

## Wimborne Minster Historic Urban Character Area 5 Rowland's Hill and Walford Farm

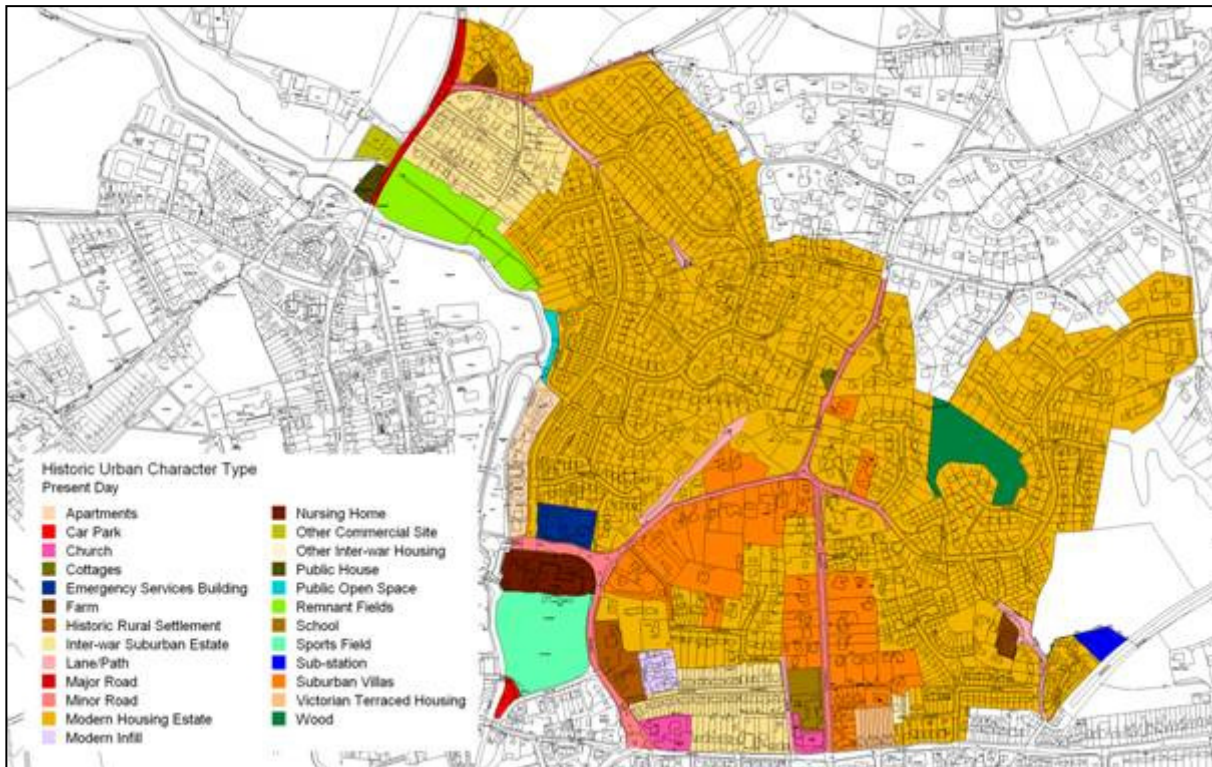


Figure 83: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 5, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 84: View west along Onslow Gardens, Rowlands Hill



Figure 85: View south along St John's Hill

## Wimborne Minster Historic Urban Character Area 5

### Structure of Character Area

#### **Overview**

This area essentially comprises a Victorian suburb at Rowland's Hill and an extensive modern housing estate on the eastern side of the River Allen.

#### **Topography and Geology**

Rowland's Hill forms the western end of the Colehill ridge which projects southwards towards Leigh Road. In general the land rises steadily eastwards from the River Allen and northwards from Leigh Road. The Geology of the area is a mix of London Clay in the south and west and Lower Bagshot Beds on the upper slopes of Rowland's Hill.

#### **Urban Structure**

This character area has an overwhelmingly suburban settlement structure comprising suburban housing estates dating from the Victorian through to the modern era. The former dispersed farmsteads of Green Close Dairy and Walford Farm have been completely subsumed within the suburban estates.

#### **Present Character**

Figure 83 shows the present day historic urban character types. Modern housing estates dominate the area (Figure 84), particularly in the northern and eastern parts. The Victorian suburb of St John's lies north of Leigh Road alongside St John's Hill (Figure 85) and Rowland's Hill. The historic dispersed settlement of Lewens survives at Lewen's Lane and Greenclose Farm house survives, although its former farmyard has been developed for modern housing. Woodland north of Green Close is a remnant of a more extensive area of wood and scrub. Meadows and public open space line the east bank of the River Allen, although modern apartments have been built on former meadows on Allenview Road. Further



Figure 86: Lewens House, 3 Lewens Lane

south, Hanham Road is lined with emergency services buildings and an old People's Home.

#### **Time Depth**

Walford was recorded as small manor of a single hide and three smallholders at the time of Domesday. Walford Farmhouse was built during the 17<sup>th</sup> century and may be on or near the site of the medieval manor house. Lewens House and Green Close Farm house were both built during the mid-late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 86). The area is crossed by a network of ancient lanes and holloways, some of which may be late prehistoric in origin. The railway arrived at Wimborne Minster in 1847 and the suburb of St John's followed rapidly. The ecclesiastical parish of St John's was formed in 1876. St Catherine's RC Church opened in 1926. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of housing estates and a water works at Walford.

#### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

The Victorian suburb of St John's generally comprises large villas, and groups of three houses set back from the street behind garden walls (Figure 87). The roads are frequently tree lined avenues, planted during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. St John's Hill has a rather formal character resulting from regular plot sizes on a planned straight road and the resulting regular spacing of villas behind low boundary walls. Rowlands Hill is less formal due to the sinuous course of the lane and the larger plots (EDDC 2006, 3-4). Inter-war housing at Walford is in the form of detached bungalows set back from a regular grid pattern of roads. The modern housing estates comprise a mixture of detached houses, bungalows, semi-detached houses and short terraces all arranged around curvilinear culs de sac.



Figure 87: Number 2 Retreat Road

## Wimborne Minster Historic Urban Character Area 5 Built Character

### **Building types**

There are a small number of farmhouses and cottages within the study area dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However the majority of the buildings in the St Johns' Hill and Rowland's Hill areas are Victorian ranging from large detached villas to small cottages; paired or in groups of three. They are all characterised by consistent use of local orange-red brick with decorative Victorian architectural detail, some later detached garages and brick boundary walls with original wooden gates (EDDC 2006, 4-5). Inter-war housing in the area is characterised by detached houses and bungalows as well as short terraces of four houses, all with hipped roofs. Modern housing is extensive and varied in form from large detached bungalows to blocks of flats alongside the River Allen. There are also blocks of modern emergency services buildings and commercial office blocks along Hanham Road (Figure 88).

### **Building Materials**

The 17<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular houses and farmhouses tend to be brick built, sometimes rendered or colour washed, although Greenclose Farmhouse has a rubble stone base. Roofs tend to be tiled, often with stone slate eaves courses, although the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses on Lewens Lane have imported slate roofs. Number 1 Lewens Lane also incorporates an earlier cob wall building which extends to the adjoining house. The Victorian buildings in the St Johns and Rowlands Hill area are built in local red-orange brick with stone, render or buff brick dressings, Welsh slate roofs and brick boundary walls with original wooden gates. Decorative ridge tiles and brick stacks with corbel detailing are also common (EDDC 2006, 4-5). Mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings are character-

ised by the use of a variety of non-local materials.

### **Key Buildings**

*17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular houses:* Walford Farmhouse, Greenclose Farmhouse, Lewens House, Numbers 1 and 2 Lewens Lane.

*Victorian Villas:* Garth Lodge, Numbers 9 and 11 Rowland's Hill, Lullingstone (28 Rowlands Hill), 13 and 15 St John's Hill, Harleston Villas, Number 1-3 Retreat Road.

*19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Public Buildings:* St John's Parish Church, St Catherine's RC Church, St John's First School (Figure 89).



Figure 88: Emergency Services and Court Buildings, Hanham Road



Figure 89: St John's First School, St John's Hill



### Wimborne Minster Historic Urban Character Area 5 Archaeology

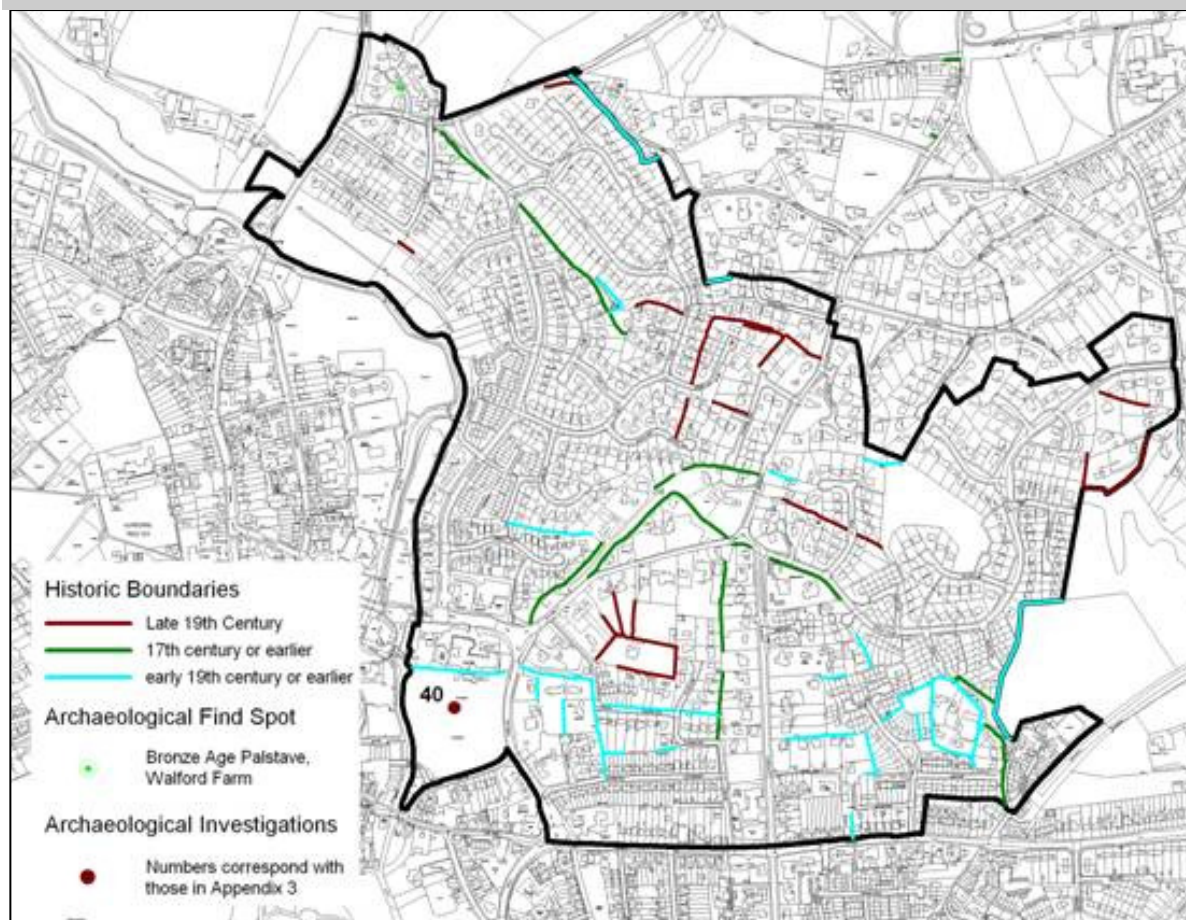


Figure 90: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 5

#### Archaeological Investigations

Only one archaeological investigation has been undertaken in this character area (Figure 90, Appendix 3, No. 40).

An archaeological desk based assessment of the former Wimborne Cricket Ground was undertaken during 2007 in advance of the development of the site for a Waitrose Supermarket. The report concluded that the archaeological potential of the site was low.

#### Archaeological Character

The archaeological character of Rowlands Hill and Walford Farm is largely unknown. No archaeological investigations have taken place and only one find has been reported, a Bronze Age Palstave axe from Walford Farm found in 1873. It is possible that further evidence for late prehistoric settlement is awaiting discovery within the area, perhaps along the lower slopes around the western tip of Colehill.

Early 17<sup>th</sup> century maps suggest that the area was dominated by pasture and unenclosed heath. The settlement pattern has comprised

isolated dispersed farmsteads since at least the Late Saxon period. Walford was listed as a one hide manor at the time of Domesday. Green Close Farm and Lewens House were both in existence by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although they may represent earlier dispersed settlement sites. A large clay pit on the west side of Beacroft Lane was disused by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a Gas works existed at that time adjacent to the railway as it passed Green Close Farm. It is possible that evidence for earlier brick working may be found along the upper slopes of Rowlands Hill.

Figure 90 also depicts a number of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century boundaries fossilised within the modern townscape. The earliest relate to a network of lanes visible on the Hanham Estate map, some of which may preserve the earlier alignments of a late prehistoric field system. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century boundaries are derived from the Tithe map and relate to pastoral enclosures, notably on the north side of Leigh Road. Later 19<sup>th</sup> century boundaries relate to plots associated with large Victorian villas and suburban estates.

### Wimborne Minster Historic Urban Character Area 5 Designations

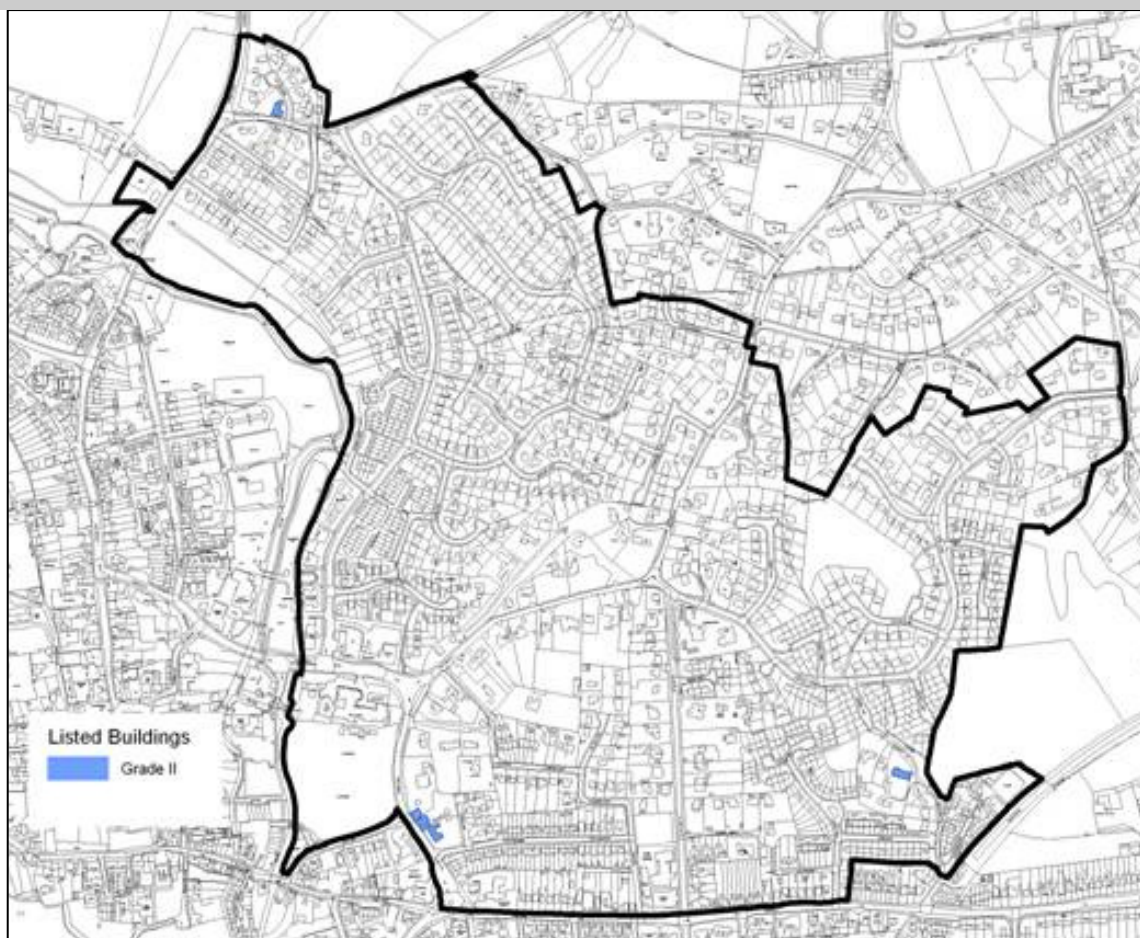


Figure 91: Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in Historic Urban Character Area 5

#### **Listed Buildings**

There are 5 Listed Building designations in the Character Area; Walford Farmhouse, Lewens House, Greenclose Farmhouse, Dewlish (2 Lewens Lane) and 1 Lewens Lane. They are all grade II (Figure 91).

#### **Conservation Areas**

The majority of St John's Hill, Rowland's Hill and Retreat Road lie within the Rowland's Hill/ St John's Hill Conservation Area. The area of historic buildings at Lewens House, together with Town Mead also lie within the Wimborne Minster Conservation Area (Figure 45).

#### **Registered Historic Parks and Gardens**

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

#### **Scheduled Monuments**

There are no scheduled monuments within the Character Area.

## Wimborne Minster Historic Urban Character Area 5 Evaluation

### ***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. The Conservation area of Rowlands Hill/ St Johns Hill is dominated by Victorian suburban buildings as well as the large number of mature native and imported trees along the streets and within back gardens. The historic settlement foci of Walford Farm, Greenclose Farm and Lewens, although largely divorced from their historic rural contexts, still allow a glimpse of an earlier medieval settlement pattern within the area.

Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that the vast majority of the area is now characterised by modern housing estates within modern curvilinear culs-de sac bearing little or no relation to the historic landscape.

### ***Sensitivity to Large Scale Development***

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. The level of sensitivity varies between the conservation areas, which are highly sensitive to development on any scale, and the modern housing estates which already represent large scale development. However, the modern housing developments are on a scale in keeping with the suburban character of the area. Large scale development of a type not in keeping with the suburban nature of the area would have a potentially detrimental effect on the historic character of the area.

### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. Domesday suggests that any medieval settlement within this area was on

a very small scale and dispersed in nature.

Some limited archaeological deposits relating to medieval settlement might survive around the Walford and Greenclose Farm sites, as well as at Lewens. The topographical position of the Rowland's Hill, above the Rivers Stour and Allen might have some potential for deposits relating to settlement activity dating from the late prehistoric period onwards. This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 4-6, 16, 22, 24, 26 and 30 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Medieval manor of Walford
- Medieval and post medieval dispersed rural settlement
- Planned Victorian suburb
- Modern suburban estates