
Conservation Area Character Survey

SHEEPBRIDGE



What are Conservation Areas?

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest which are considered worthy of preservation or enhancement. They are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Within conservation areas there are special controls on some alterations to buildings and their demolition or partial demolition and on works to trees. The Council's Heritage Guidance Note on conservation areas gives further details of the specific controls that apply.

Designation of a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development, but such development must be designed positively to enhance the special character of the area.

The Purpose of This Survey

This conservation area character survey describes the main features of special architectural and historic interest which justifies the designation of Sheepridge as a conservation area.

The survey is intended to complement the approved policies for conservation areas in the Council's Wycombe District Local Plan. These Policies are the primary means of safeguarding the special character of our conservation areas.

The survey is also intended to be used as an aid in development control decision making. Proposals for schemes positively to enhance the character and appearance of Sheepridge Conservation Area will be produced in the future in consultation with councillors, local residents and other interested parties.



HISTORY

The first known reference to the hamlet is in a document of 1323 when it was spelt 'Sheeprugge', a place name derived from a personal name. A deed of 1537 for the sale of timber covers Sheepridge Wood. The hamlet was most likely associated historically with the timber trade although the names of the dwellings Woodmans, Keepers and Foresters are modern and named by the owner who purchased them in 1939 with the intention of preserving them intact for future generations.

The Forester's was once an L-plan block of four cottages, the left wing being demolished in the 1950s.

The Crooked Billet public house was once two cottages and a lease dated 1810 refers to the pub as The Rose and Crown.

Willow Cottage and Hillside were built in the early 19th century as two pairs of semi-detached labourers cottages.

Sheepridge was first designated as a conservation area in 1986.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

There are no identified sites of special archaeological interest or Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the conservation area. In the event of archaeological deposits being found the Council may require archaeological conditions attaching to planning permissions where appropriate, including watching briefs, excavation or similar recording procedures.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Sheepridge is a tiny rural hamlet of just seven dwellings and a Public House. The environment immediately surrounding the buildings is well treed with much vegetation. Large open

agricultural fields overlook from the surrounding hill sides.

The conservation area is one of rural informality where the natural environment is dominant over the buildings, yet the listed buildings in particular have great character and are entirely appropriate within their setting.

The hamlet lies within the green belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

The four listed buildings within the conservation area all date from the early to mid 18th century.

The Crooked Billet Public House of early 18th century origins was recased in brick in the 19th century, but retains some exposed timber framing to the front and flint gables.

The Forester's House of early to mid 18th century was altered in 1956, the north elevation having been rebuilt using old materials and 2 inch bricks in part. It retains its exposed timber framing with brick infill. The dwelling has an old plain tiled roof which was once thatched.

The Woodman's Cottage was renovated in 1939 and again retains some exposed timber framing as does its neighbour The Keeper's Cottage. The steep pitched roofs were originally designed for thatch.

Crooked Cottage although not listed is attractively built of flint with brick dressings under an old tiled roof.

MATERIALS

The listed buildings are of timber-framing with red brick infill panels and have mellow old plain tiled roofs. Flint, an important local building material, occurs on the listed buildings and is

most evident at Crooked Cottage. Willow Cottage and Hillside are both rendered. Willow Cottage has a slate roof.

Surfacing is very informal and appropriate to the rural character of the area. Tarmac has been used at the heart of the hamlet but is now weathered and in some areas overlain with shingle so that as a modern material it does not seriously detract from the historic nature of the area.

TREES AND VEGETATION

Tree groups, hedgerows and vegetation in general make a very important contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Buildings are partly obscured by trees and plants which adds to their charm. Gardens and hedgerows are informal, not too neatly clipped or organised which again is appropriate to the rural setting of the hamlet.

Much of the planting was carried out by the owner of Foresters and Woodmans in 1939. The Walnut Tree at Keepers gate was planted at this time and the other younger Walnut trees are germinated from this one tree.

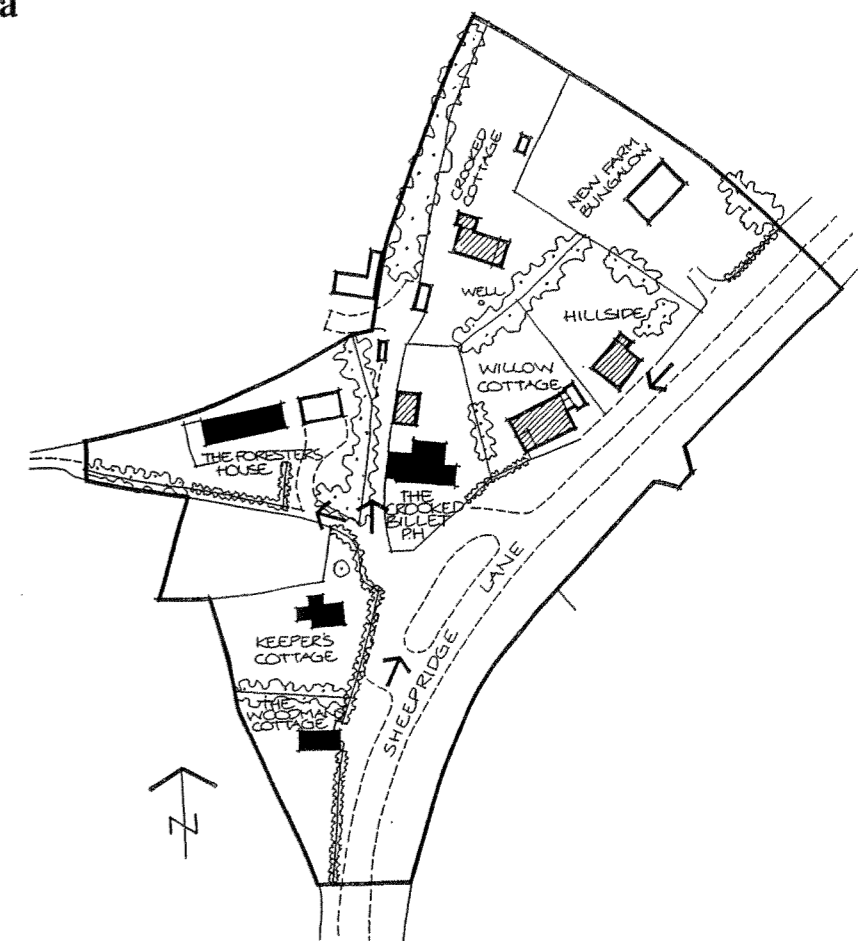
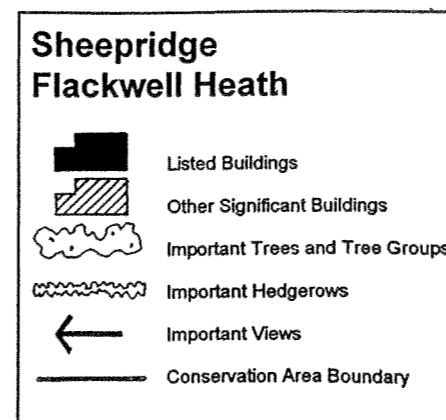
VIEWS

There are a number of important views within the conservation area and some of these are indicated on the survey map. The view south-west from Sheepridge Lane gives an attractive vista of two of the listed cottages within a scenic rural backdrop of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The view north-west from Sheepridge Lane shows The Crooked Billet within its attractive setting.

Views from the heart of the conservation area by The Crooked Billet Public House give glimpses of the listed buildings set within the trees and vegetation.

Sheepridge Conservation Area Character Survey Map



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ADVICE

The policies and proposals of the Wycombe District Local Plan are the primary source of reference for development control advice. In addition the Council's approved Heritage Strategy is seen as a supporting document to the plan.

This character survey is also intended to provide broad guidance of an informal nature in considering new development in the conservation area. Below is a brief check list taking account of the above text.

To safeguard, preserve and enhance the appearance and special character of the Sheepridge Conservation Area:-

- in the conservation area higher standards of design are required as it is the function of the planning authority to consider all applications as to whether they preserve or enhance the special character as identified in this appraisal.
 - any new building works such as extensions, must be designed not as a separate entity, but should be sympathetic in form and scale with the existing buildings and the conservation area as a whole.
 - materials for any new building works or surfacing must be sympathetic to the rural character of the area. Traditional building materials such as brick, or flint and for roofing plain clay tiles are likely to be most appropriate. Surfacing materials should be informal and concrete and tarmac should be avoided.
 - inappropriate replacement of windows and doors can damage the character of a conservation area.
- Traditional natural materials should be used in order to safeguard the special character of the conservation area. Generally speaking painted timber windows and doors are appropriate and modern substitute materials such as UPVC and aluminium are not.
- all trees within conservation areas area protected. As tree groups are a special characteristic of this conservation area new development should preserve existing trees and not present a risk to their continuation taking into account future tree growth.
 - although hedges cannot be specially protected through legislation those hedgerows indicated on the survey map should be retained and where possible enhanced.
 - special care must be taken to ensure that views within the conservation area are not spoilt. Those of particular importance are identified on the map.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Wycombe District Council's Planning, Transport and Development service has a number of publications which offer further guidance. Ask the Conservation Officer for further information on which Heritage Guidance Notes are currently available and appropriate.

The **Conservation Officer** is always pleased to give advice on all heritage matters and can be contacted on 01494 421578 or seen by appointment in the Council Offices or on site.

Development Control matters within the conservation area are the responsibility of the **West Team** who can be contacted on 01494 421517.

Planning Policy matters are the responsibility of the **Policy Unit** who can be contacted on 01494 421545.