

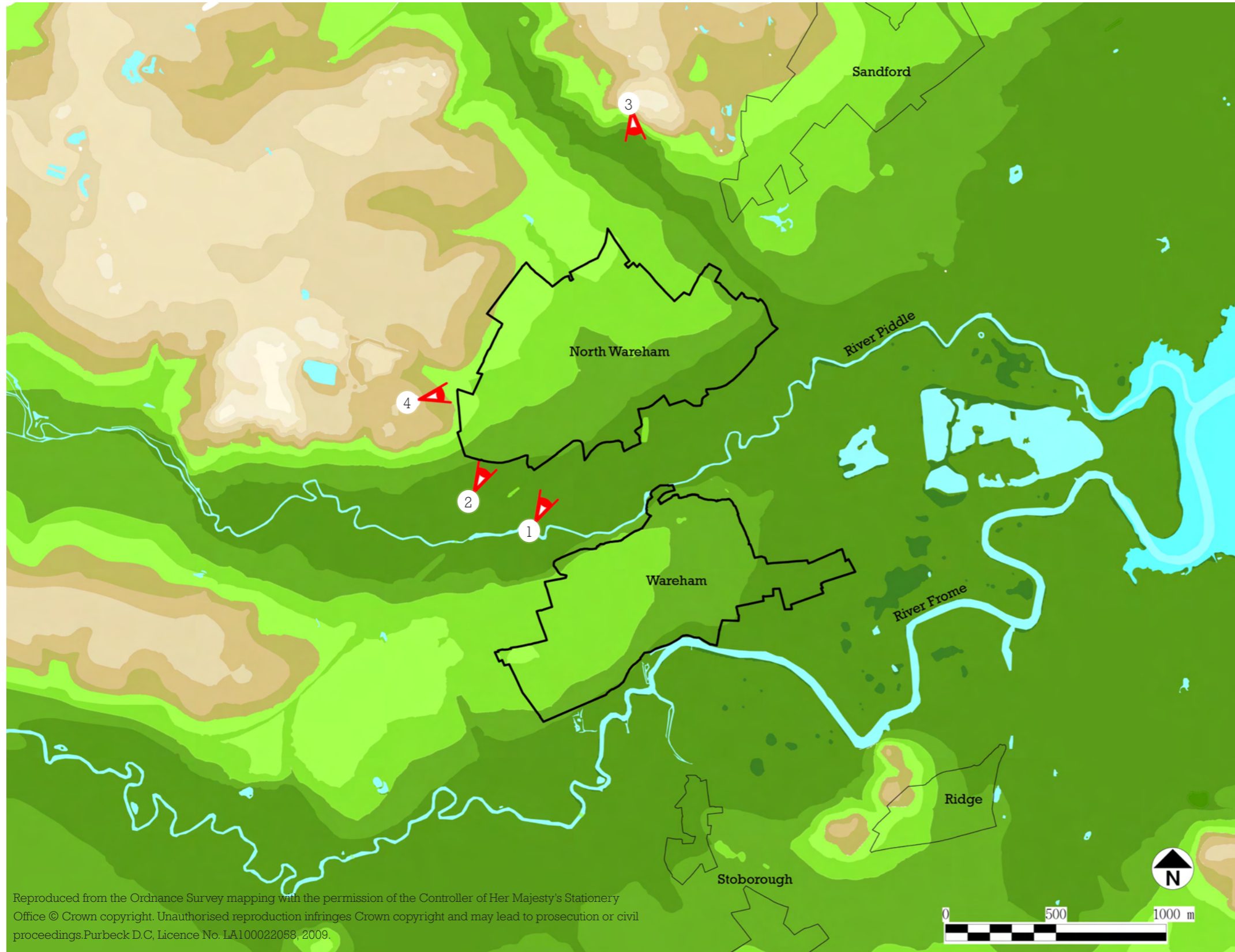


North Wareham and Wareham

Town context

02.1

Geographical context



2.1.1 The geographical context map shows the topography of landscape around the settlement.



1. The River Piddle and its flood plain separate North Wareham from the old town to the south.



2. North Wareham has been developed right up to the edge of the flood plain and sits on gently rising land adjacent to the Piddle Valley.



3. Viewed from the north the town is a relatively discrete feature in the wider landscape.



4. The land rises abruptly to the west of North Wareham and the town sits at the foot of the slope below the skyline. (Old Wareham visible in the distance)

2.1.2 The history, form and setting of Wareham have been strongly influenced by the town's geographical context and it will continue to be a key factor in defining any future development.

2.1.3 Wareham lies at the western head of Poole Harbour at a locally strategic crossing of the Piddle and Frome rivers. These rivers flow in a generally easterly direction towards the harbour, with many twists and meanders, and the town itself is situated on raised ground between them on what is in effect a peninsula of higher, drier land above the adjacent river floodplains and the saltflats around the harbour. Situated at the lowest crossing point of the rivers at the western extremity of Poole Harbour, it is unsurprising that Wareham has in the past had a strategic defended role.

2.1.4 Today, the features that originally gave the town its defensible strategic importance now do much to constrain its further growth. As an almost inevitable consequence of the town's inability to accommodate the demand for additional residential and industrial development in its own curtilage and its immediate vicinity led, almost inevitably, to the creation of what is in effect a quite separate new settlement, North Wareham. This settlement emerged on the opposite northern edge of the River Piddle floodplain opposite the old town. Whilst the railway station instigated the first clearly identifiable beginnings of North Wareham during the latter part of the 19th century, it has become substantially a 20th century creation.

2.1.5 Immediately south of Wareham and the floodplain of the River Frome, there are two other settlements, Stoborough and Ridge, and although they have much suburban expansion and infill, they remain in effect villages independent from the town.

2.1.6 Principal connections around Wareham and North Wareham are north-east towards Poole and Bournemouth (A351), westwards to Dorchester (A352) and south-east towards Corfe Castle and Swanage (A351).

2.1.7 In many ways, Wareham acts as a gateway to the Isle of Purbeck. However there is a perceptible change in character on arrival at Wareham from the more intensively farmed landscape and managed conifer plantations to the north.

KEY POINTS

- Historically a geographically strategic location;
- Topography and sensitive landscape are constraints to further expansion;
- North Wareham is a substantially modern town extension to old Wareham;
- Other nearby settlements are located above the flood plains;
- Wareham sits at the junction of several main roads and acts a gateway to the 'Isle of Purbeck'.



North Wareham and Wareham

Town context

02.2

Landscape setting



Aerial photograph courtesy of Purbeck District Council. Source: www.getmapping.com

2.2.1 Closely related to the geographical context of the town, is its landscape setting. This has a direct and marked influence on its urban form and character.

2.2.2 In geological terms, the land beyond the river floodplains and salt flats around Poole Harbour, including Wareham itself, consists of mainly sands and clays of the Bracklesham Group. These deposits substantially define the topography and landscape and character of the area. Clays have been extensively exploited for brick making in the past. The brickworks at nearby Sandford produced distinctive peachy buff bricks found locally. Historically, there has been extensive heathland around Wareham and North Wareham, that followed the clearance of original woodland.

2.2.3 During the 20th century the heathland to the north of Wareham changed radically, substantially through the introduction of extensive conifer plantations, the general recolonisation of heathland by shrubs and trees as a result of reduced management, large-scale quarrying and some suburban sprawl (North Wareham and Sandford). Today, the northern aspect from Wareham is defined by a dark ragged skyline of conifers, now known as Wareham Forest.

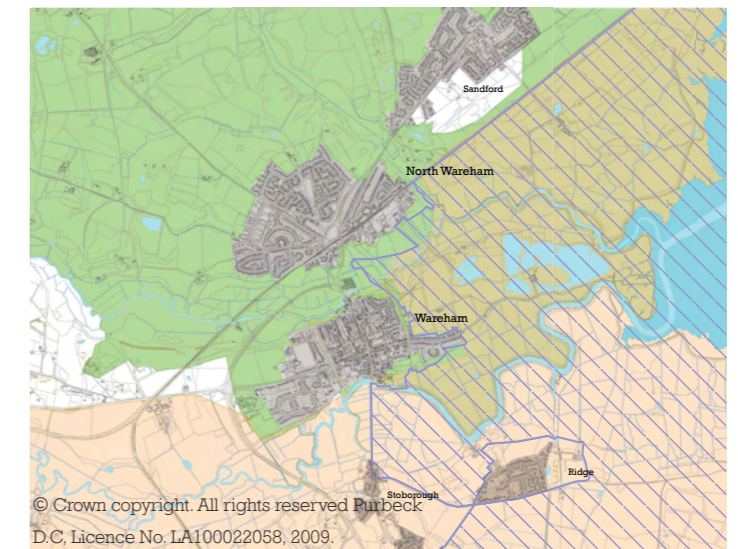
2.2.4 To the south, the land is much less altered and the Stoborough, Creech and Middlebere Heaths remain much as they were in the past. To the west the land rises gradually towards Worgret Heath with its extensive sand and gravel pits and to the east it falls gently towards Swineham Point, also including gravel pits. However it is the floodplains of the Rivers Piddle and Frome, gradually merging into the salt marshes around Poole Harbour, that substantially define the landscape setting of Wareham.

2.2.5 With their essentially open, lightly treed, character, the floodplains provide wide views across the water meadows towards the town from north and south although dense hedges and some woodland to the east limit views to and from that direction.

2.2.6 In external views Wareham and/or its green 'walls' can be very apparent, despite the fact that buildings are relatively low (mostly 2 storey). However, much of North Wareham sits below the skyline, minimising its impact.

2.2.7 It is apparent from the photographs (over page) that the setting of Wareham is an integral

feature that does much to define its character and its relationship to the surrounding landscape. In recognition of the landscape quality of the area both towns are enveloped by Green Belt, and the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) abuts the southern edges of Wareham and extends to Poole Harbour in the east.

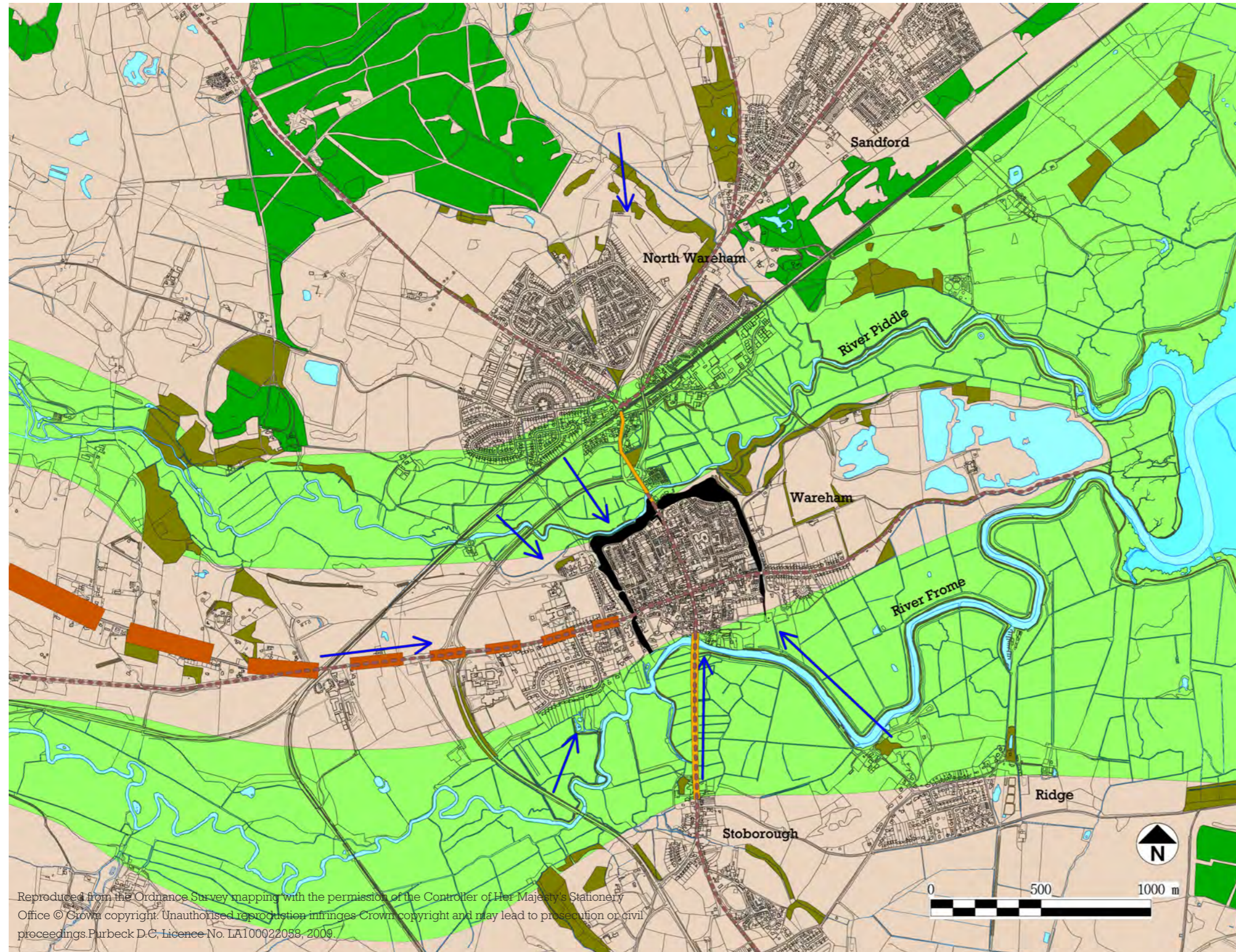


Landscape designations map



KEY POINTS

- Both parts of the town sit on slightly raised land and are separated by visually important open water meadows;
- Old Wareham is located on a peninsular of land which rises to the west as an exposed ridge;
- The town 'walls' are an important edge to the old town;
- North Wareham sits below the skyline of the surrounding hill slopes and is surprisingly discrete within the wider landscape.



2.2.8 This drawing shows the main landscape features that define the landscape setting of Wareham and North Wareham. The parallel floodplain of the Rivers Piddle and Frome can be seen running east towards Poole Harbour (Wareham Channel), defining the intervening peninsular of higher ground on which Wareham is situated. It will be noted how the original town 'walls' sit astride the peninsular controlling the causeways to north and south, whilst North Wareham lies distinct and separated from the old town north of the River Piddle floodplain. Beyond the floodplains, the land rises northwards towards the conifer plantations of Wareham Forest, whilst to the south the land rises towards surviving heathland (off plan) at Stoborough Heath.

-  River/water feature
-  Poole Harbour (Wareham Channel)
-  Floodplain
-  Raised land above floodplains (sand & gravel deposits)
-  Coniferous plantation
-  Mixed & deciduous woodland
-  Visually exposed ridge
-  Ancient town wall
-  Ancient causeway across valley
-  Historic route
-  Principal view towards town from surrounding area



North Wareham Settlement context 02.3 Landscape images



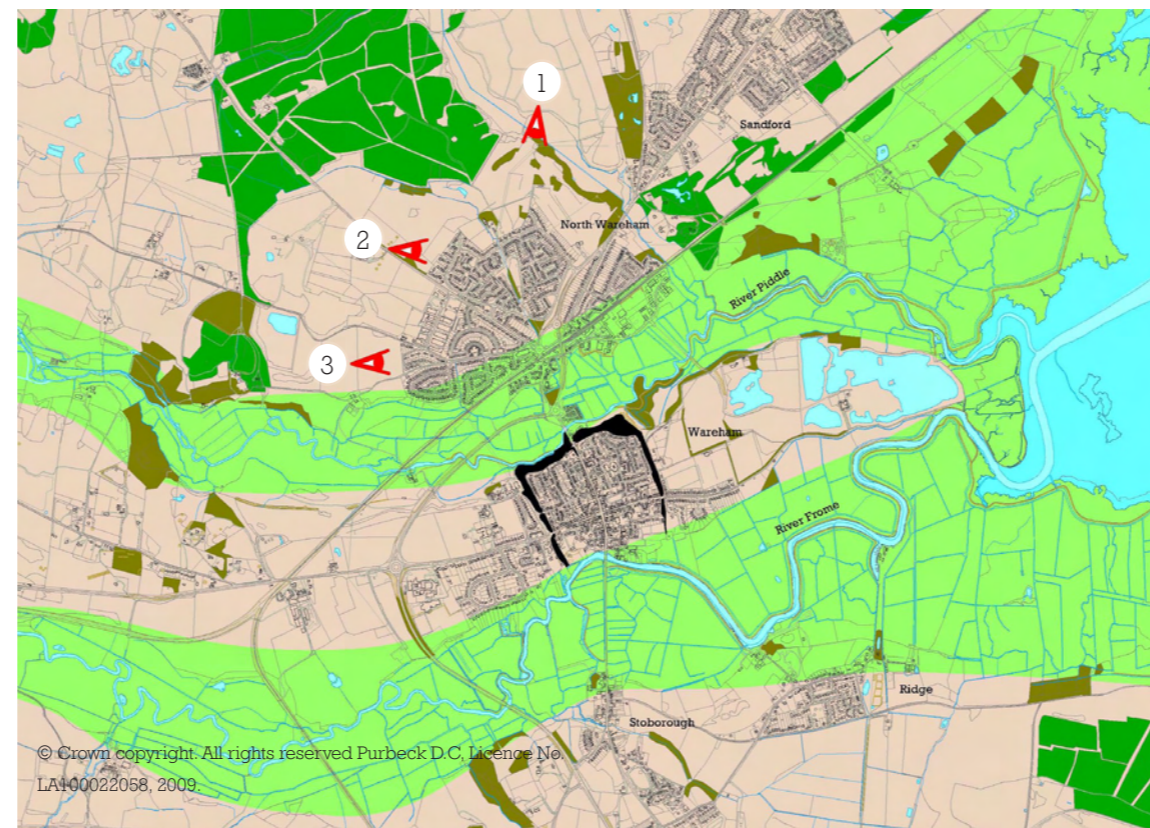
1. Looking towards North Wareham from the edge of Wareham Forest to the north of the settlement. This view looks across a valley from the hillside on the edge of Wareham Forest. The far side of the valley rises gently towards the golf course which borders the northern edge of the settlement, but patches of woodland, mature trees and a change in level substantially obscure it from view. Houses located at the northern edges of the settlement can be seen beyond the bright green of the golf course at centre left and right. Softened by a backdrop of trees beyond, the houses do not appear unduly visually intrusive. The most prominent features are the electricity pylons which rise above the surrounding trees and landscape, but sit just below the skyline of the distant Purbeck Hills.



2. North Wareham viewed from the north-west at 'Seven Barrows'. This view shows the nature of the geography, whereby the settlement largely sits on lower lying ground, but is contained to the north and west by quite an abrupt change in level. The settlement is therefore well contained below the surrounding skyline allowing views over the settlement to the distant Purbeck Hills and Poole Harbour.



3. North Wareham viewed from higher ground to the west of the settlement. An abrupt rise in the land creates a steeply sloping edge, below which the settlement is located. The low scale and height of most buildings means that the majority of North Wareham is located discretely below the skyline and therefore does not intrude prominently into the wider landscape.



Landscape map indicating photographic viewpoints.