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## **Historic Environment Action Plan**

### Urban Settlement Type Report

**Isle of Wight County Archaeology and  
Historic Environment Service**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historic Environment Action Plans (HEAPs) can be prepared for any form of historic environment asset. At the landscape scale this may be a particular HEAP Area or a HEAP Type, such as Urban Settlement. The HEAP process uses characterisation, analysis and assessment as the basis upon which the asset's vulnerability to a range of forces for change is considered. The recommendations that flow from this are then developed into a series of *SMART* actions.

This particular HEAP document provides an overview of town development and character on the Isle of Wight, drawing on the 15 documents that characterise towns as elements within the wider landscape context of individual HEAP Areas. These HEAP Area documents can be viewed on the Isle of Wight Council website.

[www.iwight.com/living\\_here/planning/Archaeology/historic.asp](http://www.iwight.com/living_here/planning/Archaeology/historic.asp)

This document – the *Urban Settlement Overview* - has been set out under a series of headings as suggested in the English Heritage publication 'Using Historic Landscape Characterisation' (2004). These headings have been modified to take account of a more recent English Heritage publication entitled 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' (2008)

Section 2 of this document attempts to define urban status and character. Section 3 considers the historic character, evolution and time-depth of urban settlements on the Isle of Wight. Section 4 assesses the heritage significance of the resource. Section 5 identifies heritage values, based on the information in the preceding sections. Section 6 describes the current condition of the resource. Section 7 discusses the sustainability of historic character within towns. Section 8 addresses the future management of change.

Section 8 of this document will be of the greatest practical value for people and organisations involved in the daily management and conservation of the Island's urban settlements; for instance planners, property owners, developers and conservation organisations. However, the identified issues and recommendations in this final section flow from the characterisation and analysis of the previous sections, the study of which should give a clear understanding of urban landscape character on the Isle of Wight.

The HEAP Steering Committee has decided that HEAP documents should be prepared for various individual towns on the Isle of Wight in addition to this *Urban Settlement Overview*, subject to resources (see 2.5).

## 2. DEFINING URBAN STATUS AND CHARACTER ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

### 2.1 National Definitions of Urban Status (Figure 1)

What constitutes a town? This is a particularly pertinent question for the Isle of Wight because several Island settlements are at the margin between 'village' and 'town' status and are difficult to classify. Modern civic status does not help much in identifying urban settlements since only larger towns and cities now have full self-government and no Island towns fall into that category.

The Ordnance Survey defines a town as '*a centre of business and population with an area in excess of 2.5 kilometres. Some smaller places are also historically considered towns, for example where they are market or former county towns*'

<http://mapzone.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/mapzone/didyouknow/whatis/>

A government report on the 2001 Census entitled 'Key Statistics for urban areas in the South East' defined an 'urban area' as '*an extent of at least 20 hectares and at least 1,500 residents at the time of the 2001 Census*' (Office for National Statistics 2004). Individual urban areas were identified on the basis of OS mapping showing blocks of 'built-up' land and not on the basis of functionality (services and facilities provided). The Census maps covering the Isle of Wight showed eleven urban areas, these being (in order of population) Newport, Ryde, Cowes/Northwood, Sandown/Shanklin, Freshwater/Totland, Ventnor, Wootton, Bembridge, Seaview, Wroxall and Brading (Figure 1). Census data was collected for each of these urban areas.

In 2004 a new 'Rural and Urban Area Classification' was introduced following a study by various government agencies (Countryside Agency et al 2004). Under this new system only settlements with a population of over 10,000 were classified as 'urban' in the classification of *output areas* published on the Office of National Statistics website [www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp) whilst built-up areas containing between 1,500 and 10,000 residents were classified as 'town and fringe'. Defra has adopted the same classification but refers to 'urban settlements' and 'rural towns'. Thus Newport, Ryde, Cowes/Northwood (including East Cowes) and Sandown/Shanklin are defined by defra as 'urban settlements' whereas Freshwater/Totland, Ventnor, Wootton, Bembridge, Seaview, Wroxall and Brading are defined as 'rural towns'. [www.defra.gov.uk/ruralstats/rural-definition.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/ruralstats/rural-definition.htm)

The new classification has been designed as a statistical tool and the introductory guide advises caution when using the classification to describe an individual local area (Countryside Agency et al 2004, 4-5). The purpose of the HEAP is to understand urban settlements as a historic landscape type and in this respect both the Census identifications of 'urban areas' and the 'Rural and Urban Area Classification' have limitations.

The most serious limitation is that functionality is not considered in defining 'urban settlements' and 'rural towns'. No Isle of Wight resident would define Wroxall as a 'rural town' as it does not provide a range of goods and services to the surrounding area.

A second limitation is the fact that the Census and Countryside Agency definitions do not consider settlement character, which is closely linked to the historic origins of settlements. Although Cowes/ East Cowes, Sandown/Shanklin and Freshwater/Totland are linked by built-up zones (or by a floating bridge in the case of Cowes/East Cowes) and are defined as three 'urban areas' on the Census map. They actually consist of six historically distinct settlements, each with a separate origin and historic landscape character.

Population size does not necessarily indicate urban character. Freshwater/Totland is defined as an urban area on the Census Map whereas Yarmouth is not. In terms of present-day population and settlement area Yarmouth certainly has a lesser claim to be considered a town than Freshwater, which partly acts as the local shopping centre for the West Wight and is an area of fairly high-density settlement covering more than one square kilometre. However, Yarmouth is a historic planned borough around a port with an urban layout and has a town council whereas Freshwater has a parish council and its street pattern and house types are less urban.

Government classifications designed for the collection of national statistics are clearly inadequate for the study of the historic urban environment on the Isle of Wight. In order to define the status and boundaries of Isle of Wight settlements at the present day for the purposes of the HEAP, it is necessary to take into account the origins, character and functions of these settlements as well as historic urban status.

## **2.2 Defining Historic Urban Status on the Isle of Wight (Tables 1 and 2)**

Heighway (1972, 8-10) defined various attributes of historic urban settlements in England, Wales and Scotland. She then included settlements possessing (or formerly possessing) two or more attributes in her study of historic towns. Her key attributes (slightly rearranged and expanded) are as follows:

- Key Position
- Urban defences
  - Wall
  - Bank and ditch
  - Gate(s)
- Internal street plan.
  - Evidence of deliberate planning such as a grid lay-out.
  - Provision of space for market.
- House plot and house type.
  - Town plan may show long narrow *burgage plots*.
  - Houses will be urban rather than rural in form
- Documentary evidence of a market.
- Existence of a mint
- Legal existence
  - Borough Charter
  - Self-Government (Elected Officers)
- Population (higher density and size than other nearby settlements).
- Social differentiation
  - A range of social classes and presence of a middle class.
  - Physical evidence for differentiation in form of house types.
- Diversified economic base.
- Complex religious organisation.
  - Possession of more than one parish church.
  - Other institutions e.g. monasteries, priories, chantries.
- Judicial centre
  - Court of national status
  - Borough court independent of manorial court

This list of attributes has been modified for the present HEAP document. No Island town had a mint and therefore this attribute has been omitted. Two additional attributes have been added, these being the right to elect one or more MP and evidence for a quay. The modified list of attributes has been used in Table 1 to identify Isle of Wight towns of medieval origin. Some attributes do not in themselves denote urban status but simply contribute to the overall picture. For instance, physical evidence of a planned layout in the form of a regular street plan and regular house plots is one indicator of urban settlement but is also fairly common in villages of medieval origin (although regularity of layout is not very common in Isle of Wight rural settlements). Evidence of urban attributes has been taken from Page ed. 1912, Jones 1978, Margham 1992 and Edwards 1999 a-g.

Six medieval settlements on the Isle of Wight have been identified as possessing two or more attributes indicative of possible urban status. However, only four places have been identified as possessing eight or more attributes and this seems to be an appropriate threshold for determining medieval urban status on the Isle of Wight. Even these four settlements of Newport, Yarmouth, Brading and Newtown did not thrive in medieval times and it is arguable how far Newtown was ever successfully established. For detailed assessments of Newport, Yarmouth, Newtown, Brading, Carisbrooke and St Helens, see the *Extensive Urban Survey of the Isle of Wight's Historic Towns* (Edwards 1999).

The Isle of Wight Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) formed part of a national EUS programme carried out by English Heritage. The EUS assessed medieval urban areas by means of attributes set out in the evaluation manual for English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme (Darvill 1992, 34-36). Attributes identified in the MPP manual were similar to those set out in this document but the MPP manual assigned scores to each attribute. On the basis of these scores, medieval towns were categorised as *small market towns*, *medium-sized market towns*, *large market towns* or *seaports*. Newport and Yarmouth were defined in the manual as *medium sized market towns*, whilst Brading and Newtown were defined as *small market towns* (Darvill 1992, 137-138).

The pre-20<sup>th</sup> century attributes of the Island's post-medieval urban and quasi-urban settlements are considered in Table 2. These settlements are best considered in relation to their functions, building density, extent of settlement and late 19<sup>th</sup> century civic status. Attributes relating to tourism have also been included (e.g. hotels, piers, esplanades) although not all the towns in Table 2 were primarily tourist resorts. 19<sup>th</sup> century population statistics are not helpful in assessing the size of Isle of Wight towns since they were collected by parish and most Island parishes included both urban and rural areas (for population figures see Page ed. 1912 448-449).

Building types cannot be readily characterised in a table but are another key attribute in defining settlement character. Freshwater, for instance, although not urban in any real sense, is characterised by Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached brick houses rather than by rural vernacular architecture. Settlement form, also hard to characterise in a table, is another significant attribute. The compact and tightly focussed form of Seaview, for example, contrasts with sprawling development at Freshwater where new houses and roads have had to be accommodated within a much older settlement and road pattern.

### **2.3 Defining Character of Historic Isle of Wight 'Urban' Settlements**

Isle of Wight urban and quasi-urban settlements fall into various categories based on historical origin, development and function:

- Medieval planned towns (Yarmouth, Newport, Newtown and Brading).
- Settlements that developed in post-medieval period with a focus on sea-borne trade and shipbuilding (Cowes and East Cowes).
- Settlements that were deliberately developed or grew up around the seasonal coastal residences of wealthy mainlanders in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ryde, Seaview, Bembridge).
- Settlements that came into existence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to cater for seaside holidays taken by a wider social range of people (Ventnor, Shanklin, Sandown, Totland) or where an existing settlement expanded after the coming of the railway (Freshwater).

These categories are not mutually exclusive and have changed over time. Cowes and East Cowes paradoxically combined being the Island's only industrial towns with

becoming, respectively, the home of an annual social event of the highest cachet (Cowes Week) and the holiday home of the sovereign (Osborne). Ryde changed its character in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to cater for day visitors from the mainland and holiday-makers staying in local holiday centres.

English Heritage's MPP Evaluation Manual (Darvill 1992, 36-39) identified various forms of post-medieval urban settlement, these being dockyard towns, resort towns, county/provincial capitals and industrial towns. However, the manual's provisional list of urban areas completely omits the post-medieval Island towns of Cowes, Ryde and Ventnor. Shanklin is classified as a resort town but Sandown is incorrectly classified as a small market town (Darvill 1992, 138)

## **2.4 Defining Present-Day Urban Character on the Isle of Wight (Table 3. Figures 2, 3 and 4)**

In order to define the character of Island towns at the present day a set of attributes has been identified in Table 3 as indicators of urban status on the Isle of Wight, although not all of these indicators are necessarily applicable on a national basis.

The table includes the most recent government indicators. These are taken from the 2001 Census map of urban areas (Office for National Statistics 2004), the 2001 population figures for urban areas and the 2004 Rural and Urban Areas classification (Countryside Agency et al 2004). The 'Rural and Urban Classification' identifies areas with a population of over 10,000 as 'urban settlements' and areas with a population of between 1500 and 10,000 as 'town and fringe' (see section 2.1).

It is not possible to disaggregate the population figures for places identified on the Census map as one settlement but perceived on the Isle of Wight to be separate places i.e. Sandown/Shanklin, Cowes/East Cowes and Freshwater/Totland. In fact all the named urban areas shown on the Census map include locations that historically were separate settlements and which are still perceived locally as having a separate identity e.g. Ryde includes Binstead, Sandown/Shanklin includes Lake; and Cowes includes Gurnard and Northwood.

One indicator of urban status is whether a settlement has a 'town' council or a 'parish' council. Although town councils on the Isle of Wight have only the same powers as parish councils, the title of 'town council' does reflect local perceptions of town status and is linked to the historic status of individual towns as boroughs or urban district councils. The two largest Island towns of Newport and Ryde were subsumed within Medina Borough Council between 1974 and 1995 and did not have any local government status, even though Cowes, Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor, Brading and Yarmouth all had town councils from 1974 and East Cowes acquired a town council in the late 1990s. The latest round of reorganisation at the local level has seen some parts of the Island enparished for the first time since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ryde has acquired a 'town council' (2008) but Newport's new local council, curiously, has been designated a 'parish council'.

The most obvious indicator of urban status and the chief means by which a visitor characterises a settlement is the presence of an area occupied by shops selling a variety of non-food items (an attribute entitled *secondary retail* in table 3). The presence of a range of commercial and administrative offices connected with local government, local organisations and business activities are other indicators of urban status. Industrial areas, industrial estates or business parks are generally (but not always) associated with towns. Towns will also have a range of social and community facilities that may include a senior school, a college, a hospital or a leisure centre.

One characteristic that would appear to define urban settlement is the presence of suburbs. However, even here the boundary is blurred – perhaps now throughout the UK but possibly more so on the Isle of Wight than in some other parts of the country. Many of the Island’s villages have housing estates that feel suburban in character. In the north eastern part of the Island the identity of the formerly rural settlements of Wootton and Binstead has become blurred, partly due to 20<sup>th</sup> century residential growth in the two villages but also because of ribbon development along the main roads from Binstead to Ryde and from Wootton to Newport. The boundaries of towns can also become blurred as a result of ribbon development such as that along the road between Cowes and Newport.

The pattern of 20<sup>th</sup> century settlement growth has meant that it is quite difficult to define the boundaries of some Island settlements. To a degree, many formerly distinct rural settlements on the Island have become satellites of the various Island towns and this raises the issue of how far the Island can be considered to be a ‘rural’ area. However, Defra (2007) defines the Isle of Wight Unitary Authority as being within the most rural of six classes of local/unitary authorities (although this category covers much of England outside the major conurbations). The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation (Basford 2008) identifies nearly 81% of the Island’s land use as being rural in character (field patterns, woodland, open land, valley floor and horticulture), disregarding rural settlements (see Figure 2).

In some cases it is difficult to define whether or not a place is ‘urban’. Freshwater has a leisure centre but possesses a limited range of retail outlets and does not feel completely urban in its physical character and layout despite a suggestion that a planned settlement may have been established at Freshwater Green in the Middle Ages (Margham 1992, 107). Another ambiguity concerns ‘villages’ such as Seaview, Bembridge, Gurnard and Totland that are not agricultural in origin but which are examples of small settlements developed as residential settlements for wealthy mainlanders or as small seaside resorts.

Historic Landscape Characterisation of the Isle of Wight was carried out from 2003 to 2005 without reference to the government definitions mentioned above. The criteria for defining the various settlement types were morphology and functionality (Basford 2008, 36 and 48). ‘Density’ is not specifically referred to in the HLC report as an attribute used in defining settlement types but was in fact used to distinguish between urban and suburban settlement and also between ‘residential cluster’ and ‘residential scatter’. Figure 2 shows all the HLC Broad Types in relation to HLC/HEAP Areas. Figure 3 shows settlement sub-types and also the industry and recreation/tourism broad types. Figure 4 shows the age of origin for settlements.

Characterisation of Island settlements needs to recognise the ambiguous status of some settlements, to reflect the modern linkages between towns and their satellite settlements, and to emphasise modern functions as well as historic origins. However, to consider historic rural settlements purely as appendages to Island towns because they are linked to them by 20<sup>th</sup> century development would be to ignore the very different historic origins and visual character of individual places on the Island and also the strong sense of local identity. A recent decision to include Carisbrooke within the jurisdiction of the new Newport Parish Council attracted some opposition from Carisbrooke residents who regarded the village as a community quite distinct from Newport.

## **2.5 Identifying Urban Settlements for study within the HEAP (Table 4)**

The HEAP Steering Committee has decided that HEAP documents should be prepared for individual Island towns in addition to this *Urban Settlement Overview* but

the preparation of these documents needs to be prioritised, given limited resources. Table 4 attempts to determine priorities by assessing a number of attributes in relation to each town. These attributes are as follows:

1. Historic urban characteristics (assessed from tables 1 and 2)
2. Present-day urban characteristics (assessed from table 3)
3. Presence of Conservation Area (see 7.5)
4. Existence of Conservation Area Character Appraisal (see 4.1 and 7.5)
5. Other character appraisals or historic landscape surveys
6. Existence of English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey (see 4.1)
7. Position in settlement hierarchy of Island Plan (see below and 8.1)
8. Conservation and management issues (see 8.2)

The absence of a Conservation Area may indicate that a particular settlement has little historic character or that there are insufficient surviving buildings of historic or architectural interest to justify designation. However, designation may not have kept pace with changing perceptions of historic character. Furthermore, Conservation Areas can only cover fairly small localities whereas the HEAP aims to manage change within the whole historic environment. Thus, the absence of a Conservation Area does not necessarily lessen the priority for an individual town HEAP.

The benefit of Conservation Area status is greatly enhanced if a Character Appraisal exists for an individual Conservation Area as this will identify the key characteristics of the Area's built environment, thereby guiding the management of future change. The existence of an English Heritage extensive urban survey may also have a beneficial effect on the understanding and management of historic character although its primary purpose is to identify areas of archaeological importance.

The absence of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal, other character assessment, or survey will therefore tend to increase the need for a HEAP study of a particular settlement. However, even where character appraisals or other assessments exist, this does not necessarily mean that a HEAP study is not required. Although Conservation Area Character Appraisals identify 'positive elements' and 'negative elements' within the area being appraised, they do not explicitly set out conservation and management issues or make recommendations for managing future change - two key functions of Historic Environment Action Plans. However, English Heritage now recommends that management strategies are drawn up for conservation areas, based on character appraisals (EH 2006, Section 5), although these have not yet been prepared for Island towns with the exception of the Ryde Public Realm Strategy (Isle of Wight Council 2005).

The *Island Plan Submission Core Strategy* (December 2008) sets out a settlement hierarchy that indicates the level of development thought to be sustainable for individual settlements. Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin are considered to be key regeneration areas capable of accommodating most of the island's planned growth during the lifetime of the plan. Ventnor and Freshwater are identified as smaller regeneration areas and certain larger villages are shown on the settlement hierarchy map as rural service centres capable of accommodating relatively limited growth to meet local needs.

Conservation and management issues vary in their complexity between individual settlements, each of which has been given a 'high', 'medium' or 'lower' score on the basis of issues identified in section 8.3 of this document.

In the final column of Table 4, overall priority ratings for the production of individual town HEAPs have been assigned on the basis of the various attributes considered above. Most of the towns falling within one of the key regeneration areas have been assigned a high priority. However, although Ryde is a key regeneration area it already possesses a Public Realm Strategy (based on a full character assessment) and this has informed work that is taking place under the Ryde Townscape Heritage Initiative (see 4.1, 7.5 and 8.1). The existence of an existing strategy and work programme means that a HEAP study is not such a high priority as for some other towns.

East Cowes falls within the Medina Valley Key Regeneration Area and a very large scheme for the regeneration of the town has been planned in association with SEEDA (see 8.1). A Masterplan Design Code prepared for English Partnerships and SEEDA by Alan Baxter and Associates (September 2007) sets out a number of distinct character areas for the regeneration project. The development envelope has been subject to archaeological evaluation, with a minimum 3% sampling strategy. No significant archaeological deposits were encountered but a full programme of archaeological investigation will be required of each developer prior to detailed planning permission being granted. The Isle of Wight Council has prepared character appraisals for the town's two Conservation Areas (Town Centre and Esplanade) and East Cowes Town Council has produced a draft design guide for the town (December 2008). A HEAP study may therefore not be required.

Newport, Sandown, Shanklin and Cowes appear to be the towns for which individual town HEAPs are the highest priority but there may also be a case for preparing combined HEAPs/extensive urban surveys for Ventnor and Freshwater, which were not included in English Heritage's extensive urban survey of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (Edwards 1999). Extensive urban surveys focus specifically on the archaeological potential of towns and on strategies for investigating, protecting and managing this resource. The archaeological potential of the recent past is increasingly recognised and it is possible that grant-funding might be available for English Heritage to carry out urban surveys of the Island's seaside resorts.

This *Urban Settlement Overview* has become longer than intended owing to the necessity to define urbanism, to do full justice to the origins, forms, functions and variety of Island towns and to consider future change, conservation and management issues. It is recommended that the individual town studies should be based on OS historical and modern mapping at 1:10,000 scale, which should illustrate town evolution with the need for minimal text. The studies will therefore be able to focus on distinctive characteristics, on the assessment of archaeological and historical significance and potential, and on conservation and management issues.

### **3. CHARACTER AND EVOLUTION OF ISLE OF WIGHT URBAN SETTLEMENTS**

#### **3.1 Location and Topography**

- The Isle of Wight's overarching characteristic is its insularity, which has shaped the location, form and scale of Island towns.
- All of the Island's towns are either on or near the coast or at the head of waterways that are currently, or were historically, navigable.
- Some of the coastal towns face north, towards the mainland (Yarmouth, Cowes, East Cowes and Ryde,) and have direct ferry links to southern English towns.
  - Those on the south east coast not only face the open sea of the English Channel but are also separated from the northern part of the island by the

- chalk downlands. Consequently, they appear substantially more remote from the busy southern English coastline.
- The most southerly town, Ventnor, is even further removed by being located on the Undercliff, giving it a wholly seaward aspect.
  - The sites of the Island's only inland urban settlements of Newport and Brading relate wholly to topography, both being close to the highest navigable point of estuaries, at gaps in the east-west chalk ridge that were strategically important in terms of transport.
  - Topography has constrained development, restricting it or channelling it into particular areas.
    - The medieval grid plan of Newport was bordered by the Lukely Brook to the north and by the River Medina to the east. Expansion across the river onto the east bank of the Medina did not take place until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
    - Ventnor is trapped on the coast by steep downs (Steephill and Bonchurch) and therefore has expanded east and westwards into the small settlements of Bonchurch and St Lawrence.
    - The growth of Yarmouth has been constrained by its situation, having the Solent to the north, the River Yar to the west and Thorley Brook to the south-east.
  - The main settlements with historic urban characteristics lie within just a few of the HEAP Areas (Figure 3).
    - Yarmouth, Newtown, Newport, Cowes, East Cowes and Ryde are within the *Northern Lowlands* HEAP Area although, paradoxically, historic rural settlement was less dense here than in other HEAP Areas.
    - Brading is within the *Brading Haven and Bembridge Isle* HEAP Area.
    - Sandown and Shanklin lie within the *Newchurch Environs and Sandown Bay* HEAP Area.
    - Ventnor is within *The Undercliff* HEAP Area.

## 3.2 Principal Historical Processes and Urban Development (Figure 4)

### 3.2.1 Medieval urban development

- There were no towns on the Island in Roman times although the presence of Roman villas near to Brading and Newport indicates the strategic significance of these areas.
- The Lower Enclosure at Carisbrooke Castle has been proposed as the site of a late Saxon *burh* (fortified town) built to defend the Isle of Wight against Viking raids (Young 2000, 10–18, 191–192).
  - However, Tomalin (2002) still favours a Late Roman date for the Lower Enclosure and has drawn attention to its small size in relation to the other burhs within the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex.
- Domesday Book (1086) records that dues were received from a mill and 'from toll' within the manor of Bowcombe.
  - Inferences have been made as to the existence of a market, an attribute suggestive of urban status, from, the record of tolls.
  - Margham (1992a) has suggested that Carisbrooke (within Bowcombe Manor) was a planned settlement of quasi-urban status founded by William Fitz Osbern, the first Norman overlord of the Isle of Wight, before 1071.
  - However Edwards (1999g) has argued that the present site of Carisbrooke village may be of 12<sup>th</sup> century date and challenges Margham's view of Carisbrooke as a planned settlement.
- Yarmouth is recorded as a manor in Domesday Book (under its early form of 'Ermud'), as is Brading (recorded as 'Berandinz'). However, there is no evidence

that either place was urban at this time although Brading was almost certainly the head of a *parochia* or *mother parish* (Margham 2000).

- Newport is not recorded in Domesday Book but was probably established as a *planned town* either by Richard de Redvers II, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Devon (died 1162) or Baldwin de Redvers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Devon, who died in 1188 (Webster n.d. Part 1 17).
  - The de Redvers family held the lordship of the Isle of Wight from c.1100 to 1293.
  - Richard de Redvers II is thought to have transferred the market from Carisbrooke to Newport (Edwards 1999b 2-3).
- The earliest undisputed evidence for towns on the Isle of Wight dates from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century when borough charters were granted to Yarmouth by Baldwin de Redvers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Devon around 1180 and to Newport by Richard de Redvers, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Devon between 1188 and 1193 (Webster n.d. Part 1, 17-18).
  - Brading may have been laid out in the late 12th century by the local Lord of Whitefield Manor (Webster n.d. Part 1, 15-16), although the grant of a market and fair is not recorded until 1285 and the town never received a borough charter (Edwards 1999e, 3).
  - Newtown was granted a borough charter by the Bishop of Winchester in 1256 (Edwards 1999c, 2).
- These medieval lords developed the towns of Yarmouth, Newport, Newtown and Brading to gain an increased income from rents and tolls, and to extend access to goods and services.
  - This was part of a national process whereby *planned medieval towns* were laid out throughout England in the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and granted rights to hold weekly markets and annual fairs. (Beresford 1967).
  - Streets were laid out on regular plans and so were house plots. Inhabitants holding property within these towns were known as *burgesses* and the individual house plots became known as *burgage plots*.
- In contrast to the later seaside towns and tourism resorts the Island's medieval towns performed a genuine urban function for the surrounding populations, reflected in the existence of weekly markets and annual fairs in all four medieval boroughs.
- However, the success of these towns in the Middle Ages should not be exaggerated.
  - Newport was the largest and by far the most prosperous of the Island towns by the early 14<sup>th</sup> century but appears to have been in decline in the later 14<sup>th</sup> century and the 15<sup>th</sup> century. (Edwards 1999b, 3)
  - All of the towns suffered from the plagues that swept the whole country in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, affecting both town and countryside.
  - Newport, Newtown and Yarmouth were affected by French raids in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and by competition from mainland ports.
  - Yarmouth seems to have been virtually destroyed by the raids of 1377 and staged only a partial recovery in post-medieval times.
  - Newtown had failed as a town by the late Middle Ages and is now a tiny rural hamlet.
  - In contrast, Brading seems to have been flourishing in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century when it was heavily taxed in comparison with the other towns (Edwards 1999e, 3)
- All four of the Island's medieval towns were situated to the north of the central chalk ridge beside estuaries or tidal inlets giving access to the Solent and all possessed harbours and quays that permitted cross-Solent trade to and from the Island.

- However, the harbour at Yarmouth was unsheltered in comparison with those of Newport, Brading and Newtown, and this may possibly have been a factor limiting the town's development.
- The estuaries and inlets on the north coast of the Island facilitated the provisioning of the Fleet, which is recorded as victualling in the Medina as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- In 1302/3 the ports of St Helen and Hamble (in Hampshire) were ordered to find ships for the expedition of Edward I against the Scots and in 1347 St Helens, together with Yarmouth, had to send ships to Portsmouth (Edwards 1999 f).
  - It has been suggested that from the 14<sup>th</sup> century St Helens must have been of some importance as a port to Brading at the entrance of the haven (Page ed. 1912, 189).
- Edward III (1327-1377) declared that there should be only three ports in the Island, namely Ryde, Shamblers (on the site of East Cowes) and Yarmouth. A warden was appointed to each port (Page ed. 1912, 197, Brading 1990, 3-4).
  - This indicates that Ryde and East Cowes were significant during medieval times for trade and transport even though they remained tiny places until the post-medieval period.
  - It has been suggested that deep draught merchant vessels could not navigate as far as Newport, and that this led to Cowes/East Cowes becoming a transit point to transfer cargoes onto shallower draught vessels for onward travel up river.
- The Isle of Wight as a whole can be characterised as a rural area during the medieval period.
  - Depopulation was a national problem in the Late Middle Ages and may have hit the Isle of Wight harder than other parts of the country but the concern for the Island's depopulation shown in the 1488/89 Act of Parliament against enclosures on the Isle of Wight may have been motivated mainly by the Island's military importance (Jones 1978, 11).

### 3.2.2 Post-medieval urban development

- There is sufficient evidence to suggest that during the early post medieval period, English towns, generally, were in stagnation following years of economic disruption and declining population caused by disease and warfare in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Newman et al 2001, 142).
- Wars with France from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, commercial competition and a declining population had certainly affected prosperity on the Isle of Wight by the 16<sup>th</sup> century both in the towns and in the countryside but the fortunes of the Island's towns were mixed.
  - The Royal Survey of 1559 stated that 'ther is not past a dosen hosis in yermouthe' (quoted in Jones 1978, 18).
  - George Oglander of Nunwell, writing in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, described Newtown as a place with no market and almost no good houses standing and stated that 'Brading is likewise' (Edwards 1999e, 3).
  - However, Jones (1978, 18) concluded from studying lists of local tradespeople that Brading at this period was 'small but active'.
  - By comparison, Newport was 'large and metropolitan'. In 1559 there was a population of 1175 in 240 houses, by no means negligible in terms of contemporary town sizes and placing it within W.G. Hoskins' category immediately below county towns (Jones 1978, 18-19).
- Defence of the Isle of Wight became a matter of national policy from the 1530s within the context of an ambitious plan of coastal works in the south-east (Jones and Jones 1987, 46-53).

- Forts were built at East Cowes and West Cowes in 1540 but Yarmouth was still undefended when a French attack in 1543 left the town in ruins.
- Work was in progress on Sandown Fort in 1545 when French raiders landed in the East Wight at St Helens and elsewhere. The raiders penetrated inland but were repulsed before reaching Newport.
- Yarmouth Castle was completed in about 1547.
- During the period 1558-1642 Newport grew notably. It nearly trebled its population and acquired a new town hall, new school, new harbour installations and a mayoral charter (Jones 1978, Abstract). It even benefited, briefly, from a piped water supply (Tomalin and Scaife 1987).
  - Land was reclaimed on both sides of the quay and empty land was progressively built up with houses and warehouses along both limbs of Sea Street between the 1560s and 1611 (Jones 1978, 168-169).
  - However, its role as the Island's chief port was challenged by the development of Cowes and East Cowes from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Newport was indisputably the commercial and social centre of the Island (Jones and Jones 1987, 87; Page ed. 1912, 261).
  - This status is reflected in its 18<sup>th</sup> century brick-built town houses (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 34).
- Land on the north side of Newport was taken out of the crown lands of Parkhurst Forest for Albany Barracks and the Isle of Wight Workhouse in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- During the Napoleonic Wars Newport became something of a garrison town.
- The fortunes of Yarmouth, at a low ebb in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, seem to have improved by 1650 when the population was recorded as being about 400 people, but had declined again by the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century (Edwards 1999a, 3).
  - Several fairly substantial houses, dating in part from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, attest to the partial recovery of this period (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 304).
- Brading was struggling economically in 1641 when it received assistance with poor relief from the communities of Yaverland, Luccombe Farm, Shanklin and Bonchurch (Edwards 1999e, 3).
  - In view of attempts made to reclaim Brading Haven in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the quay at the end of Wall Lane may no longer have been of great economic importance (Edwards 1999e, 3) but the town continued to benefit in a modest way from trade inwards and outwards through Brading Haven until the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - The elegant residential properties on the Mall at Brading, dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards are a visible reminder of modest local prosperity in the town.
- Cowes and East Cowes grew up on at the mouth of the Medina Estuary in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century as trading ports and developed a ship-building industry.
  - Cowes grew rapidly. Sir John Oglander, writing in 1647, recalled a time when 'there were not above 3 or 4 howses at Cowes' but by 1635 there were one hundred families settled there (Jones 1978, 177). St Mary's Chapel was built at Cowes during the Commonwealth, at a period when few new Anglican churches were founded, a further indication of rapid growth.
  - The growth of Cowes and East Cowes probably benefited from an increased use of the English Channel by English shipping and also the Dutch. It may have been a favoured embarkation point for supplies and settlers bound for Virginia. Sir John Oglander reported seeing 300 ships in Cowes harbour (IW Record Office: Oglander Papers OG/97/6).
  - Population figures indicate that Cowes was larger than East Cowes at this time although it was not so important for shipbuilding (Harding 1998, 3 and 8).
  - Cowes has retained some attractive 18<sup>th</sup> century town houses built by local merchants and traders on High Street, Market Hill and Sun Hill.

### 3.2.3 Industry in Island Towns from 1500 to 1800

- The Island was generally a producer of raw materials (particularly wool, corn and fish) rather than manufactured goods but specific industries were significant at various times in individual Island towns.
  - Leather working was important in Newport during the 16<sup>th</sup> century but faded away in the 1600s. This decline may have been because dwindling woodlands cut supplies of oak bark for tanning (Jones 1978, 204-217).
  - Beer was produced not only for local consumption but also for export. German Richards of Brading grew rich selling beer to visiting ships in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century and two Newport brewers made regular shipments to Guernsey in the 1560s (Jones 1978, 159-160).
  - Evidence of the local brewing industry in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries can be found in the former malt house and Brewmaster's house in Crocker Street and in the former warehouse beside the quay (now the Quay Arts Centre) where Mew Langston Brewery stored beer ready for its transportation via the Medina Estuary.
  - Clay pipes were manufactured in Newport. 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century documents mention local producers and an excavation beside Orchard Street in 1978 located a production site (HER No 1543).
- Milling was carried on both in town and countryside. Six mills are shown on Speed's 1611 map of Newport, four situated on the Lukely Brook which flowed into the River Medina and two on the Medina itself.
  - In the Napoleonic period milling and the transport of grain became an even more significant activity.
  - In 1795 it was recorded that great quantities of corn were shipped from Brading Quay for the various mills on the Island (Albin 1795, 468).
  - The tide mills of West Medina Mill and East Medina Mill were built on either side of the Medina Estuary halfway between Newport and Cowes in about 1790 (Page ed 1912, 197).
  - Yarmouth tide mill was built in 1793 and is the only former tide mill to have survived on the Island (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 309).
- In 1558 William Camden reckoned that Isle of Wight wool was the best after Leinster and Cotswold (Jones 1978, 160) but most of the wool crop seems to have been exported in its raw state at this date and there is only limited evidence for a local textile industry based in Newport (ibid, 30).
- The first reference to salt making on the Island's northern coast occurred in Domesday Book. The industry reached its heyday in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and continued until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but was on a smaller-scale than at Lymington on the other side of the Solent (Lloyd 1967).
  - The Mount Edgecumbe Survey of 1771, Murdoch Mackenzie's Admiralty Charts of 1783 and the unpublished Ordnance Survey drawings of 1793 show salterns and salthouses at Norton (near Yarmouth), around the Newtown Estuary, and at Thorness, Cowes and Nettlestone.
- The earliest references to shipbuilding in Cowes are in the 1630s. (Jones 1978, 218; Harding 1998, 4).
  - By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century two ships of war had been built at Nye's yard at East Cowes, the first of which was launched in 1696 (Harding 1998, 5).
  - In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the East Cowes yards seem to have been building only small merchant vessels but naval shipbuilding had restarted before 1746 and the general growth in shipbuilding led to an expansion of facilities along the East Cowes waterfront.
  - The shipyards in West Cowes were smaller than the East Cowes yards in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and did no work for the Admiralty or Customs until the end of the century (Harding 1998, 8).

- However, there are records of tradesmen working in, or connected to, shipbuilding in West Cowes at this time including chandlers, blockmakers, sail-makers, blacksmiths and coopers (Edwards 1999d, 6).

### 3.3.4 Trade and Export from 1500 to 1800

- The location of the Island towns beside the coast or at the head of navigable waterways allowed them to engage in trade with mainland Britain, the continent and the New World during this period.
  - The towns of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Yarmouth and Brading had control of goods and services through their harbours although all goods had to pass through the custom-port of Southampton (Jones 1978, 155-202).
  - In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Newport Corporation claimed harbour rights over the whole of the Medina Estuary including Cowes Harbour. This led to disputes with Cowes and East Cowes and a petition to government by Newport Borough in 1641 (Jones 1978, 178).
- During the period from 1558 to 1642 the main Island exports were wool, corn, and fish (Jones 1978, 221). In the 1560s most of the wool went to cloth manufacturers in Kent.
- In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Island's main foreign trade was with Rouen, later moving west to Brittany and La Rochelle. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century there was also some trade with the Newfoundland fishing grounds (Jones 1978, Chapter 4).
- From the early 17<sup>th</sup> century a significant part of the Island's external trade took the form of victualling passing ships and this trade is reflected in the development of Cowes during this period.
- The Southampton Port Books for the 17<sup>th</sup> century appear to suggest that Yarmouth was more active in terms of shipping than Newport or Cowes (Martin 2001), although this conflicts with other evidence for the levels of economic activity in these towns.
- East Cowes was engaged in trade with the American colonies from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, firstly in tobacco and later in rice (Edwards 1999d, 3; Martin, R 2004c).
  - The American War of Independence broke these trading links in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- English Heritage's webpage on the 18<sup>th</sup> century slave trade states that Cowes was one of many small ports engaged in this trade.  
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.18065>
- Isle of Wight merchant ships were quite frequently engaged in piracy or privateering in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century (Jones 1978, 180-202).
  - Pirate operations were based at Mead Hole, an anchorage with a cluster of victualling and warehouse buildings between East Cowes and Wootton Creek but cargoes of dubious origin also came into Newport town quay.
  - By the end of Elizabeth's reign the age of piracy had passed as far as the Island was concerned although some illicit activity continued.
  - Piracy undoubtedly brought an infusion of wealth into the Island economy and this was reflected in the expansion of Newport and general population growth.

### 3.2.5 The Development of Seaside Resorts

- Much of the Island's urban development during the late Georgian and Victorian periods was related to early tourism, especially in the eastern half of the Island. It is worth noting that the initial development of the Island's seaside resorts preceded the existence of railways on the Island.
- The earliest phase of the Island's tourist industry was stimulated by the fashion for high-class seaside bathing resorts, following the lead of George III who patronised Brighton.

- Cowes and Ryde were both known as bathing resorts in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bathhouses are listed in Cowes trade directories of the period – these being establishments where patrons could bathe, indoors, in seawater that was supposed to have health-giving properties (see Brading 1994, 15, 18, 20).
- A coloured engraving of 1796 by J Hassell depicts bathing carriages on the beach near Cowes Castle (reproduced in McInnes 1993, 16) .
- The affluent classes built seasonal residences at East Cowes, Ryde, Cowes, Seaview and Bembridge from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the settlement of Upper Ryde was a small rural hamlet and Lower Ryde was a fishing hamlet beside the beach. In 1719 the chapel of St Thomas' had been built to serve these two communities.
  - The Player family, who owned the Manor of Ryde, recognised the potential for residential development and William Player laid out a gridiron pattern of streets between Upper and Lower Ryde, including Union Street which was laid out in 1780 (Brinton 2006, 74-78). The first pier was built in 1814.
  - From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Ryde attracted wealthy mainland residents who built elegant 'second homes' in the town, leaving a highly distinctive mark on the architecture of the town e.g. Brigstock Terrace, Pelham Fields.
- Country houses in landscaped grounds were built or remodelled during the Regency Period at Northwood Park on the edge of Cowes, and at East Cowes Castle, Norris Castle and Osborne House on the edge of East Cowes.
  - Substantial and elegant villas were built along the seafront at Cowes, partly as a result of the yachting regattas that began in 1812.
  - The social and sporting event of Cowes Week developed in importance towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the benefit of wealthy and royal patronage.
- Seaview and Bembridge became significant as upper class coastal and sailing resorts from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and Seaview developed some urban characteristics.
  - A local family was responsible for much of Seaview's development by providing housing land and constructing the Sea Wall and Pier. From 1881 steamboat services to the new chain pier helped to increase the popularity of this settlement (Brinton 2006, 91-93).
- Shanklin's development as a seaside resort from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was connected with the Island's reputation for 'Picturesque' landscape amongst wealthy travellers. Several early buildings here were *cottages ornés*. A particular attraction was Shanklin Chine and from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the area north of the 'Old Village' was developed as a seaside resort.
- Ventnor, previously comprising only a few fishermen's cottages and a mill, was promoted as a health-giving location and developed as a holiday resort from c.1830.
  - A small commercial town centre developed on higher ground above the beach. In the early Victorian period this grew concurrently with residential suburbs of substantial properties venturing down through the wooded cliff line to the edge of the beach.
- Sandown is a resort associated with the mass-market tourism of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, made possible by cheap railway travel.
  - Interestingly, hotels and beachside accommodation had, in fact, been built in Sandown by the 1850s, before the coming of the railway.
  - However, the railway connection with Ryde and Brading from 1864 and with Newport from 1875 undoubtedly contributed to the growth of the resort.
- The railway line from Ryde continued to Shanklin and by 1866 had reached the upper part of Ventnor, but Ventnor Undercliff was not reached until 1900 by a branch line connecting with the Newport- Sandown line (Whittington 1972).

- St Helens and Bembridge were not served by a railway line until 1882 when when Brading Haven was drained and a branch line was built from Brading.
- Totland was developed from 1870 and a pier had been constructed by 1880, even though the Newport-Freshwater railway did not arrive until 1889 and was not extended beyond Freshwater village.

### 3.2.6 19<sup>th</sup> Century Development and Industrialisation in Isle of Wight Towns

- In this period the parliamentary representation and administration of the Island gradually caught up with geographical and commercial reality.
  - The *rotten boroughs* of Yarmouth and Newtown were disenfranchised in 1832. Newport retained two MPs until 1867 and then a single member until 1885, after which time a single member was elected for the whole Island.
  - Newtown Borough and Brading Corporation were dissolved in 1883 whilst Yarmouth Borough Corporation came to an end in 1891.
  - By the 19<sup>th</sup> century Newport was the chief administrative centre of the Isle of Wight and became the seat of the new County Council from 1890 as well as remaining a self-governing borough (Isle of Wight County Council 1990).
  - Ryde became a borough in 1868. Cowes, East Cowes, Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor and St Helens are all shown as ‘urban districts’ on the 1898 OS 25 inch maps. (The St Helens Urban District embraced the eastern part of Ryde beyond the Monkton Mead Brook, including St John’s Park, Oakfield and Elmfield.)
  - During the 19<sup>th</sup> century public institutions and facilities such as schools, town halls and railway stations developed in all the main Island towns and the seaside towns had recreational facilities such as theatres and piers.
  - Newport developed a wide range of institutions suitable to its position as the Island’s chief town, ranging from the Guildhall of 1816 and the Isle of Wight Institution of 1810-11 to various literary and philosophical societies as well as the less elitist Mechanics’ Institute in Pyle Street.
- Island towns had remained very small until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both in physical extent and in population.
  - However, the Island’s population nearly quadrupled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from 22,345 in 1801 to 82,777 in 1901, partly through the growth of the seaside resorts but also as a result of industrial and commercial expansion at Cowes, Newport and Ryde. (Page ed.1912, 448-449).
  - Figure 4 shows the impact of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on historic character.
- Despite its role as the Island’s chief town Newport had hardly expanded beyond its medieval street plan by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the town’s limits were defined by the River Medina to the east and Lukely Brook to the north.
  - In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century narrow urban terraces expanded west from the commercial centre of Newport and eastward across the river to house a growing population of artisans and workers, whilst more diverse properties were built at ‘New Village’ between Newport and Carisbrooke.
  - The second half of the century saw the development of a second wave of two-up-two-down properties in the Caesar’s Rd area as well as elegant villas along Carisbrooke Road and a leafy hillside residential quarter around St Johns Rd and Shide Cross.
  - Albany Barracks to the north of the town continued in military use after the Napoleonic Wars but the former barracks hospital became a prison, firstly for boys in 1838 and then from the 1860s for adult offenders (Jones and Jones 1987, 144).
- Newport’s traditional local industries of brewing and clay pipe manufacture remained important in this period and from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century soft drinks were manufactured in the town (Insole and Parker 1979, 11) .

- In 1826 Broadlands lace-making factory opened at Staplers, east of the river, and continued until 1868, employing nearly 800 people (mainly women and children) at the height of its success (Jones and Jones 1987, 116).
- Medina Cement Works developed beside the river on the site of West Medina Mill
- Brading Cement Works opened in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century but was a much smaller concern than the Medina Cement Works (Insole and Parker 1979, 15).
- 19<sup>th</sup> century Ryde was not merely a holiday resort but became a fully functioning town, obtaining borough status in 1868.
  - Suburban expansion at Swanmore, Oakfield and Elmfield in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century consisted of fairly modest houses that contrasted with the elegant early and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century villas closer to the town centre.
- The Isle of Wight is not generally associated with industrial development but Cowes and East Cowes became small industrial towns in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the shipbuilding industry developed in parallel with the growth of Cowes as a smart yachting centre, and of East Cowes as a location favoured by wealthy residents including the Royal family at Osborne from 1845.
  - The townscape close to the Medina Estuary became completely industrialised with the Thetis and Medina shipyards on the west bank of the estuary and the Falcon Yard on the east side, all owned by the White family. Dry docks were built at Thetis Yard and Medina Yard (Williams 1993).
  - Both towns exhibited sharp contrasts between the rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses erected for shipyard workers close to the mouth of the Medina Estuary, the somewhat larger houses uphill from the town centre and the grand houses in landscaped grounds sited above the river and along the seafront.
- Ropemaking was a local industry linked with shipbuilding. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were ropewalks in Cowes, East Cowes and Seaview. Bannister's ropewalk in Cowes stretched about 1000 feet from Mill Hill Road to Pelham Road (Insole and Parker 1979, 19).
- Bricks were used in town houses on the Island from the 17<sup>th</sup> century but the brickmaking industry expanded greatly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Brickworks were established mainly in the north of the Island, close to expanding towns and available water transport, and where the local clays supplied raw material (Gale 1987, 52).
- Railways played a significant role in the urbanisation of the Island generally, although they assisted rather than instigated the development of coastal resorts.
  - The Island's first railway line was not completed until 1862, twenty years after railway mania had first gripped the mainland (Whittington 1972, 5).
  - Significantly, this first line connected Cowes and Newport, the only two Island towns having industries of any size.
  - The railway did not reach the rural West Wight at Freshwater until 1889 and never reached the 'Back of the Wight' (the south-west coast), which has remained rural to the present day.
- The Isle of Wight was and is dependent on sea transport for the import of any goods that cannot be produced locally.
  - For this reason the quays, wharves and warehouses at Newport, Cowes and (to a lesser extent) Yarmouth continued to be significant until ferries capable of transporting heavy goods vehicles were developed in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. (For an account of Newport Quay and the River Medina in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century see Shepard and Greening 2008.)
  - Railway stations at Cowes, Newport, Yarmouth and Brading were situated close to the town quays and at Ryde the railway was extended to the pier head in 1880.

- Coal was a vital import coming into Cowes, Newport and Yarmouth
- Sand was exported from Yarmouth until 1851 (Winter 1981, 73).
- As late as 1840, Brading Quay was still being used to land agricultural produce for shipping to market (Brettell 1840:67) but in 1887 it was decided to drain and reclaim Brading Haven, creating the smaller Bembridge Harbour at the mouth of the Eastern Yar.
- A decline in milling set in after 1850 when garrisons began to be reduced (Insole and Parker 1979, 6-8). By this time milling had started to become an industrialised process that took place on the mainland.

### 3.2.7 Twentieth and Twenty-First century Urban and Suburban Development

- Early 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion took place mainly around the seaside towns rather than around Newport but Camp Hill Prison was built on the northern edge of Newport in 1912 (further reducing the area of Parkhurst Forest) and Albany Prison was built on the site of Albany Barracks in the 1960s.
- Ribbon development formed along the road between Newport and Cowes and along other major roads.
- Later 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban expansion took place around nearly all the Island's towns except Yarmouth, where topography was a constraining factor.
  - This growth led to the merging of settlements e.g. the wooded Seagrove Bay limited the eastwards growth of Seaview until the 1940's when new suburban residential development reached across the bay to meet with Nettlestone.
- The late 20<sup>th</sup> century saw Newport becoming much more dominant as the chief shopping town and business centre with a corresponding decline in the shopping centres of the other Island towns.
  - Newport expanded greatly, with residential estates almost merging with Carisbrooke village and encroaching on the edge of Parkhurst Forest.
  - The transport infrastructure around Newport was developed to cope with increased volumes of motor traffic. A short length of dual-carriageway was built to the north of the town in the 1970s and a southern bypass in the 1980s.
- From the 1970s Newport Industrial Estate developed beside the River Medina; industrial and business park developments took place at Ryde, Cowes and St Cross (north of Newport) and an out-of-town superstore was built between Ryde and Brading.
  - Large warehouse-type retail outlets have been built on the edge of Newport in the last 10 years.
- In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the shipbuilding industry in Cowes and East Cowes remained important and an aircraft industry developed but these heavy industries declined from the 1960s (Williams 1993; Tagg and Wheeler 1989; Wheeler 1993; Insole and Parker 1979, 20-21).
  - Cowes adapted to some extent and reinvented itself with shops catering for yachtsmen whilst retaining some local shops and much of its historic urban character.
  - East Cowes suffered a major loss of urban character, partly as a result of industrial decline and the resulting decline in prosperity, and partly through the disruption of the town's street pattern as the marshalling yards of the Red Funnel ferry company expanded.
  - Despite industrial decline, GKN remains a major employer in East Cowes at the present day, as does BAE in Cowes.
  - In Cowes, former shipyard space along Medina Road has been redeveloped for residential use in the last few years but the future of the former White's Yard is undecided. In East Cowes a comprehensive regeneration scheme for mixed residential, commercial and industrial redevelopment was approved in 2006.

- A new residential development was built beside the river Medina to the south of East Cowes in 2007/2008.
- In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century seaside towns were affected by the decline in family seaside holidays and by loss of local shopping facilities as Newport became the dominant shopping town. Ryde, in particular, suffered from the decline in its once excellent shopping facilities.
  - Ventnor had a reputation as a high-class resort before WWI but its prosperity declined in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly after the rail link was withdrawn in the 1960s.
- In the 1974 local government reorganisation Island towns lost self-governing status, coming under the two districts of Medina Borough and South Wight.
  - In 1995 the County Council and district councils were abolished and replaced by the Isle of Wight Unitary Authority, the first in the country.
  - Town and Parish Councils now have limited powers and budgets.
  - Major decisions are made centrally by the Unitary Authority which has recently appointed town managers for some Island towns. Under central government's 'double devolution' agenda the Isle of Wight Council is now trying to put more power back to town and parish councils.

### **3.3 Relationships between Settlements, with the Wider Landscape and with the Mainland (Figures 2 and 3)**

- Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Island towns had close two-way links with the surrounding countryside.
  - All Island towns are relatively small so working farms existed on their outskirts until recently.
  - The small size of towns at the present day means that rural landscape features can still be seen and accessed from all towns.
- There are close relationships between urban settlements and other HEAP Types, such as Recreation and Tourism, Industry, Communications and Parkland.
- Towns are the hubs of road networks, with Newport in particular at the centre of a web of radiating lines connecting various settlements.
- Cowes and East Cowes are separated by the River Medina but are linked by the 'floating bridge', a chain ferry connecting the twin towns.
  - This chain ferry was established in 1853 and is one of the few still operating in Britain, the present bridge dating from 1975.
  - The floating bridge was an important economic link between towns in the recent past with large numbers of industrial workers commuting both ways across the river to work.
- From the later 18<sup>th</sup> century until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century railways linked all the main Island settlements. All these links had been severed by 1966 except the train service between Shanklin, Sandown, Brading and Ryde, linking with a fast catamaran service to Portsmouth.
  - The continued link between Brading and the mainland via the railway line and catamaran service may be a factor contributing to the sustainability of this settlement.
  - Conversely, the truncation of the railway line between Shanklin and Ventnor in 1966 may have contributed to the decline of Ventnor in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- In the 18<sup>th</sup> century there were daily packet boat sailings from Southampton to Cowes and back, carrying mail, goods and passengers (Brinton 2006, 22-24).
  - Regular ferry services to and from Ryde started in 1796, landing on the beach until the pier was built in 1814.

- Red Funnel Ltd, operating from Cowes and East Cowes at the present day, is the descendant of the original 'Steam Packet Company' that commenced the first regular passenger service by steamboat from Cowes in 1820.
- A paddle steamer service between Yarmouth and Lymington commenced in 1830.
- Today, car ferries operate from East Cowes, Fishbourne and Yarmouth. High speed passenger services operate from Cowes and Ryde.
- Since the development of fast passenger services from Cowes to Southampton and from Ryde to Portsmouth and Southsea Island there has been a great increase in daily commuting to work, both from and to the Island.
- The fast passenger services linking Cowes with Southampton and Ryde with Portsmouth may be key factors influencing people to live in these towns.
- Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century there have been various proposals for bridges across the Solent or tunnels beneath it. However, the Island Plan Core Strategy Submission Document (December 2008) does not include any proposals to pursue a fixed link.
- The Isle of Wight was part of the County of Hampshire until 1890 although it was governed in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries by hereditary lords of the Island and in later medieval and early post-medieval times by captains and governors appointed by the crown.
  - In medieval and post-medieval times the Isle of Wight ports came under the custom-port of Southampton (Jones 1978, 156).
- The Isle of Wight became a County Council in its own right from 1890 and a Unitary Authority from 1995 but certain services, including the police service and the probation service, are shared with Hampshire.
- People from throughout Britain, and from further afield, have developed attachments with the Island and especially with the resort towns where they have stayed.

### 3.4 Physical Characteristics of Isle of Wight Towns

- The **sizes** of all Island settlements are relatively small and some Island towns are smaller than many villages on the mainland.
  - Some settlements have retained historic urban characteristics despite having quite small populations e.g. Brading, Yarmouth.
  - Some settlements have a higher population than places that are perceived to be 'towns', yet have a limited range of urban attributes e.g. Bembridge.
- The **shape** of towns has been affected by topography, existing features and function.
  - Newport, historically, was constrained by the River Medina and Lukely Brook.
  - The growth of East Cowes has been constrained by the surrounding parkland of the Osborne, Norris and Springhill estates and, historically, by that of East Cowes Castle.
  - Ventnor and Shanklin both include development above and below the cliff.
    - The steep climb up and down between Ventnor town and beachside attractions may conceivably have affected the town's prosperity in recent years when so many visitors to the Island have been elderly.
    - Shanklin has solved the problem by means of a lift, first opened in 1891 and rebuilt after WW2.
  - The popularity of the seaside towns has encouraged expansion and development from the water's edge to the top of the cliff face.
- **Town plans** are important attributes of urban character.
  - Yarmouth, Newport, Newtown and Brading all retain medieval town plans with characteristic features:

- street patterns taking the form of a grid at Newport, Yarmouth and Newtown and a simpler *regular row* plan at Brading.
- House plots of regular size and shape echoing the layout of medieval *burgage tenements* (often end on to the road)
- Market places.
- Harbours and quays.
- The various Island towns have a variety of **communal buildings, structures and open spaces** relating to the functions of individual towns.
  - Most towns have buildings relating to past or present local government e.g. County Hall at Newport and Ryde Town Hall (now Ryde Theatre).
  - All towns have historic churches and chapels.
  - Historically all the seaside towns had piers although today 19<sup>th</sup> century piers survive only at Yarmouth, Ryde, Sandown and Totland (the last of these in a very poor state of repair).
  - There are historic 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century town cemeteries at Cowes, East Cowes, Newport and Ryde.
  - Public and private parks and gardens survive in and around most towns. These include Norris Castle and Osborne House at East Cowes, Ventnor Botanic Garden, Morton Manor (Brading), St Cecelia's Abbey, Vernon Square and Woodlands Vale (Ryde), Northwood Park and Princes Green (Cowes), Church Litten (Newport) and Rylstone Gardens (Shanklin).
  - Several towns have transport infrastructure e.g. bus stations and interchanges, railway stations at Brading, Ryde St Johns and Ryde Pier Head.
  - Brading Station is now the only complete railway station complex on the Island in its original form.
- **Building types** relate to the functions of towns.
  - Industrial buildings and structures are mainly confined to Newport, Cowes and East Cowes and are associated mainly with shipbuilding and water transport.
    - Newport's historic industrial and commercial buildings include a former malthouse and warehouses beside the harbour.
    - Historic industrial buildings and structures at Cowes and East Cowes include warehouses, sail lofts, shipyard buildings and the 1911 crane in the former White's shipyard at Cowes, still dominating the townscape at the river mouth.
    - Brick-built 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing for industrial workers forms a characteristic feature of Cowes and East Cowes and exists on a smaller scale at Newport.
  - There are Tudor forts surviving at Yarmouth and (in part) at Cowes.
  - There are 19<sup>th</sup> century military buildings at Sandown (barracks, battery and fort), Ryde (battery) and East Cowes (barracks).
  - Disused water mills of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century date survive in Newport and Yarmouth.
  - Seasonally-occupied homes, hotels, guest houses, service worker accommodation, recreational features and transportation systems dominate the nineteenth century urban fabric of the seaside resort towns. The characteristic built environment of these towns includes built-up seafronts (some with tall hotels and apartment blocks commanding impressive sea views) and specifically tourist and coastal structures such as esplanades, and piers at Yarmouth, Ryde and Sandown.
- The **dates of buildings** in Island towns vary according to the origins of these towns.

- The earliest buildings within the historic cores of medieval planned towns are of 17<sup>th</sup> century date but most buildings date from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Some buildings in Cowes town centre date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but just beyond the town centre nearly all the buildings date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Many buildings in Ryde's town centre and the surrounding area are of early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Regency) date.
- Buildings in the town centres and inner residential areas of Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor are nearly all of 19<sup>th</sup> century (Victorian) date.
- Nearly all towns (and the larger villages) have 20<sup>th</sup> century private housing estates and estates of social housing.
- The **styles and materials of buildings** vary according to their dates and functions, and between towns.
  - Two of the oldest 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Newport, the King James Grammar School and the Castle Inn, are wholly or partly stone-built.
  - 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, particularly in Newport and Cowes, are of variegated red and grey locally produced brick.
  - At Brading the buildings are also mainly of brick.
  - Ryde contains many imposing 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, many of them in stucco.
  - Shanklin 'Old Village' has stone-built thatched *cottages ornés*.
  - At Ventnor buildings are of local greensand stone, brick and flint.

### 3.5 Time-Depth

- The oldest surviving features are the medieval town plans that survive at Newport, Yarmouth, Brading and Newtown, comprising street layouts and house plots.
  - At Cowes the long, narrow main street running parallel to the river reflects the ad hoc development of the town in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Day and Stephens families, with a dogleg at the bottom of Shooters Hill indicating ownership of different areas of land.
  - Regency town planning at Ryde is seen in the layout of Union Street linking the hamlets of Lower and Upper Ryde.
  - Plans of Shanklin, Ventnor and Sandown relate to their different methods of development as 19<sup>th</sup> century resorts.
- The only surviving medieval urban building is St Mary's Parish Church at Brading.
  - Another early town church is that of St James at Yarmouth (1626)
  - Churches and chapels (Anglican, Non-conformist and Catholic) are mainly 19<sup>th</sup> century but include some 18<sup>th</sup> century examples.
    - The 19<sup>th</sup> century churches at Ryde form a particularly striking feature of the townscape.
    - Newport's parish church occupies St Thomas Square at the centre of the town and is on the site of Newport's medieval chapel, which it replaced in 1854-56.
- The earliest secular building in an Island town is the timber-framed house in Brading now occupied by the Wax Museum (built c.1600.)
  - Few 17<sup>th</sup> century buildings survive in Island towns, those that do are in Newport and Cowes.
  - There are many more 18<sup>th</sup> century town buildings in Newport and other good examples in Cowes, Brading and Yarmouth.
- The centres of Ryde and Shanklin 'Old Village' are mainly Regency in character whilst the centres of Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor are mainly Victorian.
- Newport town centre, whilst still taking much of its character from its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, has been more strongly influenced by modern development than other Island towns.

- Dominant later 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century buildings include the 1960s extension to County Hall; supermarkets and large shops in Pyle Street, Church Litten and Foxes Way; St Mary's Hospital; retail warehouses and the new bus station with associated shops.
- Later 20th century industrial buildings dominate East Cowes town centre.
- The suburbs around Newport, Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin are predominantly 20<sup>th</sup> century in character.

## 4. UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSING THE RESOURCE

### 4.1 Existing Research and Documentation

- The Historic Environment Record (HER) is the basic resource for archaeology, the historic landscape and the built environment.
- Individual Isle of Wight towns have been mentioned within the 15 HEAP Area documents.
- The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation Final Report (Basford 2008) maps the chronological and spatial development of all Island towns. Three maps from the HLC Final Report have been adapted for use within this HEAP Study to show the extent and character of settlement on the Isle of Wight and the spatial development of settlements over time (Figures 2, 3 and 4).
- Other appraisals of Island towns include Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Extensive Urban Surveys, both of which include reviews of character and make recommendations for conservation, management and further research. These are all focussed on individual settlements, whereas this HEAP *Urban Settlement Overview* considers urban settlement on the Island as a whole.
  - Character Appraisals relating to areas with urban characteristics have been carried out by the Isle of Wight Council for the Conservation Areas of Newport, Brading, St Helens, Cowes, East Cowes Centre, East Cowes Esplanade, Seaview and Ventnor.
  - The Isle of Wight Council intends to carry out character appraisals for all remaining Conservation Areas as resources permit. (Management Plans are also produced for Conservation Areas, although none are available for Island towns at the time of writing).
  - Extensive Urban Surveys have been carried out for Yarmouth, Newport, Newtown, West Cowes, Brading, St Helens and Carisbrooke as part of an English Heritage programme (Edwards 1999 a-g). These surveys comprise archaeological assessments and archaeological strategy documents but also provide summaries of historical development.
- A full character assessment of Ryde prepared for the Ryde Regeneration Project describes the town's historical development and identifies the built character within different areas of Ryde (Whitehurst and Murray-Smith 2003).
- Some small excavations in advance of development have taken place in the four medieval towns; these have modified existing knowledge but have not changed the overall picture.
- The Island's medieval towns are described in a general study of planned medieval towns in England (Beresford 1967) and also in 'The Vectis Report' (Basford 1980, 40-48).
- The Pevsner Architectural Guide to the Isle of Wight covers all the Island towns, describing their development and significant buildings (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006).
- The development of Island towns within their respective parishes is described in the Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight (Page ed. 1912).
- Individual towns have been subjected to study: Newtown in an article on medieval new towns created by the bishops of Winchester (Beresford 1959); 17<sup>th</sup>

century Newport (Jones 1978); Shanklin (1977); Ventnor (Whitehead 1911; Currie 2002).

#### **4.2 Gaps in Knowledge affecting Understanding and Management**

- Individual elements in the layout of the Island's older towns are still not fully understood despite past research.
- Edwards (1999a-g) sets out archaeological issues relating to gaps in knowledge for all the Island towns covered by the extensive urban surveys.
- In particular, further archaeological investigation is required to understand town plans, to locate town quays and to examine quayside deposits, to understand the extent of medieval and early post-medieval occupation; to locate evidence for early buildings and for French raids; and to relate existing property plots to the original medieval *burgage plots*.
  - Archaeological investigations should be undertaken not only within the medieval towns but also in Cowes and East Cowes where there may be opportunities to investigate the early origins of these towns and to explore the archaeology of shipbuilding.
  - Surveys of standing buildings are also required as many properties are older than their frontages suggest.
- Gaps in knowledge should be addressed by planned archaeological research (possibly by means of university projects) and by archaeological interventions in advance of development.

#### **4.3 Academic Research Potential**

- Isle of Wight towns offer an opportunity to study their historical development and character in the context of their insular setting, to compare them with the towns on other UK islands such as the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, and to contrast their attributes with those of mainland towns.

#### **4.4 Rarity and Typicality**

- The towns considered in this *Urban Settlement Overview* are unusual in being situated on an Island, the Isle of Wight being England's only island of significant size possessing a range of settlement types.
- Island towns are perhaps atypical of most mainland towns in that the facilities and infrastructure associated with modern towns have not yet made a serious impact on the Island's historic landscape character as a whole, although they have done so to some extent in and around Newport and East Cowes.
  - There is only one short stretch of dual carriageway and no bypass on the Island.
  - Between Island towns there is often a complete return to rural historic landscapes and this segregation is particularly important, although there are also places where ribbon development has blurred the distinction between urban and rural landscape character.
- Newport is classified by Defra (2007) as a 'larger market town'.
  - Its medieval origin and moderate recent growth is fairly typical of such towns in southern England.
  - However, the planned medieval street grid has survived intact, which has not been the case in some towns of medieval origin.
  - The quayside with its distinctive buildings and structures is also fairly unusual.
  - The parish church of St Thomas sits in a square with no graveyard, a feature very atypical of English towns and producing a decidedly French feel (Lloyd and Pevsner 2006, 178-179).
- Yarmouth and Brading are unusual in that the pattern of historic settlement has been little altered by recent growth.

- The two towns are very similar in that they were medieval ports and market towns on the extreme east and west coast of the island, failed to develop in post-medieval times, and today rely on their historic character to attract tourists in a fairly low-key way.
- The excellent preservation of Newtown's town plan (with streets, burgage plots and open-field strips surviving) is rare.
- Cowes and East Cowes are most unusual within the context of mainland southern England:
  - The early post-medieval period, when they developed as trading ports, was not a time when many settlements developed.
  - The existence of genuine industrial character within towns of such a small size is quite uncommon.
  - The combination of industry, high-class landed properties and the equally high-class social event of Cowes Week as it developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is remarkable.
- Cowes and Ryde are the only north facing resorts on the south coast of England.
- Ryde appears to be fairly unusual within the context of mainland southern England in being a town deliberately developed from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate upper-class seasonal residences.
  - On a smaller scale, local families were also responsible for promoting the development of Seaview and Bembridge in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Brinton 2006, 13-15, 91-93).
- The seaside towns of Ventnor, Sandown and Shanklin are smaller than most mainland seaside resorts of 19<sup>th</sup> century date.
- Ventnor and Shanklin have special distinguishing features:
  - Ventnor developed rapidly in an ad hoc way from 1830 within its restricted and unusual Undercliff setting.
  - Shanklin originally developed around Shanklin 'Old Village' and Shanklin Chine in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to cater for visitors in search of the 'Picturesque'.
- In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ryde, Ventnor, Sandown and Shanklin all developed along lines typical of seaside resorts for mass tourism.
  - Their built environments very much reflect the heyday of the British seaside holiday and the decline of this social phenomenon is reflected to some extent in the present-day environments of these resorts, although there are promising signs that seaside resorts are now regaining upward momentum.

## 5. IDENTIFYING HERITAGE VALUES

### 5.1 *Evidential Value* (Archaeological Significance)

- *Evidential value* is defined by English Heritage (2008) as 'the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity'.
- Archaeological deposits lying beneath existing buildings and streets within the Island's historic towns offer potentially important evidence for social and economic activities from the Middle Ages to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Archaeological deposits may also be particularly important in understanding the origins of Cowes and East Cowes and its early industrial development.
- Standing buildings provide an equally important source of evidence although no secular standing buildings are earlier than the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- The medieval town plans of Newport, Newtown, Yarmouth and Brading including street patterns and house plots provide primary evidence for the layout and functioning of these towns.
  - The preserved medieval town plan at Newtown is a nationally important scheduled monument.

- Medieval town plans at Newport, Yarmouth and Brading and the water-edge street plan of Cowes (17<sup>th</sup> century and later) are identified in the HER and thus may be considered to be of regional importance.
- The street plan of central Ryde, particularly Union Street (laid out to link the medieval settlement of Upper Ryde with the coastal hamlet of Lower Ryde) provides evidence for the planning of this town from the 1780's.
  - Residential areas surrounding Ryde town centre contain houses of Regency and early Victorian date which provide good evidence for the development of this high-class watering place.
- Isle of Wight seaside towns are a significant resource for studies into the origins and development of holiday resorts.
- 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century developments in and around towns that provide primary evidence of historical processes include the prison complexes near Newport and features relating to shipbuilding and aircraft construction in Cowes and East Cowes.

## 5.2 Historical Values and Perceptions

- *Historical value* is defined by English Heritage (2008) as deriving 'from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative and associational'.
- The illustrative value of a place is closely linked to people's perceptions of that place and their understanding of its history. Different people will always perceive places differently, partly as a function of variable knowledge and understanding of those places' history.
- All towns have buildings of historical value but it is the particular mixture of natural setting, distinctive buildings, town form and local associations, forming the overall character of individual historic towns, which is valued by local people.
- Some aspects of historic character within certain towns may have been overlooked in recent times.
  - For example: the industrial element of Cowes' history is less celebrated than its evolution as a yachting town; the medieval town plan and 18<sup>th</sup> century town houses of Newport may be under-appreciated.
  - However, the medieval origins and subsequent histories of Brading, Yarmouth and Newtown, seem well understood and are celebrated.
- The origins of the resort towns are clearly understood but the character of these towns has perhaps not been as highly valued in the recent past as it might have been.
  - The Victorian seaside resorts in particular are often wrongly perceived as valueless, faded and as not having the potential to meet modern demands.
  - There remains a real need to celebrate the heyday of Island resorts, to recognise the quality (in the public realm, the facilities provided and the buildings themselves), and to stress the innovation exhibited by seaside resorts in the past (from suspension piers to the introduction of public bathing).
  - Resort towns have to maintain their attractiveness to an ever-changing market and so continue to reinvent and market themselves; if they fail to keep up they quickly become tired and seem dated. Several of the Island's resort towns may be perceived as struggling in this way.
- Some smaller towns have become less viable as shopping centres in recent years as modern communications have led to centralisation of commerce at Newport, causing these towns to lose vitality and to be perceived as 'run down'.

### 5.3 Communal Values and Perceptions

- *Communal Value* relates to collective experience or memories and to symbolic meanings (English Heritage 2008, 31-32).
- Towns are central to most peoples' lives as homes, workplaces, shopping or service centres, and as places of entertainment.
  - Change within towns generates strong feelings.
  - The rate, scale and form of change in towns and the perceived need for further change contribute to peoples' feelings about a place.
  - Deep local attachments to towns make some change difficult to accept. Various consultative processes allow people to comment on and help guide the location, form and scale of planned change in many cases.
- Each Island town has its own peculiar character.
  - To a degree, this has been created by each town's particular landscape setting, historical development and local culture but the present-day character of individual towns is also informed by their modern economic and social functions.

### 5.4 Aesthetic Value

- *Aesthetic value* derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place (English Heritage 2008). It is closely linked to the design of places and buildings.
- Areas of towns and villages notable for their architectural or historic interest are designated as *Conservation Areas*.
- Most of the Island's towns have Conservation Areas but not all of these have character appraisals allowing a full understanding of the area (see Table 4).

### 5.5 Contribution of Historic Urban Settlement to Present Landscape Character

- This category of heritage value is not defined in English Heritage's 'Conservation, Principles, Policies and Guidance' (2008) but is suggested in 'Using Historic Landscape Characterisation (Clark et al 2004, 54). It is closely linked with *aesthetic value*.
- Towns contribute very significantly to the historic character of the Isle of Wight by means both of their individual qualities and their variety.
- Island towns are very visible in the landscape from high points such as the downs, from certain coastal locations and from the sea.
  - Ventnor shows to particular advantage from viewpoints immediately above the Undercliff and from the sea.
  - Ryde, which climbs steeply from the shore, is particularly visually important when viewed from the sea or from Ryde pier.
  - The variety of historic landscape character at East Cowes and Cowes is apparent when viewed from the car ferry as it moves past the industrial landscape of the Medina, the 'old town' area of Cowes and the 19<sup>th</sup> century villas on the sea front.
  - In contrast, Yarmouth town offers an illusion of timelessness when viewed from the ferry although the busy modern harbour to the west of the town belies this impression.
  - Newport's centrality, both geographically and socially, is apparent when viewed from the downland cemetery of Mountjoy.
- Modern suburban development is quite dominant in some parts of the Island and generally does not fit comfortably within the rural historic landscape.
  - The visual integrity of the landscape has also suffered from ribbon development, built prior to planning regulations.

## **5.6 Amenity and Educational Values**

- Towns contain essential community facilities such as schools, libraries, surgeries and local government offices.
- Island towns are varied and locally distinctive, providing visually attractive and historic urban environments for residents and visitors despite elements that detract from historic character and visual amenity.
- The historic character of the seaside resort towns is an important part of their amenity and attractiveness to visitors.
- Historic quays and harbours at Yarmouth, Newtown, Newport and Cowes provide a focus for sailing, cultural and leisure activities.
- Public parks and gardens of historic origin are important local amenities within towns.
- A number of historic properties and monuments are sited in or close to towns and are major tourist attractions.
  - These include Osborne House and Park, Carisbrooke Castle, Yarmouth Castle, Brading Roman Villa and Newport Roman Villa.
- Island towns represent a significant educational resource for field study in terms of their origins, street plans, evolution and buildings.
  - Some towns have information boards at strategic sites (e.g. Brading, Cowes Parade) or offer heritage trails (e.g. Brading, Cowes/ East Cowes and Newport Mill Trail).
  - There is potential for more use of the historic urban environment as an educational resource, both by greater use of existing interpretive material and by examining aspects of historic character outlined in this document.
- Educational facilities situated in Island towns include the Guildhall Museum in Newport, Dinosaur Isle in Sandown and the Coastal Visitors Centre in Ventnor.
- Local historical societies or heritage groups exist for most of the Island towns and there are several local heritage centres with permanent displays e.g. East Cowes, Ventnor, Brading.

## **6. CURRENT CONDITION OF THE RESOURCE**

### **6.1 Coherence and Fragmentation**

- All the Island's town centres except East Cowes retain a basic coherence in the sense that the historic elements (such as street patterns and buildings) and the different zones of activity (commercial, industrial, residential, etc) continue to work well together.
- Rapid 20<sup>th</sup> century change in and around Newport has created some past development which has, in terms of location, scale, character and design, begun to affect the town's essential historic character.
  - Newport's modern status as the Island's chief shopping town and business centre has led to traffic congestion on the roads leading into the town and has changed its former 'market town' character to some extent.
- Some towns contain or are surrounded by development that detracts from overall historic character.
  - Where industrial uses are relocated to modern buildings on the urban fringe of towns, some of the vibrancy of mixed uses in the town centre and the positive contribution industrial buildings and activity makes to urban character is lost.
- the design and location of some new developments has affected the visual coherence of historic and landscape character to some extent in several towns.
  - In particular there has been loss of Victorian seafront and cliff-top character (e.g. at Cowes and Shanklin) due to demolition of Victorian seaside houses and construction of residential apartment blocks.

- At East Cowes past industrial and transport developments have utilised strategic access to the sea and the river Medina and as a consequence the coherence of the town has been disrupted.
  - In particular, the location of the main Southampton freight and ferry terminal at East Cowes has affected the legibility of the historic town and the intermittently congested arterial route through the town has severed historic street patterns.
  - However, a new regeneration project recognises this issue and aims to bring improvements to the townscape and public realm.
  - Yarmouth has suffered less from unsympathetic developments than other towns, arguably because the town is predominantly an affluent residential and yachting centre rather than an active commercial centre.
- Ventnor, parts of Shanklin and Sandown have all been vulnerable to the vagaries of the tourism industry over the last decades.
  - This has led to poor maintenance of buildings and the public realm as a whole.
  - Inherent character has not always been respected in new developments, and this has sometimes resulted not only in loss of historic fabric but also in loss of coherence.
  - However, in Ventnor economic difficulties have prevented new development until recently so that more historic fabric has been retained, although the appearance of the town has been affected in part by lack of maintenance.
- Some views of great historic environment value could have been lost or compromised if future developments are badly sited, are of too large a mass or scale or use inappropriate materials.
  - Views affected by recent developments include that of the inner cliff above Ventnor (into which the roofs of modern houses now intrude), Parkhurst Forest as seen from Carisbrooke Castle (affected by modern warehouses at Gunville), Shide Chalk Pit as seen from the north of Newport (now obscured by development within the town), and the panorama of Newport seen from the downland cemetery of Mountjoy.

## **6.2 Survival and Loss of Buildings and Structures**

- The built fabric of towns changes constantly through time.
  - For example, important structures associated with the early shipbuilding industry in Cowes and East Cowes were lost as this industry developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, notably the Thetis and Medina dry docks.
  - It is important to record remaining structures associated with the shipbuilding industry and to preserve these wherever possible e.g. the slipway formerly associated with Marvin's boatyard in Arctic Road Cowes (Insole and Parker 1979, 18-19).
- Significant numbers of historic buildings and structures, both listed and unlisted, have been lost in most Island towns during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and even since 2000 for a variety of reasons such as:
  - planned development - in the past the contribution of individual buildings to overall historic character was not always appreciated and Victorian buildings, in particular, were less valued.
  - accidents such as fires or natural causes such as storms - sometimes affecting structures in poor condition e.g. piers at Shanklin and Ventnor
- Historic paving materials and historic signage contribute to historic urban character but these have not often survived.
  - Remaining features should be recorded and preserved.

### **6.3 Condition and Maintenance**

- In general, the standards of maintenance in individual towns relate to the economics of the area. Consequently, shops are boarded up and empty in Freshwater, East Cowes and Ventnor, but there are seemingly higher levels of maintenance in central Yarmouth and Brading.
- Lack of maintenance in general, not just of obviously historic structures but also of more modern features, can affect the overall appearance of historic towns.
  - Industrial buildings, in particular, are frequently in poor condition. Neglected areas and structures are more vulnerable to continued decay or to change that may not be appropriate.
- A few historic buildings and structures within Island towns of Grade II\* and above are not well maintained.
  - Northwood House (Cowes), the Hammerhead Crane (Cowes) and Puckpool Battery (Ryde) are on the English Heritage Register of Buildings at Risk.
- There are issues on the Isle of Wight, as on the mainland, with public realm infrastructure, including clutters of signs, poorly designed or standardised furniture (bins, bollards, etc), maintenance and form of kerbs, pavements etc.
- Ryde has recently been the subject of a Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme that aims to improve the appearance of key buildings in an effort to catalyse enhancements and regeneration in the main streets.

## **7. SUSTAINABILITY OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER WITHIN TOWNS**

### **7.1 Assessing Sustainability**

- Sustainability of historic landscape character within towns, as in all the other HEAP Types, depends on a number of variables:
  - The current condition of the resource (examined in Section 6)
  - The inherent robustness or fragility of the type.
  - Successful adaptation to change
  - Social and Economic Sustainability
  - Conservation and management of the resource
  - The likely extent and nature of change in the near future.
  - Appropriate management of future change (examined in Section 8).

### **7.2 Robustness**

- Historic towns of all periods are fairly robust and have the capacity to accept some change and to embrace development providing that this respects historic and urban character.

### **7.3 Change and Adaptation**

- Historic landscape character within many English towns has survived to the present day despite centuries of change.
  - However, insensitive large-scale urban redevelopment and the construction of new roads in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century (particularly in the 1960s and 1970s) severely affected historic landscape character and archaeological deposits in some towns (see Heighway 1972).
  - During the 20<sup>th</sup> century the scale and pace of urban change was slower on the Island than in the rest of South-east England and, in general, this allowed successful adaptation and conservation of historic character.
- Towns, like all other historic landscape types, are dynamic and are constantly changing over time, adapting to new roles and acquiring new functions as earlier functions become obsolete.

- Changing roles and functions can be 'read' in the layout and the buildings of towns and this mixture of continuity, adaptation and change constitutes *time-depth*.
- Successive changes add new 'layers' to the urban historic environment rather like the successive layers within archaeological deposits.
- These new layers include modern suburbs where many people live but on the Island these suburbs are on a relatively small-scale, proportionate to the size of the local towns.
- Modern urban buildings and infrastructure can make a positive contribution to design quality within historic settings. For example, the Ventnor town pumping station is a particularly good and characterful example of modern infrastructure in comparison with urban waste-water treatment plants elsewhere.
- One local example of a town's changing role over time is that of East Cowes. This was originally a trading port, then a shipbuilding centre and later a key location for royalty and other notable visitors. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century the town became an important transport hub on the main route to Southampton even as much of its heavy industry vanished. There are now plans for the re-invention of East Cowes as a regenerated urban centre with quality residences and modern facilities.
  - However, in undergoing the changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, East Cowes has suffered a major erosion of urban and suburban character with the fragmentation of its street pattern and the loss of many buildings in the town centre.
  - It could be argued that Cowes, on the other side of the Medina Estuary, has adapted more successfully to change, reinventing itself with shops catering for yachtsmen whilst retaining some local shops and much of its historic urban character.
- Successful towns are inevitably the focus of development pressure, reflecting not only their continued economic growth as urban centres but also their key role in providing essential infrastructure.
  - Ironically, it was Newtown's failure as a medieval town that allowed the remarkable preservation of its medieval town plan in what is now regarded as an 'unspoilt' rural setting under the protection of the National Trust.
- Newport, as the economic, commercial and administrative centre, has experienced greater changes to the urban landscape than other Island towns, particularly during the last ten years, during which the pace of change has increased markedly.
  - Large new retail warehouses now dominate the dual carriageway on the northern edge of the town.
- In many ways, however, Newport has managed to maintain its historic character.
  - There are modern buildings that fit well within the town's historic streetscape, such as the court buildings in Quay Street.
  - The raised section of the dual carriageway where it crosses the quay is strangely appropriate, replacing the earlier railway bridge in the same position.
  - Newport's market town role has been reinvented in recent years with the relocation of the weekly market to one of the town's two historic market places in St Thomas' Square. This commercial market is now mainly a tourist attraction selling mass-produced goods from the mainland to visitors arriving by coach from the seaside resorts, but a weekly Farmers' Market is also now held in St Thomas' Square.

#### 7.4 Social and Economic Sustainability

- In the recent past some Island towns have struggled to remain economically and socially viable.
  - The Island has been and still is less affluent than the rest of South-east England. Whilst this has resulted in less pressure for development than elsewhere, it has also meant that there has been less money for maintaining and enhancing townscapes and individual buildings.
  - Coastal towns have suffered from the decline in ‘bucket and spade’ holidays over the last 25 years and this has been reflected in the poor maintenance of some buildings.
  - The Island population includes a high proportion of the elderly and this affects the economic viability of towns.
  - Newport has developed at the expense of other Island towns from the 1980s because of increased mobility and local planning policy. As a result, other urban shopping centres have declined. Shops, banking facilities and community facilities have been lost.
- Between 1999 and 2004 economic growth on the Isle of Wight was higher than in the rest of the UK (Isle of Wight Council 2006, 2.7) although it slowed from 2005. Greater prosperity on the Island over the last ten years has brought increased development pressures to Newport but has helped other towns such as Ventnor and Ryde to arrest long-term decline.

#### 7.5 Current Protection, Conservation and Management

- Conservation Areas have been designated for Brading, Carisbrooke, Cowes, East Cowes Esplanade and East Cowes Centre, Newport, Newtown, Ryde, St Helens, St Johns (Ryde), Seaview, Shanklin, Ventnor and Yarmouth.
  - Norton Green Pound Green and The Briary, three of the constituent hamlets on the edge of Freshwater, are also Conservation Areas.
  - No Conservation Area exists for Sandown at the present time.
- Maps and Character Appraisals have been published for many Conservation Areas.
  - The Character Appraisal for Newport is particularly detailed, identifying five distinct character zones.
- However, the Conservation Areas of The Briary, Carisbrooke, Newtown, Norton Green, Pound Green, Ryde, St Johns (Ryde), Shanklin and Yarmouth do not yet have published character appraisals and maps.
  - Ryde and Shanklin are the towns most likely to be subject to change, as outlined in the Island Plan Core Strategy, but Ryde has a character assessment covering the whole town (not just the Conservation Area) and this has informed the Ryde Public Realm Strategy (Whitehurst and Murray-Smith 2003; IW Council 2005).
- Details of listed buildings within individual Island parishes and towns can be found on the Isle of Wight Council website at <http://www.iwight.com/council/departments/planning/appsdiplistedbuildings.aspx>
- Scheduled Monuments in or close to Island towns or past towns are Brading Roman Villa, Newport Roman Villa, Newtown Medieval Settlement, Yarmouth Castle, Sandown Barracks Battery and Puckpool Mortar Battery (Ryde).
- Four of the Island sites listed in English Heritage’s Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest lie on the edge of towns – Nunwell (Brading), Norris and Osborne (East Cowes), and Ventnor Botanic Garden.
- *Parks and Gardens of Local Interest* listed in the UDP within or on the edge of Island towns are Morton Manor (Brading), Northwood Park and Princes Green (Cowes), Barton Manor and Springhill (East Cowes), Church Litten (Newport), St

Cecelia's Abbey, Vernon Square and Woodlands Vale (Ryde), Shanklin Chine and Rylstone Gardens (Shanklin), Ventnor Park and Ventnor Cascade Gardens.

- A *Local List* is being prepared by the Isle of Wight Council: members of the public can nominate buildings, structures or parks for possible inclusion.

### **Community Involvement in Conservation and Management**

- There is a strong local interest in the Island's urban historic environment, evidenced by the existence of various local heritage societies and heritage centres, and of conservation bodies such as the Isle of Wight Society.
- Parish and town councils comment on local planning applications and can prepare parish plans, having completed a Village Design Statement.
  - The recent creation of councils for Newport and Ryde will enable the Island's two largest towns to become involved in these processes.
- Village Design Statements are being produced by numerous Parish Councils and will be adopted by the Isle of Wight Council where appropriate. These statements include references to local landscape character, the built environment and local distinctiveness. By December 2008 statements had been adopted for St Helens, Wootton Bridge, Bembridge and Ningwood.
- Some parish and town councils generate local conservation and interpretation projects.
  - The success of permanent heritage trails around Brading, Yarmouth and Newport and of guided walks as part of the annual walking festival provide evidence that the local community and visitors alike are actively engaged with their historic built environment.
- A community-based recording project was carried out recently by the Council's Conservation Officer with the assistance of the AONB unit. The survey encountered a good number of local participants keen to engage with and survey the built environment of Shorwell. It is hoped to widen this project out to other settlements within the AONB in the near future.
- The Conservation Officer established a Historic Buildings Trade Event in 2008 at which over 200 people attended. It is hoped to run this event every three years.

## **8. MANAGING FUTURE CHANGE**

### **8.1 The Development Strategy set out in the Island Plan**

- The South East Plan (SEERA 2006) sets out the strategy for regional development until 2026 and includes a special section on the Isle of Wight.
- The Island Plan Submission Core Strategy (December 2008) provides a spatial vision and strategic policies to guide the local development of the Island over the next 15-20 years.
- Provision is made in the Island Plan for 10,400 dwellings over the period 2006-2026 in order to meet the requirements of the South East Plan
  - However, the plan supports a sequential approach to the allocation of housing land, with priority given to locating new housing on previously developed land and to re-using and converting suitable buildings to help meet targets set out in the SE Plan.
  - The Island Plan forecasts that the Island's population will continue to grow between 2006 and 2026, principally through in-migration, with the number of people over retirement age increasing to 36% of the population. It acknowledges that this will have significant impacts for economic growth, housing provision and service delivery.
- The policies for housing and economic development set out in the two plans are likely to have a significant impact on the natural and historic environment.

- However, two key objectives of the Core Strategy are ‘to support sustainable and thriving communities that enable people to enjoy quality of life without compromising the quality of the environment’ and ‘to protect, conserve and enhance the Island’s built, historic and natural environments’.
- The Core Strategy makes reference to the Historic Environment Action Plan and the Biodiversity Action Plan throughout the document.
- As explained in Section 2.5, the Core Strategy sets out a settlement hierarchy and identifies key regeneration areas capable of accommodating most of the island’s planned growth during the lifetime of the plan.
- The Medina Valley Key Regeneration Area includes the settlements of Newport, Cowes and East Cowes and the land between these settlements.
  - The construction of a new housing estate beside the Medina estuary to the south of East Cowes has already taken place but work on planned residential and commercial developments within the town has not yet started (December 2008).
  - A major new housing estate at Pan, on the edge of Newport, will deliver 800-1,200 new homes from 2009. This development will be one of the largest schemes to be built on the Isle of Wight.
  - Development for employment is planned at Kingston and Osborne Works in East Cowes, Pan in Newport, Three Gates Road in Cowes, and to the north and south of Newport.
  - Proposals will be developed to regenerate the Newport Harbour Area.
  - It is planned to ‘safeguard and maintain the functions and facilities of the existing strategic wharf sites of West Medina Mills, Newport, Medina Wharf, Cowes and Kingston Wharf, East Cowes’ (Policy SS3, 36).
- The Ryde Key Regeneration Area identified in the Island Plan Core Strategy includes the town of Ryde, Binstead, Ashley and Smallbrook.
  - Proposals for this regeneration area include the development of new employment sites in the south of Ryde, mixed use redevelopment of the former holiday centre at Harcourt Sands and new housing within existing planned allocations at Ashley (95 units) and Oakfield (149 units).
  - The Core Strategy also proposes improvement of the esplanade from the pier to Appley Park and enhancement of the public parks at Appley and Puckpool. It will also support the development of projects for the Ryde Townscape Heritage Initiative that encourage the maintenance and reuse of historic buildings within the town. These proposals build on the proposals for the improvement of Ryde seafront set out in the Ryde Public Realm Strategy.
  - A multi-million pound ‘Ryde Interchange’ has been approved and work is scheduled to start during 2009. The interchange will draw together the hovercraft, train and bus terminals and taxi rank to create a modern transport Interchange. This will be the largest project of its type ever undertaken on the Island and the design has been the subject of considerable debate.
- The Bay Regeneration Area identified in the Island Plan Core Strategy includes the coastal resorts of Sandown, Lake and Shanklin.
  - Within this area it is proposed to develop housing, re-using unviable tourism sites where appropriate, and also to develop existing strategic allocations of employment land at College Close and Lake.
  - There are unspecified plans for Sandown Esplanade, including Culver Parade, which include biodiversity enhancements within the floodplain area.
  - New tourist accommodation and facilities within the town are also proposed.
  - Development and public realm improvements are proposed for Shanklin Esplanade, centred on the Spa Site.
  - A mix of land uses is proposed for the Sandown Airport area, including leisure flying, tourism, leisure and recreation uses.

- The Core Strategy sets out a settlement hierarchy that identifies Ventnor and Freshwater as Smaller Regeneration Areas. Twelve other settlements including Yarmouth, Brading, St Helens, Wootton, Bembridge and Wroxall are identified as 'Rural Service Centres' (see 2.5 and Table 4).
  - The Strategy states that there will be some potential within the Smaller Regeneration Areas for regeneration, local employment opportunities, improved community facilities and provision of housing to meet local needs.
  - Policy SS9 on Smaller Regeneration Areas and Rural Economy has a number of aims including developing 'the tourism and leisure sector to capitalise on the environmental and heritage assets of the Island', improving 'the management of land for nature conservation, biodiversity and heritage assets' and 'appropriate farm diversification'.
- The Core Strategy (3.15) indicates that development outside the Key Regeneration Areas and Smaller Regeneration Areas will be related to the functions and needs of particular settlements, as set out in PPS 7.
- Transport proposals in the Core Strategy that are likely to impact on the historic urban environment include the proposed new link road between Carisbrooke Road and Foxes Road in Newport (Policy SS3) and the development of the transport interchange at Ryde Pier (SS4).
- The current down-turn in the economy may, in the short term, affect the development proposals set out in the Island Plan.

## 8.2 Other Forces for Change

- Sea level rise and climate change will have a particular impact on seaside towns.
  - Some buildings and structures may be at risk.
  - However, as a result of climate change English seaside towns may once again become important for beach holidays. This may itself lead on to further regeneration change.
- Demand for larger car ferries may mean that more cars are deposited into small towns in a very short period of time, creating more congestion.
- Changing shopping patterns and other patterns of use will continue to have an impact on the historic, social and economic character of Island towns.
  - For example, small shops on Newport High Street and along other streets within the medieval town plan form an important aspect of Newport's historic character but the trend is now towards larger retail warehouses on the edge of town.
    - Some streets within the medieval grid seem to lack a modern focus, having occasional shops randomly placed among residential dwellings (not all of which are well-maintained) although new houses have also been built.
  - Specialised structures, such as warehouses, industrial and public buildings, schools, halls and cinemas may become redundant and there will be a need to find appropriate new uses that maintain historic character.
  - Continued piecemeal changes to residential property, notably windows, doors, roofing materials, front gardens lead to significant changes in historic character over time. Such changes cannot always be regulated under planning legislation so there is a need for public education.
- Under the planned reorganisation of the Island school system the closure of the local primary schools at Yarmouth and St Helens is still under consideration (December 2008).
  - It is likely that any redundant school buildings will be retained for other uses but the loss of a key community service in the small centres of Yarmouth and St Helens could affect the social balance within these settlements.

### 8.3 Conservation and Management Issues

- The overriding issue is how to manage change to ensure that towns are socially and economically sustainable and can accommodate planned development whilst conserving historic character.
  - The first requirement for the successful management of change is an adequate understanding of the resource.
  - The second requirement is a holistic approach to planning which takes into account not only the design quality of individual buildings and of infrastructure but also the impact of these developments on the surrounding area.
- Another major issue is the need to identify particularly significant or sensitive areas of historic landscape character and to ensure that planned development does not compromise that character. The various HEAP documents (including the present document) identify these areas and should be used in planning new development.
  - Certain areas in and around Island towns may be affected by development proposals outlined in the Island Plan Core Strategy. These include the following locations:
    - Historic field patterns on the southern edge of Parkhurst Forest (including land behind Worsley Road) which comprise medieval and post-medieval enclosures from the forest.
    - Newport's historic town plan - this will be affected by proposals for a new link road between Carisbrooke Road and Foxes Road.
    - Newport Harbour - where regeneration is planned. However, the Core Strategy (4.5) emphasises that 'any change will need to be fully integrated with the remaining historic character of the harbour area'.
- Other major conservation and management issues are as follows:
  - Lack of resources for character appraisals and proactive management
  - Poor maintenance or neglect of some structures and areas.
  - Lack of funding sources for the maintenance of the historic built environment. (Sudden repair costs can be prohibitively high when the building is particularly historic and/or finely detailed in its architecture.)
  - Loss of historic character in the seaside towns as a result of unsympathetic new development, loss of historic fabric and poor condition of some buildings and public realm infrastructure.
  - Modern maintenance and health and safety requirements are affecting the survival of historic elements of our public realm.
  - Loss of urban wharfage and seafront industrial space to housing developments and lack of maintenance (an issue addressed in the Core Strategy – Policy SS3).
  - Variable quality of design within urban new development sometimes affects historic character adversely.
  - Inadequate understanding of how the changing pattern of tourism is affecting historic character, particularly in seaside towns.
  - Inadequate understanding of how loss of traditional functions – e.g. conversion of commercial properties to residential - is affecting historic urban character.
  - Lack of data on historic public realm features – these need to be recorded and preserved.

### 8.4 Conservation and Management Recommendations

The following recommendations are directed primarily at the Isle of Wight Council as the local planning authority. The HEAP Steering Committee has already adopted a programme of *SMART* actions to be carried out by 2013 (see below).

#### 8.4.1 Strategic Planning for Sustainable Development

- Recognise that the historic environments of towns are amongst their greatest economic assets, both for the benefit of visitors on whom the Island economy

depends, and for the well-being of residents whose quality of life is affected by the condition of their immediate environment.

- Ensure that this recognition feeds through to all documents forming part of the *Island Plan*.
- Promote viability of all the Island's towns as local shopping centres and centres of community life.
  - Maintain a diversity of functions and activities appropriate to inherited and carefully designed new spaces and structures.
- Ensure that future development is in line with relevant Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements (particularly PPG 15, PPG 16, PPS 1 and PPS 6)
- Ensure that development conserves and enhances the distinctive and varied historic character of the Island's towns by taking full account of Character Appraisals, HLC, HEAP documents (including individual Town HEAP documents, when completed), extensive urban surveys of historic towns and other relevant historical or archaeological surveys.
- Ensure that development land allocated in the *Island Plan* is not situated within those parts of the historic environment most sensitive to change.
  - This should include assessment of the impact of urban development on the various rural Historic Landscape Character Types around Island towns (as identified in the Isle of Wight HLC) to establish their varied sensitivity to this form of change, and then plotting the proposed development land in relation to these types.

#### 8.4.2 Local Authority Involvement in Managing Change

- Conservation Areas and character appraisals play a vital role in the successful management of change to conserve historic character. English Heritage now recommends that character appraisals should form the basis of developing management strategies for conservation areas (EH 2006, Section 5). It is therefore recommended that the Isle of Wight Council should make sufficient resources available to:
  - ensure completion of character appraisals for all Conservation Areas as soon as possible in line with adopted practice.
  - consider the designation of a Conservation Area at Sandown and the prioritisation of character appraisals for Sandown and Shanklin in view of regeneration proposals outlined in *Island Plan*.
  - Prepare character appraisals for all areas where major development is proposed.
  - Consider designation of Conservation Areas at Bembridge and Totland.
  - Prepare Conservation Area management strategies for Conservation Areas within urban settlements, using Table 4 as a guide to prioritisation.
- Make planning decisions within a consistent framework that recognises the particular historic character of Island towns.
- Respect the coherence and integrity of Island towns by maintaining the urban hierarchies they contain.
  - Each town has several different character areas defined by principal function, period, activity/tranquillity levels, etc.
  - Change should be designed to reinforce rather than undermine this hierarchy.
- Consider the importance of each town's setting, especially views into, within, across and out of towns, when designing change.
- Be aware that the small scale of Island towns is of importance to their own character and to that of the Island as a whole.
  - This applies to spaces (squares, street lengths and widths etc), structures (few buildings more than two-stories high), and the towns themselves.

- Ensure that elements of medieval town plans are preserved e.g. street lines and property plots.
- Strive to provide for commercial activity on the Island and achieve warehouse and industrial developments in appropriate locations without impacting on local distinctiveness and historic character of towns.
- Ensure that wherever possible existing wharfage and seafront industrial space is retained for these uses and is adequately maintained.
- Ensure that new development on the urban edge respects the wider landscape character and setting of the town.
- Ensure the conservation and sustainable use of historic properties that contribute to the individual character, local distinctiveness and sense of place within Island towns e.g. Northwood House and its surrounding public parkland.
- Explore possible additional funding sources for the maintenance and repair of the built urban environment both in the public realm and for privately owned properties.
- Assess and monitor impact of changing tourism patterns.
- Monitor loss of traditional functions – e.g. conversion of commercial properties to residential and assess impact on the urban historic environment.
- Implement Health and Safety Regulations sensitively to ensure that there is no unnecessary loss of historic features.
- Record and seek to preserve historic features in the public realm e.g. street furniture.

#### 8.4.3 Urban Design

- Maintain a commitment to quality in design and workmanship in new build and in the repairing of past mistakes.
- Ensure that new development enhances rather than detracts from the historic character and fabric of Island towns in accordance with PPG 15, PPS 1 and PPS 6.
- Ensure that new development is of a design that is sensitive to its location by using the existing historic environment to guide the scale, location and form of development, without insisting that it is a replica (pastiche) of earlier forms.
- Maintain a commitment to quality and appropriate design in the detail of building form, fenestration, boundary features, surfacings etc.

#### 8.4.4 Enhancement of Urban Environment

- Establish and maintain high standards in the public realm of Island towns
- Explore opportunities for further historical interpretation at strategic sites e.g. Newport Quay.

### **8.5 HEAP Objectives And Actions**

The Isle of Wight HEAP Steering Committee is committed to pursuing specific objectives and actions covering the period 2008-2013. These are set out in the *HEAP Vision, Aims, Objectives and Actions* document. Those objectives most relevant to Urban Settlements are cited below. It should be noted that each objective has more specific and closely targeted actions nested within it.

- D2.** Ensure that *HER* and HEAP documents are used to provide a character-based understanding of the Island's historic environment and to guide planning policy, development control, design of change and land management.
- D3.** Enhance character-based understanding of settlement through completion of relevant HEAP documents and character appraisals.
- R3** Enhance character-based understanding of Settlement HLC Types through completion of HEAPs and character appraisals

- C2.** Promote conservation of historic settlements and buildings and ensure that new development conserves or enhances historic character, is of appropriate scale and does not disrupt historic street and plot patterns.
- E2.** Raise public awareness, understanding and enjoyment of local distinctiveness represented by HEAP Areas and Types.
- L3.** [Academic] study of Island seaside resorts in terms of historic processes and historic character.

Following on from this Urban HEAP document further targeted actions can be suggested for adoption by the HEAP Steering Committee in the future.

- Support the establishment of funding schemes for historic building maintenance and repair.
- Support more resources to effect the required Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans.
- Monitor the effects of Conservation Area Appraisals and CA Management Plans on planning decisions, quality of new design and enhancement of area.
- Study the impacts of land use and settlement change on the urban environment.
- Encourage more town trails.

**Table 1. Historic Urban Attributes of Isle of Wight Medieval Settlements**

Settlement	Origin	Key Position	Market Doc. Ev.)	Borough Charter	Elected Officer(s)	Borough Court	MPs	Town Walls	Town Gate(s)	Planned Layout	Market Place	Quay	Urban Plot Form	Urban House Type	Population - relatively high size & density by C16	Diverse Economy by C16	Social Variety	Religious Complexity
Newport	12 <sup>th</sup> C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yarmouth	12 <sup>th</sup> C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	?	?	?
Newtown	13 <sup>th</sup> C	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	?	?	No
Brading	12 <sup>th</sup> C?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	?	No	No	No	Yes?	Yes	Yes	Yes?	Yes	Yes?	Yes	Yes	No
Carisbrooke	11 <sup>th</sup> C?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	?	No	No	?	No	?	No	No	Yes
St Helens	12 <sup>th</sup> C?	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	?	No	?	?	No	?	?	?	Yes
Freshwater Green	11 <sup>th</sup> C?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	?	No	No	?	No	?	?	?	No

N.B. 'Historic' Attributes are defined as any of the above attributes possessed by a town at some time between the 11<sup>th</sup> Century and the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**Table 2. Pre-20<sup>th</sup> Century Attributes of Isle of Wight Post-Medieval Settlements**

Settlement	Urban Characteristics	Location	Function(s)	Planned Origin	Significant Industrial Sites/ Industrial Housing	Building Density at Settlement Core	Relative Extent of Settlement	Town Hall	Railway Station	Tourist Hotel(s)	Pier	Esplanade/ Promenade	L.A. Status
Cowes	From 17 <sup>th</sup> C	Coastal	Sea trade (C17-C18) Shipbuilding (from C18) Bathing Resort (from later C18) Summer residences (from late C18) Yachting (C19)	No	Yes	High	Large	No	Yes	Yes?	Yes	Yes	UDC 1894
East Cowes	From 17 <sup>th</sup> C	Coastal	Sea trade (C17-C18) Shipbuilding (from C17) Summer residences (from late C18)	No	Yes	High	Medium	Yes	No	No?	No	Yes	UDC 1894
Ryde	From late 18 <sup>th</sup> C	Coastal	Bathing resort (from late C18) Summer Residences (from late C18) Tourist resort (from C19)	Yes	No	High	Large	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Borough 1868
Ventnor	From 1830s	Coastal	Tourist resort (from 1830s)	No	No	High	Large	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	UDC 1894
Sandown	From 1850s	Coastal	Tourist resort (from mid C19)	No	No	High	Medium	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	UDC 1894?
Shanklin	From 1850s	Coastal	Early 'Picturesque' Tourism (early C19) Tourist resort (from mid C19)	No	No	High	Large	Yes (1913)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	UDC? 1894
Seaview	From mid C19?	Coastal	Salt making, rope making Small-scale tourist resort Yachting	Yes	No	High	Small	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes?	None
Bembridge	From mid C19?	Coastal	Small-scale tourist resort	Yes	No	Low	Medium	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Civil Parish (1896)
Freshwater School Green	From later C19	Inland	Developed as village centre for West Wight in later C19	No	No	Low	Medium	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Civil Parish
Totland	From later C19	Coastal	Small-scale tourist resort	Yes	No	Low	Medium	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (Turf Walk)	Civil Parish (1894)

N.B. Building density has been assessed from 1898 OS 25" maps. Most settlements shown on the maps comprise a 'settlement core' of higher density and surrounding settlement area of lower density. The 'extent of settlement' includes the settlement core and surrounding area and has been assessed relative to other Isle of Wight urban settlements shown on the 1898 OS 25" maps. Railway stations served other Isle of Wight settlements (e.g. Newport and St Helens) as well as the post-medieval towns in this table. St Helens is shown as an urban district on the 1898 OS 25" map but this district included part of Ryde to the east of Monkton Mead Brook.

**Table 3. Present-Day Urban Attributes of Isle of Wight Settlements**

Settlement	'Urban Area' 2001 Census Map and SE Key Statistics	2001 'Urban Areas' Census Population	Rural /Urban Classification of 'Output Areas' 2004	Town Council 2008	Parish Council 2008	Secondary Retail	Bank(s)/ Bldg Soc(s)	IW Council Offices	Commercial, Local Council and/or Voluntary Sector Offices	Industrial And Business Sites	High School	College	Hospital	Leisure Centre
Newport	Yes	22,957	Urban	No	Yes	***	Yes	Yes	***	***	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ryde	Yes	22,806	Urban	Yes		**	Yes	No	**?	**	Yes	No	No	No
Sandown	Yes	19,716	Urban	Yes		**	Yes	Yes	**?	**	Yes	No	No	Yes
Shanklin			Urban	Yes		**	Yes?	No	**?	?	No	No	No	No
Cowes	Yes	19,110	Urban	Yes		**	Yes	No	**?	***	Yes	No	Yes	No
East Cowes			Urban	Yes		*	?	No	*	***	No	No	No	No
Freshwater	Yes	8045	Town & Fringe	No	Yes	*	Yes	?	*	*	No	No	No	Yes
Totland			Town & Fringe	No	Yes	?	No	No	?	No	No	No		
Ventnor	Yes	6257	Town & Fringe	Yes		**	?	No	?	*	No	No	No	No
Wootton	Yes	4370	Town & Fringe	No	Yes	?	?	No	*	No?	No	No	No	No
Bembridge	Yes	3492	Town & Fringe	No	Yes	*	?	No	?	No	No	No	No	No
Seaview	Yes	2286	Town & Fringe	No	Yes	*	?	No	?	No	No	No	No	No
Wroxall	Yes	1885	Town & Fringe	No	Yes	No	No?	No	?	*?	No	No	No	No
Brading	Yes	1794	Town & Fringe	Yes		*	?	No	*	No?	No	No	No	No
Yarmouth	No	N/A	Rural	Yes		*	?	No	?	No	No	No	No	No
Carisbrooke	No	N/A	Urban	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
St Helens	No	N/A	Rural	No	Yes	?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

N.B. Where twin settlements are defined as a single 'urban area' in the 2001 Census statistics they are listed next to each other with no intervening row. The population figure for the combined 'urban area' is shown on the upper row. Estimated extent of secondary retail, office and industrial/business space is denoted by number of stars.

**Table 4. Priorities for Town HEAPs**

Settlement	Historic Urban Characteristics	Present-Day Urban/Rural Characteristics	Conservation Area(s)	Adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisal	Other Character Appraisal(s) or Historic Landscape Survey(s)	EH Extensive Urban Survey	Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy	Conservation/ Management Issues	Priority for Individual HEAP
Newport	High (from C12)	Urban	Yes	Yes		Yes	Key Regeneration Area	High	High
Sandown	Medium (C19)	Urban	No	No	Yes	No	Key Regeneration Area	High	High
Shanklin	Medium (C19)	Urban	Yes	No	No	No	Key Regeneration Area	High	High
Ryde	High (C19)	Urban	Yes	No	Yes	No	Key Regeneration Area	Medium	Medium
Cowes	High (from C17)	Urban	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Key Regeneration Area	Medium	High
East Cowes	Medium (From C17)	Urban	Yes	Yes	?	No	Key Regeneration Area	High	?
Ventnor	Medium ( C19)	Town & Fringe	Yes	Yes	No	No	Smaller Regeneration Area	Medium	Medium
Freshwater	Medium (C19)	Town & Fringe	Yes	No	No	No	Smaller Regeneration Area	High	Medium
Totland	Medium (C19)	Town & Fringe	No	No	No	No	Smaller Regeneration Area	Medium	Medium
Brading	Medium (Middle Ages)	Town & Fringe	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Rural Service Centre	Medium	Medium
Yarmouth	Medium (Middle Ages)	Rural	Yes	No	No	Yes	Rural Service Centre	Lower	Lower
Carisbrooke	Low (Middle Ages)	'Urban' Output Areas	Yes	No	No	Yes	Villages & Hamlets	Medium	Lower
Bembridge	Low (C19)	Town & Fringe	No	No	No	No	Rural Service Centre	Lower?	Lower
St Helens	Low (Middle Ages)	Rural	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Rural Service Centre	Lower	Lower
Wootton	Nil	Town & Fringe	No	No	No	No	Rural Service Centre	Lower	Lower
Wroxall	Nil	Town & Fringe	No	No	No	No	Rural Service Centre	Lower	Lower
Seaview	Medium (C19)	Town & Fringe	Yes	Yes	No	No	Villages & Hamlets	Lower	Lower
Newtown	Medium (Middle Ages)	Rural	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Villages & Hamlets	Lower	Lower

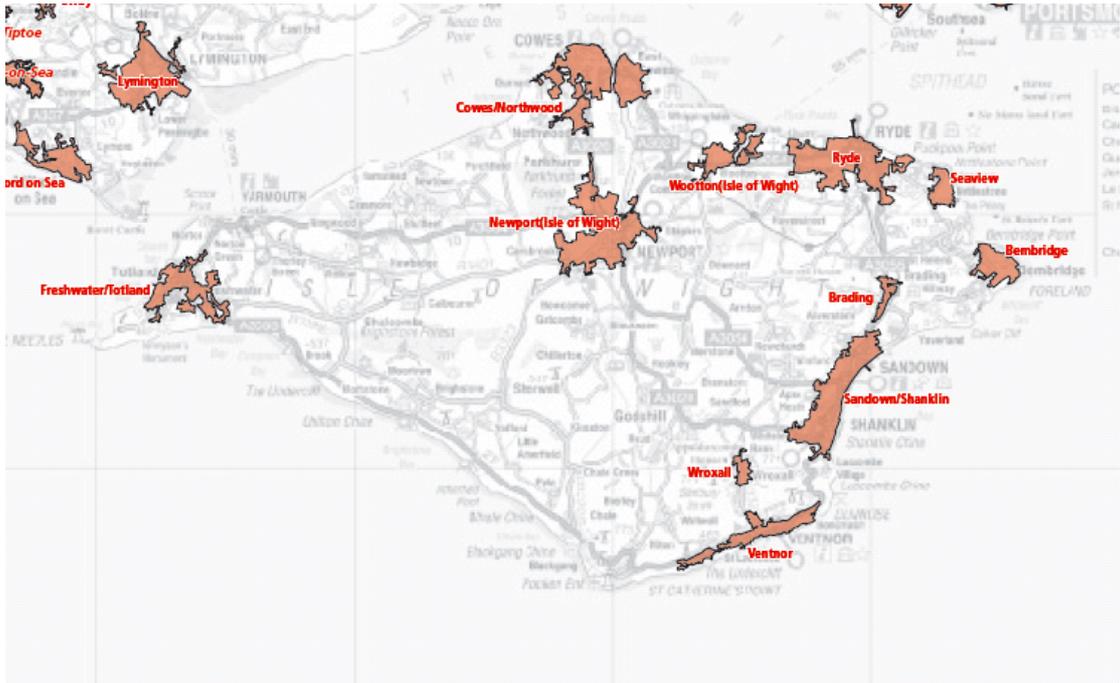


Figure 1. Map of Isle of Wight Urban Areas from 'Key Statistics for urban areas in the South East' ONS 2004

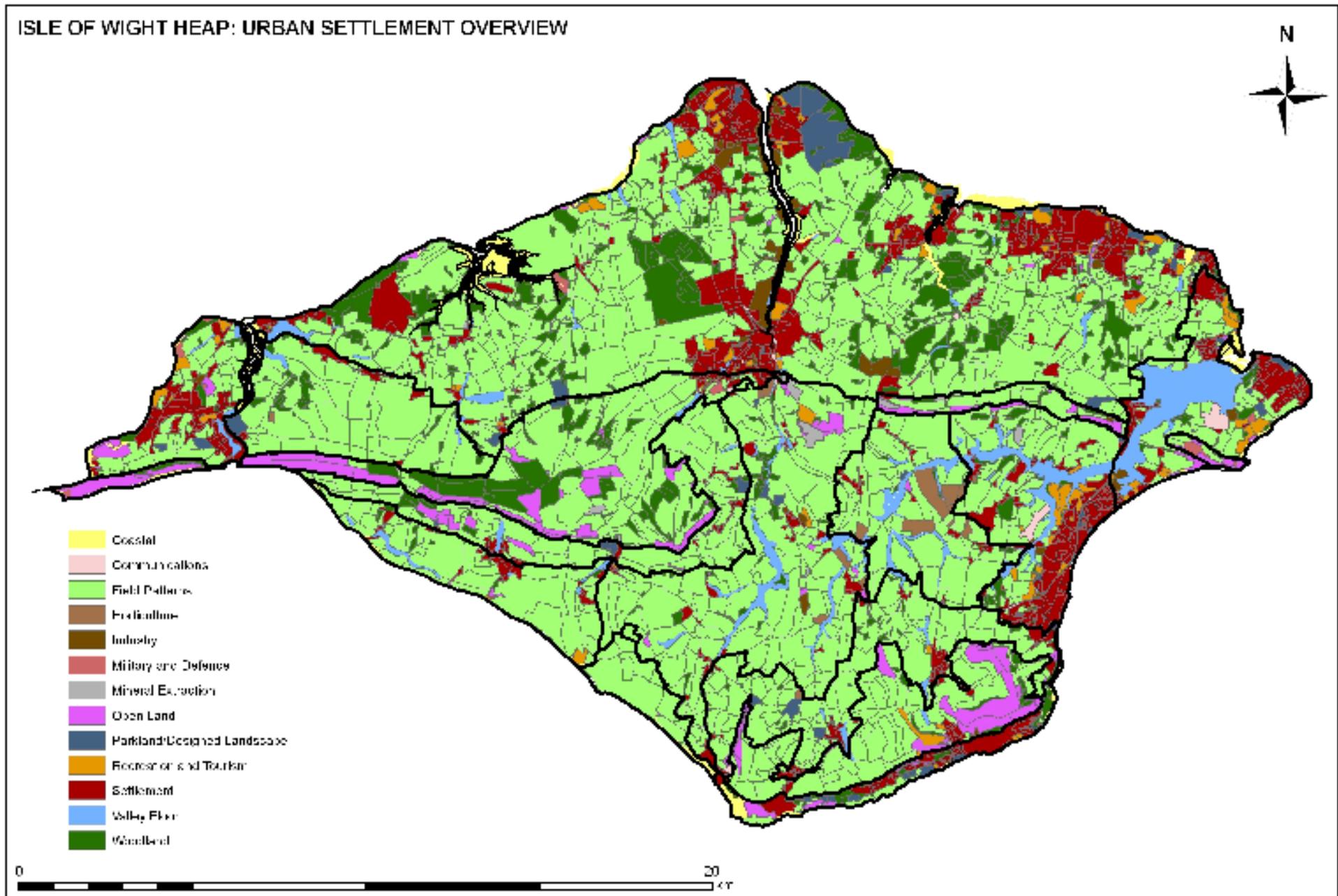


Figure 2. Historic Landscape Characterisation: Broad Types and HLC Areas

ISLE OF WIGHT HEAP: URBAN SETTLEMENT OVERVIEW

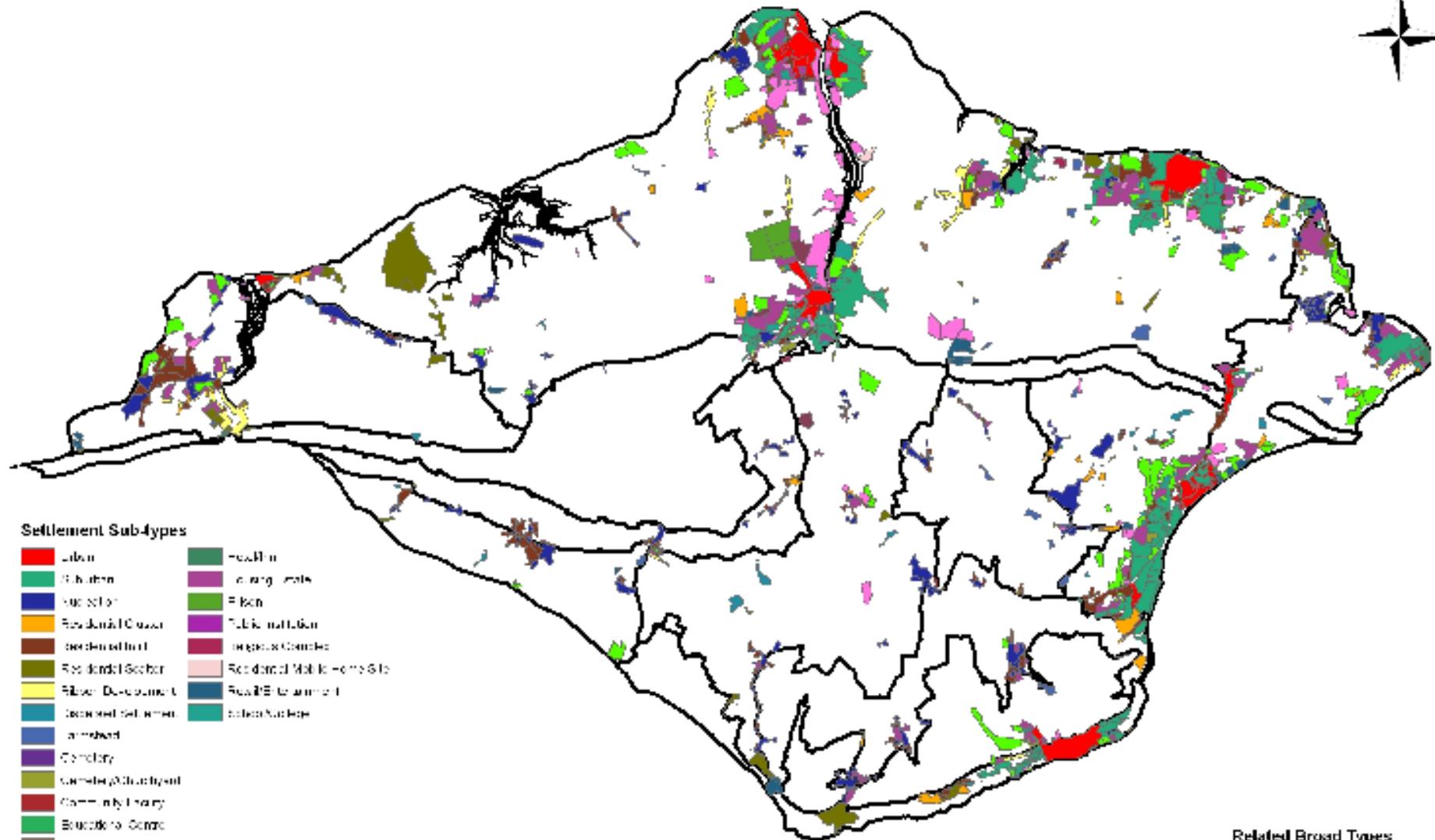


Figure 3. Historic Landscape Characterisation: Settlement and HLC Areas

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# ISLE OF WIGHT HEAP: URBAN SETTLEMENT OVERVIEW

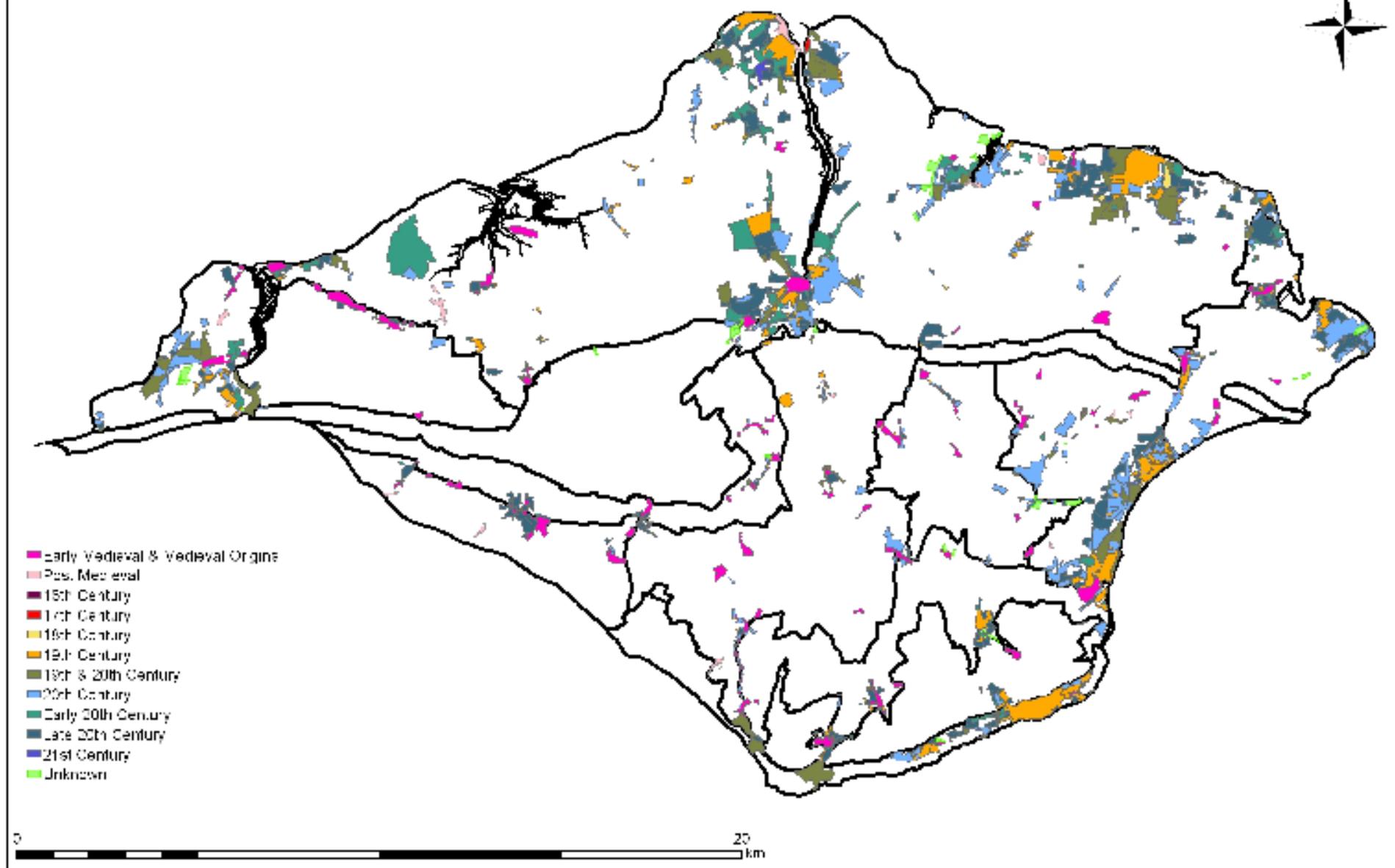


Figure 4. Historic Landscape Characterisation: Age of Settlements with HLC Areas

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