English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Stoford

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

STOFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Miranda Richardson

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

STOFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Somerset County Council would like to thank all the people who assisted in the compiling or editing of this report.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report forms one of a series commissioned by English Heritage and prepared by Somerset County Council with the aim of assessing urban archaeology as part of the Monuments Protection Programme. The work was carried out from 1994 to 1998 by Clare Gathercole and Miranda Richardson (from 1996), managed by Chris Webster. The reports are essentially as completed during that period but have been updated by Chris Webster with new archaeological information in early 2003.

English Heritage has funded two programmes assess the urban archaeological resource - intensive and extensive. The former is restricted to the major historic cities, characterised by a great depth of archaeological remains, a wealth of historical documentation and in many cases, by a great deal of archaeological investigation. The extensive urban surveys cover the smaller towns and are based on information in the local Sites and Monuments Record with limited amounts of new information collected during the project. Once the information has been collected and mapped, attention is focused on the analysis of the town plan and defining topographic units within the town. This will lead to the preparation of guidance for planners, developers and others involved in the management of the town.

II. MAJOR SOURCES

1. Primary documents

There seem to be few primary documents concerning Stoford, however the 'Inquest' documents of 1272, written following the death of George de Cantilupe without heirs, provides a detailed, early survey of the parish. In addition the church at Barwick has registers dating to 1560 which include references to the borough of Stoford.

2. Local histories

No recent local histories of Stoford or Barwick have been found, however the accounts in Collinson (1791) and particularly Batten (1894/1994) have been used along with the relevant chapter in *Historic Towns in Somerset; Archaeology and Planning* (Aston and Leech 1977:126-130).

3. Maps

No pre-18th century maps have been found for Stoford or Barwick. A good quality tithe map dating to 1837 and the OS maps listed in part V have been used.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF STOFORD

The prehistory of the area is not well known, although recent excavation has produced a number of worked flints, probably neolithic and to the north-east of the town bronze age burials have been found. The main Roman road linking Yeovil and Dorchester forms Barwick parish boundary. Several finds of Roman pottery recorded in the SMR attest Roman presence in the landscape although no settlement or structures have been located as of yet.

Neither Barwick nor Stoford appear in Domesday, but the former was probably a Saxon foundation. By the early 13th century the manor of Barwick was in the hands of the de Cantilupe family, who founded the free borough of Stoford. The new town of Stoford was laid out in burgage plots which were let to free tenants. George de Cantilupe died in 1272 leaving no heir which caused a detailed inquisition to be made of the property and income of the estate. This document describes Stoford as a free borough which remained part of the Barwick estate. For a short period the town flourished with a successful weekly market and annual fair. A deed from 1353 refers to the building of a

Guild hall in the market area and in 1483 a conveyance referred to the building of an alms house within the town. All that was lacking was a church, no document or remains have been found of a church and it is likely that Stoford residents used the parish church at Barwick. The town was still known as '*Stowford Burgus*' in the mid-17th century Hearth Tax returns but by this time was little more than a village with a rural market having lost trade to its prosperous neighbour, Yeovil. The main road to London from the West Country would have passed through Stoford in the medieval period but was superceded by a route passing through Yeovil which took trade away. In 1791 Collinson recorded only 32 houses in Stoford and Harbin has estimated the population of the whole parish (Barwick and Stoford) as approximately 340 at the start of the 18th century (Harbin 1936).

The railway arrived in Stoford in 1860, dividing the area of the original planned town in half and providing some employment at Yeovil junction station to the north-east.

Twentieth century expansion of housing reflects the town's position on the outskirts of Yeovil which has itself expanded and prospered at Stoford's expense.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF STOFORD

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological work in the town

There have been two small excavations in Stoford. In 1990 evaluation trenches were excavated prior to construction of ten houses and four flats on Hooper's Lane (SMR 55861, McDonnell, 1990). Medieval remains, including a wooden structure were found at the north end of the plot whilst the evaluation trenches at the southern end of the plot showed only animal burials and ditches interpreted as feeding a pond. In 1994 and 1997 small trenches were excavated in the garden of The Rock (on the corner of New Road and The Green) by the Yeovil Archaeology and Local History Society Archaeological unit (SMR 55862). Results from the first season revealed below the topsoil in both these trenches a medieval horizon and a post hole. Several worked flints were also retrieved (Gittos and Gittos 1994:78). Further evaluation has been undertaken at The Rock (SMR 57040) and The Church Cottage (SMR 15741); a watching brief was maintained at The Croft (SMR 57129) in 1998. None of these produced significant evidence for the medeival town.

0.2 Standing structures and visible remains

There is only a handful of listed buildings in Stoford and Barwick.

1. PREHISTORIC

(Map A)

1.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

Excavation in 1994 and 1997 in the garden of the Rock produced a a number of worked flints, probably of neolithic date.

1.2 Context

Stoford is one of 37 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no strong evidence of prehistoric settlement on the site of the later town - though there was certainly activity in the area and it should be remembered that it is notoriously difficult for archaeologists to demonstrate a prehistoric presence in areas subsequently built up. Whilst 'towns' were not, generally speaking, a feature of prehistoric landscapes, many of the same factors which made the site desirable in later periods would already have been operative.

1.3 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

1.3.a Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

STF/101 <u>Cist Burials</u> (SMR 53549)

In 1826, two stone cut cists and a large pit were discovered at the site of a quarry owned by Mr. George Harbin. The first contained a single human skeleton with a bronze age beaker and part of

a deer horn, the second contained the skeleton of a horse and the third, a mass of mixed human bone (Anon. 1853:8-9).

Taken from SMR map.

1.3.b Artefact scatters

STF/102 Worked Flints

Worked flints were found in the garden of The Rock in 1994 and 1997 during excavations (Gittos and Gittos 1994:78). In addition a flint axe was found in an adjacent garden which may have been associated with the excavated finds.

Taken from Gittos and Gittos 1994:78

not mapped <u>Stone Arrowhead</u> (SMR 53559) A barbed and tanged arrow head was found in the vicinity of Barwick.

2. ROMAN

(Map A)

2.1 Archaeological work in the town/Archaeological knowledge None.

2.2 Context

The Roman period was one of deliberate, strategic urbanisation. The area which is now Somerset appears to have been less affected than some other areas by this, in that few really urban sites are known, and this probably reflects its marginal position. However, the widespread distribution of Roman or Romanised settlements shows that the county - particularly east of the Parrett - was heavily populated and exploited in this period.

Stoford is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no evidence of Roman settlement on the site of the later town, though there was certainly activity in the area, which was not far from the town at Westland and was on the fringe of the belt of villas surrounding Ilchester.

2.3 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

2.3.a Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

STF/203 Ilchester to Dorchester Road (SMR 55102 and 53556)

The Ilchester to Dorchester Roman road forms the western limit of the parish of Barwick. At the southern end of the parish the modern road and the parish boundary diverge from the line of the Roman road which has been noted as a series of cropmarks.

Line taken from SMR map.

2.3.b Settlement

STF/204

Stilchester (SMR 53557)

Fields with this name have been noted on the 1837 tithe schedule which may indicate a Roman settlement.

Area taken from SMR maps.

2.3.c Artefact scatters

STF/201 <u>Pottery</u> (SMR 53551)

Roman pottery was found in the top soil of a small quarry in the late 1940s. A watching brief just to the north (SMR 57129, Manning 1998) failed to locate any early remains.

Area taken from the SMR map.

 STF/202
 Pottery (SMR 53550)

 A few fragments of Roman pottery were found, at a depth of 4-5ft., in trenches dug to the north of Two Tower Lane in 1916.

 Area taken from co-ordinate in SMR.

 STF/205
 Coin

 A coin, thought to be Roman in date was found in the garden of 5, Hamden Close Stoford (B&M Gittos pers comm).

3. SAXON

(No map)

3.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

It is not known when the hamlet or village of Barwick was established, nor are there clear indications of the form of the original settlement. It was not mentioned in Domesday but is likely to have existed as a minor settlement within the *parochia* of Yeovil by 1086.

3.2 Context

Though the Post-Roman and early Saxon periods were characterised by a return to non-urban lifestyles, the later Saxon period (from the 8th or 9th century onwards) saw the beginnings of a resurgence of first trading places and then towns, under the control of the Saxon royal families, in the context of a network of royal estate administration centres and subordinate settlements which was already established (in some cases long-established). Though only a relatively small number of places with any claim to be towns existed by the time of the Domesday Survey, many of the subordinate settlements recorded at that point were to become towns in the medieval period. In fact, Stoford is one of only five of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is no evidence of settlement before the medieval period.

4. Medieval (Map B)

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

Medieval pottery was found in a stratified layer in excavations in the garden of The Rock in 1994 carried out by the Yeovil Archaeology and Local History society (Gittos and Gittos 1994:78). Some medieval remains were found at the north end of the plot on Hooper's Lane, which was the subject of an evaluation excavation in 1990 (McDonnell, 1990).

4.2 Context

Both in Britain and on the continent, the medieval period saw the growth of town foundation and, to an extent, urban living (though the bulk of the population continued to live in villages). The reasons for this growth were many and complex. In England they included both general factors - such as the growth of mercantile trade (especially the cloth trade) - and more specific ones - such as the post-Conquest establishment of a network of (theoretically) loyal magnates and prelates with large estates and commercial priveleges. The latter led to the increasing relaxation of the royal stranglehold on the profits of towns and chartered boroughs (where tenants paid cash rents and were free of feudal ties), which in turn enabled the establishment of new purpose-built commercial areas (the majority of places classed as towns in the medieval period have at least some planned elements). Of course, some boroughs were already in existence by the Conquest, and the existing pattern of Saxon urban or semi-urban centres was an important influence on the medieval one. This is evident in Somerset which, like many parts of the south and west (where the majority of the Saxon *burhs* and boroughs had been established), was peppered with small boroughs in the medieval period.

In archaeological terms, the medieval towns are characterised by evidence of partially planned, intensive occupation of restricted areas. Typical features which may occur include: regular, or semi-regular, street layouts; large market

places (usually obscured by later encroachments); blocks of regular, long, narrow, plots end on to the commercial frontage; churchyards, either within the medieval layout or outside it - the latter often indicative of a deliberate shift of activity; regular or irregular suburbs or marginal areas occupied by quays, or industrial sites such as mills; and high status sites such as castles, manor sites and large religious precincts.

Stoford is one of six of the 45 historic towns identified by this project which were set up in the 12th and 13th centuries as completely new towns on greenfield sites, from an existing settlement or borough (this does not include planned extensions *within* existing boroughs, of which there were also a number). All of these new towns were given borough status by their founders - in this case one of the Norman lords - and were subsequently abandoned, or semi-abandoned, with consequently good archaeological preservation.

4.3 Archaeological components for Stoford, shown on Map B

4.3.a Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

401 <u>Stoford's Planned Roads</u>

Four straight roads forming a rectangle were laid out probably in the early 13th century, these are Court Lane, Silver Street, The Green and the north end of Fairhouse Road. Lanes presumably ran between Court Lane and Silver Street creating the 'ladder' pattern within which category Bond (c1990:1) describes the town. This might also be reflected in the three names given to different sections of the southerly road, Higher Bullen, South Street and Silver Street (although without further research it is not certain that all three names were used concurrently).

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings and Aston and Leech 1977:128.

STF/403Hooper's Lane, Fairhouse Lane and Dorchester Road
It seems likely that Fairhouse Lane, Dorchester Road and Newton Road were laid out at the same
time as the town plots as they are on the same alignment and serve to link the town with the Yeovil
to Dorchester Roman road to the south and Yeovil to the north. At the southern end of the parish
of Barwick the Dorchester Road diverges to the east from the line of the Roman road. It is
possible that this was part of the scheme designed to lead traffic into the town.

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings.

(b) Bridges

STF/410Stoford Bridge (LB 50377)A late medieval double arched stone bridge crosses the river Yeo to the east of Stoford.

Taken from Listed Building map.

4.3.b Settlement (Urban)

(a) Market place(s) STF/405 Ma

Market Place

A rectangular market place was established at the east end of the town. A market charter was granted in 1231, although Batten suggests this was confirmation of an existing market (1994:6). The 1272 Inquisition records five houses built in the market place paying 2s., 16d., 8d., 8d. and a pound of cinnamon, and 6d. respectively. A further two plots, presumably for market stalls paid 2d. (Batten 1994:5). A deed dating to 1353 refers to a guild hall built within the market area. A building within the market square, previously known as the Guild House, dates to the 15th century. (SMR LB 50379)

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings.

STF/401

(b) Burgage plots

STF/404

Area of possible burgages

It is presumed that the town was laid out in the early 13th century. The 1272 Inquisition records $74 \frac{1}{2}$ burgesses each paying 10d. a year, the total being 72s 1d (Batten 1994:5). It is unclear if these figure represented the potential income for the property or the actual income and population of the town. Taking the smallest size of plots shown on the tithe map and 1886 OS 1st Edition, (in a declining settlement plots are likely to be amalgamated rather than divided), 74 plots would have filled the full length of the laid out streets with plots on both sides. Aston and Leech (1977:126) have used the Inquisition document to estimate the total population of the borough at over 500 in 1272. However, they also suggest that the west end of the town was never built upon (*ibid*:127). Plots may have been laid out, assigned and rented but never occupied.

Taken from the 1837 Tithe map and the 1886 1st Edition map.

4.3.c Other

STF/409 Fair Ground

A fair was granted to William de Cantilupe in 1228, in 1272 it was worth 13s 4d and is likely to have been held on the field to the south of the town which is named fair ground on the 1837 tithe map. The fair was still held in 1611 when the parish register records one Edmund Wilson, '*slayne at Stoford fair*..'.

Taken from the 1837 tithe map.

4.4 Archaeological components for Barwick, shown on Map B

4.4.a Communications

STF/402 Church Lane

4.4.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

YEO/427 Saint Mary Magdalene Church, Barwick

The parish church at Barwick was built as a chapel of the minster church at Yeovil prior to 1219, which is the date of a document disputing the share of tithes paid to the two churches (Batten 1994:18). It is not known when the chapel gained the right to bury (and thus claim Soul scot); the chapel was still listed with Yeovil in Popes Nicholas's Taxation of 1341

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyor's Drawings.

4.4.c Settlement (Rural)

STF/407 Barwick Village

An approximate area of medieval occupation is shown based on Aston and Leech (1977:128), and the property boundaries shown on the 1837 tithe map.

After Aston and Leech (1977:128)

4.4.d Industrial sites: mills

STF/406 Tucking Mill (SMR 53554)

STF/408 Barwick Mill (SMR 53553)

Taken from Aston and Leech (1977:128)

5. POST-MEDIEVAL (Map C)

Although the market continued into the 17th century and Gerard (1633) notes that the portreeve still paraded with maces on fair day, the town was much reduced; in 1664 the hearth tax returns still referred to Stoford as a borough but reported only 13 taxable properties (Nash 1993:40).

5.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

None.

5.2 Context

The basic pattern of towns had been established by the end of the middle ages, and there were very few major changes in the post-medieval period, though the economic fortunes of particular towns rose and fell. Stoford, however, is one of nine of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which, though in some way urban in the Medieval period, were not really so in the post-medieval period.

5.3 Archaeological components, shown on Map C

5.3.a Manors and estates

STF/504 Barwick House and Gardens

Barwick house is has Georgian origins but was remodelled in 1830 with a Jacobean appearance. The boundaries of the gardens and estate are marked with follies at the four cardinal points constructed in c. 1775 by John Newman.

Taken from Garden Register maps.

5.3.b Settlement (Urban)

STF/501 The built area at the west end of Stoford shown on the 1808 OS Surveyor's Drawings is mapped here. This shows that the market area was reduced but remained the focus of the settlement.

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyor's Drawings

(a) Unclassified

STF/505 A single property is shown within a burgage plot on the west side of the town on the 1808 Surveyor's Drawings. Whether this is a remnant of buildings spreading from the market square right along South Street, or was one of the few burgages occupied at the west end of the town is unclear.

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyor's Drawings

5.3.c Settlement (Rural)

 (a) Farms

 STF/502
 Court Farm

 YEO/505
 Lower Key Farm

 Both of these farms are shown on the 1808 OS surveyor's's drawings.

Taken from 1808 OS Surveyor's Drawings

(b) Unclassified

YEO/512 Red House Inn

The inn, on the Yeovil-Dorchester road is shown on the 1808 map. Its position shows that generally traffic no longer passed through the centre of Stoford. This route was turnpiked in 1852 (Bentley and Murless 1985:67).

6. INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY) (Map D)

6.1 Archaeological work in the town/Archaeological knowledge None.

6.2 Context

The late 18th and 19th centuries saw some changes to the urban pattern, with the beginning of the emergence of larger centres (often at the expense of smaller ones), linked by vastly improved communication lines (turnpikes, railways and canals). Somerset was not characterised by the kind of large scale industrialisation and urbanisation seen in other counties - indeed, the virtual collapse of its most important industry, which was cloth, affected nearly all of the medieval and post-medieval towns - but some did take place. The changes were reflected in a series of alterations to town governance, which left the county with a total of only fifteen Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts by the end of the 19th century. Stoford is one of eight places which were not towns in the 19th century, although they had previously been so

6.3 Archaeological components, shown on Map D

- 6.3.a Communications
- (a) Roads, streets and routeways
- STF/601 New Road and Other Road Alterations

The arrival of the railway in Stoford in 1860 caused the road system to be reorganised. The expense of building two bridges was avoided by building the New Road between Court Lane and South Street on the east side of the settlement which goes under a single rail bridge and then splits to join the original road lines on the west.

Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".

(b) Bridges	
STF/606	Rail bridge in Stoford Centre
	The bridge was built in 1860 for the London and South Western railway.
	Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".
STF/607	Yeovil Junction Road and Rail bridges over the Yeo
	Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".
(c) Railways	
STF/602	The London and South Western Railway
	The railway was completed in 1860.

Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".

6.3.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

STF/605 Barwick Cemetery

The church at Barwick was originally a chapel of the minster church at Yeovil and is therefore unlikely to have had its own cemetery. However the 1886 first edition OS maps show that a plot of land to the west of the church building which was used as a cemetery at this date.

Taken from the 1886 OS 1st Edition.

STF/608 Stoford Chapel and Mission Room

A non-conformist chapel on Court Lane and mission rooms on the south side of Silver Street are shown on the 1904 OS second edition.

Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".

6.3.c Settlement

(a) Commercial core

STF/603 Stoford Centre

The built area on the 1904 map is shown on map D.

Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".

(b) Unclassified

STF/604

Other industrial period building on the 1904 map is shown on map D. It includes a school building at the west end of Court Lane, where it turns towards Barwick and workers cottages to the north of the settlement beside the railway.

Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".

6.3.d Settlement (Rural) YEO/622 Church Farm

Various

Taken from the 1904 OS second edition 6".

7. 20TH CENTURY (Map E)

7.1 Context

The 20th century has seen a vast physical expansion of some existing towns, and some expansion in most of the 45 historic towns covered by the project. However, there have only been limited alterations to the overall pattern of urban settlement. The County Structure Plan still contains fifteen settlements defined as Towns: this is almost identical to the late 19th century list of Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts. Stoford is one of 30 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is not in itself classed as a town in the County Structure Plan. It is, however, extremely close to Yeovil, which is one of the more important Structure Plan Towns. Yeovil is one of six Towns identified as having an important role in accommodating new development, which may leave Stoford's archaeological remains under increased threat.

7.2 Settlement components, shown on Map E

7.2.a	Water	
YEO/7	08	Sewage Works

Taken from 1995 Digital OS

7.2.bBurial sites, religious houses and places of worshipYEO/706Cemetery Extension
The cemetery has been extended to the west during this period.

Taken from 1995 Digital OS

7.2.c Settlement

YEO/701 General Expansion

Housing estates and other smaller areas of 20th-century expansion are shown on map E.

Taken from 1995 Digital OS

V. THE POTENTIAL OF STOFORD

1. Research interests

Stowford is a fine example of a planned town implanted in the 13th century, and provides the possibility of researching the material remains of the lives of the free burgesses and a thriving market town.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

There are no obvious areas where exceptional preservation might be expected although the lack of later building, due to the decline of the town from the later medieval period, areas might have allowed good preservation of the 13th- century buildings and plots.

3. Limitations

The archaeological potential of the town is limited only by more recent, mainly 20th-century construction.

4. Extent of current protection

A small Conservation Area covers the eastern part of the planned town and there is a handful of listed buildings (shown on map F). An Area of High Archaeological Potential has been designated as a result of this report. There are no scheduled monuments.

5. Management Proposals

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

VI. SOURCES

1. General documentary (Somerset/Wessex)

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2. Stoford

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3. Maps

1808	OS Surveyor's Drawings	SLHL
1837	Tithe Map	SLHL
1886	OS 1st. Edition	SLHL
1904	OS 2nd Edition 6"	SRO
1982	OS 1:10000	
1995	Digital OS	

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Compone	nt to map		
Component	Мар	Component	Мар
STF/101	А	STF/401	В
STF/201	А	STF/402	В
STF/202	А	STF/403	В
STF/203	А	STF/404	В
STF/204	А	STF/405	В
		STF/406	В

STF/407	В	STF/601	D
STF/408	В	STF/602	D
STF/409	В	STF/603	D
STF/410	В	STF/604	D
YEO/427	В	STF/605	D
		STF/606	D
STF/501	С	STF/607	D
STF/502	С	STF/608	D
STF/503	С	YEO/622	D
STF/504	С		
STF/505	С	STF/701	Е
YEO/505	С	YEO/706	E
YEO/512	С	YEO/708	Е

1	A	
2.	Component to	nage

STF/101	
STF/201 5, 1	
STF/202 6, 1	14
STF/203 5, 1	14
STF/204	
STF/401	14
STF/402	14
STF/403	14
STF/404	14
STF/405	14
STF/406 8, 1	14
STF/407	15
STF/408 8, 1	15
STF/409 8, 1	15
STF/410	15
STF/501	15
STF/502	15
STF/503 1	15
STF/504	15
STF/505	15
STF/601 10, 1	15
STF/602 10, 1	15
STF/603 11, 1	15
STF/604	15
STF/605 10, 1	15
STF/606 10, 1	15
STF/607 10, 1	15
STF/608	15
STF/701 1	15
YEO/427	15
YEO/505	15
YEO/512	15
YEO/622	15
YEO/706	
YEO/708	

Maps

Map A – prehistoric and Roman

Map B - medieval

Map C – Post-medieval

Earlier components shown in yellow.

Map D - Industrial

Earlier components shown in yellow.

Map E – 20th century

Earlier components shown in yellow.

Map F - Existing designations

Key:	Scheduled Monuments	(dark blue, none),
	Listed Buildings	Grade I (light blue, none)
		Grade II* (light green)
		Grade II (green)
	Registered Park (brown)	

Registered Park (brown) Conservation Area (green) Area of High Archaeological Potential (pink)











