

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0003182 • MANOR
ABBOTSBURY MANOR

Evidence status: Unverified
Generated: 15 October 2026 19:17 UTC

Location: Barley, Hertfordshire
Associated places: Barley, Hertfordshire

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

ABOUT THE MANOR

Abbotsbury Manor was one of several medieval and early-modern manors in the parish of Barley, Hertfordshire. It was a manorial estate distinct from the Dorset manor of the same name. The manor is also associated with the historical form Rowlettsbury in the imported record. In medieval Barley, Abbotsbury was held by the Abbey of St John at Colchester. The manor court is recorded in 1508, when Thomas Mede was sworn as a capital pledge with homage. A late sixteenth-century survey referred to the demesne closes of Abbotsbury Manor, including three contiguous Broad Fields extending over approximately 40 acres. The 1603 survey by John Norden was made for Sir John Spencer as lord of the manors of Mincingbury, Abbotsbury and Hoares. By the late nineteenth century, Viscount Hampden was recorded as lord of the manors of Hoares, Abbotsbury and Mincingbury. The available public sources do not establish a complete documentary descent between the medieval Colchester abbey holding, the Bacon family holding, John Spencer's acquisition in 1593, and the later Hampden ownership.

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

The earliest securely identified institutional holder is the Abbey of St John at Colchester, which held Abbotsbury Manor in the medieval period and is specifically associated with the manor court in 1508. The date at which the abbey acquired the manor is not established in the sources reviewed. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the manor later appears in the hands of Sir Nicholas Bacon, who died in 1579. His son Anthony Bacon inherited the three Hertfordshire manors of Minchenbury, Abbotsbury and Hores in Barley. An indenture dated 4 September 1593 records the

sale of the Barley estate to Alderman John Spencer; the sale appears to have included Abbotsbury Manor, although the source notes that the consent of Anthony's half-brother Nicholas Bacon, who held a remainder interest under the entail, was still uncertain. A 1603 survey confirms John Spencer as lord of the three manors. The next securely located historical holder in the sources reviewed is Viscount Hampden, recorded in Kelly's Directory of Hertfordshire in 1899 as lord of the manors of Hoares, Abbotsbury and Mincingbury. The intervening transfers and the precise date by which the manor passed from the Spencer family or estate to the Hampden family remain undocumented in the sources consulted.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- Medieval period; by 1508 - 1539 or before | Abbey of St John at Colchester | Earlier acquisition not established; the manor was held by the Abbey of St John at Colchester before the Dissolution. The post-Dissolution transfer is not securely documented in the sources reviewed. | | Mead Family History, 'Barley', section on the medieval manors and the 1508 Abbotsbury manor court; corroborated by United Benefice of Barkway, Barley, Reed and Buckland, 'St Margaret of Antioch, Barley'.
- Date unknown; before 1579 - 1579 | Sir Nicholas Bacon | Inherited or otherwise acquired before 1579; the precise conveyance into his hands is not established. His son Anthony Bacon subsequently inherited the Barley manors. | | Susan Doran and others, introduction to The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon, Royal Historical Society Camden Fifth Series, volume 44, Cambridge University Press, discussion of Anthony Bacon's inheritance of the Barley estate.
- By inheritance; before 1592 - 4 September 1593 or shortly thereafter | Anthony Bacon | Inherited the three Hertfordshire manors of Minchenbury, Abbotsbury and Hores from his father, Sir Nicholas Bacon. An indenture dated 4 September 1593 records the sale of the Barley estate to Alderman John Spencer, although the consent of Anthony's half-brother Nicholas Bacon, who had a remainder interest under the entail, was reportedly uncertain. | | Susan Doran and others, introduction to The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon, Royal Historical Society Camden Fifth Series, volume 44, Cambridge University Press, discussion of the Barley estate and the 4 September 1593 indenture.
- 4 September 1593 - After 1603; exact end date unknown | John Spencer, Alderman of London | Purchased the Barley estate from Anthony Bacon under an indenture dated 4 September 1593. The source notes uncertainty over whether the required consent of Nicholas Bacon II had been obtained. A 1603 survey was made for Sir John Spencer as lord of the manors of Mincingbury, Abbotsbury and Hoares, confirming his connection with Abbotsbury Manor. | | Susan Doran and others, introduction to The Letters of Lady Anne Bacon, Royal Historical Society Camden Fifth Series, volume 44; and John Norden, Surveys and Perambulation, with Plans, of the Manors of Mincingbury, Abbotsbury and Hoares in Barley, 1603.
- By 1899 - Date unknown; later nineteenth or early twentieth century record | Viscount Hampden | The route by which the manor passed from the Spencer estate to Viscount Hampden is not established in the sources reviewed. Kelly's Directory of Hertfordshire for 1899 records

Viscount Hampden as lord of the manors of Hoares, Abbotsbury and Mincingbury. | | Kelly's Directory of Hertfordshire, 1899, entry for Barley.

RECORDED RIGHTS

- Manor court recorded at Abbotsbury in 1508.: The 1508 record identifies a manor court at Abbotsbury and records Thomas Mede as sworn as a capital pledge with homage. It does not establish the full extent of the court's jurisdiction.

DISCLAIMER

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