

Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 3

Court Mills and North Mills

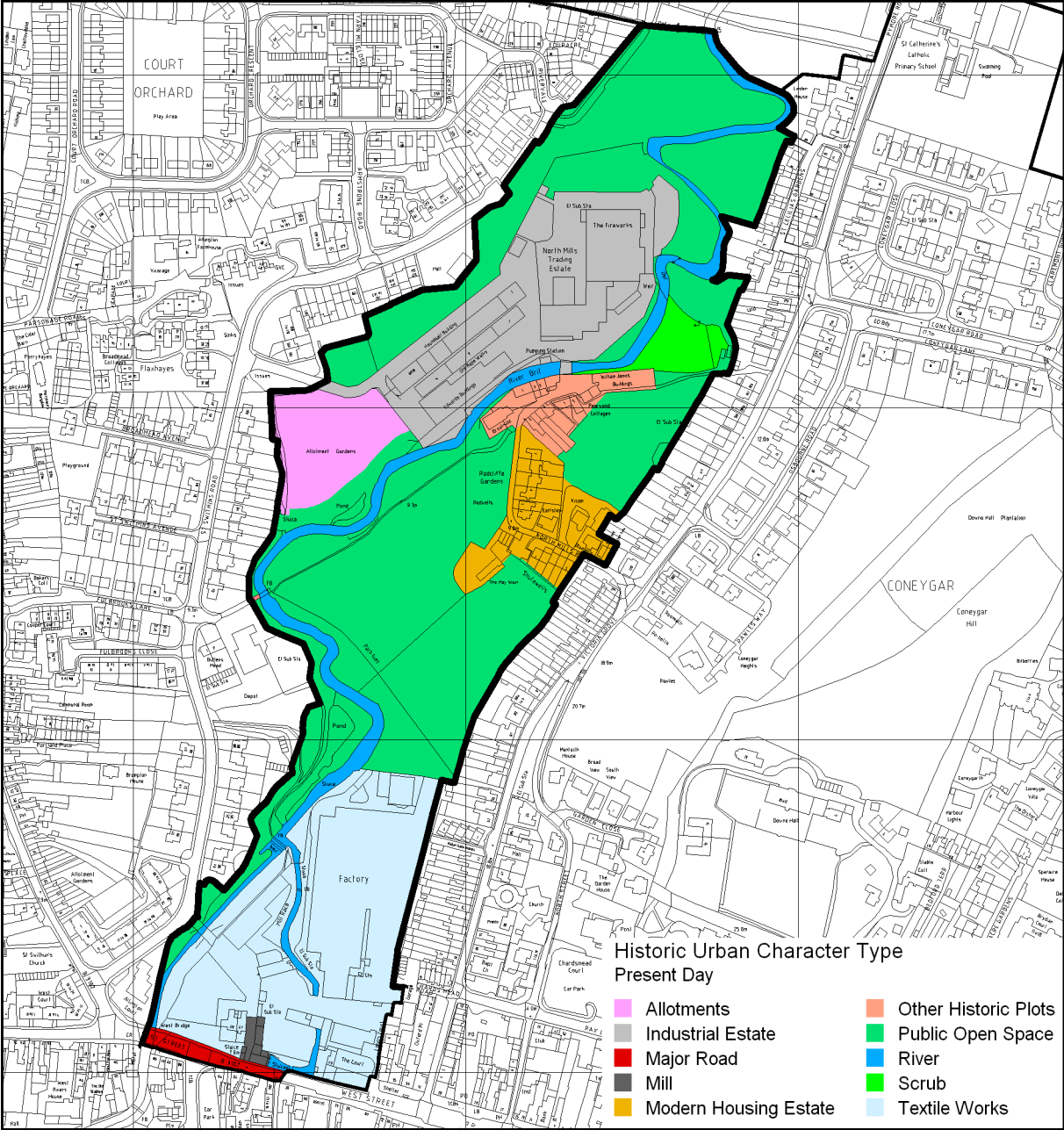


Figure 62: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 3, showing current historic urban character type.

Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 3 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This character area consists of the floodplain of the River Brit to the north of West Bridge and has two contrasting character elements, the green open spaces of the meadows along the river and the large industrial sites of North Mills and Court Mills. It is defined primarily by its topographic location and its industrial history.

Topography and Geology

The area is flat and low-lying in the floodplain of the river Brit. The geology is sandstones of the Down Cliff Sand Member and Thorncombe Sand Member with small areas of Bridport Sand sandstone and limestone of the Beacon Limestone Formation, all overlain by deposits of Alluvium.

Urban Structure

This area is largely non-urban in structure and effectively forms a finger of green land along the river bounded by suburban development on both sides. The industrial and former industrial elements are focussed on the river.

Present Character

Figure 62 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area is predominantly Public Open Space with a large area of Industrial Estate at North Mills and Textile Mill at Court Mills. There is a small area of Other Historic Plots and Modern Housing Estate next to North Mills. Other minor historic urban character types include Allotments, Scrub and the Mill at West Mill.

Time Depth

The plan elements of this area largely date from the 19th century but contain some earlier elements. West Mill at the southern edge of the area may be medieval in origin and North Mills has its origin as a water powered corn mill on the river and may be the site of the mill at Allington mentioned in Domesday. Court Mills

developed from a 17th century core, but many of the buildings are now 20th century, some of the original drying greens along the river still survive as open green space. North Mills is early 19th century in origin.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

There is no coherent settlement pattern and most roads in the area provide access to North Mills or Court Mills only. North Mills Road accesses the North Mills complex from the east, with a bridge across the river. There is a number of workshops and worker's housing adjacent to North Mills on North Mills Road. The rest of the road has medium density suburban housing along its length.



Figure 63: View over meadows from North Mills.



Figure 64: Edwards net factory, North Mills Road.

Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 3 Built Character

Building types

The buildings are almost exclusively industrial in character. At Court Mills, there are a number of different styles of industrial building, including The Court, an 18th century three storey stone former warehouse or workshop, part of the original Court Mills factory and some mid 19th century brick buildings. Much of the 19th century factory ensemble was destroyed by fire in the 1940s and replaced by modern industrial sheds. Many of the original buildings at North Mills have also been replaced by modern industrial units, but a large three storey warehouse, some 19th and 20th century northlight sheds and a large covered ropewalk remain. Adjacent to North Mills is a small ensemble comprising the 18th and 19th century brick houses, some associated with the original watermill and the 20th century William James factory building.

Building Materials

The dominant material used for the historic buildings is red brick. The Court is the notable exception, built in stone. The roofs are mainly slate.

Key Buildings

Industrial Buildings: West Mill, The Court, Court Mills Engineering Workshop, North Mills warehouse, North Mills covered rope walk.



Figure 66: Industrial buildings at Court Mills.



Figure 67: Warehouse and north-light sheds at North Mills.



Figure 68: Covered Ropewalk, North Mills.



Figure 65: The Court, Court Mills.



Figure 69: West Mill.

Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 3 Archaeology

Archaeological Investigations

There have been no archaeological investigations in this character area.

Archaeological Character

The lack of any below-ground investigation constrains detailed consideration of the archaeological resource. However, this is likely to be relatively sparse given the low-lying poorly-drained character of the ground. The floodplain is likely to contain evidence of former channels of the Brit and may contain palaeo-

environmental evidence for the Saxon and medieval landscape in the alluvial deposits.

The dominant archaeological character relates to the industrial archaeology of the area, contained within the surviving buildings and buried remains of former buildings and other structures.

Figure 70 shows historic boundaries depicted on 19th century maps, which are remnants of earlier field boundaries.

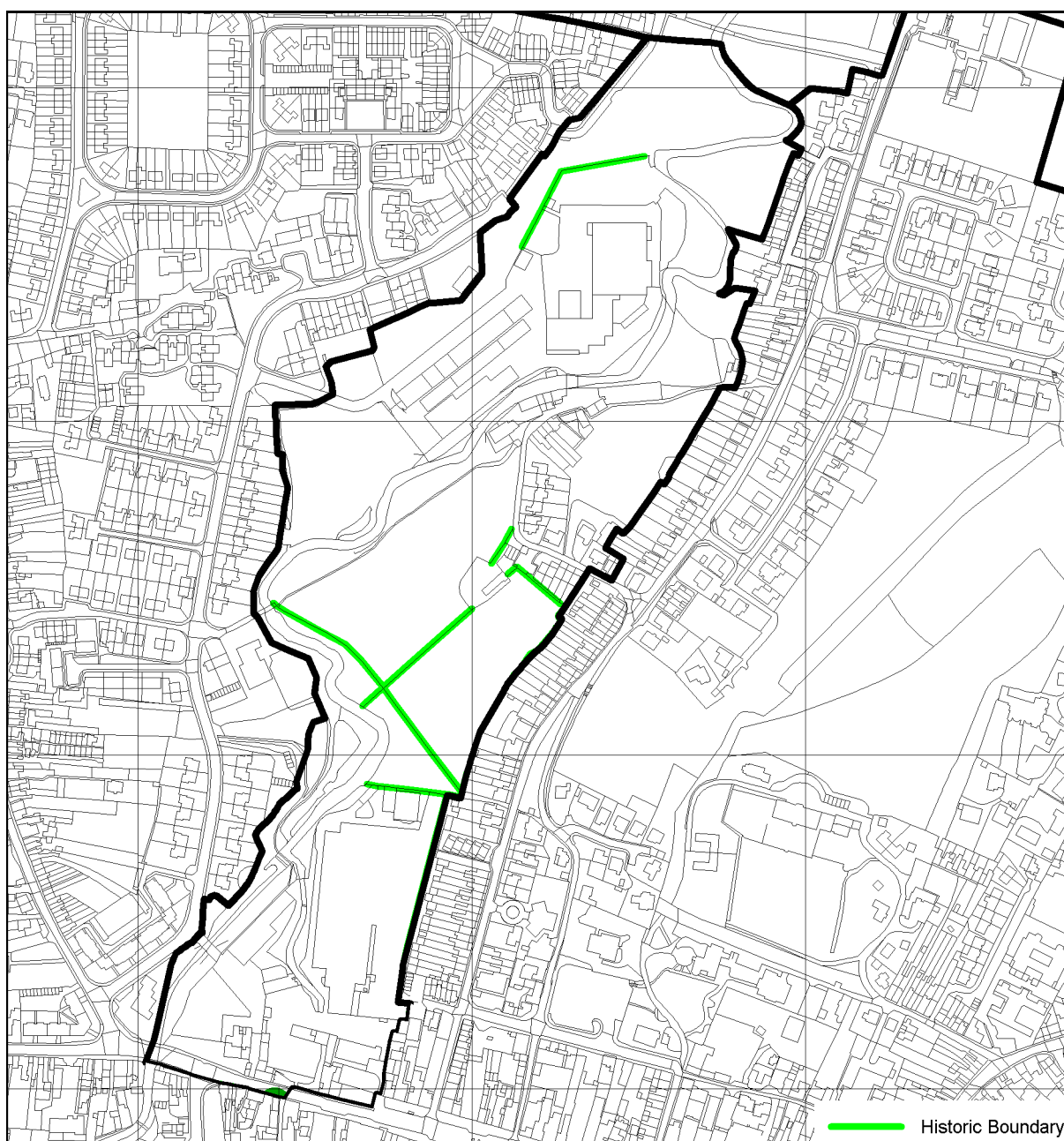


Figure 70: Archaeological features in Historic Character Area 3.

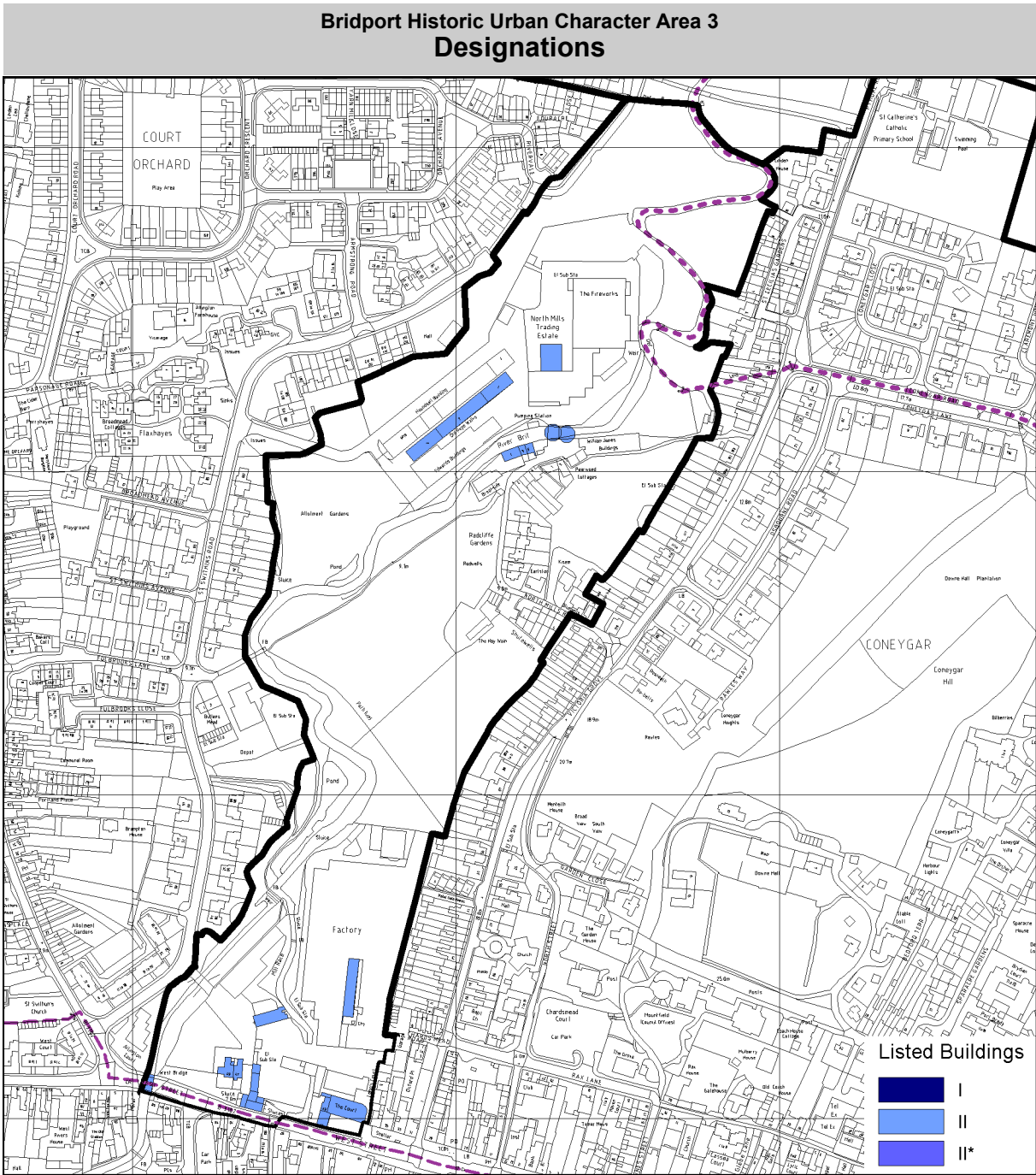


Figure 71: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 3.

Listed Buildings

There are 15 Listed Buildings in the Character Area. All are Grade II Listed.

Conservation Areas

The southern edge of this Character Area (West Mill and The Court at Court Mills) lies within the Bridport Conservation Area (Figure 41).

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.

Bridport Historic Urban Character Area 3 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **Strong**. It has moderate to good survival of historic rope and net manufacturing structures set within a landscape setting reflecting the importance of water power and the historic use of the meadows as drying greens.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **High** sensitivity to major change. Many of the historic industrial structures have been adapted or demolished, but sufficient remains survive to enable the historic industrial character to be discerned, but further erosion of this legibility would damage the essential historic character of the area. Any encroachment on the open meadows would have a detrimental effect on one of the major contributors to the historic character of this area.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **Medium**. The area is largely composed of low-lying poorly-drained land outside the historic core of the town. There is potential for geoarchaeological investigation of the development of the alluvium in the river floodplain and for waterlogged palaeo-

environmental material, which could answer questions about the landscape and environment during the Saxon and medieval periods. Its major significance relates to industrial archaeology, as it contains the two of the largest and most significant industrial sites in Bridport. The surviving industrial buildings have a potential to reveal more details on the development of industry in Bridport and there is also potential for buried earlier industrial archaeological remains. The survival of archaeological deposits and features is assessed as medium.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 4, 9, 21, 26-29 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Court Mills historic industrial remains
- North Mills historic industrial remains
- West Mill
- Open green spaces along river