

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 15 Roeshott & Somerford Retail Park

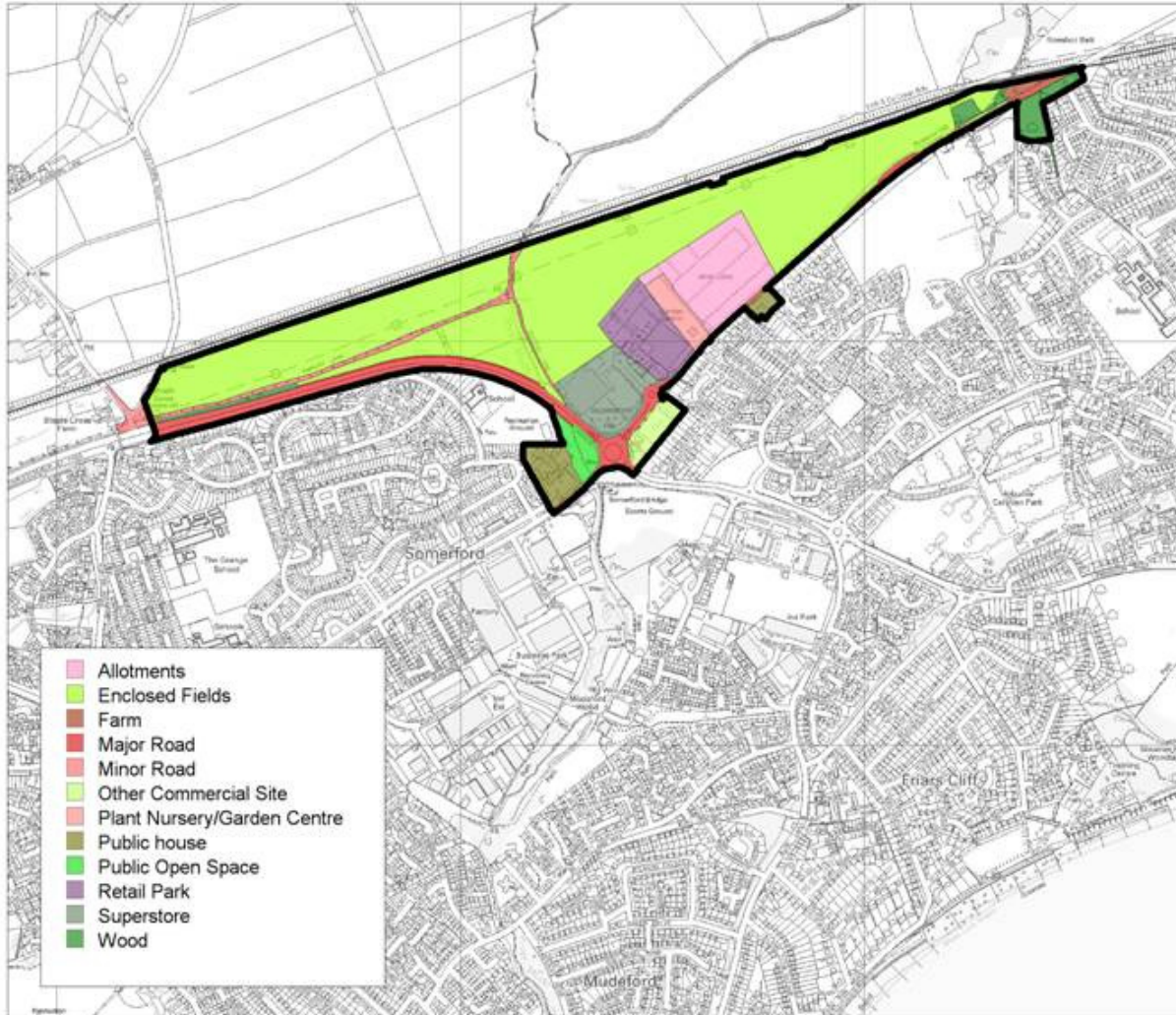


Figure 124: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 15, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 125: Ambury Lane



Figure 126: Roeshott fields

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 15 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area represents a thin strip of farmland lying south of the railway, east of Staple Cross and north of the Christchurch by-pass. Historically this area was characterised by regular enclosed pasture fields.

Topography and Geology

This character area is flat, without any distinct variations in topography. The geology of the area consists almost entirely of Bracklesham Beds.

Urban Structure

The Somerford roundabout was constructed as part of the Christchurch By-pass and is central to the current character of the area.

Present Character

Figure 124 shows the present day historic urban character types. The greater part of the area is Enclosed Fields, and these are concentrated in the northern part of the area, away from the by-pass. There is a Farm and a cluster of small areas of Wood at the very eastern tip of the area. The area nearer the by-pass is characterised by large retail outlets constructed from 1989 and a number of smaller commercial premises dating from the mid-late 20th century. These include Public Houses and a Nursery/ Garden Centre. There is also an area of Allotments.

Time Depth

The area is characterised by regular enclosed pasture fields arranged into a rectilinear pattern on an alignment (NE-SSW) discernible throughout the region. A tithing boundary and lanes such as Ambury Lane and Watery Lane, follow these alignments, which may be prehistoric in origin. Another feature of the historic character of this area was the eponymous ford, the position of which is now immediately west of Somerford Roundabout. Three roads from the east (Watery Lane, Roeshott Hill and Highcliffe Road) converged at this point to cross the River Mude and head west towards Christchurch. Watery Lane, in particular, is shown on the 1796 Malmesbury estate map (HRO 9M73/139) as being a wide lane that also encompassed the river itself, hence the name *Watery Lane*.

Roeshott Farmhouse was built around the turn of the 20th century. Until the mid-late 20th century the only other buildings in the area were two 19th century cottages on the north side of Roeshott Hill. Two hotels were constructed,

possibly around the same time as the Christchurch By-pass, one to the west of Somerford roundabout (The Somerford) and the other on the south side of Roeshott Hill (The Roeshott, formerly Forest Barn Hotel). It was not until 1989 that the retail park was established with the construction of the new Sainsbury's supermarket.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

There is little settlement in the character area.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 15
Built Character

Building types

The earliest building in the character area is the late 19th-early 20th century Roeshott Farmhouse.

The mid-late 20th century commercial premises include the Roeshott and the Somerford public houses. The latter has been converted into a large motel.

The modern commercial buildings have little local character and tend to be of simple block form with flat roofs.

Building Materials

The 19th-early 20th buildings are generally in brick with tiled roofs.

Key Buildings

Agricultural: Roeshott Farmhouse

Commercial: the Roeshott Inn, Somerford motel

Communications: 19th century cast iron milepost near the Roeshott Inn

Military: pillbox, Hinton rail bridge

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 15
Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations

No formal archaeological investigations have been recorded within the character area.

A Bronze Age cremation urn was found during the construction Sainsbury's Superstore (Dai Watkins, Poole Museums Service, Pers. Comm. Feb 1991).

Archaeological Character

The lack of archaeological investigations constrains discussion of the archaeological character of the area.

The only recorded monument in the area is a Second World War pillbox (variant) built to defend Somerford Airfield and facing south west.

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 15
Designations**

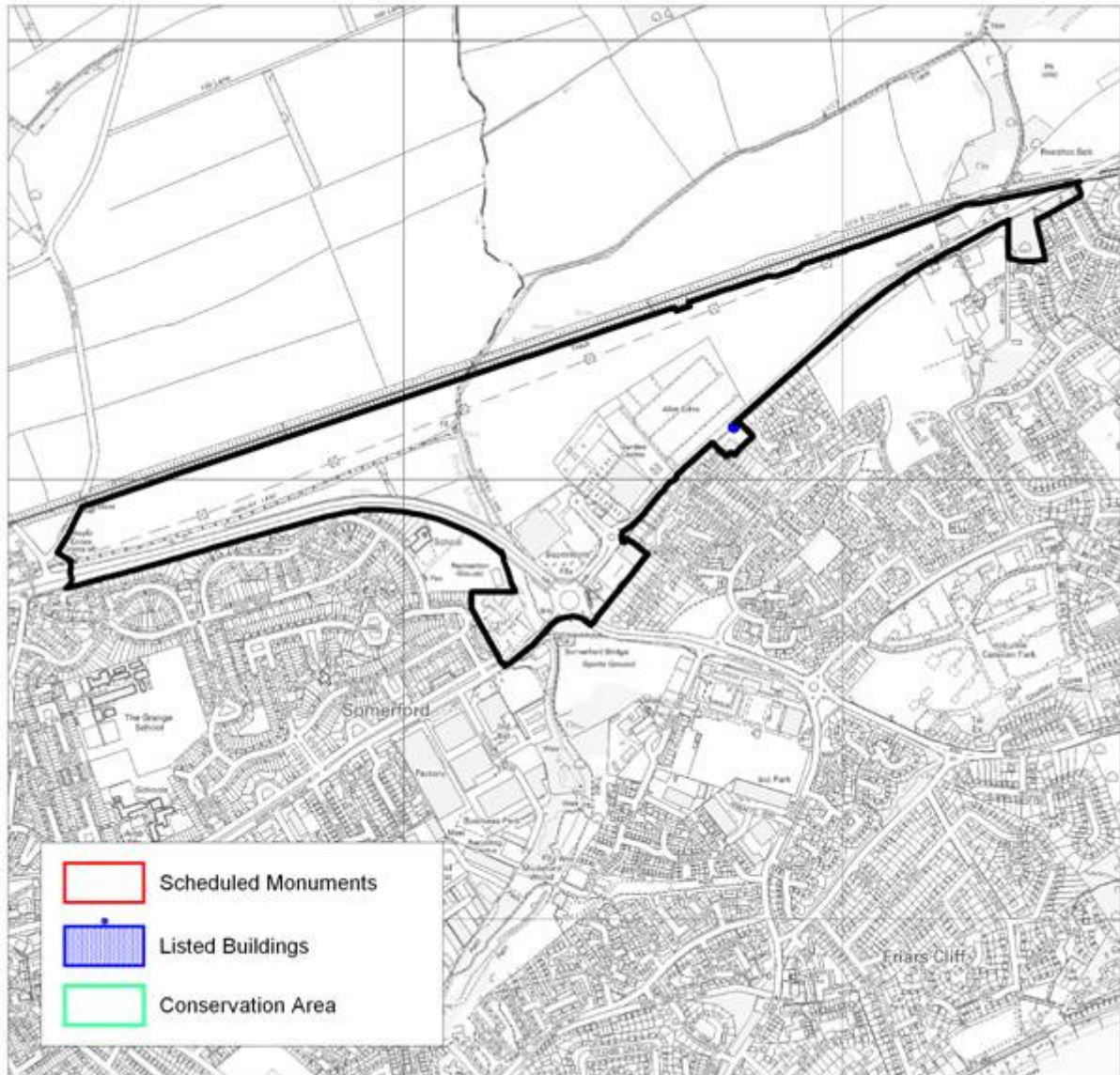


Figure 127: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 15

Listed Buildings

There is one Listed Building designation within the Character Area, a Grade II milestone on Lyndhurst Road.

Conservation Areas

There are no Conservation Area designations within the 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 15
Evaluation**

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **low**. It has retained a pattern of historic boundaries.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. Although 20th century commercial developments are already a strong element of this area, it has retained some historic character, particularly historic field boundaries.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential for the area is considered to be **medium**. It is possible that some evidence for the medieval crossing at Somerford may survive, and for future research

to recover dating evidence for the rectilinear field system within relict field boundaries.

The discovery of a prehistoric cremation raises the possibility that further cremations may be discovered.

Key Characteristics

- Post-Medieval Farm
- Surviving medieval or earlier boundaries
- Surviving medieval or earlier lanes