

# Sherington Conservation Area Review

**March 2024**  
Conservation & Archaeology

This document is to be read in conjunction with  
the General Information Document



**Front Cover: May Cottage and Calgary House, Church End, Sherington**

# Historical Development

Sherington was, and remains, a rural settlement through which ran the old line of the A509 Newport Pagnell to Wellingborough Road. The village lies within open countryside approximately 1½ miles from Newport Pagnell and some 6 miles from Olney to the north. The River Great Ouse forms large loops as it flows through its shallow, field lined valley, but is closest to the village at Sherington bridge, about half a mile to the southeast of the village. Facing westwards, Sherington lies on a gently inclined valley side between 65m-80m above mean sea level, with the river being at 55m as it reaches the bridge.

Generally, it is considered that by around 2000BC, the Upper Ouse Valley must have been well populated. It is likely that some kind of habitation had been established at Sherington in pre-Roman times, having been cleared from the primeval forest. The Domesday reference to Sciringtun is derived from Scira's Farm and is evidence of Saxon origins. The Domesday Book also refers to a mill and holdings of 10 hides. The Church is C13th; the surviving maps of 1300 and 1580 indicate settlement to the north and west of the church. According to Chibnall there were reputedly four manors at Sherington in the names of Cave, Fitzjohn, Linford and Mercers. In the early C17th these were dispersed among local farmers, although the Mercers' Company did not withdraw until 1919. Sherington Bridge played a role in the Civil War defence of Newport Pagnell, and Gun Lane implies either the transit or deployment of artillery. The Sherington Enclosure Award was made in 1797.

The new city, designated in 1967, and supporting infrastructure amount to a fundamental historic event for all the old settlements in the locality, the impact of which is still playing out. A recent survey completed by the Milton Keynes City Council Inward Investment team identified a number of commercial enterprises operating in Sherington. However, while local employment is still present, the draw of the new city means that the village is peaceful during the day. The White Hart public

house and hotel, Saint Laud's Church and a shop are highly valued by local residents.

Land and property values have increased greatly, encouraging investment in property and a tendency to intensify land use by developing garden plots or converting existing commercial premises and agricultural buildings into homes, often with mixed results. The number of active farms in the village has decreased, with modernisation of farming practices resulting in a reduction of employees working in the sector. The Sherington Church of England School is now part of the Village Schools Federation. The Federation is a group of six local village schools providing education for children aged 4-7 years old.



Whilst the High Street has a regular intermittent flow of vehicles, there is a prevailing daytime peacefulness to the village.

Adaptations to existing buildings and the division of existing plots, often for more housing, business needs, or individual reasons, has led to some quite pronounced variations in the village's appearance. This is exacerbated by the modern fixes to older houses and buildings. New and adaptive work, although often of high quality, tend to use generic designs and materials, which, if not managed, risk intruding upon and weakening the distinctive local character.

# Dominant building styles, materials and details

Long standing methods of building, and the use of local materials, has become unorthodox but an appreciation and understanding of them is required if the authentic and historic character of the conservation area and its individual buildings is to be appreciated and maintained.

The principal construction materials used for a settlement's older buildings are often indicative of the underlying local geology and can vary a great deal from one place to another. Underlining this importance of locality to appearance, the British Geological Survey's online 'Geology of Britain Viewer' (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>) confirms that Sherington sits on the west side of a shallow valley where the gentle incline drops through a band of Blisworth Limestone, sitting above the river silts and below the mudstone of the Oxford clay formation. Evidence of quarrying can be found on early edition OS maps with a limekiln, and then a small quarry, at the end of Water Lane where the water treatment works now are. Most stone to be used for building would have been extracted before the late C19th, however, when the choice of other materials was expanding following the opening of the rail network and road improvements.

Although stone dominates, there is also some locally made brick, and later standardised imperial brick from further afield which is likely to postdate the arrival of the railway in Olney. Roofs tend to be of thatch, Welsh slate, or machine-made clay tile. Some older tiles, distinguished by their unevenness, remain, but most surviving tile roofing is late C19th or C20th. Latter-day roof refurbishments have tended to use mass-produced, functional concrete tile.

Blisworth limestone is durable and shelly and is a pale honey-yellow in colour with a slight mottling. Unlike the purer, less shelly, and easier worked 'freestones' of Northamptonshire, Blisworth stone lends itself less readily to ornate

carving, and so buildings of all status and function tend to have an undemonstrative, unassuming appearance. On close examination the stonemasonry in the walls of all the buildings surviving from the 16th and 17th century tends to be rubble stone laid to courses of randomly varying width and frequently breaking down into random coursing. In Sherington, surviving stone boundary walls tend to be randomly coursed.

There are numerous examples of stone-built cottages and farmhouses in the village, one of the better-preserved is Home Farmhouse at 53 High Street (Grade II listed) which has its origins in the the C17th, the date shield on the front gable denoting the house's refronting in 1849. Amongst a number of notable features of Home Farmhouse is the use of randomly coursed rubblestone completely free of any carved ornamentation.



Home Farmhouse is of randomly coursed stone under plain tiles. The gables and dormers are coped with kneeler stones. The windows are lozenge patterned in metal.

Brickwork appears intermittently, but with no evidence of a village-based brick yard it might be assumed that the material was imported from Newport Pagnell where brick is used frequently.

Courses of brick were traditionally laid to form regular patterns, or bonds. Headers and stretchers used alternately created Flemish bond, which can be seen at The Old Chapel.



Flemish Bond at The Old Chapel

Although no specific examples of a complete timber weather board structure were noted during the review survey, this material was once in regular use in North Buckinghamshire for mid-sized barns, shelters, hovels and implement stores. If it existed, it seems to have almost



This outbuilding displays a variety of traditional building materials and methods

disappeared from Sherington, although some examples may still survive to the rear of roadside buildings.

Early roofing materials would have been long straw thatch or locally made plain clay peg tiles. Long-stemmed straw, for thatch, was once available easily from the surrounding fields, but the change to shorter stemmed wheat varieties and mechanised harvesting led to its replacement with reed thatch in the latter part of the 20th century. Reed thatching has a much sharper clipped appearance compared to the shaggier and softer looking long straw variety traditional to the area.

Old clay tiles, often with a plain shallow curve that imparts a pleasing slightly jumbled look, and the use of thatch on new buildings began to decline with the arrival of materials from further afield brought to the locality by rail. From the mid-19th century onwards, Welsh slate began to provide an alternative, hard wearing, flat, grey material that could be used on shallower pitches whilst later in the C19th, mass-produced machine tiles, which lie much flatter and are more uniform in colour than the handmade kind, entered general use and were popular throughout the 20th century.



Handmade clay tiles on the roof of St Laud's.

Welsh slate and mass-produced clay tiles displaced plain, clay peg tile and thatch on many older buildings. From the last quarter of the C20th, new concrete tiles and other roofing materials requiring intensive manufacture, became more widespread, sometimes sourced from abroad. Whereas Welsh slate has developed on own patina over time and is a valued material, other materials have proved less sympathetic and visibly altered the historic appearance of some buildings with implications for distinctive local character.

Timber, glass and lead, and occasionally metal, would have once been commonplace materials for details such as doors and windows, each tending to be made bespoke rather than to standard 'off-the-peg' sizes.

Early windows tend to be timber, side hung, flush fitting, casement variety, but few genuine examples now survive. At first they combined small pieces of glass held in place by lead 'comes', but evolved to have larger panes of glass fixed by putty into frames subdivided by wooden glazing bars. Cills tended to be absent, with the windows placed almost flush with the external stonework. During the 18th century, vertically hung sliding sash windows became prevalent. At first, these too were flush with external masonry, but late 18th century laws aimed at reducing the risk of fire spreading pushed the windows into their openings by four inches.

The shadow lines this creates adds expression to later Georgian and Victorian windows. Whilst modern windows might seek to replicate the configuration of casement and sash windows, few truly replicate the characteristics of the early joinery. The imperfections of the cylinder glass used in Victorian windows also creates a sparkle that is absent in modern windows. Where modern windows predominate the variations in appearance are normally quite evident, and often

profoundly weaken the appearance of historic buildings and their contribution to local character.



Timber casement windows on the north side of Home Farmhouse

External doors come in a variety of designs, from basic plank doors, to ornate Victorian and Edwardian designs. Some Victorian or Edwardian era panel doors still survive. They typically comprise vertical stiles and horizontal rail frames further divided vertically by muntins into which wood panels or glazing is placed. Fanlights, where present, are invariably placed above doors and never incorporated into them. Polished brass knobs, rather than lever handles, were used to open doors. The doors are always painted smooth and woodgrain finish is absent. Georgian and Victorian doors, particularly on higher status buildings, often have a door hood supported by brackets. These can be very plain to highly decorated and sometimes accompanied by an ornamental door surround.



An elegant panel door at Bakers Farmhouse with 'eight over eight' pane vertically hung, flush fitting, sliding sash windows

### Street Furniture / Views

Chief amongst the surviving street furniture are the pump and traditional 'K6' red telephone box (Grade II listed) on The Knoll. Elsewhere historic signposts, benches, railings and bollards are absent and standard 'off the peg' public realm furnishings are present.



The red K6 phone box on The Knoll

The views of the church are a key feature of the conservation area, with good views out from the churchyard westward. There are also strong views of the church from several vantage points, but particularly from the north end of High Street over the grassy and hedged meadow that forms a strong foreground to this important village landmark. There are numerous incidental views along the streets and lanes of the village, which tend to be hedge lined around Crofts End, the eastern part of Church Road and into Church End. The High Street, however, sees more stone and brick present. Cumulatively the oblique views of dwellings on High Street and the collections of older houses at the East End of Church Road are attractive and convey much in the way of historic character. However, on closer examination, it is mostly only the listed buildings that retain any characterful historic details such as original panel doors, clay tile roofs or timber sash windows.

Individualistic alterations and repairs to buildings with non-original materials within the village has cumulatively caused harm to characterful buildings. However, the variety of visually pleasing styles and quality of materials means that significant numbers of original features still survive, nonetheless.

Whilst not every building is of sufficient merit to warrant statutory listing there are still those of local interest which either individually or cumulatively contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Failure to mention a specific building, structure or open space in the review does not necessarily mean that it has no part in reinforcing local identity. Where historic materials survive, they usually impart a strong sense of character and individuality to the buildings and areas in which they are located.

# Statement of Special Interest

Sherington's built heritage is defined by the consistent use of a pale yellow to grey limestone frequently matched with orange-brown clay tiles, thatch, and Welsh slate. Adding to the mix are mid to late C19th brick dwellings and, in particular, an elegant former Congregational chapel. Most property is in domestic use, lining the village's streets and greens, many on edge of pavement positions but sometimes with larger houses standing back in their own grounds behind walls or hedges. Occasionally, gables of houses or barns face the road adding to the variety of plot layouts. Shops, farms, pubs and a smithy were gathered around The Knoll, but today only a large (in a village context) haulage company's building and sheds stand, eye-catchingly, amongst the more conventionally scaled houses and trees that define The Knoll. Its presence adds a contrasting semi-industrial character to the prevailing rural quality of views through and across this key open space. To the southeast are Crofts End and the rectory, whilst to the northeast at Church End, on top of a low hill, is the Grade I listed St Laud's church and its imposing tower. There are important views of this landmark from two or three vantage points but most notably from the north end of High Street across the open paddock. Some imposing farmhouses and associated farm buildings, almost all now converted to domestic use, are located around the village, denoting the historic reliance on farming to support the local economy. Mostly the roads are now stone kerbed with occasional un-edged grassed verges from a time before such refinement was felt necessary. Where there are gardens fronting onto the village streets, there are stone or brick walls and hedges separating public and private land. Continuous lines of wall punctuated only by garden gates are uncommon now as most have been altered to include wide gaps for vehicle parking whenever possible. Throughout the village there are attractive oblique views populated by rows or small groups of quaint

houses and cottages interspersed with the cumulative greenery provided by hedges verges and tall mature trees.



Historically, Sherington had a sprawling, loosely knit settlement pattern. Although this is now obscured somewhat by indifferent mid and late C20th developments it is still evident that the village principally lay along the old line of the A509 from Newport Pagnell to Wellingborough via Olney. It is important to keep this in mind as, especially to the unfamiliar visitor, the road layout is strangely disorientating as the village is explored.

The old A509 joins at the southern end of the village at the moated Manor House. Outbuildings, loosely grouped with greenery, trees, and hedges in abundance, boast expansive views over low open countryside. The contrasting scale and detailing of stone houses, and the long low blank walls of the former barns, immediately creates the sense of a picturesque rural settlement. To the north, the road runs up to The Knoll, with long forward linear views created by a variety of house types, converted former outbuildings and commercial premises mostly placed in continuous



back of pavement positions. Where property steps back from the road, the plot boundary is marked by a wall or hedge. At the northern end, the approach south is defined by hedgerow and trees on the east side and the gentle upward gradient of the field beyond which is topped by St Laud's church.

Branching off from the southern end of High Street is the road to Crofts End, with a characterful brick wall to the south side, and sweeping grass verges to the north, behind which, stands the Grade II listed Mercers Farmhouse. Although there is some indifferent modern infill development, the prevailing character is that of brick or stone cottages, frequently set back slightly from the road behind hedges and some stone or brick walling. From Mercers Farmhouse onward, numerous garden trees and shrubs enhance the views in all directions and create a sense of a settlement amongst parkland. The picturesque Sherington Congregational Chapel (Grade II listed), now repurposed as five dwellings, is distinguished by a pattern formed by dark brick set amongst the brighter orange bricks and 'Y' tracery windows under half round arches in stone which, happily, have remained unpainted. The chapel stands behind attractive iron railings and stone supporting piers. Good contributions to character are also made by 18-20 Crofts End, despite the loss of original window joinery, and the glimpsed view of open country between 16 and 18. Opposite there is a brief, oblique view of The Laurels (Grade II listed) from the driveway entrance, a substantial stone house dating from the early C17th, with twin gables, mostly hidden by tall and deep hedges from public vantage points. The more modest stone cottages (Grade II listed) with the ornamental door hoods are a final flourish before standardised C20th housing at the village edge commences.

The views in and out of the conservation area hereabouts are nevertheless enhanced by the grass verges and tall hedges, a characteristic that continues into School Lane and, whilst the houses are standard C20th, their context is very pleasant. As School Lane starts to gently dip down there is a view, from the driveway entrance, of the Old

Rectory (Grade II listed) standing, grandly in extensive gardens, a benefit that often accompanied and augmented these high-status dwellings. The Rectory is divided from the road by a tall characterful orange brick wall, behind which are numerous conifers and mature willow. The modern school, opposite, is neatly designed with a butterfly roof but the neighbouring old schoolhouse, although smartly kept, is so altered that its historic use would no longer be discernible but for the name plate on a gate pier.

From where a brook passes under School Lane, the effective dividing line between Croft's End and Church End, there is an important forward view. The road is lined by attractive grass verges behind which are C20th bungalows in an uneventful, suburban style, but which lead the eye up to Sherington Place House.



Sherington Place House

This is a smart, Grade II listed, symmetrical, three bay, stone built house with clay tile roof, multipaned sash windows, and a central panelled wooden door placed on a slight eminence so that it commands the spacious meeting point of five roads and the small triangular green.

From the house there are good views south, back down School Lane and east into Park Road. There is also a picturesque view west which comprises the Grade II listed whitewashed stone and thatch cottages at 1, 3 and 5 Church End and the collection of listed stone-built houses on the corner of School Lane and Church Road, opposite, albeit these are marred by their modern concrete tile roofs. Standing at the threshold of Church End, however, the

whitewash, stone and thatch cottages, with their attractive multipaned, glazed sash and casement windows, and the stone houses opposite, all enhanced by a view of the church tower and lychgate, create an important and picturesque group of buildings.

St Laud's church has a tall, robust looking, central tower which, unusually, is placed centrally in the body of the church, whilst from the grounds, over a low stone wall, there is a good view of Church Farmhouse, one of the village's grand farmhouses. To the west, there are expansive views out over the countryside. Immediately beyond the churchyard are open fields which provide important foreground to views of the church from High Street. The church yard is also bounded by late Victorian iron railings which unfortunately are falling into dilapidation. The location is quiet, leafy and spacious and from here it is possible to follow a pleasant tree and hedge lined path which opens out into a grassy field westward, back to the High Street.

Park Road is a cul-de-sac most notable for being the location of the Grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse and former outbuildings. Known to have a 1595 datestone and be of rendered rubble stone with casement windows and wavy ridged roof of red clay tile, it cannot be seen from public vantage points but the general vicinity is an attractive corner of the conservation area nevertheless.

Gun Lane commences on the east side of Sherington Place. It is overlooked by a pair of striking ornate late C19th cottages with applied timber frame decoration on render, and two tall gables, with ornamental boarding surmounted by Tudor style chimneys, set up slightly from the road lending them more visual presence. Slightly beyond here is the white rendered pub, The White Hart (Grade II listed), an imposing 2½ storey late C18th building, with C19th canted bay windows on the ground floor either side of a central door. Looking south, the back of the pub is revealed as rubble stone, with the eaves now raised in brick under a machine tile roof. The outbuildings associated with the White Hart are all brick with

slate roofs. Rurality pervades the view as grass verges and hedges line the road.

Church Road leads back down to the larger green on the High Street, with a variety of houses and buildings encircling it. Much of Church Road is bordered by everyday bungalows, some former social housing and some other indifferent infill. However, the lush summer greenery and flowers of the gardens and a small grassy park make Church Road an increasingly pleasant thoroughfare on the way down the slight incline to the Knoll. Quaint stone and brick cottages commence again on the left side and soon The Knoll comes into view. Amidst The Knoll's trees is an iron pump of the same kind found at Little Brickhill but the make was not discerned.

From here Water Lane departs west eventually becoming a farm access road. Close to the village, it is a tree and hedge lined lane with Waterlane Farm (Grade II listed) and outbuildings, now in domestic use, standing on the south side. Opposite are the grade II listed early C19th cottages at 16 and 18, the gothic windows with 'Y' tracery hinting at their origins as a Friends' Meeting House. Although modern housing dilutes the character of the older buildings, the trees hedges, verges and the roadside brook, combine to create a prevailing rural character to the lane, strongly reinforcing the village's rural context.



16-18 Water Lane, formerly a Friends Meeting House

# Management Plan

Proposals for new development should be particularly mindful of the provisions of national and local policies set out in the General Information Document. The appearance and character of the conservation area as it is set out in this review should be demonstrably understood in proposals for new development. Milton Keynes City Council (the Council) will expect applications to demonstrate how proposals will sensitively respond to and reinforce local character and distinctiveness.

The Council will normally refuse applications for development that are deemed to be inconsistent with national and local plan policies intended to protect designated conservation areas from insensitive change.

New or replacement buildings, and extensions, should remain complementary or subordinate in scale (height and massing) to other existing street frontage properties or preserve a sense of hierarchy within an existing plot.

New development within the conservation area should consider the extent of spacing and rhythm between buildings and placement within the plot. Parking spaces should be provided in a way which minimises impacts to landscaping to the front of houses or the loss of verges beside the road.

New development will be expected to employ good quality materials that are consistent with the historic materials used in the conservation area.

Planning applications will be required for material alterations to the exteriors of buildings in non-domestic use in the conservation area. For example, changes to windows, doors, roofing material will normally be held to be a material change to buildings in non-domestic use that would require planning permission.

There is no Article 4 direction withdrawing permitted development rights in the Sherington Conservation Area preventing the loss of original features on unlisted buildings in domestic use and there are no proposals to alter the existing levels of control. However, where deemed appropriate to do so, the Local Planning Authority may withdraw permitted development rights as part of granting planning

permissions for proposals to develop within the conservation area.

Proposals for development should seek to avoid disruption or loss of historic boundaries unless there are clear and convincing reasons for so doing. Boundaries within the conservation area are generally formed by hedges, brick walls or stone walls. The use of timber fencing will normally be resisted.

In line with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 six weeks' notice must be given to the Local Planning Authority before undertaking works to trees.

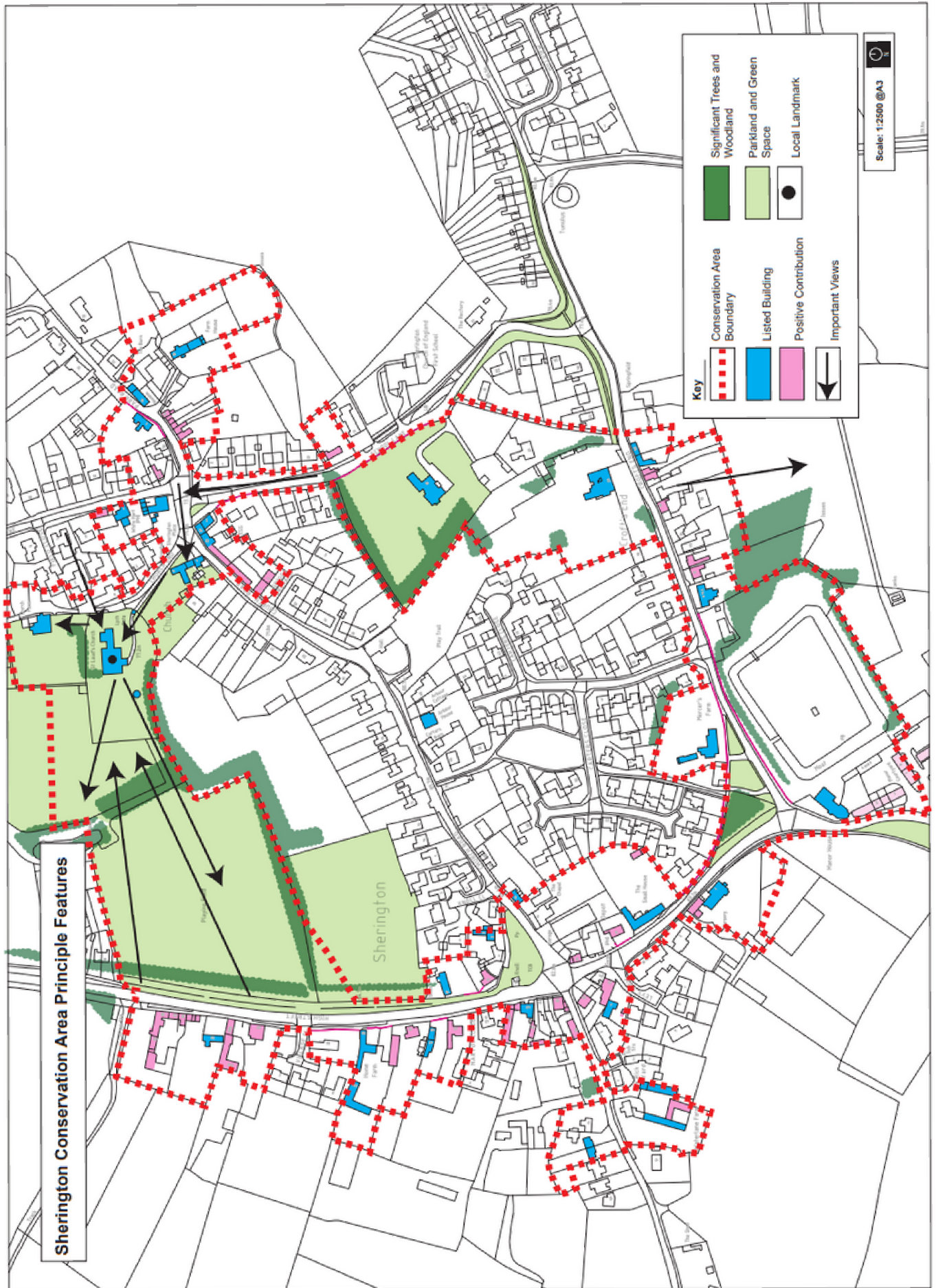
The Council shall give careful consideration to the positive contribution made by the open spaces in the conservation area when considering proposals for development within or adjacent to them.

The village's public house is an important community facility. Although the conservation area is covered by special advertising controls the Council will be supportive of the need to advertise sympathetically, operate and undertake events that contribute to village life.

The Council shall continue to offer pre-application advice to occupiers of unlisted property in the conservation area in order to avoid unsympathetic, ad hoc choices for replacement or repair of properties and features such as windows or boundary walls.

Accumulations of street furniture or visually intrusive individual items of street furniture will be discouraged. Traffic orders should take account of the sensitive historic environment and use muted colours and minimise applied road surface lines and signing. Grass verges in the conservation area should remain un-kerbed. Where a persuasive case is made to edge verges careful consideration should be given to the kerb design and appearance. The Council will seek to encourage utility companies to co-ordinate works and reinstate disturbed road and pavement surfaces sympathetically. Road improvements should avoid 'urbanising' the rural character of the conservation area.

# Sherington Conservation Area - Principal Features



Sherington Conservation Area Principle Features

[www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/conservationandarchaeology](http://www.miltonkeynes.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/conservationandarchaeology)

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