

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 9 Bridge Street



Figure 98: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 9, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 99: Bridge Street (Waterloo Bridge)



Figure 100: Bridge Street

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 9
Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area represents a medieval suburb along a probably earlier road.

Topography and Geology

This area centres on an island between two courses of the River Avon. It is a crossing point of the river. The geology of the area consists almost entirely of Bracklesham Beds.

Urban Structure

This character area is structured around the axial Bridge Street running west from the area of the burh. The Street between Town Bridge and Waterloo Bridge retains an open plan suggestive of an earlier market, partially closed by the 17th century Chandlery at the eastern end.

Present Character

Figure 98 shows the present day historic urban character types. The dominant character type is Historic Suburban Settlement, with Paddocks and Closes behind to the north, and Modern Infill to the south. There is a block of Larger Terraced and Detached Housing (1700-1850) to the east of Waterloo Bridge at the eastern edge of the character area.

Time Depth

This area represents a medieval suburb of Christchurch. A grant of AD 1278 mentions extra-mural settlement at Bargates and 'between the two bridges' (Jarvis, 1983, 12). Today the main road across the bridges (Bridge Street) is lined with historic buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. The area is adjacent to the burh and very much part of the historic town centre.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

In the majority of cases the rear plots of the buildings also follow exactly those depicted on 19th century maps. Many of these are defined by either natural or man-made drainage

channels which delineate the settlement from the floodable meadows to the north.

The rear plots to the north of this character area are open; they provide some green space, but are not generally visible from the main road.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 9

Built Character

Building types

The historic character of the area is defined by the remarkable number of surviving earlier 18th century buildings, particularly at the western end of the street. There is an almost continuous stretch along the north side of the road. The south side of the road was only partially occupied in the 19th century, mostly towards the western end. A number of these retain period shop fronts and street furniture including wrought iron braces for shop signs and lamps.

The 18th century Chandlery occupies an important position at the eastern end of the suburb on the south side of the road.

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

Building Materials

Almost all the historic buildings date from the 18th-19th centuries and tend to be built in brick (bare, painted or stuccoed) with slate or tile roofs. Many have surviving 19th-century shop fronts and glazing.

The Town Bridge is best described in 2 portions: Redford Bridge spans the millstream and the eastern part spans the River Avon. The eastern part is 15th or 16th century work, with six semicircular stone arches, one of which has been blocked. Redford Bridge has 2 arches.

Waterloo Bridge crosses the eastern channel of the River Avon. It was built in 1816-1817 in the medieval tradition, in ashlar with 5 wide segmental arches and cutwaters.

The grade II* listed Tyneham House is of early 18th century date with projecting wings and hipped roof. Number 3 Bridge Street (also grade II*) is early 19th century and retains two bowed shop windows and intact glazing bars.

Key Buildings

Town Houses: Twynham House

Commercial: The Chandlery, 3 Bridge Street

Bridges: Town Bridge, Redford Bridge, Waterloo Bridge

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 9
Archaeology**

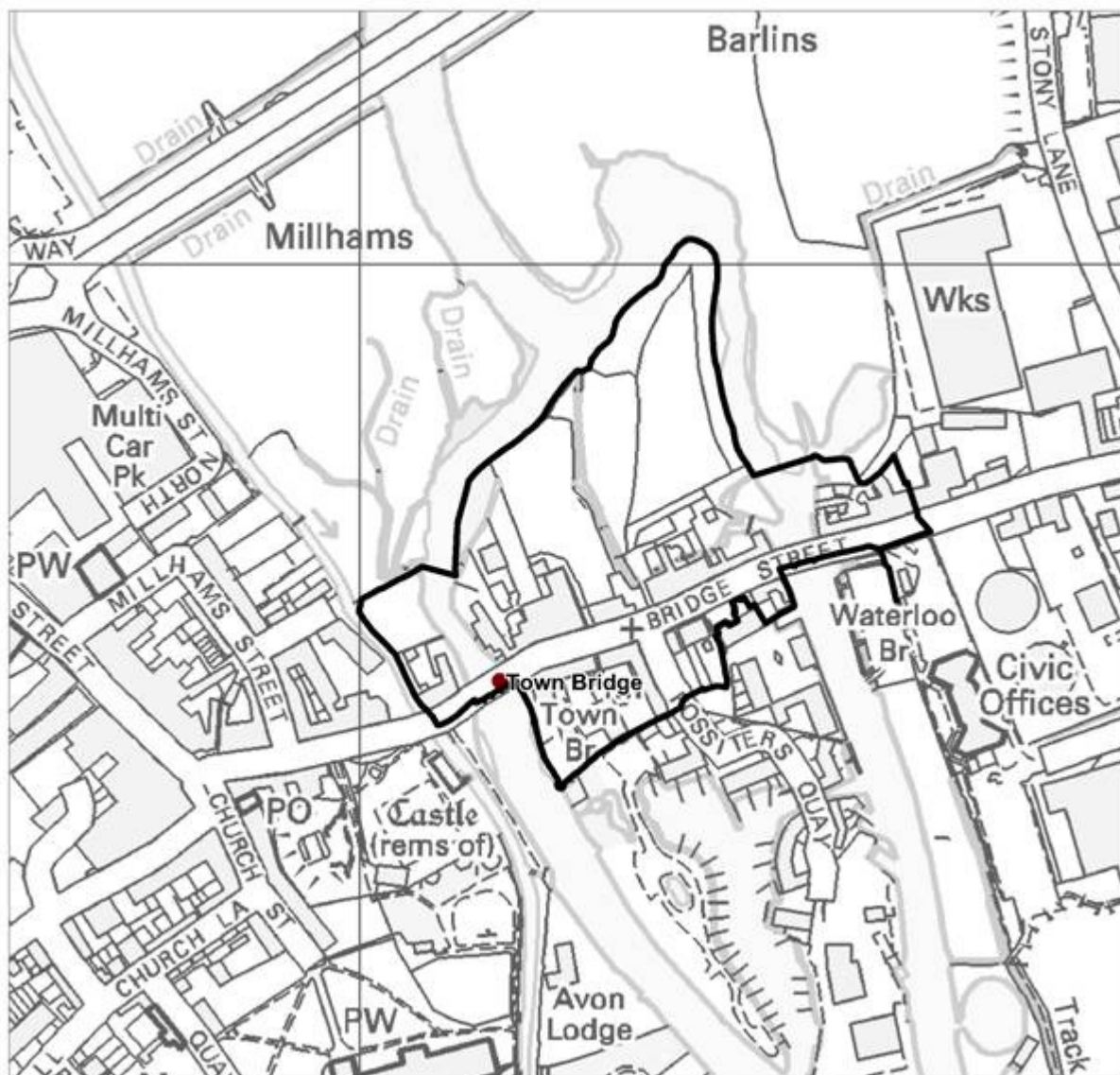


Figure 101: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 9

Archaeological Investigations

There have been no formal archaeological investigations in the area, and no reports of chance finds or observations.

Wessex Archaeology undertook an archaeological impact assessment of a proposed environmental improvement scheme to Christchurch Town Bridge. This established that the bridge was built in the 15th or 16th century, and considered historical evidence for the repair and maintenance of the bridge. (Wessex Archaeology, 2000).

Archaeological Character

The lack of archaeological investigations in this area constrains the consideration of the archaeological resource. However, it is clear that this area represents an important medieval suburb of Christchurch, and it is to be anticipated that there will be evidence of this use in the area of the street frontages in particular. Fabric of medieval buildings may be concealed with the present buildings. There may be well-preserved organic and palaeoenvironmental material in areas of alluvial.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 9 Designations

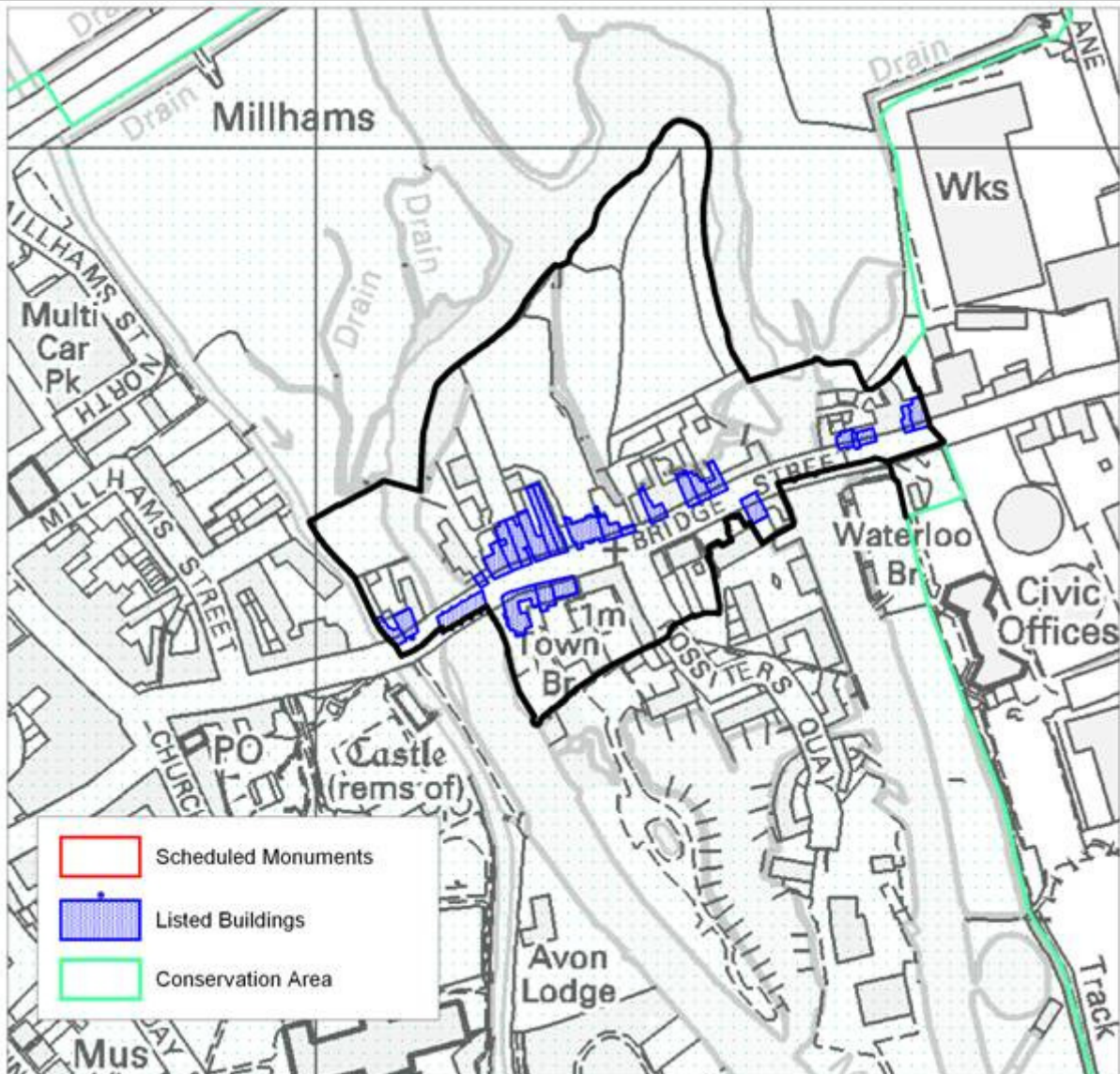


Figure 102: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 9

Listed Buildings

There are 26 Listed Building designation in the Character Area. The Town Bridge is Grade I, Twynham House and 3 Bridge Street are Grade II*, and the rest Grade II.

Conservation Areas

The majority of this Character Area lies within the Christchurch Central Conservation 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 this character area.

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 9
Evaluation**

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **high**. There are well preserved historic buildings and structures, and an almost complete run of historic buildings along the northern side of Bridge Street.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change.

Archaeological Potential

This area is considered to have a **high** archaeological potential, particularly in areas close to the road. The potential is also made more significant by the possibility that waterlogged deposits might be preserved.

Important avenues of research include the extent and origins of the medieval suburb and the date of origin for Bridge Street.

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

Key Characteristics

- Medieval stone bridge
- Medieval suburb
- 18th-19th century street frontage