

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 10 Radipole lake and shore

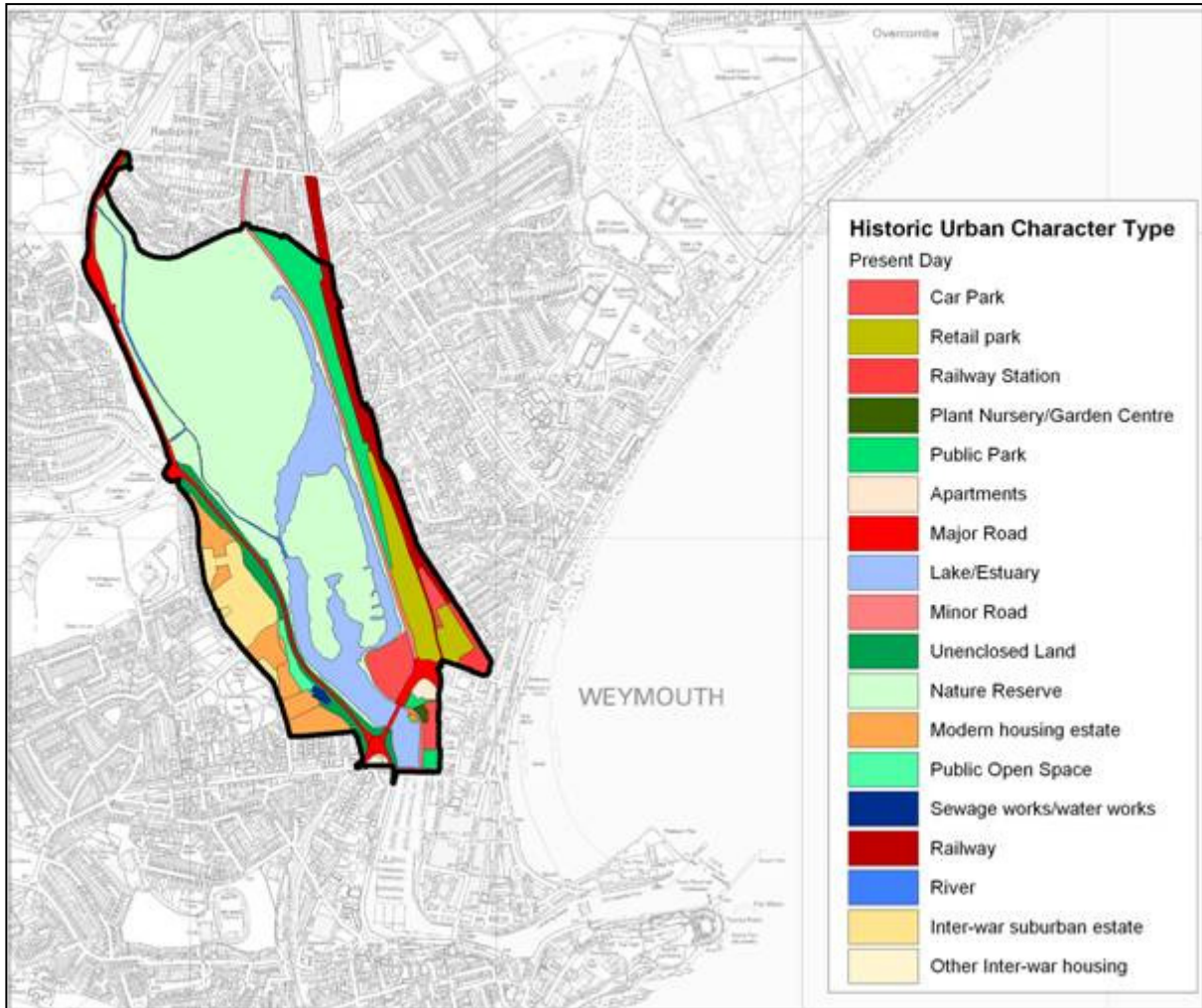


Figure 117: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 10, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 118: Radipole lake



Figure 119: Radipole lake and wildlife

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 10 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is the nature reserve that lies in the heart of Weymouth, consisting of the former estuary of the river Wey, together with land around the edges, which has virtually all been reclaimed, mostly in the 19th and 20th centuries. It is defined primarily by the edge of the marshland and reclaimed land.

Topography and Geology

The ground is very flat, mostly only a little higher than the level of the water. Most of the land is reclaimed land.

Urban Structure

The lake is the focus with roads running around it. Only on the western side there are areas of modern housing with regular plots.

Present Character

Figure 117 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area consists of Radipole lake with a thin strip of land around it. On the western side there is an area of housing, consisting of inter-war and post-war estates. On the eastern side there is a public park, retail park, railway station and car parks. The modern Swannery and Westham bridges lie in the area.

Time Depth

Radipole lake was the former estuary of the River Wey and once provided access for ships to Radipole village, whilst prehistoric finds have been made in the river by Westham bridge. Westham bridge originally dates from the 19th century, as does the railway station, though both have been rebuilt. The public park, housing and roads mostly date from the later 20th century.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is of high density housing in an irregular block beside the lake. This modern housing consists of detached or semi-detached houses with small gardens in front. Elsewhere the only development is in the area of the retail park and railway station and consists of modern industrial and commercial buildings.

Most of the area is the open space of the lake and associated marshes, which is a nature reserve, whilst to the east is Radipole Park Gardens. There are also large car parks by the Swannery, railway station, retail park and along Commercial Road.



Figure 120: Radipole nature reserve

**Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 10
Built Character*****Building types***

The area is characterised by modern buildings. There are modern detached and semi detached houses to the west of the lake. To the east there are modern industrial and commercial buildings around the station and retail park.

The industrial and commercial buildings, including the railway station, are modern with flat roofs and built in non-local materials with little concession to local distinctiveness.

The post-war and modern houses are generally two-storey, and a mixture of detached and semi-detached buildings. None of these houses have particular local distinctiveness in terms of their design and use of building materials. Some of the more recent houses are in a neo-vernacular style.

Building Materials

The modern houses are built of brick with tile or slate roofs. The industrial and commercial buildings are built of steel and concrete.

Key Buildings

Westham Bridge



Figure 121: Radipole Park Drive, industrial estate



Figure 122: Radipole Park Drive, playground

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 10
Archaeology

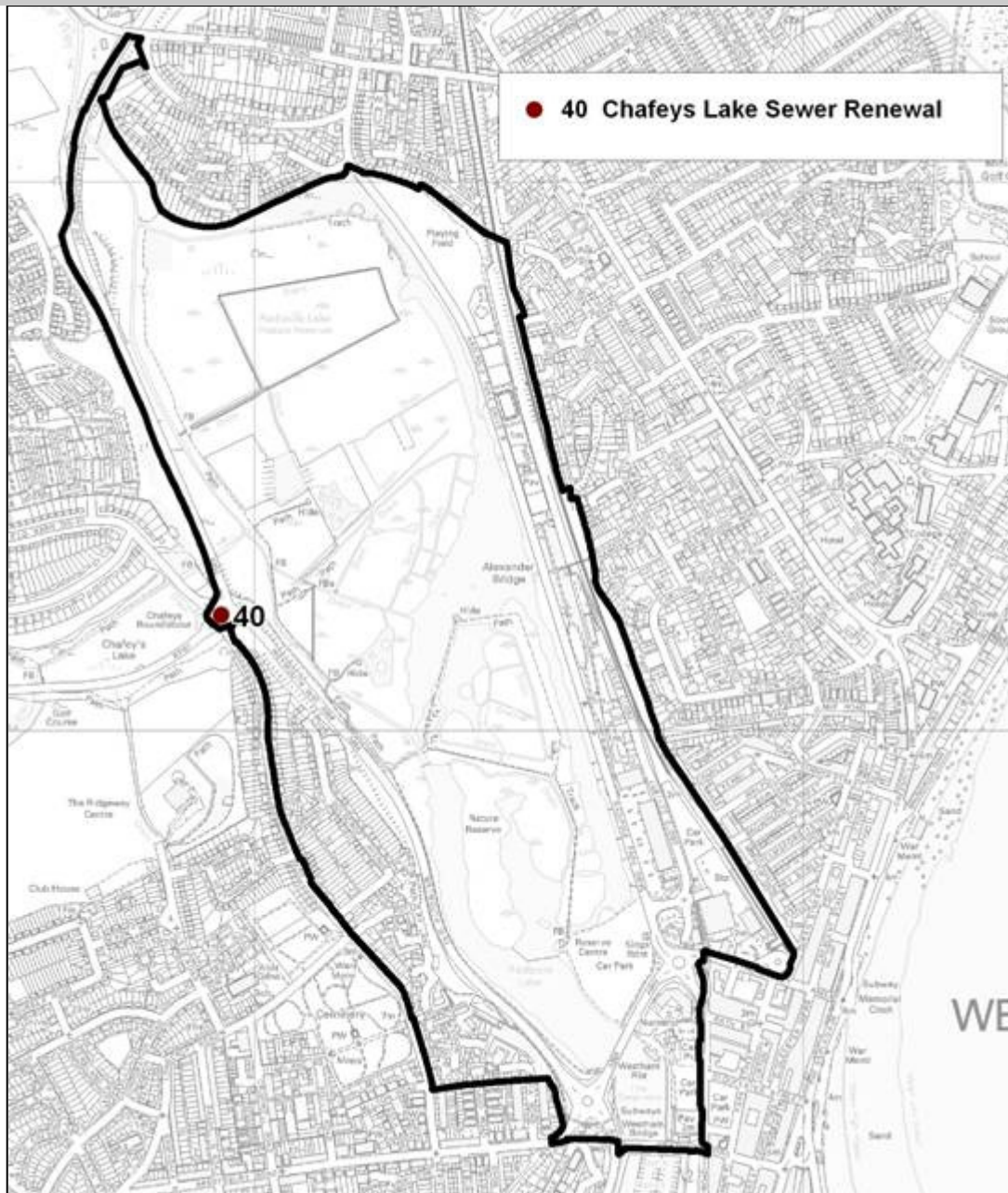


Figure 123: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 10

Archaeological Investigations

There has been only one archaeological investigation in this character area. Observations of deep trenching for underground pipes near Chafey's Roundabout recorded Lower Oxford Clay beds. No archaeological finds or features were noted (Chapman 2001).

Archaeological Character

The very limited below-ground investigation constrains any consideration of the archaeological resource. Nevertheless, the nature and location of this character area adjacent to the historic town, suggests that

evidence associated with quayside activities, transport links along the Wey valley, and episodes of reclamation may exist.

Finds of Bronze Age swords in the vicinity of Westham Bridge, interpreted as possible ritual deposits, and other chance finds and observations in the vicinity suggest a level of prehistoric activity in the general area. The precise form and extent of any such activity are not clear on present evidence. The presence of well-preserved waterlogged deposits, including organic material and palaeoenvironmental evidence, cannot be ruled out.

**Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 10
Designations**

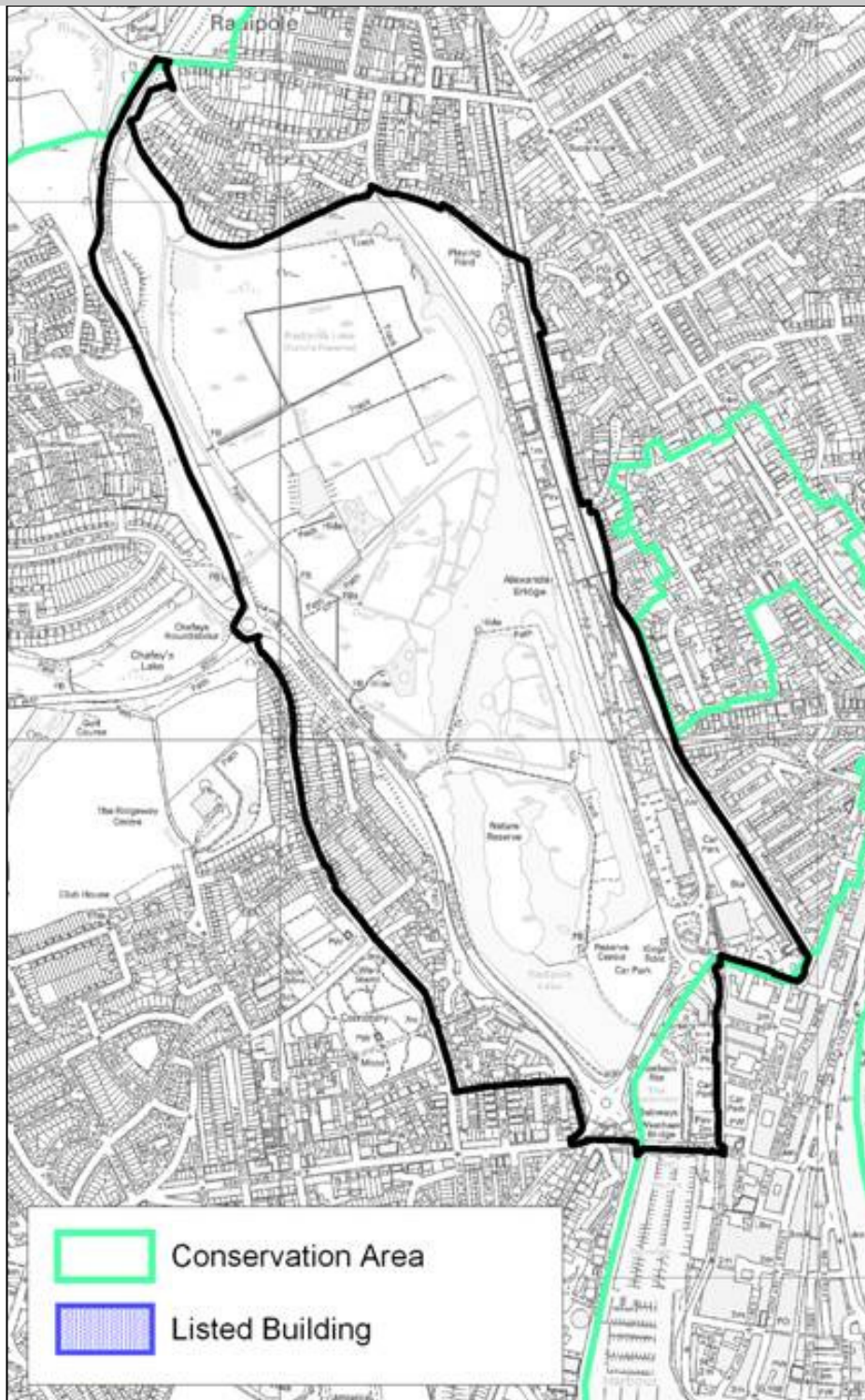


Figure 124. Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 10

Listed Buildings

There are no Listed Building designations in the character area.

Conservation Areas

A small part of the Weymouth Conservation Area lies within this character area.

Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the character area.

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the character area.

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 10 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of historic character of this area is judged to be **weak**.

However, the contribution of this area to the character of Weymouth lies in its provision of a 'green' space penetrating close to the historic core of the town. In a sense, this area provides a link to the pre-urban landscape of the area.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. Any development will fundamentally change the character of the area. It is also exceptionally sensitive in terms of its natural environment value, and archaeological potential.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It lies outside the historic core of the medieval core of the town and consequently is unlikely to provide much information on the development of the town. However, the fringes of the area may contribute evidence relating to the development of the railway and episodes of reclamation.

There is potential for recovery of information relating to trade and transport along the Wey valley at all periods, urban and pre-urban.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on pre-urban activity (as suggested by the Bronze Age findspots) in the area. The nature of the greater part of this

character area is such that well-preserved waterlogged deposits, including organic material and palaeoenvironmental evidence may be anticipated.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 22, 23, 24 (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Lake and course of river Wey
- Development around fringe, largely industrial and commercial in nature
- Pre-urban activity, including apparently ritual deposits