

Corfe Castle Historic Urban Character Area 3 East Street

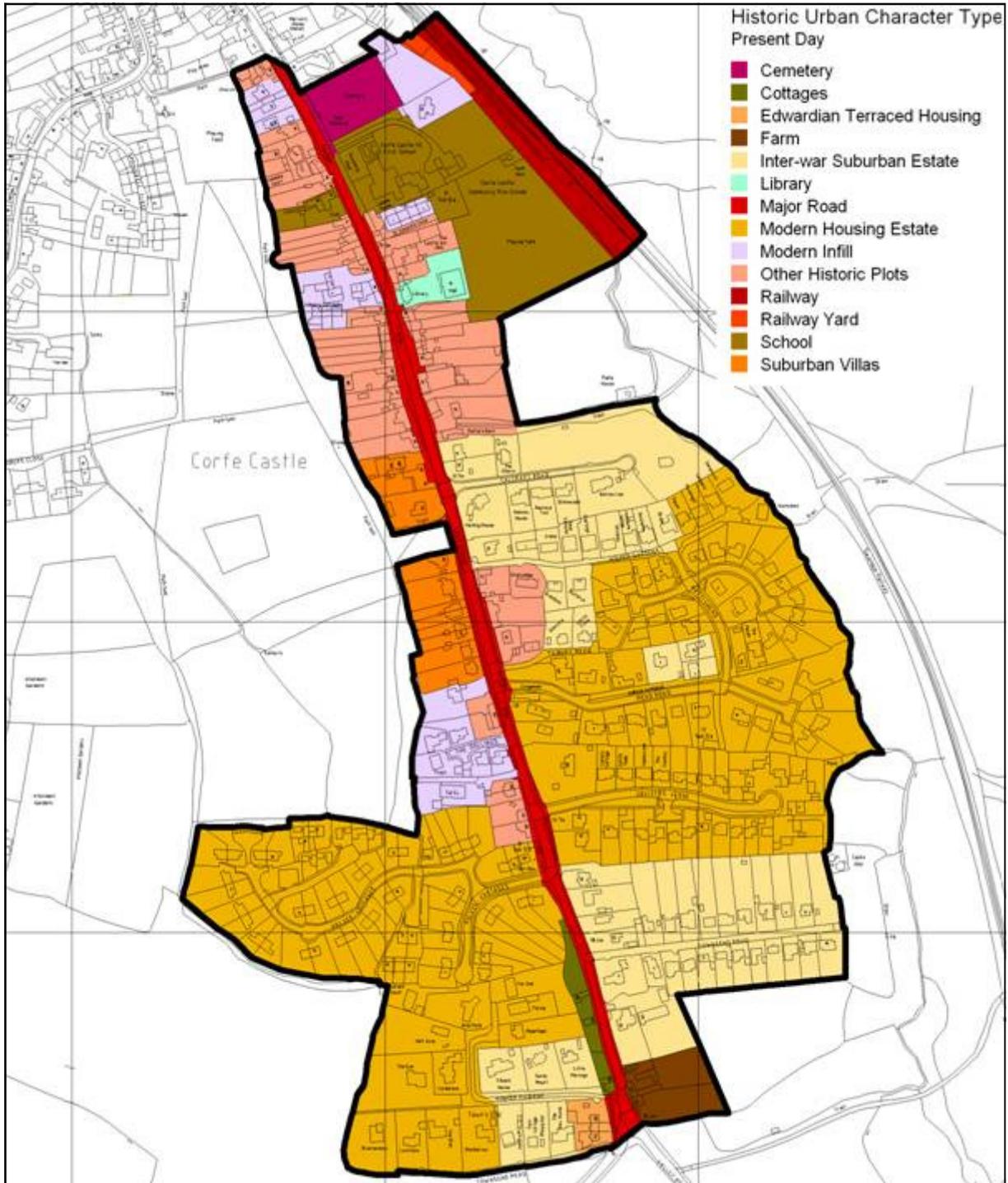


Figure 58: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type

Corfe Castle Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area comprises East Street to the south of the core of the medieval town and all settlement along both sides of the street. It includes the former dispersed hamlet of Town's End.

Topography and Geology

East Street sits entirely within the area of Wealden Clay which forms the gently undulating floor of the Purbeck vale. The topography of the area generally slopes gently and evenly up towards the south. The eastern fringes of the area slope rather more steeply down to the east and the East Corfe River (Byle Brook).

Urban Structure

This area comprises a single major route, East Street, forming the central spine of the area, with a mixture of ribbon development and small suburban housing estates along its length. The northern part of this area has a compact urban structure with unbroken lines of historic houses and cottages fronting on the street. The southern part of the area is characterised by a slightly more broken frontage of historic cottages, interspersed with 20th century suburban houses, and 20th century suburban housing estates with cul-de-sac layouts behind. The inter-war estates have straight culs-de-sac and the post-war and modern estates have a complex curvilinear layout.

Present Character

Figure 57 shows the present day historic urban character types. There are areas of historic plots along both sides of the street, particularly in the north end of the area. The southern part comprises mainly inter-war suburban estates and modern housing estates. There are also some small areas of modern infill. In the northeast part is a cemetery and school. At the south end is a farm and cottages forming part of the former hamlet of Town's End. There are

small areas of suburban villas and Edwardian Terraced Housing along the street frontage also. Other minor character types include part of the railway and railway yard and a library.

Time Depth

The historic plots in the extreme north end of the area are probably 16th and 17th century in date. The remainder of houses on the East Street frontage tend to date from the 18th and 19th centuries and may reflect the increased importance of this road following its turnpiking in the late 18th century. The cemetery is mid 19th century and the school dates from the late 19th century. The date of origin for the Town's End settlement is not known, although the long thin plot boundaries aligned with the street are suggestive of 18th century squatter settlements reclaimed from Corfe Common. Small areas of suburban housing dates from the 1920s-30s, but the majority is post-war and modern.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is essentially linear in character. Development appears to have been within regular blocks of plots from the 17th century onwards, possibly planned with a wide street green. The historic buildings are aligned along the street frontage, except at the southern end of the west side of East Street, where a number of cottages are gable end on to the street. The twentieth century development has been suburban in character, arranged in estates with linear and later curvilinear cul-de-sac layouts perpendicular to the main street and fitted within former fields.



Figure 59: View south along East Street.



Figure 60: View east along Townsend Road.

Corfe Castle Historic Urban Character Area 3

Built Character

Building types

The buildings in this character area are a mixture of historic houses, former agricultural buildings and cottages, some historic and modern public buildings, and 20th century suburban houses. The non-domestic buildings include historic school buildings, United Reformed Church, barns and stables, and modern library and village hall buildings.

The historic buildings are mainly vernacular in style. They vary in height from one storey with attic and dormer windows to two storeys with attic and dormer windows. Some 16th, 17th and 18th century houses may have earlier foundations and possibly originated as open hall houses. 72-4 East Street is the best example of this type. Cottages and houses from the 18th and 19th centuries tend to be organised in rows.

There are a few historic buildings not built in a vernacular style. 120-122 East Street is a Regency house stripped of its stucco. The late 19th century school building is in a Gothic revival style. The early 20th century 168-172 East Street is in an Arts and Crafts style. In the central part of East Street are a group of early 20th century detached and semi-detached suburban houses (Figure 66).

The 1920s-30s buildings are suburban in character and comprise bungalows and detached houses, typical of the period and with little local character. The post-war and modern houses are also suburban in character and comprise detached bungalows and detached and semi-detached houses in a variety of styles typical of the period and with little local character. There are some modern neo-vernacular houses, most notably Abbot's Cottages (Figure 67).

Building Materials

The 19th century and earlier buildings are constructed with Purbeck stone rubble walls, normally with stone slate roofs and brick chimney stacks. Thatched roofs are slightly more common on 16th and 17th century cottages than 18th century ones. Imported slate roofs are found on late 18th-19th century buildings. A couple of late 18th century houses at 73-7 West Street (odd numbers) have tiled roofs.

The early 20th century houses are constructed from a range of materials including Purbeck stone and brick with slate or tiled roofs. The inter-war houses are mainly of red brick, some rendered or pebbledashed, with slate or tiled roofs. The modern houses are mainly stone clad with tile or slate roofs.

Key Buildings

Public Buildings: Almshouses, British Legion House (former school), Corfe Castle First School, The Pound, Cemetery walls and gatehouse, United Reformed Church (Figure 62).

16th- 17th century houses: 72-4 East Street, 90-92 East Street, 158 East Street

18th- 19th century houses: 48 East Street, 64-6 East Street (Figure 63), 94-6 & 98-100 East Street (Figure 65), Town's End Farmhouse (127 East Street).

20th Century houses: 168-172 East Street, Abbot's Cottages (Figure 67).



Figure 61: Corfe Castle First School, East Street



Figure 62: United Reformed Church, East Street.



Figure 63: 64-6 East Street.

Corfe Castle Historic Urban Character Area 3 Archaeology

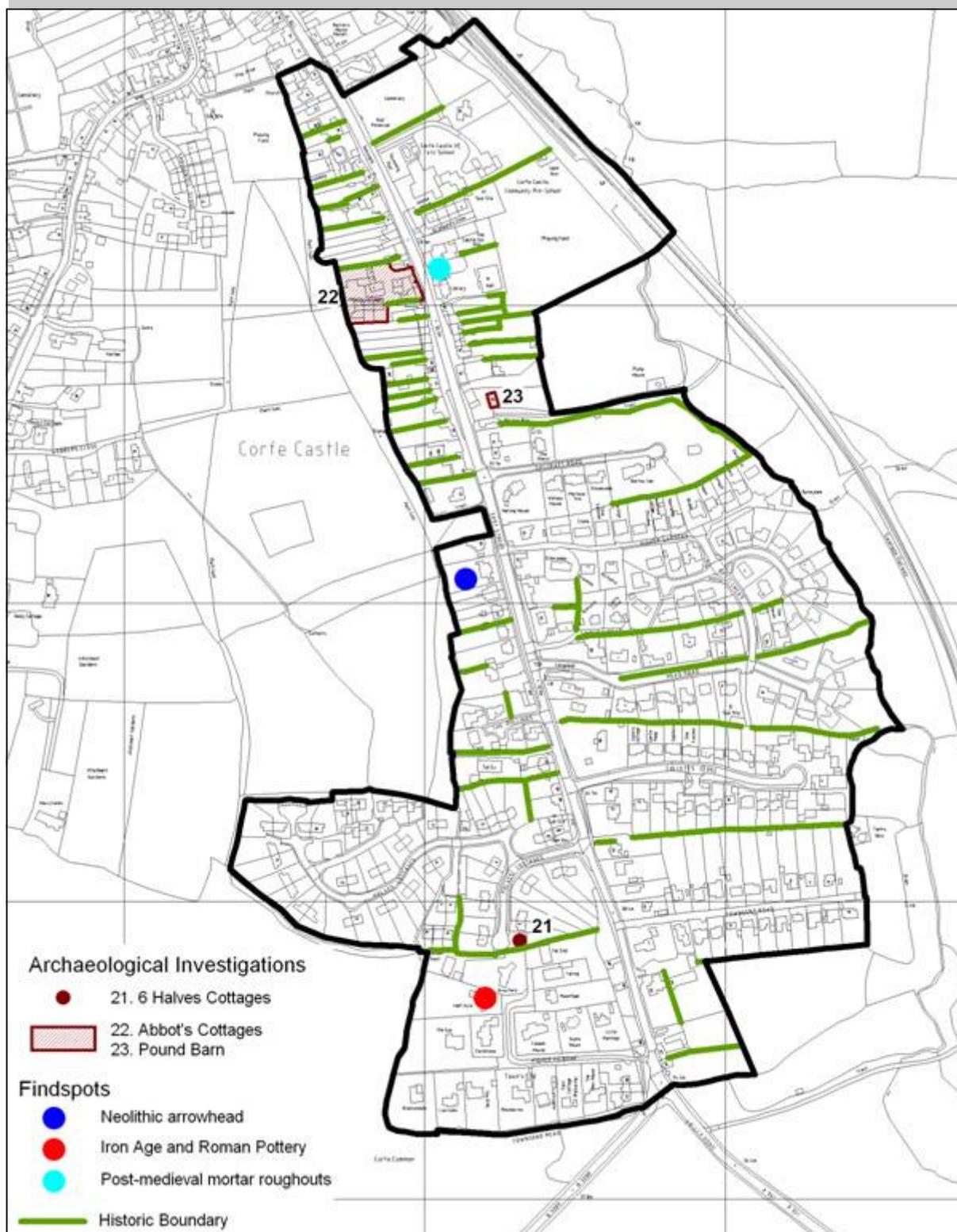


Figure 64: Archaeological Investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

Archaeological Investigations

Three archaeological investigations have been conducted within this character area – a watching brief at 6 Halves Cottages, an evaluation and subsequent watching brief at Abbot's Cottages, 84-90 East Street, and an evaluation at Pound Barn (Appendix 3, nos 21-23; Figure 64).

A Romano-British ditch was found at 6 Halves Cottages (Valentin 1993). The archaeological works during the construction of the Abbot's Cottages development revealed very few archaeological features. A well was exposed behind the street frontage and a small ditch and pit containing medieval pottery were found close to the street frontage suggesting a very low level of medieval activity (Cox and Cotton 1995, Hambleton 1996). Some possible medieval boundary ditches were also recorded (McMahon 1998). The archaeological evaluation of land at Pound Barn revealed no archaeological features (Wessex Archaeology 1995).

Archaeological Character

There have been some finds and features relating to pre-urban activity in this area. A Neolithic flint leaf-shaped arrowhead was found in a garden at 132 East Street. A Romano-British ditch and some Late Iron Age and Roman pottery have been recorded at Town's End (Farrar 1964; Valentin 1993). This indicates the presence of some Roman activity in this area, but its precise form is unclear on present evidence.

There is some very limited evidence for medieval activity at the northern end of the area, but there is no clear evidence for concentrated medieval activity along the street frontage, suggesting it was on the fringes of the medieval town.

A large number of broken stone mortar roughouts were found built into the walls of 65 East Street and are thought to be of post-medieval date (Bowd 1999). The significance of these mortars is unclear, but may indicate a mason's yard in the vicinity. This highlights the possibility that similar material or evidence of earlier phases of buildings may survive within the existing buildings within this area.

Boundaries depicted on Figure 64 represent modern property boundaries that fossilise the line of former field boundaries visible on 19th century maps. These are likely to be of medieval or post-medieval origin.



Figure 65: 94-102 East Street.



Figure 66: Early 20th century suburban villas, East Street.



Figure 67: Abbot's Cottages, East Street.



Figure 68: Archaeological Investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

Listed Buildings

There are 41 Listed Buildings in the Character Area, all Grade II (Figure 68).

Conservation Areas

The area along both sides of the East Street frontage north of the junction with Tilbury Mead lies within the Corfe Castle Conservation Area (Figure 36). It excludes the 20th century

housing on Higher Gardens and Battlemead.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

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

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the character area.

Corfe Castle Historic Urban Character Area 3 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. Although there is a distinct contribution from the 16th- 19th century houses, suburban villas and public buildings along the length of East Street this is somewhat diluted by modern housing, which has no locally distinctive characteristics. However, a significant proportion of the 20th century suburban housing dates from the inter-war period and is arranged within pre-existing fields, with a slightly higher proportion of modern later 20th century housing within curvilinear cul-de sac estate layouts. Even in the latter cases these estates tend to be fitted within the surviving boundaries of pre-existing fields.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. A number of modern suburban developments already characterise the southern part of East Street, lessening its sensitivity. The street frontage of East Street retains significant unbroken stretches of historic buildings dating from the 16th to 19th centuries. These houses tend to be modest in scale, ranging from one to two storeys. This aspect of the historic character area remains highly sensitive to major change.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. The area sits on the fringe of the medieval town and the area of highest potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeology is close to the northern end of the East Street frontage. This area has the potential to reveal details of activity on the margins of the medieval and post-medieval town.

A number of the historic buildings and outbuildings have potential to provide detailed information on the survival of earlier phases of building and to contribute to the understanding and development of houses in post-medieval Corfe Castle.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on the pre-urban activity, in particular, Late Iron Age and Roman activity in the vicinity of Town's End.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-4, 9, 14-17, 19-20 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Main thoroughfare through Corfe Castle from the late 18th century.
- Turnpike road.
- Late medieval and post-medieval suburb.
- A high proportion of 16th - 19th century vernacular houses on the East Street frontage.
- Post-medieval rural settlement at Town's End.
- Nineteenth century and earlier field boundaries.
- Inter-war and modern suburban housing estates .