



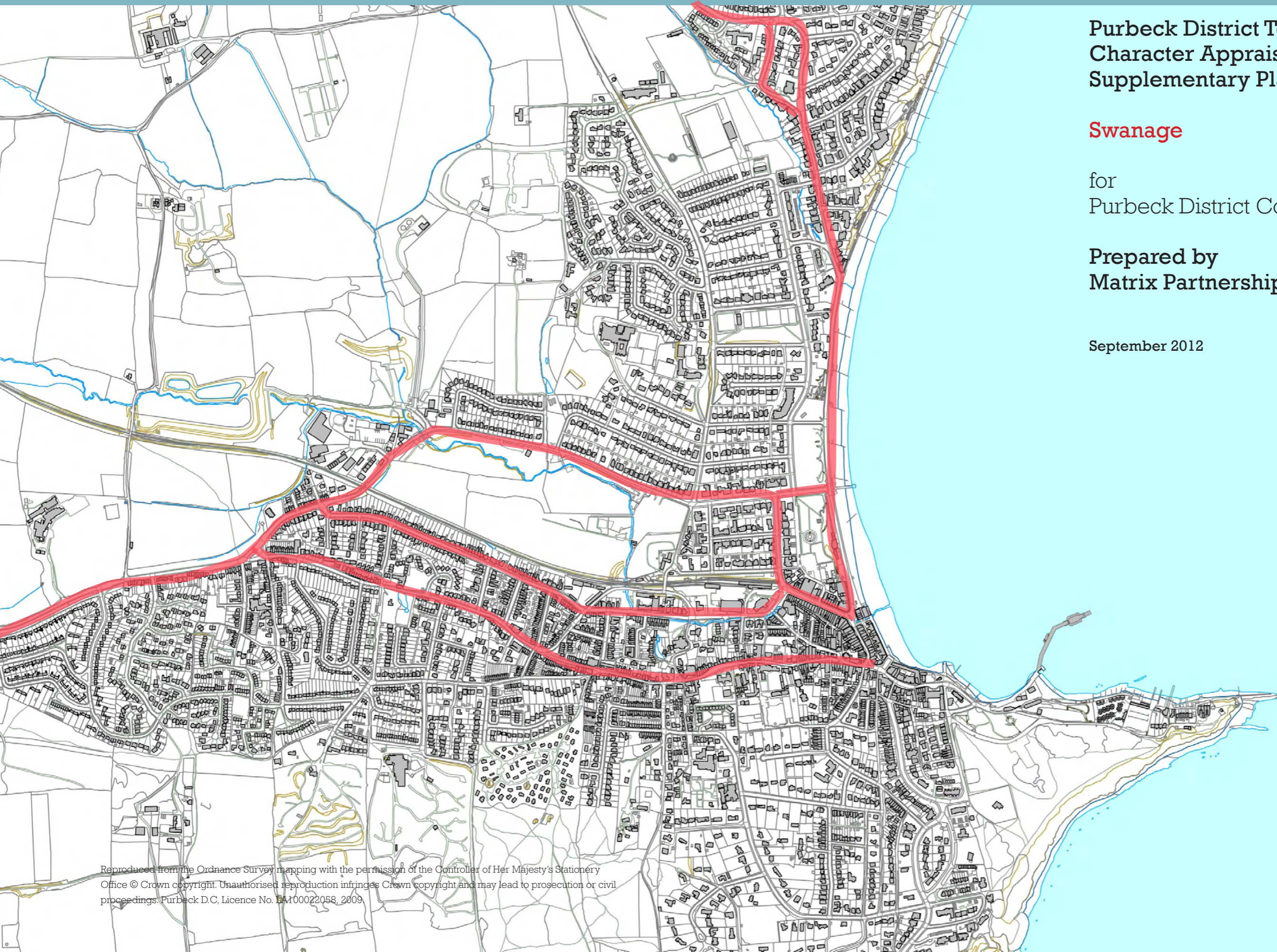
Purbeck District Townscape Character Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document

Swanage

for
Purbeck District Council

Prepared by
Matrix Partnership

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**Purbeck District Townscape
Character Appraisal for:**

Swanage

Prepared for:

Purbeck District Council

Westport House
Worgret Road
Wareham
Dorset
BH20 4PP

Telephone 01929 556561
Facsimile 01929 552688

www.purbeck.gov.uk



By:

Matrix Partnership Urban Design

1 Grand Parade
High Street
Poole
Dorset
BH15 1AD

Telephone 01202 682 789
Facsimile 01202 682 668

poole@matrixpartnership.co.uk
www.matrixpartnership.co.uk





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01.1

Introduction

“Character appraisal means understanding and evaluating the significance of a place, and drawing out the management implications so that its significance can be protected and opportunities for change identified” (Power of Place, English Heritage, 2000)







1.1.1 This Townscape Character Appraisal has been undertaken in recognition of the importance and value of townscape form, design and character in planning for and managing development, and in providing places with distinctive identity. The importance of taking into account the character of different areas is recognised as a core planning principle in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

“Characterisation attempts to define what makes a place special. This allows an estimate to be made of how much change, and what sorts, a place can absorb without losing its distinctive qualities” (Conservation Bulletin 47, English Heritage)

1.1.2 This report provides a basis for understanding existing townscape characteristics in terms of form, function, distinctive features, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and will provide a readily accessible source of information to both Local Authority officers and members of the public. The Appraisal formed part of the evidence base for policies in the Purbeck District Local Plan, and was subject to a period of public consultation from 1st June to 30th July 2010. The appraisal was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by Purbeck District Council on 11th September 2012.

1.1.3 This appraisal supports Policy D: Design within the Purbeck District Local Plan. It should be taken into consideration in the design of new development, and forms a material consideration for the Council in the determination of planning applications.

1.1.4 There are nine reports in this series of Townscape Character Appraisals. The following towns and villages have been appraised:

- 1. Wareham 
- 2. North Wareham 
- 3. Swanage 
- 4. Upton 
- 5. Bere Regis 
- 6. Wool 
- 7. Bovington 
- 8. Corfe Castle 
- 9. Lytchett Matravers 



Map of Purbeck identifying the settlements included in the study



Swanage

01.2

Introduction

Purpose: What is a Townscape Character Appraisal?

1.2.1 A Townscape Character Appraisal is a document that identifies the different qualities that make up the character of a town or village and what makes it special or distinctive from somewhere else. There are also significant variations in character within the settlements themselves.

1.2.2 Its purpose is to identify the factors that influence how a place looks and feels and to consider how these contribute to the character of the settlement.

1.2.3 Some areas within a town or village may be of special historic or architectural interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance – these will be designated Conservation Areas and subject to a separate process of Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

1.2.4 Developing a better understanding of the character of a place is essential in the preparation of planning policies and in the sensitive management of change and development within Purbeck's towns and villages. Without a clear appreciation of what makes a place special it can be difficult to ensure that proposals for any new development respect their context and can be accommodated in a satisfactory way.

1.2.5 A Townscape Character Appraisal will therefore assist in safeguarding local character and can be used to ensure sensitive, high quality new design where development does occur.

1.2.6 Consideration of character can also be used to identify the potential of different areas to accommodate new development, as well as influencing specific design policies.

Report Structure

1.2.7 The report is structured into 5 parts as follows:

Part 01. Introduction

This explains the background and context to the study and the methodology and report structure.

Part 02. Town Context

This examines the geographical context, landscape setting and historic background of the settlement.

Part 03. Town Analysis

This part analyses the urban form and organisation of the settlement, and it examines the different aspects of the town or village itself through a range of different topics, such as building height, landscape and open spaces, street patterns etc.

Part 04. Character Types

This part of the report draws on the findings of Parts 02 and 03 and identifies different character types which together make up the different places of the settlement.

Part 05. Townscape Analysis

This provides an overview of the key townscape characteristics for each settlement.

Methodology

1.2.8 The methodology used for the Townscape Character Appraisal for each settlement involved the following stages:

- Desk Study;
- On-site survey;
- Stakeholder consultation;
- Final report.

1.2.9 Desk Study

The desk study gathers together relevant information from previous recorded work. This includes:

- Purbeck District Council's digitised layered mapping (including items such as up-to-date mapping of the town, contours, conservation areas, landscape designations etc.).
- Background publications (such as conservation area appraisals, the Employment Land Review, Landscape Character Assessment, Parish/Community Plans, local history publications etc.).

1.2.10 On-Site Survey

The on-site survey involved gathering fundamentally original information on those features not readily found in available sources, that contribute to the make up and character of each settlement.

1.2.11 A photographic record was taken of different areas within each town or village. Information was also gathered on topics such as building heights, land use, open spaces and landscape, areas of high and low activity etc. This information was subsequently digitally mapped for inclusion within these reports.

1.2.12 On-site survey work considered both the broader, more strategic aspects for each town or village, such as its setting within the wider landscape and its interface between town and country, as well as the identification of individual 'character types' within each settlement. This included some of the more detailed aspects, such as building form and architectural features.

1.2.13 During the survey work care was taken to ensure that proper consideration was given to all parts of each town or village, not just the older or more historic areas, which are often found within conservation areas. It is important that the whole of each town or village should be given due consideration.

1.2.14 Stakeholder Consultation

Two public consultation events were held for key stakeholders associated with each settlement. These were important for gathering information on local views of the appraisal work. In particular, these events concentrated on the issue of potential change and opportunities for accommodation of new development within these settlements:

One event was held for the three towns:

- Wareham/ North Wareham;
- Swanage;
- Upton.

A second event was held for the villages:

- Bere Regis;
- Wool;
- Bovington;
- Corfe Castle;
- Lytchett Matravers.

1.2.15 The report for each settlement combines the findings of the desk study and on-site survey, through the use of maps, photographs, written descriptions and analysis.

1.2.16 Following the stakeholder consultation events the feedback received was assessed and where appropriate, changes were incorporated into the final reports.