

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 7

Worgret Road

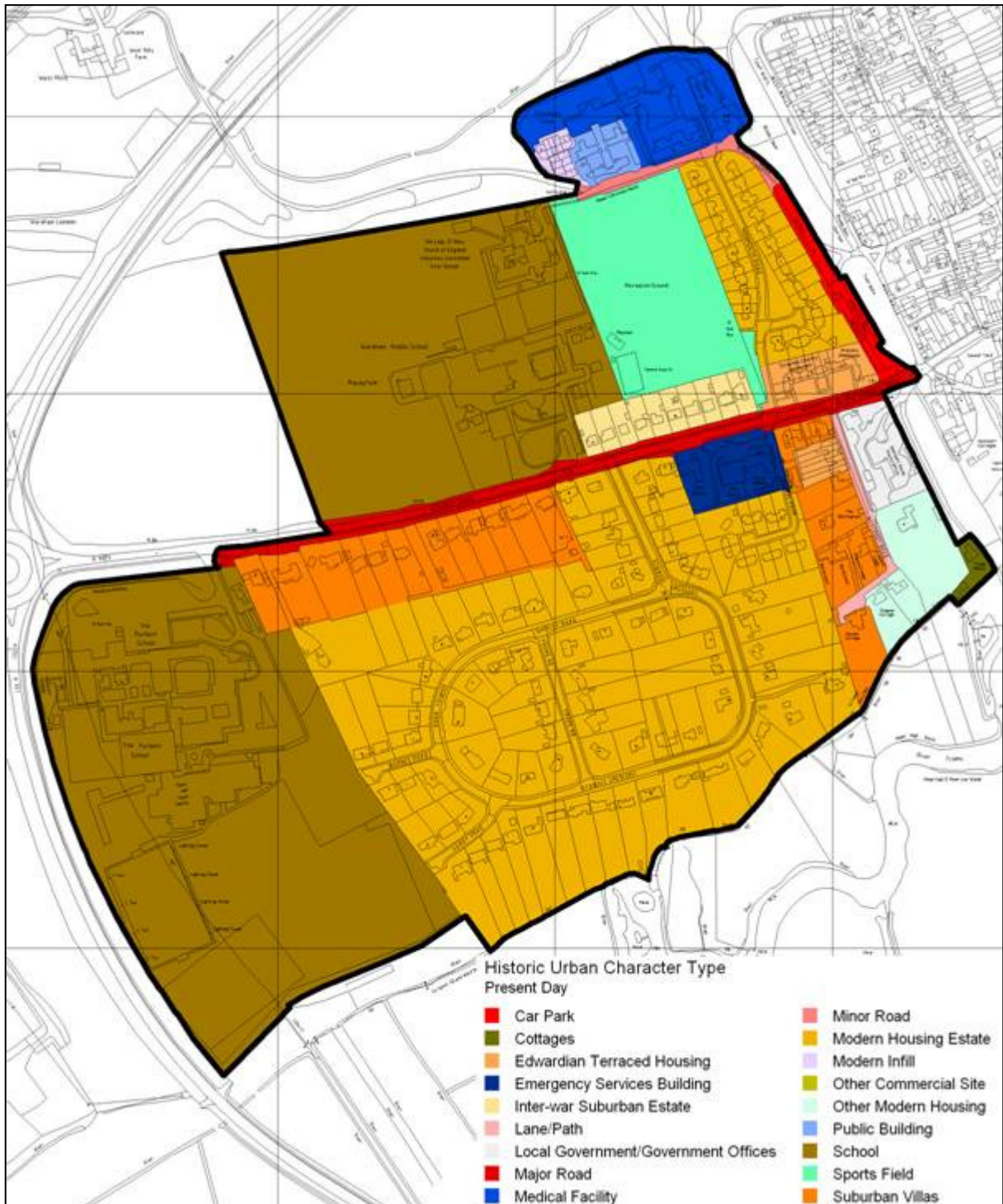


Figure 113: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 8, showing current historic urban character type.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 7 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This area represents suburban expansion to the west of the historic Saxon town walls and is largely 20th century in date. It is defined by its location outside the historic town core and its boundaries are formed by the edge of suburban development and the Wareham by-pass.

Topography and Geology

Worgret Road runs along the spine of the ridge between the Rivers Frome and Piddle, to the west of the Saxon town defences. The area rises gently to the west from 11m at the west wall of the town to approximately 15m where it joins Wareham bypass. The geology of the area consists almost entirely of Eocene gravels of the Lower Bagshot Beds.

Urban Structure

This character area is structured around the axial Worgret Road running west from the historic core of Wareham with ribbon development along it and suburban housing estates running off it to the north and south. Small roads run to the north and south at the east end of the area, just outside of the Town Walls. The area to the south is dominated by the suburban housing estate of Stowell Crescent laid out around a curvilinear road layout. To the north and east are large open areas of school playing fields and the Recreation Ground. The former workhouse and hospital lies in the northeast corner of the area overlooking the Piddle floodplain.

Present Character

Figure 113 shows the present day historic urban character types. Modern Housing Estates, Schools and Sports Field form the major part of this area, with Suburban Villas, Inter-war Suburban Estate Emergency Services Building, Local Government Offices and Edwardian Terraced Housing along the Worgret Road frontage. At the northern end of the area is an area of Medical Facility, Public Building and Modern Infill. Along the eastern edge, north of Worgret Road is a car park in the area of the former ditch of the Saxon town defences.

Time Depth

The oldest element of this area is Worgret Road, which is probably Saxon or earlier in origin. The suburban villas at the east end of Worgret Road are late 19th century in date and those further to the east are Edwardian in date (with some inter-war infill). The houses along the northern side of Worgret Road are inter-war

in date. Streche's Almshouses were built in 1908. The former workhouse was built in the 1830s and the adjacent hospital was built in the 1990s. Stowell Crescent housing estate was built in the 1950s-60s and Monmouth Road housing estate in the 1960s. The fire station was built in the 1960s also. Wareham Middle School was built in 1939 and the Purbeck School in the 1970s. Westport House offices were built on the site of the mid 19th century Westport House, which in turn was built on the site of the late 18th century cavalry barracks.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is primarily one of low to medium density housing, either aligned along Worgret Road or arranged in typical suburban estate layouts. The houses are generally set well back from the frontages behind front gardens. The area in the southeast corner of the area adjacent to the West Walls along Westport Road, the houses are generally set back from the road in large gardens often with mature trees and planting. The hospital and former workhouse are accessed by a road running along the line of the former ditch of the Saxon town defences.

There is generally more open and green space in this area than found within the Walls. The northern and western parts of the area have large open green areas formed by the school playing fields and the Recreation Ground is an important recreational space. Trees form an important visual element with mature trees particularly evident along Worgret Road, Streche's Almshouses and along Worgret Road.



Figure 114: Worgret Road.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 7 Built Character

Building types

The dominant building type is post-war suburban estate detached houses of one and two storeys, which are typical of their time and with no reference to local character. However, along Worgret Road itself, detached two storey Edwardian suburban villas and detached inter-war houses predominate. These are also typical of their period with little reference to local building traditions. Along Westport road is a short terrace of Edwardian houses.

The most distinctive or imposing buildings are public buildings. The Union Workhouse is built on a typical Greek Cross plan with octagonal central section and an administration block across the southern arm. Streche's Almshouse was built on a single storey U-shaped plan with stone coped gables and Jacobean style finials (Figure 36).

The modern public buildings have little local character and tend to be of simple block form with flat roofs.

Building Materials

The Union Workhouse is built in colourwashed brick with Flemish bond. The roof is of imported Welsh slate. Streche's Almshouse is also in brick with ashlar dressings and quoins and a pitched tile roof with red brick chimney stacks. 1-6 Westport Road is a brick-built terrace with slate roof. There are further brick built suburban villas on Westport Road and Worgret Road with tiled roofs. The majority of modern buildings are built in non-local materials, generally in brick with tiled or slate roofs.

Key Buildings

Wareham Union Workhouse, Streche's Almshouses.



Figure 115: Stowell Crescent post-war estate.



Figure 116: Edwardian terrace, Westport Road.



Figure 117: Workhouse and hospital.



Figure 118: Wareham Middle School

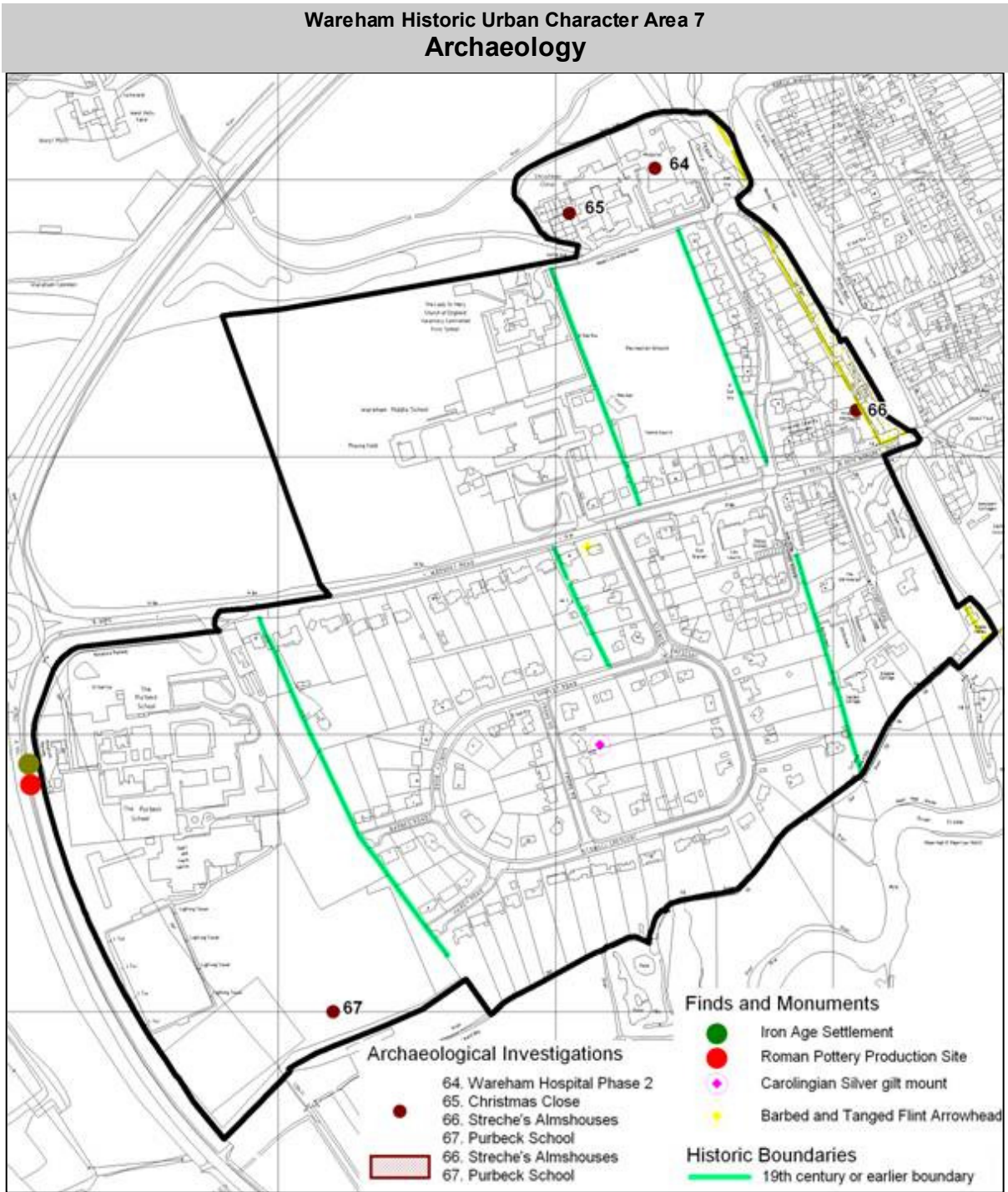


Figure 119: Archaeological investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 7.

Four archaeological investigations have been undertaken in this character area (Figure 119; Appendix 3, Nos. 64-67). These were all small scale evaluations and watching briefs on the area of the hospital and workhouse (64-65) and Streche's Almshouses (66). Some fieldwalking was also undertaken in the area surrounding the route of the Wareham bypass (67). Also of relevance to this area is a large excavation undertaken on the route of the Wareham bypass, which revealed Iron Age settlement evidence and a Roman pottery production site

(Hearne and Smith 1991) immediately outside of the study area. Observations during the excavation of the Worgret Heath-Wareham water main in 1954 also continued into the northern part of this area (42).

Archaeological results from the investigations in this area have been limited, with a single medieval pit found at Streche's Almshouses and a small quantity of Roman pottery found during the fieldwalking of the area south of Purbeck School.

Archaeological Character

The very restricted archaeological investigations in this area provide little evidence for the overall archaeological character of this area. The medieval pit and buried medieval soil found at Streche's Almshouses indicate the presence of medieval activity in this area, but provides little idea of the range and extent of this activity. The discovery of an Iron Age settlement and Roman pottery production site on the line of the bypass adjacent to Purbeck School suggests that there may be significant remains of Iron Age and Roman activity in this area. Certainly the results from the excavation on the bypass clearly indicate that the site continues into the area of Purbeck School and this may provide a context for the 2nd-4th century pottery found during fieldwalking to the south of Purbeck School. The widespread evidence for prehistoric field boundaries and round houses on the Bestwall peninsula on the east side of Wareham (Ladle and Woodward 2009) could suggest that similar

archaeological evidence could occur west of Wareham also. To date, the only recorded prehistoric find is an Early Bronze Age barbed-and-tanged flint arrowhead from a garden at 14 Worgret Road (Bowen 1957).

A silver gilt Carolingian mount probably made in the Rhineland during the 9th century AD, was found in the garden of 3 Frome Road (Keen 1988) and perhaps serves as a reminder of Wareham's importance during the late Saxon period, though the context for this particular find is uncertain.

Figure 119 depicts historic boundaries visible on 19th century maps and fossilised in the modern landscape. The parallel form of these boundaries may suggest the remains of former medieval arable strip fields, potentially the west field of the town.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 7 Designations

Listed Buildings

There are 2 Listed Building designations in the Character Area, Streche's Almshouse and the former Union Workhouse, both Grade II.

Conservation Areas

The majority of this Character Area lies outside the Wareham and Stoborough Conservation Areas, except for the area of Christmas Close around the former Union Workhouse is within the conservation areas (Figure 49).

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the Character Area.

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monuments within this Character Area

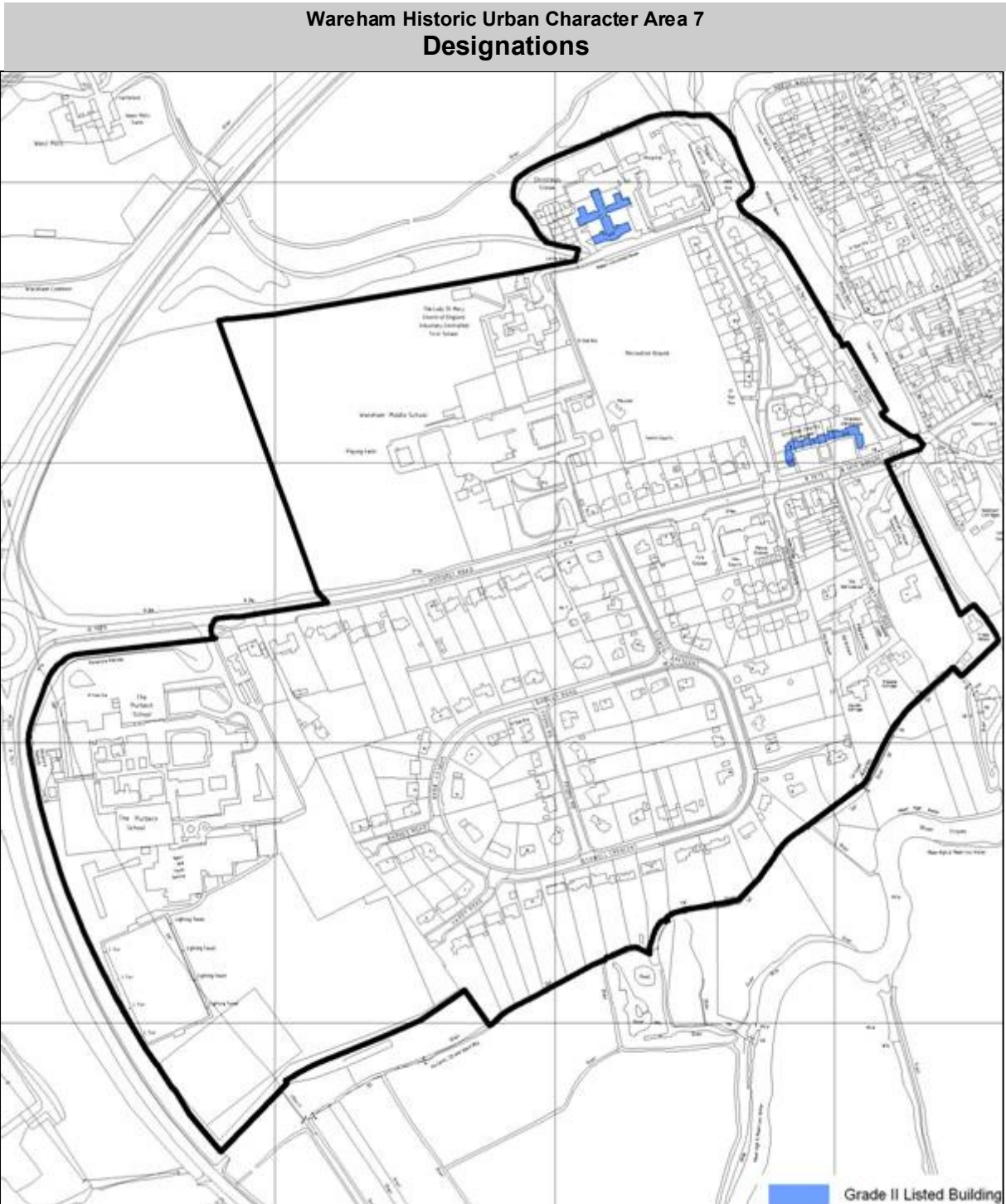


Figure 120: Listed Buildings in Historic Urban Character Area 7.

Wareham Historic Urban Character Area 7 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **Low**. The area is dominated by modern housing estates, together with some Edwardian and inter-war suburban housing and some large modern public buildings. There are a small number of buildings with historic character clustered at the eastern end of the area close to the historic town itself, notably Streche's Almshouse and the former Union Workhouse.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. Although modern development already characterises the area, this has been on a scale that does not impact visually on views from within the historic town.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is

judged to be **medium**. Although there have been few archaeological discoveries in this area, the evidence from excavations along the Wareham Bypass and on the Bestwall peninsula suggests that there could be extensive remains of prehistoric field systems and dispersed houses in this area also. The relatively open low density modern development of this area means that potentially there may be good survival of below ground features and deposits. The position of this area outside the town walls may potentially contain evidence for medieval industry or activity immediately outside the town. There may be remains of the Napoleonic cavalry barracks off Westport Road.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1-3, 13, 21, 24-25 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Main road west of Wareham
- Suburb to the west of the historic town core
- Edwardian villas and inter-war suburban housing along Worgret Road
- Post-war suburban housing estates
- Victorian and Edwardian houses along Westport Road
- Former Workhouse
- Streche's Almshouses