



5.31 TC Area 4 : Somerford

5.31.1 Located to the north of Stanpit and enclosed by the A35 Christchurch bypass, this area is made up of both residential and commercial areas. The Somerford Road acts a main route into Purewell, Stanpit and the Eastern side of the Town Centre. A range of large scale retail and commercial premises are based alongside this route.

5.31.2 The main housing area within Somerford dates from the 1950s / '60s. This area was developed as a council estate to the standards of the era. The general grain of plot sizes and densities compares with the private estates of the time. Comparison with the 1960's estate layout of Bure Lane – Mudeford illustrates the Somerford area had a better level of open space provision. Despite this, the Somerford estate is the less attractive residential area. The general quality and style of the buildings is lower and have less by way of design interest.

5.31.3 The area does not have much significant vegetation, the garden areas are less developed. The area is sandwiched between the busy A35 and Somerford Road. The commercial and industrial areas on the Southern side of the Somerford Road are non-descript, universal style and scale developments. The various commercial operations depend on the visibility to the frontage. The areas present an “anywhere” urban character to the Somerford Road.

Geographic Features

5.31.4 The area has been developed across a flat area of River terrace farmland. As such, the area has no significant natural landform and only very minor watercourses.

Historic Development

5.31.5 Reference to the 1898 Ordnance Survey illustrates there were only a few cottages along the main road at that time. The development of this area dates from the 1950's and 1960's.

Existing Townscape

5.31.6 The busy Somerford Road cuts through the area separating the main residential area from the commercial development areas. The housing is set back from the road with a wide, landscape strip. The housing and roadway are separated by level and continuous low

detached council housing. On the south side the large scale commercial developments are interspersed with pockets of higher density estate housing. The commercial frontages extend out across the A35/Somerford Road junction to a superstore and garden centre on the Lyndhurst Road.

Landscape Setting Spaces and Structure

5.31.7 The area is separated from the Mudeford neighbourhood by the open space/tree cover within the Mude Valley. Trees also enclose the housing around the edge of the A35 bypass. Trees also form local landmarks around the main road roundabouts at either end of the Somerford Road.

5.31.8 The townscape does not have any foreground setting as such. However, the contrast of dense urban development on one side of the A35 and open accessible countryside on the north side of the road is significant. Greater detail on the condition of the countryside area is set out in Section 4.0.

Landmarks and Legibility

5.31.9 There are no really positive landmarks within the neighbourhood. The roadway through is legible in the sense that the commercial developments are a different form of development from the bulk of the surrounding townscape.

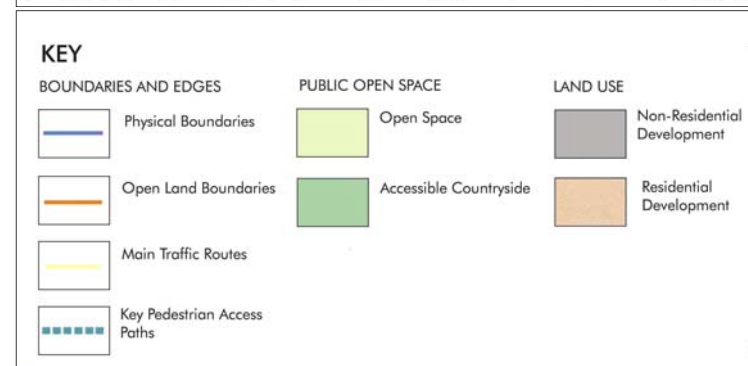


Figure 5.18a - Townscape Analysis

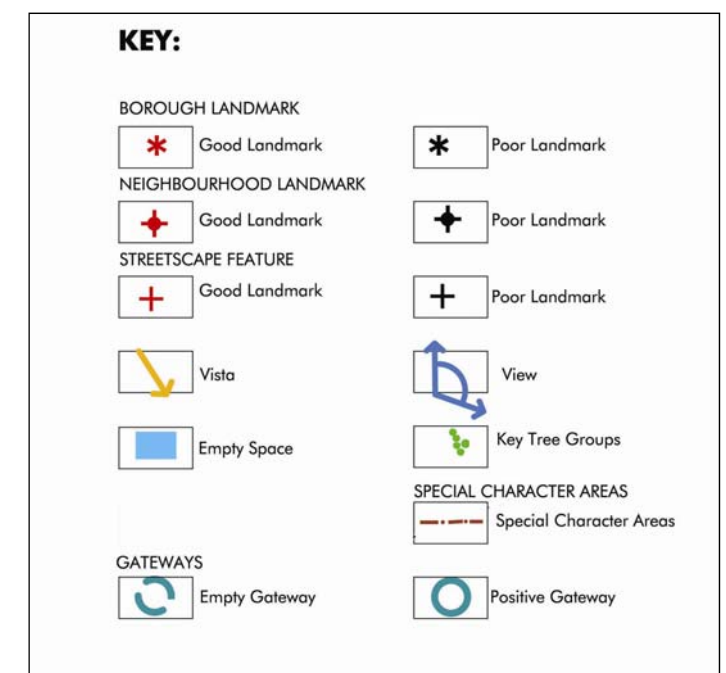


Figure 5.18b - Physical Townscape

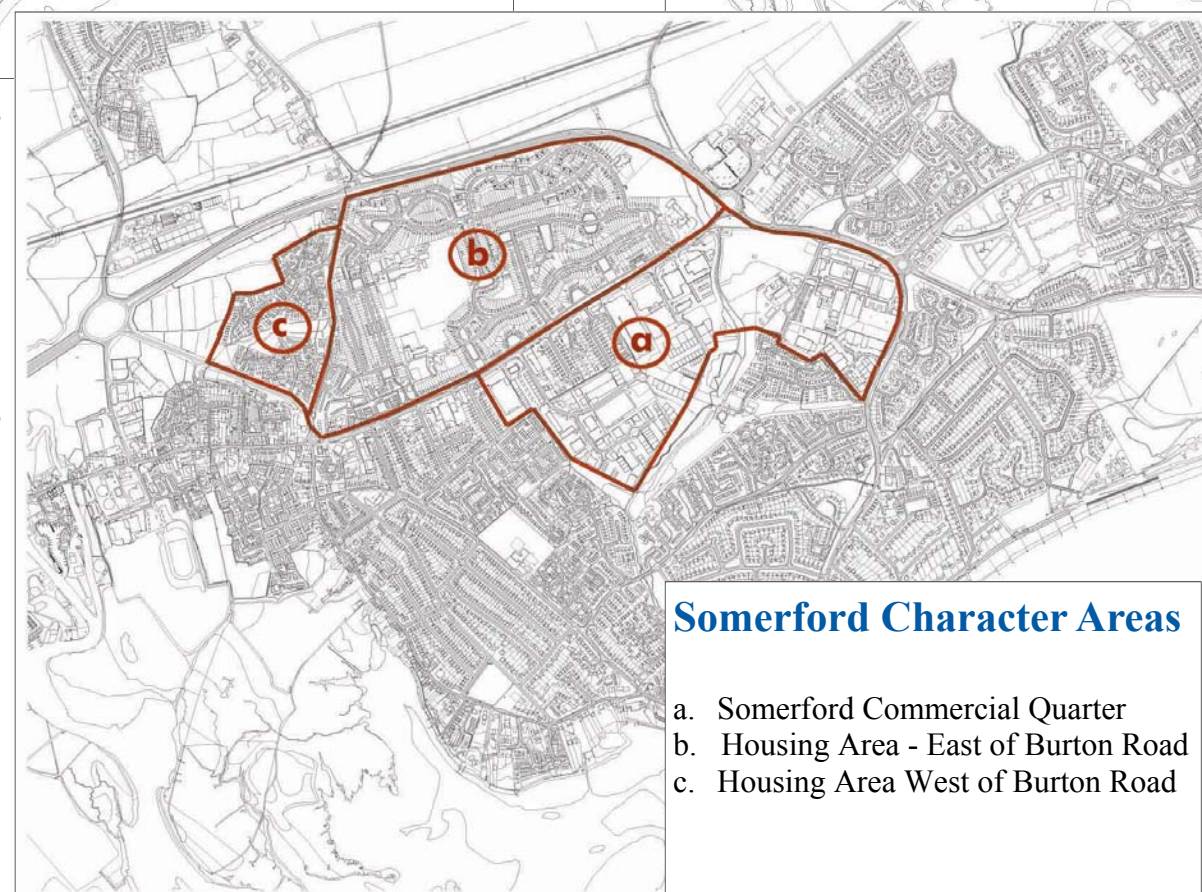


Figure 5.18c - Character Areas Somerford



Aerial photograph of Somerford



5.32 NC Area 4a : Somerford Commercial Quarter



5.32.1 This area is dominated by large-scale retail warehousing and local industrial estate buildings. This development has evolved from the large-scale hangers and ancillary buildings of the old Christchurch aerodrome. Parts of the development front on to the busy Somerford Road. Other elements are set in behind the main frontage in jumbled small-scale pockets of commercial industrial estate format.

5.32.2 The development occupies a flat area of old river terrace topography which ensures there are few views into or out of the developed area. The eastern side of the character area is heavily enclosed by the tree cover of Mudford Wood. This is a narrow band of tree cover contained within the small scale Mude Brook Valley.

5.32.3 The main road frontage, the Somerford Road, is a busy local road. The presence of a dominant commercial frontage is a different type of Townscape that is not widely seen elsewhere in the Borough. The quality of the commercial building and frontage landscape along this road is generally poor and makes little contribution to the general quality of the Borough.

5.32.4 A small-scale residential area is contained within the midst of the commercial development. This area is similar to other areas of post war housing in the Borough but is obviously dominated by the surrounding developments.

5.32.5 Main Characteristics

- Mixed large scale retail and commercial premises.
- Little design continuity between developments.
- Generally retail sites set back from main road.

Sensitivity to Change

5.32.6 As an area with no sense of place or strong landscape character this area is not inherently sensitive to change. The woodland areas along the Mudeford Brook provide an effective buffer between the commercial uses and other residential areas.

5.32.7 The small area of housing within the commercial setting is a potential constraint on activity in this area.

5.33.8 On the southern side of the main Somerford Road a number of poor quality 'anywhere' type commercial developments dominate the approach in towards Purewell. Clearly these offer alternative land uses for the Borough as employment or retail sites. But in terms of potential effects on townscape character, these areas could be redeveloped for residential uses without significant harm, and even some potential benefits to the local townscape. There is, however, the wider issue of how the Borough would avoid the perception of complete domination by housing developments.

5.32.9 The development of a common design approach and common standard for landscape provision along the main road frontage may assist with the long term creation of a stronger landscape character in the area.





5.33 NC Area 4b - Housing Area East of Burton Road

5.33.1 This is the main housing area of Somerford. It is comprised of an extensive 1950s-60s Council Estate. The houses are generally substantial semi-detached dwellings with generous gardens and spacing. The overall area extends across the River Terrace flat topography and has few of any features such as trees or hedgelines that would pre-date the housing.

5.33.2 The housing was laid out with regular allocations of open space. Many of the verges and open spaces areas have been planted, providing some areas dominated by ornamental planting and street trees.

5.33.3 Main Characteristics

- Extensive area of Local Authority housing laid out to simple estate layout.
- Frequent small scale greens or other planted spans.
- Heavily planted verges with ornamental planting provide unusual setting to houses.
- Busy main road with 'anywhere' large scale retail developments.

5.33.4 Residential Development Characteristics

Form/Scale	Semi detached and short terraces.
Era	1950's and 60's.
Style	Council house estate development.
Materials	Brick and tile.
Roofscape	Continuous with minimal conversion or disruption.
Plot Size/Density	Modest - small plots with housing at an even density or around 20/ha.
Frontage	Most houses set back with good sized gardens and planted verges.
Boundaries	Low brick walls, hedges or open plan.
Trees	Mix of typical small scale street trees.

Sensitivity to Change

5.33.5 Although the Somerford estates are not comprised of historic or spacious housing developments, the areas are reasonably well ordered and built to a relatively dense and efficient layout. On the basis of this there is again only minimal physical scope to accommodate any new development within the existing residential areas.



5.34 NC Area 4c : Housing Area West of Burton Road

5.34.1 This character area relates to the western end of Somerford developed more recently than the bulk of the neighbourhood. This area is laid out as small clusters of modern cul-de-sac development served by a simple distributor road. This area is set on the junction of the old river terrace landscape and edge of the flood meadows of the River Avon. The area has been physically separated from the open flood plain areas by the A35 and stoney lane modern roadways. Open space areas within the new development have incorporated areas of the low-lying landscape. The surrounding open area between the housing and main roads is designated as site of Special Scientific Interest (Purewell Meadows). Much of the area is vegetation with scrub willow type vegetation with pockets of remaining pasture.

5.34.2 Residential Development Characteristics

Form/Scale	Semi-detached cul-delsac development
Era	1980s-90s
Style	Volume house builder standard designs
Materials	Brick and tile
Roofscape	Simple unaltered roof lines
Plot Size/Density	Small scale plots with houses at even density of around 20/ha.
Frontage	Small scale open frontages
Boundaries	Open plan
Trees	Limited street trees within layout surrounding willow scrub woodland.

5.34.3 Main Characteristics

- Small scale estate sub divided by significant open space
- Modern standard housing types and layouts
- Semi natural landscape setting and informal public open space

Sensitivity to Change

5.34.4 As a modern estate with standard house types this area would be sensitive to changes which disrupt the continuity of the house styles or layout pattern. The surrounding landscape areas on a designated sites of special scientific interest would be sensitive to changes in management or any loss of habitat extent.

5.35 Capacity for Developments - Somerford

5.35.1 This section of the Borough presents one of the least sensitive areas of townscape. The area has few natural or distinctive townscape features and limited areas of undeveloped space. The general mix of commercial premises along the main road may offer scope for redevelopment, but as established commercial/employment land, this area contains some diversity to the townscape and important non-residential land use within the Borough.

5.35.2 The limited open space provision of the area would not provide any suitable development space. In particular the areas to the west of Burton Road are important green spaces and of Nature Conservation Interest.

