

Neighbourhood Plan Appendix A: Character Assessment



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1. Background

1.1. Objective

The WSNP sets out policies for any future development. There was a strong desire expressed by the village throughout consultation events and surveys to ensure that new development was 'in keeping' with the well-loved village space.

The aim of this document is to collate the findings of an independent and diverse group of local residents which identified those features within the built environment that contribute to the unique and distinctive character of Warborough & Shillingford.

1.2. Approach

Three members of the Steering Committee, together with the assistance of the village archivist, old and new photographs and physical inspections, drafted this document initially. SODC identified appropriate conservation and constraints maps and the Warborough Conservation Area character study (1998) was considered. Community First Oxfordshire recommended using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit¹. It was reviewed by the WSNP Steering Committee with input on ratings and refined. Feedback was also accepted following publication on the Parish Council website.

1.3. Village History Outline

The Parish of Warborough & Shillingford is an extremely attractive village and civil parish in South Oxfordshire, about 2.5 miles (4km) north of Wallingford and about 9 miles (14 km) south of Oxford the built-up area of which follows the line of the busy Thame Road, the A329. The parish also includes the hamlet of Shillingford, south of Warborough,

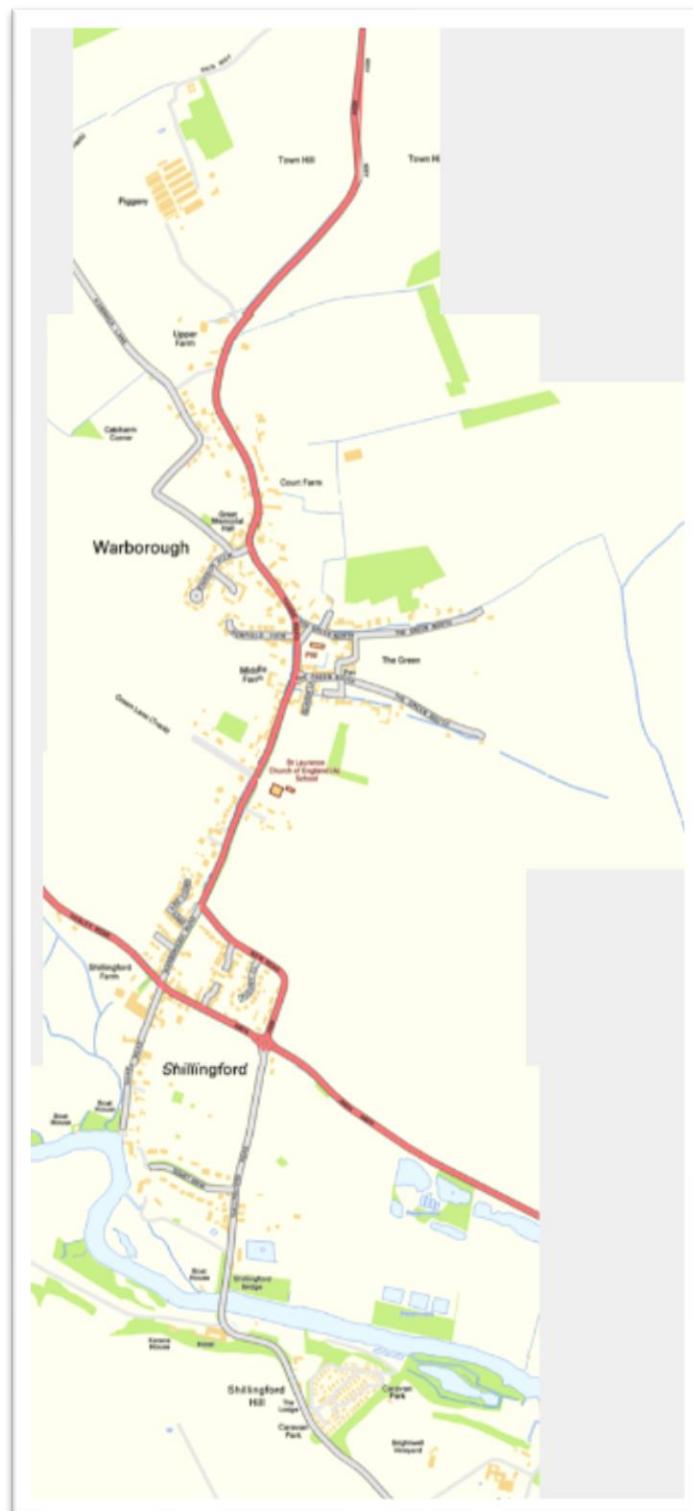


Figure 1 Warborough & Shillingford

¹ https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20193/character_assessment_toolkit/878/character_assessment_toolkit

beside the River Thames. The two villages house a combined total of 433 households (ONS statistics, January 2013).

The place-name Warborough means ‘Watch/look-out hill’ and is a derivation from Old English word meaning ‘watch, ward, protection’ and berg denoting ‘a hill, mound’ (Mills 2011, 483). It was first recorded as **Wardeberg** in 1200.

The core of the settlement is centred on the square of land formed by St Laurence’s Church, The Green North, The Green South and The Green itself. There are many historic buildings throughout the village and some particularly attractive groups around The Green North and South. The village is well known for its spacious green, the character of which is formed by the ditches around the edge, its cricket pitch, the prominent mature trees and the many historic buildings which overlook it. Ditches are also a feature along either side of Thame Road. There is a wide variety of building types in the village ranging from small cottages to large Georgian houses and late medieval farmhouses, with associated weather-boarded barns.

The historical form of Warborough reflects the medieval strip farming that persisted until the enclosures of the 19th century. This gave the village its framework around which subsequent developments took place.

The parish was chiefly agricultural throughout the 17th and 18th centuries with corn and beans having been grown on the higher ground to the north of the village, and barley on the lower ground towards the river. Cattle were also reared in the area. Before the General Enclosure Act of 1845 there was very little enclosure. In order to cover costs of enclosure, 130 acres of common land were sold to St John’s College, together with sales to smaller tenants. The Green, a common pastureland before enclosure, was transferred to the parish officers as a place of exercise and recreation for the inhabitants in 1853 the request of the Reverend White (SODC 2011).

Many older houses are detached and set in spacious curtilages. Several of the houses, now private residences, are named after their former use, e.g. The Old Vicarage, The Old Forge, The Old Bakery, and The Old School. While there is no predominant vernacular building material in the village, there are many good examples of red brick with flared headers, which are likely to have been manufactured at the Nettlebed kilns, soft rubble clunch stone, some flint work, dressed stone, timber framing, (both exposed and rendered), thatch, clay tiles and slate.

Shillingford is divided by the busy A4074 Reading to Oxford road at the junction with Thame Road. The A4074 separates the older part to the south from the newer part, to the north. The Thames-side terrace gravels have been a favoured area for settlement from pre-historic times. Neolithic settlers at Dorchester and other downstream gravel sites along the Thames took advantage of the lighter, more workable soils, an accessible water supply and slight elevation above the most flood prone areas. This pattern of settlement persisted and was extended through the Roman and Saxon period..

There is no street lighting anywhere in the parish, with the exception of the Shillingford roundabout. The village survey indicates that despite recurring suggestions from parishioners, 53% of the village prefer to have no street lighting.



Figure 2 River residents

1.4. Warborough and Shillingford Conservation Areas & Green belt

Warborough Parish straddles the southern-most reach of the Oxford Green Belt as shown in the map, Figure 3.

The green belt divides Warborough, with the western side of the A329 falling entirely within it, and the eastern side falling outside of it. Shillingford is almost entirely covered by the green belt. The Parish lies within the setting of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

There are 2 conservations areas in the Parish (outlined in pink in Figure 4):

Warborough Conservation area

(outlined in pink at the top of figure 4) is in the predominately linear part of Warborough village straddling Thame Road from the original Upper Farmhouse at the North end of the village down to New Road at the bottom and stretches eastwards to include the village green area in the centre. This area, which includes 46 listed buildings, contains dwellings from the late 15th century through to the present day, with one listed building falling outside the Conservation Area. Although two 20th century developments took place on the western (green belt) side of the village, Sinodun View and Henfield View, the eastern half of Warborough (not in the green belt), is now more vulnerable to development which would impact the overall character.

The Shillingford Conservation Area (outlined in pink at the bottom of Figure 4) covers Wharf Road. There are 7 listed buildings in Shillingford that fall outside the conservation area.

The village-scape of Warborough and Shillingford today displays the features, which together with the ‘village character’ described below, define its essential rural character as a small Oxfordshire village: although the green belt covers roughly half of the village, and the conservations areas focus on 2 areas, the character is defined by wider boundaries should therefore be assessed as an

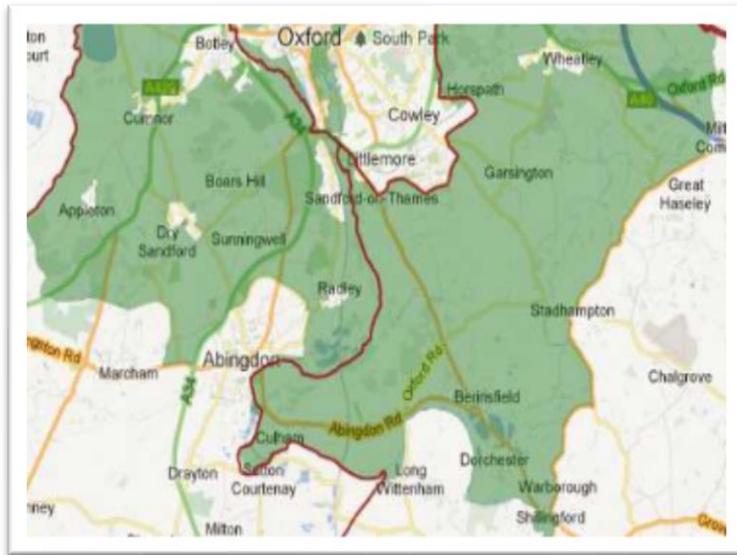


Figure 3 Southern section of the Oxford Green belt

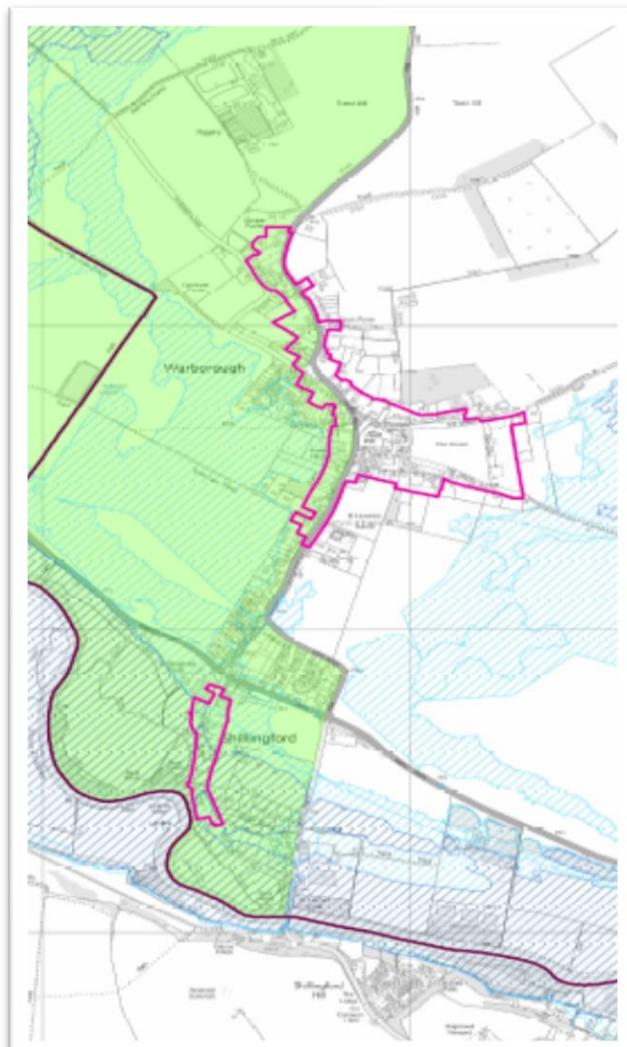


Figure 4 Warborough & Shillingford: Green belt (green); Conservation Areas (pink)

entity within which different planning criteria can be applied to distinct areas.

2. Character Assessment: Village Areas

2.1. Introduction

For the purposes of this report, the village was considered as being composed of 6 distinctive areas, each with its own identifiable character, indicated on the map in Figure 5:

1. Thame Road
2. Sinodun View
3. The Green
4. 'New' Shillingford
5. 'Old' Shillingford & Shillingford Conservation Area
6. Shillingford Bridge Approach (including Shillingford Court and Court Drive)

The character of each area was assessed with regard to building type and scale, density, streetscape, distinctive features etc.

Following the review of each area, the NPSC attributed a rating to each aspect of the built environment from each location to ascertain whether it contributed positively or detracted from the spirit of the place that makes Warborough & Shillingford.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee (NPSC) has also considered open green spaces, views into and out of the village, spaces in between buildings, topography and landscape, gardens and planting, grass verges etc. Not surprisingly there are some wishes coming out of the Village Survey that appear in contradiction to each other. For example the village has also shown its support for some new development, should it be needed, coming in the form of infill. To the extent that infill might take place in the gaps between buildings that would reduce the sense of open outlook also valued by the village, there is a need to avoid extensive gap filling over time.

A summary of views from each area is included at the end of this section.



Figure 5 Parish Areas

A rating from 1 - 5 was given with 5 being seen as making a positive contribution and 1 a negative contribution to the village character and accompanied by a summary analysis of the important aspects of each area. The following sections list the various merits of each area found by the group, moving from the north of the village to the south.

It is not intended to comment on the value and role that different areas provide to the village overall.

During consultation with the village during the NP process, there was a modest attempt to understand style / architectural preferences and help define general comments regarding style preferences. The results are shown in the table below.

In a survey of 167 people held at a public consultation event on the 30th November 2016, villagers shared opinions on which styles of building elements they liked, by looking at several photo illustrations of each style (the numbers below indicate the number of 'ticks' placed next to specific architectural preferences):

Traditional style of windows	95	or	Modern style of window	3
High pitched roofs	44	or	Low pitched roofs	19
Traditional style doors	83	or	Modern style doors	5

Do you like:

Brick fronted houses	41	Render fronted houses	21	Brick and stone fronted houses	56
Garage	79	or	Car port	9	
Porch or Canopy	71	or	No porch or canopy	2	

Conclusion:

This indicates fairly conclusively that there was a strong preference shown for traditional style of building echoing the older properties in the village



Figure 6 Historic View of the War Memorial, Warborough

2.2. Area A: The Thame Road

Outlined in yellow in Figure 7 **Rating: 4 / 5**

The Thame Road forms the largest part of the village and dissects the village north-to-south, from the original Upper Farmhouse at the North end of the village down to New Road at the bottom. This area roughly aligns with the **Warborough Conservation Area** (*Ref: Character Study SODC 15 June 2011*) except that part south of the school.

The bottom of Thame Road was diverted whilst still a turnpike, in the 1820's, to form a mini-by-pass so that it avoids the centre of Shillingford, leaving the original road as a quiet back-water. (*Victoria History of Oxfordshire, 2016*). The road at the north is sited in the low foothills of the Clay Vale and slopes downhill gently to the centre of the village. The centre of the village is largely flat until the southern end when it again slopes gently down onto the Thames flood plain.

Housing Style

These range from timber-framed hall-house all the way through to modern individually designed one or two storey buildings.

The vast majority of the buildings in the parish are domestic dwellings of traditional form representing every period of history from medieval to the present day. The historic character is one of gradual, small-scale growth, mainly linear in nature where buildings of various ages are mingled together forming a varied streetscape.

Most buildings face the roads through the village although often buildings sit at right angles to the road whilst others are reached by way of small, unmade lanes. Varied materials used for buildings include timber frame with both brick and render infill, stone, flint, brick, render and timber weather boarding for walls, thatch, plain clay tiles and slates as roofing.

20th century buildings in Warborough include a terrace of four whitewashed modernist houses south-west of the church built as farm labourers' accommodation for St. Johns College, Oxford in 1952 which are representative of their (minus the gravelled front gardens - now used for parking) era but perhaps less well received in the village.

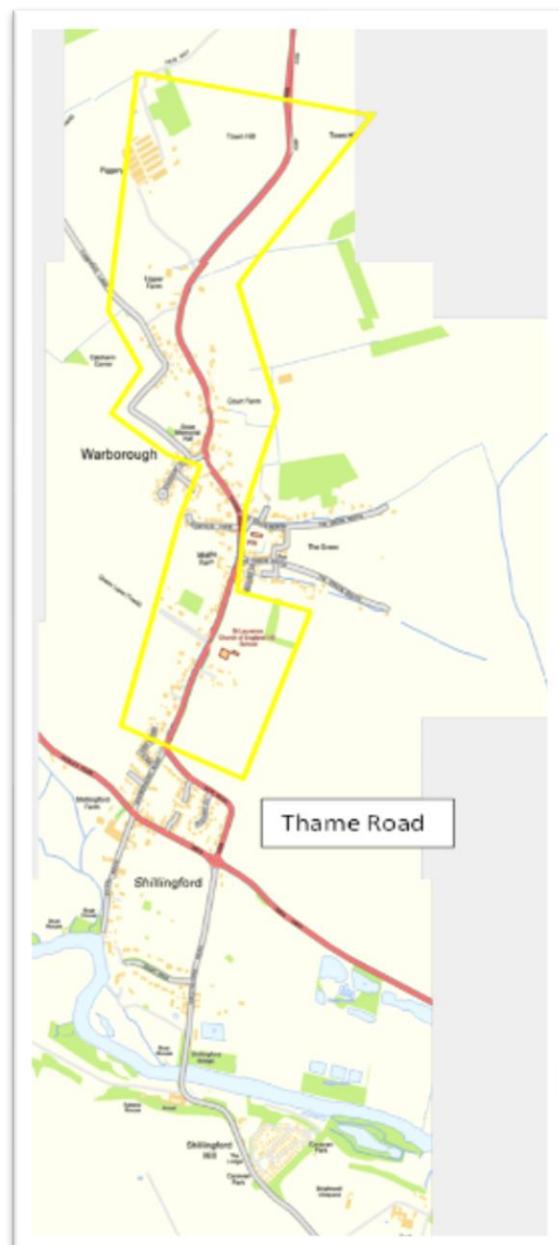


Figure 7 Thame Road Area



Figure 8 Thame Road Labourers' houses



Figure 11 The Cricketers Pub conversion

Figure 10 this new property was designed to match the adjoining public house conversion, of The Cricketers Pub to residential housing (Figure 11), which was met with great acclaim in the village.



Figure 12 There are examples of newer architect designed houses, showing high quality current modern style.



Figure 9 Medieval Cruck Cottage on Thame Road



Figure 13 The Alms Houses

The vernacular architecture of this area is illustrated with use of thatch, white painted render, red brick, timber frames, clay tiles and black timber weather boarding which contribute to the mixed character of the village.

At the centre of the village, next to the entrance to The Green there are two village alms houses (Figure 13).

Despite the changes in architectural design over the last 500 years, these varied dwellings have, over the years, melded into a village whose rural character is firmly that of a small, close village community.

Main Road (A329)

The Thame Road presents a typically rural village picture, still having hedged fields and paddocks interspersed with the houses many in quite large gardens along its length contributing to an open feel. In its northern half Thame Road has multiple bends between attractive houses giving a tightly knit feeling. It also benefits from mature planting and incidental green spaces, including:

The War Memorial (Figure 14) which is situated in the middle of the village at the entrance to The Green, providing a focal point.



Figure 15 Rod Ayot



Figure 14 War Memorial

The Rod Ayot (figure 15) A green triangular oasis with mature trees outside The Greet Hall – see Section 4 Green Spaces)

There are a few sites along Thame Road which currently add to the rural character of the village, but which might at some point in the future be made available by their owners for infill housing.

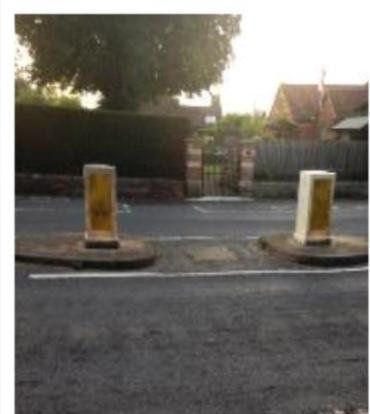
The road itself is bordered for most of its length by a mixture of pavements and grass verges.



Footpath by the Church

In places, the verges are a positive asset presenting every spring a magnificent display of daffodils which spread along much of the length of the village.

However, the footpaths, frequently changing sides as they do, mean the access, is very problematic, especially for anyone who may have pushchairs, wheelchairs or be in their later years. They are generally in poor condition, in places the damage is quite significant and detracts from the appearance of the village.



Crossing spot between Church and Shop

The difficulties are particularly notable when walking from the North end to the centre of the village, requiring 9 crossings of the road due to footpath changes of side. Proposals to introduce street lighting are not well supported (*NP Community Survey 2016*).

It is considered essential that any new development should have ease of foot access to the central hub and the school, as traffic and parking are of such major concerns.

Smells

At the North end of the village is Upper Farm, housing pigs. There have over the years have been complaints about the smells, but others consider this all part of the rural environment.

Traffic

Of the highest concern to the village is the impact of traffic and parking on Thame Road. Although the village has good signage, traffic generally ignores both the speed limit and the weight limit. Most residents have sufficient parking to enable the roads to be kept clear, which adds to the attractiveness and rural character. However, at the South end of Thame road in the school area, where parents park on the road at school times over an area of about 400m there are significant issues.

Flooding

Flooding is of major concern to the village. The centre of the village has been flooded on several occasions in the recent past due to runoff from Spiers Hill at the north of Thame Road. Part of The Vale of Clay, the land at the north has an extremely deep terrain of clay so is impervious to the rainfall. The village has a very antiquated drainage system consisting of ditches, culverts, sewers, draining both to the south into the Thames and to the west into the Thame. In recent heavy rainfall, the system has failed and flooding has occurred. At the south end of Thame road, the land falls into the flood plain of The Thames and floods most years.



Figure 16 Flooding at St Laurence

Infrastructure

Great concern is shown by all that any new development should enhance the current village structure - the physical, aesthetic and sociological. Like many villages, we have a high proportion of retired people, which perhaps partly explains why we have so many successful clubs, but are keen to introduce a greater proportion of the younger generation. What is holding us back is the lack of smaller houses in the village, both for those young people without or with small families and those who wish to downsize at the other end of their lives, which would free up larger properties in the village for those with larger families. This would improve the balance which would have benefits for almost all in the village.

The village has shown its desire that any new development should be easily accessible to the village hub, the school and public transport by foot, to alleviate the current problems with traffic and parking – both showing in surveys and feedback as the greatest concern to the village. The proximity to these central amenities would ensure support of the shop and pub and provide ease of access to the Church, Green, pre-school and School; whereas development at the edges of the village might encourage more cars use to access the school and hub and more egress to other amenities outside the village.

The entire village has recently benefitted from the installation by Gigaclear of superfast fibre broadband which has greatly improved the connectivity to the outside world and will benefit those who currently work from home and those who wish to do so in the future.

Public Buildings

Thame Road is the site of most of the public buildings in Warborough, mainly clustered around the centre. They are all well supported by the village and being clustered near the Green, form meeting points for village life.



The Halls: The village has a very full and active social life with a plethora of clubs and societies which meet regularly in the two village halls. Both have high occupancy rates and further development would need to consider enhancing these resources.



Warborough & Shillingford's strong sense of identity is well illustrated by the vibrant integrated social life within the village which includes many clubs and organisations

- Gardening club, Photographic Club, W.I., Lunch club, Dining club, Cricket club, Tennis club, Bowls club, Walking club, Cycling Club, Drama, Sculpture, baby and toddler clubs, various forms of fitness clubs catering for all ages, the Shillingford and Warborough Community Choir, .the Warborough and Shillingford Society, Allotments, etc. Both halls have very high occupancy rates – St Laurence averages over 2 bookings per day, and the larger Greet hall over 1 per day annually. In a village of 433 households, that's a lot of activity! The village is well integrated around its centre and all the villagers are interested, engaged and involved in its future, especially where any new development is concerned.



Figure 17 Village Show at the Greet Hall

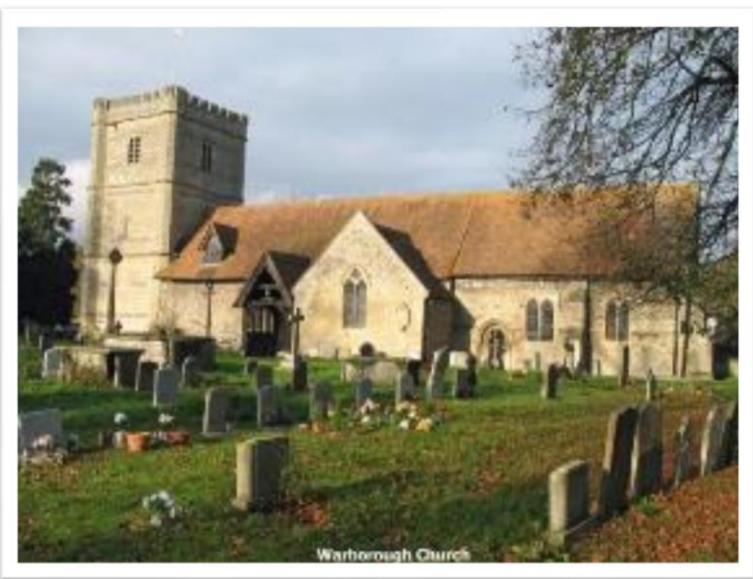


Figure 18 St Laurence Church

St. Laurence Church (left) dates back to the 13th century. It has an attractive tower which is prominently dated 1666 (the year the church tower was built). It is a three-stage and has a chequer-work decoration on the buttresses. St Laurence's is an aisle-less church, the nave and chancel being in one with a south transept and porch. There was at one time a minstrels' gallery. Perhaps the oldest item in the church is the font, which dates from late in the 12th century.

Several street scenes are highlighted for their contributions to the local character and include:

- Views to and from The Rod Eyt along the Thame Road (figure 18)
- Views to and from the St Laurence Hall and towards the war memorial along the Thame Road

Glimpsed views of the countryside are further detailed in the Community Views section.

Public Community Views



Figure 19 View north from Rod Eyt

Local Facilities

The Aisha Stores & Post Office (figure 19) has been run by Raj for many years and recently incorporated the Post Office. It is highly valued village asset and there is concern in the long term, as it is currently part of a private house. Should the current owners sell, the village would need to safeguard a new location for the shop & PO.



Figure 20 Village Shop & Post Office

St. Laurence Church of England School (*figure 20*) is a well subscribed primary school and pre-school. Echoing our rural environment, the classes are named after birds.

- Robins are the Foundation Class.
- Owls are the mixed Year 1 & 2 Class.
- Bluebirds are the mixed Year 3 & 4 Class.
- Eagles are the mixed Year 5 & 6 Class.



Figure 21 St Laurence School

Summary - Area A: Thame Road

- Largest part of and backbone of village and within the Conservation Area and the Conservation Area Study helps define what is important here.
- Starts in the rolling foothills of the Chilterns with sinuous bends and ends straighter on the river flats
- Houses represent gradual growth maintaining cohesion defined by a mix of styles
- Footpaths exist but need upgrading
- Through traffic increasing but on street parking only a problem around school
- Flooding sometimes affects A329 at centre of village
- No street lighting, adequate off-street parking which mainly avoid 'carscape'

Most Positive Features

- Variety of house styles and natural materials but with generally consistent (high) roof pitch
- sensitive boundary treatments eg period-material walls hedges and
- Proximity to road varies as well as end-on or face-on to road
- Rural character maintained by hedged fields and paddocks interspersed with houses along length with areas of openness being important to maintain
- Presence and visibility of most of village's public buildings strengthens sense of identity
- Openness around shop, war memorial and church creates focal point
- Immediate access to public views and countryside via side lanes that maintain the feeling of a village placed in a rural setting
- The open green space provided by Plough Field offers a valuable green gap that defines the separation between Warborough and Shillingford

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid obscuring views to countryside (see Section 3 Community Views No 1,2,3, 4 & 6), use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area.

2.3. Area B: Sinodun View

Shown on the map (figure 23) bordered in yellow **Rating: 1 / 5**

This group of dwellings are those that were built as Local Authority houses and flats at Sinodun View and St Lawrence Close in the 1950's, now in private or housing association (South Oxfordshire Housing Association - SOHA) ownership.



Figure 23 Sinodun View home

The 'estate' cul-de-sac form of development, which created 34 congruently-designed houses (*figures 23&24*) in generous plots and a group of 16 flats, forms a pattern of development which is in contrast to the gradual, linear, mixed development of the rest of the village. Some of the flats are currently empty and further clarity is expected from SOHA to inform the village as to its intentions for their future. These houses and flats are valued accommodation in the village.

The Road

Only one road, a wide cul de sac, in the area with little traffic; the footpaths are a little better than the rest of the village (*figure 24*). They have been neglected and suffered with repeated digging up by utility companies in recent time but provide proximate access for the residents. Parking, especially on the corner of Sinodun View at the Rod Eyot, is problematic.

It has easy access to the centre hub of the village and is well served by the nearby children's playground in Hammer Lane.

There are no public buildings or infrastructure. A significant public view in this area is gained at the playground behind Sinodun View and at the start of Hammer lane with open fields and the Wittenham Clumps. (see Section 3 Key Community Views number 3)

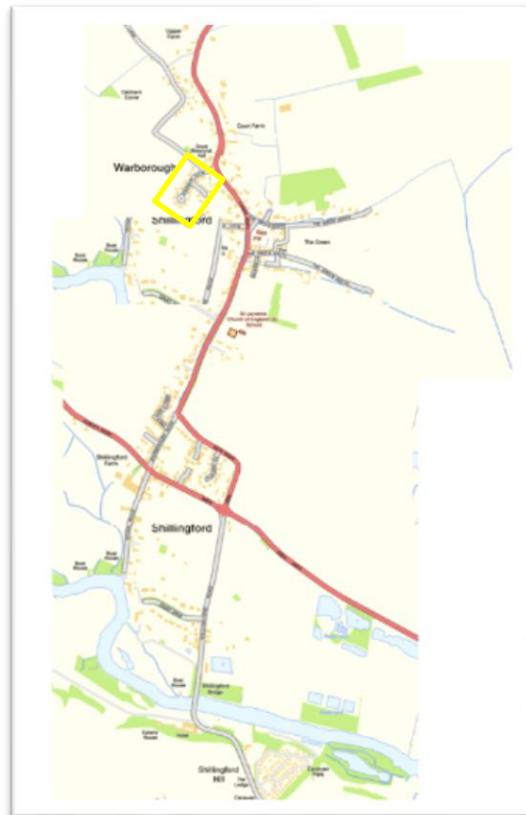


Figure 22 Sinodun View Area



Figure 24 Sinodun View home

Summary – Area B: Sinodun View

- Essentially an ‘estate’ cul-de-sac development from 1950s now in private and public ownership
- First development to break with gradual development of village
- Single building material creates a monolithic impact
- Footpaths in poor repair
- Some on-street car parking concerns

Most positive features:

- Houses and flats are valued as a more affordable supply of accommodation in the village
- Easy access to Greet Hall and central hub of village - this helps avoid being too separate
- No street lighting

IN CONCLUSION - *Any proposal for planning permission would need to ensure that development or redevelopment remains within the overall footprint of the existing development to ensure that further harm to the linear form of the village is avoided. Where possible the use of different materials and styles should be considered to help break up the visual impact of the area.*



Figure 25 Sinodun View

2.4. Area C: Warborough Green

Outlined in yellow below Rating: 5 / 5



Figure 26 Warborough Green Area

century. A Quaker Meeting house was built on the south side of The Green in 1670, but has been demolished. A burial ground is recorded in the grounds of a private residence and the name survives in nearby Quaker Lane.

This area encompasses Warborough's beautiful and much loved, much admired village Green which is the vibrant heart of the community.

The Green, a common pastureland before enclosure, was transferred to the parish officers as a place of exercise and recreation for the inhabitants in 1853 the request of the Reverend White (SODC 2011). The main area of the Green is a large flat central rectangle of grass, carefully maintained, with surrounding deep ditches filled with seasonal flowers and framed with houses of varied architectural style and size. There is a small valued green space, the Whitehead Plot, on the south of the Green North near the church, which was bequeathed to the village. The backdrop of The Green North (north) houses is an extensive wood; trees and some open glimpses form the setting behind The Green South. The allotments and the tennis Courts sit between the Green and long-range vistas of the Chilterns, which are highly valued.

There was a strong tradition of nonconformity in Warborough in the 17th



The Green North



Figure 27 Entrance to The Green South

Housing Style

Mostly residential, there is a wide variety of building types seen, echoing those in the village and along Thame Road, ranging from cottages to modern houses, to large Georgian houses and late medieval farmhouses, with associated weather-boarded barns. Smaller, densely constructed cottages mostly form the entry to the Green South, with housing becoming more sparse as you progress away from the A329.

On the Green North and away from the A329, dwellings are enclosed mainly with attractive gardens and hedges or walls that contribute to the character of the area. The area around the spacious and tree-fringed Warborough Green forms the centre-piece of the village and is overlooked by some notable buildings (eg figure 28), many listed. Some houses around the green were originally modest but few small houses now exist in their original state.

The Green South houses a particularly attractive row of terraced cottages (*Figure 29*), together with converted Methodist hall and this forms a valued street scene.



Figure 28 House and Barn, The Green South



Figure 29 There is a small, twisting lane that joins The Green North with The Green South, which houses a mixture of dwellings.



Figure 30 The Green South

Another very notable building and much-loved icon of the village located on the Green, is the only pub, The Six Bells (*figure 31*). It is a building of 15th century origin and one of the 3 oldest buildings in the village and the focus of a valued vista from the Green South.



Figure 31 The Six Bells

Near the junction of the A329, Quaker Lane runs off the Green South. Modern structures sit beside traditional cottages in a spirit of tolerance the founding Quaker fathers would have approved (*figure 32*).

Uses & Activities

The Green has a welcoming ambiance and is used daily by residents and visitors alike, to walk, to play on the children's playground, for outside exercise classes, to exercise the dogs. It is used by film companies to portray an archetypal village green and is seen in many episodes of Midsomer Murders (the incomes generated is important to support the Village). Each month in the summer it hosts a car boot sale. Throughout the summer it is used for cricket, events such as village fairs, jubilees, the bi-annual festival, visiting funfairs and circuses and in the winter for rugby, football etc.

The cricket pavilion (shown in the water colour, Figure 33) is on the south west corner of the green. The club is very active and holds regular matches with visiting teams; there is coaching for the juniors which is heavily subscribed. New cricket nets have recently been installed in the allotment area. Within the cricket pavilion is a plaque (*figure 33*) commemorating the Rev Herbert White who during the 19thC enclosures succeeded in having the Green adopted as a recreational space and maintaining the view to the Chilterns.



Figure 32 Quaker Lane



Figure 33 The Cricket Pavilion & Plaque



Figure 34 Jubilee Landmark

To mark the Queen's Jubilee, the village erected a new landmark (*figure 34*). It required careful consideration and much debate as to where it should be placed so as not to conflict with the existing War Memorial and many in the village were involved both in the debate and in its eventual erection.

At the eastern end of the green gateways lead through to the allotments (*figure 35*) and the tennis courts (*figure 36*), both well used. A swap shop is regularly held by the allotment holders and the village to exchange surpluses. There is a very active tennis club and regular lessons given to both children and adults.

Public Community Views

Significant views are described more fully in Community Views, below.



Figure 36 The Allotments

Small footpaths run between buildings in several places such as at Nellies, from Quaker Lane and from the churchyard through to the Green. Leading from the eastern end of the Green are two track ways, used daily by walkers. The one to the south leads through to Benson. This is also a very popular and frequently used cycle route and bridle path.



Figure 35 The Tennis Courts

Summary – Area C: Warborough Green

- A large area of green space with open views to the Chilterns on one side over the allotments and tennis courts
- Framed by iconic cricket pavilion, pub,
- The Green itself provides the setting for surrounding buildings
- At the heart of most village events and outdoor activities including cricket, football, tennis and allotments
- Used regularly as a film set to portray archetypal village green
- A starting point for extensive walks to open fields
- No street lighting
- Parking concerns on the Green South where ‘car-scape’ is a problem

Most positive features:

- Variety of mainly local and traditional materials
- varied traditionally designed houses with high pitched roofs
- away from the Thame Road, generously spaced buildings separated by gardens
- mature trees with a variety of hedges and traditional walls around front gardens

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid damaging views, hedges and spaces, the characteristic alley ways between buildings, use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area. The allotments and tennis courts create an important openness that enhances both views into and out of the green and should be protected from development. (see Section 3 Key Community Views number 5)

2.5. Area D: New Shillingford



Figure 37 'New' Shillingford Area

mixture of detached bungalows and houses, many with attractive hedging around their boundaries; few mature trees except in the Warborough Road area. Filming has taken place in this area, too.

Shown on Figure 37 bordered in yellow. Rating: 2 / 5

This area is mainly comprised of private housing on the border between Warborough and Shillingford, built largely in the 1960's and 1970's in the 'estate' no through-road pattern typical of that period, a form of development which is in contrast to the gradual, linear, mixed development of the other areas. The new developments surround several listed buildings.



Figure 38 Houses in 'new' Shillingford

Although these developments were against the wishes of the parish council at that time they provided a good mixture of bungalows and small and larger houses for potential purchasers at the time (and still do today).

Further such developments were prevented by both strong local opposition and the establishment of a conservation area in 1978. However today the village is very conscious of a need for smaller housing, both as starter homes and particularly housing suitable for retirement downsizing and is keen to balance the weight of the age profile of the village.

Housing Style

The houses are mainly modern brick structures (*figure 38 & 39*), indicative of the 1970s development style with consistent brick facades and low-pitched roofs offering a



Figure 39 House in 'new' Shillingford

Traffic & Transport

The modest local traffic within the cul-de-sacs is not problematic. The footpaths in this area are considerably better than the rest of the village, providing good ease of access for the residents.

Parking appears to be adequate with generous off-street parking provision. It has easy access to public bus routes. Once across the A329, access to the centre hub of Warborough is good, although road crossings are treacherous. The A329 has a high incidence of accidents on the sharp bends here.



Figure 40 Corner of Plough Close and New Road

Public Community Views

Significant views across The Plough Field are described in Community Views, below.

Summary - Area D: New Shillingford

- Comprises 'estate' developments from the 1960s and 1970s in private ownership mainly in the form of cul-de-sacs
- Contrasts with gradual, linear mixed development of much of the village
- Traffic within developments are low level but exits onto busy A329 are made more difficult by sharp bends; good off street parking provision
- Housing materials are non-traditional and garden sizes vary very little
- Few mature trees but low buildings and attractive hedges and gardens mitigate style of architecture
- No street lighting except for A4074 roundabout

Most positive features:

- Easy access to public bus routes and longer footpaths to hub of village
- Provides good mixture of small and larger houses and bungalows
- Attractive hedges, gardens and garden spacing mitigate style of architecture
- Open views out to the Chilterns AONB

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to ensure that development or redevelopment remains within the overall footprint of the existing development to ensure that further harm to the linear form of the village is avoided. Because of the low-profile design of the bungalows and houses, any conversion to the roof area would need to ensure that it is modest in scale and subservient to the overall design. Proposals for major redevelopment of the roof area should be resisted.

2.6. Area E: 'Old' Shillingford and Shillingford Conservation Area

Rating: 4 / 5 For the purposes of this assessment, this area, (outlined in green, figure 41) comprised of Wharf Road and a section of the A4074, and encompasses the Shillingford Conservation area (outlined in red, figure 41). This is the oldest part of the hamlet of Shillingford.

Prior to the river-bank erosion in the early 19th century, Wharf Road continued to curve to the South-East towards the site of the ferry across the Thames to Wallingford. Shillingford ferry was replaced in

1764 by a timber bridge on stone pillars and a new straight stretch of road was constructed to link it to the Henley Road.

The Thames-side terrace gravels have been a favoured

area for settlement from pre-historic times. Neolithic settlers at Dorchester and other downstream gravel sites along the Thames took advantage of the lighter, more workable soils, an accessible water supply and slight elevation above the most flood prone areas. This pattern of settlement persisted and was extended through the Roman and Saxon period. This continuity of settlement was also due to the strategic importance of the River Thames as a territorial boundary and for transport and trade.



Figure 44 The Kingfisher Guest House

Wharf Road houses a working farm on the corner of Henley Road (A4074,) and is lined primarily with listed buildings.



Figure 41 'Old' Shillingford outlined in green



Figure 43 Listed buildings along the Henley Road

There are large historic buildings facing Henley Road (figure 43), and a small 1990 development behind, in Hartley Close. The Kingfisher Inn sits at the entrance to Wharf Road (figure 44).

Housing Style:

The majority of buildings are residential and listed (eg *figure 45 & 46*). The character is one of gradual, small-scale growth, mainly linear in nature where residential buildings gradually developed to form a historic, yet diverse streetscape.

Most buildings face the road, with some instances where buildings sit at right angles to it, set in spacious gardens.

Materials used for buildings include brick, render & stone for walls and plain clay tiles as roofing. Boundary stone

and brick walls also add to the character; hedging delineates river gardens on the western side towards the river. There are 19 listed buildings in Shillingford, including four substantial early-to-mid 18th century houses. These houses are set amongst smaller houses of 18th century and later, some on the east side of the road, having gardens on the west. There is a relatively modern small housing estate tucked behind high brick walls off of the A4074 and Hartley House which sits nicely in the street scene, although because they are not visible, the houses there cannot be said to contribute to the street scene or typical housing style.



Figure 45 Houses on Wharf Road



Figure 46 A wisteria-clad cottage, Wharf Road

Traffic & Transport:***Henley Road (A4074)***

This busy arterial road, connecting Henley and Reading to Oxford, is continuing to take the strain of the build-up of rural traffic. 2 bus stops on either side dominate the street scene. A recent pedestrian crossing has provided a safe crossing, but because of the bend of the road, it is not positioned in the most convenient place for walkers (including those following the Thames path). Speeding is a significant issue and OCC have occasionally positioned a profitable speed camera toward the west end of this stretch. The 4-way junction with Henley Road, Wharf Road and Warborough Road (signed as one-way, but often ignored) causes concern.

Wharf Road

The road itself is mainly narrow, with no pavements or road curbs.

It forms part of the Thames Path and is frequented by walkers.

The wide grassed verges, many with stones on them to prevent

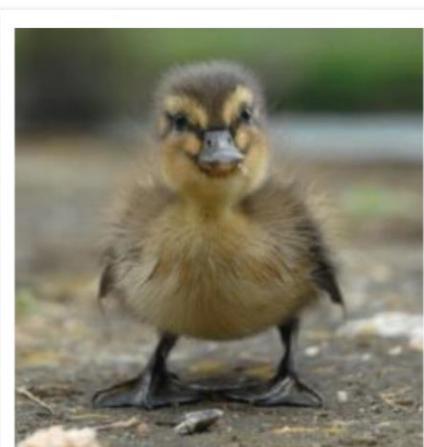


Figure 47 A Parishioner

damage, are bordered by hedges and walls for most of the length. There are public parking concerns at the top and bottom of the road. As it is a dead end to the river, there is no through traffic. There is often difficulty in exiting Wharf Road during rush hours, especially for traffic attempting to cross or turn right.

Public Uses:

Wharf Road leads down to The Wharf (a small patch of grass, *figure 48*), The publicly accessible Wharf also provides views along the river and across to the river meadow (owned and managed by the Earth Trust) and Shillingford Hill beyond. It is well used for river access for leisure activities.

Flooding:

This part of Shillingford is in the River Thames flood plain. The River Thames often bursts its banks and consumes the flood plains to the west of Wharf Road and encroaches on Wharf Road itself (*figure 49*).



Figure 48 The Wharf



Figure 49 Flooding at The Wharf

Summary – Area E: Old Shillingford & Shillingford Conservation Area

- an area defined partly by the busy A4074 where the heart of old Shillingford would have been round the coaching inn, now the Kingfisher pub.
- A4074 and the ‘crossroads’ are a busy mix of traffic and pedestrians with bus services stopping close by.
- in contrast Wharf Road has become a quiet no through-road running down to the publicly accessible river frontage of the Thames and lined with widely spaced historic substantial and smaller houses.
- fine views across water meadows to the Clumps
- frequented by Thames Path walkers as well as village residents
- like The Green, Wharf Road is one of the ‘lungs’ of Warborough & Shillingford
- Wharf Road liable to regular flooding from the river
- No street lighting

Most positive features:

- varied traditionally designed houses with high pitched roofs
- generously spaced buildings separated by gardens (primarily on Wharf Road)
- mature trees with a variety of hedges and walls around front gardens
- attractive hedges, walls and spacious gardens

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid blocking open views to the river, fields and the Clumps (see Section 3 Key Community Views number 7), use natural materials and a mix of dwelling types and address all of the bullet points above (particularly the conservation area statement) in any planning statement. Any infill development should be limited in number to avoid a significant change in the overall open character of the area.

2.7. Area F: Shillingford Bridge Approach

Shown on the map bordered in yellow. **Rating: 3 / 5**

Housing Style

It would be difficult to define a housing style in this area; such is the diversity of architectural styles. **Shillingford Court** (figure 50), which dominates the scene from the river, is a large, late 19th century house with an elegant boat house built by the wealthy tailor to King Edward VIIth, Frederick Mortimer. Now divided into multiple dwellings it is famous locally for its visits from King Edward and Lilly Langtree.



Figure 51 Shillingford Court

Leading to Shillingford Court is Court Drive (figure 51) – now a private road, maintained by the residents, running west from Wallingford Road.



This is an elegant chestnut tree lined road of large architect-designed houses built in the mid-20th Century. Houses are set back from the un-curbed road without fences, hedges or boundary walls.

Not visible from public spaces, these houses cannot be said to contribute to the style of the area but the space between them maintains an elegant approach to the historic Shillingford Court which should not be lost.



Figure 52 Court Drive

Wallingford Road (figure 53) is the main road running from Shillingford Roundabout to Shillingford Bridge and is lined with houses (many listed) and fields. It houses a new gated development from the 1990s, based around the conversion of a dairy and placed unobtrusively behind stone and brick walls and buildings, with little impact on the street scene.



Figure 50 Shillingford Bridge Approach Area



Figure 53 Wallingford Road



Figure 54 Shillingford Bridge

Traffic

Shillingford Bridge (figure 54) was made single-lane several years ago, with traffic lights controlling flow. This has made the modest traffic burden, and the crossing of the Thames Path here, safer. There are discussions about reducing air pollution in Wallingford by making this a one-way route, which would impact local residents.

Summary – Area F: Shillingford Bridge Approach (including Shillingford Court & Court Drive)

- In essence, an area defined by its proximity to or approach to the River Thames and the presence of Shillingford Court
- Several well-hidden modern enclaves from 1960s onwards of generally large houses
- Part of Thames footpath finds its way through walled alleyways from Wharf Road
- Viewed from the Wallingford Road an area with a few traditional houses closed in by walls lining the road
- No street lighting.

Most positive features:

- Traditional housing, walled and obscured along Wallingford Road
- Open-planned housing – some traditional, some modern with a variety of architectural features- on generous plots with mature trees on side roads
- Forms a pleasant exit from Shillingford culminating in the leaning boat house, golden stone arched bridge and mature trees standing in the flood plain as the river opens into wilder surroundings upstream of the bridge.

IN CONCLUSION - Any proposal for planning permission would need to avoid creating an impression of greater density of housing in the approach to the river unless small scale redevelopment modelled on the dairy conversion or set well back behind existing walls along the road, use traditional materials, maintain the open wooded flood plain along the river, avoid the open field spaces on either side of the Wallingford Road and address all of the bullet points above in any planning statement. The view from the Wallingford Road after it leaves the roundabout looking over Old Shillingford towards Wittenham Clumps should be protected (see Section 3 Key Community Views number 8)

3. Key Community Views (KCV)

Quotes from villagers:

"I want Warborough to retain rural character"

"It's rural village, not a suburb"

"We are a small village in a countryside setting"

As a small Oxfordshire rural community, the surrounding landscape is integral to quality of life. In the WSNP Community survey, walks and bridle paths were of significant importance, indicating a passionate level of integration with the surrounding countryside for residents.

Significant views, confirmed during the WSNP process (Scoping survey and 2016 Community Survey) are available from public spaces and therefore of value to members of the public and the community as a whole. Following pre-submission consultation, additional views were assessed, added where appropriate and discussed below in 'Historic Views'.

Figure 55 shows these views, which are grouped by assessment Area:

3.1 from Thame Road (Area A)

The housing on Thame Road varies from dense, tree or house-lined in the centre through to dispersed building as you move to the fringes of Warborough. This gives rise to more open views which are very highly valued by residents and visitors (including filming companies and associated tourists).

1 This offers significant views of rising farmland where the rolling field and landscape character of the Clay Vale are visible from the A329 as you leave the village and Conservation Area

2 from the A329 as you enter the village and Conservation Area, with onward views to the Wittenham Clumps towards the south

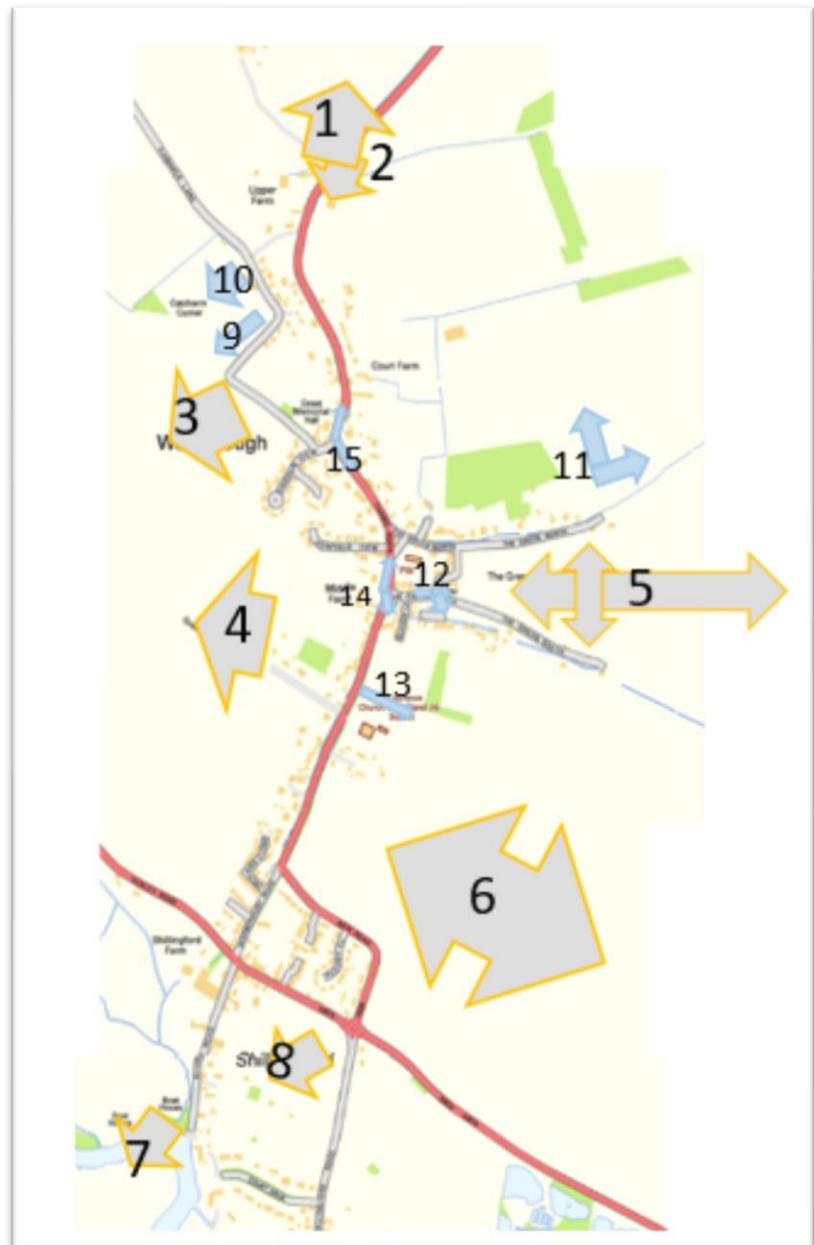


Figure 55 Key Community Views



Figure 56 The Clumps from Hammer Lane

3, 4, 9 & 10 Along the edge of the Warborough Conservation Area there are public uninterrupted views of the Wittenham Clumps from Hammer Lane (3 and *figure 56*) and the end of Green Lane. The distinct landscape character of the Thames floodplain is displayed.

6 At the Shillingford end of the Thame Road, there are expansive views out to the Chilterns, described more fully below.

14,15 Important street scenes include the views to and from the Rod Eyot (15) and the views around St Laurence and the War Memorial (14)

13 There is an inward view in a hedge gap from the Conservation area/A329, often obscured by residents' cars (figure 57). An onward glimpse towards the Chilterns, currently blocked by hedging and woodland, should be encouraged (eg figure 58).



Figure 58 Potential view (red arrow) Six Acres



Figure 57 View 13 into Six Acres

3.2 From The Green (Area C)

5 From the Green and surrounding footpaths, the expansive views to the Chilterns, the Clumps, and back into the surrounding village (5), are highly valued and important to the setting of the Conservation Area.

12 The street scene along the part of the Green North nearest the Thame Road, and towards the 6 Bells makes a valuable contribution to the Conservation area.

11 Views to the open countryside and farmland from the end of the Green north provide a valuable open public view and contribute to the setting of the conservation area.



Figure 59 Plough Field towards the Chilterns

3.3 From New Shillingford Area (Area D)

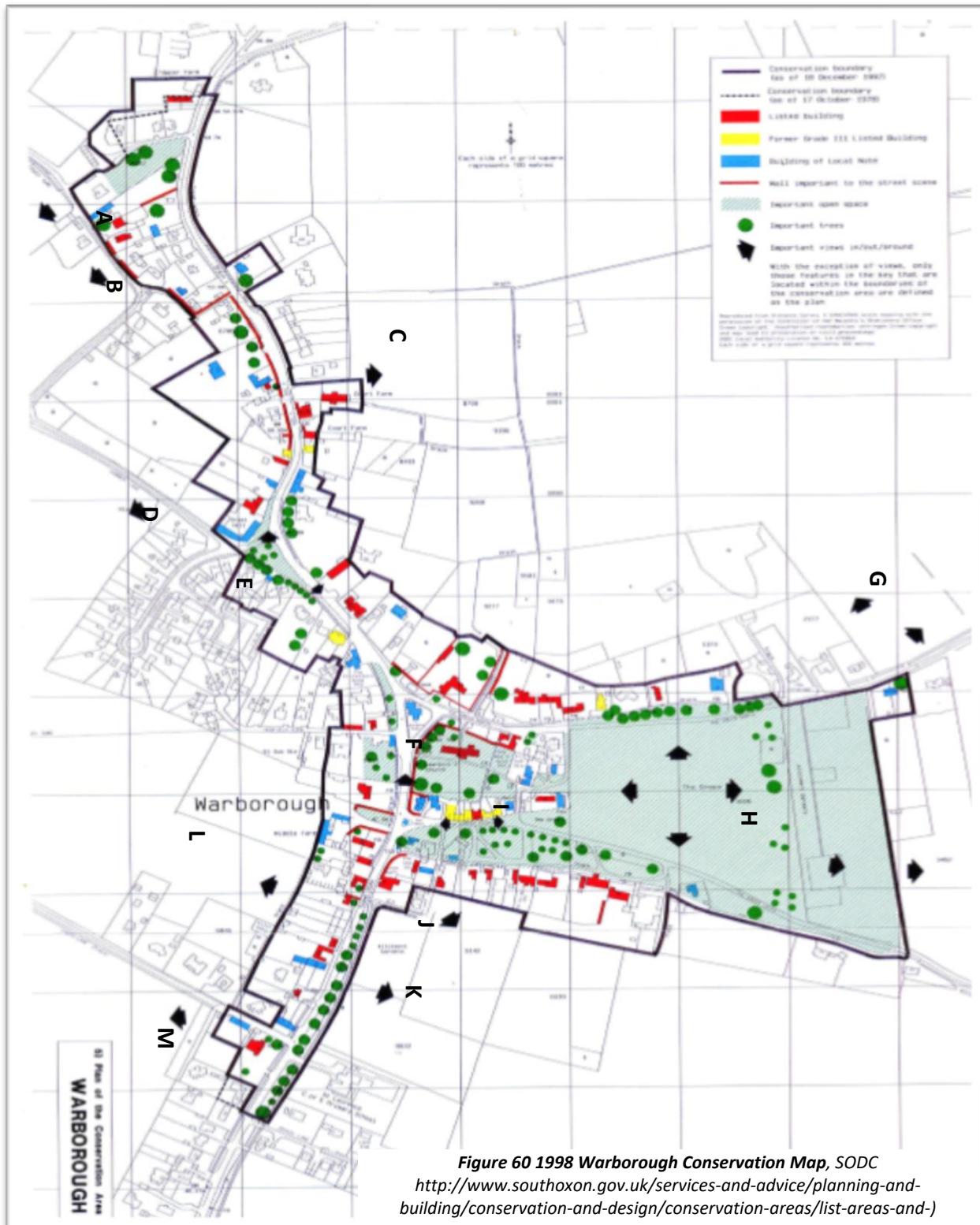
The main important view in this area is towards the south and the Chiltern Hills in the distance across Plough Field (figure 59). This is an important landscape feature in creating a separation between Warborough and Shillingford villages. Although seasonally partially obscured by overgrown hedges, this is very valued by villagers as it is the clearest and most expansive view out of the village toward the Chiltern Hills (North Wessex Downs AONB) and a very popular walk for walkers and dog owners. It contributes significantly to the rural feel of the village which is so highly valued by the residents, and is key to the inwards view of the village from the adjacent arterial road, A 4074.

3.4 Into and from Old Shillingford (Area E)

There are views from the main A4074 southwestwardly, providing an important landscape features and setting for the Shillingford Conservation area, with onwards views to the Wittenham Clumps (8). It contributes significantly to the rural character of the hamlet. There are westward views across the flood plains to Wittenham Clumps (7) from the Wharf.

3.5 Warborough Views Historically

The 1998 Warborough Conservation Map (*figure 60*) was discussed following the pre-submission consultation. The SC analysed and assessed these 1998 views in the current context and looking specifically at the value to the community and, where appropriate, added them to Key Community Views (KCV) map.



- A. Hammer Lane at this point is a private road, however, it is an expansive open view and assessed important to the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area (KCV 10)
- B. Hammer Lane at this point is a public road and this expansive open view, important to the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area, although partially covered by view 3, has been added (KCV 9)
- C. This gap in the frontage along Thame Road contributes to the character of the adjacent Conservation Area (figure 61). The view was not identified because outward views have now been eroded by extensive tree growth.
- D. Covered by KCV 3
- E. This valuable street scene view within the Conservation Area, to and from the Road Eyot (see Green Space, below) has been added (KCV 7)
- F. This street scene within the Conservation Area to St Laurence Hall & Church has been added, and expanded to include the view back to the war memorial (KCV 8)
- G. This view at the end of the Green North (north and east) is open and extensive, and important to the setting of the Conservation Area and has been added (KCV 11)
- H. Comprehensive views around the Green (KCV 5) have been expanded to cover all aspects and spans the edge of the Conservation Area
- I. This street scene within the Conservation Area along the Green South has been added, and expanded to include the view towards the 6 Bells Pub (KCV 12)



Figure 61 Current sightline of historic view C

- J. The southerly views between the listed buildings from The Green South are important to the setting of the Conservation Area and listed buildings and is covered by KCV 5. The value of the historic view angle J has eroded as explained when comparing the historic view (figure 62) and current day (figure 64): inward views from Quaker Lane are inhibited with shrubbery and onward views are blocked by overgrown hedges, a mature woodland and the rear extension of the school (circled on figure 64).



Figure 62 Historic Views The Green South circa 1980s

- K. The growth of trees and hedges have eroded historic inward views from Thame Road. Onward views have eroded because of the overgrown hedge and adjacent mature woodland and impacted by the rear school extension (circled on figure 64). However, there is an inward view at the entrance to this site and this gap contributes to the adjacent Conservation Area. This view has been added (KCV 13) as it could offer glimpses of the rural environment and distant Chilterns, subject to sensitive design as discussed above.



Figure 64 Current setting of historic view J&K (googlemaps)

- L. Eroded over time by tree growth (figure 63)

- M. Covered by KCV 4



Figure 63 Current sightline of historic view L

4. Green Spaces

There are several green spaces identified during the village consultation in Warborough & Shillingford which are considered important to protect as Local Green Spaces, the Green being the most significant in size. Also identified were the Rod Eyt and surrounds – green spaces outside the Greet Hall (hashed green on the Figure 66), the allotments and The Wharf at Shillingford, all of which have been covered previously in the village areas described and mapped in Figure 65.

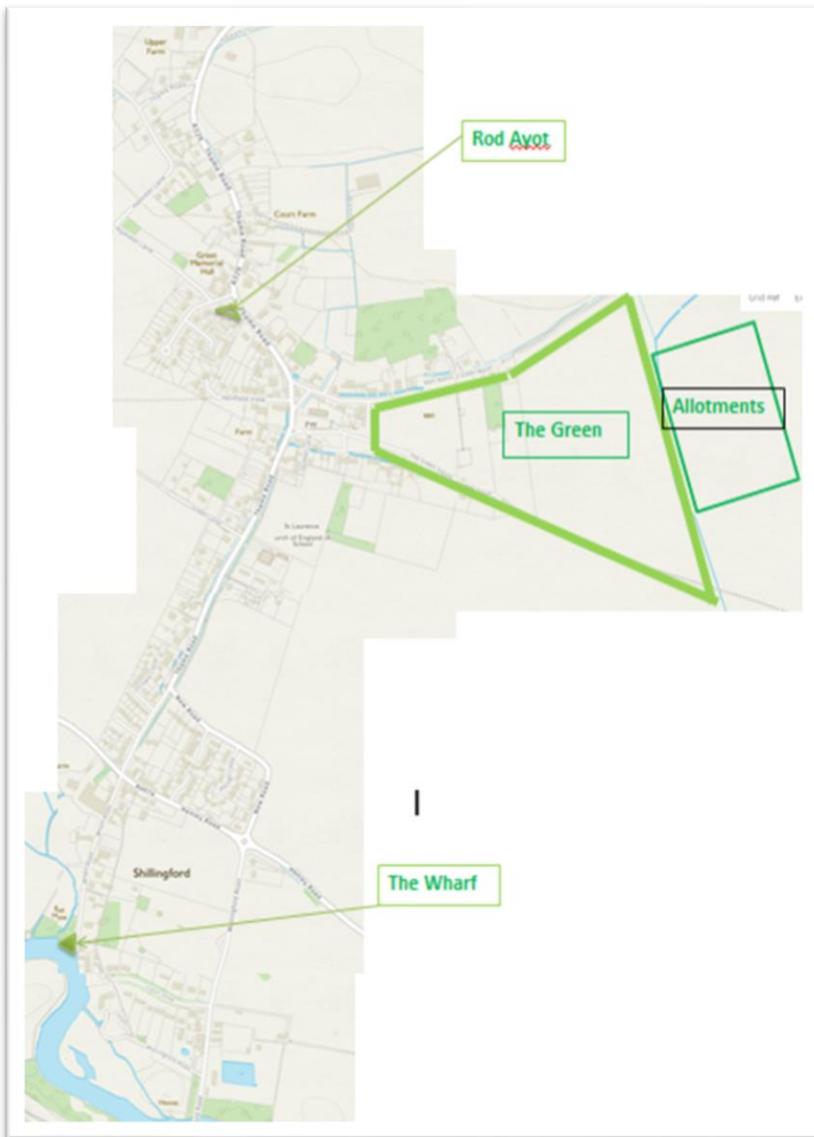


Figure 65 Green Spaces in Warborough Parish



Figure 66 Rod Eyt (shown hatched green)

The 1998 Warborough Conservation Map (Figure 7 and here <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/conservation-and-design/conservation-areas/list-areas-and->) was discussed following the pre-submission consultation. It accurately maps out the Green and other important Green Spaces in the historic core of Warborough (shown hashed in green in Figure 67). It has also been updated below to show the The Whitehead Plot on the Green North (shown with a W in Figure 67), donated to and maintained by the Parish Council, which should be noted as of community value)



Figure 67 1998 Warborough Conservation Area Map

The large Plough Field (facilitating Community View 6 in Section 3 and outlined in red, in Figure 68) has also been identified as an important landscape feature. It defines the separation between Warborough and Shillingford villages, and prevents their complete coalescence.

*"Landscapes on the fringes of settlements are particularly vulnerable to change and special attention should be paid to reduce the urbanising influences of development on adjacent countryside and to prevent the coalescence of settlements"*². This open field, part of the Thames Valley flood plain offers panoramic views out towards the North Wessex Downs AONB.



Figure 68 Plough Field, outlined in red

² SODC Landscape Assessment

5. Spirit of Place

The one thing a visitor might take away, if they met the residents of Warborough & Shillingford is how much we all love our village. All of it. Ideally, as it is, without change. But change we must and in doing so wish to protect the ambiance, structure, and appearance as best we can. There are really very few negatives about the structure of the village, the main complaints are about traffic, parking and flooding. The most positive? We have a lot to choose from but the most obvious is the Village Green. In character, you can't imagine a more enthusiastic village. It values its integration, social life, clubs, events, sports on the Green, boating on the river. It's a great place to live and the villagers are determined to keep it so.



Figure 69 Historic View, Thame Road, Warborough