

## Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 2 Market Street, Back Street and Rodden Row

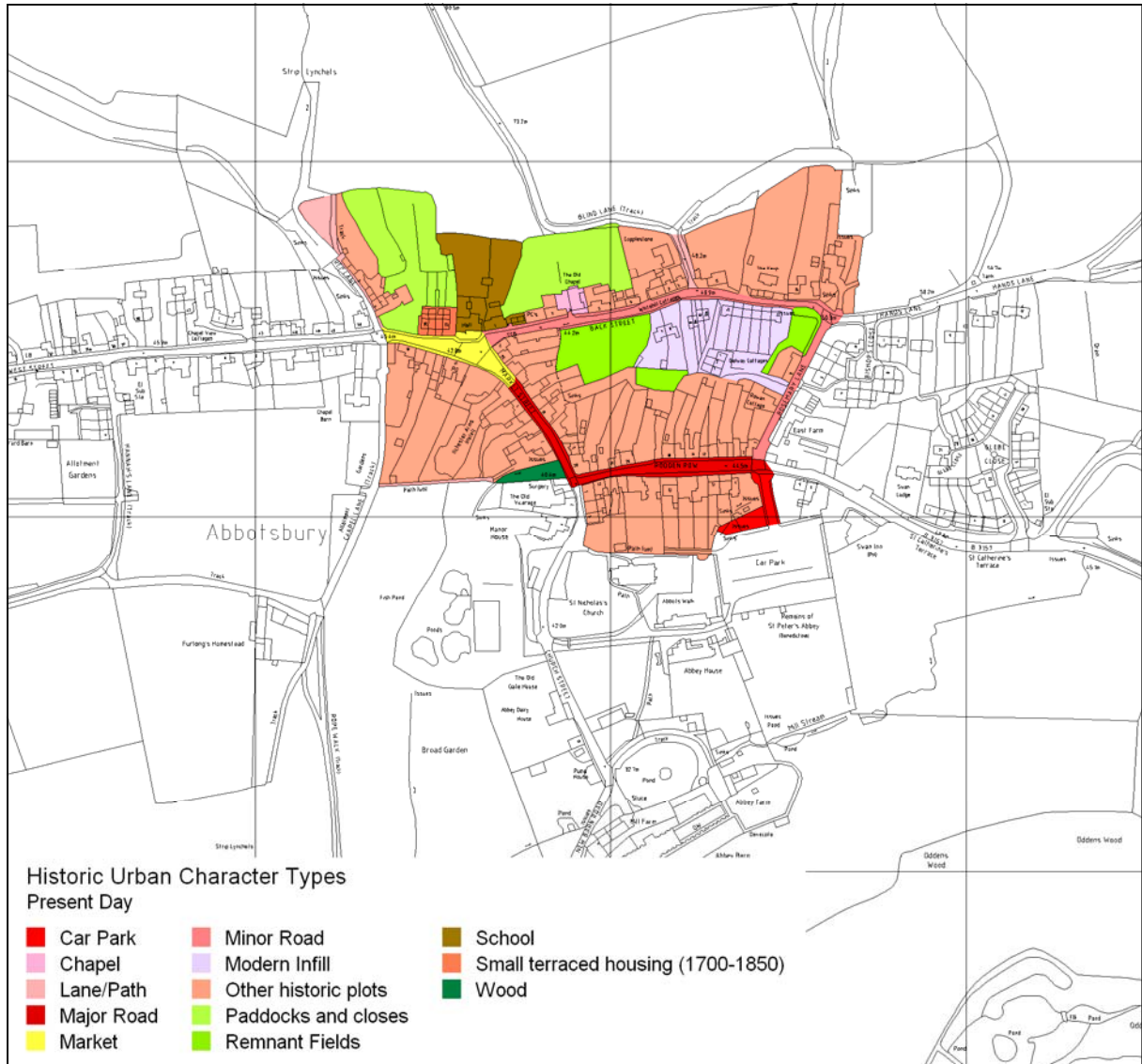


Figure 52: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 2, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 53: View of St Nicholas' Church along Market Street.



Figure 54: View of the Market Place along Market Street.

## Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 2 Structure of Character Area

### Overview

This is the historic core of the secular town of Abbotsbury and includes most of the late Saxon town plus the commercial core of the medieval, and later towns. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension.

### Topography and Geology

Generally the ground slopes gently from the northeast to the south, with a steeper rise at the rear of plots fronting on to Back Street. A small brook rises to the north of the character area and has been diverted to flow in a series of N-S and E-W doglegs and incorporating the length of Back Street. The geology of the area comprises Kimmeridge Clay in the north eastern half with a complex succession of Upper Jurassic Corallian deposits to the south and west.

### Urban Structure

Rodden Row and Market Street represent the most urbanised part of Abbotsbury, forming the main thoroughfare, lined with closely packed houses fronting directly on to the street. Back Street represents a parallel back lane to Rodden Row (Figure 57) and Rosemary Lane is a connecting side street.

The plots along Rodden Row display a certain regularity but those along Market Street are less regular because they front on to a diagonal street but are forced to fit within an earlier rectilinear grid plan. The plots fronting on to Back Street seem to have been created in a piecemeal fashion within three discrete units of three to six plots, which have curving northern boundaries partly defined by the topography.

### Present Character

Figure 52 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area essentially comprises



Figure 55: View west along Rodden Row.

historic plots fronting on to Rodden Row, Market Street and the north side of Back Street. The market place is a classic triangular medieval market. Buildings fronting on to the north side of the market place date from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and may represent rebuilding on historic plots destroyed by fire. Fields in this area remained until modern housing development reduced them to a few isolated remnants. Paddocks to the north of the market place are the result of 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures of historic plots.

### Time Depth

This area represents the primary component of the secular Saxon settlement, which appears to have been established initially along Rodden Row within a grid of pre-existing lanes and tracks. Market Street probably represents a 13<sup>th</sup> century diversion which formed a link between the parish church and the new market created at the NW corner of the late Saxon town. Buildings fronting on to the north side of the market place date from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and the fields and paddocks are the result of 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure of historic plots. The current layout of the area reflects its medieval function as a market town and the built character reflects its continuing importance into the post-medieval period when many houses destroyed by fire were rebuilt in stone in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is of medium density housing in an irregular organic ribbon layout along Market Street and Rodden Row, with tightly packed houses set mainly along the street frontage. The north part of the area has lower density housing, particularly along Back Street where some buildings are set back within gardens and there are breaks along the frontages formed by paddocks and large gardens.



Figure 56: View east along the lane behind the Ilchester Arms.

## Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 2 Built Character

### **Building types**

The area is characterised by a large number of 17th and 18th century houses and cottages and a smaller number of mid 19th century buildings. The modern development lies partially hidden behind historic frontages on Rosemary Lane and Back Street. The 17th and 18th century buildings front directly on to the street. Some 19th century houses have their gable ends to the street, frequently with small front gardens.

There are a number of more imposing buildings around the market place, including the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Strangways Hall (formerly Abbotsbury School) and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Ilchester Arms (Figure 59), facing each other across the market place. The Congregational Chapel on Back Street was constructed in 1870.

The houses are generally two storey cottages frequently arranged in short terraces. Number 20-24 Rodden Row is of three storeys (Figure 60). The south side of Rodden Row was badly damaged in 19<sup>th</sup> century fires and has a mixture of surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century and rebuilt 19<sup>th</sup> century and later houses (Figure 61). Market Street has many 18<sup>th</sup> century houses with 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations. The north side of Back Street comprises 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century cottages interspersed

with modern houses built in a sympathetic style within former plot boundaries. The south side of Back Street remained largely undeveloped until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when a number of short terraces were built in local stone. 4-6 Back Street is an inter-war semi-detached house.

### **Building Materials**

The majority of houses in the area are built from the golden-coloured Abbotsbury stone usually in the form of squared blocks, rubble or ashlar, interspersed with small amounts of grey Portesham stone blocks. Roofing tends to be Welsh slate or thatch, the former often replaced the latter following 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century roof fires.

### **Key Buildings**

*Public Buildings:* Strangways Hall, Congregational Chapel, 19 Rodden Row.

*Commercial Premises:* Ilchester Arms, Abbotsbury Post Office and Stores

*17<sup>th</sup> /18<sup>th</sup> century cottages:* 2-18, 20-24, and 26 Rodden Row, 1 Market Street (Town Farm), 5 Market Street, 1-4 Red Lane.

*19<sup>th</sup> century Houses:* 7-11 Rodden Row, 15-17 Rodden Row, Old Schoolmaster's House (Figure 64), 22-28 Market Street.



Figure 57: View along Back Street from the market place.



Figure 58: Market Street roofscape.



Figure 59: The Ilchester Arms.



Figure 60: Numbers 20-24 Rodden Row.



**Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 2  
Archaeology**

**Archaeological Investigations**

Only one archaeological investigation has been undertaken in this character area (Appendix 3, No 13). An archaeological evaluation was conducted during 2000 in advance of the construction of Galway Cottages, off Rosemary Lane, to the north of the historic plots along Rodden Row (Figure 62). No archaeological features or deposits were recorded (Valentin 2000).

remains may survive from the late Saxon and medieval periods allowing the construction of a relative dating sequence.

**Archaeological Character**

The limited archaeological investigation, outside the historic plots means there is little information available on the archaeological character. However, the location within the historic core of the Saxon and medieval town would suggest that a series of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pits, postholes, and boundary remains may exist in the rear of the historic plots. To the rear of Market street intercutting plot boundary



Figure 61: Numbers 7-11 Rodden Row.

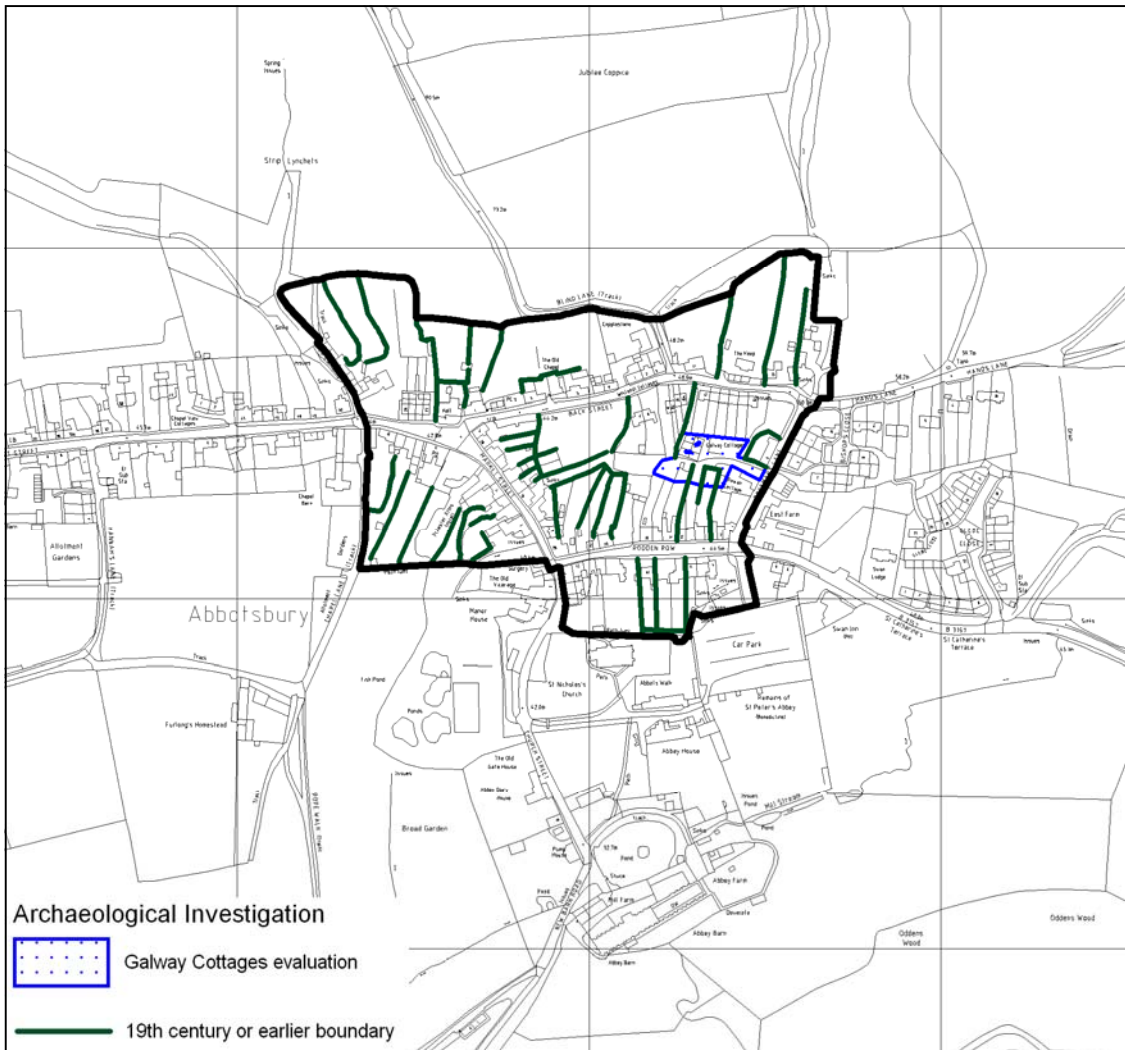


Figure 62: Archaeological investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

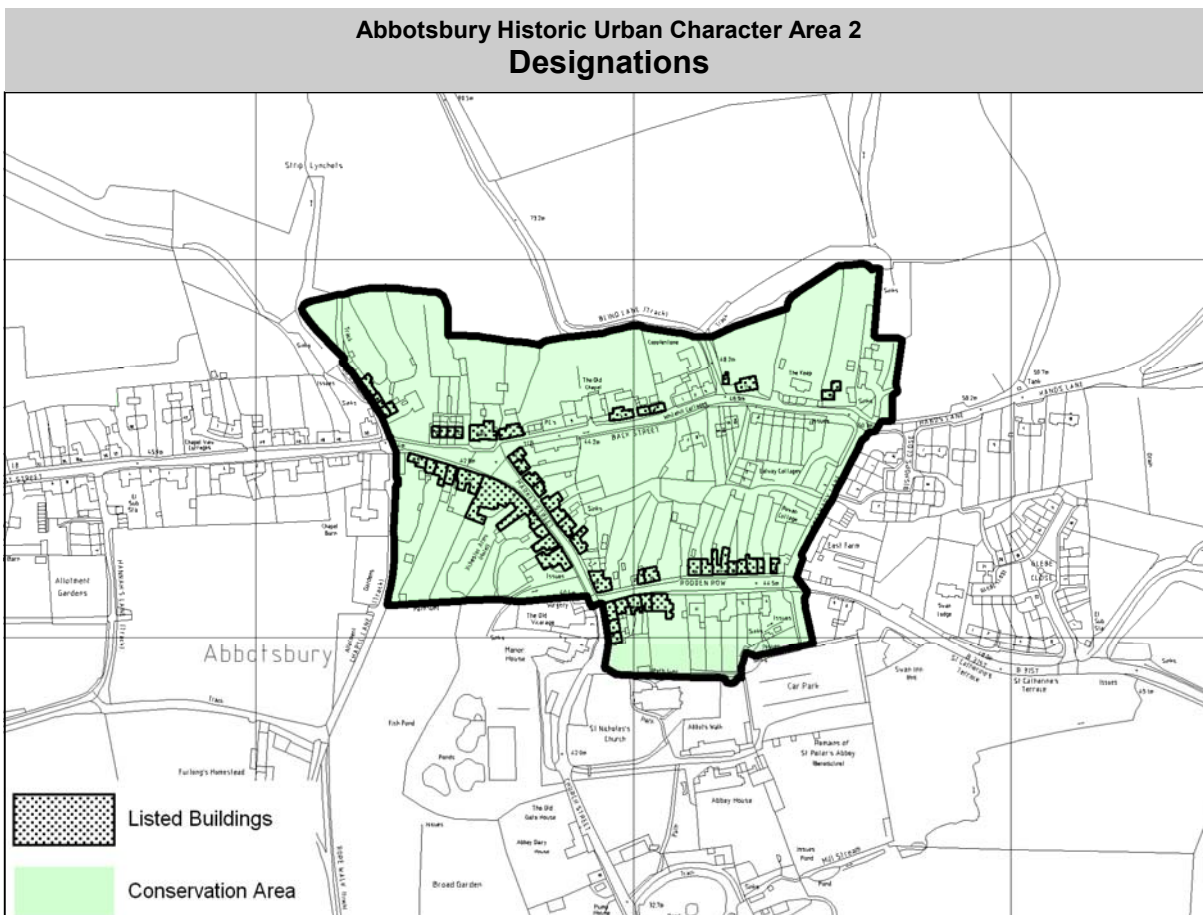


Figure 63: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

**Listed Buildings**

There are 37 Listed Buildings in the Character Area, all grade II (Figure 63).

**Scheduled Monuments**

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the character area.

**Conservation Areas**

The whole of this Character Area lies within the Abbotsbury Conservation Area.

**Registered Historic Parks and Gardens**

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



Figure 64: The Old Schoolmaster's House, Back Street.



Figure 65: Numbers 22-28 Market Street.

## Abbotsbury Historic Urban Character Area 2 Evaluation

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

The character of this area is judged to be **strong**. There is an extremely strong contribution from the large number of 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century historic buildings. The area also benefits from the fact that the small amount of modern development after 1973 has been planned with a sympathetic eye towards the surrounding character of the built environment. The road layout is essentially 13<sup>th</sup> century in origin, although even this represents only a slight alteration from the late Saxon routes. There is some survival of medieval or earlier plot boundaries along Rodden Row, and those of Market Street and Back Street may be late medieval in origin.

### ***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; some plot boundaries have been lost whilst others have been preserved. To date development has been on a small scale and 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 the destruction of ancient plot boundaries.

### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It forms the primary secular settlement component of Abbotsbury and is adjacent to the medieval abbey. The lack of

modern development means that there is very high potential for important and informative remains of the late Saxon and medieval town. These have the potential to reveal details on the organisation, crafts, industries, economy and diet of the town. The layout of the late Saxon town is conjectural due to the limited amount of archaeological work that has been carried out. This area has great potential for providing answers on this aspect of the town's origins.

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. The potential for surviving medieval architectural components and their distribution could contribute to the further understanding of the town's development.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1- 7, 9-11, 13-18, and 20-21 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Historic core of Abbotsbury
- Medieval market place
- 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century vernacular cottages
- 19<sup>th</sup> century gabled houses
- High proportion of quality historic buildings
- Medieval and earlier street plan
- Medieval and earlier plot boundaries