

# Cranborne Historic Urban Character Area 1

## The Priory Church and Manor

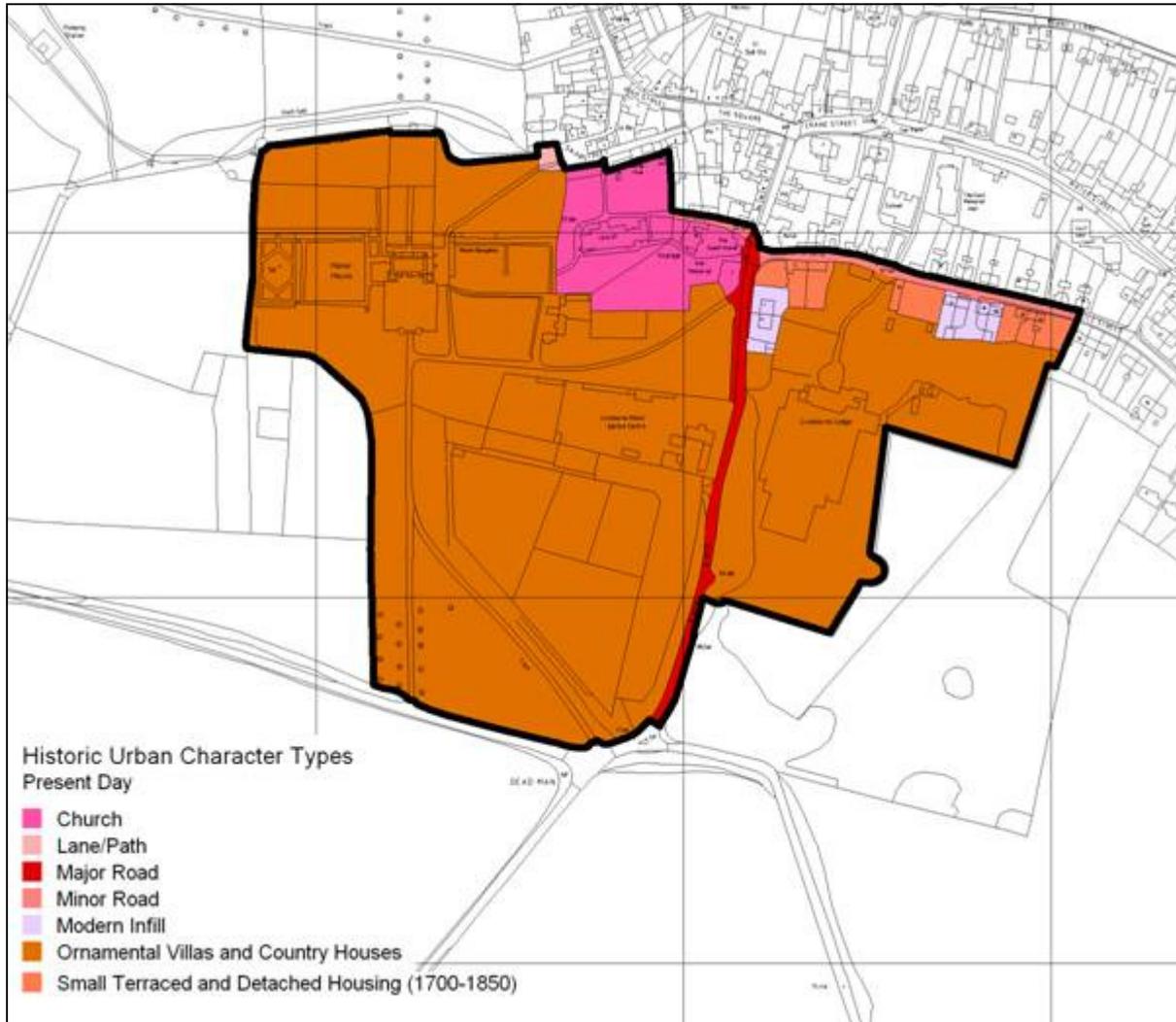


Figure 30: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 1, showing current historic urban character type.



Figure 31: Southern approach to the town down Wimborne Street.



Figure 32: Wimborne Street looking towards the town, with garden wall of Cranborne Lodge to right.

## Cranborne Historic Urban Character Area 1 Structure of Character Area

### **Overview**

This area represents the original ecclesiastical and manorial focus of the town. It is defined by its historic dimension and by its physical character. It lies on the south side of the River Crane and contains the manor house and church, the earliest upstanding medieval structures in the town. It includes extensive areas of landscaped and ornamental gardens associated with Cranborne Manor and Cranborne Lodge.

### **Topography and Geology**

The character area is largely located on the chalk. However, the northern part of the area encroaches on a band of valley gravel and alluvium formed in Pleistocene times along the bed of the River Crane. The medieval buildings of St Mary's and St Bartholomew's church and King John's hunting lodge were constructed on a slight chalk spur at the junction of these two formations. Generally the ground slopes gently from the SW to the NE.

### **Urban Structure**

This area is not strictly urban in character as it primarily comprises gardens and parkland associated with two large country houses, which lie at the southern and western edge of the town. The church lies at the northwest corner of the Manor House grounds. The area is bisected by Wimborne Street, which forms the main route into the town from the south. Towards the north end of the area, there is a staggered crossroads with Castle Street running to the east and Church Street running up to the church to the west, which together may have been a medieval back lane. There is a small amount of development directly related to the streets, mainly along Castle Street, otherwise the larger older buildings are set well away from the streets.



Figure 33: The Vicarage with the war memorial in foreground and The Old Coach House to right.

### **Present Character**

Figure 30 shows the present day historic urban character types. This area comprises in large part, extensive landscaped park and formal gardens of the country houses. The church forms another significant character type. There is some smaller housing along Castle Street and some small areas of modern infill.

### **Time Depth**

This area represents the primary historic component of the town. The medieval church and manor may be on the site of the late Saxon church and manor. Cranborne Lodge dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Wimborne Street was turnpiked in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and its present course may date from that time. Castle Street development largely dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

The dominant pattern is of large historic buildings set in extensive grounds. Additionally, there are a number of historic houses along Castle Street set directly on the carriageway, unlike the small number of modern houses which are set back from the roads. There are no footpaths along Wimborne Street and Castle Street. Wimborne Street has an enclosed feel provided by the high garden walls along both sides and by large beech trees. The parish church sits above the market place and is fronted by a graveyard which slopes gently to the river Crane. The 19<sup>th</sup> century vicarage lies within a large walled garden east of the church.

Gardens and trees form a major element of this character area which imparts a non-urban feel. The mature beech and yew trees in the churchyard and in the Cranborne Manor and Lodge gardens are of particular significance to the character. The area provides an interesting transition along the main southern approach from open farmland into the built up town centre.



Figure 34: Garden Walls, Manor Garden Centre.

## Cranborne Historic Urban Character Area 1 Built Character

### **Building types**

The oldest buildings in Cranborne are the medieval manor and church. The church of St Mary and St Bartholomew has a 12<sup>th</sup> century north doorway (Figure 10), the nave and aisles date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the west tower from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the chancel, vestry and north porch from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The south aisle is thought to have been reconstructed on the original 12<sup>th</sup> century foundations, although the north aisle has been widened and the 12<sup>th</sup> century doorway reset. The west tower is considered to be amongst the finest in East Dorset.

Cranborne Manor House (Figure 39) is one of the oldest surviving domestic buildings in England and its construction as hunting lodge for King John is recorded in 1207-8. It was a large hall house comprising two main compartments and a cross passage. The walls were very strong, buttressed and battlemented. One compartment was on two floors and the main hall had a mezzanine level. Each compartment had a separate pitched roof. There were also two projecting towers and a spiral staircase. This building was retained by the Earl of Salisbury when he took it over as his manor in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. He altered the internal arrangements and the windows and added new wings to the east and west. The remarkable survival of the 13<sup>th</sup> century central portion makes the manor house of national architectural importance.

There are a number of structures within the gardens, including an early 17<sup>th</sup> century gate and gatehouse to the south of the manor, 17<sup>th</sup> century garden walls to the north and south of the house and 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century walls around the walled garden (now occupied by the Manor Garden Centre).

Cranborne Lodge was built in about 1700, it has three storeys in brick with stone dressings. East

and west wings were added in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with a later extension on the NE added in the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century. To the north of the house, the Castle Street entrance is flanked by a 19<sup>th</sup> century carriage house and stable block (RCHME 1975, 5-13).

The Old Rectory also dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other buildings fronting on to Castle Street and Wimborne Street present a mixture of 19<sup>th</sup> century and modern brick houses. 2 Castle Street has an attached workshop (Figure 36).

### **Building Materials**

This is the only part of Cranborne with major structures that are not built from brick. The church is of flint and heathstone rubble with stone slate and tile roofs. Cranborne Manor is built in rendered rubble with flint and ashlar with ashlar dressings and a tile and stone slate roof. Cranborne Lodge has brick walls and stone dressings with a tiled roof. Its associated carriage house and stable block are in white-washed brick and the Old Rectory is also in brick with a tiled roof. Some banded brick and flint is also used in one building. The garden walls are of flint and stone rubble, brick or cob.

### **Key Buildings**

*Public Buildings:* St Mary's and St Bartholomew's Church, The Old Rectory.

*Country Houses and ancillary buildings:* Cranborne Manor, Cranborne Lodge, Cranborne Manor gatehouse and garden walls, Cranborne Lodge Carriage House and Stable Block, Manor Farmhouse.

*19<sup>th</sup> Century Domestic Buildings:* The Old Coach House, 2-4 Castle Street, 18-22 Castle Street.

*Industrial buildings:* Workshop attached to 2 Castle Street.



Figure 35: 19th century houses, 18-22 Castle Street.



Figure 36: Former workshop attached to 2 Castle Street.

**Cranborne Historic Urban Character Area 1  
Archaeology**

**Archaeological Investigations**

There have been no formal archaeological investigations within the character area, although some archaeological material has been discovered, but was not formally recorded. (Figure 37). A large quantity of human bone, thought to represent a plague pit, was found when digging the foundations of a garden wall at Cranborne Lodge (Hawkins, 1983, 13). A masonry fragment of the priory was recovered during demolition of the tithe barn in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a carved stone fragment was discovered in a pond in the grounds of the Manor House in 1935. This stone is thought to date from the 9<sup>th</sup> century and may derive from an otherwise unrecorded ecclesiastical building (Kendrick 1947; Marquess of Salisbury 1947). Penn also notes that remains of the priory were unearthed to the south of the church (Penn 1980, 52).

**Archaeological Character**

The archaeological character of this area is defined by medieval remains of the hunting lodge, the Abbey and Priory, as well as post-medieval remains of the manor gardens and Manor Farm. Cranborne is known to have existed from at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century, although no *in situ* late Saxon remains have ever been identified. If any such remains do survive they are most likely to lie in the vicinity of the medieval manor and church, or in *The Close* to the north of the manor. The boundaries of Cranborne Manor garden visible on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps and thought to date from the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries are depicted on Figure 37.

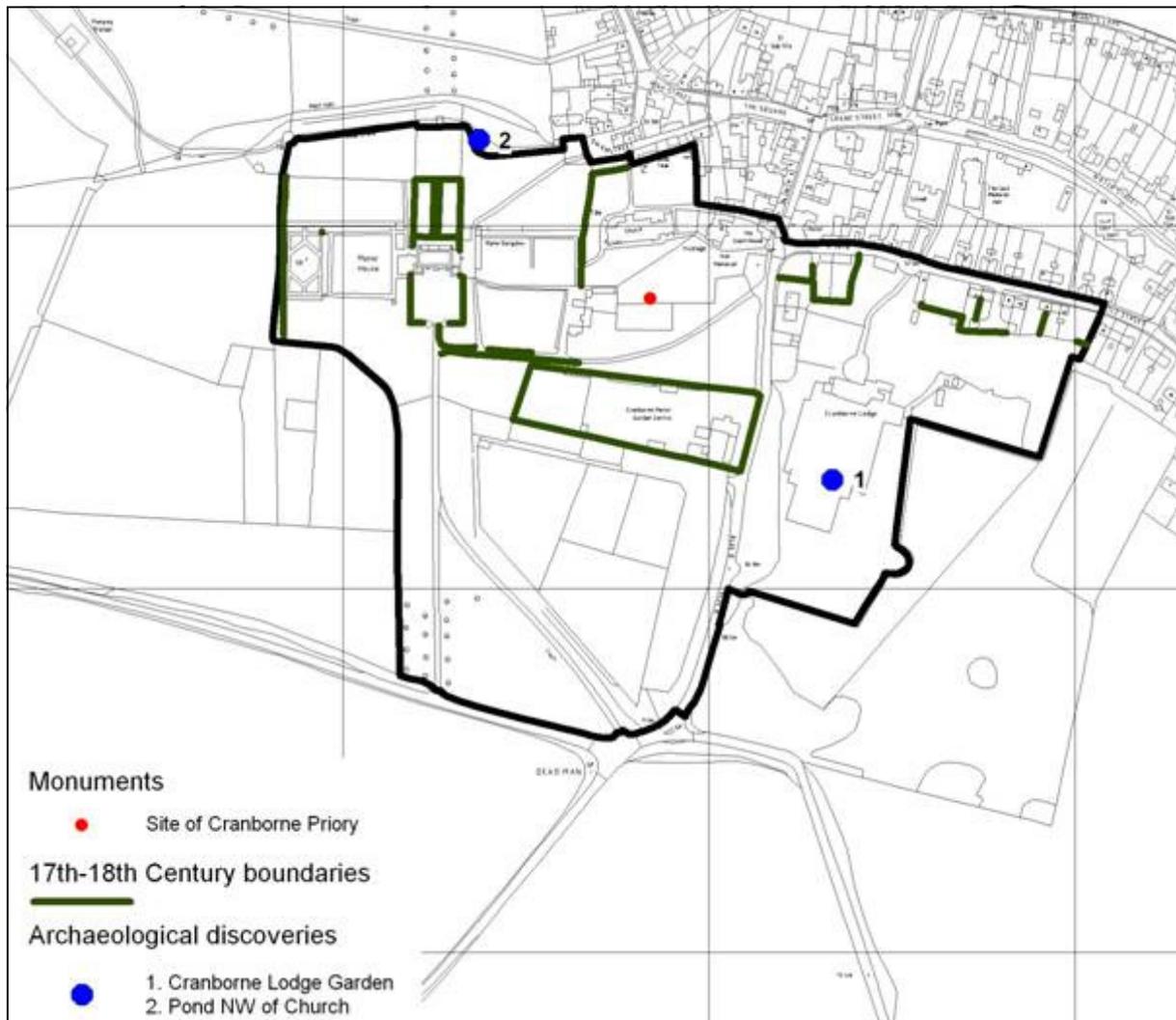


Figure 37: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 1.

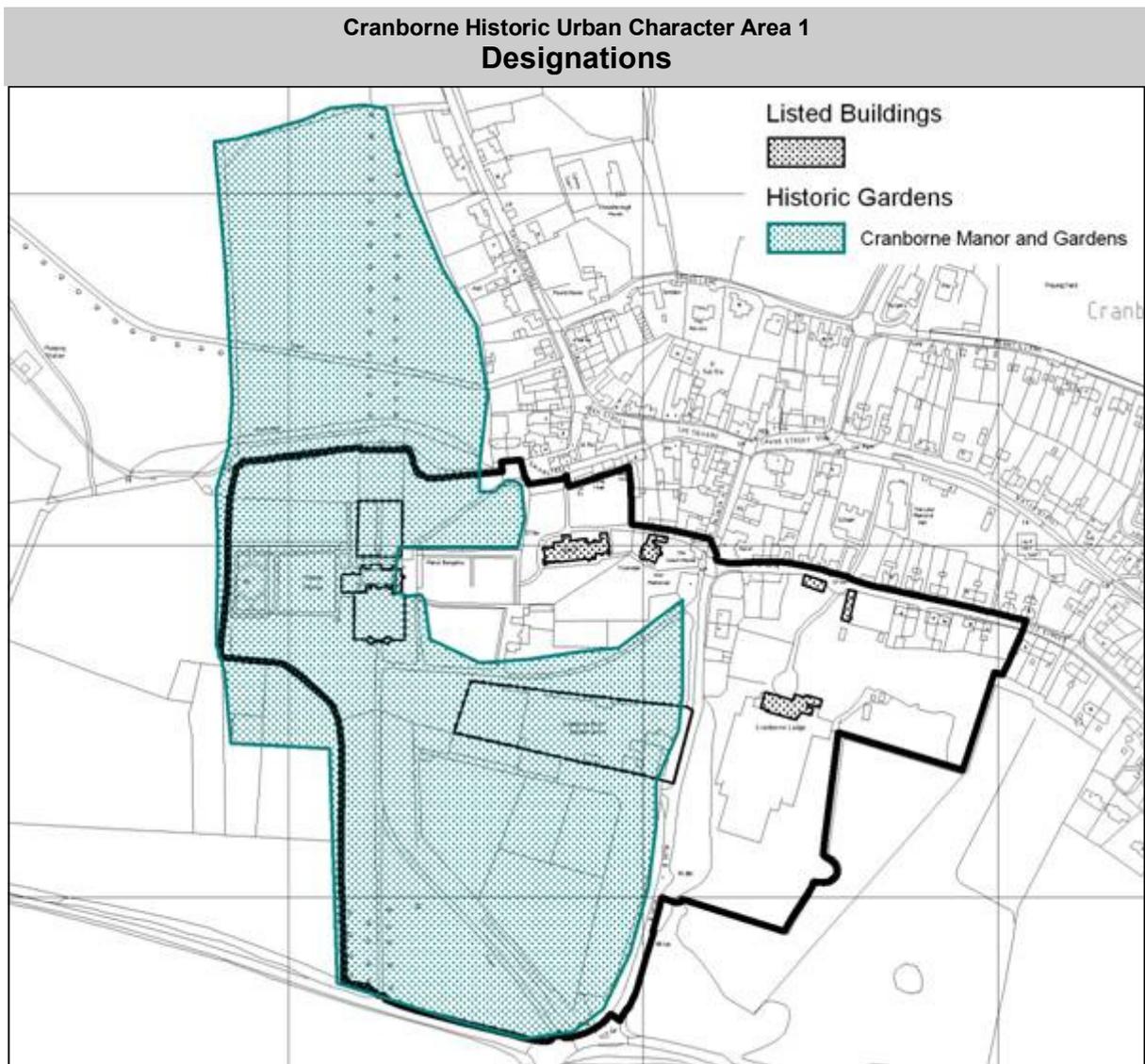


Figure 38: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 1.

### Listed Buildings

There are nine Listed Buildings and structures in the Character Area, two of which are Grade I listed (Cranborne Manor and St Mary's and St Bartholomew's Church). Three are Grade II\* (Cranborne Lodge, The Carriage House to the north of Cranborne Lodge and the southern gatehouse and courtyard walls of Cranborne Manor House). The remaining four are Grade II listed and include The Old Rectory, 10 Castle Street and its attached stable block, garden walls to the north of Cranborne Manor, and the walls around the Manor Garden Centre.

### Conservation Areas

Almost the whole of this Character Area lies within the Cranborne Conservation Area. Only the south eastern part of the Cranborne Lodge grounds lies outside.

### Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

Cranborne Manor is a Grade II\* Registered

Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest and comprises 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century gardens within a framework of early 17<sup>th</sup> century formal gardens (Figure 38).

### Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the character area.



Figure 39: View of Cranborne Manor from the gardens.

## Cranborne Historic Urban Character Area 1 Evaluation

### **Strength of Historic Character**

The character of this area is judged to be **strong**. A large part of the historic character derives from the medieval buildings at Cranborne Manor and St Mary's and St Bartholomew's Church. Cranborne Manor is considered to be of national architectural importance as a rare example of remarkably well preserved 13<sup>th</sup> century building. The church tower is also considered to be one of the finest in East Dorset. However, a second major component of the considerable historic character of the area lies in the grounds of Cranborne Manor. There are three major sections of listed walls and structures, the earliest dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These display a variety of traditional construction materials including, flint, chalk cob, brick, tile and ashlar. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Cranborne Lodge and the 19<sup>th</sup> century Rectory and Coach House are also important in maintaining the character of the area. Furthermore, the open nature of the natural environment also has an historical dimension including large ancient beech planted in avenues and yew trees in the churchyard.

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

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The largest modern developments are small plots of infill on earlier small industrial and domestic sites along Wimborne and Castle Streets. Large green open spaces are integral to the character of the area. This means there

are no places where major development could occur without fundamentally affecting the historic fabric.

### **Archaeological Potential**

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It forms the primary settlement component of Cranborne, with potential for significant Saxon and medieval remains. This potential is reinforced by the lack of modern development in the area, suggesting that such remains should be largely intact. These have the potential to reveal details on the origins and development of Cranborne.

The surviving medieval buildings have been modified in the post-medieval period and remain in use today. There is a high potential for detailed information on the survival of earlier structures hidden within these structures.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1- 11 and 14-23 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Possible Saxon manorial and abbey site
- Primary settlement component of historic Cranborne
- Medieval Priory site
- Medieval hunting lodge
- Parish church located to the south of the town
- Upstanding medieval buildings
- High proportion of quality historic buildings with contemporary detail
- Early 17th century manor and gardens
- Early 18th century Cranborne Lodge and grounds