

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 9 Historic Herston

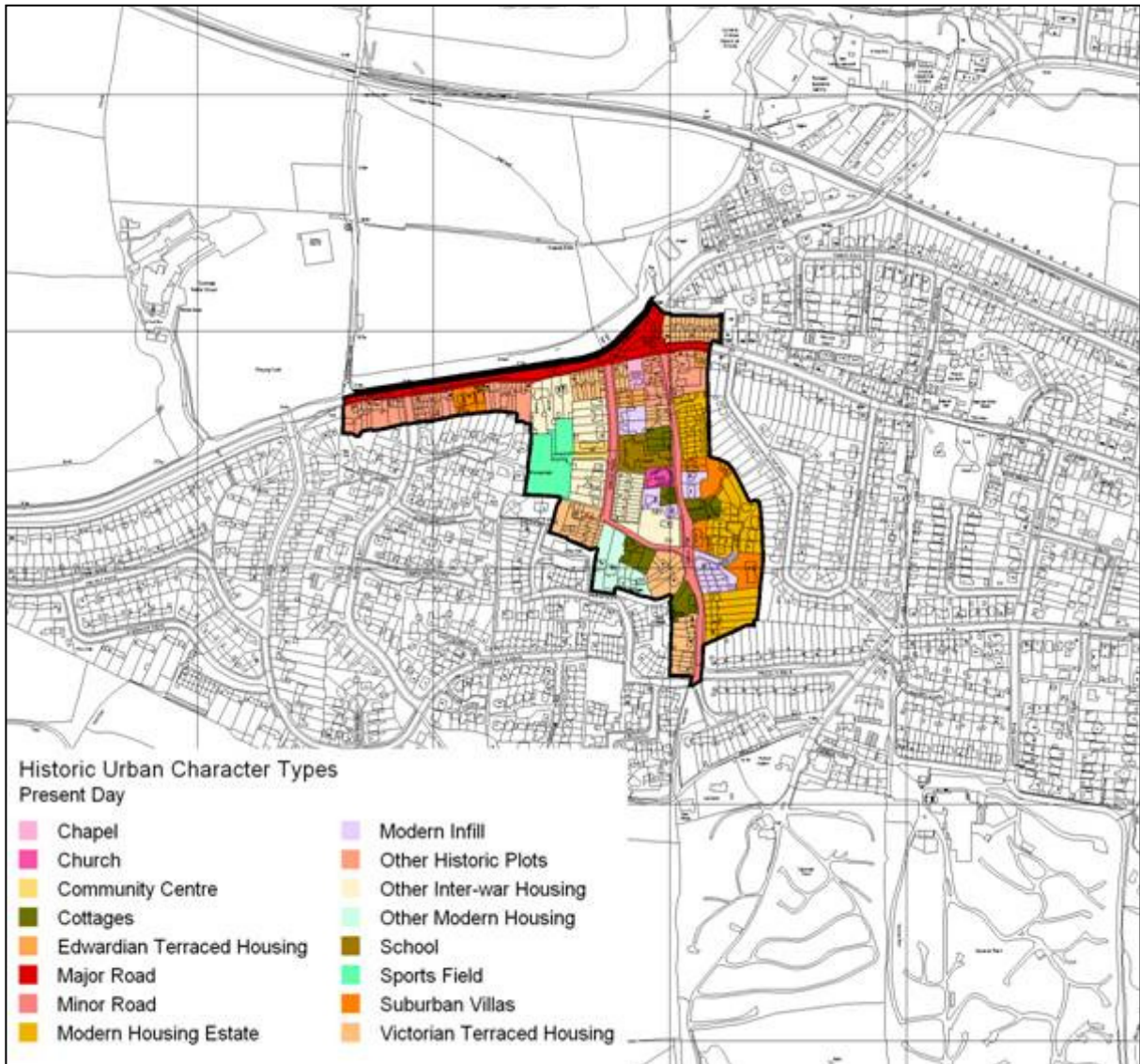


Figure 126: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 9, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 127: View up Bell Street from Herston Cross.



Figure 128: View down Jubilee Road.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 9

Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is the historic core of the Domesday manor and former quarrying village of Herston, which now lies on the western fringes of Swanage. It is defined largely by its concentration of historic buildings and comprises the area of settlement at Herston prior to the large scale suburban housing developments in this area.

Topography and Geology

The area lies on the lower slopes of southern side of the broad Purbeck Vale on the edge of the flat low-lying ground at the base of the valley. The ground rises up fairly steeply to the south up towards the Purbeck limestone plateau. The northern part of the area is on the limestones of Upper Purbeck Beds and the southern part on Middle Purbeck Beds.

Urban Structure

Herston comprises two roughly parallel north-south streets, Jubilee Road and Bell Street running south from the High Street. The south end of Jubilee Road bends round to connect with Bell Street. Bell Street continues into the suburban estates to the south of this area. Originally, Bell Street formed a crossroads with High Street and Victoria Avenue, but modern road realignment has obscured this. There are a number of paths and local access roads into housing developments behind the street frontages. The plots are generally rectangular, but are irregular in size and proportion, varying along the length of the main streets.

Present Character

Figure 126 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area is rather heterogeneous with small areas of different character type along each of the streets. Irregular Historic Plots are found along the High Street and along Bell Street, together with areas of Victorian Terraced Housing, Cottages and some Suburban Villas. The Church and School lie in the middle of the area between Bell Street and Jubilee Road. The east side of Bell Street has mainly Modern Housing Estate and Modern Infill. Jubilee Road has areas of Edwardian Terraced Housing and Other Inter-war Housing. Other minor historic urban character types include a Community Centre and Sports Field.

Time Depth

Herston has its origins as a probable late Saxon manor and some of the underlying structure of the area reflects the Saxon or medieval strip field layout in this area. Bell Street may have its

origins as a medieval or earlier trackway along a field boundary, perhaps linking Herston with Priest's Way and the route to Worth Matravers. Jubilee Road follows the line of one of the strip field boundaries, but was not laid out until the mid-late 19th century. The southern part of Jubilee Road follows the line of an earlier footpath. Herston was probably originally a fairly dispersed settlement until the 19th century. Some of the plots along the High Street and along parts of Bell Street are 18th century or earlier, but most of the development in Herston dates from the mid-19th century onwards. The school dates from 1855 and the church from 1869-72. The later 19th century sees infilling along much of the High Street and Bell Street, while Jubilee Road is largely developed in the first half of the 20th century. The development of much of the eastern edge of the area dates from the post-war and modern periods.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is medium to high density housing along the three streets, though the character of the three are different. In general, there is a relatively informal organic arrangement of size and shape of plots and position of buildings on the streets. There is also variation in their size and roofline, Bell Street is a relatively straight street which varies in width along its length, emphasised by the varied building line with some houses set forward on the street frontage and others set back. It rises up to the south, where it opens out at the junction with Jubilee Road and mature trees and garden planting provide a green 'stop' to the view up the street. The streetscape varies from vernacular cottages and terraces to modern suburban houses to the south. Jubilee Road has fewer historic vernacular buildings and has mainly urban and suburban terraced, detached and semi-detached housing set back from the road behind small front gardens, often defined by stone walls. The High Street opens onto fields to the north. The southern side has a mix of low vernacular cottages and taller detached and terraced houses interspersed with suburban detached and semi-detached houses, the latter set back from the road line.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 9 Built Character

Building types

There is a range of different buildings present in this area, including 18th and 19th century vernacular stone cottages, terraced and detached 19th century houses and 20th century suburban houses. Non-domestic structures include St Mark's Church, a simple late 19th century building with bell cote, and St Mark's School, a mid 19th century school building.

Herston has a fine collection of traditional Purbeck stone cottages of 18th and 19th century date. These are low two-storey buildings, either arranged in terraces or in shorter attached groups. One group of cottages at 1-5 Benlease Way appears to have been converted from a former agricultural building. In addition there are a number of rustic vernacular outbuildings surviving in this area (PDC 2008a).

A number of 19th century urban houses are found in the area, including detached and terraced houses, mainly of three storeys or two storeys and attics with dormers. The most noteworthy example is perhaps 'The Little Manor' (Figure 134).

Several late Victorian and Edwardian terraces occur in the area. Herston Cross Cottages dated 1899 is a particularly fine terrace incorporating a number of Arts and Crafts inspired details.

There are a small number of inter-war and modern suburban houses in this area. These include detached, semi-detached and short terraces typical of their period and with little local distinctiveness in style, massing and position in the streets.

Stone walls are prominent along road edges in a number of places in the area. Brick boundary walls are more common along Jubilee Road.

Building Materials

Local Purbeck Stone is the predominant building material along Bell Street and High Street, used for walling and for roofing. Slate is a less common roofing material, more usually employed on 20th century buildings and clay tiles are used on a small number of buildings.

Local dark red brick is used for decorative dressings on some 19th century buildings. 48 Bell Street has a brick façade with stone dressings. Machine-made bricks are used for some of the terraces and detached housing along Jubilee Road.

Key Buildings

Public Buildings: St Mark's Church, St Mark's School, The Reading Room Bell Street.

Vernacular Cottages: 14 Bell Street, 17 Bell Street, 19-25 Bell Street, 32-34 Bell Street, 42-44 Bell Street, 369-373 High Street, 383 High Street, 395-399 High Street, 401-107 High Street, 419 High Street, 37-41 Jubilee Road, 1-5 Benlease Way.

Other historic houses: 'The Little Manor' 398 High Street, Herston Cross Cottages



Figure 129: Purbeck Stone cottages along High Street.



Figure 130: St Mark's School, Herston.



Figure 131: St Mark's Church, Herston.

**Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 9
Archaeology**

Archaeological Investigations

No archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area and there are no recorded findspots.

Age and Roman material in the surrounding area could indicate the possibility for similar archaeological deposits in this area.

Archaeological Character

Herston is recorded as a Late Saxon manor and there is a possibility that some evidence for Saxon and early medieval activity may survive in this area. However, it is likely that any settlement was dispersed and there may not have been a specific focus of activity on the area of the current historic centre of Herston until the 18th and 19th centuries.. The lack of any archaeological investigations in this area makes it difficult to be certain of the nature of the archaeology relating to this settlement, but any archaeological deposits are likely to be representative of dispersed agricultural settlement activity. The occurrence of some Iron

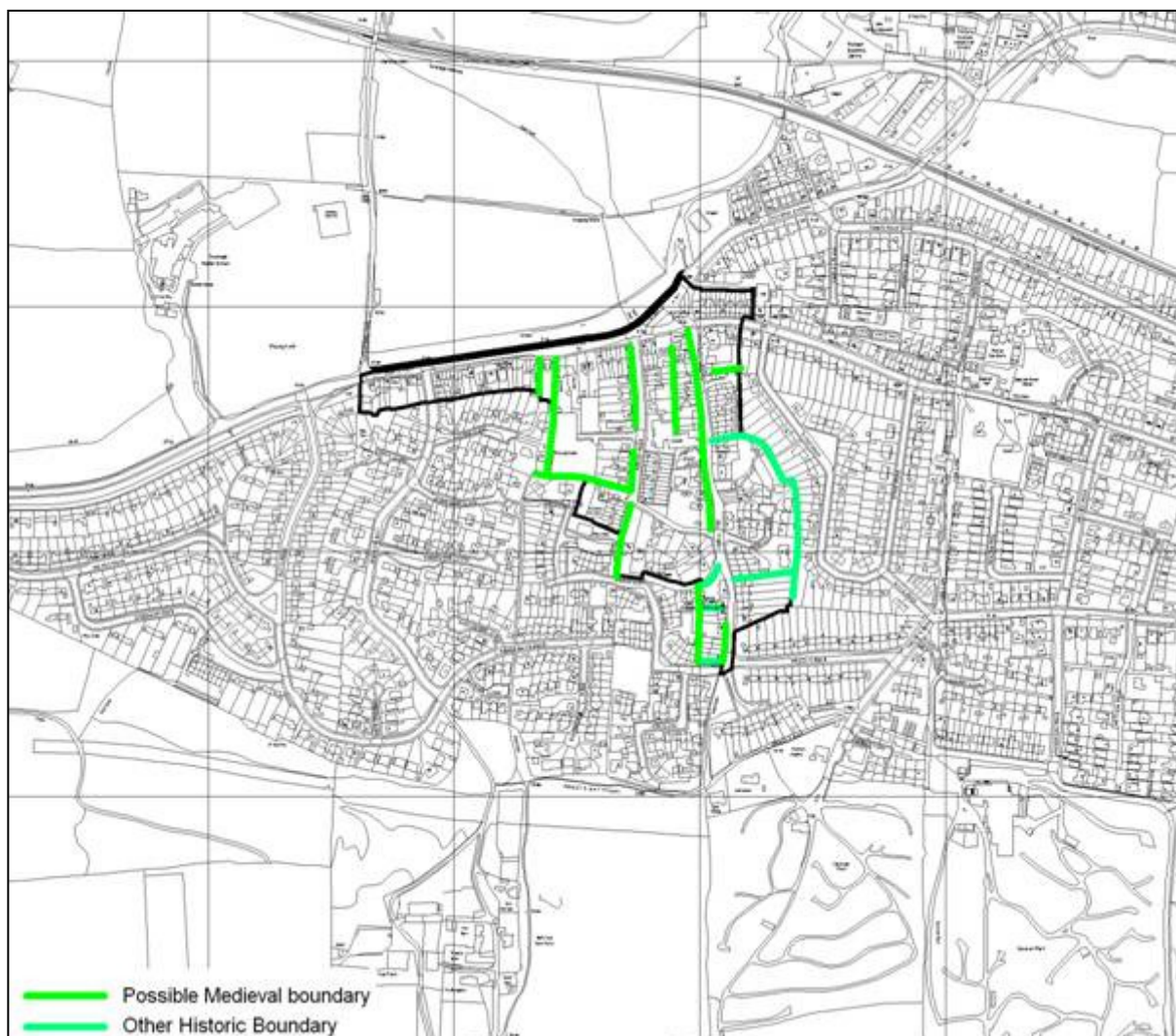


Figure 132: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 9.

**Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 9
Designations**

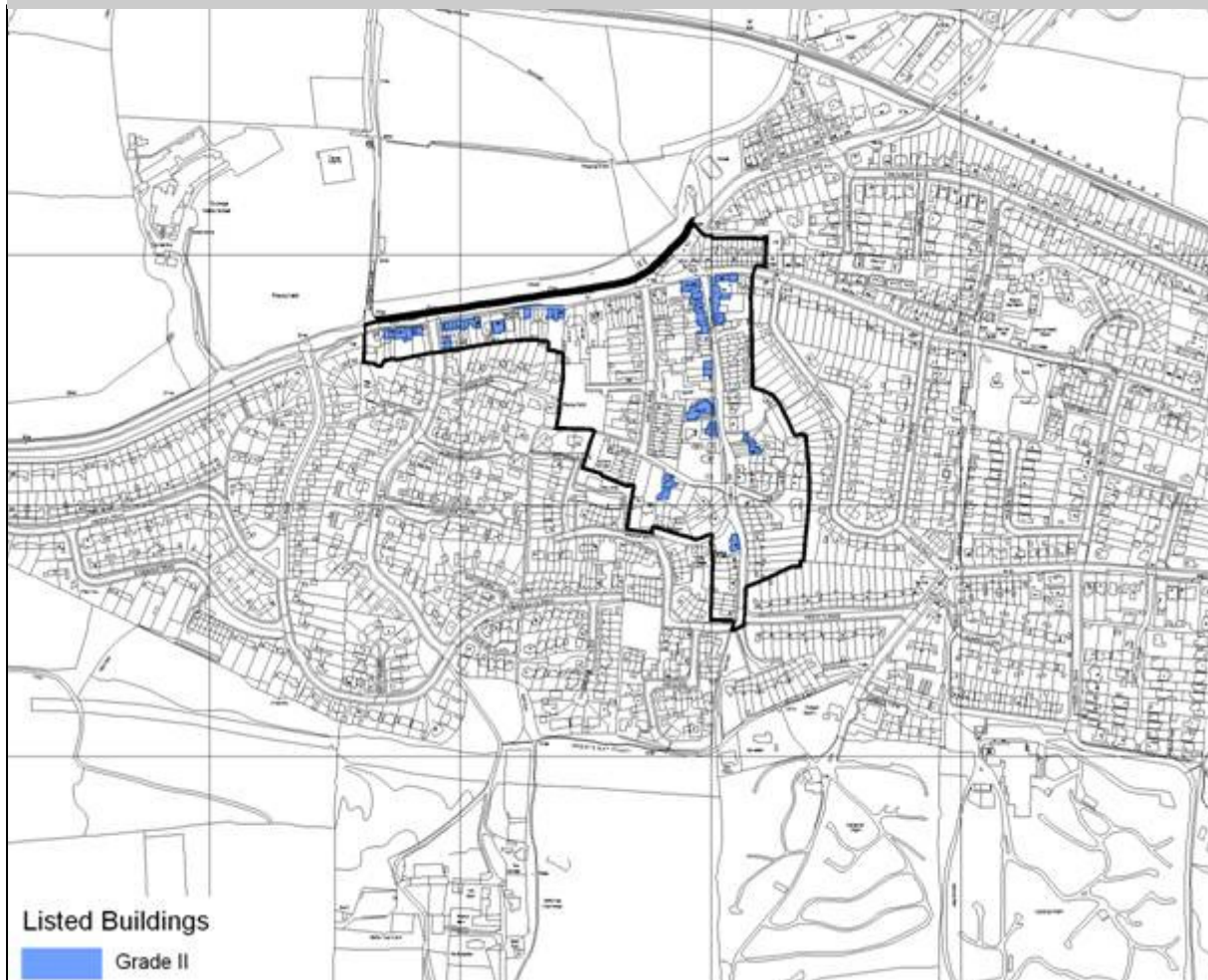


Figure 133: Listed Buildings in Historic Urban Character Area 9.

Listed Buildings

There are 36 Listed Building designations in the Character Area. All are Grade II.

Conservation Areas

Almost the whole of this Character Area lies within the Herston Conservation Area, except for some small areas along the south and east sides (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 134: The Old Manor House, Herston.



Figure 135: Herston Cross Cottages.

Swanage Historic Urban Character Area 9 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. The underlying structure reflects the boundaries of a former Saxon or medieval field system, though the current settlement pattern dates largely from the 19th century.

There is a strong positive contribution made by the relatively large number of historic buildings, in particular the number of traditional Purbeck stone cottages, outhouses, and stone boundary walls. The range of building heights and their differing relationship to the street frontage gives a variety to the streetscape, which is noticeably different to the surrounding area. The widespread use of local materials and local building forms creates a strong local character, retaining many elements of its history as a 19th century agricultural and quarrying village. The intrusion of modern suburban housing has weakened the historic character of some parts of this area and the modern highway arrangements have reduced the legibility of the crossroads at Herston Cross. Nevertheless, it retains its strength of historic character.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. It is surrounded by large areas of 20th century suburban housing and the intrusion of a number of modern suburban houses along the historic streets has diluted its historic character. Further modern intrusion along the historic streets and the erosion of historic boundary walls will have a detrimental effect on the core of this area, particularly as it is of fairly small size.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is

judged to be **medium**. The manor of Herston dates from at least the late Saxon period and there is potential for the recovery of evidence for Saxon and medieval activity. However, it is likely that this activity was in the form of dispersed agricultural settlement, rather than a single settlement focus. Nevertheless, the lower slopes of this character area are likely to form the most favourable area for settlement. The present settlement arrangement dates largely from the 19th century onwards, which means that earlier settlement evidence may survive behind the present street frontages. This evidence may provide information on the economy and diet of the inhabitants.

As well as below-ground archaeology there is some potential for buildings archaeology also. One group of cottages has been converted from an earlier agricultural building and further examples of earlier fabric may survive in other vernacular buildings. The conservation area appraisal (PDC 2008a) has identified one historic outbuilding and others may also survive. These outbuildings, of which very few now survive, have the potential to provide information on their construction techniques and of their use within a historic farming and quarrying community.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on the pre-urban activity (as suggested by the Late Iron Age and Roman discoveries in the surrounding area (see Historic Character Area 10).

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 2,3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Historic 19th century farming and quarrying village
- Parallel road layout aligned on earlier strip field system
- Traditional Purbeck stone cottages
- Interesting mix of two and three storey historic stone buildings
- Varied building line along streets
- Former Herston crossroads