

Chawton Village Design Statement

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Further copies are available from Chawton Parish Council or East Hampshire District Council (EHDC)

Production of the Chawton Village Design Statement (VDS)

Following advice from the Countryside Agency, Chawton Parish Council asked residents to form a Village Design Statement Committee in 2001, and volunteers were sought through the Parish Magazine. A group of 10 was formed, with representatives chosen from all geographical areas of the village and parish.

After discussions with EHDC officers, initial views were sought through a questionnaire delivered to all households within the parish boundary. The questionnaire, which contained a map of the area, requested opinions on what were regarded as the important characteristics of the village, including: buildings, architectural features, open spaces, walks, landscape views, traffic, public facilities. It also sought views on potential development.

A response rate of more than 70% was achieved, and an analysis of the results was conducted by members of the Chawton VDS Committee. The data was divided among five working groups, each handling one or more topic, which calculated the opinions most representative of the village as a whole. From these findings, a presentation was made to a public meeting at the end of 2001 and further feedback sought. The results were also published in the Parish Magazine. Based on this final analysis, the committee then wrote and edited the design statement. This first draft was given to the Parish Council for their input and approval in 2002. Meanwhile photographs were taken of the village throughout the seasons, and a second draft VDS was submitted for discussion with EHDC officers in 2003.

The final draft was prepared as an Exhibition in the village at Jane Austen's Granary early in 2004 and publicised in the Parish Magazine. Following the exhibition the Chawton VDS was approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Councillors at the Area North West Community Committee.

Introduction and Status of the VDS

Welcome to the Chawton Village Design Statement, produced by the people of Chawton to record the outstanding features of the community and its surroundings. It aims to encapsulate what makes this village special and to provide guidance for householders, planners and other interested parties, on any future development.

Chawton, a settlement now of approximately 150 homes, has a history dating back 1,000 years. Set in beautiful open countryside just within the designated South Downs National Park, but close to the town of Alton, it faces very individual challenges. It is fortunate to retain many buildings of architectural and historical merit, including Chawton House and the home of the novelist Jane Austen, resulting in invasions of tourists. But it is also very much an active, living village with a church and village hall, primary school, pub, tea shop and, shortly, a literary centre.

For all the residents of Chawton, present and future, it is vital to balance the inevitable pressures of modernisation with maintaining the village's charm, character and independence. This VDS, which advises how that should be achieved, is the result of extensive consultation. A questionnaire was delivered to all households in the village, of which a majority returned detailed answers. The responses were analysed and discussed over a period of several months, with further opinion sought at a public meeting and through the parish magazine

In broad terms the results were clear and, for ease of use, some main points are summarised here:

- It is essential for the integrity of the village to maintain the divide, known as the Chawton Gap, between the village and Alton
- The rural nature of the approaches to the village should be preserved
- No building should be undertaken that detracts from key aspects of the village, including the central street scene, the village green, the cricket field, the church and its surrounding parkland

- Any new development should complement the existing buildings or structures in style, materials and size

In the following pages the character of the village and its setting are explored in detail. The Countryside Agency sets out the following objectives for a design statement:

- to describe the distinctive character of the village and the surrounding countryside
- to show how character can be identified at three levels: the landscape setting, the shape of the settlement, and the nature of the buildings
- to draw up design principles based on the distinctive local character
- to work in partnership with the local planning authority in the context of existing local planning policy, and to influence future policies

As each section is discussed, guidance on design is given in the text in a tinted box where appropriate. In accordance with government aims, the report's conclusions have been adopted by East Hampshire District Council as supplementary planning guidance to the Local Planning documents. Local Plans or Local Development Frameworks are the principal documents outlining policies for the area and guiding new developments within East Hampshire. Their policies are set within a framework of Government advice, regional and county policies, now added to by the designated South Downs National Park purposes. Other supplementary planning guidance adopted by the Council includes the Countryside Design Summary, Design Guide for Residential Extensions and other Village Design Statements. The Chawton VDS will form a useful adjunct to these documents.

Over time the VDS may need to be reviewed to ensure that it is still in line with changes or revisions to any higher tier of planning policy. The guidelines in this VDS should be followed by anyone considering development within the village, and we hope that by doing so, Chawton will retain and improve its village character and historic legacy for many generations to come

History

Although it is possible that the Romans may have had some kind of a settlement in the village, and it is known that the Saxons called it Cealfa-tun, meaning roughly ‘the place where calves are reared’, the first substantial mention of Chawton comes in the Domesday Book. Here it is referred to as Celtone. A translation of the actual entry reads:

CHAWTON. Odo held it from King Edward in freehold. There were 10 hides but King Edward put it for service and tax at 4 hides and 1 virgate. Land for 8 ploughs. In lordship 4 ploughs; 19 villagers and 8 smallholders with 5 ploughs. 6 slaves; meadow, 6 acres; woodland at 50 pigs. Value before 1066 £10; later £10; now £12.

The village had perhaps 33 adults, around one eighth of the present population, was owned by the Saxon Odo of Winchester and was a subsistence farming community relying on the use of the surrounding woodland for grazing, gathering foods and wood. All this changed when in about 1087 William the Conqueror granted Chawton to Hugh de Port, a Norman, who applied the king’s ‘Forest Law’ and made the area into a large, private farming estate with the peasants holding fixed proportions of common fields which rotated between crops and grazing. Southfield, Eastfield and Northfield (but not Westfield) are names still used. It is not certain if a manor house existed before 1224, nor how large was the house built in that year, but it must have been extensive and the estate well organised, because the monarchs of the day would regularly spend time in Chawton on their way to and from Winchester accompanied by the royal household.

Due to its position at the point where the main road from London divided to go on to Winchester or to Southampton, and because it was close to the Pilgrim route (now the Pilgrims’ Way footpath) from Winchester to Canterbury, Chawton must have been familiar to many travellers. Recent research by Chawton House Library has shown that several medieval kings, Henry III and Edwards I, II and III, stayed at Chawton House between 1229 and 1331 a total of 31 times. However, the village did not grow substantially during the Middle Ages, and nor has it grown much since, possibly because the market town of Alton rapidly became more important. It suffered more than most places

from the infamous lawlessness of ‘the Pass of Alton’ in the 13th and 14th Centuries and there is no doubt that many of the villagers were involved in the robberies that took place – in 1338 Edward III ordered the imprisonment of almost every prominent citizen of the village!

Throughout history a large part of the story of Chawton has been that of the Great House and its estate (the original deeds of 1304 still exist) and to a lesser extent that of St. Nicholas Church. The Chawton estate passed through a number of families until it was acquired in 1524 by the Knight family who occupied it until the 1980s and who still own much of the freehold. The bulk of the village was sold in 1951 and Chawton House itself, a Grade II* listed Jacobean mansion, has now been restored by an American charity to much of its former glory. It is now a library devoted to the works of women, up to and including Jane Austen, who wrote in the English language.

Probably because it was not taxable there was no mention of a church in Chawton in the Domesday Book. But Hugh de Port was a man of considerable piety who ended his days as a monk and it seems likely that he would have established some place of worship whilst he owned the estate. A church certainly existed by 1270, the names of patrons and incumbents are known since 1289 and parish registers exist from 1596. The building was considerably altered when in 1871 a new heating apparatus set the building on fire. All but the chancel was so badly damaged that it had to be rebuilt; this was done within a year and St. Nicholas is now listed Grade II* as a virtually unaltered and therefore rare Sir Arthur Blomfield edifice.

The social history of Chawton in the 19th Century has been studied in some detail from the records of the population census taken every ten years since 1831. Considerable detail about individuals and general social life has come out of two studies, one of the history of the church and another of the cataloguing of the memorials in the churchyard. However, Chawton is currently best known nationally and internationally because of its association with the author Jane Austen who revised, wrote and published her major novels whilst living in the village between 1809 and 1817. She lived in

what was then, and is still, the very heart of the village, a connection which attracts tens of thousands of visitors a year to the house where

she lived, the church where she worshipped and the village which she loved and would largely recognise could she visit it today.

Community

Whilst this VDS is primarily concerned with bricks and mortar and landscapes there are two good reasons why the way of life of the inhabitants of Chawton is very relevant to the importance which should be placed on their wishes when developments are considered. Firstly, there is considerable community spirit within this very traditional and increasingly rare type of village; everyone pretty well knows everyone else and virtually all the traditional village celebrations, such as an annual fete are held. None of the houses are currently secondary homes and whilst most breadwinners have to commute to work, no house is unoccupied during a working week.

Secondly, the association with Jane Austen attracts upwards of 30,000 visitors a year, many from overseas and most of these tend to wander around the village after visiting the museum and expect to see the village as a whole kept as

something of a tourist attraction. It is reasonable to say that the name of the village is now sufficient to attract more than just Jane Austen aficionados. Typically when the village opens its gardens to the public at weekends up to 7,000 people will come, many from long distances, to browse around the parts they are not normally able to see.

Some years ago villagers subscribed to buy a field in the centre of the village as a Village Green and a children's playground has been built there. Chawton's only pub is The Greyfriar which is located in the centre of the village, virtually alongside a classic English tea-shop named after Jane Austen's sister Cassandra. Along with the Village Hall, and the Church of England Primary school, these community buildings help to keep the focus of the village at its geographical heart.

Landscape

The village of Chawton lies in a classic lowland landscape, with undulating open countryside running into the Hampshire Hangers on the east side, with a well managed chalk stream valley and historic parkland on the west. The Hampshire Landscape produced by Hampshire County Council describes the Chawton area as part of the Hampshire Downs. Its “sweeping hills provide a sense of openness and space”, “combined with numerous ancient woodlands and hedgerows”, and with much “managed parkland associated with historic houses”. East Hampshire District Council describes the area as having “distant views and large arable fields” with “wooded hills and valleys of parkland landscape” in their Countryside Design Summary. The landscape around much of the parish has been deemed to be of international quality, and as such forms part of the designated South Downs National Park.

Chawton village is located 2.5 miles (4 km) to the southwest of Alton, separated from it by fields and paddocks, and crucially by the A31 by-pass. Opinion in the parish was unanimous that the gap between Chawton and Alton should be protected for all time. The character of the settlements changes on reaching the hills to the immediate south of Alton, and beyond the Butts Bridge it starts to become more urbanised in nature. However, the gap between Chawton and Alton has been strongly protected and no development has been permitted on the southern skyline of Alton. The high ground and the raised railway embankment around the southern margin of Alton form the backdrop to the northern aspect of the parish of Chawton, and can be seen from various vantage points within and around the village. These are considered to be strategic views.

The high ground runs westward along Chawton Park Road and the Mid-Hants railway (Watercress Line) to join with the heavily forested Baigent’s and Reed’s Copses and ultimately Chawton Park Wood. The Shrave lies parallel with the railway and between it and the A31. It lies on harder stonier ground with a thin clay capping and (along with Four Marks) is part of the highest land in Hampshire. The views over the by-pass and down back towards Chawton and Farringdon from the A31 are magnificent, showing at its very best the open

rolling downland, interspersed with copses. This character of large open fields continues down to the roundabout, until reaching the more intimate landscape immediately around Chawton. This is considered an important rural approach to the village from the west.

The Southfield Farm complex is the first group of buildings to the west of the A32, forming a classic farmyard quadrangle, with associated dwellings. The village cemetery is located adjacent to the complex, and is well tended with native planting around. The Dismantled Meon Valley railway marks the edge of the Lavant valley.

The Lavant itself lies to the east of the A32, and is a typical intermittent chalk stream, which “blows” in most winters, sometimes flooding, lying dry through the summer months. It wends its way north from the adjacent village of Farringdon, and into the parkland created by Chawton House to the south of the village. The natural form has been altered here with both formal and informal landscaping taking place over the centuries at Chawton House. The parkland is now open, gently sloping grazed pasture, with mature native tree specimens leading up from the A32 towards Chawton House, via a ha-ha before long formal terraces in front of the house. Nestling also in the valley just below the house is the Church and a complex of farm buildings. These are well-loved and important views into Chawton from the A32.

Behind Chawton House to the east, the land rises again with several copses and woodland planting. This forms the backdrop to the village cricket pitch and Village Green, with the Lavant Stream in the foreground, and is one of the most regarded views from the village.

The easterly approach to the village is along Wolfs Lane, with Eastfield Farm marking the easterly extent of the village environs. With fields and paddocks on either side this is an open rural entrance to the village.

Landscape Design Guidelines

- the gap between Chawton and Alton is important to the setting of the settlement and should be protected from inappropriate development as laid out in Local Planning documents
- the “sense of remoteness” (as described in the Countryside Design Summary) is an important facet of the village and should be retained.
- the strategic views from Chawton across to the high ground along the southern margin of Alton should be protected in view of their importance to the landscape setting of the settlement
- the open rolling fields and native hedgerows in and around the village should continue to be protected and maintained
- applications for change of use for agricultural land should not involve subdivision of the open, rolling fields and landscape
- the Lavant Stream valley should be maintained and kept clear of development

Settlement Pattern

The Parish of Chawton exhibits low settlement density, confined to farms and the small village of Chawton, which has a population not dissimilar to that of Jane Austen's day. The village centre is comprised of the meeting of three roads, originally the east-west London-Winchester route (now the A31), and the north-south Gosport / Southampton (now the A32) route. By-passed by the A31/A32 in 1971, the heart of the village lies at the juncture of this tripartite system. The roads are now known as the Winchester Road and the Old Gosport Road. The Pub, the School, the Village Hall, and Jane Austen's House are all within a few hundred paces of this central point.

The street pattern is basically linear, with the majority of houses and cottages facing onto the edge of the street directly or with small front gardens.

The VDS survey highlighted specific open areas within the village centre, which are valued highly, of which the most significant are the Village Green, the cricket pitch and the approaches to the Church and Chawton House along the Old Gosport Road. The larger gardens at Prowtings, the Dower House, Alphonsus House, Chawton Glebe, Chawton Lodge and Baigens are important aspects of the open nature of the village pattern.

Specifically around the village margins there was widespread support for protecting the rural entrances to the village, the large field just off the A31/A32 roundabout, the fields and paddocks along Wolfs Lane.

The overwhelming view of the VDS survey was that the character of the village should not be diminished by inappropriate development. But if there were to be any development some specific sites were suggested for consideration.

The majority of respondents suggested that an extension to Lavant Field would be the most sensible location for any additional affordable housing, although other suggestions included adjacent to Malthouse Cottages and Ferney Close. The VDS survey was more in favour of any future building taking place in small infill sites which would not detract from the overall street scene, rather than redevelopment of any of the larger open spaces within the village or parish.

There was recognition in the VDS survey, that whilst the Redemptorist Press site is currently used for employment, it could conceivably become redundant at some stage in the future. It was felt that this site could accommodate housing, but that the orchard adjacent to the site should be protected from any development.

There was concern that any redevelopment of the farm complexes on the margins of the village (should they become redundant as viable farms), could lead to inappropriate commercial use in view of their proximity to other dwellings and the village as a whole. Issues such as noise disturbance, lighting, and in particular traffic generation were put forward as justifications for potential housing use rather than commercial purposes.

There are two additional settlement areas within the Parish of Chawton. Firstly, the remnant of Chawton that was left on the Alton side after the A31 by-pass was completed. This comprises the row of dwellings fronting Winchester Road running off the Butts roundabout, and along Mounters Lane, and ultimately to Chawton Park Road and Northfield Lane. Secondly, the Shrave, which is an easterly extension from Four Marks running along the ridge parallel to the A31 by-pass. These two areas are discussed separately later in this VDS.

Settlement Pattern Design Guidelines

- any development of the settlement should be incremental and should not detract from the current balanced pattern centred around the tripartite street layout, as seen in the Settlement Policy Boundary in Local Planning documents
- the open spaces within the village should be protected, in particular the Village Green with views beyond to the cricket pitch and the Lavant Stream
- the large open gardens associated with listed buildings are an important characteristic of the village and this quality should be maintained and enhanced
- the rural entrances to the village must be maintained, the western entrance at Winchester Road from the roundabout, the eastern entrance at Wolfs Lane, and the fields either side of the dead-end on the Old Gosport Road
- development of any infill sites should respect the existing settlement pattern

Map of the Village

~~(1:2500 or 5000 showing Conservation area, Listed buildings, Settlement Policy Boundary (from 2nd Review), important open spaces and views, important trees and hedgerows)~~

Architecture and Buildings

The village of Chawton contains about 156 dwellings, mostly sited along the tripartite road system that forms the centre of the village. There are 37 listed buildings. The long history of the village gives the buildings an architecturally varied appearance, with examples of vernacular architecture from all periods from the 15th Century onwards. No one style or period dominates the street scene. Neighbouring buildings vary in form, roof line, and fenestration styles, but each is consistent with its own period. The different styles have combined harmoniously, mainly because of an overall consistency of materials (namely brick, flint and clay tile), and because of their balance of scale, height and massing. Weathering of materials has also had a unifying effect. Almost all dwellings have chimneys, and this contributes to the varied rooflines. The few buildings that intrude on the street scene are mostly of the 1960's or 1970's era, which have a form, roof line, fenestration or materials out of keeping with the character of the remainder of the village. The VDS survey highlighted the strong support in the village for maintaining and enhancing the character of the village, and that any development must be "in-keeping".

Buildings characteristic of the oldest settlement of the village are the brick and thatched cottages such as the timber cruck-framed Pond Cottages, lying next to the site of the old village pond, and Clinkers, in the village centre. A few hundred paces away are Ivy Cottage and Denmead to the east and Thatch Cottage to the west. The rooflines are low, with upper windows just visible under the overhanging thatch. They have small leaded light windows and low doors, with minimal or no porches, and the wood work is white painted or natural wood. A few larger farmhouses date from this period, such as Baigens on the western edge of the village. These are somewhat larger in scale, with higher ridge lines and steep pitched tiled roofs, and open rafter eaves. They have slightly larger windows, but these are still set well in from the edge of the buildings and do not occupy a large proportion of the façade. Red brick is the predominant building material often set in English bond. The arched brick window head is visible in these brick buildings, and is seen to continue with the advent through the 17th and

18th Centuries of the smaller terrace houses in the village.

These terraces, ranging in length from two to eight, form an integral part of the centre of the village. The Terrace, as it is known, runs south behind the village pub, and comprises two rows of mainly painted brick dwellings facing each other across a narrow path, with very small front gardens. There is no vehicular access, and the gardens historically have been communal or at the very least located in a somewhat random fashion relative to their ownership. This is a classic example of a group of highly attractive, but high-density village housing. Over the last century each dwelling has evolved differently from its neighbour, in width, height, colour, and door and fenestration features, but the whole combination is most harmonious, perhaps since many original features still remain to add some consistency. The terrace edging the Winchester Road adjacent to The Greyfriar pub, is dated as 16th Century, jettied at first floor, and adapted in an Arts and Crafts manner with steep tile hung gables and canopies over the doorways.

The larger and originally more gentrified houses are interspersed throughout the village. On the eastern end of the village Alphonsus House started life as a pair of cottages, but was extended, on a grand scale to three storeys in the 18th Century. It is mostly of local malmstone, with a subsidiary red brick, tile hung entrance area with steep gables and white painted barge boards. The Dower House is set back from the Winchester Road, its stables forming a courtyard of flint and brick. Prowtings is a mid-Georgian style replacement built around an earlier 18th Century building. Its features and materials have been chosen to complement the neighbouring dwellings and are historically accurate. Its deep garden frontage is an important break in the otherwise enclosed street scene. Jane Austen's House is located at the heart of the village. It is a well proportioned 18th Century home of red brick and a tiled roof. Evidence of the well known Window Tax is seen with the blocking up of several windows on the façade. Chawton Lodge is a white painted 18th century building, with slate roof and ridges. Pound Farm is an elegant early 18th Century building with a symmetrical façade of red brick headers and sash windows. The canopy over the

central door is a feature with kneeler brackets formed by figures of angels. The associated outbuildings demonstrate the scalloped banded tile hanging and steep gabled ends commonly seen throughout the village. Common features include larger white painted sash windows, and featured porticos. The large gardens to all these houses form important open spaces in and around the village centre, and their boundary walls both to the street and neighbouring properties form uninterrupted and important features within the village.

The cluster of buildings around Chawton House, the Old Stables and St Nicholas Church are particularly attractive, and listed Grade II*. Chawton House is principally Jacobean in

mellow malmstone and flint, with three brick gables, and all set into a gentle hillside, the tall chimneys and gables, clay tiled roof visible from across the Lavant valley. Home Farm Barn was originally an enormous medieval barn, and has now been converted to a dwelling whilst retaining all the classic roof lines, and entrance features of its original agricultural purpose. The 1871 Arthur Blomfield designed St. Nicholas Church, is in the early English style of architecture, and sits amid trees in the Lavant valley just below Chawton House. Over the road, and opposite the driveway to the Church and Chawton House lies Chawton Glebe, the former rectory. Rebuilt in 1803, it is painted with a slate roof and ridge-line, with large sash windows, and a large porch.

Architecture and Buildings Design Guidelines

- the design and materials in any new development should ensure that the appealing and historical diversity of existing building styles is not compromised by suburban estate style uniformity
- facade materials should complement the existing predominance of hand-made or reclaimed brick and flint, with minor malmstone and render with lime mortar for bonding
- natural materials should be encouraged in place of concrete, imitation stone, resins, fibre, aluminium or UPVC plastic
- roofing materials should reflect the existing predominance of hand-made red/brown plain clay tiles, with subordinate thatch and slate
- roof lines should generally be steep pitched, gabled or half-hipped
- chimneys should be included wherever possible
- development should normally be no more than 2-storeys and dormer windows should be considered in preference to third storey developments or extensions
- doors should be plain and wide-boarded timber in solid timber frames
- any porches should be of a simple open portico type or with supporting brackets
- window styles should be either plain solid timber casement windows, with iron frames and window furniture, or white painted timber sash frames
- the position of windows at first floor in cottage style buildings should be tucked under the eaves or centrally placed in tile hung gable ends
- eaves should be open or with narrow black or white painted gutter boards
- tile hanging should be in red, scalloped and banded tiles
- extensions should be subordinate to the original dwelling, and of similar style and materials
- conservatories and garages should complement the style and materials of the dwelling, and be appropriate to the size of the dwelling and plot

Note: Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any structure within the Conservation Area. Listed Building Consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to a listed building. The majority of the older buildings in Chawton are listed, and it is an offence to carry out works to them or to buildings within their curtilages (grounds), without first obtaining consent. This includes painting walls, changing roofing materials, altering doors or windows and installing satellite antenna, amongst others. If there is any doubt further advice should be sought in writing to the local planning authority.

Other Features

During the preparation of the VDS a number of special features in and around the village have been identified that contribute to its character. The major features are dealt with in other sections but some can be summarised as follows.

Walls, Fences and Boundaries

Within Chawton there is a mixture of materials that have been used for plot boundaries, and these boundaries contribute significantly to the

local character. The older properties feature flint walling often with saddle-backed brick cappings. Other properties feature hedging and occasionally low picket fencing. All boundary types are in keeping with the individual property and the village setting. One of Chawton's best features is the impression of open space in the village. This will only remain if careful thought is given to the building of any new walls, fences and boundaries.

Walls, Fences and Boundaries Design Guidelines

- new development should seek to retain, repair or improve existing walls or stonework
- development proposals should preferably incorporate low boundaries of natural features, such as flint, brick, or malmstone with saddle-backed capping; and where possible close-boarded timber fencing should be avoided in visible locations
- any development proposals involving agricultural land should incorporate existing field boundaries, either hedgerows, or in their absence, timber post and rail fencing as seen around the entrances to the village

Trees and Hedgerows

Trees and hedgerows form an important part of our environment, not only contributing to its character, but also sustaining the health of the ecosystem. There are several copses in the fields surrounding the village planted in commemoration of events such as coronations, jubilees and royal marriages. As part of the restoration at Chawton House Library several thousand trees and hedgerow bushes have been planted in recent years. In particular wire fences have been replaced by traditionally layed

hedgerows and several small spinneys have been planted or thickened up.

The VDS survey revealed several suggestions on how best to care for the natural environment. These included the annual review of significant trees and hedgerows by the Parish Tree Warden. It is hoped that owners would use their best endeavours to care for visually significant trees and hedges. Significant trees on public open spaces such as the Village Green should be cared for, and in due course, suitably replaced by the Parish Council.

Trees and Hedgerows Design Guidelines

- new development should take account of visually significant trees, groups of trees, woodland areas and hedgerows, and where possible seek to enhance them.
- where tree or hedge planting is proposed native species should be used rather than exotic conifers
- Tree Preservation Orders should be respected

Footpaths and Bridleways

There are a number of footpaths and bridleways within the parish which allow access to the countryside. Some of the most notable include the Pilgrims Way (running in its entirety from Winchester to Canterbury), the St.Swithuns Way (running from Winchester to Farnham), the Dismantled Meon Valley railway path, and the extension of Chawton Park Road through to

Chawton Park Woods. Together, the Eastfield Farm path with the permissive path extension to Farrington's boundary, and the permissive footpath along the edge of the Chawton House parkland make a circular route. The VDS survey highlighted how important it is to keep footpaths and bridleways open and in good repair. Since quiet open-air recreation is one of the requisites of the South Downs National Park,

and in view of the large number of tourists visiting Chawton, it was felt the rights of way

network is important for enjoying the village and its locality.

Footpaths and Bridleways Design Guidelines

- the layout and design of new development should consider the impact on existing rights of way, and any proposal to close them should be avoided
- development requiring any diversions to rights of way should be carefully planned, taking into account the landscape and village setting
- the layout and design of new development should consider opportunities for new footpaths and bridleways
- signs should be of the wooden fingerpost type

Utilities and Overhead Lines

It was felt that the village is “spoilt” by the existing proliferation of poles, aerials and overhead wires for telephone, television and power supplies. As a corollary, any proposals for telecommunications or mobile telephone masts could be damaging to the village and landscape setting. Wherever possible, both

within the village centre and outside, cables and facilities should be placed unobtrusively, preferably underground. There was a general unhappiness with the current modern telephone box, and the survey emphasised that all reasonable efforts should be made to replace the box with one of a more traditional design.

Overhead Lines and Other Utilities Design Guidelines

- any proposals for the siting of telecommunications masts should be evaluated with respect to the landscape setting of the village and its environs, particularly taking into account the purposes and policies of the designated South Downs National Park
- in any new development, telephone and other utility companies should be encouraged to share poles and ground facilities to minimise any detrimental impact on the village or landscape, wherever possible placing cables underground
- any new or replacement satellite dishes must be sympathetically positioned to be unobtrusive as possible (Listed Building Consent is required for new installations on listed buildings)

Lighting

The village has very little street lighting and bright external lights on individual properties could spoil the aesthetic appearance of Chawton’s rural setting. Whilst it is not possible to impose conditions on existing dwellings the VDS survey emphasised the need to encourage all residents to be sensitive to possible glare and

disruption to neighbours caused by their personal lighting schemes. It was felt that increased lighting can also lead to creeping suburbanisation.

Lighting Design Guidelines

- any new development (domestic or commercial) requiring external lighting should be limited to the minimum required for the purpose and should seek to minimise pollution from glow and spillage
- proposals for hours of operation for any commercial venture requiring lighting should be carefully evaluated in respect of their likely impact on the rural nature of the parish
- public street lighting would harm the rural nature of the parish and should be avoided where possible

The Shrave

The Shrave, which is understood to mean 'A hard place', is the name applied to the ribbon development of housing lying on the northeast side of the main Winchester Road (A31) approximately 2 miles (3 km) from the village centre. Originally the name was applied to the whole of the southwestern part of the Parish with the A31 running uphill through rural countryside with a mixture of farm and woodland to the boundary with Four Marks at the top.

Four Marks was formed as a Parish under the County of Southampton Review Order (1932) by annexing parts of all the neighbouring parishes (including Chawton) and a further 16 acres approximately under the East Hampshire (Parishes) Order 1981. This resulted in setting the Chawton Parish boundary between two adjacent properties leaving 35 or so within the re-defined boundary. Subsequent attempts to annexe these remaining properties were vigorously opposed in a poll of Shrave residents.

The earliest housing development was initiated in 1932 after Edward Knight of Chawton House sold a strip of land approximately 0.6 mile (1 km) long between the northern side of the main road and the Mid-Hants. Railway line. This was eventually divided into plots varying in length from 450 ft (150 m) to well under half that, due to the curvature of the road and the convergence of the road with the railway, and widths of 50 ft (16.5 m), 75 ft (25 m) and 100 ft (33 m).

Many different styles of house and bungalow can now be seen, some of them significantly

changed over the years. Initially there was no main water supply and in fact all the principal services were very basic. There is now a complete gas/water/electricity supply but foul water disposal is by the more primitive method of septic tank or similar with little hope of any significant change in the foreseeable future.

Residents of The Shrave are appreciative of several unique features of the area, which they are most anxious to preserve. Although the Watercress Line preserved steam railway runs along the rear of all the properties it is mostly contained in a cutting and therefore does not impede the views across to Chawton Park Woods and open farmland beyond. To the front the old Winchester Road now forms a service road while the re-aligned main A31 Guildford to Winchester trunk road is separated and partially screened from view by a tree-lined grassed bank in which pockets of primroses, daffodils and other plants have been encouraged by the local residents. The view from the lower end of the Shrave across the Meon valley and beyond is especially valued.

Each house or bungalow is individual in appearance and character apart from a small group of similar houses at the lower end but these are well designed and proportioned to blend unobtrusively with the existing dwellings. Over the years a significant number of residents have sought to enlarge and/or improve their homes, and it considered that all efforts should be made to avoid over-shadowing of the smaller dwellings.

The Shrave Design Guidelines

- the form, scale, height and mass of any new development should respect the current settlement pattern of bungalows and chalet style dwellings and should be designed to avoid overshadowing or an unacceptable loss of amenity to existing residents
- the strategic views from The Shrave over the A31 and across the Meon Valley, into the designated South Downs National Park, should be protected

Winchester Road, Mounters Lane and Chawton Park Road

The line of the old main road to Winchester was dissected by the by-pass in 1971, leaving a part of the parish of Chawton on the northern part of the A31. Still known as Winchester Road, it is different in character of the centre of the village, but similar in some respects to The Shrave. The plot sizes are long and thin with one line of medium sized brick dwellings, mostly detached and set back from the road at the end of the gardens. There was recognition in the VDS survey that the industrial site, currently a builders merchant, could at some stage become redundant, but it was felt strongly that any development should respect the current layout and dwelling size. The adjacent paddock is an important aspect of maintaining the rural feel to this part of the parish.

The area of low-lying paddocks and pastures between this part of the Winchester Road and the Selborne Road is known as the Chawton Triangle. It is a critical area of open space preventing the possible coalescence of Chawton and Alton. All residents of Winchester Road were strongly supportive in the VDS survey of restricting any development on the Chawton Triangle or on any of the fields bordering the A31 or Selborne Road.

Running off Winchester Road, Mounters Lane becomes a bridleway with paddocks alongside before turning under the railway embankment. These paddocks and the forested railway embankment form an important part of the Chawton Gap. It continues to the Jubilee Playing Fields before ultimately joining Chawton Park Road. The playing fields are an important open space on the western margin of Alton, and mark the transition from town to country.

Chawton Park Road is a narrow and rural road running parallel to the railway to the west before becoming a long drive and bridleway running past Chawton Park Farm. The fields and copses make this an essentially rural area. This area boasts many paths and bridleways which offer important recreational countryside opportunities.

Chawton Park Road is joined to the A31 by Northfield Lane, which is a narrow lane running under a railway bridge. Chalkdell Cottages and a few other smaller dwellings form a small complex alongside the lane. As far as possible Northfield Lane should be prevented from becoming an alternative to the designated trunk roads running past Alton.

Winchester Road, Mounters Lane and Chawton Park Road Design Guidelines

- the form, scale, height and mass of any new development should respect the current settlement pattern along Winchester Road and should be designed to avoid overshadowing or an unacceptable loss of amenity to existing residents
- the Chawton Triangle and remainder of the Chawton Gap should be kept free of any inappropriate development in order to prevent the coalescence of the settlements
- improvements to Chawton Park Road and Northfield Lane which are necessary to serve new development at the former Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital site should be designed in a way which maintains the rural nature of the road
- development proposals should take account of the Jubilee playing fields which provide an important public open space and contribute to the character and visual amenity of the area

Highways and Traffic

Traffic

The highway that passes through and divides in Chawton appears to have greatly influenced the settlement pattern of the Village. The 'bypassing' of the village in 1971 by the major improvements to the A31, and to the A31/A32 junction brought immediate and much needed relief to traffic problems within the Village. Unfortunately there is still considerable road noise from both the bypass and the A32, and the VDS survey respondents suggested that any resurfacing of the A31 or A32 should incorporate low noise surfaces.

Whilst Chawton is no longer on an arterial highway, in common with most areas of Southern England there has been a large increase in traffic volume in the Village over the years. There was an increase in rat running through the village when the access to Selborne from the A31 was changed necessitating a trip to the Butts roundabout from the slip road. Clearly Chawton cannot exclude this traffic; it can however seek to influence those charged with the management of it.

The narrowing of the road in the vicinity of Jane Austen's House carried out in 1999 has served to reduce the speed of traffic through the village. The VDS survey has shown that further 'traffic calming' measures are unpopular. To seek to further reduce the problems of excess speeding would appear to require significant measures that would be unattractive and out of character with the village. It was generally felt that excessive white road markings would be detrimental to the village ambience.

Parking

It is apparent from the VDS survey, and subsequent village meeting to discuss that survey, that there is dissatisfaction with the present arrangements for parking. As a classic Hampshire village that is popular with tourists nationally and internationally, that contains a Pub and a thriving school, Chawton must accept that parking will always be an issue.

The VDS survey highlighted the fact that the parking in the vicinity of the Pub / School was considered to be a problem. The parking near the Greyfriar, Cassandra's Cup and Jane Austen's House is likely to be difficult to

restrict. The road is wide enough outside the Greyfriar to allow parking both sides of the road traffic, albeit restricting passing traffic to a wide single width passage. This does however serve as a pinch point restricting the speed of through traffic.

The parking near the school is more problematical as the road is narrower. Road markings do appear to have worked to improve the situation by restricting parking during peak periods when children are being dropped off/collected. Whilst there has been suggestion that some of the parking difficulties could be addressed by the use of Residents parking, it is understood that it is unlikely that this would be enforced.

The solution to the increasing demands for car parking are best met by better use of existing car parking facilities (e.g. the pub, EHDC, and village hall car parks) rather than the loss of valuable green space for the construction of additional car parking.

Garages, Parking Areas and Driveways

Where garages do exist they are generally unobtrusive. A few ugly exceptions do exist however and were commented upon in the VDS survey.

If any new garages are to be built (or ugly ones replaced) they should fit comfortably within the curtilage of the house and be sympathetic in both design and use of building materials. The precise location of any new garage should be carefully considered to minimise its impact on the street scene. Pitched roofs clad in clay tiles/thatch/slate are likely to be more appropriate than a flat roof design. If the garage design is to include doors then side opening timber doors are most suitable.

Most driveways and forecourts are laid to gravel which is considered suitable for the village. Tarmac is generally restricted to steep gradients, but is considered too modern and suburban to be generally appropriate for Chawton. Paviours can be acceptable, but should preferably be of mellow materials in sympathy with the dwelling.

Street Furniture

Given the historical nature of the village and that it is a conservation area it is felt that street and other furniture within the village must be unobtrusive, “in keeping” and of a good quality and be maintained well. Specifically it was proposed that benches and rubbish bins should be of a classical timber style, and that bright colours and modern designs unsuitable. The

current street furniture, in particular the village fingerpost sign, would appear to have achieved this having received no adverse comments within the VDS survey. Within the constraints of the Highway Code it was felt important that any new road signage does not overly dominate the street scene within the village. Any mandatory new signs should be kept to a minimum, and be as inconspicuous as possible whilst fulfilling their function.

Highways Design Guidelines

- new development should try to avoid vehicular hardstanding and garages dominating the streetscene, wherever possible harmonising with the historically subservient role of the car in the village
- improvements in parking should seek to maximise the use of existing car parks
- garages should be unobtrusive and sympathetic in design with similar building material and styles to the dwellings
- garages should have pitched roofs and side opening stable type timber doors
- forecourts should be laid with materials in keeping with the character of the dwelling and local area
- the low walls and front gardens are a particular feature of the village and proposals involving vehicular access or parking should seek to retain and enhance these features wherever possible
- new street furniture should be of the highest quality and in keeping so as to positively enhance the appearance of the village

Acknowledgements

Publications used in preparing this VDS include:

EHDC: District Local Plan First and Second Reviews
EHDC: Chawton Conservation Area
EHDC: Listed Buildings in East Hampshire
EHDC: Countryside Design Summary
HCC: The Hampshire Landscape
Rupert Willoughby: Chawton Jane Austen's Village
John Coates: History of St. Nicholas Church
Chawton and Farringdon Parish Magazine: The Last Hundred Years

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