

Charmouth Historic Urban Character Area 2 Lower Sea Lane

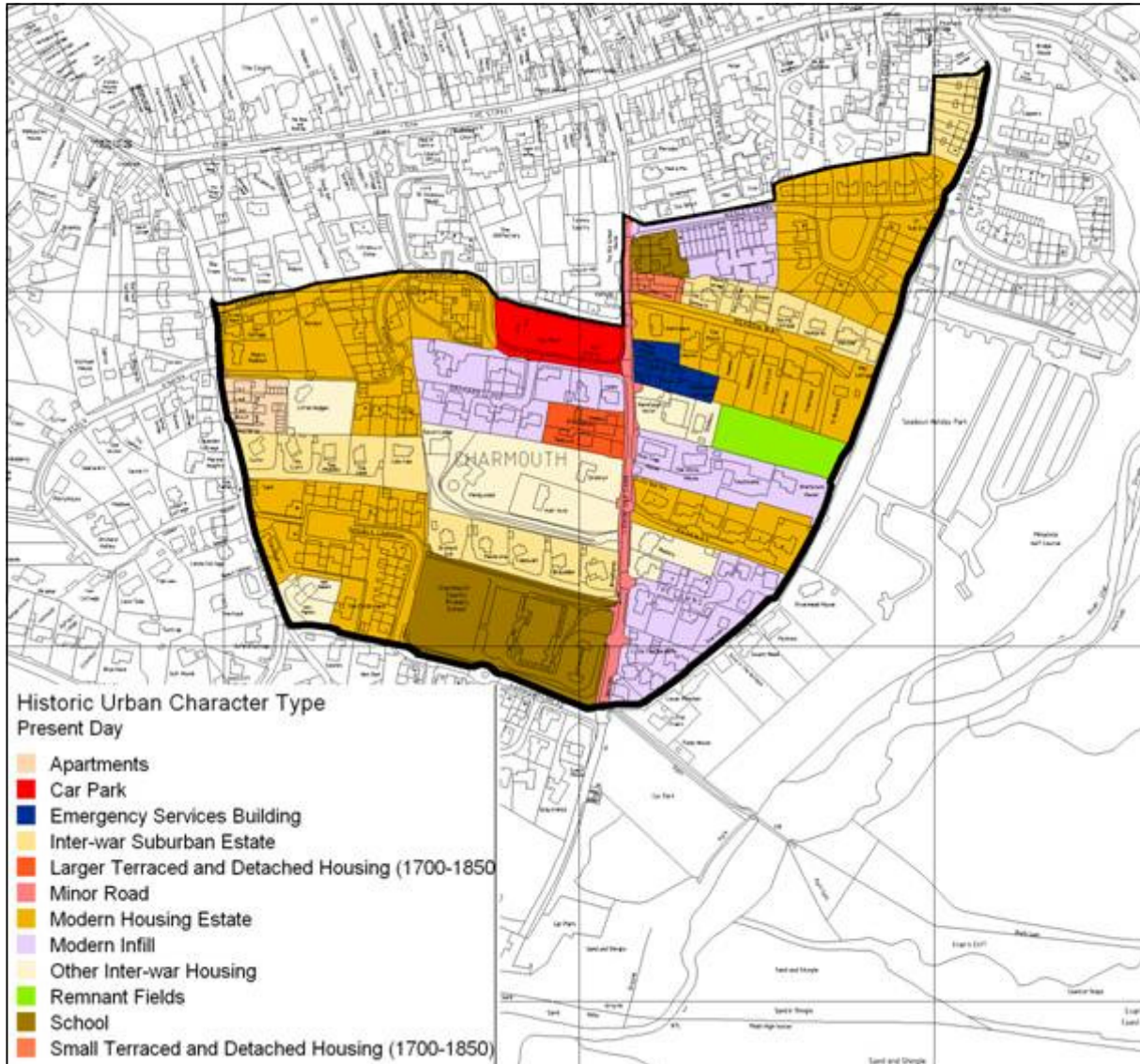


Figure 37: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 2, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 38: View down Lower Sea Lane towards the coast with tennis courts to right and Old School to left.



Figure 39: View up Lower Sea Lane towards the Street.

Charmouth Historic Urban Character Area 2 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is the area to the south of The Street bounded by Higher Sea Lane to the west and Bridge Road/ River Way to the east. It represents the former common land and possibly the medieval open fields of Charmouth. Formerly a series of narrow rectangular fields, this has now been infilled by suburban development.

Topography and Geology

The area slopes down to the east and to the south towards the coast. The area lies on Lower Jurassic Liassic clays.

Urban Structure

The area has three routes running south from The Street, which gradually converge towards the south. The main route is Lower Sea Lane which runs through the middle of the area down to the coast. Higher Sea Lane now gives access to the suburban development on the western side of the town and Bridge Road/ River Way is a footpath for much of its length.

The former pattern of narrow rectangular fields is still evident, as much of the suburban development has taken place within the existing field boundaries, with short culs-de-sac giving access to the houses along the sides of the former fields.

Present Character

Figure 37 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area is predominantly modern housing estates and modern infill housing, with a smaller quantity of inter-war suburban estates and other inter-war housing. The former school lies at the north end of the area and the present school at the south end. Other minor historic urban character types include the car park, former Coastguard Station

(Emergency Services Building), Suburban Villas and small historic houses (former almshouses).

Time Depth

The oldest elements are the roads, with Lower Sea Lane, at least, being of considerable antiquity, perhaps pre-dating the foundation of the medieval planned town. The broad pattern of rectangular fields probably has its origins in the medieval period, though the actual enclosure of these fields is probably later. The infilling of the area largely dates from the 19th century onwards, though there was some limited 17th and 18th century development. The school dates from the early 19th century and the coastguard cottages and almshouses from the second half of the 19th century. The suburban housing dates from the 1930s onwards, with the major period of development being in the post-war period. The present school dates from the early 1990s.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is one of low density housing, generally aligned at right angles to the historic roads and accessed by short culs-de-sac. Generally, the inter-war housing has linear lanes and the modern housing has more curvilinear access roads. Overall, there are few buildings facing directly on to the historic roads. In the northeast part of the area is a post-war council house development around a central green. Very few houses are set directly on the street frontage, most are set back behind a front garden and many of the inter-war houses are now screened by mature garden planting and trees. Trees and greenery play quite a strong role in this area, with many large trees and a number of surviving hedge banks, particularly in the eastern part of the area. The recent housing estate at Double Common has a greater housing density and many of the houses are set directly on the street frontage.



Figure 40: Path between Bridge Road and River View with former field boundary hedge bank to right.



Figure 41: Meadow Way, a 1930s housing development in former strip field.

Charmouth Historic Urban Character Area 2

Built Character

Building types

The area is characterised by 20th century houses in a variety of styles. There are only a very small number of pre-20th century buildings. In general, the buildings in this character area have little local distinctiveness.

The most prominent historic building is the old school in a Victorian Tudor style. The other 19th century buildings include a large detached house (Greengates) and small detached and terraced cottages.

The 1920's and 1930's houses are of detached two storey buildings with hipped roofs and with roughcast or rendered walls and are typical of the period.

The modern houses are a mixture of one and two storey buildings, detached and semi-detached, with occasional short terraces. The post-war housing is generally a mixture of bungalows, detached, semi-detached houses and short terraces. The housing along Wesley Close is typical post-war council housing. The most recent housing developments tend to have more decorative treatment, with stone cladding, contrasting colours of brick work, etc. The estate at Double Common is in a neo-Georgian

style.

Building Materials

Brick is the predominant building material for all periods of houses in this character area. This is sometimes rendered, roughcast or painted, particularly the inter-war buildings. The roofs are slate or tile. Artificial stone cladding has been used in some of the more recent housing developments.

The one distinctive building is the Old Schoolhouse, which is built in greensand chert with oolitic limestone dressings. The roof is of ceramic tile in a decorative fishscale pattern.

Key Buildings

The Old Schoolhouse, Old Coastguard Cottages, Hall View, Greengates.



Figure 42: Old Schoolhouse, Lower Sea Lane.



Figure 43: Old Coastguard Cottages, Lower Sea Lane.



Figure 44: Post-war council housing, Wesley Close.



Figure 45: Modern housing estate at Double Common.

Charmouth Historic Urban Character Area 2 Archaeology



Figure 46: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

Archaeological Investigations

There have been no archaeological investigations within this character area.

Archaeological Character

The very limited below-ground investigation constrains detailed consideration of the archaeological resource. The area is likely to have been agricultural land since at least the

medieval period and was not part of the urban area until the 20th century. Therefore, it is unlikely to contain much archaeology directly related to the town. It does have a number of surviving hedge boundaries, most noticeably along its eastern edge. Elsewhere, the line of the earlier field boundaries have been fossilised.

Charmouth Historic Urban Character Area 2 Designations

Listed Buildings

There are no Listed Buildings in the Character Area

Conservation Areas

A small part of the north end of this Character Area lies within the Charmouth Conservation Area boundary, including the Old School House, part of Wesley Close and part of St Andrew's Drive (Figure 25).

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.

**Charmouth Historic Urban Character Area 2
Evaluation*****Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. The main historic component is the surviving boundaries of a series of former fields of distinctive narrow rectangular shape, with some surviving hedged field boundaries. There are a small number of historic buildings, most notably the Old Schoolhouse and the Old Coastguard Cottages which contribute to the historic character of this area, otherwise the buildings are generally 20th century in date with little local distinctiveness.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Any development of sufficient scale to remove any surviving field boundaries would fundamentally alter this area.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **low**. It lies beyond the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town, and consequently is unlikely to provide much data on the development of the town. It was agricultural land until the 20th century.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 2, 3, 7 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Remnant historic field pattern of long narrow rectangular fields
- Some surviving hedged field boundaries
- Historic pattern of lanes
- Old Schoolhouse
- Old Coastguard Cottages
- Post-war council housing
- Inter-war and post-war suburban development