

## Lyme Regis Historic Urban Character Area 2

### Broad Street

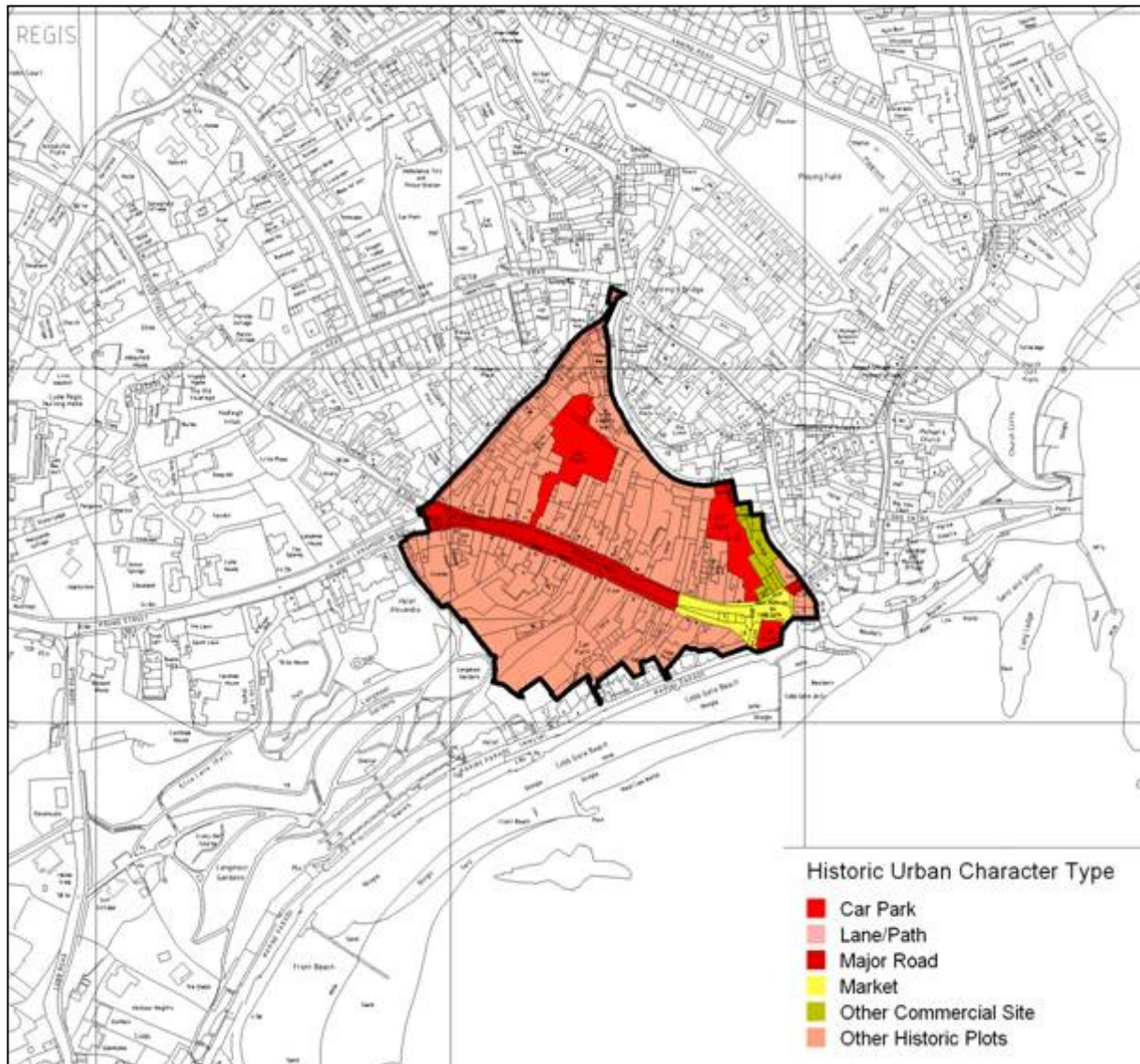


Figure 48: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 2, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 49: View down Broad Street to Middle Row and former market area.



Figure 50: View up Broad Street.

## Lyme Regis Historic Urban Character Area 2 Structure of Character Area

### Overview

This area comprises the distinctive wide straight Broad Street and the regular properties on both sides, together with the historic market area and Cobb Gate. The boundaries of the area are defined by Sherborne Lane to the northwest, the river to the northeast and by the modern rear boundaries to the properties on the south side of Broad Street. The area represents the modern and historic commercial centre of Lyme and may have its origins as a planned element of the medieval town.

### Topography and Geology

Broad Street runs down a spur falling steeply to the ESE. The ground drops away steeply to the northeast down to the river and also drops to the south down to the coast. The whole of the area is on Lower Lias clays.

### Urban Structure

This area has a simple structure based on ribbon development along a single straight wide road, Broad Street. At the eastern end there is a central block of buildings, Middle Row, in the area of the former market place. The plots are generally regular long narrow properties of fairly regular proportions.

### Present Character

Figure 48 shows the present day historic urban character types. It comprises mainly historic plots along the whole length of Broad Street with a wider market place at the eastern end. There are three car parks, two of which have been formed out of former gardens and yards behind the street frontage and the other is on the site of the Assembly Rooms at Bell Cliff. The other commercial site is a garage.

### Time Depth

The main street and property layout probably

dates to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, as does the market area. Cobb Gate may be earlier and Sherborne Lane may date to the period when the land was part of Sherborne Abbey in the eighth century. The Bell Cliff car park dates to the 1930s and is on the site of the Assembly Rooms. The other car parks date to the post-war period.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern comprises ribbon development along Broad Street and along Sherborne Lane with the buildings set directly on the street frontage. The street frontages are built up, with a few lanes, passageways and narrow car park entrances giving access to the rear of the plots, where there is some residential and retail development. Broad Street is a wide straight street steeply running downhill to The Square, Cobb Gate and the sea. The general preponderance of large town houses and commercial buildings along Broad Street is in proportion to the width of the street. The southeastern part of the area has a more open feel at The Square, with the Bell Cliff Car park, Cobb Gate and the entrance on to the seafront and the views of the sea. The 'gateway' into Broad Street is provided by the high stone walls of Bell Cliff and the middle row of buildings. The properties along Sherborne Lane are smaller and appear to be later than those on Broad Street, fitted behind the properties on the main street frontage.



Figure 51: Bell Cliff looking towards Broad Street.



Figure 52: View down Sherborne Lane.

## Lyme Regis Historic Urban Character Area 2

### Built Character

#### **Building types**

Broad Street is characterised by large late Georgian and early Victorian buildings reflecting its position as the principal street of the fashionable 18th and 19th century resort. A small number of buildings are earlier; a number of these were refronted in the 18th or 19th century. There are also a small number of modern commercial buildings along the street. The Regent Cinema is a good example of a 1930's small town cinema.

The houses are predominantly large three storey attached town houses, either with inserted or original shops on the ground floor. The houses often have an abundance of architectural ornament. There are a number of surviving good quality 19<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts. The surviving earlier buildings include the Royal Lion Hotel, which retains some 16th and 17th century work, the late 16th or 17th century timber-framed houses at 4-8 Broad Street (RCHME 1952). Other houses, such as nos. 10, 34 & 35, 50 & 51 and 57-58 Broad Street were refronted in the 18th or 19th century.

#### **Building Materials**

Most of the historic buildings are constructed

from the local Blue Lias limestones, but because of its poor weathering properties, the majority have been rendered or stuccoed or rough-cast. A small number have been slate-hung. There are several brick buildings, perhaps the most impressive being 28 & 29 Broad Street. The roofs are predominantly slate. 39 Broad Street is thatched.

#### **Key Buildings**

Commercial Premises: Post Office, Royal Lion Hotel, former Three Cups Hotel, Regent Cinema.

Large Town Houses: 28 & 29 Broad Street, 53 & 54 Broad Street, 58 Broad Street.

Smaller Houses: 4-6 Broad Street, 35-37 Sherborne Lane



Figure 53: Royal Lion Hotel, Broad Street



Figure 54: 29 Broad Street.



Figure 55: Broad Street with Three Cups Hotel to left and former Corporation Offices to right.



Figure 56: Regent Cinema.

**Lyme Regis Historic Urban Character Area 2  
Archaeology**

**Archaeological Investigations**

There has been one investigation in this study area, a watching brief during the construction of an extension to 45-46 Broad Street (Appendix 3, No. 5). The watching brief revealed part of a stable block, probably associated with the 17<sup>th</sup> century Great House that formerly stood on this site (Bellamy 2004).

**Archaeological Character**

The results of the watching brief at 45-46 Broad Street have indicated that archaeological stratigraphy survives in some of the back plots. The small amount of below-ground investigation perhaps does not indicate the full range of archaeology likely to be found in this area. The location of this character area within the historic core of the town would suggest that a series of

medieval and post-medieval pits could exist in the rear of the historic plots, together with evidence for earlier property boundaries and structures. A number of historic property boundaries exist in the area, forming fairly regular straight narrow boundaries, which are probably medieval in origin.

Traditionally, the site of the medieval Hospital of St Mary and the Holy Spirit is taken to be in the former garden of the Great House, with the so-called Leper's Well within its grounds. However, it is perhaps unlikely that a leper hospital would be located within the core of the town, so its location must remain in doubt.

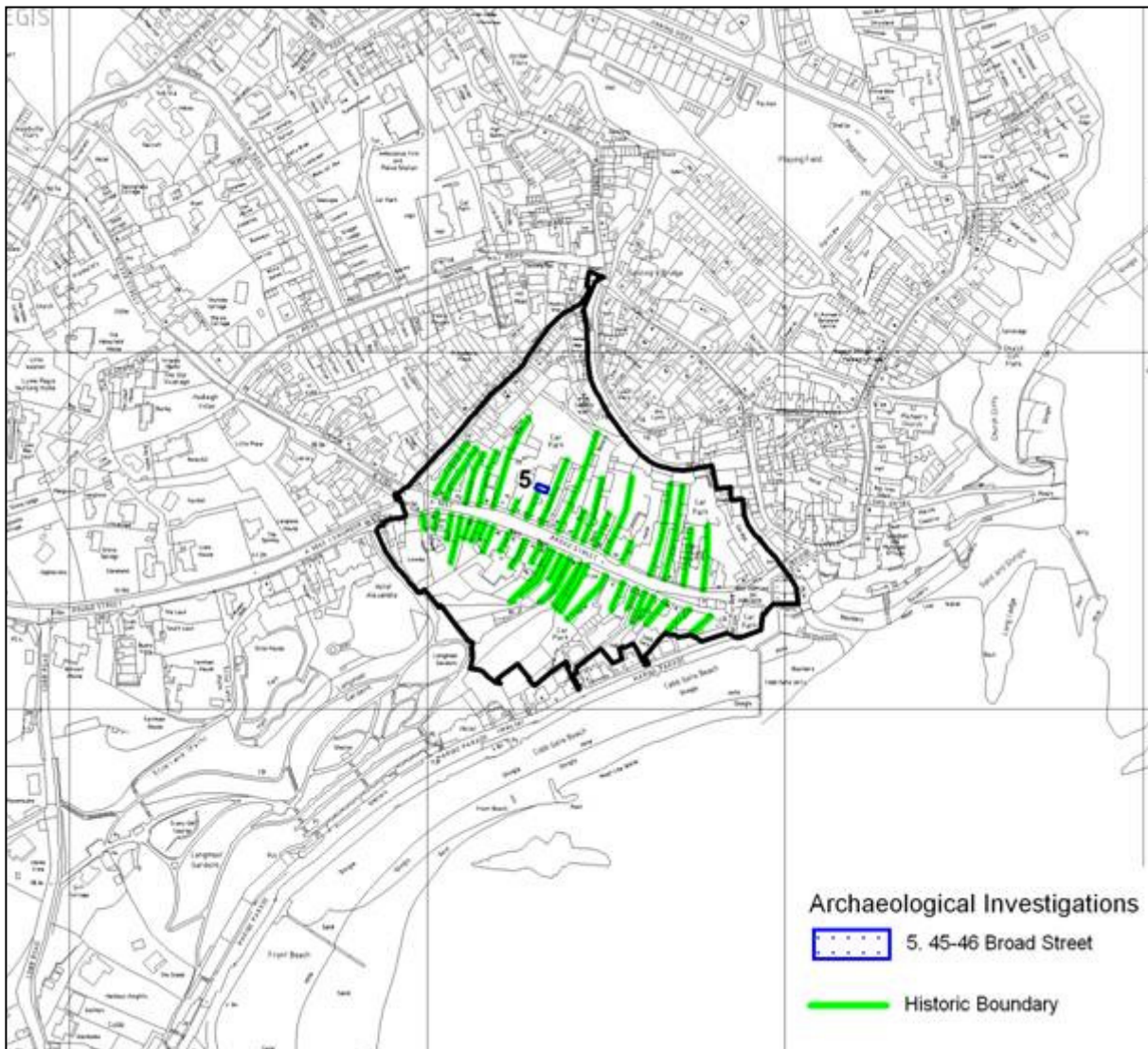


Figure 57: Archaeological features in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

**Lyme Regis Historic Urban Character Area 2  
Designations**

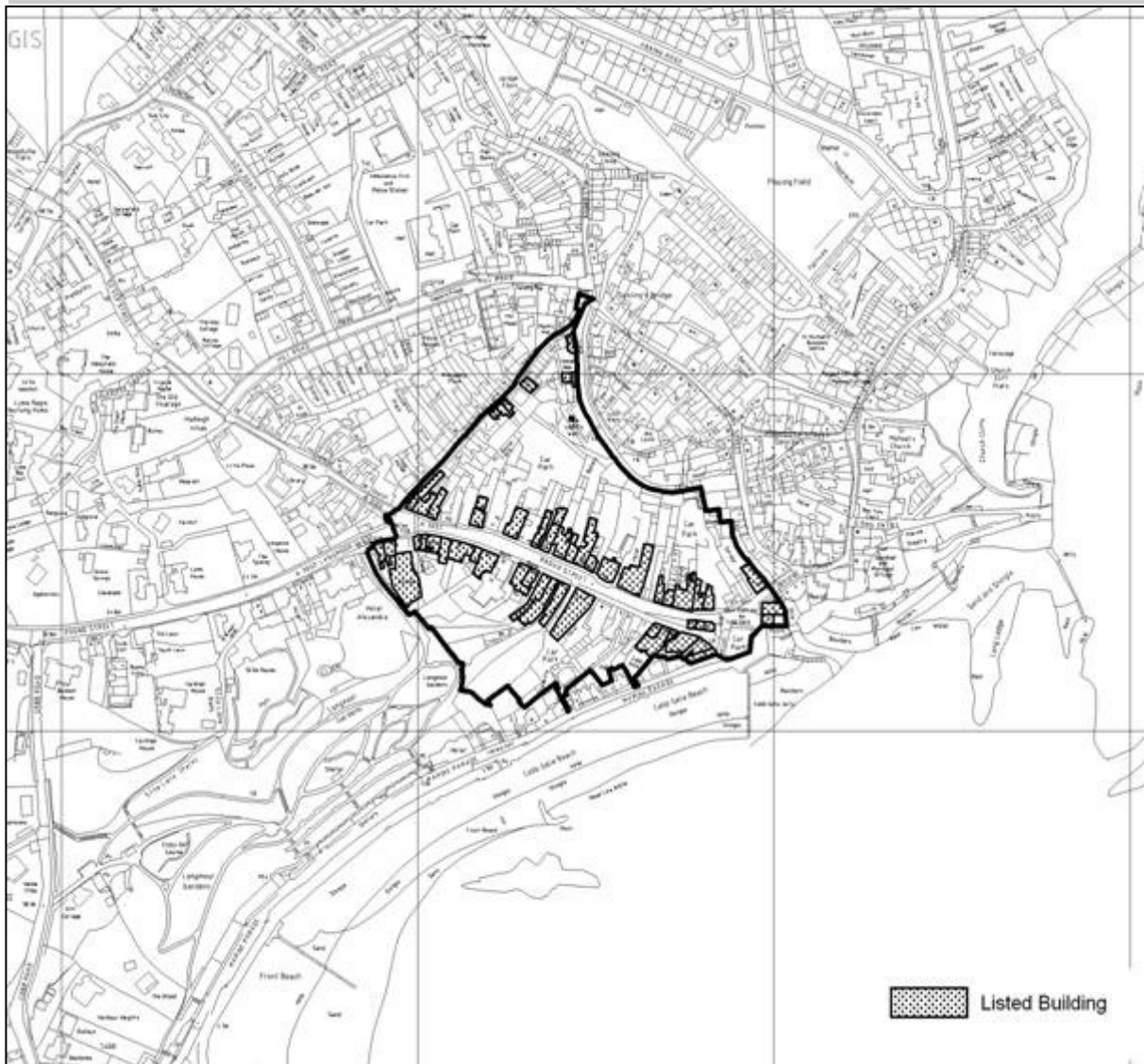


Figure 58: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 2.

**Listed Buildings**

There are 44 Listed Buildings and structures in the Character Area. All are Grade II.

**Conservation Areas**

The whole of this area lies within the Lyme Regis Conservation Area (Figure 36).

**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 59: Former Three Cups Hotel, Broad Street.

## Lyme Regis 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 its medieval elements including the wide market street and market place and regular historic plot boundaries and the whole area can be easily 'read' as a major component of the historic town. There is a strong contribution to the historic character of the town from the standing buildings, primarily of late Georgian and early Victorian date, with some earlier survivals. The buildings include a number of large town houses, together with historic inns and hotels and a significant number of historic shop fronts. There is widespread use of local building materials and relatively few modern intrusions.

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

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The scale and shape of the historic streets and plots reflect considerable time depth and provide the underlying structure which gives this part of the town its historic character. The street frontages formed mainly by historic buildings are very sensitive to anything other than small-scale change and any opening up of the frontages would have a major impact upon the character.

### **Archaeological Potential**

The archaeological potential of this area is

judged to be **high**. It lies in the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town and has potential to reveal details on its development, the history of its property divisions, small-scale craft and other industries and the economy and diet of the inhabitants.

The large number of historic buildings has 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 of houses and shops in post-medieval Lyme Regis. Historically, a range of small scale craft industries were carried out along Broad Street right into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There may be surviving evidence either within surviving outhouses or below ground to help inform the range and development of these industries and their contribution to the town.

There is also some potential for remains of the medieval leper hospital to survive in this area, though the location is not certainly within the character area.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Wide medieval market street and market place
- Regular long narrow historic plots
- Distinctive topographic position running steeply down to the river and the sea
- Narrow Sherborne Lane of great antiquity
- High quality 18th and 19th century town houses, some incorporating commercial premises
- Historic shopfronts
- Historic inns and hotels