

## Sherborne Historic Urban Character Area 6 Horsecastles and Barton

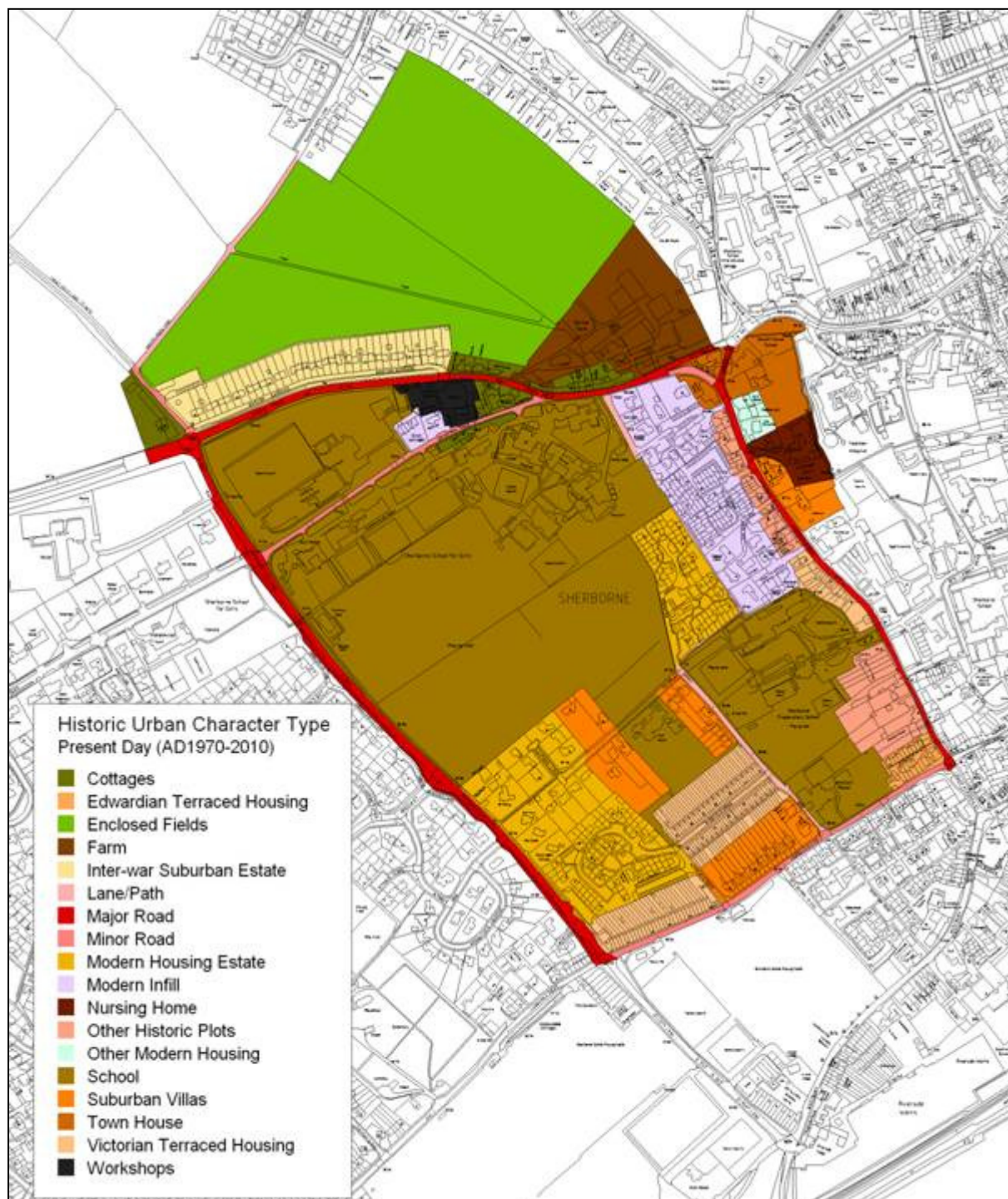


Figure 141: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 6, showing current historic urban character type

## Sherborne Historic Urban Character Area 6 Structure of Character Area

### Overview

The name *Horsecastles* is historically associated with land bounded by Acreman Street, Horsecastles, Horsecastles Lane and Bradford Road. The character area extends north to Sheeplands Lane. Early settlement was on Acreman Street and Kitt Hill. Barton Farm may be a post-medieval successor to the Abbey grange. Most of the area is school buildings and playing fields, with some modern housing.

### Topography and Geology

This character area lies on the northern slope of the upper Yeo valley, sloping gently and evenly from Horsecastles Lane towards Sheeplands. The Geology Oolitic limestone with a little Fuller's Earth clay at the south east corner.

### Urban Structure

The area originally comprised a row of large (c 1 acre) rectangular plots on the west side of Acreman Street, possibly held by ploughmen of the Abbey estate. The plots are planned and regular. The Acreman Street/ Kitt Hill junction was an early settlement focus with Barton Farm. A ribbon of cottages spread west from Barton Farm up Kitt Hill in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century. There was urban and suburban development in the south of the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the original plots being truncated by ornamental villas in large plots. Further west, on Horsecastles and Wingfield Road, is terraced housing built for workers at Westbury Silk Mill and rows of suburban semi-detached houses.

### Present Character

Figure 141 shows the present day historic urban character types. The basic rectilinear pattern to the area is clear. The northern part of the area is fields, and the Sherborne School for Girls (Figure 74) occupies the centre. Most modern housing and infill is in the south west corner and



Figure 142: View north of Acreman Street at the junction with Cornhill

north west behind the historic frontage of Acreman Street. The west side is historic houses and Victorian and Edwardian terraces, and the north end is fronted by 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century town houses (Figure 142). The north east side of Acreman Street has large detached 19<sup>th</sup>-century and modern houses, and a modern nursing home. Barton Hill Farm dominates the east end of Kitt Hill, with cottages to the west. Further west are workshops, an inter-war suburban estate at Barton Gardens and a little modern infill. The southern part of the area is 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces (Figure 143) and suburban villas, some now school buildings.

### Time Depth

The Acreman Street and Kitt Hill corridors were occupied by the 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, but most of the area was enclosed fields associated with Horsecastles Farm and Barton Farm until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The regular rectangular shape of the area reflects an underlying field system, possibly originating in the late prehistoric period (Davey 2010). Late Saxon and medieval activity has been found at Newell House (Valentin 2003). The south-eastern part of Horsecastles fields was developed in 1885 as Sherborne Preparatory School. Terraced houses were built on Horsecastles c 1860, and on Wingfield Road (Figure 144) and Acreman Place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The centre was developed as Sherborne School for Girls in 1903, with two Sherborne School houses and a few suburban villas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 145). Barton Gardens were built in 1919. Sheeplands remains undeveloped.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

There are distinct zones to the settlement pattern in Horsecastles. There is a consistent frontage of vernacular cottages and houses in Sherborne stone on the west side of Acreman Street and Yeovil Road/ Kitt Hill. These tend to be set slightly back from the street frontage, often behind low walls, sometimes with railings. Variations on this pattern include a group of large stone town houses at the north end of Acreman Street and groups of large detached houses on the east side of Acreman Street. Settlement along Horsecastles itself is more open, with brick Victorian terraces and villas on the north side only. There are enclosed terraces at Wingfield Road and Acreman Place. There are modern housing estates of detached bungalows at Half Acres and Richmond Close and small terraces around courts and culs de sac at Richmond Green and Acreman Court.

## Sherborne Historic Urban Character Area 6 Built Character

### **Building types**

An important group at the southern end of Acreman Street has a mix of 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century gentry houses and 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century cottages, most in short terraces (Figure 146). The later large detached houses have deliberate symmetry in their design. Another important group at Cornhill and Kitt Hill includes the large town houses of Kitt Hill House (18<sup>th</sup> century), Cornhill House (19<sup>th</sup> century) and Newell House (17<sup>th</sup> century) with its 16<sup>th</sup>-century barn. The 16<sup>th</sup> century Barton Farmhouse also forms another interesting group with its associated cottages on Yeovil Road (Figure 148). There is a small group of early 20<sup>th</sup> century brick industrial buildings, former printworks, on Yeovil Road (Figure 149).

### **Building Materials**

A variety of building materials is seen in the character area. The cottages and town houses along Acreman Street, Kitt Hill and Yeovil Road consistently use Sherborne Stone, but in a mixture of forms including ashlar, squared, coursed and random rubble. Larger houses sometimes use ashlar quoins and dressings with coursed rubble walls. The later Victorian ornamental villas generally have a higher quality of dressed masonry. Roofs are a variety of stone slate, tile, thatch and imported slate on later 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Boundary walls are generally rubble with ashlar piers, and chimney stacks both brick and stone. The 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces on Horsecastles are in coursed and squared rubble with imported slate roofs and brick stacks. Wingfield road is in plain red brick with ashlar dressings, pantile roofs and brick stacks. Acreman Place is plain red brick with a coursed rubble side elevation. The building materials of Sherborne School for Girls include ashlar, squared rubble and pebble dash.

### **Key Buildings**

*School buildings:* Sherborne School for Girls (Aldhelmstead), Aldhelmstead West; Sherborne Preparatory School (Acreman House and Netherton); Sherborne School Houses (Westcott and Lyon House).

*17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century town houses:* Newell House; Kitt Hill House; Corn Hill House.

*16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> century vernacular houses and cottages:* Barton Farm House and adjoining cottages to the west; 43-7 (odd) Acreman Street.

*19<sup>th</sup> century terraces and suburban villas:* Horsecastles Terrace; Wingfield Road Terraces; Acreman Place; Digby Villas, Horsecastles; Tobermory, Acreman Street.



Figure 143: View east along Horsecastles Terrace



Figure 144: Wingfield Road



Figure 145: Lyon House (Sherborne School) and 13-15 Richmond Road



Figure 146: Number 8-18 Acreman Street

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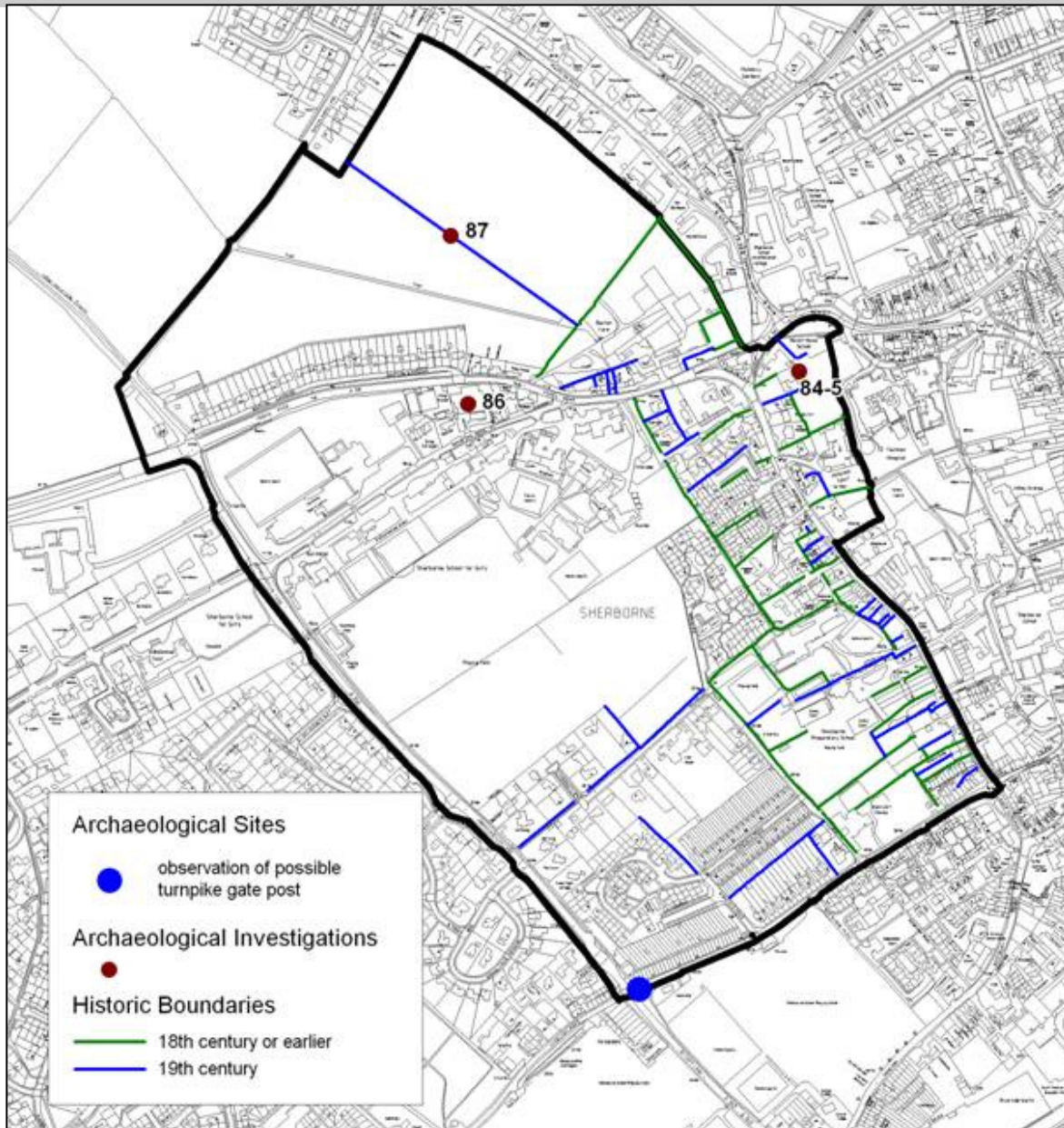


Figure 147: Archaeological Sites and Investigations in Historic Urban Character Area 6

### **Archaeological Investigations**

Four archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area (Figure 147; Appendix 3, Nos. 84-87).

An archaeological evaluation at Newell House [84-5] revealed evidence for medieval occupation associated with 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century pottery, and potentially connected with a precursor to the 16<sup>th</sup> century demesne barn. What may have been civil war burials were found during construction work on Yeovil Road, opposite Barton Farm circa 1930 [86]. There has also been a desk based assess-

ment of land on the north side of Barton Farm [87].

### **Archaeological Character**

The lack of archaeological finds from within this area does not necessarily represent its archaeological character. The area occupies part of a well drained and fertile south facing slope, ideal for cultivation and settlement from any period since the Neolithic. It is true that this area has been largely rural in nature until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the fact that it lies outside the historic core of the town has also led to a the perception that the

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area is of low archaeological potential and not worth investigating. Nevertheless, there are a number of key areas with significant archaeological character. The area behind Newell House has been shown to retain evidence of late Saxon to medieval activity, possibly associated with a 16<sup>th</sup> century barn on the site and the Abbey grange. Furthermore, plots on the west side of Acreman Street display a uniformity of size and form suggestive of planning. It seems the frontage was deliberately divided in to 1 acre plots, settled and subsequently subdivided into smaller plots. The remains of a post, possibly associated with a toll house, have also been observed in the road opposite the Travellers Rest, Horsecastles.

Figure 147 shows historic boundaries visible on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century maps. The 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier boundaries on the west side of Acreman Street are assumed to be medieval or early post-medieval in origin.



*Figure 148: Numbers 115-118 Yeovil Road*



*Figure 149: Former print works, Yeovil Road*

### Sherborne Historic Urban Character Area 6 Designations

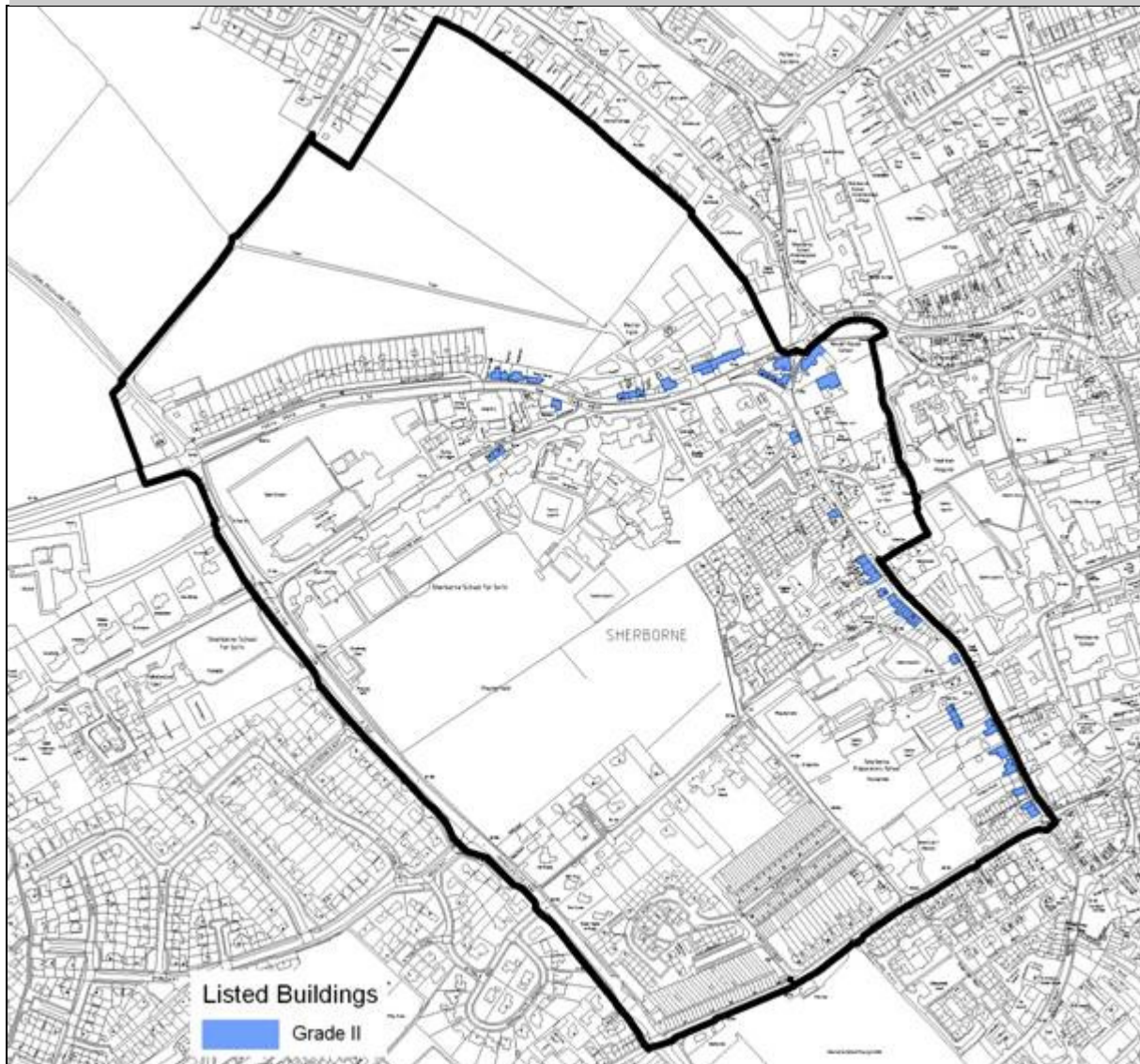


Figure 150: Historic Buildings in Historic Urban Character Area 6

#### **Listed Buildings**

There are 32 Listed Building designations in the Character Area, all Grade II (Figure 150).

#### **Conservation Areas**

Horsecastles, Wingfield Road, Richmond Road, Acreman Street, Kitt Hill, Cornhill and the east end of Yeovil Road are within the conservation area (Figure 88).

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

No Registered Parks and Gardens lie within the Character Area.

#### **Scheduled Monuments**

No Scheduled Monuments lie within the Character Area.

## Sherborne Historic Urban Character Area 6 Evaluation

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

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. There is a strong positive contribution from the historic buildings along Acreman Street, Cornhill and Kitt Hill. The industrial terraces, particularly those on Horsecastles, are significant, as they are highly visible at important view points from the south. The sub-surface archaeology of Newell House and the surviving medieval plot boundaries on the west side of Acreman Street also contribute. The area retains a significant amount of large open green space which is important in terms of vistas and a reflection of the area's rural history. On the negative side there are large areas of modern housing and commercial development highly visible from Horsecastles Lane, Yeovil Road and Bradford Road. Large volumes of heavy traffic along Horsecastles Lane and Yeovil Road also have a detrimental impact.

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

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Modern development already exists along Yeovil Road, Bradford Road and Horsecastles Lane, including some minor industrial and commercial sites. Sherborne School for Girls has expanded into the Oxley area with a new sports centre. Modern Housing estates occupy parts of the central area, around the fringes of the School playing fields.

Nevertheless there are also areas of significant historic character, notably along Horsecastles, Acreman Street and Kitt Hill. Open green spaces are also an important aspect of the character of the area. These would be at significant risk from large scale modern development

### ***Archaeological Potential***

The average potential for the area is judged to be **medium**. Because the greater part of this character area was undeveloped until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, archaeological potential is limited to deposits related to agrarian activity with only a low potential for occupation remains in these areas. However, such deposits may hold the key to refining the date of a rectilinear field system fossilised in the Sherborne region. Acreman Street, and Kitt Hill have been occupied since the 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier and Newell House has evidence that settlement may have started as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century here. In these areas archaeological potential must be considered to be High.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-3, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 20-24 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Possible site of medieval Abbey Barton
- Medieval planned plots along Acreman Street
- Medieval or earlier rectilinear field system
- 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century town houses at Newell, Cornhill and Kitt Hill
- 19<sup>th</sup> century Industrial terraces and suburban villas
- 19<sup>th</sup> century ornamental villas behind the Acreman Street frontage
- 19<sup>th</sup> century school playing fields