

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 3 West Street

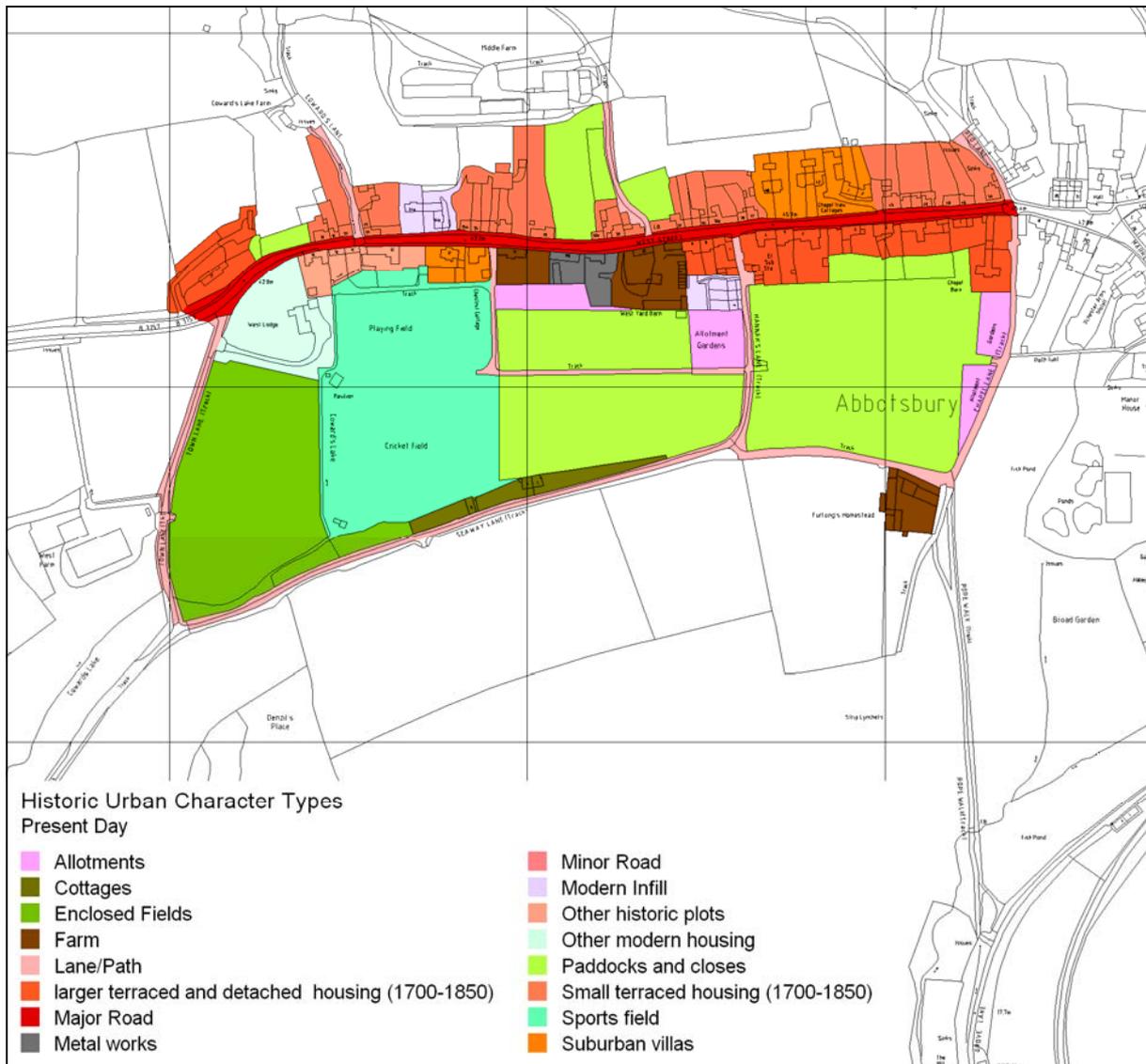


Figure 66: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 67: View of West Street and The Furlongs from Chapel Hill.



Figure 68: View west along West Street.

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is the area of the late medieval suburb of West Street. The plots on the south side of the street were very regular and were collectively known as the Furlongs. This may have originally been a planned suburb, but was substantially altered by 19th century enclosure. The plots on the north side are less regular and the pattern suggests an organic development of reclamation from the hill slope behind.

Topography and Geology

Generally the ground slopes gently from the northeast to the southwest, with a steeper rise at the rear of plots on the north side of West Street. A small brook, Cowards Lake, flows southwards through the western part of the area, along the line of a minor geological fault. This means that the west end of the area slopes more steeply southwestwards into the valley of this brook. The geology of the area essentially comprises a complex succession of Upper Jurassic Corallian deposits, with Kimmeridge Clay to the west.

Urban Structure

The area is primarily formed by ribbon development along West Street, the main route from the west into Abbotsbury. South of the West Street frontage, the area is primarily open space, with a track, Seaway Lane running along the south side and a number of other lanes (Chapel Lane, Hannah's Lane and Town Lane) running south from West Street.

Present Character

Figure 66 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area comprises a mixture of historic plots, small and larger terraced and detached houses, cottages, modern infill housing and small farms fronting on to West Street. To the south are a series of large

paddocks, fields, allotment gardens and a sports field. Several cottages and a farm (Furlongs Homestead) front onto Seaway Lane on the southern edge of the area.

Time Depth

This area represents a late medieval or early post medieval suburb on the west side of Abbotsbury, although the two E-W aligned routes running through it are pre-urban in origin. Seaway Lane (Figure 70) seems to be a continuation of the lane upon which the late Saxon abbey was founded. It is not known exactly when West Street was incorporated into urban Abbotsbury, but it was certainly no earlier than the 13th century foundation of the market. The plots along the West Street frontage were truncated following enclosure in the early 19th century, which removed the long furlong plots on the south side of the street. Furlongs Homestead is thought to be an early 19th century enclosure farm (Melville 2006) and the cottages on Seaview Lane appear to have been enclosed from waste in the 18th or 19th century.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is one of low density housing along West Street, with mixed detached housing and short terraces fronting directly on to the street (Figure 71). The frontage is fairly open, with a number of gardens defined by stone walls along its length and some houses set back from the road. This is in contrast to the more densely packed frontages of Market Street and Rodden Row. The consistent use of local materials and good survival of historic buildings means that there is an organic transition between the two, facilitated by the open area of the market. The raised pavement along the north side of West Street adds to the character of the streetscape.



Figure 69: 'View of Rose Cottage and Smugglers with Chapel Hill behind.



Figure 70: 'View west along Seaway Lane.

**Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 3
Built Character**

Building types

The area is characterised by a large number of 18th and 19th century houses and cottages. The earliest building is 35 West Street which has some surviving 16th century elements within a 17th century house and is the earliest secular building identified in Abbotsbury to date. In general, however, the houses of West Street are considered to be 18th century in date with two blocks of largely 19th century houses. These later buildings lie at the east end of the north side (numbers 36-50) and the west end of the south side (numbers 8-13) and may represent areas destroyed by fire in the late 18th-early 19th century. Small plots of modern infill housing include West Lodge and Chapel View, 24a and b West Street and 2-4 Hannah's Lane. The houses are generally two storey cottages frequently arranged in short terraces. The 19th century farmhouses are also two storeys but of slightly larger proportions and often with attached outbuildings (Figure 78). A number of barns have been converted to dwellings.

A water fountain on the north side of West Street has a lion's head as the outlet within a niched arch surround (Figure 77). It was built in 1858 and is reputed to be on the site of a medieval outlet.

Building Materials

The majority of houses in the area are built from the Abbotsbury stone. The 18th century cottages tend to be built from stone rubble with thatched roofs (Figure 73) and the 19th century farmhouses from squared stone blocks, with slate roofs (Figure 74). Again, most buildings incorporate a smattering of Portesham stone. A small number houses are rendered, or have brick or Portesham stone detailing above the windows. Roofing tends to be in Welsh slate or thatch, the former more common in houses built in the 19th century. Modern developments are built in natural stone similar in colour to Abbotsbury stone and have thatched roofs.

Key Buildings

Public Buildings: Water fountain, West Street

Commercial Premises: 43 West Street, Smithy and Workshop (10a West Street)

18th century or earlier cottages: 18-22 West Street, 25-8 West Street, 35 West Street, 3 Seaway Lane

19th century Houses: Upalong (8 West Street), 9 West Street, 38-42 West Street



Figure 71: View west along West Street (number 29 in foreground).



Figure 72: Number 3 West Street.



Figure 73: Numbers 32-37 West Street.



Figure 74: Number 1 West Street.

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 3 Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations

Three archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area (Appendix 3, Nos 9, 11 & 18). Two watching briefs have been carried out on the south side of the West Street frontage at the Chapel Lane pottery and at 8 West Street (Figure 75) and revealed nothing pre-dating the 20th century (Brook 1996; Tatler and Bellamy 2008). A Bronze Age palstave axe had been found at 8 West Street in 1954 (Farrar 1954). Immediately to the south, a watching brief on Hannah's Lane revealed a ploughsoil containing medieval pottery sealed beneath modern landscaping (Brading 1999).

Archaeological Character

Relatively little archaeological work has been conducted in this character area and that which has been carried out has revealed no surviving traces of occupation on the street frontage, but has indicated the possibility of medieval deposits behind the frontage. Nevertheless archaeological deposits such as pits and plot boundaries from the late medieval period

onwards may survive below the surface at the rear of the West Street houses. These deposits are likely to inform the date of origin and the nature of the West Street suburb, as well as information of the diet and economy of the late medieval inhabitants. Furthermore, it is likely that some of the plot boundaries to the rear of properties fronting on to the north side of West Street date from the late medieval period (Figure 75). Many of the late medieval boundaries were removed when the plots were amalgamated and incorporated into large paddocks in the early 19th century, but it is possible that traces of these former boundaries may still survive below ground.

The discovery of a Bronze Age palstave axe indicates there may be surviving pre-urban archaeology in the area.

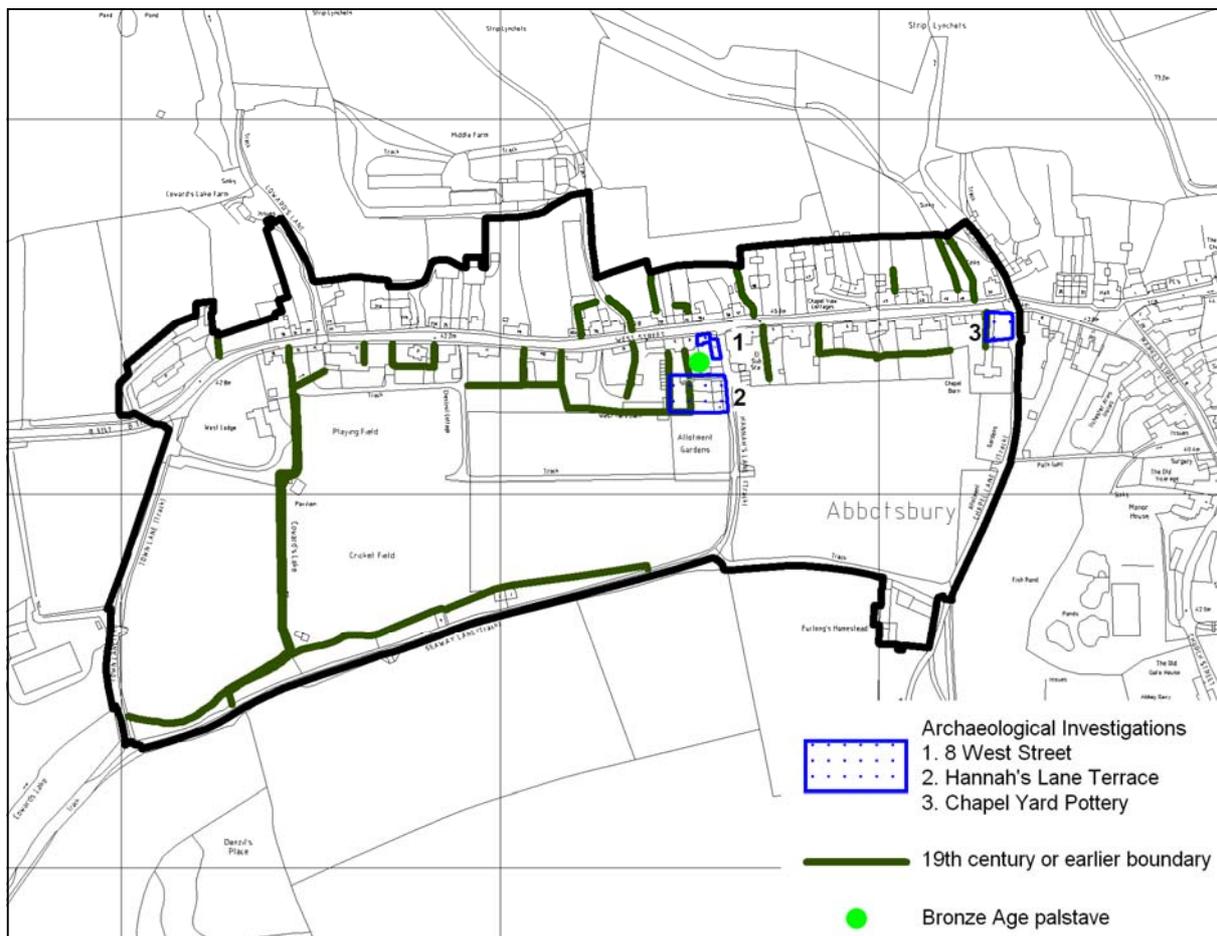


Figure 75: Archaeological features in Historic Character Area 3.

**Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 3
Designations**

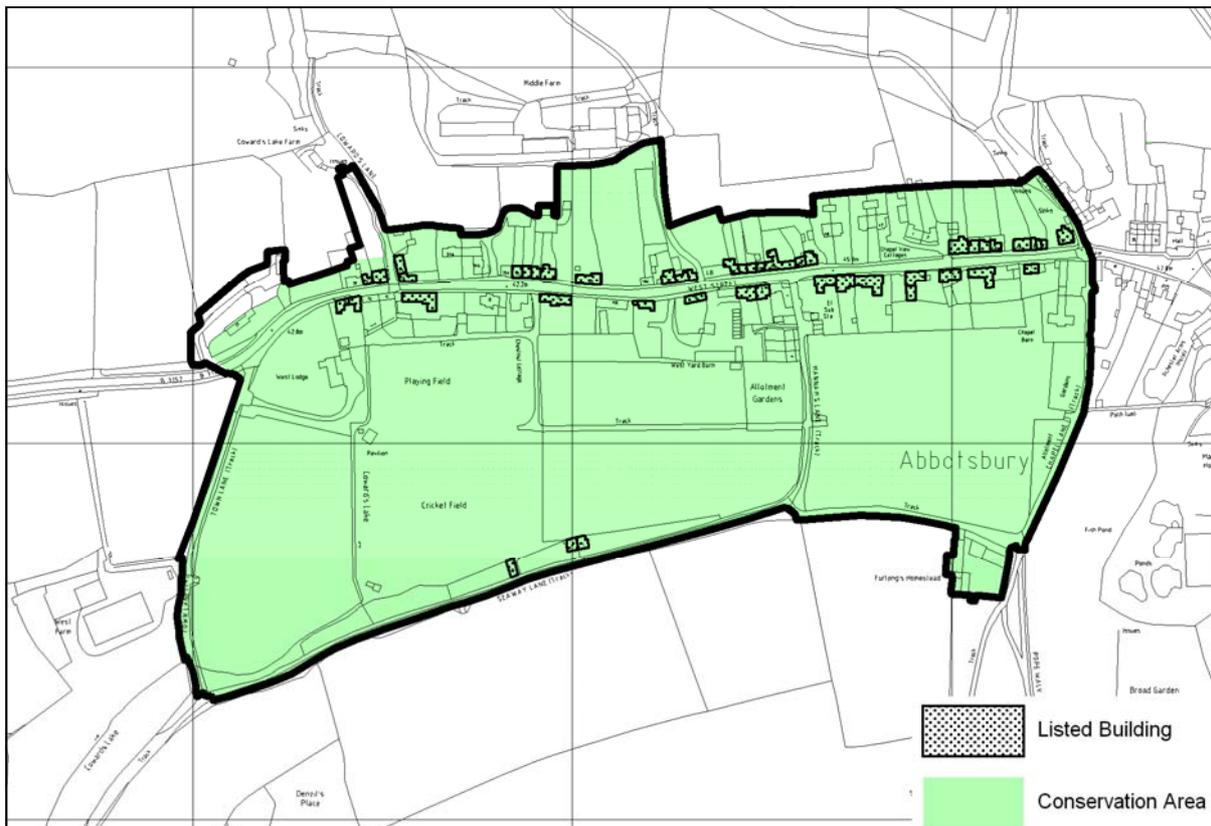


Figure 76: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

Listed Buildings

There are 28 Listed Buildings in the Character Area, all grade II (Figure 76).

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the character area.

Conservation Areas

Almost the whole of this Character Area lies within the Abbotsbury Conservation Area, except for small plots behind numbers 17, 19 and 22 West Street (Figure 39).

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

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



Figure 77: Water outlet, West Street.



Figure 78: Number 11 West Street.

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 3 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. There is an extremely strong contribution from the large number of 18th and 19th century historic buildings. The area also benefits from the fact that all modern developments after 1973 have been planned with a sympathetic eye towards the surrounding character of the built environment.

Approximately 55% of the buildings are listed and less than 20% were constructed during the 20th century. This adds up to a very strong historic built character. Furthermore, the road layout essentially dates from the 13th century in its urban context, although many of the roads and lanes in the area may have a pre-urban origin. Unfortunately many of the late medieval plot boundaries were lost in the process of early 19th century enclosure, although evidence for them may survive as sub-surface deposits.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. In the last 30 years the area has absorbed limited development with only minor disturbance to the historic character; this development has been on a small scale and generally of sympathetic design. There are now very few vacant plots in the area meaning that future development would need to infill the areas behind the street frontages, resulting in loss of character. It is unlikely that major development would be allowed on the street frontage, considering the high number of designations.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It forms a late medieval suburban settlement adjacent to the 13th century market place. The lack of modern development means that there is very high potential for important and informative remains of the late medieval and early post-medieval town. These have the potential to reveal details on the organisation, crafts, industries, economy and diet of the town. In particular, archaeological deposits in the rear of plots fronting on to West Street, have a high potential to reveal aspects of the organisation and planning of a late medieval suburb.

Many of the late medieval buildings and outbuildings have been modified in the post-medieval period and remain in use today. There is a high potential for detailed information on the survival of earlier structures hidden within later buildings, as revealed at 35 West Street. The potential for surviving medieval architectural components and their distribution could contribute to the further understanding of the town's development.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information concerning pre-urban activity, particularly in the light of the Bronze Age palstave axe found at 8 West Street.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-4, 6, 11-21 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Late medieval planned suburb of Abbotsbury.
- 17th and 18th century vernacular cottages.
- 19th century farm houses.
- High proportion of quality listed buildings.
- Medieval and earlier street plan.
- Late Medieval plot boundaries.
- Stone garden walls and raised pavement.