

Heritage Statement

Land Adjacent to Walnut Tree Cottage, Shripney Lane, Shripney

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On behalf of:	Maxine Sable	Ref:	0046

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ignus Froneman, Director at Cogent Heritage, in consultation with James Wells Architects, and the Applicant, Maxine Sable. The report should be read alongside the application drawings and all other submitted information.

1.2 The Heritage Statement supports an application for a proposed new single storey dwelling on land presently part of the large garden of Walnut Tree Cottage, on Shripney Lane in Shripney. The application follows a recent appeal, in which an application for a modern, single storey dwelling on the application site was dismissed (PINS Ref. APP/C3810/W/20/3244778). The Inspector's Decision Letter and his findings in relation to the dismissed proposal, and the potential for development on the site, were used to inform the present proposal. The following points from the Decision Letter, in particular, are highlighted:

- i. There is a wide range of styles and ages of properties in the vicinity of the site (paragraph 5).
- ii. Although the houses generally face the street, the area has an informal layout, notably in the cluster of houses around the statutorily listed buildings to the west (paragraph 5).
- iii. There is a range of plot sizes in the locality (paragraph 5).
- iv. The design of the bungalow (of modern design, as then proposed) would acknowledge the brick and flint materials used in several buildings in the conservation area. However, it would have a flat roof with a central atrium under a pyramidal roof, which would be interrupted by a metal flue. The north elevation would have wide, almost full height glazing and other elevations would have window openings of various shapes and sizes. The resulting building would have a very

modern design which bears no relation to the style and design of any of the buildings around it or to the historic nature of the conservation area (paragraph 6).

- v. The single storey building as then proposed would be low lying, but the design of the bungalow would also need to respect the characteristics of this part of the conservation area (paragraph 8).
- vi. In view of the flat roof, the modern fenestration and the pyramidal roof, the design would fail to make a positive contribution to the conservation area (paragraph 8).
- vii. The single storey building, as then proposed, would have dealt with size objections; however, in this location, a sensitive design is also required (paragraph 18).

1.3 This Heritage Statement assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on the Shripney Conservation Area, within which the application site falls. It was informed by a site visit, in October 2019, undertaken by the author. No detailed documentary research was undertaken, although historic Ordnance Survey maps were consulted, as well as common online repositories for historic images (of which none were found).

1.4 The Heritage Statement does not set out the Local Plan policies, or the National Planning Policy Framework, or the provisions of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, focussing instead on an assessment of significance and impact, before coming to an overall conclusion about whether the proposal would cause any harm to the significance of the conservation area.

2 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 There is no detailed appraisal or other such document for the Shripney Conservation Area. The closest to an appraisal is the brief description at page 73 (the page is numbered 39, but it is on the 73rd page of the document) of the *Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance* (adopted by Arun District Council in October 2000). The description of the character and appearance of the Shripney Conservation Area is quoted in full below:

"Description of the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

Shripney lies approximately 1½ miles to the north of Bognor Regis. It is rural in character with a variety of buildings of various ages, style, type and materials. Although generally street fronted, there is an informality of layout where space between buildings is important.

Remaining thatched buildings, flint and brick boundary walling, mature hedges and trees, and verges make a positive contribution to the settlement's rural character.

Shripney Manor, an imposing late 17th or early 18th Century building, set in its own extensive grounds, is an important historical reminder of the settlement's agricultural basis.

Field Nos. 6709 and 6500 are important to the immediate setting and rural character of the Conservation Area."

2.2 For the purpose of assessment, the conservation area can be divided into four 'character areas', which are shown overleaf at **Fig 1** and briefly described below:

- i. **The historic development along Shripney Lane:** This takes in the most diverse and informal area of built form, with a variety of houses of different dates and styles (both listed and unlisted). Ivy Cottage is the only building in this character area on the south side of the street, its curtilage having originally been carved from the estate associated with Shripney Manor (with which historically it would have been associated with) but in character terms it now 'belongs' to the houses along the street, more than it does to the rural openness of the estate. Most (but not all) of the houses on Shripney Lane are set close to the street frontage, and parallel with it. However, there is variation, especially along Barn Lane immediately to the NW of the application site, where there is a core of layered development behind the street. Some of the houses in this character area have large plots and others have relatively small plots. It is not unusual to see development in depth behind the street fronting houses (both of buildings within, or adjoining, the conservation area). Boundary walls, of varying height, often of flint with brick dressings, enclose and define the street. These are reinforced by hedges, trees and garden vegetation, together giving a pleasant, verdant character.
- ii. **Shripney Manor and its estate:** The manor and its estate were not inspected but it is clear from satellite images that it is a high status house, set in its own extensive garden and largely rural estate. Part of the estate boundary with its 'green wall' of vegetation defines the south side of Shripney Lane, and give enclosure to the street, and a quiet, rural character. Old Moat Close to the NW is an exception and forms a separate character area.
- iii. **Old Moat Close:** This is a relatively recent, quasi-rural pastiche redevelopment of what was formerly the Langmeads Distribution Centre, which appears to have evolved from what was historically part of the Shripney Manor estate/landholding. The buildings have been designed to have a 'rural/agricultural' and 'traditional' appearance, and although altogether pleasant, this relatively dense and recent pocket of development could not be mistaken for a farm or farmstead, or a pocket of historic development.

- iv. **Chalfont and Myddleton Terraces:** These are two short terraces of modest houses, with some alterations, built in the early 20th century. Chalfont Terrace has largely retained its front garden/boundary while the front of Myddleton Terrace is now given over to parking. Although these represent the densest development in the conservation area, their modest scale, the general absence of urban influences and the largely undeveloped surrounding land preserves a sense of rurality.

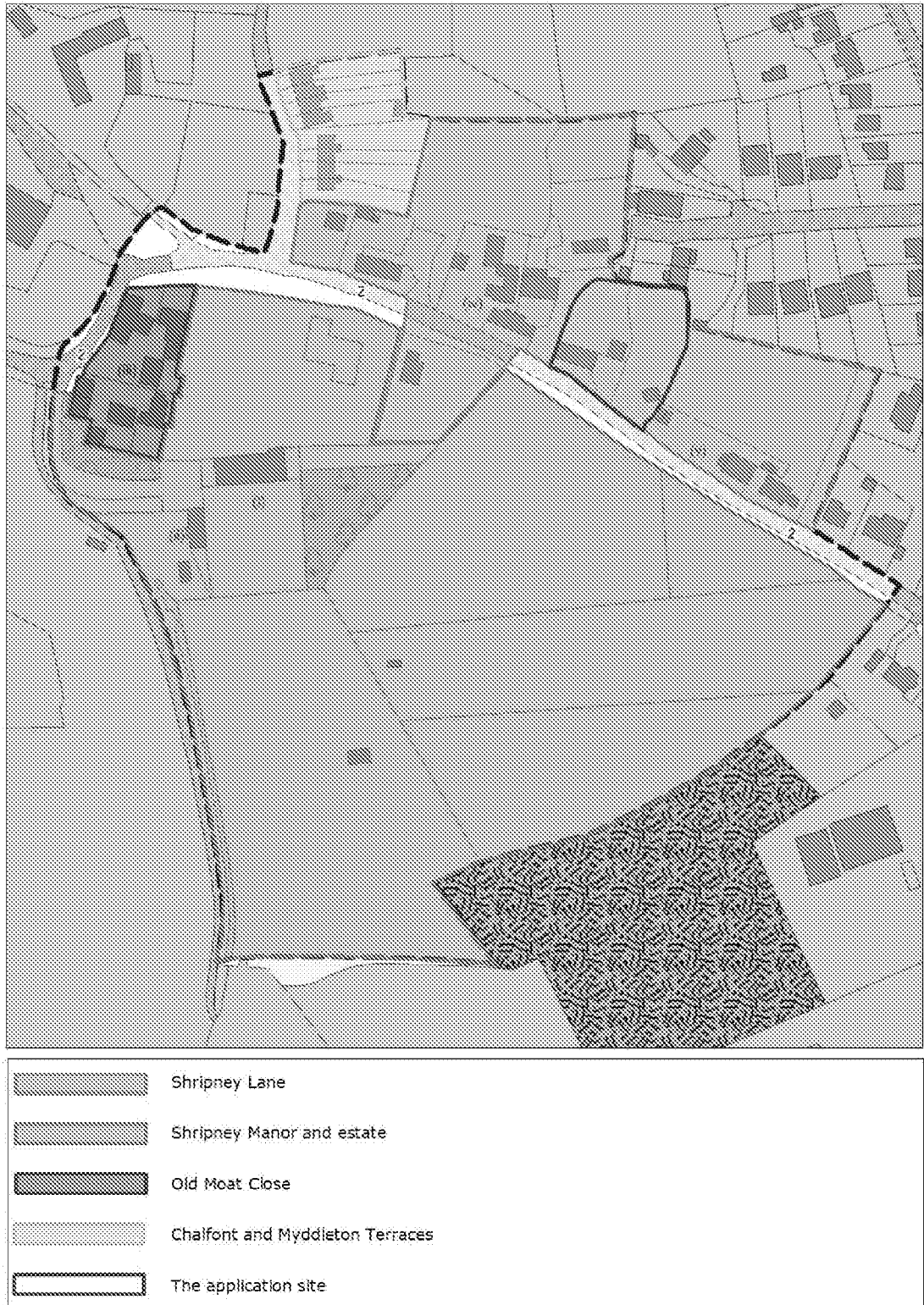


Fig 1: Conservation area character areas.

- 2.1 The *Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance* (the 'SPG') correctly highlights the variety of buildings in the conservation area, ranging from detached thatched cottages to terraces and through to the modern redevelopment at Old Moat Close. The general use of traditional forms and materials nevertheless tends to bring an overall coherence that binds together the buildings of the conservation area into a broadly legible and reasonably cohesive, if varied, historic character.
- 2.2 The SPG is again correct in identifying the sense of informality in the layout of the area, for example seen in the buildings behind the application site, and the pair of garages to the SE. This informality is reinforced by the planting, the low key roads and absence of street signage, kerbs and clutter, as well as the inconsistency in the styles, materials, and ages of buildings, as well as the slightly haphazard scattering of buildings seen along Shripney Lane – all of this in the context of the open/rural land of the Manor and its estate along the south side of Shripney Lane.
- 2.3 In the context of the application site, the most important views are those in either direction along Shripney Lane. There is also something of a historic 'core' on Barn Lane, set behind Shripney Lane, where there is a surprisingly dense built form and sense of informal intimacy created by the closely spaced buildings, including the grade II listed converted thatch roofed barn, which acts as something of a focus of this 'backland area'. There are many informal views in this area.
- 2.3 In summary, the significance of the conservation can be expressed in terms of the four strands of heritage significance as described in the NPPF as follows:
- i. **Archaeological interest:** The area may well have archaeological potential given its relatively early origins, but the conservation area was evidently not designated on the basis of archaeological remains.
 - ii. **Artistic interest:** Again, whilst the conservation area may be said to have a good deal of aesthetic value, there are no indications that it was designated for reasons of artistic interest.
 - iii. **Architectural interest:** A good deal of the significance of the conservation area is derived from the quality and character and coherence of the buildings that make up the townscape – five of which are individually listed: Shripney Manor, and four buildings on Shripney Lane (three of these are notably set back in depth behind the street fronting buildings).
 - iv. **Historic interest:** The significance of the conservation area also derives from its historic interest. The boundary was drawn around the historic estate and the mostly historic development along Shripney Lane. Although much change has

occurred, the essence of the conservation area can be seen from the 1876 Ordnance Survey map. There is a recognisable time depth and historic character to the conservation area.

3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE APPLICATION SITE

- 3.1 The application site takes in Walnut Tree Cottage and its large, associated plot of land, much of which is a garden, but also with two smaller buildings: a garage and the former garage that is now ancillary to the main house. In terms of the contribution of the site to the conservation area, Walnut Tree Cottage is evidently the principal building and it forms a group with its western neighbour on the other side of Barn Lane, and an important part of the broader pattern of development on Shripney Lane.
- 3.2 Both Walnut Tree Cottage, and its plot, have undergone changes in the past century, and there is a long history of the plot having been divided. There is also a break in the front boundary wall on Shripney Lane at the eastern end of the application site, which obviously would have been made to allow vehicular access, although it is not known when this was done.
- 3.3 Aside from Walnut Tree Cottage, the remainder of the application site is garden, with mature trees and fences; it blends into the general verdant character of the area, but it is not an especially notable piece of open land or space. The driveway and the two buildings to the east of Walnut Tree Cottage, although relatively modest, means that the Shripney Lane frontage of the application site is not without a sense of development and the garden beyond is signalled by the tree canopies in the distance. However, the part of the application site where the new building is proposed is largely obscured by boundary planting and comes into view only at a certain angle, when seen obliquely across the forecourt, more or less framed between the two existing outbuildings. This would change if the front boundary planting were changed, but for the most part it is the boundary wall and boundary planting that plays the more important role in street scenes. Beyond the two outbuildings, the application site is recessive, and goes mostly unnoticed.

4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 The impact assessment is structured under topic headings as set out below:

- i. principle;
- ii. location/siting;
- iii. scale and form;
- iv. materials; and
- v. design.

4.2 **Principle:** The previous appeal proposal has established the in principle acceptability and appropriateness of a low dwelling on the application site. The Inspector found that it was the modern design of the appeal scheme that was unacceptable, but the principle was not at issue, e.g. para 18 of the Decision Letter "*The proposed bungalow would have dealt with size objections but in this location, a sensitive design is also required.*" As part of the consideration of the previous scheme, the Council's Conservation Officer and the Conservation Area Advisory Panel notably also agreed that this is a location where it would be appropriate, in principle, to locate a low building.

4.3 **Location/siting:** In terms of the location of the proposed building relative to Walnut Tree Cottage, Shripney Lane and the remainder of the application site, this was not criticised by the Inspector (or the Council's Conservation Officer or the Conservation Area Advisory Panel in considering the previous scheme). The siting is a logical position and takes up an appropriate portion of the site. The placement of the building strikes a balance between prominence and recessiveness, and respecting the primacy of Walnut Tree Cottage in street scenes on Shripney Lane. It is not surprising to that the Inspector had no issues with the relationship between Walnut Tree Cottage and the appeal proposal, or the location of the new dwelling.

4.4 The proposed building is set behind the garage at the front of the site and, to the extent that it would be visible, there would be a layering of development, which is not unusual to see in the conservation area.

4.5 In conclusion, the location/siting of the building would logical and contextually appropriate, and this was not an issue at the previous appeal.

4.6 **Scale and form:** The footprint of the proposed dwelling is similar in size to that of the appeal proposal, and also comparable to that of Rose Cottage behind it. The Inspector did not find the footprint or size of the appeal proposal excessive, and there is no reason why the footprint of the presently proposed dwelling would be excessive. Within its local

context, the footprint as proposed is contextually appropriate. However, the footprint is only one aspect of the scale and form of the building, with the height being more important in terms of its general presence, and its potential effect on the character and appearance of the area.

- 4.7 The proposed dwelling is deliberately limited to a single storey height, and uses a low-profile, traditional hipped roof form to limit the presence of its built form in views from the surrounding area. The traditional low-profile shallow hipped roof and chimneystack would be set back a considerable distance from the street, and be visible as an unintrusive, traditional background element in those views from where it can be seen.
- 4.8 Generally, the proposed dwelling would be visible as a very modest building that would respect the primacy of Walnut Tree Cottage on Shripney Lane and sympathetically and unassumingly blend into this part of the conservation area. In conclusion, the scale and form of the building is contextually appropriate, and preserves the significance of the conservation area.
- 4.9 **Materials:** The material palette of the proposed building is simple, and largely limited to brick dressed flint walls, which is a characteristic vernacular material that is commonly seen throughout the conservation area, widely used in both buildings and boundary walls. The use of flint and brick walls is wholly appropriate in this context and would be entirely in keeping with the character of the conservation area. This widely used material would also help the building to blend in. The roof would be clad in traditional slate. The proposed materials are traditional, widely used and contextually appropriate.
- 4.10 **Design:** The Inspector's Decision Letter made it clear that it was the modern design of the previous proposal that was at issue, e.g. para 6: "*The design of the proposed bungalow would acknowledge the brick and flint materials used in several buildings in the SCA [the conservation area]. However, it [...] would have a very modern design which bears no relation to the style and design of any of the buildings around it or to the historic nature of the SCA.*" The same issue is again highlighted at para 8: "*[...] the design of the bungalow would also need to respect the characteristics of this part of the SCA in order to satisfy [NPPF] Paragraph 192. In view of the flat roof, the modern fenestration and the pyramidal roof, the design would fail to make a positive contribution to the SCA [emphasis added].*"
- 4.11 The present proposal has retained the broad location and footprint of the dwelling as previously proposed, as well as the use of flint and brick, and the low profile – all of which was previously found to be unobjectionable. However, the key design change is that the dwelling now has a traditional slate roof, chimney stack and fenestration arrangement,

making it fit well into the local character of the conservation area. In this sense the design of the dwelling has addressed the Inspector's concerns and is acceptable.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposed development was informed by findings of the Inspector at the previous appeal and has responded positively to the Inspector's concerns with a modern design. The dwelling would remain of similar footprint, in a similar location, and it would be of a low form, but it would also be of traditional design, reflecting the character of the conservation area. The proposed dwelling would therefore preserve the significance of the Shripney Conservation Area.
- 5.2 Because no harm has been identified, there are no policy conflicts with the Local Plan. Neither does the proposal trigger paragraphs 195 or 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed development also complies with the statutory duties in s.66 and s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990.
- 5.3 It is therefore respectfully submitted that the proposed development should be granted consent.