

Shaftesbury Historic Urban Character Area 5

Layton Lane

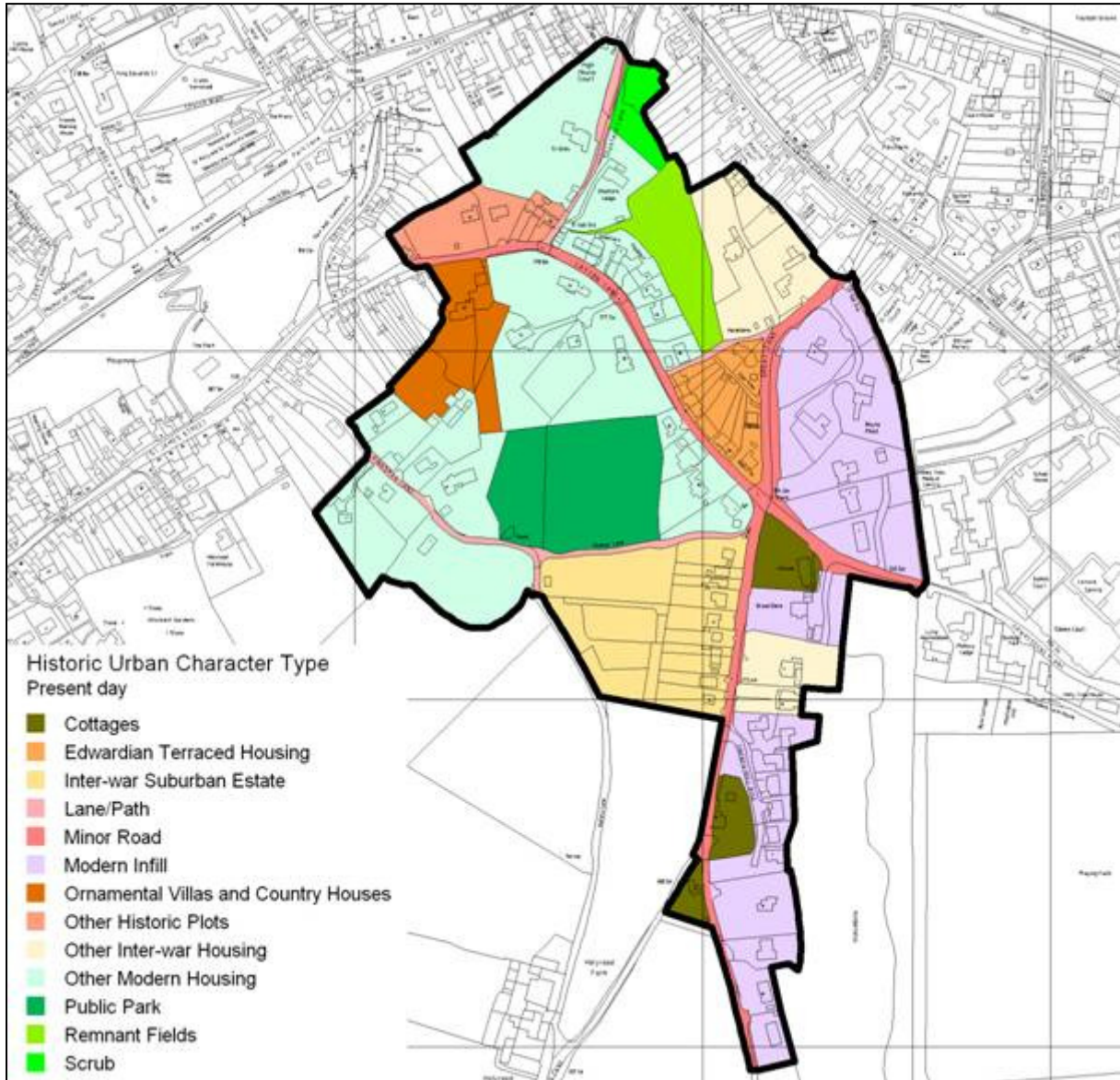


Figure 90: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 5, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 91: View of Layton Lane area from Park Walk.



Figure 92: Layton Lane looking NW.

Shaftesbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area lies in a bowl at the base of the slope of the Greensand spur and plateau, to the east of St James. It is defined by its topography and by its semi-rural character.

Topography and Geology

The area lies in the angle between the Greensand spur and plateau at the head of a valley draining to the southwest, which forms a natural bowl open to the southwest. The northern part of the area is on the steep slopes of the edge of the plateau. It lies on Upper Greensand, with the exception of a finger of Gault Clay extending towards the former abbey fishponds.

Urban Structure

Layton Lane forms the main route through the area, with Great Lane/French Mill Lane forming the other through route running north-south. Between these routes are a number of minor lanes. The area is semi-rural, rather than urban in form, with a small number of buildings and plots of varying size and shape along the roads, but generally the plots are large and irregular with the buildings set well back from the frontage. There are also a number of open spaces within the area.

Present Character

Figure 90 shows the present day historic urban character types. Most of the area consists of Other Modern Housing and Modern Infill, with smaller areas of Edwardian Terraced Housing, Inter-war Suburban Estate, Ornamental Villas and Country Houses, and Public Park. Other minor character types include Cottages, Other Historic Plots, Remnant Fields and Scrub.

Time Depth

The earliest surviving elements may date to the medieval period, though the system of roads and lanes may be Saxon or earlier. The former abbey fishponds are medieval and Layton is first mentioned as a farm in the 15th century. Layton House itself is 17th century in origin. The cottages date from the 19th century and the earliest part of the 20th. Most of the development dates from the post-war and modern period, with a small amount of inter-war development mainly along French Mill Lane.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is primarily one of low density dispersed houses within large plots and often set well back from the road. The north side of Layton Lane and the west side of French Mill Lane have a more linear settlement pattern with houses ranged along the roads and set back behind front gardens. The street frontage is defined by a mixture of stone walls and hedges.

The streetscape is generally one of heavily vegetated rural lanes, some of which are hollow ways, with irregular dispersed settlement along them. Trees and hedges form a significant component in the semi-rural nature of this area. The topography also forms a major element of the character, with extensive views to the southwest and a green backdrop of the greensand plateau to the north.



Figure 93: Layton Lane looking west towards St James.



Figure 94: Houses on slopes above Layton Lane.

Shaftesbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Built Character

Building types

Historic buildings in the character area can be subdivided into large houses, cottages and terraced houses, but the majority of buildings are modern bungalows and other suburban house forms.

Layton House is the only example of a large historic house in this area. Parts of this house date to the late 17th century and it was enlarged in the late 19th century. The cottages and small houses are a mixture of detached and terraced two-storeyed buildings. The Edwardian houses include both terraced and semi-detached houses. The inter-war and post-war buildings are largely detached one or two storey houses in a variety of styles and ground plan.

Building Materials

The historic buildings are mainly built in Greensand (both rubble and ashlar), with some brick. The roofs are slate or tile. The Edwardian houses are of red brick with slate roofs. The inter-war and modern houses are mainly brick with tile or slate roofs.

Key Buildings

17th-19th century Houses: Layton House,
19th century vernacular houses and cottages: Hillside, 16-20 Layton Lane.



Figure 95: Layton House, Layton Lane.



Figure 96: Hillside, Layton Lane.



Figure 97: 16-20 Layton Lane.



Figure 98: Edwardian Terraced Houses, Layton Lane.

Shaftesbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations

No archaeological investigations have taken place within this character area.

Archaeological Character

The lack of archaeological investigation constrains the consideration of the archaeological character of this area. However, the steeply sloping topography may have inhibited past settlement activity. It is likely that this area was largely agricultural land until its development in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nevertheless, the site of the abbey fishponds may have provided a focus for medieval activity as medieval pottery has been found nearby (Farrar 1949, 67) and a 14th century heraldic pendant was found just to the north (Green &

Griffiths 1985). Some Roman pottery was also found near the fishponds (Farrar 1949, 67), which may indicate the possibility of the survival of some 'pre-urban' archaeology.

A small number of historic boundaries are marked on Figure 99. These are mainly the remnants of 19th century and earlier field and plot boundaries.

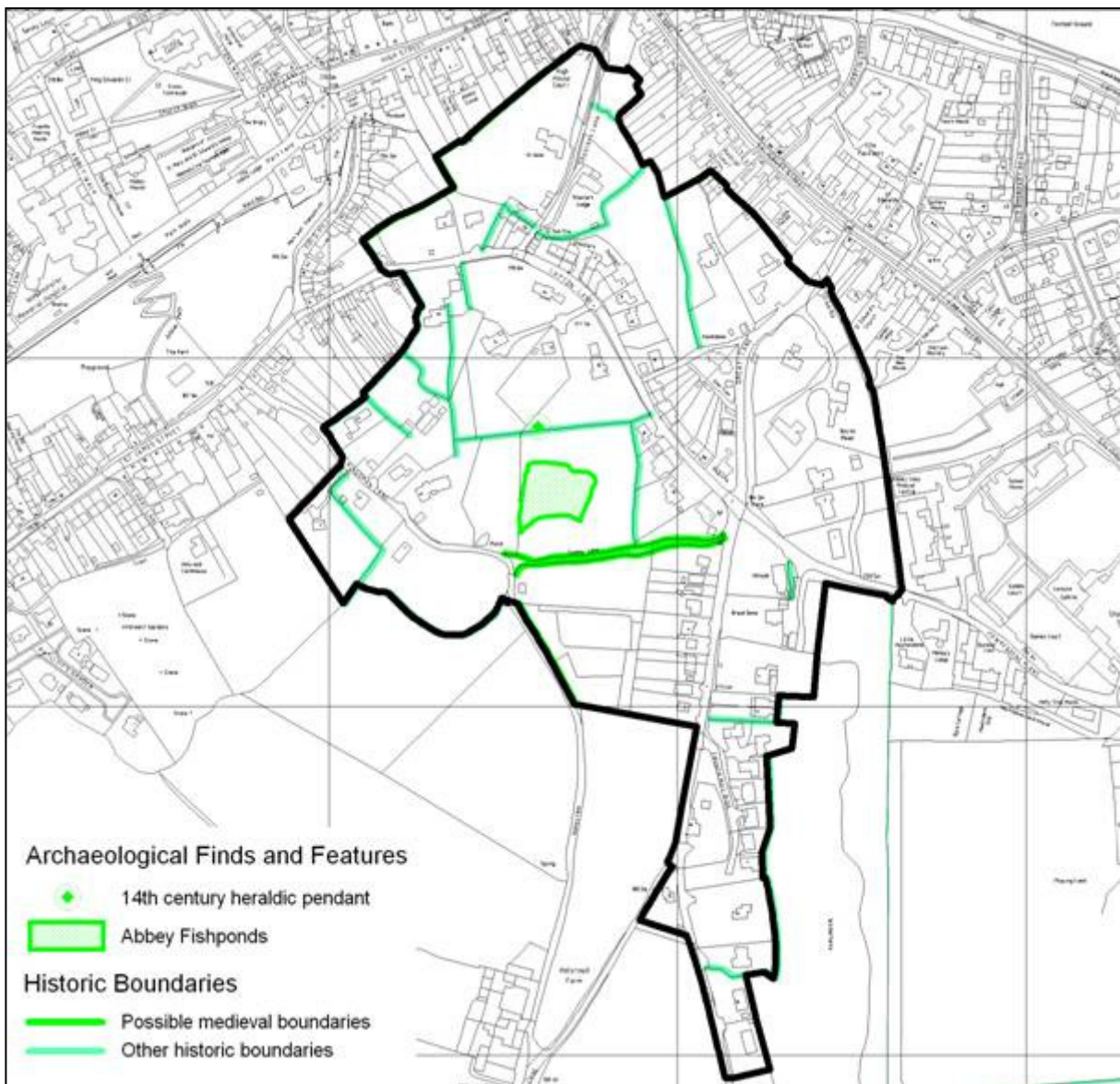


Figure 99: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 5.

Shaftesbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Designations

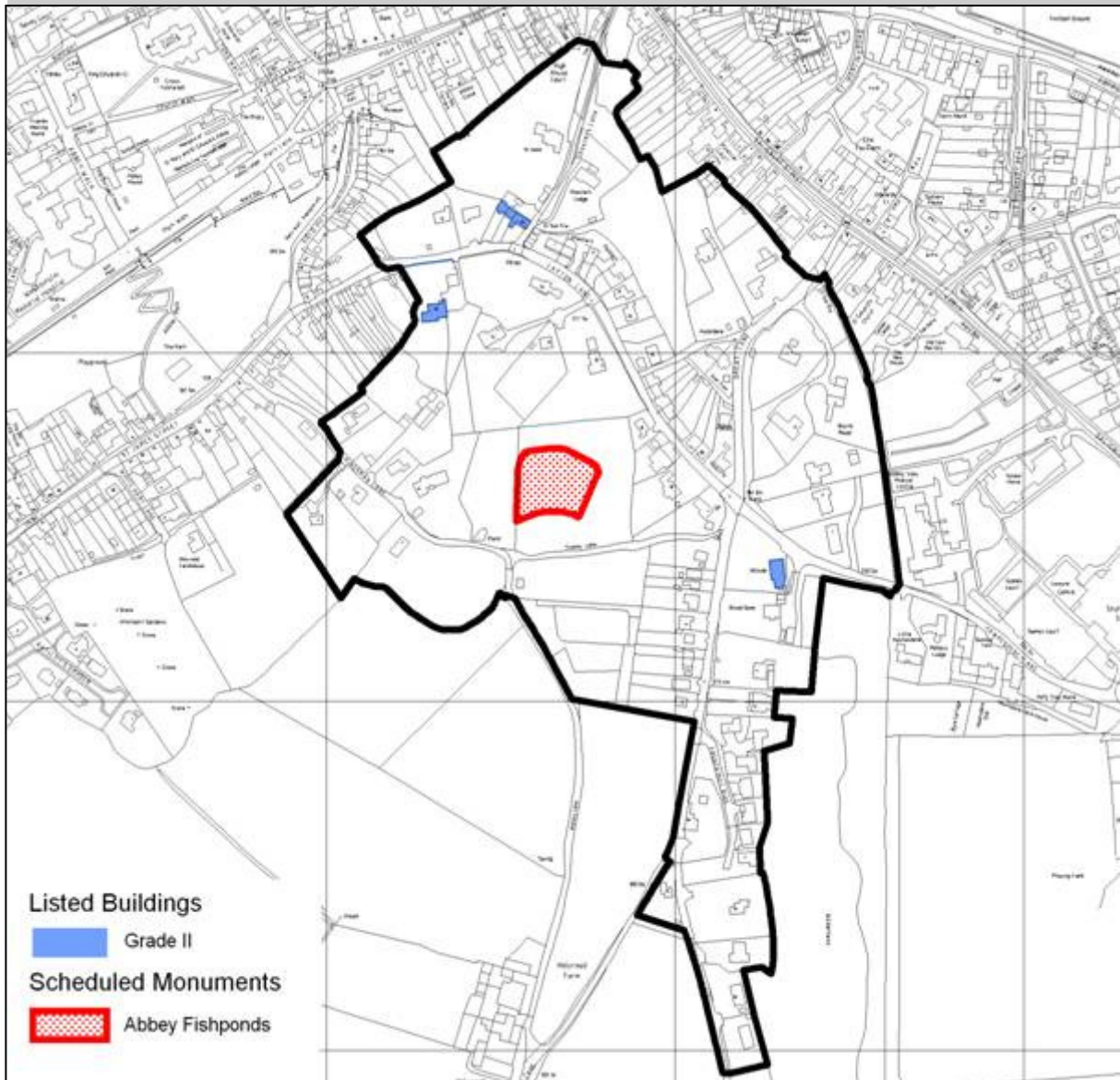


Figure 100: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 5.

Listed Buildings

There are four Listed Building designations in the Character Area. All are Grade II and include Layton House and Hillside (Figure 100).

Scheduled Monuments

There is one Scheduled Monument within the Character Area; The Abbey Fishponds (SM DO839).

Conservation Areas

Most of this Character Area lies within the Shaftesbury Conservation Area (Figure 54). The land south of Snakey Lane and the southern extremity of Frenchmill Lane are excluded.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the Character Area.

Shaftesbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. Modern development has been along pre-existing rural lanes and within pre-existing plots or subdivisions thereof. This means that many hedge-lines and historic field boundaries are preserved in the modern landscape. Furthermore, the steepest slopes remain undeveloped as fields, scrub or woodland. Within this landscape there are a number of historic cottages and houses dispersed among modern detached houses.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. It lies on the southeastern slopes of the historic town and is highly visible from the major viewpoints on the Shaftesbury promontory. Any large scale development here would have a major detrimental visual impact on important views south from the historic town.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **low**. This is a combination of the steepness of the topography and the location of the area away from the historic core of Shaftesbury. The area does contain the remains of the abbey fishponds and some medieval and Roman finds have been found close by. The Roman finds hint at possible pre-urban activity. The pre-urban settlement pattern of the region is poorly understood and this area has the potential to inform aspects of the rural settlement pattern and economy of the region from the late prehistoric period onwards.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1- 3, 26-9 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Semi-rural character
- Well preserved ancient lanes and boundaries
- Dispersed historic cottages and houses
- Large number of hedges and trees
- Distinctive topographical position below the historic town
- Good views of countryside to south