

# Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 1

## Weymouth Historic Core

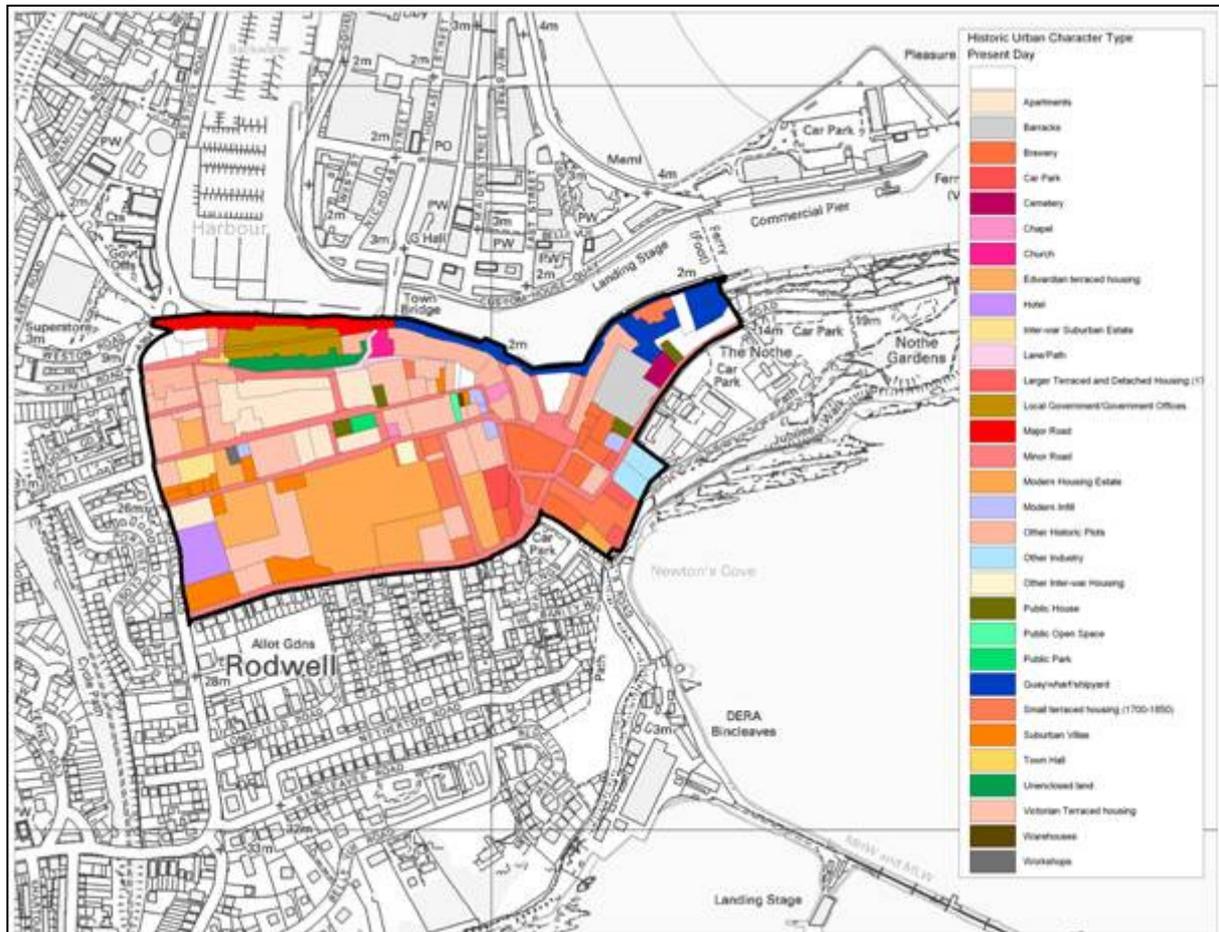


Figure 43: Map of Historic Urban Character Area 1, showing current historic urban character type



Figure 44: Cove Row, built on land reclaimed at the beginning of the 19th century.



Figure 45: Weymouth & Portland Council Offices

## Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 1 Structure of Character Area

### **Overview**

This area covers the original settlement of Weymouth, and includes the majority of the area of the medieval and early post-medieval town, as well as the earliest areas of eighteenth and nineteenth century expansion to the south. It is defined primarily by its historic dimension and the concentration of historic buildings.

### **Topography and Geology**

This area lies on the southern side of the estuary of the river Wey, with the land rising rapidly from the water's edge. This slope is broken by a valley which runs from Hope Square to Newton's Cove. The only level ground lies along the harbour side and along this valley. Most of the area lies on Corallian Limestone.

### **Urban Structure**

The harbour side forms the focus of this area. The majority of streets run parallel to the edge of the harbour, apart from a cross route running from Cove Row to Newton's Cove. Hope Square is an important open space, defined by the imposing group of former industrial buildings that surrounds it. The roads are generally straight, which implies a degree of planned development away from the original harbour frontage.

### **Present Character**

Figure 43 shows the present day historic urban character types. The oldest buildings lie along the harbour side with, on the western side regular terraces of small houses running south of the harbour laid out on a planned grid, broken by the bulk of the modern council offices. South of the Cove is a more irregular area of streets, dominated by the former industrial buildings of the brewery, now converted to a mixture of

residential, commercial and retail properties. The lower slopes of the Nothe are also covered by terraces housing, some associated with the former barracks.

### **Time Depth**

This area represents the historic core of the medieval town running alongside the harbour, with blocks of nineteenth-century housing behind. The western end was disrupted by the building of council offices in the later twentieth century. The Cove is an area of reclaimed land, reclaimed in the early nineteenth century, with a variety of buildings on it, and dominated by the buildings of the former brewery to the south.

### **Settlement Pattern and Streetscape**

The settlement pattern is one of high density commercial properties fronting the harbour, with high density housing to the south. The only areas of open space are Hope Square and the car parks which serve Brewers Quay. The former Quaker burying ground is the only green space in the area.



Figure 46: Friends Burying ground



Figure 47: Former Weymouth barracks

## Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 1 Built Character

### **Building types**

The area is characterised by a large number of 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings with a smaller number of dating to the 17<sup>th</sup>, later 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are relatively few modern buildings within the historic core, but the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century offices of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council are a prominent feature at the western end of this character area.

Buildings include attached houses, short terraces and attached small cottages, larger houses (some with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century shop premises built into them) and some large town houses. Some industrial buildings also survive, in particular the former Devenish Brewery premises, now converted to commercial and residential use. The Red Barracks buildings have also been converted to residential use.

The houses are two, two-and-a-half or three-and-a-half storey attached houses or short terraces, with occasional four storey buildings.

There are very few architecturally remarkable buildings in the area, but the similarity in scale and use of building materials, and the generally continuous street frontages, give the houses a very pleasing group character. The former brewery and barracks buildings bring variety to the streetscape and provide a strong contrast to the general character of the area and, though most buildings do not have an overtly maritime aspect, the clear focus of the area upon the quayside in particular gives it a distinct character which is different to other parts of the town.

### **Building Materials**

The majority of the buildings are brick, and stone is used for some of the older buildings, such as the Tudor Merchants House and the

Old Rooms, as well as later public buildings such as Holy Trinity Church. Alongside the harbour the older houses are generally of painted or rendered brick. The roofs are predominantly slate. The buildings of the former Devenish Brewery are of brick.

### **Key Buildings**

Holy Trinity Church

Hope Chapel

Tudor Merchants House

The Old Rooms

Former Devenish Brewery

Edward's Homes (almshouses)

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Offices



Figure 48: Former Devenish Brewery



Figure 49: Brewers Quay, former Devenish Brewery

**Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 1  
Archaeology**

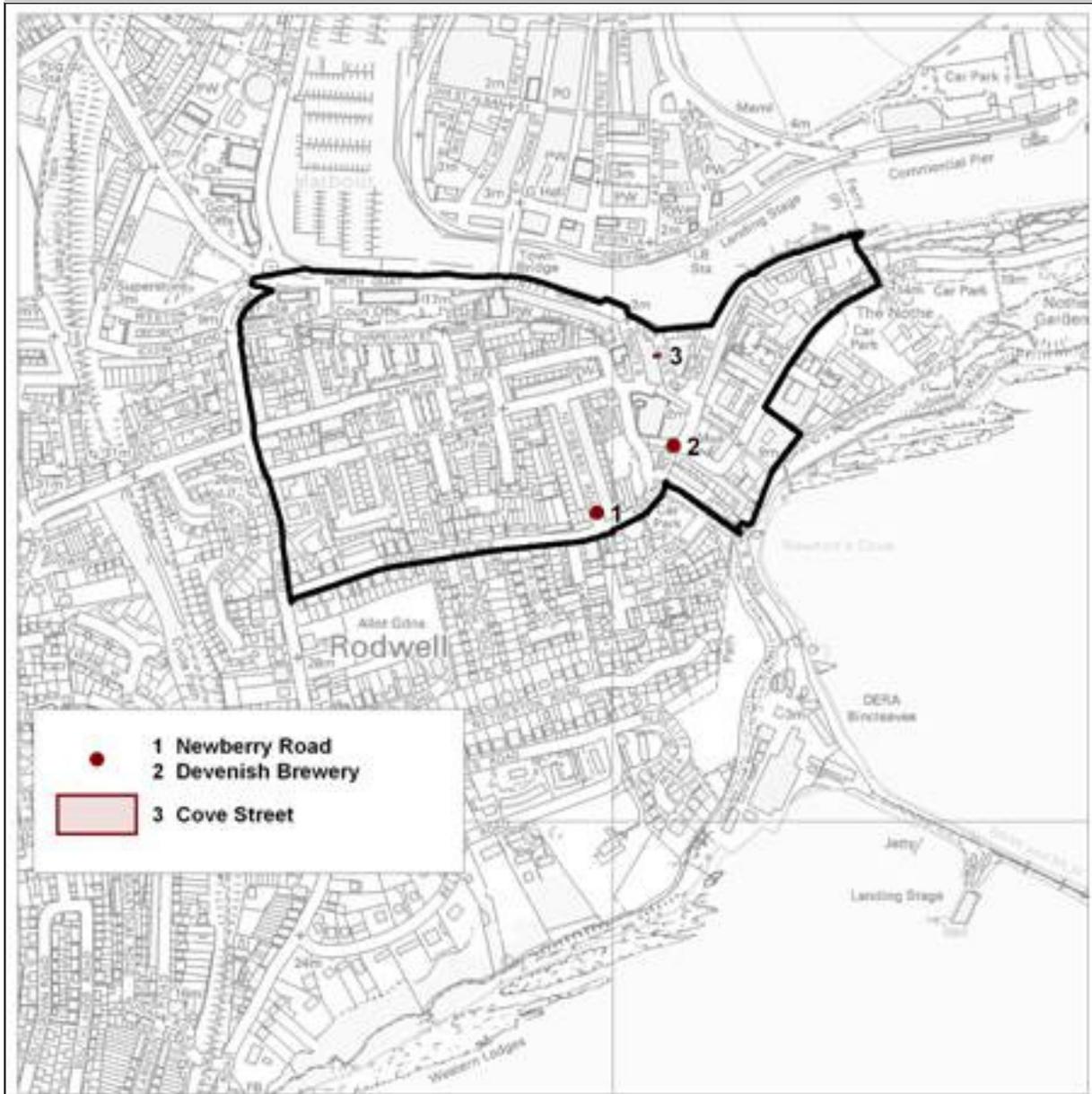


Figure 50: Archaeology of Historic Urban Character Area 1

**Archaeological Investigations**

One investigation has been undertaken - a watching brief in Cove Street which revealed disturbance by modern service trenches, and the building of stables in the 1870s.

Building work in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries exposed Roman tessellated pavements, one of which was salvaged.

**Archaeological Character**

The very limited below-ground investigation constrains any consideration of the archaeological resource. Nevertheless, the location within the historic core of the town would suggest that a series of medieval and

post-medieval pits may exist in the rear of the historic plots, together with evidence for earlier property boundaries and structures. There may be evidence of earlier quays and quayside structures. The infilling and reclamation of the Cove in the early nineteenth century may have sealed eighteenth century harbour deposits as well as the associated quays under the present buildings.

Chance finds and observations suggest the presence of a Roman villa complex in the vicinity of Newberry Road; the precise form and extent of this activity is unclear on present evidence.

## Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 1 Designations

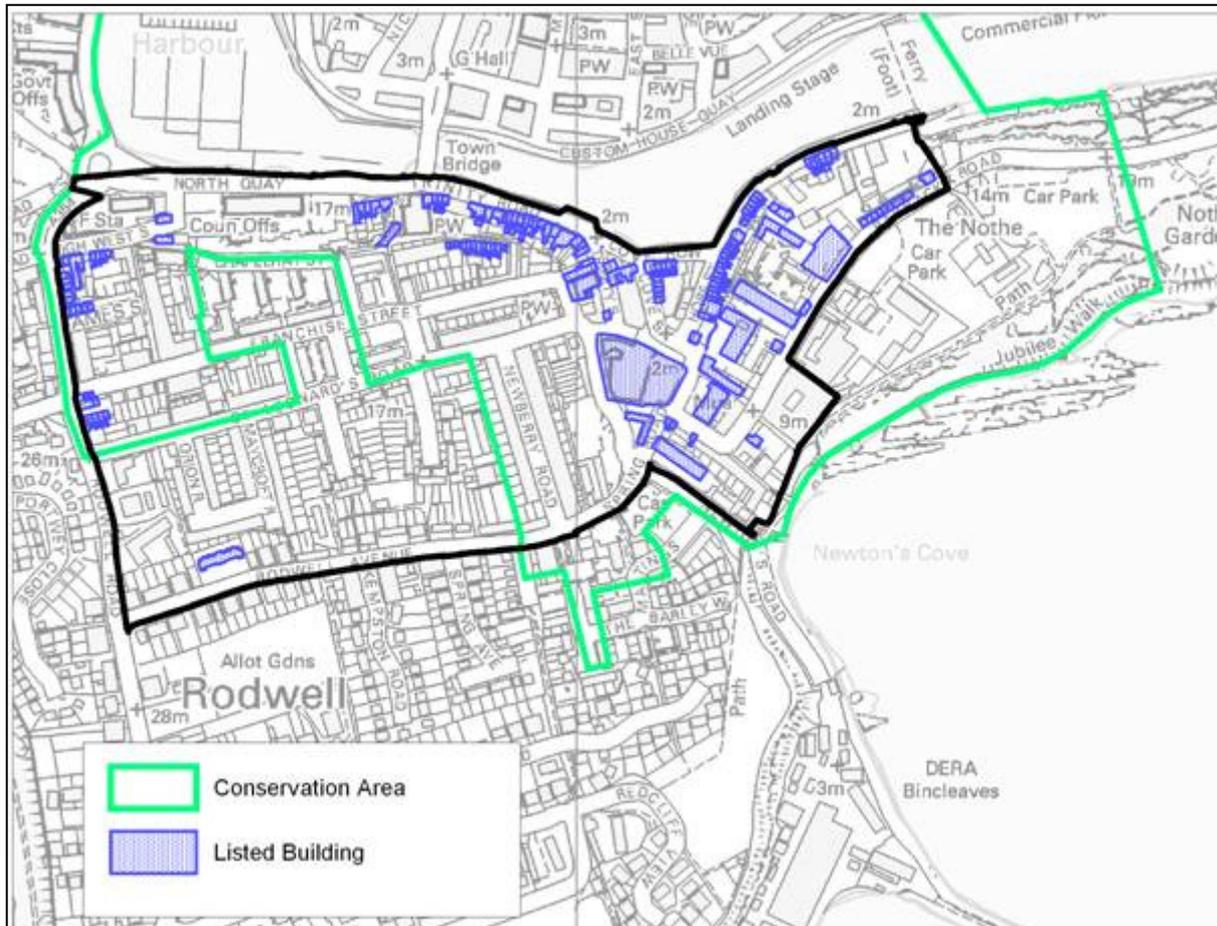


Figure 51: Listed Buildings and other designations in Historic Urban Character Area 1

### **Listed Buildings**

There are 87 Listed Building designations in the Character Area. One building is listed Grade II\* (one of the malshouses of the former Devenish Brewery) and the other buildings and structures are Grade II.

### **Conservation Areas**

The greater part of this Character Area lies within the Weymouth Conservation Area.

### **Registered Historic Parks and Gardens**

There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the Character Area.

### **Scheduled Monuments**

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the character area.

## Weymouth Historic Urban Character Area 1 Evaluation

### **Strength of Historic Character**

The strength of character of this area is judged to be **strong**. It has good survival of the medieval town layout, with its quayside and associated streets and plots. There is an extremely strong contribution from the large number of historic buildings, primarily of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date (together with a few notable earlier survivals). There is a range of different building types from gentry town houses to fishermen's cottages. The widespread use of local materials and coherent style creates a pleasing whole to the built character, albeit one punctuated by the later and strongly-characterful buildings of the former barracks and brewery, and the modern council office building.

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

The area has a **high** sensitivity to major change. The scale and shape of the historic streets and plots, and the quay frontage in particular, reflect considerable time depth and provide the underlying structure which gives the town its historic character. The street frontages formed mainly by historic buildings are very sensitive to anything other than small-scale change and any opening up of the frontages would have a major impact upon the character.

The varied nature of the topography of the area and its surroundings means that some areas of the character area are overlooked from a number of vantage points within and just outside the town. In particular the harbour side (seen from the northern shore) and the former brewery building roofscape from the Nothe

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

### **Archaeological Potential**

The archaeological potential of this area is judged to be **high**. It comprises the historic core of the medieval town of Weymouth and has the potential to reveal details on the development of the town, the history of its property divisions, maritime and merchant activity, as well as small-scale craft and other industries and the economy and diet of its inhabitants.

The large number of historic buildings and outbuildings have a high potential to provide detailed information on the survival of earlier structures hidden behind later frontages and to contribute to the understanding of the development of houses, particularly merchant's houses, shops and industrial premises in post-medieval Weymouth.

Its location on the harbour side, with a long history of small scale land reclamation, means that there is potential to discover details of former quays and associated structures together with buried waterlogged soils with potential for palaeoenvironmental information.

There is also potential for recovering archaeological information on the pre-urban activity (as suggested by the finds of Roman pavements).

This area has the potential to provide information which would contribute to Research Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25 (Part 7).

### **Key Characteristics**

- Historic core of medieval and post-medieval town
- Medieval and later quayside
- Reclaimed land
- Generally narrow sinuous streets with focus on quay
- Mercantile and maritime activity
- Wide range of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century attached houses
- Historic shopfronts
- Former brewery buildings
- Former barracks buildings