

Sturminster Newton Historic Urban Character Area 3 The Western Fringe

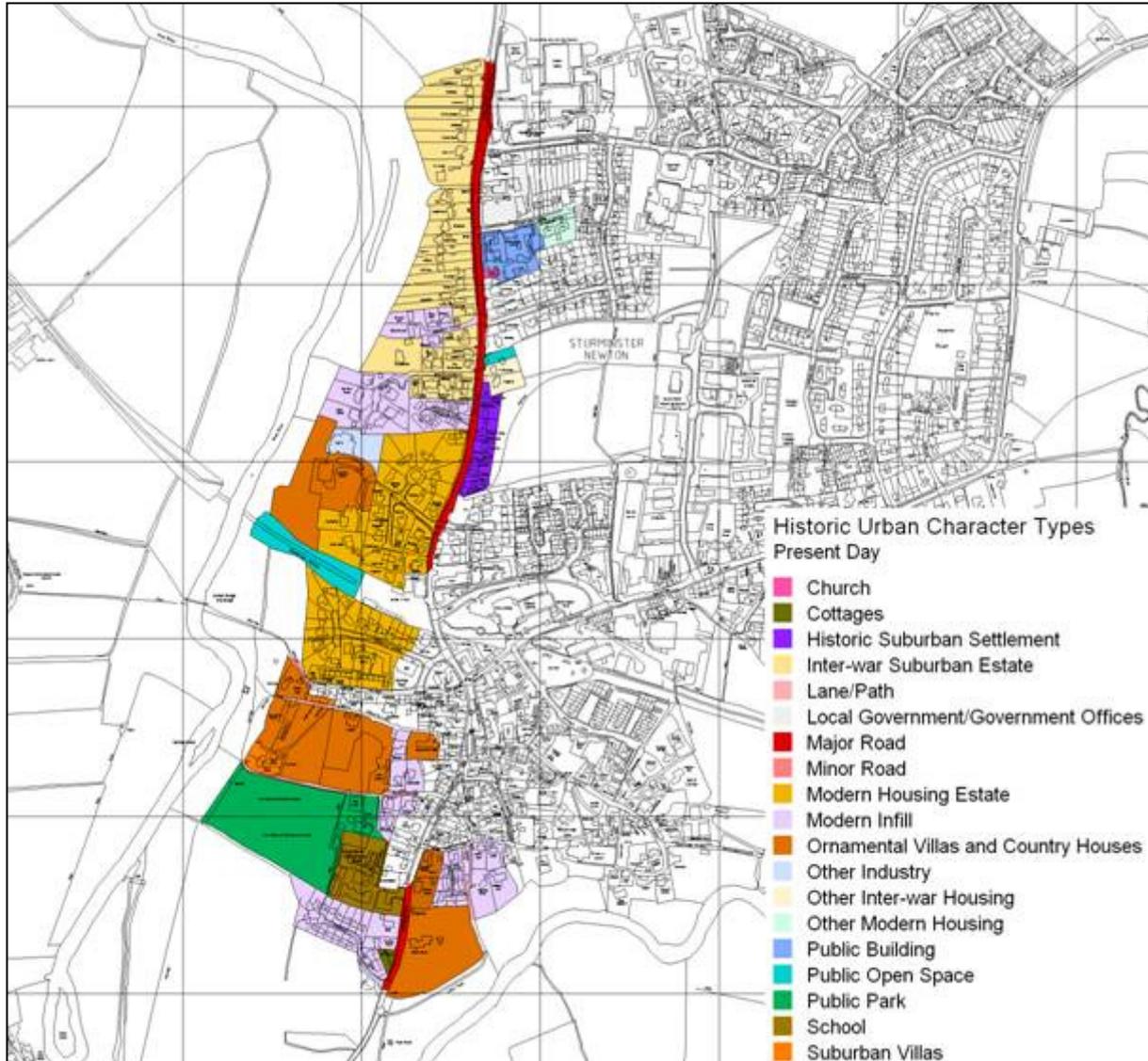


Figure 71: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 72: View (left to right) of The Hive, Stourbend House and Riverside.



Figure 73: Inter-war houses on Bath Road.

Sturminster Newton Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area lies along the western and southern edges of Sturminster Newton and comprises 18th and 19th century villas and houses close to the historic town centre and 20th century suburban housing north of the former railway line. The greater part of the area is bounded by the River Stour flood plain. Its southern part represents the initial phase of suburban expansion outside the historic town centre and is a desirable area with commanding views across the Stour valley to the west and south.

Topography and Geology

This area comprises the southern and western edge of the Corallian limestone ridge within Sturminster Newton. It sits above the Stour flood plain, often with a pronounced slope defining the boundary between ridge and river.

Urban Structure

This area divides in two, bisected by the former railway track. To the north, the area is ranged along Bath Road, which forms the eastern limit for most of this northern part. The majority of the plots are aligned on this road, though further south there is estate and infill housing set away from the road accessed by a cul-de-sac road network. The southern part of this area is less coherent and largely consists of areas to the rear of the historic plots on the street frontages. The southernmost part faces on to Bridge Street and the rest of the area is served by a series of parallel lanes running down towards the river.

Present Character

Figure 71 shows the present day historic urban character types. Ornamental villas and country houses are found only in the in the southern and southwestern parts of the character area, interspersed with modern infill, a school and sports field. There are modern housing estates either side of the former railway line. To the



Figure 74: View of Beech House from the south.

north the area is dominated by inter-war suburban housing and also interspersed with modern infill. The east side of Bath Road has a small historic suburban settlement and a mixture of local government offices and other public buildings on the site of the former Sturminster Union Workhouse.

Time Depth

The earliest settlement in this area was on the south side of the historic town centre, to the east of Bridge Street and dates to the 17th century. Development on the west side of the historic town centre started in the 18th century and continued through the 19th century. Bonslea House to the north of the railway line was built in 1905. From this point suburban settlement spread northwards along the west side of Bath Road. The Sturminster Union Workhouse was deliberately planted half a mile from the town centre in 1838. The ribbon development of cottages on the east side of Bath Road probably dates to the late 18th or early 19th century.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is suburban in character. This ranges from large houses set centrally within extensive grounds to modern infill, generally in the form of large detached and semi-detached houses set back from culs-de-sac within medium to large plots. The modern infill frequently occupies the former grounds of large villas. The inter-war housing along the north part of Bath Road comprises detached bungalows set back from the road within long narrow rectangular plots. Some of these plots have also been infilled with modern developments. The ribbon development on the east side of Bath Road comprises small detached cottages set within narrow plots aligned on the road. The area has significant tree cover, often the remnants of parkland associated with large villas. There is also important open space at the War Memorial Recreation Ground and William Barnes School.

Sturminster Newton Historic Urban Character Area 3

Built Character

Building types

This area has a very broad range of building types from 17th-19th century villas and houses to 21st century suburban estate houses.

The 17th-19th century houses are all individual in style and layout with additions and modifications. Suburban villas of the 19th century are typified by Riverside and The Hive. Bonslea House is notable for its extravagant eclectic mixture of Italianate and Jacobethan styles. A number of vernacular 17th-19th century cottages survive at Minster House, Bridge Street (Figure 77), and The Fernery, Pilgrim's Close and Wood View on Bath Road (Figure 76).

The workhouse was a variation on the Poor Law Commissioner's model 'Y' plan, but only the three storey entrance block survives. A range of modern council buildings lie to the north of the former workhouse.

The Edwardian inter-war suburban houses are substantially individual with a mixture of styles and sizes, both detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, a number with Arts and Crafts details. The post-war houses are typical of their period of construction with little local distinctiveness.

Building Materials

The historic buildings are built from local Corallian limestone rubble (Marnhull Stone) and red brick, probably from Bagber. Generally it is only the oldest buildings that are of stone (Beech House, Minster House, Old Malt House), with brick used from about the late 18th century onwards. The roofs are mainly slate or tile. Minster House and the Old Malt House are thatched. The Victorian suburban villas are mainly of rendered brick with slate roofs. Boundary walls are in brick and local stone, sometimes with red tile coping (Figure 78).

The Edwardian and inter-war houses are mainly red brick, some with pebble-dashed or rough-cast render. The roofs are primarily tile or slate. The modern houses are primarily brick with tiled roofs.

Key Buildings

Commercial Premises: The Old Malthouse.

Public Buildings: Sturminster Union Workhouse and chapel (Figure 40).

17th and 18th century houses: Beech House, Minster House, Stourcastle Lodge.

19th and 20th century houses: Hill House, Riverside, The Lindens, Bonslea House.



Figure 75: View of The Old Malthouse showing brick cellar arch.



Figure 76: View of Pilgrim's Close and Wood View, Bath Road.



Figure 77: Minster House, Bridge Street.



Figure 78: View east along Church Lane showing property boundary walls.

**Sturminster Newton Historic Urban Character Area 3
Archaeology**

Archaeological Investigations

No archaeological investigations or discoveries have been made in this character area.

Archaeological Character

This area was on the fringe of the historic town centre and remained rural in character until the 17th century and later. The archaeological character is therefore likely to comprise rural boundaries dating to the 17th century or before. Nevertheless, the prominent position of the area on the edge of a limestone ridge above a regionally-important river valley might suggest the possibility of activity dating from the Neolithic period onwards might be present, though no pre-urban activity or finds have been recovered from this area to date.

Boundaries depicted on Figure 79 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 rural origin.



Figure 79: Archaeological features in Historic Character Area 3.

Sturminster Newton Historic Urban Character Area 3 Designations

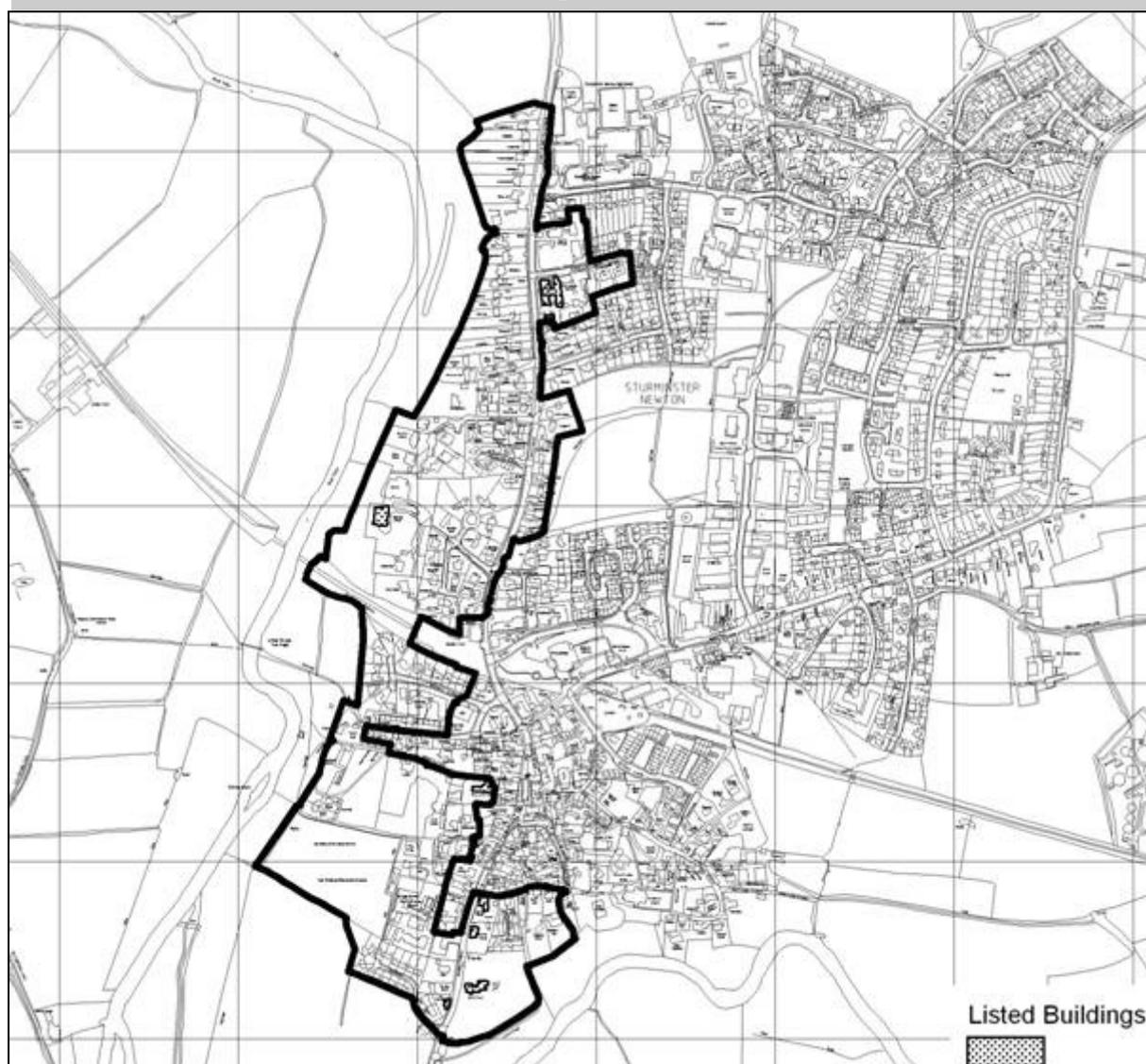


Figure 80: Listed Buildings in Historic Character Area 3.

Listed Buildings

There are 8 Listed Buildings in the Character Area, all grade II (Figure 80).

Conservation Areas

Only that part of the Character Area that lies south of the former railway line falls within the Sturminster Newton Conservation Area. (Figure 47).

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.

Sturminster Newton 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 17th and 19th century houses and suburban villas to the south and west of the historic town centre and from the 19th century workhouse, chapel and suburban settlement on Bath Road, 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 aligned on the major roads within plots subdivided from pre-existing fields, with a relatively small proportion of modern later 20th century housing within curvilinear cul-de sac estate layouts, in contrast to the neighbouring suburban areas. Some of the modern developments have been fitted in to the former grounds of large houses and villas and retain significant tree cover.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Whilst development in this area has historically been on a smaller scale than most of the housing estates in the northern part of Sturminster Newton, a number of medium-sized developments already characterise the western fringe, lessening its sensitivity. The visual

impact across the Stour valley and the significant green spaces and tree cover are defining characteristics of this area and would be vulnerable to large scale development.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. The area sits on the fringe of a significant limestone ridge above a meander of the River Stour. The agrarian and defensive potential of the area has been recognised since at least the Iron Age with the construction of Sturminster Castle on the opposite bank of the Stour. During the late Roman period, a very important and wealthy villa stood nearby at Hinton St Mary, and the southern tip of the ridge was utilised as an ecclesiastical regional centre from the 8th century AD or earlier. It is reasonable to expect some archaeological remains or deposits relating to multi-period activity within the character area. This is despite the fact that the area comprised fields, paddocks and orchards during the medieval period. This area has the potential to inform the pre-urban settlement pattern in the region about which little is known.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-3, 14, 20, 21 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Medieval and post-medieval paddocks and orchards
- 17th-19th century large houses in extensive grounds
- 18th and 19th century vernacular houses
- Early 20th century suburban housing estates
- 19th century and earlier field boundaries