

# Lacock Conservation Management Plan

**Prepared for the National Trust  
by  
Land Use Consultants**

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**43 Chalton Street**  
**London NW1 1JD**  
**Tel: 020 7383 5784**  
**Fax: 020 7383 4798**  
**[london@landuse.co.uk](mailto:london@landuse.co.uk)**

**14 Great George Street**  
**Bristol BS1 5RH**  
**Tel: 0117 929 1997**  
**Fax: 0117 929 1998**  
**[bristol@landuse.co.uk](mailto:bristol@landuse.co.uk)**

**37 Otago Street**  
**Glasgow G12 8JJ**  
**Tel: 0141 334 9595**  
**Fax: 0141 334 7789**  
**[glasgow@landuse.co.uk](mailto:glasgow@landuse.co.uk)**

**28 Stafford Street**  
**Edinburgh EH3 7BD**  
**Tel: 0131 202 1616**  
**[edinburgh@landuse.co.uk](mailto:edinburgh@landuse.co.uk)**

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# **Executive Summary**



# Executive Summary

Lacock has been a National Trust property since 1944. In order to best guide the conservation and management of Lacock, the National Trust has commissioned the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan, which sets out in detail the history of Lacock, its key significances, and the management objectives and actions required to fulfil the Trust's vision for the site.

## The Significance of Lacock

Lacock is a truly special place and one of the National Trust's flagship properties, not only within Wiltshire but throughout the country. The unique and special qualities of Lacock are numerous and are heightened by their interrelationships. At its heart lies the close linking of the grade I listed Abbey, founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the village, a rare surviving example of a medieval town which developed through the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries due to its role in the thriving wool trade.



The architectural interest of Lacock is reflected in its concentration of listed buildings, 82 in total, an astonishing number for such a small area. The Abbey itself represents a fascinating survival of a medieval nunnery, its interest enhanced by later additions including some exceptional examples of Renaissance and Gothick architecture. The Abbey gardens too represent a palimpsest of design and innovation, featuring work by renowned designers of the day including Stephen Switzer, William Emes and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, with an extensive survival of archaeology and documentary sources contributing to their overall interest and significance.

The true significance of Lacock, however, does not stop at its rich physical fabric – the stories and associations are just as remarkable. The undisputed highlight of these is the Abbey's 19<sup>th</sup> century resident owner William Henry Fox Talbot, the Victorian polymath who invented the negative photographic process here. Fox Talbot also made significant contributions in the fields of Botany, Egyptology, Chemistry and Astronomy, and today the Trust maintains a museum adjacent to the Abbey dedicated to his life and work, reflecting the international importance of his story.



The associations of Lacock are enriched by the expansive collections held by the Trust and other bodies. The Trust's collections range from medieval books and wall paintings through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century items of the Abbey's most recent inhabitants, all of which contribute to our understanding of Lacock's historic development and help bring to life the stories of those that have lived and worked there.

In addition there is a strong sense of community that survives at Lacock, rooted in its long history of continual ownership; since its acquisition following the Dissolution of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Abbey has never been sold, whilst many families have lived in the village for generations. This last factor is crucial in defining the special character of Lacock – for all its remarkable associations and physical characteristics Lacock is a living and working village, not a museum.



Today Lacock means many things to many people. For some it is home, for others a timeless and tranquil place to visit; it is a place to relax, a place of work and a site of pilgrimage, particularly for those involved in history, photography or contemporary film. The Harry Potter connection is the most recent feature of Lacock to set it on the international stage.

Ultimately, the often intangible qualities of Lacock hold as much significance as its more easily-defined features – its tranquillity, the long sense of history and continuity, its monastic associations and a pervading sense of harmony and benevolence between Abbey and village. The River Avon and the wider landscape, along with the wildlife habitats that they support, play an important role in contributing to these qualities. It is the combination of all of these things, however, and their complex and valuable interrelationships that serve to make Lacock so unique.

### The National Trust's Management Vision

The overall management vision is to conserve, enhance, present and celebrate the physical fabric and significance of Lacock and the contributions made to it by the many generations who have lived and worked here. This will be largely but not exclusively as they were left by the three generations of Talbot owners, William Henry Fox Talbot, Charles Henry Fox Talbot and Matilda Talbot who made the last significant alterations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Because of the enormous time depth that is central to Lacock's significance there is a presumption against seeking to 'restore' parts of it to specific points in history.

The distinctive character of the Abbey's interiors and collection – old and a little shabby, sound but worn – will be carefully conserved. Where more recent changes have obscured or diminished significance, management will seek to retrieve and enhance it. Proposals for change will be thoroughly informed by understanding of significance.

The sense of community that has developed over the years will continue to be respected and interpreted, whilst the facilities that serve the modern community will be fostered and enhanced. The pervading sense of harmony associated with the Abbey, village and river location will continue to portray the rich time depth which is central to Lacock's special character. We will continue to ensure that Lacock is a thriving community and an engaging visitor attraction retaining its unique qualities and rural character.

### The overall management policies for Lacock that will deliver the vision are<sup>1</sup>:

- Conserve and enhance the **built fabric** of Lacock, comprising the Abbey and the village, as well as the estate's **archaeological resource**, where appropriate securing enhanced protection of key elements and informed by ongoing & comprehensive surveys of the site as a whole (*Ch 13, Section C*).
- Conserve, promote and interpret the significance of the Lacock **collections** based on comprehensive cataloguing and the recommendations of specialist surveys (*Ch 13, Section E*).
- Conserve and enhance the **designed and farmed landscape** that has evolved over almost 800 years, seeking to reveal, reinstate and interpret key historic design and management intentions (*Ch 13, Section B*).
- Research and assess the rich **botanical** history associated with WHFT to form an enhanced plant collection in the botanic garden and inform the development of interpretation (*Ch 13, Section B*).

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Chapter 13 for detailed management actions



- Conserve and enhance the **ecological resource** found within the Lacock estate, seeking the enhanced condition of key wildlife assets focussed predominantly around the Abbey parkland and the eastern commons, whilst further significantly enhancing the ecological network throughout the wider landscape (*Ch I 3, Section D*).
- Conserve the special character and **intangible qualities** of Lacock, including its tranquillity, time-depth value and the pervading sense of harmony throughout the Abbey, village and wider rural landscape. (*Ch I 3, Section A*)
- Manage Lacock to ensure that the **community** thrives whilst continuing to provide an engaging visitor destination and conserving the integrity of the historic fabric, complying with all relevant legislation (*Ch I 3, Section A*).
- Maintain and improve the **visitor experience** and the **educational value** of Lacock whilst conserving the integrity of the unique set of qualities outlined above (*Ch I 3, Section A*).

### Priority management actions

The Conservation Management Plan identifies a number of high priority actions including:

1. **Enhance understanding of the Lacock collections:** undertake comprehensive expert assessments of all areas of the Lacock collection alongside further detailed research into its development (*Management Actions Ei, iii, iv, viii, x*).
2. **Conserve and enhance the Abbey garden:** restore historic views, circulation and planting to express the multiple layers of the garden's history & enhance interpretation (*Management Actions Bi-iv*).
3. **Improve understanding of the archaeological resource:** commission an extensive Historic Landscape and Archaeological Survey for the whole estate and consider promoting and sponsoring a village archaeology project (*Management Actions Cii, iv, v*).
4. **Enhance the wider rural setting of the Abbey and village and the ecological value of the site as a whole:** including restoration of hedgerows, semi-natural habitats, views and rights of way (*Management Actions Bix-xix*).
5. **Further understand and promote the plant collection and the botanical interests of William Henry Fox Talbot:** complete further research and investigation into the WHFT plant collection to inform future management and develop programme of interpretation to convey WHFT's standing in terms of botany and horticulture (*Management Actions Bv-vi*).



# 1 Introduction

## BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

- 1.1 Lacock is a village with a Grade I listed Abbey, located in Wiltshire within the Avon valley three miles south of Chippenham (Figure 1.2 Location Plan). Its rich history of development, the extraordinarily well preserved archaeology and architecture and distinctive landscape combine to create an unparalleled property which provides a place for both community and nature to thrive whilst providing a unique visitor experience. The National Trust property of Lacock comprises the Grade I Listed 13<sup>th</sup> century Abbey, its Grade II Registered gardens and park, the majority of the village which lies within a Conservation Area and other agricultural and common land. The property extends to some 134.56 hectares. Lacock holds significant photographic and internal and external collections, along with a rich archive which is currently in private ownership, on deposit at Wiltshire History Centre.
- 1.2 The National Trust commissioned Land Use Consultants in 2011 to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) to guide its ongoing conservation and management of the site and provide a clear vision for the future.
- 1.3 This Conservation Management Plan builds upon a wealth of previous studies and has incorporated or where necessary challenged theories, assumptions and recommendations as appropriate.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED?

- 1.4 LUC are very grateful for the involvement and advice of the National Trust Steering Group in the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan. The Plan was commissioned by Graham Heard (Lacock Property Manager) and the Lead Consultant was Stephen Ponder (Curator). Other members of the Steering Group include:

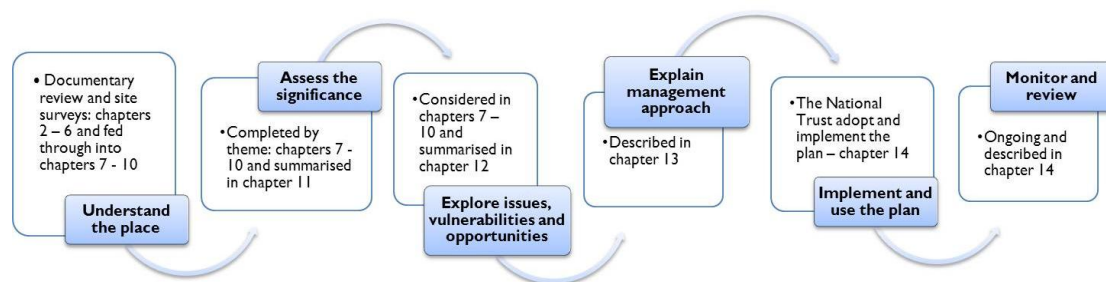
Sue Carter	Head Gardener, Lacock Abbey
Emily Davies	Rural Surveyor
David Formby	House Manager
Karen Bolger	Visitor Services Manager
Roger Watson	Fox Talbot Museum Curator
Nathan Ward	Building Surveyor
Alan Power	Gardens Advisor
Helen Moody	Conservator
Martin Papworth	Archaeologist
Simon Ford	Nature Conservation Advisor
Tara Castle	Rural Surveyor



- 1.5 We also express our gratitude to Sandy Haynes, garden historian, for making available her research, as well as to the residents and visitors of Lacock who took part in the public consultation process, which has further helped to inform the production of this plan as outlined in Chapter 2.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

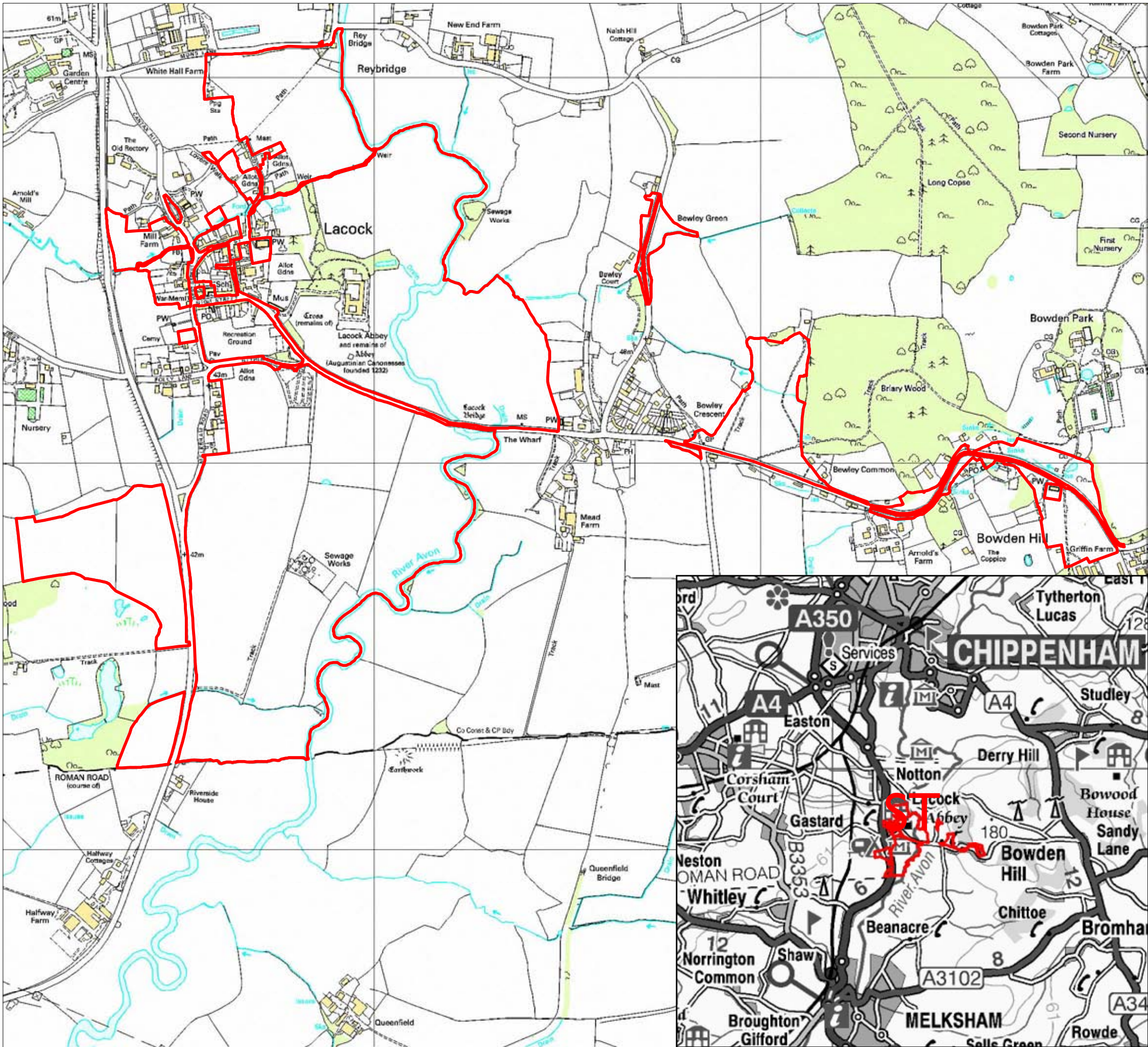
- 1.6 The Conservation Management Planning process consists of a 6 stage process as summarised below and shown below in Figure 1.1, along with an indication of how the component chapters of this report relate to the process.
- 1.7 The first part of the Plan sets out an **understanding of the place** by reporting on a review of documentary information, archives and existing surveys along with summaries of surveys undertaken as part of this study.
- 1.8 The second stage is an **assessment of significance** firstly set out under a number of themed headings (Landscape and Plant Collection; Buildings and Archaeology; Ecology; and Internal Collections) and secondly a summary for the property as a whole. This stage seeks to explain what is important, where and why?
- 1.9 The third stage is to consider the **issues, vulnerabilities and opportunities** or, what is affecting the significance and why and how can management of the property be enhanced without affecting the significance?
- 1.10 Having established the key issues the Plan then describes the **management approach** by setting out a vision, a number of property-wide policies and actions followed by character area based management actions.
- 1.11 **Implementation, monitoring and review** are the final stages to take place once the CMP is adopted.



**Figure 1.1: The Conservation Management Planning Process**

- 1.12 A key element of the CMP is an interactive gazetteer detailing all features of note located within the site, whether they are of significant interest or form a detracting modern element. Descriptions, condition summaries and management actions for these individual features appear in the gazetteer, which forms a separate volume.



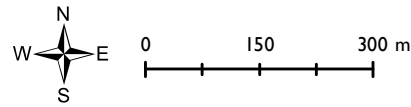


Lacock Abbey Estate

Figure I.2: Site Location

Key

 Site boundary



1:10,000 at A3 (main plate)

Source: Land Use Consultants

Date: 16/05/2011  
Revision: A







## 2 Collecting Information

- 2.1 This chapter explains how the information used to prepare this plan has been collected, including a summary of which sources have been consulted and where there are any information gaps.

### Documentary evidence

- 2.2 A range of archival evidence including maps, letters, drawings, photographs, catalogues and books has been consulted in the preparation of this plan, as well as existing surveys and reports. A full list of references is presented at the end of the report, although some of the key documentary sources are highlighted here.
- 2.3 A number of historic maps have been fundamental in forming an understanding how the study area has changed over time. A full list of maps available and referred to is provided under 'References' at the end of the report. However, there are several key maps that have proved particularly informative as to the historical evolution of the site, and these are as follows:
- **1714 plan of the Abbey and its gardens**, showing the allotment garden (the 'Kitching Garden') and orchard ('Little Old Orchard') already in place, and the original layout of the mill and fish ponds.
  - **1764 Estate Plan**, providing a detailed layout of the wider Lacock estate, giving building, road and field boundary locations, and a detailed plan of the now defunct formal water garden.
  - **1827 Map**, showing the later redesign of the formal water garden.
  - **1837 Tithe Map**, showing a detailed layout of the parish, with partial remains of the water garden.
  - **1886 25inch OS Map**, as above, with the Abbey gardens now of similar layout to today.
- 2.4 A range of archaeological, architectural, ecological and other surveys have also been carried out in the past twenty-five years that have helped guide management and are referred to in this report. The key ones are:
- **Nicholas Pearson Associates (1993) 'Lacock Abbey Historic Landscape and Restoration Plan'** – this plan has helped guide the management of the Abbey gardens and parkland to date and has been referred to and referenced within this report. The study was funded by grant aid from the then Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and combines documentary and site evidence to propose a number of restoration and management proposals for the Abbey's historic landscape. The report contains a useful history of the evolution of the gardens, as well as an inventory of landscape features within the plan's study area, including their condition at the time.
  - **Lewis, J. & Fretwell, K. (1998) 'Lacock Abbey Botanic Garden Survey'** – a report detailing the contemporary and historic layout of

W. H. Fox Talbot's Botanic Garden, including outline suggestions for restoration and an inventory of the garden's trees.

- **Papworth, M. 'Lacock South Park, Geophysical Survey' (2008)** – geophysical survey revealing details of the late-medieval 'Fountain Garden' to the south of the Abbey.
- **Papworth, M. 'Lacock Abbey Grotto, Drains and Weirs Archaeological Survey' (1996)** – survey of surviving stonework of the northern part of the formal water garden and contemporary management recommendations.
- **Archaeological geophysical survey of formal garden north of the Abbey (2002)** – showing the earthwork remains of the various phases of the water garden.

- 2.5 Full searches have been carried out at English Heritage's National Monuments Record (NMR), Wiltshire Council's Historic Environment Record (WHER) and the National Trust's own Sites and Monuments Record (NT HBSMR). These are the national, county and institutional databases respectively of known archaeology within the study area. The abbreviations above are used throughout this report as necessary rather than the full titles. The searches concentrated on the buildings and land owned by the National Trust, but were not restricted to these. Information was also received about the archaeology, buildings and other historic features in the immediately surrounding areas. Though not directly relevant to the Trust estate, these wider historic environment features are mentioned where they are relevant for the archaeological potential of the Trust's land. Site reference numbers from the WHER have been quoted using the final three digits only; the prefix ST96NW (which refers to the OS map square containing the study area) has been omitted for ease of use. NMR and NT HBSMR references, where quoted, use the full six- or seven-digit catalogue number. The searches have been followed up by visits to the Records to carry out more detailed research into, and where relevant make copies of, the various sources and reports contained within them. We are very grateful to the Record Officers of the three organisations involved for their help in carrying out the searches, and for facilitating our further research.
- 2.6 Another important source for Lacock is the Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) carried out in 2004 by Wiltshire Council (McMahon 2004). This used the WHER data available at that time to prepare an assessment of the village's archaeological potential. It was part of a project sponsored by English Heritage to map and assess the archaeology of all of Wiltshire's historic towns. It is therefore a very useful summary of Lacock's archaeology. Given that the EUS was carried out seven years ago, it was still necessary to carry out the new database searches given that further discoveries were likely to have been made since 2004. The EUS also does not seem to have involved research in the NMR and NT HBSMR.
- 2.7 There are several identified gaps in evidence which are highlighted within the main body of the report.

## Site Survey

- 2.8 As part of collecting data for this report, a number of site surveys were also conducted by LUC and its sub-consultants. These have entailed:
- A survey of the study area by LUC's landscape specialists, assessing the condition of previously recorded landscape features and identifying unmapped features to form part of the comprehensive gazetteer. This survey was also used to build up a picture of the key issues affecting the site and any management opportunities that might exist in resolving them.
  - An assessment of the buildings by Graham Keevill and Catherine Underwood. This survey consisted of a rapid visual appraisal of the Abbey and village buildings, noting their character, materials and features (e.g. blocked doors, evidence for lost shutters etc), individual and group value, and any apparent condition issues. The survey was largely restricted to external examination given the residential and commercial nature of most of the premises within the village, but a simple internal inspection was carried out on a few buildings as well (e.g. the Tithe Barn and lock-up). Lacock Abbey itself was the subject of a full external and internal visit, including rooms and areas not presently open to the public. No opening up was required. Sources such as the Pevsner volume for Wiltshire, the National Trust's vernacular building record (VBR) and the listed building descriptions were also used as part of the work. Numerous digital photographs were taken throughout the Abbey and village as part of the survey record.
  - A physical assessment of the archaeology of the study area by Graham Keevill and Catherine Underwood. This followed on from the data searches described above, and involved a walkover survey of the whole Trust estate, noting landscape features of potential archaeological interest, current land use and, where possible, examining features and sites identified as part of the pre-survey searches (see above). Only a few new features (ie ones not included in the WHER etc) were noted, but these have been added to the gazetteer.
  - An assessment of the correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot and scoping of the photographic archives at the National Media Museum and the British Library have been completed as part of the Botanical and Horticultural survey carried out by Lear Associates.

## Consultation

- 2.9 A key part of the information gathering process occurred through a series of consultations, both with the steering group and with stakeholders.
- 2.10 This study has allowed for two sessions of stakeholder consultation. The first entailed a drop-in session with the residents of Lacock and the surrounding area, which took place in the village school on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011, between 11am and 4pm. Leaflets about the event were delivered to around 500 households within the area. Residents were asked to fill in a

questionnaire (see Appendix 5) and to mark their favourite location upon a map. The main purpose of this first event was to establish:

- How residents used Lacock;
- What residents particularly valued about Lacock;
- Where their favourite places were;
- And what they felt were the key issues affecting the site.

2.11 The key outcomes of this first stakeholder consultation are summarised here:

- 17 questionnaires completed
- 15 residents; 2 visitors
- 6 male; 11 female
- 5 National Trust members; 10 non-members; 2 custodian members (i.e. tenants of National Trust housing)

2.12 Residents of Lacock use the village mainly for walking, visiting the Abbey and visiting restaurants. They value the peacefulness and the history of the village, the Abbey and the Canal and also the community spirit within Lacock. There are some aspects of Lacock that residents dislike. The main reported problem is the volume of traffic in the village. There were also negative views towards the commercialisation of the Abbey as residents value its historic qualities. The attitude towards tourists was mixed. There is the realisation amongst some residents that tourists keep the village alive, however some residents are less keen on tourism in Lacock because the infrastructure surrounding tourists, such as shops and ice cream vans, are changing the character of the village, and it is becoming crowded at weekends.

2.13 The second stakeholder consultation gathered feedback upon the draft report, which was used to develop the final version of this report.



### 3 Legislative, Planning and Management Framework

#### DESIGNATIONS

- 3.1 The following designations apply (see Figure 3.1):

##### **Statutory Designations**

###### ***Listed Buildings***

- 3.2 There are a total of 82 listed buildings within the study area, including the Grade I listed Abbey, 8 Grade II\* listed buildings and 73 Grade II listed buildings (Appendix 4).
- 3.3 Listing is an identification stage where buildings are marked and celebrated as having exceptional architectural or historic special interest. Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important; only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade I. Grade II\* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II\*. Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest; 92% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home owner. Listed building consent must be applied for in order to make any changes to that building which might affect its special interest.

###### ***Registered Park and Garden***

- 3.4 Lacock Abbey is registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England (Appendix 7). Although the inclusion of an historic park or garden on the Register in itself brings no additional statutory controls, local authorities are required by central government to make provision for the protection of the historic environment in their policies and their allocation of resources. Registration is a material consideration in planning terms so, following an application for development which would affect a registered park or garden, local planning authorities must take into account the historic interest of the site when determining whether or not to grant permission. Local planning authorities are required to consult English Heritage where a planning application affects a Grade I or II\* registered park or garden, and the Garden History Society on all applications affecting registered sites (the latter thus only currently applying to Lacock).

###### ***Scheduled Monuments***

- 3.5 A total of three Scheduled Monuments lie within the study area:
- The Conduit House 50m north of St. Anne's Church
  - The tithe barn and lock up in East Street
  - Lacock Bridge

- 3.6 A monument which has been scheduled is protected against disturbance or unlicensed metal detecting. Application for Scheduled Monument Consent must be made to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport before any work can be carried out which might affect a monument either above or below ground level. English Heritage gives advice to the government on each application and administers the consent system. In assessing applications, the Secretary of State will aim to ensure that the significance of protected sites is safeguarded for the long term future.

## **Other Designations**

### ***Conservation Area***

- 3.7 The village of Lacock, the Abbey and its grounds, and some of the surrounding farmland fall within a Conservation Area.
- 3.8 The main purpose of a conservation area is to *‘ensure that care will be taken over decisions affecting its future, that any alterations respect the particular character and interest of the area and that the case for preservation is taken fully into account in considering the merits of any redevelopment proposals.’*
- 3.9 Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any unlisted building within a conservation area. Conservation Area Consent is administered by the local authority.

### ***County Wildlife Site***

- 3.10 The stretch of the River Avon that passes through the Estate is designated as a County Wildlife Site.

## **Public Rights of Way**

- 3.11 Several Public Rights of Way occur through the Estate, including footpaths across the southern and eastern fields and to the north of the village, and a bridleway across Bewley Common (Figure 3.1).
- 3.12 National Cycle Route 4 connects Lacock to Chippenham and Melksham, with part of it running along the old canal.

## **DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY CONTEXT**

### **North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011**

- 3.13 The North Wiltshire Local Plan was adopted on June 2006, and will remain relevant until replaced by policies in new Development Plan Documents (DPD), particularly the Wiltshire Core Strategy, which is timetabled for adoption in 2011. The following saved policies from the Salisbury Local Plan are currently relevant to this study:

### ***Natural Environment***

- NE11 Conserving Biodiversity
- NE14 Trees and the Control of New Development
- NE15 The Landscape Character of the Countryside

- Policy NE15 states that *‘the landscape of North Wiltshire and its locally distinctive characteristics shall be conserved and enhanced, development will be permitted if it does not adversely affect the character of an area and features that contribute to local distinctiveness’*.

### ***Historic Environment***

- HE1 Development in Conservation Areas
- HE2 Demolition in Conservation Areas
- HE3 Historic Parks and Gardens
- HE4 Development, Demolition or Alterations involving Listed Buildings
- HE5 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Nationally Important Features
- HE6 Locally Important Archaeological Sites
- HE7 Enabling Development Historic Environment
- HE8 Archaeological Evaluation
- Policy HE1 states that *‘In Conservation Areas, proposals for development, advertisements and other works will only be permitted where the proposal will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. Open spaces, village greens, gaps between buildings, fields, gardens and trees that provide attractive views and vistas to, from and within public areas will be protected from development that would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area’*.
- Policy HE4 states that *‘Development or alteration affecting a listed building will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses’*.

### ***Retail***

- R6 Existing Local Shops and Services
- Under this policy, the District Council seeks to *‘retain the provision of existing shops and services, which provide a local service. The retention of local convenience shops, which residents might use on a weekly, if not daily basis, is considered particularly important’*.

3.14 The planned growth of Chippenham to the south highlights an important need for the greater understanding of the wider setting of Lacock and its contribution to the site’s character, and what impacts change within the wider area may have on the site. This would help to inform development proposals within the wider area that reflect the importance of the site’s rural setting, and not just the site itself.

## CURRENT USE AND MANAGEMENT

- 3.15 The majority of the National Trust owned buildings in the village are let for residential use and form the core of the village. These tenants comprise the heart of the village community, and their welfare and sustaining village community are both key issues.
- 3.16 Many of the businesses in the village are also tenanted (including tearooms, pubs and B&Bs), and helping these businesses to continue to thrive is another key issue.
- 3.17 The village of Lacock is open to the public all year round and is free to visit. The Abbey cloisters, grounds, museum, exhibition and museum shop are open all year round except for Christmas and New Year's Day, while between November and February the Abbey Rooms are only open during the weekends (and closed on Tuesday throughout the year), with a variable admission fee charged by the National Trust.
- 3.18 Around 145,000 visitors paid to visit the Abbey in 2010, while it is estimated that around 400,000 visited the village in the same year (although this latter figure remains unconfirmed). The concentrations of visitor numbers in various parts of the property is not fully understood, which has implications for fully understanding the ensuing conservation impacts.
- 3.19 Visitors are encouraged to park in the National Trust pay-and-display car park (free to members), located 200 metres from the Abbey and village. Cars parking for free within the village are causing congestion problems and difficulties for local residents during the summer months especially. Double-yellow lines were recently added to stretches of road within the village.
- 3.20 Dogs are permitted in the Abbey grounds in winter only.
- 3.21 The Trust rents out a holiday cottage and shop that is also occasionally opened to visitors at 2 High Street. The Trust also runs a Tea Room in converted stables opposite the Abbey that reopened in February of this year.
- 3.22 A full programme of events is run by the National Trust throughout the year, including family fun days, themed activities, open-air theatre, exhibitions, walks and workshops. The box below shows the events programme for 2011.

### Events at Lacock, 2011

3 Jan – 18 Feb	Ancestor & Architects (guided tours)
2 Jan – 26 June	Fox Talbot Museum Exhibition - Handmade Photographs by Jesseca Ferguson
16 Jan	Tudor twelfth night
22 Jan – 27 March	International garden photographer of the year exhibition
1 – 28 Feb	I Love Lacock
13 – 18 Feb	2 High Street: A look behind closed doors
17 Feb	Spring Flowers Walk (guided tour)
19 Feb	Wonderful Willow Structure
21-22 Feb	Writing in history
1 – 31 March	Spring Flowers Trail

1 – 30 April	Medieval Children's Trail
1 April	Nordic walking taster sessions
2 April	Get ready for mothering Sunday
8 April	Have fun with annuals
17 April	Medieval life day
23 – 25 April	Easter Trail
1 – 31 May	Tudor trail
2 May	The amazing pinhole camera day
7 – 15 May	Know your onions week
12 May	Bee Keeping Taster Day
17 May	Bat Watch
22 May	Tudor falconry
11 June	If walls could talk – a family trail
4 June	Life in the Civil War
11 June	Much ado about nothing: outdoor performance
1 – 31 July	Gothick art trail
1 – 24 July	Pleasure gardens: Lacock transformed 1714-1722
2 July	Evening picnic
7 – 18 July	Man and Cameraman
16 July	Trapeze on trees
19 July	Bat Watch
28 July	Fantastic Mr Fox
1 – 31 August	Victorian detective – a family trail
2 August	Teddy bears picnic
6 August	Victorian Day
14 Aug	Bee and Honey Day
23 August	Family Bat Watch
1 – 30 Sept	Lacock at war
11 Sept	Heritage open day
1 – 30 Oct	Dragon Trail
16 Oct	Apple Day
27 Oct	Dragon Day
1 – 30 Nov	Hibernation Trail
5 – 6 Nov	Hibernation weekend

- 3.23 There are three pubs within the village, as well as a village store, a bakery/tea room, and a number of boutique shops. There is also a primary school and a village hall.
- 3.24 Bewley and Bowden Commons are cut for hay/silage after mid-July, while the steeper banks are being cut using a tracked Kyoisha machine which can work on difficult terrain, helping maintain these herb rich grasslands and preventing scrub from invading. Keeping these commons free from car parking is a key management issue, in order to maintain them as attractive open spaces.
- 3.25 The Lacock Parkland Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreement runs until 2013, although under the present economic climate there is a high chance that it will not be renewed as a Higher Level Scheme and that the grant will cease (Nature Conservation Advisory Visit, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2010).
- 3.26 See Figure 3.2 for a map of land use and farm tenancies within the study area.



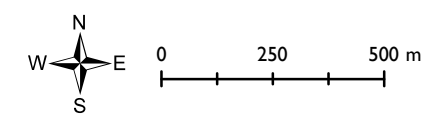


# Lacock Abbey Estate

**Figure 3.1: Designations and Public Rights of Way**

## Key

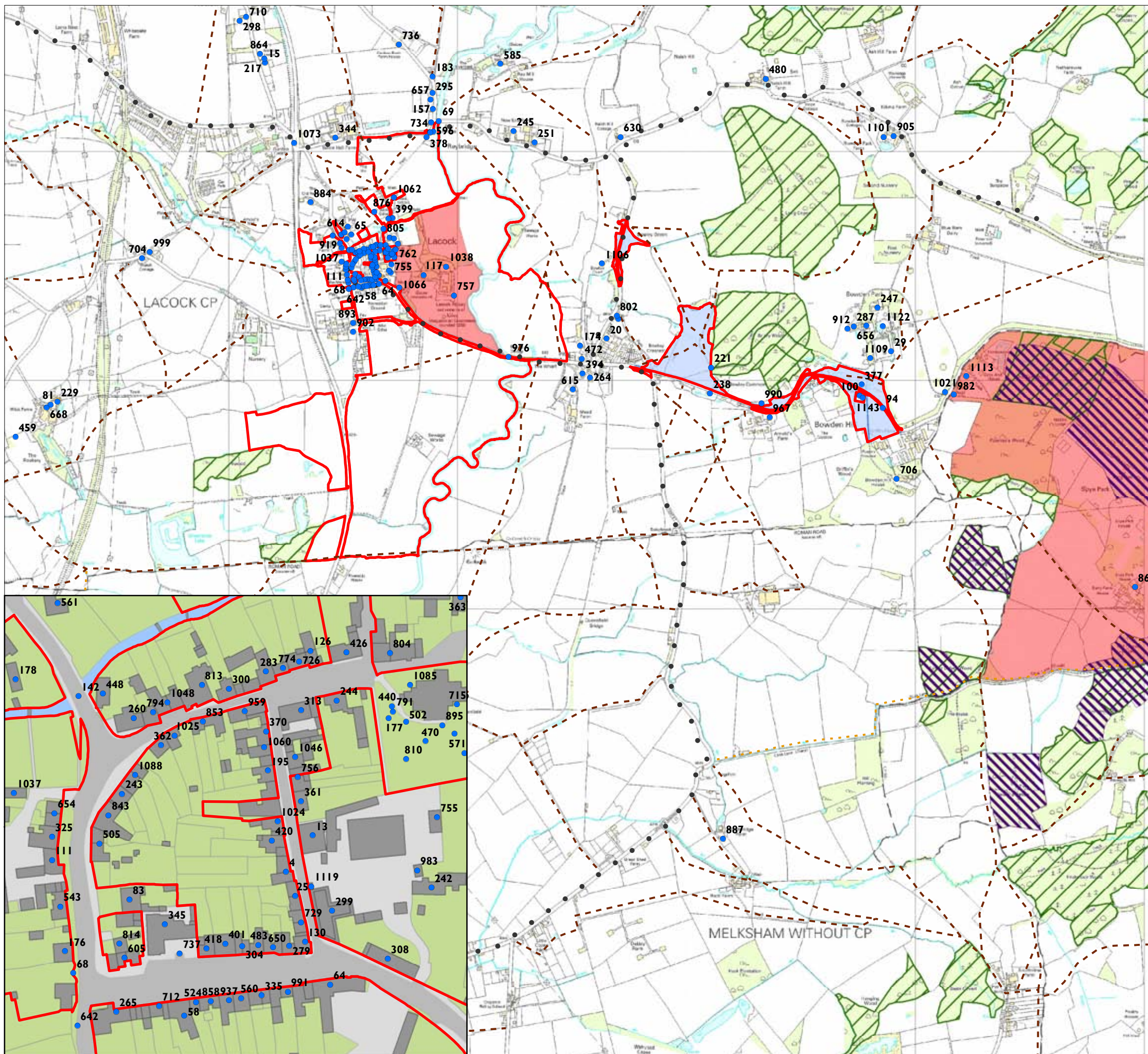
- Site boundary
- Listed building
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- • • National/Regional Cycle Network
- Nature designations
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Historic designations
- Ancient woodland
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Open access land
- Land use (inset map only)
- Building or structure
- Garden
- Inland water
- Man-made surface
- Road



1:17,000 at A3 (main plate)

Source: Land Use Consultants, English Heritage, English Nature, Ordnance Survey

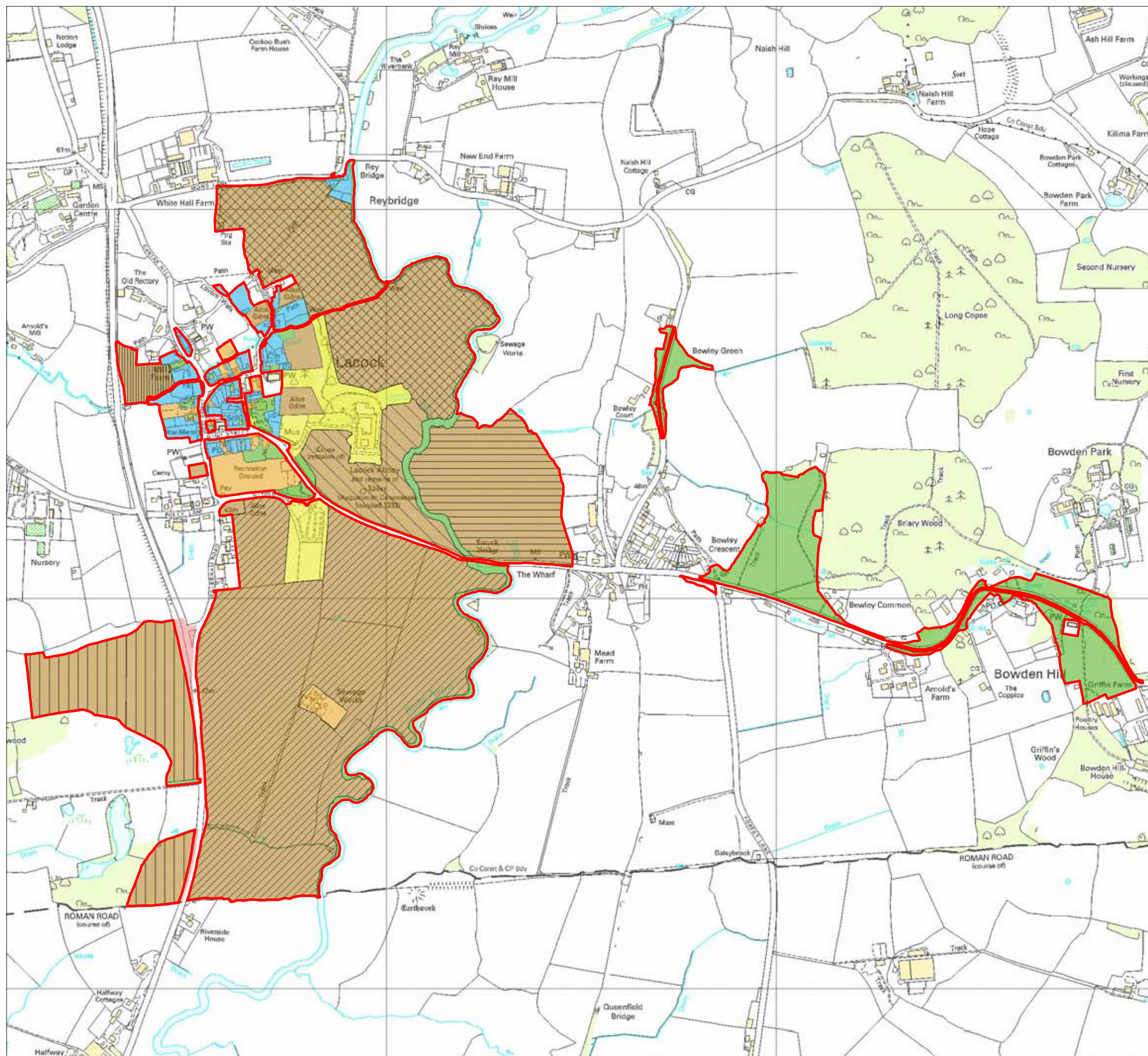
Date: 18/05/2011  
Revision: A











## Lacock Abbey Estate

**Figure 3.2: Land use and farm tenancies**

### Key

Site boundary

### Farm tenancies

Abbey Field

Chapel Field

Mill Field

Pt1 Land at Manor Farm

Pt2 Land at Manor Farm

Pt3 Land at Manor Farm

### Land Use

Agricultural

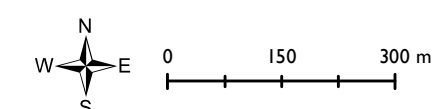
Commercial

Covenant

NT Operational

NT Visitor Attraction

Residential



1:10,000 at A3

Source: Land Use Consultants, National Trust

Date: 18/05/2011

Revision: A







## **4 Description**

### **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **Topography**

- 4.1 The property is situated within the middle section of the valley of the Bristol Avon. It includes farmland in the valley bottom around Lacock Abbey and a narrow strip of land called Bewley Common extending up the adjacent eastern valley side. Altitudinal range is from about 38 to 152 metres above sea level.

#### **Geology**

- 4.2 The underlying geology is mainly Jurassic Oxford Clay. Older Jurassic sediments and Cretaceous Lower Greensand occur within landslipped terrain that makes up the upper part of the Bewley Common section. The valley bottom land comprises varied width of flat alluvial floodplain adjacent to the river, backed by a wide river terrace a few metres above.

#### **Water**

- 4.3 The River Avon is a broad, slow-flowing major water body, flowing southwards in a meandering channel modified by dredging works. It has steep alluvial banks, up to about 3 metres high, with some undercut and slumped sections and a few small shingle bars. There are remnant river channels across Chapel Field, lying east of the Avon, which are interesting from a geomorphological and ecological perspective. Some areas of parkland adjacent to the Avon and the area in front of the Abbey in particular can become extensively flooded (raised walkways adjacent to Lacock Bridge and Keybridge provide pedestrian access during times of flood).
- 4.4 The Bide Brook runs from west to east through Lacock into the Avon, rising in Corsham. Its location has determined the location of Lacock and given rise to its name, 'Lacuc' meaning little stream. Throughout the Abbey's history the stream has been diverted to provide water for a number of uses, including to cleanse the monastic lavatories, feed the medieval mill and fish ponds, and fill the 18<sup>th</sup> century formal water garden. Another historic water supply came from Bowden Hill, suggesting that the initial source was not satisfactory, and Sharington built a new conduit house here between 1540 and 1550 which continued to provide drinking water to the Abbey (Papworth, 1996).

### **LANDSCAPE CONTEXT**

- 4.5 The Lacock Estate lies within the following character areas which are recorded at a hierarchy of scales (National, County and District). The character area descriptions provide useful information about the landscape context of Lacock.

## **National: Natural England National Character Areas**

### **NCA 117 Avon Vales**

- 4.6 *'The rivers and streams have shaped the land and created flood plains throughout the area while also contributing to the settlement pattern, with most of the major settlements lying along the Avon while smaller villages are clustered along streams. The surrounding farmland is one of gentle undulations with occasional low ridges with a dominant rectilinear field pattern of low hedges and few hedgerow trees defining a patchwork of arable and pasture with the course of streams marked by alder and willow pollards and with small pockets of thick-hedged small irregular fields in many areas often close to water courses.'*
- 4.7 *'Aspects of history that are likely to be particularly evident to the general public are the distinctive traditional towns of the NCA including Lacock village, an outstanding example of a village estate vernacular cared for by the National Trust in the clay vale between Trowbridge and Chippenham, the course of the Kennet and Avon Canal and its associated Lock systems, and the large historic mansions and parks, some of which were designed by Capability Brown and are surrounded by extensive woodland, such as Bowood.'*
- 4.8 One of the Interim Integrated Objectives for the NCA is to 'Protect from damage and loss, and appropriately manage, the area's parklands, rich archaeological and historic resource as well as its geology'.

### **County Wide: Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (December 2005)**

- 4.9 The Lacock Estate lies predominantly within Character Area 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale, though it is overlooked in the east by 7C: Bowood Greensand Hills within which the eastern sections of the Estate lie, and it sits adjacent to the boundary of 16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands in the west.

#### **12B: Avon Open Clay Vale**

- 4.10 *'Area 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale is an extended area following the course of the River Avon from Great Somerford in the north to Bradford on Avon in the south. As well as the Avon the area is characterised by the presence of other rivers, tributary streams, lakes, and, to the south, the Kennet and Avon Canal. The Avon Open Clay Vale is a level, open area with views to the higher ground of the Limestone Ridge to the east. Land is predominantly intensively managed permanent pasture with some arable and small isolated pockets of meadow (such as Sutton Lane Meadow SSSI). Hedgerows, gappy or low flailed in places, enclose fields of varying size. There are sparse hedgerow trees plus willows lines (some pollarded) marking the waterways and poplar shelter belts. Sections of the area remain rural and tranquil despite major routes travelling through (the M4, A350, A342) plus railway lines in cuttings and embankments and the visual influence of modern large scale development on the edges of Chippenham, Trowbridge and Melksham. This urbanising influence is particularly prevalent to the south of the area while the northern section is more akin to area 12A with scattered settlement of small brick and stone built villages and farmsteads.'*
- 4.11 Relevant management objectives for this Landscape Type include:

- *Minimise small scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network which could change the rural peaceful character of the landscape.*
- *Consider screening views to intrusive urban edges through planting new woodland.*
- *Retain and manage the hedgerow network and nurture new hedgerow trees.*
- *Promote appropriate management of arable land including retaining areas of fallow land and maintaining an unploughed margin around fields to encourage wildlife, particularly farmland birds.*
- *Introduce new tree planting along watercourses using typical riparian species such as alder and willow.*

### **District Wide: North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (June 2004)**

#### **4.12 The Lacock Estate lies within the southern part of **Character Area 11: Avon Valley**, the Main Characteristics of which are:**

- *Low-lying river landscape, between 70m and 30m AOD on river terrace and alluvial geology with heavy soils, interspersed with light sands.*
- *Dominant presence of water in the form of ditches, streams and river with related riparian vegetation and structures.*
- *Damp meadow and pasture along watercourses/valley floor.*
- *Intact and predominantly well managed hedgerows frequently with hedgerow trees.*
- *Areas of high quality arable agricultural land located throughout the area, on areas of Kellways Sand.*
- *Shelterbelts of poplar act as significant vertical elements in the horizontal landscape.*
- *Rural and somewhat isolated feel to remoter parts of character area.*
- *Scattered settlements and dwellings.*
- *Strong rural sense of place, which begins to break down around Chippenham and communication corridor.*
- *Broad expansive skyline, frequently unbroken by development.*
- *Significance of electricity transmission lines.*

#### **4.13 Relevant Management Strategy Actions for the area include the following actions:**

- *Conserve valley bottoms including wetland features, open ditches, meadows and riparian vegetation, especially willows.*
- *Conserve hedgerows and mature trees, including allowing new trees to emerge in existing hedges, and discourage field amalgamation.*

- *Enhance the sense of place through use of appropriate building materials in respect of new development, extensions or other built features – especially through the use of materials used in vernacular buildings.*
- *Encourage the creation of public access along waterways, where consistent with nature conservation objectives.*
- *Key Views management strategy: watercourses are important so views from bridges over the Avon should be monitored.*



## 5 Character Areas

- 5.1 The study area has been divided into 9 principal character areas (see Figure 5.1 below). A character area is a geographically discreet area that shares a number of distinct features or characteristics, enabling it to be classified as an entity with a distinct character in comparison with surrounding areas. Key factors that have been used to define these character areas include land use, vegetation, built fabric and historic associations. Where areas with a similar character are geographically separate or nevertheless have subtle but notable variations of character, sub-groups have been created e.g. 7a and 7b.
- 5.2 Separating the study area into character areas facilitates assessment and understanding of the site as a whole, providing more manageable geographical units within which issues and opportunities can be identified and discussed. Whilst this framework facilitates analysis and discussion, however, the interrelationship between character areas and the surrounding landscape should not be forgotten.

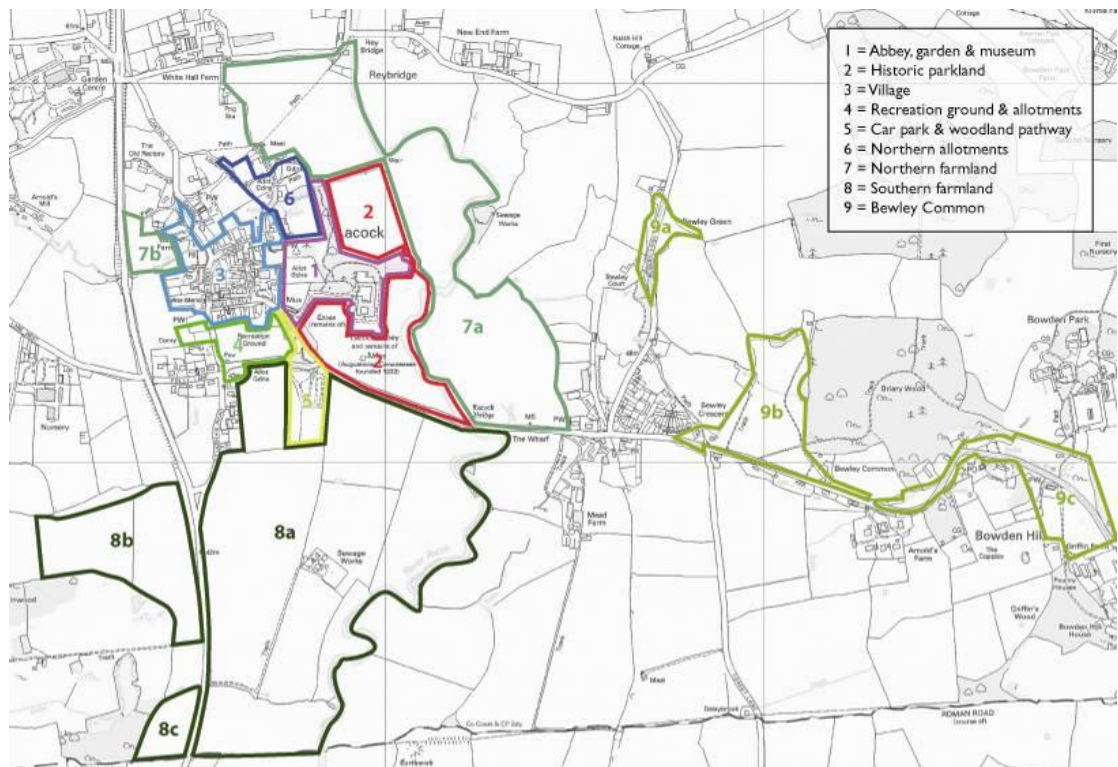


Figure 5.1: Character Areas Map

### Character Area 1: Lacock Abbey & Gardens

- 5.3 For further convenience and accuracy, this Character Area has been divided into several sub-areas as follows:
- **1a: The Abbey** – a Grade I listed building dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with a rich architectural history and housing its significant collections. The Augustinian nunnery founded by Ela, Countess of Salisbury in 1232 remains at the core of the building, with notable additions and alterations

including Sharington's Renaissance-style octagonal tower and John Ivory Talbot's Sanderson Miller designed Gothic hall.

- **Ib: The Fox Talbot Museum** – a 16<sup>th</sup> century barn at the Abbey gates, converted into a museum in 1975. The ground floor consists of a record and explanation of the pioneering Victorian's family life and his achievements in photography and other subjects, while the upper floor comprises a photographic exhibition gallery. The building also serves as the visitor reception and entrance to the Abbey, whilst a small flat on the first floor is used by the assistant house steward.
- **Ic: Terrace and driveway** – a ha-ha terrace fronting the Abbey on its southern, western and eastern sides that dates from around 1730, as well as the sweeping driveway approach with a southern ha-ha that may be associated with Capability Brown. A Sanderson Miller designed Gothic archway separates the driveway from the terrace, while a monument stands halfway along the driveway to the north, most likely a remnant from the lost 18<sup>th</sup> century formal water garden as suggested by the 1764 estate plan (figure 7.2).
- **Id: Fox Talbot's Botanic Garden** – a walled garden located behind the Abbey entrance and museum, predominantly laid to lawn, with a gravel path circuit and borders in its northern half. In the southern part several mature trees stand in front of the back of the Fox Talbot Museum. A small stone and timber outbuilding along the western wall is used as the gardeners' workroom, partially shielded by a willow screen. In the north west corner sits a recently restored glasshouse, whilst in the north east corner stands a tiled shelter.
- **Ie: Allotment Gardens** – established as the 'Kitching Garden' at least as early as 1714, the allotment gardens are located between the Botanic Garden and the Orchard and comprise a walled semi-rectangular area divided into plots for use by local residents.
- **If: Orchard** – historically an orchard by at least 1714, the orchard is situated to the north of the allotment gardens and is walled on three sides. A locked door in the west wall leads into the churchyard, whilst its eastern boundary is unwallled and merges into the 'Woodland Garden' character area (see below).
- **Ig: Woodland Garden** – this character area comprises the majority of the garden, which occurs to the north and west of the Abbey, including the north woodland walk, the rose garden, the pond and the Rockwork. The north-east boundary is defined by estate railing, separating the area from the adjacent pasture field, with a limestone wall boundary in the north-west and a ha-ha surrounding the fish pond in the south-east. The area contains a variety of mature trees, including exotic species that are likely to represent plantings by W.H. Fox Talbot, whilst the Rockwork lies at the northern tip of the area.
- **Ih: The Wood Yard** – a small walled garden to the north of the Abbey, established as the timber yard in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A timber-framed barn stands along the north wall and is still used as a log shed. The rest of the

area is laid to lawn and currently used as a private garden by the house manager.

- **Ii: The Courtyard** – enclosed courtyard within the northern part of the Abbey, formerly the stable court. Currently laid to gravel and used as a car park for the Abbey volunteers and residents. Shrubs & climbers feature along the north, east and south walls.
- **Ij: The Cloister Garth** – a rectangular grass lawn enclosed within the Abbey Cloisters, typical of a medieval cloister garth.



**Ia: The Abbey**



**Ib: The Fox Talbot Museum**



**Ic: Driveway**



**Id: Botanic Garden**



**Ie: Allotment Gardens**



**If: Orchard**



**Ig: Woodland Garden**



**Ih: The Wood Yard**

## **Character Area 2: Historic Parkland**

- 5.4 The character area comprises predominantly flat grazed pasture to the immediate north-east and south-east of the Abbey and Gardens. Mature



parkland trees are a defining feature of the area, as are the earthworks that represent the remains of formal designed gardens, notably of the 18<sup>th</sup> century water garden to the north of the Abbey (Figure 5.2 below). The southern field boundary is formed by the modern course of the old London Road, while the winding River Avon forms its eastern boundary and in places is thickly lined with a mix of mature parkland and other riparian trees. The northern boundary is formed by an historic channelled stream lined with ash, alder and horse chestnut, with the original stone walling still visible in places beneath the undergrowth.



**Parkland north of Abbey**



**Parkland south of Abbey**

### **Character Area 3: Lacock Village**

- 5.5 The village of Lacock is compact in plan, largely arranged around the four main streets: High Street, East and West Streets, and Church Street. The broad expanse of the High Street marks it out as the principal element of the later medieval (and current) layout, and this was the location of the market. The latter's cross still survives on the north side of the street towards its west end, albeit a short distance from its original position. The east end of Church Street is also broad, however, and this would appear to have been the original market focus. The close relationship with the Church of St Cyriac (at the south-east corner of Church Street, though lying outside the study area) is notable. West Street is also a broad thoroughfare, its raised eastern pavement being a distinctive feature of the village.
- 5.6 East Street is something of an exception, being (or at least feeling like) a quite narrow lane running from High Street to Church Street, and often referred to by locals as Middle Street. East Street and the abbey / manor farm also form something of a buffer between the village and the Abbey. Cantax Hill is an important element of the urban plan, running north-east from the junction of West and Church Streets, while Nethercote Hill is a further but less important extension to the north. These two streets are joined by the narrow lane of Lover's Walk. The relative significance of Cantax Hill over Nethercote Hill is demonstrated by the fact that the former bridges the Bide Brook whilst the latter merely fords it.
- 5.7 Village buildings are predominantly of later medieval and post-medieval vernacular form, mostly of two or three storeys and with very little by way of tall buildings other than the Church of St Cyriac. Some of the more prominent buildings within the village also include the Tithe Barn, village hall, school and the Red Lion Inn. The palette of building materials is relatively restricted (timber frames and brick or stone masonry, often rendered or painted, under stone slate roofs). This and the consistently high quality of the

buildings (whether vernacular or otherwise) contributes to the very attractive character of Lacock.



**Church Street**



**Cantax House**

#### **Character Area 4: Recreation Ground, Allotments & Picnic Area**

- 5.8 The character area comprises a relatively large mown recreational green space to the south of the village, dominated by a cricket ground in its western half, plus two separate smaller areas of enclosed allotments to the west and south, and a small enclosed picnic area in the east. The boundary of the main space is predominantly formed by a thick flailed hedge with fairly regular hedgerow trees and woodland in the south-east, with views of the village to the north and west. A play area and tennis courts feature in the east.



**The cricket green**



**Picnic area**

#### **Character Area 5: Car Park & Woodland Path**

- 5.9 The character area comprises the National Trust car park with a block of woodland to the north, through which a gravel path takes visitors along the roadside to the Abbey and village entrance. A dense line of mature trees (including oak and sycamore) forms the eastern and northern boundaries, screening the car park from the Abbey. The woodland block to the north comprises a mix of native and ornamental species of varying ages, while the gravel path that runs north to the Abbey is separated from the road by a mown grass verge.



**Car park**



**Path north of woodland to Abbey**

## Character Area 6: Northern Allotments

- 5.10 The character area comprises a fragmented area of allotment gardens and several houses, surrounded by a mix of scrub, ornamental and native trees and divided by Nethercote Hill. There is also a large walled field in the south adjacent to the Abbey gardens, currently used for horse grazing by the tenant of the adjoining house. The field is bounded by traditional stone walls on three sides and by the Bide Brook to the north.



**Allotment east of Nethercote Hill**



**Horse pasture field north-east of church**

## Character Area 7: Northern Farmland

### *7a: Pasture north and east of Abbey*

- 5.11 The character area comprises predominantly flat, open areas of pasture surrounding the Abbey and its historic parkland to the north and east. The land slopes up gently to the north and to a lesser extent in the south-east, providing subtle views 'down' onto the Abbey parkland from these locations. The winding River Avon forms the boundary to one side of the character area (the eastern side in its northern half and the western edge in the southern field), providing an organic quality to the field pattern, with riparian trees, predominately willow, marking the river's course. In the southern field, a flood channel creates a boggy strip of land in the south, adjacent to the traditional limestone bridge that spans the channel and river and forms part of the southern boundary. Save for a solitary oak in the north, the area is devoid of in-field trees.

### *7b: Pasture west of Mill Farm*

- 5.12 A much smaller area of pasture behind Mill Farm to the north west of the village, sloping steeply from the north down to the Bide Brook in the south. The western boundary is formed by the tree-lined embankment of the A350, whilst riparian trees further line the stream in the south.



**7a: Northern pasture field**



**7b: Pasture west of Mill Farm**



## Character Area 8: Southern Farmland

### ***8a: Farmland south of Abbey***

- 5.13 The character area comprises large, predominantly flat, mixed-use agricultural fields extending south of the Abbey and village to the line of the Roman Road in the south that demarcates the edge of the National Trust estate. The winding River Avon forms the eastern boundary of the area, while the large central arable fields have long, straight boundaries of predominantly flailed hawthorn.

### ***8b: Farmland north of Inwood***

- 5.14 Consisting of two arable fields to the west of the A350, with curving southern boundaries reflecting the historic north-eastern boundary of Inwood. These southern boundaries are tree-lined, with woodland forming the boundary in the far south-west corner.

### ***8c: Farmland south of Inwood***

- 5.15 Comprises a single arable field to the west of the A350, its curving western boundary defined by woodland, reflecting the historic south-eastern boundary of Inwood.



**8a: Farmland south of Abbey**



**8c: Farmland south of Inwood, with surviving woodland on skyline**

## Character Area 9: Bewley Common

### ***9a: Bewley Green***

- 5.16 The character area comprises a small triangle of extensively managed grassland along Bewley Lane to the north-east of Bewley Court (which is located due east of Lacock Abbey).

### ***9b: Bewley Common***

- 5.17 The character area comprises a medium-sized rectangle of extensively managed grassland lying to the east of Bewley Crescent. The old London road forms the southern boundary to the site, with no boundary feature separating it from the common.

### ***9c: Bowden Hill***

- 5.18 The character area comprises a roadside stretch of extensively managed grassland, with a narrow verge widening to an open common at the top of the hill. The common slopes down to its southern boundary which is demarcated by a line of hedgerow trees and several houses.



**9b: Bewley Common**



**9c: Bowden Hill**

## GAZETTEER

- 5.19 A key element of the Conservation Management Plan is the gazetteer, which forms a separate volume to this report. The purpose of the gazetteer is to provide a comprehensive index of distinguishing elements or features, be they good or bad, that make up the property. Each entry contains a consistent set of data that helps describe, assess and provide a strategy for that particular feature. Information includes grid reference, date(s), designation, description, history, significance, condition, key issues and management approach, as well as a photographic record.
- 5.20 In assessing the significance of each feature within the gazetteer, this has been done on a hierarchical basis using the National Trust's system of the letter codes (A-C, N and D). A denotes international significance, B national, and C local. N indicates a neutral feature, while D identifies a detrimental, negative element. Significance ratings need to reflect statutory designations, at least to some degree, as all sites, landscapes and buildings that are designated for their heritage merit<sup>2</sup> must by definition be of national significance to secure such a rating. This applies to 'lower' grade listed buildings and registered parks (e.g. grade II) as well as the 'higher' ones (II\* and I). Thus Lacock's Scheduled sites, all its listed buildings, and the Registered Park must be graded as B (national) for significance by default.
- 5.21 To better understand the different levels of significance, the key criteria for the individual ratings can be surmised as follows:

### *A – International*

- aspects of the site which give it an outstanding international importance within broad architectural, historical, cultural or social contexts.

### *B – National*

- elements which are good and representative examples of important national architectural, historical, cultural or social developments.
- elements covered by statutory heritage and/or wildlife designations.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and Registered Battlefields.

*C – Local*

- elements which demonstrate moderate cultural or wildlife significance, or have some local importance, or that contribute generally to the overall character of Lacock or the history of the people who have lived there and continue to do so.

*N - Neutral*

- does not add to or detract from the significance of the property

*D - Detracts*

- diminishes the significance of the property; is visually intrusive or obscures understanding of the site or its elements

- 5.22 The gazetteer is stored in both hard and electronic copies, the latter as a searchable PDF created from an interactive database. As a document that provides a detailed strategy for the management of all elements within the estate, it is of value to the National Trust as a comprehensive, ongoing management tool.

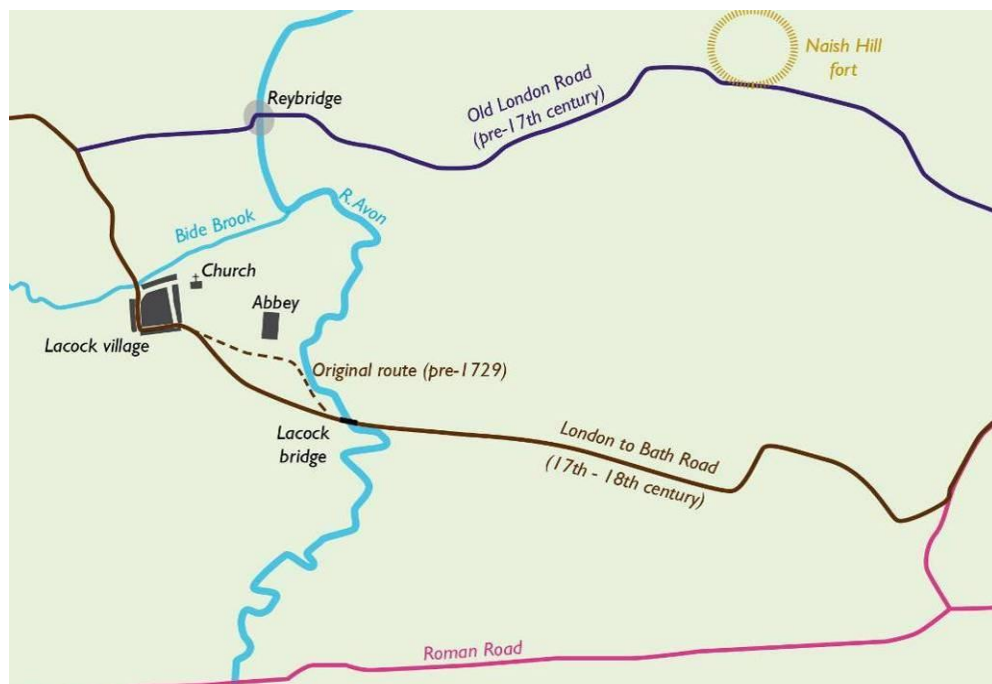


## 6 Outline History

- 6.1 The text in this chapter has been compiled from a number of summary sources, including the National Trust's guidebooks ('Lacock Abbey', 2003 & 'Lacock', 1981), the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, and the Wiltshire Libraries & Heritage summary of Lacock. Specific details have been individually referenced as appropriate.

### *Origins of the site*

- 6.2 The area around Lacock has attracted settlers since at least the Iron Age, when a camp was established at the top of Naish Hill a mile or two from the current village. Roman presence within the vicinity is evidenced by coins found at Wick and Lackham, as well as within Lacock itself during excavation of the Rockwork, whilst a major Roman road today forms the southern boundary to the parish and National Trust estate. The first permanent inhabitants were most likely the Saxons who settled around the Bide Brook, which they called 'lacuc', meaning little stream. The nearby River Avon would have been important for both communication and fish.
- 6.3 At the time of Domesday, 1086, Lacock probably had over a hundred residents and possibly a small church. It is mentioned as belonging to Edward of Salisbury, Sheriff of Wiltshire, and is described as having '...two mills..., and twenty acres of meadow and half an acre of vineyard. The wood is one mile between length and breadth.' The village was bounded by the royal hunting forests of Melksham and Chippenham. Parts of King John's Hunting Lodge beside the church date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and it is quite possible that the king stayed here on his hunting trips. The neighbouring manor of Lackham was held by William de Ow around this time, and was probably similar in size.



**Fig 6.1: Historical context of Lacock**



### ***Founding the Abbey (13<sup>th</sup> century – 16<sup>th</sup> century)***

- 6.4 By the early 13<sup>th</sup> century the manor of Lacock had descended to Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who founded Lacock Abbey in 1232. Ela was the great-granddaughter of Edward of Salisbury and was married to William Longespee, the illegitimate son of Henry II and one of the most powerful barons of the time. Already 45 years old, it is said she founded the Nunnery of Lacock for Augustinian canonesses in the morning and the Priory of Hinton for Carthusian monks in the afternoon, both in memory of her husband. The Abbey was built with stone from the Hazelbury quarry near Box, and with timbers from the royal forests. Ela herself became a nun in 1237 and took over as abbess three years later, not retiring until 1257, after which she still remained very active until her death at the age of 74.
- 6.5 To the west of the Abbey, the village had developed into a grid pattern of streets giving it the appearance of a small medieval town. Most of Lacock's inhabitants were tenants of the Abbey, being obliged to perform various services and pay for their rents by providing goods such as corn, hides and fleeces. These would have been collected in the fourteenth century tithe barn, a cruck beam construction of which there are several other noteworthy examples in the village, most notably Cruck House in Church Street.
- 6.6 By the 14<sup>th</sup> century the village had become a prosperous centre for wool and cloth, aided by its proximity to the London to Bath road which crossed the Avon at Reybridge. Sheep grazed the nearby downs, whilst in the 15<sup>th</sup> century broad looms were introduced to many houses, and the wide first-floor rooms that were built to accommodate them are still apparent on the High Street today. The church largely reflects the prosperity of this era, with no evidence remaining of the possible Saxon church that was located here.



**Fig 6.2: The medieval seal of Lacock Abbey**



**Fig 6.3: Abbey cloisters**

### ***Post-dissolution (16<sup>th</sup> century – 17<sup>th</sup> century)***

- 6.7 After its dissolution in 1539, Sir William Sharington (c.1495-1553) bought the Abbey for £783, and from this time it has never been sold but always passed down by inheritance. Sharington came from a wealthy Norfolk family and during his tenure he effected some impressive changes, demolishing the Abbey chapel though retaining most other buildings. Most strikingly, he added the three-storey octagonal tower on the south-east corner of the

cloisters and the unusual Renaissance chimneys piercing the skyline, clearly influenced by an earlier visit to Italy. On the south side of the abbey, he probably added the fashionable formal Fountain Garden which could be viewed from his new tower (figure 7.1). He also added the stable court to the north, which houses the bakehouse, brewery and stables.



**Fig 6.4: William Sharington**



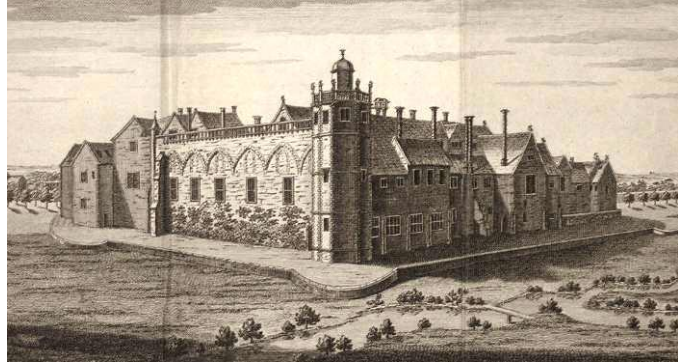
**Fig 6.5: Abbey east front with octagonal tower**

- 6.8 With no children to inherit, the Abbey passed to Sir William's brother Henry, who entertained Queen Elizabeth to a meal at Lacock and was knighted by her. When Henry's youngest daughter, Olive, married Sir John Talbot, the Abbey passed into the hands of the family who have been connected with the place ever since.
- 6.9 A Royalist garrison occupied Lacock during the Civil War, to be replaced by victorious Parliamentary troops in 1645 after the fall of Bristol and Devizes. Talbot was fined for his allegiance to the Royalists, although his son John was later knighted at the Restoration.
- 6.10 The most substantial change outside the Abbey came in 1618 when the royal forest was sold, allowing private development to the east of the river. Trees could now be felled for timber and more dwellings built, whilst the construction of the stone bridge by the Abbey shifted the London to Bath road south over Bowden Hill and into the High Street. By the early 1700s the road was turnpiked, enjoying only a brief heyday before the advent of a new road through Chippenham in 1783 (the present A4). Within the village itself, brick facades were added to Cantax House and the Red Lion, masking buildings of an earlier era, whilst the market had outgrown its original site by the church and moved to the High Street. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century the tithe barn was being used as a market hall alongside the outdoor market.

### ***John Ivory Talbot (18<sup>th</sup> century)***

- 6.11 On Sir John Talbot's death in 1714, Lacock passed to his eldest grandson by his second wife, the 23-year-old John Ivory, who changed his name to Talbot. It was the 58 year span of John Ivory Talbot (c.1691-1772) that saw the next greatest phase of changes taking place at Lacock Abbey. The elaborate gardens to the south of the Abbey were replaced with parkland, whilst the line of the drive was altered to make a carriage sweep before the front door. A Gothic arch added to the drama, whilst two chimneys from the east of the house were placed beside the drive with a figure of a sphinx resting on top of them. A large formal water garden was designed to the north of the Abbey

(glimpsed to the right of Buck's engraving below, Figure 6.7), although today only traces of it survive as faint earthworks and stones. Another significant alteration was the creation in 1754-6 of the large Gothic entrance hall designed by Sanderson Miller that replaced an earlier Tudor or medieval hall, a very early example of the Gothic Revival.



**Fig 6.6: John Ivory Talbot** **Fig 6.7: Buck's 1732 engraving of Lacock Abbey**

- 6.12 Ivory Talbot's only son John died childless in 1778, and Lacock passed to his daughter Martha and her husband (and cousin) the Rev. William Davenport. Davenport commissioned the garden designer William Emes in 1820 to make some changes to the layout of the water garden (which are evidenced by an estate map dated 1827).

### ***W.H. Fox Talbot (19<sup>th</sup> century)***

- 6.13 During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cloth industry declined as factories were built in the nearby towns, preceded by the creation in 1784 of a new London to Bath road (the present A4), which saw the Lacock route fall into disrepair. This era also saw the arrival in 1827 of Lacock's most famous resident, William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-77), the inventor of the negative-positive process and as such one of the founders of modern photography. Fox Talbot was a chemist, mathematician, botanist, astronomer and member of the Royal Society, and he conducted many experiments at Lacock. His earliest surviving negative dates from 1835, and is of an oriel window in the south gallery. This window is one of three such windows that he added to the Abbey in 1830, when he converted the room from a narrow gallery to a spacious drawing room. Today the Fox Talbot museum stands at the Abbey gates as a memorial to his achievements.



**Fig 6.8: W.H. Fox Talbot**



**Fig 6.9: A calotype of Lacock Abbey c.1844**



- 6.14 As a keen botanist, Fox Talbot was also engaged in scholarly correspondence with his contemporaries, as well as the exchange of plant material, and much of the planting around the Abbey bears his influence. In the 1840s, the failure of the railway company to come to an agreement with Fox Talbot resulted in the railway's construction through the east of the parish, away from the Abbey itself. Isambard Kingdom Brunel himself negotiated with Talbot but was unable to reach a deal. This and the fact that Fox Talbot did not have significant wealth to pour into the estate, in combination with the decline of the cloth industry, may all help to explain Lacock's excellently preserved architecture.
- 6.15 Late-19<sup>th</sup> century changes within the village included the building of the cemetery in the early 1860s and the closure of the churchyard, renovation of the cross outside the Red Lion in 1876, and the erection of the Jubilee Clock outside the old post office in 1887. A hall in East Street was built by the Lacock branch of the Order of Oddfellows in 1889, later bought by the National Trust and leased to the parish council for use as the village hall. The Abbey had meanwhile passed to Henry's son Charles Henry Talbot (1842-1916), a somewhat reclusive archaeologist and antiquarian who carried out excavations at the Abbey and published articles on his findings. He also carried out some careful restoration work there with Sir Harold Brakspear, a noted restoration architect and archaeologist. Charles never married, and he bequeathed the estate to his niece Matilda Talbot, née Gilchrist-Clark.

### ***20<sup>th</sup> century Lacock***

- 6.16 Matilda Talbot (1871-1958) unexpectedly inherited the estate in 1916, having lived in the Abbey for some years previously, and became a dedicated and benevolent custodian. She made some changes to the Abbey, notably removing the bookcases from the library and redecorating the room to form the Blue Parlour. There was little money available, and Matilda sold some Abbey contents, including books, to fund repairs to the Abbey and village. She held a pageant in 1932 to commemorate the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Abbey's founding, which attracted an audience of around 10,000, repeated in 1933 when it was filmed. In 1934 she created an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of her grandfather's discovery and invention of photography, held in the south gallery of the Abbey. During WWII the Abbey provided class rooms for 85 child evacuees from London who lived in the village. Six mothers with a child each, as well as a number of other people, were housed in the Abbey, whilst later in the War soldiers were also billeted in the Abbey. When they left three small flats for tenants were created.



**Fig 6.10: Matilda Talbot, 1932**



**Fig 6.11: Exhibition in the Botanic Garden, 2011**

- 6.17 On his visit to the Abbey in 1944 as representative of the National Trust, James Lees-Milne recorded in his diary that Matilda “has the most unbending sense of duty towards her tenants and estate to the extent that she allows herself only a few hundreds a year on which to live”<sup>3</sup>. That same year, Matilda presented the Lacock estate, including the Abbey, much of the village and 284 acres of land, to the Trust, and shortly thereafter presented the Lacock Magna Carta to the British Museum Library. Matilda had already donated many of Fox Talbot’s photographs and cameras to the Science Museum (subsequently passed to the National Museum of Photography in Bradford) and the Royal Photographic Society in the late 1920s and early 1930s, as well as much of his scientific equipment to the Royal Scottish Museum in the 1930s. Throughout the 1930s-50s she also donated Talbot prints to various museums throughout the world. In 1944 she also gave the family portraits to the Trust, but retained ownership of the remaining contents of the Abbey.
- 6.18 Matilda continued to live in the Abbey until her death in 1958, with her niece and family living in the house from 1952. Family occupation of the main part of the Abbey finally ended in late 2009 when Mrs. Petronella Burnett-Brown, widow of Matilda’s great-nephew Antony, moved out, whilst family occupation of the Abbey ceased completely in 2011 following the death of Matilda’s great niece Janet Burnett-Brown.
- 6.19 Repair work and alterations to the Abbey, grounds and village continued throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though not always sympathetically, including some interventions during the National Trust’s ownership. Flat conversions on the upper floors of the Abbey in the 1970s were not particularly sympathetic – historic features were not destroyed, but new partitions and fittings in non-traditional materials and designs were introduced. Repair and conversion works to buildings in the village were frequently unsympathetic, resulting in loss of historic features and introduction of inappropriate modern materials and details. More recently, refurbishment works have sought to conserve historic features and reintroduce traditional materials and details. Modern utilitarian features such as the sewage works to the south of the Abbey have occurred within the wider landscape. Several of the pillboxes that were built within the estate during WWII survive, and these now form distinctive features within the landscape. More recently restoration work has served to enhance the estate, including a restoration of some elements of Fox Talbot’s botanic garden, which was re-opened in 2000.
- 6.20 The National Trust purchased the majority of the contents of the Abbey from Mrs Burnett-Brown in 2009. In 2010 parts of the Abbey which had never previously been shown to visitors were opened for the first time.
- 6.21 Since the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Abbey and village have become popular filming locations. TV Series such as ‘Pride and Prejudice’ and ‘Cranford’ and films such as Harry Potter have helped to secure Lacock in the public consciousness, and the international success of Harry Potter in particular has undoubtedly contributed to the significant growth in visitor

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<sup>3</sup> (Lees-Milne, 2009)



numbers over the past decade. Whilst now a tourist hub, however, the village still retains a thriving community, a facet that is indispensable to Lacock's on-going character, appeal and sustainability.



## 7 Landscape and plant collection

### INTRODUCTION

- 7.1 The landscape at Lacock provides the setting for the Abbey and the village and reflects a long and varied history of influence. The expansive farmed area to the south is predominantly composed of flat, arable fields, in contrast with the areas of pasture and commons to the north and east of the site, while the winding River Avon provides a key feature throughout. The gardens and parkland surrounding the Abbey are of particular interest, having undergone a series of phases of redesign over several centuries. The medieval gardens were embellished by formal gardens to the south of the Abbey in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, while numerous re-designs in the 18<sup>th</sup> century involved figures such as Stephen Switzer, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and William Emes, leading garden designers of their age responsible for some of the era's finest gardens. Although much of these earlier layouts has been lost, key features that evidence their existence remain in the garden today and contribute to its rich historical tapestry. Also, largely thanks to the efforts of William Henry Fox Talbot, the garden hosts an important collection of ornamental and exotic trees and other plants.

### THE PARK AND GARDEN

#### Historic development

##### *Medieval Period*

- 7.2 Little is known about the Abbey gardens in the medieval era, although it is reasonable to assume that several of the features to the north of the Abbey that appear on the first known plan of the site dated 1714 (Figure 7.1) are likely to date at least in part from the period. These include the 'Kitching garden' and orchard, which were common features of medieval gardens and would have supplied the Abbey with vegetables, fruit and herbs (for medicine), as well as the fish and mill ponds to the east. Whether these features occurred in the same location and to the same extent remains conjecture based upon current evidence, and it is important to note the significant gap in evidence that occurs for this period. Archaeological investigation of the Kitchen garden, orchard and un-excavated areas surrounding the Abbey, including through geophysical survey, may help to shed some light on this era, in tandem with further documentary research.

##### *16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries*

- 7.3 A resistivity survey to the south of the Abbey shows at least two phases of a rectilinear formal garden dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>4</sup>. The 1714 estate plan names this as the Fountain Garden, and it is reasonable to assume that a fashionable garden was designed in this location after William Sharington acquired the Abbey in 1539, which was then adapted and altered over the next 175 years. The earliest known pictorial representation of the Abbey

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<sup>4</sup> Papworth, 2008



### **18<sup>th</sup> century: John Ivory Talbot**

- 7.6 The most extensive changes to the garden took place during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, under the tenure of John Ivory Talbot (1714-1772). Letters and bank accounts from this era testify to the partial involvement of several prominent designers, including Stephen Switzer, Capability Brown and, later, William Emes.
- 7.7 Switzer was a pioneer of the English landscape garden who worked at both Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard and was highly influential through his writings which combined theories on landscape, agriculture and politics. During his early career he worked with some of the most famous architects and designers of the day including London and Wise, Sir John Vanbrugh, Nicholas Hawksmoor and Charles Bridgeman.
- 7.8 His involvement at Lacock is of great interest and was just a few years after he published *Iconographia Rustica*, a three-volume treatise on landscape and gardening, in 1718 which became an essential addition to the libraries of the aristocratic elite. A letter from John Ivory Talbot to Henry Davenport in 1722<sup>5</sup> suggests Switzer had drawn up plans for the garden at Lacock and the grand water garden shown in the 1764 estate plan (Figure 7.2 below) appears to be his work, particularly given the unity of the design coupled with the formal grandeur of the 'French' broad prospects and the bastion.



**Figure 7.2: 1764 Estate Plan (detail)**

- 7.9 Switzer's extensive formal water garden was created to the north of the Abbey, developed in part from the medieval mill stream and ponds. Enclosed on its north and east sides by a formal moat and terrace, the gardens comprised a large L-shaped canal, a circular pool known as the 'Great Bason' at the head of a long approach, and a series of long, criss-crossing paths. The paths would have created designed views over the waterbodies and probably

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot: de Montfort/Glasgow University project collection number: LA(H) 31-002, Document no. 02134



out over the surrounding meadows; their arrangement has parallels with the French classical style, although by contrast few of the walks appear to have views to long distance focal points (NPA, 1994). At the head of the approach to the Great Bason, a monument of two Doric columns topped by a Sphinx was erected and still stands today.

- 7.10 The formal gardens to the south were removed, to be replaced with a ha-ha terrace overlooking a new area of parkland, which was increased in size through the relocation of the London road further south away from the house. The footbridge crossing the Avon to the east of the Abbey remains in its previous position, named on the estate plan as 'New Bridge'.
- 7.11 Another existing feature that is possibly contemporaneous with this era is the Rockwork (as referred to in John Ivory Talbot's diary), sited along the Bide Brook just to the north of the water gardens. Documentary and archaeological evidence suggests a date of 1749-50 for the construction of this grotto-like feature, originally constructed as an arch over the stream, with reference to the hauling of '33 load of stones from Bowden to the Rockwork' and further work at that time<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the style and materials suggest the 1740s, 'part Stourhead, part French classicism'<sup>7</sup>. Although this predates the documented involvement of Sanderson Miller, who was Ivory Talbot's architect from 1753, it is possible that Miller was involved, since in the 1740s he was creating designed ruins like those at Edge Hill and Hagley Castle.
- 7.12 What is known is that Sanderson Miller was commissioned by Ivory Talbot to create the Gothick Hall and archway (1753), reflecting Ivory Talbot's pioneering involvement in the Gothic revival (see Buildings chapter for further detail). Lancelot Brown was called in a year later to improve the landscape.
- 7.13 Brown was a prolific 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape improver having been involved in over 200 landscapes, a significant number when compared against the dozen or so completed by his predecessor William Kent. His involvement at Stowe (1741) and many other notable landscapes, including his masterpiece at Blenheim (1764), established Brown as the aristocracy's premier landscape gardener of choice. Brown swept away the formality of 17<sup>th</sup> century landscapes and often took turf right up to the house. He punctuated the parkland scene with tree clumps and specimen trees and enclosed the whole within perimeter belts. He also carefully considered the approach to a property, often creating sinuous driveways taking in carefully contrived views. His other design signature was the serpentine lake which appeared in many of his works, demonstrating his incredible ability to 'engineer' the landscape.
- 7.14 Brown was working at Lacock in 1754 – 1755, several years prior to his notable commission for the Earl of Shelburne at nearby Bowood which began in 1757. Brown was paid some £500 for his work at Lacock – not inconsequential when compared with his average yearly earnings of £8,000 during this period. It seems likely that Brown's efforts were focused to the south of the Abbey and involved the moving of the old London Road, the

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<sup>6</sup> Papworth, Lacock Rockworks Excavation Report, 2000

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Pearson Associates, 1994

creation of the new drive and establishing the southern parkland setting for the Sanderson Miller creations. These interventions are on a much smaller scale than his most famous creations such as Blenheim, Stowe and indeed nearby Bowood, and would most likely have represented a relatively minor commission in his order book, not making use of his ability to engineer land or water on a grand scale.

- 7.15 Another feature of note that appears on the 1764 Estate Map (as well as the 1773 Andrews and Drury Survey) is a long tree avenue running from the road south of the Abbey down to the River Avon, although if this design was implemented, no trace of it remains today (see Wider Landscape section below for more detail on this area).

### ***18<sup>th</sup> century: Reverend and Mrs Davenport***

- 7.16 After Ivory Talbot's death in 1772, the estate passed to his son who died childless and then to his daughter Martha who, with her husband the Reverend Dr. Davenport, appears to have commissioned Emes to carry out changes to the garden.
- 7.17 William Emes set up his landscape gardening practice in 1760 and largely followed the design principles of Brown, with his work with water and the laying of serpentine lakes being of particular note. It appears that Emes was engaged at Lacock in 1780, with invoices from 1781 clearly showing that he and his 'servant' Hunter had carried out work on a "new river" as earth moving and walling for the new river were carried out in the same year.<sup>8</sup> These changes are evidenced by an estate map dated 1827 (Figure 7.3 below), as well as the RCHME earthwork survey<sup>9</sup> and the geophysical survey<sup>6</sup>. Whilst a few elements of Switzer's formal design remained, namely the foot and the southern half of the grand canal, along with the garden's outer boundary, the rest was swept away, replaced with sinuous paths through woodland, a smaller circular water feature with an island in the centre, and new curving ponds in the north east. There is also documentary evidence of decorative alterations being undertaken to the Rockwork at the same time (the accounts refer to lath and plaster work)<sup>10</sup>.
- 7.18 Similarly to Brown's earlier commission, the work undertaken by Emes at Lacock is on a much smaller scale than his most notable achievements, such as at Tatton Hall and Calke Abbey in the Midlands, where he conceived the layout of parkland planting, avenue approaches and interconnected serpentine lakes on a grand scale in the style of Brown. Indeed, his work at Margam Park in Wales, also owned by the Talbot family, was on a similarly far grander scale to that at Lacock. Emes was working at Margam Park in 1780, suggesting that through family connections he was called over to Lacock that same year. It is interesting to note that, like Brown, it appears he also offered landscape advice at nearby Bowood (the extent of which is unknown), his commission there dated 1781<sup>11</sup> – it seems reasonable to assume that Emes, having been brought over to Wiltshire by the Davenports to advise at

<sup>8</sup> WRO Box 9.

<sup>9</sup> RCHME, 1995

<sup>10</sup> Papworth, Lacock Rockworks Excavation Report, 2000

<sup>11</sup> English Heritage National Monuments Records, 'Bowood' NMR no. ST 96 NE 32

Lacock, found himself work at Bowood since he was in the area (Emes was mostly based in the Midlands at that time); this is conjecture, though one imagines the scale of Bowood, being similar to Margam Park, must have presented a more attractive proposition for him than Lacock as a designer of Brownian landscapes in the grand style. Indeed, this would seem to express itself in the lack of confidence of his design at Lacock (see below for further detail on this).



Figure 7.3: 1827 Estate Plan (detail)

### 19<sup>th</sup> century: *WH Fox Talbot*

- 7.19 The most famous 19<sup>th</sup> century owner of Lacock was William Henry Fox Talbot, the pioneering Victorian photographer, botanist and polymath. Fox Talbot owned the estate from 1800 but he was a minor, and the abbey was let until 1827 when he took up residency (the estate map dated 1827 must have been done for Fox Talbot to accompany his occupancy). Fox Talbot's father (also William) had owned the property between 1790-1800 and left the estate deep in debt, hence the need to let it between 1800-1827 during which time no changes were made.
- 7.20 One of the main alterations that Fox Talbot oversaw in 1827 was extending the south terrace to form a larger lawn (see Fig 7.3 above), which was planted with evergreens at the corners and later ornamented with urns and tazza purchased from the horticultural society in 1839<sup>12</sup>. The surviving ponds of the water garden were also subsequently in-filled, which ultimately led to the loss of all water features except for the foot of the L-shaped canal, as evidenced by the 1<sup>st</sup> edition ordnance survey in 1886 (Appendix I). The final infilling took place in the 1840s at the persuasion of Fox Talbot's mother, Lady Elisabeth Fielding, who was a driving force behind many of the changes within the garden.

<sup>12</sup> Lewis & Fretwell, 1998

- 7.21 During this period the garden became something of a ‘family affair’, with separate plots set aside for Fox Talbot’s mother, wife, children and extended family to tend and grow. Although clearly not without a design sense, as evidenced by comments in his letters on the control of views etc, Fox Talbot nevertheless appears to have been more of a plant collector than a designer. He planted a range of exotic and ornamental trees that contributed to the wooded character of the garden that occurs today (although it should be noted that the garden is described as having an ‘open character’ during this period<sup>10</sup>). In 1838 he planted planes, horse chestnuts, tulip trees and walnuts in the ‘field near the rockworks’, while some large horse chestnuts and planes on the woodland walk today are probably his original trees, as are a Swamp Cypress and Black Walnut in the Botanic Garden<sup>13</sup>. Fox Talbot’s major botanical and horticultural mentors were his favourite uncle William Thomas Horner Fox Strangways (maker of Abbotsbury Garden and ‘botanical powerbroker’) and William Jackson Hooker (Professor of Botany at University of Glasgow 1820-1841 and Director Royal Botanic Garden Kew 1841-1865) who was the leading botanical authority in Britain of his day. There is extensive correspondence with both individuals establishing clear links with both Kew and Abbotsbury.
- 7.22 The letter archive<sup>14</sup> further includes references to ‘ontario, white poplar, lime and horsechesnut’ having been planted by the river (1833), a purple flowered Laburnum planted in the orchard (1835), and ‘acacias, one large & one small, growing together near the walnut in C(onstance)’s garden’ (1837). (Constance was Fox Talbot’s wife). Fox Talbot writes that the acacias ‘are valuable because I gathered the seed myself off the Acacias at Varese’. He also talks of planting American Walnut that he himself ‘raised from seed’, including ‘one placed to hide the barn’, and others possibly in Inwood (the large woodland that occurred to the south west of the estate, see maps in Appendix 1). It is interesting to note that Fox Talbot’s appreciation for these more exotic tree species is not universally shared, for his mother writes “It puts me in a nervous fever that you should talk of putting such absolutely worthless things in Inwood as Horse Chestnuts & American walnut! You must think of posterity & plant oaks.” Further references include those made to the presence of some great elms that were injured or lost in various gales during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, including one that stood next to the Caldron Pond (i.e. the remains of the foot of the L-shaped canal) in 1861.
- 7.23 Fox Talbot also created a Botanic Garden to the west of the Abbey (in the location of the current re-creation) shortly upon arrival, constructing a series of lean-to glasshouses against the north wall and later, in 1849, a free-standing conservatory in order to grow and propagate his tender plants. A survey of the Botanic Garden was conducted in 1998 and provides more detailed information of its development<sup>12</sup>.
- 7.24 Another alteration included the creation of the rose garden, or ‘Lady Elisabeth’s garden’, around 1829-1832 (Lady Elisabeth being fox Talbot’s mother).

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<sup>13</sup> Lewis & Fretwell, 1998

<sup>14</sup> De Montfort University & University of Glasgow, 2003

- 7.25 A sketch of Lacock Abbey by George Clark in 1834 (Appendix I) shows the presence of an arched, timber ornamental footbridge over the Avon in the location of the earlier stone bridge with central pier. A bridge is shown at this location on the 1827 estate plan, but when this new footbridge replaced the earlier incarnation is unclear.
- 7.26 It is also possible that the Rockwork was adapted into a bathing pool during this period, as suggested by a diary note of 1842 which refers to the site as a piscine. If so, it may have continued in this use up until c.1900 when the water channel was buried<sup>15</sup>.
- 7.27 It is also interesting to note that during Fox Talbot's era the sundial that is currently located on the eastern side of the terrace was positioned centrally to the terrace in front of the Abbey.
- 7.28 Despite these tantalising clues, there still remain gaps in the knowledge of this period that further research and survey may help to fill. More precise dating of the full range of the garden's existing trees, for example, might help to provide a more complete catalogue of those that were planted during Fox Talbot's tenure.

### **William Henry Fox Talbot and botany**

Fox Talbot had a keen interest in plants from an early age, and he was a respected botanist and a Fellow of the Linnean Society by the age of 29. Perhaps his greatest contribution to botanical history was in helping to secure the establishment of the National Botanic Garden at Kew, plans for which floundered after the death of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford. He achieved this through petitions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Council of the Linnean Society amongst others.

Fox Talbot's interests were expressed through an extensive correspondence (sometimes 4 or 5 letters written per day), much of which survives and is available as an online archive. His correspondence concerning plants had two facets:

- i) Botanical Science (taxonomy and plant morphology)
- ii) Horticulture (cultivation of plants in his garden and those of relatives)

The relationship between his observations in botany and his desire to make images and recording plant material is a fundamental one, and it is highly probable that he grew the plants for his earliest images c1836 ('photogenic drawing negatives').

WH Fox Talbot's interest in botanical science was focussed on taxonomy and classification. As was the case at that time, the naming and taxonomy of plants was based on the morphology of the reproductive parts and much of his work was focused on evidencing this aspect.

<sup>15</sup> Papworth, Lacock Rockworks Excavation Report, 2000



He was also very interested in collecting samples and seeds from different locations, including the creation of area floras (for example, Westmorland and Isle of Wight) and overseas (including reference to collections from the Alps, Texas, Euphrates, and Sicily and Ionian Is). Much of this material was apparently obtained through correspondence with others in the field, either directly or via his uncle.



Print from a calotype negative by WH Fox Talbot

Correspondence with his family and other gardeners reveal how important horticulture was to WHFT. He was especially interested in phenology – seasonal timing of flowering or seeding etc. The tone of WHFT's correspondence with his female family members is quite different to that of his botanical correspondence and often included aesthetic considerations such as advice from his mother and aunts regarding colours. There is also correspondence between WHFT and his daughters who had their own gardens at Lacock.

Growing plants under glass was the major manifestation of his interest in both botany and horticulture. This was carried out at the Stove House, Zinc House, & Orangery (and possibly other greenhouses) at Lacock Abbey. The Lewis & Fretwell Report (1998:10) refers to 'the conservatory' in the 'botanic garden' in the middle of the northern half of the garden at Lacock. No description or image of a 'Botanic Garden' at Lacock Abbey has been firmly identified. There is a Fox Talbot image of Glasshouses (National Media Museum Cat: 1937-366-34) and a photo of an Orangery (National Media Museum: 1937-366-86), although there is no evidence that these are of Lacock, and none of the photographs are at present dated. Fretwell & Lewis put the date of the Conservatory in the Botanic Garden at 1849.

WHFT clearly grew many plants in pots, but he was also was interested in trees, as well as climbing and bulbous plants, and seems to have had different passions at different times, for example at one point obsessing about the flowers and fruit of ivy. It is therefore probable that the plant range at Lacock would have been idiosyncratic, and the garden close focused and organised with attention to detail rather more than being concerned with larger scale arrangements or formal schemes or effects.

## **20<sup>th</sup> century**

- 7.29 The overall layout of the gardens appears to have changed relatively little during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as evidenced by the succession of available Ordnance Survey maps (which include 1901, 1925, 1960, 1975 and 1980). The most obvious change seen on the maps occurs in the northern field, the site of the former water garden, where the extent of parkland planting diminishes towards the latter part of the century (conceivably in part due to recorded storm events) and the area loses some of its more apparent parkland character. The eastern terrace wall and ditch of the former water garden were filled by the agricultural tenant of the time in the 1960s, although it appears that the fenceline remained in place into the 1990s. It is also interesting to note that a footbridge over the Avon still appears on the maps as late as 1960.
- 7.30 A number of pillboxes were added across the estate during WWII, including in the north eastern corner of the former water garden and on the corner of the south terrace, although this latter structure was removed in 1978. In 1977 the ha-ha was cleared out, deepened and widened, whilst the storms of March 1984 left several gaps along the drive. The woodland and parkland were further altered by the gale of 1990 when at least 20 mature specimen trees were brought down.
- 7.31 Information from the Garden Advisors' reports (held in hard copy on site by the Trust) sheds some light on some of the garden plantings from the 1970s onwards. The most significant changes appear to include a replanting of the orchard in 1974, as well as repeated notes on the planting of evergreen shrub species within the woodland garden in the 1980s, particularly Portuguese laurel but also yew, box and holly along the path to the Rockwork and east of the orchard. Either these latter plantings represent re-plantings or they suggest the creation of a darker, more enclosed character within the woodland at this time, and one that has created subsequent management issues in the need to regulate excessive growth (Sue Carter pers. comm.).
- 7.32 One of the major changes of recent years was the re-creation of the Botanic Garden towards the end of the 1990s, reclaiming it from its then use as allotments. Following the death of William Henry Fox Talbot the glasshouses had fallen into disrepair (his son Charles apparently lacked his enthusiasm for plants), and were probably removed in the 1940s<sup>16</sup>. The National Trust re-created a glasshouse in the same location in 2004-5 and completed in 2008.
- 7.33 Lady Elisabeth's Rose Garden was dismantled in the 1960s, but was reinstated by the National Trust around 1991 using the original arches which had been stored in the attic above the brewhouse in the stable block.
- 7.34 Only the top of the Rockwork was visible in 1996, with the lower part of the structure deliberately buried pre-1933, and has subsequently been exposed<sup>17</sup>.
- 7.35 Whilst some clear information exists on the changes that occurred within the garden during the latter part of the century in particular, it would still be useful to compile a systematic, digitised catalogue of recorded changes

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<sup>16</sup> Lewis & Fretwell, 1998

<sup>17</sup> Papworth, Lacock Rockworks Excavation Report, 2000

undertaken by the National Trust since their ownership in 1944. This would help to establish a clearer overall picture of how the garden has developed under Trust ownership. Furthermore, there appears to be a general paucity of evidence from the first part of the century which further analysis of the archive and archaeological investigation might help to develop.

### **Current status and condition**

- 7.36 Today the garden as a whole is somewhat unprepossessing and not easily understood by the first-time visitor. The incomplete pathway network lends the impression that the garden is fragmented and without a clear and intuitive visitor route. The Botanic Garden provides an isolated, but engaging experience quite separate from the other areas, providing an interesting and valued contrast with the un-manicured character of the woodland garden. The woodland garden lacks clarity, however, and work by the garden staff to control shrubs is appropriate, although the slightly 'faded air' of the place is something that should not be lost altogether. Features such as the columns and the Rockwork represent features relating to former designs and, without context, can appear unremarkable. Apart from the well-maintained herbaceous borders in the Botanic Garden, there are few spectacles of colour or planting design within the garden. As such the garden visitor who is after 'something to look at' or a short garden walk may initially be disappointed. The true character of the garden relates to its time-depth and close association with the Abbey and its residents. The stories that the garden has to tell are as interesting as the features contained within it, and as such it is not a garden that reveals itself all at once – the garden works as an overall experience, in companionship with the Abbey and parkland, rather than boasting a particular individual selling point. There are of course features of note from different periods, such as the Walled Garden, Rockwork, Botanic Garden and pond, but these all contribute to the story rather than necessarily working as standalone destinations in and of themselves. The lack of interpretation of these features, however, means that often these stories are missed.
- 7.37 Many features of the earlier garden layouts as evidenced in maps, surveys and documents have been lost, although a surprising number still remain, either noticeably or less perceptibly. The current driveway, ha-ha and southern parkland date from Ivory Talbot's pre-1764 design, whilst the allotment gardens and the orchard go back even further and are possibly of medieval origin. The Rockwork, Doric columns and Gothic archway also all date from Ivory Talbot's era, although their context within or adjacent to the current woodland walkway relates to Victorian redesign.
- 7.38 Scant, yet tantalising remains of the water garden occur in what is now the pasture field to the north of the Abbey. These include the stone-lined ditch along the north of the field and the stone footing of the bastion and the weir in the north-east corner. The condition of these features is largely poor, with stone remains threatened by unmanaged vegetation growth. Depressions in the field can also be made out that relate to the earlier layouts of the garden, most notably the long channel of the L-shaped canal.

- 7.39 Within the garden itself, the walls and other stone features are largely in good or at least fair condition, although again the unmanaged growth of vegetation, notably ivy, poses a threat. Repairs of the limestone walls and ha-ha have been effected in several places, using traditional styles and materials although readily apparent due to their recentness. A few sections of wall are in evident need of repair, most notably the large crack in the ha-ha that occurs at the end of the pond. The Rockwork arch has been backfilled with soil and its top capped with concrete probably some time this century, while the south bank of the stream is in good condition and likely dates from the stream's realignment in the 1930s<sup>18</sup>.
- 7.40 The allotment gardens are predominantly well-tendered by its tenants, although there are plots that are neglected and serve to detract slightly from the overall impression. A lean-to shed along the southern wall is another slightly unsympathetic element within this historic space. The orchard has been planted relatively recently with a variety of fruit trees, set amidst a meadow with mown paths. The creation of the glasshouse and the shelter in the Botanic garden, along with a well-maintained north border, contribute to the area's well-managed character. However, the gardeners' shed in the west, hidden behind a willow screen, detracts from this somewhat, as does the lack of design intention in the southern half of the garden.
- 7.41 The historic parkland has lost some of its original character: several newly planted cedars (over the visible archaeology of the gardens to the south of the Abbey) with palisade stock guards contrast with the established trees, while a semi-mature parkland clump stands slightly incongruously in the centre of the northern field. In the south east these additions, in combination with the extensive riparian planting along the Avon, result in a more enclosed and cluttered landscape in contrast with the more open parkland character originally intended and evidenced in the historic maps and drawings. The southern field boundary is formed by the modern course of the old London Road, where a steady stream of traffic creates movement behind the traditional limestone boundary wall. A line of mature oak and horse chestnut inhibit views along part of the eastern stretch, while a strip of younger woodland acts as a buffer in the south-west. The River Avon is thickly lined with a mix of mature parkland and other riparian trees, inhibiting views to the adjacent field from the Abbey in particular. A somewhat incongruous wooden walkway with tarmac surface runs along the southern boundary to the medieval bridge.
- 7.42 As noted in the 'historic development' section above, planting of Portuguese laurel within the woodland garden in the 1980s has resulted in on-going management issues for the gardening staff. Head Gardener Sue Carter has carried out extensive pruning in recent years to rein back excessive growth and reveal some of the woodland structure.
- 7.43 The NT plant database<sup>19</sup> holds details of the current plant collections, whilst there are also extensive plant lists surviving from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 18<sup>th</sup> century lists are derived from John Ivory Talbot's diary entries as

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<sup>18</sup> (Papworth, Lacock Rockworks Excavation Report, 2000)

<sup>19</sup> <http://issapps01/Plants/Property/71>

transcribed by Sandy Haynes, whilst the 19<sup>th</sup> century lists are derived from William Henry Fox Talbot's notebooks and letters. It should be noted that both of these plant lists require work to improve their usefulness, as they contain archaic names and the Fox Talbot lists do not separate out those plants that Fox Talbot wrote about and those that he actually planted at Lacock.

## Significance

- 7.44 The park and garden are included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Grade II making them of national importance and significance. Whilst the register entry makes reference to Capability Brown's (1716 – 1783) involvement at Lacock, which is significant in itself, there is no mention of Stephen Switzer (1682–1745) and William Emes (1729/30 – 1803). Despite the significance of these added associations, the primary significance of the garden and park relates to its discrete phases of archaeology that testify to previous designs, as well as its botanical associations with William Henry Fox Talbot, as detailed further below, and as such its listing at Grade II on the parks & gardens register probably remains the most appropriate grading for now.
- 7.45 That Switzer's involvement is clearly documented through letters and maps, backed up by visible archaeological evidence is of great significance. It is also interesting that features that related to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century garden survive in situ today as they were incorporated into later designs, for example the Monument and the remaining section of pond. Whilst Lacock was reasonably modest in size, it did contain many of Switzer's design signatures. For example, his design at Grimsthorpe Castle, Lincolnshire (1711-1718) featured a formal garden, encircled by an earthen bank. This formed a platform from which to view the working landscape beyond. The formal garden was made up of ten radial spikes terminating in bastions with a long avenue protruding from the centre, southwards, towards the groves. This design is remarkably similar to that of the 'Manor of Paston' found in Switzer's *Iconographica Rustica* (1715) which employs military fortifications as its foundation and features included a moated starburst comprising arrowhead ravelins and bastions with paths leading to a central destination.<sup>20</sup>
- 7.46 Brown's documented involvement is also of great interest and his hand seems to be evident through the current position of the driveway and through several of the trees and clumps in the parkland. It is also of note that Brown did not sweep away Switzer's formal garden and that Lacock contained an interesting mix of the formal and informal late into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Whilst it is difficult at this stage to establish precise dates for the tree planting in the park it appears that some may date to Brown's involvement in 1754 – 55. In addition some trees are planted on slight mounds which may also suggest Brown's hand. However, he adopted a light touch at Lacock and the significance of his work in the park cannot be compared to his other more significant works at, for example, Blenheim, Stowe, Hampton Court, or nearby Bowood.

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<sup>20</sup>[http://york.academia.edu/TimurTatlioglu/Papers/79738/Destruction\\_Identity\\_and\\_Dynasty\\_The\\_role\\_of\\_Martial\\_Architecture\\_in\\_Eighteenthcentury\\_Designed\\_Landscapes](http://york.academia.edu/TimurTatlioglu/Papers/79738/Destruction_Identity_and_Dynasty_The_role_of_Martial_Architecture_in_Eighteenthcentury_Designed_Landscapes)



- 7.47 Emes' involvement is of note; however, his alterations appear to have been unremarkable and lacked the clarity of design provided by Switzer and Brown. He appears to have created a two part lake in a serpentine form which is typical of his work. However, he retained two sections of the formal canal and also added a circular water feature at the centre of the garden, creating a rather confused and piecemeal design. The scale and incompleteness of the design does not compare favourably to his involvement elsewhere, for example his grand designs for Tatton Park. As mentioned above, it is interesting that Emes also worked at Margam Park owned by the Talbot family.
- 7.48 From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards the design of the landscape becomes less significant at Lacock, with the overall layout remaining largely unchanged (with the exception of the extension of the south terrace by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1827). Changes that did occur tended to be in a piecemeal fashion, such as the infilling of the canal also during Fox Talbot's tenure, and did little to contribute to a cohesive overall design. As noted above it seems apparent that Fox Talbot was more interested in botanical science than garden design, which in many instances he left to his mother, and as such the plant collections amassed by Fox Talbot are of greater interest and significance than the design changes that he made.
- 7.49 Fox Talbot's major botanical and horticultural mentors were his favourite uncle William Thomas Horner Fox Strangways (maker of Abbotsbury Garden and 'botanical powerbroker') and William Jackson Hooker (Professor of Botany at University of Glasgow 1820-1841 and Director Royal Botanic Garden Kew 1841-1865) who was the leading botanical authority in Britain of his day. There is extensive correspondence with both individuals.
- 7.50 The standard of the botanical correspondence puts William Henry Fox Talbot at the pinnacle of the 'gentleman scientist'. In his photographic-related correspondence he was exchanging views with scientific luminaries such as Michael Faraday and Charles Babbage, the latter of whom who came to stay at Lacock in 1836 with a number of other savants<sup>21</sup> before the Bristol meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Indeed given all Fox Talbot's polymathic interests, experiments and achievements, it could be argued that he has a status approaching Charles Darwin in terms of changing the way we see and understand the world today. His significance and his 50 years at Lacock Abbey deserves greater recognition, such that Lacock could be to the National Trust (and nation) what Down House is to English Heritage.
- 7.51 The re-creation of the Botanic Garden has gone some way to recognising the significance of the plant collections that Fox Talbot grew there, although there is still much scope for enhancement and greater interpretation of this area. The existing trees that have been identified as likely Fox Talbot plantings, such as the horse chestnuts and planes on the woodland walk and the walnut in the Botanic Garden, are significant in that they represent a living connection with his tenure. They will not last forever, however, with disease and other factors that may also play their part, as is the case currently with

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<sup>21</sup> Including William Whewell, Sir David Brewster, Charles Wheatstone and Peter Mark Roget

the horse chestnut. There is nevertheless significance attached to the species of tree that he planted, given his interest in exotic species and his pioneering role in planting them within his garden. It is worth noting that the *type* of tree he planted holds a greater significance than *where* he planted them, given his focus on collection over design as outlined above. It is also worth noting that design additions such as the Rose Garden, whilst of interest, are not of as great a significance as Fox Talbot's purely botanical-related additions for the reasons outlined above.

- 7.52 The walled kitchen garden is a remarkable survivor of the early designed landscape at Lacock, managing to remain in situ and in use for over 300 years. The interest in the walled garden relates to Switzer's alterations in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century which has left a curious diagonal eastern wall to this day. There appears not to have been a particularly substantial range of glass houses or other buildings associated with the walled garden, with just two glass houses appearing to the south of the walled garden in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This suggests that the walled garden at Lacock never became an 'industrial' food production plant that existed in larger gardens throughout the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its continued use as a community allotment is of great significance to village residents and must be one of the finest locations for an allotment in the south west.
- 7.53 Ultimately the key overall significance of the park and garden relates to the discreet phases of development that surround the Abbey, evidenced by their often intact archaeology, which give a unique insight into its long and rich history, making it of national (B) overall significance.

### **Key issues and opportunities**

- Visitor circulation is hampered within the garden, which lacks a cohesive and legible circular route or choice of routes: the woodland walk comes to an abrupt halt by the Rockwork, the lack of access through the allotment garden disconnects both the orchard and the botanic garden, whilst many other aspects of historic circulation have also been impeded.
- In conjunction with the above, access over the Avon from the Abbey is no longer possible, the footbridge having collapsed into the river sometime during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Views both within and out of the garden have been lost due to vegetation growth.
- Currently the complexity of the Lacock landscape and extant features relating to key phases of development are not being interpreted.
- The limestone walls are generally in a good condition; however, ivy and other vegetation threatens their structural stability and presentation.
- There are a number of tree clumps and specimen trees that have been planted in the past 20 years or so that do not relate to historic precedent and threaten visible archaeology and composition of the park.
- The stock fencing and excessive stile in the parkland east of the Abbey, provided to take people away from the potentially dangerous balsam

poplar rather than having to fell it, nevertheless detract from the overall setting.

- The presentation of the Rockwork and the visitor experience of this feature are currently very poor.
- Cessation of historic management practices (pollarding riverside willows and maintaining clear views to and from the Abbey across the Avon) has resulted in a more enclosed character in this historically open area. It has been suggested by the NT that some willow pollards may be too old to respond well to re-pollarding.
- The extent and importance of WH Fox Talbot's horticultural and botanical exploits are not being interpreted, and links to the existing botanic garden and collection are not clear or being fully exploited. Scope also exists for further enhancement of the botanic garden through further re-design (as also recommended in the Lewis-Fretwell report<sup>22</sup>).
- There are some major gaps in the knowledge of key phases of the garden's development, notably during the medieval period, but also during later phases, including during the Sharington era, and the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- The plant lists that exist for the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries need to be properly interpreted to enhance their usefulness.
- There are potential threats posed to the area's veteran trees due to the effects of climate change and new pests and diseases.

## THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

### Historic development

- 7.54 The layout of the wider farmed landscape is broadly similar to that recorded in the 1764 estate plan, suggesting that the alignment of most field boundaries is at least around 250 years old. Some field amalgamation occurred between 1827 and 1886, including the amalgamation of a field in the south eastern corner of present-day Chapel field (known as Fussell's Field see below), as well as the fields to the north of the Abbey and to the south of the road.
- 7.55 The most notable difference from the 1764 plan is the long avenue of trees depicted running south from the Abbey to the River Avon, which had disappeared by the 1838 Tithe map (or perhaps was never planted) and of which there is no physical evidence surviving today. A smaller woodland avenue does occur just to the west of this line, bordering the National Trust car park, and was in existence by at least 1886 as evidenced by the 1<sup>st</sup> edition ordnance survey. The Andrews and Drury map of 1773 shows a small line of trees in approximately this position which could take its origins back much further, although the 1827 estate plan does not corroborate this. There is also a reference in 1835 of the planting by Fox Talbot of 'an avenue of trees extending from Caroline Copse in a line towards the Abbey across the field

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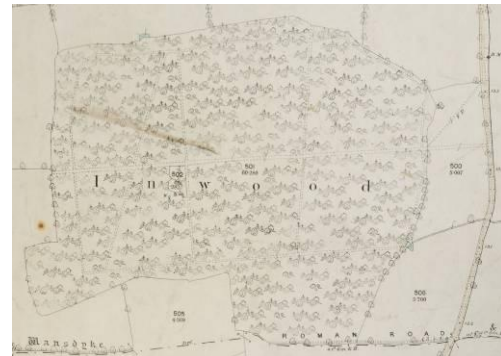
<sup>22</sup> (Lewis & Fretwell, 1998)

till it reaches the road', which could possibly refer to the planting of this avenue<sup>23</sup>.

- 7.56 Inwood was a planned woodland that formed part of the wider estate to the south west of the Abbey and village and was present by at least 1724, as evidenced by John Ivory Talbot's diary in which he records measuring some trees there, suggesting that these were notable or veteran trees even then. The 1764 estate map (Figure 7.4 below) shows a straight central ride running east to west through the woodland, with a series of smaller rides running north to south off its axis. There is repeated reference to shooting at Inwood in the Fox Talbot letter archive<sup>18</sup> (i.e. during the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and its use as a game covert, as well as to the presence of a game keepers cottage (which again was already in existence by 1764). There is also reference to its use for coppicing, as well as its use by Fox Talbot's daughters as a place to picnic. Fox Talbot's mother Lady Elisabeth also mentions the woodland as being part of the view from the south gallery windows, from where she imagines the fine effect of the trees in Fussell's Field<sup>24</sup> that 'will appear to join Caroline copse which appears to join Inwood.'



**Fig 7.4: Inwood 1764**



**Fig 7.5: Inwood 1886**

- 7.57 Being on the edge of the estate, it is clear from the letter archive that Fox Talbot had some management difficulties with the woodland, not least in its illegal use by the hunt of one of his neighbours. The woodland retained its pattern of rides and overall shape from 1764 well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The OS maps show it being still intact in the 1920s, though by 1960 two fields had been assarted into its centre. By 1975, the woodland had all but disappeared, with just its outline preserved in the boundaries of surrounding fields. The area of Inwood today falls outside of the current National Trust estate, although a few fields to its east form the south-western part of the estate and reflect the location of the woodland with their curving boundaries.
- 7.58 Allotments appeared to the south of the village in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The OS maps show that the current south eastern allotment on the corner of Hither Way was originally much larger, stretching across the northern part of the field that adjoins the modern NT car park. It had reduced to its current 'pocket' size by 1975 (before the creation of Hither Way and the modern car park). Historically there was a large allotment to the west off Melksham Road, south of the cemetery, although by 1975 this

<sup>23</sup> De Montfort University & University of Glasgow, 2003

<sup>24</sup> The 1827 Tithe map and letter archive appear to refer to this as being in the south eastern corner of the current Chapel field, where Fox Talbot was paying his tenant to maintain a woodland

area has been given over to development, and it appears that sometime after this the site of the current allotment is created from the southern corner of the cemetery itself.

- 7.59 Other major changes that occurred in the wider landscape during the 1960s/early 70s include the construction of the A350 to the west of the village, the creation of the recreation ground and tennis courts, and the appearance of the sewage works to the south of the Abbey. Whilst some development to the south west of the village along Melksham Road had appeared by the 1960s, this had increased to its current level by 1975, swamping the previously isolated Folly Cottages.
- 7.60 The significant change that occurs after 1980 is the creation of Hither Way and the National Trust car park to the south of the village, whilst a water pumping station was built in the far north of the estate.

### **Current status and condition**

- 7.61 The wider landscape predominantly consists of farmland of contrasting character. Flat, open arable land dominates to the south, with large fields enclosed by heavily flailed hawthorn hedgerows. Here intensive arable farming results in a landscape devoid of significant wildlife interest, and in combination with the largely featureless landscape creates a somewhat monotonous and unsympathetic setting to the Abbey and village. Exceptions are provided by the River Avon forming the area's sinuous eastern boundary, which with its riparian vegetation provides a localised strip of tranquil and pastoral character in contrast to its surroundings (and in stark contrast to the A350 further west).
- 7.62 Areas of gently-sloping pasture characterise the land to the north and east of the Abbey, and in combination with the River Avon and occasional in-field trees provide a peaceful, pastoral character that offers a generally more sympathetic setting to the Abbey and gardens in contrast to the southern farmland. Occasional instances of neglected field boundary and intrusive infrastructure within this area, however, detracts from this to a certain extent (see details below).
- 7.63 Of different character again are the three commons of varying size that occur in the east – here land is no longer grazed but cut for silage, resulting in grassland areas of much taller and botanically more interesting swards. These semi-improved grasslands provide a non-intensively managed character to the area. The pronounced topography of Bowden Hill provides another distinction in character within these commons, with the eastern common (CA9c) stretching up the hill along the roadside before opening out into a high plateau affording far-reaching views back over the Avon valley and beyond. This area is quite distinct from the rest of the site as a result of its elevated situation, and provides the only position (within Trust ownership) from which the property as a whole can be appreciated and understood within its context.
- 7.64 Within the farmed areas, hedgerow boundaries are of varying condition and type, though consist predominantly of hawthorn and are intensively flailed by the tenant farmers, especially in the south (Character Area 8). Here



hedgerows are often gappy and contribute to the intensively managed character of this area of arable-dominated farmland. The boundaries adjacent to the A350 comprise timber fencing of varying condition, with scattered hedgerow planting. A section of hedgerow running along the Melksham road has greater diversity and character, including elm suckers and blackthorn, while hedgerow is entirely absent between the line of mature trees that run along the boundary to the field west of the car park. Elsewhere there are field boundaries formed by ditches (north of the Roman road and south of the old London road).

- 7.65 In the pasture field to the north of the Abbey gardens (Character Area 7a) there are flailed hedgerow sections amidst stands of hedgerow trees (including oak, ash and beech), with views to the fields beyond (and from one section to an industrial unit). The north-western boundary comprises outgrown hawthorn and hornbeam hedges and green mesh fencing adjacent to the pumping station. Where houses occur further south, the hedgerow has been cut back to afford the occupiers views, creating a gappy appearance and correspondingly emphasising the houses in views back from the river.
- 7.66 In the pasture to the east of the Avon (Chapel Field or 'New Bridge Mead' on the 1764 Estate Plan), outgrown hawthorn and scrub provide a thick screen along much of the eastern boundary, behind which a large industrial barn can be glimpsed where occasional gaps occur. The northern boundary is similarly dense with an even scrubbiest character, while scrappy sections of fencing along the river edge detract locally from the landscape character. There is a fenced area of recent woodland planting on one section of bank opposite the Abbey, whilst trees lining this stretch of the Avon on both sides inhibit historic views from the Abbey and result in an enclosed character that is at odds with the historically open parkland setting (see earlier section).
- 7.67 The winding River Avon is lined with riparian trees, typically willow, along its length. In several places the bank has slipped, while driftwood also clusters at certain spots.
- 7.68 The eastern end of the Medieval bridge is currently being supported by a cluttered medley of timber struts.
- 7.69 A stile in the north (Character Area 7b) leads over the A350, though the path from the village is overgrown and poorly signed.
- 7.70 A sewage works sits in the centre of the southern farmland (Character Area 8a); its surrounding trees are prominent from a distance, but its metal fencing and small units are nevertheless visible from the north. Two red-brick WWII pillboxes also occur within the area, one in the north-east along the field boundary and one to the south of the sewage works. The former is surrounded in part by scrappy barbed wire fencing, giving it a neglected character. A small pond features along the southern boundary of the centre-north field.
- 7.71 The recreation ground (Character Area 4) is composed of disparate elements, lending it a fragmentary character. A traditional limestone pavilion and adjoining wall overlook the cricket green in the north (Character Area 4), providing a historic character in-keeping with the wider village. Tennis courts and a children's playground in the east meanwhile provide a more

utilitarian, recreational character, with a mismatched collection of benches around the ground's boundary. The allotments in the west are enclosed by dense tree cover on three sides and a traditional limestone wall along the road. Those in the south have a more open and a slightly more kempt character, bounded by a neatly trimmed hedge, inside which stand several fruit trees and some distinctive topiary.

- 7.72 The car park (Character Area 5) is surfaced with self-binding gravel. Previously (2011) the grass parking areas were severely degraded and, combined with numerous potholes in the gravel surface, gave the area a scrappy appearance, particularly in winter when it suffered from poor drainage. This was compounded by the mismatched site furniture, including timber bollards of different heights and varying signage. The car park was resurfaced and enlarged in December 2011.
- 7.73 A timber fence separates this area from a grass field in the south, which is used as an overflow car park in summer. A dense line of mature trees (including oak and sycamore) forms the eastern and northern boundaries, screening the car park from the Abbey. The woodland block to the north comprises a mix of native and ornamental species of varying ages, while the gravel path that runs north to the Abbey is separated from the road by a mown grass verge, with the traditional stone boundary wall across the road providing the visitor in summer with the first indication of what might lie beyond.
- 7.74 The allotments to the north of the Abbey (Character Area 6) have a relatively unkempt appearance in comparison with those in the south, notably the south-eastern allotment where there is a large area of scrub that backs onto the Rockwork, forming an overgrown backdrop in views from the Abbey's woodland walk.
- 7.75 Wildflowers bring colour to commons in the east (Character Area 9) in the spring and summer months. In CA9a, views extend over the hedgerow in the north-east to the field and wooded ridgeline beyond. A strip of woodland lines the south-eastern boundary, inhibiting views in this direction, while tree-tops form the main backdrop to views west. The aesthetic qualities of CA9b are enhanced by the wooded ridgeline that forms the eastern boundary, where a track leads to the stone-pillared gates that lead into the Bowden Park estate. Its western boundary is formed by a bushy, outgrown hedgerow, contributing to the 'untamed' character of the area, which is further enhanced by a line of riparian trees running alongside the stream that crosses in the middle.
- 7.76 Far-reaching views are afforded from the hilltop of CA9c, overlooking the common to the Avon valley and beyond, although these are interrupted by several large modern houses which form incongruous features in the centre. Further north the prominent red stone church forms a more traditional landmark, surrounded by several mature churchyard yews. Along the northern side of the road lies a patch of scrubby woodland that becomes a wide rough-grassland strip with sharply undulating landform further down the hill. The grassland strip is bounded by the ornamental woodland of Bowden Park to the north, while the Conduit House provides a further distinctive

feature opposite the church at the top. Ideally the commons would be grazed, but the busy road and the need for fencing and cattle grids make this very difficult to achieve.

## Significance

- 7.77 The pasture fields immediately surrounding the Abbey's historic parkland comprise the immediate setting of the Abbey and its park, and form an extension of the site's parkland character. As such these fields may be assessed as being of local significance in landscape terms, forming as they do the backdrop to the nationally significant park and garden. This includes Chapel Field, which lies to the east of the River Avon and provides important context for views across the river from the Abbey, as evidenced by the fact that Fox Talbot paid his tenant Fussell to maintain a small woodland in the south east corner to be appreciated in views from the south gallery.
- 7.78 The River Avon may also be considered to be at least of local landscape significance in its own right, particularly where it runs near to the Abbey in the north and forms not only an essential element within the setting of the site, but also represents a key link back through the history of Lacock's development, tying together the different eras as one of the area's main 'constants'. Given also the river's inseparable relationship with Lacock's medieval bridge and the nationally important park and garden, as well as the internationally important Abbey, the northern stretch of the Avon may even be considered to be of national significance.
- 7.79 The farmland to the south of the Abbey and village is dominated by large arable fields where it is worth noting that, as throughout the site, the field pattern has remained relatively unchanged since at least the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (as testified by the 1764 estate plan). The area is thus of local significance in historic terms, although given the flat nature of the topography and the heavily flailed nature of most hedgerows, the majority of the field pattern is not strongly discernible and in landscape terms the area is of neutral significance. Exceptions lie towards the south, especially to the west of the A350 where these fields mark the former boundary of Inwood, the historic woodland that once formed part of the Lacock estate. The significance of Inwood lies in the fact that it occurred as an impressive planned woodland from before 1764 until at least the 1920s, with its layout of rides preserved remarkably intact. Unfortunately the woodland was removed in the 1960s and 70s, but its boundary is still clearly demarcated. The southern field and its neighbour to the east also mark the boundary of the Roman road that once ran east to west. For these reasons, these fields may perhaps be considered to be of local significance.
- 7.80 A feature to the south of the Abbey that is certainly of at least local significance is the historic woodland avenue running north to south adjacent to the car park. This dates back to at least 1886, and was possibly planted by Fox Talbot in 1835, or alternatively could even have its origins pre-1776, and is certainly a designed feature, offering impressive (if currently partially obscured) views of the Abbey in its landscape setting.
- 7.81 The allotment gardens within the village may also be considered to be of local significance, contributing as they do to the community character of the village. It is worth also noting the popularity of tenanted allotments at Lacock, demonstrated by the waiting list that currently exists to secure one.

- 7.82 The Commons in the east are also of local significance both for their historical associations as well as their landscape value.
- 7.83 There are several features in the wider landscape that are detrimental to the landscape, predominantly reflecting piecemeal modern additions of a utilitarian nature. The most obvious are the sewage works, the raised walkway adjacent to Lacock Bridge, the car park (in its current condition) and the eastern part of the recreation ground, whilst further north they include the pumping station, the TV mast, the farm vehicle bridge over the Bide Brook and the excessive stile adjacent to the Abbey ha-ha.

### **Key issues and opportunities**

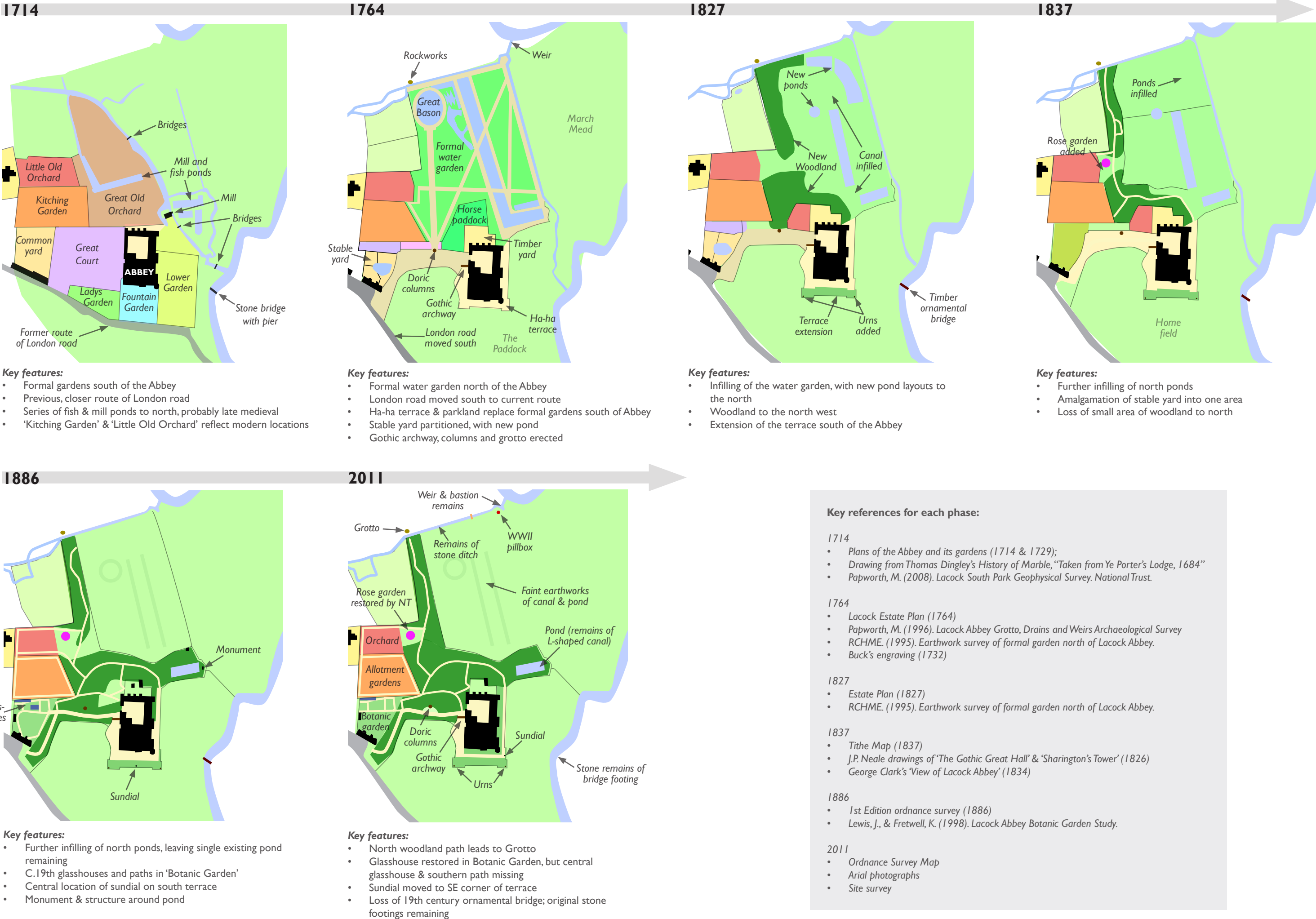
- Intensive agricultural use of the southern farmland creates an unsympathetic backdrop to the Abbey and village.
- Some of the hedgerows are gappy which lends a denuded feel to the landscape.
- There is a lack of a cohesive access network throughout the site.
- Discordant elements occur throughout the wider landscape, creating a negative cumulative impact. These include: the timber/tarmac walkways by Lacock Bridge and Reybridge, the unsympathetic footpath signage (e.g. by the mast in the north), the dilapidated timber fencing along the A350 (which also has an advertisement attached), and the occurrence of other inappropriate fencing (e.g. scrappy barbed wire by the pill box in CA8a and along the Avon bank in Chapel Field, CA7a).
- The sewage works form a distinct feature in the centre of the southern farmland CA8, in the line of what was apparently the historic avenue as indicated by the 1764 estate plan.
- The car park needs to be re-assessed and monitored follow a period of sustained use to ensure that previous issues have been rectified and do not reoccur.
- Views back to the Abbey and the church or out to surrounding areas are often important within the wider landscape. Key views include: from the northern field (CA7a) east to the ridgeline of Bowden Park and south into the historic parkland and the church; from Chapel Field(CA7a) west over the Avon to the Abbey (and back); far-reaching views from the top of Bowden Hill (CA9c) west over Lacock; from the southern fields (CA8a) north to the Abbey and church. The church is prominent in views from several locations surrounding the site, with views from rights of way outside the study area (notably the Avon route south of Reybridge) often important. Historically there were important views up the canal to the sham tower at Reybridge (now demolished), as well as possibly south-eastwards down the canal to the River Avon and Lacock bridges.
- Aside from the Abbey and church, there are several other features within or bordering the site that form localised landmarks within views, notably the Methodist Chapel and an outgrown pollard oak along the



boundary of Chapel Field (CA7a) and the in-field oak in the northern field (CA7a).

- A modern house forms a detracting element on Bowden Hill, often impinging upon views to the east.
- The recreation ground (CA4) lacks a cohesive character.
- Lacock Bridge will require ongoing conservation and management. Risks are continually posed by the weight of traffic using the single-lane structure, an issue that is likely to be compounded by the future expansion of Melksham and associated increase in traffic levels. The eastern section of the causeway is currently being supported by a tangle of timber struts, a situation that requires remedy.
- Inwood was an important part of the Lacock estate for over 200 years, although the site of the former designed woodland now falls outside National Trust ownership along its boundary.
- The southern allotment garden on the corner of Hither Way was originally a much larger allotment stretching east along the northern part of the field that adjoins the current NT car park.
- Opportunities to make better use of the River Avon, including greater riverside access and potential river access (e.g. by canoe).

Figure 7.6: The Historic Development of Lacock Abbey Gardens





**Figure 7.7 Key Views in the wider landscape**







## 8 Buildings and archaeology

### INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 The National Trust's Lacock estate contains six Scheduled Monuments, designated because of their archaeological importance, though none of these are located at the Abbey or within its immediate environs. The closest are the Tithe Barn and Lock-up in East Street, with the Conduit House on Bowden Hill being the most distant (just over 2km east of the Abbey). Archaeological fieldwork at Lacock, however, has largely been restricted to the Abbey, with the vast majority of excavations, watching briefs and surveys concentrated there (having been carried out or commissioned by the National Trust except for those done before it took ownership of the estate). No excavations are listed within the village, although watching briefs have been carried out at the Church of St Cyriac (2007) and Stroud Farm Bridge (2006; NMR Nos 1463137 and 1514038 respectively). Some building surveys and tree-ring dating have also been carried out on village properties (e.g. on No 2 High Street).
- 8.2 This strong evidential bias towards the Abbey and its grounds makes it difficult to comment in detail on the below-ground archaeology of the village, but the exceptional range and quality of its buildings make it clear that it has substantial archaeological interest in this regard, quite apart from in the standing fabric of the buildings themselves. Furthermore, excavations under the floors of the Fox Talbot Museum and Lacock Abbey Lodge in 1994 and 1995 respectively exposed remnants of medieval buildings, suggesting that the village had originally extended further east toward the abbey gatehouse (Wessex Archaeology 1994; Papworth 1995). The Abbey, its Tithe Barn and the Church of St Cyriac are Grade I listed buildings, while there are 13 grade II\* and many other Grade II buildings.

### Historic development

#### *Archaeology – prehistory to Domesday*

- 8.3 There are no documented **prehistoric** sites or finds in the study area or its immediate environs listed in the NMR or WHER (McMahon 2004, 7, and see Appendix 3), though McMahon (2004, 11) notes that 'prehistoric remains have been recorded just beyond'.<sup>25</sup> This apparent paucity of evidence is somewhat surprising given the nature of the land's form and its agricultural use in later eras. Some of the currently undated cropmarks and earthworks (e.g. WHER 601 and 620) in the area around Lacock may be of prehistoric origin, but this remains to be proved. There is also a possibility that prehistoric artefacts have been recovered in excavations around the area but have not been noted in the Records. Prehistoric flintwork was found in excavations on the Rockwork at the Abbey, for instance (Papworth 2002), but this would not necessarily appear on the Record databases as it was not the primary point of interest of that project. Despite this there appears to be

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<sup>25</sup> The WHER search included a reference to Mesolithic flints found at Bromham (WHER 050), but they are not included on the WHER mapping for Lacock and appear to be some distance away.

limited potential for discovering significant prehistoric remains within the Trust's Lacock estate.

- 8.4 The **Roman** road from Bath to Speen (WHER 304) forms the southern boundary of the Trust's Lacock estate. A Roman structure is also recorded where the road crosses the River Avon (WHER 301). The nature of this building is not clear, but conceivably it could be a masonry abutment for a bridge over the river. A roughly rectangular enclosure (WHER 600) just to the south of the road is probably of later date and thus not related to it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Roman finds such as pottery and coins are known in the area from metal detecting and occasional accidental discoveries. These have mostly come from outside the Trust estate, e.g. a cluster of 4<sup>th</sup> century coins to the south-west of the village (WHER 306, 308, 309 and 312) and a potsherd to the east (WHER 314). A coin of the emperor Crispus is recorded 'found in the ruins of an old wall at the abbey' (NMR 212145).
- 8.5 More reliably, Roman pottery (including pieces of Samian ware and an Oxfordshire mortarium) and a 3<sup>rd</sup> century coin were recovered during excavations in the Rockwork and water garden on the north side of the Abbey during excavations by the Trust (Papworth 2002; WHER 319). These were the same excavations from which prehistoric flints were recovered. One of the water channels in the garden may have been used during the Roman period. Finally it is worth noting that John Aubrey identified a Roman 'bloomery' (ironworking site) at Bowden in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when he saw a 'store of cinders' (NMR 212169) but this must be dubious. The location of this site is poorly understood because of the date of discovery, but it appears to be not far from the 13<sup>th</sup> century ironstone mining area on Naish Hill, where the location of a bloomery has also been suggested (NMR 1467396).
- 8.6 No **post-Roman** or **Anglo-Saxon** artefacts are recorded from Lacock on the NMR or WHER, and unsurprisingly there are no buildings of this era surviving. The Church of St Cyriac is a 13<sup>th</sup> century structure but may have succeeded an earlier, perhaps pre-Conquest church. The place-name *Lacok* or *Lacuc* is documented from AD 854 (WHER 454), but the village only comes into clear focus with the Domesday Book of AD 1086, where the entry for Lacock included two mills and a vineyard (McMahon 2004, 6). This suggests that the settlement might have been of non-urban agrarian type in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It is difficult to assess the potential for Anglo-Saxon archaeology at Lacock, not least because of the lack of archaeological work in the village. Any future discoveries on this subject would inevitably be of considerable interest, and could lead to significant changes in our current understanding of Lacock's origins.

### ***The medieval nunnery***

- 8.7 The **medieval** period is when Lacock first comes into clear focus, though even here there is a significant gap in time between the Domesday Book entry of 1086 and the foundation of Lacock Abbey in 1232 by Ela, Countess of Salisbury, for which there is remarkably little direct evidence, either historical or archaeological. It was established as an Augustinian house, with canonesses living a life of austerity, prayer, obedience and chastity. This much was in common with most religious orders, but the Augustinians also played

an important social role in the wider community. In male houses this meant that the canons would act as priests, with the nave of the monastic church being used by local people. Dorchester Abbey (Oxfordshire) and Lanercost Priory (Cumbria) provide excellent examples of Augustinian churches that continued in parochial use after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and therefore avoided the destruction that Lacock's church suffered. This priestly role was not available for women, so Lacock's canonesses provided charitable services (e.g. a daily dole of food and drink) to local people in need.

- 8.8 Though relatively wealthy for a nunnery, Lacock Abbey does not seem to have been a large community at any point during the medieval period. The number of nuns at its foundation is unknown, but may have been more than the 22 resident in 1395. Only 17 nuns were present in 1445, and this number had dropped to 14 in 1473. The same number were present at the Dissolution in 1539, with a further three novices (VCH, 310). Monastic life revolved around the central core of the church and cloister. Much of the day would be spent in church observing the seven offices (services) such as matins, evensong and nones. Lacock's church was demolished after the Dissolution, though its site is displayed on the south lawn by allowing the grass to grow longer over the line of the medieval walls.
- 8.9 The cloister lay to the south or north of the church, according to local circumstances. Here it was on the north side, away from the road into Lacock from the east. The cloister consisted of a central courtyard surrounded by walkways (G2-4)<sup>26</sup> with two-storey ranges behind them. The refectory (dining room) was on the first floor on the north side, with the dormer (communal dormitory) at the same level on the east. This side also contained the Chapter House (G7), a vital room where daily monastic life and discipline was managed; this lay at the centre of the ground floor.



**Figure 8.1: The Abbey Cloister**



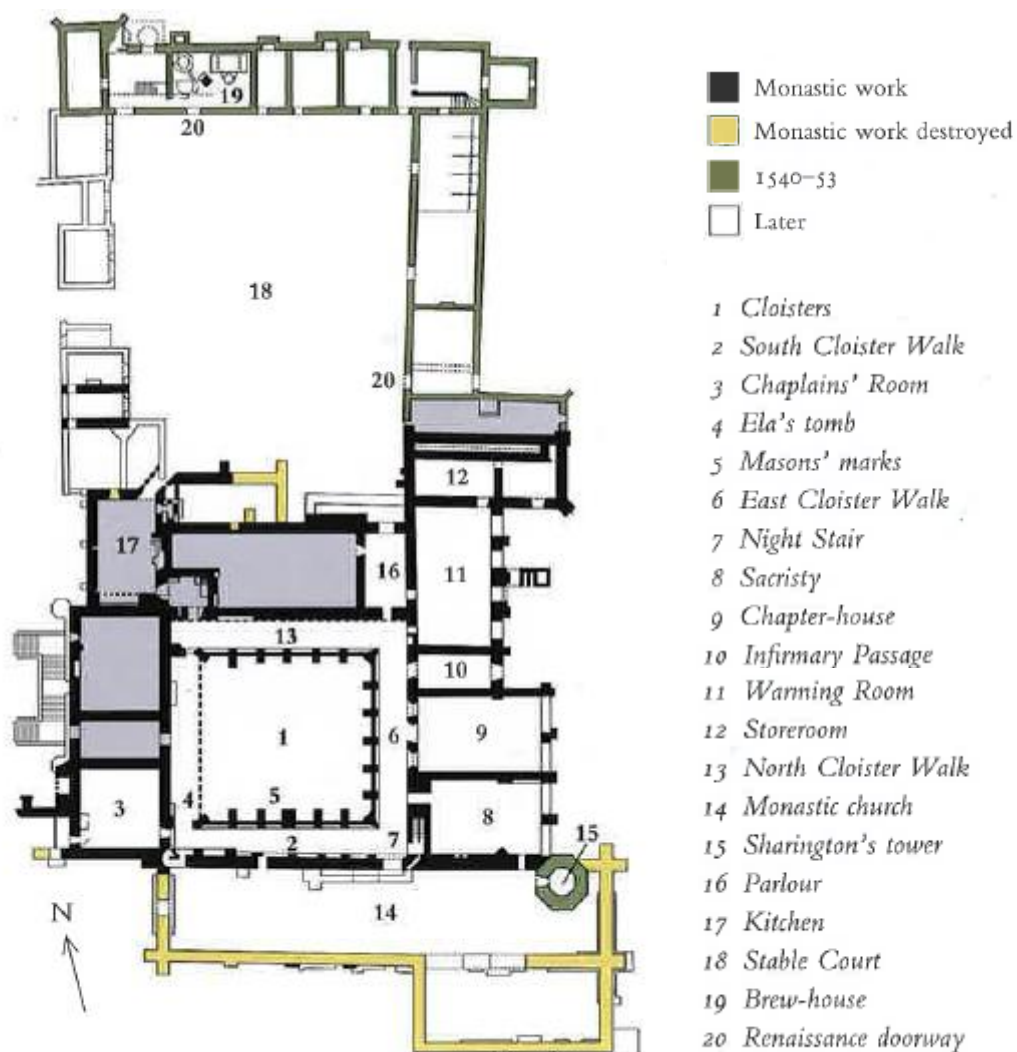
**Figure 8.2: The North Cloister Walk**

- 8.10 The cloister was originally built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but it was transformed by the insertion of a new vaulted ceiling and glazed windows with perpendicular tracery in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (except for two 14<sup>th</sup> century decorated bays on the south side). Glazing in the old open arches was common practice in monasteries in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Coppack 2006, 93). Lacock's cloister is largely intact despite later alterations, and is one of the most

<sup>26</sup> These numbers, and subsequent ones like them, refer to the National Trust's room and feature numbering system in use at Lacock Abbey. There is a full catalogue/gazetteer covering the ground floor, but this does not yet extend to the first floor and attics.

impressive examples of its type in England. It was used as a location for the Harry Potter films. The present entry to the house brings the visitor into the south cloister walk, via the site of the monastic church. The route then takes the visitor left (west) and right (east) into and around the cloister and its associated features.

- 8.11 The south cloister walk ran alongside the church. The remains of a spiral staircase can be seen in the south wall at its west end. This provided access to the private chambers of the abbess on the floor above the west range. The tomb of the foundress, Ela, can be seen just to the north of this in the south cloister walk. This has only been her resting place for little more than a century; she was originally buried in front of the high altar, but when the church was demolished in the 16<sup>th</sup> century her remains were moved to the centre of the cloister. She was removed to her current site in 1895.



**Figure 8.3: Plan of the medieval abbey and outbuildings (NT Guidebook, 2003)**

- 8.12 The Chaplain's Room (G1), a substantial groin vaulted chamber, lies off the south-west corner of the cloister, its door between the spiral stair and Ela's tomb. A priest was an absolute necessity at Lacock as at any other nunnery, as the nuns were not allowed to concelebrate at Mass or other services.

Hence male clergy were essential and needed to be catered for. The Chaplain's Room is important because it retains around 70% of its medieval wall plaster, including paintings of St Christopher and the crucifixion of St Andrew, as well as interesting medieval graffiti. The short stretch of the cloister walk between the entrance and the parson's chamber includes evidence for an earlier form of arcading (and presumably therefore vault structure) on the internal face of the south wall.

- 8.13 The range of predominantly 13<sup>th</sup> century buildings along the east side of the Cloister is an exceptionally fine suite of mainly vaulted chambers supported by plain, octagonal and clustered central shafts, with engaged colonnettes and corbels around the walls. The principal rooms are the Sacristy (G6) in the south-east corner), the Warming House (G9) in the north-east corner, and the Chapter House (G7) between them, separated from the Warming House by a passage through to the Infirmary buildings that once stood to the east of the cloister (see below).
- 8.14 The Sacristy was where vessels and vestments for the church services were stored; like the Chaplain's Room it retains much of its medieval wall plaster. The outer wall and windows were rebuilt by Harold Brakspear for Charles Talbot in 1894, in a 13<sup>th</sup> century Gothic style appropriate for the room.
- 8.15 In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Warming Room was the only one where a fire could be kept for warmth, though this rule was often relaxed at monasteries later in the medieval period as they struggled to retain their monks and nuns. The warming room also contains a fine bell-metal cauldron made in 1500 by Peter Wagheuens.



**Figure 8.4: The Warming Room**



**Figure 8.5: The Chapter House**

- 8.16 The Chapter House contains remnants of a fireplace inserted by William Sharington into the north wall when he converted the cloister into his fine new mansion house from 1540. The room has a very elaborate entrance (a common treatment for these rooms, emphasizing their importance within the monastery), with fine 15<sup>th</sup> century niches to either side under miniature vaulted canopies. They echo the contemporary vaulting of the cloister walks, where the centres of the vault ribs feature an exceptionally important array of medieval sculptural and figurative bosses. Ivory Talbot had commissioned Lord William Seymour to paint them in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but they were rather crudely overpainted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Chapter House is the only room with a paved floor, of plain but glazed tiles laid in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, slightly above the medieval floor level (which can be seen at the base of the eastern shaft supporting the vault). A number of medieval



encaustic tiles have also been assembled into a small panel to provide the visitor with an idea of how the room might have looked originally.

- 8.17 Other rooms now have simple earth/gravel floors. There are some smaller, barrel vaulted storage rooms in the north-east corner of the cloister. The ground floor of the east range is also crossed by the drain (G16) for the reredorter (toilet block), mostly housed in cubicles on the dormitory floor above but with a single garderobe (toilet) directly over the drain on the ground floor. The reredorter was reduced to half its original size in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the dormitory was extended northwards across it (Bond 2001, 122), probably to provide more individual/private accommodation for the canonesses. This relaxation of previously strict codes of living reflected trends in wider society.
- 8.18 The main feature of the north cloister walk (G4) is the original 13<sup>th</sup> century Lavatorium toward its west end, an important feature where the nuns washed before entering the church or refectory. In this instance the recess in the cloister wall for the basin also contains a remarkable wall painting, blocked in the 16<sup>th</sup> century but re-exposed during restoration work by John Dives and Charles Talbot in 1893-4. The plastered surface in the recess is original 13<sup>th</sup> century work, possibly underpainting for a contemporary fresco, but the surviving painting is of an abbess being blessed by a saintly bishop, perhaps intended to be St Augustine himself. The legend beneath includes the name Agnes Frary, abbess from 1429-45; the painting was presumably done at this time. The blocking of the Lavatorium (which thus hid the painting) incorporated fragments of tomb canopies that probably came from the church as it was demolished in the 1540s which is probably when the blocking occurred.



**Figure 8.6: Lavatorium wall painting**



**Figure 8.7: Figurative boss**

- 8.19 Other very high quality survivals include further 13<sup>th</sup> century vaulted undercrofts in the kitchens (G13) and in a sub-divided chamber (G12a-e) beneath the refectory, respectively at the north-west corner and on the north side of the cloister. The greater part of the refectory and dormitory survive above the north and east ranges. These include most of their roof structures. The insertion of floors and room partitions after the Dissolution has made the medieval spaces more difficult to appreciate. Parts of the refectory and dormitory (including most of the inserted roof/attic spaces) are in areas not currently open to visitors.



- 8.20 Further monastic remains are known in the grounds immediately around the Abbey, including the probable infirmary (hospital) area and possible water course (one may be a mill leat) to the east (in the East Field), where elements of its buildings have been revealed by geophysical survey in 1995, and excavations in 1933 and 1996 (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995; Hawkes and Robinson 1996; Hawkes and Cotton 1996). Infirmarys were a common feature of medieval monasteries, conventionally being located to the east of the church and cloister; this is the location shown on the 9<sup>th</sup> century plan of St Gall (Switzerland), almost a 'masterplan' for medieval monastic planning and layouts (Aston 1993, 54-5 and fig 27). The location at Lacock doubtless owes something to this kind of standardisation, but topographical reasons must have had some influence as well. If this was indeed the infirmary, it was situated on lower-lying ground in the Avon floodplain where water supply (always an important consideration) was assured. Furthermore, the pipework from the Conduit House on Bowden Hill would have passed through this area, potentially giving the infirmary first use from this source.

### ***The medieval village and landscape***

- 8.21 The high status and wealth of Ela, Lacock's foundress, ensured that the nunnery was endowed with a substantial estate. The lands immediately around the abbey were the centrepiece of the new estate, but other Wiltshire manors were also given (e.g. Bishopstrow) as well as ones in Gloucestershire (Woodmancote and Hatherop). Further, usually smaller grants followed, but there were no substantive additions after 1300 (VCH, 303-5). These lands were therefore the main source of the nunnery's income throughout the medieval period. The main economic and practical focus was on the home estates at and around Lacock. It is difficult to determine the exact extent of these, although most of the National Trust's estate as bequeathed by the Talbots will have been of monastic origin. Fish, cattle (as much for dairy produce as meat), pigs, sheep and pigeons were all farmed on the home estates around Lacock, though the more important sheep pastures and flocks were on other manors such as Shorwell, Bishopstrow and especially Chitterne (VCH, 312-13).
- 8.22 The Abbey's Lacock estate was obviously extensive but it certainly did not encapsulate the whole landscape. Bringing the water supply in from the Conduit House on Bowden Hill, for instance, required complex negotiations with (and compensation for) the Bluet family of Lackham, whose land it crossed (VCH, 304). Their interests in the Avon valley were also compromised by diversion of a stream to feed the Abbey's water mill, situated to the north-east of the cloister (ibid). The leat for this mill is probably among the features identified by geophysical survey in the East Field in 1995 (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1995).
- 8.23 Lacock village probably began life before the abbey was founded, but the form we see today is largely that of the planned 13<sup>th</sup> century settlement established by (and to support) the nunnery, with numerous (predominantly later) medieval buildings. It is rarely possible to be certain under what authority specific buildings or features of them were built, added or altered. Initially at least the Abbey itself was probably the main initiator, but even then tenants may well have been the ones responsible for the layout and form of buildings

within the tenement they occupied. The same can be said for the post-medieval period, when the Sharingtons and Talbots might have initiated some changes but tenants (doubtless with the landlord's consent) were perhaps more likely to make these. This would perhaps be especially so when carrying out specific alterations to do with their own trades or commercial activities on a tenement. The National Trust's Vernacular Building Survey refers to many examples of such changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but no such works have been traced with certainty in the medieval period during this study.

- 8.24 The EUS identified seven plan form components: the abbey and its grounds (1); the parish Church of St Cyriac (2); the early and later Market Places (3 and 4); the possible extent of the planned medieval settlement (5); the possible site of an earlier medieval settlement extending north from the later planned area (6); the hamlet of Nethercote (7); and the road network (8). The latter defines the core of the village, with the High Street, East and West Streets and Church Street forming a roughly rectangular grid-plan running west from the Abbey gate, with the north-west corner cut away; this form has good precedents in monastic urban planning elsewhere in England, e.g. at Burton upon Trent, Pershore and Eynsham. Church Street extends further east past the top (north) end of East Street up to and past the churchyard. The raised pavement on the east side of West Street and just round the corner into Church Street is a notable feature. The street frontages are fully occupied with medieval and later buildings, with very few undeveloped gap sites. Cantax Hill runs north from an early 19<sup>th</sup> century bridge at the junction of West and Church Streets, and may have been the focus of the original settlement (6). There are fine buildings here as well.



**Figure 8.8: Lacock High Street**

- 8.25 The current market place is the later medieval one (4), occupying the impressively broad expanse of the High Street; the vernacular architecture of the timber-framed buildings at either end of the High Street, and especially tree-ring (dendrochronology) dates of 1444/5 and after 1437 from No 2 and the Porch House (Miles and Worthington 2008) are both indicative of contemporary planned development. The earlier market place (3) was in the equally wide expanse of Church Street between the head of East Street and the churchyard. The area between the village and the abbey may have been occupied by the latter's home farm, still containing an impressive group of agricultural buildings. The 14<sup>th</sup> century Tithe Barn at the junction of East and

High Streets tends to indicate this. Some supporting evidence may be provided by an event in 1447, when the Abbey was granted a 40-year exemption from taxation because various buildings there had been struck by lightning and burned. These included the bell tower and bells, the bakehouse and brewery, and two barns full of corn at Lacock (VCH, 307). The location is no more explicit than that, but the area immediately to the west of the abbey would appear to be the best candidate (though presumably the Tithe Barn was not one of the two struck by lightning).

- 8.26 Even without the Abbey, the medieval buildings of Lacock would deserve a visit in their own right. Structurally they display a marvellous variety, with cruck and timber framed construction evident as well as masonry structures. Highlights include the Tithe Barn, the Church of St Cyriac (not National Trust), King John's Hunting Lodge and the Sign of the Angel public house, but there are many other fine examples of medieval buildings. Porch House at the south-west corner of High Street, and the Chamberlain's House on the west side of the junction between High Street and East Street (No 1) are especially notable in this context. The market cross on the north side of the High Street in front of the village school is of medieval origin but was taken down in c 1825, then stored in the Abbey until c 1880, when it was re-erected in its current location using drawings made in 1803. This is close to, but slightly to the west of, the original location.



**Figure 8.9: The Tithe Barn**



**Figure 8.10: The Sign of the Angel**

- 8.27 The River Avon and tributary streams are also important defining elements of Lacock's medieval landscape. The medieval bridges over the Avon to the south-east of the Abbey, and the raised causeways approaching and in between them, are still prominent and impressive features in the valley bottom. There are extensive earthworks of palaeochannels (former courses of the river or streams flowing into it) in the pasture fields on both the north and south sides of the bridges and causeway. Further medieval landscape components are to be found around the periphery of the Trust estate. For instance, small settlements existed at Bewley (WHER 476) and Bowden (WHER 477), and there is evidence for a former deer park at Bowden (WHER 481). These are all to the east of Lacock. An undated earthwork just outside of the abbey's park is probably a headland from largely ploughed-out ridge and furrow fields (WHER 604). Arnold's Mill to the west of the village is described in the WHER (526) as a mill site associated with Richard Arnold in 1642, but with medieval origins.

- 8.28 A conduit house survives to the east of the Abbey on Bowden Hill. The extant structure is generally attributed as William Sharington's work, c 1540, immediately after the surrender of the Abbey in 1539. It would either have replaced a medieval conduit head, or parts of that may have been incorporated in the Tudor version. Culverted water was taken into the abbey from this location from the early days of the Abbey (VCH, 304; see also Bond 2001, 129). Reconstruction of medieval conduit heads after the Dissolution seems to have been relatively common practice (Bond 2001, 91). The Conduit House is a good example of the medieval type with a pitched roof over a simple square or rectangular chamber (ibid, fig. 6.4). The building is still functional, in that a modern water supply takes water from the head down to the Abbey.
- 8.29 Not surprisingly, medieval artefacts are documented from a number of locations in and around the village. These include potsherds, a whetstone and a shear blade found beneath the packhorse bridge (WHER 479), 13<sup>th</sup> century and later medieval pottery from the garden at Raycroft (WHER 450), and a groat (coin) of Edward IV on the west edge of the village (WHER 458). Other finds have been recovered to the west of the village and south of Arnold's Mill. These consist of two Henry V pennies (WHER 456-7), a thimble and two casting sprues (WHER 462), and a bale clip (used to identify the ownership of wool bales), a damaged lead weight and a plain but pierced lead disc (WHER 463). These largely stray finds provide little more than background evidence for the village and its occupants, but the finds to the west are interesting because of their quality and distance from both the core of the settlement and Arnold's Mill. Finally various medieval artefacts have been recovered during excavations at the abbey and in its park. These are dealt with further as part of the National Trust's collections at the site.

### ***The Dissolution of the Monasteries and its aftermath***

- 8.30 The most obvious feature of the **Tudor era / 16<sup>th</sup> century** was the closure of the nunnery in 1539, and its subsequent transformation into a grand house for Sir William Sharington (c 1495-1553), who bought the dissolved abbey in 1540. He was of minor Norfolk gentry stock, but rose to wealth and power through connections with the Seymour family. A medieval monastic cloister was almost ready-made for conversion into a fashionable Tudor courtyard house. The nationwide transfer of abbey estates from church to private hands in the wake of the Dissolution often provided the new owners with the opportunity to effect grandiose conversions. In a few cases (e.g. Mottisfont and Titchfield, Hampshire), new owners were 'brazen enough to convert the monastic church itself to domestic use' (Airs 1998, 27). This was far more complicated (and expensive) than re-using the cloisters, however, and the latter was by far the more common move (ibid, chapter 2). It usually required the demolition of the abbey church as well, so that it would be more difficult to re-establish monastic use if Henry VIII's great changes to the national religion were to be reversed.
- 8.31 At Lacock, the early demolition of the monastic church meant that the emphasis of the plan shifted to the north and west. New residential and service ranges were created there, partly within the existing cloister buildings but also in areas of new work to the north; they would both be altered again

periodically according to contemporary architectural taste. Despite the new work, the medieval monastic architecture was still fully intelligible – no doubt deliberately so. ‘A house like Longleat betrays its monastic origins only in the eccentric form of its inner courtyards, whereas Lacock Abbey in the same county of Wiltshire brazenly displays the gothic tracery of the medieval cloister immediately below the inserted domestic windows and chimney-stacks of Sir William Sharington’ (ibid, 135).

8.32 The design of his additions reflected the widespread Tudor interest in Renaissance architecture, with the octagonal tower that still bears his name being the standout feature. Sharington’s Tower was the main feature of the Tudor south elevation (and indeed arguably of the whole house at this time), providing a dramatic conclusion to both this and the east side of the house. It also provided (and still does) an excellent vantage point overlooking the grounds. His new formal gardens to the east could also be viewed from the new Stone Gallery that he created in part of the nuns’ dormitory. Despite Sharington’s ambitions and Renaissance touches, however, it must be admitted that Lacock was somewhat tame and traditional compared to Thynne’s Old Somerset House (1547-52, now lost; Summerson 1993, 41-4) or the great house he built at Longleat from 1572 around work done in 1554 (ibid, 44-6 and 60-2).

8.33 The Renaissance influence also extended to Sharington’s furnishings, such as the stone tables in the middle and upper chambers. These tables have octagonal tops (matching the shape of the rooms), with the one in the middle chamber, Tower Room, supported by grinning satyrs. The one in the upper room has more staid figures, but just as well executed. The design and quality of the carving on both tables are exceptional, showing the influence of advanced French and Italian Renaissance work. They are by John Chapman, one of the finest stone carvers in the country (see Collections, Chapter 10). This was to be expected of an ambitious courtier (Sharington was knighted in 1547). Sharington’s initials and personal cipher, a scorpion, also appear on the ceiling bosses in the Tower Room, as well as on a shield in the door-frame from the South Gallery into the dining room. Floor tiles found in the South Gallery also bear this design.



**Figure 8.11: The Tower Room**



**Figure 8.12: The upper room of the tower**

8.34 Elsewhere there were fewer changes: the Buck engraving of 1732 (Figure 6.7) shows the south elevation with the arches of the monastic church still in position. The yard created to the north of the new house also includes fine



Tudor buildings, including the Brewhouse. Elsewhere in the village 16<sup>th</sup> century buildings can be found on High Street (e.g. Manor Farm house, Nos 10, 15-17, in the Manor Farm complex, and Abbey Lodge), Church Street (10, 23 and 24), East Street (16-17), West Street (the George Inn), Cantax Hill (5-7), and the Folly, Folly Lane. Several of these buildings may have earlier origins.

### ***The later post-medieval period***

- 8.35 Relatively few changes took place at the Abbey from the time of William Sharington's death in 1553 until the early-middle decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At this time John Ivory Talbot (c 1691-1772) commenced a thorough overhaul of the accommodation, primarily in the old west range of the cloister. The early 18<sup>th</sup> century classical Dining Room lies at the south-west corner on the first floor (above the Chaplain's Room). The Hall immediately to the north of this was the literal and metaphorical centrepiece of the new work, designed for Talbot by the architect Sanderson Miller and built in 1754-5. It is an early example of the Gothick style exemplified at Strawberry Hill, London. Ivory Talbot also replaced Sharington's windows in his Stone Gallery with Gothic(k) lights.



**Figure 8.13: The Great Hall**



**Figure 8.14: Terracotta statue**

- 8.36 Lacock's new Hall is an architectural gem inside and out, its front door (raised of course to first-floor height) approached by a double staircase sweeping up from left and right. The front (west) elevation features fine ogee windows with cinquefoil tracery under elaborately decorated string moulds, an octofoil rose window over the door, and turrets at the ends. Inside the painted barrel vault, the fine Painswick limestone chimneypiece, and the tables are all contemporary but they must give way to the extraordinary collection of terracotta statues housed in purpose-built (and very Gothick) niches around the room. These were produced for Lacock by Victor Alexander Sederbach between May 1755 and January 1756. The figures depict Ela and



various members of her family, along with more symbolic representations of the passage of time (notably death, a skeleton). Ivory Talbot was evidently delighted with the sculptures but no other work by Sederbach is known.

- 8.37 Development of the village continued in the later post-medieval period, with **17<sup>th</sup> century** buildings in Church, West, East and High Streets as the frontages became more built up. The buildings here (see Appendix 2) are all impressive, but the Carpenter's Arms perhaps deserves particular mention. The Wharf and Lover's Walk seem to have come into use in this century as well, though as is so often the case the buildings here could contain earlier fabric or be on previously occupied sites.
- 8.38 The **18<sup>th</sup> century** saw a considerable intensification of building work, with many new buildings along all of the village streets. This involved more consciously architectural design (as opposed to vernacular styles) of houses and commercial buildings (e.g. the Red Lion Inn on High Street), both individually and in groups (e.g. 8-11 East Street). This process had begun in the previous century but was certainly accelerated now. Partly because of this, the overall layout of the village began to take on much of its present aspect, with the broad expanse of the High Street coming to dominate the more narrow streets off it. Even so the village retained a pleasing variety of building forms. More public buildings also appeared within the village at this time, with the Lock-up in East Street being the prime example. The small packhorse bridge to the north-east of the Church of St Cyriac is also an important, distinctive and very characterful public feature dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with a ford alongside it that is still used by vehicular traffic as well as by horse riders.



Figure 8.15: The Red Lion Inn



Figure 8.16: The packhorse bridge

### ***The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries***

- 8.39 The Abbey continued to be developed and embellished by successive generations of the Talbot family. William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-77) created the first-floor South Gallery overlooking the church site and South Terrace. The existing narrow gallery was extended southwards to create what is essentially a drawing room with moulded ribbed ceiling, fireplaces and bookcases in Tudor Gothic style. Its oriel (bay) windows are among the

most notable of all additions at the Abbey. The middle oriel was the subject of the world's first photographic negative taken by Talbot in 1835<sup>27</sup>.

- 8.40 Many other changes were made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of them probably in Henry Fox Talbot's time. The coach houses were built c.1828 incorporating earlier structures on the site, and a service range on the south side of the courtyard was removed – a retaining wall and steps up to the courtyard mark its position. Former coach houses were converted to service rooms, and the medieval undercroft below the Hall was divided to create the wine cellar and servants hall. The kitchen was refitted, whilst the Brown Gallery was opened up at its western end. A few additional first floor rooms were created in the southern end of Sharington's east courtyard range and others were altered; they have many 19<sup>th</sup> century features including shutters, doors, built-in cupboards and a fireplace. Talbot installed central heating: the massive diameter pipes attached to vaulted and other ceilings on the ground floor are still very much a feature of the property, e.g. in the Chaplain's Room and servants hall and the north range undercrofts.
- 8.41 Charles Talbot (1842-1916) added a small range in the Stable Courtyard and also employed the archaeologist-architect Harold Brakspear to restore various parts of the Abbey. Brakspear was one of the pioneers of monastic studies (along with William St John Hope), and his work has already been mentioned several times. In particular, Charles and Brakspear carefully restored the ground-floor masonry of the east front. In doing so they (re)built Gothic windows into the open arches John Ivory Talbot had created in the Warming Room, Chapter House and Sacristy, carefully imitating the original designs where they survived elsewhere in the cloister.
- 8.42 Matilda Talbot (1871-1958) had little money to spend on the Abbey. She altered the Blue Parlour by removing the book cases, and subdivided the Yellow Room to insert a bathroom. During World War 2 and subsequently parts of the Abbey were let as 3 flats, whilst there was no gas or electricity supply until the 1940s. Other alterations were made in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Burnett-Brown family and by the National Trust, including further subdivision of rooms and conversion into flats (details can be found in the Abbey gazetteer entry).



**Figure 8.17: One of three oriel windows added by WHFT**



**Figure 8.18: The Blue Parlour**

<sup>27</sup> Talbot originally had a portico built on the south face of the Abbey but when almost completed he had it torn down and the three Oriel windows put in their place. Plans exist for this aborted addition and in dry summers you can still see the footprint of it in the grass.

- 8.43 Development in the village continued in the **19<sup>th</sup> century**, although less extensively, with remaining gap sites largely being filled in with further houses and commercial premises. Something of a mixture of vernacular and higher styles came to be used, but there was a notable trend toward new community facilities (always in more architectural idioms, but still adopting typical local building materials). These included the Church of St Stephen on Chapel Hill (1812), the Primary School on the High Street (1824), and the Village Hall in East Street (1889). For the most part these were subtly integrated into the existing village layout, but the Village Hall was perhaps less successful in this context. The building competes somewhat with the magnificent medieval Tithe Barn and the Lock-up to the north, and is dominant in the otherwise domestic scale of most of the East Street buildings.



**Figure 8.19: Primary School**



**Figure 8.20: WWII pillbox**

- 8.44 There has been remarkably little modern development in the historic core of Lacock. Public architecture is largely confined to the War Memorial of 1920 on West Street. Other modern development has been successfully confined to the margins of the village and new estates around it, several of which are of good design quality. Other noteworthy modern features are five World War II pillboxes defending the River Avon recorded on the NMR (1426045-6 and 1426048-90). One of these on the west bank of the Avon just to the south of the Lacock bridges was visited on 15 May 2011 and found to be in very good condition. These are clearly structures of some interest for their recent historical associations, and it is good to see that the group survives; many pillboxes have been demolished since the late 1940s. Indeed a further pill box used to stand on the corner of the terrace to the south-east of Sharington's Tower (WHER 528), but has been demolished. A bombing decoy was also built at Lacock as part of the army 'A-series' to deflect raids on the marshalling yard at Thingley; the location, NGR ST 923 673 (NMR 1467598), is just over 1km south of the Abbey, but the site had been turned over to agriculture by the 1970s and there was nothing surviving in 1999.

### **Current status and condition**

- 8.45 The various archaeological projects undertaken at the Abbey suggest that remains are generally in good condition here. The multi-phase nature of the site's development is inevitably reflected in the archaeology, with features of later phases often cutting those of earlier ones. Aerial photographs and excavations also suggest a complex history of development below ground. Evidence for medieval buildings underlying Tudor and later ones in the Abbey Farm area have already been mentioned, while an aerial photograph of the

area to the north of the Rockwork suggests that there may be an area of extensive settlement (undated at this stage) there. This does not diminish the value or potential of the remains. The situation is not as clear-cut in the village, largely because so little archaeological investigation has been done there. Despite this it seems likely that archaeological remains will survive extensively and in generally good condition within and around the village as well. The occasional finds of medieval pottery and other artefacts tends to support this suggestion.

- 8.46 Lacock Abbey and village form a Conservation Area. The site also has the following statutory designations.

Name	Reference Number or grade
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	
Tithe Barn and attached Lock-up	28990
Market Cross	WI 664
Lacock Bridges	28988, 28989
Conduit Head/House	34191
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	
Abbey with Stable Yard; the Tithe Barn; the Church of St Cyriac	I
Lacock Bridge; 2-5, the Porch House (14) and the Market Cross High Street; 14-16, King John's Hunting Lodge (21), the Corner House (2) and the Sign of the Angel public house (6) Church Street	II*
Most other buildings in the village – see the Gazetteer	II
<b>Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest</b>	
Lacock Abbey Park	2244; grade II

- 8.47 Lacock Abbey generally appears to be in very good condition, with few obvious major structural defects or issues noted in the main buildings during site visits in 2011. The condition of earth/gravel and tile floors in all of the ground-floor rooms around the cloister is a matter of concern, however, because of visitor wear and tear and dampness. The wall paintings in the Lavatorium, Sacristy and Chaplain's Room are also fragile and exceptionally important survivals, potentially or actually at risk from environmental conditions, visitor wear and tear, and possibly vandalism. The substantial survival of undecorated medieval plasterwork is also remarkable, but here again the fabric is vulnerable. These issues are especially acute in these downstairs areas which are open on most days through the year where there is no stewarding (unlike in the furnished and decorated upstairs rooms). They are accordingly even more at risk from wear and tear. There are also condition issues in areas such as the ha-ha/retaining wall along the eastern side of the house, where some of the walling is in a poor state, but these are relatively isolated. The National Trust carries out full condition assessments

with recommended actions on a regular basis, and with annual maintenance budgets these mean that the core property is well looked after.

- 8.48 Refurbishment and re-display of individual rooms (and suites of them) allows further opportunities to attend to conservation needs, but this is not allowed to be detrimental to the array of historic decorative styles apparent at the Abbey. There are some excellent examples of early (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century) wallpaper, for example, but these are consciously retained on display. Floor surfaces are generally in good order but are increasingly showing signs of wear as visitor numbers rise, whilst the mains services to the buildings (e.g. water and electricity) all seem to be maintained to a high standard (but formal inspections were beyond the remit of this project). Conservation and repair works appear to use appropriate materials and methods. Occasional instances of hard cement-based mortar pointing are probably the residue of earlier work. Early photographs (including examples by William Henry Fox Talbot himself) often show ivy and other creeping vegetation covering substantial areas of the house and courtyard walls, but this has been removed by the National Trust. Vegetation can be very invasive and detrimental to historic masonry, so the sensitive clearance of the walls here is sensible and appropriate.
- 8.49 Ancillary structures in the Botanic Garden and farm courtyards to the west of the Abbey are in rather more variable condition, though there was little to suggest significant structural problems. The boundary walls of the Botanic Garden and associated buildings such as greenhouses and timber shelters are mostly in good order, and the planned upgrading of this area will doubtless see further improvements. The barn now housing the entrance to the Abbey and the Fox Talbot museum has obviously benefitted from extensive repair and conservation, as well as substantial internal renovation, as part of the work to enhance its visitor use (completed in the early 1970s). Buildings across the road in the village car park to the south east of the Red Lion Public House have also been upgraded by the National Trust to provide a cafeteria and other visitor facilities (renovation of the Stable Tea Room occurred in early 2011).
- 8.50 The Trust also owns an extensive estate within the village. Some of the buildings such as the Tithe Barn and Lock-up form free-entry parts of the visitor attraction, but the majority of the properties are residential or commercial. The latter include numerous shops (including the Trust's own gift shop), as well as several public houses (including the aforementioned Red Lion, which forms a distinctive 'gateway' building at the east end of the High Street), restaurants/cafeterias, and the village bakery on Church Street (opposite the north end of East Street). The vast majority of properties are leased out, most presumably being on repairing leases of various terms (e.g. short, medium or long lease). Buildings of all types provide a mixed and visually very pleasing palette of materials, with timber framing, stone, brick and render all being common. Most roofs are of stone slate, with a number of porches also roofed in slate and also clay tile.
- 8.51 Most buildings appear to be in reasonably good condition (this was only assessed at a basic, visual level), but examples of several typical condition issues were noted in various places. Examples of inappropriate hard cement

mortar were noted on most streets in the village, often as localised repairs but sometimes on a larger scale. These repairs often show signs of distress through to failure, with the pointing falling away. A number of good examples of older lime mortar were noted (e.g. 7 West Street and several properties on Church Street). The pointing on the West Street example also has lines incised into the mortar to imitate the effect of ashlar masonry. Unfortunately much of the mortar here is failing, and the 'ashlar' effect is therefore less effective. Any repair or re-pointing should seek to replicate the effect. Lime wash, or remnants of it, is to be seen on the elevations of most cottages in the village and is an important surface treatment for its built character. In the past it is likely that many more cottages would have been limewashed. Roofs mostly seem to be in good condition (though again no close inspection was possible), but some of the porches were notable exceptions to this. More serious condition issues seem to be rare, though some cracks were noted in some wall elevations. These did not seem to be active (and there was evidence of past repair) but should be monitored as part of general condition surveys (whether formal or otherwise) within the village.

- 8.52 The National Trust has been very successful in managing the exterior aspect of properties in the village. A strictly limited and muted colour palette is allowed for doors, window frames, notice boards and other architectural features (blue, green, white, natural wood or stone). Correspondence on this in the Trust's files (and specifying these colours) dates back to the 1960s at least, showing that concern over inappropriate and gaudy decoration has been an important consideration in the management of the estate for a long time. It is not clear whether the specification was based on historic precedent, though Matilda Talbot's re-painting of the Blue Room in that colour – mixed by the village house painter – was found to match well with the original hue (National Trust 2003, 12). This may suggest that the village blue at least has a reasonable degree of authenticity. Paint is mostly in good condition and well maintained, although there are occasional exceptions (e.g. garage doors to the east of Porch House at the west end of the High Street). Painting of rendered buildings is also largely in a restrained and natural ochre palette, but 9 East Street is perhaps a rather over-rich interpretation of this. Otherwise the village is notable for the very restrained decoration of its built elevations.
- 8.53 Pavement and road surfaces are the responsibility of the local highways authority and are therefore outside of the National Trust's direct control, but an influence on this issue is obviously desirable. Historic pavements are a mixture of stone flags and cobble setts, but there is quite widespread use of inferior modern tarmac on public highways (e.g. in East Street and Church Street). Some frontages have been surfaced (probably again in modern times) with traditional bound gravel, for instance in front of the George Inn and on the raised pavement on the opposite side of West Street to it. These are of better quality visually, and they match similar surfaces in many back alleys between buildings on West and Church Streets (e.g. to the south of the George Inn). An inferior modern bound medium-dark grey gravel in thin tarmac has been used on much of the pavements along High Street. This is poor visually and does not provide much contrast between the road and pavements (although conversely this adds to the sense of the street as a



broad thoroughfare). Unfortunately many pavements (of all kinds) display the typical evidence for repeated cutting of service/public utility trenches. A small hole in the tarmac surface on the corner of West Street and High Street was noted in May 2011; this opened onto a void beneath of unknown proportions, perhaps an old roadside drain.

- 8.54 Parking in the village appears to be a perennial issue. There is a substantial visitor car park (including capacity for coaches) to the south-east of the public entrance to the Abbey, about 250m from the village. This is the car park to which the visitor is directed on the approach to Lacock and the Abbey. The smaller car park just mentioned behind the Red Lion is more convenient for the village, and also provides disabled parking (though it is little closer to the Abbey entrance, but there is a drop-off point here) as well as toilet facilities. There is plentiful on-street parking in the village, under the control of the highways authority. There is no official residents' parking scheme, but many houses have small signs in their front windows suggesting that there is.
- 8.55 The Abbey is an important visitor attraction in its own right. The income generated directly by ticket sales and indirectly from merchandise is essential for its long-term use, maintenance, conservation and repair. There is a wide variety of uses of space around the Abbey: these include visitor access, storage, offices, a staff/volunteers room, service spaces, currently un-or little used rooms that could be opened up in the future, and three flats. The brewery and bakehouse in the Stable courtyard, and the cloisters with the rooms off it, are accessible independently from the furnished rooms and are open every day. The Trust periodically reviews and re-presents rooms and areas at the Abbey to refresh its attractiveness to visitors, while still being fully mindful of the needs and sensitivities of the historic fabric (in all its multi-faceted forms). The furnished upper floor rooms (along with the servants' hall and the kitchen on the ground floor) are mostly attended by volunteer stewards, though some rooms have been re-presented in 2011. Seating has been provided in several rooms, where visitors can rest on robust chairs from the collections (after review of appropriateness by the house manager, conservators and curators as necessary). It will be interesting to monitor visitor reaction to this initiative.
- 8.56 Village properties are in a mixture of domestic and commercial use; several are in a mixture of both, making it difficult to provide exact numbers for either. There is no sense of over-reliance on one or the other, or of the village being swamped by shops, pubs and cafe/restaurants. Monitoring the balance between residential and commercial uses will be important in the future so that the current balance is maintained. Too many shops, pubs etc would place undue pressure on residents, but too many houses and not enough business could pose a threat to the viability and sustainability of the community as a whole. Properties in commercial use are fairly evenly spread, with shops mostly on the High Street but with a few in East, West and Church Streets. Pubs and cafe/restaurants are likewise spread evenly between Church, West and the High Streets. Residences outnumber commercial uses on all roads. Tourism is clearly important for village business (and thus to some degree for at least some residents as owners and employees) in economic terms. Equally, however, tourism brings with it

issues of wear and tear, overcrowding and noise, quite apart from traffic pollution. Some crowding was noted in both East Street and the east end of Church Street during site visits in 2011, perhaps a little surprisingly in the latter case because the road is broad here (albeit not as broad as the High Street, which did not appear to suffer similar problems at the time).

## **Significance**

- 8.57 The archaeological significance of the Abbey and its surrounding landscaped park and gardens are unquestionably of at least national significance. There is known to be good or very good preservation of remains over most of the site, with both the monastic and post-medieval periods being well (and obviously) represented. Monastic buildings and estates, and post-Dissolution uses of them, are persistently identified as high priorities on national and regional research agendas. Lacock Abbey, its component parts and the parkland score well in most or all of the criteria for scheduling monuments because of their archaeological significance, e.g. fragility, rarity, group value, condition etc. They also fulfil the necessary criteria evinced by English Heritage in its Conservation Principles and under Planning Policy Statement 5, Planning for the Historic Environment, e.g. evidential, historical, aesthetic and social values. Excavations have also shown that prehistoric and Roman material is present, but this is imperfectly understood at the moment and should probably be regarded as of local significance until and unless more substantial discoveries are made (e.g. of buildings).
- 8.58 The archaeological significance of the village and wider landscape of the study area are more difficult to assess because relatively little work has been done there and equally quite small amounts of finds are known. The landscape will obviously have been an important element in the economic life and support of the successive Abbey and house communities, but this would not necessarily find expression in important structures or features. Current knowledge suggests that the archaeology of the village and agricultural landscape is predominantly of local significance, with little or nothing known that obviously merits any higher assessment. The few exceptions are the two bridges over the Avon and the Market Cross, which are Scheduled Monuments (with the Tithe Barn and Lock-up), and the listed Conduit House on Bowden Hill. These, as already noted, are by definition of national significance. Further archaeological fieldwork might enhance this significance level, but opportunities for this appear to be limited because it seems unlikely that new development would be allowed (or indeed desired) within the historic core of the village. Research opportunities would therefore appear to be restricted to academic or amateur initiatives, perhaps under National Trust sponsorship. In this context it is important to stress the need for a better understanding of the wider monastic and post-Dissolution estates, and thus by extension the National Trust's estate, through historic landscape and archaeological survey.
- 8.59 There is an important and substantial collection of archaeological material from Lacock Abbey, including pottery, encaustic floor tiles, decorated tiles from Sharington's era bearing his rebus and initials,, fragments of architectural masonry, and many other artefacts, still on site at the Abbey. More could be made of these collections in terms of their visibility and use by visitors and

educational groups. Some of the collections will not be of great significance individually, but as a group they gain considerable additional value. Furthermore, the exceptionally close relationship between the artefacts, the buildings, landscape and their historically documented occupants through the medieval period mark them out as being of national significance for their group value. Individual categories such as the floor tiles and architectural fragments also merit this level of significance in their own right and for their relationship to the medieval nunnery. While some artefacts and smaller collections are known from the village as well, they usually have less contextual integrity. Many finds have been collected relatively casually from fields, gardens and by metal detector, and therefore little or nothing can be said about how they relate to buried archaeological sites and/or the history of the Abbey and/or village. Thus the archaeological material from the wider village and landscape can only be characterised as of local significance. This may change if further discoveries are made in the future, but this assessment can only be based on what is known now.

- 8.60 Listed buildings must by definition be nationally significant. Grade I buildings represent the top 2.5% of England's most important historic buildings.<sup>28</sup> The Abbey and Stable Court, Tithe Barn and Church of St Cyriac are in this category. Grade II\* buildings are the next most important 5.5% of the stock (13 more examples in Lacock, see table at 8.43), while Grade II buildings make up the remaining 92%, still nationally important. These proportions apply roughly to Lacock's listed buildings as well. The Abbey's and village's historic buildings provide an outstanding example of individual and group significance. They range in date from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a mixture of vernacular and high architectural styles. Materials provide a pattern-book of English village architecture, with stone, brick, timber framing and local stone slates being especially well represented. Numerically the vernacular buildings are clearly dominant, and are thus crucial to the overall character and group contribution.
- 8.61 The Abbey is obviously the key building in the village, even though it stands (indeed has always stood) at a little distance from it. This sense of reserved space was crucial for the nunnery – perhaps even more so than for a male monastic institution – and also provided a strong sense of social division between lord and people/tenants after the Dissolution. The Abbey buildings partly reflect this in their sheer scale – they are by some distance the largest built complex at Lacock, especially when the farm and service buildings are included – and more particularly in their architectural character. It is true that the long historic development from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the modern era means that the Abbey displays a palimpsest of architectural styles, both grand and vernacular. There is a visual and conceptual linkage between the medieval Gothic, the Gothick of John Ivory Talbot (and his architect Sanderson Miller) and Harold Brakspear's historicism for Charles Talbot. Sharington's magnificent Renaissance additions (internally as well as externally) stand out boldly, as in a different way does his Stable Court.

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<sup>28</sup> There are approximately 374,081 listed building entries in England (a single entry can include more than one building, such as a terrace). <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/listed-buildings>.

There is, then, a clear difference internally and externally between the major constructional and decorative periods at Lacock Abbey - medieval, Tudor, 18<sup>th</sup>-century and later – that is vitally important to the character of the place.

- 8.62 The character and significance of Lacock have also been influenced very strongly by the monastic origin of the property, and its subsequent conversion to private but grand use. A critical influence here was the succession from the former to the latter. The retention and conversion of monastic buildings – quite apart from the re-use of their estates – was common, perhaps surprisingly so given the serious concern at the time over the potential for a re-introduction of Catholicism in or after Henry VIII's time. The usual response to this was to re-use one or other of the religious and domestic sets of buildings, but (outside of the monastic cathedrals), very rarely both. Thus an abbey/priory church might survive in parochial use, or the domestic buildings ranged around the cloister might be converted into a courtyard house. It was extremely rare, however, for both to happen, and at Lacock the obvious outcome was for domestic use (there was, after all, a very fine parish church in the village already). Thus much of the character of Lacock Abbey to this day resides in that apparently simple decision, to retain parts of it (rather than to demolish the entire complex) in domestic use.
- 8.63 That this has continued to influence the layout and use of the Abbey to the present day should not cause any surprise. The nunnery's cloister was built according to standard monastic practice and design, with a central courtyard with ranges around its outer sides. These rooms were predominantly one deep (the sub-division of the reredorter undercroft was the only exception). The ranges were quite narrow, except where important spaces such as the Chapter House and the Sacristy next to it stepped forward from the general wall plane. The downstairs rooms of the medieval cloister were generally sparse in line with the monastic ideal of frugality and simple living, albeit that this had been relaxed somewhat by the late medieval period as a necessary adjunct to retaining community sizes. Even so they were evidently less attractive as living spaces for the Sharingtons as the new owners. Thus new living accommodation was created upstairs, either through conversion of existing rooms such as the dormitory and reredorter, or through the creation of new spaces such as the South Gallery over the cloister's south walk (corridor). Even the creation of grand new spaces such as John Ivory Talbot's remarkable new Hall in the 1750s could not hide the fact that the new mansion house contained many small rooms and spaces, all carved out of but constrained by the scale of the monastic ranged.
- 8.64 Moreover this influence extended to Sharington's new Stable Court. This extended north directly off the north-west and north-east corners of the old cloister ranges, though the new courtyard was neither precisely in line with nor exactly aligned on the cloister's west and east ranges. Even so it maintained the 'tradition' of long, narrow ranges with single-depth rooms, with upper floors to extend the facilities and accommodation. These 'constraints' are at least partly reflected in how the buildings continued to be used (and decorated/furnished) through four centuries of family ownership. The variety of decoration and furnishings within these spaces is also a very strong element of the Abbey's character. Medieval bosses and wall paintings,

Sharington's tiles and tables, the Gothick Hall, 18<sup>th</sup>-century Blue Parlour, and 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century decorative schemes all contribute strongly to a sense of Lacock as a time-capsule - but not of a *single* time. The slight shabbiness in some areas can also be seen as a result of a family line in lineage running out of time. This is part of the charm and the story of Lacock Abbey, and it should not be cleaned away completely.

- 8.65 Buildings such as the churches, the Lock-up, school, village hall and Red Lion provide more grand architectural statements at points around the village, punctuating the rhythm of the more low-key (but often still quite large) vernacular structures and in several instances standing at or close to important 'gateway' points. This is particularly so of the school and Red Lion at opposite ends of the High Street. Some of the vernacular buildings also have some architectural pretension, especially in groups, particularly along East Street, where there are several 'terraces' of distinctive design (different on either side of the street). Within the core of the grid pattern at least, the village is also strongly characterised by frontages (and front doors) giving out directly onto the street without front gardens. The limited palette of materials used is also an important factor in determining the character and high quality of the built environment. Lacock is one of England's finest villages largely because of its rich and varied stock of historic buildings. When the Abbey complex is taken into account as well, a strong argument can be made for defining the built heritage as being of international significance for its landscape, historical, archaeological and architectural quality.
- 8.66 Lacock also has numerous historically important people associated with it. These include Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who founded the nunnery in 1232 to commemorate her husband William Longespée. Both had been closely involved in the building of the new Salisbury Cathedral (replacing Old Sarum) in the 1220s, and indeed William had an ornate tomb erected there after his death in 1226. Twelve years later Ela joined her own nunnery, becoming its first abbess three years later and dying here in 1261. She was buried under the high altar of her own monastic church. Few other medieval figures are known, but Sir William Sharington (c 1495-1553) had as marked an effect on Lacock as Ela did when he bought the dissolved nunnery in 1540. The Talbots, his successors, continued to own the property (including of course the village) until 1944, when Matilda gave the whole site to the National Trust. The family continued to live in the main part of the Abbey until 2009, with family occupation of the Abbey ceasing completely in 2011 following the death of Janet Burnett-Brown, Matilda Talbot's great niece. Their long line has included many notable characters, including John Ivory Talbot (?1671-1772) who created the 'Gothick' Lacock, but there is a very strong case for holding William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-77) as the most important member of the family. Lacock's owners and benefactors down the centuries can claim national significance as a group, but William Henry alone can lay claim to international significance as a pioneer (arguably the inventor) of photography.

### **Key issues and opportunities**

- Lacock is well covered by archaeological data sets (the National Trust's own Sites and Monuments Record, Wiltshire Council's Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record). It is vitally

important that this continues in the future, with all projects and finds fully notified to and logged on all three data sets as appropriate.

- Whilst the Extensive Urban Survey report for Lacock is still an excellent document and fully relevant, it may be worth reviewing it in a few years' time as more archaeological data becomes available.
- The Lacock datasets can form the basis for an archaeological research agenda specific to the site as a whole and based within existing national/regional strategies. The agenda should encapsulate the Abbey, Park, farm area and the village.
- There is strong potential for a village archaeology project, sponsored by the National Trust and perhaps with a university tie-up (Bristol University has a good track record in this area). Projects of this type have attracted strong support and grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- The National Trust will continue to take due responsibility for archaeology in planning and implementing its own projects at Lacock, whether within the Abbey, park or village. This includes watching briefs, surveys (including geophysical, and of buildings), excavations, and many other types of project.
- There is a clear need for a better understanding of the history and archaeology of the wider National Trust estate at Lacock, given that fieldwork so far has concentrated heavily on the Abbey itself. It would be beneficial to carry out an extensive historic landscape and archaeological survey of the whole estate.
- Potential threats to the estate's archaeology need to be understood and mitigated e.g. from tree planting, tree roots etc.
- While the key areas of the site are covered by one or other of the Registered Park or the village Conservation Area, these do not afford as much legal protection as Scheduling does, and little or no specifically archaeological protection.
- The National Trust system of regular property maintenance and repair within a management cycle dictated by the quinquennial system of condition surveys needs to be maintained carefully so that the pattern of survey is not broken.
- It is difficult to determine a single philosophical basis for conservation and display at Lacock Abbey. It is no longer in active use as a family home, as it had been for more than four centuries (though there is extensive National Trust office accommodation). Rather, it is a visitor attraction of very strong historic and social character, set on the edge of a village whose history, form and built character is inextricably linked with it. Despite this the Abbey is aside from the village, and its needs must be addressed individually. The multi-period nature of the fabric in its totality (ie including decoration, furniture and furnishings) must be respected. Indeed in cases such as the surviving medieval wall paintings and floor surfaces, conservation is of paramount importance. These areas in particular are issues requiring action in the immediate future. At a



different level, the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century approach of Charles Talbot and Harold Brakspear of extensive 'restoration' of the built fabric to a medieval appearance (especially on the east front) would be difficult to justify today and, given the Abbey's Grade I listed status, most probably would not be permitted. Display and presentation of the interior arguably requires a different emphasis, however, and re-presentation of rooms or suites of them is common practice in historic properties open to the public. Lacock has its grand moment (Blue Parlour, galleries, Hall) but it also has many more humble ones – smaller domestic rooms and areas, many of which are not open to the public at present. We suggest that the guiding principle here should be, as far as possible, to preserve as found. Where rooms have already been re-presented in the past it may be appropriate to carry out a further generation of display, perhaps according to a period-specific design. Even so we would strongly urge caution in such an approach, as the existing character of the Abbey very much rests on its obvious multi-period character in all aspects of its appearance. Over-dominance of any one period in re-presentation should be avoided. If new areas are to be opened up, their current character and archaeological sensitivity should be the starting point for this process rather than a period-specific design.

- That said, it must also be accepted that in some cases the gradual process of fabric deterioration may reach a point where it cannot be retained. This is generally accepted as a principle as far as masonry is concerned, where the advanced decay of a one or more stones might represent a threat to the surrounding fabric. In such cases conservative repair or replacement will usually be specified. A similar approach may be adopted where timberwork is concerned, although here the decision might be to reinforce rather than to replace (eg by splicing in timber or adding new alongside old so a lost connection to adjacent beams is reinstated). It is likely that a similar approach will be needed where furniture, curtains, wallpaper and similar materials are concerned. If fabric of this sort becomes too frayed, threadbare, discoloured or otherwise loses its character, it can soon have an unintended deleterious effect on the rest of the fabric around it – and indeed to whole rooms/spaces. In such cases it is, likely to be appropriate to remove the relevant materials (to permanent storage and conservation if appropriate) and replace it with new, as far as possible on a like-for-like basis. There may be cases, however, where the 'timber' approach could be followed, eg by providing a new backing fabric to a worn curtain or bedspread. It is likely that the relevant conservator(s) would take the lead in such decisions.
- A similar approach will generally be appropriate in the village, though here it is clearly important to maintain its role as a living and active community. The significance of the built fabric will be an explicit consideration in any proposals for change – that is inevitable given that the vast majority of the historic buildings are Listed. Changes that are detrimental to the historic character and significance of individual buildings *or to the village as a whole* (given that it is a Conservation Area) will not be acceptable. The National Trust perhaps more than any other land owner (and landlord) is fully aware of this and would rarely if ever

advocate such changes. Nevertheless the interests and wishes of the village community are a valid consideration in planning for the future.

- It is also important that aspects of the village's built fabric that contribute materially to its historic and visual character are conserved and maintained. The general mix of buildings materials and finishes to walls, roofs, openings and surfaces may seem obvious enough, and garishly different treatments are unlikely ever to be acceptable. Finer details may be more difficult to appreciate and protect. The incised pointing in imitation of ashlar work (see paragraph 8.48) is a case in point here. It is also a good example of where conservation of the existing pointing may not be easy to achieve at the same time as replicating the existing style in new work.
- The National Trust is always sensitive to conservation requirements on the macro and micro scales, but clearly there are other partners involved in the management of Lacock. Private property owners are one example, though listed building and conservation area provide appropriate development control processes there. Other important stakeholders include statutory utility companies and Wiltshire Council, the latter particularly in its role as the highway authority. A number of issues relating to road and pavement surface treatments have been referred to in this Plan. It will be desirable for the National Trust to exert as much influence as it can with the Council in this respect, as inappropriate surface treatments and signage can have a strongly negative impact on the character of the village (though this is usually not of a permanent nature).
- Village buildings are generally in good conditions, although examples of pointing in poor condition and inappropriate hard cement-based new or replacement pointing were noted on several buildings, and in both cases this is something that needs to be addressed as part of future management and maintenance of the estate.
- Village buildings surveys are carried out regularly and comprehensively on the same basis as at the Abbey itself. These surveys are actively used to plan projects and works, as well as to inform maintenance, conservation and repair.
- Lacock Abbey, its garden and park, the village and its properties are all very sensitive to wear and tear from visitors, both in numbers, desired routes and the need for ancillary facilities, with consequent conservation implications. Impacts are potentially or actually of particular concern in the monastic and furnished areas of the Abbey, where the historic fabric (in its widest sense) is both of the greatest significance and at its most vulnerable. There are constraints in the village as well, with access restricted to commercial properties, the Tithe Barn and (very occasionally) No 2 High Street. Roads are often packed with visitors, and this is not restricted to high season (e.g. July-August). This creates pressure for residents and visitors alike. There may be opportunities to ameliorate some pressures by spreading access more widely, for instance by occasional opening of historic properties. This would require

considerable preparation and coordination with tenants, whose support would be essential. Other constraints include practicalities of management and potential impact upon historic features not previously open to public use.

- The potential impact on historic fabric arising from the understandable desire to bring historic buildings up to expected modern standards must always be taken into account. In theory the historic nature of a building should not preclude further change, so long as it is sensitive to the historic fabric. If the degree of intervention involves unacceptable loss or damage to historic fabric (ie that which impacts significantly on the historic nature and character of the building and/or its setting), however, the status quo should be preferred. Listed building consent procedures and building regulations make due allowance for the sensitivity of historic fabric to change. Irreversible alterations should usually be resisted unless there are overwhelming needs for the change (e.g. a direct threat to the stability, safety or long-term sustainability of the relevant fabric).
- Change of a building's use can also be a threat and an opportunity. The potential for a wider threat to the village as a whole has been expressed above, but obviously this can also be at the level of a street, group of buildings, or particularly to the building itself. Residential, commercial and other uses (eg storage) may have very different requirements on the fabric and spaces of a building. These may not be compatible with its built fabric. Equally, however, change of use can offer opportunities. At one level this may involve reversion to an original use, which would generally be supported (unless it involved loss of significant historic fabric). At another, changes may provide opportunities for recording and archaeological analysis of the historic fabric, including scientific dating techniques (which have already been used to good effect, for instance on properties in the High Street). Change must be reviewed on a case by case basis, and will always require rigorous and full analysis and justification. Listed Building and Conservation Area Consents would be applicable in many/most cases, and these tests would be critical in that environment as well as in the National Trust's own planning.
- Disaster planning is important in the historic environment, as historic fabric and collections can be very vulnerable to fire, flood, weather and other threats. This has been proved on numerous occasions, eg by fires at Hampton Court Palace, Uppark House, Windsor Castle, York Minster and Peterborough Cathedral in the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the new millennium. The response to disaster can also cause severe problems if handled inappropriately (eg flood damage). We assume that there is regular liaison with the emergency (especially fire) services, and that they are fully briefed on the significance and sensitivity not only of the built fabric but also of the multifarious collections.
- Comprehensive records of the Abbey, farm and village buildings (and where relevant their contents) are fundamental tools upon which sound management decisions are dependent. Accurate surveys provide an essential repository of information in the unfortunate event of partial or complete loss of any aspect of the building in a disaster. They also

provide a more thorough understanding of each element of the building and space around it and enable appropriate and effective research to be undertaken in a systematic fashion to inform future decision-making. The Abbey in particular has very good records of the furniture, furnishings, library, paintings and other collections. Survey records are available for the village properties as well, but could be more detailed. The National Trust's Vernacular Building Record (VBR) provides excellent individual records of village buildings but a programme of digitisation is required to enable their inclusion into the Trust's Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record. The Trust (and where relevant their professional advisors) should continue to develop and maintain a database (in hard copy and digital formats with appropriate storage locations and environments) of accurate architectural records for the interior and exterior of the buildings as resources and/or grant aid allow, to include:

- Site plan, floor/roof and ceiling plan.
- Building sections.
- Building services layout.
- External and internal photographic records; photogrammetric records of each significant elevation (excluding modern fabric except in broad outline) and rectified photographs of all important interior structures.
- A fabric typology survey (internal and external) identifying original fabric and subsequent phases of repair/restoration graphically, photographically and in text.

## 9 Ecology

- 9.1 This chapter is based on The National Trust Biological Survey (2001) and various site notes prepared by Simon Ford, National Trust Nature Conservation Advisor.

### INTRODUCTION<sup>29</sup>

- 9.2 The main features of nature conservation value at Lacock are:
- **unintensively managed grasslands on Bewley Common**, including unimproved neutral grasslands, a nationally scarce and greatly declined habitat type and of significance within the regional Nature Conservation Strategy;
  - **parkland around the Abbey**, notable for its wood decay invertebrate fauna;
  - **the River Avon** running through the park.
- 9.3 The farmland that surrounds the park is too intensively managed at the moment to be of major wildlife value. The following features are of some value however:
- the river habitat and its margins, particularly crack willow pollards that provide useful wood decay habitat;
  - a less intensively managed field to the east of the river and, particularly, a flood channel within it that has well-developed and quite diverse wetland flora;
  - hedges (although these are few in number, damaged at their bases by nutrient-enrichment and generally in poor condition in terms of structure, and only one species-rich one was noted during the survey);
  - other fragments of comparatively long-established grassland;
  - a tiny stream along the north edge of the parkland that supports wetland plants;
  - presence of some farmland birds of conservation concern.
- 9.4 The woodland garden also provides habitat for birds and other wildlife. It could also be of interest for fungi.
- 9.5 The property has the potential to make important contributions towards achieving the conservation, restoration and recreation targets in the action plans for the following UK BAP key habitats:
- lowland wood pasture and parkland;
  - lowland meadow.

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<sup>29</sup> Taken from the National Trust Nature Conservation Evaluation, Lister, J.A. & Foster A.P., (2001)

## BEWLEY COMMON

### Current status and condition

- 9.6 Bewley Green (CA9a) has a lowland hay meadow type flora of moderate quality, typical of a sward that has reverted from an agriculturally improved community through hay meadow type management with little or no nutrient input. The vegetation was uncut and tall at the time of survey with frequent common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, tall fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, common bent *Agrostis capillaries*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, great horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*, pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* are all occasional or rare.
- 9.7 Bewley Common (CA9b) has species-poor grassland made up mainly of dense grass growth with infrequent broadleaved herbs. The vegetation is dominated by Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* with common bent *Agrostis capillaris* abundant and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis* and tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa* each widespread and locally frequent. Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* is also fairly widespread and locally common.
- 9.8 Broadleaved herbs are infrequent and mainly very common species. They include a few patches of common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, occasional hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*. Oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* also occur, but appear to be rare. Wetland plants including giant horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*, hemlock water-dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*, great willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, soft rush *Juncus effusus* and hard rush *J. inflexus* grow in damper parts, such as along the margins of a small stream that runs east-west across the common, together with large amounts of nettle *Urtica dioica*. These are all common species tolerant of high nutrient levels.
- 9.9 Bowden Hill (CA9c) is the highest quality part of the Common in terms of nature conservation as it supports grassland with species composition typical of unimproved grassland on circumneutral soils. This species composition is varied as a result of springs emerging and varied drainage amongst land-slipped terrain. Predominantly the area is cut for hay, with some more uneven areas topped and the arisings left in situ, which creates a mulching litter layer and reduces diversity. Ideally the area would be grazed, but there are practical issues relating to the unfenced road, and it is likely that the area has deteriorated a little since the Biological Survey in 1982 in terms of botanical interest as a result of fertilizer use in the 1980s and early 90s. However, the NT now bans fertilizer use on the common and the cutting of the grass in July suggests that the condition should be once again improving.
- 9.10 The drier parts have grasslands with good diversity of plant species characteristic of unintensively managed grasslands on circumneutral soils



including broadleaved herbs such as common bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, red clover *Trifolium pretense*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, meadow crane's-bill *Geranium pratense* and lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*. They include patches of short open structured grassland, with high cover of broadleaved herbs and fine-leaved species such as common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* prominent amongst the grasses. The majority have coarser texture with a high frequency of Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and tough leaved grasses such as cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, however.

- 9.11 Wetter parts are generally avoided by the grazing sheep and have tall rushy vegetation. The density of the rush cover varies from dense and rather species poor patches to open areas with high cover and diversity of broadleaved herbs. The main rush species are jointed/sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus/articulatus* and hard rush *Juncus inflexus*. The associated plants are mainly species characteristic of mesotrophic wetlands including common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, ragged Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre*, greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* and marsh marigold *Caltha palustre*. Wood club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus* also occurs, found within marshy vegetation at the southeastern end of Bowden Hill during the 2000 survey and in willow carr above the road in 1982.
- 9.12 There are also patches of nettle *Urtica dioica* and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*. These are indicative of high nutrient levels. There is no mention of these in the report on the 1982 Biological Survey. Instead a number of plants characteristic of more nutrient-poor environments not seen during the 2000 survey were recorded, including glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, common sedge *Carex nigra*, common spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, marsh arrowgrass *Triglochin palustris* and common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*.
- 9.13 There are small marginal areas of scrubby semi-natural woodland and carr which provide useful shelter and additional habitat diversity. The largest area is in the north-east corner. This comprises young ash sycamore woodland with other trees and shrubs including oak and hazel, and willow carr locally.
- 9.14 In terms of the NVC, the drier grassland includes examples of the highly valued MG5, *Cynosurus cristatus*-*Centaurea nigra* grassland of the NVC, its undermanaged equivalent, MG1e, *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland, *Centaurea nigra* sub-community and other areas which are transitional between these two. The wetter areas do not slot readily into the NVC classification. They appear to be most closely related to the M23 *Juncus effusus/acutiflorus*-*Galium palustre* rush pasture, a community characteristic of damp lowland areas in western Britain, but have plant species composition indicative of soils that are less acidic, for example high frequency of hard rush.
- 9.15 The 1982 survey recorded the Nationally Scarce leaf beetle *Chrysolina orichalcea* that feeds on umbel plants such as hogweed, and the locally distributed chimney sweeper moth *Odezia atrata* which has larvae on pignut

*Conopodium majus* - both are probably still present in the grassland areas. The wet flushed slopes are also of value to invertebrates and contain locally distributed species such as the leaf beetle *Platymetopius discolor*.

## Significance

- 9.16 Bewley Green (CA9a) provides an example of the MG5, *Cynosurus cristatus*-*Centaurea nigra* grassland of the NVC, the characteristic unimproved lowland grassland type of well-drained circum-neutral brown earth soils which is now internationally scarce. The area provides valuable invertebrate habitat and was rich in insect life during the current survey. Although only relatively common grassland species are recorded so far, e.g. common blue butterfly, it is possible that more locally distributed species such as marbled white butterfly may be present. Whilst the *Cynosurus cristatus*-*Centaurea nigra* grassland might individually be classified as being of national importance due to its scarcity, taken as a whole Bewley Green is likely to be considered of local ecological significance.
- 9.17 On Bewley Common (CA9b), nutrient levels appear to be too high to support a richer hay-meadow type sward like that found on Bewley Green, presumably as a result of past agricultural "improvement". The grassland falls within the MG1e, *Arrhenatherum elatius* grassland, *Centaurea nigra* sub-community of the NVC. MG1 grasslands occur on circumneutral soils where grazing or cutting regimes are insufficient to maintain shorter, finer textured, more botanically diverse grassland. However, some locally distributed insects are present, including marbled white butterfly and narrow bordered five-spot burnet moth *Zygaena lonicerae*, the latter having larvae on birds-foot trefoil which occurs here only very locally, making this area of local significance.
- 9.18 Wood club-rush *Scirpus sylvaticus*, found within marshy vegetation at the southeastern end of Bowden Hill during the 2000 survey and in willow carr above the road in 1982, is local and has declined nationally and is uncommon in Wiltshire, making this species of national significance.
- 9.19 Small marginal areas of scrubby semi-natural woodland and carr on Bowden Hill, particularly the north-eastern corner, provide useful shelter and additional habitat diversity, and are of local significance.
- 9.20 Previous survey at Bowden Hill recorded the Nationally Scarce leaf beetle *Chrysolina orichalcea* that feeds on umbel plants such as hogweed, and the locally distributed chimney sweeper moth *Odezia atrata* which has larvae on pignut *Conopodium majus*, and both are probably still present in grassland areas. The wet flushed slopes are also of value to invertebrates and contain locally distributed species such as the leaf beetle *Platymetopius discolor*.
- 9.21 Also including examples of the highly valued *Cynosurus cristatus*-*Centaurea nigra* grassland and related sub-communities, taken as a whole Bowden Hill is of at least local ecological significance, and possibly of national significance.

## Key issues & opportunities

- Although Bowden Hill (CA9c) is the highest quality part of the Common in terms of nature conservation, it may have deteriorated since the 1982 Biological Survey in terms of botanical interest. Plants indicative of high

nutrient levels not mentioned in the 1982 report suggests the area may have become more nutrient-rich, most likely due to change in management practices, including cessation of grazing and the mulching effect of uncollected arisings.

- The ideal objective for enhancement of plant species diversity would be to graze the commons with cattle in summer and sheep in winter.
- Grazing of the commons is, however, complicated by the presence of the busy road and the need for fencing.
- The best available option may be to manage the grassland on a traditional hay cutting regime. Any areas managed by mowing should preferably be subject to a variety of cutting regimes, with the majority left uncut during the main summer flowering period.

## **ABBNEY GARDEN & PARK**

### **Current status and condition**

- 9.22 The gardens are a mix of formal lawns and occasional herbaceous beds, as well as the woodland garden. There are many mature trees, the bulk of which are thought to be around 180 years old with very little other tree planting until comparatively recently. In some areas of the gardens laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, box *Buxus sempervirens* and Portuguese laurel *Prunus lusitanica* have become quite dominant and it is the intention to carry out regular thinning. In some parts of the garden areas of long grass with spring bulbs and species such as Martagon Lily *Lilium martagon* are present.
- 9.23 The woodland garden comprises a high frequency of standard trees amongst short mown grassland. The trees include both native species, such as oak, ash and beech, and non-natives including horse chestnut, poplars and maples. Occasional and locally frequent holly provide elements of an understorey, providing a woodland type habitat. The grassland has low plant species diversity and little botanical interest. Much of it must be long-established, and unintensively managed, in terms of fertilisers. It is therefore potentially of interest for fungi. A few common woodland plants occur amongst the trees, such as wood sedge *Carex sylvatica* and male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*. An ornamental pond to the north-east of the Abbey is of limited value to wildlife, owing to its vertical sides. A narrow band of tall emergent vegetation around its margins, made up mainly of yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*, upright bur-reed *Sparganium erectum* and common club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris*, provides some habitat.
- 9.24 There is a badger sett comprising seven or eight entrances, under a yew shrubbery close to the parkland boundary although it possibly extends into the neighbouring field. There are plentiful signs of badger activity including scrapes and latrines around the perimeter of the garden.
- 9.25 Bird boxes have been erected in the gardens for species such as tawny owl and little owl as well as blue tits. There are also incidental records of species including great spotted woodpeckers, nuthatch and tree creeper using cavities in the mature trees within the gardens.

- 9.26 There is a large and important pipistrelle bat roost in Sharrington's Tower within the Abbey. A count by the Wiltshire Bat Group in 2004 recorded almost 1,000 bats emerging from the gargoyles on the tower. There are also records of greater horseshoe bat roosts in the Cloisters and in the Monastic drains.
- 9.27 Various bats have been reported from the Abbey and nearby buildings in the village (data from Wilts. & Swindon Records Centre) including pipistrelle, whiskered/Brandt's, greater horseshoe, Daubenton's and brown-long-eared.
- 9.28 The parkland around Lacock Abbey has occasional and locally frequent trees of varying age and species. The park grassland has been agriculturally improved and is not of botanical interest. The majority of the trees are not natives, with horse chestnut, sycamore, London plane *Platanus x hybrida*, cedar of Lebanon and other non-native maple species particularly frequent, but there are also significant numbers of native oaks, including trees of up to 3 metres girth at breast height. Parkland trees are often of special interest for lichens, but superficial examination indicated that those here are of little value in this respect. However, the wood-decay invertebrate fauna includes notable species such as the Nationally Scarce beetle *Synchita humeralis* and the locally distributed longhorn beetle *Leiopus nebulosus*. In view of the age and number of old trees it is likely that additional species of similar note are also present. The large old hawthorns are also a valuable feature – they provide a valuable early summer nectar source to a wide variety of insects, including wood-decay species, and support the Nationally Scarce hawthorn jewel beetle *Agrilus sinuatus*.
- 9.29 Although there are a number of veteran trees in the area, it is generally rather devoid of trees in part of the original parkland and is suffering from an age class crisis (i.e. many of the trees are nearing the end of their natural life, while few young trees have been planted to replace them). There is also potential use by bats of the area's veteran trees.
- 9.30 Bat roosts have been recorded in Sharrington's Tower and the Abbey roof and drains. The use of the persistent Avermectin veterinary medicine, however, has a damaging impact on dung fauna, which in turn reduces food for many species of bat – Avermectin is currently banned in the NT's grazing licences, and thus should not pose a problem within the site.

### Significance

- 9.31 The mature trees within the garden provide nesting cavities for bird species such as the great spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and tree creeper, and as such may be considered to be of local significance. Some of the parkland trees are much older and are of national significance for the wood-decay fauna that they support. No trees appear to be of much interest for epiphytic plants, however.
- 9.32 The woodland grassland has low plant species diversity and little botanical interest, although it is potentially of interest for fungi due to its long establishment and lack of intensive management, again meriting local significance. The park grassland has been agriculturally improved and is not of botanical interest, and thus its significance is neutral.

- 9.33 Sharington's Tower and the Abbey roof and drains are of national significance for the pipistrelle and greater horseshoe bat roosts that they support.

### **Key issues and opportunities**

- Although it is positive to note that fallen deadwood has been left in situ, there remains a paucity of standing or fallen dead wood.
- Natural damage and shedding of limbs and branches can, through the action of wood decay fungi, lead to trunk hollowing, branch cavities, live stubs, shattered branch ends, loose bark, sap runs and a range of rot types. These veteran features provide highly specialised habitat niches for a range of organisms. Many of these organisms are characterised as having extremely limited powers of dispersal. Continuity of habitat and lack of disturbance are therefore extremely important factors in determining the ecological resource that these trees provide.
- One of the main causes of veteran tree death is branch, stem or rootplate failure. The key aim of any veteran tree management should be to enhance tree longevity wherever possible to ensure there is no unnecessary loss of veteran trees.
- Sympathetic management of the park would benefit the overall quality of the habitat and enhance the value of the area as feeding habitat for bats.
- While there is no formal public access to the Abbey Field, local people do use this informally and a large number of visitors use the parkland in July. This has meant that tree safety is of concern and historically this has been managed through contractors. It is important that no unnecessary tree surgery is carried out and that other ways of mitigating danger such as roping off the old trees while the event is taking place, are investigated.
- The trees within the area are suffering from an age-class crisis. Enhancement of tree longevity can be achieved by improving the structural and physiological condition of the trees. Where a tree is at risk of catastrophic failure remedial works can be used to stabilise the tree. Typically these will be targeted to reduce the end loading on limbs and rebalancing the tree. Where trees are considered to show signs of physiological stress management may focus on promoting vitality. This can be achieved by reducing competition for resources around the tree and improving the root soil condition.
- Lack of continuity planting in some areas of original parkland is an issue for many species of wildlife, which will have no tree to migrate to when the tree eventually fails. Many key invertebrate species, particularly deadwood or saproxylic, require nectar sources such as flowering shrubs (for example hawthorn clumps).
- There is horse damage to veteran and more recently planted trees due to bark stripping in Chapel Field which requires attention.
- There is a wartime pillbox at the north end of the parkland, which could feasibly be used by some species of bat.

- The use of the persistent Avermectin veterinary medicine has a damaging impact on dung fauna, which in turn reduces food for many species of bat.

## RIVER AVON

- 9.34 The section of the river that runs through the site has a meandering course with some eroding, undercut and collapsed sections and some small shingle bars. These provide fairly good diversity of wildlife habitat, although the river channel is clearly affected by dredging. The larger part of the river bank is open to grazing, but stock only penetrate down the steep banks to the river edge in a few small areas.
- 9.35 Aquatic vegetation has not been properly investigated but a few common floating plants are present including amphibious bistort *Persicaria amphibia*, unbranched bur-reed *Sparganium emersum* and a water lily, together with emergent plants including yellow flag *Iris pseudacorus*, giant water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*, common club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris*, reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and common reed *Phragmites australis*.
- 9.36 A similar but greater range of species was noted during detailed survey by NCC in 1975. The range of species they found suggest an example of the A8, *Nuphar lutea* community of the NVC, which is characteristic of deeper standing and slow-flowing mesotrophic, eutrophic and in some cases lime-rich waters mostly in the southern lowlands. At that time it was considered that this was one of the best stretches of the Bristol Avon, in terms of its vegetation. It appears to have deteriorated since, however, as its River Ecosystem Classification in the Bristol Avon Leap is only 3 (meaning water of fair quality suitable for high class coarse fish populations), whereas many other sections meet the higher standard of 2 (water of good quality suitable for all fish species), including some sections further down the catchment.
- 9.37 Though, as noted above, there are some bare eroding and collapsed bank sections, most support dense cover of coarse grasses and ruderal tall herbs, amongst which cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, hemlock *Conium maculatum*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, common thistle *C. vulgare* and nettle *Urtica dioica* figure prominently. Others present at lower frequency include oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*.
- 9.38 Overall a fairly large variety of plant species are present, but these are mainly very common ones that thrive in nutrient-rich conditions and it is very unlikely that the vegetation is of any significant botanical interest. Shingle vegetation is similarly uninteresting and confined to a few common species such as creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*. The shingle habitats may support notable invertebrate species, though at present only common and localised taxa are reported.
- 9.39 There is varying frequency of trees and shrubs along the river margin. These are mainly natives and include a large range of species including willows *Salix* spp., ash, alder, oak, field maple, hawthorn and blackthorn. A series of old



crack willow pollards *Salix fragilis* provide particularly good habitat for wildlife and contain some locally occurring wood decay beetles – it is possible that scarcer species may also be present. Some of the largest pollard willows are beginning to split while other trees have collapsed into the river.

- 9.40 During a 2008 survey, a significant amount of Himalayan balsam along the River Avon as well as a single patch of Japanese knotweed was noted. Charlock (a form of oil seed rape) was also establishing along the river bank. Since then the Japanese knotweed has been treated and none was recorded during a 2010 visit.
- 9.41 The presence of the Nationally Scarce White-legged damselfly *Platycnemis pennipes* and the locally distributed common river snail *Viviparus viviparus* indicates good water quality in the river as both require well oxygenated and unpolluted water for development. Large populations of both were present during the current survey - adults of the former were common, especially in the parkland section of the river, and shells of the latter were common on the shingle banks in the southern sector of farmland. The local and protected freshwater mussel has also been recorded on various parts of the Avon throughout the site.
- 9.42 Locally distributed wetland insects are also present including the banded damoiselle damselfly *Calopteryx splendens*, the soldier beetle *Cantharis lateralis*, recorded during the 2000 survey, and the ground beetle *Bembidion aeneum*, recorded during the 1982 survey. Kingfisher, sand martin and pied wagtail were all recorded along the river. The exposed earth riverbanks may provide suitable nesting habitat for both kingfisher and sand martin, though it is not documented that they breed here, alongside invertebrates like solitary mining bees. Water vole has been observed as recently as 1997 – this species has legal protection covering its places of shelter.

### Significance

- 9.43 The River Avon, including its banks, may be considered to be of local significance for the invertebrate populations that it supports, which include White-legged damselfly, common river snail and the freshwater mussel, as well the legally-protected water vole and bird species such as Kingfisher, sand martin and pied wagtail. The river is also designated as a County Wildlife Site.
- 9.44 Aquatic and shingle vegetation appears currently to be of less significance, although as previously one of the best stretches of the Avon in this regard there remains the potential to improve this situation.
- 9.45 Some of the older crack willow pollards, however, are of local significance, containing some locally occurring wood decay beetles and potentially scarcer species.

### Key issues and opportunities

- Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, Charlock and other invasive species all need managing as part of a river wide programme to prevent further re-infestation.

- Some of the largest pollard willows are beginning to split while other trees have collapsed into the river.
- This is currently one of the poorer stretches of the Avon in terms of its River Ecosystem Classification, as reversal of the situation in 1975.

## WIDER LANDSCAPE

- 9.46 There is a three or four acre paddock adjacent to the garden, which was historically known as withy beds, though at present it is rather rank and a dense thatch of dead grass is becoming established.
- 9.47 The single field to the east of the river (Chapel Field) is less intensively managed than its neighbours and it is of greater value to wildlife as a result. It comprises mainly rough cattle-grazed pasture that has clearly been agriculturally improved, and comprises mainly grass species and white clover. It is however somewhat more diverse than the grasslands within the other fields in terms of plant species, including a scattering of other common broadleaved herbs such as creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, and damp grassland species such as hairy sedge *Carex hirta* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*.
- 9.48 Chapel Field's nature conservation value is greatly enhanced by a river flood channel. This provides wetland habitat with high cover and good diversity of common wetland plants including water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*, water mint *Mentha aquatica*, brooklime *Veronica beccabunga*, fool's watercress *Apium nodiflorum*, reed sweet-grass *Glyceria maxima*, floating sweet-grass *G. fluitans* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*. Stock-poaching and varied wetness result in good habitat diversity. A variety of common wetland insects are present and the wetter areas may provide valuable feeding habitat for birds.
- 9.49 The Southern Farmland (CA8) is almost entirely arable and reseeded grasslands that appear to be of little nature conservation interest. There are, however, a few features of value as follows:
- hedges;
  - coarse grassland on the steep side of a river terrace towards the south end of the property; this supports oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, but is generally of little botanical interest, being very grass-dominated and species-poor;
  - a couple of other areas of grassland which, though poor in terms of plant species diversity, have not been reseeded in the recent past and therefore have greater potential value for fungi and other soil biodiversity;
  - in common with sections in the park, the margins of River Avon in the southern sector of the property provide valuable wildlife habitat. Arable farmland on soils of the type that occur on the river terrace deposits here is sometimes of interest for its weed communities. Only common species are known from this area, however, though

more detailed survey would be needed to confirm that there are no more interesting ones present.

- 9.50 The property has few hedges and most of these are of rather limited value as wildlife habitat, being:
- dominated by hawthorn and/or blackthorn or by English elm suckers with only occasional other shrub species;
  - generally short of mature trees, though mature oak occur in places;
  - often gappy and no longer functioning as stock-proof boundaries;
  - nettle-infested at the base as a result of nutrient-enrichment caused by farming practices.
- 9.51 A hedge along the southwest side of set-a-side fields to the west of the A350 is a much more valuable feature than most of the other hedges on the estate and has the following notable features:
- it is untrimmed;
  - it has good diversity of native tree and shrub species including hazel, field maple, ash geulder rose, wych elm and several willow species.
- 9.52 Some planting of native tree species such as oak has been undertaken in a few of the hedgerows and this should be encouraged elsewhere.
- 9.53 These areas of farmland support a number of farmland birds, e.g. yellowhammer and skylark, which are declining nationally and listed on the RSPB Birds of Conservation Concern.

### **Significance**

- 9.54 The majority of the farmland consists of arable fields or reseeded grassland that are of little nature conservation interest. Chapel Field is the main exception and may be considered to be of local significance, largely due to the presence of the river flood channel which has good habitat diversity, whilst it also has somewhat more diverse than within the other fields.
- 9.55 There are other areas of some value, though the only other that may be considered to be of local ecological significance comprises the margins of the River Avon in the south which, as through the park, provides valuable wildlife habitat. Hedgerows are dominated by hawthorn and generally intensively flailed, although it should be noted that there are occasionally instances of much greater interest. It should also be noted that these areas of farmland also support a number of nationally declining farmland birds.

### **Key issues and opportunities**

- Horse grazing on the paddock adjacent to the garden encourages aggressive weeds, such as ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* and nettle *Urtica dioica* to dominate. As an area formerly of Withy Beds, there exist opportunities here to reinstate these.
- Hedges are few and of mostly limited value as wildlife habitat, suffering from nutrient enrichment due to farming practices, lack of species diversity and mature trees, and often gappy and intensively flailed.



## 10 Collections

### Introduction to the collection, its history and provenance

- 10.1 The Abbey collection like the Abbey itself has its origins in the medieval nunnery. It is unique in having a book from the nuns' library, *Expositiones Vocabulorum Bibliae* [Explanations of Biblical Vocabulary] by William Brito. An important collection of tiles and archaeological material relating to the medieval nunnery remains in the possession of the National Trust, and is retained on site at Lacock Abbey.
- 10.2 Sir William Sharington's conversion of the Abbey to a house is reflected in a number of exceptional pieces – principally two octagonal tables, a bronze mortar and pestle, and an important group of tiles formerly from the South Gallery. The inventory made for his brother Henry in 1575 suggest rich interiors, listing walnut furniture, velvet seat covers, beds hung with silk and principal rooms with tapestries, but none of these survive.
- 10.3 The Abbey contains a collection of family possessions – decorative, functional, personal, and quirky – accumulated by many generations of the Talbot family. Although no leading designers or makers were commissioned specifically to furnish the house, some of the contents are of considerable interest and intrinsic importance, such as the early 17<sup>th</sup> century sgabellos, or the terracotta sculpture, Gothick tables, and chairs of the Hall. The “Lacock books are of enormous interest. Their collective historical value on the shelves is considerable,” (Lacock Abbey collection level survey by Mark Purcell, National Trust Libraries Curator, 2 May 2011). Some contents are closely associated with particular individuals, and the collection's chief significance is to a considerable degree the story it tells of the family's lives and tastes. Some items still in the Abbey can be identified in historic inventories of 1575, 1778, 1788, 1801 and 1827. A 1916 inventory exists, but the National Trust has had no access to this.



Figure 10.1: The Dining Room

- 10.4 In 1714 John Ivory (?1691-1772) inherited Lacock and took the Talbot name. He remodelled the Dining Room, with decoration including plaster frames for the pictures, mainly copies of mythological subjects and portraits by Rubens

and Van Dyck and a copy of Cornelis van Haarlem's allegorical portrait of the collector Jan Govertz van der Aar that was for years thought to be the original. The fine but repainted white Rococo pier glass and marble-top table were supplied for the room by the Marlborough cabinet maker Henry Hill in 1750. They are recorded in the 1778, 1788, 1801 and 1827 inventories, together with the paintings and their wall frames. The set of four gilt brass wall-mounted lanterns now in the Dining Room were recorded in 1788, 1801 and 1827 in the Hall.

- 10.5 In 1753-4 Ivory Talbot demolished Sharrington's Hall and replaced it with a new, Gothick Hall designed by Sanderson Miller. Its unique feature is the set of 27 terracotta figures and busts set in Gothick niches and on Gothick corbels by the enigmatic and otherwise unknown Victor Alexander Sederbach.
- 10.6 The most famous owner of Lacock was William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877), son of William Davenport Talbot and Lady Elisabeth Fox-Strangways, who inherited aged only 5 months. The Abbey was let from then until 1827 when Talbot returned (having originally been let to the Countess of Shrewsbury before 1800). Talbot is best known as the inventor of the photographic negative process, but was a great Victorian polymath - a talented mathematician, botanist, geologist, astronomer, classicist, and Assyriologist. His family, Lacock Abbey and some of its contents were the subjects of many of his photographs, and some of those objects remain in the Abbey. They are of special interest for interpreting Talbot and his photographic work. His achievements are celebrated in the Fox Talbot Museum, established by the National Trust in 1975 within a converted barn at the gates to Lacock Abbey. In 1832 Talbot married Constance Mundy and began to modernize the Abbey. He added three Gothic oriel windows to the South Gallery – one of them the subject of his 1835 photograph, the oldest photographic negative in existence.



**Figure 10.2: The South Gallery**

- 10.7 Talbot was succeeded in 1877 by his son Charles (1842-1916), a scholar of old buildings who commissioned Sir Harold Brakspear to restore the medieval Abbey remains. The Wiltshire Heritage Museum and Library



collection in Devizes includes some numbered photographs of various pieces of furniture captioned “*Lent by C.H. Talbot, Esq., Lacock Abbey*”, and a number of these pieces are still in the Abbey – some of them are in the historic inventories, and there is currently no evidence that others were collected by Charles Talbot.

- 10.8 On Charles Talbot’s death in 1916 Lacock passed to his niece Matilda Gilchrist-Clark (1871-1958), who took the name Talbot. At various times Matilda Talbot sold contents (including books) to raise money. Sales at Sotheby’s included 29-31 March 1916; 28-29 July 1947 (which included “illustrated books, many of which with coloured plates; botany and natural history; science; travel; tracts; and general literature”); and 26-27 July 1948 (on this occasion “comprising a very extensive series of rare and interesting botanical works, principally of the 18<sup>th</sup> century”).
- 10.9 In 1944 Miss Talbot gave the Abbey, the village of Lacock and the estate to the National Trust. In 1946 she gave Lacock’s 1225 copy of the *Magna Carta* to the British Museum, now housed in the British Library. In 1948 she gave the principal family portraits to the National Trust, but retained ownership of the furniture and other contents.
- 10.10 In 1952 Matilda’s niece Katharine Mary Gilchrist Clark-Maxwell and her husband Alexander Burnett-Brown came to live in the Abbey under the terms of a 50-year lease. They brought some contents from their previous home, but a very considerable quantity of the contents in the Abbey today are known to pre-date Burnett-Brown occupation. The lease passed to their son the late Anthony Burnett-Brown and his wife Petronella Dittmer, who added contents including musical instruments. Anthony’s sister Janet Burnett-Brown continued to live in a flat at the Abbey until her death in December 2011. For 18 years until her retirement in 1992 she was employed by the National Trust as Administrator of the Abbey.
- 10.11 The National Trust has added some items to the collection.
  - A Nicholas Condé watercolour *The Cloisters at Lacock* was acquired in 1965.
  - Some books were transferred from Montacute to the Abbey in 1979 and 1980, but were removed to Osterley in 2012.
  - The John Piper painting View of Lacock Abbey was a bequest from the estate of Sir Alec Clifton-Taylor, via the National Art Collections Fund.
  - CH Talbot’s pocket watch and a watercolour of Tower House by Matilda Gilchrist-Clark were given in 1984.
  - A watercolour view of The Warming Room by William Willcox was purchased from David Kerr in 1992.
  - A 19th century Dutch brass chandelier in the Blue Parlour was purchased at Sotheby’s on 22 February 1999.
  - A Condé watercolour of the Hall was accepted as a gift in 2007.
  - Carpets, rugs and curtains have been introduced to replace worn-out furnishings, principally in show rooms.

- 10.12 The family retained ownership of almost all of the furniture, ceramics, watercolours, books, textiles and other chattels, and the archives, both in the show rooms and private rooms. Discussions on the long term occupation of the Abbey and some form of loan arrangement never secured an agreement. Anthony Burnett-Brown died in 2002, and the lease came to an end on 2 December 2002.
- 10.13 Until November 2008 Lacock Abbey was a Registered Museum. In discussion with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council it emerged that the absence of a loan agreement and lack of control over the majority of the Abbey's contents was a major barrier to achieving Accreditation. The decision was taken not to apply, and the MLA formally de-Registered Lacock Abbey. The Fox Talbot Museum is fully accredited and is a Registered Museum.
- 10.14 In 2008 Petronella Burnett-Brown announced her intention to leave the Abbey in 2009 and to sell the contents. Some items were removed, including some books from show rooms, and a grand piano (not indigenous/ associated) from the Hall but no details were disclosed to the Trust. The National Trust purchased the vast majority of the Abbey's contents in October 2009, following lengthy negotiations. The offer was en masse, with no opportunity to negotiate on individual items. Some indigenous and associated contents were removed from the house including the wing chair owned by Charles Feilding (William Henry Fox Talbot's stepfather) shown in Condy's watercolour of the Hall and still there in 2009. On the principle that the Trust does not normally purchase archives, the extensive family archives, partly held in the Abbey and partly in the Wiltshire History Centre, were excluded from the purchase. As a result the Sharlington Pardon and the 1946 facsimile of the Magna Carta given to Matilda Talbot, which had both been on show to visitors for many years, were removed from the Abbey.
- 10.15 The National Trust has produced an Inventory of the Lacock Abbey collection on the central electronic Collections Management System, which will be completed by staff over the next 2 years. The record contains approximately 6,000 entries. The inventory does not include fixtures and fittings which are part of the structure. In common with all of its collections, the National Trust will make the CMS inventory publicly accessible on line, subject to usual security settings (e.g. read-only access, no editing facilities etc). The Fox Talbot Museum's collections are also on CMS. 2500 draft catalogue entries for books have been compiled at about the same time, and work to upgrade these and record those which are at present without a record is now in progress. Book data compiled to date will be available in summary via the public interface to the Collection Management System, and full records are viewable via Copac ([copac.ac.uk](http://copac.ac.uk)).
- 10.16 The following section provides a brief summary of the collection, based on the Inventory, the draft National Trust Acquisitions and Disposals policy for Lacock Abbey, and further research by the CMP project team. The next stage after the basic CMS inventory will be to carry out expert assessments of various aspects of the collection. The Libraries Curator has made numerous visits, has produced a preliminary assessment and will carry out more research in 2012. The Furniture Curator has made an initial visit and

has drafted an entry on Lacock for the publication Furniture in National Trust Houses, together with catalogue entries for the stone tables and the sgabelli. The Painting Curators have revised attributions of some of the pictures but have not yet seen the recently acquired pictures. No assessment has yet been made of textiles, ceramics or metalwork.

- 10.17 A separate (but interesting) collection exists at No 2 High Street, where the intact contents of the former shop remain in situ and are occasionally open to the public. Not all of the shop contents are in situ at present. Some are in separate and not very satisfactory storage.

## **The Collection**

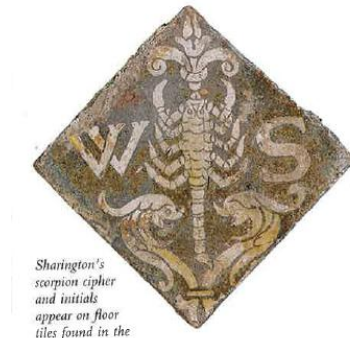
### ***Architectural and Archaeological material***

- 10.18 There are important groups of architectural and archaeological material from the buildings and site. Some items are finds by members of the Talbot family and others, identifiable by labels, and acquired by the Trust with other contents. Some of this material has been found or become detached during National Trust ownership and is therefore Trust property. Archaeological material is held in stores to the rear of the east wing of the Abbey and in rooms at the north-west corner of the Stable Court. These are from excavations by Wessex Archaeology, AC Archaeology and the National Trust's own projects. All are in museum-standard cardboard archaeological storage boxes, with special finds (e.g. metal) in plastic Stewart-type boxes. This collection includes a considerable amount of architectural and archaeological material finds from excavations and other fieldwork, including:
- fragments of medieval glass,
  - pottery,
  - pins,
  - a medieval book clasp
  - architectural elements such as eroded carvings which have been removed and replaced with new work, and a large quantity of architectural fragments, notably pieces of medieval carved/ moulded stonework, and
  - A large number of complete and fragmentary medieval and 16<sup>th</sup> century tiles which were purchased with the other contents.
- 10.19 The medieval and Tudor tiles form two distinct but related groups (Ferguson nd). The medieval examples fall into two main categories: those made locally at Naish Hill in the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century, and later 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century products of lower Severn Valley type. On-site and museum collections of medieval floor tile are quite common (especially at/from former monastic sites), with the production centres being relatively easy to identify. Tile and floor designs were often of standard types available 'off the peg', but could also include heraldic or other elements more specific to a site. Ferguson (ibid) does not mention any such examples among Lacock's medieval tiles; the later medieval ones in particular used 'standard or stock patterns identical to pavement tiles found in situ elsewhere in the region'. The Tudor tiles, in contrast, were

made for Sir William Sharrington – and specifically for Lacock Abbey. They bear both his initials and his cipher, the scorpion designs, showing the Renaissance influence of grotesque ornament. Sir Harold Brakspear made an excellent set of record drawings reconstructing both medieval and Tudor pavements. These are exquisite coloured illustrations, but there is no scale on the drawings, and it is therefore difficult to determine the size relationship between the medieval and Tudor tiles from them alone.



**Fig 10.3: Collection of architectural stonework fragments**



*Sharrington's  
scorpion cipher  
and initials  
appear on floor  
tiles found in the  
South Gallery*

**Fig 10.4: Sharrington's personalised tile design**

### ***The Gothick Hall terracotta statues***

- 10.20 The great (Gothick) Hall built for Ivory Talbot by Sanderson Miller is a fine example of early-mid 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural taste. It is also the home for one of the great treasures of Lacock's collection – the unique set of 27 bizarre terracotta figures set into niches or on corbels built specially for them. The subjects include Ela, Countess of Salisbury, probably her husband William Longespee, their two sons and two of their granddaughters, set in the Gothick niches and on the Gothick corbels. They were made at Lacock 1755-56 by Victor Alexander Sederbach, a probably Austrian or South German modeller. A letter from Constance Talbot to her husband William Henry Fox Talbot dated 6 December 1838 refers to their construction: "I have just made acquaintance with an old man who recollects the making of the Terra cotta images in the hall. He recollects some foreigners coming to Lacock & baking the figures in the orchard – it must be about 80 years ago – for the old man is 86." The figures are recorded in the 1788, 1801 and 1827 inventories, whilst maquettes for some of them remain in the collection.



**Figure 10.5: Sederbach's terracotta statues in the Great Hall**

## Pictures

- 10.21 The National Trust owns around 130 oil paintings and portraits, ranging in date from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries including:
- 16th century family portraits include Sir William Sharington (English School), his 1st wife Ursula Bouchier, previously thought to be his 3rd wife Grace (both South Gallery) and his 3rd wife Grace Farington, previously identified as Olive Sharington (Short Lobby).
  - 17th and 18th century portraits include Sir Gilbert Talbot attributed to John Hayls (Stone Gallery); Sir John Talbot by Lely and Lady Talbot from the studio of/ in the manner of Lely (South Gallery); Barbara Talbot, School of Kneller (Blue Parlour); John Ivory Talbot and his wife Mary by Michael Dahl (Stone Gallery); and John Talbot by Gainsborough (Blue Parlour).
  - There are few 19th century oil portraits in the collection. They and twenty nine 18th and 19th century miniatures are connected to the Burnett-Brown rather than Talbot family. There is one 20th century portrait, of Matilda Talbot painted in 1949 by Paul, Lord Methuen (Brown Gallery). There are also portraits after Van Dyck of Charles I and Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond (Dining Room) and the Children of Charles I (South Gallery) and others of unknown sitters.
  - There are few subject pictures, chiefly those set into the Dining Room which include *Allegory of the Arts and Sciences*, after Cornelis van Haarlem, *The Martyrdom of Sebastian* after Van Dyck, and *The Judgement of Paris*, *The Rape of the Sabines*, *The Continenence of Scipio*, and *The Reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines* which are Flemish copies of Rubens, not of good quality. There are several religious subjects – 3 ‘Madonna and Child’, a 19th century ‘Virgin Mary at Prayer’ attributed to Pellegrini, and ‘Ecce Homo’ by unknown artists, a small number of landscapes, and a 19th century ‘Allegory of Harvest’. The Abbey itself is the subject of 20<sup>th</sup> century works: John Piper’s striking View of Lacock Abbey 1942 bequeathed by Sir Alec Clifton-Taylor (Brown Gallery) and two studies of details of the Hall by Lord Methuen (the Methuens of nearby Corsham Court were family friends).



Fig 10.6: *Allegory of Arts & Sciences*



Fig 10.7: Matilda's watercolour of the Stone Gallery

- 10.22 There is one significant formal loan, a group of portraits and sculpture from Davenport House in Shropshire, reflecting the Talbot family descent from the

heiress Martha Talbot's marriage to her cousin William Davenport. The loan term ends in 2012. It includes:

- a group portrait of Sharrington Davenport and companions out shooting attributed to Philippe Mercier, and framed as a pair with it Sharrington's seven children attributed to Edward Penny.
- Other portraits by John Vanderbank, and variously attributed to John Van der Vaart, Charles Jervas, Bartholomew Dandridge and after Lely.
- A marble bust of Gratiana Rodd, Mrs. Sharrington davenport by the Bath-based sculptor from Turn Joseph I Plura.

10.23 There is a large collection of watercolours, chiefly by family members. Those on display include early 19<sup>th</sup> century views of the Hall and Cloisters by Nicholas Condy and a 1915 William Willcox view of The Warming Room (Painting Room). Many are by William Henry fox Talbot's daughters. They include two views of the Stone Gallery by Matilda (Gilchrist-Clark, mother of Matilda Talbot) that show many items which remain in the Abbey. 'Lacock Abbey from the South East' and a number of Italian views are by Rosamund Talbot (all Painting Room). There are many other watercolours and drawings by Talbot's wife, sisters, daughters and mother, the majority unmounted and not currently on display.

### ***Metalwork***

10.24 The collection includes indigenous and associated items which can be traced through historic inventories, pictures and photographs including:

- The great cauldron in the Warming House, inscribed with the maker's name (Peter Wagheuens) and the date (1500).
- A bronze pestle and mortar bearing William Sharrington's name and cypher recorded in Henry Sharrington's 1575 inventory.
- The brass andirons in the Great Hall fireplace, made c. 1680, were given by Lady Dacre to Ivory Talbot in 1757 at Sanderson Miller's suggestion. They are recorded in 1827, and probably also in the 1801 inventory reference to "a large Grate and Brass ornaments".
- 16th /17th century funeral helms with Talbot crests in the Stone Gallery and a few pieces of Civil War era armour – one, unusually, still with its padded lining.
- A quantity of 18th and 19th century fire irons – shovels, pokers etc.
- Other items of metalwork include 16th–18th century metal and wood barrels and equipment in the Brewhouse (some of the Brewhouse material is mentioned in the 2006 Quinquennial Report).
- There is very little silver. There is some Sheffield plate, including a small pair of 3-light and a 5-light candelabra, and 2 pairs of 18th century candlesticks (Dining Room). There are also various plated entrée dishes and other items.





**Fig 10.8: Sharington's pestle & mortar**



**Fig 10.9: the great cauldron**

### ***Furniture***

10.25 The furniture is generally of country house character, but some pieces are of outstanding quality and/ or significance. Most of these are indigenous or strongly associated with the Abbey, and are documented in various ways.

- The set of six carved and painted sgabello chairs (with Talbot crest added later) are English in Italian style, attributed to Francis Clein (Franz Cleyn) (1582-1648), the German painter and designer who worked for Christian IV of Denmark and then for Charles I. They were made about 1624, possibly for Holland House in London. They appear to be those variously described in 1778 as “6 Shell Back Hall Chairs”, in 1788 as “6 Camp Chairs with Talbot Crest”, in 1801 as “6 Painted Camp Chairs with Talbot Crest” and in 1827 as “6 Hall Chairs Carved Backs & Seats”. One is shown in the Wiltshire Heritage Museum and Library collection photographs. They are shown in Matilda Gilchrist-Clark's 1914 watercolour and in 1923 Country Life photographs.
- The four fine yew-wood Gothick tables in the Great Hall, probably ordered specially for the room, are listed here in 1778, 1788, 1801 and 1827. One is shown in the Wiltshire Heritage Museum and Library collection photographs.
- The set of twelve 18<sup>th</sup> century hall chairs in the Great Hall are likely to be those which the 1778 inventory records in the Great Hall as “12 Walnuttree Hall Chairs” – possibly in error, as in 1788, 1801 and 1827 12 Mahogany Chairs or Mahogany Hall Chairs are listed. Two of the Gothick tables and many of the hall chairs are shown in an early 19<sup>th</sup> century watercolour of the Hall by Nicholas Condy. One is shown in the Wiltshire Heritage Museum and Library collection photographs.
- The two marble-topped Chinese Chippendale tables in the Stone Gallery are listed there in the 1788, 1801 and 1827 inventories and shown in Matilda Gilchrist-Clark's watercolour.
- The bookcases now in the Short Lobby may well be those recorded in 1801 in the ‘New Library’ and in 1827 in the ‘Library’. They were removed from there by Matilda Talbot after 1916 to create the Blue Parlour.



**Fig 10.10: Carlton House Desk in the Blue Parlour**



**Fig 10.11: Sgabello chair**

- 10.26 Some pieces are not of great intrinsic quality/significance but have acquired greater interest because they were photographed by Fox Talbot. They include:
- Lady Elisabeth Talbot sitting on the chaise longue currently in the Blue Parlour, and his half-sister Henrietta playing the Erard Harp, now in the South Gallery, its proper location;
  - The rocking horse Firefoot.
- 10.27 Many other pieces are known to have been in the house before the Burnett-Brown family occupation. Some clearly have very strong family associations, such as:
- A large early 18th century leather-bound chest with the initials of Barbara Davenport, sister of John Ivory Talbot and great grandmother of Fox Talbot.
  - The fine Carlton House desk in the Blue Parlour was given to the family in settlement of a debt incurred by HRH the Duke of Kent and was photographed by Fox Talbot.
- 10.28 Some pieces are primarily documented by drawings or photographs:
- The ornate white and gold Charles II stand (together with the lacquer cabinet) was probably put in the Blue Parlour by Matilda Talbot but is shown alone in the Stone Gallery in Matilda Gilchrist- Clarks' watercolour.
  - The window seat in the Stone Gallery is shown in Matilda Gilchrist- Clarks' watercolour and in Country Life 1923.
  - A 17<sup>th</sup> century x-framed chair with 18<sup>th</sup> century needlework is said to have been a camp chair used by Charles I's army, but in the Wiltshire Heritage Museum and Library collection photograph it is described simply as "similar in shape to that in which King Charles I. sat during his trial".
- 10.29 Some pieces are probably among those listed in the historic inventories but are difficult to identify with certainty. There is a variety of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup> century oak chests, cupboards, tables, and beds etc. There is also a large quantity of 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup> century furniture including oriental lacquer cabinets (Blue Parlour), and four-poster beds, tables, chests, sofas, chairs etc in a variety of woods. Many of these are known to have been in the house before

Burnett-Brown occupation. Some pieces have left the house, such as Matilda Talbot's 19<sup>th</sup> century imitation bamboo bed and 17<sup>th</sup> century coffer shown in the 1923 Country Life photographs.

### ***Textiles***

10.30 A limited amount of historic textiles remain in the collection. They include:

- A collection of fragments of historic furnishing textiles – blinds, upholstery etc. - which is potentially of great significance as evidence of the Abbey's historic furnishings.
- A 19<sup>th</sup> century Aubusson carpet (Blue Parlour) from Markeaton, the family home of Fox Talbot's wife Constance Mundy, given to Matilda Talbot by Lady Mundy.
- Some period bed hangings, notably the chintz hangings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century bed in the Chintz Room.
- The Cloister Room has curtains of c.1900.
- Some old coverings (notably 19<sup>th</sup> century chintzes) to seat furniture remain, and others have been discovered beneath later covers; some pieces have been reupholstered in recent years.
- A large quantity of table and bed linen including items owned by Fox Talbot.

### ***Ceramics and Glass***

10.31 The ceramics and glass collection is not extensive. It chiefly comprises English and European 19<sup>th</sup> century items including part tea, dinner and dessert services. Some items are known to be from the Talbot collection. Some are probably recorded in the historic inventories but these are very difficult to conclusively identify individually or in groups. There is a quantity of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese blue and white porcelain, much of it damaged; some of the pieces in the Stone Gallery may be those shown in Matilda Gilchrist-Clark's watercolour. Other pieces left the Abbey in 2009.



**Fig 10.12: Blue & white porcelain in variable condition**

10.32 Some pieces are shown in Fox Talbot photographs:

- Two parian statuettes (Dining Room); two others left the Abbey in 2009;
- Decanter and glasses;

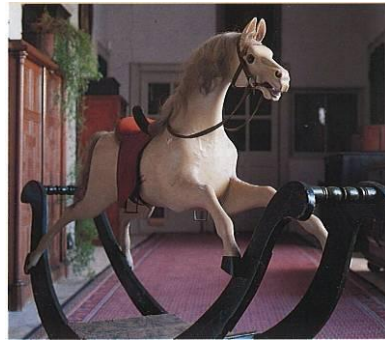
- Group of Meissen and other ceramics and glass, including some pieces currently displayed in the South Gallery and clearly identifiable in a modern copy of the photograph hanging close by.

### ***Personal Items and Miscellanea***

- 10.33 The collection includes personal items of the Talbot family, items collected by them which reflect their interests, enthusiasms and pursuits, and miscellaneous items.



**Fig 10.13: WHFT's & son's geology collection**



**Fig 10.14: 'Firefoot'**

They include:

- Canadian moose horns (Stone Gallery) probably acquired by William Davenport Talbot while serving in Canada.
- The Erard Harp purchased in 1827, which is shown in a photograph of Horatia (Fox Talbot's half-sister) playing it, and also mentioned in the diaries of the governess Amelina Petit de Billier.
- The rocking horse Firefoot bought by Fox Talbot for his children and photographed by him.
- Personal items such as Fox Talbot's spectacles, items of clothing and luggage.
- Geological specimens collected by Fox Talbot and his son Charles (Brown Gallery).
- The grand piano in the South Gallery given to Matilda Talbot in 1930.
- Personal items owned by Matilda Talbot including her walking stick, a presentation dressing table tray etc.
- Family luggage – trunks, cases etc.

### ***Books***

- 10.34 There is a large collection of books, approximately 2,700 items – comparable in size to Stourhead. They are housed in both fixed and free-standing bookcases, chiefly in the South, Stone and Brown Galleries and the Short Lobby. From at least 1806 to 1916 many of the books were in the room now known as the Blue Parlour, until Matilda Talbot moved the bookcases and books elsewhere in the Abbey. The current chaotic arrangement of the

books is the direct result of this. A small number of books removed from the Abbey in 2009 have since been sold at auction. The collection includes:

- Remarkably, the origins lie in the nun's library. Two early 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript books, *Brito's Expositiones Vocabulorum Bibliae* and a collection of Norman French verse treatises beginning with a 'Tretiz' by Walter of Bibbesworth remained in the Abbey until 2009. The Brito certainly and the Bibbesworth probably were the only books from any abbey library in England to have survived on their original site. They were sold at auction on 23 November 2011, and the Trust purchased the Brito book to return it to Lacock Abbey.
- The Sharington ownership of Lacock also contributed. A copy of Calvin's *Two and Twelve Sermons* is inscribed with the name of Anne Sharington (died 1608), stepdaughter of Sir William Sharington and wife of his brother Henry. Any book with an unbroken family provenance pre-1600 is very remarkable. There are probably only a dozen such in the entire Trust portfolio, and only three Trust properties where books known to be in the collection in the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be confirmed as remaining.
- There is a large number of early books, many in undisturbed original condition, many in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bindings, some with very early and rare seventeenth-century paper spine labels and a few with medieval manuscript waste in the bindings. This is very valuable. The most important recent discovery is that many of the earliest books have early shelf numbers written into them. These are currently thought to date from the first half of the seventeenth century, and if so, they are easily the earliest shelf numbers in any National Trust house. They seem to show that one of Lacock's early owners had a large and well-ordered library at a very early date. This is an extremely important discovery for the study of the early evolution of country house libraries. Some Talbot owners wrote their names in their books, including Sharington Talbot, his son Sir John, and his son Sharington Talbot in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and , and John Ivory Talbot in the 18<sup>th</sup>. Others inscribed by 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century owners unconnected with Lacock were probably acquired by William Davenport Talbot (1764-1800) who wrote his name in a large proportion of the books. The earliest is a copy of *Plautus* (Venice 1499). Others include Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Antiquitatem sive Originum Romanum*, 1532 and a 1539 edition of Cicero's *Opera* in an 18<sup>th</sup> century binding.
- The collection is strong in English books of the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, notably history, biography, antiquarian and reference e.g. Whitlock's *Memorials of English Affairs* (1682) with Sir John Talbot's (1630-1714) signature.
- There is a large quantity of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, history and periodicals etc.
- The collection is also strong in law and parliamentary books e.g. Acts of Parliament, early 19<sup>th</sup> century House of Commons Journal.
- Classical texts of all periods.

- Most are still in contemporary bindings which their original owners would still recognise. Many have manuscript notes on flyleaves or in margins, bookplates and early ownership inscriptions.
  - There is a quantity of books and manuscript volumes; photograph albums; and other material by or owned by Fox Talbot, his family and members of his household which are of particular significance for understanding Talbot's life, work and interests. They include a copy of *English Etymologies*, *Alphabetical Catalogue of the Old Library* and a notebook all by him; and *Catalogue of the Library in Sackville Street* [his London home]. A copy of Tibullus' *Carmina* has his signature dated 1814. Others include a volume of hand-written music by his mother Lady Elisabeth Fox-Strangways.
  - Antiquarian works and publications about medieval records in the Public Record Office, contemporary books and books about related families reflect Charles Talbot's interests. There is some manuscript material on the history of Lacock by Charles Talbot.
  - A large group of books may have been Matilda Talbot's: fiction, early 20th century non-fiction including local history, and books connected with the Talbots and Lacock e.g. History of Margam Abbey.
  - A quantity of unbound pamphlets, early 19th century maps etc.
  - Many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century books in formerly private areas of the house seem, for the most part, to be Burnett-Brown introductions.
- 10.35 There is a quantity of National Trust books transferred to the Abbey in 1979 and 1980. They comprise 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century English and French literature, history, essays, text books, and religious works. They are to be moved to Osterley.
- 10.36 There are "vast numbers of late twentieth-century paperbacks, mostly in the Old Muniment Room, or shelved floor-to-ceiling in the Book Room. By repute most of these belonged to Anthony Burnett-Brown, and were bought and read by him on regular train journeys to and from Paddington to Chippenham. Whether these should be regarded as interesting relics of life at Lacock in the 1980s and 1990s, or as junk which the National Trust would be better off without, is, as yet, unclear. Arguably they are too recent to make any decision easy or straightforward"<sup>30</sup>.

### ***William Henry Fox Talbot material and the Fox Talbot Museum***

- 10.37 Matilda Talbot gave much of Fox Talbot's photographic and other materials to museums, including his celebrated negative of the South Gallery oriel. In 1975 Anthony Burnett-Brown loaned to the Fox Talbot Museum (an Accredited Museum in its own right) much of the remaining Lacock Abbey Collection (now known as the Talbot Collection) of photographic material, photographic and scientific equipment, objects including antiquities, drawings, printed material, notebooks and other manuscript material relating to the life and work of Fox Talbot. In 2005 Petronella Burnett-Brown and Janet

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<sup>30</sup> Taken from 'Lacock Library Collection Level Survey', 2011, Mark Purcell



Burnett-Brown donated the Collection to the British Library. However, the Museum retains on formal loan (for 30 years) 183 items from the collection which were and remain on permanent display (although the antiquities have now been returned to the British Library). Other Fox Talbot material from the Abbey remaining in family possession has been loaned to the British Library, including a large number of Talbot prints.

- 10.38 Much of the original Talbot Collection belonged to William Henry Fox Talbot and the items are therefore strongly associated with Lacock. However, many additional non-indigenous items have come into the Museum's Collection since its opening - some single items, others distinct collections in their own right. There are approximately 1,500 items of photographic technology (i.e. cameras, lenses, etc.) and approximately 10,000 photographic images dating from the birth of photography to the present day. Notable items in these collections include images by Cecil Beaton, stereo daguerreotypes, Pepe Dinez portraits of famous photographers, and a loan collection of images by Major Henry Wood of the British Army in India during the 1860s.
- 10.39 The Fox Talbot Museum has an Acquisition and Disposal Policy ratified in 2007 which is separate from that of the National Trust for the Abbey as a whole. The principal objective in acquiring new items is to expand the holdings in the Museum's Collection relating to William Henry Fox Talbot, his family, friends, and associates, and to the history of photography with particular focus on photography's formative years (circa 1830-1860).

### ***The Lacock archive***

- 10.40 The very extensive Lacock and Talbot archive is currently deposited at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre and is in private ownership. Two very important medieval cartularies (bound copies of medieval charters) which belonged to the Abbey in the Middle Ages were removed from the History Centre and sold to the British Library in 2011. Wiltshire Council is preparing a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to acquire ownership of the Archive. The archive is a hugely important source of information about Lacock and its stories. The National Trust is supporting the bid. The Archive includes 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century inventories of the Abbey contents, estate and other plans, correspondence, bills and accounts. It also includes the Sharington Pardon, a document which was on show to visitors until it was removed from the Abbey in 2009.

### ***The shop collection, No 2 High Street***

- 10.41 The National Trust owns the contents of the historic shop at Number 2 High Street, which includes historic shop fittings, former stock and other material. The premises were occupied by the Butler family for over 100 years. Peggy Butler, the last of the family, ran it as a village shop and Post Office until the early 1980s. The old shop fittings and much of the shop stock from that time survive. Miss Butler collected items and deliberately arranged the 'old-fashioned' window display of goods and adverts, and an assortment of typical items from a small village store. These include chemists' items, washing soap, sewing tape and thread, a tube of Nestle milk, old match boxes, ointments bottles and castor oil. These are on old wood display shelves. Number 2

High Street is a holiday cottage owned and rented out by the National Trust. The shop collection is only occasionally open to the public. In 2007-8 the contents were removed while 2 High Street was extensively repaired and refurbished. Many of the contents previously in the main part of the shop were returned to their previous locations, but some are stored elsewhere in unsatisfactory conditions.

## Significance

- 10.42 There are some specific areas and categories within the collection (mainly of medieval and Tudor date) that are undoubtedly of international or national significance. The early 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript book *Expositiones Vocabulorum Bibliae* by William Brito was chained in the Abbey in the Middle Ages and was probably bound at Lacock. It is the only monastic manuscript in England (other than some of the former monastic cathedrals) which can be proved beyond doubt to have survived in situ. This and its undisturbed condition make it of international significance. It is believed to be the object with the longest confirmed association with a National Trust property. The Trust was unable to secure the equally significant contemporary manuscript book of French texts, starting with one by Walter of Bibbesworth removed from the Abbey at the same time, sold at the same sale, 23 November 2011, and purchased by a private collector. While not provably from the abbey library, it probably is, and was later owned by Henry Sharrington. Both seem to be connected with female education in the Middle Ages. A magnificent illuminated 14<sup>th</sup> century choir Psalter from the Abbey given to the Bodleian Library by Archbishop Laud in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is of international significance because of its quality and associations with Lacock. All three are remarkable because they belonged to a convent of nuns.
- 10.43 The archaeological collections relating to the medieval nunnery are rich and varied, with floor tiles and architectural fragments being particular features. Pottery and other artefacts from excavations and other sources are also important. These collections are among many good examples of archaeological assemblages relating to medieval monasteries, but their retention on site at Lacock Abbey itself is unusual. The collections and their continued presence at the Abbey are of national significance. One specific item – the cauldron of c 1500 now displayed in the Warming House is an exceptional piece in its own right. Such large bronze survivals are rare enough, but for it to remain here is truly remarkable. This piece is unquestionably of national significance. Given its rarity and the documented continental origin of its maker, a strong argument for international significance can be made.
- 10.44 The association of such an influential man at court as William Sharrington with both Lacock Abbey and specific artefacts designed for him and this property is of national significance. His cipher (the scorpion) and initials WS literally mark his authority on the building and items directly associated with him. These include the two octagonal tables in Sharrington's Tower, the bronze mortar and pestle, his tiles and carved directly into the fabric of the building, eg in the South Gallery.

- 10.45 The tables are traditionally attributed to the carver John Chapman, who worked for Henry VIII and Sharrington's friend Sir William Thynne of Longleat, but they may have been made by foreign craftsmen attached to Henry VIII's court. They represent rare sixteenth-century stone furniture of Franco-Flemish inspiration, but with an eye to the Antique. Chapman's involvement at Lacock is important in itself, but it is also a statement of Sharrington's social status. Chapman was clearly in demand as a master craftsman. In 1552, for instance, the Duke of Northumberland ordered a chimney-piece for Dudley Castle (Staffordshire) from him; this was made at Lacock while Chapman was working here for Sharrington, and was transported to Dudley in the following year for installation (Airs 1998, 114). This must also have been about the time when Sir John Thynne asked whether Chapman's services could be spared for his early work at Longleat (later to be transformed into a great prodigy house), only for Sharrington to tell him that the mason was unavailable due to the Duke of Northumberland's commission. The Lacock tables are of national significance as examples of the scale and detail of furniture at Tudor high status buildings, by a nationally renowned master of his craft. The only other example known of a 16<sup>th</sup> century stone table is Burgundian but with a rectangular top, sold at Sotheby's in London. The one on the first floor stands in a room intended for storage and display of works of art and probably books, and was probably used for display and study. The fact that they remain in situ in the spaces they were created for, with stone paving laid to correspond with the octagonal shape of the tables and the rooms, gives them extraordinary national or possibly international significance.
- 10.46 The large bronze mortar and pestle bearing Sharrington's name and cipher are also nationally significant as rare surviving examples of Tudor bronze-smithing, as well as for their documented link with the site (they are included in the 1575 inventory, more than 20 years after William's death).
- 10.47 The Sharrington tiles are also of national significance. They represent a unique late flowering of the English 'encaustic' tradition at a time when continental maiolica and other tiles were starting to dominate the market. These tiles have strong and demonstrable links to both person and place – in the latter instance more specifically still to the South Gallery (where they once lay, in association with now largely lost heraldic window glass). They are exemplary of Sharrington's desire that Lacock should be a design showpiece (which, with the exception of Ivory Talbot and Miller's Gothick Hall, it would not attain again). The tiles are also a most unusual development of the late medieval 'encaustic' tradition into something that could have sparked (but did not) a new insular tradition. Sharrington's commissions have very strong evidential, historic, aesthetic and social value.
- 10.48 The 18<sup>th</sup> century Hall, its decoration and furniture are of unique importance as a planned ensemble still fully preserved; they are unquestionably of national significance and arguably merit an international rating as exemplars of the Gothick style, on a par with Strawberry Hill itself. The Hall was built 1754-5, and the Gothick furniture and fittings such as the terracotta statues are generally well preserved (though the recent conservation report highlights the need for cleaning and conservation work), and still in place. The tables, hall chairs and terracotta statues are listed in the historic inventories, and are

therefore key indigenous items. Bills and other documents for the statues have also come to light recently. Sederbach's work here appears to be unique, as 'nothing else by this mysterious sculptor is known' (National Trust 2003, 7). Other Gothick buildings such as the type site at (the recently restored) Strawberry Hill, Twickenham (now a University building), do not have the same level of interior preservation as Lacock. The hall and furniture at Plas Newydd (Anglesey, Wales) are later in date (1796 onwards), by James Wyatt, an acknowledged master of Gothic architecture (Colvin 1995, 1118; Summerson 1993, 426-30). Lacock Abbey also bears strong comparison with Arbury Hall, Warwickshire, for example in the latter's Library with a segmental ceiling of 1754-5, and Drawing Room of 1762-4.

- 10.49 Otherwise the collection contains numerous paintings of 17<sup>th</sup> century and later that are of good quality but few (if any) are of national (still less international) level. Few outstanding artists are represented (there is one Gainsborough portrait), and many works are attributed as 'after', 'school of' or 'in the manner of' rather than by leading artists. Subjects include some allegorical and Classical scenes, a few royal portraits (Charles I, his children, a 17<sup>th</sup> century portrait of Henry VII), and religious scenes, but the majority are family portraits. This doubtless reflects the status of the Talbot family (and Lacock as their country seat), as middle-ground aristocracy. As such they are a good and important collection in its place of origin, and thus of regional significance.
- 10.50 The same can be said for the majority of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century collection (e.g. furniture, ceramics, textiles etc), most of which has strong, direct and demonstrable links with both the family and the house (sometimes down to individual rooms). The indigenous character, contemporaneity and direct associative value of the collection are its main asset. In this respect Lacock Abbey is markedly similar to many country houses (including many owned and maintained by the National Trust) where a few gems of national significance are to be found among collections that are otherwise of regional/local significance to the place itself (e.g. Rex Whistler's work at Mottisfont Abbey, Hampshire). Lacock cannot, however, compete with greater houses such as the Vyne (also Hampshire), which 'through the artistic and aesthetic interests of its various owners ... has been at the cutting edge of the development of country house architecture, interior design and taste' (site page on [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)).
- 10.51 Although the library collection has been depleted by 20<sup>th</sup> century sales and recent removals, it is of national significance, notably for the earlier printed books with their early numbering system. The collection includes a surprisingly large number of early books. Many of the books have been in the Abbey since the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, some may have been in the house earlier, and at least one was in the Abbey in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The books also form an important part of the furnishing and presentation of the rooms. As the National Trust's Libraries Curator has stated (Collection Level Survey 2 May 2011), "the Lacock books are of enormous interest. Their collective historical value on the shelves is considerable, and the long and complex history of books and manuscripts from monastic times right through into the twentieth century mean that few Trust houses have a library with so many

layers within it, and one which so obviously reflects the evolution of their historic home over many centuries. This, clearly, is a library where every hour spent with the books is bound to produce further and fascinating discoveries, and is an extremely valuable and welcome addition to the Trust's library portfolio."

- 10.52 The Fox Talbot archive, photographs, equipment and correspondence are of international and national significance because of William Henry's pioneering role in photography. The most important parts of the collection are owned and held by the British Library, however, and the National Trust/WH Fox Talbot Museum holdings are lesser (but still important). The continuing high level of academic interest in Fox Talbot, his correspondence and research papers are also due to his many other interests, from Egyptology through botany to politics. His many social and political connections are of immense importance and include Lord Brougham, the Fox Strangway relatives at Abbotsbury (Dorset) via his mother, and his cousins in Wales, the Mansel Talbots. Many items in the Abbey have strong associations with him (and his family) as well. The material at Lacock is of national significance. The British Library collections, which also used to be at Lacock, are of international significance. The significance of the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century photographs other than William Henry's is unclear because they have not yet been fully assessed. This should be a priority so that this part of the collection can be managed on the basis of a proper understanding of their relevance and significance.
- 10.53 At 2 High Street the contents and fittings of a general shop and post office in their original location, which included haberdashery and chemist items, is rare. Working shops have been re-created at Blists Hill (Ironbridge), Millgate Museum (Newark, Nottinghamshire), Worcester City Museum, and at a village shop at Denny Abbey from the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of old shop fronts have also been set up at the Lakeland Motor Museum (Cumbria). The Lacock shop collection and its fittings are mixed, and not of a single contemporary period. Some of the fittings are of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date, while others have been adapted. There is also a mixture of stock from the 1970s/80s, plus a deliberately 'old fashioned' collection assembled by Peggy Butler. The collection may therefore be regarded as in situ, but perhaps not fully 'original'. To that extent its significance must be regarded as unclear until further research on the collection in totality has been carried out.

## **Key Issues and Opportunities**

- A detailed consideration of the significance of all items within the collection, or even of components of it such as paintings and furniture, is clearly beyond the remit of a more general study of the type needed for this report. The National Trust's own specialist curators are best placed to assess significance in this level of detail, not least because they have a broad perspective across the Trust's numerous properties and their collections. As noted above, these expert assessments remain to be done for most areas of the Lacock collection.
- Losses of books, furniture, Talbot photographs and manuscript material and other contents during 20th century sales by Matilda Talbot and by

removals in 2009 had a significant negative impact on the property as a whole. Some indigenous / historically-associated items were lost in this manner, and it may be appropriate to re-acquire such items when opportunities arise to do so. The National Trust clearly does not have infinite resources for such action, however, and any such initiatives will therefore require careful consideration.

- There is a definite need for more research into the collection's development and, more particularly, losses from it by the sale (or any other past disposal) of individual items (or groups). Whilst an important action, it could take a considerable amount of time and effort to complete such research.
- In the meanwhile, the National Trust has a draft Acquisition and Disposal Policy (2010) for Lacock Abbey, backed by the Trust's overall Acquisition and Disposal Policy (The National Trust Statement, 2005). The property-specific draft policy provides a clear and important statement of the logic behind any future purchases (or indeed sales) of material for/from Lacock Abbey. Inevitably, however, as a draft document it cannot have the same authority as a fully adopted policy document. The National Trust therefore needs to complete and adopt the Lacock Abbey Acquisition and Disposal Policy as a matter of urgency, notwithstanding the need for further research on the history of the collection. Should the latter flag up a need for changes to the policy, this could be achieved by a simple process of amendment and re-adoption of the document as appropriate.
- Acquisitions outside the currently stated policy will be made only in exceptional circumstances and only with the appropriate level of authorisation.
- Disposal will only be considered if the provenance of the item(s) concerned is absolutely certain and it does not comply with any of the criteria and priorities for acquisition/ retention. Where the provenance is uncertain the presumption is against disposal until the provenance is confirmed. The Trust will also observe the conditions attached to grants received for the purchase of chattels for display at the property.
- Perhaps the largest 'disposal' from Lacock was the transfer of the Fox Talbot collection to the British Library, as a gift to the nation by his heirs. While this has taken most of the collection away from Lacock (which is regrettable), it has secured it permanently within the ownership and care of Britain's greatest library. The Fox Talbot Museum continues to provide information and displays of his work at Lacock Abbey.
- The entire collection needs to be reviewed regularly and cyclically for conservation management and maintenance purposes. Archaeological material, artworks, furniture, textiles, books and indeed virtually all items in the collection may be vulnerable to various harmful influences. These can range from wilful acts of vandalism through accidental damage to issues related to storage conditions and materials. Significant and cyclical (e.g. day-night) variations of temperature, moisture and humidity can have a severe negative effect on historic artefacts of all kinds. Items on



display or in store are likely to have different requirements in this respect, but the need for review and action is equal in both cases. Whilst there are dedicated collections stores for the Fox Talbot Museum, none have yet been established for the Abbey or 2 High Street contents – some 2 High Street contents are in poor storage conditions. The archaeological and historical materials are often (correctly) described as a non-renewable resource that cannot be replaced. That is especially so at Lacock because of the collection's strong indigenous character and associations with people and place. It is therefore of paramount importance that the entire Lacock collection receives regular attention, monitoring and ongoing conservation management whether in situ in display rooms or in the stores.

- In the specific case of the terracotta figures in the Hall, the Cliveden Conservation report recommends that they should be given a light clean throughout (this should take care not to remove traces of early paint or the patina of age unnecessarily), with some re-attachment of small fragments that have broken off but are either in the parent niche for the statue or in store. This would be appropriate where the original location is demonstrable and re-fixing can be achieved without negative impacts on the rest of the fabric and/or the overall character of the individual piece or group. In contrast, re-construction where features such as fingers and toes have been lost completely is unlikely to be acceptable.
- Full documentation is a necessary adjunct of collection management and conservation. The base-level inventory is an excellent step toward a fully documented collection but it is part of a process rather than the end in itself. The inventory is likely to be a 'snapshot in time', for instance, as far as artefact locations are concerned (whether on display or in store). This will require regular updating as rooms are opened to the public, refurbished or re-presented. All artefacts – large or small – should have a full tracking record registering its location and movement at the Abbey or beyond it (e.g. for items sent away for conservation, or loaned out for display). It will also be desirable (arguably essential) to enhance individual artefact records (and by logical extension the inventory/documentation as a whole), for instance in the light of new research and/or when relevant original papers are discovered. These issues will become increasingly relevant as the inventory becomes available as an online public resource, providing opportunities to involve people with the history of Lacock and its many stories.
- Access – whether online or direct – is a potentially difficult area for collection management and conservation. The general presumption now tends towards increasing both physical and intellectual access to sites and collections, with a fully inclusive approach being the goal. This is laudable and, in general, appropriate, but some sites, areas and elements of a collection may/will be problematic in this respect. For example, the upper floor of Sharington's Tower (and the octagonal table that is fully indigenous to it) is inaccessible to the general public because of its remote location and complicated access route, let alone to people with mobility issues. Limited access e.g. by booked tours may be possible.

Permanent removal of the table to another location would be wholly unacceptable, and even a temporary move could be controversial. In such circumstances virtual access by means of webcam, web sites and other means is likely to be acceptable.

- The old shop contents in No 2 High Street are both an issue and an opportunity. They are rarely open to the public at the moment, and little can be seen in the bay window on the street frontage. The National Trust will need to decide what to do with the collection, given that there will inevitably be some conservation liabilities as well as opportunities for enhanced public access, participation, oral history (“I remember buying those for 2d in the 1950s” etc), and education. Some of these initiatives may be difficult because of the holiday letting of the property as a whole, but that should not be used as an excuse for inaction.
- Public access can be active as well as passive. The National Trust has a long tradition of voluntary help in many areas, such as stewarding (and thus security) in rooms, conservation parties and so on. A property like Lacock presents many opportunities for involvement of this sort, and generally in participation with the collections. Equally there are obvious and ongoing opportunities for educational initiatives and participation given the sheer size, range and relevance to the National Curriculum of the Lacock collection (including of course the Fox Talbot Museum). The Trust is very alive to possibilities in these areas and will continue to develop new initiatives, either on its own or in partnership with others.
- The Trust has been active in re-presenting existing rooms and opening up new areas for visitors at Lacock since this became possible at the start of 2010 when family occupation of the house ended and the contents were acquired. This has allowed more of the collection to be on display than has ever been possible before. The Trust believes that more can be done in a similar vein, but staff are also fully conscious of conservation requirements. Some items are very vulnerable, and it may be difficult to reconcile access with care, security and the right environmental conditions for the specific artefact. Where there is doubt over the advisability of displaying a piece that is felt to be especially vulnerable, it should be withheld until those concerns have been met in full.
- Any threat to the Lacock collection and archive would be of massive concern. This is a nationally important resource, the continuation of which should be unquestionable. Equally there is great potential for partnership and community involvement, and for continuing enhancement of public enjoyment of Lacock as a whole. Conservation will always be uppermost in the National Trust’s thinking, but it will continue to invest time and resources in the access to Lacock and its collection, while also ensuring their long-term preservation.
- There is a lack of dedicated and environmentally controlled stores on site at Lacock Abbey. Storage conditions are also poor for parts of the historic shop collection housed in No 2 High Street. This means that there is still much work to do on creating adequate modern storage of the collections at Lacock.

# 11 Significance

- 11.1 The overall significance of Lacock is related to four key phases of development or eras:
- The **founding of the Abbey by Ela, Countess of Salisbury** in the **13<sup>th</sup> century**, resulting in the major part of today's Grade I listed abbey, and the development of the village to the west;
  - The **conversion of the Abbey into a dwelling by Sir William Sharington** in the **16<sup>th</sup> century**, including the addition of the octagonal tower and the Renaissance chimneys;
  - The **extensive alterations to the house and grounds by John Ivory Talbot** in the **18<sup>th</sup> century**, including the creation of the Gothic entry hall, the ha-ha terrace and the formal water gardens in the north;
  - The tenure of **the Victorian polymath and photographic pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot** in the **19<sup>th</sup> century**, whose association with Lacock is of international significance.
- 11.2 On the following page, Table 11.1 provides a summary breakdown of the key significances within the site according to the themes explored in this plan using the National Trust's letter code system as explained in previous chapters (A denoting international significance, B national, and C local, with N indicating a neutral feature and D identifying a detrimental element). Following this Figure 11.1 presents a spatial summary of combined significance by Character Area. Detailed assessments of significance for each theme are provided in chapters 7-10.
- 11.3 The themes assessed are:
- **Landscape and plant collection**
  - **Buildings and archaeology**
  - **Ecology**
  - **Collections**
  - **Associations related to the above**
- 11.4 Below this, table 11.2 summarises the significances of Lacock by Character Area, providing a summary assessment of each part of the property to better understand its importance and contribution to the wider significance of the site.

## CONTEMPORARY AND INTANGIBLE SIGNIFICANCES

- 11.5 In addition to the themes outlined above and that cannot necessarily be graded or assessed as part of a wider framework, Lacock possesses significant intangible qualities that pervade the site. Repeated site survey and public consultation have both highlighted the special qualities that occur at Lacock: **its sense of timelessness, its peacefulness, its spiritual 'atmosphere' and its long association throughout history with individuals from all**

**walks of life.** It seems that the longer one spends at Lacock, the more it grows upon the visitor and the more there is to discover.

- 11.6 These intangible qualities should be taken into account when managing Lacock and deciding how it is presented to visitors – this is a place to be *experienced*, rather than simply photographed. It is also vital that these qualities are not lost as a result of increased visitor numbers or management changes, but rather need to be conserved and where possible enhanced.
- 11.7 A factor that has undoubtedly raised the profile of Lacock in the public's consciousness is its repeated **use as a film set**, notably for Harry Potter, Cranford and the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*. The international reach of Harry Potter in particular is likely to have extended the property's appeal to a much wider audience, a fact already recognised by the National Trust in their production of associated souvenir literature (now the shop's biggest seller).
- 11.8 Lacock remains **an active and thriving community providing a highly valued place to live, work, and learn**. The sense of timelessness at Lacock is even borne out in the presence of several second and third generation families living in the village.
- 11.9 **This assessment of significance necessarily de-couples the various values and benefits that Lacock contains and delivers** in order to inform the management policies and actions contained in the following chapters of this plan. **However, when considered as a whole, Lacock is a place of outstanding significance to be valued at an international level.** It is this broad appeal and 'fossilised' appearance of the medieval settlement that make it "one of the most pleasing and individual places in England."<sup>31</sup>

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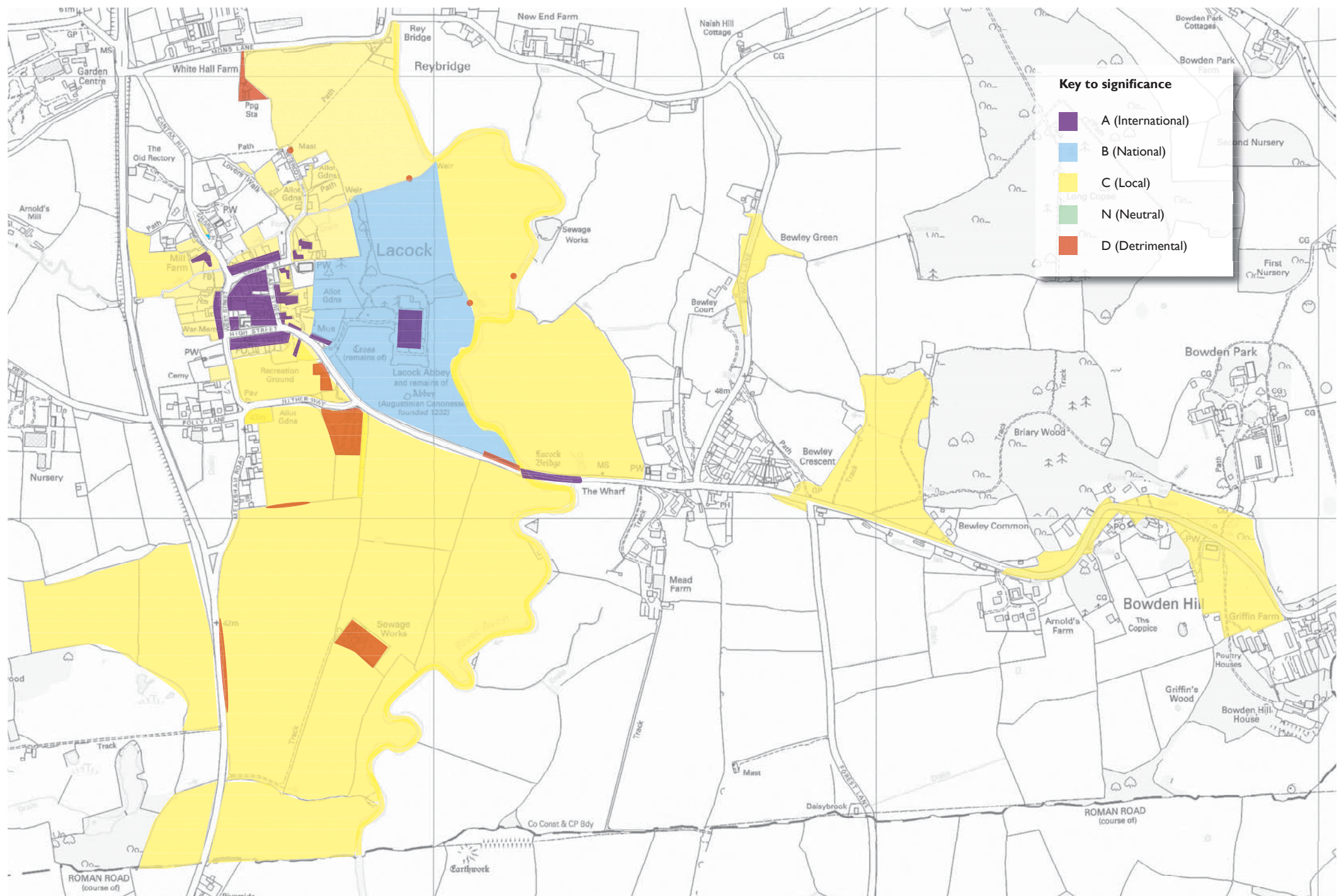
<sup>31</sup> Greeves and Trinick (1989) *The National Trust Guide: a complete introduction to the buildings, gardens, coast and country owned by The National Trust*, fourth edition.

**Table 11.1: Summary of key significances by theme**

Landscape & plant collection	Buildings & archaeology	Ecology	Collections	Associations
<b>A - International</b>				
- WHFT's botanical / horticultural work	- Abbey & village (buildings)		- Gothic Hall - Fox Talbot archive (British Library) - Brito manuscript	- WH Fox Talbot
<b>B - National</b>				
- Abbey park & garden (notably involvement of Brown, Emes & Switzer)	- Abbey & gardens (archaeology) - Lacock bridge - Market Cross - Conduit House - All listed buildings	- bat habitats (Sharrington's Tower & Abbey roof/drains) - veteran trees (park)	- Tudor collections - books, medieval tiles, sgabellos, furniture, ceramics, textiles, metalwork etc - the collections in totality – group value - Fox Talbot archive (Lacock) - 2 High Street	<i>Owners:</i> - Ela, Countess of Salisbury - William Sharrington - John Ivory Talbot - Charles Talbot  <i>Designers and others:</i> - Stephen Switzer - Lancelot Brown - William Emes - Sanderson Miller - Harold Brakspear  - Use as a film set (Harry Potter, Pride & Prejudice)
<b>C - Local</b>				
- River Avon - Northern pastures (as setting to park) - allotments - eastern commons - southern fields	- village & wider site (archaeology)	- River Avon & margins - Bewley Commons - veteran trees (garden & river) - Chapel Field - hedgerows	- personal items	- Matilda Talbot
<b>N - Neutral</b>				
			- recent acquisitions	
<b>D - Detrimental</b>				
- sewage works - car park - recreation ground (east) - hedgerows - raised walkway - pumping station - TV mast - farm bridge - stile		- Invasive species along the River Avon		

**Key to significance**

- A (International)
- B (National)
- C (Local)
- N (Neutral)
- D (Detrimental)





**Table 11.2: Summary of Significance by Character Area**

Character Area 1: Lacock Abbey & Gardens
1a: The Abbey – refer to Chapter 8 & gazetteer entry for greater detail
<p>The Abbey is of <b>international</b> significance for the quality and extent of its buildings, its history as one of the country's wealthiest nunneries, and the influence and effect of successive generations and several outstanding phases of architectural development, a case that is heightened when considered as part of its wider architectural associations with the village. The early 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript book <i>Expositiones Vocabulorum Bibliae</i> by William Brito held as part of the Abbey's collections is of international significance as the only monastic manuscript in England which can be proved beyond doubt to have survived in situ. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Gothick Hall, its decoration and furniture, designed by Sanderson Miller for John Ivory Talbot, is of international significance as an exemplar of the Gothick style, on a par with Strawberry Hill itself. The Abbey is also of international significance for its associations with William Henry Fox Talbot.</p> <p>It is of <b>national</b> significance for its archaeology and associations with other former occupiers and designers including Ela, Countess of Salisbury, William Sharrington, John Ivory Talbot and Sanderson Miller. Specific areas of the collection housed in and associated with the Abbey are also of national importance, including Sharrington's octagonal tables, the bronze mortar and pestle, and his tiles, the sgabello chairs in the Stone Gallery and the library collection. The Abbey is also of national significance for its bat habitats in Sharrington's Tower and the Abbey roof and drains. Most recently the Abbey is of national significance for its use as a film set, notably the Harry Potter films.</p> <p>The majority of the remaining collections held within the Abbey are of <b>local</b> significance for their associations with the building's previous inhabitants, including paintings and portraits and personal items such as Firefoot the rocking horse (which W.H. Fox Talbot bought for his children and photographed).</p> <p>Some 20<sup>th</sup> century changes within the Abbey, such as the subdivision of historic spaces and insertion of partitions and kitchen and bathroom fittings in flats and offices, are of <b>neutral</b> or <b>detrimental</b> significance.</p>
1b: The Fox Talbot Museum
<p>Abbey Lodge (which houses the Fox Talbot Museum) is of <b>national</b> significance as a Grade II listed building. It is an agricultural / service building in origin, with strong connections to Sharrington, whilst the ornate Gothick aspect also connects the building to John Ivory Talbot. The Lodge has strong group value both with the rest of the home farm complex and with the Gothick entrance hall to the Abbey. The Fox Talbot Museum itself is also of national significance as a prime repository for and display of his work and its importance in the history of photography (<i>note that the Fox Talbot collections held off-site by the British Library are of international significance</i>).</p>

Ic: Terrace and driveway
<p>The sweeping driveway approach with southern ha-ha is of <b>national</b> significance for its associations with the 18<sup>th</sup> century garden redesigns commissioned by John Ivory Talbot, possibly to a layout by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. The ha-ha terrace fronting the Abbey is also of national significance in representing a combination of the John Ivory Talbot and William Henry Fox Talbot alterations. The Sanderson Miller designed Gothic archway separating the driveway from the terrace is of national significance, as is the monument along the driveway most likely being a remnant from the lost 18<sup>th</sup> century Switzer-designed water garden.</p> <p>The trees along the driveway and terrace are of <b>local</b> ecological significance.</p>
Id: Fox Talbot’s Botanic Garden
<p>The key significance (<b>national</b>) of the Botanic Garden lies in its associations with William Henry Fox Talbot and the plants that he collected and grew here as part of his pioneering explorations in botanical science (<i>see box in Chapter 7 for further detail</i>). It also forms part of the grade II registered park and garden and its bounding walls date from at least the first half of the 18th century, possibly relating to John Ivory Talbot’s alterations to the gardens in the 1720s.</p> <p>The WHFT associations are reinforced by elements within the garden including the re-created glasshouse and the mature walnut probably planted by WHFT himself, although individually these features are of <b>local</b> significance. The trees within the garden are of local significance for their ecological value.</p>
Ie: Allotment Gardens
<p>The allotment gardens were established as the ‘Kitching Garden’ at least as early as 1714, and are of <b>national</b> significance as an early part of the registered park and garden. Their interest lies in the fact that they represent one of the oldest parts of the garden, retained (although altered) during Ivory Talbot’s early 18<sup>th</sup> century redesigns and possibly dating back to Sharington’s tenure or before. The bounding walls are of national significance forming the primary element of the gardens, and are of interest due to Switzer’s alterations in the early 18th century which have left a curious diagonal eastern wall to this day.</p> <p>The current use of the allotment gardens by the local community is of <b>local</b> significance, providing a valued community resource within an historic and attractive walled garden. The trees within the garden are of local significance for their ecological value.</p>
If: Orchard
<p>Similarly to the Allotment Gardens (above), the Orchard is of <b>national</b> significance as an early part of the registered park and garden, its interest lying in the fact that it represents one of the oldest parts of the garden, retained (although altered) during</p>

Ivory Talbot's early 18<sup>th</sup> century redesigns and possibly dating back to Sharington's tenure or before. The bounding walls occur on three sides and are likely to date back to at least the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, forming the primary historic element of the orchard (and thus of national significance).

The orchard trees are of **local** significance for their ecological value, as well as their potential in providing fruit for the community and estate.

#### Ig: Woodland Garden

The woodland garden is of **national** significance as forming the major part of the grade II registered park and garden. Its major interest lies in its combined representation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century garden containing original W.H. Fox Talbot plantings, with surviving elements of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Switzer design, including the fish pond (part of the original L-shaped canal) and the Rockwork. The WHFT and Switzer associations are both individually of national significance, as are the Rockwork and fish pond and the collection of exotics planted by WHFT. Some of the mature trees within the garden are also of national significance for their ecological value.

The remaining trees within the garden are of **local** significance for their ecological value. There are other features of local significance within the garden, including the rose garden, which is of local significance as a modern interpretation by the National Trust of the rose garden that existed in this location during WH Fox Talbot's tenure.

#### Ih: The Wood Yard

The historic layout of the wood yard is of **national** significance, including its bounding walls and the timber-framed barn along the north wall, forming part of the grade II registered park and garden and falling within the curtilage of the grade I listed Abbey.

Its current use as a private lawn garden is of **neutral** significance.

#### Ii: The Courtyard

The Courtyard (aka Stable court) is of **national** significance, falling within the curtilage of the grade I listed Abbey and dating back to Sharington's alterations. The shrubs & climbers along the north, east and south walls are not overpowering and contribute greatly to the character of the space.

Its current use as a car park for Abbey volunteers and residents is, however, of **detrimental** significance.

#### Ij: The Cloister Garth

The Cloister Garth is of **national** significance, falling within the curtilage of the grade I listed Abbey and dating back to the original medieval layout established in the 13<sup>th</sup>

century.

### Character Area 2: Historic Parkland

This character area is of **national** overall significance, providing the immediate parkland setting to the Abbey and forming a major part of the grade II registered park and garden. The greatest significance of the area relates to its fascinating archaeology, which testifies to numerous previous phases of design: to the north lies evidence of Switzer's impressive 18<sup>th</sup> formal water garden and Emes's later alterations, whilst to the south lay the formal gardens as laid out in the Sharington era. The layout of the southern area as parkland may also represent the hand of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, and the current parkland character of the area is also of significance (national). Some of the veteran trees within the area are of national significance for the wood-decay fauna that they support. The pillbox in the north east corner of the area is of national significance as an extant WWII military structure that forms part of a group at Lacock (significance is predominantly for social and military history rather than archaeological or architectural interest).

The remaining trees within the area are of **local** significance for their nature conservation interest.

The grassland within this area has been agriculturally improved and is not of botanical interest, and thus its significance is **neutral** in ecological terms.

A number of **detrimental** features occur along the boundary to the character area, including the utilitarian farm bridge across the northern stream, the stile along the east boundary, and the raised wooden walkway in the south east.

### Character Area 3: Lacock Village – refer to Chapter 8 for greater detail

Lacock is one of England's finest villages largely because of its rich and varied stock of historic buildings, and a strong argument can be made (when taking the Abbey complex into account as well) for defining the built heritage as being of **international** significance for its landscape, historical, archaeological and architectural quality.

The majority of the buildings within the character area are listed (including the grade I listed Tithe Barn and a number of grade II\* buildings), and are thus by definition at least of **national** significance. They provide an outstanding example of individual and group significance, ranging in date from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a mixture of vernacular and high architectural styles.

Current knowledge suggests that the archaeology of the village is predominantly of **local** significance (with the exception of the Market Cross, which is of national significance).

#### Character Area 4: Recreation Ground, Allotments & Picnic Area

The recreation ground, allotments and picnic area are all of **local** significance for their contribution to the community at Lacock. Apart from its practical value, the significance of the recreation ground is enhanced by its long history of use as a cricket ground, possibly dating back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – the cricket green and pavilion are the key features of historical significance within this area. The allotments are of local significance for their ongoing use by local residents, as well as a long history of use stretching back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The layout of the picnic area appears to date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its current use is of significance to residents and visitors alike (though predominantly the latter). The hedgerows and trees bounding the area are of local significance for their ecological and landscape value.

The mismatched collection of benches within the recreation ground, in combination with the overly exposed nature of the playground and tennis courts, currently represent **detrimental** features within the landscape.

#### Character Area 5: Car Park & Woodland Path

Following resurfacing in December 2011, the car park in its current state is of **neutral** significance, although will need re-assessing and monitoring follow sustained use to ensure that previous issues have been fully resolved and do not reoccur (e.g. poor drainage, potholed surfacing, degraded grass parking strips, and mismatched furniture and signage).

The strip of woodland to the east, however, is at least of **local** significance and possibly of **national** significance as a designed feature relating to the Abbey and its garden which may have been planted by WHFT in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The northern end of this woodland affords striking views to the Abbey which appear clearly to relate to the designed intention but are currently not being exploited.

The woodland to the north of Hither Way is of **local** significance both for its ecological value and as a landscape feature dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Character Area 6: Northern Allotments

The allotment gardens are of **local** significance for their value to residents and for their contribution to the character of the village, although do not appear to have a long history of use (no evidence pre-1980). The trees and shrubs are also of local significance to wildlife.

The growth of scrub in the east allotment may become **detrimental** to the landscape if it is allowed to continue unchecked; this is of particular significance as it provides the backdrop to the Rockwork to the south (which is of national significance).

## Character Area 7: Northern Farmland

### 7a: Pasture north and east of Abbey

This area is of **local** overall significance in landscape terms as it forms the immediate setting to the grade II registered park and garden and forms an extension of its parkland character. The stretch of the River Avon that runs through the character area is at least of local (and possibly national) landscape significance in its own right, forming an essential element within the setting as well as representing a key historical link in Lacock's development; it is also fundamentally linked with Lacock Bridge (see below). The river is also of local significance for its ecological value, supporting invertebrate populations and water vole and bird species; it is also designated as a County Wildlife Site. Some of the older crack willow pollards are of local significance for the invertebrate communities that they support. Chapel Field is of local ecological significance, largely due to the presence of the river flood channel which has good habitat diversity (and is of local significance for its geomorphological interest), whilst it also has somewhat more diverse than within the other fields. The trees within and bordering the area and some of the more diverse stretches of hedgerow may also be considered to be of local significance for their value to wildlife.

The grassland outside of Chapel Field is of **neutral** ecological significance as it has been agriculturally improved and is not of botanical interest.

The weeds growing along the River Avon, notably Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed are **detrimental** to the ecology of the area. The TV mast in the north is a detrimental landscape feature within the area.

Lacock Bridge and causeway, in the south west corner of the character area, is of **national** significance as a grade II\* listed structure as well as a scheduled monument, forming a key feature within the estate.

### 7b: Pasture west of Mill Farm

This small area of pasture is of **local** significance for its contribution to the landscape setting of the village. The trees and stream bordering the character area are of local significance for the ecological value.

## Character Area 8: Southern Farmland

### 8a: Farmland south of Abbey

In landscape terms this area of flat, intensively-farmed arable land is of overall **neutral** significance, although it is of **local** historic significance as its pattern of large fields have changed little since at least the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of this farmland is also of little nature conservation interest and thus of neutral ecological significance, including the majority of the intensively-flailed, hawthorn-dominated hedgerows.

The River Avon and its margins in the east are of **local** ecological and landscape significance, being designated a County Wildlife Site and providing valuable wildlife habitat. Occasional stretches of diverse hedgerow (e.g. also Melksham Road) are also of local ecological significance, as is the stream to the south.

The sewage works in the centre of the area is a significant **detrimental** feature within the landscape, evident (although not dominant) in views from the registered park and the grade I listed Abbey. In landscape terms, the overall condition of the hedgerow network is also detrimental to the area, predominantly consisting of heavily-flailed hawthorn with a gappy character.

The pillbox in the north west of the area is of **national** significance as an extant WWII military structure that forms part of a group at Lacock (significance is predominantly for social and military history rather than archaeological or architectural interest).

#### 8b: Farmland north of Inwood

This small area of farmland is of **local** landscape significance in that it demarcates the boundary of Inwood (an 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier designed woodland) along its southern boundary. The majority of the area is of little nature conservation interest, although its hedgerow trees and thicker stretches of hedgerow field boundary are of local ecological significance for the wildlife that they support.

The stretches of denuded boundary edge along the roadside are, however, **detrimental** to landscape character.

#### 8c: Farmland south of Inwood

Similarly to 8b above, this field is of **local** landscape significance in that it demarcates the boundary of Inwood (an 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier designed woodland) along its northern boundary; its interest is enhanced in that it also marks the line of the Roman Road along its southern boundary. The trees bounding the field are of local ecological significance.

Stretches of denuded boundary edge along the roadside are, however, **detrimental** to landscape character.

### Character Area 9: Bewley Common

#### 9a: Bewley Green

Bewley Green is of **local** overall ecological significance, its grasslands providing a valuable invertebrate habitat. (Individually the Green's *Cynosurus cristatus*-*Centaurea nigra* grassland is now internationally scarce and could be considered to be of national importance). The area is also of local significance for its contribution to the attractive small-scale rural landscape character of the area.



9b: Bewley Common

Bewley Common is of **local** ecological significance for the locally distributed insects that the grasslands support. It is also of local significance for its contribution to the rural landscape character and its historical associations as an area of common land.

9c: Bowden Hill

Taken as a whole Bowden Hill is of at least **local** ecological significance, and possibly of national significance, for its grasslands and the rare invertebrates that they support; small marginal areas of scrubby semi-natural woodland and carr in the north-eastern corner provide useful shelter and additional habitat diversity, and are of local significance. In landscape terms the area is also of local significance in contributing to the un-intensively managed rural character of the wider area, as well as offering a significant platform for views west over the Avon Valley and the landscapes beyond.

## 12 Key Management Issues

- 12.1 Drawing on the preceding evaluation and analysis, this chapter summaries the issues, vulnerabilities and constraints that may affect the significance of the site as a whole, its component character areas and/or individual features.

A	Designations, Current Management & Community
A1	All of the buildings within the NT estate are listed, including the Grade I listed Abbey and 8 Grade II* listed buildings, whilst the Abbey grounds are registered Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England.
A2	The main part of the estate also falls within a Conservation Area, where Planning Policy HE1 states that <i>'proposals for development, advertisements and other works will only be permitted where the proposal will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area'</i> .
A3	National Trust tenants, both residential and commercial, comprise the heart of the village community, and their respective welfare and success are key issues.
A4	Cars parking for free within the village are causing congestion problems and difficulties for local residents particularly during the summer months.
A5	The double-yellow lines added within the village have gone some way to tackling the parking problems, but they also assert a modern influence on the medieval character of the village.
A6	Managing the car parking on the Commons is a key management issue, in order to maintain them as attractive open spaces.
A7	Key management objectives from the County and Local Landscape Character Assessments provide a steer for the wider landscape, including restoration of hedgerows, creation of public access along waterways, and key views over the River Avon.
A8	National Cycle Route 4 connects Lacock to Chippenham and Melksham, with part of it running along the old canal.
A9	The overriding problem cited by residents as being detrimental to Lacock is the volume and speed of traffic through the village.
A10	Potential impacts arising from the planned growth of Chippenham.

B	Landscape and Plant Collection
B1	Visitor circulation is hampered within the garden, as well as throughout the wider site, with many aspects of historic circulation impeded.
B2	Views both within and out of the garden have been lost due to vegetation growth, whilst views back to the Abbey and the church and to other features surrounding the site are often important within the wider landscape.
B3	The complexity of the Lacock landscape and extant features relating to key phases of development are not currently interpreted and are poorly presented.
B4	The extent and importance of WHFT's horticultural and botanical knowledge and exploits are not being interpreted, and links to the existing botanical garden and collection are not clear or being fully exploited.
B5	Cessation of historic management practices has resulted in a more enclosed character in the historically open parkland setting surrounding the Abbey, whilst a number of recent plantings threaten visible archaeology and composition of the park.
B6	Vegetation growth threatens the structural stability and presentation of the garden's limestone walls and other surviving historic features.
B7	Intensive agricultural use of the southern farmland and poor hedgerow management creates an unsympathetic setting for the Abbey and village.
B8	Discordant elements both within the garden and the wider landscape further detract from the setting of the Abbey and contribute to a cumulative negative impact.
B9	The recreation ground lacks a cohesive character.
B10	Condition of and pressure on Lacock Bridge.
B11	Importance of Inwood to the historic estate and potential for restoration.
B12	The history of the allotment garden on Hither Way as a much larger area of allotments and the existing community need for allotment space.
B13	There are some major gaps in the knowledge of key phases of the garden's development, notably during the medieval period as well as later phases, and that of the wider landscape.
B14	The plant lists that exist for the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries need to be further researched and interpreted to enhance clarity.
B15	There are potential threats posed to the area's veteran trees due to the effects of climate change and new pests and diseases.
B16	The visitor car park needs to be re-assessed and monitored follow a

period of sustained use to ensure that previous issues have been rectified and do not reoccur.

## C Buildings and Archaeology

- C1 No part of the Abbey or its gardens and parkland is Scheduled, a designation that would afford additional legal protection and help to protect the site as a whole.
- C2 It is vitally important that the excellent coverage of archaeological data sets continues, with all projects and finds fully notified to and logged on all relevant data sets as appropriate.
- C3 Whilst still a fully relevant document, the Extensive Urban Survey may be worth reviewing in a few years' time as more archaeological data becomes available.
- C4 The Lacock datasets can form the basis for an archaeological research agenda specific to the site as a whole and based within existing national/regional strategies.
- C5 There is strong potential for a village archaeology project, sponsored by the National Trust and perhaps with a university tie-up.
- C6 The National Trust needs to continue to take due responsibility for archaeology in planning and implementing its own projects at Lacock, whether within the Abbey, park or village.
- C7 The archaeology of the wider landscape is poorly understood, and thus the impacts of works in the area are not fully known.
- C8 The Trust's system of regular property maintenance and repair at the Abbey needs to be maintained carefully so that the pattern of survey is not broken.
- C9 The comprehensive vernacular surveys and rolling programme of structural surveys of village buildings need to continue to be maintained and updated to assist in their ongoing management.
- C10 Disaster planning should include regular liaison with the emergency (especially fire) services.
- C11 The records of the Abbey, farm and village buildings could afford to be more detailed as they are fundamental tools upon which sound management decisions are dependent.
- C12 The National Trust's Vernacular Building Record (VBR) provides excellent individual records of village buildings but a programme of digitisation is required to enable their inclusion into the Trust's Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record.
- C13 The impact of visitors in the monastic and furnished areas of the Abbey, as well as within the village, needs consideration in relation to potential damage to the historic fabric.

- C14 Irreversible alterations to historic buildings may have a significant impact upon their historic value.
- C15 There were some negative views from residents towards the commercialisation of the Abbey as they value its historic qualities.
- C16 Potential threats to archaeology e.g. from tree planting, tree roots etc

## D Ecology

- D1 Bowden Hill may have deteriorated since 1982 in terms of botanical interest, although it remains the highest quality part of the Common.
- D2 The ideal objective for wildlife enhancement of the commons would be to graze them with summer cattle and winter sheep, but grazing is complicated by the presence of the busy road and need for fencing.
- D3 The best option may be to manage the grassland on a traditional hay cutting regime. Any areas managed by mowing should preferably be subject to a variety of cutting regimes, with the majority left uncut during the main summer flowering period.
- D4 There remains a paucity of standing or fallen dead wood.
- D5 Natural damage and shedding of limbs can lead to highly specialised habitat niches for a range of organisms, although tree safety is also of concern and historically this has been managed through contractors.
- D6 The trees within the area are suffering from an age-class crisis, and lack of continuity planting in some areas of original parkland is an issue for many species of wildlife.
- D7 Sympathetic management of the park and Abbey (including a restriction on the use of harmful veterinary medicines) would benefit the overall quality of the habitat and enhance the value of the area as feeding habitat for bats.
- D8 Himalayan balsam has formed very dense and extensive stands along the banks of the River Avon, as has charlock (a form of oil seed rape).
- D9 Some of the largest pollard willows are beginning to split while other trees have collapsed into the river.
- D10 Horse grazing on the paddock adjacent to the garden is encouraging aggressive weeds to dominate.
- D11 There is horse damage to veteran and more recently planted trees due to bark stripping in Chapel Field which requires attention.
- D12 Hedges are few and of mostly limited value as wildlife habitat.

E	Collections
E1	Detailed expert assessments remain to be done for most areas of the Lacock collection.
E2	Losses of books, furniture and other contents during 20th century sales by Matilda Talbot and by removals in 2009 had a significant negative impact on the property as a whole.
E3	There is a need for more research into the collection's development and losses from it by the sale of individual items or groups.
E4	The National Trust has a draft Acquisition and Disposal Policy (2010) for Lacock Abbey which provides a clear and important statement of the logic behind any future purchases, though as a draft it does not have the same authority as a fully adopted policy document.
E5	Acquisitions outside the currently stated policy will be made only in exceptional circumstances and only with the appropriate level of authorisation.
E6	Disposal will only be considered if the provenance of the item(s) concerned is absolutely certain and it does not comply with any of the criteria and priorities for acquisition/ retention.
E7	The largest 'disposal' from Lacock was the transfer of the Fox Talbot collection to the British Library, which has nevertheless secured it permanently for the nation within Britain's greatest library.
E8	The entire collection needs to be reviewed regularly and cyclically for conservation management and maintenance purposes.
E9	Specialist conservation reports provide important guidance for the conservation of particular aspects of the collection (e.g. the Cliveden Conservation report has recommendations for conservation of the terracotta figures).
E10	The base-level inventory will require regular updating, and all artefacts should have a full tracking record.
E11	Access is a potentially difficult area for collection management and conservation, with a need to balance the presumption towards increasing access to collections with sympathetic management of them.
E12	The old shop contents in No 2 High Street are rarely open to the public but present opportunities for enhanced public access as well as some inevitable conservation liabilities.
E13	There are ongoing opportunities for educational initiatives and participation given the sheer size, range and relevance to the National Curriculum of the Lacock collection.
E14	The Trust's activeness in re-presenting and opening up new areas for visitors should continue to be balanced with conservation requirements.

E15 The Lacock Collection is a nationally important resource, with great potential for partnership and community involvement, and for continuing enhancement of public enjoyment of Lacock as a whole.



## 13 Property Management Vision, Policies & Actions

### The National Trust's Management Vision

The overall management vision is to conserve, enhance, present and celebrate the physical fabric and significance of Lacock and the contributions made to it by the many generations who have lived and worked here. This will be largely but not exclusively as they were left by the three generations of Talbot owners, William Henry Fox Talbot, Charles Henry Fox Talbot and Matilda Talbot who made the last significant alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries. Because of the enormous time depth that is central to Lacock's significance there is a presumption against seeking to 'restore' parts of it to specific points in history.

The distinctive character of the Abbey's interiors and collection – old and a little shabby, sound but worn – will be carefully conserved. Where more recent changes have obscured or diminished significance, management will seek to retrieve and enhance it. Proposals for change will be thoroughly informed by understanding of significance.

The sense of community that has developed over the years will continue to be respected and interpreted, whilst the facilities that serve the modern community will be fostered and enhanced. The pervading sense of harmony associated with the Abbey, village and river location will continue to portray the rich time depth which is central to Lacock's special character. We will continue to ensure that Lacock is a thriving community and an engaging visitor attraction retaining its unique qualities and rural character.

### MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS

- 13.1 Policies have been developed under the same five themed headings that appear in the previous chapter and actions are cross-referred back to specific numbered issues to ensure that they can be easily traced back to earlier analysis.
- 13.2 Management actions that relate to the landscape (Policy B and subsequent actions) have been set out in two management proposals drawings to provide a clearer understanding:
  - Figure 13.1: Abbey Gardens and Parkland
  - Figure 13.2: The Wider Landscape
- 13.3 Essential or 'non-negotiable' actions that must be implemented are identified with an asterisk (\*). Essential actions are those that relate to legal obligations, core National Trust objectives and those which conserve significant fabric or where non-intervention would lead to a decline in condition.

- 13.4 **CONSIDERING POTENTIAL IMPACTS:** *Before any of the following management actions are undertaken, full consideration should be given to potential landscape, visual, historic, archaeological and other impacts that may affect the setting, character, significance and/or physical fabric of historic structures, the Conservation Area and/or Lacock as a whole. Heritage Impact and/or Archaeological impact assessments and watching briefs may be required.*

A Designations, Current Management & Consultation		
<b>Approach:</b> <i>Manage Lacock to ensure that the community thrives whilst continuing to provide an engaging visitor destination and conserving the integrity of the historic fabric, complying with all relevant legislation.</i>		
Management Actions:		Relates to key issue:
(i)	Ensure all relevant stakeholders are involved in management decisions that affect nationally designated features.*	A1
(ii)	Involve Wiltshire Council in management decisions that affect the Conservation Area.*	A2
(iii)	Engage National Trust tenants in regular consultation to promote a flourishing village community.*	A3
(iv)	Manage the village car park as residents and patrons of the Red Lion only to help remove cars from the streets and ease congestion.	A4
(v)	Monitor and review the addition of double-yellow lines within the village. Alternative solutions should be considered in the future (see A viii below).	A5
(vi)	Monitor the eastern commons for cars parking illegally.	A6
(vii)	Maintain and enhance the rights of way network throughout the estate, seeking opportunities to re-open the canal path where practical.*	A8
(viii)	Explore options for traffic calming within the village to address problems of excessive traffic. <i>It is likely that planning permission will be required prior to the implementation of any traffic calming scheme.</i>	A9
(ix)	Consider the commission of a setting study to investigate the potential impacts of the planned growth of Chippenham.	A10
(x)	Conserve and enhance the tranquil, rural character of	A6/A9/A10

	Lacock as a key value to residents as well as for the contribution to the setting of the Abbey and village.*	
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## B Landscape and Plant Collection

**Approach:** Conserve and enhance the designed and farmed landscape that has evolved over almost 800 years, seeking to reveal, reinstate and interpret key historic design and management intentions. The rich botanical history associated with WHFT will be researched further and assessed to form an enhanced plant collection in the botanic garden and inform the development of interpretation. The garden will be managed according to the principles of sustainability and in accordance with the environmental standards scheme of the NT.

The wider landscape will be managed to reflect the layout shown on the 1764 plan so that field boundaries are conserved, enhanced or restored to reflect the historic pattern which defines its character and provides the setting to the Abbey and the village, park and garden.

The management of the garden and park will be guided by a series of historic maps rather than adherence to one particular phase to ensure that the key significances of the evolved designed landscape are presented. The 1764 map (Figure 7.2) will be used to understand views, circulation and how visible archaeological remains relate to the Switzer design; the 1827 map (Figure 7.3) will be used to understand later design interventions including the establishment of the woodland garden and how visible archaeological remains relate to the Brown and Emes designs; and the First Edition Ordnance Survey map dated 1886 (Appendix I) will be used as a record of the maturing landscape that accurately plots significant trees (including those planted by WHFT) and later development of circulation.

### Management Actions:

Relates to key issue:

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| (i) | <p>Create a circular route based on historic precedent within the Abbey garden by extending circulation around the site of the 18<sup>th</sup> century formal water garden, as well as by potentially taking visitors through the allotment gardens, a key feature in its own right.</p> <p><b>Considering potential impacts:</b> The proposed route would follow historic circulation patterns and should therefore have minimal impact upon historic fabric, however an archaeological impact assessment may be required to inform the design and precise route around the water gardens. If construction of surfaced paths is proposed then an archaeological watching brief and detailed design development would be required. Additional permissions (e.g. Listed Building Consent/Planning Permission) may be required as the paths would be in the</p> |
|-----|---|

B1

	<p><i>curtilage of the Grade I Listed Abbey.</i></p> <p><i>It is unlikely that any tree removal would be required, however any works to trees should be subject to seasonal constraints to minimise disturbance of protected species (e.g. bats and birds). Further survey to establish the presence of protected species may be required.</i></p> <p><i>It will be necessary to serve a notice of intention prior to cutting down, topping or lopping trees.</i></p>	
(ii)	Explore the potential to restore the footbridge over the Avon at its historic location to the east of the Abbey, using documentary and physical evidence to explore style and user implications. Consider the desirability of this proposal against practical issues of management.	B1
(iii)	<p>Reinstate key views through selective vegetation management. Of particular importance are views to the Church along the east-west vista created as part of the formal water gardens and the view to the Monument.</p> <p><b>Considering potential impacts:</b> <i>It is likely that some tree removal would be required to open up key views and further survey to establish the presence of protected species may be required. The focus would be on the removal of self-sown trees rather than established mature trees or specimens of historical importance.</i></p> <p><i>Any works to trees should be subject to seasonal constraints to minimise disturbance of protected species (e.g. bats and birds).</i></p> <p><i>Conservation Area Consent will be required prior to cutting down, topping or lopping trees.</i></p>	B2
(iv)	<p>Conserve, enhance and restore key features that relate to the evolved character of the garden and park to enhance presentation, interpretation and visitor enjoyment. Specific actions will include:</p> <p>a) Replanting of the orchard to emphasise the vista to the Church suggested on the 1764 estate plan, whilst creating a more cohesive character to the area</p> <p>b) Explore options to re-align the rose garden onto the key axis between the alcove and monument and the vista from the Church<sup>32</sup>,</p>	B3

<sup>32</sup> Given that the rose garden is a re-interpretation by The National Trust (1992) of an earlier feature that was removed in the 1960s, further investigation into the footprint and alignment of the ironwork

	<p>and improve the planting of the garden, conserving and enhancing the physical interpretation of this 19<sup>th</sup> century Fox Talbot-era feature whilst enhancing interpretation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Switzer design</p> <p>c) Restoration of key vistas from the monument that further interpret the Switzer design</p> <p>d) New summer house in the location of an historic building to the north of the pond as indicated on the 1886 OS map that provides a focal point to the reinstated eastern footpath</p> <p>e) Conservation works to the Rockwork and re-instatement of the cascade as historically intended, enhancing the character and 'drama' of this important feature of the garden</p> <p>f) Further interpretation of the 18th century water gardens through view creation, tree planting, and appropriate methods of interpretation to be explored further.</p> <p>g) Interpretation of other phases of the garden's development, including the medieval, Sharrington and Victorian eras</p> <p>h) Consider the relocation of sundial back to central position on the terrace as indicated on the 1886 OS map, enhancing symmetry of the terrace whilst re-establishing a link to the Fox Talbot era.</p> <p>i) Conserve and manage the trees that date to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as key structural elements of the landscape of the park and garden. * (see Appendix I)</p> <p>A detailed design and/or management plan will be required to take this forward and to consider how and where new features may be accommodated.</p> <p><b>Considering potential impacts:</b> <i>These proposals should be considered in tandem with B (i) and B (iii) above. A comprehensive tree survey which considers the full range of values including current condition, wildlife values (e.g. deadwood/bat habitat etc.), current landscape value, compatibility with historic planting, compatibility of current</i></p>
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may reveal that the vista was originally taken into consideration. Given the significance of the vista it is important that options to make both elements work together are fully explored.

	<p><i>restoration and management objectives etc. should be prepared. Given the complexity of the area, the survey should be prepared at a 1:200 scale.</i></p> <p><i>It is likely that some tree removal would be required to open up key views and further survey to establish the presence of protected species may be required. The focus would be on the removal of self-sown trees rather than established mature trees or specimens of historical importance.</i></p> <p><i>Any works to trees should be subject to seasonal constraints to minimise disturbance of protected species (e.g. bats and birds).</i></p> <p><i>Conservation Area Consent will be required prior to cutting down, topping or lopping trees.</i></p> <p><i>Potential impact on archaeology associated with new tree planting should be assessed and archaeological watching briefs may be required.</i></p> <p><i>Conservation of the rockworks would require detailed design development and input from an archaeologist, conservation architect and potentially a structural/hydrological engineer. Its re-use as a cascade may require consent from the Environment Agency.</i></p>	
(v)	<p>Complete further research and investigation into the WHFT plant collection and botanical interests to inform future management of the plant collection including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>j) A full assessment of De Monfort on line archive of WHFT correspondence, and catalogue plant and garden data arising.</li> <li>k) Visit and assess British Library Collection of WHFT photographs.</li> <li>l) Visit and review archives at Kew.</li> <li>m) Review the importance of National Media Museum collections who are currently preparing details of their WHFT collections.</li> <li>n) Search images at Science Museum if these were not transferred to the National Media Museum at Bradford.</li> <li>o) Transfer Lewis &amp; Fretwell's plant list into a more useable format and check/add to the botanical info. Incorporate further botanical</li> </ul>	B4

	listings from correspondence into the Fretwell & Lewis to create a Lacock Historic Plant Record.	
	p) Cross relate Lacock Historic Plant Record with present/recent plant catalogues for the garden. (Current catalogue/plant survey will need to be botanically competent and deal with synonyms & common names past and present).	
	q) Compile list of phytogeographic areas that interested WHFT/mentioned in correspondence.	
	r) Assess horticultural potential of Lacock Historic Plant Record that could be reassembled at Lacock.	
	s) Evaluate possibility of restoring structures and ornaments identified in historic images of Lacock. This will involve synthesis with archaeology of and cartographic information	
	t) Find out what happened to WHFT's herbarium	
(vi)	Develop programme of interpretation of WHFT to convey his national and international standing in terms of botany and horticulture. Further academic work including items listed above should be encouraged.	B4
(vii)	Carry out tree planting and removal to conserve and restore the historic parkland, garden and wider estate character. Historic trees in the garden (e.g. those planted by WH Fox Talbot) should be retained and managed to ensure their longevity. The 1 <sup>st</sup> edition OS map will be used to inform further tree planting within the park, as indicated on the accompanying plan (figure 13.1).	B5
(viii)	Establish an ongoing programme of repair and vegetation clearance for the garden walls.*	B6
(ix)	Encourage less intensive agricultural use of the farmed arable landscape, exploring potential for entry of all farmed areas of the estate into agri-environment schemes (or renewal/upgrading of existing schemes).	B7
(x)	Restore and enhance hedgerows throughout the site, specifically through gapping up, increasing species diversity and less intensive management, particularly in the south (CA8). Hedgerows established and	B7



	managed where appropriate.	
(xi)	Redesign furniture and fencing to reduce their visual impact, both within the gardens and throughout the wider landscape.	B8
(xii)	Develop a programme of pollarding and vegetation management along the Avon (critical view band only), creating new pollards from younger trees to retain continuity.  <b>Considering potential impacts:</b> Any works to trees should be subject to seasonal constraints to minimise disturbance of protected species (e.g. bats and birds).	B2
(xiii)	Enhance access within the wider landscape through improved signage, maintenance of existing access, and creation of new access to provide circular routes that link to long distance trails and cycleways. Lost historic access (former footpaths and bridges) should be explored e.g. the link from the Avon footpath to the common and the bridge over the Avon. Options to provide a safer crossing over the A350 should be explored with Highways.	B1
(xiv)	Carry out further judicious planting and management to help screen the sewage works without attracting attention to it.	B8
(xv)	Explore the opportunity to make use of the historic woodland avenue adjacent to the car park as an entry route for pedestrians as outlined in the Wider Landscape Management Proposals plan.	B1
(xvi)	Conserve and enhance key views to localised landmarks within the wider landscape.	B2
(xvii)	Monitor planning applications carefully to ensure the wider landscape as the setting to Lacock is protected.*	B8
(xviii)	Enhance the character of the recreation ground and picnic area through rationalisation of furniture; better integration of recreational facilities through further hedge/tree planting; and establishment of differential mowing regimes to divide space and enhance presentation.	B9
(xix)	Ongoing conservation and management of Lacock Bridge.*	B10
(xx)	Explore the potential for the re-creation of native	B11

	woodland at Inwood with the current landowner, following the historic design, and target this land as a high priority for acquisition should it ever come up for sale.	
(xxi)	Restore the allotment garden on Hither Way back to or near to its original footprint at indicated on the 1960 OS map to help meet community demand whilst enhancing the landscape character of this area.	B12
(xxii)	Explore the opportunity to create new picnic areas in CA 6 and 8a.	
(xxiii)	Undertake further investigative research into the development of the Abbey gardens, including through archaeological survey, arboricultural survey and archival research, to help shed light upon the medieval and Sharrington periods in particular, but also to better catalogue and understand later periods, including the 20 <sup>th</sup> century and when within NT care.	B13
(xxiv)	<p>Further research the development of the wider landscape to fill in gaps surrounding its development, including archaeological and archival research to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) When the woodland strip adjacent to the car park dates to</li> <li>b) Whether there is any evidence that the woodland avenue indicated on the 1764 estate plan running south to the Avon was ever implemented</li> <li>c) The earliest date for the creation of Inwood</li> <li>d) When the farmland was enclosed</li> </ul>	B13
(xxv)	Undertake further research and interpretation of the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> century plant lists derived from the diaries and letters of the time to improve their usefulness in providing an accurate picture of historic plantings at Lacock.	B14
(xxvi)	Consider the potential impacts of climate change and new pests and diseases when planning tree planting.	B15
(xxvii)	Re-assess and monitor the car park annually to ensure that previous issues are rectified and do not reoccur.	B16

## C Buildings and Archaeology

**Approach:** Conserve, enhance, present and celebrate the physical fabric and significance of Lacock and the contributions made to it by the many generations who have lived and worked here. This will be largely but not exclusively as they were left by the three generations of Talbot owners, William Henry Fox Talbot, Charles Henry Fox Talbot and Matilda Talbot who made the last significant alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries. Because of the enormous time depth that is central to Lacock's significance there is a presumption against seeking to 'restore' parts of it to specific points in history.

The sense of community that has developed over the years will continue to be respected and interpreted, whilst the facilities that serve the modern community will be fostered and enhanced. Every effort will be made to ensure that Lacock remains a living village.

### Management Actions:

Relates to key issue:

- (i) Any proposed interventions which would permanently affect significance should go through a rigorous Impact Assessment procedure to ensure potential impacts are identified at an early stage and mitigation measures put in place if appropriate.\*

**Considering potential impacts:** any works that will affect archaeological features or buildings, whether above or below ground level, should be subject to discussion with the NT Regional archaeologist and/or curator as appropriate prior to detailed design or implementation. 'Works' may be defined as including:

- any works resulting in the demolition or destruction of or any damage to an archaeological feature or building or any element(s) of them;
- any works for the purpose of removing or repairing an archaeological feature or building or any part of it or of making any alterations or additions; and
- any flooding or tipping operations on land in, on or under which there is an archaeological feature or building.

Statutory consents (e.g. Listed Building Consent/Planning Permission/ Scheduled Monument Consent may be required for any of these works, depending on the site or building affected.

C1

- (ii) Maintain the comprehensive coverage of the three key

C2/C4/C7

	archaeological data sets, and commission an extensive Historic Landscape and Archaeological Survey for the whole estate.	
(iii)	Consider a review of the Extensive Urban Survey in 2013.	C3
(iv)	Consider promoting and sponsoring a village archaeology project.	C5
(v)	Continue to take due responsibility for archaeology in planning and implementing projects at Lacock.*	C6
(vi)	Maintain the existing system of regular property maintenance and repair in the Abbey and village.*	C8/C9
(vii)	Ensure that disaster planning includes regular liaison with the emergency (especially fire) services.*	C10
(viii)	Maintain comprehensive and up-to-date records of the Abbey, farm and village buildings to form the basis of sound management decisions.*	C11
(vix)	Undertake a programme of digitisation of the National Trust's Vernacular Building Record (VBR) to enable their inclusion into the Trust's Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record.	C12
(vx)	Monitor visitor pressures and conflicts within the Abbey and village, and investigate opportunities to ameliorate pressures where they arise.*	C13
(vxi)	Ensure development and change to historic buildings within the Trust's care is sensitive to the historic fabric, resisting irreversible alterations unless there are overwhelming needs for the change.*	C14

D Ecology		
<b>Approach:</b> Conserve and enhance the ecological resource found within the Lacock estate, seeking the enhanced condition of key wildlife assets focussed predominantly around the Abbey parkland and the eastern commons, whilst further significantly enhancing the ecological network throughout the wider landscape.		
Management Actions:		Relates to key issue:
(i)	Manage the commons on a traditional hay cutting regime, subject to a variety of cutting regimes and with	D1,

	the majority left uncut during the main summer flowering period.*	D3
(ii)	Explore the possibility of grazing some parts of the commons where practical in tandem with the above regimes.	D1, D2
(iii)	Leave dead wood in situ where appropriate or practical for the benefit of biodiversity.	D4
(iv)	Ongoing tree safety management through regular survey, favouring non-intervention for the benefit of wildlife.*	D5
(v)	Enhancement of tree longevity by improving the structural and physiological condition (see 9.38 for further detail).*	D6
(vi)	Carry out planting of predominantly native tree species (including hawthorn) to replace older species and maintain a diversity of ages throughout the site.	D6
(vii)	Seek the renewal of Lacock Parkland as a Higher Level Stewardship scheme following the expiry of the existing Countryside Stewardship Scheme in 2013, with a focus on low-input grassland options to benefit biodiversity.	D7
(viii)	Consider conversion of WWII pillboxes into bat roosts, though implications upon their value as listed structures must be considered.	D7
(ix)	Monitor the use of the Abbey roof and drains by bats (consider involving the Wiltshire Bat Group), taking particular care when 'fogging' to control pests.*	D7
(x)	Continue the restriction of Avermectin and other veterinary medicines that may be harmful to bats and other wildlife within tenancy agreements.*	D7
(xi)	Management of Himalayan balsam and charlock along the River Avon by hand-pulling and composting in June on an annual basis until at least 2016.*	D8
(xii)	Consider re-pollarding of ancient willows along the Avon to prevent them collapsing, in tandem with management action B(xii)above.  <b>Considering potential impacts:</b> Any works to trees should be subject to seasonal constraints to minimise disturbance of protected species (e.g. bats and birds).	D9

(xiii)	Improved management of the paddock adjacent to the garden, ideally through sheep or cattle grazing.	D10
(xiv)	Respond to horse damage of trees in Chapel Field, investigating options for prevention and treatment.*	D11
(xv)	Restoration of hedgerows throughout the site through less intensive management, enhancing species diversity and planting of native hedgerow trees.	D12
(xvi)	Enhance pond in CA 8a through selective re-grading to create shelves, establishment of marginal planting and buffering to perimeter.	
(xvii)	Carry out vegetation management to stream in CA 8a to enhance biodiversity and landscape value.	

E Collections		
<b>Approach:</b> Conserve, promote and interpret the significance of the Lacock collections. Comprehensive surveys and cataloguing should be undertaken and will involve multiple organisations as required.		
Management Actions:		Relates to key issue:
(i)	Undertake comprehensive expert assessments of all areas of the Lacock collection using the Trust's own specialist curators.	E1
(ii)	Consider the re-acquisition of items lost during 20 <sup>th</sup> century if opportunities arise and if appropriate.	E2
(iii)	Undertake further detailed research into the collection's development, including losses, in the long term.	E3
(iv)	In the immediate term complete and adopt the Lacock Abbey Acquisition and Disposal Policy as a matter of urgency, in tandem with the longer term aspirations of action E(iii). *	E4
(v)	Only make acquisitions outside the currently stated policy in exceptional circumstances and only after authorisation by the Properties and Acquisitions Group.	E5
(vi)	Where the provenance of an item is uncertain the presumption is against disposal until the provenance is confirmed.	E6

(vii)	Maintain links with the British Library's Fox Talbot collection, either through reference or investigating the loan of items to display in the Abbey.	E7
(viii)	Regular monitoring and ongoing conservation management of the entire Lacock collection whether in situ in display rooms or in the stores.*	E8
(ix)	Act in a timely fashion upon the recommendations of specialist conservation reports (e.g. restoration and upkeep of the terracotta figures in the Hall as recommended by the Cliveden Conservation report).*	E9
(x)	Continue ongoing updating of the base-level inventory, ensuring all artefacts have a full tracking record registering location and movement, whilst enhancing individual artefact records where possible.	E10
(xi)	Monitor conflicts between access and conservation and seek resolutions where these arise (e.g. virtual access by means of webcam, web sites etc).*	E11
(xii)	Actively explore opportunities to provide greater public access to the old shop contents in No 2 High Street.	E12
(xiii)	Continue to develop new initiatives that foster community participation with the Lacock collection, either on its own or in partnership with others.	E13 / E15
(xiv)	Continue the Trust's activeness in displaying and providing access to the collection, but if there is a potential conflict between access to a piece and its conservation, it should be withheld until those concerns are met.	E14
(xv)	Continue to invest time and resources in the provision of access to Lacock and its collection, whilst also ensuring their long-term preservation.	E15



Figure 13.1 Management Proposals - Lacock Abbey Gardens & Parkland

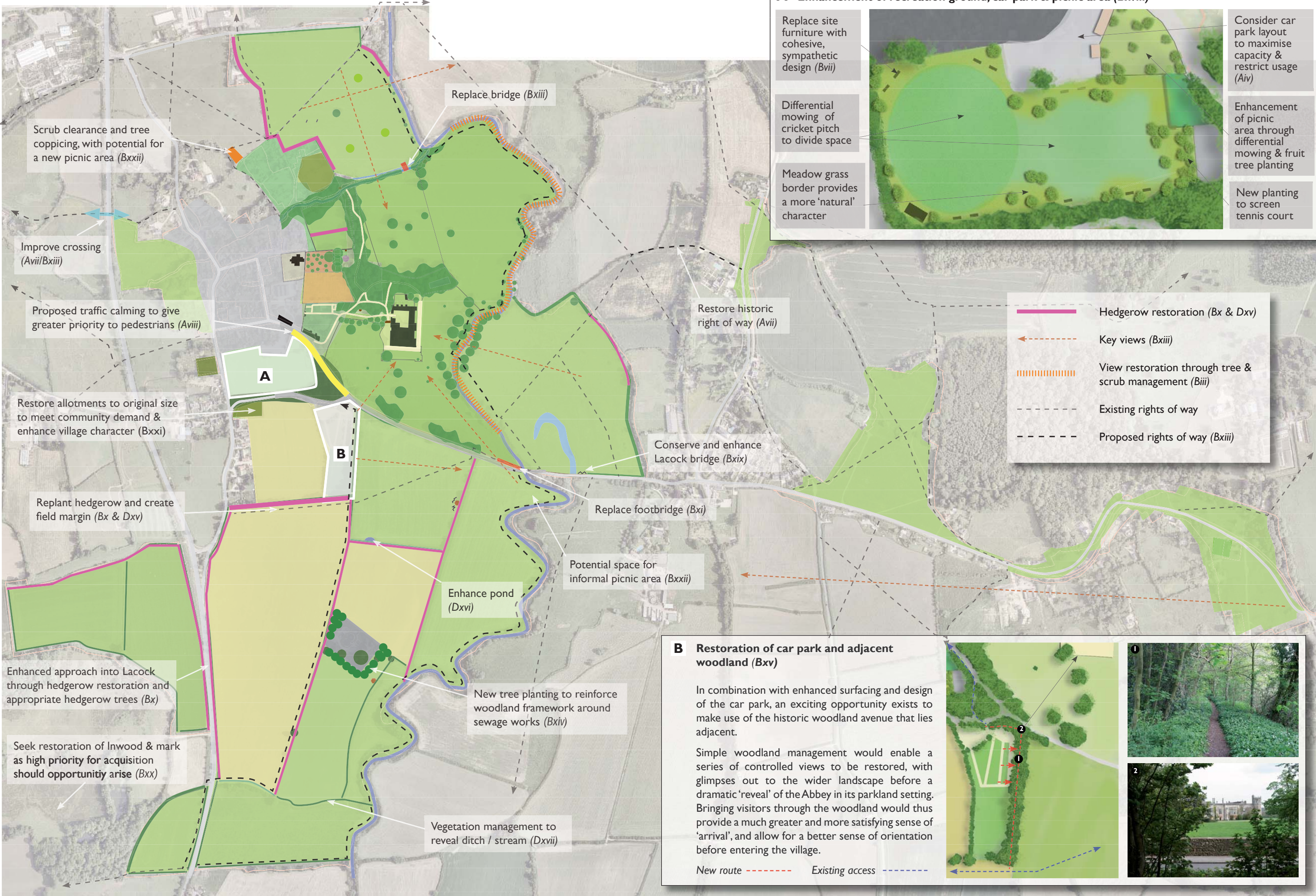








Figure 13.2: Management Proposals - Wider Landscape







## **14 Monitoring and Review**

### **IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**

#### **The management planning cycle**

I4.2 The Conservation Management Plan will be continually reviewed, revised and re-written. The cycle for the Plan is to:

- Write and adopt the plan.
- Operate according to the strategy and policies held within the plan.
- Monitor the operation of the plan.
- Review the working of the plan.
- Revise and improve the plan where necessary to reflect on-going developments such as changes to visitor access or revised financial projections.

#### **Planning and implementing capital projects**

I4.3 This plan does not in itself secure financial resources, but will be used to assist in identifying priorities in forward planning, budgeting and expenditure. In many cases the management actions have the potential to attract funding. For example many of the landscape and ecological management actions could be funded through an HLS application once the existing CSS agreement ends in 2013 and some elements of collections and archaeological research projects may attract HLF grants.

I4.4 Chapter 13 identifies a number of management actions and from this a project register may be developed by the Property Manager and management team. The project register will develop the implementation of this plan as a rolling programme of projects - both capital and maintenance - drawing on the issues, recommendations and guidance.

I4.5 Some of the projects will require further planning and design development and may require the input of specialist professionals experienced in the conservation, restoration and management of historic buildings, collections and landscapes.

I4.6 Any management actions that may have a negative impact upon the significance of the property (e.g. archaeological remains and ecological values such as the presence of legally protected species such as birds and bats) will be fully considered prior to implementation. Impact assessments may be required as part of the development of design and management proposals to ensure potential impacts are identified at an early stage and therefore subject to appropriate mitigation measures.

## **Permissions and Agreements**

- 14.7 Some projects may require consent (e.g. tree removals or construction work). It is recommended that the views of Wiltshire Council's Conservation Officer and English Heritage be sought at an early stage and that liaison should continue during design development of such projects. The range of consents required might include Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent, Planning Permission, Protected Species Licences, and Scheduled Monument Consent (refer to Chapter 3 for details of relevant designations).

## **Circulation**

- 14.8 The Conservation Management Plan will be circulated to interested parties within the National Trust, Fox Talbot Museum and other partners.

## **Monitoring and review**

- 14.9 The key areas for monitoring at Lacock are:
- Management of the Abbey, village, estate and its component features according to the vision, policies and actions outlined in this plan.
  - Standards of maintenance, management and safety.
  - Condition/ health of the living structure of the garden, park and wider landscape.
  - Condition of built elements within National Trust ownership.
  - Standards of design quality where applicable.
  - Ecological monitoring including range of habitats and component species.
- 14.10 The steering group should meet every 6 months to discuss the on-going conservation of Lacock and to agree upon and implement the management actions recommended in the Plan.
- 14.11 This Conservation Management Plan has a minimum life span of 10 years, with a five year review, although it is currently envisaged that most of the policies will continue to guide the conservation and evolution of the wider estate through the longer term for future generations.
- 14.12 A copy of this plan will be held with the area officer, and an electronic copy will be uploaded to the National Trust shared drive.

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## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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