

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6 Northbrook

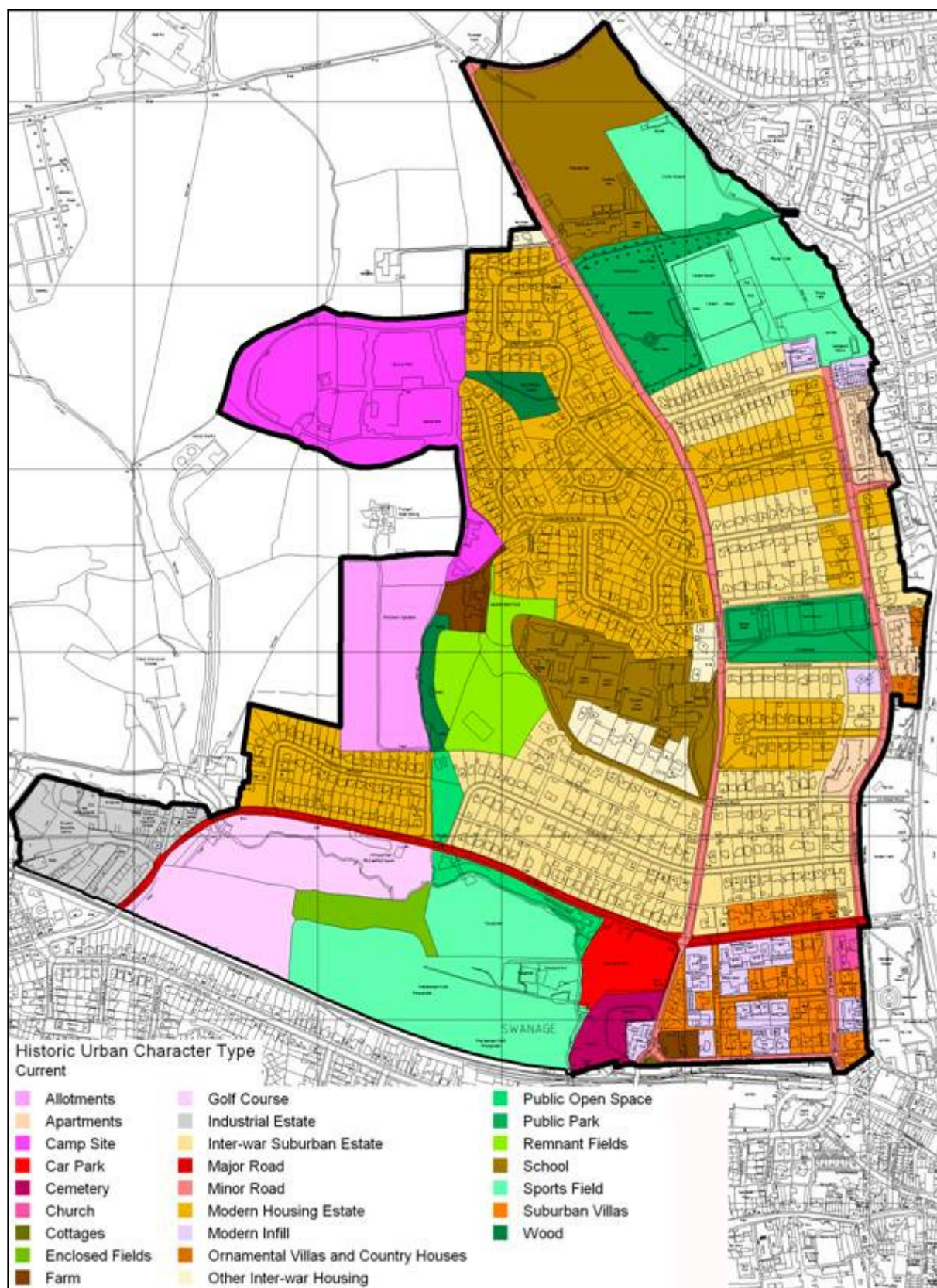


Figure 96: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 6, showing current historic urban character type.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is the area of 19th and 20th century suburban development to the north of the historic core, largely focussed on the line of Northbrook Road, together with small areas of other activity north of the railway line. It is defined mainly by the large concentration of inter-war and post-war suburban housing.

Topography and Geology

The area generally rises up to the north towards Ballard and Nine Barrow Down. There is a slight E-W ridge running along the eastern part of the southern edge of the area and a more prominent parallel ridge further to the north creating an undulating topography with a prominent high point at Harrow House and Purbeck View School. The underlying geology is sands and clays of the Lower Cretaceous Wealden Group, with some alluvium along the southern edge of the area to the west.

Urban Structure

The basic structure of the area consists of the curving Northbrook Road, running up the centre with a regular grid of streets and properties to the east. To the west, this grid is continued in the southern part, but to the north the structure of roads and plots becomes increasingly complex, with curvilinear loop roads and radiating curvilinear culs-de-sac. There are larger areas of primarily open space around the periphery, formed by sports grounds, parks, allotments, school playing fields, caravan park and an industrial estate.

Present Character

Figure 96 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area predominantly comprises Inter-war and Modern Housing Estates. The southeast corner closest to the town centre consists of Suburban Villas interspersed with Modern Infill. Apartments are concentrated along the eastern edge overlooking the coast. There are a number of more extensive Character Types including two Schools, two Sports Fields, two Public Parks, Golf Course, Allotments, Camp Site, and Industrial Estate. Other minor historic urban character types include Wood, Farm, Cemetery and Car Parks.

Time Depth

Northbrook Road is the earliest element in this character area and may be prehistoric in origin. Northbrook Farm and Cauldron Barn Farm are also of great antiquity and may have their

origins in the Saxon period. The villas along Victoria Avenue and Gilbert Road date from the late 19th and early 20th century. The adjacent cemetery dates from 1855. The suburban housing over most of the area dates from the 1920s-30s, with infilling and extension of the suburban area in the post-war and modern period. The apartment developments are all modern in date. The schools date from the late Edwardian and the post-WW1 periods. The parks date to the post-war period as does the caravan park. The Industrial Estate is modern but built on the site of the 19th century gas works.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is primarily low density housing in a rectangular grid layout with largely detached houses set back from the street frontage within large garden plots. The houses in the Victoria Avenue area are large and of significant height which imparts a different character compared to the other suburban parts of this area, where building heights are generally much lower and consequently the buildings are less prominent in the streetscape.

Open green space and trees play a significant part in the character of this area, particularly around the edges, where the King George's Playing Field and Day's Park are the most prominent green spaces. Mature pine trees form a highly visual element, particularly around Beach Gardens. Mature vegetation in many gardens provides a significant green contribution to this area.



Figure 97: View down Northbrook Road.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6 Built Character

Building types

This area is characterised mainly by suburban house forms, together with a number of large villas and guest houses, apartment complexes and several schools. Two earlier vernacular buildings are found in the area; the 18th century former Northbrook Farm house and the 16th-17th century Cauldron Barn farm house.

The large villas and guest houses mainly date from the later Victorian and Edwardian period and are often of three stories with prominent stacked bay windows and a plethora of gables and decorative elements. Many now have modern extensions, often in a less than sympathetic style. The de Moulham villas are distinctive in having a plainer early Victorian style with shallow pitched hipped roof with deep bracketed eaves.

The 1920's-30's houses are a typical mixture of detached two storey houses and bungalows, all typical of the period but in a variety of different styles, both Tudorbethan and, more commonly, non-Tudorbethan styles, with a variety of bay and oriel windows and normally with a hipped roof. The post-war and modern houses also comprise a mixture of mainly bungalows with some two-storey buildings, in a rather plainer style typical of the 1960s and 1970s. The more recent housing developments have a greater use of neo-vernacular and other neo-historical stylistic treatments.

Large apartment developments are common close to the seafront and are all individual in style, but very typical of their period of construction. They include 1960's flat-roofed four storey blocks, modern 'marina-style' developments and one modern neo-Art-Deco block on Rempstone Road.

There are very few non-domestic buildings in the area. The most prominent are the three large red brick school buildings. The 1904 church of the Holy Spirit and St Edward is in a 'decorated' Gothic style. The only industrial buildings are the remains of the former gas works, at the Victoria Avenue Industrial Estate.

Building Materials

The Victorian and Edwardian buildings are mainly of red brick with Purbeck stone dressings or of rock-faced Purbeck Stone (often only on the frontage). The inter-war houses are of brick, but often painted, rendered or pebble-dashed, with tiled or slate roofs and often with tile hanging on many bay windows. The post-war and modern houses are often stone clad or rendered with tiled roofs.

The earlier vernacular buildings are of stone and Cauldron Barn has a stone roof.

Key Buildings

Community Buildings: Church of the Holy Spirit and St Edward, Harrow House, Purbeck View School, Swanage Grammar School

Villas and Guest Houses: De Moulham villas, The Gables, 2-6 Gilbert Road.

Vernacular farm houses: Northbrook Farm; Cauldron Barn

Industrial Buildings: Former gas works buildings,



Figure 98: Victoria Avenue, with De Moulham Villas on the right.



Figure 99: Modern apartments on De Moulham Road.



Figure 100: Part of former gas works.

**Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6
Archaeology**

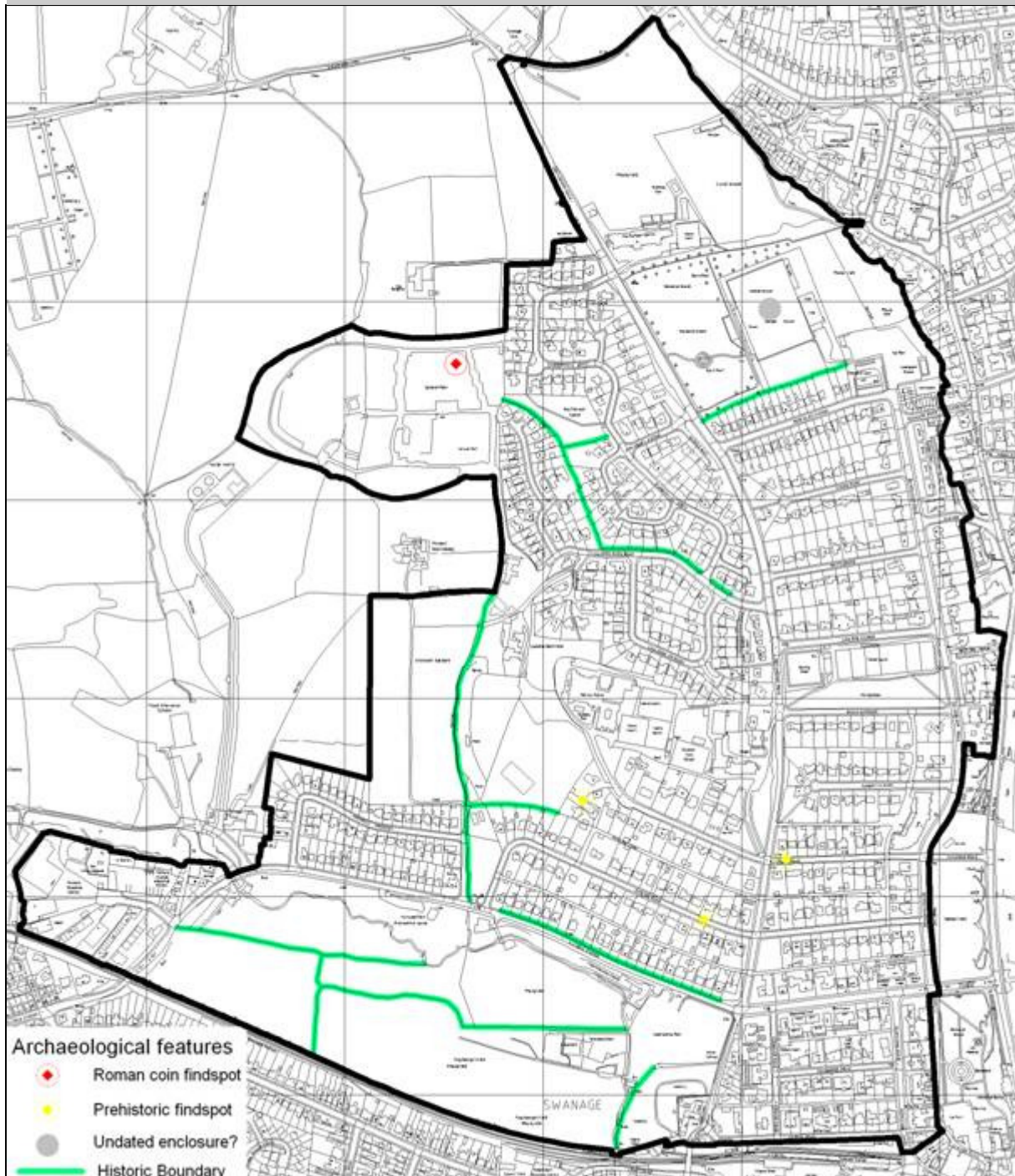


Figure 101: Archaeological features and findspots in Historic Urban Character Area 6.

Archaeological Investigations

There have been no archaeological investigations within this character area. However, there have been a number of finds of unstratified archaeological material. Three Neolithic stone or flint axes and a pick have been found in the Rabling and Walrond Road area, which suggests an area of prehistoric activity, but it is unclear what the nature of this

activity might be from these stray finds. A late Roman silver coin was found at Cauldron Barn.

The only possible archaeological feature recognised in this area is a rectilinear feature seen in an aerial photograph, in the area of the football pitch.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6 Archaeology

Archaeological Character

The lack of below-ground archaeology constrains the consideration of the archaeological resource. However, it is clear that its character does not relate to the urban archaeology of Swanage. The area did not form part of the urban area until the late 19th century, but is primarily a 20th century suburban expansion. The area of Victoria Avenue Industrial Estate contains a number of surviving buildings from the gasworks and there are likely to be further buried industrial archaeological remains in this industrial estate.

The Neolithic findspots are of interest and may indicate some Neolithic activity in this area, but the form and extent of this activity is unclear from the present evidence. The Roman coin find fits into the general background scatter of Roman finds and features recovered from across virtually the whole of Swanage, but does not suggest a focus of Roman activity in this area.

There are a small number of historic field boundaries which are fossilised in the present housing estates, as marked on Figure 101.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6 Designations

Listed Buildings

There are three Listed Building designations in the Character Area — the former Northbrook Farm house, Cauldron Barn Farm and the Church of the Holy Spirit and St Edward. All are Grade II.

Conservation Areas

Most of this Character Area lies outside a Conservation Area. Only the Gilbert Road frontage and the Cemetery lie within 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 102: Northbrook Farm House.



Figure 103: Church of the Holy Spirit and St Edward.

**Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6
Designations**

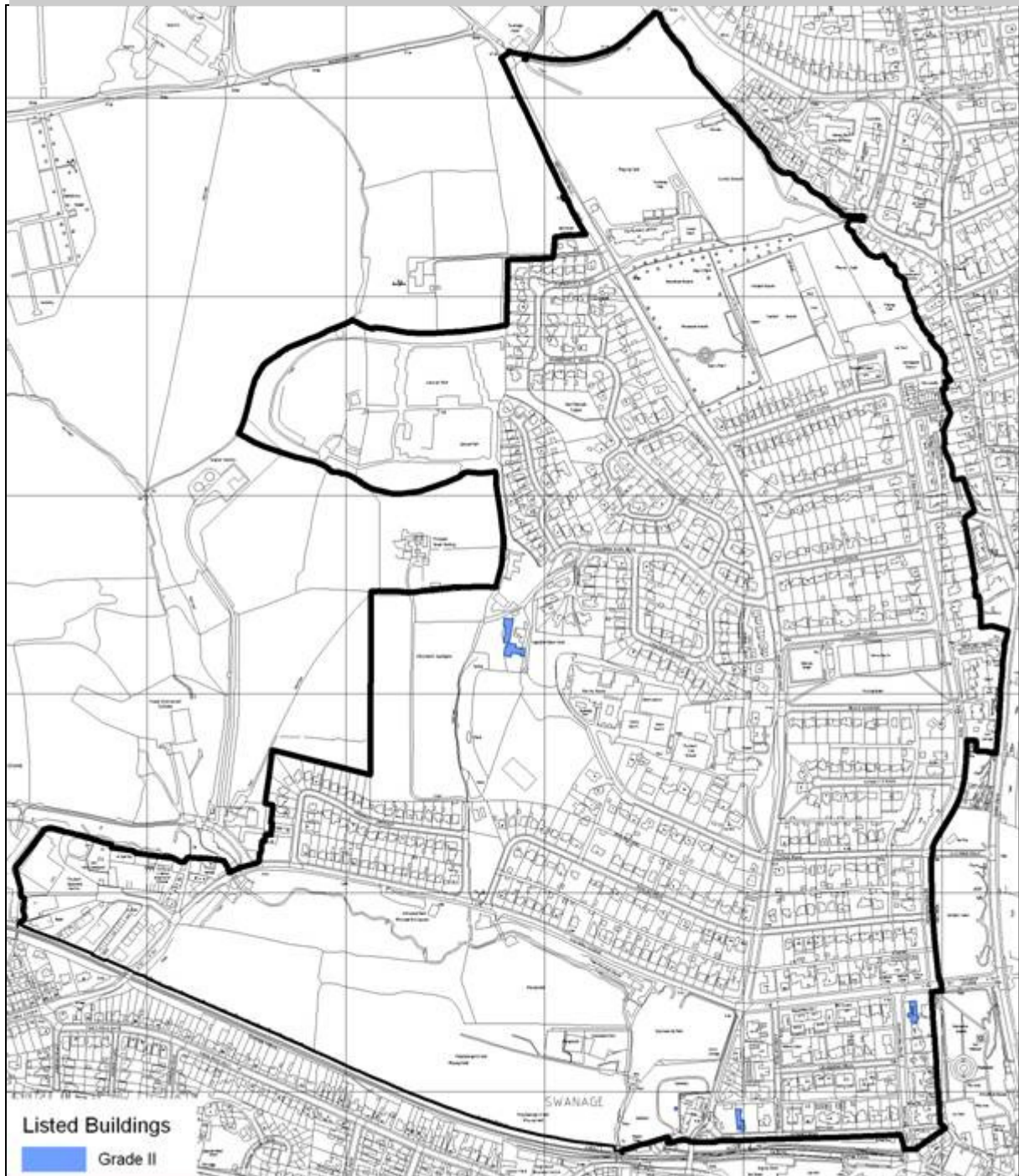


Figure 104: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 6.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 6 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. It retains its strong grid layout of suburban streets and many large late Victorian and Edwardian villas and guest houses close to the town centre and inter-war suburban housing beyond. However, the character has been somewhat diluted by the number of unsympathetic extensions to the Victorian and Edwardian villas and the replacement of some by modern apartments. The inter-war suburban housing is not distinctive, but it forms a pleasing coherent area enhanced by large pine trees and much mature garden vegetation. It is representative of one of the major periods of growth in the town.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Modern development in the southern part of the area has caused serious erosion of the historic character and setting of the surviving large Victorian and Edwardian buildings and further redevelopment of this area could have a further detrimental effect. The regular arrangement of plots and houses are sensitive to changes in settlement density with the infilling of plots with more housing and potentially removing mature garden vegetation to the detriment to the overall settlement character. The extensive areas of modern housing estate are much less sensitive to large scale redevelopment.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **low**. There is little potential for urban archaeological remains relating to the development of Swanage, though there is potential for surviving industrial archaeological remains in the area of the former gas works. There is a higher potential for discovering remains of pre-urban features, particularly in the southern part of the area where a number of Neolithic finds have been made. The area around Northbrook Farm and Cauldron Barn Farm may contain evidence for medieval rural settlement.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 3, 6, 11, 14, 21, 22, 24, 25 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Large late Victorian and Edwardian villas and guest houses
- Inter-war suburban houses in regular grid pattern
- Harrow House and Purbeck View school buildings on prominent knoll
- Large modern apartment complexes close to the seafront
- Remains of Swanage Gas Works
- Public parks, allotments and sports fields around the edges of the area