

5.5 Inter-war Shaftesbury (1918- 1945)

5.5.1 Historical Summary

In 1918-19, the 'Property of Shaftesbury' was sold off and the town entered a new era with a large number of smaller property owners rather than a single powerful landlord. This stimulated the economy and saw the beginnings of expansion of the town. The population grew from 1812 inhabitants to 2367 in 1931. In 1933, the municipal borough was enlarged to include parts of Cann and Motcombe.

Shaftesbury seems to have been relatively fortunate in terms of avoiding the worst depredations of unemployment and poverty during the depression of the 1920s and 1930s. This may be partly explained by the sale of the 'Property of Shaftesbury', which had enabled many of the former tenants to buy their own homes and premises. This encouraged investment in the town. The borough was now in complete control of the water supply, market house, cattle market, and land destined for recreation and housing. The infrastructure was improved with the construction of a new sewer system. Electric street lighting was installed in 1935, provided by the Wessex Electricity Company, who had established an office in the town in 1929 (Innes 1991, 101). A new municipal cemetery was formed on Mampitts Road in 1927 to relieve the overcrowded cemetery of Holy Trinity Church. A recreation ground with tennis courts and bowling green was created at Barton Hill.

The suburban area of the town was increasing during this period. A council house estate was built along Coppice Street and Old Boundary Road and speculative suburban houses were erected along the Grosvenor Road, Lower Blandford Road, Christy's Lane and Mampitts Lane. Some housing was also built along Breach Lane, Enmore Green and along Layton Lane and French Mill Lane.



Figure 37: Lych gate, Municipal Cemetery, Mampitts Road.

Shaftesbury's economy was still largely based on the markets and on hospitality to travellers. The covered market between High Street and Bell Streets held weekly produce markets on Thursdays. The fortnightly cattle market was changed from Saturday to Thursday in 1919 and was held in the market site off Bell Street. The cattle were still driven through the town to the market. The rise of the motor vehicle and motoring holidays meant increasing traffic through Shaftesbury, which was still on the main route from London to Cornwall. This led to something of a resurgence in hotels and guest houses. A number of the larger houses in the vicinity, such as Belmont House on the southeast edge of the town, became hotels to cater for this new type of tourist. The ruins of the Abbey were also put on display and opened up to visitors at this time and in 1931 a lead casket containing bones, thought to be the remains of Edward, King and Martyr, was found in the Abbey ruins. This led to renewed interest in the Abbey and an increase in visitors.

There was no significant industrial base to the town. The only heavy industry was the Belle Vue Iron Works on Bleke Street.

Shaftesbury escaped any serious damage during the Second World War.

5.5.2 Town Layout

There was little significant change to the road layout of the town. The historic centre remained largely unaltered, with little large-scale rebuilding. The hospital was enlarged and there was some infilling of the western end of Bimport. A small amount of new building took place in St James, but it largely retained its earlier appearance. The major changes in settlement occurred around the edges of the his-



Figure 38: Inter-war council houses, Old Boundary Road.

toric town, with suburban expansion primarily along the Grosvenor Road, Coppice Street, Mampitts Lane, Christy's Lane, French Mill Lane and the Lower Blandford Road.

5.5.3 Inter-war Town Plan Components

The main plan components of the inter-war town are shown on Figure 39 and are listed below.

1. *Bimport (The Burh)*. A number of short terraces and some detached houses in relatively large gardens were built in the 1920s at the western end of Bimport, between it and Love Lane.
2. *Abbey House*. Abbey House was divided from the abbey site, but otherwise there was little significant change during this period.
5. *St Peter's Church*. St Peter's was semi-redundant for much of this period, used only for occasional summer services.
6. *Wesleyan Methodist Chapel*. There was no significant change during this period.
7. *High Street*. The High Street frontage was fully developed by the early 20th century and there was no significant change in this period.
8. *Barton Hill*. A number of outhouses were added to the east of the house and the garden boundaries were rearranged.
10. *St James' Church*. There were no significant changes to St James' Church during this period.
11. *St James Suburb*. There was relatively little change in this area during this period, other than a slight expansion along St Johns' Hill.
12. *St Rumbold's Church*. There was no significant change during this period.
13. *Cann*. A small number of houses were added.
14. *The Market*. The wooden clock tower on the Town Hall was replaced by the current stone tower in 1923. Otherwise, apart from the resurfacing of the roads, there was been no significant change to the market area in the inter-war period.
15. *Holy Trinity Church*. There was no significant change to Holy Trinity Church during this period.
16. *Bell Street and Bleke Street*. There was relatively little change during this period.
17. *Gold Hill*. There was no significant change during this period.
18. *Salisbury Street and Coppice Street*. There was relatively little change along Salisbury Street during this period.
19. *Enmore Green*. There was relatively little change other than the construction of the war memorial and the construction of a row of detached houses along Breach Lane.
20. *Castle Hill*. There was no significant change to Castle Hill during this period.
21. *Layton House*. There was no significant change during this period.
22. *The Park*. There was no significant change during this period.
23. *North Bimport*. The Savoy cinema was built adjacent to Castle Hill House, otherwise, there was relatively little change during this period.
24. *Belle Vue*. There was little change during this period.
25. *Old Granary*. There are few recorded changes during this period. There was some development to the rear of the malthouse site either in the late Edwardian period or in the 1920s.
26. *Congregational Chapel*. There was no significant change during this period.
27. *Friends Meeting-House*. The meeting-house was no longer used by the Society of Friends and was let.
28. *Barton Hill Farm*. There was little significant change during this period.
29. *Half Moon Inn*. There was little recorded change during this period.
30. *Mayo Farm*. There was little significant change during this period.
31. *Brinscombe Farm*. There was a small amount of change to the farm buildings during this period.
32. *Hawkesdene Farm*. A new farmyard was added to the west side of the farm before the late 1920s.
33. *Heath Farm*. There were few changes during this period.
34. *Middle Field Farm*. Some farm buildings were built on the south side of Wincombe Lane.
35. *The Westminster Memorial Hospital*. The hospital was extended in 1930 and a veranda added in 1932. X-ray equipment was installed in 1919.
36. *Gas Works*. Some of the gas holders were removed and a new gas holder built below the gasworks in the northeast corner of the open

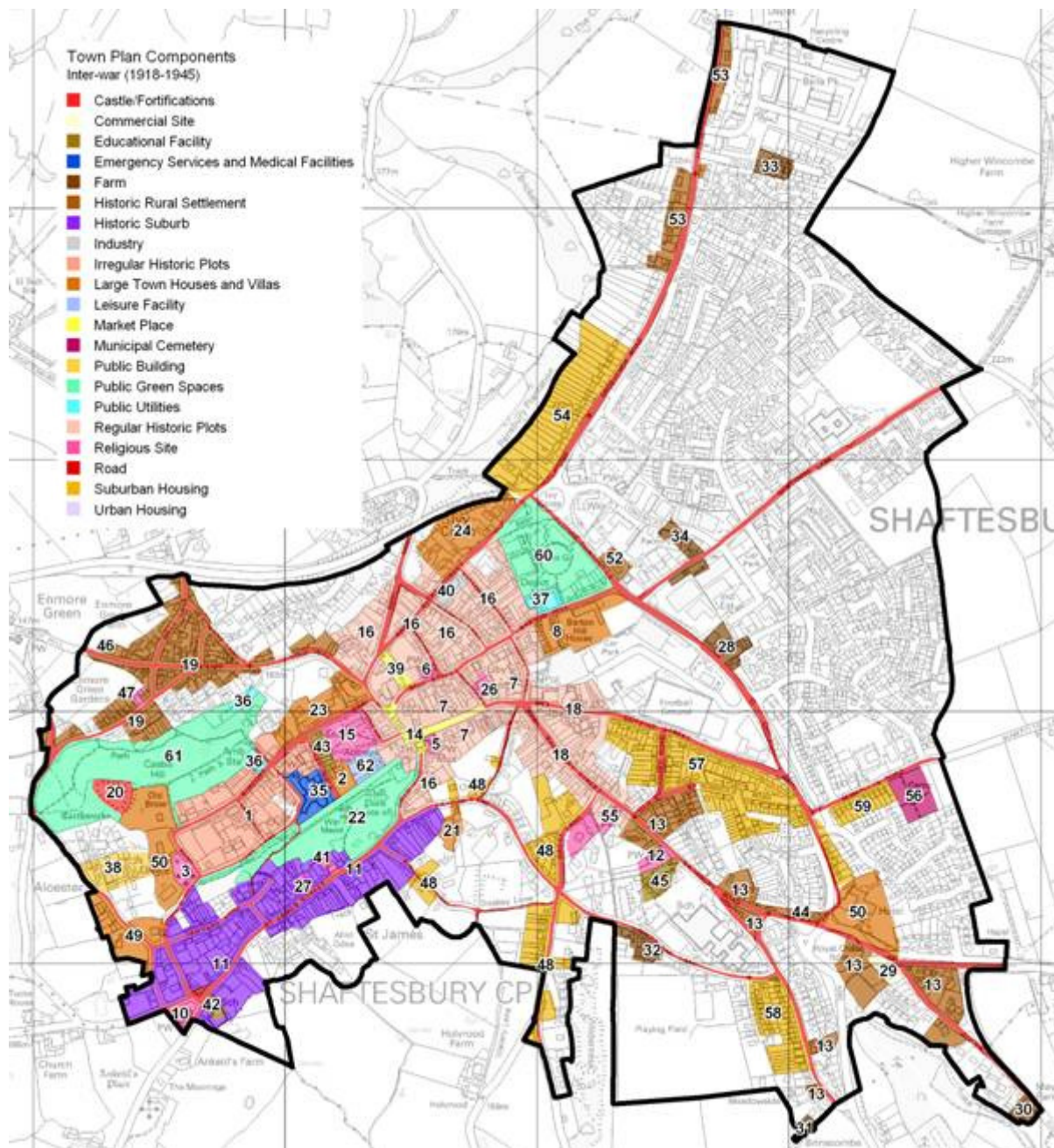


Figure 39: Shaftesbury Inter-war plan components

ground of Castle Hill.

37. *Water Works*. A redundant water tank was converted into a swimming pool in the 1920s. The mineral water factory continued to operate until at least 1939.

38. *Shaftesbury Union Workhouse*. After 1930 the workhouse became Shaftesbury Public Assistance Institution, caring for the chronically sick.

39. *The Cattle Market*. There was little change during this period.

40. *Belle Vue Iron Works*. The Belle Vue Iron Works were the only heavy industry in Shaftesbury during this period.

41. *St James Primitive Methodist Church*. This is marked as an 'Institute' on the 1928 Ordnance Survey map.

42. *St James National School*. There was little change during this period.

43. *Shaftesbury National Schools*. There was little change during this period.

44. *Cann School*. There was no significant change during this period.

45. *Shaftesbury Grammar School*. The school buildings were extended in 1923.

46. *Enmore Green School*. There was no signifi-

cant change during this period.

47. *Enmore Green Methodist Chapel*. The chapel may have become redundant by 1935, as it is no longer listed in Kelly's Directory.

48. *Layton Lane and Great Lane*. There are two small groups of inter-war housing on Great Lane and Hawkesdene Lane.

49. *Alcester*. There was little change during this period.

50. *St John's*. Old Brow was built in the 1930s to the north of St John's Cottage and adjacent to Castle Hill.

51. *Belmont House*. Belmont House was converted into a hotel in 1922.

52. *Barton Hill Villa*. There was no significant change during this period.

53. *Little Down*. There was little change during this period.

54. *Ivy Cross*. There was ribbon development of semi-detached houses along the western side of the Gillingham road built in the 1930s.

55. *St Andrew's RC Church*. A presbytery was built to the rear of the church.

56. *Shaftesbury Municipal Cemetery*. The Shaftesbury Borough Corporation acquired land for a new cemetery on Mampitts Lane in 1927 at the eastern edge of the then borough boundary (Figure 37).

57. *Old Boundary Road Housing Estate*. At the sale of the Shaftesbury 'Property' in 1919, the Corporation bought allotments on Coppice Street for development as council housing. The first new council houses were built in 1932 along Coppice Street and Old Boundary Road.

58. *Cann Suburban Housing*. There was some suburban housing development along the west side of the lower Blandford road in the inter-war period.

59. *Suburban Housing South of Mampitts Lane*. Some detached bungalow development took place prior to 1947 along Mampitts Lane and Christy's Lane.

60. *Recreation Ground*. The recreation ground at Barton Hill was created in the 1920s. There was a bowling green and tennis courts along the western side, a pavilion on the eastern side and allotments along the southern side on Barton Hill.

61. *Castle Hill*. After the 1918-19 Sale the land at Castle Hill was given to the town as a permanent open space.

62. *Abbey Gardens and Museum*. The abbey site was bought by Robert Borley in 1918-19 and he sold it to the Claridges in the 1930s. They opened the remains to the public, and continued to excavate the site.



Figure 40: Inter-war suburban houses, Mampitts Lane.



Figure 41: Inter-war and post-war houses along Grosvenor Road