

# RINGWOOD


## Character Assessment

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# RINGWOOD

## Character Assessment

### I OVERVIEW

- I.1 The historic market town of Ringwood lies in the valley of the River Avon on the south-western boundary of the county with Dorset. The town is also a gateway to the New Forest National Park, which lies immediately to the east. Most of the modern area of the town lies on the gravel terrace on the eastern floodplain of the river, the ground only increasing noticeably in height at the eastern fringe of the town. To the north, gravel extraction has created a series of lakes with housing development extending right up to the water's edge. Historically, to the north-west there was a large lake which is now flood plain crossed by the meandering river and several smaller channels and drains. The flood plain narrows as it passes Ringwood, and this may account for the siting of the town, providing an easier crossing point of the river. The River Avon is a chalk stream of national and international importance for its wildlife communities, particularly aquatic plants and invertebrates, and fish. A range of habitats within the wider Avon Valley are also designated for their wildlife importance for birds.
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- I.2 To the south, the valley widens slightly forming the edge to the historic core of the town, contributing to the layout of the town with the road to Christchurch closely following the edge of the flood plain. East of Christchurch Road the edge of the town is less clearly defined; ribbon development along Christchurch Road pushes the suburban area into the countryside. A housing estate south of Crow Lane/Hightown Road also protrudes southwards, with open countryside to the south and west and a large recreation area to the north, leaving it detached from the main area of suburban development. Eastwards, the town abuts a landscape of small enclosures and dispersed settlement which fringes the open heathlands and large woodland blocks of the New Forest.
- I.3 Ringwood, first recorded in 955AD, was a royal estate in the Saxon, and much of the medieval, periods. As a royal estate centre it is possible that there had been a market in the town from before the conquest. A market charter was granted in 1226AD but the town never gained borough status. However, tax records suggest that Ringwood was one of the wealthiest places in the county, third only to Winchester and Southampton. Leatherworking and cloth-making appear to have been the principal industries of the town. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the town was well-known for its gloves and for collar and cuff-making.

- I.4 It is possible that the relationship of the market and church dates back to the Saxon period but the relative regularity of the property plots on the south side of the Market Place, High Street and Christchurch Road suggests planning in the layout of the town similar to that seen in other new towns across the county. The layout of the property plots indicates that the road from Christchurch was the most important route through the town. The road to Southampton, leaving the east end of High Street, was relatively lightly developed although it was along this street that the property known as the Manor House was built.

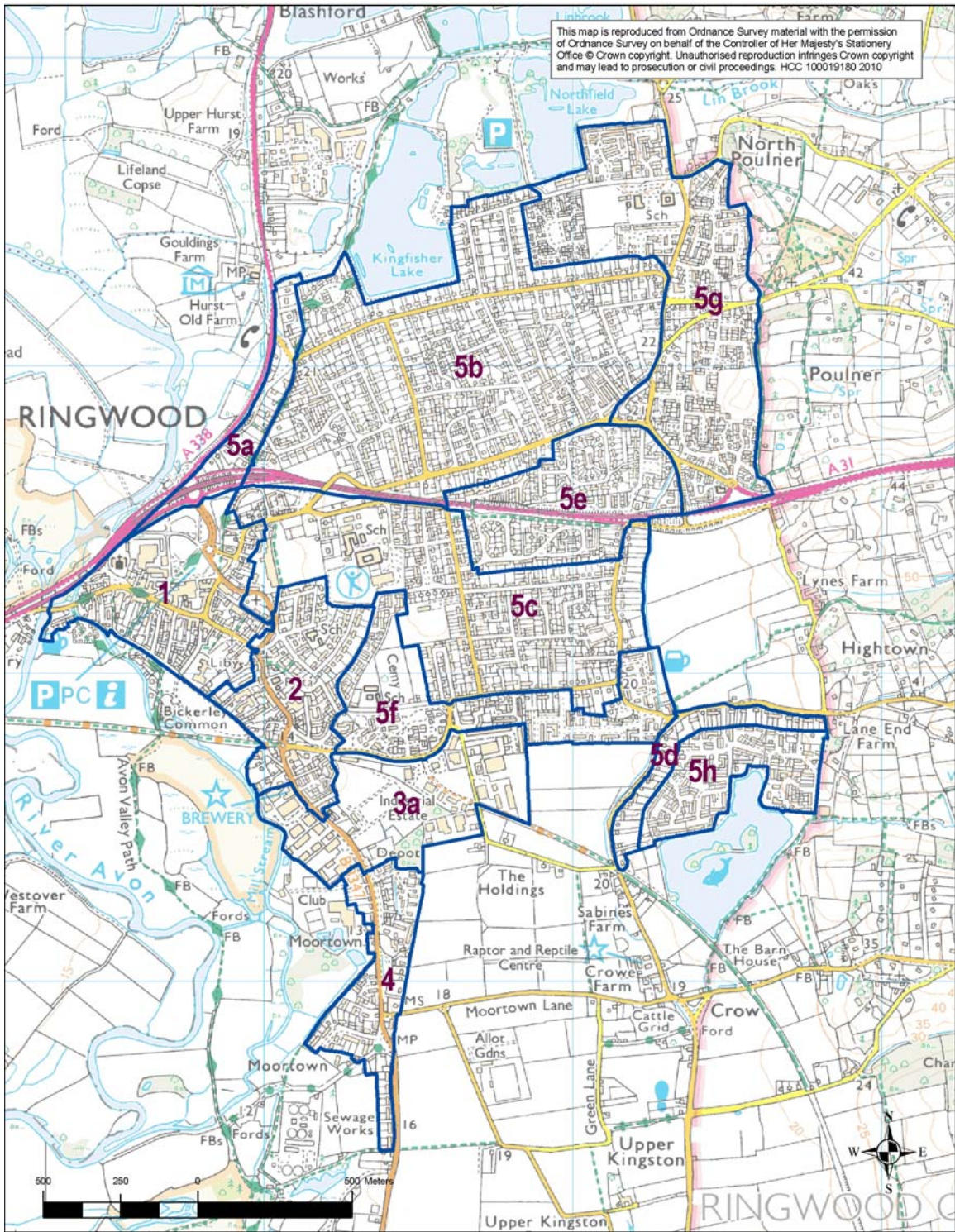
## Hampshire Towns Character Assessment – Townscape Types

<b>TCT</b>	<b>Description</b>
01	Medieval Planned Urban Settlement
02	Rural Settlement
03	Post Medieval Development 1600–1819
04	Residential 1820–1869
05	Residential 1870–1914 (Terraces, Semi-detached, Small Detached Houses)
06	Residential 1870–1914 (Villas)
07	Residential 1915–1945
08	Residential Post 1945–Present (Houses and Bungalows)
09	Residential Post 1945–Present (Flats, 4 storey and above)
10	Commercial 1870–1945
11	Large Retail 1950–Present
12	Office/Commercial 1945–Present
13	Business Park 1945–Present
14	Traditional/Older Industrial
15	Industrial 1945–Present
16	Hospital/Education – Older Core
17	Hospital/Education – Modern
18	Defence Pre 1830
19	Defence 1830–1914
20	Defence 1915–Present
21	Civic
22	Religious/Churchyard/Precinct
23	Open Space (Public Park)
24	Open Space (Sports/Recreation)
25	Open Space (Allotments)
26	Open Space (Cemetery)
27	Open Space (Green Corridor)
28	Open Space (School Playing Field)
29	Transport Corridor
30	Civil Infrastructure – e.g. Sewage Works
31	Car Park
32	Mobile Home Park



**RINGWOOD  
TOWNSCAPE TYPES**





## RINGWOOD CHARACTER AREAS



## 2 CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

### 2.1 RING01 Historic core and environs

#### 2.1.1 *Character Summary*

**Ringwood is an historic market town, set out parallel to the path of the River Avon, with the main historic crossing at the north-western end of West Street and a modern crossing (A31) to the north-west. The medieval town is planned and laid out in regular plots around the widened High Street and open Market Place. These historic plot divisions survive to the south side of High Street but to a far lesser degree elsewhere. Historic buildings (all substantially post-medieval due to a number of major fires in the town) respect the plots and give a pleasing rhythm of varied style, materials and articulation to the streets. There are a lot of statutory listed buildings to the historic core and the entire character area falls within the Ringwood Conservation Area. Despite much redevelopment to the edges, the core remains cohesive and is an important regional centre for the New Forest.**

#### 2.1.2 *Key Characteristics*

- Medieval planned market town with good survival of early plan and diverse building stock producing dynamic and interesting historic townscape
- Low-lying and flat topography
- Regular, narrow and deep plots, most of which date from the medieval period, particularly to the south side of High Street/Market Place
- Consistent buildings lines to streets, most development at back of pavement or slightly set back with boundary treatment
- Red/orange brick painted and unpainted, render. Good survival of old clay tiles, thatch and natural slate (with very little replacement with modern materials)
- A widely varied scale from one-and-a-half- to three-and-a-half-storey buildings
- Mixed commercial use and good mix of independent retailers and high street chains
- Good trees to rears of properties (mostly private gardens) and to the churchyard
- High-quality public realm with mostly well-considered materials, well-sited lighting and pedestrian areas and shared spaces. On-street parking aids traffic calming
- Good access and connectivity, with footpaths, lanes and streets providing excellent permeability throughout

#### 2.1.3 *Boundaries and setting*

To the north-east (strongly defined by the A31 at its boundary) and east of the character area are the residential suburbs of Ringwood (RING05), to the south-east is an historic suburb stretching along Christchurch Road (RING02) and to the south and north are the flood plains and water meadows of the River Avon.

The town as it is, set on flat land edging the flood plain, provides no significant views from the town out into the country. The countryside setting is truncated by the A31 to the north, and to the south by trees lining the route of the old railway and meadows beyond the Bickerley Mill Stream Adjacent to the River Avon.

Approaching the town from the east (for example, travelling along the A31 down Poulner Hill) the tower of the church of St Peter and St Paul is a prominent and memorable landmark for some distance, sitting above the trees and low-level roofscape. The church, due to its closeness to the road, also forms a familiar local landmark to users of the A31 in both directions.

To the south-east, the town slowly diminishes on travelling along Christchurch Road (into RING02). In this respect the setting could be defined as the continued but more suburban journey along Christchurch Road out of the town. The traveller is not immediately aware of leaving the historic core as the back of pavement development continues for some distance along Christchurch Road into RING02. Other boundaries of this character area, such as the A31 to the north and the riverside to the west, are more well-defined.

#### 2.1.4 *Designations*

The church of St Peter and Paul, The Meeting House, Meeting House Lane and Bridge House and railings, West Street are statutory Grade II\* listed buildings. There are over one hundred further statutory listed buildings to the historic core of Ringwood plus their associated curtilage buildings and structures, including boundary walls in particular.

The historic core lies within the large Ringwood Conservation Area which stretches beyond the character area into RING02.

#### 2.1.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT01, 02, 03, 08, 09, 11, 21, 22, 23 and 27.

#### 2.1.6 *Topography*

The area is predominantly low lying and flat with a slight fall north-westwards towards the river

#### 2.1.7 *Layout and Pattern*

The medieval planned layout of long deep plots fronting High Street and Market Place still survives in places, particularly to the south of these areas. Buildings still maintain these plot lines with only limited amalgamation of plots. This, combined with the piecemeal way in which buildings have been remodelled or rebuilt, and with survivals from various post-medieval periods, together with the variations in materials and style (some being vernacular, including the unusual survival of urban thatched houses and others being overtly polite), creates a dynamic and memorable historic townscape.

The early expansion of the town was piecemeal, without large distinct phases of growth. Development was often in backland or on minor streets and lanes leading off High Street and Christchurch Road. None of these have destroyed or significantly eroded the relatively small-scale feel and rhythm of the town.



Most buildings have been developed to the back of pavement and have no front boundaries. There are a few old brick boundary walls and railings fronting properties. This provides good enclosure throughout and the gentle curves of High Street encourage deflected views of buildings along the principal streets and into side streets. Streets such as Lynes Lane retain hedges, which together with the absence of pavements, gives a semi-rural character despite the close proximity to the town centre.

Older and more recent open spaces form a sequence through the town, to include the Market Place and Centre Place off the Furlong and the courtyard to the Safeway store adjacent to Meeting House Lane. These spaces successfully link commercial areas with parking, give a sense of medieval plan of the town (with lanes linking to High Street) and are good pedestrian routes and spaces, reducing the conflict between car user and pedestrian in what are sometimes narrow streets with reduced pavements.

#### 2.1.8 *Buildings and materials*

The character area comprises the typical predominantly modest townscape of a market town. There is much variation in material use, scale (mostly height in storeys) and style. The mix of vernacular and polite is perhaps the most striking part of the character of the built form. A few buildings stand out as being civic in their scale and ostentation for example; Greyfriars, Old Bank House, the former Town Hall and Corn Exchange.

High Street and Market Place are historically intact inasmuch as there is very little major twentieth-century intervention (other than the collective nature of modern signage) into these spaces, and groups of traditional buildings make for very attractive and dynamic townscape. Buildings mostly date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The oldest houses are thatched, a rare and valuable survival in an urban context.

There is broad range in the scale of buildings within the character area as one would expect in the town centre. This ranges from one and a half storey (some of the thatched buildings for example) through to three storeys. The upper storeys are often located in the roofspace, necessitating dormer windows or rooflights. These are common features in the character area.

Red brick (a distinct dark red or with orange tones) is the traditional walling material of the character area. There are rendered and painted facades in almost equal numbers and this also adds to this dynamic character of the historic townscape of Ringwood's historic core. Where brick or render has been painted, the colour palette has been restricted to white, cream and the lighter shades of buff and fawn. There is a very limited use of mathematical tiles (for example, Old Bank House and Mansfield House). There is some tile hanging to later buildings.

Slates and tiles are both used widely on roofs with no direct correlation between age of building and material used. Clay tiles (the majority) are the indigenous materials and are best seen where a number of adjoining old clay-tiled roofs occur on traditional buildings.

### 2.1.9 *Predominant land use*

The historic core of High Street and Market Place was the commercial area of the town but has shifted in recent years to focus on associated backland shopping areas (Furlong Shopping Centre and adjacent to Meeting House Lane; supermarket environs). West Street and Christchurch Road both contain commercial uses amongst houses and offices. Elsewhere the character area is almost entirely residential with only occasional small businesses and community uses (such as civic buildings, churches and public open spaces).

Within the commercial core most of the shopfronts have been retrofitted to earlier houses. There are a small number of purpose-built shops from the Edwardian period and later in High Street.

The character area also includes the extensive areas of car parking to the north of the town on the former cattle market and the supermarket adjacent to and linked to the Furlong Shopping Centre.

### 2.1.10 *Public realm*

Most streets have narrow tarmac pavements. These have been frequently dug up leaving a muddled patchwork of tarmac to some of the town's historic streets and lanes (this is particularly apparent in Southampton Road). There is some survival of older paving treatments such as stable pavements in Staffordshire blue clay (adjacent to the Market Place). The Market Place has a high-quality public realm which combines artificial blocks with natural York stone paving (in front of Old Bank House), granite setts, and block paving. Street lighting is wall-mounted in places which reduces its impact on the streetscene. In the centre (High Street, Market Place and part of Meeting House Lane) there is a mixture of wall- and post-mounted, replica nineteenth-century lanterns, and pendant globes. Star Lane and the Furlong Centre adopt another type of suitable post-and-lantern system.

Trees adjacent to the Market Place in the churchyard are a welcome relief from the built form and provide an attractive green frame for the church.

On-street parking to much of the historic core is a good traffic calming measure but tends to create a muddled and cluttered public realm, especially to more narrow sections of street.

### 2.1.11 *Open space*

There is a sequence of open spaces throughout the historic core but they are all urban in character and grain. There are very limited areas of private garden, with much of the space behind the principal roads developed, leaving mostly small pockets of green open space. Green spaces include the formal Silver Jubilee Garden riverside park at the end of West Street and the Dr Little historic formal gardens in the north-east of the character area. Silver Jubilee Garden is a small park, lined with mature trees (alder, willow, ash and lime), notable as being one of the only points where there is direct public access to the river.

The most significant open spaces however, are Bickerley Common and a series of water meadows adjacent to the south-western edge of the character area.

Bickerley Common (registered as a village green under the Commons Registration Act) is separated from the water meadows by the Mill Stream and by the disused railway line. The grass is rough and coarse. Historic maps show a cricket pitch on its broadest part. It is now an important amenity space for the town.

The Avon Valley long-distance footpath runs through the character area, passing the riverside park, Bickerley Common and water meadows, and connecting up to a disused railway line, now a right of way and cycle path. There are a lot of mature trees lining this former railway line which are seen in views south from the character area.

#### 2.1.12 *Biodiversity*

Two of the braided channels of the River Avon flow through the western corner of the character area. The River Avon is a calcareous (chalk) river system, internationally important for biodiversity and designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for the number of species supported. The Avon Valley Special Protection Area, Ramsar site and SSSI covers water meadows to the north of the character area and south of the railway line. The neutral grasslands, fens and mires are particularly important for bird species. The riverside open spaces within the character area, and Bickerley Common, are therefore valuable for protecting and linking these important habitats.

Green spaces are not prominent features in the historic core of Ringwood. Big trees are seldom in the foreground of built form within the character area, although there are trees to rear gardens, which are sometimes seen above roofs. There are some good groups to the south, along the former railway line and to Bickerley Common.

The churchyard has a number of mature trees (ash and yew) and a distinctive row of limes adjacent to Market Place. These trees combine with those of the Furlong Centre service yard and further trees behind Church Hatch and Old Bank House to give the impression of considerable tree cover in public views.

#### 2.1.13 *Access and connectivity*

The paths and lanes of the town centre, linking the modern commercial areas with High Street, Market Street and beyond, provide good accessibility for the pedestrian. This is combined with relatively level gradients throughout. The vehicle user is more constrained by the narrow roads, high level of commercial traffic using the main roads through and peripheral roads to the historic core.

Connectivity to the river is greatly restricted and former places where it was easily accessible have been lost. Connections with adjacent character areas are good and favour the pedestrian and cyclist.

## 2.2 RING02 Historic suburb (Christchurch Road)

### 2.2.1 Character Summary

***This character area comprises the first major surviving phases of expansion of the historic core and includes mostly residential dwellings but with some commercial uses and a number of public houses. It continues, for the most part, the enclosed townscape and deep plots of the historic core although many of the plots have been truncated and amalgamated to the rear, and redeveloped (over various periods). There is more late-twentieth-century development in the streetscene, and the townscape is more varied in terms of quality and historic unity. The Victorian and Edwardian extensions to the town stretch north from Christchurch Road and give a far more consistent character to this part of the character area. Despite some diversity, the character area is cohesive as an expression of relatively late town extensions (mostly late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century but on the line of earlier development).***

### 2.2.2 Key Characteristics

- Early residential suburb to the town centre laid out on a series of grids and informal lanes
- The land rises steadily to the north-east and falls away from Christchurch Road to the south-west
- Mix of plot sizes throughout but regular consistent sizes within individual streets Strongly defined buildings lines throughout; houses set to the back of pavement or slightly back behind small gardens with hedge or brick boundaries
- Red brick and painted brick, some render, natural slate roofs and some old clay tile
- Predominantly two-storey (some upper storey converted to residential, with dormers)
- Residential, with some civic and commercial uses interspersed and small individual shops
- Very limited public green space; small, medium-sized and large gardens with limited tree cover but good mature hedge boundaries to some streets/lanes
- Busy public realm, often with on-street parking, subtle street lighting but poor wirescape, some shared surfaces to lanes
- Good access and connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian

### 2.2.3 Boundaries and setting

This character area is bounded to the north-west by the historic core (RING01) and to the north and east by the mostly post-war residential suburbs of the town (RING05). To the south-east are the industrial estates to the north-eastern side of Christchurch Road which are all included within character area RING03. The setting of this character area is strongly influenced by the historic core along Christchurch Road, and in this respect the change in character from one to another is gradual. Both these areas (RING01 and RING02) are contained within the Ringwood Conservation Area. To the south, the setting is more defined by the dramatic change in land use within RING03; the juxtaposition of the residential houses of Christchurch Road, hard to pavement, with the industrial units set away and down

from the road is striking and somewhat unnerving in townscape terms. To the east, the character area fronts onto Bickerley Common and open countryside.

#### 2.2.4 *Designations*

There are a number of statutory listed buildings to Christchurch Road, all at Grade II. These are mostly eighteenth-century houses or cottages, some thatched, a number of which have subsequently been retrofitted with nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century shopfronts.

Most of the character area lies within the Ringwood Conservation Area, the southern border of which is the former railway line.

#### 2.2.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT03, 05, 08, 09 and 16.

#### 2.2.6 *Topography*

The land rises steadily to the north-east (most noticeable in College Road) and falls away from Christchurch Road to the south-west and gently drops, whilst the road curves to the junction with Castleman Way, giving a pleasing view north, along Christchurch Road, of developing historic townscape.

#### 2.2.7 *Layout and Pattern*

This character area is laid out in a series of distinct phases and types which are not extensive enough to warrant their own sub area. Generally, street layout is based on early historic routeways such as Christchurch Road, Coxstone Lane and Duck Island Lane and subsequent later impositions such as the railway and later road improvements. Streets like Coxstone Lane retain hedges which, together with the absence of pavements, maintain a semi-rural character despite their close proximity to the town centre.

To the north side of Christchurch Road the roads are more planned and comprise regular plots, some large with consistent development to the roadside. These streets are well-designed and provide good enclosure and attractive townscape through the use of materials and articulation of the facades or roofscape with chimneys.

The numerous different phases and types of development are reflected in different layouts. The result is a variety of urban grain which is generally of a fine to medium character.

#### 2.2.8 *Buildings and materials*

The majority of buildings in this character area are residential and most are two storey. Where higher domestic buildings are seen most take advantage of the roof space and have dormers or rooflights to top storeys. Christchurch Road is characterised by Georgian buildings of various status, from the cottage-scale house to the townhouse. Most of these houses are statutory listed. Some have later shopfronts. There are a number of larger buildings, some dating from the twentieth century and having civic uses (such as the fire station) and others are garage premises and public houses. They provide a more diverse, and in some places disparate, townscape to that of the historic core.

Building lines vary throughout the character area with a mix of back of pavement and buildings set back in gardens. To College Road, the red brick villas are individually treated with building lines set well back from the road at a noticeably coarser grain development than their neighbours to the south.

Good quality local red brick is marginally the most prominent material in the streetscene, with painted brick and painted renders having almost equal numbers in some streets (most notably Christchurch Road). The red brick is usually seen with a variant colour, mostly buff, to create string courses, eaves courses and dressings to windows and doors (these are sometimes painted brick or occasionally stone). There is some timber framing but this is mostly painted and/or rendered (to Christchurch Road and Coxstone Lane). Roofs are mostly natural slate with some old clay tiles and some replacement with modern interlocking concrete tiles (especially to Woodstock Lane). There is also a distinctive use of decorative tile hanging to Woodstock Lane. An important survival of straw thatch is seen in pockets throughout the character area; this is mostly multi-layered thatch with raised ridges. Shopfronts are traditional timber, where found.

#### 2.2.9 *Predominant land use*

This area is predominantly fine-grain residential, small block layout and size, with some small shops surviving, mixed with some offices and other civic uses such as the fire station. There are also commercial premises such as garages and public houses. The Trinity Congregational Church to the junction of Christchurch Road and Mansfield Road is an important landmark (Grade II listed building) and has extensive community facilities. There are some larger blocks of flats which create coarser grain townscape to the north and south of Christchurch Road.

#### 2.2.10 *Public realm*

There is much variation in the treatment of public space. Pavements to Christchurch Road are wide with on-street parking, and the road can seem crowded, being a busy thoroughfare. Roads and lanes leading off can be semi-rural in character with made and unmade lanes being used as shared surfaces with mature boundaries or well maintained brick walls or occasionally railings to small gardens. Street lighting is modest and for the most part lights are attached to buildings. There is a high degree of wirescape throughout (this is a significant issue throughout the suburbs). Most roads have on-street parking which in places has a significant impact on the setting of attractive groups of traditional buildings.

#### 2.2.11 *Open space*

There is almost no public open space in this character area. There are occasional school grounds. Gardens are relatively small except for those to College Road and the rear gardens of commercial properties off Duck Island Lane. There is a series of parking areas close to civic buildings or commercial uses (often using part or all of former gardens) and there are also yards and hardstandings interspersed through some of the more intensively developed areas. The former railway line enters Ringwood to the north of Duck Island Lane, providing access to the common; it is also part of a national cycle path linking Bournemouth and Southampton via the New Forest.

### 2.2.12 *Biodiversity*

To the east, the character area lies adjacent to the protected river and habitats of the Avon Valley (see RING01), particularly the Mill Stream, Bickerley Common and water meadows. Bickerley Road and the hardstanding of front gardens to properties off this road present a hard barrier between the character area and these semi-natural habitats, except for properties off Duck Island Lane which back onto the common. To the back of properties along College Road, and to the south side of Christchurch Road, gardens interlink to form limited green corridors although these are not linked to larger areas of open space or the riverside habitats. Mature boundaries, including some large trees, also contribute in some cases to a semi-rural character and provide good wildlife habitats though these are limited. There are some large trees to rear gardens some of which are seen over built form in extended views.

### 2.2.13 *Access and connectivity*

The series of lanes and footpaths which feed off Christchurch Road give good access to other character areas and areas of open countryside. There is good connectivity, particularly for the pedestrian. The road network provides connectivity to the town centre but is a busy route and is used by large vehicles (servicing the industrial units to the south).

## 2.3 RING03 Ringwood's Industrial Estates

### 2.3.1 Character Summary

**Medium- to coarse-grain mix of small, medium-sized and large industrial units with some limited ancillary office uses. Buildings are surrounded by large areas of hardstanding used for parking and/or storage. Areas to the west of Christchurch Road are almost integrated into the townscape despite being set back. The sections to the east are more inaccessible and, by virtue of the nature of the use, poorly connected. This character has two sub-areas, physically separated. Sub-area RING03a is to the south of the town centre and sub-area RING03b is to the north of the Ringwood urban area. These areas share very similar characteristics in terms of layout, scale, materials and use.**

### 2.3.2 Key characteristics

#### Sub-areas of RING03

##### 03a Ringwood (south) industrial estates

- Enclosed industrial estates on a small and medium scale
- Land is predominantly flat
- Large regular grid of plots of varying sizes and coarse grain – but blocks of development broken by woodland and undeveloped space
- Consistent building lines throughout, building set back from the roadside parallel to feeder roads
- Profile metal cladding and asbestos-cement sheeting to steel frames
- Industrial shed-like structures, the equivalent of two-storey domestic buildings (height to eaves)
- Industrial manufacturing and engineering, storage, distribution and associated ancillary uses and some separate office units
- Very little tree cover to character area but good tree screening to northern boundary with Castleman Way and to Bickerley Mill Stream to the west, some open green space and vacant sites with some landscaping
- Poor public realm, favouring the car user
- Access and connectivity are limited, due to the nature of the use



### 03b. *Headlands Business Park*

- Enclosed industrial estate on a small and medium scale
- Land is flat and low lying
- Irregular grid of plots of varying sizes and close coarse grain
- Building lines vary to suit the cranked access road through the estate
- Profile metal cladding and asbestos-cement sheeting to steel frames
- Industrial shed-like structures the equivalent of two-storey domestic buildings (height to eaves)
- Low-key light Industrial, manufacturing and services/distribution
- Limited tree cover to character area but good tree screening to eastern and northern boundaries with Kingfisher Lake beyond
- Poor public realm, favouring the car user
- Access and connectivity are limited, due to the nature of the use and the layout of the access road, although unusually this is on a loop rather than the typical single access and egress

#### 2.3.3 *Boundaries and setting*

To sub-area RING03a, to the north are the residential character areas of RING02 and RING05f. The former penetrates into this character area with residential buildings set to back of pavement on the east side of Christchurch Road and industrial units to the west. To the south, the character changes again and takes in the separate area of village-like character of Moortown (RING04). To east and west is open countryside, although to the east there is only a small gap which then becomes urban fringe once again (RING05d). Sub-area RING03b is on the edge of the urban area and is bounded by Kingfisher Lake to the east (outside the urban area) and residential suburb RING05a to the south. To the north is open countryside which mainly comprises Blashford Lakes.

The setting of the area is one of residential extension along the principal routes from the south and north into and from the town. The industrial areas, particularly the expanse of roof, can be seen for some distance in the open landscape, especially from the east (RING05d) and north (RING05f) and, in the case of sub-area RING03b, on approaching Ringwood from the north.

#### 2.3.4 *Designations*

There are no statutory listed buildings or designated conservation areas in this character area.

#### 2.3.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT15.

#### 2.3.6 *Topography*

To sub-area RING03a, the area to the west of Christchurch Road drops away westwards to the flood plain and water meadows of the River Avon. The land to the east is low lying and predominantly flat. To sub-area RING03b the area is flat and low lying.

### 2.3.7 *Layout and Pattern*

To sub-area RING03a, varying footprint of building (almost entirely rectangular in plan), laid out on a simple grid parallel and perpendicular to Christchurch Road and Crow Arch Lane (to the east). Building lines are consistent to the grid. To the west of Christchurch Road the units are set in very large courtyards perpendicular to the road. This generally gives a uniform and rigid structure to the character area. To RING03b, despite the cranked access road, the built form sits in plan on a formal grid pattern although the building line appears very irregular in places due to the course of the access road.

### 2.3.8 *Buildings and materials*

Both sub-areas comprise small, medium-sized, large (and in the case of RING03a – very large) industrial units comprising clear-span steel-frame sheds with various modern cladding materials, mostly profiled metal. Often materials used for the walls are replicated on the roof. Otherwise, asbestos-cement sheeting is used. Low pitches are a consistent feature throughout and curved eaves profiles are a feature of the units to the west of Christchurch Road.

### 2.3.9 *Predominant land use*

Use is small- and medium-scale light industrial; some manufacturing/engineering, some office units with storage and distribution.

### 2.3.10 *Public realm*

The public realm is very poor for the pedestrian although most units are accessible by pavement. There are some grass verges and/or landscaping to the roadsides for individual units.

### 2.3.11 *Open space*

To both sub-areas, there are large areas of open space but this is mostly given over to parking areas or storage or both. To sub-area RING03a, there is a large cleared site but with hardstanding between Crow Arch Lane and Christchurch Road and an area of grassland to the east of Embankment Way.

### 2.3.12 *Biodiversity*

Habitats are limited amongst the hardstanding of the industrial units, but include some neglected and unconnected woodland fragments to the backs of units in the south of the area within the built environment. There are good tree belts to Castleman Way, and to the east of Embankment Way there is an open piece of managed grassland open space which is part hedge- and tree lined. There is some limited landscaping to individual units. To the west, the character area backs onto the protected habitats of the Avon Valley (see RING01) with a limited tree belt between the two. Sub-area RING03b backs onto Kingfisher Lake and is well-wooded to its eastern boundary with the lakes.

### 2.3.13 *Access and connectivity*

Due to the nature of the land uses within this character area it is deliberately not well connected to its surroundings. To sub-area RING03a, there are, however, good road links through and within the character area, although the separate areas have single entry and exit points. There are limited pedestrian routes. The national cycle route runs through sub-area RING03a, although is diverted from the former railway line onto main roads where the railway line has been lost to development. Sub-area RING03b is unusual for an industrial estate in that the buildings are set on a looping access road, with effectively two entrances and exits, giving this sub-area slightly better access than is usually the case for small to medium-sized industrial estates.

## 2.4 RING04 Moortown

### 2.4.1 Character Summary

***This character area is defined by two large open green spaces with houses set around, with the main Christchurch Road running through one side of each space. They developed during the late-nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth century and now form an area of medium-grain housing set around these 'greens'. A long terrace of finer-grain Victorian houses to the west side of Christchurch Road signals the start of the urbanised approach to Ringwood.***

### 2.4.2 Key characteristics

- Village-like suburb of the town set around a series of open greens
- The area is flat and low lying
- Regular plots at a medium grain – open in character
- A varied building line but with most houses set back in gardens. Terraces set to back of pavement make for memorable townscape
- Red brick, tile and slate and concrete interlocking tile replacements
- One- and two-storey houses (a number of chalet-style houses with dormers at upper floor)
- Predominantly residential, with a large sports complex (private tennis club) set behind dwellings
- Good open spaces; greens set off main road and mature tree belts provide backdrop for development
- Busy road network, some grass verges, poor wirescape
- Good access and connectivity

### 2.4.3 Boundaries and setting

To the north of this character area is RING03, the industrial edge to the town. To the south, east and west is open countryside (the edge of the settlement).

Moortown has its own identity as a place and, despite much infill and a setting comprising industrial units to the north, it has managed to retain the sense of a semi-rural village-like character. On travelling south out of the town, the houses set on the triangular green perpendicular to the road make an attractive group despite much alteration to materials.

### 2.4.4 Designations

Moortown House is Grade II listed; mid-eighteenth century with much alteration. There are no designated conservation areas in this character area.

### 2.4.5 Townscape types present

TCT05, 07 and 08.

### 2.4.6 Topography

The area is predominantly flat and low lying.

#### 2.4.7 *Layout and Pattern*

The main emphasis of this character area is on the distribution of houses along the main road (Christchurch Road), in terraces and detached dwellings, and around two open greens set off the main road (Christchurch Road) running north–south. In each case the road forms one side of the green with a secondary road serving houses and lanes off, with further usually post-war development beyond. Houses in different developments are set in regular-sized plots at a medium density although there is variety between the developments.

The building line varies throughout, with houses staggered along the roads fronting the open spaces, and terraces and older surviving buildings to back of pavement along the main road. Where houses are set to the back of pavement the townscape becomes strongly defined, sometimes only briefly, but effectively. Generally however, most houses have a front garden and usually a front boundary wall. The plots often back onto the rural landscape.

#### 2.4.8 *Buildings and materials*

A mix of single- and two-storey houses; terraced, semi-detached and detached. Most are simply detailed with limited articulation. There are further larger post-war houses of a more elaborately embellished character (for example Moorland Gate). A number of houses are chalet-style with sweeping roofs and large dormers to upper floors. There is a large sports complex largely hidden from the roadside; this comprises a series of varied buildings including a large linear brick and tile building with pitch roofs and a very large low pitch shed type structure housing indoor tennis courts.

There is a noticeable and predominant use of red brick in this character area, some painted render and a mix of clay tile and natural slate, but there has been much replacement with concrete interlocking tiles.

#### 2.4.9 *Predominant land use*

The character area is mostly residential with single-family dwelling houses of various sizes. There is a medium-scale private sports facility (tennis club) to the rear of the residential houses fronting Christchurch Road. There is also a prominent petrol filling station to the junction of Moortown Lane and Christchurch Road, and a small hotel/ restaurant.

#### 2.4.10 *Public realm*

There are grass verges and natural boundaries to pavements, some on-street parking and encroachment by cars onto open green space. Street lighting is standard and unobtrusive. There is a very high degree of wirescape throughout the character area (as is common to much of Ringwood). Christchurch Road is a busy thoroughfare passing through Moortown.

#### 2.4.11 *Open space*

A sequence of grassland open spaces runs along the principal route through the character area and most gardens are large with mature trees throughout. Trees often form the backdrop to development though they are not evident to front gardens or to the open spaces. There are good tree belts to the boundaries of the character area which often enclose distant views beyond the built form.

There is much open green space in the form of open countryside adjacent to boundaries to the east, west and south.

#### 2.4.12 *Biodiversity*

In most cases private gardens in the character area back onto open countryside and there is a high level of mature boundary survival and tree cover in these areas and beyond. The Bickerley Mill Stream passes along the western boundary; this is a rich habitat for wildlife, of international importance (see RING01), and forms part of the wider River Avon green corridor comprising flood plain and water meadow.

#### 2.4.13 *Access and connectivity*

This character area is set upon one of the principal routes to and from Ringwood and is easily accessed by road and on foot. For the pedestrian, it is well connected to its countryside hinterland, with footpaths and lanes running from the main road into and through the River Avon flood plain.

## 2.5 RING05 Residential suburbs

### 2.5.1 Character Summary

***This is a large and diverse character area with a series of small, medium-sized and large residential areas dating from the late Victorian period through to the late-twentieth century. Most of the housing is at a medium grain with mostly late-twentieth-century development at a fine grain – such as RING05h. The main roads and housing estates are predominantly formally laid out with varying degrees of allocation of green public space to the plans. Most Victorian and inter-war development is on a loosely defined grid plan. Houses are well-constructed and often reflect a cottage scale, with earlier (immediate-post-war) estates reflecting much of the stylistic and layout characteristics of the Garden City movement. A very distinct characteristic to this part of the town is the occasional survival of very early development associated with a forest character (thatched houses, lanes and general rural feel) into modern development. This is particularly apparent to the eastern edge (RING05g). Despite some significant differences (not least period of development) no areas are considered to be sufficiently unique or strongly defined as to be separate character areas. However, differences in terms of layout, presence and character of open space and period of development have necessitated the defining of five sub-areas.***

### 2.5.2 Key characteristics

#### Sub-areas of RING05

##### 05a. Salisbury Road Environs

- Principal route north (to Salisbury), comprising mostly inter-war and post-war expansion
- Land is flat and low lying but with houses set up from roadside
- Large detached houses and some detached bungalows, irregular layout and coarse grain
- Varied building line
- Houses set back from road in large front gardens
- Red brick, clay tiles and natural slate
- Single-storey and two-storey houses
- Almost entirely residential, single-family dwelling houses, and a museum (in part-converted farm buildings)
- Wide road, with wide grass verges
- Tree cover within gardens and to boundaries providing screening to houses and housing beyond
- Good access and connectivity

*05b. Northfield Road, Seymour Road and Broadshard Lane environs*

- Older mix of late-nineteenth-century, inter-war and post-war development at a medium to coarse grain throughout; medium-sized to large block layout, sometimes broken by cul-de-sacs
- The topography is flat throughout
- A mix of houses and bungalows, often detached, set on medium-sized to large plots
- Consistent buildings lines throughout, dwellings set back from the road with low boundary wall or hedge defining the roads or lanes
- Red brick and render and combinations of these with clay tile and natural slate
- Single- and two-storey houses with some chalet-style houses with dormers
- Entirely residential; single-family dwelling houses
- Mature boundaries of hedges and some trees. Some historic boundaries and lanes
- Narrow roads throughout and some on-street parking. Wirescape is a significant issue and impacts on the skyline of a number of roads
- Good access and connectivity

*05c. Parsonage Barn Lane and Eastfield Lane environs*

- Older mix of isolated late-nineteenth-century (and earlier), inter-war and post-war development at a medium grain throughout. Medium-sized block layout – broken by cul-de-sacs.
- The topography is flat throughout
- A mix of houses and bungalows set on medium-sized and some large plots
- Consistent buildings lines throughout, dwellings set back from the road with low boundary wall or hedge defining the roads
- Red brick (and other tones such as orange), painted brick and render and combinations of these with clay tile and natural slate and concrete interlocking tiles
- Single- and two-storey houses with some chalet-style houses with dormers
- Predominantly residential; single-family dwelling houses, with schools and their associated fields and sports facilities
- Mature boundaries of hedges and a limited number of mature trees
- Narrow roads throughout and some on-street parking. Wirescape is a significant issue on some roads
- Good access and connectivity



*05d. Crow Lane and Hightown Road (part)*

- Older routes east and south from the town, comprising mostly post-war expansion at a coarse open grain
- Land is flat and low lying
- Large detached houses and some detached bungalows and some semi-detached houses
- Varied building line reflecting gentle curve of lanes
- Houses set back from road in front gardens
- Red brick, clay tiles and natural slate
- Single-storey and two-storey houses
- Entirely residential; single-family dwelling houses
- Wide road, with wide grass verges and views to open countryside to west
- Some tree cover within gardens and to boundaries
- Good access and connectivity

*05e. Wessex Estate, Merryweather Estate and Queens Way*

- Planned estates of the immediate-post-war period, reflecting much of the spirit of the Garden City movement
- The topography is flat throughout
- Good-sized plots, side accesses and some front drives (some created from garden areas)
- Buildings lines are generally staggered and offset to streets and areas of open space, houses are set back with small gardens (often laid over to parking)
- Red brick sometimes painted and some render, clay tile roofs and brick chimneys
- Two-storey throughout
- Residential throughout; single-family private dwelling houses
- Good provision of small and medium-sized public open spaces
- On-street parking throughout, mostly narrow roads and cul-de-sacs, standard materials and lamp columns but with some good-sized grass verges (particularly to Queens Way)
- Poor access and connectivity, often with a single point of entry and exit, and with the A31 transport corridor as a significant barrier between estates

*05f. South of Hightown Road (western section)*

- Radburn type estates layout with 1970s houses (bungalows to part of Kingsfield Manor)
- The topography is flat throughout
- Fine grain; regular, rectangular layout, predominantly arranged in short terraces around grassed areas
- Consistent strongly defined building lines within groups (occasionally staggered but still cohesive)
- Red and buff brick with tile hanging to upper floors and concrete interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses (some with mono-pitched roofs)
- Residential throughout, with community uses and schools
- Views to open countryside to ends of streets, limited tree cover, some hedge boundaries (but mostly open)
- Grass verges, parking and garage courts, some on-street parking
- Good access and connectivity, often with pedestrian links between areas

*05g. Poulner and North Poulner*

- A series of medium-sized housing estates, bounding the eastern edge of the town's urban extent, with a small but popular district shopping area (Butlers Lane)
- Topography is steadily rising to the east (Western Escarpment of the New Forest)
- Detached and semi-detached houses, sometimes grouped around pedestrian greens, with front and rear gardens with driveways and garages
- Some staggered building lines to roads but generally a consistent set back
- Red/brown and buff bricks with weatherboarding and tile hanging (green, grey and orange examples) and some rendered panels to upper floors. Grey and brown concrete interlocking tiles to roofs
- Two-storey houses almost throughout
- Private dwelling houses, with small district shopping centre
- A good degree of public open green space to the front of houses (usually open boundaries) and to the formal green courts
- Wide roads with grass verges and some survival of early historic boundaries and lanes. No pavements to the lanes adds to the rural character of the eastern edges of this sub-area

05h. *Hightown Lake and Lane End Farm environs*

- Late-twentieth-century housing
- The topography is flat throughout
- Fine grain; irregular layout of short terraces or semi-detached and detached houses set in groups or around small cul-de-sacs
- Inconsistent building lines due to the overly complicated road and plot layouts
- Red brick, mock timber framing, hanging tiles and modern clay tile and other modern interlocking tiles
- Two-storey houses
- Entirely residential; single-family dwelling houses
- Areas of open space with small wooded areas linked to lakes to the south. Trees often forming the backdrop to development
- Shared pedestrian spaces, roads with grass verges, let down in places by dead frontage to the main feeder roads
- Good access and connectivity (especially to Hightown Lake and to countryside to the south)

2.5.3 *Boundaries and setting*

This large character area is bounded to the west and south-west by the older central core of the town (RING01, historic core and RING02, historic suburb (Christchurch Road)) and to the south (in part) by RING03, industrial estates. To the north lies a series of man-made lakes (Northfield Lake and Kingfisher Lake, known collectively as Blashford Lakes) which strongly define this northern boundary, although for the most part they are well-screened by trees or houses (with gardens hard to the edges of the lake) or both. There is also Hightown Lake, to the south-eastern boundary, which has residential development hard up to its edges.

The western boundary is strongly defined by the A338 (Salisbury Road) and the River Avon beyond.

To the east, a strong characteristic of the character area is the backdrop of the New Forest, constantly present in views east (and to a lesser extent north-east) out of the settlement. There are pockets of early development encapsulated within the sub-area on the eastern boundary (RING05g), usually comprising small groups of older houses (some of which are statutory listed buildings) in their lane setting, with historic hedgerows and older tree groups linked to the forest beyond.

The setting of much of the character area is that of forest (to the east) or open countryside (to the south and west). There are only limited open views out or in to the character area, due to the topography, but the sense of being at the urban edge of Ringwood, with the presence of the New Forest beyond, is most apparent to the southern boundary with some open views across fields towards the industrial units of Hightown Industrial Estate (RING03).

#### 2.5.4 *Designations*

There are a few statutory listed buildings distributed around the character area. These are mostly located along the principal routes; Southampton Road and Hightown Road. Most date from the eighteenth century with later alterations. Of note is Manor House on Southampton Road, a Grade II\* listed building of the early-eighteenth century.

To the west, the boundary is shared in places with the Ringwood Conservation Area, and to the north-east and east, small sections of the Western Escarpment Conservation Area (part of the New Forest National Park) are designated; these are to the western extent of Cowpitts Lane, where it joins Gorley Road, and the eastern extent of Butlers Lane where it becomes Linford Road.

#### 2.5.5 *Townscape types present*

TCT02, 07, 08, 16, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29.

#### 2.5.6 *Topography*

Much of the area is flat and low lying. There is some variation around the A31 corridor but this is only minimal gradient change. The eastern edge is the exception where, in places, the gradient steadily climbs up onto the western escarpment of the New Forest. This is most pronounced in sub-area RING05g.

#### 2.5.7 *Layout and Pattern*

There is some variation in layout and pattern across the character area although large areas share common characteristics (RING05b and RING05c for example). Most variation is due to the period of development and stylistic preferences rather than topographical or site constraints. The main layout principles are summarised as follows:

There are two sub-areas of marked coarse open grain which single them out for individual attention; RING05a (Salisbury Road) and RING05d (Hightown Road and Crow Lane). These comprise medium-sized but mostly large detached houses, with some semi-detached houses and bungalows, dating from both the inter-war and post-war periods (with the occasional older property, especially to RING05a), set on generous plots often with space all around the building, good-sized front and back gardens with off-street parking, detached garages and varied boundary treatments; mature and well-screened built form to RING05a and low hedges and small trees to RING05d.

The inter-war and immediate-post-war estates to the north and south of the A31 transport corridor (RING05e) comprise a well-defined pattern of houses, set around a loop-shaped block with either rear gardens or an open green space to the centre. They are set out at a medium to fine grain but plots are relatively generous throughout, many with side access and larger corner plots with houses angled to the road or street, often with public green space in front. Houses are generally laid out in short terraces with some semi-detached houses in groups. There is good public amenity space within estates – small urban parks, greens and informal recreation spaces. Houses in this sub-area (with very few exceptions) are set back from the road in their own front gardens but have varied and sometimes angled or offset building lines. Boundary treatments vary but are generally low timber fences or

hedges. In some limited cases gardens have been laid over to parking either informally or formally through the use of hardstandings.

The largest sub-areas RING05b and RING05c are similar but differ in the degree of open space retained within their layout. Both are laid out in fairly rigid grid patterns running approximately north–south and east–west. Plots are generally medium-sized to large with long back gardens and predominantly detached houses or bungalows, set back off the road with drives and/or front parking areas (some converted from front gardens). There are consistent building lines almost throughout RING05b and 05c and this adds to the general cohesion of this character area. RING05c has a much larger provision of public open space and a number of schools set within the grid pattern. RING05b appears and feels more intensely developed. This is combined with the narrow lanes and narrow width of roads generally throughout both sub-area, but most apparent in RING05b. There are also some older sections to RING05b dating from late-nineteenth century/early-twentieth century and the 1930s.

There are two types of housing layout dating from the 1970s. The north-eastern and eastern side of the character area (sub-area RING05g) is built on a medium grain, sometimes in short terraces of houses with separate parking courts, with garages and large areas of open green space between groups of houses and around which houses are set. The house groups are set out with some formality, always fronting the roadside of open green spaces. They are often set around a close or a green but there is good permeability, with pedestrian routes linking cul-de-sacs with open green space and wide grass-verged footpaths throughout. The second type is seen in RING05f and follows the principles of the 'Radburn estate'; houses set in short terraces (of between four and six houses) arranged around open cul-de-sacs (regular fine-grain pattern) which allow access to shared public green spaces and are linked to larger areas of public open space and/or the open countryside to the south. Housing in sub-area RING05f strongly reflects this layout pattern.

The late-twentieth-century development within the character area (most notably RING05h) is of a fine, irregular grain; short terraces or semi-detached and sometimes detached houses set in groups or around small cul-de-sacs, often with shared surfaces. Trees often form the backdrop to development. This period of residential development is characterised by a single entry road, providing access to the feeder roads and cul-de-sacs. A distinct part of this pattern is that most if not all housing faces onto secondary roads or cul-de-sacs. This often results in the main roads into the estates having dead frontage (rear fences/hedges/high boundary walls) for part and sometimes most of their length.

#### 2.5.8 *Buildings and materials*

There is a consistency to this large character area in terms of the height of buildings. Through all periods of development, there are rarely any houses above two storey and relatively little use of roofspaces to accommodate additional living space. Single-storey bungalows are usually mixed with houses rather than in individual developments in large numbers (the only exception to this is the western end of Clough's Road and environs). Stylistically, there is wide variation across the character area. However, almost all development would be generally considered as traditional – predominantly brick with some painted render with pitched roofs and

front and back gardens. There is no true style which dominates. The estates within RING05e to the north and south of the A31 transport corridor could be considered to be in a 'Garden City' style and share some of the common characteristics of this style, namely a cottage scale, with small windows, projecting gabled bays and small porches or door hoods. This type of inter-war and early-post-war housing is well-constructed, has provided good flexible accommodation and has maintained its integrity and 'cottage' style. The housing to the Merryweather Estate (sub-area RING05e) is an excellent example of this.

Brick is the predominant walling material throughout. There are many different colours, textures and finishes, from red (predominant), orange and buff bricks in straight colour and multi-bricks and the deeper browns of the inter-war and immediate-post-war examples. Brick has been painted in places. The 1970s developments (RING05f and 05g) are characterised in part by tile hanging – also seen in different colours from green and grey to red and orange.

Roofs are a mix of clay tile (some traditional plain tiles, but mostly machine-cut) or concrete interlocking tiles or natural slate. Low pitched roofs of bungalows and houses, particularly of the 1970s, use a number of different plain clay and cement interlocking tiles of various designs and colours; browns, greens and greys. There is a very limited but notable use of thatch (multi-layered with raised ridges) to older houses within the later estates developed around or adjacent to them. However, there are no examples of thatch on new build. There is also a notable use of exposed rafter feet to the eaves in the housing to Kingfisher Way – a distinct and defining feature of the character of this development.

#### 2.5.9 *Predominant land use*

The area is almost entirely single-family dwelling houses. There is some very limited flat development (some retirement flats and sheltered housing schemes). There are a number of well-used small district parades of shops and 'corner' shops within estates and on the main roads through sub-areas. Churches, chapels, community facilities, schools and colleges are key land uses, dispersed within the character areas. The latter are found mostly towards the western edge of the character areas, close to the town core, with a large school and associated playing field to the north-east (Poulner Infants and Junior schools).

#### 2.5.10 *Public realm*

The quality of the public realm is generally good. There are some distinct characteristics of sub-areas RING05b, RING05c and RING05e such as the survival of older lanes built into later development patterns and the general narrow character of streets and roads throughout. The lanes are often hedge-lined and have no pavements, adding to their semi-rural qualities. Narrow roads with on-street parking can be a significant issue in some places but are an effective traffic-calming tool. Throughout the character area wirescape is a significant issue and in some cases it dominates and defines the skyline and extended views along streets and roads. This is particularly prevalent in sub-areas RING05b and RING05c.

There are a lot of estate roads (post 1970s) with wide grass verges and additional break-out areas of green space. This, when combined with open boundaries as seen in sub-area RING05g, gives a real impression of an open grain, uncluttered townscape and spatial quality. These areas also have, in places, varied colours to tarmac denoting changes to the hierarchy of streets and granite sett cross-overs both to the streets and side roads. These add quality to the public realm in these areas (particularly seen to Kingfisher Way, but also elsewhere).

#### 2.5.11 *Open space*

There are a number of recreation grounds and sports fields connected to medium-sized to large school complexes. Of note is the Carver Sports Centre and grounds, connected to Ringwood School but publicly accessible, with a range of sports facilities. These schools tend to be located to the western boundary of the character area close to the historic core and its suburbs. In contrast, estates north of the A31 such as RING05b have very little public open space at all.

There are limited areas of amenity green space; these are often found in the 1970s estates (particularly RING05g) where they occasionally but not generally have some tree cover.

Gardens are medium-sized to large with relatively limited mature tree cover giving these houses good private open spaces throughout.

#### 2.5.12 *Biodiversity*

Habitats within the character area are urban, including gardens and amenity spaces, although the area has a high-quality countryside setting, with the Avon Valley to the west, the Western Escarpment of the New Forest to the east, and a series of lakes to the north, including Blashford Lakes Nature Reserve, which is part of the Avon Valley SPA and Ramsar site (see RING01). Medium-sized to large mature gardens within the area are linked throughout and often directly linked to habitats within the wider countryside.

Trees and woodland often form a backdrop to development but large tree groups do not form a significant part of the character of the character area. However, there are some notable survivals of former field boundaries; these are often linked to the survival of lanes and historic routes which have been incorporated into later development. This is particularly seen to RING05b, to the east of and including Broadshard Lane, and to the eastern edge of the character area (RING05g).

#### 2.5.13 *Access and connectivity*

There is good access throughout this character area, although the A31 transport corridor is a significant barrier, with only three road links and one footpath link across between north (RING05a, RING05b, RING05e (part) and RING05g ) and south (RING05c, RING05d, RING05e(part), RING05f and RING05h). The rights of way network varies but there is generally good access to the surrounding landscape; the New Forest and Avon Valley. The Avon Valley footpath runs through the character area, which also provides local access to Blashford lakes.

The character area is well connected to the historic core and its suburbs; these links often prioritise the cyclist or pedestrian, with a series of footpaths or limited access roads linking the town centre to its residential suburbs.