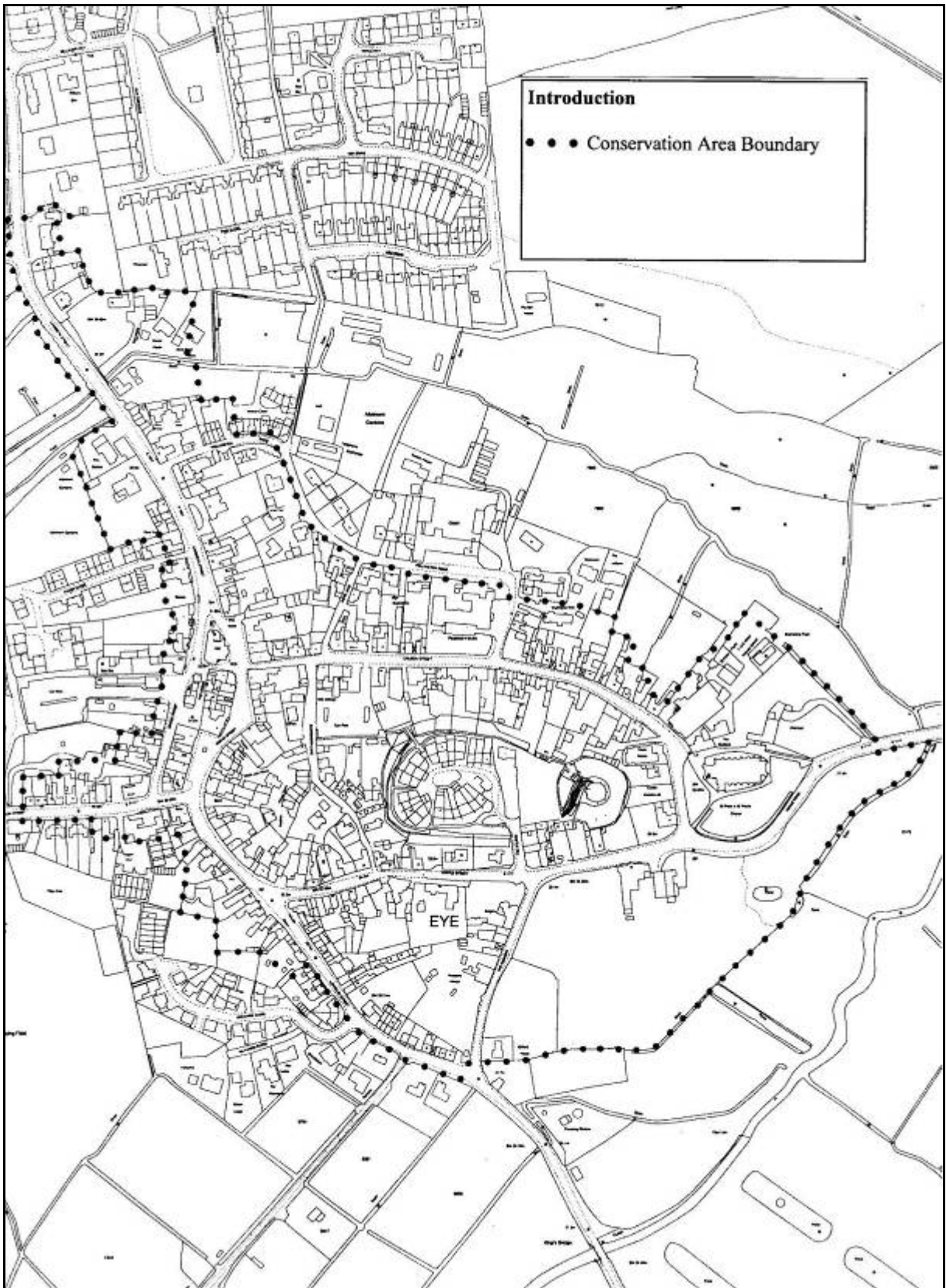


*conservation area appraisal*





# Introduction

*The conservation area in Eye was originally designated by East Suffolk County Council in 1970, and inherited by Mid Suffolk District Council at its inception in 1974.*

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

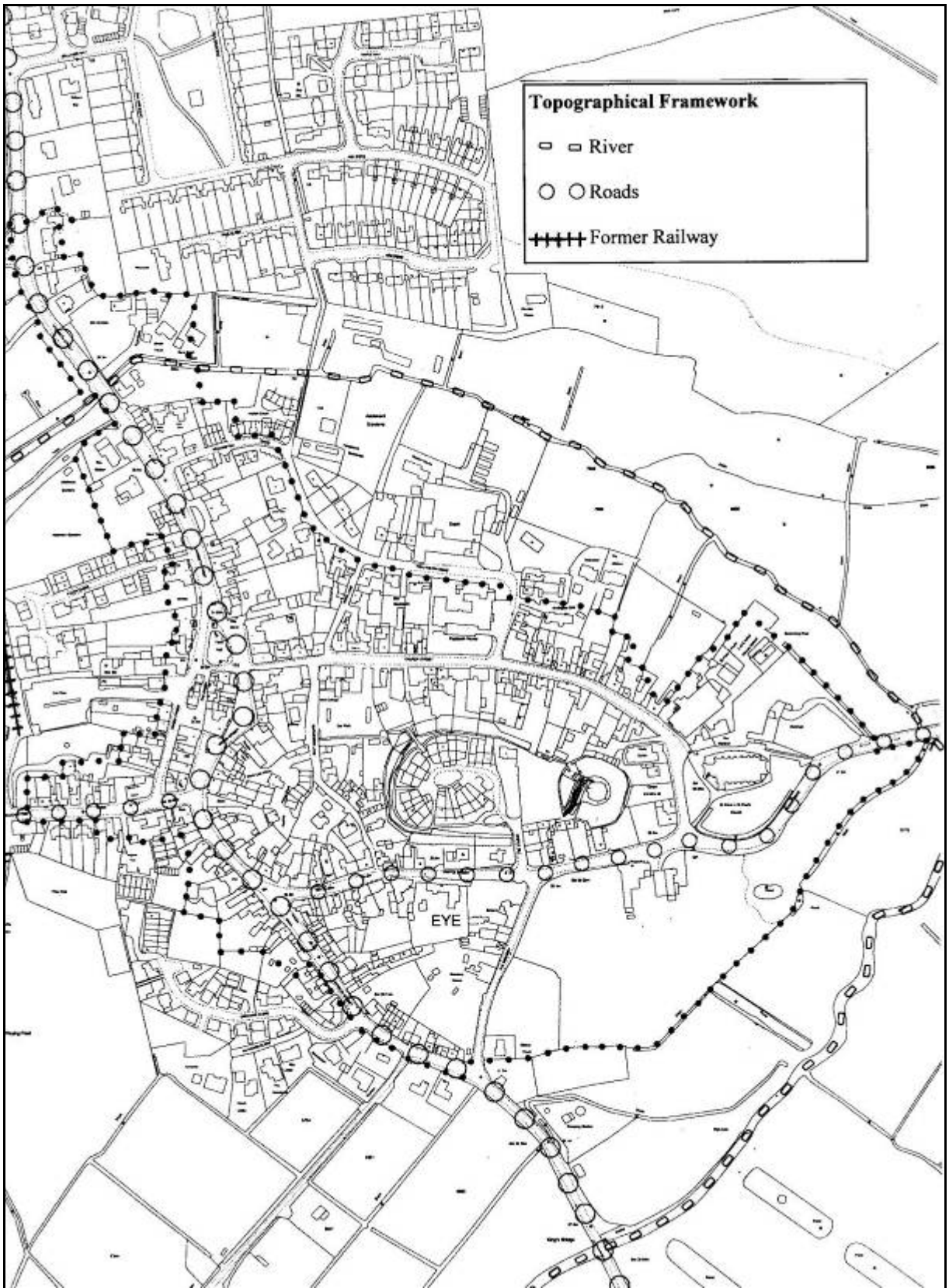
*As such it is a straightforward appraisal of Eye's built environment in conservation terms.*



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

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

*Text, photographs and map overlays by Patrick Taylor, Conservation Architect, Mid Suffolk District Council 2009.*



# Topographical Framework

*Eye is a small market town in the north of Suffolk, approximately four miles south of Diss across the border in Norfolk.*

*Eye lies just over a mile east of the main Ipswich to Norwich road, a former Roman road, turnpiked by the Ipswich to Scole Turnpike Trust in 1711. Eye was itself on a later turnpike road running south-east from here through Debenham and on to Woodbridge and has its own surviving toll-house in Lowgate Street.*

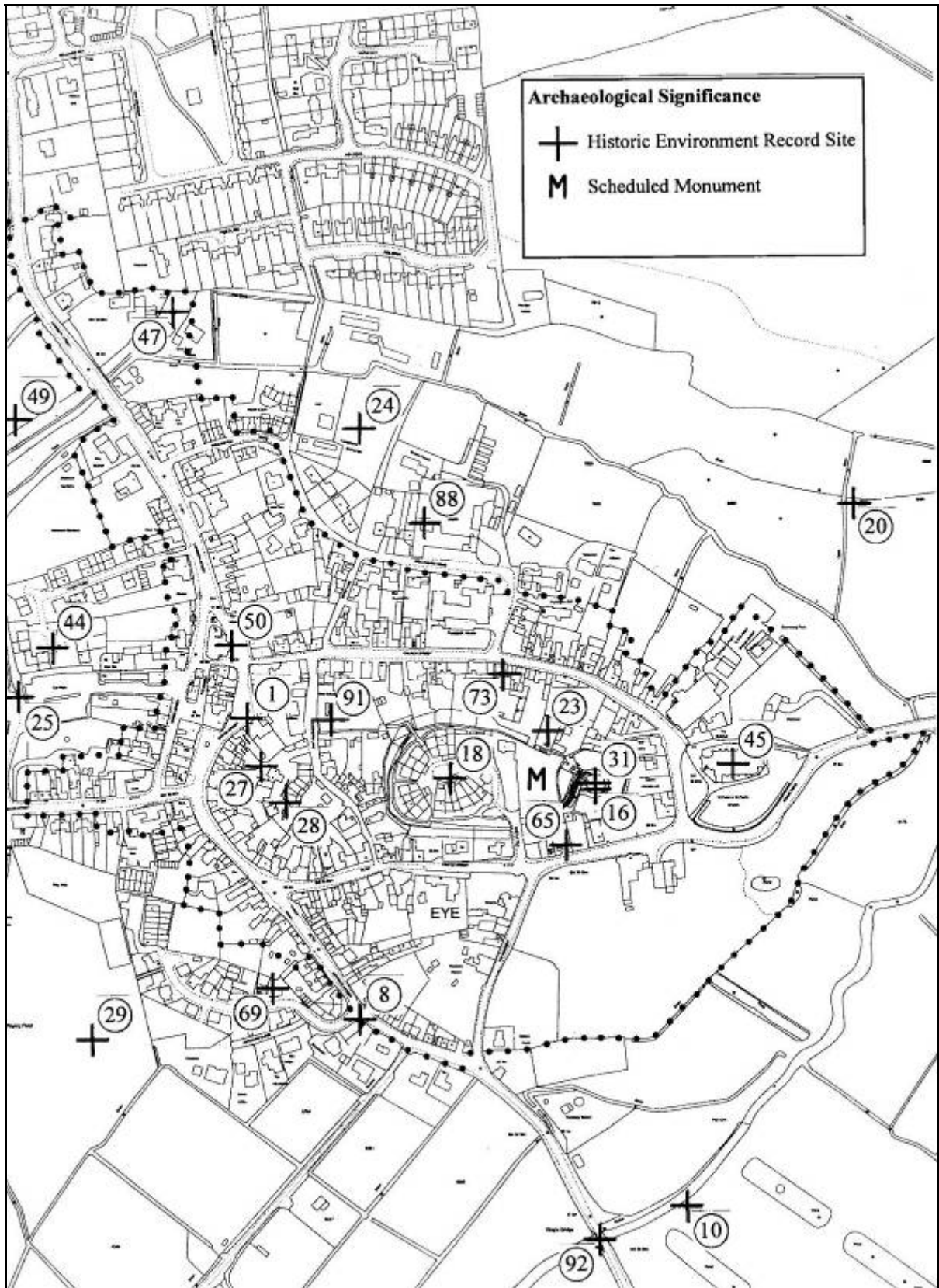
*A short branch line spur off the main Ipswich to Diss and Norwich railway line at one time terminated at Eye. Opened in 1867, it closed to passengers in 1931 and goods in 1964.*



*The town lies approximately 40m above O.D. on land that rises slightly to the west. It almost forms an island between two tributaries of the River Dove that flows on from here north-eastwards to join the River Waveney near Hoxne.*

*Beneath the alluvial deposits the underlying geology locally is that of 'High' Suffolk's glacial clays, the Lowestoft Till formation, which in turn overlies the chalk.*



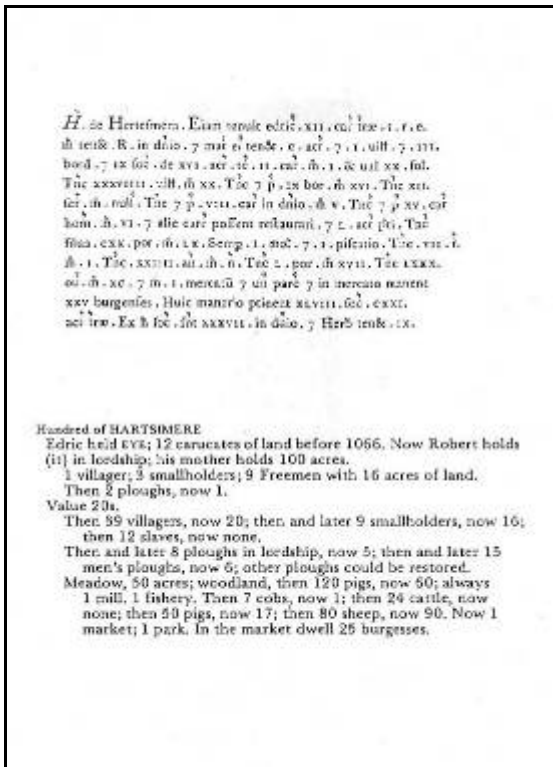


# Archaeological Significance

*The wider parish of Eye contains up to a hundred sites of archaeological interest listed in the Suffolk County Historic Environment Record.*

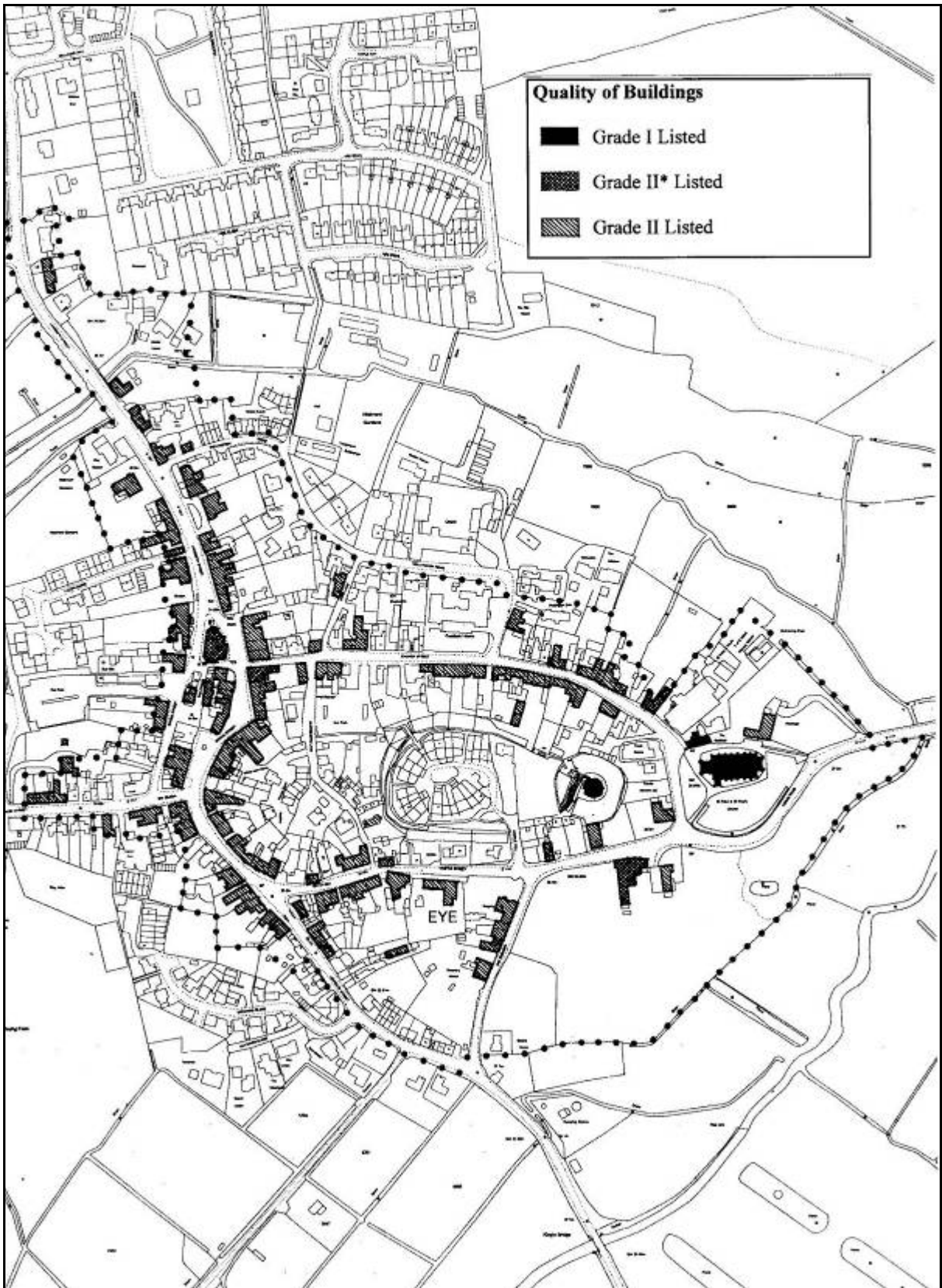
*Even within the central area these finds cover a wide range of dates. The oldest comprise a Palaeolithic small hand axe found in a garden and a later pair of Mesolithic worked flints, one a leaf shaped microlith.*

*Roman finds include fragments of a quern, some pottery and six small bronze coins of late 4<sup>th</sup> Century date, along with the suspected remains of a drying kiln. In their turn the Saxons have left us bronze tweezers and the bronze seal of Bishop Aethelwald of Dommoc of mid 9<sup>th</sup> Century date.*



*Archaeology in the more tangible form of Scheduled Ancient Monuments also abounds in the forms of Eye Castle and the Priory at Abbey Farm, both founded by the Normans.*

*The Domesday survey records Eye as held by Edric before 1066 and Robert Malet subsequently. There were 50 acres of meadow and woodland for up to 120 pigs. Mention is also made of a mill, which would then have been of the water driven type, plus a market and a park (hunting land).*





# *Intrinsic Quality of Buildings*

*As an important historic settlement since Norman times, Eye accordingly has its share of higher graded listed buildings.*

*Three are grade I listed, comprising Castle, Church and Guildhall, buildings very much at the heart of a medieval town.*

*The Castle now is little more than a mound, the former motte raised just after the conquest, most of the actual building having been destroyed in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The picturesque building crowning it now is of Victorian age, a flint rubble house for Sir Edward Kerrison's batman, which itself replaced the windmill depicted on old prints.*



*The Church of Ss Peter and Paul is mainly early 14<sup>th</sup> Century with additions in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, restored in 1869 by J K Colling. Pevsner describes the west tower as 'one of the wonders of Suffolk', 101 feet high with flint flushwork from top to bottom.*

*In the usual position tight against the churchyard wall, the former Guildhall of St Mary displays the usual high quality of such buildings. Timber-framed with very straight close studding and a carved corner post supporting the jetties on two sides, this is structure which was meant to be seen. It was however rebuilt in 1875, presumably re-using much original material, and now unfortunately has machine-made roof tiles.*





# *Traditional Building Materials*

*Overall the town presents a good selection of Suffolk's many and varied local materials.*

*The Church is in flint with some brick and stone dressings, with unusually roofs of aluminium to the aisles and cedar shingles elsewhere.*

*Many of the older buildings are timber-framed, those obviously so with exposed framing, others rendered over or more recently cased in local brick, either soft 'Suffolk Red' or the harder 'Suffolk White'.*

*The grade II\* Town Hall of 1857 by E B Lamb is idiosyncratic with its red and white brick walls, flint panelling and a slate roof.*

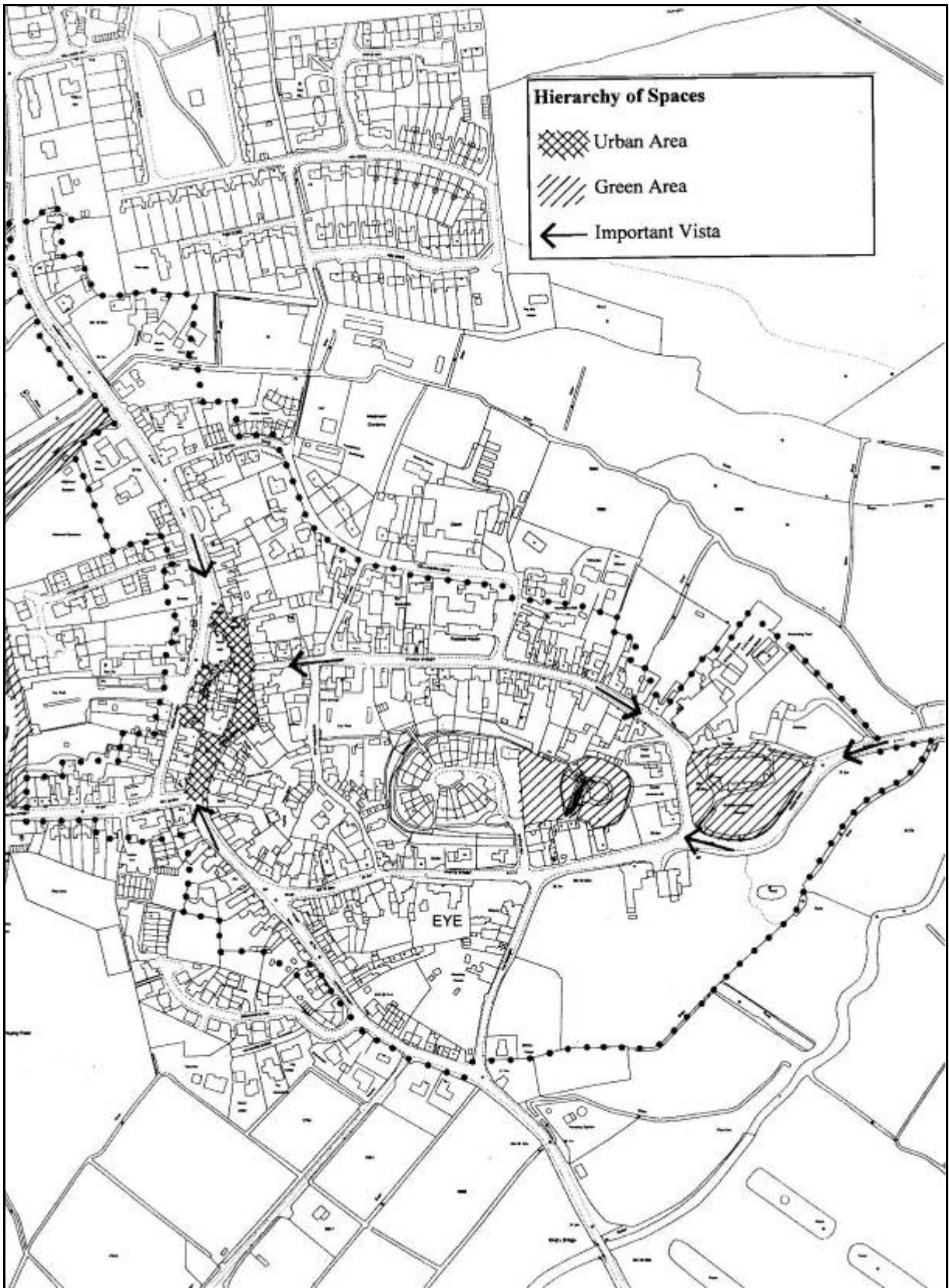


*The 18th and 19th Centuries have also left their mark with their replacement roofs in plaintile or pantile and some buildings in local brick, both red and white, usually with slate roofs but occasionally with the black glazed pantiles common up the Waveney valley.*

*A number of these brick buildings have subsequently been reabsorbed into the local colour-washed vernacular by the application of a coat of paint.*

*Around the town there are also several instances of black-boarded outbuildings with pantile roofs and a scattering of remnant flint walls. Garden walls also include examples of the locally made (Hoxne) half round Banham bricks.*





# *Hierarchy of Spaces*

*The Castle has left more of a mark on Eye than might at first be realized. Little other than the Church and Guildhall lie to the east, but to the west of the motte, the higher ground of the inner bailey is now crowned with modern housing, suitably defensive in style.*

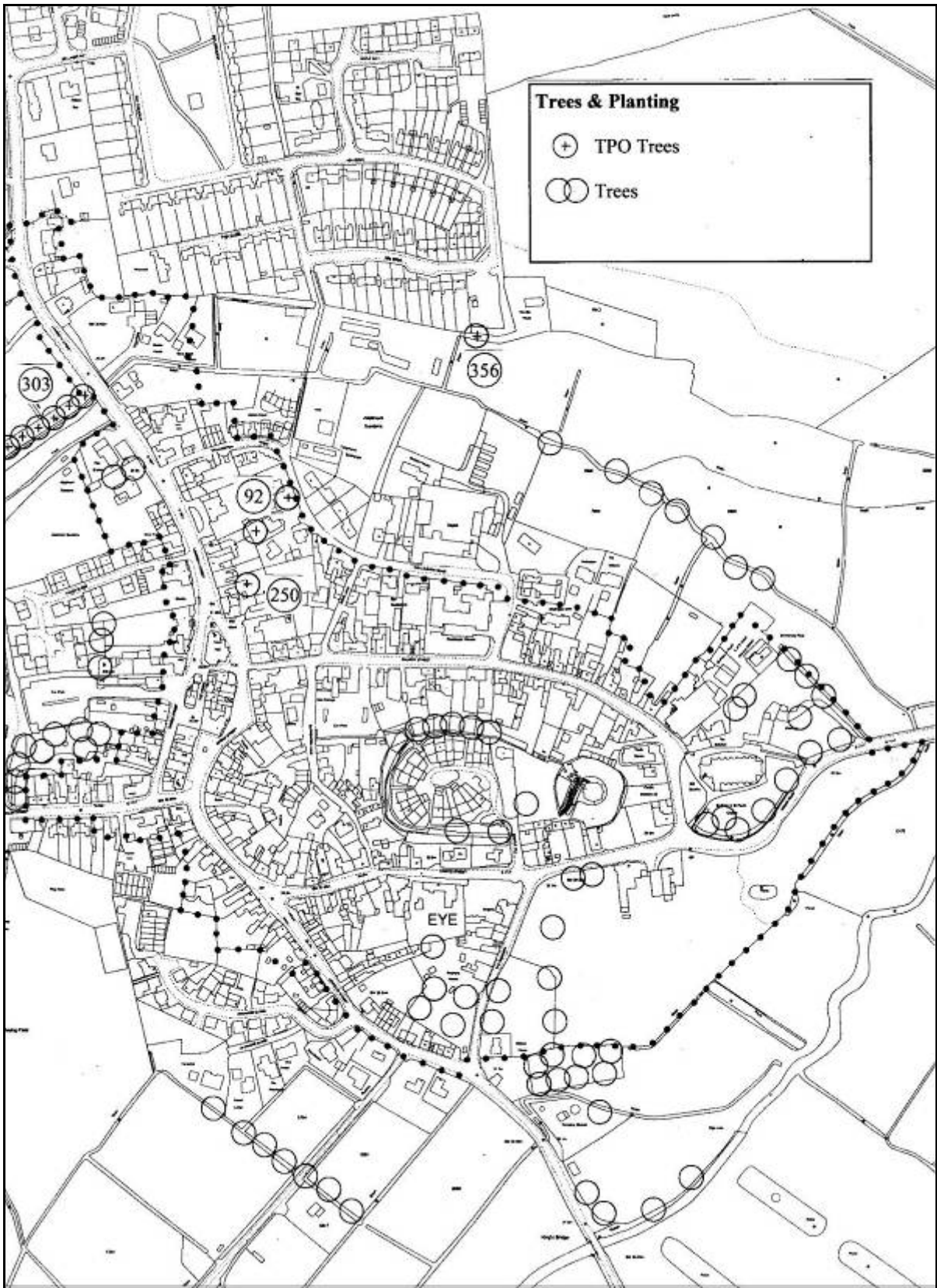
*Further west the line of outer bailey encloses the Buckshorn Lane car park and the rear of properties fronting Castle Street, Broad Street and Church Street, built along its former line.*

*The gentle curvature of these streets contrasts with the more complex spaces forming the commercial heart of the town in Broad Street and beyond, further west.*



*Here there are a series of small urban spaces linked at their corners to the next one, all now suitably enhanced to provide short term town centre car parking.*

*The southernmost of these spaces contains the Kerrison memorial and leads to two spaces further north, one on Broad Street, the other accessed off Cross Street. Further north still another linked space adjoins Lambseth Street opposite the Town Hall.*





# Trees and Planting

*Within the town centre trees do not figure largely, however they can be found but a short distance away.*

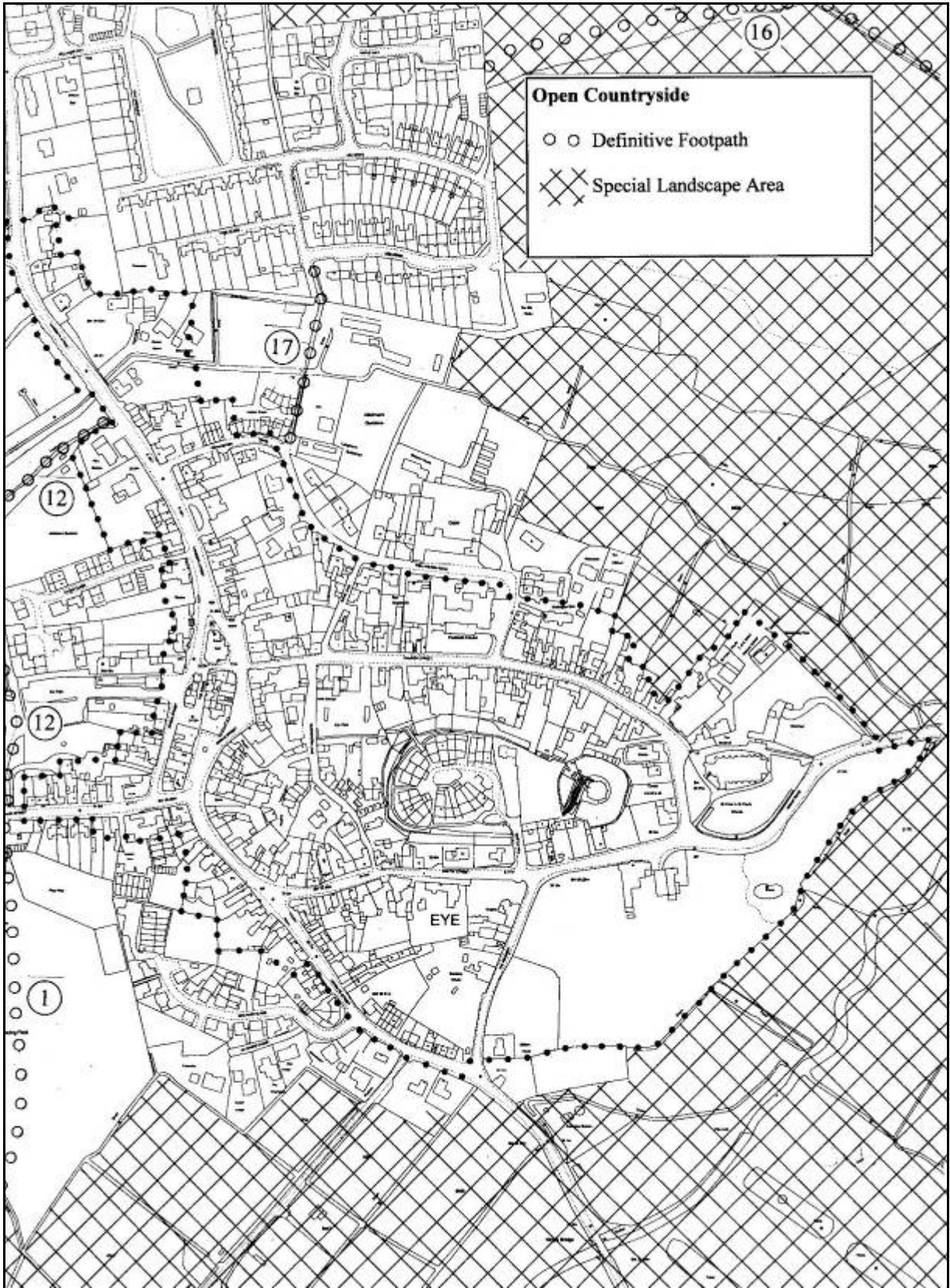
*To the south, a large Wellingtonia adorns the garden of Stayer House on Castle Street, providing something of a local landmark. To the west a band of trees follows the footpath north off Magdalen Street, linking to areas of trees immediately north and south of the Cross Street car park, and including a large wild Pear Tree.*

*Hedgerow trees can be found further from the centre in the lower wetter areas that encircle the town.*



*A number of Tree Preservation Orders have been felt necessary over the years to protect various trees at risk. TPO 92 (1986) covers a Walnut and an Acacia off Wellington Road and TPO 123 (1989) protects a group of five Oaks north of Chandos Lodge off Castleton Way, all north of the town centre.*

*More recently to the south of Chandos Lodge adjoining the river valley, two Oaks and an extensive boundary strip of mixed woodland are protected by TPO 303 (2002), whilst to the rear of Lambseth Street TPO 250 (1997) covers a single Lime tree.*





# Relationship to Open Countryside

*Eye is not a large town and has not actually spread itself much beyond its historic limits. There are some relatively modern housing estates to the north and north-west and a small industrial area around the old station site to the west of centre. The only substantial growth has been the industrial estate on the old airfield site further out to the north-west.*

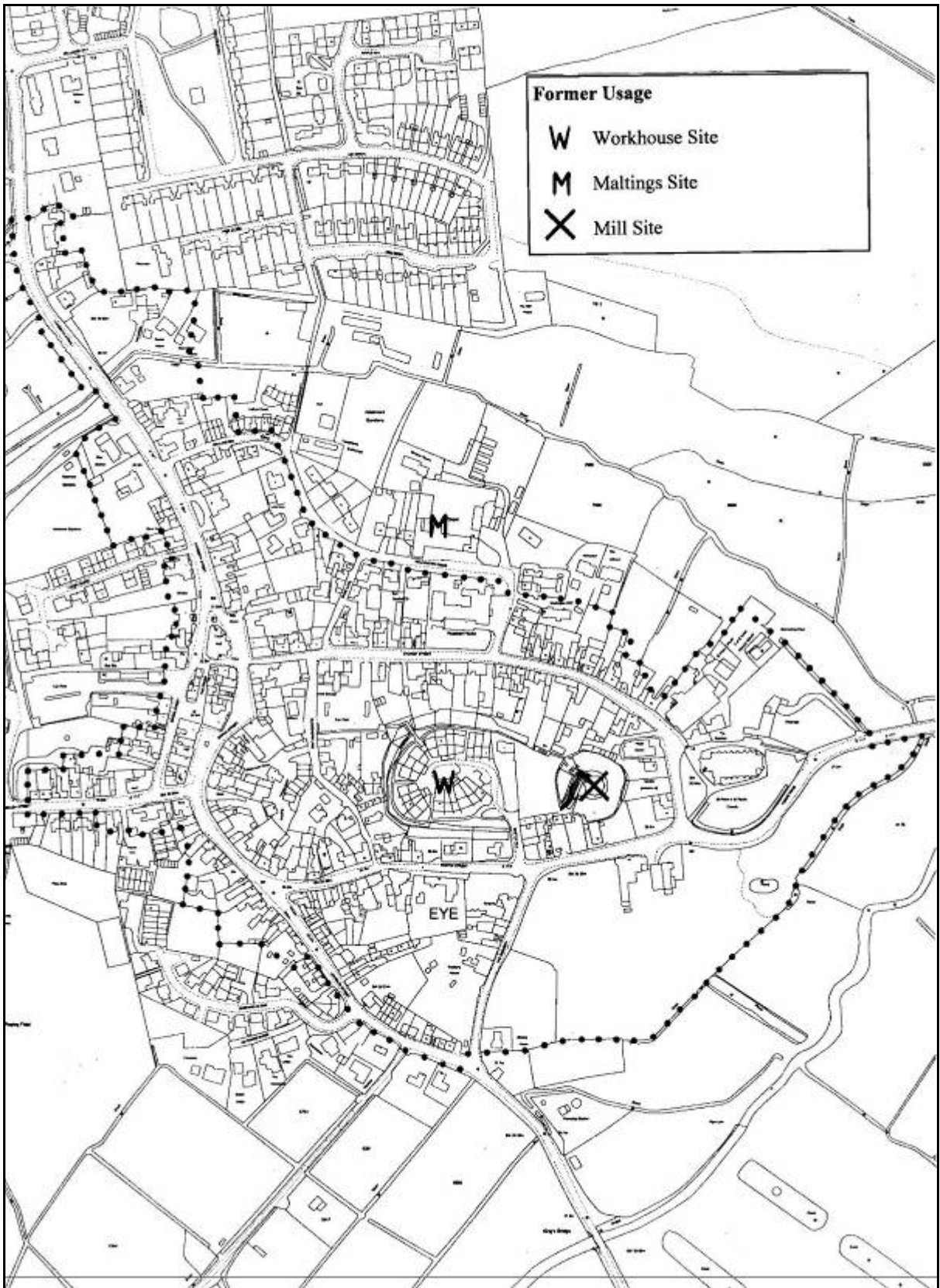
*This lack of spread is largely a result of the town's moist surroundings, which have kept it contained especially to the south and east. The countryside in these directions is thus close at hand and very visible across low-lying land particularly from the rear of properties in Castle Street. To the east generally the countryside is all part of a Special Landscape Area.*



*Footpaths giving access to the adjacent countryside are also affected by the geography here. To the south and east there are no radial routes other than the roads. On higher ground beyond the wet area definitive footpaths 16, 21, 24, 28 and 32 encircle the town about half a mile from the centre.*

*From the centre itself definitive footpath 17 heads northwards from Wellington Road to the start of footpath 16 and footpath 12 heads westwards off Lambseth Street before branching into two. One branch continues west just south of the river, the other turns south to Magdalen Street continuing beyond there southwards as footpath 1.*





# Prevailing & Former Usage

*Eye's growth as a market town can be traced to the need to service the castle on its defensive almost 'island' site. Both the market to the west and the adjoining priory site to the east swiftly followed the establishment of the castle.*

*The River Dove is believed to have been navigable this far up, at least for small craft, allowing the town to grow as a trading centre. The Borough of Eye received its first charter from Henry IV in 1408.*

*Records from the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century indicate cordwainers, spinsters, a clothier and both linen and woollen weavers there, along with the more usual yeomen farmers, blacksmiths, carpenter, millwright and miller.*



*There was a post-mill type windmill for many years on top of the castle mound, a good if vulnerable site for such. The Tithe Apportionment of 1841 has several other 'mill' related entries, so there were probably three mills within the parish.*

*Other tithe entries indicate a brewery, a malthouse, and associated hop yard and kiln yard. Victorian directories confirm the growth with typical small town entries for lawyers, insurance offices, teachers, bakers, butchers, and ironmongers in addition to 28 farmers, 3 millers, 4 bricklayers and a stonemason.*







# Losses & Possible Gains

*Within the town there were three listed buildings in poor repair on Suffolk's 'Buildings at Risk' register, however 15 Broad Street is now in new ownership and undergoing repair. Meanwhile 33 Magdalen Street (left) remains in urgent need of joinery and brickwork repairs and the Town Hall continues to have problems with its roof. On Castle Street, unlisted Harwen House in multiple occupation, will require repairs to its stone quoins before much longer.*

*Some areas of modern infill could have been better implemented: the striking new housing on Castle Hill sits better against the backdrop of the castle mound than the relatively new house opposite the churchyard, built in a foreign brick with an alien roof form.*





# References and Further Reading

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*Pevsner, N 1976 The Buildings of England: Suffolk Penguin*

*Suffolk County Council 2008 Sites and Monuments Record*

*Tithe Map & Apportionment 1839 Eye Suffolk Records Office*

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*This Appraisal adopted as  
Supplementary Planning Guidance  
by Mid Suffolk District Council  
Environment Policy Panel  
20 September 2011*