

KHC Kintbury Historic Core

Historic Character

A small historic village, Kintbury has been a settlement from the early medieval period onwards. Much of the layout of the village is medieval and the main streets retain a large number of historic buildings dating back to the 18th century. Kintbury Lodge, a minor parkland, exists on the eastern edge of the village. Kintbury has been a focus of housing growth, and housing developments were constructed around the village edge in the 1960's and 1990's. Some redevelopment and infilling has occurred within the village core, mostly between the church and mill, but it has had a limited effect on the historic character of the zone.

Historic Environment

HER records are quite dense in this zone, and the majority relate to sub-surface deposits, listed buildings and documentary references. There is a history of the chance discovery of archaeological material during building and landscaping works, but there has also been archaeological work carried out in the zone, mostly in advance of, or during, development.

Evidence for prehistoric activity has been discovered during archaeological work and is thought to come from an as yet un-located settlement in the zone. The village core lies next to an important concentration of Mesolithic activity, and it is possible that features or material of this date exist within the zone. Some Romano-British material was also found during this work but is thought to be indicative of activity in the area rather than a settlement of this date.

Much of the archaeological material from the zone is early medieval. Evidence for contemporary activity comes from excavated burials, rubbish pits and possible plot boundaries. Some of the burials have been interpreted as pagan suggesting activity in the zone from a relatively early date. Kintbury is thought to have been a late-Saxon proto-urban centre, but the nature and extent of this settlement is unclear. Material of this date from the village indicates that the settlement was located around the site of the present late medieval church.

Kintbury did not grow into a town during the late medieval period, probably due to the establishment of the nearby market centres of Hungerford and Newbury, and HER records of this date are scarce. St. Mary's church is the only known medieval building and is also listed. The church dates to the 12th and 13th centuries but was heavily restored in the 19th century. Much of the layout of the village and its plot patterns are probably medieval in date.

There is a significant stock of historic buildings, and with the exception of the church, are apparently post-medieval in date. Much of the village has been designated as a Conservation Area and fifteen structures are listed buildings. The majority of the listed buildings are in the centre and eastern part of the village and form three distinct groupings; church and funerary monuments, domestic structures, and bridges. Domestic structures form the largest component comprising eight buildings. It is possible that further investigation of the historic building stock could locate other significant structures or medieval structural elements.

Historic Environment Potential

The existing HER record is patchy but this is unsurprising since the zone has been covered in buildings for several hundred years. The work that has been carried out has shown that buried deposits are present, and archaeological potential should be high across much of the zone. It is possible that truncation of deposits may have occurred in places along the street frontage due to cellaring. Deposits of a Mesolithic and later prehistoric date are likely within the zone, and

Historic Environment Character Zone

Romano-British material is also possible. The development of Kintbury as a settlement from the early medieval period onwards is very poorly understood. The potential for deposits relating to early and later medieval occupation and burial is high and these will be crucial in understanding how the village developed. The historic building stock has been partially studied but it is likely that further significant buildings will be identified, and possibly medieval structural elements discovered within later buildings.

Historic Environment Action Plan

Conservation Issues

- Conservation Area appraisal and management plan is overdue.
- Redevelopment of the small number of 'Brownfield' sites in the village centre presents an opportunity for archaeological research, but a threat to the character of the settlement.
- The historic building stock is poorly understood and could therefore be threatened by inappropriate alterations/development.
- Need to stimulate greater interest in the history and historic environment potential within the community.
- More information about the form and character of the settlement is required to inform future development proposals. Need to undertake a new archaeological/historic character study.

Research Potential

- Does evidence for Mesolithic activity survive within the zone?
- Is there any Romano-British settlement activity in the zone? Does evidence for settlement continuity survive?
- What was the date and location of the first early medieval (Saxon) settlement? What was the status and character of the early settlement?
- How and when did the later medieval settlement expand away from the early medieval core? What was the status of the later medieval settlement? Is it possible to determine why it reduced in status?
- What is the date and significance of the historic building stock in the village?
- Does archaeological evidence of the impact of the Canal and Railway on the economic and social structure of the settlement exist?