

5.36 TC Area 5 : Highcliffe And Walkford



5.36.1 Highcliffe is the most eastern neighbourhood of the Borough. The area is contained on its northern side by the A35 and the Railway. The area is separated from Mudeford by the A337 and open land around Highcliffe Castle. Walkford Brook forms the boundary to the New Forest District area. An area of open land along the Walkford Brook boundary is described in Section 4.0 Edges and Enclaves. The overall area has developed as a large village/small town with extensive suburban housing around a local commercial high street.

Physical Framework

Geographic Features

5.36.2 The village occupies rising ground on the edge of the Borough. Modest cliff slopes lead down to beaches and along to the southern side of the village. The area sits at about 25 m above sea level. Inland, the Bure Brook has carved valley areas into the high ground. These run roughly parallel to the coast and drain through Mudeford into the harbour. The ground levels continue to rise inland to a high point of around 40m AOD. This is directly comparable with the landmark St Catherine’s Hill at 45m AOD across the Avon valley.



5.36.3 The A337 takes advantage of this topography by running up the ridge between the Bure Brook valley and the sea following the most gentle gradients to the head of the valley, before dividing into the Ringwood Road, and the New Milton Roadways at Walkford.

Historic Development

5.36.4 The 1910 edition of the Ordnance Survey (see **Figure 5.19**) illustrates Highcliffe as a cluster of village buildings around a cross roads on the Lymington Road. The area around was a heavily wooded landscape with a series of large country houses. Several of these were contained in the sheltered valley areas. Highcliffe Castle being the prime exception to this. Smaller clusters of cottages are indicated as Walkford Glen and Chewton Common.



5.36.5 The earliest stage of 20th Century expansion can be found off the 1939 survey (see **Figure 5.20**) with the additional infill around the Highcliffe Crossroads and the Chewton Common. Sporadic development had also extended along the roads to the railway station and Ringwood Road. In the intervening time interest in the attraction of the coast had drawn a café to the cliff top where previously only a gravel pit was shown.

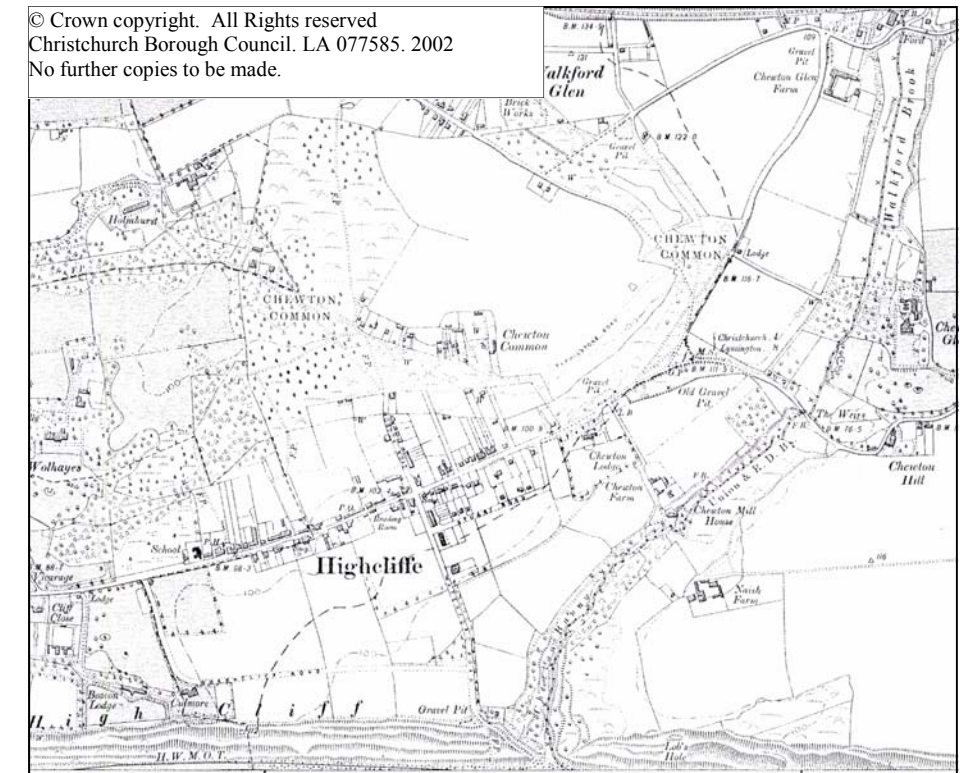


Figure 5.19 (1910 O.S.)

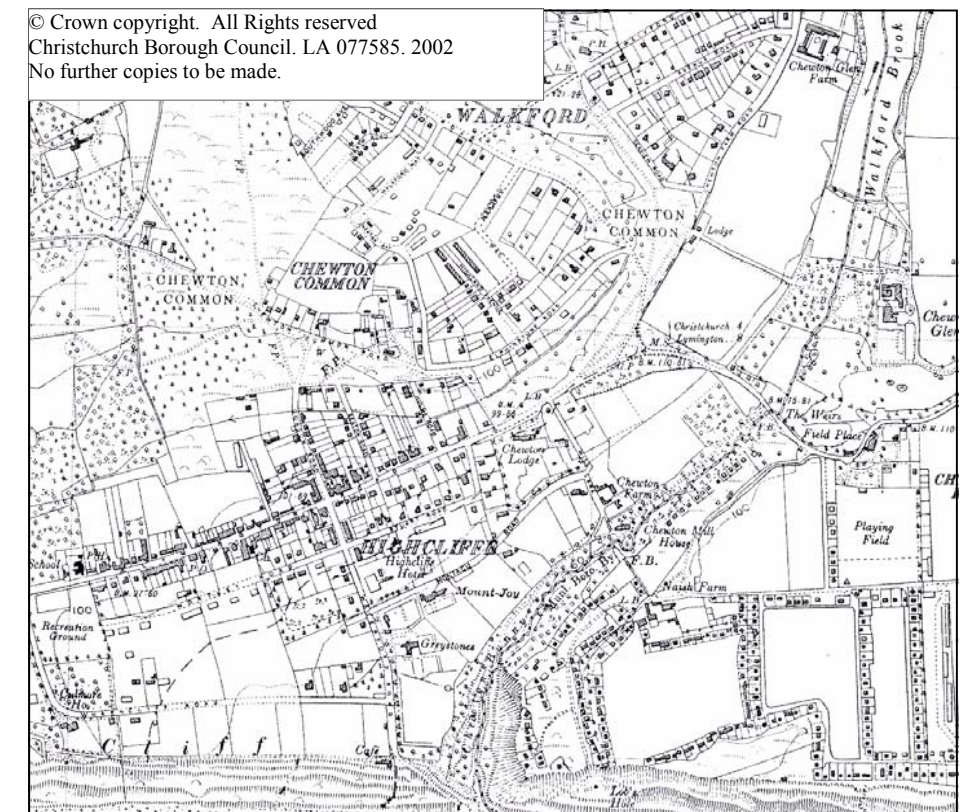


Figure 5.20 (1939 O.S.)



5.36 TC Area 5 : Highcliffe And Walkford cont ..

5.36.6 The early post-war developments subsequently filled the space between villages and cliff tops and infilled the open areas and grounds of the country houses in the woodland area on the higher ground.

5.36.7 The latest areas of development have followed on since the 1950s on the open land between the A35 and A337 close to the neighbourhood of Somerford .

Existing Townscape

5.36.8 The built up area of Highcliffe now extends to clear physical boundaries. The central high street remains as the heart of the neighbourhood. The settlement is almost exclusively residential. The shopping streets, school sites, beach car park and Highcliffe Castle being the limited exceptions to this. The overall development pattern is essentially suburban, with small clusters of older cottage groups and pockets of modest scale flat developments.

5.36.9 The busy A337 physically separates the development areas along the ridge leading to the coastal cliff from the Bure Valley estates. Two other busy side roads (Hinton Wood Avenue and Ringwood Road) link the A337 to the A35 north of the railway.

5.36.10 The scale and layout of the suburban areas have not allowed for significant pedestrian routes within the estates. Although a series of commons are linked by a network of paths.

Landscape Settings, Spaces and Structure

5.36.11 Highcliffe is well contained in the landscape. Approaching from the North woodlands within the adjoining district shield any views. To the East, the plateau of high ground limits any significant view. From the West the tree cover and rising ground ensure the area is well contained. The coastal frontage is an important setting in terms of the contributions the Highcliffe tree cover makes to the wide coastline and sea views to and along the coast. Trees also have a significant presence within the built-up area.

5.36.12 The main roadways are enclosed by mature tree lines in both communal landscaped areas along the road and private gardens.

5.36.13 In addition, a series of heavily wooded commons are contained within the valley areas. These areas are designated Sites of National Conservation Interest (SNCI s). As spaces that almost link together the areas provide the basis of a landscape structure to the neighbourhood.

5.36.14 The combination of mature tree cover and rolling topography help create a strong internal landscape framework that provide a backdrop or setting to some of the housing areas.

5.36.15 The neighbourhood area is not well provided with open spaces, but this is compensated for by the coastal setting and areas of Commons, areas to the north of the Railway, the Steamer Point Woodland, Highcliffe Castle Golf Club, Nea Meadows and Walkford Brook/Chewton Bunny valley.

Landmarks and Legibility

5.36.16 As an enclosed and sylvan area of townscape there are few visual landmarks within the Neighbourhood. Highcliffe Castle is a well-known local facility and is in a sense a point of orientation. The high street contains some quite attractive individual buildings but does not present strong individual visual reference points.

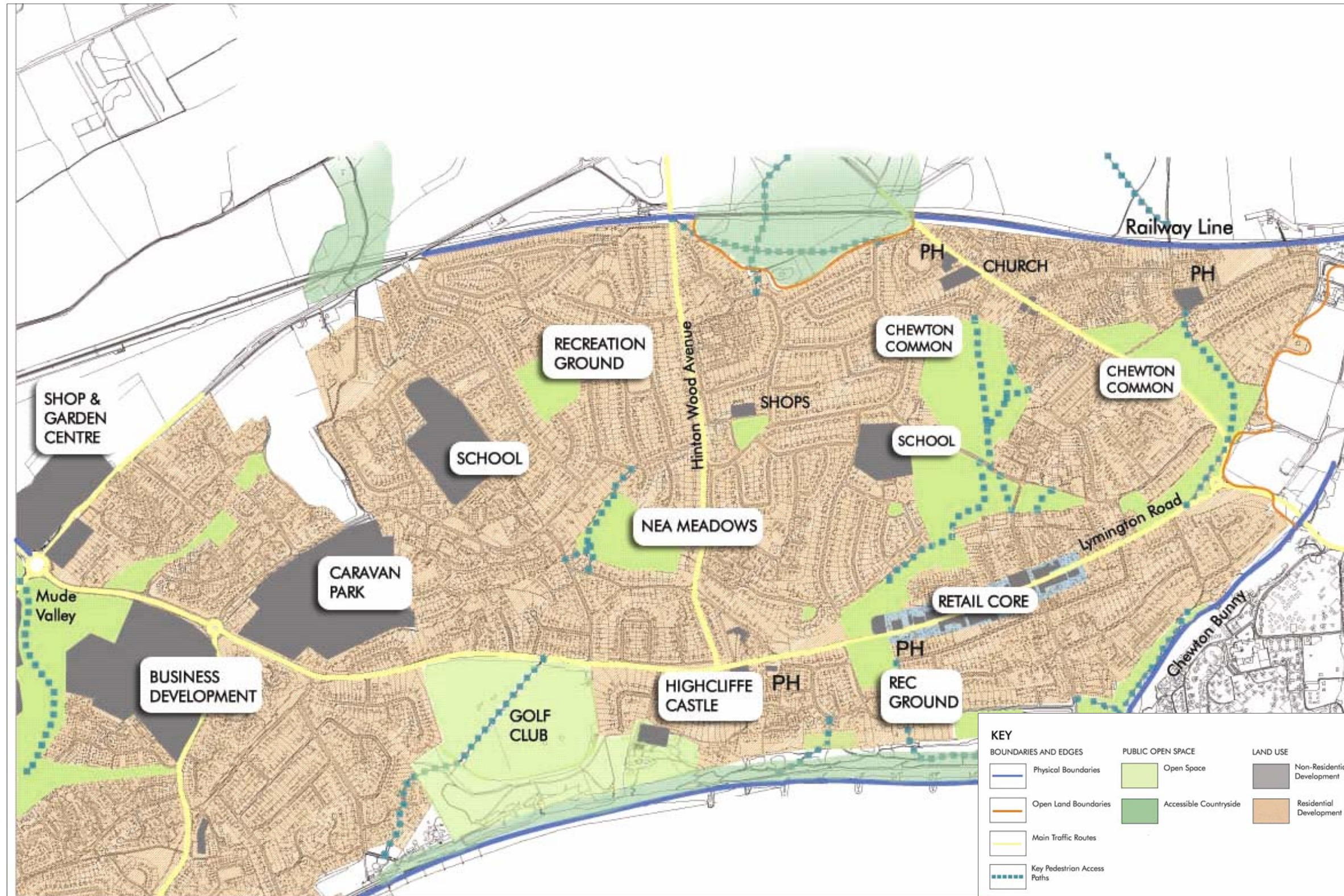


Figure 5.21- Highcliffe & Walkford Physical Townscape

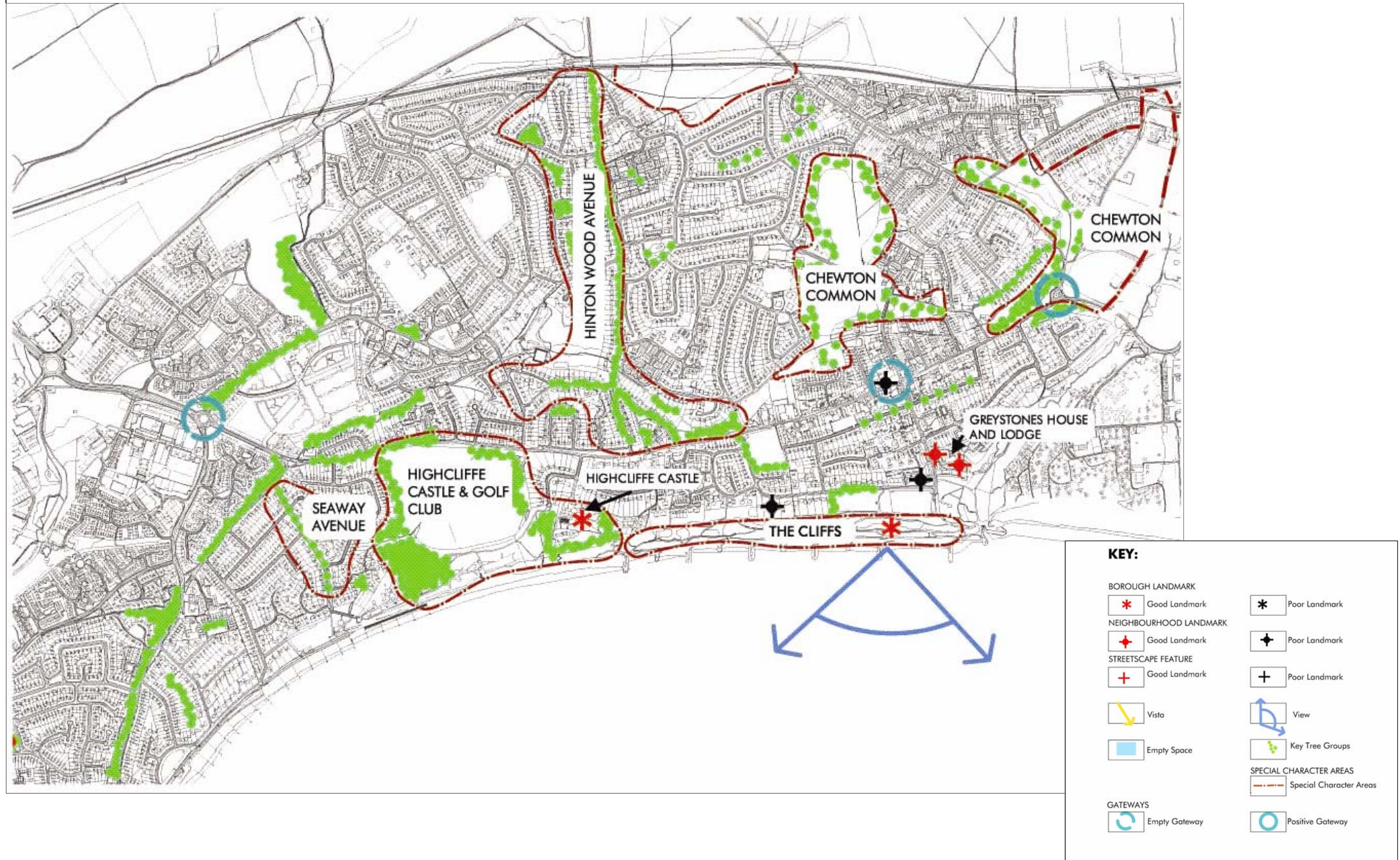


Figure 5.22 - Highcliffe and Walkford Townscape Analysis