

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 13 Purewell

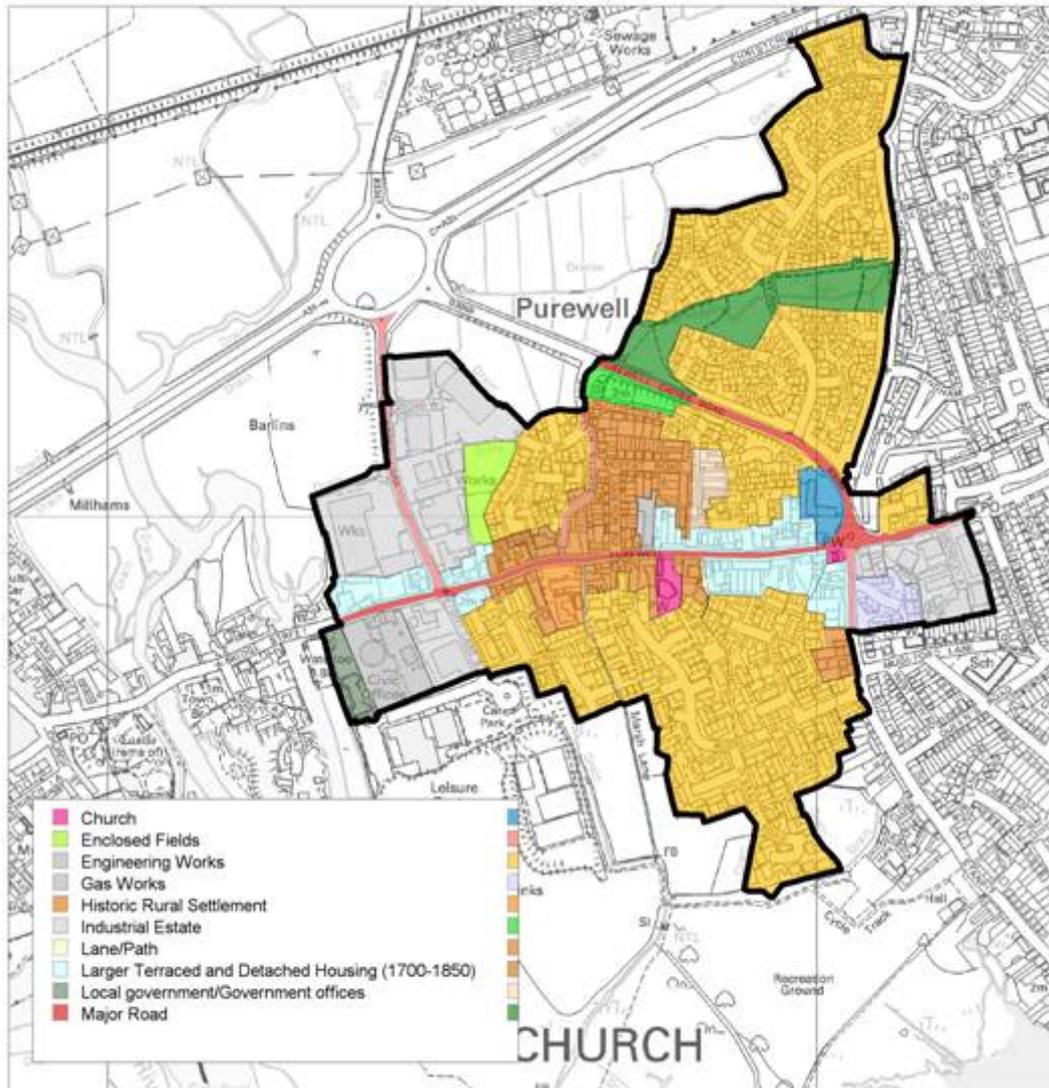


Figure 116: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 13, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 117: Scotts Hill Lane



Figure 118: Purewell Farmhouse

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 13

Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area represents the historic settlement of Street (now Purewell) and a rural area between it and the medieval suburb of Bridge Street to the west.

Topography and Geology

The area sits on the eastern bank of the River Avon, sloping slightly upwards towards the east. The geology of the area consists of alluvium.

Urban Structure

This character area is structured around the Purewell, running from Bridge Street in the west to the junction with Purewell Cross Road and Stanpit in the east. This area includes a short section of Bridge Street and Stony Lane South.

Present Character

Figure 116 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area is very mixed, with Historic Rural Settlement along Purewell, with a ribbon development Larger terraced and detached houses (1700-1850), Town Houses, and Suburban Villas forming to the east along Purewell. Elsewhere, the area is dominated by Modern Housing Estates.

Time Depth

The area now known as 'Purewell' was originally called 'Street', the name being transposed from Purewell Cross in the late 19th century. *La Stret* was part of the manor of Somerford before AD 1150 (Page, 1912, 83-101). Houses are shown lining the main road on Ogilby's road map of 1675. In the late 18th century the village was clustered around the Purewell/Scotts Hill Lane junction. The settlement was contained within a large oval enclosure, delineated in the modern townscape by the line of *The Buttery*, a ditch north of Scotts Hill Lane, and a ditch running at the back of properties on Rotterdam Drive. The section of the enclosure south of the main road is less easy to define on modern maps but is clearer on the 1796 Malmesbury estate map.

The settlement at Purewell Cross dates from before 1796. The name Purewell may have originated here, perhaps denoting the cross close to Tutton's well.

Other aspects of the Street medieval landscape were preserved in field boundaries marked on 18th and 19th century maps, including an area of likely shared meadow or woodland which had been enclosed in a piecemeal fashion over many years at the north end of Scott's Hill Lane.

A common called Scott's Hill Common is recorded as being enclosed in 1827 (Page, 1912, 83-4). This area is now dominated by the modern housing estates around Normandy Drive to the north of Purewell and the majority of ancient field boundaries have been destroyed in the modern development. To the south of the main road an area of medieval furlongs has also been developed for modern housing.

The 1796 Malmesbury estate map shows Stony Lane as a small lane running from the main road east of Waterloo Bridge to the village of Burton to the north (HRO 9M73/139). Stony Lane South did not exist before the middle of the 20th century. The first houses were recorded in this section of Bridge Street on the late 19th century 1st edition OS map. It appears that many of today's standing buildings retain some fabric dating from that time, especially on the north side of the road. This section of Bridge Street was known as *Rotten Row* then.

The rest of the area was pasture until the mid 20th century, except for fields south of Bridge Street which were taken over by the municipal Gas Works from the late 19th century. The area has been developed for commercial activities from the mid 20th century, including industry and the Council Offices .

The field boundary marking the northern limit of the area on the west side of Stony Lane may be of even greater antiquity. This follows the prevailing NNE-SSW alignments of the Avon valley, and is likely to have been created at some time between the late prehistoric and the medieval periods.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The streetscape and views around Stony Lane have changed dramatically in the last 50 years. What had been a quiet country lane is now a busy town centre street flanked by industrial units rather than pasture fields. Surviving topographical elements to the Stony Lane character area include the rear boundary plots to properties fronting on to Bridge Street and the relict field system into which the 20th century industrial estate is fitted.

The rear property boundaries on the north side of Bridge Street are formed by a sinuous ditch or stream draining westwards into the River Avon. The ditch is not visible on the 1796 estate map but is prominent on the 1st edition OS map. The sinuous nature suggests that it may be a modified natural stream or gully, enhanced in order to better drain the building plots.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 13

Built Character

Building types

The historic fabric of the character area consists of buildings along the main road at Purewell, at Purewell Cross and along Bridge Street, formerly Rotten Row.

Four buildings, two on each side of the main road of Purewell including numbers 8, 14 and 7-13 Purewell. Number 8 has an early 19th century facade to an earlier structure; number 14 is a former chapel, built in 1890 with a Slate roof .

A group of buildings and associated structures are clustered around the junction of Purewell and Scotts Hill Lane, the core of the medieval settlement of Street. Most of these buildings date from the early 19th century, except Avon Manor (early 18th century), Hengistbury House (circa 1800) and the Salisbury Arms (18th century).

A group of historic buildings at Purewell Cross includes part of the medical centre, formerly Purewell Farmhouse, the Rising Sun public house and number 113 Purewell. The buildings are generally early 19th century in date, although The Rising Sun may date from the late 18th century.

Building Materials

Historic buildings are generally brick with tiled roofs. The former chapel at 14 Purewell, built in 1890, has a slate roof and ornate façade. The Starre Inn is a 19th century building in two parts. The western half is in painted brick and the eastern has a roughcast façade and mock timber frame on the first floor.

Key Buildings

Vernacular: 52-56 and 74-78 Bridge Street

Industrial: Gas Works

Civic and Institutional: war memorial at Purewell Cross

Commercial: Rising Sun public house, Salisbury Arms

Agricultural: Purewell Farmhouse (now medical centre)

Archaeological Investigations

No formal archaeological investigations have taken place in this character area.

There have been some chance finds and observations. A relatively high number of Bronze Age artefacts have been recovered from the Street/ Purewell Cross area. These include an Early Bronze Age beaker, knife and barbed and tanged arrowhead from Cameron Road; a Bronze Age palstave from the site of Pritchard's Nurseries to the south of Purewell (St George Gray, 1925); and a Late Bronze Age urn from a gravel pit.

A Lower Palaeolithic handaxe was found near Purewell Cross Roads at the western edge of the Terrace 4 Gravel geology. (Roe, 1968, 94; Wymer, 1991-2, 138).

Archaeological Character

Medieval settlement remains can be expected along the Purewell street frontage and the Purewell/ Scotts Hill Lane and Stony Lane areas.

Much of the area was under pasture until 50 years ago. Nevertheless the potential for relic field boundaries and chance finds of prehistoric, medieval or Roman material also remains.

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 13
Designations**

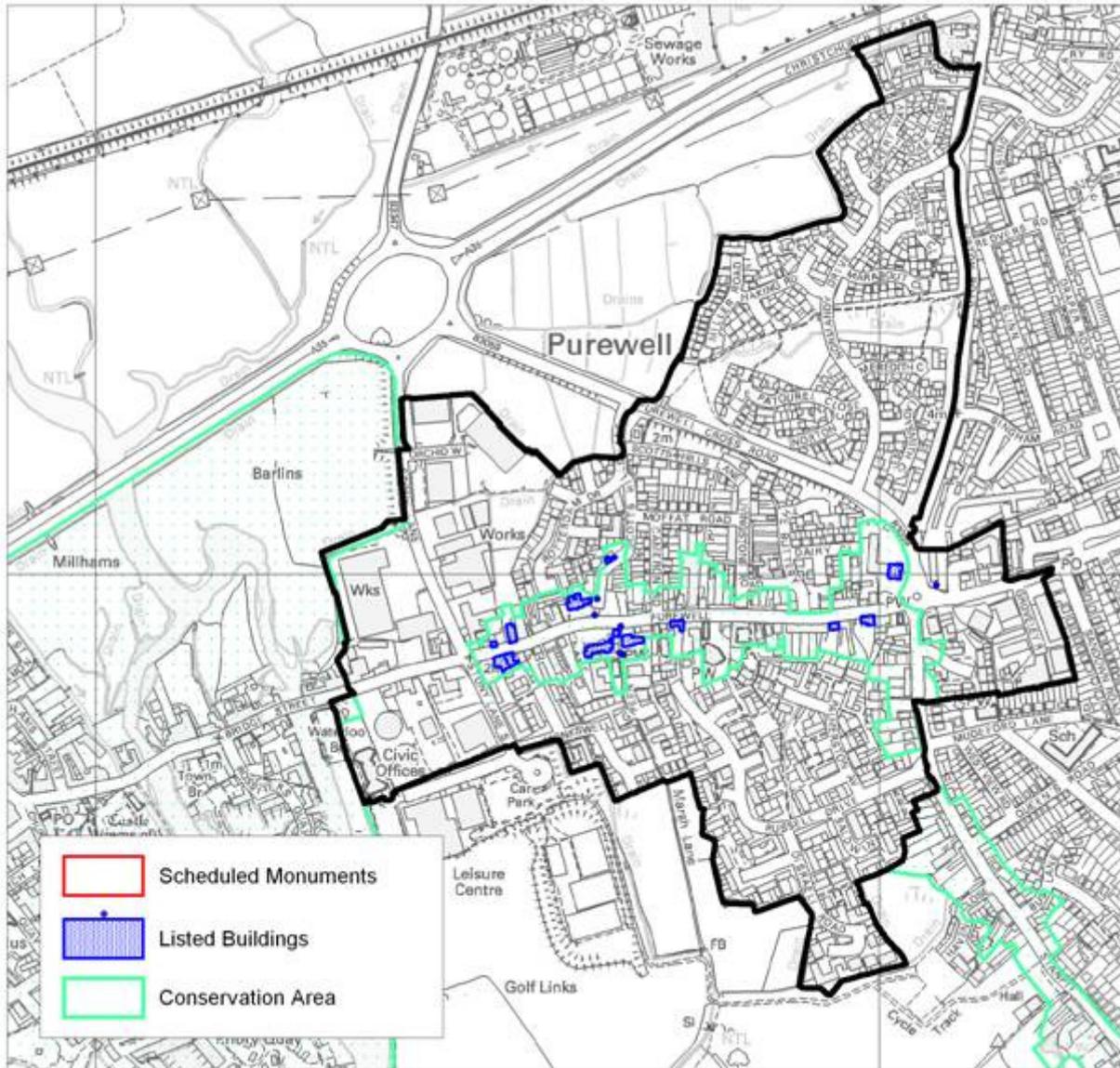


Figure 119: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 13

Listed Buildings

There are 19 Listed Building designations in the Character Area, all Grade II.

Conservation Areas

The Purewell Conservation Area lies within this Character Area.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

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

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monument designations within the Character Area.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 13 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **high**. The area represents a late and post-medieval extension of the town eastwards from the medieval suburb, and has retained many historic buildings and boundaries.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Although there are some 20th century housing estates, the area has a distinct historic core with industrial elements. Future development needs to be on a scale that does not impact visually on views to and from the historic town.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**.

The archaeological potential of the Purewell area varies between the historic core which has a **high** potential and the modern housing estates with a lower potential. The peripheral areas also have potential for the recovery of evidence for enclosures and land division, as well as prehistoric activity.

No known archaeological sites are recorded for the Stony Lane area. However, Bridge Street has been in use since the medieval period or earlier and the potential for archaeological deposits in the plots flanking the main road must be fairly **high**. The remainder of the area

was under pasture until 50 years ago. Nevertheless the potential for relic field boundaries and chance finds of prehistoric, medieval or Roman material also remains.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-4 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Medieval rural settlement
- Surviving medieval boundaries
- 18th-19th century street frontage
- Bridge Street 19th century frontage
- Relict property and field boundaries
- 19th century gas works buildings