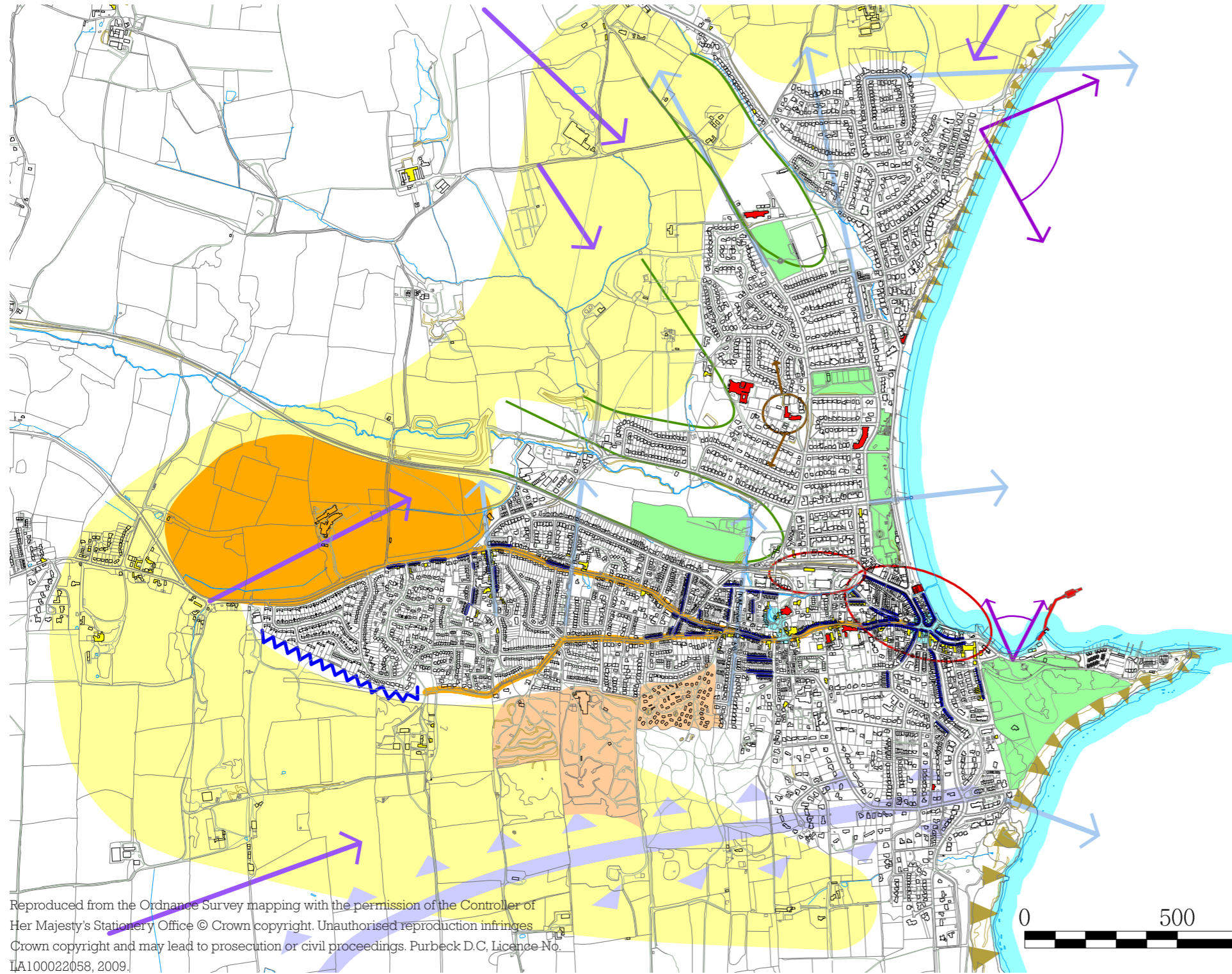




Swanage Townscape Analysis 05.1 Townscape Analysis



-  Focal space
-  Node
-  Landmark
-  Buildings of townscape interest
-  Historic route
-  Notable continuous built frontages
-  Principal green open spaces
-  Cliff edge
-  Coastline
-  Visually prominent ridge / hillside
-  Abrupt edge
-  High quality landscape adjacent to town
-  Positive town entrance
-  Low profile buildings on hillside
-  Principal views - out of town
-  Principal views - into town
-  Principal vistas
-  Green wedge
-  Inner ridge

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5.1.1 Overview

Swanage is geographically isolated but its unique coastline location and the high quality of the surrounding landscape provides an excellent setting to the town which is an important asset.

5.1.2 Swanage's agricultural, industrial and tourism heritage have helped to shape its development form and function. This is a process that continues to the present day as the town becomes increasingly important as a residential destination.

5.1.3 Relationship to surroundings

The town lies along the coastal fringe of the valley situated between the chalk ridge to the north, terminating at Ballard Point and the rising land to the south of the town which culminates at Durlston Head. The coastline comprises the beach with its sweeping backdrop of Swanage Bay, together with impressive cliffs which extend beyond the town towards Ballard Down (north) and Durlston (south). The geographical relationship of Swanage to its coastal setting is one of the defining landscape characteristics of the town.

5.1.4 The chalk ridge visually dominates the northern edge of the valley and overlooks Swanage, providing panoramic views of the town and the rising ground beyond. As such, uniquely, the town can be appreciated from above. The land to the south rises steeply initially, before becoming shallower in a long gentle climb to the ridge. The land to the south contains historic field patterns, ecologically sensitive sites and forms part of the World Heritage Jurassic Coastline.

5.1.5 To the west the valley appears relatively level from its elevated surroundings, but actually comprises an undulating and varied topography which sweeps up to the western edges of the town creating a close visual relationship between town and country. The exposed nature of this landscape makes Swanage a highly visible town within its wider landscape setting.

5.1.6 Urban structure

The town's coastal location dictates that the main routes of communication run inland from the sea. The town centre is strongly defined by enclosed streets, facilities and its position within Swanage. The two main historic roads are the High Street which runs centrally through the main part of the town and Priests Road which branches off from the High Street in the direction of Langton Matravers.

5.1.7 The historic parts of the town are situated around and along these roads and form a dense core of buildings beyond which later development has branched. The multilayered history of the town has provided a range of building types, styles and materials resulting in a compound townscape. Beyond its historic core modern 20th Century development has expanded the town significantly to the north, south and west. This comprises predominantly pre and post war housing together with a range of post-war estates.

5.1.8 Flatted development has occurred along the coastal fringe in the form of purpose-built flats and converted large houses. Large mobile home parks are situated predominantly along the upper slopes of the southern hillside.

5.1.9 The Harrow House International College on Walrond Road is located on a prominent knoll and is a highly visible feature in the townscape and wider landscape. Other notable landmarks in the town include the converted water tower on Purbeck Terrace Road, The Purbeck House Hotel and The Mowlem building at a prominent junction in the town centre.

5.1.10 Open spaces

Swanage is well served by formal recreational open space, in the form of municipal parks and playing fields. With the exception of Peveril Point these spaces are situated in the central and northern parts of the town where the landscape is less steeply sloping and more able to accommodate such spaces. As a result the southern part of the town is less well served by open spaces.

5.1.11 Peveril Point is a particularly distinctive open space. This large undeveloped area at the eastern extremity of the town has a strong relationship with the coastline. Its sloping topography and open character provide an attractive parkland location close to the town centre.

5.1.12 The close relationship of the town to the surrounding landscape ensures ready access to an extensive network of public footpaths and recreational routes into the surrounding countryside. The seafront and beach also provide a wide sweep of distinctive open space which is a significant draw for tourists.

5.1.13 Views

The town is most clearly seen in views from the chalk ridge to the north providing a wide panorama

overlooking the valley. From the west the Valley Road affords views towards the town and glimpses of the sea and the cliffs at Ballard Down.

5.1.14 Views from the south are less obvious and the gently sloping nature of the hillside together with intervening trees and hedgerows limit the extent of views into Swanage from the outside.

5.1.15 Within the town itself the undulating nature of the topography is such that many views are possible, either towards other parts of the town or the landscape beyond. Often, views are limited to narrow glimpses between buildings, which is particularly the case in views out from the elevated southern slopes of the town.

5.1.16 Negative features

Swanage has an excellent landscape setting which has not been compromised by intrusive roads or other infrastructure. However, it is the spread of the town itself which has resulted in some visual intrusion. In particular the extensive mobile home parks on the southern slopes and at Cauldron Barn Road have a collective impact.

5.1.17 Other prominent negative features include The Mowlem building at the junction of Shore and Station Roads and the tennis dome at the international school which is highly visible from many vantage points.

5.1.18 The Pierhead Cafe is an unused building occupying an important waterfront location between the pier, Peveril Park and the town centre. Its derelict appearance is unsightly and it provides a poor focal point for this part of the town.

5.1.19 Conclusion

Swanage occupies a distinctive coastal location and its character is defined by its range of townscape and its varied landform and topography, which contribute to view into and out of the town. The open nature of the valley is such that Swanage is not contained visually, although the maturity of trees within the town softens its prominence.

5.1.20 Planning, ecological and landscape designations impose particularly tight constraints resulting in limited opportunities for expansion of the town.



Swanage

Appendix

06.1


Stakeholder Consultation Summary


6.1.1 Stakeholder consultation events were held on 4th December 2007 (for the towns) and 27th February 2008 (for the villages) to present the work being undertaken and set out the approach to the research and analysis for each settlement.


6.1.2 Each presentation was followed by questions and a workshop. The workshops were designed to draw out the opinions of stakeholders about the character of their town or village. Views on potential opportunities for future development were also sought, having regard to planning constraints, such as flooding.

The following questions were asked:

1. How do you perceive different parts of your town? Using the definitions and colours provided, identify areas, assigning them as either:

 strong character, sense of place and distinctive street scene, importance in terms of local identity.

 less distinctive character but makes a definite contribution in terms of local identity and sense of place.

 'anywhere' or commonplace development which contributes relatively little to sense of place or local identity.

2. What features of the townscape do you value most and feel are most distinctive? Identify on the map and / or list as many as you can.

3. What features of the townscape do you least value? Identify on the map and/or list as many as you can.

4. Bearing in mind designations, can you identify sites where there may be opportunities for development or improvement? Identify both greenfield and brownfield sites on the map and/or list as many as you can. If improvements are suggested explain what these consist of.

5. Bearing in mind designations, can you identify parts of the town which would be particularly suited to intensification? Identify brownfield sites on the map/ list. How do these correspond to the values assigned in part 1 of the exercise?

6.1.3 The workshop feedback is summarised below:

Townscape Workshop Feedback

Retail

- Demographics vary:
 - Older people have the spending power to buy greener products and want quality and good service;
 - Younger people want value for money, choice and fashion – there is a demand for young orientated shops.
- Choice:
 - Higher quality becoming noticeable.
 - Status quo.
- Illegal parking – needs enforcement.
- Older residents drive from periphery of town into centre.
- All adds to congestion problems.
- Need to improve shopping experience- shared space?
- Tourist traffic – the proposed improvements to Durlston will increase traffic:
 - Can we intercept cars at King George car park with shuttle service/land train?
- Town centre focus remains.
- Intercept tourists who bring own goods for day trip.
- Extend the season (the trains close for the season when older people tend to holiday in Autumn).

SWOT

- Not good transport links.
- Mixed views on need for national retailers – retailers/residents/tourists all have opposing views.
- Mowlem – weakness.
- There is plenty of car parking.
- Lack of 'quality' supermarket – there is no need for a larger store or more of the same.
- Quality/Niche businesses utilising knowledge/skills of retired would increase attractiveness, pay and retaining the young.
- Extend season to attract older people to the town.
- Lack of young people to work in shops/provide care.

Townscape

- High Street, Bell Street, Church Hill, the railway station, Peveril and remaining Edwardian hotels in New Swanage viewed as particularly distinctive.
- Edwardian, 1920s and 1930s parts of the town viewed as important in providing local identity and character.
- Mixed views on development in the vicinity of Rabling Road, Cauldron Barn and along Kings Road.
- Most of the council housing, estates of bungalows and caravan sites between Herston and Priest's Road viewed as lacking, contributing little to local character.
- The early loop of brick built early council housing entering Herston along High Street viewed as an exception.
- Some disagreement over the Ballard estate – some view as distinctive and special, others unremarkable.
- Mowlem is distinctive but in a 'bad' way.
- The Haven and pier head site are other eyesores.
- Various sites for possible greenfield development identified.
- Potential intensification along Atlantic Road?
- Intensification between Gilbert Road and Victoria Avenue is poor.

