

## Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 3 Milldown Road

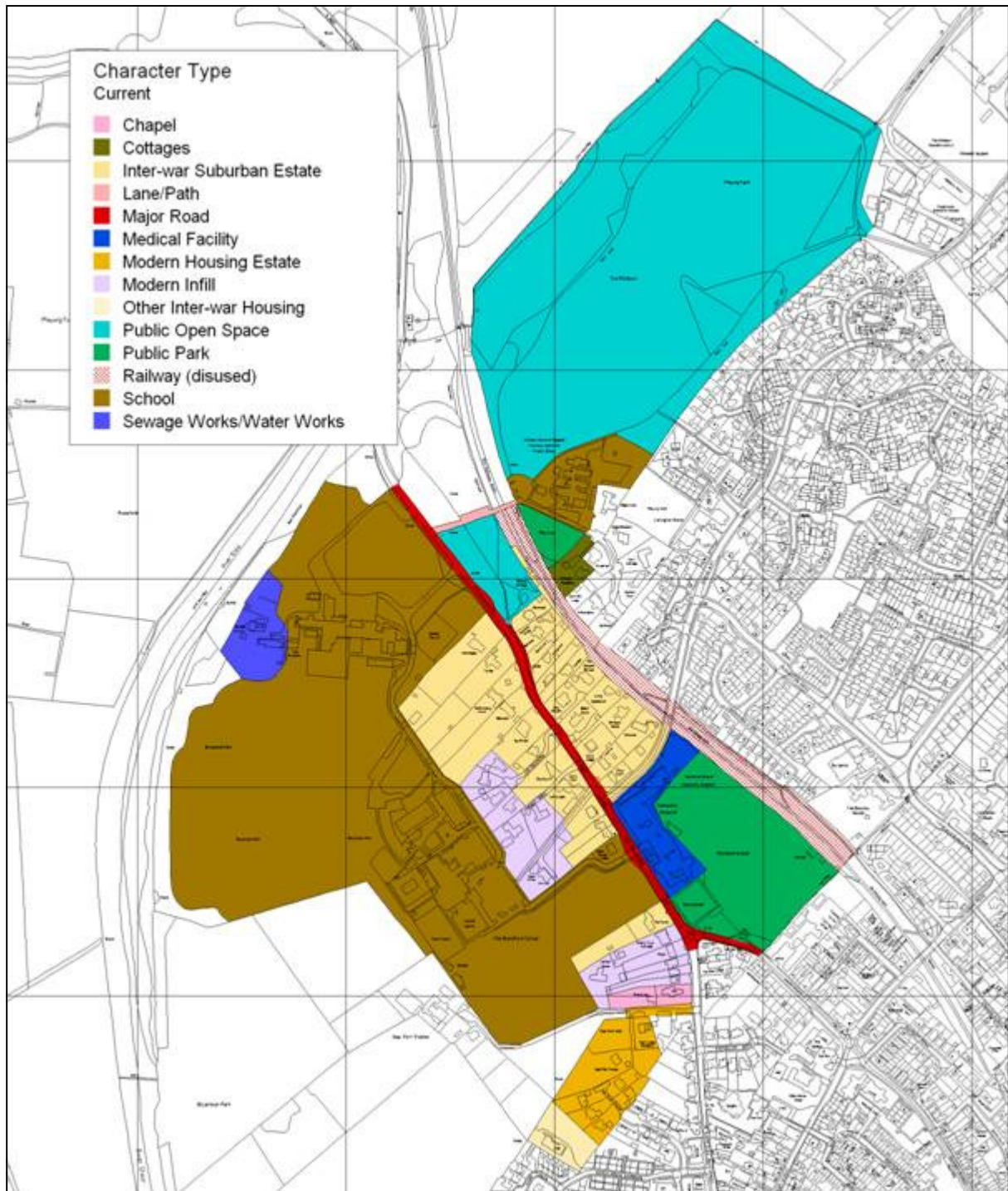


Figure 66: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type

## Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

### **Overview**

This area comprises suburban expansion to the north of the historic town of Blandford, between the river Stour and the former railway line. The area west of Milldown Road was historically part of Bryanston Park and the area to the northeast was formerly an area of unenclosed pasture,

### **Topography and Geology**

This area lies at the south western tip of a chalk ridge running south towards the Stour at Blandford. The western edge of the character area marks the boundary between the chalk downs and the alluvial floodplain of the Stour. The ground of the character area rises gently from approximately 45m above Ordnance Datum in the south west, to a high point of approximately 80m in the north east corner of Milldown. There are also two shallow dry valleys cutting through the area from the NE to the SW.

### **Urban Structure**

This character area is essentially suburban in nature and structured around an axial through route, Milldown Road. This road forks at its southern terminus into White Cliff Mill Street and Park Road. There was development to the northeast by the line of the embanked former railway line, which runs parallel. Inter-war housing continued this suburban expansion north along the axial route of Milldown Road. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century development has been within short culs de sac leading off the three main roads with modern housing behind the original street frontage. There are also large areas of green space on either side of Milldown Road comprising school playing fields, a recreation ground and Milldown itself.

### **Present Character**

Figure 66 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area is dominated by the large expanses of School, Public Open Space



Figure 67: View south along Milldown Road

and Public Park. There is an Inter-war Suburban Estate along Milldown Road and small areas of Modern Housing Estate and Modern Infill. Other significant character types include the Disused Railway and a Medical Facility. Other minor character types include Cottages and a Chapel.

### **Time Depth**

The line of Milldown Road appears to follow that of a regular co-axial late prehistoric landscape identified in the Blandford Region. Bryanston Park seems to have been established during the 18<sup>th</sup> century; an avenue of trees was planted as part of a landscaped approach to Bryanston House across the Stour in 1759 (Pollard and Brawn, 2009, 57). The Recreation Ground was established on its present site during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 68). The neighbouring cottage hospital was built in 1888 (Figure 69). Barracks were established adjacent and opposite to it during WWI and suburban housing lined Milldown Road during the inter-war period. The Milldown School was established in 1955.

### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

The settlement pattern is a mixture of low and medium density housing along Milldown Road and large institutional buildings set in extensive grounds. The streetscape is generally fairly open with the houses set back from the street frontage behind fences or low garden walls.

Open green spaces form a significant part of this area including the recreation ground, school playing fields and the Milldown. Mature trees also form a prominent element in this area, both in gardens and particularly around Milldown.



Figure 68: Late 19<sup>th</sup> century Cricket Pavilion, Park Road Recreation Ground



### Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 3

## Built Character

### **Building types**

The area is dominated by mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban housing. The original 19<sup>th</sup> century Cottage Hospital building was constructed on two storeys with a gabled ended roof and hipped dormers. The 20<sup>th</sup> century Catholic Church on White Cliff Mill Street is cruciform in plan (Figure 72). The inter-war houses lining Milldown Road are irregular in plan with a mixture of hipped and gabled roofs. The Milldown and Blandford Schools comprise a complex of flat roofed blocks.

### **Building Materials**

Brick is by far the most common walling material in the character area, although later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing tends to use non-local materials. The Cottage Hospital and Catholic Church both have red brick walls with plain tile roofs. The inter-war housing has a mixture of slate and tiled roofs. The school buildings use a variety of non-local materials.

### **Key Buildings**

*Public buildings:* The Cottage Hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes and St Cecilia Catholic Church; The Milldown School

*Inter-war houses:* White Lodge, Beech House, The Rowans, Coonor and Railway Cottage Milldown Road



Figure 69: The Cottage Hospital, Milldown Road.



Figure 70: View north along Milldown Road.



Figure 71: The Blandford School, Milldown Road.



Figure 72: Our Lady of Lourdes and St Cecilia Catholic Church.

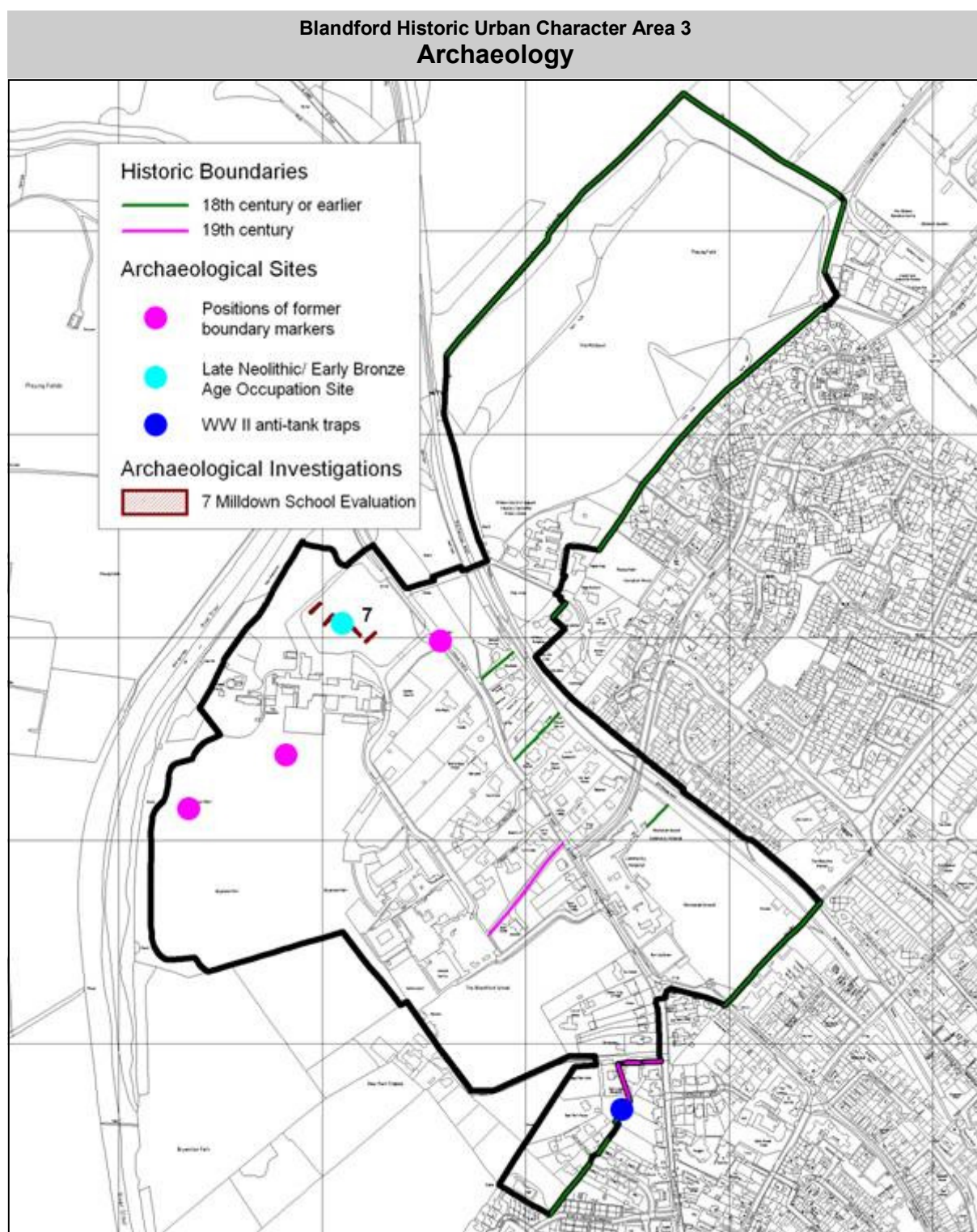


Figure 73: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 3.

### **Archaeological Investigations**

One archaeological investigation has been undertaken in this character area (Figure 73; Appendix 3, No. 7). Geophysical survey, evaluation and excavation at Milldown School have revealed evidence for significant late Neolithic/ early Bronze Age activity including a pit containing beaker pottery (Steve Wallis, pers.

comm).

### **Archaeological Character**

This area lies beyond the historic settlement focus of the historic town and suburban activity dates from the 19th century onwards. The limited archaeological investigation constrains a full consideration of the archaeological character, but underscores the possibility of

significant pre-urban archaeological remains in this area. The excavations at Milldown School have revealed evidence for late Neolithic and early Bronze Age settlement in the form of pits and ditches. The position of this area on the edge of the well drained chalk slopes and the Stour floodplain would have been attractive to settlement throughout the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. There is evidence for a rectilinear system of land division, partially fossilised in the modern landscape and potentially dating from the late prehistoric period. It is not known if there was any medieval dispersed settlement in the area. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the land west of Milldown Road had been incorporated into Bryanston deer park.

Boundary stones survive just outside the study area to the west and the east. Three others formerly lay in the northern part of the study area during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but seem to have been removed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is a line of well preserved concrete anti-tank cubes in an orchard behind the White Cliff Mill Street frontage.

Figure 73 also shows historic boundaries depicted on maps dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The earliest field boundaries, perpendicular to Milldown Road, retain alignments reflecting that of the late prehistoric field system.

### Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 3 Designations

#### ***Listed Buildings***

There are no Listed Building designations in the Character Area.

#### ***Conservation Areas***

Almost the whole of this character area lies within the Blandford Forum Conservation Area. Only that part lying east of and including the disused railway is outside (Figure 44).

#### ***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.

### Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 3 Evaluation

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

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. This is supported by well preserved earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century street frontages along Milldown Road and the track bed of the former railway, now preserved as a green corridor (North Dorset Trailway). Milldown Road itself follows an ancient, possibly prehistoric, course and the grounds of Milldown and Blandford Schools occupy part of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century deer park. However, these positive contributions are tempered by a high proportion of modern housing behind White Cliff Mill Street and Milldown Road as well as large modern school and hospital buildings. The area retains a higher proportion of open spaces and trees than the town centre, reflecting its rural status during the medieval period.

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

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to large scale development. Although there are already large areas of modern housing, these frequently lie behind an intact 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century street frontage. The buildings within these areas are of a scale that does not visually impact upon the historic streetscape. Furthermore, the northern part of the area remains relatively unencumbered from modern housing and includes large areas of open space (The 19<sup>th</sup> century Recreation Ground, school playing fields and disused railway). This reflects an earlier rural and parkland character and is

particularly sensitive to large scale development.

#### **Archaeological Potential**

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. Although the area was largely outside the urban area until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is potential for surviving archaeological deposits relating to a putative late prehistoric field system. The nature of pre-urban dispersed settlement patterns might also be revealed through surviving deposits. For example, whether there evidence for later Prehistoric, Roman or Roman settlement accompanying the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age settlement excavated at Milldown School. The area lies at the junction between the fertile chalk slopes and floodable meadows of the River Stour. This range of resources suggests that the area has the potential for surviving deposits relating to rural settlement from the late prehistoric period onwards. There is also some potential for surviving archaeological deposits relating to lost boundary stones as well as deposits relating to clay and chalk extraction or other industrial activity.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-2, 4-6, 13, 22-24 and 26 (Part 7).

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Edge of River Stour floodplain location
- Formerly partly in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Bryanston Park
- Possible late prehistoric field pattern
- Disused railway line
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> century hospital and recreation ground
- 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban expansion
- Extensive public open green spaces