

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

OVERTON

1. INTRODUCTION

English Heritage has initiated a national series of Extensive Urban Surveys. Several counties have commenced such projects including Hampshire County Council who are undertaking the survey of the small towns of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The survey is intended to provide an up-to-date view of the archaeological resource in each of the towns building on earlier surveys (e.g. Hughes, 1976; Basford, 1980) and consists of three phases: Data Collection, Data Assessment and Strategy. The first stage, Data Collection, draws together the accessible history of the town, the archaeological knowledge and historic buildings data. The Data Assessment phase of the survey leads to the production of a report which presents a brief history of the town, (this document is not intended as a definitive history) an analysis of the plan of the town, an assessment of the archaeological and buildings data and the state of modern development resulting in the identification of areas of archaeological importance. Information about the development of the town through the ages, including plan-form analysis and the identified areas of archaeological importance, is also presented in cartographic form at the end of the report. The Strategy phase of the survey, uses the information presented in the Data Assessment combined with current statutory and non-statutory constraints, and present and future planning policy to make recommendations for policies regarding the historic environment. The policies may be incorporated into Local and Unitary Development Plans, non-statutory policies, supplementary guidance and for use within development control.

2. LOCATION

Overton (NGR SU 515496) lies mid-way between Andover and Basingstoke along a road that follows the line of the valley of the River Test, and is approximately 20km to the north of Winchester, on the road from Winchester to Kingsclere. The town lies on the south side of the River Test, near its source, at between 90-100m above Ordnance Datum (OD), whilst the church lies on the northern bank of the river on the edge of a small ridge overlooking the flood plain. The land also falls away to the north and east from the church. Court Farm, to the west of the church, lies in a slightly higher position than the church.

To the north and the south of the town and the river, the land rises onto chalk downland, which to the north reaches a height of 170m OD and 140m OD to the south. Winchester Street, the main street of the town, lies in a small, dry, tributary valley. The land rises gently to the east and west of Winchester Street, but the rise to the west is a little sharper.

3. BACKGROUND

ARCHAEOLOGY

Prehistoric

From the town itself, there is very little evidence of prehistoric activity. From the southern end of Winchester Street a Neolithic flint tool has been recovered, and from near Southington Neolithic pottery has been found. From the area around the town further evidence of Neolithic activity has been found in the form of isolated finds of flint tools. 2.5km to the north of the town there is a long barrow (SAM 12108) and nearby, a Bronze Age barrow.

- A1 A prehistoric trackway, The Harroway, passes through the parish to the north of the town. This track formed one of the principal routes to and from the south-west and was later used as a pilgrim's route towards London.
- A2 To the south of the town, at White Hill, some Iron Age pottery has been recovered at a site that also revealed possible evidence of Roman settlement.

Roman

A Roman cremation burial with pottery of third- to fourth-century date and several late Roman coins was found in Overton in the mid-nineteenth century, although the exact location of the discovery is not known.

Part of the northern edge of the parish boundary takes the line of the Roman road The Portway that ran between Sarum and Silchester (Margary 4b, 1955, 89).

- A3 On the north side of the river, there have been several isolated finds of Roman coins, and at Foxdown, near Overton station, building remains, pottery and coins have been recovered.
- A2 Another possible Roman building has been located approximately 1km to the south of the town at White Hill. Second- to fourth-century pottery was also found at this site from which some Iron Age pottery was also recovered.

Saxon

There is no archaeological evidence for settlement on either the north or south side of the river in the area of existing settlement. A general scatter of early medieval pottery, which included a single rim sherd of tenth- to early eleventh-century Portchester ware, has been found at Turrill House (Moorhouse 1971, 44). The modern OS 1:10,000 map marks a Turrill Hill Farm 1.5km to the south-west of the town, and this may be Turrill House.

Medieval

There is no record in the SMR of any finds of medieval date being recovered from the area of the town. Twelfth- to thirteenth-century pottery is recorded from locations to the west of Court Farm and from Southington. Two archaeological investigations in the rear parts of the burgage plots on the east side of Winchester Street have failed to locate any evidence of the medieval town although the investigations were small in size.

Along the line of the valley to the east and west of Overton are several deserted and shrunken medieval villages including Northington (A5), Quidhampton (A6), Polhampton (A7), and Laverstoke (A8), and the small hamlet of Southington (A4). The growth of the town of Overton may have had a direct impact on the fortunes of these nearby rural settlements.

HISTORY

Saxon

Overton may have been a royal manor in the eighth century as King Edward the Elder confirmed an earlier grant of the estate of *Uferantun* on Frithstan, Bishop of Winchester, in 909 (Page 1911, 212). It is not known when the estate came into bishopric hands. The place-name means 'higher farm' which is considered to refer to the position of the settlement in the upper reaches of the valley of the Test rather than to a settlement on higher ground (Coates 1993, 127-8). The bishopric continued to hold the manor, apart from a short break in the mid-seventeenth century, until 1869.

Medieval

At the time of the Domesday Survey the Bishop held forty-one hides of land and there was land for thirty-two ploughs. Two churches and ninety-four villagers, smallholders and slaves were also recorded (Munby 1982, fol 40b). It is thought that the second church was at Tadley, a detached holding of the manor. At the time of the Domesday Survey there was also a church at Polhampton, a settlement within the parish of Overton (Munby 1982, fol 47b).

The borough of Overton first appears in the early thirteenth century when the Bishop's Account Roll of 1217-18 has an entry for Overton *burgus* (Beresford 1959, 96). In 1218 the Bishop was granted a market charter by Henry III and it is thought that this charter may represent the foundation date of the town. Initially, nineteen burgesses held twenty-two burgage plots. By 1223-4 at least forty plots were

recorded (Beresford 1967, 447) some of which may have been half plots, as in 1220 a smith paid 18d for a '*burgagio dimittendo*' (Page 1911, 211). Manorial accounts indicate a steady rise in prosperity in town, but in the latter part of the thirteenth century there appears to have been a down-turn in fortunes. In 1278 a 'seld' (shop) was found to be ruinous and the repairs cost the bishop 4s 4d. The following year receipts from the town collapsed to £2 10s from the expected £12 12s 1d (*ibid.*).

In 1295 the town sent two burgesses to Parliament, but eleven years later Overton was discharged from Parliamentary responsibilities because the expense was too great (Pitcher n.d., 6). It is thought that the town suffered during the mid-fourteenth century plagues and there are references to properties reverting to the bishop because of the death of the burgesses or poverty (Page 1911, 211). The receipts from the shops and stalls dropped significantly and the manorial courts produced little or no income for the bishop (Page 1911, 211). It has been suggested that the reduced population from the plagues led to Overton becoming an important sheep market (Pitcher n.d., 7). However, there were already over one thousand sheep on the manor in the early thirteenth century (Hare 1994, 160) so clearly sheep farming was an important part of the economy of the manor long before the fourteenth century plagues. The Pipe Roll of 1301-2 records repairs to, or the re-building of, four sheep-houses on the manor (Page 1996, 95).

Although the town survived through various periods of decline, many of the surrounding settlements were less fortunate. The nearby settlements of Laverstoke, Northington, Quidhampton, Polhampton, Deane and Ash all experienced shrinkage or desertion. In the mid-fourteenth century the Bishop of Winchester appealed to the king for reductions in taxes on behalf of several poor benefices, including Ash, which were 'depopulated since the pestilence and reduced to penury, so they can hardly subsist' (Hockey, 1987, 100). The desertion of Northington is particularly well recorded. Northington had been a settlement of at least thirty-five households that had shrunk to only four tenants in 1485. In that year the bishop leased the land that had produced a rent of £16. 10. 8 to Richard Ayliffe for only £9. 6. 8, replacing the last four tenants who were possibly either unable, or unwilling, to pay the rent. Ayliffe was required to build a suitable house on the site of the house of Thomas Prince, one of the former tenants (Greatrex 1978, 417; Hare 1994, 166). At present there is little indication as to where the former populations of the surrounding hamlets moved to but it may be that Overton received some of the displaced occupants.

Under the Tudors it is thought that the town recovered its prosperity to a certain extent, possibly confirmed by the fact that many of the burgesses managed to pay some of the large arrears of rent that had accrued. A second fair was obtained in 1519 by Thomas Wolsey, Bishop of Winchester that was held over three days at the feast of St George (22-24 April). In the early sixteenth century the west tower of the church was built, an event that may also reflect the improved financial situation in the town. In the late sixteenth century several burgesses claimed that there was a corporation that gave them the right to elect their own representatives. However, the Court of Chancery ruled against the burgesses, confirming the right of the bishop to make the appointments of port-reeve, bailiffs, beer-tasters and leather sealers (Page 1911, 212).

Post medieval

During the seventeenth century there may have been another period of decline, reflected in the number of communicants attending the parish church. Between 1603 and 1676 there was a 36% drop in the number who took communion. This drop in the number of communicants compares to an average increase of 40% in the number of communicants in all Hampshire towns, and an average county-wide increase of 26% over the same period (Rosen 1981, 175).

Overton was an important staging post on the route from London to the south-west in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Pitcher n.d., 9), and so the town would have probably benefited from income derived from the travellers.

In the eighteenth century silk production began in the town when a silk factory was built to the north of Southington. Many inhabitants of the town also found employment at Laverstoke Mill where bank notes for the Bank of England were produced from 1724 (Page 1911, 209).

A canal linking Andover to Basingstoke was proposed in the late eighteenth century and the projected course of the canal was surveyed in 1789. However, the cost of the venture proved to be too expensive and the idea was dropped (Pitcher n.d., 17). In 1854 the Basingstoke to Andover railway was opened

with a station at Overton. The advent of the railway led to the reduction of the stage coach trade which hit the inns and possibly the business of other trades in the town.

4. ANALYSIS

MEDIEVAL TOPOGRAPHY

Introduction

The medieval topography of Overton can be divided into two parts: The church and Court Farm area and the new town. The church and Court Farm lie on the north side of the river, and it is possible that an earlier rural settlement occupied the area around the church, although there is no evidence for its exact location. The 'new town', one of several new town foundations of the Bishops of Winchester in the thirteenth century, lies on the south side of the river and was laid out over part of the fields of the manor (Beresford 1959, 196).

The town plan has been described as a simple rectilinear grid and has been compared with another of the Bishop's foundations at New Alresford (Beresford 1959, 195). The main north-south market street, Winchester Street, lies at right angles to the main east-west through road, High Street/London Road, which runs along the line of the valley. Together, Greyhound Lane and Sprent's Lane, which lie parallel to High Street/London Road, form the southern side of the grid. Red Lion Lane and Waltham Lane lie roughly parallel to, and to the west and east respectively, of Winchester Street. Initial inspection of the plan suggests that these parallel lanes served as back lanes to the property plots on Winchester Street. Hughes set out two possibilities for the development of the plan:

1. All three north-south streets were originally built-up and that population decline left Winchester Street as the only built-up area;
2. The original plan consisted of a single main street at right-angles to the main road with the north-south streets on either side of Winchester Street functioning as back-lanes (Hughes 1976, 107).

In attempting to understand the plan of the town, a wider view of the road pattern is required. To the west of Overton, and south of the main road, there are several north-south roads, including, Dellands Lane and Vinns Lane, linking the main road and Dellands, a continuation of Greyhound Lane and Sprent's Lane, which form the south side of the grid. These lanes create a series of rectilinear units of land varying in size. The overall pattern raises the question as to whether any, or all, of the three north-south streets of the town (Winchester Street, Red Lion Lane and Waltham Lane) were actually laid out in the thirteenth century or formed part of the lane and path network serving the open fields. It is important to note that the two suggested back-lanes are not an equal distance from Winchester Street. The area to the west of Winchester Street is larger than that to the east, and the burgage properties do not appear to run from Winchester Street to Red Lion Lane. Instead, the common rear boundary to the burgage plots lies at a similar distance from Winchester Street to the distance between Winchester Street Waltham Lane. This leaves a plot of land between the rear of the western burgage plots and Red Lion Lane that would have prevented the lane acting as a back-lane. The burgage plots within the block to the east of Winchester Street run through to Waltham Lane that would appear to have functioned as a conventional back-lane.

Although the main street is called Winchester Street and is now the main road to Winchester, it does not take a direct route to the south from the town as it has to make two sharp turns to join a road that lies on the line of, and is almost certainly a continuation of, Red Lion Lane. It is suggested that Red Lion Lane was the original road to Winchester from the church/'village' area, and that Winchester Street was a newly laid out street in the thirteenth century. When approaching the town from the south, the deviation from the line of Red Lion Lane to the line of Winchester Street presents the traveller with a view of the market street, with the parish church in full view on the north side of the river. The alignment is so marked that it would be difficult to see it as being purely coincidental and it is suggested that the line of Winchester Street was chosen so as to present a view of the church as one approached the town. The origin of Waltham Lane, the eastern back-lane, is uncertain. It may have been an original part of the road pattern that lay at convenient position to form a back-lane, or it may

have been laid out at the same time as Winchester Street. It lies at a point where the steepness of the slope to the east increases, and its line is continued to the north of London Road leading to Quidhampton, which may suggest that the lane was in existence before the foundation of the new-town.

To the north of High Street, two other streets head north to the church and Court Farm area of the settlement. The western street, Bridge Street, is on the line of Red Lion Lane, the suggested original main road to Winchester from the settlement area on the northern side of the river. The second street to the north lies on the line of Winchester Street. It is uncertain whether this road existed before the foundation of the new-town but as there was a mill at the crossing point, it is probable that there was at least a path on this line.

Roads, streets and bridges

Winchester Street B1

Winchester Street, known during the medieval period as the *Streete*, is wide enough to accommodate the market. It is probable that Winchester Street was laid out at the time of the town's foundation in the early thirteenth century (see p4 above).

Bridges B2

Both the two streets linking the church/'village' with its fields and, later, with the town, may have crossed the river by bridges although the river is quite shallow and would have been easily fordable. There is no existing medieval structure at either crossing point and no records of the bridges in the medieval period have been located.

Possible area of Overton village B3

There is no field or cartographic evidence to indicate the exact location or size of the pre-new town village. It is thought that the village lay around the church and Court Farm on the north side of the river. Alternatively, the population of the pre-new town manor may have resided in the hamlets within the parish, including Southington, Northington, Quidhampton and Polhampton, leaving Overton as the manorial and ecclesiastical centre. The village, if there was one, had certainly disappeared by the early seventeenth century as a map of 1615 (HRO Copy 566/1-3) shows no settlement near the church apart from the Court Farm. The area representing the village shown on Map B is based on the location of the church and Court Farm, the road pattern and the topography of the area.

Burgage plots

Winchester Street properties B4

The first available register of burgage plots (the 1218-9 Court Roll) records twenty-two plots. The plots probably lay on either side of Winchester Street. Five years later there were at least forty plots in the town, although this figure may include half plots. This number of plots would probably have filled the areas along Winchester Street between the High Street and the cross-lane that runs approximately parallel to the High Street. In the early and mid-fourteenth century, a time when the town was experiencing a period of decline, the number of 'selds' was between fourteen and sixteen (Page 1911, 211). There may have been some shrinkage in the size of the town at this time but it is unlikely that the extent of the shrinkage was as severe as Hughes (1976, 107) suggests.

High Street/London Street properties B5

If there were other burgage plots in the town other than along Winchester Street, it would be possible to envisage properties along the north side of High Street. To the north-west of the Winchester Street/High Street junction there are property plots with roughly parallel boundaries running down to the river that forms the rear boundary. Within the areas to the north-east there may have also been some burgage plots. Corpus Christi College held property in this area, including the White Hart, from at least 1525 (Waight 1995, 177). A map of college property in the town dating from 1615 (HRO Copy 566/1-3) shows property plots that are similar to the

plots to the north-west of the junction. It would be expected that the area around the most important road junction in the town was occupied in the medieval period.

'Langepoule' properties (not located)

There is also a reference of 1349 to burgage plots in *Langepoule* that would appear to have been outside the borough proper (Page 1911, 211) but the exact limits of the borough and the location of these plots are not known.

Late Medieval occupation

Winchester Street B6

At the southern end of Winchester Street, south of the cross-lane, there are some buildings that appear to have late medieval origins. The boundaries in this area do not suggest that it formed part of the area of burgage plots and it is suggested that this area represents late medieval growth on the fringe of the town. One of the buildings in this area was owned by Corpus Christi College, and was described as 'newly built' in 1544 (E.Roberts pers comm). That the college was building on the edge of the town, and so far away from the Winchester Street/High Street junction, may indicate that there was little space within the core of the town for new properties.

High Street B7

Settlement may have extended along the western part of High Street in the later medieval period.

Southington B8

To the west of the town is the hamlet of Southington. The hamlet was not recorded in the Domesday Survey but was recorded in the 1334 Lay Subsidy when, together with Northington, it was taxed £ 4. 0. 10. compared to the £3. 12. 8 levied on Overton. In 1524 twenty-four people living in the hamlet were taxed at £16. 6. 4, more than the fifty-four taxpayers of Overton who paid £14. 13. 10. These figures may suggest that Southington was where some of the wealthier merchants and traders lived, away from the market area of the town.

Buildings

Court Farm B9

Court Farm represents the site of the bishop's manor and is recorded as such on the SMR as a bishop's residence. The building was occasionally used to accommodate the bishop, who visited on only four occasions in the fourteenth century (Roberts 1996, 91). It is known that it had a stone chimney in 1256/7, a new garderobe in 1282/3 and bishop's and knight's chambers recorded in 1284/5 and 1287/8. There was also a cellar, as it had to be repaired before the visit of Bishop William Edington in 1348/9 (*ibid.*). The Pipe Roll of the bishop of 1301-2 records repairs made to the hall roof and also to the roofs of the wheat and oat barn, the dovecote and the kitchen that had been unroofed in the wind. The bake-house also received attention. In the same year the *curia* and gardens were enclosed with hedges (Page 1996, 94). The existing building dates from the sixteenth century when there was a re-organisation of the estate around the year 1500. A new great barn was constructed between 1496-8 and the Court Farm was rebuilt between 1505-7, with both redevelopments being undertaken at the expense of the bishop (Roberts 1996, 93). Both the manor house and the barn are still in existence.

Corpus Christi College properties (not shown on map)

There was a surge in the re-building of properties owned by Corpus Christi College, Oxford as it is recorded that five of the College tenements in the town were described as being newly built in the years between 1542 and 1555 (Waight 1995, 175). The White Hart, for example, on the north-east corner of the junction of Winchester Street and High Street was one such property. This phase of investment by the college probably reflects the increase in prosperity of the town in the sixteenth century.

Other buildings

There are several sixteenth century buildings of some quality along High Street and Winchester Street including Nos 7-11 High Street (c.1525), 14-16 Winchester Street (c. 1500), and 32 Winchester Street which was a two-bay open hall house of c. 1500, but it has been noted that there is an apparent lack of any earlier structures (E.Roberts, pers comm).

Church B10

The parish church of St Mary lies on the north side of the river. It is possible that the church was a 'mother church' founded in the tenth century when the *parochia* system of the minster churches broke up (Hase 1994, 53). Externally the church is Victorian, but inside there is an arcade of c.1200. The chancel appears to be of thirteenth-century date which may suggest that the bishop also invested in the church at the time the new town was created. The west tower was built c.1500 (Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 367).

Mills B11

Domesday Book records four mills on the manor of Overton (Munby 1982, fol 40b). Two of those mills may be represented by Town Mill (later Overton Mill) and Linch Mill (later Southington Mill). To the north-west of Southington, on the south side of the river, the OS 6" map of 1877 shows two ponds which may also represent the site of one of the medieval mills.

Town Mill

This mill is recorded in the Pipe Roll of the Bishop of 1301-2 when the roof was renewed, presumably after the storms that had also caused damage to the buildings of the bishop's manor house (Page 1996, 95). This mill was also known as Burrough Mill

Linch Mill

The tenant of the 'mill of lynch' was in default of rent in 1301-2 (Page 1996, 91). The Pipe Roll also records that the mill was re-roofed and the sluice renewed (*ibid*, 95). In 1446 the mills of the vill and *La Lynch* were let with a fishery (Page 1911, 213).

New Mill (not shown on map)

New Mill has been identified as Quidhampton Mill. It was built after 1446 as at that date an empty plot called New Mill was recorded. The mill had certainly been built by the beginning of the sixteenth century when it was described as a fulling mill and was let with a fishery (Page 1911, 213).

Othinic Mill (Not located)

The Pipe Roll of 1301-2 also records the mill of *Othinic* (Page 1995, 91). The identification or location of this mill is not known.

Other industry or trades

There are few other references to industry or trades in the town. In 1390, a man claiming sanctuary in the church was pushed out into the highway by a shoemaker of Overton (Page 1911, 218).

POST-MEDIEVAL TOPOGRAPHY

Roads, streets and bridges

Apart from the Andover to Basingstoke road (the B3400) being turnpiked in 1754 (Deveson 1987, 5) there appears to have been very little alteration in the road network and street plan of the town in the post-medieval period.

Property plots C1

In the nineteenth century, several terraces of houses were built within the area of burgage properties along Winchester Street. Most of the terraces were situated in the rear parts of the plots, although one row was built along the length of plot and was served by a small lane connecting Winchester Street and Waltham Lane. Settlement also extended along Bridge Street, the continuation of Red Lion Lane on the north side of the High Street.

Buildings

Many of the surviving medieval buildings were re-faced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Greyhound near the junction of Winchester Street with London Road and High Street was extended in the seventeenth century with a high quality structure.

Most of the nineteenth century housing built in the town consisted of rows of small cottages.

Church C2

The church, particularly the exterior of the building, was extensively restored in the nineteenth century. The west tower was re-built in 1909 (Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 367). The churchyard was slightly extended to the north between 1877 and 1896 and another extension has been made in recent years.

Chapels (not shown on map)

Methodist chapel. On 1st Edition OS 6" map of 1877 on the south side of High Street?

Independent Chapel on Winchester Street. Shown on 1st Edition OS 6" map of 1877

Mills C3

Town Mill

In 1648 the Town Mill, also known as Burrough Mill or Overton Mill, was described as 'two water corn mills'. The mill was purchased by the Portal family and was used for processing rags and paper for the paper mill at Laverstoke. The mill was rebuilt in the late nineteenth century.

Lynch Mill

In the sixteenth century Lynch Mill was described as 'two mills under one roof'. It was also recorded in 1648 and 1761. This mill was later known as Southington Mill, and was marked as a corn mill on the 1877 6" OS map.

New Mill (not on map extent)

A list of the mills of the town of 1648 records a corn mill that was formerly a fulling mill. This mill was probably the New Mill built in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. It was recorded in 1761 and was later known as Quidhampton Mill. The mill was powered by water from a large pond to the east.

Silk Mill C4

A silk mill stood to the north of Southington. The mill employed around 250 people, mainly children, and was demolished in 1848 (Oram n.d.).

Brick-works

Brick-kiln Farm C5

To the south of Southington there was a farm called Brick-kiln Farm where there was a kiln. This site, including the farm has now been completely abandoned.

Berrydown Farm (not shown on map)

A second brick-works was sited to the south-east of Overton near Berrydown Farm. The 1877 OS map marks a kiln and clay pit slightly to the north of the farm. (Not on map extent).

Fair Close C6

On the west side of Winchester Street at the south end of the town a field called Fair Close is shown on the 1st Edition 6" OS map of 1877. This field may represent the site of the annual fairs held in the town.

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENT

There has been some modern development along Winchester Street but only one significant area of housing has been built to the east of Winchester Street at the southern end of the town. The majority of housing development has occurred around the periphery of the historic town. The largest developments are to the south-east of the town, to the west of Red Lion Lane and to the east of Waltham Lane.

6. IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL

CRITERIA FOR THE AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL

Introduction

The primary aim of the Data Collection and Data Assessment phases of the project is to enable the identification of areas of archaeological importance within each town to inform the Strategy phase of the project. Four such areas of importance have been defined, and the criteria for these are briefly described below. Although they are all described in this introduction, not all towns will have areas within each of these categories.

Levels of Archaeological Importance

The levels of importance are Areas Comprising Nationally Important Remains; Areas of High Archaeological Importance; Archaeologically Important Areas; and Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance.

As additional archaeological information becomes available, and a greater understanding of the archaeological resource of the town is achieved, it is possible that some areas will be re-assigned to different levels of importance.

Areas Comprising Nationally Important Remains

Areas of identified nationally important archaeological remains, whose location, character and importance have been demonstrably established. These remains merit physical preservation *in situ*. The criteria used to assess national importance is set out in Annex 4 of the Secretary of State's non-statutory guidance note PPG16, and are briefly noted below.

- Period
- Rarity
- Documentation
- Group Value
- Survival/Condition
- Fragility/Vulnerability
- Diversity
- Potential

This category will include Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Areas of High Archaeological Importance

Areas considered to include other important archaeological remains, whose location, character and importance are inferred from observation, research and interpretation. Those remains are likely to merit preservation *in situ*. Where preservation is not justified appropriate archaeological recording will be required.

Areas of High Archaeological Importance may:

- Contain well preserved, archaeological deposits which may not be of national importance, but which are of importance to the understanding of the origins and development of the town;
- Be areas where the destruction, without archaeological record, of well preserved archaeological deposits means that the last surviving elements have an increased value for the understanding of the origins and development of the town;
- Have been identified as having significant water-logged deposits;
- Have a high number of existing medieval buildings. The survival of medieval buildings may also indicate that there is well preserved stratigraphy beneath the building;
- Be areas that are thought to have High Archaeological Importance due to their proximity to other, recognised, plan elements even though there is little direct evidence to indicate high importance. For example, the area around an isolated church that may have been the focus for earlier settlement may be defined as an Area of High Archaeological Importance.

It is possible that areas that areas of High Archaeological Importance may, through further archaeological or documentary work, be shown to include Nationally Important Remains.

Archaeologically Important Areas

Areas considered to contain archaeological remains of some importance. Where these remains cannot be preserved *in-situ*, they are likely to require appropriate archaeological recording.

Such areas:

- Are significant elements in the plan but where there has been a moderate level of modern development or cellaring;
- Have had little archaeological work undertaken within them but cartographic or documentary sources suggest that they may have been within the historic core of the town or areas of important suburban development.

Surviving archaeological deposits in Archaeologically Important Areas will probably have a relatively high density but, due to pressures of development over many centuries, there may be a high level of fragmentation.

Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance

Areas considered to include archaeological remains of a character unlikely to provide significant information, or archaeological remains whose integrity has been severely compromised by development. These remains may require appropriate archaeological recording if threatened by development.

Areas of Limited Archaeological Importance may:

- Have a good survival of archaeological deposits, but where there is likely to be a low density of archaeological features;
- Be areas with significant modern development resulting in limited archaeological importance, either due to the scale of development or due to the limited nature of the archaeological resource before development;
- Be areas where the current hypothesis supports only a limited possibility of encountering archaeological remains.

THE POTENTIAL OF OVERTON

Areas of Archaeological Importance

Nationally Important Archaeological Remains

No areas have been recognised that are thought to contain archaeological deposits that are of national importance.

High Archaeological Importance

The burgage plots along both sides of Winchester Street and the possible burgage plots along the north side of the High Street have High Archaeological Importance. These areas may contain evidence for the original buildings, and for the trades and industries that were carried out in the new town. Such activities are likely to have been undertaken in the rear parts of the plots behind the building line. Although there has been some nineteenth-century and modern development within the area of burgage plots, there are still sufficient areas that have not been developed where there may be good survival of archaeological deposits.

There is an Area of High Archaeological Importance around the church and Court Farm as this may have been where the rural settlement of Overton was located before the foundation of the town. At present there is no evidence to confirm the presence or absence of settlement but it has to be assumed that this was the location of the village until proven otherwise. Generally, settlements along the river valley are sited on the first terrace above the river flood plain. Most of the land to the south of the church is relatively low lying with the church and Court Farm on higher ground. It is possible that settlement would have been sited on the higher ground to the west of Court Farm and the area of High Importance accordingly covers this area. Some of the area to the north of the church, which may have also been used for settlement, has been incorporated into the graveyard and so subsequent burials would have almost certainly compromised any archaeological deposits.

Archaeologically Important Areas

Areas of expansion to the south of Winchester Street and along the western part of High Street have Archaeological Importance. These areas may have developed in the sixteenth century when there was some economic recovery in the town but there is a possibility that there had been a degree of shrinkage when there was financial difficulty in the town. It is known that there are a few medieval buildings in these areas, and the identification of others could lead to the areas being regarded as Areas of High Archaeological Importance. Often the suburbs of a town can be used as an indicator of the town's fortunes (Schofield and Vince 1994, 52) and so even though there has been some nineteenth- and twentieth-century development in these areas, they still retain archaeological importance.

Area of Limited Archaeological Importance

The area of land between the rear boundary of the burgage plots on the west side of Winchester Street and Red Lion Lane has been the focus of much housing development that will have compromised any archaeological deposits, with only the recreation ground remaining undeveloped. It is, at present, uncertain as to how this area of land was used in the medieval period. It is possible that some industrial processes were undertaken in this area or that there was some settlement, possibly by families moving from one of the deserted settlements nearby, such as Northington. Therefore this area may have some Limited Archaeological Importance.

Research Framework

Although it is thought that the new-town at Overton was founded in the early thirteenth century, there are some aspects of the development of the town that are not fully understood. The extensive archives of Winchester Cathedral will almost certainly contain much information about the manor and the town and so there is great potential to learn more about the town from Cathedral documents. Specific problems to be addressed include:

- Roman settlement in the area of the town.

The scattered finds of Roman material and the cremation burial from around and within the town suggest that there is a Roman settlement site in the vicinity of the town.

- The pre-town settlement.

It is assumed that there was a village of Overton on the north side of the river near the church (Paralleling another of the bishop's new foundations at New Alresford) but there is no evidence in the form of earthworks near the church, or any cartographic evidence to confirm the location of an earlier settlement. Further work around the church and Court Farm could identify the nature and extent of settlement, if indeed, there was ever a village in this area.

- Industrial processes undertaken in the town.

There is little evidence for industry within the town during the medieval period and so archaeological investigations, particularly in the areas behind the building lines, may be able to shed light on what goods were produced in the town or brought in for sale in the market.

- Fourteenth-century decline and sixteenth-century revival.

From documentary sources it is clear that the town suffered a period of decline in the fourteenth century, with references to vacant properties and some dis-repair to buildings. Whether there was any shrinkage on the periphery of the town is not known. If there was an extent of shrinkage in the size of the town, it may be that any growth in the sixteenth-century, possibly represented by the areas at the south of Winchester Street and along the western part of High Street, utilised the areas of earlier desertion.

- The location of *Langepoule*.

A mid-fourteenth-century document includes a reference to four burgage plots in *Langepoule* rather than in the borough proper. It is not known where these plots were located but the reference is in relation to four plots coming into the hands of the Bishop during the financially difficult period of the town's history. These plots may have become deserted at this time and may not have been re-occupied when the fortunes of the town improved.

7. SOURCES

DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Because the manor was held by the Bishop of Winchester throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods, much information about the town will exist within the archives of Winchester Cathedral. Some of the documents have been transcribed or published, for example, the Pipe Rolls of 1301-2 that provide details of expenditure on buildings and income from rents and produce, giving an insight into the economy of the manor.

MAPS AND PLANS

- 1615 Map of the manor of Overton held at Corpus Christi College Library, Oxford. A copy is held at HRO, document reference HRO Copy 566/1-3
- 1843 Tithe Apportionment Map HRO 21M65/F7/181/2
- 1877 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6" Sheet 17
- 1896 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 25" Sheets 17.10, 17.11, 17.14, 17.15

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8. ABBREVIATIONS

HRO	Hampshire Records Office
n.d.	No date of publication given
NGR	National Grid Reference

OD	Ordnance Datum
OS	Ordnance Survey
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record
TWA	Trust for Wessex Archaeology
VCH	<i>Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight</i>