

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 3 Durlston Down

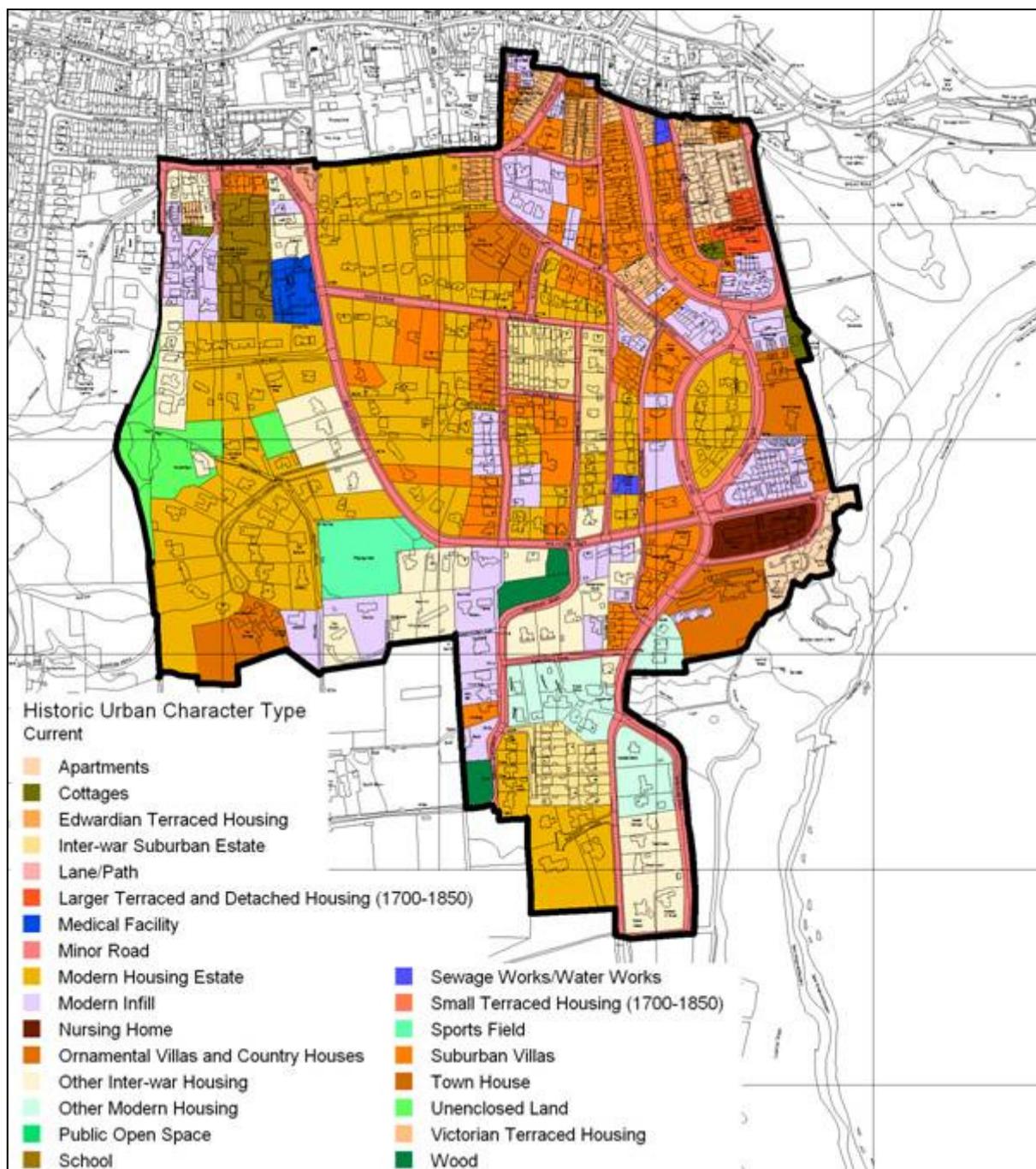


Figure 66: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is the area of historic suburban expansion to the south of the town towards Durlston. It comprises the land south of the High Street properties between Townsend Road to the west and Seymer Road to the east, which formed the 19th century suburban estates of George Burt and Sir Charles Robinson. It is defined by its historic dimension and its concentration of large suburban villas.

Topography and Geology

Generally, the ground slopes steeply down to the north towards the High Street. At the southeast corner it slopes down into a small coombe running eastwards to the coast. The underlying geology is Middle Purbeck limestone.

Urban Structure

The area fundamentally comprises two separate long rectangular estates divided by Taunton Road, which have differing developmental histories. This has produced a framework of largely linear parallel roads running N-S, combined with some curving avenues. There are very few roads running E-W linking up the various parts of this area. There is a large variation in the size and shape of the properties. Generally, they front onto the major roads, but there are a number of housing developments served by both linear and curvilinear culs-de-sac.

Present Character

Figure 66 shows the present-day historic urban character types. Suburban villas and modern housing estates predominate in the east and west parts of the area respectively. Ornamental Villas are found on the margins of the area. There are a number of areas of Inter-war Suburban Estates and Other Inter-war Housing interspersed throughout the area, together with



Figure 67: Bon Accord Road.

a number of areas of Modern Infill. In the northwest part are a School and Medical Facility. Other minor character types include small areas of Wood and Sewage Works/Water Works.

Time Depth

The parallel N-S routes and boundaries probably originate as medieval strip field boundaries and prior to the suburban development of this area they served as routes to the extensive stone quarries which covered this area. Seymer Road and some of the development along it belongs to the early 19th century. The majority of the roads and the suburban villa development belongs to the mid-late 19th century. The school and hospital are late 19th century in date. The remaining areas of suburban development date from the inter-war, post-war and modern periods.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

Much of this area has a generally low density suburban feel with houses often set well back from the street frontage. To the north, closer to the High Street and the town centre, it has a more urban feel with some terraced housing and large houses on small plots set close to the street frontage. A number of the roads are not adopted and comprise gravel tracks. Where the houses are set back from the road, the boundaries are marked by rubble stone walls.

Trees and vegetation play a major role in this area, but are restricted to private gardens rather than public green spaces. There are a number of large pine trees and many gardens have mature trees and other vegetation often obscuring the buildings. This is particularly evident along Peveril Road and parts of Bon Accord Road. Seymer Road has good views out over Peveril Point and there are views to the north towards Ballard Down glimpsed from many locations in this area.



Figure 68: Purbeck View Road.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 3 Built Character

Building types

The area is characterised by a large number of primarily Edwardian villas. Other late Victorian and Edwardian buildings include some large attached, detached and guest houses as well as some terraced houses. They are generally three to four storeys in height, but some of the smaller terraces are two storeys with attics. They include a number of Arts and Crafts inspired buildings and a range of other typical late 19th – early 20th century styles. Stacked bay windows are prominent on many of these houses. There is a distinctive group of Georgian buildings on Seymer Road.

A range of inter-war houses and bungalows, but mainly large detached houses in a variety of styles typical of the period, is found in this area. Modern houses include both bungalows and detached houses of varied architectural styles typical of the period. There are a number of large apartment developments of 4-5 storeys, including 1960s flat- or monopitch-roofed developments, typified by Peveril Heights, Seymer Road, and more recent buildings built in a pastiche of different historic building styles.

There is an impressive range of industrial buildings and associated office buildings built for the Swanage Gas and Water Companies in Marshall Row, and a water tower in a medieval military style in Terrace Road. Swanage Hospital is a pleasing late Victorian red brick structure that takes its stylistic cues from the Victorian villas and boarding houses of the area. The adjacent Mount Scar school is a typical late Victorian school building.

Many of the plots in this area are defined by stone boundary walls, generally these are low, but can attain a significant height, particularly along Sunshine Walk. There are also a number of stone street markers surviving from the initial laying out of the area (Figure 71).

Building Materials

The Georgian houses are stuccoed with slate roofs. The majority of the late Victorian and Edwardian houses are of red brick with stone or yellow brick dressings. The roofs are of slate or tile. Decorative timber barge boards and balconies are a feature of some villas.

A small number of buildings are of local stone, primarily community and industrial buildings, including Swanage First School and the former Water and Gas works offices and Water Tower.

The inter-war buildings are of brick and fre-

quently are pebble-dashed. The majority of the modern houses are stone clad.

Key Buildings

Early 19th century buildings: Seymer Place, Belvedere and Belvedere Lodge, Clarence Cottage.

Victorian and Edwardian Villas: Sunnyside Villas, 16-28 Durlston Road, Cluny House, Sea Court Taunton Road, Carthion, Wordsworth Nursing Home.

Industrial Buildings: Swanage Water and Gas Works Offices, Swanage Water Tower.

Community Buildings: Swanage Cottage Hospital, Swanage First School.



Figure 69: Seymer Road.



Figure 70: Swanage Water Tower.



Figure 71: Original stone street name, Queen's Road.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 3 Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations

Archaeological discoveries have been recorded from three sites in this area, on Bon Accord Road, Atlantic Road and Durlston Cliff (Figure 72; Appendix 3, 4-6), but only one more formal archaeological investigation. This was a watching brief undertaken during sewer replacement off Durlston Road (Figure 72; Appendix 3, 7). No archaeological remains were found during this watching brief (Bellamy 2003).

Archaeological Character

Previous archaeological discoveries suggest that there was widespread Roman activity in this area. The remains of a possible Roman settlement site with indications of hearths, together with some Roman coins, pottery and flints, were found about 1904 in the school

playing field on Bon Accord Road (RCHME 1970, 612). Roman burials were found in two locations, on Atlantic Road and at Durlston Cliff, Belle Vue Road. It is unclear whether this indicates small localised pockets of activity, perhaps a number of small farms or similar, or represents part of a much larger Roman settlement.

The area was part of an extensive Saxon and medieval field system and a number of the parallel property and field boundaries have been fossilised in present town layout (Figure 72).

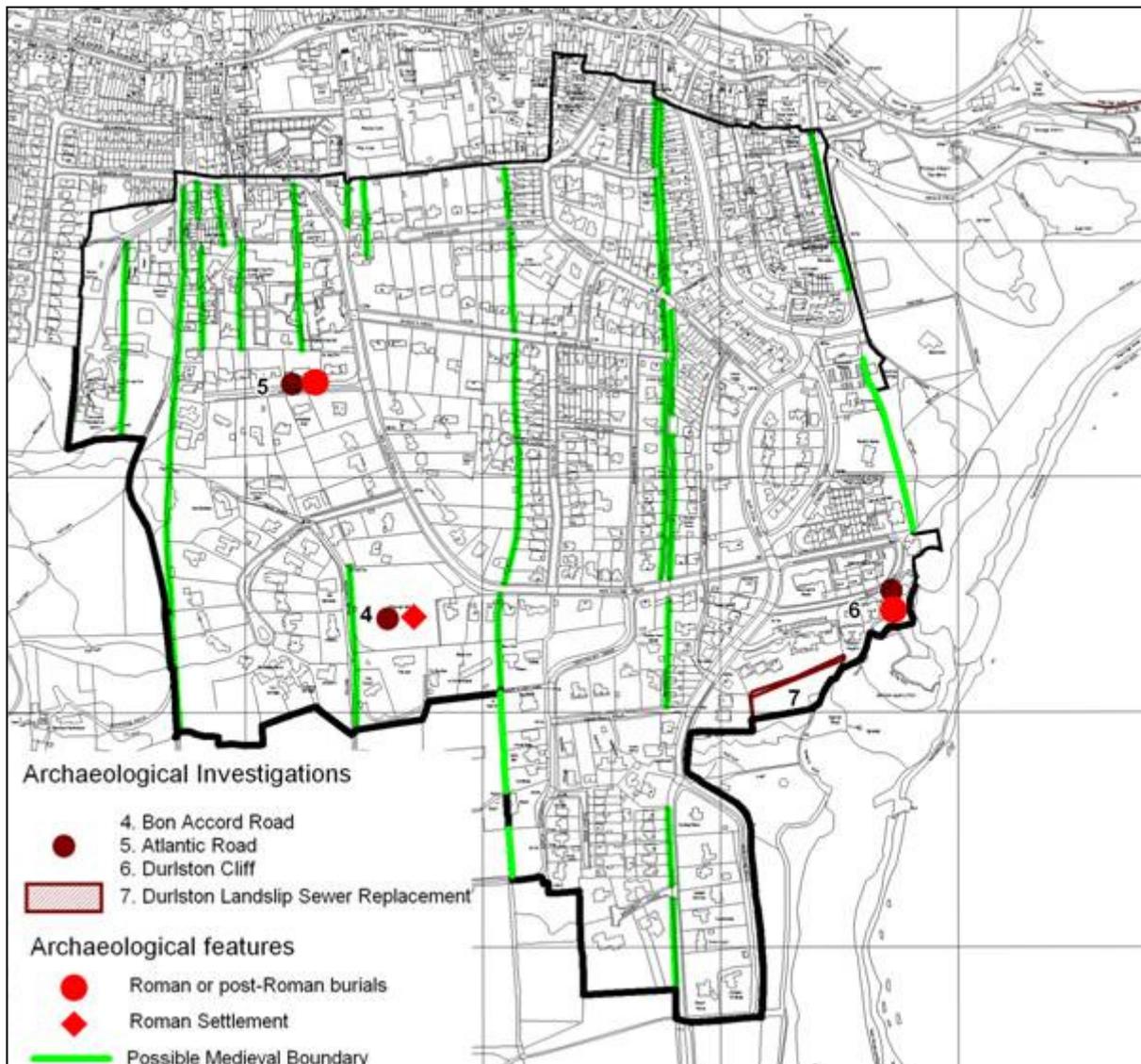


Figure 72: Archaeological Investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

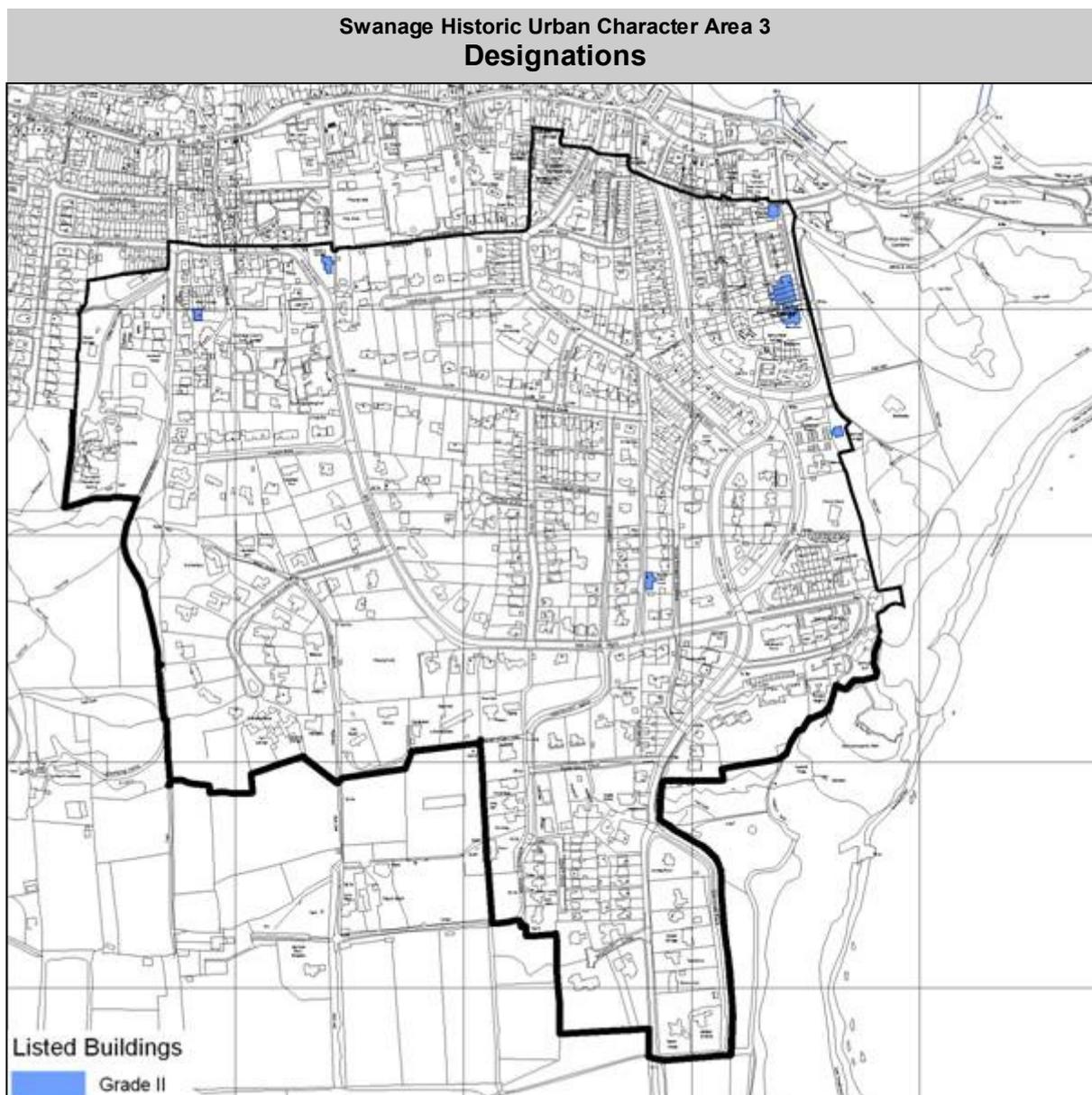


Figure 73: Archaeological Investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

Listed Buildings

There are eight Listed Building designations in the Character Area. All are Grade II.

Conservation Areas

A small part of the northeast corner of this Character Area around Seymer Road and Park Road lies within the Swanage Conservation Area (Figure 42).

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

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

Scheduled Monuments

No Scheduled Monuments lie within this character area.



Figure 74: Swanage Hospital.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 3 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. The original 19th century suburban layout survives largely intact and reflects an underlying Saxon and medieval land boundary system. There is good survival of buildings relating to the major periods of development of the area, which reflects the history of the emerging seaside resort of Swanage in the 19th and early 20th century. The number of unmetalled roads provides a good visual contribution to the historic nature of this suburban development. The Edwardian villas and guest houses of this area provide a strong contribution to the overall character of Swanage. However, the historic character is somewhat eroded by the infilling of some of the larger properties and the construction of large apartment developments.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. The scale and shape of the road and plot layout reflects the original planned layout of this area. This has been partly eroded by modern development. Further infilling of large properties and the replacement of some historic houses with modern apartment complexes would have a major impact upon the character.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. This potential relates to the potential for recovering evidence for pre-urban activity, in particular further information on the Roman period activity in the area.

The area lies beyond the historic settlement core of Swanage, consequently, it is unlikely to contribute much archaeological information towards an understanding of the development of the town.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Steeply sloping hillside location
- Georgian houses on Seymer Road
- Large number of Edwardian villas and guest houses
- Parallel N-S roads reflecting medieval strip field boundaries
- Some broad curving roads
- Former Swanage Gas and Water Works buildings
- Swanage Hospital and First School buildings
- Stone boundary walls
- Good views from Seymer Road over Peveril Point
- Strong contribution made by mature trees and vegetation in gardens