

# Shephall Green Conservation Area Appraisal 2009



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Front cover: Top left: Shephall Green; Top right: St Mary's Church  
Bottom left: Shephalbury Farmhouse; Bottom right: Shephall Green

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This appraisal was conducted to define the special interest of Shephall Green Conservation Area in order to help preserve and enhance its character, and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future. The conservation area was designated in 1973 and the boundary was extended in December 2007.

Shephall Green comprises the original village green and settlement directly around it. It includes buildings dating from the medieval period (St. Mary's church) to the late twentieth century; almost all these properties face on to the green reinforcing its position as an attractive green space and focal point. There are a large number of trees upon the Green and throughout the conservation area. Hedge boundaries, grassed areas and front gardens all help to preserve the village setting.

Overall Shephall Green Conservation Area is in a good to fair condition although there are some negative issues including the loss of traditional architectural features, a vacant school premises and vandalism. Some of these issues could be better controlled through the provision of an Article 4 (2) Direction to reduce permitted development rights.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1.1 This appraisal of Shephall Green Conservation Area was conducted by BEAMS Ltd, the trading company of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust between August 2008 and March 2009. The appraisal was commissioned by Stevenage Borough Council in August 2008.
- 1.2 Shephall Green Conservation Area was designated on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1973 following proposals made in the report 'Shephall Green; a study for the conservation of an old village within a new town'; it was designated to preserve '.. the nucleus of the old village which still survives as such within the new town..' ensuring that its character survives the pressures for change and to help the assimilation of new development and redevelopment into the landscape of the village. The conservation area boundary was amended on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to include the area of school playing fields to the east of the green.
- 1.3 A previous study of the conservation area was conducted by BEAMS Ltd in November 2005 in the document 'A Review of Stevenage Conservation Areas'.

### Objectives

- 1.4 The main objectives of this conservation area appraisal are:
- to define the special interest of Shephall Green Conservation Area by analysing its historical development, uses, landscape setting, views and spaces, and through assessment of the architectural and historic qualities of its buildings.
  - to identify neutral areas, negative features and spaces, and the problems, pressures and capacity for change.
  - to provide recommendations on how the conservation area may be enhanced

### Survey

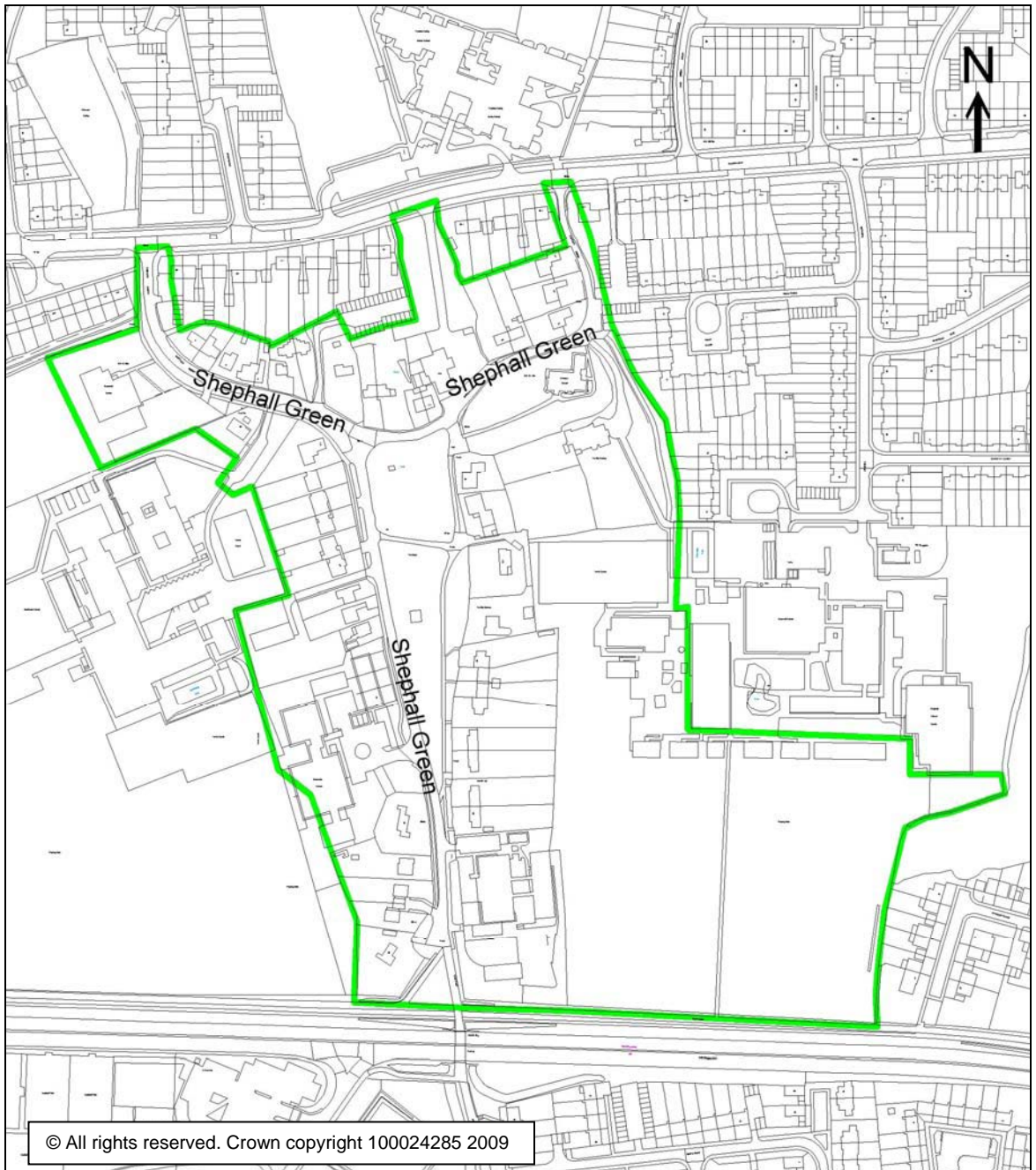
- 1.5 A full photographic record of Shephall Green Conservation Area was made in line with recommendations by English Heritage (2006) to provide 'a baseline for measuring change and monitoring alterations / physical condition'. This will form part of the project archive for use / reference by Stevenage Borough Council. The omission in this report of any particular feature within the conservation area does not imply that it is of no significance or value.

## **2.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 2.1 A Conservation Area is defined under Chapter 9 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) as *an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. Each local planning authority is responsible for the designation of such conservation areas under the Act. Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to ‘... formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement...’ of these conservation areas.
- 2.2 Section 4.3 of Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) recommends that local authorities should ‘...periodically review existing conservation areas and their boundaries...’ against established consistent local standards. Assessment of such conservation areas should then form the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions that aim to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
- 2.3 As a result of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local plans will be replaced by Local Development Frameworks (LDFs). Unlike local plans, the new LDF will be a series of documents. In combination with the regional spatial strategy (RSS) for the East of England the LDF will set out the statutory development and planning framework for Stevenage.
- 2.4 Some policies contained within the Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1998 and the Stevenage District Plan (2004) will continue to exist and will have statutory force until new development plan policies are in place. For further information please refer to the Planning Policy section of the Stevenage Borough Council website.
- 2.5 This appraisal utilised the guidance set by English Heritage, Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, published in February 2006, which offers advice to those undertaking conservation area appraisals.

### **3.0 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

- 3.1 Every conservation area has a distinctive character which is derived from its topography, historic development, current uses and features such as streets, hedges, buildings, monuments and place-names.
- 3.2 Shephall Green is a medieval village settlement which has evolved around the nucleus of the Green. It retains its distinctive village characteristics within the Stevenage New Town context.
- 3.3 Shephall Green contains buildings dating from the medieval period (the church) to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century; almost all these properties face on to the Green reinforcing the village characteristics.
- 3.4 The principal features of Shephall Green Conservation Area are:
- The triangular form of the Green, central to the layout of the village.
  - The significant number of mature trees surviving on the Green, lining the roads and surrounding the church.
  - Significant landmark buildings including the church and cottages along the north side of the Green.
  - The cluster of houses surrounding and facing the Green, which reinforces the village appearance of the Conservation Area.
  - The wide verges and broad paths around and across the Green, as well as significant hedges and front gardens.
  - Views into and out of the Conservation Area.
  - The surrounding playing fields which are remnants of agricultural fields.
- 3.5 Shephall Green has been designated a Conservation Area because of its local history, its interesting and diverse vernacular architecture, and its retained character. The area is bounded by Hydean Way to the north. To the east and west it is bounded by the perimeters of the three schools surrounding the village and their playing fields (the Heathcote School, Greenside Special School and Barnwell School). Shephallbury Park Infant School, located at the south end of the Green has now closed. To the south Shephall Green is bounded by the A602 (Broadhall Way).



**Figure 1.** Shephall Green Conservation Area (green line denotes conservation area boundary)



## **4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **Location and Landscape Setting**

- 4.1 Stevenage is a large town and borough in Hertfordshire. It is located between Welwyn Garden City (to the south) and Letchworth (to the north) and lies just to the east of the A1(M). The total population of the borough is approximately 79,400 with the large area of new town development to the south of Stevenage being the most densely populated.
- 4.2 Shephall Green is a surviving medieval village area to the south east of Stevenage but now lies within the New Town neighbourhood of Shephall, constructed in 1953.
- 4.3 It is approached directly from the surrounding housing areas to the north from Hydean Way (a new road constructed during the construction of the new town neighbourhood) via either the broader western branch of Shephall Green or the narrower eastern lane.
- 4.4 From the south, the approach is along Shephall Green Lane directly under Broadhall Way, but this is only accessible on foot. From the narrow southern end, the Green gradually widens out.
- 4.5 Shephall Green Lane follows the west side of the Green; a footpath runs along the east side of the Green.
- 4.6 The Green is framed by the buildings, hedges and trees around its edges. Particularly important backdrops are the churchyard, church and the group of 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier buildings along the north arc of Shephall Green.

### **Topography**

- 4.7 Shephall Green Conservation Area stands on flat ground with a slight descent towards the south end of the village. Mature trees on and around the green and in the church yard help to reinforce the areas historic rural characteristics.
- 4.8 The predominant use within the area is residential with some educational establishments around the perimeter of the village. Though these are partly outside the Conservation Area, the playing fields to the east and west act as buffer-zones between the village of Shephall Green and Stevenage New Town. The playing field to the east has, since the 2005 recommendation, been included within the Conservation Area boundary.

### **Geology**

- 4.9 The underlying geology of the area is chalk but this lies well beneath gravel and clay-with-flints and surface well-drained loamy soils.

### **General Character and plan form**

- 4.10 The general character and plan form of Shephall Green is of a medieval village that has formed around the triangular nucleus of its Green. It is a residential area south-east of Stevenage town centre with a variety of detached and semi-detached houses of varying heights and frontages. There are several pairs of cottages, some detached homes, a Grade II\* church and a public house. It

comprises phases of vernacular architecture from the medieval period up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all sitting comfortably around the Green.

- 4.11 Today the area benefits from its variety of buildings that are in a good to fair condition, modern and historic land boundaries, hedgerows, paths, green spaces, established trees and a retained village boundary. It was chosen as the best surviving example of an old village within a new town.

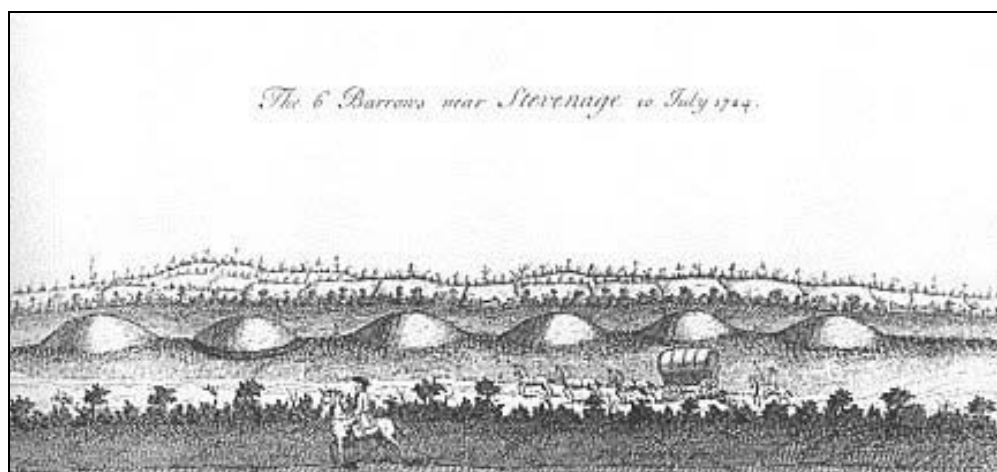
## 5.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

### The origins and development of the area

Shephall Conservation Area is an agricultural medieval settlement. It was first mentioned in the Domesday Book and the village began to grow up in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### Early Development of the Area

- 5.1 Stevenage and its surrounding landscape have been occupied since the prehistoric period (10,000BC – 100BC). Stone axes found buried in the Old Town, Fishers Green and Shephall suggest use of the open landscape by ‘hunter gatherers’ during the early period. However, the first signs of settlement date to the Bronze Age and Iron Age and have been identified from a number of pottery finds, burial sites and domestic pits. Occupation of the Borough increased into the Late Iron Age and Roman period (100BC to 450AD). Towards the end of the Roman period, the landscape probably comprised a series of small farmsteads with burial mounds and cemeteries. The most prominent monuments in Stevenage, Six Hills barrows, are thought to date to the Roman period and lie alongside London Road at the Six Hills Way roundabout. London Road linked the Hertfordshire Roman towns of Verulamium and Baldock, and later was used to form part of the medieval Great North Road between London and Edinburgh. The barrows are one of three scheduled monuments in the Borough (SM 27904; Fig. 2).

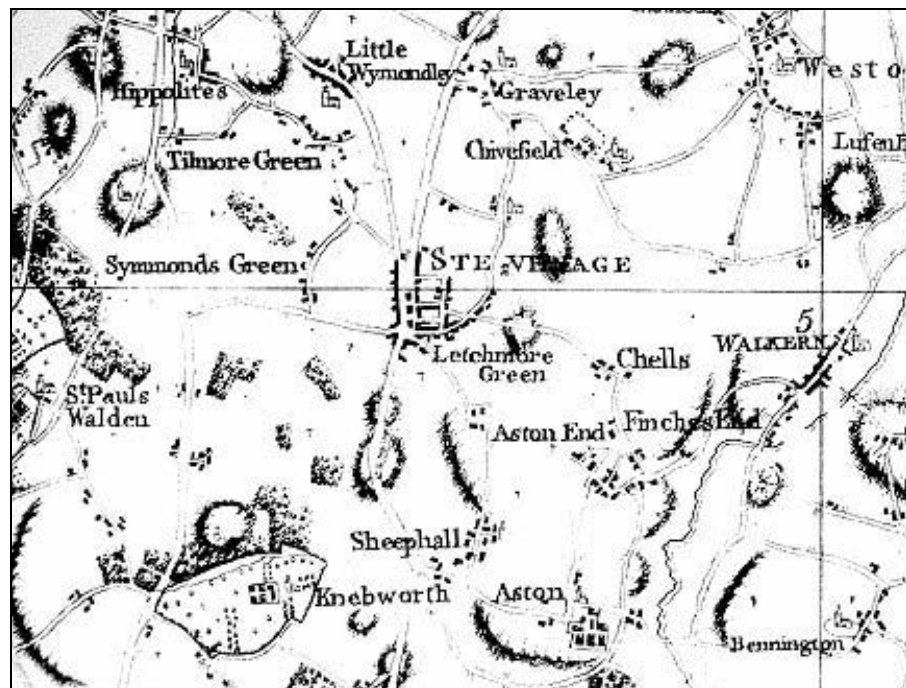


**Figure 2.** Engraving of the Six Hills in 1724 (Ashby 2002)

- 5.2 Evidence of Saxon occupation has been identified from both excavation and historical documentation. The first historical record of the manor of Stevenage is found in the Domesday Book dating to 1086. It was then known as *Sticenaece* which means a place ‘at the strong oak’. The estate had been given to the newly founded Abbey of Westminster by King Edward in 1062. An early village centred around the church of St Nicholas and The Old Bury on Rectory Lane, gradually the focus shifted to Stevenage ‘old town’ which began to develop in the thirteenth century.
- 5.3 Shephall was an entirely separate parish and manor situated in the Hundred of Broadwater. It was recorded as *Escephale* in the Domesday Book of 1086, meaning ‘corner of land where sheep are pastured’. The manor was owned by both the Abbot of St Albans Abbey and the Archbishop of Canterbury and the estate land comprised arable land, meadow and woodland. St Albans Abbey

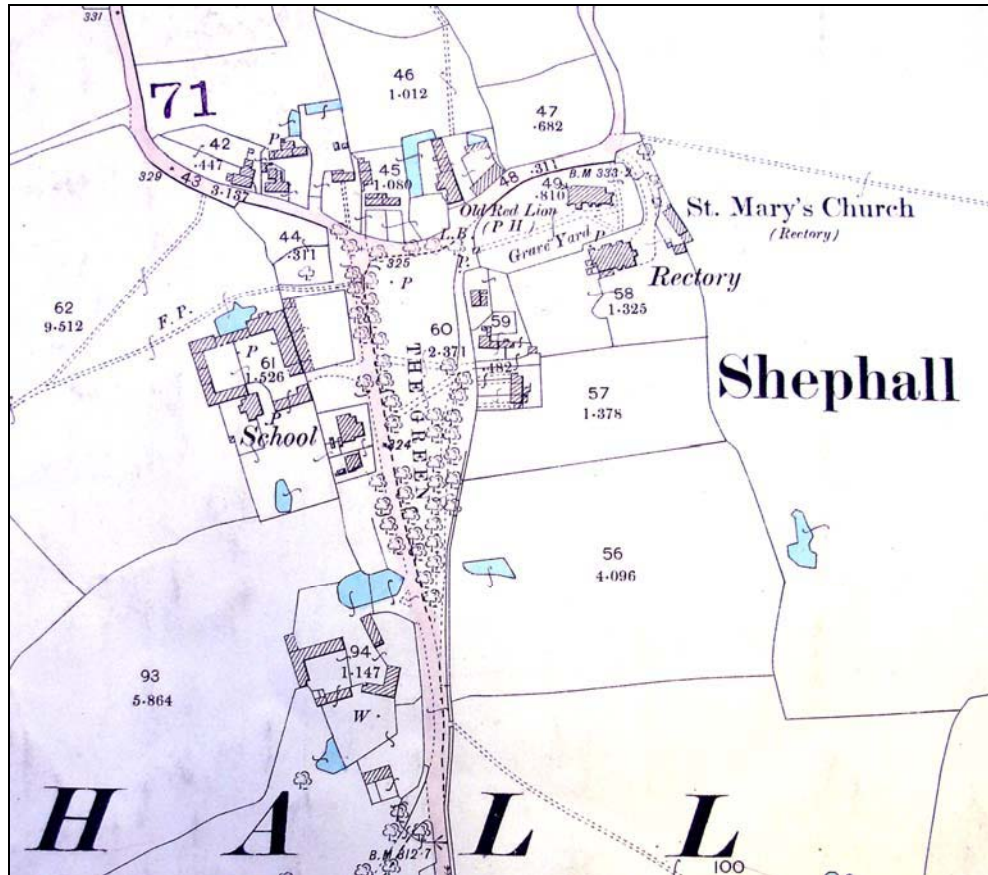
gained overall control of the manor of Shephall and leased it out until the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The village developed around the church, St Mary's, which dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In 1381 the people of Shephall fought against the Poll Tax of King Richard II by joining the Peasants Revolt, led by Watt Tyler. They temporarily secured a number of rights, common pasture and rights of way from St Albans Abbey.

- 5.4 St Albans Abbey was dissolved in 1539 by King Henry VIII and the manor of Shephall was given to George Nodes. The manor remained in the Nodes family until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when it was sold to Michael Heathcote of London.
- 5.5 A small number of farms were built in the vicinity including Broom Barns, Home Farm (Shephallbury Farmhouse on the Green) and the largest – Half Hyde. Housing would have developed around the green, the earliest houses to survive date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and include The Old Rectory and 23 Shephall Green. The Red Lion Public House, Fullers Mead and Mead Cottage (4-5 Shephall Green, Figs. 7 and 10) and 9 Shephall Green also date to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; these properties line the northern edge of Shephall Green. 40 Shephall Green may also date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Historic maps dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries show the village of Shephall was already clearly established (Fig. 3). The population of Shephall is said to have remained stable over the centuries with many of its residents earning a living from a rural existence.



**Figure 3.** 1766 Map of Stevenage Borough (Dury and Andrews)

- 5.6 At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Shephall was the most established village outside Stevenage itself and its population was steady at about 100, but by 1841 it had grown quickly to 265.



**Figure 4.** Shephall Green in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1898 Ordnance Survey map)

- 5.7 A village school was built on the west side of Shephall Green in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has since been demolished but School House (46 Shephall Green) still stands (Figs. 4 & 6).
- 5.8 The manor house located a short distance to the south west of Shephall Green, and outside the conservation area boundary, was demolished and replaced by a new manor house, a red brick neo-Gothic building designed by T Roger Smith in 1864 (Fig. 8).



**Figure 5.** The Green, Shephall c1900 (Ashby 2004)



**Figure 6.** Shephall School and School House (Ashby 2002)



**Figure 7.** Fullers Mead Cottage, Mead Cottage and a brick and flint house since demolished (Ashby 2004)



**Figure 8.** Shephalbury (Ashby 2004)

- 5.9 In 1947 land around Shephall Green was compulsory purchased under the New Towns Act by Stevenage Development Corporation and a new neighbourhood, Shephall, incorporating the three areas - Leaves Spring, Half Hyde and Bandle Hill was constructed between 1953 and 1955. A decision was made to retain Shephall Green in its existing form although further houses were built on the western side of the green in the 1970s and 1980s. As part of the 'New Town' development the Broadhall Centre was constructed in the north-west corner of Shephall Green (Fig. 9). It opened in 1956 as a community hall leased to the Broadhall Community Association.



**Figure 9.** The Broadhall Centre

- 5.10 Schools were built to the east and west of Shephall Green (Barnwell, Shephallbury Park Infant and Heathcote Schools); and in 1976 Greenside Special School was constructed on the west side of the Green.

### **The archaeological significance and potential of the area**

- 5.11 Human activity has been recorded in and around Stevenage since prehistory. Of the 200 entries that currently appear on the Historic Environment Record for Stevenage, eight are sited within the Shephall Green conservation area and include some listed and locally important buildings, and the village of Shephall itself.
- 5.12 There are no scheduled monuments within the Shephall Green Conservation Area. Medieval pottery (HHER 2918) was found on the site of the Broadhall Centre during its construction. The potential for archaeological finds must be assumed in the vicinity of the church, around the Green and upon the school playing fields. A Neolithic stone axe (HHER 424) was discovered on the Barnwell School site. Evidence for late Iron Age / early Roman occupation has been found in the vicinity of Shephallbury Manor to the south-west of the conservation area. The entire conservation area falls within an 'Area of Archaeological Significance' (Stevenage District Plan, 2004).





**Figure 10.** Fullers Mead, Shephall Green c1900 (Ashby, 1982)



**Figure 11.** Fullers Mead, Shephall Green in 2008

## 6.0 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Spatial analysis seeks to identify the character and interrelationship of space within an area and is an important consideration in the designation of a Conservation Area. Shephall Green has retained its character and appearance as a small village.

### Open spaces

6.2 The green is the principal focus and area of open space within the conservation area. The approaches into the green from all directions are dominated by views of the green with its many trees. The housing surrounding the triangular green help to enclose the area, the green is delineated primarily by hedges, and in the case of the churchyard, by a low flint and brick wall. The churchyard is another area of open space containing a number of trees and tomb monuments including an old yew tree. The school playing fields to the east side of the conservation area are enclosed by trees and hedges.

### Landmark buildings

6.3 Within the conservation area are a small number of landmark buildings dating to different periods. These are visually important structures that make a statement, form a full stop at the beginning or end of a view, hold an important corner position, can be seen at a distance or stand above the general roofline of the surrounding buildings (Fig. 12). These landmark buildings are:

- The church of Saint Mary, views of this building are gained when entering the churchyard
- The Red Lion Public House



(a)



(b)

**Figure 12.** Landmark buildings in Shephall Green conservation area; The Church of St Mary (a), The Old Red Lion Public House (b)

### Focal point

6.4 The main focal point of the conservation area is the Green itself including its trees and well cover (Fig. 13). The Green forms the heart of the village, and all the houses face inwards, looking onto the Green. The visitors gaze is likewise, drawn to the centre of the green.



(a)



(b)

**Figure 13.** Focal points of the Shephall Green Conservation Area; the well cover (a), the Green (b)

### **Key views and vistas**

- 6.5 The key views of Shephall Green are those looking into and out of the green from all directions. They all reinforce the rural character of the area by being bordered by trees, hedges or neat cottage gardens. The high hedge along the southern boundary of the conservation area is a noticeable and impressive feature when viewed from Broadhall Way.

## 7.0 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

7.1 As Shephall Green Conservation Area is in essence what remains of a small village focussed around a village green it has its own distinct unified character and does not need to be broken down into separate character zones. The area is predominantly residential although there are schools within, and surrounding the conservation area; the Greenside, Barnwell and Heathcote schools.

### **Architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and their contribution to special interest of the area**

7.2 The appearance of the buildings within Shephall Green is mixed and much relates to their period of construction; however most buildings are two storeys and constructed of brick. There is a mixture of detached and terraced properties. The older buildings are those that lend the area its special architectural and historic interest; these are mostly ranged along the north side of the Green.

Statutory listed buildings within Shephall Green are:

- Church of Saint Mary. Grade II\*. 733/5/58. Listed 1948 (listed Grade II\* 1999)
- The Old Rectory. Grade II. 5/150. Listed 1976
- Shephalbury Farmhouse. Grade II. 5/60. Listed 1948
- 23 Shephall Green. Grade II. 5/10000. Listed 1993

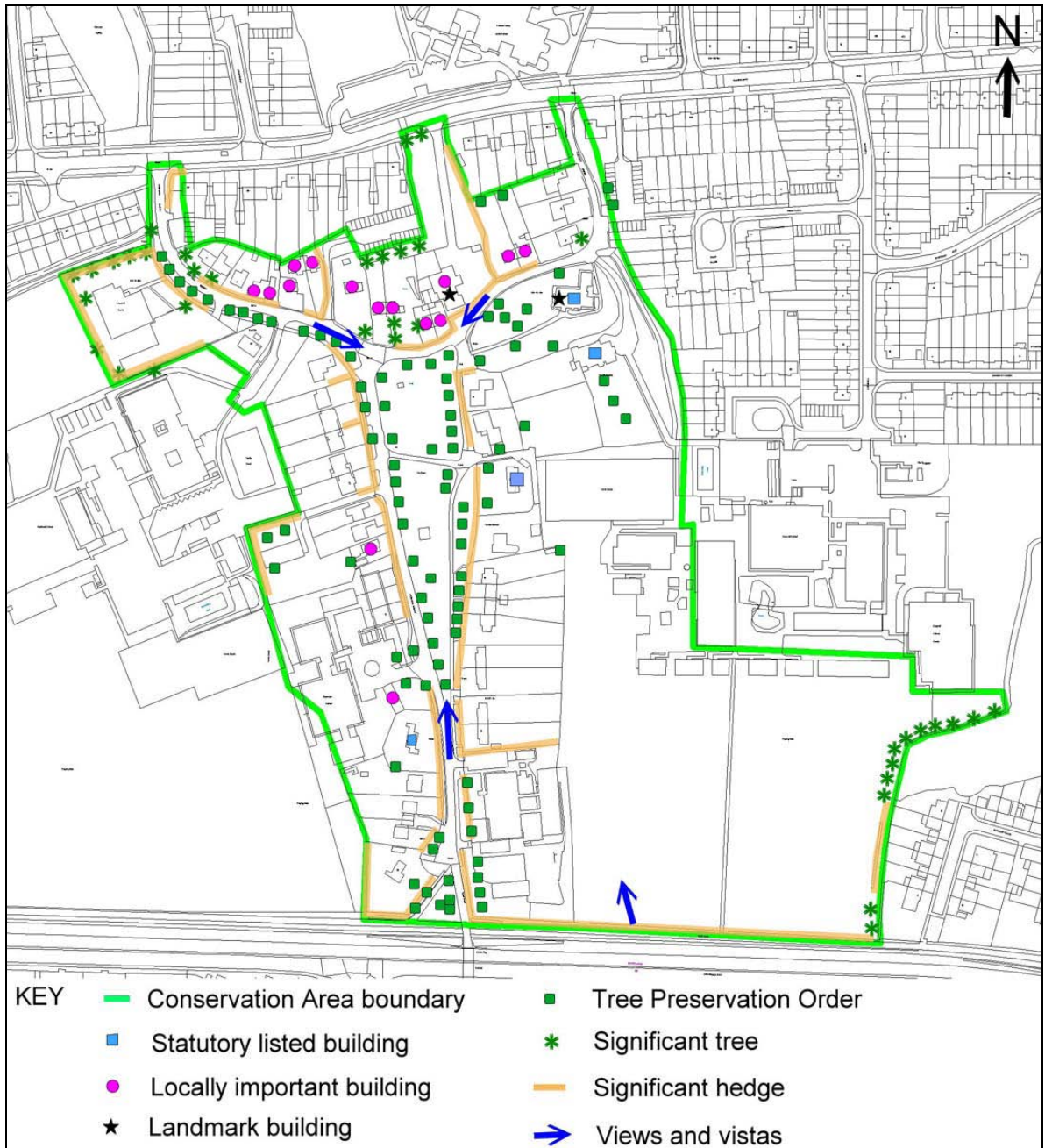


(a)



(b)

**Figure 14.** Two of the listed buildings within Shephall Green Conservation Area; Church of Saint Mary (a), Shephalbury Farmhouse (b)



**Figure 15.** Character analysis map of Shephall Green Conservation Area

7.3 Buildings of importance to the conservation area are indicated on the conservation area map forming part of this report (Fig. 15). These are:

- Fullers Mead and Mead Cottage, 4 and 5 Shephall Green  
Single story dwelling sub-divided into two units. Probably late 16<sup>th</sup> / early 17<sup>th</sup> century single storey cottage with rear addition. Timber framed. Tiled roof with two dormers. External cement render. Modern timber diamond lattice windows with shutters to ground floor front.
- 6 Shephall Green  
2 storey red brick house with tiled roof. Flemish bond, some blue headers. Probably early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, replaced earlier building. Modern timber diamond lattice windows.
- 7 and 8 Shephall Green  
Pair of two storey yellow stock brick cottages with slate roof. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two enclosed front porches. Timber sashes (no.7). UPVC double glazed windows (no.8).
- 9 Shephall Green  
Single storey cottage. Probably late 16<sup>th</sup> / early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Timber framed. External cement render. Enclosed front porch. Tiled roof with two dormers. UPVC windows.
- 10 and 11 Shephall Green  
Pair of two storey semi-detached houses in yellow stock brick with slate roof. Probably late 18<sup>th</sup> century with rear extensions. Timber sashes, 2-over-2 (no.10), 6-over-6 (no.11). Modern front porch to no.10. Weather-boarded single storey adjoined outhouse with corrugated roof to no.11.
- 12 and 13 Shephall Green  
Pair of two storey semi-detached houses in red brick, render to first floor. Tiled roof. Probably early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some timber windows, some uPVC windows.
- The Red Lion Public House, 14 Shephall Green  
Oldest part to the front, south elevation. Single storey red brick building with dormer 6-over-6 sash window in attic. Half hipped slate roof. Flemish bond with some blue headers. Probably dates to the late 17<sup>th</sup> / early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later two and single storey extensions to rear with several different types of timber windows, and gabled tiled or slate roofs.
- 15 and 16 Shephall Green  
Pair of single storey semi-detached cottages with dormers and small roof light in attic. Red brick with tiled roof. Modern timber and UPVC windows to no.15, UPVC windows to no.16. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 46 Shephall Green  
Two storey red brick house. Stretcher bond to ground floor. Flemish bond with some tile hung walls to first floor. Tiled roof, part gabled, part hipped and half hipped. Timber open porch. Timber windows. Mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century former school house.

- Barn north of Shephalbury Farmhouse  
 Timber framed and weather boarded barn on brick sill. Corrugated iron gabled roof. Two large air conditioning units attached to gabled end. Formerly part of Shephalbury Farm, now within grounds of Greenside School, possibly used as a classroom. May originally date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century; contemporary with adjacent listed farmhouse. Heavily renovated and converted.

7.4 Some of the buildings referred to above have appeared on a list of locally important buildings produced by Hertfordshire County Council, in the Urban Characterisation Study and in the Stevenage Extensive Urban Survey Report (Hertfordshire County Council 1973; Stevenage Urban District Council 1973; Thompson 2005; Thompson 2002). Other buildings have been added during the 2005 review. This list is not intended to be an exhaustive record of buildings located in the conservation area. Some buildings are listed / described as a group, rather than individually. Where buildings are included within a joint listing / description they are indicated separately on the character analysis map (Fig. 15).



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

**Figure 16.** Buildings of local importance within Shephall Green Conservation Area; Fullers Mead & Mead Cottage (a), 6 Shephall Green (b), 7 & 8 Shephall Green (c), 9 Shephall Green (d)



(a)



(b)



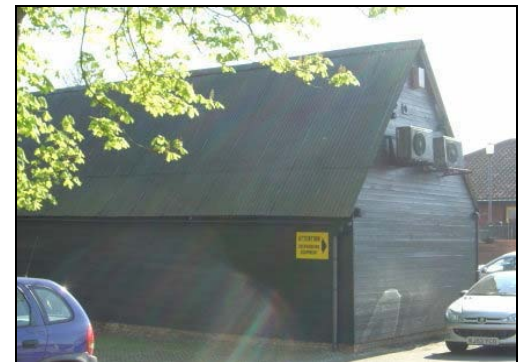
(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

**Figure 17.** Buildings of local importance within Shephall Green Conservation Area; 10 & 11 Shephall Green (a), 12 & 13 Shephall Green (b), Red Lion PH (c), 15 & 16 Shephall Green (d), 46 Shephall Green (e), barn north of Shephalbury Farmhouse (f)

7.5 On the south-east side of the green are some attractive mid 20<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses and on the north-west side later 20<sup>th</sup> century houses. Aside from their intrinsic interest, the older buildings amongst or close to these are important for “tying-in” the 20<sup>th</sup> century housing to the overall character. What the variously aged houses have in common is that they are of modest size, of two storeys, and are facing on to the Green (The Old Rectory is the exception but this of course had a special relationship with the church). Indeed, the way the houses are arranged around the Green is an important determinant of the conservation area’s character.

7.6 Unsurprisingly, the school buildings do not relate particularly to prevailing patterns here. It is however, notable in terms of land use, that school buildings



have been part of the make up of the village since certainly the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (only the former school house, 46 Shephall Green, now survives).



**Figure 18.** Examples of mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing within the conservation area

7.7

### **Prevalent and traditional building materials**

Most of the houses surrounding Shephall Green are two-storey but there are a few older single and one and a half storey cottages on the north side of the green. Roof ridges generally run parallel with the Green and gables are common. Brickwork is generally of brown tones and roof coverings are mostly small tiles and on some Victorian buildings, slate.

*Walls:* Brick, red / brown in tone, occasionally rendered, used in the construction of the majority of the buildings on the Green. The Church being an exception (constructed of flint, stone and some brick). Older properties such as The Old Rectory, Shephallbury Farmhouse and 23 Shephall Green are of timber frame construction (with brick / plaster infill / cladding) and date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

*Roofs:* Clay tiles, on some Victorian buildings slate has been used.

*Windows:* timber sashes, timber casements, crittall windows on the mid-twentieth century properties. uPVC windows have been used on the later twentieth century dwellings and as replacement windows in older properties.

*Doors:* timber.

*Chimney stacks:* brick, matching the brick colour of the house.

### Local details

- 7.8 The vernacular cottage style of architecture, particularly noticeable on the north side of Shephall Green, emphasises the original village structure of the settlement – which is a unique, local characteristic within the context of Stevenage New Town. There are houses from most decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which also gives the village a sense of continuity rather than stagnation.

### Contribution made to the character of the area by green spaces

- 7.9 The Green is a strong and unifying presence in the make up of Shephall Green. The village has evolved and continues to evolve around it. The importance of the Green cannot be underestimated. Wide verges, pathways, significant hedges and cottage style front gardens also provide a positive contribution to the green spaces of Shephall Green, which all impact upon its status as an historic village with its roots in rural Hertfordshire. The playing fields to the east and west of Shephall Green also have a positive impact on the green spaces of the village. Though the playing field to the east has now been included in the Conservation Area, the playing field to the west has not. These are both remnants of old agricultural land. Their proximity to Shephall Green is a reminder that it was once a rural and not a suburban village, and these green spaces should be considered as much a part of the village as the Green itself.



(a)



(b)

**Figure 19.** Views into Shephall Green; from the south (a), front the north-west (b)

### Trees

- 7.10 There are a significant number of mature trees which are part of the character of the conservation area, these are,

- along the north, east and west perimeters of the Green
- at the south end of the green just before Shephall Green Lane meets the dual carriageway of Broadhall Way
- along the south side of the path at the north east corner of the conservation area behind 88 – 98 (even) Hydean Way
- within the churchyard

The majority of the trees within the conservation area are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO 8), including those trees planted in the 1950's which are now reaching maturity.

The Norway maple trees located at the north end of the green were planted in memory of Councillor Fred Millard. The large mature Oak at the south end of the Green was planted by Miss Evelyn Heathcote as part of the celebrations to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935.

### **Negative factors**

- 7.11 The main issue is the parking pressure on the Green including parking on the Green at night and driving over the Green. The houses on the east of the Green have pedestrian access to the front of the properties, but seem to have little or no vehicular access. Vehicles occasionally park on the east side of the green which does mar its appearance. The problem is compounded during school term time, with a large amount of vehicular access required, particularly to the Greenside School. The road to the west of the Green is barely wide enough to allow two cars to pass, but with parking at peak times it becomes a single track road.
- 7.12 The visual amenity of the area at the north end of the Green is harmed by a proliferation of highways signage and waste bins - some free-standing, some on lamp-posts and some on sign-posts. Grass verges have become worn due to cars parking on them. Also, at the north end of the village is a small electricity compound. It is fenced off with a wire mesh fence and so is highly visible and creates a negative impact on the historic cottages opposite.
- 7.13 The disused and vandalised modern BT telephone box just outside the church and opposite the Old Red Lion public house is unsightly (Fig. 20).
- 7.14 There is a memorial plaque and circular brick setting to the north east of the village near the church. The plaque states that the seat is in memory of a local councillor, yet the seat itself is missing.
- 7.15 The church lych gate is also missing from the main entrance to the churchyard, this significant feature was removed after being vandalised and it has yet to be restored / replaced.



**Figure 20.** Vandalised redundant telephone kiosk

*Loss of traditional architectural features*

- 7.16 There is a proliferation of UPVC windows in this historic village. In some of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century properties this is acceptable, but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and older properties they are out of keeping with the appearance of the building (Fig. 21).



**Figure 21.** Pair of 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages, one has retained its original timber sash windows, the other has uPVC replacement windows.

*Buildings that make a negative impact*

- 7.17 Shephallbury Park Primary School does not enhance the character of the conservation area in its present condition. The site is currently empty and is for sale (it is understood planning permission has been granted for residential redevelopment of the site). This building has the potential to make a greater negative impact if it is vandalised and allowed to deteriorate further.



**Figure 22.** Shephallbury Park Primary School

*The existence of neutral areas or buildings*

- 7.18 It could be argued that some of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing is of neutral character, though it has already been stated that these properties are representative of the continuing evolution of the village.
- 7.19 New development since designation has consisted mainly of a small amount of in-fill (No.3, and either side of No.23), plus the frontage at Greenside school on the western side of the Green. These have had limited impact.
- 7.20 The car park to the rear of The Red Lion Public House consists of a large expanse of tarmac surfacing and does not create a particularly attractive setting to the public house when viewed from the northern boundary of the conservation area. Fortunately the car park is not visible from within Shephall Green.

## **8.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- 8.1 As part of the 'Review of Stevenage Conservation Areas' (BEAMS Ltd, 2005) public consultation was conducted through press releases, access to the Council's website and targeted invitation to local interest groups.
- 8.2 Conservation area consultation was undertaken by Stevenage Borough Council between 9<sup>th</sup> July and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2007 regarding the amendment to the Shephall conservation area boundary as proposed in the Review of Stevenage Conservation Areas (BEAMS Ltd, 2005).
- 8.3 Consultation in this instance was undertaken in accordance with the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and comprised:
- Letter and A4 booklets sent to each household (approx. 1,100) within existing or proposed conservation areas.
  - Letters and A4 booklets sent to neighbouring councils, regional and national agencies and other key stakeholders.
  - An advert in the Comet newspaper for the start of the consultation period.
  - A similar advert in the Comet towards the end of the consultation period.
  - Posters in the reception area at Daneshill House.
  - Publicity on the council's website with the ability to view proposals and provide feedback.
- 8.4 It was proposed that school playing fields to the east and west of the currently designated area be incorporated as these represent the historic agricultural field boundaries. 56% of respondents agreed with the proposal, only 7 respondents made additional comments on the proposal, most of which related to parking issues. Two comments suggested that the school buildings and playing fields do not offer any architectural merit and, as the fields are protected by current District Plan policies, they should not be included. This included a response from Hertfordshire County Council, owners of the land. In light of the significant benefits to be gained from the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, which significantly affects the Barnwell and Heathcote school sites, the extension of the conservation area onto the Heathcote site was not proceeded with.

## 9.0 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

### *Unlisted buildings / buildings of local importance:*

9.1 The appraisal has noted that the architectural integrity of some unlisted properties within the conservation area has already been compromised by the use of modern materials such as uPVC windows, modern roofing materials or the addition of obtrusive porches. The Council may wish to consider the introduction of Article 4(2) Directions to restrict permitted development. Article 4(2) Directions would be a useful tool in strengthening controls over the unsympathetic alteration of unlisted buildings which cumulatively have an adverse affect on the character of the conservation area. This could be developed further in future detailed Management Plans.

9.2 The appraisal has identified a number of unlisted 'buildings of local importance' to the conservation area. They are of historic / architectural interest and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. As such they should be retained and the impact of any alterations or change of use considered in relation to their existing character.

### *New development:*

9.3 Design briefs should be produced for any significant development sites.

General principles should be applied regarding any new development:

- Proposals to develop / redevelop sites or convert buildings to new uses will be required to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.
- The design, position, scale, massing and materials of new development will be expected to respect the existing character of the conservation area.
- Roofs to be of simple pitched, gabled form and characteristic building orientation to be maintained. The principal features of the Shephall Green Conservation Area are the vernacular cottage style architecture and the way properties front on to the Green.

### *Public House:*

9.4 The Red Lion Public House has been long established within Shephall; its retention and continued use should be encouraged.

### *Public realm:*

9.5 The issue of car parking on the Green and reducing the numbers of cars driving across and parking on it should be addressed. The addition of a further access road across the Green should be discouraged as this will create a physical divide across the Green and detract from its character and appearance as a green open space. It will also alter the long-established historic form of Shephall Green.

9.6 Rationalise the number of waste bins and highways signs at the north of the village and across the Green. The yellow plastic waste bins attached to posts are visually unappealing and do not enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

9.7 The BT telephone box opposite the public house detracts from the character of the conservation area in its present state; ideally it should be removed / replaced by its owners (BT).

- 9.8 Restore seating to the brick paved area in the north east corner of the Green.
- 9.9 The lamp post by the Old Red Lion Public House is not a Windsor design and should be replaced.
- 9.10 The lych gate to Saint Mary's Church should be re-instated.
- 9.11 The statutory listing of Nos. 4 & 5 Shephall Green should be considered.



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**APPENDIX 1: Extracts from 'The London Gazette' regarding Shephall Green Conservation Area designation / boundary alteration**

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971**

**SECTION 277**

*Conservation Areas*

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, that the area briefly described in the Schedule hereto being an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, was designated as a Conservation Area for the purpose of section 277 of the said Act by the Hertfordshire County Council as local planning authority on 1st October 1973.

Copies of the designated area map have been deposited at the offices of the Stevenage Urban District Council, Southgate House, Southgate, Stevenage and at the County Planning Office, County Hall, Hertford, where they may be inspected during normal office hours from Mondays to Fridays inclusive.

**THE SCHEDULE**

*Stevenage Urban District  
Shephall Green*

The Shephall Green Conservation area is centred on the elongated Green which, together with its surrounding buildings, forms the nucleus of the village of Shephall now included within the boundary of the designated area of Stevenage New Town.

The western boundary of the Shephall Green conservation area runs southwards along the eastern boundary of the eastern approach run to the Green from its junction with Hydean Way and along the eastern side of St. Mary's Church and Churchyard to include the former rectory and its garden. The boundary then runs southwards along the eastern boundary of the properties facing the eastern side of the Green. The southern boundary is formed by Broadhall Way. The western boundary runs northwards along the rear of the properties on the west side of the Green. It then turns westwards and northwards to include the entrance to Heathcote School and the Broadhall Community Centre. The junction of the western boundary approach run to the Green and Hydean Way is included. The northern boundary of the Conservation Area returns eastwards along the rear of the properties fronting the north side of the Green, running northeast and south to include the car park of the Red Lion Public House and returns eastwards and northwards along the eastern approach run to its junction with Hydean Way.

*Peter Boyce*, Clerk of the County Council.

County Hall, Hertford.

25th January 1974.

(771)

Extract from The London Gazette, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1975

***Stevenage Borough Council***

**PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS)  
ACT 1990**

**AMENDMENTS TO 3 CONSERVATION AREAS AND  
DESIGNATION OF 2 NEW CONSERVATION AREAS**

Notice is hereby given that at its meeting on 19 December 2007  
Stevenage Borough Council resolved to:

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Amend conservation area boundaries      Rectory Lane & St Nicholas  
at:

Shephall Green  
Symonds Green

Designate new conservation areas at:      Broadwater (Marymead)  
Orchard Road

Copies of the appraisals and plans defining the conservation areas can  
be obtained from the Stevenage Borough Council website at:  
[www.stevenage.gov.uk/planningandregeneration](http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planningandregeneration) or, the Planning Policy  
Team at Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete,  
Stevenage, SG1 1HN. (438075)

Extract from The London Gazette, 25 January 2008