

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 6 Hospital & Workhouse

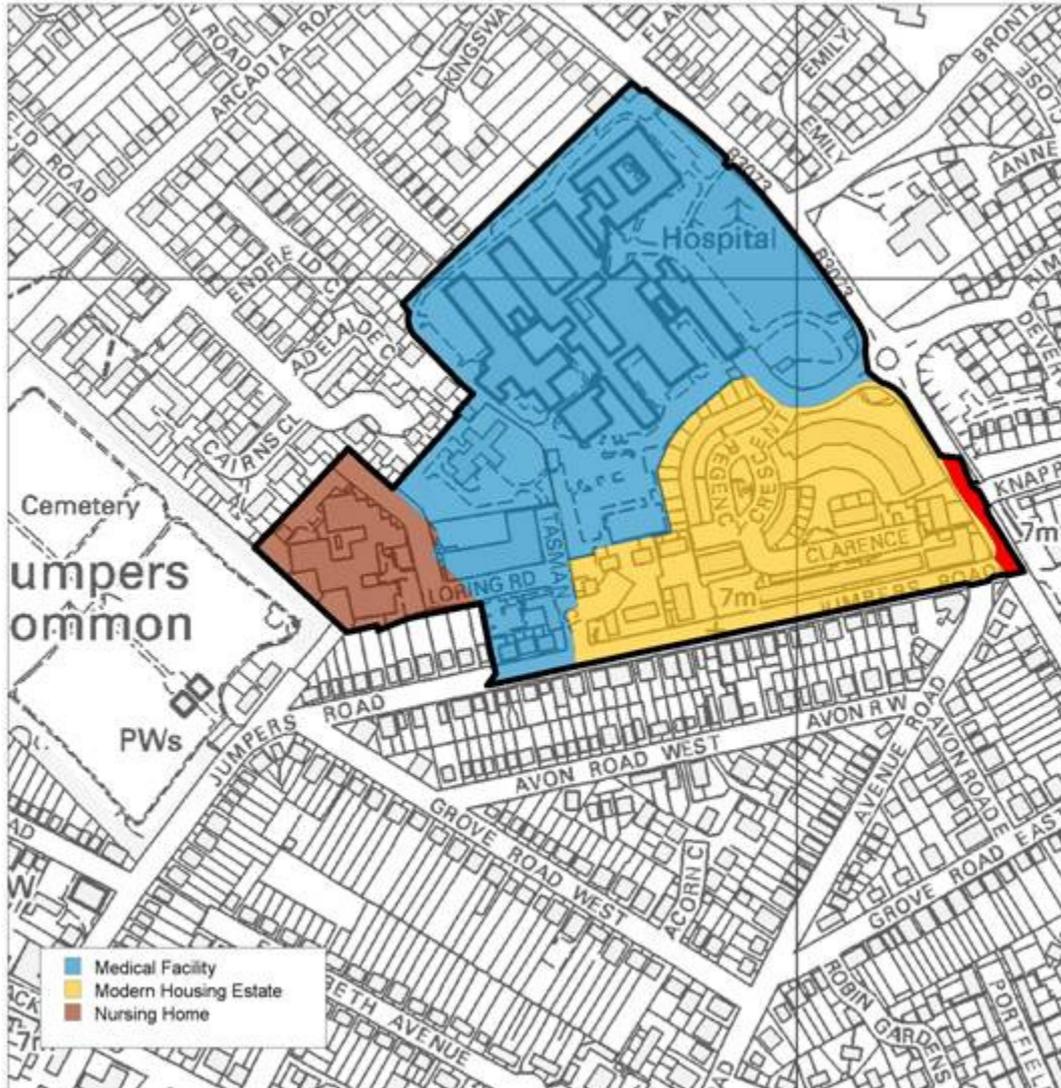


Figure 84: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 6, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 85: Workhouse entrance block



Figure 86: Christchurch Hospital

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 6
Structure of Character Area

Overview

An area of former open fields upon which the workhouse was constructed. The workhouse was partly demolished and developed into what is now the site of Christchurch Hospital.

Topography and Geology

This area lies on the gravel ridge between the rivers Stour and Avon. The geology of the area consists almost entirely of Bracklesham Beds.

Urban Structure

A women's block, was linked by a connecting corridor to the west, and a men's block to the east. Additional buildings included children's home and school and a men's pavilion. All of these buildings have now been demolished to make way for a housing development.

Present Character

Figure 84 shows the present day historic urban character types. The largest part of this area comprises Medical Facility, with a Nursing Home and Modern Housing Estate.

Time Depth

The site of Christchurch Hospital, on the west side of Fairmile, originally formed part of the medieval open field *Portfield*. When this was enclosed in 1878, part of it became the site for the new Union Workhouse built in 1881. The workhouse had previously been located at the Red House on Quay Road, subsequently purchased by Druitt and established as a private museum (Now the Red House Museum). A men's pavilion was added to the new Workhouse site in 1895 and the infirmary in 1913. Most of the workhouse has now been demolished to make way for a housing estate, although part of the entrance block at the corner of Fairmile and Jumpers Road still survives and the infirmary now forms part of the modern Christchurch Hospital which occupies the northern part of the old Workhouse site. Former playing fields to the west of the workhouse have now also been developed for residential homes and car parking.

The topography of the site has been much altered in recent years.

A large new infirmary complex was added at the north of the site in 1913, replacing the original infirmary to the rear of the workshops. This new infirmary survives as part of Christchurch Hospital (Higginbotham, 2008).

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The workhouse occupied a parcel of land at the junction of Fairmile and Jumpers Road. The southern end of the site featured the entrance block, ranged along the north side of Jumpers Road.

The plot boundaries encompassing the hospital and modern housing estate remain those of the original workhouse. The survival of the entrance arch of the workhouse means that a small part of the streetscape on Jumpers Road retains its character, and the entrance arch still provides pedestrian access to the new housing estate. The modern housing development comprises terraced crescents and is sympathetic to the character of the surviving historic buildings.

There are no open green spaces in this area, but some landscaping around the hospital provide a green contribution to the area.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 6
Built Character

Building types

The central entrance archway, the board-room and married inmates' quarters of the workhouse survive and have been incorporated into a modern housing development which now occupies the former site of the main block of the workhouse.

Building Materials

The surviving workhouse buildings are in red brick with ashlar detail. The modern houses are in red brick with ashlar detail and slate roofs.

Key Buildings

Civic and Institutional: workhouse and hospital

**Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 6
Archaeology**

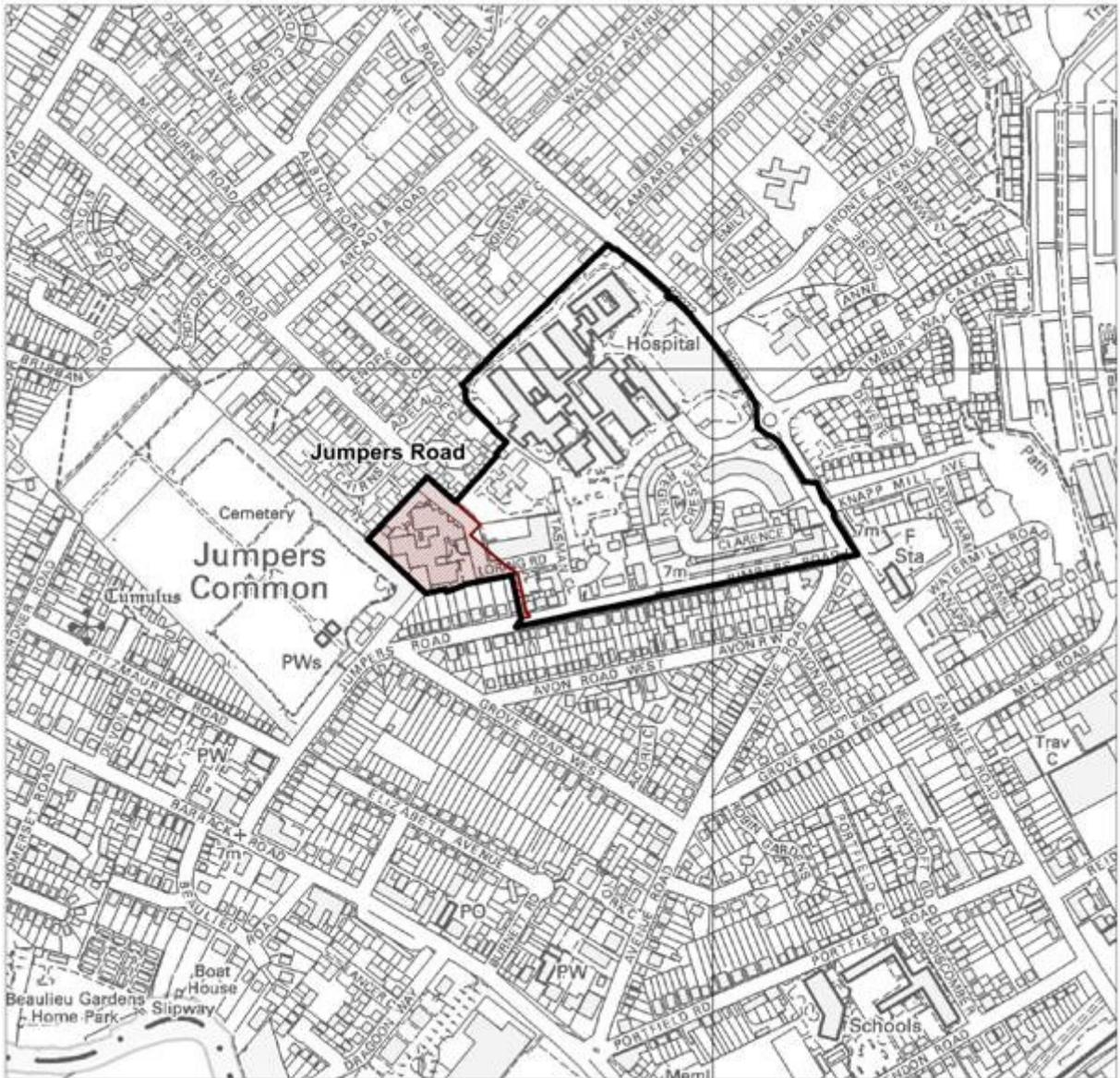


Figure 87: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 6

Archaeological Investigations

There has been one archaeological investigation in this character area. Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Dorset County Council to undertake archaeological observations and recording during topsoil stripping associated with the construction of a new residential care home on Jumpers Road, at the western end of the character. No prehistoric or Roman features were observed and only a very small quantity of Bronze Age flint was recovered. Most of the features found on site appear to be 20th century in date and comprise the gravel bases to a number of small buildings, perhaps dating from World War II, together with two gravel paths or tracks (Bellamy 2005a; 2005b).

Archaeological Character

The character area was part of the medieval *Portfield* and remained open ground until the development of the workhouse. There appears to have been some prehistoric activity in the area, though its nature is not clear. The military archaeology is of interest. The hospital buildings themselves are of social archaeological interest.

Christchurch Historic Urban Character Area 6 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **high**. The 19th and 20th century hospital buildings have a strong character. The surviving infirmary blocks are situated at the entrance to the modern hospital and as such give the new building a sense of historic character.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to large scale development. There is already a large facility in this area, in the form of the hospital. However, the buildings themselves are

susceptible to loss of character through development.

Archaeological Potential

Little archaeological work has been carried out in this area but this does not mean that there are no in situ deposits. There is a **medium** archaeological potential for prehistoric and Roman deposits. Throughout the medieval period the area comprised part of an arable field, the site only became occupied in the late 19th century.

Key Characteristics

- Christchurch Workhouse
- Christchurch Hospital
- Jumpers Road street frontage