



Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey

Crediton



South West Archaeology Ltd.

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of South West Archaeology Ltd. and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

Cover illustration

The north side of the High Street, viewed from the east.

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Contents

1	Summary	1
2	Town context	3
2.1	Location and setting	3
2.1.1	Communications	3
2.2	Geology and topography	3
2.2.1	Geology	3
2.2.2	Topography	3
2.3	Previous archaeological work	4
3	Historical development	4
3.1	Crediton	5
3.1.1	Prehistoric and Roman	5
3.1.2	The Saxo-Norman Period	5
3.1.3	The Borough	6
3.1.4	The Bishop's Palace	7
3.1.5	The Woollen Trade	7
3.1.6	Tanning, Boot and Shoe-making	7
3.1.7	War	7
3.1.8	Fires	7
3.1.9	Improvements and Changes	8
3.1.10	The 20 th Century	8
4	Historic Urban Character	8
4.1	The Church to Mill Street (HUCA 1)	8
4.1.1	Historic character	8
4.1.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	11
4.1.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	11
4.2	Dean Street (HUCA 2)	11
4.2.1	Historic character	11
4.2.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	13
4.2.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	13
4.3	Market Street to Church Street (HUCA 3)	13
4.3.1	Historic Character	13
4.3.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	15
4.3.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	16
4.4	Union Road and Barnfield (HUCA 4)	16
4.4.1	Historic character	16
4.4.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	17
4.4.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	18
4.5	High Street, South Side (HUCA 5)	18
4.5.1	Historic Character	18
4.5.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	20
4.5.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	20
4.6	High Street, North Side (HUCA 6)	20
4.6.1	Historic Character	20
4.6.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	22
4.6.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	22
4.7	Western Road (HUCA 7)	23
4.7.1	Historic Character	23
4.7.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	24

4.7.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	25
4.8	Landscape to Westwood (HUCA 8)	25
4.8.1	Historic Character	25
4.8.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	25
4.8.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	25
4.9	George Hill (HUCA 9)	26
4.9.1	Historic Character	26
4.9.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	26
4.9.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	26
4.10	Alexandra Road to Deep Lane (HUCA 10)	27
4.10.1	Historic Character	27
4.10.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	27
4.10.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	27
4.11	Jockey Hill (HUCA 11)	28
4.11.1	Historic Character	28
4.11.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	28
4.11.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	28
4.12	Pounds Hill (HUCA 12)	29
4.12.1	Historic Character	29
4.12.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	30
4.12.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	30
4.13	Exhibition Road (HUCA 13)	30
4.13.1	Historic Character	30
4.13.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	32
4.13.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	32
4.14	Lord's Meadow (HUCA 14)	32
4.14.1	Historic Character	32
4.14.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	32
4.14.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	32
4.15	Commercial Road Industrial Estate, Mill Street and Tolleys (HUCA 15)	33
4.15.1	Historic Character	33
4.15.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	33
4.15.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	33
4.16	Park Street (HUCA 16)	34
4.16.1	Historic Character	34
4.16.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	35
4.16.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	35
4.17	Exeter Road, Station and Fordton (HUCA 17)	35
4.17.1	Historic Character	35
4.17.2	Heritage significance (above ground)	38
4.17.3	Heritage significance (below ground)	38
5	Suggestions for future research	39
6	Bibliography	40
6.1	Primary sources	40
6.2	Publications	40
6.2.1	Published	40
6.2.2	Unpublished	41
6.3	Information leaflets	42
6.4	Websites	42

List of Figures

Figure 1: Location map.	4
Figure 2: The south elevation of the church.	10
Figure 3: East Street, view to the east.	10
Figure 4: East Street, north side, view to the east.	10
Figure 5: East Street, north side, view to the west.	10
Figure 6: East Street, view to the west.	10
Figure 7: Mill Street, east side, view to the north.	10
Figure 8: The Glebe House, view to the south-west.	11
Figure 9: View of the parish church across Newcombe's Meadow; view to the south-east.	11
Figure 10: A house in Dean Street, west side.	12
Figure 11: Dean Street, view to the north.	12
Figure 12: The junction of Charlotte Street, East Street and Union Road.	12
Figure 13: Charlotte Street, north side, view to the east.	12
Figure 14: Bowden Hill, south side, view to the south.	13
Figure 15: Charlotte Street, south side, view to the east.	13
Figure 16: Haywards School, view to the south.	13
Figure 17: Haywards School, East Street, view to the south-west.	13
Figure 18: North Street, viewed across the Market Square from the west.	15
Figure 19: Parliament Street, south side; view to the east.	15
Figure 20: Market Street, view to the north.	15
Figure 21: Market Square, north side, view to the east.	15
Figure 22: Market Street, west side, view to the north.	15
Figure 23: Market Street, east side, view to the north.	15
Figure 24: Church Workers' Institute, Union Road, south side; view to the east.	17
Figure 25: Park Street, south side, view to the west.	17
Figure 26: Bowden Hill, view to the west.	17
Figure 27: The junction of Bowden Hill and Park Street, view to the west.	17
Figure 28: The Spurway Alms Houses on Park Street.	17
Figure 29: The Moose Hall, Bowden Hill, view to the east.	17
Figure 30: Ernest Jackson Medical Confectionery viewed from the High Street, south side.	19
Figure 31: View towards High Street, south side, past a possible chain linhay.	19
Figure 32: The west end of the High Street, south side, view to the west.	19
Figure 33: Pownes House, at the west end of the High Street on the south side.	19
Figure 34: The west end of the High Street, south side, view to the east.	19
Figure 35: Earnest Jackson and Co. Medical Confectionery.	19
Figure 36: St. Saviour's Way, view to the south.	20
Figure 37: Town Park, view to the west.	20
Figure 38: The central High Street, north side, view to the north.	21
Figure 39: The museum on the corner of Searle Street, view to the north.	21
Figure 40: The Congregational Chapel on the north side of the central High Street area, view to the north.	21
Figure 41: St. Lawrence's Green, view to the west.	21
Figure 42: Kiddicott, possible infill of former market place view to the west.	22
Figure 43: Kiddicott, view to the south.	22
Figure 44: Buller Road, view to the north.	22
Figure 45: View to south from Buller Road.	22
Figure 46: Western Road, south side, view to the east.	24
Figure 47: Queen Elizabeth's School, Western Road, north side.	24
Figure 48: Western Road, south side, view to the south-east.	24
Figure 49: St. Lawrence's Chapel (as reconstructed).	24
Figure 50: The west end of Alexandra Road, view to the north.	24
Figure 51: Threshers, north side, view to the east.	24
Figure 52: Landscore, view to the east.	25
Figure 53: Westwood Road, view to the south-west.	25
Figure 54: Landscore, view to the west.	26
Figure 55: Western Lea, view to the south-west.	26

Figure 56: View towards Dartmoor from Avranches Avenue.	27
Figure 57: Avranches Avenue, view to the east.	27
Figure 58: Deep Lane, view to the north.	27
Figure 59: The People's Park, view to the east.	27
Figure 60: The junction of Jockey Hill with Penton Lane, view to the north-east.	28
Figure 61: Newcombes, view to the north-east.	28
Figure 62: The Maltings, Penton Lane, view to the south.	29
Figure 63: Walnut Drive, view to west.	29
Figure 64: Beech Park, view to the north.	30
Figure 65: Penton Lane, view to the south.	30
Figure 66: Allotments and rugby pitch on the south-eastern side of Exhibition Road.	31
Figure 67: Allotments on the south-east side of Exhibition Road, view to the south-east.	31
Figure 68: Looking south-west across the rugby pitch.	31
Figure 69: Cromwell's Meadow, view to the east.	31
Figure 70: Old Tiverton Road, view to the north-east.	31
Figure 71: Bramble Lane, off the south-east side of Exhibition Road.	31
Figure 72: Junction of Exhibition Road and Commercial Road, view to the south.	32
Figure 73: Looking south from Exhibition Road.	32
Figure 74: The sports field on the north-east side of Commercial Road, view to the north-west.	33
Figure 75: View across the northern sports field, view to the east-north-east.	33
Figure 76: Buller Square, on the eastern side of Downshead Lane.	34
Figure 77: Mill Street, east side, view to the north.	34
Figure 78: West end of Commercial Road, view to east.	34
Figure 79: Barnfield Road, north side, view to the east	35
Figure 80: Park Street, west side, view to the north.	35
Figure 81: Cottages, Exeter Road, east side, view to the north.	36
Figure 82: Crediton Station, view to the east.	36
Figure 83: Crediton Station, view of the eastbound platform.	37
Figure 84: The overpass under wraps.	37
Figure 85: The commercial estate south of station.	37
Figure 86: Four Mills Area, view to the north.	37
Figure 87: The Crediton Milling site, view to the north-east.	37
Figure 88: Fordton Terrace, view to the north.	37
Figure 89: Fordton Bridge, view to the south.	38
Figure 90: Roads and streets.	43
Figure 91: Pre-Conquest 900-1100.	44
Figure 92: Early post-medieval c.1590.	45
Figure 93: Mid Victorian c.1850.	46
Figure 94: Late Victorian and early Edwardian 1888-1905.	47
Figure 95: Early 20 th century c.1930.	48
Figure 96: Later 20 th century c.1980.	49
Figure 97: Early 21 st century c.2015.	50
Figure 98: Crediton HUCAs.	51
Figure 99: Extract from the 1598 Norden Atlas: the town centre.	52
Figure 100: Extract from the 1598 Norden Atlas: the Lord's Meadow.	52
Figure 101: Extract from the 1598 Norden Atlas: Fordton.	53
Figure 102: Extract from the 1598 Norden Atlas: north of the town.	53
Figure 103: The three sections of the 1743 Crediton Map, with inset detail.	54

Abbreviations

CA	Conservation Area
EH	English Heritage (until 1 st April 2015)
EUS	Extensive Urban Survey
DCC	Devon County Council
HE	Historic England (from 1 st April 2015)
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
HUC	Historic Urban Character
HUCA	Historic Urban Character Area
HUCT	Historic Urban Character Type
NGR	National Grid Reference
NRHE	National Record for the Historic Environment
OS	Ordnance Survey

1 Summary

Crediton was assessed during 2015 as part of the Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey (DHCMTS). Part of a national programme of Extensive Urban Surveys initiated and supported by Historic England (formerly English Heritage), DHCMTS aims to increase understanding of 17 medieval towns within the county, prioritised because of their high historical significance and archaeological potential and the immediacy of development pressure.

DHCMTS constitutes a deepening of Devon's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), completed in 2004. Standard, easily available sources are used to identify Historic Urban Character Types (HUCTs), which divide a town up on the basis of land use. Incorporating time depth allows a town's urban extent and uses to be mapped during the different periods of its history.

The HUCTs are then grouped together to define distinct geographical areas – Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) – distinguishable by their specific origins, historical development, plan-form, buildings and degree of survival. HUCAs are the principle tool for describing the character of the historic towns included in the survey. The survey results are held digitally in a GIS database (the main project output) as part of the Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) and presented in a report for each town together with a project synthesis to be published at the end of the project.

Originating as a post-Roman estate, Crediton, or Kirton enters history in the 8th century as the location of a minster church. When in the 10th century the Diocese of Devon was created, the minster church of Crediton became its cathedral. With the 11th century removal of the cathedral to Exeter, the former cathedral at Crediton became a collegiate church. At this time Crediton may have consisted of a settlement nucleus with extensive field-systems next to an ecclesiastical precinct. In the 1230s the Bishop, who remained Lord of the Manor and maintained a residence and an extensive park at Crediton, set up a new borough to the west, thereby creating the twin settlements of East Town and West Town. The latter comprised principally a main street lined with tenements and their burgage plots, while the topography of the former remained focused on the church. The two towns remained neighbouring but physically separate communities until joined together in the 1830s by the creation of Union Road.

Until the late 18th century Crediton maintained a successful and regionally-important woollen trade. Weaving of serges was largely carried out in weaving sheds behind High Street properties while the final processing of the cloth was undertaken by mills on the River Yeo. In the late 18th and early 19th century the Crediton woollen trade was eclipsed by the advance of industrial production in the north of England and came to an end. When the woollen trade was at its peak, Crediton was an important market centre and hosted great cattle fairs. Side by side with the woollen trade, tanning and leatherworking, principally shoe making, were also significant. In the 19th century the manufacture of medical confectionery also developed. This manufacture is now a principal employer in the town.

A 16th century survey indicates that at that time the two towns had hardly expanded beyond their medieval extent. A detailed map of 1743 presents a picture of some expansion and a High Street lined with thatched cottages interspersed with numerous inns and with market buildings in the middle of the street. A devastating fire in the same year destroyed 450 houses. As a result of this and subsequent fires, buildings in the main street appear to be mainly of a late 18th and early 19th century character. The coming of the railway in the 1850s began to stimulate suburban growth, but serious expansion did not take place until after WWII. The late 20th and early 21st centuries have seen the town grow considerably with residential, industrial and commercial developments spreading over surrounding farmland. The town has been divided into 17 HUCAs (see Table 1 below) on the basis of its historic character.

Historic Urban Character Area (HUCA)		Heritage significance	
No.	Name	Above ground	Below ground
1	The Church to Mill Street	High	High
2	Dean Street	High	High
3	Union Road and Barnfield	High	Medium
4	Market Street to Church Street	High	Medium-High
5	High Street, South Side	High	Medium-High
6	High Street, North Side	High	Medium-High
7	Western Road	Medium	Medium
8	Landscape to Westwood	Low	Low
9	George Hill	Low	Low
10	Alexandra Road to Deep Lane	Low	Low
11	Jockey Hill	Low	Low
12	Pounds Hill	Medium	Low
13	Exhibition Road	Medium	Medium
14	Lord's Meadow	Low	Low
15	Commercial Road Industrial Estate, Mill Street and Tolleys	Medium	Medium-High
16	Park Street	Low	Low
17	Exeter Road, Station and Fordton	Medium	Medium

Table 1: The 17 HUCA areas which make-up Crediton.

2 Town context

Crediton lies in the centre of 'Red Devon', characterised by rich red soils derived from Permian sandstones and breccias. The town is uncomfortably jammed into a narrow steep-sided valley north of the Creedy and west of the Yeo, and while it later became an important woollen and market town, it owes this rather unpromising location to its origins as an early ecclesiastical centre. The historic core of the town is divisible into two parts: East Town focused on the early medieval minster precinct; and West Town, the medieval borough laid out across the Open Field to the west. The historic cartographic sources indicate the town remained fairly small and largely confined to its medieval extent until the second half of the 20th century, when the town developed as a dormitory satellite to Exeter.

2.1 Location and setting

The name of Crediton identifies it as a settlement on the river Creedy which drains the hill country of mid-Devon and flows into the Exe at Cowley to the north-west of Exeter. The town does not actually lie directly on the Creedy, but in a trough between hills that flank the valleys of the Creedy and the Yeo; the latter river joins the Creedy a little way to the east. The land which rises on either side of the essentially linear settlement affords views over the town and has been colonised by housing in the later decades of the 20th and early 21st century. Meanwhile land on the east side of the town has been occupied by an extensive trading and industrial estate. Having in the past been a significant centre of the Devonshire woollen industry and an important market for livestock, Crediton is now principally a town affording an easy commute to Exeter, a role facilitated by its good transport links.

2.1.1 Communications

Crediton stands astride the A377 Exeter to Barnstaple road at the junction with the A3072 road to Tiverton, c.12km north-west of Exeter. These are the main routes to and through the modern town, but both are clearly late additions to the road system. The principal historic routes to and from the town were probably: to Fordton to the south; along what is now a footpath to Shobrooke and ultimately to Thorverton and Silverton to the east; and the road from Coleford across Raddon Down to the west. The earlier historic elements of the town are defined by its roads, which clearly also served an extensive associated Open Field system. The Exeter to Barnstaple 'Tarka' railway line runs to the south, with a station at Fordton. Road and rail together represent an important transport link between the north and the south of the county as well as providing ready access to the national networks of road and rail.

2.2 Geology and topography

2.2.1 Geology

Crediton lies in what is known as the Crediton Trough, an ancient valley which, in the geological period known as the Permian (250-300 million years ago), filled with the sands and gravels that have since been transformed into the Old Red Sandstone and various coarse breccias. The latter, composed of a mixture of pebbles and rock fragments naturally cemented into a solid mass, have provided building stones in and around Crediton, notably in the fabric of the parish church. Also originating in the early Permian period are volcanic 'traps', the product of a period of vulcanism related to the rise of the Dartmoor granite. From the 12th century onwards a quarry at Posbury has yielded quantities of this reddish lava product, the structural use of which is evident in the buildings and boundary walls of Crediton.

2.2.2 Topography

The town occupies a short and fairly narrow east-west valley, the ground rising steeply to the north and south, from an altitude of c.50m AOD at the Lord's Meadow area, to c.140m AOD on the Chapel Downs to the north-east, and c.125m to the south-west near the Queen Elizabeth School. This valley is one of a number in the area, one element within a deeply-dissected plateau draining into the Yeo and the Creedy. It is certainly not the most obvious place for a minster or an episcopal centre, and the character of the terrain places strong physical constraints on urban expansion.

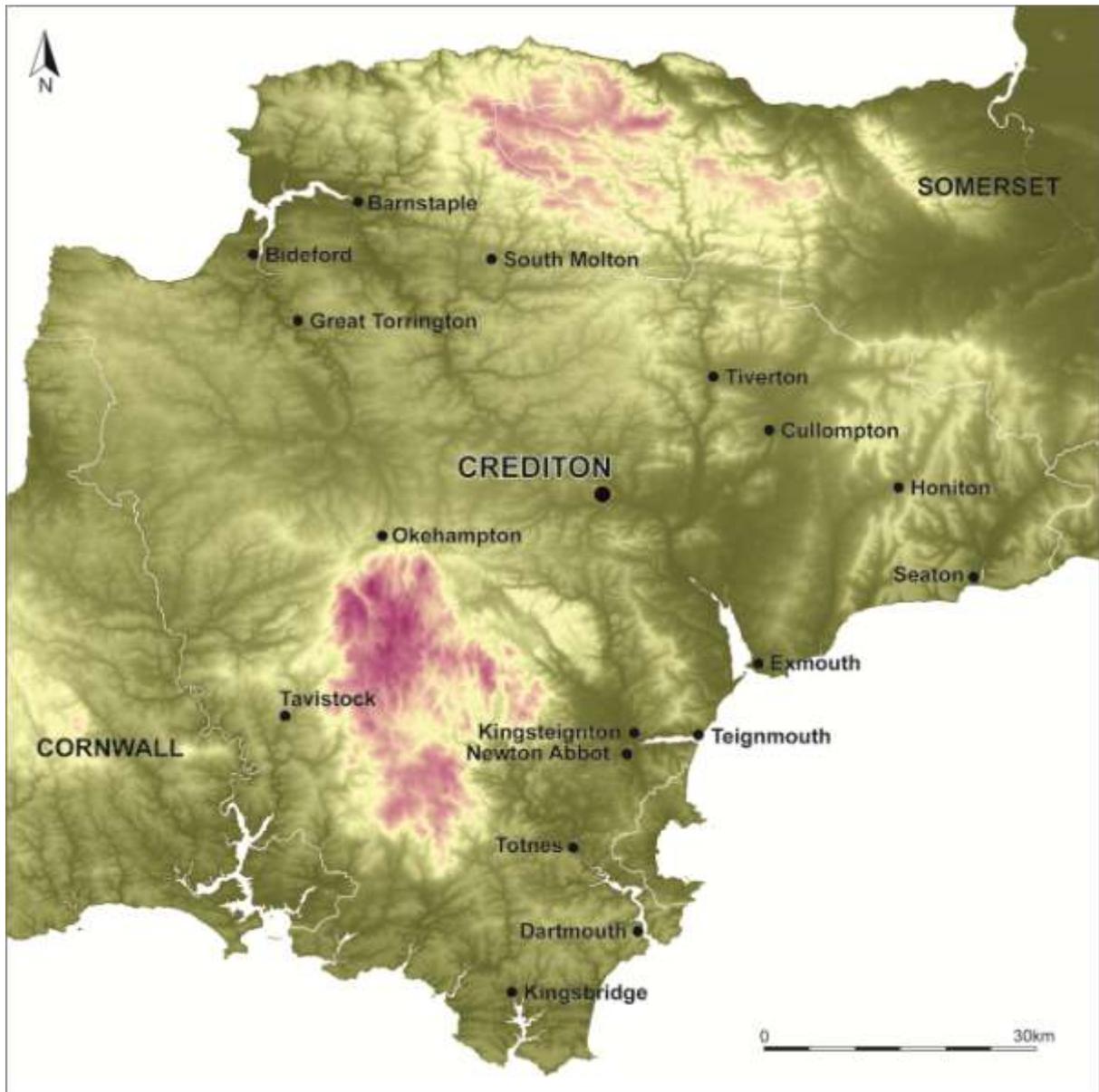


Figure 1: Location map.

2.3 Previous archaeological work

For a town of this size and historical importance, and considering the extent of late 20th century development, Crediton has seen relatively little development-led archaeological work, and no research excavation.

Between 1984 and 2007 Exeter Archaeology undertook a number of excavations and watching briefs in the area adjacent to the Church of the Holy Cross and at locations in East Street and Charlotte Street. The various interventions are summarised in Allan *et al.* 2010, and include a series of small excavations in and around the minster precinct. Some building recording, archaeological evaluation and monitoring has since taken place, with some extensive survey work undertaken to the east and south of the town (Oxford Archaeotechnics 1999; Adam & Warman 2009 etc.) but add little to the archaeological narrative. The bibliography contains details of these unpublished reports. A key consideration is the character of the local soils, as archaeological features are notoriously difficult to identify in the stiff homogeneous red clayey silt subsoils of this area.

3 Historical development

This section summarises the development of the town through time (Figure 91 to Figure 97), highlighting the key components and influencing factors, as part of the process of identifying its historic urban character. It is not intended as a detailed historical narrative. A key issue with Crediton is the relative *lack* of information for much of the medieval and post-medieval period, and this is reflected in the synopses below. A key resource for

the town is its early and detailed cartographic resources: the Norden map of 1598, and the town map of 1743. Such is the importance of these two maps that extracts are reproduced in Appendix 1 (Figure 99-47).

Historic Environment Record numbers (prefix MDV) have been included for cross reference with the DCC database of archaeological sites and historic buildings (where site-specific descriptions and bibliographical references can be accessed).

Cross reference is also made to the Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs).

3.1 Crediton

3.1.1 Prehistoric and Roman

The recorded evidence for Prehistoric occupation within the area under review is sparse. A pit containing Neolithic pottery was uncovered at Cromwell's Meadow (MDV73227). A hoard of bronze weapons, possibly of Bronze Age date, is alleged to have been found nearby in the late 19th century (MDV13977), while aerial photography has revealed a cropmark which appears to point to a Neolithic or Bronze Age barrow ditch to the south of Exeter Road (MDV13977). Aside from this, it is suggested that an enclosure at Posbury is Iron Age in date.

Evidence for the Romano-British period is somewhat more substantial. Most significantly, aerial photography has revealed a probable Romano-British villa at Downes to the south-east of the town (MDV42065). Excavated evidence suggests a fourth century date and that the remains are well preserved. Further to this, there is the suggestion of a section of Roman road nearby (MDV18517). Within the town, excavation on the site of the old Vicarage found a Roman tile (MDV28351). The period following the collapse of Roman administration may have seen re-occupation of the enclosure at Posbury.

3.1.2 The Saxo-Norman Period

The history of Crediton is firmly rooted in its role in ecclesiastical history. Crediton is widely supposed to have been the birthplace of St Boniface in or about AD 680. Little known in Britain outside of Devon, St Boniface is revered on the Continent where he conducted missionary work, became an archbishop and was martyred. He is a patron saint of Germany. In AD 739 King Aethelheard of Wessex granted an estate called *Creedy* to the episcopal See of Sherborne for the creation of a minster. Like other similar Devon place names (Teignton, Plympton, Tawton *passim*) the name *Crediton* suggests descent from a territory or estate focused on a river. In the light of the small but significant evidence for Romano-British occupation south of the town, it is *possible* that the land granted in 739 descended from a Romano-British estate based on the Creedy.

In AD 909 the Diocese of Sherborne was broken up and a new diocese for Devon was created with its centre at Crediton. The process of creating the new bishopric may have entailed building a new cathedral on the foundations of the earlier minster church, though this has proved difficult to demonstrate archaeologically. For around 150 years the bishopric was administered from Crediton, but in AD 1050 Bishop Leofric petitioned the Pope to request the removal of the See to Exeter; he considered Exeter more suitable because Crediton was no more than a village. This would indicate that by the mid-11th century there *was* a settlement associated with the then Cathedral – albeit a small one – and this is likely to be the lineal descendant of a settlement associated with the earlier minster. Work in Britain and Ireland has emphasised the importance of minster sites as proto-urban centres (e.g. see Blair 2005). The present church, together with its surrounds and East Town, largely falls within a sub-rectangular enclosure defined by roads; similar sub-rectangular enclosures are associated with minster churches elsewhere (e.g. Sherborne).

The Domesday Manor of Crediton, held by the Bishop of Exeter, was very extensive. It comprised 15 hides with numerous tithings, hence presumably the impressive figures enumerating '264 villagers, 73 smallholders with 172 ploughs'. With a taxable value of £75 Crediton was a valuable manor indeed. As for the location of the principal settlement, there is no great certainty as to where this may have been. However, tradition places the site of early Crediton in the area known as Tolleys to the east of the church, and there is a certain amount of evidence to support this. In 1594 Queen Elizabeth ordered a survey of the manor of Crediton. Responsibility for overseeing the project was assigned to Sir Francis Drake, and John Norden was commissioned to undertake the work. The result, in 1598, was a comprehensive survey with numerous very detailed maps showing the layout of the town and all the fields round about. The original does not survive but the Devon Heritage Centre holds a 19th century copy (see appendix). Very particular attention was paid by the cartographer to an area to the east where there were well-defined strip field systems on either side of an area called the *Lord's Meadow* (apparently good pasture belonging to the Lord of the Manor, i.e. the Bishop). The orientation of the system of

strip fields, together with the Lord's Meadow as illustrated in the survey, suggests a focus of medieval settlement to the east of the church in the Tolleys and Mill Street area. This may be misleading, since there is evidence in the 1598 maps of extensive areas of plough strips having existed elsewhere around the town, and in any case the strip field systems may well be of post-Conquest origin. However, since what is probably the old road to Exeter originates in this area, and since the minster and subsequently the cathedral were placed here, it is likely that Tolleys cum Mill Street represents an early settlement focus quite possibly on the edge of an infield. The existence of what may have been a minster enclosure (its boundaries represented by East Street, Church Street, Blagdon Terrace and Mill Street) would have determined the extent and form of the early medieval settlement, which may have spread westwards from the minster enclosure, later to become the East Town.

The move of the See to Exeter led to the creation of a collegiate church at Crediton dedicated to the Holy Cross. The college consisted of 18 prebendaries or canons, each of whom had a vicar under him. For the college and for the parish a new church was built in the 11th century Norman style, possibly on the site of the former cathedral. The unusually large church accommodated the parishioners in the nave and the canons in the chancel with a central tower between the two halves. Living accommodation for the canons and the vicars was provided nearby: for the vicars in cottages (Kalendarhay) on the north-west side of the church, and for the prebendaries possibly in what is now Dean Street. Very little of this Norman church survives, the building having been comprehensively recast in the Perpendicular style in the 15th century. When Leland passed through in the 1530s he noted that *The place where the old cathedral stood is now occupied with buildings of houses by the new churchyard side.... The church now standing hath no manner or token of antiquity*. The college of canons was dissolved in 1536 and the church was surrendered to the Crown in 1545; it was subsequently bought by the parishioners for £200 in 1546.

In addition to the collegiate church, Crediton had two medieval chapels. At the west end of the town was the Chapel of St Lawrence together with a hermitage. St Lawrence's Chapel held 262 acres of land in the adjacent area. To the north, on George Hill, was the Chapel of St George; the ruins of this chapel are indicated on Norden's plan of 1598.

3.1.3 The Borough

The Bishop retained the Manor of Crediton, where he is said to have had a palace to the north of the church set within a 'little park' with a great park for hunting largely to the south and west. In addition, an area of low-lying land to the east of the town (Lord's Meadow) was also reserved to the use of the Bishop, as Lord of the Manor, providing prime grazing land for his cattle. In the 1230s the Bishop of Exeter created a new borough to the west of the existing settlement, locating it on the edge of his Great Park. Whether, as in other places (e.g. Newton Abbot and Ashburton *inter alia*), this was laid out across an existing field-system or whether the Bishop gave up part of his park, is not clear. We know that at one point the Bishop gave 'quilllets' (strips of land) for the 'burgage acre', hence 'quilllets of the borough' as noted on the Norden map of 1598. However, the reality may have been more complex. The 'New Ville' took the classic form of new boroughs created during this period, namely a long main street with space for a market, with tenements and narrow burgage plots laid out to either side. Historically the market was held along the main street, and both the Norden map and also the detailed 1743 map show market buildings (shambles) in the middle of the street. However, the topography of St Lawrence's Green and its immediate surrounds might suggest an earlier market place at the west end of the street, where several roads meet.

The new borough to the west was separated from the church town in the east by a rise known as Bowdon Hill. The two parts of Crediton became known as East Town and West Town. The 1598 survey includes a plan of both towns, not only demonstrating the classic borough form of the West Town, but, when compared with 19th century mapping, indicating that in the intervening centuries the town hardly grew at all. It is possible that Exeter and its markets were just too close to allow the town to prosper. In 1644 a captain in the Royalist Army quartered in the town described Crediton as 'a big lousy town', in which 'the houses be mostly of clay, without any timber in the walls except the roof, doors and windows'. The comment may betray personal prejudice, but all the same, does not suggest wealth. However, this judgement runs contrary to the known history of Crediton as a thriving centre of the wool and weaving trade for which it was famous up until the late 18th century. It was also a centre for the cattle trade and, when the woollen trade declined, emphasis shifted to tanning and shoe making. When Lysons wrote his description of Crediton in 1822, he remarked on the great cattle market held here in April and commented that the weekly market was 'still considerable' but had formerly been larger especially when the woollen trade was at its peak.

3.1.4 The Bishop's Palace

The Norden map of 1598 shows a large building lying north-east of the church and within the putative ecclesiastical enclosure; the building is labelled 'The Pallace' and the enclosed area is called 'The Little Parke'. Some forty years later Pole recorded that the Bishop's palace was 'altogether ruynated', though it apparently still had its great hall and was still in use as a residence up to the mid-18th century. The site is labelled as such on OS maps into the 1950s.

3.1.5 The Woollen Trade

The trade in woollen products was established in Crediton by the mid-13th century, and, together with Exeter and North Tawton, this region became one of the principal centres of woollen manufacture in the country. Much of the production was originally rooted in cottage weaving, though Norden's survey of 1598 indicates cloth making at Fordton Mills. The local weavers specialised in the production of kerseys (a coarse cloth) and serge and were renowned for the fineness of their products. From the 16th to the late 18th century the weavers of Crediton maintained a high level of production: in the mid-18th century they were sending 1200-1300 pieces of white serge or flannel to Exeter weekly. Apart from cottage weavers – the last of whom died in the late 19th century – manufacture was either in mills, such as those at Fordton, or 'chain linhays', that is, dedicated sheds or barns situated to the rear of High Street properties and accessed via the numerous passages off the High Street known as 'courts'. A principal customer for Crediton cloth was the East India Company who, for example, in the late 18th century took 7000 pieces of fine cloth from Mr Madge whose chain linhay was in Landscore at the west end of West Town. Another customer was the Navy, for whom the mills at Fordton made sailcloth. The fortunes of the weavers of Crediton and of the West Country declined with the rise of industrial manufacture in the North, the loss of the East India Company monopoly on trade in the East Indies, and the ending of the Napoleonic wars; trade went into decline from around 1800, so that by the mid-19th century it had all but disappeared.

3.1.6 Tanning, Boot and Shoe-making

The Lay Subsidy of 1332 for the Borough of Crediton lists three cobblers and a skinner, which would suggest tanning and the manufacture of leather goods was already well under way. Tanners are recorded from the 16th century and in the 18th century there were tan-pits in Parliament Street. Through the 19th century the boot and shoe making trade grew considerably in importance. The 1830 Pigot's Directory recorded 16 boot and shoe makers: 3 in East Town and 13 in West Town. By 1857 their number had grown to over thirty. At the end of the 19th century there were at least five boot and shoe factories in the town together with two tanneries.

3.1.7 War

Crediton was caught up in two acts of rebellion between the mid-16th and the mid-17th centuries. The enforced introduction of the prayer book in English into churches throughout the land aroused anger among stubbornly-unreformed Catholics in Cornwall and Devon. In 1549 a rebellion ensued with a rebel army emerging from Cornwall and West Devon to march on Exeter. Meeting opposition from the King's forces at Crediton, groups of rebels found themselves besieged in barns from where they were finally burnt out.

During the Civil War, the location of Crediton gave it some importance as a gateway to North Devon and Cornwall. In 1644 Prince Maurice's army was quartered here, but retreated on the approach of the Earl of Essex. Royalist forces later returned and the King himself stayed for a while. The town was retaken by Fairfax in December 1645.

3.1.8 Fires

More than any other Devon town (at least in the documentary records), the history of Crediton is marked by disastrous fires. The greatest of these occurred in August 1743 when over 450 houses in the High Street were destroyed and 16 people lost their lives (see appendix). In 1766 a fire started in a bakery by St Lawrence Green and 60 houses were destroyed. Another 130 houses, many of them recently built, succumbed to fire in 1769, this time starting in a pub. The year 1852 saw another 11 houses destroyed, the fire again starting at a baker's oven. This prompted the final abandonment of thatch as a roofing material at least in the commercial areas, and as a result, almost the entire existing building stock in the High Street is of late 18th or 19th century origin. However the town has been subject to further devastating fires in more recent history, with Fordton Mill destroyed in 1988 and a row of six thatched cottages severely damaged by a fire in Buller Square in 2012.

3.1.9 Improvements and Changes

In 1836 an act of Parliament was passed for 'The better lighting, watching, cleansing and otherwise improving the town of Crediton'. The comprehensive proposals for improvement included new and better roads, very important among which was a direct road uniting the East and West Towns. Thus in short order a new road was created avoiding the steep and roundabout route of Bowden Hill. This is now Union Road. Other improvements included re-planning the approaches to and/or exits from the town. This entailed, among other things, the creation of Charlotte Street, widening the Exeter Road and re-planning the exits from the town at the west end. What was hitherto a 'Back Lane' running westwards from St Lawrence's Green was widened and turnpiked, so that coaches had a direct route through the town. This is now Western Road, the A377. Another improvement was the removal of the market from the High Street to a new covered market to the north of the High Street and reached via a newly created Market Street parallel to North Street. The street to the north of the new market was named Parliament Street in honour of the act which had brought these changes about.

Not directly connected with the Improvement Act was the advent of gaslighting to the streets in 1845 by the Crediton Gas and Coke Company. The gasworks were at first in Union Road, but later transferred to the Lord's Meadow area east of the town. Also, the creation of Searle Street was undertaken privately by the Crediton Villa Building Society and promoted by James Searle. Kept at first as a private road, it was taken over by the Council to provide access to the People's Park which had been created on Buller land – at one time the rack field – to the north. The Buller Family, Lords of the Manor residing at Downes House, were both promoters and financiers of the new market and park.

The decades of the 1830s to 1850s also brought the railway to Crediton. A railway connection to Exeter was first proposed in 1832, with links to Barnstaple mooted. Disagreement over which gauge to use (broad or narrow) meant that the line was not opened until 1851 and it was not until 1854 that the connection to Barnstaple was completed.

3.1.10 The 20th Century

Apart from the involvement of its people in the great international wars of the century, this period is marked by the end to boot- and shoe-making, the end to the great cattle markets, and the loss of most of its manufacturing, leaving only the production of medical confectionary and dairy products. The second half of the 20th century also saw the disappearance of the medieval strip fields and the Lord's Meadow beneath housing and an industrial estate. At the same time, large areas of open farmland land surrounding the historic core of the town were developed for housing as Crediton developed into a dormitory town dependent on Exeter.

4 Historic Urban Character

The historic town has two principal foci: East Town in and around the former minster precinct, and the later borough of West Town flanking the High Street. These areas contain the bulk of the historic building stock. Most of these buildings date to the 18th and 19th centuries due to a series of destructive fires, but some earlier buildings do survive, and others lurk unrecognised within later shells and frontages. Around these historic areas, extensive areas of modern (i.e. later 20th and 21st century) housing stretch up onto the hills to the north and south, with a large industrial park to the east.

The 17 Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) are described below, together with a statement of their (Low, Medium or High) above and below ground heritage significance, and photographs to illustrate general character. Relevant Historic Environment Record numbers (prefix MDV) have been included for cross reference with Devon County Council's Historic Environment Record (database of archaeological sites and historic buildings).

4.1 The Church to Mill Street (HUCA 1)

4.1.1 Historic character

HUCA 1 is bounded on the south by the A377 (East Street), on the west by Church Street, on the north by Blagdon Terrace and on the east by the A3072 (Mill Street).

This is the historic core of the settlement and the most significant in archaeological terms. It contains the collegiate church of the Holy Cross, the putative site of the Bishop's Palace and is defined by the bounds of what may have been the early minster and cathedral precinct. The oldest extant structure in this area is undoubtedly the church, distinguished by its size, its central tower, the rich colour of its stonework and, of

course, its prominence in the ecclesiastical history of Devon (MDV619). When Crediton was established as the centre of a newly created episcopal See in AD 906, the 8th century minster church became the cathedral. In AD 1050 the function of a cathedral was transposed to Exeter and subsequently the church became collegiate (MDV17295) with a college of canons represented by vicars. The present structure is largely work of the 13th to 15th century, the only remnant of the Norman church being found at the base of the tower. In 2007 geophysical survey of a large area around the church failed to find evidence of any earlier structure, but geophysical anomalies within the building encouraged speculation that the church may stand on the footprint of a Saxon foundation.

Despite the failure to find clear evidence of the early church, a series of archaeological investigations undertaken between 1984 and 2007 to the north of the church, in the church car park and the vicarage garden, uncovered the remains of buildings that are interpreted as the medieval house or college of the vicars choral. Following the Dissolution, when the college was dispersed, the parish acquired the church buildings and land and made use of the collegiate buildings. These subsequently became a workhouse and then an infants' school. The surviving buildings were finally demolished in the 19th century (see Allan *et al.* 2010).

The sub-rectangular area that defines this HUCA is the posited early medieval minster or cathedral precinct. The location and orientation of the fossilised strip fields recorded by Norden in 1598, which survived well into the 20th century, might suggest a settlement focus to the east, possibly in the area known as Tolleys (HUCA 14 and 15).

North-east of the church on the Norden map a building or buildings is shown and labelled 'The Pallace'. Leland stated in his description of Crediton (c.1540) 'The Bishop of Excester hath a Maner Place or Palace by the Chirche Yarde ...'. He goes on to state that '...to this Maner there longith a Parke', and the Norden map shows the 'Pallace' standing in 'the Little Parke'. There seems little doubt that the Bishop, as Lord of the Manor, had a residence here, which, after the Dissolution, may have continued to be used for manorial purposes (MDV12612). By the mid-17th century little of the medieval building remained, and in the 18th century a house was built on the site apparently (according to Pevsner) incorporating some of the medieval fabric. The orientation of boundary walls to the west of the building reflects that as shown on the Norden map. These lead into the north-west corner of HUCA 1, contained between Church Street and Belle Parade, and containing the former Vicarage (Glebe House); this building probably dates from the late 18th century with an 18th century cob wall on its north side. To the south of Glebe House is the modern Rectory, located roughly where the Norden map shows a small group of buildings that may have descended from the collegiate buildings of the medieval church.

Much of the northern part of HUCA 1 is now occupied by late 20th century residences that flank the road (Meadow Gardens) that leads off Blagdon Terrace, itself a leafy road of modest late 19th and 20th century properties. Mill Street to the east is largely occupied by modern commercial premises at the north end and a few 19th century brick cottages at the south end. The north side of East Street is lined with largely late 18th or 19th century cottages plus one larger property, The Limes. These cottages appear to stand on the footprint of a regular line of 17 tenements with long rectangular plots to the rear as shown on the Norden map. At that time, and up until 1906, there were cottages in front of the church standing on the south side of what is now the open space between the church and the road. Archaeological excavation in East Street in 2007 found evidence of occupation from at least the late 12th century, as well as evidence for medieval bell founding.

The central part of this HUCA is occupied by the industrial buildings of Crediton Dairy and Morrisons Supermarket. Industrial use of this site may go back to the 18th century when Benjamin Cleave's mills 'adjoined the churchyard', but more certainly goes back to the late 19th century when a 'Confectionery and Lozenge Works' was operating on an apparently modest scale in the area to the east of the church (MDV97434). The OS 1:2500 map of 1904 shows much more extensive industrial premises (also dubbed 'Confectionery and Lozenge Works') in this area. Industrial occupation has continued here ever since.

The Church to Mill Street (HUCA 1)



Figure 2: The south elevation of the church.



Figure 3: East Street, view to the east.



Figure 4: East Street, north side, view to the east.



Figure 5: East Street, north side, view to the west.



Figure 6: East Street, view to the west.



Figure 7: Mill Street, east side, view to the north.



Figure 8: The Glebe House, view to the south-west.



Figure 9: Newcombe's Meadow; view to the south-east.

4.1.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Very High – Dominated by the church and defined by the putative boundary of a minster precinct, this area is representative of the earliest development of the Christian church in Devon. Successive residential and commercial developments around the ecclesiastical core, while obscuring the early historic topography of the area, endow it with a historic depth which is unmatched in any other part of the town or indeed in almost any other Devonshire towns apart from Exeter, Barnstaple and perhaps Totnes. Among standing features, the vestiges of the Bishop's palace retained within the building now occupying its site add significantly to the architectural and historical value of this building, while any surviving boundary features that can be related to the ecclesiastical history of the area carry considerable significance. These remains have to be set against the absence of any visible evidence of the collegiate buildings and the rather bland appearance of the mainly late 18th to 19th century building stock of East Street and Mill Street. Nevertheless these are representative of much of the architectural character of the town following its many conflagrations, and are thus a mark of continuous renewal. Even the otherwise intrusive industrial element represented by the Dairy deserves respect in that it stands in for the evolution of Crediton from religious centre to a medieval and post-medieval commercial and industrial hub of mid-Devon, maintaining an element of that commercial vigour into the present day.

4.1.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

High – As the historic core of the town, and the location of the posited early Minster precinct, it is likely that significant archaeological remains survive. However, archaeological investigation has thus far failed to uncover the remains of the Anglo-Saxon minster or the early cathedral, although geophysical survey inside the church is suggestive. Excavations in the former Vicarage garden in the 1980s uncovered the remains of the college of the vicars choral as well as what were interpreted as pre-Conquest structural remains. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic and ecclesiastical structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, cemetery, field and precinct boundaries. Post-medieval domestic and ecclesiastical structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains (e.g. mill buildings and leat systems), field and property boundaries, walls, culverts, ornamental features, and cemetery. It is also possible palaeoenvironmental remains may also be encountered near the buried watercourse.

4.2 Dean Street (HUCA 2)

4.2.1 Historic character

HUCA 2 is an area bounded on the north by East Street, on the east by the Exeter Road, on the south by Park Road, on the west by the southern part of Park Street and on the north-west by Bowden Hill. Dean Street runs from north to south through the area.

The earliest secular settlement at Crediton may have occupied the part of this area nearest to the church, but direct evidence is elusive. The Norden map of 1598 shows the south side of East Street as fully occupied by houses whose plots do not display the regular character of those shown on the north side of East Street. Most eye-catching today are the handsome buildings of the Hayward Primary School. Built in local volcanic trap, the classrooms and what were originally teachers' houses date from 1859 with additions through the later 19th century. Excavations in the grounds of the school in 2002 found evidence of occupation from the 14th century.

In historical terms, the most significant element of this area is Dean Street itself. Its name of probably reflects its origin as a residential street accommodating senior members of the college of priests serving the church. The Norden map shows structures lining this street, and some of these structures survive today, the most obvious example being No.29 (MDV23397) which is clearly built on the three-room with cross-passage plan (with lateral stack) of the 16th century. All the other houses along the street now appear to be of 18th and 19th century date, though any one of them may conceal evidence of an earlier origin. Chantry House (MDV23400) on the east side of the street stands out as a more prestigious 18th century dwelling. Like many important ecclesiastical sites, there is supposedly an underground passage linking Dean Street with the church (MDV13970); while tunnels seem unlikely, substantial drains or perhaps a culverted stream are possible.

Apart from the Town Barn at its north end, the southern part of Park Street is devoid of dwellings on the Norden map, but is shown as fully built up on the tithe map. Apart from Nos.53-57, which appear to be of 18th or 19th century date, the street is now largely occupied by 20th century housing. An exception to this is a terrace of thatched 18th century artisans' cottages at Nos.4-9 on the west side.

Within the area here described, Charlotte Street, running from East Street to the Exeter Road, is a 19th century creation resulting from the improvement act of 1836. The line of this road does however appear to reflect that of a path or narrow lane as shown on the Norden map.

Dean Street (HUCA 2)



Figure 10: A house in Dean Street, west side.



Figure 11: Dean Street, view to the north.



Figure 12: The junction of Charlotte Street, East Street and Union Road.



Figure 13: Charlotte Street, north side, view to the east.



Figure 14: Bowden Hill, south side, view to the south.



Figure 15: Charlotte Street, south side, view to the east.



Figure 16: Haywards School, view to the south.



Figure 17: Haywards School, East Street, view to the south-west.

4.2.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Very High – The historic significance of HUCA 2 is marked as much by its thoroughfares as by its built heritage. Central to HUCA2 is Dean Street, the line of which closely follows that shown by Norden, and the dwellings within which – as the probable descendants of medieval priestly accommodation – connect this area directly with the ecclesiastical history of Crediton, possibly with the removal of the See to Exeter and the creation of the collegiate church. The area between Dean Street and East Street may have grown out of the earliest secular settlement. Bowden Hill represents the historic route between East Town and the Bishop’s creation, West Town, while in similar vein the name of Park Street commemorates the Bishop’s park. Charlotte Street represents 19th century improvement. The Hayward School buildings in East Street are not only handsome, but mark an important milestone in the education of the children of Crediton.

4.2.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

High – Ground disturbance within the curtilage of buildings in Dean Street and East Street has the potential to reveal evidence for medieval occupation in the area. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic and ecclesiastical structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, underground passages/culverts(?), artefacts, field and property boundaries, roads and paths. Post-medieval domestic and ecclesiastical structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, field and property boundaries, walls, and ornamental features.

4.3 Market Street to Church Street (HUCA 3)

4.3.1 Historic Character

HUCA 3 is bounded on the east by Church Street, on the south by Union Road and High Street, on the west by Market Street and on the north by Parliament Street and Belle Parade.

This area is dominated by the large open space of Newcombe's Meadow public park and the Market Square. The earliest known market charter was granted to Crediton by Henry III, and up until the early 19th century markets were held in the High Street. As one of the improvements of the 1830s, the Lord of the Manor sponsored the building of a covered market off North Street and the creation of Market Street. The market went out of use in the 1950s and the buildings, having served other, non-market purposes, were demolished to be replaced by a public square opened in 2007.

The Square is largely defined by its 1830s architecture: the row of brick-built former stalls and shops with matching end turrets on the south side of the square, the very elegant former houses, now offices, on the west side of Market Street, the Three Little Pigs Inn (formerly the Market House Inn) and substantial brick building adjacent, and an eye-catching white stuccoed building built in the Strawberry Hill Gothick style. The Post Office and the Council Offices, formerly a police station, date to the mid-19th century.

North Street, which runs along the eastern side of the Market Square, is shown on the Norden map as Litterburn Lane; the stream known as the Litterburn (now culverted) crossed the lane from west to east. Near the junction with what is now Parliament Street the Norden map shows houses on both sides of the lane. On the detailed town map of 1743 it is called Back Lane, having on the west side at the corner of the Square a long building called the Red Lion Inn separated by a long wall from the Green Dragon farther up the lane. The site of this inn is now occupied by a concrete yard, a store and car parking. On the east side of North Street as far as the Steak House are houses Listed as 18th and 19th century in date. Any of these may contain elements of the houses shown here in the 1740s, but as most of those appear to have been thatched they may all have succumbed to the great fire of 1743. The building on the south-east corner (a former bank?) appears to date from the 1920s or 1930s and stands on the site of a 1743 inn called The Lamb.

The Old Manor House at the north-east corner of the Square occupies the site of a house (apparently a three-room and cross passage house) shown at this location on the Norden map. This was succeeded by a very substantial three-storey Jacobean house labelled 'The Manor House' on the 1743 map. The present house may incorporate elements of that building, though externally it appears early 19th century in character. White Cottage is Listed as early 18th century, and other structures here may be earlier than they appear externally.

A series of later 20th century structures have been built (infilled) in this area, along the north side of Parliament Street (See HUCA 11) and the Tannery Flats, located on the site of a tannery. Behind the Manor House the 20th century maps indicate a malthouse.

To the east, the land to the south of Parliament Street and Belle Parade as far as Church Street was shown as open ground in 1598. The public park Newcombe's Meadow occupies a large part of this area and preserves something of its open character. The Litterburn Stream, now culverted, runs west to east through the area, and there are two 'medieval' wells (St Winfrith's Well with well house MDV613; Libbet's Well MDV614) located within the park.

The area between Union Road and the southern end of Church Street is shown as fully occupied by buildings on the tithe map of 1840, but is difficult to relate to the Norden map. Of note are No.1 Church Street, Listed as early 19th century; a modern development set back from the street line and occupying the site of the Davie Almshouses demolished in 1959; and, standing back in off-street seclusion, Priory Cottage, dating from the late 17th or early 18th century. Otherwise, the houses along the edge of this HUCA appear largely late 19th or 20th century in date.

Market Street to Church Street (HUCA 3)



Figure 18: North Street, viewed across the Market Square from the west.



Figure 19: Parliament Street, south side; view to the east.



Figure 20: Market Street, view to the north.



Figure 21: Market Square, north side, view to the east.



Figure 22: Market Street, west side, view to the north.



Figure 23: Market Street, east side, view to the north.

4.3.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

High – Bridging the gap between the historic East and West Towns, this area is characterised by important elements that track the evolution of Crediton. To the east, Newcombe’s Meadow has probably remained open space since the days of the minster. To the south, Union Road represents the joining of the two towns in the 1830s (See HUCA 4). To the west, the Market Square and Market Street represent a major 19th century improvement, removing the market away from the main street into a dedicated space. Developments in the market area, namely the police station and council offices, and the ultimate conversion of the market into a public space, endow it with significance for the civic and social life of Crediton. The Manor House, the White

Cottage, the buildings of North Street, the Strawberry Hill-style building, even the Tannery Flats together with the buildings of North Street and those off Church Lane, all bear witness to continuous change in the character and occupation of this area in the post-medieval and modern eras.

4.3.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

High – Any ground intervention to the rear of properties in North Street, as well as within the curtilage of those in Church Street, may produce evidence clarifying the development of the area between East Town and West Town. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, field and property boundaries. Post-medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, artefacts, wells, industrial remains (e.g. tannery and malthouse), field and property boundaries, walls, culverts, and ornamental features. It is also possible palaeoenvironmental remains may also be encountered near the buried watercourse.

4.4 Union Road and Barnfield (HUCA 4)

4.4.1 Historic character

HUCA 4 is bounded by Union Road and High Street on the north, Bowden Hill and Barnfield on the south and by a line running from the High Street end of North Street to Barnfield on the west.

Union Road, which joins East and West Town via a relatively level route avoiding Bowden Hill, was built as a consequence of the Improvement Act of 1836. As far as one can tell, the route cut mainly through open ground, though possibly cottages at or near the end of Church Street may have been demolished during construction. By the 1880s the south side of the new road was largely occupied by gardens of the houses on Park Street, though at the eastern end there was a boot and shoe factory. On the northern side of the road the Crediton Gas Works was built in 1845. The site was disused by the time of the large scale Ordnance Survey mapping, subsequently became a timber yard and is now The Bike Shed. The open space beyond is flanked by the Church Workers' Institute, dating from the early 20th century, a Masonic Hall of c.1900 and a block of apartments occupying (the site of?) what was in 1940 a Boot and Shoe Factory. The Wesleyan Chapel beyond this dates from 1891. At the west end, where Union Road joins the High Street, Victorian shops merge with late 18th or early 19th century buildings as far as North Street.

The old route from the East Town to the West Town is represented by Park Street and Union Terrace. The outstanding feature of the south side of Park Street is the Spurway Almshouses dating from 1557. These stand on a raised walkway above the road and are flanked on the east by a group of possibly late 18th century houses. The tithe map of c.1840 shows houses in this position. It also shows houses on the south side of Park Street, but the extant buildings all appear to be late 19th or early 20th century in date. Park Street leads at its west end into Union Terrace, a row of 18th century residences that are all Grade II listed.

The remainder of HUCA 3 represents part of the east end of West Town. The High Street frontage between Union Terrace and a point opposite North Street is comprised of late 18th and 19th/20th century shops. The land to the rear between High Street and Barnfield represents what was, from the 16th to the mid-20th century, long back plots and orchards attached to houses fronting the High Street and Park Street. There was for a while in the early 20th century a school behind Union Terrace, apparently approached by a court leading off the High Street. Barnfield was from the 16th century to the mid-20th century a lane or path leading out into the fields into which the former Great Park had been divided and was called Park Lane. The lane became Barnfield when modern housing began to be built along both sides of the lane in the 1950s.

Union Road and Barnfield (HUCA 4)



Figure 24: Church Workers' Institute, Union Road, south side; view to the east.



Figure 25: Park Street, south side, view to the west.



Figure 26: Bowden Hill, view to the west.



Figure 27: The junction of Bowden Hill and Park Street, view to the west.



Figure 28: The Spurway Alms Houses on Park Street.



Figure 29: The Moose Hall, Bowden Hill, view to the east.

4.4.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

High – This HUCA is defined by Union Road which, following the Improvement Act of 1836, linked the East and West Towns, facilitating movement between them. Buildings on the north side of Union Road and at the east end of the High Street represent the development opportunities arising from this major improvement. The traffic on Union Road may be avoided by taking the historic route represented by Bowden Hill and Park Street, the latter now a quiet residential street in which late 19th century housing contrasts with the 16th century Spurway Almshouses raised high above the road and representing the bequest of a 16th century clothier. Where Park Street descends to the High Street, Union Terrace represents an element of 18th century elegant

town housing. In contrast, at the west end of HUCA 4 long property boundaries link the High Street with Barnfield, the former Park Lane, and reflect the origins of this area as the more generously-provided burgages of the medieval borough.

4.4.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Medium – The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, field and property (burgage) boundaries. Post-medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains (gasworks), field and property boundaries, walls, cellars, and ornamental features. Between Union Road and Barnfield there is much open ground, and excavations may clarify the early development of West Town.

4.5 High Street, South Side (HUCA 5)

4.5.1 Historic Character

HUCA 5 is bounded on the north by the High Street from Landscore to a point opposite North Street, on the east by HUCA 4, on the south and west by a path (Stonypark Lane) running from Barnfield to Landscore. Modern roads called Greenway and Town Park run east to west through the area.

This historically-significant portion of Crediton comprises the southern half of the borough as created and laid out by the Bishop of Exeter as Lord of the Manor in the 1230s. The mixed commercial and domestic properties on the High Street maintain the characteristic medieval borough layout of street frontages with burgage plots behind. Still discernible, and quite obvious on the early mapping, is the difference in the length of the plots between those to the west and those to the east. This differentiation was already present in 1598 and would indicate either a different period of origin or a difference in status. The steeply-sloping land to the south was part of the Bishop's Great Park, but whether the borough was formed within the Great Park, or whether, as in other medieval boroughs (Newton Abbot, Ashburton etc.) the borough was overlaid on an existing strip field system, is not currently clear.

The buildings of the High Street are mainly of late 18th or 19th century origin, very many of them having been built to replace those destroyed in the devastating fire of 1743. The detailed 1743 map gives a very clear picture of the character of the post-medieval High Street. The building stock appears to have been dominated by rows of thatched dwellings interspersed with numerous inns and individual buildings in a more elegant 17th or 18th century style. Many of the buildings had forward projections and the purpose of the text accompanying the 1743 plan seems to have been to enumerate and identify those properties which had 'pentices' encroaching onto the street. The fire of 1743 is shown on this map as having started on the south side of the High Street, at or near a location now occupied by Lloyds Bank.

For many centuries Crediton was renowned for its woollen products. While some of the production appears to have been carried out in dedicated mills (e.g. at Four Mills and Fordton), a very great proportion of the work was performed in what locally were known as 'chain linhays', i.e. weaving sheds. Very many of these were located to the rear of the High Street and were reached through the 'courts', that is, openings off the High Street. The master weaver lived in a superior house facing the street, while the employees might be locked into the workshop at night-time. It is not clear how many of the 'chain linhays' survive, but attention should be paid to structures to the rear of the High Street properties. It is thought that the majority of these structures were on the south side of the High Street (John Heal, *pers. comm.*).

When the cloth trade declined and died out in the 19th century other industries became more prominent, principally the making of boots and shoes. In the late 19th century a boot and shoe factory was located behind the present site of Lloyds Bank. Also important, and for a long time a major source of employment in the town, was the manufacture of medical confectionery. Initially located in East Town, to the east of the church and then in Union Road, the factory of Ernest Jackson and Co. was developed on its present site behind the High Street in 1973.

Listed buildings along the High Street are numerous, the majority in plain late 18th, 19th or early 20th century styles. Notable within HUCA 5 is No.52 Pownes House, which is an eye-catching 1740s example of 18th century town house style, either a survivor from before the fire or else built soon after. Buildings opposite St Lawrence Green probably date from the 1830s when what was then known as Narrow Street (the east end of High Street) was widened by setting back the property frontages.

Up until the improvements of the 1830s, market stalls and shambles occupied the centre of the widest parts of the High Street. These are clearly illustrated on the map of 1743.

High Street, South Side (HUCA 5)



Figure 30: Ernest Jackson Medical Confectionery viewed from the High Street, south side.



Figure 31: View towards High Street, south side, past a possible chain linhay.



Figure 32: The west end of the High Street, south side, view to the west.



Figure 33: Pownes House, at the west end of the High Street on the south side.



Figure 34: The west end of the High Street, south side, view to the east.



Figure 35: Earnest Jackson and Co. Medical Confectionery.



Figure 36: St. Saviour's Way, view to the south.



Figure 37: Town Park, view to the west.

In the 1960s St Saviour's Way was created leading south from the High Street to open up land to the south for development. This land was part of the Bishop's Great Park in the medieval period. The Norden Survey of 1598 indicates that after the Dissolution the Great Park was broken up into closes that were worked by a variety of tenants or proprietors. By the 19th century many of these closes had been amalgamated into larger fields. Residential development together with access roads and car parking only began in the 1960s/70s.

4.5.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

High – The strictly linear character of the medieval borough plan is maintained today by the line of the High Street and is echoed to the south by modern development sited within what was formerly the Bishop's park. Despite severe losses in the fire of 1743, the High Street frontage of this area retains numerous buildings of architectural merit, any of which may retain within them features of structures surviving from before the fire. These could readily be related to the detailed town map of 1743, which provides an unparalleled opportunity to examine the character of an 18th century inland Devon town. Despite radical changes to its outward appearance, the High Street retains its historic function as the commercial heart of the town. Where surviving chain linchways can be identified, these should be recorded and appreciated as important relics of Crediton's historic status as a woollen town.

4.5.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

High – The back plots of High Street properties, representing the former medieval burgage plots, are largely undeveloped. Excavation may produce evidence for the early and subsequent development of this part of the borough. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, field and property (burgage) boundaries, and possibly features relating to the pre-borough Park or fieldsystem. Post-medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains, field and property boundaries, cellars, and walls.

4.6 High Street, North Side (HUCA 6)

4.6.1 Historic Character

HUCA 6 is bounded on the south by the High Street from Market Street to St Lawrence Green, on the west by St Martin's Lane, on the north by Alexandra Road and People's Park Road and on the east by Deep Lane, Parliament Street and Market Street.

HUCA 6 represents at its core the northern part of the borough as created by the Bishop of Exeter in the 1230s. As recorded by Norden in 1598, the burgage plots or 'quilllets of the borough' from St Martin's Lane to North Street were all of equal length extending northwards to the line represented now by Alexandra Road and People's Park Road. Cutting across these plot boundaries was the course of the Litterburn Stream, which rose in the area of St Lawrence Green (MDV66965). By the 19th century this stream had been culverted and covered over. St Lawrence Green (MDV78922), apparently the site of an annual fair in the 13th century, was not shown as such on the Norden map, although it is shown as an open space with trees. The plan of 1743 shows the green, with a well on its south side. It also shows dwellings facing westwards onto the green at its eastern end. The one designated 'Mr Hooker's' may be No.26 Kiddicott at the present time. In the centre of this group of

buildings is a well called Cock Well. Kiddicott (MDV55353) is the name of the thoroughfare running along the northern side of St Lawrence Green to just beyond a lane called New Cut. It appears to be a post-medieval creation that developed when the eastern part of the Green was infilled by the group of dwellings around Cock Well, together with those on the High Street frontage. In fact, the topography of the area suggests the infilling of a long ovoid stretching from the west end of St Lawrence Green to the full extent of Kiddicott and a corresponding point on the High Street. It is worth considering that at an early period this area may have accommodated not just an annual fair, but a regular market, perhaps a cattle or stock market. St Lawrence Green is now laid out as a public park. Set into the grass is the socket stone of a medieval cross (MDV610). This apparently stood in North Street, but is now known as West Town Cross.

Beyond the east end of Kiddicott is a commercial yard. In the 19th and early 20th century this was the site of a boot and shoe factory. To the north-east of this was a tannery and beyond that another boot and shoe factory. Between the two factories a Congregational Chapel was built in 1863 designed by R.D. Gould of Barnstaple.

The High Street Frontage of this area is characterised by a mixture of commercial and residential properties with a predominantly late 18th to 19th and early 20th century character, of which a number are Listed. A prominent position at the corner of Searle Street is taken up by the CREDITON MUSEUM. The Palladian-style building was erected in 1852 as the CREDITON PUBLIC ROOMS with the purpose of providing a venue for public meetings, concerts and other public events.

High Street, North Side (HUCA 6)



Figure 38: The central High Street, north side, view to the north.



Figure 39: The museum on the corner of Searle Street, view to the north.



Figure 40: The Congregational Chapel on the north side of the central High Street area, view to the north.



Figure 41: St. Lawrence's Green, view to the west.



Figure 42: Kiddicott, possible infill of former market place view to the west.



Figure 43: Kiddicott, view to the south.



Figure 44: Buller Road, view to the north.



Figure 45: View to south from Buller Road.

A number of roads running back from the High Street to the north were created or upgraded in the 19th century. Searle Street was created by the Crediton Villa Building Society (promoted by James Searle) as a private road leading to Searle Villas, a group of quite elegant Victorian detached residences. St Martin's Lane (Martin's Lane) was until the 1870s apparently no better than a 'storm water channel'. These roads connected with Buller Park Road (now People's Park Road), built 1840x80 and following the northern boundary of the burgrave plots. With the exception of Searle Villas, all the housing in this area is 20th century in date.

At the eastern end of HUCA 6, adjacent to the Square (HUCA 3), there was a 19th century cattle market, now a car park.

4.6.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

High – Underlying this area of the town is a substantial part of the medieval borough, the 'quillets' of which still determine the orientation of present property boundaries and thoroughfares running north from the High Street. Despite severe losses in the fire of 1743, the High Street frontage of this area contains several buildings of architectural merit, many of which may retain within them features surviving from before the fire. These could readily be related to the detailed town map of 1743. Here too, the historic commercial function of the street is maintained. The possibility of a former market-place in the area of St Lawrence Green and Kiddicott merits consideration in terms of Crediton's history as an important market town. The small public park of St Lawrence Green reflects the historic function of this area as a public open space. Architecturally significant are the Congregational Chapel, the Museum building and the Searle Villas.

4.6.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Medium to High – Unlike HUCA 5, the medieval burgrave plots have been extensively developed, and most of the ground to the north of the High Street and St Lawrence Green has been heavily disturbed by 19th century development and modern housing. Nonetheless, the key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, field and property (burgrave) boundaries, and possibly features relating to the pre-borough fieldsystem. Post-

medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains, field and property boundaries, cellars, and walls.

4.7 Western Road (HUCA 7)

4.7.1 Historic Character

HUCA 7 is bounded on the east by St Martin's Lane, on the north by Alexandra Road and on the west and south by Threshers. Western Road runs east to west through the area

What is now Alexandra Road was originally called Turnagain Lane, terminating in a dead end to the west. In the mid-19th century it was extended to meet the Western Road at a point opposite the Workhouse gates. A deed of 1599 cited by Venn indicates that in the 16th century what is now Western Road was known as the Old Way. It is subsequently described as a 'back lane', the main route to the west being via Threshers. In 1838 the 'back lane' was widened and improved so that coaches could now 'traverse the full length of the town in a normal manner'.

In the angle formed by Threshers and the Western Road is St Lawrence's Chapel (MDV608). The earliest mention of the chapel dates from 1242, when it was already in existence and when a cell for a recluse was established nearby. The chapel was badly damaged by the great fire of 1743 and stood in ruins until the 1920s when it was restored by Sir Charles Nicholson. A certain amount of medieval fabric was incorporated into the restored building. At the Dissolution St Lawrence's Chapel held 262 acres of land (see below).

Both the Norden map of 1598 and the tithe map, show long, narrow strip fields extending westwards from and parallel to Martin's Lane, apparently continuous with the long plots to the rear of the High Street properties. This tends to strengthen the hypothesis that the borough may have been superimposed on an existing strip field system. Close examination of the tithe map indicates that the 'Old Way' or 'Back Lane' (now Western Road) bisects this fieldsystem. Although the name 'Landscape' is now applied to a road leading south-west from St Lawrence's Green, it seems likely that this system of strip fields was originally the 'landscape', i.e. a subdivided fieldsystem. This area of 'fossilised' medieval strips is named in the Norden survey as St Lawrence Land and must therefore have formed part, if not all, of the 262 acres which the Chapel of St Lawrence held at the Dissolution.

Apart from the chapel, the most significant features of this HUCA are the Queen Elizabeth's School at the east end and the former Crediton Workhouse at the west end. Queen Elizabeth's School on the west side of St Martin's Lane began life under Edward VI when education was provided for a small number of boys within the church. The status of the school was confirmed by Queen Elizabeth I and from the 16th to the 19th century the school continued to be located in the Lady Chapel of the parish church. In 1861 new purpose-built school buildings were opened at the junction of St Lawrence Green and Martin Lane. During the 20th century the school grew, taking over land to the immediate west, which formerly held allotment gardens, so that now the school premises extend all the way to Alexandra Road.

The Crediton Union Workhouse (MDV97479) was built in 1836. Later in the century a hospital was built immediately west of the workhouse (MDV97470). The present hospital was built in the 1970s and the former workhouse has been redeveloped as housing.

This predominantly residential area was, until the late 20th century, mostly occupied by orchards, gardens and allotments. Near the junction of Western Road with Threshers there was a certain amount of late 19th century development, and the Rus Cottages probably date to the early 19th century. To the east of Rus Cottages, and stretching from Threshers to Western Road, was the Crediton Vineyard with numerous large glass-houses. This ground is now occupied by the housing of St Boniface Road.

Western Road (HUCA 7)



Figure 46: Western Road, south side, view to the east.



Figure 47: Queen Elizabeth's School, Western Road, north side.



Figure 48: Western Road, south side, view to the south-east.



Figure 49: St. Lawrence's Chapel (as reconstructed).



Figure 50: The west end of Alexandra Road, view to the north.



Figure 51: Threshers, north side, view to the east.

4.7.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Medium – As in HUCA 6, property boundaries in this area, both north and south of Western Road, reflect the topography of the strip field system which apparently underlies the north-western parts of the town and which is commemorated in the name 'Landscape'. The western parts of this area were *St Lawrence Land*, relating the whole area directly to the 13th century St Lawrence's Chapel, which, though heavily restored, is clearly historically important. The roads leading west (Threshers, Western Road, Alexandra Road) each, through their different histories, lend historic depth to an area which is largely characterised by 19th and 20th century developments. Significant 19th century institutional developments in this area are Queen Elizabeth's School and

the former Union Workhouse and adjacent hospital. A terrace of early 20th century houses on the south side of Western Road near its eastern end represent a good example of middle class domestic architecture of the Victorian/Edwardian period and an early expansion of residential development westwards from the historic town.

4.7.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Medium overall – Most of the area is likely to have been disturbed by 19th century development and modern housing. Nonetheless, the key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval ecclesiastical remains (St Lawrence’s Chapel, **High** significance), rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, cemetery(?), field and property (burgage) boundaries, and features relating to the pre-borough fieldsystem. Post-medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, civic remains (workhouse, hospital, schools), field and property boundaries, cellars, ornamental features, and walls.

4.8 Landscore to Westwood (HUCA 8)

4.8.1 Historic Character

HUCA 8 is a triangular area bounded on the north by Threshers, on the west by the houses of Westernlea and on the east by Westwood Road and Landscore.

As indicated under HUCA 7, the name Landscore applied to the eastern end of this area may have ‘migrated’ from its original application, i.e. the apparent ‘fossilised’ medieval strip field system to the north. On the other hand, since this triangle of land is also named St Lawrence Land in the Norden Survey of 1598, it may have once been part of a strip field system in its own right, all traces of which had been eliminated by the time of the tithe survey. Until the 1960s and 1970s the area was agricultural land. Apart from those exceptions mentioned below, all residential development in this area dates from the late 20th century.

The only ‘ancient’ feature is Westwood farm, which probably has late medieval or early post-medieval origins. Just beyond this area the Norden map shows a house and outbuildings with the name Westwood to the immediate west. The buildings may correspond to ‘Middle Westwood’ as recorded on the tithe map. Westwood appears to have been a small hamlet. Other buildings of note in this area are the 19th century cottages on the north side of Landscore near the junction with Threshers.

4.8.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Low – Development during the 20th century swept away the former agricultural landscape and replaced it with a number of spacious but nondescript late 20th century housing estates. The street names may preserve something of the early landscape. The only exception is the late medieval or early post-medieval Westwood Farm, the buildings of which would merit further investigation.

4.8.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – Most of the area is likely to have been disturbed by modern housing development. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval and post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks.

Landscore to Westwood (HUCA 8)



Figure 52: Landscore, view to the east.



Figure 53: Westwood Road, view to the south-west.



Figure 54: Landscore, view to the west.



Figure 55: Western Lea, view to the south-west.

4.9 George Hill (HUCA 9)

4.9.1 Historic Character

HUCA 9 is bounded on the north by Higher Road, on the east and south by Alexandra Road and on the west by Queen Elizabeth Drive.

George Hill is named after St George's Chapel (MDV607), the ruins of which are indicated in the Norden survey at the north end of the route now called George Hill (probably just outside the boundary of this survey). George Hill was earlier known as Jocelin's Hill, and a land transfer of this hill was made in 1246 by Bishop Brewere for the upkeep of a hermitage, presumably the chapel.

Until the late 19th Century this area was entirely agricultural land. It is evident from the Norden Survey of 1598 that the route known as George Hill cut through the remains of a medieval strip field system, the western part of which was St Lawrence Land. By 1598 any earlier plough strips in the area north of Alexandra Road had been engrossed and enclosed. Until the late 20th century the line of the original headland was still represented on the ground by a boundary line – probably a hedge line – from George Hill to Alexandra Road. This is now lost among late 20th century housing estates. Residential development of the area began between 1880 and 1904 with the construction of late Victorian or Edwardian villas, The Mount, Northleigh (later Argyll House), Trenavin and Southfield. In the early 20th century the angle formed by George Hill (east side) and Alexandra Road contained a reservoir and the premises of the Crediton UDC Water Works. By the 1920s the site had been handed over to residential development in the form of the house called Fircroft.

4.9.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Low – Development during the 20th century swept away the former agricultural fieldscape and replaced it with a number nondescript 20th century housing estates. Some of the roads are clearly medieval or post-medieval in origin, and the late 19th century villas are of some interest, but the housing estates that characterise this area are of limited architectural merit.

4.9.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – Most of the area is likely to have been disturbed by modern housing development. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval to post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks.

George Hill (HUCA 9)



Figure 56: View towards Dartmoor from Avranches Avenue.

Figure 57: Avranches Avenue, view to the east.

4.10 Alexandra Road to Deep Lane (HUCA 10)

4.10.1 Historic Character

HUCA 10 is bounded on the west by Alexandra Road, on the north by Higher Road, on the east by Deep Lane and on the south by People's Park Road.

Until the mid-19th century the greater part of this area was entirely agricultural land. The strip of land which is now People's Park was the Rack Field until the woollen industry died away in the early 19th century. During the 19th century the land was made over by the Buller Family for a public park, at first called Buller Park, later People's Park. The only residential development in the area was Okefield House, still extant in the 1950s. Apart from People's Park, the entire area is now occupied by late 20th century housing.

4.10.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Low – Development during the 20th century swept away the former agricultural fieldscape and replaced it with a number nondescript 20th century housing estates. Some of the roads are clearly medieval or post-medieval in origin, but the late 20th century housing estates that characterise this area are of limited architectural merit. The People's Park represents an important communal resource, and represents the benevolence of the Buller Family in turning a redundant remnant of the lost woollen trade (the Rack Field) to communal use.

4.10.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – Most of the area is likely to have been disturbed by modern housing development. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks. Post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks, and features relating to the Rack Field.

Alexandra Road to Deep Lane (HUCA 10)



Figure 58: Deep Lane, view to the north.

Figure 59: The People's Park, view to the east.

4.11 Jockey Hill (HUCA 11)

4.11.1 Historic Character

HUCA 11 is bounded on the east by Jockey Hill, on the south by Belle Parade and on the west by Deep Lane.

The earlier name of Deep Lane – Forches Hill – betrays the fact that at the apex of this triangular area is Forches Cross. The name ‘Forches’ occurs throughout Devon, usually at crossroads and in elevated positions. It is derived via Norman French from the Latin *furcae*, a term denoting gallows or gibbet.

In the Norden Survey this area of land, named ‘Mr Speakes Land’, is devoid of features. Apart from that noted below, the tithe map shows only a very few geometrically straight boundaries, an indication of late enclosure. However, the southern third of the area is shown on the tithe map as Newcombe Lodge with a house, ancillary buildings, formal gardens, orchards and a lodge. In 1693 John Speke, presumably the descendant of ‘Mr Speake’, sold land to a William Newcombe. In 1723 Newcombe sold the land to Robert Stone who built a ‘Great House’, two other dwellings and walled gardens. During the 18th century the property descended to the Cleave family and subsequently passed through a variety of hands until in 1939 it was bought by the Gaumont British Picture Corporation. During WWII the site became a temporary film production site with numerous temporary huts for staff. These remained in occasional emergency use until long after the War. In 1947 parts of the mansion house were leased to the Ministry of Health for a Health Centre. In 1971 part of the site came into the hands of Devon County Council, who demolished the mansion and built a modern health centre. Other parts of the estate were sold off for housing until finally in 1978 the Lodge was demolished. A photograph reproduced in John Heal’s ‘Book of CREDITON’ shows the house to have been a solid, four-square mansion standing in terraced grounds (MDV23388).

Apart from an open green space beside the Health Centre, the rest of this HUCA is occupied by late 20th century housing.

4.11.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Low – Characterised today by undistinguished late 20th century housing, certain features recall a more interesting past. The Health Centre represents the last echo of the ‘Great House’ and gardens constructed here in the 18th century and which had a chequered subsequent history. The point of convergence of the north-south roads with other routes from east and west represents a typical gallows site, as commemorated in the name ‘Forches’.

4.11.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – Most of the area is likely to have been disturbed by modern housing development. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks. Post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks, and domestic structures.

Jockey Hill (HUCA 11)



Figure 60: The junction of Jockey Hill with Penton Lane, view to the north-east.



Figure 61: Newcombes, view to the north-east.

4.12 Pounds Hill (HUCA 12)

4.12.1 Historic Character

HUCA 12 is bounded on the west by Jockey Lane, on the north by Stonewall Lane and the houses of Beech Park, on the east by Old Tiverton Road and on the south by Blagdon Terrace.

In the Norden Survey of 1598 much of this area is seen to be divided into numerous closes, very many of them with the parallel slightly curving boundaries indicative of enclosed medieval strip fields. These features are particularly clear in the north-eastern corner of this HUCA, where the strips are shown in some detail with the names of tenants. It is striking that tenancy is dispersed among the strips, strongly suggesting descent from a medieval Open Field system. The Norden Survey shows the strips to extend northwards to meet what is now Pedlerspool Lane, but which was in 1598 Cholwell Lane.

The Norden Survey also seems to show that in the late 16th century an area between the bottom of Penton Lane and the southern end of Old Tiverton Road was used as a rack field. Racks are roughly sketched here on the 19th century copy.

At the time of the tithe survey the domestic residences in this part of the town were confined to the area of the junction of Jockey Hill, Pounds Hill, Penton Lane and the Old Tiverton Road. In addition, Penton House and Penton Cottage were located a little distance along Penton Lane. Penton House (MDV17548) was built in 1806 and from 1814 housed the Crediton United Charity Schools. Penton Cottage (MDV23456) is a small villa in the Strawberry Hill Gothick style dating from around 1820. Also present in 1840 was the terrace of thatched dwellings that line the southern end of Penton Lane and which were then a functioning malthouse. This malthouse, dating from the 18th century, remained commercially active until the 1920s and is now known as 'The Maltings'. At the foot of Jockey Hill is Nos.2-4 Jockey Hill, said to be of 18th century or earlier origin. No.1, the former Horse and Jockey Inn, burnt down in the late 20th century. Also marked on the tithe map is a row of still extant cottages at the junction of Jockey Hill and Pounds Hill. Palace Villa (MDV78936), at the junction of the Old Tiverton Road with Blagden Terrace, is of late 19th century origin, but it should be noted that the Norden map shows houses at this location. Penton Cottages at Poundshill Cross appear on the OS maps from 1880. All other buildings and roads in this area are of late 20th century date.

The eastern boundary of HUCA 12 is the Old Tiverton Road (MDV17735). The northern part of this road has been widened with the development of modern housing estates. However, the southern part from Blagden Terrace northwards retains the character of a country lane. This part of the road or lane is narrow and deeply-incised into the landscape, and given that it skirts the eastern edge of a well-defined area of strip fields shown on the Norden map, appears to be a very ancient route leading towards the Creedy. In this case the purpose may have been to take cattle to and from riverside pastures by the Creedy. The junction with Pedlerspool Lane to the north is suggestive of a funnel guiding cattle from open grazing onto the track/Old Tiverton Road. The general direction of the road's southern end reinforces the suggestion that the early settlement focus was in the Mill Street/Tolleys area.

Pounds Hill (HUCA 12)



Figure 62: The Maltings, Penton Lane, view to the south.



Figure 63: Walnut Drive, view to west.



Figure 64: Beech Park, view to the north.



Figure 65: Penton Lane, view to the south.

4.12.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Medium – ‘The Maltings’ together with 2-4 Jockey Hill are of interest both for architectural and cultural/historical reasons. Penton House and Penton Cottage are of architectural and social interest. The most significant element in landscape-historical terms is the southern part of the Old Tiverton Road, which retains the character of a country lane, the origins of which appear related to the earliest settlement and land use in this area of the town.

4.12.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – The density of late 20th century development, and the landscaping around Penton House, make it unlikely that any evidence of the 16th century landscape survives. Most of the area is likely to have been disturbed by modern housing development. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks; post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks, with evidence for domestic structures limited to that part of the HUCA closest to the historic settlement core; 19th century villas and school, malthouse, cottages, field and property boundaries, ornamental features.

4.13 Exhibition Road (HUCA 13)

4.13.1 Historic Character

HUCA 13 is bounded on the west by Old Tiverton Road, on the south by Blagden Terrace and Commercial Road, on the east by the boundary of the Crediton United Football Ground and on the north by a section of the A3072 and the houses of Cromwells Meadow. Exhibition Road, the A3072, running south-west to north-east, bisects the area.

It is in this area that Norden’s survey provides us with a detailed record of the 16th century landscape, with the area between what is now the Old Tiverton Road and what was then Lord’s Meadow, containing the surviving remnants of a fossilised medieval strip field system. The tenancy or ownership of the individual strips was dispersed among a number of individuals whose holdings were intermixed. This indicates descent from something akin to a common Open Field system. It is apparent that in the late 16th century some strips remained as such while others had been engrossed into closes. The field-names as recorded in the later tithe apportionment also contain references to Open Field terminology, at a time when the process of engrossment and enclosure had eliminated almost all signs of its fieldscape origin.

Through the middle of the fieldsystem ran an axial trackway providing access to the plots on either side. On the tithe map this is named Bramble Lane, a name which was retained until in 1881, when it was widened on the occasion of the Devon County Show coming to Crediton. It was then renamed Exhibition Road. Further widening and development through the 20th century have transformed it into the A3072 road to Tiverton.

In the 16th century, residential development in this area was restricted to the roadside between Old Tiverton Road and Bramble Lane (Exhibition Road). The only surviving older buildings in this area are Blagdon Terrace itself (MDV23391), a row of three houses dating from the 1820s.

Since the 1950s large parts of this area have been taken up with modern housing, but at the same time a considerable area of open ground remains. These comprise, on the west of Exhibition Road, the Cemetery and

undeveloped land to the north plus the Rugby Ground, and, on the east side of Exhibition Road, an area of allotments and a large playing field. The allotments seem to have been set aside before 1880 and remain today unaltered in location and extent. The Cemetery was begun about the middle of the 20th century and had reached its present extent by 1970; similarly, the playing field is 20th century in origin.

A number of elements of the contemporary landscape can be readily related to the plots and boundaries shown in the Norden survey. It is particularly notable that the northern boundary of the cemetery follows the northern boundary of the field labelled 'George Trowbridge Hooked Close' on the Norden map. Similarly, the ground immediately to the north is the same shape and size as the plot labelled 'John Davie Hunnywells Close'. Both the allotments and the rugby grounds occupy land that was still divided into strips in 1598.

Exhibition Road (HUCA 13)



Figure 66: Allotments and rugby pitch on the south-eastern side of Exhibition Road.



Figure 67: Allotments on the south-east side of Exhibition Road, view to the south-east.



Figure 68: Looking south-west across the rugby pitch.



Figure 69: Cromwell's Meadow, view to the east.



Figure 70: Old Tiverton Road, view to the north-east.



Figure 71: Bramble Lane, south-east side of Exhibition Road.



Figure 72: Junction of Exhibition Road and Commercial Road, view to the south.



Figure 73: Looking south from Exhibition Road.

4.13.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Medium – A number of the surviving boundaries, where they are marked by hedgebanks, relate to the fieldscape as depicted on the 1598 Norden map, and Exhibition Road follows the line of an earlier axial track within the fieldsystem. The allotments were established in the 19th century and are still in use, and the utilisation of land in strips defined in acres, rods and perches bears superficial resemblance with the medieval Open Field system, engrossed and enclosed before 1598. The 20th century housing and civic developments in this HUCA are of limited architectural merit.

4.13.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Medium – Areas of open ground, even where there has been extensive landscaping, may yet yield evidence that might help to determine the period of origin for the fieldsystem recorded in the Norden Survey. This is a rare instance of relatively-undisturbed ground where we have detailed evidence of its early history. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks; post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks. A large proportion of this HUCA would have been disturbed by 20th century housing development and landscaping associated with the rugby ground.

4.14 Lord's Meadow (HUCA 14)

4.14.1 Historic Character

HUCA 14 comprises land on the north-west side of the Commercial Road industrial estate. It includes the CREDITON United Football field, tennis courts, the sewage works and commercial units in the angle between the playing field and Commercial Road. The sewage works sometimes give this area a distinctive smell. Historically this area of land was the Lord's Meadow (MDV13971), recorded as such in 1598 and singled out on Donn's map of 1765. Donn shows the Lord's Meadow surrounded by a park pale, but this may be a misinterpretation on Donn's part. As a large, level open area, Lord's Meadow is reputed to have been used as a rebel encampment during the Prayer Book Rebellion, and used for reviews by both Parliamentarian and Royalist forces during the Civil War. Before it was culverted, the Litterburn Stream ran into this low-lying land beside the Creedy and it is likely it was given over to high-quality pasture which the lord of the manor reserved to himself as part of his demesne. On the Norden map the land is shown as undivided, whereas the tithe map of c.1840 shows two straight internal boundaries that appear as substantial hedges. Mapping up to the 1950s shows some further subdivision, as well as a footpath running along the northern edge. Development of the land into its modern state began in the 1960s and 1970s.

4.14.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Low – Apart from the hedges to north and east, there appear to be no surviving historic features in this area. The possible association with the Prayerbook Rebellion and the 17th century Civil War lend the area some associative significance.

4.14.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – Landscaping and ground disturbance are likely to have been extensive, although some evidence of pre-

20th century land management may survive across the northern part of the area. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval to post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks.

Lord's Meadow (HUCA 14)



Figure 74: The sports field on the north-east side of Commercial Road, view to the north-west.



Figure 75: View across the northern sports field, view to the east-north-east.

4.15 Commercial Road Industrial Estate, Mill Street and Tolleys (HUCA 15)

4.15.1 Historic Character

HUCA 15 comprises all of the Commercial Road Industrial Estate, with Commercial Road to the north, Downshead Lane and Commonmarsh Lane to the south and Mill Street to the east. The greater part of this area is shown on the Norden map as divided into strips with dispersed ownership and tenancy. These strips survived until the 1950s/60s, but, with the exception of the allotments between Downshead Lane and Tolleys, it has now been entirely subsumed within the modern industrial estate. The Norden map shows the area of Mill Street (Hadder Street) as partly built up by the late 16th century, a process completed by the late 19th century. The houses lining the east side of Mill Street all have plain late 18th or 19th century frontages, though these might conceal earlier structures; the brick-built Oxford Terrace, set perpendicular to Mill Street, is probably early 20th century in date.

The area known as Tolleys may represent the area of earliest settlement in Crediton, and a blue plaque proclaims it as the birthplace of St Boniface. The early cartographic sources show Tolleys as a path leading into the surrounding fields flanked by terraced cottages. These were gone by the 1950s, to be replaced by a small car park and mid- to late 20th century detached housing.

Downshead Lane leads into Commonmarsh Lane, the name of the latter implying common grazing on meadows or wetland beside the Creedy. Downshead Lane, which turns into a footpath across fields in the direction of Downs House, is regarded as part of an old route to Exeter; on the Norden map it is shown as a route apparently equal in status to what is now recognisably the modern Exeter Road. As it leads out of the Tolleys area this tends to support the hypothesis that Tolleys represents an early settlement nucleus. On the left hand side of Downshead Lane is Buller Square (MDV23394) with four houses on three sides of a cobbled square. The group is thought to have 16th century or earlier origins.

4.15.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Medium – A very large part of this area has lost any trace of historic significance through the construction of the modern commercial estate. The western segment however, through its reputation as the birthplace of St Boniface and by virtue of its potential identity with the earliest settlement, has strong associative value, which may be enhanced through close archaeological examination. The tenements of Mill Street may hold within them evidence of the extent of medieval settlement on the east of the town. Downshead Lane is a valuable historic element of the landscape, representing part of a road network that differs from – and may predate – that of the post-medieval period. Its link with Commonmarsh Lane very probably associates it with the medieval pastoral economy. Buller Square is also of architectural and historical interest.

4.15.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Medium to High – Any open ground in the Tolleys area, especially the allotments, may produce evidence of the early development of this area. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, artefacts, field and property boundaries, and features relating to the pre-borough fieldsystem; post-medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains, field and property boundaries, and walls; 19th century domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains, field and property boundaries, cellars, and walls. The area with the highest potential lies to the west (around Tolleys and Mill Street); the archaeological potential of much of the rest of this area is otherwise fairly low. Palaeoenvironmental deposits may survive adjacent to the course of the Litterburn Stream.

Commercial Road Industrial Estate, Mill Street and Tolleys (HUCA 15)



Figure 76: Buller Square, on the eastern side of Downshead Lane.



Figure 77: Mill Street, east side, view to the north.



Figure 78: West end of Commercial Road, view to east.

4.16 Park Street (HUCA 16)

4.16.1 Historic Character

HUCA 16 is bounded on the north by Barnfield, on the east by Park Street, Park Road and the Exeter Road, and on the south and west by field boundaries. It includes the Queen Elizabeth's Lower School.

On the Norden map this area is shown as divided into fairly regular quadrilateral fields, some of which include 'park' in their name. To the west was 'Part of the Great Park' which was also divided into fields, representing the carving up of the Bishop's park after the Dissolution. The historic route of what is now Park Road (*Back Lane* on the Norden map) is now disrupted by housing, but its continuation is seen as a green lane crossing the fields to the west. The long boundary marking the western edge of HUCA 16 is visible on the early maps and may be of some antiquity.

The only historic buildings in this HUCA cluster around its edges, for instance the 18th or early 19th thatched cottages on Park Street, or the similar terrace at the east end of Park Road. Otherwise, this whole area was

developed for residential housing from the 1950s onwards, with the only remaining open ground being an area of allotments between Barnfield and Park Street.

4.16.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Low – Some of the surviving hedge boundaries (e.g. to the west of HUCA 16) preserve parts of the earlier fieldsystem, and may retain evidence of its history. Some pleasing historic structures survive on Park Street and Park Road, but the rest of this HUCA is dominated by 20th century housing estates of limited interest.

4.16.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Low – The known archaeological potential of the area is low. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: medieval post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks; post-medieval field boundaries, roads and tracks; 18th-19th century domestic structures, occupation material, rubbish pits, artefacts.

Park Street (HUCA 16)



Figure 79: Barnfield Road, north side, view to the east



Figure 80: Park Street, west side, view to the north.

4.17 Exeter Road, Station and Fordton (HUCA 17)

4.17.1 Historic Character

HUCA 17 includes the Exeter Road as far as the station, Four Mills Lane and Well Parks together with the road leading south from the station to Fordton on the Yeo.

The road running south from the junction of Charlotte Street with Mill Street is the Exeter Road, formerly Mill Street itself, presumably all the way to the eponymous Four Mills. According to Venn the Exeter Road was widened as part of the improvements of 1836. The tithe map of c.1840 shows very little building along this road with the exception of a terrace on the eastern side, Nos.16 to 22 Exeter Road (MDV78929), a row of brick and thatched cottages of probable 18th century date. With the exception of a second short row of cottages to the south, all the other buildings along this road are mid-19th to 20th century in date (see below).

Four Mills Lane is a narrow thoroughfare branching off the Exeter Road and running parallel to it forming a back lane to the properties along the main road. As indicated above, Mill Street originally extended to Four Mills and it seems likely that this route predates the Exeter Road or was more important at an early date since it provides the link to Four Mills, the mill at Fordton and the crossing of the Yeo. It is noteworthy that the Norden map shows not only these two routes, but also a third route branching off the Exeter Road at a point to the north of Four Mills Lane and curving around an area of fields – all of which are called variations on *Will Park* – and joining Downshead Lane. By the end of the 19th century this route had virtually disappeared, its course marked only by a footpath leading off the main road and a hedge line. The name of 'Will Park' is preserved in the farm known as 'Well Parks' opposite the Tesco Superstore on the A377. The short length of road joining the Exeter Road to the level crossing over the railway was created as part of the improvements of 1836. The most recent road development in this area is the 2013 link road between the Well Parks roundabout and the Lord's Meadow industrial estate.

Beyond the mill, the road crosses the Yeo by way of Fordton Bridge (MDV36317). As the name Fordton implies, the bridge probably replaces an earlier ford. It is not clear from the Norden map whether or not there was a bridge here in 1598, though it seems probable since in 1668 the bridge was said to be in decay. The present bridge dates from the 18th century; it was widened on the east side in the 20th century, but retains refuges on the west side in the manner of what is often referred to as a pack horse bridge.

The 1598 Norden map shows a leat serving the Four Mills and a fulling mill at Fordton (see below). Visible on the north side of the leat at Fordton are racks where presumably the fullled cloth was hung to dry. Similarly, there is a field to the north of Four Mills called Rack Close, so presumably at some date fulling was carried out here as well. In the early 19th century a paper mill was active at Four Mills (MDV18868). One of the four mills was demolished when the railway was built (see below). There was also a grist mill, destroyed by fire in the 1880s and shown on the OS 1st Edition 25" map as 'mill ruins'. The mill leat still runs to the rear of the properties along the road. An industrial estate in the angle between Fordton Terrace and the railway was established in the 1960s/70s.

The leat still flows beneath the road and behind the Railway Cottages to drive mills at Fordton, still active as Crediton Milling. Set back from the road, this industrial complex is the ultimate successor to the fulling mill shown on the Norden map. Fordton Mill (MDV21361) grew from that shown by Norden to two fulling mills in 1636 to four fulling mills in 1780. In 1794 the property was described as a 'Capital Woollen Manufactory' with several houses and lands. The 19th century complex, clearly shown on the tithe map of c.1840, was at its height in the mid-19th century with a four-storey mill, cottages, stables, a forge and a smithy. The four-storey mill burnt down in 1988 and was replaced by the current buildings.

Major change came to this area with the arrival of the railway in the 1850s. One of the four mills was demolished, and the railway station, Taw Vale Terrace (MDV23479), the Railway Hotel, a saw mill, coal and corn stores, a new road and cattle pens were constructed. A new leat seems to have been drawn off the old leat to serve the saw mill. Much – if not all – of this work was undertaken by the Taw Valley Railway Company which had bought up land here in 1830. South of the railway, Fordton Terrace (MDV108134) comprises 19th century railway cottages.

Some of the small cottages in this HUCA date to the 18th century, for instance Fordton Cottage (MDV108134), which was remodelled in the early 19th century in the Strawberry Hill Gothick style and Fordton House (MDV108134). The railway cottages are contemporary with railway, but other domestic buildings to the south of Fordton Terrace represent late 19th to late 20th century developments.

By the beginning of the 20th century the saw mill had become a cider mill. All the other buildings on the north side of the railway are late 20th century in date. To the west of the road, Kirton Recycling occupies the site of the former mills.

The River Yeo marks the boundary of this survey. It should be noted, however, that c.1km to the east of Fordton lies a Roman villa (MDV42065). The land between Fordton and the railway includes part of the Downes Crediton Golf Club, and although landscaping for the golf club will have caused considerable ground disturbance, Romano-British remains or finds may survive.

Exeter Road, Station and Fordton (HUCA 17)



Figure 81: Cottages, Exeter Road, east side, view to the north.



Figure 82: Crediton Station, view to the east.



Figure 83: Crediton Station, view of the eastbound platform.



Figure 84: The overpass under wraps.



Figure 85: The commercial estate south of station.



Figure 86: Four Mills Area, view to the north.



Figure 87: The Crediton Milling site, view to the north-east.



Figure 88: Fordton Terrace, view to the north.



Figure 89: Fordton Bridge, view to the south.

4.17.2 Heritage significance (above ground)

Medium – This part of Crediton is largely defined by its roads and by the influence of the railway. Four Mills Lane, as a continuation of Mill Street, may represent the earliest of the routes leading south from the town, heading as it ultimately does to Fordton and an important crossing of the Yeo. The Exeter Road heading eastwards also closely follows what must be a medieval route. It is clear that the mills at Four Mills and at Fordton were important to the economic life of Crediton, and the surviving leats and active mills of Crediton Milling represent an importance link with Crediton’s industrial past. Station buildings, signal box, goods sheds (if any remain) as well as domestic or other buildings which grew up in response to the coming of the railway are a significant record of this seminal mid-19th century period with strong economic, social and cultural associations. The buildings of Well Parks Farm also have historic value.

4.17.3 Heritage significance (below ground)

Medium – Interventions at Four Mills or at Fordton may reveal evidence of the early industrial development. The key types of remains likely to be uncovered during groundworks are: possible Romano-British activity or cultural remains at the Gold Club; possible medieval domestic and industrial structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, field and property boundaries, and leats; post-medieval domestic structures, rubbish pits and occupation material, wells, artefacts, industrial remains (fulling, milling), rackfield, field and property boundaries, and leats; 19th century domestic, industrial and commercial structures, occupation material, industrial debris, artefacts, leats, railway trackbed and associated structures.

5 Suggestions for future research

- The early tradition relating to St Boniface is largely based on later hagiography, and the history of the Minster and the Episcopal See is relatively well known and discussed. However, the medieval history and development of the town is, by comparison, very poorly understood. Useful work could be undertaken to explore the later development of the town – assuming the necessary manorial or Episcopal documentation survives and is accessible.
- The morphology of the town is very distinctive. The layout of the early minster enclosure and the later borough appear fairly clear, but it is not clear whether the new borough was a. laid out in a single planned episode; b. gradually expanded from east to west; or c. developed as a separate site around St Lawrence's Green and expanded back to the east. All are hypotheses that have yet to be tested archaeologically, and while this may not be very practical (e.g. the minster posited enclosure is defined by public roads) it is the logical first step in the investigation of this important early ecclesiastical precinct and associated Episcopal town. A programme of test-pitting may be a way to take this forward.
- St Lawrence Green area of the town has the appearance of an early, partly-infilled, market site, situated at the edge of the borough at the confluence of several roads. Further work in this area, with historical sources but also with building recording, could reveal the former extent and importance of this area.
- The town has two excellent early maps that could be used to study the development of the town. The 1743 map, with its unparalleled depiction of street frontages, could be used to characterise the building stock of the mid 18th century, and a parallel exercise undertaken today would be an excellent low cost local initiative. The Norden Map could be tested through targeted excavation, in order to establish if there was a continuous northern boundary to the burgages on the north side of the High Street.
- Similarly, all the historic maps show a developed and extensive apparent Open-Field system surrounding the town, and detailed work on the historic sources, coupled with field survey and perhaps targeted excavation, could help determine its origin and descent.
- It is assumed the great fires of the 18th and 19th century swept away much of the historic building stock of the town, particularly in the town centre. This historic narrative has yet to be rigorously tested, and detailed building recording might reveal earlier structures encased within later shells.
- The industrial history of the town, in particular that of the medieval period, is a neglected study:
- The woollen trade was of central importance to CREDITON during the medieval and post-medieval period, and would benefit from detailed study (similar to the HLF-funded 'Cloth and Clothing' project at Cullompton). This study should be accompanied by a survey of the surviving infrastructure of the woollen industry (i.e. mills, leats etc.) and the domestic-scale structures (i.e. the linhays) that accompanied it.
- The boot and shoe trade was very important to the economy of CREDITON in the 19th and early 20th century, but a comprehensive history of the site remains to be undertaken.

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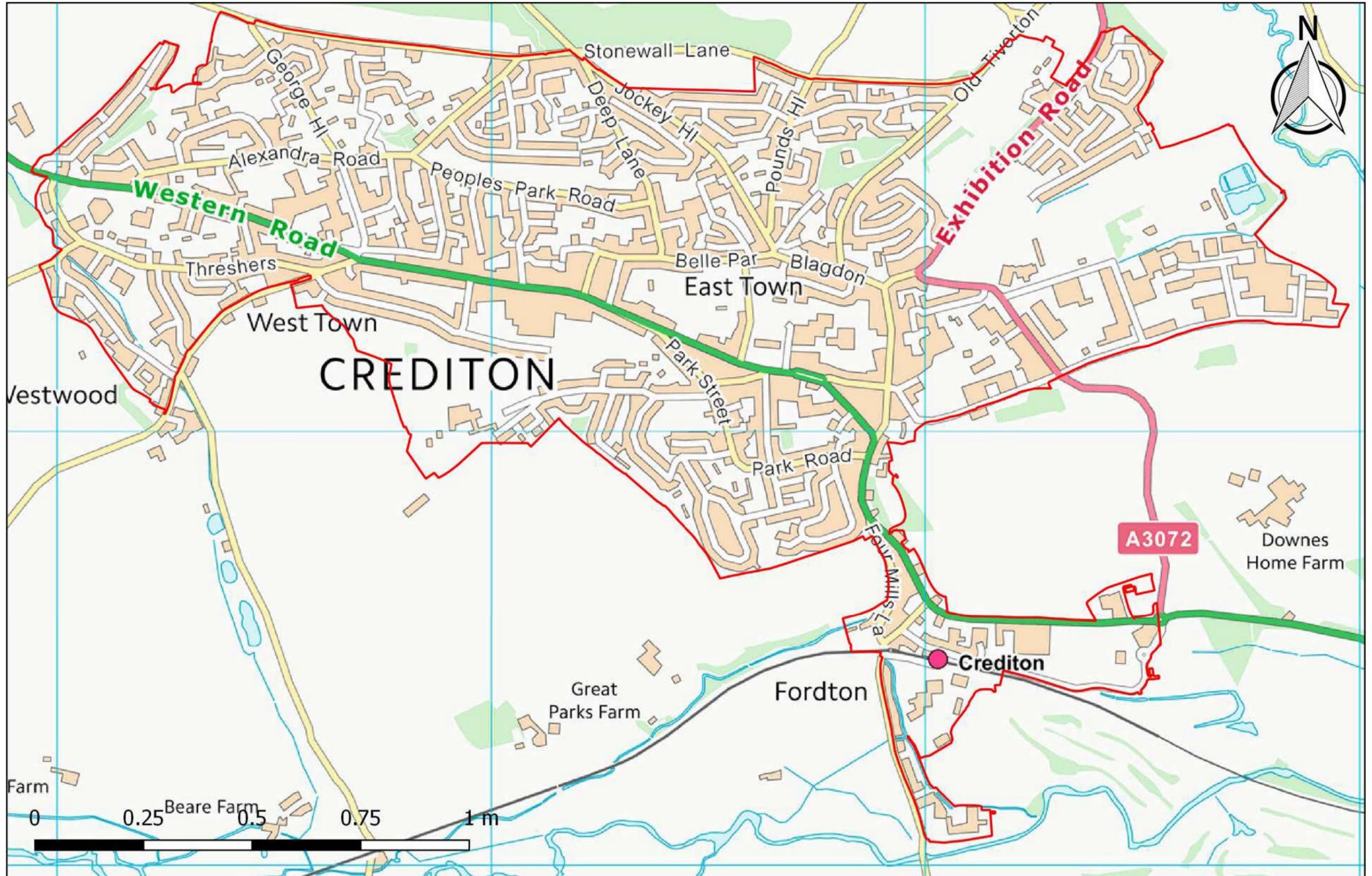


Figure 90: Roads and streets.

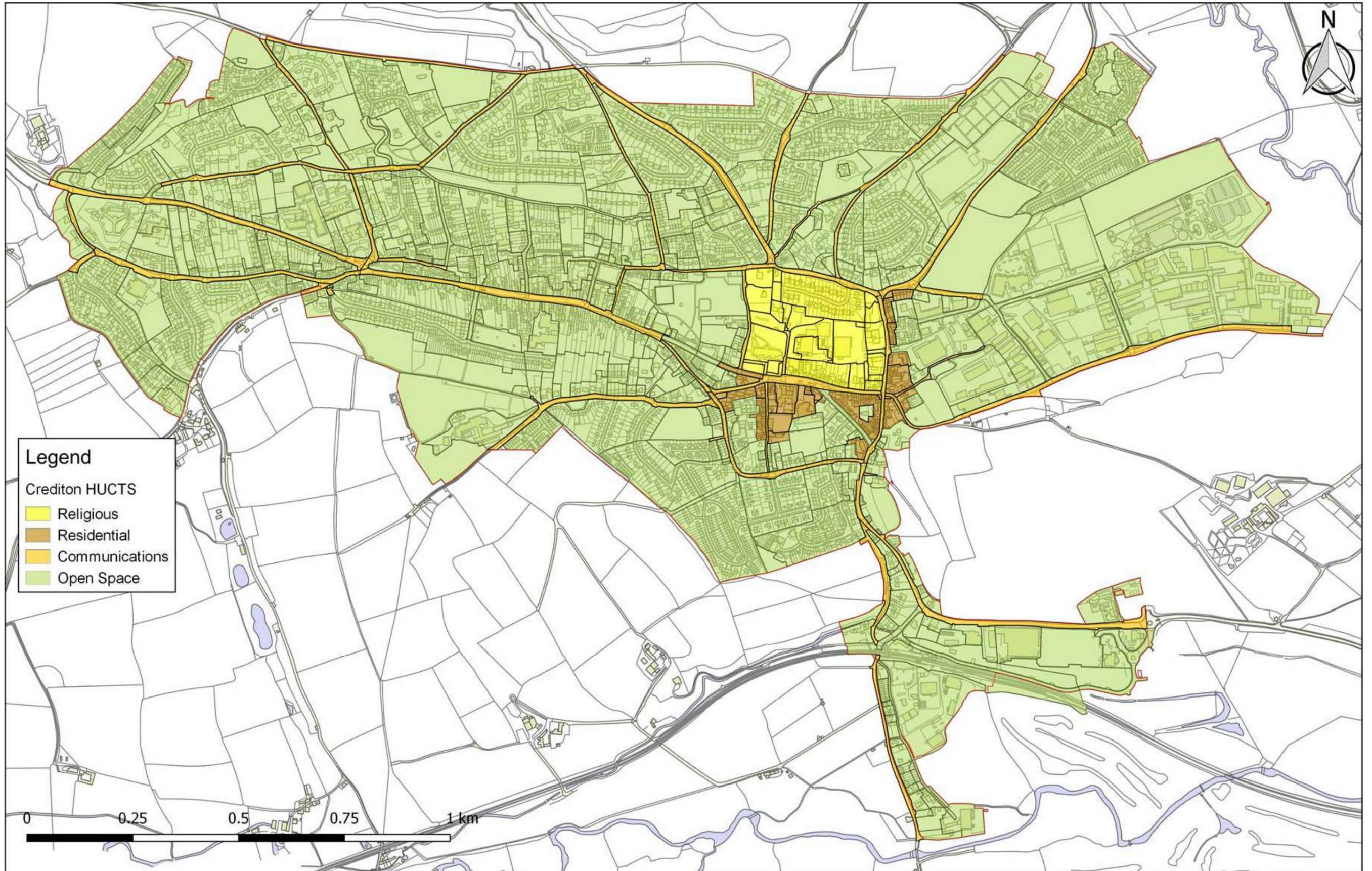


Figure 91: Pre-Conquest 900-1100.

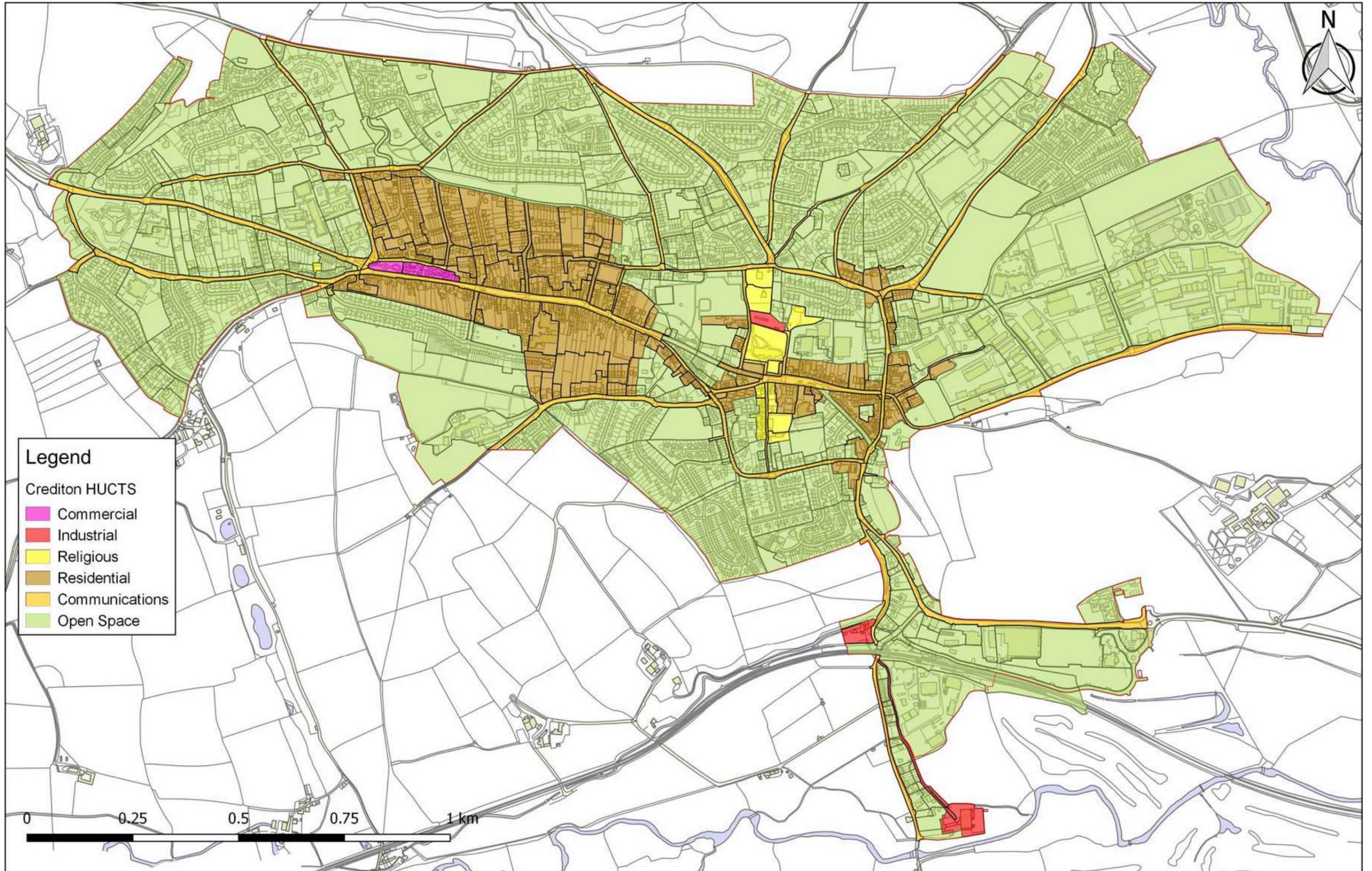


Figure 92: Early post-medieval c.1590.

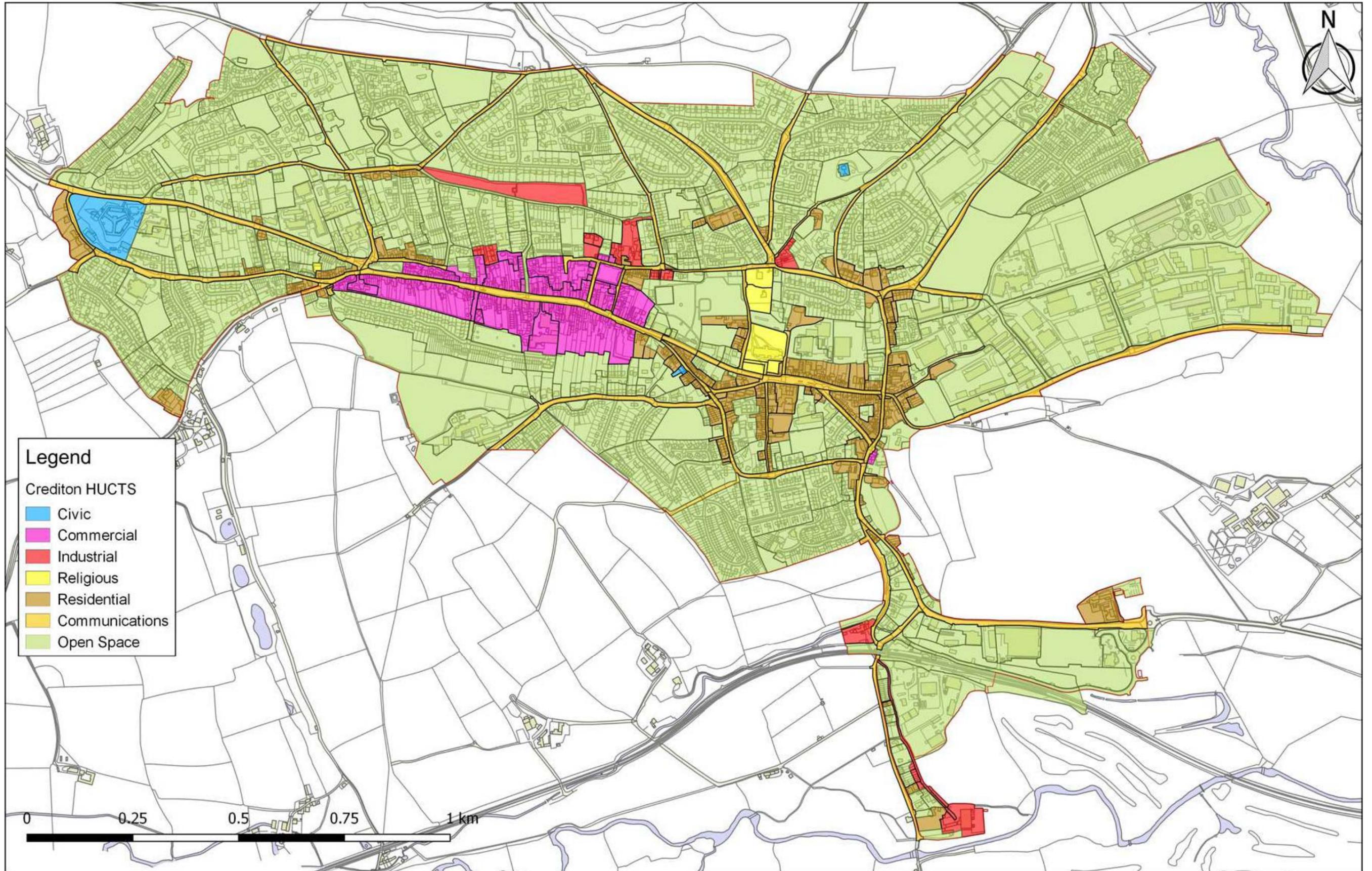


Figure 93: Mid Victorian c.1850.

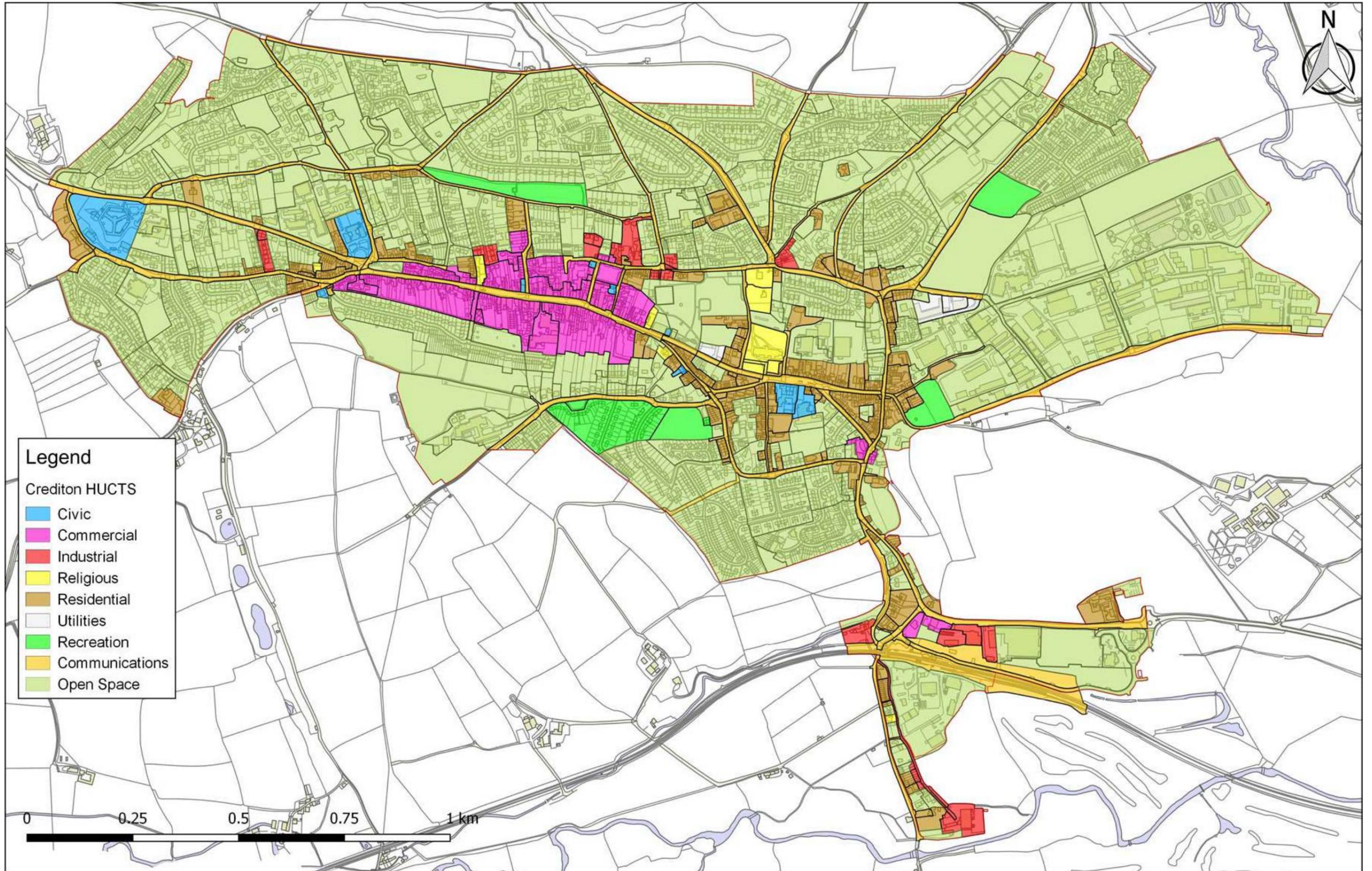


Figure 94: Late Victorian and early Edwardian 1888-1905.

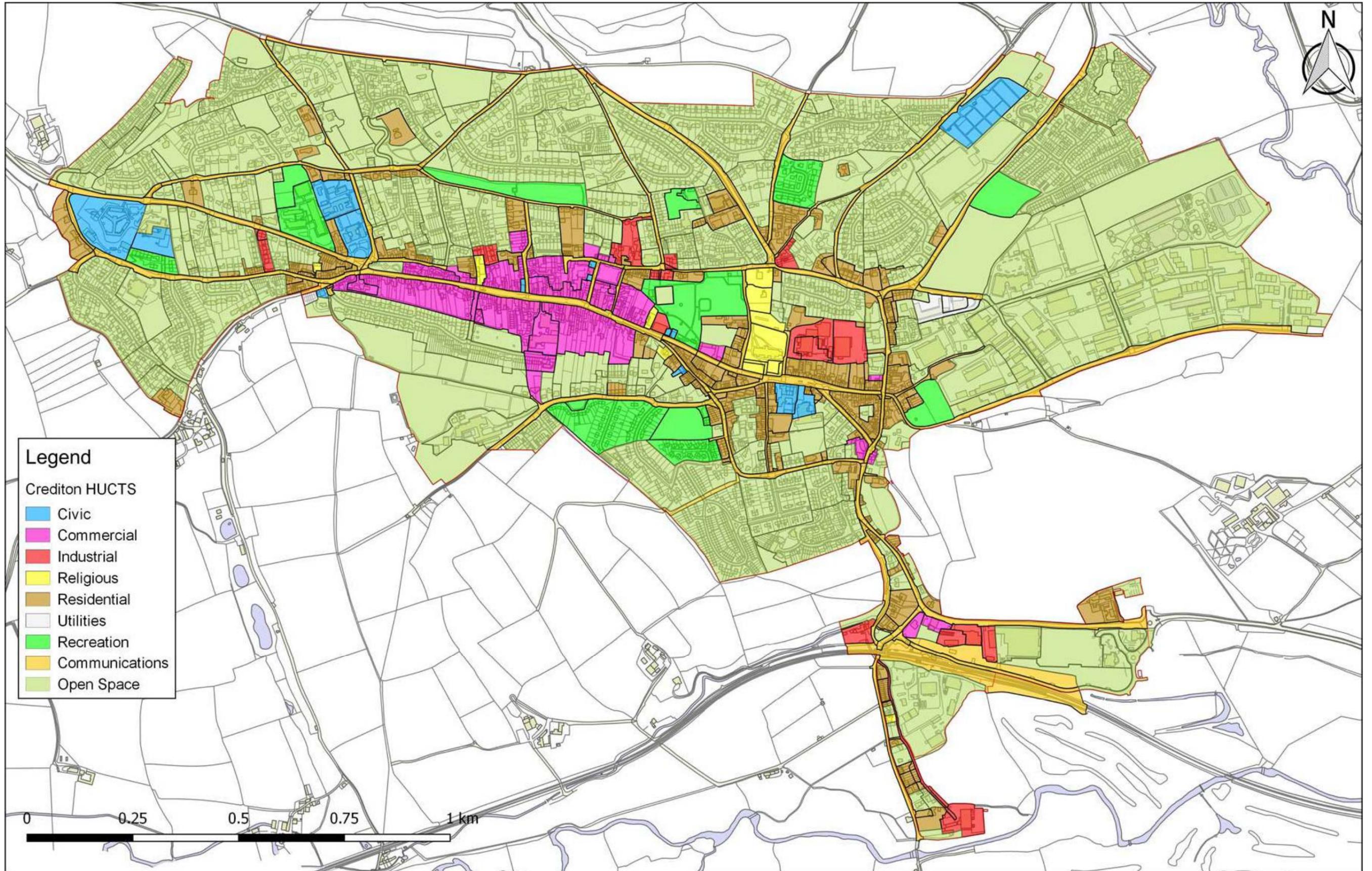


Figure 95: Early 20th century c.1930.

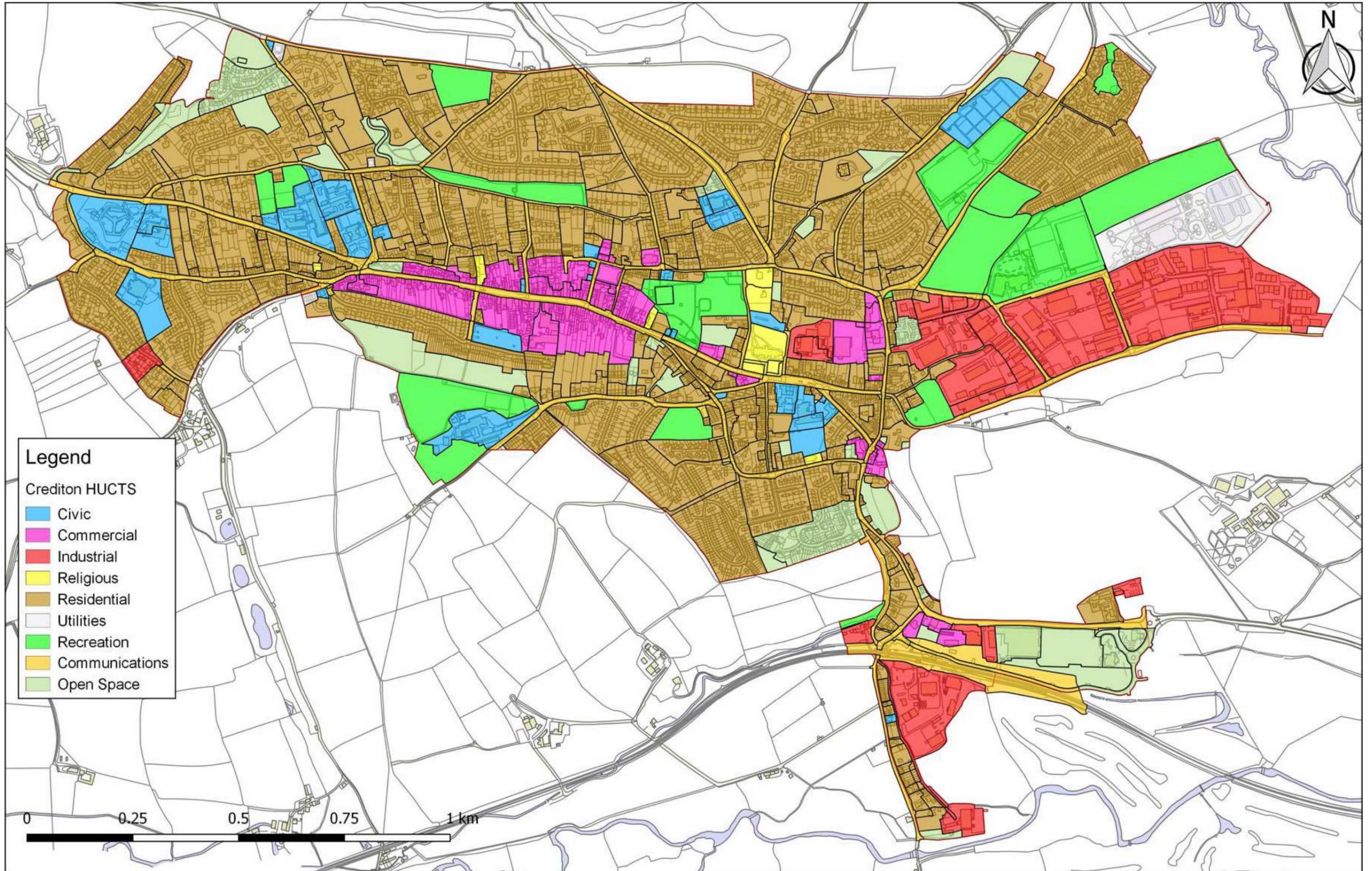


Figure 96: Later 20th century c.1980.

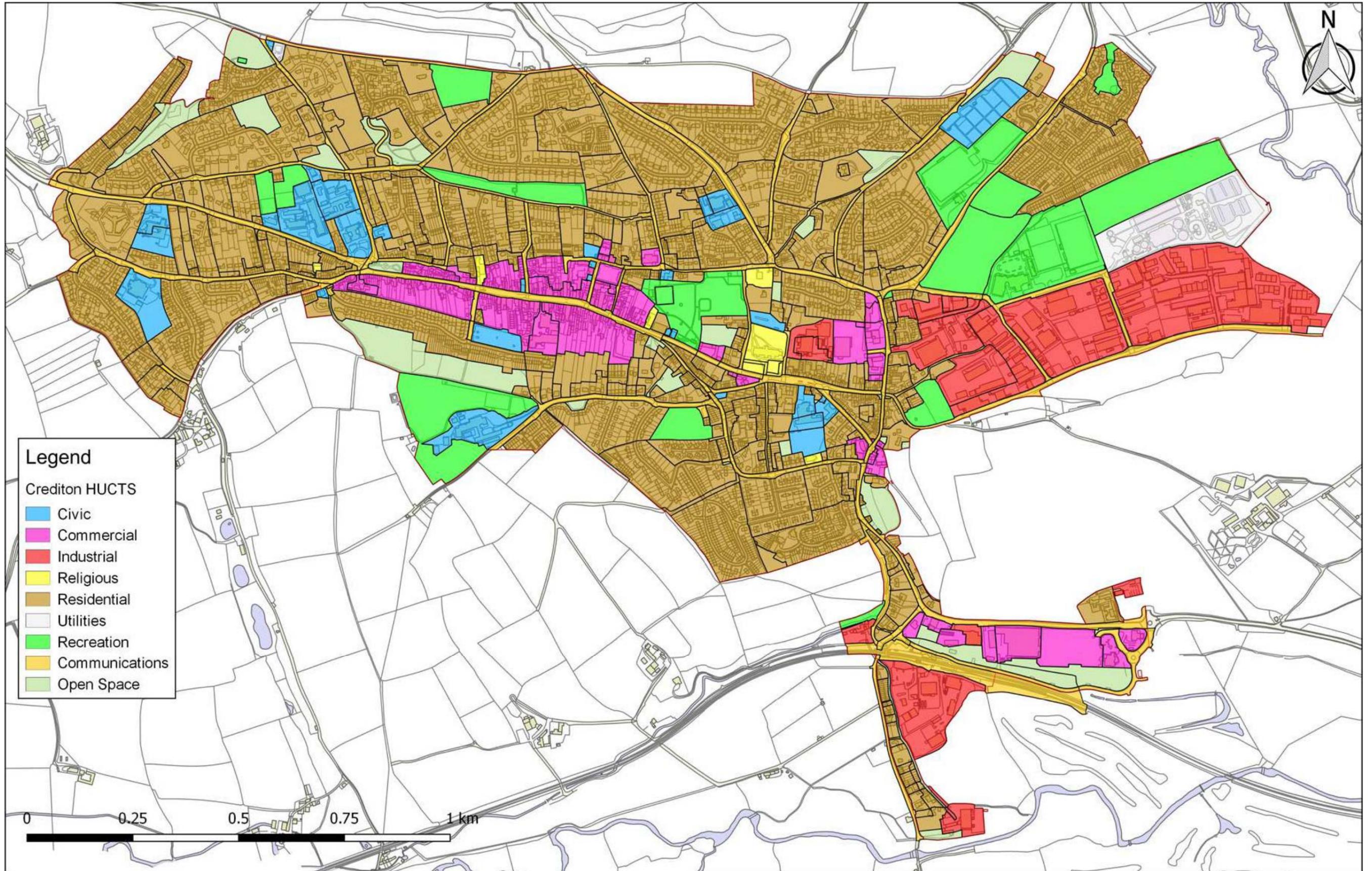


Figure 97: Early 21st century c.2015.

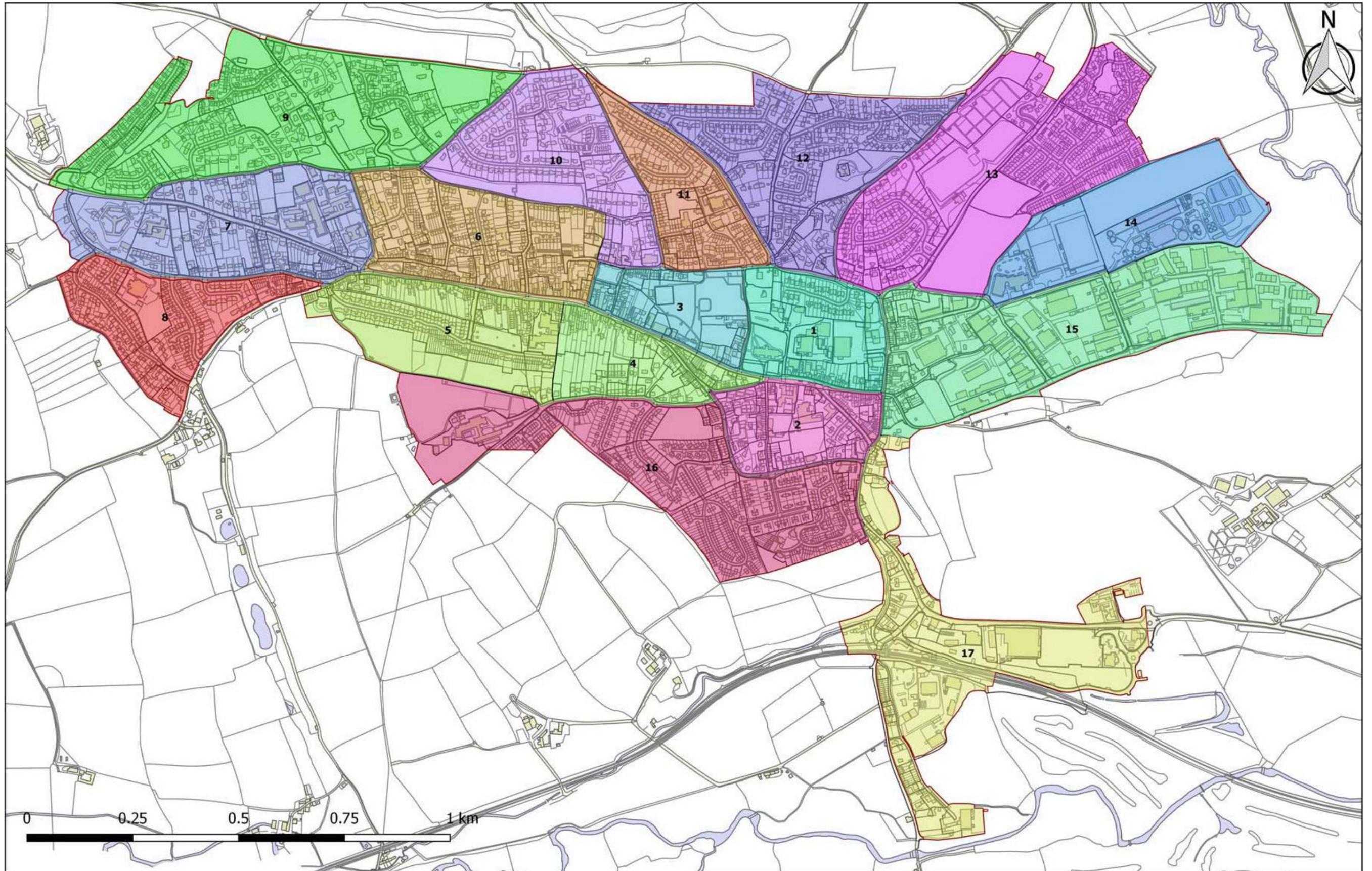


Figure 98: Crediton HUCAs.

Appendix

Historic maps

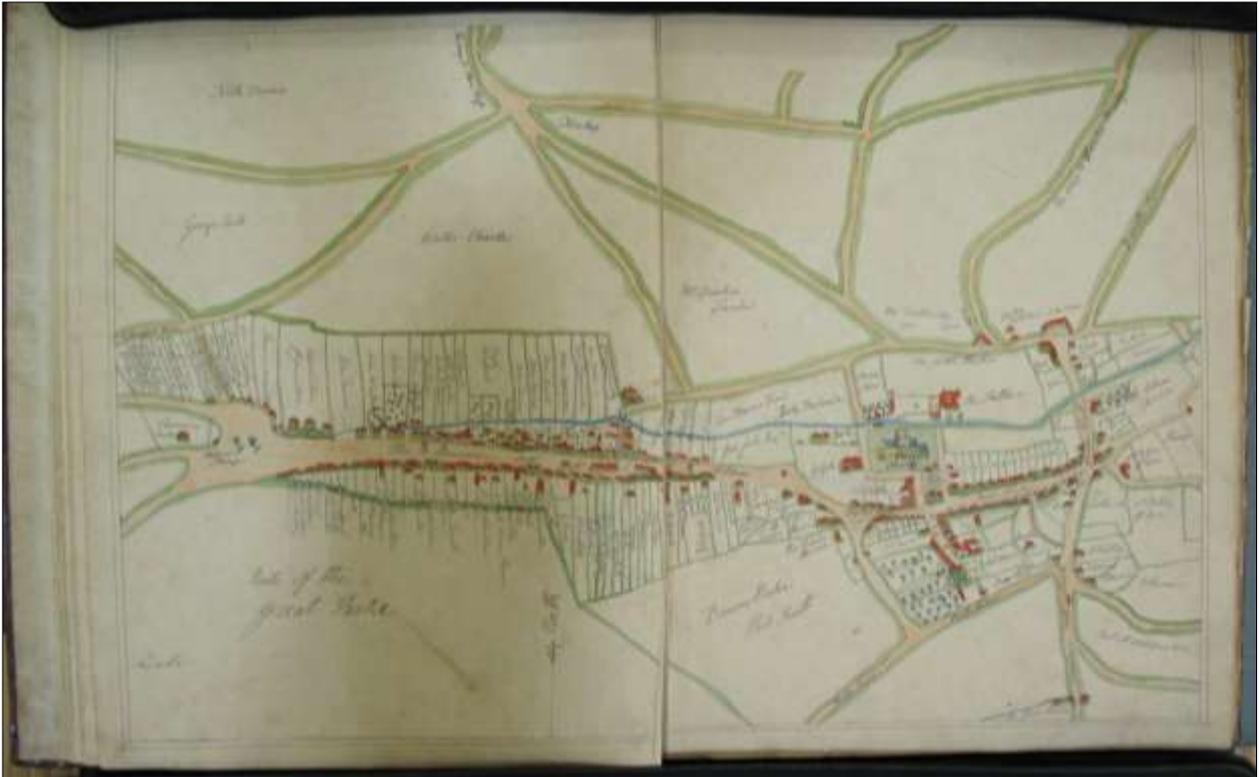


Figure 99: Extract from the 1598 Norden Atlas: the town centre (©DHC 1660/A add4/E1/).



Figure 100: Extract from the 1598 Norden Atlas: the Lord's Meadow (©DHC 1660/A add4/E1/).



Figure 103: The three sections of the 1743 Crediton Map, with inset detail (© Devon Heritage Centre, ref: 6850; 2065M/add3/E332).