

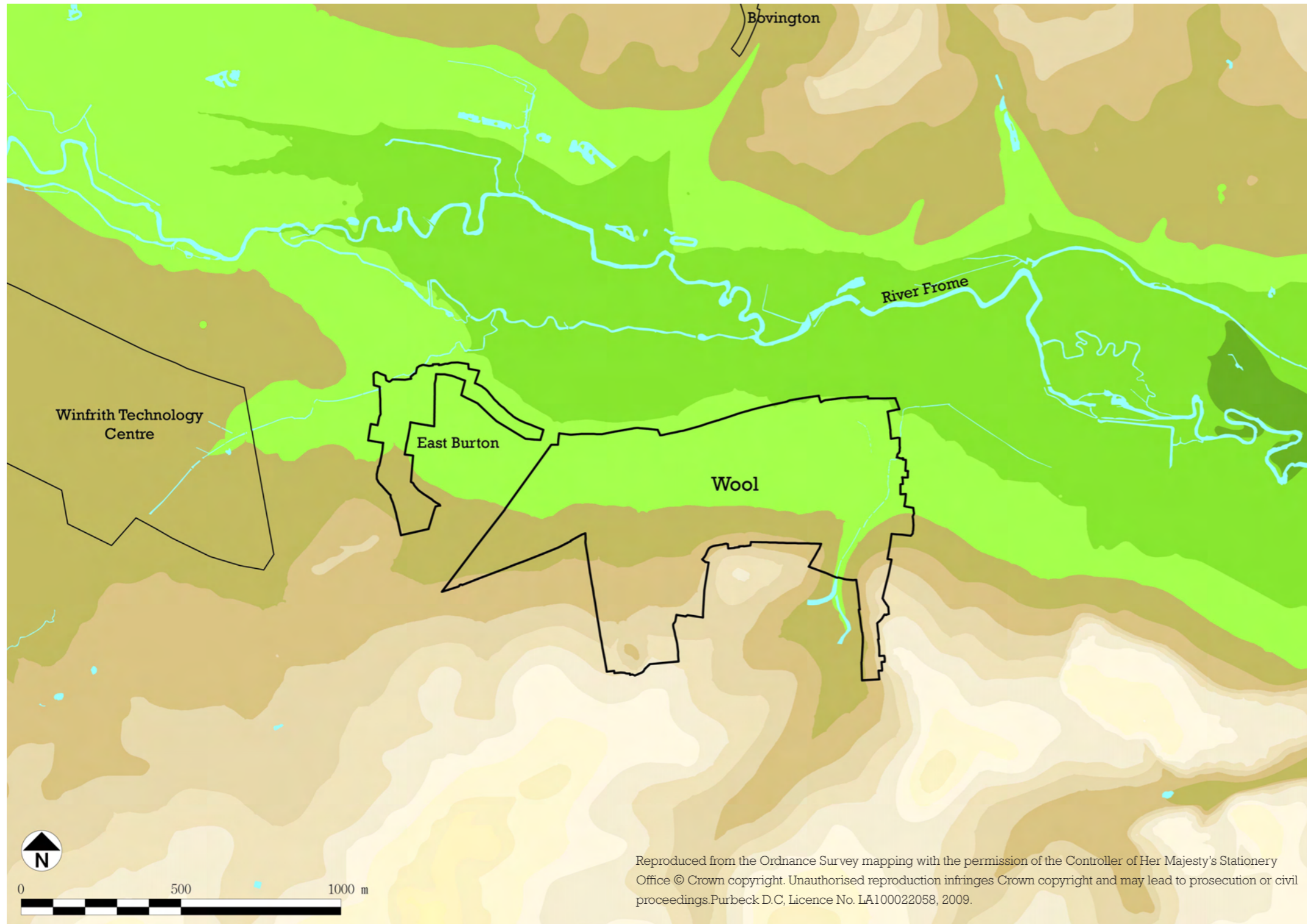


Wool

Town context

02.1

Geographical context



2.1.1 The geographical context map shows the topography of the landscape around Wool, East Burton and the Winfrith Technology Centre. The village occupies the north facing slopes of the Frome Valley and the low-lying areas adjacent to the water meadows, although not all of the village is located above the flood plain of the River Frome.

2.1.2 The village of Wool is situated in the valley of the River Frome on the A352 road and the mainline railway between Wareham and Dorchester about 6.5 km west of Wareham, and about 6 km from the coast at Lulworth. The extensive campus developments of Winfrith Technology Centre and Bovington Camp are nearby, about 1 km west of the village and on the opposite side of the valley respectively.

2.1.3 The village itself is situated on the south side of the valley, just above the floodplain adjacent to the ancient river crossing that is Wool Bridge, now superseded by a more recent bridge carrying the main road. Several roads converge on the river crossing and the village in addition to the main Wareham – Dorchester road, including the B3071 from West Lulworth, and roads from Bere Regis and Bovington to the north, and a minor road that follows the south side of the valley from West Stoborough near Wareham.

2.1.4 The valley lies within an area of gentle, rolling topography that means that, as a landscape feature, it is not a very clearly-defined feature to the observer 'on the ground'. The broad water meadows and meandering course of the river are rather more distinctive of the valley than the valley sides that are scarcely more pronounced than the rolling topography elsewhere.

2.1.5 In very broad terms, the valley defines a break in the geology between the chalk downs to the south and the sandy heaths to the north. At a local level, the village is split between the Oakdale Sand Member (part of the Poole Formation) and the West Park Farm Member (Otherwise known as Reading Clay). Only the southern tip of the western part of the settlement is situated directly on the underlying chalk. The mixed geology results in a varied use of materials in vernacular development with cob, heathstone, a little flint and some imported limestone rubble.

2.1.6 The village is situated on an area of broad, gently sloping land, generally without feature, that falls gently northwards towards the river. To the west, the land



1. View south towards Wool from the original historic bridge over the River Frome.



2. Large parts of the modern village are located on the north facing slopes above the valley giving rise to occasional glimpses towards Bovington. (View from New Road).



3. Wool is built on the edge of rolling chalk downland but is located at a point of change in the underlying geology. In broad terms, the land to the north, east and west has a geology of sands and gravels. (View from minor road south of Burton Cross).



4. The stream, running through the eastern part of the village, does much to define its character. (Spring Street).

appears near level in the direction of East Burton and Winfrith, whilst to the south-west it slopes up towards a low ridge, surmounted at its highest point by what is apparently a small wood. (North Wood)

2.1.7 However the original, eastern part of the village is situated on a small stream that rises nearby and which flows through the village. At the south-eastern entrance to the village, the stream briefly occupies a well-defined valley that contributes much to the character of this part of the village. The topography in this location, that also defines a small knoll to the west of the stream, produces a marked change in the character of this part of the village.

KEY POINTS

- Wool is situated at a crossing point of the River Frome, which together with its broad water meadows form a distinctive feature of the landscape.
- Topography in and around the village is generally not prominent.
- The village is situated immediately above the floodplain on land rising to a gentle ridge to the south.
- The south-eastern entrance to the village is defined by a short valley and knoll.



Wool Town context 02.2 Landscape setting



Aerial photograph courtesy of Purbeck District Council - Getmapping.com

2.2.1 Strongly influenced by the geology and topography, the landscape setting around the village varies quite markedly, and the setting to north, south, east and west is different in each instance.

2.2.2 Approaching Wool from the west by road along the A352, the large roundabout at Burton Cross that gives access to Winfrith Technology Centre and East Burton announces, in effect, the village although it is somewhat removed from the developed area itself. To the south of the road and the village the chalkland setting is very apparent, typified by extensive arable fields rising to a broad, open skyline punctuated by a small area of woodland that forms the northernmost extension of North Wood and Coombe Wood. The view south across this open and rather bleak piece of land does much to define the setting of the village from this direction. However the village edge in this area is rather raw, with houses backing abruptly onto open fields, and this includes current development on the north side of the A352.

2.2.3 As already described, the southern entrance into the village along the B3071 from East Lulworth is more distinctive. Here the edge of the village is largely defined by a small knoll on which there is a single house surrounded by mature trees and small fields. Other dwellings on the edge of the village can be seen, but they blend discretely into the surrounding landscape.

2.2.4 To the east of the village, the landscape is generally more enclosed with a much greater incidence of hedgerow and other vegetation. The site of the former Cistercian abbey on Bindon Lane is well vegetated with many mature trees, and Cole Wood, situated on higher ground, creates a wooded skyline to the south-east. The traditional village core, including the church, is situated on the east side of the village and this gives rise to a more established and sensitive edge to the village than to the west with several small paddocks and established gardens forming a well integrated edge with the countryside.

2.2.5 To the north, the village adjoins the distinctive river valley landscape of water meadows including the meandering river, reed beds and scattered trees. Notable in this locality is the historic Woolbridge Manor and adjacent cottages, outbuildings and bridge. Set amongst the water meadows and with its thatched roof and tall chimneys silhouetted against

the sky, the manor is one of the more distinctive and memorable buildings in Dorset. Although situated close to the village, the water meadows are physically and visually separated from the main part of the village by the railway. This does much to weaken the visual and physical relationship between the village and adjacent water meadows, particularly when compared with the manner in which, say, Wareham relates to its water meadows to the south of the town.

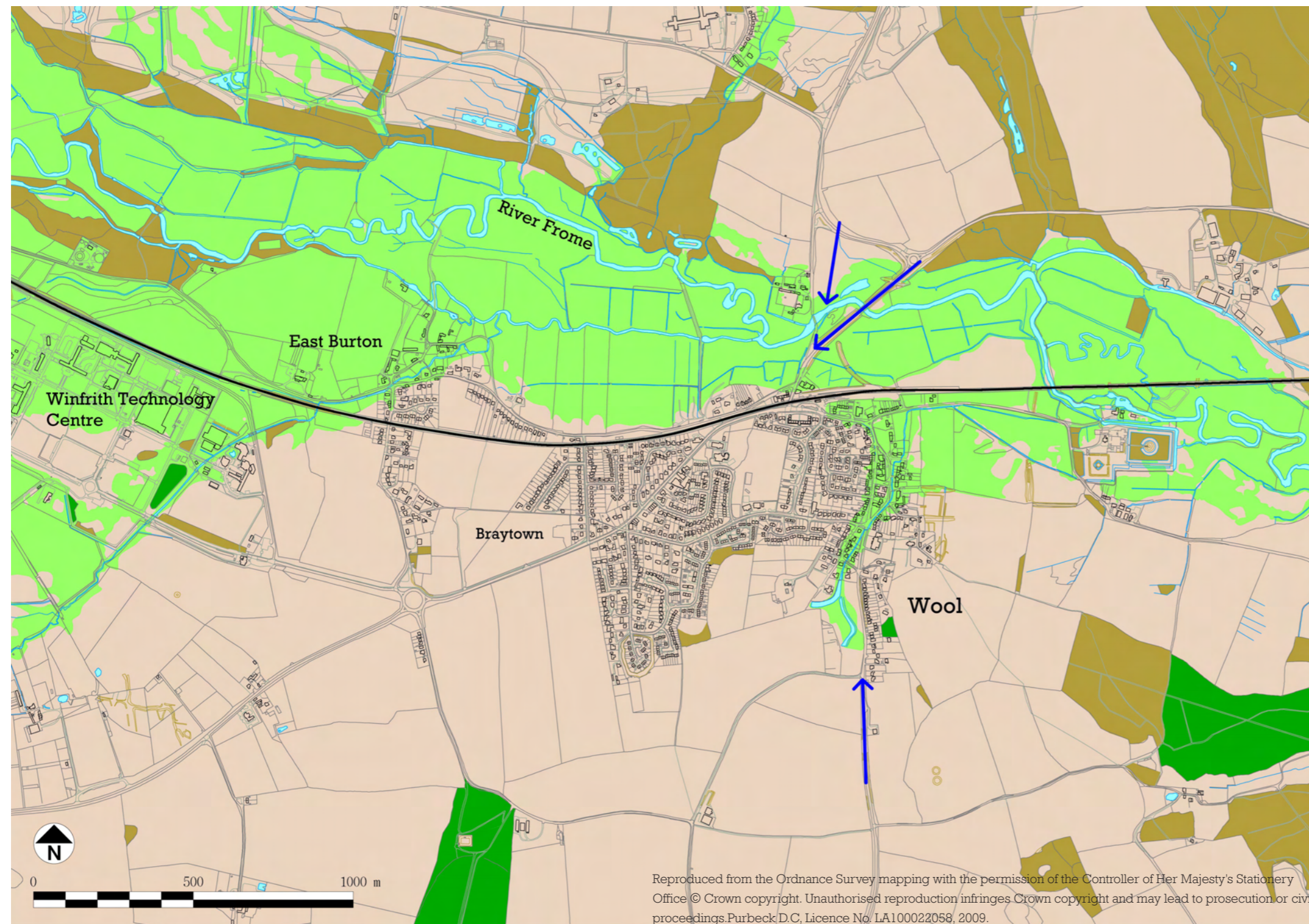
2.2.6 To the west, and slightly removed from the village, is the extended rural settlement of East Burton strung out along Burton Road. Although there is a high percentage of post-war development, East Burton retains a distinct rural quality. This is despite its close proximity to estate development on the west side of Wool, recent developments along East Burton Road, Burton Cross roundabout and the extensive campus-style development of Winfrith Technology Centre.

2.2.7 It must be noted that part of the land that separates Wool from East Burton is currently being developed. This extends the boundary of the village westwards along the north side of the A352 towards the Burton Cross roundabout.

2.2.8 The Technology Centre itself adjoins the Frome valley to the north and Winfrith Heath to the west, but its large office and similar buildings appear strangely out of place in this relatively remote rural landscape. The formal approach off the Burton Cross roundabout, the security gate, the planned orthogonal layout and the encircling security fence all serve to isolate the development from its local context.

KEY POINTS

- The setting of the village is strongly influenced by the variations in its underlying geology.
- The setting to the north, south, east and west is different in each instance.
- Winfrith Technology Centre appears rather out of place in this relatively remote landscape setting.



2.2.9 This drawing demonstrates clearly the course of the River Frome valley by its floodplain and the setting of Wool just above flood level opposite the crossing point at Wool Bridge. It also shows how the railway separates the valley and water meadows from the village.

2.2.10 Also to be noted is the general lack of woodland and larger groups of trees in the immediate setting of the village.

-  River/water feature
-  Floodplain
-  Raised land above floodplains
-  Coniferous plantation
-  Mixed & deciduous woodland
-  London to Weymouth railway line
-  Principal view towards village from surrounding area

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Wool
Town context
02.3
Landscape setting images



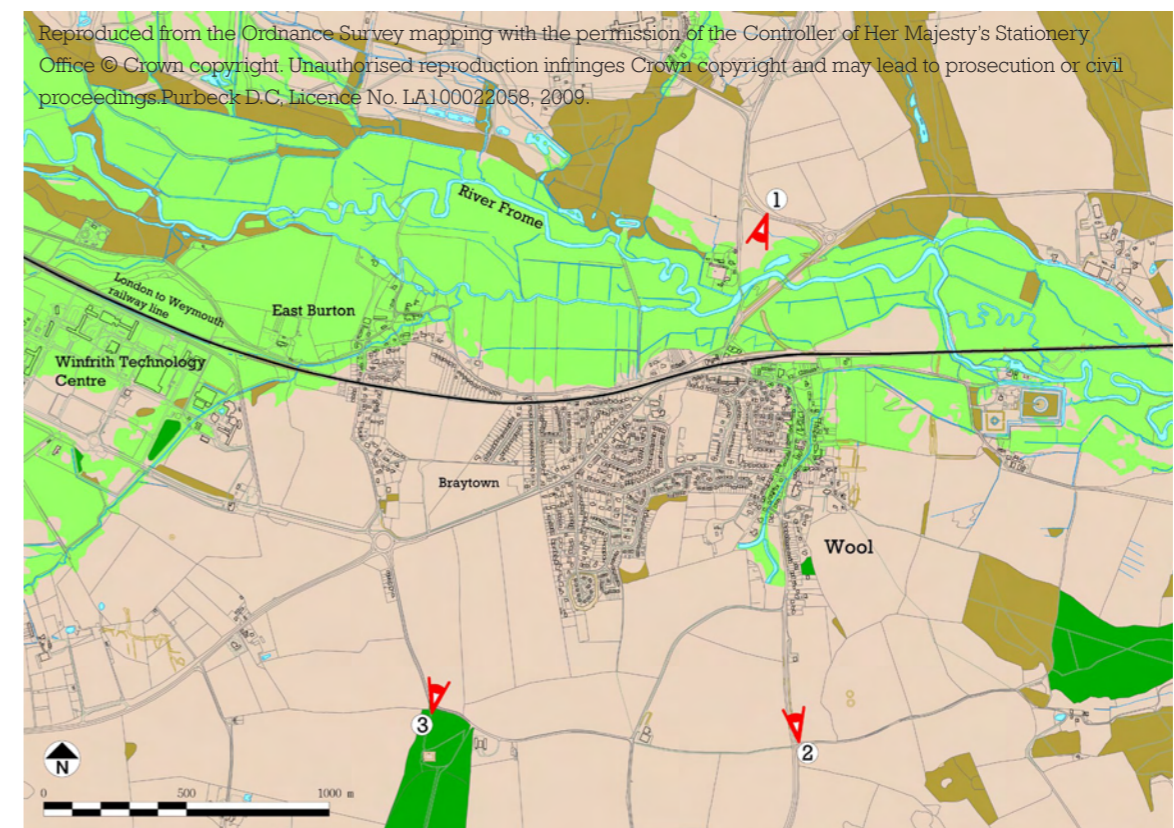
1. **Wool seen from the north-east.** This photograph was taken from Tout Hill road that turns north off the A352 to Bovington. The view looks across the water meadows of the River Frome towards Woolbridge Manor and the village of Wool beyond. Beyond the village the local geology changes and the distinctive rolling skyline of chalk downland defines the setting of the village to the south.



2. **Wool seen from Lulworth Road to the south.** The southern entrance to the village is defined by a pleasing view towards a well treed knoll. A few houses on the edge of the village are apparent, tucked well below the skyline, whilst beyond is the valley of the River Frome rising to heathland, conifer plantations and army training areas around Bovington.



3. **The south-western edge of Wool.** This view, taken by the lane that connects Burton Cross roundabout on the A352 with Lulworth Road B3071, demonstrates well the broad and open character of the landscape around Wool. In the centre right of the view recent residential development to the west of the village, extending along the north side of the A352, can be clearly seen. Beyond is the valley of the River Frome and the large army sheds in and around Bovington. To the left of the view large office and other buildings in the Winfrith Technology Centre appear rather out of place in this rural context.



Landscape map indicating the positions where photographs were taken.



Wool Town context 02.4 Historic background



OS 1902

2.4.1 These historic Ordnance Survey Maps show both Wool and East Burton at the beginning of the 20th century and in 1928. A comparison between the two maps shows only a very modest expansion of the village during that time.

2.4.2 By 1928 development was showing early signs of the future direction of Wool's expansion. New housing was beginning to spread along Dorchester Road, Colliers Lane and Chalk Pit Lane and is indicated as Braytown on the 1928 Map. These appear to be individually built houses rather than a large scale planned development. However, subsequent 20th century development has added substantially to this area.



OS 1927-1928



2.4.3 The contemporary map illustrates the scale and extent of the growth of Wool since the late 1920s. The village has expanded to the point that the extent of modern development is now much greater than the original village. This has reduced the separation between Wool and East Burton. Further reducing this separation is the new Barratt Homes housing development currently under construction on the considerable wedge-shaped plot bounded by Frome Avenue and Bailey's Drove to the north and east, and Dorchester Road to the south.

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Wool

Town context

02.5

Historic Evolution

2.5.1 The earliest signs of settlement around Wool are in the form of Bronze Age barrows, and some evidence of Roman occupation has been found in the area. The derivation of the village's name is from the Saxon word 'Wyllon', meaning spring or well. Today, Wool is a small village consisting largely of modern residential development, but with some remaining historical aspects. In terms of historical vernacular buildings, there are a few thatched cottages on Spring Street and Church Lane, close to the Holy Rood Church (**fig. A**). Most of the cob and thatch houses that survive date from the late 1700s or early 1800s. There is a notable building of a more formal kind just north of the main village, beyond the northern boundaries of the railway and the River Frome. Woolbridge Manor House is a 17th century gabled country manor overlooking the Frome, and which sits alongside the 15th century bridge over the river. The bridge includes four recesses on either side for the use of pedestrians. Woolbridge Manor House is one of the most prominent landmarks of the village, albeit slightly removed from the main part of the settlement, and is referred to in Thomas Hardy's novel 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' based on the Turberville family of Bere Regis. In the novel, Tess spends her honeymoon at the manor. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Wool itself was often referred to as Woolbridge.

2.5.2 Another notable landmark of historical interest is the church (**fig. B**). It was built during the 13th and 14th centuries but at that time consisted simply of a nave. A small chancel, north aisle and tower were added in the mid-15th century. The church then remained relatively unchanged until 1865 when a large part of it was taken down to extend it in length and construct a south aisle. It was rebuilt to maintain its 15th century appearance as far as possible, and some of the 15th century windows were re-used when the walls were reconstructed. The position of the church relative to the rest of the village is interesting since it is unusually sited at the village edge rather than at its heart. It has been noted, however, that this was not always the case. Church Lane was previously a busy road which, a hundred yards from the church, divided into three sections, the first leading to East Stoke, the second leading to Purbeck via Woodstreet and the third leading to Coombe Keynes, running almost parallel to the present route, Lulworth Road. (The village appears to have suffered shrinkage during the medieval period, the original settlement being

located in the vicinity of the church).

2.5.3 Due to the seemingly odd location of the church, and the fact that the High Street and older roads such as Church Lane and Spring Street are all in the extreme east of the village, it is clear that the modern development of Wool has been mainly in a westward direction from its historical core. Wool has lost many historic features on the eastern side of the village, including an entire street, Duck Street, which previously consisted of thatched cottages and stables but was virtually all demolished for redevelopment as bungalows and houses during the 1960s (**fig. C**). The old Catholic school and a few houses were lost from the High Street area near the Cross and, also during the 20th century, Wool lost many of its characteristic grass verges which ran alongside, and in some cases down the centre of, the roads, when many roads were widened to better cope with modern traffic loads. These verges contributed much to the village character of Wool, and still do, where they exist, but historically they may also often have served a functional purpose. One such example is the wide verge that previously existed on Bindon Lane which probably provided a site for some of the stalls of Wool fair. In the latter part of the 19th century, taps were installed at points around the village and remained a useful feature until mains water was provided in the 1960s.

2.5.4 Historically, people lived and worked in Wool and the majority of residents were agricultural labourers. With the arrival of the railway in 1847 there was some diversification of occupations, and some villagers now caught the train to work at Holton Heath or other nearby places. Even so, most people still worked in Wool or Bovington, which at that time was little more than a heath and the agricultural land surrounding Bovington Farm.

2.5.5 The village of Wool began to develop in earnest once the nearby Bovington military camp was created during the First World War. The population figures illustrate the growth of Wool and the impact of different events on the village. In 1801, the population was 383, increasing fairly steadily to 602 in 1871. Just ten years later it had dropped to 509 as a result of four consecutive years of bad harvests, during which many inhabitants left the countryside to find work elsewhere. The population continued to decrease, although less

dramatically, until it reached 463 in 1911. During the following decade, the army camp at neighbouring Bovington was set up and so the population rocketed. In 1921, the population figure reached 2,290, only 431 of which were female, showing that much of this number was made up by the military personnel rather than civilians. By 1931 the population had risen again to 2,876, and by 1961 after much development in the village, the population was at 4,414. It has remained fairly constant in the decades since, and was at 4,118 in 2001.

2.5.6 In 1922, Drax Estate land including Braytown were sold, and Chalk Pit Lane, Bailey's Drove and the land around the junction on Dorchester Road was developed. Ribbon development, often of the most basic kind, continued through the 1920s, and in 1929 development began to line Lulworth Road. In 1941, one of the houses in Bailey's Drove was demolished by a bomb but later rebuilt. A larger phase of development took place after the Second World War, with Knowle Hill being developed in around 1950. The western side of Sydenham Crescent had been built up in around the 1930s, but the remaining pocket of land to the east was infilled in the 1950s with Council development. During the 1960s, the practice of infilling became more prevalent and as a result, Wool became more intensively developed. High Street Close, Jeremy Close, Breach Field Road and Hyde Place were developed over small paddocks and allotments that previously existed behind Oddfellows Hall. Meadow Lane, Folly Lane, and Lincleith Road were developed on the Bindon Estate and in the 1970s, the developments at Knowle Wood Knap and Hillside Road were built. As well as the historic cottages of Duck Street, other characterful buildings were destroyed during these postwar decades, including cottages on Quarr Hill in the 1950s, which were replaced by a bungalow, and the late 16th/early 17th century Woodstreet Farmhouse near Wool, which was demolished in the early 1970s. The original railway buildings and Wool station were demolished in August 1969 (**fig. D**). In 1864, one hundred fir trees were planted around the sand pit at Quarr Hill and, although the number has rather diminished, some still remain in place, forming a backdrop to views. East Burton and Giddy Green form a small settlement west of Wool and still distinct from it. Burton Church was consecrated in 1840, and had its bell removed when it became redundant in 1978. The church is notable for its odd

north-south alignment as opposed to the traditional east-west alignment. East Burton School opened near to the church in 1869, taking in children from the age of 3 until 11. The school was closed in 1967, and pupils instead attended Wool Church of England School, built in 1871. This school today forms the older part of the existing Wool C of E school.

2.5.7 Burton Common and Winfrith Heath were lit up on occasion during World War II to distract German planes from the Warmwell Aerodrome. By 1957, parts of the Common and Heath were no longer accessible to the public, having been taken over by the UK Atomic Energy Authority. The site was levelled to build the civil nuclear research site, now known as Winfrith Technology Centre, and the site expanded over the following 40 years. Since the mid-1990s, the UKAEA has been decommissioning the site for future commercial use, and its management passed into the hands of English Partnerships in 2004.



fig. A. Historic thatched cottages in Church Lane.



fig. C. View along Duck Street today. A surviving thatched cottage is just visible on the right.



fig. B. The church seen from where Church Lane meets the village edge.



fig. D. The original station was demolished in 1969 and replaced with the current one, seen here.

KEY POINTS

- The majority of surviving historic buildings are in the eastern part of Wool, with some in East Burton.
- Woolbridge Manor is a historic landmark located just outside of the village to the north of the Frome.
- The main landmark within the village is the Holy Rood Church which was originally built in the 13th and 14th centuries, but was added to over the centuries and altered significantly as late as 1865.
- The creation of Bovington camp, during World War I, had a major effect on the population of Wool, and its subsequent development.
- The first phase of significant development in Wool occurred during the interwar period.
- The second phase of significant development in Wool occurred during the post-war period but which saw the demolition of some of Wool's historic buildings.

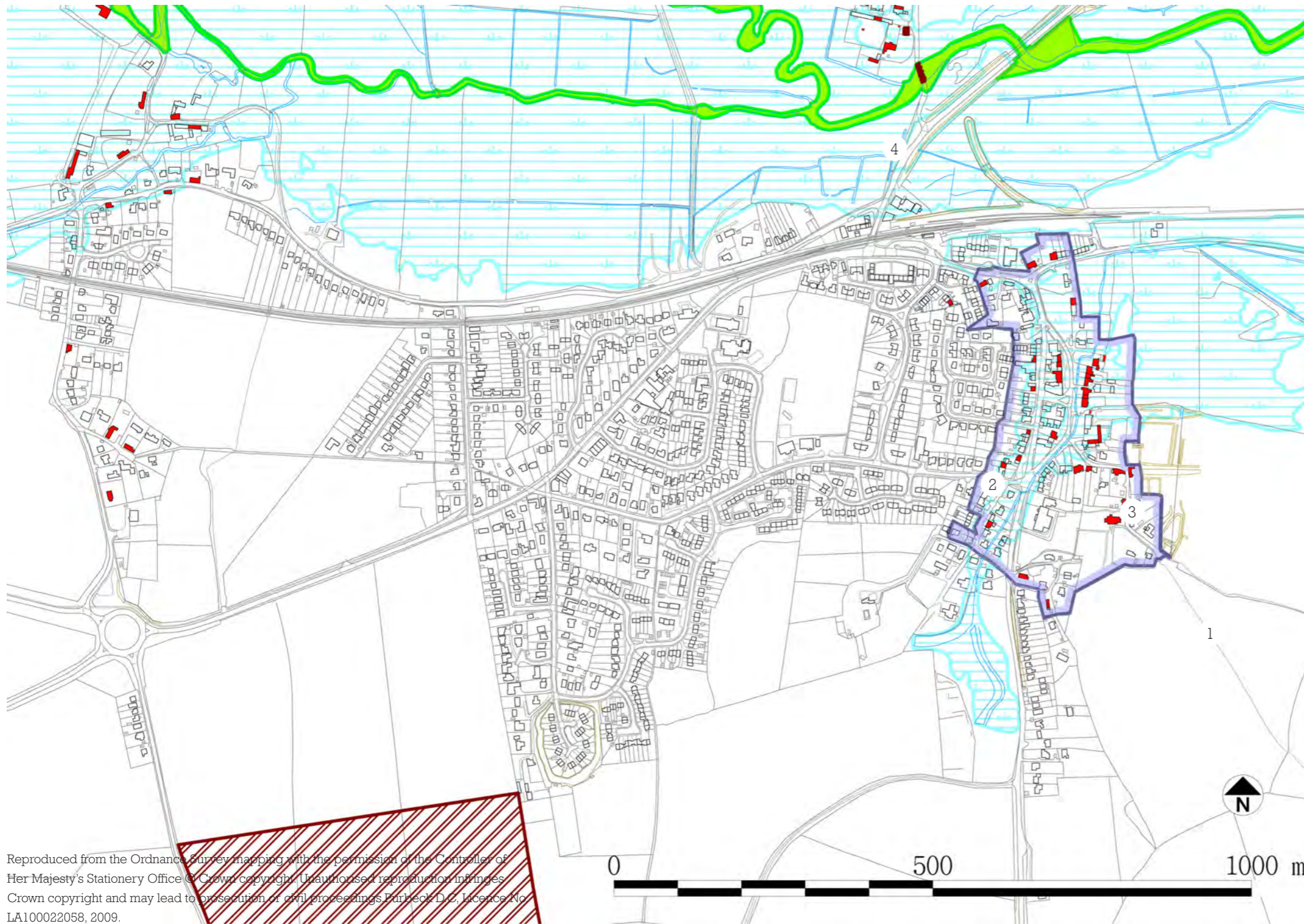


Wool

Town context

02.6

Planning Designations



-  Listed Building
-  SAM
-  Conservation area
-  SSSI
-  Floodplain

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Note: Not all listed buildings may be identified on this map.



1. The countryside surrounding Wool is not protected by landscape designations.



2. Wool High Street, within the heart of the village Conservation Area.

2.6.1 Wool is situated in open countryside, although within an attractive landscape setting, adjacent to the River Frome. The surrounding landscape is not subject to specific landscape designations, the village being located outside the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and areas identified as Green Belt.

2.6.2 However, the village does contain a number of notable planning designations. Heritage designations include an extensive Conservation Area situated around the historic part of the village. This area, also contains the greatest concentration of historic buildings, although a number of listed buildings are also present in East Burton.

2.6.3 A large Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) is also present to the south-west of the village, although this is not apparent visually and appears as agricultural land.

2.6.4 Environmental designations include the River Frome itself, which is identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, the most extensive designation is that of the floodplain, which encompasses large parts of the river floodplain to the north of the railway line. However, it also includes parts of East Burton and parts of old Wool along the High Street, Spring Street and Duck Street.



3. The church is one of a number of listed buildings owing its architectural and historic interest.



4. Large parts of the area around the River Frome are liable to flooding.

KEY POINTS

- The countryside surrounding Wool is not protected by landscape designations.
- The original village centre is an area of special historic and architectural interest and is designated as a Conservation Area.
- Designated listed buildings are concentrated in the old village of Wool with a small number of historic buildings located in East Burton.
- The River Frome is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- The river floodplain covers a large area north of the village but also extends into parts of East Burton and old Wool.