

# Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 21 West Bay

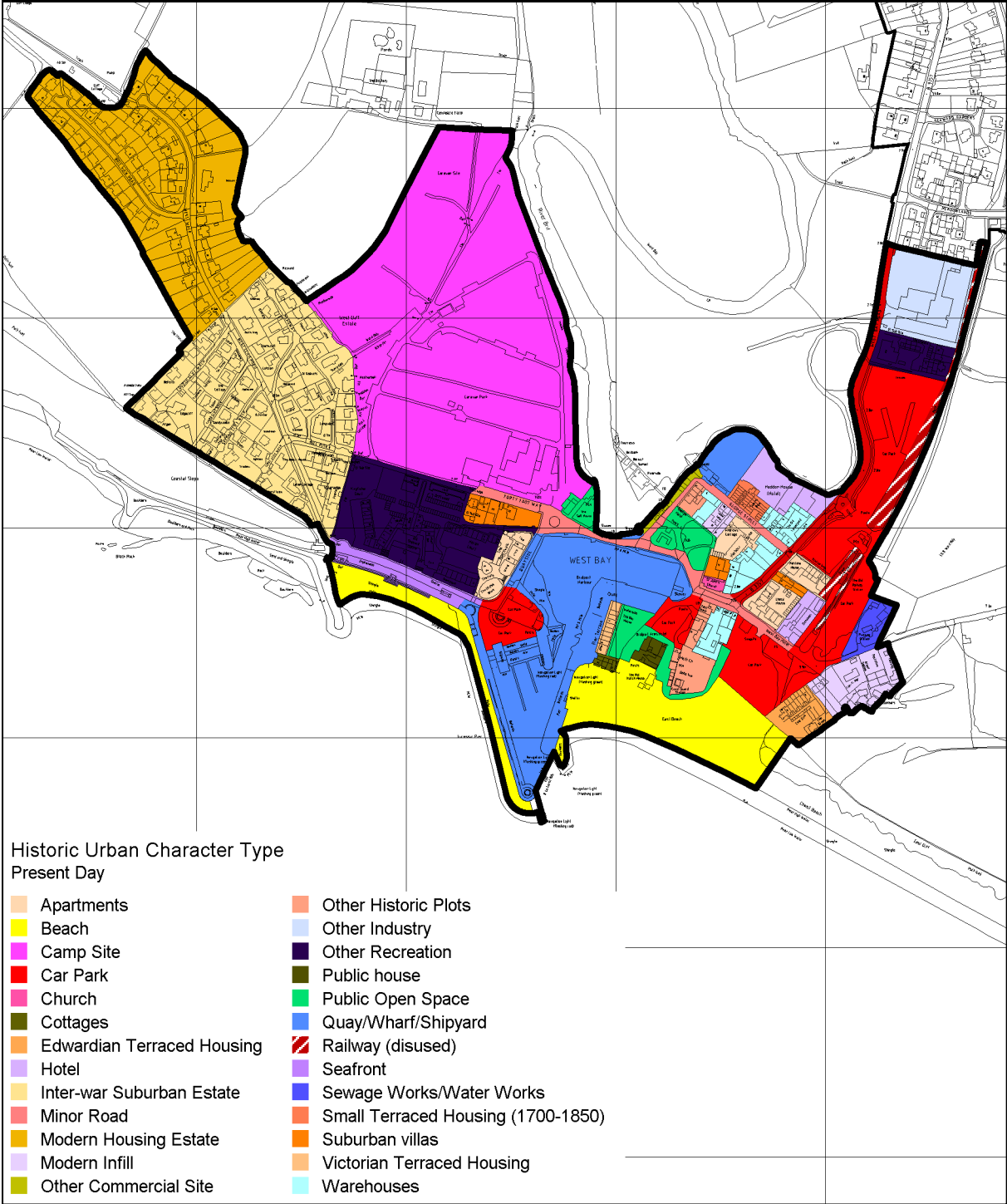


Figure 201: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 21, showing current historic urban character type.

## Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 21 Structure of Character Area

### **Overview**

This character area encompasses the historic Bridport Harbour and the surrounding seaside resort of West Bay. The central focus is the harbour basin with areas of historic warehousing and housing on its eastern and northern sides and suburban expansion up the slopes of West Cliff.

### **Topography and Geology**

West Bay is situated at the end of the Brit Valley. The ground is flat and low-lying, behind a shingle beach. It slopes up on to East and West Cliff on either side. These cliffs form the most dominant element of the topographic setting, constraining the settlement to the mouth of the river. The area lies on Fullers Earth calcareous mudstone with sandstone of the Bridport Sand Formation along the southern part and with superficial deposits of Alluvium.

### **Urban Structure**

The L-shaped harbour forms the focus with a broad area of open space around it, only interrupted by Pier Terrace. The main artery from Bridport along West Bay Road is in the eastern part, turning to run across behind the harbour, giving access to the Esplanade and West Hill. A minor road runs up East Hill to join the coast road to Burton Bradstock and beyond. Behind the harbour is George Street and its range of warehouses, forming an extension to the historic harbour facilities.

The suburban estates on West Hill have a central spinal road, with narrow roads at an acute angle and a more open layout of curvilinear culs-de-sac further up the slope.

### **Present Character**

Figure 201 shows the present day historic urban character types. The core of the area consists of Quay/Wharf/Shipyard surrounded by Public Open Space, Edwardian Terraced Housing, Public House, Cottages, Car Park, Apartments and Suburban Villas. To the east are areas of Warehouses, Apartments, Hotel, Suburban Villas and Small Terraced Housing (1700-1850). To the west is the Seafront behind the Beach with a block of Other Recreation behind and a large expanse of Camp Site. On West Hill is an Inter-war Suburban Estate and a Modern Housing Estate. Other minor character areas include Disused Railway, Sewage Works and Victorian Terraced Housing.

### **Time Depth**

The harbour basin dates largely from the early 19th century, based on an 18th century predecessor, but the harbour mouth has been significantly altered by a new coastal defence

and harbour improvement scheme. The historic open working area of the harbour still survives as public open space and car parks, with Pier Terrace (built 1887) as the only significant structure within it. Early 19th century warehouses lie on George Street and West Bay Road and this is also the area of the historic 19th century housing. There are a number of modern flats within the historic core. The west side of the harbour is dominated by 20th century developments such as the holiday apartments of the Old Shipyard and West Bay Holiday Park, formerly the post-war municipal camp ground.

The roads on the lower slopes of West Cliff were laid out in the 1920s as a speculative development and the housing subsequently developed piecemeal plot by plot. The upper slopes comprise a more uniform planned estate dating to the 1960-70s. A few elements of the Second World War emergency coastal battery still survive in the West Cliff estate.

### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

The settlement pattern is different either side of the harbour. The historic core lies to the east and consists of a mixture of former industrial, commercial and residential elements set in generally rectangular plots. The buildings are a mixture of different sizes, either set on the street frontage or set back from it and comprise both historic houses and port buildings and modern apartments. George Street is straight with a right angle returning to the harbour and retains much of its original character. There are stone warehouses built up directly on the frontage and a 19th century terrace set at right angles to the road with the frontage defined by a stone wall.

The western side of the harbour is dominated by the three- and four-storey modern Quay West development, with the low-rise leisure and residential Old Shipyard Centre behind. West Hill has low-density housing estates, the lower part has the houses set in a slightly irregular pattern along a regular straight cul-de-sac road arrangement and further up the hill, the houses are arranged around a curvilinear cul-de-sac layout. The houses are all set back from the roads in the centre of generally rectangular plots.

There are good views out to sea, towards the cliffs and up the Brit valley from many parts of the area, but there are relatively few trees. The largest green space is on the north east side of the harbour; most other open areas are taken up by car parks.

## Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 21 Built Character

### **Building types**

The built character of the historic core of the area is one of historic warehouses and short terraces of worker's houses (such as Swains Row), mainly along George Street. The warehouses are the dominant type of historic building and they exhibit a variety of structural and architectural details but generally are large 2-3 storey rubble stone buildings with central loading bays and external loading doors. The oldest warehouse is the 18th century Good's Yard with stone mullioned windows.

Most of the original housing seems to have survived including rows of terraced houses on George Street in a formal classical style.

The oldest building is probably the thatched Bridport Arms hotel, much altered extended and adapted from its original form. The near by Ship Cottage is another thatched building in a rather informal thatch style.

There are three key Arts and Crafts buildings, associated with E S Prior: Pier Terrace, 'The Moorings', and Querida.

The lower West Cliff estate is typified by a wide range of different house types and styles. The lower slopes have some undistinguished modern stone bungalows, but further upslope there is a varied mix of larger and smaller houses and bungalows, some with Arts and Crafts influenced features (Applecross). There is one prominent large mock-Tudor house (Tredewi) and one medieval-inspired stone house with thatched roof (The Thatch). In the southwest corner, at the top of the slope, overlooking the cliff is the former Battery Observation Post, now converted to a dwelling (Hilltop), with a pitched tiled roof (perhaps wartime camouflage?).

Many of the modern buildings are undistinguished, but the recent Maritime House reflects many details of the historic warehousing and the new development on the west side of the harbour has a very distinctive modern maritime style.

### **Building Materials**

Most of the historic stone buildings are of Forest Marble, including the harbour walls. A significant number of buildings are stucco, including the Bridport Arms, Swains Row, the George Hotel and the Methodist Chapel. Pier Terrace and adjacent Gull House and The Dinghy have roughcast finishes.

The 1960s and 1970s housing is mainly stone-clad detached bungalows, with some two-storey brick and stone-clad houses with tiled roofs.

### **Key Buildings**

Public Buildings: St John's Church, West Bay Methodist Chapel.

Warehouses: Sladers Yard, The Old Timber Yard, Brody Forbes, Good's Yard, the Salt House.

Arts and Crafts houses: 'The Moorings' Pier Terrace, Querida.

Commercial Premises: Bridport Arms.



Figure 202: West Bay Harbour looking towards Pier Terrace.



Figure 203: Brody Forbes warehouse, George Street, West Bay.



Figure 204: Former Battery Observation Post of WW2 coastal battery, West Cliff.

## Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 21 Archaeology

### Archaeological Investigations

There have been six archaeological investigations in this character area. Two desk-based assessments and one evaluation were undertaken on the historic harbour during the recent improvements (Keystone Historic Building Consultants 1997, Exeter Archaeology 2000, Gifford and Partners 2003). Two small watching briefs have been carried out adjacent to the harbour at Forty Foot Way (Slator 2007) and at the Bridport Arms Hotel (Bellamy 2004). There has also been detailed building recording of the Bridport Arms (Brebner 2003).

The below ground archaeological interventions have produced very little evidence, but have been very limited in scope.

### Archaeological Character

The small scale of the below-ground investigations in this area constrain the consideration of the archaeological resource. The harbour walls have a number of different builds, which may contain valuable evidence for the development of the harbour. The west side of the harbour may contain buried evidence of the former shipyards, though the precise form this might take is difficult to determine. Evidence for earlier activity is difficult to predict given the numerous recorded periods of storm damage to Bridport Harbour. It is possible that some archaeological evidence may survive below storm deposits of shingle behind the beach. The discovery of Roman finds on West Hill may indicate the presence of a Roman settlement or other type of site in the vicinity.

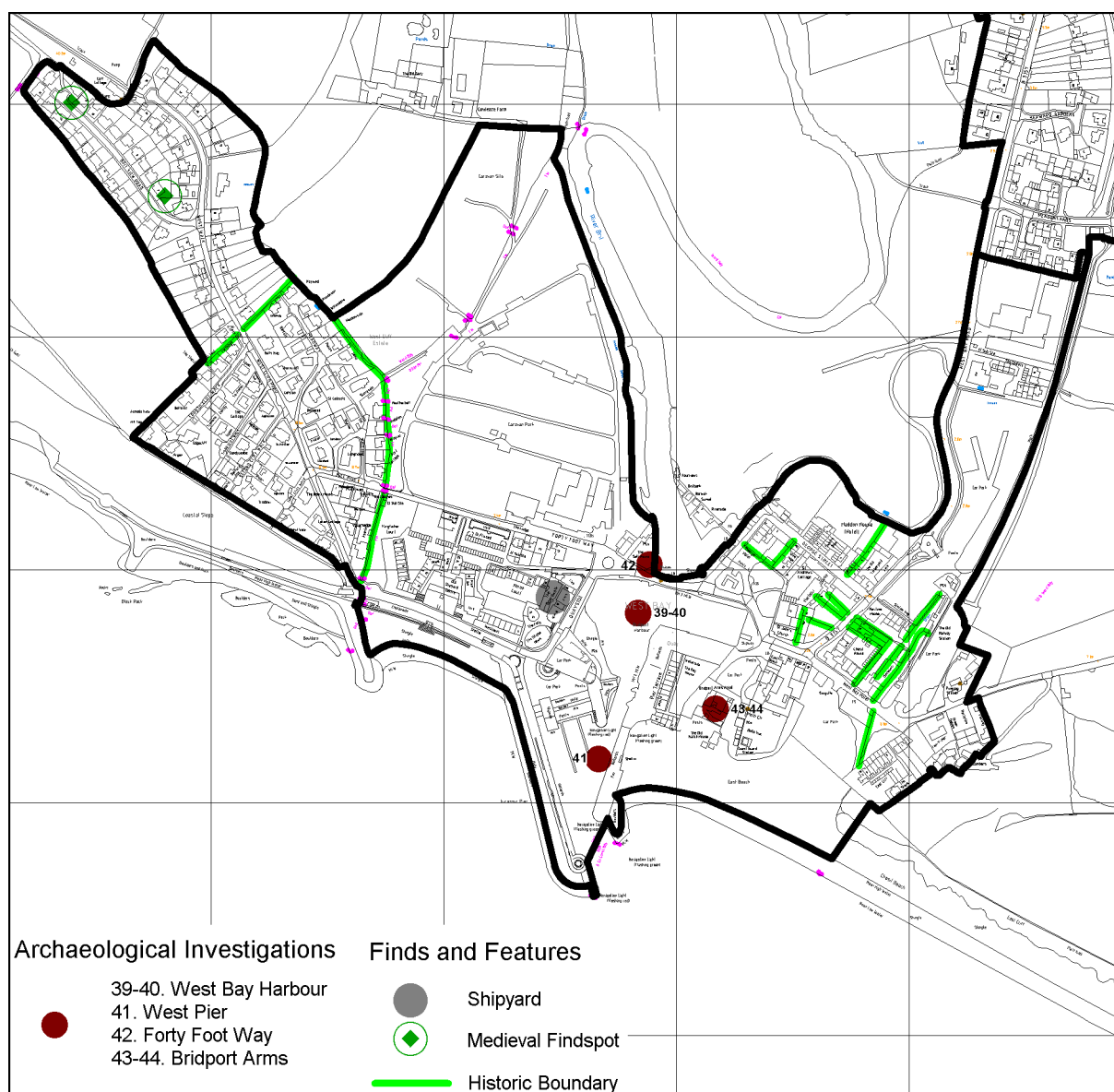


Figure 205: Archaeological Investigations, findspots and features in Historic Urban Character Area 21.



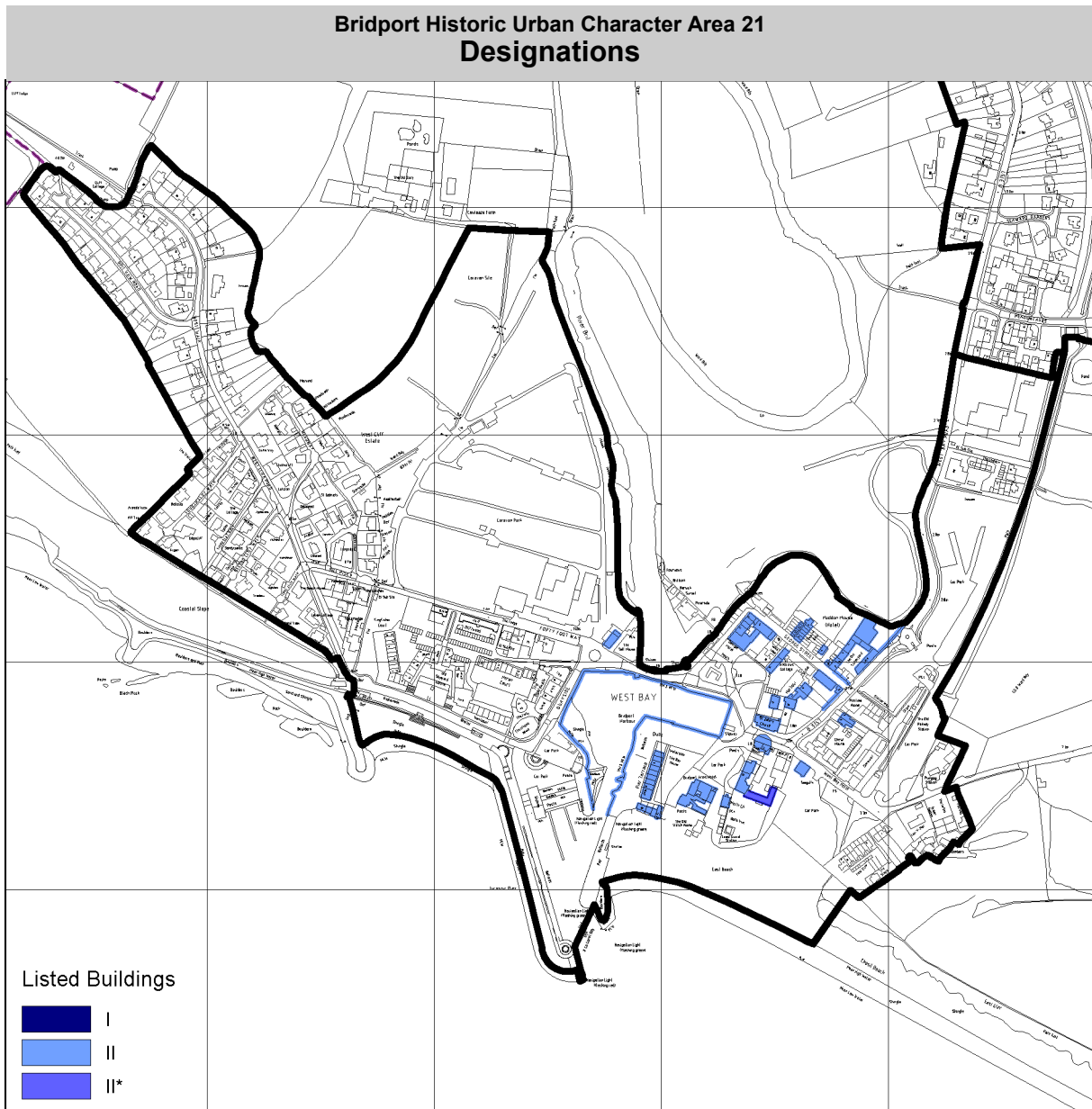


Figure 206: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 21.

**Listed Buildings**

There are 30 Listed Buildings in the Character Area. Messrs Norman Goods Warehouse is Grade II\* and the remaining 29 buildings and structures are Grade II.

**Conservation Areas**

This Character Area includes most of the West Bay Conservation Area.

**Registered Historic Parks and Gardens**

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

**Scheduled Monuments**

No Scheduled Monuments lie within this character area.



Figure 207: West Bay from the beach, with the Bridport Arms to right, Pier Terrace, centre, and Pier Cottage to left.

## Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 21 Evaluation

### ***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **Strong**. West Bay retains much of its 18th and 19th century historic building fabric including a range of well-preserved warehouses, worker's houses and a large merchant's house, together with much historic fabric of the harbour walls. Much of the open area forming the working area of the port survives, albeit mainly as car parking. There are also remains relating to the touristic development of the area and its transition from Bridport Harbour to West Bay.

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

The area has **High** sensitivity to major change, in particular in the harbour area itself. Any major development that impinged on the harbour would compromise the essentially open aspect of the former working area of the harbour. There have been a number of modern developments in the historic core and any further dilution of the historic core may endanger the legibility of the various elements of the historic harbour.

### ***Archaeological Potential***

This character area has a **High** archaeological potential. It lies in the historic core of West Bay and much of the potential lies in the standing historic buildings and structures. There is also

potential for buried remains of earlier harbour features and for geoarchaeological deposits in the alluvium. There have been finds of Roman material on West Cliff to the west of the character area, which highlight the possibility for earlier evidence relating to periods pre-dating the development of the harbour. The survival of archaeological deposits and features is assessed to be medium to high.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 4, 15, 22, 26-28 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Historic harbour basin
- Open working area around harbour
- Historic warehouses
- Pier Terrace and other Arts and Crafts buildings
- Disused railway line and station
- Modern flats, apartments and holiday park
- Remains of WW2 coastal battery