

## Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 14 Staple Cross

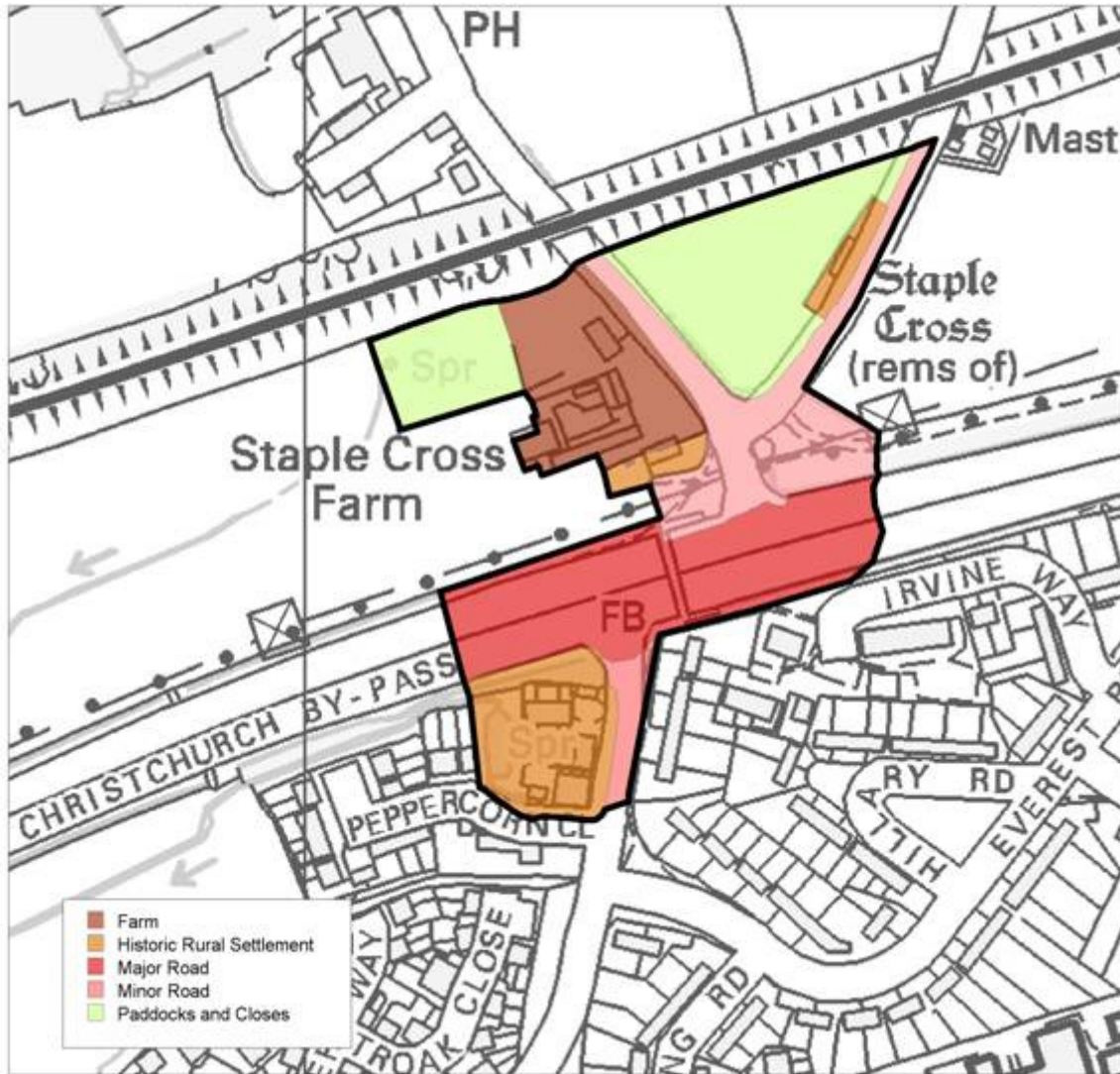


Figure 120: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 14, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 121: Village green



Figure 122: The Cross

## Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 14 Structure of Character Area

### **Overview**

This area represents a small hamlet at the junction of four medieval or earlier lanes. Now divided by the line of the railway and by-pass, it is still essentially rural in character.

### **Topography and Geology**

This character area is flat, without any distinct variations in topography. The geology of the area consists almost entirely of Bracklesham Beds.

### **Urban Structure**

This character area is structured around the junction of four potentially medieval or earlier lanes (Salisbury Road, Burton Road, Ambury Lane and Hawthorn Lane) The historic hamlet has been split into three sections by the construction of the railway and the Christchurch by-pass. The core of the settlement, including the cross and village green now occupies a thin strip between the railway and the by-pass, the part to the north of the railway lies outside the study area in Burton.

### **Present Character**

Figure 120 shows the present day historic urban character types. The character area comprises three small blocks of Historic Rural Settlement with associated Paddocks and Closes, albeit now divided by Major and Minor Roads.

### **Time Depth**

Staple Cross is a small hamlet on the Road between Purewell Cross and Burton. It is first mentioned in 17<sup>th</sup> century documents (Page, 1912, 83-101), although its date of origin remains unclear. Staple Cross itself probably dates from the post-medieval period, and may have been a wayside cross. Ambury Lane also marked the boundary between the tithings of Burton and Street. It is not clear whether the settlement existed prior to the erection of the cross. The name may derive from the Old English *stapol* meaning a post or pillar used as a boundary marker (Christchurch Local History Society, 1995, 24) suggesting that the cross may be a post-medieval replacement for an earlier boundary marker

### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

Whilst the by-pass divides Staple Cross from Burton, it also separates the remaining core from the sprawling suburbs of Christchurch. Thus, rather perversely, the by-pass helps maintain the rural nature of the area. Historic

maps show that the street pattern and small green have otherwise changed very little since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Staple Cross lies on the small green.

Field and other alignments within the village also maintain the ancient rectilinear field patterns of the region. Ambury Lane may be contemporary and integrated within it. The tithing boundary which follows, Ambury Lane may, represent medieval or earlier land division fossilised in the modern landscape.

## Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 14

### Built Character

#### ***Building types***

Staple Cross is a post-medieval roadside cross located at the junction of five roads and on parish boundary. It has a circular pedestal base of two steps surmounted by a square stepped and chamfered socket stone, into which is set a part of a shaft.

There are two listed historic buildings on the green: Staple Cross Farmhouse, an 18<sup>th</sup> building in red brick with a slate roof, and 1 Salisbury Road which is a 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed house with later alterations and additions.

There is only one other listed building in the area of the historic settlement, now lying to the south of the by-pass on Burton Lane. This is Peppercorn Cottage, a grade II listed 18<sup>th</sup> century 'T' shaped house with roughcast facade and an old tiled roof.

#### ***Building Materials***

The predominant building material is red brick with slate roofs. The facade of 1 Salisbury Road is now roughcast but the rear, facade still has some square panel framing exposed with red brick infilling.

#### ***Key Buildings***

Farmhouse: Staple Cross Farmhouse

Vernacular: 1 Salisbury Road, Peppercorn Cottage

Monument: Staple Cross

Communications: 19th century cast iron milestone beside the wall of Staple cross Farm

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 14**  
**Archaeology**

***Archaeological Investigations***

There have been no archaeological investigations within the character area. There is a reference to a geophysical survey being conducted on the site of the cross but no results have been published (Dorset County Council, 2008b).

There are no recorded archaeological features or find spots, apart from the Staple Cross itself.

***Archaeological Character***

The lack of archaeological investigations constrains consideration of the archaeological character of this area.

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 14  
Designations**

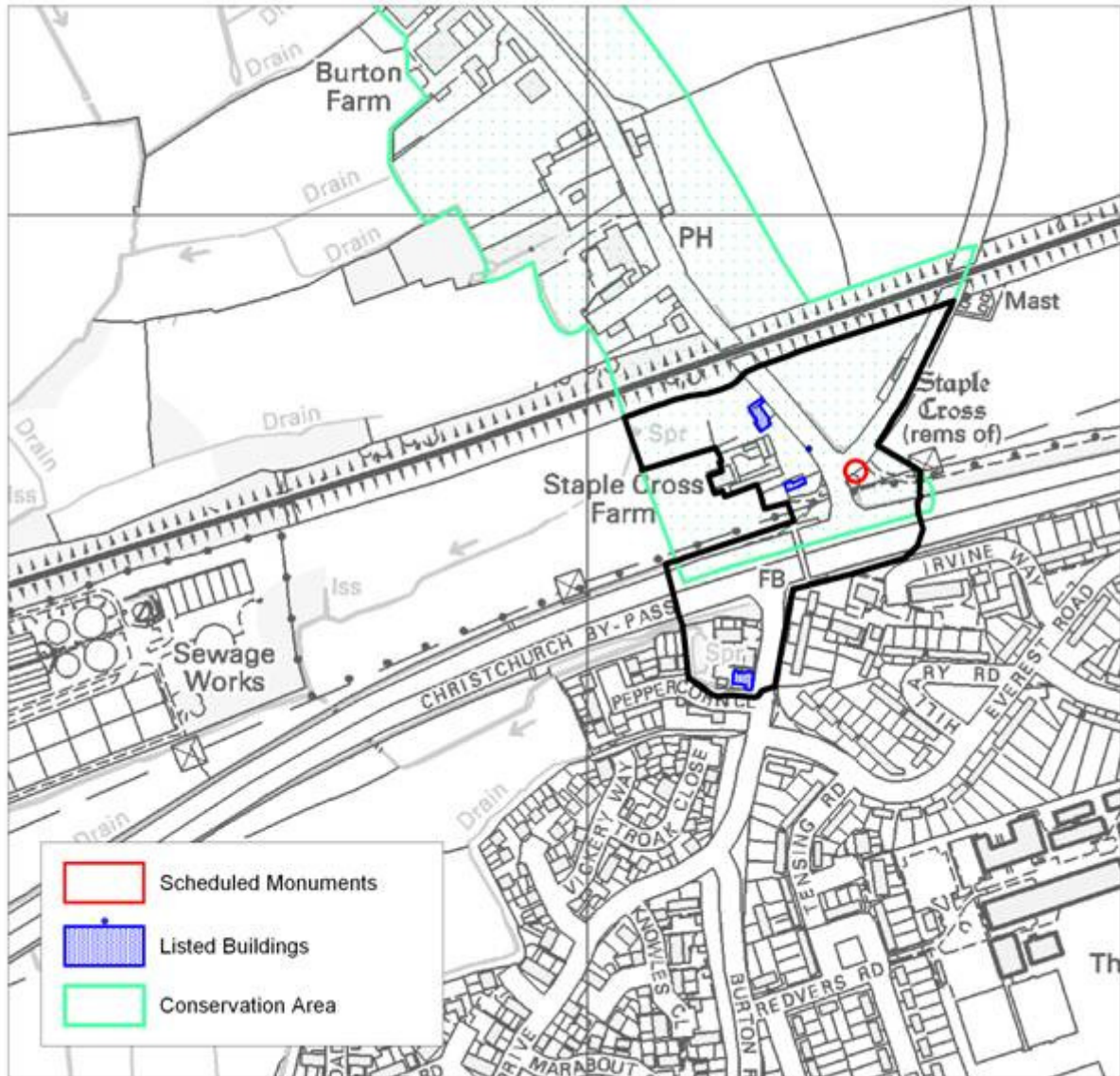


Figure 123: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 14

**Listed Buildings**

There are no Listed Building designations within the Character Area.

**Conservation Areas**

There are no Conservation Area designations within the Character Area.

**Registered Historic Parks and Gardens**

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the Character Area.

**Scheduled Monuments**

There is one Scheduled Monument designation within the character area, Staple Cross (Dorset 828).

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 14  
Evaluation**

***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. This small area represents the remains of a rural hamlet at the junction of four lanes of medieval or earlier origin, and retains many of its property boundaries.

***Sensitivity to Large Scale Development***

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Although much altered by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century developments in the form of the railway and by-pass, it is essentially a rural hamlet. Future development needs to be on a scale that does not impact on this.

***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is considered to be **high**. This is an historic

settlement, though now isolated, and there is a strong potential for post-medieval building foundations and material relating to the cross. Future work has the potential to shed light on the origins of the settlement and cross, as well as the rectilinear systems of land division in the area.

**Key Characteristics**

- Post-Medieval rural settlement
- Surviving medieval boundaries
- Post-Medieval cross