

5.4 Inter-war period Swanage (1914-1945)

5.4.1 Historical Summary

This period sees the continuing development of Swanage as a seaside resort and the increasing suburban expansion of the town to the south, west and north. It was the time of the town's greatest popularity as a tourist holiday destination. It was also a period during which there was significant military activity and the town suffered some serious bomb damage in the Second World War.

The First World War interrupted house building in Swanage. A large number of troops were billeted here in 1914-15 and five large army camps were built to the north of Swanage below Ballard Down. After the war, the camp at the north end of Swanage Bay at Whitecliff became the Ballard Estate, with many of the huts being converted or rebuilt as houses. There was a chronic shortage of houses after the war and Swanage, like most towns in England, saw major suburban development, both council housing and the speculative development of private housing, during the 1920s and 1930s. Suburban development to the west swallowed up Herston, which became part of Swanage. There were extensive new housing estates built to the north, extending almost all the way to Ulwell. To the south, suburban development continued to expand further up the hill towards Durlston. The population increased from 4689 in 1911 to 7110 in 1921, but reduced slightly in 1931 to 6280 inhabitants.

Swanage became a popular seaside holiday destination during the 1920s and 1930s. Most visitors arrived by train and many stayed in the increasing numbers of guest houses and small hotels. The 1930s were the heyday for the railway with a large number of services all year round and some summer seaside specials di-

rect from London. There were regular steamer services from Bournemouth and after the Sandbanks chain ferry and Studland toll road were opened in 1926, there was a regular bus service from Bournemouth.

The sea front was altered and improved with the widening of Shore Road in the 1920s. A series of timber groynes were constructed to counteract the loss of sand from the beach. The area of the former Eastbrook Farm adjacent to the Mowlem Institute was made into a recreation ground with a bandstand, tennis courts and bowling green. Another recreation ground was created further north along the Shore Road. Other amusements in the town included a cinema in Station Road in 1916 and there were two cinemas by 1932.

Tourism became the major economic activity in Swanage during the inter-war years. The stone trade continued but at a reduced rate and most of the quarries close to the town were closed as suburban development encroached. The Swanage brickworks continued throughout this period.

Both Mount Scar and Herston elementary schools continued to cater for the education of younger children and in 1929 Swanage Grammar School was opened to provide education for older pupils. Also, Swanage continued to be a favoured location for private schools during the 1920s and 1930s. The most prominent of these schools was Oldfield School and the adjacent Forres School which were housed in large purpose-built school buildings in a prominent location just to the north of the town centre. Most of the private schools left the town during the Second World War and never returned.

The coming of the Second World War saw great changes to Swanage. The visitors



Figure 25: Inter-war suburban housing on Cauldon Avenue.



Figure 26: The bandstand and recreation ground on the site of the former Eastbrook Farm.

ceased and anti-invasion defences were added along the seafront. An emergency coastal battery was established on Peveril Point, armed with two 4-inch naval guns, and a number of pillboxes and gun emplacements were built along the coast (Chacksfield 1993). The town suffered from several air raids between 1940 and 1944: parts of Institute Road, Station Road, Cornwall Road, High Street, Springfield Road, Park Road and Church Hill suffered serious damage. Swanage, together with Worth and Langton Matravers, played a significant part in the birth of radar in the early years of the war. Many soldiers were billeted in Swanage prior to Operation Overlord in 1944 and a practice landing was carried out on Studland Heath.

5.4.2 Town Layout

The town layout in this period was broadly the same as the Late Victorian and Edwardian town. There was no major new road building other than local access roads to the expanding suburban housing estates. These new housing estates were largely built off existing roads with a local network of linear streets and culs-de-sac giving access to the houses. The estates off Northbrook Road were largely set out on a rectilinear grid, while to the south of the town, the new estates were less regular, but were largely fitted within the grid of existing north-south boundaries. There was little new building within the centre of the town at this date.

5.4.3 Inter-war Town Plan Components

The main plan components of the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth century town are shown on Figure 31 and are listed below.

1. *Church*. There was little change to the church in this period. It received some bomb damage during the Second World War.

2. *High Street*. There was relatively little new



Figure 27: The former cinema on Station Road.

building along the High Street during this period. Parts of this area were badly bomb damaged during the Second World War. John Wesley's Cottage was destroyed and large parts of the area known as 'The Narrows' was damaged.

3. *Mill*. There was little change to this area during this period. The cottages around the mill pond were threatened with demolition in the late 1930s, but were saved and renovated.

4. *Royal Victoria Hotel*. There was little change during this period.

5. *Magnolia House*. There was little change during this period.

6. *Vicarage*. There was little change during this period.

7. *The Parade*. There was little change during this period.

9. *Sandpit*. The sandpit had gone out of use and the area landscaped. A small recreation ground was made to the north of the sandpit field in the 1920s. A brick gun emplacement was built here during the Second World War.

11. *Herston*. There were few changes to the historic core of Herston during this period.

12. *Newton*. In 1876, Newton Manor House and Farm remained much as in the previous period. There was some suburban development along the High Street between Newton Manor and Herston House in this period.

13. *Carrant's Court*. There was little change during this period.

14. *Northbrook Farm*. This no longer operated as a farm and it had become incorporated into a suburban housing estate.

16. *Cauldron Barn Farm*. A number of new farm buildings and outhouses were added during this period.

19. *Congregational Chapel*. There were no major changes to the chapel during this period.



Figure 28: Site of Wesley's Cottage, High Street, destroyed during a Second World War air raid.

During the Second World War, the school room was used initially as a reception area for evacuees and later as a British Restaurant. It suffered bomb damage during the War.

20. *Methodist Chapel*. There were no major changes to the buildings during this period. It suffered bomb damage during the War.

21. *Coastguard Station*. There was little change during this period.

22. *The Grosvenor Hotel*. There was little change during this period.

23. *Marine Villa*. There appears to have been little change to the house during this period.

24. *Durlston Down Estate*. Some large villas and detached houses were built at the southern end of the estate, particularly along Durlston Road and Lighthouse Road. The most interesting house is Scar Bank House, designed by Morley Horder and built in 1930.

25. *Shore Villa*. There was little change during this period.

26. *Railway and Railway Station*. The railway line became part of Southern Railway after the First World War. The 1920s and 1930s saw a great increase in traffic along the railway and services ran all year round. The station was rebuilt and enlarged in 1938.

27. *Stone Yard*. The stone yard was removed and the railway siding lifted and Commercial Road formed. The area was infilled with buildings. Part of Cornwall Road and Station Road was destroyed by bomb damage during World War 2.

28. *Pier and Tramway*. There was little change in the area during this period, but it was no longer used by the stone trade. The pier was cut off during the Second World War to discourage enemy invasion.

29. *Drill Hall*. There was little change during this

period.

30. *Cemetery*. The cemetery was replaced by a new municipal cemetery at Godlingston in the 1930s.

31. *Swanage Elementary School*. There was little change during this period.

32. *Swanage Hospital*. There was little change during this period. The adjacent house was bought for the hospital and was used as a maternity home.

33. *Water Works*. There was little change during this period.

34. *Water Tower*. There was little change during this period.

35. *Gas Works*. The gas works were expanded during this period with a new siding from the railway and two new large gas holders constructed before the end of the 1920s.

36. *The Mowlem*. There was little change during this period.

37. *Purbeck House*. The house was purchased by the Convent of Mercy in 1935.

38. *Peveril House Hotel*. There was little change during this period.

39. *De Moulham Road Villas*. There was little change in this area during this period.

40. *Kings Road West*. Kings Road West was extended to join Victoria Avenue and suburban housing was built along it.

41. *Ballard Down Housing Estates*. Suburban housing estates were built here after the First World War behind the Edwardian villas. The Ballard Estate started life as an army camp.

42. *Grand Hotel*. The hotel was enlarged slightly during this period.

43. *Durlston Dairy Farm*. There were no significant changes during this period. It was demol-



Figure 29: World War 2 coast battery, Peveril Point.



Figure 30: Scar Bank House.

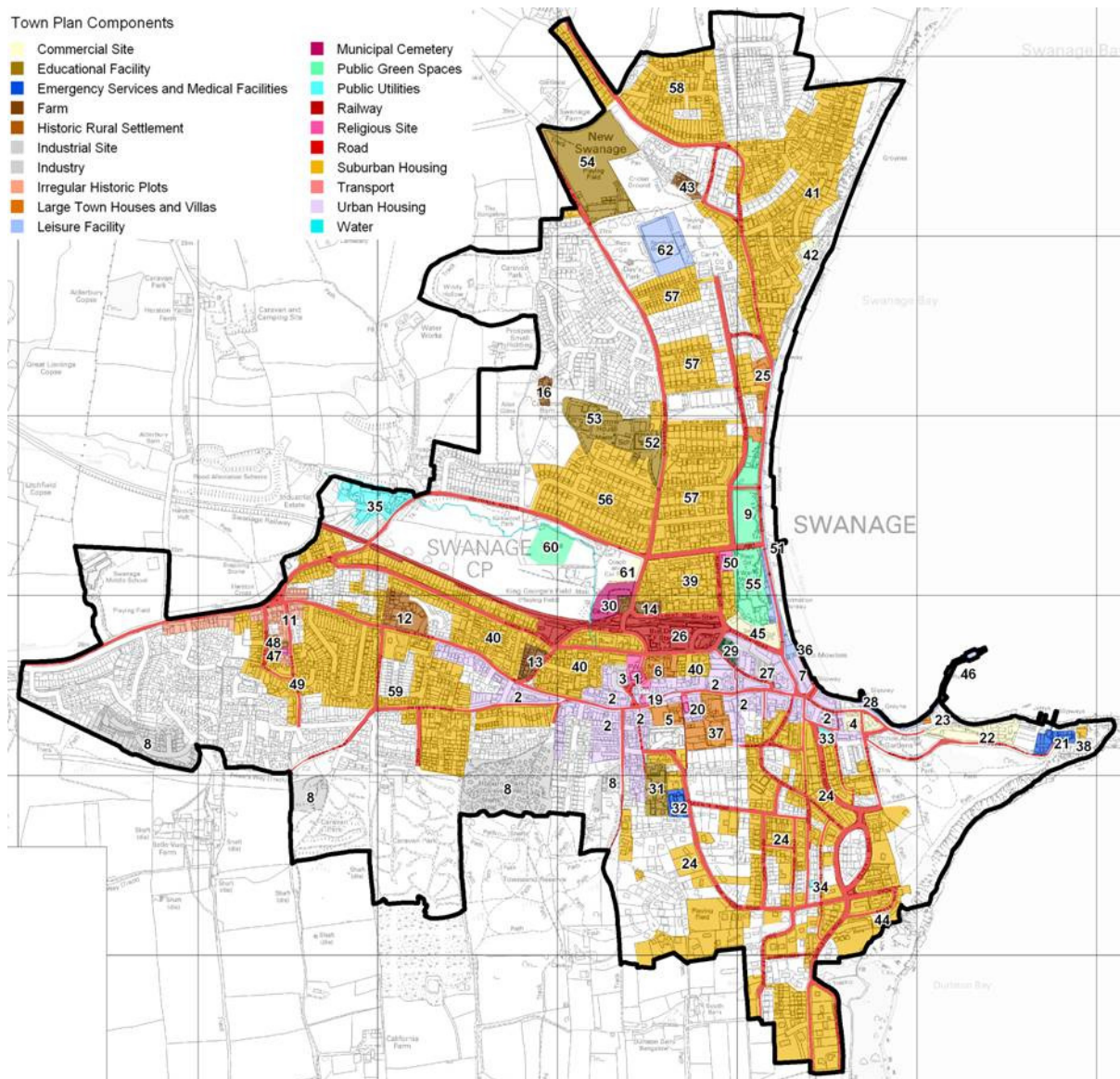


Figure 31 Inter-war Town Plan Components



Figure 32: Swanage Grammar School.



Figure 33: Ballard Down estate, created from a First World War army camp.

ished in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

44. *Belle Vue Restaurant*. There were no significant changes during this period.

45. *Station Road*. A number of other buildings for entertainment and facilities for visitors joined the Railway Hotel on the northern side of Station Road including the Cinema (built 1916) and the adjacent Grand Theatre originally a concert hall and later became another cinema in the 1930s.

46. *Pleasure Pier*. The pier was repaired in 1928. It was cut off from the land during the Second World War to discourage enemy invasion.

47. *St Mark's Church, Herston*. There were no significant changes during this period.

48. *St Mark's Church Of England First School*. The school was expanded in the 1920s.

49. *Herston Suburbs*. Some semi-detached houses were built along the High Street in the 1920s.

50. *The Church of the Holy Spirit and St Edward*. There were no significant changes during this period.

51. *Seafront*. Shore Road was widened and a new sea wall built in the 1920s.

52. *Forres School*. Brookfield House school was taken over by Rohan Chadwick in 1919 and renamed Forres School. A chapel was added in 1933 and was later damaged by a wartime bomb.

53. *Oldfield School*. Oldfield preparatory school moved from Cranborne Road to a new red brick building on a site off Northbrook Road just before the First World War. The school did not survive the Second World War.

54. *Swanage Grammar School*. The Grammar School was opened in 1929 in a large red brick building on Northbrook Road.

55. *Recreation Ground*. The recreation ground was created with tennis courts, bowling green and bandstand after the First World War on the area of the former Eastbrook Farm.

56. *Rabling Road Housing Estate*. The roads were laid out for this housing estate in the 1920s and the detached houses built during the 1920s and 30s.

57. *Housing Estates, De Moulham Road/ Northbrook Road*. A number of individual detached suburban housing developments were built to the north of the original Edwardian villas in this area between Northbrook Road and De Moulham Road.

58. *Housing Estates, Whitecliff*. This included some bungalow ribbon development along Ullwell Road and an estate of detached houses and bungalows along Hill Road and Moor Road built in the 1920s and 30s.

59. *Townsend Housing Estates*. A number of small estates of mainly detached houses were built in the 1920s and 1930s off Priest's Road, Cow Lane and the High Street. In the 1930s the suburban housing estate built along Steer Road joined Herston into the suburbs of Swanage.

60. *Cricket Ground*. This was established in the 1920s.

61. *Nursery*. A plant nursery with large green houses was established after the First World War to the north of the cemetery.

62. *Swanage Town Football Ground*. A football pitch was established here after the First World War.