

Case Study: Redditch New Town

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20th-century non-domestic buildings and public places in
Worcestershire



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Front Cover Image: Halfords head office at Washford Industrial Estate in Redditch

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Redditch is a town located on the north-east border of the County of Worcestershire with a population of approximately 85,000. The town is separated from the main urban area of Birmingham by a green belt of 5 miles and there are approximately 12 miles between their centres. Redditch sits in a rolling landscape with the town located on a ridge and the lower ground around it. The geology is principally Mercia Mudstone with superficial deposits of alluvium related to the River Arrow, which cuts through the eastern half of the town. Historically the main industry of the town was needle production; however, the factories of Redditch have a long history of metalwork and were heavily involved in production for both World Wars. The settlement appears to have grown as both an ecclesiastical centre around Bordesley Abbey, now located in the north of the town, and an informal market or 'semi-urban' settlement around the cross roads of two major Medieval roads, which met at Church Green (Dalwood 1996) and later became the main centre. In 1964 Redditch was designated a New Town and underwent considerable development which changed the face of both the town and its surrounding countryside. Its unique history presents substantial opportunity to study the characteristics of both 20th-century development and New Town planning in Worcestershire.

Redditch pre-20th Century

Prior to 20th-century expansion, the town of Redditch was relatively small; the 19th-century tithe map for the parish of Tardebigge depicts a settlement principally focused on the area of Church Green, Prospect Hill, Silver Street and along Beoley Road. In 1850 the population of Redditch was thought to be around 5,000, by 1900 it had exploded to approximately 18,000 (University of Portsmouth 2000). This rapid growth has been attributed to the opportunities afforded by growing industry.

The earliest evidence for settlement in the area is not recorded on the summit of Prospect Hill but instead 1.5 miles north at Bordesley Abbey. Bordesley was founded in the early 12th century by Cistercian monks from Leicestershire after a land grant by the Earl of Worcester. The abbey became wealthy through a network of 12 granges and by utilisation of the River Arrow for fishponds, water mills and water powered iron forges. A stone abbey was constructed, followed in the 13th century by St. Stephen's Chapel, which was built adjacent to the main gate to serve the growing community (Astill 2011).

Documentary sources also evidence a settlement at Redditch Church Green in the 13th century (Dalwood 1996) and an excavation in 1997 revealed a moated medieval manor site built over 13th- or 14th-century agricultural soils (Linanne 2016). This may have been a grange related to Bordesley Abbey; however, there is no documentary evidence for this (Dalwood 1996). Equally, there is no documentary evidence for a market place at Redditch, although the form of possible medieval tenement plots around what is now Church Green, on the 1885–1886 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map, would suggest that an economic centre existed here at the meeting of two important routeways running east–west from Warwickshire to Kidderminster and north–south from Staffordshire to Evesham (Dalwood 1996 and Dyer 1992).

Following dissolution of the abbey in 1538, the settlement of Redditch gradually moved up to the site of Redditch's modern town centre. There is considered to have been some decline in settlement during this period (Dalwood 1996), however, the 1997 excavation on Alcester Street did record a large 17th-century sandstone building which

appears to have replaced an earlier moated site, whilst the Unicorn Hotel, demolished in 1997, also dated to the 17th century, indicates some investment in new buildings. Needle making was a cottage industry in Redditch during this period but by the 18th century it had become factory-based, utilising the power of the River Arrow to scour needles at numerous mills along its watercourse and tributaries. In 1805 the gate chapel at Bordesley was demolished and the material was used in the building of a church in the new settlement of Church Green. The advent of steam power in the 19th century allowed the needle works to move from the low ground beside the River Arrow, to the new town developing on the hill. The needle industry of Redditch grew throughout the 19th century to provide 90% of the world's needles; it also turned its focus onto other wire-based industries including fish hooks and springs (Coombes 2014). Growing metalwork expertise in the area also brought in new industries like cycle manufacture. In 1880 the Townsend Cycle Company was founded which also led to the establishment of the Eadie Manufacturing Company and the Enfield cycle company; the large works for each company forming a backbone of industrial sites in which the manufacturing of early 20th-century Redditch would play out.

The 1885–1886 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map records a town centred on Church Green and Market Place with shops and services surrounding the green and running along Evesham Street and Alcester Street. Around this centre, terraced houses were served by a number of chapels and St. Stephens school on Peakman Street, whilst factories like Neptune Works, Queens Works, Washford Mills, Abbey Mills, Unicorn Works, Forge Mills, British Mills, Standard Works and Easmore Works, among others, proliferated across the town, guiding the character of urban morphology throughout the 20th century until the advent of the New Town and late 20th-century brownfield development. The railway had come to Redditch in 1859 and the gas works was located along Birmingham Road with its own halt for unloading. Redditch at the end of the 19th century was therefore a small but growing town with prolific industry and a growing population.

Redditch in the early 20th Century (1900–1918)

Buildings of the early 20th century reflect the continued success of industry within Redditch. Expanding factories saw several established businesses move to larger sites and new companies moved into existing sites, changing and rebuilding them to fit their purpose.



Image 1: Royal Enfield Building, Hewell Road (now ALM)

The Enfield Cycle company moved to a new 30-acre site at Hewell Road in 1906 which eventually included a works, offices, service department, motorcycle test track and staff canteen. Whilst the nearby city of Birmingham played an important part in the rise and development of the motorcar, Redditch became engaged with the production of motorbikes and cycles. Several of the buildings within the Enfield industrial estate survived into the early 21st Century but in the last decade have been demolished or heavily modified for a new business park. The Eadie Manufacturing Company, which constructed the short-lived Eadie Automobile, had moved out of Hunt End to Lodge Road and in 1905 BSA moved into Hunt End, extending the building to include a gatehouse for site police. In 1912, Terry Springs also opened a new factory on Ipsley Street to produce their spring-related wares like the Anglepoise Lamp and Terry Clips. The main building, Millsborough House, was designed by F.W.B Yorke and later extended by Yorke and his son F.R.S Yorke, the modernist architect. Brick-built with frequent large, multi-paned windows, roof hidden behind a parapet and a prominent porch entrance, pilasters and entablature, the building displays many features characteristic of early 20th-century architecture. Millsborough House is now in use as multiple small industrial units, a snooker centre and gym whose large signage festoons the frontage; however, in 2018 the estate was up for sale with pre-application planning for residential development.



Image 2: Millsborough House (part of Terry Springs)

A comparison of historic maps shows that other factory and mill sites throughout Redditch were expanding or reorganising during this time. Many buildings from this early 20th-century period of development remain extant; for example the Victoria Works on Britten Street added an Iron Foundry building prior to 1904, while new buildings at the Ashleigh Works were built between 1904 and 1927. The gas works on Birmingham Road also expanded, building new structures to meet with demand, and a tall chimney was probably built during the very early 20th Century at Ferny Hill brick works. Motorcycles, bicycles and ammunition clips were produced in great quantities during the first and second World Wars. Many of these factories close to the centre of Redditch, including the gas and brick works, are now lost to brownfield retail development and housing, although part of the electricity works on Summer Street built between 1886 and 1904 prior to regional and state control of supply, remains extant and retains original street lighting above its doorway.



Image 3: Ashleigh Works, Bromsgrove Road

With the success of industry in Redditch came the development of new housing estates which included areas of greenspace and recreation. The value of greenspace and recreation areas for health and wellbeing had been supported from the late Victorian period and they were a planned component of many early 20th-century developments. For example; cricket grounds, football grounds and sports pavilions were constructed along the Bromsgrove Road in Batchley, as were recreation grounds and allotment gardens in Birchfield Road, which survived until at least 1954 and was still green space in the 1980s but has since been built upon. The Pitcher Oak golf course was also opened in 1913. Designed by James Braid, who created Kings Course at Gleneagles, the course included a club house which is still in use today. With the advent of late Victorian social reform and the nearby influence of Bourneville model village there is likely to have been a design early on for green space planned into developments (Cherry 1979) and indeed, in 1918 Redditch Urban District Council proposed plans to build an estate at Ipsley along the lines of the garden city movement as soon as the war was ended (Coombes 2014).



Image 4: Pitcheroak Golf Course

New buildings were also constructed for recreation, including the extant timber-framed and brick bandstand in Church Green, which was built at the very end of the 19th century as a final phase of Victorian enhancements to the town centre (Redditch 2009) and the Grecian style Palace Theatre, which was built in 1913 on Alcester Street, by the famed theatre designer William Robert 'Bertie' Crewe. Impressively fronted with a stone façade, and large second-storey pilasters with iconic capitals, the Palace Theatre's interior was equally well designed to replicate theatres

across London with stalls, balcony and two boxes. It was also built with its own cinema bioscope box at a time when live theatre was on the decline (Mackill et al 2013) and cinema was on the rise. In the late 20th century, the Palace Theatre was at risk from demolition due to the New Town development. It was saved and underwent significant restoration, in 2005–06, which included the addition of a large, glazed foyer and staircase. Several clubs were also built in the early 20th century including the 1908 red brick Unionist Club on Easmore Road (later a Masonic Hall) by John Johnson.



Image 5: Palace Theatre



Image 6: Masonic Hall (former Unionist Club) 21 Easmore Road

Churches and schools had been well supported in the 19th century with a few wealthy needle makers, some of whom were choosing non-conformity and independence, funding the building of churches and Sunday schools. Building continued into the 20th century; Redditch Baptist Sunday School on Ipsley Street had been built in 1897 and the St. Stephens Church Institute on Archer Road, and Technical School were also built at this time but were demolished in the 20th century to make way for the expansion of New College. Holyoake's Field First School celebrated its centenary in 2013 but has since been granted permission to rebuild in green belt, leaving the original buildings – which benefit from an aesthetically pleasing design not found in many of the later schools – at risk of demolition.



Image 7: Holyoakes Field First School and Nursery, Bridge Street¹

The early 1900s saw development on the fringes of the town centre including buildings such as the magistrates court and Police station (dated 1901), on Church Road, and additional structures built along the Worcester Road. Many of these buildings have now been lost to New Town and late 20th-century re-development, as have many early 20th-century shops constructed in the town centre. This may have included branches of the Alcester Co-operative which opened in Alcester Street, Queen Street and Church Green East amongst other locations

Redditch in the inter-war period (1918–1945)

Following the First World War, and the crushing numbers of lives lost in the conflict, a national drive for commemoration was reflected in Redditch by the funding of several war memorials. The memorial standing near Plymouth Road and Cemetery Road was built in 1927 by the Bromsgrove Guild and depicts a lamp within a bronze urn set within an ashlar archway. A second memorial, designed by the Bromsgrove Guild and comprising a pedestal and cross with a carving of ‘The Great Sacrifice’ by James Clark, is found beside St Stephen’s Church and is dedicated to the 122 Redditch lives lost.



Image 8: War Memorial on Cemetery Road

The Inter-war period saw several chapels built in the town. While Redditch Baptist Chapel, built in 1923 to replace an earlier building on Easmore Road, remains extant, the Evesham Street gospel hall, which was built a year earlier, was demolished in 1975.

¹ Designed by A.V. Rowe and dated 1913.



Image 9: Redditch Baptist Church, Easemore Road

The 1920s slump felt throughout the country is demonstrated, in Redditch, by evidence on Ordnance Survey Maps for some smaller factories closing and being replaced by new works or housing. This was a time when needle companies began to merge to defend against overseas competition; a good example being the creation of the English Needle and Fishing Tackle Company (ENTACO) created in 1932 (Green 2015). Conversely, some industries in Redditch thrived. Terry Springs, for example, expanded their premises along Millsborough Road and Polycarp Allcock, the biggest producer of fishing hooks, rebuilt and extended their premises in Clive Road following a fire in 1920. Only the original mid-19th-century structure at Excelsior Works remains standing on Clive Road. However, the Terry Springs premises remains extant and is an impressive brick-built structure with roofs hidden behind parapets, brick columns dividing bays and large quantities of multi-pane windows providing a striking architectural appearance.



Image 10: Terry Springs, Lodge Road

The 1920s also saw new industries investing in Redditch, including the battery industry. In 1920, Batteries Ltd. moved into and expanded Hunt End, previously the Enfield Cycle Company site, whilst Britannia Batteries moved, in 1929, to the Union Street site of Eadie Manufacturing Company. Both sites retained the large impressive brick frontages of the late 19th-century structures they took over and expanded through the addition of brick and metal sheds. None of the old or new buildings remain at either site today, Hunt End being replaced by a modern industrial estate and Union Street by a retail development.

Redditch batteries were in demand for use in submarines and other businesses in the town played their part in rearmament. High Duty Alloys played a leading role, creating a large factory next door to the Gas Works on the Birmingham Road, where they could have direct access to a manifold for the forging. The factory produced pistons for the engines of Spitfires and Hurricanes as well as parts for the Bouncing Bomb adaptation of the Lancaster and

later parts for Concorde (Coombes 2017). By 1941 the site ran to nearly 26 acres and is still largely extant on Windsor Road – now called Mettis Aerospace. Birmingham Small Arms (BSA) also built a large new factory on the Studley Road, in 1939, to produce BES machine guns but this has now been demolished for housing and a modern industrial estate. Both factories were war-time shadow factories built specifically to produce armaments alongside regular production.



Image 11: High Duty Alloys, Windsor Road (Now Mettis Aerospace)

As well as rearmament, the Second World War brought defence features to Redditch. 35 records for the period are present on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record, all recording now demolished features. Structures included pillboxes, anti-aircraft gun batteries, barrack huts, single and communal air raid shelters, Bofors gun emplacements, search lights and sound detectors. The structures of many of the gun placements and pillboxes did survive into the late 20th century before being lost to re-development.

In this period, prior to the 1938 Fire Brigades Act, a new fire station was built at Red Lion Street. Large enough for 6 engines, it was demolished as part of the town hall development. The gas works expanded with additional manifolds to supply the growing metalwork industry and several sewerage works, like that at Webheath (recently built over by a housing development) were constructed to meet demand for sanitation. The Gas Company of Redditch also built an office and showroom in the town centre which is still extant despite undergoing many changes to reflect chain restaurant identities. County House (Church Green West), originally built as Redditch Benefit Building Society also retains much of its original character of red brick with stucco banding.



Image 12: Redditch Gas Company Offices (Now Papa John's and Pepe's)



Image 13: Redditch Benefit Building Society (now Workforce)

Transport services within Redditch saw the introduction of the public bus, provided by the Midlands Red company, during the First World War. A red brick garage was built on Plymouth Road in 1930 with a capacity of 18 vehicles which was later increased. The structure is still extant today and still in use as a depot, now for the Diamond Bus company.



Image 14: Bus depot, Church Road

The inter-war period saw additional housing estates built at Silins Avenue, Upper Ipsley and Batchley as well as further facilities for recreation and leisure, facilitated by the growth in household disposable income as well as free time. The swimming baths on the Hewell Road in Batchley, built as an outdoor pool, was enclosed prior to 1930, and demolished in 2016 to make way for new housing. The rise of cinema, fuelled by the 1927 Cinematograph Act, encouraged the development of several cinemas in Redditch. This included the Gaumont cinema, which was built in 1930, with a modern Art Deco façade and interior decorations on the bare bones of the old public hall, in Church Road. With its neon sign, introduced after outside lighting restrictions were lifted post Second World War, the Gaumont remained a local landmark, through its later incarnations as a bingo hall and night club, until its demolition in 2016 for residential development. Now a public house, the Art Deco Danilo Cinema on Unicorn Hill, built in 1936–7 and designed by Ernest S. Roberts, remains a significant local landscape feature on the northern edge of the town centre.

A number of public houses are also recorded as being built during this period, including the Foxlydiate Arms on Birchfield Road, built in 1938 by S. N. Cooke, and the Railway Inn on Hewell Road, also built in 1938 by C. E. M. Fillimore for Mitchell & Butlers². Both are on the Redditch Local List and are currently still in use as public houses, although an application to demolish the Foxlydiate Arms was submitted to Redditch Borough Council in the Summer of 2019 (Redditch BC 2009).



Image 15: Danilo Cinema (Now the Royal Enfield)

In 1944, the Education Act set the scene for several developments in school building. In the inter-war period, school building was principally restricted to the County High School in Easmore Road (completed in 1932). The school, which was designed by H.W. Simister of Birmingham, was the only one in Redditch that required entry by exam (Smith & Webster 2016) and consisted of a brick building centred on two courtyards which were lined with cloistered walkways. The characteristically neo-Georgian school building, much extended, remains in use today as Trinity High.



Image 16: County High School (Now Trinity High) Photograph © Trinity High School

² The Railway Inn is described in Brooks and Pevsner (2007, 559) as a nice example of Brewers Picturesque.

Redditch in the post-war period (1945–1964)

The 1944 Education Act required school education to be made available to all children up to the age of 15 and organised under primary and secondary strands as opposed to the all-ages schools present in Redditch. Population increase and a lack of building during the Inter-war period meant that existing schools were not capable of reorganising to suit the new act, resulting in a need for a programme of new school building (Smith & Webster 2016). Bridley Moore High and Walkwood School were opened in 1952 and Lodge Farm and St. Bede's followed in 1955 and 1959. Bridley Moor was in use until 2000 when it was closed as a result of school reorganisation; it has since been demolished for housing. Walkwood is still extant as a Middle School and like St. Bede's comprised a flat-roofed building built of brick with fenestration supplemented by coloured panels. A considerable number of new buildings have been added to St. Bede's in the 21st century. Lodge Farm School, now known as Woodfield Academy, has similar design characteristics but improves on them with visually balanced green panelled bays and white columns with no exposed brick, set prominently at the roadside with no intermediary fence line or trees.



Image 17: Lodge Farm School (Woodfield Academy) © 2020 Google.

Following the Second World War, Redditch's industry was boosted by the shadow factories which transitioned back to peace-time production; however, there does not appear to have been much building or expansion. Services like the Studley Road sewerage works were developed during this period and a new telephone exchange was built prior to 1963. In retail, new shops were built within the town centre including Burtons on the corner of Evesham Street and Unicorn Hill. The shop was distinct with its metal and glazed upper storey and coloured panels which survived until 2018 despite numerous adaptations to the lower ground frontage. During the 1950s a new Woolworths, with its characteristic house style, was constructed on the Market Place.



Image 18: Former Woolworths, Market Place



Image 19: Burton's Store, Evesham Street (Now the West Brom)

In post-war Britain, the buildings and infrastructure of many cities and towns were badly damaged. The train line between Redditch and Evesham closed in the early 1960s due to the poor state of the track and Redditch also saw slum clearance during this period with new aluminium prefab buildings being built in estates like Mayfields. Some prefabs remain extant, including those in Dolphin Road which were saved from demolition in the early 2000s thanks to a hard-fought campaign by residents (BBC 2002).

The housing estate at Batchley, started in the inter-war period, was also extended at this time with emphasis on green space incorporating the historic mill pond and watercourse. Other estates were developed, and recreation grounds can be seen at Easmore Lane and Walkwood as well as new allotments at Crabbs Cross. Many of these housing developments were the result of a plan put forward by Sir Patrick Abercrombie, which also initiated the development of a new bypass and a widespread program of street lighting. Despite these developments, the 1950s and early 1960s were dominated by disputes over the rehousing of Birmingham's overflow population and eventually this led to the creation of the Redditch New Town (Anstis 1985).



Image 20: Batchley Pool, Batchley © North Worcestershire Water Management

Redditch: The New Town (1964–1985)

On the 11th April 1964, Redditch was designated a New Town, setting the scene for building development over the next 20 years. The New Towns Committee had convened in 1945 to remedy the post-war infrastructure and population problems felt across the country, but especially in the capital. The New Town Act was enacted in 1946 and gave the government the power to designate any land in the country a New Town. The first phase of 15 New Towns, were designated in the period 1946–1960, 8 of them for London's over-population. The second phase, which included Redditch, saw the designation of 17 more New Towns between 1961 and 1971. Redditch was chosen for its central, well connected location and proximity to Birmingham. Development corporations, established for each New Town, were granted powers to acquire land and carry out the building of houses and services to make a comprehensive, functioning town.

The development corporation facilitated innovative town development which would allow many aspects of a town's requirements to be designed outside of normal economic demands. In 1967, the master plan for Redditch was published³. The master plan proposed self-contained neighbourhoods, of up to 10,000 inhabitants, the majority of which were to be based on existing communities (Brooks and Pevsner 2007, 546). Following consultation, it set out a vision for the town aligned to a number of design aims and principals, including;

1. *The New Town would ensure the right amount of jobs and industry was provided for the proposed population.*

This resulted in the development corporation building new industrial sites of varying size and redeveloping old works to provide either buildings for rent or land to construct customised factories at attractive rates. Proposed industry was expected to be 60% in manufacturing and 15% in related trades like construction and distribution whilst the remainder would be in the service industry (Redditch DC 1966).



Image 21: Small factory units on the Royal Enfield Industrial Estate

Redditch had several factors which attracted new companies to the area; low rates, the opportunity to develop new technology-led factories, a well-connected road network for distribution and a pleasant, green environment (Winter 1993). The development corporation began by modernising the Royal Enfield site at Hewell Road to make 270,000 square feet of industrial and office space. They also produced several standard units of varying size for rental, like those at Howard Road and Cross Gate Road on the Park Farm Industrial Estate. Advanced units, built of brick with a pitched roof, large bay door to the front and a small, single-storey office area at the rear, were also built at Washford

³ Hugh Wilson (Wilson & Womersley) drew up the master plan (1964-6) for a target population of 70,000, eventually rising to 90,000. Michael Brown was landscape consultant. In 1965 Redditch Development Corporation appointed Brian Bunch as Chief Architect and Planning Officer, he was succeeded by his deputy Graham Reddie, in 1979 (Brooks and Pevsner, 2007, 546).

industrial estate, including those off Heming Road. All of these units are still present on their respective industrial estates with little obvious change.



Image 22: Larger factory units on Howard Road Industrial Estate

Technological changes during the New Town period also meant that industrial units were increasingly required for companies who needed access to business networks like ARROWNET which linked business networks to the University of Birmingham data hub and other plants and offices. New 'high technology' offices were also constructed at Moons Moat CENTECH Park.



Image 23: GKN Group Headquarters from Ipsley Church Lane
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Image 24: Halfords Head Office

Distribution centres were also attracted to Redditch, many companies creating new head offices and warehouses at the industrial estates across the town. GKN built large offices at Ipsley House in 1972–3 and Halfords constructed a head office at Washford industrial estate: a striking four-storey concrete building with heavily glazed frontage facing on to a deep green verge beside Icknield Drive. Halfords, as well as being involved in the sale of automotive parts, also became known for their sales of cycles which continued the history of the cycle industry in the town. Additional office blocks built at this time include the red brick St. Stephen's House with its bay windows on the fourth floor and Grosvenor House, a six-storey building with 54,000ft of floor space. Both offices are still extant on Prospect Hill.



Image 25: Grosvenor House, Prospect Hill



Image 26: St. Stephen's House, Prospect Hill

Existing factories also underwent change and expansion during this time to update buildings that no longer suited the needs of new technology. The Chloride Alcad Batteries site on Union Street introduced a large new 'Jubilee' building which could cover the whole of their battery production line and included a large dust extraction system (Green. Unknown). A computer building was also built in 1976 and an Electrolyte building was built in 1978. The structures were all eventually demolished for a retail park.

- 2. New housing estates were to be built under the neighbourhood principals; each estate having its own centre with shops, amenity and leisure to ensure a sense of community and identity. Each district would have its own infrastructure and industry allowing the district, as a whole, to be a separate entity that can be characterised by its landscape locality, emphasised by topographical conditions (Winter 1993).*



Image 27: Christ Church seen across Matchborough Way



Image 28: Church of Latter Day Saints, Evesham Road

A number of new buildings were created to promote community cohesion during the New Town build. These included community halls within each 'centre' development and several new churches. Matchborough Christ Church, with its glazed cross on the front and rear walls, was constructed in 1975, and the Church of Latter Day Saints, on Evesham Road, with its brick detail to the front face was built in 1984 by John Porter & Associates. The Elim Pentecostal church in Plymouth Road, built in 1976, has been demolished and rebuilt in the 21st century whilst the 1983, single-storey St Gregory's Catholic Church, constructed with an impressive freestanding spire is now subject to plans to demolish it for housing; this would also affect a historic route way preserved as a footpath beside it. Redditch Crematorium, which is described as an excellent example in Brooks and Pevsner (2007, 549), was also built during this period. Designed by Twentyman, Percy and Partners, the site incorporates a curving memorial corridor, its East wall fully glazed, leading to the chapel.



Image 29: St Gregory's Catholic Church, Winyates



Image 30: Redditch Crematorium

- 3. The New Town would be car orientated with district distributor roads leading to district feeder roads and then into housing and industry to protect the environment of the housing with opportunity to develop public transport including bus-only lanes. It also planned that footpaths would be segregated from roads under the Radburn principals to protect pedestrians and especially the school commute, including the use of subways (Redditch BC 2011).*

The road network incorporated several new highways, including the Cloverleaf junction at the centre of the New Town. This was the first full clover-leaf junction in the UK and the first priority left turn at a roundabout. Five multi-storey car parks were built in the town centre with direct links to the shops and further car parks followed. The structures were all open air, multi-storey with concrete walls and stair-towers. Glazed bridges, used to connect the car parks straight into Kingfisher Mall, can still be seen when driving into and out of Redditch town centre today.



Image 31: Kingfisher Centre car park bridge

Public transport was provided by a bus service, stationed on the lower ground floor of the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Originally constructed as multiple exterior bus shelters with a covered walkway into the shopping mall, the bus station was then redeveloped to incorporate inside waiting areas. The station has since been relocated within the Kingfisher Centre. Bus shelters found throughout Redditch today are mainly of modern construction in glass and metal. A small number of brick structures with concrete roofs are still present in Churchill, Matchborough and Batchley and these may have also been constructed as part of the New Town development. Although train travel saw the retention of the Birmingham to Redditch line, the train station was moved to allow space for the Kingfisher Centre.

4. Three acres of recreation space would be provided per 1,000 population within the New Town.

Much of the recreation ground was delivered by means of a sharing policy with newly built schools, which allowed for public use of playing fields and built facilities. This was a concept brought to Worcestershire by the county architect Alan Meikle who had worked on shared recreation facilities in new comprehensive schools whilst working with Henry Swain, the county architect in Nottinghamshire (Harwood 2019 Personal Communications 18th February and Meikle 2002). Purpose built leisure facilities included an extension and redesign of the Palace Theatre which had become run-down. A number of public houses were built throughout Redditch, reflecting the high frequency of pub building nationally during this period. Many of the pubs were built in the design of oversized residential houses. The Mayfly on Studley Road is similar to houses built in Greenland's while the Duckpond Public House, built on the site of Pheasant Farm, has the appearance of a farmhouse or barn with its high-sided open gables and wooden weatherboarding. Public houses, along with a shopping parade and other services, such as a community centre, were often built at the heart of new estates. Many, including The Old Sticky Wickets at Matchborough, are now facing demolition or redevelopment (Leach 2019).

Abbey Stadium sports centre, one of a new range of sports centres seen nationally from the 1960s onwards, was also constructed at this time, as was Valley Stadium. A BMX track (now lost), built in 1980 near Halford's headquarters, was the first BMX track to be officially adopted in the country, holding the Anglo-American BMX championships in 1981 and 1982. Two new golf courses were also opened in the 1970s. Abbey Park Golf Course was located near an upscale housing development that Redditch Development Corporation hoped would entice wealthy families to move into Redditch, whilst Lower Grinsty golf course, which opened in 1972, was a new municipal golf course established to replace the existing golf course, which had been truncated by road developments. Other

leisure features were also constructed within the community centres. At Winyates a giant chess board formed the centre of the shopping area and inter-estate championships were planned.



Image 32: Abbey Golf Course
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5. *The town would also have a network of green space, generally on high ground and along highways, as where the planting of trees contributed to containment of the landscape (Winter 1993) but also through the designation of a large park along the Arrow Valley.*

Views were identified as important for the New Town and veteran trees and hedgerows were preserved within housing estates to enhance the natural feeling of the environment. Winyates Green, for example, has a large area of mature woodland at its centre. This also meant that much of the historic field pattern was encapsulated in the new developments and many other archaeological remains were also preserved. Old route ways such as Ryknield Street Roman road were preserved as footpaths and mill leats and ponds were retained to support blue infrastructure and greenspace within estates. The Scheduled Monuments of Moon's Moat and Bordesley Abbey were both preserved as green space and additional earthworks, like the dry, medieval fish ponds at Churchill Middle School, were preserved as site boundaries. Green space was also designed to alleviate climatic conditions within the landscape, utilising treelines to provide wind breaks and direct cold air flows, with the land along the valley bottom where a colder climate was identified, being designated for leisure instead of residential development (Winter 1993).



Image 33: Mature trees preserved in green space

Arrow Valley Country Park was designed to fill the land around the River Arrow, the main lake being created during the excavation of marl for highway banks. Golf courses, woodland, recreation ground and tree buffers were also utilised to provide green space that linked across the whole town and this land made up nearly a quarter of the New Town area (RDC 1966). Several nature reserves, including Ipsley Alders Marsh and Rough Hill Wood, were also incorporated. Marl pit ponds were also reused and following drainage and improvement, were stocked with fish for recreational fishing – as at Lodge Pool which is still extant at the centre of the Greenlands Estate.



Image 34: Lodge Pool, Lodge Park

- Schools would be built to meet the demands of the proposed population rise but this also came at the time of changes in education with the move to the comprehensive system.*

Redditch, with its 1950s schools incapable of expansion to meet the needs of comprehensive education, followed parts of the county (Bromsgrove and Droitwich) which chose to re-organise itself into the 3-tier system of First, Middle and High (Smith & Webster 2016). This allowed the New Town to plan out the siting of schools: First and Middle schools were placed near each other in the centre of communities, facilitating both safety of commuting and school collaboration.



Image 35: RSA Academy Arrow Vale, Green Sward Lane, Matchborough
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Arrowvale Community School opened in 1976 and held a youth centre and shared sports centre on its site. The building, whilst similar to those built in the 1950s, does not quite retain the same architectural eminence and instead reflects much of the industrial architecture within the New Town. Many of these new schools, including St. Augustine's Catholic School and Leys High School (now Tudor Grange), built in 1974, were of a similar multi-storey

design whilst the majority of first schools built during this period have similar characteristics but are principally single storey. Whilst most of the New Town schools are still extant, Matchborough First School was rebuilt post 2000 on its playing field and new houses were constructed on the old site. Redditch Further Education College (later New College) was also extended in 1973 to include a seminar room, gymnasium and changing rooms; however, there have been significant changes to the building in the latter part of the 20th and 21st centuries.

7. *Retail would be provided both in community centres and within a town centre located in a covered mall.*

The Kingfisher Shopping Centre was developed as the main shopping development within Redditch.⁴ Fed by traffic from the ringway, the development caused some controversy due to its wholesale removal of historic shops and streets which were replaced with the indoor mall. Whilst the main frontages of the mall have since been redeveloped with modern glass and metal, the rear of the complex still retains its pebble dash exterior, which was also continued within the shopping mall, supplemented by tile floors and tile shop-front surrounds. The centre contained many of the regular names in retail at the time, Owen Owen, Boots, Woolworths, Marks & Spencer's and Sainsbury's largest store in the Midlands, all laid out in a way that encouraged circulation throughout the mall (Coombes 2017b). A public house, church,⁵ bus station and links to parking were also incorporated, as was an outdoor market in Kings Square. The emphasis of the New Town as a pleasant environment was also represented in the mall with hanging planters that benefited from their own misting system and public art; although the mall cannot be acknowledged to be in the forefront of commercial architecture of the period, the mosaics by Eduardo Paolozzi are outstanding examples of Pop Art by one of its leading practitioners. The artwork, revealed in 1983, is unlisted. Several phases of construction followed in the 1970s and 1980s which saw the mall and its shops continue to grow with many companies being allowed to design their premises within the space to their own brand designs.



Image 36: Kingfisher Shopping Centre service area

⁴ The shopping centre (originally designed by Graham Reddie, in partnership with engineers Ove Arup & Partners), had doubled in size by 1981. It was further remodelled in 2002–2005.

⁵ The Emmanuel Church 'Ecumenical Centre', opened in 1978, on the top floor of the shopping centre (Brooks and Pevsner, 2007, 549).



Image 37: The Redditch Kingfisher Centre Paolozzi mosaics

Outside of the main shopping mall, over 35 shops had been built within community centres in the first 10 years of the New Town (Anstis 1985). This included centres at Churchill, Winyates, Matchborough and Woodrow where shops, posts offices, libraries and medical centres were arranged either around a central courtyard or in a row; often only accessible by bus or foot. The structures were constructed either single-storey or with an upper storey of residential flats. These centres, whilst still in use in many of the communities, have often been subject to anti-social behaviour and there has been loss of many of the traditional services located in the retail units. This has resulted in some of the centres being replaced by modern developments in recent years.



Image 38: Woodrow Centre



Image 39: Greenland's shopping parade

8. *And finally, services were built to serve the New Town of Redditch.*

A new Police station and courts, connected by a tunnel to transfer prisoners from cell to court, opened in 1978, in Queen Street near the town centre. A new fire station, comprised of three bays for engines, was also opened, in the 1960s, in Birmingham Road. Alternatively, whilst land was set aside for a hospital, no structure was built for nearly 20 years. In this time, the Smallwood Cottage Hospital in the town centre served as the main medical centre for Redditch, whilst health centres were gradually added to community centres to meet demands for local GPs, dentists and other practitioners; many of these have now been rebuilt to suit modern needs and expectations.



Image 40: Police Station and Courts



Image 41: Fire Station, Redditch

A new office for Redditch Borough Council, constructed with a frontage that allowed offices to face on to the pedestrianised town centre, was also built on Silver Street and the new library, located next door to the council offices, was designed by John Madin Partnership around the same time that he was developing Birmingham's brutalist central city library which has now sadly been demolished. Constructed with brown brick, which was exposed internally, and coffered ceilings, the building has seen later internal renovations to encourage the feeling of openness and to improve lighting (Clawley 2013) The library was originally planned to have a second phase expansion, but this never materialised.



Image 42: Redditch Town Hall⁶



Image 43: Redditch Library

Telephone exchanges, like the one found on Fishing Line Road, were built in many of the districts during the New Town expansion to ensure the best connection was available for industry. For water, a new concrete water tower and reservoir was built at the highest point in the town; Headless Cross, whilst new electricity distribution centres were also built at Headless Cross and in Astwood Bank.

⁶ Redditch Town Hall was designed by Cassidy & Ashton Partners of Preston in partnership with engineers Ove Arup & Partners. Brooks and Pevsner (2007, 552) describe the building as red brick with overbearing metallic roofs, chunkily detailed but with an attractive open courtyard with brick steps, ramps, low fountains and an octagonal, pyramid-roofed kiosk.



Image 44: Water tower, Headless Cross

In 1977 changes in Labour Government policy led to an order for Redditch Development Corporation to close operations by 1982. It was provided with an extension which allowed development to continue until 1984/1985, however, by 1982 much of the major building had been completed and the new Conservative government, with its goals of privatisation, made further enhancement of the New Town assets incompatible (Alexander 2009).

Redditch towards the end of the century (1985–1999)

With the impressive investment in industrial sites during the New Town era, organisations continued to move their premises to Redditch in the latter part of the century. New factory units continued to be built on industrial estates; some were built on undeveloped land, others initiating the demolition of existing units to make space for alternative structures. New factories and warehouses were constructed along Arthur Street industrial area, Hemming Road at Washford industrial estate and Mearse Road, at Moons Moat industrial estate. ISTEEL also constructed new, larger data centres at Moons Moat as technology developed. In 1993 the Moons Moat industrial estate was expanded by the development of the Ravensbank Business Park, this time on a greenfield site to the east of the estate. Building here continued into the early 2000s. Many new factory units during this period and into the 2000s are comprised of large metal structures with minimal glazing. A business park was also constructed at Clews Road with six large office blocks all a single design; two-storey red brick with blue brick banding and tile roofs. The historic factories at Hunt End were also demolished during this period and replaced with new units comprising metal cladding set on low brick walls.

Other historic works were also lost during this period as brownfield sites were chosen for new retail developments. A Lidl and Staples retail development was built on the site of Washford Needle Mill off St George's Road in 1998 and Trafford Retail Park was developed on the site of the adjacent spring works.



Image 45: Shopping parade on Unicorn Hill

A new parade of shops was built on Unicorn Hill in the late 20th Century, incorporating brick detail and a Unicorn relief; however most retail opportunities were sought on greenfield sites, largely due to the development corporation not predicting the rise and demand for commercial retail parks and supermarkets (Coombes 2017b). A large Tesco superstore was opened in 1990 on a greenfield site near the cloverleaf junction in Oakenshaw whilst a second store, which opened opposite, has since been replaced with housing. Morrison's, off Battens Drive, was also built on a greenfield site at the edge of Arrow Valley Park, and the Abbey Retail park, which incorporated a Sainsbury's and petrol station (now demolished), was built in 1987 on greenfield land behind houses on the Birmingham Road. Many of these food retail superstores are constructed to their characteristic, 'house' design, however, these designs have changed over time and the Sainsbury's at Abbey Retail Park has a frontage with two wooden gables emblazoned with 'Sainsbury's' a contrast to their more recent full glass frontages. Drive-through restaurants also start to be built in Redditch during this period. A McDonald's restaurant was built and still stands extant on the Clews Road business park and a KFC was built on Trafford Retail Park around the turn of the century.



Image 46: Sainsbury's Redditch

A number of housing estates were also built on brownfield sites during this period, for example on the site of the gas works. However, a lot of new housing developments, though generally small in scale, were built on greenspace within Redditch. Examples include Home Meadow Lane where new build assarted the woodland buffer of Moons Moat and Winyates Green, expanding towards Ipsley Alders. Webheath expanded into the golf course and other infill took up small areas of greenspace in existing housing estates. These developments had the unfortunate side effect of changing the quantity and shape of greenspace designed into Redditch by the New Town development, which in most cases had been defined by field boundaries and other historic features in the landscape. For example,

house building at Winyates near Ipsley C of E School filled a green space that had previously preserved the tree-lined route of a historic trackway. The trees are now under houses and back gardens having a significant impact upon habitat connectivity and green infrastructure in the area.



Image 47: Changes in green space at Winyates Green 1999 to 2018
Source; Google Earth © Interflora & BlueSky 2019, Getmapping plc 2019

Bridley Moor School closed in 2001 and was also demolished for housing. At the very end of the 20th Century, pressure on school places had dropped and a review of provision was made with some schools closing and others merging (Smith & Webster, 2016). There had been some expansion of school sites in the 1980s, but no new schools were built during this period. The New College did, however, see significant building during the latter part of the 20th Century with D block opening in 1994 and Redditch Sixth Form Centre opening in 2000, which included facing the main block with a large glass and aluminium canopy.



Image 48: Heart of Worcestershire College

A proliferation of religious diversity over the 20th century, as well as the New Town-related increase in Redditch's population, meant that construction of churches and places of worship continued across Redditch during the 1990s. The Jehovah Witness hall in Orchard Street was constructed in 1990 and consists of a single-storey building, as does the Redditch Spiritual Church in Easemore Road built in 1996. St. Andrew's in Church Hill, built in 1993, and the registration office in Easemore Road were also constructed during this period. The St. John the Evangelist church built in Greenland's at this time benefits from a hexagonal design and central metal spire and cross, the interior layout characteristic of changes within church design, which sought to develop a space where the clergy and congregation were unified.



Image 49: Redditch Registration Office, 29 Easemore Road



Image 50: St John the Evangelist Church, Greenland's

Although 21st century in date, the spectacular Mosque on Jinnah Road reflects the growth of the town's Muslim community throughout the course of the 20th century. Redditch Central Mosque, one of the earliest mosques in the town, was previously accommodated in the former St. Stephen's Church Institute on Easemore Lane. Dated to 1910 the institute is of Domestic Revival style with vernacular detailing.



Image 51: Redditch Central Mosque, Jinnah Road



Image 52: The former St. Stephen's Church Institute and Redditch Central Mosque, Easemore Lane

In 1985 the Alexandria Hospital finally opened, 20 years after land was designated in the New Town plan. The building consists of a large, two-storey, red-brick building with multiple wings off a central corridor. The building of the hospital had been considerably delayed despite certain need and the existing Smallwood Cottage Hospital (dated 1892) not meeting demand. Furthermore, throughout Redditch a number of doctors' surgeries, pharmacies and other health services constructed new buildings during the late 20th century, to cope with requirements, suggesting demand had been considerably underestimated in the New Town plan.

Increases in disposable income and free time, led to the development of further leisure facilities, the leisure industry being important to the town's economy. Morton Stanley Park, the land for which had been bequeathed to the town 60 years earlier, opened in 1986. The parkland, which ran to 38 acres, included football pitches, playgrounds and woodland, and linked up to surrounding green space and golf courses. The changing room/pavilion next to the sports field was built in the late 1980s or early 1990s. The grounds also house a skate park: a much larger skate park, which incorporated a new BMX track, was built in the Arrow Valley Park in 2000. Other leisure buildings built during this period include the Arrow Valley Park Visitor Centre which includes a glazed lake-side frontage and the Oast House public house built in 1990 on Paper Mill Drive, complete with its own oast house and Dutch-style gable roof.



Image 53: Arrow Valley Visitor Centre, Arrow Valley Country Park

Conclusions; loss of 20th-century heritage

Approximately 36 records on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) refer to 20th-century buildings in Redditch. Most of these records relate to Second World War structures, now demolished, and were added as the result of a volunteer survey of the Second World War defence sites of Worcestershire. This demonstrates a real absence of 20th-century buildings on the HER but this case study has shown that a wealth of 20th-century architecture remains within Redditch and is in desperate need of proper recognition and recording.

The building of the New Town clearly dominates Redditch, especially in areas of industrial building, but the choice of Redditch Development Corporation in allowing companies to design and build their own modern factories, at a time of great leaps in technological development, means that we can look to Redditch's industrial estates for buildings that encapsulate this period as well as for ones that tell the tale of companies with an important history in the UK, like that of Halfords. Redditch has also preserved earlier 20th-century structures that played key roles in the metal casting, springs, aerospace and cycle industries, especially during the first and second World Wars, like Royal Enfield and High Duty Alloys. This study has shown, however, that industrial structures continue to be susceptible to redevelopment, predominantly as a result of the growth of residential housing and retail.

The school buildings of Redditch also hold a lot of interest. Whilst many created by the New Town are architecturally similar, earlier school buildings like Lodge Farm, built in the 1950s with its striking roadside block, and Holyoake's primary, built in 1913 and now at threat of demolition, should be noted as locally significant buildings. Redditch has also seen a lot of church building in the 20th century and although many of the structures produced are simple, single-storey brick buildings without embellishment, there are some that have made sound contributions to the architecture of their surroundings but are now under threat of demolition due to poor congregational attendance.

In retail, the New Town once again dominates, amalgamating town centre shops within its single mall and community centre shopping parades. However, these buildings tell the story of the New Town; its quest to create tight-knit communities with a sense of place. These 'centres' have mainly been superseded by the large, out-of-town food superstores and retail parks with their homogenous design which spread throughout the town in the 1990s and 2000s, the old centre shops changing to services such as nail bars and tanning beds. Despite this, however, new residential developments are keen to bring new, revitalised shops and services to the communities; the old centres are therefore being replaced in the process and threatened with demolition for further housing allocation.

The 20th-century increase in disposable income also played an important part in the 20th-century development of Redditch, but here too, structures are threatened when found unadaptable to meet the demands of the growing population. The swimming pool at Hewell Lane in Redditch is a good example of this. The structure, which opened at the turn of the 20th century as an open-air pool, was able to respond to changing 20th-century attitudes to leisure, swimming, sport, hygiene and gender, until 2011. It then closed its doors to be replaced by a new £6.5m pool at Abbey Stadium, and the old pool was subsequently demolished for housing.

Furthermore, the designed green space and designed infrastructure of Redditch also depicts the heritage of the New Town, of its determination to provide a well-connected, car and pedestrian-friendly development, set within an established, green environment. The footpaths and woodland, recreation grounds and ponds are also informed by and preserve the pre-20th-century heritage of the landscape in a way only really seen elsewhere on this scale preserved under post-medieval parkland. However, the infill of greenspace is where modern developments are making a real threat to the 20th-century designed landscape and the heritage it preserves, with densification of the residential areas severely impacting on the structure and feeling of the urban landscape designed by the Redditch Development Corporation. Modern infill developments have been identified eating into tree buffers, golf courses,

holloways, recreation grounds and other green infrastructure assets which provide an important part of Redditch's landscape and history.

It is clear from this study that 20th-century buildings and public places are an important part of the urban heritage of Redditch, as intrinsic a layer as that of earlier buildings, many of which are cherished and protected within its bounds. The question should be raised as to how the remaining 20th-century buildings and green spaces, that can be identified as being of local significance, should be protected from redevelopment or demolition. These buildings and places may not have famous architects, but they are structures that offer a sense of place, community and history to the locality in which they are built, and they reflect national development during the 20th century and the New Town Movement. Nonetheless they are under threat of being lost in the barrage of 21st-century development. Inclusion on the Local List would offer limited protection as it offers no statutory protection and is thus dependent on strong policies in Local or Neighbourhood Development Plans: few buildings would be protected from demolition as the justification for this in Local Development Plan (policy 37) is set so high. Planning permission is only required for Local List buildings within Conservation Areas. There needs to be further investigation into the effectiveness of NPPF policies regarding non-designated heritage assets, defining what matters and why and using this to inform schemes for adaptation and redevelopment. Further investigation into the justification behind why a 20th-century building might need to be redeveloped or replaced, how this differs from factors affecting earlier buildings, and mitigation strategies to ensure the heritage is protected, may be useful questions for further research.

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