



Shipton Conservation Area Review December 2008



Introduction

Shipton is a small agricultural settlement about half a mile east of Winslow. Although the settlements are physically separated, they have close associations and their histories and development are intertwined. Historically Shipton was a moderately sized agricultural settlement that appears to have suffered from substantial population shrinkage during the later mediaeval period (as witnessed by the abandonment of the mediaeval settlement on the site of Rands Farm) and again in the late 18th and early 19th. At this time the main road through Shipton was diverted to as part of the turnpike improvements to the south west of the hamlet, considerably altering the road layout and plan of the hamlet.

A Conservation Area is an area of “special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. At present there is a single Conservation Area in Shipton, including most of the buildings in the hamlet.

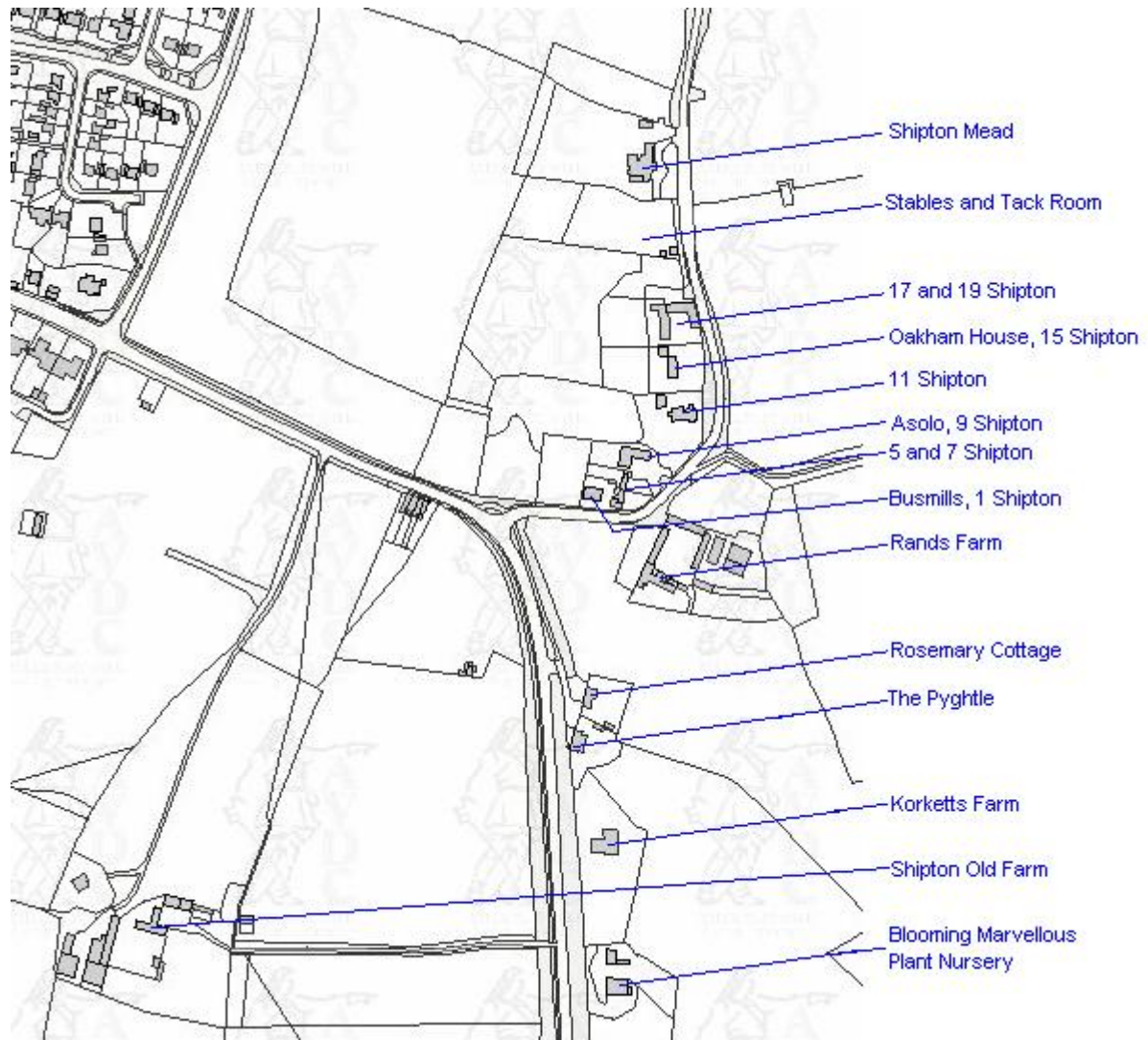
The boundary of the existing Conservation Area in Shipton



Buildings in Shipton today

In preparing this report all the houses in Shipton, not just those within the existing Conservation Area, have been considered.

The buildings within Shipton are identified below. Detailed descriptions of the historic and architectural interest of these buildings are included on pages 8-10:



Shipton Conservation Area Review

Conservation Area designation is a useful planning tool, but the legislative protection offered to Conservation Areas is limited. Designation cannot prevent further development in an area, nor is it intended to do so. Mothballing historic settlements would be detrimental to the character of such areas as it would artificially curtail their on-going organic growth.

Since the last review of Shipton in 1990 the area has experienced considerable change, including the building of a selection of modern detached homes in the centre of the hamlet and alterations to many of the older properties nearby. Whilst these alterations and additions were carried out in line with prevailing National and Local Planning Policy, the combined impact of new development on the character of the settlement, and incremental change to the historic but unlisted buildings in the area has been considerable.

This report identifies the elements within Shipton that still contribute to the historic or architectural interest of the hamlet. It also identifies those elements which are not of historic or architectural interest. Each building or space has been looked at individually in terms of its architectural, historic, or archaeological interest. Green spaces and trees have also been assessed in terms of the contribution they make to the area.

The final section of this report outlines three possible proposals for the Conservation Area. These three proposals will be sent out to public consultation and the views expressed by the residents of Shipton will be taken into account before a final proposal is taken forward to Cabinet and Council.

Location and Landscape Setting

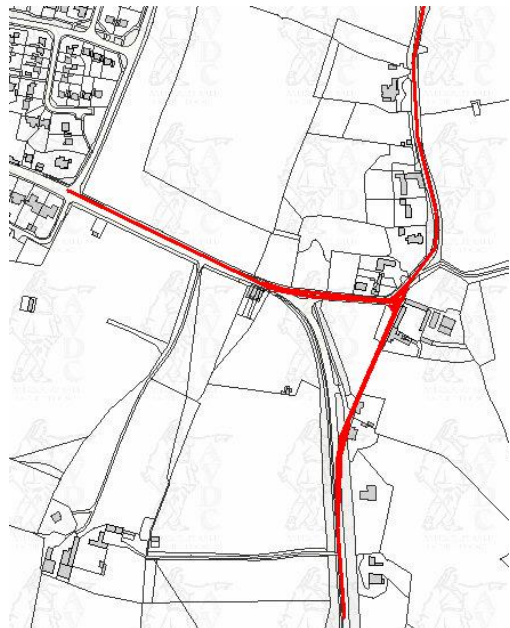
Shipton is a small hamlet about ½ mile to the east of Winslow, situated at the junction of the A413 and the B4032. All the buildings in the village are accessed from one of these two major roads. There are a number of footpaths and farm tracks in Shipton, most of which link the main road with the surrounding agricultural land.

The landscape surrounding Shipton and Winslow is predominantly rural. The two settlements occupy a ridgeline setting roughly 100m above sea level, providing good views over the river valleys below. To the north east of Shipton the landscape rises towards the village of Mursley. To the south it falls towards the river valley. The geology of the area is simple, with sand, gravel and alluvium beds above the underlying Oxford Clay and Kellaway beds. There are also bands of Oolite and Cornbrash to the north of the settlements.

Character

Originally Shipton hamlet formed a linear settlement along the line of the main road running north-south between Aylesbury and Swanbourne. The centre of the village clustered around the T-junction where the Winslow Road met the Swanbourne-Aylesbury Road. It is in this area that the remains of the deserted mediaeval village at Rands Farm are to be found.

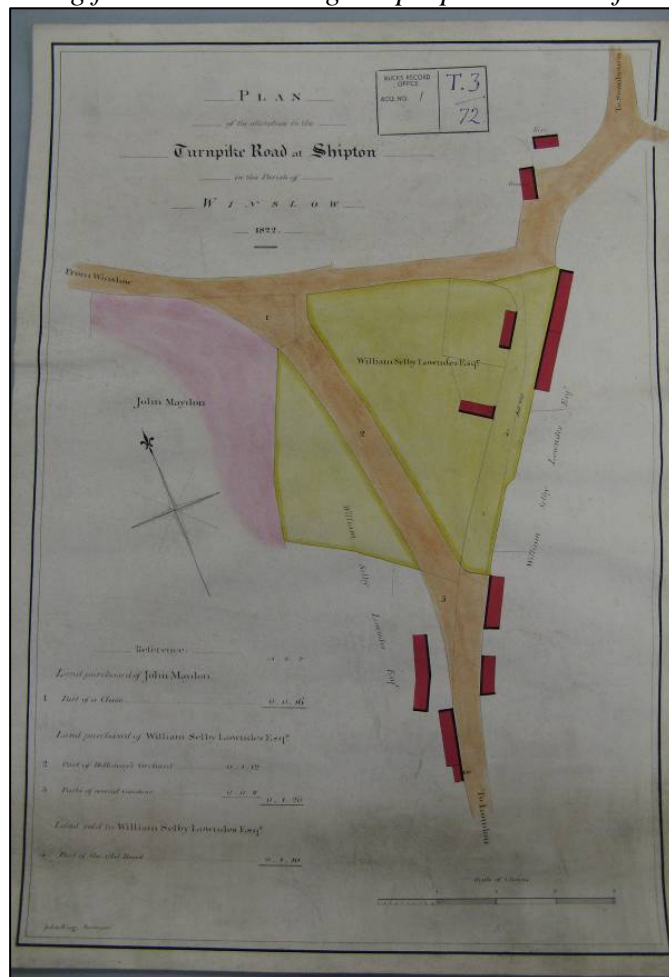
The Original Road Layout of Shipton (right)



In 1822 the road was diverted from its historic course through Shipton as part of the turnpike improvements for the road to Winslow (the line taken by the A413 today). The diversion of the road created the somewhat strange present day layout of Shipton. The 19th century Y-shaped junction is now roughly 100m away from the position of the original T-junction and Shipton hamlet is barely visible from the A413. The two listed buildings which are visible from the A413 (Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle) were cut off from the rest of Shipton hamlet when the historic road was abandoned. The other buildings nearby (shown on the 1822 map) were subsequently demolished, possibly as part of a 20th century road widening scheme, giving the impression today that Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle are completely isolated from the rest of the hamlet.

The original road line through Shipton is still clearly visible today as a footpath between Rosemary Cottage and Rands Farm.

Historic map of Shipton dating from 1822 showing the proposed route of the new Turnpike road.



Historically the buildings of Shipton were spread along the main north-south road. It appears from historic maps that the hamlet was made up of two or three discrete and scattered farm complexes, the majority of buildings being in agricultural rather than domestic use. In recent years a number of modern bungalows and houses have been constructed along the northern side of Shipton. These houses do not follow the historic grain of the hamlet and have obscured the underlying historic plot form. In some cases clusters of historic agricultural buildings were demolished to make way for development. In other cases the gaps between discrete farmsteads have been developed.

Historic development

It is likely that the hamlet of Shipton has Saxon origins, although the first documentary reference to the settlement dates from the 1100s when King Henry I granted Winslow and Shipton to the Abbot of St Albans in a royal charter. On the site of Rands Farmhouse there are the remains of a deserted mediaeval village, although later building work has somewhat obscured these.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw considerable change in Shipton. In 1743 an act of Parliament was passed for the enclosure of the common fields in the hamlet, leading to substantial alterations to the historic field layout around Shipton. In 1822 the main road through Shipton was diverted to form a new turnpike road to Winslow. The loss of the historic common fields around Shipton, and the passing trade travelling to Winslow along the old road may in part have contributed to the population shrinkage and abandonment of Shipton in the late 18th and early 19th century. At this time population patterns were changing across Britain as a result of the industrialisation of British towns following the Industrial Revolution and a countrywide period of agricultural depression following the Napoleonic Wars.

In the 20th century Shipton experienced some population growth, with a number of new dwellings being built along the north side of the Shipton Road, and some of the historic farm buildings and cottages undergoing alteration, extension and conversion into residential use. Today the majority of buildings in the settlement are residential. Rands Farm appears to be the only remaining working farm in the hamlet.

Morphology

Originally the buildings of Shipton sat close to the edge of the main road, most with their principal elevations running parallel to the street. The road was diverted away from Rands Farm, Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle in 1822 leaving the buildings further back from the street. The stepped-back appearance of the historic buildings, particularly the two cottages, is very unusual.

The 19th and 20th century buildings of Shipton are, for the most part, set within fairly small, rectilinear plots, and are set back from the road edge behind small front gardens. Jubilee Cottages are an exception. These cottages sit close to the edge of the A413 and have no front gardens.

The original agricultural character of the hamlet, as a collection of two or three discrete farms, has been lost. The history of the settlement is extremely difficult to understand as many of the historic buildings have been demolished, and the remaining buildings do not give a good indication of the true historic development of the settlement. The clear indications of historic, organic, settlement growth usually found in rural villages is missing in Shipton today.

Details and materials

Given that many of the historic buildings originally in Shipton have been demolished or lost over the years there are very few surviving examples of historic buildings materials and detailing in the hamlet today. Brick, timber frame with brick infill, slate, clay tile and thatch are all found within the hamlet, as are timber sash windows and leaded lights. There is little in the way of architectural uniformity in either building detailing or materials. This is principally due to the fact that there are very few buildings within the hamlet which survive in anything like their original form.

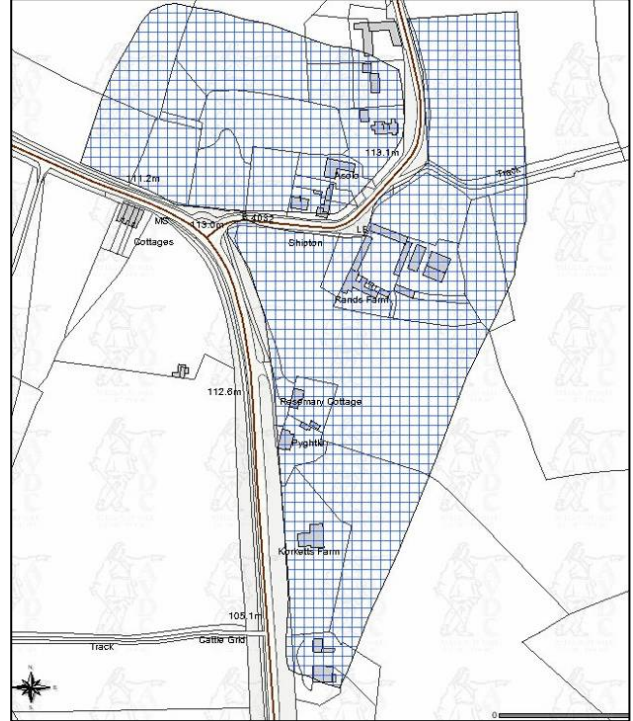
Modern materials have been used to construct the new bungalows and houses within the hamlet.

Archaeology

Two large areas of Shipton hamlet are identified as archaeological notification sites. These areas cover the known archaeological remains of a deserted mediaeval village at Rands Farm (to the south of Shipton Road) and a possible Saxon cemetery site (to the north of Shipton Road).

Where well preserved archaeological features are clearly visible on the ground it is justifiable to include them within Conservation Area boundaries. However, these inclusions simply recognise the historic importance of the sites and do not offer much in the way of protection to the remains. Conservation Area status is not designed to protect archaeological sites as there are already legislative protections in place which specifically deal with buried archaeological remains.

Unfortunately the fields in and around Shipton have been extensively quarried, and as a result any archaeological remains under the ground are likely to have been considerably damaged. The Bucks County Archaeological Officer has been consulted and has confirmed that it would be difficult to justify the inclusion of such patchy remains within the Conservation Area.



Views and vistas

Views from Shipton Road to the west are limited by the tall trees and hedges that make up the field and rear property boundaries. There are wide ranging views from Shipton Road out to the east across the undeveloped agricultural land that surrounds the settlement.

Jubilee Cottages, Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle are easily visible from the A413. Most of the other buildings in Shipton, along Shipton Road, are almost invisible from the A413. From the area of land in front of Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle, Rands Farm is partially visible. On approaching the hamlet from the south, along the B4032, the most prominent building is the modern house, Busmills, 1 Shipton.

Open space and trees

Within Shipton hamlet there is no designated public open space. In places the road is bordered by broad grass verges but the overall feeling of the area is that of an enclosed country lane, with tall hedges on either side of the main road and farmland beyond.

There are a number of tall trees in Shipton. Most of these are situated along property boundaries, or form part of the hedgerows that border the agricultural fields. One area of particularly dense planting contains a selection of important trees, but since this area is covered by a Tree Preservation Order these trees already benefit from stronger protection than that offered by the Conservation Area designation.



TPOs in Shipton








Trees along the road edge in the Conservation Area





Area covered by group TPO on right hand side of photo

Architectural form

The buildings in Shipton vary considerably in their scale, size, height and style. There are very few buildings in the hamlet, so it is possible to look at each building individually. Travelling from the northern end of the village southwards along Shipton Road and then the A413 the buildings are as follows:

Name	Photo	Description
Shipton Mead (outside the existing CA)		A substantial early 20 th century dwelling. The building appears to have some typical arts and crafts features, such as steeply sloping roofs, but has been greatly altered and extended over the years.
Stables south of Shipton Mead (outside the existing CA)		Small stable buildings that are predominantly hidden from view behind thick boundary hedges. Historically this area was undeveloped. These buildings are modern constructions and as such their historic value is limited in the context of Conservation Area designation
19 and 17 Shipton		Two dwellings originally formed a single stable block, probably 18 th century or early 19 th century in date. The buildings have lost a number of their historic features as a result of conversion, and no longer reflect the agricultural history of the site.
Oakham House (15) and 11 Shipton		A single historic plot, originally occupied by Shipton Mead Farm and other agricultural buildings associated with the stables (now 17 and 19 Shipton). These agricultural buildings were demolished in 1999/2000 and the historic plot divided up to accommodate the two new dwellings that now occupy the site.

Asolo, 9 Sipton	No Picture Available (thick boundary hedges hide building from view)	A modern bungalow built in the late 20 th century on a previously undeveloped plot. Bungalows are not traditional house types and the building has little historic value in the context of Conservation Area designation.
7, 5 and Busmills (1) Sipton		Three 19 th century cottages that are likely to have been built to house farm workers. The buildings are dark red, brick built structures with little in the way of decorative detailing. The cottages have been considerably altered in recent years. Recently a new dwelling (annexe) has been built to the rear of 5, Sipton (Busmills, 1 Sipton). This building is of a different scale to the cottages, it is much deeper and the eaves heights are taller. As a result the building, which faces onto the public highway, dominates views on entering the Conservation Area from the west.
Rands Farm		<p>Important historic buildings, that have been listed (grade II) accordingly. The house is a 17th century timber framed building with a 19th century front. The attached 18th century dairy and 19th century barn are also mentioned in the list description. To the north-east of the listed buildings are a collection of small barns and outbuilding which have little historic value. These buildings partially obscure the archaeological remains of the deserted mediaeval village of Sipton.</p> <p>Originally the main road through Sipton ran from Rands Farmhouse down to Rosemary Cottage, providing easy access between the two. Today, since the road was diverted in 1822, this line has been lost, giving the impression that Rands Farm is the end point of the hamlet. The lack of any other building along the south side of Sipton Road gives the farm a feeling of isolation. The undeveloped land around the house is extremely important to the setting of the listed buildings.</p>

<p>Jubilee Cottages (outside the existing CA)</p>		<p>A terrace of late 19th cottages 1887, likely to have been built during one of Queen Victoria's jubilee years (either 1887 or 1897). The buildings are modest brick built cottages of 2 storey with very little decoration. Over the years the buildings have lost many of their original features such as windows and doors. This incremental change has greatly altered the character of the buildings.</p>
<p>Rosemary Cottage</p>		<p>A small 1 1/2 storey timber framed house dating from the 17th century and listed (grade II). The building makes use of many different materials in its construction and has had a number of small extensions added over the years. The building is clearly visible in approaches both up and down the A413, but feels isolated from the rest of Shipton hamlet.</p>
<p>The Pyghtle</p>		<p>A 2 storey, timber framed house dating from the 16th century and listed (grade II). The timber infill is in herringbone brickwork and the thatched roof is unusual within the context of Shipton. The building is clearly visible in approaches both up and down the A413, but feels isolated from the rest of Shipton hamlet.</p>
<p>Korketts Farm (outside the existing CA)</p>		<p>A modern bungalow built in the 1970s on a previously undeveloped plot. The building is not easily visible from the surrounding area as it is hidden behind thick boundary planting and hedges. Bungalows are not traditional house types and the building has little historic value in the context of Conservation Area designation.</p>
<p>Shipton Old Farm (outside the CA)</p>	<p>Photo not available (buildings not easily visible from the public highway)</p>	<p>The oldest buildings at Shipton Old Farm are identifiable on historic maps and are therefore of some historic interest. However, these historic buildings are surrounded by modern agricultural and domestic structures. From the public highway it is the modern buildings that are most visible, although even these are partially hidden by trees and planting.</p> <p>Shipton Old Farm is visually and geographically cut off from the existing Shipton Conservation Area and is situated a considerable distance from the existing boundary. Given the remote nature of the farm it is not possible to include the building within the Conservation Area boundary without having to include large undeveloped fields and modern agricultural buildings.</p>

Because there are very few buildings in the village there is no easily identifiable dominant style or design of historic building. The most common building type in the hamlet today is the modern residential bungalow, but this is not a traditional building style in this area.

The 1990 Boundary

In 1969 the majority of Winslow was designated as a Conservation Area. The area was subsequently reviewed in 1990. It is unclear whether Shipton was designated at the same time as Winslow, or added to the Conservation Area in 1990. In 1990 the character of Shipton was very much that of a small hamlet, with limited archaeological evidence in the surrounding fields suggesting that the area had once been more densely populated.

The 1990 Conservation Area review went out to a period of Public Consultation. At this time there were only two modern houses in Shipton- Blooming Marvellous Nurseries and Asolo. At public consultation neither of these modern houses were proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area. However, a subsequent alteration to the proposed boundary led to the inclusion of Asolo (9 Shipton) within the boundary of the Conservation Area. The rest of Shipton was still largely undeveloped in 1990, and as such very few buildings were excluded from the Conservation Area. Only a 19th century terrace (Jubilee Cottages) and a turn of the century house (Shipton Mead) were not included within the boundary.

Development within Shipton since Designation

Since 1990 the turn of the century house at Shipton Mead has been extended, the historic stable block at the northern end of the Conservation Area has been converted to residential units, 19 and 17 Shipton (involving considerably alteration to the fabric of the buildings). To the south-west of the stables there was a collection of small outbuildings (Mead Farm). These buildings were demolished in 1999 and two new detached houses (15 and 11 Shipton) have been built on the site. Asolo (9, Shipton), a bungalow built in 1975, has remained largely unchanged, although planning permission was granted in 2003 to raise the roof of the building. At the junction of the A413 and the B4032, there is a row of late 18th/ early 19th century cottages (7, 5 and 1 Shipton) which have undergone considerable alteration including a garage extension to the south, subsequently converted to domestic use and a further, modern, residential unit has been built in the gardens. To the south of the A4032 the three listed buildings, Rands Farmhouse and attached barn, Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle, are visible. These three buildings remain more or less unchanged since designation.

Overview of the hamlet today

Today very little of historic Shipton remains. Of the sixteen buildings in the hamlet five are modern constructions (bungalow developments and large detached houses, 4 built since 1990), the historic buildings of Shipton Mead, 7, 5 and 1 Shipton and Jubilee Cottages have been greatly altered over the last few decades, and the historic stable block at 19 and 17 Shipton has undergone considerable alteration during conversion into two dwellings.

The historic buildings at Rands Farm, The Pyghtle and Rosemary Cottage are of clear historic and architectural interest, and are listed accordingly. The listed status of these buildings offers them considerable protection, which outweighs the protection offered by Conservation Area designation.

The road layout at Shipton is interesting, in terms of its history. The original path of the main road travelling north from the Pyghtle to Rands Farm, is still clearly visible on the ground, as is the 1822 turnpike road layout, now the path of the A413. Conservation Area designation offers little protection to the historic road layout within Shipton.

There is some evidence of the presence of a deserted mediaeval village close to Rands Farm. These remains are important in terms of the history of Winslow and Shipton. Unfortunately, considerable quarrying of the area around Shipton means that the archaeological potential of the site is low. Conservation Area designation does not offer any extra protection to archaeological sites at the present time.

There are a number of important trees within Shipton, which benefit from the protection offered by Conservation Area designation.

English Heritage Comments

Under section 69 (1) (b) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council has a duty to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas. Under section 69 (2) of the same act the Council has a duty to review these designations from time to time to ensure that they are still accurate. Current English Heritage guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (published in 2006) states that:

Areas designated many years ago should be re-appraised to see if they are still of special interest. If the original interest has been so eroded by subsequent changes (either cumulative or dramatic) or by inappropriate development that the area is no longer special boundary revisions or even cancellation of designation may need to be considered.

English Heritage have been consulted on the initial appraisal of the Shipton Conservation Area. Dr Nigel Barker, Historic Areas Advisor for English Heritage, sent the following comments regarding the case for de-designation at Shipton:

I have looked through the information and unfortunately it does appear that Shipton is one of those unusual cases where de-designation is appropriate, in line with English Heritage Guidance on Conservation Areas issued March 2006. The special architectural or historic interest of the village, the character and appearance of which it was desirable to preserve appears to have been the very small scale, scattered development, evocative of a failed historic settlement. The combination of the small number of isolated, scattered houses and the archaeological evidence of the former settlement provided a distinct character. That character has now been changed by a combination of significant expansion (bearing in mind the context) and the cumulative erosion of rural character by the conversion of former agricultural buildings. It therefore appears that substantial change in combination with cumulative erosion of character has in this instance diluted the special character of the hamlet so that de-designation appears justified if the overall standards of designation are not themselves to be compromised.

Bucks County Archaeological Officer Comments

Bucks County Archaeology were consulted on the initial appraisal of the Shipton Conservation Area. Sandy Kidd, Bucks County Archaeologist, sent the following comments regarding the case for de-designation at Shipton:

At Shipton, I agree that the northern part has lost much of its character and is an unfortunate illustration of the effect of piecemeal development in a conservation area. The southern part has some noticeable archaeological earthworks attributed to a shrunken medieval settlement but possibly includes more recent quarrying. This site is not as clearly defined as many other deserted medieval settlements in the county and was not identified as a candidate for scheduling by English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme. Thus, whilst there is an archaeological interest at Shipton it is perhaps not strong enough to override your wider assessment that the area should be de-designated.

AVDC Tree Officer

The AVDC Tree Officer, Ian Hopcraft, has been consulted, and concluded that the presence of a number of important trees on the site would not, in itself, justify the retention of the Conservation Area. However, he requested that, in the event of de-designation, a TPO should be placed over certain trees currently protected by the Conservation Area designation.

As a result of the comprehensive review undertaken at Shipton, and in light of the consultee comments above, it is considered that the Conservation Area at Shipton is one of the very rare cases where de-designation must be considered. However, at the request of AVDC Councillors two other options have also been put forward for public consultation.

For the purposes of Public Consultation AVDC are considering two options for the Shipton Conservation Area. These two options are set out below.

Option 1: Remove the Conservation Area from Shipton

Current English Heritage guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (published in 2006), states that, in Conservation Areas where the original special interest has been eroded by subsequent changes or inappropriate development, the cancellation of the designation needs to be considered.

The Conservation Area Officer's comprehensive review of the Shipton Area has shown that the inclusion of many of the buildings currently within the Conservation Areas is not justifiable in terms of architectural or historic interest.

Where buildings have survived well these buildings are listed, and so already benefit from much stronger protections than those offered by Conservation Area designation, thus making the designation redundant.

The undeveloped land in and around Shipton does not include any important public open spaces or areas of historic interest (such as a village green or pond). The archaeological remains in the fields around Shipton are of some historic interest, but more recent quarrying limits the archaeological potential of the site.

Benefits:

Conforms with current English Heritage guidance and specific advice given by English Heritage and Bucks County Archaeology.

Maintains consistency of approach across all the Conservation Areas within AVDC.

Disbenefits:

There is considerable local support for the retention of the Conservation Area.

Option 2: Retain the Conservation Area in a reduced form

Many of the historic buildings on Shipton Road have either been demolished or greatly altered and extended in recent years. The buildings that now sit on the sites are modern buildings. In an area of predominantly modern or substantially altered historic buildings designation serves little purpose, those elements which designation can preserve have already been lost or damaged.

Generally modern buildings are not included within Conservation Areas unless they:

- Retain important historic plots boundaries
- Have architecturally or historically important curtilage structures within their grounds
- Are completely surrounded by buildings of historic or architectural merit, and their removal would result in a hole in the Conservation Area
- They are of particularly unusual design or make use of new technologies in their construction

Those elements in Shipton that retain their special character: Rands Farm and the associated remains of the Shipton deserted mediaeval village, Rosemary Cottage and The Pyghtle, and the historic road layout at the corner of the A413, could be retained in a substantially reduced Conservation Area. However, this would result in a very small area and it would be extremely difficult to draw a cohesive boundary around these features without including a large area of undeveloped agricultural land of no visible historic interest.

The possible Saxon cemetery to the north of Shipton Road is not proposed for inclusion within this area, as it has been considerably quarried. The subsequent development of 4 modern houses on the site will also have impacted upon any remaining archaeology.

Benefits:

Reducing the Conservation Area to include only those elements which retain a clear historical or architectural interest will prevent other Conservation Area designations in Aylesbury Vale from being watered down.

Removing modern buildings from the Shipton Conservation Area would follow the general principles adopted by AVDC in Conservation Area Review.

Disbenefits:

Archaeological areas are already protected by more substantial planning protections than those offered by Conservation Area designation.

Listed buildings also already benefit from stronger protections than those offered by Conservation Area designation.

Historic road layouts are offered no extra protections from being included within Conservation Areas.

The retention of a Conservation Area solely made up of three listed buildings, an area of minimal archaeological potential and an historic road layout recognises the historic importance of the area, but effectively makes the designation redundant as a planning tool.

Retaining the Conservation Area at Shipton in a reduced form takes little account of the expert advice received from English Heritage and the Bucks County Archaeological Officer.