

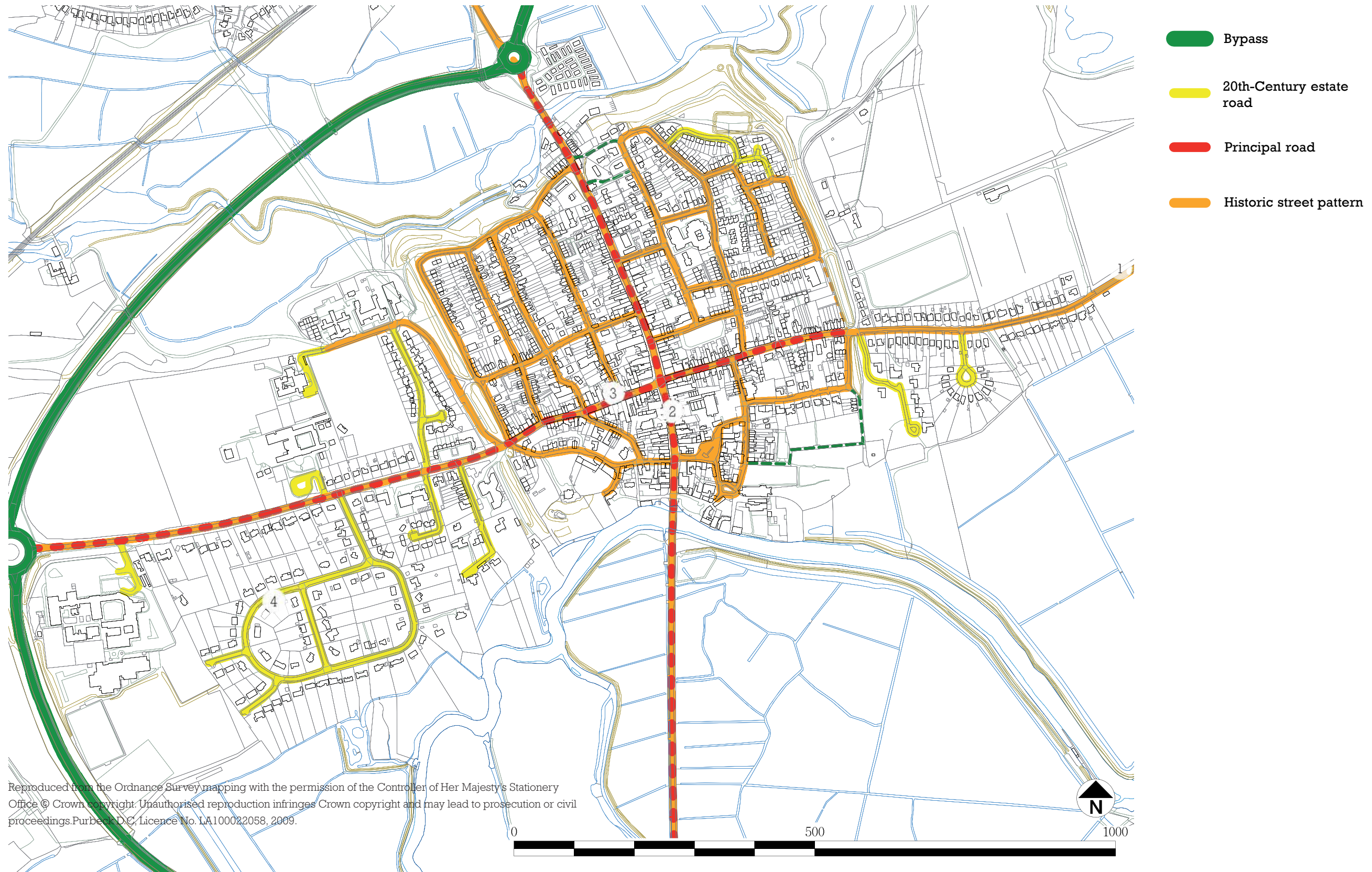


Wareham

Town analysis

03.1

Street pattern



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1. Bestwall Road on the east side of Wareham changes from a residential street to a leafy lane providing pedestrian access to Swineham Point at the edge of Poole Harbour.



2. The principal roads meet at the Cross at the heart of the town. This is a broad street but adjacent buildings provide a very well defined sense of enclosure.



3. The historic streets within the 'walls' make up a network of narrow lanes on an ancient alignment. Buildings are close to roads and pavements are narrow or absent altogether.



4. In contrast to the old town, modern estate roads are wide with pavements on both sides and buildings set back from front boundaries. This creates a very open appearance.

3.1.1 The street pattern of Wareham is primarily influenced by its Saxon origins and geographical constraints. The main north-south and east-west axes originate from when the Saxon town was established in the 9th century. The defensive 'walls' and surrounding water meadows limited opportunities for expansion. These factors have influenced the growth of the town, which until recent times, has been almost exclusively within the town 'walls'.

3.1.2 The main roads follow ancient routes to Wareham which meet at the Cross in the centre of the town. This is historically its commercial heart and until 1762 the southern part of North Street was occupied by buildings leaving only very narrow lanes either side. The area was known as Middle Row or The Shambles. The shops present at that time were originally traders' stalls which eventually became permanent buildings. These buildings were all destroyed in the Great Fire of 1762. Following the fire Middle Row was not permitted to be rebuilt and the road was widened to form the crossroads that exists today.

3.1.3 Beyond the main routes a network of ancient narrow lanes was established in an irregular grid pattern, primarily in the northern part of the town. These provided access to a patchwork of small fields, allotments and occasional cottages. Interestingly, many of these lanes existed without houses or other buildings being present until relatively recently in Wareham's history. This ancient street pattern remains essentially unchanged to this day, although intensification of development throughout the 20th century has introduced some modern roads within the original network of lanes.

3.1.4 Today the lanes comprise a series of narrow residential back streets of considerable character. The street widths, building lines, degree of enclosure and gentle variations in alignment are very important characteristics which could be vulnerable to insensitive interventions or highway 'improvements'.

3.1.5 In the lower part of Wareham, south of the Cross, the town comprises fewer lanes in a less rigid street pattern.

3.1.6 Pound Lane and Trinity Lane in the south-west quarter of the town are long, narrow, gently curving streets, as a result of their relationship with the former castle which once stood on the mound south of Pound Lane. This pleasing alignment invites exploration and is an attractive quality of the area.

3.1.7 The south-east quarter of Wareham includes The Quay, St. John's Hill Square and Church Green which are all connected by footpaths or lanes. These three individual spaces all have different origins. The Quay was the focus for the transportation of raw materials to Poole and beyond. Until the 20th century a weekly pig market was held at St. John's Hill square and Church Green provides an intimate and attractive approach to Lady St. Mary Church. These locations provide unique spaces of interest and delight and are very important to the character of this part of the town.

3.1.8 Beyond the walls the street pattern reflects its predominantly 20th century origins. Wide estate roads and cul-de-sacs are accessed from the older east-west route.

KEY POINTS

- The main roads are broad and dissect Wareham, meeting at the Cross at the heart of the town;
- The historic street pattern is Saxon in origin and laid out as an irregular grid with a tightly knit and enclosed character;
- South-west of the Cross there are fewer lanes but with a curved rather than grid alignment;
- The Quay, St. John's Hill Square and Church Green form a sequence of important historic spaces;
- Outside the 'walls', 20th century estates are mostly arranged around wide engineered roads with pavements.



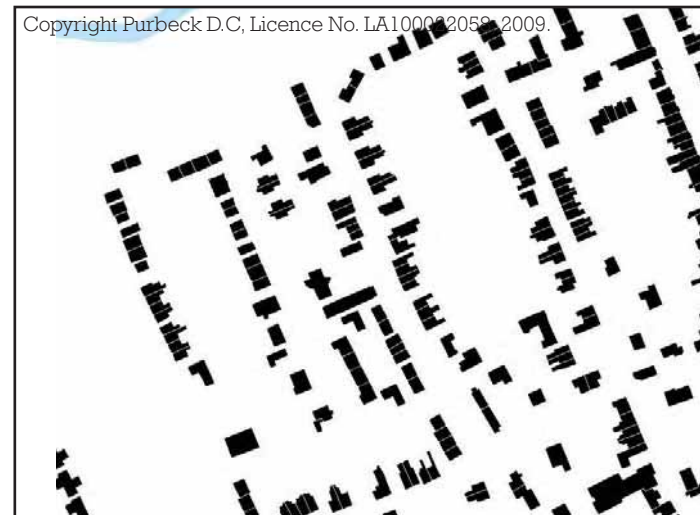
Wareham
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03.2
Figure ground



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1. The town centre around the Cross is the most densely built up area of Wareham.



2. Narrow lanes and tight buildings situated close to the road creates a sense of enclosure.



3. Buildings are less tightly arranged in the north-east quarter with greater setbacks creating a less regular appearance to the townscape.



4. Modern suburban areas contain generous plots, wide roads and a more open pattern of development than that found in the old town.

3.2.1 This drawing shows a number of sample areas as 'figure ground' maps which highlight the form and juxtaposition of buildings relative to the surrounding spaces. These sample studies show a representative range of different parts of Wareham, demonstrating how these elements affect the character of different parts of the town.

1. Historic centre

It is clear that the densest area of Wareham is located in the historic town centre and along the four main streets. These display almost continuous frontages with only occasional breaks occurring at junctions with minor roads and lanes. At road junctions corner buildings are located hard up against the back of pavement resulting in narrow junctions which limit visibility and cause traffic to proceed with care in these locations. The continuous building line creates well defined frontages and causes the main roads to feel enclosed, even with relatively low buildings.

Plots are generally narrow limiting buildings to narrow, often elongated forms, with long rear gardens, service areas and parking located to the rear. This plot form results in a tight urban grain fronting onto the main roads. When seen in elevation the tight grain contributes to the rhythm of these streetscenes.

2. North-west Wareham (within the walls)

The area within the north-west quarter of Wareham has a distinct grid road pattern, but with minor changes of alignment (indicative of its ancient origins) comprising narrow lanes, without pavements and with a tight building line. This includes houses located on the back edge of the highway (pavements are notably absent), and those with narrow front gardens. Although the building lines vary both within and between streets in this area, it maintains a tight grain and sense of enclosure. Plots are mostly very narrow containing small buildings located close to the front of their plots.

The majority of houses have rear gardens or yards, although this is dictated by distances between grid pattern of roads and the relationship of corner plots to adjoining buildings. A few plots are occupied by detached buildings including one or two bungalows and some very limited 'backland' development, although such plots are rare and do not contribute to the overriding character of the area.

3. North-east Wareham (within the 'walls')

The north-east part of Wareham also comprises a network of narrow roads and shares some qualities with the north-west quarter. Plots are predominantly narrow and have a relatively tight grain although more variation in the building line exists within this area. A range of building types is present including detached dwellings and short terraces. Detached plots tend to have staggered frontages and slightly larger front gardens. The presence of more standard highway widths and pavements, primarily in the modern areas of redevelopment, results in a slightly more open grain and less consistent sense of enclosure. Occasional developments (such as Moreton Court) are set back from the highway which weakens the definition of the streetscene in places.

Anglebury Court, in the centre of the north-east quarter of the town, has a large footprint and spans a wide frontage. This is inconsistent with the prevailing pattern of tight plots and modest building forms.

4. Stowell Crescent (outside the 'walls')

More recent 20th century residential development outside the walls displays a notable contrast to development within the old town. Building plots are generally wider and deeper, allowing each plot to have a large rear garden. The development pattern is also relatively loose knit with gaps of varying sizes between buildings and their boundaries, quite large front gardens and a loose building line although always set well back from the road. The streetscene is weakly enclosed although consistent front boundaries clearly define plot frontages.

KEY POINTS

- Dense historic town centre with continuous frontages, very occasional setbacks and narrow elongated plots;
- The north-west quarter has a distinct grid pattern with narrow streets, houses located close to frontages and a tight urban grain;
- The north-west quarter also has a tight grain but with greater variation and less consistent enclosure;
- Outside the 'walls' modern development is of lower density suburban character.

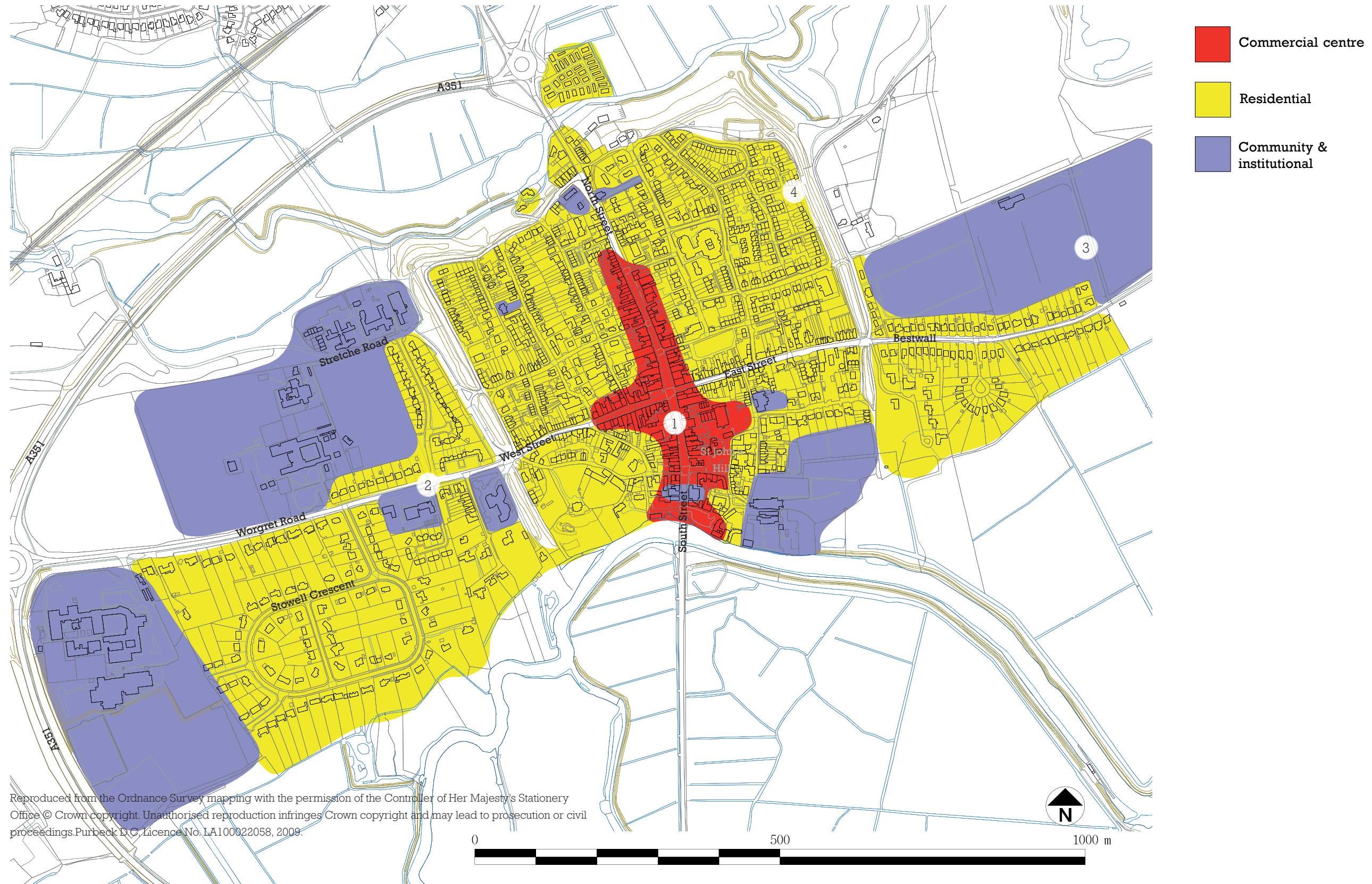


Wareham

Town analysis

03.3

Land use



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1. The town centre is the commercial heart of Wareham and contains a range of shops, including many independent traders that contribute to the individual character of the town.



2. A range of community/institutional uses such as the schools, hospital and care home help to create a self-contained settlement with its own facilities although invariably they are of ubiquitous character.



3. School playing fields and sports pitches occupy large areas on the outskirts of the town.



4. The majority of the town comprises residential streets with a range of predominantly 2 storey houses.

3.3.1 The land use diagram identifies a clear commercial core to the town where the majority of retail, professional services and food retail are clustered along the main north-south axis, West Street, around St. John's Hill and the Rempstone Centre. There is little spread of these uses beyond these areas although occasional commercial uses are found in other locations, such as the Auction Rooms on East Street, which add interest and richness to such areas.

3.3.2 Beyond the commercial centre of Wareham the surrounding streets are largely residential in nature with few other uses. Within these areas are occasional community uses such as churches. Situated at the northern entrance to Wareham is a mobile home site which is physically separated from the rest of the town.

3.3.3 Around the outskirts of the town a number of community and institutional uses can be found. These include the two schools to the west of Wareham, which occupy significant areas of land, by virtue of their size and associated playing fields. To the east are allotments and sports pitches accessed from Bestwall Road.

3.3.4 Wareham itself has no allocated employment land either within or immediately outside the town 'walls', although some small scale commercial activities can be found within otherwise exclusively residential areas.

KEY POINTS

- Commercial town centre along the main streets comprising retail, professional services and food retail;
- Mixed residential areas situated beyond the main commercial streets within the 'walls';
- Beyond the 'walls' are relatively modern residential estate type developments and community functions such as schools and playing fields.