

Historic Environment Character Zone

HSAS Hungerford Suburban Area - South

Historic Character

This is a zone of recent housing developments and associated civic amenities that have expanded southwards from the historic core of Hungerford. Prior to development most of the zone was part of Hungerford's agricultural hinterland and was composed of fields created by Parliamentary enclosure of the town's open fields and common meadow. A very small area of historic settlement named Smitham Bridge existed next to the river Shalbourne at the north-western tip of the zone. This has been largely redeveloped, but some historic buildings remain. A single country house named The Priory had been built by the late 19th century to the south of Hungerford. Most of the development in the zone was constructed in the 1960s and 1970s and is characterised by small housing estates with schools and playing fields. Smaller housing developments were constructed around the edge of the zone during the 1990s and 2000s. Some large open areas also exist around the edge and mostly comprise playing-fields and recreation areas.

Historic Environment

Little archaeological work has been carried out in this zone. Four records are for the prehistoric period and three of these consist of finds of flintwork. These finds include fifteen Mesolithic cores found in the Priory Road area which may be indicative of a flintworking site. The other prehistoric record is of the chance discovery of Iron Age pits during roadworks near the water treatment works. There is considerable evidence of prehistoric and Romano-British activity in neighbouring areas and it is possible that further material and features from these periods is present in this zone. Smitham Bridge is documented in the 16th century but is likely to have been an earlier ford. Aside from the Kennet and Avon canal and Great Western railway line which cross this HECZ, the remaining record is for Hungerford Workhouse. The workhouse was demolished in the 1990s and the site redeveloped for housing. The sparseness of medieval and post-medieval records reflects the fact that most of the zone was under cultivation during these periods and was not densely settled.

Historic Environment Potential

The potential of this zone is difficult to assess as so few HER records exist and very little archaeological work has been carried out. The potential of much of this zone is likely to be low due to disturbance of sub-surface deposits by housing construction. By analogy with adjacent areas, there is the potential for Mesolithic, later prehistoric and Romano-British material but the location and quality of any existing deposits is unknown. Much medieval and post-medieval material is unlikely to be present.

Historic Environment Action Plan

Conservation Issues

- Development pressure in this area.
- Archaeological records are sparse and further clarification of the nature and extent of any deposits would be welcome.

Research Potential

- Do the Mesolithic finds from Priory Road indicate a centre of activity?
- What is the nature of the Iron Age activity near the sewage treatment works?
- Do any buildings of local significance survive in the zone?