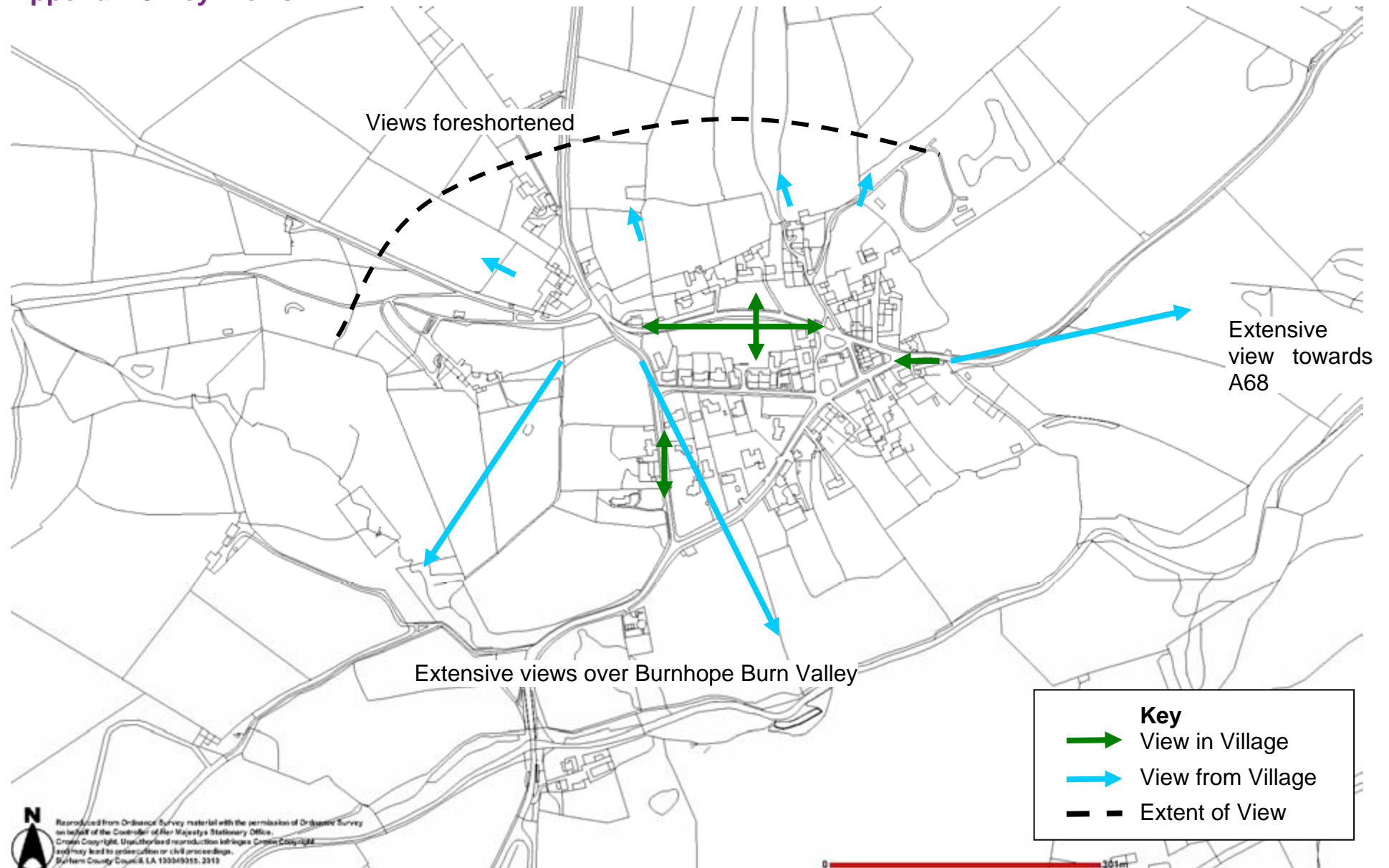


The development of Edmundbyers during the 20th century is apparent from a comparison between the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (1896; above), the RAF aerial photograph (1940; top right) and the aerial photograph 2001; right). Note that the 2001 air photograph shows new houses under construction at the centre of the village

### Appendix 4 Current Designations



### Appendix 5 Key Views







Heritage, Landscape and Design  
Durham County Council  
County Hall  
Durham  
County Durham  
DH1 5UL

Tel: 0191 383 4196

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