

Part 6: Historic Urban Character Appraisal



6.1 The historic urban character of Weymouth

The position of Weymouth, as a port at the mouth of the wide river Wey, has determined the location, form and character of the town. Weymouth, on the southern side of the estuary, seems to have developed first, but subsequent development was curtailed by its loca-

tion, with high ground immediately to the south. Melcombe Regis, on the northern side of the estuary, had no such problems, being situated on a broad, flat, peninsula. The pattern of streets reflects this topography. Away from the historic core development has been centred on the small historic settlements of Broadwey, Wyke Regis and Elwell.

Weymouth is very much a linear settlement,

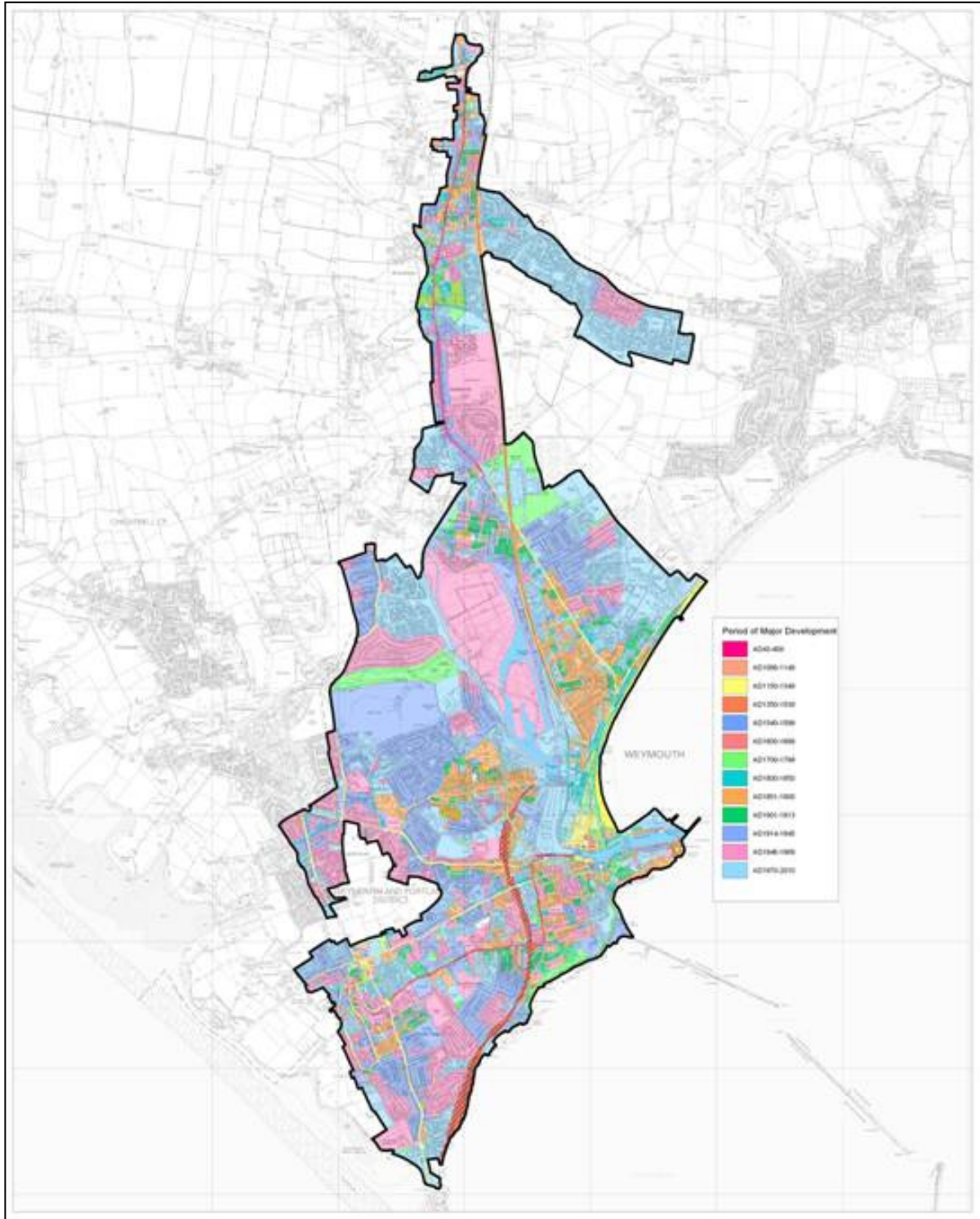


Figure 41: Map showing the major periods of development in Weymouth

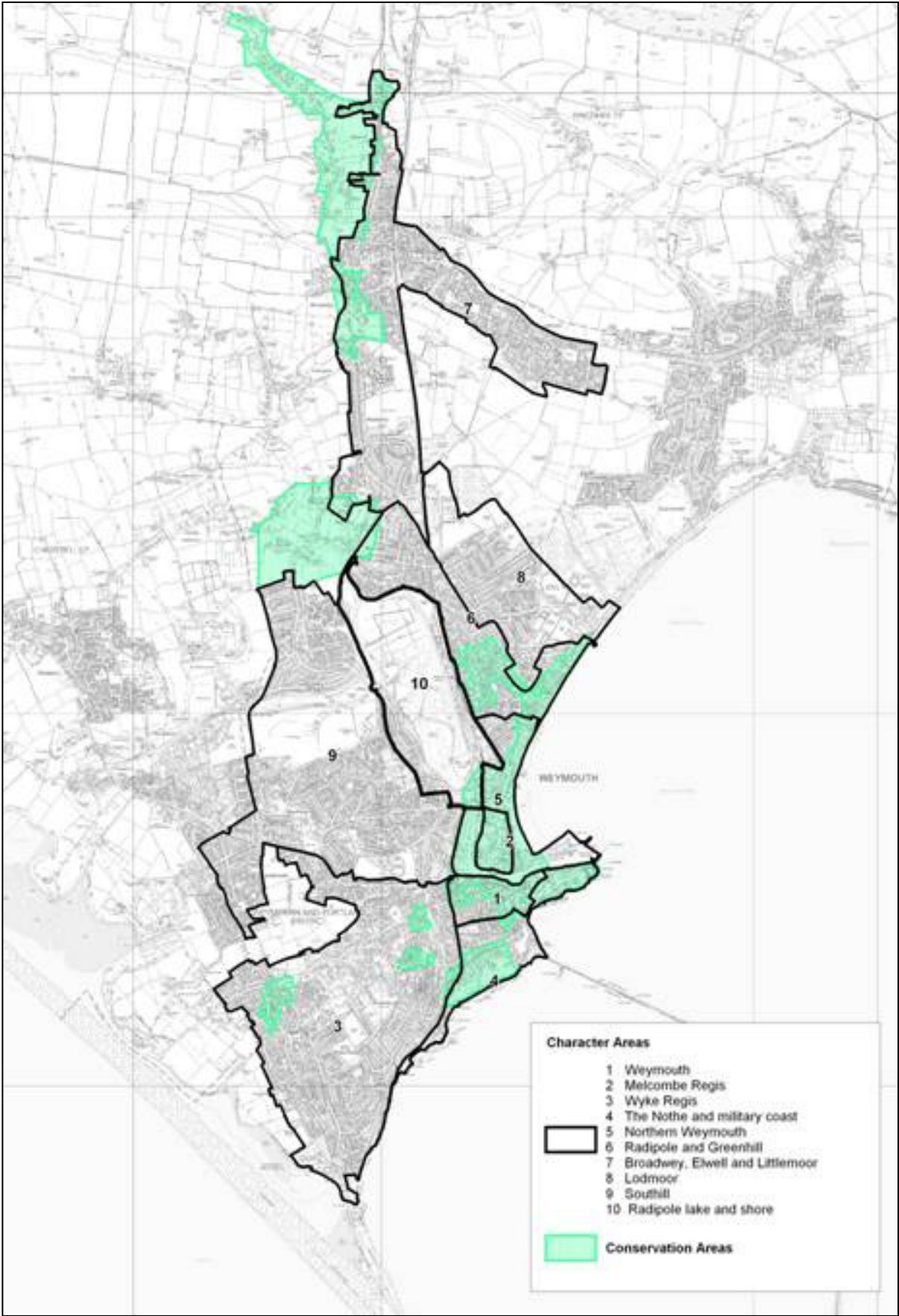


Figure 42: Weymouth Historic Urban Character Areas in relationship to the Conservation Areas

following the edge of the harbour, whilst Melcombe is laid out on a strict grid pattern, probably reflecting the original plans of the thirteenth century. Later development initially continued this grid, only ceasing to respect it as buildings were laid out away from the peninsula, following the roads leading away from the town. Later nineteenth and twentieth century development, has tended to take the form of initially blocks of terraced housing, and latterly housing estates with winding cul-de-sacs, which have filled in the open ground between the historic town and the outlying settlements.

The historic buildings form a major element of the historic character of Weymouth. There are a large number of very fine 18th and 19th century buildings, particularly terraces which reflect the importance of Weymouth as a holiday resort at this time.

There has been substantial modern development, on all sides of the town, mostly in the form of extensive housing estates.

6.2 Historic Urban Character Areas of Weymouth

A total of ten Historic Urban Character Areas have been defined for Weymouth as shown on Figure 42. They comprise the historic core of the town (Character Areas 1 and 2), areas of pre-19th century suburban growth (Areas 3-5), and later suburbs (Areas 6-10).

1. Weymouth historic core
2. Melcombe Regis historic core
3. Wyke Regis and Ferrybridge
4. The Military Coast
5. Northern Weymouth
6. Radipole and Greenhill
7. Broadwey, Elwell and Littlemoor
8. Lodmoor
9. Southill and Westham
10. Radipole lake and shore