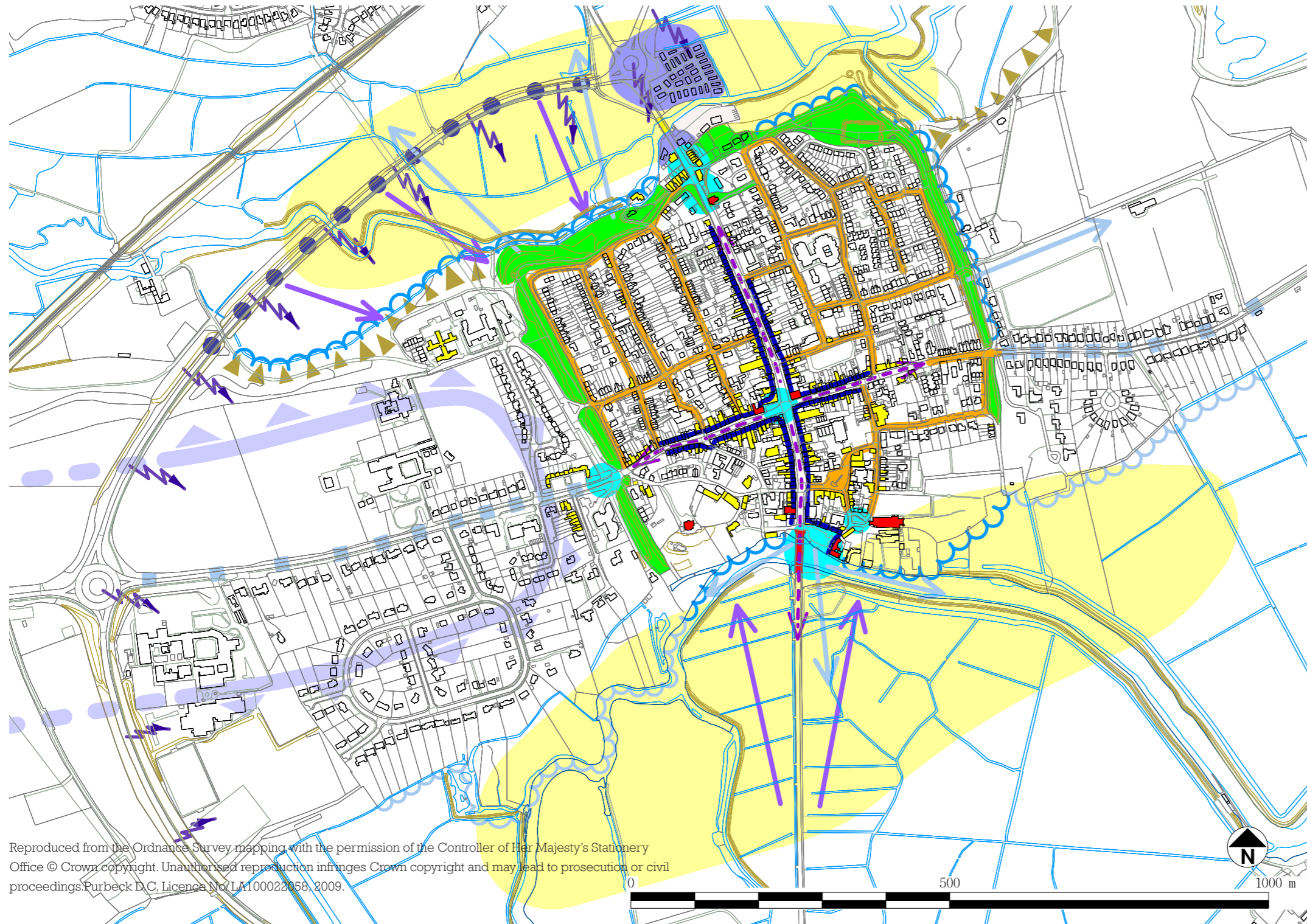




Wareham Townscape Analysis 05.1 Townscape Analysis



-  Gateway/focal space
-  Landmark
-  Buildings of townscape interest
-  Assumed Ancient street grid
-  Strong built frontage
-  Ancient town wall ramparts
-  Minor scarp
-  Ribbon development
-  Visually exposed ridge
-  High quality urban/rural edge
-  Unobtrusive edge
-  High quality landscape adjacent to town
-  Weak town entrance
-  Intrusive feature - visual
-  Intrusive feature - noise
-  Axis with views
-  Principal views - out of town
-  Principal views - into town

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5.1.1 Overview

Wareham is a historic town of distinct character which has a very important relationship to its immediate and wider landscape context. Its historic origins as a defensive settlement on a low peninsular at the edge of Poole Harbour, have shaped its evolution as a town and fundamentally contribute to its setting and character today. The town acts not just as an important district settlement, but as a gateway to the Isle of Purbeck.

5.1.2 Relationship to Surroundings

The valleys of the Rivers Piddle and Frome form contiguous landscape areas to the north and south of the town and their floodplains are highly sensitive in terms of their intrinsic landscape quality, ecological importance, the setting of the town and in providing an important visual separation between the old town and North Wareham and Stoborough.

5.1.3 The town's slightly elevated position makes it somewhat prominent from certain view points and visually sensitive to further development along the ridge westwards which would be highly visible in the wider landscape.

5.1.4 The low lying land to the east lies within the Dorset AONB where agricultural land turns to wetland around the fringes of Poole Harbour.

5.1.5 Urban Structure

Today the centre of Wareham exhibits a coherent townscape and the survival of its ancient street pattern, many historic buildings and impressive defensive 'walls' ensure the old town retains an atmosphere of antiquity whilst continuing to be a vibrant and living place. The south and east quarters of the town contain many listed buildings pre-dating the 20th century, although surprisingly few historic buildings are present in the north-east and north-west quarters of the town. Nonetheless these areas represent generally high quality townscape and a number of unlisted buildings are also of townscape interest, including the Town Hall.

5.1.6 Gradual infilling has resulted in a variety of architecture, but within this variety the townscape displays many shared traits common throughout these areas. In particular, are its ancient street pattern, narrow lanes, tight frontages and sense of enclosure created by relatively modest buildings. Later 20th

century development occurring outside the 'walls' has shown little regard to the distinct character of the old town and Wareham's particular local identity. It is generally of a somewhat commonplace, although not unpleasant, character.

5.1.7 The western approach to Wareham, along Worgret Road, is lined with mixed ribbon development of ubiquitous early to mid-20th century housing. Although it is a green and pleasant road, this entrance feels less clearly defined and lacks the sense of arrival and drama experienced upon entering the town at its northern or southern entrances.

5.1.8 The existing established development south of Worgret Road predominantly displays a consistent manner and style of architecture and character despite the individuality of the buildings themselves. The frontages of these roads are important insofar as they have large front gardens which contribute to its green and treed character and follow a quite well defined building line that is an important quality of the area.

5.1.9 The western area of Wareham, contained within the bounds of the bypass (both north and south of Worgret Road), is currently occupied by schools, associated playing fields and some open agricultural land. The site of Wareham Middle School is reasonably well screened within the wider landscape, primarily from the south. However, brief, if clear, views into this area are possible from the bypass.

5.1.10 The Bestwall development of bungalows and houses beyond the east 'wall' is unfortunate in terms of Wareham's setting. However, its low density rural edge has, over time, become relatively unobtrusive as trees and other vegetation have matured. As a result this area has a relatively low visual impact in views back into the town from Redcliffe and Stoborough.

5.1.11 Open Spaces

Within the 'walls' there is limited open space and as such the 'walls' themselves are an important recreational resource for residents offering fine views of the surrounding countryside, despite having been breached by modern development in some locations. As such they should remain accessible and continue to act as an important defining edge of the original town.

5.1.12 Beyond the 'walls' playing fields provide

important open areas for recreation. In addition, good footpath links exist to the countryside to the east and west, although the western path suffers from the intrusion of traffic noise from the bypass.

5.1.13 Views

Principal views into Wareham are seen across the water meadows from along the A351 bypass to the north and in views from the direction of Stoborough and Ridge to the south.

5.1.14 From the east mature hedgerows and tree lines obstruct direct views of the town which is essentially hidden from this direction.

5.1.15 Looking towards the town from Worgret, Wareham lies on the lower part of the ridge and is mostly obscured by undulations in the landscape and existing vegetation. However, the ridge west of the town is visually sensitive in wider views.

5.1.16 Closer to the town, within the bypass, agricultural land to the east of the Wareham Middle School is bounded by a low hedge and is very open. Its sloping topography is clearly visible from the west and north.

5.1.17 Negative features

The town comprises generally high quality townscape although several areas display some negative traits. The northern entrance to the town is a relatively weak entrance in terms of its townscape appearance. Access from the A351 is via the roundabout, past the Purbeck View mobile home and car showroom site/garage. Although the buildings themselves are of some townscape interest, the entrance is dominated by large amounts of advertising. Immediately beyond this there is a well-defined entrance where the road ascends through the town 'walls' past St. Martin's Church, but it is diminished by the previous mobile home and car showroom development.

5.1.18 Within the town itself several sites contain somewhat large and uncharacteristic buildings which do not respect the grain or scale of the town.

5.1.19 Conclusion

Within the 'walls' Wareham has a strong historic character which is defined by its street pattern, historic buildings and generally tight urban grain. Focal spaces like the Cross, the Quay and St. John's

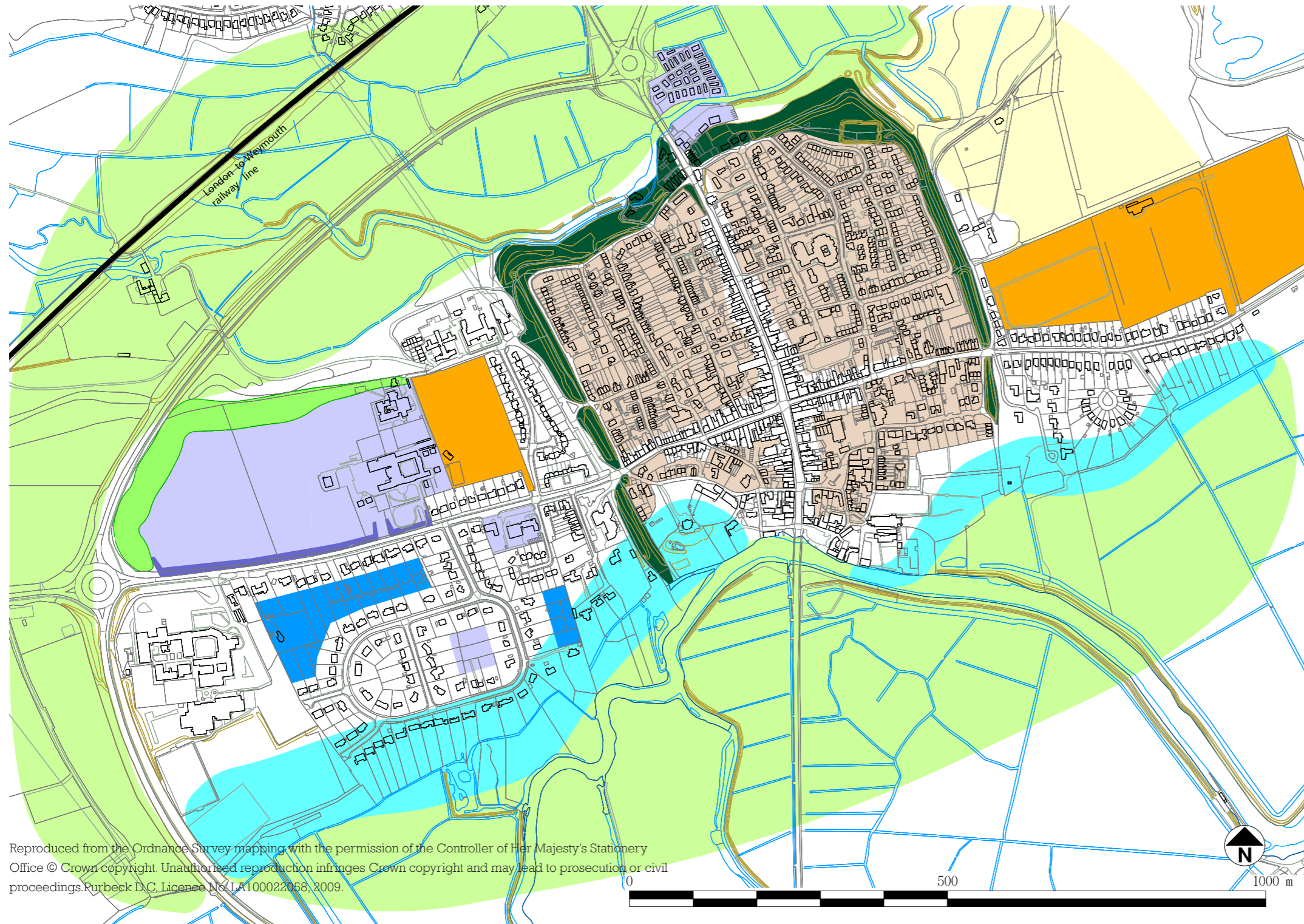
Hill create identifiable places within the town which contribute to the sense of place and identity of Wareham.



5.1.20 Some more recent parts of the town are less significant historically and architecturally and offer some potential for redevelopment.

5.1.21 The surrounding landscape provides a high quality setting to the town, but flood areas, ecological sensitivities and visual impact considerations also restrict opportunities for expansion of Wareham much beyond its current settlement limits.



Wareham Potential for Development 06.1 Potential for Development Analysis



-  Town walls - to be maintained
-  Visually & ecologically sensitive landscape
-  High quality landscape adjacent to town
-  Potential infill - within town walls
-  Open spaces - to be maintained
-  Town edge - to be maintained
-  Potential infill - outside town walls
-  Potential redevelopment
-  Opportunity for strong built frontage
-  New landscape buffer

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Wareham Potential for Development

06.1

Potential for Development Analysis

6.1.1 The historic, landscape and ecological constraints affecting Wareham represent a significant constraint to the future outward expansion of the town. Nevertheless a number of potential opportunities have been identified where development might be possible, albeit largely within the existing settlement.

6.1.2(a) Infilling (within the 'walls')

Infilling and redevelopment of plots within the 'walls' has continued to the present day. Provided that such development does not result in the removal of buildings or spaces that contribute positively the townscape character of these areas, sensitive infill development that respects the scale, form and grain of its context could continue to take place on a limited scale without adversely damaging the character of these parts of the town.

6.1.3 (b) Infilling (outside the 'walls')

Infilling or redevelopment at a greater scale or density could significantly compromise the low density, green characteristics of those areas outside the 'walls'. Many houses in the Worgret Road area are sited on large plots, some of which could lend themselves to sensitively designed infilling behind the established building line. This could potentially be achieved with limited impact on the character of the roads themselves. Views from the wider landscape would need to be considered and trees in front and back gardens may also be important in their contribution to the skyline of Wareham when viewed in the wider landscape and would therefore need to be protected.

6.1.4 (c) Open spaces

Existing open spaces and recreational resources should be maintained due to the limited open space present within the town and their contribution to the relationship between the town and the surrounding landscape.

6.1.5 The town 'walls' themselves are an important informal recreational resource. Nowhere should future development further compromise the setting of the 'walls' or relax their important relationship with the surrounding landscape. The west 'walls' have previously suffered from inappropriate development in close proximity. However, development beyond the east 'wall' is very limited in terms of its scale and density. As such the east 'walls' retain a visual and physical relationship with their landscape setting. It is therefore important to avoid further compromising

this important asset. The intensification of existing development or new development to the east of the 'wall' should be avoided.

6.1.6 From the east 'walls' fine views towards Poole Harbour would have once existed, although these are now obscured by mature tree lines and hedgerows. This is a lost resource and co-operation between local authorities and landowners together with suitable management of vegetation and could visually reconnect the historic association between Wareham and Poole Harbour.

6.1.7 (d) Town edges

Inappropriate redevelopment or the intensification of development in these areas could seriously threaten the current positive interface between town and country to the detriment of the character and appearance of town.

6.1.8 The edges to the south of Bestwall Road, to the south-west of the old town and along the southern side of Stowell Crescent and Hardy Road, contain detached properties set in large gardens with mature vegetation. This largely limits sight of modern development, whilst glimpses of the old town in the wider landscape remain, enabling it to continue as the principal focus of these views. It is important for the setting of the town (both in summer and winter) to ensure that these fringes of the town maintain the dominance of the landscape over built forms. Occasional buildings should be seen to nestle amongst trees and vegetation rather than buildings becoming the dominant features of these edges. Intensification, inappropriate levels of development or loss of important tree cover in this area would endanger the quality of the relationship between this part of Wareham and the surrounding countryside.

6.1.9(e) Wareham Middle School

The school site is relatively large and has the potential to accommodate some development. However, it is currently designated as Green Belt land, has a rural edge and a visually sensitive skyline. Development in this location would be likely to impact both on the skyline and in views from the wider landscape, resulting in a potentially abrupt relationship between town and country and compromising the special character of the town. As such, the rural interface would certainly be a very important consideration of any future proposals.

6.1.10 The school could potentially be relocated within the site and suitably designed buildings could provide an important frontage to the north side of Worgret Road. The agricultural land to the west of the site should remain open, but could potentially accommodate new school playing fields. Floodlighting and other intrusive features should to be avoided. Landscape buffers would also assist the integration of any such scheme into the wider landscape and could also form part of an extended pedestrian network of accessible open space for the town.

6.1.11 Residential development on the existing school site would need to be undertaken with great care in order to protect the special character and appearance of Wareham and its setting in the wider landscape. The maintenance of high quality urban/rural edges with the surrounding countryside is very important. Medium density development could address Worgret road and decrease to lower density development in middle part of the site with very low densities towards the rural edges accompanied by generous landscape margins. The provision of suitably large trees (and for development to allow for this) both within gardens and throughout any new development would contribute to the integration of buildings within this area and maintain a satisfactory relationship with the wider landscape and a soft treed skyline.

Wareham Potential for Development

06.2

Conclusion

Conclusion

Wareham is a town of strong architectural and townscape character value and demonstrates a generally positive transition between town and countryside.

Opportunities for outward expansion are severely restricted by landscape, ecological designations and floodplains. Within the town, heritage designations represent a further constraint in many areas.

Nevertheless, limited opportunities for infilling, both within and outside the 'walls' could allow for some additional development. The Wareham Middle School may also afford a potentially large opportunity site. However, new development on elevated sites or infilling around the town's low density edges could impact on the setting and skyline of Wareham. Any proposals in these locations should have regard to existing trees and vegetation and seek to maintain its treed appearance and character of gradual transition between Wareham and its surrounding landscape.



Wareham

Appendix

07.1


Stakeholder Consultation Summary


7.1.1 Stakeholder consultation events were held on 4th December 2007 (for the towns) and 27th February 2008 (for the villages) to present the work being undertaken and set out the approach to the research and analysis for each settlement.


7.1.2 Each presentation was followed by a questions and a workshop. The workshops were designed to draw out the opinions of stakeholders about the character of their town or village. Views on potential opportunities for future development were also sought, having regard to planning constraints, such as flooding.

The following questions were asked:

1. How do you perceive different parts of your town? Using the definitions and colours provided, identify areas, assigning them as either:

 strong character, sense of place and distinctive streetscene, importance in terms of local identity.

 less distinctive character but makes a definite contribution in terms of local identity and sense of place.

 'anywhere' or commonplace development which contributes relatively little to sense of place or local identity.

2. What features of the townscape do you value most and feel are most distinctive? Identify on the map and/or list as many as you can.

3. What features of the townscape do you least value? Identify on the map and/or list as many as you can.

4. Bearing in mind designations, can you identify sites where there may be opportunities for development or improvement? Identify both greenfield and brownfield sites on the map and/or list as many as you can. If improvements are suggested explain what these consist of.

5. Bearing in mind designations, can you identify parts of the town which would be particularly suited to intensification? Identify brownfield sites on the map/list. How do these correspond to the values assigned in part 1 of the exercise?

7.1.3 The workshop feedback is summarised below: (N/B Wareham and North Wareham were discussed together)

Townscape Workshop Feedback

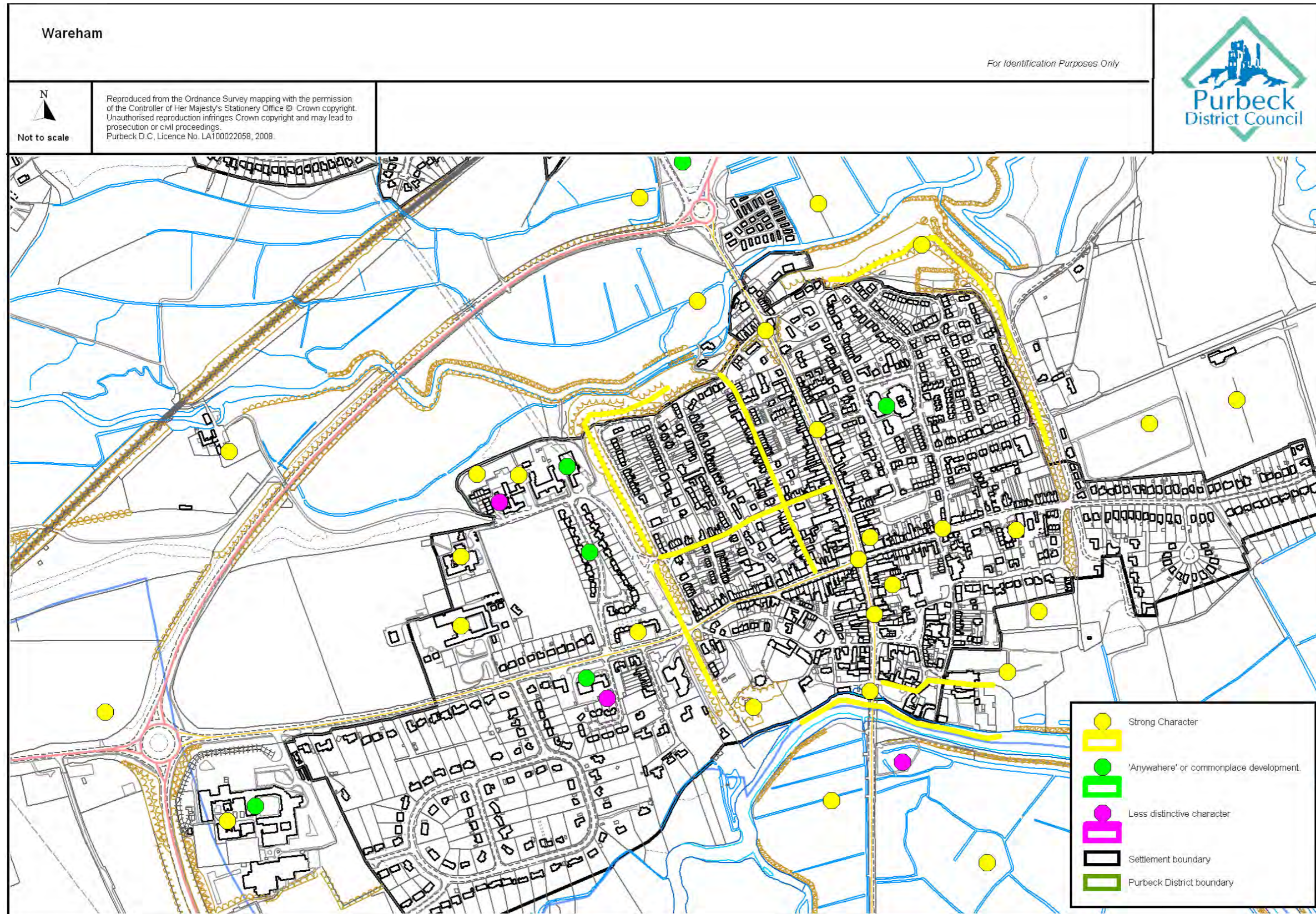
- Saxon 'walls' very important – not enough made of them. Saxon re-enactment on 'walls' should be encouraged.
- All approaches to Wareham should be protected
- Issues with definitions;
- Schools – locally distinctive (yellow dots) but not visually pleasing (green dot).
- 'Walls' area is very distinctive (yellow line).
- Bells Orchard – fairly sensitive estate by the standards of the time.
- Old Alms Houses – sense of history.
- Stowell Crescent – huge gardens but not such attractive houses.

Opportunities for development:

- East of bypass (playing field area)
- Gas works
- Northmoor
- Between station and Carey (disputed) – relocate businesses
- Golf course (disputed)

Opportunities for intensification

- If playing field is developed should south-side of Worgret Road be intensified to 'match'?
- Different opinions on intensification of Worgret Road – 2 or 3 garden plots do not work – needs to be holistic with more plots with comprehensive scheme.
- Frome Road? But there is only one access.
- Piecemeal development of small plots would not work in any situation.
- Wessex Oval – people living there love the place – greener, bungalows.
- Smell of landfill a problem and the pylons on Bere Road.
- Stowell Crescent area needs to be looked at as a whole – all the plots, not incremental adding of development.
- View from bypass is important.
- Development should not go to edge of bypass.
- No 'anywhere' development - high quality design required.
- Move Purbeck School (disputed).



Map generated from stakeholder workshop identifying areas of differing character within Wareham.