

## 5.8 Later 20th Century Christchurch (1946-Present Day)

### 5.8.1 Historical Summary

Following the end of WWII the development of Christchurch has been dominated by the proliferation of modern suburban housing. The historic core of Christchurch remains relatively undisturbed by these developments although there was the loss of historic character in the Bargates area through road and retail development during the 1960s and 70s and the development of the area between High Street Milhams Street and Bargates. By the 1970s the area to the west of Walkford, around Wolhayes had been developed for housing as well as much of Bure and Mudeford. The suburbs to the north of Christchurch had nearly reached its modern day extent during the 1970s.

The post-war period saw a boom in the sea-side holiday with the arrival of holiday camps such as Pontins which opened in Christchurch at Wick Ferry in 1962 and closed in 1995. A number of caravan sites existed in the 1960s at Wick, Mudeford, Friars Cliff, Hoburne and Chewton Common.

There was a proliferation of industrial estates the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of industrial units have developed on the site of the former Christchurch Airfield, Somerford. The Stony Lane business Park was built on former meadow between the Bridge Street medieval suburb and Purewell. Large retail parks have also developed at Somerford Roundabout and Bailey Drive on the former Barracks site.

The area of the Avon flood plain and Stanpit marsh remains undeveloped and separates the new housing estates from the historic town, allowing the latter to retain much of its character. To the north of the town only St Catherine's Hill remains undeveloped between the Stour and the Avon. Furthermore, pressure on land in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been



Figure 51: Captain's Club Hotel on the site of the former Pontins holiday camp

such that many of the original large plots have now been subdivided further and developed more intensively for housing. Modern roads have cut a swathe through the Bargates area and elsewhere dual carriageways and roundabouts link or perhaps divide the housing estates into the distinct areas of Somerford, Highcliffe, Walkford and Mudeford. Some of the marshes, such as Stanpit and Quomps, although undeveloped have been partially raised or drained or utilised for recreational purposes. The southern part of Stanpit Marsh is now a nature reserve.

### 5.7.2 Town Layout

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a number of major developments to the town plan. The suburban housing estates have continued to expand, most notably into areas of former commons at Grove, Chewton and Nea Woods. Industrial and retail parks have also been developed at the former Barracks, the former Christchurch Airfield and Somerford. Retail developments have also eroded the historic character of the town centre in the region of Bargates and the NE corner of the burh. Bargates is also the character area to be most affected by the development of the Christchurch By-pass in 1958, a dual carriageway linking the northern and eastern suburbs and running between Bargates and Somerford roundabouts.

### 5.7.3 Later Twentieth century Town Plan Components

The main plan components of the later twentieth century town are shown on Figures 53 & 54 and are listed below.

1. *Parish Church of The Holy Trinity and Priory Gardens.* The area of the Church, graveyard, priory precinct and Castle has been used as



Figure 52: Avon Park Housing Estate

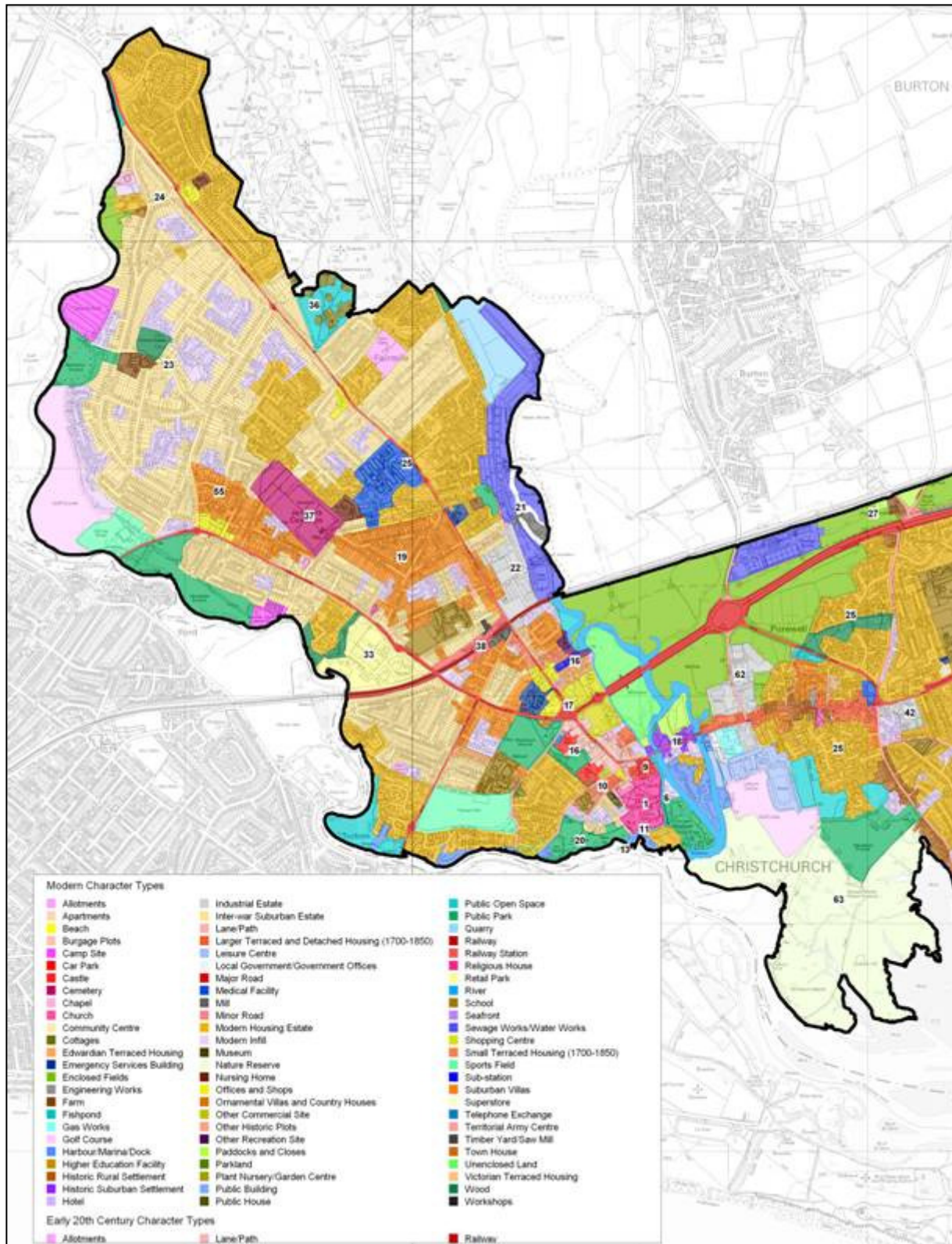


Figure 53: Christchurch modern plan components (west)

public gardens for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Priory House and grounds remain private. Furthermore, some of the former monastic buildings have been used recently as museums and part of the precinct turned over to car parking. This area retains the greatest sense of historic char-

acter in the borough with substantial remains of medieval architecture. It also provides a quiet haven adjacent to the bustling town centre.

6. *The Mill Stream*. There were no significant developments during this period

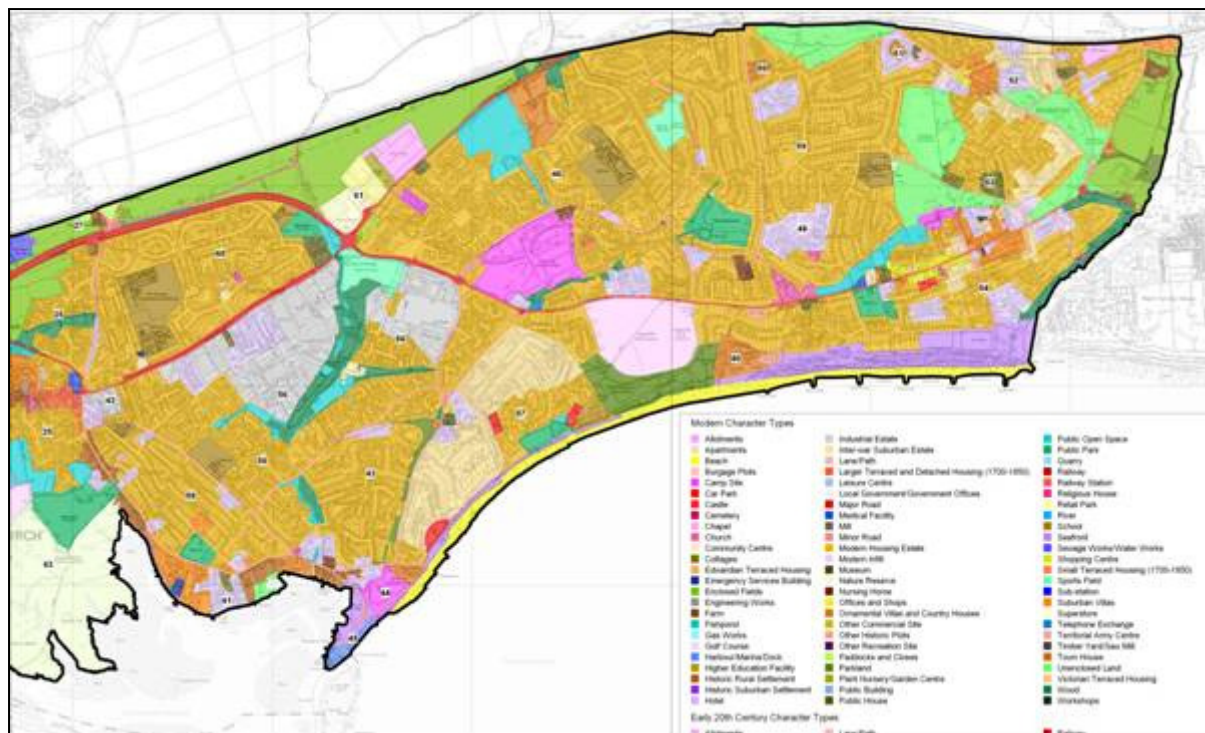


Figure 54: Christchurch modern plan components (east)

9. *The Castle*. The area of the castle has been given over to public gardens for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A bowling green sits within the former bailey.

10. *Wick Lane*. There were no significant developments during this period

11. *Place Mill*. In 1981 Place Mill was restored by the Borough Council and is now used in the summer months as a gallery for local artists.

13. *The Harbour & Quays*. There were no significant developments during this period. There was some dredging in the harbour.

16. *Burgage Plots*. Burgage plots survived at the NE end of High Street until the 1970s when the area was redeveloped for a superstore and multi-storey car park. Further burgage plot boundaries were destroyed during the Saxon Square development in Bargates and the construction of the by-pass and roundabout there at the same time. Some burgage plot boundaries survive at the rear of properties on both sides of Beaconsfield Road and the museum of electricity, but in a skeleton form. Similarly the occasional boundary survives to the rear of properties on the west side of High Street between Bank Close and Druitt Gardens.

17. *Bargates suburb*. The Historic Character of the southern Bargates area was severely compromised when the by-pass, Fountain Roundabout and Saxon shopping centre were built during the 1970s. The entire triangle between

Barrack Road, Bargates and Stour Road was demolished and burgage plot boundaries removed.

18. *Bridge Street suburb*. The only development on Bridge Street during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century was that of Avon Wharf which had previously been a small industrial site.

19. *Avon Park Housing Estate*. This estate was only fully developed during the 1960s. Some of these later houses were built in a consistent style to those from the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, others were .

20. *Quomps*. There were no significant developments during this period

21. *Knapp Mill*. There were no significant developments during this period

22. *Latch Farm*. Some of the area of the former gravel working has been incorporated into the waterworks alongside the River Avon. The Higher and Lower Close sites at Latch Farm have been developed for modern housing. The Mill Plain gravel pits lay to the south of Lower Close and were bounded by Mill Road, Fairmile Road and the railway to the north of Bargates. This area has recently been re-developed as an industrial estate.

23. *Grove Farm*. This estate is essentially an inter-war suburban estate with a high number of brick built bungalows set back from the street frontage in large plots. The estate was largely

complete by 1947, although a few plots were not built on until the 1950s.

24. *Bosley*. Development of the Bosley area for suburban housing had already begun by 1947, with a similar style of wide curving roads with bungalows set in large plots as at the earlier Grove Housing estate to the south. There has been a gradual northward expansion of development from Jumpers Common, through Grove and Bosley to the western slopes of St Catherine's Hill throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

25. *Street or Purewell*. It was only in the 1970s and 1980s that extensive modern housing estates were built. Initially the area around the medieval core was expanded to include the Buttery and industrial units were established to the west of Scotts Hill Lane. These have recently been redeveloped as the Rotterdam Drive estate. The area of the former Scotts Hill Common was developed as a large estate comprising curvilinear culs de sac with a mixture of short terraced, semi-detached and detached housing. To the south of Purewell an area of former medieval furlongs on the northern edge of Stanpit Marsh around Marsh Lane was also developed as a housing estate in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A number of significant developments have taken place at Purewell Cross during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. Purewell Hill House was demolished and the Purewell Court development constructed in its stead. The Grovely Road Industrial estate was established on the site of a 1930's gravel pit. The 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings in the SE quadrant of the cross roads were demolished and replaced with the Purewell Close development.

27. *Staple Cross*. During the 1970s the Christchurch by-pass was driven through Staple Cross, effectively cutting it off from Peppercorn Cottage on Burton Road. Staple Cross now sits on a major dual carriageway with a modern housing estate on the other side.

32. *Nea*. The main lake at Nea Meadow was constructed in 1987-8, the bowling club has been established here since 1975. The site was declared a local nature reserve in 2005.

33. *Barracks retail park*. This retail park was opened in December 1996, it occupies the site of the former sports field at Christchurch Barracks and buildings associated with the Military Engineering Experimental Establishment (MEXE). The site continued to develop equipment for the military until the 1970s (MVEE).

35. *Christchurch hospital*. With the creation of the NHS in 1948, the Northern part of the workhouse became Christchurch Hospital. The

southern part has recently been redeveloped with apartments arranged in crescents built in a style sympathetic to the surviving workhouse buildings, which have also been restored.

36. *St Catherine's Hill estate*. There were no significant developments during this period.

37. *Jumpers cemetery*. There were no significant developments during this period

38. *Christchurch Station and railway*. There were no significant developments during this period



Figure 55: Grove Housing Estate



Figure 56: Purewell Housing estates



Figure 57: Modern buildings at Mudeford

40. *Highcliffe Castle*. The property was sold in 1950 and it became a children's convalescent home and Catholic Seminary before being destroyed by fire. The site was purchased by Christchurch Borough council in 1976 and the building and gardens have now been partly restored.

41. *Fisherman's Bank*. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century development at Fisherman's Bank has been dominated by the construction of the Rushford Warren and Inveravon estates in the former grounds of the Rushford Warren and Inveravon villas. The villas, fronting on to Mundeford, were demolished in the process and the subsequent estates are in stark contrast to the historic street frontage.

42. *Purewell Cross*. Purewell Hill House was demolished and the Purewell Court development built on the site. The Grovely Road Industrial Estate was established on the site of a 1930's gravel pit. The 19<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings in the SE quadrant of the cross roads were demolished and replaced with the Purewell Close development. Perhaps the most significant development was the construction of Purewell Cross Road in the 1980s to connect Stanpit, Mundeford and Purewell with the Christchurch by-pass.

43. *Bure Homage*. Bure Homage fell into disrepair and was demolished in 1957. The development of the site of the house and gardens for housing began shortly after. The estate comprises detached bungalows set centrally within medium sized plots arranged in geometrically designed roads. Some trees have been retained from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Park.

44. *Sandhills*. Sandhills House became the clubhouse of a holiday park in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the grounds now occupied by static caravans

45. *Mundeford Quay*. A lifeboat Station and sailing club were built on the Quay during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. A new lifeboat station replaced the old one in 2004.

46. *Hoburne House*. Hoburne house was built in 1809 and demolished during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The site is now occupied by a modern housing estate. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Hoburne farmhouse and outbuildings survive as part of a caravan park during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

47. *Verno Lane*. Designated a conservation area in October 1988

48. *Wolhayes*. Wolhayes became the Marydale Convent School and was demolished in 1970 to be replaced by the Wolhayes housing development. This comprises regular terraced houses and apartments set within small plots arranged on regular linear culs de sac.

49. *Belvedere*. Belvedere became known as

Holmhurst. The house was demolished and redeveloped in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century as part of the North Highcliffe housing estate.

50. *Cranemoor House*. The grounds of Cranemoor house were redeveloped for housing prior to 1960. Cranemoor Avenue and Cranemoor Close are slightly curving culs de sac with detached bungalows set in large plots. The 19<sup>th</sup> century house and Lodge have been preserved at the junction of Cranemoor Avenue and Hinton Wood Road.

51. *Amberwood*. The grounds of Amberwood House were similarly developed for housing within a curving cul de sac called Amberwood Gardens, although the bungalows here were set in smaller plots at a later date than Cranemoor.

52. *Walkford*. The development of suburban estates in the vicinity of Walkford continued steadily in the 1950s so that by 1960 the plots had been almost completely developed.

53. *Bramble Lane and Chewton Common*. Bramble Lane was designated a conservation area in June 1982.

54. *Highcliffe*. During the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century some of the large plots associated with the grid pattern of streets were infilled with linear or curving culs de sac, mostly with detached houses in large plots. One such cul de sac developed the site of the former Chewton Lodge.

55. *Jumpers Common housing estate*. This late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estate remained largely unchanged during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. Expansion to the north during the inter-war period encompassed the Grove Farm area. One small area of modern infill was established in plots at the rear of Fitzmaurice Road (Eleanor Gardens).

56. *Former Christchurch Airfield housing and industrial estates*. Civilian flying returned to Christchurch Airfield after the war and the Signal Research and Development Establishment (SRDE) occupied the eastern end of the site. All activity ceased in the early 1970s and the site has since been developed for housing and industrial estates. Only a few of the original Airspeed buildings have survived. The SRDE moved out in 1974 and that part of the MOD site not sold for redevelopment was eventually taken over by British Aerospace in 1998. The site is still partly used by BAe Systems, and part leased out as office space.

57. *Friars Cliff housing estate*. The SRDE also had a pair of radomes at Steamer Point on the former Emergency Beach Battery site. These were instantly recognisable white multifaceted domes. However, when the SRDE moved out in

1974 the radomes were dismantled and the site used as a coastguard station. Other parts of the SRDE land were sold for housing as an extension to the Friars Cliff housing estate.

*58. Mudeford Lane housing estate.* This estate was planned and mostly developed during the inter-war period. The last plot to be developed lay on the west side of Mudeford Lane on the site of a former glider hanger, this remained as allotments as late as the 1960s.

*60. Somerford housing estate.* The Somerford housing estate is located to the north of Somerford Road and south of Christchurch By-pass. It was built during the 1950s and the streets are planned with curving geometric patterns.

*61. Somerford Retail Park.* This development lies to the east of Somerford Roundabout and largely to the north of Lyndhurst Road. It was constructed in the late 1980s and early 1990s as an out-of-town retail.

*62. Stony Lane industrial estate.* The Stony Lane Business Park was built on former meadow between the Bridge Street medieval suburb and Purewell. It includes a business and retail park as well as light industrial units.

*63. Stanpit Marsh Nature Reserve.* Stanpit Marsh is an SSSI and a fine example of a mid-estuary marsh covering an area of 52 hectares. It was declared a nature reserve in 1964. The site boasts an early Bailey Bridge still in existence; a prototype, developed at the nearby Christchurch Barracks, was tested on Mother Siller's Channel and remains spanning the channel to this day.