

SHIPLAKE PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE OPEN LAND TO THE SEPARATION OF THE SETTLEMENTS OF LOWER SHIPLAKE AND SHIPLAKE CROSS



UPDATED REPORT VERSION 2 APRIL 2021

KIRKHAM LANDSCAPE PLANNING LTD AND
THE TERRA FIRMA CONSULTANCY LTD

CONTENTS		Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Objectives of the Study	3
3	Landscape Setting	4
4	Landscape Character Context	9
5	Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Area Reports	13
6	Contribution to the separation of settlements	39

FIGURES

Figure 1	Location of the Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Areas
Figure 2	South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Types 2017
Figure 3	Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Types 2017 and Listed Buildings
Figure 4	Chilterns AONB, Thames floodplain and Public Rights of Way
Figure 5	Topography and landform
Figure 6	Location of key landscape features
Figure 7	Location of key visual landmarks and views

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) on behalf of Shiplake Parish Council first appointed Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd in September 2017 to undertake the *Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Contribution of the Open Land to the Separation of the Settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross* to inform the emerging policies in the Neighbourhood Plan; to identify the value of the landscape outside of the built up areas; and the role of the rural landscape in contribution to the character and separate identity the built up areas of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake. An earlier version dated January 2020 was included in the Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation in 2020.
- 1.2 Following the Regulation 14 Consultation, in response to comments, the Study was updated in May 2021. This update amends Section 6 in the Report and removes Figure 8 in response to the removal of the former Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Buffer policy. Further notes have been added to the Study in Section 6 in support of the replacement Separation of Settlements policy SV9.
- 1.3 The Study Area falls wholly in South Oxfordshire District. Figures 1 and 7 show the Parish Boundary and the Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA) which follows the Parish boundary. A small part of the Parish lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which borders the north-west edge of the Parish as in Figure 4. The eastern boundary is the line of the River Thames beyond which to the east lies Wokingham District within Berkshire. The Study Area, shown in Figure 1, covers the open landscape of the Parish/NPA outside of the two settlements of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake.
- 1.4 The study forms part of the NP's evidence base and provides robust landscape evidence to be used in plan making and planning decisions.
- 1.5 The Study builds on published landscape character studies most notably the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017, the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment 2017, and data sources from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). A full list of documents is included in Appendix 1.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 2.1 Overall the Study aims to provide a transparent, consistent, and objective approach to understanding the landscape and visual attributes of the Parish and to provide the Parish and Local Planning Authority officers with a robust and clear landscape evidence base.
- 2.2 The *Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Contribution of the Open Land to the Separation of the Settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross* identifies and describes the variation in the character of the landscape across Shiplake Parish within 4no. Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs) which exhibit

particular combinations of elements and features (characteristics) that make these landscape areas valued and distinctive. The study goes on to make land management and development recommendations for each PLCA.

- 2.3 The boundaries of these PLCAs are based, as a starting point, on the wider landscape character types identified in the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017 and then on detailed desk-base and fieldwork assessment. The Study also considers the visual characteristics of the Parish; key views and vistas, landmark features, important skylines and particular sensitive visual receptors.
- 2.4 The study takes into account the locations of ecological, heritage and recreational assets but does not include detailed studies of these topics. However historic landscape characterisation by Oxfordshire County Council has been used to further understand landscape surviving patterns derived from the historic landscape.
- 2.5 In the light of NPPF para 170 a) and b) and 171, the Study assists the NP in its identification of valued landscapes within the Parish outside of the Chilterns AONB. The Study identifies landscape and visual features of value in each area which collectively form the physical attributes which define valued landscapes within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The Study does not start with the premise that all landscapes are valued (i.e. as falling within NPPF para 170) but through careful examination of those features shared with the AONB or identified as worthy of conservation and enhancement in the SODC Landscape Character Assessment 2017 (in accordance with the Landscape Institute's Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment version 3 paras 5.26 to 5.31), identifies those areas that meet the criteria for valued landscapes.

3. LANDSCAPE SETTING

Location (see Figure 1)

- 3.1 The Study Area falls within South Oxfordshire District, the most southerly part of Oxfordshire. The Parish borders onto Wokingham District within Berkshire which lies to the east.
- 3.2 The Parish lies between the River Thames to the east and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty to the west, with a small part of the AONB (Shiplake Wood) within the Parish. To the north, separated by Harpsden Parish, lies the town of Henley-on-Thames. To the south lies the Parish of Eye and Dunsden which extends up to the Caversham borders.
- 3.3 The Parish contains just two 'Smaller villages' (ref: SODC Local Plan 2035): Lower Shiplake in the north and Shiplake Cross in the south. These form two distinct settlements separated by open countryside. In 2019 planning permission was granted for a Retirement Village on land between Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross. Permission has also been granted for two dwellings on the land between Tower House and the retirement home on Reading Road (Figure 1). At the time of writing neither scheme has been implemented.

Topography and Hydrology (see Figures 4 and 5)

- 3.4 The topography is a key characteristic of the Study Area. The Parish lies on the dipslopes of the Chiltern Hills which descend down to the River Thames floodplain. At its highest point the Study Area sits at around 75m AOD within the AONB, falling south-eastwards in a gently undulating landform to the River Thames at around 40m AOD. The undulating landform includes shallow dry valleys as at Haileywood Farm and flatter local plateau, west of Shiplake Farm.
- 3.5 The terraces and undulations create local skylines as for example at Warren Hill when viewed from the Thames or Haileywood when viewed from New Road. However, a main feature of the Parish is the extensive views eastwards to the skyline of the hills above Wargrave and across the river valley to the wooded horizons extending across to Bowsey Hill and also to Bracknell.
- 3.6 The flat River Thames floodplain and meadows are a distinctive feature of the Parish for example east of Lower Shiplake and south of Warren Hill. West of the valley floor are to be found the raised river terraces forming a local landform feature, often wooded, as at The Warren and Shiplake College, leveling out across Lower Shiplake with these steeper slopes moving westwards in the north of the Parish to the Haileywood area.
- 3.7 The River Thames is a key feature of the Parish. It has an extensive floodplain (see Figure 4) which includes the land east of Mill Road, Lower Shiplake and the land south of The Warren. Lash Brook runs into the Thames near to Shiplake Station. Streams follow the base of The Warren to flow into the Thames next to Shiplake College.
- 3.8 The higher open arable landscape has dry valleys and no streams.
- 3.9 The Study Area topography is therefore typical of the AONB dipslopes and their inter-connectivity with the River Thames floodplain.

Vegetation and Ecology (see Parish-wide Figure 6)

- 3.10 The Parish is largely under arable farmland in a mix of large, medium and small fields, with pockets of pasture mainly found around the settlements.
- 3.11 Woodland is not extensive in the Parish but the groups of woodlands in the AONB known as Shiplake Woods are Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW). Woodland covers the terraces rising above the valley floodplain and is associated with the parkland around Shiplake College; and area south of Woodlands Road. Other areas are either deciduous broadleaved woodland; or a mixed broadleaved and ornamental trees as at Haileywood. However, the eastern part of the Parish has a more wooded appearance due to the many small copses and lines of mature trees along roadsides, within gardens and on field boundaries.

- 3.12 Extensive wetland floodplain meadows characterise the Shiplake side of the River Thames extending up to the wooded terraces.
- 3.13 Hedgerows vary from mature deciduous boundaries to the settlements, along the roadsides and around the smaller fields to the rather gappy remnants within the open arable fields. There are some conifer belts next to settlements but these are not a key feature of this area.
- 3.14 The Study Area vegetation pattern is therefore typical of the AONB dipslopes.

Historic landscape (see Figure 3)

- 3.15 The history of the development of the two settlements lies outside of the scope of this Study.
- 3.16 Oxfordshire County Council published its Historic Landscape Character Assessment for the whole of the County in 2017. This shows that the Study Area has a number of distinguishing historic landscape patterns including the above Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW); surviving pre 18th century ‘ancient enclosure’ east of the ASNW; and pre 1881 post medieval planned enclosure alongside the River Thames.
- 3.17 Shiplake College contains a number of listed buildings and is the oldest settled part of the Parish. The main Grade II listed Shiplake College and Shiplake House buildings sit on the raised terrace overlooking the river, a common feature of large properties along the River Thames corridor. Shiplake Memorial lying at the junction of Reading Road/Woodlands Road/Station Road is Grade II listed and together with its landscape setting forms a landmark feature. The Grade II* listed Church of St Peter and St Paul forms part of the important group around Shiplake College.
- 3.18 The Parish has no Registered Parks and Gardens but the grounds of Shiplake College extending eastwards as far as the Lodge on Mill Lane are noted as Parkland. Features of the surviving parkland include large old Planes along the river (possibly Veteran Trees), tree plantings and the alignment of routeways to the two lodges.
- 3.19 There are no Conservation Areas in the Study Area.
- 3.20 The Henley Railway Branch line into Twyford runs along the eastern side of the Study Area until it crosses the River Thames west of Wargrave. A railway crossing and station lie within Lower Shiplake close to the river. As it passes through the Parish the line is enclosed by dense tree cover and rarely visible. Apart from the level crossing, there is an underpass along the Mill Lane Byway and under the Thames bridge along a footpath bordering the river across the gardens of properties on Mill Lane. The railway bridge over the River Thames is a local landmark.

- 3.21 The river bank is mostly rural in character except where it meets Lower Shiplake. Shiplake Lock is a local landmark located south of Mill Lane.

Perceptual/Experiential Landscape

- 3.22 The Study Area has an over-riding rural character with exceptionally good scenic value as a result of the internal mix of river landscapes, small to medium fields on undulating ground, local undulating dipslopes and floodplain topography, woodland and mature tree belts, open farmland, local landmarks and the scenic vistas over the Thames Valley and up to the Chilterns AONB.
- 3.23 Although the two settlements of the Parish are mainly Victorian or modern in character, owing to very generous gardens, high trees and hedge cover, and a good standard of domestic low-rise architecture, they are of a good quality suburban character and have little adverse influence on the surrounding open countryside. Even where the housing is more exposed, as along Memorial Avenue, few houses are visible and the predominant character remains rural.
- 3.24 The two settlements are separated by open countryside and appear quite distinct from each other.
- 3.25 The Study Area has few detracting features. The single carriageway A4155 Henley Road from Caversham to Henley runs through the Parish carrying mostly local traffic but busy at certain times of the day. Traffic is visible on the more open stretches of the road. The railway line is single track and well hidden by vegetation. There are no pylons across the Parish or other modern infrastructure. The largest buildings are individual modern agricultural barns which are not out of place in the rural arable landscape.
- 3.26 The condition of the landscape is good and well cared for. Some traditional hedgerows have been removed from the arable land but the 1872 OS and HLC show that these fields have been large from at least the late 19th century.
- 3.27 The Study Area benefits from a good public rights of way network which includes a section of the Thames National Trail and the Chilterns Way. These paths, including the permissive routes around the field south of Shiplake Wood and into the woods, are very well used by dog walkers, runners, Nordic walkers and Shiplake College and the local school children for runs.
- 3.28 The Study Area appears as an extension of the open arable parts of the AONB dipslopes. The more enclosed and well tree covered landscape also reflects the pattern of the landscape setting of the AONB along the Thames Valley. Intervisibility between the AONB and the Study Area however is limited by the woodland and tree cover. Where there are open views, the Study Area forms part of the visual setting to the AONB.

Settlement Pattern

- 3.29 The oldest part of the Parish is the settlement at Shiplake Cross centred on the St Peter and St Paul Church. To the east lie the buildings which make up Shiplake College. These are set within generous tree covered grounds which derive the former parkland to the 19th Century Grade II Listed Shiplake House and Grade II Listed Shiplake College. This group, together with the more modern school buildings, have a distinct character which distinguishes this area from the residential village pattern to the north in Shiplake Cross and at Lower Shiplake.
- 3.30 Lower Shiplake developed and expanded as a result of the coming of the railway line and a station. This area is a mix of Victorian up to modern day housing set within leafy roads and some large mature gardens. The area is quite compact, lying to the east of the Henley Road and extending to the floodplain. However, beyond the settlement core the area around Lower Shiplake is characterised by groups or short rows of mainly larger houses, typically set in large grounds which are well treed and maintain a semi-rural and open aspect such as at Woodland Road. Boundary planting is in evidence so the houses are hardly visible in the landscape, although more so in the winter months.
- 3.31 Shiplake Cross north of the Henley road is largely 20th century housing with community facilities and a school. This area is contained by three roads, Henley Road, Plough Lane and Memorial Avenue. Boundary planting is less in evidence so the houses are more visible in the landscape.
- 3.32 The two settlements are therefore typical of the settlement pattern between the Chiltern AONB and the River Thames. Together with their tree covered and pastoral setting, the villages do not detract from the setting of the AONB.
- 3.33 In 2019 planning permission was granted for a Retirement Village on land between Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross. Permission has also been granted for two dwellings on the land between Tower House and the retirement home on Reading Road (Figure 1). At the time of writing these schemes had not been implemented.

Important visual landmarks and features (see Figure 7)

- 3.34 These are described in more detail in the relevant PLCAs. The main key features of the Parish are the openness and elevation of the field network which allows for extensive and particularly attractive views to the east; and the very attractive views along the River Thames corridor.
- 3.35 A number of landmark features are distinctive to the approaches to the village by road or river and include the Shiplake Memorial, Shiplake Farm, the open green at the entrance to the Shiplake College Grounds, the tree avenue along Memorial Avenue and along Bolney Lane, Grade II listed Shiplake College, the railway bridge over the River Thames and Shiplake Lock.

3.36 Skylines are created mainly by the woodland and tree cover on elevated land in views. Looking east the skyline is panoramic, with receding horizons. Woodland dominated these horizons but at points in the south of the Study Area the commercial development in Reading Thames Valley Business Park is visible 3.5km away and on a clear day the tower blocks of Bracknell. These have a limited impact on the predominantly rural views.

3.37 More enclosed and intimate views are found around the settlements as set out under the PLCA reports.

4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

4.1 The Study Area lies within the National Character Area NCA110: Chilterns. This area includes the Chilterns AONB but covers a wider area and is defined, amongst other things, by the close relationship between the Chiltern Hills and the Thames valley. NCA110 extends eastwards of the River Thames at Shiplake into Wokingham District to include the hills above Wargrave which form an important backcloth to the views from the Study Area.

4.2 The landscape character assessment for South Oxfordshire District was originally completed in 2003. This document was updated by the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment September 2017 which forms part of the evidence base for the SODC Local Plan 2035. The 2017 work reflects much of what was to be found in the 2003 study with some update in the guidelines. The 2017 work however excludes the assessment of landscape sensitivity and landscape strategies contained within the original work.

4.3 Study Area largely falls within the District-wide Thames Valley and Fringes Landscape Character Area 11 (LCA11), an area which extends along the Thames between north of Henley to Reading and from Reading up to Goring (see Figure 2). This area is sub-divided into landscape types (LCTs) of which the following are found within the Study Area:

- *Flat floodplain pasture* (by the river east of Lower Shiplake and south-west of Shiplake College);
- *Parkland and estate farmland* (southern part of Shiplake College and land to the east up to Mill Lane);
- *Open Dipslope* (land west of Plough Lane, Shiplake Cross);
- The remaining land including Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross lies within the *Semi-enclosed dipslope*.

4.4 Key characteristics of the Thames Valley and Fringes Landscape Character Area LCA11 of relevance to Study Area are set out in sections 19.3 to 19.6 of the 2017 study:

- Flat valley floor and the steeper valley sides to the west and the more gentle hills and sloping fringes to the east. Topography ranges between c. 40m AOD and c. 75m AOD;

- The River Thames and associated floodplain has a strong influence on the character of this area;
- Woodlands are feature in this landscape;
- Away from the urban areas, arable farmland is located adjacent to the River Thames;
- Transport infrastructure including the A4155 roads and a section of the Great Western main line (railway) cross through this character area;
- The valley sides are more gentle and grade almost imperceptibly into the Chilterns dip slope. Here, the chalk is masked by coombe deposits and gravels;
- Priority habitats include deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland, traditional orchards, lowland calcareous grassland, lowland meadows, semi-improved grassland, lowland fens and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh;
- Species-rich hedgerows are distributed throughout different parts of this character area. Priority should be given to safeguarding, maintaining and expanding this resource;
- The Thames Path crosses through the area;
- This section of the Thames Valley includes a string of riverside towns and settlements, including Lower Shiplake. Many of these originated as favoured sites on the terrace gravels for prehistoric, Roman and Saxon settlement. However, their strategic position at important river crossings, and as trading or staging posts along the river and main east-west routes, was the key to their later development;
- The special qualities of the riverside landscape, set below the wooded Chiltern Hills, were also a key factor in the development of settlements and buildings between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, drawing opulent villas to the towns and riverside and inspiring the creation of a sequence of beautiful parks along these reaches of the Thames. Later development of road and rail communications led to the growth of commuter villages.

4.5 The key characteristics of the landscape types and the relevant landscape guidance for LCA11 are set out in the Table below:

Landscape type	Key characteristics	LCA11 Landscape guidance
Flat floodplain pasture	<p>Flat, low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture with a distinctively ‘wet’, riparian character (although some areas of arable may be interspersed within the floodplain)</p> <p>Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches</p> <p>Comparatively strong landscape structure with willows conspicuous along the riverside</p>	<p>Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses. Recognise that grazing sheep and cattle can make a contribution to the landscape’s identity and distinctiveness;</p> <p>Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges</p> <p>Safeguard, maintain and enhance the quality of unimproved chalk and limestone grassland with</p>

	<p>Intimate, pastoral, tranquil and quite remote character with some 'arcadian' qualities along the Thames close to settlements and riverside parklands</p> <p>Generally low intervisibility, although views along the river corridor may be possible in some more sparsely vegetated areas</p>	<p>sustainable grazing techniques. Identify opportunities for calcareous grassland restoration by linking and extending the existing resource</p> <p>Prevent scrub encroachment in areas of species-rich grassland</p> <p>Promote the conservation and restoration the pastoral character of existing parklands and promote the replacement of veteran and mature trees where appropriate</p>
Parkland and estate farmland	<p>Although much of the landscape of the floodplain and valley sides has been managed as part of large estates and parks, only three areas were identified as having a specific parkland character, namely the parks associated with Hardwick House, Shiplake House and Fawley Court</p> <p>Well-managed parkland character with formal features such as avenues and free standing mature trees in pasture, clumps and blocks of woodland</p> <p>Unspoilt character</p> <p>Generally enclosed character with strong landform, woodland and tree cover</p> <p>Low intervisibility</p>	<p>Safeguard, maintain and enhance and the characteristic landscape features of existing parklands including veteran trees, avenues of trees, lakes, woods and walls</p> <p>Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside</p> <p>Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements</p> <p>Minimise impact by locating new communication masts on existing structures or by using existing masts</p> <p>Bury cables underground and seek opportunities to bury existing overhead cables</p>
Open Dipslope	<p>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake</p> <p>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover</p> <p>Distinctively 'grey' and flinty soils</p> <p>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas</p> <p>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility</p>	<p>Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows</p> <p>Species-rich rivers and ditches are also very important and the aim should be to establish and maintain diverse banksides and aquatic vegetation through sympathetic management and the use of agri-environment schemes</p> <p>There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands distributed throughout the landscape type and the priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management</p> <p>Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows</p>
Semi-enclosed dipslope.	<p>Sloping ground and minor valley at foot of Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor around Lower Shiplake</p> <p>Mixture of medium-scale fields to west of the A4155 and smaller scale field pattern around the settlement edges</p>	

	<p>Strong structure of hedgerows, trees and small blocks of woodland, generally provides visual containment and results in moderate intervisibility</p> <p>Predominantly rural character, especially to the west of the A4155, but some localised influence from roads, ribbon development on minor roads and built-up areas immediately around settlement edges</p>	
--	--	--

- 4.6 A small part of the Study Area, Shiplake Woods, falls within the Chiltern Plateau with valleys LCA10 (see Figure 2). The Shiplake Woods, Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, within the AONB, are a key valued feature of the AONB and the Study Area.
- 4.7 Oxfordshire County Council completed its county-wide Historic Landscape Character Assessment in 2017. The data for this work is now available for non-commercial use. Figure 3 shows the historic landscape character types within the Parish. These have been used to inform the individual PLCA reports.
- 4.8 The land to the north of the Study Area falls within the Chilterns AONB with the Shiplake Woods (PLCA2) within the AONB boundary. The special qualities of the AONB landscape are set out in the Chilterns Management Plan 2019-2024 and are reflected in the SODC landscape character assessments. Special qualities of the AONB and its setting which are also found in the Parish are:
- Wooded landscape as at Shiplake Woods (AONB);
 - Inter-relationship between the AONB hills and the River Thames Valley;
 - Chiltern dipslopes with folds in the landscape;
 - A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land;
 - Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated;
 - Mosaic of fields with arable crops and livestock, bordered by ancient hedgerows and trees;
 - Extensive rights of way, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside; and
 - Dry valleys.
- 4.9 There is a high level of intervisibility between the edge of AONB and the Study Area with views from the edge of Shiplake Woods over the Study Area to the Thames Valley and views from the Study Area up the open farmland to the AONB edge.
- 4.10 Although only a small part of the Study Area falls within the AONB, the above shows that the Study Area falls within the setting of the AONB. This is supported

by the Chiltern Conservation Board in their submissions to Natural England for inclusion of the Study Area within an extension to the AONB. Guidance within the Chiltern Management Plan 2019-2024 sets out the protection to be given to the setting of the AONB and the approach to be taken in the CCB *Position Statement Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB 2011*.

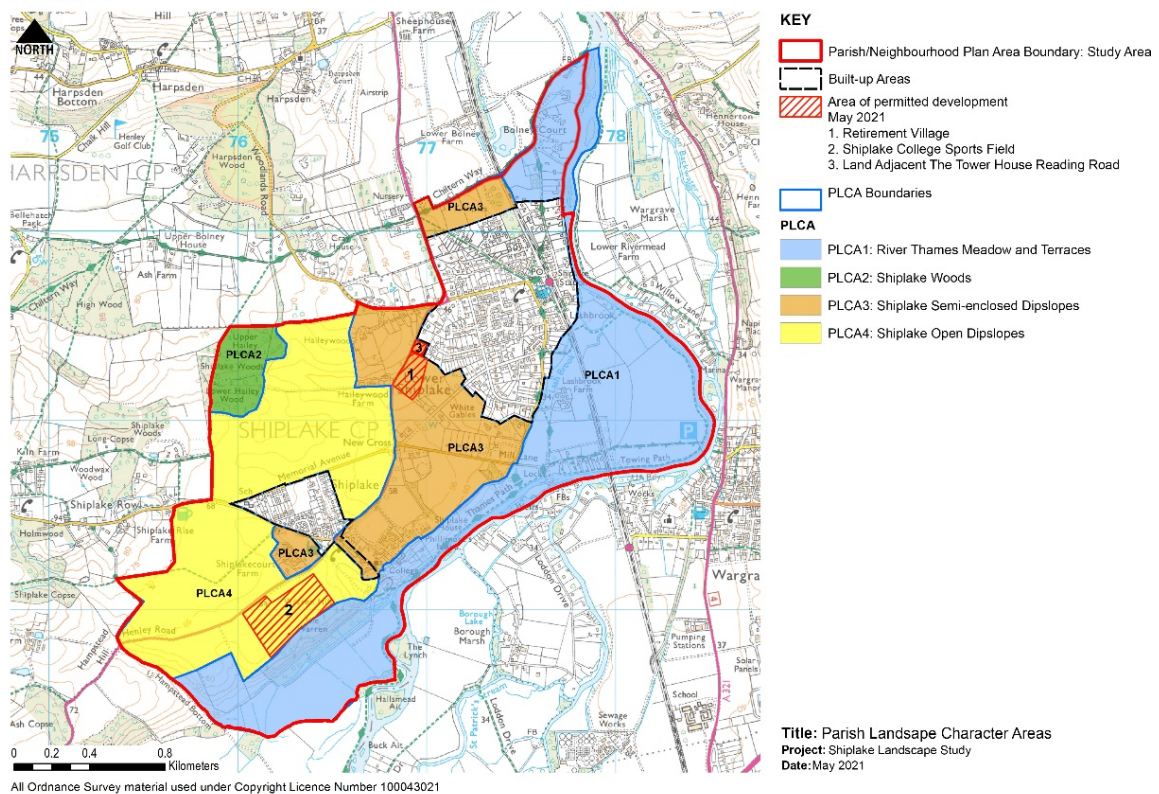
4.11 We are aware that a number of the local Parish Councils have also joined together and are seeking to make an application to Natural England to extend the AONB when it is next due for review.

5. STUDY AREA LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

5.1 Each of these is assessed below, drawing upon relevant key characteristics, sensitivities and management considerations identified in the Landscape Guidelines and adding a new level of detail appropriate to the unique setting within the Study Area. They reflect current conditions in May 2021 but three areas of land within PLCAs 3 and 4 have been granted planning permission for an Extra Care Retirement Village and two dwellings in the former; and sport fields in the latter (Figure 1).

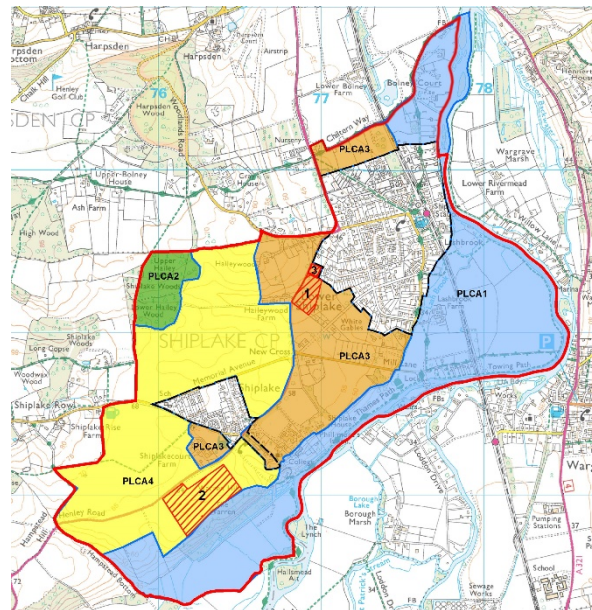
PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS 1 TO 4

FIGURE 1



PLCA1: River Thames Meadow and Terraces

Character area map:



PLCA1: Landscape Character Area Description

PCLA1 comprises the western half of the watercourse of the River Thames, the river bank and floodplain across to the enclosing south - western river cliff/terrace, creating a long linear character area (Figure 4).

The topography of the flood plain is flat (around 30m AOD). The western river cliff and terraces rise steeply from around 35m AOD up to around 50m AOD at Shiplake College and then further south beyond The Warren woodland to over 60m AOD (Figure 5).

PCLA1 falls within one area, with the River Thames linking broad areas of floodplain with narrow sections enclosed by the western river cliff and terraces.

PLCA1 is bordered by the River Thames along its central line (parish boundary); the PCLA3 Shiplake semi-enclosed Dipslopes and Lower Shiplake along its north-eastern boundary and then the PCLA4 Shiplake open Dipslopes further to the south (Figure 1).

PLCA1 includes the western half of the River Thames channel, as well as a number of well wooded small islands. The low-lying floodplain is largely pastoral although further to the south these once water meadows are now sports fields forming part of Shiplake College. Other small areas on the floodplain are residential including large properties within designed landscapes of parkland and garden. The western river cliff and terraces is characterized by woodland on the steeper slopes and parkland, pasture and arable land on the gentler slopes and terraces.

Landscape types within PLCA1 (Figure 2)

PLCA1 River Thames Meadows and Terraces lies mainly within the Flat Flood Plain Pasture LCT5 landscape character types of the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017. In addition, PCLA1 also includes the eastern part of the Parkland and Estate

Farmland LCT 15 and a small sliver of Semi-enclosed Dipslopes LCT16. The key characteristics of these three landscape types within the Thames Valley and Fringes Landscape Character Area are set out in para 4.4 and 4.5 of this Report.

Historic landscape character types within PLCA1 (Figure 3)

PLCA1 contains the following historic landscape character types as defined by the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation 2017:

- Bolney Court is classified as ‘ornamental-parkland / designed landscape’;
- River Thames is classified as ‘water-fresh waterbody’;
- The western banks from Bolney Court down to Lash Brook is classified as rural village;
- The playing fields south of Shiplake College are classified as ‘enclosed meadow’;
- The main part of the floodplain is ‘reorganised and planned enclosures’.

Historically by the late 18th century, the majority of PCLA1 fell within the ‘unenclosed rough ground’ adjacent the River Thames, with areas on the periphery of Lower Shiplake classified as part of the ‘open field system’. Bolney Court is classified as ‘ornamental parkland / designed landscape’, with the existing mansion built in the mid 1800’s on the site of the demolished manor; the surrounding landscape at this date is shown to have individual and clusters of trees suggesting a more designed parkland character.

Shiplake House, a typical Thames riverside house, was built in the late 1800’s with lodges marking entrances from the Henley Road and Mill Lane. The land between these lodges and the house (as shown on maps from the 1800’s) have a higher density of individual trees suggesting a more designed parkland character; some of these trees still survive in the modern-day landscape, with a higher concentration within the Shiplake College grounds.

Key Valued Landscape Characteristics specific to the River Thames Meadows and Terraces to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 6)

Natural

- Meandering river with wooded islands with no development. River islands with names: Ferry Eyot, Poplar Eyot, Handbuck Eyot;
- Irregular river banks with intermittent groups of trees and riverside riparian vegetation;
- Open undeveloped flat flood plain with pasture and intermittent hedgerows and post and wire marking field boundaries;
- Linear fields of pasture, parkland and woodlands on higher ground of the river cliffs and terraces;
- Large expanse of grass sports pitches to the south of Shiplake College with rugby goal ends visible;
- River cliff and terraces further characterized with dry valleys cutting through;
- Woodlands on the river cliff and terraces - The Warren;
- Natural meandering tributaries i.e., Lash Brook and the watercourse coming down from Hampstead Bottom;
- Flood plain area prone to flooding with manmade drainage channels straight or slightly curved on floodplain. Evidence of seasonally wet areas;
- Continuous robust woodland belt on eastern edge of Lower Shiplake, including linear woodlands on the eastern side of Mill Road;

- North side of Mill Lane small field/ allotment patches including old orchard enclosed by mature robust hedgerow;
- Mature trees remnants of designed landscapes associated with larger properties i.e. Shiplake House and Bolney Court.

Cultural

- Contained clusters of riverside development with properties set back from river with long rear gardens off Mill Lane and properties to the south of Bolney Court adjacent river with gardens to front;
- Building style influenced by flood history with buildings set on low stilts and walls with open gaps to allow flow of flood water;
- No pavements or footways along roads;
- Lack of intrusive urbanising detracting features;
- No street lighting;
- Listed buildings and their settings at Shiplake College, Shiplake House and the White House at Bolney Court;
- Large expanse of Shiplake College playing fields on flood plain;
- The open white stucco façade of Shiplake House contrasts with its mature gardens, which also frames the view of the house as seen from the River Thames, typical of River Thames residences;
- Limited vehicle access to PCLA1 with the narrow Mill Lane terminating at the railway line;
- Railway line contained within wooded embankment and cuttings;
- Simple single lane bridges over Lash Brook to Andrew Duncan House;
- Large river side residences (Bolney Court) set within designed gardens and parkland, characterized by mature trees and large open grass expanses down to River Thames;
- Tow Path along western river bank - except at northern end where there is no public access to the River Thames from Bolney Court down to Lash Brook;
- Tight cluster of buildings at Andrew Duncan House (originally farm buildings) set in open floodplain;
- Shiplake Lock and associated weirs spread out connecting a number of islands;
- This section of the river featured in 'Three men in a boat' by Jerome K. 1889. Location for Wargrave and Shiplake Regatta every year.

Perceptual

- Low inter visibility with PCLA3 and PCLA4. PCLA1 is contained to the west by the river cliff and terraces;
- Contrasting open river landscape character compared to adjacent semi enclosed landscape character of Lower Shiplake and PCLA3;
- Alignment of river demarcated within the landscape by riverside vegetation, often hidden;
- Meandering river provides seclusion and a series of screened and intimate locations;
- South of Shiplake College, due to lack of development on the western side of the River Thames this contributes to a peaceful intimate where there is no traffic noise or visual detractors. The adjacent wooded islands The Lynch and Hallsmaed Ait further provide enclosure and a strong sense of isolation within this unspoilt rural landscape;
- Long views down the River Thames.

Key Valued Visual Characteristics specific to the River Thames Meadows and Terraces to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 7)

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- River Thames and eastern side of river including Wargrave;
- Railway line;
- Shiplake College grounds;
- Views from Mill Road across Lash Brook to open flood plain.

Key views out of the area to:

- Development on the island at Shiplake Lock;
- The wooded and undeveloped River Thames islands - Hallsmead Ait and The Lynch;
- Wargrave and Wargrave Manor and the properties on the eastern bank of the River Thames;
- Down the River Thames;
- Shiplake College buildings and grounds.

Key views within the area:

- Across the open flood plain to the river cliffs and terraces on the western side including the woodland 'The Warren' the arable landscape at Hampstead Bottom and the pasture fields east of Shiplake House;
- Views from the Public Rights of Way and Tow Path across the open flood plain and Shiplake College sports fields;
- The wooded embankments of the railway line, viewed as a strong landscape feature on the open floodplain;
- The viaduct across the River Thames;
- The wooded edge of Lower Shiplake, including the woodland south of Mill Lane;
- Shiplake College and Shiplake House;
- Lash Brook in the foreground of the undeveloped pasture fields of the flood plain;
- Properties along Mill Lane from the Tow path.

Contribution to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements

PCLA1 makes a major contribution to the riparian character of the eastern edge of the built-up area of Lower Shiplake, with its open meadows, Lash Brook, and tree enclosed railway line.

Summary

PCLA1 is a necklace of landscape types connected by the River Thames which include flat open areas of floodplain under pasture, wooded river cliffs and terraces and remnant parkland associated with river side residences taking advantage of higher ground and views. This is in contrast with the more gently undulating open arable landscape of the open Dipslopes to the west (PCLA4) and the semi enclosed rural landscape character of PCLA3. The river cliffs and terraces along the western edge of PCLA1 also act as a transition in the topography and landscape pattern to PCLA3 Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes.

PCLA1 contains landscape features as found within other landscape character areas adjacent the River Thames within the Chilterns AONB; these include a mainly undeveloped open flat floodplain, characterised by fields of pasture and drainage ditches with riparian vegetation.

Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017

- Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture;
- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges;
- Promote the conservation and restoration the pastoral character of existing parklands;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area;
- Help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows.

Land Management guidance specific to River Thames Meadows and Terraces

- Conserve and retain the eastern wooded edge to Lower Shiplake;
- Retain the small-scale pasture fields, woodland and parkland character of the undeveloped river cliffs and terraces;
- Conserve and further enhance the parkland character and mature trees around and associated with Shiplake House and Bolney Court;
- Retain, restore and improve the hedgerow boundaries to fields on the open floodplain;
- Manage and retain existing woodlands;
- Retain the natural alignment of Lash Brook and associated riparian character;
- Retain the natural alignment of Hampstead Bottom tributary;
- Retain and improve the wooded character of the embankments of the railway line. Link to adjacent woodlands;
- Maintain and manage the wooded character of river islands.

Development guidance specific to River Thames Meadows and Terraces

- Conserve the largely development free large scale open floodplain;
- Conserve and enhance the semi-rural character of the area around Mill Lane and Mill Road; Avoid overdevelopment of each residential site. Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanize this area;
- Maintain the undeveloped wooded character of the river islands;
- Retain and improve access to the River Thames including the Tow path adjacent the river through rear gardens;
- Avoid the expansion of the domestic curtilage of Andrew Duncan House and improve the boundary edge treatment to the wider floodplain;

- Avoid urbanizing of residential entrances and garden boundaries in particular along Mill Lane and Mill Road.

Visual guidance specific to River Thames Meadows and Terraces





- Maintain the open rural views of the River Thames corridor from the edge of the river cliff and terraces, in particular from Shiplake College;
- Maintain the visual separation of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross. Avoid any development that would detract from the semi-rural character of views from the River Thames Meadow and Terraces to PLCA3. In particular avoid development that would introduce inappropriate development in the terrace skyline;
- Retain the sense of visual enclosure by the undeveloped wooded river cliffs and terraces;
- Retain the character and appearance of the scenic views down the River Thames;
- Maintain the visual separation of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross.

Valued landscape

PLCA1 River Thames Meadows and Terraces is regarded as a valued landscape for a number of reasons as set out below:

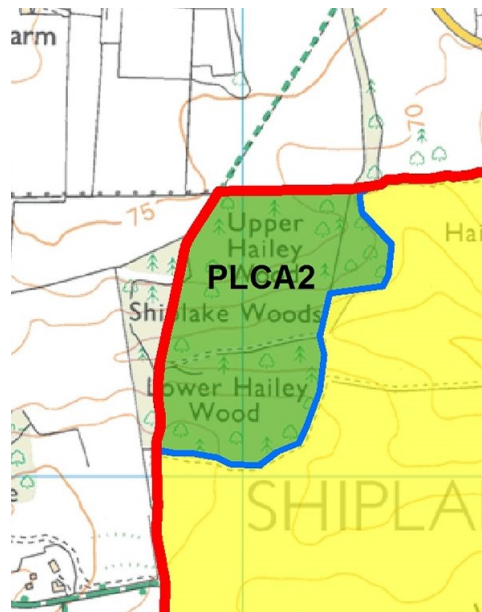
- It makes an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB;
- It makes an important contribution to the landscape setting of the River Thames;
- It contains many landscape features of value in their right - as set out above; and
- It is set well above an 'ordinary' countryside.

PLCA1: River Thames Meadows and Terraces Photographs

	
<p>Photo 1. Mature trees part of the designed parkland of Shiplake House on the edge of the River Thames (not visible)</p>	<p>Photo 2. Framed view of one of the Lodge houses to Shiplake House across and on the edge of the floodplain</p>
	
<p>Photo 3. View across the floodplain to Wargrave Manor visible to the left and a lower waterside residence to the right. The River Thames (not visible) is located on the transition between the pasture and trees</p>	<p>Photo 4. Close view across the floodplain to the wooded embankment of the railway line and tunnel to the right of the photograph</p>
	
<p>Photo 5. View across the playing fields of Shiplake College to the alignment of the River Thames demarcated within the landscape by riverside vegetation</p>	<p>Photo 6. View across the playing fields of Shiplake College to the wooded river cliff containing the woodland known as The Warren and an area of arable fields beyond</p>

PLCA2: Shiplake Woods (including Upper Hailey Woods and Lower Hailey Woods)

Character area map:



PLCA2: Landscape Character Area Description

PLCA2 comprises about 80% of an area of woodland which includes Upper Hailey Wood and Lower Hailey Wood, collectively known as Shiplake Woods, located on the middle Chiltern Dipslopes within the Chilterns AONB. The wood has an unspoilt rural landscape character (Figure 4).

The topography of the woodland forms a section of a shallow dry 'V' shaped valley descending from 75m AOD (from the north-western corner) south down to around 60m AOD (base of dry valley) before climbing again up to around 70m AOD along the southern edge. This dry valley then continues in a westward direction further into the Chilterns AONB and to the east into PLCA4 (Figure 5).

PLCA2 is bordered by PLCA4 Shiplake Cross Open Dipslopes to the east and south and the parish boundary to the west and north (Figure 1).

The woodland is mix woodland with around 6 different compartments of varying tree species, age and structure. The central area is mainly commercial forestry with species including softwoods, with hardwoods (oak, ash etc.) located on the periphery and in particular within the bulge on the north-eastern section.

Landscape types within PLCA2 (Figure 2)

PLCA2 Shiplake Woods lies within the Wooded dipslope landscape character type LCT23 of the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017. This character type includes both woodlands and the land in between. The key characteristics of this landscape type are detailed within the Chilterns Plateau with Valleys Landscape Character Area as set out in para 4.4 and 4.5 of this Report.

Historic landscape character types within PLCA2 (Figure 3)

PLCA2 contains the following historic landscape character type as defined by the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation 2017:

- Woodland

Shiplake Woods can be separated into three areas, Upper Hailey Wood (which is designated as Ancient Woodland), a middle section (unclassified) and the lower section known as Lower Hailey Wood, also designated as Ancient Woodland.

Historically in the mid 1800's until the early 1900's the northern part of Upper Hailey Wood is shown as 'ancient enclosure', however by the end of the WWI, this area is also shown as woodland.

Key Valued Landscape Characteristics specific to Shiplake Woods to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 6)

Natural

- Shallow small scale dry valley;
- Woodland including a mix of broadleaf and non-native pines;
- Irregular eastern woodland edge;
- No watercourses;
- Characteristic bluebell cover in spring.

Cultural

- Public Right of Way along the parish boundary and western edge;
- Permissive footpaths throughout and along eastern edge;
- Ancient boundary feature along northern side of Lower Hailey Wood and southern end of Upper Hailey Wood;
- Redundant chalk pits on northern edge and south-western edge;
- Includes two Ancient Woodlands - Upper Hailey Woods and Lower Hailey Woods.

Perceptual

- Prominent woodland on skyline as seen from Memorial Avenue and Shiplake Cross;
- Lack of visual detractors;
- Quiet area with no significant traffic noise;
- Dry valley provides enclosure and secrecy within the wood;
- Low intervisibility across area;
- Popular and well used woodlands for informal recreation.

Key Valued Visual Characteristics specific to Shiplake Woods to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 7)

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Memorial Avenue and properties along northern edge of Shiplake Cross. The woodland provides a skyline feature;
- Public Right of Way along western parish boundary;
- Permissive footpaths along eastern boundary.

Key views out of the area to:

- Northern edge of Shiplake Cross to trees, hedgerows and housing adjacent Memorial Avenue;
- Tree and hedged lined Plough Lane;
- Hailey Wood House and Haileywood Farm;
- Western edge of Lower Shiplake is screened by vegetation at present but more visible in winter;
- A tree line along the skyline on the northern parish boundary.

Key views within the area:

- Permissive footpaths and Public Right of Way throughout wood provide views of the wood.

Contribution to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements

The open landscape above Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake forms the undeveloped setting for Shiplake Woods along its eastern edge. The woods are visible from the edge of Shiplake Cross (Memorial Avenue) and provide a strong visual link from this area to the Chilterns AONB.

Summary

PCLA2 Woodlands is a landscape feature typical of the Chilterns AONB, containing two areas of Ancient woodland.

Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017

- There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands distributed throughout the landscape type and the priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash.

Land Management guidance specific to Shiplake Woods

- Manage woodland as above;
- Retain dry valley landform;
- Maintain eastern irregular edge of woodland, avoiding new straight woodland boundaries;
- Identify historic woodland field boundaries within wood, protect and maintain as links to the past.

Development guidance specific to Shiplake Woods

- Resist any built features or development including modern boundary treatments (fences etc.) and vehicular access tracks;
- Maintain permissive footpaths links to Shiplake Cross and the wider Chilterns AONB.

Visual guidance specific to Shiplake Woods




- Maintain irregular eastern edge of woodland;
- Maintain open rural setting to the woods;
- Maintain open rural views to screened Lower Shiplake and beyond to the hills above Wargrave.

Valued landscape

PLCA2 Shiplake Woods is regarded as a valued landscape for a number of reasons as set out below:

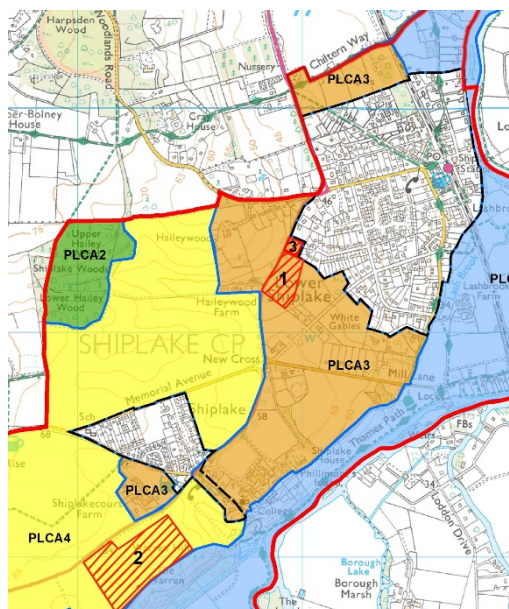
- It is within the Chilterns AONB, a landscape of the highest value; and
- It is a landscape feature of value in its right - as set out above.

PLCA2: Shiplake Woods Photographs

	
<p>Photo 1. Irregular edge characterizes Shiplake Woodlands with permissive footpath along adjacent field</p>	<p>Photo 2. Looking out from Shiplake Woods, the dry valley continues down towards Lower Shiplake</p>
	
<p>Photo 3. View across to the edge of Shiplake Cross</p>	

PLCA3: Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes

Character area map:



PLCA3: Landscape Character Area Description

PLCA3 comprises the land on the lower slopes of the Chiltern dipslopes that fall southwards and eastwards down to the Thames River Valley (Figure 4).

The topography is gently undulating falling west to east from highest points at 70m AOD south of Woodlands Road to the lowest points 35m AOD north of Lower Shiplake at Kilnpits. A shallow dry valley runs across PLCA3 west to east from the Shiplake Woods (PLCA2) through Haileywood Farm into Lower Shiplake. This creates local spurs of slightly higher ground at Haileywood and east of Shiplake Cross (Figure 5).

PLCA3 is bordered by Lower Shiplake to the north-east; the River Thames Meadow and Terraces to the east and south-east (PLCA1); and Shiplake Cross and the Shiplake open dipslopes to the west and south-west (PLCA4) (Figure 1).

PLCA3 falls within three areas. The main part (together with part of PLCA4) separates the two settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross. A further small area lies to the west of Shiplake Cross and includes Shiplake Farm and the land between this farm and Shiplake Cross. A third area lies to the north of Lower Shiplake between the railway line and the A4155 Henley Road. These three areas share key landscape characteristics as set out below.

PLCA3 forms the small scale largely pastoral and arable, well treed setting to Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross. The open tree lined green which forms the frontage to Shiplake College and the Lodge create a distinctive setting to Shiplake Cross with the sense of rural character enhanced by the open fields to the north within PLCA4. The interface between PLCA3 and Lower Shiplake is well defined by dense mature tree and hedgerow lines on the edge of the built-up area. Large houses with large grounds in the

Mill Road/Mill Lane/New Road area blend into this small scale semi-enclosed landscape, in contrast with the built-up area to the north.

Landscape types within PLCA3 (Figure 2)

PLCA3 Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes lies mainly within the semi-enclosed dipslopes landscape character type LCT16 of the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017. LCT16 includes both settlements and the land in between. In addition, PLCA3 includes the northern part of an area of parkland and estate farmland LCT 15 north-east of Shiplake College (see Figure 2). The key characteristics of these two landscape types within the Thames Valley and Fringes Landscape Character Area are set out in para 4.4 and 4.5 of this Report.

Historic landscape character types within PLCA3 (Figure 3)

PLCA3 contains the following historic landscape character types as defined by the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation 2017:

- A substantial part lies within ‘reorganised enclosures’;
- Parts lie within the early 21st century ‘rural village’ to south of Lower Shiplake, north and south of Woodland Road, with ‘rural farmstead’ (formerly ‘ancient enclosure’) at the former Wyevale Nursery and ‘rural hamlet’ at Shiplake College (as do Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross);
- Open land north and east of the College lies within ‘recreational - sports facilities’; and
- A small pocket between Shiplake Farm (rural village) and Plough Lane is ‘recreational - other leisure facilities’ (unspecified).

Historically by the late 18th century, the majority of PLCA3 fell within the open field system (which included the extent of the two settlements), with an area of Ancient enclosure around Haileywood. Today this is classified as reorganised enclosures. Shiplake College was partly a ‘rural village’ and partly ‘unenclosed rough ground’. By the late 19th century parts of Lower Shiplake formed a ‘rural village’ with ‘piecemeal enclosure’ and ‘planned enclosure’ over the open land.

Key Valued Landscape Characteristics specific to the Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 6)

Natural

- Lower Chilterns dipslope topography with undulations and local shallow dry valleys and higher spurs contributing to the transition from the higher Chilterns dipslopes down to the valley floor;
- Mainly small-scale fields with some medium sized fields creating a distinctive settlement edge landscape;
- Fields mainly under pasture close to settlement with arable fields beyond;
- Fields contained a strong structure of hedgerows;
- Mature hedgerows and tree belts separate the field pattern from the current built up area;
- Mature native and mixed tree lines line the road network and extend into gardens;
- Small tree groups and copses mainly closely associated with large private grounds;
- Shiplake College ‘green’ to college frontage;
- A dry landscape with an absence of watercourses and other wetland features;
- Avenue of mature trees along Bolney Lane;

- Chilterns Way PRoW framed by mature trees and patchwork of open grassland;
 - Continuity of open grassland landscape with Harpsden Parish north of Bolney Lane.
- Cultural
- Very low-density housing in large mature grounds with mature tree and hedgerow boundaries off New Road, Mill Lane, Mill Road and south of Woodlands Road;
 - Busy single carriageway A road of a rural character;
 - Lack of pavements or footways;
 - No street lighting;
 - Parkland character to prominent mixed species mature tree covered grounds south of Haileywood;
 - Large farmstead with houses, barns and hardstandings in mixed uses at Haileywood Farm set down into valley;
 - Large farmstead at Shiplake Farm set within open fields;
 - Minor narrow roads radiating away from Lower Shiplake with grass verges, and hedgerows;
 - Post 1960 very low-density ribbon development along Woodlands Road;
 - Small scale residential and sports facilities development associated with Shiplake College;
 - Open grassed Shiplake College playing fields;
 - Listed buildings and their settings at Shiplake College;
 - Parkland and estate farmland character of the land between Shiplake House and Mill Lane (as defined by the HLC and SODC LCA) including the tree and hedgerow lined former eastern approach to the Shiplake College; and the wooded setting to the Lodge;
 - Grade II listed Shiplake War Memorial a local landmark;
 - Private recreational and sports grounds at Shiplake College.

Perceptual

- Prominent mature tree lines;
- Mature hedgerows and tree lines provide layers of vegetation cover restricting views through the area;
- Sense of enclosure between mature tree lines or hedgerows and of a settled intimate landscape;
- Busy road of rural character linking Caversham/Sonning with Henley;
- Dark skies away from settlement;
- Lack of visual detractors: no pylons, industrial premises or urbanising buildings;
- Chilterns Way public right of way and promoted trail runs along the northern boundary with Bolney Lane.

Key Valued Visual Characteristics specific to the Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 7)

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- The higher ground to the west (including the permissive footpath along the edge of the AONB) across to the western tree lined edge of PLCA3;
- The Henley Road to the open fields between Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and from the minor roads across PLCA3 to open fields and large grounds;
- The Thames River corridor to the wooded terrace ridge along the eastern boundary of PLCA3;

- The Henley Road approach from the west to the Shiplake Farm and surrounding fields.

Key views out of the area to:

- Memorial Avenue and the open fields to the west of PLCA3;
- The open meadows south of Shiplake College from the elevated terrace edge at the College;
- South-eastwards from Shiplake College over the Thames River corridor to the hillsides to the east above Wargrave.

Key views within the area:

- To the mixed species tree cover on the higher ground south of Haileywood from several locations;
- Views of Shiplake College historic buildings and their landscape setting;
- To the woodland and Lodge from Mill Lane;
- Down the tree lined routes including in particular Woodland Road, the Chiltern Way, and Henley Road.

Contribution to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements

PLCA3 is predominantly an area of open countryside but includes the open grounds to Shiplake College and large individual houses in large grounds. Shiplake College is more built up than elsewhere (and is included in the Historic Landscape Character Assessment as part of the rural village) but its character of school buildings, set within their grounds, is clearly different to that of the main small villages. The houses within the Mill Road/Mill Lane/New Road area are of a very low density and the character and appearance of this area is more rural than suburban, retaining an overall semi-rural character to this part of PLCA3, in contrast with the settlement to the north.

The small area including the farmstead and adjacent pasture of PLCA3 at Shiplake Farm retains its rural character despite the proximity of Shiplake Cross, contributing to the rural setting and main approach to Shiplake Cross. The openness of this parcel of land contributes to the rural setting, typical of the AONB, albeit views from the AONB are limited by tree cover and some development. Evidence shows that the field was always agricultural and that the field was not used for recreation (as suggested by the Oxfordshire HLC). There is no intervisibility with the Thames but the area is an integral part of the pastoral village setting of the Thames valley.

The undeveloped small pasture area of PLCA3 north of Lower Shiplake is part of the open landscape separating Lower Shiplake from Henley with a high level of intervisibility with the open landscape around Lower Bolney Farm and Sheephouse Farm to the north. Historically the area was typical of the pattern of small to medium sized fields north of Lower Shiplake. These have been eroded through the approval of large housing schemes in the adjoining Parish west of Henley Road at Thames Farm and the old nursery. These have undermined the rural character and appearance of the northern part of Shiplake Parish to the detriment of the inter-connectivity between the AONB and the Thames floodplain linked by the remnant parts of the semi-enclosed dipslope landscapes. The area is typical of the semi-dipslope landscape which extends northwards into the Parish of Harpsden and into the AONB. There is no intervisibility with the AONB or River Thames but it forms an important part of the open landscape with mature trees and hedgerows

forming the setting to the AONB and Thames floodplain, with limited intervisibility with Lower Shiplake. Therefore, in addition to contributing to the landscape separation of these two settlements, this area also contributes to the rural main approach to the village from Henley to the north.

Neither of the above areas are isolated pockets of PLCA3. As can be seen in the SODC LCA semi-enclosed dipslopes extended northwards and extended into the land on which Shiplake Cross now stands, up into the AONB.

PLCA3 is distinguished by its role in wrapping around the two settlements and Shiplake College retaining a distinct pastoral and domestic landscape setting to these villages. The landscape strongly contrasts with the adjoining settlement built form, even where there is very low density development as off Mill Lane. These are also clearly separated from the built-up areas by the mature boundaries which reflect the historic pattern of tree lines in the area. They ensure that Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross retain their distinct settlement pattern and 360° rural setting. The fields closest to the villages retain strong connectivity, both visually and physically with their rural neighbours, whilst the openness of the pastoral fields contribute equally to the rural character as the mature tree and hedgerow boundaries.

Summary

PLCA3 is a small-scale landscape with a mix of small to medium sized fields under pasture and arable farmland and the extensive grounds to Shiplake College and semi-rural individual houses, with heavy tree and mature hedgerow cover. This is in contrast with the more compact suburban areas of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake. The area also contrasts with the open arable landscapes of the Open Dipslopes to the west (PLCA4) and the open meadows of the River Thames Meadow and Terraces (PLCA1). The terraces on the western edge of PLCA1 act as a transition in the topography and landscape pattern from PLCA1 to PLCA3.

The overall semi-enclosed dipslope character of PLCA3 is extensive throughout the Chilterns AONB (see SODC LCA), although little of this landscape type is found along the Thames Valley and Fringes outside Shiplake Parish. As such it represents a rare example of where this AONB landscape type extends down into the Thames Valley and creates a pastoral, rather than wooded setting, to the river landscape.

Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017

- Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture;
- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges;
- Promote the conservation and restoration the pastoral character of existing parklands;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area;
- help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements;

- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows.

Land Management guidance specific to Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes

- Conserve the pattern of small-scale area of pasture around the settlement edges and between the lower density housing areas;
- Retain mature hedgerow boundaries to these and the slightly larger arable fields;
- Conserve and enhance the tree and woodland cover throughout the area, especially along the road network, within gardens and within the grounds of Shiplake College and the Lodge on Mill Lane;
- Planting in open countryside and on the boundary with the settlements and private grounds should be of native species to enhance the rural character;
- Conserve and enhance the surviving parkland and estate farmland character including the tree and hedgerow lined former eastern approach to the Shiplake College; the wooded setting to the Lodge.

Development guidance specific to Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes

- Conserve and enhance the semi-rural character of the area around New Road/Mill Lane/Mill Road, including the pattern of large properties in large grounds with extensive tree cover and mature tree and hedgerow boundaries;
- Conserve and enhance the special character of Shiplake College, retaining its pattern of open grounds and tree cover, and conserving the well landscaped setting to the listed buildings;
- Conserve and enhance the wooded and tree covered character of the housing along Woodlands Road;
- Maintain the physical open countryside separation of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross (see also section 6);
- Maintain the rural character of the minor lanes and the Henley Road by retaining roadside tree lines, native hedgerows and grassed verges;
- Avoid features such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise the area;
- Provide substantive native tree and hedgerow buffers (through retention and new planting) between any approved expansion of either settlement and the wider landscape to screen the development and integrate the new settlement edge into its landscape setting;
- Redevelopment of any land in existing residential, agricultural or commercial use should maintain the current mass and scale of built form, protect the current very low-density pattern of built form and the dominance of open space and tree/hedgerow cover within the plots of land;
- Conserve the rural approach to Shiplake Cross from the west along the Henley Road by retaining the agricultural character of Shiplake Farm and its agricultural setting;
- Avoid any development around Shiplake Cross which would urbanise the rural setting of Shiplake College;
- Retain the pastoral character of the rural approach to Lower Shiplake from Henley.

Visual guidance specific to Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes

- Maintain the open views of the river Thames corridor from the edge of the river terraces, in particular from Shiplake College;
- Avoid any development within the area that would impinge of the rural character of the views from PLCA2 and 4 eastwards over PLCA3 to the river corridor and hillsides to the east. Special regard to be had to the views from the edge of the Chilterns AONB;
- Avoid any development that would detract from the semi-rural character of views from the River Thames Meadow and Terraces PLCA1 to PLCA3. In particular avoid development that would introduce inappropriate development in the terrace skyline;
- Retain the sense of visual enclosure created by mature tree lines and hedgerows;
- Maintain the visual separation of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross (see also section 6).

Valued landscape

PLCA3 Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes is regarded as a valued landscape for a number of reasons as set out below:

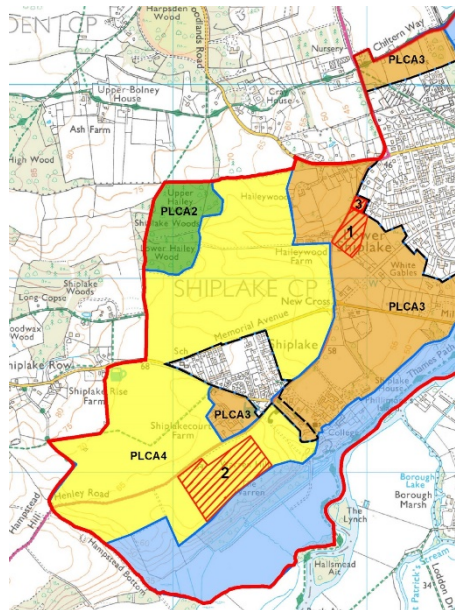
- It makes an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB. Semi-enclosed dipslopes are an integral part of the AONB and a key characteristic and special quality of the AONB, knitting together the open dipslopes with the wooded dipslopes of the southern plateau and slopes. PLCA3 links to the wider semi-enclosed dipslopes in the adjacent AONB Parishes. Visually it forms an important rural setting to the AONB;
- It makes an important contribution to the landscape setting of the River Thames providing a pastoral landscape with strong hedgerow and tree cover within which the riverside settled areas of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake College stand;
- It contains many landscape features of value in their right - as set out above; and
- It is well above an 'ordinary' countryside.

PLCA3: Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes Photographs

	
<p>Photo 1: View of Shiplake Farm to the west of Shiplake Cross from footpath to the west. The rural farm buildings in their agricultural setting mark the western approach to the village</p>	<p>Photo 2: One of a number of the large houses in substantial tree covered grounds in the open semi-rural area south of Lower Shiplake</p>
	
<p>Photo 3: View into one of the numerous small fields under arable or pasture between Lower Shiplake and Shiplake College</p>	<p>Photo 4: View from Henley Road looking east with the open tree lined green to the right which forms a distinctive frontage to Shiplake College and a local landmark</p>
	
<p>Photo 5: Paddocks to the north of Lower Shiplake and east of Henley Road forming the small fieldscape setting to the village</p>	<p>Photo 6: Tree lined lane which marks the northern edge of the Parish leading to the railway bridge</p>

PLCA4: Shiplake Open Dipslopes

Character area map:



PLCA4: Landscape Character Area Description

PLCA4 comprises land on the middle slopes of the Chiltern Dipslopes that fall southwards and eastwards down to the Thames River Valley (Figure 4).

The landform of the LCA Shiplake Open Dipslopes forms a gently undulating elevated plain, gradually rising between the contours of 60m AOD to around 70m AOD. Further to the north the landform becomes more rolling with a pronounced dry valley leading up from Lower Shiplake (around 50m AOD) to Shiplake Woods 65m AOD (located within the AONB). These small dry valleys are a feature of the adjacent Chilterns AONB (Figure 5).

PLCA4 is bordered to the east by PLCA3 Shiplake semi-enclosed Dipslopes and Shiplake Cross; to the south PLCA1 River Thames Meadows and Terraces; to the west the rising land at Shiplake Row and the edge of Shiplake Woods located within the Chiltern AONB; and to the north the parish boundary (Figure 1).

This character area comprises mainly medium sized arable fields with boundaries marked by post and barbed wire with the odd patch of scrub/remnant hedgerow. The roadsides and byways are more clearly defined with mature trees and managed hedgerows. Woodlands are not a feature of this PLCA. However, they form part of the boundaries and provide a sense of enclosure and separation from other adjacent PLCA's. A few small areas of scrub with small trees are found within the arable fields which are remnant features of previously landscapes.

This character area largely surrounds Shiplake Cross village. The settlement edge comprises the roads Memorial Avenue and Plough Lane, with semi-detached, detached properties and a farmstead all set within a degree of enclosure provided by a mix of mature trees and roadside hedgerows. On the north-eastern boundary, Shiplake Cross's settlement edge is near enough screened by a mature tree belt. These mature boundary trees play an important contribution to the setting and character of Shiplake Cross.

Landscape types within PLCA4 (Figure 2)

PLCA4 Shiplake Open Dipslopes lies within the Open Dip Slope and Semi Enclosed Dip Slope landscape character types of the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017. The key characteristics of these landscape types are set out in para 4.4 and 4.5.

Historic landscape character types within PLCA4 (Figure 3)

PLCA4 contains the following historic landscape character types as defined by the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterization 2017:

- The central open area lies within ‘prairie/amalgamated enclosure’;
- A smaller part south of the Henley Road leading down to The Warren lies within ‘re-organised enclosures’;
- An area between the Henley Road and the eastern edge of Shiplake Cross lies within ‘planned enclosure’; and
- A section from Shiplake Woods across to Haileywood House is classified as ‘ancient enclosure’.

Historically by the late 18th century, the area of PCLA4 fell roughly equally divided between the following:

- ‘Ancient enclosure’: a small area located to the east of Shiplake Woods and across to Lower Shiplake. A second area is located to the south of Plough Lane and then across to The Warren woodland;
- ‘Open field system’: Located to the south of Shiplake Woods to Shiplake Cross.

Key Valued Landscape Characteristics specific to the Shiplake Open Dipslopes to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 6)

Natural

- Gently undulating landform becoming more pronounced further to the north with a dry valley;
- Intensive arable cultivation with medium scale field pattern. Straight field boundaries;
- Weak hedgerow structure, and no woodland cover;
- In contrast with the open field character, the roadside vegetation along Plough Lane and Memorial Avenue creates semi enclosure with hedgerows and mature roadside trees. The trees along Plough Lane are particularly visible from the adjacent landscape;
- Mature tree cover and robust hedgerows along Kiln Lane (Bridleway) to Shiplake Woods;
- Two small triangular areas of scrub within the open arable fields to the south, originally part of a designed landscape to the east;
- Small woodland copse set in an arable field adjacent Haileywood House, originally part of more extensive landscaped grounds of Hailey House.

Cultural

- No buildings, except western end of the farmstead of Haileywood Farm which includes a particularly visible large scale modern agricultural shed;
- The settlement of Shiplake Cross is semi-visible with gable ends seen through the tree line boundary. The north-eastern edge of the village provides a more vegetated screened built edge;

- No obvious historic interest;
- Predominantly rural character with little intrusion from built up areas;
- A mix of open roads with cars visible across landscape, and semi enclosed tree lined avenues as shown with Plough Lane.

Perceptual

- Open elevated landscape, with long views from Warren Hill across the Thames Valley to the wooded horizons to the south and Wargrave;
- Open landscape contributes to the southern and northern rural setting of Shiplake Cross;
- Little inter-visibility with Lower Shiplake, enhancing the rural character;
- Good PRoW access, with additional permissive footpath network within the north around Hailey Wood;
- Forms part of the open undeveloped landscape between the villages.

Key Valued Visual Characteristics specific to the Shiplake Open Dipslopes to be conserved and enhanced (Figure 7)

Key views into the area are afforded from:

- Shiplake Woods (within the AONB);
- Shiplake Cross and Woodlands Road to the north.

Key views out of the area to:

- The settlement edge of Shiplake Cross across the open landscape;
- Shiplake Woods to the west and the woodland 'The Warren' to the south east;
- The west, the hedged fields and woodland copses on the eastern side of Shiplake Row and the wooded copses leading up to Binfield Heath;
- Long views across the Thames Valley to Wargrave and the distinctive and contrasting white stucco façade of Wargrave Manor with longer views to the wooded Bowsey Hill on the skyline;
- The south west the wooded edge of Shiplake Row and the wooded Bowsey Hill beyond;
- Views across to the east from Henley Road to the designed parkland and school grounds of Shiplake School.

Key views within the area:

- Across the open fields from various Public Rights of Way and permissive footpaths;
- Across to the semi enclosed Plough Lane and the open character of Henley Road with moving traffic;
- Across and down the dry valley to Haileywood Farm, with the well vegetated edge of Lower Shiplake forming the backdrop;
- Open and long views out from Henley Road due to lack of roadside hedgerows;
- Occasional views out to the north from Memorial Avenue due to intermittent hedgerow;
- Across to the slightly elevated northern edge of Shiplake Cross softened by layers of trees and the well managed hedgerow along Memorial Avenue.

Contribution to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements

- The open undeveloped landscape character maintains the separate identity of Shiplake Cross and Lower Shiplake. The open landscape character also provides a setting for Shiplake Woods and allows visibility from Shiplake Cross across to the Chilterns AONB;
- Memorial Avenue and Plough Lane clearly define the northern and south-western settlement edge of Shiplake Cross;
- On the Henley Road, the southern and northern settlement edge of Shiplake Cross forms an important gateway approach to the village;
- Plough Lane provides a rural approach to Shiplake Cross from the west;
- Memorial Avenue provides a rural approach to Shiplake Cross from the east.

Summary

PLCA4 forms part of the open farmed plateau above the Thames valley river cliff and below the wooded Chilterns to the north-west. However due to its proximity to Shiplake Cross it is partly influenced by the settlement edge due to the semi exposed character of the village.

The key features of PLCA4 are as follows: A strong rural character with limited views of the settlement edge of Shiplake Cross and limited views of the buildings within Lower Shiplake; a sense of elevation with long views to the east and south east and across the Thames River valley to the wooded Bowsey Hill; open rural settings of the farmsteads Shiplake Farm and Haileywood Farm; and the open rural approach to Shiplake Cross along the Henley Road, Memorial Avenue and Plough Lane. This is an open landscape with strong visual and landscape links to the adjacent Chilterns AONB, with Shiplake Woods (located within the AONB) visually prominent throughout the northern section. Within the adjacent area of the Chilterns AONB, the landform of dry valleys and open slopes (typical of the AONB) continue within this PLCA4.

Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017

- Promote arable conversion to grassland;
- Promote environmentally sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type (see Oxfordshire Design Guide);
- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements, and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development and that are appropriate to Thames Valley and Fringes (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, November 2016).

Land Management guidance specific to Shiplake Open Dipslopes

- Maintain the rural character of Memorial Avenue and Plough Lane by retaining roadside tree lines, native hedgerows and grassed verges;
- Improve field boundaries with management and the replanting of hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- Enhance isolated woodland with new planting and further link to adjacent hedgerow network.

Development guidance specific to Shiplake Open Dipslopes

- Maintain the physical open countryside separation of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross (see also section 6);
- Conserve the rural approach to Shiplake Cross from the west along the Henley Road by retaining the agricultural character of Shiplake Farm and its agricultural setting;
- Avoid any development around Shiplake Cross which would urbanise the rural setting of Shiplake College and Henley Road;
- Avoid features such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise the area.

Visual guidance specific to Shiplake Open Dipslopes







- Conserve the open long views across the Thames valley to Wargrave and Bowsey Hill;
- Maintain the open uninterrupted views to local woodlands: Shiplake Woods (within the Chilterns AONB) and The Warren;
- Maintain the contrast of open undeveloped landscape to developed village as gateways to Shiplake Cross;
- Maintain the undeveloped open rural settings to the farmsteads Shiplake Farm and Haileywood Farm.

Valued landscape

PLCA4 Shiplake Open Dipslopes is regarded as a valued landscape for a number of reasons as set out below:

- It makes an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB;
- It makes an important contribution to the landscape setting of the Thames Valley allowing views from the Study Area to the eastern hillside above the valley;
- It contains many landscape features of value in their right - as set out above; and
- It is set well above an 'ordinary' countryside on the basis of its integration with the AONB and the adjoining PLCA3 and PLCA4.

PLCA4: Shiplake Open Dipslopes Photographs

	
<p>Photo 1: View from a Public Right of Way across the open arable landscape to the south-western edge of Shiplake Cross, with the wooded Bowsey Hill on the horizon. Field boundaries are poorly formed, although there are some small trees. Gable ends are visible on the settlement edge imbedded within a mature tree boundary</p>	<p>Photo 2: View from Public Right of Way at junction with Plough Lane. Plough Lane to the left forms a prominent feature within this open landscape with its mature trees and managed native hedgerow</p>
	
<p>Photo 3: Good network of footpaths, with links out of Shiplake Cross to adjacent landscape. The Warren (woodland) is visible on the horizon</p>	<p>Photo 4: Long views across the elevated arable landscape to the wooded character of the eastern landscape of the Thames valley, with cars visible on the Henley Road in the foreground</p>
	
<p>Photo 5: Shiplake Woods visible within the northern section of PCLA4 (located within the Chilterns AONB) provides a prominent boundary feature. A dry valley continues across PCLA4 from the adjacent AONB</p>	<p>Photo 6: Haileywood Farm visible and Haileywood house (on horizon to the left) partially visible on the western edge of Lower Shiplake. Bowsey Hill visible across Thames river valley on the horizon</p>

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEPARATION OF SETTLEMENTS

Function of the separation of settlements

6.1 The open landscapes serve the following functions:

1. To maintain the open rural landscape character between the settlements;
2. To prevent the loss of the distinctive and separate character and identity of the settlements;
3. To avoid incremental extensions to either village which would erode their separate character and identity;
4. To contribute to conserving the historic open landscape setting to the listed buildings at Shiplake College;
5. To protect the surviving area of Ancient Enclosure east of Haileywood (see Figure 3);
6. To protect the setting of the Chilterns AONB, the River Thames and the Ancient Semi-natural woodland;
7. To strengthen the clear distinction between the settlements by conserving and enhancing the tree and mature hedgerow cover to the outer edges of and between the settlements;
8. To conserve the openness of the landscape within PLCA4, allowing for the improvement to hedgerows as recommended in Section 5;
9. To contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the open landscape links between the River Thames and the Chilterns Hills;
10. To conserve and enhance the sense of continuity of character of PLCA1 with the wider River Thames Meadows and Terrace landscape;
11. To conserve the lack of intervisibility between the built form of the settlements; and
12. To retain well defined boundaries on the ground.

6.2 The distinctive character of the two villages is experienced in transition passing along the road network: Henley Road, Mill Road, Mill Lane and New Road. It is also appreciated in views from the edge of the Chilterns AONB, the public rights of way and permissive path network within the area. Currently there is no intervisibility between properties on the edge of both settlements due mainly to intervening vegetation with some benefits from the local landform, which enhances the perception of separation.

6.3 The prevailing built form character is sub-urban, and rural outside of the main two villages and there is a total absence of urban form and any visual detractors such as pylons, services and other such urban fringe uses or features. This absence makes a positive contribution to the rural character and appearance of the area.

6.4 It is recognised that the area already includes some development - mainly north of Mill Lane. This is very low density and predominantly rural in character and it is important that the ration of built form to the very extensive open grounds with a high tree cover is not eroded through redevelopment.

- 6.5 The open countryside north of Lower Shiplake makes an important contribution to the character of the village, as experienced in approaching the village passing along the Henley Road and in views from the Chilterns Way.
- 6.6 Although this landscape contains some development such as the two new housing sites west of Henley Road (one of which is now under construction), the farm groups and Bremont site (now under construction), there is otherwise a strong rural character dominated by the River Thames floodplain and the lower rural slopes next to the AONB with an absence of visual detractors such as pylons, services and other such urban fringe uses or features. This absence makes a positive contribution to the rural character and appearance of the land north of Lower Shiplake.
- 6.7 Here the railway line is again well integrated into the landscape and does not impinge on the rural character of this area. Although the Henley Road carries heavy volumes of traffic at certain times of the day, it still retains its rural character, winding around the landform, with green verges, mature hedgerow and tree boundaries, no footways nor lighting.
- 6.8 West of Shiplake Cross the setting to the village extends westwards up to close to the AONB, reflecting the unity of this area, the links between the Chilterns AONB and the River Thames landscapes, and the extent of the setting of the AONB as described in section 5. The open landscape is appreciated approaching the village along Henley Road and the local footpath network and enables long views to the south. The Setting of the village is distinguished by its lack of built form, with the exception of the rural buildings at Shiplake Farm.

Effects of recent planning approvals

- 6.9 Recent approvals have been given within the northern, central and southern settings of the two villages within PLCA3. With the exception of the Shiplake College sports pitches these have been for residential uses of a much higher density than found in either village.
- 6.10 The land for Shiplake College's new sports pitches (shown as in Figure 1) was approved in 2019 (planning application P18/S2434/FUL). The new sports fields are to be grassed and the land landscaped with structures limited to goal posts and post and wire fencing. No floodlighting or buildings are proposed thus limiting the impact on the landscape.
- 6.11 The land for a major retirement facility (shown as in Figure 1) was approved in 2019. The site lies beyond the built-up area of Lower Shiplake and is an open field with a mature well treed boundary. It abuts the settlement edge for a very short section of the village and otherwise is surrounded on all four sides by open fields, creating a sense of isolation from the village. The proposed development on this site will extend the footprint of Lower Shiplake southwards leaving open fields

around it which are a distinctive part of the wider PLCA3 and also PLCA4 to the west. Despite the mature boundaries, the visibility of the site/development from the wider landscape shows the adverse impacts of development within the setting of the villages. The development of this field should not be used to justify further intrusion into the landscape which defines the villages.

- 6.12 The proposed development at the redundant Wyevale nursery is on a well-developed brownfield site and policy would in this case over-ride landscape concerns. Again, the development of this site should not be used to justify further intrusion into the landscape.
- 6.13 The Thames Farm development will result in a significant change to the character and approach to Lower Shiplake. This will erode the semi-enclosed dipslopes north of the Parish and create a much more urban character in this location. However, this development should be regarded as an exception where circumstances with housing supply over-rode landscape, character, the Joint Henley-Harpsden NP at the time and other objections.

Summary

- 6.14 The rural character of the landscapes which butt up to the villages (PLCA1, PLCA3 and PLCA4) seek to ensure the retention of the distinct rural intrinsic beauty and character of the open land around and between the villages.
- 6.15 There is clear riparian landscape continuity between these landscapes and the wider setting of woodland, small pastoral fields and the open agricultural landscape, forming an interlinked landscape of high value, intrinsic beauty and distinctive character, contributing to the setting of the AONB and that of a rural section of this River Thames.

PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER FIGURES 1 TO 7

SHIPLAKE PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE OPEN LAND TO THE SEPARATION OF THE SETTLEMENTS OF LOWER SHIPLAKE AND SHIPLAKE CROSS APRIL 2021

FIGURE 1

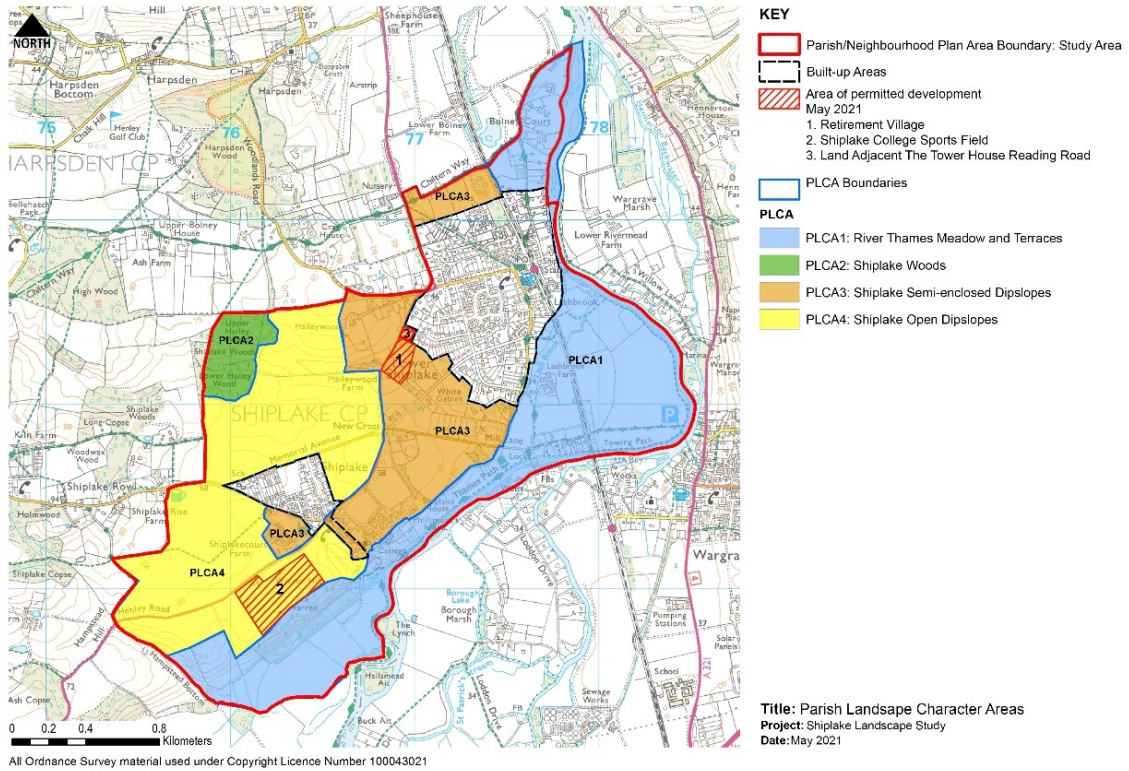


FIGURE 2

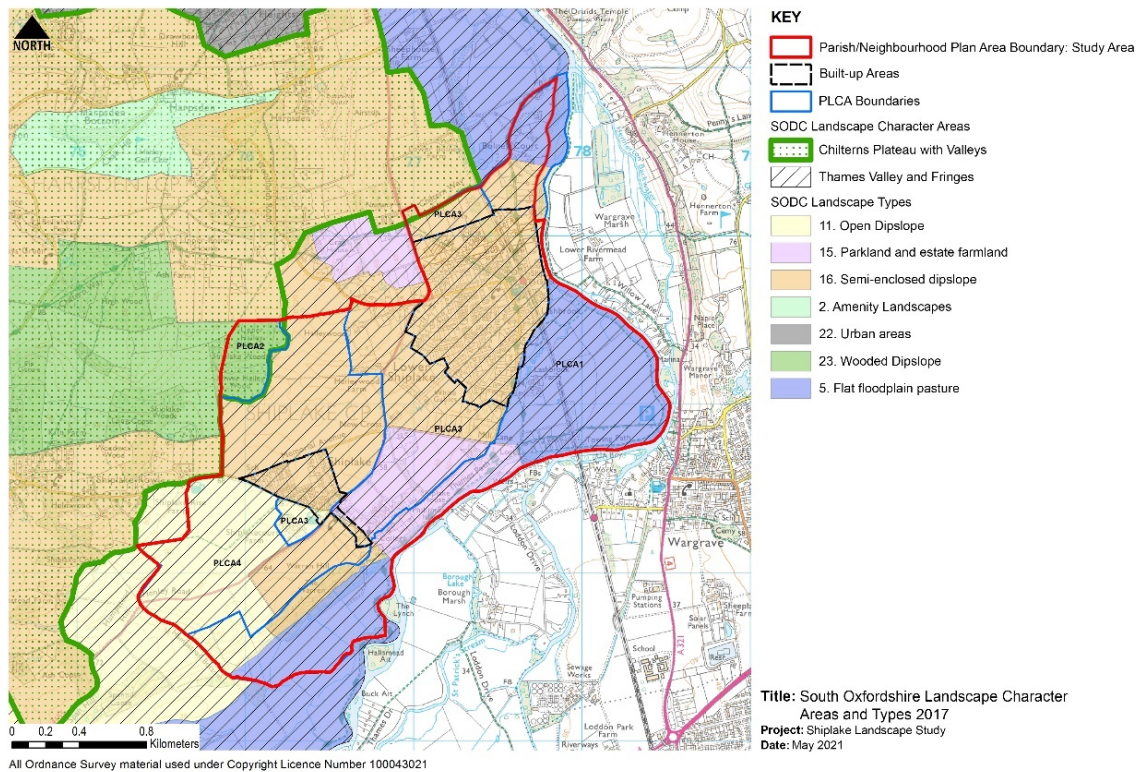


FIGURE 3

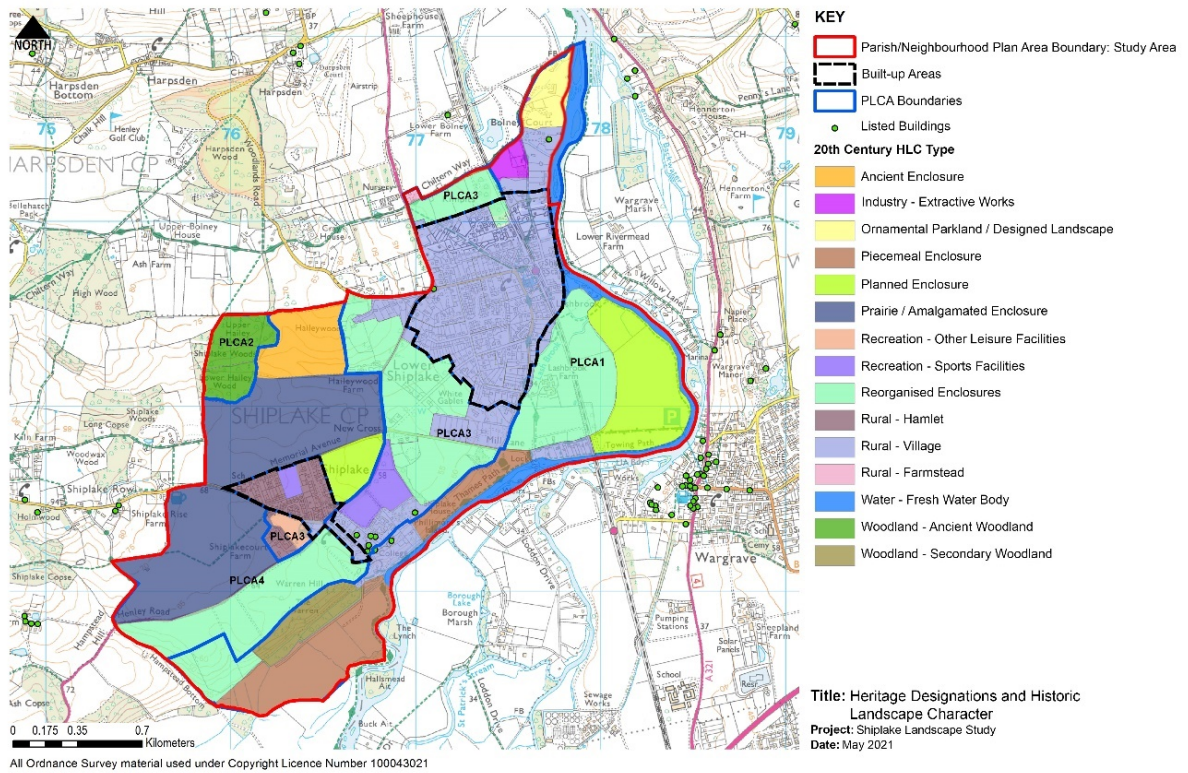


FIGURE 4

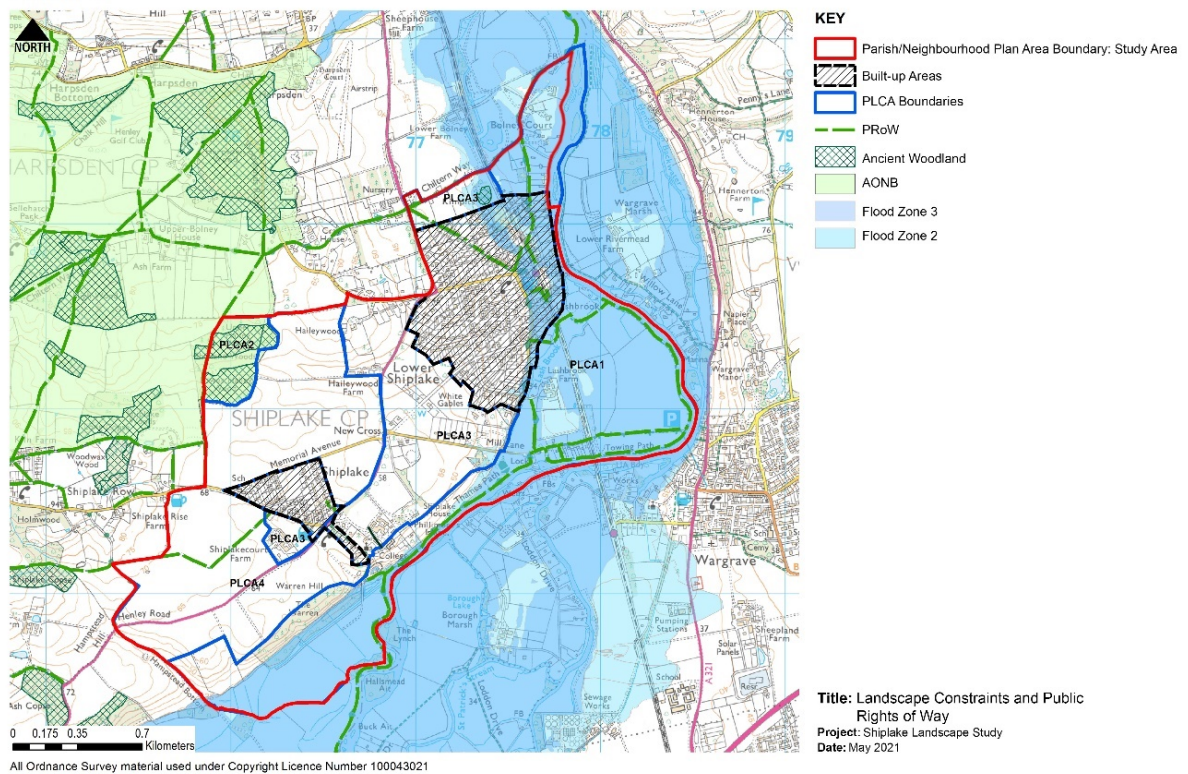


FIGURE 5

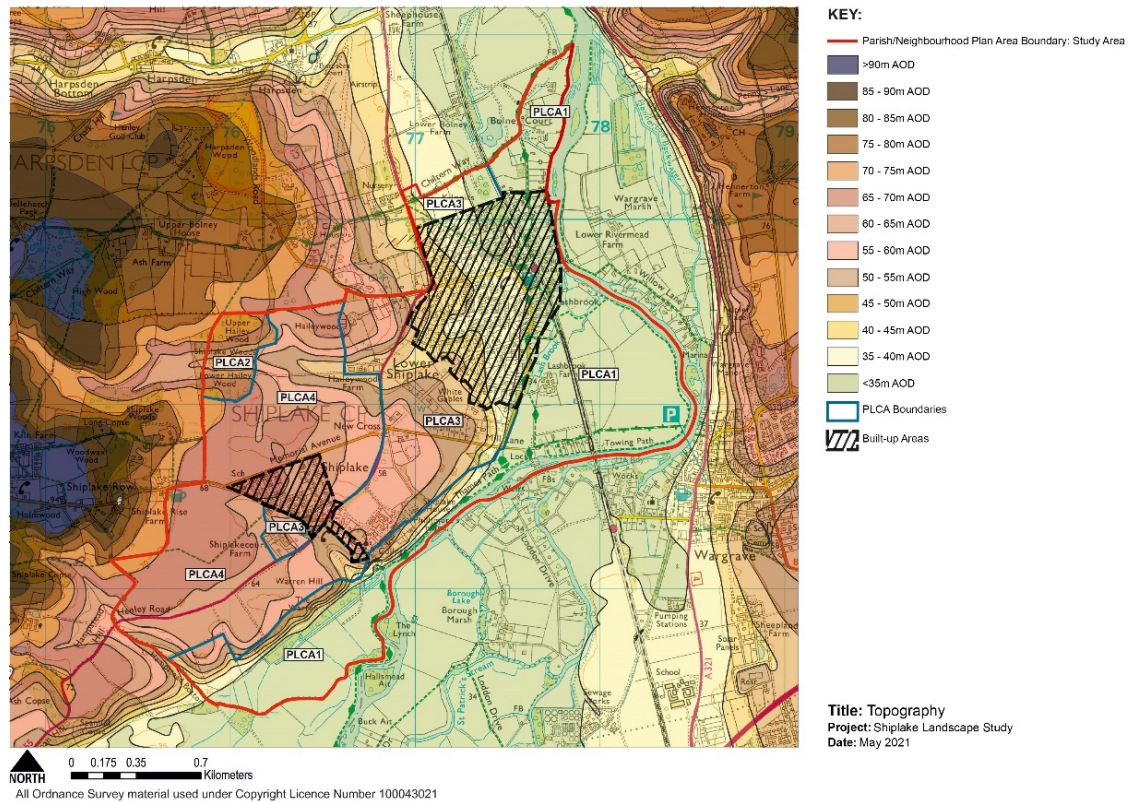


FIGURE 6

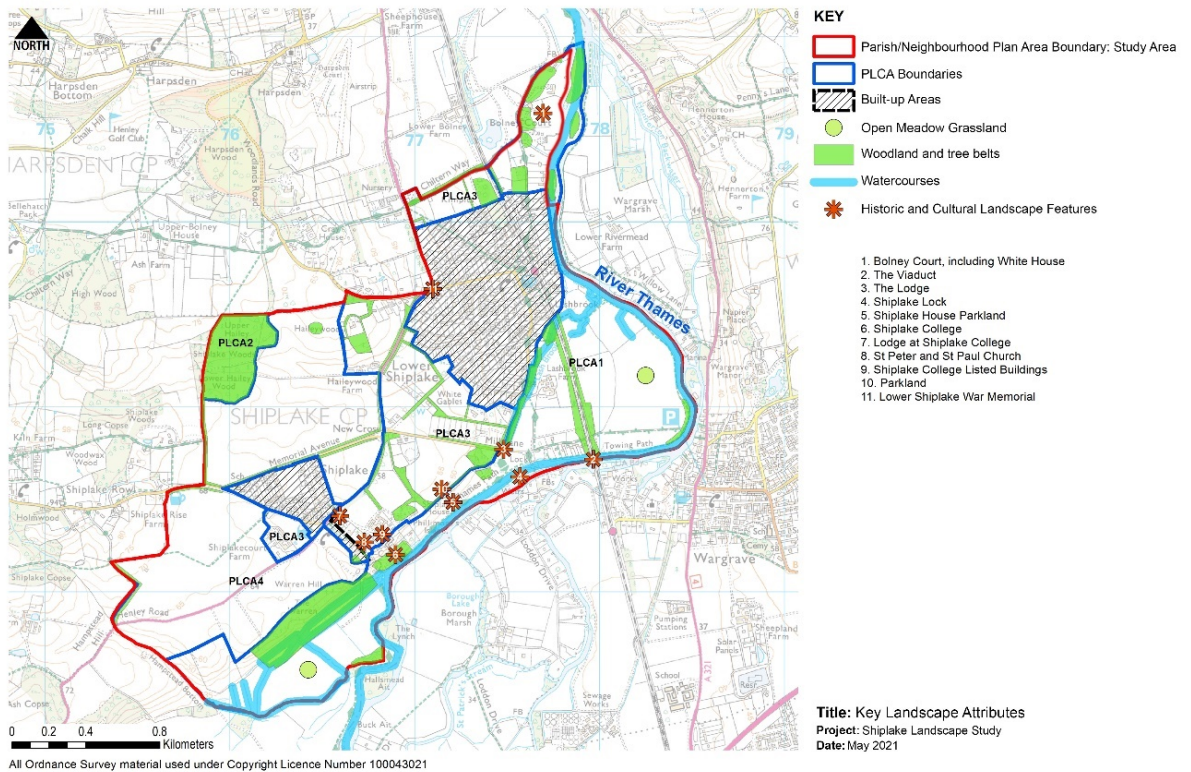
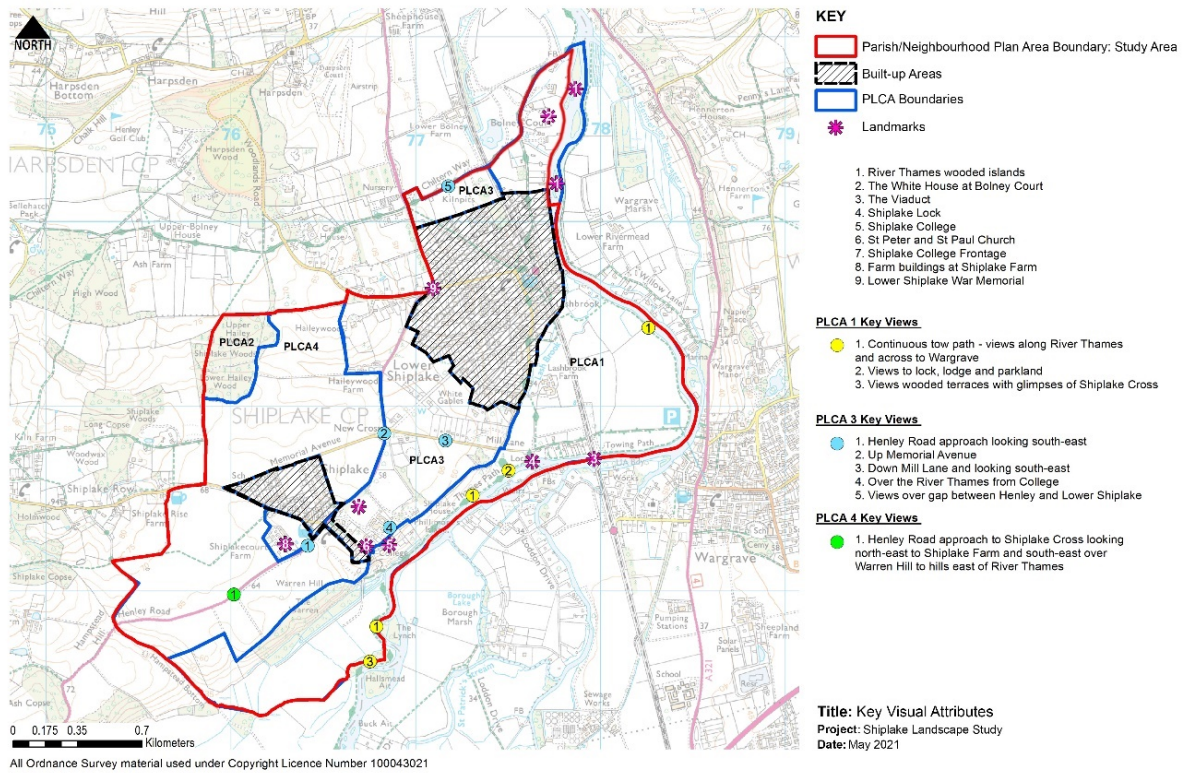


FIGURE 7



APPENDIX 1

Bibliography

Chilterns Management Plan 2019-2024

Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd photographic records

Natural England 'National Character Area NCA110: Chilterns'

NPPF 2019

Oxfordshire County Council 'Historic Landscape Character Assessment'

South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment September 2003

South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment September 2017

South Oxfordshire Interactive Mapping and data 2017 on: historic, ecological, public rights of way, topography, designations, flood plain, listed buildings

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2035

South Oxfordshire Planning Applications