



Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey

Okehampton



Historic Environment Projects

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Okehampton

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Historic Environment Projects and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Cover illustration

View from the Norman castle motte along the principal castle road leading to a bridge on the East River just beyond which, the urban survey indicates, the Norman town was founded. The early town, and a medieval chapel of ease with tower on the castle side of the bridge, would have been clearly visible before later development and tree growth.

The parish church is on the high ground to the left, above a settlement, probably pre-Norman in origin, on the steep end of the ridge. That western settlement, the Norman one to the east, and the medieval town between them, all lie on an ancient east-west highway, superseded here by a turnpike road (in the trees). The highway served as the A30 trunk road in the 20th century until Okehampton was by-passed in 1988.

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Abbreviations

ADS	Archaeological Data Service (website giving access to unpublished archaeological reports)
BL	British Library
EDV	Prefix to number identifying an archaeological 'event' (eg excavation) recorded in Devon's HER
EH	English Heritage
EUS	Extensive Urban Survey
DCC	Devon County Council
DHCMTS	Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey
DHS	Devon Heritage Service; prefix to number identifying a record in that archive (previously Devon Record Office)
GIS	Geographical Information System (computerised mapping and database)
HE	Historic Environment (service of Cornwall Council)
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
HUCA	Historic Urban Character Area
HUCT	Historic Urban Character Type
MDV	Prefix to number identifying monument recorded in Devon's HER
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey

1 Summary

Okehampton was assessed in 2014 for the Devon Historic Coastal and Market Towns Survey (DHCMTS). Part of a national programme of Extensive Urban Surveys initiated and supported by 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. Readily available sources are used to identify units of different Historic Urban Character Types (HUCTs), types of landscape sharing a similar historic character today as a result of similar development in the past. These are reconstructed also for different chronological periods, allowing a town's urban extent, uses and character to be mapped for the different periods of its history.

Units of various 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 principal tool for describing the character of the historic towns 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. Information about the survey and a detailed method statement are presented in a separate document accessible on the DCC website.

Through its street plan and buildings, with evidence from borough records and historic maps, Okehampton can be seen as an ancient moorland-edge market town on a major east-west highway. The town provided livestock markets and fairs for a large rural hinterland - including, crucially, the great rough grazing grounds of Dartmoor nearby - and accommodated travellers on the through road. It originated from an earlier settlement, and developed c1080 and 1220 under the lords of a castle probably built shortly before 1080, itself positioned at some distance from the highway, exploiting a natural spur for its mound. Fore Street, a broad open market place between two rivers - with burgages and chapel (now altered), and known or potential post-medieval houses and inns - continues to serve as the main street. Patterns of roads and other features also indicate foci of the landscape inherited by the town. These include a possible Roman fortlet used as the site of the parish church, a potential pre-urban market, and the likely pre-Norman manorial centre (outside the study area).

The report identifies 12 character areas, listed below, showing Okehampton's development and adaptation to changes such as the coming of the railway and the shift to motorised road transport. A summary of the evaluations of these HUCAs is provided in table form on the following page.

- 1 Church** with 15th and 19th century fabric, and churchyard and lanes of early, pre-urban origin
- 2 High Street and New Road** western hill with re-developed early settlement, and toll road
- 3 Castle Road** approach to ruined fortress and hunting residence developed c1080 and c1300
- 4 Riverside Town** medieval market core, with Georgian and much Victorian and modern change
- 5 Oaklands** mansion of c1820, reflecting the shaping of the town by political interests
- 6 Oaklands Park** suburb with recreational spaces derived from part of Oaklands' landscape park
- 7 Station Road** with station, houses mostly late Victorian and Edwardian, and Alpine style park
- 8 Crediton and Exeter Roads** early-mid 20th century residential streets and civic infrastructure
- 9 North Road** industrial estate and housing on former marshy area, with recent hospital above
- 10 Outer Exeter Road** outlying mid-20th century development attracted by the A30 trunk road
- 11 Eastern Suburbs** spread of estates, mostly later 20th century, reaching a Roman fort site
- 12 Ranelagh Road** mixed mid-late 20th century housing, shaped to a framework of old roads.

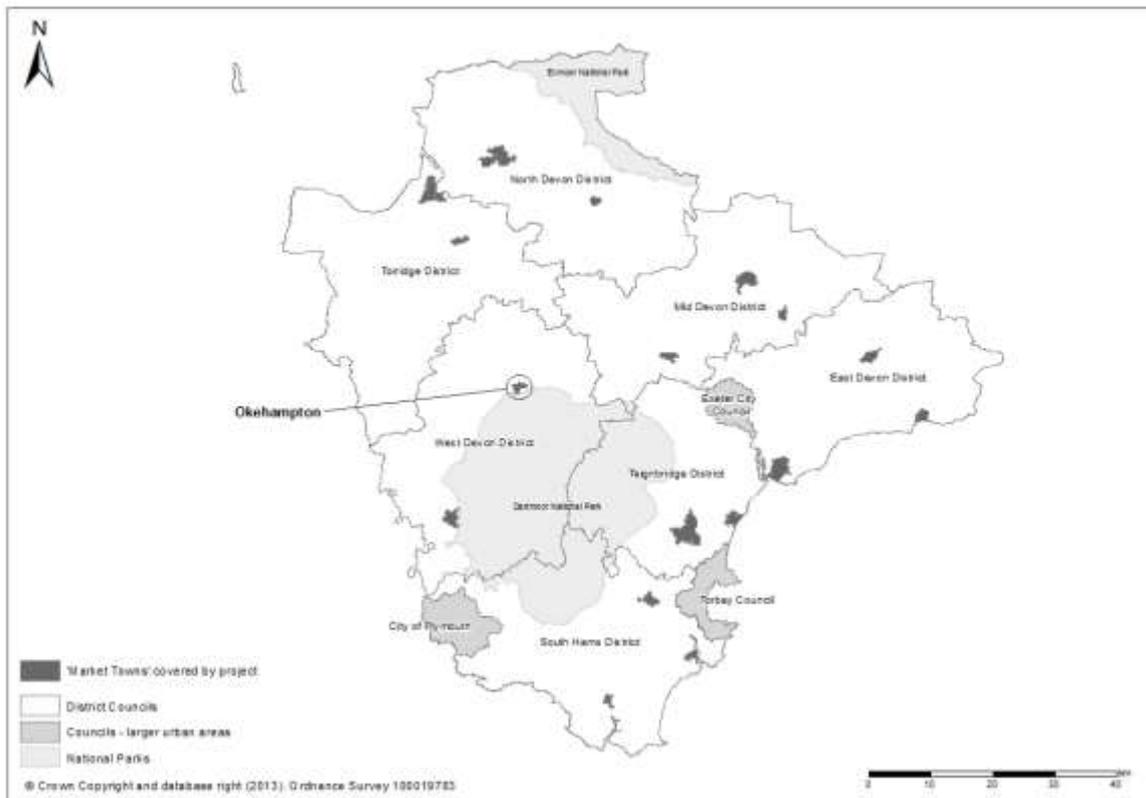
Summary table of Okehampton's Historic Urban Character Area assessments

HUCA no.	Historic Urban Character Area	Above ground heritage significance	Below ground heritage significance
1	Church	High	High
2	High Street and New Road	Low overall Medium on east; High for Darkey Lane, and at potential pre-urban market place at Old Road/South Church Lane junction	Low overall High at Old Road/South Church Lane junction; and in any relatively undisturbed ground off High Street and West Street
3	Castle Road	High overall Low in recent housing estates	Medium overall High at Castle, mill, & park pale
4	Riverside Town	High overall Low on north where redeveloped	High overall Low on north where redeveloped
5	Oaklands	High	High
6	Oaklands Park	Low overall High at the toll house and bridge	Low overall Medium in surviving open ground
7	Station Road	High	Low overall High at river, park pale and pound
8	Crediton and Exeter Roads	Medium	Low overall High in surviving open ground and in Crediton Road
9	North Road	Low	Low overall High in any surviving wet ground
10	Outer Exeter Road	Low overall High for milestone	Low
11	Eastern Suburbs	Low overall High at Ball Hill Lane	Low overall High on north by Roman fort
12	Ranelagh Road	Low overall Medium on east	Low

2 Town context

2.1 Location

Okehampton is located west of the centre of Devon, north of Dartmoor (see location map below, and foldout Map 1). The nearest other towns are around 25 km away - Crediton to the east, Tavistock on the south, and Launceston in Cornwall to the west. The study area of some 505 acres (204 ha) covers the full extent of the modern town.



Location of Okehampton in Devon, with administrative areas of the county

2.2 Geology and topography

The bedrock of the area is varied, including the sandstones, shales and limestones of the Crackington Formation, with the great granite boss of Dartmoor to the south (Edmonds *et al* 1975). Soils include the 'Denbigh 1' typical brown earths, and, on the valley floor, the Teme type of brown alluvial soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales).

Okehampton lies on the northern fringe of Dartmoor, the largest upland of the West Country. The landform of the study area is varied. It includes slopes on the south rising steadily towards the moorland hills, and also ground on the backs and sides of hilly ridges at around 200m OD extending to east and west. The town centre lies 50m or so below these ridges, on the valley floor running roughly north-south intersecting them, where two moorland rivers, the East and West Okement, converge.

These are strong rivers draining high ground and bogs, rising in the heart of the moor to the south, and running from there, one to either side, around a high shoulder of the moor, studded with half a dozen tors. This area supports the medieval commons and later medieval deer park, and the 19th century and modern artillery range, of Okehampton. Between the rivers, at their confluence, is a tongue of low ground traversed by the medieval town. At the south-west corner of the modern town, the valley of the West River reaches the edge of the uplands, and features a small but sudden natural spur within it used as the site of the Norman castle.

2.3 Previous archaeological work

Most previous archaeological work at Okehampton has focussed on its medieval castle on the south-west of the town (in HUCA 3). A programme of excavation and recording of the complex earthworks and structures there took place in the 1970s and 1980s. Reports on the work touched briefly on the development of the town, this being associated with that of the castle (Higham 1977 and 1980). 'Rescue' recording of part of one corner of the Roman fort site to the north-east (in HUCA 11) took place in 1984 after limited, inadvertent damage to the site (Griffith 1984).

The Devon HER maps archaeological 'events', or recording projects, at two locations in the town centre (HUCA 4). At the Town Hall on the north side of Fore Street, the interior of the building was inspected (EDV 6041); and at 13, St James' Street, a watching brief was carried out (EDV 4139). Also noted in the HER, in the record of monuments rather than events, is a watching brief at Fern Meadow (MDV 58011) in the north-eastern suburbs of the town (in HUCA 11).

Three further archaeological events in the urban study area are included in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) record of the large body of unpublished archaeological reports known as 'grey literature'. Trenches were excavated and recorded in advance of development south of High Street in 2007 (in HUCA 2), and south of Crediton Road in 2010 (in HUCA 11) where a geophysical survey was also carried out. A watching brief was undertaken on a pipeline trench dug along the Crediton Road in 2010 (the trench lying partly in HUCA 11).

A museum situated in the historic urban core (in HUCA 4) displays some artefacts, old paintings and photographs relating to the historic town and castle, though most of the material it presents is associated with traditional life on nearby Dartmoor.

3 Historical development

This section summarises the development of the town through time, highlighting its 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, but rather to support, and enhance the meaning of, the GIS project (together with the area-by-area characterisation of the present landscape forming Section 4, below). Foldout maps show successive 'time-slices' of broad Historic Landscape Character (Maps 2-10); the GIS should be consulted for detail of HLC. Historic Environment Record identification numbers (with the prefix MDV) are 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 Prehistoric

People have followed routes through this area from prehistoric times, passing over the Okement and its tributaries, to hunt in season on Dartmoor, to make, and meet at, its ceremonial monuments, and to herd livestock to and from summer grazing on its open rough ground. In later prehistory they established farming settlements on the moderate slopes and ridges, including those flanking the site where the town was to develop.

Just north-east of the study area, in a field north of Exeter Road, the sites of two roughly oval enclosures are visible as soil- and crop-marks on aerial photographs (MDV 12874, 13042). The presence of settlement/s there may have been a factor affecting the siting of the Roman fortifications nearby (in HUCA 11; Section 3.2). Within the study area, few prehistoric remains are recorded. A perforated stone axe of Early Bronze Age type is said to be from Okehampton, but no details of the location and context of the find are known (MDV 57365). Buried 'large old timber' preserved by waterlogging (MDV 60455) is recorded on the upper edge of wet ground which formerly extended north to the river from Exeter Road (in HUCA 9). This is suggestive of an ancient structure, but as details of it are lacking its date and meanings are not clear.

Map analysis and regression (the 'peeling back' of successive historic maps to identify features of the landscape, their origins and change) show that the churchyard on the west of Okehampton was extended in post-medieval times and altered in the 19th century and more recently. The site in its original form is a primary feature in the landscape, and the church is outside any known medieval settlement (Section 3.3.1). It is therefore likely that the churchyard was adapted from a pre-existing enclosure. This could have been a later prehistoric 'round' giving status as well as protection to a farming settlement. Development from an earthwork of that kind is indicated for some other churchyards in the region such as that at St Buryan, west Cornwall (Preston-Jones 1987, 158). However, the evidence currently available – its plan, roughly square with rounded corners, its size, and its siting – suggests that the early enclosure here had a different origin, as a fortification of Roman times (Section 3.2).



Fig 1 West side of early churchyard, left, square in plan with rounded corners (HUCA 1)

3.2 Roman (AD43 – AD409)

A complex, or succession, of Roman fortifications on the high north-east edge of modern Okehampton (MDV 4751, in HUCA 11) recorded from soil-, crop- and parch-marks on aerial photographs (Griffith 1984, 13), is shown on Map 2. This includes a fortlet, and a fort nearby apparently positioned so that an entrance in the centre of its south side would be clear of the fortlet (besides several enclosures beyond the present study area, two of which are superimposed and so show that the site is of more than one period).

An exciting possibility raised by this project is that the siting of the church on the other side of Okehampton, otherwise unexplained, results from re-use for its first-phase churchyard of the earthworks of another Roman fortlet, forming the core of the churchyard of today (Map 2). The 1756 survey shows the churchyard originally closely resembled the fortlet on the east, in size, shape, and positioning in relation both to the topography and to the probable line of the associated Roman road (see below).

The fortification site/s indicate a Roman origin for the ancient highway to the west from the Exe valley via Crediton, passing through Okehampton towards Launceston. This road was to bring traffic supporting the growth of the town, and was itself shaped (in HUCAs 2 and 4) to provide trading places in the early medieval period and in the High Middle Ages (Sections 3.3.3, 3.4.1.2, 3.4.2.2). West of Crediton the Roman road by the present A3072 to North Tawton parish where Roman marching camps and fort/s of several phases lie by a river crossing c8km (5 miles) north-east of Okehampton (Griffith 1984, 24).

From there the Roman road probably struck the line followed by the B3215; passed the Okehampton fort, which has a crop-mark indicating a road link to it, on the course of Crediton Road (Fig 2); and continued through the study area as High Street and Old Road (MDV 18496) to the Lewdown ridge (Fig 3). The trends of medieval fields (now built over) were different either side of Crediton Road, providing further evidence of its early origin, and a similar effect can be seen by Old Road, though less clearly.



Fig 2 Crediton Road on the east of town, an altered early ridgeway (HUCA 11)



Fig 3 Old Road on the west, superseded by New Road, so little changed (HUCA 2)

Crediton Road has been widened, built up, and provided with new junctions in recent times. This gives much of it, in the study area, a predominantly 20th century character (Fig 4). Archaeological monitoring of a pipeline trench running along it in 2010 (partly in HUCA 11) found only modern road fabric and tarmac there (ADS website). However, the works apparently affected only the southern side of the roadway. Comparison of its plan as mapped in 1756, with that shown on the tithe survey of 1841, indicates that, as one would expect, the roadway was widened in the intervening period by the Turnpike Trust (beyond Barton Road which carried the toll road nearer the town centre). Metalling of the turnpike age, and earlier surfacing, may still survive under the north side of the road.

A geophysical survey of land south of Crediton Road in 2010 found 'no evidence....of the putative Roman road' (report by A Farnell provided by ADS website) but this need not affect the likelihood of a Roman origin for the road since neither the survey nor the subsequent archaeological trenching extended to the road itself.



Fig 4 Crediton Road widening at Link Road junction (HUCA 8)

It is probable that the Okehampton fort was placed to control movements in several directions, as well as to hold the higher ground at the site, possibly occupied previously by prehistoric enclosures (Section 3.1). Historic maps such as the 1885 OS show marshy fields west of the ridge on which the fort lay, so on the west side the fort was probably provided with a road skirting that wet ground (just beyond the study area). Such a road would have given access to a ridgeway running north towards Jacobstowe across the Okement, as well as to a route to the north-east along the near side of the river.

The main Roman road presumably crossed the two branches of the Okement rather than the joint river downstream because this allowed a direct connection between two ridgeway routes. It may also have been much easier and safer to address the two strong rivers separately rather than their combined waters. The crossings may have been carried on bridges to avoid the risks of being delayed or swept away whilst fording. Even in summer the water level could be dangerously high, as recorded in 1628 when 'the East water was suddenly risen about some v. foote at the Easte bridge running more violent than had been usually knowne....' (Bridges 1839, 82).

Within the historic urban core (HUCA 4), the footprint of the Roman road with its river crossings is obscure because of the intensive development of the market streets here from medieval times. For the purposes of this project it is mapped, provisionally, on the course of the medieval highway and market street, Fore Street, since this links Crediton Road and High Street (where there is landscape evidence for its course) quite directly. One might speculate that it ran a little to the south of Fore Street so as to maintain a straight alignment between those two points, but no evidence for this has been found, and it is very likely that the Romans were obliged to take an angled route across the valley to make use of the best crossings across its two often turbulent rivers (Map 2).

3.3 Early medieval (AD410 – 1065)

3.3.1 Church on the road to the Moor

The evidence for the character of the landscape is clearer from early medieval times (Map 3). The earliest recorded fabric at the parish church in HUCA 1, largely rebuilt in the 19th century, is the 15th century tower (MDV 4759). The first known documentation of the church dates from the 13th century, when it was appropriated to Cowick Priory, Exeter (Higham 1977, 4). However, Okehampton is given in a document originating in the 10th century, *Leofric's Missal*, as the location of a manumission (or freeing of slaves where a group of priests was present), raising the possibility that the eventual parish church had earlier origins (Young 1925, 187-188; Higham 2008, 94-95).

The 1756 borough plan and 1841 parish tithe map indicate that the churchyard once had a different plan, square with rounded corners (Fig 1). The first of these surveys, made before changes to surrounding roads, also shows that this earthwork was a primary feature in the landscape. A road running around its western side led south to Dartmoor (Fig 5). This was probably a long-distance route for transhumance (shifting of livestock to summer grazing) (Section 4.1.1). The early square earthwork respected by the road to the moor may have been a Roman fortlet or conceivably a later prehistoric enclosure (Sections 3.1, 3.2), re-used and expanded as a churchyard.



Fig 5 South Church Lane from its probable continuation across Old Road (HUCA 2)

If there was an early church or chapel here, before the town had grown, it may be that this was attracted to its site both by the pre-existing earthwork, and by some spiritual significance of the valley of the West River below (in HUCA 3). The topography of the valley is distinctive, with the strong little spur inside it later occupied by Okehampton Castle, and a 'curious spring' upstream of the Castle recorded on Donn's map of 1765.

3.3.2 The farming landscape

Much of the landscape was probably worked or grazed from Early Medieval times. Some steep valley sides (in HUCAs 2, 3, 7 and 12) are very likely to have carried ancient woods, used for pasture as well as gathering timber or firing - as did the moorland margin to the south and also the ridge to the north, beyond the urban study area, where woods are recorded in the 13th century (Sections 3.4.2.1, 3.5.1). Early farming is indicated where roads serving the Norman castle - Castle Mill Lane (now Moyses Lane, in HUCA 2), and Castle Road (in HUCA 3) - cut through field systems (though as a result of later development those relationships are no longer clear on the ground).

Pastures prevailed on the alluvial valley floors, as shown by field names with the Old English element *ham*, 'river-meadow' (in HUCAs 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9).

It should be noted that woods, strip fields and meadows are not distinguished from one another on the maps in the report, because all are Sub-Types of the Broad HLC Type 'Open Ground', and these maps display only Broad Types. They are recorded in the GIS data-base, however. Note also that fields showing derivation from strip fields are recorded as the latter (as this was the only related Sub-Type available), and that they have varying character, resulting from variations in later enclosure and amalgamation of strips, which could not be unpicked and dated within the resources of this project.

The manor, recorded at Domesday, can be expected to have had a manorial centre, superseded by the Norman castle as the capital settlement of Okehampton. Higham notes that places with 'barton' or 'home farm' names, which might indicate such a site, occur well to the east (near Chichacott, presumably relating to that manor, and at Fatherford), or relatively late in the case of Home, or Beare, Farm, the model farm of the country house of Oaklands, on the north in the present study area (in HUCA 5). However, he notes also the similarity of the place name Beare with that of Byrham, referred to in the town charter of 1291 as the arable demesne land (Austin 1978, 195).

The improved Home/Beare Farm stands on the site of Beer, marked on the 1805 OS drawing. This lies in south-facing farmland (part of the later Oaklands Park), very likely the demesne arable, within which is also a probable abandoned settlement west of Home Farm (just outside the urban study area). That site, indicated by a cluster of small enclosures at a junction of primary routes, including one to the church, shown on the 1756 map, may have been the early medieval manorial centre of Byrham.

Map regression shows that the road system in the Beer area was re-organised with the shifting of several routes even before it was adapted to serve the new Oaklands estate in the early 19th century (Section 3.8.1). These changes may be associated with the abandonment of the settlement west of Home Farm, and the shifting of its demesne farm function to Beer (later Home Farm), following the linking of Beer to Okehampton town by Beare Bridge. The building of that bridge is likely to have taken place around the time of the charter of 1291, by which the townspeople were granted new commons to the north of Beare in exchange for their old ones south of the town (Section 3.5.1).

3.3.3 Settlement on the western hill

Okehampton is first recorded, as Ocmundtune, in documents of the 10th or 11th centuries (Gover *et al* 1931, 202; Higham 1977, 4). The place name, with the more traditional form of it, Ockington, still current in the 19th century (Worth 1895, 93, 97), is said to contain the Old English element *tun*, the common word for a settlement, and the ancient name of the river, Okement (Gover *et al* 1931, 11, 202; Finberg 1954, 4).

A rapid search for post medieval and post-medieval records of Okehampton's branching rivers (other than those mentioning them simply as East or West Water) indicates that, while the waters were named Okement in a document of 1294 referring to 'part of 1 tenement Bywestwater called Okemonnd on the north side of the Kings highway' (DHS 3248A-O/11/7), they were commonly called Lyde or Lede. (This name is similar to that of the River Lyd which runs west to Lydford from a head spring on Dartmoor quite close to that of the Okement.) For example, a quitclaim (a formal renunciation of a claim such as a right to land) of 1329 from Okehampton (DHS 3248A-O/11/21) refers to 'a burgage situated between the waters called Lyde'. It is possible that the waters were originally called Lyde, and were named Okement after the early settlement of Ocmundtune, rather than the other way round.

This leads to the question of where and what Ocmundtune was. It has been suggested that the tongue of land above the confluence of the rivers, in the medieval town, was the site of a Saxon *burh*. An early study asserts that 'the enclosure of the infant burgh must have been completed by a bank cutting off the triangular area...' (Worth 1895, 107). However, analysis of the historic maps and the landscape does not support this.

The evidence indicates that the earliest feature south of the through road (probably Roman in origin), is, instead, St James' Street, with part of Station Road continuing its line (see Section 4.7.1). This formed a route from the East Bridge crossing on the East Okement which was used to take livestock to and from Dartmoor, as was a route which ran past the church site and over the West River (Section 3.3.1).

More recently, Hoskins and Beresford have stated that there was an Anglo-Saxon village adjoining the parish church (MDV 13517), but, as noted by Higham (1977, 4), without offering any supporting evidence. Study of the patterns of roads and enclosures captured on the detailed 18th and 19th century maps across the town as a whole indicates rather that settlement was attracted, before the Norman Conquest, to a site fairly close to but quite separate from the church, on the ancient east-west highway here formerly known as Shob Hill, more recently as High Street (in HUCA 2).

The plan of 1756 shows that the highway had an expanded section c270m long and up to 25m across, shaped like a 'perfecto' cigar in plan. This was centred at a crossroads, where a route to Dartmoor from the north (passing around the churchyard; see Section 3.3.1) ran over the highway to cross the West River below the later castle (in HUCA 3). It may be the site of a market, used for seasonal sales of livestock pastured on the moor, made widely accessible, and legitimised, by its location on the ancient through-road. A similar relationship of early market and highway may occur elsewhere in the region. The place name of Marazanvose in Cornwall, which like Okehampton lies on an ancient highway adapted to form the A30 trunk road, is derived from the Cornish elements *marghas an fos*, 'the market on the dyke' (Padel 1985, 157-158).

The probable early settlement lies on that part of the highway now known as High Street (Fig 6) - east of the crossroads trading site, which may have been established to serve a rural area, and then continued to serve the settlement below until its function was shifted in Norman times to a new market place to the east (in HUCA 4) and later extended to Fore Street in between (also in HUCA 4). This settlement on High Street, with Darkey Lane forming its back lane, has been previously noted, in a discussion of the landscape context of Okehampton Castle (Higham 1977, 7; Higham 1980, 51). Higham identifies it as the Norman town (pers comm). The present survey suggests that it may be earlier in origin, and that the Norman town lay to the east (in HUCAs 4 and 8; see Section 3.4.1.2). This interpretation is based on evidence (set out below) for the western settlement being early relative to the Riverside Town; combined with the likelihood that the Norman builder of the castle chose a town site on the approach from Exeter to the castle, and intervisible with its keep (see further Section 3.4.1).



Fig 6 View from Ball Hill on the east to the suggested early settlement site (in HUCA 1)
The highway was diverted from the steep street there to New Road (below it to the left)

The 1756 and 1841 surveys show plots on High Street (then named Shob Hill), below the potential crossroads trading area. At the fronts of the plots were their buildings, lining or encroaching on the street; behind the plots on the north lay Darkey Lane, the back lane noted by Higham. These maps indicate growth in an easterly direction within the settlement, a group of plots on steeper ground above West Bridge being secondary. The upper, earlier plots number around 20, 10 each side of the road. This accords with the number of 'villagers', 21, recorded for the manor of Okehampton in Domesday Book of 1086; a possible indication (though our understanding of what such entries in Domesday Book represent in the landscape is generally poor) that this is the place where those 'villagers' with their households lived. The 1756 map also names the settlement, as Weston or Western Town. If this was Ocmundtune, it may have been re-named Western Town after a new town was laid out on the east in HUCA 4, either before or after this was joined to it by the intervening riverside town also in HUCA 4.

While quite regular in plan, Western Town has no back street on the south. The maps of 1756 and 1841 show only a short lane, below the secondary plots, by (later) New Road. A back lane may not have been made here, as plots backed on to Battlesbeere Wood, or to pasture above it, and as their outer sides lay away from the parish church north of the highway (in HUCA 1), so were not *en route* to church. Darkey Lane was needed to connect the plots on the north with farmland beyond and with pre-existing routes to church - the transhumance way (South Church Lane) at the upper end of the settlement, and at the lower end, Church Lane, now Church Path, leading to the earlier route to church from the east, part surviving as Vicarage Road. Darkey Lane will then have originally returned to Sharp Hill just below the primary, western plots; and Church Lane is aligned on that point, except for its lower part (now Church Street) which curves east to serve the bottom of the secondary plots and the Darkey Lane extension.

The street pattern, recorded by historic maps, indicates that this part of Okehampton was developed earlier than that to the east (in HUCA 4). Castle Mill Lane, later Moyses Lane, providing a link to it from the Castle, can be seen to respect the Western Town. Church Street, linking West Bridge and church, does not run directly from the West Bridge, as would be expected if the earliest town lay east of the bridge. Instead, it respects the lower end of the High Street settlement. (The Church Street route formerly reached the Church via an early road - now truncated - from the Beare area to its east, where the early manorial centre probably lay, rather than via the later Church Avenue.)

The Church Street link between the riverside town and the church is identifiable as the Lychway or Leech Lane of medieval records such as DRS 3248A-O/11/31, a grant of 1362. Leech is probably derived from Old English *lich*, 'body', denoting a coffin-road, along which people from the riverside medieval town took their dead for burial (Darkey Lane will have served the western settlement in a similar way). This link to the church is now superseded in importance by others, as can be seen from its fragmentation into the residential Church Street at its lower end, the pedestrianised Church Path in its centre, and part of the Vicarage Road/Church Avenue route beyond that.

The results of archaeological trenching evaluation in 2007 of several historic plots south of High Street, at the centre of the suggested early settlement, do not contribute to the evidence for it. The trenching revealed parts of two boundaries, but no deposits or structures showing medieval occupation. This is not surprising, though, due to the placing of the trenches, one just behind the plots in what was the edge of Battlesbeere Wood (Trench 3), one c50m back from the present roadside, so behind the expected site of early houses (Trench 2), and one c30m behind the road and in a plot previously disturbed by buildings of several phases in the 19th and 20th centuries (Trench 1).

An alternative idea is that High Street represents post-medieval expansion of the town from the east (Nick Cahill, pers comm). However, the evidence, from map analysis, for a medieval settlement here, outlined above, is important because of its meaning for archaeological potential (Section 4.2.3), and its implication that the town developed from two separate cores (see Section 3.4.1.2, Section 4.4). It is hoped that future work will investigate this settlement, and whether it is Norman or earlier in origin.

3.4 High Medieval (1066 – 1299)

3.4.1 The Okehampton of Baldwin de Brionne

3.4.1.1 Baldwin's keep

The broad character of the great and complex development of the town in medieval times is shown in Map 4; details of burgages, markets etc. are captured in the GIS.

Okehampton Castle (in HUCA 3) is a motte and bailey castle, founded between 1068, when William I put down an English revolt in Exeter, and 1086 when it was recorded in the Domesday survey for the demesne manor of Baldwin FitzGilbert de Brionne, or Baldwin of Exeter, sheriff of Devon by 1071 (Higham 1977, 11). Domesday Book states that 'Baldwin holds Okehampton himself from the King; (his) castle is sited there....21 villagers and 11 smallholders with 20 ploughs and 2 virgates, 6 pigmen. A mill which pays 6s 8d; meadow, 5 acres; pasture 1 league long and ½ league wide; woodland 3 leagues long and 1 league wide. 4 burgesses; a market which pays 4s. 1 cob; 52 cattle; 80 sheep. Value of the whole £10....' (Thorn and Thorn, 1985, 16,3).

The motte, and the core of the stone keep built upon it, represent the first phase of the castle (Higham 1977, 29, 31). The motte was made on the end of a steep, narrow spur which was cut through behind it, making it a powerful site (Fig 7). A mill below the Castle, shown in a drawing of 1734, may be the mill referred to in Domesday Book.



Fig 7 Spur running to the castle, with castle ditch across it; from the motte (HUCA 3)

This was the capital castle of what would in the 13th century be termed the barony of Okehampton, which at Domesday comprised, besides Okehampton itself, nearly 200 rural manors, some with lesser castles, and urban properties in Barnstaple and Exeter, where the lords of Okehampton were also castellans of the royal castle (Higham 1999, 138, 140). The barony spread fan-like west, north, and east from Okehampton, the manors being dotted across most of Devon on the north side of Dartmoor. Baldwin concentrated much of his landed power in central Devon; he held a handful of demesne manors in the Okehampton region, and important tenants held other manors nearby, at Kigbeare and Chichacott (Higham 1977, 13).

Factors influencing the positioning of the capital castle probably included proximity to the edge of Dartmoor with its wooded hunting grounds and vast rough pasture beyond; the availability of the valley spur site; and pre-existing settlement (see Section 3.3.3).

The choice of Okehampton for the baronial castle would seem to show, also, the strategic importance for the Normans of the route of Roman origin running west from Exeter to Cornwall (via Launceston, the site of another Norman motte and bailey castle). Okehampton Castle lies below the early highway, but had a link intercepting it to the west (part incorporated in New Road), and another meeting it on the north at the head of the suggested pre-existing settlement on High Street (see Section 3.3.3), besides a principal approach leading straight from near East Bridge (Castle Lane).

Baldwin's heir Richard fitz Baldwin, or de Brionis, also had a strong interest in Okehampton. He re-fortified the castle in 1105, and the town charter of c1220 refers to him as founder of the borough customs (Higham 1977, 13). In the 1130s Richard established a Cistercian monastery at Brightley by the River Okement, to which monks came from Waverley Abbey in Surrey (Worth 1895, 110). This was outside the urban study area, downriver, but linked to Okehampton Castle by North Street across the East Bridge, with the route down the valley floor beyond it which became North Road. (The monks left in 1141 after their patron's death, moving to Ford, East Devon.)

3.4.1.2 The Eastern Town

The Domesday Book of 1086 records a market and four burgesses in the manor of Okehampton (Section 3.4.1.1). Historians of the last half century or so have generally regarded this as evidence of a new town, which had few burgesses because it was new and 'struggling into existence' (Hoskins 1954, 57), and some have placed it in the area of Fore Street, 'squeezed between the ... rivers, leaving the church of the Anglo-Saxon village isolated in the fields on the hillside above' (Beresford 1967, 248-249).

The foundation of a major castle must have had a great impact on the settlement pattern, as noted by Hoskins and Beresford. However, particularly as he was castellan of the royal castle in Exeter, Baldwin would seem most likely to have initiated urban growth where two major routes from Exeter met east of East River, from the crossing of which he made the approach to his castle. These were the road via Crediton, probably Roman in origin (Section 3.2); and that skirting Dartmoor through Sticklepath (later part of the A30), possibly established as an alternative route from Exeter closer to the time of the castle, as it seems to cut field systems of early medieval type.

Historic maps and a place name, together with the topography of the area (discussed in the description of it, in Section 4.4.1), indicate a potential site of the town begun before Domesday, between the junction of these Crediton and Exeter Roads, and the East Bridge, in Easton or Eastern Town (in HUCA 4). This would then have been quite distinct from the suggested pre-Norman settlement to the west (in HUCA 2) until development of the intervening low ground between the rivers (in HUCA 4) connected the two. As noted in Section 4.4.1, this eastern area has been seen instead as formed by expansion from the present town centre (Nick Cahill, pers comm); the evidence for an early core here, important in terms of both understanding of the town as a whole, and potential for buried archaeology, is set out below.

The 1756 map depicts a sausage-shaped trading place, running west along East Street from the Exeter/Crediton Road junction, expanded at its west end by East Bridge, beyond which lay the Castle Road (no longer clear due to changes to East Street in the turnpike and trunk road eras, and infilling east of East Bridge). The 1756 plan also gives the name One Stone Meadows for fields north of Crediton Road. The similarity of their names suggests that the 'One Stone' was the 'Longstone', a marker of the edge of Okehampton's trading area recorded in the charter of 1220, which states that 'If any man buy or sell within the Longstone or Yfenystye he must pay toll' (Young 1925, 189). The location of the One Stone fields, c90m from the present Exeter/Crediton Road junction, suggests that the medieval trading area extended there because it included, besides the spaces nearer the bridge, an early open market place, later built over, in the triangle of land between today's junction and the Stone (Figs 8, 53).



Fig 8 Site of possible triangular Norman market, right, by inner Crediton Road (HUCA 8)

As can be seen from the 1756 survey and later maps, and on the ground, the Eastern Town was connected directly, via Mill Shot Lane (now part of Mill Road), to Town Mill on the East River (MDV 5579). Extracts from a rental of 1593 provide documentation of 'two grist mills called the Custome mills' (Bridges 1839, 163), and one of these will have been here at Town Mill (the other was very probably Castle Mill; Section 3.4.1.1). Town Mill is named on the 1885 OS map, and formed part of the manor as recorded by the tithe schedule in 1841 (being listed there as held in hand by Albany Savile, who then owned the lordship). Its leat forms an early feature in the landscape of the East River valley, on the edge of the modern town. The positioning of the Town Mill on this eastern side of the river, very convenient to the Eastern Town, and considerably less so to the town between the rivers (direct access from which required use of a ford or a little bridge, perhaps a clapper or stone slab structure, both shown on the 1756 plan), gives strong support to the evidence for the relative chronology of those urban areas.

The 1841 map shows further details of Eastern Town, consistent with the interpretation of the junction triangle as a former open market place. A sinuous, medieval type boundary ran between the Crediton and Exeter Roads south of One Stone Meadows, with a lane on its inner side, defining the triangular space within which were plots with angular plans indicative of infilling. A small group of plots, shorter than the burgages of the town between the rivers, resembling more closely the plots of pre-Norman origin in the Western Town (in HUCA 2), bordered the Exeter Road south of the triangular area. There are signs of a similar group - reverted to farmland by 1756 though built on again by 1841 - on the Crediton Road north of the triangle.

Other groups of plots, facing the triangular place or facing East Street, can be seen on the 1756 and 1841 maps lying west of those noted above. The 1841 plan depicts plots north of the triangle, west of the group which reverted to fields, attached to the latter, indicating that development progressed from the east to the west; this is not shown on the 1756 map, though. The Domesday survey may have captured the town during the laying out of an original symmetrical plan, recording one of the two groups in prime positions facing the triangular market place as the 'four burgesses'. The sausage-shaped market place and plots on East Street and the expanded trading place by East Bridge may then represent early 12th century expansion under Richard fitz Baldwin.

Meanwhile, on the western front (in HUCA 2), Moyses Lane, historically Castle Mill Lane, ran across earlier fields (see Section 4.2.1) to link the Castle (in HUCA 3) with the head of the settlement on High Street, considered to have been established before the Norman Conquest (Section 3.3.3), indicating that this settlement continued to function.

3.4.2 The landscape of the Courtenays

3.4.2.1 Old castle of the Courtenays

The Courtenays came from France in 1152; Reginald de Courtenay married Hawise or Hawisia, the heiress of the barony and honour of Okehampton, in 1173, and so became Baron of Okehampton, and hereditary Sheriff of Devon, in right of his wife (Hoskins 1954, 75; Endacott 2003, 26). After the Courtenays acquired the barony, the old Norman castle (in HUCA 3) may have been adapted to accommodate more residential functions (Higham 1977, 13, 14). On the death of John Courtenay in 1274 the castle was described as 'an old motte which is worth nothing, and outside the motte a hall, chamber and kitchen poorly built', but as noted by Higham this may be an underestimate of its value; other documentation indicates some development, Reginald de Courtenay being granted a private household chapel in 1178 (*ibid*).

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the manor is thought to have established new farming settlements on the edge of the great upland pasture of Dartmoor, in the area which was to become a deer park later in the medieval period (Higham 1980, 51), on the southern edge of the modern town. Elements of the landscape later used for the deer park were established by this time, the Courtenays controlling use of woods around the slopes south of the castle which will have formed part of their hunting grounds. The timber granted by Robert Courtenay in his charter for the town (below) was to come from 'the wood of Okehampton', and burgesses also had the right to have a sow and four pigs without pannage in Okehampton Wood (Worth 1895, 108).

Further manipulation of the social landscape by the lord of the kind seen earlier in the 12th century in the foundation of the (short lived) monastic house at Brightley downriver (Section 3.4.1.1) is also recorded, the Courtenays founding a hospital for lepers, dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, around 1250 (MDV 4767). The tithe map records as 'Hospital' enclosures of medieval character on high ground south of the Castle; these may have been granted to the hospital, but 14th century documents mention St Mary Magdalene in contexts which show that the hospital was on the west side of town, apparently between West Bridge and Sharp Hill/High Street (in HUCA 2).

3.4.2.2 The town between the rivers

Robert de Courtenay granted a charter with confirmation of privileges to the burgesses of his 'free borough of Okehampton' c1220 (Young 1925, 188). He gave 'all their tenements and free customs which they held in the time of Richard fitz Baldwin and of Robert the king's son [Robert fitz Ede, son of Henry I, who acquired the lordship through marriage with the daughter of William D'Avranche, who had himself married into the family of Baldwin]'. Robert also obtained in 1221 a grant for the holding of a fair annually on the eve and day of St James at Okehampton, as shown by the Pipe Rolls for 5 Henry III (Young 1925, 189).

Okehampton, the map analysis indicates, may have included three distinct foci around this time (though a single centre is suggested by some: Nick Cahill, pers comm). Robert de Courtenay himself may have founded the urban area on Fore Street, running from East River to West River (in HUCA 4), with the result that the centre of town became the Market Cross site (from which the 19th century Market Street was cut). This would then have linked two earlier cores; the Eastern Town around the Exeter and Crediton Road junctions (also in HUCA 4) possibly founded by Baldwin de Brionne and expanded to East Bridge by his son Richard (Section 3.4.1.2), and the Western Town beyond West River (in HUCA 2) where a settlement may have been made before the Norman Conquest (Section 3.3.3). If so, though their rights would seem to have been confirmed by the 1220 charter, the character of the two earlier areas of settlement will have been transformed by the development of Fore Street between them; the market place east of East Bridge appears likely to have remained in use, however, as market housing was built within it in later or post-medieval times (Section 3.6.2).

The similarity in the capacity of the pre-urban, cigar-shaped market place indicated by the historic maps to the west (on Old Road), to that of the trading places in Eastern Town (including the eastern triangle and the sausage-like East Street), and to those in the Riverside Town (including Fore and West Streets, and Fair Place or St James' Street), suggests that each of these three areas provided for a comparable volume of livestock, and that trade shifted from the first area to the second, expanded to the third, and shrank away from the second. A very likely context for the shrinkage of the eastern market would be the abandonment of the castle in the 16th century (Section 3.6.1), reducing the importance of this area on the outer approach to that site.

Besides chronological relationships between burgage plots and between these and the Castle Road, noted in the description of the plots, below, other evidence supports the suggestion that the town between the rivers was developed by Robert de Courtenay. Robert's fair of 1221 shares its dedication to St James with a chapel. St James' Chapel (MDV 4763) stands inside the East Bridge at the end of the (Norman) eastern approach to the Castle, this inner end of which was used for St James' fair ground (discussed further below); the chapel is recorded in a grant of c1272 (DHS 3248A-O/11/2) in a way that suggests it had stood for some time before that date, so perhaps from c1221.

The position of the (lost) market cross is of interest here. As the 1756 plan shows, it stood on Fore Street (near the later George Street and Market Street junctions). A conveyance of 1624 refers to lands 'in the midst of Okehampton nigh to the Crosse there' (Brooking-Rowe 1902, 149). It was not at the centre of the area between the rivers, as might be expected if this were the earliest part of the town, but at the centre of the combined urban area including Eastern and Western Towns. However, for the siting of the cross in the centre to indicate that this combined area is High Medieval, it would need to have been of that date itself, and *in situ*; and it may have been placed when the town was incorporated, around the time of the reference to it noted above.

The market place between the East and West Rivers (MDV 15993) will have been open originally (as it is now), apart from temporary pens, stalls and the like, before the development of rows of buildings within it visible on the borough survey of 1756. Again, like the town centre of today, it was probably also accessed by bridges at either end. The East River crossing can be expected to have had a bridge maintained from Norman times to serve the castle. The West River probably had one by 1220, if not before, to allow access, irrespective of the state of the rivers, to that part of the ancient east-west route which supported the new market street. A bill filed in Chancery in 1610 says that the Borough had 'always' been subject to great charges and payments 'viz. the relief and maintenance of very many poor persons; the reparacion and mayntenance of three great bridges [the third being Beare Bridge, discussed in Section 3.5.1], the amendment of the highways, pavements and streets' (Burd 1926, 320-321).

The flat broad market with bridges at either end, expanding towards East Bridge, was no doubt a renowned feature of the district (Figs 9, 54). Rare documentary evidence provides glimpses of the place, as it was experienced in medieval times, and of the traffic passing through it on the ancient highway which, with the livestock from Dartmoor and associated trades, supported its population. A lease of 1521 refers to land lying between other tenements on the east and west and bounded by the 'water called Okemende on the north and the road platea on the south' (DHS 3248A-O/11/138). As suggested in the DHS catalogue, 'the road platea' may mean 'the wide road', the open market place. A letter or a copy of one from Pope Urban in answer to a petition from the inhabitants of Okehampton for a perpetual chantry and celebration of divine services at St James' Chapel, attributed to Urban V and so dated to 1365, mentions the siting of the town between the rivers (Burd 1926, 312). '....The same township, together with the Chapel, is found to be situated between two streams of water, on account of which floods often occur....'. The letter also says the petition states that 'through the middle of your said township of Okehampton there is a certain public road which stretches from Cornwall towards the city of Exeter and London, by which so many caravans enter and pass through....'



Fig 9 The great span of Fore Street, from the West Bridge now similarly wide (HUCA 4)

Robert's charter granted timber to build houses on new burgages (Worth 1895, 108). Timber framed buildings are no longer readily seen here due to later fires and decay, removal and renewal. However, early images record some, particularly a picturesque row crowded into the market street west of East Bridge. This appears in a view from the Bridge (reproduced in Wreford and Wreford 1994, 4, and dated 1821 in the Etched on Devon's Memory website) and in a photograph of 1875 looking the other way (Wreford and Wreford 1995, 4). Such sources show buildings with exposed timbers and other features characteristic of this type of construction. These included Mount Ribbon north of the chapel (Wright 1889, 233), and the Western Shambles extending west towards Market Cross from near Mount Ribbon (note that the Western Shambles, appearing in these views, has been mistaken by previous commentators on them for Middle Row, which in fact ran behind it, *ie* to its south, in line with Mount Ribbon).

Either side of the market were burgage plots perpendicular to the street with houses at their heads, again captured in modified form on the plan of 1756. The plots on the south of Fore Street were shorter, and graded in length, since they had to be fitted, behind, to the ancient Moor Road, here incorporated in the Norman period Castle Lane. Those on the north ran out almost to the natural barrier of the curve of the western river above its confluence with the eastern one, but not quite - a slip of land remained below the plots there as the 1756 plan shows, perhaps to give shared access along the river bank for domestic water, fishing, processing of goods for the market and so on.

The length of the northern burgages has been thought to indicate that these are Okehampton's earliest urban plots (MBV 15994). However, their length is comparable to that of others in the Courtenays' town, though generally greater (see note on the relative chronology of the Riverside Town, below), and it may reflect several factors, besides the usual desirability of access to river frontage, already mentioned. This low flat land at the river confluence will have been poorly drained and subject to flooding, making larger plots desirable; and it will have been rendered inaccessible for normal use as meadows by the building of houses along the market place between the rivers.

Burgages developed in complex ways; the 1756 surveyor noted that a couple lay 'in Twenty three parcels'. Nevertheless, on the north of Fore Street, the 1756 plan shows how the outer ends of plots, captured in the waterside slip mentioned above, were attached to others, indicating time depth in their layout. They were probably imposed on meadow/s rather than strip fields, this being low, wet ground. A belt on the west bank of East River remained as meadow until taken in by expansion plots in early post-medieval times, as indicated by the 1756 plan and by a break in ground level on its west. It may have been used to pasture animals for market, and for crafts using water.

The burgages beyond this belt, ending at further meadow land in the bow of West River, can be seen to have been laid out in a sequence progressing from east to west. This fits well with the model of westward medieval growth of the riverside town from a Norman foundation on the other side of East Bridge.

Besides the market on Fore Street, the town between the rivers had a fairground on St James' Street with an expanded area where the castle approach ran on from the end of the street. This street was named Fair Place in 1756, and a 1770 lease refers to 'Dwelling houses, burgage and herb garden adjoining the Bullock Fair and the street leading towards Okehampton Park' (DHS 3248A-O/11/321). Its position, at the edge of the town and on a primary transhumance route linking Okehampton and Dartmoor (Moor Road, now Tors Road, in HUCA 7), made this site ideal for Robert's annual fair.

A large sub-circular enclosure identifiable as an early pound used for the fair lay at the outer end of the fairground, where the castle approach ran away from the early moor road. A 19th century schedule of 'Ancient Town Lands' refers to 'Woodhouse near Pound' (Wright 1889, 234), and this pound was clearly the site in question, Woodman's House lying nearby. The enclosure was part absorbed into the road and part used for houses and their gardens by the time of the 1756 survey. (A smaller, probably 17th century manor pound lay outside the borough limits by the road to Exeter; see Section 4.11.1.)

The town also had meadow and craft areas by its rivers. It was linked to the Town Mill - already placed on the opposite side of the East River to serve the earlier settlement there (Section 3.4.1.2) - via Mill Lane and several other routes through the burgages, by a crossing over the East River which had a foot- or packhorse bridge at the time of the 1756 survey and no doubt in medieval times too. The nearer parts of the low hams or meadows curving along the rivers, either side of Robert's town, can be expected to have been used for crafts requiring a water supply. These included processing hides from the cattle raised on the moor and sold and butchered in the town, an activity controlled by the charter which states that 'none, unless he be of the borough, shall buy green hide in the borough nor do any retail trade' (Beresford 1967, 218).

As shown on Map 4, Okehampton expanded within the medieval period in several places. The 1756 and 1841 plans indicate secondary groups of burgages, beside and between the foci of settlement suggested above (*ie* the pre-Norman Western Town, the early Norman area on the Exeter/Crediton Road junction, the early 12th century East Street, and the early 13th century Fore Street). Plots on the outer, south side of the 13th century fairground on St James' Street (in HUCA 4) can be identified as the 'South Town' of a document of 1418 (see discussion of the 'town between the waters', Section 4.4.1). These were long plots ending at riverside ground, like those north of Fore Street, and clearly represent expansion from the settlement on Fore Street. Others, north of West Street across West Bridge (in HUCA 2), are shorter, more like those of the pre-Norman settlement to their west (also in HUCA 2), but showing fitting to a shelf of riverside ground, so could represent growth either from the west or from the town between the rivers (in HUCA 4). A grant dated 1480, DHS 3248A-O/11/120, of a tenement in Okehampton by East Water on the north of a road leading to Sele [South Zeal] and on the south of a road leading to Bow, *ie* between the Exeter and Crediton Roads, could indicate expansion within the suggested triangular market place there, but could alternatively relate to a tenement of rural character east of the triangle.

A table of the value of boroughs on the estates of five families including the Courtenays (Beresford 1967, 68) shows that on the inquisition *post mortem* of Hugh de Courtenay, in 1292, Okehampton had 140 burgages. That total approximates to the number of plots with market street or fair ground frontage shown on the 1841 map, in all of the probable areas of burgages identified in this assessment. This may suggest that by the end of the thirteenth century Okehampton reached something like its full medieval extent, including the Eastern Town and Western Town thought to be of Norman and earlier origin respectively (later- and post- medieval growth being accommodated by sub-division of burgages). There is great potential for refining this impression through mapping of detail from the borough records, beyond the scope of the present survey.

3.5 Later Medieval (1300 – 1540)

3.5.1 Hunting castle and park of the Courtenay Earls

The keep of Okehampton, with much of the rest of the castle (in HUCA 3), was rebuilt c1300 by Hugh de Courtenay. In 1335 Hugh became Earl of Devon (the first Courtenay Earl; Robert de Courtenay had earlier married the daughter of William Redvers, Earl of Devon), with the result that the family was 'pre-eminent in the West' (Young 1925, 190; Hoskins 1954, 75; Higham 1977, 32). During the Wars of the Roses, in the later 15th century, Okehampton Castle was twice confiscated from the Courtenays because of their political allegiances, but was returned to them (Endacott 1999, 32). It was finally lost to the family at the end of the medieval period (Section 3.6.1).

The renewal of the castle c1300 gave it enhanced power of two kinds (Higham 1980; Creighton 2002, 67). It had a very formidable entrance from the Okehampton side, through a long walled way rising from an outer barbican to the curtain walls and inner gatehouse (Fig 10). Within this were luxurious lodgings for the family and visiting households, with views over an ornamental private deer park extending south.



Fig 10 Ruins of the long, strong, intimidating entrance from town to castle (HUCA 3)

This was the largest castle in Devon, and the Courtenay household, perhaps numbering over 100 people, and their guests, will have brought much business to the town. Higham's excavations of the site show for example that supplies consumed here included sea fish as well as venison from the park (Endacott 2009, 8, 31). The Earls may have actively promoted trade and industry in the town to provision their castle, as suggested by a reference of 1639 (DHS 3248A-O/11/427) to 'Earles Maltheuses in Easton town' (probably on the west side of HUCA 8).

The deer park was an essential as well as very extensive element of the new Okehampton of the Courtenays. Such a landscape, dedicated and designed for hunting and viewing by the lord's family and their guests, was necessary to entertain peers and maintain status at the highest levels of society (Herring 2003). To secure the land for it a new town charter was made for Hugh de Courtenay in 1292 (Worth 1895, 109; Austin 1978, 195). The burgesses agreed to relinquish rights in the wood to the south of the castle and borough, in return for new rights in Hook Wood to the north.

The OS drawing of 1805 shows the landscape to which the common rights were shifted, on the slopes rising to the north of the town, beyond the study area (showing this as it was prior to improvements - associated with the estate of Oaklands centred in HUCA 5 - made for much later lords of the manor, the Saviles; see Section 3.8.1). This area, Beare, was formerly linked to the town across the River Okement by Beare Bridge, the site of which lies beyond North Street (MDV 63473) on the north side of HUCA 8.

Beare Bridge was mentioned, with the road leading to it, in a record of a 1386 (DHS 3248A-O/11/48). It was probably built in Hugh's time to provide access to the new commons, since the river here, below the confluence of its East and West waters, is deep and strong even in summer. This crossing was finally closed at some point in the period between 1841 and 1885, by which time the Lodge Bridge (upriver, between Beare Bridge and the earlier West Bridge) had been established for several decades.

Returning to Okehampton Park by the castle, this landscape, as delimited on later maps (such as DHS D1508M add/E34/1), lies south of the historic town, largely beyond the limits of the present study (Fig 11), but it has shaped the urban area indirectly in many ways. For well over two hundred years it contributed to the prestige of the Courtenays, and its maintenance brought business to the town; the place names Woodmans (Castle Road) and Parkers Ham (North Street), recorded on the 1756 plan, act as reminders of this. In the longer term, the presence of this 'private' hunting landscape on the moorland edge facilitated the introduction of the artillery range of the 19th century which in turn developed into the extensive army range on the higher moors today.



Fig 11 Part of the hunting grounds of Okehampton Park, from the Castle (HUCA 3)

On the south of the study area, the modern town reaches to, or, in places, just across, the edge of the hunting park. A substantial length of the massive bank and ditch required to support the park pale or deer-proof fence survives near the Castle in HUCA 3. Elements of the layout of the suburbs by Tors Road and Station Road (in HUCA 7) have also been determined by this earthwork and/or by the property boundary it represents (see Figs 48, 85).

While the burgesses gave up their commons in the wood south of the Castle in 1292, they retained rights of passage through it to grazing on the moor above, with 'free and peaceable entrance and exit from the said borough through the middle of the said South Wood, by way of Rodmore to the said waste' (Austin 1978, 195). This Rodmore, or Moor Road, ran from the East Bridge via Fair Place to the deer park and through this to the Moor Gate on the upper, south edge of the park beyond the modern town (the site of which edge is marked by the later Moorgate Farm intake, just outside it).

As a result of the arrangements made in 1292, the name of this route changed, appearing as Park Lane on the map of 1756. Around seven centuries later it was re-used, with modifications (widening works were recorded in 1911; DHS 3248A-O/31/36-39) - to form the inner part of Station Road, with Tors Road picking it up beyond that; so that the major, modernising expansion of the town in the railway age adopted the line of an ancient, customary drove road (Fig 84).

3.5.2 A deep-rooted market and a tall church tower

Borough documents show that Okehampton returned members to Parliament in 1300-1301 and 1313 and it has been suggested that this record of early representation may be incomplete (Wright 1889, 134-135). However, other documentary evidence has been found by historians to indicate that the town was decayed in or by the early 14th century, and severely depressed in the 15th century. A comparison of the 19 places in Devon classed as boroughs for taxation purposes in 1334 shows Okehampton ranked 18th, just above Lydford, and it has been suggested that both of these towns had suffered from competition from Tavistock during the 12th century (Hoskins 1952, 223, 225). A wider study placing the success of planted towns on a 'ladder' ranging from 5 to 150 shillings, based on taxation assessments for 1334, has Okehampton, at 22 shillings, just above the lowest group (the lowest 14%) which were assessed at under 20 shillings (Beresford 1967, 261-262). In a tax re-assessment of 1445 Okehampton's assessment was reduced by 61 per cent, making it the Devon borough with the second highest cut to tax in a list of 20, after Crediton at 74 per cent (Hoskins 1952, 231).

Several historic maps show decay in the town in the past. The 1756 plan shows gaps in the frontage on High Street, and no buildings at all in the suggested Norman burgages on Crediton Road. The 1955 OS map marks 'Ruins' in places within the burgage plots south of West Street inside the bridge (now built over and forming part of HUCA 3). Further evidence of ruined or decayed structures in burgages can be seen on the ground, in parts of the backs of the streets (where difficulty of access has restricted the redevelopment or levelling and re-surfacing which may have obscured such evidence elsewhere), including north of West Street, and north of Fore Street (Figs 12, 72).



Fig 12 Burgage on north of outer West Street, from re-developed north end (HUCA 2)

The dates and meanings of abandonments will be varied, and some may result from shifts of trade within Okehampton, rather than overall shrinkage. Ruins may represent post- rather than late-medieval decay, for example where cob is visible, this fabric having been recorded as characteristic of the town in the 17th century (Section 3.6.2). Wealthy medieval merchants' houses appear lacking, but will have been lost or transformed in the railway age (Section 3.8.4). The parish church was rebuilt in the 15th century, the fine tower of this period surviving today (Hoskins 1952, 239-240). Certainly the rows which ran through Fore Street represented a very significant increase in the town's buildings, and must have been fully or largely developed before 1585; the existence of the Western Shambles, crammed in to a space left by them, being implied by a reference of that date to the Eastern Shambles (see Section 3.6.2).

Possibly Okehampton was much poorer in later medieval times than in the High Middle Ages but maintained its market essential to the farming and moorland hinterland, its related trades including the tanning provided for in its early charter and a wool industry better documented in the 17th century (Section 3.6.2), and its role as a highway posting town where long-distance travellers west of Exeter needed to stay overnight.

3.6 Post Medieval (1540 – 1699)

3.6.1 Fall of the Courtenays, incorporation, and Civil War

Okehampton shows limited development in post-medieval times (Map 5), and may have suffered serious decline with the fall of the Courtenay Earls and dispersal of their lands. In 1538 Henry de Courtenay was attainted of treason and executed, and all his properties passed to the crown (Higham 1977, 6, 12, 14). After the death of the last Earl of Devon, in 1556, the estates were divided among co-heiresses so that, for example, Sir Francis Vyvyan, representative of one of the heiresses' families, possessed an eighth as late as 1743 (Lysons and Lysons 1822). As well as breaking the connection between Okehampton and the nobles who had held it for some 400 years, this division caused abandonment of the Castle (in HUCA 3) as a residence, and of its Park as a hunting ground and idealised landscape. A park-keeper was installed as late as 1514 but after 1538 the Park was let out by the crown for rents. It has been suggested that after the beheading of de Courtenay, for many generations, the people of Okehampton had very few direct dealings with their overlords (Young 1925, 193).

From 1623 the status of the Okehampton changed, as it became an incorporated town, one of the smallest. The borough lands forming a circle with a radius of half a mile centred on the Market Cross in Fore Street (both the cross site and boundary appear on the maps of 1756 and 1885) were defined at this time (Endacott 2002, 47). The incorporation brought the town judicial rights in the second tier giving criminal jurisdiction over all cases not involving life and limb and exclusive of county magistrates (Barry 1999, 422, 423). A court is mentioned in 1641 (Bridges 1839, 93). The court house, as shown by borough records (DHS 3248A-O/11/401-408) was in Fore Street's Middle Row (removed between 1841 and 1885), by the old Town Hall or Guildhall. This was the 'town hall...new plaunched and new playstered' recorded in 1674 (Bridges 1839, 102). A prison, built on the outer bank of the West River near the West Bridge, is referred to in the description of the location of a messuage nearby in 1675 (DHS 3248A-O/11/409).

The political significance of the town changed, since the owners of the manor and borough, through expenditure, patronage and pressure, could control the Corporation and determine the appointment of the two Members of Parliament sent regularly from Okehampton until 1832 (Hoskins 1954, 447). New charters confirming and extending trading privileges followed later in the 17th century (see further Section 3.6.2). The power-bases of most lords of the fragmented old Okehampton estate of the Courtenays remained remote from the town, but an eighth was held by a local family, the Northmores, for nearly a hundred years, passing from them to another leading resident family, the Luxmoores (Lysons and Lysons, 1822). In 1685, John Northmore built a house in the centre of the town and market, later adopted as a replacement Town Hall (MDV 12868). Its positioning, with its quality (Fig 61, and see comment on town buildings, below), marked the influence of the family, enhanced by the incorporation.

During the Civil War, Okehampton, as an isolated population base on a major, strategically important route to Cornwall, suffered repeatedly from the movements of troops. In 1642 'the King's armyes and the parliament's armies came severally to this town, dyvers times...and quartered here, to the great dammage of the inhabitants' (Bridges 1839, 94). In 1644 the place was occupied by Prince Maurice with 2,000 troops, and then by the King; the following year Sir Richard Grenville quartered here 'with a considerable force' before leaving suddenly on the approach of Sir Thomas Fairfax, who came again in 1646 (White's Directory for 1850, 20).

The troops built earthworks to control the approach to the town along its east-west highway. In 1642 'The fortification in Stony park was made by the direction of Major James Chudleigh, of the Parliamentary army. And there was a fight at Meldon Downe, by night, in a great tempest of wind and rain' (Bridges 1839, 94). There are several Stony Parks near Okehampton, but the one referred to can be identified with confidence as the Stony Park south-west of the church recorded on the 1756 survey.

The HER notes remains visible on aerial photographs of an earthwork said to be of the Civil War, in a field, later subdivided, south of Stony Park across Stony Park Lane, above the highway here named Old Road (MDV 4821; just west of the limits of the study area). There may well have been other, associated earthworks, perhaps of several phases, in different positions around the Stony Park area; it is known that in October and November 1645 Grenville 'did raise barricadoes and other works and made this town a garrison town for a while – free quarter continued till February' (Bridges 1839, 96-97).

The population of Okehampton has been estimated from documentary evidence as being approximately 800 in around 1660 (Barry 1999, 417). The inhabitants had been afflicted in 1625 by 'a very great sickness and visitation of the pestilence...whereof dyed about 300 people...and from Easter eve 1626, until after Michaelmas following; noe markett at all [was] kept here save only some small quantity of victuals brought in weekly on the market day...' (Bridges 1839, 80).

3.6.2 'A little market town.... with a very good inn'

The two main sources of town life continued despite the loss of the Earls' patronage – trading livestock and products such as wool, cheese and leather related to the grazing on nearby Dartmoor; and accommodating and provisioning travellers on the highway.

The critical importance of the market for the town is emphasised in a petition of the early 17th century (pre-1612) from the Borough to the Earl of Salisbury (Lord High Treasurer of England). The petitioners refer to the 'commons of pasture, profitts of a market there and such like whereby many poore people there inhabiting are much comforted and in a manner altogether sustained so that if the same should be taken from them it will turne to the utter overthrowe of the said towne and utter undoing of multitudes of the inhabitants of the same' (Young 1925, 201). A visitor found that 'Okehampton is a place of little account, situated on the small river Hocan....its whole consequence is derived from the abundance of cheese produced in the adjacent country, which is famous for cows; and this is sold in considerable quantities to the dealers who come hither every week in great numbers (Magalotti 1669, 103-104).'

The market (in HUCA 4) was provided with at least two specialised buildings, 'shambles' or meat market houses, by 1585, when a lease referred to the 'easter Shamels [Eastern Shambles' (DHS 3248A-O/11/456). Other rentals, with the 1756 map marking borough holdings in red, indicate that the western shambles was a long narrow timber structure, squeezed into Fore Street, north of St James' Chapel and also of the east end of Middle Row. (See below for the development of Middle Row in the centre of the market street.) The Eastern Shambles, necessarily east of this, and in a market place, can be identified with a range marked east of East Bridge on the 1756 map, part re-absorbed into the street by 1841, and part by 1885. This had a footprint similar to that of the Western Shambles, but unlike the latter occupied a central position in its own part of the open trading area, which may indicate that it was the earlier of the two. The siting of both shambles, by the foot of Moor Road (St James' Street-Station Road), seems to reflect the economic role and importance of that early route from the upland pastures. The market also had a 'weighing house on the east in middlerowe' by 1628 (DHS 3248A-O/11/309).

The street (Fore and East Street) remained the principal place of trade, and introduction of some market housing was delayed and unpopular. A town official records that in 1641 'An order [was] made...that the roome under the Court house should be fitted, and employed for a roome to sell corn and wheat in, for some moderate toll: *neglected by reason of the succeeding many troubles*' (Bridges 1839, 93). In 1666 'the [western] Shambles were pulled down and new built with a chamber over, which was intended for a place to sell wheate in'. The next year 'It was published at the Towne Crosse...that all persons that did bring any wheate to the Markett were to bring it into the new built Chambers over the Wester Shambles' (Young 1925, 212).

The fair place on St James' Street continued in use. In 1677 the pound at its outer end was renewed; 'The pound within the borough made up this summer...This Pound was made up with posts and rayles many years since' (Bridges 1839, 84). The development of premises alongside the fair may have begun at this time; a lease of 1679 includes 'land at the Fair Place' (DHS 3248A-O/11/520). The frequency of fairs was increased on several occasions. In 1676 'Wee [in Okehampton] had our charter brought home for the two new fairs here'; the first new fair was held in March, but was spoilt by a heavy snow fall (Bridges 1839, 102), a reminder of the adverse conditions which could easily hamper town life here on the very edge of Dartmoor. A charter of 1684 granted the town five fairs (Young 1925, 211). A lease of 1686 refers to 'benefits and profits of the six annual fairs, and certain profits of the weekly markets' (DHS 3248A-O/11/312).

Trades and manufactories associated with the sales of livestock and their produce, established in medieval times, were pursued in and around the town core (HUCA 4). In 1585 a messuage, tenement and garden in Okehampton were leased to William Brooke, tanner, and Joan his wife (DHS 3248A-O/11/154). A tan-yard occupied land 'on the western quay...beyond the school' (Hunter 1925, 223-224), so in the area north-west of the West Bridge, now Westbridge Close. A lease made in 1588 deals with 'Land called the Rackparke, by Paradise' (DHS 3248A-O/11/603). This place was clearly named from the use here of racks for drying fibres or fabrics; another lease, of 1655, records that the 'Close of land called Paradise' itself had 'fullers and tuckers racks' (DHS 3248A-O/11/564-5). Extracts from a rental of Okehampton manor of 1593 include a reference to 'one fulling mill' (Bridges 1839, 163), possibly situated off North Street (see Section 4.4.1). The wool trade may have been seen as being one of those particularly important to or characteristic of the town, as indicated by a reference to a mercer or an image of a woolpack on some of the half-penny tokens issued here to facilitate trade in the 17th century (illustrated in Wright 1889, 242).

Inns of varying sizes catered for the traffic on the ancient highway. The *White Hart* (Fig 63, and see further Sections 3.7, 3.8.1), *White Horse*, *King's Arms*, *Three Pigeons*, *George*, and *Royal Oak* were mentioned in 1677 (Bridges 1839, 103). The *Angel* - either another inn, or one of the above, renamed - was recorded shortly before this (Magalotti 1669, 103-104). The larger establishments could accommodate horses and carriages, as at the *King's Arms* which had a 'Messuage, tenement, inn, dwelling house, meadow' leased in 1636 (DHS 3248A-O/11/464-5). Long-distance travellers between Exeter and Launceston had to stay here, two days' travel from the city via Crediton or (if they took the southern route closer to Dartmoor) via Crockernwell; 'I came through lanes and some commons to Oakingham....This was a little market town, and I met with a very good inn and accommodation....' (Fiennes 1695, 135). Some of those recorded early inns which are no longer evident may survive unrecognised, either as public houses with later names and/or with renovation or antiquing (Fig 13), or in other use.



Fig 13 Mock Tudor at the Feathers, a central, potentially post-medieval inn (HUCA 4)

The concentration of traffic and the turbulence of the rivers meant that the highway and bridges required frequent repair or rebuilding. In the 17th century, for example, 'Beare Bridge [was] repayed in the middle pillar at the towne charges' (Bridges 1839, 82). Again in the 17th century, bridges and streets, especially Beare Bridge, were repaired and amended, as well as the schoolhouse, town hall, and shambles (*op cit*, 155); and 'six hundred yards of cause[way] was paved this year leading to the church and [to] Bear bridge, which amounted to the charge of £11 13s 10 ½ d' (*op cit*, 127.)

To judge from the earliest surviving travellers' accounts, many houses in the post-medieval town were made of cob, like those of surrounding villages; 'They passed through the village of Halbombridge [Horrabridge], consisting of a few houses thatched with straw...[to Okehampton where] the houses are built of earth and stone, and thatched with straw' (Magalotti 1669, 103).' Timber framing is indicated by early images of the town, as noted in Section 3.4.2.2. A three-storey house facing the medieval market place at 13 Fore Street, with timber framing behind its slate-hung front, has been identified as c17th century in date with 19th century alterations (MDV44309), and other such buildings are likely to survive.

A couple of the grander buildings of this period in prestigious positions at the heart of the town, in HUCA 4, preserved through continuous use, are known, though not fully recorded. The (former) Town Hall (MDV 12868), converted for that purpose in the early 19th century, preserves much of the character of the house of John Northmore built in 1685 (Fig 61). This is a fine granite ashlar building of three storeys which has a broad facade with five windows and bold moulded string courses facing the site of the Market Cross (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609). It was changed to a corner building with the cutting of the adjoining new Market Street on its west when it was made into the Town Hall (replacing the ancient hall built within Fore Street), and as a result has been significantly adapted with the insertion of openings on its west side. The *White Hart* on the opposite side of Fore Street (MDV 44310) has interior features showing it was also a late 17th century building of five bays (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609). (As noted above, in this Section, the *White Hart* is recorded as an inn from at least 1677.)

Images and travellers' descriptions of the town made before or shortly after the opening of the station in 1872 show that Okehampton had other very substantial houses, lost or changed through rebuilding in the following decades or in the 20th century. One such was the Mansion House in East Street, a prominent building with a broad frontage, featuring a central two-storey porch of 17th century type and mullioned windows irregularly arranged indicating medieval origins (drawing by George Townsend of 1873, Etched on Devon's Memory website). This was demolished during road widening in the 20th century (Section 3.9).

Several charitable institutions were founded. A school, rebuilt in 1671, was originally a single storey structure with a thatched roof, and the schoolmaster's house was newly thatched with reed in 1628 (Hunter 1925, 215, 217, 223-224). The site of the school was that later known as the old Post Office, located by the HER to the north of West Street, west of the bridge (MDV 16340), so was in HUCA 2. The 1756 plan records a substantial site labelled 'College' on the other, eastern end of town, at the outer side of the triangle between the Exeter and Crediton Roads (in HUCA 4), possibly an earlier endowment. The origin of this college is obscure at present and it merits investigation.

The town developed within its medieval extent, in several ways. The 1756 map shows rows and courts, extending down medieval burgages, which probably accommodated the 'many poore people' of the early 17th century petition noted above. The 1756 survey also shows expansion plots on meadow north of the east-west highway either side of East Bridge. New houses on corners by the rivers are documented; a tenement leased in 1605 as 'Meadow abutting river called west water and Fore Street' was leased again in 1610 'with house erected on meadow' (DHS 3248A-O/11/556, 557). Some of the houses infilling the area in the angle between the Exeter and Crediton Roads thought to have been an open market place in Norman times (Section 3.4.1.2), in front of the college noted above, could also date from this period.

Borough records of this time record the rows within Fore Street (MDV 15993), developed before 1585 (see above in this Section). A long row, like an island in the streaming life of the market street, ran from near St James' Chapel which had its own cluster of secondary buildings. A shorter row lay to the west beyond the Market Cross. The long 'island' is named Middle Row in leases such as one of 1644 (DHS 3248A-O/11/394-5). It contained shops and dwellings, as shown by a 1679 record of a 'Messuage, shop at wester end of Middle Row, near the cross' (DHS 3248A-O/11/520).

Of the two courses of road formed from the old market place by Middle Row, that on the north was the wider, until the Western Shambles was made in it, and it opened straight ahead from East Bridge, so it was named Fore or Market Street; while that on the south was called Back Street, as recorded in leases of 1623 and 1694 (DHS 3248A-O/11/558-9, DHS 3248A-O/11/702). The former cramming of Fore Street particularly towards East Bridge, with rows and shambles round which through traffic had to weave in narrow passages, shows very well the economic desirability of that site. This density, with the continuing market function of the street itself, meant that the road could be severely congested, despite its status as a King's (or Queen's) Highway with, potentially, strategic importance for conveying troops or news through the west. An order of 1599 for two post horses to be kept in readiness in Okehampton is signed by Ferdinando Gorges and officials of Plymouth, in the Queen's name (DHS 3248A-O/9/3).

On the margin of the urban plots, to the south, on the town side of the East River opposite the Town Mill, was an enclosure recorded on the 1756 map as Bowling Green. This probably dated from the Tudor period when bowling was very popular. In the 17th century the enclosure ceased to be used for bowling, and a fulling rack (for which see comment on the wool trade, above) was set up on it (Endacott 2002, 65).

The area most attractive for development beyond the limits of the medieval town at this time was probably Exeter Road. Even here the 1756 plan shows buildings beyond the burgage plots on the north side of the road alone, and reaching out only as far as the (later) Victoria Street junction (on the east edge of HUCA 4). The West River valley upstream of medieval Okehampton, where the castle was decaying (in HUCA 3), remained almost unchanged until Castle Road was built up from the later 19th century; as did the East Valley before the railway station was made above it in 1872 (HUCA 7). Brock's Almshouses on Castle Road (MDV 44322) were founded c1588 when Richard Brock left a messuage with meadow attached so that housing and gardens there should be granted to two deserving old townspeople (Bridges 1839, 154). The cottages were preserved through rebuilding in the 19th century, and Brock's Meadow survives as allotments, giving a sense of the open space that originally surrounded them (Fig 14).



Fig 14 Almshouses on Castle Road, founded c1588, rebuilt in 1847 (HUCA 3)

3.7 Eighteenth century

In the 18th century, non-residents, powerful national figures, bought and sold property in Okehampton to secure (through influencing the freemen and freeholders of the borough) election for themselves, or their kinsmen or allies, as one of its two MPs. Among them were the Pitts, who purchased 'two fourths' of the manor from the Mohuns, who had inherited one of these fourths, and had bought the other along with the site of the castle (Lysons and Lysons 1822). Both Robert Pitt, father of Prime Minister William Pitt the Elder, and another of Robert's sons, Thomas Pitt, sat as MPs for Okehampton in the first half of the 18th century. On the borough plan of 1756 the properties of Thomas Pitt, and that of the other principal landowner of the time, the Duke of Bedford, are shaded in yellow and purple respectively, and their combined extent, and intermingling, give an impression of how such 'patrons' gripped the town.

A family living in the town, the Luxmoores, gained through such patronage, having freehold property and personal interest at their disposal. The eighth of Okehampton previously held by the Northmores passed to them (Lysons and Lysons, 1822) and in 1780 Charles Luxmoore purchased the Park, over 1,000 acres (Anon, 1902, 421). The grand, central residence of John Luxmoore (who died in 1750) was the old Northmore House noted in Section 3.6.2, later the Town Hall, which remained in his family from 1740 to 1821 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609). His nephew John, an agent for the Pitt interest, lived at Fair Place (see further in Section 4.4.1); Luxmoore of Fair Place was made Comptroller of the Stannaries in Devon and Cornwall in 1754 (Lysons and Lysons, 1822).

Okehampton's population reached around 850 in 1750, and 1,100 in c1805; in a table ranking towns in Devon and Cornwall by their size in c1805, Okehampton was 45th of 92 (Barry 1999, 417). Some growth was probably supported by the making of serges, strong woollen fabrics for use in clothes or uniforms. Manufactories at Okehampton produced white serges, which were mostly dyed at Exeter (Pococke 1750, 211). They may have been located on the rivers to either side of the core of the town in HUCA 4, very likely at the sites of Clapps Mill (MDV 59114) and North Street Mill (MDV 44306), (both used later for different purposes). Cloths, or garments made from them, were also sold in shops in the town, as shown by a document of 1705 leasing a forge and smithy to be converted to a mercer's shop and house (DHS 3248A-O/11/623). However, serge making was said to be declining, though still the largest industry in the town, at the end of the century (Maton 1797, 272).

The town was still sustained by the long-established market. Fore Street continued to be busy weekly with stalls both in the market houses and in the open, and the annual fairs carried on in St James' Street or Fair Place. A lease of 1718 deals with 'Shambles and standings in the two market houses and round the Town Hall, except the standing belonging to the New Market House chamber' (DHS 3248A-O/11/314). Another of 1770 refers to 'Dwelling houses, burgage and herb garden adjoining the Bullock Fair and the street leading towards Okehampton Park' (DHS 3248A-O/11/321). The range of associated trades is indicated by a Bill in Chancery of the Mayor and Burgesses of Okehampton in 1791 which names a butcher, a carpenter, a wool stapler, a grocer, and a timber merchant among the leading inhabitants (Brooking-Rowe 1902, 155). Much of the land on the large but damp riverside burgage plots north of Fore Street was used for orchards, as indicated by tree symbols on the plan of 1756, so cider production was probably also a significant business in season.

Contemporary accounts note also the importance of 'the expenditure of travellers; the turnpike-road from Exeter to Launceston, Falmouth, &c. passing through the town' (Britton and Brayley 1803, 241). The Okehampton turnpike trust was formed in 1760 to improve the main Exeter to Plymouth post road from Cheriton Bishop to Bridestow, and further, local routes radiating from the town (Turnpikes website), and several other phases of road building and improvement followed.

However, turnpike works in the study area were largely limited to improving existing, medieval roads, until the Savile family acquired control of Okehampton in the early 19th century. The first new turnpike road was Barton Road east of the urban core, marked on the 1803 OS drawing. The central George Street, which helped to relieve the severe crowding of Fore Street on market days, was made between c1760 and 1840, probably c1820 since it connected with Market Street and Lodge Hill to its north which were made at that time (Section 3.8.2). The major new turnpike loop on the west, New Road (Fig 42), was made after the 1765 map, probably shortly before 1823 (Section 3.8.2).

From this period onwards, many of the 'posting' houses and other inns, taverns and eating-places, which served travellers as well as the crowds attending markets and fairs, are recorded. A list of victuallers dated 1775 (DHS 3248A-O/4/12/18a-b) notes 16 premises, some with names evoking the importance of the road for trade - the *Exeter Inn*, *Pack Horse*, *Post Boy* and *Three Horse Shoes*. Even the 16 listed in the 1775 source were only some of the establishments of the time. Others included the *White Hart*, documented as a leading inn from the 17th century (Section 3.6.2); the *Cornish Mount*, noted in the early 19th century when Market Street was cut through its premises (DHS 113A/140/1); and perhaps the 'tenement and mansion called the *Swan*', possibly situated on a riverside, recorded in 1744 (Brooking-Rowe 1902, 151).

Some of the larger, purpose-built or well-adapted premises of this kind, displaying their distinctive features such as broad fronts and carriage openings, survive through continuous use for their historic function or conversion to others. The distribution of these along the ancient through-road where it forms East Street, Fore Street and West Street - in the Riverside Town core (HUCA 4), and at the foot of High Street (HUCA 2) - reflects clearly aspects of the former life of that road (Fig 15) and of the junctions with it of locally important roads (Sections 4.2.1, 4.4.1).



Fig 15 Inns and passages to yards showing old commercial life in East Street (HUCA 4)

Travellers included people making tours of Devon's scenery for pleasure and discovery, as well as those on business. Visitors were attracted to Okehampton primarily not by the town proper, but by the castle (in HUCA 3). They published accounts and images of this picturesque site, encouraging others and establishing Okehampton in the itineraries of the gentry (which often also included the more westerly Dartmoor-edge town of Lydford with its gorge). Besides 'the ivy-clad ruins of the Castle, its mouldering turrets, and crumbling walls' they appreciated the rural qualities of Okehampton's immediate surroundings, the 'fine verdant meadows, which are watered by a beautiful, clear stream' in the valley below it (Maton 1797, 272), and the 'acclivities....covered with fine woods' (Britton and Brayley 1803, 241). At Okehampton itself, such visitors generally found interest only in St James's Chapel (in HUCA 4). 'There is only one large street, and that without the advantage of good buildings....We did not find any building worthy of notice, except a ruinous chapel apparently of some antiquity' (Maton 1797, 272).

As noted by Maton, and as seen in a view from the south which has been dated to 1821 and also attributed an earlier date (Endacott 2002, 30), the town remained essentially linear; reflecting the economic dependency on the east-west roads with their market places along which it stretched. It ran from Eastern Town, lining first the Exeter Road, and then the more ancient highway (which the latter joined on East Street) running from river to river as Market (now Fore) Street and West Street, and lastly rose through Western Town as Shob Hill (High Street). Since the parish as a whole had 1,430 people and 269 houses at the turn of the 19th century (Britton and Brayley 1803, 242), and since as already noted the town had roughly two-thirds of these people, it is possible that it had a similar proportion of the parish's houses, in the region of 200.

The rows on North Street on the north-west side of HUCA 4 (Fig 16), recorded on the 1756 survey, probably housed the families of workers in the woollen industries. They run along a medieval route, leading to Beare Bridge and on to Sampford Courtenay and beyond. They probably originate from post-medieval rows facing that road, which simply extended the lines of the medieval buildings at the heads of plots beside it (these hanging off East Street, and off the former market place expanded from that street by East Bridge). Nevertheless they represent a shift in the character of the town as a whole. This was the first substantial continuously built-up area at Okehampton to follow a line quite different from that of the ancient West/Fore/East Street axis.



Fig 16 North Street, rows on west, looking towards East Street (HUCA 4)

Development within other burgages, or in former meadow, industrial, or waste land between them, can be seen through comparison of the surveys of 1841 and 1756. Infilling is also recorded, for example in the lease in 1706 of a 'Plot of ground near mill leat, east side west river, on which to build a house' (DHS 3248A-O/11/479), and the grant in 1716 of 'Authority to erect shop on land on south-west corner of West Bridge' (DHS 3248A-O/11/481). However, the greater part of the long burgages north of Fore Street, rendered inaccessible for other use by the presence of the street and rivers all around them, remained open ground (mostly used for orchards, as mentioned above.)

Because little detailed historic assessment or building survey has been carried out in the town, limited evidence for rebuilding or restyling around this time is recorded at present. Several houses surviving on the south side of West Street, at nos. 1, 3, and 5, have been attributed to this period (MDV 44311, 44312). A first floor assembly room at the leading inn of earlier origin, the *White Hart*, has also been recorded as *circa* late 18th century (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609; MDV 44310). Review of the dating of this development, indicative of the social functions and status of the town, is needed. The large front window of the assembly room gives a view of the new Market Street and Town Hall of c1820, as well as the long-established Market Cross area which these respect, and a side window opens over George Street, probably made at a similar date (Fig 63). It is possible that the formation of the assembly room is closely related to these wider changes to the town core in the early 19th century (Section 3.8.2).

3.8 Nineteenth century

3.8.1 Oaklands commands Okehampton, c1820

In the early 19th century, the landscape of Okehampton was adapted significantly within and beyond the medieval urban framework (Map 6), through the influence of the family of Christopher Savile, or Atkinson as he was called before a change of name made with royal licence in 1798. Savile was a highly ambitious, self-made man, successfully re-established after public disgrace following a conviction for perjury in 1783. He was said by the painter John Constable (possibly affected by family interest since he was the nephew of Savile's first wife), to be 'a man whose sole object in this world is gain' (History of Parliament website). Christopher Savile purchased a controlling interest in Okehampton previously secured by the Holland family, which included the two-fourths of the manor held earlier by the Pitts, and two fourths thought to have been added subsequently by Lord Clive through separate purchases (Lysons and Lysons 1822). Savile claimed to have paid in the region of £100,000 for the whole, in several phases.

Through holding the full 'domain and interest' of Okehampton, Savile was able to have his son, Albany, returned as one of its MPs at the general election of 1807 (History of Parliament website). Albany Savile continued as one of the MPs of this double member borough (with Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle) from 1807 to 1812 (Bridges 1839, 144). He held the estate from his father's death in 1819 until he himself died in 1830, heavily in debt (Endacott 2002, 80, 87). Okehampton was finally disfranchised in 1832 (Hoskins 1954, 187). The son of Albany Savile, Albany Bouchier Savile, sold Oaklands in 1858, two decades after he came of age, to James Holley of Norfolk (Endacott 2002, 93).

The Saviles created a mansion and home farm (in HUCA 5), with parkland reaching to the edge of town (part in HUCAs 5 and 6). Changes to the landscape included enclosure, planting, and diversion of roads, notably a route to the Hatherleigh road from Beare Bridge which appears as a public way on a plan of c1823 (DHS DP56; HL) and as a park drive on the 1841 tithe map. They encountered, but overcame, opposition from townspeople. 'The inhabitants of Okehampton have a right of common over....about 500 acres, from the first Monday after the 10th of October until Lady-day. Savile claimed sole rights of pasturage in the winter on the common around the time of his first election, about 40 years ago' (White's Directory for 1850, 20). 'These lands were the property of Mr Saville; this gentleman desired to purchase the common right over these lands; the inhabitants refused his request, and 400 acres have been ploughed up. This act was presented by the grand jury, but no measures were taken by the corporation to preserve the right of the inhabitants' (Rushton 1834, 559). The Savile's name for their new house and estate, Oaklands, appears to have been chosen to emphasise its owner's command of the town, then generally spelt *Oakhampton* (Endacott 2002, 78), and the mansion and inner park are sited to overlook the town as well as the valley of the Okement (Figs 17, 74, and Section 4.5.1).



Fig 17 Oaklands in its trees (HUCA 5), right, overlooking the historic core (HUCA 4)

3.8.2 'The town is not flourishing....' early 19th century economy

Writers of the time indicate that the population of Okehampton increased only slightly in the first few decades of the century, and shrank around the middle of the century. They attribute the lack of growth to control and mis-management by the old corporation with (before the reform of representation in 1832) the political interest operating through this. A report to parliament on municipal corporations found that at Okehampton 'The constitution of the corporation, and the management of the public property, are both the subject of complaint by the inhabitants (Rushton 1834, 559).' The Saviles' influence was marked in the fabric of the town core as well as in their ornamental landscape. The West Bridge was rebuilt in 1831 to a design by the architect of Oaklands, before being replaced by the present bridge of 1957 (Endacott 2002, 91-92). Most importantly, new road and bridge infrastructure was provided to serve both the market and the entrance to Oaklands Park, linking the two (see further the discussion of the development of the market, below, and of HUCAs 4 and 5).

The account of 1834 goes on to state that 'The town is not flourishing; the number of the population has increased only 32 in 10 years. In 1821 the population was 2,033; in 1831 it was 2,055. The increase of the town or its trade has not been encouraged....because, as it was stated, an increase of the population and the introduction of a large [manufacturing] concern would tend to create an opposing political influence to that already existing' (Rushton 1834, 559). The report specifies that the population numbers given are for the borough *and* parish, and adds that the total was 1,500 in 1801; and 1,555 in 1811 (*ibid*). According to a trades gazetteer, the town had 2,194 inhabitants in 1851, but only 1,929 in 1861 (Anon 1868).

The Bude-Holsworthy canal, for which an act was obtained in 1819, was originally planned to go on to Okehampton, but never did. Similarly, plans of 1831 for a railway joining Okehampton and Bideford, to profit mostly from freight including carriage of stone from quarries around Okehampton, came to nothing (Hoskins 1954, 157, 159).

The turnpike trust made piecemeal improvements to the roads. In 1823 a short but vital, central route was cut to serve a new market complex (see following page). New Road, above the castle, taking traffic on the ancient east-west highway away from Sharp Hill, was by then 'already made and paid for' (DHS 113A/140/1). An Act of 1829 provided for further alteration and extension of the turnpike system, including a new road from 'Okehampton Northward to Woolley-Farm or Woolley-Pound in the Parish of Beaford, through or into the several Parishes of Okehampton, Sampford Courtenay, Jacobstowe...[and others]' towards Great Torrington (turnpikes website), but the plans were never fully realised. Limited new road was made to the north-east by Chichacott, in and beyond the present study area; and part of the pre-existing road to Sampford Courtenay, beyond North Street, was shifted to a different line (possibly part of an earlier, medieval route), forming North Road (this shifted part lies in HUCA 8).

The weaving trade noted in the 18th century continued, Okehampton and district having 530 looms for serges in 1838 (Hoskins 1954, 130). Looms may have been located in a mill on North Street (HUCA 4) and dispersed in cottages and beyond the town. The trade was written about as a thing of the past in mid-century (Anon 1850, 21), but was lingering or renewed a couple of decades later when 'Some of the inhabitants are employed in weaving serges, or long ells, for the Chinese market' (Anon 1868).

The corporation continued to derive its revenue from tolls of the weekly markets and six annual livestock fairs, as well as from rents and fines payable on the renewal of leases, the tolls accounting for approximately £200 of the total of £423 (Rushton 1934, 558). The market, held every Saturday, generated 'a considerable retail trade for the supply of the surrounding country' (Anon 1868) and 'great quantities of agricultural produce [were] bought here for the markets of Exeter, Plymouth, &c' (Anon 1850, 21). The large one-day fairs in each of the months of March, May, July, August, September and October were chiefly for cattle; a great market was held on the Saturday before Christmas, and a giglet or pleasure fair on the Saturday after Christmas (*ibid*).

A petition from Okehampton read in the House of Commons in 1800 identifies the need 'to purchase a Piece of Ground in a more convenient Situation, for the Purpose of building a new Court House, Market House, and Shambles...'. The proposed new market was realised in 1826, when 'commodious market buildings were erected' and 'the old shambles were removed from the street' (Anon 1850, 21). The replacement 'extensive range of spacious buildings', together with a butter and poultry hall added later (Anon, 1902, 420), extended north from Fore Street (Fig 18). It ran along the east side of Market Street, a new road north of the Market Cross, laid for the purpose through the burgage plots. (The new road and market range occupied one of the plots, so they follow the trend of these). The road was carried on a new bridge across West River where it formed Lodge Hill; this ran outside the built-up area of the time (in HUCA 6) to join the medieval highway to the north (now Ranelagh Road and Upcott Hill).



Fig 18 Market Street of c1826, with market housing, altered and converted (HUCA 4)

Note also a dog-leg to George Street across Fore Street, by the White Hart (rear right)

The new Market Street was tied to the old one – Fore Street, previously also called Market Street, and styled The Parade in later Victorian times (Wright 1889, 216) - by a Town Hall at the corner between the two, facing Fore Street. Opposite the Town Hall, a new road was cut between Fore Street and the Fair Place junction to the south. This was cut after 1756, and presumably before 1830 when George IV died, since it was named George Street; most likely c1826, as it served as a link to the Market Street of that date. The off-set of the ends of Market Street and George Street at their junctions with Fore Street shows the secondary character of the route they form (Fig 18).

The crossroads and civic centre created in this way was fixed in the inherited urban landscape by its positioning at the ancient Market Cross. The town borrowed further from the past (and saved money) through re-use as the Town Hall of the house built for the Northmores in the 17th century (Fig 61). (Plans were made c1885 to replace it with a purpose-built Town Hall, but were never realised; Wreford and Wreford 1994, 10.) The first floor of the house was adapted to form a Council Chamber (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609). At the same time, the outer, north end of the new Market Street was bound by Lodge Bridge to the Lodge Hill turnpike road which also served the Oaklands estate of Albany Savile, lord of the manor, so manifesting in the landscape his control of the town and its business (see further Section 4.5.1).

3.8.3 'Widening and opening in some Places'; the mid-19th century streets

The extent of the built up area shown on the map of 1756 is very similar to that shown on the tithe survey of 1841. It appears that the small increase in population in the early to mid-19th century was accommodated within the street frontage of medieval origin and in the post-medieval rows and courts on the burgage plots behind this.

The main change to the street plan sought at this time, other than creation of the new Market Street/George Street axis noted above, was clearance of Fore Street's 'island' rows of dwellings, shops and stalls, to ease traffic. A petition of 1800 from Okehampton, read in parliament, calls for the paving, cleaning and lighting of streets other than those managed by the Turnpike Trust (which were then pre-existing main roads beyond the urban core). It states the need for 'widening and opening the Streets in some Places, and making new Streets and Passages where necessary....it will be necessary to take down the present Court House, Market House, and Shambles, together with a place called The Middle Row, and to lay the Space occupied by the said Buildings into the Streets, and to purchase a Piece of Ground in a more convenient Situation, for the Purpose of building a new Court House, Market House, and Shambles...'. (The Journals of the House of Commons, Vol 55, 182-183).

The 1800 petition adds that 'it would likewise be of Public Utility if the present Bridges over the Rivers [there] were to be repaired, altered, and improved....' A subsequent report on the matter found that road surfaces and bridges were very ruinous and had deteriorated in the late wet season, and yet 'it is the great Public Road on which the Mail Coaches and other Carriages are daily passing and repassing....'

While the West and East Bridges were rebuilt in 1831 and 1841 respectively (White's Directory for 1850, 20), and the shambles were dismantled and their functions shifted to the new Market Street complex in the 1820s (Section 4.4.1), the rows lingered on. When the tithe map was made in 1841 the rows still remained largely as they had been at the survey of 1756. The Middle Row which probably included the first town or guild hall and courthouse, and the cluster of buildings north of St James' Chapel, were taken down between 1841 and the first detailed OS mapping of 1885. The western row, known as Rosemary Row, was only removed in the middle of the 20th century.

Fore Street with East and West Streets continued to feature accommodation and stabling for travellers and the postal service. The best inns stood in prime positions, in the centre or by major junctions. In the middle of the century there were ten inns, two being posting inns (the *London*, and the very old *White Hart*). A mail coach passed along the principal east-west road daily in both directions, to Exeter at 5.55 pm, and to Falmouth at 6.55 in the morning (White's Directory for 1850, 22). Local carriers ran from other establishments (Fig 19, and see further Section 4.2.1). The *White Hart* was the dominant inn; others named in the later 19th century are the *Plume of Feathers*, *Red Lion*, *Fountain*, *George*, *King's Arms*, and *Temperance Hotel* (Wright 1889, 216).



Fig 19 The 'Plymouth' by West, High, and Church Streets and New Road (HUCA 2)

This was one of a pair of inns serving carriers running to Hatherleigh via Church Street

In the middle of the 19th century the core of the town seems to have had an ancient if decayed character. Many buildings showed their late- or post- medieval origins for several decades more; 'Some of the old houses are very picturesque, and that known as Gayer's house in the main street has some excellent carved panelling' (Wright 1889, 217). The old prison by the West Bridge, 'in a most wretched state....' (Rushton 1834, 558), was still there in middle of the 19th century (White's Directory for 1850, 21). The town was only partially watched and lighted under the provision of an Act of Parliament of 1821 (Rushton 1834, 558). Charles Kingsley's characterisation of Okehampton as an 'ugly, dirty, and stupid town' in his historical novel set in the Elizabethan era, *Westward Ho!*, very popular in the years following its publication in the middle of the 19th century, tells us how some outsiders perceived the town at that time.

The Ebenezer Chapel (MDV 44317) was built at the far end of North Street in HUCA 4 (Fig 69) in 1822 (replacing an earlier, unstable one). It had seating for 500 by the later 19th century (Wright 1889, 218), and a burial ground (Radford and Radford 2002, 85). As a result its site, on the old route to the commons across Beare Bridge, became a focal point of a different kind for the town. A Wesleyan chapel with 250 sittings was built in West Street in 1841 (*ibid*). Non-conformists were refused potential church sites in the town centre (Section 4.4.1), though later in the 19th century, the Baptists secured a central site for their chapel (Fig 23). The medieval parish church west of the town (in HUCA 1) was rebuilt after a fire in 1842-1844, retaining its old tower. The churchyard has gravestones of 1811-1815 with French inscriptions to prisoners of war who were quartered and died in Okehampton, far from the sea (Anon, 1902, 420).

Assembly rooms at the White Hart, overlooking the new Market Street as well as the ancient Market Cross, and opposite and on a first-floor level with the council chambers in the new Town Hall (Fig 63), probably date from this period (Section 3.7). These prestigious rooms will have expressed, and enhanced, the status of the town in its rural hinterland. As the main population centre in a large rural area, Okehampton also formed the centre of a Poor Law Union, with 28 constituent parishes, formed in 1836.

The Union Workhouse, preserved through use as a hospital until recent times, but now greatly reduced (Fig 20), stands by the road to the castle on the south (in HUCA 3). As at other towns, it was placed well outside the built-up area of the time, to effect the removal of the poor from society and to provide grounds where they could be put to work. Its siting here on the south and on relatively low ground is very likely to have been influenced by Albany Bouchier Savile, lord of the Manor, to conceal it from his mansion of Oaklands on the north side of the town (in HUCA 5). Its buildings were made 1836-1837 to a '200-pauper' model by Samuel Kempthorne, who also designed workhouses for Crediton, Exeter and other places in Devon (workhouses website).



Fig 20 Remains of the workhouse, and development on the rest of its site (HUCA 3)
The surviving building stood at the head of a much larger spread of connecting wings

3.8.4 Lighting, railway, and a new Corporation; the later 19th century

Okehampton grew and changed substantially in the later 19th century (Map 7). Improvements began in mid-century, with the laying out of a rail route north of Dartmoor (to rival the South Devon line joining Plymouth, Tavistock, Lydford, and Launceston) by the South Western Railway, working through the Okehampton Railway company, and the establishment of a gas company in 1858 supplying lighting from a gasworks by Town Mill (MDV 16240) on the south edge of HUCA 4 (Wright 1889, 214).

The railway reached Belstone Corner/Sampford Courtenay in 1867, and Okehampton in 1871; it was carried on to Lydford across the Meldon viaduct, in 1874, and from Tavistock to Devonport in 1890 (Hoskins 1954, 164). Okehampton Station (MDV 57375) opened in 1872 on the south edge of the study area (Fig 21). This was the chief station between Exeter and Plymouth on the main line of the London and South West Railway, and the junction station for the Holsworthy branch (Wright 1889, 215).



Fig 21 Railway and station dominate the skyline at the south edge of town (HUCA 7)

To carry the railway on around Dartmoor the station was sited outside the town, on the higher ground to the south. As a result it attracted new homes, and boarding houses for visitors to Dartmoor (Fig 89), on the ancient Moor Road now used as its link to the town (in HUCA 7). The railway also stimulated rebuilding and improvement in the historic core, so that there were 'several good hotels' in the centre (in HUCA 4) as well as 'Many handsome villas....erected in and around the town' (Wright 1889, 215, 216). It is likely to have encouraged the greater economic diversity at Okehampton apparent from this time. Industrial developments were located beside the East and West Okement (in HUCA 4), to use the rivers for water power, disposal of waste, and so on, some probably adapting sites used by medieval craftspeople for similar reasons. Townsmen are also known to have been involved in the winning and working of the varying rocks of the area at sites served by the railway, notably at Meldon to the south-west with its 'very superior quarry for granite' (Anon 1850, 20; Wright 1889, 217).

An innovative hydro-electric power turbine was installed upriver from the East Bridge (in HUCA 4) in 1880 (Endacott 2002, 97). (As noted in the HER entry for the site, MDV 19764, it was suggested in 1968 that this was a medieval mill; but the weir and leat, indicated on the map of 1885, do not appear on those of 1841 and 1756). There were several factories in the town, besides two mills, in 1889 (Wright, 216). One of these was a vitriol and manure works (MDV 94833, in HUCA 4), much of which still survives, including a chimney stack (Fig 68). This is marked on the OS map of 1885, close to the Town Mill on the East River (the Town Mill itself was one of the two grist mills Wright refers to, along with North Street Mill further down the East River in the same HUCA 4).

Also recorded in 1889 was James Glass's foundry upstream of Clapp's Mill on the West River (HUCA 4), which was not marked on the 1885 map, so was laid out 1885-1889.

The foundry produced street furniture as well as farm implements (Endacott 2002, 94). Although it does not survive, its products still contribute to the character of the built environment of Okehampton. A lamp on Station Road in HUCA 7 bears Glass' maker's mark (Figs 22, 91). One on the East Bridge is marked WJ Thorne, Okehampton, possibly reflecting a period of different ownership of the same works (if so, the Thorne work would be secondary to the bridge, dated 1841). Clapp's Mill near the foundry was adapted for German's boot factory begun in the 1890s (Endacott 2002, 95). The boots used hides from the cattle trade, and were sold in the town to visitors and soldiers from the nearby camp (see below), as well as local people (the leather no doubt returning to Dartmoor on many feet). A tannery just outside and downriver of West Bridge (HUCA 2), and possibly another inside the bridge, south of Fore Street (HUCA 3), operated in the 19th century (Wreford and Wreford 1994, 7; Hunter 1925, 223).



Fig 22 Lamp on monument in Station Road (HUCA 7) made at Glass' Foundry (HUCA 4)

The presence of the railway was also a major factor – along with the availability of moorland freed from common rights in the late 13th century to accommodate the medieval castle's deer park - in the choice of Okehampton Park for artillery practice by the army. 'The present proprietors [of Okehampton Park, 1,500 acres or so] have leased eighty acres for twenty-one years to the War department for artillery practice: a large force of Field and Royal Horse Artillery encamp here every year for several months. Permanent stables have been erected' and 'modern artillery [is] now being experimented with on the heights immediately fronting the Castle' (Wright 1889, 236). The army base was outside the urban study area but it brought much military business, and display, to both station and town (Endacott 2002, 102-103).

In 1885 a new Charter of Incorporation was granted. Its powers extended to the limits fixed for the old Corporation of 1623 and shown on the surveys of 1756 and 1841, at 'A radius of half-a-mile from the Cross or from the place where the Cross was formerly erected and stood in the centre of the Town of Okehampton' (Wright 1889, 226). Improvements to the town made at this time or soon after included provision of a good water supply from a spring fed reservoir in the Park (outside the urban study area), a drainage system, installation of electric lighting in hotels and places of business, widening of the East Bridge by 10 feet, repaving of about two-thirds of the town, expansion of the churchyard for burials, and extension of the market accommodation at a cost of £1,000 with the result that it was 'good', though still 'inadequate to the growing requirements of the town' (Wright 1889, 214, 216; Anon, 1902, 420).

Provision for education, lapsed in the earlier 19th century when for 'many years' there was 'neither school nor chaplain' (Rushton 1834, 558), had begun before the new Corporation, and continued to improve. There were 'modern' schools for boys at Moorside and for girls at Park Villas (Wright 1889, 219). Their names indicate that these establishments were accommodated in the villas attracted by the railway. The purpose-built school for girls and infants in North Street (MDV 59112, in HUCA 4) was rebuilt in 1874 and enlarged in 1877 and 1895-1896. That for boys, in East Street (now the Police Station, in HUCA 8) was built 1896-7 (Anon, 1902, 421). A two-storey technical school block was provided in Market Street in 1893 (Endacott 2002, 98).

The church (in HUCA 1) was rebuilt after a fire, and significantly enlarged, 1842-1844. The parish also provided a small iron mission church with seating for 60 at Meldon (1894), and another at Brightley (1897) (Anon, 1902, 420). A Baptist Chapel was built in 1889 inside East Bridge, almost opposite the medieval chapel of ease (Fig 23).



Fig 23 Baptist Chapel of 1889, Fore Street, from the end of St James' Street (HUCA 4)

The coming of the railway, industries, army camp and new Corporation may have contributed to a shift in the architecture used in rebuilding or renovating parts of the historic core (in HUCA 4) as well as in new development on Station Road in HUCA 7 (Sections 4.4.1, 4.7.1). However, much of the fabric of the core persisted. A photograph of the south side of Fore Street dated to 1887 (Wreford and Wreford 1995, 6) shows frontage including - besides rebuilt houses - others made more uniform by rendering but still apparently post-medieval or even earlier in character, with some steeply pitched roofs indicative of thatching replaced by slates. Among these were the *Plume of Feathers* with its long, lower roof-line, which survives today (Fig 13).

Moreover, the essential character of Okehampton as a market town persisted through the planned improvements and other changes of Victorian times. This can be seen from the record of large expenditure on housing for the market in the 1880s, mentioned above, and from other documentation, besides the historic maps. Much as in earlier centuries, the market tolls still formed one of the major items of the corporate receipts, Saturday was the chief market day, and there was a great cattle market held on the first Saturday in each month, besides a cattle fair held in March each year (Wright 1889, 216). The main change to Market Street (observable by comparing the surveys of 1841 and 1885) is a conifer plantation on its west side towards the river, seemingly screening its busy human and animal life from the approach to the market down Lodge Hill which also served the drive to the mansion of Oaklands.

The continuity of the livestock market of medieval origin, probably begun to the west before the Norman Conquest, before the town itself, may be one reason why, long after disfranchisement and after the reform of the Corporation, medieval ways abandoned elsewhere still persisted in Okehampton. An observer in the new century noted that 'The ancient custom of tolling the curfew bell is still observed here' (Anon, 1902, 421).

3.9 Twentieth century

Okehampton expanded dramatically during the 20th century. The urban area of today is around six times as large again as it was at the time of the OS mapping of 1906 (Maps 7-10). The old town was adapted greatly also. More of its street frontage was rebuilt and more roadways were widened. By the end of the century, most of the burgage plots previously used as orchards or gardens were levelled and re-surfaced, or developed, the market was shifted away, and the trunk road role of the central highway ceased. Some major aspects of the complex change and continuity in the town through the century are outlined below; others are touched on in descriptions of character areas, particularly the extensive southern and eastern suburbs (HUCAs 8, 10 and 11).

In the early 20th century, the development of Fore Street and the area to its south (in HUCAs 4 and 7) associated with the coming of the railway, increased and diversified (Map 8). A central feature articulating the development, and of outstanding interest in itself, is the shopping arcade, with a glass roofed passage flanked by a score of shops. This runs through the medieval plots south of Fore Street, from a façade of larger shops there, to an integrated hotel on St James' Street below the foot of Station Road (Figs 24, 25, 64). The complex bears the date 1900 on the St James' Street entrance.



Fig 24 Interior of the Arcade with mostly well-preserved shops to either side (HUCA 4)



Fig 25 Arcade running off from Fore Street on the sinuous line of its burgages (HUCA 4)

The ornamental Simmons Park of 1907 (MDV 64779) was laid out along the East River, from Fair Place, near the south opening of the Arcade, to the station, while villas spread down Station Road, reaching the urban core by the time of the 1932 survey (all in HUCA 7). The Grammar School of 1911 was also placed on the south, station side of the old town, across the river from Simmons Park (in HUCA 8), and was linked to the park through open grounds with rustic foot-bridges over the river (Fig 26). Further south, beyond the study area, a golf course opened in 1913 (Le Messurier 1970, 238).



Fig 26 Bridge with concrete 'log' railing linking park and school grounds (HUCAs 7, 8)

Residential and industrial expansion to the east and north-east (in HUCAs 8, 9) also began (Fig 27). Some of this represents re-location from the congested old town, rather than net growth (Section 4.8.2). Development continued through the middle of the century and increased greatly in later decades, forming extensive suburbs (in HUCAs 10 and 11). The shift to mass motorised road transport brought renewed importance to Exeter Road, more accessible than the steep western area in HUCA 2.



Fig 27 Macey's Terrace, 1936 (HUCA 8), built beyond the old town (HUCA 8)

New infrastructure was increasingly provided on the east of the town. In 1904 a new chapel (MDV 4757) was built at the corner of East Street and Mill Road (Rendell 2011, 18) in HUCA 4; this replaced a Bible Christian Chapel of 1868 on the corner of Victoria Street (Wright 1889, 218). A cottage hospital of 1925 stood off Exeter Road, in the growing suburbs (in HUCA 8). As noted in an account of the opening of a new ward in 1930, this site enjoyed a 'Lovely Moorland View' (Wreford and Wreford 1995, 16, 17).

After World War II a hospital was established on the south of the town (in HUCA 3), in order to re-use the large old workhouse there, but its purpose-built replacement was set further east again, in the road-vehicle-centred landscape of HUCA 9.

In contrast, the west side of the old town was comparatively marginal and decayed by the middle of the 20th century. The 1955 OS map records 'Ruins' at three separate sites even in the western part of the urban core (behind Fore Street, between the West River and George Street). However, although actual expansion on the west was relatively restricted in extent, much of the urban area here was redeveloped for residential use, in several phases. New estates transformed the settlement of early medieval origin on High Street (in HUCA 2), and medieval burgages and riverside industrial areas by the West Bridge, now Westbridge Close and Jacob's Pool (in HUCAs 2 and 3).

During the First World War a drill hall and headquarters for the 6th Devonshire Regiment was established on the town side of Simmons Park; this is now the Conservative Club (Endacott 2002, 114). The artillery range to the south of the urban study area, bringing military activity to town via the station and military sidings in HUCA 7, continued to develop. The name of the road leading to it, which had been the early medieval Moor Road and later medieval Park Road, was changed again accordingly, becoming Camp Road in the period between the OS mapping of 1906 and that of 1932 (it has since changed once more, to Tors Road).

The Second World War brought further change to the landscape. The 'front', southern area of Oaklands Park (in HUCAs 5 and 6), part already re-used (from the later 19th century) for an annual agricultural show, was occupied by a military camp. It has been suggested that this was used by the United States 227 Field Artillery Battalion of the 29th Infantry Division stationed at Okehampton in advance of the D-Day landings in occupied France (MDV 57300), and also that it accommodated a unit of the Polish Navy (Endacott 2002, 119). A group of huts remains by the river (in HUCA 5). After the war the agricultural show resumed on its old ground; it was moved away from the town in 1982, making way for a housing on the showground. A pillbox survives in a corner of Simmons Park (MDV 64782, in HUCA 7). This would seem to reflect a wartime significance to the area below it on Mill Street, in the edge of the old town (in HUCA 4); perhaps military re-use of the drill hall of 1914 there (Section 4.4.1), or production of sulphuric acid at the fertiliser works nearby (acid was pumped to the station through a pipe under the park; MDV 94850). Okehampton was bombed on October 1st 1940, causing damage to the market (Wreford and Wreford 1993, 11).

Memoirs such as those of Mr Charles Westlake (published in part in Radford and Radford 2002, 122-125) attest to the character of Okehampton in the years after the Second World War. It was a busy market town with commercial activity in East, North, and West Streets, New Road, St James' Street and the Arcade as well as Fore Street. Until the later 20th century the livestock market essential to the economy and character of Okehampton from medieval times remained vital. The surviving Market Hall is a rebuilding of 1900 (Endacott 2002, 98). It was observed after the Great War that 'The market still survives and flourishes, but for centuries the Castle has been only a ruin' (Young 1925, 187).

The OS maps of 1932 and 1955 show how the foundry site by Clapps Mill in the bow of the West River on the north-west side of the historic core (MDV 59113, in HUCA 4), and also ground by Lodge Bridge at the end of the long range of market buildings on the early 19th century Market Street adjoining, became filled with further market infrastructure. This included the cattle sales ring with stalls and offices around it, rows of sheep pens, and a very large water trough. In the decade or so between the OS map of 1955 and that of 1967, the outer halves of the burgage plots east of this market complex, running down to the river from the north side of Fore Street, were covered in a large parking area servicing it (Fig 28). However, a couple of decades later the market ended, livestock sales moving out of the town to Hatherleigh. The market site, with the parking area, was re-used for large supermarkets with car parks (Map 10).



Fig 28 Truncated burgage plots seen from the 20th century market area (HUCA 4)

A factor contributing to the cessation of the market was congestion of the main street on the traditional market day, Saturday (Endacott 2002, 120). This was a very serious issue. The traffic on the east-west highway – after livestock trading, Okehampton's main economic support developed from medieval times – changed profoundly in the mid-20th century. Road use increased enormously with the shift to motorised transport. The highway was adopted to serve, as part of the A30, in the national system of through-roads under the Minister of War Transport (Trunk Roads Act, 1946), and it brought traffic to Dartmoor National Park, created in 1951, and the western sea coast.

Through the middle of the century, however, as the 1932 and 1955 maps show, the highway continued to support and attract businesses in the old core (HUCA 4). These included a garage in the pole position at the Exeter/Crediton Road junction which is thought to have attracted the first lord of Okehampton Castle to lay out a new town there. A photograph dated to 1920 shows this garage, Ruby's, already established (Wreford and Wreford 1995, 10).

A new adaptation to the Exeter Road also appears on the mid-20th century maps - a motel, originally well outside the town. The motel, which survived until recently, had an associated camping ground on the south of the road (in HUCA 11). It probably replaced a rather earlier one on the other side of the road (in HUCA 10). The site was well-placed to attract traffic as it approached the congested town from the east, and, being elevated and open, offered views to Dartmoor (Fig 29). The motel competed with half a dozen hotels in the historic core, mostly inns of the coaching era. Early conversion of rear premises to parking areas allowed old central hotels to provide for motor vehicles, as shown by a photograph of 1910 capturing the *London's* large painted advertisement of its 2,500 square feet of parking (Wreford and Wreford 1995, 3).



Fig 29 View south from the later outlying motel site (on the border of HUCAs 10, 11)

From the 1930s onwards, streets were significantly widened, especially where they lay on the ancient east-west highway (in HUCAs 2, 4, 8, 10 and 11), to increase road capacity. This involved removal of some late- or post-medieval features, both individual buildings and blocks, as well as later structures. Rosemary Row north of the east end of West Street, the longest surviving, western part of the 'island' of houses and shops in Fore Street, was finally taken back into the main street. The large late- or post-medieval Mansion House or Mansion Court on the north side of East Street, with its projecting two-storey porch (Section 3.6.2), was demolished (Endacott 2002, 117-118). East Street was widened also on the south (Fig 30), through demolition of the early Ruby's Garage, as well as the Methodist chapel at the corner of Mill Street (Wreford and Wreford 1995, 10); this took place in 1963 (Rendell 2011, 18).



Fig 30 Greatly altered medieval junction of Mill Road (left) with East Street (HUCA 4)

Already in the 1930s a new road skirting the town centre on the northern, Oaklands side was considered (Endacott 2002, 118). Only two decades after its adoption as a trunk road, in the 1960s, the volume of traffic on the A30 at Okehampton - particularly on Saturdays in summer holiday periods - was such that it was nationally notorious. Plans for diverting it away from the town gained momentum. The new A30 bypassing the town, south of the present study area, was opened after another two decades, in 1988, the plans for it having caused great controversy, due to direct impact on Dartmoor National Park (Hawkins 1988, 43, 48, 56, 58; Dartmoor National Park Authority 2004).

The deleterious environmental and social effects of the very heavy traffic of the decades after the middle of the 20th century, together with the then recent urban growth producing many similar terraces of unremarkable housing (in HUCA 8), and the scarcity of known early structures, all contributed to a lack of interest in the historic urban landscape of Okehampton at that time. This attitude to Okehampton is typified by its characterisation by a leading Devon historian as 'a singularly dull town, with very little to look at' (Hoskins 1954, 447). It contributed to further degradation of the historic environment here, the later 20th century being a time of high vulnerability to change. The following Section aims to show how through looking at the street plan, as well as the buildings known to date from medieval or post-medieval times, and others potentially of those periods, besides many more recent structures of different types, Okehampton can be appreciated as a town shaped by strong forces with regional and national significance.

4 Historic Urban Character

The predominant historic character of Okehampton is that of a linear market and highway town. The essential market function related to the grazing of a great upland, the continuous but changing influence of a major, early highway, the formative role of one of Devon's principal castles, sustaining but restricting effects of political patronage, and the stimulating and diversifying impact of the railway, are all evident to varying degrees in the landscape and buildings of today. Evidence for growth from two early settlements contributes further interest, challenging a traditional model of expansion from the centre (preferred by some; Nick Cahill, pers comm). Parts of the town have potential for significant medieval or other building fabric and buried structures or deposits.

The following Section provides descriptions of the 12 Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) identified in the town, and assesses their heritage value for contributing to understanding and experiences of the town as a whole and of its region (Low, Medium or High), in terms of buildings, earthworks, roads or spaces above ground, and also of potential for buried remains. (It is critical to note that the assessments are for the landscape across each HUCA. Where major exceptions within HUCAs are known, they are stated in the table, but these variations do not appear in the GIS database.) Relevant HER numbers (prefix MDV) are included for cross-reference with DCC's Historic Environment Record.

4.1 Church (HUCA 1)

Parish church with 15th and 19th century fabric, and churchyard and lanes of pre-urban origin

4.1.1 Historic character

Okehampton's parish church, and the surrounding fields and lanes, form an area which has rural character, but also shows very close and ancient associations with the town. The area is outside the historic urban extent, but adjoins the modern suburbs. It lies on a shoulder of the long ridge running to the Okement Valley from Sourton Down to the west. The church stands on the edge of the high ground, with moderately steep slopes falling away to the river on the east and to a stream feeding into this on the north. On the east the HUCA is bordered by residential areas - the modern suburb HUCA 12, and the redeveloped HUCA 2. To the west are fields running away from the town. The HUCA is framed on this side by South Church Lane, part of an early road running north from the moor (via HUCA 7), and also by field boundaries and a green lane (Fig 31) forming parts of a route now partly absorbed in farmland, running between the church and Upcott.

Documentary evidence shows that there has been a church here at least from the 13th century, and indicates also a possible religious function for the site in the 10th century (Section 3.3.1). The church (MDV 4759 and associated entries) was dedicated to All Saints at its rebuilding in the 15th century (see below). It may previously have been dedicated to St Michael, as were churches on high sites elsewhere in the south-west. The churchyard can be seen from map analysis and on the ground (Fig 32) to have a core area sub-square in plan (Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3.1), indicating a potential origin as a Roman fortlet. If real, this may have been associated with the highway passing east-west to the south (in HUCA 2), and with a fortlet on the next ridge to the east (in HUCA 11). The maps also show that the church site was linked by roads, some now lost, to probable foci of the early medieval landscape. These include an abandoned manorial centre near Oaklands (in HUCA 5) and a settlement on the highway to the south, largely re-developed (in HUCA 2).

Among the medieval roads within the area is that now known as Church Path, previously called the Lychway or Leech Lane (Section 3.3.3). Leech Lane climbed from the foot of the suggested early settlement on High Street (in HUCA 3) to meet an approach to the church from the area around Beare to the north-east, where the

manorial centre probably lay before the Castle was built (in HUCA 5). This remained the principal route between the Riverside Town (in HUCA 4) and the church through medieval times; it became linked to the church more directly by a branch to the downhill corner of the churchyard of post-medieval times.

The part of the route nearest the old town (Church Path), and the branch to the churchyard (now called Choir Boys' Path), show age and past change in features preserved through later pedestrianisation. Both have a narrow span, surfacing of local stone said to have been laid by prisoners during the Napoleonic wars (Endacott 2002, 74), and hedgebanks and trees with semi-natural and natural diversity (Fig 33). A later road alongside Choir Boys' Path (see further below) may indicate that the old route was greatly valued by townspeople in the past, since it is unusual for a parallel 19th century road improvement to respect the integrity of a pre-existing way, rather than absorb it.

The church is said to have been rebuilt during the episcopate of Bishop Lacy, 1420-1455 (Hoskins 1952, 239-240). All apart from the 15th century tower was reconstructed in Perpendicular style between 1842 and 1844 by prominent Exeter architect John Hayward after a fire; the church of 1844 is said to be similar to the earlier one (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 608) though comparison of the maps of 1841 and 1886 shows it has been considerably extended to the east. Giant iron numerals giving the date 1844 on the tower door, together with the medieval stonework of the tower itself, allow the main periods of construction of the church to be readily appreciated (Fig 34).

As already mentioned, in post-medieval times the churchyard was expanded on the Okehampton side, with a sub-rectangular, curving sided enclosure, linked to the urban core (in HUCA 4) by a route to its south-east corner (now Choir Boys' Path). This enclosure is now open to a Victorian graveyard on its south (see further below) but is distinguished from the latter on the ground by a break in slope and path line. It can be seen as bringing church and town closer together, since it extended east towards, and had a new direct route to, the core of the town of the time (in HUCA 4).

The links between the church and the Riverside Town to the east were further strengthened physically and symbolically in the post-medieval period. Recorded episodes of improvement and ornamentation by the borough on the routes between the two sites include the planting of 'several spreading colonnades of elm trees in Okehampton churchyard, planted...in the winter of 1685-6', and paving also in the 17th century (Bridges 1839, 125, 127). The granite slabs forming the path to the church porch, as noted in 1902 (Anon 1902, 420), include many with dates and initials of the 17th century, clearly *ex-situ* as they are laid to one side and with their inscriptions on differing orientations (Fig 35). They may include both original paving and re-used memorial stones of that period. The mature trees around the church may include some veterans, or successors, of the 17th century elm avenues (Fig 36).

By the time of the 1841 map, Church Avenue, parallel with the Choir Boys' Path and continuing it to South Church Lane, was made, and the churchyard was expanded slightly to the west, taking in the roadway there which was shifted beyond it. In 1885 ground within the new road on the south was added to the churchyard (Section 3.8.4). An early 20th century cemetery nearby is of course full of significance for the people of Okehampton today. Its positioning, just across the road to the west, means that one can still readily appreciate the old churchyard as a separate site with clear evidence for its early origins and growth, and its associations with and distance from the borough.

To the north is the Vicarage complex (MDV 44315) with its former large precinct, farmstead, garden, orchard and lanes, now considerably altered. The 1756 plan shows what appears to be a high-status site, post-medieval or even earlier in origin, with long building ranges running across the contour, and the field name Culver Meadow likely to refer to a culver house (dovecote) which may have been a circular structure visible on the map. The Vicarage was rebuilt in the mid-19th century on an altered plan, with ornamented Tudor-style chimneys and gables which rise to feature in views across the churchyard above, contributing to the 'revived ancient' character of the church (Fig 34).

4.1.2 Above ground heritage significance

High The location of this HUCA outside the built-up area of Okehampton might perhaps give rise to an impression that its development was extraneous to that of the town. In fact, the urban survey shows that this place has very high value, with its varied components and their relationships, and with the benefit of the evidence of old maps and documents, for understanding and experiencing aspects of the historic town, as well as the pre-urban landscape from which it developed.

The position of the church outside any known settlement is remarkable. The potential for this reflecting its siting in a Roman fortlet is of particular interest, as fortlets are rare nationally, relatively poorly understood, and tell us much about Roman frontiers.

All Saints Church is among the few buildings in Okehampton known to be medieval in origin and has group value with the chapel of ease in the urban core (HUCA 4). The footprint of the old Vicarage coincides partly with those of previous buildings, so it is likely to incorporate part/s of them, and its grounds may have earthworks or structures relating to the earlier layout. Both Church and Vicarage are listed at Grade II. The visible expansion of the old churchyard and accumulation of its ground through centuries of internments, the relative chronology of the lanes passing or converging on it, the hollowing of lanes on the townward side of this area and in HUCA 2 adjoining, the post-medieval paving and trees, all contribute to the very strong historic character conveyed by the church itself, the graveyard memorials and other structures:– one of long development of this place through medieval and post-medieval times to serve the needs of an urban community as well as those of a rural parish (Fig 37).

The similar areas of the post-medieval and Victorian extensions to the churchyard are meaningful for the town as a whole, reflecting a similarity between the extent of the growth of the town based on the market and wool trade, and that of the railway-age. The limited overall size of the burial ground which sufficed until recent times is indicative of the restricted growth (or relatively stable population) of the historic town.

The historic lanes around the church (Figs 1, 5, 31, 33, 38) provide clues to how the landscape was shaped in the distant past, particularly valuable as the origins of Okehampton are poorly documented. The courses and relative chronologies of the lanes, and the views from them and from the churchyard across open farmland, contribute greatly to understanding of the separate origins and shared development of church and borough. As mentioned above, the retention of the 'Choir Boys Path' road beside a later road is unusual and may reflect aspects of the relationship between town and parish church with wider significance. The old churchyard and hedgerows are also reservoirs of local building stones, and of trees (many planted or laid) and other semi-natural features, largely lost from the burgages in HUCA 4, where orchard trees proliferated before plots were amalgamated, built up or re-surfaced in the 20th century.

4.1.3 Below ground heritage significance

High The churchyard may have buried remains of the Roman and early medieval periods in its core, as well as remains of the shifted part of the early road on its west (South Church Lane) taken in by its late 18th /early 19th century westward expansion.

The fields around the Church share the high potential for buried remains of the prehistoric and historic eras common to medieval farmland. (The urban survey results do not however support the suggestion by Hoskins and others that these fields contain the site of a pre-Norman village, captured in the HER as MDVs 13517, 21798.)

Ground in a couple of fields east of the Vicarage (once lying in one enclosure) has more specific archaeological potential for traces of buildings associated with the holding there named Buss Houses (possibly from a dialect word for suckling calves) recorded on the 1756 plan. Post-medieval or earlier features or deposits associated with former high-status buildings by the Vicarage may survive in its grounds above or below ground. The southern margin of the Vicarage grounds and the field immediately east may have buried remains of the former road to the church from the north-east.



Fig 31 Lane NNW of the church, formerly linking Dartmoor and Hatherleigh



Fig 32 Former SSE corner of churchyard which may re-use a Roman fortlet site



Fig 33 Church Lane, now a path, linking the Riverside Town and the church



Fig 34 Church door displaying date of restoration, and rebuilt Vicarage below



Fig 35 Granite slabs with post-medieval dates and initials south of the church

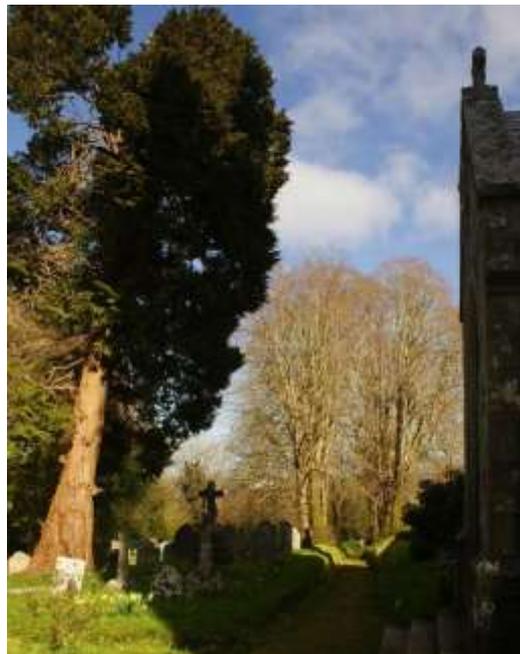


Fig 36 Rows of elms lining the historic approach to the church from the town



Fig 37 Medieval tower, tall trees and lichen-covered gravestones at the church



Fig 38 South Church Lane which ran to Dartmoor is joined by Darkey Lane

4.2 High Street and New Road (HUCA 2)

Steep western hill on the ancient highway, High Street, with evidence of a pre-urban market, a pre-Norman settlement now largely re-developed, and the 'New' turnpike road skirting the hill

4.2.1 Historic character

This area lies on the west, above the riverside urban core, HUCA 4. It is roughly wedge-shaped with a curving long east side against the West River. The wedge expands from West Bridge, rising steeply to a long ridge to the west. It has a framework of roads; High Street following its spine, Darkey Lane shaping its north side, and New Road above the river to the south. The latter two roads both spring off High Street towards the thin end of the wedge, above West Bridge. The area includes the suggested first phase of the settlement of Okehampton, referred to as *Ocmundtune* in the mid- 11th century. The evidence for this settlement is presented below, and in Section 3.3.3 where it is noted that Higham sees it as post- rather than pre-Norman; another view sees the area as purely post-medieval (Nick Cahill, pers comm). The built environment today is largely modern residential suburb, with some earlier houses on the north-east, and Victorian development on New Road.

The central, formative road, named as High Street on modern maps, was formerly known as Shobhill, Shabhill, or Sharp Hill, perhaps, as the third version suggests, because of its steep and abrupt slope. This was part of the early east-west road, the 'King's highway' in borough records, and very probably Roman in origin (MDV 18496; see Section 3.2). The extreme steepness of the east end of High Street or Sharp Hill means it can be appreciated as a route inherited from the era before carriage or motor vehicle traffic, despite modern widening, surfacing, and redevelopment of its frontage.

Where it passes out of the town, at the edge of the HUCA and of the study area, this road now serves as a minor lane, and is relatively unaffected by modern change. Here it retains the character of an ancient ridgeway, and can also be seen to have been much wider before slips of ground on its south were enclosed, at the point where it was crossed by a transhumance route from the north to the moorland to the south (Fig 39). Part of that moor way survives as a road today, forming South Church Lane in the adjoining HUCA 1. The once expansive cigar-shaped open ground at this former cross-roads is potentially very significant for the historic market town of Okehampton, as it may mark an early, pre-urban place for the sale of livestock, which helped to attract, and continued to serve, the first, pre-Norman phase of settlement (Section 3.3.3).

The early settlement itself is considered to lie below this feature, on the steep part of High Street (again, see Section 3.3.3). The 1756 and 1841 maps record rows of buildings along the roadside here, at the heads of plots perpendicular to the road. Since High Street was re-developed in the 20th century (see further below), its early character is not readily appreciable on the ground. However, the approximate extent of this western market and highway settlement and its associations with, and dating relative to, the church, castle, and Riverside Town, can be detected in the landscape through the surviving patterns of the roads to either side.

To the north is Darkey Lane, the early settlement's back street by which its inhabitants, and the coffins of its dead, went to the church via the pre-existing South Church Lane (Fig 40). Another coffin road, which served the wider town, and so probably dates from the High Middle Ages (part now Church Street, in this HUCA, and part Church Path in HUCA 1), connects the bottom of the back street to an earlier route from the east to the parish church (in HUCA 1). Moyses Lane on the south is part of a secondary link to the top of the High Street settlement from the castle in HUCA 3 by the West River.

If there was a livestock market above this western settlement it will have ceased at least when the addition of the Fore Street market place between the two rivers to early Norman and 12th century ones further east (all in HUCA 4) created a livestock market capacity similar to that provided here (Sections 3.4.1.2, 3.4.2.2). The settlement was distinguished in documents of the 12th century and later from what had become the

urban core between the rivers as *Bywestwater*, along with the intervening ground traversed by West Street, between High Street and the West Bridge. This ground off West Street was low-lying and wet and part was used for the town prison (recorded in 1675), but it also accommodated burgages, as indicated by the shapes of plots shown on the 1756 plan and by documents such as a grant of 1316 of '1 burgage and a croft Biwestwater on the north side of the King's highway leading from town towards Magdalena' (DHS 3248A-O/11/16). These may have begun as expansion either from High Street, or from the Riverside Town across the West Bridge (HUCA 4).

The Magdalena of the document referred to above was the 'hospital of St Mary Magdalene'. This would appear to be the name of a hospital for lepers at Okehampton known to have been founded c1250 (Orme 1999, 218). (The HER records this, as MDV 4767, at a notional site, north of the west end of High Street, beyond Darkey Lane.) Another grant, dated 1388, tells us that the Magdalena of Okehampton was at Tathiport or Taddiport (DHS 3248A-O/11/51).

The name Taddiport or Daddypport also occurs at Torrington in North Devon, and Tregony in Cornwall, and at both those medieval towns it denotes a place on the riverside (Henderson and Coates 1928, 89). It would seem possible then that riverside ground in the north-east corner of this HUCA, probably the area north-west of the West Bridge in a bend of the West Okement, was used for a lazaret, though the site seems surprisingly central for such a use (see also Section 3.4.2.1). It is interesting to note that the other Taddiports mentioned above also had leper hospitals. If the place name refers to toads, this may perhaps be a derogatory term for lepers. The dedication of the hospital may be particularly significant for Okehampton in that Mary Magdalene was the patron saint of tanners (as well as others, including reformed prostitutes). Tanning was the subject of a clause in the first charter of the town (Section 3.4.2.2), and Taddiport may very well have been one of the sites used for that craft early in the life of the town, the river supplying water and taking away waste, as it did later for a tannery and later still for a large laundry here (see further below).

From later medieval times, the lower end of Sharp Hill, and that of Church Street which was then linked to a route leading north replacing an earlier one by the Church (in HUCA 1), may have formed a quarter of shops or workshops as well as dwellings for less wealthy families, outside, but close to, the riverside town. Church Street has some potential post-medieval buildings of this kind (Fig 41). Sharp Hill is largely redeveloped, but is known to have had traders or craftsmen in post-medieval times, shops being recorded here in 1589 and 1714, for example (DRS 3248A-O/11/435-6, 480). Some potential medieval houses standing end on to the street, and some fields in gaps in the street frontage possibly marking the sites of others lost to decay, are visible on Sharp Hill on the 1756 plan. The value of frontage there will have declined after the graded loop of New Road was cut around the south side of this HUCA, perhaps c1820 (see Section 3.8.2), this carrying the east-west highway traffic away from the hill.

New Road was cut between the urban core (in HUCA 4) and Five Oaks, now New Road Cross, to the west, so avoiding steep Sharp Hill, dangerous as well as difficult for carriages. The 19th century directories show that prior to recent redevelopment Sharp Hill, or High Street as it was named on the 1906 map, had a semi-rural character, with cottage rows, and small yards or shops for trades serving both the town and surrounding farms. This may reflect an ancient village status (Section 3.3.3) as well as the by-passing of c1820. Workers based here were mostly rural craftsmen; besides an insurance agent, probably working in the town centre, who also ran a school, there were two masons, a nurseryman, a farmer, a seedsman, and a thatcher (White 1878). Some eddies of the flow of business on the highway still reached here long after 1820. A photograph of 1895 (Rendell 2011, 35) shows a modest thatched house, ruined by fire, in one of the rows on rock-cut platforms flanking Sharp Hill, which had been a lodging house, named *Little White Hart* after the renowned old central inn.

Around the foot of High Street, on the 'outer' side of West Bridge, the area had a busier urban character from the early 19th century. Businesses related to highway traffic

thrived, New Road feeding this into the old route along West Street here. The south side of West Street, between the bridge and a forge near the end of New Road recorded in the 1878 trades directory, was opened up to ease congestion in the 20th century, but frontage on the north survives and shows shaping to local and longer distance communications. An old post office and a cluster of inns here exploited the main road, and also on the regionally important route to the Hatherleigh district to the north which branched off from the latter along Church Street by the inns (Fig 19). The riverside ground adjoining to the north, probably the medieval Taddiport, was in use at the time of the 1841 survey for large, industrial-type buildings, very likely the tannery in this area mentioned as still existing in this area after the First World War (Hunter 1925, 223). The site was used for a large laundry by the time of the 1932 mapping; this was replaced in the later 20th century by a council depot and more recently by housing.

Returning to the inns on West Street between New Road and West Bridge, these served as the termini for weekly carriers' carts running to Chagford and Clawton, as noted in the 1878 directory mentioned above. The web of such local transport services has wider meaning for the history and character of Okehampton, indicating the broad east-west spread of the rural hinterland with stock rearing farms and villages on which the town and its market traditionally drew – reaching Chagford a dozen miles to the east around the edge of Dartmoor, and Clawton a similar distance away over the 'cold', relatively thinly settled farmland on the bedrocks known as the culm measures to the west.

On New Road itself, the smithy mentioned above held a prominent position by the junction with High Street and West Street, allowing it to attract both town trade and passing traffic (Fig 42). Further out along New Road, terraces and ribbons of villas were built on the land which it opened up above the river. This development was relatively late and limited in extent and range compared to that by Station Road in HUCA 7. The contrast reflects the greater importance of the railway as opposed to the road system in stimulating residential growth in Okehampton in Victorian times, as well as the steepness of the land cut for New Road which acted as a constraint on building there.

Developments relating to road transport continued in the area around the New Road/West Street junction, this being positioned on the main through road, yet in an area where land for works, depots and sales premises could be acquired more easily or cheaply than on the east of the town. The large Day's car showroom of the early 20th century, on a prominent site opposite the forge, survives through conversion to other use (Fig 42). (The Devon Motor Transport Company depot by West Bridge noted by Endacott, used to operate extensive bus services taking advantage of Okehampton's central position on Devon's road network, was just east of the bridge, so in HUCA 4.)

The character of High Street was changed radically in the 20th century, with housing and access ways running off it on new lines. The map of 1932 shows Bright View, a series of short rows overlooking the town on a narrow path at right angles to the old street, a field away from the pre-existing built-up area. The fields below this, inside the Moyses Lane junction and so within the likely extent of the early medieval settlement, were developed between the mapping of 1955 and 1967. By the time of the 1983 map, the north side of the street all the way down to Church Street was re-developed, forming Jubilee Close (Fig 43).

The recent estates are arranged on streets and cul-de-sacs on alignments very different from that of the early settlement which had followed that of the pre-existing road through its centre. Little remains of the old pattern of roadside cottage rows with rear plots perpendicular to the street; though the settlement's back lane, Darkey Lane, survives very well behind this (to the north). In this way the redevelopment represents a thorough redesign, which suggests that the inherited landscape here had become little regarded or valued.

4.2.2 Above ground heritage significance

Low overall; **Medium** on Church Lane and north of West Street; **High** (in terms of upstanding boundaries and road, rather than buildings) for Darkey Lane and at the potential pre-urban market at the Old Road/South Church Lane junction on the west

Lower Church Lane has historic street frontage on its east with potential for survival of post-medieval buildings or fabric, and this would be of particular value for Okehampton since much of the frontage in the urban core in HUCA 4 has been altered from the later 19th century. The inns north of West Street have group value with those in HUCA 4, showing how highway travel affected the shape, economy and character of the town in the past. To the rear of this north side of West Street there may be walling or other surface remains of medieval burgages. Low walls of the town prison survive on the other side of West Street, reflecting the marginal character of the riverside in the past.

The early car showrooms, and earlier forge, on either side of the inner end of New Road, are of wider importance for Okehampton, being associated with the historic use and status of the east-west through road which supported the town from medieval times. The showrooms evoke well the appeal of motor road transport, which in the second half of the 20th century shaped the growth of the town (particularly in HUCAs 8-12), yet also led to a 'bottleneck' with severe traffic congestion extending along the A30 trunk road through this HUCA and on through HUCAs 4 and 8, 11 and 10, forcing travellers to adapt by driving by night, or spending hours of restricted movement, or sleep, in trapped vehicles (Hawkins 1988, 31).

On the outer, west side of the area, the upstanding boundaries of Old Road are potentially valuable, vulnerable, markers in the landscape of the early form of the east-west highway and the possible pre-urban livestock market place on this highway, both critical to understanding of the origins of the town as a whole.

4.2.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** in High Street and in open ground off this, in the field taken in from the roadside south-west of the South Church Lane/High Street junction (Hungerlands), and in any relatively undisturbed ground remaining in plots off West Street.

Details of the areas regarded as having high potential or sensitivity are as follows;

- The roadway of High Street, developed from an ancient highway probably Roman in origin, and considered to have been used on the west of the HUCA to form a market place before the Norman Conquest, may have early surfaces or associated deposits beneath its tarmac finish.
- Any undeveloped ground and also any relatively undisturbed property boundaries, lying off High Street east of the Moyses Lane junction, could preserve evidence of pre-Norman as well as medieval and later settlement and change (Fig 44).
- The remaining narrow roadside field of Hungerlands, south-west of the South Church Lane/High Street junction, interpreted as part of an early, pre-urban market on the highway, may retain traces of such use below ground.
- Darkey Lane, showing very well its ancient origin as a back lane, and representing the earliest settlement of Okehampton which is obscured by re-development elsewhere, may be vulnerable to alterations such as new openings for access.
- The ground off West Street has map and/or documentary evidence for medieval expansion plots, and for a leper hospital (not precisely located), and may have buried remains of these or other use related to its marginal, riverside character, such as tanning (though the largest area with such potential, adjoining the river below the bridge, has recently been re-developed, forming Westbridge Close).
- The prison site by the West River with its upstanding walling also has potential for buried remains of medieval settlement-related activity, as well as for deposits associated with the use of the post-medieval prison.



Fig 39 South Church Lane/Old Road junction, formerly a broad crossroads



Fig 40 Darkey Lane, the deep back lane of the early settlement on High Street



Fig 41 Church Street with potential post-medieval houses and workshops



Fig 42 New Road turnpike with former forge (left) and car showroom (right)



Fig 43 Jubilee Close redevelopment by the steep ancient High Street (rear ground)



Fig 44 Ground levels by Mount Prospect relate to early High Street settlement

4.3 Castle Road (HUCA 3)

Approach to ruined Norman fortress and sumptuous hunting residence and park of c1300, the road articulating riverside land marginal to the town, with associated sites including a workhouse

4.3.1 Historic character

Castle Road forms the spine of a linear area on the south-west of Okehampton, running out, by the West Okement River, from the urban core in HUCA 4, to Okehampton Castle on the edge of this HUCA 3 and of the town. The area is bounded on its eastern long side by the rather irregular line formed by the combined backs of the coherent railway age residential development of Station Road (HUCA 7) and on the west by the sweep of the 19th century New Road with the redeveloped early western settlement on High Street above this (HUCA 2). The ground is low-lying and fairly level as far as Castleford Bridge, roughly half way out from the town centre. Beyond this point, the flanking valley sides are increasingly steep, and the castle keep rises abruptly at the head of the area, on a motte and bailey shaped from the end of an unusually steep little spur between the river and a tributary stream (Figs 7, 45, 47).

The castle survives well and many aspects of its relationship with the town are evident. Though ruined, it has well-preserved earthworks and walls, protected by Scheduling and Listing. Its layout, character and development are readily appreciated, interpretation benefitting greatly from the findings of a programme of excavations and research (Higham 1997, 1980). It has two main phases, and the character of both, the strong fortress made for Baldwin the Sheriff in the later 11th century, and the complex, sumptuous residence within a defensive circuit developed by the Courtenay lords around the early 14th century, is evident. A mill and mine recorded below the castle are poorly understood at present, but remains of them may survive, at least below ground.

There is no evidence for medieval settlement in the vicinity of the Castle. The relationship of the Castle with the western, High Street part of the town, interpreted in this assessment as an earlier settlement (HUCA 2), is not apparent at the Castle or High Street, since topography and trees mean they are not intervisible (cover photo). However, it can be appreciated on the ground through an old route linking them, Castle Mill Lane, springing from the steep south end of a pre-existing road to the moor by the church with its ford at Lovers' Meet (Fig 49). To the north (in HUCA 2) this link to High Street was intersected by the turnpike road, New Road, and beyond that it has been widened and built up, forming Moyses Lane. South of New Road, in this HUCA 3, where it slants up the steep valley side through replanted ancient woodland, it is very well preserved in its historic narrow form, and remains a public right of way (Fig 46).

The principal historic approach, linking the castle to the Eastern Town and the town between the rivers, considered to be the urban areas founded in the Norman and 13th century respectively (mostly in HUCA 4), is similarly evident. This is the 'road leading towards the castle', lying 'between the waters', mentioned in a grant of 1300 (DHS 3248A-O/11/12), named Castle Lane on the 1756 map, and Castle Road today (Fig 47).

Castle Road is now mostly flanked by 19th and 20th century development, is altered in width and finish, and has a 20th century bridge at Castleford over the West Okement, formerly crossed by a ford, as the place name says, and by stepping stones, as recorded for example on the 1756 survey. Despite this the road can easily be read as the approach to the castle from the Norman and medieval urban areas, since it runs directly from the market/fair/road intersection between them marked by East Bridge and St James' Chapel.

Looking along it from the castle, the early, eastern part of the urban core can be perceived (cover photo), although the view is more restricted by tree growth than it was in the past (as indicated by old images of it, such as one of 1832 reproduced on the Etched on Devon's Memory website). Looking along the road in the other direction, the castle's motte and ruined keep, curtain wall and barbican dominate the approach from Castleford.

The close relationship of the developed castle of the Courtenays with Okehampton Park, the private hunting grounds established by the family over a very extensive tract of the slopes and valleys rising to the high moors on the side away from the town, can also be seen. Windows in the ruins of the high status residences in the bailey overlook the park, and east of the ford at the foot of the castle the massive bank and characteristic internal ditch of the park pale or deer-proofed boundary survive well (Fig 48; the outer, townward side of the massive bank is marked by the large trees on the left of the photo). The ford and watering place, on an earlier transhumance way, linked castle and park.

It is easy, too, to appreciate how from the 18th century, long after its abandonment for occupation, the castle acquired a new significance as a picturesque antiquity, the eye-catching high yet fragmented fortifications, dramatic topography and accessible riverside (cover photo, and Figs 45, 49) attracting genteel visitors as well as people from the town. Old graffiti, some by French prisoners quartered in Okehampton during the Napoleonic Wars, can be seen on the castle walls. Footpaths and a footbridge over the river link the castle and the town centre and station areas (HUCAs 4 and 7). While the footbridge has been rebuilt, losing its romantic historic character, the paths show their age where they are respected by Victorian development or where they feature iron kissing gates, though the gate nearest the castle has recently been re-positioned.

Between the castle and the town, by Castle Road, is piecemeal and varied residential and civic development of the 19th and 20th centuries. Several of the earlier sites reflect, in their dispersed distribution, and varying character, the marginal nature of this area in post-medieval times when the castle was abandoned and the park was farmed and, later, used for artillery practice by the army. Almshouses were founded by a benefactor in the 16th century, and rebuilt in the 19th (MDV 44322). A capacious, discrete hollow in the slope east of the river, facing north-west and low lying so probably rather damp at the time, was used for the Union Workhouse of the early 19th century, later converted to a hospital (MDV 93674). This is marked by a surviving Workhouse range of severe classical design, and now by several interpretative notice boards and installations, though recent housing has replaced most of the original large complex, so obscuring aspects of the role of Okehampton as the central town of a rural district in Victorian times (Fig 20). Nearer the Castle are rows resembling estate cottages, built in several phases from around the turn of the 20th century, in an arrangement unusual for the time, running back-to-back across the space between Castle Road and river (Fig 50).

More recent infilling in the northern half of the area includes a ribbon of semi-detached and other houses along the east side of Castle Road, and a small housing estate off the road by the river near Castleford Bridge. A denser residential estate on the riverside further down the valley, at Jacob's Pool, was built on ground formerly quite different in character - medieval burgages, with a possible tannery, and a major bus depot - but is included in HUCA 3 since as a result of the redevelopment it now resembles the modern riverside housing here more closely than it does the rest of the historic core in HUCA 4.

4.3.2 Above ground heritage significance

High overall; **Low** where re-developed in Jacob's Pool and The Glen housing estates

The Castle has outstanding value and potential, for Okehampton as a whole, and for national studies of castles and their roles in the growth of urbanism and of hunting park landscapes of power and exclusion (for example Creighton 2002). Its two major phases of building can be related to those of the urban areas founded by successive lords, in HUCA 4. Its approaches and setting, though altered especially nearer to the town centre, greatly enhance understanding of those urban foundations, and of pre-existing settlement in HUCA 2. Castle Road and Castle Mill Lane in particular indicate how castles were embedded in, and adapted, patterns of communication and settlement. The openness of the castle area gives a sense of its decline after the Courtenay era.

The Castle and riverside of Okehampton Park have great community value today and this is rooted in the past, as shown by historic footpaths and kissing gates, and an open

air swimming pool of the earlier 20th century. The almshouse, workhouse and back-to-back rows on or by Castle Road have high group value, showing differing responses, in the same marginal urban area, to perceptions of social needs over several centuries.

Most surviving buildings on inner Castle Road are 20th century. A large, three storey house in part of the old pound at the outer end of Fair Place, mapped in 1756 and photographed early in the 20th century (Wreford and Wreford 1993, 8), may have been the home of a member of the Luxmoore family prominent in the 18th century (see Sections 3.7, 4.4.1), but it was demolished in 1938, and replaced by a post office in 1962 (Figs 51, 87). Woodman's, also recorded in 1756, is notable for its relatively early origin and for the association with the deer park suggested by its name (Fig 51).

4.3.3 Below ground heritage significance

Medium overall; **High** at the Castle, in the valley below with its mill and mine sites (not currently well defined), and at the deer park boundary with its bank and ditch

The high potential of the Castle site for buried medieval structural remains and deposits has been demonstrated, and extensively investigated, through excavation. (Here, as at other sites with complex buildings and stratigraphy, including the historic urban core, 'above' and 'below' ground value and potential are of course closely integrated.)

The valley bottom by the Castle also has high archaeological potential: the sites of the mill and a silver lead mine recorded in Victorian times (Anon 1859, 7) could be defined and investigated; and the upstanding park boundary can be expected to have traces below surface of its early form and function, maintenance or repair. The roads serving the Castle may preserve early features such as paving under modern surfacing. Gardens west of Castle Road may have buried remains of the prehistoric or historic eras, since they were medieval farmland. Gardens or paddocks closer to the castle may have traces such as stray artefacts relating to the use of the castle (Fig 52). The gardens of the almshouses, worked by the residents of the latter from their foundation in the 16th century, may well have domestic debris from that time in their ground.



Fig 45 Bailey complex with motte and keep above, Okehampton Castle



Fig 46 Early track slanting up the steep slope north-west of the castle



Fig 47 Castle Road approach from town to castle, on a direct, designed line



Fig 48 Park pale earthworks on the east side of West River, below the castle



Fig 49 Ford just below the castle with path to the Lovers' Meet footbridge



Fig 50 Rows by Castle Lane with jointed end showing back-to-back build



Fig 51 Woodman's (second from left), later rows, and post office, Castle Road



Fig 52 Plots and sheds below the steep west side of the valley by the castle

4.4 Riverside Town (HUCA 4)

Historic core east of, and between, two rivers, with medieval market and fair streets, bridges, burgages, chapel, mill, and lanes, new market of c1826, and later re-building of street frontage

4.4.1 Historic character

Note: This is an overview of complex landscape, including the greater part of a medieval town, not previously analysed as a whole so requiring detailed interpretation. The chronological Section 3 provides further comment on components and dating.

Introduction

The Riverside Town may be regarded as the medieval heart of Okehampton, formed in three main phases and developed over almost a millennium, dominating the earlier settlement on High Street (in HUCA 2). It includes the probable site of a new town, by the junction of the Exeter and Crediton Roads, begun before the Domesday survey of 1086 and most likely after 1068, by Baldwin the Sheriff who built the Castle (in HUCA 3) at that time; growth from this to East Bridge likely to have been promoted by Baldwin's heir Richard in the early 12th century; and between the East and West Rivers, a major extension of the town attributed to the Courtenay lords who held the manor and barony from 1173 and who granted the town charters in c1220 and 1290.

The development of the Riverside Town from east to west, and the growth of the town from two cores – one on the east here in the Riverside Town, the other west of this area on High Street – is indicated by the map analysis. It is presented along with the supporting evidence and interpretation, in this Section, as elsewhere in the report, to contribute to future investigation of the town. Growth from a single central core has also been suggested (Nick Cahill, pers comm).

The HUCA lies immediately upstream of the confluence of the East and West Okement Rivers, on level or slightly sloping, relatively low ground, falling significantly to the riverbanks. It extends across the ground between the two rivers, and includes a smaller area on East Street across the East Bridge. The ground is built up, apart from its roads, yards, and limited paths and gardens. Some of the surviving open parts of plots retain their historic enclosed character and stone paving; more are opened up from their (original or truncated) outer ends and re-surfaced to form parking areas and the like.

In plan the area has an irregular outline overall, but it can be seen to be made up of lobes of urban landscape derived from mostly medieval burgages (more sinuous in the expansion plots south of St James' Street, these being subdivisions of strip fields, and with variations in size some of which may reflect relative chronology; see further below). These medieval lobes, like the later roads serving the area, hang off a central formative and unifying feature, the ancient highway, here named East Street, Fore Street, and West Street, running across the rivers on the East and West Bridges.

As can be seen from Maps 4 and 11, HUCA 4 does not correspond entirely with the known extent of medieval Okehampton, because of later change. It does not include the probable pre-Norman settlement on Sharp Hill, with, on the intervening ground beyond West Bridge, low-lying plots likely to represent medieval expansion. Those areas are mostly re-developed, and were in any case distinctive historically and topographically, and so lie in HUCA 2. The east arm of the HUCA does not include the plots on the north of Crediton Road by its junction with Exeter Road, considered to be Norman in origin, since these have been re-developed; but does include some ground on Exeter Road east of that junction which has some lingering post-medieval character.

On the south, a belt of land adjoining burgages, forming Kempley Road, has become effectively merged with the burgages through similar growth of cottage rows and so is included in this HUCA 4. At Jacob's Pool, the landscape is derived from burgages but is now similar to that of estates fitted around Castle Road beyond, with modern housing laid out on cul-de-sacs on new lines, and so is included in HUCA 3. Again, on the south,

parts of a pound on the edge of the medieval town have been absorbed in the redevelopment on Castle Road in HUCA 3 and in the villa landscape of HUCA 7.

The north part of the borough, the outer ends of the burgages north of Fore Street (used in the 20th century for market infrastructure and parking), has also been re-developed, with a group of supermarkets and their parking areas. However, this corner is considered to remain part of the historic core. It is strongly defined, and bound to the core to its south, by the rivers converging around its other sides. On its inner, south side, part of it remains essentially open to yards on the truncated burgage plots, across modern School Way, so can be seen to have been developed from these plots, a perception aided where banks on burgage boundaries survive between car parks.

The Riverside Town as a whole has formed the commercial heart of the town from the early 13th century, and has undergone important modifications to its plan and buildings in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most notable are alterations to the infrastructure of the market and its approach roads in the early 19th century; re-design of central frontage related to the arrival of the railway to the south (in HUCA 7) in the later 19th century; road widening and other adaptation to the load of traffic, extraordinarily heavy for a relatively small historic town centre, carried on the spinal through road from the middle of the 20th century (particularly in East Street and West Street, though changes to Fore Street between these included removal of the last remnant of its late- or post-medieval central row); and, as mentioned above, later 20th century levelling and re-development of the outer, riverside halves of the burgages north of Fore Street following the cessation of the livestock market there.

The layers of change can be still be seen to be fitted to, and in places to owe much of their character to, a framework of medieval streets with burgages hanging off them and with back roads and sites of medieval industry outside those. As a result, the Riverside Town represents a coherent urban area of medieval origin. Medieval and later borough records, with, from the 17th century, journals kept by borough officials (Young 1925), and accounts by travellers passing through on the highway, contribute to interpretation and understanding of many aspects of the landscape and past life here seen also through the historic mapping and in the shape of the area today. Its origins and character are fundamentally influenced by its exploitation of, and adaptation to, the economic opportunities and pressures associated with the market trade and highway traffic within it, and, later, with transport on the railway to its south in HUCA 7.

The historic maps, landscape and buildings indicate several layers of character and significance in the Riverside Town, explored briefly in turn below.

Eastern Town of Norman origin

The historic maps, a field name, and relationships with surrounding urban areas (see Section 3.4.1.2), provide evidence of a shadowy first layer, a small Norman town, with plots mostly comparatively short (more similar to the earlier ones on High Street in HUCA 2 than to those between the rivers) flanking a triangular market place marked on the east by a stone named the One Stone or Longstone, at the Crediton Road/Exeter Road junction, and extending to the East Bridge, from which a road ran off south to the castle (in HUCA 3). It may be seen as a new focus, associated with the castle, for the trading settlement of Okehampton, rather than a new town in a completely rural landscape, since a road was provided from the castle to High Street in HUCA 2, indicating that a pre-existing settlement in that western area continued to be occupied.

This place has been greatly altered, with the building up of the junction triangle apart from an alley on the east, infilling of another open trading area in front (east) of the East Bridge, widening of the roads in the turnpike and trunk road eras, and rebuilding of houses (Figs 8, 53). However, it is possible to appreciate the great attractions, mostly lacking in the pre-existing settlement on High Street (in HUCA 2), and not all offered by the intervening riverside area across which the town extended in the 13th century, which made this easterly spot the best location for establishing the Norman town.

It had favourable topography, on gently rising ground, out of reach of floods from the strong rivers. It was located in the direction of Exeter where the lord of Okehampton was sheriff and castellan of the royal keep, on a major highway junction with high economic potential, and was near, and on the main, east approach to, the East Bridge serving both highway and castle and linking it to a route carrying livestock to and from the moors (now Station Road). Importantly - since Okehampton Castle was placed well off the main road, to exploit the outstanding castle site offered by a dramatic natural spur on the edge of hunting grounds - it was intervisible with the castle (cover photo).

'Town between the waters' of the High Middle Ages

The street plan of today, with some surviving key structures, shows much more clearly the second layer of development in this area, the extension to the town lying mostly within the East and West Rivers, 'between the waters' as it was expressed in documents from the later 13th century. This was probably formed around 1220, when Okehampton was granted a charter by Robert Courtenay.

It was laid out around a greatly extended market place, Fore Street (MDV 15993), on the highway between the East and West Bridges. Its fair place, with a large pound for animals at its outer end (now part in HUCAs 3 and 7), lay on St James' Street, branching off from the market street by East Bridge, and running on outside the fair place to form the castle approach (Castle Road) and also as an earlier road to Dartmoor (inner Station Road). Burgage plots were extended back from the market place. Map analysis shows that the layout of those north of Fore Street progressed from east to west; indicating that the roads to the east, with the Norman settlement there and the castle approach running off from it, had a stronger attraction for development than the pre-Norman settlement to the west (or the castle itself, left isolated to the south-west).

Crafts, including the tanning implied by a clause in the charter of c1220, and malting referred to by the place name Earles Malthouses recorded in 1639, will have been sited by the East and West Rivers so that these could be used for water supplies, processing and disposal of waste. Several narrow lanes were extended from the centre of the Courtenays' town to the East River to provide access to the Town Mill, positioned on the east side of the water and so probably part of the Norman establishment there.

The burgage plots north of Fore Street reached to the riverside at their far ends, so may not have required separate ways to the water. They did need openings to the market place in front wide enough to allow animals to pass in and out of them, since the rivers effectively cut the plots off from the farming landscape behind. (The Lodge Bridge crossing on the deep river bed there did not exist before the early 19th century.)

A few such openings, at least, survive; the sites of others may have been absorbed in later rebuilding where houses set 'end on' to the street were replaced with others with broad street frontage. The burgages on the south had access to the fair ground on St James' Street behind them, and via this to the rivers and the road to the castle and early commons beyond, except on the west where a back way was therefore provided. Parts of these various alleyways can be seen on the 18th century borough plan.

Expansion burgage plots attached to the outer side of the fair ground on St James' Street are very probably the Southtowne referred to in the grant of a nearby field in 1418 (DHS 3248A-O/11/78). Together the burgages indicate a moderately successful town, which had realised and outgrown the potential for expansion provided on the 13th century market place. Documents record that in the later medieval or post-medieval periods, provision of dedicated market buildings in the open market place began, as in other Devon towns at the time; here the western shambles (meat market) was secondary to a long row of dwellings with shops and stalls which had divided the market street in two, all these street buildings showing how market-based activity took precedence over the through traffic which was forced to squeeze around it.

Some of the early characteristics of the Riverside Town are legible on the ground today. Most striking, and most important to the economy and life of the town into modern

times, is the open market place, Fore Street (MDV 15993), returned to its great early span by the removal in the 19th and 20th centuries of the lateral rows and shambles (Fig 54). Its capacity for stalls, pens, herding of animals and the like is evident and there is great potential for understanding its function and importance, with contemporary documentary evidence some of which may be rare for the region. Records include - besides the 13th century charter specifying market regulations and tolls (Worth 1895, 108) and an early 16th century lease apparently alluding to the form of the street, mentioned above (in Section 3.4.2.2) - a suit by the town in 1612 which specifies that 'it is to be noted that the market place is the highway or street' (Young 1925, 210).

A Market Cross is recorded but has long been lost, and no drawing or description, or early documentation, is known for it at present, so the date and context of its setting up remain obscure. However, its location is known from the 1756 map, and can be seen to have influenced the positioning of the new, staggered crossroads of Market Street and George Street in the early 19th century. It served also to define the borough when it was incorporated in the 17th century; 'In the centre of the town a cross formerly stood, and the limits extend for half a mile in a circle from [the place] where the cross was erected....now marked by a large stone' (Rushton 1834, 557).

Other notable features conveying the medieval layout between the rivers are the long narrow rear plots derived from burgages, laid out from the market street, and later from the fair ground on the south. These are much altered by recent development but their trend is clear; and stone or cob buildings and boundaries, some medieval or post-medieval in origin, are visible at the backs of properties - particularly north of Fore Street, east of the redeveloped Red Lion Yard (MDV 14325) and south of School Way and the modern retail development beyond it which truncates the burgages (Fig 55).

The mill site on the historic town margin also survives, with flowing medieval leat and 19th century mill building (Fig 56). Lanes (mostly with expanded widths and altered surfaces, however) indicate the main ways through and around the layout. Few of the minor alleys are evident in the publically accessible areas today, though George Street is derived from one, widened to form a road to the south by the mid-19th century. Remains of others may well survive in properties behind the street frontage.

The south and east lobes of the HUCA have later housing, built along burgages or strip fields. The cottages of Park Row on the south face a medieval route running past burgages off Fair Place to East River and Town Mill (Fig 57); this lane had earlier rows, taken out of its width, and beside its inner end, removed in the 20th century. Kempley Road beside it, with similar character now, is wholly Victorian, shaped to strip-derived fields rather than burgages. These streets perpetuate the trend of burgages and strip fields, while their cottage rows and workshops blend them with an industrial sub-area on the river (see below). Rows on the east fronting North Street, the medieval way to Beare Bridge and Sampford Courtenay, stand on plots originally hanging off East Street (the rows running along the lengths of these, so facing their former long sides).

Development of the Riverside Town as a whole from later medieval times

Moving on to the third layer of meaning in the HUCA, its street frontage, this shows significant survival of post- and potentially later medieval structures, while representing reconstruction, and limited re-organisation, in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Building facades show some of the town's historic functions, its continuity and change.

St James' Chapel with its granite tower (MDV 4763) is medieval in origin though restored in 1862 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 608). As a chapel of ease it manifests the distance between, and separate origins of, the urban core and the parish church in HUCA 1 (Fig 58). Its site represents the 'front', east end of the Courtenays' expansion of the town, heading and legitimising its two new trading areas which met here - the market place on Fore Street, and the ground of the eponymous fair on St James' Street. Its position, forward of the street frontage, allows us to envisage the 'island' rows which once ran west from it and the shambles north of them, all now removed.

Few other medieval or post-medieval structures are recorded here at present. However, a significant number of buildings on Fore and East Streets, particularly on the north side of the thoroughfare, less affected by rebuilding in the railway age - probably because they were nearer to the noisy and smelly 19th century Market Street, and further from desirable Station Road - have narrow fronts indicating derivation from later medieval or post-medieval houses (Section 3.6.2). Some have slate cladding, itself disguised by painting, which may point to timber-frame construction. They may well preserve early fabric, with later facades or finishes. Both these, and other roadside premises rebuilt with broader fronts in the 19th or 20th centuries, may have remains of earlier structures in the burgages behind them, not visible from public space (Fig 59).

The old East and West Bridges were narrow with rounded backs and pointed cutwaters, as shown by the 1756 plan and later drawings. The present, rebuilt bridges reflect the wheeled traffic, building materials and civic style of the 19th and 20th centuries respectively (Fig 60). They remain quite small in scale, and are readily understood as successors of structures documented from the 15th century and probably much earlier in origin. Secure access across the moorland rivers will have been essential, for the castle (at least from the direction of Exeter, across East Bridge) from the 11th century, and for the weekly market between the waters from the 13th century.

A foot ferry pre-dating West Bridge is mentioned in a reconstruction of town life in the 17th century (Endacott 2002, 52). The West Bridge is certainly medieval in origin, and it is not clear whether a ferry is documented. It is interesting to note that the west side of the river just downstream of this bridge, where a ford joined an opening from West Street (now in Westbridge Close) with the end of Rosemary Row (the passage along the north side of Fore Street made by a row of houses in the centre of the street, now re-absorbed in it) was formerly called the 'western quay'. The quay could perhaps have served a ferry helping to relieve bridge congestion on market days. The ford itself will of course have served as a crossing- and watering-place for market livestock.

Imposing premises of the 17th century, the Northmore House later adopted and altered to form the Town Hall on the north (Fig 61), and the *White Hart* inn on the south (Fig 63), face the site of the Market Cross, and reflect the meaning of this market core and its change through post-medieval and early modern times (see further Sections 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.7, 3.8.2). 'The College' marked on the 1756 map at the broad end of the suggested former open triangular market place at the junction of the Crediton and Exeter Roads may also have been an important building complex, potentially post-medieval in date; the origin and character of this site remain to be established.

A building at 1-3 St James's Street (MDV 44319), 'low, with massive stone stack' (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609), may be more typical of the houses of the post-medieval town centre than the mansion of the Northmores, who held an eighth of the manor. It stands in a pole position, at the junction of market and fair places, and may represent a merchant family's premises (Fig 62). It is possible that three storey buildings on Fore Street, especially timber-framed ones, may have been developed by raising the height of earlier, lower buildings similar to this (Nick Cahill, pers comm).

In the 18th century John Luxmoore, a leading agent for the political interests operating in the double member borough (Section 3.8.1), lived at Fair Place. He will have had a high-status residence, like his uncle who lived in the old Northmore mansion (above). One such was mapped in 1756 at the old pound (built after 1677, when the pound was repaired; see Section 3.6.2); its site was re-used for a post office in 1962 (in HUCA 3).

On the through road, inns and hotels of the coaching age form a strong group (though some, notably the *George* east of West Bridge, have gone). They stand at intervals and in clusters in prominent positions in the centre or at important junctions, some converted to other uses but still showing their long, low, post-medieval-type fronts, or squared 18th century-style ones, with carriage openings to yards, their positions and names often reflecting in some way their place or source of trade (Figs 13, 15, 63).

The distribution of these and other commercial buildings, concentrated on East Street as well as on Fore Street, reflects the attraction for trade of the eastern approach to the market from those leading towns (while a pair of inns in HUCA 2 indicates that the approach to West Bridge on that side was also good for the business of providing for travellers). Further out in the Exeter direction, at and by 93 East Street/Exeter Road, are buildings representing post-medieval expansion; others beyond them at the HUCA boundary on later Victoria Street, shown on the 1756 map, appear more altered.

Fore Street is dominated by imposing later Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings, large, tall and ornate with much use of granite varied by detailing in other stone, brick and tile (Fig 54). Together with the villas and lodging houses of comparable scale by the station in HUCA 7, they reflect the stimulus of the railway on the town, as well as wider changes in commerce and taste. The development is concentrated on the south side of Fore Street between George Street and St James' Street, both connected to Station Road. While this location may reflect other factors, such as land ownership, design to attract custom from the railway is clear in the centre of the frontage.

Here a block of some of the town's largest historic shops incorporates an opening to the very well-preserved Arcade, a passage with smaller shops facing it under a glass roof running along the line of the burgage plots, built-up to either side (Figs 24, 25). The Arcade has a highly dramatic entrance integrated with a building on St James' Street below Station Road, bearing the date 1900 (see Section 3.8.4). This front building was the Arcade Hotel (Radford and Radford 2002, 121). The hotel facade advertises the glass tunnel within, through displaying its roof arch, edged with terracotta providing a strong contrast to the pale limestone walling; and so emphasises the flow of business from Station Road to Fore Street (Fig 64).

The Town Hall on the north side of Fore Street, while capturing the character of one of the principal town houses of the 17th century, as already mentioned, also has other meanings for the town of the early and late 19th century. Through its adoption and adaptation as a civic building, it anchors the new market housing behind it laid out on Market Street (c1826) to the ancient market place on Fore Street in front, standing as it does on the corner between these (Fig 61).

With the coming of the railway, the Town Hall, as well as the Arcade, served also to tie the old east-west linear town to a new axis of development on the approach from the station to the south (in HUCA 7), via the pre-existing George Street (cut at around the same time as Market Street), this street having provided a view of the Hall at its end (Fig 65). As noted in the railway age, 'The Town Hall is one of the most noticeable buildings in Okehampton and is situated in Fore Street, almost opposite the road leading from the station' (Wright 1889, 219). The building is now in different use; its former civic role, and its earlier origins, are identified on a plaque.

The range of Victorian and later market buildings on the east side of Market Street behind the Town Hall has been part rebuilt and converted. Behind the main historic façade is the Charter Hall, a community centre of 1973 (Endacott 2002, 98). However, its original function and former importance can be perceived through its long front, provided with a broad doorway but no windows, and dated foundation stones (Fig 18). In contrast, the complex with sale ring, sheds, pens, and yards which developed beyond it to the north, spreading on either side of Market Street, to serve the livestock market into the later 20th century, is no longer extant. Its structures have been demolished for supermarkets and other buildings and parking areas. However, a foundation stone from market housing of 1927 has been set up, with a plaque attached mentioning the market house and weighbridge, as a sort of memorial.

Other prominent 19th and 20th century buildings show the functioning of the business and civic centre of the expanding town, and referencing of the medieval market core. The most imposing is a large bank, now Lloyds (MDV 44313), built in 1908 by the site of the Market Cross (Fig 61). It appears designed to draw on the historic character of the place, having a neo-Georgian style 'tactfully picking up some of the details' of the

Town Hall on Fore Street on the other side of Market Street (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609), and resembling the Town Hall also in scale. Another central bank, on the other side of the Market Cross, also refers to the historic character of its part of the urban core, with an ornamental window over George Street, opposite the town assembly rooms at the *White Hart* (Fig 63; the bank window is on the left).

Other institutional buildings on less prominent but still central plots include a substantial brick police station on George Street, marked on the OS map of 1932 (Fig 65). This replaced an earlier 'County Police Station' (Anon, 1902, 421), which had been sited on High Street (in HUCA 2) presumably because land was more readily available there (it was too small to be recorded in the project mapping). The shift was probably prompted by the eastward expansion of the town in the early 20th century, which effectively made High Street too marginal. The police station subsequently moved further east again, to the former school site on the Exeter Road (in HUCA 8).

Industrial sub-area on the east within the Riverside Town, HUCA 4

A sub-area characterised by post-medieval and later industrial or related development, though integrated within the Riverside Town, lies on the eastern side of the HUCA by the East Okement River. (An area with similar character - though lacking the very early and lasting importance conveyed by the Town Mill on the east, and also less influential on the 19th century settlement pattern - formerly lay on the west of the Riverside Town, but this was re-developed in the 20th century.)

The surviving landscape with industrial character runs along the East River, in two parts, extending from East Street to the north, along North Street on the east bank of the river to North Street Mill, and to the south, on both sides of the river to Town Mill. Both parts of it are fitted to the rivers, and to leats taken off these, which have supplied water and water power to crafts and industries, probably from medieval times. The buildings span several centuries, from the 18th to the early 20th, but have a shared character, with cottage rows and terraces for workers, some with small rear yards and buildings which may have served as workshops, set on streets extending from, and in places linked also by paths to, sites of factories or power generation works.

North Street has 18th century cottages for workers' families running down medieval burgages from East Street on its east side; and on its west, housing on probably post-medieval expansion burgage plots, with some workshops, yards and leat visible behind or between more diverse later development by the river (Figs 66, 67). It is possible to sense how the street was experienced by the 18th century as an artisanal riverside neighbourhood, its long eastern row facing the mill stream and meadows, free of the animal and human hordes in the market and fair streets and main highway nearby.

Such characteristics may have contributed to an accolade to the street recorded before the area was affected by motor transport and the development of the North Road industrial estate beyond it (in HUCA 9). 'Someone was talking to old Betty Hatch about the beauties of heaven, and Betty said, "Give me a house down in Norlane and forty pounds a year, and anyone can go to heaven that likes it"' (Burd 1926, 230).

North Street Mill, on the riverside below a sudden corner at the end of the street signifying the end of the medieval burgage plots hanging off East Street, and the end of the post-medieval cottages occupying the plot beside North Street, is said to have been largely demolished in 1986 (MDV 44306). However, a substantial building, possibly the mill house, still stands on a prominent position at the street corner, and a rear wall shows shaping to accommodate the movement of traffic behind the street, most likely related to the mill business on the riverbank there.

The 1756 plan marks the house here but not the leat (it depicts other leats quite clearly), so the mill can be expected to have had an 18th century or earlier phase, lapsed prior to 1756, before being re-used by 1841 when the leat and rear mill buildings were recorded on the tithe survey. In the later phase, as shown by a label on the 1885 OS map, the mill served to grind corn. It is very likely that in its earlier phase

the mill served the woollen industry, of great importance to Okehampton in post-medieval times before declining in the 18th century, and that North Street itself, the town's first long street to develop off the main highway and market streets, provided homes for its workers and their families (Sections 3.6.2, 3.7).

In the upriver part of this sub-area, south of East Street, around the Town Mill of medieval origin, the former industrial sites themselves, as well as the associated workers' housing, have a strong presence in the landscape, and give good definition to the edge of the HUCA (Fig 68). A chimney-stack, widely visible across and beyond this quarter of the town, rises above factory and storage buildings or ruins, post-industrial waste ground, and works enclosures, some with imposing boundaries.

Town Mill itself (MDV 5579) has been thoroughly rebuilt on a different alignment (while remaining in the same place, as is usual for mills since they are fixed by their leat systems). This occurred in the mid- or later 19th century, as can be seen by comparing the footprint of the mill on the maps of 1841 and 1885; quite likely in 1882, the date displayed, with the name of the maker of Hatherleigh, on its iron water wheel. Park Row on the south has a long ribbon of simple early 19th century stuccoed terraces (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609); and these, with the more recent Kempley Road off St James's Street, are clearly linked by functional footbridges, for use by workers, to the industrial sites on the river.

Being populous quarters on the outskirts of the old town, these eastern streets also have civic infrastructure serving their residents, and those of this HUCA as a whole and of the more distant HUCA 2. Chapels with seating for hundreds, providing for a substantial workforce, mark the outer margins of the artisanal areas and reflect their relative dates, displaying changes in form, fashion and fabric often less apparent in the more functional style of the housing there.

The Ebenezer Chapel of 1822 in North Street (Fig 69) was built beyond the built up area of the time, the minister having been refused more central sites (Radford and Radford 2002, 85). It has a restrained Classical style, contrasting with the United Reformed Church of 1903 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 608-609) in the 'railway town' landscape to the south (in HUCA 7). North Street itself has a later school and library. The drill hall of 1914, now the Conservative Club, stands on the site of an early bowling green on the south edge of the borough. While drill halls were features of many towns and villages at the time, this one has a particular interest in that it represents military activity in a town closely associated with the extensive artillery training on Dartmoor.

Major changes to the Riverside Town in the late 20th-early 21st century

Beside the supermarket area on the north, already mentioned, several later 20th century redevelopments have significantly affected the overall historic character of the Riverside Town, by reason of their size and/or positioning on key sites, combined with their modern design and materials. These include a block of shops on the site of a mid-20th century car showroom (Rendell 2011, 82) just inside the West Bridge, which has contributed, with the replacement of the bridge itself in 1957, to the modern feel of the western entry to the ancient Fore Street market place (Fig 9).

The central Red Lion Yard shopping precinct, opened up from the north side of Fore Street around 1980, has 'crudely mechanical pseudo-vernacular detail' (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609). The precinct has also been described as having 'agreeable spaces' (*ibid*), and it does have public access from a passage off Fore Street, rare in Okehampton, allowing some adjoining historic fabric to be seen (MDV 14325). Behind this, though, the development obscures the pattern of the burgage plots, which is otherwise fairly legible inside (south of) School Way.

In addition, many of the shopfronts on the main through-road, particularly on Fore Street, have been knocked through at ground level to provide modern shop floors and windows. However, some facades, especially those of inns and of the later 19th or early 20th century shops, preserve much of their earlier character.

4.4.2 Above ground heritage significance

High overall; **Low** on north where redeveloped (north of modern School Way cutting across the burgage plots, and on parts of the plots between that road and Fore Street)

The Riverside Town has high heritage value and potential as a moor-edge market and highway town of medieval origin. It remains highly legible, though the historic character of the north part of it is degraded by later 20th century re-development off Market Street and School Way, with parking areas and a cluster of large retail developments remarkable, if not rare, in a historic urban core of this kind.

The site considered likely to have been the Norman market place, at the Crediton/Exeter Road junction, is greatly changed; but it is clear how the market place on Fore Street from the 13th century, and then from the early 19th century both this street and the market housing on Market Street, and then in the later 20th century the expanded Market Street complex only, served the market function fundamental to the town. (It should be noted that Market Street was newly cut and laid out c1826, since the HER entry, MDV 59113, mentions that a medieval origin has been suggested for it.) In addition, the moorland rivers, cold and fast-flowing and with deep, boulder strewn beds, the views from open areas to the hills, and the use of granite for building, notably in the post-medieval house re-used as the Town Hall, all contribute to awareness within the urban core of the formative influence on the town of the extensive uplands of Dartmoor whose rough grazing supported livestock brought for sale here (Fig 70).

The plan of this historic urban core, like the shape of Okehampton as a whole, also clearly depends on the east-west highway running through its centre which supported its trade. Both HUCA and town are centred on this primary axis, and at the same time both show the greater attraction of the eastern approach to the two river crossings on the axis, reflecting the importance of the traffic from Exeter and Crediton.

In those burgages not fully re-developed, there is high potential for discovery of medieval and post-medieval fabric, which may be vulnerable to change, in or behind shopfronts later in style, as well as for improving understanding of the later structures, through building survey and analysis of borough records and maps. This can be seen in some of the burgages on the north side of Fore Street, visible from the modern road cut across them, School Way, and from associated opened-up areas (Figs 55, 71, 72).

Walling at the backs and sides of the buildings on the street shows early features or stonework including water-worn boulders from the riverbeds; and parts of the plots are bounded by cob or stone walls, potentially derived from the side walls of medieval or post-medieval buildings as well as those of the plots themselves, and potentially vulnerable (Fig 72). In places, historic spaces between buildings mark aspects of past use or change, as in an alleyway between Crediton and Exeter Roads which provides evidence of the suggested early triangular open market and its later adaptation.

While reflecting quite clearly the medieval market and highway town function of Okehampton, the area also shows many important later changes, although others, such as the spread of orchards on the northern burgages, appear lost from the landscape. Besides the re-siting and housing of the market already mentioned, these changes include alteration of buildings to attract business in the ages of coach, railway and motor vehicle travel; and development of water-powered manufactories, power generation of other kinds, and workers' housing, by the east river at its margin. The industrial area by Town Mill is of great importance for the town, developed and adapted to serve it over nearly a thousand years, and may be vulnerable to redevelopment.

The Riverside Town remains the commercial centre for Okehampton today, as in the past. Its historic role as the civic centre is less evident, since the former Town Hall is not readily identifiable as such, having been adapted from an earlier house, and as there is no central civic square – itself a reflection of the paramount importance of the east-west thoroughfare and market business, and of constraints on this imposed by the rivers.

The streets and buildings show diverse other aspects of the core role of the Riverside town which has developed over almost a millennium, through significant associations with surrounding areas of the town; the following are some of the most important of these.

St James' Street, leading directly on to the main historic approach to the outlying Okehampton Castle (in HUCA 3), marks in today's landscape how first the Eastern Town, and then the Riverside Town taking in the latter, with its trading places on Fore Street and St James' Street meeting the earlier ones at the medieval St James' Chapel, provided the commercial, craft and service centre of the kind necessary to a castle's lord, household, and guests (Liddiard 2005, 16-22).

The development of North Street can be attributed to that of the woollen industry, wealth from which probably funded the rebuilding of the church in HUCA 1. Market Street, with its links to Lodge Hill and Oaklands (in HUCAs 6 and 5) shows the influence on the ancient town of the landowner, lord of the manor and MP prior to the Reform Act. The Arcade represents economic and aesthetic links with the railway lying at a distance from the town centre similar to that of the castle, and with the steam-age villa and pleasure-ground landscape extending between here and the station, in HUCA 7.

4.4.3 Below ground heritage significance

High overall; **Low** north of School Way where redeveloped

In relatively undisturbed ground, which may include parts of rear yards, and lower layers of roadways, the HUCA has high potential for buried remains, associated with its medieval market place and burgage plots on a highway probably Roman in origin, and with its riverside ground and river crossings likely to have been frequented and to have attracted ritual activity from prehistoric times. Roman coins have been found here, though the find-spot is not recorded (MDV 58850). Burgage plots may have vulnerable features and are currently mapped in the HER only to the north of Fore Street (Fig 73).

Sites with particular known or potential value for the town include the following;

- The Fore Street and East Street roadways may preserve buried market-related deposits, old surfacing, and footings of the market houses and Fore Street rows.
- West Street, Fore Street, East Street as far out as Crediton Road, and Crediton Road itself, could have remains of the Roman road, though this will have been altered by the market places (on Fore Street, East Street and Crediton Road) as well as more recent widening (on East Street, West Street and Crediton Road).
- Crediton Road could conceivably have some trace below ground of the One Stone or Longstone, though again this seems unlikely as the road is much altered.
- By East and West Bridges, and the footbridge SSE of Park Row, buried traces of earlier bridges recorded in medieval and/or post-medieval times may survive.
- Parts of burgages may have remains of medieval or post-medieval structures or related deposits; many are not visible to assess from the streets (Fig 73).
- Land by the rivers may have buried remains of early tanning, malting or cloth making as well as of later industries (and ruinous weirs are visible in the rivers).
- Part of its differently aligned predecessor could survive by the standing Town Mill.
- Traces of the College mapped in 1756 (not to be confused with the present school of that name) in could remain at the junction of the Crediton and Exeter Roads.
- Burials may remain in the Ebenezer Chapel graveyard (in unknown condition).



Fig 53 East Street rising to the possible Crediton/Exeter Road market triangle



Fig 54 Fore Street medieval market place from St James' Chapel at its east end



Fig 55 Plot north of Fore Street with long building ranges and worn paving



Fig 56 Town Mill, medieval in origin, fully rebuilt, with water wheel dated 1882



Fig 57 Park Row, one of several streets running south from St James' Street



Fig 58 St James' Chapel with Fore Street beyond and the church hill above



Fig 59 Narrow shops possibly timber framed, and alley, north of Fore Street



Fig 60 East Bridge, with granite work of 1841, and lamps, possibly added



Fig 61 Granite Town Hall, originally Northmore House, on Fore Street



Fig 62 Nos. 1-3 at the inner end of St James' Street, opposite the chapel



Fig 63 17th century White Hart inn, with the Georgian assembly room on its left



Fig 64 Dramatic Arcade opening in hotel front, facing towards Station Road



Fig 65 Old police station, George Street, looking towards the Town Hall



Fig 66 View along North Street towards its junction with East Street



Fig 67 Yards and workshops opening off the east side of inner North Street



Fig 68 Industrial area on the East River, seen from modern Mill Road bridge



Fig 69 Chapel at the north edge of the town of 1822, with burgages behind



Fig 70 View up the river from East Bridge with the moorland on the skyline



Fig 71 An arch by Red Lion Yard indicates wider potential for medieval fabric



Fig 72 Cob and stone walling north of Fore Street, east of Red Lion Yard



Fig 73 Burgage plot south of Market Cross exposed by the later George Street

4.5 Oaklands (HUCA 5)

Mansion of c1820, associated with control of the rotten borough, along with its farm on the site of Beer, and part of its inner parkland including medieval road and bridge sites

4.5.1 Historic character

The Oaklands estate, on the northern margin of the town, was laid out in the early 19th century by the Savile (originally Atkinson) family. This HUCA captures its country house, home farm, and (altered) main approach, and also part of the town side of its extensive 'landscape' park with ornamental, naturalistic lawn and meadow, woods, and water features. The area is bounded on the south by the suburb extended in the 20th century over the front of the park, in HUCA 6, and on the east by the River Okement with modern residential and industrial areas in HUCAs 8 and 9 beyond the river.

The Saviles acquired the manor of Okehampton with a controlling interest in the town and so of its political representation by 1807, Albany Savile holding one of its two seats in Parliament from that year to 1812 (Section 3.8.1). The Savile family held the estate until debts forced its sale in 1858. It was sold again in the later 1920s when it was partially dismembered; the mansion was in poor condition at the time of the second sale, and was extensively damaged by fire in 1930, before being renovated as apartments (Endacott 2002, 115).

The mansion, begun under architect Charles Bacon c1816, and completed by his pupil Charles Vokins in 1820 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 610), is sited on a small but marked rise, on the foot of gentle, sheltered, south facing slopes, below a prominent ridge (Fig 74). It has a neo-Grecian façade of pink sandstone, identified as being from Hatherleigh to the north (MDV 4762); behind this it is made from bricks said to be of local clay supplied by the former brickworks on the edge of the historic core of Okehampton, just across the river (Endacott 2002, 79), in the north-west corner of HUCA 4.

From the front of the house and inner lawn Okehampton can be seen across the Okement River whose east and west waters join a short distance upstream, as shown by contemporary images such as an engraving of 1837 (shown on the Etched in Devon's Memory website) and from viewpoints around the town today (Fig 17). Oaklands Farm to the east, the estate's home farm designed on the courtyard plan, and kitchen gardens later used for farm cottages, are legible as part of the designed landscape, close to the house but screened from it by trees and topography to preserve its appearance of floating in natural surroundings.

The grounds in front of the mansion include part of its 'finely wooded lawn' of pasture backed by extensive plantations further up the spur to the north (White's Directory for 1850, 20); its large ornamental pool recorded on the 1841 survey with details such as a tiny island; and part of its network of drives in belts of trees derived from the medieval public road system, with the south approach from a lodge across the West River from the town of its time but linked to it by a contemporary bridge (see below).

The approach has some recent widening and re-alignment, and a block of flats, long and large for Okehampton, on its side by the river where diverse smaller buildings were made in places from the mid-20th century (see below). However, the drive's essential historic character can still be experienced, its course and flanking trees showing the designed withholding and then dramatic opening of a view to the mansion above.

The South Lodge of Oaklands (MDV 44314) is altered but still readily recognisable today. Although small and on a low-lying site, it is a striking building, tall, positioned above a deep, almost gorge-like stretch of river, and enhanced with a polygonal plan and verandah (Figs 75, 76). Originally (as shown by an old photograph in Rendell 2011, 53) its roof and verandah were both thatched. This will have given it an appearance similar to that of the nearby Buss House turnpike toll house in HUCA 6 (MDV 14551), but more impressive and picturesque, with its 'two tier' thatching.

Together, the Oaklands and Buss House Lodges and the roads they mark have a particular significance for Okehampton. South Lodge can be seen as the hub of three spokes of new road, made by Albany Savile or by the turnpike trust with his direction or support - the Oaklands entrance drive, Lodge Hill (in HUCA 6), and Market Street (in HUCA 4) - showing how the landowners' economic and political power altered the landscape of the town, its approach from the farming hinterland to the north, and its market core. Albany Savile was a trustee of the Okehampton Turnpike Trust (Endacott 2002, 77) and the architect of his mansion, Charles Bacon, is said to have designed the predecessor of the present West Bridge (*op cit*, 91-92). Savile is very likely then to have also determined the positions of the Lodge Hill turnpike road and the market buildings, and to have chosen the style of the lodges and of Lodge Bridge. The depth of the river bed at Lodge Bridge, difficult to ford, and the styles of the lodge and bridge, combine to show the relatively recent origin of the crossing, and of the mansion and market street it served (Fig 76).

Oaklands was a new site for a settlement, but it was in ancient farmland, which may be identified with the arable core of the early medieval demesne farm of Bereham (Section 3.3.2). Oaklands Farm was built on the site of Beer (also recorded as Beere and Beare), a pre-existing farmstead. Beer may have been a barton farm held in hand by the lords of the manor (or of part of this, after it was divided among the heirs of the last Courtenay lords). The 1756 survey shows a large yard there with various structures including a long range, resembling specialised, or developed, farm buildings. To the west of the mansion, just outside the urban study area, the 1756 plan shows a cluster of small enclosures, at a junction of many roads of which several at least are demonstrably early, including one leading to the church (most of these roads were later closed, though some were retained as estate tracks). It is possible that this junction marks the site of an abandoned settlement, potentially that of Bereham itself.

Corrugated iron buildings below the inner part of the approach drive (Fig 77) are related to military activity during the Second World War, when Oaklands Park was used for a camp (MDV 57300). They appear on the 1955 map and are labelled as depots and stores on that of 1983. The 1955 map also shows other structures, including a garage, set at intervals along the drive nearer the town; by 1983 these sites accommodated dwellings and District Council offices, and more recently they have been partly cleared and part replaced by a block of flats. The surviving iron buildings may represent a substantial part of a wartime camp, and their positioning near the mansion is of interest for Okehampton, showing how even landscape invested with great social, economic and political power in the past was subject to great change at that time.

4.5.2 Above ground heritage significance

High Oaklands is listed at Grade II* for its architectural importance. The park, though truncated by suburbs, shows clearly the character of the setting of the mansion. The park (not visited for this survey) has potential for survival, as earthworks, of important elements of the pre-urban landscape, its lawn-like pastures having been developed from medieval strip-derived fields, and many of its wooded estate tracks being adopted from early roads giving access to the fields and linking farming settlements and church.

The mansion, grounds and lodge, their relationships with the market and other features in the urban core (HUCA 4), and the privatised roads forming estate drives (Fig 78), together with contemporary documentation, and the map evidence for the limited nature of industrial and residential expansion of Okehampton at the time, clearly show aspects of the control of urban growth and communications by the landowner in a rotten borough before the Great Reform Act, potentially important on a national as well as regional scale.

The group of corrugated iron buildings was not accessible for the survey, but if this is as it appears a substantial survival *in situ* of the wartime camp it may have wider significance, both for its preservation and because its setting, though changed by the recent development to the south, retains much of its historic character.

4.5.3 Below ground heritage significance

High The medieval farmland here, ploughed less than elsewhere due to incorporation in the Park, has high potential for survival of medieval and prehistoric remains below ground. Most low land on the eastern, river side was meadow in the past; this may well have buried prehistoric remains associated with use of the river, flints lost by hunters, old channels of the river bed, and the like. Upstanding and/or buried traces of Beare Bridge and associated medieval road may survive on or by the site of the iron huts.

It should be noted that the possible settlement site in the wider Oaklands Park, outside the urban study area, in the south-west part of the plantation west of the mansion, may have buried or upstanding medieval remains, and could potentially be the pre-Norman manorial centre and so of high value for the parish of Okehampton as a whole.



Fig 74 Oaklands' south-east front; some of the trees may be plantings of c1820



Fig 75 South Lodge at the foot of Lodge Hill, by the Oaklands approach, left



Fig 76 Rear of Oaklands' South Lodge, with Lodge Bridge on the West River



Fig 77 Oaklands approach looking towards the Lodge, with wartime huts, and flats



Fig 78 Road privatised to form a drive between Oaklands' farm and mansion

4.6 Oaklands Park (HUCA 6)

Suburb of the later 20th century including sports grounds and school developed from an agricultural show ground, derived from part of Oaklands Park; with a turnpike road

4.6.1 Historic character

This HUCA includes a suburban area of the later 20th century, on the edge of the urban study area, to the north-west of the town centre. It is defined around the inner, southern side by Lodge Hill, a turnpike road used as part of the modern A386; and by the approach to Oaklands, bordered by a plantation, running off this, forming an arm of HUCA 5. It occupies a lower, rounded spur, bordered by a stream to the north, lying under the long ridge from the west on which the church stands (in HUCA 1). The suburb is distinguished from that around Ranelagh Road (HUCA 12) on the rising ground to the south between Lodge Hill and the church, by its more varied uses today, and by the shaping of its residential estates, both reflecting its past character.

The greater part of the HUCA is now residential, but it incorporates several recreation or sports grounds, and a school, serving the town as a whole. These areas have determined the layout of the housing, and themselves developed from the site of the Oaklands Showfield, used annually, for much of the 20th century, for Okehampton Show. This is the principal agricultural show for the district, begun by 1896 (Wreford and Wreford 1993, 38), a major event in the moorland-edge livestock market town, and still continuing though on a new site outside the urban area. The design of a gateway now serving a school, and its siting on a track mapped in 1955, suggest it was once the entrance to the grounds of the show (Fig 79).

The showground extended in an arc across the southern, townward side of the area in the mid-20th century, as shown by the map of 1955. It is probable that the choice of the ground for the show was influenced by its proximity to the agricultural market infrastructure of the time, just over the bridge across the West Okement River in HUCA 4, and that the presence of the show ground itself influenced the temporary use of the area for an army camp during the Second World War, facilitated also by the decline of the Oaklands estate after the First World War (Section 4.5.1).

The showground was shaped by landscape features from the deep past. It was fitted on the north to a lane with large trees along it, one of the wooded drives of Oaklands Park made c1820 by the lord of the manor, landowner and MP Albany Savile (Section 3.8.1). Like many Oaklands drives, it took the line of a pre-existing public road, in this case that linking the church and Beer, marked on the 1756 map as Broad Park Lane and probably of early medieval origin (Section 3.3.2). The route was not preserved as such in the suburbs, but the outer part of Glenacre Road runs along it, and beyond this, the rugby ground, and a curving belt of later housing, respect its line (Fig 80).

On the south side, towards the town, the area is bounded by other elements of the Saviles' landscape, shown on a plan of 1823 (DHS 113A/140/1). These are the Lodge Hill turnpike taken off the medieval way to Hatherleigh, with its toll house by that road (MDV 14551) which took the name of Buss House from a farm holding nearby (Section 4.1.3), and the turnpike's bridge on the West River, serving a new market street beyond (in HUCA 4); and, running off from Lodge Hill, the main approach drive with entrance lodge and plantation belt leading to the heart of Oaklands (in HUCA 5).

The turnpike toll house is round in plan, and has a conical roof with a tall chimney and steep pitch showing that it was originally thatched (Fig 81). Traffic was charged here to access contemporary Market Street, below, via Lodge Hill visible to the left in the photo, Figure 81; this route having been taken off the earlier highway to Hatherleigh (right, and behind the viewpoint, in the photo) at this point. The toll house shows similarities in design to, and differences in quality from, the estate lodge in HUCA 5, and is commonly known as Buss House Lodge; these details all helping to show the significant relationship of the turnpike road and estate approach (Section 4.5.1).

On the western edge of the HUCA, and of the urban study area, are two adjoining areas of quite different character, Lower and Higher Upcott, which in the periods when they developed stood well outside the town now reaching to them. Lower Upcott originated from a medieval farmstead or hamlet. A feature here of interest in terms of the development of the town's landscape is the positioning of the access lane into this settlement, on its west side, reflecting how it formerly connected there to the early course of the highway to Hatherleigh which ran past the church, now part closed (in HUCA 1). East of Lower Upcott is Upcott House, a large villa used as a boarding school in the early 20th century.

The later 20th century development reaching to Upcott has housing estates on curving access ways opening off Glenacre Road, fitted to the earlier landscape framework, but carried across the line of a field boundary of medieval origin with a screening clump of trees of the Oaklands era. One of the street names, Oaklands Park, refers to the 19th century landscape of the place, also perceptible in places where old trees survive in former field boundaries (Fig 82) and where there are views towards the heart of the estate (Fig 83).

4.6.2 Above ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** at the toll house and bridge

The Listed toll house and the bridge marking either end of the turnpike road of Lodge Hill, with the continuation of that route forming Market Street (in HUCA 4), and the entrance to Oaklands opening off it (in HUCA 5), are the most significant upstanding features in this area. Together with the wider road system they show adaptation of the traditional location and approaches to the market through the turnpike system under the control of the landowner, important for understanding the historic character of the whole town. (The buildings at Upcott and Upcott House have not been included in this assessment.)

4.6.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low overall; **Medium** in surviving open ground

The open ground, in sports fields, has been affected by levelling and other modification associated with its use in the mid-20th century, but being adapted from medieval farmland it has some potential for buried remains of the medieval and prehistoric periods. Lower Upcott can be expected to have high potential for medieval archaeology, in common with other medieval rural settlements.



Fig 79 Gateway above showfield site now serving a school



Fig 80 Glenacre Road by the rugby ground marks the line of Broad Park Lane



Fig 81 Buss House Lodge, with chimney showing it once had a thatched roof



Fig 82 Trees west of playing field mark the side of medieval Lower Broad Park



Fig 83 Upcott Valley development with view to plantations of Oaklands beyond

4.7 Station Road (HUCA 7)

Extensive landscape of the railway age extending from station to town centre, around an earlier moor road, with late Victorian and Edwardian frontage, and Alpine-style park

4.7.1 Historic character

Station Road, with the railway station at its outer end, forms the spine of an extensive suburban landscape of the railway age on the south side of Okehampton. The HUCA includes moderately sloping ground on the back of the ridge between the East and West Okement Rivers, rising towards Dartmoor on the south, and also a steep valley side falling to the river on the east, forming the pleasure grounds of Simmons Park. The area is roughly triangular in plan, narrowing inwards to the backs of the town of medieval origin in HUCA 4 from a broad outer side framed by the railway line; the castle approach with the varied 19 and 20th century development on it (in HUCA 3) lies on its west, and early 20th century town growth (in HUCA 8) to its east.

Station Road, as far south as its steeper outer third made to link it to the station c1872, together with Tors Road beyond the junction of that link, is medieval or earlier in origin, and can be understood as such through its sinuous ridgeway course, though now widened and built-up. It was mentioned as Moor Road in the town charter of c1291 and was subsequently named Park Lane since it led to the Courtenay's deer park made on the edge of the moor. The lane was of great importance to the townspeople of the 13th century, who used it to drive animals to pasture on the commons which opened out from it in the southern corner of the study area, or, after the creation of the deer park, to pass on through the park to access higher grazing via Moor Gate further south.

The 1756 map shows Lower Park Gate, where the enclosed lane ended at the commons and, later, at Okehampton Park, as a gateway with flanking heads, a significant landmark. A bend in the old moor way and an increase in its steepness by a junction with a lane, once a track through the park branching off it, mark the site of the gate (Fig 84). The borough limits, fixed by the Corporation of 1623, as depicted on the 1756 and 1888 maps, and marked on the ground by a boundstone (Fig 84), run across the road nearby, so they appear to have been fixed in relation to the extent of the park.

The pale on the edge of the deer park nearest the medieval town, incorporating this gate, extended across the back of the ridge, linking the East and West Rivers. Most of its course is respected by housing estate or garden boundaries, as might be expected since it was a massive earthwork, and also, when the deer park was held separately from other parts of the manor after the fall of the Courtenays, a property boundary. On the steep west side of the east valley the pale survives well, bounding the modern Simmons Park (discussed below), this HUCA, and the urban study area (Fig 85).

On the town side of the deer park, the area formerly lay in strip fields, with meadows and woods on the slopes to the east. Many garden boundaries behind Station Road and Tors Road preserve the lines of strip-derived field boundaries shown on the 1756 map, and most others follow a similar trend. An old lane to fields survives as an access way behind Victorian gardens (Fig 86). The wood in the east valley was probably ancient, being very steep, but was replanted with conifers before the 1841 survey. By the time of the 1885 mapping it was used to quarry stone, probably for building in the town.

At the town end of the ridge, a very large sub-circular pound lay at the many-branched Fair Place road junction, where it could be used for animals from the fair ground, from the Fore Street market, and from the ridgeway itself, and where it was linked to the castle by Castle Road. The junction, though much altered and part encroached on, still has substantial public open space, and serves as the approach to the main gate of Simmons Park (see further below). A part of the pound edge remains captured by the garden of a Georgian villa (Darley House, MDV 44318), while another part of the site, also used for a large house in the 18th century, is now a post office complex (Fig 87).

Until the mid-19th century, settlement here, south of the medieval borough, was limited to the secondary buildings in the former pound, and a farmstead now under Simmons Park, all shown on the 1756 map. An outlying series of paired and single houses was then built on the ridge road (MDV 44321), in an unusual style 'reminiscent of Plymouth neo-classical' (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 610). They have been dated to c1840 (*ibid*) but were made after the 1841 survey, perhaps in anticipation of the railway, brought around Dartmoor in the 1860s. Obelisk gateposts may suggest an Egyptian design influence, perhaps from London's Great Exhibition of 1851 (Fig 88). The villas may have been lit by gas from works of 1858 at Town Mill nearby (in HUCA 4).

From 1872 the railway linked Okehampton with Exeter and Plymouth, and attracted visitors to nearby Dartmoor. Its stimulating effect on urban growth and change is clear in the development of this area in the next dozen years, recorded on the OS map of 1885. The primary buildings, in terms of date and quality, on the new Station Road – the section of it made to feed in to the old ridgeway part – are at the upper end, rather than nearer to the historic urban core or to the mid-19th century houses half way between town and station. These are large, tall, gabled terraced buildings (Fig 89), formerly hotel or boarding houses as well as private accommodation (Rendell 2011, 47, 55), made of varied materials brought by rail, as well as local stone.

The station complex (MDV 57375) is very well-preserved. The railway embankment and structures running along the skyline form a strong frame to the HUCA and to the town, and associated spaces convey the life of the place in the past – a parking area for many vehicles plying between station and town, and a depot below with original railings for coal or other freight (Figs 21, 90). A track to a former tramway shows how quarries on the east supplied building stone (Rendell 2011, 75), and old military sidings on the west (MDV 70201) give an impression of the historic significance of the artillery range in Okehampton Park, and of the impact of the movements of troops, with their victualing, horse shoeing and other requirements, on the character and business of the town.

By the time of the 1906 survey, there were several streets here, well outside the town. This distinct railway suburb formed a triangle, with the early ridgeway (here Tors Road) on the west, the new, outer Station Road on the east, and Parklands linking these on the south inside the railway line. A street in the triangle, Brandize Park, takes its name from a former field, triangular like a brandis (an iron tripod traditionally used over a fire), probably effectively enclosed from moorland by the park pale on its south. This field underlies the suburb, with an offset, rather like a shadow beneath a tree. The triangle was later joined to the town, but remains distinguishable through its housing's close date range, style, high capacity and status, on upper Station Road in particular. It is defined also by a memorial of 1895 at the point nearest to the town, with a granite base, and a lamp post from Glass' Foundry in HUCA 4 (Figs 22, 91).

Below the triangular suburb, a path was made up between the station and Castle Ford with its stepping stones, probably to benefit day trippers brought by the train as well as residents (Fig 92). New development at the town end of Station Road was limited at the time of the 1906 OS map to a prominent Freemasons Hall (the large white building visible in Fig 96). Almost all of lower Station Road was built up in the years between the mapping of 1906 and 1932; the exceptional square block of Nos 14-16, 'modern with traditional symmetry', dates from 1936 (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 610).

Most of Station Road below the Tors Road junction has terraced, paired and detached houses showing varying styles and materials indicating a series of speculative developments, with garden walls of local stone, and granite street gutters (Fig 93). A small building, now residential, is probably the Catholic church of c1906, used until a larger one was made from a pre-existing house nearby c1922 (Radford and Radford 2002, 82-83). The earlier building with its small scale and simple design (Fig 94) may be representative of temporary churches of the period recorded elsewhere in the parish (Section 3.8.4). Its siting indicates how lower Station Road remained marginal with open space which could be acquired for such use into the 20th century, because it was relatively removed from the station, despite its proximity to the historic core.

The north end of Station Road, downhill from the mid-19th century houses mentioned earlier, was used for new shops, as recorded by historic photographs showing a wide range of such businesses (for example that reproduced in Wreford and Wreford 1993, 17). Most of this activity has now ceased here, but old shopfronts remain (Fig 95), representing a substantial extension of commercial activity in the direction of the station from the pre-existing urban core.

Below this again, the east side of the Fair Place road junction has a prominent group of gabled buildings, including a Methodist Church of 1903 with a 'crazy-paving' limestone front (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 609), and houses of lodging-house scale, besides the heightened and converted earlier Freemasons' Hall. With this building group, the main entrance to Simmons Park just beyond it, the breadth of the roadway, and a scenic if rather long view to the edge of Dartmoor, the Fair Place junction has some of the characteristics of a late Victorian square (Fig 96). Development of this kind was possible at this place because it inherited a broad branching junction from the medieval landscape, it lay on the station side of the historic core, and it was free of the continual highway traffic and weekly market business constraining the shaping of the latter.

Simmons Park was laid out in 1907 along the East River (MDVs 44320, 64779), incorporating the plantations and riverside path shown on the 1885 map. The park extends almost to the station from the outer side of Mill Street which bounds the southern plots of the borough with their 19th century rows of artisans' housing. The intimate, ornamental layout, mapped in 1932, survives very well, with its entrances on upper Station Road as well as Mill Street, gates and other decorative and commemorative iron and stonework, network of paths, footbridges on the river rusticated by boulder facings and concrete 'log and branch' railing, rockeries, ponds and waterfalls, lodge cottages and almshouses in a Swiss style, bandstand base, and other structures (Figs 26, 97). It provided for the social recreation of Edwardian Okehampton, while also, through referencing idealised mountain scenery, evoking the beauty of Dartmoor accessible from the town which helped to attract its visitors.

In the later 20th century Leeze Park was built on the western slopes above the workhouse in HUCA 3, with houses and bungalows of modern design and materials and small gardens, access roads and drives for cars, laid out in a crescent across the historic field pattern (though ending at the deer park pale on the south, as noted above). As it lies behind and below the pre-existing houses along Tors Road and Station Road, this change does not greatly affect the historic character of the area as a whole.

4.7.2 Above ground heritage significance

High This is a substantial part of the historic town, roughly doubling its previous area. It shows clearly how the arrival of the railway encouraged, and shaped, urban growth. The station, the suburb expanded from it, Simmons Park below which is included in the Register of Parks and Gardens at Grade II, and the square-like area at Fair Place linking park and suburb to the town, together form a coherent landscape of the railway age.

The landscape has strong, designed links to the town core, notably via the Arcade where effects of the railway's stimulus on commercial life can also be seen (in HUCA 4). The 19th and earlier 20th century houses have aesthetic value, display the range of building materials then available, and preserve mature planting in their gardens. The topography and rock and water features of the park add drama and semi-natural diversity. There are notable later structures; the temporary church, and a well-preserved Second World War pillbox in the park (see further Section 3.9).

The survival on the north of the boundary of the deer park – an essential element of Okehampton Manor in later medieval times - is very substantial. Its setting relative to topography and to the medieval town, and its influence on the later development of the landscape, can be seen, since the open space of the later pleasure ground, developed from ancient woodland, extends continuously between it and the historic urban core.

Understanding and presentation of the development of the area might be improved through assessment of the buildings, borough documents, and comparable urban landscapes of the railway era elsewhere. There may also be potential for further study of the survival and influence of the earthworks of the deer park pale across this area.

4.7.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** at river, park pale and pound

This ground is outside the medieval town, and most is developed, or is steep and so was not intensively used in the past. However, it has several areas of high potential.

- The park may preserve traces of prehistoric activity by the riverside, and of the settlement, probably a post-medieval farmstead, shown on the 1756 map.
- The deer park pale could have significant buried as well as upstanding remains.
- Traces of the borough pound could remain in the grounds of Darley House.



Fig 84 Boundstone (right) on Tors Road by Lower Park Gate, from the north

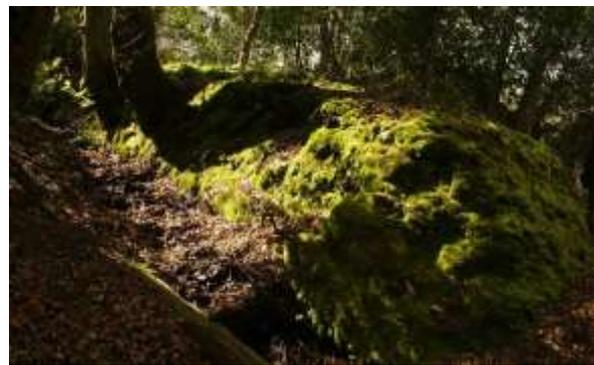


Fig 85 Length of deer park pale, now part of the boundary of Simmons Park



Fig 86 Former lane to fields and barn, now a back way, upper Station Road



Fig 87 Darley House (left) and sorting PO on old pound site, Fair Place



Fig 88 Station Road villas, originally outlying, between old town and station



Fig 89 Large villas or boarding houses on upper, Victorian Station Road



Fig 90 Upper Station Road, with fenced yard, park entrance (right), and villas



Fig 91 Junction marking the town end of the formerly separate railway suburb



Fig 92 Railed path linking the station and the picturesque castle valley



Fig 93 Decorative brick and limestone villas on Station Road below Tors Road



Fig 94 Probable temporary Catholic church of c1906, Station Road



Fig 95 Shops below villas and an unusual modernist block, lower Station Road



Fig 96 Victorian development (from George Street, cut c1820) on Fair Place



Fig 97 Valleyside Alpine cottage, rock and water features in Simmons Park

4.8 Crediton and Exeter Roads (HUCA 8)

Early-mid 20th century residential streets, with major civic infrastructure, extending around the east side of the medieval urban core and along Crediton and Exeter Roads

4.8.1 Historic character

This is a large area, mostly residential streets and major civic infrastructure including a large school complex and recreation grounds in use at the present time. It lies on ground generally level or slightly sloping, rising gradually to the east; roughly in the centre, and south of centre, in Okehampton of today. Its irregular outline reflects fitting to earlier features, and rivers – on the west, to the urban area of medieval origin (HUCA 4) and to the Okement and East Okement north and south of that core; and on the east, to the major routes to Crediton and Exeter, thought to be of Roman and early medieval origin, respectively (Figs 4, 98, 99).

The area includes, on the north side of inner Crediton Road, plots considered to have been part of the Norman town, but reverted to a field, and then altered through re-building in the earlier 20th century.

The HUCA also includes part of North Road. This part of that street, beyond the point where the (20th century) Northfield Road joins it, was established in the years between the mapping of 1805 and 1841, very likely c1829 when the turnpike trust proposed to improve the route to Sampford Courtenay (see further Section 3.8.2). A previous route to Sampford Courtenay ran nearer to the River Okement. However, that riverside track may itself have been shifted from a position close to that of North Road, the 1756 plan showing a lane on part of the course of North Road, possibly downgraded to a field access way and truncated when meadows on the valley floor below it were enclosed.

Besides the extant early roads, greatly altered at surface through continuous use, the area preserves several significant features of the margin of the medieval town. A cluster of strip-derived fields remains north of the centre of the area. One is that named One Stone Meadow, possibly after a stone bounding the early market place in the adjoining historic core (HUCA 4). The east boundary of an allotment field on the north (Fig 100) preserves the line of a medieval road (MDV 63474). This led to the townspeople's commons north of Beare (later to be the site of Oaklands' Home Farm, in HUCA 5), commons exchanged for those south of the Castle by the charter of 1291.

The original Beare Bridge (MDV 63473) carried this route across the Okement at the edge of the area. This bridge fell or was removed after 1841 (it should not be confused with a more recent bridge of the same name, downriver, in HUCA 9). It is mentioned in a grant of 1386 (DHS 3248A-O/11/48) and is likely to have been built in 1291 or soon afterwards, the Okement here being a strong force, carrying the combined waters of the East and West head rivers.

Old Beare Bridge may have symbolised the freedoms of the townspeople, giving access as it did to their common grazing and other resources. This may perhaps be indicated by town rituals recorded in 1696 when peace with the French, having been 'proclaymed at the town-hall, at the Crosse and at the markt house...' was celebrated with 'a bonfire made down at Beare bridge' (Bridges 1839, 107).

The 1756 map shows that beyond the suggested early triangular market place, Exeter Road then had buildings on the north side only. These had varying plans, but were mostly set in small plots made by cutting across the ends of strip-derived fields, and may represent post-medieval urban growth. One of a couple of larger plots with broader buildings on the edge of this HUCA altered by the later Victoria Street may have been the tenement with a stable, linnhay and curtilage, perhaps a farm or carter's holding, 'towards the east end of town, between Exeter Lane and Crediton Lane', recorded in 1639 (DHS 3248A-O/11/427). This was at a place called Earles Maltheuses in Easton town, so possibly on or by the site of a medieval malthouse (Section 3.5.1).

In general, this is an area of urban expansion and improvement dating to the period from the turn of the 20th century until a decade or so after World War II, with some later infilling and change. It shows a sequence of developments, separate but forming a fairly coherent whole; it is mostly laid out on lengths of the pre-existing main roads or on direct new side routes, giving a common street pattern with frequent intersections and high visibility along streets, and has predominantly similar terraces and semis.

The earlier built-up areas, depicted on the 1906 map, include terraces on the linking roads mentioned above; the new Victoria Street between Crediton and Exeter Roads (against HUCA 4), and Northfield Road made rather earlier to join Crediton and North Roads (Fig 101). Victoria Street was presumably made before the death of the Queen in 1901, perhaps around her Jubilee of 1887 (after the previous map 'horizon' of 1885).

These streets follow the trend of the medieval strip-derived fields on which they were built, the length of their gardens marking the width of the old fields. Other rows extended along North Road from the Northfield Road junction; Macey's Terrace here bearing a datestone of 1936 (Fig 27). A school was built on Exeter Road, just beyond a link to Crediton Road made in the turnpike age (Barton Road). The position of the school, now a police station, outside the east edge of the rapid residential development, may simply be pragmatic, or may indicate that more growth was already planned.

In the following decades, new infrastructure for Okehampton as a whole was provided here, on sites around the old town (HUCA 4) and so near the centre of the full, developing urban area. A hospital off East Street was built after the Great War. A grammar school in the East River valley opened in 1911 (Wreford and Wreford 1994, 38), and appears on the 1932 map with extensions and additions and with sports and recreation grounds. The complex, with further school buildings and a late 20th century sports centre, forms an integrated civic landscape (Fig 102), well connected by footbridges to the earlier, ornamental Simmons Park across the river (in HUCA 7).

The 1932 map also shows several new developments of 10 to 15 or so houses, dispersed through the area, this pattern presumably reflecting the mode of operation of local builders or financial backers. These streets show some variety of house forms and styles, while being fitted to the framework of the pre-existing farming landscape. Mill Road, for example, has terraced housing, distinguished from the rows of the turn of the century on Northfield Road by the broader style and brick fabric of the fronts (Fig 103), but set on a lane of medieval origin. Far View Road, off East Street, has modern style, detached square villas of modest size offset in square gardens; its plan might appear to show modern design, having a crescentic shape, but in fact it fills a field derived from medieval strips, recorded as Lower Crooked Meadow on the survey of 1756.

Far View's roadway was narrow, and tapered, scarcely allowing for vehicle access, an indication that this residential area may be regarded as having been served by the railway, though at some distance from the station with its halo of larger houses for wealthier families and visitors (in HUCA 7). Mill Road, though provided by the turn of the century with a bridge over the river at the old ford below the mill, was similarly narrow, retaining its medieval horse-traffic span, barely wide enough for a cart.

The area clearly provided homes for workers at the nearby industrial sites on the outer edge of the historic core (in HUCA 4) and on North Road (in HUCA 9). The historic physical and visual links between the housing here in HUCA 8 and the nearby factories in HUCA 4 are particularly strong above the medieval Town Mill. Steps run down to Mill Road and to paths and footbridges serving the old industrial structures and spaces in HUCA 4, and the prominent chimney stack of the manure and vitriol works there (MDV 94833) can be seen from surrounding streets in both HUCAs 4 and 8 (Fig 104).

The 1955 survey shows the area mostly covered by terraced, semi-detached or detached housing, set on old or new roads; with generous plots to some groups of houses, or open spaces left behind these (now filled in places), perhaps reflecting an emphasis on gardening following World War II. A fire station was placed strategically on

inner North Road, close to town centre, river, and factories to the north (in HUCA 9). A laundry nearby, sited for similar reasons, survives through conversion to other use.

The eastern limit of these streets of the mid-20th century (and the HUCA) is at Limehayes Road linking Crediton and Exeter Roads. This lies as far out as the boundary encircling the borough lands, a mile in diameter, fixed in the 17th century. In fact, the Limehayes Road houses run along the arc of the old boundary, facing inwards (Fig 105), suggesting a planned association between the two, which merits further investigation – though it should be noted that residential development further east, across a large field, had already begun when Limehayes Road was being built up (in HUCA 10).

Some of the social housing required after World War II was provided in this area, closer to the old town, though some lies further out on North Road (in HUCA 9). The Savile Mead estate of the nationally favoured 'Cornish Unit' houses near the old Grammar School (Fig 106), together with expansion of the school itself on a quadrangular plan, show how needs and standards developed and were provided for by building on to the inter-war civic landscape of 1930 noted above. Documents such as those of relating to the design and building of Savile Mead from 1951 to 1956 (DHS 3248A-O/33/19-20) may provide significant details of this process. The area continued to attract new infrastructure serving the town as a whole in the later 20th century, when the police service was moved to the former school site where East Street becomes Exeter Road.

4.8.2 Above ground heritage significance

Medium

Streets here typically mark the shapes of the strip-derived fields which surrounded the medieval town. The survival of a group of the fields as open spaces with some of their boundaries is important since elsewhere in the town they are built up, and (outside HUCAs 4 and 7) their patterns are mostly lost.

The area shows how workers' housing and civic infrastructure was developed in the decades straddling the transition from train- to car- and lorry-based transport. The use of the old Exeter and Crediton roads as a framework for residential streets shows a late stage in the evolution of Okehampton as a highway town, when even Exeter Road, part of the A30 trunk road from 1946, offered an attractive frontage, before the enormous increase in motorised road traffic which led to the by-passing of the town in 1988.

Besides the various relationships with the historic core and railway landscape (in HUCAs 4, 7) noted in Section 4.8.1, the area may have further meaning for the medieval town, since parts of its housing may represent relocation of residents from old holdings in the latter, as well as physical expansion from it; documents of the 1930s record measures for clearing areas perceived as slums (DHS 3248A-O/33/37-38).

The buildings are generally of limited architectural or aesthetic value. However, some houses, or parts of them, and many gardens, display walling of rubble stone of the kind produced by quarries around Okehampton (some adjoining the urban study area). Together this stonework contributes significantly to local distinctiveness. The bricks widely used in the area have not been sourced by the writer but may well be from the former town brickworks in HUCA 4.

The design of houses is of interest too in the context of the town as a whole. The comparisons and contrasts shown by the post-medieval rows of North Road in HUCA 4 and the terraces of c1900 on Northfield Road in this HUCA are particularly clear since these are parallel, neighbouring, topographically similar streets (Figs 66, 101). Some relatively small villas on the north of the area have features in common with the earlier, large villas by the station in HUCA 7, possibly designed to evoke those grander buildings (Figs 89, 107).

4.8.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** in surviving open ground and on Crediton Road

The archaeological potential of the area is low overall, as a result of modern development, and of alterations to the roads in the turnpike era and more recent times. However, Crediton Road could possibly retain some traces of a Roman roadway under later surfacing. Because of the widening, negative results from an excavation such as a pipeline trench on one side of the present span of the road need not necessarily mean that nothing remains of an earlier, narrower roadway. The properties north of the inner part of Crediton Road, and north of East Street, could have buried artefacts or other traces of the Norman town and of the Earl's malthouses, respectively. These early sites seem likely to have been substantially disturbed by their later development, though.

The open areas – the school grounds on the south, strip-derived fields north of centre, and allotments on the north – like other medieval farmland have high potential for buried medieval and prehistoric remains. The allotment field has further potential. It will have buried remains of the medieval road to Beare Bridge, and perhaps even surface traces of the bridge; half of the structure, on this townward side, still stood at the time of the 1885 survey. A source of water once used to treat eye infections is recorded in the vicinity of Beare Bridge (MDV 12869), within the area of the allotments. The healing qualities recorded may indicate a medieval holy well, potentially provided with well house, steps, etc, and this site may also have buried or even surface remains.



Fig 98 Crediton Road above the recent Link Road, with semis of 1906-1932



Fig 99 Exeter Road, from Limehayes Road on the circular corporation limits



Fig 100 Path by allotments off North Street, on the line of the road to Beare



Fig 101 Northfield Road with its terraces, made on the edge of town, c1900



Fig 102 Early 20th century Grammar School grounds, from Simmons Park



Fig 103 Mill Road, carried over the East River by 1906, was built up by 1932



Fig 104 View over works below (in HUCA 4) from the foot of Simmons Way



Fig 105 Limehayes Road development curving along the old borough limits



Fig 106 Social housing on Savile Mead above school and recreation grounds



Fig 107 Stone villas, and garden walls topped with boulders, North Road

4.9 North Road (HUCA 9)

Industrial estate on low ground, formerly marshy and probably used for hunting and for summertime rough grazing in prehistory, with more recent hospital and housing above

4.9.1 Historic character

The area around North Road lies on the north-east side of the historic core of Okehampton and of the 20th century expansion from this (in HUCAs 4 and 8). It includes low ground by the east bank of the Okement River, downstream from the confluence of its two main tributaries, and moderate slopes falling to this from the south off the ridge followed by the Crediton Road considered to be Roman in origin. Most of the area is covered by an industrial estate developed in the decades after the middle of the 20th century, with a more recent hospital and housing served by a new road on the south, the B3217 or Link Road joining North Road and Crediton Road.

The survey of 1885 shows a wide belt of rough grassland on the low-lying ground north of the present hospital site and east of the lane later called North Road, an area now largely, but not entirely, developed (Fig 108). This is likely to have been a marsh in prehistoric times, attractive for hunting, fowling, fishing, and grazing in dry seasons. 'Large old timber', possibly remains of prehistoric structure/s (MDV 60455), was observed during farming operations in a field on the edge of the wet ground, now included in the course of the B3217 and flanking development. It is possible that a route once skirted the downstream end of the wet ground (just beyond this HUCA and the urban study area), providing a link between the western side of the Roman fort on the higher ground to the east (in HUCA 11) and the country to the north.

North Road itself, in this HUCA, follows the line of a medieval lane, as recorded on the 1756 survey (see Section 4.8.1 for a historic shift to the course of the road nearer the old town, in HUCA 8). This was part of the medieval route to Sampford Courtenay and to Barnstaple beyond, running between meadows by the river. A small agricultural or other building is recorded in the meadows on the 1841 survey; this had gone before the OS mapping of 1885, by which time a plantation was made on the slopes on the south-east, probably to enhance the view from Oaklands across the valley (in HUCA 5).

The area is linked to Oaklands across the River Okement by a small bridge, Beare Bridge. There was a footbridge here before 1841, probably made c1820 to serve the Oaklands mansion of that time. With the loss between 1841 and 1885 of a bridge also called Beare but of medieval origin and sited nearer the old town (between HUCAs 5 and 8), this one in HUCA 9 became the only crossing on the river within Okehampton below Lodge Bridge (which links HUCAs 4 and 6). It has been rebuilt more recently.

Development of this area began before World War II. The OS map of 1932 records a sawmill on the town side, now re-developed, and semi-detached cottages and a bungalow, possibly associated with the mill, which survive between later industrial estate buildings (Fig 109). The outlying Brayhams Terrace displays the date 1939. The mid-20th century map shows more unusual clusters of buildings arranged in arcs with small rear enclosures, which were short-lived, so may have been the post-war temporary housing recorded in Okehampton (DHS 3248A-O/33/9).

In the following decades large works and warehouses were laid out, taking in the possible wartime housing site. Businesses here included an electronics factory marked on the 1967 map, as well as others processing local produce. The estate is now mostly used for wholesale retail and the like, though some earlier industrial character persists notably at its outer end (Fig 110), where some of its older buildings survive and where the road is pale with stone dust from a quarry just beyond the limits of the modern town (and so of the study area). The later development on the south forms a distinct part of the area with its hospital on the higher ground and small housing estates on the intervening slopes, but is related to North Road physically by Link Road, visually through views over the industrial estate in places, and by some contemporary fabric.

4.9.2 Above ground heritage significance

Low

As far as is known, the built environment here has limited heritage value, though the earlier industrial buildings may well include structures or features of local interest.

4.9.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** in any surviving waterlogged ground

Much of the area is developed, but lower-lying ground still relatively undisturbed has potential for buried prehistoric remains. In particular, some wet ground may survive in this area, as indicated by vegetation such as yellow flags and willow, and this might contain rare organic remains or palaeoenvironmental evidence preserved through waterlogging.



Fig 108 Low, rough ground off North Road, from Wonnacott's Road above



Fig 109 Bungalow on North Road, a pocket of early 20th century character



Fig 110 Factory incorporating an earlier one, North Road, and quarry beyond

4.10 Outer Exeter Road (HUCA 10)

Residential and commercial area, of several phases, originally the site of an early-mid 20th century motel outside the town, on Exeter Road which was then part of the A30

4.10.1 Historic character

An arm of modern roadside development extends along the north side of Exeter Road on the gentle ridge on the east of Okehampton, ending at the cutting of the railway of c1872. Until the 20th century, as the historic maps show, the area lay in large, quite regular enclosures, with some boundaries showing sinuous or stepped lines in plan, so possibly 'barton' fields formed from an earlier strip-field system. The fields may have been part of the lands of Chichacott's Barton Barn (MDV 16928), the farmstead to the north beyond the Crediton Road, formerly linked by a lane to the Exeter Road in this area (now served by Chichacott Road, made in the turnpike era).

The later development here was fitted to the framework of the fields to some extent - the limits of the housing and of the industrial estate, and some of the internal access roads of the latter, following old boundary lines. However, this shaping is scarcely appreciable on the ground.

The Exeter Road here was considerably widened to serve the turnpike system, as can be seen by comparing the 1756 and 1841 maps. The adaptation of the road can be appreciated on the ground through the presence of cut edges to its higher, south side, against HUCA 11, and survival of a Turnpike Trust milestone (MDV 71822). A site by the milestone was chosen for a single building, probably a 'roadhouse' or predecessor of a motel built later across the road (see further below), and then for an industrial estate, so that these developments lay a mile from the town centre and its congested old residential and trading areas (Fig 111). The milestone is in a similar position to that marked for it on the 1885 map, but may have been shifted to allow widening of Exeter Road and provision of industrial estate access, and is now part obscured by signage.

In the middle of the 20th century, as shown by the map of 1955, a ribbon of houses in sizeable gardens ran along the Exeter Road, with the Bartons hatchery behind this. (The hatchery site is now redeveloped and forms part of the extensive suburbs adjoining, in HUCA 11.) At that time the eastern edge of the town's continuously built-up area reached to Limehayes Road in HUCA 8 on the line of the old circular corporation boundary. The inner end of the ribbon development here in HUCA 10 was separated from the latter by a large field, only built over more recently (in HUCA 11), so that this ribbon appears to have been strongly attracted by the approach to Okehampton from the east along Exeter Road, adopted as part of the A30 trunk route in 1946. Some houses were set off an access way running parallel with Exeter Road, behind its boundary bank and hedgerow trees; this would seem to represent deliberate screening from motor vehicle traffic, already becoming heavy at the time (Fig 112).

East of the ribbon of houses, a little further from the old town, was the Okehampton Motel. The 1974 map records a large plot with motel and camping site with views of distant tors (Fig 29) opening from the south side of Exeter Road, recently absorbed in residential suburbs there (in HUCA 11). This motel may have been a successor of a building visible on the mapping of 1954, standing just east of it and across the road in this HUCA, set at an angle to the road apparently to address more clearly the approach from Exeter.

The exact location of the first building, immediately outside the turnpike milestone, indicates deliberate positioning to cater for travellers a mile from the historic urban core. It was probably one of the roadhouses, with services and modern club style for passing and local motorists, popular after c1930 (Morrison and Minnis 2014, 298-303). A garage was also built in the vicinity, before the 1967 survey, between houses to the west of the motel; its site has since been redeveloped, and lies in HUCA 11.

The industrial estate was begun north of the road at a similar time to the motel on the south of it, covering the site of the suggested predecessor of the motel. It continues to develop with buildings of varying scales and standardised materials and methods of construction (Fig 111). More recently, the rear gardens of some houses of the ribbon development, particularly those towards the west of the ribbon, have been infilled.

4.10.2 Above ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** for milestone

The built environment here has generally low historic, aesthetic and community value for Okehampton. However, the milestone may be an unusual survivor for the area, standing in or close to its original position, important as a marker of the improvements made to the main roads of the town in the turnpike era. It also marks the siting of the roadhouse outside the urban limits of the mid-20th century, a reminder of how the transition to motor road transport at that time altered the shape and character of this area and of the whole town; though neither the roadhouse itself nor its successor, the 1970s motel, survives. The planning of the houses on an access way behind Exeter Road reflects the traffic pressures which, increasing in the following decades, contributed to the development of a different, inward-looking landscape in the eastern suburbs (in HUCA 11), and led eventually to the by-passing of the whole town.

4.10.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low

Since the area is quite intensively developed it has low archaeological potential, though any ground still relatively undisturbed, having been medieval farmland, has the potential for buried medieval and prehistoric remains common to such ground.



Fig 111 Milestone on Exeter Road (by hedge, right), and early motel site



Fig 112 Mid-20th century housing with road parallel to and beside Exeter Road

4.11 Eastern Suburbs (HUCA 11)

Large area of housing estates, mostly later 20th century, reaching to a field with buried Roman fortifications; with the built-over site of a pound, and an extant associated lane

4.11.1 Historic character

A large residential area of the later 20th and early 21st centuries lies on the broad ridge on the east side of Okehampton, filling in the fields by Exeter Road left in the mid-20th century between the terraces ending at Limehayes Road on the old corporation boundary (in HUCA 8), and the outlying motel, industrial estate and residential area on the east (HUCA 10), and expanding also on the north and south sides of that HUCA 10.

Some of the buildings here are houses of mid-20th century character, resembling those of the outer parts of HUCA 8, but captured in this HUCA where it runs across the main roads on which these houses originally formed thin ribbons of development. The later estates predominate, however. These show some internal variety; some elements in the design and arrangement of houses at Wadlands Meadow refer to more traditional ones. Mostly, though, the estates consist of moderately dense but low level development of houses and bungalows with garages and small gardens, arranged on short cul-de-sacs with car-friendly widths, grades and curves (Fig 113). They generally have individual or branched access roads opening off the framework of pre-existing roads at various, limited points, and not inter-connecting, with the result that the area as a whole has restricted permeability to traffic and lines of sight.

The early highways to Crediton and Exeter from which the estates are accessed have been greatly altered by modern widening and other works, as well as by improvements of the turnpike age. Fatherford Road, derived from a medieval open trackway over downland enclosed in the earlier 19th century, and Chichacott Road which was newly made as a turnpike route, show more of their different historic characters, though with modern alterations to junctions, and surfacing. Ball Hill Lane on the south, not marked on the 1841 map but clearly earlier because associated with the site of a 17th century pound (see further below), survives well as a narrow green lane, a public right of way.

Some edges of housing estates follow those of old fields. This was an area of large enclosures. Most are derived from medieval farmland, as can be seen from their shapes recorded on historic maps, and from evidence for buried strip boundaries within the field on the north-east captured by geophysical survey prior to development in 2010 (ADS website). Those on the south, flanking Fatherford Road, were taken in from rough ground in the earlier 19th century. A field on the north contains the site of Roman fortifications (MDV 4751), no longer evident in the landscape but of great significance, indicating the early origins of the east-west through route which supported and shaped the linear medieval highway and market town (see further Section 3.2).

The survey of 1756 shows a manor pound, north of Exeter Road, immediately outside the corporation boundary half a mile from the market cross (within which was another pound, Section 3.4.2.2) so presumably 17th century. This now lies under the west end of Balmoral Crescent, but as mentioned above, a drove way linking it with the meadows on the East River and the moors to the south, Ball Hill Lane, survives with some ancient hedgerow trees between housing estates (Fig 114). It is interesting to note that a site covered by a more recent housing estate to the north, Fern Close, where rubble remains of a stone built feature associated with a potsherd of 17th century type were found during a watching brief (MDV 58011), lies in a similar position relative to the boundary of the corporation by the Crediton Road; perhaps that spot also had a pound.

By 1906, large fields by Fatherford Road were used for allotments for the town which then reached only to Victoria Road, half a dozen smaller enclosures away to the west. They were probably chosen for this because they lay just outside the corporation boundary fixed in the 17th century, and perhaps because of ancient common rights on the downland enclosed to make these fields in the earlier 19th century.

The allotments survived through the middle of the 20th century, when they lay convenient to newer terraces to the west (in HUCA 8), and to outlying ribbon housing on Exeter Road (in HUCA 10). They were then absorbed in suburban development.

4.11.2 Above ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** at Ball Hill Lane

In general, the built environment here has low heritage value, representing a large increase in the residential capacity of Okehampton, and the shift to personal transport based on car ownership, but showing little in the way of shaping in the deeper past, or local distinctiveness. However, Ball Hill Lane is a valuable marker in the landscape of the importance and organisation of the livestock-based economy, and of the extent of the lands of the 17th century incorporated town and their relationship with the manor.

4.11.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low overall; **High** on north by Roman fort and on the eastbound side of Crediton Road

Most of the area, being covered by recent residential development, has low potential for survival of archaeology below ground. There may be potential for buried remains, associated with use of the Roman fortifications, in the gardens on the north edge of the suburbs, besides that in the field beyond, in which the fort site lies. There is potential for traces of the Roman road and turnpike beneath the modern surfacing of Crediton Road, in particular, in the north-west side of the roadway (see further Section 3.2).



Fig 113 Newcombe Close, one lobe of the modern convoluted eastern suburbs



Fig 114 Ball Hill Lane running south from the site of a 17th century pound

4.12 Ranelagh Road (HUCA 12)

Mid-late 20th century housing, fitted to old roads marking major stages in the life of the town, and a riverside plantation, an outer part of the designed landscape of Oaklands

4.12.1 Historic character

The Ranelagh Road area on the moderate slopes to the West River on the north-west of the town has a large early 20th century villa, and surrounding residential estates of the mid to late 20th century, with houses and bungalows set on pre-existing roads and on access ways curving off these (Fig 115). The built elements of the environment are mostly similar to those of Oaklands Park to the north in HUCA 6, but other elements of landscape character in these places are different. Oaklands Park has sizeable open spaces reflecting its shaping by former use as the town's agricultural show ground - itself shaped to part of the early 19th century park of Oaklands House. The suburb here in HUCA 12, in contrast, is fitted to a framework of pre-existing roads, several of them once locally very important; these have declined in status at various times and for various reasons, though one, Ranelagh Road itself, continues to articulate the area.

Vicarage Road framing the HUCA on the north was part of Buss House Lane, itself part of a longer early medieval way which formerly provided a route, it is suggested, between the church and an early manorial centre near Beare (Section 4.1.1). The medieval Church Street coffin road on the south, later partly pedestrianised and named Church Path on the margin of the adjoining HUCA 1, linked the Norman eastern town and the 13th century town between the rivers (both in HUCA 4) with the Buss House Lane way to the church (and later with a more direct way, Church Avenue), via the lower end of the pre-Norman western settlement (in HUCA 2). Ranelagh Road itself, formerly named Triggs Lane, is a secondary, probably medieval route to Hatherleigh, successor to an earlier one west of the Church of which part is now South Church Lane and part has reverted to fields (in HUCA 1). Lodge Hill on the north-east of the HUCA (forming the edge of HUCA 6) is a turnpike road cut to the Hatherleigh road from the town centre in the early 19th century.

These old roads are significant because they represent major stages in the life of Okehampton – the changes to the church approaches showing how the town was established in several phases and places each served by the parish church; the shifting to the east of the main route to Hatherleigh reflecting the eclipse of the western settlement by the Riverside Town in the High Middle Ages; and the creation of Lodge Hill marking the steering of the town by its landowner and political master in the latter years of the rotten borough. Within this HUCA the roads are altered by modern widening or resurfacing, but their relative chronologies can still be perceived in their courses and junctions, and in places massive tree boles preserved in the hedgebanks beside them, now serving as suburban garden boundaries, attest to their age.

On the south, between the church and High Street, a sunny well-drained area, mostly open farmland today, was used in post-medieval times to provide drying grounds with racks for the textile industry (Section 3.6.2). In the north-east corner of the HUCA, the land slopes down quite steeply to the West Okement River. The 1841 survey depicts a little plantation belt here, with conifers among broadleaf trees. This will have been made to enhance the surroundings of the early 19th century ornamental park of Oaklands just across Lodge Hill (in HUCAs 5 and 6), and so shows the extension of landscape design beyond the park proper. There may well have been ancient woodland here, as on other steep valley sides. If so it was cleared, or coppiced, before the 1756 survey, which shows the enclosure with no tree symbols. This ground retains its historic woodland, and now has a public path above the river, from which the strength of the moorland waters (photographed at summer level) and their roles in determining the route of the east-west highway between the best crossings, and the development of the highway- and market-based settlement, are readily appreciated (Fig 116). Above the wood, several gardens preserve parts of a strip-derived field running along the contour.

4.12.2 Above ground heritage significance

Low overall; **Medium** on east

The area contributes to understanding of the past development of Okehampton as a whole largely through the pattern of its roads, and is assessed as having low value overall in terms of its built environment.

The slope above the river on the east is considered to have medium value for the town. It preserves a plantation reflecting the role of Oaklands Park and its owners in shaping Okehampton. It also captures through this some of the ancient wooded character of the steeper parts of the twin valleys of the Okement which helped to attract diverse use and design of the wider urban landscape in the past, from the medieval hunting park around the castle in HUCA 3 to the railway-age pleasure grounds in HUCA 7.

4.12.3 Below ground heritage significance

Low

The larger gardens on former strip fields, towards the east and south, if relatively undisturbed, may contain buried remains of prehistoric or medieval date, like medieval farmland elsewhere.



Fig 115 Beans Meadow fills a field shaped previously by roads on two sides



Fig 116 West River from the woodland path on its west above Lodge Bridge

5 Suggestions for future research

Aspects of Kingsbridge's historic landscape which would benefit from further research or consideration, identified in the course of the project, are brought together here. This section is not intended to be comprehensive, but to highlight issues emerging from the processes of mapping and interpretation.

- **Archaeological investigation of the ancient east-west highway** if disturbed, to allow recording of any surviving Roman or medieval remains.
- **Further assessment of the origins of the church and churchyard**, including the possibility of a Roman fortlet forming the core of the churchyard.
- **Archaeological investigation of the early settlement on the west**, in any areas of this remaining relatively undisturbed, should the opportunity arise.
- **Assessment of the medieval landscape around the town**, particularly of the Beare area where the manorial centre may have lain before the castle was built.
- **Study of medieval market and fair grounds** including the possible pre-urban market on the west, and market places and street east of East Bridge, as well as Fore Street, and also the market buildings; using borough records (for the DEUS project it was possible only to rapidly scan listings of these), old images and oral history, and archaeological recording should the opportunity or need arise.
- **Detailed assessment of medieval or post-medieval buildings** including recording of surviving fabric as appropriate, and study of the lost rows in Fore and West Streets; informed by close study of the 1756 plan, which depicts and numbers individual buildings, any other detailed surveys, and borough records.
- **Investigation of town crafts and industries and their sites by the rivers** including the leather working related to the livestock trade, a craft implied by the 1220 charter and continued in the form of boot making in the 20th century.
- **Study of the college** on the east in the old town and recording of any remains of it (this is a separate site from the school of 1911 named Okehampton College).
- **Recording of the formerly numerous inns**, their locations, survival, character, dates and importance, through documentary study and building survey.
- **Exploration of the relationships of the corporation boundary** a mile in circumference around the market cross with the deer park pale and other landscape features, and with the planning of the town in modern times.
- **Comparative study of the shaping of Okehampton by political interests** from incorporation in 1623 to disenfranchisement by the Reform Act of 1832.
- **Thematic study of the varying effects of war on the town** including its role on the Roman frontier, the degree to which the Norman castle served as a strategic fortress on the route to the west, the Civil War campaigns, the Napoleonic Wars when prisoners were held here, the artillery training in the deer park from Victorian times, and the use of Oaklands Park during World War II.
- **Study of modern perceptions of and changes to the built environment** including the context of the distinctive rows set back-to-back by Castle Road, and the designation and clearance of slums in the urban core.
- **Specialist study of borough records and place names** including property, street, and river names (see comments in Section 3.3.3).
- **Use of the present assessment to develop interpretative material** such as a guidebook on the historic town might be considered, to complement the provision of plaques in the streets and displays of artefacts in the museum.
- **Review of the extent of Okehampton's two conservation areas** to take account of the findings of the urban assessment may be appropriate.

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Etched on Devon's Memory; historic images provided by Devon County Council

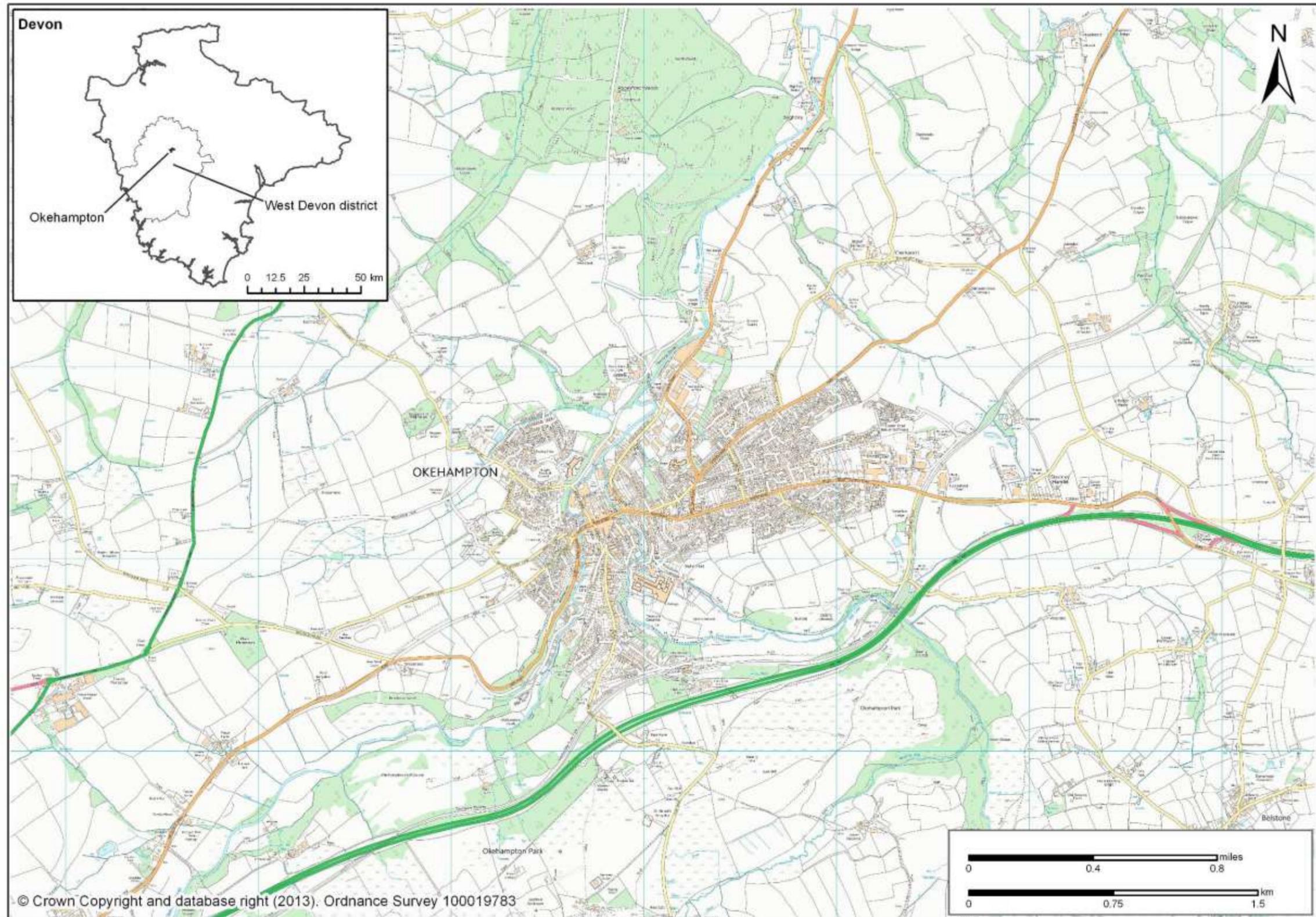
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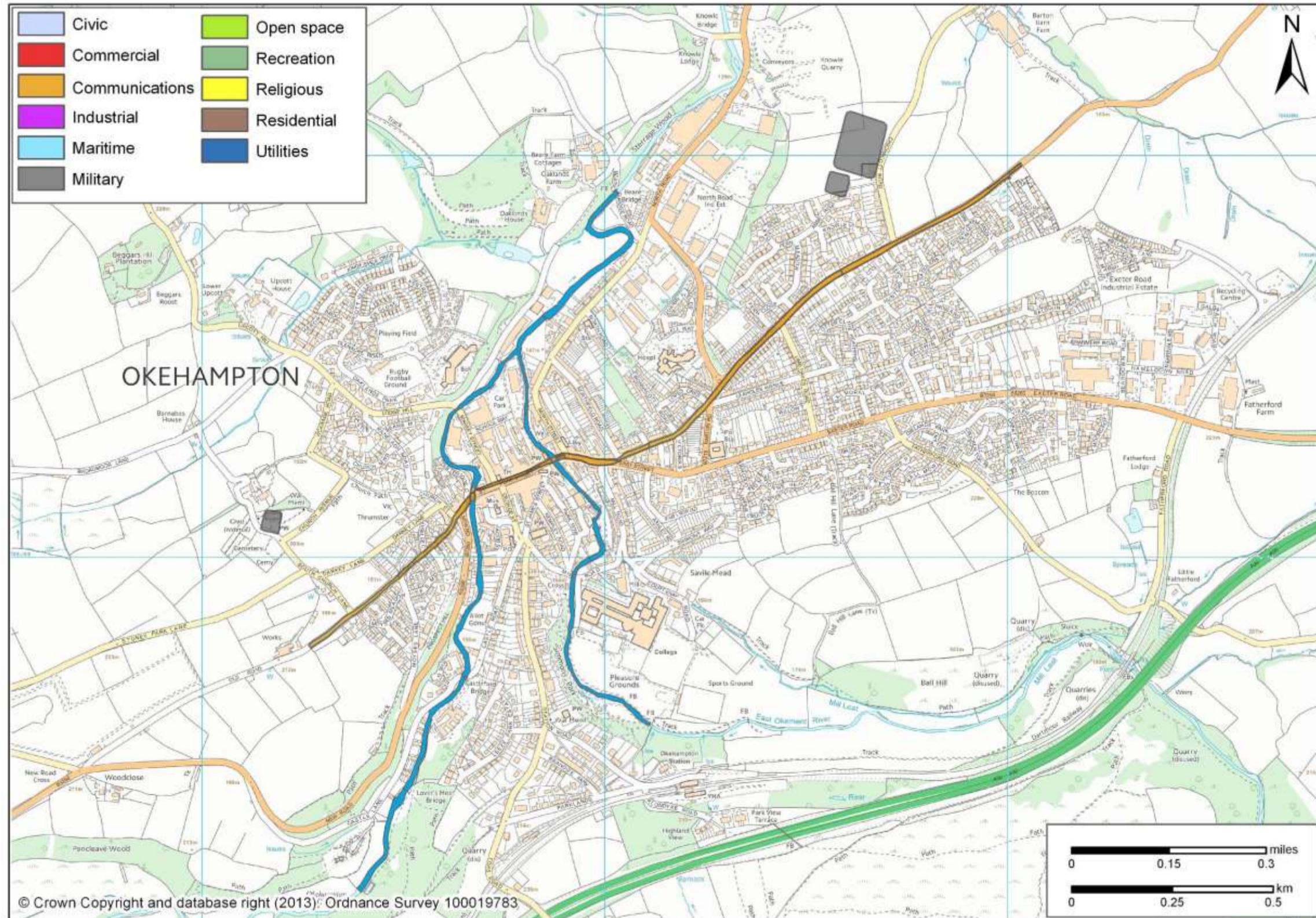
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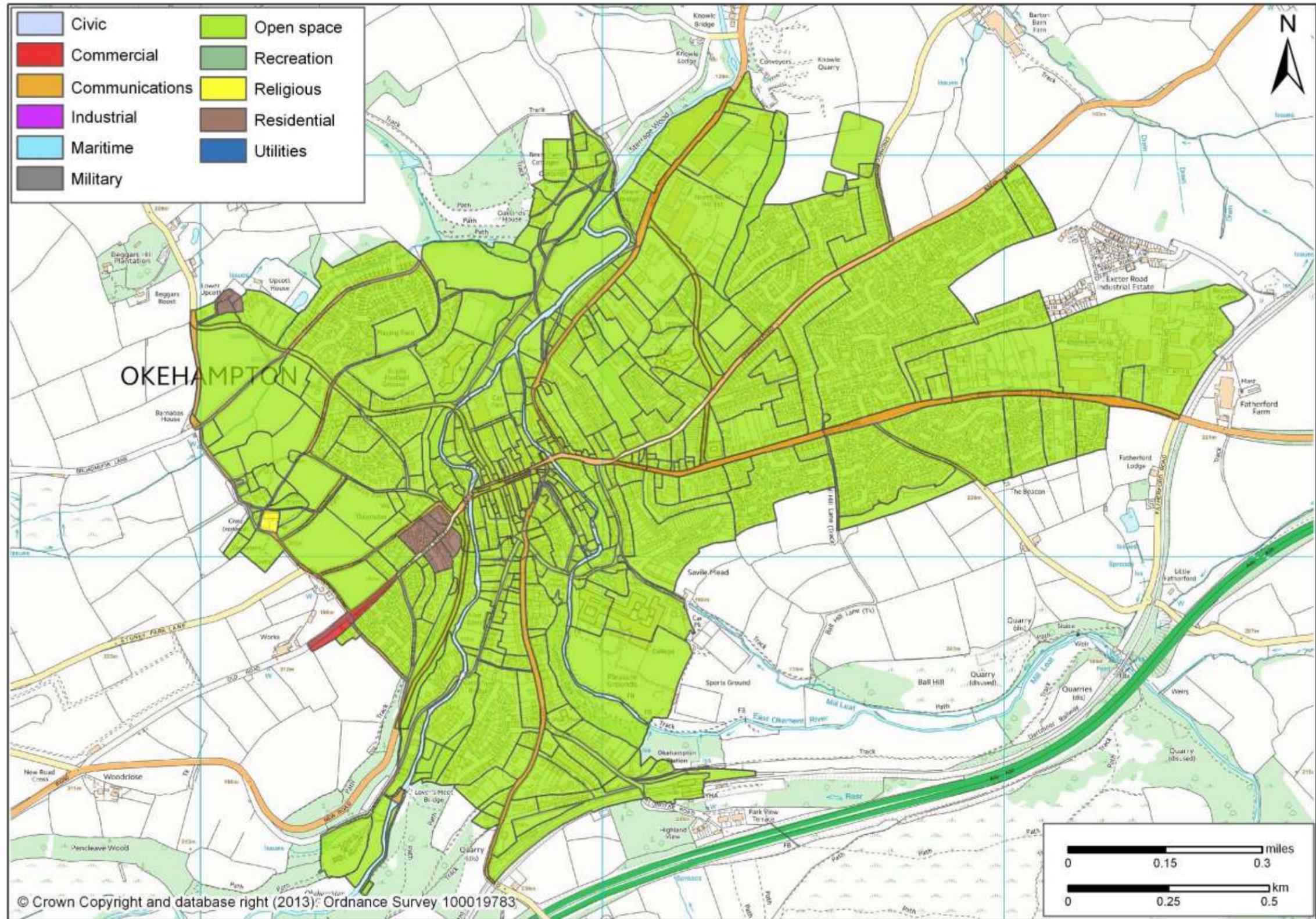
turnpikes.org.uk



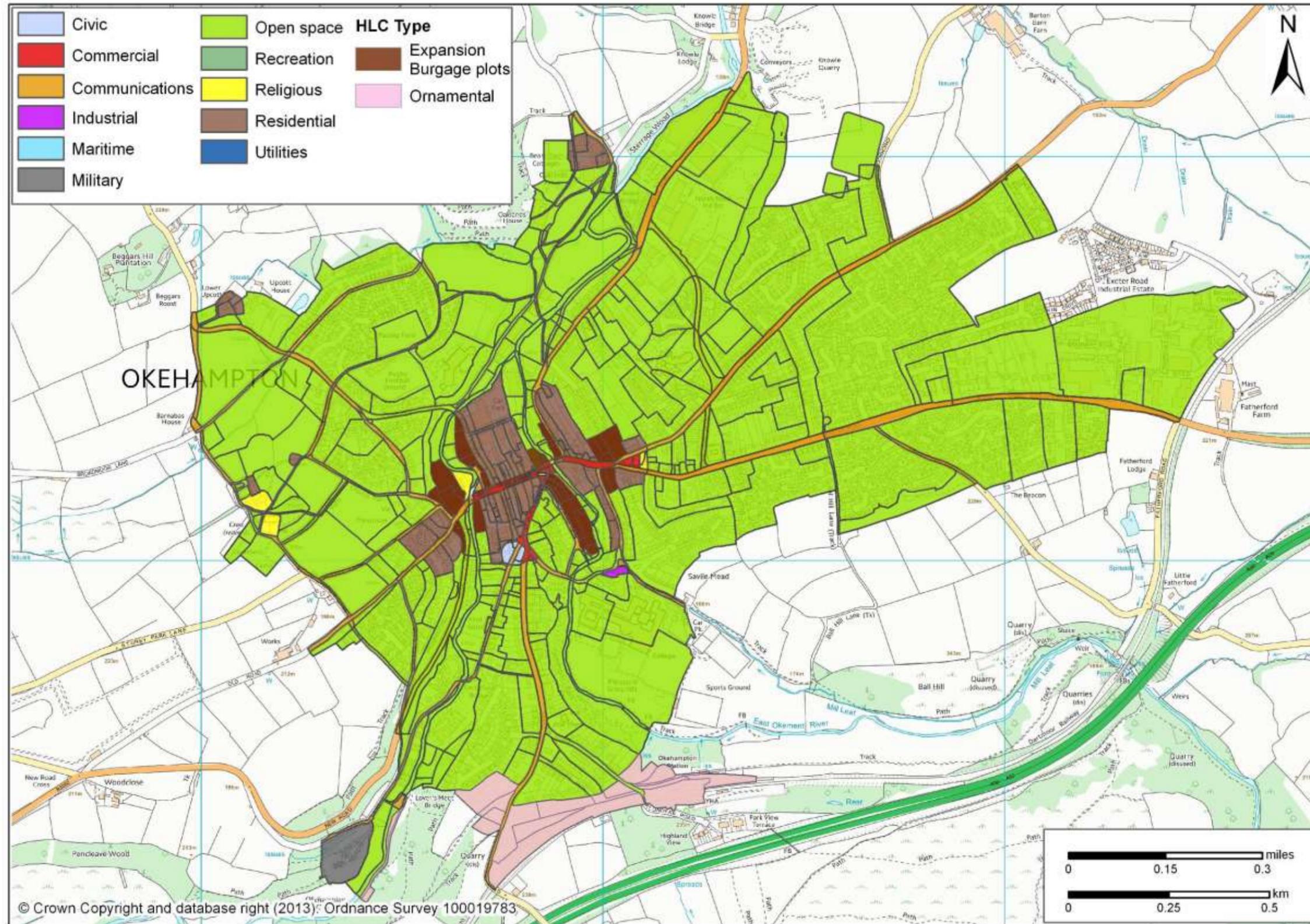
Map 1 Location and extent of the study area at Okehampton



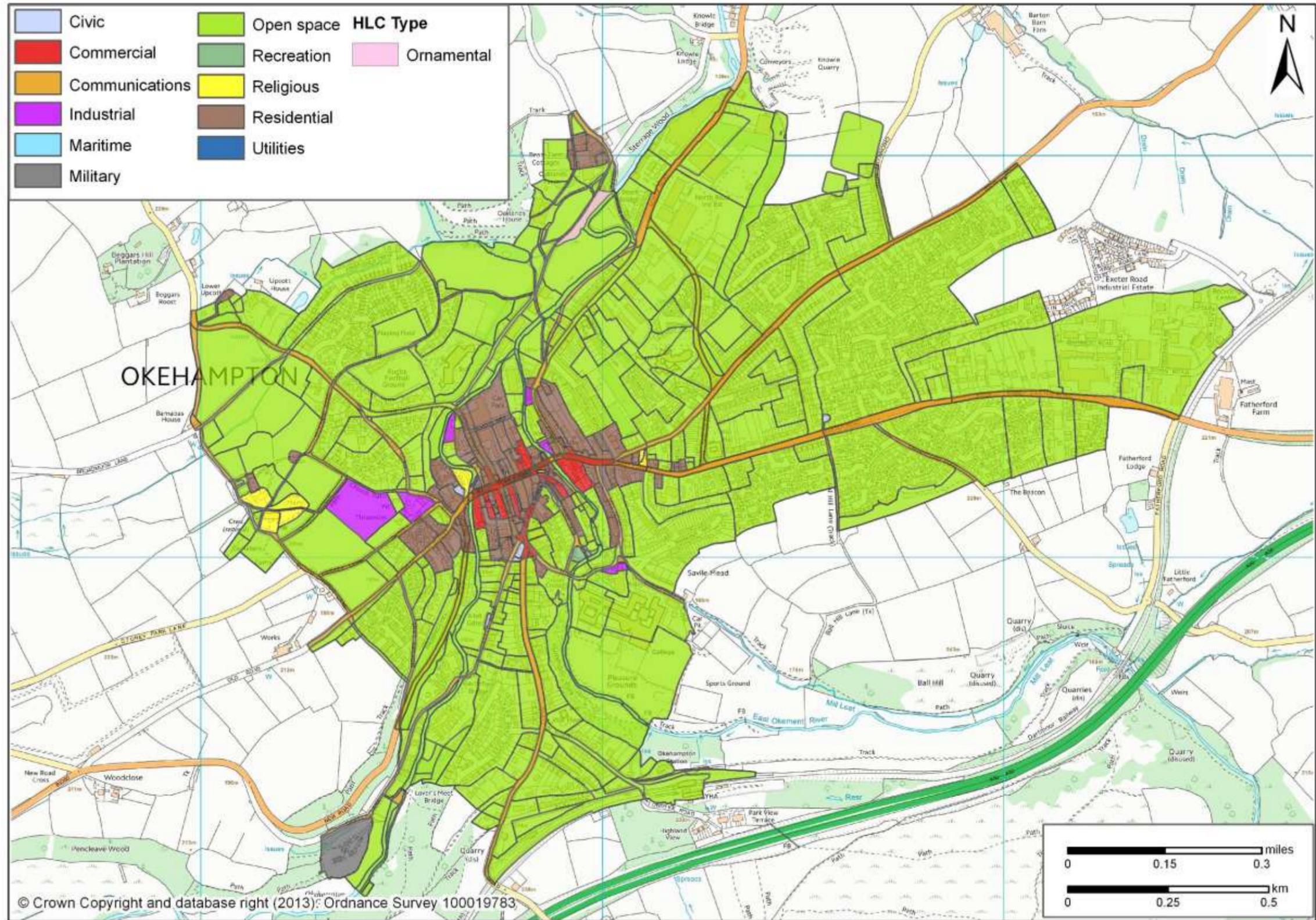
Map 2 HLC; Roman (AD43–409), showing potential site of fortlet re-used for church, known fortification sites, and primary through road



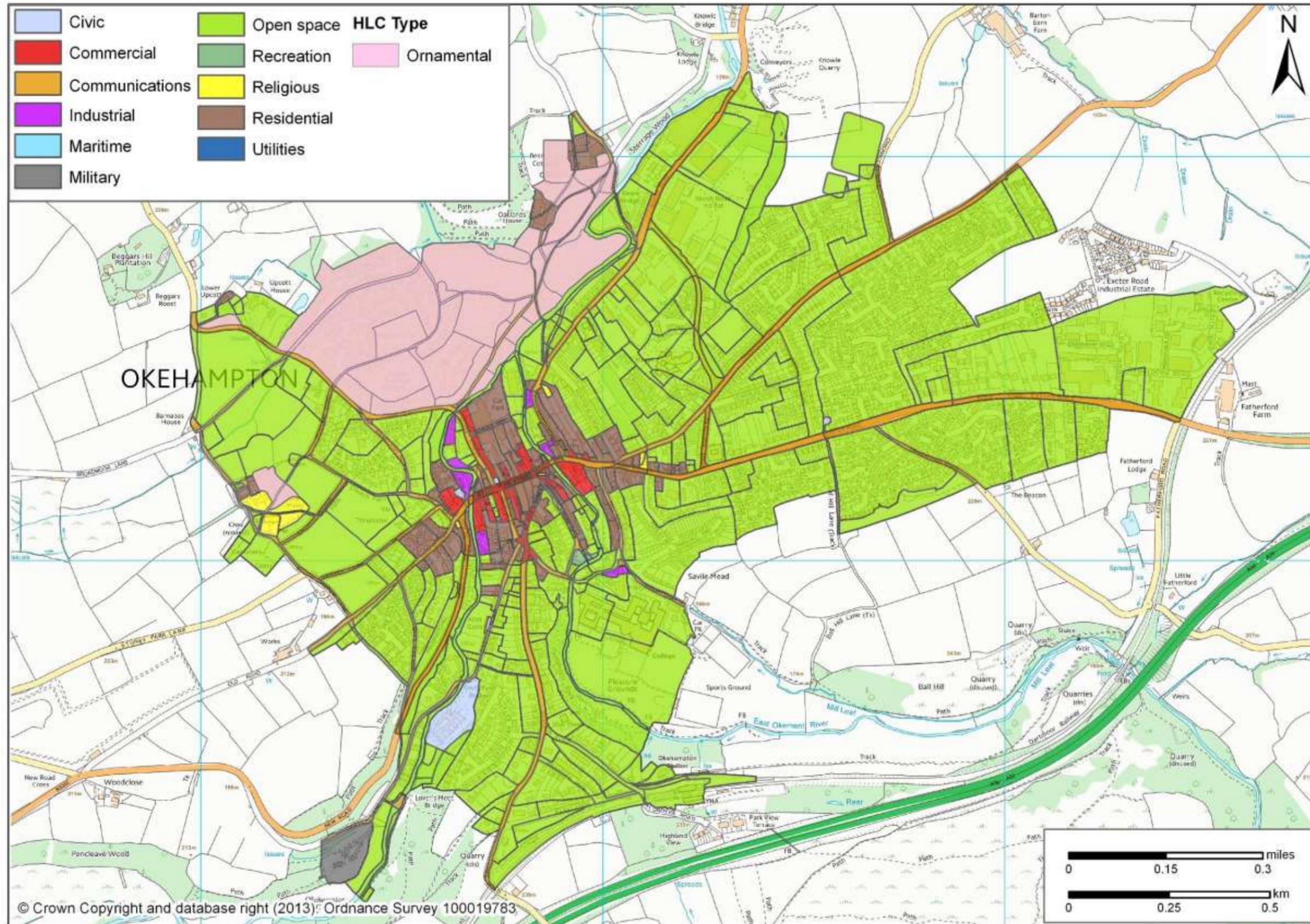
Map 3 HLC, Early medieval (410-1065) with potential market area at transhumance route/through road junction, and settlement below



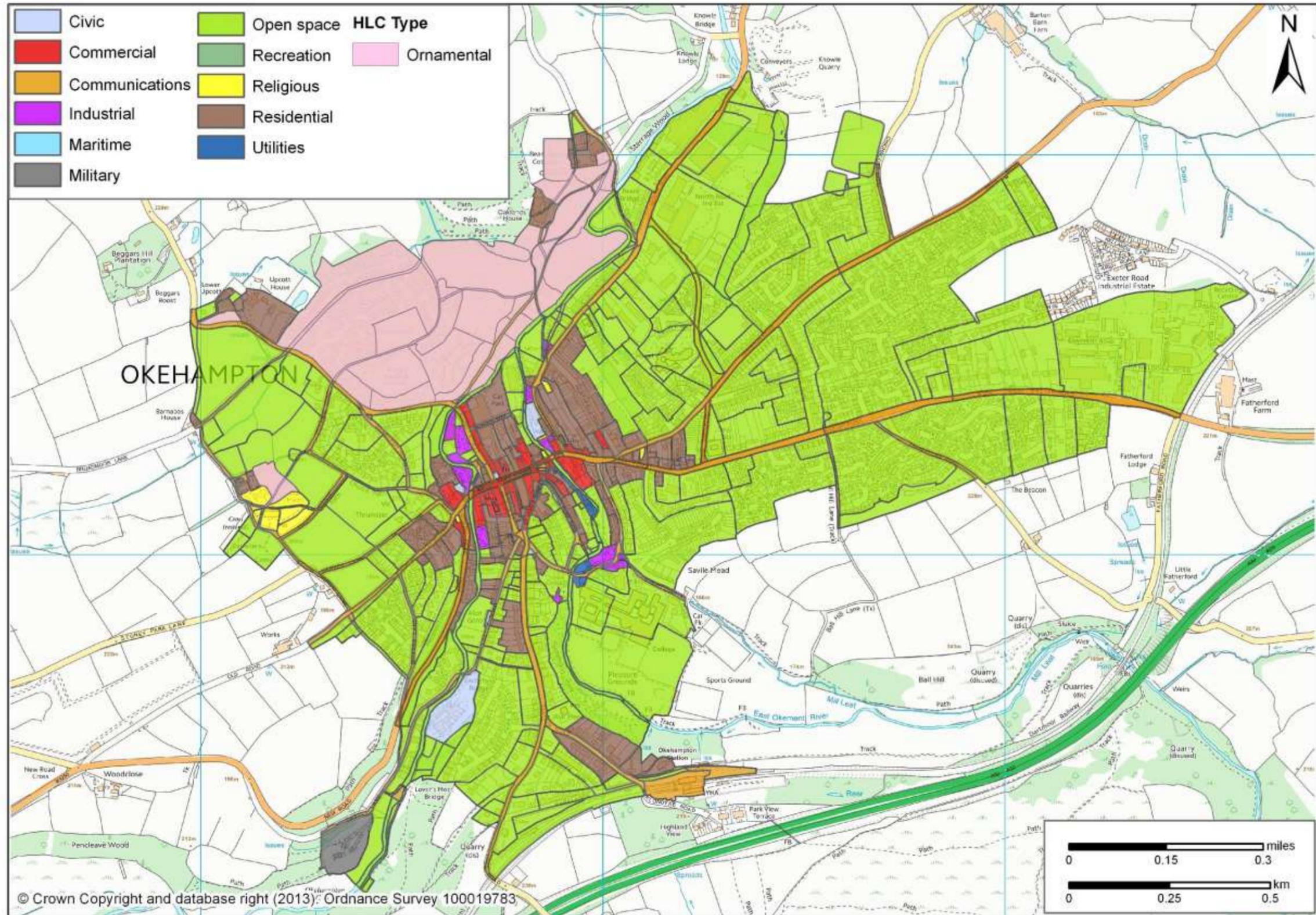
Map 4 HLC, Medieval (1066-1539), showing castle and burgage plots attributed to 11C at Exeter/Crediton Road junction, 12C on East Street, and 13C on Fore Street, and also expansion plots



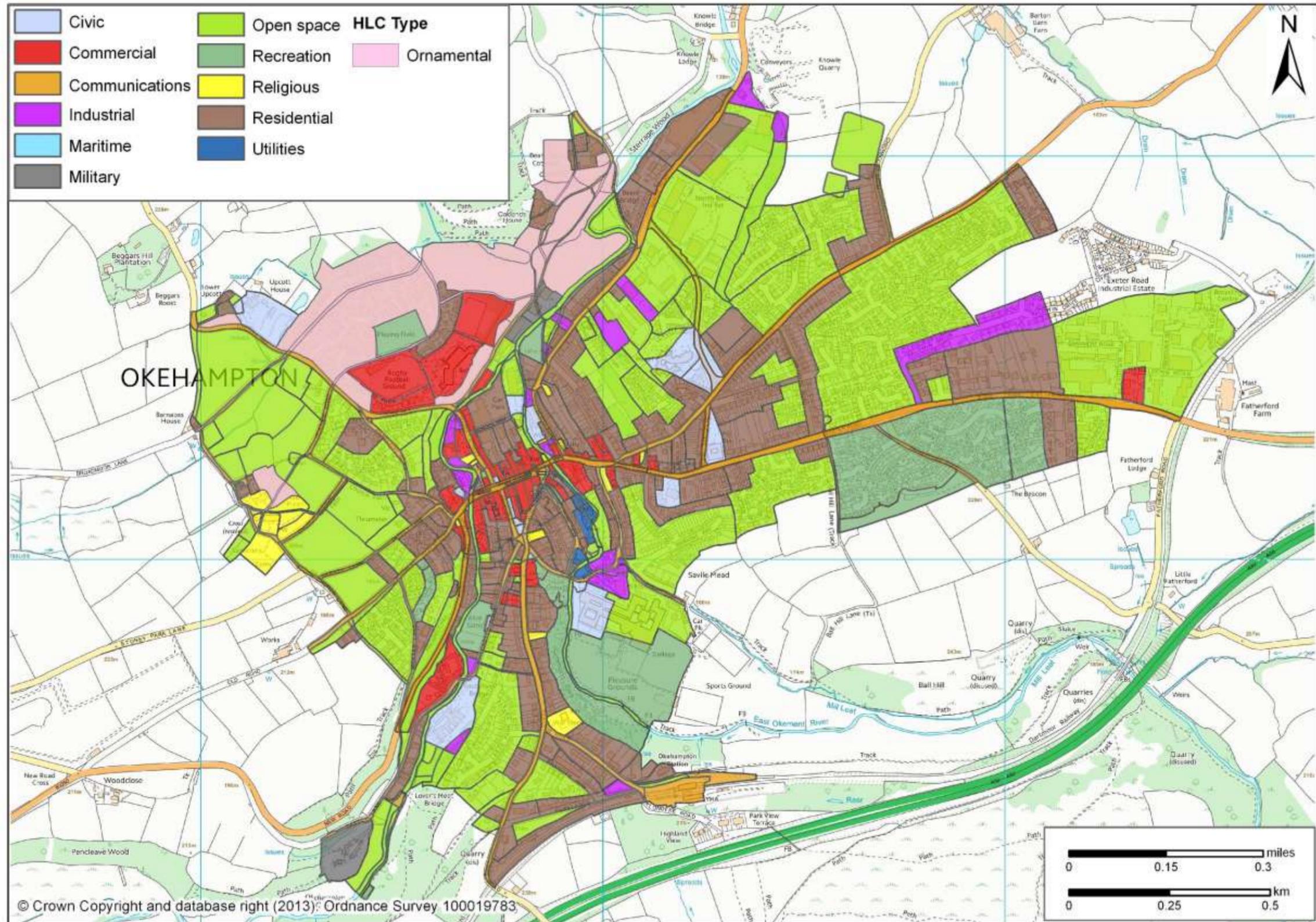
Map 5 HLC, Post medieval (1540-1799), featuring woollen mills and drying grounds (the residential expansion, rows on North Street, are not evident as these run down existing 'Residential' burgages)



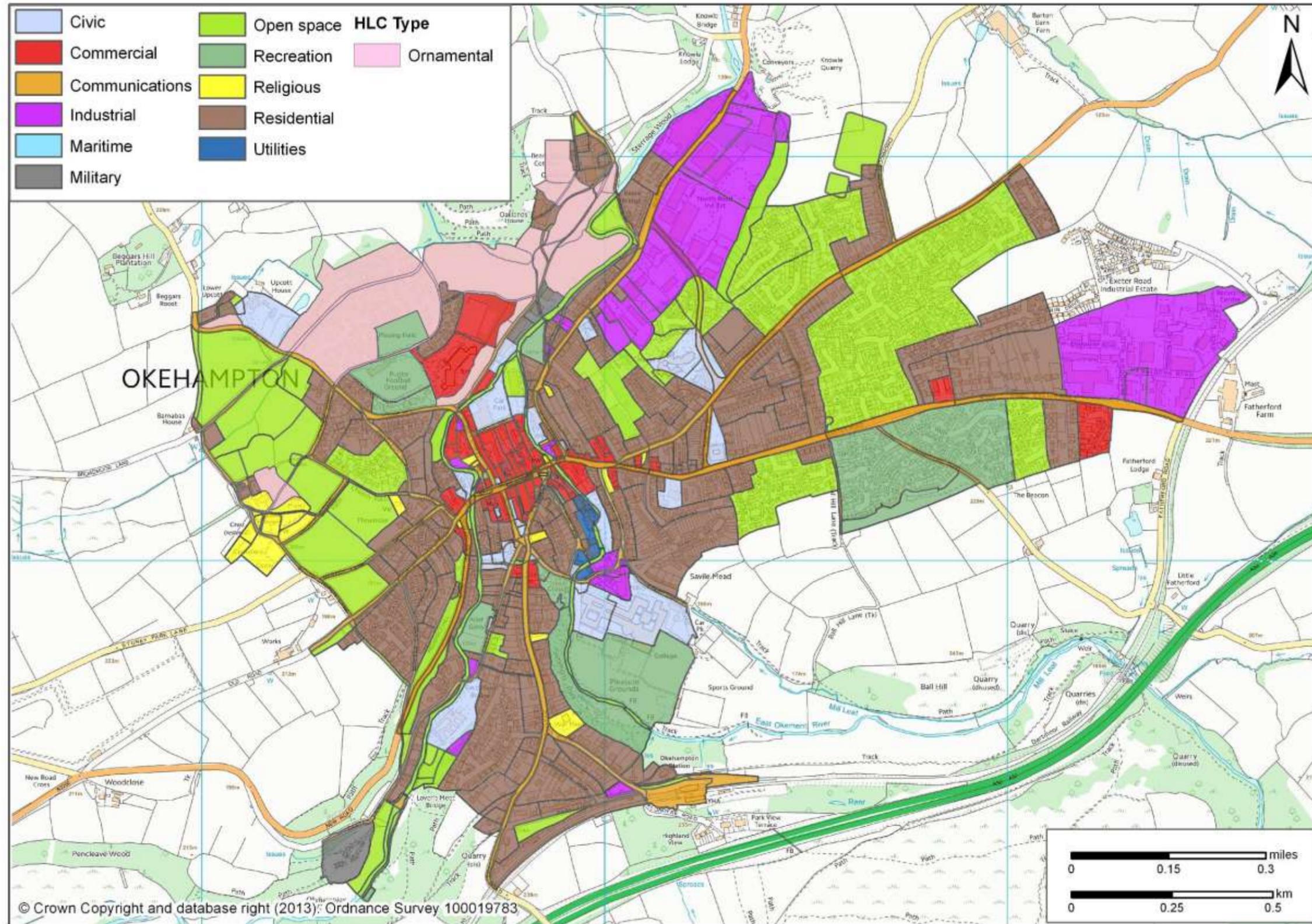
Map 6 HLC, Early 19th century (1800-1849). Note Oaklands Park and Market Street, contemporary and linked by the newly made turnpike road, Lodge Hill



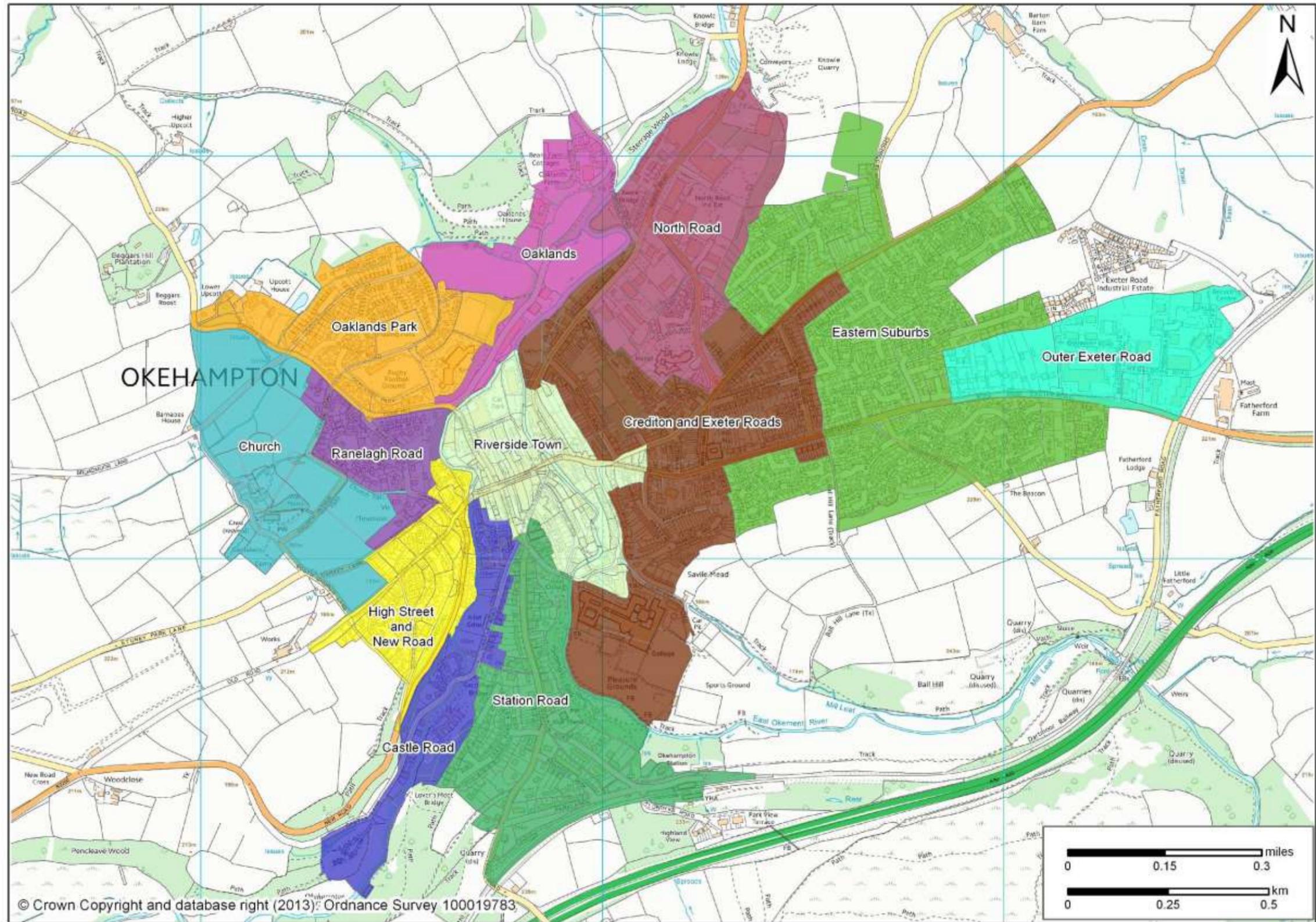
Map 7 HLC, Late 19th century (1850-1899). The impact of the railway is clear in the development of an outlying suburb by the station



Map 8 HLC, Early 20th century (1900-1949) with much growth on Station and Exeter Roads, and agricultural show ground at Oaklands



Map 9 HLC, Late 20th century (1950-1999); major changes include expansion and redevelopment of early Western Town, and large industrial estates on the Exeter side



Map 11 Historic Character Areas (HUCAs), 2014