

## Dorset Councils Partnership



# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

2018

## Distribution List

Together with public consultation in \_\_\_\_\_, the appraisal was distributed as follows:

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## I Introduction

Blandford Forum is best known as one of the finest examples of a Georgian Town in Britain. This is a result of the wholesale reconstruction of the town between 1731 and 1760 following its almost complete destruction by fire. Blandford Forum as an historic town with its Georgian town centre has long been recognised as being one of the finest in England. Newman and Pevsner say that the centre of the town 'forms one of the most satisfying Georgian ensembles anywhere in England'.

A Conservation Area was designated in 1972 to preserve and enhance Blandford's historic character with subsequent expansion of the area in 1990. Within the larger area, nine sub-areas or character areas within the boundary were identified. These character areas define specific parts of the conservation area which contain and illustrate a coherent pattern such as the later (post railway) Victorian and Edwardian suburbs and the more spacious tree-lined suburban area of Milldown Road and its surroundings.

This appraisal examines at this stage the historic town centre including the area to the south of the town bridge within Blandford St. Mary together with the 19<sup>th</sup> century suburbs to the north all of which formed the original conservation area (see Fig 1.). Examination of the remainder of the conservation area will be subject of further study.

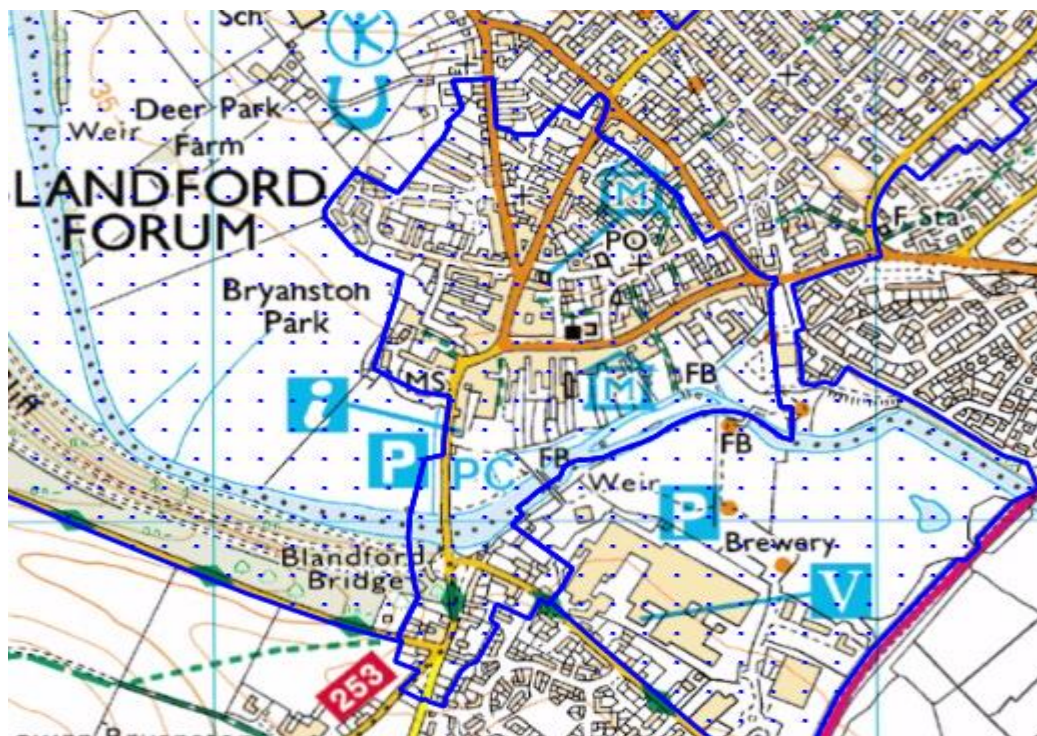


Fig. 1. A map of the appraisal area and conservation area boundary.

The Blandford Forum Conservation Area was designated because of its special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Government policy requires that local planning authorities must review their conservation areas from time to time as defined by section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Undertaking a conservation area appraisal can be used to help local planning authorities develop a management plan and appropriate policies to support policies contained within the authority's Local Plan. A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.

As the Blandford Forum Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset, Government policy requires that planning decisions must have regard to the special architectural or historic interest of the area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Any planning decisions must be based upon a thorough understanding of the numerous aspects of the conservation area's special interest in order to effectively conserve the area. Conservation area appraisals are therefore essential tools for the planning process and are also of prime importance for informing any enhancement works and may provide a longer-term basis for effective management.

This appraisal document has been prepared following current advice from Historic England. Included are summaries of the planning policy context, landscape setting, historic development and archaeology. There is also a more detailed description of the character of Blandford Forum's buildings, areas, building materials and architectural details, green elements and detrimental features. All of these are brought together into a definition of the special interest.

In order to enable greater understanding, the appraisal area has been divided into two principle character areas. The historic core and the area immediately to the north. In addition, the entrance into the town within Blandford St. Mary has also been included given the importance of its relationship with the town centre.

The boundary of the conservation area has been reviewed at its eastern end with the subsequent recommendation to extend the area to include the existing railway arch adjacent to the River Stour.

The appraisal was subject to public consultation xxxxxxxxxx, during which an information event, manned by district council officers and representatives of xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx was held within the town. Following formal consultation and subsequent amendments the Blandford Forum Conservation Area and Management Policies (Part 1) was formally adopted by the District Council in xxxx.



## II Executive Summary

Blandford Forum has a strong historic and architectural character, resulting from a combination of the significant historical background and time depth, the positive contribution made by a very high number of historic buildings, the intact medieval town plan and its topographic location within a bend in the River Stour which enables a resultant visual connectivity with the surrounding landscape. Around three quarters of the buildings within the town centre date from the 18th century or earlier representing one of the highest concentrations of historic buildings in any of the Dorset towns. Perhaps more important however is the entire ensemble of Georgian brick architecture with a significant cohesive strength of character almost greater than its component parts and recognised nationally as an extremely important example of a Georgian country town.

Immediately adjacent to the historic core of the town centre, approximately 78% of the buildings within the remaining part of the appraisal area date from the late 19th century or earlier. This represents one of the highest concentrations of historic buildings outside of the medieval town centre for any of the Dorset towns. In general, evidence of more recent development is set behind the more historic street frontages or located away from significant vantage points within the public realm.

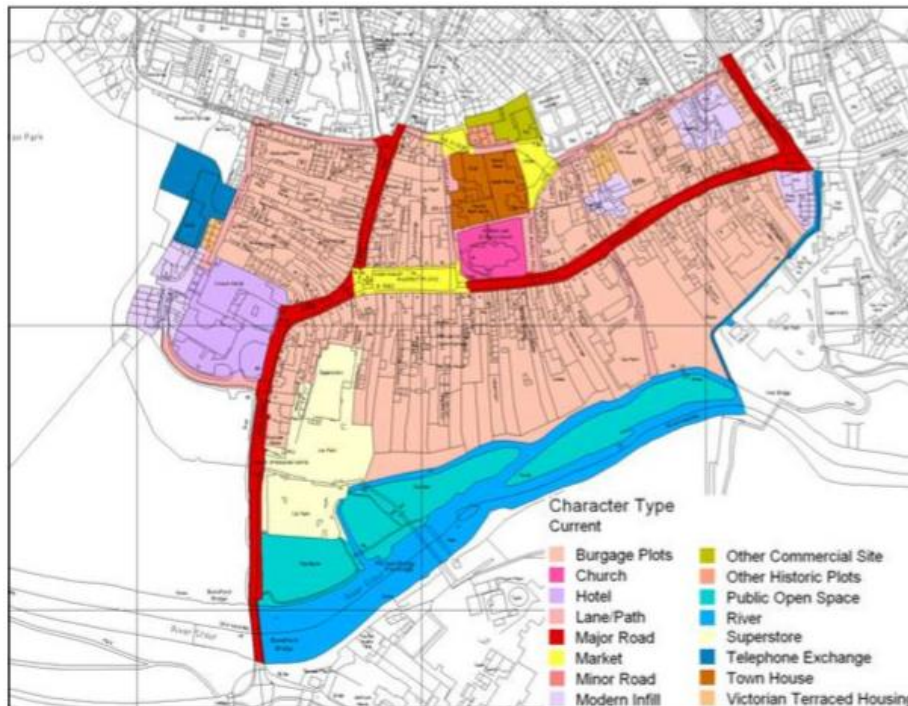


Fig. 2. The historic core.

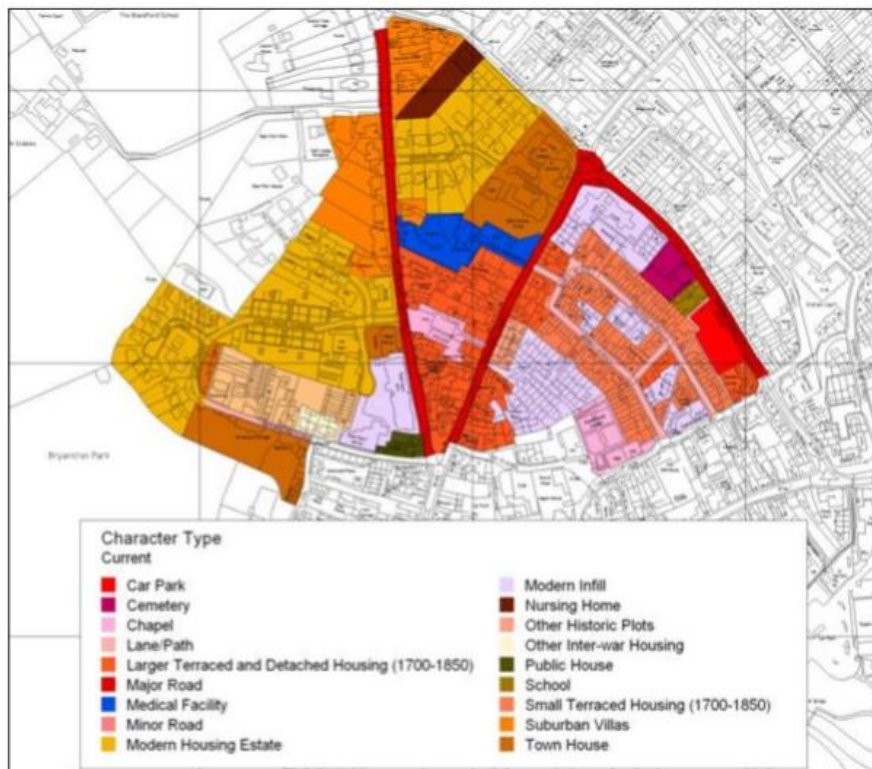


Fig. 3. The Victorian suburbs.

Given the cohesive 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century character of the appraisal area the area is sensitive to change on all levels. The medieval town layout and burgage plots provide a worthy backdrop upon which the Georgian town sits adjacent to the river. The layout essentially dates from the original foundation of the town during the early 12<sup>th</sup> century and as such is a rare example of an intact planned medieval market town. The burgage plots are extremely vulnerable to large scale development and several have been lost to development and modern housing which has eroded the special interest of the town centre.

Large scale development has the potential to disrupt and overshadow this definitive element of the town's historic character. Large scale modern development also has the potential to disrupt the harmonious Georgian facades and roof lines and intervisibility which extend beyond the confines of the medieval town. Smaller scale development including those forms of development permitted under existing planning legislation have the potential to erode both the character and appearance of the conservation area through loss of historic features and important spaces. Unauthorised development particularly within the town centre also has the potential to undermine the value, quality and significance of the retail centre.

The key characteristics of the area are:

- Remaining evidence of a planned medieval market town

- Its strong landscaped setting
- A significant proportion of nationally listed buildings
- Intact medieval burgage plots
- Its national importance as an important Georgian country town
- A very high density of historic buildings
- Evidence of its post-medieval suburb
- Rare surviving 17th century buildings
- Occasional large houses and grounds
- Mid-19th century suburban villas
- Early 19th century terraced housing estate at Dorset/ Orchard Streets

## 1. The Planning Policy Context

### National Legislation and Policy

- 1.1 Development proposals which are likely to affect the character or appearance of the conservation area are subject to statutory controls exercised by the local planning authority who will in turn apply both local and national guidance. This section also lists planning guidance that is relevant to the appraisal and formation of management policies.
- 1.2 The overarching legislation governing the consideration of applications for planning consent that affect the character or appearance of a conservation area is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Areas Act 1990. Part II paragraph 72 places a general duty with regard to conservation areas in exercise of planning functions making clear that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.3 Section 12 of the NPPF covers the historic environment. It encourages local planning authorities (paragraph 126) in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, the guidance makes clear that local authorities should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The Framework goes on to state that when formulating strategies to achieve this, they should take into account:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;



- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

1.4 When determining planning applications (paragraph 131.) local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

1.5 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset paragraph 132 makes clear that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.

1.6 Finally, under paragraph 137 the Framework states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

1.7 The Planning Practice Guidance produced to support the framework is published online and regularly updated. It reinforces the Government's view that protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development. The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles' (paragraph 17 bullet 10) that underpin the planning system. This is expanded upon principally in paragraphs

126-141 but policies giving effect to this objective appear elsewhere in the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 1.8 The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation delivers wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets.

#### Historic England's National Planning Guidance

- 1.9 Historic England's (formerly English Heritage) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (November 2017 - Draft) is a tool which seeks to guide advice and decisions affecting the conservation of England's heritage and encourages local authorities, property owners, developers and their advisers to refer to these Principles when considering how to approach a particular proposal or situation that may impact on the historic environment, whether in relation to designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 1.10 Principle 3 which relates to understanding the significance of heritage assets is the starting point for effective conservation. As such, understanding and articulating what is significant about a heritage asset, in this case the Blandford Forum Conservation Area, is considered necessary to inform decisions about its future. Good-quality information about an asset will help ensure a decision is well-informed and robust.
- 1.11 Historic England make clear that in order to identify the full significance of a heritage asset, so far as that is possible at a point in time, it is necessary first to understand its physical fabric, its links with its surroundings (including other heritage assets), together with how and why these have changed over time, and then to consider:
- who values the heritage asset, and why they do so;
  - how their valuation of it relates to its physical form, fabric and associations;
  - whether associated objects and historical records contribute to its interest;
  - the relative weighting of the heritage asset's interests (some parts may be more important than others); and
  - the relative weighting of the heritage asset's interests with those of other heritage assets, sharing similar interests (some sites or buildings will be more important than others).

1.12 This appraisal and subsequent management policies seek to address these interests the latter of which is supported by Principle 4 which makes clear that heritage assets should be managed to sustain their heritage values given that change in the historic environment is inevitable. In light of this change successful conservation is about managing change to a heritage asset and its setting in ways that will best sustain the asset's significance, while taking opportunities to better reveal or enhance that significance for present and future generations. The policy continues to comment that conservation is best achieved when those involved share a common appreciation of an asset's significance, and use that understanding to:

- identify how its significance is vulnerable to change;
- take the actions and accept the constraints necessary to sustain, reveal or enhance significance;
- Take a balanced view where conflict between conservation needs of different aspects of significance requires may require some loss of an asset's significance to secure its sustainable conservation; and
- minimise loss of its authenticity as a source for future generations by doing invasive work only when any resulting harm to significance is demonstrably outweighed by the heritage benefits of that work.

#### Local Planning Policies

1.13 The new local plan (North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (LP1)) sets out the strategic planning policies for the district and was adopted by the council on 15 January 2016. With regard to the Historic Environment, the Plan follows national guidance stating that significance is 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'. In assessing significance, the Council will seek to establish the value of a heritage asset on the basis of its heritage interest in terms of:

- its archaeological interest: *There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them;*
- its architectural and artistic interest: *These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or*

*fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture; and*

• its historic interest: *An interest in past lives and events (including prehistoric). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide an emotional meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.*

- 1.14 The Plan also states that the setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings from which an asset is experienced. This setting is integral to the heritage asset and the impact of a proposal on the heritage asset is also derived from the impact to its setting. An assessment of the impact of development on the setting of a heritage asset is therefore required. This should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which the proposal detracts from its significance. An assessment should also consider cumulative impacts and the long-term viability of the heritage asset. In the event that these terms are defined or redefined in national policy or guidance, the Council will seek to establish the value of a heritage asset on the basis of the new or redefined terms.
- 1.15 The Plan makes clear that the developer has a role in assessing significance and that the Council will expect developers to identify any heritage assets that may be affected by their development proposals and describe the significance of the identified assets including any contribution made by their setting. The significance should be described in terms of the heritage asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interests. The information provided by developers to support a proposal should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset (or assets) that may be affected and the potential impact. Where a heritage asset is made up of several constituent parts all of the parts will not have the same heritage interest nor will they all necessarily contribute to the significance of the asset. The importance of these features as part of the whole heritage asset and the contribution they make to its interest and value needs to be taken into account in describing its significance
- 1.16 Policy 5 - The Historic Environment deals with a development's impact on the historic environment. The Policy, attached as an appendix, confirms that for any designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to its conservation when considering proposals that impact on its significance. It states that clear and convincing justification will be required for development that will cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. The Policy clarifies the position regarding substantial harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset, less than

substantial harm, harm to a non-designated heritage asset as well as hidden and unidentified heritage assets.

- 1.17 North Dorset District Council is embarking on producing a new Local Plan for the District, which will replace both the North Dorset district-Wide Local Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Revision) adopted in January 2003 and the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 which was adopted in January 2016. .

The Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2031

- 1.18 The Blandford+ Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 was submitted for examination in the summer of 2016 and was examined during the first half of 2017. A public hearing was held on 10 April 2017. The Examiner's Report has now been received and concludes that provided the recommendations in her report are followed the plan would meet the basic conditions. In light of this the plan as modified, can proceed to a referendum.
- 1.19 The Plan seeks to maintain the special heritage and landscape character of the plan area and in particular to protect and enhance the special landscape and ensure that historic assets will be protected and enhanced. Proposals within or affecting the setting of the conservation area, as shown on the Policies Map, should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and should demonstrate:
- i. consistently high standard of design and detailing reflecting the scale and character or appearance of the area, including the layout of the streets, development patterns, burgage plots, building lines and building form;
  - ii. the use of building materials and finishes which are sympathetic to the area, in particular the use of red brick in facades;
  - iii. no harmful impact on the townscape and roofscape of the Conservation Area;
  - iv. the retention and protection of trees, gardens, spaces between buildings, and other open areas which contribute to the character or appearance of the area, and the use of permeable surfaces to reduce surface water flooding;
  - v. where appropriate, the removal of unsightly and inappropriate features or details; and vi. the retention and, where appropriate, the reinstatement of original features such as chimneys, chimney pots, gates, railings and shop fronts and small scale architectural details such as mouldings which



individually or cumulatively contribute to the character or appearance of the area.

- 1.20 Proposals including proposed changes of use that are likely to have an adverse impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area will not be supported.

## **2. Location and Setting**

- 2.1 Blandford comprises the main town of Blandford Forum to the north of the River Stour (and the smaller built-up area of Blandford St Mary to the south). The town lies in the Blandford Gap, where the river cuts through the chalk downland in the southern part of the District of North Dorset. The town is enclosed almost completely by two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs): the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB and the Dorset AONB. Two important roads, the A350 and A354, intersect in the town.
- 2.2 Blandford lies at an important crossing of the river Stour and within a wide sweeping curve in its course, around the foot of a projecting and tapering chalk ridge. The river lies within a wide and open flood plain which provides a broad green swathe between the medieval town and its suburb of Blandford St Mary. The wooded cliffs and former deer park at Bryanston provide a distinctive backdrop and setting for the town to the south-west. These features have meant that the natural expansive direction for the modern town has been up the sloping chalk ridge to the north east. Furthermore, Crown Meadows to the west of the town consists of a series of small scale, low lying paddocks used mainly for grazing and hay crop set within an attractive pastoral, parkland landscape. It forms part of the green undeveloped edge to the west of the town, lies within the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area and in addition to its own historic and visual interest forming part of the picturesque Stour Valley; it contributes to the setting of several designated and non-designated heritage assets as well as the town centre conservation area.

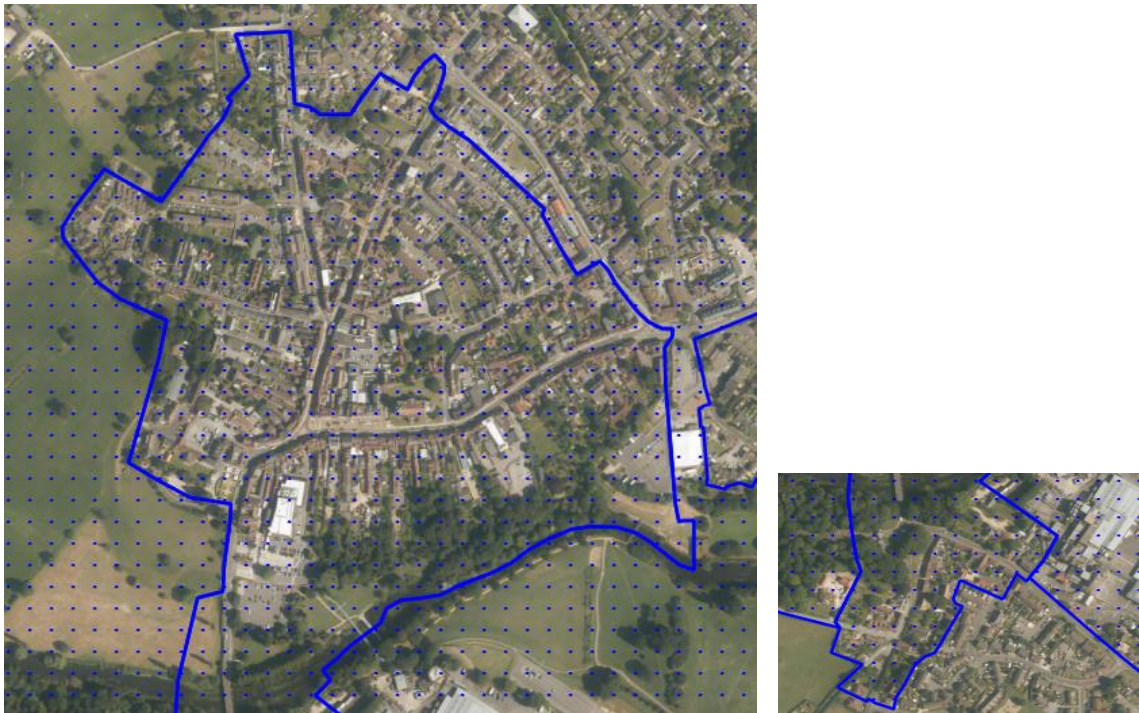


Plate 1. An aerial view of Blandford Forum. Bryanston cliff is to the south-west, Crown Meadows to the west and the Marsh & Ham and Sour Meadows to the south,

- 2.3 To the south of the town centre, the cumulative impact of the Marsh and Ham, Card Island together with the river, provide a further green, naturalistic backdrop and setting for the town. These public spaces are managed by the District Council for public recreation and in the case of Stour Meadows as a blue flag nature reserve. Key views to and from the wider setting are important contributors to the special interest of the appraisal area its significance.
- 2.4 As part of the setting of the Conservation Area, there are several key views to and from the conservation area which enable understanding and appreciation of its situation on the River Stour and its rural hinterland. These are described in section XXXX

### 3. Historic Background

#### 3.1 Evolution

##### Synopsis

- 3.1.1 There were nine manors with variations on the name Blandford mentioned at Domesday and it is difficult to know whether any of them refer to a settlement on the site of Blandford Forum. It is perhaps more likely that dispersed settlements in Blandford St Mary and Langton predate the foundation of

Blandford Forum itself. The earliest documentary evidence for the town suggests that the church was founded in 1110 by Robert de Beaumont. A market was recorded by the early 13th century and Blandford Bridge and St Leonard's Hospital were both recorded by the late 13th century. By the 14th century Blandford sent a member to parliament and the town was taxed at the urban rate. By the late 17th century the economy of the town appears to have expanded into a successful market town. This success may have been briefly curtailed by a series of devastating fires that had destroyed almost the entire town by 1731 following which the town was famously rebuilt under the guidance of the Bastard brothers. Button and lace making, gloving, iron founding, brick making and candle making were important industries during the 17th-19th centuries, but it primarily remained a successful market town. The arrival of the railway in 1863 went some way to ameliorate the effects of the agricultural and economic depressions of the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, it was not until the 1980s that the town expanded beyond its 19th century population with the creation of large modern housing estates to the north and east of the town.

### Historical Development

- 3.1.2 The Middle Palaeolithic (40-70 kya) is not represented in the Blandford area, but from about 2000 BC forward, Bronze Age remains have been recovered. Romans were certainly nearby on Hod Hill which is within walking distance of the town but there is little evidence that they settled in or near Blandford.
- 3.1.3 There is very little known about Blandford within this period. Bokerly Dyke, the Dorset County boundary to the east of the town was reinforced after the Romans left the country in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and it is well known that Dorset put up a strong resistance to Saxon invasions. In the late Anglo-Saxon period there is evidence of 9 estates or manors in and around Blandford or Blaen-y-ford (the place in front of the ford). The consensus of opinion is that the manor now called Blandford Forum was the demesne of Robert, Count of Mortain. While the Domesday Book makes 9 references to Blaen-y-ford, only one actually refers specifically to Blandford Forum.

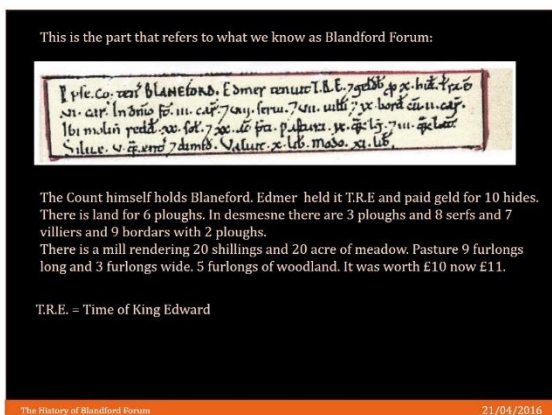


Fig. 4. Extract from the Domesday Book

- 3.1.4 The earliest secure evidence for occupation within the study area comes from archaeological finds of Late Saxon pottery in association with a shrunken medieval settlement found at the Stour Park retail site in Blandford St Mary. It has been suggested that the first church was founded at Blandford in 1110 by Robert de Beaumont, 1st earl of Leicester and lord of the manor. However, it is not clear if this refers to the church at Blandford Forum, or one of the other Blandfords. Rectors are only recorded for Blandford Forum church from 1295 onwards. The medieval church burnt down in the great fire of 1731 but was rebuilt on the same site.
- 3.1.5 The first record of urban development at Blandford Forum comes from Close Rolls dated 1217-18. This document is a mandate to the Sheriff of Dorset that the market day at Blandford shall be changed from Sunday to Saturday. In 1219 the Countess of Leicester received £10 rent from the borough of Blandford and in 1244 Blandford was represented as a borough at the Eyre. From 1288 onwards, the town is referred to as Cheping Blandford or Blandford Forum. These documents suggest a very rapid rise for Blandford as a borough and market town and may suggest the implantation of a planned market and Borough in the 12th century. By 1307 the borough had passed to the Kingston Lacy estate and at this time Henry de Lacy was granted a charter for an annual fair to be held over three days centred on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul (the 29<sup>th</sup> June) to be held at the manor of Blandford. A second annual fair was in existence at the town by 1415 when Henry V granted that the fair held on All Saints Day should be moved to the feast of Simon and Jude on 28 October.
- 3.1.6 In 1304-5 Blandford sent a member to parliament and by 1307 the town was taxed at the urban rate. The burgesses paid forty shillings a year in rent collectively to their lord in 1312. The Lay Subsidy of 1332 records that there were 21 tax payers in the town paying a total of 41 shillings. This suggests that Blandford remained a modest country town following its initial foundation. The surnames of the taxpayers recorded in the 14th century Lay Subsidies suggest that a typical range of urban trades were carried out in the town. These include le Tannere, le Smyth, le Goldsmyth, le Chalener (blanket seller), le Skynnere (leather worker), le Webbe (weaver), le Clerk, Boucher (butcher) and Tavener. There are other clues to the scale and nature of the medieval urban economy in Blandford; in 1390 twelve men and one woman were taken to court for brewing and selling ale contrary to regulations and John Aubrey recalled that the town had a glass painter who died in 1643.
- 3.1.7 A hospital for lepers has been recorded at Langton Long Blandford recorded in a deed dated 1281-2 and at the time of the Black Death a chantry priest is recorded as being replaced in the same area. This chantry at Langton may be part of the leper hospital of St Leonard, close to the east side of the town (just

outside of the study area). Nothing more is known of it other than it is traditionally held to have been at the site of St Leonard's Chapel.

- 3.1.8 It is unclear whether Blandford Forum was severely affected by the Black Death of 1348. If the town did suffer a slight decline during the late 14th century because of the Black Death or other reasons, it had recovered by the early 16th century. During this period it is thought to have contained a population of around 500, maintained through an economy based on a small cloth industry. Sixteenth century developments in the town included a free school north of the church, an almshouse immediately west of the church and a guildhall.
- 3.1.9 The borough was administered by a common council and an elected bailiff who acted under the overall control of the manorial lord, prior to being incorporated in 1605. The manor was owned by the Earl's of Leicester following the Norman Conquest, although Robert Earl of Leicester granted part of it to the nuns of the order of Ste Marie in Amesbury in 1200-1201. Hutchins was able to demonstrate that this property eventually passed to the Ryve family and equated to Damory Court just beyond the eastern end of East Street.
- 3.1.10 It seems clear from a number of maps and the little published information concerning the development of trade and industry within Blandford Forum that the town did not significantly expand economically or physically beyond its medieval limits until the mid-17th century. There was some limited early post-medieval period expansion on the north side of The Plocks as revealed on the 1605 Norden survey of Cranborne Chase. A suburb also developed on the south side of the ford during the late medieval or early post-medieval period within the parish of Blandford St Mary. This suburb is depicted on the Hardinge survey of Cranborne Chase dated 1618. None of the 17th century maps are of sufficient resolution to depict the location of dispersed medieval farmsteads in the region.
- 3.1.11 In 1605 the manor was formally incorporated as a borough, with a charter. In the 1620s, Thomas Gerard described Blandford as a "faire market towne" and whilst the medieval town was well positioned to succeed as a local market centre, economic growth was only possible within the sphere of wider national socio-economic developments associated with the agricultural revolution in the later 17th and 18th centuries. This might be partly explained by a change in tenurial arrangements from copyhold to leasehold in the region, allowing landowners to increase rents on a regular basis and requiring tenants to exploit and amalgamate their smallholdings in order to pay the increased rents. This in turn stimulated the economy of local urban areas such as Wimborne Minster as well as Blandford Forum.
- 3.1.12 Industry remained a relatively small component of Blandford's total economy in the 17th and 18th centuries. The weekly market and annual fairs were more important. Nevertheless, it was during the 17th century that industries such as



the manufacture of band strings and bone lace were recorded for the town. In fact, by 1698 there were 500 lace makers recorded in Blandford. This is a significant figure and it is thought must include the surrounding area given that only around 400 dwellings are recorded within the town as late as 1760.

- 3.1.13 Blandford continued to be famous for the production of the finest lace or point in England into the early 18th century. Lace making was conducted on an individual basis, needing little equipment and was considered a worthy occupation for schoolchildren and residents of poor houses. Button making was also a feature of the Blandford economy during the 17th century and along with the manufacture of articles of straw, into the 18th century. A large manufactory of shirt buttons continued at Blandford into the early 19th century. In 1814 seven families were engaged in button making in Blandford.
- 3.1.14 Gloving became a significant industry in Blandford from at least the early 18th century and brewing was an important cottage industry during the 17th century with public houses subsequently brewing their own ales during the 18th century with Hector's Brewery established by 1789 on the south bank of the river Stour in Blandford St Mary. A further insight into the burgeoning economy of the late 17th century may be gained through the fact that in 1660-66 local Blandford tradesmen resorted to issuing their own token coinage of farthings and halfpence in brass and copper. In 1669 the borough issued its own farthing tokens in order to meet the demand for small change generated through trade. A second factor in the growth of the 17th and early 18th century economy was the wealth contained within the surrounding countryside, where there were a number of large estates and country houses. Hutchins also noted that the chief support of the town was the resort of travellers and the neighbouring gentry, as well as the market and fairs. He also mentioned the races which had been held during July or August on Monkton Down (now the site of Blandford Camp) since at least 1603 up until 1843. The borough arranged entertainment during race week and the races themselves were widely attended by Dorset gentry during the 18th century. An offshoot of the wealth exhibited in the surrounding country may have been the development of plant nurseries as successful businesses around the fringes of the town from the late 18th century. John Galpine ran a particularly extensive garden nursery on the north side of the town. His 1782 catalogue listed a variety of ornamental trees, shrubs and plants serving the growing needs of country houses and formal gardens.
- 3.1.15 Records reveal that there had been a number of destructive fires within the town prior to 1731. In 1713 for example, the lower part of East Street was destroyed by a fire suspected as arson. Subsequently this part of town, rebuilt in brick and tile, avoided the worst ravages of the Great Fire of 1731 which began around 2pm on 4 June 1731 at a soap boiler's or tallow chandler's house at the junction of White Cliff Mill and Bryanston Streets. The town's three fire engines were quickly burnt or rendered unusable and brisk NW winds spread the fire throughout the town within less than an hour. The fire also spread to

Blandford St Mary and Bryanston where it destroyed all but three houses. Tiled houses lasted longer than thatched but even so, by 7pm few houses were left standing. Apart from the eastern end of East Street, only the Old House, Ryves almshouses, Dale House and a few other buildings in the upper parts of Salisbury and White Cliff Mill Streets survived. Few people died in the fire but 400 families lost their homes. Temporary barracks were built to house the poor at the north-eastern corner of the town and a wooden tabernacle was built on the north side of the sheep market as a temporary parish church. In 1732 George II passed an act for the reconstruction of the town and charitable donations were made to help the process.

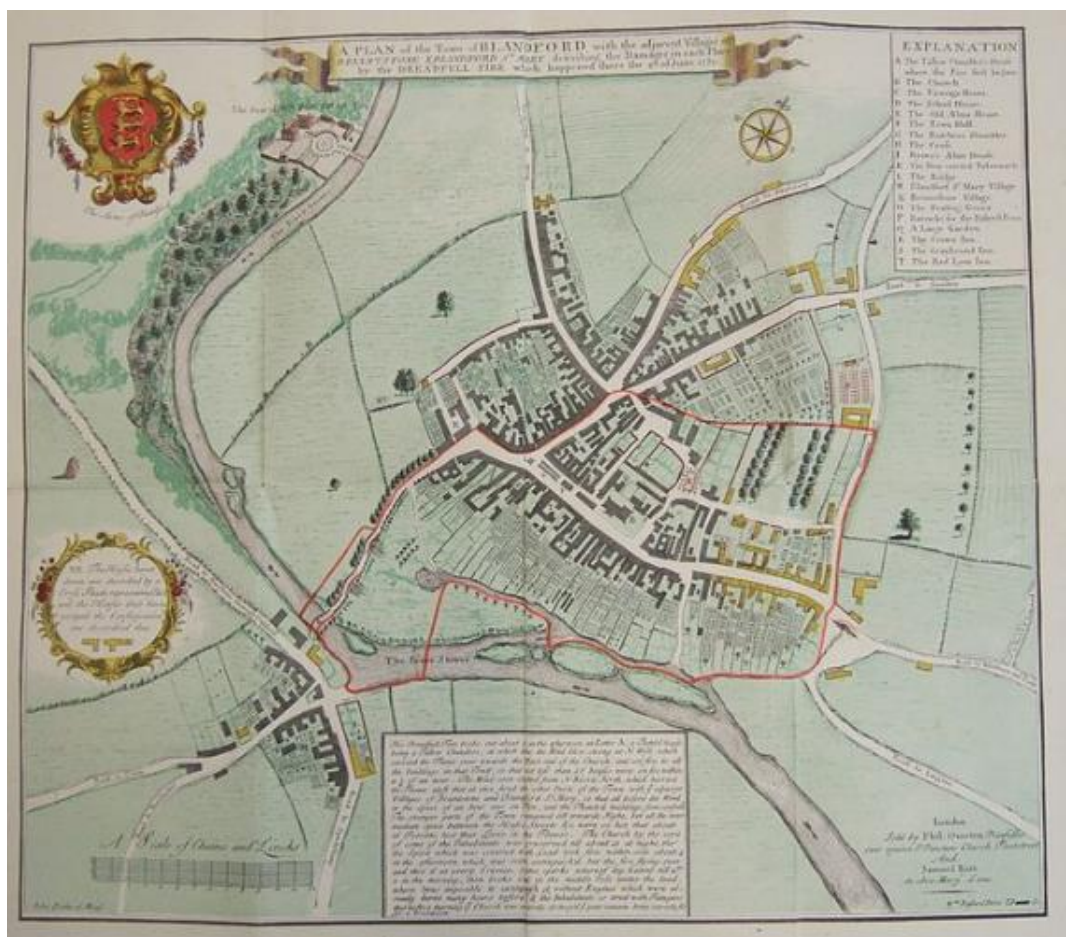


Fig. 5. 18<sup>th</sup> Century map showing the buildings lost during the fire (black) and those that survived (yellow) produced by the Bastard brothers.

- 3.1.16 John and William Bastard were in business in Blandford as architects, builders and joiners at the time of the fire. They had considerable experience and had built many country houses in the area. It was John and William who undertook the planning and supervision, as well as most of the rebuilding of the town following the fire. The fact that John subsequently held the office of town bailiff five times and William twice, is a mark of how well their efforts were received. The work was largely completed within a period of thirty years. The Bastards

initially drew up an accurate map showing the extent of the destruction. They retained the original street plan and plot boundaries, although some of the streets and the market place were widened and the work was regulated by act of parliament, resulting in the present brick Georgian town.

- 3.1.17 The rapid and charity-aided reconstruction meant that the economy of the town was not adversely affected in a disproportionate manner. Nevertheless, there was a certain amount of disorder and poverty during the mid-18th century. In 1738 only 20 innkeepers were licensed because of a large number of disorderly events. The situation soon normalised and in 1757 Archbishop Wakes Bluecoat School was established and in 1785 Milton Abbas Grammar School relocated to East Street. The Blandford Bank was founded in 1787 by John Bastard, William Sillers and John Damory. The success of Blandford Forum is also reflected in the fact that it was created a municipal borough under the Municipal Corporations act of 1835, although there was no boundary extension until 1889. The Free School at Blandford had been established on the NW side of the parish church during the 16th century or earlier. It was rebuilt by the corporation following the fire but appears to have closed in the early 19th century; it may have suffered due to competition from the Milton Abbey Grammar School which had relocated to Blandford in 1785. Archbishop Wakes' Charity Blue Coat School was established by 1757 through a charitable endowment for the payment of a master. This arrangement continued until the establishment of the National School in Park Road in 1831 at which time the Blue Coat boys were admitted. A girls National and infants school was built on Damory Street in 1821.
- 3.1.18 The origins of religious non-conformity in Blandford seem to lie with a licence granted to Congregationalists to hold a service in the house of John Paige in 1672. In 1711 the first Congregational church was built on a site off Salisbury Street. It was rebuilt after the fire and again in 1867. A large workhouse was built on East Street in 1815 for 250 paupers.
- 3.1.19 During the Victorian era, the most notable event was the arrival of the railway in 1863 and the resultant economic benefits. Blandford Station was built on the east side of Damory Street, approximately 150m north of the former Damory Court which seems to have been demolished to make way for the track and was opened in September 1863. The completion of the line instantly boosted the local economy with new suburbs and industry appearing within the vicinity of the station. This effectively marked the beginning of suburban expansion to the east of the historic town, a process that continued throughout the 20th and into the early 21st centuries. Initial suburban development was arranged around a grid plan of streets aligned on and south of Salisbury Road. Buildings consisted of Victorian and Edwardian terraces intermixed with larger suburban villas, particularly from the turn of the century in the eastern part of the suburb. There was also a number of small industrial workshops. This period is also

characterised by the proliferation of ribbon developments along the major radial routes into the historic town, most notably along Salisbury Road.



Fig. 6. A 19<sup>th</sup> Century Map of Blandford

- 3.1.20 Button making continued to be important and the Saturday market still thrived during the 19th century and included a weekly sheep market well into the 20th century. In the early 19th century Blandford was famed for its great wool fair, when buyers came from all over the world to buy sheep skins. To facilitate this trade the town had a tannery on East Street, opposite the church. The town council also held six sheep fairs a year in the Fair Field on Salisbury Road. A good-sized cattle market also took place each week. Farmers also came to 'the Little Market' held on Thursdays during the earlier 20th century which included a sheep market.
- 3.1.21 The subsequent increase in population also stimulated significant growth in non-conformist congregations. The Independent Congregational chapel on Salisbury Street was enlarged in 1867 and a Primitive Methodist Chapel was built on Albert Street, in the new suburb east of the railway station. The increase in the size of congregations across the town also necessitated the creation of a new cemetery on Damory Street with an associated Church of England mortuary chapel. The municipal cemetery with its two neo-gothic chapels and entrance lodge, was established in the mid-late 19th century on Salisbury Road, about a mile outside the town on land purchased by Lord Portman.



3.1.22 Blandford had a number of schools by the late 19th century. The original Blandford Free School seems to have ceased by the early 19th century. Blandford Grammar School (originally Milldown Endowed School) was founded in 1862 and new premises erected on Damory Street in 1864. The original foundation was for a girls' school but it became mixed by 1869. The National girls and infants' school on Damory Street was enlarged before 1874. A British School was also held in premises on Whitecliff Mill Street. There was also a ragged school in Bryanston Street. Other mid-late 19th century urban institutions included the new union workhouse built on Salisbury Road in 1859. A new police station was erected in the same year. The Cottage Hospital opened in 1883. Gas was introduced in 1837 and the Blandford Waterworks Co. formed to supply the town with piped water in 1893-4. An isolation hospital was built on Higher Shaftesbury Road, close to the municipal cemetery, sometime between 1885 and 1901. A municipal recreation ground was established on Park Road by 1885, although by 1901 the site had been developed for housing and the recreation ground moved to its current site adjacent to the Cottage Hospital.



Plate 2. An early to mid- 20<sup>th</sup> Century image of Market Place with central gas lamp column and telephone kiosk.

3.1.23 Gloving continued to thrive until the start of WWII. In the early 20th century there were two small workshops in East Street and another in White Cliff Mill Street, attached to Eagle House, which made gloves for a well-known Milborne Port glover. There was an iron foundry at the upper end of Orchard Street and a candle factory between Alfred Street and Edward Street. Coach building was also an important industry in the town. Conyer's had a large coach builders' workshop on West Street from 1910.



3.1.24 In light of the above, Blandford developed as a successful regional market town. Evidence from trade directories suggests that Blandford's retail businesses were thriving and multiplying during the later 19th century. In 1875 for example the inhabitants of Blandford and the surrounding areas carried out more than 50 different trades including 37 grocers and general shopkeepers, 31 drapers, tailors and cloth merchants, 17 publicans and hoteliers, 11 shoemakers, 10 blacksmiths and ironmongers, 10 beer and wine merchants, 10 bakers, 10 carpenters and funeral directors, 9 plumbers and decorators, 6 butchers, 6 watch, clock and gunmakers, and 5 builders.



Plate 3. A turn of the last century image of East Street looking towards Market Place.



Plate 4. An early 20<sup>th</sup> Century view of Salisbury Street, looking north from Market Place.

- 3.1.25 The two World Wars and the intervening period had a significant effect on the economy, population and layout of Blandford Forum. A Royal Naval Division (RND) base was established on the site of the former race course on Monkton Down in November 1914. A German PoW camp was also set up next to it. The RND vacated the camp in 1918, although they were replaced by the RAF Record Office. A railway branch line from Blandford Station to the camp was built around this time but was removed in 1923 and the cutting used as a municipal rubbish dump. The camp itself was closed completely at the end of 1919, the wooden huts removed and the land returned to agricultural use. Nevertheless, the camp was reactivated during 1939 as a mobilisation and training centre for reservists and later as a battle training camp. During 1944 the first of five US Army hospitals were built on the site to receive wounded from the invasion of Europe. The hospitals were closed following VE day, having treated some 20,000 patients. The camp remains in use today as the home of the Royal Signals.



Plate 5. A mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century view of Salisbury Street looking south from the junction with White Cliff Mill Street.

- 3.1.26 The effect of the wars was also felt within the borough itself. The 8th Dorset Rifle Corps had been established in Blandford during 1859. Barracks and a Drill Hall were established during WWI on Milldown Road, opposite and adjacent to the Cottage Hospital. Part of this site was used as a scout hut during the inter-war period but taken over by the Home Guard in 1940. An airfield was established to the north of the Salisbury Road cemetery. A linear group of concrete WWII anti-tank traps lie on the west side of West Street along with reinforced walls and rifle slots, within and adjacent to the grounds of the Crown Hotel. A further well-preserved group lies along the rear boundary plots of villas fronting on the west side of White Cliff Mill Street. These are part of an extensive complex of World War II defences, including pill boxes, along the western edge of Blandford, which occupied a highly-significant strategic position.



Plate 6. A mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century view of Market Place looking west towards West Street.

- 3.1.27 Between the wars the population and economy of Blandford seems to have declined in line with national trends. The population fell from 3,649 in 1901 to a low of 3,193 in 1921. By 1939 the population had risen again to 3,811, although this figure might be partly attributable to an influx of reservists at Blandford Camp. In one month alone between December 1928 and January 1929, during the worst of the depression, 549 vagrants were admitted to the Union Workhouse on Salisbury Road. However, the economic situation in the town was not entirely dominated by depression. Just a few years earlier, in 1924, an open-air swimming pool had been opened in The Ham and the town's main sewage scheme became operative in central Blandford in 1921. Industrial output also continued; the glove industry remained in Blandford until around 1940, as did the iron foundry on Orchard Street and the candle factory on Alfred Street.
- 3.1.28 Blandford's economic mainstay of weekly wool and livestock markets continued until about 1930 at a site behind the Crown Hotel. After this period the cattle trade seems to have been lost to Sturminster Newton and Shaftesbury markets. The annual sheep fairs continued on the Fairfield site until 1939. Saturday sheep markets also continued throughout the period on Sheep Market Hill and the street market still exists on a Thursday and Saturday.

## 3.2 Settlement Layout and Pattern

- 3.2.1 The urban character of Blandford, like any town, is a product of many factors including its topographic position, history of estate ownership and management,



geographical relationship with other towns and resources and other historical events. The topographic position of Blandford, within a wide sweep of the River Stour as it passes through the Dorset chalk downs, has had a profound effect on the location, form, economy and character of the town. The settlement originated as a planned borough at a pre-existing crossing point of the Stour. The medieval market flourished due to the proximity of a range of landscape resources and therefore agricultural products in its hinterland. The proximity of the river and its floodplain has limited the direction in which the town could expand and during the medieval period, as today, the suburb of Blandford St Mary was separated from the town by a wide undeveloped strip of land.

- 3.2.2 Blandford remained relatively unchanged from its medieval layout until the mid-17th century. As described previously, the early post-medieval town was almost completely destroyed during a devastating fire in 1731. Thus, an essential part of Blandford's urban character, layout and pattern reflects the fact that it was reconstructed in its entirety during a short period between 1731 and 1760 around its former medieval plan with subsequent extension during the 18<sup>th</sup> and particularly the 19<sup>th</sup> century on a grid-like pattern.
- 3.2.3 The historic core is arranged around a single main street running parallel to the river Stour with regular burgage plots on both side and back lanes behind. The market place lay at the junction with the road running across the river from Blandford Bridge. To the north, east and west of the town centre, is some ribbon development along a series of radiating roads. The areas between these routes is infilled with suburban housing estates arranged on a linear grid system, or more commonly on looped networks of roads and curvilinear culs-de-sac.
- 3.2.4 The southern end of Salisbury Street and the east side of White Cliff Mill Street are lined with closely packed urban housing. Larger detached town houses are more typical of the west side of White Cliff Mill Street and the north end of Salisbury Street. The 19th century suburban villas on White Cliff Mill Street are set back behind small open yards, Bryanston Street has a mixture of detached cottages, inter-war semis and modern apartments. Two rows of small 19th century brick terraces are arranged perpendicular to the street behind the northern frontage. Damory Street was formerly dominated by schools, a gas works and cemetery, although modern development and car parks are now more typical. The north side of The Close and The Plocks has fine Georgian buildings and a Wesleyan Methodist chapel with modern housing behind. The north side of the close is dominated by a large early 19th century housing estate of terraced houses fronting directly on to Dorset and Orchard Streets.
- 3.2.5 Blandford's history as an important regional market town is also a strong contributor to the historic character of the town. As stated previously, it held weekly livestock markets and numerous annual sheep fairs throughout the medieval, post-medieval and modern eras. This is reflected in important central open spaces within the built environs which created important and legible



spaces such as the Market Place, The Plocks and Sheep Market Hill. Blandford also functioned as an important service centre on the Great Western Turnpike and has had a strong tradition in coach building, inn keeping and brewing since the 18th century as a result.

- 3.2.6 The Historic Urban pattern and character of Blandford is closely bound up with its distinctive landscape setting and the quality of its historic fabric, as well as the preservation of its medieval layout. The medieval town plan retains distinctive burgage plots into which the distinctive coherent Georgian streetscape has been fitted. The wide sweep of the river Stour and its associated wooded cliffs and broad meadows, coupled with post-medieval bridges, set the scene on the town approaches. The green swathe, so close to the medieval town centre, also provides a suitable backdrop to the Georgian design as well as to underscore its local setting and emphasise the linkage with the surrounding landscape. Victorian and later suburbs and industrial buildings around the fringes of the medieval town testify to the town's more recent expansion.
- 3.2.7 Furthermore, the town's grain, pattern and character is also characterised by extensive green spaces which provide appropriate settings for the built environs of the town. The Hams between the town centre and Blandford St Mary is now an important public recreational site. The Stour flood plain to the west of town forms part of Bryanston Park and has the wooded slopes of Bryanston estate as a backdrop. The northern part of this former deer park is now taken up by Blandford School. Milldown comprises a further an important public space and chalk downland nature reserve on the northern edge of the town.

### **3.3 Archaeology**

- 3.3.1 There are no scheduled monuments within the Conservation Area or within its setting however Dorset's Historic Environment Record contains entries for all those buildings and structures marked green in Fig. 7 below.
- 3.3.2 In archaeological terms, the area is highly significant given the area forms the primary settlement component of Blandford Forum. Within the town centre, the relatively low level of modern development within the medieval core means that there is very high potential for important and informative remains of the medieval period to remain intact. Although the current layout of the town reflects its Medieval origins, very little secure dating evidence has been recovered to confirm this assumption. The investigations conducted to date suggest that the highest potential for intact remains of Medieval Blandford lie within the rear of burgage plots fronting on to East Street, Market Place and West Street. The later largely late 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century suburbs appear to have not been incorporated into the urban area of the town until the late 17th century. There is however potential for post-medieval archaeological deposits surviving in the

vicinity of Salisbury, Bryanston and White Cliff Mill Streets. Evidence has the potential to reveal detailed information on the economy of the town during the 17th and 18th centuries, as well as confirm the date at which Blandford expanded in to this area.

- 3.3.3 Furthermore, Blandford lies on well drained gently sloping land with a south westerly aspect. The area is well placed to exploit a variety of resources and likely to have been a preferred site for at least a small settlement during the late prehistoric and Romano-British periods. The potential for remains dating to this period can be demonstrated through the high level of Iron Age and Roman activity in the surrounding area.
- 3.3.4 Assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments are subject to the same policies for designated heritage assets (NPPF para.139). Heritage assets that comprise only buried remains may not be readily appreciated by a casual observer, but they nonetheless retain a presence in the landscape and, like other heritage assets, have a setting. Buried archaeological remains can also often be appreciated in historic street or boundary patterns; in relation to their surrounding topography or other heritage assets; or through the long-term continuity in the use of the land that surrounds them. A possible ring ditch was excavated in 2009 at the nearby Milldown School north-east of the appraisal area. Excavation did not find a ring ditch, but there was evidence for a late Neolithic or early Bronze Age settlement site in the form of pits and ditches containing pottery finds. The position of this area on the edge of the well-drained chalk slopes and the Stour floodplain would have been attractive to settlement throughout the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. The potential for remains dating to this period can be demonstrated through the high level of Iron Age and Roman activity in the surrounding area. In light of this it is likely that any below ground works to facilitate development may also contain some archaeological evidence of Early Modern occupation which was possibly ecclesiastical in origin; according to the Bowle map, a settlement lay at the junction of Chapel Close, Chapel Mead and Longe Close, now the location of the Deer Park Stables and its surrounding paddocks and the presence of St. Leonard's Chapel a 15<sup>th</sup> century infirmary (it is also known as the lepers' chapel) to the east of the town centre suggests evidence of early occupation.



Fig. 7. Plan showing Dorset's Historic Environment Record's identification of monuments (in green) illustrating the depth and intensity of interest.

- 3.3.5 There has been little evidence for prehistoric activity recovered to date. Nevertheless, it is clear from a landscape analysis of the region that an extensive rectilinear field system existed at Blandford, potentially from the Bronze Age through to the post-medieval period. Remains of this field system may survive in the town and the location at a crossing point of the river may suggest that other evidence for prehistoric activity could survive in this area. There is no evidence for the Romano-British occupation, though seven iron and bronze figures, thought to be Romano-British votive objects, have been found at Blandford, although the exact circumstances of their discovery are unknown.
- 3.3.6 Five archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the historic core of the town. They comprised four evaluations on the periphery of the medieval core and a watching brief. In general, the investigations in Blandford town

centre have only produced evidence for post-medieval activity. The watching brief in the Red Lion Yard revealed 19th and 20th century yard surfaces, but medieval deposits may be preserved beneath these. The evaluation of the proposed new library site revealed nothing other than a 17th century or later cultivation soil.

3.3.7 The results of the small number of archaeological investigations probably do not provide a good indication of the archaeological character or significance of the core of the medieval town. It is likely that the character of the sub-surface archaeology would include a series of medieval and post-medieval rubbish pits, boundary ditches and possibly evidence for earlier structures and small-scale industrial and craft activity. A number of medieval coins, dating from the late 11th century onwards, have been recorded for Blandford, although their exact provenance is unknown.

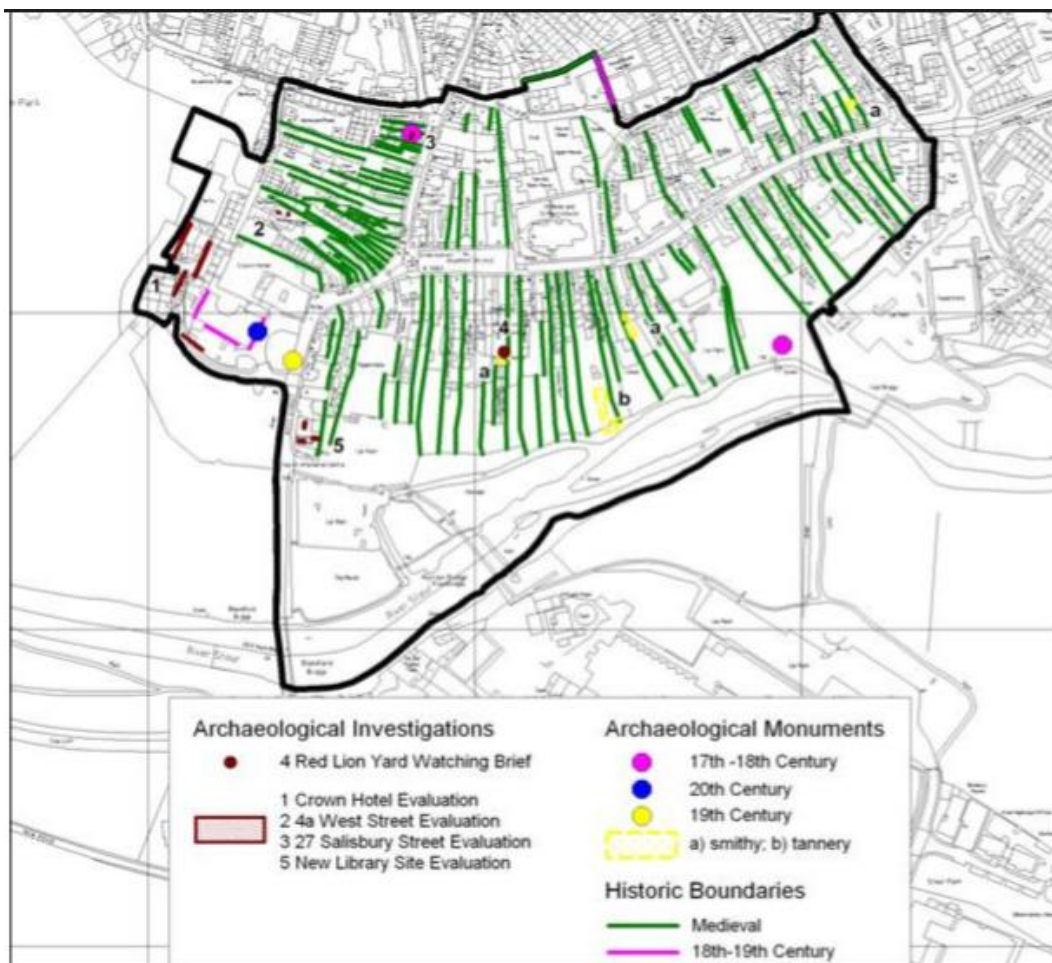


Fig. 8. Plan showing the location of investigations and monuments within the southern half of the appraisal area (the historic core). Source: Dorset Historic Towns Survey.

3.3.8 Nineteenth century maps of Blandford indicate that industrial activity was still prevalent within the rear of burgage plots at that time. This reflects continuity of

the medieval situation and it might be expected that archaeological deposits relating to all periods be preserved here. Again, evidence for post-medieval subsurface archaeological deposits is rare within Blandford town centre, generally limited to 18th and 19th century pits and cultivation soils.

3.3.9 Within the northern half of the appraisal area, only one archaeological investigation has been undertaken. An evaluation at 58 Salisbury Street revealed only post-medieval pits and a soak away. The lack of archaeological investigations in this area constrains understanding of its archaeological character. However, maps and surviving buildings suggest that this area was not settled on an urban scale until the late 17th century, although this remains to be confirmed archaeologically. Nevertheless, the location of the area, at the end of a chalk ridge and within a bend in the river Stour, suggest that it would have been an attractive site to man from the Mesolithic period onwards. Furthermore, landscape analysis of the region suggests that an extensive rectilinear field system existed at Blandford, potentially from the Bronze Age through to the post-medieval period. The presence of disused 19th century cemeteries to the north of the medieval town centre should also be noted.

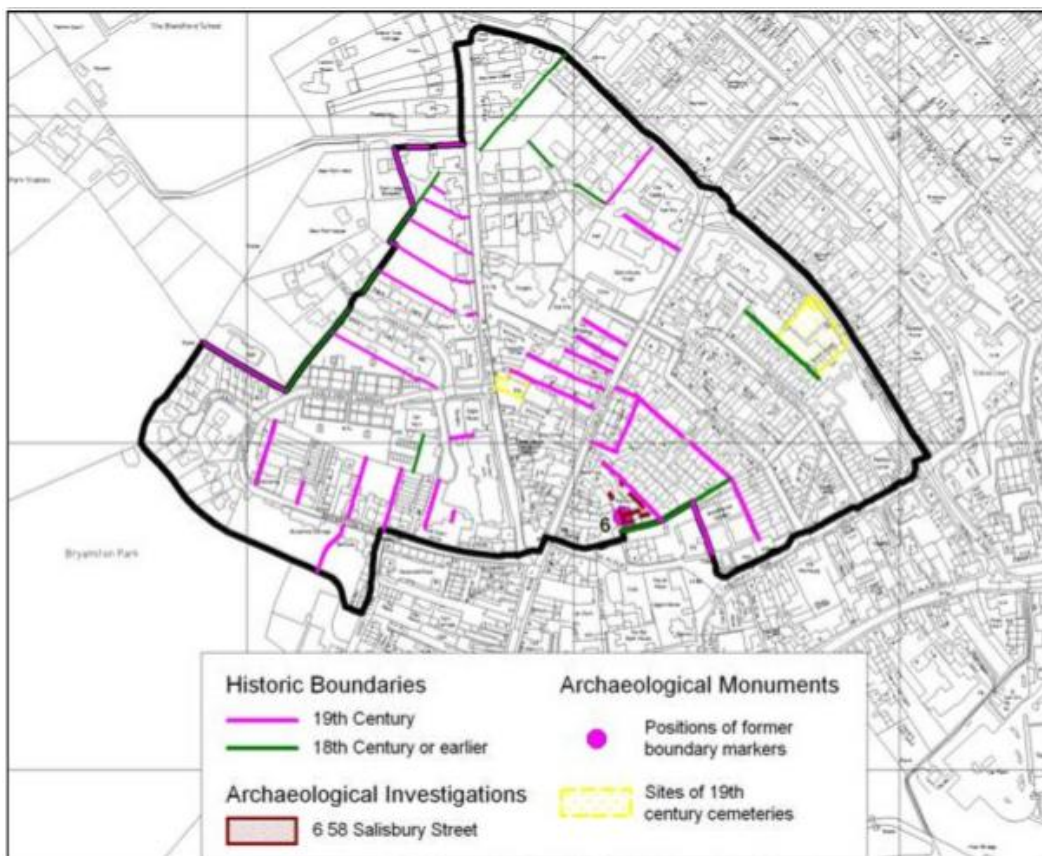


Figure 9. Plan showing historic boundaries visible on 18th and 19th century maps. The 18th century or earlier boundaries are shown on the tithe map and may be medieval or earlier in origin. Later, 19th century plot boundaries represent subdivisions of these earlier fields. Source: Dorset Historic Towns Survey



### 3.4 Architectural quality and built form



Plate 7. The Market Place with the Shambles and Corn Exchange playing a key role within the historic townscape.

- 3.4.1 Much of the early post-medieval town was as reported, almost completely destroyed during a devastating fire in 1731. Thus, an essential part of Blandford's urban character, architectural quality and built form is defined by the fact that it was reconstructed almost in its entirety (within the historic core) during a short period between 1731 and 1760. The town is as a result an extremely important example of an intact Georgian brick-built country town and of exceptional quality. Pevsner described it as '...one of the most satisfying Georgian ensembles anywhere in England'.
- 3.4.2 The market square in particular has a fine collection of Georgian buildings in brick and stone including the parish church of Saint Peter and Paul, the town hall with its three-bayed façade surmounted by a triangular pediment, and the former The Red Lion Inn opposite to the south. Other important collections of Georgian buildings surround Sheep Market Hill and The Plocks. Rare buildings that survived the fire include, Ryves almshouses, The Old House and Dale House. The ruined and partially restored St Leonard's Chapel is the only standing medieval structure in the town although that falls outside of the appraisal area.
- 3.4.3 Georgian architecture does not fully define the historic character of Blandford however. The architects John and William Bastard, who largely directed the rebuilding of the town, created a town plan showing the extent and layout of the



town prior to the fire and the properties destroyed (Fig 5.). This plan reveals that the Georgian town was rebuilt within the pre-existing medieval plot boundaries. These medieval burgage plots survive largely intact today and greatly enhance the historic character of the place (Fig. 8).

- 3.4.4 Furthermore, as described previously, the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburbs adopted a grid plan of streets. Buildings consisted of Victorian and Edwardian terraces intermixed with larger suburban villas, particularly from the turn of the century in the eastern part of the suburb. There was also a number of small industrial workshops located within the area.

#### Building types

- 3.4.5 The study area has a significant number of notable historic buildings many of which are statutory listed. Following the great fire, the work of restoration was regulated by Act of Parliament and, to give effect to the Act, Parliament set up a Court of Record with power to make rules for the rebuilding of the town; a Commission was also established for the just apportionment of the losses incurred and for the distribution of the large sum of money that was publicly subscribed for the relief of the afflicted citizens. The Minutes of the Commissioners' meetings, still preserved by the local authority are another useful source of information. The Royal Commission for Historical Monuments classifies the house types post fire. Although adopting a generic approach it is clear that in typical 18<sup>th</sup> century fashion building types fell into clear hierarchical types. The highest rate of house type were those designed for wealthier professional men and leading merchants. They are rectangular in plan and narrow enough to be spanned by a single roof. The ground floor has a central vestibule and staircase, with one room on each side. The vestibule is usually lit by a fanlight over the front door while two sashed windows light each flanking room; the fireplaces are against the end walls of the rectangle and the chimneystacks emerge at the apex of the gables. The first-floor plan is similar to that of the ground floor, with two principal bedrooms; smaller bedrooms are provided in a dormer-windowed attic. Kitchens and service rooms, with other bedrooms above them, occupy a lower wing at the rear or to one side of the main block. The symmetrical façade always has an ornate central doorway, with sashed windows disposed on each side of it and corresponding windows on the first floor. Lime Tree House is an example of this group.



Plate 9. Lime Tree House

- 3.4.6 Of slightly lower order are those two groups that were probably designed for occupation by shopkeepers and middle-class families and they are found at the centre of the town, in the Market Place, West Street and at the southern end of Salisbury Street. In every case the ground floor is a shop, whether in origin or by subsequent modification, and the typical plans have to be deduced from the disposition of the upper floors. Many of these houses have three storeys. In the higher of these two groupings the entrance is placed to one side of the façade and opens into a narrow passage which leads to the staircase, set against the back wall of the house; there is one room in front beside the passage and a smaller room behind beside the stairs; on the first floor the front room extends across the ground-floor passage.
- 3.4.7 The houses of the third group have a plan similar to the preceding group except that the staircase, un-lit, rises between the front and rear rooms.



Plate 10. Second and third-rate houses in Salisbury Street.

- 3.4.8 The fourth tiered buildings were those constructed for artisans and are mostly in the eastern part of East Street, on the western side of Salisbury Street and in White Cliff Mill Street. They are built in pairs and share a common service-passage leading through to the rear, from which both dwellings are entered. Each dwelling may have one or two ground-floor rooms; where there are two, the fireplaces are sometimes set corner-wise so as to be served by one chimney-stack. In such pairs of houses one of the tenements is usually bigger than the other so that one wall of the service passage may stand half-way between the end-walls, thus supporting the roof purlins with greater economy.
- 3.4.9 In the final group houses the plan of the foregoing group is repeated in a single tenement, which may be with or without its own service-passage; in the latter case the front room is entered from the street. A still simpler version of the artisan's dwelling has only one room on each floor.



Plate 11. Fourth rate housing. Of particular note is the band of brick headers between ground and first floor windows. A similar approach can just be seen on the adjacent property to the left of the image.

- 3.4.10 Salisbury and White Cliff Mill Streets have buildings with a rather modest Georgian façade in comparison to the neighbouring town centre. The larger detached town houses on the fringes of the urban housing such as Eagle House and Dale House are of a much grander scale and conception however. They both have symmetrical fronts with five windows on the first floor and a triangular pediment above the central window. Dale House has a hipped roof, central chimney stack and attic dormers whilst Eagle House has a gabled roof and attic dormers with end stacks.
- 3.4.11 The 19th century suburban houses along White Cliff Mill Street are mainly detached villas. They are generally built in a neo-gothic style with a combination of hipped and gabled ended roofs and gabled dormers. Deer Park Lodge is a mid-19th century picturesque cottage.





Plate 12. Eagle House, White Cliff Mill Street.



Plate 13. 19<sup>th</sup> Century detached villa in White Cliff Mill Street.

3.4.12 Terraced houses on Dorset and Orchard Streets provide a well-preserved example of early 19th century urban housing with three levels of housing type. The upper level comprises those detached villas and three storey compositions reflecting the plan form of those elsewhere within the suburbs but in simplified form.



Plate 13. An early 19<sup>th</sup> Century terrace in Orchards Street.



Plate 14. Lower rate 19<sup>th</sup> century housing in Dorset Street. This level of housing has perhaps been subject of the most significant changes as a result of permitted development allowances.



3.4.13 Within this wider area other individual buildings or groups of buildings exist interspersed amongst the 19<sup>th</sup> century development. Ryves Almshouses on Salisbury Street for example date from 1682 and comprises a single storey long brick range with projecting end wings and decorative detail including a central gable with cartouche bearing the arms of the founder. There are two nonconformist chapels in the area. The Wesleyan Methodist tabernacle and hall on The Close and the Congregational Chapel behind the Salisbury Street frontage.



Plate 14. Ryves Almshouses, Salisbury Street.



Plate 15. Non-conformist Chapel, The Close and Methodist Chapel Salisbury Street.

3.4.14 In addition to the architectural fashion of a particular period illustrated by the buildings, their quality is also dependent upon details such as fenestration, materials, the pattern of brick bonding, and other items such as rainwater goods, dormers and pediments (see section on materials). The form and appearance of original details and their retention is extremely important as they help reflect a particular period in architectural fashion and technology and

provide a narrative to the townscape. An early example of the importance of safeguarding fabric detailing is The Old House which is something of a curiosity (and the fact that it was one of the few houses to escape the fire of 1731 gives it an additional interest) being built about the middle of the C17 by a Dr Sagittary - a native of the Palatinate, which may explain its Germanic character. The two decorative chimneys are octagonal on square bases and each has eight circular attached shafts with moulded brick bases and cappings. The Eastern part of the house is of rusticated brickwork and there is a moulded brick eaves cornice. Over the round-headed doorway, which has rusticated brick voussoirs, there are designs in cut brickwork and a moulded niche. All this work is said to have been done in situ. Windows are leaded casements with moulded oak frames and mullions, those at the eastern part of the property also have transoms.



Plate 16. The Old House

- 8.14 18<sup>th</sup> Century detailing reflects a more restrained taste and with a strong sense of symmetry as illustrated throughout the town centre with higher status buildings being set back from the carriageway set behind railings illustrating their relatives' status within the townscape. Lower order domestic buildings and shops (with accommodation above) were set against the pavement edge.



Plate 17. East Street with higher status buildings set back from the carriageway.



Plate 18. The Costume Museum, The Plocks.





Plate 19. Conyers, West Street

3.4.15 This pattern continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century within the town centre suburbs often with an even more restrained palette particularly in the earlier part of the century. Higher status buildings were again set back from the highway with lower status buildings located on the edge of the pavement. All however of good quality.



Plate 20. Higher and lower status 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Orchard Street. Note the extensive use of render in contrast to the earlier taste for brick.

### **3.5 Building uses**

- 3.5.1 The town reflects a typical country market town in the range of uses and activities taking place within it with the retail centre offering a range of services. The following plan shows the distribution of current uses.

**Map showing existing uses to be completed.**

### **3.6 Building materials and local building traditions**

- 3.6.1 Within the historic core, the surviving pre-fire buildings are mostly of red brick with stone dressings and headers (particularly within the Market Place) in some cases vitrified headers. There is also evidence of cob being used in some parts (e.g. 52 Salisbury Street). In the post-fire reconstruction every building was brick-faced, except the Town Hall which is faced with Portland stone, the Greyhound Hotel which has a stucco façade and the Parish Church which is constructed from green sandstone with Portland stone dressings. The only

other stone dressings were used only on Coupar House, the largest private house in the town; other brick buildings have quoins, cornices, doorway-surrounds, keystones and other details executed in plaster and wood. Variety was obtained by special brick bonding and by the use of bricks of various colours; for instance, dark red brick was often used to outline openings, and quoins and window-heads were sometimes defined by finely-jointed pale red bricks, contrast being provided in each case by building the main wall-face in blue bricks. Flemish bond was generally used in the post-fire period, but a special effect was sometimes obtained by the economical device of using headers only; economical because it enables the builder of use broken bricks. Façades are also diversified by vertical *chaînage* of brickwork of contrasting colour which connects the openings of one storey with those of another. In addition, mathematical tile cladding has been used to replicate the effect of brick, hung on a timber frame with a good example in Salisbury Street and Artisan House in East Street has mathematical tiles also.

- 3.6.2 Many façades retain traces of false brick jointing applied in white paint to the wall-face, the latter having been coloured red and blue, in correspondence with actual bricks but masking the real joints. Sometimes the painted joints do not exactly correspond with the real ones. It is uncertain if this work is of the 18th or of the early 19th century. Roofs are either clay tile or slate, a later 19<sup>th</sup> century import.



Plate 21. The Parish Church.





Plate 22. Mathematical tiles, Salisbury Street



Plate 23. Typical 18<sup>th</sup> Century materials, red brick with vitrified headers, clay tiled roof and timber windows, in this case vertical sliding sashes.

- 3.6.3 Joinery comprised polite vertical sliding sashes with typical multi-paned Georgian paned openings (without horns) or typical 19<sup>th</sup> century with larger glazed sections reflecting the advances in glass production (with horns added to provide additional strength to the frame). Other windows in the main comprise simple flush fitting side hung casements, mostly with glazing bards. In rare cases examples of Yorkshire sliding sashes exist. Doors are either six or four panelled. Rainwater goods cast iron.
- 3.6.4 Outside of the historic core, houses are either of brick (Some of which have been painted) with slate or tiled roofs or stuccoed with slate or tiled roofs as in the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces on Orchard Street. Windows are in the main vertical sliding sashes with larger paned windows in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings reflecting advances in glass technology and fashion. Eagle House has a polychromatic effect formed through the use of blue vitrified brick headers with red brick dressings and a plain tile roof reflecting the historic core. The Congregational Chapel is in pale brick with red brick and stone dressings and a slate roof. Historic garden walls tend to be greensand with brick or stone piers.



Plate 24. 19<sup>th</sup> Century housing in Dorset Street.



Plate. 25 late19th/early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing in The Tabernacle

### 3.7 Important buildings

3.7.1 Most of the buildings within the conservation and appraisal area are by reason of their special interest statutory listed, but where not others are considered to be of interest as non-designated heritage asset, positive contributors to the area's special interest and help shape its character and appearance including enabling understanding of the narrative of evolution of the area. The extent to which their contribution is considered as positive depends not just on their street elevations but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, from both the public and private realm (the rear elevations are extremely important for example) together with an interesting roofscape or skyline and their position relative to the public realm. The following plan identifies statutory listed buildings within the historic core.



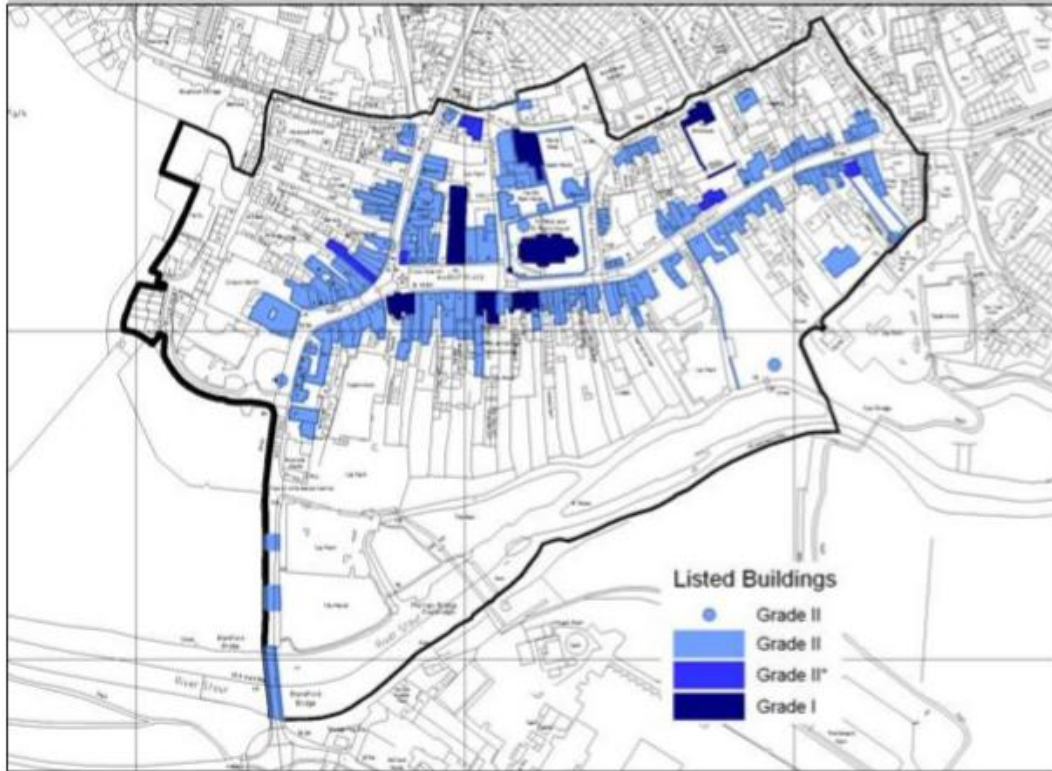


Fig. 10. Statutory listed buildings

- 3.7.2 Key Buildings comprise pre-fire buildings: The Old House; numbers 717 (odd), 21-31 (odd), 35-39 odd) and 18-26 (even) East Street. Post Fire Public Buildings: Parish Church of St Peter and Paul; Town Hall; The Fire Monument; Old Almshouse entrance, Church Lane Post-fire town Houses and commercial premises: The Red Lion Inn, 75 East Street, 26 Market Place, Other notable buildings include The Old Greyhound Inn, Lime Tree House, Coupar House and Old Bank House. Of the 9th and 20th century buildings The Crown Hotel is a key feature.
- 3.7.3 Non-listed structures of importance within this area include the former art-deco cinema building in east Street and former warehouse building in Church Lane.



Plate 26. The former cinema, East Street.

- 3.7.4 Within the northern character area a significant number of buildings are also statutory listed with key buildings including the Wesleyan Methodist Tabernacle, The Congregational Chapel. Pre-fire buildings include Dale House, and Ryves Almshouses. Post-fire town houses and commercial premises include Eagle House; 2-3 The Plocks; The Kings Arms Hotel, White Cliff Mill Street and 81 Salisbury Street.
- 3.7.5 Non-listed buildings of note also include Westfield Court, Centre Court, Portman Lodge and Park Place on White Cliff Mill Street together with The former school entrance, wall and railings in Damory Street and the Methodist Chapel in Salisbury Street.

Note: Other buildings of interest may also be revealed as a result of further research and this list cannot be assumed to be complete or exhaustive.



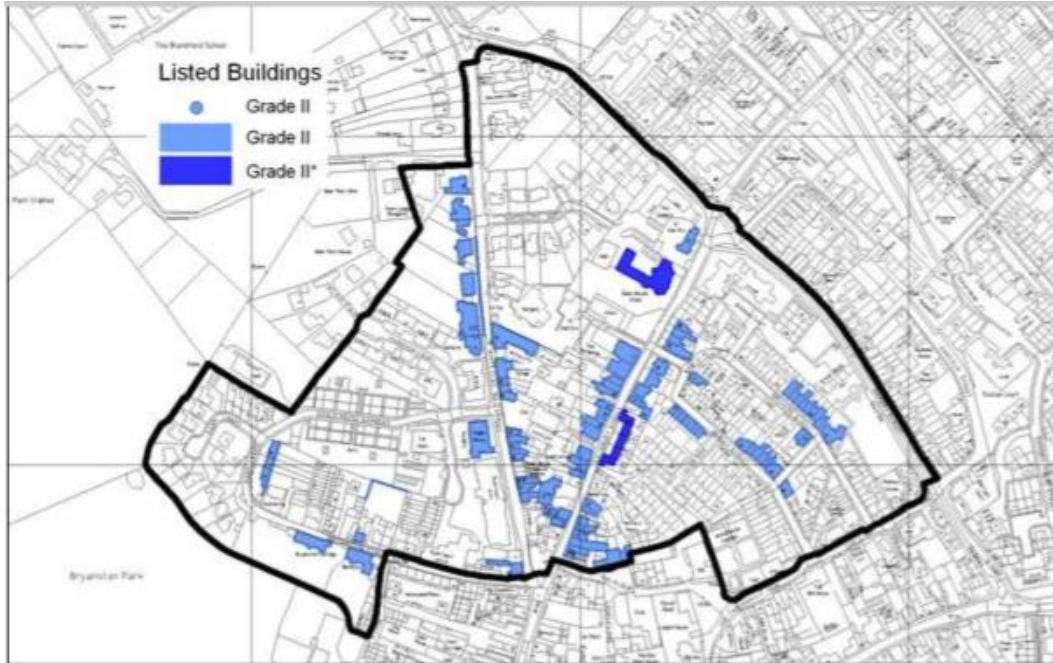


Fig. 11. Statutory listed buildings



Plate. 27. Westfield Court, Central Court, Portman Lodge and Park Pace, White Cliff Mill Street.



Plate 28. The former school entrance, wall and railings, Damory Street.

### 3.8 Open space, parks gardens and trees

- 3.8.1 There are essentially three types of open space adjacent to or within the town centre. Formal space is provided by Woodhouse Gardens located off The Tabernacle and managed by the Town Council.



Plate. 29. Woodhouse gardens.

- 3.8.2 The second type is managed green open space. The Marsh & Ham to the north side of the river falls within the appraisal area. Card Island and Stour Meadows lie to their east and south, the latter south of the river. These areas provide a vitally important setting for the town. The existing trees add to the landscaped framework.





Fig. 12. A mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century map showing the area currently called the Marsh and Ham (central) together with what now forms Stour Meadows, formerly agricultural fields. The burgage plots within the town centre are clearly seen.



Plate 30. The Marsh looking north-east.



Plate 31. The Ham with the Parish Church in the background.

- 3.8.3 The third space type lies outside of the appraisal area but is nonetheless important as it provides an important setting to the town. The Crown Meadows (and Bryanston Park) are of vital importance in preserving the undeveloped setting of the town of Blandford and for enabling understanding its historic development. It forms part of the green undeveloped edge to the west of the town and lies within the Blandford, Blandford St Mary and Bryanston Conservation Area. It has two levels of interest, the first is its historical development and interest in its own right, the second in terms of its quality and role in providing a setting for the adjacent historic town of Blandford, Blandford St. Mary and a series of other grouped and individual heritage assets.
- 3.8.4 The key characteristics of Meadows are that it consists of a series of small scale, low lying paddocks used mainly for grazing and hay crop set within an attractive pastoral, parkland landscape. During the 17th century, the meadows were a busier pastoral landscape crossed with lanes and divided by hedgerow enclosures but were made into an open parkland landscape during the 18th century. The Deer Park Stables farm complex is set on the edge of this open landscape; although it was built during the mid-to-late 19th century, some minor settlement existed at, or very close to, the site since at least the 17th century and could have been ecclesiastical in origin. Since the infilling of the land to the west of White Cliff Mill Street and the development of the Park House site during the late 20th century, the urban fringe now lies at a distance from the historic core of the town, bordering directly onto Bryanston Park. The only remaining historic urban edge lies to the south of Bryanston Street at Bryanston Cottage. However, the south of the Park remains undeveloped and its 18th-century boundary remains intact having been incorporated into the Second World War defences. The north of the Deer Park, however, has been

encroached upon significantly since the 1960s by developments on Milldown Road and the buildings and sports fields of the two schools; further development here in the form of a floodlit synthetic sports field has been approved. This in turn makes its preservation all the more important.

- 3.8.5 Historical research and map regression (see Figs. 1 – 4) suggests that the Meadows were more enclosed and settled during the 17th century than at any point since (see Bowles map). The enclosures led down to the River Stour, over which was 'The great clyffe' of planted woodland leading to the pre-1778 Bryanston House built by the Rogers family. The continuation of Bryanston Street led across what was to become the Deer Park with closes on either side of the road towards Bryanston, Durweston and Sherborne. This road, known also as Chapel Lane, crossed the River Stour by a ford or footbridge near Bryanston House where it turned north-east towards Durweston. The direction of the road across the Meadows can be traced passing immediately south or through the site of the present Deer Park Stables. Significantly, some settlement, possibly ecclesiastical in origin judging by the place and road names, is indicated on the map in this area with three buildings illustrated in 'Chapel Close' at the junction of a lane running north-east off the Bryanston Road adjacent to several other small closes. The map of 1731 was made after the fire which destroyed most of the town. The 'road to Sherborne' across the meadows is still present. It was not until the 1780s that Henry William Portman swept this road away along with many of the small enclosures and turned Bryanston Street into a cul-de-sac. This change coincided with the building of the new Bryanston House by James Wyatt in 1778 on the site of the present St Martin's Church. By diverting the road to the eastern side of the river and building the bridge at Durweston, Portman left his new house standing in isolation overlooking an open Park and Deer Park as the church does today. The view over the Park and the River Stour from the wooded Cliff was described in 1778 in the eighth edition of Daniel Defoe's *Tour Through the Island of Great Britain* as 'one of the most superb and pleasing scenes of the kind I ever saw'. The tithe map of 1838 is the first to record the modern boundary between the west of the town and the Deer Park marked by the ha-ha ditch. This was also made the boundary of the borough after 1832. Bryanston Street was closed to the west by Park House and its gardens which marked the edge of the urban fringe with Bryanston Cottage and Bethune. The area to the west of White Cliff Mill Street remained undeveloped, although the first suburban villa had been built in about 1830. The site of the Deer Park Stables is located at 142a and is recorded simply as a 'paddock and hovel'; no other buildings are recorded in the Park, any earlier settlement probably having been swept away with Portman's improvements during the 18th century. By the 1888 Ordnance Survey, further buildings had been constructed on the Stables site to create Deer Park Farm. The farm and Bryanston Park were by this time overlooked by the suburban villas built during the mid-19th century along the west side of White Cliff Mill Street. The remainder of the western edge of the town remained open and undeveloped. By 1901, the cottage at Deer Park Farm



had been built and an access road and footpath created to White Cliff Mill Street. During the 1920s and 30s, an area within the southern part of the Park was used as a football ground. It was at this time that almost all of the Portman lands in Dorset, including Bryanston Park, passed to the Crown Estate Commissioners in lieu of death duties. During the Second World War, the ha-ha ditch boundary was utilised as part of an anti-tank defence, and pill boxes and concrete anti-tank obstacles were erected along the western fringe of the town overlooking the open space of the Park. These defences remain largely intact. Park House was still present in 1971, but by this time the modern development of Eagle House Gardens had been built and Deer Park House had been built on the former orchard behind the suburban villas. Park House was demolished later that decade and the Parklands development was constructed on its site; these modern buildings continue to mark the boundary of the urban fringe to the west of Bryanston Street. The first of the school buildings and fields were built in the north of the Deer Park by the late 1960s; by the end of the 1970s the Blandford School buildings and playing fields had been constructed, encroaching further onto the Deer Park. The mid-1970s saw further infilling behind the 19th-century suburban villas with the construction of Hanover Court. In the last thirty years, further infill has taken place along the boundary of the Park with the building of Portman Place off Hanover Court, River Mews behind the Crown Hotel to the south, and further expansion has taken place on the site of both schools. Deer Park Stables has also been expanded to include a large indoor riding school to complement the long- established riding school which has been based there.



Fig. 13. Map of Bryanston and part of Blandford Forum by William and Margaret Bowle, 1657-9 (Dorset History Centre, Ph.500). Note: The map is inverted with south at the top of this historic map. The road from Blandford (top left) to Bryanston (bottom right) is clearly visible running across the enclosed Crown Meadows to the River Stour; White Cliff Mill Street runs parallel to it to the left. The buildings at Chapel Close are half way along the road. The proposed site lies at Chapel Mead, Dogg Kennell Mead and Reek Close.



Fig. 14. Tithe Map of Blandford Forum, 1838 (T/BF). The Deer Park Stables are visible at 142a as a hovel and paddock. The boundary of the Park is clearly marked running along the south of Bryanston Street, around the grounds of Park House and along the orchard towards White Cliff Mill Street.



Fig. 15. Ordnance Survey of 1929. The site of the Deer Park Stables has now been developed as a farm complex and still lies in a largely undeveloped landscape. Very little further building to the west of the town has occurred apart from the construction of the suburban villas to the west of White Cliff Mill Street during the mid-19th century.



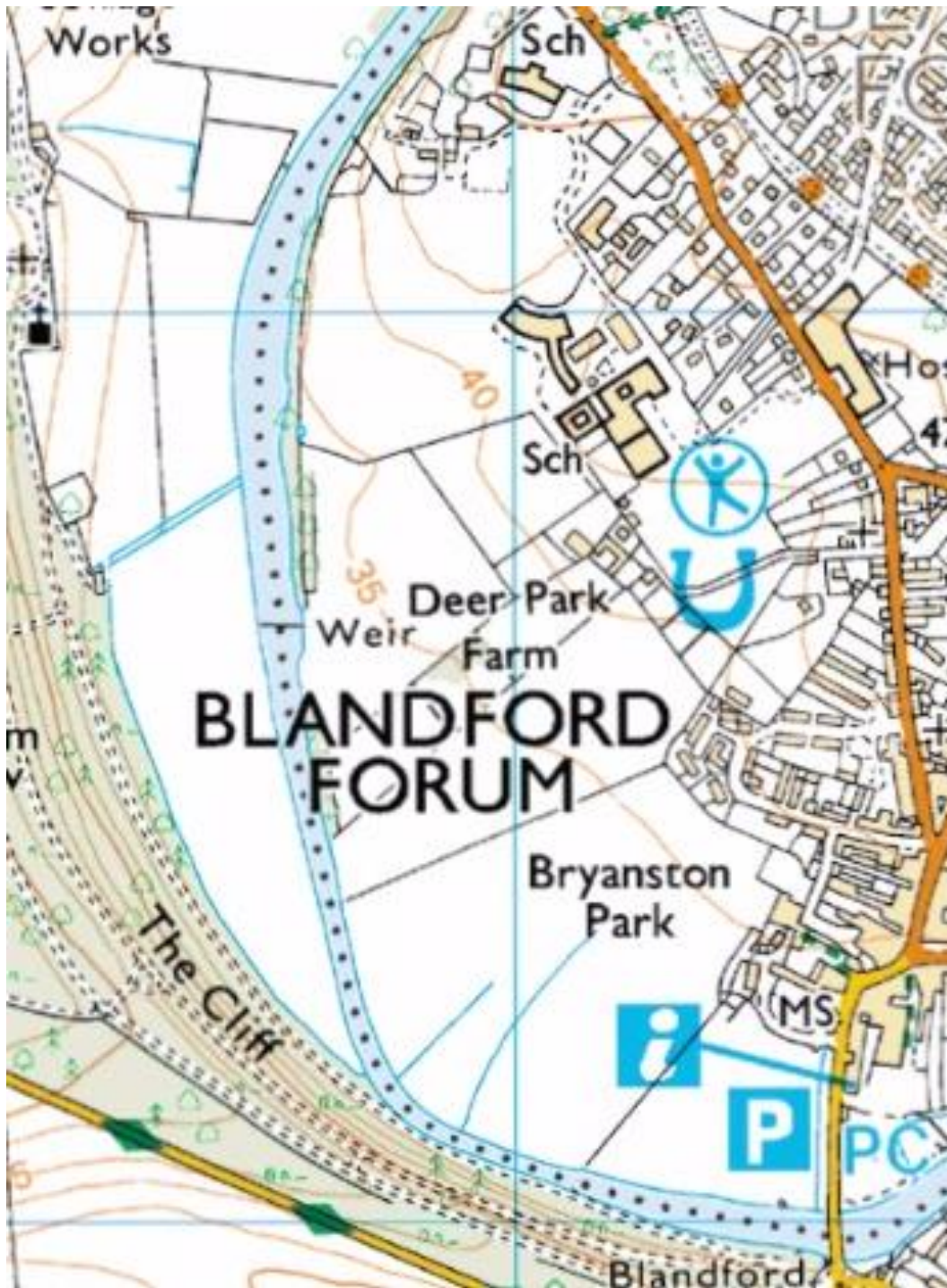


Fig. 16. Modern Ordnance Survey. The late 20th century saw substantial infilling to the west of the town and encroachments in the north of the Deer Park. To the south, the urban edge of the town remains confined within the 18th-century boundary of the Park.

### **3.9 Other heritage assets**

- 3.9.1 Given the high number of statutory listed buildings within the town centre is important to also consider those non-designated heritage assets which also make a positive contribution towards the character or appearance of the conservation area as identified within section 3.7 above.

This appraisal has used the following criteria to assess non-listed buildings and structures to determine their degree of local interest:

1. Most buildings erected before 1840, which survive in largely original condition
2. Buildings erected after 1840 but before 1939 which fall into one or more of the following categories:-
  - Having special value within certain types, historic or architectural. For instance, industrial buildings, railway stations, schools, civic buildings, cinemas, almshouses.
  - Displaying technological innovations or virtuosity. For instance, cast iron, prefabrication or early use of concrete.
  - Having group value (for instance squares, terraces or model villages.)
  - Illustrating social development and economic history
  - Of good design, reflecting period detail and style.
  - Designed by a well-known architect of national or local reputation
3. Buildings which have an association with local characters or events.
4. Street furniture of special or unique design, or of local historic interest.
5. Monuments and other commemorative structures or plaques which have local historic or architectural value

## **4 Spatial Analysis**

### **4.1 General**

- 4.1.1 Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside. Within the Blandford Forum Conservation Area there is a unique progression of spaces with varying degrees of enclosure and exposure. The character and appearance of the spaces is very much informed by the density and height of buildings, their position relative to the highway and each other, the character and form of boundaries and the contribution made by



trees and other vegetation together with views both within the area and those beyond the boundary, to the countryside or open spaces beyond. The areas comprise both public and private realm, the public being formed primarily by the streets and in particular the market place. Within the historic core, these demonstrate a clear hierarchy of space with the principle market place being served by a series of streets and lanes, closely enclosed by buildings. The higher buildings tend to be within the Market Place comprising many three-storey buildings, some with attic space expressed through the provision of dormer windows. This pattern extends along Salisbury street and East and West street with lesser distances between opposing buildings creating a more intense sense of enclosure and intimacy.

- 4.1.2 As one moves away from the historic core, the density reduces as does the degree of enclosure particularly within the north-western part of the study area. The north-eastern area however, which comprises areas such as Dorset and Orchard Street, the sense of enclosure is again very strong with buildings constructed (in the main) to the edge of the street and the mixture of two and three (4 in part) storey buildings again creates a strong sense of enclosure and character.

Figs 17. **Extracts from Insall Assoc. Report**

Fig. 18. **Figure ground map of the areas**

4.1.2 Also important within the conservation area are the effects of the underlying topography – the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths. This is particularly noticeable as one moves north through the area with streets leading north rising to These are all elements of townscape, giving visual coherence and organisation to the mixture of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the town centre (and its suburbs) environment. In summary, the general townscape can be described using three elements:

- The sequence of views obtained in passing through an area, depending upon road alignment, positions of buildings, views etc. The chain of events is usefully termed serial vision;
- The feelings of relative exposure and enclosure depending upon the size and shape of spaces and buildings;
- Content: colour, texture, scale, style, personality and the many little details of materials, street furniture, signs and other local distinctiveness characteristics.






## 4.2 Plan form

4.2.1 The figure ground map at Fig. 18 provides evidence of the town plan based upon its medieval origins as described in section 3. This shows the principal

space of the Market Place with routes radiating from it in an easterly, westerly and northerly direction. In addition, Figs. 8 and 9 enable an understanding of the plot widths and arrangements, with a particularly important area of burgage plots south of the Market place and East and West streets which it is necessary to safeguard against inappropriate development.

### 4.3 Assets map

Fig. 19. **To be completed showing:**

- A north sign
- The conservation area boundary as a solid black line
- Any conservation area extension as a hatched area
- All rights of way as dashed lines
- Locations of gateways with cross-references to text in section 4.4 using the 
- Locations of key views with cross-references to text in section 4.5 using the 
- Locations of landmarks with cross-references to text in section 4.6 using the 
- Locations of important local buildings with cross-references to text in section 3.6 using the 
- Locations of listed buildings with cross references to text in section 3.6 using the 
- Scheduled monuments

### 4.4 Gateways

- 4.4.1 There are several principal or key gateways into and out of the conservation area. The most significant is the approach to the town centre from the south and Blandford St. Mary. This entrance was used by Gordon Cullen in his book *The Concise Townscape* which used the series of consecutive views into the Market Place to illustrate the role of buildings and spaces to create a high-quality townscape. The gateway enables travel from the historic centre of Blandford St, Mary over the town bridge with Crown Meadows to the west and Marsh and Ham to the east with the view then being framed by buildings in West street and in particular the Crown Hotel, Riverside House and 31 west Street.



Plate 32. The approach into the town centre from Blandford St. Mary.

- 4.4.2 The second key entrance is located at the eastern end of East Street as one approaches from the east and announces the entrance into the historic core. 18<sup>th</sup> Century buildings frame the view into the town centre and East Street.



Plate 33. The entrance into East Street.

- 4.4.3 A third comprises the entrance into the Bryanston Estate and is marked by the gatehouse creating a distinctive and formal entrance into and exit from the wooded area.





Plate 34. Entrance into Bryanston

## 4.5 Key views

- 4.5.1 Views to and from the conservation area enable understanding and appreciation of both individual buildings and groups, spaces and the general grain, form and appearance of the conservation area. Part of the role of views is to provide a setting to heritage assets and given the number of assets within the area views to and from those asset from both public and private real are extremely important.
- 4.5.2 Key views can be divided into two types. The first are views to the conservation area from outside of the appraisal area. Examples include those from The Marsh and Ham, Crown Meadows and Stour Meadows which enable an appreciation of the landscaped framework within which the town sits.
- 4.5.3 Others are important internal views for example the approach from Blandford St. Mary, from West Street into the Market Place and views looking south along Salisbury Street from its junction with White Cliff Mill Street, The Plock, The Tabernacle, White Cliff Mill Street and Bryanston Street are also important locations for key views. These not only allow an appreciation of the individual assets and their setting but also the cumulative value of buildings within the area and the special architectural and historic interest of the area.



Plate 35. Looking east from West Street into Market Place.



Plate 36. Looking north along Salisbury Street from Market Place.



Plate 37. The approach towards the Town Centre from Blandford St, Mary.

## 4.6 Landmarks

4.6.1 Landmarks help shape and define the conservation area. They are those buildings or structures that help define why the area is special and providing visual and physical clues and evidence of the areas historical development and narrative. Given the high number of statutory listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets within the area, landmark buildings or structures are those that form some sort of visual node or marker enabling legibility and appreciation of the area. Those that perform this function are:

The Parish Church  
The Crown Hotel  
Bryanston Entrance Lodge  
The Town Hall/Shambles  
Bank House  
Lime Tree House  
The Old House  
Ryves Almshouses

## 5 Character Analysis

### 5.1 Description of character areas

5.1.1 The Medieval town centre represents the area of the medieval town and modern commercial centre of Blandford. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension, particularly the survival of a large number of burgage plot

boundaries. The southern boundary is, for the most part, taken as the River Stour.

- 5.1.2 The urban structure of this area essentially comprises a T-shape of major roads with West Street crossing the river and East Street running parallel to the River Stour. The streets are sinuous and West Street has a distinct dog-leg. The rectangular market place is at the junction of these roads. Behind the main roads are back lanes running parallel to the north and west with some small lanes linking the two.
- 5.1.3 The plots off the main roads are generally regular long narrow burgage plots, with very few wider plots along the frontages, most notably, the parish church and the Crown Hotel. The regularity of the settlement pattern breaks down in the area around The Plocks and Sheep Market Hill, where there are small market places and larger house plots. There is some amalgamation of burgage plots behind the street frontages.
- 5.1.4 Figure 20. shows the present day historic urban character types. Most of the area comprises Burgage Plots. There are three Markets and the Church adjacent. There is a large area of Superstore and Hotel and the southern end is formed by the River and Public Open Space. Other minor character types include Other Historic Plots, Victorian Terraced Housing, Telephone Exchange and Modern Infill.
- 5.1.5 This area represents the primary historic component of the town. The layout suggests that the church, market square and burgage plots along East Street were planned and laid out in a single event, perhaps in the early 12th century. Blandford Bridge is first recorded in the 13th century and the current line of West Street and the associated burgage plots along on its east side is probably of a similar date. The burgage plots on the west side of Salisbury Street are probably later medieval in origin. The town houses are 18th century, fitted into the essentially medieval plot layout.



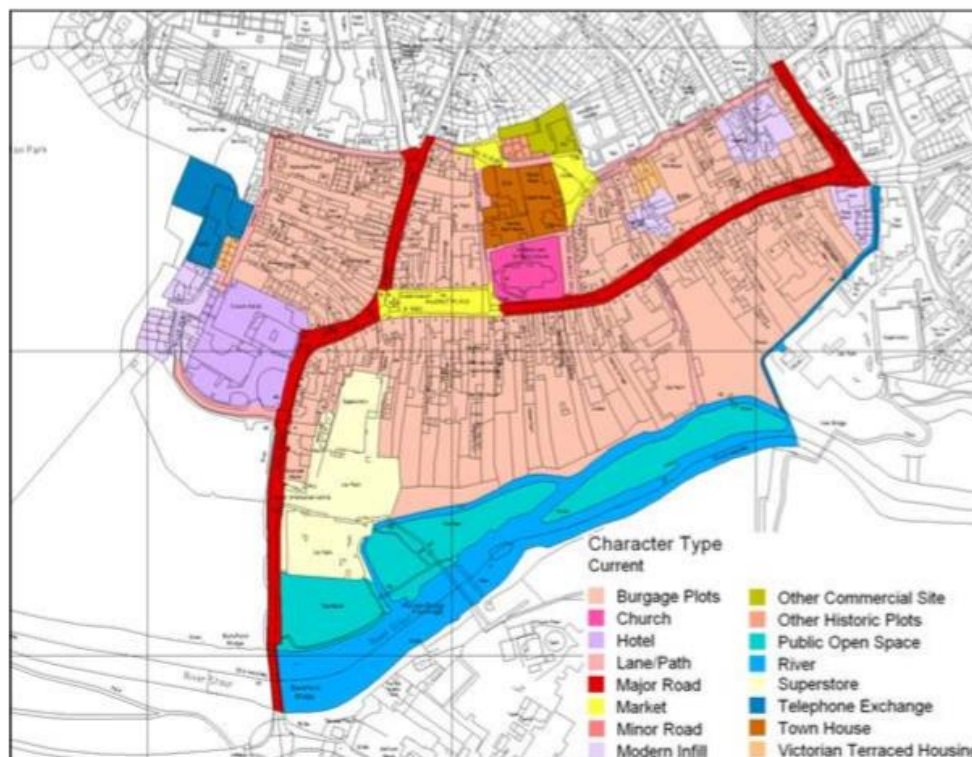


Fig. 20. The Medieval Town Centre. Source Dorset Historic Towns Survey

- 5.1.6 The second character area lies immediately north of the medieval historic core and represents the late 17th to early 19th century expansion of the town. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension.
- 5.1.7 The urban structure of this area comprises three radial routes converging at the junction of Bryanston, White Cliff Mill and Salisbury Streets. A number of roads giving access to housing estates run off these main routes. The local access roads include both linear street grids and curvilinear cul-de-sac layouts. The plots in this area vary between closely-packed rectilinear plots on Dorset and Orchard Streets, to much larger open plots in the northern part of the area.
- 5.1.8 Figure 21. Shows the present day historic urban character types. The southern part of the area mainly comprises Larger Terraced and Detached Housing and Small Terraced Housing, with significant areas of Modern Infill. Elsewhere Suburban Villas and Modern Housing Estates predominate. Other minor character types include Cemetery, Car Park, Medical Facility, Nursing Home, Other Historic Plots, Other Inter-war housing and Town House.
- 5.1.9 The major roads are the earliest features in this area and appear to be medieval or earlier in origin. Expansion of the town into this area appears to have begun in the later 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ryves Almshouses and Dale House are the only late 17<sup>th</sup> century feature surviving. The majority of this area dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The larger houses in the southern part of the area are

late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Eagle House is 18<sup>th</sup> century. Park House, at the west end of Bryanston Street was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The house was demolished in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the extensive grounds developed as modern Parkland housing estate. The small terraced housing estate on Orchard and Dorset Streets is early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the suburban houses on White Cliff Mill Street date to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The later 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen much redevelopment of larger gardens and infilling of the area.

5.1.10 With regard to settlement pattern and streetscape the southern end Salisbury Street and the east side of White Cliff Mill Street are lined with closely packed urban housing. Larger detached town houses are more typical of the west side of White Cliff Mill Street and the north end of Salisbury Street. The 19<sup>th</sup> century suburban villas on White Cliff Mill Street are set back behind small open yards, Bryanston Street has a mixture of detached cottages, inter-war semis and modern apartments. Two rows of small 19<sup>th</sup> century brick terraces are arranged perpendicular to the street behind the northern frontage. Damory Street was formerly dominated by schools, a gas works and cemetery, although modern development and car parks are now more typical. The north side of The Close and The Plocks has fine Georgian buildings and a Wesleyan Methodist chapel with modern housing behind. The north side of the close is dominated by a large early 19<sup>th</sup> century housing estate of terraced houses fronting directly on to Dorset and Orchard Streets.

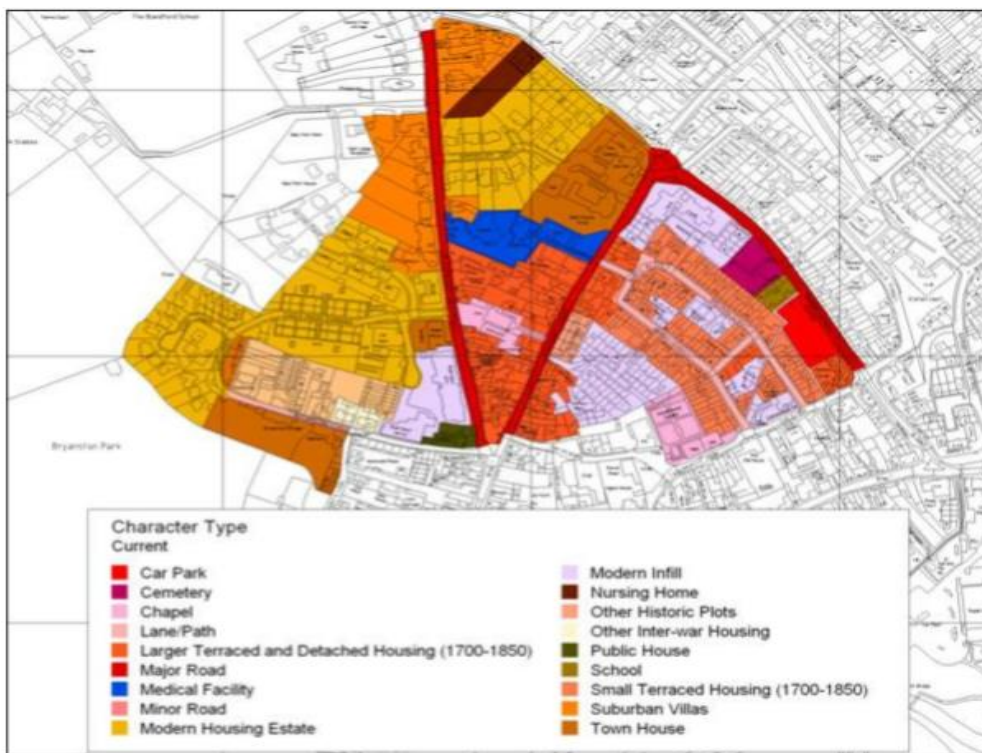


Fig. 21. The northern area.

## 5.2 Positive contributors

- 5.2.1 Given the extremely high concentration of historic buildings within the area, all those identified as statutory listed buildings or non-designated heritage assets should be considered (irrespective of their current condition) to be considered positive contributors to the conservation area.



Plate 38. The town pump, an important historic building and feature within the market place.

- 5.2.2 In addition, those open spaces and trees that provide a setting area also important and the presumption should be to safeguard them against inappropriate development.
- 5.2.3 Further to the above, the important contribution made towards the special interest of the conservation area by other features such as street furniture and general floorscape cannot be underestimated. Appropriate street furniture which reinforces the underlying 19<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> character or the town should be used wherever possible. Furthermore, paving which reflects the importance and age of the historic town centre is also vital to reinforce the quality and status of the area.



Plate 39. Natural good quality paving material which enhances the visual quality and interest of the town centre.

### 5.3 Shopfronts and Signage

- 5.3.1 Shops make a significant contribution to the distinguishing character of the Town Centre and Conservation Area and maintain its important links with the 18<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction. The primary purpose of a shopfront is to attract the attention of shoppers. Appropriate signage, paint finishes, inviting entrances and attractive window displays all influence the potential customer and create a sense of character and reinforce the town's with and 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance. Conserving these historic features enhances Blandfords shopping areas no matter how small and may, in turn, bring economic benefits to that area by increased footfall. In contrast, shops and signage of poor appearance and quality detract from the conservation area and can discourage shoppers and may contribute to an overall loss of townscape character. (Ref. Dorset Council Shopfronts Guidance).





Plate 40. 18<sup>th</sup> Century shopfronts within west Street.

## 5.4 Problems and detriments

5.4.1 Several issues give cause for concern and have resulted in Historic England confirming that Blandford Conservation Area is “at risk”. These risks include:

Economic Uncertainty

Lack of investment

Poor maintenance of buildings, structures and floorscape

Changes of Use

Lack of understanding of the importance and role of the historic environment.

5.4.2 Market town High Streets in particular are facing increasing pressure from a number of factors:

- Increase in on-line shopping, which can be easier and is normally cheaper
- Increase in edge of town supermarkets, where people can purchase almost all they need, and the location often doesn't encourage people to visit the town centre.
- Income squeeze over the last few years has exacerbated the problem, as people have less to spend
- Increasing overheads for retailers and other town centre businesses


5.4.3 Market town centres which do well in the face of these factors offer a different 'experience', with a mix of main shops and small independent shops, a mix of markets, a sense of activity and a place to socialise. The quality of the heritage and architectural fabric is a very important part of this and as a result a series of

management policies have been produced in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 5.5 Assessment of condition

5.5.1 Historic buildings are especially vulnerable to the problems of vacancy, neglect and lack of suitable repair. Many of the agricultural buildings within the area are currently in a poor state of repair either through lack of funding, deliberate neglect or well-intentioned but ill-informed repairs or alterations. A detailed survey of buildings within the area has been undertaken the results of which are attached as an appendix. An examination of the information gathered has revealed underlying causes of decay reflect a general lack of maintenance or lack of awareness of the impact of uninformed alterations and additions (including shopfront, signs and paint colours). The survey revealed the need to undertake regular maintenance to ensure that rainwater goods for example are maintained to prevent ingress of moisture into built fabric and thus avoiding costly repairs. (See appendix). Two examples of long term issues relating to the maintenance and re-use of the town centre’s historic buildings comprise 26 East Street and 52 Salisbury Street. Both have been included in a series of North Dorset District Council Buildings At Risk registers. The following examples provide evidence of the Council’s concerns.

Agricultural		Domestic			Retail		Ecclesiastical	
MAP Reference	Co-Ordinates		Address			Parish	Survey	
ST8866064	E388741 N106377		26 East St			Blandford Forum	13/12/10	
SURVEYOR	BOA	RS	CA	Windows	Roofing	WM	SR	
MRW	3	5	Yes	Wooden Sash	Plain tile	Brick	4*	

<p><b>Description:</b> Two-storey 18<sup>th</sup> Century Town House, with Dormer Casement windows in Attic. Sash Windows with glazing bars, four panel door with canopy over and fanlight.</p> <p><b>Condition:</b></p> <p><i>General:</i> Chimney of Brick construction flashing failing on left side. (Po</p> <p><i>Roof:</i> Plain tile with slate course at e level small amount of dipping(f</p> <p><i>Walling:</i> Flemish Bond (fair)</p> <p><i>Pointing:</i> Flush (good)</p> <p><i>Joinery:</i> All wood work (fair)</p> <p>Footprint = 33m<sup>2</sup></p>	
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## 6 Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

- 6.1. A review of the conservation area boundary which abuts non-designated land has been undertaken and no proposed changes are being put forward.

## 7 Community Involvement

- 7.1 The appraisal was subject to public consultation between during which an information event, manned by district council officers, was held in . Comments received helped finalise the appraisal, which was subject to further consultation on a proposed extension to the conservation area.

## 8 Management Policies

- 8.1 Given the significant historic and architectural interest of Blandford Forum, a series of management policies have been produced which aim to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. These

policies seek to support local planning policies adopted by the Council in addition to those within the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 8.2 The policies are as follows:

### Demolition

In addition to the general presumption against the demolition of statutory listed buildings, there will also be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings (both principal and service buildings e.g. outbuildings) which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Thus, it is expected that proposals to demolish such buildings will be considered against the same criteria as proposals to demolish statutory listed buildings. For cases where a building makes little or no such contribution the District Council will require a heritage statement outlining the value of the building to be demolished in architectural or historic terms together with clear information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. In such instances and for new development sites consent will not be given unless acceptable and detailed plans are submitted.

### New Development

#### Siting and layout

Whilst opportunities for new development will be extremely limited, proposals for new development should respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings. The siting and layout of new buildings will need careful consideration and will need to reflect the scale, form, common roof heights and the detailing and materials of the contributory buildings. Spaces around and between buildings allow views into and from the open countryside and are important to the character and appearance of the area and the setting of buildings. Where it is evident areas or buildings are characterised by open settings, regular spacing or large gardens (such as the highly sensitive burgage plots to the south of the Market Place, West and East Street or White Cliff Mill Street – western side), the introduction of additional substantial buildings are likely to be inappropriate particularly where it is evident that the spatial characteristics of the locality will be reduced, diminished or harmed.

To be able to assess the impact of a development on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area the District Council will need to be provided with detail of the proposal. It is expected that planning applications will be submitted with sufficient detail on the siting, layout, design, use of materials, landscaping and any other details necessary to allow a full understanding of the proposals and the likely effect on the area.



## New building Design

The District Council expects all new development within the Conservation Area, both free standing buildings and extensions to existing buildings to be of the highest architecture quality. Assertive, uncompromising or insensitive contemporary design or poorly informed, inappropriate references to more traditional and vernacular forms can soon dilute the special characteristics and local distinctiveness of the conservation area and will be resisted. The adaptation of local vernacular styles and use of local materials will normally be expected within The Street to reinforce the unique character and appearance of the area. The main elevation of new buildings and general orientation will be expected to reflect those of the immediate area to help integrate new development into existing patterns of development.

## Alterations and Extensions

The Conservation Area is not a museum, but a living historic landscape. Changing lifestyles and expectations will result in pressure for changes to existing buildings and spaces. Requirements can sometimes be met without diminishing the character and appearance of the area, but care is required to ensure that new developments preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Even changes such as the repainting of a shopfront, a change of window or door, the installation of external plumbing fixtures or ventilation stacks and chimney flues can have a detrimental impact on the external character of a building and therefore the area.

The Council has produced guidance on alterations to historic buildings which can be found under the North Dorset Pages on Dorset for You. This provides guidance on the principles to be adopted when considering changes to historic buildings and they can also be applied to any building within an historic area. Reference should also be made to the Dorset Thatching model to inform works to thatched roofs within the area.

## Locations and form of extension

Any extension or addition should reflect the design, form, materials, textures and finishes of the existing building. These constraints will vary between individual buildings in the Conservation Area, and any proposals will need to respond to the specific building and local environment. In general, extensions should be subservient to the original building and not dominate or compete in visual terms with that building. Within the Conservation Area the primacy of the original building will be required to be maintained and the special characteristics of the street, road, lane or footpath including the separation between buildings and the views between them to the landscape beyond will need to be protected.

## Materials and methods

Given the range of buildings within the conservation area, the palette of materials is limited ranging from stone, brick and some render to clay tiles and natural slate for roof coverings plus limited examples of cob and mathematical tiles. Reference for the construction of any new works should be informed by the host or principal building. Care should be taken to take note of local details such as string courses, eaves projections, lintels etc. and incorporate them in local development where appropriate. The matching of bonds and styles of walling, render, mortar material and pointing style will be encouraged. Windows and doors should also aim to reflect local character and appearance and the use of sustainable materials (not UPVC) will be sought.

## Exterior Details

Many historic buildings in the Conservation Area are either polite or vernacular in nature. Other buildings reflect a particular age or style of construction (e.g. 19th Century polite architecture). Typical details, which are characteristic of these buildings should be retained wherever possible. Alterations to the exterior form and detailing should respond sensitively to the significant elements of the building. In particular attention should be paid to protecting and reflecting elements of the original design and detailing, such as chimney stacks, ridge tiles, lintels and string courses

The personalising or improving of buildings through replacement windows and doors, rendering and other elevational changes and the creation of hard surfaces or placing of garden buildings and equipment can have a dramatic and adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is particularly apparent within residential areas where significant change has taken place. Although many such alterations may not require planning permission or listed building consent, if it is demonstrated that the character and appearance of the conservation is being harmed by cumulative change then the Council will consider issuing an Article 4 Direction under the relevant planning legislation in order to prevent the loss of special interest of the Conservation Area.

## Windows

Metal and timber casements and vertical sliding sash windows are most common type within the Conservation Area. Where repair or replacement is necessary any new work should match the existing material and character of historic windows. Insensitive replacement of windows can seriously detract from the character of the building and, the Conservation Area. Mass produced windows including those made from UPVC, can alter and involve the loss of historic proportions and detailing of originals windows and will not be allowed within listed buildings.

## Doors

Historic front doors, door cases, garage doors and porches are important feature of the Conservation Area, adding character to the street scene, reflecting the age of construction and should be retained wherever possible. Mass produced doors including those made from UPVC, can lead to changes to the design, involve the loss of historic detailing and fabric as well as harming the appearance of the building. The removal of original doors and their replacement with inappropriate doors in timber, UPVC or other material will not be allowed within listed buildings and where controls exist will be resisted on other non-designated heritage assets (non-listed buildings).

## Cladding and Rendering

The cladding of walls with stone, timber or plastic does require planning permission and where relevant, listed building consent. Given the limited pallet of materials within the Conservation Area it can have a diverse effect on the character of the building and the Conservation Area and therefore any applications for changes to remove historic fabric and replace with more modern materials will not be supported.

Dormer windows are a common feature within the Conservation Area and in part form an important component of the architectural style of the buildings. In some case the introduction of dormers and roof lights will be inappropriate. In other cases, sometimes dormer windows can be a more suitable insertion into a roof although they should always be of a size, scale and design appropriate for the appearance and age of the building and the character of the area. Only conservation type roof lights are considered appropriate in buildings pre-dating the mid-twentieth century.

## Ancillary Works

Alterations to, or the introduction of, outbuildings, walls, paved areas, particularly to the front or side of properties can all impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## Garages

Where space allows, any new garages should be constructed in materials and adopting details that are compatible with host and adjacent buildings whilst safeguarding existing trees, hedgerows and other boundary details. Where existing garages are to be modified, the opportunity should be taken where necessary to improve the visual relationship the existing and proposed building in order to reinforce the special interest of the area, building and its setting.

## Fences, Boundary Walls, Gates and Front Hedges

Although urban in character, hedges, mature trees, railings and picket fences form important features in the Conservation Area and the presumption will be to resist their removal. The retention of existing boundary treatments and gates will be encouraged wherever practical. Furthermore, the reinstatement of known earlier boundary treatments will be encouraged provided there is clear archival evidence of their existence. Historic materials and detailing should be accurately reinstated. The creation of new or widened openings through existing boundary structures or plantings can erode the streetscape and should only be undertaken where alternatives or more modest arrangements are not available. Where new or replacement boundary treatments are proposed, these should reflect the height, scale, materials and detailing used historically. The planting of hedges of traditional native species will be supported. Where security is a concern, the selection of native thorny species such as hawthorn and blackthorn will be encouraged and can be protected while establishing by temporary wire mesh fencing set discreetly within the hedge.

## Trees and Gardens

Areas of mature trees exist both within the Conservation Area and in the surrounding landscape and they contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Local Planning Authority must be notified of any work to trees within conservation areas and trees and tree groups which have been identified as important to the character of the Gillingham Conservation Area should be retained and the presumption will be to safeguard trees which make a positive contribution to the area.

## Satellite Antennas and Solar Panels

The installation of satellite dishes on to the front elevations, or chimneys of buildings in the Conservation Area requires careful consideration. The Local Planning Authority will usually resist granting planning permission for dishes on the front elevation of building or others facing roads, public spaces or above the roof line.

## Shopfronts

### Shopfronts

Shops make a significant contribution to the distinguishing character and appearance of the Conservation Area and they represent an important link with the social and cultural history of the town. The primary purpose of a shopfront is to attract the attention of shoppers. Appropriate signage, paint finishes, inviting entrances and attractive window displays all influence the potential customer. Conserving the historic features of the town enhances the shopping areas no



matter how small and may, in turn, bring economic benefits to that area by increased footfall. In contrast, shops and signage of poor appearance and quality detract from an area, can discourage shoppers and may contribute to an overall loss of townscape character.

### Frameworks

The shopfront is the screen or panel that fills the space defined by the architectural framework. The term refers to the door, window and stallriser as well as any glazing bars (transoms, mullions) that might be present. They provide the greatest opportunity for interpretation and adaptation. It is a fundamental principle for historic buildings that original or traditional architectural frameworks, shopfronts, or elements should be repaired or re-established, where photographic evidence or nearby original fabric exists. The removal of good quality original or early fabric will be resisted.

The architectural framework should:

- i Relate to the building or group of buildings on which it is fitted;
- ii Frame the shopfront and give visual support to the upper floors;
- iii Separate shop units visually within the streetscene, creating a strong vertical rhythm;
- iv Respect the proportions of adjacent units and upper floors;

### Fascias

The fascia was traditionally an angled or flat board containing the trade name sited between the corbels at the top of the pilasters. The fascia provides the opportunity to create a distinctive and individual style by applying the following principles:

- (i) Cornices should be retained or reinstated as the terminating element of the fascia; they should be weatherproofed using lead flashing or a similar material.
- (ii) The width of the fascia should be restricted within the pilasters and corbels or line up with the window frame below where the corbels are missing.
- (iii) The depth of the fascia should be restricted to the depth of the console. If consoles do not exist the general rule is that the fascia depth should not exceed one-fifth of the distance between the cornice and pavement or the fascias of adjacent properties should be used as a guide for alignment but not necessarily as a standard.

(iv) Fascias which are over-deep should be reduced when a new fascia sign is produced or shopfront replaced.

(v) The fascia (and other signage) should contain the name and/or trade of the premises together with the street number of the premises and a telephone number if necessary. The lettering should be well spaced and cover a maximum of 3/4 the depth of the fascia. The colour scheme should complement the shop window frames. The lettering style should be simple and bold.

(vi) Intermittent, flashing or moving displays will normally be unacceptable, either on the shopfront or within the window.

(vii) Due to the historic nature of Blandford Forum illuminated signs will be generally resisted. In exceptional circumstances, where it is felt appropriate to introduce a form of sensitive lighting, i.e. to support evening trade, internally illuminated or wholly backlit fascias will not be acceptable. If illumination of the fascia is required this should be done by external means e.g. concealed top light tubes or carefully positioned spot or backlights concealing the light source. Large spots or swan necks will normally be unacceptable.

(viii) Shiny, glossy, highly reflective and luminous colours and materials will not be acceptable.

(ix) On historic buildings and within the Conservation Area as a whole, effective and acceptable forms of signage include signwriting on the fascia board or the installation of individual letters in metal or wood. Silver, gold or light-coloured lettering on a dark background reflects light at night and used with interior lighting of window displays is successful. This provides the required colour contrast to assist people who are visually impaired.

### Lettering

Lettering upon the fascia should preferably be traditionally sign written. In some circumstances applied lettering will be considered, for example, gilded lettering with a half-round section is particularly suitable for public houses. Flat applied lettering on minimal pins will sometimes be acceptable. Lettering should normally be easily contained within the fascia - a ratio of 60% fascia height for lettering, with 20% spacing above and below is a guide. Generally, the length of wording should not be greater than 75% of the fascia length

### Stallrisers

Stallrisers are the solid panels below the shop window they can introduce a horizontal unity in the streetscene. They can also provide a visual base to the shopfront, bring displays of goods closer to the shopper and to protect the glazing from damage. The materials for stallrisers and upstands should respect

the main building and shopfront. Acceptable materials include timber, stonework, brickwork to match the upper facades, painted smooth render, slate, or when appropriate e.g. butchers or fishmongers, ceramics.

Traditional stallrisers will normally required on in all shop premises. The base of the pilasters or existing traditional stallrisers in adjacent units should determine the height. The general design and details of mouldings and cills should respect the architectural period of the property. At the very minimum a solid upstand of at least 150mm will be required.

### Pilasters

Pilasters contribute to the vertical emphasis of a building and providing support for the shop and upper floors. The pilaster projects only slightly from the wall, and has a base, a shaft, and a capital. Pilasters should:

- Be modelled and project beyond the plane of the shopfront and the upper floors.
- Not be clad or treated separately on each side of the party line, or cluttered with fixtures such as signs, alarm boxes or blind fittings.
- On historic buildings, be treated in a manner sympathetic to the architectural style and age of the building.
- Include decorative mouldings on historic buildings which can be should be copied from an original nearby shop or a historical pattern book.

### Window frame and doors including architraves

Windows and doors, through the use of colour, interesting shapes and proportions, quality materials and lively window displays can add visual interest to the streetscene and produce a distinctive individual shop unit. At all times, the detailed design of the size, shape and profile of window frames, glazing bars and doors should respect the architectural style and period of the premises. The plane of shop windows should be slightly recessed from the pilasters to provide depth and shadow and a variation in the plane, by recessing doors or curving windows, can also add to visual interest. Deeply recessed windows or completely open frontages are unacceptable in visual and functional terms.

### Colour

The colour palette should reflect the context of the area and the character and appearance of the host building. Within the Conservation Area a 'traditional' colour palette and finish should be used. Rich, dark colours with a matt finish often look very good, leaving window displays and lettering to provide accents. Whatever the context, colour schemes adopted should be subtle and blend harmoniously with the environment. Corporate organisations should not assume

that their corporate colour scheme will be acceptable and variations may be required. The Council has adopted a colour palette has been produced. The suggested colours are:

To be confirmed.

## Materials

Materials used in shopfront construction should be of good quality, durable and in keeping with a building's existing character. In general, the number and type of materials and colours used should be kept to a minimum. Materials traditionally used in the Conservation Area are timber glass, brick, stone, brass and painted iron. Good quality modern materials for lettering will sometimes be permitted where appropriate, but fascias made of acrylic sheeting, Perspex, aluminium or plastic will not generally be permitted. Timber is the most versatile of materials and was the standard shopfront material of previous centuries. Painted timber is preferred to stained hardwood and tropical hardwoods are discouraged, as their use is environmentally questionable.

## Projecting Signs

Projecting signs can provide a useful form of advertising where identity is necessary from a longer distance, and if illuminated on premises that are open after dark. However, the proliferation of such signage can create visual clutter in the townscape thus undermining their advertising purpose. Only one projecting sign for each shop unit or structural bay will be permitted. Where a unit is located on a corner site the projecting signs should be located at that end of the fascia, which is farthest from the corner. This enables the trader to maximise presence while minimising the visual clutter. Also, projecting signs should normally be installed at fascia level, at either end of the fascia panel. Signs should not be fixed to the pilasters or decorative capitals.

## Blinds and canopies

There is a good historical precedent for the installation of blinds or canopies on shop units. However, the style, colour, material, location, and number of blinds or canopies installed can affect the character of a streetscene. Existing original or traditional canvas blinds and blind boxes should be retained and refurbished. The mechanism for the blind should ideally be located at the base of the fascia, behind a blind lath. If the shopfront is not being altered, it may be appropriate to position the blind mechanism above the cornice.



## Additional Signage

When business premises have a forecourt, there is consent to display additional signage, indicating any commercial services, goods for sale or other services available at the premises. Typically, these notices take the form of A board signs. The notices must be at ground floor; not exceed 4.5 square meters on each forecourt; not be illuminated and consider issues relevant to the Disability and Discrimination Act. Only one sign per premises is supported. The front of a premise which forms part of the highway is not a forecourt and signs should not be placed upon the highway.

## Security shutters

External solid or perforated metal shutters result in an unattractive environment out of shopping hours, attract graffiti and reduce safety and security for the public. They deaden the streetscene and discourage pedestrians from using streets out of shopping hours. Night lighting of the interior of shop window displays encourages pedestrian use of the street out of hours providing passive surveillance that deters vandals and thieves. As such the use of external metal roller shutters is unacceptable within the Conservation Area.

## Uses

Blandford Forum like many market town high streets and retail areas is facing increasing pressure from a number of factors:

- Increase in on-line shopping, which can be easier and is normally cheaper
- Increase in edge of town supermarkets, where people can purchase almost all they need, and the location often doesn't encourage people to visit the town centre.
- Income squeeze over the last few years has exacerbated the problem, as people have less to spend
- Increasing overheads for retailers and other town centre businesses

In order to secure economic vitality opportunities should be sought which provide visitors and residents with an 'experience', with a mix of main shops and small independent shops, a mix of markets, a sense of activity and a place to socialise. The quality of the heritage and architectural fabric provides an important framework and place for this to occur. Proposals which contribute and enable a vibrant town centre to exist will be encouraged.

## Enforcement

Where there is demonstrable evidence that works have taken place which cause harm, both substantial and less than substantial, to the special interest of the area or individual buildings or structures, appropriate and proportionate action will be taken by the local planning authority to reverse the harm caused and seek reinstatement of any lost features or fixtures.

## Advice

The District Council can advise on the need for Listed Building Consent or any developments that might require planning permission. Advice will also be given on matters such as methods of maintenance and repair, alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings and suitable materials.

Property Alterations: Planning Permission may be required for a variety of works to a property in a conservation area (either for residents or businesses) if it is proposed to make alterations such as over-cladding the exterior; inserting different windows; installing satellite dishes and solar panels, adding conservatories or other extensions, laying forecourt paving or building walls; and can include increased control over advertisements and shop signs. This is because it is the appearance of the area as a whole that is important and this could be spoiled by unsympathetic work that diminishes its special character.

The substantial or complete demolition of a building within a conservation area will usually require permission from the Council.

Particular emphasis is given to the protection of trees in conservation areas and anyone thinking of doing any pruning works or felling of a tree must notify the Council 6 weeks in advance to enable an assessment to be made about the contribution the tree makes to the special character of the designated area. The Council can also decide to specifically protect the tree by making a Tree Preservation Order.

## 9 Information and Contact Details

E.g. Contacts: Dorset Councils Partnership Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or e-mail

## 10 References

To be completed.



## **11 Management Plan**