

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 9 Southhill and Westham

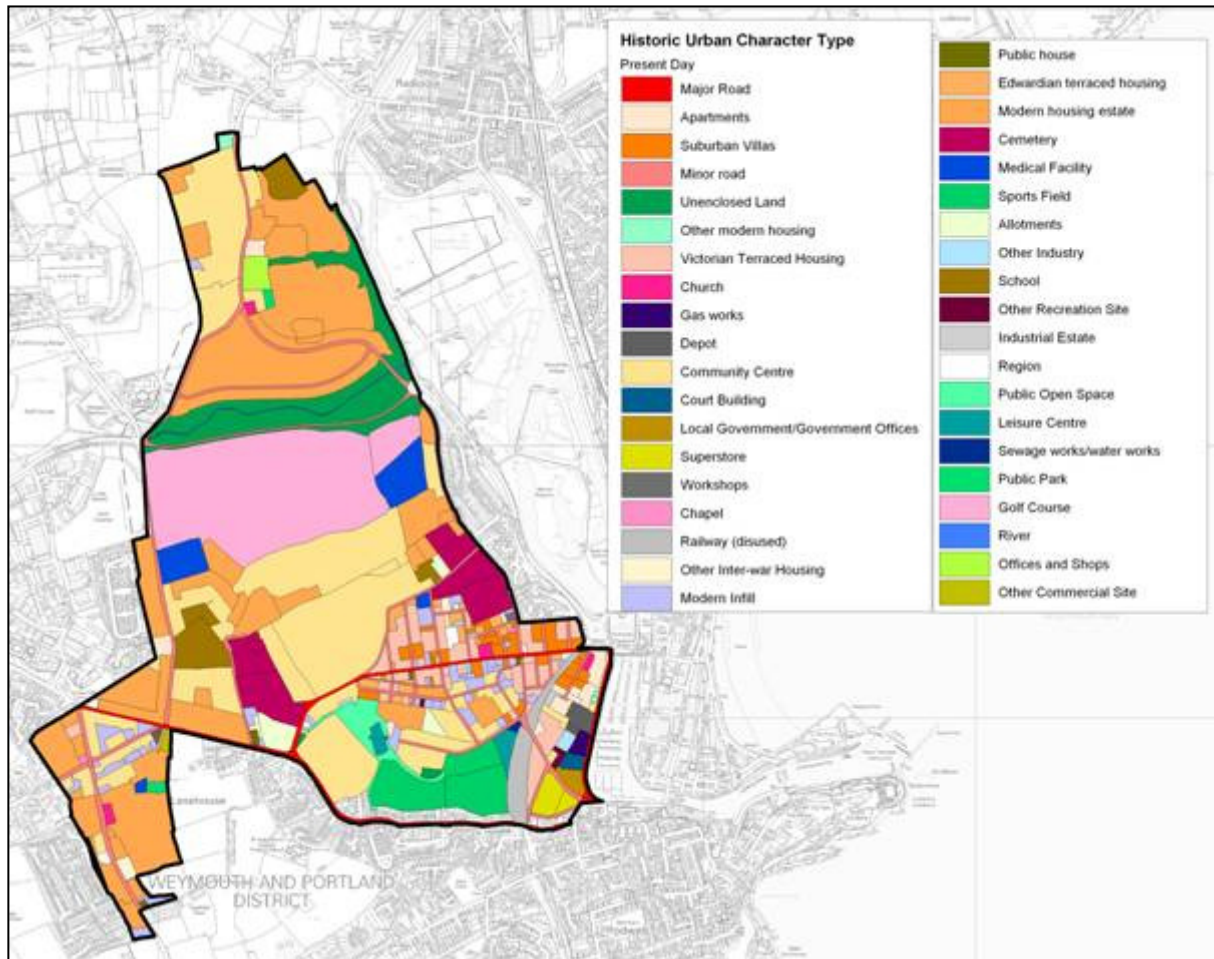


Figure 108: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 9, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 109: Melcombe Regis Burying ground, memorial



Figure 110: Weymouth Cemetery chapel

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 9 Structure of Character Area

Overview

This is an area of suburban expansion of Weymouth. It covers the residential areas of Southhill, Westham and Lanehouse, together with their associated facilities. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension. It lies to the west outside the historic core of the town and represents an area of 19th and 20th century suburban development, initially along Abbotsbury Road from Westham Bridge.

Topography and Geology

Generally, the ground rises from the east. However the area is divided in two by a shallow valley of Chafey's Lake which drains into the river Wey. Most of the area lies on Oxford Clay.

Urban Structure

There are blocks of housing separated by open ground. Southhill consists of modern housing estates based on culs-de-sac running off the two roads which cross this part of the area. Westham and Lanehouse have a more varied layout depending on the date of the houses, from terraces which front straight on the road, or with a minimal yard in front, to more recent housing estates where the houses are set back from the road behind small gardens.

Present Character

Figure 108 shows the present day historic urban character types. There are some Victorian and Edwardian terraces in Westham, along with a few suburban villas. However most of the housing consists of interwar and post war estates. There are two cemeteries, an area of allotments and a golf course.

Other minor historic urban character types include the supermarket in the south east corner, and the adjacent public offices and

gasworks.

Time Depth

This area represents the 19th and 20th century expansion of Weymouth, and includes a number of important facilities for the developing town, the cemeteries and the gas works. This area began to develop with the opening of Westham Bridge in the 1860s, which encouraged the development of suburban villas as well as terraced housing.

Later development included extensive housing estates, as well as a golf course.

Settlement Pattern and Streetscape

The settlement pattern is high density housing in separate blocks. Southhill consists of modern housing estates based on culs-de-sac whilst Westham and Lanehouse have a more varied layout depending on the date of the houses, from terraces which front straight on to the road, or with a minimal yard in front, to more recent housing estates where the houses are set back from the road behind small gardens. Alongside the harbour there is a more industrial element, of gasworks and public offices.

There is considerable open space in this area, notably Weymouth Golf Course, but there are also two cemeteries as well as playing fields, the enclosed marshland of Chafey's Lake, as well as smaller areas of public open space in the modern housing estates.



Figure 111: Westham, Abbotsbury Road



Figure 112: Westham, Abbotsbury Road

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 9 Built Character

Building types

The overall character of the built environment is one of modern suburban housing estate houses. There are terraces of Victorian and Edwardian houses along Abbotsbury Road in particular, and some suburban villas in more spacious gardens. The houses are predominantly two-storey.

The post-war and modern housing estates and modern infill are a mixture of one and two-storey buildings. They include small terraced and semi-detached houses, bungalows, and a range of modern detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. None of these post-war and modern estates have particular local distinctiveness in terms of their design and use of local building materials.

Building Materials

Apart from the churches and cemetery buildings, which are built of stone, all the other buildings are built of brick with slate or tile roofs.

Key Buildings

St George's Church, Southill

St Paul's Church, Westham

Westham and Melcombe Regis cemeteries



Figure 113: Abbotsbury Road, St Paul's Church



Figure 114: Melcombe Regis Burying Ground, Cemetery Lodge

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 9 Archaeology

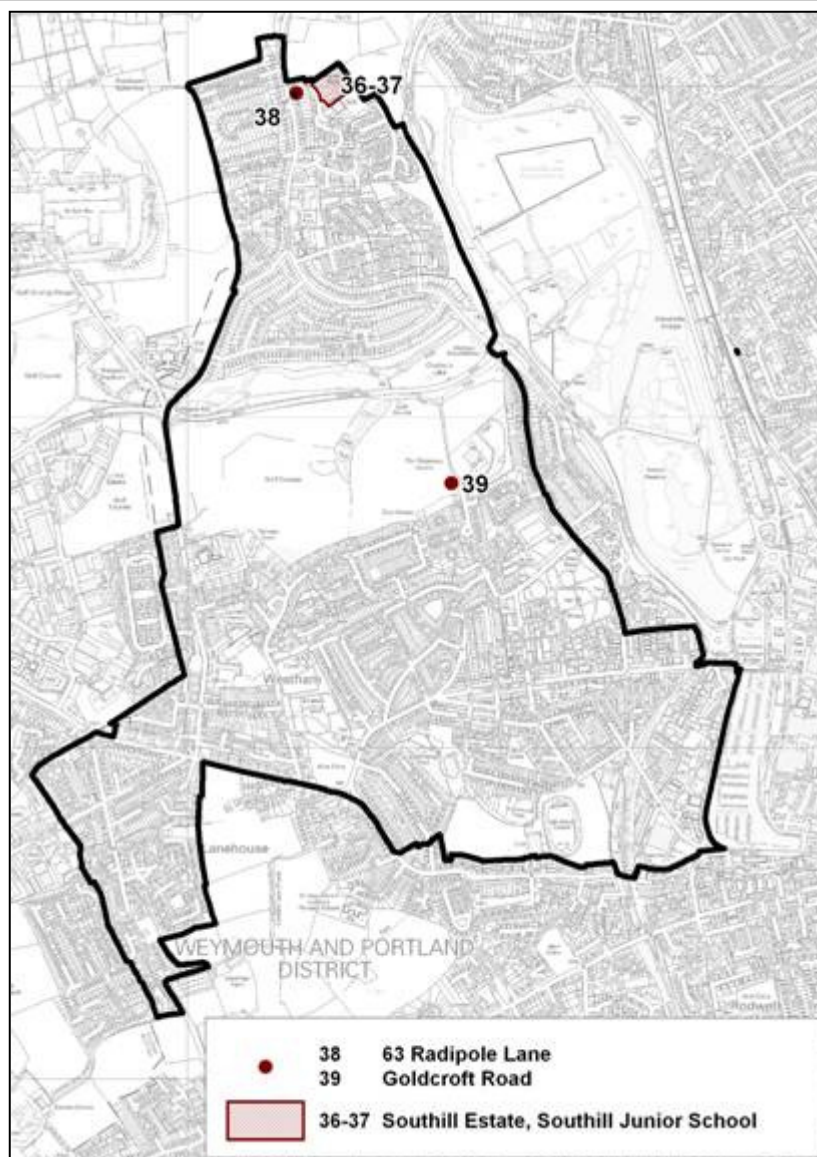


Figure 115: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 9

Archaeological Investigations

Three archaeological investigations have been undertaken – observations during levelling for a playing field at Southhill Junior School, a salvage record when an extension was built in Radipole Lane, and an evaluation at Goldcroft Road.

Romano-British occupation and burials were observed at Southhill Junior School, and limited examination of the field and selective removal of finds followed (Morris 1974, Keen 1977).

Three burials of probable Roman date were recorded at Radipole Lane. These finds tie in with numerous finds and observations of burials and settlement features in this general area.

The evaluation at Goldcroft Road encountered only modern field drains (Cox 1992).

Archaeological Character

Limited below-ground investigation constrains any consideration of the archaeological resource. There is unlikely to be any significant urban archaeological evidence, as the area is beyond the historic core of the town. It was essentially rural until relatively recently, and some surviving field boundaries may reflect this.

A concentration of finds and observations indicate the presence of Roman settlement and cemeteries in the northern part of the character area. The precise character and extent of these deposits is not clear on present evidence; the existence of similar activity in more southerly parts of the character area cannot be ruled out.

Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 9 Designations

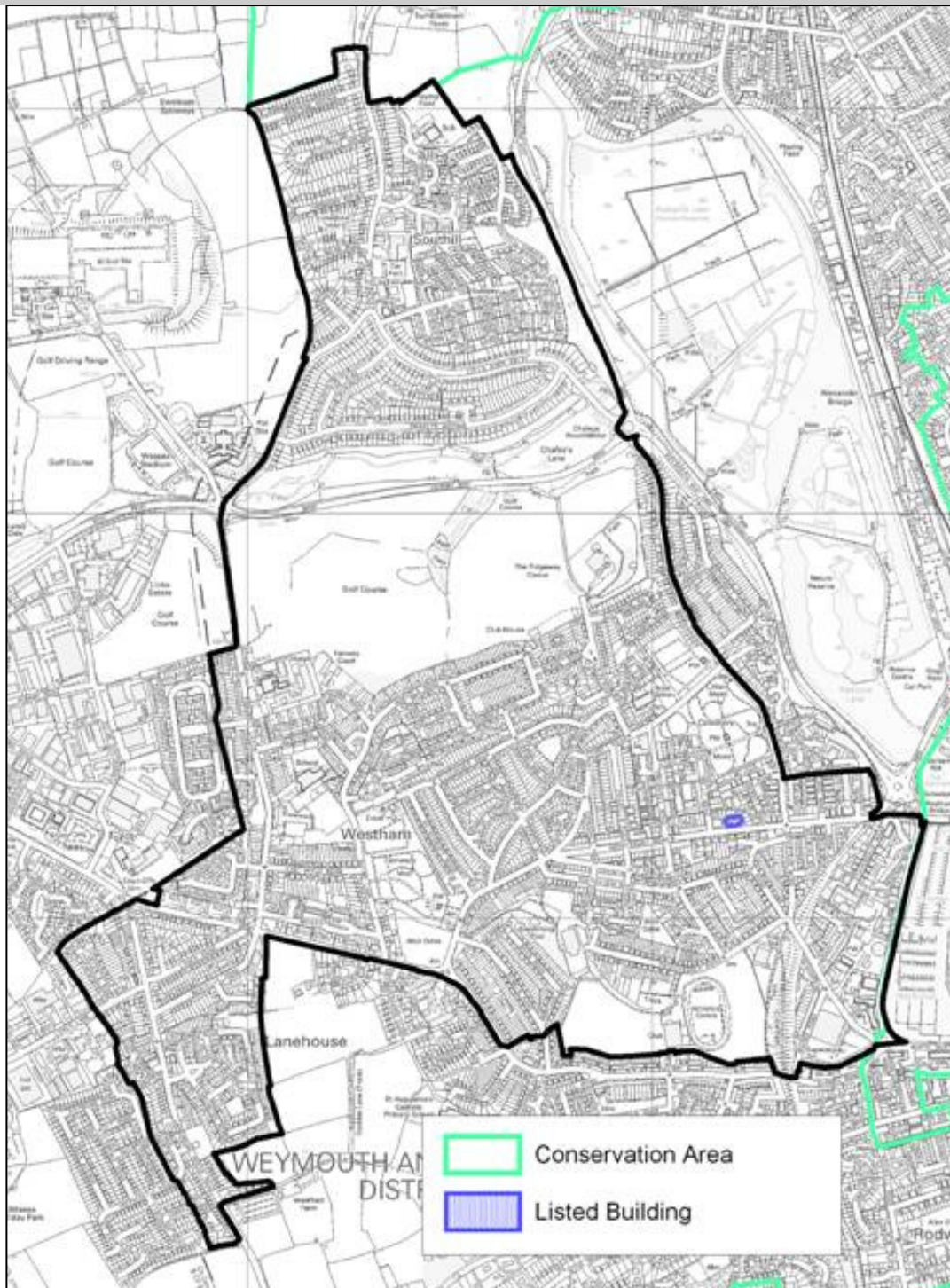


Figure 116 Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 9

Listed Buildings

There is one Listed Building in the character area, the Grade II St Paul's church, Abbotsbury Road.

Conservation Areas

There are no Conservation Area designations within the 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 9 Evaluation

Strength of Historic Character

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **weak**. There is little time depth evident in areas of primarily post-war housing estates. The areas of greatest historic character are the areas of late 19th and early 20th century suburban development along Abbotsbury Road, with Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing and features such as the cemeteries. In general, the modern buildings in the area have no local distinctiveness.

Sensitivity to Large Scale Development

In general, the area has a **low** sensitivity to major change as the majority of the area comprises modern suburban housing development. However, the areas of Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing and associated features, and areas that are still open ground will have a higher sensitivity.

Archaeological Potential

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **medium**. It lies outside the historic core of the town, and so has little potential to reveal evidence relating to the urban development of the area, although there is some potential to provide information on the suburban development of the town.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on the pre-urban activity. For example, the extent to which earlier field boundaries have been preserved within the layout of modern housing estates is not clear on present evidence, and may repay further

research. In particular, chance finds and observations suggest the presence of extensive Roman (and possibly late Iron Age) settlement and cemeteries in the northern part of the character area.

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 2, 9, 22, (Part 7).

Key Characteristics

- Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing, some incorporating commercial premises
- Suburban development along and in short terraces off approach road to town
- Cemeteries