



4.0 Urban Edges and Enclaves



4.0 Urban Edges & Enclaves

4.1 General Description

4.1.1 The pressure for development within the Borough has led to most sections of the built up area filling out to clear physical boundaries.

4.1.2 In many areas the edge of the urban area is defined by hard edges such as river flood plains, woodland, the railway or roads. In most areas there is a sharp contrast between the built up area and adjacent countryside. There are localised conflicts between urban and rural land uses, occasional pressures such as fly tipping or trespassing are evident. However there is no extensive 'urban fringe' landscape around the Borough.

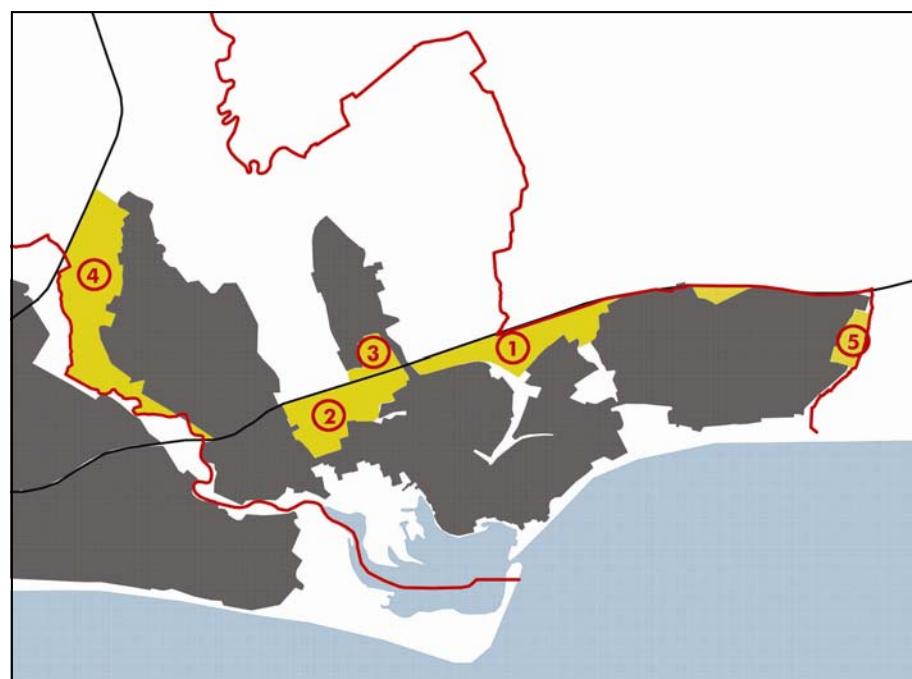
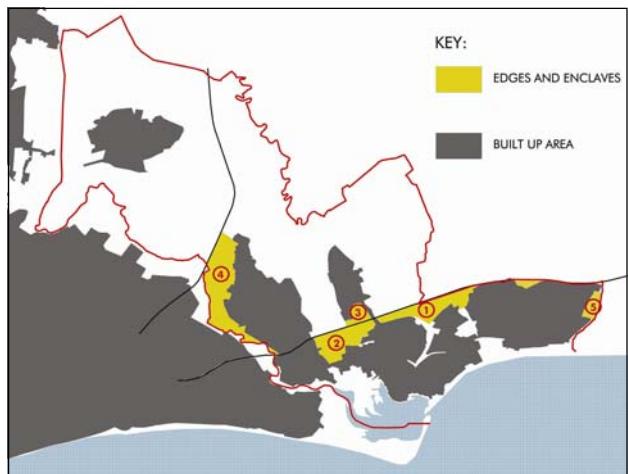


Figure 4.1

4.1.3 While most expansion has reached clear boundaries, there are pockets of rural landscape contained around the edge of the urban area. The location of these 'edges and enclaves' is indicated on **Figure 4.1**.

4.1.4 Generally these areas are extensions of the main landscape types found in the wider landscape. While the general continuity of landscape is often evident, in some areas the full range of

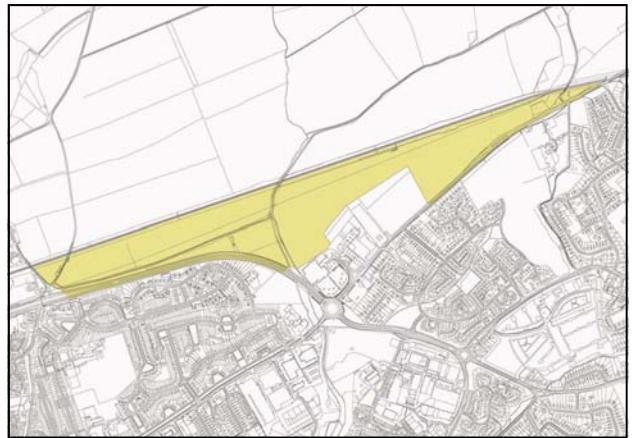
characteristic features may not be seen. These areas are in most locations heavily influenced by their proximity to the urban area. Most contain or adjoin elements of the urban infrastructure and/or are affected by the visual or audible impact of the surrounding infrastructure. In general, while the landscape quality of such areas may be diminished, the inherent value of the landscape to residents and as a setting to the town is often increased.

4.1.5 The specific areas identified as key edges and enclaves are:

1. Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross
2. The Avon Water Meadows close to Purewell
3. Land to the South of Burton and North of the Railway Line
4. The Stour Valley between the A338 and Iford Bridge
5. Walkford Brook – Highcliffe

4.1.6 A further small area of common (Cranesmoor Common) is described as part of the assessment of the Chewton Commons described in the Braemor Drive/Cheaton Common sections (5.37/5.41).





Character Areas

4.2 UE Area 1 : Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross/Purewell Roundabout

General Description

4.2.1 This is a section of the Avon River Terrace contained against the edge of the town by a dominant railway embankment. The built up area has expanded out to the southern sides of the A35 Lyndhurst Road and A35 Christchurch Boundary. A supermarket, garden centre, and some allotments occupy a corner site on the north side of the roadway.

4.2.2 The undeveloped area is predominantly arable farmland. A small farm is located at Staple Cross. The building is Grade II listed. This area forms part of the Salisbury Road (Burton) Conservation Area. A single rough paddock separates the farm from a major sewage treatment works. Minor roads tee off the A35 bypass at Staple Cross. Two pass under the railway to Burton and out into the wider countryside. A third, Ambury Lane, runs parallel with the A35 to connect with a footpath bridleway route. This lane and the rights of way, provide a well-used connection between Burton, Somerford, and Purewell. The link acts as a functional connection between residential areas and facilities. In addition the links act as recreational links into the rural enclave and out to the wider countryside to the north of the railway.

Landscape Character

4.2.3 The area has some of the basic characteristics of the open River Terrace to the north. It is flat, sub-divided by regular field boundaries, and is in positive agricultural management. The area encompassed by the Conservation Area around Staple Cross is also a clear continuation of the linear agricultural village that extends away to the north of the railway. This area presents a stark contrast with the built-up area across the A35. Staple Cross itself is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

4.2.4 There are obvious urbanizing influences of the A35, the allotments, views of developments, a power line and sewage works. In terms of the intrinsic quality of the landscape these influences have a significant impact. Conversely the area is of significant importance in the perception of the built up area of Christchurch. A large part of the managed farmland is in open view to users of the

A35 entering the Borough at Roeshot Hill. The area is also in clear view from the railway for rail passengers as the foreground to the built up area. Views from the railway include the landmark of the ancient Priory. These views, from both rail and road ways, confirm the role of the countryside as part of the overall Borough environment. If developed out to the railway embankment the town would be effectively divorced from the rural landscape by the railway embankments.

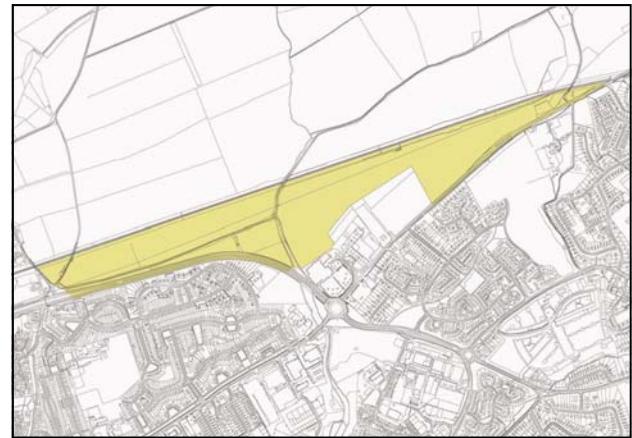
4.2.5 In terms of the perceived character of the landscape from the key route of Ambury Lane, the A35 is shielded by a dominant tree line and bank and the lane has retained an informal rural character. From the lane the area has retained a clear countryside character.

4.2.6 Main Characteristics

- River Terrace landscape of flat topography alluvial soils, mixed farmland within enclosure field pattern. Some field amalgamation has occurred.
- Area enclosed by dominant rail embankment, A35 roadways, and tree line alongside the A35 bypass.
- Listed Staple Cross farm buildings and minor road junctions form a connection with the linear agricultural village along Salisbury Road
- Numerous elements of urban intrusion confirm proximity to built up area. Positive agricultural management and tree cover present an agricultural landscape to key views.
- Area acts as accessible landscape on the edge of built up area and as an alternative link to wider countryside beyond the railway.

Sensitivity to Change

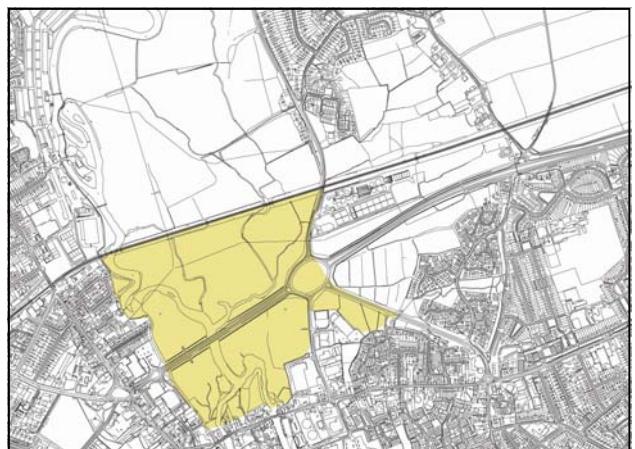
4.2.7 This area provides a key part of the urban setting to the northern side of the built up area. Although the area has already absorbed significant intrusions of urban infrastructure, there remains a strong connection to the agricultural land use within the enclave and beyond the railway embankment. The area is of particular significance because of the continuity of views along the length of the area, and by virtue of the links this area provides to the town and wider countryside. The area should be seen as sensitive to loss of agricultural land uses, visual intrusion or severance of the recreational access links.



4.2 UE Area 1 : Roeshot Hill to Staple Cross/Purewell Roundabout cont..

4.2.8 As with other enclave areas the historic landscape character may not persist through future changes in agricultural management. While loss of agricultural character or changes in the views across this land may be detrimental, the overriding value of the area is related to the lack of development and its condition as open land.





4.3 UE Area 2 : The River Avon and Water Meadows

4.3.1 The Railway line into Christchurch contains two areas of open water meadows on the edge of the main Town Centre. These are split by the A35 Christchurch bypass that crosses the flood plain on a causeway. The river channel divides close to the railway where a Mill Stream branches off a loop in the main river. The river divides again to the south of the A35 to flow around the Bridge Street Island and out into Christchurch Harbour. A number of other small ditches and channels drain the area.

4.3.2 The flood plain areas are predominately water meadow grasslands. To the north of the A35 the area appears regularly grazed. To the south the area appears to be semi abandoned. The areas are fenced with post and wire and occasional sections of post and rail type fences. The flood plain area supports a number of mature trees generally willows, some of which have been managed as pollards. Random groupings of poplar have been planted on the A35 causeway.

4.3.4 The river channel is designated SSSI, Special Protection Area, Ramsar Site and Special Area of Conservation. The water meadows to the south of the A35 are in part designated SNCI.

4.3.5 The roadscape and traffic are dominant features. Traffic frequently queues between the roundabouts on either side of the flood plain. The areas close to the mill pool is managed by a fishing club. A car park, bridge and fishing facilities have been installed around the river. There are no public paths or access to the flood plain. A short section of path adjoins the Mill Stream but views out of the town from this path are generally blocked by vegetation.

4.3.6 Key views are gained from the A35 (eastbound) and the railway to the Town Centre, in which the ancient Priory and the Millhams Street church are seen as landmarks.

4.3.7 On the north side of the A35 a power transmission line crosses the flood plain in front of the railway embankment. The pylons are a major detraction in the view. But the old power station building on the edge of Bargates is a small landmark in these views.

Landscape Character

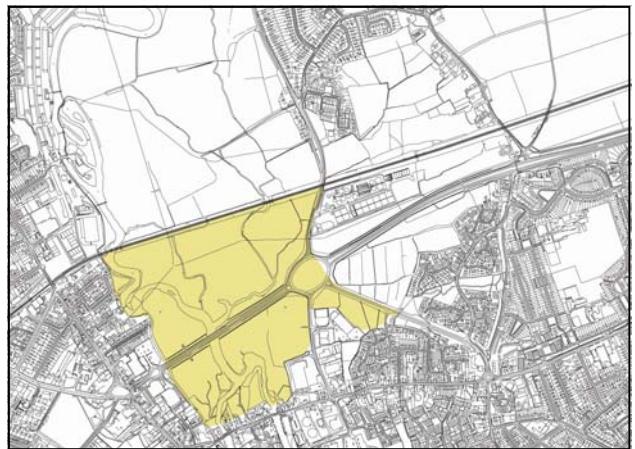
4.3.8 This is a small scale but open section of the river flood plain. The basic landscape elements of the flood plain landscape are present although the lack of management will in time change the character from a pastoral landscape to that of scrub and tree cover. The area is influenced by the impact of traffic and power lines and its proximity to urban development. The relationship of this area to the historic townscape area an important part of the character and historic fabric of the townscape. The open area forms a key setting to the historic core of the Conservation Area, listed buildings and the river corridor, all of which are an integral part of the Borough identity and sense of place. The spaces and views to the town also provide a real sense of arrival on approaches via the A35 and railway. Refer also to Section 5.9.

4.3.9 Main Characteristics

- Low lying flood plain landscape with meandering and divided river channels, and ditches.
- Pastoral land use, partially abandoned.
- Fenced field enclosures.
- Generally open landscape area with trees concentrated around the edges nearest the town. In winter views are available to the historic building groups in the foreground of the Priory. In summer these are lost to tree cover.
- Elements of urban intrusion include, roadscape and traffic, power lines and poor quality retail developments.
- Riverside landscape has an integral relationship with historic townscape, as part of the physical boundary to development and as open setting to historic buildings and strategic view to the Priory.

Sensitivity to Change

4.3.10 The water meadows are an integral part of the historic landscape of Christchurch. The southern area is within the Conservation Area. Both areas of land have been heavily compromised by elements of the urban area. However, despite this they remain of real and potential value to the setting of the town. Without management the area to the south of the A35 will continue

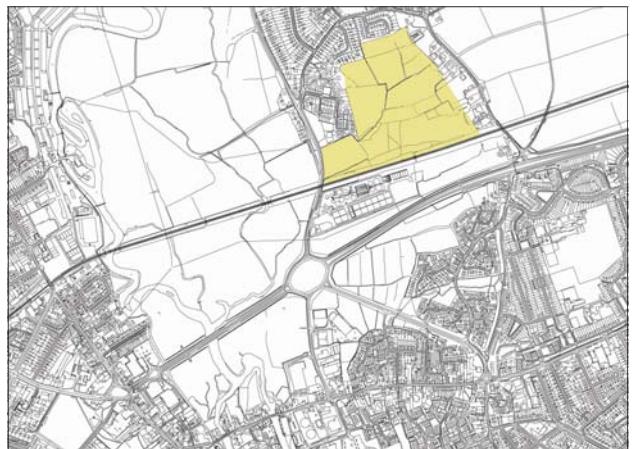


4.3 UE Area 2 : The River Avon and Water Meadows cont ..

to scrub over. This may detract from the foreground to views into the historic town. The lack of management may also lead to a loss of ecological interest to the pasture areas. Such decline can be reversed. The areas could provide an enhanced setting to the edge of the Conservation Area.

4.3.11 Although urban elements already intrude, this is not without significant harm to the landscape setting. The impact of any additional infrastructure or development should be considered in terms of the cumulative impact of the existing and any proposed new elements.





4.4 UE Area 3 : Land to the South of Burton and North of the Railway Line

General Description

4.4.1 This is an area of farmland enclosed by housing and the railway at the southern end of Burton. On the eastern side the area is enclosed by the older part of the village along Salisbury Road.

4.4.2 The area is enclosed on the north and north eastern side by modern estate housing. The majority of the housing backs onto the space. Although outside of the protected flood plain the area is low lying, generally below 5.0m AOD. The area is divided into small pastures with a network of ditches. Some limited tree cover screens views into the area and the railway embankment. The Conservation Area Boundary includes only the property boundaries. The presence of open land contributes to the character of the historic areas. This is evident with the space visible behind the original Burton Farm buildings. The area is not accessible to any public footpath. There are limited public views from the older part of the village into the area. The area can be viewed from the railway.

Landscape Character

4.4.3 The area is a small-scale enclosed space. While undeveloped the area is set between remnants of historic farm uses and the suburban fringe of the modern village areas. As small open space behind the old farm buildings of Burton Farm, the area contributes to the character of the Conservation Area. Although encircled by the railway and suburban development on three sides, this area is part of the wider Avon Valley ESA designation.

4.4.4 Main Characteristics

- Low lying isolated pocket of small scale paddocks/pastures
- Area of tree cover along the southern edge of the area
- Network of small ditches and drains

Sensitivity to Change

4.4.5 This area forms a small pocket of enclosed farmland in view and forming the setting to the historic Burton Farm buildings. Although not within the Conservation Area, the open space and tree cover provide some context to the farm buildings in the view from

Salisbury Road. In terms of this aspect, the area is at least in part sensitive as the setting to the Conservation Area. Beyond this, the area is enclosed by suburban housing and not seen as a continuation of the wider countryside of the open flood plain or higher terraces. With no public access and limited visibility, the area does not contribute to the wider setting of the built up areas of the main town or the main area of the village. The ESA designation suggests there would be some ecological sensitivity to change in this area.

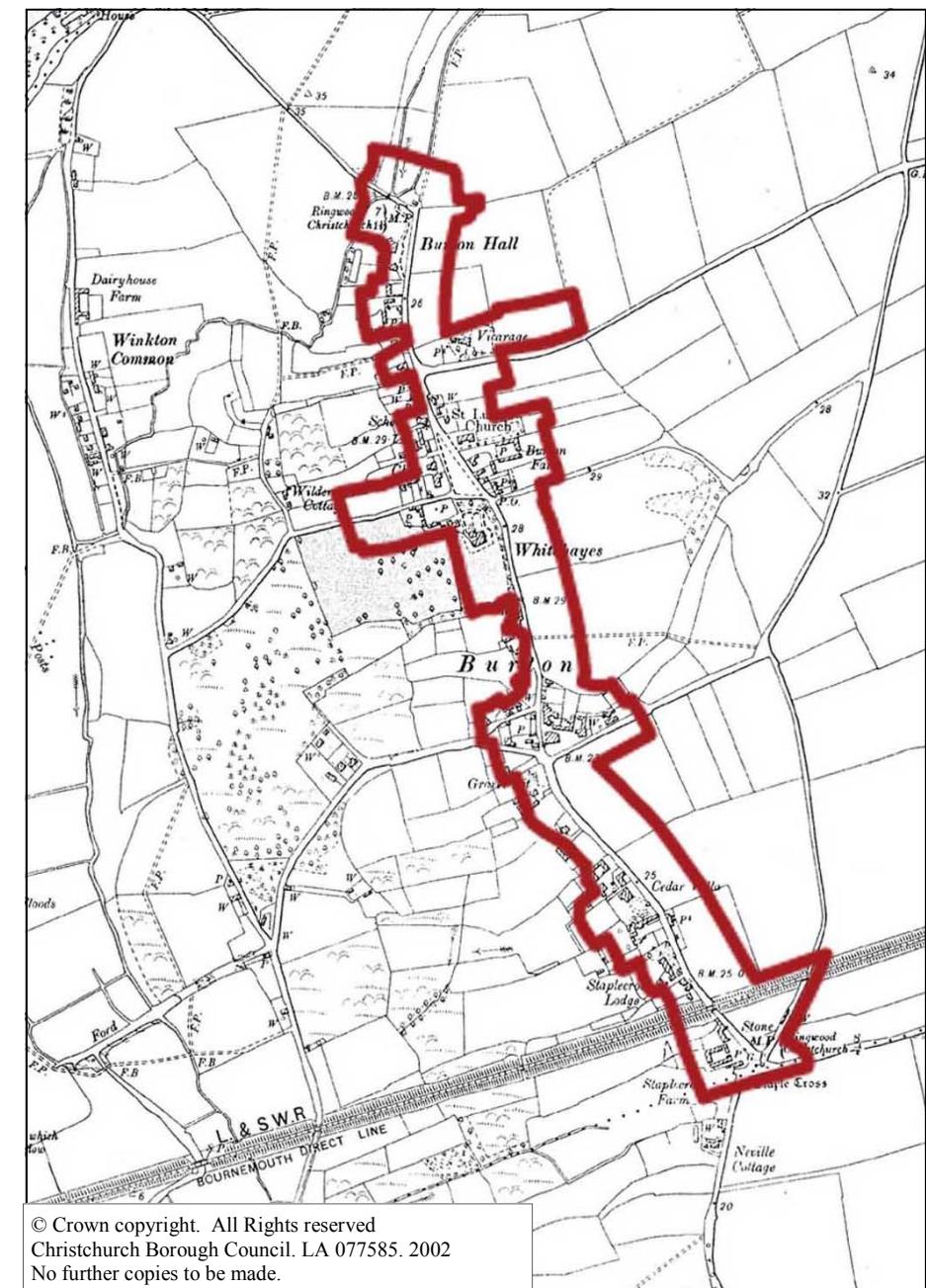
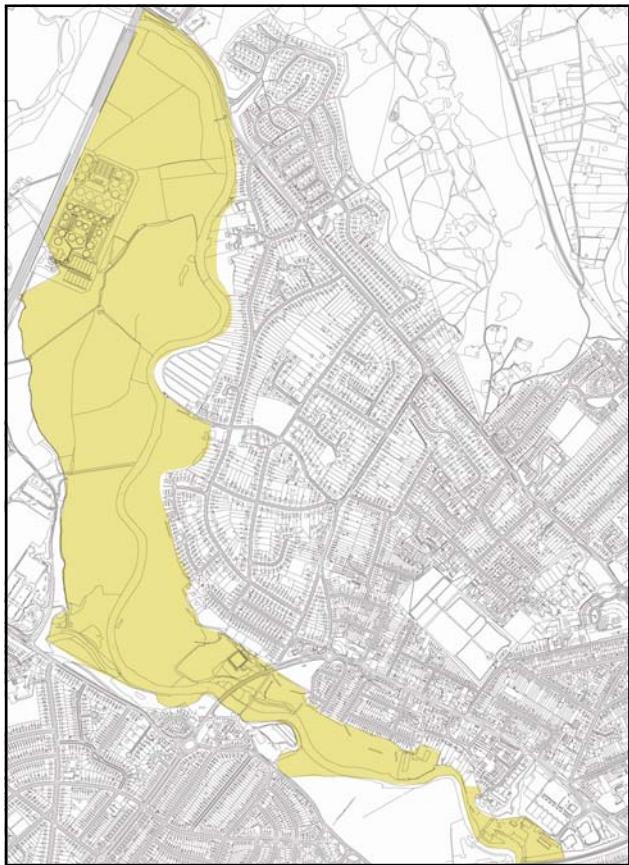


Figure 4.2 - Outline of the Salisbury Road Conservation Area overlaid on the Ordnance survey of 1898



4.5 UE Area 4 : The Stour Valley Between the A338 and Iford Bridge

4.5.1 The River Stour flood plain area has provided a natural constraint on development within both Christchurch and Bournemouth. The area down stream of the A338 dual carriageway crossing maintains the basic character of the general flood plain but is contained within a more urban setting. The area is managed as agricultural pasture and other non-agricultural landscapes are also present. Downstream of the Iford Bridge the Christchurch side of the river is entirely non agricultural.

4.5.2 Within the Christchurch area the landscape encompasses a major sewage works, golf course, caravan park and local park lands. The landscape is relatively open within the flood plain although the edges of the corridor are enclosed by significant tree cover. The field areas are divided by fences and occasional hedgerows. The river is marked by groups of riverside trees.

4.5.3 The riverside areas are accessible to sections of footpaths. On the western side of the river, this is via the Stour Valley Way path with the public open space areas and golf facilities In this respect the western side is a more public section of the valley.

4.5.4 The sewage works and dual carriageway are major elements of urban infrastructure. The recreational uses and views to residential development also confirm the proximity of the urban area.

4.5.5 At the southern end of this character zone the river corridor/open landscape narrows to the point where the Iford Bridge crosses the Stour. The historic mapping shows these areas on the Bournemouth side as a small village clustered around the bridge. The area still retains some of the character of an earlier more informal layout and the old (C17th) bridge is protected as a Grade II listed structure.

Landscape Character

4.5.6 This is a large-scale open landscape within a suburban setting. The area maintains some continuity with the flood plain landscape upstream of the A338. The character of a low-lying informal pastoral landscape is a clear link with the wider countryside.

4.5.7 The area is more open than other sections of the flood plain; in some locations with the more artificial and recreational uses it is also bland in character. The area is physically accessible by paths and

green spaces. With many of the housing areas backing onto the river and few views from roads or other public spaces adjoining the floodplain the area is not heavily overlooked.

4.5.8 The river corridor is a potential asset in terms of Christchurch having its own sense of identity or being seen as a separate entity from Bournemouth. This is a significant natural feature that has acted as a physical limit to major development. However, its low-lying secluded position between built up areas does not give the area a very high profile. Although accessible the area has the feel of a backwater space unconnected to either the urban area or wider countryside. Even the recreational uses along the river are relatively low-key local neighbourhood facilities.

Sensitivity to Change

4.5.9 As with other parts of the urban edge, this area has already absorbed significant change. With the conversion of areas of open farmland to recreational uses, some of the traditional landscape character of the flood plain has been lost. This area should be seen as sensitive to further urban encroachment and further loss of characteristic landscape.

4.5.10 This area can also be seen as currently an ‘under developed’ part of the Borough identity. While a physical break between Christchurch and Bournemouth, the river corridor is not a high profile landscape. Further severance, reductions in access or increasing enclosure by development would continue to undermine the role of the river valley as a buffer zone between the built up areas.

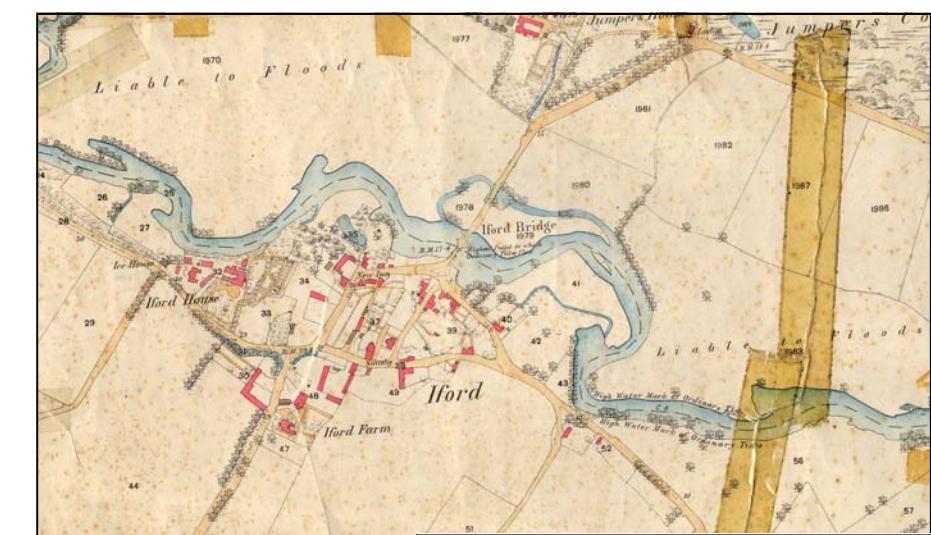
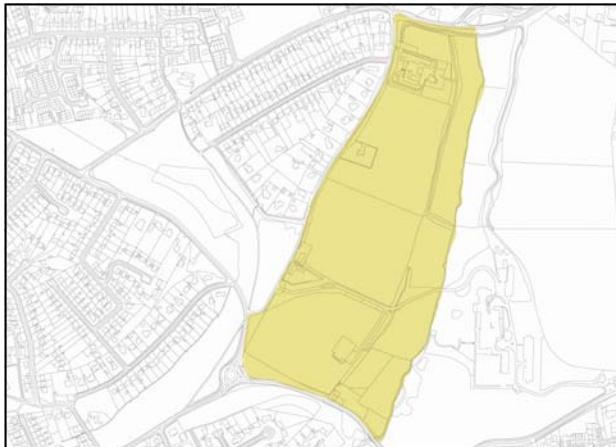


Figure 4.3



4.6 Area 5 : Walkford Brook - Chewton Common, Highcliffe

4.6.1 This is a small area of farmland adjoining the eastern edge of the Borough surrounded on three sides by roads and residential development. Four enclosed fields are visible from the adjoining roads these gently slope into a narrow steep sided valley containing the Walkford Brook. The brook forms the Borough Boundary, further areas of open land adjoin the eastern side of the brook within New Forest district area.

4.6.2 The fields are managed as grassland and are enclosed by full mature hedges with mature trees. A small section of the brook is designated as a site of natural conservation interest.

Landscape Character

4.6.3 There is a small scale space on the edge of the village. The fields appear as well managed farmland and provide a glimpsed contrast to the compact and intensive residential developments of the adjacent Highcliffe village. (See Section 5.23). Elsewhere in the village the separation between built-up area and countryside is more strongly defined by the railway. This area provides a transition space between the mass of residential development and the wider countryside.

4.6.4 Main Characteristics

- Small scale enclosed pastures
- Gently sloping land
- Enclosed by tall hedges and mature trees

Sensitivity to Change

4.6.5 As a small area of farmland enclosed by vegetation and development, this area is not part of a wider continuum of open countryside. While this area could absorb change within the boundaries of the hedgerows, development would diminish the general area around Walkford by loss of the open spaces within an otherwise heavily developed residential area.

4.7 Urban Edges and Enclaves Summary

4.7.1 With the extensive sub-urban expansion within the Borough much of the built up area has developed out to clear physical boundaries. A small number of substantial open areas have survived between the urban area and wider countryside.

4.7.2 These areas share some of the common characteristics of the adjacent countryside. However, with the limitation of the physical extent and the presence of nearby urban development these areas do not have an obviously unspoilt rural character. While these spaces do not reflect much in the way of distinctive rural character they are nevertheless valuable as a setting or counterbalance to the built up area.

4.7.3 The areas of Roeshot Hill and the Avon Meadows are strategically positioned alongside main routes through the Borough and around the built up area. These two spaces are critical in the wider identity of the Borough.

4.7.4 The Stour Valley provides a strategic gap between Christchurch and the built-up area of the Bournemouth conurbation. While the area is not heavily overlooked from the main routes through the Borough, it is still the gap that ensures Christchurch can maintain the sense of being a separate entity from the wider conurbation.

4.7.5 The discreet areas around the Walkford Brook are again of limited prominence in the Borough. These areas do, however, provide a relief from the densely developed residential areas of the Highcliffe/Walkford neighbourhood.

4.7.6 The open land between the railway and Burton has been to some extent isolated from the wider countryside by development. This area contributes to the setting of the Conservation Area but is also influenced by adjacent suburban development.

4.7.7 These areas are part of the open space or landscape setting to the built up area. While they do not generally present a strong inherent landscape quality or sense of place, they are of significant value to the Borough. As such there is very limited development capacity within these sections of the Borough.

