

**PSA            Pangbourne Suburban Area**

**Historic Character**

This is a zone of early 20<sup>th</sup> century and recent housing developments that have expanded from the historic village of Pangbourne. Prior to development most of the zone was part of Pangbourne's agricultural hinterland and was composed of irregularly-shaped fields created from open fields and areas of meadow next to the Pang and Thames. The Great Western Railway was constructed through the village and a station established in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As well as turning Pangbourne into a popular Victorian riverside resort, the arrival of the railway led to settlement growth around the village. The housing of this period is typified by small terraced developments and large detached villa properties. Further housing developments were built to the south in the 1960s, and by the 1970s the village had more or less reached its current size. There has been some early 21<sup>st</sup> century housing development between the railway and river northeast of the historic core.

**Historic Environment**

HER records are fairly sparse in this zone and are dominated by chance finds of archaeological material and standing structures. The zone was covered by the Middle Thames Survey and the National Mapping Programme, but they found no features in the zone and little other archaeological work has been carried out.

Limited evidence of prehistoric activity has been recovered from the zone. A small amount of flintwork has been found at three locations in the zone, but has not been closely dated. A Neolithic burial was disturbed during construction of a tennis court at Courtlands Hill in the 1920s. The site was not properly excavated and it is not clear if any other features were present. The only later prehistoric material from the zone is a casual find of a Bronze Age palstave axe. Evidence of significant Neolithic to Iron Age activity is known from adjacent parts of the Thames valley floor and it is possible that features or material of these periods may exist within the zone.

There is some evidence for Romano-British activity in this zone. The present A340 and A329 are thought to follow the course of the Roman road from Silchester to Dorchester. A Roman cemetery was found at Shooter's Hill during construction of the Railway in the 1830s, but was not properly excavated. It is unclear how large the cemetery was or how far it extended, and reports on the number of burials seen range from five to hundreds. It is possible that further parts of the cemetery extend into the zone. Given the existence of a cemetery, it is probable that a settlement may have existed somewhere in this zone.

There are few medieval and post-medieval records in the zone. This reflects the fact that much of the zone was under cultivation during these periods. Medieval pits were discovered during an archaeological evaluation of probable burgrave plots on the edge of Pangbourne's historic core. The significance of a surviving historic farmstead at Flower's Court was recognised in 2008 when the farmhouse, granary and buttery were listed.

There are several other listed buildings in the zone: most are houses built in the 1890s and reflect the development of Pangbourne as a Victorian retreat. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses include a group of buildings overlooking the Thames on Shooter's Hill (locally referred to as 'The Seven Deadly Sins'). Three 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century cottages, a Victorian school, and three milestones along the 18<sup>th</sup> century turnpike road are also listed, as is the cast iron toll bridge between Pangbourne and Whitchurch-on-Thames. A barge building shed had been built next to the river in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was another reflection of Pangbourne's riverside resort heyday. This

## *Historic Environment Character Zone*

has now been redeveloped, but was recorded prior to demolition. Three Second World War pillboxes and a gun-emplacement from the GHQ stop-line are recorded in the east of Pangbourne. These structures were an important component of this system but many are falling into disrepair through redundancy and disuse.

### **Historic Environment Potential**

It is likely that significant Neolithic to Romano-British activity was present across this zone, but it is unclear whether any archaeological deposits of these periods exist. The potential of much of the zone is likely to have been reduced due to disturbance of below-ground deposits by housing construction. Much of Pangbourne does not consist of very high-density housing and it is possible that archaeological deposits survive in garden and other open areas.

### **Historic Environment Action Plan**

#### Conservation Issues

- The area has high potential for Roman and possibly also early medieval archaeological discoveries.
- More detail is needed on the historic building stock to ensure appropriate policies are put in place to conserve this resource.
- More information about the form and character of the village is required to inform future development proposals. Need to undertake a new archaeological/historic character study.

#### Research Priorities

- What was the nature, and extent of the cemetery at Shooters Hill? Is there a related settlement nearby?
- Is there continuity of settlement from the Roman period to the current day?
- What is the date and significance of the historic building stock in the village?
- Can archaeological study of the WWII stop line features advance our understanding of military strategy?