

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 2

St John's Hill

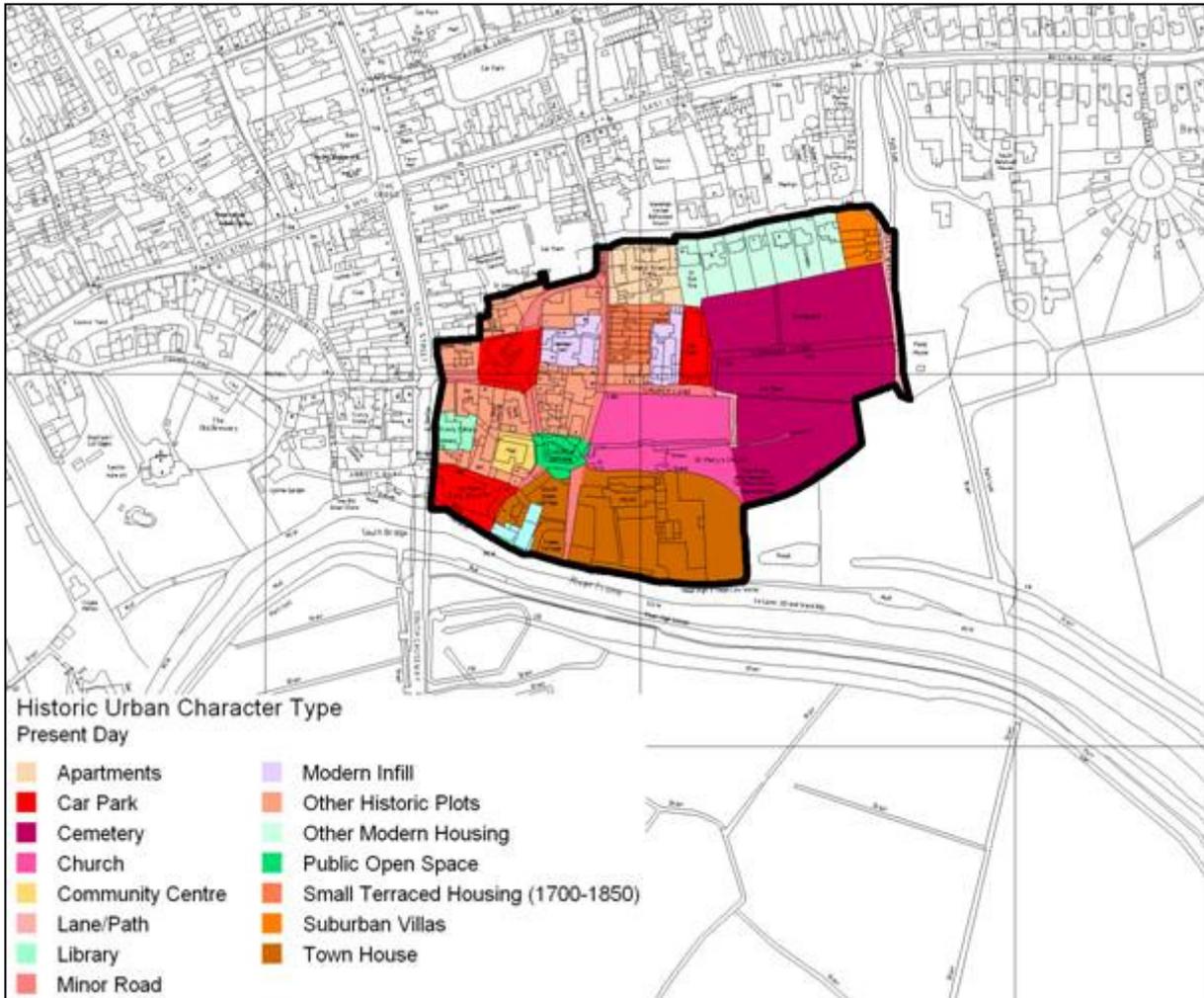


Figure 59: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 2, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 60: The Quay and South Bridge.



Figure 61: Church Green and Lady St Mary's Church.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 2

Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area lies in the southeast corner of the town and includes the area of Lady St Mary church and The Quay. It is perhaps the primary settlement area of the town, probably pre-dating the establishment of the burh. It is defined by its historic dimension and by its more irregular street pattern.

Topography and Geology

This area lies on the north edge of the Frome floodplain. The Quay was established at the lowest bridging point on a tidal stretch of the River Frome at approximately 2m above OD. The ground rises to the north and also east towards the Church of Lady St Mary at 4-5m above OD. The area of The Quay is reclaimed land from the river. The geology of the area consists entirely of Eocene gravels of the Lower Bagshot Beds.

Urban Structure

This area comprises three open spaces of St John's Hill, Church Green and The Quay, which are joined by narrow lanes, with St John's Hill lane having a distinct curvature. Most of the western part has fairly irregular tightly packed rectilinear plots directly fronting the lanes. The northern edge of the area is more open with suburban-style houses in wider plots fronting Wyatt's Lane.

Present Character

Figure 59 shows the present day historic urban character types. The greater part of the eastern half of this area is taken up by the Church and Cemetery of Lady St Mary's and the Town House of the Priory Hotel. The western half largely comprises Other Historic Plots, with small areas of Warehouses, Library and Community Centre. There are Car Parks at The Quay, St John's Hill and off Church Lane. Along Wyatt's Lane are Apartments, Other Modern

Housing and Suburban Villas. There are two areas of Modern Infill.

Time Depth

This is probably the oldest area of Wareham. A church on the site of Lady St Mary's was probably in existence by the 7th century AD, with a nunnery in the area of the Priory Hotel. The area west of the church may be the area of an associated early settlement. The precise date of the streets and property boundaries of St John's Hill is not known, but could pre-date the 9th century burh. The southern part of the area was reclaimed from the Frome, possibly in the 18th century. The Cemetery dates from the late 19th and 20th centuries and the housing along Wyatt's Lane is post-war in date. The library was built in the late 20th century.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is a mixture of high density housing around St John's Hill, Church Green and The Quay, with low density housing along Wyatt's Lane. The area around the church, Priory Hotel and the cemetery is much more open with green spaces and gardens.

The buildings are generally built directly on the frontage with few gaps, except along Wyatt's Lane, where the buildings are set back behind front gardens. There is a contrast between enclosed narrow curving lanes and the open spaces of St John's Hill, Church Green and The Quay. The Quay affords good views over the Frome floodplain and the Purbeck Hills beyond.



Figure 62: Bridge House and Wareham Library.



Figure 63: Brick-built Georgian town houses, St John's Hill.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 2 Built Character

Building types

The predominant building type in this area is the attached two-storey (occasionally two storeys with attics) Georgian house, in a variety of sizes and roof heights. There are also a small number of earlier 19th century terraced houses along Church Street.

There are a number of industrial buildings in this area, including two and three storey 18th century warehouses on The Quay and on St John's Hill is a 19th century warehouse converted from a 16th century barn.

The mid 19th century former Police station has a double pitched roof and has been altered as part of a modern commercial development.

Significant historic buildings include the former 16th century barn on St John's Hill, Lady St Mary's Church, although significantly rebuilt in the 19th century retains medieval work including the tower, and Priory House, which incorporates some 16th century work.

Modern buildings include the Wareham Library, some commercial development around St John's Hill, post-war suburban-style bungalows, 1960s three-storey flats on the corner of Wyatt's Lane and Church Street and some modern small housing.

Building Materials

The dominant building materials are red brick for walls and ceramic tile for roofs, sometimes with stone easing courses. Slate is also used as a roofing material. Rendered or painted brick is relatively common. Stone rubble is used as walling material on earlier buildings, in particular Lady St Mary's Church and the former barn on the north side of St John's Hill.

Key Buildings

Ecclesiastical: Lady St Mary Church, Priory House and Barn.

Institutional Buildings: Former Police Station (South Street).

Industrial Buildings: The Old Granary (The Quay), The New Inn and Annexe (The Quay), Barn and former smithy St John's Hill, 1 St John's Hill.

Town Houses: Church Green Cottage, 2 The Quay, Gold Court (Figure 64), Priory Hotel



Figure 64: Gold Court (left) and Mint House (right), St John's Hill.



Figure 65: Smaller houses, St John's Hill, looking towards Church Green.



Figure 66: Warehouses on The Quay.



Figure 67: Church Green Cottage.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 2 Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations

Nine archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area (Figure 68; Appendix 3, Nos. 26-34). These have all be small scale evaluations and watching briefs.

In the grounds of Priory Hotel, burials were recorded in a service trench in the 1960s (26). Some evidence for burials was also found during work on the Library site (27-8). An evaluation and watching brief on St John's Hill (29-30) revealed some medieval features beneath a thick dark humic cultivation soil, and post-medieval features. Watching briefs on The Quay (32-3) revealed deposits of post-medieval reclamation deposits.

Archaeological Character

The archaeological results from investigations in this area have been disappointing to date. Very few medieval features have been found and very little earlier material. The investigations

have suggested that the general character of deposits in this area is similar to elsewhere in the centre of Wareham with a thick layer of dark humic soil overlying medieval features. The area of The Quay is different, with a thick layer of post-medieval reclamation deposits overlying marshy waterlogged remains.

The most distinctive characteristic of this area is the large quantity of human burials that have been recorded both in the area of the Priory and on St John's Hill from the 18th century onwards, though unfortunately none have been discovered recently or excavated under modern archaeological conditions. The burials have sometimes been in stone lined graves and those in St John's Hill may be associated with the former medieval St John's, but perhaps are more similar in character to post-Roman cemeteries. In the area of the Priory, Roman finds have also been recovered in the same area as the burials, but none in direct association. These burials remain undated.

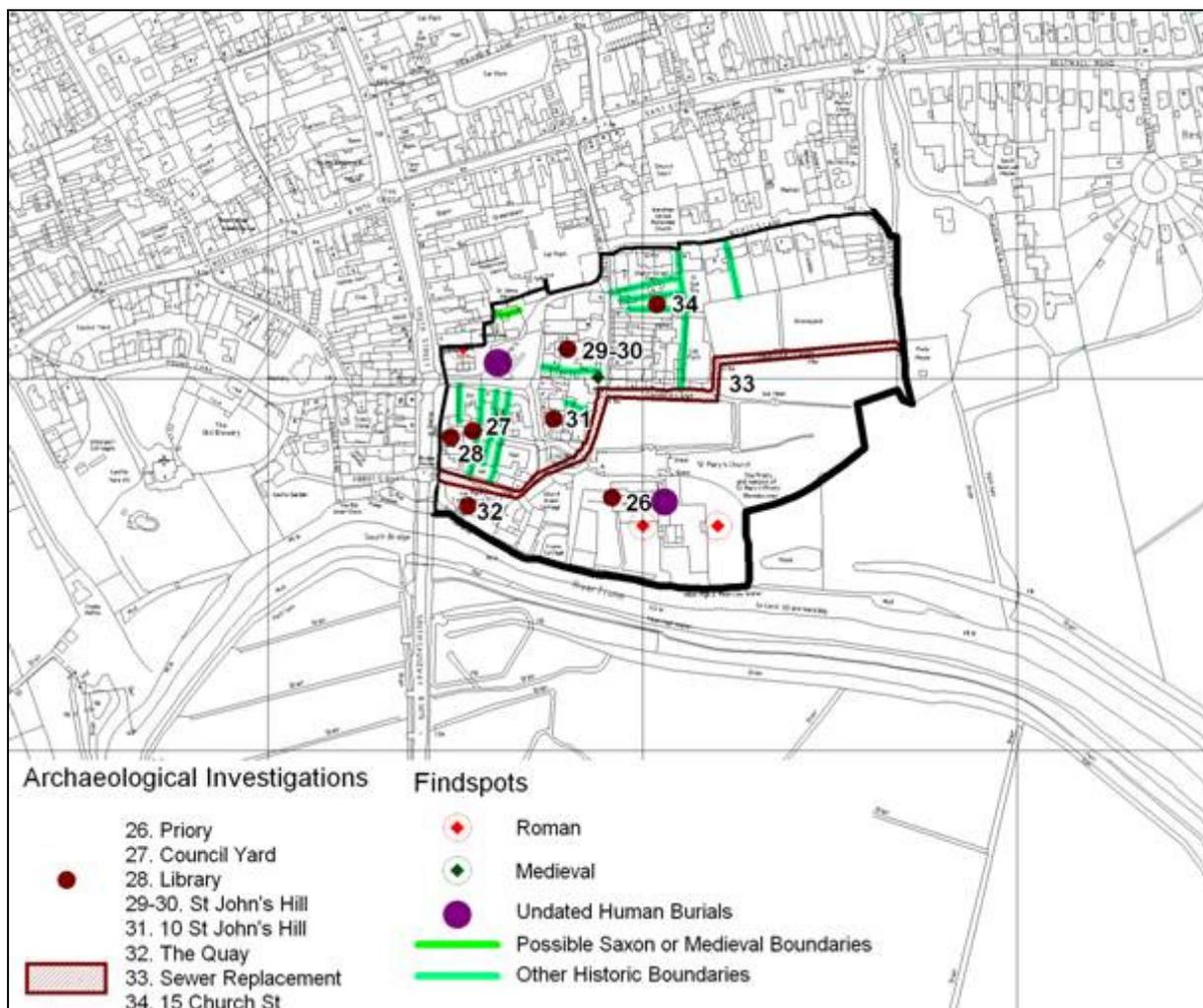


Figure 68: Archaeological investigations, features and findspots in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

No evidence for the earliest settlement in this area has been found, other than the inscribed stones found during the rebuilding of Lady St Mary's Church.

A number of 18th century or earlier property boundaries survive in this area and are marked on Figure 68.

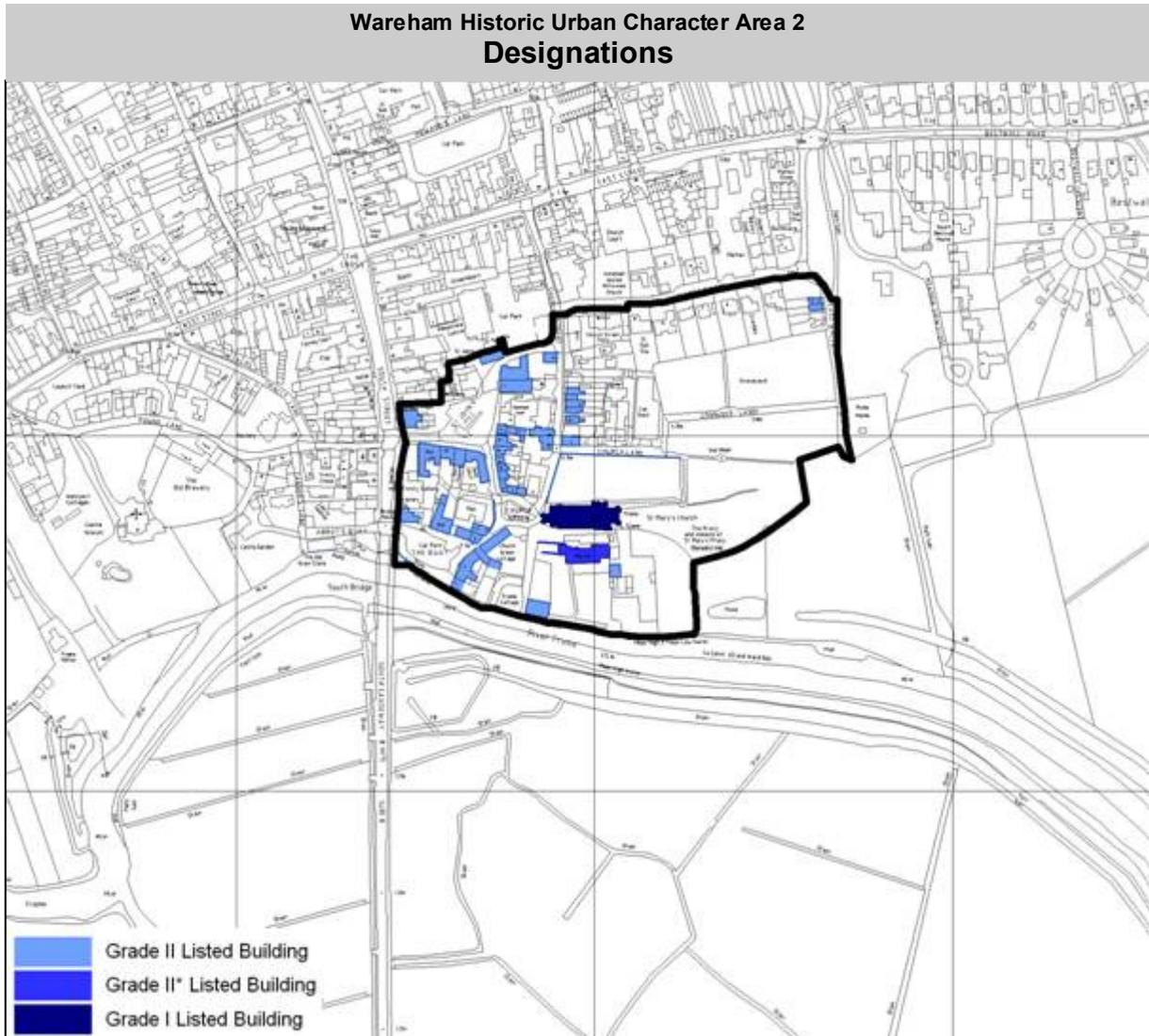


Figure 69: Listed Buildings in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

Listed Buildings

There are 35 Listed Building designations in the Character Area, one grade A (the Church of Lady St Mary), one Grade II* (Priory House) and the remainder are Grade II.

Conservation Areas

The whole of this Character Area lies within the Wareham Conservation Area (Figure 49).

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.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 2 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. It has good survival of a potentially early (pre-burh) street layout and contains three historic open urban spaces, which differentiate this area from the rest of Wareham. There is a strong contribution made by the large number of historic buildings, primarily of late 18th century date, but there are some significant earlier buildings also. The Quay, with its historic warehouses and location on the River Frome forms a picturesque focal point in this part of the town. The contrast between the open spaces and the narrow lanes gives this area a particular character unlike anywhere else in Wareham.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The particular form of most of this area with its narrow lanes and historic open spaces with fairly unbroken frontages of historic buildings has good legibility of historic character, which could be compromised by development on a large scale. The area to the north around Wyatt's Lane has a lower sensitivity.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It forms the primary settlement component of Wareham, with the potential for discovery of the remains of the earliest settlement in Wareham of middle Saxon or earlier date. The relatively low level of modern development means that there is high potential for important and informative remains to survive, though this has yet to be demonstrated by archaeological results to date. The area has potential to provide information on the pre-burh origins of Wareham.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1- 4, 5-8, 10-14, 16-20, 22-26 (Part 7)

Key Characteristics

- Historic open spaces of St John's Hill, Church Green and The Quay
- Narrow lanes not part of the grid pattern of streets found elsewhere in Wareham
- The Quay with its historic warehouses and views across the Frome floodplain
- High proportion of quality historic buildings with contemporary detail
- Site of Post-Roman ecclesiastical site and Middle Saxon Minster
- Site of Saxon and medieval port
- Site of Benedictine Priory
- Possible post-Roman cemetery