

# Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 5 Northern Weymouth

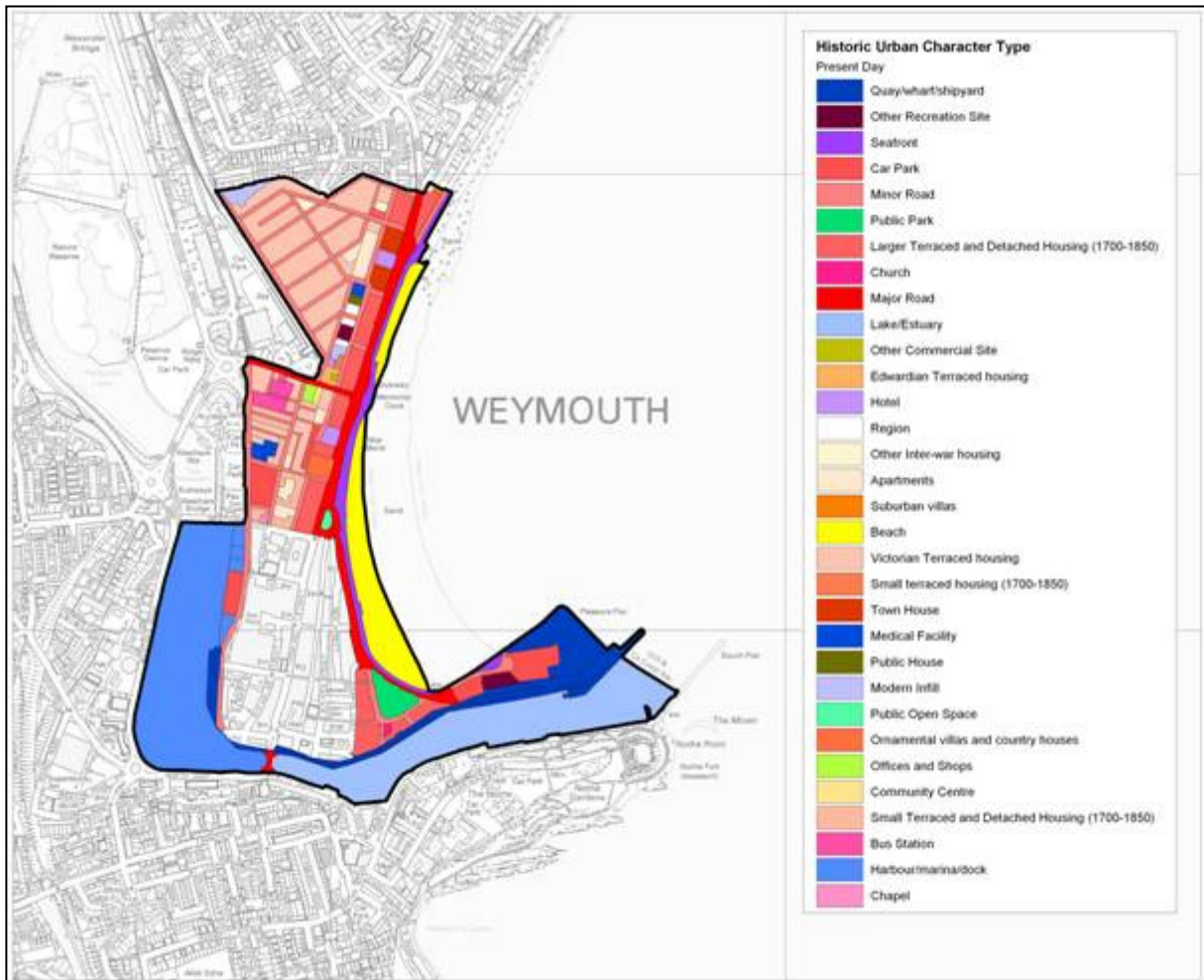


Figure 78: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 5, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 79: Gloucester Lodge



Figure 80: Town Bridge

## Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 5 Structure of Character Area

### Overview

This area can be thought of in three parts: the nineteenth century part of Weymouth, lying to the north of the historic core; the Esplanade, Alexandra Gardens and the Pavilion and Ferry Terminal, forming the focus of the recreation industry of the town; and the harbour itself including the quaysides and the Town Bridge.

### Topography and Geology

The ground is generally flat, indeed much of the terrestrial part of the area lies on reclaimed land, including the Park district, the area of the Pavilion and much of the quaysides. Away from the reclaimed land much of the town lies on Oxford Clays.

### Urban Structure

The road pattern forms two contrasting areas. The late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century developments lay along northeast - southwest roads which ran parallel to the shore and essentially continued the original medieval grid pattern of the town northwards. The mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century developments of the Park district lie at 45 degrees to these roads and parallel the railway.

There is a group of houses around Alexandra gardens, reflecting its nature as a public open space, with extensive car parks around the Pavilion and Ferry Terminal.

### Present Character

Figure 78 shows the present day historic urban character types. The area predominantly comprises late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces fronting onto the sea with, behind them, extensive areas of later Victorian terraced housing. The Pavilion and Ferry Terminal form separate urban character types, as does the

harbour.

### Time Depth

This area represents the parts of the town which were developed to serve the growing leisure industry during early nineteenth century, as well as the harbour which has been the *raison d'être* for the town from antiquity. The Promenade shelters are important examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> century leisure based architecture, whilst the pier bandstand is an excellent example of later Art Deco construction.

### Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is high density housing in terraces on a regular grid, apart from the areas around the Pavilion and Ferry Terminal. The esplanade and harbour side are wide streets, with significant areas given over to pedestrians.

Alexandra gardens and the esplanade are the most important public open spaces, there are also large car parks at the Pavilion and Ferry Terminal as well as on Commercial Road.



Figure 81: Pier bandstand



Figure 82: Alexandra Gardens, Baptist Chapel

## Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 5 Built Character

### ***Building types***

The area is characterised by a large number of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, and relatively few modern buildings. There are large terraced and attached houses, some incorporating commercial premises, some purpose-built as hotels or gentry houses, along the seafront; either in long frontages facing the sea or in short terraces at right angles to these frontages. In many cases the service buildings, such as stables, at the rear of these large houses have been converted to or replaced by residential buildings. The similarity in scale and generally consistent detailing and use of generally local building materials gives the seafront an exceptionally pleasing character. The almost continuous frontage is particularly striking. In many cases, original or very early replacement fittings have been retained. Behind the seafront, in the northern part of the character area, are terraces of housing associated with the arrival of the railway and the growth of Weymouth as a resort.

### ***Building Materials***

The houses are predominately brick, some of them, particularly the early 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces are rendered. The Kings Statue is an important monument in Coad Stone.

### ***Key Buildings***

Town Bridge  
Kings Statue  
Gloucester Lodge  
Pavilion  
Pier Bandstand  
Jubilee Clock  
Waterloo Place

Brunswick Terrace  
Promenade shelters  
Esplanade



Figure 83: Queen Street, Raneleagh Road junction



Figure 84: Westham Road, Salvation Army Citadel

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 5  
Archaeology

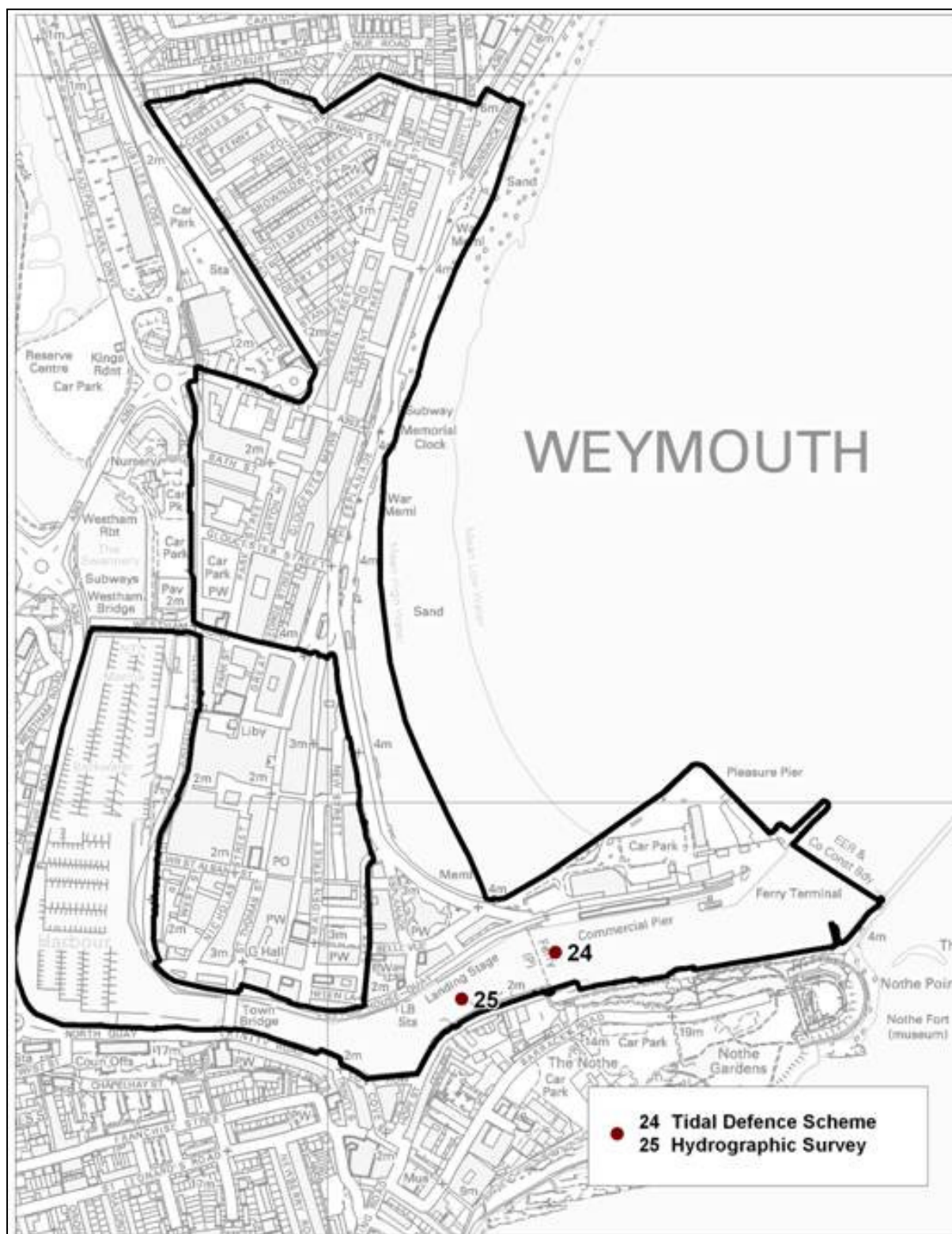


Figure 85: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 5



**Archaeological Investigations**

There have been no intrusive archaeological investigations in the area. A desk-based assessment considered the possible implications of a proposed Weymouth Harbour Tidal Defence Scheme (in this and adjacent areas) and concluded that 19th century reclamation deposits may be expected to a depth of at least 1.4m, below which natural beach surface and possible alluvial material might be anticipated. In addition, attention was drawn to the site of the main 17th century quay and another site where there may be an earlier quay (Weddell 1997).

Hydrographic survey has been carried out in the area of the marina and harbour mouth. Though not specifically archaeological in purpose, such surveys have the potential to reveal information about archaeological deposits, and are shown in Figure 85 for information.

**Archaeological Character**

The limited below-ground investigation constrains any consideration of the archaeological resource. The area incorporates the area of a late medieval and post-medieval quay, on the northern edge of the harbour, and below-ground deposits

associated with the construction and use of the quay, and with associated reclamation, and the later development of the Alexandra Gardens area for recreational use. Construction and maintenance of the marina and harbour in general may well have removed any archaeological deposits in that area. However, records of chance finds of a Roman amphora, possibly indicating a shipwreck, and Bronze Age swords from the vicinity of Westham Bridge, suggest that pockets of evidence of the pre-urban use of this area may survive.

The Tudor map of 1597 shows a straight bank running across the peninsula, just to the north of the medieval town. This is labelled 'conybery' hills. This would suggest it was a medieval rabbit warren, though the location, immediately opposite the location of Westham Bridge where the bronze swords were discovered raises the interesting possibility that it was an earlier earthwork. The presence of a 'great barrow' shown immediately north of the earthwork on the same map is also interesting, and perhaps significant.

**Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 5  
Designations**

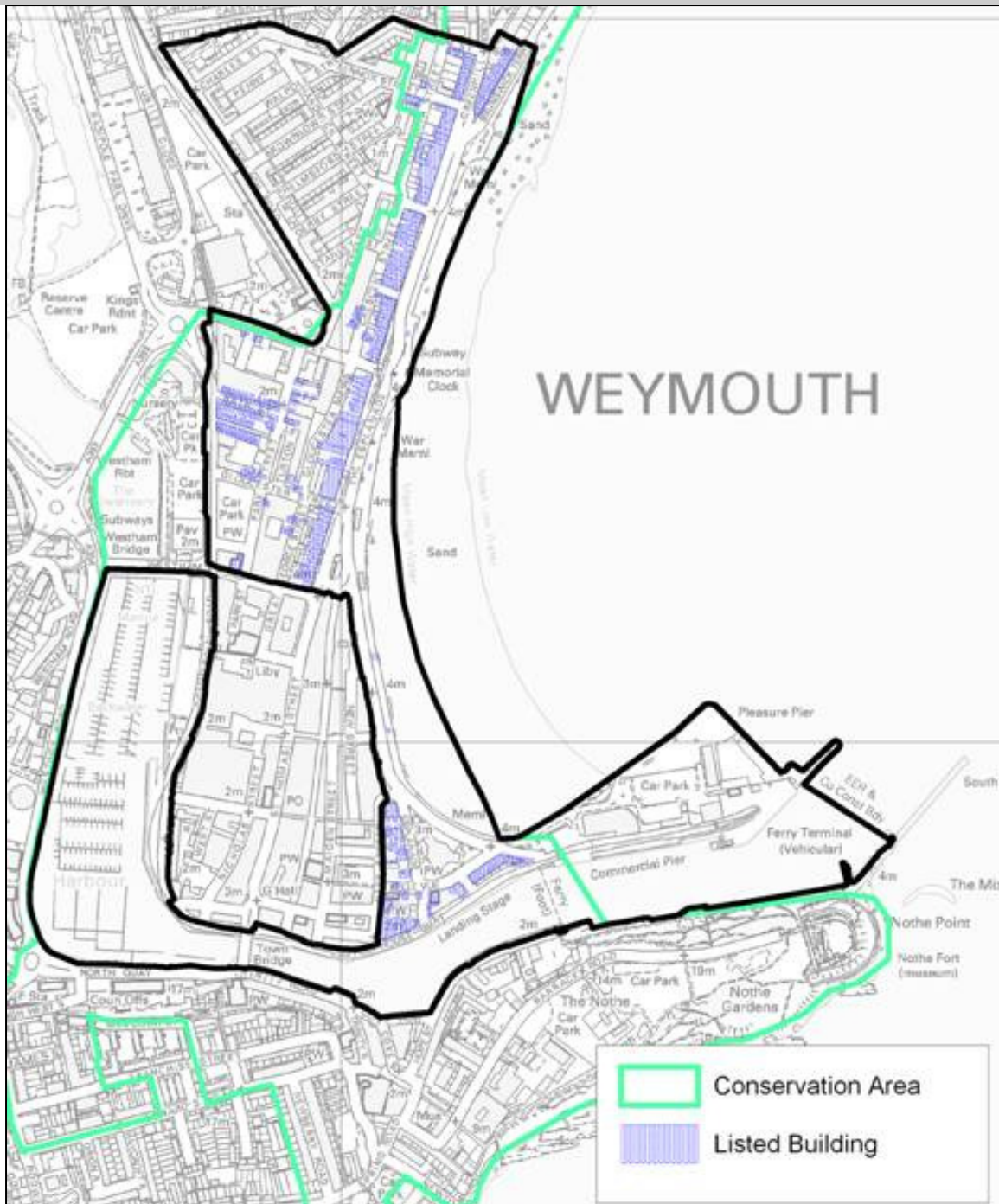


Figure 86: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 5

**Listed Buildings**

There are 82 Listed Building designations in the character area, of which one is Grade I (the King's Statue) and four Grade II\* (Gloucester Lodge, and the terraces of Devonshire Buildings, Pulteney Buildings and Waterloo Place). The others are listed Grade II.

**Conservation Areas**

The greater part of this character area is

covered by the Weymouth Conservation 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 5 Evaluation

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

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **high**. Developments associated with the continuing use of the quay and the development of the marina have led to a loss of historic character in some parts, though the essential nature of these areas as working quayside remains clear, and this continuity of an historic use is welcome. However, that part of the area which is characterised by 18<sup>th</sup> century and later recreational activity has a very strong character, with a large number of historic buildings and structures, some of exceptional significance. This part of the area retains a pleasing and coherent historic character.

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

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The scale and shape of historic streets and plots, notably the extension of the medieval street grid layout into later development in this area provide the underlying structure which gives the town its character. There are contrasting, but no less significant, areas of Victorian and later housing away from the seafront.

The street frontages formed mainly by historic buildings, particularly those along the seafront, are very sensitive to anything other than small-scale change and any opening up of the frontages would have a major impact upon the character.

That part of the character area which lines the seafront is visible from a long distance and several directions both within and outside the

town, with the result that any large-scale development would be very visible.

### ***Archaeological Potential***

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. It lies adjacent to the historic core of the medieval and early post-medieval town, but incorporates the sites of early quays and some eighteenth century and later development along the sea front in particular. It has the potential to reveal details on the development of the maritime aspects of the town, and on the town's transition to a seaside resort and spa.

The large number of historic buildings and outbuildings have potential to provide detailed information on the town's development as a resort, and to contribute to the understanding of the development of early seaside recreation.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on the pre-urban activity (as suggested by Bronze Age sword finds and a possible Roman wreck from the harbour).

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Chapels
- Early harbour and quayside
- Buildings and structures associated with historic resort and royal patronage
- Seafront promenade
- Alexandra Gardens and funfair