

Pokesdown Shops

On the corner of Chessel Avenue is a Queen Anne style terrace, from The Flower Shop to Chok Dee (739-747?). This brings the well-proportioned Dutch classicism, typical of the style, with a striking red brick façade, three stories high, intended to impress and succeeding. This marks the edge of the Shelley Estate, and the end of Boscombe, separated from the neighbouring Portman Estate, by Woodland Walk.



The first property in Pokesdown on the south side of Christchurch Road is the distinctive Portman Lodge, a small plain gothic building which was the entrance to the Portman Estate, home to William Henry Berkeley-Portman, 2nd Viscount Portman, the great nephew of Henrietta Tregonwell, whose husband made Bournemouth's reputation in the earliest days.



Opposite this north of Christchurch Road, between Wolverton and Gloucester roads, several of the early houses of the area survive, with a domesticated gothic style – some prominent gables and brick string-courses, but lacking the decoration of the fuller Gothic style. These were built when the area was first being developed as a residential suburb, and were later converted to shops as the area took on a more commercial character.

These ground floor shops set up a regular rhythm along the street, each framed by pilasters – the squared-off panelled columns between the different shops, each topped by a curvy console bracket. Topping the frame is a fascia, which carries the shop name. The shops themselves have large plate glass windows held in place by the thin stanchions, sitting on top of low stall risers (the low walls beneath the windows) and recessed doorways, which emphasise the rhythm of the streetscape.



These shops are so typically what people think of as shops, that their pleasing design and the contribution they make to an ordered, and interesting street is easily overlooked. There is a pleasing depth given to the street scene here, with the difference between the slower rhythm of the old houses above the shopfronts, and the faster rhythm of the shop fronts themselves, rather like a clever counterpoint in a musical score.



Beyond Gloucester Road is a terrace of properties, indicating a more commercial area was originally built, also with ground floor shops built out at a later date. The rhythm of the street scene intensifies here, and there is a new element to the design, the pilasters and console brackets are distinctly Art Deco in style, featuring large circular designs.



There is a dramatic, Catholic, pause in the street scene to the south of Christchurch Road, where Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church, set well back from the street, and its neighbouring modernist-style school, leave a void along the street.



East of the void is one of Pokesdown's most notable terraces, a clear Arts and Crafts statement, from Fishtales to Boscombe News (761-781?). Here there is a sense of orchestrated style, several elements of classicism, such as the segmented arches and pediments to the dormer windows, are present, but overall, these are used as decorative effects within a canvas of elements. The first floor windows are grouped into fours, with stone mullions between them and a stone architrave around them, so that they form an interesting rectangular pattern along the terrace, rather than being scattered in the more expressive style of domesticated gothic. The shop fronts themselves are built into the terrace, rather than being ground floor additions. They echo all the elements already seen in the shops between Wolverton and Gloucester roads, but are rather taller and grander. These were built as shops, instead of being converted to shops.



The effect is to repeat and change a theme, rather like a symphonic orchestral work. The rhythm of Pokesdown continues, but approaches a climax here. Opposite and south of Christchurch Road there is quite a contrast. Moving east from Gloucester Road more of the domestic gothic houses survive, some with pierced bargeboards typical of the period at the end of the 19th Century. These have been converted to shops on the ground floor too, but with less uniformity than before, each property has its own slightly different design, from Sandys Antiques, to Le Munch, on the corner of Somerset Road. Musically this is a discordant counterpoint to the smart and ordered terraces opposite.



Approaching Parkwood Road, the Arts and Crafts Terrace on the south of Christchurch Road reaches a crescendo, bringing in Italianate rather than classical elements. The decoration is still orchestrated to the service of the overall design of the terrace, but the exuberance of the decoration is allowed much freer rein here, bringing a playful element into the street frontage.



East of Parkwood Road, the design returns to the more controlled classicism, with the corner shopfront being surrounded by rusticated ashlar, typical of bank premises.



North of the road, the domesticated gothic character of the original houses is again the underlying note, with ground floor shop extensions, again in the Art Deco style. This is punctuated by the squared bulk of the Mission Hall/Church building, which plays on the Italianate style, but brings to it the stronger lines of the Art Deco aesthetic, giving a rather solemn façade in dark brick and grey stone.



Beyond this, the domesticated gothic gives way to Arts and Crafts once more, closer to the style that the originator of the movement, William Morris would have recognised, with 'half-timbered' style gables, above Art Deco style shop fronts.



To the South, from Sonics (803?) to Greener Britain (817?) there is a very typical Arts and Crafts terrace, with a simple repetition of tile-hung gables, oriel windows and shop fronts below. Some of the original shop fronts survive, as do several of the chimneys, giving a nice simple rhythm to the street scene, and a purity of style.



The style gets a bit grander at 'The Well (819?) and beyond, with more elaborate dormer windows in the roof, but all the elements are still presented within the Arts and Crafts style.



North of Christchurch Road, the combination of original dwellings and later shop extensions continues to Chorley Burdett Furniture on the corner of Warwick Road.



East of the road, the Arts and Crafts style is strongly asserted with a purpose built terrace of homes and shops. 'King & Co' (834?) on the corner is a lovely expression of the style, with rusticated first floor windows, and a 'rescued' corner gable feature of a Beehive dated to 1677 – presumably rescued from an older property, not necessarily local to Pokesdown or Bournemouth. The Beehive was a symbol adopted by some of the local Urban District Councils, to express the 'hive-of-activity' that went on in them.



The ashlar ground floor suggests that this corner property was once a bank premises, as the style was frequently used to suggest the sturdiness and reliability that people once associated with banks.



The terrace to the east of this is Arts and Crafts in composition, with the large repeated gables along the roof line, but is a rather sombre expression of the style. The windows being separated into simple single openings, rather than the grouped windows seen on the more expressive buildings nearby.



The buildings opposite are also in a simpler design, with less decoration, more nearly cottage-like, in a way that would have pleased William Morris, who was an advocate of rustic and rural craftsmanship and design, rather than the mechanised repetition that he saw taking over architecture.



Just to the east of this terrace, the playful element comes back into play, with the first floor oriel bay window carried up above the roof as a dormer window. This gives a particularly strong and unique emphasis to the rhythm of the street.



As with the preceding terrace and that opposite, this one has strong lines, but lacks decoration and detail. In such buildings, the original form of development is often

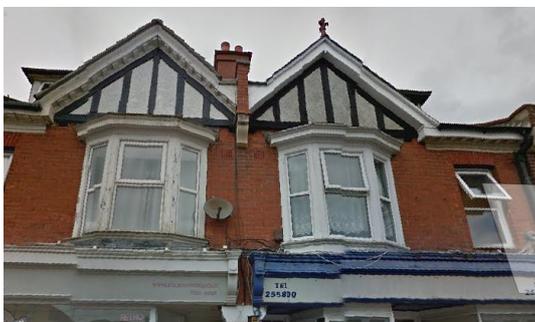
important in making the building work to its best advantage. As seen opposite at The Pokesdown Antique Centre (866?) the lovely original shop front, preserving the curved spandrels at the top of the windows, and the surviving awning, makes for a significantly more pleasing facade than the roller shutter at Asian Trader (uk) Ltd, next door.



Kwik Fit, immediately to the east presents another void in the streetscape and the modern flat-roofed design of the building brings the rhythm of the street to a halt. This is a building that exists in isolation to the surrounding development. Within a strong existing area of development, as here, the break in the street scene is notable, but not a disaster, however further redevelopment of other properties would significantly erode the character and appearance of the area.



Immediately to the east, the rhythm and character of Pokesdown picks up again, with a pleasing Arts and Crafts pair of villas. The oriel windows and half-timbered gables dentillated eaves and deeply carved fascia, all add detail and interest to the Arts and Crafts styling.



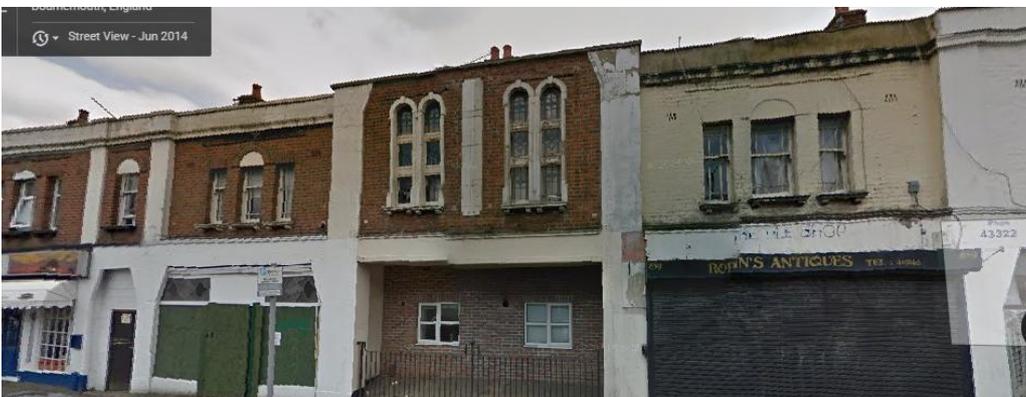
The terrace continues to the east, with simpler buildings, seemingly designed in pairs, within an overall terrace scheme. The Arts and Crafts style runs across all these buildings, which are distinct from each other, gables alternating with flat-roofed bays.



The roughcast riser-panels to the bay windows also demonstrate the Arts and Crafts aesthetic of the terrace. The shopfronts themselves have been largely replaced, but the long line of awning housings above the fascias gives a unity to the whole terrace, despite the variety of shop fronts. The rhythm of the shop fronts is also largely preserved, despite the loss of the original detailing.



Opposite this terrace is one of Pokesdown's most important and also overlooked buildings. Once serving as a cinema, the building east of the junction with Queensland Road is a wonderful example of the Art Deco style, adapted to an urban street. The angular pilasters and some of the leaded lights are wholly Art Deco, some of the window grouping owe their origins to Arts and Crafts, or even Italianate sensibilities, put into the service of the Art Deco style.



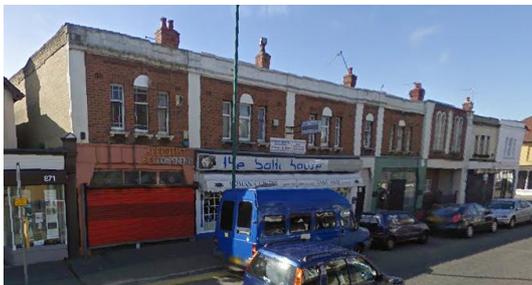
The surviving detailing to the building, particularly of the leaded lights, is very important for the character of the street.



Where elements like this survive, they give a quality to the street scene which is irreplaceable.



The Cinema buildings read as a terrace of individual shops, until you stand back and take a look at the whole group, when the overall design becomes apparent.



The rear of the site, where the main cinema would have been, has been redeveloped with housing in Queensland Road. Beyond this is a rare intrusion of the domestic onto the south side of the road, with three houses, with ground floor extensions to form shops,



The property on the corner of Rosebery Road has the eclecticism of the Arts and Crafts style, but the playful execution of the terraces further west, with a corner bay carried up into the roof area. The exuberance of this corner property helps to give a distinct identity to the Rosebery Park Estate, which underlies the development of this part of Pokesdown.



North of Christchurch Road at this point, on the corner of Hannington Road, there is a similar return to the residential character, as the Arts and Crafts terrace ends at Moddlers Loft, and a small pair of villas in the domestic gothic style sits at the corner.



The shopfronts added to these villas are distinct from the run of shops along the Arts and Crafts terrace.



On the opposite corner of Hannington road is one of Pokesdown's finest buildings. Put up as the Pokesdown Art and Technical School in 1898, to bring Pokesdown into

the cultural life of Bournemouth when the town first absorbed the village, the building is a showcase of all that was considered finest by the local architects of the day. The Italianate detailing is too prominent for this to be seen as a genuinely Arts and Crafts building, and its style has been described, when this was added to Bournemouth Council's 'Local List' in 1998, as 'Renaissance-style'; although the general Arts and Crafts sensibilities are also present. This is a celebration of the knowledge of the architect, and the skill of the builders.



To some extent the building is as much of a punctuation point in the streetscape as the modernism of Kwik Fit or the Corpus Christi school, despite being in a similar style to and from the same period as the majority of the buildings along the high street.



On the south side of the road is a fine Arts and Crafts terrace, it shares the simplicity of the terrace west of Kwik Fit, and the paired gable give a strong rhythm to the street. Where the original shopfronts survive, they show the charm of the original development.



Of particular added value here is the delightful wrought iron balustrading above the shop fronts. This would have delighted William Morris, being a great example of the blacksmith's art, and just the sort of rural craft that he was seeking to champion. The survival here is very fortunate as it gives the whole terrace a grace and elegance.



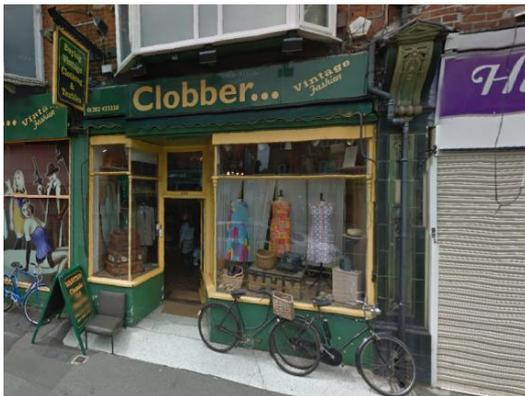
Immediately opposite Morely Road is one of the less successful elements of the street scene, housing Ada Associates; just like Kwik Fit, this modern building with its flat roofed style belongs to a completely different architectural milieu than the interests that are expressed in the other properties along the street. In the overall form of the street an intrusion like this can just about be accommodated, amongst the variety of other buildings, but it adds nothing to the whole character of the area. Elsewhere it's modernist elegance might sit quite comfortably, here it jars.



Just to the west the character of the area is saved by a particularly characterful Arts and Crafts terrace, the gables give a strong rhythm, the oriel windows to the first floor provide strong emphasis and the venetian windows above, in the gables, provide an interesting form.



The shop fronts have largely been unsympathetically altered, but the surviving example 'Clobber.. ' at 920, shows how delightful the original frontages were.



The buildings south of Christchurch Road, and west of Morely road are in the Arts and Crafts style, but lack the unity and rhythm of some of the other terraces along the road. The shop fronts also give this grouping less cohesion than is seen elsewhere.



In place of the former Steptoe and Sons warehouse, originally the Pokesdown tram terminus, there is a modern block of flats, which sits rather uncomfortable back from the roads. Less jarring than Ada Associates, this does not do much to enhance the street scene.



Opposite this is a small terrace with leanings towards the Art Deco style, particularly in the flat roof and the angular brackets on the roof line between each property.



Where the shop fronts are more original (Bourne & Co.) the terrace works quite well, where the shop front design is unsympathetic (Boscombe Youth ABC) the result is rather more unfortunate.

Luckily this trip along the high street through Pokesdown ends on something of a triumph. To the south of the road is the delightfully Art Deco Pokesdown Station. The single storey design with its minimalist detailing and clean lines, is the epitome of elegance through economy of line that the Deco period celebrated. The currently uncluttered front helps to show the station at its best.



Opposite this, on the corner of Seabourne road is the delightful Bell Inn, recently restored to its original name. This is a festival of Arts and Crafts period detailing, from the tile-hung walls, to the half-timbered central gable, the segmented arch mullions to the ground floor windows and the rusticated doorways. An entirely delightful building, which sums up everything that is best about the style found elsewhere along the street.



The pairing of the station and the public house, each showcasing their own style, and emphasising the elements found more conservatively along the street, sum up all that is best and to be celebrated about Pokesdown. This is a neighbourhood which wears its history proudly, mixing residential and commercial areas, Arts and Crafts style with Art Deco elements and even the odd bit of Italianate detailing. The rhythm of the street scene is strong throughout the area, changing from time to time, interrupted occasionally, but providing a continuity to the architecture. Some alterations have been unsympathetic, but enough that is original remains that the best of the area can be appreciated, and could be restored, providing the will to do so is there.