

## Cerne Abbas Historic Urban Character Area 3 Acreman Street

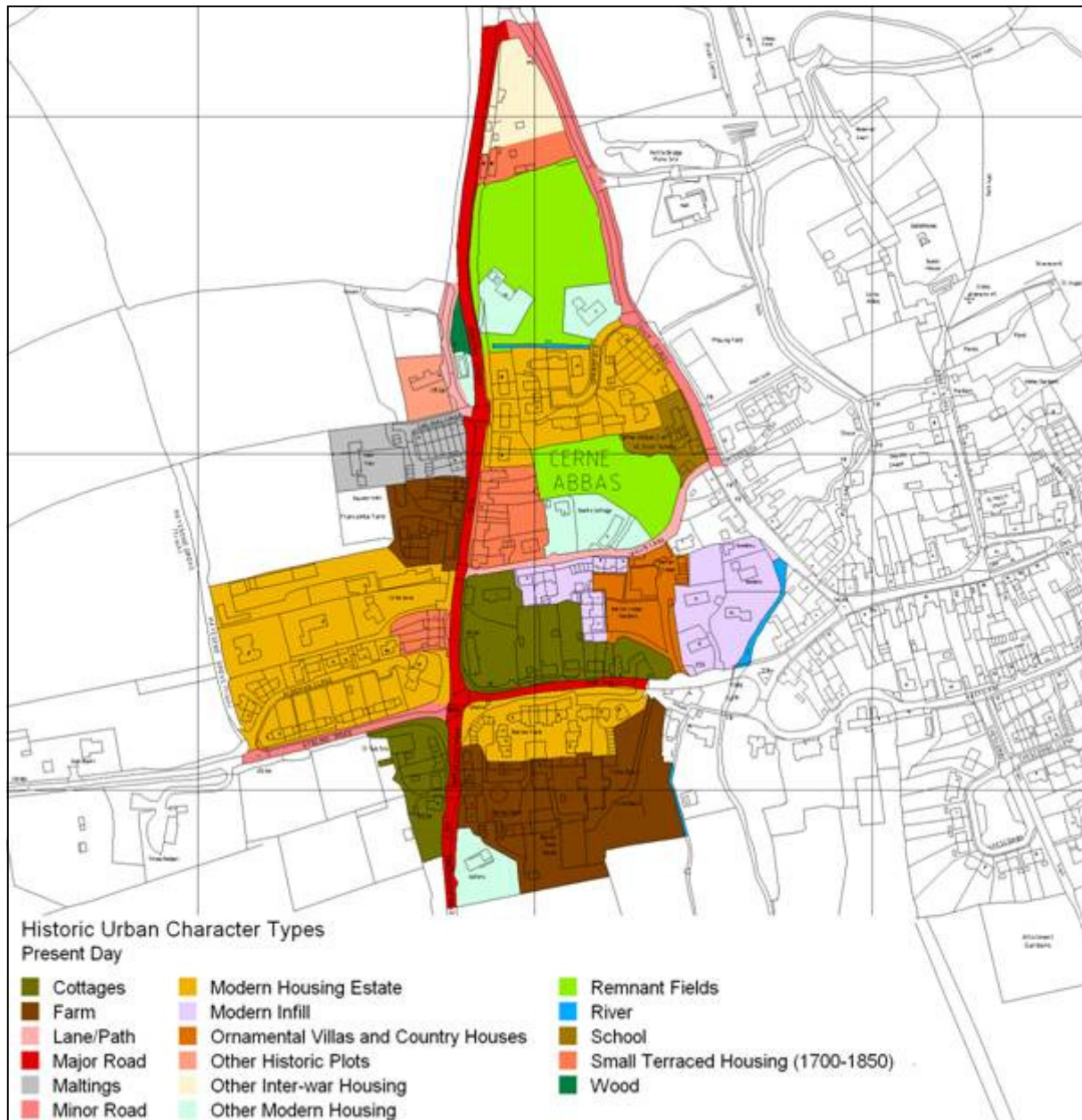


Figure 60: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 61: View north along Acreman Street.



Figure 62: Barton Farm House.

### Cerne Abbas Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

#### Overview

This area lies west of the River Cerne and the medieval town centre. Its heart is ribbon development along Acreman Street, which was fully established by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century but may have begun as a medieval suburb.

#### Topography and Geology

Acreman Street lies within a broad relatively flat area on the lower western slopes of the Cerne valley. Two slight E-W valleys cut through this plain at Springfield and The Folly. Springfield contains a brook which drains a spring in the fields to the west of Acreman Street and The Folly may represent a slight hollow way. The area is on the spring line at the junction of the Chalk and the Upper Greensand. The most of the character area is on Greensand with the southwest corner on Chalk.

#### Urban Structure

There is a major through route, the A352 from Dorchester to Sherborne, along the western side. Duck Street runs northwest from the town to meet the main road at the north end of the area. The Folly runs through the southern part of the area joining the historic town with the main road. A minor lane, Wills Lane, runs north of The Folly between Duck Street and Acreman Street. There is irregular ribbon development along the southern part of Acreman Street, Duck Street, and, to a lesser extent, The Folly. There are a number of small modern estates accessed by curvilinear culs-de-sac. Two farms also lie within the area. The northern part of the area is rather more open.

#### Present Character

Figure 60 shows the present day historic urban character types. The main A352 road forms the central spine of the character area, with a variety of character types along its length. There are small areas of historic plots on both sides of the road, interspersed with Francombe Farm,



Figure 63: The Tithe Barn.

converted maltings, cottages and modern housing estates. At the corner of Acreman Street and The Folly are a range of vernacular cottages and a villa, Barton Lodge, its grounds infilled with modern housing. To the south lies Barton Farm, its grounds partly developed with a modern housing estate. There are some remnant fields in the northern part of the area between Acreman Street and Duck Street. The primary school sits at the corner of Duck Street and Wills Lane.

#### Time Depth

The earliest element is the E-W route marked by The Folly and Sydling Road, which is probably prehistoric in origin. Acreman Street is probably medieval and was widened and straightened in the 1960s. The Tithe Barn is 14<sup>th</sup> century. Barton Lodge and the primary school date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Modern housing developments generally date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, although there is some inter-war and post war housing at the junction of Acreman Street and Duck Street, and at Acreman Close.

#### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern along Acreman Street, Dorchester Road and The Folly is varied, with a range of historic cottages, small terraces, farm and industrial buildings within irregular plots or plots enclosed from former furlongs. This pattern has been added to in a piecemeal fashion during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with isolated inter-war housing and a post-war estate of semi-detached houses on a linear cul-de-sac at Acreman Close. The alteration of Acreman Street in the 1960s led to the construction of semi-detached bungalows within truncated historic plots fronting on to the new road line. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century modern housing estates on curvilinear culs-de-sac or arranged in courtyards have been established at Springfields and Barton Farm.



Figure 64: View of Francombe Farm and Barn, Acreman Street .

### Cerne Abbas Historic Urban Character Area 3

## Built Character

### **Building types**

There is a great variety of building styles and uses. The most distinctive building is the mid 14th century Tithe Barn. Nine bays and opposing porches survive but a number of bays have been lost to the north. The southern few bays were converted into a dwelling during the 18th century. Of the several older houses and cottages on the west side of Acreman Street, the complex of buildings at Francombe Farm is distinctive. They include a flint and brick barn, with a tin half-hip roof, Francombe Farmhouse and attached row to the north (13-17 Acreman Street) are all in flint and brick (Figure 65). The former maltings site to the north of this row has been converted to housing. The adjacent 19 Acreman Street is a thatched house at a lower level than the main road further north, with unusual corner windows (Figure 66). 3 & 5 The Folly are a pair of 18th century cottages, probably altered in the late 19th century (Figure 67). Barton Lodge is a typical early 19th century villa built around 1828. The school is a single storey mid-19th century building in Tudor Revival style (WDDC 2007).

### **Building Materials**

The wide variety of building materials used in this character area reflects the variety of building styles and the piecemeal nature of development here. The Tithe Barn is essentially constructed in knapped black flint with Ham Hill stone and grey limestone quoins and dressings (Moule 1889). The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings at Barton Farm are in flint with brick quoins, as are many of the boundary walls. Thatch is a common roofing material and the granary has weatherboarded walls and stands on saddle stones. Barton Lodge is rubble with painted stucco and a hipped slate roof. The 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages on the Folly and Acreman Street have walls of rubble and flint with brick quoins. Thatch is used on some roofs. Brick and flint banding is common on Francombe Farm and its associated buildings, including a group of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages opposite. The school is of flint and chalk bands with Ham Hill stone dressings.

### **Key Buildings**

*Medieval and post-medieval farm buildings:* The Tithe Barn, Barton Farmhouse, Barton Farm Stables, Barton Farm Granary, Francombe Farm and Barn.

*18<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings:* The Maltings.

*19<sup>th</sup> century public buildings:* Cerne Abbas CE VC First School.

*18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and villas:* Barton Lodge, 13-15 The Folly, 5-7 Acreman Street.



Figure 65: 13-17 Acreman Street, a row of brick and flint cottages attached to Francombe Farmhouse.



Figure 66: 19 Acreman Street.



Figure 67: 3 and 5 The Folly.

**Cerne Abbas Historic Urban Character Area 3  
Archaeology**

**Archaeological Investigations**

There have been two investigations in this character area (Figure 68; Appendix 3, Nos 10-11). In 1888 H J Moule wrote a detailed description of the Tithe Barn during rebuilding and repair (Moule 1889; 1901). An archaeological evaluation on land off Duck Street revealed no archaeological features other than a 19<sup>th</sup> century field drain (Barton 2004).

**Archaeological Character**

Unfortunately the two investigations undertaken in this area reveal little about the underlying archaeological character. The character is one of a medieval farming settlement represented

by the monastic tithe barn, which developed into a post-medieval suburb of Cerne Abbas. Furthermore, the character area lies close to the spring line on the western bank of the River Cerne and, as such, prehistoric and Roman activity may feature as an aspect of the archaeological character. A single Roman coin was found from a garden on the north side of The Folly (Keen 1976, 54).

Boundaries depicted on Figure 68 represent modern property boundaries that fossilise the line of former field boundaries visible on 18<sup>th</sup> century maps. Some reflect medieval furlong boundaries and others may indicate the position of a post-medieval planned suburban unit.

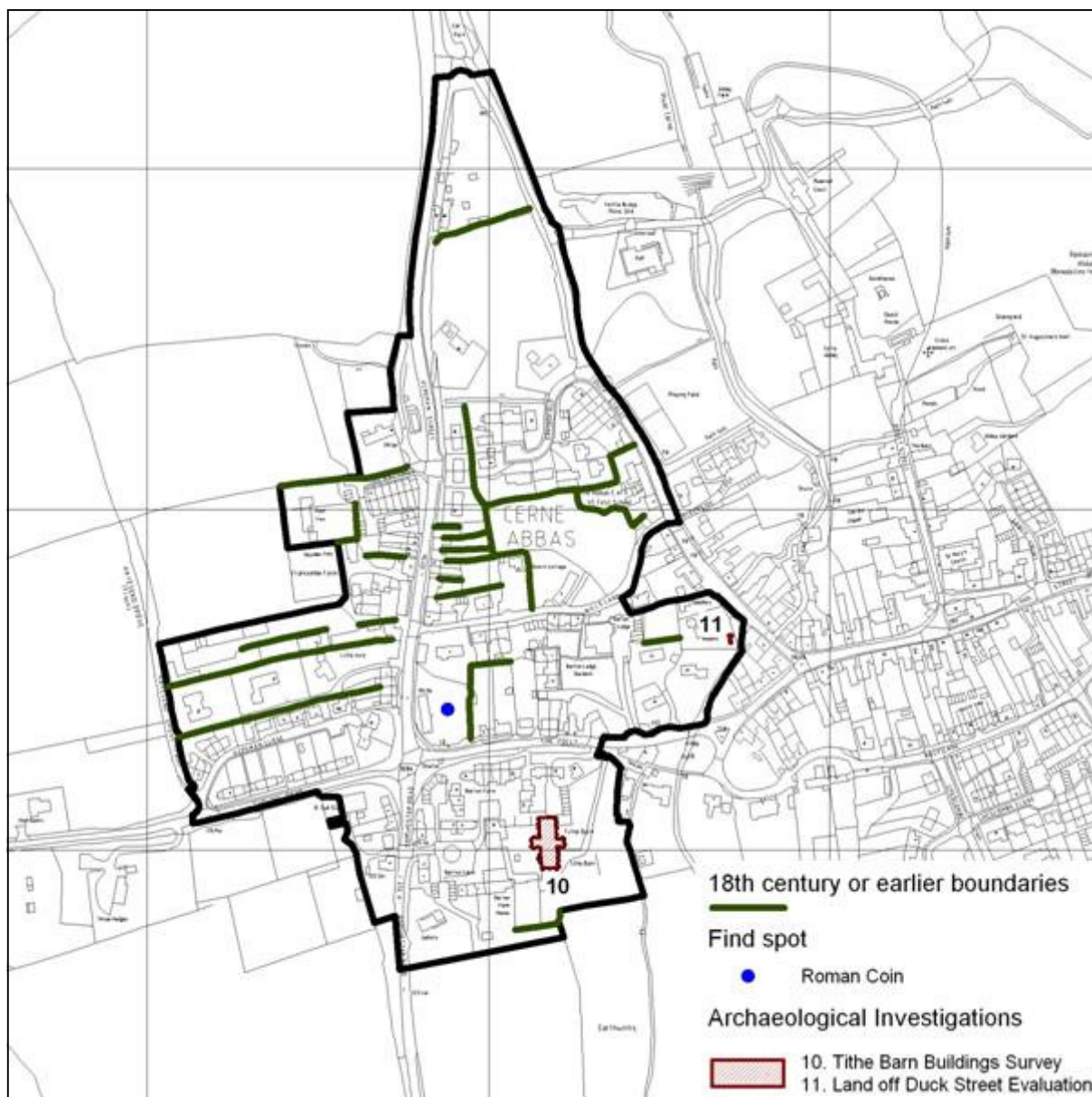


Figure 68: Archaeological features in Historic Character Area 3.

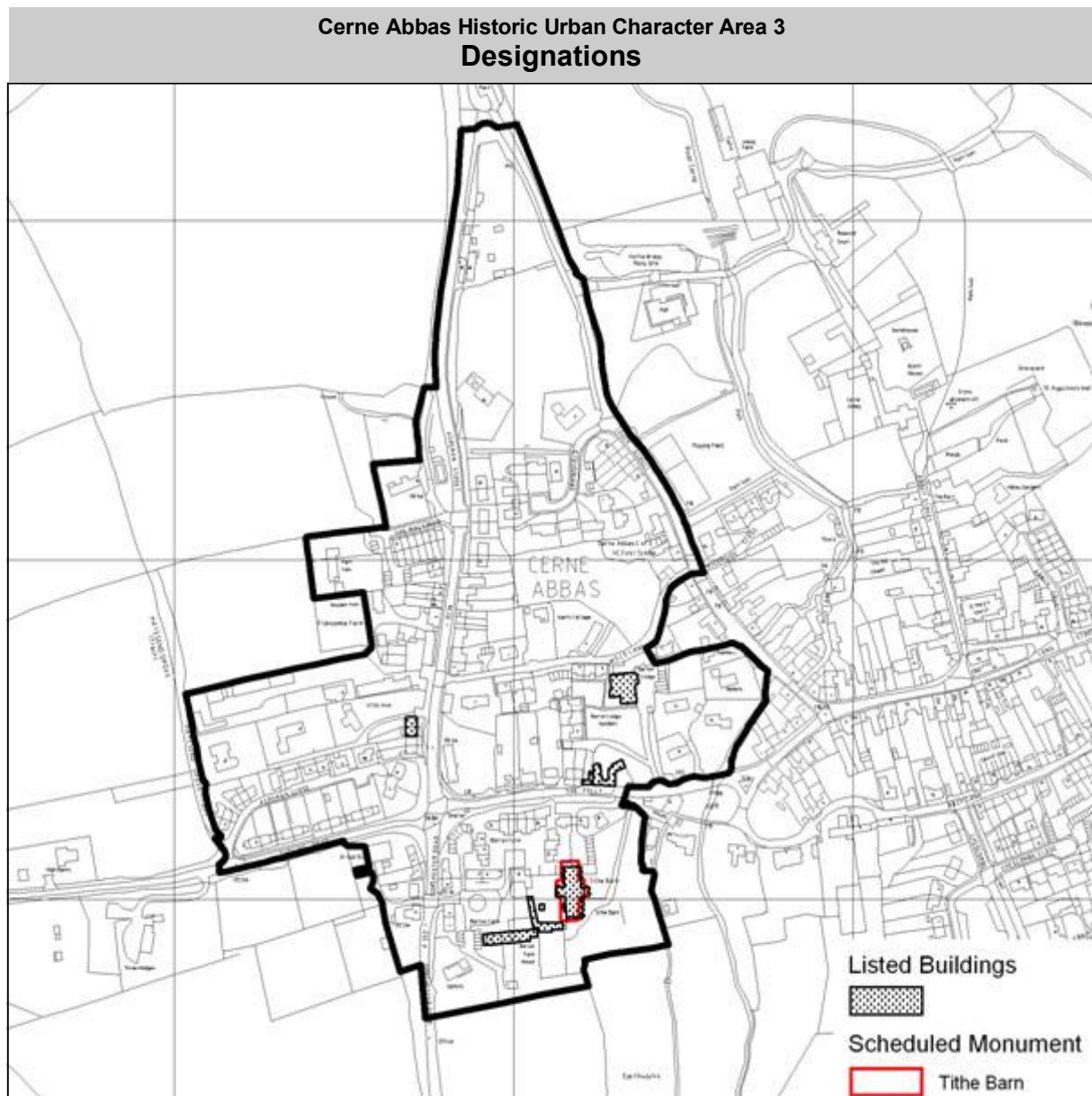


Figure 69: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

### **Listed Buildings**

There are eight Listed Buildings in the Character Area, one of which is Grade I (the Tithe Barn) and the remainder grade II (Figure 69).

### **Conservation Areas**

The major part of this Character Area lies within the Cerne Abbas Conservation Area. The modern house to the south of Barton Farm is excluded, as are the houses on the west side of Dorchester Road. Acreman Close and Springfield housing estates and the modern houses on the east side of Acreman Street north of number 20 (Figure 38) are excluded.

### **Registered Historic Parks and Gardens**

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens

within the Character Area.

### **Scheduled Monuments**

There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument within the character area: the Tithe Barn (DO26A).

### Cerne Abbas Historic Urban Character Area 3 Evaluation

#### ***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area as a whole is judged to be **medium**. Although in reality the strength of character is mixed. The Barton Farm and Tithe Barn area has a particularly strong historic character, though slightly compromised by a modern housing estate on its north side. Similarly the north side of The Folly and Barton Lodge have a strong historic character, again compromised by the development of modern housing in the former grounds of The Lodge. Acreman Street also has a strong historic character but this is again slighted by the widening of the road and construction of modern housing in the 1960s. The weakest sections in terms of historic character are the modern housing estates at Acreman Close and Springfield.

#### ***Sensitivity to Large Scale Development***

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Again this sensitivity is variable. The Barton Farm, Francombe Farm and Maltings areas retain a sense of their original design and are very sensitive to major change. Similarly the street frontages of The Folly and Acreman Street are sensitive to major change. The modern housing estates at Acreman Close and Springfield are less sensitive.

#### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. Although there is little direct evidence, the position of this area close to the spring line would suggest that there is significant potential for pre-urban archaeological deposits in this area. The presence of the Tithe Barn might also suggest that there are deposits relating to the medieval settlement here. Such deposits have the potential to answer questions concerning the origins and development of Cerne Abbas as a settlement. For example; has there always been a dual nature to the settlement of Cerne Abbas on either side of the River Cerne? And, if not, when did the suburb of Acreman Street originate? Any archaeological deposits in this area also have the potential to help provide an understanding of the pre-urban settlement pattern in the region. Furthermore, there is a high potential for medieval and post-medieval features such as pits, structures and boundaries surviving, which can inform on the economy of Acreman Street and Cerne Abbas as a whole.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-54, 8-10, 12-24 (Part 7).

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Medieval tithe barn
- 18th century vernacular houses and cottages
- 18th century farms and maltings at Barton and Francombe Farms
- 19th century villa and gardens at Barton Lodge
- Post-medieval suburb
- Medieval furlongs