

## Vision 2030 Neighbourhood Plan: Environment and Heritage Working Group

### Evidence base on heritage and the built environment

*"Bridport is one of the best towns in Dorset, and for a continuously sustained urban feeling perhaps the best of all".*

*"East and West Streets slope gently downwards, so that the urban vistas end in distant views of green hills, and South and East Streets have for much of the way Georgian frontages of unusual unity".*

Quotes taken from *The Buildings of England: Dorset*, Newman J and N Pevsner (1972)

This document contains evidence about the five adjoining parishes which together form the designated area of the Vision 2030 or Bridport area Neighbourhood Plan.

### Introduction

Bridport was established as a fortified Burgh in the late ninth century by Alfred the Great and in 1253 was made a Royal Borough by Henry III. In 1213 King John demanded that Bridport produce rope and cable for his army and navy, an industry which (with flax and hemp growing) was to expand and become a vital part of the town's heritage, and which can still be found in a number of net making businesses. Moreover, the industry has left a distinctive mark on the town's street layout, buildings and boundaries e.g. premises and back gardens/ yards which extend back for some distance.

*"The prolonged influence of the flax and hemp industry can be seen in the exceptional diversity of Bridport's industrial landscape, including the wide range of well-preserved historic housing, the distinctive walks used for spinning twine and rope and the buildings around the harbour at West Bay".*

Sir Neil Cossons in *Bridport and West Bay: the buildings of the flax and hemp industry*, English Heritage (2006)

The main streets in the town (East, West and South Streets) are among the widest in the south west of England. They meet at a T junction by the Town Hall, with Bucky Doo Square just off this junction at the top end of South Street.

Notable buildings within the town include:

- The Chantry – the oldest building, dating from before 1300 and possibly built as a lighthouse;
- The Town Hall – built in 1786 on the site of an earlier market house;
- St Mary's Church – an elegant building of local stone, begun around 1400 and with nineteenth century additions which maintain its style;
- The Literary and Scientific Institute – built in classical style in 1834 and due to be refurbished;

- Bridport Museum – which is in a building with an early sixteenth century frontage.

Today the built area of Bridport has expanded to roughly 14,000 residents. Its post-war expansion resulted in the town coalescing with previously separate settlements at Bothenhampton and Bradpole. This built form is notably shaped by the topography of steep sided hills within and around the town, and by the valleys of the rivers Brit, Asker and Simene, whose confluence is in the town before they flow to the coast at West Bay. This town setting is further described in the Environment section of the evidence base.

**Map showing extent of Bridport at key points in history**



The iconic view from the town centre looking down West Street has buildings framing open countryside and the well known landmark of Colmer's Hill. The view along East Street

similarly ends with a green backdrop of wooded hillsides. In South Street, just beyond the shops and opposite St Mary's Church, there is a run of houses which could be described as quintessentially Dorset in style.

One notable feature of the built environment is the low skyline and absence of any building which could be described as even approaching 'high rise'. Almost every building throughout the town, including its centre, has a height of no more than three storeys. There are a few buildings which reach four storeys, such as the two buildings directly opposite the town hall and The Strand (flats in West Allington). A handful of other cases have a fourth storey built into the roof. No building anywhere in the town exceeds four storeys.



Photo 1: View along West Street, Bridport, with countryside backdrop



Photo 2: View along East Street, Bridport, with wooded hillside backdrop



Photo 3: Four storey Strand building, Bridport, out of place and blocking views



Photo 4: Heritage streetscape in South Street, Bridport

West Bay (historically known as Bridport Harbour) is about one and a half miles to the south of the town centre on Lyme Bay. It lies in a gap between dramatic cliffs, which form part of Dorset's Jurassic Heritage Coast. The harbour has considerable heritage value, having been built mainly to transport net and rope. Today it is used mainly by fishing and leisure boats. Other buildings of interest include the Salt House and the former Methodist Church.

Bradpole is today physically joined with the built area of Bridport, but was historically separate and has its own historic (village) centre with some fine stone buildings. Another part of the wider Bridport built area is Bothenhampton, across the A35 trunk road, whose village centre includes Old Holy Trinity Church.

The neighbourhood plan area also covers some outlying villages or small settlements, all of which have heritage interest, some of this being formally recognised through heritage designations. They include Eype, Pymore, Symondsbury and Walditch.



Photo 5: Upper end of Hollow Way in Bothenhampton



Photo 6: Middle Street in Bradpole village

There is a good summary of the area's history and the main publication sources in *Dorset Historic Towns Project: Bridport Report* (Bellamy P, 2008 for Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council and English Heritage).

### Town Historic Character Assessment

*"Bridport has a strong historic character, a reflection of the historic street network, the survival of historic property boundaries and the large number of surviving historic buildings".*

Quote from *Dorset Historic Towns Survey: Bridport*, Bellamy P for Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council and English Heritage (2008)

The urban (or built up) area of Bridport has been the subject of a detailed character assessment through the Dorset Historic Towns Project, referred to above. It should be stressed that this built up area extends beyond the town council boundary and into the adjoining parishes. The purpose of this report (and those produced for other Dorset towns) was to identify the specific features, building forms and building traditions that give places their character and identity. This information can be used to help ensure that new developments are in keeping and respect the existing built environment. To quote the report: *"Without knowledge and understanding of the historic urban environment it is too easy for significant elements to be damaged or removed through modern redevelopment"*.

The Bridport report from this project identified 27 character areas in the town, 12 of which (listed below) it considered to be 'high' in terms of their contribution to historic character. Moreover, 10 of these 12 areas were also considered to be 'high' in terms of their sensitivity to change.

Character areas with a high contribution to historic character:

- Area 1: South Street
- Area 2: East and West Streets
- Area 3: South of East Street
- Area 4: St Michael's Lane
- Area 7: Coneygar Hill
- Area 8: Barrack Road/Bedford Place
- Area 12: Historic Bradpole
- Area 14: West Allington
- Area 15: North Allington
- Area 17: Court Mills and North Mills
- Area 24: Historic Bothenhampton
- Area 26: West Bay

The full list of 27 Character Areas is given at Appendix B together with their main features.

The source report can be viewed at this web link:

[file:///C:/Users/Brian/Downloads/Bridport\\_Historic\\_Character\\_Draft\\_Report\\_11\\_Assessment\\_and\\_Appendices.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Brian/Downloads/Bridport_Historic_Character_Draft_Report_11_Assessment_and_Appendices.pdf)

### **Parish Plans and Village Design Statements**

Outside the Bridport Town Council boundary, the other four parishes that constitute the designated Neighbourhood Plan area have all variously completed Parish Plans (PPs) or Village Design Statements (VDSs). VDSs have a similar function to the Bridport town Character Assessment, identifying the main features which give these areas distinctiveness. PPs are rather different, being essentially an audit of the issues considered important by local residents and how they might be addressed. However, PPs are relevant to this paper in that most identify some heritage-related issues.

Allington Parish Plan (2006): this PP found much support among residents for:

- Preserving trees, woodlands and orchards, and for repairing its dry stone walls;
- Maintaining the rural or semi-rural character of the parish; and
- Starting a heritage project to record the special features of the parish.

Bothenhampton Village Design Statement and Village Plan (undated, around 2003): key features identified here were:

- The old village retains its charm, not least with dry stone walls and long gardens;
- Mature hedgerows and copses form a buffer between village and newer development;
- Hollow Way has a raised pavement dating from medieval times;
- There is a network of footpaths and bridleways, many with deep hedge banks;
- Important building materials are Forest Marble (older buildings), random and coursed rubble (cottages), and Bothenhampton brick (early 20<sup>th</sup> century);
- Roofing is often slate and there are some thatched houses.

Bradpole Parish Plan (2011): among the three features of this parish that were most rated by its residents, two are of relevance. 98% of survey respondents supported safeguarding open spaces and rural areas, whilst 93% supported safeguarding the Conservation Area.

Symondsbury Parish Plan (2008): the topics highlighted by this PP did not relate directly to heritage and the built environment.

Walditch Design Statement and Parish Plan (undated): key features identified here were:

- The original village along Walditch Road with buildings dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century;
- Centred on three farms (now in residential use) built from local quarried stone. Berry Farm is a rare surviving example of a Dorset long house;
- Outside the village, the mock Tudor Hyde House built of Ham stone in 1853 by the Gundry family, which has an 1885 outbuilding containing a real tennis court;
- Several historic narrow lanes, such as Lower Walditch Lane, which are typical Dorset deep cut tracks.

## Conservation Areas

There are six Conservation Areas (CAs) within the designated Neighbourhood Plan area, which are those in:

- **Bridport**: this was the subject of a 2004 CA Appraisal which was adopted by West Dorset District Council that same year. The CA area was extended and the Appraisal updated in 2010. This sizeable CA is described in nine sub-areas;
- **West Bay**: this was the subject of a CA Appraisal which was adopted by the District Council in 2003. It was updated in 2013. This CA is described in four sub-areas;
- **Bothenhampton**: this was the subject of a 2007 CA Appraisal which was adopted by the District Council that same year. An extension to its area was adopted in 2008;
- **Bradpole**: this was the subject of a 2007 CA Appraisal which was adopted by the District Council that same year;
- **Symondsbury**: this was the subject of a 2007 CA Appraisal which was adopted by the District Council that same year. There also appears to be a small CA area in the hamlet of Eype, though no Appraisal document for this has been found; and
- **Walditch**: this was the subject of a 2007 CA Appraisal which was adopted by the District Council that same year.

As indicated above, these CA Appraisals have been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance and hence they are intended to inform planning application decisions. They support conservation area policy in the adopted Local Plan for West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland (2015).

The location of these CAs can be seen on the maps at appendix A to this note. The reviews and updates of the Bridport and West Bay CAs can be found at this link:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/387600/Bridport-and-West-Bay-conservation-area>

The Executive Summary from the Appraisal for Bothenhampton, Bradpole, Symondsbury and Walditch CAs can be found at this link:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/387599/Bothenhampton-Bradpole-Symondsbury-and-Walditch-conservation-areas>

The heritage information for Bradpole is also summarised in a note which was prepared in Spring 2016 by its Parish Council.

Key characteristics of these six CAs are summarised in the table below.

***Key characteristics identified from the CA appraisals***

Bridport	<p>Wide East, West and South Streets with their characteristic 'T' shape and historic market place.</p> <p>Pattern of land or burgage plots that, with the roads, establish the historic layout of the town.</p> <p>Legacy of the town's net and cordage industry, including buildings, industrial gardens, rope walks and open spaces required.</p> <p>Impressive views from within the town to surrounding countryside and conversely.</p> <p>Physical connection between the town, its river valleys and adjoining or surrounding hills.</p> <p>Urban variety and visual richness encouraged by a long history and the different types of buildings, architectural styles and traditions.</p> <p>Landmarks like the Town Hall, St Mary's Church and Coneygar Hill.</p> <p>There are around 400 Listed Building entries in this CA.</p> <p>Other buildings of merit include industrial buildings, such as on the St Michael's Trading Estate.</p>
West Bay	<p>Dramatic cliff top and shoreline views of the settlement.</p> <p>Central focus of the harbour, with its boundary, river entry and sea connection.</p> <p>Traditional buildings types and plots around or near the harbour.</p> <p>Maritime, informal, formal and arts and crafts building styles.</p> <p>Historic settlement road and track layout, including Arcade Cut.</p> <p>Various landmark buildings, such as St John's Church, the Salt House, Harbourmaster's House, Sladers Yard, Bridport Arms, George Hotel and Riverside Restaurant.</p> <p>Visual link of the former railway line and the old station building.</p>
Bothenhampton	<p>High hills, hedges and trees to the east, north east and south east.</p> <p>Groups of trees and hedges in Hollow Way, the two churchyards, around the Old Rectory and around Quarry Lane.</p> <p>15 Listed Building entries, including the Arts and Crafts Gothic New Church, C16th and C17th farmhouses, and small cottages.</p> <p>Roughly a dozen other buildings of merit, including a Victorian rectory, several thatched cottages and a K6 phone box.</p> <p>A coherent group of historic buildings on Main Street.</p> <p>Local building traditions from Forest Marble and local brick clays.</p> <p>Attractive details, such as ironwork, stone paving and walling.</p>
Bradpole	<p>Attractive AONB setting, with low rounded hills and hedges north and east, and a wide green corridor along the river.</p> <p>Important individual and grouped trees, particularly the grounds of St James' Nursing Home and lower part of Higher Street.</p> <p>Fairly intact historic plan around raised churchyard and a rectangle of lanes.</p> <p>10 Listed Building entries, including spired Victorian Parish Church, table tombs and two large gentry houses.</p> <p>17 other buildings of merit, including the former school, Forster Memorial Institute, 2 large gentry houses and various cottages.</p> <p>Several coherent groups of quality buildings linked by stone walls, hedges and trees.</p>

	Attractive details, such as cast iron railings, stone walls and distinct building materials (Inferior Oolite, Forest Marble and brick clay).
Symondsbury	<p>High quality AONB landscape setting, with rounded hills capped by woodland and narrow valleys.</p> <p>Major contribution made by mature trees, hedges and gardens.</p> <p>Visual coherence of village stewarded by private estate.</p> <p>Intact village layout, with few modern alterations or additions.</p> <p>17 Listed Building entries, including Parish church, the Old Rectory, the Ilchester Arms pub and estate buildings.</p> <p>6 other buildings of merit, including estate cottages.</p> <p>Consistent use of Inferior Oolite and Forest Marble building stone.</p> <p>Other features, such as thatching, plain tiles and gate piers.</p>
Walditch	<p>Dramatic AONB setting above Bridport backed by high wooded hills.</p> <p>The Hyde is an important Victorian country house, with an interesting garden history and parkland setting.</p> <p>13 Listed Building entries, including former longhouse, The Hyde, the Real Tennis Court and C17th manor house and estate cottages.</p> <p>15 other buildings of merit, including Victorian former school, vernacular cottages/farm buildings and K6 phone box.</p> <p>Two coherent groups of listed/unlisted buildings at the village entrances.</p> <p>Reasonably consistent use of Inferior Oolite as building stone.</p> <p>Other details, such as use of thatch, cob and render, and wrought ironwork.</p>

The appraisal reports also refer to factors posing a threat to the CAs. They include loss of green space to infill housing, loss of architectural detail during maintenance, difficulty sourcing original materials, buildings falling into disrepair and street clutter from poles/wires.

### Listed Buildings

It is impossible to list here all of the hundreds of Listed Buildings (LBs) within the designated Neighbourhood Plan area. A map showing their location is overleaf.

Those wishing to explore the list further can do so using the National Heritage List for England, which is maintained by statutory body, Historic England:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

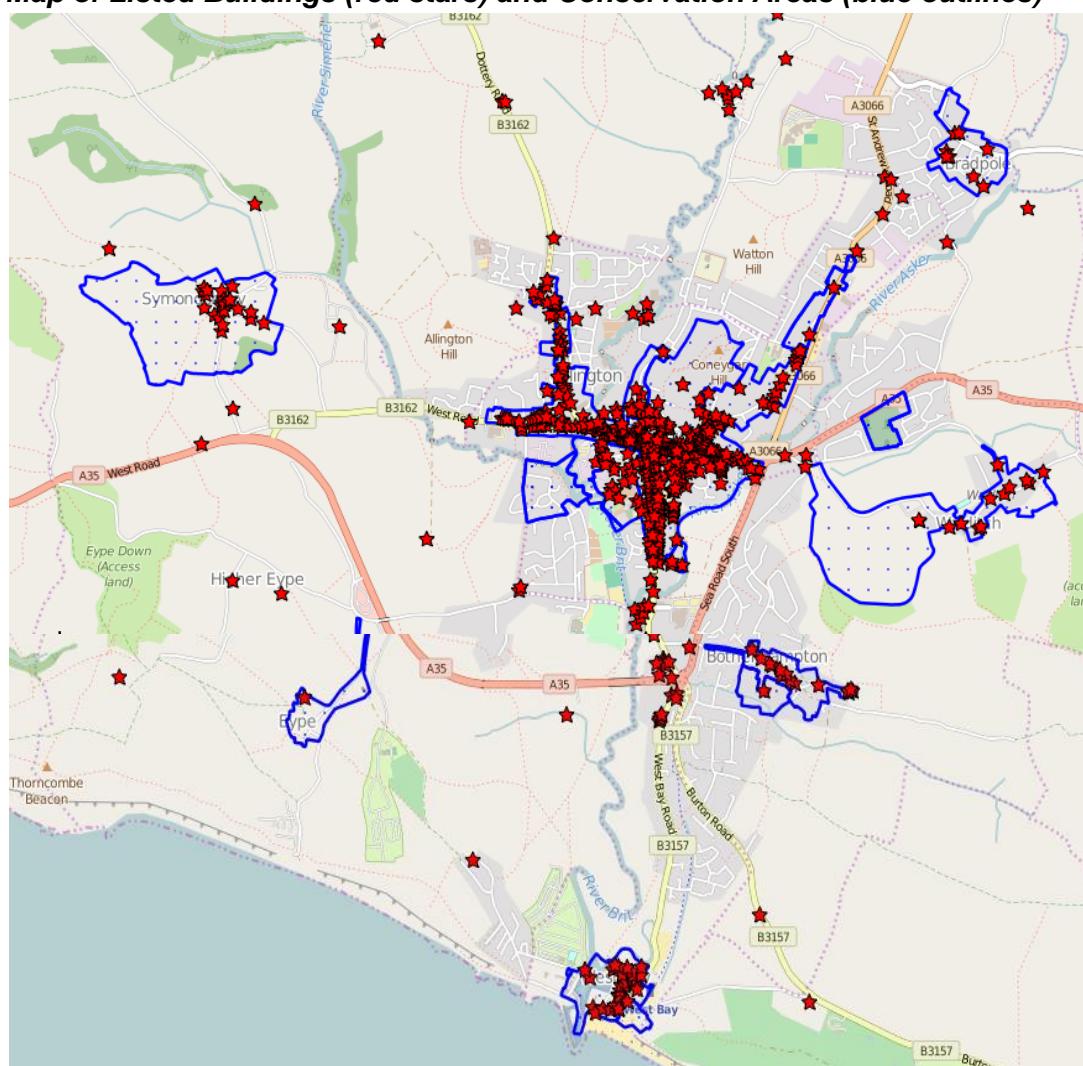
Their current records show that the number of LBs is as follows:

- 65 within the Allington Parish Council boundary (some at Pymore west);
- 471 within the Bridport Town Council boundary;
- 29 within the Bothenhampton and Walditch Parish Council boundary;
- 20 within the Bradpole Parish Council boundary (some at Pymore east); and
- 47 within the Symondsbury Parish Council boundary (some at Eype).

In short, the total of LBs in the designated Neighbourhood Plan area is 632.

These numbers are higher than those cited in the table about Conservation Areas, because some of the LBs are located outside such areas.

**Map of Listed Buildings (red stars) and Conservation Areas (blue outlines)**



Source: Open Source Map from Dorset Explorer

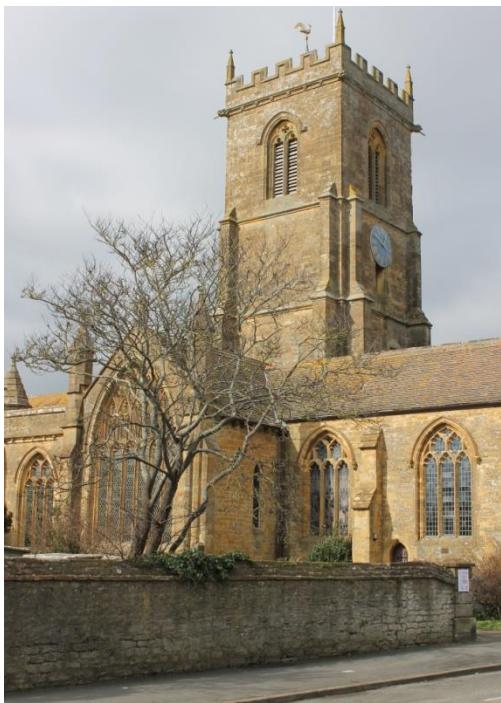


Photo 7: St Mary's Church, Bridport

Four of these Listed Buildings have the highest status or Grade I status. They are: St Mary's Church in Bridport; the Town Hall in Bridport; Old Holy Trinity Church in Bothenhampton; and St John the Baptist Parish Church in Symondsbury. All the other LBs in the area have Grade II status.

### **Buildings of Local Importance**

Buildings may still be considered to have local importance even if they have not formally been registered by Historic England on the National Heritage List. Guidance by Historic England's predecessor (English Heritage) says that an "important local building" is one that makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, and where this is the case, the building will be included in a local list within the conservation area appraisal.

A number of such locally important buildings are referred to in the CA appraisal documents covering this Neighbourhood Plan area. They include:

- 12 buildings at Bothenhampton;
- 17 buildings at Bradpole;
- 6 buildings at Symondsbury; and
- 15 buildings at Walditch.

There may, of course, be other buildings of local importance which lie outside the CAs.

Locally important buildings also reflect the area's industrial heritage. One notable example is the Edwards Building on the St Michael's Trading Estate in Bridport – a red brick structure from the 1890s, with a central clock tower and which now hosts various craft and antique businesses.

Full lists and descriptions of these buildings can be found within the appraisal document:  
<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/387599/Bothenhampton-Bradpole-Symondsbury-and-Walditch-conservation-areas>

## Registered Parks and Gardens

There is one Registered Park and Garden, much of which coincides with the Millennium Green on Coneygar Hill. This is shown in green cross-hatch on the map below. The entry says that Downe Hall in Bridport was registered as a Grade II garden in 1996. It is described as: "Compact pleasure grounds and park laid out in the late 18th century to accompany a new house, together with early 20<sup>th</sup> century formal gardens designed by E S Prior".



Source: Dorset Explorer on an Open Street Map base

## Scheduled Monuments and archaeology

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the registered Neighbourhood Plan area. This is confirmed by the Dorset Explorer website.

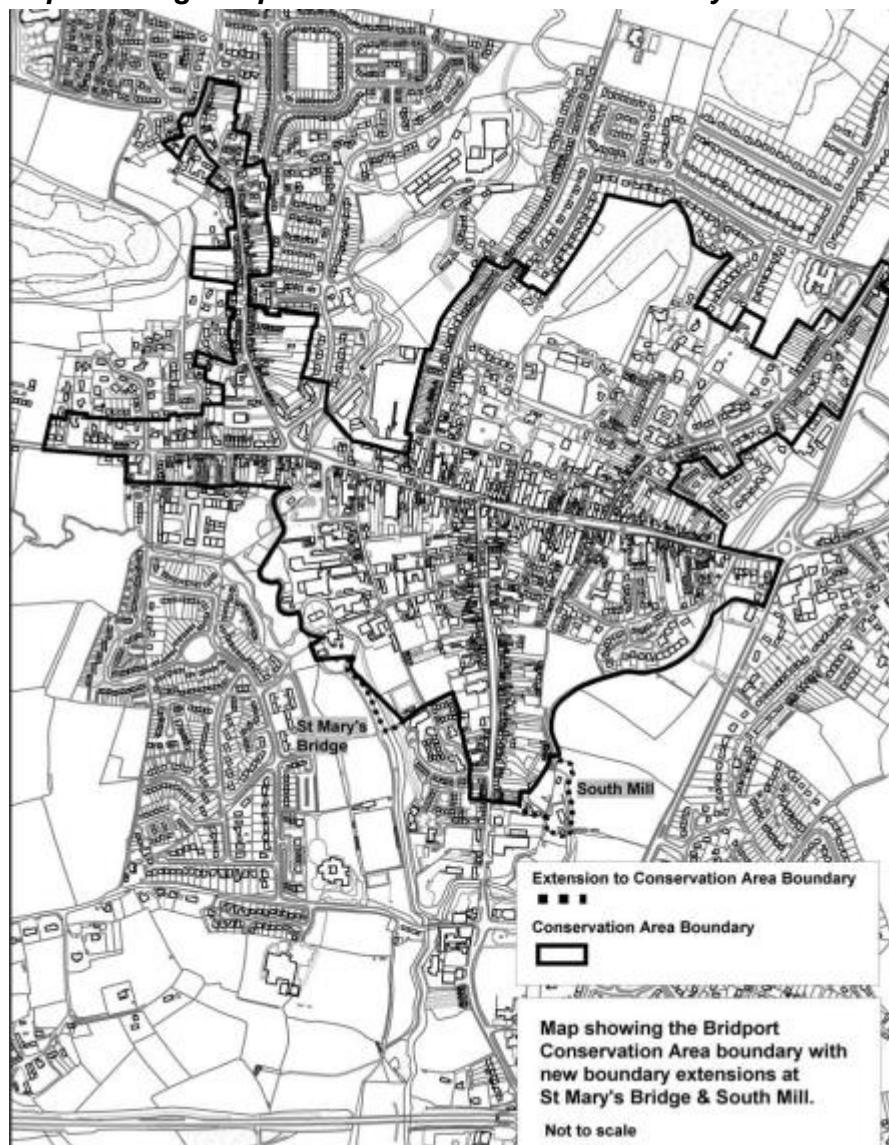
It is widely accepted in the literature and appraisal documentation that the archaeological potential of the Bridport area has not been realised. Digs have been restricted to specific plots, largely as and when site developments have taken place. The pre-medieval record is therefore limited, despite known Saxon activity and some Roman finds.

Brian Wilson

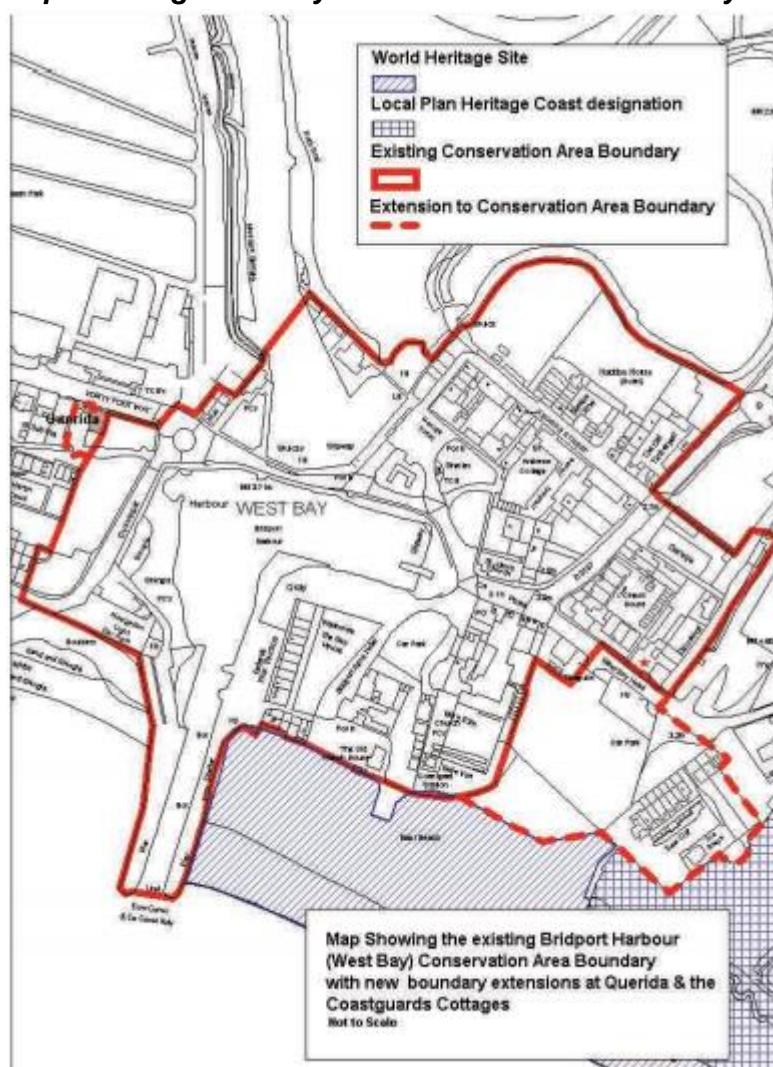
Version: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016

## Appendix A – Conservation Areas

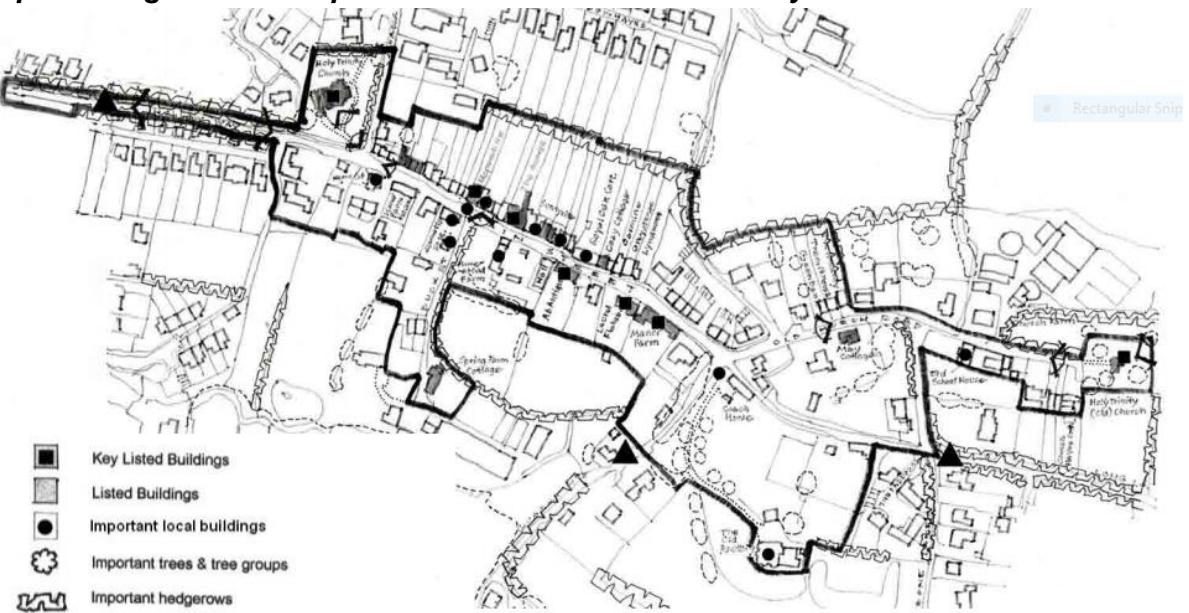
*Map showing Bridport Conservation Area boundary*



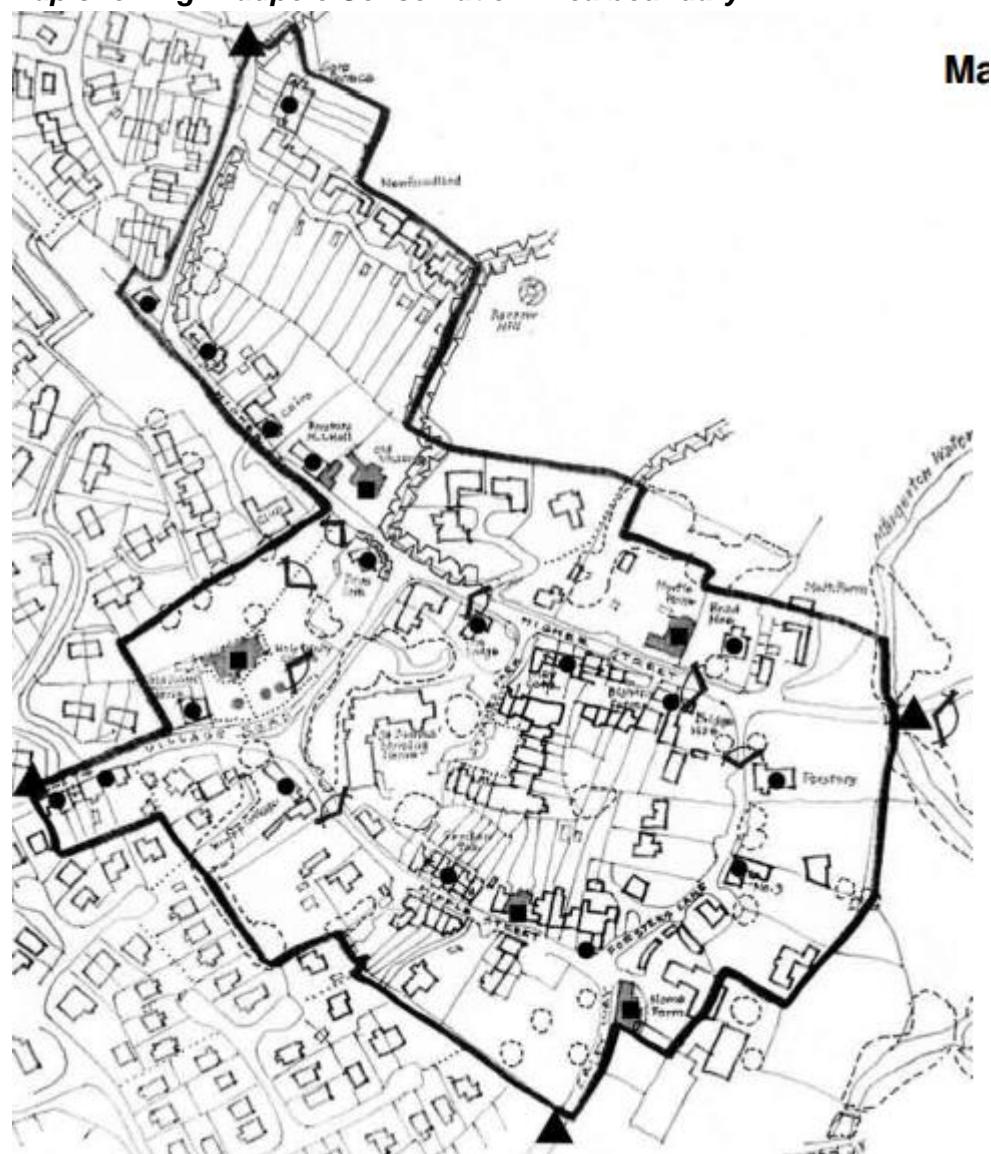
### **Map showing West Bay Conservation Area boundary**



## ***Map showing Bothenhampton Conservation Area boundary***



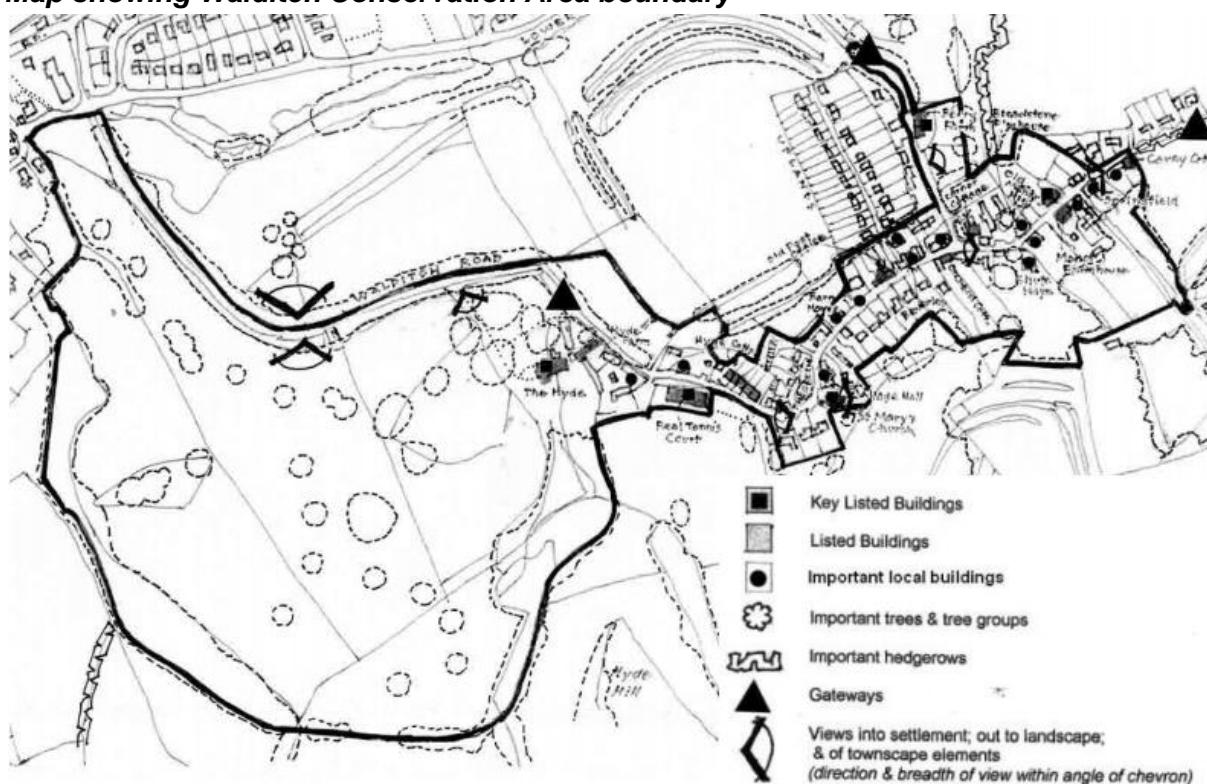
**Map showing Bradpole Conservation Area boundary**



**Map showing Symondsbury Conservation Area boundary**



**Map showing Walditch Conservation Area boundary**



## Appendix B – Full list of the 27 Urban Character Areas in/around Bridport

No.	Name	Key features
1	South Street	Burgage plots Historic street frontages St Mary's Church Town Hall Historic market Spinning walks
2	East and West Streets	Burgage plots Historic street frontages Town Hall Historic market Buried town defences
3	South of East Street	Burgage plots Historic street frontages Rope walks Buried town defences
4	St Michael's Lane	Historic industrial remains Open green spaces and hedges
5	South Mill	South mill Modern industrial / commercial premises Modern housing estate
6	Folly Mill	Industrial archaeology remains Historic domestic / industrial buildings Modern housing estate
7	Coneygar Hill	Large detached villas and grounds Downe Hall, gardens and park Buried industrial archaeology
8	Barrack Road/Bedford Place	Historic terraced housing Workhouse Buried town defences
9	Victoria Grove	19 <sup>th</sup> century terraced detached and semi-detached housing Baptist chapel St Mary & St Catherine Church
10	Coneygar Road and Watton	Roman burial Coneygar Lane Modern housing estates
11	St Andrew's Road	19 <sup>th</sup> century housing St Andrew's well St Andrew's church St Andrew's crescent Delapre House
12	Historic Bradpole	Mix of historic urban and rural buildings Intact village plan Raised churchyard Boundary walls and raised pavements
13	Bradpole suburbs	Historic roads Small group of historic housing Remains of railway Modern housing estate

14	West Alllington	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> century historic plots Late Regency / early Victorian villas Industrial archaeology remains
15	North Alllington	Historic terraces Rural vernacular buildings Spinning walks
16	Alllington	Potential buried remains of medieval Alllington Flax Barton Electricity station Modern housing estate
17	Court Mills and North Mills	Court Mills North Mills West Mills Green spaces on floodplain
18	River Brit floodplain	Open green spaces on floodplain Brewery Farm Site of Port Mill
19	Skilling	Small number of 19 <sup>th</sup> century cottages Inter-war housing estate Modern housing estate
20	Old Brewery and Portville	Old Brewery and brewery workers' housing Portville suburban development Green space next to river Modern commercial development
21	River Asker floodplain	Historic fields and field boundaries Sluices
22	East Road	Late Regency villas East Mill Large detached villas Municipal cemetery Modern housing estate East Road Business Park
23	Bothenhampton suburbs	Narrow hollow ways Victorian and Edwardian housing along Crock Lane Modern housing estates
24	Historic Bothenhampton	Historic rural buildings Historic street frontages Bothenhampton Old and New churches
25	West Bay Road	Rural vernacular buildings Late Regency / early Victorian villas Edwardian villas 20 <sup>th</sup> century housing Disused railway line
26	West Bay	Historic warehouses Harbour Pier terrace
27	West Cliff	World War 2 coastal battery 1920s and later housing estate Modern housing estate

## **Appendix C – Map of Character Areas, Listed Buildings and other heritage designations in the Bridport town centre area**

