



## **Charlton Down or Charminster Herrison Conservation Area Appraisal**

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## Introduction

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The District Council is required by Section 71 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This can be achieved through conservation area appraisals.

West Dorset has 79 Conservation Areas and the Council has agreed on a programme of character appraisals. Charminster (Herrison) conservation area forms part of this appraisal work. The conservation area was designated in January 1991.

In order that designation is effective in conserving the special interest, planning decisions must be based on a thorough understanding of the conservation area's character. An appraisal is therefore an essential tool for the planning process. It is also of prime importance for any enhancement works and may provide a longer-term basis for the effective management of the conservation area.

This document describes the planning policy context, concentrating on the relevant West Dorset District Local Plan historic landscape, building conservation and archaeological policies and the Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014. The main part of the report focuses on the **assessment of special interest** of the conservation area, describing:

- Location and setting;
- Historic development and archaeology;
- Spatial analysis, notably the sequences of spaces, views in and out and landmark buildings;
- Character analysis, building uses and types, the key listed buildings and the contribution made by important local buildings, building materials and details, and "green" elements.

The report then focuses on recommendations for management action, including landscape and tree monitoring and ways of improving essential repairs and maintenance, and suggestions for environmental enhancement. All of these are formalised into management proposals that the local authorities, land and property owners and the wider community should consider.

The appraisal was subject to public consultation (May-June 2012), during which an information event, manned by district council officers, was held in the village. Following consultation, officers recommended amendments and the district council adopted the appraisal on 11 December 2012, as a technical document supporting policies in the West Dorset District Local Plan (Adopted 2006).

## Executive Summary

The key characteristics of the Charlton Down or Charminster Herrison Conservation Area are:

- The former County asylum set in C19 and C20 asylum landscapes
- Prominence in the wider setting and the intensity of the rural setting
- Landscaped character and strength of connection with the surrounding countryside
- Trees - avenues, belts, groups, hedgerows, single

- Distinct entity due to the retention, interrelation, significance and recognition of historic assets
- Strength and scale of views and panoramas
- Impressive landmarks and building groups
- Significant number of Important Local Buildings
- Associated with two major Victorian architects in asylum design
- Predominance of brick and slate in C19 to early C20 buildings
- Timber framed windows, especially sash

## The Planning Policy Context

Contained within the **West Dorset District Local Plan** (Adopted 2006) are a number of planning policies relevant to the settlement:

- *Safeguarding Assets*: Policy SA1 seeks to protect the natural beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); development must be in keeping with the landscape character of the area (Policy SA3); SA6 refers to areas identified as Land of Local Landscape Importance; Policy SA15 covers Ground Water Source Protection Zone; Policies SA18, SA19 and SA20 cover the demolition, alterations to and the settings of Listed Buildings; Policy SA21 seeks to protect the character or appearance of Conservation Areas; SA22 is concerned with demolition within a Conservation Area.
- *Housing, Employment, Tourism, Community Issues, Playing Field/Recreation Ground and Amenity Open Space and Transport*: there are a number of policies relating to these and associated land use;
- *Design and Amenity*: a specific chapter contains several policies regarding design and amenity considerations, including Policy DA1, relating to retention of woodland, trees and hedgerows and other important landscape features;
- *Sustainable Construction*: relates to energy efficiency (Policy SU1), renewable energy and other measures;

**National Planning Policy and Legislation** protects sites of international and national importance for nature conservation. The **National Planning Policy Framework** (2012) sets out planning policies and how these are to be applied and is available at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk). The Supplementary Planning Document **Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines** were adopted by the district council in February 2009. This contains 10 design policies that apply to different types and scales of development. Accompanying this is the **West Dorset Landscape Character Assessment** adopted February 2009, which addresses the 35 landscape areas of the District.

**The Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014** contains a number of relevant policies relating to the Historic Environment (historic buildings, archaeology, historic parks and gardens); the Built Environment (historic buildings, Conservation Areas and other developed areas); and Landscape. The West Dorset District Local Plan, Design and Sustainable Development Planning Guidelines and Landscape Character Assessment are available at district council offices, whilst the Framework for the Future of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan is available from Dorset County Council. The documents can be viewed on [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com) and main libraries will hold relevant printed copies. Information on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is also available on [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

## Assessment of Special Interest

### Location and Setting

Located in the parish of Charminster, Charlton Down (formerly Herrison Hospital) is one mile north of Charminster and three to four miles north of Dorchester. The former hospital site is situated between the A352 road to the SW and the C12 road (Old Sherborne Road) to the east. These roads are connected by Herrison Rd, which runs downhill along the SE boundary of the site and is the main route into it. In relation to this road, the grounds and main buildings are situated on a slightly higher level and are partially screened by vegetation, but they are easily visible in the landscape when viewed from the higher ground of the surrounding hills.

Charlton Down lies just outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in a landscape type called “chalk valley and downland”. It is situated on a knoll of chalk upland with a dry coombe to the NW, a dry coombe to the SE, above which is Wood Hill, the Cerne river valley below to the SW, and finally, Charlton Higher Down adjoining to the NE.

In terms of setting in the wider landscape, the significance and prominence of Charlton Down is apparent from downland both near and far, for example, the top of Poundbury Hillfort near Dorchester, the Old Sherborne Road, neighbouring Charminster and from the public right of way (S14/2) over Wood Hill.



Fig 1 Location map



Fig 2 View from Poundbury Hillfort, Dorchester



Fig 3 Panorama from public right of way (S14/2), Wood Hill



## Historic Development and Archaeology

Prior to the designation of a conservation area and redevelopment, the HERRISON Hospital site (now known as Charlton Down) was formerly in Health Authority ownership, comprising 119 acres.

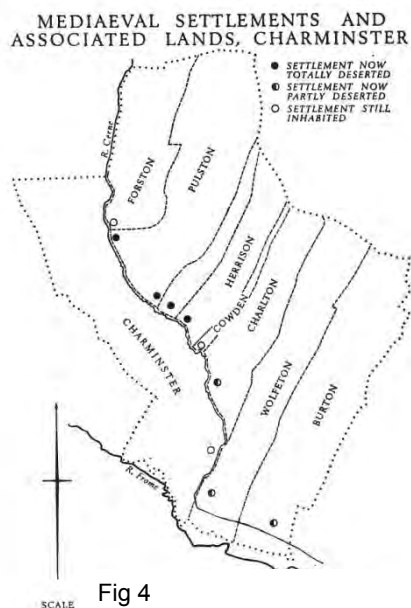


Fig 4  
Copyright RCHM (1970)

Although the former hospital is a Victorian contribution, the name HERRISON can be traced back to C13. This corresponds with the small settlements on the east side of the River Cerne (fig 4) as recorded in the Domesday Book; one of which was HERRISON, whose lands stretched from the river up to the top of the downland. Old maps, for example, the 1839 Charminster Tithe Map, indicate that the boundary outlining the land associated with the deserted settlement of HERRISON (near the river) is still perceivable today, for example, the NE/SW boundary alongside the hospital's southern access (behind Birch Way).

The use of the area for an institution for people with psychiatric disorders starts in the early C19 and relates to the first Dorset County Asylum that was based a mile up the Cerne valley at Forston. The need for further expansion led to the purchase of a second site of 55 acres of farmland. It is important to note that when selecting a suitable site for the new building the County Surveyor chose a place which he reported "*could not be seen by a traveller on either the top or bottom roads to Sherborne*" (West Dorset Mental Health NHS Trust, 1992, p. 21). The original hospital on this site (now Redwood House) was built in 1860-1863 to designs by H.E. Kendall.

In 1890, a further plot to the north east of the asylum was purchased in order to accommodate an extension to the main building. The new block (now called Greenwood House) was designed by the architect G.T. Hine and opened in 1895 to accommodate female patients, the older building accommodating male patients still. Between the two, Hine placed an entertainment hall/ballroom (today the village hall). The mortuary chapel (now HERRISON Health Club) was enlarged into a full-size church. During the next 2/3 years further cottages and farm buildings were added. Some of the materials from the partially demolished Forston asylum were used for the construction of new farm buildings.

During 1904, HERRISON House, set in landscaped grounds, was completed to accommodate private patients. This addition breached the NE/SW land boundary of the deserted settlement of HERRISON and utilised land that once belonged to an adjoining mediaeval settlement. By 1932 the hospital has become a self supporting community with its own farm, laundry, ballroom, theatre, cinema and cricket ground. Post WWII development comprised two nurses' homes and Forston Clinic that opened in 1958.

In 1986 HERRISON House was closed down and became the headquarters of West Dorset Health Authority. In the following few years the use of the hospital (with the exception of Forston Clinic) was phased out. As part of meeting the development needs of Dorchester and the surrounding area, West Dorset District Council produced a Development Brief and Design Code

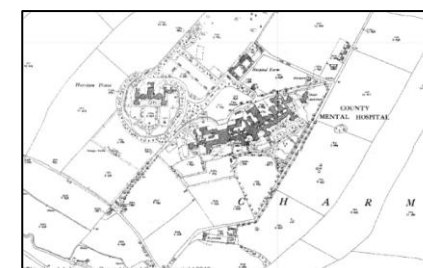
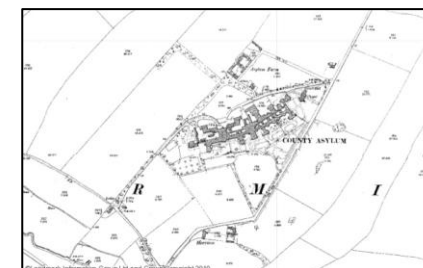
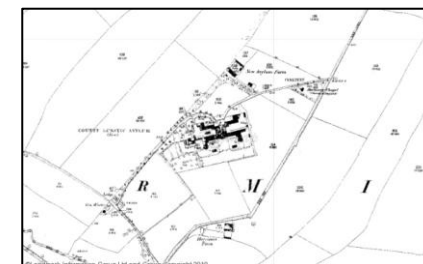


Fig 5 top down: 1880s, 1900s, 1920s & 1950s

© Landmark Information Group (2012)

for the Herrison Hospital site in 1991. In recognition of the architectural and historic special interest of the site and the amenity value of the trees, the formal landscape and the cricket pitch, the conservation area, Charminster Herrison, was designated in the same year. The new name of Charlton Down was chosen to honour a medieval epithet for the hill on which it was built. Today, Charlton Down can be broadly divided into three main areas (fig 6):

- AREA 1 - The area SW of the main hospital buildings, originally defined as Phase 8 of the Charlton Down development, completed in accordance with Bellway Homes Masterplan for Charlton Down together with Herrison Development Brief and Design Code. This area falls within the conservation area.
- AREA 2 - The main bulk of the original hospital buildings: Herrison House, Redwood House, Greenwood House and Summer Hill House, all of which are situated within the conservation area;
- AREA 3 - The area north and NW of the main hospital buildings comprising another part of Charlton Down development, plus Forston Clinic and its grounds – all outside the conservation area

The archaeological issues are:

- Greater appreciation of ancient boundaries and their preservation
- Greater appreciation of the deserted settlements, including Herrison

### **Spatial and Character Analysis (see also Review of the Conservation Area boundary, page 26)**

Each settlement differs in its relationships between buildings, public space, gardens and open countryside. Within Conservation Areas (usually the historic core of the village), there are unique progressions of spaces, with varying degrees of enclosure and exposure. These sensations depend upon the density and height of buildings, their position relative to the highway, the character of boundaries and the dominance or dearth of trees, and views out to countryside or into the village core. Also important are the effects of topography – the rise and fall and alignment of roads and paths. These are all elements of **townscape**, giving visual coherence and organisation to the mixture of buildings, streets and spaces that make up the village environment. Townscape enables places to be described, using three elements:

- The sequence of views obtained in passing through an area, depending upon road alignment, positions of buildings, views etc. The chain of events is usefully termed *serial vision*;
- The feelings of relative exposure and enclosure depending upon the size and shape of spaces and buildings;
- Content: colour, texture, scale, style, personality and the many little details of materials, street furniture, signs and other local distinctiveness characteristics.



Fig 6 Three main areas of Charlton Down





**Charlton Down or Charminster Herrison Assets Map**

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## Spatial Analysis (refer also to the Assets Map)

The limits of Charlton Down predominantly coincide with important historic assets:

- In the north, the right of way S14/20 which follows an old road from Forston on the east side of the River Cerne to the Old Sherborne Rd (C12);
- Herrison Rd, an old road, as shown on the 1765 Isaac Taylor Map of Dorset;
- In the south, the right of way S14/17, part of an old road on the east side of the River Cerne that passes through Forston (the only medieval settlement still inhabited on the east side [fig 4]) and on along a section of the southern access of the former hospital, before continuing towards Charminster;
- The far boundary alongside the southern access of the former hospital (behind Birch Way) which is a land boundary of the deserted, medieval settlement of Herrison.

Other limits that constitute historic assets are those determined by the former hospital and grounds, for example, the boundary around Herrison House and the boundary running NE/SW behind Mulberry Gardens, Willow View and the open space, and along with the assets listed above are a key characteristic, providing continuity with former uses, whether manorial, public highway or hospital. The same characteristic continuity is evident in the former hospital access arrangements, which have not altered greatly. Indeed, the building line of Nos 1-11 (odds) and 15-23 (odds) Sherren Avenue and No 12, 19, 21, 23 & 25 Strodes Lane are an example of retaining treed access and the setting of the conservation area.

The street pattern to the north of the conservation area radiates from a central point opposite the village hall and the shop. This was determined by the Design Code that adopted the philosophy of the urban/street village (like Cerne Abbas) primarily to achieve a relatively high density grid pattern. This central point, together with the commercial and public buildings and landscaped areas around and by it, constitute Charlton Down's centre.

The principal routes through the conservation area are:

- Herrison Rd – connects A352 and C12 (Old Sherborne Road) and provides the main access route into the village;
- Sherren Avenue – branches off Herrison Rd into the village centre and runs alongside Herrison Health Club and north elevation of Greenwood House;
- Hawthorn Road – follows on from the village centre alongside north elevation of Redwood House and into the new development (Phase 8 [Area 1, fig 6] Charlton Down development).

The secondary routes through the conservation area are Poplar Drive, Birch Way and Laurel Way situated in the recently developed Phase 8 (Area 1, fig 6) part of the conservation area. These roads are designed to have a winding and interconnected layout with some short cul-de-sacs. This part of the village is much less permeable and the vehicular routes are used to access the houses within the estate

There are a number of intimate routes, for example, a more defined private road circling Herrison House leads to an inconspicuous half screened access to Walnut Court to the north and a footpath connecting Herrison House with Chestnut Road has a distinct rural character being shaded by a semi-circular belt of mature trees south of Herrison House. Several lanes running on the side of Herrison Hall, Greenwood and Redwood Houses provide access to the public green open



Fig 7 View east along Sherren Avenue



Fig 8 Part of the former southern access to the hospital, following an ancient boundary



spaces to the south. Also noteworthy is the path (formerly part of the southern access to the hospital and following an ancient land boundary of the deserted, medieval settlement of Herrison) running along the firm avenue of mature beech trees on the north-west boundary of the area. Framed by a pair of brick pillars (near which was once an entrance lodge) at one end, this path has a distinctive grand estate feel combined with a sense of familiarity and privacy.

Rights of way connect the village with neighbouring Charminster and Forston and have been referred to under historic limits above. Another right of way (S14/2) is an old road that travels over Wood Hill and joins right of way (S14/17), the former road on the east side of the River Cerne. These rights of way are well used and some offer panoramic views of Charlton Down in its rural setting as well as views of its landmark buildings and open spaces. Besides their historic significance, these rights of ways provide alternative and more intimate access points into the conservation area.

The historical limits and former accesses, together with retained hospital buildings, associated buildings, open spaces, landscaping, gardens and pathways (permissive and rights of ways) that define the character of Charlton Down, influenced the 1991 Development Brief and Design Code, which means that such heritage assets stayed interrelated and their significance recognised. Similarly, the old roads retain their clear relationship with the past as well as the present.

An institutional quality is evident from the presence of the former hospital buildings. There is still a distinct sense of entity, enriched by these many references to the past. The layout as designed over the course of the hospital's lifetime remains recognisable with buildings surrounded by open space, particularly green ones that underpin spaciousness and building separation (as between Herrison House and the rest of the hospital). This layout, along with the many mature trees and hedgerows, gives the conservation area a strong landscaped character and an equally strong connection with the surrounding countryside.

Fig 10 Herrison House set within its landscape grounds

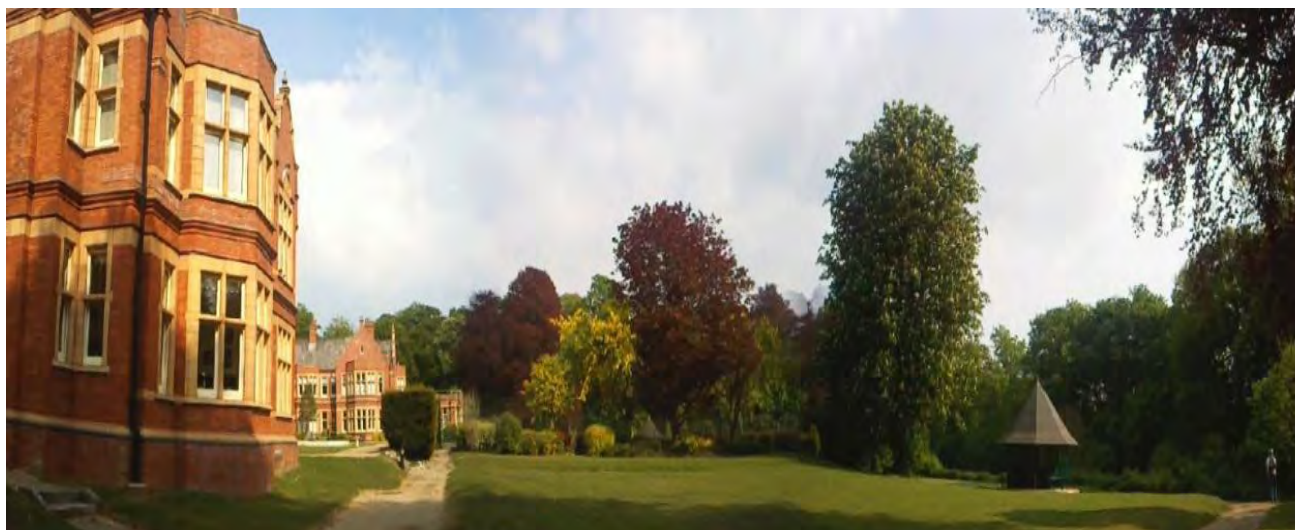


Fig 9 View from right of way S14/2 towards the conservation area with No 13 Herrison Rd on the left

## Gateways

There are a number of attractive gateways associated with the conservation area. These gateway experiences are important for the overall perception of the conservation area, providing a sense of arrival.

### Northern gateway from C12 (Old Sherborne Road)

The road line falls gently downhill towards Charlton Down. The view from the elevated point of the road offers a panorama of the surrounding farmland and gives an idea of the immediate farmland setting. The settlement is partly screened by small, mature woodland on the north boundary of the conservation area and partly visible in a dip. A stand of conifer trees on the roadside are prominent.

Entering the conservation area with hedgerow on either side, the detached, late Edwardian Foxbrake House is glimpsed and ahead, two brick pillars, one on each side of the road, which provide a handsome entrance feature. The road continues, bordered by fence on the left and an important line of mature trees on the right that open up to provide views into the spacious grounds of Forston Clinic. Opposite the clinic are Herrison Cottages set around an attractive green with a roadside picket fence. Further on, definition is lost to post and wire fencing and a utilitarian block of garages before becoming hedge with a community orchard and farmland behind. Opposite and contrasting the country views are an orderly row of semi-detached former staff cottages with attractive front gardens. The cottages provide interesting rhythm in the street scene. The road then gently curves to the right and comes to a fork revealing, behind trees and green open space, the unexpected and impressive mass of Greenwood House and Herrison Health Club (former chapel and cemetery) with the modern Grenville Court set behind green verge and picket fence on the right and ahead, the continuation of Herrison Rd with verge, trees and views of downland.

### Southern gateway from A352

Approaching from Charminster on A352 along the River Cerne valley, there are hedges and views of valley slope on both sides and the white row of Nos 6-11 Herrison Rd on the right. Turning into this road, on either side of the bridge are attractive views of the winding river and ahead, the startling, three pairs of semi-detached cottages (Nos 6-11) against a green backdrop and the equally obvious Nos 1 & 2 Herrison Rd (the conservation area starts here). Further on, the start of the impressive, roadside avenue of trees is preceded by a white, refurbished Nos 3 & 4 Herrison Rd and announced by the new housing of Phase 8 (Area 1, fig 6), particularly No 30 Birch Way. Here too, there are important views towards Nos 6-11 with woodland beyond and down the treed, former southern access (right of way S14/17 and part of the valley road between Forston and Charminster) to the hospital. Continuing uphill, along the tree lined sunken road, there are glimpses of downland to the right and high boarded fence to the left. On a bend, the tunnel effect stops when reaching the focal No 12 Herrison Rd, once the farmhouse of Herrison Farm. Across its hedged garden are views of mature hedgerow and Wood Hill and on the opposite side of the road, the fence has given way to glimpses of green open space between trees. A straight and country view up the road is complemented on the right by the presence of the farmyard of Herrison Farm, set back behind a line of roadside trees or boundary wall, and on the left, by the green amenity open space that forms the setting to Redwood House/Chapel Block of the former hospital. The rural scene continues around another bend and on again past the cricket ground to arrive at the junction with Sherren Avenue and a particular view over green space (former cemetery) towards the Health Club (former chapel), Greenwood House (continuation of the former hospital) and lines of trees.



Fig 11 Nos 16-21 Herrison Rd



Fig 12 View towards Nos 6-11  
Herrison Rd & Cerne valley

### Gateway approaching on foot

The right of way (S14/2) from Charminster, including the top of Wood Hill, offers spectacular panoramic views of Charlton Down and its attractive farmland setting, which is complemented by the presence of the former Herrison Farm. These views also show the important connection between the farm, the farmland and the open space in front of the former hospital's Chapel Block, which is a landmark in itself.

### Key Views & Panoramas

Examples of key views and panoramas (see also "Location and Setting" and "Gateways") that highlight the significance of the character and country setting of the conservation area are as follows:

#### Views

- Sequence of views when travelling eastwards from No 12 Sherrin Avenue down the treed avenue towards the countryside visible at the end - opening out at Greenwood House with its long rear facade, opening out again between the towered facade of Greenwood House and the Health Club with trees and farmland as the backdrop - and finally arriving at the chapel with views over the green open space and former cemetery, through trees to the countryside. A look back up the avenue is equally attractive.
- Multiple views (viewshed) from the formal landscaped open spaces, cricket ground and playing field either towards the frontages of the former hospital buildings (Herrison Hall, Greenwood and Redwood Houses, including Chapel Block) or towards the countryside.
- Southerly view towards the village hall and the westerly entrance and wing of Greenwood House.
- From the footpaths on either side of Herrison Hall - southerly views of a fairly confined nature between two buildings, and then opening out to the vast cricket ground with countryside beyond
- The impressive Herrison House and its tree ringed grounds are glimpsed in summer and more seen in winter from the nearby footpath.
- Succession of inviting views either into Charlton Down or out into the countryside along part of the southerly hospital access (behind Birch Way) that is lined with trees and complemented by the trees surrounding Herrison House and Chestnut Court and the trees in Hawthorn Rd. The west entry point by the brick pillars provides an intriguing deflected view inviting further exploration.
- From Meech Way southwards towards the countryside, the former cemetery and chapel (Health Club) and down Sherren Avenue to Greenwood House.
- Along the right of way S14/17 (former road on the east side of the river) there are attractive views across the Cerne valley.

#### Panoramas

- From the grounds to the south of Redwood and Greenwood Houses, views southwards across the fields and in the direction of Wood Hill.
- From the elevated position near Nos 6 & 7 Herrison Rd, at the SW boundary of the conservation area, views east and southwards
- From Walnut Court northwards, wide uninterrupted view of rolling hills and large scale arable land



Fig 12 View across the Cerne Valley from right of way S14/17

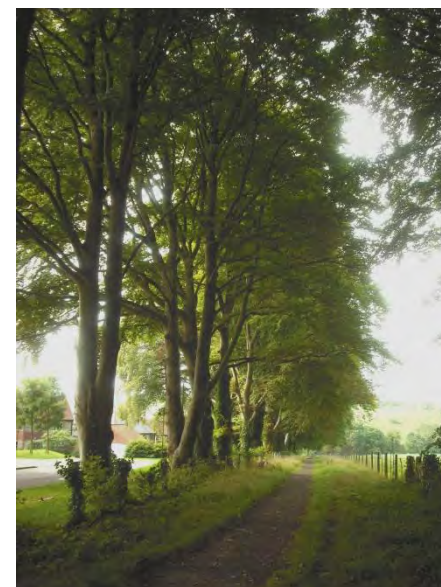


Fig 13 View towards the Cerne valley from the path by part of the former southerly hospital access



## Landmarks

The following buildings constitute landmarks:

- Redwood House, particularly the Chapel Block with its symmetrical front and full-height central gable rising higher than the adjoining wings.
- Herrison Hall because of its central position between Redwood and Greenwood Houses and its steep roof pitch.
- Greenwood House with its conspicuous pavilion roofs and roof lanterns.
- Herrison House due to its setting and country house appearance.

## Character Analysis (refer also to the Assets Map)

### Building Uses

The predominant building use is residential with the newly built element of the former hospital site comprising approximately 550 dwellings. The listed hospital buildings were converted into residential flats. The latest additions are Chestnut Court (flats) and Chestnut House Nursing Home.

Historically, Herrison Hospital was fairly self-sufficient with its own farm and garden, work yard, fire station, leisure and entertainment facilities and catering services. A sense of place at the centre of the new development is aided by the former hospital ballroom (Herrison Hall), which is now the village hall (hub of activities and events) and by the shop on the small green. The hospital chapel has become a health club/cafe.

### Key Listed Buildings

The Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest contains only two Grade II entries for Charlton Down. The entries are Herrison House and the Former Chapel Block, which means that the attached Redwood House is listed too. Both entries are key listed buildings as follows:

- Herrison House – two and three storeys, former hospital building for private patients, opened 1904, designed by G.T. Hine, now converted into private flats, has a complex plan with the main centre block and lower wings that forms a very flat U-plan facing south and a second courtyard to the north. It is built of red brick with cream terracotta dressings and decorative features and slate roofs. Detailing to the south is richer than to the north, although there is a consistency of careful detailing throughout. “A remarkable... example of design stemming from the great country houses of the Edwardian era” (The National Heritage List for England, 2011).



Fig 14 Herrison Hall



Fig 15 Herrison House



The three storey main south front has 1:5:1:5:1 bays with a series of modelled Dutch gables with stone copings and finials. Some of the gables have two storey canted bays, whereas the central gable has been brought forward and has rich ornamentation, a clock, flanking octagonal, pepper pot turrets and a three storey canted bay. All windows have terracotta mullions and transoms and there are terracotta bands at plinth, cill and lintel levels. The two storey wings of the south front are brought forward at each end and have similar Dutch gables and canted bays but the east wing also has a single storey, flat roof extension. The returns of these wings (main west and east elevations) continue as two storeys and the east side has a projecting block. The detail of the back elevation is simpler. Chimneys are a prominent feature throughout.

- Chapel Block and Redwood House - the asylum, opened in 1863 to the design of H E Kendall Junior comprising a square block around a courtyard at the centre of which was an octagonal kitchen with a separate female and male ward wing running off each of the two south corners and shorter ranges ending in workshops off the two north corners. On the west were the men's workshops and maintenance yard; on the east was the laundry. Described as Lombardic (essentially an amalgam of Early Christian and Romanesque architecture that flourished in Northern Italy) with an important example of Ruskinian (influenced by John Ruskin, C19 academic and architectural critic) gothic, the mainly two storeys, brick and slate building stands above basement where the land slopes southwards.

The north entrance front is of red brick with decorative brickwork (three black brick bands at ground floor level, lintel band of stone bordered with blue brick, first floor cill band with a centre course of white brick, lintel band of white brick between courses of blue, eaves courses of white and blue brick). Timber sash windows have stone cills on plain brackets with a dentil course of white bricks between. Heads are elaborate arches of alternating dark red brick and stone. A central projection with a decoratively finished gable has a relieving arch of white and blue bricks (one of three such arches in the main front) over two windows at first floor and a timber door flanked by Romanesque columns and windows at ground floor.

In the south elevation, the chapel is noticeably higher than the adjoining wings. Built of red, blue and cream brick, stone dressings and slate roof, the first floor chapel, originally above an undercroft, was converted to three rooms circa 1897. The chapel's symmetrical front of two storeys has 2:2:2 bays at ground floor and 2:1:2 bays at first floor. This is articulated by a full height, central gabled projection, at ground level by paired sashes in stone surrounds with central colonnette and at first floor by a five-light traceried window, flanked by two three-light traceried windows, all with pointed heads, Venetian voussoirs and drip moulds. A band of yellow and blue diaper pattern brickwork separates floors and runs between stone buttresses, rising from a stepped plinth. Internally, there is a hammer-beam roof.

The three storey wings running east and west from the south corners of the Chapel Block are slate and red brick with blue brick decoration on the north side but rendered on the south, east and west sides. At the end of each of these wings, project southwards further rendered wings, which are two and three storeys. The wings from the north corners of the Chapel Block project in front of it and have similar details with instances of decoration, for example at verges and in gable ends. Projecting at right angles from these two wings are single storey red brick and slate blocks (originally painters' shop and laundry) with again familiar decorative features, for example, gable end with four windows with a stone cills with a white brick dentil course between the brackets and each window with a plain stone



Fig 16 The Chapel Block is part of Redwood House



Fig 17 Entrance to Redwood House & former asylum main entrance

tympantum under an elaborate arch, the two central windows situated below a single blue brick relieving arch. All these wings have wooden sash windows and doors, the latter with tall fanlights, and a number of roof vents have decorative surrounds.

On the north side of the west wing from the south corner of the Chapel Block is a two storey building of red brick with a gabled slate roof that has a ridge lantern and two ventilators. The multi paned wooden sash windows have segmental brick arches and iron stairs lead to a platform with loading door in the balustrade in front of a first floor doorway.

### Important Local Buildings

There are a number of important local buildings that make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area:

- Greenwood House – opened in 1895 to the design of G T Hine as the new female part of the asylum, the original asylum (Chapel Block/Redwood House) becoming the male part only. At the same time, Hine designed the recreation hall/ballroom (see Herrison Hall below) situated between the original and new asylum buildings. The former remained the main entry into the asylum as a whole, so an axial corridor linked all three buildings. This corridor has subsequently been removed along with wards, kitchens, a laundry and service rooms attached on its north side. For Greenwood House, this exposed small sanitary and dormitory annexes (at right angles to the main building) and internal courts between. The former are now part of the residential conversion, whilst the latter are car parking.

Greenwood House is a main range of three storeys with a two storey T shaped wing at each end with a two storey wing at the NE corner. It is built of red brick with slate roofs (mostly hipped) and decorative ridge tiles and generally (there are exceptions) has a brick plinth with a stone cill band for ground floor windows and stone cill bands for first and second floor windows. Again with exceptions, ground floor and middle floor wooden sash windows have segmental brick arches with key stones and plain brick banding and dentilled banding above, whilst top floor sash wooden windows have a stone lintel banding with a brick dentilled eaves course directly over. Besides two shallow ground floor bays (two sash windows side by side), there are ten, three storey semi-octagonal bays with pavilion roofs and three sash windows per floor, except where there are ground floor French doors and fanlight. Other entrances (segmental arches, mostly with keystones, wooden doors with fanlights) are reached by stone steps with iron handrails, and in one instance, corresponds with an annexe that has a hipped roof with a pyramidal, slate roofed, timber framed, lantern on top. There are two other similar lanterns (on brick tower in car park, SW end of main range). Chimneys have brick banding and dentilled cornices.

The building has an impressive quality of construction and a unified appearance. The latter aided by horizontal and vertical elements being in balance – windows wrapped around the building in rows, emphasised by continuous horizontal banding counterbalanced by an array of pavilion roofs and chimneys, interspersed with lanterns.



Fig 18 Southerly side of Greenwood House



Fig 19 Easterly side of Greenwood House

G T Hine was the consulting Architect to the Commissioners in Lunacy. As well as this former asylum building, today called Greenwood House, it is important to note that Hine designed Herrison House (see above), which is listed Grade II. Designed by a specialist asylum architect, Greenwood house has considerable historic and architectural interest. It was a major part of the former Herrison Hospital and has important group value (see page 20).

- Herrison Hall/Ballroom – built in 1894/5 to the design of G T Hine, an architect who along with the design of asylum buildings (see Greenwood House and Herrison House above) acquired a reputation for large and ornate recreation halls. In 2004, the hall was handed to the residents of Charlton Down to become their village hall and ballroom. At the northern end of the building, as part of the refurbishment, a new entrance, meeting rooms and other facilities were built, allowing full view of the hall from the new square and Sherren Avenue.

On plan, the red brick hall/ballroom is rectangular with a double pitched slate roof finished with decorative roof tiles that at either end have stone coped gables with stone kneelers and apex finials. The hall's new red brick, north gable with its decorative panel overlooks the square, rising above the equally new red brick and slate lean-to front with its central gabled entrance and gabled slate and brick end wings that return alongside the hall itself. This still leaves both sides of the hall visible (stone weathered brick plinth, brick and stone weathered buttresses defining six window bays, tall round brick arched windows [some modified to provide side entrances] with timber frames and stone cill banding, single brick banding above arches and above that, a moulded and dentilled brick eaves cornice). The hall's south gable end has three buttressed bays. The outer bays have a similar window arrangement to the sides. The central bay is defined by two taller brick buttresses with stone weathering that become piers supporting stone scrolls that abut either side of a raised brick panel with a brick pediment weathered with stone. Below the panel are two bands of moulded brick (stretching the full width of the gable) and a round headed, tall central window with its two tiers of uncusped tracery. Like the adjacent windows, the central window has moulded brick banding at the spring line of the arch and stone cill banding. Stained glass fills the top tier of the central window, whereas all other ballroom windows have a stained glass fanlight.

Inside the ballroom at the north end is the stage (basement underneath) with a moulded proscenium arch. Looking south from the stage, the window bays and piers are wrapped by a wainscot that meets a wooden floor. Corresponding with the piers are eight timber trusses. Each pier has a moulded impost supporting curved braces to the lower of two collars. Between the two collars are seven turned struts and between the brace and principal rafter behind it, further timber uprights. A ceiling follows the line of the principal rafters and upper collar, thereby hiding king posts above. All the internal elements – roof trusses, form and rhythm of the windows, stained glass, wainscot, wooden floor, proscenium arch - come together to create an impressive communal space.

The Recreation Hall/Ballroom had an important recreational and convalescence role in the life of the hospital and today has significant communal use. It was designed by Hine, an architect renowned for asylum buildings, including halls, and has considerable historic and architectural interest as well as group value (page 20).



Fig 20 South elevation of Herrison Hall



Fig 21 East elevation of Herrison Hall



- Herrison Health Club (Former Chapel) – originally a mortuary chapel built in 1874 to a Gothic Revival design by Fletcher, the County Surveyor. It became the chancel when it was incorporated into a larger chapel completed in 1897 to the design of G T Hine. The chancel is Broadmayne brick chequered with flint panels and on the east side divided into three bays by stone buttresses. Each bay has a cusped single light window with a stone surround, whilst the west side has one such window. There is a three light window with stone tracery at the NE end and a stone eaves cornice to a slate roof that has decorative ridge tiles. The date 1874 is on a cast iron rainwater hopper head and there is an apex stone cross on the coped gable which has stone kneelers.

The nave, transepts, vestry and porches are red brick on a red brick plinth with stone weathering. All have a stone eaves cornice, a slate roof and coped gables with kneelers but only the nave and transepts have decorative ridge tiles; the others have plain stone. The nave has buttressed (brick with stone weathering) bays with two light windows of plate tracery recessed within stone surrounds. The nave's projecting, SW elevation has timber double doors protected by a shallow brick porch, reached by stone steps with stone capped brick side walls. Decorative, the porch has a stone weathered pediment with kneelers and a Gothic finial, a pointed stone archway, stone buttressed sides and a high stone capped plinth. Above the porch is a tall, three-light window with bar tracery, flanked by secondary, single-light pointed stone windows. All three windows are linked by a stone hood moulding and retain their stained glass, donated in memory of those at the hospital. This same elevation has a stone and brick bell-cote with a bell suspended under a stone arch. The transepts each have a stone, traceried three light window with a hood mould. The two nave porches, one of which is reached by stone steps, have timber double doors protected by a brick pointed arch with a stone hood mould. The vestry has two windows similar to the chancel and a timber door set in a brick archway with a hood mould over. A similar but blocked doorway exists on the opposite side of the chapel.

Internally, the nave has four round iron columns on each side, each column supporting a beam to the wallplate and an arch-brace to a high collar. Above the collar are three turned columns reminiscent of Herrison Hall. The chancel arch has continuous mouldings and a label with leaf stops.

The chapel has significant historic and architectural interest being first the asylum's mortuary chapel and then a larger chapel designed by Hine. The chapel is a focal point in key views and the northern gateway and has group value (page 20).

- Summerhill House – two and three storeys house built for the asylum's first Medical Superintendent, originally connected by corridor to the west wing of the asylum and built of brick (exposed to the north and rendered elsewhere) with double pitched and hipped (resulting from reconfiguration) slate roofs. On the west side is a conservatory with iron framing and on the east, a slate roofed garage with a central lantern and stone capped pillars and other single storey, attached ancillary rooms. The architectural style is contemporary with the original asylum as evident in the detail (polychromatic [multi coloured] brickwork for arches over doors and windows, horizontal banding and dentils, an elaborate relieving arch and equally decorative verges) and features (a projecting gable wall with intricate window configuration on the north elevation). Timber sash windows have either round or segmental heads and in the rendered walls have raised surrounds. The open entrance porch leads to a semi glazed timber panelled door, behind which is the reception hall with its impressive original staircase.



Fig 22 Herrison Health Club



Fig 23 Summerhill House

A coach house is attached to the garage and is built of brick and slate with hipped roof, timber doors and sash windows, stone bracketed cills and decorative brick arches. There is a brick dentil course below the eaves and the inner hall has an original cobble floor.

The house is an important example of a quality residence built specifically for the Superintendent of the asylum and as such has considerable historic and architectural significance. It also has group value (page 20).

- Foxbrake House - two storey detached former residence (now outpatients facility and offices) in late Edwardian style with rear extensions; rendered, slated gabled roof, two ground floor canted bays with flat roofs on front facade and timber casement windows in keeping with the period. The building is important due to its intact appearance and historical significance, as one of the few remaining senior hospital staff residencies.
- Nos 16-21 Herrison Rd – three pairs of two storey, semi-detached, former staff cottages, late C19 - early C20 of Broadmayne brick and clay tile; shallow U shape on plan with hipped roof, projecting front gables and two dormers at the rear; semi-glazed timber panelled front doors are protected by a shared, tiled lean-to canopies supported off a central timber post; decorative barge boards and a row of brick chimneys. There is similarity of design to Nos 6–11 Herrison Rd. The cottages have historic significance and present an important, orderly ensemble that benefits the conservation area's northern gateway.
- Nos 26 & 27 Herrison Rd – two pairs of post WWII semi-detached, former staff cottages of painted brick similar to Nos 16-21 Herrison Rd but lacking the detail. The cottages are of historic interest and maintain a line with Nos 16-21.
- Nos 3, 5, 7 & 9 Greville Court – two pairs of recent semi-detached cottages of similar design and materials to Nos 16-21 Herrison Rd and complement them, thereby benefiting the northern gateway.
- Nos 6–11 Herrison Rd – three pairs of two storey, semi-detached, former staff cottages built late C19 - early C20 with white rendered walls (evidence of brickwork around some windows) and slate roofs; shallow U shape on plan with hipped roof, projecting front gables and two dormers at the rear; each pair was linked by single storey outhouses some of which have been converted; No 6 has a two storey side extension; front doors are protected by what were shared, slated, lean-to canopies that have now been enclosed; plain barge boards and a row of rendered chimneys. There is similarity of design to Nos 16-21 Herrison Rd. The highly prominent cottages have historic significance and contribute to the conservation area's southern gateway.
- Nos 12 & 13 Herrison Rd and farmyard – No 12 was the farmhouse to Herrison Farm that dates back to at least the early C19, prior to the opening of Herrison Hospital in 1863. This farm then became part of the hospital and in the 1960s, the Industrial Therapy Department (concrete block making was an enterprise) was housed in a purpose built, concrete block, therapy unit built by the staff and patients. This unit is situated in the farmyard.

No 12 has a symmetrical main frontage with a window above a central entrance (semi glazed timber panelled door with a canopy over) that is flanked on each side by a ground and first floor window. The former farmhouse is



Fig 24 No 12 Herrison Rd



Fig 25 No 13 Herrison Rd

constructed of brick and stone banded flint walling with a double pitched metal sheet roof over thatch, hence the deep eaves and timber boarding at the gable ends. There are brick chimneys either end of the main house. Window openings have brick arches and dressings. Against the north gable is a single storey tile roofed lean-to extension and against the south, a single storey, metal roofed gabled extension.

Adjacent to No 12, earlier maps show a farmyard in what is now the vicinity of No 13. Along with other structural elements, this implies that No 13 is a post 1930, two storey conversion of an early C19 farm building, perhaps a threshing barn. The east elevation of No 13 comprises stone/flint walling, stone quoins and some stone banding and four inserted windows with brick dressings. There is a blocked ventilator with earlier brickwork. This elevation also has a two storey former opening (similar to a projecting porch of a barn) with brick quoins and reveals. The opening is now two windows surrounded by panelling. The variability of the north elevation's walling (flint, various stone and brick and their varied application) indicates changes, including two inserted windows and a tiled and panelled lean-to, attached to a flat roofed rear extension and providing ground level entrances. The rear (west) elevation has a flat roofed, C20 dormer window inserted in the metal sheet roof. There is a central brick chimney. The concrete garden wall with its fret work may be associated with the onsite industrial therapy from the 1960s onwards.

Despite loss of buildings, the layout of the farmyard is discernible with the east range (excluding No 13) and much of the south range remaining. The non residential part of the east range comprises an altered (sliding double doors in later red brickwork, metal sheet roof) barn, the east elevation of which is built of flint with stone and chalk banding and older brick dressings round a ventilator. The west elevation (stone/flint?) has double doors in what may be an altered entrance. Joining at right angles to this barn is the south range which shows changes over time, including metal sheet roofing. The part (shed/store?) attached to the east range is stone/flint with brick banding and brick dressings round ventilators, doorways and high level openings and has a brick quoin that abuts the other half of the south range. This other half (stable/hayloft?) is stone/flint with timber boarded doors at ground and first floor on the yard side. The gable end wall has been rebuilt at a later stage and against it is a C20 concrete block lean-to.

Further south, the original outer yard is also evident in the form of boundary walls and on its south side, a single storey shed of stone/flint (?) and corrugated iron sheet.

As a farm that predates the Hospital, as well as forming part of it, Nos 12 and 13 and the farmyard have historic and architectural interest. The farm benefits the rural character of the conservation area's southern gateway, in which No 12 acts as a particular focal point and also complements the gateway via the right of way S14/2 that travels down from Wood Hill. Both properties are important in views from the playing field and the cricket ground.

- Nos 1 & 2 Herrison Rd – late C19 semi-detached, staff cottages partly rendered, whereas at rear red brick and flint banding. Large central chimney on plain tile roof with two rear lucernes. The cottages are a focal point along the southern gateway into the conservation area.



Fig 26 Garden wall of No 13 Herrison Rd & attached farm buildings



Fig 27 Nos 1 & 2 Herrison Rd



- No 5 Herrison Rd – this property is shown on the OS 1888 map and has a thatched roof, stone and flint walling with brick dressings, multi-paned, timber casement windows and a small rear, thatched and rendered extension. The cottage benefits the conservation area and its origin is likely to be at least contemporary with Herrison Farm, thereby establishing an historic interest.
- Nos 28-35 Herrison Rd - 1950s (?) former staff, semi-detached cottages situated around a semi circular green, reminiscent of Garden Suburb planning and Arts and Craft design. Each pair of brick cottages was almost rectangular on plan but with slightly protruding rooms at the rear, thereby creating a very shallow U shape with a hipped roof (hip eaves higher than the rest) covered with slate (artificial?). At the front of each pair of cottages is a slate cat's slide and between these a wide hipped slate dormer with a window serving each property. Subsequent extensions and enclosed porches have modified some of the cottages and most of the brickwork is painted. Other original features are evident on No 29 (the most intact of the cottages) – Crittal (a line of three such windows under the hip) and top hung timber windows with tile cills, timber boarded front door with a small, single pitched canopy. Each pair of cottages still has two chimneys and outhouses, some of which retain original features and/or design.

Situated within the northern gateway, these cottages have historic and architectural interest being a representation of a specific ethos in planning and design, the only such combination within the former Herrison Hospital.

- The original Forston Clinic that was designed in the late 1950s and associated with Herrison Hospital. The clinic represents a post World War II design for a hospital building.

### Important Building Groups

Important building groups are as follows:

- The main block of former hospital buildings - Summerhill House, Herrison Hall, Redwood House and Greenwood House- and the Herrison Health Club (former chapel), presenting not only a dramatic grouping but also skyline;
- Those buildings that define the centre of Charlton Down - Herrison Hall, Redwood House, Greenwood House, Alder Court and Nos 2-10 (evens) Sherren Avenue;
- Nos 3-9 (odds), 16-21, 26 & 27 Herrison Rd provide strong definition on the west side of the northern gateway;
- Nos 6-11 Herrison Rd - a prominent line of former staff cottages;
- Nos 12 & 13 Herrison Rd - the former Herrison Farm.

### Building Types, Materials and Architectural Details

Buildings associated with Herrison Hospital, together with their construction materials and architectural details, have already been referred to under Key Listed Buildings and Important Local Buildings.

With regard to new development, the two storey housing in Area 1 (fig 6), SW of the main hospital buildings and inside the conservation area, is predominantly brick (small number are rendered) with tile or slate roofing. The general point of reference is a Regency style, as required by the Herrison Development Brief and Design Code.



Fig 28 No 29 Herrison Rd



Fig 29 Looking towards the green, shop and Alder Court

Area 2 is original hospital buildings (Herrison House, Redwood House, Greenwood House and Summer Hill House), all of which are situated within the conservation area. Substantial 3½ storey development is in the form of Chestnut House and Chestnut Court in a mixture of brick and render with slate roofing.

Area 3 is outside the conservation area, north and NW of the main hospital buildings and includes the Forston Clinic. As required by the Development Brief and Design Code, this area includes the centre of Charlton Down with its small green, car parking and road junction that are defined by new dwellings and a new shop and by Herrison Hall, Redwood and Greenwood Houses (former hospital buildings). There is also a site earmarked for a public house. At the centre, the new buildings are greater in scale, as required by the Development Brief and Design Code – three storey blocks of flats, shop with two floors of flats over and 2½ storey houses. The centre abuts the conservation area and comprises part of its setting, along with Sherren Avenue. The predominant materials are brick and slate with the occasional use of render, clay roofing tile and stone for dressings and plinths. The influence of Herrison House is evident in shaped gables (Nos 2-10 (evens) and Nos 1-9 (odds) Sherren Avenue and Nos 2-14 (evens) Cedar Rd) and bay windows (No 10 Sherren Avenue). Other architectural details reflect the turrets of Greenwood House (No 10 Sherren Avenue and Cherry Tree House) and the gables of Herrison Hall (Alder Court and No 2 Cedar Rd). Elsewhere, two storey brick and slate dwellings prevail, although there is a limited number of three storeys, especially overlooking the green open space to the NE, and the occasional use of clay tile roofing and render and even less frequent flintwork. Doors and sash and casement windows are predominantly timber, as per Design Code.

#### Other features and details

Ironwork, entrances and boundary walls (some are new) contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, for example:

- Brick/stone walls, brick entrance piers, railings and gates of and near to Redwood House and Summerhill House;
- Railings and boundary wall of the former cemetery;
- Hoop railing of Herrison House that replaced the six foot railing in the 1960s;
- Concrete boundary wall of the former Herrison Farm (12 & 13 Herrison Rd);
- Brick entrance pillars in the northern gateway (Herrison Rd) and the former, southerly hospital access (behind Birch Way);
- Brick wall, railings and brick piers at the main entrance to Greenwood House.

There are small concrete (1960s?) street lights, two of which are near No 6 Herrison Rd, that are reminiscent of hospital use.

Charlton Down has a remarkable inheritance of trees and some of them carry small mementos in the form of carvings. For example, carvings on the trees of the southerly hospital access (behind Birch Way) - one is inscribed by Private Johnson, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards and dated 1945, whilst the other simply reads 'Love'.

Over the years, many of the staff and patients were buried in the Hospital's own cemetery, next to the former chapel. The gravestones have been moved several times over the years, most recently during the conversion of the chapel. The stones are now erected near the boundary wall.



Fig 30 Hoop railings of Herrison House



Fig 31 Main entrance to Greenwood House

Within Herrison Hospital there were airing courts, which were enclosed exercise yards for patients. In 1960, the walls of airing courts were demolished or reduced in height. In front of the former chapel (Redwood House) a bowling green was established instead. Some of the airing shelters remain in the grounds of Herrison House. The bowling green and the shelter are now part of the south-facing landscaped gardens of Redwood House, which also has remnant brick/stone walls.

### Gardens, Hedgerows, Trees and Open Spaces (refer also to Gateways)

#### *Hospital landscape*

Large areas are identified as Land of Local Landscape Importance (Local Plan Policy SA6) by virtue of the setting they provide for Herrison House and the main block of buildings.

By the mid C19, the landscape formula for asylums was adapted from the landscape park. The typical C19 asylum landscape had ornamental drives, lodges, avenues, parkland, home farm, kitchen gardens, estate walls and fences and often its own cemetery and cricket ground. These landscape elements existed and in the main still exist at Charlton Down, including elements (shelters, pathways and planting) of the enclosed exercise yards or airing courts that replaced the formal terrace of the country house. Herrison Hospital was a textbook example of a hospital laid out to meet C19 therapeutic and administrative advice.

In the 1860s, the hospital was situated on a bleak hillside until the first patients planted the fine avenues of trees and created the gardens and terraces under the direction of the Medical Superintendent. Such work was considered to be part of a patient's treatment. Today, the south facing recreational space to the front of the main block of former hospital buildings (Redwood and Greenwood Houses, Herrison Hall) is a semi-formal landscape with undulating expanses of grass, cricket pitch, belts and groups of trees, a sense of openness and informality and the imperceptible merging of the designed space with the wider countryside. It is quintessentially country house design that relies on long vistas and a backdrop of open countryside.

The later Herrison House was on the other hand set in its own landscaped grounds with ornamental garden, tennis court and octagonal wood shelters and is almost entirely enclosed by the mature wooded belt wrapped around western side of the grounds and a line of more widely spaced mature beech trees to the east. This treed landscape provides an extra sense of enclosure and intimacy. It frames and enhances the ground's fine quality, providing a connection between the house and the countryside.



Fig 32 Gravestones in the former hospital cemetery



Fig 33 Airing shelter in the grounds of Herrison House



The relationship between the former hospital buildings and their designed landscape (not confined to the conservation area) and between them and the surrounding countryside, including distant vantage points (fig 2) is key and intrinsic to the conservation area. This relationship is dependent on the innumerable trees (many outside the conservation area have Tree Protection Orders) and many views and panoramas, for example, the view from the main hospital buildings to Wood Hill and vice versa. Such a landscape and its setting also have significant special historic interest and considerable amenity and social value. It stands as a living testimony to both staff and patients, some of whom are buried in the hospital's cemetery.

#### *Small green and adjoining central square*

Outside the shop, there is a small green with a tree. Adjoining the green is a square, used for car parking, but which has as its centre piece, the community building, Herrison Hall. Both spaces constitute and symbolise the centre of Charlton Down.

#### *Semicircular green to Nos 28-35 Herrison Rd*

The semicircular green with its picket fence is an attractive feature of the northern gateway into the conservation area and helps to retain the rural character on the eastern side of Herrison Rd.

#### *Community orchard*

The community of Charlton Down has a young orchard alongside Herrison Rd, opposite Greville Court, which is in the tradition of tree planting that is so much a part of the hospital landscape,

#### *Other open spaces*

North of the playing field, alongside a footpath are two rectangular areas of green space that were part of the former hospital's countryside setting and farmland. These fields retain their hedgerows which have matured into lines of trees. Both spaces have historic significance and provide amenity that complements the neighbouring green spaces.

#### *Trees*

Although the significance of trees is highlighted already, there are trees that provide additional amenity in relation to development:

- From the green and nearby Sherren Avenue, there is an attractive backdrop behind properties in Cedar Rd formed by the trees to Herrison House and Chestnut Court/House. The same area is benefited by views of the cedar tree in Deverel Rd.
- In the courtyard of Alder Court, a mature beech provides attractive contrast.
- The treed eastern boundary of Area 1 (fig 6), assists in retaining rural views from the playing field and cricket ground.
- The trees along right of way S14/17 and the conservation area boundary provide an important transition between the countryside and development and benefit the character of this former valley road.



Fig 34 Beech tree at Alder Court



Fig 35 Trees along right of way S14/17

- The trees along the northerly hedgerow boundary of Area 3 (fig 6) that benefit the setting of the conservation area. These trees also complement the trees around Chestnut House/Court and on the conservation area boundary.

### Detrimental features

There are a number of features which are considered to have a detrimental impact on the conservation area:

- More than a hundred black plastic 'no parking' bollards on the roadways, near the shop, present an incongruous feature at the centre of Charlton Down.
- Uninteresting hard landscaping means that public space, pedestrian routes and car parking adjoining the conservation area can be barely differentiated.
- The proliferation of 'private' and 'no entry' signs detracts from the conservation area and its setting.
- High wooden fences in Area 1 (fig 6) obstruct important views out of the conservation area.
- A long line of high wooden fence impacts on right of way S14/17.
- Upvc is replacing some timber windows, which were specified as a Herrison Design Code requirement.

### General Condition

The village has generally been well looked after, but many of the larger trees are becoming veteran with all the structural defects and die-back that this often entails. New planting – and management of the natural regeneration in the more wooded areas – is essential if the tree cover so characteristic of the area is to be maintained.

## **Community Involvement**

The appraisal was subject to public consultation (May-June 2012), during which an information event, manned by district council officers, was held in the village hall. Comments received helped finalise the appraisal.

## Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area's SW, SE and NW boundaries are well pronounced, thanks to the lines of mature trees and hedgerows along the boundaries. This is a significant physical feature that provides natural contour to the settlement and defines it from open countryside, as well as screening the buildings from the Cerne valley floor. From Herrison Rd, the changes in height and occasional interruption in a boundary offer passers-by surprising glimpses into the formal gardens and the lawns of the cricket pitch with a magnificent, seemingly incessant, backdrop of Greenwood House, Herrison Hall and Redwood House.

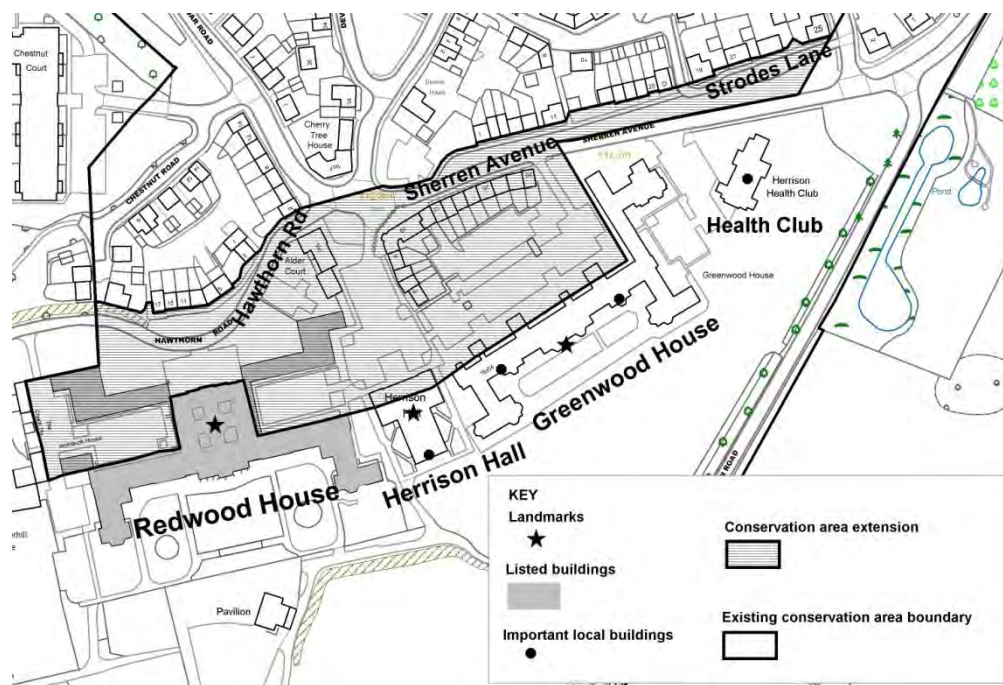


Fig 36

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### *Sherren Avenue, Strodes Lane, Hawthorn Rd and Centre of Charlton Down*

The north conservation area boundary tends to cut through the landmark and listed Redwood House/Chapel Block and Herrison Hall, which is an Important Local Building (page 17). Nor does the boundary include the centre of Charlton Down with its important communal areas - the small green and adjoining square in front of the hall; nor the north side of Sherren Avenue/Strodes Lane with its planned line of new frontages, green verge and retained trees that altogether, complement the important building group (page 21) and Important Local Buildings (pages 16 & 18) of the Health Club (former chapel) and Greenwood House opposite. A similar building line fronted by green verge and trees exists in Hawthorn Rd and complements the landscaped and significant Redwood House opposite.





*Nos 6-11 Herrison Rd*

The conservation area boundary is extended to include Nos 6 to 11 Herrison Rd (fig 37) that is, the three pairs of semi-detached, former staff cottages that have been identified as Important Local Buildings (page 19). These prominent cottages are positioned parallel to and above the Cerne valley road, A352, and as part of the former hospital contribute to the historic interest and southern gateway of the conservation area.

*Nos 28-35 Herrison Rd*

The conservation area boundary is extended to include Nos 28-35 Herrison Rd (fig 38), which are former staff cottages identified as Important Local Buildings (page 21). The later provision of a range of utilitarian garages changed the garden plot of No 29. As well as being within the northern gateway, these cottages have historic interest and represent an influence of Garden Suburb planning within a hospital complex.

## Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Partners
Standards and methods or repair and maintenance of historic buildings and structures	Provide advice on request	WDDC
Sourcing local materials and continuation of building traditions	Provide advice on known sources and building traditions on request	WDDC
A number of unlisted buildings have historic and/or architectural interest	Consider additions to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest	WDDC English Heritage
Design standards in the public realm (signage, bollards, space with amenity value and use)	Identify opportunities to enhance and consider traffic management	DCC (Highway Authority) WDDC
Review conservation area boundary	Consider possible amendments	WDDC Parish Council
The contribution of trees and hedgerows to the character and appearance and setting of the conservation area	Exercise regulatory role to ensure that important trees are protected and that where trees in the conservation area are damaged or felled, they are replaced where appropriate. Suitable schemes through the Conservation and Community Planning Grant to be supported.	WDDC Parish Council
Exchange of archaeological information	Consider how to assist the Dorset Historic Environment Record	WDDC DCC English Heritage

## Developing Management Proposals

Based on the Summary of Issues & Proposed Actions, the following objectives might be set out as the basis of a long-term management plan:

- the contribution of the landscape setting and trees to the conservation area to be perpetuated using all means possible; suitable schemes could qualify for the Council's Conservation and Community Planning Grant (offers limited financial support subject to criteria and availability); details available on *dorsetforyou.com* website;
- consider additional buildings for listing;
- provide the Dorset Historic Environment Record with relevant information as available;
- small-scale improvements could qualify for the Council's Conservation and Community Planning Grant (see above).

## Advice

The District Council can advise on the need for Listed Building Consent or any planning permission that may be required, and can provide advice on matters such as methods of maintenance and repair, shop fronts, alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings and suitable materials. Contact details are provided below.

## Information and Contact Details

### Criteria used for assessing the contribution made by important local buildings:

In line with English Heritage guidance, an "important local building" is one that makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, and where this is the case, the building will be included in a local list within the conservation area appraisal. Two basic criteria were used; the actual design characteristics, such as mass, skyline, interesting details, materials and existing or former use; and position relative to the wider setting, individual or groups of Listed Buildings.

**Contacts:** West Dorset Design & Conservation Officer (01305 251010) or e-mail [planning@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk](mailto:planning@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk)

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## Maps

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