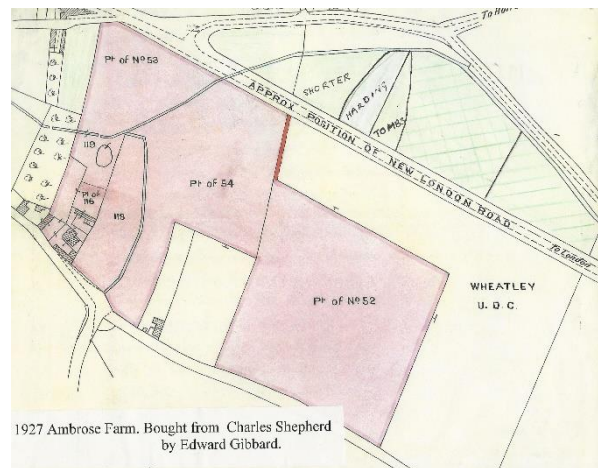
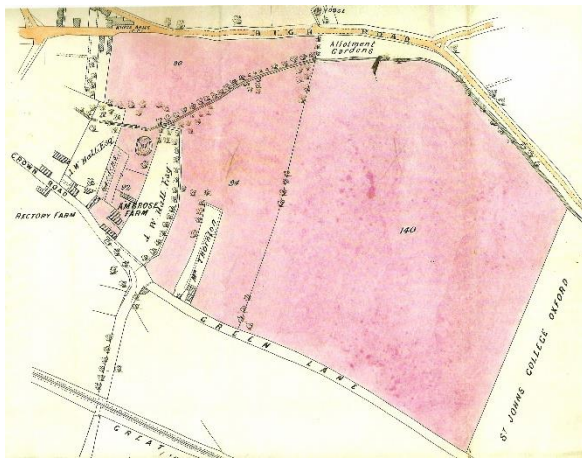


Council Housing in London Road 1927/8

In 1924 the government introduced the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act which sought (and achieved as some 0.5 million houses were built using this) to have built 'council' housing for low-paid workers. The Act was appropriately the brain-child of John Wheatley, the housing minister and it became known as the 'Wheatley Housing Act'! Councils could fund these developments by taking Public Works loans for 60 years at 5% p.a.

A land opportunity was to arise in 1926 when Charles Shepherd, having built up a substantial land holding soon after the Great War, decided to disinvest. The main farming area was gifted to Magdalen College, later becoming the basis of Castle Hill Farm now in private ownership. However, the area shaded pink in the left-hand image was sold to Edward Gibbard, who was a horse dealer and had a butcher's shop in Oxford market. He sold the area to the east with frontage to London Road and Crown Road (right-hand map) to Wheatley Urban District Council. So, the timing, in relation to the housing act was fortuitous.



1927 Ambrose Farm. Bought from Charles Shepherd by Edward Gibbard.

At Wheatley Urban district Council's meeting on 18th October 1926, it was decided, with this site in mind, to take up this proposal for 50 houses and to appoint H B Barnsley as the architect. A month later, the architect tabled three schemes which went out to tender to seven builders. These ranged from £24785 to £33500 and were tabled at the meeting on 31st December 1926. 10 days later the council chose Buildings & Public Works Construction Company at a price of £26,499 who were to use Broseley roof tiles.

By 21st February 1927, a loan of £29,400 (Cost of land £1143, construction inc. £1500 architect's fees the balance) had been sanctioned. Work started shortly after and the 50 houses were complete by April 1928.

Interest on the loan was £1470 p.a. and rents were 9-11 shillings per week, which matched the interest cost.

The houses were built six to an acre, so had 'large' gardens by today's standards.

Bullington Rural District Council, the successor to Wheatley UDC, was to buy further land after the Second World War to create additional housing.