
Supporting Information for Proposal to designate a Conservation Area for the village of Ovington

Prepared by:

OVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Date:

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OVINGTON

OVINGTON is a township in the chapelry of Forcett, a daughter of the great Saxon parish of Gilling near Richmond. The village stands high on the southern bank of the Tees, which rolls along far beneath in all its glory. Nothing in the whole of its course can be compared with its beauty at Ovington, from Wycliffe downwards to Winston Bridge. Banks high, rocky, here and there precipitous; well-wooded, trees left to themselves to grow and fall and decay. Holly and ivy in abundance. Yew here and there only. Owls, gledes, hawks, jackdaws, jays woodpeckers. Immediately behind the village the Tees flows imperceptibly in a deep dark bed in many places of great depth, called the Dubbock, dammed back by a stratum of mountain limestone. At the foot of this remarkable pool the water, having regained its liberty, expands its arms in a channel of great breadth with three islands of considerable size, one of them well wooded in its bosom. At the distance of half a mile the channel of the river again becomes contracted by impending banks and rocks equally well wooded and beautiful and through such scenery it struggles onwards for another mile to Winston Bridge and falls away into a softer country less characterised by such prominent beauties but still of a very captivating character.

Introduction and Background Context

As long ago as 1979, Durham County Council approved a report relating to the designation of Conservation Areas arising from consultations on the (then) County Structure Plan. Among other things, the report contained a list of areas considered to be suitable for designation as Conservation Areas. This included 22 settlements in Teesdale district, among which was the village of Ovington.

Whilst Ovington didn't proceed to be designated, the Teesdale Local Plan (2002) subsequently confirmed that the [former] District Council was 'committed to the identification, protection and enhancement of the District's heritage' (paragraph 4.1.3).

The Plan accordingly contained a Policy (BENV6) entitled 'Settlements for Consideration for Conservation Areas'. The policy (now expired) listed 5 settlements, including Ovington, to which consideration would be given to the designation of a Conservation Area.

By way of context, paragraph 4.8.1 of the Plan explained that *'There are a number of settlements within the District of outstanding character which are not currently designated as Conservation Areas. In order to protect and enhance this character it is proposed to designate them as Conservation Areas'*.

Notwithstanding this background, Ovington has, over the intervening years, remained conspicuously without the recognition, management and protection that a Conservation Area designation affords.

Whilst Ovington's special character and heritage has clearly been recognised for some considerable time, recent development pressures in the village have brought into sharp focus the need to finally enshrine this by means of a Conservation Area designation.

The Parish Council has therefore taken proactive steps to initiate the process, resulting in the preparation of this supporting information and a formal request to Durham County Council to take over and implement the process of designation under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Reasons for seeking designation of a Conservation Area for Ovington

A Conservation Area designation will provide the village of Ovington with the recognition it justifiably merits, given its special character and historic qualities set out in this document.

Moreover, it will provide a lasting legacy for residents and visitors to the village to better experience, understand and enjoy these qualities in the years to come by providing a clear context for their protection, management and enhancement.

Summary of work undertaken, including community input and support

The Parish Council first began looking into the potential for a Conservation Area to be designated for Ovington back in 2019.

To gauge the views of village residents, a public meeting was held in June 2019, when a show of hands revealed that all 17 residents attending were in support of a Conservation Area being pursued.

The Parish Council then arranged a further public meeting in August 2019. This was attended by Mr Bryan Harris, Senior Conservation Officer at Durham County Council. Mr Harris gave an informative presentation on what a Conservation Area is, what it entails and the process involved in designating one. There was also an opportunity for people to ask questions and clarify any uncertainties.

The meeting was very well attended by 25 individuals, representing 17 households (ie – approaching one third of the village).

The level of attendance and nature of questions showed that there was genuine interest in the idea of a Conservation Area for Ovington.

Following the meeting, the Parish Council undertook further publicity and consultation to provide more information on Conservation Areas and an opportunity for feedback for those who weren't able to attend the Public Meeting and/or hadn't yet expressed their views (see Appendix 2).

The vast majority of views received over this period have been in favour of pursuing a Conservation Area, so at the Parish Council meeting in October 2019, it was resolved to begin the process of research and information gathering to progress towards designation of a Conservation Area.

Subsequent publicity and consultation with the community the following month included an invitation to any interested residents to participate in a small Working Group to be set

up to progress the Conservation Area project. The invitation explained that *‘This is an excellent opportunity for anyone with an interest in the history and development of the village to pursue this in a positive and focused way. It will help build up a knowledge and understanding of our village and provide a strong foundation for the future Conservation Area to be identified’*.

A Working Group was subsequently established, consisting of Parish Councillors and a village resident. The Group then embarked on a structured process to gather information, survey and assess the character and heritage of the village. Liaison took place with the County Council as part of this, culminating in a meeting being arranged in March 2020 with Bryan Harris. Unfortunately, this coincided with the start of the coronavirus lockdown, so had to be postponed till June 2020.

That meeting helped confirm that the work being undertaken was on the right lines and what the next steps were. With the preparation of this supporting information, this brings things up to date and the Parish Council would now request the County Council to take over the process of progressing the Conservation Area designation from this point.

Summary overview of Ovington's character and historic values

As a place, Ovington dates back at least 10 centuries since it is mentioned in the Domesday Book as part of the Land of Count Alan of Brittany, with households comprising '*16 villagers. 3 freemen. 6 smallholders. 1 men*'.

The oldest surviving properties are Ovington Hall on the western side of the village and Ovington Edge on the east (both Grade II Listed). They date from around the 17th century (possibly earlier) and were closely linked with farming of adjacent land. The complex of farm buildings associated with Ovington Hall are also Grade II Listed (these were converted into dwellings in the 1990's and are now known as Ovington Hall Court).

Between Ovington Hall and Ovington Edge, the historic core of the village centres around the traditional village green, with its historic maypole (also Grade II Listed).

Clustered around the sides of the green are properties largely dating from the first half of the 19th century (though likely to have been buildings before this), whilst to the south and south-west of it are properties (including the village pub, 'The Four Alls') of a similar age. In the middle of these lies the 18th century Ovington House (Grade II Listed) predating its neighbours and still operating today as a working farm with adjacent tofts and fields to the south and east of the village. Much of this land (and that south of Ovington Hall) exhibits clear evidence of historic rigg and furrow cultivation.

The eastern approach to the village crosses Ovington Bridge, constructed in 1841 to span the steep-sided valley of Little Beck. The bridge is another important historic feature in the village and is also Grade II Listed. Prior to the bridge, the road into the village followed a different alignment, skirting the top of the eastern edge of the valley of Little Beck and connecting to the lane south of the property known as Wispering Waters. With the noteworthy exception of Ovington Edge, the historic built form of the village is consequently largely contained by the valley of Little Beck.

Finally, much of the northern backdrop of Ovington contains designated ancient woodland, dropping steeply down to the River Tees and providing an attractive landscape setting and context to the village.

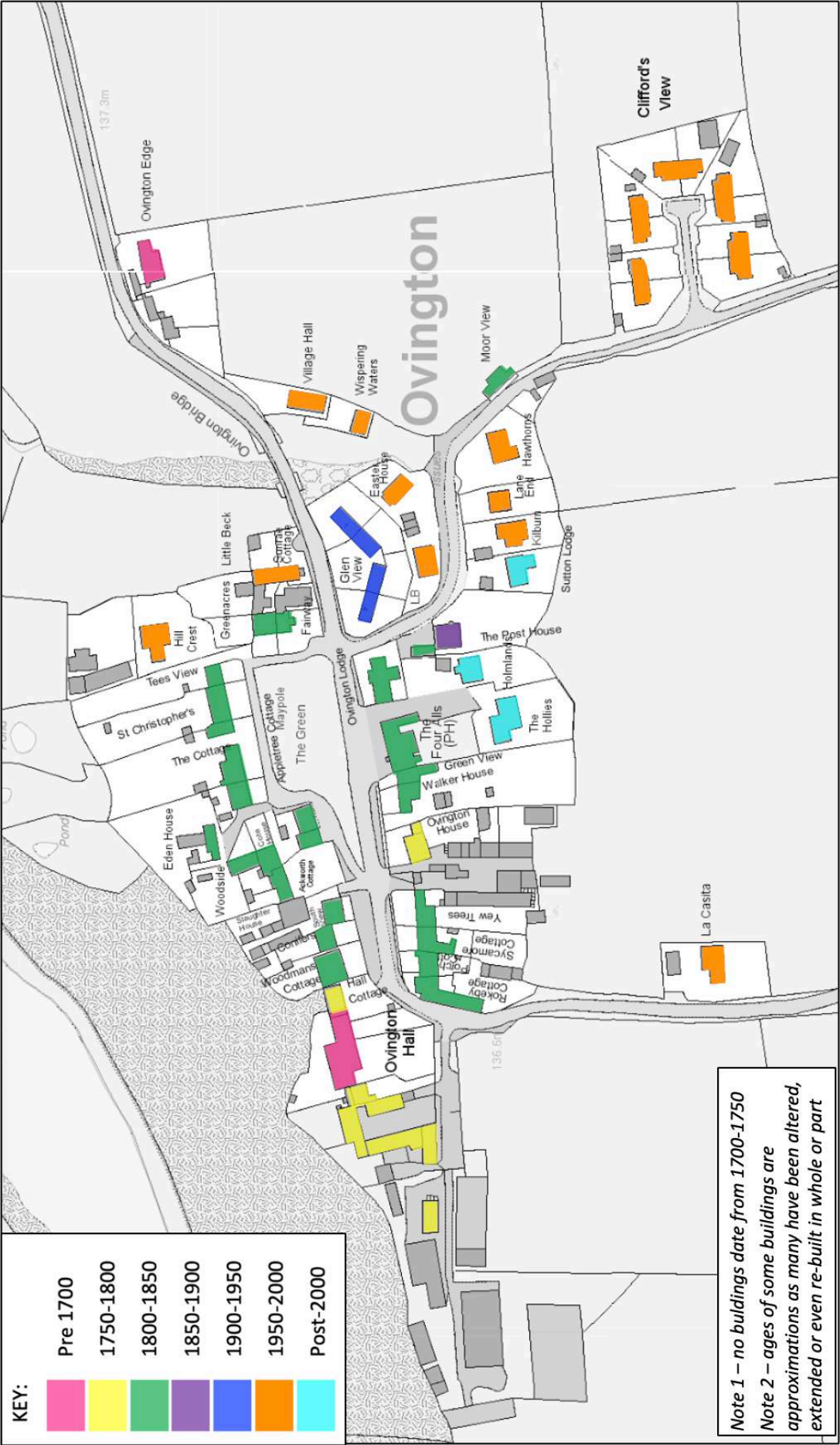
Map 1: Proposed Conservation Area boundary



Written Description of proposed Conservation Area boundary

- 1) Beginning at its confluence with 'Little Beck', the northern boundary follows the southern bank of the River Tees heading westwards (upstream) to the Ovington Parish boundary.
- 2) The boundary then follows the Parish boundary in a south-westerly direction through 'Wycliffe Wood' (ancient woodland).
- 3) Where it reaches the southern edge of the wood, the boundary turns eastwards to follow the edge of the wood for approximately 75 metres up to the hedge boundary forming the western extent of the curtilage of the Grade II Listed property known as 'The Old Granary'.
- 4) The boundary then turns 90 degrees to follow this hedge boundary for approximately 21 metres in a SSE direction before turning eastwards again to follow the southern boundary of 'The Old Granary'. After approximately 51.5 metres it reaches, and then follows, the western (hedge) boundary of a field, heading in a southerly direction till its southern boundary is reached, also marked by a hedge line.
- 5) The boundary then follows the southern boundary of the field heading in a westerly direction back to the road, crossing to its other (eastern) side and then following that side of the road southwards for approximately 61.5 metres to a field boundary just after the slight kink in the road.
- 6) The boundary follows the edge of this field heading due east for approximately 182 metres before reaching and following a further field boundary heading due south for 94 metres.
- 7) This field boundary is then followed eastwards to the narrow lane (a public bridleway) and crossing it to the other side (a total of approximately 113.5 metres).
- 8) On reaching the eastern side of the lane, the boundary follows its edge northwards until it reaches the southern curtilages of properties forming the 'Cliffords View' development.
- 9) The boundary follows these curtilages eastwards, then wraps round the eastern-most extent of the development, following the curtilage boundaries northwards for a distance of approximately 66.5 metres.
- 10) When the northern edge of Clifford's View is reached, the boundary 'dog-legs' slightly to the west to join the next east-west field boundary (approximately 19.5 metres) at the intersection of this with the eastern boundary of the field to the north.
- 11) This eastern edge of the field is followed in a northerly direction, then continuing on the same alignment to follow the eastern boundary of the Grade II Listed property known as 'Ovington Edge' up to, and then crossing the road (a total distance of approximately 193 metres)
- 12) Once the northern side of the road is reached the boundary follows it, heading back towards the village before reaching the Grade II Listed Ovington Bridge.
- 13) At the point that the boundary reaches the course of the small stream (known as 'Little Beck'), it heads north to follow it, eventually joining back up with start point 1) when the stream meets the River Tees.

Map 2: Colour-coded ages of buildings in Ovington



Inventory of buildings in Ovington and their approximate ages

	PROPERTY	AGE	NOTES
LB	The Old Granary	1750-1800	Former cartshed/granary converted to house. LB description says 'late C18 or early C19'
LB	Old Coach House (Ovington Hall Court)	1750-1800	Part of cluster of listed farmbuildings converted to dwelling circa 1990's. LB description says 'late C18 & early C19'
LB	The Granary (Ovington Hall Court)	1750-1800	Part of cluster of listed farmbuildings converted to dwelling circa 1990's. LB description says 'late C18 & early C19'
LB	The Stables (Ovington Hall Court)	1750-1800	Part of cluster of listed farmbuildings converted to dwelling circa 1990's. LB description says 'late C18 & early C19'
LB	The Arches (Ovington Hall Court)	1750-1800	Part of cluster of listed farmbuildings converted to dwelling circa 1990's. LB description says 'late C18 & early C19'
LB	Ovington Hall	Pre-1700	LB description says 'Probably C17, extended & altered in C18' LB description refers to 'hall and adjacent cottage' – The adjacent cottage is Hall Cottage (see below).
LB	Hall Cottage	Pre-1700	LB description says 'Probably C17, extended & altered in C18' (see Ovington Hall above). This is the adjacent cottage. It is possible that this is the portion described in the listing as 'extended and altered in C18'. If so, may need to change age from pre-1700 to 1700 to 1750
LB	Garden Cottage	1750-1800	LB refers to pantile-roofed section, describing it as 'Outbuilding and smithy, late C18'. This has since been converted to a dwelling (Garden Cottage) plus two adjacent garages
	Woodmans Cottage	1800-1850	Recorded as 1800-1850, but likely that this relates to earlier building based on style, appearance and footprint of current property. If so, need to change age accordingly
	Conifers	1800-1850	
	South View	1800-1850	Note that 'Slaughter House' to the rear is an outbuilding rather than a separate house.
	Ackworth Cottage	1800-1850	
	Maypole Cottage	1800-1850	NB – Adjacent garage (actually owned by Ackworth Cottage) was originally a smithy & includes a date stone of 1871
	Cote Cottage	1800-1850	Property formerly single storey – now much changed from original
	Woodside	1800-1850	Property formerly single storey – now much changed from original

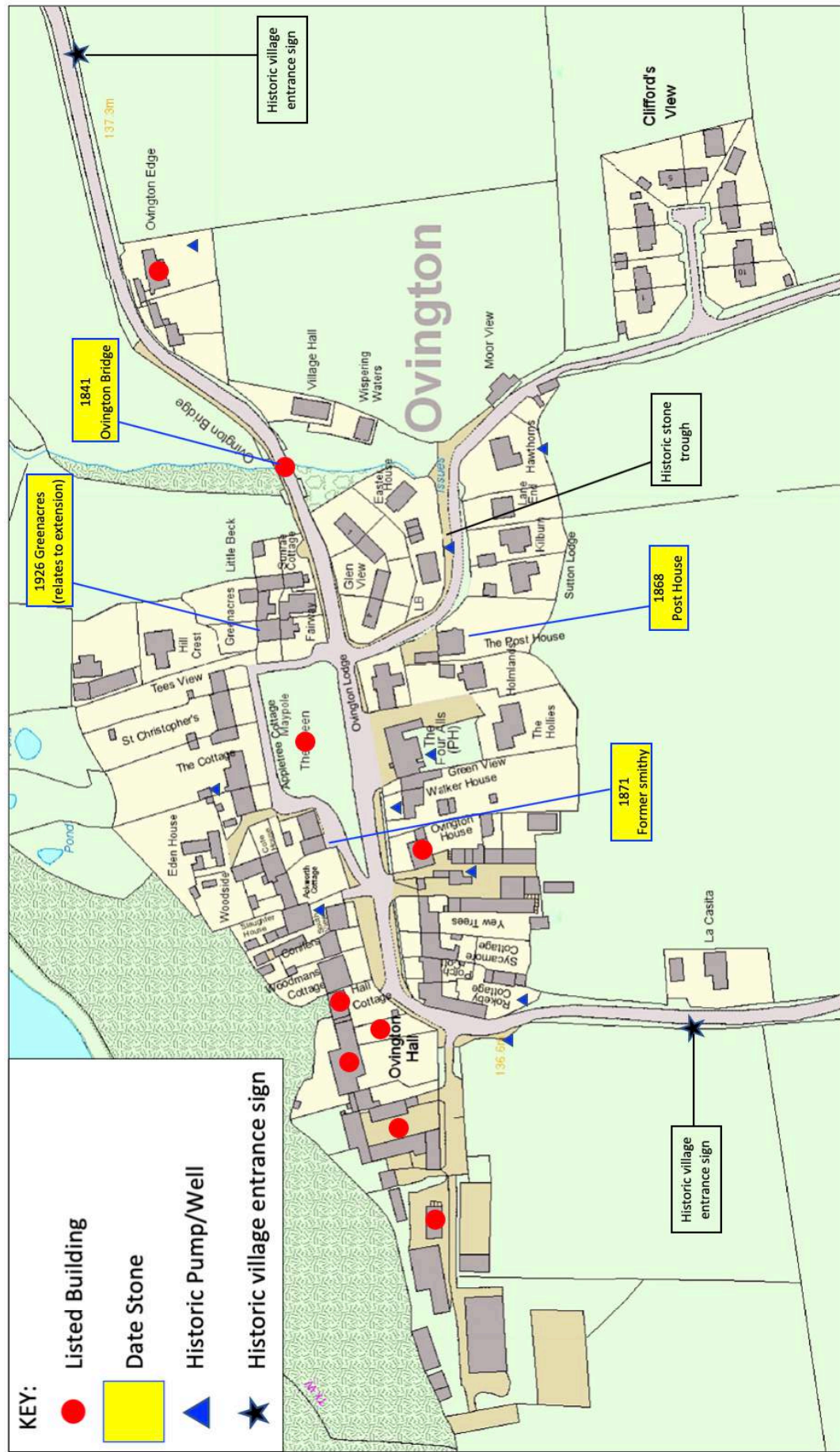
Inventory of buildings in Ovington and their approximate ages (continued)

	PROPERTY	AGE	NOTES
	Eden Cottage	1800-1850	Significantly extended from original
	Appletree Cottage	1800-1850	
	The Cottage	1800-1850	It is understood that the property was built around 1805. It was originally two small cottages
	Village Green Cottage	1800-1850	
	St Christopher's	1800-1850	Looks to have been originally two cottages
	Tees View Cottage	1800-1850	
	Hill Crest	1950-2000	
	Greenacres	1800-1850	Originally part of Wycliffe Estate house. Date stone in gable identifies that the property was extended in 1926
	Fairways	1800-1850	Originally part of Wycliffe Estate house – substantially extended
	Sunrae Cottage	1950-2000	
	Little Beck	1950-2000	
LB	Ovington Edge	Pre-1700	LB description says 'Late C17 or early C18' Historically a farm of some considerable age and a significant landmark at the edge of the village. It includes evidence of a ha-ha along the southern boundary
	Village Hall	1950-2000	Noted that there was planning permission for replacement village hall in 1984
	Whispering Waters	1950-2000	
	Glen View (4 houses)	1900-1950	Understood that Glen View was constructed in the 1940's using POW labour
	Christmas Cottage	1950-2000	
	Easter House	1950-2000	
	Moor View	1800-1850	Originally built as a 'School' (late 1800's/early 1900's) and was thereafter a 'Mission Room' till at least the 1950's.
	Cliffords View (10 houses)	1950-2000	Built as a small Council housing development in the early 1950's
	The Hawthorns	1950-2000	
	Lane End	1950-2000	
	Kilburn	1950-2000	

Inventory of buildings in Ovington and their approximate ages (continued)

	PROPERTY	AGE	NOTES
	Sutton Lodge	Post-2000	
	The Post House	1850-1900	Property formerly housed the village Post Office & small shop. It also at one time accommodated a doctor's surgery. Datestone on garden urn of 1868. Adjacent building (now garaging for The Post House) is earlier - circa 1800-1850
	Ovington Lodge	1800-1850	Original oldest part of dwelling would appear to be westernmost portion
	Holmlands (1 Maypole Court)	Post-2000	
	The Hollies (2 Maypole Court)	Post-2000	
	Rowan House	1800-1850	Residential conversion created from downsizing of pub approx. 2019
	Yew Tree House	1800-1850	Residential conversion created from downsizing of pub approx. 2019
	The Four Alls	1800-1850	Historic pub at centre of village, recorded on Tithe Map as such as far back as 1839
	Green View	1800-1850	
	Walker House	1800-1850	
LB	Ovington House	1750-1800	LB description says 'late C18 or early C19'. Farmhouse & working farm, including outbuildings of similar age to the house. One of these used to house a brewery/maltkiln, including an underground cellar (still in place) which runs under part of the garden of the adjacent Sycamore Cottage
	Yew Trees	1800-1850	NB - this no longer exists as a separate property as it has been amalgamated into Sycamore Cottage (see below)
	Sycamore Cottage	1800-1850	This was originally a row of 3 cottages (one of which was Yew Trees above), but now just one house
	Porch Cottage	1800-1850	
	Rokeby Cottage	1800-1850	
	La Casita/Willow Garth	1950-2000	Dwelling name has recently been changed from La Casita to Willow Garth

Map 3: Historic Assets of Ovington



Ovington – List Of Historic Assets

‘Keys to the Past’ Entries:

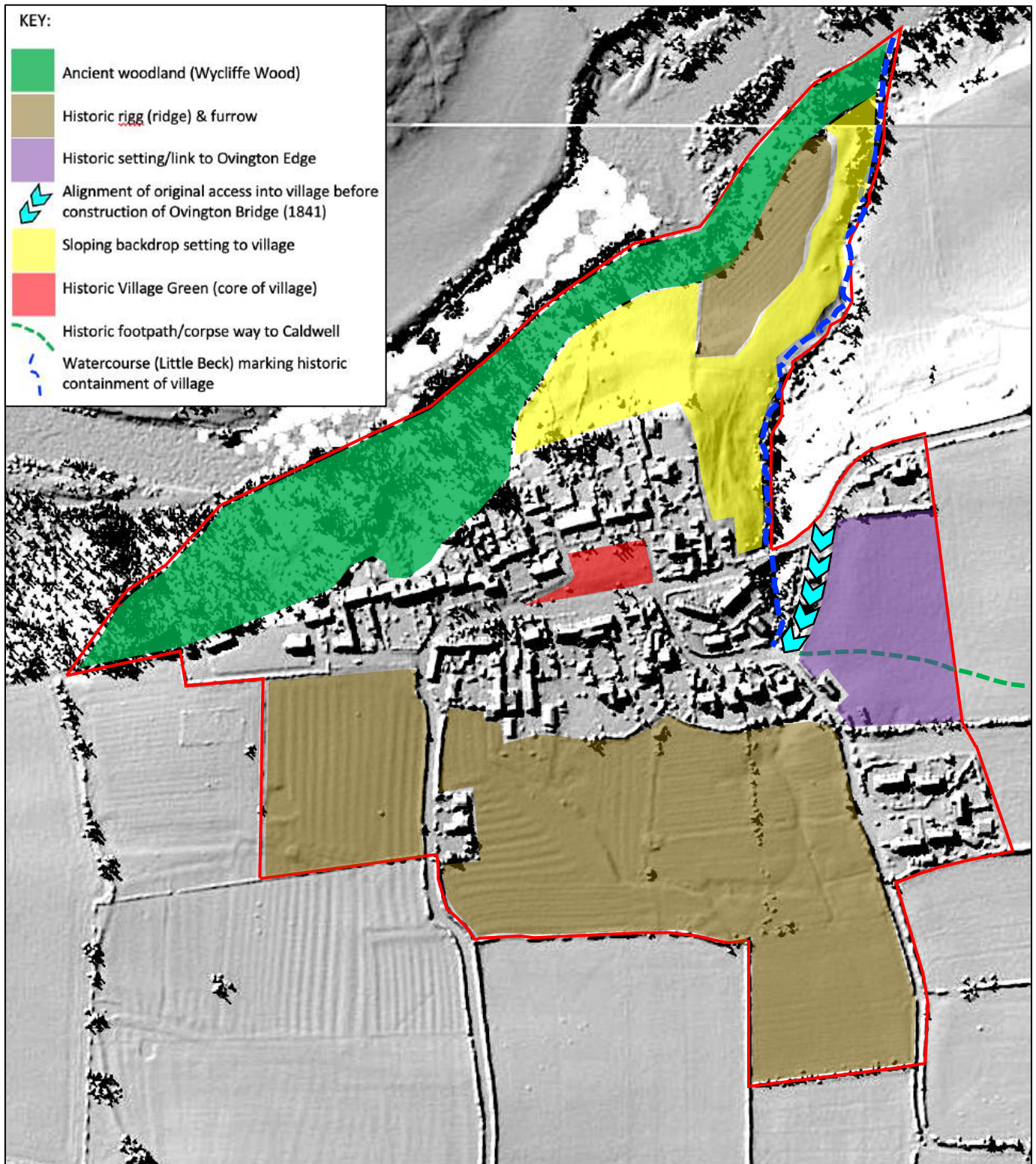
Building/Feature	Description	Listed Building?
<u>Maypole on Ovington Village Green</u>	COMMEMORATIVE MONUMENT, MAYPOLE	✓
<u>Outbuilding & Old Smithy @ Ovington Hall</u>	BLACKSMITHS WORKSHOP, OUTBUILDING	✓
<u>Ovington</u>	QUERN STONES	×
<u>Ovington Bridge, Ovington Village</u>	BRIDGE	✓
<u>Ovington Edge, Ovington Village</u>	HOUSE	✓
<u>Ovington Hall & Cottage, Ovington Village</u>	HOUSE	✓
<u>Ovington House, Ovington Village</u>	HOUSE	✓
<u>Walls, Outbuilding & Railings @ Ovington Hall</u>	GARDEN WALL, OUTBUILDING, RAILINGS	✓
<u>fmr Cartshed/Granary SW of Ovington Hall</u>	CART SHED, GRANARY	✓
<u>fmr Farmbuilding Range W of Ovington Hall</u>	FARM BUILDING, STABLE	✓

Other historic features:

Building/Feature	Description
Historic wells/pumps (see historic OS maps, esp 1897)	See Map 3: Historic Features of Ovington
Date stones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ovington Bridge – 1841 • Post House - 1868 • Garage adjacent to Maypole Cottage (former smithy) – 1871 • Green Acres - 1926 (relates to extension)
Stone trough	Replacement, but same site as historic trough (see 1914 OS map as evidence)
Cockshot Camp	<i>‘This small (4 acres) Iron Age hillfort is located over the steep slope descending to river Tees. The fort was roughly square in shape, it has a rampart, ditch (up to 2 m deep) and outer bank. Northern and western part of the earthworks survived in decent condition, but the southern and eastern bank are completely ploughed out’.</i>
Wycliffe Wood (Ancient Woodland)	
Other features	Quern stone in garden of ‘The Cottage’

Map 4: Historic Landscape Setting of Ovington

NB - Red outer line denotes proposed boundary for Conservation Area



Appendix 1: Inventory of historical sources

SOURCE TYPE		EXAMPLES/DETAILS
1	Statutory & non-statutory heritage related records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic England • Keys to the Past • Historic Environment Record (Durham County Council) • LIDAR mapping • National Archives • North Yorkshire County Record Office • East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Local Study Group • A Vision of Britain Through Time • Genuki – directories and gazetteers
2	Other official records (eg – planning applications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Council records • Teesdale District Council Records • Durham County Council Records
3	Maps (including aerial photos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1809 Burton Constable Estate Map • 1839 Tithe Map • Wycliffe Estate Map • OS Historical maps (1857; 1895; 1893; 1897; 1899; 1914; 1924; 1954) • Google Earth/Google Maps (for current & historical aerals) • 1979 aerial view of Ovington + other aerial views held by individuals • Village and house plans – records of Chichester Constable family
4	Postcards, photos, drawings or other illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published postcards (dates?) • ‘Images of England’ (on Historic England website – several from Ovington) • Historic photos of maypole etc • Facebook group – historic Teesdale images? • Photos from private collections
5	Published sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domesday Book • ‘Their Lives’ (Angela Diamond) • Vol 200 Surtees Society (Publications of the Surtees Society) • The H-O-W Villages
6	Oral History & feedback from residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longstanding village residents • Other former residents • Newsletter ‘call for information’ responses
7	Census Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancestry.com • List of Trades & Professions • Population – see “A Vision of Britain Through Time”
8	Newspaper articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teesdale Mercury eg – new maypole/other reports from 1855 • Northern Echo – 1st Feb 1967 • British Newspaper Archive
9	Estate Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale of Estate 1935/39 – Historic England Archive • Papers of Chichester Constable family
10	Title Deeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual contributions
11	Wills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From title deeds • National Archives/FindmyPast/Ancestry

Appendix 2: Example of publicity and community engagement

OVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

UPDATE: A POTENTIAL CONSERVATION AREA FOR OVINGTON VILLAGE

A brief background

There are currently 93 Conservation Areas across County Durham as a whole. In Teesdale, these include places such as Whorlton, Gainford and numerous others. Conservation Areas are defined as *'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*.

Designation of a Conservation Area gives broader protection than the listing of individual buildings. All the features, listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognised as part of its special character. Conservation Area designation is the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that planning decisions address the quality of the landscape in its broadest sense.

Like all local planning authorities, Durham County Council is under a legal duty to assess its area and review it from time to time to consider whether any new areas are suitable for designation as Conservation Areas.

The designation of a Conservation Area for Ovington had been mooted by the County Council as long ago as the 1980's. Later, in the 2002 Teesdale Local Plan, the Council stated that *'There are a number of settlements within the District of outstanding character which are not currently designated as Conservation Areas. In order to protect and enhance this character it is proposed to designate them as Conservation Areas'*. Ovington was one of the identified settlements. However, the impetus to proceed with its designation has not materialised to date.

Recap on the recent Public Meeting in Ovington Village Hall on 28th August

To begin exploring what a Conservation Area designation might entail for Ovington, a special meeting was arranged last week to find out more. This was attended by Mr Bryan Harris, who is the Senior Conservation Officer at Durham County Council. Mr Harris gave an informative presentation on Conservation Areas, including a question and answer session. This helped clarify a range of queries and uncertainties that people had.

The meeting was very well attended by 25 individuals, representing 17 households (ie – approaching one third of the village).

The level of attendance and nature of questions showed that there was genuine interest in the idea of a Conservation Area for Ovington.

However, notwithstanding the well-attended meeting, as a Parish Council, we are keen to ensure that everyone has ample opportunity to express their view before any further action is taken.

Next Steps

The main aims of this newsletter are therefore –

- to provide a further opportunity to find out more about what a Conservation Area is and what it entails (see box 1 overleaf)
- to provide a further opportunity for feedback for those who weren't able to attend the Public Meeting and/or haven't yet expressed their views (see box 2 overleaf)

Please see overleaf for further information and how to express your views.

Further information

There are many online sources of information about Conservation Areas.

Historic England is perhaps one of the most authoritative sources, and the following links provide lots of useful information –

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/conservation-areas/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/owning-historic-property/conservation-area/>

Expressing your views

If you have any comments or views about the possible designation of a Conservation Area for Ovington, please let the Parish Council know in either of the following ways:

- By email or in writing to the Parish Clerk
- Verbally to the Chair or any Parish Councillor

Contact details are as follows –

Clerk – Amanda Wilson - Kilburn, Ovington (email - teesdaleovingtonparishclerk@gmail.com)

Councillor Nigel Parkes (Chair) - Greenacres, Ovington

Councillor Julie Parkes - Greenacres, Ovington

Councillor Peter Levett – 2 Glen View, Ovington

Councillor Shaun Hanson – Woodside, Ovington

Councillor Tricia Hanson – Woodside, Ovington

**YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT AND WILL HELP IN DETERMINING THE NEXT
STEP THAT THE PARISH COUNCIL TAKES AND HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED**

Next Meeting of the Parish Council

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7.45pm on Tuesday 8th October at the Village Hall. This will include an agenda item to discuss the topic and decide how to proceed.