

## *Historic Environment Character Zone*

### **UEF            Urban East Fringe**

#### **Historic Character**

Lying on the eastern fringes of Reading, this is a zone of mixed use, and is neither built-up nor wholly rural in character. The zone comprises small fields, sports areas, some waste-ground and scrubby recent woodland. Historically, the zone was characterised by farms, early enclosures, parliamentary fields, and meadows. The fields that remain within this zone are heavily altered, and several are very irregularly-shaped due to truncation by adjacent developments.

#### **Historic Environment**

HER records are very scarce in this zone and the only recorded archaeological work that has been carried out is fieldwalking by the Lower Kennet Valley Survey and an evaluation in the 1980s at Turnham's Farm. Activity of all periods has been documented in adjacent zones, but only a small number of pre-20<sup>th</sup> century records exist. The majority of these are prehistoric findspots with some Roman and late medieval finds also documented. The 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse complex at Pincent's Manor are the only pre-20<sup>th</sup> century buildings recorded. The 15<sup>th</sup> century barn at the site has however recently been destroyed by fire. Second World War structures associated with the defence of the Theale munitions factory and the GHQ stop-line are also recorded.

#### **Historic Environment Potential**

On the basis of evidence from surrounding zones and from the Lower Kennet Valley Survey, buried archaeological deposits are possible across this zone. The nature and quality of any deposits is hard to estimate on present evidence and it is also possible that any adjacent to the river could be well-preserved. An area of specific potential exists at Pincent's Manor where deposits and structural remains relating to medieval and later occupation are likely to be present.

#### **Historic Environment Action Plan**

##### Conservation Issues

- There is continued development pressure in the area.
- Management of WWII features.

##### Research Priorities

- Does the paucity of evidence for the prehistoric period represent a genuine picture of the level of activity in the zone in this period?
- Are medieval deposits likely to survive at Pincent's Manor?
- Do historic buildings at the farms in the zone contain information about post-medieval and modern farming practises?
- Can the surviving WWII defensive features in the Kennet and Thames valleys help us understand the military and political history of that period?