

7.0 – CHARACTER AREAS



Woodsage Drive

DISTINCTIVE ELEMENTS OF GILLINGHAM

Unlike the local city of Salisbury, or town centre of Blandford Forum, Gillingham does not have an immediately identifiable style. Instead, and because of its age, it can be seen to have a theme derived from building materials, and the shape of the developments.

From the maps it is obvious that the Town's shape has been derived from the path of the rivers, the ancient roads and the railway line in 1859. Initially buildings were constructed from the natural yellow stone, and the industrial past has also played a role, through the later use of the Gillingham brick, with its distinctive red colour.

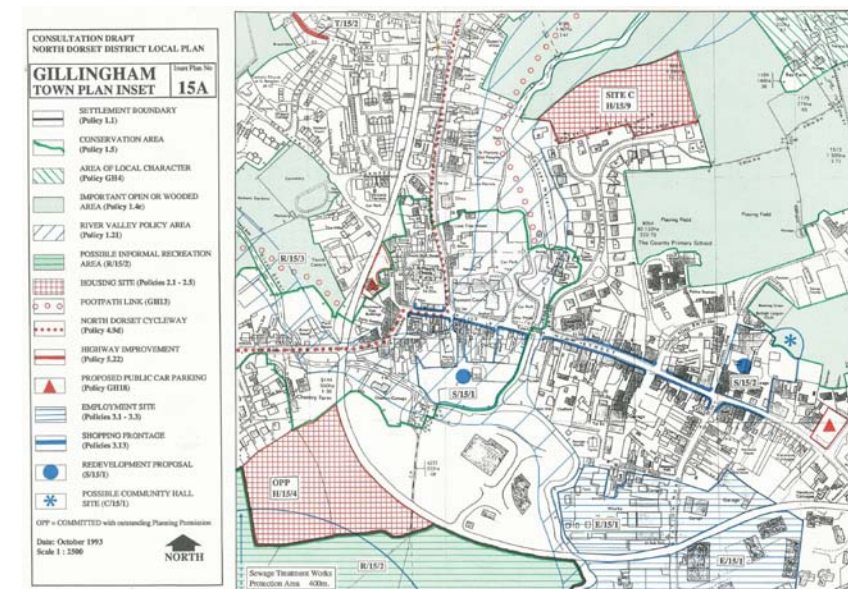
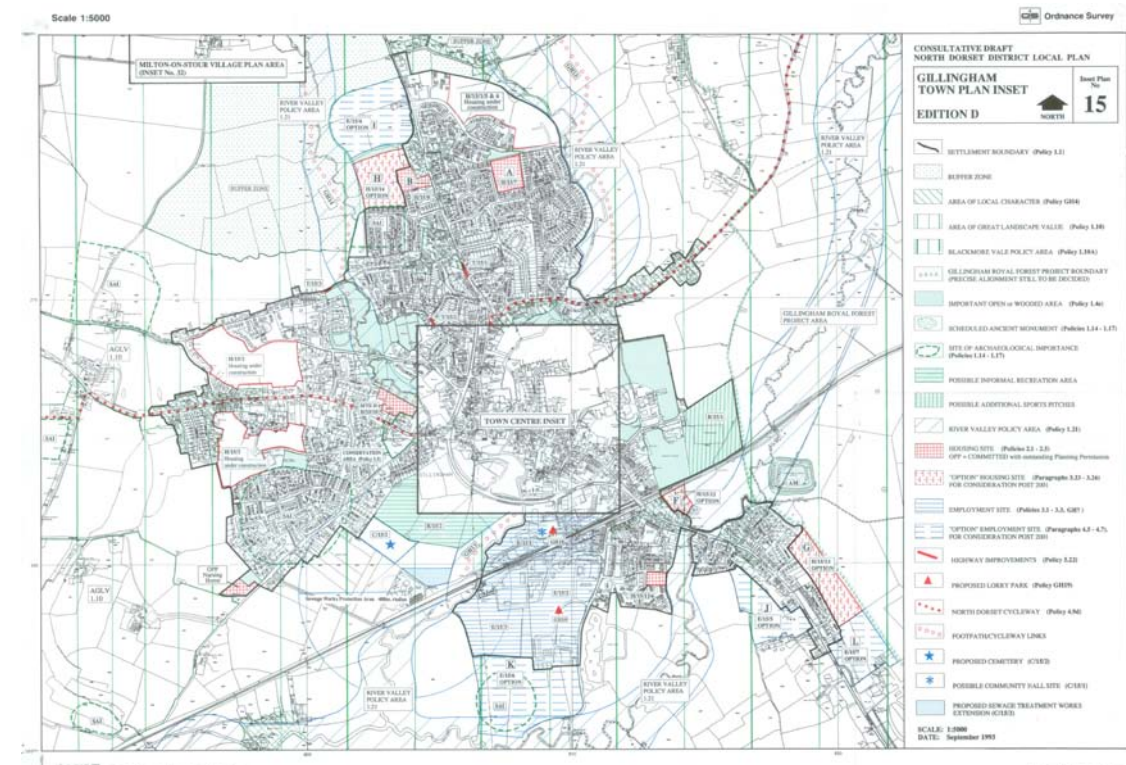
Considering the domestic dwelling element of the Town provides some indicators as to distinctive elements. Older parts of the Town are characterised by ribbon development and the use of the natural stone and red brick, with slate roofs. More modern parts favour a selection of brick colours and concrete roof tiles, and are laid out in regularised square shapes of moderate density. These developments have tended to concentrate on one particular style and a limited range of building sizes, and this has created pockets of similar developments throughout the Town. Recent developments have introduced different styles, been generally higher in their density, and used a random selection of materials which changes their whole appearance.

Key elements of the Town are:

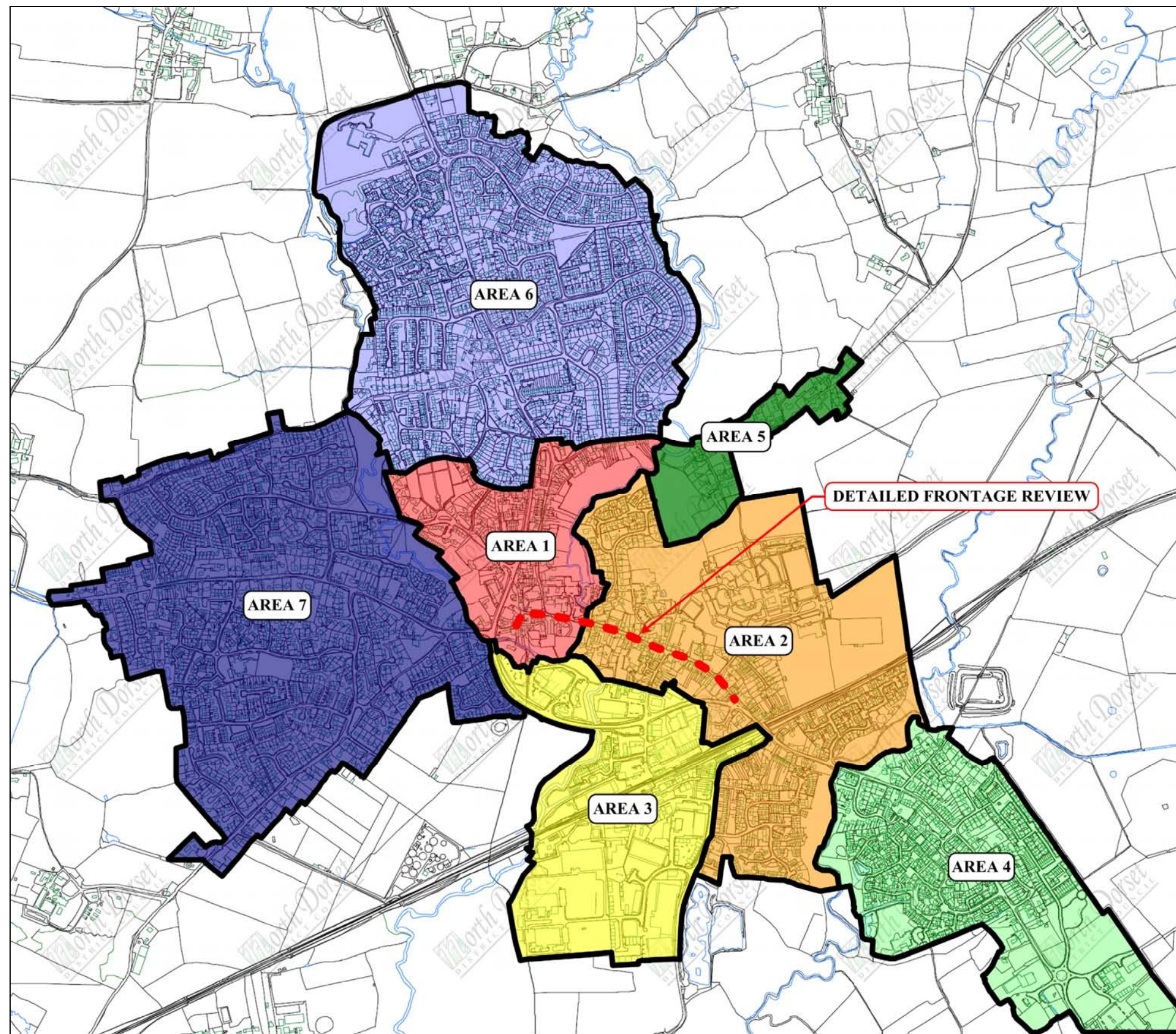
- In the main, it comprises low rise buildings of one and two storeys.
- The density of developments has been low to medium.
- Older development areas are concentrated along the main road routes to the Town centre, with significant infill in the second half of the 20th Century in small mono style pockets. The same developers have also constructed several areas, generating isolated patches of similar developments across the Town.
- These older areas are characterised by the yellow natural stone and/or the Gillingham red brick building materials.
- The estate roads are generally a good width, laid out in square regular shapes and with footways to each side.
- Where developments have crossed existing footpaths, these have been retained through the new estates, giving good pedestrian access.
- Established areas of green space have been retained within developments, and there is an ability to be in open countryside within a few minutes walk from anywhere in the Town.
- There exist clear green buffer zones with neighbouring villages and hamlets.
- There are green elements to most street scenes throughout the Town, either from established trees, hedges or through private garden areas.
- Industrial and retail areas have been concentrated into specific areas.

From the earlier page entitled 'Periods of Construction', it can be seen that a significant proportion of the current Town was constructed within the period 1971 to 2000. During this period, there were a number of documents that were in place to control development. One such document was produced by Dorset County Council that provided detailed design information as to the widths, layout and hierarchy of all new estate roads, based upon the number of dwellings it served.

Another important document that shaped the areas of expansion during this time was the North Dorset District Plan. An example of the Edition D – October 1993 is included below, and this detailed the available areas for development and their intended use.



CHARACTER AREA BOUNDARIES



Seven character areas have been identified within the Town, which arise from the different ages. These have been previously identified within the Historic Urban Characterisation, and they comprise:

- Area 1 – Historic Town Centre that is comprised of the historic core.
- Area 2 – Newbury which was a medieval suburb of the Town.
- Area 3 – Station Road and Brickfields developed in the 19th century industrial expansion.

With the later suburban housing estates of:

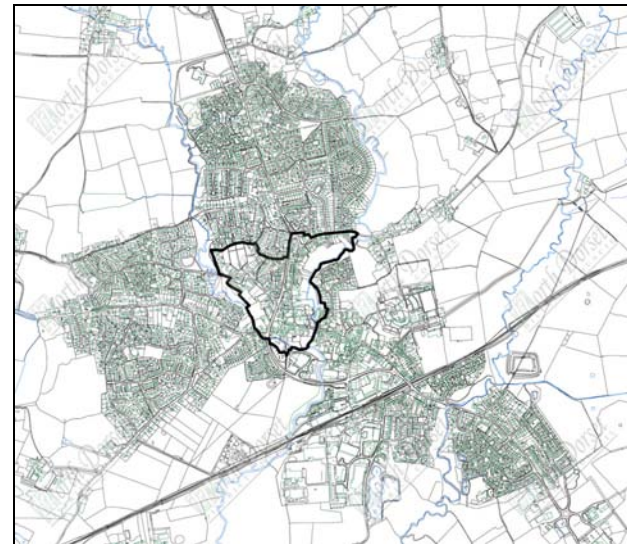
- Area 4 – Ham Common
- Area 5 – Bay
- Area 6 Peacemarsh
- Area 7 Wyke

■ ■ ■ ■ In addition, a more detailed frontage review follows Character Area 7 considering the building frontages in High Street and Newbury, illustrating sympathetic and unsympathetic development that has occurred in this central area of the Town.

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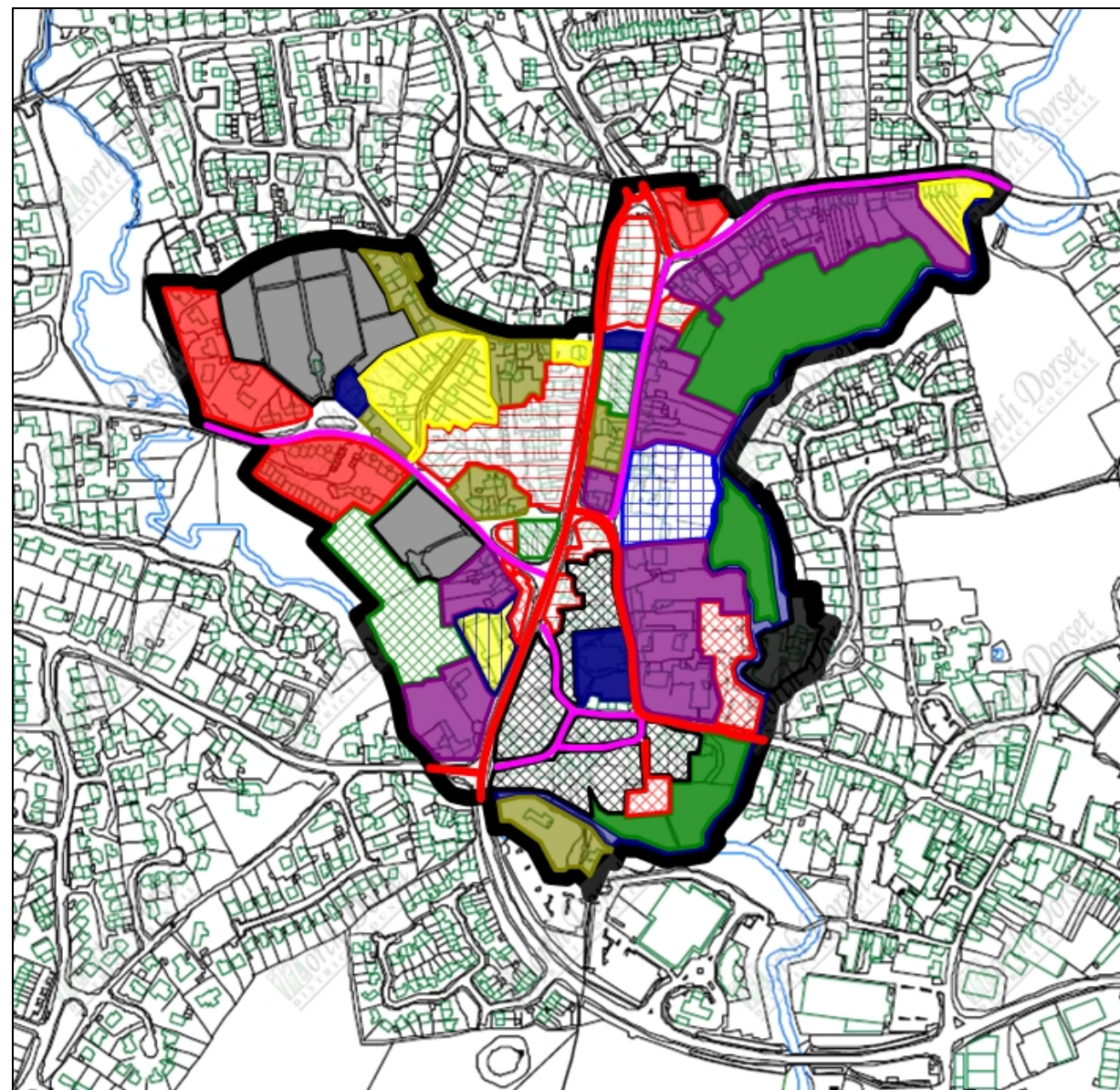
CHARACTER AREA 1

HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE



KEY:

	Allotments		Car Parks
	Cemetery		Chapel/Church
	Community Centre		Cottages
	Edwardian & Victorian Terraces		Major Road
	Inter-war Housing		Minor Road
	Nursing Home		Modern Infill
	Mill		River
	Modern Housing Estate		Modern Infill
	Other Historic Plots		
	Public Open Space/Remnant Fields		
	Town Houses, Suburban Villas & Pre-1850 Terraced Housing		



OVERVIEW

This area represents the core of the medieval and post-medieval town of Gillingham. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Historic Town Centre lies on a low spur between the River Stour and Shreen Water immediately north of their confluence.

URBAN STRUCTURE

The traditional road layout comprised the three main routes from the north, west and east converging on the Church with a number of smaller roads leading off. The area was bisected by the relief road which has diverted the main traffic flow away from the older roads of the Town centre.

The plots along these older roads are varied with densely-packed, irregular, rectilinear plots on the south side of the High Street and the west side of Queen Street, with small open spaces at The Square and St Martin's Square. The east side of Queen Street has larger more open plots, now subdivided. The plots along Bay Road are rectilinear but with variable widths. Larger plots and fields are found along the Shreen Water floodplain. West of the relief road the structure is different and comprises a mixture of larger open rectilinear areas and smaller irregular plots along road frontages, with the rest of the area filled with housing estates with local access roads and cul-de-sacs.

PRESENT CHARACTER

The area is a mosaic of character types, with irregular historic plots to the south and west of the Church, and town houses to the east and north. Small and large terraced housing (1700-1850) lines part of Queen Street and Bay Road, and with cottages along roads to the west of the relief road. Small areas of Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing and suburban villas are found on both sides of the relief road. The west side of the relief road has an Inter-War suburban estate and a large area of modern infill, allotments and cemetery. Along the rivers are remnant fields, public open spaces and car parks.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The core of this area has a medium density, with the majority of buildings along the older roads set directly off the back of footways along the street frontages. The large time depth and variety in property sizes provides a sequence of differing views throughout the area. Although narrow in some places, the roads tend to be straight, and there are a number of gaps in the frontages which promote an open feeling.

Green spaces and trees play an important part in this area, with the Churchyard and Cemetery providing central green areas. There are also a number of trees along the street and in larger gardens which make a positive contribution to this historic core.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The earliest buildings dating from the 17th and early 18th Centuries tend to be constructed in coursed rubble with ashlar and/or brick dressings. They frequently have brick chimneys and hipped tile or thatched roofs. Later 18th to early 20th Century houses are generally built with Gillingham red brick, occasionally with greensand or Ham stone ashlar dressings and slate or tiles roofs, and frequently contain moulded brick or tile detail.

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CHARACTER AREA 1

HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE



OTHER HISTORIC PLOTS (High Street and The Square)

Concentrated in the centre of the Town, the historic buildings are characterised by their use of coursed, some dressed Corallian Limestone rubble walls and either red clay tiles, or slate. Chimneys are prevalent and most properties have their own substantive character. These are predominantly two storey, a few are three, and they line the original main thoroughfare through the Town.

EDWARDIAN TERRACED HOUSING (Queen Street)

In the foreground is the converted public house followed by the Edwardian Terrace of Octave Terrace. The latter features Gillingham brick walls and clay tiled roofs. In the distance is the converted chapel of Churchbury House.

VICTORIAN TERRACED HOUSING (Victoria Terrace)

Built in 1897, Victoria Terrace is constructed with Gillingham brick and clay roof tiles. As with the Edwardian Terrace, small front gardens enclosed by walls and railings set the front doors back from the street edge, with long narrow gardens at the rear.



COTTAGES (Tomlins Lane)

The cottages in Tomlins Lane are a mixture of coursed rubble and Gillingham red brick, most with ashlar and/or brick dressings, under clay or slate roofs with chimneys. The plots are small with some houses set against the road edge and others set back.

TOWN HOUSES, SUBURBAN VILLAS, SMALL TERRACE HOUSING (Queen Street and Bay Lane)

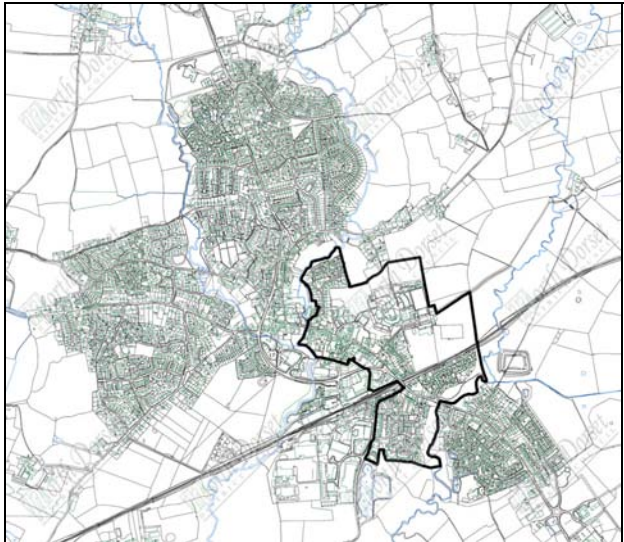
The photograph above left shows on the left the 18th Century Lime Tree House and towards the centre The Barton. These are both Listed Buildings and important historic examples of Town Houses. The photograph to the above right shows an example of small terraced housing built between 1700 and 1850. The plots are irregular due to the large range of construction dates; however, most have front gardens. Mature trees and shrubs soften the building lines.

INTER-WAR HOUSING (Orchard Road)

The Inter-war Housing utilises Gillingham red brick and clay roof tiles. They are generally set back from the road edge, which are of generous widths with footways to each side. Most of the rear gardens are long, if narrow in some cases, and mature trees and shrubs break-up the building lines.

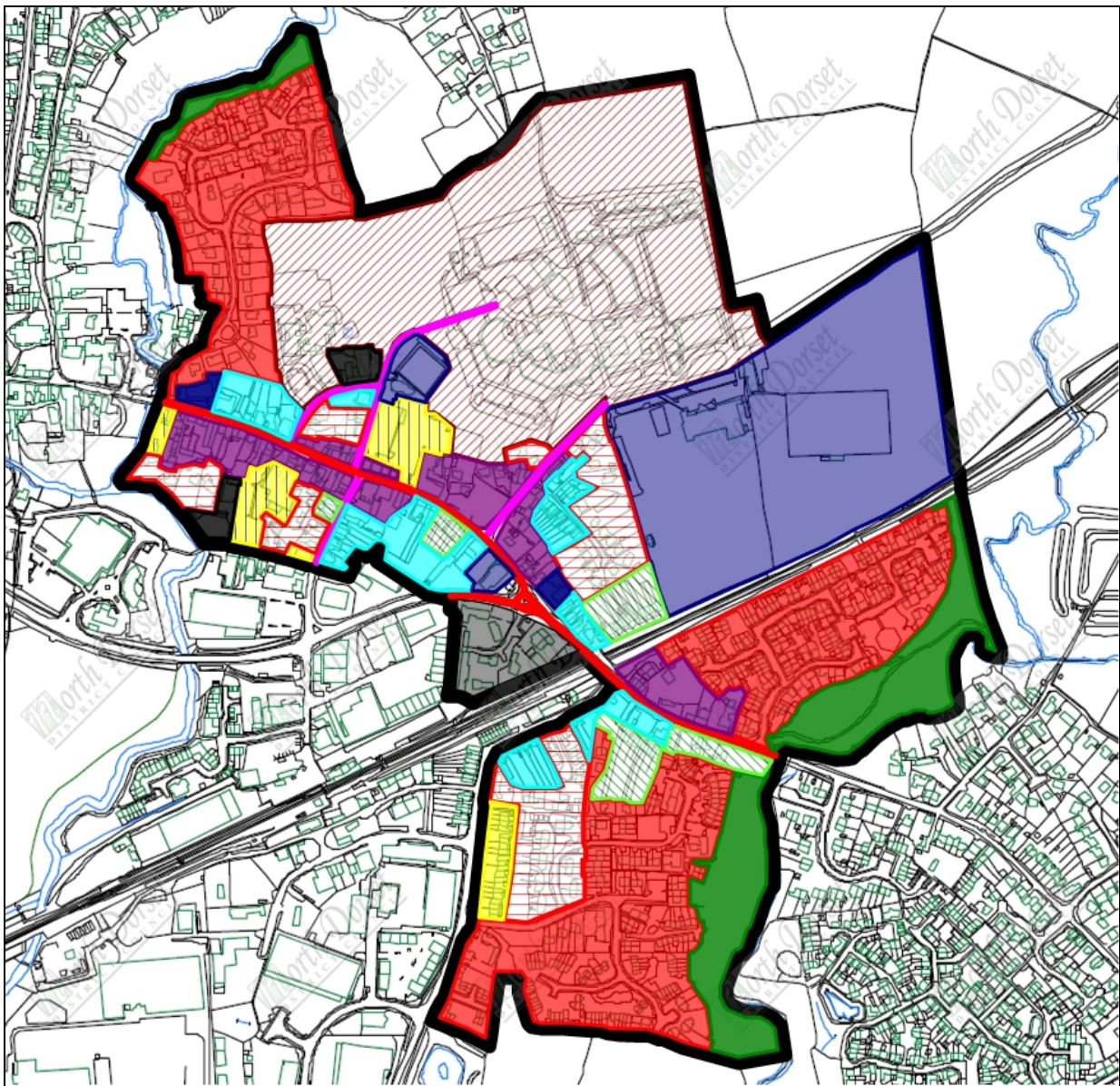
CHARACTER AREA 2

NEWBURY



KEY:

Apartments	Chapel
Edwardian & Victorian Terraces	
Historic Suburban Settlement	
Leisure Centre, Sports and Medical	
Major Road	Minor Road
Modern Housing Estate	
Modern Infill	Inter-war
Public Open Space/Remnant Fields	
Schools	Superstore/Commercial
Suburban Villas	Gov./Utility



OVERVIEW

This area includes the medieval suburb of Newbury, together with Gillingham School to the north and modern housing estates to the south and east. It is bounded to the east by the River Lodden and the Shreen Water to the west. Hence Newbury is defined by both its historic dimension and the rivers' geographical boundaries.

TOPOGRAPHY

Newbury lies on a slight ridge between the two rivers, the highest point being within the Gillingham School curtilage. A number of footpath links provide quick and level pedestrian access to green open space areas.

URBAN STRUCTURE

The High Street or Newbury forms the spine of this character area, with settlement along both sides. Until the completion of the relief road, this road formed the main route through the Town due to it being the only vehicular crossing point over the railway line within the immediate area.

There are a series of short, narrow rectilinear plots along both sides of the main road, together with some larger plots. Behind the main corridor are a series of housing estates accessed by a network of curvilinear culs-de-sac. The school and leisure centre form large plots to the north side.

PRESENT CHARACTER

The illustration to the left shows the narrow strip of historic suburban settlement aligned along the High Street. This was originally the main shopping area of the Town, and is interspersed with sections of Victorian terraced housing, suburban villas, a chapel and a doctor's surgery, all within plots that may have formed part of the suburban settlement. There has been infill comprising supermarkets, modern infill, offices and shops. Expansion of Gillingham School has created new facilities and the leisure centre has been modernised. Of the areas shown as modern housing estate, around half of these have been constructed in the 21st Century.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The settlement pattern is dominated by the axial road of Newbury upon which the settlement was founded. Settlement along this road varies between tightly packed shops fronting directly on to the street, large town houses, detached cottages and suburban villas set back from the street, and short terraces within short narrow plots. Modern housing estates lie beyond comprising detached, semi-detached and short terraces within mainly rectilinear cul-de-sacs reflecting the earlier square layout. Open and green spaces form a large but peripheral part of this area, and comprise the River Lodden and Shreen Water floodplains, the School and Leisure Centre grounds. The area is based on simple, regular road layouts, with full pedestrian footways and good footpath network.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The earliest buildings in the area tend to be constructed in coursed square rubble, greensand or Corillian limestone, with slate roofs. Walls are plain, painted, rendered or stuccoed. Later 19th Century houses are generally built in Gillingham red brick with slate or clay tiled roofs. Moulded and polychrome brick detail is common. The Baptist Chapel is brick built with ashlar dressings, and the Gillingham Methodist Chapel is built in rock-faced stone with ashlar dressings and detail. 20th Century houses tend to be coloured brick faced with tiles.

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CHARACTER AREA 2

NEWBURY



HISTORIC SUBURBAN SETTLEMENT (High Street)

Concentrated along the High Street (Newbury), the historic buildings are characterised by their use of coursed, some dressed Corallian Limestone rubble walls and either red clay tiles, or slate. These examples within the centre of the High Street, show some variation in the building lines and materials as well as decorative features that enhance the built environment. Chimneys are prevalent and most properties have their own substantive character. These are predominantly two storey, a few are three, and they line the original main thoroughfare through the Town.



SUPERSTORE (Newbury)

Typical of modern larger retail development, the aspect is dominated by provision for vehicular parking and goods deliveries. The buildings are high single storey with low pitched or flat/mansard roofs.



MODERN INFILL (Victoria Road)

The modern infill in the Newbury area is a mix of bungalows, as above, some larger, two storey semi-detached houses and a small development of three and four storey town houses. Most have front and rear gardens, and some garaging is provided.



SUBURBAN VILLAS (Station Road)

Generally detached or semi-detached, these have tended to be constructed in small blocks. The Gillingham red brick is the most common wall material as well as the provision of chimneys. Mainly the plots are long and narrow, with limited front garden area, if at all.



EDWARDIAN/VICTORIAN TERRACE (Railway Terrace and Newbury)

These terraces are distinctive in their own right, with brick features and details. The Gillingham red brick has been used and contrasted with others, or used as a feature within Corallian Limestone walls. They are situated within long narrow plots, and have short front garden areas. Chimneys are very common and most have clay tiled roofs.

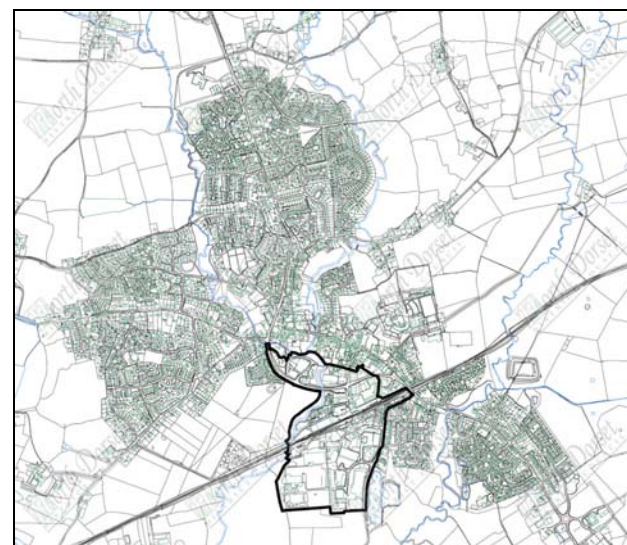


MODERN HOUSING ESTATE (Barnaby Mead)

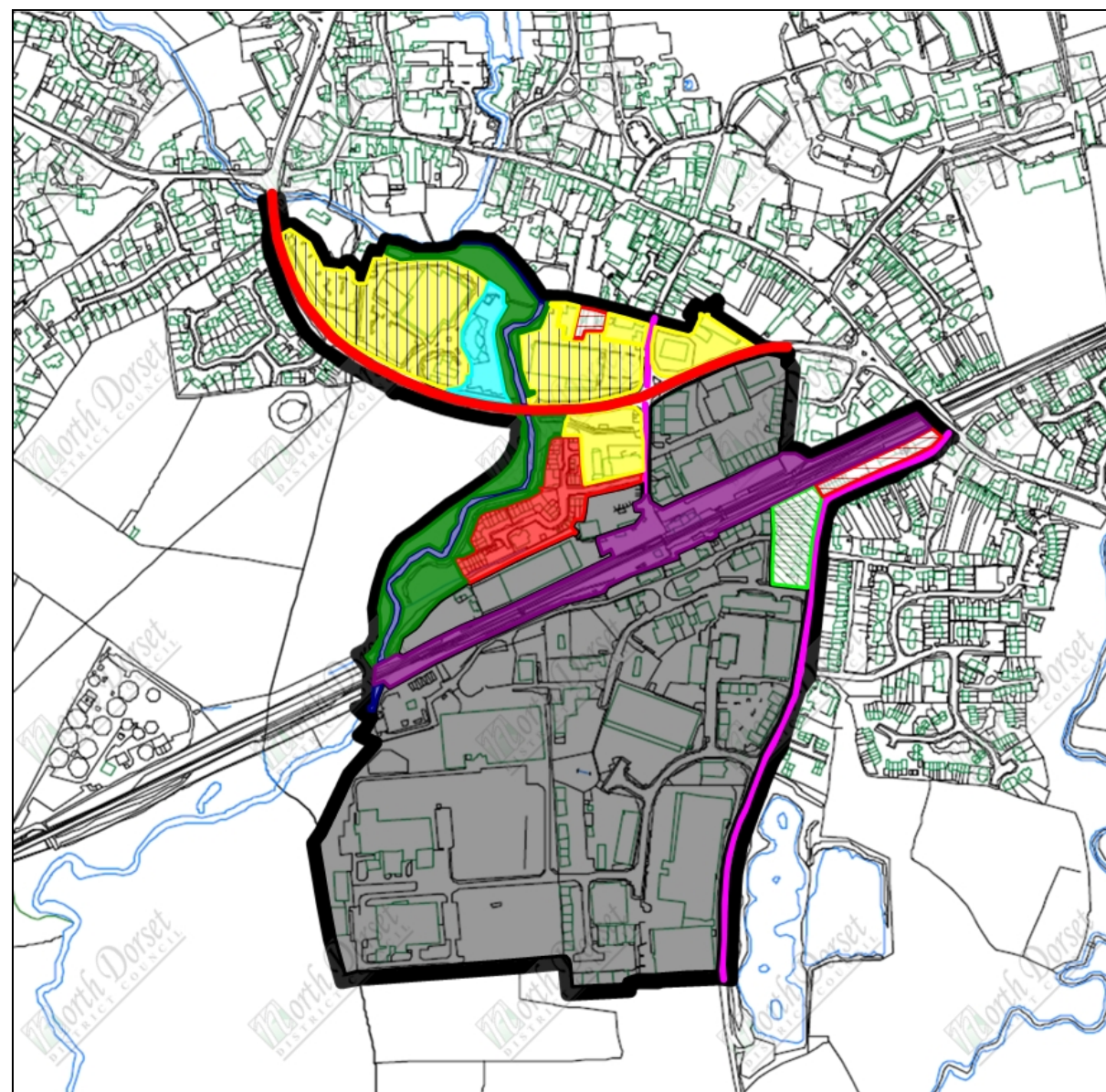
The modern housing estates range in materials from the reconstituted stone bricks above to a selection of coloured bricks or rendered. The roads are of generous widths with footways to each side. Older estates have gardens front and rear and there is suitable parking provision.

CHARACTER AREA 3

LE NEUBOURG WAY, STATION ROAD AND BRICKFIELDS



- KEY:**
- Edwardian Terraced Housing
 - Industrial Estate/Depot
 - Library
 - Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Modern Housing Estate
 - Modern Infill
 - Public Open Space
 - Railway
 - River
 - Other Commercial
 - Superstore



OVERVIEW

The area is defined by the large areas of late 19th Century and later industrial and commercial development to the south of the Town, focusing on the railway and the Gillingham Relief Road (Le Neubourg Way). It includes areas of late 19th Century industry (including the former brickfields) and the former medieval suburb at Chantry Fields.

TOPOGRAPHY

This area lies either side of the River Stour and is relatively flat. The Railway Station is on a slight hill to the east of the Stour, and just south of this was the location of the Gillingham Brick Works (now Brickfields Industrial Estate).

URBAN STRUCTURE

The railway cuts this area in two, and the Station is accessed off Station Road which was bisected by the Relief Road. Another minor road to the east heading towards East Stour is New Road, which was re-aligned during the construction of the railway, hence its name. The River Stour and its floodplain form the western edge of this area. There are small areas of housing along New Road, but the bulk of the area south of the railway comprises an extensive area of industrial estate and business park accessed by a number of curvilinear cul-de-sacs. To the north of the railway, there are large plots containing small industrial estates, light industry and warehouses accessed from Station Road, together with a modern housing estate. There are superstore developments within large car parks and the Town Library and Museum.

PRESENT CHARACTER

The dominant element of this area is the industrial estate, particularly in the south. The northern area includes superstores, other industry and commercial sites, and small developments of Edwardian terraced housing, a modern housing estate and modern infill. The majority of this Character Area comprised meadow and enclosed fields until mid 19th Century when the railway was constructed. Industrial sites developed rapidly in the later 19th Century and thrived into the mid-to-late 20th Century. The area was redeveloped after 1990 when the Relief Road was constructed. However, a small part of the Character Area, to the south of the Town centre had been the site of a medieval suburb, aligned on a possible Roman road which still exists as a lane running south from Chantry Ford.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The settlement pattern is typical of industrial and commercial edge of settlement developments. Station Road still contains remnants of 19th Century development interspersed with modern development, has been truncated by the Relief Road and has little coherence. Trees and open green spaces may not exist in this area, but surround it.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The 19th Century buildings are built exclusively of Gillingham red brick with clay roofs. In contrast the modern industrial buildings utilise non-local materials such as profiled sheets, concrete and glass. Whilst the modern housing estate also uses modern slate or tile roofs that are similar to the earlier buildings within the Town, non-local materials have also been utilised, such as pale bricks.

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CHARACTER AREA 3

LE NEUBOURG WAY, STATION ROAD AND BRICKFIELDS



SUPERSTORE (Waitrose and ASDA)

The construction of the Relief Road created two larger plots suitable for commercial retail. Both sites contain modern retail outlets, with good access for both customers and delivery vehicles off the main Relief Road. Their size requires significant parking areas, and whilst both have provided shrub and tree screening to soften this hard landscaping, the different quality of this provision can be clearly seen. The Waitrose building is clad in light red brickwork, close to the Gillingham red brick with clay roof tiles and the ASDA building is covered in modern profile steel sheet of neutral grey colouring. Both sites have conservative permanent site signage and are relatively low in their profiles.

EDWARDIAN TERRACED HOUSING (New Road)

Although initially looking similar, the above houses were constructed differently. In the foreground the Gillingham red brick houses are semi-detached and in the distance they are terraced and contain contrasting brick dressings. Small front gardens set them back.

MODERN HOUSING ESTATE (Oake Woods)

The modern Oake Woods development comprises two and three storey terraced houses and flats in a small development. Some garaging is provided. Walls are constructed using modern brick, stone-like masonry or render with slate or clay tile effect roofs.



INDUSTRIAL ESTATE (Brickfields Business Park and Old Market Centre)

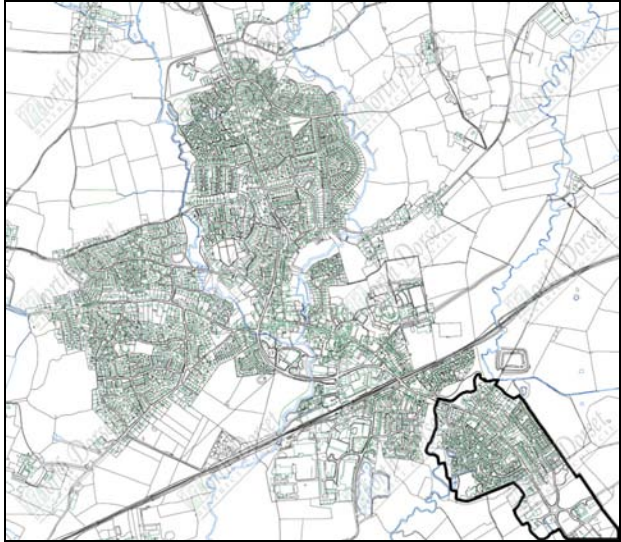
Until the construction of the Railway, the area comprised only meadows and enclosed fields. The Gillingham Brick and Tile Company was the first development south of the new Railway, and whilst all traces have disappeared apart from some remnant lakes, the site names of Brickfields Business Park, Brickfield Industrial Estate and Brickyard Lane remain. These areas are modern, and comprise low-rise industrial units clad in profiled steel sheeting which are mainly neutral light colours. Vehicular access is good, although, whilst some pedestrian footways are provided, most of the areas are shared surfaces. Off Lower Station Road and Brickyard Lane there are some remnant buildings constructed with the Gillingham red brick and clay tile roofs. Even though these areas are relatively new, only a token soft-landscaping gesture has been incorporated into the layout.

MODERN INFILL (New Road)

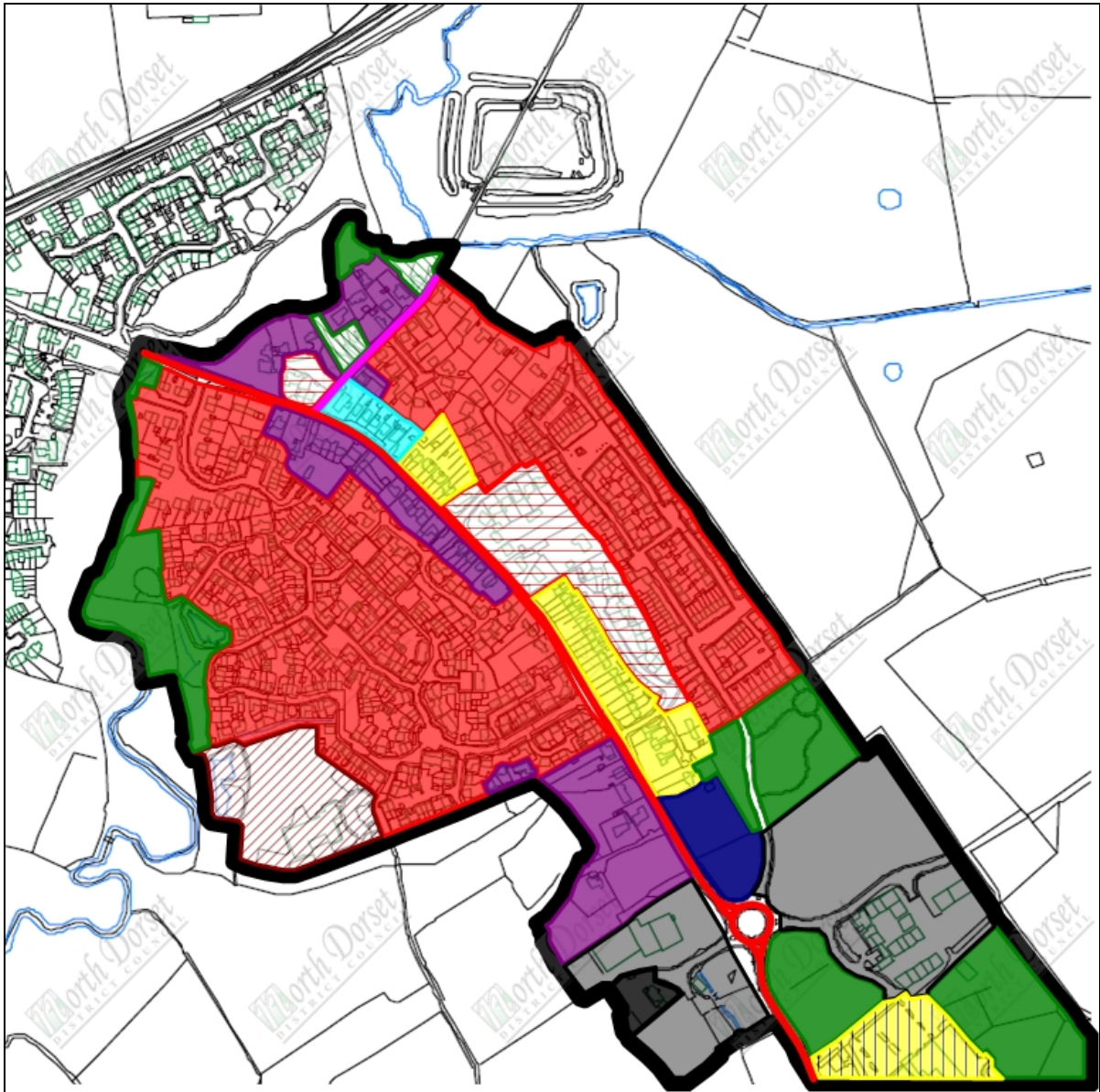
Adjacent to the Edwardian Terrace is a terrace of Modern Infill. A similar modern red brick and roof tile has been used, and they are set back behind a small front garden to continue the building line. The recessed front door detail has been replaced by short, individual porch roofs, and there are no chimneys or feature brick courses, but otherwise they blend well.

CHARACTER AREA 4

HAM



- KEY:**
- Farm
 - Historic Rural Settlement
 - Industrial Estate/Depot
 - Inter-war Suburban Estate
 - Major Road
 - Modern Housing Estate
 - Modern Infill
 - Public Open Space/Remnant Fields
 - Garden Centre
 - Victorian Terraced Housing
 - Nursing Home
 - Minor Road
 - Other Modern
 - School



OVERVIEW

The Ham area of the Town forms the south-eastern extremity of the Gillingham Urban Area. It is centred on the historic rural manor of Ham, lies along the main road to Shaftesbury, and is close to the medieval royal hunting lodge at Kings Court and former Gillingham Park. It is composed mainly of modern suburban development and bounded by open countryside.

TOPOGRAPHY

Ham lies to the southeast of the River Lodden, and gently rises away from the river, upon a ridge formed by two small tributaries, the Fern Brook and the Meadow Brook.

URBAN STRUCTURE

This area is dominated by the main road, which runs along the top of the ridge in a northwest/southeast alignment. To the north is a small number of short rectangular cul-de-sac roads complete with a series of short plots along the road. Towards the centre on the east side, there are a few larger plots of different dimensions, then short narrow plots towards the south. North-east of the roundabout lies a new development behind the main roadside plots which is formed with rectangular plots and open squares. From the roundabout heading north on the west side are a series of larger open plots, followed by smaller suburban plots. Off the main road, there is a recent large housing estate, complete with a primary school which has been laid out in a dense, organic layout with winding roads and shared surfaces. Prior to the river is a smaller older estate with rectangular plots either side of a curvilinear road.

PRESENT CHARACTER

Modern development is the substantive element of this area, and two of the larger areas are recent housing estates that follow two different distinctive forms; rectangular/formal and organic/winding. The former is formed with square, straight roads and the incorporation of squares, which are sufficiently large to create the feeling of space, which together with planting encourage the countryside feel. The latter has very short view paths because of the winding and narrow roads in places, which make it difficult to navigate and with smaller open blocks, vehicular parking becomes an issue. The older sections can be seen along the edge of the main road and comprise a mixture of Cottages, Historic Rural Settlement, Inter-war Suburban Housing and Modern Infill. At the southern end there are industrial/depot areas, a Garden Centre and a Nursing Facility.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The earliest settlement was set back from the road at the edge of a common, and a number of later historic rural houses are aligned gable end to the road. The area consists of detached, semi-detached houses, bungalows and some short terraces, which are set back from the main road where they bound it. There are a number of green spaces, and the long narrow depth of development means the open countryside is within easy reach on both sides. Along the main road there are a number of hedges and trees.

BUILDING MATERIALS

Prior to the early in the 19th Century, the buildings tend to be stone rubble construction, with brick or rendered chimneys and slate or plain tile roofs. The Haywain is thatched and Park Farm House is greensand ashlar. Later 19th Century houses tend to be Gillingham brick, sometimes with contrasting decoration. Recent estates are a mixture of materials and the industrial areas are modern sheet materials.

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CHARACTER AREA 4

HAM



MODERN HOUSING ESTATE (Bridge Close, Trent Square and Jay Walk)

The three photographs above show distinctly different examples of the Modern Housing Estates in the Ham area.

Bridge Close is set along a gently curving, wide cul-de-sac road and is typical of the ‘older’ modern housing. Open front gardens predominate and the properties are either detached or semi-detached houses and bungalows. Dark brick with dark concrete tiles predominate.

Trent Square is set in regularised square layout with some very small front garden areas. The roads are narrower and buildings straight off the back of the footway, but the straight lines and large open squares provide space. Brick with features, render and various tiles have been used.

Initially starting with a wide entrance, the other modern estate that includes Jay Walk has an organic winding road, and limited sight lines that induce an enclosed feeling and make navigation difficult. Brick with features, render and various tiles have been used.

INDUSTRIAL ESTATE/DEPOT (off Shaftesbury Road roundabout)

These modern commercial areas cater for HGV access with wide roads directly off the roundabout. The buildings use neutral coloured, modern sheet materials, and this together with the security fencing has been visually softened with brickwork.



OTHER MODERN HOUSING (Shaftesbury Road)

Comprising mainly bungalows, this housing is identified through the use of dark red brick and dark concrete roof tiles. Each of the properties with its own front garden is set back from the road with vehicular access, and bounded with a hedge or low wall.



INTER-WAR SUBURBAN ESTATE (Lockwood Terrace)

There are several different styles of housing within this group, however they share the same characteristics being semi-detached, with front gardens setting the buildings back from the road. The above shows the use of Gillingham red brick, others are painted render.



HISTORIC RURAL SETTLEMENT (Shaftesbury Road)

Built of stone rubble or Gillingham red brick, these older properties are generally set slightly back from the main road edge with front gardens, and are either detached or semi-detached. Topped with clay roof tiles, most have chimneys.

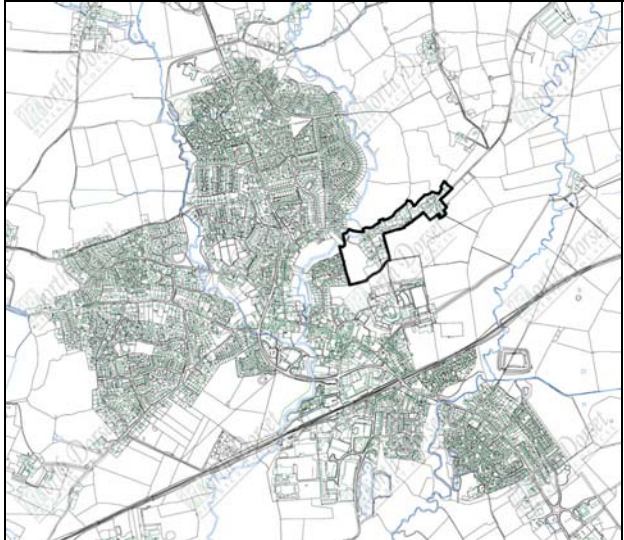


MODERN INFILL (Rookery Close)

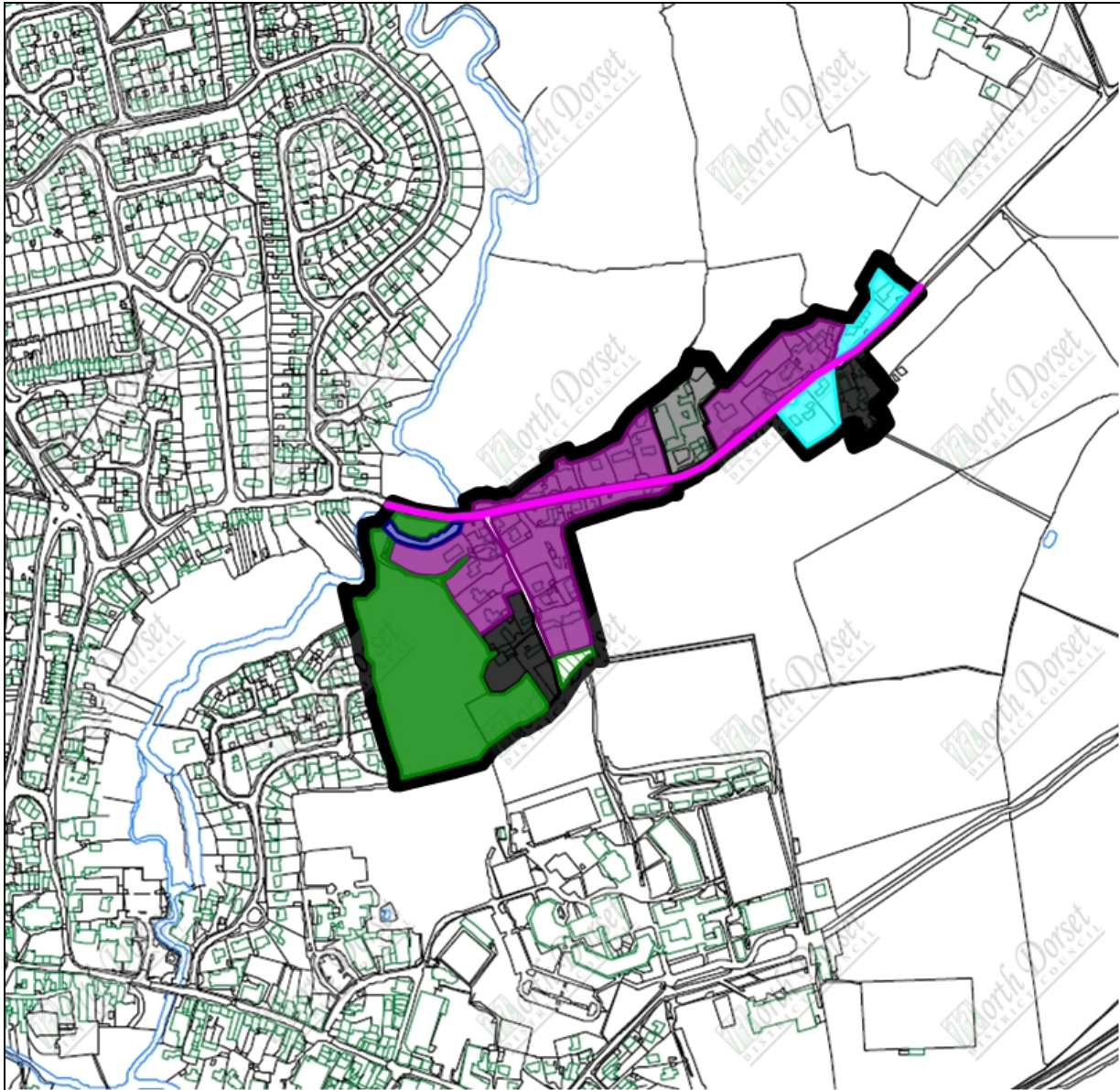
Modern infill is either detached or semi-detached and tending to be of individual character. Walls are generally light brickwork, reconstituted stone or natural coloured render, and roofs are dark concrete tiles. All have front gardens, some are open, and trees and shrubs soften the hard landscaping.

CHARACTER AREA 5

BAY



- KEY:**
- Farm
 - Historic Rural Settlement
 - Maltings
 - Minor Road
 - Other Modern Housing
 - Public Open Space
 - Remnant Fields, Paddocks and Closes
 - River



OVERVIEW

On the eastern side of the Town, commencing at Bay Bridge where Bay Road crosses the Shreen Water and leading towards Bowridge Hill and East and West Knoyle, is the historic rural settlement of Bay. It is the only character area within Gillingham not to contain modern housing estates or modern infill, although there are some modern detached houses on the edge of the settlement.

TOPOGRAPHY

Bay lies on the western slope of Bowridge Hill, which is a ridge running north-south between the Shreen Water and the River Lodden. It is relatively level adjacent to the Shreen Water and rises gently from the centre towards the eastern end.

URBAN STRUCTURE

Bay remains essentially a rural settlement appended to the edge of the urban area of Gillingham and linked by road (Bay Bridge) and several footpaths to the Town. The limits of this settlement correspond closely with the original extent of the roadside common along Bay Road. It comprises an L-shaped settlement with one through road running east/west (Bay Road) and a smaller cul-de-sac road (Bay Lane) running in a south-east direction near its western end. There are farms along both roads and large relatively shallow irregular plots.

PRESENT CHARACTER

Unlike the other character areas in Gillingham, the historic rural settlement character predominates in this area. There are two farms and a maltings (now converted to a nursing home). The eastern part of the area comprises remnant fields and paddocks on both sides of the Shreen Water around Bay Bridge.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The original rural settlement lay along the west side of Bay Lane on the fringe of a wide roadside common in similar fashion to Ham Common. Bay Lane was the northern extension of Hardings Lane in Newbury during the medieval period.

The settlement pattern essentially comprises detached houses, farmhouses and houses set centrally within large plots. These plots have become subdivided but still contain the original houses. There are also good examples of Dorset long houses with steeply pitched gable ended roofs.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The 18th and early 19th Century buildings tend to be built in coursed and/or squared Greensand or Corallian limestone rubble. Earlier 19th Century suburban villas are built of coursed rubble with brick dressings and slate roof. Later 19th Century semi-detached houses are built entirely from brick. In general the area displays a mixture of slate and clay tiled roofs. Later 20th Century houses use a wider mixture of materials, including more of a non-local origin.

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CHARACTER AREA 5

BAY



HISTORIC RURAL SETTLEMENT (Bay Road and Bay Lane)

The four photographs above show excellent examples of the Historic Rural Settlement houses within the Bay area. The style of Riverside Cottage dates from the 17th to 19th Century period of vernacular farmhouses and cottages, built from coursed Corallian limestone rubble, with a clay tile roof and brick chimney.

Clematis Cottage and End Cottage are two of the few remaining thatched cottages within the Town. The walls are built from coursed Corallian limestone rubble and they are constructed with a staggered building line, set back from the carriageway.

Gillingham brick dressings are features within the coursed rubble walls of Prospect. Slates have been utilised on their roofs, and brick has also been used for their short chimneys. In the background, the rendered elevation is the rear of Baldrick's End (featured below).

Tresillian is an example of a 19 Century Suburban Villa. A symmetrical house with hipped roof, it is detached and constructed of coursed rubble with brick dressings and a slate roof. The tall brick chimneys add to the strong elevation.



MALTINGS (The Maltings)

The Maltings was originally constructed during the 19th Century, and has been converted into a nursing home, together with some modern extensions. The original buildings were constructed from coursed and squared Greensand and Corallian limestone rubble with clay roof tiles.



OTHER MODERN HOUSING (Bay Road)

There are several different styles of housing within this group, however they share the same characteristics of being detached and set back from the road. They use modern non-local materials and are screened with hedges.



DORSET LONG HOUSE (Bay Lane)

Bay Farm, Baldrick's End (above) and Cherry End Cottage are good examples of Dorset Long Houses, with steeply pitched gable ended roofs. Here shown built of coursed stone rubble, topped with clay roof tiles, most have chimneys, and are within the Historic Rural Settlement.

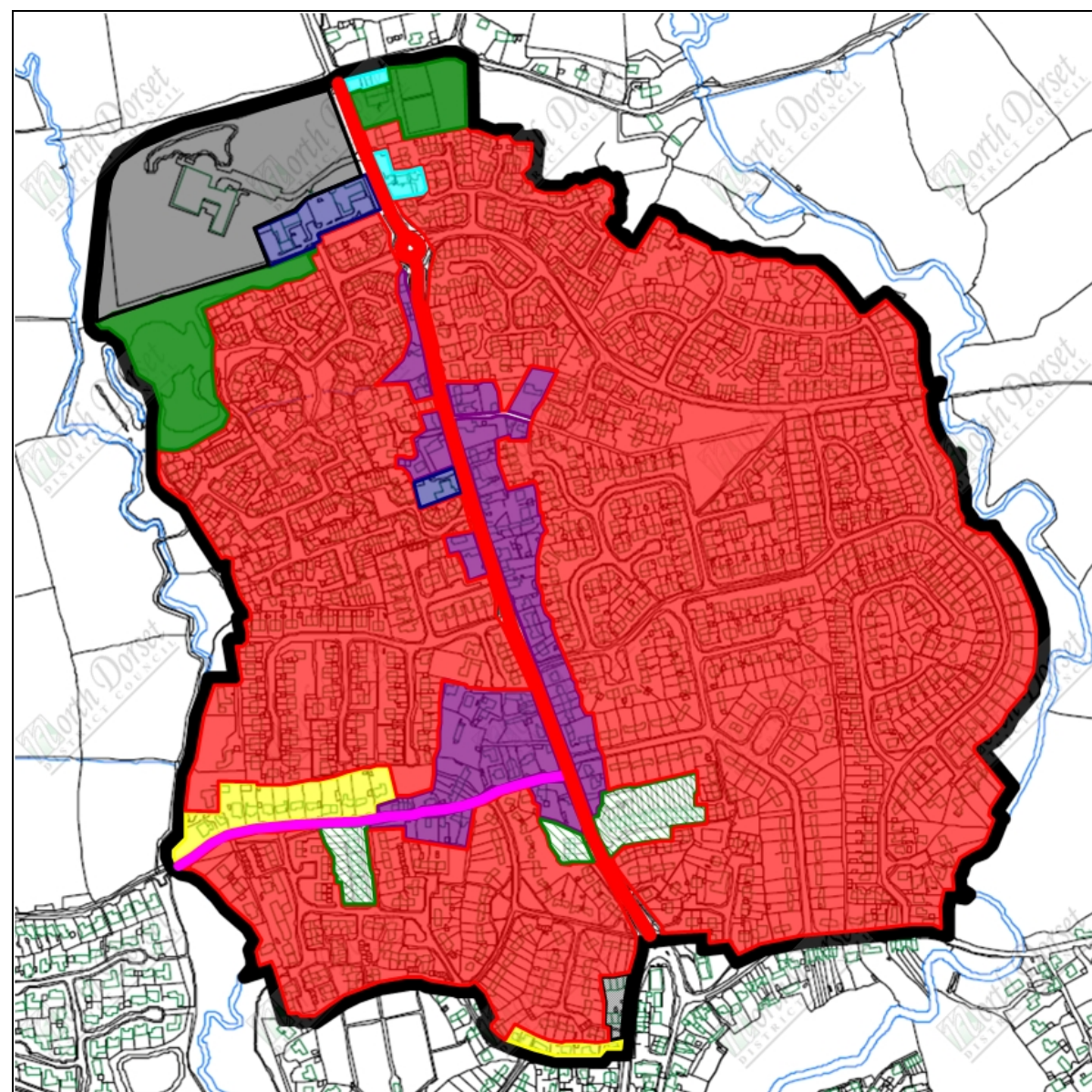
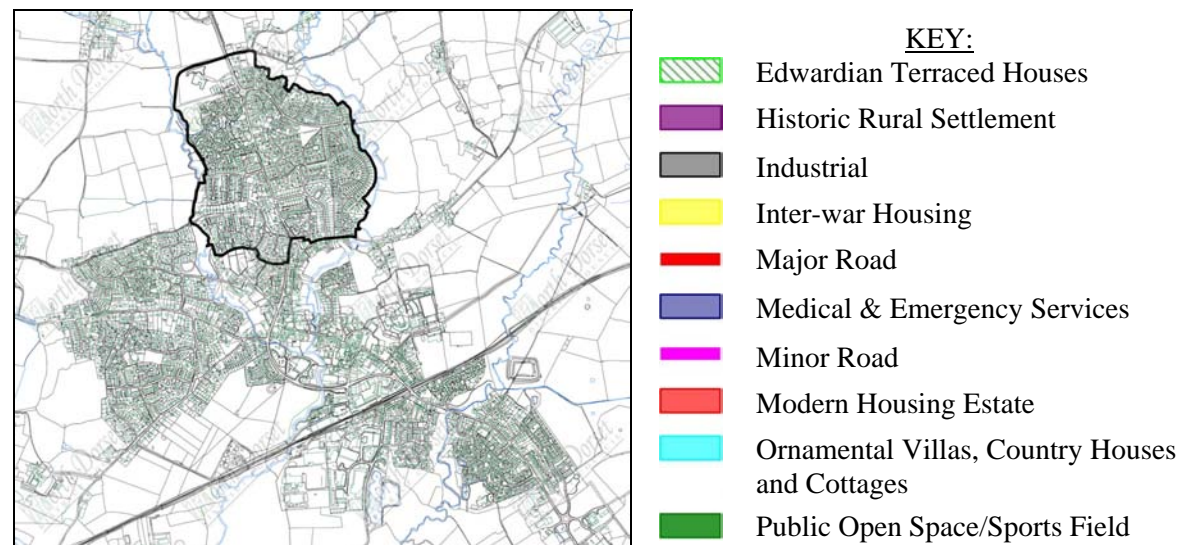


REMNANT FIELDS, PADDOCKS AND CLOSES

These are remnant fields, some of which lie within the flood plain of the Shreen Water.

CHARACTER AREA 6

PEACEMARSH



OVERVIEW

This area comprises the northern suburb of the Town, centred on the historic rural settlement of Peacemash, which is itself aligned along the main road north of the Town leading towards Milton-on-Stour. Large modern housing estates lie on either side of the main road, behind the historic street frontage.

TOPOGRAPHY

Peacemash lies on a low rounded hill between the upper courses of the rivers Stour and Shreen Water, and is relatively flat along the north-south axis. To the east the horizon is dominated by Bowridge Hill, with gently rising open fields to the west. This provides easy access to/sight of open countryside to the east and west.

URBAN STRUCTURE

The major road, Peacemash Road runs north to south and is joined from the west by the minor road, Wavering Lane. A series of relatively shallow irregular plots line these roads in a discontinuous fashion. Almost the whole area comprises a range of different housing estate developments distinguished by their road alignments, plot sizes and linear boundaries between the estates.

The estate layouts are broadly simple linear or curvilinear looped networks with some culs-de-sac and dendritic road patterns. Only one very recent development has introduced an uncharacteristic random pattern to its southern edge. A modern edge of Town development has been constructed to the northwest edge.

PRESENT CHARACTER

As can be seen from the diagram to the left, the area is dominated by the areas of modern housing. Along Peacemash Road and Wavering Lane are areas of Historic Rural Settlement. Prior to the end of the 19th Century, the buildings along these corridors comprised only of small farms and cottages. There are small areas of inter-war housing, and at the northern edge lies an area of medical facilities, sports field, public open space and some Ornamental Villas and Country Houses. It is only in the 21st Century that a new development has introduced a significant number of three-storey houses.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The historic nature of the Historic Rural Settlement areas can be seen through fairly shallow irregular rectilinear plots, with most houses set back from the street on differing orientations and building lines. The post-1939 housing estates are low to medium density, set well back from the street edge and behind front gardens, including a number of greens. They are set in typical suburban estate fashion and contain separate character areas in themselves of bungalows and houses. Simple, regular road layouts predominate, together with full pedestrian footways and good interconnecting footpaths.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The 18th and early 19th Century vernacular houses are built with coursed, sometimes dressed Corallian Limestone rubble with either clay tile, slate or the occasional thatched roofs. Brick chimneys are common from the 19th Century and Gillingham red brick is increasingly used from the mid 19th Century onwards. Later 20th Century housing estates feature a mixture of brick or coloured rendered walls with concrete tiles or slate roofs. The business development, Neal's Yard, includes the use of blue profiled sheets and timber.

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CHARACTER AREA 6

PEACEMARSH



HISTORIC RURAL SETTLEMENT (both central Peacemarsh)

Concentrated along Peacemarsh Road, the historic buildings are characterised by their use of coursed, some dressed Corallian Limestone rubble walls and either red clay tiles, slate or some thatch. These examples along Peacemarsh, show the varied building lines and materials as well as the space between and established small garden trees which soften the built environment. Chimneys are prevalent and most properties have vehicular access with off-road parking.



ORNAMENTAL VILLAS AND COUNTRY HOUSES (northern Peacemarsh)

Towards the northern end of Peacemarsh are two isolated groups of Ornamental Villas and country houses/cottages which in the late 20th Century have almost disappeared in the surrounding development.



EDWARDIAN TERRACED HOUSING (Lodbourne Terrace)

These houses in Lodbourne Terrace feature rendered walls and red clay tiles. At the front there are small front gardens between the houses and the short access road, with longer narrow gardens and some garaging provided at the rear.



INTER-WAR HOUSING (Wavering Lane)

Comprising mainly bungalows, this housing is identified through the use of dark red brick and dark concrete roof tiles. Each of the properties is set in its own garden, back from the road and bounded with a hedge or low wall. These are some of the few areas within the Town without a footway.



MODERN HOUSING ESTATES (Fairey Crescent and Broadacres)

There are several different styles of housing within this larger group, however they share the same characteristics of square, uniform road layouts, with front gardens setting the buildings back from the road. Most have driveways with off-street parking and the majority are either detached or semi-detached. The densities low to medium and good interconnecting footpath links exist. Above left is an example of the Gillingham red brick and above right, the also widely used reconstituted stone. It is only with 21st Century developments that areas have been developed with much higher density and winding road layouts that are difficult to navigate.

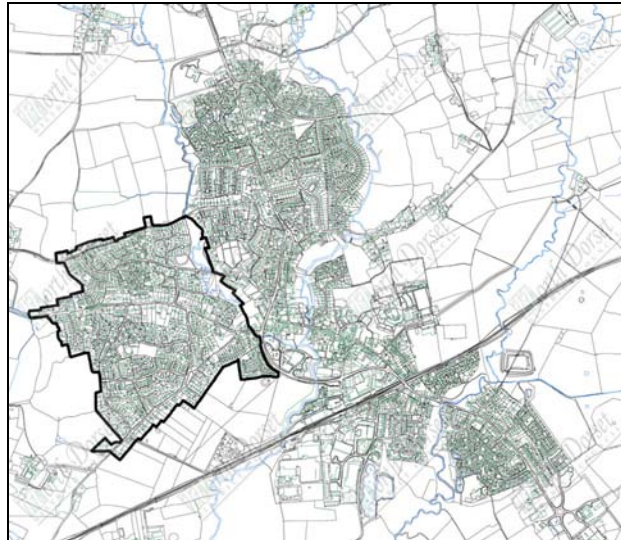


MEDICAL FACILITY (northern Peacemarsh)

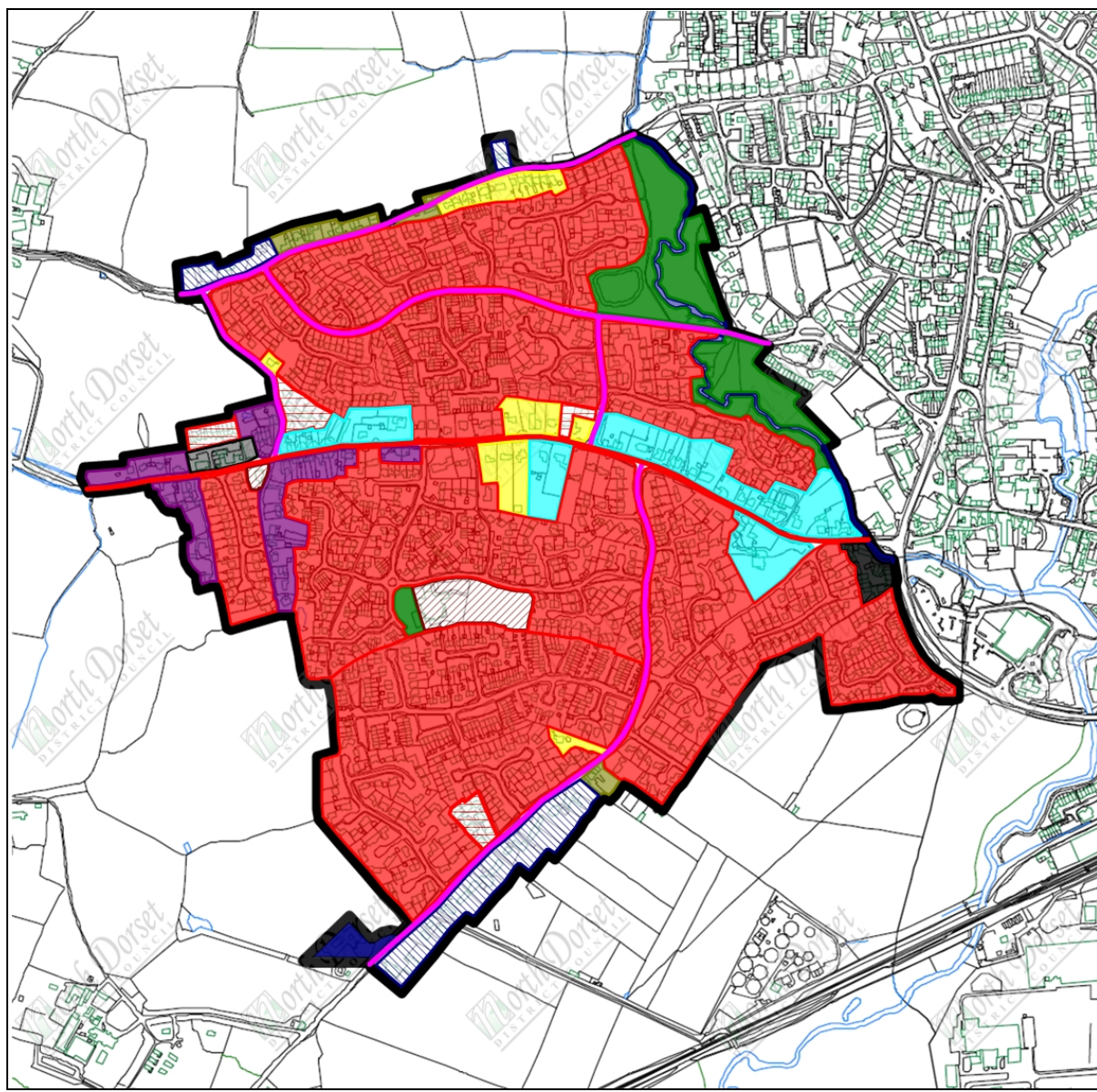
Modern medical and industrial facilities at the north of the Town, built with brick and render with slate roofs are in the right foreground, and the blue profiled sheet and timber cladding of the industrial unit can be seen in the background. Also note the provision of soft landscaping.

CHARACTER AREA 7

WYKE



- KEY:**
- Brewery
 - Farm
 - Major Road
 - Inter-war Housing
 - Modern Housing Estate
 - Nursing Home
 - Other Modern Housing
 - Ornamental Villas, Country Houses, Suburban Villas and Town Houses
 - Public Open Space
 - River
 - Cottages
 - Historic Rural Settlement
 - Minor Road
 - Modern Infill
 - School



OVERVIEW

Wyke is the western suburb of the town of Gillingham. It lies between the historic rural settlement of Wyke and the Town centre. Wyke Road (the modern B3081 to Wincanton) is the main axial route through the area, and large modern estates have developed north and south of it, behind the historic street frontage. The area is bounded to the north by Wavering Lane and the south by Common Mead Lane.

TOPOGRAPHY

The area rises gently from almost the lowest point in Gillingham at Wyke Bridge (72m above sea level) to the highest developed area just south of its centre at Wyke Primary School (90m). It is bounded to the east by the River Stour.

URBAN STRUCTURE

Four main routes radiate westward from the centre of Gillingham through this area; Common Mead Lane, Wyke Road, Rolls Bridge Lane and Wavering Lane, which all have historic ribbon development along their edges. These roads are linked together with modern suburban housing estates, with their curvilinear dendritic arrangements of local access roads and culs-de-sac.

PRESENT CHARACTER

Although dominated by modern development, this area has important historic urban character ribbons along its main routes, especially Wyke Road, as illustrated on the map to the left. This ribbon development dates from the late 18th Century. The historic rural settlement of Wyke lies at the extreme western end and includes the site of the former Wyke Brewery, suburban villas, an old school house and the 19th Century villa of Wyke House. The recent housing development at Chantry Farm, to the extreme east of the area, lies on the site of a farm which dates back to 1331.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

The historic settlement pattern of Wyke originally comprised three rows of cottages arranged around a central rectangular green, which has been in filled with a modern housing estate. Ribbon developments along the main routes comprise detached or semi-detached houses either on or set back slightly from the street frontage. Modern housing estates have been arranged around gently curvilinear culs-de-sac, with buildings set back from the back of footways by front gardens, some areas of greens, and with soft landscaping to promote an open, natural feeling. Although the modern areas are large in comparison, they have a simple layout and are easily navigated.

BUILDING MATERIALS

The 18th Century houses such as Little Chantry and Old Toll House are built in coursed rubble with tiled roofs. Knap House has ashlar and rubble walls with a slate roof. The former Wyke Brewery is built in coursed squared rubble with a tiled roof and ashlar dressings. Later 19th Century suburban villas and terraces are of local Gillingham brick. The inter-war houses are mainly rendered brick with slate roofs. The modern housing estates are constructed using non-local materials; however they each have a distinct theme running through them, rather than a random mix as has appeared in post-2000 developments elsewhere in the Town. These themes include the use of brick banding and distinctive roof soffits and barge boards.

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CHARACTER AREA 7

WYKE



HISTORIC RURAL SETTLEMENT (Wyke Road and Lydfords Lane)

Concentrated in thin ribbons at the western end of Wyke Road, the historic buildings are characterised by their use of coursed, some dressed Corallian Limestone rubble walls and either red clay tiles or slate roofs. These examples show the varied building lines and materials as well as the space between and established small garden trees which soften the built environment. Chimneys are prevalent and many properties have vehicular access with off-road parking.



MODERN INFILL (Newton Close and Camelot Way)

The Modern Housing Estates in the Wyke area are all slightly different in their appearance, but have the same common themes of open, slightly curved culs-de-sac off main access roads. The materials are modern non-local brick, reconstituted stone and render with coloured concrete tiled roofs. Existing footpaths have been retained and there is adequate provision for pedestrians. All have front gardens and this, together with development planting schemes, softens the hard landscaping. Most areas have off-road parking which also reduces vehicle parking issues. Navigation is straightforward, and the wide open carriageways, footways and green spaces promote a rural feeling.



INTER-WAR HOUSING (Wavering Lane)

Comprising mainly bungalows, this housing is identified through the use of Gillingham or a darker red brick, with render above and dark concrete roof tiles. Each of the properties is set in its own garden, back from the road and bounded with a hedge or low wall. It is one of the few areas without a footway.



ORNAMENTAL VILLAS, COUNTRY HOUSES, SUBURBAN VILLAS AND TOWN HOUSES (Wyke Road)

There are several different styles of housing within this group, and it forms a ribbon of older properties along Wyke Road. Above left shows houses characterised by their use of coursed, some dressed Corallian Limestone rubble walls, with Gillingham red brick dressings and red clay tiled roofs. Above right shows some of the larger Gillingham red brick detached houses, which lie within individual plots. The abundance of soft landscaping is evident and an appreciated feature of this area, especially the large mature trees and hedges within the larger plots.



WYKE BREWERY (Wyke Road)

At the western end of Wyke are the remnants of the old Brewery buildings, built in coursed squared rubble with ashlar dressings and tiled roofs. This building forms an impressive entrance to the Town and is complemented by the other Historic Rural Settlement buildings.

DETAILED FRONTAGE REVIEW

HIGH STREET AND NEWBURY

- KEY:**
- Sympathetic Development.
 - Unsympathetic Development.

OVERVIEW

At the heart of Gillingham is the High Street, which prior to completion of the relief road was the main thoroughfare through and the main retail area. It now contains a mix of converted dwellings and more recent custom built shops, and was originally a wide unenclosed track in the 14th Century, that has slowly been in-filled with piecemeal plots. Within this wide time depth, there remains a core of buildings that maintain a record of the previous character that makes the Town distinctive. Whilst some of the adaptation and new buildings have been in keeping with this original character, there are others that have been less sensitive, and generalised examples are shown in the diagram below.



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DETAILED FRONTAGE REVIEW

HIGH STREET AND NEWBURY



SYMPATHETIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town Square provides a quieter corner of the Town to reflect the examples of its character, complemented with trees.

Rawson Court (originally a 19th Century Vicarage) has retained the mature trees and walled garden that provides an important green aspect to the High Street.

No. 2 High Street was until recently divided into two shops. The building has been re-developed back to a single shop and the frontage improved.

Conversion of redundant commercial buildings and new build in School Lane has re-introduced some of the High Street character and disguised a plain and functional building.

Phoenix House (centre) is a recent development which through careful choice of materials and features complements the much older adjacent plot (left) and enhances the streetscape.

The re-development of the Royal Hotel site is currently in progress. The Newbury frontage shows similar traditional coloured brick and features that complement the houses opposite.



UNSYMPATHETIC DEVELOPMENT

The re-development into retirement flats of Barnaby Mill has gone a little way to suggest the conversion of an industrial building, but the modern materials and uniform shape detract.

Adjacent to The Town Bridge is a substation compound which has been surrounded with an unsightly galvanised steel palisade security fence.

The Parade (originally a supermarket store) was built in the 1970s and its frontage is reminiscent of that period, but bears no relation to the High Street scene.

The removal of the character bay windows to the shop frontage above and replacement with full height glass, distracts the eye from the character of the much older cottage behind.

Whilst the corporate colours of the shop frontages are intended to allow identification, large blocks of strong colours detract from the character of the host building fabric.

The re-development of the above plot has provided a bland painted render façade compared with Phoenix House (noted above), which is almost opposite the site.



The Barn Surgery (left) is a modern style building with brick and timber elevations and a sweeping profiled steel roof. It occupies a landmark site, just off the Newbury roundabout, and whilst it has a strong presence and individuality of its own, apart from the colour of the brickwork, there is nothing else similar within the Town.



The shop unit in front of Fernbank (left) obscures the character of the original town house behind. The single storey and large banner work against the good points of the similar coloured brick. The green area adjacent to the Town Bridge (right) brings trees to the street scene, but needs to be formalised as a green area.



CHARACTER AREA SUMMARY

HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

URBAN STRUCTURE

This area represents the historic core of Gillingham. It is defined primarily by its ribbon development along the three historic main routes through the Town.

PRESENT CHARACTER

A mosaic of character types, with irregular plots due to the long timescale of the development of this area dating from the 17th Century up until the present day.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

The core area is medium density and set along the historic roads. Although narrow in places, the roads are straight, with gaps in frontages that provide open aspects. Some small modern culs-de-sac have in filled.

MATERIALS

Early buildings are coursed rubble with ashlar and/or brick dressings under hipped tile or thatched roofs. Later 18th to early 20th Century are generally Gillingham brick with slate or clay tile roofs. Modern developments use non local brick and tiles.

HARD SPACE

Dominated by the relief road which bisects the area the roads have minimal street furniture. Parts of the High Street and the Town Square have been surfaced with brick paviers. Overhead cables feature along the older roads, and in almost all locations, there is a footway on both sides of the carriageway.

LANDSCAPE

The green aspects created through mature trees are an important feature of this area. River flood plains have also restricted subsequent infill development to the thin ribbon along the main road frontages, providing glimpses of green fields.

NEWBURY

URBAN STRUCTURE

The medieval suburb of Newbury, Gillingham School, leisure facilities and modern housing are the main components of the Newbury area.

PRESENT CHARACTER

The main focus is the High Street and Newbury, which prior to the relief road was the main route through the Town. The older ribbon development along these roads is interspersed with Victorian terraced housing, suburban villas and other terraces of mixed composition. Some modern housing estates are also within this area.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

Culs-de-sac extend outward from the straight main through road that are generally straight or slightly curved. Behind the older line of development, the modern housing has occurred in blocks.

MATERIALS

Early building materials comprise coursed square rubble Greensand or Corillian Limestone walls with slate roofs. Moulded and polychrome brick detail is common. Modern developments, including additions to the school, are with modern coloured brick and concrete tiled roofs.

HARD SPACE

Roads are generally of moderate width, with footways to each side. Older areas have some overhead cabling and minimal street furniture.

LANDSCAPE

Soft landscaping is generally restricted to shrubs within gardens. The grassed public open spaces, remnant fields, School and leisure facilities provide important green areas within the heart of the Town.

LE NEUBOURG WAY, STATION ROAD AND BRICKFIELDS

URBAN STRUCTURE

This area was initially defined by late 19th Century industrial development, and then by the late 20th Century relief road.

PRESENT CHARACTER

Cut in two by the railway line and station area, the area comprises industrial units and two superstores. Remnants of the 19th Century industry remain together with pockets of similar dated and modern housing.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

The need for heavy goods vehicle access throughout this area means that roads are generally straight/gentle curved and wide.

MATERIALS

The Gillingham Brick and Tile Company that existed here supplied much of the Town's building materials in its era. The small modern housing estate uses modern bricks and painted render under tile roofs and the industrial buildings are formed with profiled sheeting, generally of neutral colouring.

HARD SPACE

Roads are wide with footways each side, with large parking and turning areas are needed for HGV's and cars.

LANDSCAPE

Low rise development has retained some views into the surrounding countryside, and token soft landscaping has been provided. Future developments should consider this more closely to avoid the sterile environment these developments create.

HAM

URBAN STRUCTURE

The south-eastern approach to the Town passes through the rural manor of Ham and until late in the 20th Century, development comprised a thin ribbon along this route with a short cul-de-sac. Modern housing estates have expanded this strip outwards.

PRESENT CHARACTER

There is an historic rural settlement that lines the main road containing older cottages, inert-war suburban housing and modern infill. Behind this lie modern estates to the north and south that are generally rectangular in shape.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

The older properties are set in individual plots along the sides of the relatively straight main road and cul-de-sac. The modern estate to the north is based on a rectangular layout with squares and formal building lines, whilst the estate to the south is a winding layout with confusing shared surfaces, enclosed aspects and difficult to navigate.

MATERIALS

Pre 19th Century buildings have stone rubble walls, with brick chimneys and slate or tiles roofs. Later 19th/early 20th Century houses have Gillingham red brick walls and tile roofs, with recent modern estates using a mixture of bricks and concrete tiles. The low rise industrial estates at the southern end use modern coloured profile sheeting walls and roofs.

HARD SPACE

Mainly wide open straight roads with footways to both sides.

LANDSCAPE

Trees and the open aspects provide a countryside feeling, except some areas of the recent modern estate to the south that are enclosed.

CHARACTER AREA SUMMARY

BAY

URBAN STRUCTURE

Bay is a small area that represents the historic core of Gillingham, as it currently contains no large infill development.

PRESENT CHARACTER

It remains a rural settlement of houses mainly within individual plots dating from 18 and 19 Century. Infill plots have been discrete.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

There are only two roads in this Character Area, both of which are relatively straight.

MATERIALS

Early buildings have coursed and/or squared Greensand or Corillian limestone rubble walls with brick dressings under slate roofs. Early 19th Century suburban villas are built form coursed rubble with brick dressings. Later 19th Century semi-detached houses are built from brick. Recent infill uses non local materials.

HARD SPACE

Overhead cables feature along the older roads, and this is one of the few areas within the Town where there are no footways.

LANDSCAPE

Remnant fields surround and established front garden shrubs and hedges make this area retain its rural feel. The area is crossed and bounded by a number of footpaths.

PEACEMARSH

URBAN STRUCTURE

A thin strip of older properties line each side of the road heading north from Gillingham. Behind this, the areas leading down to the rivers on either side have been infilled with modern housing estates.

PRESENT CHARACTER

The original settlement of Peacemarsch contain a mixed of irregular plots through development over time, including farms, cottages villas and country houses. The modern infill comprises single style houses and bungalow estates, with a recent development composed of a broad mix of houses with very high density in places.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

The main road is straight, with its historic rural settlement laid along its sides. The modern estates are reached via gently curving distributor roads, feeding generally square culs-de-sacs. A recent high density estate is based around a twisting and turning access road, which together with changing shared surfaces makes navigation difficult.

MATERIALS

Early buildings have coursed rubble walls with ashlar and/or brick dressings under tile or thatched roofs. Later 18th to early 20th Century are generally Gillingham brick with slate or clay tile roofs. Modern developments use non local brick or render and tiles.

HARD SPACE

Overhead cables feature along the older roads, and in almost all locations, there is a footway on both sides of the carriageway.

LANDSCAPE

Established front garden shrubs and hedges soften the hard landscape, and there are glimpses of the surrounding green fields which are easily accessible.

WYKE

URBAN STRUCTURE

The Wyke area has been infilled from the ribbon developments along the original three, almost parallel roads into the Town from the west.

PRESENT CHARACTER

The thin strip of buildings along the main roads contain a mixture of historic rural houses, ornamental and suburban villas, country and town houses, together with significant infill with modern, mixed housing estates.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

Between the core routes, the area has been infilled with modern culs-de-sac that are generally straight, reached by gently curving distributor roads. The infill estates are all different and have characteristics of their respective developer that are echoed elsewhere.

MATERIALS

Early buildings are coursed rubble with ashlar and/or brick dressings under tile roofs. Later 18th to early 20th Century are generally Gillingham brick with slate or clay tile roofs. Modern developments use non local brick and tiles.

HARD SPACE

All the roads are generally straight, feeding some slightly curved culs-de-sac. Overhead cables feature along the older roads, and in almost all locations, there is a footway on both sides of the carriageway.

LANDSCAPE

The green aspects created through mature trees are an important feature of this area and are concentrated along the older roads. The elevation provides glimpses of the surrounding green fields and distant hills. New estates have retained the original hedge lines, but as these are not protected, they are slowly disappearing.

HIGH STREET AND NEWBURY

URBAN STRUCTURE

The heart of the Town is the High Street and Newbury areas, which is also where the original retail area was concentrated.

PRESENT CHARACTER

A broad mix of character types, with irregular plots due to the long timescale of the development. It displays some of the original suburban villas and town houses, together with modern infill, some of which bears no relation to the existing adjacent buildings. In contrast there are some recent infill development that have utilised sympathetic materials and details which blend in extremely well with the older buildings and styles.

PATTERN AND SHAPE

This highlighted area is a thin ribbon of buildings whose frontage the straight roads of High Street and Newbury.

MATERIALS

Early buildings are coursed rubble with ashlar and/or brick dressings under hipped tile roofs. Later 18th to early 20th Century are generally Gillingham brick with contrasting brick/stone dressings and slate or clay tile roofs. Modern developments use non local brick, rendered and/or painted facades and tiled roofs.

HARD SPACE

The roads have minimal street furniture and footways on both sides of the carriageway. Parts of the High Street and the Town Square have been surfaced with brick paviers. A utilitarian security fence blights the adjacent historic Town Bridge

LANDSCAPE

There are some important green aspects created through mature trees and a central grassed open space.

8.0 – DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Based upon the foregoing study of the characteristics of the Town of Gillingham, this section of the Town Design Statement provides a series of Design Guidelines for future development. The origin of these guidelines has been developed from desktop study and importantly the views of local people through public consultations.

Gillingham is distinctive, and has its own character, mainly created through its initial age of ribbon development along the main roads through the Town, and the subsequent developments which have tended to occur in larger defined areas. As a consequence the Town can be summarised as having original character features along the through roads, with themed development areas comprised of open, formal estate developments with a local theme. It is noted that some post-2000 estates have recently been completed with dense, winding layouts and random mixture of styles and designs, whose instant village concept is not characteristic of the Town.

Key features of Gillingham are:

- Easy access to the surrounding open countryside, through open aspects providing views of the adjacent farmland and with good footpath links.
- Open developments that contain wide and relatively straight carriageways, together with grassed open spaces or other soft-landscaped areas.
- Historic buildings along the through roads which provide direct contact with characteristics of an earlier period in the history of the Town.
- Relatively low density of developments, contributing to the countryside aspect of the Town.
- Generally low rise development, comprised of single or two storey buildings, with some three or four storey buildings in larger plots that limit the scale.
- Good riverside access for recreation.
- Despite individual plot variation, developments have followed an overall theme, which provides integrated communities.

Whilst it is intended that small infill plots and extensions to existing buildings will follow the same characteristics of the immediate vicinity, larger new developments should take into account the overall characteristics of the Town rather than simply be a random mix of styles from other towns.

LANDSCAPE SETTING

1. Rural Landscape

All new developments adjoining or close to the rural edges of the town should be planned and designed to maintain the sensitive transition between the town and surrounding rural areas.

Comment: The low profile of the town in the landscape, the materials used and the abundance of trees and hedges ensure the town blends into the surrounding rural area. This is a feature that needs to be protected in relation to the existing town and reinforced in any new development. Past poor screening around Brickfields has resulted in the industrial estate being visually prominent in the landscape.

2. Trees

Development that is likely to have a detrimental impact on important trees in the town will be resisted. All development proposals should consider the contribution trees make to the landscape setting of the town, the character of particular areas and the amenity value for local residents. Existing trees and new trees should be an integral part of any new development.

Comment: Trees are an important feature in the landscape setting of the town. They give the town its rural character and help to integrate the town into the surrounding countryside. Public opinion is strong on the topic of trees and the important role they play in the character of the town. Trees should be retained and protected. In any new development it is essential that a proper assessment is made of the value and contribution trees make to the immediate locality and the overall character of the town.

3. Countryside Views

Development should not adversely affect important views from within the town of the surrounding countryside.

Comment: The scale and depth of existing development mean that there are few places within the town where views of the countryside are not possible. Local residents particularly value this rural link and consider it important and worthy of protection. Any new development should ensure countryside views are maintained.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

LANDSCAPE SETTING

4. River Corridors

All river corridors should be protected and where possible enhanced.

Comment: Public access to the river corridors is an important feature in the town valued by local residents. The corridors offer safe pedestrian and cycle links and are a well-used recreational resource. They are also important to wildlife and should be protected from development and improved or extended wherever possible.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND SHAPE

5. Street Layouts

New developments should reflect the more historic and regularised street layouts in the existing town. The importance of the historic routes into the town and the mix of uses along these routes should be acknowledged in the layout and design of any new development.

Comment: The winding and irregular layouts in the more recent developments are out of character and unpopular.

6. Open Green Spaces

Existing open green spaces in the town should be protected and improved and new high quality open green spaces should be included in any new development.

Comment: Open green spaces are vital to the rural feel of the town and are an important amenity asset for all ages. The trees and hedges they contain are especially important in maintaining the rural landscape setting of the town.

7. Footpaths and Cycle Path Connections

New developments should seek to incorporate high quality new pedestrian and cycle links to improve permeability around the town.

Comment: Permeable links between residential, commercial and recreational uses are essential for access, movement and circulation in and around the town. Links to and extensions of the existing river corridor network and the joining up of green spaces are particularly important to enable local residents to have quick and easy access to the adjoining countryside for recreational purposes.

BUILDING FORM

8. Development Layout

New developments should acknowledge the road frontage and respond appropriately to the context of the road hierarchy.

Comment: In general development in the town faces directly onto the road and this should be followed. With the exception of the High Street and Newbury a majority of dwellings in the town have a front garden, although on the new estates these can be very small. Gardens allow shrubs and planting to be introduced which softens the otherwise urban environment.

9. Gardens

The design of new developments should include adequately sized gardens to allow residents sufficient space to store recycling containers, erect outdoor washing lines and sheds for the storage of cycles and other gardening tools and machinery.

Comment: Recent high density developments have not been designed to include sufficient space for recycling containers, washing lines or the safe storage of cycles and garden machinery. Residents should be given the opportunity to benefit from low carbon alternatives.

10. Density

The density of new residential developments should reflect the surrounding context and setting. Lower densities may be appropriate in certain areas to protect the rural landscape setting of the town.

Comment: High density developments are not in keeping with the town in general and were raised as a concern by local residents.

11. Scale

New development in general should not exceed the height or massing of existing buildings in the town in relation to their role and function. A limited number of landmark buildings of increased height may be permissible providing there is sufficient open space around them to minimise their impact on the locality and that they are not in an elevated position.

Comment: In general the town is characterised by one and two storey developments and as a result sits well in the rural landscape.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

BUILDING FORM

12. Building Materials

New development should be of a high design quality and respect the qualities of nearby buildings.

Comment: Attention should be given to architectural detail. The character areas in Section 7 highlight those features that give the different parts of the town their character and local distinctiveness. The standard styles of the more recent residential developments should be avoided as they bear little resemblance to the character of the town.

In relation to the industrial areas of the town excessive use of plain profiled sheet and contrasting colour bands should be avoided as due to their scale these have a detrimental impact on the setting of the town in the wider landscape. New industrial units should be carefully screened with soft landscaping to reduce their visual impact.

13. Hedges, Wall and Fences

Good quality soft landscaping should be integral to the design of any new development to ensure it integrates successfully into the local environment.

Comment: Soft landscaping will enable the town to retain its rural charm.

14. Boundaries

New boundaries and changes to existing boundaries should be in keeping with the locality and/or enhance the street scene. Hedges and trees in particular should be retained where they make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Comment: Boundaries such as hedges, fences and walls should take reference from established examples in the locality in terms of height, species, building materials and styles and follow best practice. Original hedges incorporated into the design of new developments should be protected to stop homeowners from making insensitive alterations.

INFRASTRUCTURE

15. Traffic Effects of Development

The traffic effects of new development on the existing road hierarchy need to be carefully considered especially in relation to areas of physical constraint.

Comment: The main concern for local residents is the impact new development will have on the single railway crossing point in the town. This junction is already congested at peak times and any new development should seek to avoid adding to this congestion or the congestions of other areas of constraint within the town.

16. Road Infrastructure

The existing primary and link roads provide a clear and navigable route through the town. The road infrastructure for any new development should follow a similar format of hierarchy and design and follow best practice.

Comment: Although local residents appreciate the clear and navigable primary and link road hierarchy in the town some concern was raised about the number of traffic signalled junctions. When designing new intersections highway engineers should seek appropriate solutions and consider other options to allow traffic to move freely through the town.

17. Local Roads and Footways

New development should have a clear and defined local road hierarchy to enable ease of movement for vehicles and pedestrians. Excessive hard shared surfaces and narrow winding roads should be avoided.

Comment: Residential areas of the town built prior to 2000 have a road hierarchy and footpath network that are simple to navigate and where vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow freely. Adequate off street parking means few cars are parked on the carriageway and front gardens add an element of soft landscaping bringing the countryside into the town.

In comparison the more modern developments are characterised by hard shared surfaces, narrow accesses and restricted off road parking that result in a large number of cars being parked on the carriageway. In this type of environment pedestrians become confused, drivers find it difficult to drive down tight winding roads clogged with parked cars and street nameplates are often obscured leading to problems for delivery drivers.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

OTHER

18. Retail Shop Frontages

The design of shop frontages along the High Street and Newbury should be sympathetic to the historic character of the town centre.

Comment: Redevelopment of the retail frontages along the High Street and Newbury should include details from the older more historic buildings to enhance the character of the area. Modern and more functional facades should be avoided as they detract from the character of the town centre.
