Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL
Sites & Monuments Record

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

# STROUD DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

# BERKELEY

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## A note about the maps

**The SMR maps in the original Historic Towns Survey (i.e Maps 2-5) are now out of date and have not been included within this revision although references to SMR numbers remain in the text. For up to date SMR information readers can contact the SMR on 01452 425705 or via email at archaeology.smr@gloucestershire.gov.uk. The other maps have been refreshed using current software and retain their original numbering as referred to in the text.**

*SMR maps*: these maps show a selection of sites relevant to the discussion of the development of each town. The maps are not intended to provide a comprehensive gazetteer of all recorded archaeological sites in the settlements, and should therefore only be used in the context for which they were produced. For further information about the archaeology of any area, the Sites and Monument Record should be consulted directly.

*Plan component maps*: these maps are intended to indicate the most likely areas of settlement in each town during the Medieval and Post-medieval periods, on the basis of present archaeological knowledge. They should not, however, be regarded as definitive, and the interpretations made will require revision as new evidence emerges from future work.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS USED IN THE TEXT

| | |
|---|---|
| Anon | Anonymous |
| c. | circa |
| C | Century [e.g. C12] |
| EH | English Heritage |
| GSIA | Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology |
| km | kilometres |
| m | metres |
| n.d. | Undated |
| O.D. | Ordnance Datum |
| O.S. | Ordnance Survey |
| PCNFC | Proceedings of the Cotteswold Naturalists Field Club |
| RCHME | Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) |
| SMR | Sites and Monuments Record |
| **SMR 12345** | An SMR site which is shown on the accompanying maps |
| SMR 12345 | An SMR site which is not shown on the accompanying maps |
| TBGAS | Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society |
| TRE | Tempus Rex Edwardus (i.e. during the reign of king Edward the Confessor) |

## PERIODS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

| | |
|---|---|
| Palaeolithic | 500,000 B.C. – 10,000 B.C. |
| Mesolithic | 10,000 B.C. – 4,000 B.C. |
| Neolithic | 4,000 B.C. – 2,200 B.C. |
| Bronze Age | 2,200 B.C. – 700 B.C. |
| Iron Age | 700 B.C. – A.D. 43 |
| Roman | A.D. 43 – 410 |
| Early Medieval | 410-1066 |
| Medieval | 1066 – 1540 |
| Post Medieval | 1540 – 1901 |
| Modern | 1901 – present |

## POPULATION FIGURES

The text for each town considered in the GHTS includes a section about the historic population of the parish in which the settlement lies. This information has been drawn from a variety of sources, mainly taxation returns, ecclesiastical returns and what can generally be referred to as censuses. The nature of these sources often makes it unclear what area was included within the survey, and in many cases suburban developments were excluded from the figures. It is also important to note that the accuracy of the information available is variable, and relates to a society which was not accustomed to the same degree of numerical accuracy demanded today. Some enumerations were the result of antiquarian interest in the growth of settlements and were included within descriptions of the nature of the town, as is the case with the figures given by Atkyns (1712) and Rudder (1779). Other population surveys were required by the ecclesiastical authorities, and in the case of Gloucestershire, there were a number of such surveys in 1563, 1603, 1650 and 1676. The 1563, 1603 and 1676 surveys were intended to indicate the number of communicants, papists and nonconformists in the parish. As the surveys were undertaken by the local clergy, there may well have been a temptation to play down levels of nonconformity. The 1650 survey was intended to give an indication of levels of pluralism, as well as to indicate the general size of the communities served.

The figures recorded in these surveys could be for communicants (i.e. anyone over the age of 16), men and women over 16, men, women and children, men over sixteen only, householders, households or families. In the case of Gloucestershire the figures generally relate to households, families and communicants. In order to gain a better indication of the true size

of the population of a parish, calculations need to be made to convert communicants and households into men, women and children of all ages. It has generally been accepted that to convert households into individuals the given figure should be multiplied by 4.25, while to add children under 16 to the number of communicants the figure should be multiplied by 1.5, based on the assumption that children made up approximately 33% of the general population.

It is possible to view the figures arrived at by these means as simplistic but it has been shown that they generally fit quite well with data from other seventeenth century sources (see Whiteman A (ed.) 1986, *The Compton Census of 1676*, for a full discussion of the issues). It is not intended that the figures given in the following text should be seen as correct values, but it is hoped that the information will provide an approximate indication of the order of size of the parish at a time when there were few other sources of information available.

# THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

**town** *n.* **1.** a densely populated urban area, typically smaller than a city and larger than a village. **2.** a city, borough or other urban area.

**urban** *adj.* **1.** of, relating to, or constituting a city or town. **2.** living in a city or town. ~ Cf. **rural.**

## 1 Introduction

The Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey was undertaken between 1995 and 1998 by Antonia Douthwaite and Vince Devine of the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service and was funded by English Heritage as part of a national programme of county-based extensive urban surveys of small towns in England. All of the 37 settlements included in the survey once had, or have now, some urban characteristics, and range in date and type from the Roman towns of the Cotswolds through to the Post-medieval industrial settlements of the Forest of Dean and Stroud valleys (Table 1). Not all the settlements are urban at the end of the twentieth century: some are now greenfield sites and others are small villages, although a few have survived as urban foci for modern communities. Both Gloucester and Cirencester were omitted from the project since they were identified by English Heritage as major historic towns, with a considerable history of archaeological investigation meriting individual and detailed study (English Heritage 1992).

The extensive urban surveys were designed as tripartite projects to include: the *enhancement of the county Sites and Monuments Record* (SMR), in order to provide a comprehensive database for each settlement, the preparation of *assessment reports* which would summarise the state of archaeological knowledge for each settlement and the design of a *strategy* for the management of the archaeology of each town to be implemented mainly through the planning system. The database is now held as part of the Gloucestershire SMR, while the assessment and strategy reports each take the form of separate volumes covering the administrative districts of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Stroud and Tewkesbury. All three phases of the projects were based on the use of secondary, published sources, involved no fieldwork and were tightly constrained by the available resources.

Previous work on towns highlighting their archaeological potential and their vulnerability to development was undertaken in various parts of England, including Gloucestershire (Leech 1981), in the early 1980s. Changes in approaches to the management of the urban archaeological resource since then, particularly the greatly enhanced opportunities for its protection from the adverse effects of development through the planning system, prompted the new urban surveys of the 1990s.

## 2 The concept of urbanism

*A town is a permanent human settlement with two chief and essential attributes. The first is that a significant proportion (but not necessarily a majority) of its population lives off trade, industry, administration and other non-agricultural occupations. The second...is that it forms a social unit more or less distinct from the surrounding countryside* (Reynolds 1977, ix).

Although most people understand the term "town" in the modern context, the definition of urban areas in the past is far more varied, and modern concepts of urbanism tend to confuse more than they elucidate. For every period contemporary documents reveal a plethora of terms to describe settlements, depending upon their social, economic and legal status. Under the Roman empire there were seven distinct terms which could be used to place a settlement and its inhabitants in its context: *civitas*, *colonia*, *municipium*, *oppidum*, *urbs*, *vicus* and *πολισ* polis). Any attempt to equate these words with modern terminology creates considerable confusion as there are just as many English terms to describe the status of any urban settlement: town, city, urban district, municipality, county borough, borough, any or all of which may or may not be a direct equivalent to the Roman terminology. Similarly, there are numerous Early Medieval and Medieval terms relating to settlements, including *vill*, *burghus*, *burh*, *wic* and *urbs*, some of which had very specific meanings while others are more difficult to define with precision.

This varied terminology has led archaeologists and historians to attempt to define urban status in terms of the roles towns played and their physical attributes which have survived in the archaeological record. This approach has been most successful in relation to settlements of the Early Medieval and Medieval periods, based on the work of Beresford (1967) and Biddle (1976), who have defined a town as a settlement possessing a combination of the following:

1) defences
2) a planned street system
3) market(s)
4) a mint
5) legal autonomy
6) a role as a central place
7) a relatively large and dense population
8) a diverse economic base
9) plots and houses of urban type (burgages and burgage tenure)
10) social differentiation
11) complex religious organisation
12) a judicial centre
13) the possession of a borough charter
14) a reference to the settlement as a *burgus* or representation by its own jury at the *eyre*
15) that it was taxed as a borough
16) that it sent members to any Medieval parliament

Table 1 illustrates where there is documentary evidence for some of the main urban characteristics of towns included in the Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey:

| Town | Defences | Market | Mint | Borough charter | Burgages/ burgess tenure | Legal autonomy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Berkeley | | 1086 | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Bishop's Cleeve | | | | | | |
| Bisley | | 1687 | | | | |
| Blockley | | | | | | |
| Bourton-on-the-Water | | | | | | |
| Chalford | | | | | | |
| Cheltenham | | 1226 | | | ✓ | |
| Chipping Campden | | c1180 | | 1154-89 | ✓ | |
| Cinderford | | 1869 | | | | |
| Coleford | | eC14 | | | | |
| Dursley | | 1471/2 | | C12 | ✓ | |
| Dymock | | 1225/6 | | C13 | ✓ | |
| Fairford | | c.1100-35 | | 1221 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Frampton-on-Severn | | 1245 | | | | |
| King's Stanley | | 1253 | | C13/14 | ✓ | |
| Lechlade | | 1210 | | c.1235 | ✓ | |
| Leonard Stanley | | 1307-27 | | | | |
| Lydney | | 1268 | | | | |
| Minchinhampton | | 1269 | | | ✓ | |
| Mitcheldean | | 1328 | | | | |
| Moreton-in-Marsh | | 1228 | | C13/14 | ✓ | |
| Nailsworth | | C18 | | | | |
| Newent | ? | 1253 | | C13 | ✓ | |
| Newnham | ? | C12 | | 1187 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Northleach | | 1219/20 | | c.1227 | ✓ | |
| Painswick | | 1253 | | | ✓ | |
| Prestbury | | 1249 | | C13 | ✓ | |
| St. Briavels | | 1208 | | C14 | ✓ | |
| Stow-on-the-Wold | | 1107 | | C12 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Stroud | | 1570-1607 | | | | |
| Tetbury | | 1211-1287 | | c.1211 | ✓ | |
| Tewkesbury | | 1086 | | 1086 | ✓ | |
| Winchcombe | ✓ | 1086 | ✓ | 1086 | ✓ | |
| Wotton-under-Edge | | 1252 | | 1253 | ✓ | |

**Table 1 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: indicators of urban status in the Medieval period**

# 3 Urbanism in Gloucestershire

## *3.1 The Roman period*

The concept of urbanism is often considered to have been a continental imposition brought to Britain by the invading Roman army during the first century A.D. The geographer Strabo, writing during the late first century B.C. and the early first century A.D. implied that the backwardness of western Europeans outside Italy was due to their hunting and raiding way of life and that once they were converted to a settled agricultural existence, urbanisation would develop of its own accord (Wacher 1995, 33). However, there is evidence that some Iron Age hillforts and enclosures had begun to take on urban functions before the Roman conquest of A.D.43. The Iron Age settlements of Bagendon and Salmonsbury Camp in east Gloucestershire appear to have been densely populated, with streets, arrangements of dwellings and ancillary buildings, along with defences, and to have acted as centres of political, commercial and administrative activity (Friar 1991, 386). Compared with Roman towns they may still have been extremely primitive, and the imperial government would have been keen to establish towns on the Mediterranean scale which were an essential part of the Roman way of life, and also facilitated the tasks of administration, the collection of taxes, education and policing. Towns may also have been seen as a means of furthering the acceptance of the Roman government among the native population.

The earliest Roman towns to develop would have been those on which the administration of the province was based - the *civitates* and the *coloniae* - some of which were based on early forts, while others derived from settlements of veterans who were given land at the end of their period of military service (e.g. Gloucester). Smaller towns developed around the other early forts where merchants and other civilians gathered to service the army, or at other significant locations on the network of Roman roads, such as the Foss Way or Watling Street, to serve the imperial messenger service along with other travellers who would need somewhere to stop overnight, to eat and change horses, and possibly to trade. Unlike the civitates and coloniae, there is little evidence of planning in many such settlements, which are more likely to have developed organically.

The Roman small towns at Bourton-on-the-Water, Dorn, Dymock, Kingscote and Wycomb (Andoversford) were included in the historic towns survey. At Bourton there are suggestions of continuity of occupation from the Iron Age into the Roman period; the Iron Age enclosure of Salmonsbury Camp lies just over 1km to the east of the Roman small town. The Roman settlement was initially focused around a posting station (*mansio* or *mutatio*) on the Foss Way near its crossing of the River Windrush, but then spread eastwards towards Salmonsbury Camp. Dorn is also thought to have served an administrative function during the later part of the Roman period (the late third to fourth centuries), possibly as a site where the official taxes (the *annona*) were collected; the defences around the eastern part of the site may have been constructed at this time. The Roman settlements at Kingscote and Dymock may also have had military origins – there is a suggestion that there may have been an early fort at Dymock from which a small agricultural and metal-working settlement developed, while considerable material of first century date has been found at Kingscote which then developed into a market centre, covering about 200 hectares by the later fourth century. Unlike the other Roman settlements in Gloucestershire, Wycomb is not associated with any major road and it is thought to have grown up around a site of ritual or religious significance pre-dating the Roman conquest. A settlement would have developed there either to serve the pilgrims and visitors to the site, or as a market centre for surrounding communities which were often associated with ritual sites.

Some Medieval settlements in Gloucestershire may also have developed on sites of Roman activity, including Bisley where there is evidence for Roman ritual activity, possibly associated with the wells; King's Stanley, where there is evidence for a large Roman villa in the area of the later church; and Lydney which lies close to the Roman cult centre at Lydney Park. The nature of the relationship between the Roman and later settlements is not understood, and it is not clear to what extent the existence of Roman activity influenced the siting of later settlements.

The end of the Roman period in Britain is often thought to have been marked by a hiatus in urban life. There is little evidence for continuity of occupation in urban areas into the fifth century in the county, and it appears that the function of the towns died with the culture that they had been founded to sustain (Wacher 1995, 417). The fact that many sites were reoccupied in the later Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods may be due more to the fact that, by accident of geography, the sites were suitable for the economic and administrative functions of the period, just as they had been during the Roman period.

### 3.2 The Early Medieval period

The popular perception of the Dark Ages as one of deserted Roman towns, dilapidated villas and a reversion to barbarism still persists to a certain extent, and until 50 years ago academics were still debating the question of whether Anglo-Saxon towns existed at all. Roman towns fell out of use for a time, perhaps because they were too superficial an imposition on a society to which the idea of formal towns was alien. It is likely that the renaissance of internal and external trading networks prompted the increased centralisation of the production and sale of goods. From the eighth century specialist trading centres, such as Southampton and Ipswich, developed. Elsewhere the main impetus for urban development may have been a desire to control and promote economic activity, including the striking of coinage. A second important factor in the development of urban communities were the Scandinavian raids of the eighth and ninth centuries, which prompted Alfred and his successors to create the fortified settlements known as *burhs*. Some were established on the sites of Roman towns, while others were newly founded, but all were provided with defences of earth, timber or stone. The interest of the ruling elite in the promotion of towns gathered force throughout the later part of the Anglo-Saxon period, with increasing controls and prescriptions on the activities permitted within and outside urban areas: legislation of Edward the Elder and Aethelstan attempted to restrict trade to the towns, while the reform of the coinage by Eadgar in A.D.973 meant that the coins could only be struck in a burh.

The early church also played a significant role in the development of towns. From the seventh century onwards minsters were founded to serve as centres for the conversion and administration of large areas of England. A minster usually consisted of a church and outbuildings within an enclosure, served by a priest and a number of monastic or secular assistants. Such concentrations of priests would have required goods and services, which would in turn have attracted secular settlement to the area to serve those needs, and it is possible that these complexes may have provided the closest equivalent to towns in England until the creation of the burhs in the ninth century.

The tenth and eleventh centuries therefore saw the steady establishment of towns as centres of trade, finance, administration and ecclesiastical affairs, functions which continued into the post-Conquest period and have come to be viewed as indicators of urban status.

In Gloucestershire there is evidence that early minsters were founded at Tetbury, Berkeley, Cheltenham, Bishop's Cleeve, Blockley, Bisley, Tewkesbury and Winchcombe and it is possible that their existence played a significant role in the development of urban functions at those sites. Winchcombe is also the only example of a burh in Gloucestershire, founded in the seventh or eighth century at the site of an early minster which developed into a monastic house, with a Mercian royal palace and a mint, surrounded by a defensive enclosure. For a while during the early eleventh century, the settlement was important enough to stand at the centre of its own shire - *Winchcombeshire* - until it was incorporated into Gloucestershire c.A.D.1017.

### 3.3 The Medieval period

From the tenth to fourteenth centuries the process of urbanisation acquired momentum as first royal and then secular and ecclesiastical landlords began to promote existing villages to urban status, or to found completely new towns on virgin sites. Towns were important as a source of income from markets, taxes and tolls. Existing settlements had the added advantage of containing the remains of the Anglo-Saxon administrative structure, with military and fiscal obligations, and many were also episcopal sees. They housed large clusters of the population and many stood at important road junctions or river crossings. Artisans and merchants also found that the towns presented opportunities for the creation of wealth and the advancement of social status.

Medieval landowners were quick to promote the development of urban communities on their land, obtaining income from property rents and tolls levied on trade and commerce. This revenue could be controlled through the establishment of a market in a specific area within the settlement and in the period 1199-1350 around 2500 market grants were issued.

In addition to the foundation of a market, many landlords attempted to promote existing villages to borough status. The grant of a borough charter conferred a number of privileges of administrative, teneurial and legal character, the most important of which was the right to burgage or freehold tenure, for a rent and without labour services. In the period from 1199-1350 c.370 new boroughs were created by the king, lords and bishops. One of the most

characteristic features of towns of this period is the burgage plot - long, thin strips of land extending back from the main street which allowed as many burgesses as possible access to the street frontage and the trade which it afforded. In Gloucestershire at least 22 small towns acquired borough status during the Medieval period, with most charters being granted during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (see Table 2).

| | TOWN | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tewkesbury | by 1086 |
| | Winchcombe | by 1086 |
| 2 | Chipping Campden | 1154-1189 |
| 3 | Newnham | 1187 |
| 4 | Berkeley | 1190 |
| 5 | Dursley | C12 |
| | Stow-on-the-Wold | C12 |
| 6 | Tetbury | c.1211 |
| 7 | Fairford | c.1221 |
| 8 | Northleach | c.1227 |
| 9 | Lechlade | c.1235 |
| 10 | Wotton-under-Edge | 1253 |
| 11 | Dymock | C13 |
| | Newent | C13 |
| | Prestbury | C13 |
| 12 | King's Stanley | C13/14 |
| | Moreton-in-Marsh | C13/14 |
| 13 | Minchinhampton | 1300 |
| 14 | Cheltenham | 1313 |
| 15 | Painswick | 1324 |
| 16 | St. Briavels | C14 |

**Table 2 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: earliest documentary references to borough status.**

The units of settlement described as towns during this period were plentiful but remained very small, about 95% of the population of England was still rural, and the main difference between the new towns and the rural villages was that the former contained *a substantial proportion of traders and craftsmen whose services would be drawn on by the villagers of the surrounding area* (Palliser 1987, 55). This pattern of new foundations and promotions continued until the outbreak of the Black Death (1348-1369) which effectively curtailed the creation of new towns. Up to this time, town growth had been achieved mainly through the attraction of immigrants from surrounding rural populations, who were accommodated through the infilling of open areas and the sub-division of existing burgage or tenement plots.

The Norman and later Medieval town was thus an important instrument of political, administrative and economic control, flexible enough both to exert control over an area and to allow it to be exploited commercially. Through this process English towns were adapted to become a major economic force.

The Medieval small towns of Gloucestershire fit into this general pattern. A number of settlements in the central and eastern part of the county, such as Berkeley, Cheltenham, Tetbury, Tewkesbury and Winchcombe had begun to develop during the Early Medieval period, but the vast majority of the towns in the county owe their existence to the Medieval fashion for founding new markets and boroughs during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Table 3 shows the market towns in the county and the dates at which they received their market charters: 15% of all Medieval market grants were made during the twelfth century, and 55% during the thirteenth century.

| | TOWN | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tewkesbury | by 1086 |
| | Winchcombe | by 1086 |
| | Berkeley | by 1086 |
| 2 | Fairford | c1100-1135 |
| 3 | Stow-on-the-Wold | 1107 |
| 4 | Chipping Campden | c1180 |
| 5 | Newnham | C12 |
| 6 | St. Briavels | 1208 |
| 7 | Lechlade | 1210 |
| 8 | Tetbury | 1211-1287 |
| 9 | Northleach | 1219/20 |
| 10 | Dymock | 1225/6 |
| 11 | Cheltenham | 1226 |
| 12 | Moreton-in-Marsh | 1228 |
| 13 | Frampton-on-Severn | 1245 |
| 14 | Prestbury | 1249 |
| 15 | Wotton-under-Edge | 1252 |
| 16 | Painswick | 1253 |
| | Newent | 1253 |
| | King's Stanley | 1253 |
| 17 | Lydney | 1268 |
| 18 | Minchinhampton | 1269 |
| 19 | Leonard Stanley | 1307-27 |
| 20 | Mitcheldean | 1328 |
| 21 | Coleford | C14 |
| 22 | Dursley | 1471/2 |
| 23 | Stroud | 1570-1607 |
| 24 | Bisley | 1687 |
| 25 | Nailsworth | C18 |
| 26 | Cinderford | 1869 |

**Table 3 Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey: market charters by date**

Amongst the boroughs founded after 1086, some appear to have been added on to existing non-urban settlements, while others could have been new creations. Towns in the first category include Stow-on-the-Wold, Northleach, Moreton-in-Marsh, Chipping Campden, Wotton-under-Edge and possibly Dursley. Such settlements generally comprise a large market area which is sometimes triangular or square, and sometimes formed by widening the main street to allow stalls to be set up along its length, with burgage plots fronting onto all available sides. The earlier settlement, to which the borough was attached, can often be seen in a less regular pattern of property boundaries, usually clustered around the church. Towns of the second category include Fairford, Lechlade and Painswick. These settlements also have a well defined market area, but a more complex street pattern, incorporating more than one main street, with burgages also laid out along the subsidiary streets.

The history of the development of towns in the Forest of Dean, is rather more diverse. Some followed a pattern similar to those outlined above, of foundation and development around a market during the Medieval period and thus have a similar layout, such as Newent and Newnham; St. Briavels was connected closely with the development and administration of the Royal Forest of Dean. Other settlements – Coleford, Lydney and Mitcheldean - were the product of the industrial development of the Forest, based on the exploitation of its natural resources, particularly iron and coal.

The Stroud valleys, which would become such an important area of settlement during the Post-medieval period, show little evidence for urban development during the Medieval period, apart from areas at the edge of the Cotswold Scarp such as Dursley, Bisley and Painswick, where the settlement pattern is similar to that found

elsewhere on the Cotswolds. The main reason for this is likely to have been the nature of the terrain, which was mostly unsuitable for Medieval industries and agricultural exploitation, but which was ideally suited to Post-medieval advances in manufacturing techniques.

### *3.4 The Post-medieval period*

The mid-sixteenth century marked a further important phase in the development of English towns. The dissolution of the Monasteries and the suppression of religious houses, especially friaries, chantries and pilgrimages had an enormous impact on urban life. Large areas of land and buildings were put up for sale, and were converted into houses or redeveloped by their new, secular owners. The economic impact on towns dependent upon church landlords or pilgrimage cults was therefore severe. Other factors also affected the success of the small towns founded during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Some failed because they had been poorly located, others because of direct competition from near neighbours, and yet others due to the economic changes of the period. Many of the towns which continued to flourish did so by specialising in a certain product at market, such as cheese, wool, grain or leather goods, while others specialised in a particular industry or manufacturing process.

During the later Medieval period changes to the industrial and commercial geography of England also had a significant effect upon the development of towns in the country. One of the main English exports up to the fourteenth century had been raw wool, which was shipped to the continent where it was made into finished cloth to be sold back to England. The wars with France in the early fourteenth century forced an end to this trade, providing the opportunity for the production of cloth to spread rapidly through the rural areas of England. Within a few years finished cloth had replaced raw wool as one of the country's main exports. Numerous small settlements began to develop in rural areas to service this trade, away from the constraints of the town guilds, which enabled cloth to be produced more cheaply, thereby competing with the Flemish weavers who had dominated the trade up to this time. These settlements were strikingly different from those of earlier towns; they were not confined within town walls and were often not connected to earlier settlements, but took the form of straggling developments along the sides of valleys. The new cloth industry thus allowed small rural settlements in favourable locations to develop into prosperous towns.

The effect of these economic changes was felt very strongly in Gloucestershire where the towns of the Cotswolds had specialised in the marketing of locally produced wool. Many of these towns, such as Northleach and Winchcombe, fell into decline during this time as they were not located in areas suitable for the manufacturing of woollen cloth. Prosperity spread instead to the valleys around Stroud where easy access to high quality Cotswold wool, to abundant supplies of fuller's earth, to water of a quantity sufficient to drive a number of mills and to Bristol as an outlet for the finished product allowed numerous small valley hamlets to develop into towns serving the cloth industry. Three kinds of English cloth were produced, the finest of which was broadcloth; kerseys were a lighter, cheaper and often coarser cloth and worsteds were the cheapest and did not require fulling. Gloucestershire held foremost place in the production of broadcloth, mainly due to the steep-sided valleys in the Stroud area which were well suited to the creation of reservoirs for the large fulling mills, and later for the dyehouses for the coloured cloth which supplanted the finished broadcloth. This is how settlements such as Chalford, Nailsworth and Stroud developed from the later fourteenth century, spread out along the sides of the river valleys and clustered around the mills. Within these towns evidence for the cloth trade is well preserved, not only in the form of large mill buildings, but in the architecture of the houses of the weavers, who produced the cloth, and the large, commodious dwellings of the clothiers who owned the mills, and distributed the wool to be woven.

In the Forest of Dean the settlements which developed during the Medieval period - Lydney, Newnham, Newent, Coleford and Mitcheldean - did not expand or develop greatly between the later Medieval period and the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, when new industrial techniques were developed and large scale mining operations began as the free miners were persuaded to sell their rights to speculators and entrepreneurs. This industrial activity was so concentrated in the area of Cinderford Bridge that a new town developed purely to service the requirements of the mine owners and their workers.

From the mid-seventeenth century the conglomeration of buildings and social classes which had characterised so many Medieval towns was superseded by the introduction of new urban styles from the continent, which reflected the growing prosperity of the period. The concept of large open circuses, squares and terraces of elegant town houses dominated the urban scene for the next two centuries, exemplified in the Gloucestershire context by the development of Regency Cheltenham, with its pump rooms, promenades, elegant terraces and town houses. Elsewhere the picture was not quite so pleasant, the industrial towns also had terraces, but these were usually

'blind-backed' or 'tunnel-backed' with inadequate sanitation for the large families who occupied them. This form of dwelling can still be seen at Lydney and in the Oldbury development at Tewkesbury (although the houses have been modernised for modern use). Innovations in methods of transport also played an important role in the development of settlements, encouraging the separation of commercial, residential and industrial areas, as people no longer had to live in the same area that they worked. Most of the Gloucestershire small towns show some evidence of nineteenth century redevelopment, and most also have examples of Victorian civic pride in the form of public buildings such as libraries (Stroud) and town halls (Bisley, Stow-on-the-Wold, Nailsworth and Painswick).

## 4 Conclusions

Perhaps the most striking conclusion of this survey of the historic small towns of Gloucestershire is its demonstration that, despite documentary evidence of the Medieval or earlier origins of the majority of settlements, there is as yet very little archaeological evidence for most of them.

The town centre redevelopments of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s were not generally preceded by archaeological investigation and during this period many sites of high potential in the historic cores of small towns were destroyed without record. It was not until the later 1980s, and the advent of Planning Policy Guidance 16 (DoE 1990), that a more systematic approach to the archaeological evaluation and recording of sites in small towns became possible. Most recent large scale development has, however, tended to be away from the street frontages in the historic cores of towns, and the archaeological investigation in the latter areas has therefore been on a very small scale.

The summary of archaeological evidence provided by the Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey assessment reports and the policies contained in the strategies will, however, provide a good basis for ensuring that, in the future, sites of archaeological potential in small towns are managed appropriately and not developed without an assessment of the archaeological implications and implementation of suitable mitigation strategies.

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# HISTORIC TOWNS IN THE STROUD DISTRICT (Map 1)

| | Definition | Market | Borough charter | Burgages/ burgage tenure | Legal autonomy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Berkeley | Medium-sized market town | 1086 | | ✓ | |
| Bisley | Small market town | 1687 | | | |
| Chalford | Industrial town | | | | |
| Dursley | Small market town | 1471/2 | C12 | ✓ | |
| Frampton-on-Severn | Small market town | 1245 | | | |
| Kings Stanley | Small market town | 1253 | C13/14 | ✓ | |
| Leonard Stanley | Small market town | 1307-1327 | | | |
| Minchinhampton | Small market town | 1269 | | ✓ | |
| Nailsworth | Small market town; Industrial town | C18 | | | |
| Painswick | Small market town | 1253 | | ✓ | |
| Stroud | Small market town; Industrial town | 1570-1607 | | | |
| Wotton-under-Edge | Small market town | 1252 | 1253 | ✓ | |

The area defined as Stroud District today was created by local government reorganisation during the 1970s. Most of the District is within the geographical area of the Cotswolds. It includes the steep western scarp slope, dissected by streams flowing west into the Severn estuary through steep sided valleys, as well as the high, flat land of the top of the escarpment. Between the Cotswold hills and the Severn estuary is the low-lying Severn Vale.

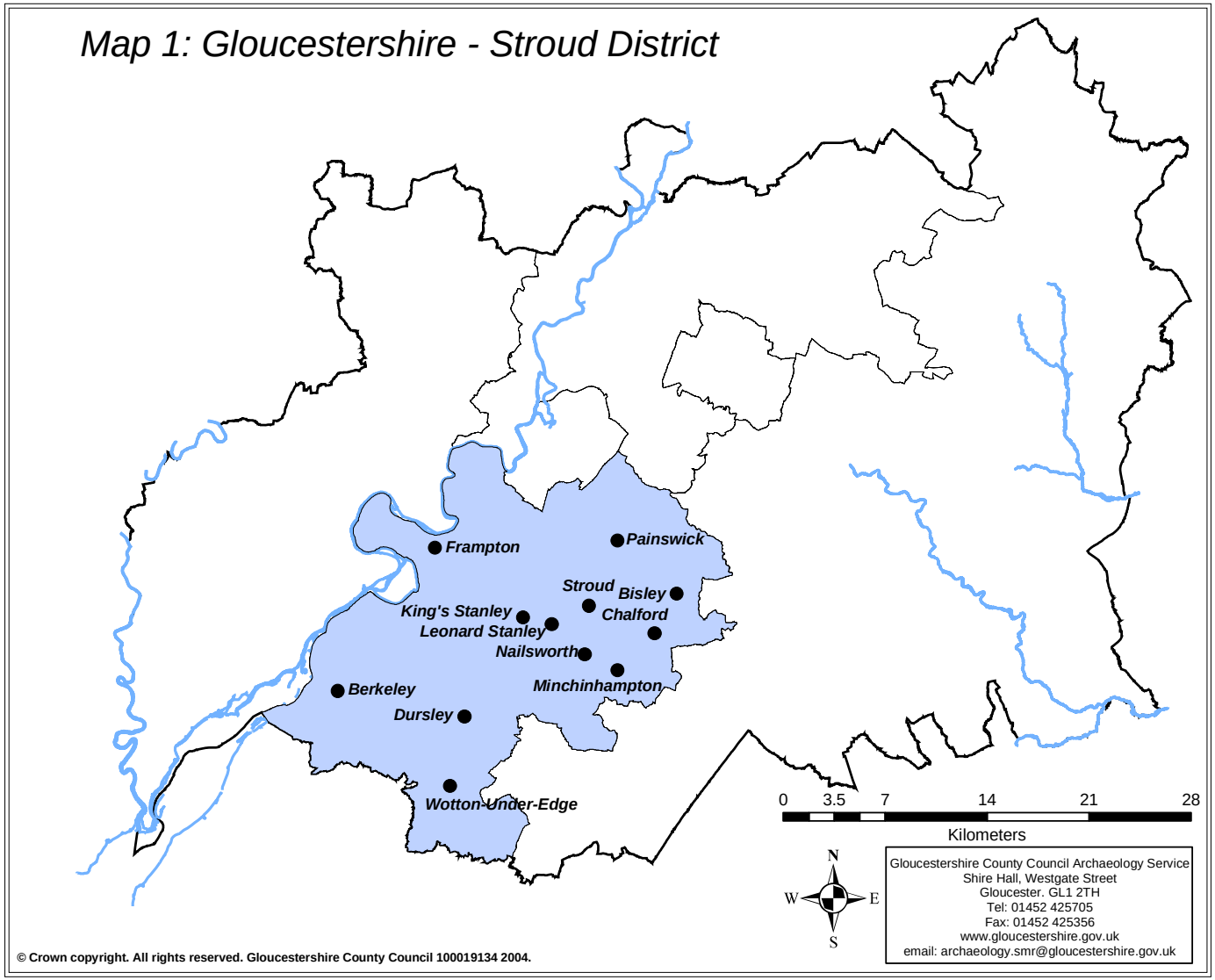
Of the twelve towns studied in this area a number – such as Bisley and King's Stanley – may have developed from Roman settlements. However, the majority of settlements on the Cotswold plateau and Severn Vale, such as Berkeley, Frampton-on-Severn and Leonard Stanley, developed as small market centres during the period after the Norman Conquest, and some of them acquired urban status during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During the Medieval and Post-medieval periods the economy of the area came to be dominated by the woollen industry, first the production and sale of raw wool, and later, from the sixteenth century onwards, the production of woollen cloth. The steep escarpment in the Stroud area had many natural resources which supported the development of this industry – the fast flowing streams of the Frome and its tributary valleys, deposits of fuller's earth for fulling the woven cloth, woad for dyeing and teasels for raising the nap on the finished cloth. The area had a further advantage in its proximity to Bristol, developed as one of the main ports in the wool trade during the later Middle Ages.

Stroud, originally a small hamlet and chapelry dependent upon Bisley, gradually developed to become the most important town in the whole district – to which it gave its name. As well as Stroud itself, other settlements in the valleys, such as Chalford and Nailsworth, developed as centres of this industry during the Post-medieval period. The importance of the area originated during the reign of Henry VI (1422-1462), when cloth manufacturers, realising the advantages of the valleys, began to take leases of the millstreams for three or four lifetimes. In 1577 an act of parliament was passed which attempted to confine the manufacture of woollen cloth to towns, although a few districts were specified as exceptions, including *any towns and villages near the river Stroud in Gloucestershire where cloths have been made for twenty years past*. In a second act, issued 1585/6 this grace was again extended to the *parts of Gloucestershire about Frome water, Kingswood water and Stroud water*. Further government assistance was given to the area in 1585 when acts were passed regulating the production of Gloucestershire *'whites and reddes'*, and protecting the local industries of woollen-card making and card-wire drawing. By the early eighteenth century, the manufacture of woollen cloth was *so eminent in this county that no other manufacture deserves a mention* (Atkyns 1712).

Despite a slump in the industry during the early part of the seventeenth century, the period between 1690 and 1760 saw the greatest prosperity of the business, illustrated by the large numbers of mills, houses and cottages which were constructed at this time, many of which still line the valley sides. Mechanisation was gradually introduced to Gloucestershire, during this period (c.1830-1860) the number of people employed in all branches of the woollen industry gradually increased from about 4000 to 7050. However, during the next twenty years, the numbers fell, and in 1881, only 4958 were still employed in the manufacture of cloth. At this time the main products of the area were smooth, highly finished cloths including hunting and military scarlets, white buckskins, doeskins, liveries, riding cords, beavers, meltons, vicuñas, llamas and cheviots, along with cloths for pianos, carriages and billiard tables. As the market for even these goods decreased, many

mill owners were forced to sell their factories or to adapt them to the production of other goods, such as walking sticks, paper or industrial components.

Atkyns R 1712, *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire*.


Map 1: Gloucestershire - Stroud District
Frampton
Painswick
Stroud
Bisley
King's Stanley
Chalford
Leonard Stanley
Nailsworth
Minchinhampton
Berkeley
Dursley
Wotton-Under-Edge
0 3.5 7 14 21 28
Kilometers
N
W
E
S
Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service
Shire Hall, Westgate Street
Gloucester. GL1 2TH
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# BERKELEY

## 1 Introduction

Berkeley (ST 685995) lies about 16km to the west of Stroud and 6km south-east of Lydney. It is situated on a ridge of Red Marl at c.18m O.D, overlooking Berkeley Pill, a tributary of the Little Avon River. The castle stands at the southern end of this ridge with the town to the north.

There are references to Berkeley from the eighth century, when an important monastic house was founded there, and the associated settlement was flourishing by the time of the Norman Conquest. Domesday Book (1086) recorded that the town already had a market and numerous mills, and that the castle was also under construction by that date. By the later twelfth century Berkeley had achieved borough status. Berkeley Pill played a significant role in the economy of the town throughout the Medieval and Post-medieval periods until the nineteenth century when the new canals diverted water-borne trade away from the river.

## 2 The Prehistoric period

A greenstone wedge is reported to have been found at Berkeley at ST 680990 during the 1940s or 1950s (SMR 5118).

## 3 The Roman period

There is some evidence for Roman activity in the area of the modern town of Berkeley, although no major Roman roads passed within the area of the settlement. A number of finds from the church and castle do suggest the presence of Roman buildings in the vicinity. A slab of stone which depicts Hercules, a female figure and a priest sacrificing a pig is said to have been found *near Berkeley castle*, in the area of ST 685990, and may have been part of a Roman altar (**SMR 6403**). Roman remains were also discovered during the restoration of the church (**SMR 6404**). A fragment of a stone coffin, thought to be Roman, was found on the pathway to the south of the chancel, and a Roman brick or tile inscribed DCL VI [Decurio Legionis Sexti] was also found in the chancel itself. An inscribed Roman tile (DEC LIV) is built into the wall of the nave, and a stone cist partly constructed of bases from two columns, and which contained a burial, was also found during the restoration work.

## 4 The Early Medieval period

### *4.1 Berkeley Minster (SMR 5117)*

The earliest reference to a religious house at Berkeley dates from A.D. 759 when Tilhere, abbot of Berkeley, was witness to several charters (Heighway 1987, 110). During the ninth century the monastic house was mentioned on several occasions, once in A.D. 824, when a dispute between bishop Heaberht and the *familia* at Berkeley was settled; and again in a charter of A.D. 833, which recorded privileges granted by Aethelred, earldorman of the Mercians, to Berkeley monastery in exchange for land. The transaction was approved by King Alfred and the clerical and lay members of the Witan of Mercia (Grundy 1936, 223; Sawyer 1968, 402).

The nature of the foundation at Berkeley has occasionally been called into question, as there are ninth and tenth century references to abbots and abbesses, including Ciolburga, widow of Ethelmund, earldorman of the *Hwicce* (Leech 1981, 4). Although none of the surviving documents indicates the nature of the order at Berkeley, it is quite possible that the foundation may have been a double house throughout the period.

By the time of the Norman Conquest (1066), Berkeley minster was the largest landowner in the county, but the foundation had been dissolved by the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Leech 1981, 4). Tradition holds that Earl Godwin brought about the destruction of the minster by arranging for the seduction of the nuns (Watson-Williams 1956, 205), although this explanation is unlikely. It has also been proposed that the foundation was destroyed by a Danish raid in A.D. 910 (Watson-Williams 1956, 207). However, the documentary reference of A.D. 915 stating that Ethelhun, abbot of Berkeley, had become bishop of Worcester (Gethyn-Jones 1970, 9), suggests that it is more likely that the Dissolution took place in the post-Conquest period.

The location of the minster is uncertain, but it is likely to have stood in the area of the later church (**SMR 5117**), the castle being constructed close to it in the immediate post-Conquest period. Although the present parish church dates to the twelfth century, Anglo-Saxon architectural fragments, part of an Anglo-Saxon stone cross and the Roman tile mentioned above (section 2) all indicate that there were earlier structures in the area (Leech 1981, 5). Smith in the

early seventeenth century also recorded that *a great part whereof* [the castle] *was built out of the ruines of the Nunnery which stood in the same place* (Leech 1981, 5).

### 4.3 The Berkeley mint

A mint is known to have been operating in Berkeley during the reigns of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) and William I (1066-1087). Coins from the Berkeley mint bear the mint mark BEORC, although only three are known to date. The presence of a mint at Berkeley indicates the importance of the settlement. Following the reforms of Eadgar in A.D.973, mints could only operate within burhs, in certain royal manors, or within ecclesiastical estates where the landowners had been granted dispensation. The location of the mint is unknown, but it is likely to have stood in the area of the minster or nearby settlement.

## 5 The Medieval period

### 5.1 Domesday Book

Berkeley is recorded amongst the lands of the king, which had previously been held by Edward the Confessor. 20 villagers and 5 smallholders are recorded, along with 9 slaves, 2 mills valued at 12s and 10 riding men who held 7 hides. A market, in which 17 men lived and paid dues to the revenue, was also recorded. The manor also held land in a large number of outlying areas, including Alkington, Hinton, Cam, Gossington, Dursley, Coaley, Symonds Hall, Kingscote, Beverston, Ozleworth, Almondsbury, Horfield, Kingsweston, Elberton, Cromhall, Arlingham and Ashelworth. In total there were 49½ ploughs held by the lordship of Berkeley in 1066, with 242 villagers and 142 smallholders, 127 slaves and 19 free men, riding men with their men, 22 freedmen, 15 female slaves and 8 mills valued at 57s 6d (Moore 1982).

### 5.2 The placename

The first documentary references to Berkeley during the eighth century refer to *Berclinga*, while a charter of A.D.824 names it as *Berclea*. The name had developed into *Beorclea* by 883 and in 1086 Domesday Book used *Berchlai*. By the twelfth century this had become *Berklai*, while *Berkley* first appears in 1497 (Smith 1964, 211-212).

The name is thought to be derived from *beorc* and *leah*, meaning a birch clearing, although the form *Berclinga*, 'the men of Berkeley' is thought to refer to the monks of the monastery (Smith 1964, 212).

### 5.3 The status of the settlement

A town existed at Berkeley by the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, as coins were being struck there from the reign of Edward the Confessor. Domesday Book also records that a market had been established in Berkeley by 1086, and that 17 men lived within it, which may indicate early burgage tenure. A grant of burgage survives from 1190, and in 1286 Berkeley was referred to as a borough in the cartulary of Canonsleigh Abbey (Beresford and Finberg 1973, 110). Although Smith writing in the early seventeenth century noted that *in many old deeds it is called nova villa*, there is no evidence that there was a new town or borough deliberately attached to the Early Medieval settlement, and it is more likely that the term relates to the rebuilding of the area destroyed by William I c.1080 (Beresford 1967, 438; Anon 1905, 6).

### 5.4 Berkeley Castle (SMR 5112)

Berkeley castle stands in a commanding position at the southern end of a ridge, between two tributaries of the Little Avon River, overlooking Berkeley Pill. A motte and bailey castle is thought to have been constructed on the site c.1067 by William FitzOsbern, and when the manor was granted to Robert FitzHarding in 1153, he was granted the right to build or fortify a castle there (Renn 1973, 107). It was at this date that the retaining wall was built around the base of the motte, while the curtain wall enclosing the inner bailey was constructed between 1160 and 1190, although only the south-eastern section of the wall survives today. Three apsidal turrets have also survived, the easternmost of which housed the castle chapel (Renn 1973, 107). The main period of building work at Berkeley was during the fourteenth century, when the whole of the interior of the castle was remodelled. Within the inner bailey a series of fourteenth century structures survive, most of which have undergone only minor alterations. The present Great Hall is of this date, at the south-western end of which is the entrance to the fourteenth century state lodgings and the Berkeley family's private apartments, which were improved during the fifteenth century. The inner gatehouse also retains its fourteenth century form, with guard rooms flanking the passage and two sets of chambers on the upper floors (Verey 1980, 101). The relationship of the moat on the north side of the castle to the churchyard indicates that the churchyard has been encroached upon, possibly during the time of Thomas of

Berkeley (1352-1407), when Smith recorded that *Hee much inlarged the ditch.... by taking a part of the churchyard which he recompenced with a yearly rent of 6s 8d*. Excavations were undertaken within the area of the castle in the 1930s which revealed evidence for earlier structures beneath the fourteenth century buildings (Berkeley 1939, 308-339).

The castle was the seat of the Lords of Berkeley throughout the Medieval period, and in September 1327 Edward II was murdered there *in the most barbarous manner* (Anon 1905, 9).

### 5.4 The manor

In the immediate post-Conquest period the manor of Berkeley and its castle were granted to William FitzOsbern and the lands remained with the family until the rebellion against Henry II, when Henry granted the manor to Robert FitzHarding in 1153 (Smith 1952, 101). The castle remained the principal residence of the lords of the manor throughout the Medieval period.

### 5.5 The church (SMR 5117)

The present church is dedicated to St. Mary and is twelfth century in origin. The oldest part of the building is the nave, which has the original south clerestory with a range of windows dating from the second quarter of the thirteenth century. The west end of the nave is mid-thirteenth century, while the aisles and lower part of the north porch are of fourteenth century date; the chancel was also extended c.1300 to take in the choir. The church contains a number of late thirteenth century wall paintings with a fragment of a Doom over the chancel arch, showing Christ seated in judgement with upraised hand (Verey 1980, 99-100).

Although the earliest architectural features of St. Mary's church are of twelfth century date, Anglo-Saxon architectural fragments and part of an Anglo-Saxon stone cross indicate that there was an earlier structure in the area and may relate to a pre-twelfth century church or the Anglo-Saxon abbey. The eighteenth century tower (**SMR 9344**) at the north end of the churchyard stands on the plinth of an earlier tower of fifteenth century date. It is not clear how this relates to the existing and earlier church buildings on the site (Leech 1981, 5).

### 5.6 Markets and fairs

The Domesday Book entry of 1086 records a market in Berkeley, in which 17 men lived, suggesting that it may have been held for a considerable period before the survey. Later, in 1159, a market grant was obtained from Henry II by Robert, son of Hardinge, but it is unclear whether this grant served to confirm a pre-Conquest market or to create a new one. The market would have been held at the cross roads created by the junction of Longbridge Street, Marybrook Street, Salter Street and the High Street. A plan of 1543 shows a market house standing within the market area (**SMR 16832**) to the west of the junction of Salter Street and the High Street.

Two fairs were held at Berkeley from 1394 onwards on the vigil and day of the feast of the Holy Rood.

### 5.7 Medieval hospitals

Maurice of Berkeley is known to have founded two hospitals in the area of Berkeley between 1170 and 1189. Holy Trinity Hospital (**SMR 5116**) was for a prior and a number of brothers who were to provide for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the sick poor who were received into the hospital. In 1321 it was recorded that the foundation was not functioning properly and had lost some of its lands. In 1535 the income of the hospital was £19, and it was suppressed under the Chantries Act in 1547 (Knowles and Hadcock 1971, 342; Graham 1972, 123-124). The foundation is thought to have stood at the north-eastern edge of the modern town, close to the Long Bridge (**SMR 16835**).

Very little is known about the second hospital of the Master Brethren of Lorreage, except that it may have stood in the area of Loredge Farm on Berkeley Heath (Gethyn-Jones 1970, 10).

### 5.8 Trade and industry

Recorded occupations important in the Medieval period included agriculture, especially sheep farming, the production of cheese and fishing on the River Severn (Gethyn-Jones 1970, 19). In 1330 Thomas III of Berkeley stocked the manor with 1500 sheep (Smith 1952, 118), to produce wool for the cloth trade. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the woollen cloth trade was very important on the Berkeley estate, and Smith, writing during the early seventeenth century, recorded the wool production records of Thomas II of Berkeley: *much of the Lord's wool [was] put out to spinning for making of cloth and clothing for the poor, in sortinge, pickinge, beatinge,*

*oylinge, pullinge, cardinge, spinning, spooling, warping, quillling, weaving, tucking, shearing, dying, dressing, and the like,* making Thomas *one of the richest wool producing magnates in England* (Rollinson 1992, 24).

There is little information available about other trades in the town, although among the fourteenth century inhabitants of Berkeley, John le Webbe and Willmo le Smythe are named (Leech 1981, 4).

### 5.9 Berkeley Pill

Berkeley Pill, to the south of the High Street, is the estuary of the Little Avon River and was an important haven throughout the Medieval period. Smith, c.1639, described the harbour in the early seventeenth century, noting that *against the town of Berkeley, a little beneath the town mill, or the Castle Mill, maketh a pretty safe haven close by the town side, wither barkes of 40 tons and more do come and safely ride at Spring Tides; from whence in times past great profits came to the lords of this borough town, as appears by many of their evidences which I have read for wharfage and toll* (quoted in Leech 1981, 5). Near the landing area, also according to Smith, was an area called "Averys". In the fourteenth century an old house was said to stand there, known as Averies Place, and in 1464 there was a house and four shops in *le Averyes*. Leech has tentatively located these features at the southern end of Stock Lane, adjacent to the Berkeley Pill inlet (**SMR 16834**).

It is recorded that Maurice of Berkeley (1361-1368) maintained a vessel which traded with France exporting wool and corn and importing wine, while during the fifteenth century a ship named The George sailed from Berkeley to Bordeaux, returning with 200 tons of wine (Gethyn-Jones 1970, 20).

## 6 The Post-medieval period

### 6.1 The status of the settlement

Berkeley appears to have remained a reasonably prosperous settlement until the nineteenth century, illustrated by the number of fine, brick-fronted houses, when the importance of the settlement began to decline due to its location away from the main road and rail routes. Berkeley remained an important market centre for the smaller settlements surrounding the town throughout the Post-medieval period, but it did not retain the significance which it had enjoyed during the preceding centuries.

### 6.2 The manor

The manor of Berkeley remained in the hands of the Lords of Berkeley throughout most of the Post-medieval period, except between 1492 and 1553 when it was alienated by Henry VII, becoming Crown property.

### 6.3 Ecclesiastical history

#### 6.3.1 The church of St. Mary (SMR 5117)

The church was restored by Pope and Bindon in 1862, and by Sir George Gilbert Scott between 1865 and 1866. Scott was responsible for the preservation of the Medieval wall paintings which cover a considerable area of the interior of the church. The wall painting in the chancel was restored by E.W. Tristram in 1938 (Verey 1980, 100).

The present tower in the north of the churchyard (**SMR 9344**) is a Gothic Survival rebuilding of 1750-1753, thought to have been designed by the mason-builder Clark, with diagonal buttresses and an embattled pierced parapet with pinnacles (Verey 1980, 98).

Following the Reformation the rectory of Berkeley was held by the Dean and Chapter of Bristol, but was sold during the Civil War (Fisher 1864, 15). At the Restoration, the rectory reverted to Bristol where it remained, while the Benefice remained in the hands of the Berkeleys throughout the Post-medieval period.

#### 6.3.2 Nonconformity

Three nonconformists were recorded at Berkeley in the Compton Census of 1676, but there is no further evidence for nonconformity until the nineteenth century. A Wesleyan Chapel was built on Canonbury Street in 1805 (**SMR 20412**), and a Congregational Chapel was constructed on Salter Street in 1835 (**SMR 17750**; RCHME 1986, 60).

### 6.4 Markets and fairs

The map of Berkeley of 1543 shows the 'King's Shambles' at the junction of the four main roads through the town (High Street, Salter Street, Canonbury Street and Marybrook Street) which formed the area in which the market was held (**SMR 16832**) while from the early sixteenth century there was a market house in Salter Street, which was described by Smith as *a very ancient and curious building, forming an archway over the causeway, and extending into the street. It was pulled down sixty years ago*.

By the later eighteenth century Rudder (1779, 269) noted that the market was *so little frequented [it could be] scarcely called one*. This decline may have been due to the location of the town away from any of the main road and rail routes which were developed in the county during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and when Rudder described Berkeley in 1779, he noted *there is no travelling [through it], the turnpike road from Gloucester to Bristol running about a mile to the south of it* (1779, 269). In 1839 an annual 'Great Market' was established by Alfred Pearce, a local wine and spirit merchant, which was to be held on the second Monday in December, while a monthly market, to be held on the first Tuesday of the month was also established (Fisher 1864, 11).

### 6.5 Trade and industry

The local cloth industry continued into the seventeenth century, and Smith, in his *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608*, recorded twenty men associated with the industry, including mercers, weavers and tailors. However, the industry declined in importance during the Post-medieval period so that Rudder (1779, 269) recorded that the clothing trade had *deserted the town* and that there were no other manufacturing trades in Berkeley. Fisher (1864, 109), writing in the mid-nineteenth century stated that *the clothiers business was an important one here formally, but ceased about 48 years ago*.

Smith's *Men and Armour* also recorded the occupations of many of the inhabitants of the town, who included butchers, sadlers, husbandmen, carpenters, glovers, smiths, shoemakers, joiners, tanners, an innkeeper and a surgeon. Tanning and malting were also recorded as trades during the nineteenth century (Fisher 1864, 10).

Berkeley Pill continued to be used as a port throughout the Post-medieval period, and during the sixteenth century Berkeley merchants are recorded to have been trading as far afield as Carmarthern and Milford on the South Wales coast (Gethyn-Jones 1970, 20). Items traded included locally produced wool, frise, wheat, barley, malt, oranges and lemons and glass slag building blocks, probably from Newnham, which were incorporated into many of the buildings of the town (Leech 1981, 6). A toll was also levied on all vessels in the Pill which were not owned by the castle (Gethyn-Jones 1970, 20). The Gloucester and Sharpness Canal, completed in 1827, was originally planned to join the Severn at Berkeley, but due to economic considerations the route was shortened, entering the river at Sharpness instead (Awdry 1983, 10). This contributed to the demise of the port at Berkeley, as trade was relocated to Sharpness.

## 7 The modern settlement

The majority of buildings in the historic core of the town date from the eighteenth century, although one fifteenth or early sixteenth century house has survived (SMR 17723; Nos.16–18 High Street). Despite alterations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the building has retained a fine Medieval roof structure. In the grounds of the eighteenth century vicarage house is an eighteenth century rustic hut (SMR 17712) of brick and rubble stone with a thatched roof in semi-domical shape, which was where Dr. Edward Jenner performed his vaccinations against smallpox in 1796. It is possible that many of the eighteenth century brick-fronted houses in the town may be earlier in origin and only refronted at this later date. Very little development took place in Berkeley during the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, until the 1950s when a number of new houses began to be built on the northern side of the town. Since then housing estates have been constructed to the north and west of the town centre and a bypass to the north of the town has diverted traffic away from the Medieval centre.

## 8 Population figures

| Date | Communicants | Households | Families | Nonconfor-mists | Inhabitants | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1551 | 1012 | | | | *c.1518* | Percival |
| 1563 | | 297 | | | *c.1262* | Percival |
| 1603 | 1900 | | | | *c.2850* | Percival |
| 1650 | | | 275 | | *c.1169* | Survey of Church Livings |
| 1676 | 1100 | | | 3 | *c.1653* | Compton Census |
| 1712 | | 500 | | | c.2500 | Atkyns |
| 1779 | | | | | 1854 | Rudder |
| 1801 | | | | | 3090 | |
| 1851 | | | | | 4344 | |
| 1901 | | | | | 5299 | |
| 1997 | | | | | 1823 | |

**For a full explanation of this table, please see page 5 above.**

## 9 Plan analysis (Maps 6-8)

### *9.1 Discussion*

The settlement at Berkeley appears to have developed during the Early Medieval period following the foundation of a minster church during the eighth century. The location of the early minster is not known, although it is thought to have stood in the area of the present parish church. The foundation is also likely to have controlled much of the land to the east of the High Street and to the south of Canonbury Street, the ridge of higher ground above the flood plain of the Pill. The early settlement would thus have been forced to develop in the area to the north and west of the minster precinct.

Although the earliest parts of the present parish church of St. Mary (**Area 1**) date from the twelfth century, the churchyard and site of the church must have been defined by the time that the castle was first constructed in 1067, although much of the land included within the minster precinct passed into the ownership of the manor. A motte and bailey castle was built at Berkeley immediately following the Conquest (**Area 2**), and it was not fortified in stone until the later twelfth century. The siting of the castle, overlooking the Pill and adjacent to the church, constrained the later expansion of the stone structure, causing encroachment into the churchyard during the early years of the fourteenth century when Maurice de Berkeley extended the castle ditch *by taking a part of the churchyard which he recompensed with a yearly rent of 6s 8d* (Smith c.1639; **Area 3**).

The Medieval market (**Area 4**) was held in an area stretching from the cross roads in the centre of the town (formed by the junction of High Street, Canonbury Street, Marybrook Street and Salter Street) westwards along Salter Street, the width of which indicates that it was designed to accommodate market stalls. The market house and cross would have stood in the area of the modern town hall, at the corner of Salter Street and Marybrook Street (**Area 5**). This area gradually became infilled with increasingly permanent market stalls, reducing the width of the street at this point.

The Medieval settlement at Berkeley was based around the junction of the four streets which ran through the town: Canonbury Street, first recorded in 1492, and which may also have been known as Longbridge Street; the High Street (recorded from 1575), Salter Street (also 1575) and Marybrook Street (1516). Other streets which were recorded in Medieval documents and which have since been lost included Radigon's Lane (1575), Spurryer's Street (c.1639), St. Michael's Lane (1575) and The Shambles (1575). The 1543 sketch map indicates burgage plots and blocks of tenements standing along all the main streets in the town. Those fronting on to the west side of the High Street (**Area 11**) are the most regular in form and may indicate a planned element in their development. It is possible that they were laid out by the lord of the manor to attract settlers to the town. The 1543 plan also shows a lane leading directly to the church from the High Street, called St. Michael's Lane (**Area 10**), to the north and south of which was an area of Medieval settlement (**Areas 8** and **9**). The plan also indicates the original, curved, course of Church Lane before alterations during the nineteenth century (**Area 6**). Medieval occupation is also indicated to the east of Church Lane and to the south of Canonbury Street which was later destroyed by Post-medieval

developments (**Area 12**). Burgage plots are shown to have lined both sides of Canonbury Street (**Areas 13** and **14**), stretching northwards along the southern end of Marybrook Street (**Area 15**), lining both sides of Salter Street (**Areas 16**, **17** and **18**) and extending southwards along the western side of Stock Lane (**Area 19**). These plots are shown as less regular than those to the west of the High Street and may indicate that they developed in a more organic and piecemeal way over a more extended period of time. The area to the south of Salter Street and west of the High Street (**Area 24**) may have contained orchards and gardens during the Medieval period, similar to those shown on the tithe map of 1840.

The hospital of Holy Trinity (**Area 22**) is believed to have stood at the eastern end of Canonbury Street and at the northern side of the town, in the area of the bridge (**Area 23**). Smith recorded in 1639 that it had been demolished before 1600, probably immediately following its Dissolution. The stone from the structures is likely to have been reused for other buildings in the town. A tithe barn is also recorded to have stood at the north-eastern end of Canonbury Street, although nothing has survived to indicate its exact location.

Berkeley Pill (**Area 20**) lies immediately to the south of the settlement, at the bottom of High Street and Stock Lane. Quays are known to have stood along the course of the Pill in the area of the town, although no archaeological evidence has yet been found for them. It is, however, possible that the group of buildings at the very southern end of the High Street may stand on the site of one of the quays (**Area 21**).

The Post-medieval period saw little significant expansion of the town as it lay away from the main road, rail and canal links which were constructed during the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Expansion of the settlement to the south-east would have been blocked by the lands belonging to the castle, and further to the south and east the land was low-lying and therefore liable to flooding. In 1828/9 Robert Jenner altered the course of Church Lane in order to improve the situation of the vicarage, truncating the back plots of some of the properties fronting on to the High Street. At some point after 1543, the properties to the west of the church were demolished and the area left open, the reason for which was not recorded.

It was not until the twentieth century that the town began to expand, with a number of housing estates being built to the north and west of the Medieval core, as described in section 7, above.

## *9.2 Plan components*

### *9.2.1 Medieval (Map 6)*

1. The church of St. Mary and surrounding churchyard, including the Medieval tower

2. Berkeley castle and associated grounds

3. Part of the churchyard incorporated into the castle ditch during the early fourteenth century

4. The market place

5. Infill of the market place, including the site of the Shambles and market cross

6. Original (pre-nineteenth century) course of Church Lane

7. Burgage or tenement plots between Church Lane and the High Street

8. Area of burgage plots fronting on to the east side of the High Street

9. Area of burgage plots fronting on to the east side of the High Street

10. Line of St. Michael's Lane

11. Burgage plots fronting on to the west side of the High Street

12. Area of Medieval settlement shown on the 1543 plan

13. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the south side of Canonbury Street

14. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the north side of Canonbury Street

15. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the east side of Marybrook Street

16. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the north side of Salter Street

17. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the south side of Salter Street

18. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the north side of Salter Street

19. Burgage or tenement plots fronting on to the west side of Stock Lane

20. Berkeley Pill

21. Possible quay

22. Site of Holy Trinity Hospital

23. Site of the Medieval Long Bridge

24. Possible area of orchards and gardens

### *9.2.2 Post-medieval (Map 7)*

25. The church of St. Mary and surrounding churchyard including the eighteenth century tower

26. Berkeley castle and its grounds

27. Post-medieval settlement to the east of High Street, truncated by the new course of Church Lane

28. Post-medieval settlement to the south of Canonbury Street

29. Post-medieval settlement to the north of Canonbury Street and east of Marybrook Street

30. Post-medieval settlement to the east of Marybrook Street

31. Post-medieval settlement to the west of the High Street

32. Post-medieval settlement to the south of Salter Street

33. Post-medieval settlement to the north of Salter Street

34. Post-medieval settlement to the west of Stock Lane

35. Post-medieval settlement at the southern end of the High Street, close to Berkeley Pill

36. Open area to the west of the churchyard

37. Area of Post-medieval development including the vicarage and Jenner's *Rustic Hut*

38. Area of Post-medieval development to the north of Canonbury Street

## 10 Future research

Priorities for future work include:

1. The nature and extent of Roman activity at Berkeley: the discovery of Roman material in the area of the church and castle suggest there may have been Roman activity within the area of the later settlement. Further investigation might provide information about its nature, extent and chronology.

2. The Early Medieval minster: documentary sources indicate that there was an Early Medieval minster church at Berkeley. The location, date of foundation and date of the dissolution of this house are all unknown, although a number of alternative theories have been proposed, none of which can be confirmed at present.

3. The Early Medieval settlement: the presence of a religious foundation would have attracted settlement during the Anglo-Saxon period. It has been assumed that the main area of occupation was to the north and west of the minster, although there is no evidence available at present to support such a theory.

4. The Anglo-Saxon mint: a mint is known to have been operating in Berkeley during the tenth and eleventh centuries, as indicated by the surviving coins, however, the location of the building is unknown. It may have been in the area of the minster church, and would certainly have stood within the bounds of the settlement following the laws laid down by Eadgar in 973.

5. The Medieval borough: since there is no surviving borough charter for Berkeley, the date at which the town acquired borough status is not known. The extent of the Medieval borough is also unknown as no record of the bounds has survived.

6. The Medieval church: the relationship of the twelfth century church to the pre-Conquest foundation is unclear, and there is similar confusion about the significance of the free-standing tower in the north of the churchyard, its relationship to the existing parish church and to the early minster.

7. The location of the Medieval hospitals: the hospital of the Holy Trinity is known to have stood in the north-eastern part of the town, close to the Long Bridge, but its exact location is not known. Similarly, the site of the Hospital of the Master Brethren of Lorreage has not been recorded, and there is no evidence to indicate that it stood in the town rather than on Berkeley Heath.

8. The location of the Medieval and later quays: quays are expected to have stood along the course of Berkeley Pill, although their locations were not recorded. The Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1883 shows a coal wharf at the bottom of Stock Lane which may indicate the position of one of the earlier quays. Materials preserved as waterlogged deposits along the Pill might also provide significant information about the economy of the town and the environment of the area.

## 11 Sources

### *11.1 Primary historical sources*

There are a number of Anglo-Saxon charters and Medieval documentary references to Berkeley, although the majority of the surviving Medieval documents relate to the genealogy and deeds of the Berkeley family. These have not been consulted directly, but where they appear in the text have been drawn from secondary, published, sources.

### *11.2 Secondary historical sources*

There have been a number of articles concerning Berkeley and the Berkeley family published in various archaeological journals, which have been consulted during the preparation of this report. Berkeley has not yet been covered by the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire and the Berkeley family and the castle have stimulated most interest amongst historians, mainly due to the records kept by John Smith of Nibley, chamberlain to the household during the first half of the seventeenth century. A few histories of the town itself have been published, such as Gethyn-Jones (1970) and Fisher (1864).

### 11.3 Archaeological sources

Very little archaeological investigation has been undertaken within the area of the modern town at Berkeley. During the 1930s the Earl of Berkeley undertook a number of excavations within the area of the castle which revealed evidence for pre-fourteenth century buildings. A single evaluation excavation was undertaken in the early 1990s in the area between Stock Lane, Jumper's Lane and Salter Street, but this failed to produce evidence for Medieval occupation. The finds of prehistoric and Roman material listed in sections 2 and 3 above were made by chance, rather than during archaeological investigations.

### 11.4 Maps

A map, reputedly showing the plan of the town in 1543, is held by the Gloucestershire Records Office (RV41.8). The map is an amalgam of several eighteenth century sketches, apparently taken from an original plan. The map itself is not in the form of a measured survey, but is likely to give an indication of the size and density of the sixteenth century settlement. The enclosure map of 1827, the tithe map of 1840 and the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1883 all show the extent of the Post-medieval settlement prior to twentieth century development.

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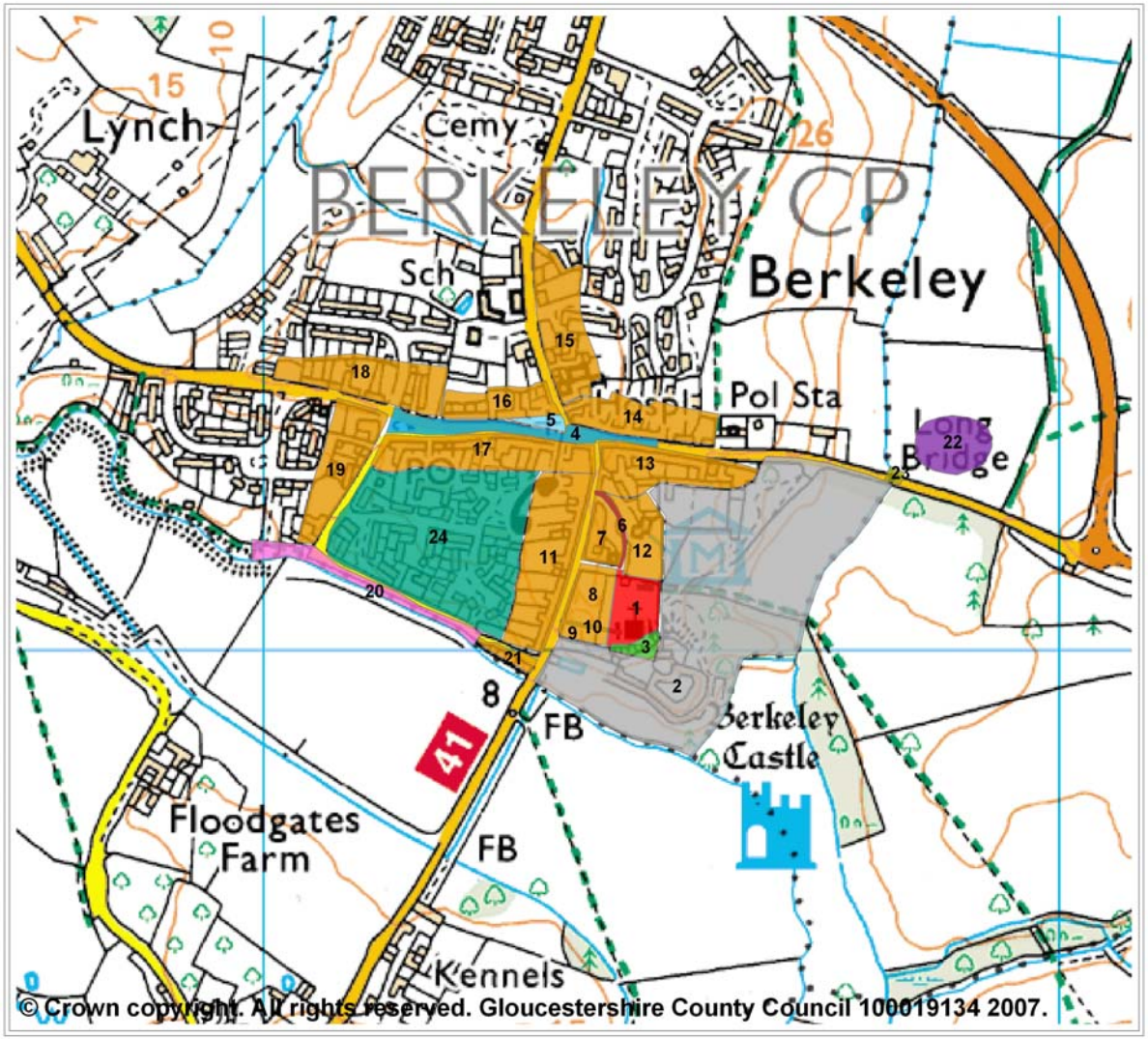
### 12.2 Maps

Sketch map of Berkeley c.1543, copied during the later seventeenth or early eighteenth century
Enclosure map, 1827
Tithe map, 1840
Ordnance Survey first edition 25":1 mile map, 1883




MAP 6
Berkeley
Medieval Plan Components

**Legend**

- Areas of settlement
- Castle and grounds
- Church & churchyard
- Encroachment into churchyard
- Hospital of Holy Trinity
- Market infill
- Market place
- Orchards and gardens
- Berkeley Pill
- Site of the Medieval Long Bridge
- Original line of Church Lane
- St Michaels Lane

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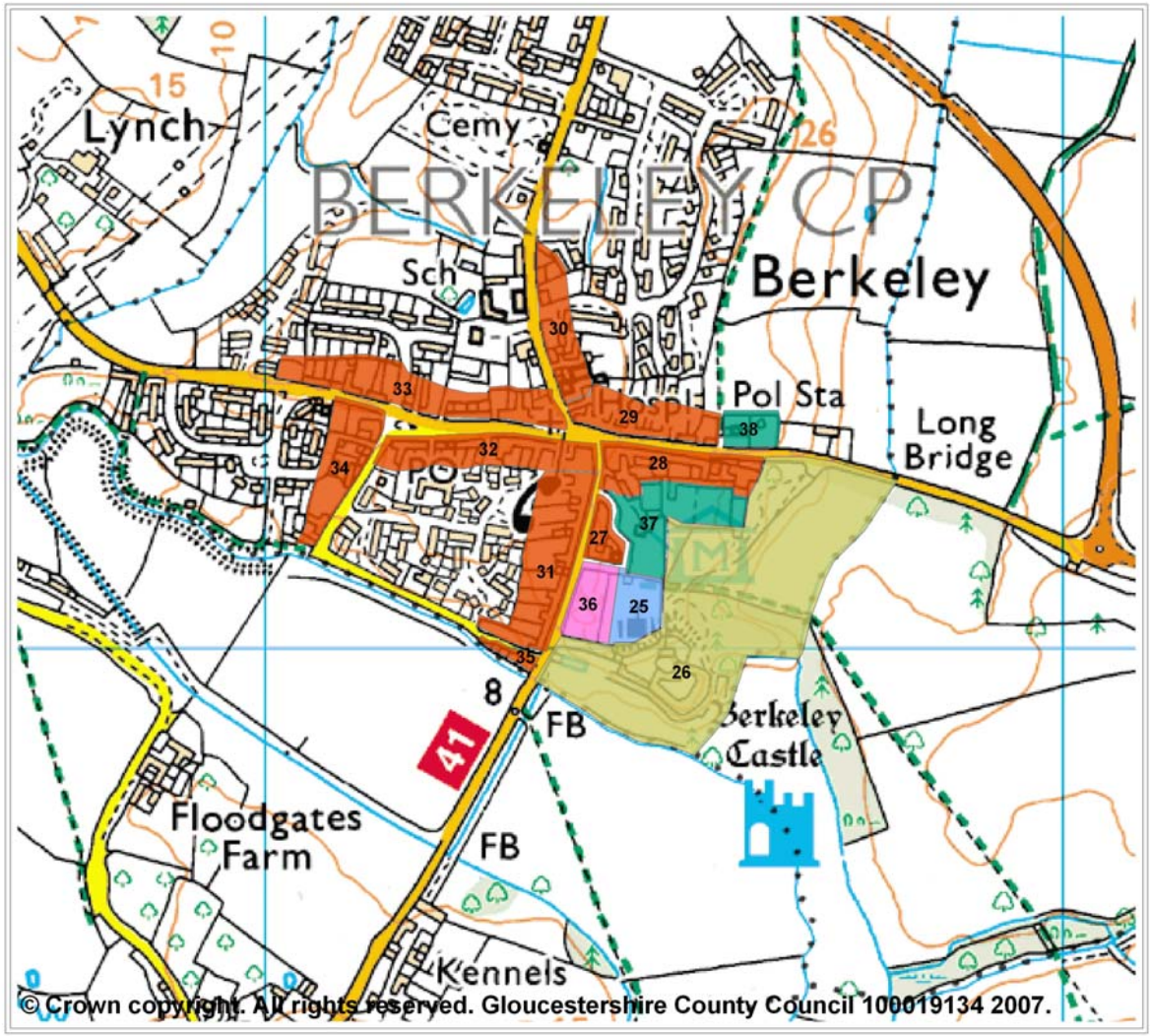
DATE: 11 October 2007
DRAWING NO: MAP 6




MAP 7
Berkeley
Post-Medieval
Plan Components

**Legend**

- Areas of development
- Berkeley Castle
- Church & churchyard
- Open ground
- Areas of settlement
- The Vicarage

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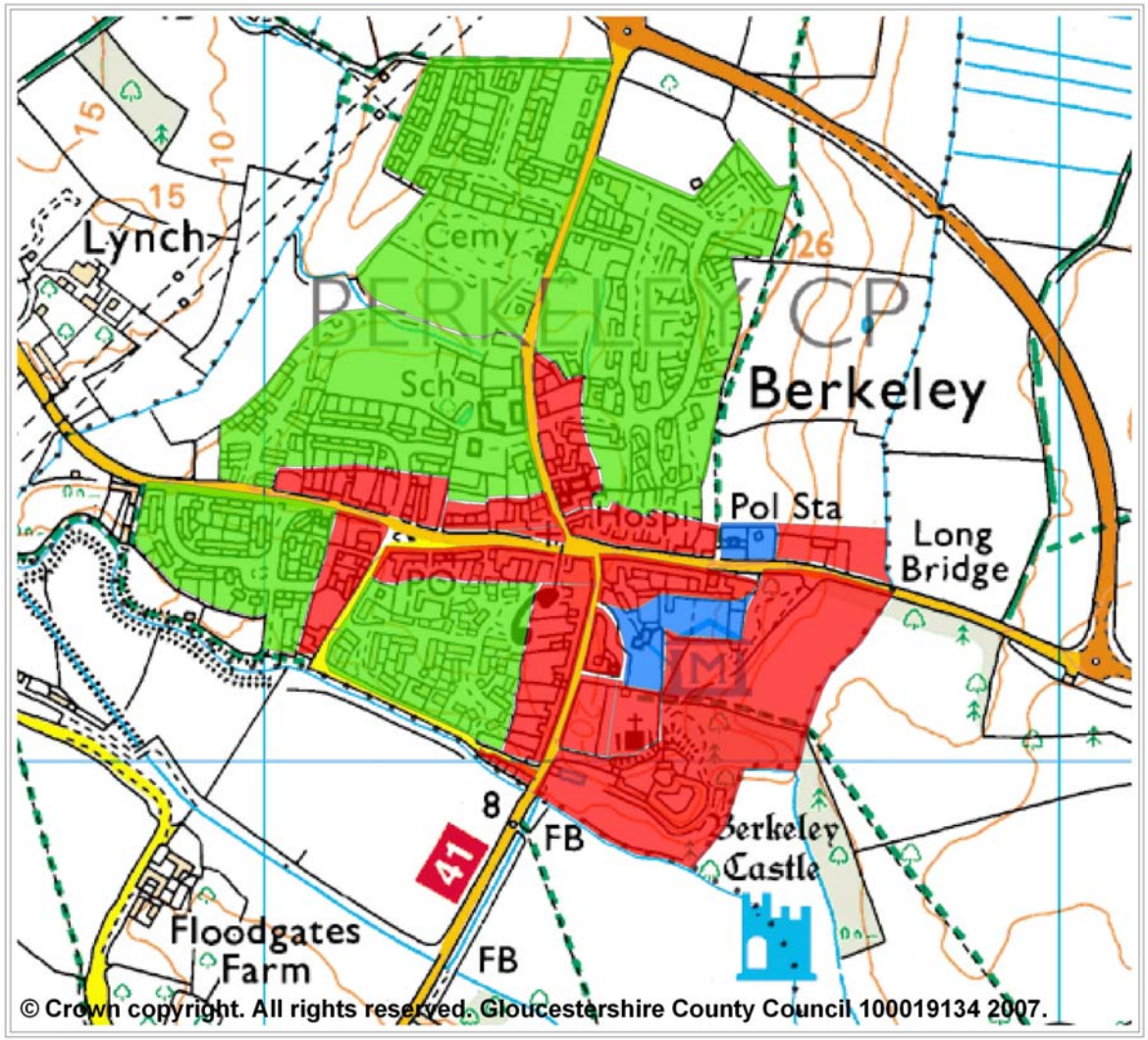


MAP 8
Berkeley
Development By Period

**Legend**

- Medieval
- Modern
- Post Medieval

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