

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 4 The Military Coast

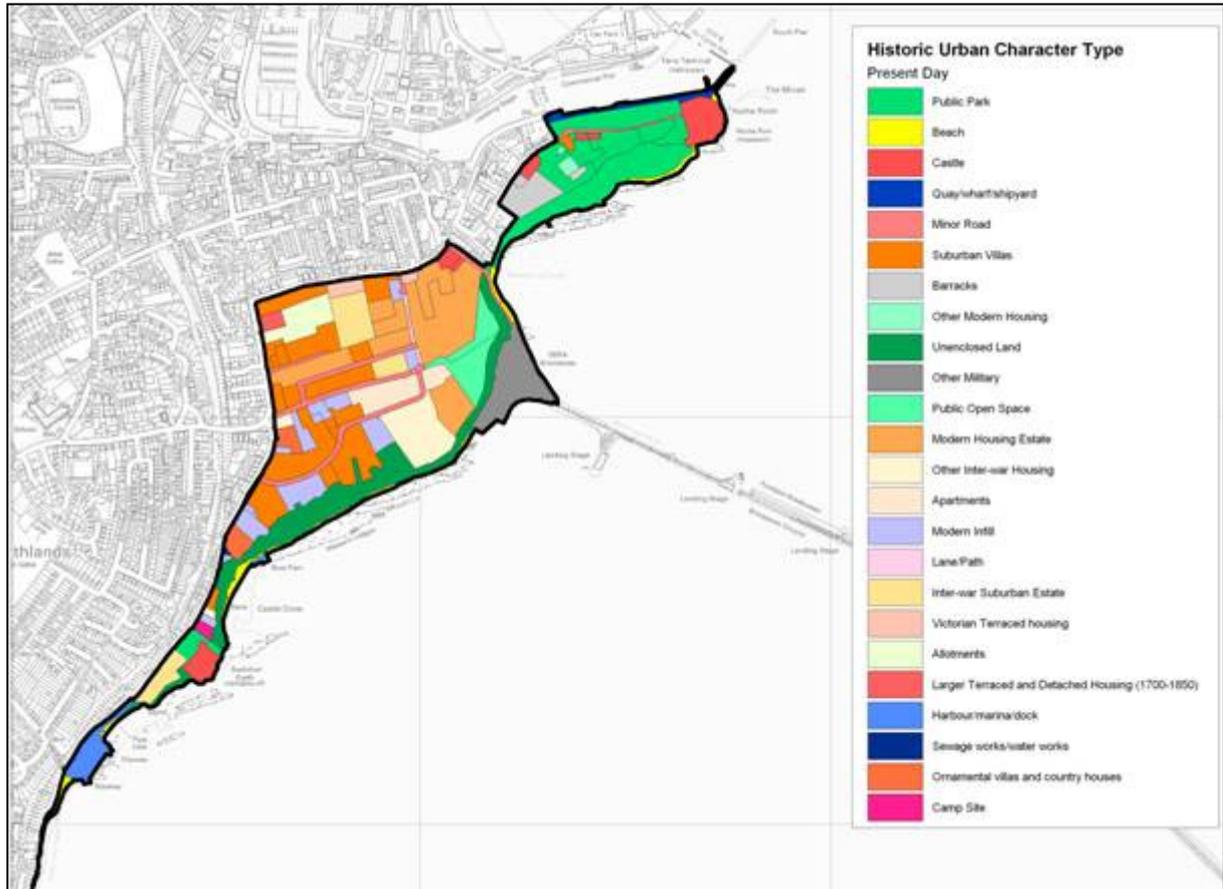


Figure 69: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 4, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 70: Nothe Fort, retaining wall



Figure 71: Victorian housing Old Castle Road

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 4 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area runs along the shoreline of Portland harbour, from the Nothe Fort to Sandsfoot Castle, and includes an area of 19th and 20th century housing which also overlooks Portland Harbour.

Topography and Geology

The ground slopes up from the shoreline, except at Newtons Cove where a valley runs inland towards Weymouth harbour. Much of the land close to the shore is very unstable and susceptible to landslips. The area lies on clays overlying Corallian limestone.

Urban Structure

The only roads in the area are comparatively modern, built to serve the late 19th and 20th century developments. At the northern end the area is dominated by the bulk of Nothe Fort and the adjacent Nothe Gardens. The development in the middle section of the area consists of late 19th century villas and 20th century housing estates, whilst at the southern end is Sandsfoot Castle and its associated gardens.

Present Character

Figure 69 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area is very varied with former military buildings in public gardens at either end with more recent housing developments in between. The houses are a mixture of Victorian villas and attached houses



Figure 72: Sandsfoot Castle gardens

with some more recent 20th century infill. There is also a modern military research facility at Bincleaves at the end of Portland Breakwater. Sandsfoot Castle is a ruin with public gardens on three sides, whilst the Nothe Fort is substantially intact with public gardens to the west. Minor historic urban character types include the sailing facility at Castle cove, beside Sandsfoot castle.

The shoreline is very unstable and, as a result, there is a strip of undeveloped land running along the coastal strip.

Time Depth

This area has always been marginal to the town, with little development until comparatively recently. It has not however been unimportant as it has been the focus of the areas defences since at least the sixteenth century, when there was a battery on the Nothe, defences at Newton's Cove and Sandsfoot castle. Although Sandsfoot castle fell into ruin by the late seventeenth century the Nothe was continuously defended and developed, reaching its current form in the late nineteenth century.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is of high density housing in the central section of the area, with public open space at either end. The Nothe gardens are the largest public gardens in Weymouth, running along the coast almost as far as Newton's Cove, whilst the Nothe Fort is one of Weymouth's principal tourist attractions. At the other end Sandsfoot gardens surround the ruins of the castle, creating another important public open space. There is open, green space along the coast, but it is unstable and overgrown and cannot safely be accessed by the public.



Figure 73: Nothe Parade walk below gardens

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 4 Built Character

Building types

The most notable buildings in the character area are on the coast and associated with defence and military activity over many centuries. The remains of the post-medieval Sandsfoot Castle and the late 19th century Nothe Fort are the most prominent and architecturally significant, but there are numerous buildings along the coastal fringe which were built for military/ industrial purposes. There are a few short terraces of Victorian houses and larger suburban villas, with modern housing estates and smaller areas of modern infill.

Building Materials

The military buildings are stone built. Sandsfoot Castle appears to have been partly built of recycled stone (traditionally from Bindon Abbey) and cased in Portland Stone, whilst Nothe Fort was built exclusively of Portland Stone. The 19th and 20th century houses are predominantly built in brick with slate roofs, stone only being used for some decorative features.

Key Buildings

Sandsfoot Castle

Nothe Fort

Bincleaves

Twentieth century villas



Figure 74: Newtons Cove



Figure 75: Newtons Cove bridge

**Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 4
Archaeology**

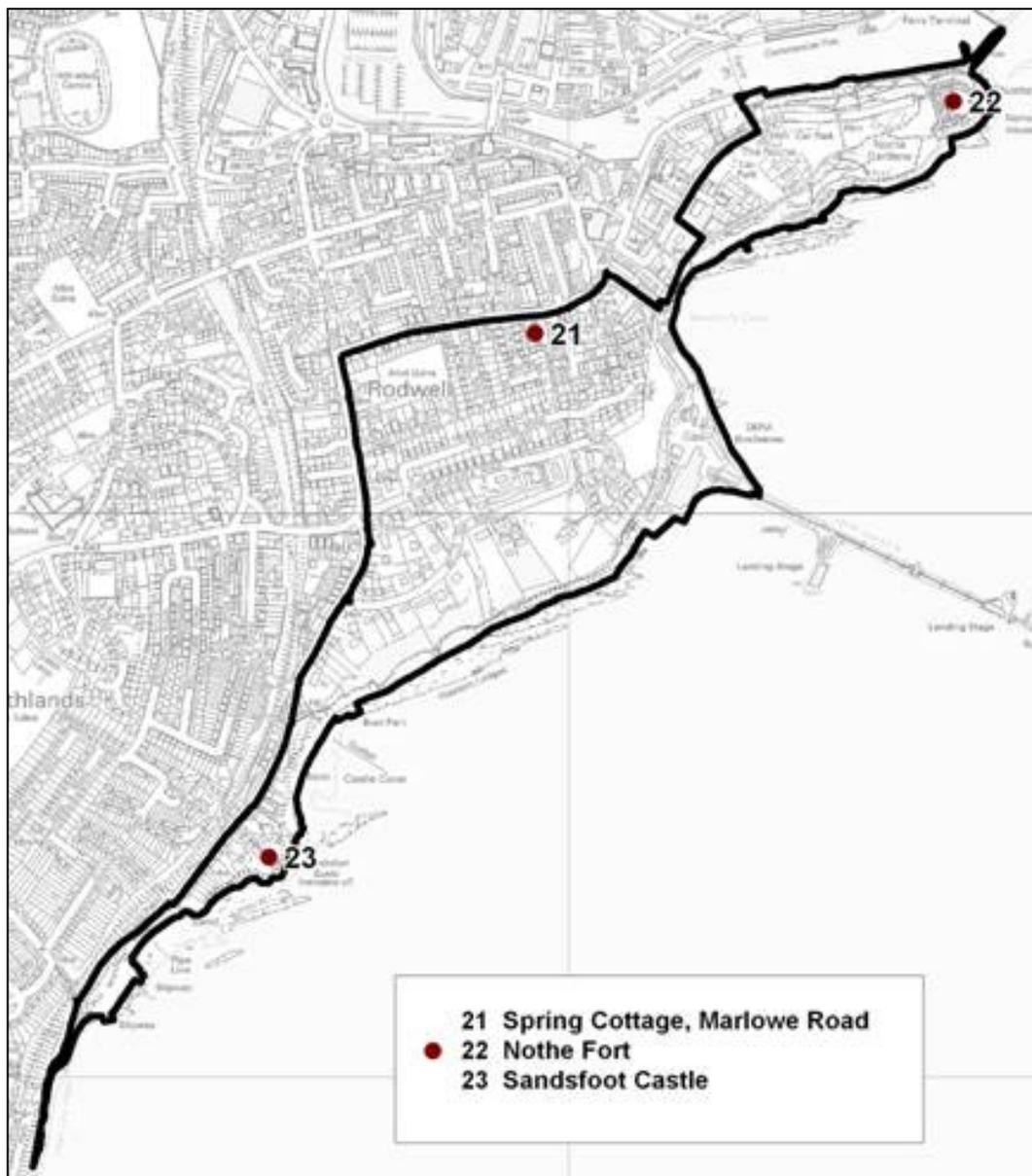


Figure 76: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 4

Archaeological Investigations

Evaluation of land adjacent to Spring Cottage revealed no features or finds earlier than 18th century in date. Geophysical survey in Nothe Gardens revealed features that probably relate to the anti-aircraft battery situated here during World War II (Rowe 2006). Some building survey has taken place at the Nothe Fort (Gardiner 2004).

Archaeological Character

The very limited below-ground investigation constrains any consideration of the archaeological resource. Clearly, both Sandsfoot Castle and the Nothe Fort and their

environs are of considerable historic and military archaeological significance and consequently potential.

No evidence for pre-urban activity has been recorded in this character area. The coastal edge of the area is relatively unstable, and significant archaeological deposits in this zone are likely to have been observed in cliff falls and so forth. There appears to have been significant Roman activity in the adjacent character area to the north, and this may have extended into the northern part of this character area.

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 4 Designations

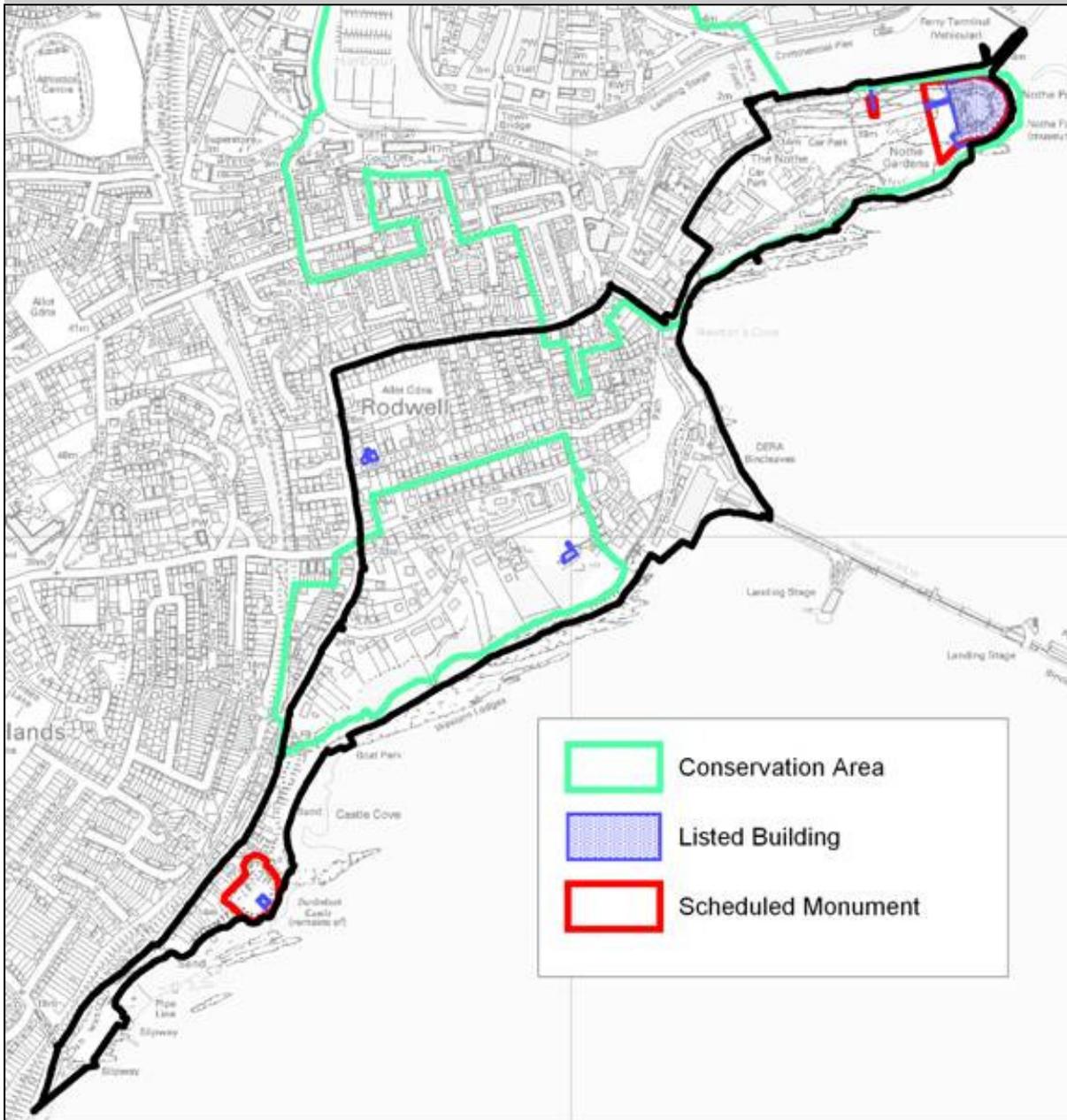


Figure 77: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 4

Listed Buildings

There are 6 Listed Building designations in the character area, of which two are Grade II* (Sandsfoot Castle and The Nothe). The others are Grade II.

Conservation Areas

The greater part of the Belle Vue Road Conservation Area lies within this character area. A small area at the southern tip of the Weymouth Conservation Area falls into this character area.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

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

Scheduled Monuments

There are two Scheduled Monument designations in the character area – Sandsfoot Castle (SM33198) and the Nothe Fort (SM33199).

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 4 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**, particularly in the area of Sandsfoot Castle and the Nothe Fort and their environs, where there is good survival of historic features. These two buildings and their associated structures make an extremely strong contribution to the character of the area, particularly as seen from Portland and the sea and, in the case of the Nothe Fort, from the area of the pavilion and ferry terminal.

There is a range of different building types from suburban villas to terraced houses and artisan's cottages. The widespread use of local materials in historic buildings and some modern infill confers a pleasing character to some parts of the area. Elsewhere modern housing has been constructed in non-local materials and styles.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The monuments of Sandsfoot Castle and the Nothe Fort reflect considerable time depth and, with the quayside, provide focal points which give this area its historic character. Those street frontages formed mainly by historic buildings, though relatively modern, would be sensitive to anything other than small-scale change and any opening up of the frontages would have a major impact upon the character.

The coastal nature of the area means that majority of the character area is visible from the sea, whilst the Nothe Fort is a prominent feature from the harbour and the shore of Weymouth bay, with the result that any large-scale

development would be very visible.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It contains the significant monuments of Sandsfoot Castle and the Nothe Fort, and these buildings and their environs have the potential to reveal much about coastal defences from medieval to modern times. This area lies beyond the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town, but has some potential to reveal information about later suburban development, and maritime and commercial activities along the quay.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on the pre-urban activity. Though somewhat unstable, its coastal location means that it can be considered a favourable location for earlier pre-urban activity. Significant Roman finds have been made to the north of this area.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 9, 10, 11, 16, 25 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Sandsfoot Castle
- The Nothe Fort
- The Nothe Gardens
- Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing