

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

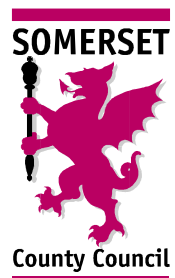
An archaeological assessment of

North Petherton

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

NORTH PETHERTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Clare Gathercole

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

NORTH PETHERTON

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

Sources for the urban settlement at North Petherton are limited. The parish has been covered by the Victoria County History, which details the complexities of the surrounding manors' history. There is a map of 1770, showing plots in the town, though not in full detail.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTH PETHERTON

North Petherton lies below the eastern foothills of the Quantocks, in an area once largely marsh and prone to flooding. As with other marsh and marginal areas in Somerset, the land appears to have been exploited in prehistoric times, possibly on a seasonal basis: isolated neolithic and bronze age artefacts have been recovered, and a mesolithic flint assemblage was recovered from Greenway Farm, to the south of the present settlement.

Some 2nd and 3rd century Roman activity is suggested by finds of Roman material just east of North Petherton, but little is known of its extent or character.

North Petherton was at the centre of a large royal estate in the Saxon period, and the hundred meeting place. It was never hidated, but by Domesday was of 30 ploughlands, considerably larger than most private holdings: North Petherton is still one of the largest parishes in Somerset. The record at Domesday of a pre-Conquest church on an estate of such size and status suggests a minster foundation (Leach, 1977), with dependent chapels at Chedzoy, Pawlett and, possibly, St Michaelchurch (though this was independent by 1066). It is likely that the settlement of North Petherton itself (for which there is no evidence earlier than the 10th century) grew up around the minster. Whilst not originally urban in form, North Petherton had some central functions by the end of the Saxon period, with a short lived mint in operation around 1045 (Dolley, 1967).

After the conquest, the monarchy retained an interest in the lands. The royal park to the east was extended under Henry II into a royal forest centred on North Petherton. The bounds of the forest are not known in detail: it may have lain mainly on the Quantocks or on the marshes (Rackham, 1988). North Petherton acted as an administrative centre for the forest, and the chief forester of Somerset owned land there, but in the 13th century the bounds were restricted, and the town's functions were redirected into the royal park. North Petherton was also surrounded by several small manors.

The medieval borough is something of an enigma, and its relationship with the settlement's royal administrative functions unclear. There is a reference to a burghage in North Petherton in 1251-2 (Dunning, 1992), although the borough was not separately represented at the eyres of 1225 or 1242-3, nor at the law hundreds of the 1430s. In the 1490s, however, a list of fines refers to Petherton Burgus (Leach, 1977). North Petherton flourished in the later middle ages - witness the rebuilding of the church - but with Bridgwater so close, its prosperity seems to have been based more on agricultural and pastoral activity combined with good communications.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the coming of the turnpike and the repeated improvement of the route through the town maintained North Petherton's communications, although it was not directly touched by canal or railway. The market, a large corn market according to Collinson (1791), continued throughout the post-medieval period, and the park was converted into fields during this time. There was little urban growth, however, until comparatively recently when the town has become a commuter settlement beside the M5.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NORTH PETHERTON

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological knowledge

There has been some fieldwork in connection with the building of the M5, resulting in the discovery of some possible early sites east of the town. In the centre itself, there has been one excavation, on a site to the west of the church, which took place in 1975. This site, though quite small, was dug partly as research for the previous towns survey in Somerset (Aston & Leech, 1977), and produced information on three periods of the town's history.

0.2 Standing structures

There are few very early standing structures, but buildings survive from the late medieval and post-medieval periods (qv).

1. PREHISTORIC

(No map)

1.1 Archaeological knowledge

While there is nothing to suggest prehistoric settlement at North Petherton itself, work in advance of the M5 produced evidence for the (possibly seasonal) use of the Parrett valley by mesolithic hunters. The site (SMR 10617) at Greenway Farm, at the eastern edge of the Quantock foothills, contained a mesolithic flint assemblage, and it is thought that there are likely to be other similar sites in the area (Norman, 1975). Some neolithic and bronze age material has been found closer to the town itself (neolithic axe, SMR 10648, near Pilot's Helm; bronze age knife in Dyer Close) and possibly late prehistoric enclosures appear on aerial photographs of the area to the north of the town (SMR 11886-88,90).

1.2 Context

North Petherton 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 areas subsequently built up. 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. In the case of North Petherton, however, the site would have been on the edge of the marshlands of the Levels, and the evidence so far indicates seasonal exploitation, with an important mesolithic (hunter-gatherer) flint assemblage coming from near the town.

1.3 Archaeological features

1.3.a Water

The 1975 excavation west of the church produced no prehistoric material, but it did reveal an ancient river channel. This ran east west under the church, roughly parallel to the modern stream, but with a greater water flow. It was probably a periglacial feature, a twelve to fifteen thousand year old predecessor of today's stream.

No map has been produced for this period.

2. ROMAN

(Map A)

2.1 Archaeological knowledge

There is little evidence of the extent of Roman activity in the area of North Petherton. Apart from the M5 work (see below), a Roman coin (SMR 10647) was found in Baymead Lane.

2.2 Context

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.

North Petherton is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is no evidence of Roman settlement on the site of the later town, though there was certainly some activity in the area. This lay just above the floodplains of the Parrett, in the foothills of the Quantocks, but evidence suggests that Roman influence was less felt in these areas than in those further east.

2.3 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

2.3.a Settlement

NPE/201

The possible Roman settlement site

M5 work revealed a possible settlement site (SMR 10619) just east of North Petherton. This consisted of a ditch, sandstone slab and stakeholes, with 2nd and 3rd century pottery and a coin. The site was quite badly disturbed by later quarrying.

Mapped from the SMR.

3. SAXON

(Map A)

3.1 Archeological knowledge

North Petherton must have been an important centre in the Saxon period, but little is known of its archaeology. Apart from the discovery of the Alfred Jewel, which was found in the north-west corner of Petherton Park, the evidence of Saxon North Petherton comes from the excavation of a plot west of the church, which took place in 1975.

3.2 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.

North Petherton is one of fifteen out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which already had some urban functions or features before the Conquest. In fact, it is one of eleven places which may have had a mint in the 10th or 11th centuries. All of the mints were associated either with royal estate centres or with their linked burhs (fortified sites); in this case, it was the former. North Petherton is also one of 22 out of the 45 towns associated with a known or probable pre-Conquest minster.

3.3 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

3.3.a Settlement

NPE/301

The Saxon settlement

There may have been a Saxon settlement focussed on the church. This suggestion is based partly on archaeological evidence of some late Saxon timber structures west of the church (Leach, 1977). It is also based on the supposition that a minster existed on the same site as the later medieval church. Within this area, therefore, remains of Saxon buildings and plot boundaries, streets, ecclesiastical buildings and burials may survive, though the latter will probably lie under the present church and churchyard. Within this area also lie two medieval mills, at least one of which (probably Baril's Mill, later the manor mill) was active by Domesday.

It is important to remember that the limits of Saxon settlement as mapped are highly conjectural. The extent of the minster precinct is unknown, and it may have extended some way to the south of the mapped area. Moreover, there is a possibility of some kind of early administrative hall, not necessarily in the same area as the settlement.

4. MEDIEVAL

(Map B)

4.1 Archaeological knowledge

Again, little definite is known of medieval North Petherton. There is some evidence from the excavation west of the church, which relates only to a small part of the town.

4.2 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.

North Petherton is one of the fifteen places out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which either were boroughs or at least had some urban functions before the Conquest. Though not described as a borough before the Conquest, it was one of five of the places with some pre-Conquest urban functions which acquired borough status during 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.

4.3 Standing structures

There are few standing remains, apart from the late medieval rebuild of the church. Map B shows the medieval Listed Buildings.

4.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map B

4.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

The medieval town components have been defined across the possible Saxon settlement area.

4.4.b Communications: Roads, streets and routeways

NPE/417

Early roads

Since the medieval period, North Petherton has lain on the main Bridgwater route. However, the way through the town was notoriously convoluted. Before the coming of the turnpike in the 1730s, the main route came in from Farringdon to the south-west. The earliest maps postdate the turnpike, and show the new route coming directly from the south, but they predate the early 19th century widening and straightening of the roads through the town centre: they may therefore give an impression of the medieval street plan.

The plan is a comparatively intricate one, with lanes appearing to enclose large blocks of land in a regular fashion on three sides of the church: the remains of these outlines can still be seen, but the 1770 map shows that they used to be much broader, particularly to the north. There are two major interruptions to the circuit: the first, to the south-east is caused by Baymead, which is known to have been land of the chief forester of Somerset in medieval times; the second, to the north-east, where the old and new routes to Bridgwater leave town, is an area marked as "Broad Burgage" on the 1770 map. On the periphery there are at least two small foci, at Dyer's Green and Pilot's Helm (called Pillocks Elms on the 1770 map). Within the area enclosed by lanes, the main route dog legs through the centre in an irregular fashion. The main street was narrower to the west before the 19th century, and so there are likely to be frontages underlying it. However, Fore Street (High Street) may originally have been wider to the north of the church.

The details and the significance of North Petherton's old streets are not fully understood.

Map B shows the major roads at the end of the post-medieval period. These are taken from the 1770 map and the 1802 OS surveyors' drawings.

4.4.c Manors and estates

NPE/416

Petherton Park

The Forest jurisdiction was still in force when the borough of North Petherton seems to have begun (mid 13th century): we do not know how far this affected the development of the town, and it is probably not a question which can be best answered archaeologically. The subsequent royal park, to the east of the town, had its bounds marked by watercourses, later named brooks.

The approximate boundary of the Park is taken from Dunning & Siraut, 1992.

NPE/415

Parkers Field

To the west of the park, the lands of Parkers Field (NPE/415) lay adjacent to the town. These lands were only encroached upon in the 19th and 20th centuries.

NPE/410, NPE/411, NPE/412, NPE/413

The surrounding manors

North Petherton was surrounded by the lands of various manors, including Hulkshay (NPE/410) and Melcombe (NPE/411), Shovel (NPE/413) and Stamfordlands (NPE/412) and there are several important medieval farms and manor house sites (not all definitely located) associated with them. Associated SMR sites include a possible dovecote site at Hulkshay (SMR 10601) and a post-medieval mill (SMR 10602) at Mellcombe.

The outlines of these areas are taken from the 19th century maps, with reference to information in the SMR.

4.4.d Burial sites and places of worship

NPE/403 The medieval churchyard

The church (SMR 10600; SMR LB 13601), on sloping ground above the stream, was dedicated by 1086, and belonged to Buckland Priory from the 12th century onwards. The earliest remaining fabric is 13th century, most of the fabric being a 15th century rebuild. However, the 1977 excavation produced a lime pit, dated to the 12th or 13th century, which is thought to have been associated with the construction of the earlier stone church. This itself could have replaced an earlier Saxon building on the same site.

The churchyard contains the remains of a 15th century cross (SMR 11003, SM 28820).

The churchyard outline is from the 1770 map.

NPE/404 The medieval cemetery extension

The current extent of the churchyard does not represent its medieval bounds. It may not have reached as far as Fore Street to the north (Dunning and Siraut, 1992). The lime pit, however, lay on a plot of land to the west of the church. Though occupied in the 11th century, this plot appears to have been scantily used in the early middle ages: rubbish pits succeeded the lime pit. The reason for this is uncertain, but presumably the land was attached to the churchyard. In the 14th century, it was in use as a cemetery (SMR 10599): the excavators thought that this might represent a plague cemetery since it appeared short-lived and contained a large inhumation pit as well as well-spaced burials. The boundaries of the cemetery were not defined by the excavation, but it probably spread as far as the stream. This area was redeveloped in the late middle ages, and the excavation revealed a quite substantial sequence of post-medieval building ranges, including the Nag's Head Inn, together with pits at the back.

This area is based on the information in Leech, 1977.

NPE/406 The church land

There are also references to a hospicium (guest house), a garden and a vineyard attached to the church. The old vicarage lies south of the church on what used to be an island defined by two branches of the stream going down to Higher Baymead Mill (which also probably belonged to Buckland) and it could be that this whole area was church land, maybe as far down as the rectory (Dunning and Siraut suggest that the manor house for the part of the manor belonging to Buckland may have lain here). There could, therefore, be some important medieval remains in the area, surrounded perhaps by the open spaces of gardens and orchards. The area remained relatively undisturbed until the 20th century, when it was overtaken by modern suburban developments.

This area is conjectural and is based on the information in the Victoria County History (Dunning & Siraut, 1992).

4.4.e Settlement (Urban)

(a) The market

NPE/402 The market place

North Petherton's market was granted in 1318, but probably existed before then. The most likely market place is the broad triangular area formed by the modern Queen Street and Clare Street (post-medieval Pound Street and Silver Street), which would once have been an open area, slightly larger than it now appears: the 1770 map shows post-medieval encroachment on its western side, as well as the island in the middle.

The market place is mapped from the 1770 map.

Not mapped It is possible that an earlier market took place in a broader High Street, north of the church, on land which subsequently became churchyard and the domestic plots uncovered by excavation. High Street is documented as containing the shire hall, court house and guildhall, these presumably lying on the north side opposite the church.

(b) The burgage plots

NPE/405

Fore Street north

The position of the burgage plots in North Petherton was dictated by pre-existing land holdings. The 1770 map shows plots running back from the north side of Fore Street which could represent such plots, but nothing to the south (confirmed by excavation west of the church) or the west.

NPE/401

Broad Burgage

The 1770 map also shows an areas called "Broad Burgage" and "Broad Burgage Mead" which spread out to the east of the town. These may represent the remains of a failed burgage area, or the fields attached to the borough in medieval or post-medieval times: they appear on the 1770 map to be mainly fields, except for a small area fronting onto the medieval main street. The character of any remaining archaeology in these areas ought to be assessed if possible, though further documentary research would be appropriate prior to this.

NPE/408

The east side of the market

These areas may also contain the remains of early burgage plots, though typical long, narrow plots are not now in evidence.

All the above areas were mapped from the 1770 map.

All the potential burgage areas have been affected by post-medieval and 19th century street front redevelopment and road schemes: the areas marked as meadow on the 1770 plan remained undisturbed until this century, but have now been built over.

(c) Other Medieval urban occupation

NPE/407

Medieval occupation

The overall extent of medieval settlement is unclear. Areas south of the High Street were occupied: Hammet Street (then called Southbroke Street) is documented in the 14th century. There are certain to be the remains of medieval buildings underlying later frontages, though these areas have been repeatedly redeveloped through the years.

These areas are taken from the 1770 map.

4.4.f Industrial sites

There were at least two medieval mills in the town itself:

NPE/418

Baril's Mill

Baril's (Barrel's) Mill (SMR 10629), west of the town centre, may be the same as the manor mill mentioned at Domesday, although it was also called the New Mill in 1349. This mill continued in use until c1920, by which time it was known as Petherton Mills and steam powered. It has subsequently been demolished and the pond filled in.

NPE/414

Higher Baymead Mill

The mill south of the church, Higher Baymead Mill, is probably the one recorded as belonging to the church in 1235. By the 18th century, it was a malt mill and a grist mill. It survived as a mill until 1899, and now as a private house, the Old Mill (SMR 10631).

The sites are marked from the SMR.

Not mapped

There was also at least one mill at Hulkshay (see p7), just west of North Petherton, which served Melcombe manor.

4.4.g Agricultural sites

NPE/409

Closes and open land in the town

Some lands within the street circuit were in private hands and seem to have been long-standing open areas. The north-west corner of the town was part of the manor lands, and part at least remained largely open until the 20th century. Along Tappers Lane, however, there was extensive post-medieval building. South of Tappers Lane the land was mainly an orchard in the post-medieval period, and may have lain similarly open in earlier centuries. Jefferie's Acre, north-west of the market place, formed an open space until the 20th century.

These areas are based on the 1770 and 1816 maps.

5. POST-MEDIEVAL

(Map C)

5.1 Archaeological knowledge

The 1975 excavation by the church revealed post-medieval structures, but there is little other archaeological information for this period.

5.2 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. North Petherton 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.

5.3 Standing structures

More of the post-medieval town fabric survives, and there are several listed 17th and 18th century buildings in, for example, Church Walk (SMR LB 13592), Clare Street (SMR LB 13594), Fore Street (the George Inn, SMR LB 13600), Hammet Street (SMR LB 13609) and Mill Street (SMR LB 13619). Map C shows the Listed Buildings of this period.

5.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map C

5.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under "medieval" are shown in lighter shading. Most post-medieval developments took place within the layout of the medieval settlement. The excavation west of the church found a lane running behind post-medieval tenements and there may be similar minor plan variations to be discovered. The major developments on enclosed but open ground in the west part of the town, have been defined for this period.

5.4.b Communications: Roads

NPE/504

The turnpikes

The main street, called High Street then, had several inns on it, including the Nag's Head, the remains of which were excavated (Leach, 1975). In 1730, it became the turnpike road, the route coming in from the south, along the High Street, up through the putative market place and then north-east towards Bridgwater.

From the 1802 maps and Bentley & Murless, 1985.

5.4.c Settlement

NPE/501

Post-medieval expansion and encroachments

The main post-medieval expansion, which was in the west of the town, on the new turnpike approach. There was also infilling of the old back lanes.

These areas are from the 1770 map.

NPE/502 Post-medieval farms
The farms of probable post-medieval origin include those of Baymead and Dyers Green.

From the 1802 and early 19th century maps.

5.4.d Industrial sites

Milling continued to be a major occupation, with the two medieval mills continuing in business.

NPE/503 Baymead Mill
Baymead Mill (SMR 10184), east of the town centre, is first referred to in the post-medieval period, though it may have been older. It had two grist mills in 1747, though only one in 1787; a steam mill is recorded there in 1906, but it was out of use by 1910.

The outline of the mill is from the 1888 map.

Not mapped The Hulkshay mill was succeeded by Melcombe Mill (SMR 10602), west of the town, though there may also have been another fulling mill at Hulkshay after the medieval mill. Water pollution was recorded in 1707 and it is thought there was a tannery in the area, but this has not been located. Malting was practised in the town from the 17th century onwards, though the surviving malthouses are 19th century. North Petherton was surrounded by orchards in the post-medieval period, but these have not been mapped.

6. INDUSTRIAL

(Map D)

6.1 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.

North Petherton 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).

6.2 Standing structures

There are a few 19th century Listed Buildings in the town (SMR LB 13591, 13606), some around Shovel to the south-west (SMR LB 13596-8; smr 10183), and some along Old Road, the old turnpike route east, where a new cemetery and mortuary chapel were built later in the century (SMR LB 13627-8). Map D shows Listed Buildings of 19th century origin.

6.3 Archaeological components, shown on Map D

6.3.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under earlier periods are shown in lighter shading.

6.3.b Communications: Roads

NPE/604 Turnpike realignments

In the early 19th century, there was some redevelopment associated with the alteration of the turnpike road through the town. The road was widened and straightened through the centre, and to the south of the town, Hyde Park Corner was bypassed.

From the 1888 map.

6.3.c Burial sites and places of worship

NPE/603 The cemetery
The combined Non-Conformist and Anglican mortuary chapel and cemetery (SMR 10178-9; SMR LB 13627-8), on a greenfield site.

From the 1888 map.

Not mapped The new vicarage was built in Fore Street on the site of three former dwellings, in the late 18th century, enlarged in the 19th, and still survives. There were several chapels built, including those of the Wesleyan Methodists, and the Congregationalists (SMR 10194).

6.3.d Settlement (Urban)

NPE/601 19th century suburban and general development
Suburban development began down the new turnpike road, with the construction of large houses, and there was a similar growth along Tappers Lane, the old road to Farringdon. Map D shows the piecemeal 19th century expansion around the fringes of the town.

The plots are taken from the 1841, 1888 and 1904 maps.

6.3.e Settlement (Rural)

NPE/602 19th century farms, from the 1888 map.

6.3.f Industrial sites

NPE/605 A smithy at Pilots Helm.

From the 1888 map.

Not mapped The malthouse in Hammet Street (SMR 10634) was in existence by 1816, and there was another one at the Petherton Mill. Starkey's Brewery on Fore Street developed from a malthouse on Fore Street.

7. 20TH CENTURY**7.1 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. North Petherton 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.

7.2 Settlement components, shown on Map E**7.2.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components**

Map E shows the modern expansion. Components described under earlier periods are shown in lighter shading.

All components are defined from the 1995 OS digital maps or the 1962 & 1978 maps.

7.2.b Settlement

NPE/701 20th century development (general)

NPE/702 20th century farms

7.2.c Industrial sites

NPE/703 The Gasworks

North Petherton was one of the few towns in Britain to be lit by Acetylene Gas, perhaps the only

one (Anon, 1988). The gas works used one of the old mill buildings and the street lamps were lit in 1906. The works closed in 1931 when town gas came from Bridgwater.

Location from R A Croft (pers. comm.).

V. THE POTENTIAL OF NORTH PETHERTON

1. *Research interests*

The Saxon settlement of North Petherton is of great interest since the suspected importance of the estate centre has not been confirmed archaeologically. There may be three elements to be defined: the administrative centre (and hundred meeting place?), the minster and the settlement growing up around it.

Elements of the medieval town are also obscure: the extent of church land, the precise significance of the street plan, the possible early market place, the character of "Broad Burgage".

2. *Areas of potentially exceptional preservation*

The focus of the town stands on a rise of ground above the stream, but there are possible wetlands at Baymead.

3. *Limitations*

The archaeological deposits have been shown to be fairly shallow in the centre of the town. Nevertheless, there was surviving early archaeology west of the church. Much of the most recent, and therefore most damaging, developments have taken place on greenfield sites.

4. *Extent of current protection*

(shown on Map F)

There is one Scheduled Monument (SM 28820, the churchyard cross) in North Petherton. An AHAP has been defined to cover the medieval core of the town, and there are several Listed Buildings.

5. *Management proposals*

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

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- 1904 OS 1:10560
- 1962 OS 1:10000 + SMR DATA
- 1978 OS 1:10000 + SMR DATA

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Component to map

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NPE/401	B	NPE/413	B
NPE/402	B	NPE/414	B
NPE/403	B	NPE/415	B
NPE/404	B	NPE/416	B
NPE/405	B	NPE/417	B
NPE/406	B	NPE/418	B
NPE/407	B	NPE/501	C
NPE/408	B	NPE/502	C
NPE/409	B	NPE/503	C
NPE/410	B	NPE/504	C

NPE/601	D	NPE/605	D
NPE/602	D	NPE/701	E
NPE/603	D	NPE/702	E
NPE/604	D	NPE/703	E

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Maps

Map A - Roman and Saxon

Map B - Medieval

Map C - Post-medieval

Earlier components in yellow.

Map D - 19th century

Earlier components in yellow.

Map E - 20th century

Earlier components in yellow.

Map F - Existing designations

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