

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 4 Shorts Lane

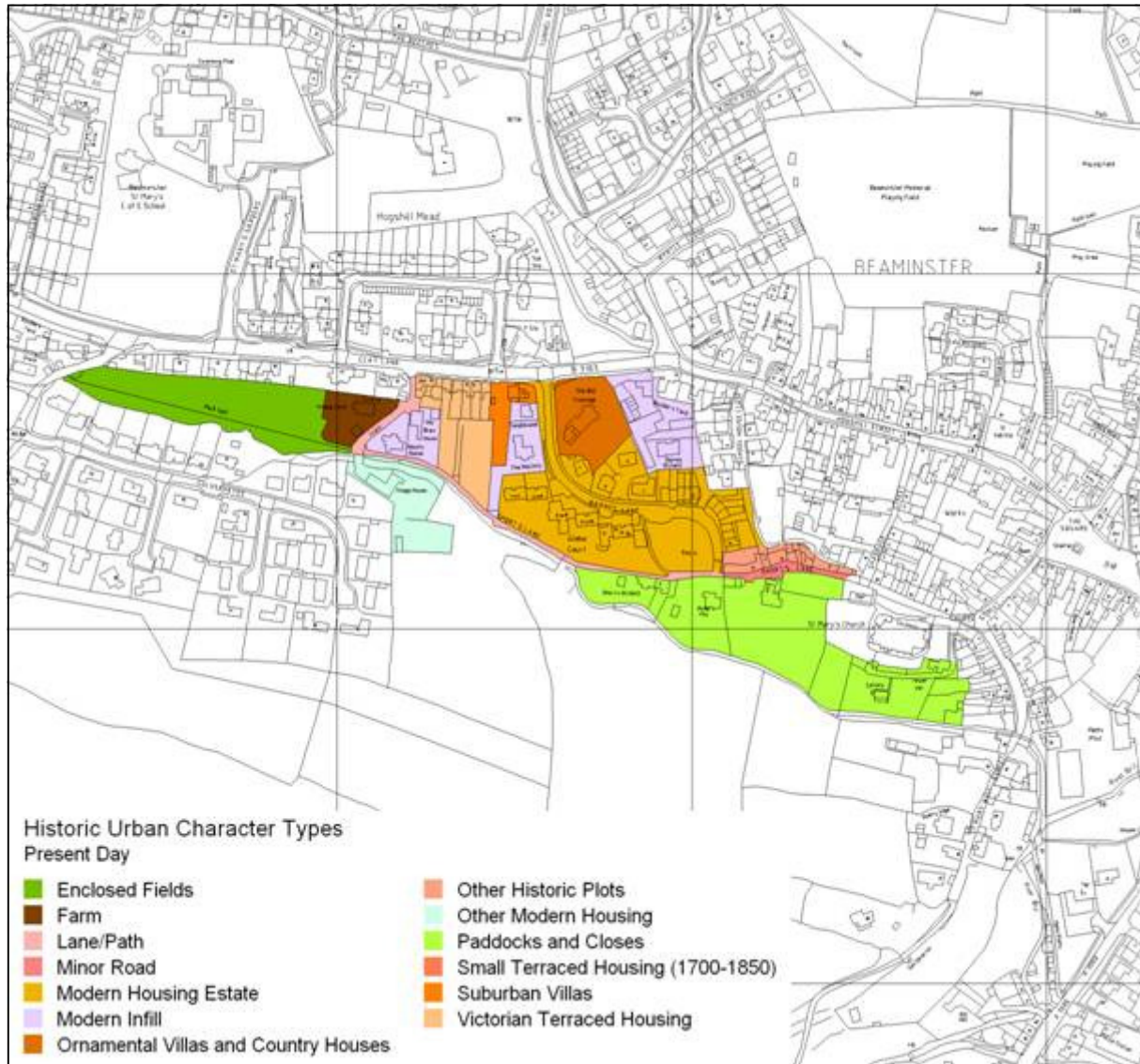


Figure 68: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 4, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 69: Shorts Lane viewed from East.



Figure 70: Western part of Shorts Lane.

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 4 Structure of Character Area

### Overview

This is the south-western edge of the historic core of Beaminster along the side of one of the tributary streams of the River Brit. The southern side is formed the stream and the northern edge by Clay Lane. It is defined primarily by its location just outside the historic core and its position on the urban edge.

### Topography and Geology

The area lies on the northern side of the valley of a small stream running from west to east and the ground slopes down to the south. At the eastern end of Clay Lane the ground drops steeply down to the junction with Hogshill Street and Tunnel Road. The whole of the area lies on Fuller's Earth Clays.

### Urban Structure

The structure of this area is not very coherent, but it comprises the properties to the south of Clay Lane down to the stream. Shorts Lane provides a southern route through this area. It survives as an unmetalled track towards the west and its line is continued by a footpath as far as Stoke Road.

The plots off Clay Lane are generally rectangular or rectilinear in shape but are irregular in their proportions. At the eastern end of Clay Lane the plots are larger and more irregular. Along the stream edge to the south of Shorts Lane are larger paddocks and gardens.

### Present Character

Figure 68 shows the present day historic urban character types. There is not a consistent character throughout this area. Along the streets are a mixture of historic plots, small historic housing (1700-1850), Victorian terraced housing and Ornamental Villas. The largest part of the area comprises a modern housing estate



Figure 71: Clay Lane

and modern infill. To the south of Shorts Lane are a series of paddocks and closes. At the western end is a farm and adjacent enclosed field.

### Time Depth

The two routes, Clay Lane and Shorts Lane are the oldest elements in this area. Shorts Lane is probably medieval or earlier in date. Clay Lane was an 18th century turnpike road, but its origins are much older. The plots along Shorts Lane are probably of early post-medieval date and many of the buildings date from the 18th and 19th century. The plots along Clay Lane date from the 19th century. The Old Vicarage dates from 1859-62, but its original extensive grounds have been carved up to form a modern housing estate and some modern infill housing.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is varied within the area. Overall, the area is of medium density housing, but this includes high density along Clay Lane and low density along the south side of Shorts Lane. Most of the houses along Clay Lane are set right on the street frontage, though the Old Vicarage is set well back at an angle to the road line. The houses along the north side of Shorts Lane are set right on the edge of the carriageway, but those on the south side are mainly set back in larger grounds, with stone perimeter walls. Stone perimeter walls (formerly to the grounds of the vicarage) are a feature on Barnes Lane. The Barnes Lane estate is based on a curving cul-de-sac layout.

There are two large open spaces in this area, the green on Barnes Lane and the field west of Knapp Farm. Other enclosed green spaces also form a significant element of this area, particularly along the south side of Shorts Lane (which feels rural in character in its western part) and the grounds of the Old Rectory.



Figure 72: Barnes Lane.

## Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 4 Built Character

### **Building types**

The buildings of this area are rather diverse. The historic buildings comprise a mixture of gentry houses and cottages, some of which form informal groups, of 18th and 19th century date. Almost all the buildings are of two storeys, with or without attics. Modern houses form a large proportion of the buildings in this area.

The gentry houses comprise Minster View with its fine classical 18th century brick façade and the Old Vicarage built in an asymmetrical Victorian Gothic style in 1859-61, somewhat uncommon in Dorset (Newman and Pevsner 1972). The humbler historic buildings are of relatively informal style, varying in size, layout and detailing. The oldest house in this area is probably the 17th century cottage at 2 Shorts Lane, which has a jointed cruck roof construction (RCHME 1952, 24).

Some buildings formerly used for industrial or craft purposes and now converted to domestic use also survive along Shorts Lane. These include the former smithy adjacent to 2 Shorts Lane and the former bag manufactory at 3 Shorts Lane.

The modern houses are of standard late 20th century type, with no local distinctiveness.

Some of the more recent houses are in a neo-vernacular style (Figure 72).

### **Building Materials**

Local yellow-brown Inferior Oolite stone is used for the majority of the historic buildings. Minster View has a fine 18th century brick front. Many of the buildings along Clay Lane have rendered walls. The roofs are predominantly slate, with some ceramic tiled roofs (notably on the Old Vicarage).

The modern houses are primarily a mixture of red and yellow brick, with tiled roofs. Some houses have stone cladding.

### **Key Buildings**

The Old Rectory, 2 Shorts Lane, 'Minster View' 6 Shorts Lane, Knowle Cottage (with its garden walls and gate piers) 1 Shorts Lane, 'Flax Mill Cottage' 3 Shorts Lane.



Figure 73: Minster View, 6 Shorts Lane.



Figure 74: Flax Mill Cottage, 3 Shorts Lane, formerly David Bugler's Bag Manufactory, early 19th century.



Figure 75: Knowle Cottage, 1 Shorts Lane.



Figure 76: Former smithy, adjacent 2 Shorts Lane.

### Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 4 Archaeology

#### **Archaeological Investigations**

There has been one archaeological investigation in this area. A watching brief was undertaken during the construction of houses on former glebe land off Barnes Lane in 1995-6 (Figure 77). No archaeological finds or features were observed (Adkins 1996).

#### **Archaeological Character**

Most of the area lies beyond the medieval and early post-medieval town and is likely to contain very little urban archaeological evidence, as illustrated by the watching brief on Barnes Lane.

Shorts Lane is a historic lane probably of medieval or earlier date. There are historical references to post-medieval industrial activity along Shorts Lane and adjacent to St Mary's

Church and there may be some surviving industrial archaeological remains in this area.

There have been no discoveries of earlier pre-urban finds or features within the area, but the possibility of the discovery of evidence of earlier activity must not be discounted.

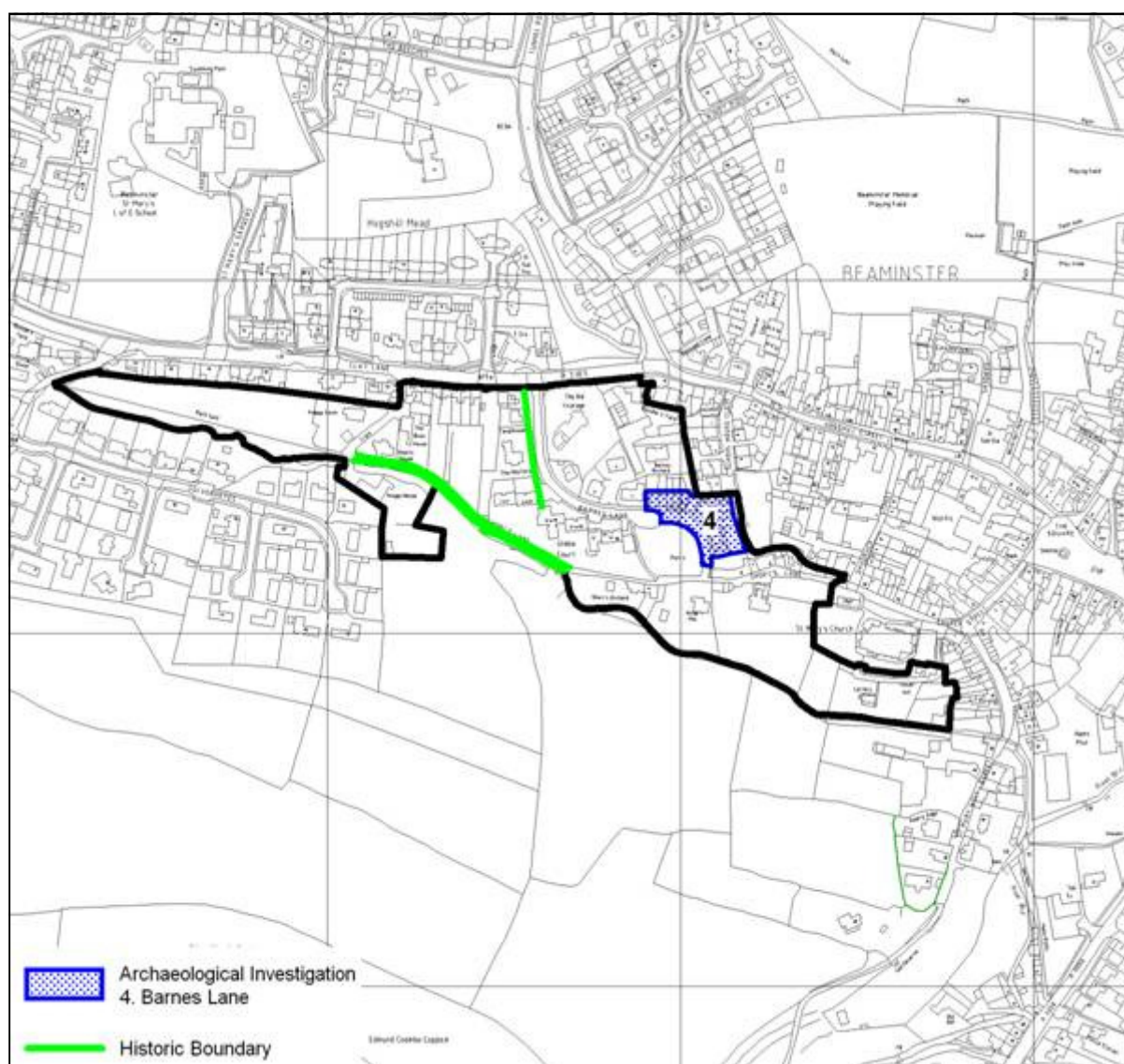


Figure 77: Archaeological Investigations and features in Historic Urban Character Area 4.

### Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 4 Designations

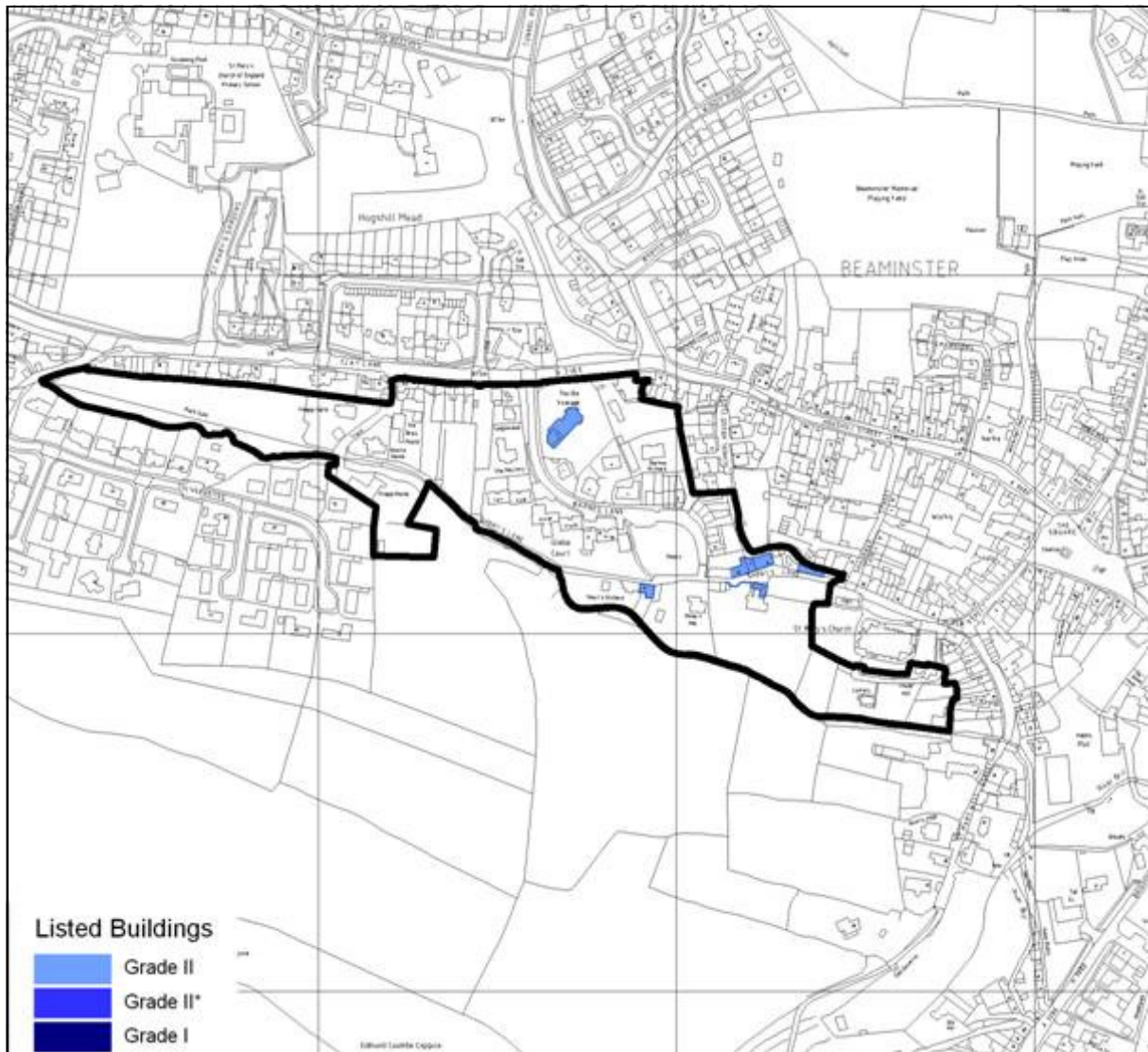


Figure 78: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 4.

#### **Listed Buildings**

There are five Listed Buildings in the Character Area. All are Grade II.

#### **Conservation Areas**

Almost all of this Character Area lies within the Beaminster Conservation Area (Figure 33).

#### **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 79: The Old Vicarage.

### Beaminster Historic Urban Character Area 4 Evaluation

#### ***Strength of Historic Character***

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **medium**. There is some survival of the historic layout and good historic buildings, particularly along Shorts Lane. However, the construction of a modern housing estate in the centre of this area has destroyed or obscured many of the historic boundaries and further modern infill has further obscured other spaces within the area. The topography and the strong contribution from the surrounding landscape to the south adds to the character of this area, which has a semi-rural feel along its southern margins.

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

The area has a **medium** sensitivity to major change. The overall pattern of the major routes in this area still survives, but modern development has diluted the historic structure in the central part of the area, making this area less sensitive to change. However, the good survival of historic buildings and the strong contribution from trees and landscape along Shorts Lane makes this area much more sensitive to change.

#### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. It lies outside the historic core of the medieval and post-medieval town and much of this area is unlikely to contain much archaeological data on the development of the town, as it was not developed until the 19th century. The historical references to industrial activity along Shorts Lane indicate the potential to reveal industrial archaeological details on the former industries of the town.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on pre-urban activity, although there has been no previously recorded discoveries in this area.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 14, 16-18 (Part 7).

#### **Key Characteristics**

- Historic hedged lane (Shorts Lane)
- 18th and 19th century houses and cottages along Shorts Lane
- High Victorian Gothic Vicarage
- Semi-rural character of southern edge of area