



# Swanage Town analysis 03.1 Street pattern



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1. The High Street is the principal historic street in Swanage, and has a gently curving alignment.



2. Late 20th century road layouts are more sinuous and often incorporate cul-de-sac arrangements.



3. Many of the more historic streets have Purbeck stone paving and kerb detailing. This is particularly prevalent along the High Street, but even some late 20th century estate roads have Purbeck stone kerbs.



4. Some residential roads have the character of lanes or tracks, often with grass verges in place of formal kerbs and pavements.

3.1.1 The principal historic street in Swanage is the High Street. The road itself has an irregular, sinuous form that suggests its ancient origin, and this is confirmed by the number of old vernacular buildings that can still be found along it. As the road heads inland from the point where the Peveril Point headland meets the southern end of Swanage beach, another ancient route known as Priest's Road branches off in the direction of Worth Matravers, whereas the High Street continues towards Herston and ultimately Corfe Castle and Wareham.

3.1.2 Before the 20th century, the High Street effectively defined the form of the town as a simple linear settlement extending along the road with just a few largely undeveloped lanes extending south, following the distinctive north-south alignment of the field boundaries and giving access to the extensive stone workings on the higher ground above the town.

3.1.3 However, with the coming of the railway and the emergence of the town as a seaside resort, the character of the road pattern rapidly changed and developed. Alternative routes to the north of the town centre were developed to give access to areas of new development north of the town and the sea front, avoiding the constricted High Street (Victoria Avenue and Kings Road). The area north of the station and close to the sea was laid out as a rectangular grid of roads, mostly during the first half of the 20th century. This area was progressively developed with relatively large villas, but further inland, west of the station and between the High Street and the railway, a similar but altogether tighter grid of short roads was laid out and developed with more modest, generally terraced, houses.

3.1.4 Numerous lanes and tracks are present within the town. Those of south Swanage are mostly residential lanes but are often unmade with an informal character. There are fewer tracks in the northern part of the town, but those which are present generally provide rear access to residential properties.

3.1.5 South of the town centre further speculative development was promoted on higher ground west of Peveril Point and extending south towards Durlston Bay. Some of this development was laid out on a rectangular grid, but more notably, a distinctive curved and lozenge arrangement of roads (Durlston Road and Peveril Road) was also laid out, during the 1860s, in anticipation of further development. The dimensions

of the plots did much to determine road layouts (i.e. linear land holdings), a pattern which is repeated across Swanage.

3.1.6 During the early and middle parts of the 20th century, as the town continued to expand, road patterns generally followed the earlier grid form but during the latter part of the 20th century, and in marked contrast, sinuous road layouts were preferred, including cul-de-sac arrangements. These are wholly typical of their period and a glance at a map gives the reader an immediate indication of where the main areas of more recent development are situated.

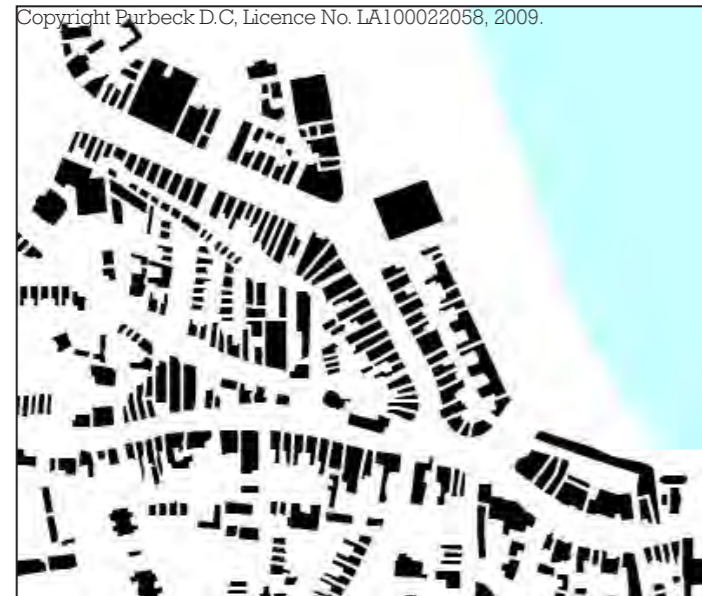
#### KEY POINTS

- The original linear High Street was sinuous and irregular in nature whereas later development generally has regular, planned patterns.
- Other principal west-east roads were developed which relieved pressure on the High Street.
- Most early and mid-20th century development is laid out on a regular grid.
- Late 20th century development is laid out on a distinctive arrangement of sinuous roads and cul-de-sacs.
- The historic field pattern of long narrow plots of is largely absorbed by modern development within the town, although numerous footpaths and roads follow the alignment of former field boundaries.



# Swanage Town analysis 03.2 Figure ground





1. Historic Town Centre



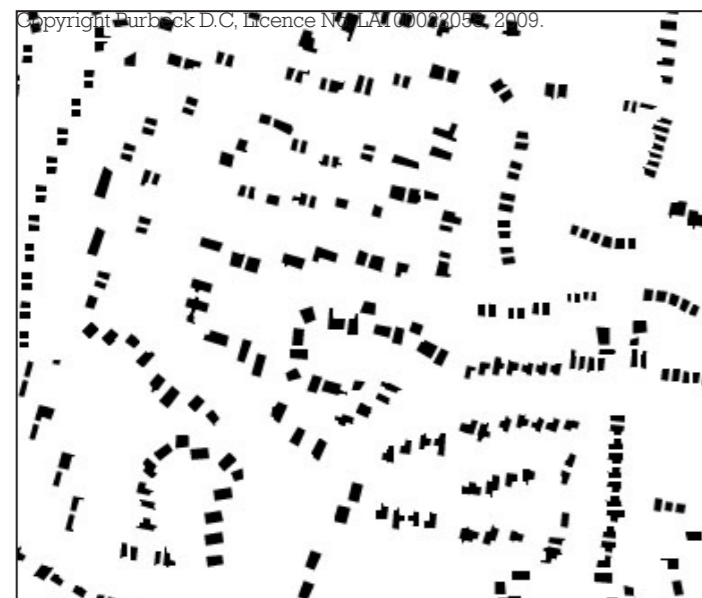
2. Large Villa Development



3. Early 20th Century Villas



4. Early 20th Century Terraces



5. Late 20th Century Estates

3.2.1 The main 'figure ground' drawing highlights the relative density of development across the town including the form and juxtaposition of buildings relative to the surrounding spaces. The five extracts show a representative range of different parts of Swanage, demonstrating how these elements affect the character of different parts of the town.

#### 1. Historic Town Centre

The narrow, sinuous layout of the High Street extends across the bottom of the extract while the later, more planned alignment of Station Road runs diagonally towards the station at the top left. The tight frontages of shops and other buildings clearly define these principal town centre roads linking some moderately defined urban spaces such as that in front of the station (top left) and that which opens onto the beach at the Mowlem Centre (top centre).

#### 2. Large Villa Development

Although buildings in these areas are generally substantial and detached and the plots are relatively wide, these areas can have quite shallow plots. This results in quite well defined streets in terms of their figure ground pattern.

#### 3. Early 20th Century Villas

The grid of buildings clearly defines the rectilinear arrangement of development in this area, although relatively generous margins exist between houses both to front and back (roads and back gardens). Distinct spaces also exist between adjoining buildings on either side. Comprehensive redevelopment of plots overlooking the sea (top right) as flats has a significant effect on the figure ground pattern, and it can be appreciated how developments of this scale can affect the character of an area.

#### 4. Early 20th Century Terraces

Similar to the early 20th century villas, the houses differ insofar as they are either terraced or very closely spaced with rather narrow spaces both between frontages (roads) and backs (gardens). The effect is to create a high density of development with a tighter and more intimate character.

#### 5. Late 20th Century Estates

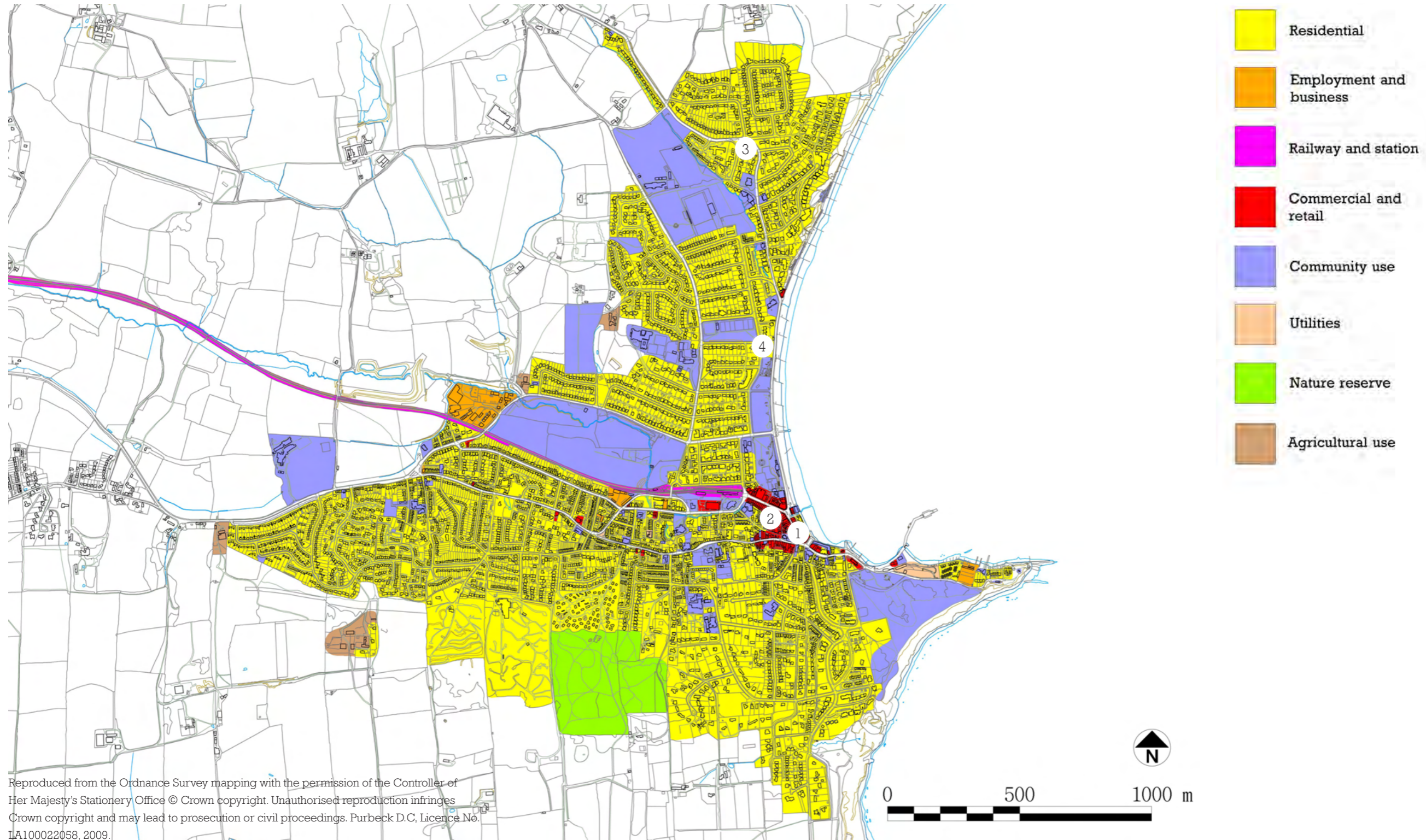
The sinuous and cul-de-sac layout of more recent development, together with somewhat irregular building footprints and orientations, create a rather looser and less clearly defined figure ground pattern that is often of a relatively low density.

#### KEY POINTS

- Swanage has a moderately high density core with near continuous frontages along streets connecting some moderately defined spaces.
- Early and mid-20th century development follows regular, clearly-defined arrangements, mostly on grid arrangements with generally consistent densities and building lines.
- Late 20th century estate development has a distinctive sinuous and cul-de-sac figure ground that distinguishes it clearly from earlier phases of the town's development.
- Some recent redevelopment of individual or amalgamated plots is changing the mass and density of figure ground patterns, particularly along the sea front. Despite this, different localities within the town remain generally consistent in terms of their figure ground patterns with relatively few irregularities which helps to give each area a substantially consistent character.



# Swanage Town analysis 03.3 Land use



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1. The Mowlem is principally community in terms of its use (theatre, cinema), but it has some retail at ground floor level.



2. The town centre contains a range of retail and commercial uses at ground level often with commercial or residential uses on upper floors.



3. The majority of Swanage is occupied by residential development of various eras and associated architectural styles.



4. Swanage contains a number of good quality municipal parks and gardens for community use, although these are mostly located in the central and northern part of the town.

3.3.1 Situated at the lower, east end of the High Street, Swanage has a well-defined commercial and retail core. This is well supported by its relationship to tourist-related attractions including the beach and the terminus of the Swanage Railway. Retail uses are situated at ground floor level with some offices above, although office provision in Swanage generally is limited.

3.3.2 There is no edge of town retail development in Swanage, but the town centre contains two small supermarkets, Somerfield, situated on Station Road and the Co-op on Kings Road West, outside the railway station.

3.3.3 Elsewhere commercial and retail uses are very limited, with just a few scattered premises west of the station and little or none close to the mass of housing development around Herston or in the northern part of the town.

3.3.4 Employment and business uses are similarly restricted, and these are substantially confined to a small site at the western end of Victoria Avenue.

3.3.5 Hotel uses are not shown on the map, but most are situated to the northern part of the town adjacent to the sea or in and around the town centre. However caravan parks are situated around the edge of the town, mostly on higher ground to the south.

3.3.6 There is a fair scattering of community uses around the town including schools, parks, playing fields, cemeteries, allotments and the like. Away from the town centre itself, there are some facilities including a corner shop and a pub in Herston, but there are few other community uses in the area. It should also be noted that north of the town centre, beyond the railway, there is only a single convenience shop.

#### KEY POINTS

- Swanage has a well-defined commercial and retail core supported by two nearby supermarkets and it is a focus for tourism-related activities.
- There is no edge of town retail development and there are few business and employment sites.
- Caravan sites are situated on the edge of town, mostly to the south.
- Herston has some local centre land uses, but few other community facilities in the locality.
- There are no local centre facilities in the northern part of town.