

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 2 East Street

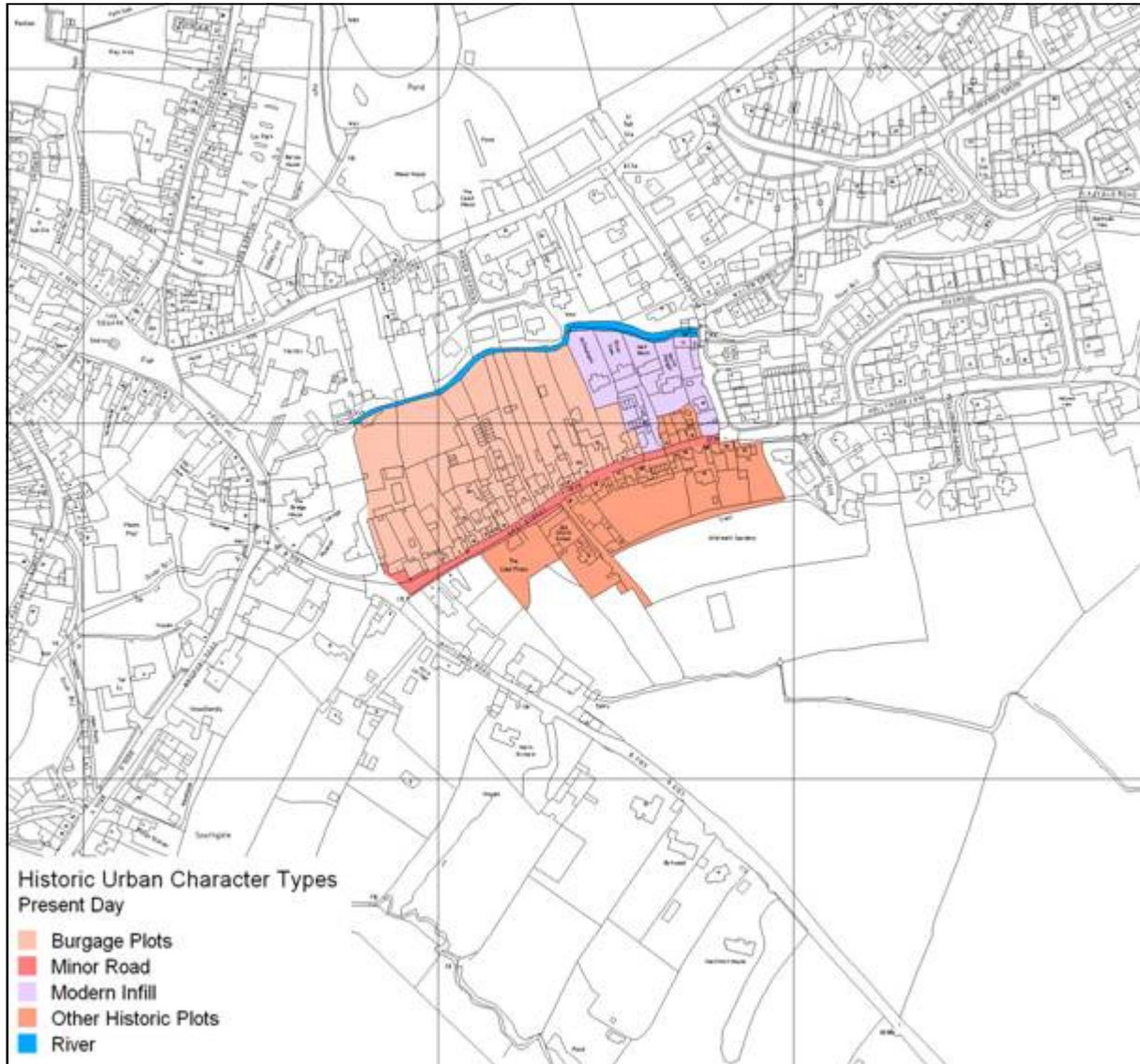


Figure 46: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 2, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 47: View along East Street, looking east.



Figure 48: View along East Street towards looking west.

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 2 Structure of Character Area

### Overview

This is the area of the possible medieval planned suburb along East Street, together with the historic plots on the south side of the road. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension, based on its plot pattern.

### Topography and Geology

The area lies on the south side of the river Brit, which forms its northern edge. The ground slopes down gradually to the north. Most of the area lies on Fuller's Earth Clays, but the western end is Inferior Oolite geology.

### Urban Structure

This area is essentially a ribbon development along East Street, which was formerly one of the major streets of the town but is now a more minor thoroughfare. It once had a more mixed character, but is now exclusively residential.

The plots to the north of East Street are long narrow properties running from the street frontage back to the river Brit and are fairly regular in width. The properties to the south of the road are different in character, being more irregular in size and more rectangular in shape.

### Present Character

Figure 46 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area comprises 'burgage plots' along the north side of the street, with some modern infill behind the frontage at the east end. The south side of the street comprises other historic plots.

### Time Depth

The precise period of origin of the possible planned suburb is not known for certain, but is probably late medieval in date. East Street was one of the main streets in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, but may be much

earlier in origin. The settlement on the south side of the street is later, perhaps of early post-medieval date. Gilbert Adam's almshouse was built here in the early 17th century.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is primarily high density housing in a ribbon layout, with the houses set along the street frontage. The majority of the buildings are set on the street frontage, though there are a small number of houses set back from the road, where the street frontage is defined by stone perimeter walls (Figure 52). Some terraces are set at right angles to the street. Most of the frontage is built up, but there are a number of lanes into the rear of the plots.

There are few open spaces in this area. The arrangement of the houses at the junction with Whitcombe Road forms a relatively open area, leading into the narrow thoroughfare of East Street (Figure 53). Trees and green spaces form a small element of this area, being limited to a small number of gardens. Views of the surrounding countryside can be glimpsed, particularly to the south.



Figure 49: View along of houses on East Street, with the former Sun Inn in background.



Figure 50: Modern infill estate behind East Street frontage.

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 2

### Built Character

#### **Building types**

The area is characterised by a large number of 18th and early 19th century buildings with a smaller number dating to the later 19th and earlier 20th century. There are a small number of later 20th century houses also, mainly concentrated in a small infill estate at the east end of the area.

The buildings are primarily small attached stone cottages and short terraces, with a small number of larger houses. Most are of two storeys. Very few of the buildings are architecturally distinguished, but the vernacular cottages and terraces at the west end of the street form a coherent group full of local character. Numbers 1 and 3 East Street form a distinctive ensemble at right angles to each other and are typical late 18th or early 19th century Beaminster houses with symmetrical classical facades, different to the rather less formal arrangement of the adjacent cottages.

There are very few non-domestic buildings, the most prominent is the 1875 Victorian gothic former Boys' Elementary School. The former Sun Inn retains its carriageway through into its yard behind.

There are a small number of later 19th and 20th century houses inserted along the street, which are generally unobtrusive. The small infill estate of modern neo-Tudor houses is tucked well back behind the street frontage, but disrupts the original layout of the properties along this street.

Stone boundary walls to gardens form a significant visual element along the street frontage in this area.

#### **Building Materials**

Local yellow-brown Inferior Oolite stone is used for most of the houses. The roofs are predominantly slate.

#### **Key Buildings**

1 East Street, 3 East Street, 11 East Street, 15-17 East Street, Former Boy's School.



Figure 51: View of cottages along north side of East Street.



Figure 52: Houses set back from frontage on north side of East Street.



Figure 53: 1 and 3 East Street — early 19th century houses at west end of East Street.



Figure 54: Former Boy's Elementary School, East Street.

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 2 Archaeology

### **Archaeological Investigations**

There has been no archaeological investigation undertaken in this character area

and/or possibly evidence of former small-scale industrial use.

### **Archaeological Character**

The lack of investigation makes it difficult to fully define the archaeological character of this area. Nevertheless, a number of historic property boundaries still survive within the townscape (Figure 55) and it is likely that a series of medieval and post-medieval pits may exist in the rear of the historic plots, together with evidence for other activities, including perhaps small-scale craft and industry.

The historic buildings may contain surviving evidence of earlier buildings within their fabric

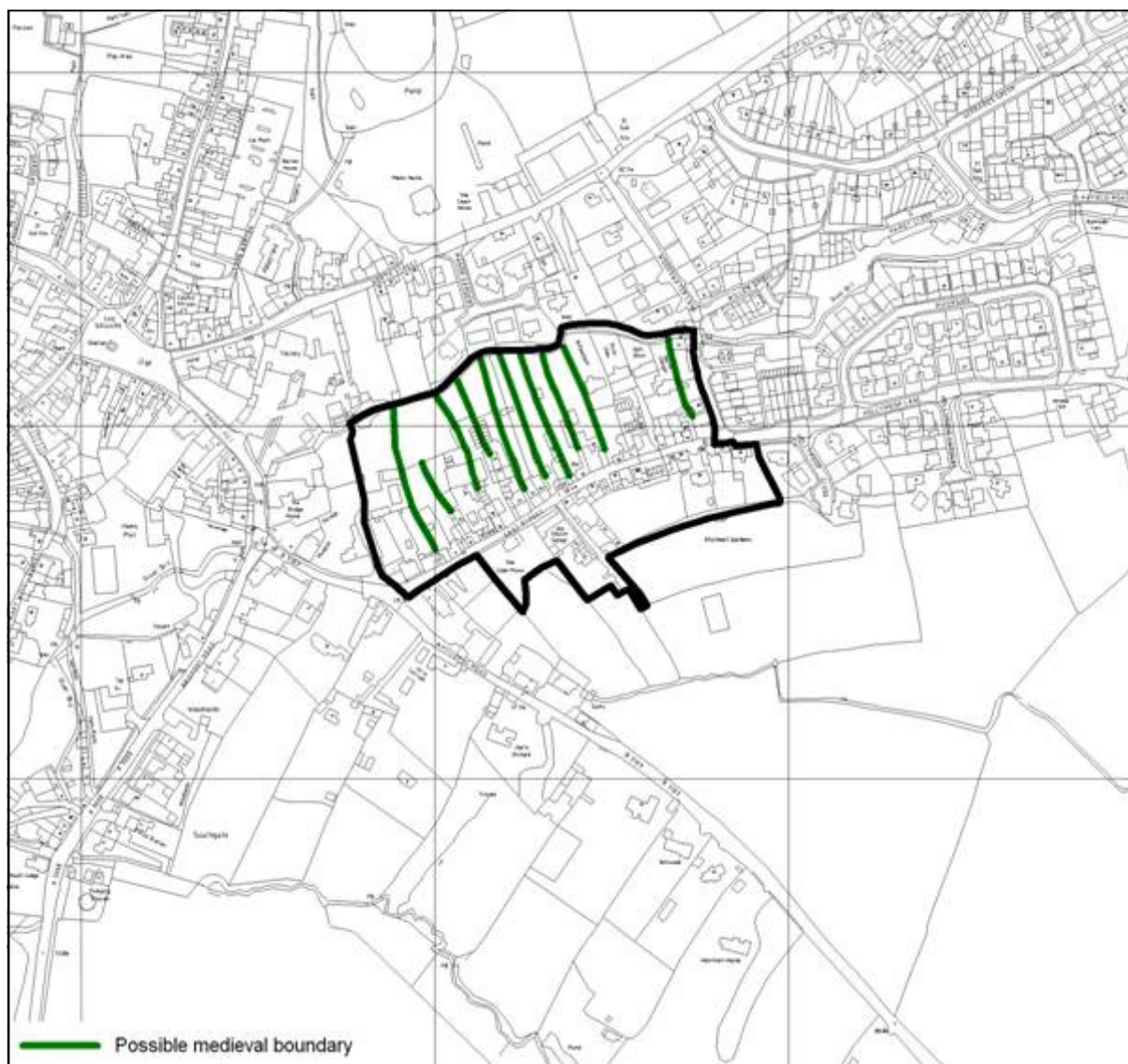


Figure 55: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

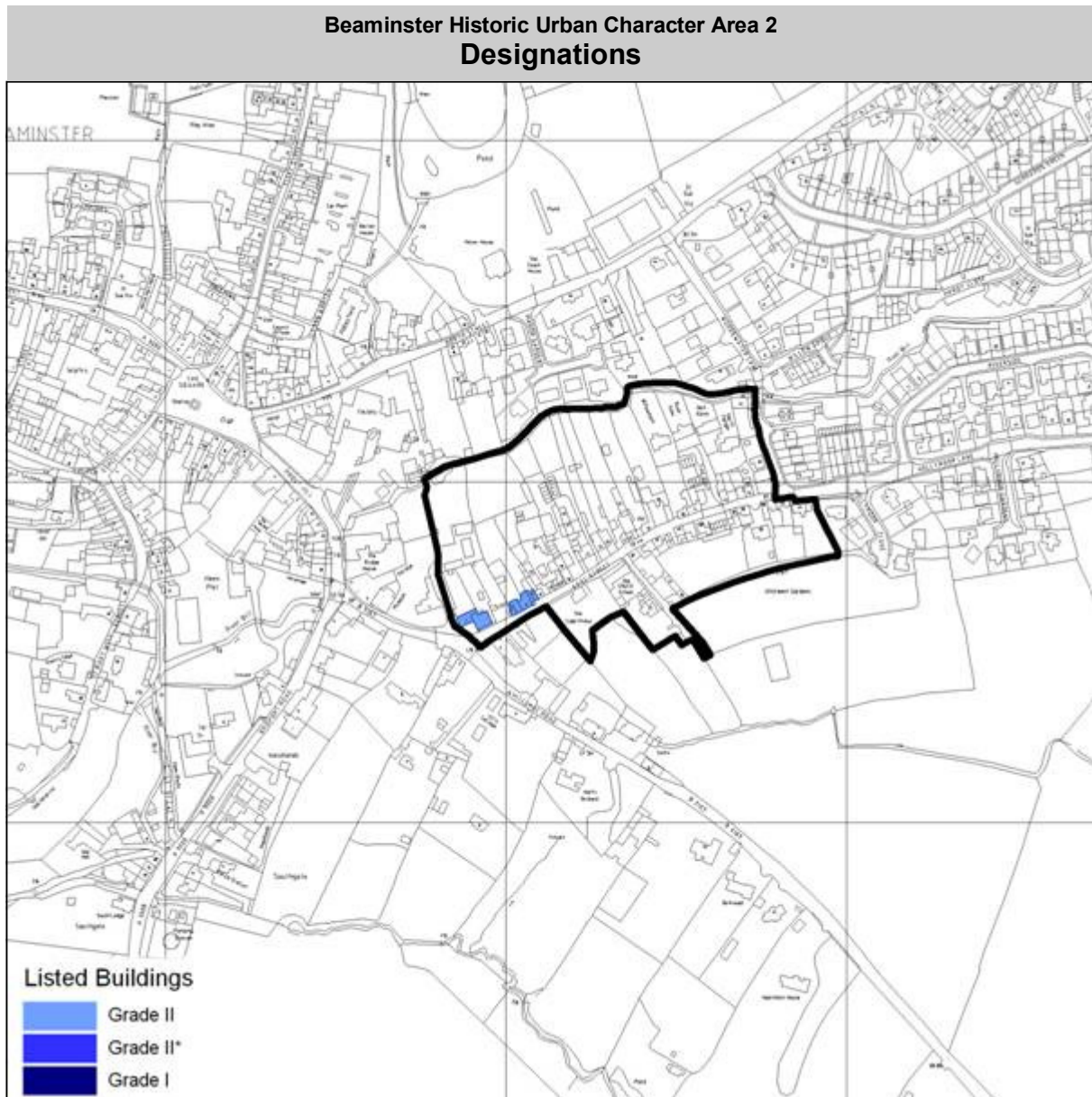


Figure 56: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

### **Listed Buildings**

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

### **Conservation Areas**

Almost all of this Character Area lies within the Beaminster Conservation Area (Figure 33).

### **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.



Figure 57: Nos. 7 & 9 East Street.

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 2 Evaluation

### ***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. It has good survival of regular historic plots. This area is the only part of Beaminster where there appears to have been a planned layout. The large proportion of historic late 18th and 19th century attached cottages and small terraces of worker's houses gives this area its own distinctive character within the town. The widespread use of local materials creates a pleasing whole to the built character.

### ***Sensitivity to Large Scale Development***

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The scale and shape of the long narrow historic plots reflect a planned layout of considerable time depth which gives this part of Beaminster its character. Any further erosion of this pattern would have a detrimental effect on its historic character. The street frontages formed mainly by historic buildings are very sensitive to anything other than small-scale change.

### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be high. It comprises a probable

planned medieval suburb and one of the main streets in the medieval and early post-medieval town. It has the potential to reveal details on dating of this suburb of the history of its property divisions, small-scale craft and other industries and the economy and diet of the inhabitants. The relatively limited redevelopment in this area may indicate increased potential for good survival of archaeological remains.

The historic buildings and outbuildings have a high potential to provide detailed information on the survival of earlier structures hidden behind later frontages and to contribute to the understanding of the development this suburb of Beaminster.

Its location close to the river Brit means that it can be considered a favoured location for earlier pre-urban activity.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 7-18 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Regular long narrow plots of possible medieval planned suburb
- Ribbon development along narrow street
- Small vernacular cottages and short terraces of 18th and 19th century date
- Stone garden walls
- Former Victorian school on site of earlier almshouse and workhouse