



Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project NEWSLETTER

Bulletin No 1: March 2008

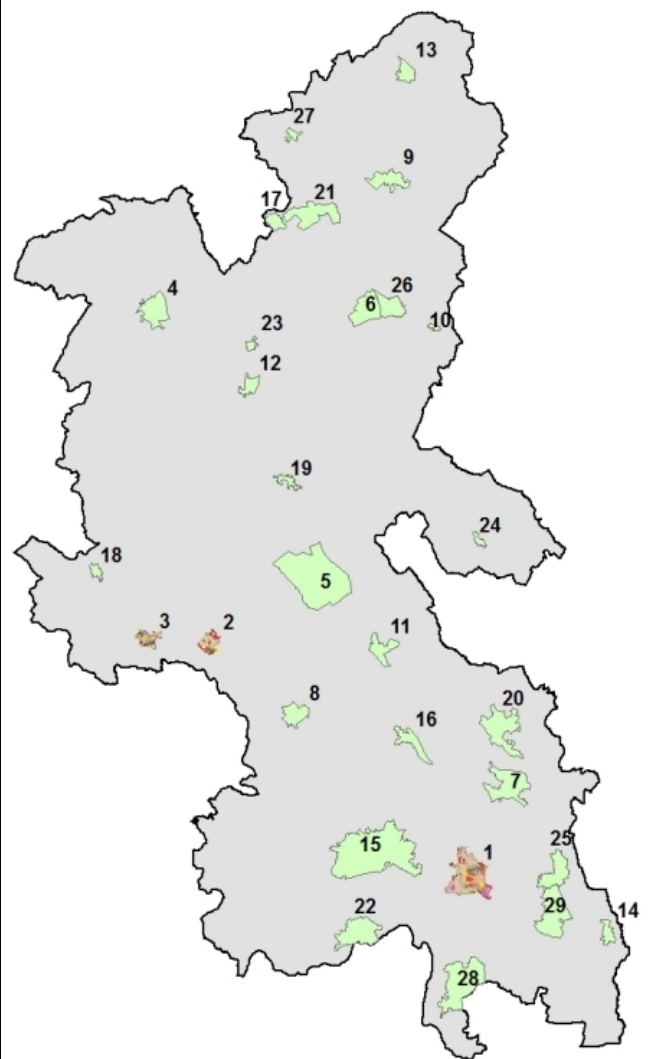


ENGLISH HERITAGE

This is the first in a series of bulletins issued on a quarterly basis to provide updates on the Historic Towns project. The bulletin will include a timetable that will be regularly updated as well as short histories of the towns covered so far. Public consultations for the individual town reports will be carried out throughout the project and information on the release of these reports will be included in this bulletin.

Timetable

Town	Completion Date	
	Data Gathering	Consultation Draft
Tranche 1		
1. Beaconsfield	Completed	In Progress
2. Haddenham	Completed	In Progress
3. Long Crendon	Completed	30/04/08
4. Buckingham	In Progress	31/05/08
Tranche 2		
5. Aylesbury	Autumn 2008	TBC
6. Bletchley	Autumn 2008	TBC
7. Amersham	Autumn 2008	TBC
8. Princes Risborough	Autumn 2008	TBC
9. Newport Pagnell	Autumn 2008	TBC
10. Little Brickhill	Autumn 2008	TBC
Tranche 3		
11. Wendover	Winter 2008/9	TBC
12. Winslow	Winter 2008/9	TBC
13. Olney	Winter 2008/9	TBC
14. Denham	Winter 2008/9	TBC
15. High Wycombe	Spring 2009	TBC
16. Great Missenden	Spring 2009	TBC
17. Stony Stratford	Spring 2009	TBC
Tranche 4		
18. Brill	Summer 2009	TBC
19. Whitchurch	Summer 2009	TBC
20. Chesham	Summer 2009	TBC
21. New Bradwell & Wolverton	Summer 2009	TBC
22. Great Marlow	Summer 2009	TBC
Tranche 5		
23. Great Horwood	Autumn 2009	TBC
24. Ivinghoe	Autumn 2009	TBC
25. Chalfont St Peter	Autumn 2009	TBC
26. Fenny Stratford	Autumn 2009	TBC
27. Hanslope	Winter 2009	TBC
28. Burnham	Winter 2009/10	TBC
29. Gerrards Cross	Winter 2009/10	TBC



Progress so far

The first stage of the project involved the creation of a working methodology for the characterisation of the towns as well as research into available resources. The project is working with researchers from Leicester University's Department of Local History, who have been appointed to carry out detailed documentary research which will be used in the final individual town reports.

So far the data gathering for Beaconsfield, Haddenham and Long Crendon has been completed while work is commencing on Buckingham. The project team are completing drafts for Beaconsfield and Haddenham with Long Crendon and Buckingham to follow in May/June.

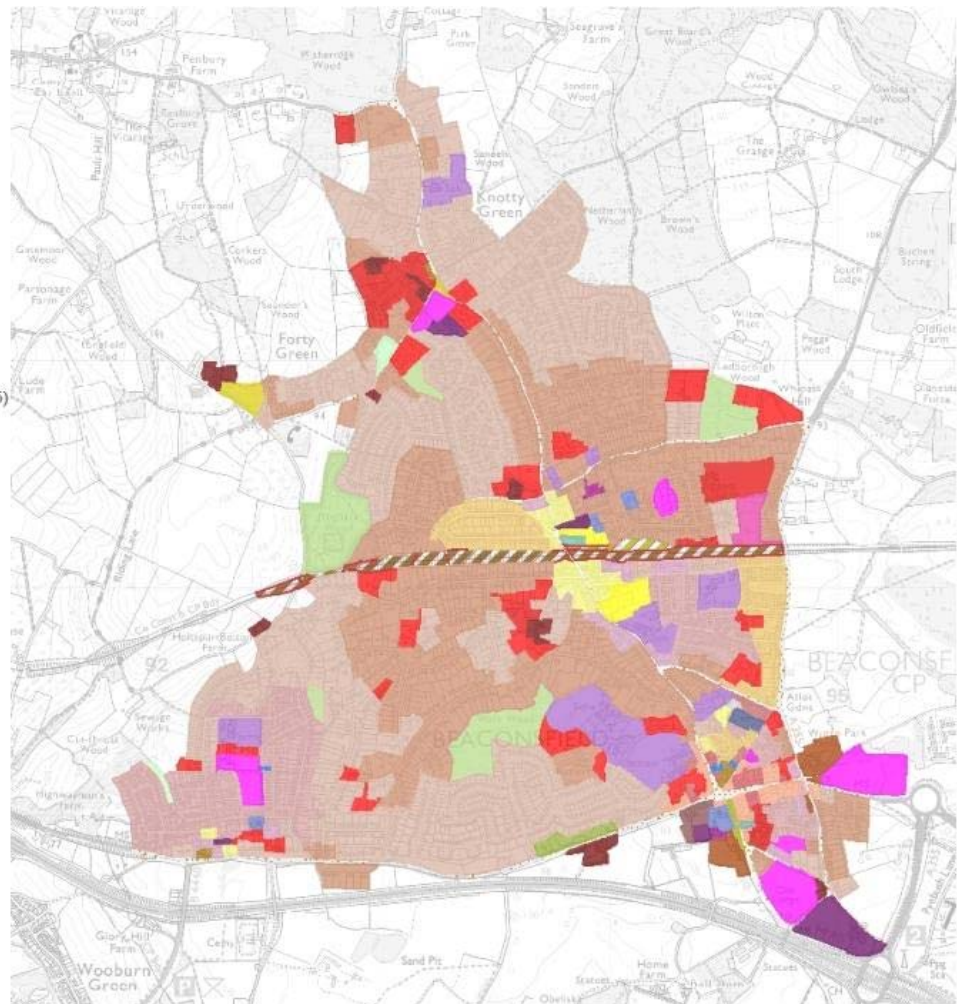
Beaconsfield

The historic core of the town dates back to the 13th century when the majority of the parish came under the ownership of Burnham Abbey. The original extent of the market is thought to have covered all four arms of Beaconsfield Old Town and incorporated a much larger square at the crossroads, however by the 19th century the market had been reduced to one street before it eventually ceased.

The town remained small and seemingly changed very little throughout the medieval period, the main areas of high status settlement were along the London to Wycombe road with several surviving examples of late medieval buildings. Although the Aylesbury to Windsor road has significantly more 17th and 18th century buildings along it, it is likely that the plot boundaries are earlier than the current surviving building stock. The Old Town is characterised by large Georgian townhouses interspersed with smaller vernacular urban cottages set around the wide crossroads of the historic market area. In the 18th century the introduction of the turnpike helped to increase trade as well as establishing the town as a popular residence for gentry coming from London.

The construction of the railway a mile from Old Town at the start of the 20th century led to the creation of Beaconsfield New Town. The New Town is characterised by the suburban 'metroland' housing and a diversity of modern housing styles of the 20th century.

- Civic
- Educational
- Medical
- Church
- Cemetery
- Chapel
- Rural Historic
- Manorial & Mansions
- Estate farm/houses
- Merchant housing
- Narrow plots
- Villas (1850-1945)
- Middle Class Housing (1850-1945)
- Bye law housing (1850-1945)
- Social Housing (1945-1980)
- Private Housing (1945-1980)
- Blocks of Flats 1945
- Modern Infill (Post 1980)
- Private Housing (Post 1980)
- Allotments
- Leisure
- Sports/fitness
- Market Place
- Inns/pubs/hotels
- Modern Shops
- Offices (Post 1945)
- Retail (Post 1945)
- Nurseries
- Industrial (Post 1945)
- medieval highway
- Rail/tram way
- Rail/tramway station
- greens/commons
- Enclosure
- Woodland



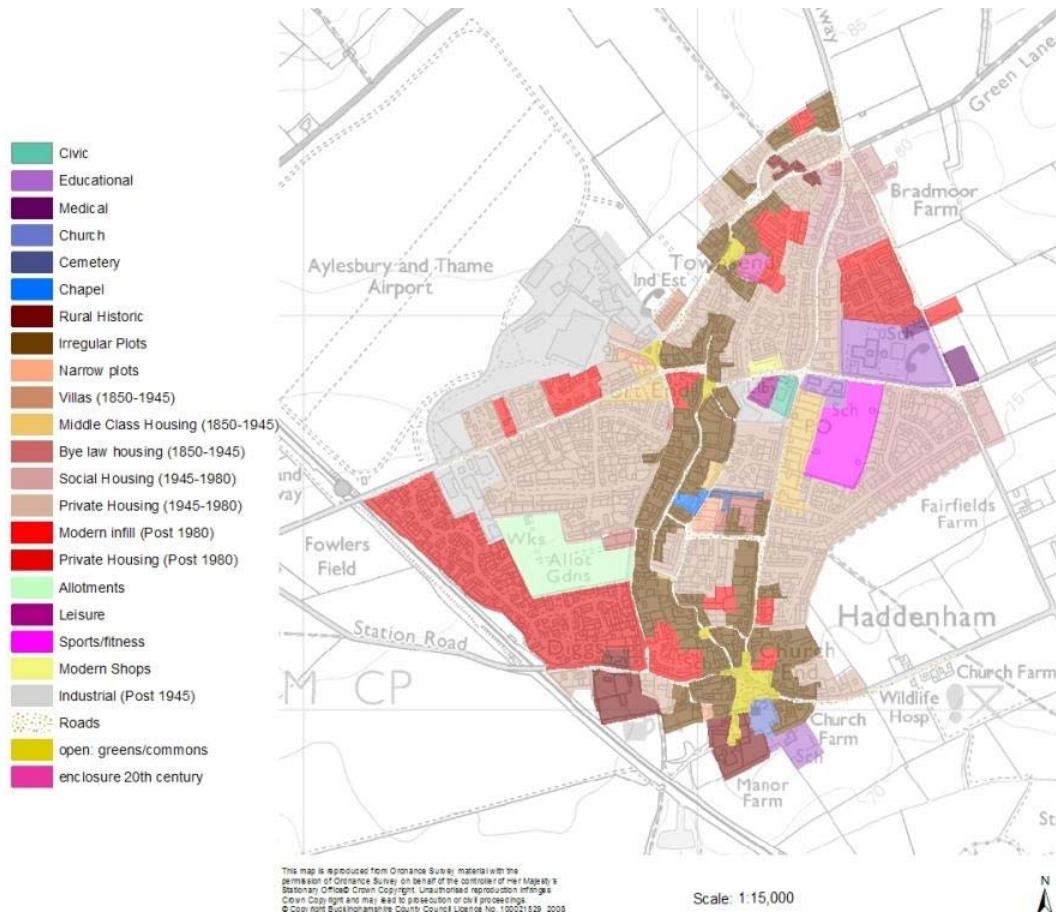
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Scale: 1:30,000



Haddenham

The evolution of Haddenham as a settlement is interesting as it is more of a village than a town. Haddenham probably grew out of a series of ends or hamlets consisting of a small number of historic buildings facing onto a central green. A series of narrow, winding lanes link the three hamlets of Church End, Fort End and Townsend. A subsidiary green also may have formed close to each End at Skittles Green near Church End, Dollicot near Fort End and at Rosemary lane near Towns End. Diggs End farm may also represent a failed hamlet within the interlinking structure with only the farm and a few associated buildings survive. Haddenham is renowned for the highly distinctive witchert walls that border many of the lanes and properties, many of which date back to the 18th century at least. The walls are commonly tall and topped with clay tiles in a variety of patterns and may well have been used to border the many orchards that thrived in Haddenham at the time. Witchert is a locally sourced material of clay, earth and straw unique to this area of the country and was used for the construction of houses as well as the walls. Several modern estates in the town have also used visually similar property boundaries.



History shows that Haddenham once had the status of being an important settlement with the potential to grow into a market town, St Mary's church is believed to be built upon the site of an Anglo-Saxon minister church, an important local centre serving communities which later became parishes in their own right. By the medieval period Haddenham also briefly possessed a weekly market which would have attracted commerce and trade. However, despite these attractions Haddenham was not able to attain the status of other market towns in Buckinghamshire. A principal reason for this is that by 1301 the market was discontinued following protests by the Bishop of Lincoln who held interests in the nearby market at Thame. Little is known about the short lived market in Haddenham and while the annual fair continued for some time, it too eventually ceased. One of the objectives of this project is to try and understand the dynamics of historic settlements such as Haddenham, to find out why some towns failed to evolve or survive while others succeeded.

Next Issue: May 2008

- Available reports for public consultation
- Update: Long Crendon characterisation
- Update: Buckingham characterisation
- Update on Phase 2

If you would like further information about the project or have comments about the newsletter then go to: www.buckscc/archaeology.gov.uk or contact David Green dagreen@buckscc.gov.uk