5.4 Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Shaftesbury (1800-1918)

5.4.1 Historical Summary

The nineteenth century saw some stagnation in the economy of the town, though it retained an important market function. It suffered during the agricultural depression after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and much of its industry declined and disappeared in the first half of the century. In the second half, Shaftesbury's cattle market suffered from the rise of that of Gillingham with its good railway links. Nevertheless, reform of the local corporation and of its parliamentary representation benefited the town and a number of new public buildings and houses were built in the first half of the 19th century by Earl Grosvenor, the major landowner in the town at that time.

Census returns indicate that the population of Shaftesbury was relatively stable in the first half of the 19th century but steadily decreased in the final decades. The combined totals from the three parishes of St James, St Peter and Holy Trinity declined from approximately 3054 during 1871 to 2658 in 1891. From this point the census was counted for the metropolitan borough and it is not certain how the boundary changes affected total populations. Nevertheless the downward trend continued with the total population of the metropolitan borough falling from 2027 in 1901 to 1812 in 1921.

Shaftesbury retained its role as a market town and an important staging post on the Great West Road. It continued to support a large number of inns and brewhouses. Many of the shops on the High Street were renewed in the early 19th century, perhaps an indication of their continuing economic success (Rutter 1827a, vol 2, 1-5). Shaftesbury's weekly market was vital to its economy and served a hinterland of up to ten miles around, including Gil-

lingham, Motcombe and many other smaller villages. By 1860 the railway had been extended from Salisbury to Exeter, but only passed as close as Semley Station, approximately three miles to the north. Nevertheless, its importance as a market town ensured that coaches ran regularly from Semley to Shaftesbury, maintaining trade and inns within the town. In 1871, a wholesale milk depot was established at Semley station to supply milk to for the London market. This meant that local agriculture changed from mainly butter and cheese production to bulk milk supply. On the other hand, Shaftesbury's cattle market suffered as a consequence of the success of the Gillingham cattle market with its more direct rail connections.

Shaftesbury's industrial base all but disappeared in the first quarter of the 19th century, largely as a result of the increasing industrialisation in the Midlands and northern England. The cloth industry was almost extinguished by the increasing availability of cheap machine-produced cloth. The button-making industry was killed off by the mechanised processes of the manufactories in Birmingham (Rutter 1827). Tanning and leather working were also seemingly in decline with only one tanyard remaining in St James' parish in 1827. A silk house had existed on Angel Lane, an offshoot of the Gillingham Silk Mill, but it closed in the beginning of the 19th century.

The decline of industry in the town had a detrimental effect on the poor, many of whom lost their livelihood. The situation was particularly bad in the St James and Gold Hill areas and in the town's two workhouses, as described by John Rutter in his 'A Brief Sketch of the State of the Poor in Shaftesbury' published in 1819. The situation in the St James and Gold Hill ar-

Figure 28: Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Bell Street.

Figure 29: Former toll house, Lower Blandford Road.

eas may have been partially ameliorated through the philanthropic work of Earl Grosvenor (later Marquis of Westminster) and Quakers such as John Rutter. In St James, Grosvenor cleared some slums at Andrew's Yard and built new houses. Rutter set up a school and soup house. The Shaftesbury Poor Law Union came into effect in 1834 and the new union workhouse, which housed up to 250 inmates, was opened in Alcester (St James) in 1840. The building was based on the Poor Law Commission's model square plan (Higginbotham 2008).

In 1820, Earl Grosvenor bought the 'Property of Shaftesbury' from Lord Rosebery to control the elections in the town. He proved a benevolent landowner and generous to the town, giving it a new Town Hall in 1826, providing it with a free piped water supply in 1852 from a waterworks built at Barton Hill, and rebuilding many of the houses. Westminster Memorial Hospital was constructed by his wife and daughter in 1871 as a memorial to the Marquis who had died in 1869.

A gas works was built on Bimport in 1837 to provide gas for both public and private lighting.

Electoral reforms saw the end of Shaftesbury as a pocket borough, with the 1832 Reform Act removing one of its MPs and extending the electoral area to include people living outside the town. This meant that the landowner's ability to influence the elections was greatly reduced. The introduction of secret ballots in 1872 meant that elections in Shaftesbury were finally free. The Municipal Reform Act of 1835 also meant that the old closed corporation handed over control of the borough to a more democratically elected body. Early successes of the new body saw the reconstruction of Spiller's and Chubb's almshouses in Salisbury Street (Innes 1992, 66-94).

There was a revival in religious fervour from the 1830s onwards. The majority of Shaftesbury's surviving parish churches were reconstructed following the transfer of Dorset from the diocese of Bristol to that of Salisbury in 1836. St Rumbold's was rebuilt in 1840, Holy Trinity in 1841 and St James in 1868. St Peter's is the only Shaftesbury church to retain significant medieval fabric. Dissenting chapels were also rebuilt, usually due to a need for enlargement from the increasing numbers in their congregations. The Independent or Congregational Chapel was rebuilt in 1859. The Methodist Chapel was rebuilt in 1827 and again in 1907 (Figure 28). A Temperance Hall was built in Bell Street in 1877, which later became the Shaftesbury Masonic Lodge.

This period saw the increasing provision of education in the town. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Shaftesbury Free School on Bimport seems to have closed, leaving the twenty places at Lush's Blue Coat School as the only source of free education. A number of private schools were opened in the town, such as Grosvenor House academy in Bleke Street, run by the Reverend Thomas Evans, established before 1823. Evans later opened a more inclusive school in Muston's Lane for the education of poorer children, although parents still had to pay a small fee. Grosvenor House was later converted to a girls' boarding school. A National School was established in Abbey Walk in 1847 and in 1871 a new school building was constructed adjacent on Bimport for boys and girls, the old school continued to be used as an infant school. National Schools were also built in St James, Cann and Enmore Green (Innes 1992, 78-82). There was a British School in Muston's Lane. An amendment to the Endowed School Act in 1878 led to the Blue Coat School becoming Shaftesbury Grammar School. The old building on Bell Street was sold and a new school built adjacent to St Rumbold's Church, opening in 1898 (Rutter 1970, 7).

The Shaftesbury and Sherborne Turnpike Trust was renewed in 1800 and 1822-3. This latter Act included provision for converting the lower road to Blandford into an arterial route. Within Shaftesbury the physical manifestation of this was the turnpiking of the road south from Butts Knapp, upon which a toll house was constructed at the junction with Hawkesdene Lane. In 1840 the Shaftesbury division of the Trust contained 38 miles of road but was extinguished on 1 November 1865 (Good 1966, 125-6). New Road was constructed in the early 19th century to make an easier descent of the slopes to the north of the town (Innes 1992, 65).

5.4.2 Town Layout

Shaftesbury changed little in terms of street layout during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1817, the road down Tout Hill was widened, the gradient reduced, and the retaining wall rebuilt. New Road was created at about the same time and was the only new addition to the road layout. It cut through the north side of Bleke Street to make an easier descent to the Gillingham road. There was some reorganisation of the market place. The old guildhall and other buildings in the centre of the High Street were removed and a new Town Hall was built in its present location in 1837. It is not clear if the turnpiking of the Lower Blandford Road from Butts Knapp southwards in 1822-3 led to a significant
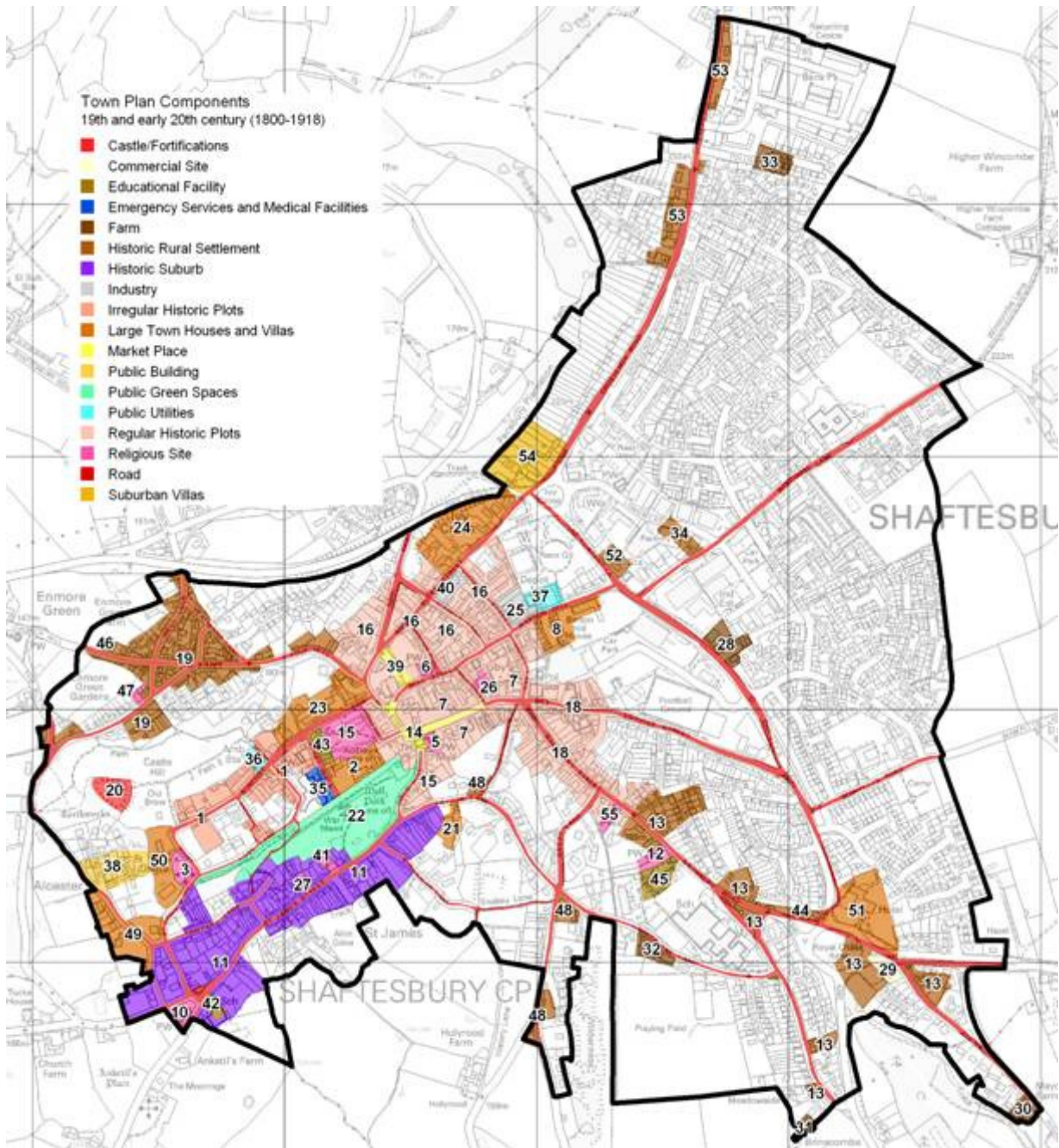
Figure 30: Shaftesbury Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Town Plan Components.

realignment of the route. However, it seems to have been widened and became the major route into town from the south at that time. A toll house was constructed at the junction with Hawkesdene Lane (Figure 29).

There do not appear to have been many significant changes in the historic plots, though many of the buildings in the town centre, including High Street, Bell Street, Bleke Street and Salisbury Street were built or reconstructed during this period. There was also partial slum clearance and the rebuilding of houses in St James. Much of the area along Bimport remained undeveloped, though a gas works and the Westminster Memo-

rial Hospital were built here. A water works and reservoir were built on the east side of town. A cattle market and covered market house were constructed on Bell Street in the late 19th century.

The built area of the town expanded slightly towards the east, though there was a contraction of settlement along Bimport. The new Grammar School was built on the edge of the town on Salisbury Street and the workhouse was built to the west of the spur. This period also saw the beginning of suburban expansion along the Gillingham road and an increase in rural settlement in the vicinity. Cottages were constructed on former roadside common at Little Down, Cann and

Enmore Green.

5.4.3 Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century Town Plan Components

The main plan components of the nineteenth and early 20th century town are shown on Figure 30 and are listed below.

1. Bimport (The Burh). Significant parts of the former burh remained unoccupied during the 19th century. However, there were also a number of domestic and commercial developments. A row of urban housing was cleared on the north side of Bimport and replaced with a new Victorian terrace (Figure 31), along with further Victorian houses at the far west end of Bimport.

2. Abbey House (The Abbey). There was little change to Abbey House during this period. The remains of the abbey lay in the garden. Excavations on the site of the abbey church were undertaken in 1816, 1861 and 1902. Following the latter, the finds were displayed in the Town Hall until 1910 (Innes 1992, 86).

3. St John's Church. Although the church had been demolished at the end of the medieval period, the churchyard remained in use until the 19th century (Penn 1980, 85).

5. St Peter's Church. St Peter's is the only surviving Shaftesbury parish church to have escaped wholesale reconstruction during the 19th century, but there were some restoration works in 1897. Minor alterations in the crypt below the south aisle are dated to the 19th century.

6. Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. The 18th century meeting-house on the site of St Laurence's church was rebuilt in 1827 in a classical style and repaired in 1864 (Innes 1992, 79-80). In 1907 a new Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built on the site. It was in a Gothic style, by Gordon and Gunton (Stell 1991). The former date stone was reset.

7. High Street. A significant number of houses along the High Street date were rebuilt or re-fronted in the 19th century. The Grosvenor Arms Hotel was rebuilt in the early 19th century on the site of the former Red Lion and may retain some earlier fabric. A covered market house was built running between High Street and Bell Street in the later 19th century.

8. Barton Hill. Barton Hill House appears to have been substantially rebuilt in the late 19th century.

10. St James Church. St James was entirely rebuilt in 1868 (Figure 32) slightly to the west of its medieval location. The 19th century church contains some 14th century windows and a 15th century parapet, reused from the earlier building (RCHME 1972, 64-5).

11. St James Suburb. St James was a poor district during the 19th century containing many tightly-packed small slum dwellings. A number of small improvements were made by local philanthropists to mitigate against the worst of the conditions.

12. St Rumbold's Church. St Rumbold's was the first of the Shaftesbury parish churches to undergo a 19th century reconstruction. The earlier church was demolished and a new combined chancel and nave, west tower and south porch were built in 1840. A vestry and organ chamber was added on the north side of the chancel in 1909 (RCHME 1972, 65).

13. Cann. The settlement at Cann expanded during the 19th century. This may be explained by the turnpiking of the Upper and Lower Blandford Roads by the early 19th century and the enclosure of the commons in 1812. The area around Butts Knapp was enclosed in 1812, the land having been auctioned off (DHC Inclosure 26). This prompted the development of small houses and cottages along Butts Knap and some larger houses near the junction of the Salisbury and Higher Blandford Roads (e.g. Cann House and Cann Villa). A few houses were added in the early 20th century, Highfield

Figure 31: Numbers 43-61 (odd) Bimport.

Figure 32: St James' Church (North Front).

House for example.

14. *The Market.* The old Guild Hall was demolished along with an adjacent row of houses in the centre of the High Street, thus opening up the market place to its present extent. The new Town Hall was built in 1837 at the top of Gold Hill. A wooden clock tower was added in 1879.

15. *Holy Trinity Church.* The church of the Holy Trinity was rebuilt in 1841. The nave, aisles, north and south chapels, and west tower of the new church were built in the 'Early English' style by George Gilbert Scott. The chancel was added by Doran Webb in 1908 (RCHME 1972, 64). The new church was much larger than the medieval one and became the main church of Shaftesbury.

16. *Bell Street and Bleke Street.* There were a number of changes to the Bleke Street and Bell Street area. New Road was constructed in the early 19th century, bisecting the former burgages on the north side of Bleke Street, representing a significant departure from the medieval layout. Most of the area north of New Road was made into allotments. A police station, Temperance Hall and a number of Victorian town houses were built at the east end of Bell Street suggesting that this was firmly a middle class area of town. Another large 19th century house was built at Sunridge on Bleke Street, adding to the pre-existing Grosvenor House. There was expansion of the built area to the east of Victoria Road, which comprised a mixture of housing and other buildings including the armoury of I Company of the 1st Volunteer battalion, Dorsetshire. A Drill Hall was built here in the early 20th century.

17. *Gold Hill.* Gold Hill was a poor area during the 19th century, along with the adjoining St James. The old 'Lamb Inn' at the top of the street was one of the town's two poor houses prior to the construction of the Union Workhouse in 1840. In 1904, an institute was built on the site of the Lamb Inn, incorporating a meet-

ing house, adult school and workmen's club (Butler 1999).

18. *Salisbury Street and Coppice Street.* There were a significant number of developments along Salisbury Street during the 19th and early 20th centuries. A row of houses at numbers 2-38 (even) are thought to be 19th century in date although a corresponding row is depicted on the Upjohn town plan of 1799. Numbers 40-44 have been demolished in recent years for pedestrian access to St Martin's Road. A row of Victorian suburban villas occupy the area to the south (46 -58 Salisbury Street). Cann Lodge also dates from the 19th century.

19. *Enmore Green.* The early-mid 19th century was period in which a number of large detached houses were constructed in Enmore Green, adding to the existing scatter of small cottages. These include Tout Hill House and The Old School House on Tout Hill as well as Enmore Green Farm House, 2 and 17 Well Lane and 20 The Knapp. Two short rows of terraced houses were built along Breach Lane in the later 19th century. A small group of cottages at The Butts are also probably 19th century in date.

20. *Castle Hill.* There was no significant change to Castle Hill during this period.

21. *Layton House.* Layton House was refronted in the 19th century. It was the home of local lawyer and philanthropist John Rutter.

22. *The Park.* The Park was given to the town by Robert Dyneley in 1816. Park Walk was extended by Pine Walk up to St John's Hill in the early 1890s.

23. *North Bimport.* By the 19th century, the Arundell's house on the corner of Bimport and Tout Hill became a public house, the Rose and Crown, then a builder's yard before being demolished.

24. *Belle Vue.* Belle Vue (now Bleke House) was constructed in the early-mid 19th century (Figure 35). The neighbouring Palladwyr House

Figure 33: Former Congregational Chapel, Muston's Lane.

Figure 34: St Edwards Catholic Church, Salisbury Street.

was built to the west in the late 19th century.

25 *Malthouse.* A large granary was built here during the 19th century and a suite of stables behind. The malthouse itself appears to have gone out of use in the mid 19th century.

26. *Congregational Chapel.* The earlier meeting-house was replaced by the present Congregational Chapel (Figure 33), designed by Andrew Trimen, in 1859 (Stell 1991).

27. *Friends Meeting-House.* There were some changes to the meeting-house building, including the alteration of the windows in the 19th century. It was closed in 1907 and meetings transferred to the 'Institute', Gold Hill. The stable was converted into a dwelling in 1914 (Butler 1999).

28. *Barton Hill Farm.* There was little recorded change during this period. It is marked on the Tithe Map as Rabbitts Farm.

29. *Half Moon Inn.* There was little recorded change during this period.

30. *Mayo Farm.* There was little recorded change during this period.

31. *Brinscombe Farm.* Brinscombe Farm probably dates from the early 19th century.

32. *Hawkesdene Farm.* Hawkesdene Farm probably dates to the mid to late19th century.

33. *Heath Farm.* Heath Farm was probably established by the early 19th century.

34. *Middle Field Farm.* Middle Farm was probably established in the early 19th century.

35. *The Westminster Memorial Hospital.* This hospital was opened at the corner of Park Walk and Abbey Walk, within the former monastic precinct in 1871 by the widow and daughter of the Marquis of Westminster in his memory. In 1907 his daughter presented a further gift of an operating theatre for the hospital.

36. *Gas Works.* In 1837, a number of Shaftesbury businessmen formed the Shaftesbury Gas

and Coke Company Ltd and built a gas works in Bimport to make gas for public and private lighting.

37. *Water Works.* In 1852, the Marquis of Westminster sank a 125ft deep well with steam pumps to form Shaftesbury's Water Works on Barton Hill. A mineral water factory was established next to the water works by George Kersley and Sons.

38. *Shaftesbury Union Workhouse.* Shaftesbury Poor Law Union was established in 1836 and comprised 19 parishes. The new workhouse was completed and opened in 1840. It could accommodate 250 inmates and was designed by William Walker, based on the commission's model square plan (Higginbotham 2008).

39. *The Cattle Market.* A covered market was built at Bell Street in the mid-late 19th century. It held fortnightly cattle markets. In 1902 permission for a fortnightly open air Saturday cattle market was revived.

40. *Belle Vue Iron Works.* James Farris, agricultural implement maker and engineer, established the Belle Vue iron works in the late 19th century on Victoria Street. They provided a wide range of steam agricultural equipment and also hired out steam rollers for road surfacing.

41. *St James Primitive Methodist Church.* This was erected in 1895. It is on the site of a school founded by John Rutter, earlier in the 19th century.

42. *St James National School.* This school was opened in 1873 for 220 pupils.

43. *Shaftesbury National Schools.* A National School was built in 1847 on Abbey Walk and in 1871 a new school building was built on Bimport for girls and boys, with the original school used for infants.

44. *Cann School.* A National School was built near Butts Knap in 1845. It was enlarged in 1893, to accommodate 88 pupils (Kelly's Direc-

Figure 35: Bleke House, formerly Belle Vue, Bleke Street .

Figure 36: School House, Shaftesbury School.

tory 1915).

45. *Shaftesbury Grammar School.* Lush's Blue Coat School became a Grammar School in 1872 and was renamed Lush's Endowed Grammar School. It moved to a new site on Salisbury Street close to St Rumbold's Church in 1898, becoming Shaftesbury Grammar School (Figure 36).

46. *Enmore Green School.* A National School was built in Enmore Green in 1870.

47. *Enmore Green Methodist Chapel.* A Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in Enmore Green, probably in the early 19th century.

48. *Layton Lane.* A short terrace of cottages was built on the corner of Layton Lane and Shooters Lane in the 19th century. Other scattered cottages were built along Gascoigne's Lane during this period.

49. *Alcester.* Some large detached houses were built in this area during the 19th century including St James Rectory and Cliff House.

50. *St John's.* In the early 19th century, a large house, St John's Cottage (now St Edward's Chantry) was built on the western extremity of the spur, adjacent to the former location of St John's Church. It incorporates a number of architectural details and internal features said to have come from Fonthill Abbey.

51. *Belmont House.* Belmont House was built in the early 19th century by James Barrow and finished off by the Reverend J Christy. It incorporates a porch brought from Ashcombe House (Rutter 1827, II, 41). In 1898 it was purchased by the Sons of Mary Immaculate (Fils de Marie Immaculée), an order of French Missionary priests and became the headquarters of the order in 1903 following persecution and expulsion from France (FMI 2010).

52. *Barton Hill Villa.* A large villa (now known as Little Content House) was built on Little Content Lane, Barton Hill, in the early 19th century.

53. *Little Down.* Little Down comprises a narrow roadside strip of cottages apparently built during the 19th century along the main road to Warminster close to the northeast edge of the borough boundary. The plots are narrow and resemble enclosures from former roadside common, although plots may have been made available following the turnpiking of the road in the late 18th century.

54. *Ivy Cross.* A small development of suburban villas was built on the Warminster Road in the late 19th century.

55. *St Andrew's RC Church.* The Catholic church of the Most Holy Name and St Edward the Martyr was built in 1910 on Salisbury Street. It is in Early English style, designed by Doran Webb (Figure 34).