

Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 4

The Railway Suburb

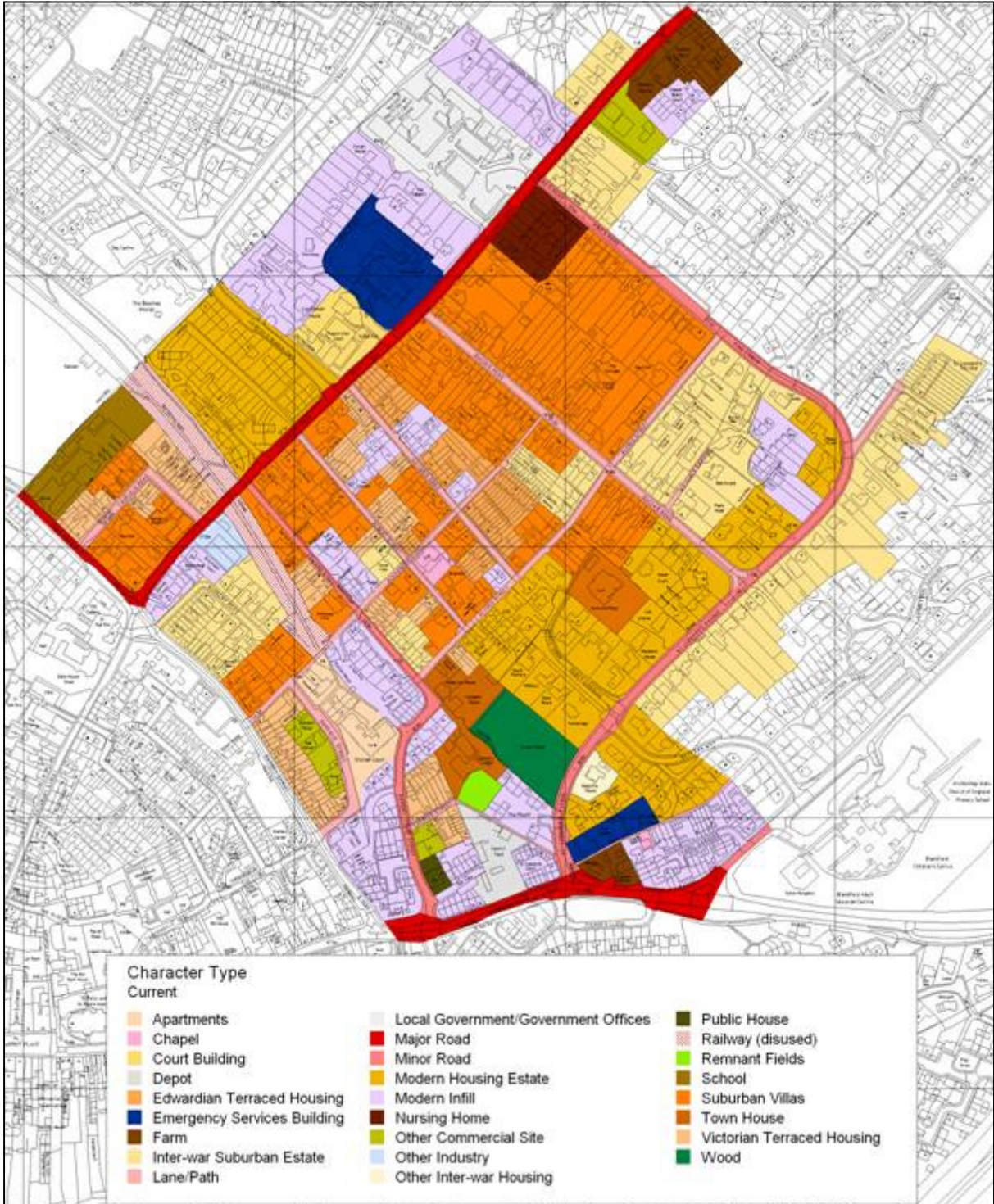


Figure 74: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 4, showing current historic urban character type

Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 4 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is essentially a suburb to the north of the historic core which developed after the opening of the railway in 1863. The area is bounded by Damory Street to the west, Salisbury Road to the north, King's Road to the east and St Leonard's Avenue to the south.

Topography and Geology

This area occupies the southern slopes of a chalk ridge, bounded to the south by a small valley and ditch which empties into the Stour at Langton Road. The south east part lies in the base of the valley. The ground rises gently at first, then sharply between St Leonard's Avenue and Alfred Street and then levels off slightly in the northern part of the area. The geology of the area is chalk.

Urban Structure

This area is structured around a regular rectilinear grid street pattern. The two pre-existing main roads within the character area; Salisbury Road and Damory Street, are aligned perpendicular to each other and form the main axes from which the grid has been planned. The plots are a mix of rectangular and long narrow plots. The grid pattern breaks down towards the southern end in the area of the former railway station.

Present Character

Figure 74 shows the present day historic urban character types. The character types in the central part are dominated by Suburban Villas, Victorian and Edwardian Terraced Housing and Town Houses, with a number of areas of Inter-war Suburban Estate and Modern Infill. The periphery is characterised by more Modern Housing Estates, Modern Infill and Inter-war Suburban Housing. A number of institutional character types are present including two Emergency Services Buildings, a Court



Figure 75: View of Station Court, built on the site of the former Blandford Station.

Building, a Local Government Office and a (former) School. Two former farms are also present. Other minor character types Nursing Home, Chapel, Public House and Wood.

Time Depth

St Leonard's Farm and Chapel are on the site of a medieval leper hospital which was in existence by the late 13th century. The Damory Oak Inn is on the site of the medieval Damory Court. The Inn itself was built in the early 19th century. Other early 19th century developments include St Leonard's Farm and the National School. The Workhouse and Police Station date from the mid 19th century. The major period of development follows the opening of the railway in 1863 after which the new Victorian suburb was laid out around it. Subsequent developments include the late 19th century Nordon, now the offices of North District Council on Salisbury Road. Suburban development continued through the 1920s-30s. Significant suburban development in this area followed the closure of the railway in 1966.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is one of medium and high density housing arranged in a rectangular grid layout. The streets in the southern part of the area are relatively narrow and enclosed with primarily terraced housing set on the street frontage. Further north and east the streets are wider and with large detached and semi-detached houses set back from the street frontage within garden areas. Modern infill developments on the site of the former railway station and industrial units on Wimborne Road depart from the strict grid pattern. The greatest proportion of mature trees lie around the fringes of the Victorian suburb and along Salisbury Road where modern housing has developed within plots and paddocks associated with former farms and large ornamental villas.



Figure 76: View of Oakfield St showing 19th century commercial premises adjacent to the former station.

Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 4

Built Character

Building types

Although this area is dominated by red-brick Victorian and Edwardian terraces and semi-detached villas, there is a surprising variety of buildings both within and beyond the Victorian core. Places of worship are represented by the 15th century former chapel of St Leonard. The Victorian Primitive Methodist Chapel on Albert Street was built originally on a T plan with gabled roofs. St Leonard's Farmhouse is the only pre-Victorian domestic building in the character area. Large public buildings are represented by the mid 19th century Castleman's Homes, Salisbury Street, which was originally the entrance block to the Union Workhouse. The National School on Park Road also dates from the mid 19th century. Large ornamental villas are represented by the late 19th century Nordon, now the home to North Dorset District Council. There is also a group of large Victorian houses (Damory Lodge, Ashburton House and Highgate House) at the junction of Damory Court Street and Edward Street. Damory Court Farmhouse was built in 1901 but retains earlier outbuildings and Barnes Homes was built in 1908. Surviving Victorian commercial and industrial buildings are rare but include the Railway Hotel, the Damory Oak Inn and auction rooms on Alfred Street.



Figure 77: St Leonard's Farmhouse.



Figure 78: The Damory Oak Inn, with a 19th century or earlier north wing on the left of the picture.

Building Materials

The 15th century chapel of St Leonard's is primarily of flint with stone dressings and some brick repairs, with a tiled roof. Flint has also been used as banding on the north wing of Damory Oak Inn.

The majority of the Victorian and Edwardian buildings use brick for walling and slate for roofing. Primarily red brick is used with some yellow brick used decoratively and some decorative tiling. A small number of houses are stuccoed or rendered.

Key Buildings

Early 19th century or earlier buildings: St Leonard's Chapel; St Leonard's Farmhouse.

Victorian and Edwardian public buildings: National School, Park Rd; Castleman's Homes (former Union Workhouse); Barnes Homes; Primitive Methodist Chapel, Albert Street.

Victorian and Edwardian villas: Nordon, Damory Court Farmhouse, Grenville Pl, Damory Lodge

Victorian and Edwardian suburban housing: 5-35 Damory Street, St Leonard's Terrace, St Leonard's Ave



Figure 79: View north along Victoria Street showing a tight-knit urban streetscape.



Figure 80: View north along Queens Road with a more open suburban streetscape.

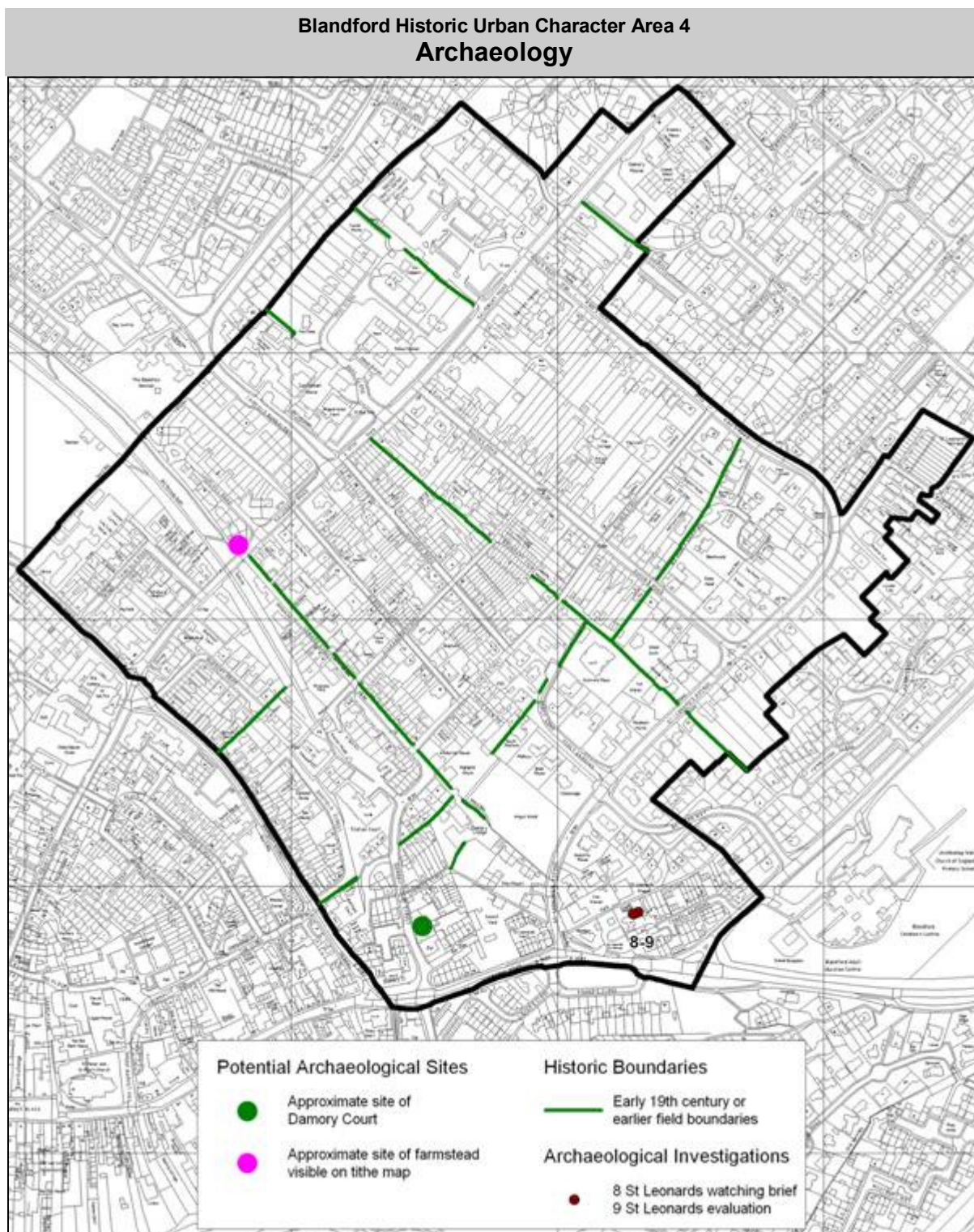


Figure 81: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 4

Archaeological Investigations

Two archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area, both at St Leonard’s Chapel (Figure 81; Appendix 3, Nos. 8-9). A watching brief during the construction of a new west wall at St Leonard’s Chapel and a neighbouring house revealed no archaeology (Keen 1988). An evaluation trench excavated

along the north wall of the chapel revealed the chalk rubble foundations of the 15th century chapel, along with flint knapping debris from the original construction of the walls (Gale 1991).

Archaeological Character

The archaeological character of this area is largely unknown. The fact that it comprised arable fields during the medieval period, does

not preclude the possibility of dispersed settlement existing in the area dating to any period from the late Neolithic to Early Medieval. Medieval settlement existed here at Damory Court and St Leonard's hospital. Another potential dispersed medieval settlement site might be indicated by a farmstead depicted on the Tithe Map on the north side of Salisbury

Road.

Figure 81 also depicts historic boundaries visible on the Tithe map and fossilised in the modern landscape. The rectilinear form of these boundaries suggests the possibility that they preserve the alignment of an earlier prehistoric field system.

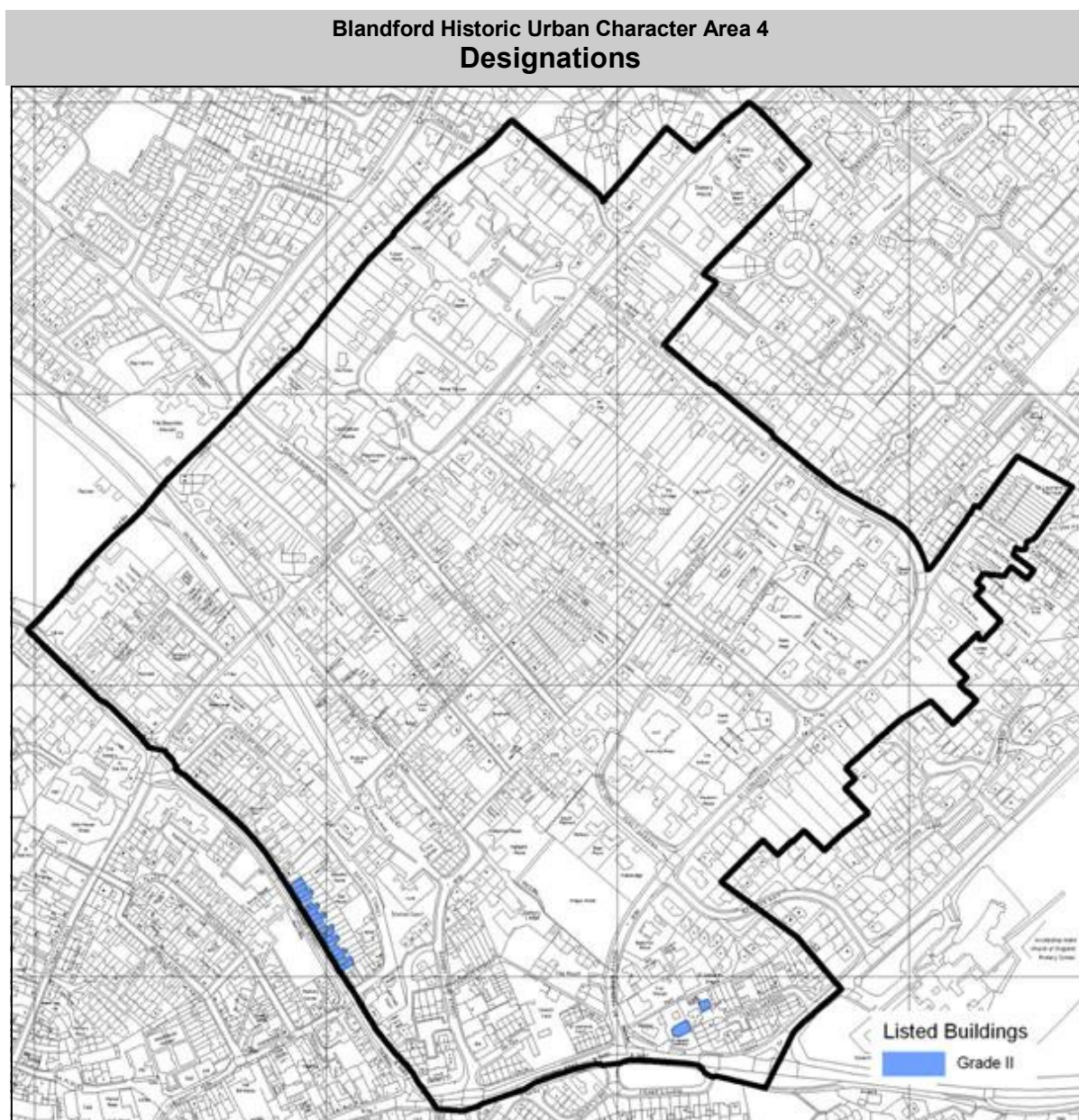


Figure 82: Listed Buildings in Historic Urban Character Area 4

Listed Buildings

There are three Listed Building designations in the Character Area, all Grade II (Figure 82).

Conservation Areas

The greater part of this character area lies within the Blandford Forum Conservation Area, excluding the modern housing north of Salisbury Road and the modern housing estate

between St Leonard's Avenue and Wimborne Road (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 4 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. The earliest part of the suburb, immediately to the north and east of the former station site, comprises a planned grid of streets with an intact, tight knit group of Victorian terraces and suburban villas. Further to the east there is a more open, verdant character to the area with wider tree-lined streets and detached Edwardian and Inter-war houses set back from the street frontage. The former station has been entirely given over to modern development, thus removing the original historic focus of the character area. Nevertheless, further modern housing is hidden behind the Salisbury Road or Leonard's Avenue street frontages. Salisbury Road itself is a busy thoroughfare with a mixture of large modern and historic public buildings interspersed with a mixture of late 19th and 20th century housing.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Large scale housing and public development already typifies the north side of Salisbury Road. The Victorian and Edwardian suburbs on the other hand, retain a great deal of integrity as a coherent and largely intact unit of planned streets and housing plots. There is also a uniformity of building material and scale, accompanying a diversity of building styles. The value and character of this area would be

seriously compromised through large scale development. The setting of Blandford's only surviving medieval building has already been detrimentally affected by the development of a modern housing estate.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. Its landscape setting, on a south facing, well drained and fertile slope, just above the flood plain, is ideal for settlement for any period from the Neolithic onwards. Any prehistoric or Romano-British settlement here may have been integrated within a rectilinear field system, partially fossilised within modern plot boundaries and road alignments. Furthermore, this area already has good historic evidence for medieval settlement at St Leonard's Farm, the former Damory Court, and potentially on the north side of Salisbury Road.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-2, 4-6, 13, 17-18, 21-24 and 27 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Medieval chapel and Manor House
- Former railway and station
- Victorian and Edwardian suburb
- Late 19th and 20th century industry
- Late 19th and 20th century public buildings