

## Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 6 Blandford St Mary

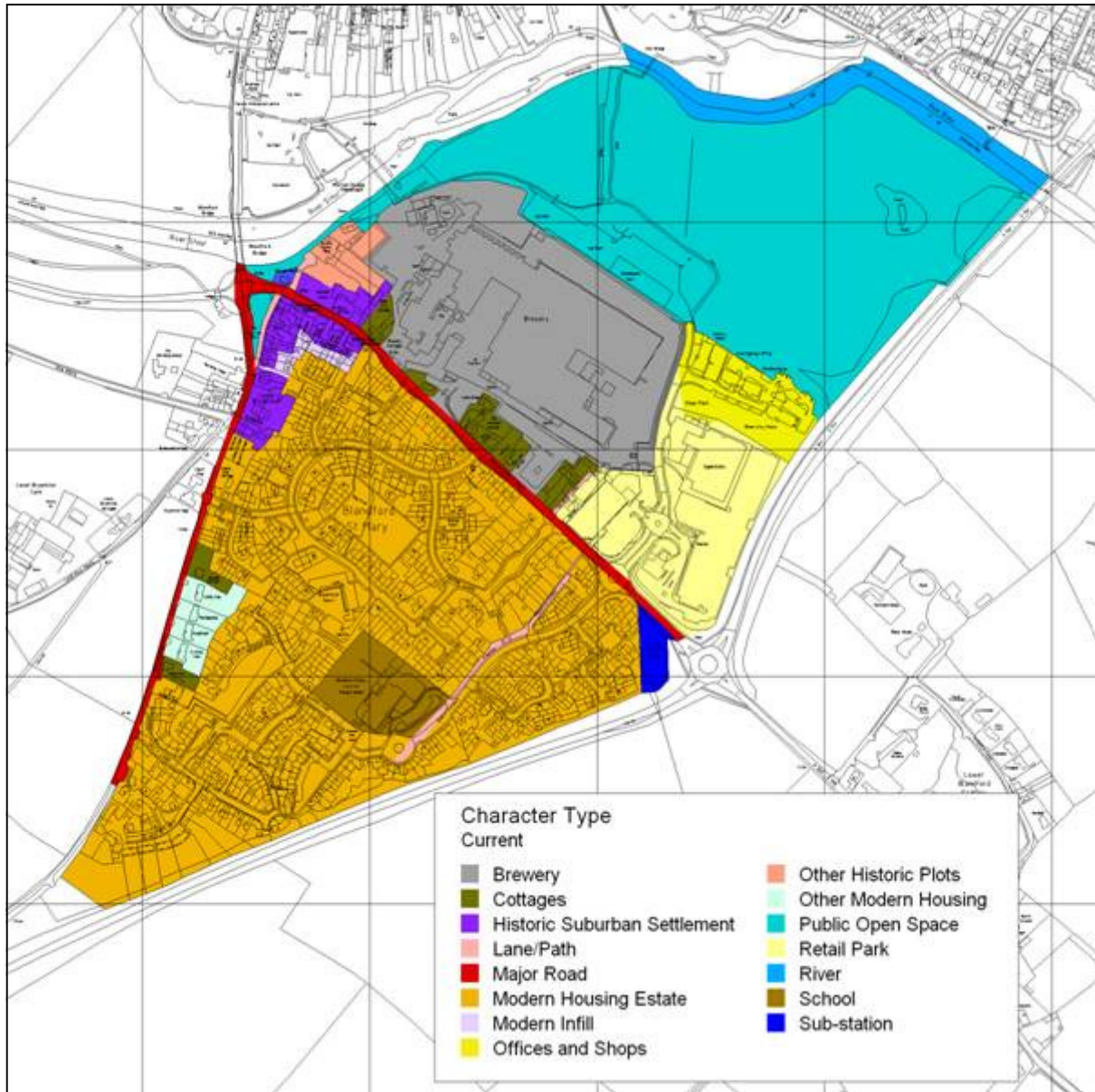


Figure 92: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 6, showing current historic urban character type

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

### Overview

This area comprises the built up area to the south of the River Stour in Blandford St Mary, which has its origins in a small medieval or post-medieval settlement. The area is bounded by the River Stour on the north, the Blandford By-pass on the south and east sides and Dorchester Hill on the west.

### Topography and Geology

This area lies on the south bank of the river Stour and rises to the south up Dorchester Hill. There is a wide, flat expanse of flood plain between the river and Bournemouth Road. The geology of the area is chalk, with alluvial clay along the floodplain.

### Urban Structure

The area is bisected by Bournemouth Road, which runs from Blandford Bridge to the by-pass and beyond. The area to the north is occupied primarily by large industrial and commercial units, together with the Stour floodplain, and the area to the south by suburban housing estates.

### Present Character

Figure 92 shows the present day historic urban character types. Most of the area comprises large blocks of Modern Housing Estate, Brewery, Retail Park, Offices and Shops and Public Open Space. There is an area of Historic Suburban Settlement at the junction of Bournemouth Road and Dorchester Hill. Small areas of Cottages are also found along the length of these roads. Blandford Primary School lies at the centre of the modern housing estates. Other minor character types include Sub-station, Other Modern Housing, Modern Infill and Other Historic Plots.

### Time Depth

The historic suburban settlement to the south of

Blandford Bridge may have its origins as one of the manors mentioned in Domesday. A brewery seems to have been established on the south bank of the river during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the well preserved late Victorian Brewery buildings were constructed here in 1900 (Stanier 2006, 4). Many of the extant cottages along Bournemouth Road and Dorchester Hill date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Development of modern housing estates began in the immediate post-war period at Pigeon Close, with further expansion in the 1990s. The school and the retail park development dates to the 1990s and 2000s.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The historic suburb of Blandford St Mary comprises a block of tightly knit buildings fronting directly on to the junction of Dorchester Hill and Poole Road. However, the suburb does not feel entirely enclosed because the buildings on Dorchester road front on to a small green, the other side of which is the entrance to Bryanston Park. Mature trees dominate this area as they do the north side of Bournemouth road around Old Ford House and The Old Stable Yard. Dorchester Hill, formerly the main road to Dorchester, is now a narrow sunken cul de sac. The southern section is lined with large detached houses set back from the street frontage behind hedged front gardens. Bournemouth Road is now the main southern approach to Blandford Bridge, lined with modern retail and industrial complexes mixed with 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and modern housing set back from the road. The modern housing estate on the south side of Bournemouth Road comprises a mixture of detached, semi-detached and short terraced houses arranged around curvilinear culs-de-sac. Mature trees are restricted to former field boundaries in this area.



Figure 93: View of the Hall and Woodhouse Brewery from across Stour Meadows.



Figure 94: The historic suburb of Blandford St Mary.

## Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 6

### Built Character

#### **Building types**

Few houses survive from before the fire of 1731. It is possible that the eastern part of Old Ford House and the Thatched Cottage on Poole Road (Figure 97) predate the fire. There are a number of mid 18<sup>th</sup> century houses and cottages rebuilt after the fire. Perhaps the finest example is Brook House on Poole Road, built in Georgian style during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the houses are of two storeys and attics with both gabled and hipped dormers. The post-war housing at Pigeon Close comprises short terraces of up to four houses.

It is perhaps the late Victorian brewery however, that holds the greatest architectural interest in the area. The complex, completed in 1900, is considered to be of both county and regional architectural significance. It comprises a main brew house, chimney stack, maltings, stables and offices, all of which remain essentially unchanged today (Stanier 2006, 1-4). There are further brewery buildings on the south side of Poole Road which date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are now used as offices (Figure 98).

#### **Building Materials**

The majority of the historic buildings in this area are built in brick with tile roofs. Some houses have slate roofs. Often the brickwork is rendered and colour washed. Several cottages on Dorchester Hill have flint, stone and brick used in their walling. Other decorative styles included the glazed blue header brickwork on the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century Brook House, Poole Road with red brick dressings. Old Ford House and the Stour Inn, Dorchester Road have stone slate eaves courses. The Thatched Cottage has a thatched roof and is a likely survivor of the fire of 1731. The Hall and Woodhouse brewery has pale brick walls with red brick dressings and a part gabled, part half hipped slate roof. Modern buildings use a variety of non-local materials.

#### **Key Buildings**

*Early 18<sup>th</sup> century houses:* The Thatched Cottage, The Old Ford House (east part)

*Mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian houses and cottages:* Brook House, 8 and 9 Dorchester Road, St Mary's Cottage, Stour View, The Stour Inn

*19<sup>th</sup> century Industrial buildings:* Hall and Woodhouse Brewery, Premises of Hall and Woodhouse attached to Brook House.



Figure 95: Stour Park



Figure 96: Post-war housing estate at Pigeon Close.



Figure 97: The Thatched Cottage, Poole Road



Figure 98: Premises of Hall and Woodhouse on the south side of Poole Road.

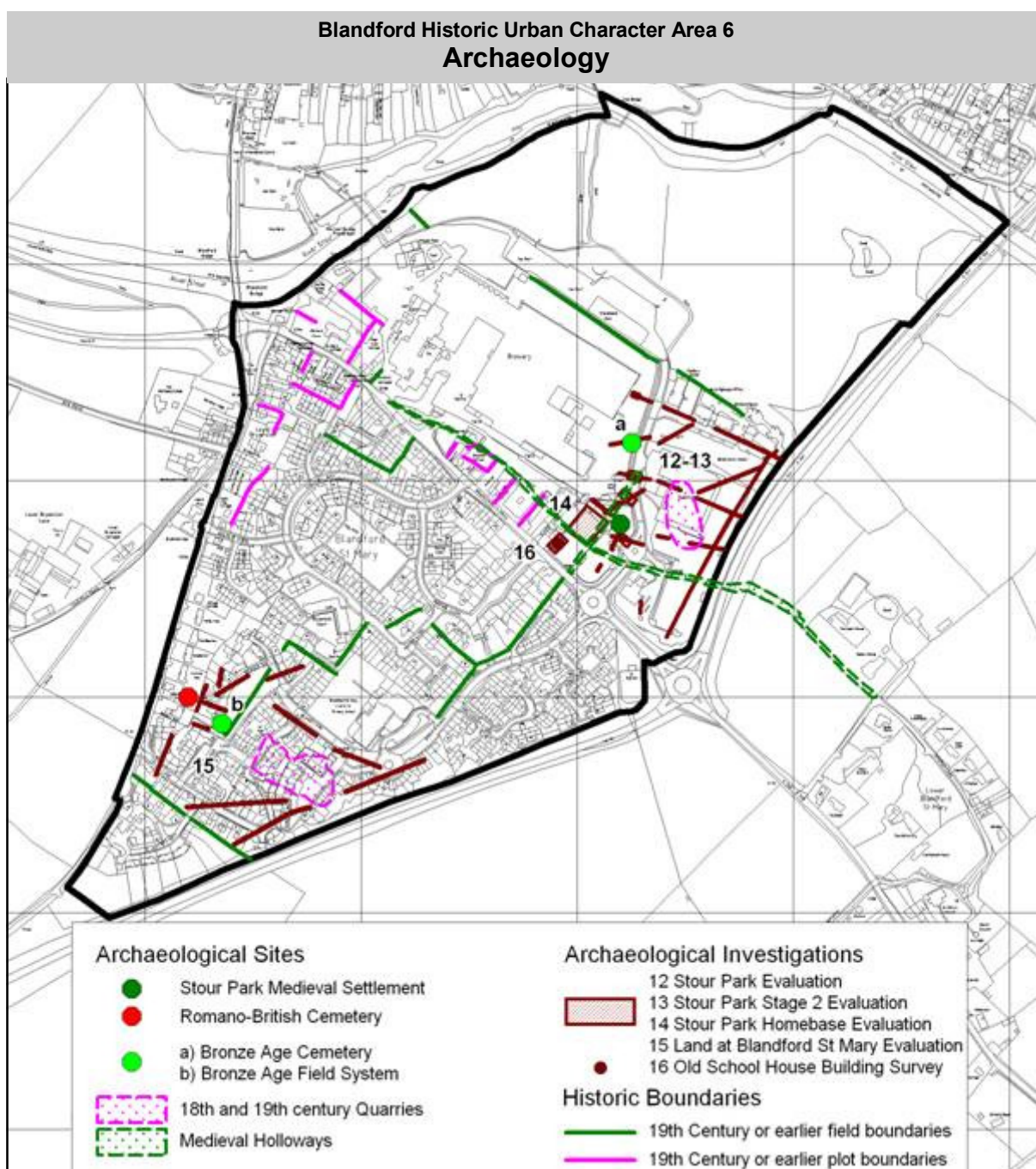


Figure 99: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 6.

### Archaeological Investigations

Five archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area (Figure 99; Appendix 3, Nos. 12-16). These have been concentrated in the area of the Stour Park retail park development. An archaeological evaluation was also undertaken in the area of the housing estate on Dorchester Hill. A building survey was undertaken on the Old School House.

The investigations at Stour Park uncovered evidence for a medieval hollow way associated with a number of medieval enclosures, post-hole structures and ovens suggestive of a small settlement. Residual late Saxon pottery

suggested that the earliest settlement may have pre-dated the Norman Conquest. Evidence for a Bronze Age cremation and possible ring ditch were also revealed, as well as clay pits containing brick making debris.

The investigations on Dorchester Hill only revealed evidence for an early 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier chalk pit.

### Archaeological Character

The archaeological character of Blandford St Mary is complex and varied. Evidence for a Bronze Age cemetery has been revealed on the north side of Stour Park, on the southern edge

of the Stour flood plain. Only a single urned cremation and fragments of a possible ring ditch were recorded within an evaluation trench. It is likely that further cremations exist in this area.

Some Roman burials with 4th century coins were discovered in 1833, somewhere south of Blandford Bridge (Hutchins 1874, 178).

During the late Saxon and medieval periods the settlement pattern was one of dispersed sites strung out along a road running parallel to the Stour flood plain. Two such sites can be suggested within this area, at Blandford Bridge and Stour Park, associated with a rectilinear pattern of land division in which each settlement

had a share of floodable meadow, well drained arable and high pasture. Sunken and parallel lanes connected these settlements with their fields. This pattern of land use can still be recognised, fossilised in the modern landscape.

The post-medieval period in Blandford St Mary is characterised by suburban expansion south of the bridge and industrial activity in the form of brewing and mineral extraction. Evidence of clay pits for brick making has been found at Stour Park. Figure 99 also depicts a number of historic boundaries fossilised within the modern townscape, some of which appear to follow the alignments of prehistoric and medieval field systems in the area.

### Blandford Historic Urban Character Area 6 Designations

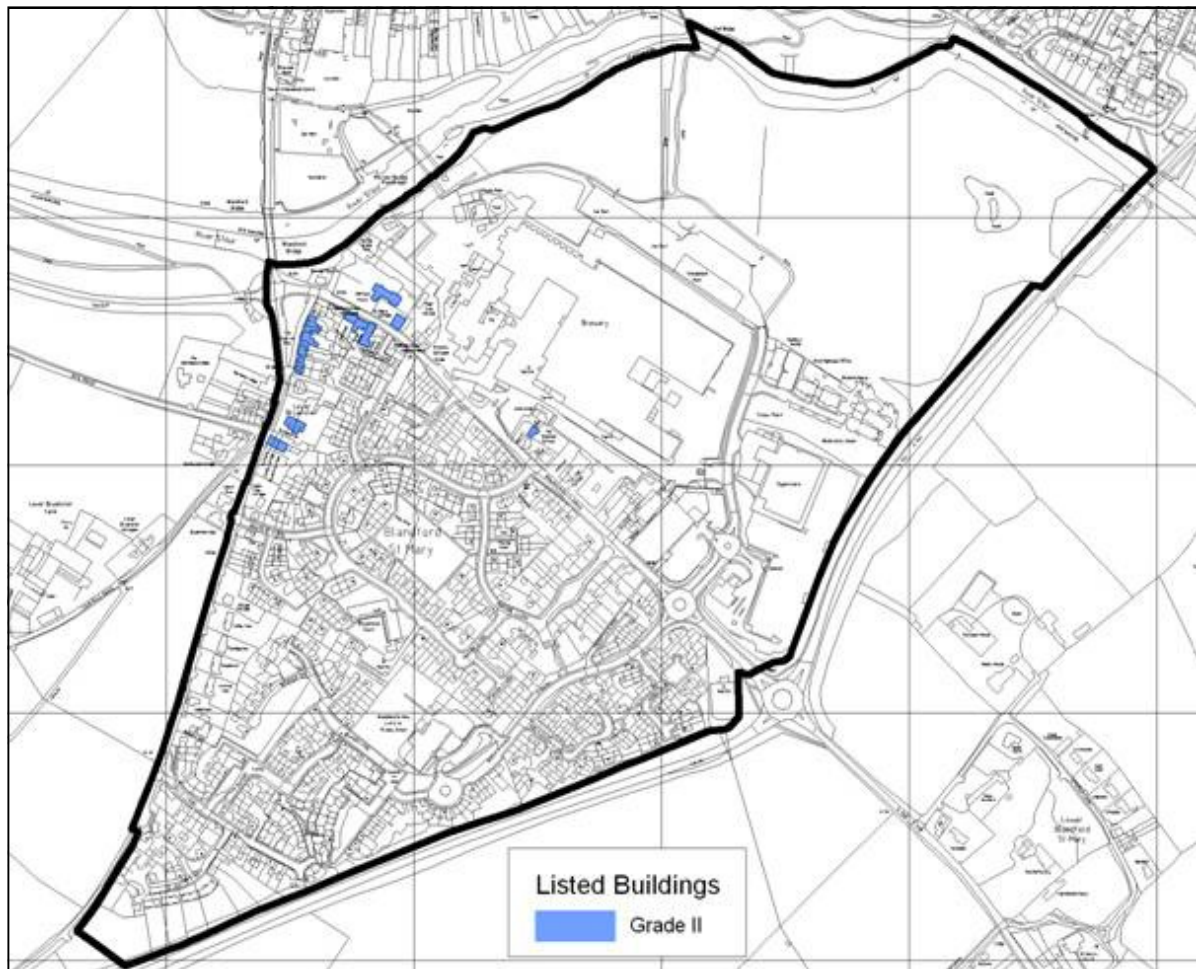


Figure 100: Listed Buildings in Historic Urban Character Area 6

#### **Listed Buildings**

There are 12 Listed Building designations in the Character Area; all grade II (Figure 100).

#### **Conservation Areas**

The northern half of this character area lies within the Blandford Forum Conservation Area (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 6 Evaluation

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

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. The historic plots on Dorchester Hill and Poole Road make a strong positive contribution, as does the Victorian brewery buildings and the extensive riverside meadows. However, the southern part 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. Furthermore, the last remaining 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings at Stour Park were demolished as part of the modern retail development there.

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

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. The level of sensitivity varies between the historic suburb at Dorchester Hill and Poole Road, together with the Victorian Brewery and river meadows, which have a high sensitivity; and the modern housing and commercial estates, which have a relatively low sensitivity. The Hall and Woodhouse brewery site is particularly sensitive to major change. The buildings here are well preserved and a fine example of late Victorian brewery architecture. They are also important in terms of the industrial heritage of Blandford.

### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. Several important archaeological sites have been recorded within the character area, notably the medieval settlement and Bronze Age cremation cemetery at Stour Park and the Roman cemetery and Bronze Age field system on Dorchester Hill. Whilst there is some evidence that the Roman cemetery site may have been destroyed through quarrying, the original extent, nature and location of the site remains unknown. There remains considerable potential to further

understand the context of this site in terms of the wider pattern of Roman activity in the Blandford area. The evidence for a rectilinear field system in the area has been demonstrated through excavation. These field boundaries follow later medieval alignments; perpendicular to the Stour Valley, but may be Bronze Age in date. There is also potential for further remains of the Bronze Age cremation cemetery at Stour Park surviving around the north western fringes of the Stour Park retail site. A substantial portion of the medieval settlement at Stour Park has been excavated by archaeologists, but there is some potential to discover more evidence of medieval settlement and other activity.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-7, 12-13 and 19-26 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Medieval and post-medieval suburb
- Hall and Woodhouse Brewery
- Modern suburban and retail estates
- Situated south of River Stour