



## Neighbourhood Character Assessments

### 5.3 TC Area 1 : Fairmile and Jumpers Common

**5.3.1** Jumpers Common forms the western extension of the built up area to the north of the main town centre of Christchurch. The area is separated from the main town by the Southern Railway. To the east the neighbourhood is enclosed by the coniferous forests of St Catherine's Hill, to the west the area is bordered by the River Stour.

#### Physical Framework

##### Geographic Features

**5.3.2** The area of Jumpers has grown out over the terrace of raised ground between the River Avon and Stour. The Fairmile Road out of Christchurch follows the spine of high ground that extends from the Priory in the Town Centre out towards the village of Hurn. The bulk of the built up area occupies the generally level ground above the adjoining flood plains. Limited areas of housing have been developed on the lower slopes of St Catherine's Hill.

**5.3.3** As a small scale alluvial terrace there are no notable watercourses within the built up area. The existing development has generally been limited by the edge of the natural flood plains of the two rivers. A narrow corridor of open flood plain land is left undeveloped alongside the river Stour. To the east the Water Treatment Works separates the existing development and the River Avon.

##### History and Settlement Pattern

**5.3.4** The Ordnance Survey Map of 1898 (**Figure 5.1**) illustrates the Victorian development pattern that was limited to the Fairmile area to the south of Jumpers Common. The Christchurch Union Workhouse, Cemetery and Artillery Barracks provided the focus for the expanding area. To the north of Jumpers Common the landscape had been reorganised into the enclosure type landscape now seen on other sections of River Terrace.

**5.3.5** By 1924 the first phases of building alongside the Grove and close to Grove Farm had been started. The new developments in this area often used the enclosure field pattern to provide plot boundaries. Between the 1924 and 1931 OS editions the area to the north of Fairmile Road expanded from a few cottages to include the first

phase of detached 'estate' housing.

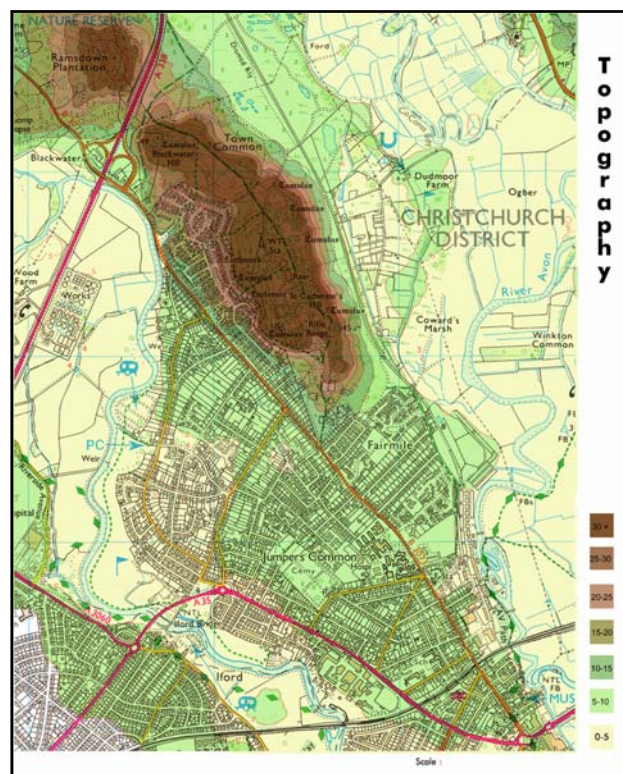
**5.3.6** The subtle distinctions in the housing areas that were apparent in the 1930s are reflected in the broad character areas described at the end of this section. To the south of the cemetery the older housing stock was becoming more densely in-filled and even at that time contained a clear mix of different aged development. To the north of Fairmile Road the early estate layout of uniform housing was beginning to emerge. To the north of Jumpers a network of roads around the Grove was developing with detached individual houses and bungalows in large plots, giving a more suburban pattern of development.

##### Existing Townscape

**5.3.7** The neighbourhood has expanded out to its natural boundaries. To the north-east is the coniferous forest on St. Catherine's Hill, to the east the Avon flood plain and to the west the River Stour. The area is effectively separated from the main Town Centre by the railway line. The area is physically sub-divided by busy main roads. The Fairmile Road connects the Borough to the A338 and Barrack Road provides a key route into Bournemouth. These routes act as main through routes for the Borough, and are consequently heavily trafficked. The predominant land use with Jumpers is residential. Limited blocks of non-residential development are found concentrated mainly in the southern (Fairmile) area. These include the non-food retail outlets on the old Barracks site, a school, light industrial area, the water works, the hospital and cemetery.

**5.3.8** At a smaller scale there are also occasional groups of local shops located along the main roads through the neighbourhood. The residential areas are laid out to a variety of densities across the neighbourhood. The bulk of the residential development ranges between 15 and 30 units/ha.

**5.3.9** The area is further sub-divided by side road links. A series of parallel roads link between the two main through routes. Numerous side roads and cul-de-sacs spur off these to serve the estate layouts. Although the vehicular access to the housing areas is well provided there is no comprehensive network of footpath links or open space routes that would serve pedestrians. Significant areas of infill development have occurred within blocks of housing, but few new opportunities for pedestrian links have been created in the process.



**Figure 5.3**

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### Landscape Settings, Spaces and Structure



**5.3.10** The neighbourhood of Jumpers is not widely visible to external view points. There is no obvious sense of the surrounding landscape providing a foreground setting. St. Catherine's Hill acts as a backdrop to local views from within the neighbourhood. The Stour flood plain is not strongly related to the neighbourhood, many housing areas back onto the flood plain and preclude public views towards the river. With a very limited provision of public open space, there is no overall landscape structure to the neighbourhood.

**5.3.11** Individual trees and local tree groups form significant features within the Jumpers area. The line of the Fairmile Road is marked by a succession of key tree groups from the outskirts of the area into the hospital grounds. Oak and Pine frame sections of the road where houses are served by a parallel side road inside the tree line. Mature cedars highlight an open space along the frontage of the hospital grounds.



**5.3.12** Around the Grove the large gardens of the early development pattern include mature hedgerow, oaks dating from the old enclosure pattern hedges. The Grove includes a dramatic avenue of these specimen trees. The remaining area of Grove Copse is a small part of the woodland indicated on the 1898 historic map, and is presumed to significantly pre-date the enclosure landscape of that time.

**5.3.13** The Victorian planting of trees around the cemetery has now provided a landmark tree group within the centre of the neighbourhood. In the landscape setting to the area the Pine Forest of St. Catherine's Hill also provides an important backdrop to the housing on the lower slopes of the hillside.



**5.3.14** The lack of an internal structure of open space areas is to some extent compensated for by the access opportunities to the adjacent open land. The Stour flood plain can be accessed from the western side of the neighbourhood. St. Catherine's Hill is accessible from the adjacent housing areas on the eastern side. With no significant parking on the Hill and access through residential estates, the Hill is not openly accessible to visitors. While this is a prominent visual feature within the Borough the lack of general access for non-residents of the area diminishes its role as a Borough-wide asset.

### Landmarks and Legibility

**5.3.15** The tree groups described above provide the majority of local landmark features within the neighbourhood. Those trees located

alongside the Fairmile Road are significant in terms of the wider perception of the Jumpers area. On these same routes the hospital buildings are also a local landmark element on the approach into Christchurch. Two key points on the main roads noticeably lack any sense of arrival or landmarking. At the points where both Fairmile Road and Barrack Road climb over the railway into the Town Centre, the sense of entering or leaving the neighbourhood has been lost. St. Catherine's Hill is noted as a visual landmark to glimpsed views within the neighbourhood.

**5.3.16** At a more local level minor landmarks and intersections of routes can help make the area legible. Features such as the Fire Station, the Barrack Building, the Bailey Bridge Sculpture and Iford Bridge fall within this category. The distribution of these features along the main routes are somewhat few and far between.



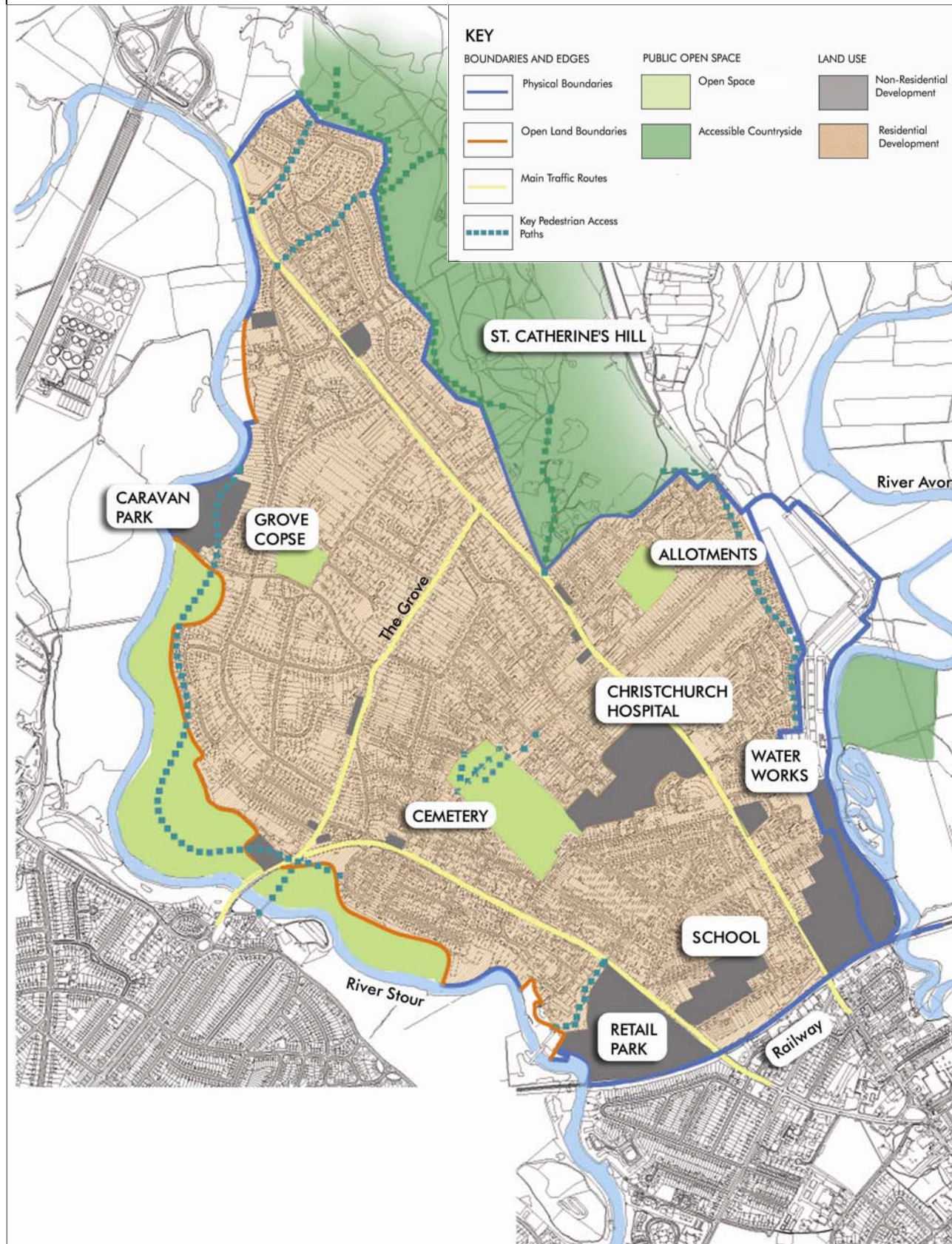


Figure 5.4 - Jumpers - Fairmile Physical Townscape

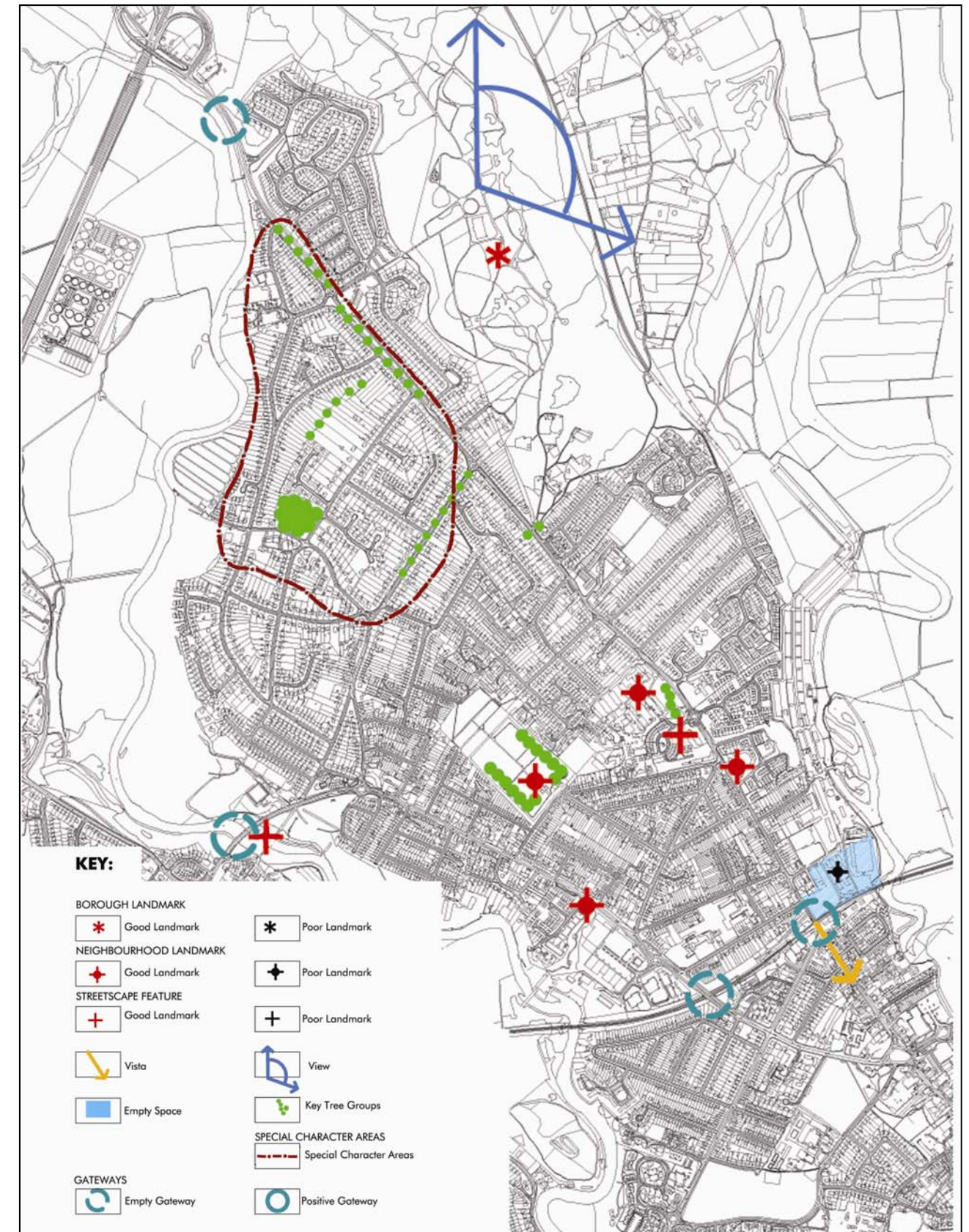


Figure 5.5 - Jumpers - Fairmile Townscape Analysis



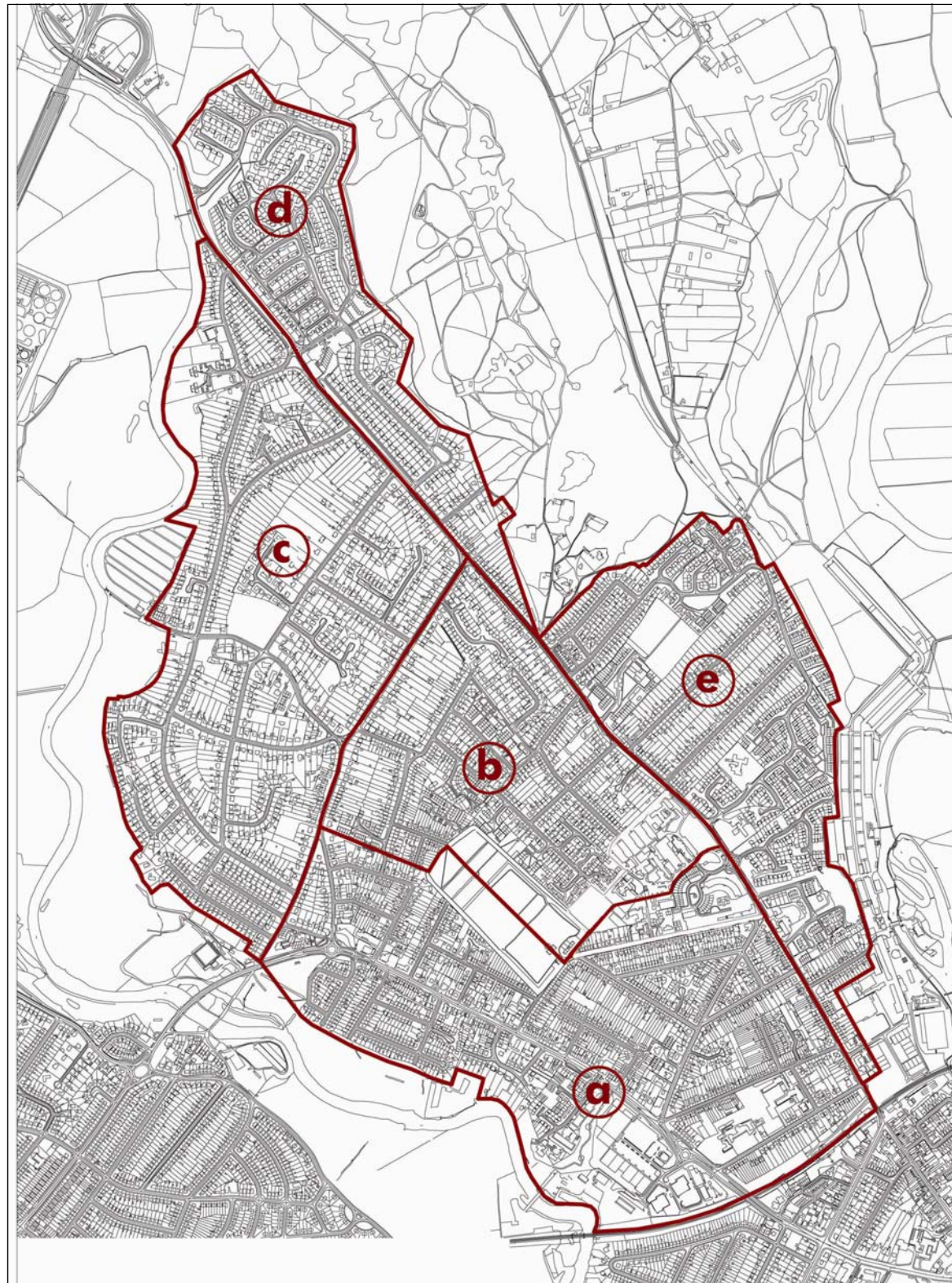


Figure 5.6 - Character Areas

### Neighbourhood Character Areas

5.3.17 The whole neighbourhood has a general character of an expanded residential area. There are a mix of development patterns and house types throughout the whole area. The sub-division of this area down into individual character areas relies on relatively subtle variations.

- a. Barrack Road/Christchurch Cemetery
- b. Canberra Road
- c. The Grove
- d. St Catherine's Hill—Hillside Drive
- e. Marsh Lane

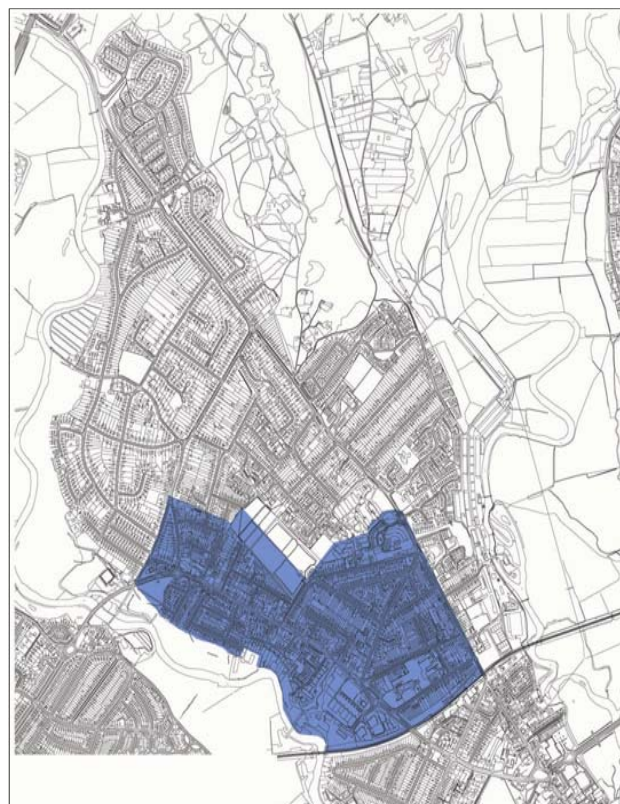




Aerial photograph of the  
Fairmile and Jumpers  
Common Area







#### 5.4 Area 1a : Barrack Road

**5.4.1** The area to the south of the cemetery and hospital was the main area of Victorian expansion into the Jumpers area. In the 1890s the area had a network of new roads and an emerging pattern of housing. By the 1930s the area was developed as a series of residential streets interspersed with other land uses. The Artillery Barracks, a nursery, an orchard and allotments appear within the mixed pattern of development.

**5.4.2** Since that time the basic framework of development has been infilled with new houses in the open spaces and by sub-division of large plots. The resultant townscape is a very varied mix of old and new housing around a tight network of streets.

**5.4.3** The general grain of this area is of small blocks of housing set within small garden plots. There is also a wide range of building styles and materials giving the area little continuity between different streets or the wider network. The area lacks any strong landscape structure or setting. Although the area adjoins the River Stour corridor most of the development turns its back on the flood plain. The mature trees of the cemetery form a backdrop to a few streets. Generally the area is not heavily treed.

**5.4.4** The chapel and lodge buildings within the cemetery form distinctive local landmarks on Jumpers Road. The converted Barracks housing area is a noticeable feature on the main A35 (Barrack Road) frontage. The general quality of the area is reduced by the varied, often random, mix of housing stock. As with other areas there is a dominance of housing over other activities. Where other landscapes occur, such as the retail park and school, these do little to reinforce any sense of place.

#### 5.4.5 Main Characteristics

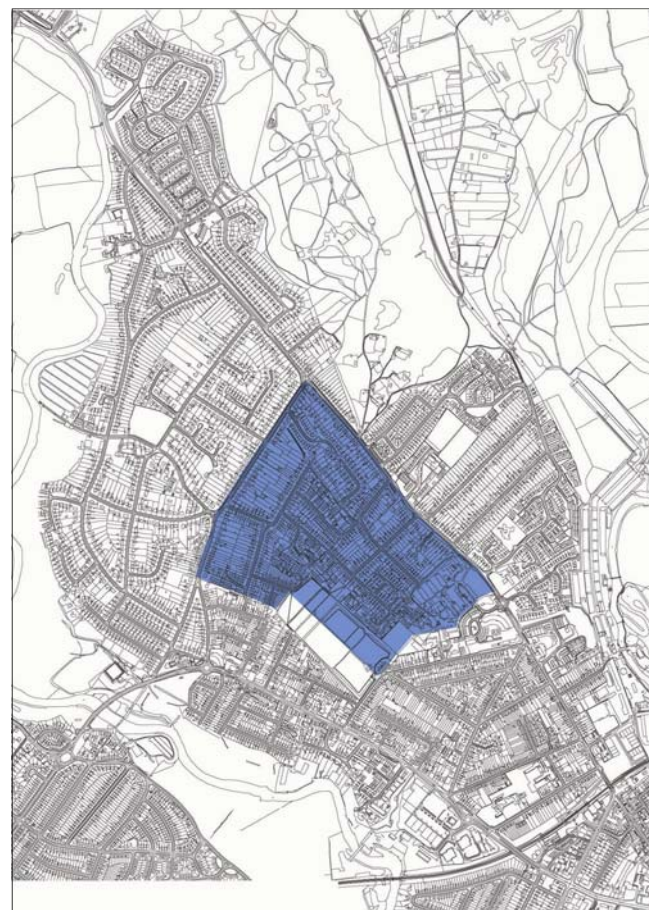
- Small scale very mixed housing area with occasional street frontage rather than estate development.
- Wide range of un-unified building styles and materials.
- Absence of landscape structure or public spaces and limited relationship with adjoining river corridor.
- Few positive landmarks and limited legibility of townscape.

#### 5.4.6 Residential Development Characteristics

Form/Scale	Mixed single and two-storey detached and semi detached residential streets with small infill cul-de-sac development
Era	1910 - onwards often jumbled.
Style	Mix of bay fronted and plain
Materials	Brick exposed and rendered with slate and tile.
Roofscape	Varied - often broken
Plot Size/Density	Small - medium - up to 30/ha
Frontage	Properties set back with modest front gardens
Boundaries	Brick, fencing and hedges
Trees	Mix of small scale street trees.

#### Sensitivity to Change

**5.4.7** The general mix and diversity of building styles suggests this area would not be sensitive to general changes. The heavy random infill of the older streetscape and small scale grain already gives the impression of some cramming of development. Further insensitive development would exacerbate this effect.



**5.5 Area 1b : Canberra Road**

**5.5.1** The area to the immediate north of the cemetery follow on from the development to the south (Area 1). In the 1890s this area was fields and rough common land, with The Grove appearing as a tree-lined lane. The initial development pattern facing onto The Grove was more suburban than the street pattern to the south of the cemetery. Subsequent development was built off a pattern of minor estate roads. The distinction between the area and the suburban area to the northwest of The Grove is in the scale of these estate roads. The roadways in this area are generally smaller and follow a tighter pattern. The housing plots were also slightly less generous than the area across The Grove.

**5.5.2** The original development pattern has been in-filled with a number of modern cul-de-sac developments contained within amalgamated rear gardens. Within some it is possible to see separate phases of development within the same cul-de-sac. The remaining pattern of larger plots retains some treescape between the houses, but the general impression is less dominant than areas to the north west of this character area.

**5.5.3** The Grove provides a significant tree-lined frontage to one side of this character area. The cemetery also provides some sense of a setting to the south. Aside from these elements there is no real landscape structure and only a single public open space within the area.

**5.5.4** The building pattern is a general mix of bungalows and houses. There is a degree of structure in the groupings of bungalows and housing. There are also repeating styles and materials that help give some unity to individual streets. The street pattern is sufficiently small to provide a good degree of pedestrian access through the area. No opportunities have been taken to improve this within the infill developments. These areas remain as small private enclosures within the more public streets.

**5.5.5** The general conformity of the main streets and condition of the housing stock provides a pleasant residential environment. The small scale pattern and privacy makes this an enclosed section of townscape. The area does not make a strong contribution to the wider character of the neighbourhood.

**5.5.6 Main Characteristics**

- Small scale roadways leading into mix of mature estate and modern infill development.
- Local landmark tree-line of The Grove provides a setting to one side of the area. Internally limited treescape is important to the remaining sense of division between spaces.
- Housing stock is an ordered mix of bungalows and housing with occasional contrasts of newer infill cul-de-sacs of standard estate type housing.

**5.5.7 Residential Development Characteristics**

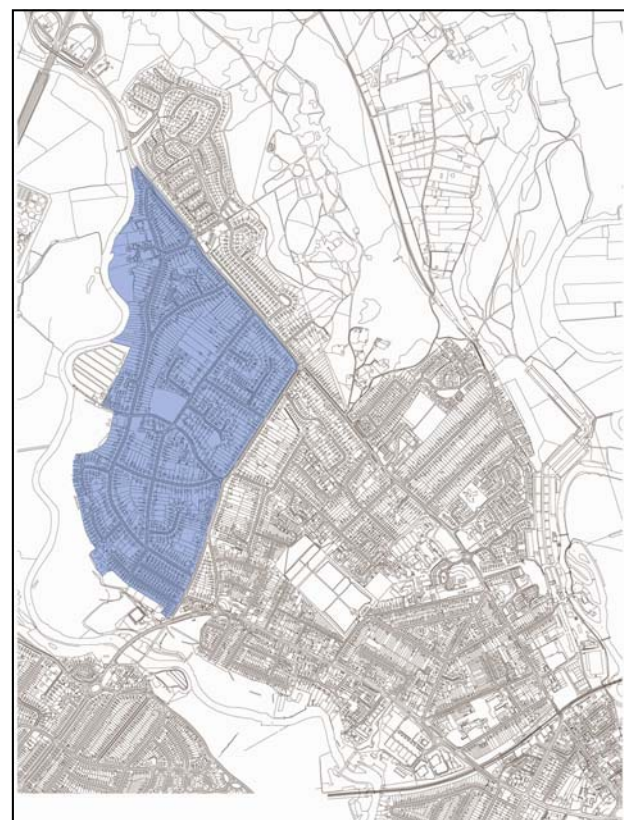
Form/Scale	Early suburban estate - with infill mixed single and two storey
Era	1900 - 1970 and later infill
Style	Suburban detached - common house types within 70's standard estate layout.
Materials	Brick and tile
Roofscape	Varied due to mix of bungalows and houses.
Plot Size/Density	Medium - low - 15/ha
Frontage	Modest front gardens
Boundaries	Low brick walls and hedging
Trees	Oak within gardens

**Sensitivity to Change**

**5.5.8** The general mix of housing within the area would allow some incremental redevelopment, improvement or extensions. The limited tree cover and garden frontages appear to have been diminished by infill. Further loss of trees or mature gardens would increase the sense of a hard environment.

**5.5.9** The existing pattern of infill appears as having crammed some development at the expense of the general character of the area. Further infilling would increase the conflicting contrasts in densities and styles. These developments have tended to increase the isolation and privacy of the area.





### 5.6 Area 1c : The Grove

**5.6.1** This area includes the original lower density housing laid out around Grove Farm from the early 1900's onwards. The defining features of this character area is the noticeably more Sylvan character of the housing area provided by street trees and mature gardens. The housing types in the neighbourhood are primarily a combination of bungalows and two storey detached houses. The initial phase of building occurred between 1890 and 1910, with the bulk of the housing completed after the War. Elsewhere, there are pockets of more recent infill and groups of similar house types. Whilst there is a broad mix of house types in the area, the building has generally been of a similar scale, which contributes to a cohesive character.

**5.6.2** Because Jumpers Common is relatively flat, the coniferous woodland of St. Catherine's Hill provides a visual landmark above the houses, creating a backdrop and orientation point. The Hill is indicative of something beyond, and provides some sense of enclosure.

**5.6.3** The neighbourhood has been imposed upon an enclosure landscape of fields, woodland and rough common ground. As such, The Grove and remnants of woodland areas are key indicators of the history of the area. The mature garden plots help to enhance a pleasant environment, reinforcing a sense of establishment and permanence. The roads around The Grove area are gently winding and often tree lined. Together with the large, private front gardens, this gives the neighbourhood a leafy suburb Sylvan character and adds interest. The established planting both in the streetscape and in gardens adds to a sense of enclosure and shelter.

**5.6.4** The early parts of the development follow continuous roadways that link through the area. The original properties were laid out as a mix of individual dwellings that includes bungalows and houses in random order. The properties were generally built set back from the roads with long back gardens and often generous spacing between plots. In many areas the individual houses are set back into well vegetated gardens. It is generally the garden vegetation that provides the key characteristic of the area.

**5.6.5** More recent infills are generally cul-de-sac infill developments. These range in size from only three or four dwellings to more than twenty. These smaller developments have had a cumulative impact on the tree cover of the area. As cul-de-sacs, the new infills have also increased the sense of defensible spaces within the housing area. The individual housing infills become private enclaves off the public

roadways. Although such infills present the opportunity to create new pedestrian links through an area, none of the developments have improved the permeability of the area.

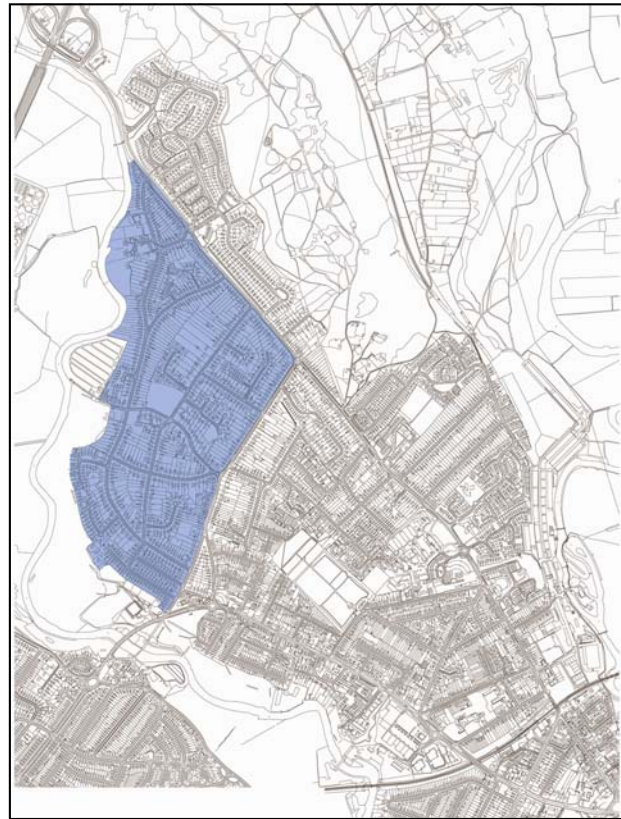
#### 5.6.6 Main Characteristics

- Original development patterns of mixed detached properties set back from the roads in large plots.
- Mature oaks form a distinctive characteristic as street trees and dominating some gardens.
- General feeling of enclosure and mature treescape and gardens.
- Area forms a quiet leafy suburb.
- Private infill developments formed as newer cul-de-sac developments have increased the density of the original pattern.
- Sylvan character depends on a limited number of original sized plots.
- This area has a strong sense of place in relation to other parts of the neighbourhood. It is evident that the tree cover is variable within the character area.

#### 5.6.7 Residential Development Characteristics

Form/Scale	Early suburban development with areas of modern infill, single and two storey
Era	1900 - 1930 with later additions/infill
Style	Mix of mainly individual properties
Materials	Brick - often rendered with tile
Roofscape	Varied with mix of housing - many loft conversions
Plot Size/Density	Large - often less than 10/ha
Frontage	Large mature front gardens
Boundaries	Well vegetated gardens
Trees	Dominance of old hedgerow oaks



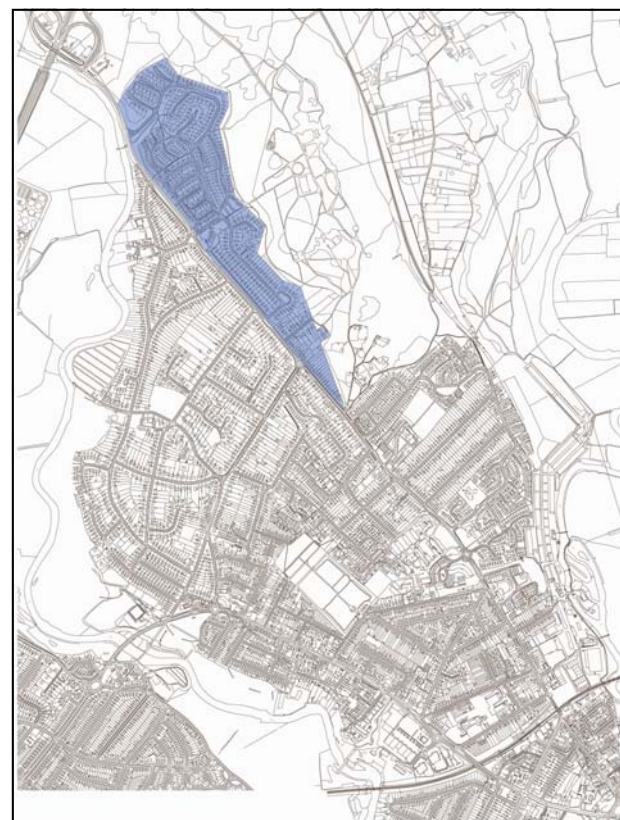


### Area 1c : The Grove cont ..

#### Sensitivity to Change

**5.6.8** The layout of individual mixed housing styles suggests this area can accept the general upgrading and alteration of the existing built fabric. The loss of a large proportion of the original large gardens means the well vegetated character is dependent on those that remain along with the vegetation between, and in the frontage of the plot areas. This characteristic is therefore sensitive to enlargement of the properties or further infill.





**5.7 Area 1d : St. Catherine’s Hill – Hillside Drive Estate**

**5.7.1** This is a very ordered estate of predominantly bungalow development on the lower slopes of St. Catherine’s Hill. The area is laid out as a small grain pattern of estate roads and cul-de-sacs. The streetscape is of wide sweeping roadways and open plan front gardens. The development is predominantly detached bungalows with a few more individual houses set down against the Fairmile Road. The estate was developed with a standard range of designs. There has been minimal adjustment or extension to the original designs. The result is a very uniform character.

**5.7.2** The estate is set into the edge of the Pine forest planting on the hillside. Occasional groups of Pine are also contained within the layout. There is minimal public or communal space within the layout. On the lower side of the development area strong lines of roadside trees separate the Fairmile Road from parallel side roads serving the estate. These help separate the houses from the busy road and also provide a local landmark, as noted previously. The area is well served by pedestrian links - most of the cul-de-sac areas have path connections out from the hammer head end of the roads. These connect routes down to a central shopping court and the Fairmile Road. The area also has several footpath connections up into the woodland area on the Hill.

**5.7.3** The open plan uniformity of the estate creates a distinct character. The whole estate is well maintained and the standard dwellings remain mostly unaltered. In this very controlled environment, it is difficult for individual property owners to personalise the dwellings. The open plan frontages do not allow for any definition of private space on the frontages. The resultant effect is a good quality controlled environment, but one that may be less desirable or adaptable to changing fashions and lifestyles.

**5.7.4** The development provides a pleasant living environment, but does not make a wider contribution to the neighbourhood character.

**5.7.5 Main Characteristics**

- Open plan uniform low rise estate, with rigid adherence to standard design.
- Setting of Pine forest backdrop, with occasional echoes of evergreen vegetation within layout.

- Trees fronting onto Fairmile Road form local landmark on the approach to Christchurch.

**5.7.6 Residential Development Characteristics**

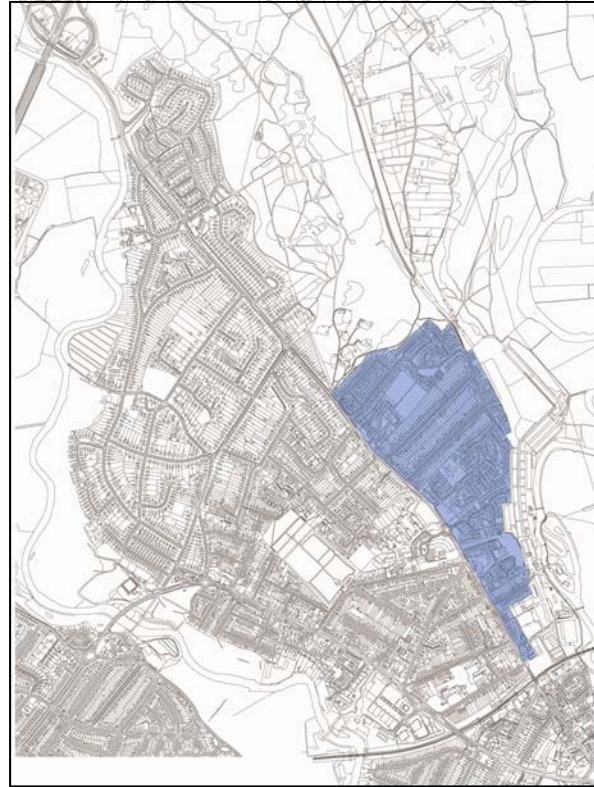
Form/Scale	Suburban estates - predominance of standard bungalow types and plots
Era	1960’s
Style	Standard designed bungalow types
Materials	Brick and render - tile
Roofscape	Unbroken lines of standard designs
Plot Size/Density	Modest - 15/ha
Frontage	Open plan gardens
Boundaries	n/a
Trees	Pine

**Sensitivity to Change**

**5.7.7** The low level uniform designs and open plan gardens create a rhythm that would be particularly sensitive to change. The existing densities and grain of roadways also suggest there is little scope for sporadic increases in density. Future pressure may arise for enlargement or roof conversions. In view of the general consistency of the dwellings, this could disrupt the existing conformity of the estate.

**5.7.8** Future pressure for adaptation of these dwellings may need to be resisted or managed to a common design style if the overall quality of the estate environment is to be protected.





**5.8 Area 5e : Marsh Lane**

**5.8.1** This area is comprised of a series of different aged estate developments. The earliest remaining development appears on the 1930s edition Ordnance Survey as detached houses on two long straight avenue estate roads. These were designed as individual dwellings on modest plots with a small set back from the road. The slightly later addition of Norfolk and Suffolk Avenues were again detached dwellings, but with smaller plots. The remaining areas are more typical 1970s, 80s and 90s volume house builder estates with fewer straight roads, and more cul-de-sac developments. These generally are of high density and have minimal front gardens and small rear garden plots.

**5.8.2** The dense pattern of development is relieved by only limited areas of open space. There are few pedestrian connections between open areas or the different areas of development. At the northern end of the area the development is contained by an area of oak woodland and the rising ground of St. Catherine’s Hill. On the eastern side the area is divorced from the open landscape of the Avon Valley by the operational areas of the water works. To the south the housing borders a light industrial area and the railway.

**5.8.3** The general environment of the area is hard with minimal softening provided by the woodland in view to the north of the area.

**5.8.4 Main Characteristics**

- Townscape comprised of a series of estate developments of mixed layout styles and house types
- Hard un-relieved environment.
- Limited connection with wider landscape settings of St. Catherine’s Hill and flood plain.

**5.8.5 Residential Development Characteristics**

Form/Scale	Ordered estates, mix of bungalows and two storey houses
Era	1930 - 1940’s and 1970 - 1980’s
Style	Detached
Materials	Brick and tile
Roofscape	Varied with housing mix
Plot Size/Density	Modest 15/ha
Frontage	Enclosed modest gardens
Boundaries	Walls and Fences mixed
Trees	Occasional street trees with native woodland backdrop

**Sensitivity to Change**

**5.8.6** With a very mixed range of housing types and layout styles, this area is not highly sensitive to change. The overall density of the existing layouts suggests infill developments or plot divisions could result in a sense of a cramped environment.





### 5.9 Capacity for Development

**5.9.1** The detailed character area assessments have highlighted some local characteristics that would be sensitive to change. The tree cover of the area has suffered from infill development reducing the size of garden plots. Significant areas of the neighbourhood have already accommodated a lot of infill or plot division to provide new housing. There is a real sense that the areas have been developed to capacity. While some potential infill sites remain there is a danger with more infill the neighbourhood would read as a ‘crammed’ environment. A number of housing areas have been built to standard house types. The conformity of these areas would be sensitive to conversions and extensions that disrupt the continuity of these areas.



**5.9.2.** Table 5.9.6 sets out a summary of the neighbourhood development potential and identifies the likely conflicts that would arise. It is recognized development can be a positive force for change, the table allows for potential benefits against different aspects of townscape to be identified.

**5.9.3** From this it is apparent the physical scope for further development within Jumpers is in fact quite limited. The amount of undeveloped land within the area is minimal. Extension of the neighbourhood boundaries would encroach into flood plains and forest. It is also evident the opportunities that do exist would impact on aspects of the townscape. In terms of the most sensitive elements of character, the tree cover within the residential areas is an essential part of the local neighbourhood character.



**5.9.4** It should be noted the predominance of oak arising from old hedgerows which predates the housing. These trees require space and cast heavy shade, there may be pressure from householders to fell or reduce such specimens. The value of such trees to the general setting and as a historical record could be promoted. In the long term such trees will require management to remain in a safe and healthy condition. The potential for such trees to become veteran specimens could be promoted as a local tree project to encourage residents to positively value and manage the trees.

**5.9.5** It should also be recognized the infill sites and spaces between plots and road frontages provide the long term potential for the changing patterns of vegetation. Infills and extensions that reduce the long term potential for a mature vegetation structure should be resisted.