

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 5

Abbotsbury Mill



Figure 91: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 5, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 92: View of Historic Urban Character Area 5 with The West Fleet in the background .



Figure 93: View of Abbotsbury Mill and associated buildings along Grove Lane.

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area comprises a small group of isolated buildings focussed on Abbotsbury Mill and lying within the narrow valley of the Mill Stream to the south of the abbey precinct. This part of the town is rural in character, separated from the main urban area by the former abbey precinct.

Topography and Geology

The character area lies within a steep-sided narrow wooded valley between St Catherine's and Odden's Hills, which contains the Mill Stream on its course southwards from the abbey precinct to the West Fleet. The geology of the area essentially comprises a complex succession of Upper Jurassic Corallian deposits. At the southern end of the area the sequence passes in to Oxford Clay. More recent deposits of gravelly alluvium lie in the valley floor of the Mill Stream.

Urban Structure

The area comprises two roughly parallel curving routes, Grove or Frog Lane and New Barn Road, which run south from the abbey precinct towards the Fleet and are isolated from the main focus of the present village. There is scattered settlement along both sides of Grove Lane, mainly focussed on the mill and millstream.

Present Character

Figure 91 shows the present day historic urban character types. The mill lies to the west of Grove Lane, with the Swannery tea rooms (defined as other recreation on Figure 91) to the south, interspersed with cottages along the both sides of the lane. The Swannery Car Park lies at the southern end of the area between Grove Lane and New Barn Road and the remainder of the area is fields.



Figure 94: Estate workers' cottages, 6-7 Grove Lane.

Time Depth

It is possible that the southern part of Grove Lane was part of a N-S aligned pre-urban route incorporating Rope Walk and Red Lane. There is evidence for significant industrial activity in this area throughout the post-medieval period, including a pair of mills, one for corn and the other for fulling; rope manufacture and the growing of withies for basketry a little to the south. This activity began in the late 16th century following the dissolution of the abbey. The cottages appear to date from the 18th and 19th century, although the mill house itself probably dates from the 17th century. The associated former barn (3 Grove Lane) although much altered, may have a similarly early origin. The Abbotsbury kennels, associated with the estate pheasantry, was built in the mid 19th century (and converted to the Swannery Tea Rooms in 1995). In the late 19th century a new road (New Barn Road) was constructed connecting the town, Abbey Farm and Abbotsbury Mill.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is one of detached and semi-detached cottages set back slightly from Grove Lane, with some presenting their gable ends to the street. Some of the cottages are converted barns or mill buildings, although the consistent use of local materials and good survival of 17th and 18th century buildings means that they blend in well with the overall character of the area. The area is rural in character, with widely spaced buildings a large number of mature trees and enclosed fields (Figure 95) and a partial separation from the town centre due to its location on the south side of the abbey precinct.



Figure 95: View of Abbotsbury Mill with Grove Lane cottages.

**Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 5
Built Character**

Building types

The area is characterised by 17th-19th century cottages and former industrial buildings. Abbotsbury Mill house is thought to be mid 17th century in date and has rubble stone walls with stone quoins. It has a slate roof with stone gable copings and moulded apex blocks (Figure 96). The adjacent barn (3 Grove Lane) may have 17th century elements, although greatly altered in the 18th and 19th century. It is on the site of the 17th century village bakery and comprises three storeys with a slate roof with the gable facing the road (Figure 97). Generally the cottages are rubble built with slate roofs, although some modern extensions have tiled roofs. The mid 19th century kennels have a hipped slate roof.

Building Materials

The majority of houses in the area are built from the golden coloured Abbotsbury stone. The 18th-19th century cottages tend to be built from stone rubble with slate roofs and the 17th century Mill House from squared stone blocks. Number 3 Grove Lane is rendered and painted and number 6-7 are painted. Some modern extensions have tiled roofs. There is probably less use of Portesham stone in this part of Abbots-

bury.

Key Buildings

Commercial Premises: Abbotsbury Mill, 3 Grove Lane, Abbotsbury Mill Cottage, Abbotsbury Kennels (Swannery Tea Rooms)

18th-19th century cottages: 1-2 Grove Lane, 4-5 Grove Lane, 6-7 Grove Lane.



Figure 96: Abbotsbury Mill.



Figure 97: Number 3 Grove Lane.



Figure 98: Numbers 4-5 Grove Lane.



Figure 99: Mill Cottage, Grove Lane.

**Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 5
Archaeology**

Archaeological Investigations

Only one archaeological investigation has been undertaken in this character area (Appendix 3, No. 13; Figure 100). A watching brief in the Swannery Car Park in 1993 revealed no features or finds of archaeological interest (Cotton 1993).

on the economy of Abbotsbury and possibly on the location and organisation of a variety of industrial activities. Furthermore, the area lies at the foot of steep slopes containing evidence for medieval cultivation. The means that a considerable build up of colluvium will have occurred in the valley protecting any industrial or pre-urban archaeological deposits.

Archaeological Character

Relatively little archaeological work has been conducted in this character area. Nevertheless there are likely to be surviving archaeological deposits of industrial character from the early post-medieval period onwards. These may include evidence for water management as well as superstructures, pits and other groundworks. These deposits are likely to provide information

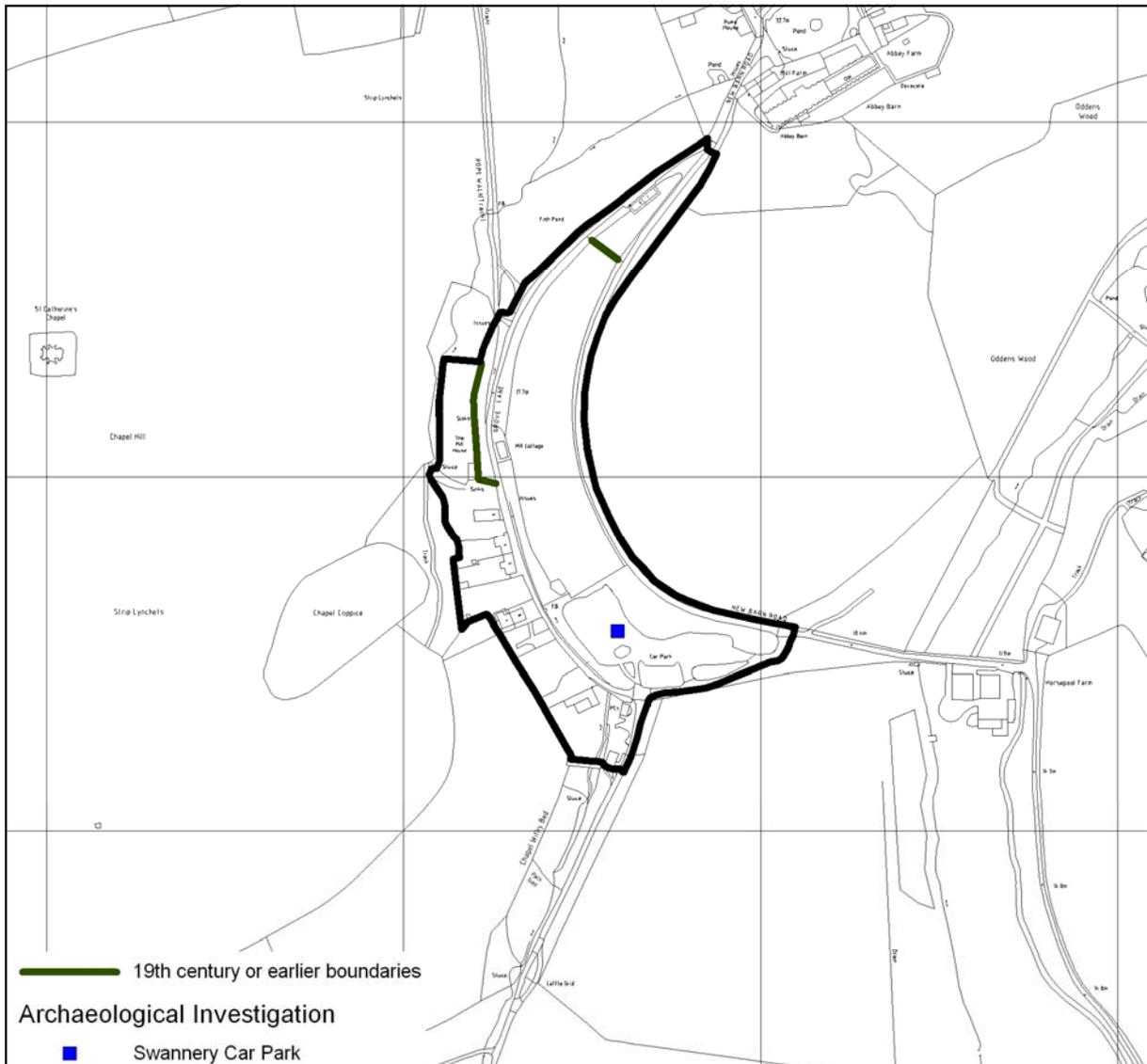


Figure 100: Archaeological investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 5.

Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 5 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. There is a significant contribution from the predominantly 17th to 19th century historic buildings. The area also benefits from the fact that all modern developments, such as barn conversions and house extensions have been planned with a sympathetic eye towards the pre-existing buildings. None of the buildings in the area were built anew in the 20th century. Furthermore, the area retains some of the character pertaining to Abbotsbury's industrial heritage, even though there is no known occupation earlier than the late 16th century. The area is also characterised by mature trees and enclosed fields, although recent developments have detracted from this through the construction of a major car park serving the Swannery.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to large scale development. The fact that there has been no new builds in the area during the 20th century apart for the Swannery car park means that any new development would detract from the surrounding character.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. This is despite the fact that the only archaeological investigation undertaken here revealed no significant finds. The area was important for post-medieval industry in Abbotsbury and has potential to reveal information on the nature and extent of this activity. The lack of modern development, together with the build up of colluvium means that archaeological deposits have a good chance of preservation.

Many of the early post-medieval structures and outbuildings have been modified in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, remaining in use today. There is also potential for detailed information on the survival of earlier structures hidden within later buildings, for example at 3 Grove Lane, a later building on the site of a 17th century bakery.

It is also likely that any pre-urban archaeological deposits have been preserved beneath medieval and later colluvium.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-4, 6, 13-14, 17, 18-19, 21 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Site of late 16th century Mill
- 17th to 19th century industrial buildings
- 18th-19th century cottages
- 19th century kennels and estate cottages
- Mature woodland and enclosed fields within narrow valley