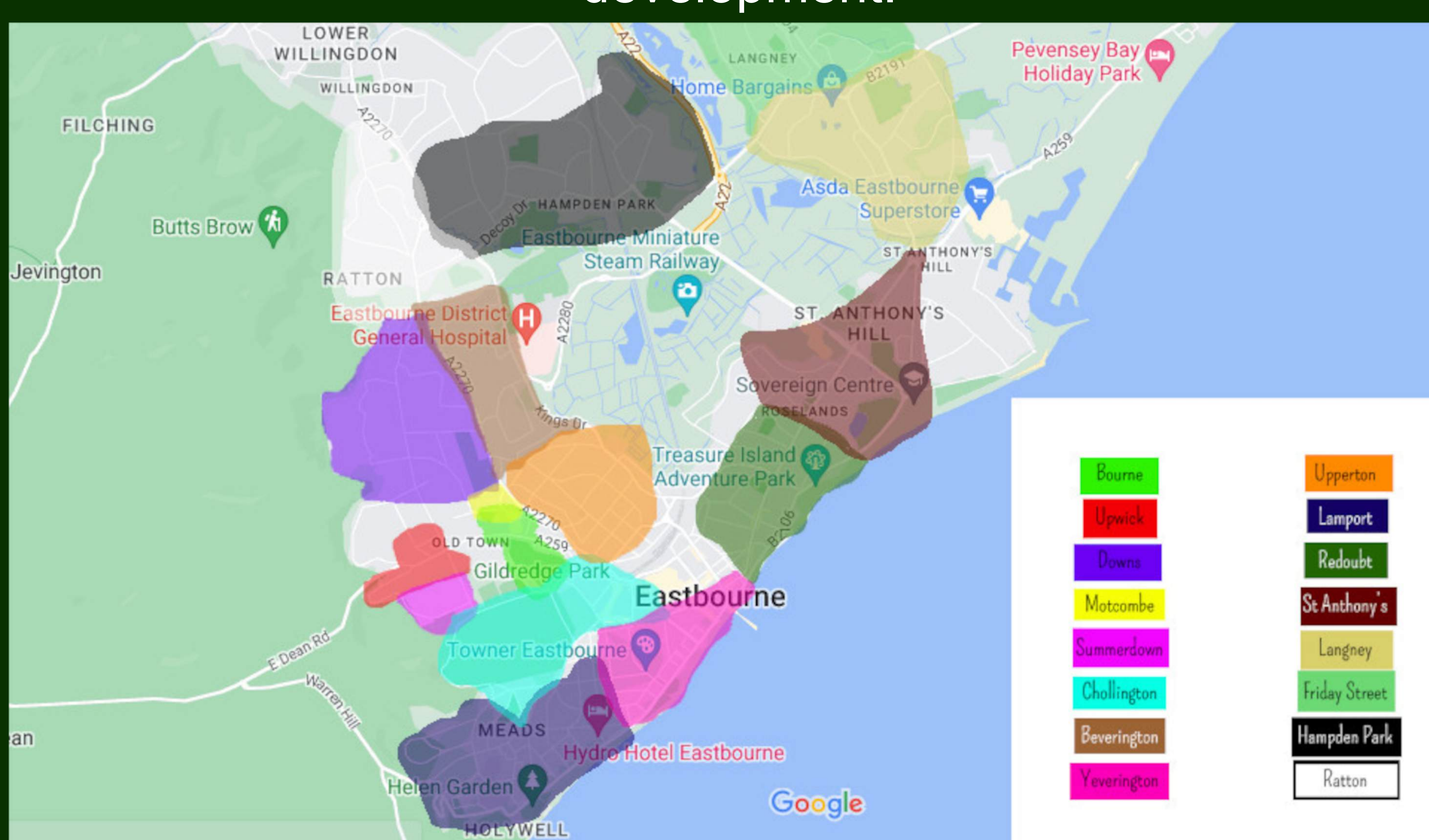


Eastbourne's Historic Character areas and Big Dig Finds

The Eastbourne Big Dig explored sites across the town, uncovering layers of history that reveal how people lived, farmed, and built communities over thousands of years. Test pits were dug by Eastbourne residents in 12 of Eastbourne's 16 Historic Character Areas, showing just how much of the past survives beneath today's streets and gardens.

The results confirm that Eastbourne's story is one of farming, settlement, and change. From prehistoric activity on the Downs, to medieval manors, to the 19th-century expansion of the seaside resort, the Big Dig has helped piece together a complex picture of the town's development.



Highlights from the Big Dig

- Bourne – The medieval heart of the town, with occupation from the 1500s to 1900.
- Upwick – Evidence of prehistoric tools, medieval fields, and farming that shifted between arable and pasture.
- Motcombe – Traces of the medieval manor farm, dovecote, fishponds, and later housing.
- Summerdown – Over 900 years of farming, with powerful reminders of WW1 when the area became a vast convalescent camp.
- Hampden Park – Signs of prehistoric and early medieval activity, including finds that point to Iron Age and Saxon presence.
- St Anthony's and Langney – Later developments that transformed pasture and wetlands into the town's 19th–20th century suburbs.

What the Finds Tell Us

Together, the finds from these areas show how Eastbourne developed as a downland settlement, shaped by farming, manor estates, and later seaside growth. They also highlight exciting new questions—for example, the confirmation of prehistoric and early medieval activity around Hampden Park suggests there is still much more waiting to be discovered.



Mesolithic/Neolithic worked flint found in Hampden Park



Pottery found in Hampden Park