

## Settlement

### ***Prehistoric settlement***

Evidence of Neolithic activity has been found in the form of isolated finds of flint tools. There is a long barrow 2.5km to the north of the village with a Bronze Age barrow nearby.<sup>1</sup>

There is a round barrow cemetery just north of the London to Exeter road in the far south of the parish on a chalk spur. It consists of a linear arrangement of four very substantial round barrows and a saucer barrow oriented along the spur over a distance of about 185m. To the south of the town, at White Hill, some Iron Age pottery has been recovered.

There are strip lynchets in a dry valley immediately south of the Basingstoke to Whitchurch road at the western edge of the parish. These ridges are the consequence of ploughing along the contours over prolonged periods and are commonly found near Neolithic burial mounds.<sup>2</sup> Abra Barrow lies 1k beyond the skyline in this picture and Neolithic axe heads have been found close by.



Strip Lynchets at Southington.

A prehistoric trackway, The Harrow Way, passes through the parish to the north of the village, connecting Stonehenge with the Weald of Kent.

### ***Roman settlement***

On the north side of the River Test, there have been several isolated finds of Roman coins and at Foxdown, near Overton station, the remains of a Roman building, pottery and coins have been recovered. Another possible Roman building has been located approximately 1km to the south of the village at White Hill. The straight northern boundary of the parish is 'Caesar's Belt' which marks the course of a Roman road now called the Portway, connecting Silchester with Old Sarum.

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<sup>1</sup> This section is based on Hopkins, D., *Extensive Urban Survey, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight: Overton*, English Heritage, 2004. <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/historicenvironment>. Accessed 28 June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Matthews, J., (ed), *Encyclopedia of Environmental Change*, 2, 2014.

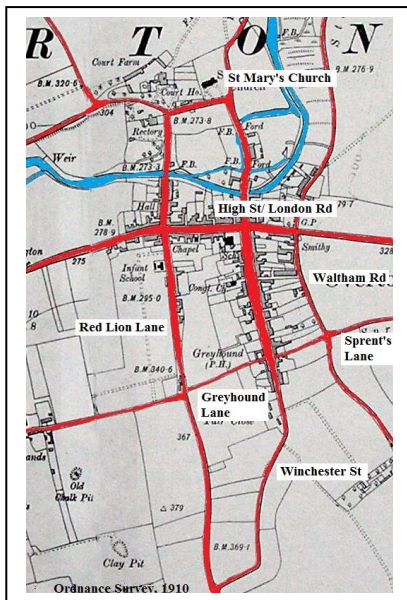
### Anglo-Saxon settlement

The manor of Overton belonged to the bishopric of Winchester from an early date, and was confirmed to Frithstan, Bishop of Winchester, by King Edward the Elder in 909.<sup>3</sup> The Domesday Survey states that *'the bishop himself holds Overton in demesne; it always belonged to the bishopric.'*<sup>4</sup> St Mary's church has no Anglo-Saxon features but it is assumed to stand on the site of one of the churches mentioned in the Domesday Survey and that the Anglo-Saxon village stood around it, north of the river. However, no archaeological evidence for this assumption has yet been found.<sup>1</sup> A number of sandy flint tempered wares, possibly Saxo-Norman (11th-12th centuries), were found in an archaeological investigation in the churchyard in 1999 though it was limited in scope.<sup>5</sup> A sunken Anglo-Saxon dwelling north of London Road was found in 2005.<sup>6</sup>

### Medieval settlement

At the time of the Domesday Survey the bishop held 41 hides of land and there was land for 32 ploughs. Two churches and 94 villagers, smallholders and slaves were also recorded.<sup>7</sup> At this time there was also a church at Polhampton.

A new market town was planned by the Bishops of Winchester in the early 1200s and Overton received a market charter in 1218.<sup>8</sup> The Borough of Overton first appears in the Bishop's Account Roll of 1217-18 as 'Overton burgus'.<sup>9</sup> Initially, 19 burgesses held 22 burgage plots. By 1223-4 at least 40 plots were recorded.<sup>10</sup>



The town plan is a simple rectilinear grid. The main north-south market street, Winchester Street, lies at right angles to the main east-west through road, High Street/London Road. Greyhound Lane and Sprent's Lane, which lie parallel to High Street/London Road, form the southern side of the grid. Red Lion Lane and Waltham Road lie roughly parallel to Winchester Street. They serve as back lanes to the property plots on Winchester Street. Although this is now the main road from Winchester, it does not take a direct route from the south into the village as it has to make two sharp turns to join a road that lies on the line of, and is almost certainly a continuation of, Red Lion Lane. It is suggested that Red Lion Lane was the original road from Winchester to the church/village area, and that Winchester Street was a newly laid out street in the 13th century. When approaching the town from the south, the traveller is presented with a view of the market street, with the parish church in full view on the north side of the river. The alignment is so

<sup>3</sup> VCH Hants, 213.

<sup>4</sup> Williams A. and Martin G.H., (eds.), Domesday Book: A Complete Translation (London, 2002).

<sup>5</sup> HRO 134A02/61.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, A., Iron Age to Roman Landscape Features and a Saxon Building at London Road, Overton, Hampshire, *Proc. Hampshire Field Club Archaeol. Soc.* 67 (pt. I), 2012, 174–201 (Hampshire Studies 2012).

<sup>7</sup> Munby, J. (ed), Domesday Book: Hampshire, 1982, fo 40b.

<sup>8</sup> VCH Hampshire, Overton, 213.

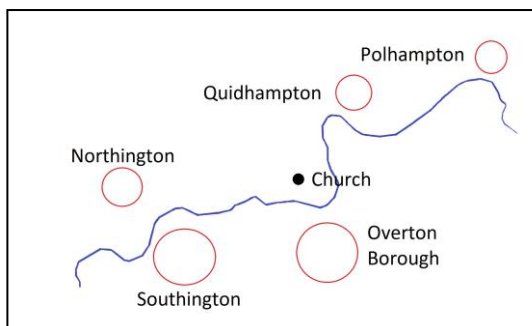
<sup>9</sup> Beresford, M., *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, (1967), 447.

<sup>10</sup> Hare, J. *Agriculture and Rural Settlement in the Chalklands of Wiltshire and Hampshire from c.1200 -c.1500*, in M. Aston and C. Lewis (eds), *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex*, Oxbow Monograph 4, (1994), 159-69.



Winchester Street looking north to  
St Mary's Church.

marked that it would be difficult to see it as being purely coincidental. It is suggested that the line of Winchester Street was chosen to present a view of the church on approaching the town.<sup>11</sup>



There were also settlements along the valley of the Test at Southington, Northington, Quidhampton and Polhampton, all of which except Southington experienced shrinkage or desertion in the 14th and 15th centuries. The desertion of Northington is particularly well recorded. Northington had been a settlement of at least 35 households that had shrunk to only four tenants in 1485. In that year, the bishop leased the land that had produced a rent of £16 10s. 8d. to Richard Ayliffe for only £9 6s. 8d., replacing the last four tenants who were possibly either unable, or unwilling, to pay the rent.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Later settlement**

The parish was divided into four tithings, Overton Borough, Southington, Quidhampton and Polhampton. The Hearth Tax Assessment of 1665, including those who were exempt, gives the relative sizes of the settlements at that time.<sup>13</sup>

Households	
Overton Borough	99
Southington	41
Polhampton	9
Quidhampton	4
Total	153

Quidhampton and Polhampton now have only a few dwellings while Southington remains a distinct though dispersed settlement of some 50 dwellings.

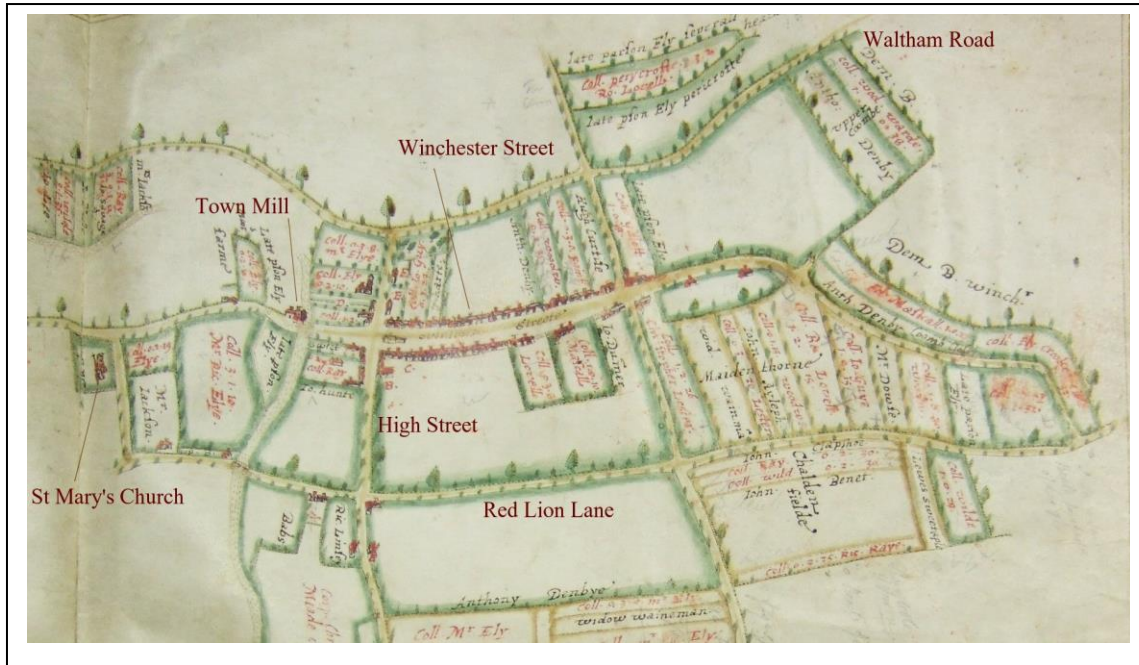
<sup>11</sup> Hopkins, D., *Extensive Urban Survey, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight: Overton*, English Heritage, 2004, 4. <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/historicenvironment>. Accessed 28 June 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Hare, J.N., 'Northington, near Overton, and the deserted villages of Hampshire'. *Hampshire Field Club Archaeol. Soc., Newsletter*, N.S. 21, (1994), 26.

<sup>13</sup> Hughes, E. and White, P., (ed), *The Hampshire Hearth Tax Assessment (1991)*, 172-4.

## Overton village

From 1516, Bishop Fox endowed a new liberal college in Oxford which he named 'Corpus Christi'. Up to 1527, he gave many lands and properties in Overton and elsewhere to endow the College.<sup>14</sup> In 1615, the college engaged Thomas Langdon to survey their properties to determine the exact areas held by their tenants. The plan below is one of four of the parish and shows the extent of Overton village at the time.<sup>15</sup> It is oriented with east towards the top of the page. Buildings are shown in red.



Detail of 'Map of lands and tenements in the borough of Overton and tithing of Southampton in the parish of Overton, belonging to Corpus Christi, Oxford, by Thomas Langdon and Henry Wilcocke, 1615'.

Southington was known as 'Southampton' at this time.

From the blank spaces on the map, it is evident that Langdon was only contracted to survey college property and adjacent bishop's lands. The road towards Basingstoke was omitted, though part of it is shown in another of Langdon's plans of Quidhampton.<sup>16</sup>

Whilst there are scattered dwellings in what are now called High Street and London Road, the built area of the village is otherwise confined to the lower part of Winchester Street. However, Langdon was more concerned with land acreage than buildings. He shows three houses on the south side of High Street whereas there were at least 11 dwellings built in the 16th century on that side of the street, now numbered 7-21 and 31-35.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Waight, S. *The Estates of Corpus Christi College, Oxford in Overton, Quidhampton and Polhampton, Hampshire*, (1996), 1.

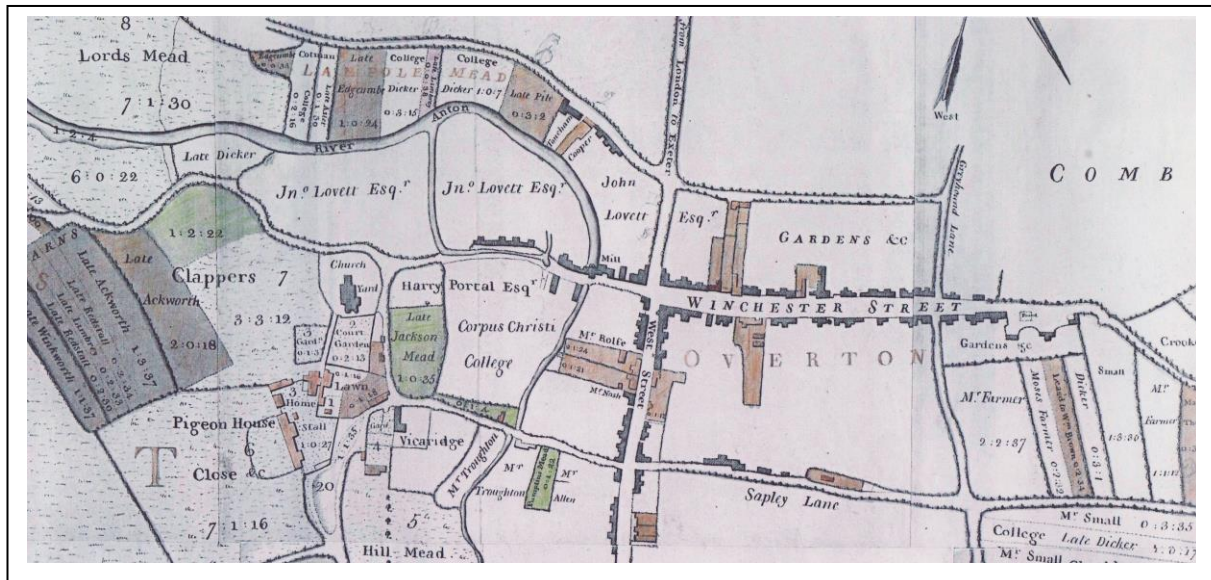
<sup>15</sup> Reproduced by permission of the Archivist, Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

<sup>16</sup> HRO 132M98/N2/2.

<sup>17</sup> HER 3442, HER 3423, HER 3424, HER 3425, HER 3426, HER 3428, HER 3429, HER 3430.

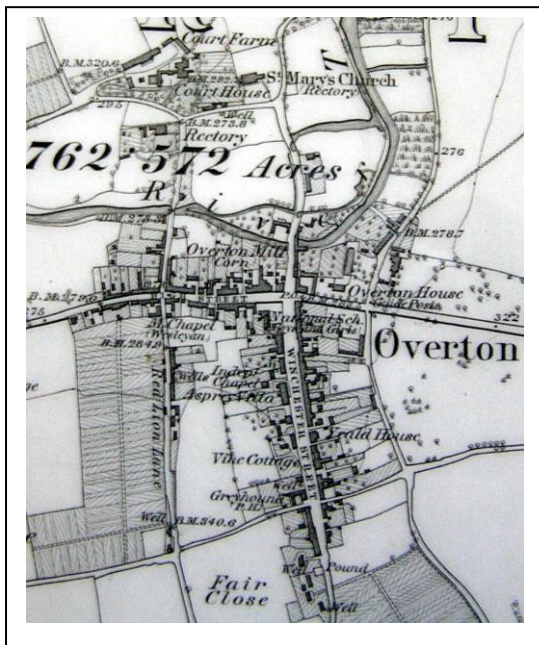


Another plan of the Manor of Overton was drawn in 1795 by James Sherriff<sup>18</sup> in the same year that the lease of the manor was up for sale.<sup>19</sup>



Detail of 'Plan of the Manor and Borough of Overton, by James Sherriff, 1795'.

This detail shows further development along High Street, Kingsclere Road, Sapley Lane (now called Red Lion Lane) and at Lampole on what is now called Station Road.



Ordnance Survey, Hampshire Series, 6 inches per mile, sheet 17, 1877.

Whilst the Ordnance Survey map of 1877 shows very little change in the extent of the built area, there was continual replacement of buildings and infilling. Corpus Christi College built five new houses in Winchester Street between 1540 and 1551.<sup>20</sup> The White Hart was enlarged with a new wing facing London Road in about 1640.<sup>21</sup> Just to the east, Henry Holdipp replaced an older dwelling with a mansion between 1662 and 1685. It fell into decay and was rebuilt again in 1839 and was then known as Overton House. It subsequently became Norris's Garage and the shell of the building was finally incorporated into a modern housing development on the site.

At the south-east corner of the cross roads, older cottages were demolished to make way for the New Inn, otherwise known as the 'Poyntz Arms', in the second half of the 18th century. The inn was demolished in 1869 to make way for the new

<sup>18</sup> HRO 10M57/P8

<sup>19</sup> HRO 34M87/10

<sup>20</sup> Waight, S. *The Estates of Corpus Christi College, Oxford in Overton, Quidhampton and Polhampton, Hampshire*, 25. HRO 83/A02/8.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

National School, now the Community Centre.<sup>22</sup>

Other dwellings were destroyed by fire. Four 16th century cottages in Waltham Road were burnt down and replaced in 1864.<sup>23</sup> In 1911, Mr Hide's stores and three cottages in High Street were totally destroyed, one of them dating from 1551,<sup>24</sup> to be replaced by a much larger store on three storeys which still dominates the site in 2017.<sup>25</sup> Three older houses in High Street, converted into the International Stores and a cycle shop, were lost by fire in 1937.<sup>26</sup>

The Methodist chapel (1842)<sup>27</sup> and St Mary's Hall in High Street (1914)<sup>28</sup> replaced earlier buildings, whilst the Congregational chapel in Winchester Street was built on an empty plot.<sup>29</sup> St Luke's Hall replaced five earlier cottages in Winchester Street in 1940.<sup>30</sup>

The Portals paper company demolished Town Mill and the mill house in Kingsclere Road in 1900 to build an industrial rag house.<sup>31</sup> It was converted into sheltered housing in 1988.<sup>32</sup>

### **Modern housing development**

Modern housing development started in 1922 with bungalows near the station and proceeded in the 1930s with ribbon development along existing roads. It continued after the Second World War with estates of houses in the ubiquitous styles of the times. The number of dwellings in the parish doubled from 328 in 1911 to 682 in 1951 and doubled again to 1445 by 1991.<sup>33</sup>

Housing gradually encased the historic core of the village to the east, south and west, eventually obscuring the skyline. Development on the northern slopes of the valley south of the railway resulted in the village having three distinct built areas. Only to the north of St Mary's Church and Court Farmhouse is the visible connection between the historic village and surrounding countryside preserved on the northern boundary of the Conservation Area.

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<sup>22</sup> Deveson, A., *Overton and its National School*, (2000), 5, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Waight, S. *The Estates of Corpus Christi College, Oxford in Overton, Quidhampton and Polhampton, Hampshire*, (1996), 30. HRO 83/A02/8

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 30 September 1911.

<sup>26</sup> Oram, R., *The changing Face of Overton*, (1998) 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 4 August 1928, refers to the 86th anniversary.

<sup>28</sup> *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 10 October 1914.

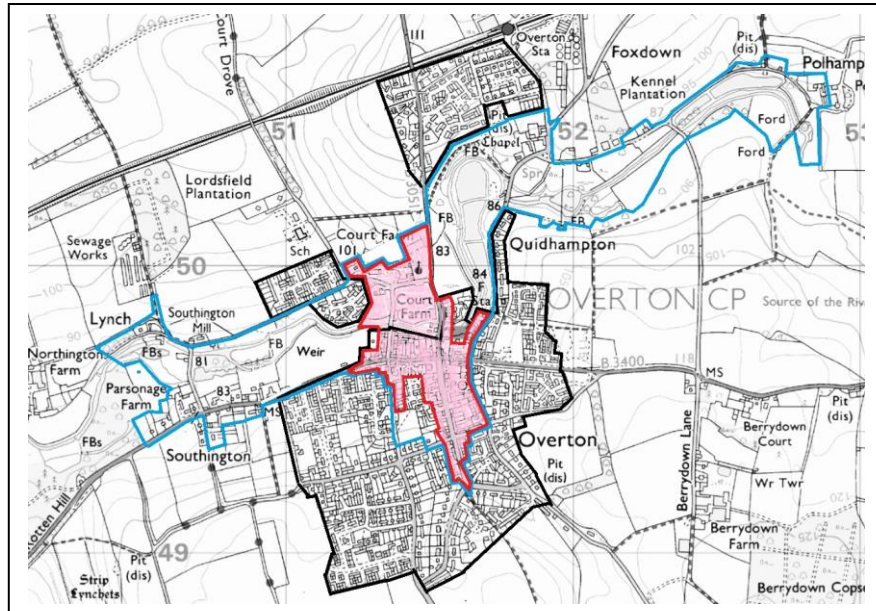
<sup>29</sup> HRO 50A07/E28.

<sup>30</sup> Tutin, R., *St Luke's at War*, Portals Company Newsletter, Christmas, (1985), 8. HRO 162A10/2; Plan in possession of Derek Mirfin, Overton.

<sup>31</sup> *Hants & Berks Gazette*, 18 June 1901.

<sup>32</sup> Town Mill, [www.overtonpictures.com](http://www.overtonpictures.com), 04TM01\_02\_01. Accessed 10 January 2018.

<sup>33</sup> *Censuses*, 1951-1991



The settlement boundary in 2016 is outlined in black. The historic core of the village is shown in pink. The Conservation Area is outlined in blue.

The Overton Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016)<sup>34</sup> became part of the Basingstoke & Deane Adopted Local Development Plan<sup>35</sup> which will determine where further housing development will be built up to 2029.

<sup>34</sup> Overton Neighbourhood Development Plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, (2016).

<sup>35</sup> Adopted Local Plan, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, (2016).