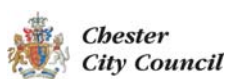




SHOTWICK

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL JANUARY 2008



Maps can be seen on the following link: www.chester.gov.uk/conservationareareview

SHOTWICK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - JANUARY 2008

DESIGNATIONS

Conservation Area	First designated in 1974, alterations in 1996
Listed Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shotwick Hall (II*)</i>, Hall Lane • <i>Garden walls and piers (II)</i>, Hall Lane • <i>Kitchen/Bakehouse (II)</i>, Hall Lane • <i>Stable (II)</i>, Hall Lane • <i>L-shaped ranges (II)</i>, Hall Lane • <i>Stone Cottage (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Manor Farmhouse (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Greyhound Farmhouse (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Church Cottage (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Church of St Michael (I)</i>, The Village • <i>Tombchest (W. Briscoe) (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Tombchest (W. Briscoe) (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Tombchest (J. Newett) (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Tombchest (J. Phillips) (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Tombchest (M. Reay) (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Tombchest (M. Ellison) (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Sundial (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Gates, gate piers and wall (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Church House Farmhouse (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Woodbine Cottage (II)</i>, The Village • <i>Vicarage Farmhouse (II)</i>, The Village
Scheduled Monuments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shotwick Hall moated site</i>
Registered Parks and Gardens	None
Archaeological Priority	None
SSSI	None
Article 4 directions	None
Regulation 7 directions	None
Any other designations	
Area of Special County Value (ASCV)	None
Site of Biological Interest (SBI)	None
Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shotwick Lane</i>
Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shotwick Brook</i>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Amenity Greenspace (Env 17)</i> • <i>Green Belt (Env 63)</i>

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Shotwick is listed in the Domesday Survey as Sotowiche, Shotowyk (1271), Shotowick (1403) and finally Shotwick. This name would mean "hamlet at a steep promontory" from *wic* and a hill name in old english, *sceot-hoh* from *sceot* "a steep slope" and *hoh* "a promontory, a spur".¹

The fortunes of Shotwick are closely bound up with the River Dee. Its prosperity was mainly dependant on fishing, the ford and the ferry.

It seems that traders were crossing the ford at Shotwick carrying salt from Cheshire into North Wales long before the Normans came, certainly by the middle Ages, a “Saltesway” was well established, being a trading route from the 3 Cheshire “wiches” into Wales. It also became a military way, leading armies across the ford into Wales until the 14th century (Henry III in 1245 and Edward I in 1278 and 1284).

When the Dee silted up and large vessels found it increasingly difficult to navigate as far as Chester and other ports in the estuary, they would discharge their cargoes in Shotwick. For about a hundred years, Shotwick took the place of Chester as the major port. At the end of this period, the Dee having silted up still further, Burton, Neston, Parkgate and Heswall each in turn handled the shipping which formerly went to Chester.

Most of the houses were rebuilt during the 17th century, very possibly due to civil war and plague side-effects. The old fortified manor was pulled down and a new one, which still stands - Shotwick Hall - was built by Joseph Hockenhull in 1662.²

Shotwick has changed very little in its layout as a hamlet since late 17th century being gradually distanced from passing trade routes for two closely related main reasons: first of all the gradual silting up of Dee River, detaching the village from the estuary and secondly a new road heading to Queen’s ferry (formerly King’s ferry) built in 1830, splitting the parish in two, with Woodbank on the southern side and the village on the northern side. The road leading to the village, which used to cross into Wales, became a dead end.



Shotwick Hall Road

¹ J.Mc.N. Dodgson, *The place names of Cheshire*, part IV, p 209, University Press, Cambridge, 1972.

² L. Whitfield, *The Church at the Ford*, pp 1-3, Prontaprint Press, Ellesmere Port.

KEY FEATURES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

General:	Strong rural influence as well as important architectural influence of the Hockenhull estate.
Topography:	flat
Streetscape:	one road crossing the settlement, from Northeast to Southwest, i.e. Shotwick Village Lane leading to a dead end. A secondary lane joins it, i.e. Shotwick Hall Lane, Shotwick Vicarage Lane connecting the latter Lane further on
Settlement layout:	clustered around Shotwick Village Road end
Built environment	Semi detached and detached houses two storeys high, slate or

re: residential units:	clay tile pitched roofs, sandstone or brick walls with patterns in brickwork, sometimes rendered, dating from the late 17 th century to the 20 th century
Building setting:	detached houses with varied setbacks
Boundary treatment:	sandstone and brick walls: mixed use of both in Shotwick Hall
Historic floor surface:	important cobblestone frontages in the village centre
Trees and hedgerows:	presence of medium and high hedgerows bordering properties and fields. Mature trees bordering Shotwick Hall road
Open spaces:	Shotwick Village Road end with its generous grass verges
Change of conservation area boundaries:	none

CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Shotwick is a hamlet on ground gently sloping down to the flat lands of the reclaimed Dee estuary, seven miles from Chester. It enjoys a well built rural character reinforced by its activities and buildings. It is one of the best preserved villages in West Cheshire, possibly one of the finest in the country. Its rich architectural legacy is recognised by the significant amount of listed buildings within the conservation area.

Its strong historic character, predominantly late Georgian, has been maintained for the reasons mentioned above, but also because the village remained within the estate of a single family.

The main portion of the village is clustered around a short, wide street, almost a square, which ends in a cul-de-sac. This square may very possibly have been a stopping place before crossing into Wales. A lane forks just before this place, heading out of the village towards Shotwick Hall and the Vicarage, both properties having a dead end access.

Buildings are in sandstone or brick with patterns in the brick work, pitched roofs and with a few exceptions, slated. In most cases, they retain their original windows such as wooden sashes, casements and neo-gothic cast iron.

With the exception of Church Farm, the northern properties of the village centre are all detached houses, set back from the road with substantial grass verges and boundary walls. The southern properties, both semi-detached and detached, border it directly. Those properties are often separated by small gardens or fields, which also contribute significantly to the local distinctiveness of the area as well as adding to its rural character.

This arrangement, with the winding country lane bordered by woodland leading rather suddenly to a clearing entering the hamlet,



View from St Michael's Church towards the Dee Estuary

contribute significantly to an impression of isolation and separation from the rest of the world, as if it frozen in time some 200 years ago.

The Church, erected initially in Saxon times, situated on a small promontory at the end of the village facing the estuary, adds also greatly to this particular setting.

POSITIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Listed buildings

The listed elements within the conservation area are the key features of its overall character. These include two types of building construction: Church, Hall, cottages, farm houses and farm buildings, dating from the late 11th century (St Michael's Church) up to the late 19th century. Buildings are sandstone or brick built, both weatherworn. They give the whole village a feeling of solid continuity from an earlier age.

Building proposed for listing

It is proposed that the Vicarage, located on Shotwick Vicarage Lane, should be recommended for listing.

A proposal to English Heritage for this building to be considered for listing will be submitted by Chester City Council if this document is approved.

Unlisted buildings of merit

Like the listed buildings, unlisted buildings of merit are varied in their detailing, use of materials and overall form. Most of them seem to date from between the 18th century and the 20th century. When special circumstances arise and for more effective built environment protection in conservation areas, it may be appropriate to consider the provision of article 4 directions and making use of a local list for Shotwick's unlisted buildings of merit.

Local views

Local views are important and contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is essential that full consideration be given to the impact of development proposals upon these views. Important local views include those listed below:

- View from the extreme south of the conservation area looking down the Dee estuary with high cooling towers intruding upon the landscape and the distant Welsh Hills in the back ground.
- Similar view from Shotwick Hall frontage, facing southwest.



Townscape, Topography and Landscape details

The relationships existing between topography, local townscape and

The Vicarage, Vicarage Road

landscape details often contribute to the sense of local distinctiveness and are often unique to a particular conservation area. They can range from specific building detailing, characteristic building elements and boundary treatments, to the quality of the streetscape. Individually and collectively they contribute to the overall quality of Shotwick as well as enhancing individual areas of character within the settlement.

Topography

Shotwick conservation area's topography is mainly flat, with a gentle slope up towards Shotwick Hall.

Townscape details

There are no distinctive local townscape details, but the following factors contribute strongly to the overall local distinctiveness as well as unifying the general layout:

- Sandstone or brick houses with patterns on the brick work, two storeys high
- Pitched roofs with slate or clay tiles
- Casement and sash windows, generally timber built, some neo gothic windows cast iron built.

Boundary treatments, hedgerows and trees

Boundary treatments, hedgerows and trees have a significant impact upon the setting of properties, the coherence of a group and the overall character of a conservation area. Traditional and appropriate treatments will preserve or enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

Boundary treatments

The old walls - varying in height from 400mm to 1600mm - sandstone or brick built add significantly to the townscape of the village usually bordering residential frontages.

It is worth mentioning the short and massive sandstone wall bordering Greyhound Farm, the setting and height of Vicarage Farm front brick wall, while contribute substantially to a sense of "centre" giving a special character and appearance to the way the lane ends in the village. Shotwick Hall's Jacobean garden walls and gate piers, with their strong architectural presence and subtle mixed use of local sandstone and brick, stand impressively, facing open fields and looking out down the Dee Estuary.

Hedgerows and trees

Varied height hedgerows, from 400mm to 3000mm, often border residential properties in the village. The imposing long line of 3000mm high hedgerow fronting the important grounds of the Vicarage reminds us of the former importance of the Church within the hamlet.

The majestic line of mature trees along the lane heading to the Hall similarly evokes the strong presence of the Hockenhull estate



St Michael's Church & Church Farm

in the village, contrasting with the domestic scale of the village lower down.

It is worth mentioning the multi centennial yew tree facing Stone cottage, already shown on an early 1920's photograph. Its prominent location, shape and size adds to the strong sense of stillness in this small conservation area.

Open Spaces

As mentioned previously, the wide street ending the village centre could have been very possibly a stopping place before crossing into Wales and seems to be the only semblance of public space in the village. Important grass verges lie on its northern side and cobble stones front some of the properties abutting the highway. There is strong evidence that cobblestones lie underneath.

Historic floor surface

There is an important presence of cobblestones in the village centre, fronting the southern properties that abut the highway – Stone Cottage, Manor Farm Greyhound Farm, Church Cottage - as well as Church Farm and St Michael's Church entrance on the northern side, very possibly extracted from the estuary, giving a feeling of continuity from an earlier age.

Buildings and their setting in the landscape

The village appears to be divided into two, one domestic clustered group with the Church at one end, and Shotwick Hall and the Vicarage with their imposing grounds in the village fringe.

Shotwick conservation area is notable for varied dwelling setbacks, ranging from buildings directly fronting the street to gardens stretching 18 metres back from the highway boundary, reinforcing the distinctiveness of an area already rich in built heritage.

Boundaries

The boundaries have been reviewed and no changes have been proposed.

NEUTRAL OR NEGATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Neutral elements represent features within the conservation area that offer no strong positive or negative influence upon the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, negative features detract from the special character of an area and present the opportunity for change, which will enhance the character and appearance of an area. Those elements considered neutral or negative features and those elements that represent enhancement opportunities within the conservation area are listed below.

Neutral elements

Shotwick Lane

- Westbrook, semi detached cottage late 1950
- Tralee, semi detached cottage late 1950

Negative elements

Shotwick Village Road

- Firtree Cottage, detached house of the 1950s, situated in the village centre has poorly designed doors and windows with inappropriate texture and colour rendering, a feature that seriously affects the rural character of the area.
- The concrete kerb rounding the curve, south of Firtree cottage, affects seriously the rural character of the area, especially with cobblestones on the other side of the road.

Enhancement opportunities

Streetscape

- The dead end road ending the village would deserve an appropriate landscape scheme

As mentioned previously, the wide street ending in the village centre may very possibly have been a stopping place before crossing onto Wales and seems to be the only semblance of public space in the village. Important grass verges lie on its northern side and cobble stones front some of the properties abutting the highway. There is strong evidence that cobblestones lie underneath. As a proposal to reveal the original streetscape, this part of the street would benefit from the tarmac being removed to expose the cobblestones lying underneath.

Concrete kerb

- The concrete kerb surrounding a round shaped grass verge, south of Firtree cottage, affects the rural character of the area, especially with cobblestones on the other side of the road. This site would benefit from a simple removal of the kerb.

It is hoped that funding to achieve these enhancements may be explored locally in due course.

Building requiring attention

- Firtree Cottage, a detached house of the 1950s, situated in the village centre, has poorly designed doors and windows with inappropriate texture and colour rendering, a visual sore spot that seriously affects the rural character of the area.

It would benefit from the reintroduction of traditional material (i.e. timber) carefully designed as well as another colour and texture of rendering - off-white for instance - or simply plain brick, if the brick is of sufficient quality.

NB: These are suggestions for improvement, but owners should note that the Planning Authority has no powers to implement those recommendations.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

In order to maintain the character and appearance of conservation areas, Chester City Council will use the appropriate pieces of legislation relevant for this task:

- Urgent Work Notice.
This notice relates to a building which is in a very serious state of disrepair and needs basically to be water safe. It should be confirmed by the Secretary of State.
- Tidy Land Provision Notice, section 214 of the Planning Act 1990.
This notice relates to a building and its curtilage that is poorly maintained. It requires a tidy up of the property.
- Dilapidated Building Notice, section 16 of the 1984 Building Act.
This Notice refers to a building that is in a poor state. It implies either repairing the building or removal of the building. In a Conservation Area, such demolition would need a Conservation Area Consent.

THREAT

Increasing car traffic - mainly due to commuting - with its side effects such as street widening, road signs, tree cutting, poorly designed garages and drive ways, inappropriate traffic calming measures, etc. often seriously and irreversibly affects the character of a conservation area.

It is therefore important to foresee and manage very carefully the design and material impact of traffic on new developments, in order to maintain the essential features that make a conservation area special, in accordance with the latest guidance on streets published by the Department for Transport (Manual for Streets, March 2007, www.communities.gov.uk).

SURROUNDINGS OF A CONSERVATION AREA

Developments on properties located in the surroundings of a conservation area should also be considered with great care, in order to maintain the essential features that make an area special.

The dead end road ending in the village merits an appropriate landscape scheme (see proposal in management plan).

APPENDICES

- Map of the conservation area as existing, scale 1:2,500

FURTHER READING

Chester City Council - 1997 *Living in a Conservation Area - A Guide to Householders*
 Chester City Council - November 2006 *Chester District Local Plan*

Relevant Local Plan Policies

- ENV21 Protection of trees and woodland
- ENV24 Preservation of key features within the landscape and its overall character
- ENV37 Preservation or enhancement of conservation areas
- ENV38 Protection of local views
- ENV45 Preservation of the special interest of listed buildings
- ENV46 Appropriate changes of use to listed buildings
- ENV47 Protection of unlisted buildings of merit