



PORTISHEAD COMMUNITY CHARACTER STATEMENT

SUBMISSION VERSION 2022

This document was produced by the **Portishead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group** with assistance from consultants **Place Studio**.

Place Studio is a community planning and design consultancy which seeks to enable local communities to harness their local knowledge and objectives to produce sound and robust planning and design documents

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IN DEDICATION TO SANDY TEBBUTT

Sandy Tebbutt was a well known and respected town historian and font of all knowledge for things Portishead.

Sandy moved to Portishead some 53 years ago in 1968 and, whilst raising a family, she commenced her interest in the town. Portishead was then a very different place. It was an industrial area in decline and dominated by the Power stations, the docks, the railway and large industrial works. Sandy listened to the locals, collated their stories and compiled an archive of an earlier time. Whilst Portishead was being transformed into a thriving modern community, the population grew exponentially, and Sandy was there to create a legacy of historical record.

Sandy wrote and edited 25 editions of Posset Pieces, a publication she created in 2006. She wanted to record the history of Portishead and the Gordano Valley and talk to the people who had such a wealth of knowledge of the region. She dedicated all the profits of the publication towards restoration of heritage assets within the town and created a living history as Portishead developed. This was achieved by many projects, restoration of the civilian memorial, restoration of the clock tower face of St Peter's church, restoration of the gates to the former

Power Station, information boards at several locations illustrating Portishead's past – and so the list goes on.

In addition, Sandy gave talks around the region, all of which were hugely popular, and she led walks in the area demonstrating the historical aspect of this town.

Sandy was Vice Chairman of The Gordano Civic Society with a focus on the town history and development. She was Chairman of Portishead in Bloom for many years and was the leading light for the town's incredible success in the RHS Britain in Bloom contest where PIB gained no fewer than 11 gold medals over the years. Additionally, the Portishead in Bloom Open Gardens weekend is now established in the town calendar.

Sandy passed away in May 2021 after a long illness. She will be remembered for her untold dedication to the town and people of Portishead. It was during this illness that Sandy persuaded the Town Council to create a Heritage Centre in the Folk Hall. She recorded a timeline of Portishead from its first beginnings to the present day which now lines the walls of the main hall. She and Cllr Janet Davey together organised the displays which illustrate this timeline together with a

gallery of stories, photos and artefacts. The centre is to be known as the Sandy Tebbutt Heritage Centre.

This document is dedicated to Sandy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This Character Statement has been prepared as part of the evidence base for the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan.

A Character Statement is a description of local character produced by the residents of an area. The town as a whole is also the designated area for the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan (hereinafter also referred to as NP). Its preparation and content follow an established format for preparing and presenting Character Statements as guided by Plan consultants Place Studio – a planning and design consultancy.

The core of this document is a description and analysis of important and locally distinctive features of the town as a whole and the distinctive areas within it.

It also incorporates design guidelines to inform the design of any new development in the town, including alterations to existing buildings.

Although this Character Statement stands alone as a document, it is linked directly to policies in the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan which require applicants to demonstrate how they have taken its analysis into account in their planning applications.

HOW HAS IT BEEN PRODUCED?

Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Environment and Heritage Working Group, together with consultants Place Studio, have worked together to draft this document, building on detailed area assessments conducted by Working Group members. Advice and guidance has come from North Somerset Council and draft versions of this Statement were produced, then shared with the overall NP Steering Group and others in the community during the process of drafting.

HOW WILL IT BE USED?

The Portishead Character Statement is a tool for our town to use in the consideration of any planning or other applications.

It is for local residents, businesses and landowners who may wish to improve or add to their homes, or business premises. It is also for designers, developers and planning professionals (including the local planning authority and Town Council) involved with new build developments.

It does not focus on whether or where developments should take place; its focus is the design of any future developments in the Parish.

This Community Character Statement will form part of the evidence base to the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan. It will be linked to a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan and as such will be a 'material consideration' which must be consulted by those planning to build in the town, together with those responsible for making decisions on development proposals.

The aim is to ensure that new development is high quality design and locally distinctive. It must be a positive addition to the town and respect the distinct character of the different areas both the historic and the more recently developed. It should also respect the distinct landform and wider landscape setting that varies from expansive coastal to more intimate wooded valleys.

WHY PRODUCE A CHARACTER STATEMENT FOR PORTISHEAD?

The objectives are to:

- complement and inform our Neighbourhood Plan;
- encourage early pre-application involvement of our community by prospective developers;
- inform the design process of any new development.

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) illustrates how the government attaches great importance to local character in the design of new development:

“Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics.”¹

The NPPF also sets out that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Therefore it is clear that the Portishead Neighbourhood plan can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of the town that should be reflected in development. The NPPF places great importance on design quality:

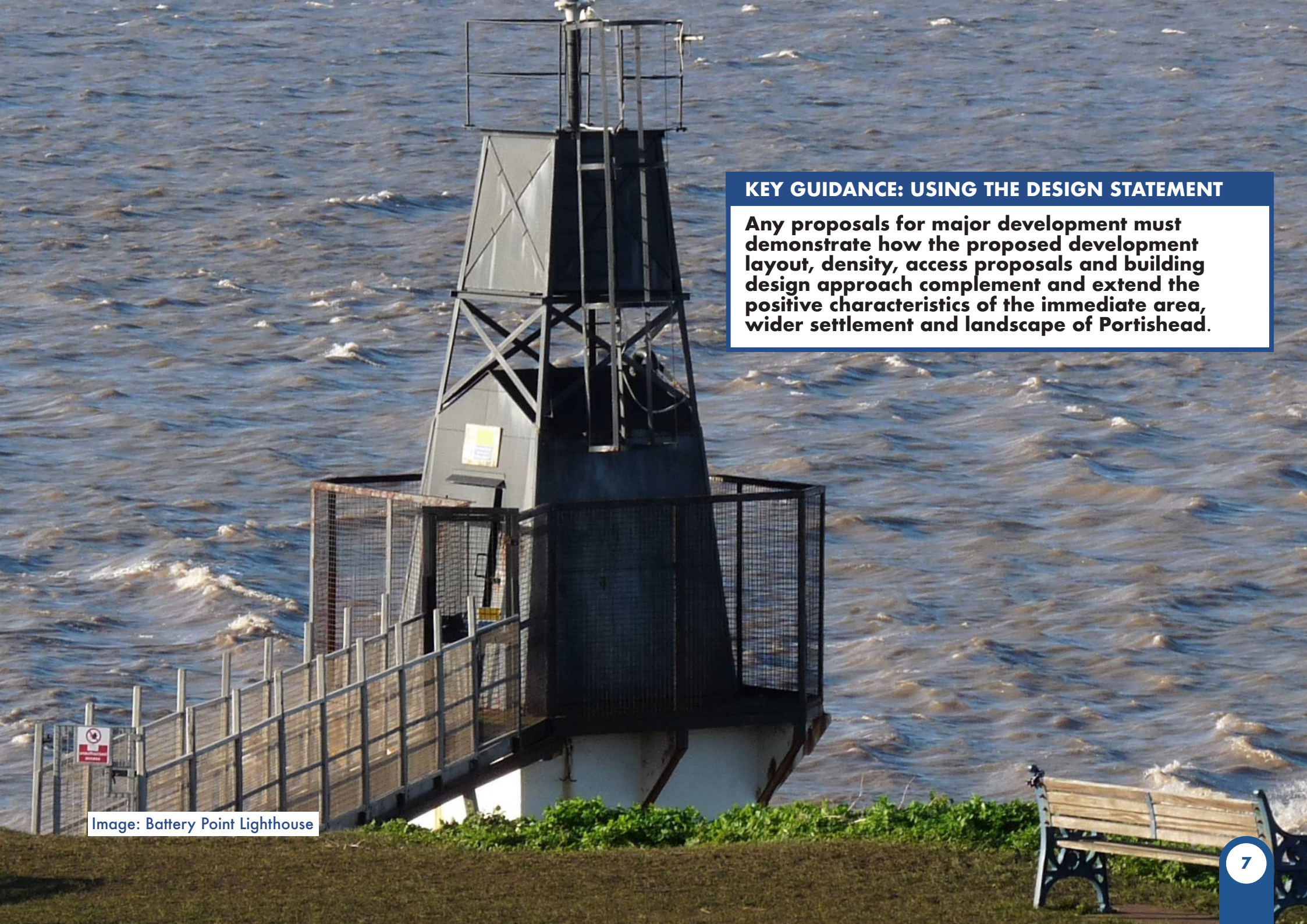
“Good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development.”¹

[Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\)](#) on planning for well-designed places also reinforces the importance of design, and the value

of guidance such as this Character Statement and the role of communities in achieving good design.

To be read in parallel with the PPG noted above, the government also published a [National Design Guide](#) which places great emphasis on the importance of understanding and responding to local character (in many senses) and on community engagement.

The National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It forms part of the government’s collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools. Achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last long, are sociable and will adapt to the needs of future generations. As set out above, this Character Statement is linked directly to policies in the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan which require applicants to demonstrate how they have taken its analysis into account in their planning applications. The aim being to protect and enhance positive characteristics and local distinctiveness of the town whilst also allowing for innovation and originality in design that would positively add to the character of the town.



KEY GUIDANCE: USING THE DESIGN STATEMENT

Any proposals for major development must demonstrate how the proposed development layout, density, access proposals and building design approach complement and extend the positive characteristics of the immediate area, wider settlement and landscape of Portishead.

Image: Battery Point Lighthouse

2. PORTISHEAD: AN OVERVIEW

The character of Portishead has been shaped over the years by a series of factors.

Portishead's location was highly influenced by topography. Settlements in the Somerset Level region were built on raised ground, often sitting just above the foot of the taller hills and ridges. Roads also often contour around the edges of hills, above the valley floor, as can be seen still with the B3124 Clevedon Road. As with many of the nearby coastal settlements, Portishead lay on the end of a ridge, linked to the outside world by a route leading across the valley. Its position may well have been influenced by the pill, or tidal creek which

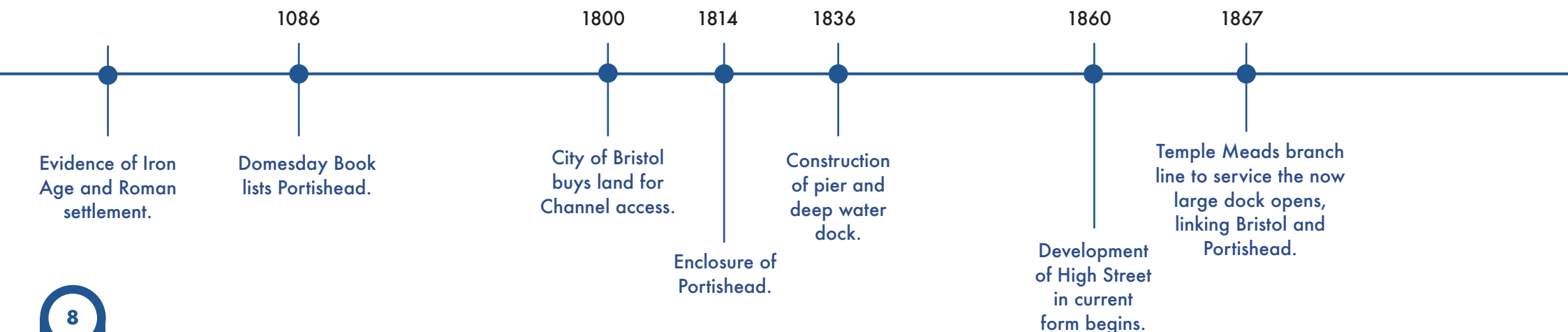
in Victorian times was remodelled as a dock, but which before the nineteenth century was the end of the watercourse leading from the Gordano Valley, with a tidal mill and seawall at what is now The Old Mill public house.

Although the hills and marshy areas were not appropriate for roads and building, they were important agriculturally, with pastoral grazing and orchards. Until two hundred years ago, the village was largely clustered around St Peter's Church. An industrial complex was formed on the open marshland around the pill as the dock expanded from the 1880s, and the residential area of Portishead spread along the hillside and

then in the post war period, up and along the ridge of Portishead Down. From the 1970s, as land has become more scarce on the hillside, development has moved to the valley floor.

In the early 2000s, as the Marina area was developed, Portishead was regularly referred to as the fastest growing town in Europe.

For many years, public pressure, combined with planning policies such as Green Belt and settlement boundaries, have limited the development of valued public spaces within the town and on its perimeter; for example, there has been strong and successful resistance to any



change to the status quo on the large section of open grassland, stretching from the Lake Grounds to Redcliffe Bay.

The last remaining open spaces are under threat from development particularly the area around Weston Big Wood and farmland and floodplain outside the settlement boundary. Residents are anxious that these green spaces should not be built on except under exceptional circumstances.

Future development needs to be carefully managed to ensure that the conservation of Portishead's assets such as domestic gardens, open green spaces and heritage within the town, as well as the green areas on its periphery, are not spoilt or permanently lost. From the coastline to the ancient woodland these unique assets provide much value to the wellbeing of residents, the quality of the environment and the distinct character and visual amenity of Portishead.

The Portishead Neighbourhood Plan sets out the areas of Portishead where development is preferred and identifies 'character areas', not necessarily estate by estate but more broadly in terms of their location, topography, general patterns and styles. It is these main factors - landscape character and setting, detailed settlement pattern, heritage and character areas - that form the basis of this Assessment and therefore the sections that follow.



WCPLR¹

1907

Portishead extension of Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway opens.

1910

Lake Grounds opened catering to the growing tourism demand.



Portishead Power Station²

1926

Portishead's first Power Station is built.



Battery Point Lighthouse³

1931

Battery Point Lighthouse constructed.

3. TOPOGRAPHY AND BASIC SETTLEMENT

TOPOGRAPHY

The basic topographical setting of Portishead has always shaped the town's development. There are three basic elements to this as on [Map 1A](#) on the next page.

First, the hill between the town and the Severn estuary – Portishead Down. This is at its highest, with steep slopes down to the estuary, to the south west of the town centre and continuing all the way past the town boundary towards Clevedon. The hill is less high but still visible from east of the town in the area of Woodhill, out north towards the point. Between the Down and Woodhill there is a shallower 'saddle' that, for many years (see [Map 1B](#) from c.1770) was still enough of a barrier to prevent the town extending out to Woodhill Bay.

Secondly, on the other side of the down from the estuary, there is the long Gordano valley. This is a broad, flat-bottomed valley and is the source of the stream or 'pill' that used to drain into the estuary, broadly where the marina is today. Though now fully drained, the pattern of drains shows that much of the land has only been fully reclaimed for agriculture fairly recently (and may be liable to flooding again in the future with sea level rises).

Thirdly, there is an area to the east of the centre that has, for a very long time, been part of the estuary, flooding regularly and therefore not considered for building – for houses at least - until fairly recently. The western part of the area under Woodhill was used from the 19th century for forms of seasonal dock (see later) and then the main dock and the power stations.



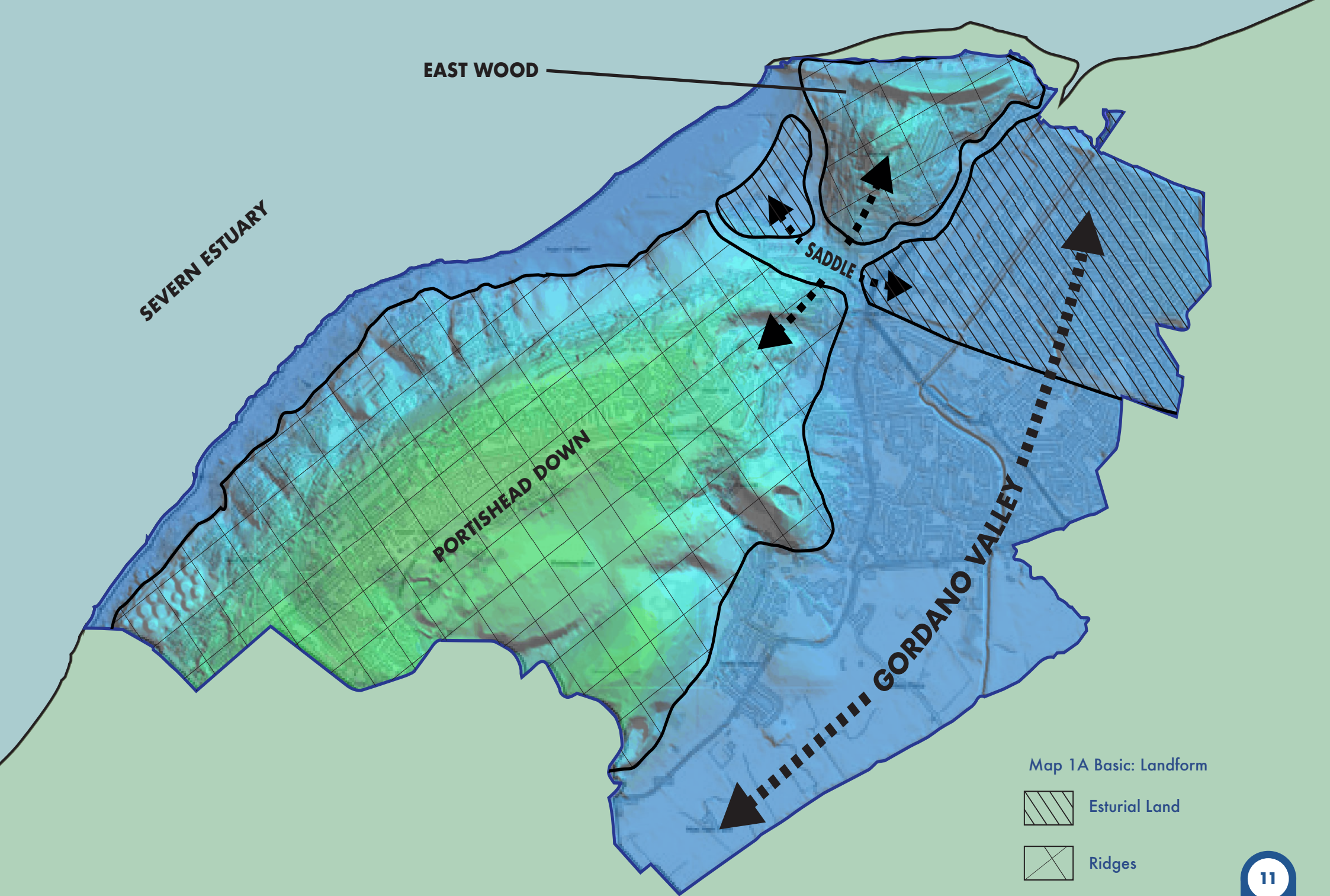
Map 1B: 1770 Portishead
(source: [Know Your Place](#))



Image: Gordano Valley



Image: To Weston Bigwood and
Portishead Down



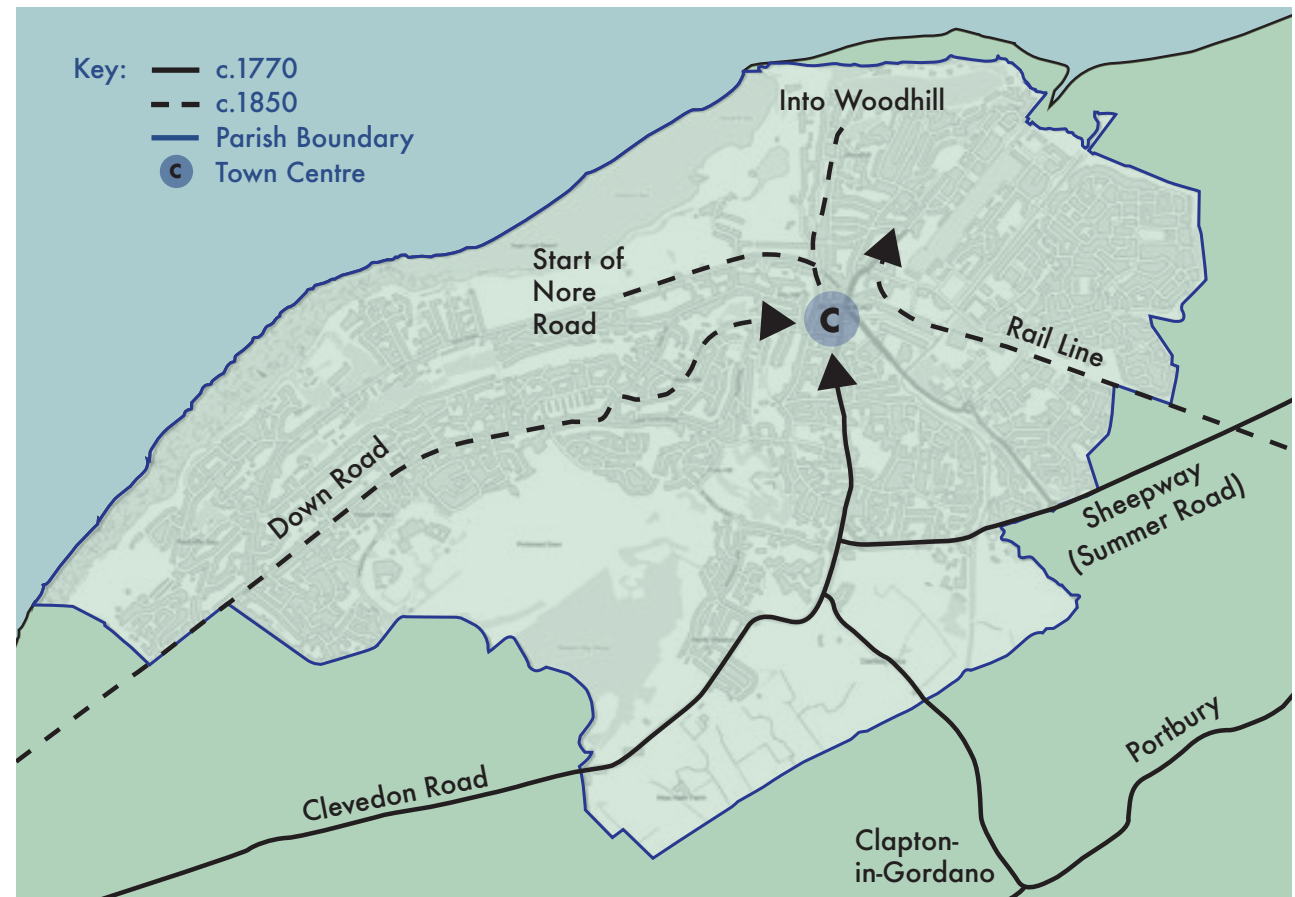
Map 1A Basic: Landform

 Esturial Land

 Ridges

ROAD PATTERNS

Map 2A shows the road pattern before the mid 1800s. Around 1770, the approach from Bristol was via Portbury and from there into Portishead mainly by the road that went on to Clapton in Gordano before turning north. The road via Sheepway shown on the map was described as a 'summer road', no doubt because it was only in summer that it was safe to use it and avoid flooding. The road from Portbury and Clapton was also joined by the road from the south west through Weston in Gordano. Map 2A also shows that Down Road was developed by the mid 1800s but Nore Road had only just started to be built and roads were just developing into Woodhill, if not as yet down to Woodhill Bay. Finally, significant development of the dock became possible by the construction of the rail line.

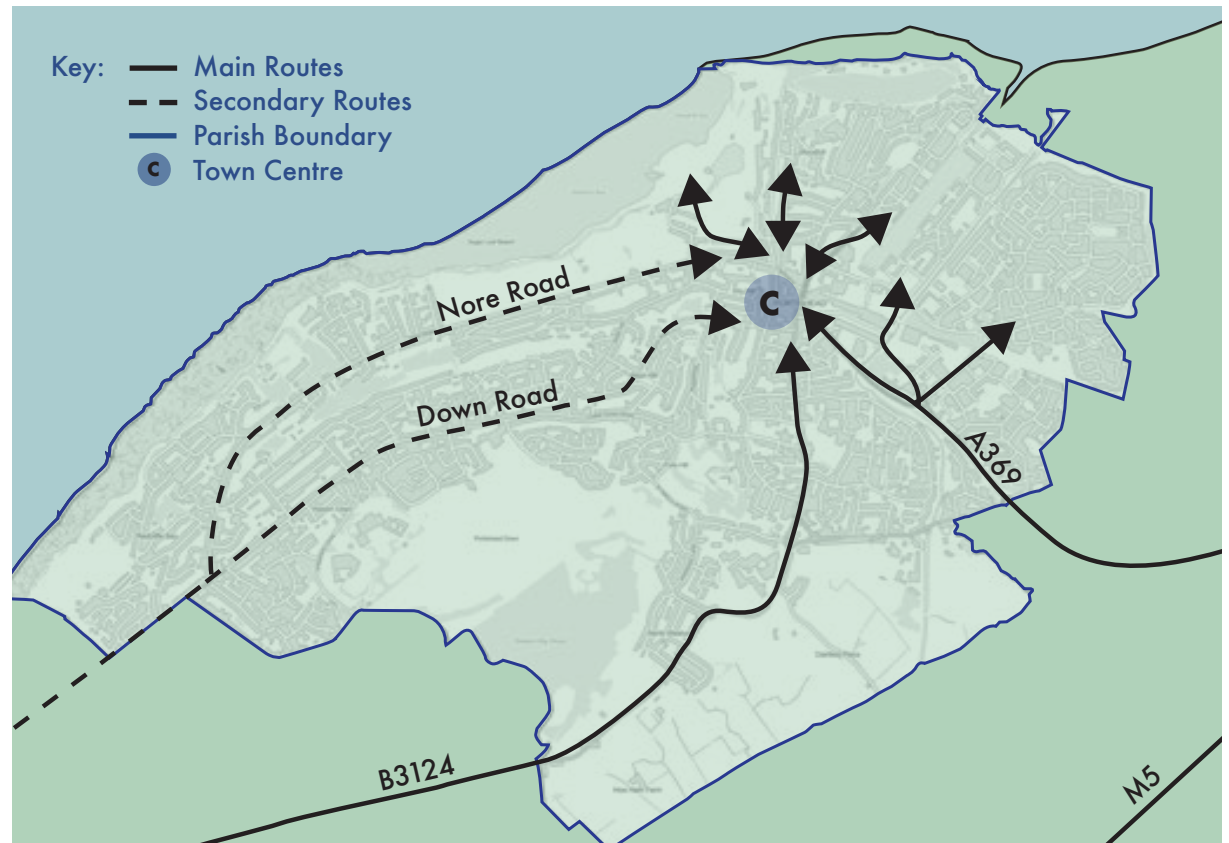


Map 2A: Pre 20C Roads (and Rail)

Map 2B shows two key modern roads which fundamentally change the experience of arriving at the town centre (see later). Following construction of the M5, the road from Bristol north from Portbury was cut off (except for pedestrians) and the A369 - now called the Portbury Hundred - was built to link to the motorway junction. This linked back to the old Sheepway route at what now continues into the town as Wyndham Way. This created a very different route, almost along the boundary between the estuarial land and the Gordano Valley as shown on Map 2B. This is now very much the prime route into the town from the east. From the south west, people use the M5/A369 or B3124.

At the same time, the late 1800s saw more roads accessing into Woodhill as it developed as a distinct area and also down to the Bay and the lake area.

Finally, with the regeneration of the dock and the reclamation of the area to the east, access was created to the whole Harbour Quarter. At this stage, the rail line had ceased to be used.



Map 2B: Modern Roads



Wyndham Way



Esplanade Road Junction



The Harbour Quarter

4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND SETTING

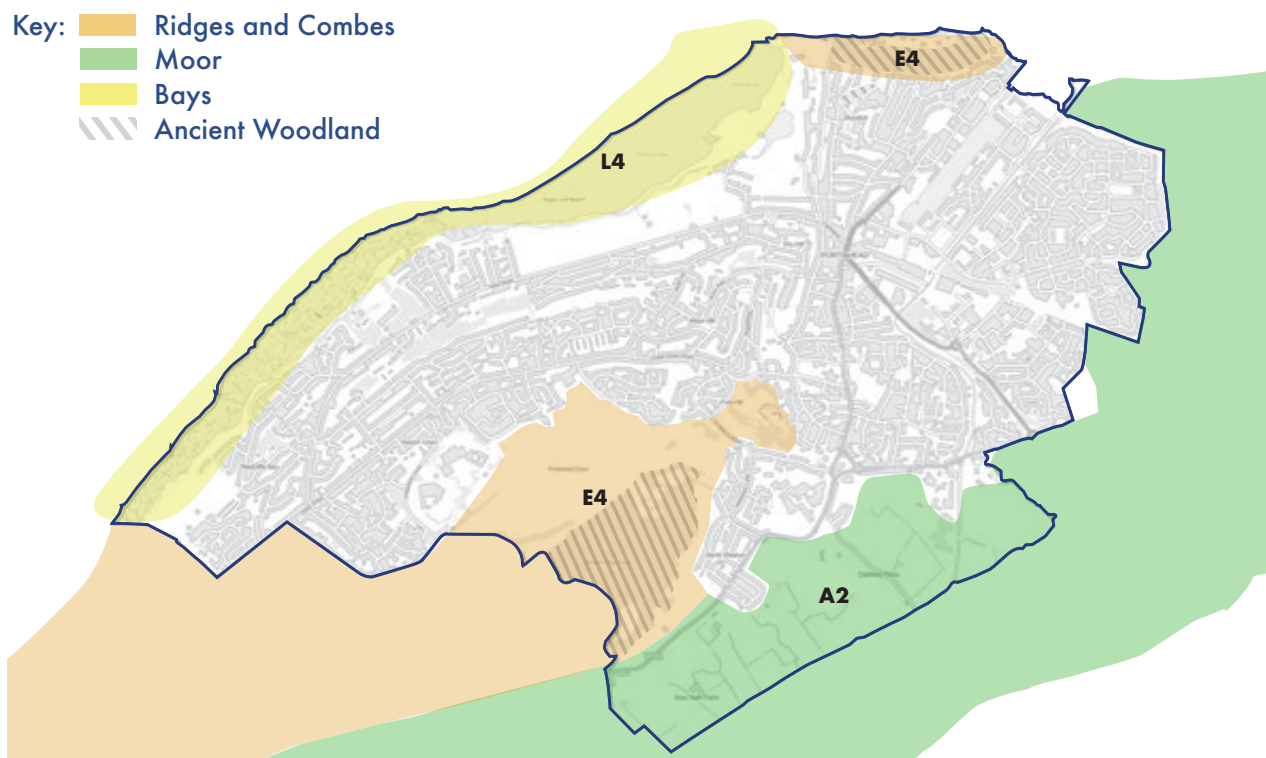
INTRODUCTION

The character and quality of landscape is key to maintaining a strong sense of place which is an important objective in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). Portishead has a distinct, and varied landscape character which is cherished by residents and visitors. The landscape character of the district is defined in the [Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document \(2018\)](#).

Settlements often have distinctive landscape settings which not only contribute to their distinctive character and quality but which are also highly valued reflecting their significance as places where people live and work. They are often vulnerable and it is an important objective to protect their character when considering development proposals.

Landscape setting includes the surroundings of the settlement as well as undeveloped or well 'treed' areas which may be within the settlement and are important to the context of the developed areas. There are notable areas of different and distinct landscape character that form the landscape setting to Portishead.

Natural, cultural and human factors together with visual and perceptual factors contribute to landscape character. These are significant to Portishead and its setting have been explored in relation to four distinct areas of character as shown on [Map 4](#).



Map 4: Landscape Types

The North Somerset Council '[Landscape Character Assessment' \(2018\)](#)³ supplementary Planning Guidance has identified different character types and areas in North Somerset. It is used to inform and guide planning decisions and has been used to inform this assessment. The 2018 assessment also identified strategies for future management of identified character areas, and assessed character and condition. This is summarised below:

Landscape Character Area	Strategy	Character	Condition
E4 Portishead Ridges and Combes	Conserve and Enhance	Moderate	Declining
A2 Clapton Moor	Conserve/Enhance and Strengthen	Moderate	Good
L4 Clevedon and Portishead Bays	Conserve	Strong	Good

CLAPTON MOOR

Natural Factors:

This is a linear area with a wide valley feel, enclosed by wooded slopes to both the east (distant) and west. It forms a distinctly rural part of Portishead, with much of the area used for pastoral farming in hedgerow enclosed fields.

Cultural and Human Factors:

Sparsely developed, two streets in North Weston lie on the east side of the B3124, adjacent to the town cemetery, large allotment gardens and Portishead Flower Show Field. The majority of the area within the Portishead boundary is farmland, with the gently sloping higher sections given over to arable land, whilst the lower, marshier land beyond is pastoral.

Visual and Perceptual Factors:

Open views across to wooded limestone slopes to the east over fields, and treed hedgerows. The close proximity of the wooded slopes of Weston Big Wood gives a sense of enclosure to the west.



PORTISHEAD DOWN AND WESTON BIG WOOD

Natural Factors:

This is a distinct ridge area of Portishead with a mixture of open, pastoral land bordering the woodland. On the southeastern slope both West Wood and the contiguous Weston Big Wood are large areas of ancient and semi-natural broadleaved woodland. Both areas of woodland are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and provide irreplaceable habitat. Large sections of the area on the seaward side of the ridge are given over to grassland - Portishead Down is an area of semi-improved neutral grassland with scrub. There are also arable fields with low, flailed hedgerows with few hedgerow trees and some fences.

Cultural and Human Factors:

The built edge can be visually prominent in sometimes abrupt urban edges. Adjacent to Merlin Park, the publicly used urban space merges into the adjacent landscape, with the recreational facilities at Merlin Park sitting above a popular area for walking which lies next to the publicly accessible Weston Big Wood.

Visual and Perceptual Factors:

The main built area of Portishead nestles into the valley below. This topography enables locally valued and expansive views over the Gordano Valley inland and to the Bristol Channel, Wales and the Severn Bridge to the west, giving a sense of tranquility and connection to the wider landscape for the viewer.



EAST WOOD

This same ridge of Portishead Down continues along the length of Portishead, and now forms a significant part of the developed urban area. East Wood at the far eastern edge of the ridge remains as an isolated fragment of woodland with few houses.

Natural Factors:

A distinct area of broadleaved, ancient woodland which is locally designated as a Local Nature Reserve (East Wood and Battery Point).

Cultural and Human Factors:

Location of archaeological interest, with the yet to be explored location of an iron age hillfort. It is within a Conservation Area, and there are a number of walking routes through the woodland.

Visual and Perceptual Factors:

There are many glimpses of the estuary from the hillside, as well as a number of places at a range of elevations where it is possible to gain a panoramic view of the Severn Estuary and across to Gwent, Monmouthshire and Glamorgan.



PORTISHEAD BAY

Natural Factors:

The estuary is an internationally important area for wildlife with Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations. Narrow inter-tidal range, exposing areas of Beach and Tidal Flat Deposits with much variety in textures, the mud-flats form a smooth surface broken up by rough rocks and cliffs. The sweeping bay at Portishead has the backdrop of the town.

Cultural and Human Factors:

Popular area with visitors to enjoy walks along Woodhill Bay or Kilkenny Bay, or to visit Sugar Loaf Beach

Visual and Perceptual Factors:

Expansive and distant views out to sea and across to Wales.



THE CONTRIBUTION OF TREES AND GREEN BELT LAND TO THE SETTING OF PORTISHEAD

ANCIENT WOODLANDS

Portishead has a distinctive treescape, with large areas of woodland visible from within the built environment as well as locally valued significant trees located within and around the town as shown on [Map 5](#). The number and diversity of street trees is an important feature of the town (many of which are protected with Tree Protection Orders) and the Neighbourhood Area is also home to large areas of ancient woodland - nearly 45 hectares in total (see [Map 5](#) on next page). Ancient woods are our richest land-based habitat for wildlife. According to the Woodland Trust they are home to more threatened species than any other habitat. Yet today, ancient woodland covers only around 2% of the UK's land area - however, in Portishead, ancient woodland accounts for 4.7% of the parish area.

The Woodland Trust defines ancient woodlands as areas which have:

*"had woodland cover for centuries and have been relatively undisturbed by human activity. Over hundreds of years, they have evolved into complex communities of trees, plants, fungi, microorganisms and insects."*⁴

Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat. The areas of ancient woodland in Portishead are important for:

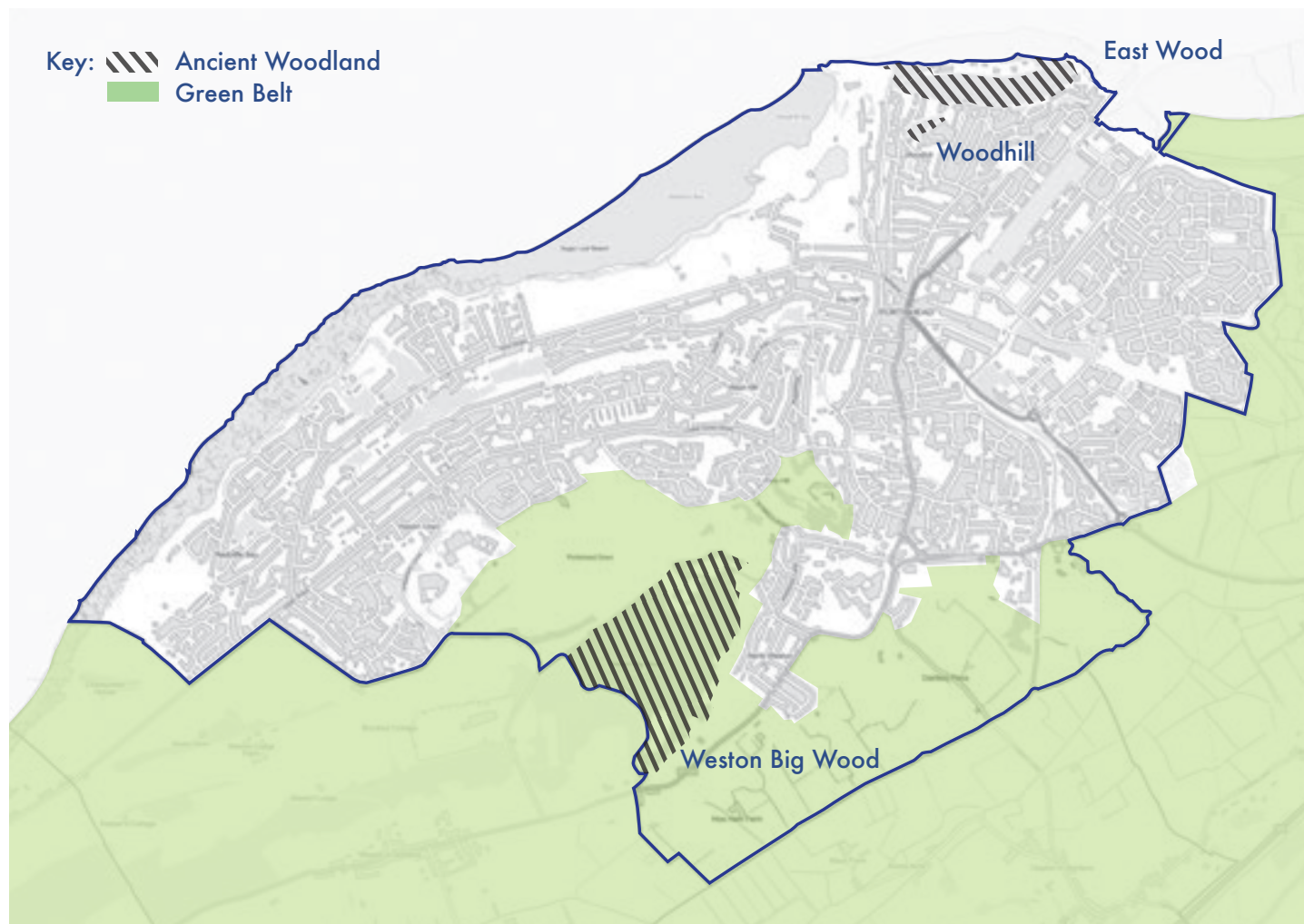
- flora and fauna - it's nationally important for its fungi, and is home to rare Whitebeam trees.
- there is a well managed Avon Wildlife circular route through Weston Big Wood
- recreational value
- cultural, historical and landscape value

GREEN BELT

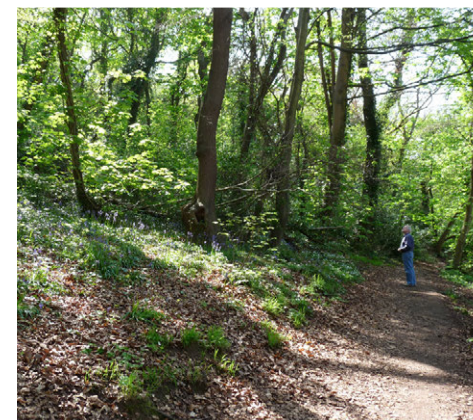
Green belts are an important element of national planning policy. The NPPF states (para 137):

*'The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.'*⁵

[Map 5](#) shows the Green Belt land in the parish covering the landscape area E4 (Portishead Down) and A2 (Clapton Moor). The Green Belt has protected these areas of landscape and provided space and setting to the ancient woodland, as well as areas of grassland that provide biodiversity value on Portishead Down and Fore Hill. This designation has ensured that the landscape remains undeveloped and continues to provide landscape value to the town and the wider area.



Map 5: Trees and Green Belt



1. East Wood



2. Weston Big Wood

KEY GUIDANCE: LANDSCAPE SETTING OF PORTISHEAD

The landscape setting of Portishead must be conserved and enhanced as a significant resource providing multiple benefits.

Any development at the settlement edge, in the identified areas of landscape setting to the town must adequately mitigate impact on the landscape character and provide sensitive edges between the built and natural environments.

The landscape setting to the town also contains areas of important habitat which must be protected, notably the irreplaceable habitat of ancient woodland. Adverse impacts on sites of biological value must be avoided.



Image: Looking north east towards the town from Portishead Down. Weston Bigwood is to the right of the photo.

5. DETAILED SETTLEMENT PATTERN

SETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT

This section builds from the above by describing in more detail how today's Portishead developed over time.

Portishead has always been much admired for its scenery and the wide-reaching views of the River Severn. The origins of Portishead pre-date the Domesday Book as we have evidence of a Roman burial and an Iron Age settlement. Portishead is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and the early population made their homes on the rising ground that had a water supply and was sheltered from most winds on the rectangle of land between Church Road North and Church Road South.

In the 17th century the City of Bristol bought large swathes of Portishead, mainly for access to the Bristol Channel. An outer sea wall was built allowing the local marshes to be drained and increasing the land available for farming.

An Act of Parliament governing the 'enclosure' of Portishead was passed in 1814 and stipulated the right to a public wharf. In 1836, at the height of the iron and steel era, a pier and a deep-water dock were built by the Bristol and Portishead Pier and Railway Company to accommodate the large ships that had difficulty in reaching Bristol Harbour.

Development of the large dock - now the Marina - from what had been a small local wharf became possible by the construction of the Great Western Railway (GWR) branch rail line from Temple Meads in 1867, aimed at capturing some of Bristol's transatlantic passenger trade. Though the line was closed to passenger traffic in 1964 and freight in 1981, the old line - and the difficult ground conditions - formed a barrier to development until recently.

Another rail line - the Portishead extension of the Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway - opened in 1907 from behind the Old Mill pub, joining the GWR branch line very briefly before turning south and then west. This closed before the Second World War and subsequent development shows very little record of it. Unlike the GWR branch line, it had little influence on development.

The White Lion/Old Mill stands at what was the head of the old pill (or creek) which meandered in for about half a mile from the river Severn right up to the northern tip of the High Street. The wide street that became the High Street (formerly known as Mill Street and Duck Street) was once lined with apple and pear orchards. The High Street and



Image: The Old Mill, High Street



Image: High Street



Image: East Wood and Marina from Estuary

the streets immediately around it were established in Victorian times (from the 1860s), along with industrial activity at the wharf and newer housing being developed on West Hill.

An ancient way runs from the settlement at St. Peter's Church, along Slade Road and Battery Lanes, out to Battery Point just above the most northerly of the Somerset Levels called Rodmoor. This area was dug out to form the Lake Grounds, opened in 1910. The Battery Point Lighthouse was built in 1931 and replaced with a near replica in 2012.

During the latter part of the 20th century and now in the 21st century, Portishead has grown rapidly. The industry on the dock area and beyond has almost completely disappeared. It had been the location for the power stations – the first of which was built in 1926 - and the last of which was demolished in 1992. The huge brownfield site left behind has now become an area of considerably varied housing.

Much of the growth of Portishead's population can be attributed to the development of the former docks. The former deep-water dock, used for a range of trade including the supply of coal to the power stations, has been fully redeveloped since around 2000 into a modern marina with over 250 pontoon berths.

The areas on each side of the marina, formerly occupied by the two power stations and chemical plant, have been redeveloped to provide a wide range of housing and leisure uses. Development has also been completed on the Portbury Ashlands to the east of the harbour (so-called because they were the dumping ground for power station waste) extending the area of the town further towards Portbury.



Image: The Lake Grounds



Image: The Marina

THE TOWN TODAY

In many towns of a similar size to Portishead, the experience of arrival is shaped by mixed developments – very old and very new – along modern, upgraded, usually winding versions of the original routes. In Portishead, the building of Wyndham Way, when the motorway was built in the early 1970s, designed to support the lorry traffic to the power station, along with the subsequent



Image: Wyndham Way

redevelopment of the former industrial areas on this side of the town centre, has led to an almost entirely late 20th century approach.

On the way in, this starts with housing either side well shielded by trees, but then becomes a line, on both sides, of entirely modern commercial and retail development with huge car parks. The effect of this is that the main arrival does not take the visitor into or through the

town centre, as happens in many other towns. In fact the town centre is easily missed by a visitor (especially since it is not signed) given that it requires a sharp left turn by the Old Mill pub.

This leaves any visitor slightly unsure as to whether to go on ahead (and slightly right), hopefully not missing the sign to the Seafront if that is where they wish to



Image: Nore Road, Coast and Estuary

go. Then, if still unsure, going ahead after seeing only a sign to the Leisure Centre, the visitor may never realise that the highly attractive marina area lies over to the right. Direction-finding at this point is extremely counter-intuitive and therefore badly in need of some good signage.

Assuming a visitor wishes to get to the seafront, that involves a turn up Nore Road, seemingly away from the centre past an easily-missed sign not to the

Seafront but to the Lake Grounds. This is over the 'saddle' described in section 3, so again counter-intuitive and not easy to grasp.

If the visitor decides to carry on along Nore Road, this offers a superb set of views to the right across the Severn estuary and along the coast, later limited by developments down to the right. Given gradual development of Nore Road, the developments on either side are predominantly 20th century, some accessed directly off the road, some from roads one level higher up the hill to the left.

After almost 2.5 kilometres, Nore Road swings left and joins Down Road, which soon then reaches the town boundary and has open green space on either side. The experience for the unfamiliar visitor coming the other way, i.e. from Clevedon, can be very different, however. Coming along Down Road, Nore Road is no more than another turning to the left and is easily missed. Down Road is then also very long, with houses on both sides almost all the way along what is effectively the ridge of the down. Although there are important views to the estuary along the frequent roads to the left (and rarely between houses), there are no obvious views to

the right and across the Gordano Valley. In fact, the valley remains hidden in the several areas of development to the south east of Down Road, although there are a few glimpses over the valley to the wooded hill above the M5 close to Cadbury Camp.

For a visitor continuing to move along Down Road, a view opens up straight ahead (not to the side) across to the end of the wooded hill mentioned above, just before a road junction taking the driver left. This is now West Hill and it clearly starts to go down, with occasional views across the Avon estuary. Shortly after the turning onto West Hill there is another junction to the right, connecting to Avon Way. This is the natural (albeit not signposted) route to the High Street. Continuing past this junction West Hill winds its way down past houses and now a few shops and a children's centre. There are no signs for the Town Centre. The road slowly narrows, some Victorian buildings start to appear either side and now some views to the other side of the down and the Severn estuary. The road narrows with a variety of style and age of buildings on either side of the road, that ends at the junction with Coombe Avenue. Continue onwards following a left bend until the junction with Nore Road. There are no signs at this point indicating that a right turn will lead to the Town Centre.

If we now assume that the visitor turned sharp left by the Old Mill pub into the High Street, this would present a far more familiar picture of a town centre. There are shops and other buildings set back behind a broad pavement, and a few trees. Looking carefully, many of the shops are in Victorian buildings above and behind the modern shopfronts. Further along, the pavement narrows and houses start to predominate over shops and there are a few modern and larger commercial premises. Development slowly becomes more fragmentary before Church Road to the right, leading up to St. Peter's Church (around which is a Conservation Area). This is the much older part of the town until one reaches the far more modern Gordano School (also the site of Portishead's ancient monument).

Coming in along Wyndham Way, access into the marina and the very new housing developments of Port Marine is not very clear. Taking the suggested direction up Quay's Avenue leads to another roundabout with only a tiny, non-statutory sign directing left to the marina and no sign into Port Marine. Most visitors would probably be looking for the dock and marina so would turn left into Harbour Road. This continues for some time before there are hints of the Marina but no direct views to it. And, if one wanted to go to the south east side of the dock, that

would require a turn up Newfoundland Road but this is not signed, even though there is a large public car park for visitors adjacent to the lock and coastal path. At the same time it has to be said that all this is complicated by the need to cross the old railway line.

Finally, if someone was to miss the signs to the marina at the Wyndham Way roundabout, they would be back by the Old Mill pub, at which point (as earlier) there is only a sign to the Leisure Centre; the marina could easily be missed.

All of the above sets the overall pattern of the town set in its landscape. Within and between all these main roads are the many distinctive Character Areas of the town, detailed in section 4 – Character Areas.



Image: West Hill

3. HERITAGE

LOCAL HERITAGE

Portishead is rich in local heritage and has an active local history group – The Gordano Civic Society. There are 39 listed buildings in the town, as well as scheduled ancient monuments, and four Conservation Areas, as shown on [Map 6](#), on page 25.

CONSERVATION AREAS

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural character and historic interest which is protected by law against certain changes. Unlike listed buildings, which are designated by Historic England, Conservation Areas are appointed and managed by the local council - in this case North Somerset. [The Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990⁶](#) requires planning authorities to pay special attention to 'preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a Conservation Area.

Any proposed development which conflicts with these objectives should usually expect to be refused.

National policy states that, in determining applications in Conservation Areas, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including

any contribution made by their setting. This should be a thorough assessment of impact proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset. Heritage statements are a method of ensuring that this work is undertaken as part of any development procedures.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF LOCAL INTEREST

There are also many more buildings, and structures in Portishead that play a role in the collective heritage and identity of the town even though they do not meet the 'special' benchmark for Grade 1 or 2 listing, they are valued as part of the local heritage story. Their heritage value places them in the category of 'buildings of local interest'. Through research and consultation, a number of buildings and structures of local interest have been identified. These are shown on [Map 6](#) and detailed information is set out in the Locally Valued Non-designated Heritage Assets Report (2022) which is part of the evidence base to the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan.

North Somerset Council are working in collaboration with Historic England to launch a Local Heritage List for North Somerset. The Local Heritage List for the district has a nomination and assessment

process. Buildings and structures of local interest identified on [Map 6](#) may be nominated for consideration for the North Somerset Heritage List and are considered to be strong candidates

By identifying locally valued non-designated local heritage assets, the local community has the chance to recognise buildings or other heritage assets that are of importance to the history of the place and these will be material considerations in planning decisions. This will ensure locally valued heritage is given full consideration in the design, planning and development process.



Black Nore Lighthouse



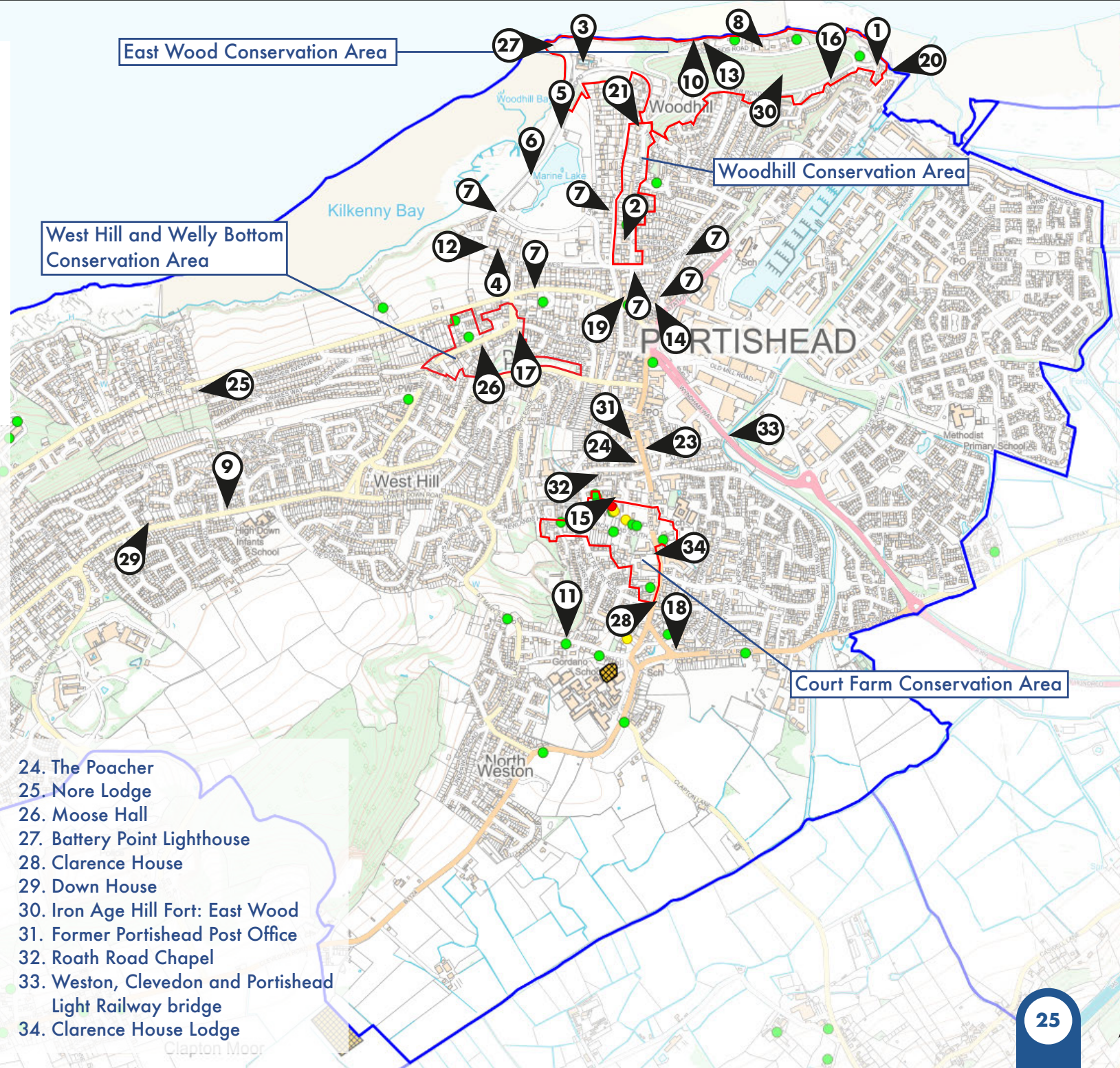
Portishead Cross

Map 6: Local Heritage Assets

- Listed Buildings
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Parish Boundary
- Buildings and structures of local interest

List of buildings and structures of local interest:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The Dock Master's House | 24. The Poacher |
| 2. The Abbey' Woodhill Road | 25. Nore Lodge |
| 3. Portishead Open Air Pool | 26. Moose Hall |
| 4. Mariners Cottage | 27. Battery Point Lighthouse |
| 5. Street Lamps | 28. Clarence House |
| 6. Street Benches | 29. Down House |
| 7. Ventilation Columns | 30. Iron Age Hill Fort: East Wood |
| 8. Woodlands and Holmleigh | 31. Former Portishead Post Office |
| 9. The Upper Lodge | 32. Roath Road Chapel |
| 10. The Saltings | 33. Weston, Clevedon and Portishead Light Railway bridge |
| 11. The Cot | 34. Clarence House Lodge |
| 12. Myrtle Cottage | |
| 13. Anchorage | |
| 14. The old police station | |
| 15. Church Cottage | |
| 16. Power Station original Fencing | |
| 17. Avon View House & Annex | |
| 18. The Albion | |
| 19. United Reform Church | |
| 20. Lifeboat station, Slipway and Pier | |
| 21. 71-73 Woodhill Road | |
| 22. Methodist Church | |
| 23. The Plough | |





Above: East Wood Conservation Area

Above: Woodhill Conservation Area

Above: West Hill and Welly Bottom Conservation Area

Above: Court Farm Conservation Area



KEY GUIDANCE: LOCAL HERITAGE

1. Conservation Areas

Proposals for development within any of the four Conservation Areas in Portishead must show how they preserve or enhance the characteristics and special qualities that make up the architectural and historic character. Existing open green space, including private gardens, should be protected from unsympathetic development where this would have an adverse impact on the historic character of the Conservation Area.

2. Locally valued heritage assets

Non-designated Heritage Assets

Development proposals that affect non-designated Heritage Assets (including buildings or structures of local interest as shown on Figure 12) will be required to take into account the character, context and setting, including important views towards and from the building or structure. Development proposals must demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to:

- i. the significance of the heritage asset;
- ii. its most distinctive and important features;
- iii. the elements of its setting and immediate surrounds that contribute to its significance; and,
- iv. the contribution the asset and its setting makes to the character of the local area (whether in a Conservation Area or not).

4. CHARACTER AREAS

Given the wide variety of architectural styles and built characteristics across the town, it was decided to divide the town into different character areas for the purpose of this Character Statement. Each area is made up of streets of broadly similar architectural style and origins with its own particular identity and coherent sense of place.

Each Character Area has been surveyed by local people who were members of the NP Environment Working Group. The results and this document have been shared with people who live and work in the town, as well as with statutory consultees to inform the content of this document.

The following pages set out the dominant and distinctive characteristics of each of these areas; characteristics which the Character Statement sets out to inform and guide new development to respect and reflect.

Character areas M-Q combine to form the Town Centre of Portishead. The Town Centre is the subject of a separate section and policy in the Neighbourhood Plan, a detailed assessment has been produced for it. What is included in this section is just the summary.

This Community Character Area Assessment is based on detailed survey notes prepared by members of the Environment working group. This more detailed information for each character area can be viewed upon request.

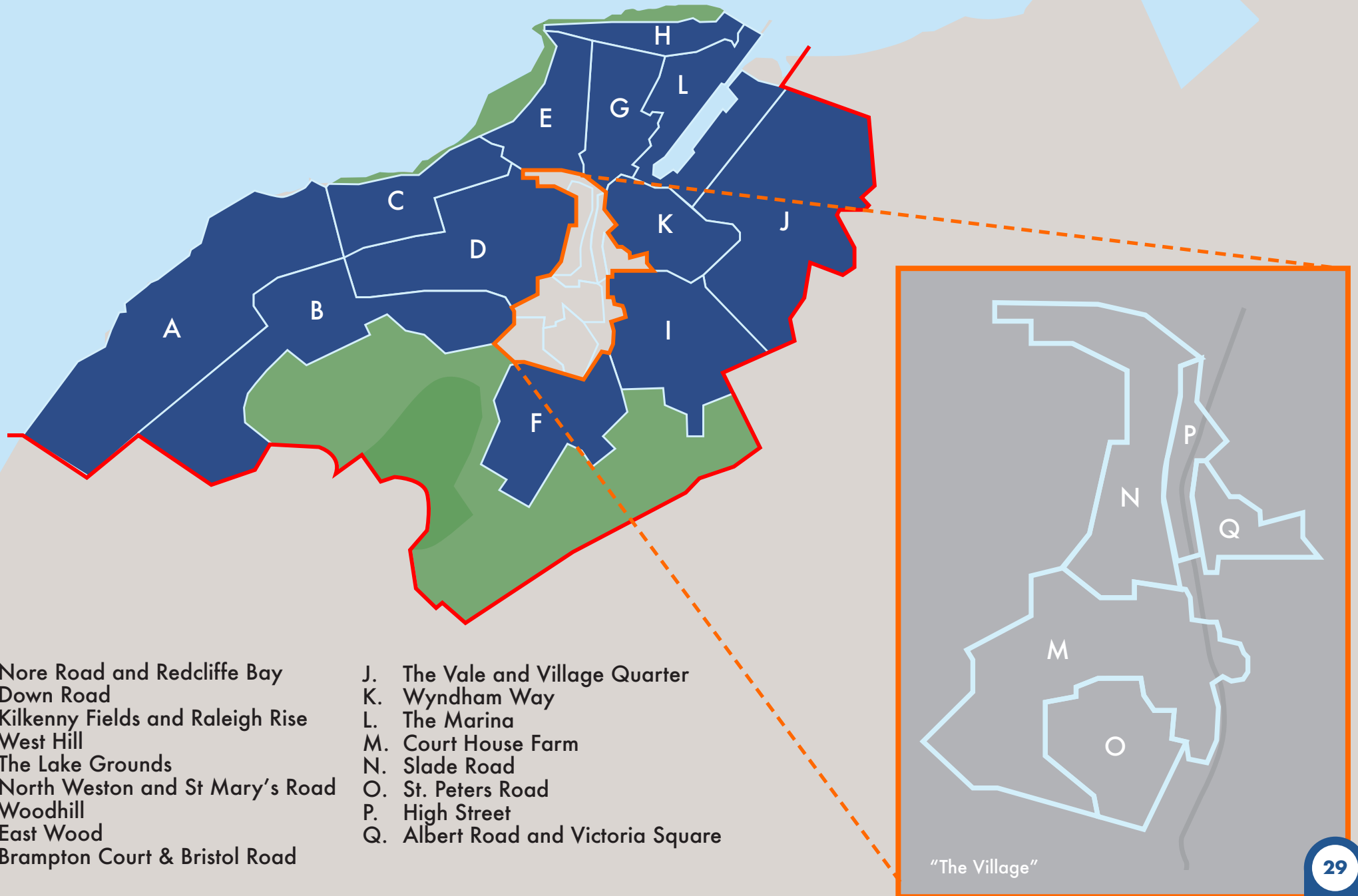
KEY GUIDANCE: CHARACTER AND PLACE

All development should reflect and reinforce the sense of place in its identified character area, drawing on identified positive and distinctive characteristics as highlighted for each character area.

The choice of building massing, appearance and materials should be demonstrated to reference this guidance and complement and enhance the quality and character of the neighbouring character areas.

Proposals that demonstrate the use of contemporary design that draw on a character area's positive characteristics, distinctive features, and heritage assets and materials to contribute to a locally distinctive sense of place, will be encouraged.

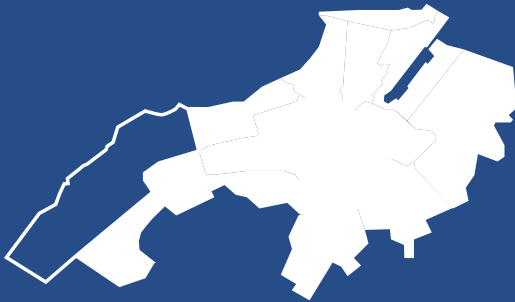
Map 7: Character Areas



A: NORE ROAD AND REDCLIFFE BAY

Key Roads:

- Down Road
- Nore Road



Listed buildings 4

This area consists of a coastal, north west facing hillside which was originally farmland. The topography primarily defines the direction and pattern of the roads in the area. The original field layouts and ownership contributed to the timing and design of the buildings, whether individually designed or developed as small 'estates'. There are some large, older, Victorian houses remaining, but generally the area now consists of individually built detached houses on varying sized plots. The majority of the development is designed to take full advantage of views either towards Wales or towards embedded wooded areas by using patios, balconies and stepped-level houses. Small estates have been built since the 1950s and continuing recently as land has become available. More recently deluxe apartments with outstanding views have been developed slightly higher on the hill. Architect-designed modern houses have also been built in some of the larger gardens and replaced original wooden holiday homes, as well as bungalows being upgraded to provide additional accommodation and enhanced views. The area has many footpaths linking up and down the hill and to the coastal path. Many green spaces and trees have

been left in place. There are usually pavements along the roads apart from parts of Nore Road. The hedges are well-maintained with most cut back so as not to intrude onto the pavement. The area also includes, north of St. Nicholas's Church, Fedden Village. Built as a young offenders' institute, designed to train offenders for the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy, it has now been converted into luxury apartments.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Most properties set back from the road with well kept front gardens. Gardens arranged according to topography.



SCALE:

Some are large older Victorian houses but generally more recent detached houses of varying size.

ROOFS:

Primarily pitched roofs with either slate or pantiles.

DOORS:

Various, no prevailing style.



WALLS:

Various, no prevailing style. Examples include stone, brick, painted render.

WINDOWS:

No prevailing aesthetic style, many are large to capitalise on expansive views across the channel.



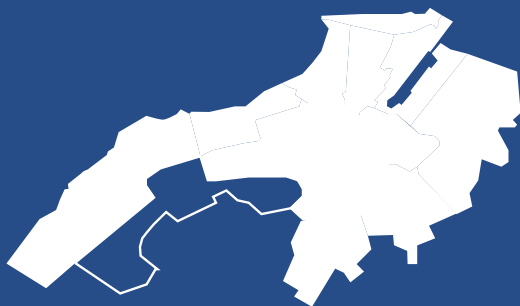
DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- The extensive views across the Severn Estuary.
- The coast path.
- The heritage buildings which are accessible to the public such as Black Nore Lighthouse and St. Nicholas's Church.

B: DOWN ROAD

Key Roads:

- Down Road
- Weatherly Drive



Locally Valued Heritage Assets 4

The area known locally as “up the top” lives up to its name being a residential area on top of the ridge with views for some to the south east across the Gordano Valley and, for others, north west across the Bristol Channel.

This character area is a varied mix of residential housing with Down Road serving as an artery through the middle. Down Road runs along the ridge of Portishead Down. The area to the north of the character area is sloping down land providing views across the Bristol Channel. Development is variable between single storey bungalows and two storey houses and takes place around Down Road with estates and culs-de-sac on both sides. Generally the buildings are detached with front and rear gardens. Most properties have some form of off-street parking.

The use of materials in this area varies greatly. Development has taken place over a number of years and each era of construction has brought its own materials and styles.

The gardens on the estates to the south are mostly open plan. They are usually well maintained and full of greenery. The gardens along Down Road and some of the older houses to the north have enclosed gardens.

Brackenwood woodland is to the north of the character area providing access to green space, and to the south there is Merlin Park and skatepark bordered by open fields with views across the Gordano Valley. There are small greens within the residential areas breaking up the development.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Most properties set back from the road with well kept front gardens. Often properties have off street parking. Mixture of fencing, hedges and open front gardens.



SCALE:

Ranging from bungalows to three storey houses, 2 storeys are most common.

ROOFS:

Primarily pitched roofs with either slate or concrete tiles.

DOORS:

Various, no prevailing style.



WALLS:

Various, no prevailing style. Examples include stone, brick, painted render. Mixture of styles depending on era of construction.

WINDOWS:

No prevailing aesthetic style, many are large to capitalise on expansive views across the channel, where available.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Far ranging views on both sides creating a sense of openness and light.
- The gardens, small collections of trees and green spaces are an asset.
- There is a good amount of open space and recreational facilities.

C: KILKENNY FIELDS AND RALEIGH RISE

Key Roads:

- Down Road
- Nore Road



Listed buildings 4

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 1

The housing on this almost north facing hillside overlooks the Kilkenney Fields / former golf course abutting the Bristol Channel and has spectacular views overlooking the coastline.

Nore Road separates these two distinct sections. To the upper, south side of Nore Road, built into the hillside, are residential homes dating from the 1950s to the current day, all with gardens and driveways. Appearing as single storey from the upper levels, they drop to three to four levels on the lower side. This Raleigh Rise development of domestic housing contains a number of roads named after famous historical naval characters. There have been at least three phases to the development here and the architecture reflects this. Phase one early 1970s; Phase 2 late 1970s early 1980s; Phase 3 late 1980s / 1990s.

To the north of Nore Road, just four properties are built on the green open areas of the former golf course and Kilkenney Fields. These grassed areas are being re-wilded and are designated SSSI, whilst the coastline has been defined by DEFRA as "an important geological site". There are four buildings on the open space consisting of two residential

homes, the listed Windmill Public house and a house now converted to a dentist's surgery.

On the north eastern edge of this area there is an access road from Beach Road to the Council-maintained Kilkenney car park leading to open spaces, coastal coves, picnic tables and Mariner's footpath. This is the coastal footpath from Portishead to Clevedon.

Nore Road is a busy commuter road at all times of day being a feeder road from the south west of the town to the town centre and motorway beyond – as well as serving the popular Lake Grounds, recreational areas and coastal walks.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



WALLS:

Brick, white render, some with sections clad in painted timber. Occasional dressed stone details.

WINDOWS:

No prevailing aesthetic style, many are large to capitalise on expansive views across the channel.



SCALE:

Primarily two storey and built into the hillside so they appear to be single storey from the road.

ROOFS:

Primarily pitched roofs with concrete tiles.

DOORS:

Various, no prevailing style.



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Steep front gardens, most with garages and off street parking. Mostly open with well kept front gardens some with lawns and bushes.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- The open spaces of the former golf course and Kilkenny Fields are well used by the public. This is an important recreational area and a valued asset for Portishead residents.
- The coastal pathway is part of the popular Gordano Round walking area and also leads to the South Coastal walk.

D: WEST HILL

Key Roads:

- West Hill
- Avon Way
- Mendip Road



Listed buildings 4

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 2

As the name suggests, this area is on a hill rising from two sides. Spectacular views can be appreciated to the west towards the Bristol Channel and the Welsh coastline, which appear from between the buildings and are as ever-changing as the weather. Historically there was a quarry and enclosures of various sizes in this area. This is reflected today in the width of roads and variations in the topography.

Three roads divide this area. 1. West Hill road, which branches off Nore Road, climbing steeply then turning 90 degrees west through the picturesque late Georgian and Victorian villas connecting at the top to Down Road. 2. Avon Way also connects to West Hill bringing access to the High Street on the east via some large areas of post war residential development. 3. There is also Mendip Road to the west which provides a detour connecting Down Road and West Hill, providing access to a large residential estate to the west of West Hill.

The area is primarily residential, however there is a small shopping area at the top of West Hill containing a variety of small businesses alongside a convenience store. The residential properties vary in ages and styles, ranging from the early 19th century through to the current day.

There are Victorian villas, 1930s chalet style bungalows and tall 1970s/1980s apartment buildings. The Mendip Road estate was built as local authority housing and reflects the characteristics of typical developments of its time, containing green spaces, garages and properties of a variety of tenures, mostly set back from the road with front gardens.

This area, like several others in the town, has good permeability with many half-hidden pedestrian routes that thread through the area, lined in some places with historic cottages and leading to 'destinations' such as the town centre, Lake Grounds and Stoney Steep.

A sense of greenery is contributed by trees and hedges in gardens around homes, notably the Victorian buildings which generally have generous front and back gardens with mature specimen trees. Scots Pine is plentiful. There is an abundance of green spaces, and a variety of interesting trees to the west of the area.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Stone walled gardens are common, variable heights. Some more recent buildings have open front gardens with off street parking.



SCALE:

Variable, development ranges from two storey houses to grand three and four storey victorian houses through to large apartment towers.

ROOFS:

Variable depending on era of construction mostly pitched with slate or concrete tiles. Exception for flat roof tower blocks.



WALLS:

Vary depending on era of construction, dressed stone, painted render are most common.

WINDOWS:

Primarily uPVC, sash windows present in older buildings. Casement windows more common in recent buildings. Some larger picture windows where views are available.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Expansive views out towards the estuary and the landscape setting.
- Mixture of building ages – the earlier buildings in particular use high quality materials and bring a sense of history to the area.
- Distinctive details such as decoratively carved 'bargeboards' on gable ends and chimney pots.
- Green spaces and a variety of interesting trees.

E: THE LAKE GROUNDS

Key Roads:

- Esplanade Road
- Lake Road
- Beach Road West



The area can be divided into two sections. Firstly, the area formally defined as the Lake Grounds and, secondly, the built area.

The Lake Grounds were built on an area known historically as Rodmoor. It formed a natural drainage basin into which numerous springs flowed and so the land was marshy and unfit for building. The whole area remained largely rural until the 1860s when the building of the dock and the railway led to a renewed interest in developing Portishead as a visitors' attraction.

The Lake Grounds are categorised as an Unregistered Historic Park or Garden with a variety of sport and leisure facilities. There are expansive open grass areas and collections and rows of trees, some of which line the roads. The Grounds are well-maintained and full of greenery, contributing to a very green and pleasant environment. The lake itself is the habitat of a variety of birds and around 60,000 wading birds and wildfowl winter on the adjacent SSSI site. The views out of the Lake Grounds across the Severn Estuary towards the Severn Bridges and the Welsh Coast are spectacular.

The facilities within the area such as the children's playground, the cafes,

the sporting activities and the open-air swimming pool are very well used and appreciated by residents and visitors. Rodmoor Gardens, which includes a rose garden, are beautifully maintained by volunteers of the 'Portishead in Bloom' group. Community events are held in the Lake Grounds, such as the Raft Race and the Soapbox Race.

The built area uses are mainly residential. The oldest buildings, situated to the west, date from the Georgian period. There is then a wide mix of ages, styles and heights across the area from Georgian cottages to substantial Victorian Villas, 1930s bungalows, large detached 1970s houses and blocks of four storey flats. The heritage buildings mainly use natural stone, most likely local, as do the sea wall defences.

The predominant style is of detached properties set in spacious grounds. Many of the houses have been remodelled or extended.

Other buildings are used for recreational purposes, for example, the Open-Air Swimming Pool and Lido cafe, the Tennis and Cricket Clubs and the Lakeside Cafe.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Well kept hillside front gardens with driveways and properties set back on the hill to maximise sea views. Boundaries are variable between hedges, fences, low walls and open driveways.



SCALE:

Primarily two to four storey and built into the hillside. Properties are detached.

ROOFS:

Primarily pitched roofs with concrete pantiles.

DOORS:

Various mostly not visible from the road.



WALLS:

Mostly rendered and painted.

WINDOWS:

No prevailing aesthetic style, large windows to capture views. Many properties with bespoke feature windows.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- An expansive green, open area next to the coast.
- The views across the Severn Estuary and the sunsets are spectacular.
- The abundant birdlife.
- A popular recreational place for residents and visitors.

F: NORTH WESTON AND ST MARYS ROAD

Key Roads:

- Clevedon Road
- Wetlands lane
- St Marys Road



Listed buildings 5

Scheduled Monuments 1

This area is primarily residential with properties dating from the 17th century to the current day, but it also contains two schools, allotments, a village hall and a cemetery.

The area is situated to the south of Portishead with the B3124 running through the area from Portishead to Clevedon. From this busy road, the land rises steeply one side to the ridge of the hill and Weston Big Wood, whilst on the opposite side are the open spaces of the Gordano Valley. On the north side St Mary's Road is an ancient way serving an estate higher up the hillside. The area is bounded by the Green Belt that has until now limited further development.

The residential housing is of mixed stock, some older properties with large gardens and, on the estates, front gardens are generally well maintained and full of greenery, usually open or with low front walls. There are many historical houses and cottages in this area. The 1950s housing is mainly detached and semi-detached housing with a few bungalows and social housing, all with gardens.

Development and infill in the 1980s and beyond has created a more dense housing area on what was once farmland. Clapton Moor is characteristic of the

North Somerset Levels landscape and is a designated Local Nature Reserve, whilst Weston Big Wood, an ancient deciduous wood, is an SSSI site and Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

The roads in this area are well maintained and adequate for use. Off-road parking is generally available.

Within the curtilage of this area are two schools – Gordano School and St Josephs Roman Catholic School - a cemetery, village hall, Quaker meeting house, allotments, community school playing fields and the Flower Show field. The area is almost surrounded by woodland and open fields with fine views to the Gordano Valley.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Well-kept front gardens with driveways and properties set back from the road. Boundaries are variable between hedges, fences, low walls and open driveways.



SCALE:

Mixture of bungalows and two storey houses. Detached and semi-detached.

ROOFS:

Primarily pitched roofs with concrete tiles.

DOORS:

Various, most not visible from the road as they are located to the side of properties.



WALLS:

Mostly rendered and painted, some brick, some pebbledashed.

WINDOWS:

uPVC casement windows. Primarily white.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- The openness of the valley and its southerly sunny position.
- The rural character and the greenery surrounding it as well as the green spaces within it, such as the gardens.

G: WOODHILL

Key Roads:

- Woodhill Road
- South Road
- Beach Road East
- Station Road



Listed buildings 5

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 7

The Woodhill area is in the north of Portishead on a hill rising to 57m above the coast and the surrounding town. The two primary roads in the area are Woodhill Road and Station Road. Throughout the area there are a wide variety of building styles, ages and heights from four storey Georgian terraces and Victorian villas to 1950s social housing and modern infill developments.

The staggered heights of the buildings as they follow the inclines of the hill towards the lower ground are distinctive. The use of traditional, high quality building materials, such as the honey-coloured Bath stone and the natural local stone, make a positive contribution and bring a sense of history to the area. The architectural details of the historic buildings, such as the tall chimney stacks, doors with wreathed and radiating fan lights above them, bar sash windows, doric columns and parapets between gables also add to the distinctive character, as do the iron railings, stone walls, gate piers and historic street furniture. The area is partially inside the Woodhill Conservation Area.

Some of the historic buildings, such as the United Reformed Church and stables on

Battery Lane, have been converted into dwellings and the larger properties on Woodhill Road into flats. The building lines vary, although most buildings are set in a linear pattern following the roads. Because they are built on the incline of the hill, access to the houses is quite often made via steps or sloping paths.

Throughout the area, there is a backdrop of greenery, provided by the substantial, protected groups and lines of trees. The well-stocked gardens and boundary hedges also contribute towards the green ambience.

Glimpses of the Severn Estuary and West Hill are visible between some of the buildings on the highest point of Woodhill Road and along Battery Lane. From roads on the other side of the ridge, such as South Road, glimpses of the tall buildings around the Marina and across to Tickenham Ridge are also visible.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Well-kept front gardens with driveways and properties set back from the road. Boundaries are variable between hedges, fences, low walls and open driveways.



SCALE:

Wide variety of building styles, ages and heights. Four storey Georgian terraces and Victorian villas to 1950s housing and modern infill developments.

ROOFS:

Primarily pitched roofs with pantiles.



WALLS:

Various styles; dressed stone, brick and painted render. Generally dependent on age.

WINDOWS:

Victorian and Georgian properties have sash windows with more recent additions using uPVC casement windows. Bay windows are common.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Diverse styles, ages and materials of the buildings creating interest and a unique sense of place.
- The mixture of architectural styles generally blending well together.
- The staggered heights of the buildings and the architectural details of the historic buildings.
- The abundance of greenery.

H: EAST WOOD

Key Roads:

- Woodlands Road
- Pier Road



Listed buildings 5

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 6

The East Wood Conservation Area and Local Nature Reserve/ Local Green Space is situated to the north of Portishead and is adjacent to the Severn Estuary Coast, an SSSI and Ramsar site. It includes land at Battery Point and an area of ancient woodlands.

The geographical location of East Wood has resulted in it being utilised as a look-out and defence area throughout the centuries.

A significant proportion of the conservation area remains free from development and there are less than 30 buildings within the defined area. These are mainly sited within two distinct sections of Woodlands Road; to the south west of the character area and the north of the character area. The existing development is predominantly of residential use.

A cluster of six large, individual houses are set in spacious, open plots on either side of Woodlands Road. The houses, though set back from the road, are visible. Dense woodlands form the backdrop to the houses on the south side whilst on the north side the setting is more open and the land falls away to the Severn Estuary. There are two houses from the Edwardian period. Other houses were built in the 1960s and 1980s. This area

provides a transition from Woodhill Road, itself within a conservation area with a predominantly residential character, into Woodlands Road which overall has a much less developed and more rural character.

To the south of the site the woodland rises steeply to the south of Woodlands Road and to the north stretches down to the foreshore except where it has been interrupted by development. The character of the area is defined by substantial houses set in spacious, landscaped plots with large gaps between individual buildings enabling views across the Severn Estuary to Wales. The size of the gardens, the settings of the buildings and the extensive views across the estuary are an essential element of the distinctiveness, quality and character of the conservation area.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Houses are set in large cliff top gardens with views across the estuary. From the road generally only gates are visible with hedges and fencing bordering the roadside.

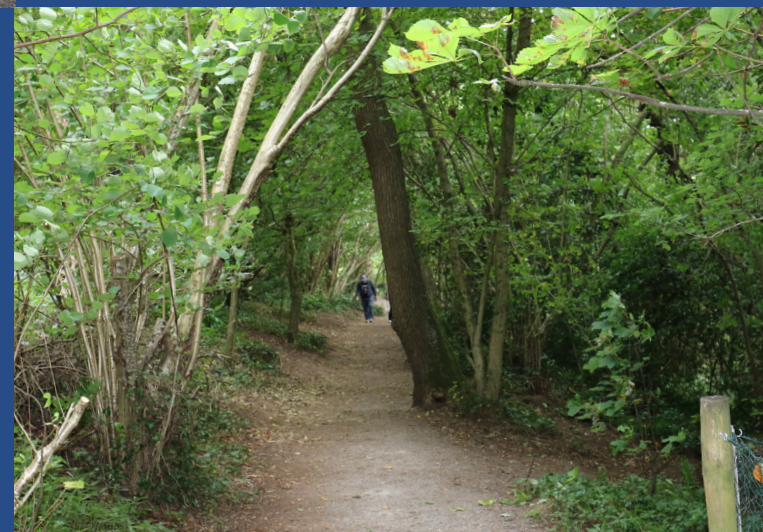


SCALE:

Substantial houses set in spacious, landscaped plots with large gaps between individual buildings.

ROOFS:

Primarily slate pitched roofs on the Victorian and Georgian buildings, some newer flat roof buildings are also present.



WALLS:

Various styles; dressed stone, brick and painted render. Generally dependent on age.

WINDOWS:

Victorian and Georgian properties have sash windows with more recent additions using uPVC casement windows. Bay windows are common.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- It is a distinct area of high landscape value and historical interest.
- The diverse ecology of the broadleaf woodlands and the coast.
- A verdant and tranquil space.
- Popular for recreation.
- Routes through the woodlands.

I: BRAMPTON COURT AND BRISTOL ROAD

Key Roads:

- Brampton Way
- East Wood
- Wyndham Way



Listed buildings 3

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 1

The B3124 - Portbury Common and Bristol Road - is one of the original roads linking Portishead to Bristol and continues to form one of the major entrances to Portishead. The road forms the edges to the Brampton Court Estate.

The Brampton Court estate has a 'U' shaped arterial road that serves residential housing with roads leading off. To the East, a rhyne separates the estate from the main Wyndham Way with green spaces and open areas either side and has pedestrian access and bridges over the rhyne. The Rhyne separates the Brampton estate from a small newer estate Heron Gardens. To the South of the Bristol Road, and adjoining open land is a small well maintained industrial estate.

The residential housing is predominantly 1970's detached housing with gardens and driveways, with off street parking and adequate roadways. Heron Gardens which is adjacent was built in the mid 1990's. On Bristol Road there are Victorian terraces and detached houses built in stone or brick, and to the South there are playing fields owned by Portishead Football Club and Gordano School with the Gordano Valley beyond.

There are two schools - St Peter's CE Primary School and St Joseph's RC Primary School, The Albion Public house as well as a number of residential care homes and supported living blocks in the estate.

Roads are linked with car-free paths running through green corridors. There are a number of other open green spaces and small children's play parks, including a semi-circular green space in front of two rows of houses in Bristol Road and a large area of open space between King's Drain and Heron Gardens. The rhyne has a trackway along the eastern bank with pedestrian access across.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Estate housing generally set back from the road. Majority of properties have off street parking with open front lawns.



SCALE:

Primarily two storey detached and semi-detached houses. Occasional three storey apartment buildings including a residential home.

ROOFS:

Mixed concrete tiles and slate.



WALLS:

Brick, painted render, hanging tiles.

WINDOWS:

White uPVC casement windows.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Open Green Spaces.
- The pedestrian pathways through the estate are much valued by residents.

J: THE VALE AND VILLAGE QUARTER

Key Roads:

- Wyndham Way
- Phoenix Way
- Galingale Way



Situated to the East of Portishead's centre, The Vale and The Village Quarter are primarily residential housing. The Vale was developed from the late 1990s on farmland and includes a small area - Quays Office Park - that is dedicated to small offices. The Village Quarter was built from c2006 as part of the redevelopment of the old dock. It was built on farmland and the industrial edge of the former dockland, previously used for dumping waste ash from the power station site (hence the name of the main arterial road - Phoenix Way).

Each estate consists of a single main arterial road, with branch and cul de sac roads radiating outwards. The Vale is predominantly three to four bedroom detached houses of brick and roof tile construction. In places there are townhouses arranged in a 'circus' fashion around circular roadways and modern terraced housing. The Village Quarter has a wider variety of housing types, including terrace, semi-detached, detached and apartment buildings; most are rendered, many in a variety of colours to imitate some of the very prominent rows of colourful housing in parts of Bristol. To the north of the site there are apartment buildings facing out across the estuary. These buildings range between four to six storeys.

Both estates include houses built around areas of grass in a number of configurations, including the large, central parks - Vale Park and Phoenix Park, a number of small 'circuses', and several smaller public open spaces. There are significant numbers of trees around the grassed areas and along the estate boundaries.

The estates differ significantly in terms of parking and pedestrian traffic. In both estates, many houses have their own driveways. The Vale has significant lengths of street available for on-street parking but almost all cars are parked on driveways. The Village Quarter has very significant on-street parking with both the local bus and fire services expressing their concern regarding access.

The Vale is well laid out with many cycleways and pathways leading into Portishead town centre as well as across the development and over the busy Wyndham Way towards the schools of Portishead. The Village Quarter has small stretches of off-road pathways, which link poorly with neighbouring routes and destinations and include stretches that pass adjacent to busy roadways.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Close to road, some off street parking majority with no front gardens. Shared streetspace. Some small hedge boundaries majority with no boundary fronting directly onto pavements.



SCALE:

Majority two storey modest houses. Mix of detached semi-detached and apartments. Some larger apartment blocks on northern edge.

ROOFS:

Concrete pantiles, slate.



WALLS:

Variable. Majority brick, some rendered, some dressed stone.

WINDOWS:

White uPVC casement windows.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Good permeability for pedestrians and cyclists in most places.
- Green spaces throughout development.

K: WYNDHAM WAY

Key Roads:

- Wyndham Way
- Old Mill Road
- Harbour Road
- Quays Avenue



The Wyndham Way character area lies between the north end of the High Street and the Marina. Wyndham Way itself is one of the primary vehicular access routes in and out of Portishead. It is a large and busy road designed for the scale of the motor vehicle. This is reflected in the surroundings. The character area consists primarily of large retail stores and some warehouses and offices. There are several large supermarkets and other large box-style retail outlets, all with very large car parks. There is a takeaway restaurant in one of the car parks. Between these large retail outlets there are smaller businesses located on Old Mill Road. These businesses are in warehouse and industrial units and have a large range of purposes.

The Wyndham Way Opportunity Area Scoping Study 2021 is an in depth study of the area and should be referred to for a more comprehensive analysis of this area.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Mostly surrounded by parking areas, some low walls and hedges at boundaries.



SCALE:

Large box stores and two storey warehouse/industrial units.

ROOFS:

Metal cladding systems.



WALLS:

Brick first storey, upper storeys corrugated metal cladding systems.

WINDOWS:

Curtain wall systems, casement windows.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Majority of Portishead's large industrial and retail units are located here.

L: THE MARINA

Key Roads:

- Old Mill Road
- Harbour Road
- Quays Avenue



With the old dock basin forming the centre of the site, the road pattern consists of two artery roads running parallel with the dockside - Newfoundland Road to the south of the site, which links to Phoenix Way and the Village Quarter; Lower Burlington Road to the west of the dock side, and a further two roads climbing the hillside to the west of the dock.

A significant walkway runs around the dock and, as well as providing a car-free route for residents, linking shops, houses and amenities, it is also a popular destination in itself for people in the area.

The development consists of small groups of high-rise apartment buildings along the waterfront, as well as a small number of terraced houses. Behind the waterfront, houses tend to be semi-detached and detached, with some wide curves of housing in stretches. As with other newer developments, many of the streets have deliberately varied corner buildings to minimise the feeling of long lines of housing.

The area has been developed with a range of uses. Away from the waterfront, the area is exclusively residential. The waterfront itself includes the Parish Wharf leisure centre at the southern end of the dock, a range of restaurants, medium

sized shop units, largely on the ground floor of high-rise residential buildings. The site also includes a boatyard and chandlers, as well as a significant number of buildings and facilities for the management and operation of the marina and associated lock. The waterfront also includes Portishead Primary School, a 420-place primary school, and an RNLI station.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Estate housing, generally set back from the road. Majority of properties have off street parking with open front lawns.



SCALE:

On the waterfront there are large mixed use buildings with residential upper floors and active ground floors. Away from the waterfront there are medium density terraces and high density apartment buildings ranging from 3-7 storeys.

ROOFS:

Pitched roofs slate and red pantiles. Waterfront roofs are flat roofs.



WALLS:

Waterfront: Brick, render and engineered timber cladding.
Away from waterfront: Brick, painted render.

WINDOWS:

Waterfront: Aluminium windows, large
Away from waterfront: White uPVC casement windows.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Mixed use development.
- Active ground floor uses.
- Good range of facilities reducing reliance on motor vehicles.
- Good integration with the waterfront.
- Pedestrian friendly environment.

M: COURT HOUSE FARM & NEWLANDS ROAD

Key Roads:

- Church Road N
- Church Road S
- Slade Road
- Newlands Hill
- High Street (B3124)



Listed buildings 10

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 4

This is the historic area of Portishead, mostly now a Conservation Area with the Parish Church of St Peter's at its centre. Surrounded by five listed buildings, some of which were farmhouses that were dominant in this area at one time, most of the buildings surrounding the church are of a sympathetic style with well-maintained stone walling.

The church dates from Norman times and the listed Court House Farm complex features a tower dating to Tudor times. The grounds of Court House Farm have been developed into a fine courtyard and are now used for many community events.

The other housing is of mixed style ranging from renovated Victorian farmhouses, more recent houses built to accommodate people working in the old quarries at the edge of this area, a residential care home, and modern style social and domestic housing built on the edge of the Green Belt.

Running from the Church, Newlands Hill Road (now a pathway) was once the only way to reach the heights of Portishead overlooking the town, the valley and the estuary. The roads are narrow in places

without pavements, reflecting this early period where horses were the traffic of the time - a horse mounting block is still to be found adjacent to the Church. Where pavements do exist, they are narrow and not at all well maintained. Parking is quite restricted as few houses have driveways and the narrow roads prevent on-road parking.

Gardens are varied, surrounded by well-maintained stone walls which help to shape the area's character. There are two open areas of grassland that help to maintain the open spaces and create views to the church and the towers of Court House Farm.

There are many fine views from the open green spaces and areas on the upper hill slopes and Quarry Road (the old quarry site) towards Avonmouth and beyond.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



WALLS:

Majority dressed stone some rendered.

WINDOWS:

Large multi-pane windows.



SCALE:

Majority two storey medium to large detached buildings and some terraces. Large farm buildings in centre of conservation area.

ROOFS:

Pitched roofs red pantiles.



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Front gardens with low stone wall boundaries. Historic character and abundance of greenery contributes strongly to the character of the area.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Rural characteristics give this area a unique character within Portishead.
- Hedgerows and historic buildings contribute to the rural character of this area.
- Conservation area with a rural atmosphere and many listed historic assets.

N: SLADE ROAD

Key Roads:

- Slade Road
- Combe Road
- Combe Avenue
- Nore Road



Listed buildings 2

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 2

Slade Road and its immediate surroundings form a residential area that is connected to the High Street. One of Portishead's oldest roads, it originally connected the old village near St Peter's Church to the fort at Battery Point.

As such, much of the development is older, with the majority of the houses being Victorian in a mix of terraces and detached properties. Nearly all the properties are set back from the road with front gardens and garden walls, often with flowers or hedges. There has been infill development over the years and there is a 1950s development of bungalows and some newer houses interspersed with the old. Most follow the general character of the area, keeping to two or three storeys set back from the road, with small front gardens.

The next road up the hill, Combe Avenue, was developed later and consists primarily of detached and semi detached post war developments, again generally in two or three storeys with gardens both front and back.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Front gardens with low stone wall boundaries. Some converted to off street parking. Generally original Victorian walling contributing strongly to the character of the area.



SCALE:

Majority two storey Victorian semi-detached houses with loft conversions. Some 50s bungalows.

ROOFS:

Pitched roofs red concrete tiles.



WALLS:

Dressed stone Victorian buildings. 1950s bungalows rendered and painted.

WINDOWS:

Large sash windows, uPVC casement windows on newer buildings.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Large, open communal gardens and pond.
- Views over the rooftops, ornate chimney pots and staggered roof lines of the terraced houses.
- The easy access to the High Street from the residential areas.

O: ST PETERS ROAD

Key Roads:

- St Peters Road
- High Street



Listed buildings 1

St. Peters Road, which borders the Court House Farm Conservation Area, is a residential development from the 1960s consisting of two or three storey properties. The houses are set at an angle so the frontages of the houses do not form a straight line as one passes along the road. Housing in The Paddocks is more regulated with straight approaches. Towards the north west of this character area is The Garstons. This is a small cul-de-sac off St Peter's Road. These hillside properties are in the villa style and oriented to maximise views across the Gordano Valley.

The housing is a mixture of styles and materials, mainly red brick with white feather boarding or vertical tiling, giving a uniform appearance. Houses have open front gardens with parking. There are open spaces but not enough to form play parks or areas to sit.

St Peter's Road is an artery road clear of parked cars, but more congested at the lower High Street end. Here there is a small café and convenience store in the White Cot to the south east of the area as it meets the High Street.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Open front gardens with off street parking, most with lawns, some converted to patios or stone chippings.



SCALE:

Two storey detached houses some smaller single storey semi detached units throughout

ROOFS:

Pitched roofs red concrete tiles, single storey construction features monopitch roofs



WALLS:

Brick with wooden cladding on upper floors, some wood cladding has been replaced with tiles

WINDOWS:

uPVC casement windows, some picture windows where views are available



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Quiet residential area on the edge of the historic area of Portishead.
- The area is well maintained with views across to the parish church, Newlands Hill and the lower High Street.

P: HIGH STREET

Key Roads:

- St Peters Road
- High Street



Listed buildings 1

Locally Valued Heritage Assets 3

The High Street is a locally very important area. Forming the heart of the community and perceived to be under threat. The High Street is a section of road that runs north to south from the end of Wyndham Way for 500m toward Brampton Way before the primary retail use fades and the road becomes mainly residential.

Built in the Victorian period, the High Street is formed primarily of pairs of shops together with gaps between. Behind this initial row of properties through the gaps are the backlands. Historically used for stables, horses and carts, they now have a variety of uses. Some have been developed into shops, others into residential mews developments. These backland areas are a strong contributor to the character and heritage of the area. The pavements are mostly wide and crossing points are good.

Development is a mixture of two or three storeys and for the most part constructed of stone. The shop fronts are mostly well maintained and, overall, retain the Victorian character of this area of the High Street. The carved stonework

details such as date stones and builders' names create local identity. Victorian chimney pots have been largely retained, decorative carved pallisters retained and the 'Portishead Blue' colour scheme, transposed from shop fronts to street furniture on the side of the road' is favourably noticeable.

Where there are more recent developments, they are in the most part of good scale and sympathetic to the existing character of the area.

It should be noted that a more extensive High Street analysis is available in the full Neighbourhood Development Plan document in the Town Centre section.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Set back from roads, open frontages. Shopfronts with occasional trees and planters.



SCALE:

Two and three storey semi detached units, some small terraces.

ROOFS:

Pitched roofs, red concrete pantiles



WALLS:

Dressed stone

WINDOWS:

Ground floors generally shopfronts with large windows. Upper floors sash windows painted white.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Victorian shop fronts with strong heritage character.
- The many frontage gaps leading to backland areas.
- Human scale design.

Q. ALBERT ROAD AND VICTORIA SQUARE

Key Roads:

- Albert Road
- Victoria Square
- High Street
- Wyndham Way



This character area is a Victorian residential development that sits to the east of the High Street between the High Street and Wyndham Way. The roads within the development are small, almost too narrow for two cars to pass. This gives the area a distinctive feel and is accentuated by the relatively tall two or three storey Victorian properties. Most properties have small front gardens, some with low walls and others have been converted into off-street parking. The area also benefits from close proximity to the High Street and other amenities.

KEY DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS:



GARDENS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS:

Set back from roads, stone walls and small front gardens. Many converted to off street parking.



SCALE:

Two storey semi detached and terraces.

ROOFS:

Pitched roofs red concrete pantiles



WALLS:

Dressed stone

WINDOWS:

Sash windows painted white



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

- Well proportioned Victorian properties

5. SUMMARY

This Community Character Statement sets out detail about valued and positive characteristics of the town that underpin planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. In summary the key points of guidance are:

1. EARLY, POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE PRE-APPLICATION COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This Character Statement alone cannot ensure the best quality design. That can only come through meeting and talking with those proposing changes or developments and exploring how that specific location or site can deliver high quality and locally distinctive design.

Although applicants cannot be required, only encouraged (in line with national planning policy), to undertake early stage community involvement, through the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council is putting in place a coherent and consistent approach, in the form of a Pre-Application Community Engagement Protocol as a key way to deliver this mutual benefit.

2. HIGH QUALITY AND LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE DESIGN

Proposals should be supported by analysis and evidence, and **planning applications for new development in Portishead must include a statement demonstrating how they have used this document to inform a locally distinctive and positive design response.**

3. PROTECTION OF THE LANDSCAPE SETTING

Proposals for development within the Parish should demonstrate how it contributes to the conservation or enhancement of the character and local distinctiveness of the Parish landscape – the ancient woodlands are irreplaceable habitats and must be protected as such.

4. LOCAL HERITAGE

Development, environmental management and infrastructure proposals within Portishead's Conservation Areas will be expected to demonstrate how proposals conserve and enhance the historic character and fabric. Locally valued, non-designated heritage assets must also be sensitively responded to in any development proposals.

5. CHARACTER AREAS

Development should reflect and reinforce the sense of place in its Character Area drawing **on identified positive and distinctive characteristics as highlighted for each character area.**

6. APPROPRIATE BUILDING FORM AND MATERIALS

The choice of building massing, appearance and materials should be demonstrated to reference this guidance, and complement and enhance the quality and character - **use of contemporary design that draws on a character area's positive characteristics, distinctive features, and heritage assets and materials to contribute to a locally distinctive sense of place, will be encouraged.**

6. REFERENCES

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