

Stalbridge Historic Urban Character Area 4 Station Road

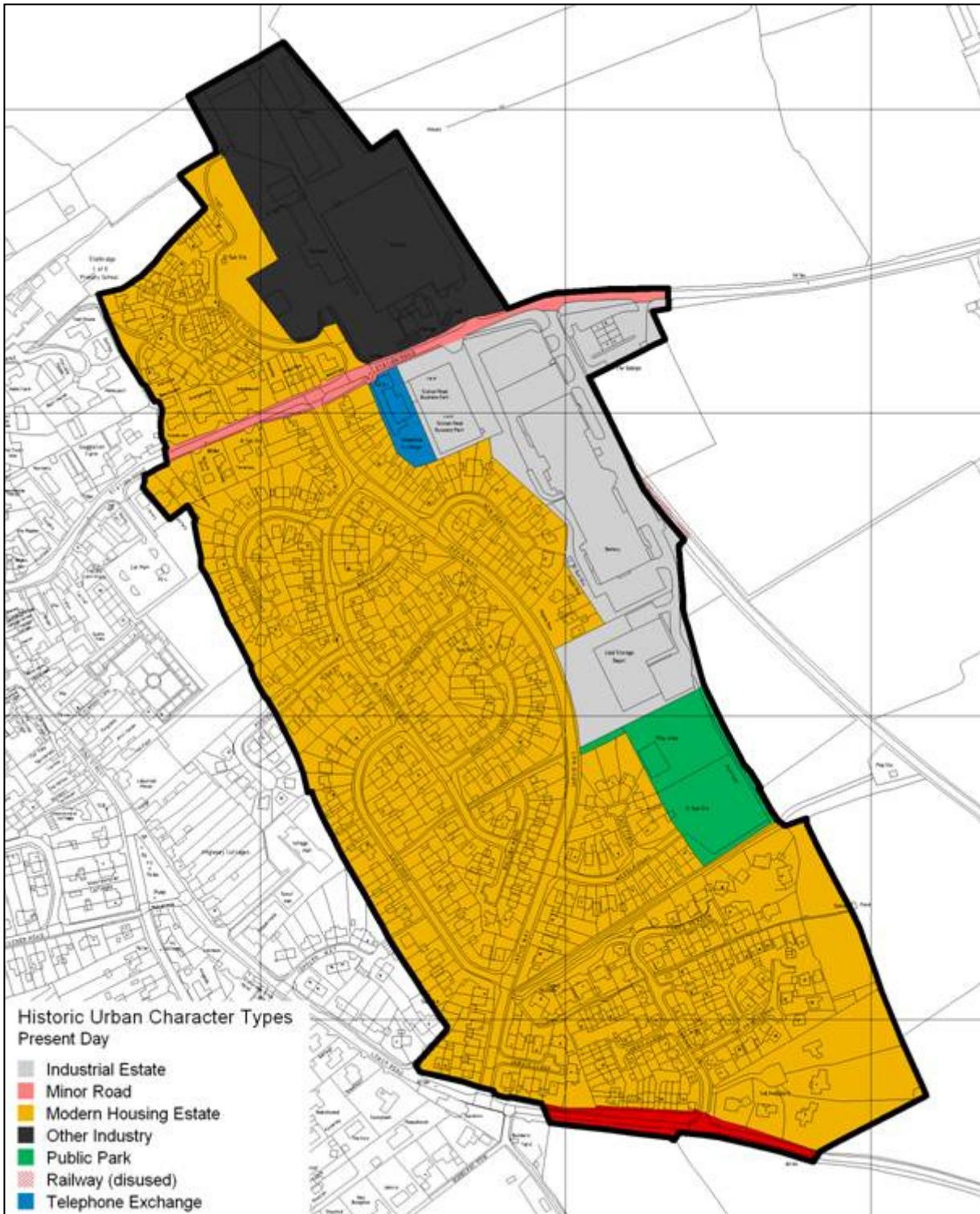


Figure 65: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 4, showing current historic urban character type

Stalbridge Historic Urban Character Area 4 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area essentially comprises modern suburban development and an industrial estate on the site of the former railway station, on the eastern fringes of Stalbridge.

Topography and Geology

This character area sits between the 60m and 70m contours, just above the lowest part of the Stour valley; the Stour itself lies at about 50m in Stalbridge parish. The entire character area lies upon Oxford Clay, which gives rise to heavy, poorly-drained clay soils. This area was avoided by the medieval town. There are a number of dispersed farms of medieval origin situated within the clay vale but outside the study area, and the majority of these lie on slightly raised sites just above the 60m contour. A number of springs rise in the area and thence follow largely canalised courses.

Urban Structure

The structure of this area comprises primarily suburban housing estates set out around a curvilinear looped network of local access roads and curvilinear culs-de-sac. These estates are accessed from Station Road and Lower Road. Station Road also gives access to a number of industrial and commercial premises.

Present Character

Figure 65 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area essentially comprises a broad swathe of modern housing estates along the eastern fringe of Stalbridge. A zone of mixed industrial and commercial activity occupies the site of the former railway and station in the north eastern part of the area. Station Road runs through the northern half of

the character area, connecting the former station with the town. There is a small playing field to the south of the industrial estate.

Time Depth

The earliest surviving features within this area are field boundaries fossilised as property boundaries within the housing estates. These fields may have formed part of the medieval east field, enclosed in 1811. This area was probably completely unsettled until 1863 when Stalbridge Railway Station was opened. A gas works developed between the Station and the town shortly after and a saw mill was opened in the early 20th century. A modern housing estate was constructed on the land between the railway and the town in the 1960s and 70s; ironically just as the railway was closing. Very little trace of the station survives, save for a short section of track in Station Road (Figure 66). Many of the industrial buildings are also modern reconstructions on earlier sites.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern essentially comprises medium and low density houses within an open pattern of detached and semi-detached houses set back from the roads behind open front gardens (Figure 67). The layout of the estates is typical of their period. Towards the northern and southern fringes of the estate there are small groups of later developments comprising mixed detached and semi-detached houses, again set back from culs-de-sac arranged within individual former fields.



Figure 66: The only surviving remains of the Somerset and Dorset Line in Stalbridge; a short length of the former track within Station Road



Figure 67: View NW along Jarvis Way.

**Stalbridge Historic Urban Character Area 4
Built Character*****Building types***

Only one building predates the 20th century; Palmer's Garage on Station Road is the only surviving element of the former Gas Works (Figure 27). The majority of the modern residential buildings are semi-detached houses and bungalows (Figure 68). Some of the more recent houses are in a neo-vernacular style.

The industrial buildings include large warehouses and modern structures sub-divided into commercial units (Figure 69).

Building Materials

The former gas works building is of squared stone rubble and slate roof. The majority of 20th century houses are of brick or stone cladding, with some rendered elevations and with concrete tile roofs. The neo-vernacular houses on Woodmill Lane are of red brick or stone cladding with slate or tile roofs.

The industrial buildings are a mixture of red brick and asbestos panelled buildings and modern steel-framed structures.

Key Buildings

Commercial Premises: Palmer's Garage (former gas works); Stalbridge Timber Supplies



Figure 68: View west along Blackmore Road.



Figure 69: The Sidings commercial units, Station Road.

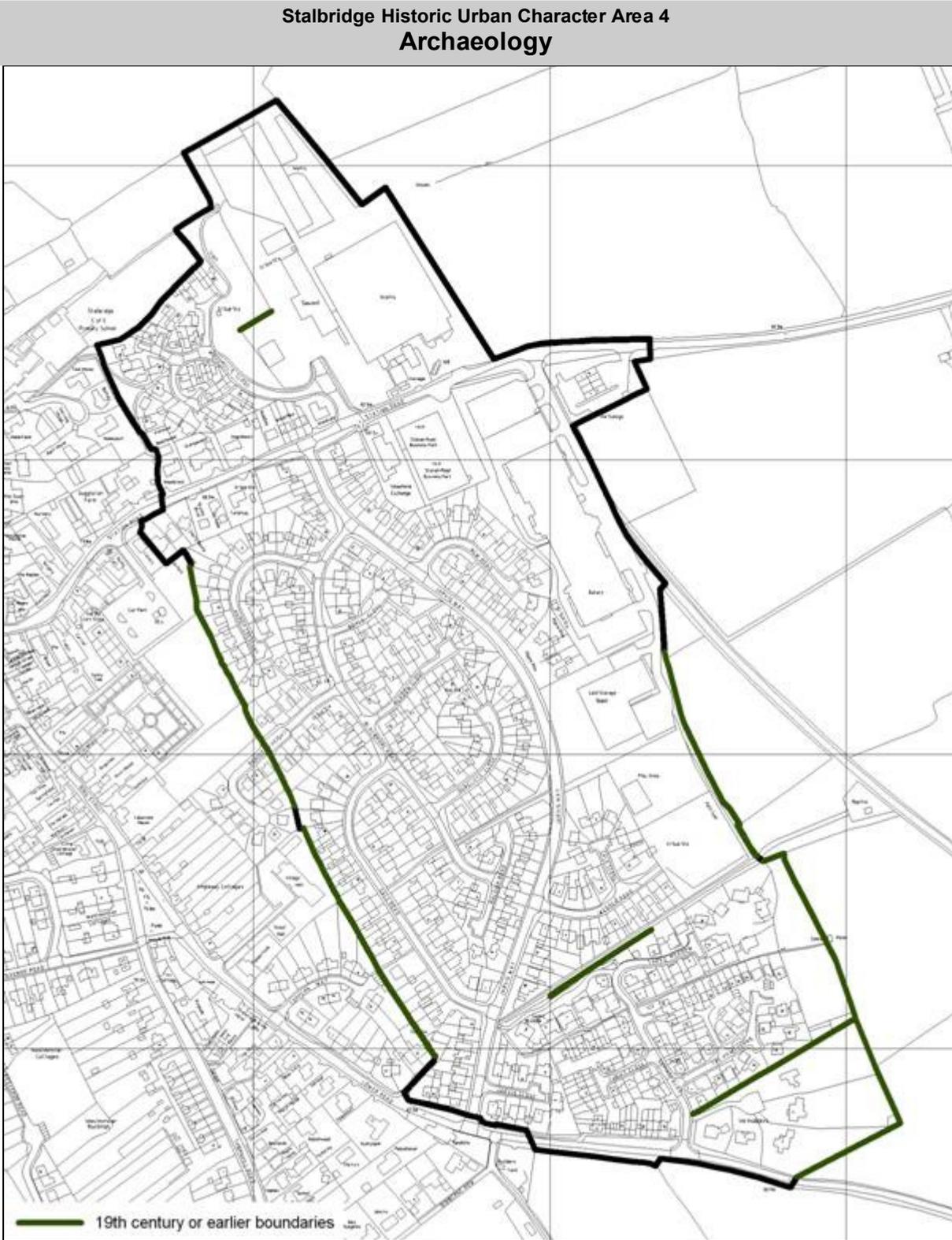


Figure 70: Archaeological Investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 4.

**Stalbridge Historic Urban Character Area 4
Archaeology**

Archaeological Investigations

No archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area.

Archaeological Character

The fact that there have been no archaeological investigations or discoveries in this area does not reflect on the archaeological character. The character of the area is a function of its agrarian history as the east field of Stalbridge. Field boundaries and isolated medieval and post-medieval artefacts can be expected here.

A small number of historic boundaries are marked on Figure 70. These are the remnants of a group of small enclosed fields to the south

of the former east field.

Although the area is on the clay vale, it is raised slightly above the 60m contour close to the spring line, and there may be archaeological remains relating to late prehistoric or Roman activity on this site

**Stalbridge Historic Urban Character Area 4
Designations**

Listed Buildings

There are no Listed Buildings in the Character Area.

Conservation Areas

Only the western part of Station Road and Wood Mill Close lie within the Stalbridge Conservation Area (Figure 36).

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

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

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Character Area.

Stalbridge Historic Urban Character Area 4 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **weak**. There is only one 19th century historic building and the remainder of the houses in the area were constructed during the second half of the 20th century. Although the Stalbridge Saw Mill was established in 1926, it is not clear how much of the original layout survives in the modern industrial complex. There are no remains of the former railway station buildings and most of the industrial buildings in the area date from the late 20th century. There are a few surviving historic boundaries in the southern part of the area.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **low** sensitivity to major change, providing development does not visually impact on the historic townscape of Stalbridge.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. Although there is no time depth to the urban development of the area, there is higher than average potential for Roman or prehistoric archaeology. The prehistoric and Roman settlement pattern of the region is poorly understood. An enhanced

knowledge of prehistoric settlement may help in the understanding of putative field systems and tracks identified in the area.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1- 4, 9, 21-23 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Former east field of Stalbridge
- Former Railway Station
- Modern industrial area
- Modern housing development