

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Martock

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2003



SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

MARTOCK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Miranda Richardson

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

MARTOCK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

II. MAJOR SOURCES

1. Primary documents

No primary documents have been consulted for this report. The VCH history of Martock hundred provides a good source for the available documents concerning the town.

2. Local histories

There is VCH coverage of Martock parish (Bush 1978).

3. Maps

No pre-19th century maps have been located, however a good quality map of the parish dates to 1823 and the 1840 tithe map is of particularly fine detail having inset maps of each of the settlements.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF MARTOCK

The parish of Martock is situated on the low lying land between the Parrett and the Yeo rivers, bounded to the south by the Foss Way. Very little is known of the area in the prehistoric or Roman periods. The Domesday book records Martock as having been a royal estate, owned by Queen Edith until the conquest which probably also included Mulcheney and part of Tintinhull (Bush 1978:76). As such it is likely to have had a minster church which administered to the population of the nine settlements in Martock Hundred (Martock, Hurst, Bower-Hinton, Milton, Witcombe, Ash, Coat, Stapleton and Load and Newton). The church is first mentioned in 1156 when it was in the possession of the Abbey of Mont St. Michel. A parsonage house and a dovecot are recorded in 1226, this building survives as the Treasurer's House. In addition a chantry chapel is mentioned in the early 14th century.

After the conquest the manor was granted to Eustace Count of Boulougne who conferred it on his daughter Maud, wife of Stephen who was made king of England in 1135. In 1302 the manor house, dovecot and garden are recorded as lying within a moated area but by 1633 it was described as "almost all let to ruin" and it is likely that the moated site was abandoned from this time (Bush 1978:86). A new manor house was built on Church Street in the later 17th century.

In 1247 Ingram de Fiennes procured a grant for a weekly market and by the later period Martock was a lively trading and agricultural centre. As with many other South Somerset towns cloth production was the major industry but from the 19th century this changed to glove production.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MARTOCK

GENERAL COMMENTS

1 Archaeological work in the town

There has been no archaeological excavation or survey in Martock. A watching brief during construction of a new building on the site of the moated manor in 1983 and recording of the Treasurer's House prior to repair are the only recorded archaeological interventions.

2. PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN

(No Map)

1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There are no prehistoric entries in the SMR for Martock parish and only two entries for the Roman period. There is a possible Roman settlement site to the north-west of Coat (SMR 54237) and a single sherd of Roman pottery was found in 1904 at an unlocated site in the vicinity of Martock (SMR 54221)

2 Context

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

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

Martock is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no evidence of Roman settlement. Though there was some activity in the area, which was within the rich hinterland of Ilchester, it was also on the margins of land subject to flooding, and therefore may have been less heavily settled than some other areas.

3 Archaeological features

*a Communications: roads
not mapped*

Foss Way

The parish of Martock is bounded on the south-west side by the Foss Way (SMR 55101).

3. SAXON

(Map A)

1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological investigation of Saxon Martock.

2 Context

Though the Post-Roman and early Saxon periods were characterised by a return to non-urban lifestyles, the later Saxon period (from the 9th century onwards) saw the beginnings of a resurgence of trading places and towns. This was controlled, in England, by the Saxon royal families (though it was part of a wider trend), and took

place in the context of a network of royal estate administration centres which was already established (in some cases long-established). The reasons for the changes were many and complex, combining defensive, administrative and ecclesiastical considerations with, increasingly, purely commercial aspirations.

As one of the heartlands of the kings of Wessex, Somerset played an important part in the early re-urbanisation of the south, and there are a number of places amongst those studied for this project which can claim to have been towns before the Norman Conquest. However, there are also a number which can claim to have been 'central places' performing more limited, and non-commercial, functions: not all such places developed into towns, but many towns originated in such specialised settlements.

Martock is one of seven of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which, whilst it had not developed any really urban functions by the end of the Saxon period, had both ecclesiastical and administrative functions. It is one of 22 towns associated with a known or probable pre-Conquest minster, and one of 22 associated with a royal manor centre.

3 Archaeological components, shown on Map A

a Manors and estates

MAR/304 Site of The Manor (SMR 54219)

The moated manor is thought to date to the period, however, as Ellison's interpretation of the Saxon settlement area shows, the area is likely to have been the site of Saxon manorial buildings (Ellison 1983:64). (SMR 54219)

Taken from Ellison 1983:64

b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MAR/305 Site of All Saints Church and Cemetery (SMR 54217)

The first mention of a church in Martock dates to 1156 it is however likely to have Saxon origins. Bush has suggested that as an early church at the centre of a royal Saxon estate it is likely to have originated as a minster church (1978:103). The earliest visible parts of the church structure date to the 13th century. The cemetery, similarly, is likely to have early origins.

Taken from Ellison 1983:64

c Settlement

MAR/301 Settlement

The Domesday entry states that Martock was the centre of a large Saxon royal estate, and therefore is likely to have had a substantial settlement serving the needs of the manor. Ellison (1983:64), has suggested an area of Saxon settlement surrounding the church and moated manor site. The limits of this area have not been proven archaeologically.

Taken from Ellison 1983:64

d Industrial sites

MAR/302 Mills (SMR 54222 and 54224)

Domesday records two mills belonging to Martock which have been identified as Cary's Mill (now known as the Parrett works) and Madey Mill. Records naming both these mills exist from the late 13th century (Bush 1978:99).

4. MEDIEVAL (Maps B and C)

1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological excavation in the town. A watching brief was carried out during the construction of a building within the moat in 1979 which showed masses of building debris but no dateable finds (Burrow *et al* 1980:126). Archaeological recording of the fabric of the Treasurer's House was carried out between 1993 and 1995 prior to refurbishment of the building by the National Trust.

2 Context

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

In archaeological terms, the medieval towns are characterised by evidence of partially planned, intensive occupation of restricted areas. Typical features which may occur include: regular, or semi-regular, street layouts; large market places (usually obscured by later encroachments); blocks of regular, long, narrow, plots end on to the commercial frontage; churchyards, either within the medieval layout or outside it - the latter often indicative of a deliberate shift of activity; regular or irregular suburbs or marginal areas occupied by quays, or industrial sites such as mills; and high status sites such as castles, manor sites and large religious precincts.

Martock is one of 20 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which first acquired urban status (though not in this case borough status) in the medieval period. It was one of 19 of the 45 towns at which a planned area was laid out in the medieval period partially across or - more commonly - immediately adjacent to an established settlement.

3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are ten listed buildings in Martock, Hurst and Bower Hinton which have medieval elements or origins.

4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on Map B

a Communications: roads, streets and routeways

MAR/401 Water Street/Church Street/North Street

The main north-south artery eventually links Somerton to the Foss Way and has the settlements of Stapleton, Limbury, Martock, Hurst, Newton and Bower Hinton strung along it. At Martock the road turns sharply around the church yard to the east; the road may have been realigned with expansion of the cemetery or when the church was rebuilt in the 16th century.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

MAR/401 East Street

East Street forms the southern side of the market place and leads out towards the deserted medieval settlement of Venn in the east of Martock tithing.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

b Manors and estates

MAR/402 The Moat (SMR 54219)

The moat and manor buildings which stood within it probably date to the medieval period. Collingwood describes the manor house as having been embattled and crenellated (1891:5). A document of 1302 describes a manor house, dovecot and garden all within a moated area, however another document dated 1633 describes the scene as “almost all let to ruin” (documents quoted in Bush 1978:86). A single building dating to the 17th century survives although largely rebuilt in 1979. Since the decline of the manor the area within the moat has variously been planted as an orchard, a market garden and let to pasture (Anon 1940:97).

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

c Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MAR/403 All Saints Church SMR(54217)

The Church dates to the 13th and 16th centuries. The earliest tomb stone dates to the late 16th century, although the cemetery is likely to have much earlier origins.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

d Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

not mapped Chapel

A medieval chapel dedicated to the blessed Virgin Mary was demolished in c.1541. Ellison (1983:62) suggests the chapel was located somewhere between the church and the moated site.

e Settlement (Urban)

(a) Market place(s)

MAR/404 Market Place

Ingram de Fiennes obtained a grant for a weekly market in 1247. The medieval market place is triangular in form with North Street, East Street and Church Street leading into it. The ‘Pinnacle’ which now stands in the southern corner of the infilled market area is dated to 1741. However it stands on a medieval stone base which probably once supported a market cross.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

(b) Tenement plots

Two areas have more regular forms which may represent planned building episodes in the medieval period.

MAR/405 West side of Church Street

Both the 1823 Parish Map and 1840 Tithe Map show fairly regular narrow plots along the west side of Church Street.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

East side of North Street

Similarly the plots along the east side of North Street are regular and narrow.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

(c) Other town plots

MAR/406 South side Church Street, south side of Pound Lane and East Street

The plots along the south side of Church Street, the south side of Pound Lane and along both sides of East Street are less regular than those discussed above; this may be due to distortion caused by rebuilding and reorganisation of previously planned areas. The area to the south of Church Street includes the medieval priest’s house now known as the Treasurer’s House. It has a 13th-century core with several phases of later adaptation.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

MAR/407 West side of North Street
The plots along the west side of North Street are of irregular form suggesting they were not planned and may represent a secondary phase of town expansion.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

5 Archaeological components (outlying area), shown on Map C

a Settlement (Rural)

MAR/408 Limbury (SMR 54227)
The hamlet of Limbury was recorded in 1366, in the south-east of Coat tithing (Bush 1978:82). It has now been engulfed by the town of Martock.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

MAR/409 Hurst (SMR 55468)
The rural hamlet of Hurst, situated to the south of Martock, is first mentioned in 1281 (Bush 1978:82). It shared a field system with and was probably originally a secondary settlement of Bower Hinton.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

MAR/410 Newton (SMR 54231)
Between Hurst and Bower Hinton lies the planned settlement of Newton, first mentioned in 1327. Over forty cottages occupy regular shaped plots of half an acre each (Bush 1978:82).

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

MAR/411 Bower Hinton (SMR 54238)
The village of Bower Hinton is first recorded as Hanton Mertoc in 1225 (Bush 1978:82). It would appear to have the form of a 'green village' with a large central rectangular area outlined by Middle Street, Higher Street, Back Lane and Bower Hinton road surrounded by a loose collection of farmsteads.

Taken from the 1823 Parish Map

b Industrial sites: mills

Carey's and Madey's Mills

Both of the mills discussed above continued in use during the medieval period, the mill building at Madey's Mill includes some medieval structural elements (SMR LB 52726).

MAR/412 Fulling Mills (SMR 54234)
Two fulling mills were recorded in Martock in 1506 as "totally waste" (Bush 1978:100). These may have been situated on a site south of Madey's Mill where two fields called Dye House have been located on the 1840 tithe map. These fields lie at the conjunction of Hurst Brook and Mill Brook and beside a stream joining Madey's Mill Stream to Hurst Brook giving several possible locations for water mills.

Taken from the SMR map

5. POST-MEDIEVAL (Maps D and E)

1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

None.

2 Context

The basic pattern of towns had been established by the end of the middle ages, and there were very few major changes in the post-medieval period, though the economic fortunes of particular towns rose and fell. Nearly all the Somerset towns depended on either cloth manufacture or cloth trade to some extent. Martock was no exception, and was one of many of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which held its own economically for much of this period.

3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are 31 listed post-medieval buildings in Limbury, Martock, Hurst and Bower Hinton.

4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on Map D

a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

The listed post-medieval buildings attest some re-development within the existing town form during this period. For example the Manor House on Church street was built in 1679 as a replacement of the manorial buildings in the moated area (LB 52657) (Bush 1978:86).

b Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

MAR/501 Roads shown on the 1808 Surveyors' drawings of Martock have been marked on map D.

Taken from the 1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings

c Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MAR/502 Non-Conformist Cemetery
The 18th-century cemetery continues to be used.

MAR/510 Presbyterian Chapel
The chapel in Pound Lane was built in 1701 and demolished in 1913 (Ellison 1983:62).

d Settlement (Urban)

MAR/503 West Side of North Street
The area to the west of North Street was built over in this period, linking the town of Martock to the hamlet of Limbury.

1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings/Ellison 1983:64

MAR/504 Water Street
Expansion of the town to the south is shown with infilling along Water Street, linking Martock to Hurst.

1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings/Ellison 1983:64

MAR/511 East Street
Some minor expansion along East Street occurred in this period.

1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings/Ellison 1983:64

5 Archaeological components (outlying area), shown on Map E

a Communications: roads, streets and routeways

MAR/507 Roads shown on the 1808 Surveyors' drawings of Martock have been marked on map E.

Taken from the 1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings

b Settlement (Rural)

MAR/506 Bower Hinton Pound (SMR 54233)

The SMR includes the post-medieval pound situated at the west end of Middle Street.

Taken from the SMR Map

c Industrial sites: mills

Carey's and Madey's Mills

Both of the mills discussed above continued in use during the post-medieval period, the house at Carey's Mill dates from the 17th century and is thought to have been associated with a grist or malt mill on the site (SMR LB 52608).

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

(Maps F and G)

1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

None.

2 Context

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

Martock is one of the 22 or so places which though they did not merit Borough or Urban District status at the end of the 19th century, remained market centres and can probably still be regarded as towns (though several of them had sunk towards village status during the course of the century).

3 Standing structures and visible remains

Over sixty listed buildings date to this period.

4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on Map F

a Communications

(a) Bridges

MAR/602 Hurst Bow Bridge

The iron bridge between Hurst and Martock was built by Murch of Bridgwater in 1848. It was a county bridge.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

not mapped

Moat Bridge

Ellison (1983:62) states that the 19th-century bridge over the moat was uncovered and photographed in 1975. The whereabouts of the resulting photographs are not known. Collinson described the bridge as double arched and built of stone (1891:5).

(b) Railways

MAR/601

Railway

The Bristol and Exeter railway, linking Taunton and Yeovil was opened in 1848. Martock station was built to the north of the town at the turning to Coat. It was closed in 1964 and is now mainly dismantled.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MAR/603

Cemetery Extension

The cemetery around All Saints church was extended to the west in 1879 (Ellison 1983:62).

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

c Settlement (Urban)

(a) Market place(s)

MAR/606

Market Place Infilling

The market house was built following the resurrection of the weekly market in 1753 (LB 52653). The market cross or pinnacle was dated to 1741 but stands on a medieval stone base (LB 52652). There are five listed buildings in-filling the market place; four of these date to the industrial period and one to the 17th century. The latter may mark the start of the market place being built over.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

(b) Suburbs

MAR/607

Ashfield House

Ashfield house was built in the 1840s. Much of the land which originally formed its garden has been built over by a 20th century estate.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

MAR/609

New Vicarage

The new vicarage was built in 1874 (Bush 1978:103).

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

MAR/610

East side of Church Street

Some new buildings are shown on the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6" map behind the first row of buildings on the east side of Church Street.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

MAR/611

North side of Water Street

There was infilling on the north side of Water Street during this period.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

d Industrial sites

MAR/612

Paull's Sailcloth Factory

This site was established in 1864, tents and marquees were made here.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

MAR/618 Glove Factory (SMR 54236)
This is one of three 19th-century glove factories in Martock. By 1851 over five hundred women were employed making gloves, making it Martock's most important industry. The location of the other two factories is unknown.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

5 Archaeological components (outlying area), shown on Map G

a Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MAR/616 Bower Hinton United Reformed Church
The church has been established on this site since 1837.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

b Industrial sites

MAR/619 Sparrow's Engineering Works
The Sparrow works moved to Bower Hinton from the Parrett works site in 1868.

Taken from the 1904 OS 2nd Edition 6"

7. 20TH CENTURY

(Maps H and I)

1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

None.

2 Context

The 20th century has seen a vast physical expansion of some existing towns, and some expansion in most of the 45 historic towns covered by the project. However, there have only been limited alterations to the overall pattern of urban settlement. The County Structure Plan still contains fifteen settlements defined as Towns: this is almost identical to the late 19th century list of Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts.

Martock is one of 30 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is not classed as a town in the County Structure Plan.

3 Settlement components, shown on Map H

a Settlement

MAR/701 20th-century expansion has largely consisted of the construction of housing estates. This is shown on map H.

4 Settlement components (outlying area), shown on Map I

a Settlement (Rural)

MAR/702 20th-century rebuilding and expansion is shown on map I.

V. THE POTENTIAL OF MARTOCK

1. Research interests

The research interest of Martock lies in the relationship between the manor, the minster church and the market found together in the Saxon royal estate centre. The variety of settlement forms from Limbury in the north to Bower Hinton in the south make an interesting group.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

The moated site is likely to have good preservation having only been gardened since the demise of the manor buildings. The area between the Mill Brook and Hinton Meads Brook may have waterlogged levels.

3. Limitations

The archaeological potential of Martock is limited by the back of the medieval plots having been built over in

the 20th century.

4. *Extent of current protection*

There are no Scheduled Monuments in Martock. The Area of High Archaeological Potential, listed buildings and conservation area are shown on map J.

5. *Management Proposals*

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

VI. SOURCES

1. *General documentary (Somerset/ Wessex)*

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3. Maps

1808 OS Surveyors' Drawings at 3": fiche in SLHL
1811 Parish Map: SRO DD/WY
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1840 Tithe Map: fiche in SLHL
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1904 OS 2nd Edition 6": SRO
1982 OS 1:10000
1995 OS digital Maps

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Component to map

<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>
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MAR/302	A		
MAR/304	A	MAR/506	E
MAR/305	A	MAR/507	E
MAR/401	B	MAR/601	F
MAR/401	B	MAR/602	F
MAR/403	B	MAR/603	F
MAR/404	B	MAR/604	F
MAR/405	B	MAR/606	F
MAR/406	B	MAR/607	F
MAR/407	B	MAR/609	F
		MAR/610	F
MAR/408	C	MAR/611	F
MAR/409	C	MAR/612	F
MAR/410	C	MAR/613	F
MAR/411	C	MAR/618	F
MAR/412	C		
MAR/413	C	MAR/616	G
		MAR/619	G
MAR/501	D		
MAR/502	D	MAR/701	H
MAR/503	D	MAR/702	I
MAR/504	D		
MAR/510	D		

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Maps

Map A - Saxon

Map B - Medieval core

Earlier components in yellow.

Map C - Medieval wider area

Earlier components in yellow.

Map D - Post-medieval core

Earlier components in yellow.

Map E - Post-medieval, Bower Hinton

Earlier components in yellow.

Map F - Industrial core

Earlier components in yellow.

Map G - Industrial, Bower Hinton

Earlier components in yellow.

Map H - 20th-century core

Earlier components in yellow.

Map I - 20th-century, Bower Hinton

Earlier components in yellow.

Map J - Existing designations

Key: Scheduled Monuments (none),
Listed Buildings Grade I (light blue)
Grade II* (light green)
Grade II (green)
Registered Park (none)
Conservation Area (green)
Area of High Archaeological Potential (pink)