

## **Part 6: Historic Urban Character Appraisal**





## 6.1 The historic urban character of Milton Abbas

Milton Abbas is unique in that it is the only complete well-established town in England that was forcibly removed from its site. This means that today Milton Abbas exhibits no urban characteristics and has not been an urban place since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Instead, it forms part of an extensive Brownian landscaped park. It is beyond the remit of this present report to describe and analyse the landscaped park in detail, so this section on the urban character of Milton Abbas will be confined to a few broad points.

Firstly, the current landscape is a highly designed one, which includes the layout, position, and visual appearance of the current village of Milton Abbas. The broad features of this later 18<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape survive rela-

tively intact, but partly obscured by later subdivisions of land ownership, management and some recent development.

The current village of Milton Abbas is a wholly artificial confection, highly designed to provide an important picturesque element in the landscape and is an integral part of 'Capability' Brown's landscape park design. The village retains much of its original character and elements, with relatively little later development (Figure 21). The limited area of modern development at Catherine's Well is located away from the village, and does not visually impinge on it.

The Abbey Church and Milton Abbey house are important visual elements in the designed landscape. The current Milton Abbey School buildings have impinged on the setting of these buildings, but their location echoes the position of earlier ancillary buildings, subservient to the

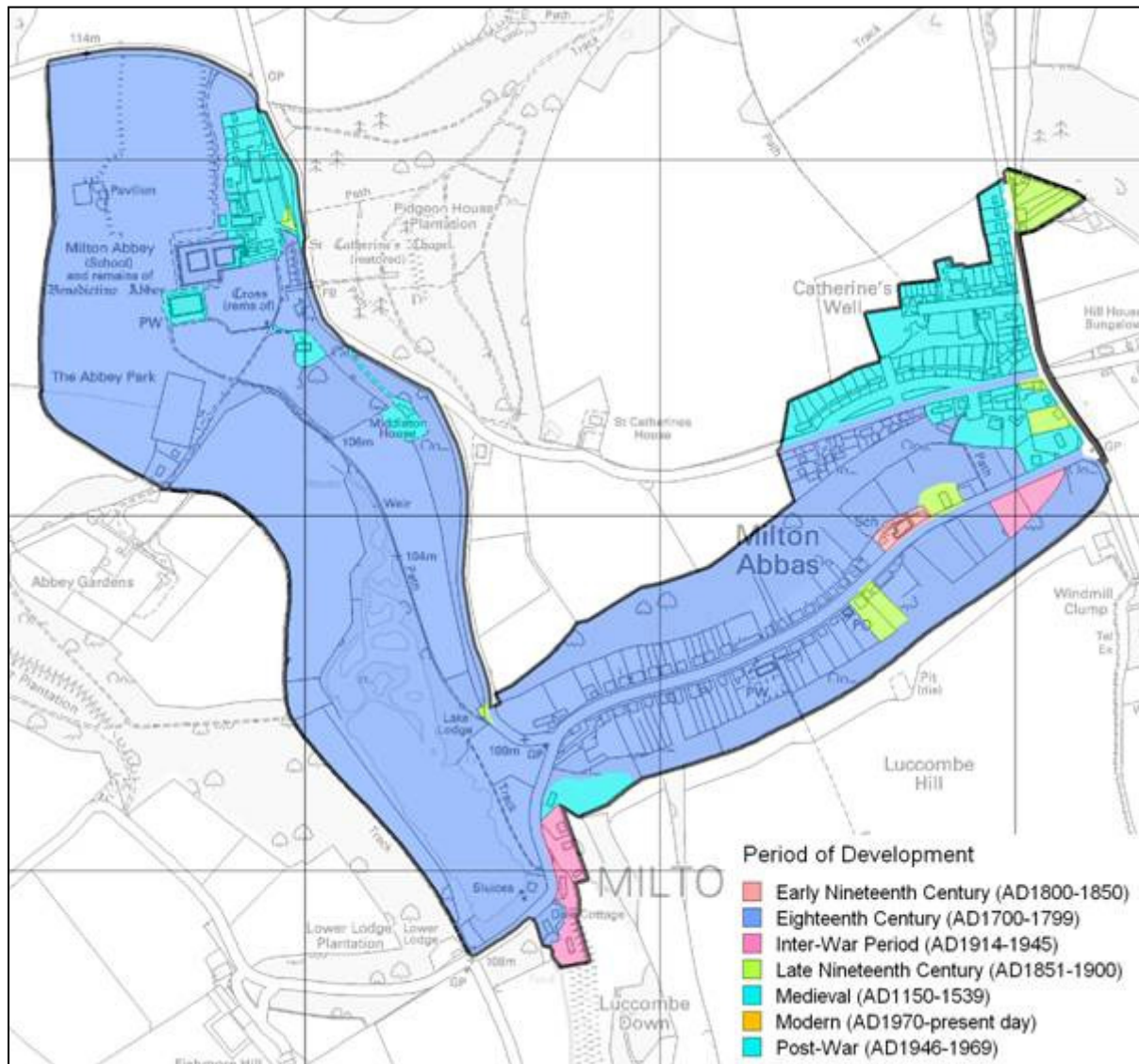


Figure 21: Map showing the major periods of development of Milton Abbas.

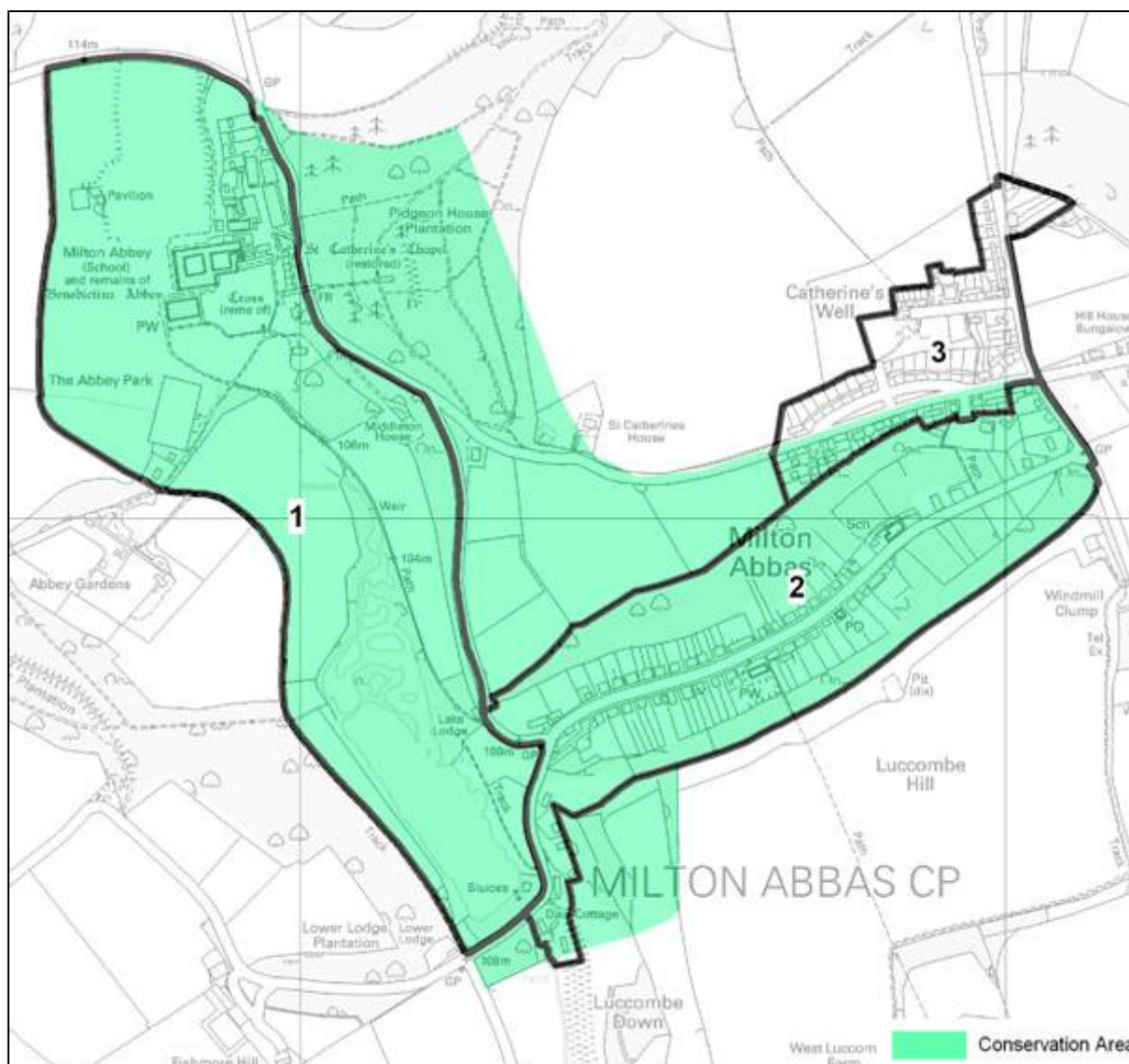


Figure 22: Milton Abbas Historic Urban Character Areas and Conservation Area.

house and church, from the medieval period onwards.

The location of the former town of Middleton is visible as a series of low earthworks, which can be related to the known layout of the 18<sup>th</sup> century town. The lake has encroached on the southern end, but otherwise there has been very little development following the removal of the town and the landscaping of the area, thus, potentially, an almost complete historic market town lies fossilised beneath the ground.

## 6.2 Historic Urban Character Areas of Milton Abbas

Three Historic Urban Character Areas have been defined for Milton Abbas as shown on Figure 22. They comprise the area of the Abbey, the former town of Middleton and the Park (Character Area 1), the 18<sup>th</sup> century model village (Area 2), and later suburb at Catherine's

Well (Area 3).

- 1 Milton Abbey and Park
- 2 Milton Abbas village
- 3 Catherine's Well